
**SOCIAL NETWORKS IN EARLY CHRISTIANITY
ACCORDING TO LUKE-ACTS**

by

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Ethics statement

The author, whose name appears on the title page of this thesis, has obtained the required research ethics approval/exemption for the research described in this work. The author declares that they have observed the ethical standards required in terms of the University's Code of ethics for scholarly activities.

Bonn, 2023-11-03

(Signature Jens Dörpinghaus)

Abstract

This study explores the narrative portrayal of the early Christian network in Luke-Acts by utilizing Social Network Analysis (SNA) and critical spatiality. Understanding social interactions and networks and how they influence society are important issues in this quest. Most studies by historians and biblical scholars have only focused on understanding how the New Testament constructs networks and identity using exegetical methods. In this work we have developed suitable methods for a mathematical computational social network analysis using exegetical methods.

First, we provide a detailed methodological discussion that highlights the overlap between narrative criticism and SNA. Combining both in a second step, we present a SNA based on exegetical observations on Luke-Acts. This includes a detailed analysis with multiple methods like distance measures, structural analyses, community detection, and other methods from the social sciences. Transferring these results back to the domain of biblical texts, we provide a detailed analysis of Luke's portrayal of community and social cohesion. This also includes research on a network construction which combines both Luke's Gospel and Acts, the mission co-workers in Acts, different locations and spatiality, and detailed studies of several major and minor actors.

By using these methods, we were able to demonstrate that methods from the humanities, in particular social network analyses, can bring fresh perspectives to our understanding of Luke-Acts. While the Gospel of Luke focuses on the connection between theological and christological motifs with social aspects in thirdspace (according to the categories of critical spatiality), and in particular describes the 'in' and 'out' in the inclusive network of Jesus-followers, Acts is more concerned with the firstspace and secondspace spread of the network and in particular how the network developed and displays the previously introduced motifs. Further analysis indicates that Luke's primary focus is on the inclusion of every single person. In this, his inclusion of women stands out, but, however, his interest goes even further: He opens the perspective to all people. Thus, the opposite is also important: The SNA of Luke's Gospel does not allow any conclusions that Luke in his composition intended that one particular group should play a special role in the community. The network is built around Jesus being the centre of Luke's narrative and theological intentions. Luke's primary narrative interest in composing interpersonal relationship is the idea of participation in a community. Acts describes a stable, redundant but expanding network. It refers to strong interactions between people who belong to several communities, which is a key to understanding the network. The results of this SNA emphasize that Paul was a person deeply embedded within the early Christian network. In particular, Luke does not omit co-workers, but highlights collaboration in mission not

only with Paul, but also for Barnabas, Peter and John. All these actors use different strategies to collaborate with co-workers.

Our approach also has the added benefit that it integrates an analysis of the methodological overlap between SNA, literary approaches and narrative criticism. However, more research needs to be done to evaluate how digital methods can contribute to our understanding of biblical texts.

Keywords

New Testament, Narrative Criticism, Luke-Acts, Acts, Gospel of Luke, Luke, Social Network Analyses, Critical Spatiality, Jesus, Mission

Abbreviations

ABD Anchor Bible Dictionary

BG Biblische Gestalten

BZNW Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft

CDCT The Cambridge Dictionary of Christian Theology

DGB Das große Bibellexikon

DJG Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels

DoMo Dogmatik in der Moderne

EBR Encyclopedia of the Bible and Its Reception

EKK Evangelisch-katholischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament

FRLANT Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments

HGANT Handbuch theologischer Grundbegriffe zum Alten und Neuen Testament

HThKNT Herders Theologischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament

IDB The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible

JSNTS Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement

KEK Meyers Kritisch-exegetischer Kommentar über das Neue Testament

NCBC New Cambridge Bible Commentary

NICNT The New International Commentary on the New Testament

NP New Pauly

NTD Neue Testament Deutsch

RCS Reformation Commentary on Scripture

RGG Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart

RNT Regensburger Neues Testament

TBLNT Theologisches Begriffslexikon zum Neuen Testament

ThHK Theologischer Handkommentar zum Neuen Testament

ThHNT Theologischer Handkommentar zum Neuen Testament

TRE Theologische Realenzyklopädie

WBC Word Biblical Commentary

WiBiLex Das wissenschaftliche Bibellexikon im Internet

WUNT Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament

WUNT II Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 2. Reihe

ZECNT Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament

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1 Introduction

What is the nature of Christian¹ society according to biblical texts? Numerous exegetical studies investigated the nature of this community in New Testament texts. Can novel methods help to answer this question? The purpose of this work is to demonstrate that methods from the humanities and social sciences, in particular social network analyses, can bring fresh perspectives to our understanding of biblical texts, in particular Luke-Acts. As the exegetical approach with the best methodological overlap we will use a literary approach and narrative criticism.

Social networks play an important role in social sciences and have been widely used for several decades, both in theory and in application. Understanding social interactions and networks and how they influence society are important issues. In the last few years there has been a growing interest in using social networks in historical sciences. Quite recently, considerable attention has been paid to social networks in religious studies and especially in theology. It was shown that social network analysis (SNA) helps to understand the ancient literature on the early religious movements and social identity.

Collar (2013), for example, as an archaeologist, was among the first to combine religious studies and archaeology using SNA. In her work “Religious Networks in the Roman Empire” she examines why some cults and religions within the Roman Empire either vanished or became meaningless while others maintained the same popularity. She examines various cults, including the Jewish diaspora after A.D. 70. This new approach shows that the spread of ideas and even religion could be traced along ties in social networks (cf.

¹ The terms Christianity or early Christianity are often anachronistic and problematic. Stolz et al. (2018) outlines, that the first proof for this term could be found in the 2nd century proved by Ignatius of Antioch (but compare Ac 11:26). At what point in time the term Christianity can be used is widely discussed in research. The question is related to the “parting of the ways”, see e.g. B. Bauckham (1993). Since this discussion is outside the scope of this work, we will keep it simple and use the term “Christianity” starting with the religious community founded by Jesus.

van Nuffelen 2015: 224). It is not yet known whether the SNA can be generalized in all cases, since lack of data is a challenge. Regarding New Testament research the studies of Duling (2013), Czachesz (2011), White (1992), and McClure (2020) should be mentioned. One of the main issues in what we do *not* know about a social network is in particular what we can not reproduce. Thus, Collar showed how to embed network approaches into traditional research (cf. van Nuffelen 2015: 226).

Most studies from historians and exegetes have only focused on understanding how the New Testaments constructs networks and identity. Thus, on the one hand in this study we have developed mathematical computational social networks using exegetical methods. On the other hand these results should also raise new questions and show a new perspective on biblical texts. Previous work has been limited to only one of these goals. In particular, techniques to build a large computational social network of early Christianity based on biblical texts are time-consuming and require an interdisciplinary approach. Thus, the focus of recent research has been on SNA and critical spatiality to understand the distances in social networks and conduct new questions and answers, see Dörpinghaus (2020). Till now, it remains unclear how a literature-based reconstruction of the early Christian network can be interpreted in its relation to the society in general and as a whole in particular. To solve this problem, many researchers have proposed various methods from social sciences to expand the exegetical toolbox. See, for example, the various number of approaches in Horrell (1999) or Esler (1995), and the social identity theory (SIT) (cf. Tucker & Baker 2014).

This work proposes to extend a complete computational social network reconstruction of Acts with various sociological distance measures like critical spatiality to establish both a better understanding of the biblical text, raising new perspectives in order to answer fresh questions on the literary representation of early Christian networks according to Luke-Acts. Does SNA bring fresh perspectives on biblical texts? The interdisciplinary questions are connected to others: What are the challenges of missing data and quiet sources? How do assumptions influence hypotheses using digital methods?

1.1 Problem statement

This proposed research tries to answer the question: What does the early Christian network (or networks) according to Luke-Acts look like? Is it possible to extend the methods from SNA to get a fresh exegetical view on these New Testament texts? Can we extend the social network with more data to answer more theological questions? In section 1.2 we will present a more detailed view on our research questions.

In the ancient Mediterranean world various religions² and spiritual movements could be found. It is fascinating to consider why some have prevailed and others have disappeared. Or how Collar poses her research question: “why and how some religious movements ‘go spreading all over the earth’, while others, equally popular for a time, wane and are forgotten” (Collar 2013: 1). These questions have become interdisciplinary: in recent years there has been growing interest in theology to understand the early Christian movement and the literature describing it, in particular the book of Acts and protopauline letters. Here, however, it is not only a question of the connections between early Christian congregations and how they were embedded in their ancient environment and network, but also of the reconstruction of the history of early Christianity.

The development of religious communities is not limited to archaeology, but also comprises (narrative) historical writings. In particular the transition between Biblical texts and early Christianity is interesting: What links and developments are mentioned in Biblical texts? Very little is known about direct or indirect literary proofs of connections between local churches in early Christianity. However, translocal links are one major difference between early Christian communities and ancient associations (cf. Stenschke 2014, 2017: 1). In principle, translocal links in early Christian churches have not yet been systematically investigated. A serious limitation is the missing link between exegetical developments and their location in time³. Various models and approaches have been proposed to solve this issue. For example Ascough (2015: 207) assumes, that “the household

² The term “religion” is not very clear. Ahn et al. (1997) describe the problem as follows: “Wenn man die Geschichte des Begriffs religio („Religion“) verfolgt, ist unschwer zu erkennen, daß die damit assoziierten Inhalte sich nicht vereinheitlichen und auf eine allgemeingültige Formel bringen lassen.” Feil et al. (2019) draw our attention to the fact, that there is a different reception of the term in antiquity and in present time. In addition, Christianity had a broad influence on the modern reflection of “religion”. The discussion is nevertheless out of scope for this study; here, the minimal perspective of religion as definition of social and cultural convictions is sufficient.

³ Referring to the “überaus schwierige zeitgeschichtliche Verortung exegetischer Entwicklungen” (Gutsfeld & Koch 2006: 1)

[is] a primary building block for group life” and thus he focuses “on four models: synagogues, philosophical schools, the mysteries, and voluntary associations”. Other authors like Stenschke (2019) draw more attention to the social network, and he concludes: “In view of the significance of the translocal links between early Christian communities for various issues in New Testament scholarship, it is surprising that they have not hitherto been examined comprehensively.” (:1)

Duling (1999, 2000, 2013) one of the very few people to work on this topic; He did short analyses on “the Jesus Movement” and Paul. He used older approaches by Malina (1979) to generate a network. However, this only includes the network around Jesus. One of the major drawbacks is that his work is not finished: “One then needs to work out the many persons and relationships in the intimate, effective, and extended social networks, and graph the nodes and lines throughout the network.” (Duling 2000: 11). Other researchers have been only focusing on some aspects – see for example Kloppenborg (2020) who mainly described hypothetical networks. We can see that research is still in the beginning phase.

However, the concepts of time and space, e.g. distances, are crucial for understanding narrative texts and constructing a social network. In order to understand the concept of space we need to mention *Critical Spatiality*, see Flanagan et al. (2003). In the past decades a number of studies examined the understanding of the concept of space as humanly constructed, while others were interested in different concepts of space (cf. Becking et al. 2017). We can find critique of the postmodern and modern concept of space and a separation from the meaning of “time”. In particular Marxist philosophers like Lefebvre and Soja discussed “spatiality” as a social theory. They divide space into three parts. The *Firstspace* contains the physical space, the *Secondspace* the mental space and the *Thirdspace* the social space. While the first space can be quantitatively investigated, i.e. simply measured, the second reflects the human perception of space, the third contains the practice of life in relation to other people.

Focusing on biblical studies George (2008) gives a good introduction. Stewart (2012) sees a growing interest within theology:

Spaces described in texts are slightly different from other spaces. Though they may describe more or less accurately particular spatial practices or representations of space, since places can never be the same twice, they always encode

a specific meaning to a place that, while negotiable outside the world of the text is, within the text, fixed. (Stewart 2012: 142)

In Dörpinghaus (2020) we did show that critical spatiality helps understanding social networks within biblical texts. But there were some serious limitations because it was still hard to extract those factors which were essential factors for inclusion of people within early Christianity.

This problem can thus be outlined in terms of SNA, since translocal links form such a social network. In Dörpinghaus (2020, 2021a) we have shown, that these connections can be examined in literature.

There is significant need for additional study on this topic for the following three reasons. First, both the question of the reconstruction of the history of early Christianity and its mission and the question of the nature and extent of translocal links can be reduced to the network of early Christian mission and communication. As others have highlighted, a work dealing with this condensed question must thus have both a historical and a rhetorical-exegetic component. This approach can be used to reconstruct the social networks as described in New Testament texts. SNA has already been used by archaeologists and in ancient history.

Second, we need a general proof of concept for applying these methods to New Testament texts⁴. To some extent we were already able to show results of this method in Dörpinghaus (2020), but it is still important to show the limitations of this method.

Third, a study attempting to understand differences and commonalities between Luke-Acts and the Pauline letters from a social network perspective is still missing. This work intends to help fill this gap.

⁴ Stenschke (2014) asked if SNA could be applied to New Testament texts: “Dabei müsste sich zeigen, ob solche Methoden auf die begrenzteren Daten aus dem Neuen Testament angewendet werden können, da christliche archäologische Funde aus dem ersten Jahrhundert weitgehend fehlen bzw. die ntl. Briefe vom Umfang und den dort erwähnten Personen und Orten nicht mit anderen antiken Briefsammlungen vergleichbar sind, die anhand dieser Methoden aufschlussreich analysiert wurden.” (Stenschke 2014: 5)

1.2 Main research questions

A systematic and theoretical analysis is required to understand the early Christian network as it is described in Luke-Acts. Thus, the first important question associated with this aspect is: What kind of network, which social or group identities are described in Luke-Acts and how do both describe the spread of the Gospel into other social groups and locations (RQ1)?

To properly address this question, we will not only establish the social network found in these New Testament texts but also extend the concept to the widely used knowledge graphs. This method was chosen because the result can be interpreted using SNA and is also one of the most practical ways to store other knowledge and references. In addition, we may discuss the usage of Critical Spatiality to identify how social distances that were overcome by early Christian mission were described to determine how the early Christian social network and identity was constituted according to Luke-Acts.

This study addresses several further questions on the differences between the two narratives on how Christianity spread according to Luke-Acts (RQ2), how it describes translocal links between different early Christian churches (RQ3), and the centrality of persons like Simon Peter or Paul and locations like Jerusalem (RQ4). In particular, we will focus on the social network and the new ‘identity in Christ’. Other questions are relevant: The description of belonging to the body of Christ for single persons and groups, how did conflict, suffering, or poverty influence groups and subgroups within this identity?

There are some potentially open questions and new perspectives. This approach is a highly interdisciplinary concept combining theology, mathematics, psychology, and social science.

The main limitation with respect to SNA is that we still have no complete computable network representation of Luke-Acts or even all New Testament texts. These findings signal the need for additional studies to understand more about how these methods can be combined within New Testament exegesis and understanding the early Christian movement. Thus, this study also offers a pilot testing on these methods and will answer the question, if a somehow meaningful social network can be established from New Testament texts.

These questions are of central interest as much recent research in theology focuses on new methods and approaches, since one of the toughest challenges for researchers in this domain is the need to work interdisciplinarily to gain new insights. Since several topics have been widely studied, on the one hand, this study will do a careful review of scientific results and on the other hand apply exegetical methods as well as methods from SNA to build a network representation of Luke-Acts. The research questions will then be tackled by applying all three results.

Interdisciplinarity is at the heart of the methodological approach of this work, and in particular we will discuss how this work is positioned within the boundaries of “Digital Humanities” (DH) and “Digital Theology” (DT), see Dörpinghaus (2022c). This field is not without debate and scholars such as Sutinen & Cooper (2021) and Cooper (2021) also include the field of “digital religion” against scholars such as (Garner 2022 van Oorschot 2020: 231). We will continue the discussion on this topic in the next sections and draw conclusions in the Section 22.4.

1.3 Limitations

There are several sources for early Christianity. However, we restrict ourselves to biblical texts and a narrative perspective on them, see Section 4.1. Moreover, it makes sense to start with the earliest available material, which leads us directly to the Gospel of Luke and the Acts of the Apostles. For further discussion, see Chapter 2.

This work has also other potential limitations. The global network may be subject to biases due to the historical knowledge and literature included and there may be other issues that influence the model. Nonetheless, the social network representation of biblical texts may only be limited by exegetical problems. This work will be limited to Luke-Acts and will add as much data as possible from the Pauline Letters (1 Thess., Gal., 1 Cor., Phil., Philem., 2 Cor. and Rom.). Whenever necessary, we will consider other New Testament texts and other available sources.

Nevertheless, it will be impossible to cover the complete history of early Christianity. The same holds for relevant social science and historical studies. Rather, the goal of

our study is to apply a historical or sociological method in New Testament studies in a reflected manner in order to answer the research questions.

The challenge of missing data and silent sources also limits SNA, which can only model and evaluate what the narrator explicitly states, while it is limited to modelling and evaluating inferred or implied activities and relationships. We will discuss whether SNA can open up new perspectives on otherwise silent sources.

We should also mention that this study will not provide a complete exegetical work on Luke-Acts, see for example Figure 4.1 on p. 60 and the discussion in Chapter 3. We will only focus on the data relevant for the SNA. Whether this network can be used as a historical source needs to be discussed. In any case, the minimal perspective is a reconstruction of the literary texts and their literary reflection of those historic or fictional events. This study also does not aim to provide a detailed spatial analysis. Instead, we use critical spatiality to overcome some shortcomings of SNA, which we will discuss in the following chapters.

1.4 Hypothesis

How does the early Christian network look like according to the Luke-Acts? We suggest that we could examine these texts with narrative tools to learn more about the social network. These findings may provoke questions and provide a fresh viewpoint on Biblical texts, beyond understanding how the New Testament builds networks and identity.

We will show how techniques from the humanities, particularly social network analysis, can provide new insights into our comprehension of Luke-Acts. The Gospel of Luke emphasizes how theological and christological concepts connect with social aspects in “thirdspace” by illustrating who is included and excluded within Jesus’ followers. Acts, on the other hand, focuses more on how the network of followers spread in “firstspace” and “secondspace” and developed the previously introduced concepts.

We will analyze how SNA, literary approaches, and narrative criticism overlap in methodology.

1.5 Structure

This thesis is organized as follows: First, we present a research overview. In Chapters 3 and 4 we will discuss the methodological background and provide the theoretical framework, including the exegetical approach and technical setup. How can we combine SNA and results from social sciences towards a fresh perspective on biblical texts on the early Christian movement? Based on both the literature overview and the research question, an evaluation will be made as to whether and to what extent these approaches are suitable for an analysis of early Christian religious networks. A new methodology is described as study design. There, we will give an overview about how the combination of different approaches can be used and how they will be carried out.

The Chapters 5-21 are ordered in three parts: Part I provides a detailed study on Luke's Gospel, Part II a study on Acts 1-12 and 1-24. For details on their structure and how they are organized, we refer to Section 4.4 and in particular Figure 4.1 on page 60.

Part III will combine all information and analysis collected in the last parts on Luke's Gospel and Acts. The chapters presented here are loosely related. The first chapter examines the social networks of Luke and Acts. The following chapters concentrate on Acts because of its unique features (see Chapters 3 and 4). Initially, we will study mission co-workers, and from these observations on collaboration, we will provide a detailed study of Peter and Paul, as well as some minor characters in Acts. A study about locations and spatiality follows, and concluding remarks are given in the last chapter.

A summary and outlook of the whole thesis is presented in Chapter 22. Here, we will draw our conclusions, in particular also some critical reflection on SNA and theology, and provide an outlook for further research. In the first section, we will try to answer the question whether SNA provides fresh perspectives on biblical texts. This also includes a critical reflection of our results. The second section is dedicated to the question 'Unde venis, quo vadis?', and we will in particular evaluate how assumptions influence hypothesis finding in SNA on biblical texts. The third section tries to evaluate the impact and challenge of missing data and "quiet sources" for SNA in general and HNA. This question would be particularly interesting, if we would perspectivevely leave the framework of narrative analysis. Or, in other words, could SNA also provide new insights for historical

and critical research? Some observations and an outlook on Digital Humanities and the future of digital theology are drawn in the last section.

Since some of the figures in this thesis may be small and difficult to read. Thus, we added a QR code. The code is also a clickable link in the PDF version and leads to a larger version of the figure.

2 Research Overview

In this chapter, we will discuss the current research on Luke-Acts and the Pauline Letters, which are the primary sources for this work.

Several research questions are related to Luke-Acts and the Pauline Letters. First, we will introduce several questions related to Luke-Acts and the current state of the art. After that, we will discuss some research problems related to the Pauline Letters and their relation to Luke-Acts.

The question of the unity of the Luke-Acts can be answered with different approaches and answers may have different implications. If we assume a unity, the question of the different genres of Luke and Acts must be answered, see Schröter (2007: 384). In any case, this question has implications on how to date the composition of the combined work.

The unity of two different texts has some serious problems. Together with a relative late dating of Acts this is the first common research opinion. Pervo, for example, supports the thesis that Luke-Acts work is not a unified work and therefore both texts do not require to have the same genre. He postulates: “Luke does not require Acts” (Pervo 2009: 19). Acts was a completely independent work that Luke did not need in any way; on the contrary, in its theology it was even more closely related to Paul than to Luke. He concludes that the “unities of Luke and Acts are questions to be pursued rather than presuppositions to be exploited”(Pervo 2009: 19).

In an anthology published by Andrew F. Gregory and Christopher Kavin Rowe in 2010, different approaches are introduced and discussed. Gregory argues that before Irenaeus Luke and Acts were not understood as a single work. In his review Gregory & Rowe (2010: 51-53) summarize:

Despite suggestions from several scholars of the literary unity of Luke-Acts, significant differences between Luke and Acts such as genre, Christology, and narrative technique remain unexplained if the books were originally intended to be a single composition. This is not to suggest there is no literary unity between Luke and Acts; rather that unities of Luke and Acts are best viewed as questions to be pursued rather than presuppositions to be exploited.

Reception history is also used to answer this question. Markus Vinzent, for example, takes up Gregory's thesis that Irenaeus was only interested in anti-heretical strategies. In doing so, he also refers to Harnack and Haenchen and arrives at a late dating. Thus, Acts had been unknown before, see Vinzent (2019: 143). Joseph Verheyden is another representative of this thesis. He summarises the other possible points of view:

The majority view stands over against three minority positions. The first and most important of these argues that Luke originally wrote two autonomous works, each with its own purpose and character, which, at the end or shortly after, he tried to connect with each other, above all by making minor changes at the end of the first and the beginning of the second work. More distinctive positions include the view that Acts was written before the Gospel; that Luke-Acts are but the first two parts of an incomplete trilogy; or that Luke wrote a first version of his work (called Proto-Luke) that included elements of the Gospel and of Acts (up to chapter 15) which he later completed by adding more material on Jesus (from Mark, and for some also Q), thereby separating the Gospel story from that about the disciples. (Verheyden 2012: 28)

Smith and Kostopoulos try to find a single genre for Luke and Acts. They explained the problem and its consequences in detail:

While many scholars are content to label Luke as biography and Acts as history, others argue that both volumes must belong to a single genre. This solution preserves the generic unity of Luke-Acts by shoehorning one or both volumes into ill-fitting categories; such a move only makes sense within an understanding of genre-as-classification. By exploring recent scholarship on genre and privileging ancient practice over ancient theory, we propose reading Luke-Acts as a unified narrative influenced by and modelled after a wide range of Greek prose narratives, rather than representing one genre in particular. (Smith & Kostopoulos 2017: 390)

A considerable number of scholars – and this is the second approach in research – are trying to approach this problem from a literary perspective. Christian Blumenthal chooses the approach that Jesus is the main actor balanced in both Luke and Acts. Thus, a

conceptual connection between both works and a narrative and Christological unity exists, see Blumenthal (2018: 78).

Blumenthal follows the tradition of the reception history. Nathanael Lüke takes a somewhat different direction in his dissertation. He raises the question of the reception of the Pauline Letters in Acts and how this influences the reading of these letters. With this he develops the concept of narrative coherence (“narrative Kohärenz”):

Die Apostelgeschichte erzählt nicht nur eine kohärente Geschichte zu zehn echten und pseudepigraphischen Paulusbriefen [...], sondern wurde so gestaltet, dass sie mit ihnen einen kohärenten Gesamttext bildet mit dem Zweck, die Rezeption der Paulusbriefe zu steuern. (Lüke 2019: 12)

Nevertheless, his work offers some surprises: For example, he argues that Acts is a historiography with narrative elements, and he dates Acts to the late 2nd century. There is no longer a scientific “consensus” of dating Acts in the 1st century:

Die Datierung der Apostelgeschichte steht aktuell in der Mitte einer bewegten Kontroverse. Der bisher geltende Kompromissfrieden (um 80/90 n. Chr.) ist aufgekündigt. Der Ansatz im 2. Jahrhundert, der der älteren Exegese plausibel war, lebt ebenso auf wie als längst erledigt geltende Frühdatierungen. (Backhaus 2017: 212)

Backhaus sees critical hints to date Luke-Acts in (a) Acts of the Apostles and the life of Paul, (b) the place in the history of theology and (c) the relationship of Acts to the Gospels. He discusses the different approaches and points of view and sums up:

Die konsequente und die modifizierte Frühdatierung erweisen sich als unhaltbar, die Standarddatierung erweist sich als unbegründet, die radikale Spät-datierung als unwahrscheinlich und die relative Spät-datierung (ca. 100–130 n. Chr.) als insgesamt tragfähigste Lösung. (Backhaus 2017: 258)

These arguments are ambiguous. For example, Baum (2017: 272f) speaks in his conclusion of both “stylistic similarities” and “stylistic differences” between Luke and Acts. This also is particularly obvious in the question of which problems actually occur in Acts. Whereas Schnelle (2017: 334) sees a reflection of the third generation of Christians, Jaroš (2008: 99) contradicts: “Hauptthematik der Apg [ist] die Auseinandersetzung zwischen Juden- und Heidenchristentum”.

To sum up, no consent on both the unity and dating of Luke-Acts exists. Backhaus (2017: 213) points out an obvious problem: Since there are no new sources, scientists can only discuss the complete picture of early Christian literature⁵.

When talking about the Pauline Letters and discussing the connection to Luke-Acts, there are several issues regarding their dating and the character of their genre. These issues are mostly related to where a letter was written and who is mentioned. For example, Philippians was most probably written in Rome, although it is not very clear how this fits the situation in Rome. Dunn (2003: 106) suggests, that “several years have elapsed since he wrote Romans, and he has come to Rome as a prisoner: he could well have changed his mind about his future plans.” But despite that, there are other issues when discussing the relation between Luke-Acts and the Pauline Letters.

Keener summarises that the details which are mentioned in both Luke-Acts and the Pauline Letters “highlight[s] some contrasts between the two sources (often related to the character of their genre as well as their respective emphases in particular settings) but often underlines their common information” (Keener 2012: 221). There are several issues which are related to the chronology of Paul’s ministry and the dating of New Testament texts, theology and, of course, on Luke’s perspective on Paul. At this point, we will only introduce a few examples. A detailed discussion will be done every time these issues occur.

For example, Acts 28 speaks of Paul being imprisoned in Rome for two years. There are several theories here: for example a second imprisonment assumes that he was released afterwards and was imprisoned again at a later time. Marshall, for instance refers to Eusebius as a source that Paul’s defence was successful. During the first imprisonment he had written 2 Tim and Luke had written Acts Marshall & Towner (cf. 2004: 68). Other ancient writings, such as the First Epistle of Clement, would also support this thesis. This example illustrates a recurring problem in the field: assumptions are made into hypotheses without much to go on.

In general, possible dating and classification attempts are key in the context of further

⁵ “Weil es kaum neue Quellen auszuwerten gibt, würdigt man in gewissen Abständen das Gesamtbild der frühchristlichen Literatur und ihres zeitgeschichtlichen Horizonts. Dabei neigt man um der Innovationsleistung willen nicht dazu, die Annahmen der unmittelbaren Vorgängergeneration zu wiederholen. Weil es aber nur eine begrenzte Anzahl von Einschätzungsmöglichkeiten gibt, findet sich die eigene Innovation oft bei einer früheren Fachgeneration wieder.” (Backhaus 2017: 213)

works of the apostle. Was Paul active in the western Mediterranean area? If so: did he reach Spain or not? An extensive discussion of the different positions and research can be found in Wander (2001). He states the view that the discussion on both sides have some strange hypotheses to come to a conclusion⁶. According to his view newer scientific research was also methodically insufficient. Nevertheless, a lot of research is still going on in this field. Pervo introduces an approach to read Pauline Letters as a source for Acts. He tries to “test the hypothesis of Luke’s dependence on the Pauline corpus” and sees no reason to agree. But he concludes that the author of Luke-Acts needed access to all Pauline Letters: “Notably, for our purposes we need not attribute to Luke such conscientious collation of the data in the letters as we find in modern reconstructions of Pauline chronology – a procedure for which he would likely have lacked both motive and technological means.” (Schellenberg 2015: 213) In contrast, Keener argues that we should expect Luke to be the best historian available covering Paul. But he also states the issues when doing a comparison between Acts and Paul’s Letters:

[They] provide the major test case for Acts, as Q and Mark do for Luke’s reports about Jesus in the Gosepl. In designing this test, however, some interpreters lay too much weight on the kinds of differences that show us little about Luke’s sources. It is reductionist to assume that differences between Luke’s and Paul’s perspective and style militate against Luke’s use of the historical Paul, or informants close to him, as a genuine source. (Keener 2012: 241)

He sees main problems in missing information, different perspectives and emphases. We will discuss this challenge and possible approaches to tackle these challenges in section 4.1.

As we can see, several issues exist where we cannot expect a solution while doing a direct comparison of both text corpora. Much of the information is incomplete, there are many varying perspectives, purposes and genres.

Here, comparing raw data exegetically extracted from the texts – for example social and local relations – may help to introduce a fresh perspective into this discussion.

⁶ Es sei “manche gewöhnungsbedürftige Hypothesen aufgestellt und entfaltet worden” (Wander 2001: 179).

3 Methodological Considerations

This section describes the conceptual framework established to answer the research questions. The first section is dedicated to Social Network Analysis (SNA), and describes the development of this method within the humanities, history and theology. After that, a detailed overview and discussion on the proposed methods is given: Network Structures, Centrality Measures, Spanning Trees, and Community Detection. In the second section, we discuss the current perspective on early Christian networks, translocal links and mission to shape the methodological perspective on SNA. The third section presents the exegetical approach of this work with Luke-Acts as narrative. By using a literary criticism approach we find a significant connection to social network perspectives on narratives, and we will discuss the closeness to locations, space, people, actors and interactions as well as addressing some open questions. Before presenting the technical setup and open data approach, a short section is dedicated to the readers of Luke-Acts.

This chapter presents not only the strengths and weaknesses of the chosen approach, but also raises some new research questions. Individual methods have been used in the past, but since the proposed approach as compilation of methods is new, the nature of this study is also explorative. Although the SNA's strengths and weaknesses are not the main topic, we will continue to discuss these throughout the thesis to push the frontiers of this interdisciplinary approach between the humanities, theology and computer science.

3.1 Social Network Analysis⁷

Social network analysis (SNA) aims at an analytic representation of human interactions. In the social sciences, this was a paradigm shift⁸. The development began in the 1940s as so-called “sociometry” and had its breakthrough in the US in the 1970s. According to Stegbauer & Häußling (2010: 21) SNA can be defined in various ways. First, it can describe an analysis of social relations between different actors as part of the social order. Second, it can describe the systematic evaluation of empirical data. Third, it can describe the graphical presentation of the data and fourth, it can describe mathematical models describing the data⁹. Thus, it is a highly interdisciplinary approach, and part of the so-called field of digital humanities.

3.1.1 Social, Historical and Religious Network Analysis

Network approaches have been used in historical studies for some decades. Here they are often called *historical network analysis* (HNA). Reitmayer & Marx (2010) note that many methods are used and no common formal structure exists. They show, that Anglo-American historians started to work with network analysis much earlier whereas European scholars started using the method much later. Since only selected methods of network analysis are used, a full network analysis as it is conducted within the social sciences would not be carried out. In particular, a subset of literature uses the term “network” without using methods from SNA or HNA. For example, van de Kamp (2020) analyzes the network of translators of devotional literature from Dutch and English into German. Although combining biographic research with networks, no methods or computational analysis are applied.

As a special application of HNA that often uses text sources, we need to mention archaeology. Network approaches are also used in archaeology to evaluate social structures.

⁷ Parts of this section have been published in Dörpinghaus et al. (2022) Dörpinghaus (2022d) Dörpinghaus et al. (2022).

⁸ A comprehensive historical analysis of network research in the field of social sciences can be found in Stegbauer & Häußling (2010) or in Rollinger (2014: 345ff).

⁹ “(1) die Analyse der sozialen Beziehungen zwischen Akteuren als wichtiger Bestandteil gesellschaftlicher Ordnung, (2) die systematische Erhebung und Auswertung empirischer Daten, (3) die graphische Präsentation dieser Daten und (4) mathematische und computergestützte formale Modelle, um zu Abstraktionen dieser Daten zu gelangen.” (Stegbauer & Häußling 2010: 21)

This involves settlement structures, social hierarchies and also the analysis of documents. Collar describes several methods which are widely used in archaeology: primarily the *proximal point analysis* (PPA), the *Small-World* or *Complexity* theory, *Relational Space*, *Closeness* and *Betweenness Centrality* measures and Social Network Analyses (SNA), cf. Collar (2013: 29).

The most obvious problem here is the source problem and limited data for antiquity as Reitmayer & Marx summarize¹⁰. Therefore, instead of speaking of a historical network research, they suggest using a term like “using network approaches”. This seems to be reasonable, since Collar (2013), for example, suggests a deliberately simplified definition of “network thinking as a new methodology for understanding the processes of change and the spread of innovation in the past”(Collar 2013: 6).

Important works for the study of social networks in the ancient Mediterranean area are found in Malkin et al. (2013), who deals with the Roman imperial house and the spread of Christianity. Rutherford (2007) examines the networks of Greek city-states. He concludes that network theory “seems to provide a way of describing theoretic networks, and a number of valuable insights into their structure and functioning” (Rutherford 2007: 32). Nevertheless, he also points to the problem of finding reliable source.

Although SNA and HNA are emerging topics, most works show that the described data and source problem are the greatest hurdle. Especially with focus on the ancient Mediterranean region, much of the data is still not systematically recorded as Leidwanger et al. (2014) argues. He claims that different approaches need to be made interoperable, because a “more explicit dialogue concerning long-term histories and the changing social motivations for, and hence scales of, connectivity from the Neolithic to the Middle Ages, would surely promote a greater degree of commensurability in the questions different specialists ask” (Leidwanger et al. 2014: 7). Rollinger (2014: 368) also deals extensively with method criticism, the variable range of results and examines the source problem as reason for quality problems¹¹.

¹⁰ “Selbst die gegenwartsnah operierende Zeitgeschichte sieht sich oft außerstande, die für quantifizierende Untersuchungen erforderlichen Daten mit vertretbarem Aufwand und unter Beachtung der Archivsperrfristen bzw. der Zugänglichkeit von (privaten) Archiven überhaupt zusammenzutragen” (Reitmayer & Marx 2010: 869).

¹¹ He states “die prekäre Quellengrundlage als Ursache für die lediglich relative Aussagekraft der Netzwerkanalyse” (Ganter 2015: 183).

To sum up, sources need to be interpreted, because they do not contain direct statements about the quality of the relationships or their temporal duration. While network analysis can show additional aspects, working with sources is crucial¹². Thus, as mentioned in Dörpinghaus (2020), we try to overcome this problem in the spirit of Rollinger (2014: 384f): The aim is to create a network with as much data available as possible. The objects embedded in this network should be presented as detailed as possible. This can be used to represent the network approximately, and we need to discuss how correct this presentation is.

Having discussed the methodology of HNA, we also need to introduce *religious network analysis* (RNA) as another field. RNA is often combined with HNA, thus it is often unclear, which methods are applied. Vásquez (2008) presents the theoretical background for the analysis of contemporary religious networks. First, we need to assume that “complexity, connectivity, and fluidity are preponderant features of our present age, without ignoring the strong countervailing global logics of segregation, surveillance, and control” (Vásquez 2008: 151). Further approaches can be found in Malkin et al. (2013), where the spreading of religious ideas in the ancient Mediterranean area is examined on the basis of the cult of Demeter Eleusinia. Woolf (2016) also examines the application of network approaches to religious change in the Roman Empire. In doing so, he uses both the model of conversion as a form of contagion and as a spread of ideas.

Networks in early Christianity have not yet been fully investigated. Duling (2013: 136) summarizes the situation: “interest in SNA by Biblical scholars has been sporadic, but steady, and is apparently growing”. First approaches can be found in Thompson (1998), who examines the communication of information in the network of early Christians between the years 30 and 70 A.D.. Further attempts to explore these questions with the help of social network analysis were carried out in the work of Duling (1999) and Duling (2000) which are entitled “The Jesus Movement and Social Network Analysis”. Here, older approaches of Malina (1979) were used to generate a network. However, this only includes the direct network (so called ‘ego-network’) around Jesus. In general, Duling’s work remains unfinished. He concludes one “then needs to work out the many persons and relationships in the intimate, effective, and extended social networks, and graph the nodes and lines throughout the network. The above illustration is only a

¹² Ganter states: “aber allein klassische Quellenkritik vermag den qualitativen Gehalt der Beziehungen zu ergründen” (Ganter 2015: 183)

beginning” (Duling 2000: 11). Another scholar working with SNA is McClure¹³ who draws her final observations in McClure (2020): “The results provide a unique window into the relational dynamics portrayed by the Gospels, producing a variety of insights, some which may not surprise biblical scholars but others which hopefully will inspire further consideration.” (:35) She seconds the approach of Green (1997) that Luke’s Gospel emphasizes the stigmatization of actors and women. Besides, she points at “actors whose narrative and historical roles have been discussed by biblical scholars but whose roles in the Gospels’ relational structures have needed further examination.” (:49) Despite these weaknesses we will use her unique studies to discuss the results and methods in this study. We should also mention the work of Kloppenborg (2019), who also addresses network approaches (:64) and Roitto (2019) who worked on the Johannine communities.

Furthermore, Duling (2013) presents a network reconstruction of Paul’s Aegean network. His work builds on Czachesz (2011), who used SNA to study the factors for the rapid growth of early Christianity through SNA. Besides the practiced charity and the integration of women, the strength of the weak relationships, as Granovetter describes them, have been found to be essential factors. To sum up, a complete computable network of early Christianity according to the biblical texts is still missing.

3.1.2 From Social Networks to Knowledge Graphs

Data and knowledge management, sometimes also called information management, is a core topic in computer science. Since we are using methods from this field to store and retrieve data, i.e. social networks, it is necessary to discuss some preliminary concepts of this field. In general, it is an interdisciplinary field touching economics (how efficient and expensive is the solution?), psychology (do people use and understand this solution in a way that was intended?) and, of course, informatics. This underlines the universality of this approach and after introducing the DIKW concept, we will discuss how these concepts can be utilized to generalize the concept of SNA towards knowledge graphs.

¹³ She worked with a harmonized version of all gospels and was first working on support, conflict and compassion (see McClure 2016). After that, she investigated subgroups and balance (see McClure 2018). While the methodological approach remains somehow unclear (for example the data is changed which makes the studies incomparable), she carries no detailed discussion on her choice of methods.

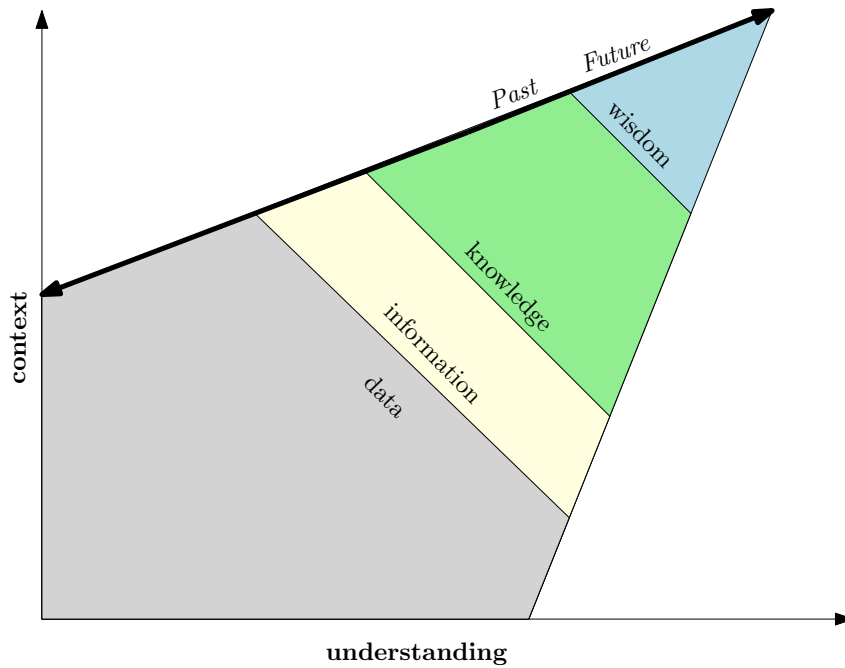


Figure 3.1: DIKW hierarchy or ‘Knowledge Pyramid’ in both a *linear* and the *pyramid* perspective.

One of the core concepts in data management is *DIKW*: Data, Information, Knowledge, Wisdom, see Hey (2004). First introduced by Zeleny (1987) it was extended by Ackoff (1989), who introduced the perspective of wisdom. Sometimes this hierarchy is depicted as a *knowledge pyramid*, sometimes as a linear chain. Figure 3.1 combines both perspectives: The linear perspective of understanding and context with past and future and the pyramid’s perspective describing the amount of data leading to a smaller amount of information etc.

In general, knowledge can be seen either as *explicit* or *implicit*. Data is always explicit. Implicit knowledge is not available for data mining, since it is only available as personal knowledge or experience. Thus, one of the key problems for digital humanities is the amount of implicit knowledge, for example historical events or non-documented parts of history.

In information theory, knowledge is obtained from data and information. Data are recorded, context-free facts like measured values from devices (mass spectroscopy) or basic notes (weight of patients), but also images (e.g. computer tomography). The latter in turn may be regarded as organized pixels of certain intensity values. In the beginning, these data are measured. If this data is enriched by context, which implies meaning and purpose, we get information. This information leads to knowledge and wisdom if – once

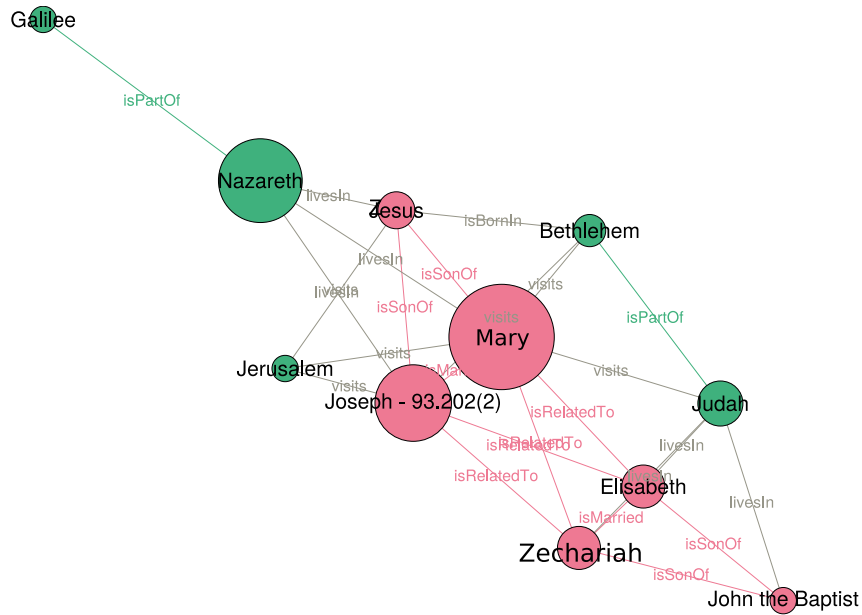


Figure 3.2: The social network representation of Lk 1:1–2:22. Red nodes describe persons, green nodes locations. The edges describe different relations. The node size reflects the betweenness centrality of each node.

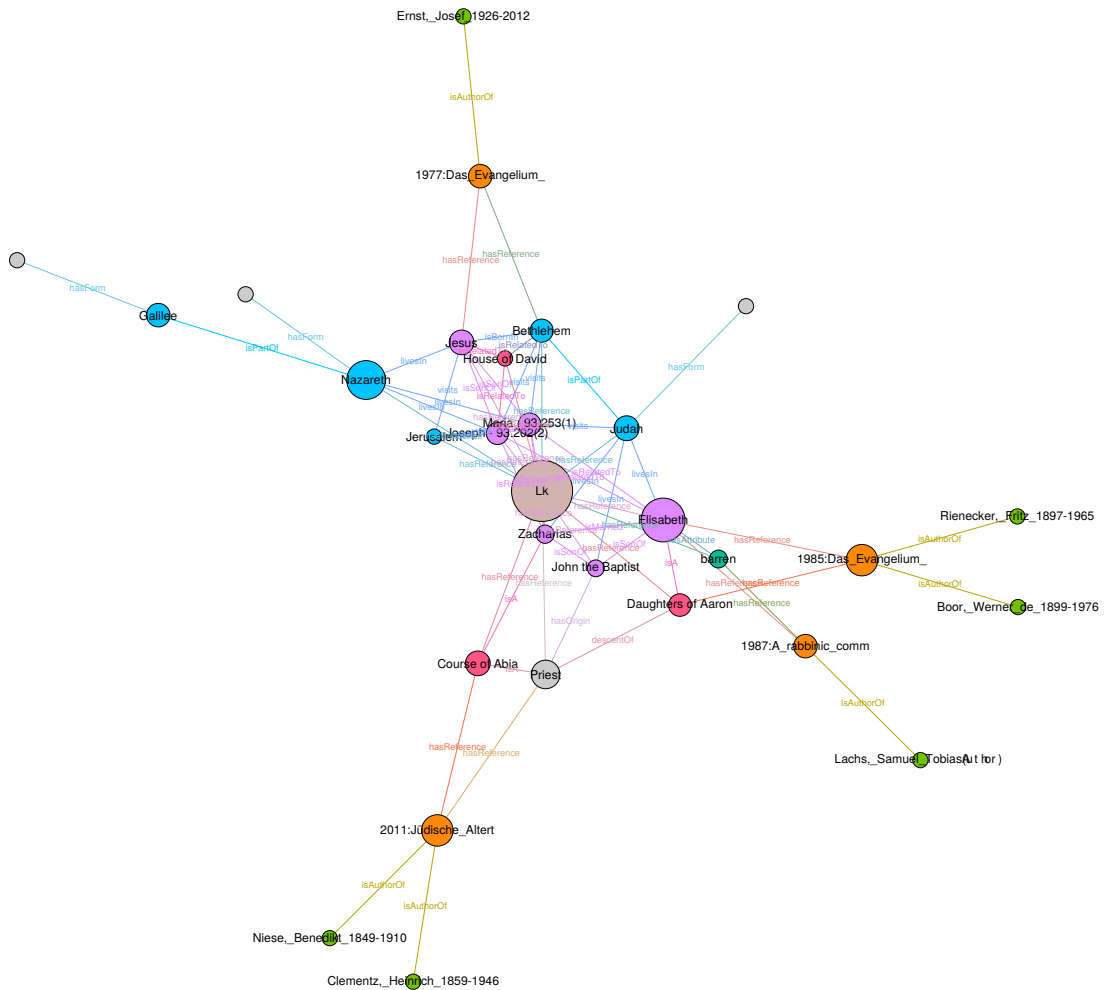


Figure 3.3: The knowledge graph representation of Lk 1:1–2:22. Purple nodes describe persons, blue nodes locations, green, grey and red nodes different entities, orange nodes literature references and green nodes authors. The edges describe different relations. The node size reflects the betweenness centrality of each node.

again – enriched by context¹⁴.

In summary, SNA records data from social interactions and social relations into networks which display the social context of each person. Extending this network with more contextual information, like locations, churches, or other data points will result in more data. This will help to apply more methods from computer science. To get an overview about these methods, we need to introduce the concept of a knowledge graph.

Knowledge graphs, in general, play an important role in knowledge mining and discovery. A *knowledge graph* (sometimes also called a *semantic network*) is a systematic way to connect information and data to knowledge on a more abstract level than language graphs. It is thus a crucial concept on the way to store and retrieve linked data, to generate knowledge and wisdom¹⁵, to search within data, information, and knowledge and a prerequisite for a detailed data analysis. The “context” of data is a significant topic to generate the knowledge necessary for further analysis. Simple datasets store simple data relations. For example: Mary and Elisabeth are relatives, see Lk 1:36. But a network of knowledge would store all other relations between both actors and all other data points, such as Mary visiting Elisabeth in Judah (Lk 1:39–40). Thus, connecting knowledge graphs with context is crucial.

Many authors tried to define knowledge graphs, but a formal definition is still missing, see Fensel et al. (2020). Ehrlinger & Wöß (2016) compared several definitions, but the only formal definition was related to RDF graphs which does not cover labeled property graphs. Thus, we propose a very general definition of a knowledge graph using graph theory: We define a knowledge graph as graph $G = (E, R)$ with entities $e \in E = \{E_1, \dots, E_n\}$ coming from a formal structure E_i like ontologies.

We will discuss a short example of a knowledge graph extension of a social network. In Figure 3.2 we can see a social network representation of Lk 1:1–2:22. There are two different sets of entities. E_1 describes persons, E_2 locations. The edges describe different relations between both entities from the same set and between entities from different sets. A more generalised network or graph can be found in figure 3.3. Here, every node and edge has some sort of source or provenance. The brown node “Lk” refers to the Gospel

¹⁴ More information about this topic can be found in the work of Hey (2004) or Rowley (2007).

¹⁵ At least while talking about the computer science task of “Knowledge Discovery”. This is based on a formal definition of knowledge in databases combined with data processing and transforming.

of Luke. It would be possible to add even more data: If we find references or sources in scientific literature, they may form orange nodes. There are also some other concepts or entities that can be seen as context, for example being “barren” or being a “priest”. We will show that these concepts will help to detect previously hidden knowledge utilizing methods from computer science.

But we should also mention that this concept needs careful consideration of context that will be used to build this knowledge graph. For example, if we would have nodes representing the authors of scientific literature they could be used to detect the coverage of certain authors, or, in other words: Did we cover a sufficient number of different authors and options to build this network? This requires discussion if we want to tackle this question before building the network.

Since we are entering the interdisciplinary field of data science, we should also mention that knowledge graphs are generated out of original data, both structured and unstructured. Being secondary data, they address central ethical standards of science: reproducibility, transparency and a fair and – if possible – open, handling of data. These standards are also key for reusable AI and can be summarized with the “FAIR Data” principle, which was introduced in Wilkinson et al. (2016). FAIR as an acronym refers to Findable, Accessible, Interoperable and Re-usable. It evolved out of the Semantic Web representing data as Linked Open Data. A central component of FAIR Data is the semantic preparation of knowledge in a format that allows not only the search and retrieval of (meta-) data, but also interoperability – which usually refers to an open data format – and reusability.

3.1.3 Strong and Weak Ties

Strong and weak ties were introduced in the work of Granovetter (1973). He analyzes the flow of information among people looking for work. Avenarius (2010) points out that his categorization of ties is also highly relevant to the transitivity of ties in triangular form: Here, for three individuals A , B , and C , it holds that the stronger the friendship relationship between individuals A and B and individuals A and C , the more likely that B and C know or will know each other. Easley & Kleinberg (2010: 48) call this ‘Triadic Closure’. Avenarius (2010: 99) proposes a definition and also a list of characteristics of

strong and weak ties. Nevertheless, this list is only useful for the consideration of single actors in a network and we need to discuss whether they can be used to analyze a complete network.

One way to analyze social networks is to examine the density of the respective network. In a dense and multiplex network, everyone knows everyone else; in a thin and so-called uniplex network, not all people know each other and there is usually only one type of relationship between people. Only those sub-networks that are particularly dense and multiplex would be considered significant. Therefore, especially non-existing or weak relationships were investigated¹⁶.

Whether weak or strong ties are important for the spread of new ideas is also heavily discussed. Collar, for example, finds it more important to observe that “*everybody* is both a weak and a strong tie, that identification as such depends on perspective, and that these classifications are flexible and subject to change.” (Collar 2013: 12). She calls for a particular focus on strong ties. She is contradicted by Schweizer (1996: 118f), who sees weak ties as bridges between different subnetworks¹⁷. Other scholars like Rollinger (2014: 359) agree. Especially in historical studies it is not easy to provide a feasible definition for the terms ‘weak’ and ‘strong’ in this context.

But the spread of new ideas can also happen consciously or unconsciously. “Effective diffusion across a network occurs when those individuals that can be described as vulnerable to the new idea, technology, etc. are ‘found’” (Collar 2013: 14). Social aspects are also important. For example, an idea is more likely to catch on with a person if many people in his neighborhood – and those with a higher social status – are already influenced by it. This is a highly complex process, but happens quite frequently. Collar notes, however, that the system as a whole is rarely affected, i.e., an innovation is rarely so powerful that it changes an entire society: “The system remains, on the whole, unaffected by most innovations. Yet occasionally, some sweep through the network.” (Collar

¹⁶ “Mit diesen Ansätzen sollte der Versuch unternommen werden, die Einbettung der Akteure in das soziale Netzwerke und die daraus entstehenden Chancen und Hindernisse für ihr Handeln zu erklären.” (Hennig 2006: 75)

¹⁷ “Die Verbindung zwischen kohäsiven Teilbereichen werden nun nicht durch starke, sondern durch schwache Beziehungen hergestellt. Je mehr starke Beziehungen ein Akteur aufweist, desto schwächer ist er in das Gesamtnetz eingebunden, weil die kohäsive Subgruppe viel Zeit und Energie verbraucht. Je mehr schwache Beziehungen hingegen ein Akteur unterhält, desto besser kann er die Beschränktheit kohäsiver Kreise überwinden, desto mehr unterschiedliche Informationen erhält er und desto besser ist seine Einbindung in das gesamte Netzwerk.” (Schweizer 1996: 118f)

2013: 16) Collar argues that it depends not on the innovation itself – how ‘good’ it is – but on how interconnected the social network is and whether the local environment is ‘vulnerable’, which means receptive to that innovation. Other scholars agree: “In the small-world phenomenon, such strong ties are complemented with weak ties. The importance of the latter should not be underestimated, since they are long-distance links, connecting separate local clusters.” (Rosillo-López 2020: 98)

Collar attempts to analyze the influenceability of a network using Rogers’ approach which, however, remains unresolved.¹⁸ There is also an ongoing and yet unresolved discussion on the importance of ties in particular network structures¹⁹ Thus in general, it remains unclear whether strong or weak ties are more important to influence the network.

Another question that remains unanswered is how to distinguish between strong and weak ties. Besides, we may also consider negative relations²⁰. Thus, we either use *no*, a *negative* or a *weak* or *strong* relation. In general, a weak relationship is assumed. Only in the following cases a strong relation may be considered:

- The actors already belonged to a certain part of the followers (disciples, women, family of Jesus).
- A family relationship between the actors exists. For example: The family of Jesus.
- The relationship is multiplex, which implies more than one kind of contact. As an example, the “deacons” (Ac 6).

¹⁸ “Für die reine Informationsdiffusion wird heute im Hinblick auf die meisten Nachrichten von einem One-Step Flow ausgegangen” (Schenk 2010: 775). For example, Rogers postulates that personal influence carries great weight. In doing so, he divides people into different categories depending on when they adopt an innovation. “The titles assigned to these five categories were: innovators, early adopters, early majority, late majority, and laggards.” (Rogers & Beal 1958: 331).

¹⁹ For example, the influence of cliques on weak ties: “Eine solche Partitionierung von Netzwerken in Cliques kann aber durch schwache Beziehungen strukturell aufgehoben werden, da diese Brücken zwischen den Cliques bilden können. Damit gewinnen schwache Beziehungen eine entscheidende Bedeutung für die Integration des Netzwerkes, da sie Cliques in das Netzwerk einbetten.”(Hennig 2006: 76)

²⁰ There is an ongoing discussion on this category. Everett & Borgatti (2014: 111) for example asks for a better understanding of those ties because they usually “are treated the same, regardless of meaning.” Again, no clear definition exists and we need to be careful using them, especially when their amount gets large: “The broad definition [...] is most useful if one’s main objective is to compare negative ties to an equally broadly defined set of positive ties.”(Labianca 2014: 24) Especially due to the fact that only little research has been done in the field of methods for negative ties, see Kaur & Singh (2016), we will only consider negative ties for hostile relationships.

- A conversion implies a strong relationship because of a direct, face-to-face encounter or because of a direct but distant encounter with a preacher.

However, these considerations are mainly theoretical as long as the analysis does not utilize this additional data. Foreshadowing Section 4.1.3, is important to mention that we are mostly omitting the longitudinal view on the network (changing ties) and that these structures are just an approximation. We will need to consider these issues within the process of interpretation.

3.1.4 Centrality Measures to analyze Actors in Social Networks

Once a social network is built, we can start to ask questions. We can ask questions like “How many friends does actor X have?” or “How many groups does actor Y belong to?”. The mathematical formulation of these questions would be “What is the degree of node X ?” and “How many communities C_i can be found so that $Y \subset C_i$?”. Thus, the challenge of this and the following two sections is to communicate interdisciplinarily between mathematics and computer science (discrete mathematics, graph theory), social sciences and the natural perspective on networks or the world describing the networks. Since the denomination of mathematical formulas is usually not unique²¹, we use a consistent approach without naming alternatives, unless they are widely used. The mathematical foundations in this and the following sections are based on the works of Diestel (2012) and Matoušek et al. (2007), unless otherwise noted²².

In general, we define a *Graph* $G = (V, E)$ with a set of edges or vertices V – these are actors, locations or any other nodes in the network – and edges E , which describe the relations between nodes. The number of nodes $|V|$ is usually denoted with n . Given two nodes $s = \text{Simon}$ and $j = \text{Jerusalem}$ we may add an edge or relation (s, j) between both, describing, for example, that Simon is or was in Jerusalem. Then we say s and j are *connected* or they are *neighbors*. The *neighborhood* of a vertice v is denoted with $N(v)$ and describes all nodes connected to v . If we are interested in the size of this neighborhood we calculate the node *degree* given by $\text{deg}(v) = |N(v)|$. Compare with the example given in Figure 3.4.

²¹ For example the node degree described later can be denoted with $\delta(v)$, $d(v)$ or $\text{deg}(v)$.

²² We follow the usual approach in mathematics to not cite every occurrence of a definition or formula unless it is unique in a particular publication.

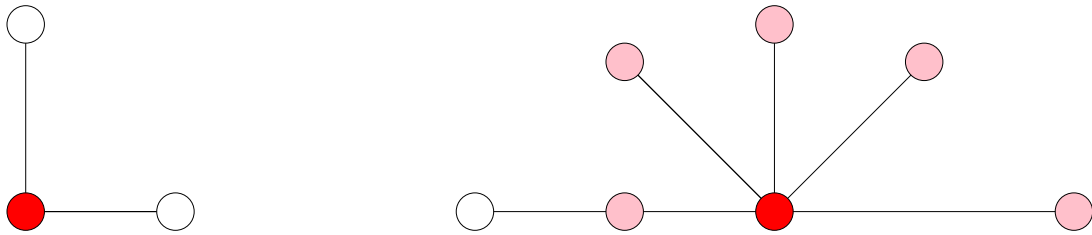


Figure 3.4: Two examples for node degrees and neighborhoods. In the left network, the red node has two neighbors and thus a degree of two. In the right example the red node is connected to five pink nodes which form the neighborhood and thus his node degree is five.

The neighborhood thus gives information about the connectedness of an actor in the network. This can be useful to illustrate the direct influence of an actor within the complete network, especially for actors with a high node degree, see Figure 3.6. But it is obvious that the amount of relations we maintain does not provide any indication to their quality or usefulness. The node degree is often used as a measure to create random graphs, but it is, in general, not a good approach to analyze particular actors in networks, see Jackson (2010: 8-13).

Nevertheless, the *degree centrality* for a node $v \in V$ is given by

$$dc(v) = \frac{deg(v)}{n - 1}$$

The output value ranges between 0 and 1 and gives a reference to the direct connections. As discussed, it omits all indirect relations and in particular the node's position in the network.

Definition 1 (Scale-Free Network). *A network is scale-free if the fraction of nodes with degree k follows a power law $k^{-\alpha}$, where $\alpha > 1$.*

Definition 2 (Small World Network Watts (1999)). *Let $G = (V, E)$ be a connected graph with n nodes and average node degree k . Then G is a small-world network if $k \ll n$ and $k \gg 1$.*

In any case, the *degree distribution* tells us about the network structure since we can distinguish between sparsely and densely connected networks. While Jackson (2010) suggests statistical analysis to compute the correlation between attributes of the network

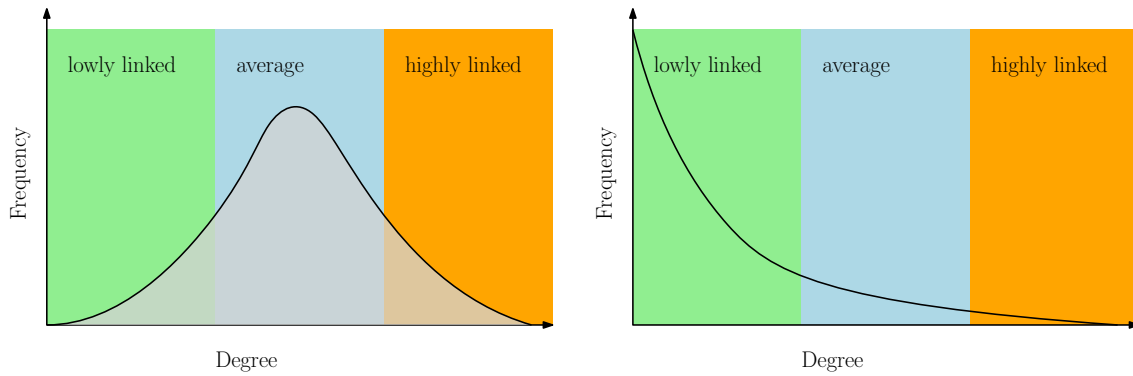


Figure 3.5: Left: In random networks the degree distribution follows a given random distribution. Here, most nodes are averagely linked and an equal number of nodes is lowly and highly linked. Right: Real networks often follow other or even no standard random distribution. Here, a scale-free distribution is shown: Most nodes are lowly linked whereas only very few nodes are highly linked.

and the density of nodes, this will not work for the small networks and the missing statistical values. However, although scale-free networks are not a universal characteristic for real-world networks, we might use this approach to get an initial overview about the network itself. Random graphs, like the Erdős–Rényi networks, follow a Poisson distribution. Scale-free networks, inspired by real-world social networks, follow a power law. See Figure 3.5 for two examples of a random graph and a more common distribution in real-world networks.

We will now discuss more properties to evaluate actors and their position in the networks. These properties can be used to calculate statistical parameters, so-called *centrality measures* (cf. Freeman 1978 Carrington et al. 2005). They answer the question “Which nodes in this network are particularly significant or important?”.

Betweenness analyzes critical connections between nodes and thus gives an indication of individuals that can change the flow of information in a network. This measure is based on the number of paths in a network:

Much of the interest in networked relationships comes from the fact that individual nodes benefit (or suffer) from indirect relationships. Friends might provide access to favors from their friends, and information might spread through the links of a network. (Jackson 2010: 39)

A *path* p in a graph $G = (V, E)$ is a set of pairwise connected vertices v_1, \dots, v_n , for example written as

$$p = [v_1, \dots, v_n],$$

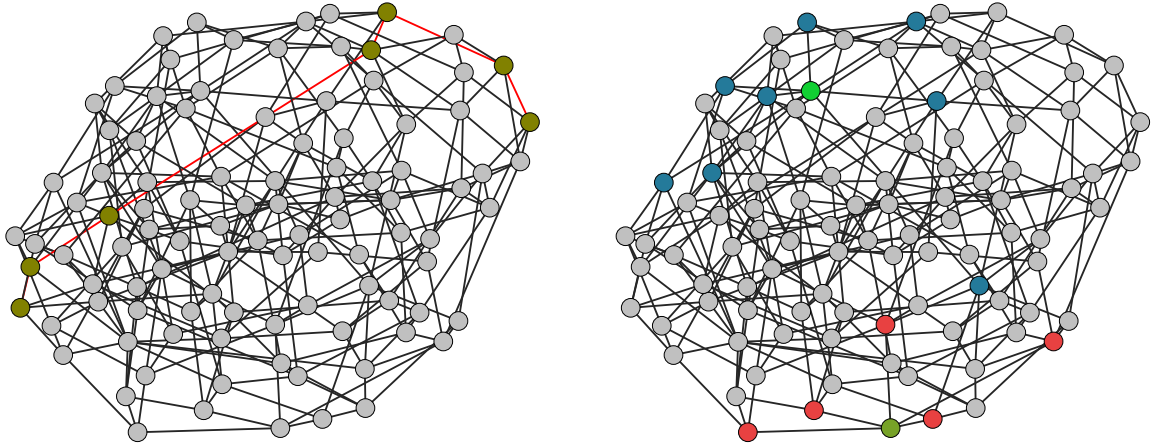


Figure 3.6: An example network. Left: A shortest path p (red) between two nodes and the nodes on that path (darkgreen). The length $d(p) = 6$. Right: Two neighborhoods (blue and red) of two nodes (green and darkgreen). Shortest paths are used to compute centrality measures related to information flows which can follow those paths. Neighborhoods can be used to illustrate the direct influence of people on a network, especially if these are actors with a high node degree.

where $(v_i, v_{i+1}) \in E$ for $i \in \{1, \dots, n-1\}$. The length $|p|$ of the path p is the total number of edges – not nodes. Thus $|p| = n - 1$. The path p links the starting node v_1 and an ending node v_n . In a path, no crossings are allowed, thus $v_i \neq v_j$ for all $i, j \in \{1, \dots, n\}$. For an illustration of a shortest path between two nodes we refer to Figure 3.6. If the beginning and the end are the same ($v_1 = v_n$) we consider this path to be a *circle*.

Betweenness centrality was first introduced by Freeman (1977)²³ and considers other indirect connections, see Schweizer (1996). Given a node v , it calculates all shortest paths in a network $P_v(k, j)$ for all beginning and ending nodes $k, j \in V$. If $P(k, j)$ denotes the total number of paths between k and j , the importance of v is given by the ratio of both values. Thus, the betweenness centrality according to Jackson (2010) is given by

²³ Initially introduced for symmetric relations – undirected graphs – it was extended to asymmetric relations – directed graphs – by White & Borgatti (1994).

$$bc(v) = \sum_{k \neq j, v \neq k, v \neq j} \frac{P_v(k, j)}{P(k, j)} \cdot \frac{2}{(n-1)(n-2)},$$

where n denotes the number of the vertices in the graph. This parameter allows an analysis of the critical links and how often a node lies on such a path. This centrality measure thus answers the questions whether a node can change the flow of information in a network or whether it is a bridge between other nodes, see Schweizer (1996).

While betweenness assumes network flows to be like packages flowing from a start to destination, other measures consider multiple paths. For example, the so-called *eigenvector centrality*²⁴ – introduced by Bonacich (1972) – measures the location of direct neighboring nodes in the network. It “counts walks, which assume that trajectories can not only be circuitous, but also revisit nodes and lines multiple times along the way.” (Borgatti 2005: 56) This measures not only the direct possibility to influence neighbors, but also the indirect possibility to influence the whole network. For a detailed mathematical background we refer to Jackson (2010: 49ff).

A *Closure* describes closed groups, meaning clusters or communities, see Jackson (2010: 39). The nodes within such a structure are nodes that can potentially establish trust within a cluster. The *Closeness* is determined by the number of shortest paths starting from a node. Thus, it indicates the potential possibility of a node to establish new connections. In contrast to betweenness, only selected paths and possibilities are considered here.

This leads to other occasionally used measures like *closeness centrality* and *harmonic closeness centrality*²⁵. Given a node $i \in V$ we can compute the average distance between the first and other nodes $j \in V$ with $\sum -j \neq id(i, j)$ where $d(i, j)$ denotes the length of a shortest path between i and j . Then, according to Jackson (2010: 39), we can compute closeness-centrality as follows:

$$cl(v) = \frac{n-1}{\sum_{u \in V} d(u, v)}$$

²⁴ Less popular measures are Katz’ prestige, and Bonacich’s measure (cf. Jackson 2010: 40). It has been shown that these measures have a strong relationship (see Ditsworth & Ruths 2019) and thus in this thesis we focus on the eigenvector centrality.

²⁵ Again, we will limit this discussion to undirected graphs. See for example Putman et al. (2019) for more information on other graphs.

But making a small adjustment in this formula leads to the harmonic closeness-centrality:

$$hcl(v) = \sum_{u \in V, u \neq v} \frac{n-1}{d(u,v)}$$

The change is small but leads to significant other results, especially for large networks: “Harmonic centrality is strongly correlated to closeness centrality in simple networks, but naturally also accounts for nodes y that cannot reach x . Thus, it can be fruitfully applied to graphs that are not strongly connected” (Vigna & Boldi 2014: 230).

Having introduced the most important centrality measures, it still remains unclear for which particular question they provide an answer. We refer to the extensive study of Das et al. (2018) who not only present the historical development of centrality measures but also discuss their application. They conclude: “Centrality measures are very useful for network analysis. But their proper information, selection and application are also needful.” (:13) and indeed, we will work on a narrative-based social network. When computing centrality measures, we first need to understand what they describe within that network and then in a next step transfer this knowledge back to the world of the author.

We will use the following approaches:

- *Degree distribution*: To get a first overview about the network structure.
- *Betweenness centrality*: To identify actors which control information flows between other actors in the network.
- *Eigenvector centrality*: To identify actors who have a great influence on the whole network and who are important for emergent trends.
- *Closeness centrality* and *harmonic closeness centrality*: To identify actors that can potentially establish trust within a cluster, build new relations and spread information within a cluster.

Since there is often no consent about the proper interpretation of these structures, we propose this as a further research question for this study: How can we interpret these values within the given framework of New Testament Studies? We will continue with a more detailed discussion on network structures and spanning trees within networks.

ANATOMY OF A SOCIAL NETWORK

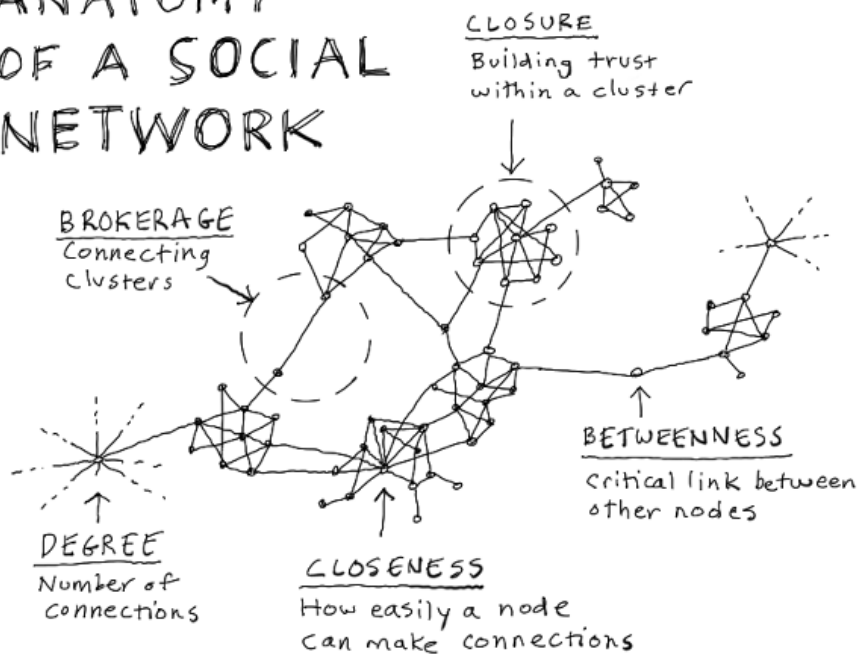


Figure 3.7: A sketch illustration of several network structures done by Gray & Vander Wal (2014). It shows closure, brokerage, degree, closeness and betweenness as described in the previous section. A closure refers to a community structure or, when completely connected, a cluster. A structural hole can be found: the brokerage bridges this hole.

3.1.5 Network Structures and Spanning Trees

There are several network structures which have specific names within graph theory, some of which we already have introduced, see Figure 3.7. Not all of them are useful for network analysis, but we will name the most important, especially to avoid confusion. They are often necessary to find subgraphs or other subclasses of nodes in order to verify properties of structures within a network.

Most important, a subgraph $C \subset G$ is called a *clique* if all nodes in C are pairwise connected. A subset $S \subset G$ is called *stable* or a *stable set* if there are no edges at all between the vertices of S , that is, $(u, v) \notin E$ for all $u, v \in S$.

Thus, a clique refers to the colloquial use of this word, but in real-world networks there are only very limited cliques where all nodes are connected. Scholars are more interested in dense connected subnetworks which are called communities. We will discuss these structures in detail in the next section.

A stable set refers to a *structural hole* introduced by Burt (2004)²⁶. He states, “that people who stand near the holes in a social structure are at higher risk of having good ideas” (:349), see Figure 3.7 for an illustration. They are defined by non-connected areas (a stable set is “the hole”) and people bridging them (the brokerage). But the impact of this structure is discussed extensively, see for example Cowan & Jonard (2007) or the discussion whether “actors with closed networks [...] are disadvantaged in terms of information and control benefits” (Kilduff & Brass 2010: 329)²⁷. Although scholars tend to rely on these arguments (see Easley & Kleinberg 2010: 66-67), in general it remains unclear, how these structures can be interpreted and why they are formed:

Even as we advance scholarly understanding of network dynamics, much more work is needed to further explore the processes and conditions through which network structures of various kinds, not just structural holes, are formed.(29 Zaheer & Soda 2009)

Thus, network structures do not only have an impact on leadership (cf. Dinh et al. 2014) but also on organizational networks (cf. Kilduff & Brass 2010). Even newer studies like Soda et al. (2021) or Zacharias et al. (2021) leave open questions, for example: “future studies could clarify which kinds of collaborative ties are most useful”(:10). Thus, again a new research question arises: How can we interpret these structures within the given framework of the New Testament?

Since the networks built upon Luke-Acts will not be very large, we will mostly rely on visualization techniques to analyze these structures.

In addition to existing structures within networks, we can also analyze the inherent structures of them. This means, we compute substructures based on external conditions. For example, a *Minimum Spanning Tree* (MST) is a subset of a network containing all nodes, but a minimum number of edges, so that every node is still connected. Usually, this is used to compute cost-efficient networks (e.g. electrical power networks or traffic

²⁶ From a mathematical perspective, a clear definition is missing and most scholars are following Burt’s vague description, see for example Easley & Kleinberg (2010: 67).

²⁷ Beside these general questions it is also a yet unresolved questions whether an existing network structure describing a particular characteristic also implies that it is the reality. Or in other words: “Ein Netzwerk, das viele strukturelle Löcher aufweist, bietet zwar reiche Möglichkeiten für unternehmerisches Handeln, aber es führt nicht automatisch zum Handeln, sofern zu den strukturellen Bedingungen nicht die unternehmerische Motivation hinzutritt.” (Schweizer 1996: 126) And this is true, not only for economic activities.

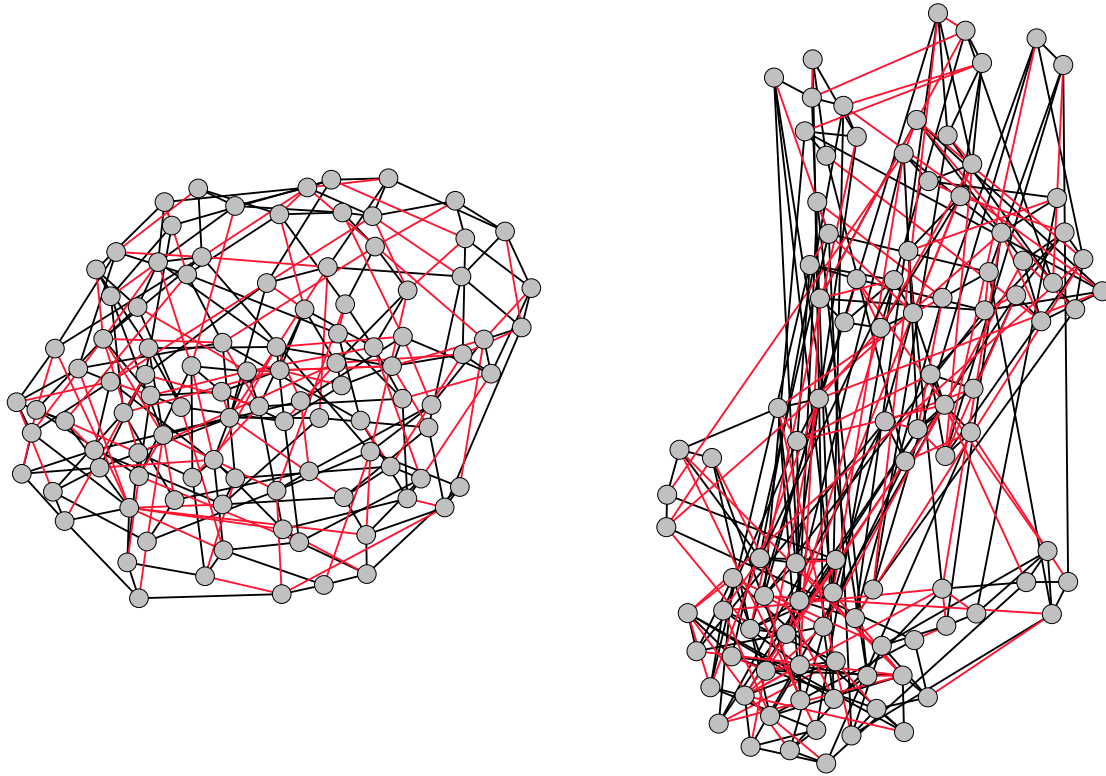


Figure 3.8: A minimum spanning tree (MST) in the network presented in Figure 3.6. The red edges are part of this spanning tree. This is one possible spanning tree, multiple may exist. Left: Visualized with ForceAtlas algorithm. Right: Visualized with OpenOrd algorithm.

route rowlocks (see for example Scellato et al. 2006). Consequently, it answers the question: What are possible edges and relations between actors that are necessary to keep communication in a network? We may call these subnetworks a backbone, see for example Du et al. (2007)²⁸. A MST is not unique, several may exist. Thus, when discussing the MST we need to keep in mind that other backbones are also possible.

In Figure 3.8 we present one particular MST in a network, visualized with two different algorithms. This highlights that a MST might still present a complex structure and needs proper visualization.

Yet there is no consensus on how to interpret MST structures in social networks and what these backbones really imply. Some scholars have argued for several use-cases that MST structures refer to network stability (see Millington & Niranjan 2021). Other scholars like Djauhari et al. (2012) have argued that it is reasonable to compute *all* MSTs

²⁸ MST has been used in various networks and for various research questions. It has also been used for Community Detection, see Mokhlissi et al. (2015) and Basuchowdhuri et al. (2014). For small networks, this is not a feasible way.

to get an idea about the network stability. This approach has been discussed very little and more research has to be carried out. Nevertheless, the analysis of a MST will help to reveal inherent graph structures and important links. But as above, another research question is how these structures can be interpreted.

We will now discuss how communities in networks can be calculated, especially without being restricted to clusters.

3.1.6 Community Detection

As discussed above, we do not only want to compute inherent structures, but also those (perhaps hidden) structures that lead to the structure of the complete network. While the structures discussed above are easy to visualize but mostly very hard to interpret, other methods use algorithmic and statistical methods to receive community structures and patterns.

In general, a *community* is a subset C of nodes $N \subset V$. A *community structure*²⁹ is a set of communities C_1, \dots, C_n so that $C_1 \cup \dots \cup C_n = V$. If these communities are pairwise disjoint as Jackson (2010: 444) suggests, we have hard borders between these sets. If nodes or actors belong to multiple communities we may speak of soft or overlapping community detection.

As we have already discussed in the previous section, – next to a proper definition – we lack a detailed understanding of *what* a community is. Several prominent definitions exist but from a mathematical perspective they can't be merged. So, before continuing we need to discuss if it is as simple as “whatever I define, is what I obtain” with the caveat “my results represent exactly what I wanted to see”. Are they “tightly knit groups with dense connections among their members” (Newman et al. 2006: 553) or solely unconnected margin actors? Jackson (2010: 449) summarizes: “As we vary what a community represents, the optimal method for identifying communities will correspondingly change. In particular, it is important to have an idea of how community structure affects network formation.” Consequently, we need to discuss how nodes may be “playing a similar role”

²⁹ The corresponding graph-theoretical problem is called *graph partition*. Other network researches use a different nomenclature: Easley & Kleinberg (2010: 70) for example name communities ‘regions’.

(Fortunato 2010: 1) and thus can be grouped together. This is still an ongoing discussion in research (see Newman et al. 2006: 553). Due to the amount of approaches in this research area, we will restrict this overview to the most common approaches within SNA. In addition, we will discuss the construction of communities hand in hand with the methods.

Fortunato (2010) provides a detailed overview on methods and approaches. We will mostly rely on those called ‘traditional methods’, because, unlike dynamic algorithms, the results are reproducible and it is easier to discuss possible biases. Most research focuses on the performance of these algorithms in dense and large-scale networks. So in general, there is a lack of research for communities in small and historical social networks.

The *Girvan-Newman* algorithm was introduced in Girvan & Newman (2002). This approach relies on “property of community structure, in which network nodes are joined together in tightly knit groups, between which there are only looser connections.” (:7821) This approach is based on the removal of nodes with the highest betweenness. Thus, it does not aim at finding the strong connected centers of a network. The time complexity of this algorithm is very high (see Boccaletti et al. 2006: 283), and it was shown that this algorithm does not work well for every graph class, see Fortunato (2010). In these cases, Girvan-Newmann will produce very unbalanced partitions (see Fortunato 2010: 25). Thus, we need to evaluate how many structural holes the resulting network has and how many people with a high betweenness exist.

The *Leiden* algorithm is also very popular³⁰ and was first introduced in Traag et al. (2019) as an extension of the classical Louvain algorithm. This approach is based on the optimization of modularity or Constant Potts Model (CPM) values in communities to the expected value. It is often described as Louvain approach in literature, see for example Mucha et al. (2010), and Traag et al. (2015). Since this algorithm focuses on the inherent structure of a community in comparison to other communities it will most likely output similar communities. Naturally, not all communities have a similar structure, so we need to evaluate the performance of this algorithm with the given data.

Another approach called *Fluid Communities* (FluidC) was introduced in Parés et al. (2017). It is inspired by the idea of expanding fluids which will end in a stable environ-

³⁰ Sourcecode is available at <https://github.com/vtraag/leidenalg>.

ment and applies this to communities. Thus, it allows to define the number of expected communities which will lead to a different number of ‘fluids’ starting in the network. It is a very efficient algorithm (cf. Cheng et al. 2021 Wandelt et al. 2020). This algorithm will be hard to compare with the other two approaches since we need to define a number of communities beforehand. Given this, we will evaluate this approach hand in hand with the others to get a good estimate of the number of communities. However, according to the author’s knowledge FluidC was not yet evaluated on small social networks.

Easley & Kleinberg (2010: 78) state “it is a challenge to rigorously evaluate graph partitioning methods and to formulate ways of asserting that one is better than another – both because the goal is hard to formalize, and because different methods may be more or less effective on different kinds of networks.” And this is very true. We can’t give a proper mathematical definition of what we want to see; also due to the fact that we work exploratively and can’t provide a-priori quality measures.

Thus, we need to evaluate the performance of community detection on small networks in general but also the performance of these three approaches in particular. It is also important to consider if one single approach can be used or if this can only be done with several algorithms and different perspectives. Thus, here is a gap which we need to fill.

3.2 Early Christian Networks, Translocal Links and Mission

Current research often tries to find an answer to the questions regarding what early Christianity looked like. There is some interdisciplinary research in this field, mostly combining history or archaeology, although some research even focuses on quantitative methods, see Schor (2009). One major challenge is the missing sources. Apart from Acts, there are basically no sources available. Carson and Moo summarize: “Die Apg ist das ntl. Buch, das am ehesten einem historischen Bericht gleicht, und sie stellt für das, was sie berichtet, die einzige vorhandene Quelle dar.” (Carson & Moo 2010: 378) Keener (2012: 197) describes this problem with all consequences:

Those who reconstruct early Christian history on the basis of a very selective reading of Acts, such as the Tübingen School, are likely to read it in light

of their own biases (in that case, Hegelian dialectic); those who exclude Acts altogether may be forced to reconstruct Christian origins almost by arguing from the silence after they have eliminated the clearest concrete sources.

The problem for any research on early Christianity is that the descriptions in Acts are mostly interpreted as fictional, non-historic. The foundations of this axiom were laid within the critical research in the 19th century. Haenchen, for example discussed Acts as a simplification. Everything else would have been adjusted or omitted (“*angeglichen oder ausgelassen*” Haenchen 1977: 89). This option is no longer found in current research. However, many attempts have been made to generate “controllable statements” (“*kontrollierbare Aussagen*”) through reception or tradition research. The opinion that “*zahlreiche alte und historisch zuverlässige Traditionen aufbewahrt [wurden]*” (Schnelle 2017: 350) is also not an individual opinion. Bock, for example, observes the following connection:

For some scholars, the most troubling aspect of the book is the range of miracles and the direct invoking of divine involvement. For those who question such categories, Acts is automatically suspect because of the way God functions as the central, and even most active, character. (Bock 2008: 9)

Baum also refers to ideological preconditions (“*weltanschaulichen Voraussetzungen*” Baum 2017: VI) and it is clear that the expression “*kontrollierbare Aussagen*” requires ideological control. Lohse, for example, concludes that Acts offers only a few historically reliable clues³¹. However, to what extent some details, such as place names, can be seen as historically correct is evaluated differently.

This second point of view also has a long tradition. The early work of Archibald Thomas Robertson from 1920 and of Howard Marshall from the 1970s should be mentioned here³². Marshall examines the concept of historicity, but also criticizes its opposition to theology. He argues that Luke, just because he was a theologian, could also be a historian: “His view of theology led him to write history” (Marshall 1988: 52).

With this question introduced by Marshall, the actual concept of historicity must be taken into account. Bock (2008: 3) observes that “[it] has become popular in our

³¹ Die Apg “bietet nur einige historisch zuverlässige Anhaltspunkte; er [der Verfasser der Apg] entwirft eine nach überlegtem Plan gestaltete Rückschau aus späterer Sicht, durch die der Gang des Evangeliums von Jerusalem bis nach Rom in werbender und zum Glauben einladender Weise beschrieben werden soll.” (Lohse 2009: 257)

³² See Robertson (1920) and Marshall (1988).

postmodern age to define history itself as a construct and a type of fictive act.” The question of Luke’s own claim, the external perception in antiquity, and the reception of Acts in the present cannot be answered without a detailed consideration of the environment and an exact study of the Greco-Roman and Jewish sources. Schnelle also points out the influence of the Greco-Roman world: “Fast unbestritten ist die starke Beeinflussung des Schriftstellers und Historikers Lukas durch die hellenistische Geschichtsschreibung” (Schnelle 2017: 340).

A detailed discussion of Luke’s claim to write a historical report can be found in Müller (2009b). It is striking that Luke uses the term *διήγησις* in Lk 1:1–4, which was quite common for a historical work. However, since his work can certainly also be placed in the category of ancient biographical narrative, an interesting overall picture can be supported by all critical inquiries: “Die Glaubwürdigkeit des Erzählten wird durch die Nutzung etablierter literarischer Formen aus dem Bereich historiographischer und biographischer Literatur massiv unterstützt” (Müller 2009b: 124).

Besides the discussion about world views that influence the arguments, the view of Padilla (2016) is also worth mentioning. He sees Acts as a work of history that “encourages the reader to view the events narrated as actually having occurred; however, it does not guarantee accuracy.” (Padilla 2016: 72) An important point is therefore the embedding of Acts in ancient historiography:

Lukas steht genau dort, wo die jüdische und die griechische historiographische Strömung zusammenfließen. Seine narrativen Verfahren entlehnt er weitgehend dem damaligen kulturellen Standard im römischen Reich, nämlich der Geschichte, wie sie die Griechen schreiben. (Marguerat 2011: 63)

Thus, we can assume that the description is incomplete, but historically useful while talking about ancient historiography. This view is currently the consensus in research, especially in the English-speaking world. But also in the German-speaking world, reservations are – albeit cautiously – being dropped, see for example Schnelle (2017: 333).

To understand the New Testament writings in this context, approaches from the historical and social sciences have also been used in recent times – and this is a further research focus – in this context. Here, the research on Acts naturally strongly overlaps with the research on early Christianity. Especially the ancient notions of memory are a much-noticed topic. Stock et al. (2016), for example, discussed the neuropsychological

perspective of memory and the question if memory was important when Jerusalem was no longer the centre of early Christianity³³. Alan Kreider is primarily working on the history of early Christianity; he assumes sociologically that it was “[p]atience [...] as centrally important to the early Christians” (Kreider 2016: 5) that led to the rise of Christianity.

In addition, the study of migration also contributed to the understanding of Acts³⁴. On the subject of migration and diversity in Acts 1-15, see the work Stenschke (2018a). In research, however, there are also many questionable parallels. Not only may patience and perseverance have become a symbol of early Christianity, but migration as such may also have become a condition of mission: “As in the Scripture God ministers to and through the diaspora communities to fulfil his sovereign plan and purpose” (Moses 2019: 29). A new problem occurs when current terms are used without transferring them to the historical environment. This is the weak point of many methodological approaches: Historical questions must not be ignored. Otherwise, when viewed in isolation, for example, even with a view to Acts in extreme cases early Christianity may be classified as a “new religious movement”, see Regev (2016: 504).

Using SNA or Social Identity Theory (SIT, see Tajfel (1978) or Esler (2014: 2)) to the reconstruction of early Christianity and thus of Acts is still an emerging approach, see section 3.1.1.

³³ “For some early Christians, the destruction and forced abandonment of the Temple in 70 CE, and the fact that Hadrian established a colony on the former site of Jerusalem after the failed Bar Kokhba Revolt (c. 135 CE) meant that they had to imagine their aetiologies in ways that explained why the Temple had to be destroyed and why Jerusalem was not a central site for ritualized veneration of the deity, the Christos, and the apostles.” (Stock et al. 2016: 344)

³⁴ The Gentile mission in Acts was not due to Peter or Paul, but to the impulses of Hellenistic Diaspora Jews. The author refers to the ‘mini-stories’ in Ac 8; and Ac 11:19ff, see Samuel (2019: 29ff)

4 Theoretical Framework

4.1 Exegetical Approach: Luke-Acts as Narrative

The exegetical approach which is most suitable for the questions to be answered for SNA – and which wants to examine the social networks represented in biblical literature – is a literary approach and narrative criticism³⁵. This approach tries to determine how biblical texts can be interpreted as literature³⁶.

The problem with applying narrative criticism is its variety. The approaches differ slightly, not only due to the different original languages between OT and NT, but also between different literary approaches and schools in different countries. Additionally, we may even consider different generations of research³⁷. While all these differences might create the impression that the approach suffers from a certain arbitrariness, this diversity actually benefits narrative criticism by broadening its range of observations. Before continuing, we will try to give a short overview about methods and approaches and a selection of scholarly work to position our own methodological horizon. After that, we will present the most important narratological elements, locations and space, people, actors, interaction, and discuss the unresolved problem of time.

The interest in narrative and ‘story’ began with Richard Niebuhr in 1941, see Niebuhr & Ottati (2006). After that, it was introduced in the 1970s³⁸. While some scholars focused

³⁵ Oeming (2007) describes some confusion about this approach and its naming. In general, we find this method as “New (Literary) Criticism, Literary Approach/Criticism, Holistic Approach, Rhetorical Criticism, Close Reading, Synchronical Approach, Narratology und Narrative Criticism”(Oeming 2007: 70).

³⁶ See (Resseguie 2005: 18). Petersen (1978: 5) states “the literary critic looks at the text for what *it* says in itself by means of the patterning or shaping—the informing—of its content.”

³⁷ Cornils (2006: 22-29) distinguishes between three generations: The Literary Criticism, the Narrative Criticism and the New Testament Narratology.

³⁸ See also Ritschl & Jones (1976) and the overview by Wacker (1977).

Text-oriented approaches	Reader-oriented approaches
New Criticism, Formalism, Narratology	Affective, Phenomenological and Psychoanalytical Criticism
Semiotics, Structuralism	Poststructuralism and Deconstruction
Rhetorical Criticism	Reception Aesthetics
Linguistics	Reader Response Criticism

Table 4.1: Overview about most common trends in literary approaches, following Cornils (2006).

on ‘text-oriented approaches’, ‘reader-oriented approaches’ were also widely used. What they all have in common, however, is the focus on biblical texts as a literary work and the usage of methods of criticism studies for the interpretation of narrative texts. In Table 4.1 we present a short overview about most common trends in literary approaches.

Different schools exist which are not only committed to different literary theories, but are also connected to different geographical areas, see Oeming (2007: 70-71) and in particular Cornils (2006: 30-32). Even though Herrmann Gunkel displays a literary sensitivity in Old Testament texts as early as 1910 in his commentary on Genesis, this method initially received little attention. His approaches were further developed in the 1920s by Martin Buber and Franz Rosenzweig, and later by Reinhold Niebuhr, Johann Baptist Metz, and Harald Weinreich, as well as Meir Weiss in the 1960s. At that time, narratology (“Erzählforschung” Cornils 2006: 38) was primarily a marginal topic only investigated by individual researchers. Weiss increasingly examined narrative texts of the Old Testament with literary narrative form analysis (cf. Bar-Efrat 2006 Alter 2011: 12). Bar-Efrat was one of his students and created a standard work on narratological exegesis with his work ‘Narrative Art in the Bible’. This was an important contribution to the dissemination of this method. But the roots are not easy to trace and there are many different sub-approaches or related methods. They all use a synchronic method and are related to one or more approaches from literary studies.

Narrative approaches are more popular in OT research. While Bar-Efrat mainly considers formal structures and language art, other researchers like Berlin (1994: 13) are more interested in the whole structure of the OT: “Narrative is the predominant mode of expression in the Hebrew Bible.” Here, we present a small selection of various narrative approaches outside of biblical studies with reference to Table 4.1. It is a selection of scholars which may, in one way or another, help to establish a good foundation for the research questions. (Literary) semiotics, for example, are widely associated with Genette (1966)

and Uspenskij (1975) who examine literature as structure and formalism. Some elements will be examined later, and it should be noted that the readers decides for themselves, so to speak, which structural elements of literature they wish to take up. This approach is rarely used in biblical studies – at least outside the Francophone world (cf. Cornils 2006) – an exception is the work of Chabrol (1973). Fisher (1987), on the other hand – who was concerned with rhetoric and communication – put forward the thesis in his little received work that narratives are the essence of human communication. Narrative ratio, he argues, is the inverse logic of all human communication (:194). The works of Jauss (1982) and his late work Jauss (1994) should also be mentioned. He describes aesthetic experience and literary hermeneutics (1982): Not the social-historical interpretation and reception, but the specific experience of literature leads to an interpretation. However, this is not really a paradigm shift, since the impact of literature (and art) has been known since antiquity. If Fisher is to be commended for elaborating the importance of narrative in and for human communication, Jauss’s work succeeds in elaborating the importance of the reader for the interpretation of narratives.

In Germany, literary approaches relied on German literary studies³⁹. On the other hand they had to find their position next to the omnipresent historical-critical approaches. In the last 30 years, concepts from semiotic and narratology have been adopted and often combined with a diachronic or historical-critical perspective.

Many studies have also been published on New Testament exegesis. Resseguie (2005), for example, provides a broad methodological overview with focus on rhetoric, setting, character, point of view, and plot. This explains well, why SNA and narrative criticism can be combined: Both focus on characters, settings and the plot with a literary point of view. Another overview work can be found in Powell (1990). He especially focuses on the continuity of this approach: “Narrative criticism is a new approach to the Bible, but it is based on ideas that have been used in the study of other literature for some time.” (Powell 1990: 1) Other work has been carried out by Finnern (2010), who analyzed Mt 28. Together with Jan Runggemeier he published one of the most recent workbooks on narrative criticism, see Finnern & Runggemeier (2016). A narrative exegesis of the Gospel of Luke can be found in Resseguie (2004), Knight & Knight (1998) and particular in Green (2020).

³⁹ See Cornils (2006: 23) for more details.

In narrative exegesis, the first step is to apply methods of text analysis: “The ‘what’ of a text (its content) and the ‘how’ of a text (its rhetoric and structure) are analyzed as a complete tapestry, an organic whole.” (Resseguie 2005: 19) For this purpose, the text is examined with respect to its content layer and effect layer to find out which structure, order and content the text wants to convey. In order to refine the exegesis, different elements of the text are examined: time, locations, characters, perspective, plot or plot line, narrator, listeners, and readers, key words, repetitions and other structural elements and stylistic devices.

Narrative approaches can be applied to any narrative texts – both the Gospels and Acts are widely considered to be suitable. We refer to section 2 for a detailed introduction. Bailey & Vander Broek (1992: 91) argue: “A Gospel is a narrative, fashioned out of selected traditions, that focuses on the activity and speech of Jesus as a way to reveal his character and develops a dramatic plot that culminates in the stories of his passion and resurrection.” Other scholars emphasize the need to work with historical-critical methods, see for example Perrin (1986) and Darr (1994). Finnern & Rügge-meier (2016: 259ff) offer a wider perspective which comprises historical, thematic, and critical approaches. Since we are primarily interested in the world of story and only secondarily in how the historical information could help to understand the narrative (for example within the world of text production), we will focus on the text and provide critical references whenever necessary. This is inspired by Kuhn’s approach: First, he introduces Luke and his world followed by a narrative interpretation (cf. Kuhn 2015). This approach can – as shown above – be applied to both the Gospel of Luke and Acts⁴⁰.

⁴⁰ We need to discuss, whether narrative criticism can also be applied to letters. The Gospel of Luke and Acts are different genres. Whether a narrative (sub-)structure in the Pauline Letters can be found has been widely discussed since the 1970s. Longenecker (2002) summarizes the current situation as follows:

The language of narrative is now emerging in Pauline scholarship with sufficient frequency that it is no longer novel to speak of a narrative dimension in Paul’s theologising. Narrative is now mentioned regularly in diverse contexts in the study of Paul. These include erudite gatherings of leading scholars in their effort to synthesis Paul’s theology; helpful introductions to Paul’s thoughts, life and letters; and informed studies of Paul’s theology. (Longenecker 2002: 10)

Since not all narrative components are as important for our SNA approach, we do not need to consider all methodological issues which are important to understand the narrative of *how* Paul said things. We are mainly interested in *what* and *how* he introduces people, places and relations. Hays describes this as a “certain tension between the conceptions of Paul as storyteller and Paul as interpreter of stories. The two roles are related but hardly identical.” (Hays 2004: 221) Thus he speaks of “narrative substructures” within Paul’s Letters and this is quite important. Paul’s theological commentary or his interpretation of theological issues are not narrative texts which help to understand the social

In general, we will apply exegetical methods from narrative criticism following Finnern & Rügge-meier (2016) and Resseguie (2005). First of all, we will discuss some introductory questions. For example, it is necessary to evaluate the literary form and genre of the biblical texts. This is very important for an exegesis since the authors often play with these borders and they are not stable during times, genres are historically and culturally changeable, i.e. they are subject to social changes⁴¹. Next, it is important to examine structure, context, grammar, and stylistics found in the text, see Finnern & Rügge-meier (2016: 104).

For a detailed analysis, we need to analyze specific objects within the narrative. While Finnern & Rügge-meier (2016: 176) mention *space* (Raum), *plot* (Handlung), *characters* (Figuren), and *perspective* (Perspektive), Resseguie (2005) names rhetoric, setting, character, point of view, and plot. We will focus on the following two entities: characters and spaces. We will also consider the entity of time, but since this is not easy to integrate either into the SNA or into the narrative analysis, we will mainly consider the critique of temporal analysis.

As we can see, these aspects interact with all other issues found in narrative criticism. But for doing a SNA we will focus on characters and spaces, and do as much analysis in the other fields as necessary to understand these two. Since narrative criticism tries to understand the text as literature in its final form, we will only focus on those introductory questions which are necessary to understand the texts. We will not address the historical reliability of texts, but focus on the literary description of social networks.

In principle, social network analysis can be used in various contexts of application. The most common ones – in the social sciences, historical and religious network analysis – have already been discussed in the previous section. The application of SNA in narratological studies is usually not considered. Some studies have been presented, for *Alice in Wonderland* (cf. Agarwal et al. 2012), *Les Misérables* (cf. Newman & Girvan 2004), or in the context of ancient Greek tragedies (cf. Rydberg-Cox 2011). Some researchers, such as Elson et al. (2010a), additionally use methods of computational linguistics, for example,

network underlying these texts. Thus, a major methodological challenge will be to find these narrative substructures in the Pauline Letters.

⁴¹ “Sie stellen keine zeitübergreifenden, ontologischen Gegebenheiten dar. Gattungen sind vielmehr historisch- kulturell wandelbar, d. h. sie sind gesellschaftlichen Veränderungen unterworfen.”(Finnern & Rügge-meier 2016: 87)

to automatically analyze corpora of 19th-century British literature and extract social networks⁴². The connections between SNA and the narratological exegesis of biblical texts have so far only been discussed in passing. For instance, Dörpinghaus (2021a: 69) concludes, with reference to persons, time, and space, that the close relationship between the SNA and narratological exegesis is still widely omitted (“[e]in bis jetzt unbeachteter Aspekt [] in der engen Beziehung zwischen der SNA und der narratologischen Exegese [liegt]”).

4.1.1 People, Actors, Interaction: The Social Network within the Narrative

SNA always includes persons. These may well be fictitious or the information about them can be worked out by exegetical steps from historical sources, which Rollinger (2020) did for the epoch of antiquity. Thus, the social network paradigm can technically be applied to narrative texts without any problem. As an example for a first systematization of these relations, the so-called figure configuration which Cornils (2006: 75) uses for Acts may serve: This is a pure listing of characters appearing simultaneously in a narrative. Thus, the computer-based evaluation of this data already used in the literary analysis is merely another logical step.

The character is the main (or minor) actor described in the text. This is equivalent to the actor in SNA. Narrative criticism provides a more detailed view: “Characters reveal themselves in their speech (what they say and how they say it), in their actions (what they do), by their clothing (what they wear), in their gestures and posture (how they present themselves).” (Resseguie 2005: 121) Resseguie also points out a social perspective by mentioning their position within society. Thus, it is also important to think about the constellation of characters, which means their position in a network⁴³ and their relation to the plot.

⁴² This study elaborates on the advantages as follows: “This allowed us to take asystematic and wide look at a large corpus ofttexts, an approach which complements the narrower and deeper analysis performed by literary scholars and can provide evidence for or against some of their claims.” (Elson et al. 2010a: 146) Since no automated methods of computational linguistics are used in this work, this merely introduces the further possibilities of such work

⁴³ This equivalent to *Figurenkonstellation* found in Finnern & Rüggeheimer (2016: 204).

The character analysis can be separated into quantitative and qualitative questions: When is a character present (in drama: “stage presence”) and with whom does he interact? Qualitatively, one can also ask about content (the “character speech”) or about characterizations. The first is answered by the “figure configuration” and its “configurational structure”: In the first, the person and their interactions are inferred; in the second, they are juxtaposed. While the extraction of characters as word entities is not very difficult, the accurate analysis of interactions is challenging. Therefore, current studies focus on “co-presence”⁴⁴. Rarely are models explored to precisely describe these interactions, see Elson et al. (2010b) or Wiedmer et al. (2020). In New Testament studies, figure constellations have been generated manually so far, see Cornils (2006: 75) and Dörpinghaus (2020).

Pfister states that this opens up the possibility to apply methods of sociometry or social network analysis to the analysis of the structure of drama characters⁴⁵. And indeed, methods of social network analysis (whose precursors were called sociometry) can be applied, which again makes new computer-based analysis procedures possible, see Dörpinghaus (2021a) and Trilcke (2013).

A possible limit of this approach lies, however, clearly in the significance: The network is a *reproduction* or a *representation* of the literary findings. The information it provides must always be interpreted within the framework of this narrative horizon. Thus, the evaluation does not position itself historically, since it can interpret the narrative in its immanent framework. However, it contributes to the understanding of narratives and opens new perspectives for interpretation and for interdisciplinary models.

4.1.2 Locations and Space in Narrative

Locations and Space, or more generic spatiality, of a narrative offer a detailed framework for interpretation, since they are necessary to understand the story and characters and their relation to the plot.

⁴⁴ This indicates “welche Figuren zu welchem Zeitpunkt gemeinsam auftreten”(Krautter et al. 2020)

⁴⁵ “[Es] erschließt sich die Möglichkeit, Methoden der Soziometrie, wie sie für die Untersuchung sozialer Gruppenstrukturen entwickelt wurden, auf die Analyse der Struktur des Dramenpersonals zu applizieren.”(Pfister 1988: 233)

The method of narrative criticism offers another approach to tackle the understanding of different world views on the basis of the implicitly presupposed and explicitly addressed framework conditions⁴⁶. And indeed, there are multiple dimensions of locations and space in narrative texts: Not only “place, presence and person/story” (Habel 2016: 481) but also what is called ‘environmental hermeneutics’. Here, aspects of logic coherence, compatibility, together with ethnic, linguistic, geographic, political and religious aspects are key. We should also mention the works of Uspenskij & Živov (2017) and Uspenskiĭ et al. (1973) who are working on the field of typology in different points of view: “The problem of point of view is directly related to those forms of art which by definition have two planes, a plane of expression and a plane of content” (Uspenskiĭ et al. 1973: 2). In particular, we may use his approaches on spatial and temporal planes.

To understand the concept of space, we should also mention *Critical Spatiality* (see Flanagan et al. 2003). In the past decades, there has been a growing understanding of the concept of space as a construct on the one hand, and an interest in different concepts of space on the other hand (see also Becking et al. 2017). Basically, back in the 1960s there was a critique of the modern concept of spatiality and a demarcation from the meaning of “time” leading to a “recognizable spatial turn in literary and cultural studies”(Tally Jr 2012: 11). This goes back to various philosophers, some of them Marxist, such as Lefebvre and Soja, and discusses “spatiality” as a social theory⁴⁷.

They divide space trialectically into three parts, see Soja (1996). The *firstspace* includes physical space, the *secondspace* mental space, and the *thirdspace* social space. While the first space can be studied quantitatively, i.e. simply measured, the second reflects the human idea of space as such, the third involves the practice of living in relation to other people. However, the concept of space can also be interpreted by non-Western ideas, by other cultures, or even through a feminist lense. The theory of Critical Spa-

⁴⁶ “Anhand der implizit vorausgesetzten und explizit thematisierten Rahmenbedingungen lässt sich abschließend bestimmen, inwieweit der erzählte Raum und das Weltbild der intendierten Rezipienten kompatibel sind” (Finnern & Rügemeier 2016: 232)

⁴⁷ Lefebvre was noticed outside the French-speaking scientific community in the early 1990s (cf. Charnock 2014: 313). He claims that urbanization was the impact of industrialization Marx did not foresee, see Lefebvre (1976), in particular he claims that “dominance of the urban centers had to be maintained in town planning projects without even an adequate analysis of its impact” (Lefebvre & Enders 1976: 34). In summary, his perception of space is: “(Social) space is a (social) product.” (Lefebvre & Nicholson-Smith 1991: 26). Soja (1985: 94) follows here: “the materialist interpretation of spatiality is the recognition that spatiality is socially”. His view is more holistic: “My aim is to spatialize the historical narrative, to attach to *durée* an enduring critical human geography” (Soja 1989: 1).

tiality is primarily applied to the Old Testament in theology. Boda et al. (2007: 45), for example, examined the book of Daniel and the concept of the temple. In particular, it addresses chronology and place as more than just a physical entity. “The historical-critical study of the Bible in modern period has tended to focus on time and chronology, not on the spatial and geographical dimension of the literature.” (Dozeman 2008: 87). This implies, then, the use of geographical terms, of places, as a tactical, theoretical level in the background. Let us distinguish between *religious geography* and the *geography of religion*. The religious geography is understood as more ‘fantastic’ literature and must be reproduced critically as geography of religion. Dozeman (2008) argues primarily from the Old Testament and must also face the question whether his attempt to reproduce the geography of religion is not culturally influenced.

An attempt to apply this method to the New Testament is found in Schreiner (2016). He examines the concept of kingdom in Matthew. He summarizes: “Metaphysics explains the fundamental nature of being. Thus, metaphysical space is the fundamental nature of space” (:46). See also the work of Stewart (2010) on the Gospel of Mark.

Thus, *Critical Spatiality* as a theory seeks to penetrate and socio-historically reconstruct living space as a whole. Or in other words, as Becking et al. (2017: 22) summarizes, Critical Spatiality offers a “range of ways for holding our critical feet more systematically on the fire on how we understand this fundamental, but often taken for granted, aspect of human existence.” Thus, it calls for a constant shifting reflection and rethinking of spatiality.

A methodological issue in the application to SNA is that it can’t be associated with all three spatial terms: Real distances cannot be mapped⁴⁸ and are instead replaced by distances in social space. As shown in Dörpinghaus (2020), this problem cannot be addressed within the scope of SNA, but important connections in the social network can be analyzed for their distance in firstspace, secondspace and thirdspace, which requires an exegetical analysis of the text.

Thus, this work follows an approach similar to that portrayed by Robbins (2010: 200f) and Dörpinghaus (2020) with regard to socio-rhetorical interpretation. Critical spatiality

⁴⁸ While geographical positions of cities or other locations could be added to a network, the spatial distance between actors and e.g. cities is temporal and would require a very complex dynamic network modelling with both a spatial and a temporal axis.

– as being aware of the trialectic spacial view – is used as an additional tool to examine the social and spatial structure of New Testament writings. However, this study also does not aim to provide a detailed spatial analysis.

Firstspace, i.e. the physical space, can be extrapolated easily from the text, provided appropriate information is given. For example, in Lk 4:14–44 the first space travel from Nazareth to Capernaum, and in particular to Simon’s house, can be traced. The Acts of the Apostles, as another example, provides much wider travel narratives like Paul’s missionary journeys.

Secondspace, the mental space, on the other hand, is much more difficult to reconstruct. Here the question is how people perceive and interpret space. This requires the examination of social positions as well as positions, education, empathy and antipathy. But it also includes family relationships, marriage and parent-child relationships. They are often closely intertwined with the first spatial distances in narratives, see for example the spatial movement in Lk 1:1–4:13. In the Gospel of Luke this includes social distances to the Samaritans, but also between Jesus and his enemies. Luke carefully arranges these distances and how the actors move within them. In Acts we find different cultural groups, Jews, proselytes, Greek and Roman actors, but also women and men.

Can we draw possible conclusions about the inner perception of persons? This finally leads to a description of the *thirdspace*, i.e. the experienced space and the description of how people live and use the space. This includes a careful analysis of how different cultural groups use and perceive space, but also how internal and intra-group perceptions differ. For example, we will look at how the early Christian movement and its sub-groups are described in the Acts of the Apostles. Do different groups, such as deacons or apostles, live and use space differently? Thus, a spatial description of the social network is obtained.

4.1.3 The Unresolved Problem of Time

A narrative always represents a progression of time in which the actions occur (narrated time). At the same time, time passes while the narrative is being *told* (narrative time), where Genette (2014: 75) points out the universality: “est un trait caractéristique non seulement du récit cinématographique, mais aussi du récit oral, à tous ses niveaux

d'élaboration esthétique". Narrative time is automatically created through the shaping of the narrative by means of sentences, rhythm, paragraphs, lengths, etc. Narrated time is rarely linear, but adapts to circumstances and thus includes leaps, expansions, or even breaks.

The temporal component can also be interpreted as a limitation of the method: The complex narrative flow cannot be mapped to a computational model; only a static, final network can be analyzed. But time is of great importance for biblical narrative and thus we will use predefined 'breakpoints' for our analysis. Here, the 'motion' is stopped and we may analyze a particular timepoint in the story or compare them to other timepoints.

4.1.4 Digital Methods and Exegesis: Limitations and Synergies⁴⁹

The most important question to discuss is whether methods from the humanities can be applied without any methodological precondition within Theology. Theology was widely skeptical about interdisciplinary approaches: "It seems that the emphasis on the so-called 'empirical' method in theology has not grown out of actual theological demands but has been imposed on theology under the pressure of a 'methodological imperialism', exercised by the pattern of natural sciences." (Tillich 1947: 16) But there was a paradigm shift within the last three or four decades. For example, Heimbrock (2005: 274) introduced the "Experiential Dimension of Faith" while establishing his hypothesis about empirical methods within practical theology. The main challenge remains for subdomains in Theology which do not need a prior condition. Or in other words: Can we think about a subdomain in Theology without thinking about God? Without going into the depths of the philosophy of science, we argue that some areas in Theology have this methodological freedom, for instance, archaeology⁵⁰ or classical philology⁵¹. But we have to consider the preconditions in other fields. Heimbrock had some thoughts about these in the field of Practical Theology:

To understand the character of empirically based practical theology, one needs also to explicate specific questions like the following. How do we discern

⁴⁹ This is a revised and extended version of a manuscript partly published in Dörpinghaus (2022c)

⁵⁰ See (Cantwell & Petersen 2021 Krawiec & Schroeder 2021 Horne 2021) but also the works of (Collar et al. 2015).

⁵¹ We refer to those works on manuscripts, see Hamidović et al. (2019) Streza (2021) Dell (2021). Here, also the works of Flexsenhar (2016) Rollinger (2014) should be mentioned.

valuable bits of reality during the research process? How does one interpret these findings in an appropriate way? What are the necessary sources or data of empirical research? What is the appropriate involvement of the researcher-subject during the research process? What are appropriate presentations of research findings, and how are valuable re-presentations of reality determined in empirical research? A further question regards the point during the research process when a specific theological element and interest is best introduced (Heimbrock 2005: 275)

These questions remain closely connected to the methodological preconditions used in the humanities. Some scholars argue that these are widely omitted⁵². But it is widely agreed that an interpretation of analysis does need a hermeneutic fixation of data points and knowledge representation (cf. Beetz & Franzheld 2016: 59). Thus, digital humanities (DH) always include a methodological transfer of a scientific domain to computer science which includes the representation of domain data with data points and data records⁵³. This step always relies on hermeneutic preconditions. For an analysis, the data needs to be re-transformed to the original scientific domain, which again relies on hermeneutic preconditions. In this case, the methodological difference between Theology or any other domain within humanities can be found in this step of interpretation and re-interpretation. Thus, we argue that in these cases where Theology and humanities have a broad overlap, we may say that methods from the humanities can be applied without any (further) methodological precondition.

The situation is slightly different when it comes to subdomains of Theology where methods from the humanities are not that present. For example, Biblical Studies are working with biblical texts, and thus they are using computational methods only in a particular setting like cross-lingual semantic concordances, manuscript management, or parallel bible corpora. In this case, these settings are embedded within an exegetical context of (re-)thinking sources and Biblical texts. Here, exegetes already use hermeneutics within their scholarly activities. It “entails critical reflection on the basis, nature, and goals of reading, interpreting, and understanding communicative acts and processes.” (Thiselton 1998: 95) It is the nature of Biblical studies to apply hermeneutics in the interpretation of Biblical texts (cf. Oeming 2007). Thus, even before applying methods

⁵² For example Kuckartz (2010: 16) concludes, that it is a new trend to pay attention to these methodical preconditions: “In den Sozialwissenschaften fand die Frage einer Methodik zur Auswertung von qualitativen Daten ohnehin lange Zeit nur wenig Beachtung.”

⁵³ Mehl (2021) for example states that “we cannot simply transfer them into our field in unexamined ways without intellectual integrity”. See also Cosgrave (2021).

from DH we have a step of interpretation. We are coming back to “perform a double act of interpretation” as Anderson (2018) suggested. But – and this fact is widely omitted – we also need this double act of interpretation on the way back: Once we have results from DH, we not only need to interpret them within the framework they departed from, but we also need to go one step ahead and re-think these results within the context of the hermeneutics we used, for example in the exegesis of Biblical texts.

As an example, when applying methods from SNA to Biblical studies, it is not only important how social networks are created (which is a similar step to the hermeneutics used in social sciences), but also how we interpret Biblical texts. And once we have created a social network: How is it to be interpreted and what kind of questions does it bring to the original step of exegesis? If we miss this step, we are doing DH applied on the result of an exegetical analysis of a Biblical text. But we are not doing DH in Theology, because this would return scientific questions or results back to the starting domain, Theology.

When a SNA reconstruction of Acts based on narrative exegesis and literature analysis discovers central actors, for example Barnabas or Philip, what does that imply for the initial step of exegesis? For example, Philip may be seen as a bridge-building person or Barnabas as a central person with a lot of connections to different clusters within the social network of early Christianity. But these claims simply omit the last step of discussion with the preliminary exegetical step. The question should rather be: Why does Luke describe both in this manner? What is his theological goal? Why does he omit other information which are indicated by the social network or which we might expect because of the network structure? The application of methods from DH leads to new research questions within the original field⁵⁴.

To sum up: first, we consider the theological subdomains which apply methods from the humanities without any methodological precondition. Due to the methodological overlap between humanities and theology we see no limitations when applying methods from DH. There might be ethical limitations, but the problem can be summarized with the hermeneutical discussion which needs to be tackled beforehand.

⁵⁴ This was only considered in other research fields, for example in information science: Here methods “including information retrieval, information systems, tool science, user interface design and information behavior – can be transferred to novel research questions and applications in the digital humanities.”(Burghardt & Luhmann 2021)

Second, considering the subdomains of theology where methods from the humanities are not widely used, the synergies are not clear because of the necessary double act of interpretation. The most limiting factor is that scientists need to be capable of doing hermeneutical steps both in exegesis and a domain in humanities and apply computational methods from digital humanities. This is a great challenge in rethinking theology with the eyes of two different disciplines using a double interdisciplinary approach. But it is also a great chance, because there is a growing awareness of hermeneutic transfer processes within DH, and theology could be a good matching domain field to improve scientific results also within the other scientific domains. Here, we find another broad field of possible synergies – but they are yet to come.

4.2 The Readers of Luke-Acts

The recipient of Luke-Acts is identified by the author in the prologue (Lk 1:1–4). Both are addressed to Theophilus and also to other readers with the same mind. Two interpretations are possible: Theophilus as a person from the Greco-Roman world and/or as chiffré for a God-loving person. We will discuss more details in chapter 5.1. In addition, several scholars have analyzed the readers described in the narrative of Luke-Acts. Of course, this brings several challenges: “The Lukan text creates a narrative world, and it is this world we examine as we analyze the social relations, ethos, and symbolic universe of Luke. Still, this does not mean that we now have a ‘window’ that opens directly onto the social situation of Luke’s historical community.” (Moxnes 1994: 379) Bauckham (1998) takes a different direction: First, he argues that the audience of the Gospels were Christians and a more significant reconstruction of the readers would not be possible. But other scholars disagree, in particular for Luke’s Gospel:

Lukan scholars [...] did not pay as much attention to the Lukan ‘community’ as did happen with the other Gospels. Because Luke clearly identifies his first audience (Theophilus) one need not ‘reconstruct’ his first audience. The Lukan audience should therefore be located differently than those of the other evangelists. (Du Plessis 2000: 244)

So we need to ask if there is any consensus in research. Whereas Carson & Moo (2010: 134) argue that Luke-Acts is of interest for Jewish Christians but “apparently was not

intended for them in the first instance” other scholars like Schnelle (2017: 316) are far more convinced that Luke writes primarily for Gentile Christians⁵⁵. Thus, we assume Christians to be Luke’s audience. Another observation by Garland (2012: 35) is very important: “they also are assumed to have familiarity with Scripture and to accept its divine authority.” This is the common denominator which we will use for our analysis.

When applying narrative criticism, we also need to consider other recipients, for example today’s readers. Thus, it also makes sense to ask how in particular Jewish or Gentile Christians may have read Luke-Acts to derive differences. What did they read, which allusions were clear to them? We need to consider this aspect as it has been suggested by other scholars, in particular because we cannot reasonably locate the readers of Luke-Acts⁵⁶. As a result, we need to analyze different levels of understandable figures and narratives. For example, what level of familiarity with the OT references is necessary to understand Luke-Acts? In other words with Green (2020: 72): “Placing to one side as unanswerable the question whether Luke’s first readers were so proficient in locating Genesis-Luke parallels as our comments might suggest, we may still ask: Did Luke hope that they would be so clever?” Green argues that Luke-Acts can also be understood with “largely untrained ears” and we will have to elaborate upon that. In particular, we need to consider what the author of Luke-Acts intended while working on the research question⁵⁷. This may include the following questions: What did readers from a different background understand of Luke’s idea about society? How did they imagine the Lukan portrayal of early Christianity?

⁵⁵ “Lukas schrieb für eine mehrheitlich heidenchristliche Gemeinde, denn er setzt deutlich die gesetzessfreie Heidenmission voraus [...]. Zudem ist für ihn die heilsgeschichtliche Ablösung Israels bereits Realität”(Schnelle 2017: 316).

⁵⁶ “Der implizite Adressaten- und Leserkreis von Lk-Act bestand sicherlich auch aus »Godfearing Gentiles«, vielleicht sogar zu großen Teilen. Aber er bleibt eben nicht auf diesen einen Personenkreis begrenzt, sondern ein gerade zu auffallendes Kennzeichen lk Darstellungsweise ist doch die Öffnung der intendierten Adressatenschaft auf alle (πάντες Act 28,30), auch gebürtige Juden, die sich zum Jesus-Christus bekennen.”(Wasserberg 2013: 67)

⁵⁷ Wasserberg is very clear about how an intention can only be restricted to one particular question: “Zudem gilt es methodisch zu berücksichtigen, daß jeder Versuch, die Erzählintention zu benennen, schon von der jeweiligen Suchfrage bestimmt und somit vorgeprägt ist. So wird die lk Erzählintention zum Thema »Arm - reich« einen anderen Wortlaut haben müssen als die der Stellung des lk Erzählwerkes zu Judentum und Synagoge. Suchte man aber nach einer alle Themen übergreifenden Erzählintention für Lk-Act, so müßte diese so allgemein ausfallen, daß sie kaum aussagekräftig bliebe. Daher scheint es sinnvoller, sich um eine an der jeweiligen Fragestellung orientierte Erzählintention zu bemühen.”(Wasserberg 2013: 67)

4.3 Technical Setup and Open Data

The data will be collected using simple text files applying the pySNA file format and the software package to generate the network is pySNA, which is available as open source software at <https://github.com/jd-s/pySNA>. This package was already used for Acts 1-12, see Dörpinghaus (2020). Data analysis was performed using Gephi, which is also available as open source software at <https://gephi.org/>. Addressing the “FAIR Data” principle, which was introduced in Wilkinson et al. (2016) is a key requirement and will be realized by making the knowledge graph available to the public. Thus, we plan to publish all datasets and make them available as an online resource at Dörpinghaus (2022e).

Many empirical disciplines like psychology or the social sciences used to have a great crisis of reproducibility. If data as a basis or results are not publicly accessible, results cannot or can hardly be scientifically reproduced and thus not be confirmed or falsified. See for example Renkewitz & Heene (2019) or Miyakawa (2020) who stated, that “a lack of raw data or data fabrication is another possible cause of irreproducibility.” We will first discuss several issues of availability of data in theology, then the impact of FAIR data and lastly how the Open Science movement may broaden the perspectives of theology.

An interesting perspective on available data regarding digital sharing of information is presented in the essay “Ad fontes – Open Sources as topic within theology. Reflections from Fundamental theology”, see Gockel (2018). He defines the “word of God” as the “source” of theology and raises the question of how availability or openness can also be applied to it. Another interesting view can be found in Graham (2013) reflecting the living, construction, narrative of theology.

Bringing both aspects – digital sources and digital literacy – together, we end up with another interdisciplinary challenge from the field of data science: How shall we manage information and data to support reproducible science? Several approaches can be found in various disciplines of the humanities. In natural sciences, which are driven by data to an even greater extent, the principles of FAIR data are common. The acronym stands for Findable, Accessible, Interoperable and Reusable. Data should therefore be findable (e.g. on the web or in databases), accessible (even restrictively, for example due to data protection issues), interoperable (which means they should be shared in easily accessible data formats) and thus reusable for other quests. Since various theological sub-disciplines

also work with digitally recorded empirical data as well as with digitally retrievable sources (e.g., historical texts, Hebrew and Greek basic texts, or other literature that is now freely available), the question must be asked why these principles are not echoed more widely in Theology. Instead of making the data available digitally, they are at best offered in expensive commercial software products.

4.4 Conclusion

Rollinger describes the central problem in applying SNA methods to historical texts as follows:

The fundamental problem of treating ‘social networks’ as a ubiquitous metaphor for social structures is that while this approach may seem unimpeachable given all the evidence gathered so far for the dominant position of networks in all societal (and other) matters, almost none of the conclusions derived from this theoretical starting point are based on empirical, quantitative evidence – which is the very foundation upon which the methodology of SNA was developed, and lies at the very core of its application. (Rollinger 2020: 4)

This defines the field of tension and subjective interpretation of this work: As we have presented and discussed in detail, this work must begin exegetically. In a second step, the SNA can be added at coordinated points of the narrative text, in order to answer questions raised in the exegetical part with the help of a SNA at the end. In particular, new perspectives arise at the intersection of the Gospel of Luke and Acts.

To sum up, we want to build a knowledge graph which comprises a social network but which is also capable of answering other questions. For instance, we might ask the following questions:

- What are key concepts (with limitation to one or the other category) in Luke-Acts, and in which social context are they mentioned?
- Considering the locations mentioned in different texts: How important are they when limiting the network either to Luke-Acts or the Pauline Letters? Are there special references to the ancient world and culture?

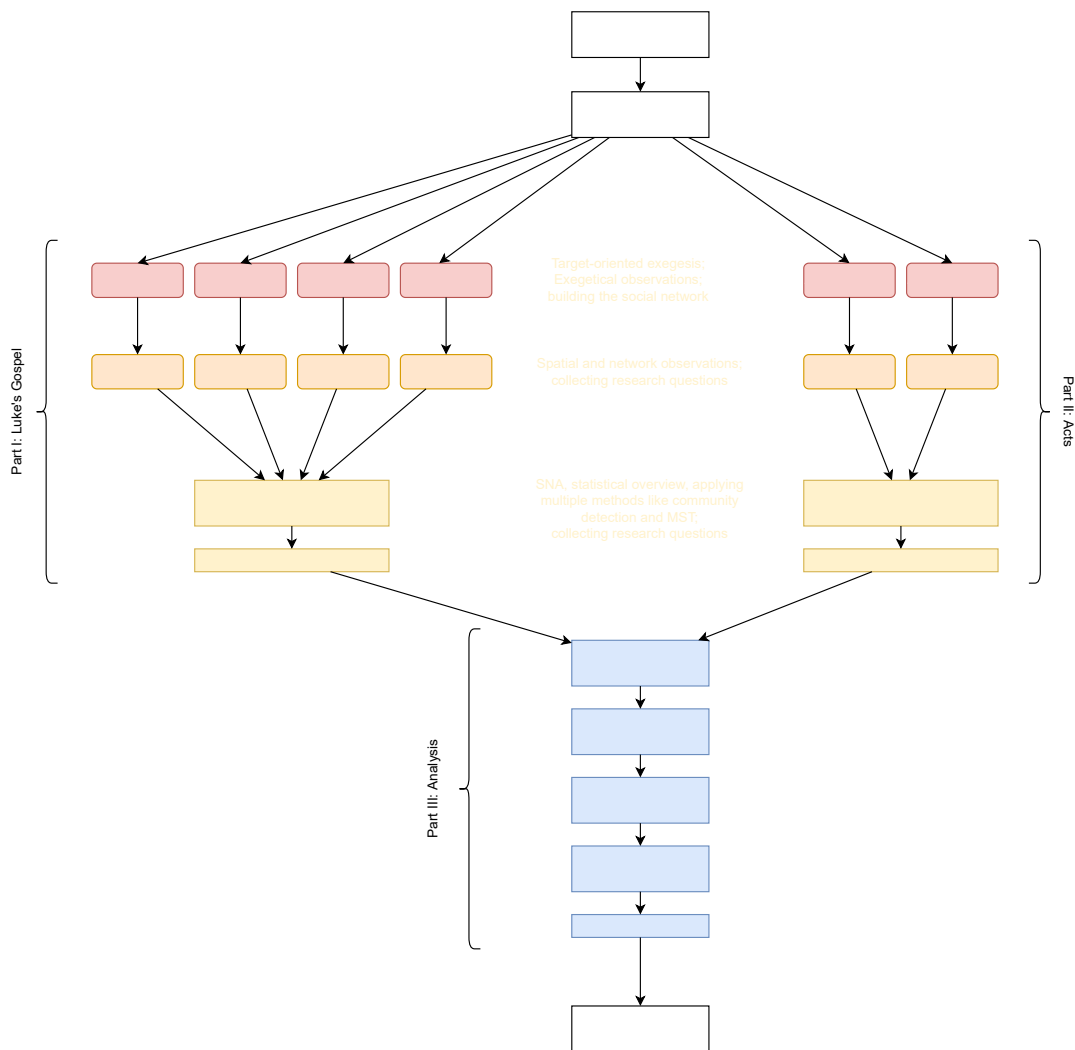


Figure 4.1: Illustration of the proposed workflow: (a) social network reconstruction of biblical texts which leads to a reconstruction of social networks described in Luke-Acts, (b) Spatial and network observations, collecting research questions, (c) SNA, statistical overview, applying multiple methods like community detection and MST, collecting research questions for (d) Part III and a detailed analysis.

- Where do we find implicit or explicit references to other biblical texts or ancient literature?
- Can we determine social relations using contextual information, for example belonging to a special group or living at the same place?
- What kind of contextual information will change the output of analysis algorithms applied to the social network?

There are numerous other questions that can be asked and more specific questions will

arise once the knowledge graph representation has been generated⁵⁸. In addition, this data can also be used for many further analyses and for establishing information systems, see Hyvönen et al. (2019).

Figure 4.1 describes the proposed workflow. All data is related to the real world setting of early Christianity. We have explicit data from biblical texts, literature or historical sources. Having the network, we can describe contradictions or even simulate different scenarios. Rollinger (2014) did this for SNA, and we can extend his approach to knowledge graphs.

In summary: On the one hand, we establish a social network from biblical texts. On the other hand, we include contextual data to establish a knowledge graph of all analyses from SNA achieved using this data, see Section 3.1.1. In addition, we will test if the knowledge graph is a valuable extension to establish more hypotheses and to answer more questions. This should give us at the very least a solid data foundation.

⁵⁸ Since this is a novel approach within the field of theology, we can only suggest inspiration from other domains like cooking, see Veron et al. (2020) bioinformatics, see Dörpinghaus et al. (2022) or medicine, see Bao et al. (2020).

Part I

Luke's Gospel

5 Introduction (Lk 1:1–4:13)

The first part of Luke's Gospel, Lk 1:1-4:13, can be seen as an introduction. Whereas the first four verses serve as a preface or prologue, Lk 1:5-25 describes both John's and Jesus' birth as well as a story about Jesus as a child in the temple. It also introduces Jesus' public ministry in Lk 3:1-13. While some scholars argue that this is no longer part of the introduction, see, for example, Bock (1994: 21), where we find a major literary break with respect to the social network starting with Jesus' Galilean ministry.

We see five major sections A-E where B and C can be subdivided in two parallel sections B, C and B', C' which are either dedicated to Jesus or John the Baptist. B and B' are followed by section B'' which brings the main plot lines together when Mary visits Elizabeth. Sections C and C' finish the birth narratives. Section D covers Jesus' infancy narratives which are subdivided in two stories about Jesus in the temple α_1 and α_2 . Section E is dedicated Jesus' public ministry and both subsections β_1 and β_2 bring yet again John the Baptist and Jesus together. Here, we see two lines of suspense beginning with section B and B' which are not completely solved in Lk 1:1–4:13. But we see β_1 as a partial response to B and β_2 to B' whereas the birth itself is described in C and C'. The second line of suspense begins with section A and ends with the end of the gospel. Here, we see B', C', D and β_2 as partial relief and β_2 as connection to the next part of the gospel.

A Preface (Lk 1:1–4)

B Birth of John the Baptist I (Lk 1:5–25)

B' Birth of Jesus I (Lk 1:26–38)

B'' Mary visits Elizabeth (Lk 1:39–56)

C Birth of John the Baptist II (Lk 1:57–80)

C' Birth of Jesus II (Lk 2:1–21)

D The Infancy Narratives (Lk 2:22–52)

α_1 Jesus in the Temple I (Lk 2:22–40)

α_2 Jesus in the Temple II (Lk 2:41–52)

E Jesus' public ministry (Lk 3:1–4:13)

β_1 John the Baptist Prepares the Way (Lk 3:1–22)

β_2 Introduction of Jesus Christ (Lk 3:23–4:13)

While A Lk 1:1–4 does not provide much useful information to reconstruct the social network, we find several interesting aspects in B-D Lk 1:5-Lk 2:52 and E Lk 3:1-Lk 4:13. We also need to consider if there is a larger literary line of suspense connected to other parts of the Bible. Knight & Knight (1998: 71) sees a language break between A and B: “The shift to biblical Greek draws the reader to the world of the Hebrew Bible where Luke’s plot (and time-scale) in one sense begins.” We need to consider language, but also other references while analyzing the text.

The first part, vv. Lk 1:5–2:52, is deeply rooted within the piety of Israel and a literary analysis needs to consider the special factors of the period of Second Temple Judaism. Green summarizes:

As the character references given Zechariah and Elisabeth (1:5-7) and especially the presentation of Jesus in the temple (2:22-39; esp. v. 39) underscore, Luke is concerned to show the importance of faithful obedience. This obedience is directed to the law, the validity of which is thus assumed to the birth narrative, even if this perspective will receive further development later in the Gospel. (Green 1997: 61)

Conzelmann (1993: 93) discusses how the author of Luke’s gospel divided salvation history in eras, so-called “heilsgeschichtliche Epochen”: First, the entire time of the law and the prophets (die “gesamte Zeit des Gesetzes und der Propheten”), which is concluded with John the Baptist. Second, Jesus’ ministry and third, a period of the church. This thesis is highly controversial, see for example Garland (2012: 36-37) for further details. But from a literary perspective, time is highly important: “Die Kategorie «Zeit», die das literarische

Unternehmen des Lk bestimmt, hat neben dem heilsgeschichtlichen auch einen pastoral-paränetischen Aspekt.” (Ernst 1977: 16) As a consequence, we will carefully consider the aspects of time and piety in Israel.

The original research question, what kind of network, which social or group identities are described by Luke and how do both describe the spread of the Gospel into other social groups and locations, will be answered using SNA. Thus, we present and collect exegetical observations, relevant for topical and social network concerns, in a first step. We limit this to the relevant parts, omitting others. At the end of each part of the Gospel, as a second step, we will present some preliminary network observations and bundle the questions concerning the social network. A detailed SNA of Luke’s Gospel is presented as a third step in Chapter 9. Here, we will first present statistical observations and then discuss more questions and topics in detail. However, because some questions can only be answered with a perspective on Luke-Acts, in part III we will continue with some more specific questions.

5.1 Preface (Lk 1:1–4)

The four verses Lk 1:1-Lk 1:4 can be interpreted as a preface – or prologue – by the author of Luke’s Gospel. They contain an intention of the writing, to give a διήγησιν περὶ τῶν πεπληροφορημένων ἐν ἡμῖν πραγμάτων, and a dedication to Theophilus.

For narrative exegesis these verses are important, since they introduce the purpose and the reader of the text. Theophilus as addressee remains an unknown person, but the structure itself tells us a little about who is *us*, because Luke includes not only himself and Theophilus⁵⁹ but also like-minded readers. Parsons et al. discuss, whether Luke “intent[s] to criticize others who had written about Jesus” (Parsons et al. 2015), from a literal view this preface only tells about positive intention to write about the things (καθεξῆς σοι γράψαι), although the “many” in verse 1 may refer to a *they*, see for example Ernst (1977: 47).

⁵⁹ There is a considerable amount of literature dedicated to the discussion if Theophilus is a real figure or what Luke intended by including him. But as Ernst (1977: 52) stated, this discussion comes second because the solution can be found in the “Gesamtprogramm des Lk”. For a detailed discussion see also Garland (2012: 55-56), Green (1997: 44-45) and Bock (1994: 63-34). Here, this discussion is also secondary, because we have no possibility to include both the author of Luke’s Gospel and Theophilus in our network.

We meet Theophilus also in Ac 1. In literature, different theses exist pertaining to the identity behind that name. Theophilus could be named (a) as *God-loving* representative of all readers of the Gospel (cf. Carson & Moo 2010: 250). This thesis is supported, for example, by Jervell (1998: 89), who argues that the Lucan writings were incomprehensible for non-Christians. With this “we are called to read sympathetically *with* the faithful writer as Theophilus-types: not as a Greco-Roman official, if that is what the historical Theophilus was, but as a *God-lover*, which is what the name ‘Theophilus’ means.” (Spencer 2019: 29) Furthermore, it could be (b) a pseudonym or an alias. Since Theophilus is addressed as *κράτιστε*, it could be a dignitary or a Roman nobleman, cf. the same address as Felix and Festus in Ac 24 and Ac 26. Then it is a Gentile Christian, cf. Bock (2008: 52) or also Schnabel (2012: 70). In principle, Carson & Moo (2010: 251) must be agreed with when they take two things as given: It is highly probable that Theophilus is a real person, and secondly, he is also representing Luke’s target audience. With his writings, Luke probably has Christians in mind who are still new to the faith.

In Lk 1:4 the intention is stated as follows: ἵνα ἐπιγνῶς περὶ ὧν ξατηγήθης λόγων τὴν ἀσφάλειαν. Here, Baum (2017: 286f) points out that the plural οἱ λόγοι cannot be determined more closely than with the general translation of the Christian statements. Schnelle (2017: 316f) elaborates that the target audience is predominantly Gentile Christian communities within the Greco-Roman world. By no means tenable is the thesis that the introduction is purely an editorial addition, as Haenchen (1977: 113) already indicated.

Luke uses the word *διήγησις* which directly leads to the term *historicality* (“Geschichtlichkeit”). Without a doubt, the author of Luke’s gospel used a term widely used by other historians in that time, see Bovon (1989: 31). Bock (2008: 3) states it “has become popular in our postmodern age to define history itself as a construct and a type of fictive act.” Luke can be seen as a part of ancient Greek historical literature. For example, Padilla (2016: 72) sees Luke as a historical book that “encourages the reader to view the events narrated as actually having occurred; however, it does not guarantee accuracy.” But to understand Luke’s literary intentions, it is important to consider the ancient historiographies⁶⁰:

⁶⁰ The question of Luke’s self-claim, external perception in antiquity, and the reception of Acts in the present cannot be answered without a detailed consideration of the environment and a close study of Greco-Roman and Jewish sources: “Fast unbestritten ist die starke Beeinflussung des Schriftstellers und Historikers Lukas durch die hellenistische Geschichtsschreibung” (Schnelle 2017: 340) For a detailed discussion of Luke as a historian, see Bock (1994: 52-63) and Müller (2009b). Although in

Lukas steht genau dort, wo die jüdische und die griechische historiographische Strömung zusammenfließen. Seine narrativen Verfahren entlehnt er weitgehend dem damaligen kulturellen Standard im römischen Reich, nämlich der Geschichte, wie sie die Griechen schreiben. (Marguerat 2011: 54)

Within the context of historiography we also find a strong literary component:

In *How to Write History* (second century C.E.), Lucian remarks that audiences will give their full attention to historians whose work is evidently ‘important, essential, personal, or useful’. Like the orator, however, the historian should give the audience ‘what will interest and instruct them’. [...] In narratives, the narrator is typically concerned to communicate that his or her version of the story is ‘true’. For works like Luke’s, this was accomplished with reference to firsthand knowledge of the subject matter – through intimacy with the tradition as well as research and/or personal experience. (Green 1997: 34)

The author of Luke’s gospel may call himself an eyewitness, *αὐτόπτη*. But using dative case, it can also show “that Luke is distinguished from the original eyewitnesses but is nevertheless dependent on them” (Thompson 2017: 11). In any case, the author of Luke’s Gospel gathered several sources and based his text on eyewitness testimonies. “And for Luke, beginning properly includes the story of Jesus’s birth and his family. In fact, to be a complete narrative from a rhetorical perspective, Luke’s story had to include these elements.” (Parsons et al. 2015: 32) This already describes Luke’s route through his introduction.

Although we don’t get any detailed information for the social network – we can neither include the author of Luke’s Gospel nor Theophilus – these four verses give us a detailed overview about the narrative itself, and it’s goals, readers and to some extent also about the author and how he sees himself in relation to the reader.

5.2 Birth of John the Baptist I (Lk 1:5–25)

The section Lk 1:5–25 can be subdivided into different signals. Parsons et al. (2015: 33) for example sees a

Lk 1:1–4 the author of Luke’s Gospel uses the term *διήγησις*, which was quite common for a work of history, his work can certainly be placed in the category of ancient biographical narrative. An interesting overall picture can be supported despite all the critical inquiries: “Die Glaubwürdigkeit des Erzählten wird durch die Nutzung etablierter literarischer Formen aus dem Bereich historiographischer und biographischer Literatur massiv unterstützt” (Müller 2009b: 124).

dream-vision narrative, which is usually constituted by the following parts: (1) scene-setting (1:5-10); (2) dream-vision terminology (1:11a); (3) dream-vision proper, which includes a commissioning/invitation (1:11b-20); (4) reaction/response, which can include an extended narrative demonstrating how the dream-vision is fulfilled (1:21-25).

But from a literary perspective I suggest a section similar to Bock (1994: 73), but which is mainly based on the locations mentioned which correlate with the scene settings.

The first three verses, Lk 1:5–7, introduce the setting and persons. Lk 1:8–23 take place in the temple in Jerusalem and describe Zechariah encountering Gabriel, an angel of the Lord (v. 11), and comprises three statements, two longer ones by Gabriel (vv. 13–17 and 19–20) and a short contribution by Zechariah (v. 18). The last verses, Lk 1:24–25, are placed at ‘his home’ (v. 18) and from Lk 1:39 we learn it is ‘a town in Judah’, placed in ‘the hill country’. V. 25 is a statement from Elizabeth.

Jerusalem and in particular the temple are meaningful places. We may start the discussion with observations from Green:

Thus, the birth narrative shows that (1) the temple of God’s house, his abode, and thus, (2) the nexus between God and humanity (3) segregating some space from others as more holy and some people (in this case, a priest) from others as having greater access to what is holy; (4) the temple is the locus of holiness and purity and so a place of sacrifices and cleansing, (5) where revelation can be given and receives, (6) where issues related to the Law can be discussed, and (7) where eschatological fervor can be focused. For Luke, the power of the temple as a culture-defining institution is demarcated especially in social and religious terms, not politico-economic. (Green 1997: 61-62)

This section is deeply rooted in Jewish piety and there are several cross-references for the reader⁶¹. The primary intentions of these references can be found in the narrative

⁶¹ Ernst (1977: 59) for example argues for an “apokalyptisch-endzeitliche Bedeutung” (end time meaning) with reference to Daniel. While this reference is as silent as the reference to Hannah in 1Sam, a lot of readers – especially from the Jewish-Christian background – will see the references to Genesis:

So entspricht Zacharias in Bezug auf die Vorgeschichte der Geburt Isaaks dem atl. Abraham aus der Genesis: Beiden wird – obwohl hochbetagt – ein Nachkomme verheißen. Beide fragen nach, wie das angesichts ihrer körperlichen Konstitution sein könne. Beide bekommen ein Zeichen. Auf dem Hintergrund dieser diegetischen Anspielung wird der Glaube auf seiten Abrahams und der Unglaube auf seiten Zacharias’ als Kontrast dazu besonders deutlich. (Rusam 2015: 51)

Other scholars agree on these references and emphasize their importance to readers: “What is remarkable about Luke’s knowledge of his scripture was that apparently it came from his assiduous reading of it, or portions of it. [...] And those portions were centrally Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomic history, that is, Deuteronomy to IV Kingdoms (II Kings).” (Sanders 1982: 146)

continuum to the OT and in particular to God's salvation plan. Although this is a new chapter, it is neither a new plan nor a new God⁶².

We find three acting and speaking persons in this section: Zechariah, his wife Elizabeth and Gabriel. The – yet still and unborn – protagonist in this section is John the Baptist. His birth will be described in Lk 1:57–66, although his name (v. 13) as well as vocation (vv. 14–17) are described by Gabriel. Other people mentioned are 'the people' outside the temple (v. 21), waiting for Zechariah and Herod, king of Judea (v. 5)⁶³. For the narrative perspective, this is nearly everyone. The author of Luke's gospel does not give any other hint and at this point, there is no social interaction or relation to Herod. The aspects for dating these events⁶⁴ are out of scope for this work but should be noted. We notice three additional features to consider, extending the social network to a knowledge network: (1) *Course of Abia*, (2) *Daughters of Aaron*, and (3) *barren*.

5.3 Birth of Jesus I (Lk 1:26–38)

This section has several literary parallels to Lk 1:5–25, in particular Lk 1:8–23. Again, the angel Gabriel is sent to foretell another birth. We find three statements from Gabriel (v. 28, vv. 30–33 and vv. 35–38) and two short statements from Mary (v. 34 and v. 1:38). The whole section is located in Nazareth, a town in Galilee. We should notice, that, whereas the announcement of John's birth happened in a central place, in Jerusalem and in particular in the Temple, here Gabriel visits Mary in a small city far away⁶⁵.

⁶² Green (2020: 68) discusses this issue and sees a specific hermeneutic in Luke's reference to Gen. His usage is more "a kind of echo chamber for the interplay of 'the old stories' with Luke's own story". Yet this is the most important narrative interplay with readers from different backgrounds, this will touch different strings from different readers. While a Jewish-Christian reader will understand this continuum in society, a Gentile-Christian reader might either not understand – which does not reduce his capacity to understand the main points! – or see this continuum in a different direction.

⁶³ Parsons et al. (2015: 34) summarizes: "This allusion to Herod (who reigned in Judea 37–4 B.C.)– like the references to Caesar Augustus in 2:1 and to Tiberius Caesar, Pontius Pilate, and Herod in 3:1 – serves to anchor the story within a particular historical epoch and suggests that these events will have political, as well as religious, implications."

⁶⁴ See for example the detailed arguments given by Bock (1994: 75) contrary too Ernst (1977: 57).

⁶⁵ Carroll (2012: 37) also notes: "As with King David long before, a young man will step from Israel's social margins to claim the throne." We will discuss whether or not this statement and contrast is true. Yet we notice a literary contrasting parallel to B', both in location and person. In addition, Bock (1994: 107) emphasizes that here we have a very private situation whereas the forecast of John's birth was given to Zechariah in a public place – although in a situation where nobody else could join him in the temple.

Despite Gabriel, this section tells us about Mary, who is betrothed to Joseph, of the *house of David*. Mary is described as παρθένος, a virgin⁶⁶. More relevant for the SNA is the question whether this has implications on Mary's locations and relations and we get two particular pieces of information considering μνηστεύω: First, Mary is betrothed and thus lives in her father's house, see Carroll (2012: 39). Second, we do not get any information about Mary's family. She names herself δούλη in v. 38 but here, this word refers to her humble status before God, see Bock (1994: 126). But it will be repeated in v. 48 where it describes more of Mary's social status.

Rusam (2015: 46) points us to the greeting in v. 28 (Χαῖρε, κεχαριτωμένη, ὁ κύριος μετὰ σοῦ) since it is a diegetic allusion to OT vocation, in particular because (1) this person tells about his or her deficits and (2) because μετὰ σοῦ should refute this objection⁶⁷. In addition, these references support the continuum between OT and Luke.

Mary is told by Gabriel to call her son Jesus, and he will even be called holy and 'Son of God'(v. 35). In v. 36 we see how the text brings together Mary and Elizabeth. We learn that they are relatives⁶⁸. Only Luke's Gospel tells us about their relationship and tells both birth narratives in parallel⁶⁹. Thus, Luke presents the Messiah⁷⁰ and John – and we should note that Luke presents extensive details on John⁷¹.

The phrase “because nothing is impossible with God” in v. 37 seems to be another important signal for the interpretation of the first part of Luke: Bridging and overcoming

⁶⁶ There is extensive research and discussion on that description, see for example Bovon (1989: 72-73) and in particular Ernst (1977: 71-72; 75-80). Again, we see parallels to the Old Testament (Is 7:14).

⁶⁷ “Der jeweils Berufene benennt dagegen seine eigene Unzulänglichkeit [...]. Die Zusage des Mitseins Gottes [...] hat dabei die Funktion, den Einwand des Berufenen zu entkräften.” (Rusam 2015: 46)”. References are Moses in Ex 3:12, Gideon in Jdg 6:12–16 and Jeremiah in Jr 1:8. If a reader is familiar with these OT references, it emphasizes on the one hand the humble estate of Mary, on the other hand God's power to overcome these deficits. Jeremiah claims “I do not know how to speak, for I am only a youth.”(Jr 1:6) and Gideon “Behold, my clan is the weakest in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father's house.”(Jdg 6:15).

⁶⁸ The meaning of συγγενής is not totally clear and has a wide range: “On précise parfois que ces degrés de parenté sont ceux du frère [...], de la sœur [...], des cousins [...] et on y associe les proches et les amis” (Spicq 1982: 617).

⁶⁹ Carroll (2012: 43-44) offers an extensive discussion of these parallels and concludes: “Both John and Jesus play decisive roles in God's saving activity, and it is already clear which of the two will have the greater rank and responsibility.”

⁷⁰ Although Jesus is not yet named like this, it is part of the line of suspense Luke constructs: “The infancy narrative emphasizes that Jesus is the fulfillment of the promises to David that were constructed to refer to the coming Messiah.” (Garland 2012: 86)

⁷¹ Green (1997: 72) argues, that John “is in every sense a significant figure for Luke's history of Christian salvation.” See the detailed overview Garland (2012: 84–85) provides. We will discuss this issue in our SNA in Chapter 9. However, Bovon (1989: 71) argues that both stories are placed without a narrative and theological connection. We will discuss this in our first summary in section 5.9.

social and religious borders. At the very least, it “further conforms the certainty of this promise but also reinforces that this conception is beyond human potentiality” as Garland (2012: 83) suggests. We have one additional feature to consider, once we extend the social network to a knowledge network: *House of David*.

5.4 Mary visits Elizabeth (Lk 1:39–56)

The narrative in section Lk 1:39–56 frames two larger hymns, one by Elizabeth (vv. 42–45) and one by Mary (vv. 46–55), the Magnificat. Vv. 39–40 introduce the setting: Mary visits Elizabeth, who is pregnant. We may expect Zechariah to be there, since she visits her at his house. Here, the author of Luke’s Gospel gives us a little more information about where this is: a town in Judah in the hill country.

A careful reading tells us about a journey which was done μετὰ σπουδῆς. Depending on the location of the town this could be a distance of 70-160km. Garland (2012: 91) suggests, that probably a town near Jerusalem is meant, but Bock (1994: 134) sees this city south of Jerusalem. It remains unclear, where this place precisely is, but for Luke’s narrative the place itself is not important. Several scholars argue that “[t]here is not a word about her motive, or why she hurries so; what matters is not why Mary comes to her relative’s home but what happens after she arrives.” (Carroll 2012: 46) But we should consider, that μετὰ σπουδῆς is directly related to v. 38. The literary construction of the text offers an explanation of Mary’s eagerness to visit Elizabeth by linking it to the angel’s visit.

From a narrative perspective, we see that both B and B’ are now brought together. Both Elizabeth and Mary meet an angel of God and are pregnant. In v. 43 Elizabeth’s statement ‘And why is this granted to me that the mother of my Lord should come to me?’ needs further attention. Whereas some scholars only see Jesus’ higher status as a reason for this exclamation⁷² it is important to notice the social distance between Mary and Elizabeth:

⁷² For example, Garland (2012: 93) carefully investigates the usage of ‘Lord’ and the contrast in the narrative about John and Jesus. Bock (1994: 137) emphasises a different point: “How is she worthy to share in this visit and in these events?” He mainly argues for OT parallels.

Why should the woman higher in status come to another who is lower in status? The reverse should happen [...]. There is irony here; social status is not what it appears to be. By pronouncing a blessing on Mary, Elizabeth assumes the posture of one higher in status (apt for an older and married woman), yet she does so only to give Mary the higher honor – as mother of Elizabeth’s Lord. Indeed, Mary is most blessed among women (Carroll 2012: 46)

Despite that we also need to consider the contrast between v. 48 and vv. 52–53. We find the words *ταπεινωσις* which may be translated with humbleness⁷³ and *δούλη*, a slave. They are used in a metaphorical way to express both a distance to God as well as being socially poor and belonging to the ‘common people’⁷⁴. Even Bock (1994: 150) argues, that “the social terminology throughout the hymn argues for a broader reference here”.

The Magnificat, vv. 46–55, has three stanzas⁷⁵: vv. 46-50 are a hymn to *God the Savior* praising his mercy for those who fear him. The motif *mercy* and the timeline *forever* or *from generation to generation* are re-adopted in stanza three and are thus a narrative frame. The second stanza, vv. 51-53, describes both an eschatological as well as a present way of how this mercy will be build with an glimpse of judgment in v. 51 and justice in vv. 52-53.

⁷³ See Thompson (2017: 29) and Garland (2012: 94).

⁷⁴ Some scholars omit the social meaning in this case, for example Ernst (1977: 85): “Der soziale Aspekt wird in der durch und durch theologisch geprägten Aussage praktisch bedeutungslos.” While Bovon (1989: 88) made a clear statement on this: “[Es] drückt in den Augen des Lukas ihre Distanz Gott gegenüber («Magd») und ihre Zugehörigkeit zu den sozial Amren in Israel aus.” From a narrative perspective it does not make sense to limit the meaning of *δούλη* in this verse to a humble status before God like v. 1:38. The context implies that here we get information about Mary. This thesis is highly supported by Green (1997) and Green (2020). Green (1997: 58) argues for a narrative ‘balance of power’ in Luke’s description of Mary. He disagrees with other scholars like Malina & Neyrey (1991) who “observe that the Third Gospel begins with an outline of the honor ascribed to Jesus by virtue of his kinship relations. Thus, his father is of an honorable family, claiming David as an ancestor (1:27; 2:4). What of Jesus’s mother? Because priestly families enjoy honored status and because Mary is the kinswoman of a daughter of Aaron (1:5, 36), Malina and Neyrey suggest that Mary, too, enjoys the status of the priestly line.” (Green 2020: 52) But a narrative interpretation of Luke’s gospel combined with cultural anthropology and social psychology unveils a different view: “In the case of our narrow concern with the presentation of the social status of Mary in Luke’s birth narrative, we have observed how critical issues of status honor are for the evangelist, and how he can first appear straightforwardly to mimic his social world with its concern with ascribed and acquired honor only then serendipitously to overturn those cultural norms by redefining status vis-à-vis the household of God. Not least in this way, the portrait of Mary in Luke 1:5–2:52 portends the nature of salvation and the norms of the community of God’s people to be developed more fully subsequently in Luke-Acts.” (Green 2020: 41)

⁷⁵ Other scholars like Garland (2012: 91) suggest to split in four stanzas: 46-49a, 49b-51, 52-53, 54-55 whereas Bock (1994: 146) agrees with three stanzas but sees v. 50 in stanza 1. But due to the narrative topics, generation to generation leading to the eschatological view and mercy as motif readopted in the last verses, and since with *καί* it has a logical tie to the preceding verse, it appears more natural to assign it to the first stanza.

We noticed earlier in B” that Luke is silent about the origin of Mary’s family. If we anticipate that Mary identifies herself in vv. 46–55 we may assume a low position in society. In addition, Carroll (2012: 38-39) suggests:

Ironically, while she is waiting to gain in (ascribed) honor by marriage into a household that stands in David’s line, she learns from a divine messenger that her status reversal will come instead from the identity of her son – and from God’s choice and initiative.

Considering vv. 52–53 (‘he has brought down the *mighty from their thrones* and exalted those of *humble estate*; he has filled the *hungry* with good things, and the *rich* he has sent away empty.’) we see first, an external connection to v. 48 because of the wording ταπεινώσις–ταπεινός and δούλη–δυνάστης and second, an internal contrasting parallelism between δυνάστης and ταπεινός (v. 52) as well as πεινάω and πλουτέω (v. 53). Here, Luke introduces a prominent motif, wealth and being “rich towards God”⁷⁶. In any case we see God’s concern for the lowly. The salvation act for his world is shown by his care for one woman who called herself humble⁷⁷. Here, we need to consider two other words in Lk 1:52–53: Abraham and Israel. This is yet another hint for the deep rooting of Luke’s Gospel in the OT⁷⁸.

⁷⁶ On the one hand this “introduces a prominent theme in Luke-Acts in which the ‘rich’ focuses on those who are not ‘rich towards God’ (cf. 12:21).” (Thompson 2017: 31) In addition, Bock (1994: 156) argues, that with reference to τοῖς φοβουμένοις αὐτόν in v. 50 these verses are limited to ‘spiritually oppressed’. But this narrative has not only a spiritual component with God levelling “the playing field” as Garland (2012: 96) suggests, but also a social component which is highlighted by the narrative background of Mary’s and Elizabeth’s social position. But we should also keep in mind, that Luke is in general not positive about wealth, see οὕτως ὁ θησαυρίζων ἑαυτῷ καὶ μὴ εἰς θεὸν πλουτῶν in 12:21. But there are only a few more usages of these particular words in Luke-Acts and we need to analyse other narratives like Lk 22:24–30 among others to get a better overview.

⁷⁷ But Luke’s narrative emphasizes also another aspect: “In Luke’s understanding God’s social revolution, like the conception of Jesus, is not the perfection of the human by human striving but the result of the divine breaking into history.” (Talbert 2002: 27).

⁷⁸ “The Magnificat ends by reiterating the theme of 1.32-3 that God’s mercy to Israel (the ‘children of Abraham’) will last for ever (1.54-5). This again locates the center of the Gospel’s eschatological hopes in the tradition of the biblical promises to Israel.” (Knight & Knight 1998: 74) Rusam (2015: 65-69) provides some arguments that the Magnificat alludes both verbally and diegetic 1 Sm 2:1ff. Summing up all OT references on a χριστος κυρίου with a background on the coming Messiah this functions as a narrative bridge to the next part of the Gospel: “Das Magnificat erweist sich also mit Hilfe seiner atl. Allusion als Scharnier zwischen den γραφαί und der folgenden Darstellung des Jesusgeschehens.” (Rusam 2015: 69) Thus for a reader with a good knowledge of Scripture, this will be another narrative hint. But as Green (1997: 98-99) highlights, this is also understandable by any other reader: the hymns here are closely embedded in the narrative flow, topics, and line of tension.

5.5 Birth of John the Baptist II (Lk 1:57–80)

The first part of the section Lk 1:57–80 is mainly a narrative with four short statements (vv. 60, 61, 62 and 66) and a longer prophecy by Zechariah (vv. 68–79), the so-called Benedictus, echoing once again the connection to the OT. Green (1997: 106) suggests the pattern *birth – response – circumcision – naming – response* to structure this section. However, in C we see a line of suspense ending: The promised child John is born. This birth is only a short remark, καὶ ἐγέννησεν υἱόν, in v. 57. But the narrative embeds the birth in other parts of the story. For example, Zechariah is now again able to talk, see vv. 1:18–20. We will now turn to the spatial aspects.

The narrative is located in or near the home of Elisabeth and Zechariah and other people from the ‘hill country of Judea’ (v. 65). Apart from Elisabeth and Zechariah there are ‘neighbors and relatives’ (περίοικοι καὶ συγγενεῖς in v. 58, περίοικοι v. 65). This highlights the parallels to B with λαός in v. 21.

This section begins with a description of the birth of John the Baptist and presents the discussion about his naming eight days after his birth⁷⁹ Following the angel’s command and giving a name to John is the main point⁸⁰. It is interesting that in v. 60 Elizabeth says ‘Οὐχί, ἀλλὰ κληθήσεται Ἰωάννης.’ whereas for Zechariah there is no question in v. 63: ‘Ἰωάννης ἐστὶν ὄνομα αὐτοῦ.’ For him, there is no possibility to not follow the angel’s command.

For the neighbors (περίοικος, v. 58), this event results in a discussion; they wonder about the miracles that happened and fear: “and all who heard them laid them up in their hearts, saying, ‘What then will this child be?’ For the hand of the Lord was with

⁷⁹ The circumcision was a traditional Jewish rite, see Bovon (1989: 101). This is relevant for the social network, since it does not only describe a novel actor, but also offers hints for his characterization. Although it was unusual to give a name to a baby on the day of his circumcision the main narrative highlighted in this section is the confrontation between the expectation of the relatives and the naming of John. See for example Bock (1994: 166) with a careful explanation: “it seems, although a naming on the eighth day is unusual, it is not to be regarded as a historical problem, since cultural and biblical precedents do exist for the practice”. There are many more solutions suggested in literature, for example Hellenistic influence, see Ernst (1977: 91). See also the discussion at Green (1997: 140-141).

⁸⁰ Bovon summarises the importance of a person’s name for his relation to the society and God and his identity: “Der Mensch lebt eben nicht nur biologisch, sondern auch in gesellschaftlichen Beziehungen zu Familie und Volk. Der Name ermöglicht ihm, mit anderen in Kontakt zu treten und sich zugleich seiner Identität gewiß zu werden. Hier kommt noch eine zusätzliche Komponente hinzu: Der Name stellt dieses Kind in Beziehung zu Gott, da der Engel ihn vorgegeben hat. Das Kind ist Trost für seine Eltern und zugleich Zeichen des Erbarmens Gottes.” (Bovon 1989: 102)

him.” (v. 66) The *χεῖρ κυρίου* once again highlights the intention of Luke to follow up on the OT. The crowd is wondering, because God and people are doing something unusual.

Zacharias’ *Benedictus* is both a praise and a literary answer to the question ‘What then will this child be?’. There is a frame for this praise: In v. 68 Zechariah makes a prophetic statement that his son will also affect the whole of Israel – ‘he has visited and redeemed his people’. This is the scope for the whole prophecy in vv. 68–79 because in v. 80 Luke describes that John stayed ‘in the wilderness’ until his public appearance in *Israel*. The central literary motif can be found in the middle, in v. 74: ‘being delivered from the hand of our enemies’, *ἐκ χειρὸς ἐχθρῶν ῥυσθέντας*. Although some scholars argue that here again a political topic is raised⁸¹, this is not clear with regards to the narrative. This liberation motif is not only purely religious (cf. Ernst 1977: 96), but it is also about salvation, forgiveness and mercy ‘to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death’ (vv. 77–79). John’s task is to prepare the way for the Messiah.

5.6 Birth of Jesus II (Lk 2:1–21)

This section describes the birth of Jesus. It is a stark contrast – and highly parallel – to C. It presents the first tension climax of the first part of Luke’s Gospel. It is mainly a narrative section with an angelic announcement in vv. 10–12, praise in v. 14 and a sentence from the shepherds in v. 15. These parts not only provide information about actors, but also some hints on Luke’s perspective on society. We will pay special attention to these aspects, since they are the basis of the social network as discussed in Chapter 3.

Lk 2:1–21 introduces figures from the political environment: Caesar Augustus, Quirinius. Carroll (2012: 65) points out, that the “the emperor in distant Rome [...] directs the steps of Mary and Joseph”. Yet there is another social meaning in his naming: In direct social contrast, shepherds⁸² are introduced as witnesses of the birth. Joseph and Mary travel

⁸¹ For example Bovon (1989: 107) states: “Die göttliche Rettung geschieht in Israel konkret, d. h. auch sozial und politisch, aber eben vor Gott (ἐνώπιον αὐτοῦ): im religiösen (ἐν ὁσιότητι) sowie im gemeinschaftlichen (καὶ δικαιοσύνη) Lebensvollzug”.

⁸² Although it is widely discussed if the Biblical, and in particular the OT picture of shepherds is negative or positive, we notice that shepherds in general do not belong to the wealthy class of society. Bovon (1989: 122123) discusses that the picture of shepherds is used for God, Kings and the Messiah whereas the rabbinic Literature is mostly negative about shepherds. Strack & Billerbeck (1924: 113) say: “Die

from Nazareth in Galilee to Bethlehem in Judea, which is once again a reference to OT topics because it refers to the city of David since Joseph is of the house and lineage of David. Here, again, we see an interesting contrast between v. 1 stating the universal Roman order for being registered to “all the world” whereas in v. 4 the author of Luke’s gospel ‘zooms in’ to a small village Bethlehem in Judea⁸³.

When the angel appears ‘the glory of the Lord shone around’ the shepherds (v. 9)⁸⁴. The announcement by angels in vv. 10–12 is centered around v. 11. Vv. 10 and 12 are somehow a frame with the central motifs *fear not*⁸⁵ – *a sign for you* (why you need not fear) and *you – for all the people*. The second dualism is a central theme, because the verses play with emphasizing the personal message (εὐαγγελίζομαι ὑμῖν (v. 10), ἐτέχθη ὑμῖν (v. 11), τοῦτο ὑμῖν τὸ σημεῖον (v. 12)) and the universality of the message (... ἦτις ἔσται παντὶ τῷ λαῷ v. 10).

- 10b **Fear not**, for behold,
 I bring you *good news of great joy* that will be *for all the people*.
- 11 For **unto you** is born this day in the city of David
 a **Savior**, who is **Christ the Lord**.
- 12 And this will be *a sign for you*:
 you will find **a baby** wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger.

The “good news” are both related to OT prophecy (Is 40:9, 52:7 and 61:1–2) but have a different meaning in the Graeco-Roman world describing a “religio-political opposition to the emperor.” (Green 1997: 123,133)⁸⁶. There is another often discussed contrast between

Hirten waren verachtete Leute. Man hatte sie in Verdacht, daß sie es mit dem Mein u. Dein nicht genau nähmen; darum blieben sie auch von der Zeugenaussage vor Gericht ausgeschlossen.” Which is particular interesting because Luke sees them in the role as witnesses: “Good news comes to peasants, not rulers; the lowly are lifted up.” (Green 1997: 131) But Bock (1994: 213) points at two problems: “First, the rabbinic evidence is late, coming from the fifth century. More importantly, shepherd motifs in the Bible are mostly positive.” These valuable remarks remind us that we do not have a complete understanding of the author’s motif. But nevertheless, it is evident that shepherds belong to the social margin of society. The observation in Garland (2012: 122) seeing a hint for the “false shepherds of Israel” and Jr 23:1–6 and Ezk 34 is probably to far off. In addition, Rusams theory of a reflex on 1 Sm 17:15,28,32ff where David is described as shepherd (“but David went back and forth from Saul to feed his father’s sheep at Bethlehem”), see Rusam (2015: 51), is rather unconvincing. Even if this might touch a string in a reader’s mind – what would be Luke’s intention?

⁸³ “This progression draws the birth of Jesus onto a universal stage and underscores the redemptive significance of that birth for the whole world.” (Green 1997: 126)

⁸⁴ This δόξα κυρίου has several OT references, e.g. Ex 16:10 (which also references the wilderness: ...καὶ ἐπεστράφησαν εἰς τὴν ἔρημον, καὶ ἡ δόξα κυρίου ὤφθη ἐν νεφέλῃ.) or Lv 9:23 (hinting at the glory for all people: ...καὶ ὤφθη ἡ δόξα κυρίου παντὶ τῷ λαῷ.).

⁸⁵ Which is closely related to OT Scripture, e.g. Gn 15:1, 21:17 etc. This once again underlines the close connection between the OT and Luke-Acts for those readers familiar with it.

⁸⁶ Or in the words of Bovon (1989: 117-118): “Die «politische Theologie» des Augustus, besonders

the sign for the newborn savior which is ‘a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger’. This is again a surprise describing God’s power. The narrative up till now is full of miracles and wonders. But it is also a narrative frame for the whole Gospel: A king, born in unusual circumstances and a king who died in unusual circumstances at the cross – again with those excluded from society, criminals (Lk 23:39) ⁸⁷.

V. 21 is again both parallel as well as a contrast to C. It is a shorter description of a similar situation and the naming caused confusion in Elizabeth’s and Zechariah’s case, although Luke comments that it was the angel’s command to call him Jesus. For the SNA we need to omit two persons: Caesar Augustus and Quirinius, the governor of Syria. They are both not directly interacting with the protagonists and form a background for the plot and narrative. But we need to consider two locations: Nazareth and Bethlehem.

5.7 The Infancy Narratives (Lk 2:22–52)

Jesus in the Temple I (Lk 2:22–40): Luke introduces two new actors, Simeon, who ‘was righteous and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him’⁸⁸ (v. 25) and a prophetess called Anna, ‘the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher’ (v. 36)⁸⁹. The two references in vv. 23.24 are particularly important, because

im Orient durch die religiöse Verehrung des Herrschers unterstützt, wird durch den christologischen Anspruch enthüllt und entkräftet.” The term ‘good news’ ‘was used for the glad tidings related to the birth of an heir to the emperor, his coming of age, and his accession to the throne. The term will be completely redefined by the gospel story of Jesus.” (Garland 2012: [122-133] Carroll (2012: 69) and Bock (1994: 215) disagree: “It is probably too much to see a conscious polemic against the emperor of Rome here since Luke-Acts does not engage in challenging the Roman leadership”. But nevertheless the narrative follows the pattern of showing the superiority of Jesus as savior. Thus, in any case there is a contrast and Luke presents a distance to the existing environment.

⁸⁷ Rusam (2015: 51) suggests suggests this vision is comparable to Isaiah (Is 6:1–7): “Und möglicherweise will Lukas tatsächlich diese Berufungsgeschichte seinem Leser in Erinnerung rufen; denn die Hirten werden an dieser Stelle ja auch zu Verkündigern des Wortes (Lk 2,17).” (Rusam 2015: 51) Although Is 6:1 (καὶ ἐγένετο τοῦ ἑνιαυτοῦ, οὗ ἀπέθανεν Οὐζίας ὁ βασιλεύς...) has some familiarity with Lk 2:1 the different language doesn’t seem to support his hypothesis and the narratives are do not share the same motifs (e.g. Is 6:2: “καὶ σεραφὶν εἰστήκεισαν κύκλῳ αὐτοῦ...” and Lk 2:9: “καὶ ἄγγελος κυρίου ἐπέστη αὐτοῖς...”). In addition, it is unclear, what particular intention Luke would have had with a reference to Isaiah’s vision of the Lord.

⁸⁸ Bovon (1989: 141) describes Simeon as a waiting person (“wartende Figur”). And indeed, it is interesting how Luke gives an easy answer to the question if Jesus is the answer to Jewish expectations of the Messiah: He is exceptionally qualified, the waiting Simeon declares it.

⁸⁹ Green (1997: 141) points out an interesting trail: V. 24 describes the offering of “a pair of turtledoves, or two young pigeons”. In Lv 12:8 this is an offering reserved for the poor and not so wealthy: “And if she cannot afford a lamb, ...”. See also Strack & Billerbeck (1924: 119-120,123).

they are directly addressed to the reader⁹⁰. However, this section also contributes to the characterization of actors and how they are located in society.

The audience of Simeon is Jesus' family and Anna is talking to all (παῖς, v. 38). It is now a difficult question if we should add one or both to the network. Simeon certainly has a direct contact to Jesus and his parents. He talks to them and even blesses them. But the narrative does not indicate, whether they meet Anna in person. Green (1997: 139) points out, that "the spotlight shines on Jesus only in a qualified sense, for Jesus is repeatedly characterized in relation to God." And this is true not only for vv. 22,26 and 30 but indeed also for Simeon's and Anna's praise in vv. 28 and 38.

Simeon's praise in vv. 29–32 uses some motifs already introduced by Luke: Simeon names himself a δοῦλος, refers to εἰρήνη and God's word, 'κατὰ τὸ ῥῆμα'. He identifies Jesus as the one who will lead to salvation, his eyes saw τὸ σωτήριον. It uncovers another aspect of the salvation coming, namely its universality. God prepared the coming salvation κατὰ πρόσωπον πάντων τῶν λαῶν⁹¹. In v. 31 Simeon uses the word ἔθνος, referring to the Gentiles – but still does not omit Ἰσραήλ in v. 32, a quote from Is 49:6⁹². However, here the universality of salvation is clearly depicted but still is centered in Israel and rooted in Jewish piety.

Simeon's blessing and in particular his saying to Mary deepens the motifs which were laid out before: Jesus 'is appointed for the fall and rising of many in Israel and for a sign that is opposed' (v. 34) and to reveal the 'thoughts from many hearts' (v. 35). There is a friction between the praise and the blessing τὸ σωτήριόν σου — πτωσις, εἰρήνη and φῶς — ῥομφαία. The prophetic words 'a sign that is opposed' begin another line of suspense and a motif throughout the gospel. Here, the aspect of a coming "eschatological crisis" (Green 1997: 149) is introduced.

⁹⁰ "Diese sind nicht nur deshalb auffällig, weil sie die einzigen Schriftzitate in Lk 1f. sind, sondern auch deshalb, weil sie neben Lk 4:4-6 die einzigen Zitate im lk. Doppelwerk sind, die nur auf der Kommunikationsebene ‚Erzähler – Leser‘ eine Rolle spielen. Nicht zufällig stammen sie aus dem Pentateuch." (Rusam 2015: 53)

⁹¹ Bovon (1989: 144) emphasizes, that here Luke's Christology is mainly a soteriology whereas Green (1997: 146) sees more a "development from the more general Isaianic hope of divine deliverance to a more nuanced messianism". But from a narrative perspective both hold true.

⁹² Indeed, the order is reverted, which "underscores the element of surprise in the salvation that God has made ready in the person of the Messiah" (Carroll 2012: 78). This is a surprise which is carefully arranged at this specific position.

Jesus in the Temple II (Lk 2:41–52): The section Lk 2:41–52 is mainly narrative with a second reference to the Temple. The narrative is split by two statements by Mary and Jesus in vv. 48 and 49. It describes the family visiting the Temple in Jerusalem for the Feast of the Passover. Jesus remains afterwards in the Temple – ‘sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions.’ (v. 46) There are two contrasts in this text, the first in v. 46: Those listening to Jesus were amazed. This is not a surprise when looking at the introduction in v. 40, but the narrative presents the reaction of the people. Jesus is not an adult yet, but a *παῖς* as Bovon (1989: 155) suggested. Thus, the surprise is caused by Jesus’ age: Even as a child he is full of wisdom. Critical Spatiality can help to understand Jesus’ relation to the temple. We will discuss this in more detail in Chapters 7 and 8.

The second contrast is presented in v. 49 when Jesus answers his parents who were searching for him: ‘Why were you looking for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father’s house?’⁹³. Garland (2012: 145) points at the possible ambiguity of the phrase ‘ἐν τοῖς τοῦ πατρὸς μου’. Adding ‘house’ makes sense when referring to other ancient texts like Josephus and also Jb 18:19 and Es 7:9. But it could also be translated with ‘in the affairs of my father’ which some readers may understand as the discussion with the teachers in the temple⁹⁴. While this phrase is certainly open to some interpretation, we can conclude that with v. 45 we find a reference to the temple and with the unexpected stay of Jesus in the Temple to be another reference of him amazing the people.

We find neither new actors nor places to add to the social network – nor can we identify the teachers of the Law nor the people of Nazareth. But this section helps again to understand the deep rooting of the story in Jewish piety and the characterization of Jesus.

⁹³ There is a deeper theological content hidden, as Bovon (1989: 155) states: “V 49 kann als theologische Beschreibung des ganzen Lebens Jesu gelten, auch wenn der Satz zuerst die nüchterne Antwort eines Kindes an seine Mutter darstellt.” This answer states two Christological facts: Jesus is the son of God (v. 49) and a human being (v. 51). Green (1997: 155) summarizes: “Jesus is being raised in a pious environment, but his commitment to God’s purpose transcends that piety and that environment. In this case at least, acting on behalf of God’s aim places Jesus’ behaviour against parental expectations.”

⁹⁴ See also Bock (1994: 269-270) for further discussion.

5.8 Jesus public ministry (Lk 3:1–4:13)

John the Baptist Prepares the Way (Lk 3:1–22): Section Lk 3:1–22 narrates how John the Baptist prepares the way for Jesus. Vv. 1–2 are an introduction, changing the setting and scene back to John and his stay in the wilderness. Luke introduces the time again in a chronological manner referring to Tiberius Caesar. The second part spans vv. 3–20 narrating John’s baptizing and his imprisonment. Vv. 21–22 describe Jesus’ baptism by John⁹⁵. This section contains several pieces of information about how Luke sees society and also foreshadows several aspects of the community of those, who follow Jesus.

The first two verses introduce the time and location. The situation has changed since v. 5: Judea is ruled by a tetrarch⁹⁶: Luke introduces Tiberius Caesar and governor of Judea (with a participle ἡγεμονεύω) Pontius Pilate, as the three tetrarchs, of Judea, Ituraea and Trachonitis, and Abilene. He also introduces Annas and Caiaphas as high priests in Jerusalem⁹⁷. It is not that clear whether the picture of suppressed Israel and the liberation from the powerful and privileged are the only narrative motifs here. Bock (1994: 284), for example, refers only to the “complexity of the political and religious setting into which John’s ministry came.” All mentioned people apart of Tiberius Caesar, Philip and Lysanias will play an important role as antagonists in Luke-Acts and Luke introduces them right here.

The narrative is interrupted by a longer Isaiah quote in vv. 4–6 citing Is 40:3–5⁹⁸. We also find a shorter preaching of John in vv. 7–9. Here, vv. 7b and 8a are the introduction part, and John calls his audience γεννήματα ἐχιδνῶν⁹⁹ and asks them why they think they could flee the coming ὀργή which clearly refers to a coming judgment. This can only be done when they bring fruits of repentance. The words καρπός and μετάνοια are very

⁹⁵ Green (1997: 161) sees two narrative points in this section: First, John prepares the way “by provoking a crisis and directly popular hopes to the coming of a future deliverer”, and second, his preaching leads to his imprisonment and we may expect even more hospitality.

⁹⁶ Bovon (1989: 167) states: “Die heilgeschichtlichen Ereignisse gehören sogar der Zeit fremder Herrscher über Israel an.”

⁹⁷ Garland (2012: 152) argues that they also represent the Roman empire being appointed by them.

⁹⁸ Whereas Mt 3:3 and Mk 1:3 quote only Is 40:3! Beale & Carson (2007: 276) state, that this difference mainly highlights the importance of Gentiles in Luke. It is worth mentioning, that this is a quote explicitly given to the reader. It once again embeds the narrative – and in particular John – in the OT Scripture and the promises given in OT prophecy.

⁹⁹ Which – as Green (1997: 175) suggests, can be best interpreted with reference to v. 8: “They are the offspring of poisonous snakes, not children of Abraham.”

important for Luke's portrait of the preaching of both John and Jesus and the motif of a tree with fruits is used as a narrative bracket for the next verse. V. 8b is a comparison – or rather a confrontation – of what he expects the audience would say (... μὴ ἄρξῃσθε λέγειν ἐν ἑαυτοῖς ...) and what he says (... λέγω γὰρ ὑμῖν ὅτι ...). It is not enough to have Abraham as a father: “at an individual level [] Abrahamic heritage guarantees nothing before God.” (Bock 1994: 305) Even more: ‘God is able from these stones to raise up children for Abraham.’ Which is a reference to the coming grace for the Gentiles, see Ac 11:18¹⁰⁰. V. 9 is threefold with a climax at its end. The motif of a tree is repeated, the axe is not only laid to the tree but even to the root of the tree. Although it is lying at the moment: Without the ‘good fruits’ mentioned in v. 8 a tree will not only be cut down, but ‘thrown into the fire’.

In vv. 10–14 there are several questions and answers between the crowd or particular persons and John. John's audience is an ὄχλοι¹⁰¹ (v. 7,10), λαός (v. 15), τελῶναι (v. 12), στρατευόμενοι (v. 14). The question ‘τί ποιήσωμεν;’ is repeated in v. 10, 12, 14. Whereas ὄχλοι, λαός and τελῶναι refers most likely to a Jewish audience, this is surely not for the soldiers¹⁰². From the narrative perspective we may assume, that Luke is not playing with the motif of Roman soldiers. However, John's response to the people has not only a theological perspective covering the change of the people but also a social: Sharing food and clothes (v. 11), not being greedy about money (v. 13) and being honest to others and being content with one's wage (v. 14)¹⁰³.

¹⁰⁰ Maybe we see references to Ezk 36:26, Ml 4:1, Is 51:1–2;33–34 or Gn 18:14. See Beale & Carson (2007: 278-279) for more details. Sanders (1982: 13) offers an idea of how the Jewish-Christian as well as today's readers might understand: “By dynamic analogy Jesus and Luke bring Isaiah to us as a challenge whenever we as Christians feel we have God boxed into our ideas of the Incarnation. The temptation for Christians to feel they have God tamed in the Incarnation is perhaps even greater than it was for Jews to feel they had God on a leash as children of Abraham (Luke 3:8). If one takes a cue from Luke and does a theocentric reading of Isaiah as a whole without, like Luke, worrying for the moment about whether it is First Isaiah, Deutero-Isaiah, or Trito but looking at the Isaiah book canonically, one would have to say that Luke's Jesus has brought Isaiah forward to the first century believer and to the twentieth century believer in a dynamic way true to the canonical Isaiah.”

¹⁰¹ Bock (1994: 302-303) tries to identify which people are meant with ὄχλοι and discusses Pharisees, Sadducees and a general audience addressing ‘all’. Since it is impossible to figure that out, we assume that this addresses narrative in particular the reader.

¹⁰² See for example Bovon (1989: 174) who sees the soldiers as part of the Hellenistic-Jewish community. Although Green (1997: 180) sees this possibility, he sees no grand importance in this question: “In any case, John behaves toward Jews as though they were Gentiles — 3:7-8.” Other scholars like Bock (1994: 310) see both the soldiers and the tax collectors as part of the “least popular in Jewish society”. Although this question remains unsolved, we may argue that for some readers this text implies a first hint on the Gentiles – but in general we assume a Jewish audience.

¹⁰³ And indeed: “Habsucht ist die lukanische Ursünde.” (Bovon 1989: 175) Although this perspective limits the Luke's narrative intention, because obviously with respect to vv. 3–20 Luke is painting a

Vv. 15–17 describe John’s answer to the question as to whether he is the Messiah. He refers to the Christ and his relation to him without naming him. Jesus is proclaimed as much higher than all prophets (... οὐ οὐκ εἰμι ἰκανὸς λύσαι τὸν ἱμάντα τῶν ὑποδημάτων αὐτοῦ ...) and although the motif of an ἀξίνη is changed to a πύον but the motif of πῦρ from v. 9 is repeated. It is an eschatological image. The main difference described in his answer is that he baptizes with water whereas the Messiah baptizes ‘with the Holy Spirit and fire’.

Vv. 18–20 describe the imprisonment of John by Herod. Luke does not explicitly mention the reasons for that here, and although we may think about reasons¹⁰⁴, it seems unimportant for him. Maybe the reference to vv. 1–2 seems sufficient enough. This intersection is a break between the indirect reference to Jesus – the reader already knows who Jesus is – and the story of his baptism.

The last two verses 21–22 describe Jesus’ baptism. Lk 3:1–22 is of particular interest for the SNA because it describes again the scenario for confrontation between the coming of Jesus and the people: Both social, cultural and religious confrontations are foreshadowed. On the other hand, for the reconstruction of a network we may only add one additional edge: John baptized Jesus and thus, they both meet and have a strong connection. It remains unclear if these verses imply some connection or even (positive) connections between them and Herod, his household or even dynasty, c.f. Lk 8:1–3.

Introduction of Jesus Christ (Lk 3:23–4:13): Two narratives (vv. 3:23a and 4:1–13) are split by the genealogy of Jesus Christ (vv. 3:23b–38). The general topic is the introduction of Jesus Christ to the reader. This is done both by presenting his genealogy and the narrative of the temptation of Jesus. We find several important aspects for the coming tensions in the Gospel.

The genealogy in vv. 3:23b–38 (par. Mt 1:1–17) is special for several reasons:

- First, it states Jesus was supposed to be the son of Josef (...ὡς ἐνομιζετο...). One of the main purposes of this genealogy can be found exactly here, because v. 22

broader perspective: Greed is only a result of the people’s disobedience.

¹⁰⁴ See for example Garland (2012: 160) and Bock (1994: 327–330).

states, that Jesus is God’s son, while v. 23 states, that Jesus is the son of Josef¹⁰⁵: the reader knows more than the people in the narrative.

- Second, when comparing this genealogy to Mt 1:1–17, we see a list of rather important people, for example Matthew includes King Solomon whereas Luke includes Nathan¹⁰⁶. This might be a link to history and the people of Israel. Although a SNA of the genealogies might be helpful, it is out of scope of this work limited to Luke-Acts because it would require different time points to be included.
- Third, the genealogy is ordered differently from Matthew¹⁰⁷.

The narrative begins in v. 3:23a introducing Jesus ministry when he reached the age of thirty, and is continued in vv. 4:1–13. Jesus leaves the Jordan (the link to 2:21–22) and goes into the wilderness (which is antiparallel to 2:2 – John came from the wilderness to the Jordan, Jesus does the exact opposite). The text tells the story of how the devil comes to tempt Jesus and how he resisted these temptations.

Jesus has shown obedience to God’s plans and thus, in v. 13 the devil “departed from him ... until an opportune time” (...ἄχρι καιροῦ...). But nevertheless, as Green (1997: 196) states, “tests would certainly continue” but in a different setting¹⁰⁸. This narrative foreshadows all causes of friction: The different reading of the OT, the earthly power is not obedient to God and the social problems, hunger, and slavery. The temptations are

¹⁰⁵ See for example Green (1997: 189) who argues that this shows “how closely 3:28-38 is integrated into its narrative genealogy”. Similar Bovon: “Eine Analyse der zahlreichen Namen, ihrer Träger rund ihrer eventuellen Beziehungen ist weniger interessant als die Frage der literarischen Einordnung [...]. Nach der Bezeugung der Zugehörigkeit Jesu zur göttlichen Sphäre (Lk 3,22) will er die menschliche Identität Jesu veranschaulichen.”(Bovon 1989: 191)

¹⁰⁶ Is it only because the “kingly line was filled with scandalous behavior“ (Garland 2012: 171) or does emphasize this the humble state of Jesus’ genealogy? Garland also suggests this could be a reference to Is 11:1.

¹⁰⁷ Bovon (1989: 187) sees a universality approach in going back to Adam whereas (Green 1997: 189) argues that this “presents the divine origin of the human race and indicates Jesus’ solidarity with all humanity”. Garland (2012: 172) agrees with both thesis. Beale & Carson (2007: 281) sees some influences from the Hellenistic genealogies in the ordering and the emphasizes on divine origin. All these interpretations could have been intended by Luke, but if the readers of Luke-Acts are as divergent as discussed in section 4.2 we need to consider that not all these points had been equally important for Luke.

¹⁰⁸ Garland (2012: 184) disagrees: “It does not mean that the devil is now finished.” But this is not only an end to the narrative, the word διάβολος is only used in Lk 8:12 and Ac 10:38;13:10 in a different context. Thus – from a narrative perspective – it is obvious that Luke wants to express that *the* confrontation between Jesus and the devil is finished, although the devil is still active which is also expressed by ἄχρι καιροῦ in v. 13.

literary arranged and the reading of the Scripture is the climax¹⁰⁹. Although this section does not give any further information for the social network, it gives us further information about how Luke narrates the coming tensions and that these are also integrated in a wider field of social frictions. This, however, will play an important role to analyze the social network once fully established.

5.9 Summary: To bring good news to the poor

Lk 1:1-4:13 is both an introduction to the Gospel of Luke and a narrative subsection with its own lines of suspense. Initially, Luke roots his Gospel in the time and piety of Israel. His OT references are an important part of his composition. However, while these motifs continue, Luke carefully arranges and introduces yet another issue: the society and the social network of Jesus. Before discussing the main narrative social issues presented by Luke in this section, we will discuss a social network representation of this introductory part of Luke which is presented in Figure 5.1. As stated earlier, in these summary sections, we will mainly present preliminary observations on the network and narrative motifs related to the social network to collect questions to be answered within Chapter 10 and in part III.

This network omits all antagonists which have only an indirect influence on the actors in this network according to the narrative. See our discussion in Chapter 3. Luke presents mainly the network of two families – Joseph’s and Zecharias’ – which are related. Both centrality measures presented in Figure 5.1 are not easy to interpret. The betweenness centrality doesn’t seem to return valuable results because the network itself is small and quite dense, forming a unique *small world*, see Section 3.1.4 for further information and Section 22.3 for a detailed discussion on missing data and the reliability of SNA. The eigen centrality describes exactly this, identifying mainly those characters being part of that small world.

One family is most likely rather poor, Joseph and Mary. The other family belongs to the religious elite, although we do not know about their wealth. Since we have no

¹⁰⁹“Die letzte Versuchung ist für Jesus deshalb die schwierigste, weil sich der Satan auf eine γραφή beruft; d. h. er versteckt sich hinter einem Wort, das qua Zugehörigkeit zu den γραφαί Autorität beansprucht. Diesem kann Jesus nur mit einem anderen Schriftwort begegnen” (Rusam 2015: 96-97).

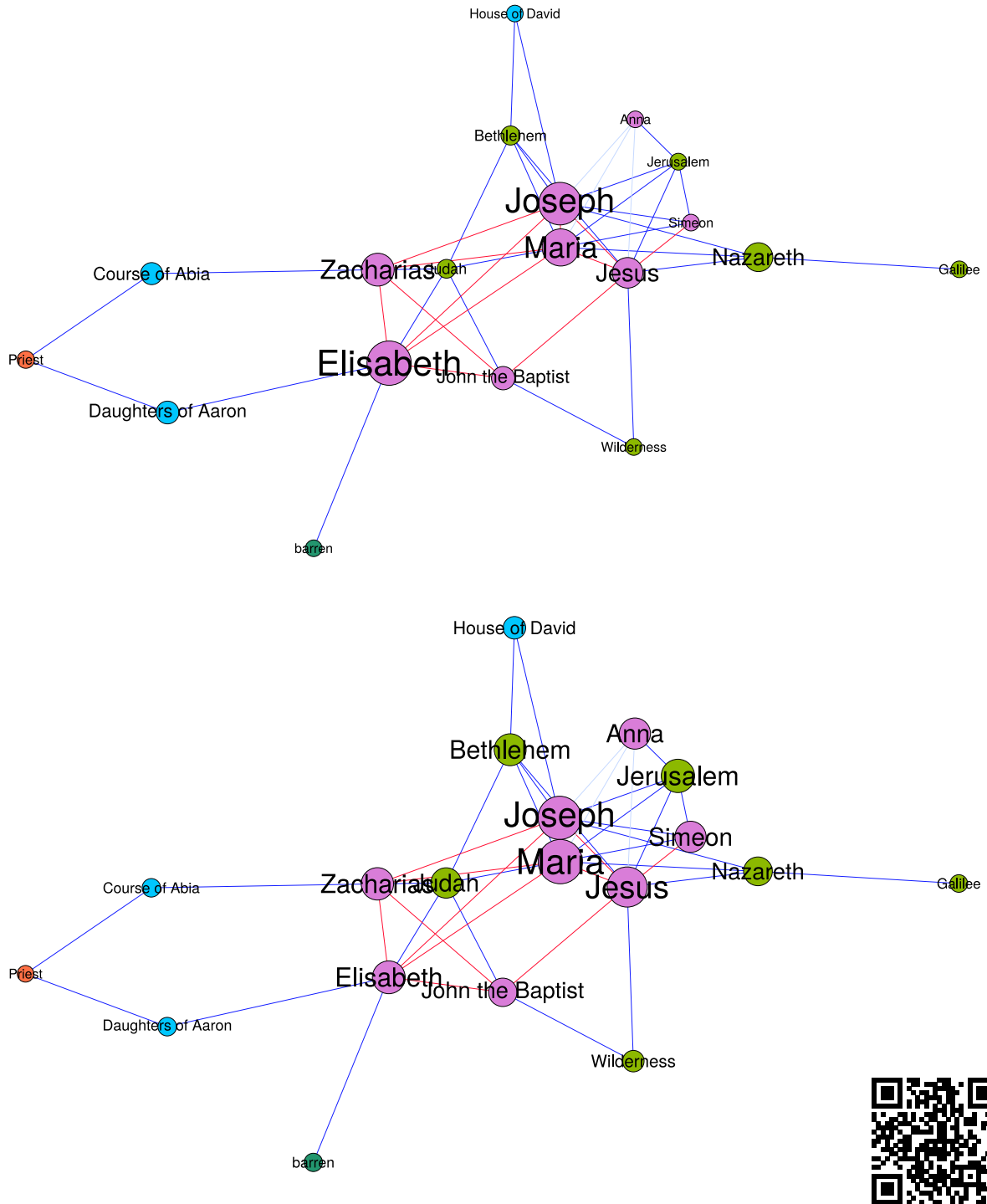


Figure 5.1: Social network according to Lk 1:1-4:13

The node size refers to its centrality value, *Betweenness Centrality* (top) or *Eigen Centrality* (bottom).

The node color refers to the group: Persons are purple, locations green, groups orange and entities blue or green. Different layout strategies will not result in different visualizations. This is a hint of the simplicity of this network found in the narrative. It is mainly a network comprising two families with two children – only Simeon is a person which is known to have more closely interacted with one family.



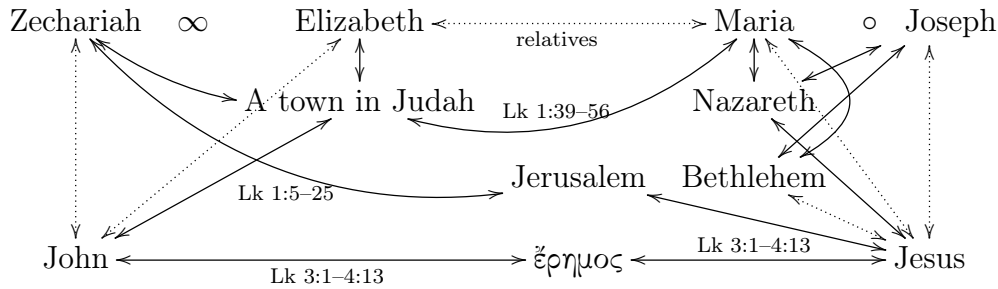


Figure 5.2: The spatial movement in Lk 1:1–4:13. The arrows indicate spatial movement and relations in firstspace and secondspace, the dotted arrows indicate relations primary in thirdspace, for example social relations as part of the spatiality.

information about Simeon this results in an exact bisection of the network, see Fig. 5.2. For a narrative interpretation this is a very interesting observation showing that Luke not only describes the ‘humble’ Davidic origin of Jesus but also the priestly origin of John. This will play an important role in Luke’s narrative evolution of problems, confrontations and tensions, as we will show during our analysis.

However, a spatial analysis of this part shows how carefully Luke arranges his narrative, see Figure 5.2. Besides the fact that both stories of Jesus and John and his families are closely connected, and that both stories follow a similar pattern, there are several differences highlighting Luke’s point of view. First, while Jerusalem plays an important part in Zechariah’s work, Luke does not connect John to this city, but Jesus. Similarly, the birth narrative of Jesus is spatially connected to Nazareth and Bethlehem, underlining the importance of Jesus for Luke’s story.

There are other interesting observations: First, all entities – which means all additional information in the network apart from actors or locations – describing characterizations are part of the OT-world. And – although the next part of Luke’s gospel is dedicated to Jesus’ ministry in Galilee – Jerusalem already plays an important role in this introduction.

We also find information about Luke’s implicit view on society in the narrative, which are also important bricks for our analysis. Sections A-C’ give hints mainly on plots which are evolved later in the narrative. Section A helps to identify readers and intention of the Gospel. This is especially important when discussing which hints and information about society can be understood by the reader. Luke writes mainly for Christians with a solid

knowledge of OT Scripture, but it seems obvious that he intended to write also for a far wider audience, see Section 4.2.

Sections B-B'' introduce the main places for this introduction: Jerusalem, in particular the Temple, Nazareth, Galilee, Judah. The only exception is the 'wilderness' introduced in C which further raises the line of suspense. Here, Luke presents the meeting of two families from a different social background, although related. This is not Luke's central topic, but Luke carefully develops his narrative on this basis which makes it important for SNA. Both families receive a special gift from God and it is worthwhile to notice that the Messiah is born into the more humble family. Nevertheless, here the overcoming of social borders is already foreshadowed. Luke is very carefully describing both Mary's and Elizabeth's social position.

Luke also foreshadows coming confrontations and social inclusions in C and C'. While in C only the neighbors and relatives are concerned about the naming of John, C' indicates not only a coming conflict with the Romans, but also the inclusion of the humble and low and the coming grace 'for all the people'. There is always a narrative connection to social relations as well as being obedient to God and possible confrontations. This salvation

is made possible by the birth and growth of John and Jesus in households that honor God. But, according to the Lukan birth narrative, it is not an aim that will be reached easily or without opposition. It requires the positive responses of people like Zechariah (whose response is hesitant), Mary, and others, for God's aim necessarily involves the collusion of human actors. Not all will respond favorably to God's agent of salvation, Jesus, resulting in antagonism, division, and conflict. (Green 2020: 54)

The infancy narratives D are a relief in the line of suspense but they also deepen the topics yet to be introduced. The first narrative about Jesus in the Temple α_1 repeat the universality of the coming salvation and the relation to the Temple in Jerusalem. This is also a topic for narrative α_2 , although here Jesus is more clearly presented as God's son. At this point, there is not yet a friction between his teaching and the teachers in the Temple.

The beginning of Jesus' public ministry in E clarifies a lot of the introduced topics. John's preaching in β_1 clarifies the need for salvation, for the coming of the Messiah and the universality for all people. The crowd and two special groups of people ask John 'What then shall we do?'. John's answer is particularly important because it does not

only contain a theological but a very obvious social component: Sharing food and clothes, not being greedy about money, being honest to others and satisfied with wages. This will be one of the leitmotifs in Luke's gospel. It is thus important that section β_1 contains the first confrontation with the earthly powers, John being imprisoned by Herod.

In combination with section β_2 the narrative highlights again the nature of Jesus being a human being and the Son of God. Jesus being tempted by the devil in the wilderness also retells and frames the already introduced areas of conflict: The different reading of the OT as the most important issue because it separates those believing in Jesus being the Messiah from the rest, because it will lead to conflicts with the religious elite and Pharisees and Sadducees¹¹⁰.

Finally, Jesus' applying OT scripture to himself already foreshadows all other conflicts. This makes the explicitly told points literally even more important. The narrative also points to an earthly power which is not obedient to God, maybe a general critique on the powerful leaders of Luke's world can be heard. In addition, this section again highlights social problems and in particular hunger and slavery.

Lk 1:1-4:13 is an introduction to the social view as the narrative develops it. This view is of significant importance for the further analysis of the social network. It introduces the main lines of suspense which converge in the theological meaning of the salvation in Jesus and is combined with the reading of OT scripture identifying God's plans. Luke highlights in particular the social component of the disproportion of earthly power and slavery, wealth and hunger. Luke presents a social network being the center of God's works containing both the 'humble and poor' and the religious elite. John's preaching and Jesus' temptation already introduce all leitmotifs of the Gospel and prepare the coming lines of suspense.

The quote from Is 61:1 which is referred to later in Lk 4:18,19 is a good summary of this narrative: 'to bring good news to the poor'.

¹¹⁰ It is not surprising that several scholars like Green (2020: 59) and Rusam (2015: 20ff.) highlight the importance of OT references in this part of Luke's gospel.

6 Jesus in Galilee (Lk 4:14–9:50)

The second part of Luke's Gospel, Lk 4:14-9:50, narrates the story of Jesus in Galilee. The first part A (Lk 4:14–44) can be seen as an introduction. Here, Luke describes the beginning of Jesus' ministry in Galilee. The next five sections form a chiasmus. Both sections B (Lk 5:1–6:49) and B' (Lk 9:1–50) are dedicated to Jesus' preaching and his disciples. The line of tension is carefully drawn by the author: While in B the focus is on the calling of the disciples and preaching, in B' we see the coming crisis and the confrontation with society and rulers. Both sections C (Lk 7:1–17) and C' (Lk 8:22–56) are an important interlude narrating mainly wonders and signs. Part D (Lk 7:17–8:21) is somehow a climax of tension, because first, Jesus describes many points of criticism: His relation to John, women and family. Second, together with C and C' it forms the middle of his works in Galilee and shows crucial theological issues.

A The beginning of Jesus' ministry in Galilee (Lk 4:14–44)

B Jesus' preaching and his disciples (Lk 5:1–6:49)

β_1 Jesus calls his disciples (Lk 5:1–32)

β_2 Jesus and certain questions (Lk 5:33–39)

β_3 The twelve Apostles and Jesus' Preaching (Lk 6:1–49)

C Wonders and Signs (Lk 7:1–17)

D Jesus, his Theology and Society (Lk 7:18–8:21)

δ_1 John and Jesus (Lk 7:18–35)

δ_2 Jesus and Women (Lk 7:36–8:3)

δ_3 Parables (Lk 8:4–18)

δ_4 Jesus' Mother and Brother (Lk 8:19–21)

C' Wonders and Signs (Lk 8:22–56)

B' Jesus' preaching and his disciples (Lk 9:1–50)

β'_1 The twelve Apostles being sent by Jesus (Lk 9:1–6)

β'_2 Jesus, John and Herod (Lk 9:7–9)

β'_3 Jesus and his Disciples (Lk 9:10–50)

In the first part, Lk 1:5–4:13, Luke introduces Jesus as God's Son. Jesus' identity is clear for the narrator and the readers. Here, Jesus starts his public ministry and the focus of his mission lies in Galilee. Green (1997: 197) argues that the first part tells about what might be expected, and this section tells about how this is carried out. It “articulates the pattern of ministry by which God's aim would be actualized — first by providing a more definitive understanding of the outworking of Jesus' sonship and empowerment by means of a public proclaimed missionary programme (4:16-30), then by demonstrating that program in concrete missionary practice”.

6.1 The beginning of Jesus' ministry in Galilee (Lk 4:14–44)

This section comprises five deeply connected narratives with a joined line of tension, see Table 6.1. The climax comes very early in vv. 4:16–30, the falling action comprises two narratives. The resolution in vv. 4:42–44 is as short as the exposition in vv. 4:14–15. These short sections include different theological topics, the mission of Jesus with an eschatological perspective, the Spirit of God, and the rejection of the Messiah (cf. Knight & Knight 1998: 84). We will pay particular attention to the issues related to the social network, that is actors and their characterization, social and spatial thinking.

In the first two verses, Lk 4:14.15, Jesus' ministry is introduced, and they are the exposition and a narrative summary containing additional information: “Jesus returned *in*

	VV	Location	Audience	Action	Reaction
Exposition	14.15	Galilee, surrounding country	Synagogue	Teaching	
Climax	16-30	Galilee, Nazareth	Synagogue	Teaching	They want to throw him down the cliff (29)
Falling	31-37	Galilee, Capernaum	Synagogue	Teaching, Healing	They were amazed (V. 36)
Action	38-41	Galilee, Capernaum, Simon's house	Simon's family, any who were sick	Healing	Demons proclaiming "You are the Son of God!"
Resolution	42-44	A desolated place (42), Judea (44)	The people (42)	Teaching	

Table 6.1: Narrative structure of Lk 4:14–44.

the power of the Spirit to Galilee”, see vv. 3:22 and 4:1. Jesus taught in the synagogues¹¹¹. The reader knows Jesus’ identity. “If the wilderness test of Jesus’ fidelity to the divine call shows, negatively, what Jesus’ messianic vocation is not, the inauguration of his prophetic-messianic ministry shows, positively, how it is that he will bring salvation to Israel.” (Carroll 2012: 106) Jesus is being praised by all and ‘a report about him went out through all the surrounding country’.

Apart from the next section, vv. 16–30, where Jesus is rejected in Nazareth, the narrative repeats his positive reception on several occasions (vv. 32;42) and that he is well-known in the surrounding area (vv. 37;40;42). Luke arranges his story very carefully leading to Jesus’ saying ‘I must preach the good news of the kingdom of God to the other towns as well; for I was sent for this purpose’ in v. 43. Together with him being identified – yet as a secret – as the Son of Man and Christ, this is the main intention in this section. The section vv. 16–30 narrates Jesus’ return to Nazareth and his rejection by the audience in the synagogue on a Sabbath day, it is the climax of these narratives. Jesus reads from Isaiah in vv. 18–19 quoting Isa 42:7;49:8;58:6;61:1.2 and Ps 146:7.8. There

¹¹¹ Not surprising: “Such gatherings on the Sabbath, expressing piety matching that evident in temple observances of Luke 1–2, give the setting for Jesus’ initial teaching in Galilee.” (Carroll 2012: 108)

are three statements of Jesus (v. 21;23;24–27) and one question from the attendants (v. 22). Jesus states that ‘Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.’ Initially the audience has a good impression of him, they ‘all spoke well of him’. But they are also astonished: ‘Is not this Joseph’s son?’ Jesus answers: ‘Doubtless you will quote to me this proverb, Physician, heal yourself. What we have heard you did at Capernaum, do here in your hometown as well.’ The question Luke tries to answer is: ‘Who is this?’ and indeed, the audience recognizes only half of the answer (cf. Bovon 1989: 214). In vv. 24–27 Jesus refers to Elijah and Elisha¹¹².

The spatial setting is carefully arranged within the town, the synagogues and in households¹¹³ The last section, vv. 42–44, connects part A to the next part B: Jesus first departs to a “desolate place” (ἔρημος, v. 42) and then continues his preaching “in the synagogues of Judea” (v. 44). Bovon (1989) highlight the importance of πόλις within Luke’s Gospel, and we will pay attention to towns and villages for a detailed SNA analysis.

6.2 Jesus’ preaching and his disciples (Lk 5:1–6:49)

Jesus Calls his Disciples (Lk 5:1–32): Most scholars tie together 5:1–6:11¹¹⁴. Green, for example, argues that “[i]mmediately following in this section are six episodes that illustrate in concrete interactions with Jewish people the nature of ministry” (Green 1997: 227-228) Bock (1994: 446) suggests that the structural element of these narratives is “gathering disciples and the rise of opposition”. Following these observations, we would need to distinguish between the calling of disciples and their actions. Both are important for the social network. There is a break after v. 32 when no more callings are described,

¹¹² Carroll (2012: 115) sees references to Gentile mission: “Of significance in Luke 4 is the fact that God’s help—the passive verb ‘was sent’ implies divine action—comes through the prophet to a Gentile widow, bypassing those within Israel.” In contrast, Bovon (1989: 120) argues, that this is hard to show: “Es läßt sich nicht mehr sagen als dies, daß die VV 26-27 ein Christentum widerspiegeln, das seine jüdischen Schranken durchbrochen hat.” In fact, it remains even unclear if reflects or if it simply states.

¹¹³ Carroll (2012: 120) rightly observes that “the scene shifts from gathered community (synagogue) to household, from public sphere (word is spreading throughout the region) to private.” Indeed, this change in perspective is typical for Luke.

¹¹⁴ Or even 5:1-6:19—which, according to Klein (2006: 203) can be summed up by ‘The Word’. Whereas this section would describe teaching as mission (“missionarisches Wirken (Verkündigung)”) the following section would describe normative reaching (“Verhaltensnorm für Christen || (Lehre)”). Other scholars support a more detailed view on this topic and in particular the importance of the calling of disciples (cf. Bovon 1989: 227ff).

but Jesus' disciples seem to be complete (cf. 6:12–16)¹¹⁵. We will return to the important narrative comparison between John the Baptist and Jesus in section 6.2.

There are also literary reasons for not putting these narratives together. First, the stories in 5:33–6:11 are not dedicated to the calling of disciples¹¹⁶. Indeed, the parables in Lk 5:33–39 are rather a link between the narratives which rather belong to the summary in 6:12–16. Second, the inherent narrative structure suggests that Lk 5:1–32 forms a story linked to (a) the calling of disciples in the first and fourth part and (b) the confrontation and discussion with others¹¹⁷. The structure of locations also supports the idea of a narrative structure in this section, see Table 6.2: From the wide open teaching at the lake of Gennesaret, the story focuses on smaller locations: A city, a desolated place, a house, the tax booth and a particular house: Levi's house. In addition, the audience and the action also support this: The audience follows the same pattern, the people, the crowd stand in the background and the Pharisees remain as antagonists. The action begins and ends with teaching and calling disciples. In the middle part, there is rising action and a climax when healing and the forgiving of sin are added.

Jesus Calls his First Disciples (vv. 1–11): This scene can be localized in Capernaum¹¹⁸. Here, Jesus is teaching the λόγος. Again, a crowd – ὄχλος – wants to hear him and he asks Simon to take his boat to teach from the boat on the sea. Although teaching from a boat might be special, teaching in public was not¹¹⁹. We do not know much about

¹¹⁵ Indeed, Knight gives another hint why the story should split here: “The dispute is followed by the Pharisees’ comparison between the behaviour of the disciples of John the Baptist and that of those of Jesus (5.33).” (Knight & Knight 1998: 78)

¹¹⁶ In contrast, Bovon (1989: 253) highlights the importance of the people involved: “Eine Trennung zwischen 5,32 und 33 wäre nur bei Markus sinnvoll, der die Fastenfrage (5,33-39) von anderen Gesprächspartnern stellen läßt (Mk, 2,18). Bei Lukas findet ein durchgehendes Gespräch mit denselben Partnern statt.” Although v 33 indicates an ongoing discussion (Οἱ δὲ εἶπαν...) the usage of δὲ indicates a narrative hint on a changing topic.

¹¹⁷ (Green 1997: 228) suggests Luke only aims at “the importance of response”, but it is more than response, often even hospitality. On the one hand a response to Jesus’ teaching can be the realization of being a sinner (cf. Bock 1994: 447), on the other hand people might refuse his preaching: “Other teachers discover that Jesus’ vision and embodied practice of the reign of God clash with their own and, with increasing intensity, object.” (Carroll 2012: 123)

¹¹⁸ With Lk 4:31.38 this is the place were Simon lived and most likely worked. Both (Green 1997: 231) and Carroll state, that “[t]he presence of Simon at the shore of the lake Gennesaret [...] places this scene near Capernaum, although 4:42–44 has seemingly reported Jesus’ departure.” (Carroll 2012: 124)

¹¹⁹ “Predigstätten waren nicht nur Synagogen u. Lehrhäuser, sondern auch Straßen u. freie Plätze.” (Strack & Billerbeck 1924: 157) Teaching on a boat might have some benefits: “A sloping amphitheater-like inlet lies halfway between Capernaum and Tabgha and has excellent natural acoustics, and Jesus may have used this cove in teaching the crowds from the boat.” (Garland 2012: 226)

	vv	Location	Audience	Action	Disciples
Exposition	1-11 a	Lake of Genesaret	The People	Teaching	Simon, James, John
Rising Action	12-16 b	“one of the cities” → “desolate places”	A Leper, the crowd	Healing, Teaching	
Climax	17-26 c	A house (?)	A Paralytic, Pharisees	Forgiving, Healing, Teaching	
Resolution	27-32 d	Tax Booth, Levi’s house	Tax Collectors, Pharisees	Teaching	Levi

Table 6.2: Narrative Structure of Lk 5:1–32.

the fishermen and their social status. Simon and his business partners (μέτοχος, v 7), James and John, might have been quite well off¹²⁰.

Simon calls Jesus κύριος – the first usage to address Jesus – and Luke describes a motif of repentance¹²¹. More important is the recognition of sin¹²², which is also an important topic in the fourth part of this narrative vv. 27–32. The word ἁμαρτωλός occurs 17 times in Luke, here for the first time and also reoccurs in v. 32. Jesus introduces the μετάνοια which is not necessary for those δίκαιος but for ἁμαρτωλός. And indeed, this is the most important narrative topic that ties together these four narratives: The understanding of sin is key for receiving forgiveness. Simon is the first person to experience this¹²³.

¹²⁰“Although in general fishermen might be peasants with artisan-type skills [...], the fishermen in this scene command their own boats and depend on a cooperative business partnership rather than on hired day-laborers.” (Green 1997: 231)

¹²¹ Although some scholars argue that repentance itself is not mentioned: “The exchange between Simon and Jesus, however, introduces a new motif, one that will become central in Jesus’ teaching. He embraces a self-professed sinner and commissions him as a laborer in the realm of God (5:8, 10). The language of repentance and forgiveness does not appear, but Simon is the first of many sinners whose lives will be transformed through encounter with Jesus.” (Carroll 2012: 124) But Bovon (1989: 243) stresses the motif of repentance: “Die numinose Erscheinung deckt die Sünde des menschen auf und wird ihm gefährlich. Simons Reaktion entspricht den alttestamentlichen Theophanien: Man kann Gott nicht sehen, ohne zu sterben.” And indeed, meeting Jesus itself calls for repentance; being a sinner is clear for Simon now.

¹²²“That Peter declares himself a sinner is nonetheless important for the development of Luke’s narrative [...] [and] also entail the release from the power and stigma of (or forgiveness of) sin.” (Green 1997: 231)

¹²³ It is not to far-fetching to call him a narrative prototype within the gospel: “Damit ist Simon Prototyp aller, die zum Glauben kommen werden, indem sie ihre Sünden bekennen und Jesus als Herrn annehmen.” (Klein 2006: 209)

Simon's reaction is fear¹²⁴ and Jesus response is μή φοβοῦ (v. 10), which is also a central topic for Luke's description of sinners meeting God. The image 'from now on you will be catching men' is well placed in a scene with fishers and a very singular occurrence of this image¹²⁵. The word ζωγράφω (LXX: Num 31:18, Dtn 20:16, Jos 6:25, 2Chr 25:12) "has a prehistory in the OT and in Greek literature, where it belongs to the vocabulary of war and hunting." (Green 1997: 234)¹²⁶. The disciples do not fulfill this task in the Gospel, although we will find some hints in the social network analysis. This topic is more important in Acts. And this might be another hint why this missionary approach is new¹²⁷.

The last reaction in v. 11 is not only Simon's but also the reaction of John and James: 'they left everything and followed him.' This reaction is embedded in the narrative with three directions of movement in one verse, ἀκολουθεῖω and πίπτω in one direction after bringing up the boats (κατάγω). It is not only the call in the discipleship¹²⁸ but a complex movement of three people from their here and now, their daily business already interrupted by Jesus¹²⁹. What it means to be Jesus' disciple, will be one of the core topics of Luke¹³⁰

¹²⁴ Although some scholars do not directly link this fear to the recognition of sin, this seems to be the most important part of this fear. The elementary encounter with Jesus and his own life will send the fishing experience into the background. In contrast to Carroll: "The narrator adds that Simon and the others who have witnessed the incident—including Simon's business partners James and John, Zebedee's sons, identified for the first time—are amazed by what has happened (vv. 9–10). Jesus names their amazement (or awe, *thambos*) 'fear' when, turning to Simon, he speaks the words one expects in such an epiphany: 'Don't be afraid!' (cf. 1:13, 30)." (Carroll 2012: 123)

¹²⁵ "Lukas betont: Du warst Fischer, du wirst die Menschen *lebendig* fangen. Die Allegorie wirkt und deckt die Grenze des Bildes vom Fischfang auf." (Bovon 1989: 234-235)

¹²⁶ But there is no negative aspect of killing the fish after fishing it, it emphasizes the catching alive as Bovon (1989: 234-235) suggests. "The first observation is that, besides the parabolic use of the sorting of fish in Mt. 13:47-50, there are seemingly no other metaphoric uses of fishing in the New Testament, except, of course, in the story of the call of the first disciples (Mk. 1:16-18 par. and Lk. 5:1-11). But on closer examination we find in the New Testament and in early Patristic sources some reflection on the meaning of 'fishers of men' and an occasional employment of metaphors related to fishing or hunting." (Wuellner 1965: 50) And this fits very well in the scenery of fishers: "All these metaphors reflect an understanding of man as both essentially and existentially subject to powers. Man finds his true freedom in letting himself be caught by the right and not by the wrong powers." (Wuellner 1965: 59)

¹²⁷ "Die Berufung schafft nicht nur Nachfolger, Schüler, sondern ‚Menschenfischer‘, Missionare, ein Novum, das es so in der jüdischen Umwelt nicht gegeben hat und kaum von der Ukirche erfunden wurde: der Ausdruck ‚Menschenfischer‘ kommt außerhalb der Evangelien im Neuen Testament nicht vor." (Schnabel 2002: 271)

¹²⁸ "Simon, joined by his business partners James and John, models appropriate response to Jesus' call to the realm of God, leaving everything to follow him." (Carroll 2012: 123)

¹²⁹ Müller & Haacker (2013: 1372) see a dramatic difference to other people joining a school or a rabbi, since it is Jesus' will and his decision to call them: "Jesus ergreift die Initiative und beruft in die Nachfolge". Indeed, in the whole scene the three play a mostly passive role.

¹³⁰ "And so they leave everything (5:11): a distinctively Lukan embellishment (anticipating Levi's similar response in 5:28). Answering the call to follow Jesus, in this Gospel, means detaching oneself from one's

Thus v. 11 is not just an addendum in concise style (“Lapidar ... am Ende der Erzählung”, see Klein 2006: 210), but a fundamental narrative element that sums up the key elements of this scene. Sin as a topic will return in the third and fourth story. Calling disciples in the fourth. The next story introduces another topic important for Luke’s concept of society: sickness and healing.

Jesus Cleanses a Leper (vv. 12–15): This scene is placed in ‘one of the cities’ (v. 12). Again, the spatial setting is not clear and emphasizes that other points are more important. Indeed, λέπρα is the most important element which is also highlighted: *ἰδοὺ ἀνὴρ πλήρης λέπρας*. While it is not clear, what kind of disease was meant with λέπρα¹³¹, it is a diseases which made people unclean. They were excluded from society (see Lv 13:45–52 and Nm 5:2–4) and although it might be far-fetched to compare it with reanimation¹³² it is indeed bringing a person back to society. In this second and the fourth part the story tells about stigmatized marginal groups which return to the kingdom of God¹³³. But it is important to notice that Luke talks about cleaning (καθαρίζω), not healing. It is not valid to assume Luke is not interested in the disease itself¹³⁴ but rather (1) he links the healing to the temple (‘go and show yourself to the priest’ v. 14)¹³⁵ and (2) this implies the healing, but highlights (3) the importance of social healing and being part of a community. Shellberg points out another narrative point which highlights the importance of this story here:

former life: family, home, livelihood—and, as will become increasingly clear, possessions (e.g., 12:33; 14:26, 33; 18:22, 28–29; see Excursus: Poverty and Wealth in Luke’s Gospel, at 19:10). Although Simon has urged Jesus to depart (5:8), he ends up going away with Jesus (v. 11; see Johnson 90).”(Carroll 2012: 125–126)

¹³¹“Leoprosy as portrayed by Luke was almost certainly unrelated to the disease so identified in modern times, and in any case cannot be adequately understood in biomedical terms. Whatever physical symptoms might be identified, ‘leprosy’ was foremost a social disease in the sense that those so labeled were regarded as impure and separated from others (Leviticus 13).”(Green 1997: 236) Other scholars omit the disease completely: “Der Priester ist weder Arzt noch Thaumaturg. Er kennt die Schrift und fällt aufgrund dessen, was er sieht, sein priesterliches Urteil, das insofern keine medizinische Diagnose darstellt.”(Bovon 1989: 239) But with part 3 we may argue that Luke is also interested in the disease whilst it is not his primary interest.

¹³²“The leper was thus like a walking corpse, and his cure was likened to raising the dead.”(Garland 2012: 239)

¹³³“Persons suffering from leprosy or blood flow, who were considered unclean and had been excluded from society on the basis of the Torah (Lev 13–15; see II above), were approached by the helping Jesus without fear of defiling himself (Mark 1:40–45; 5:25–34).”(Stausberg et al. 2011)

¹³⁴Some scholars suggest this: “Lk hat λέπρα mit seinen Quellen im Sinne von Unreinheit verstanden.”(Klein 2006: 213)

¹³⁵“Although healing does not come from priests at the Jerusalem temple, Jesus dispatches the man to them, as the law of Moses requires, for restoration to community will not be complete until they have attested the leper’s cleansing.”(Carroll 2012: 126)

A closer look at the cleansing texts across the Third Gospel and Acts reveals that Luke has linked *kathalizō* with the word *dektos*, or ‘acceptable’, at two critical points in the narrative progression: the first is in Luke’s Gospel, in what is widely considered the ‘programmatically sermon’ inaugurating Jesus’ public ministry; the second is in Acts, in Peter’s first attempt at articulating an interpretation of his dream of clean and unclean animals. (Shellberg 2015: 9)

Referring the leper to the temple emphasizes first of all Jesus’ concern for his social status (cf. Garland 2012: 241). Jesus’ fame is rising, there are great crowds (ὄχλος, v. 15) which want to hear his teaching and see his healing. Green highlights the importance of both and indeed the cleaning underlines his observations of “the growth of Jesus’ reputation and his ongoing practice of retreating for prayer [...] in tandem word and deed” (Green 1997: 238). In v. 16 Jesus withdraws (ὑποχωρέω) again to desolated places (ἔρημος) to pray. Some scholars argue that this was a custom habit¹³⁶, but we can neither prove nor falsify this. More important for SNA is the observation that these desolated places are not only places for gatherings but also for praying and being in communion with God: “Die Wüste ist nicht mehr wie in Mk 1,45 ein Versammlungsort, sondern ein Gebiet, wo Jesus seine Verbindung mit Gott durch das Gebet pflegt.” (Bovon 1989: 241). This highlights these observations as another central topic of this scene.

Jesus Heals a Paralytic (vv. 17–26): While in the first story, the motif of sin, in the second story the motifs of cleaning and community were highlighted, here, Luke emphasized healing, faith and forgiveness of sins. These are all necessary for the fourth story. In contrast, other scholars see these motifs isolated. But indeed, it is possible to link these observations to the global plot of Luke and his development of Jesus: “Now the narrative weaves together the motifs of sickness and sin, of healing and forgiveness—joining these to the continuing interest in Jesus’ identity and his authority, as well as its source. Jesus has power to heal and authority to bring forgiveness, and both are dimensions of his ministry of release, of salvation.” (Carroll 2012: 128). Here, both time (... ἐγένετο ἐν μιᾷ τῶν ἡμερῶν... v. 17) and location remain vague¹³⁷. The Pharisees and teacher of the law must

¹³⁶ The “periphrastic participle ‘[he] was withdrawing’, following the imperfect-tense verb of v. 15, ‘[crowds] would come together,’ suggests that this is not a singular occurrence but a customary rhythm of Jesus’ ministry. Repeatedly, Jesus seeks prayerful communion with God, from time to time separating himself from the people to whom he has been sent to bring deliverance. He will return to face the crowds, though, and continue to teach and to heal.” (Carroll 2012: 128)

¹³⁷ Klein (2006: 215) introduces several suggestions: (a) Jesus would not have yet returned to Galilee – which would be a contradiction to the naming of the lake of Gennesaret – or (b) Luke’s attempt to

be placed in some sort of house (referring to the δῶμα in v. 19)¹³⁸.

The sick person is paralyzed, παραλύω. Luke does not make any additional references to this disease. Crucial for the understanding of this scene is the usage of πίστις in v. 20. It is the first of 8 occurrences of πίστις in Luke. Bovon (1989: 149) states, that (1) πίστις is a practical-narrative and not a theoretical usage which is (2) described for the men, but not in particular for the paralyzed¹³⁹. For him, indeed, the forgiveness of sin is the most important part. Here, healing goes hand in hand with forgiveness, while the faith of the men leads to a change in society and returning the paralyzed to the society¹⁴⁰.

Jesus Calls Levi (vv. 27–32): In this fourth story Luke tells about another calling of a disciple, thus this is the bracket for this part. The spacial setting is again vague but clear on a very local perspective: Jesus went out (v. 27: ἐξέρχομαι, most likely out of the house) to Levi sitting in his tax booth (τελώνιον). He made a ‘great feast’ ἐν τῇ οἰκίᾳ αὐτοῦ (v. 29), and once again the scene is located in a house. After that, there is an ongoing discussion between Jesus and the Pharisees and their scribes (v. 30). Thus, the narrative starts with action in the first three verses.

The calling of Levi shares parallels with the calling in the first story: Again, it is Jesus calling and not the free decision of those who have been called¹⁴¹. And whilst Simon calls himself a sinner, in this case this social and religious state is clear to all (see explanation

narrate a wide Palestinian Horizon – which is not convincing because within these narratives Luke does not give any additional hint on the spatial perspective, which ‘one of the cities’ is meant.

¹³⁸ There are some more vague observations which can be added here: “Die Beschreibung der Dachöffnung und des Hinunterlassens der Bahre hat gegenüber Markus an Anschaulichkeit eingebüßt, da das konkrete καλύω, in 5,4-5 für die Netze gebraucht, durch das blasse καθίημι ersetzt ist. Markus versteht die Handlung so, daß die Träger ein Loch durch das Dach aus Ästen und Strohlehm graben. Lukas [...] stellt sich als Städter das Dach als ein von κέραμοι gedecktes vor, was leichter wegzuhebende Ziegel oder auch Steinplatten bezeichnet.” (Bovon 1989: 144)

¹³⁹ “Leben, das Vertrauen, den Glauben. Ihre πίστις wird nicht theoretisch beschrieben, wohl aber narrativ: Sie ist Entscheidung, Handlung, Durchschlagskraft, Gemeinschaftlichkeit und Zuruf zugleich. Erstaunlicherweise spricht kein Evangelist aus, daß dieser Glaube auch der Glaube des Gelähmten ist.” (Bovon 1989: 149)

¹⁴⁰ We should not ignore the confrontation between the Pharisees, teachers of the law and Jesus: “From Jesus’ point of view, healing paralysis and forgiving sins have the same therapeutic end in this case, but the Parisees and scribes intrude into the healing encounter, opposing Jesus’ claim to release people from sin.” (Green 1997: 239) But for the social network reconstruction this remains too vague till the hostility gets more open.

¹⁴¹ “The starkness of Jesus’ request is matched by Levi’s response. He had been sitting, now he stands; he was a toll collector, now he leaves everything [...] and follows Jesus.” (Green 1997: 246) In contrast, Garland (2012: 249) highlights the parallels: “The call is no different from that extended to Peter except that there is no evidence of a previous relationship between Levi and Jesus.”

in section 5.8). In the second and third story the connection between healing, purity and social reintegration was laid out¹⁴². The contrast between Levi ‘leaving everything’ (v. 28) and the ‘great feast in his house’ (v. 29) seems jarring¹⁴³. And indeed, there seems to be a large crowd, ... ἦν ὄχλος πολὺς τελωνῶν καὶ ἄλλων ... and ... οἱ Φαρισαῖοι καὶ οἱ γραμματεῖς αὐτῶν ... and Jesus and his μαθηταί. Luke does not say who these others were, but we can imagine that there was no positive reception about them¹⁴⁴. The Pharisees are condemning Jesus eating with ‘tax collectors and sinners’ (v. 30). Jesus’ answer is quite short and clear, he uses a parallel argumentation:

- 31b Those who **are well** have no need of a *physician*
 but those who **are sick**.
 32 I have not come to call **the righteous**
 but **sinners** to *repentance*.

We see that Jesus associates those who *are well* with *the righteous* and those who are *sick* with the *sinners*, which is an allusion to the first three stories and in particular the calling of Levi: The sick need a physician, the sinners repentance and both can go hand in hand¹⁴⁵. Sharing company with sinners and outcasts is a key to restoring society and relationships and gathering people for the kingdom of God. For the social network it is most important that Jesus has called disciples and in particular comes to those who are on the margins of society. Again, the confrontation with the Pharisee is foreshadowed. In

¹⁴² “The call of Simon to a new vocation of fishing showed that Jesus, far from turning away from a ‘sinner,’ welcomes such a person into his company and work. The healing of a paralyzed man then drew an explicit connection between sin and Jesus’ authority to bring forgiveness, a point only implied in the call of Simon. The episode centering on the tax collector Levi now explores at greater depth the interaction between Jesus’ call to discipleship and his embrace of sinners—and again highlights the criticism that Jesus’ conduct elicits. The new praxis of God’s reign does not mix well with conventional ways of ordering the community’s life.” (Carroll 2012: 132)

¹⁴³ Green argues that the “apparent tension between these two reports is resolved when it is realized that, for Luke, the ownership and disposition of possessions were embedded in a larger network of social relations and personal commitments.” (Green 1997: 246) This seems to be a solution, other scholars discuss that this leaving everything “does not entail abandoning all of one’s property, but Luke makes it clear that those who have the means to throw banquets are to invite one and all” (Garland 2012: 250). See also Bovon (1989: 258), who highlights the connection to Acts: “Lukas stört es nicht, daß Levi, der alles verlassen hat, noch ein Haus besitzt und ein Gastmahl veranstalten kann. Nach der von der Apostelgeschichte bestätigten Ethik des Lukas verlassen die Christen nicht alles im buchstäblichen Sinn, sondern stellen alles zur Verfügung. [...] Die Spannung zwischen der radikalen Redaktion und der Tradition vom Mahl läßt sich nicht ganz verleugnen.”

¹⁴⁴ Garland (2012: 250) for example argues that Levi “leaves the camp of sinners but does not ignore the sinners”.

¹⁴⁵ “Indeed, Jesus thus draws on traditional conceptualizations of Yahweh as physician and of divine redemption as healing. Against this backdrop, ‘healing’ is understood as restoration to relationship with Yahweh and his people — that is, as forgiveness.” (Green 1997: 247-248)

the summary we will analyze the deep connection between the four narratives.

Summary: These four stories a-d are bracketed by the calling of disciples in a ('they left everything and followed him.' 5:11) and d ('And leaving everything, he rose and followed him.' 5:28). This is the central motif and important for the SNA: the followers of Jesus form a new social network, which Luke identifies as βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ (Lk 4:43; and later 6:20, 7:28, etc.). However, the same bracket in stories a and d also describes the central reason for calling the people: sin. The calling is always connected with restoring the social system which means in particular to add people to the kingdom of God. This is connected with healing (b) and forgiving (b,c). Thus, the climax of these stories can be found in c, whilst story d is both a resolution and a summary of these four stories.

While all these stories are about faith, they are not solely focusing on faith *and* possession (cf. Green 1997: 229), rather possession is described as something that is left behind by joining the new society established by Jesus. Schnabel (2002: 212) is right: Jesus is mainly concerned about who is part of this new community of followers, rather than with other issues. And indeed, this society has just one primary position, Jesus. While Bovon states that these texts describe priority for Peter ("der Vorrang des Petrus" Bovon 1989: 235) this does not seem to be a primary narrative interest of Luke. However, we will present a detailed discussion of this issue in Chapter 18.

Jesus and Certain Questions (Lk 5:33–39): In this section we find another question from the Pharisees (v. 33) and Jesus' answer (vv. 34.50) and a parable (vv. 36-39). Although this section is related to β_1 from a spatial perspective – this scene is located at Levi's feast – it is a bridge between β_1 and β_3 for three reasons: (1) it brings the story of John to an end, (2) it summarizes β_1 from a christological perspective and (3) it introduces the central topics of β_3 where the disciples and Jesus are associated with the 'new wine' and the bridegroom¹⁴⁶.

¹⁴⁶ In contrast to Green: "Given the connectives Luke employs in vv 33, 36, together with the point of contact with the literary structure of the symposium, we should treat vv 27-39 as a single scene" (Green 1997: 245) See also Knight: Luke "contrast between new and old in 5.36-9 is effectively a statement about the meaning of eschatology. Jesus says that a new patch should not be put onto an old garment, nor new wine into old skins. The implication is that something decisively new has arrived with his preaching. Readers know that this 'new something' is the eschatological age. The place of this saying, after the comparison between Jesus and John the Baptist, implies that even John belongs to the old order because he merely heralded the fulfilment like the other prophets. This passage looks

	vv.		Additional People	Location
a	1-5	Jesus Is Lord of the Sabbath	Pharisees	Grainfields
b	6-11	A Man with a Withered Hand	Pharisees	Synagogue
c	12-16	The Twelve Apostles (x)	Apostles	The mountain
d	17-19	Jesus Ministers to a Great Multitude (x)	Disciples, People	A level place
e	20-23	The Beatitudes		The Sermon on the Plain
f	24-26	Jesus Pronounces Woes		
g	27-36	Love Your Enemies		
h	37-42	Judging Others		
i	43-45	A Tree and Its Fruit		
i	46-49	Build Your House on the Rock		

Table 6.4: Narrative structure of Lk 6:1–49.

From a social network perspective, the comparison with John is interesting: ‘The disciples of John fast often and offer prayers, and so do the disciples of the Pharisees, but yours eat and drink.’ (v. 33) Both the Pharisees and John call people to repentance, but Jesus’ disciples don’t show this in an expected behavior (νηστεύω and δέησις)¹⁴⁷. Jesus’ answer contains two pieces of information: First, he states that he is the bridegroom and emphasizes that this is the difference to John. Thus, Luke now focuses on his protagonist Jesus, the story of John comes to an end – see Lk 7:18–35. Second, Jesus tells about his christological self-image¹⁴⁸.

The Twelve Apostles and Jesus’ Preaching (Lk 6:1–49): The narrative structure of Lk 6:1–49 can be found in Table 6.4. It contains two scenes a and b which can be interpreted as the way through grainfields and a synagogue to the mountain where the apostles come together with Jesus to pray. After that the spatial setting remains on a level plain where Jesus teaches (d-j). Our analysis will especially focus on scenes c and d.

The first two scenes contain mostly christological topics, for example that Jesus – the Son of Man – is lord of the Sabbath¹⁴⁹. Indeed Jesus makes the point that not

forward to the enigmatic statement of 7.28 where Jesus says that the least in the kingdom of God is greater than John the Baptist.” (Knight & Knight 1998: 78)

¹⁴⁷ “They eat and drink rather than fast and pray. Where is the mourning over sins, the sackcloth and ashes (see Joel 1:13-16)?” (Garland 2012: 252)

¹⁴⁸ “Jesus states that his disciples eat and drink because the bridegroom is still with them (5.35). Fasting would be appropriate to the period when he had been taken away (5.35). Here, Jesus anticipates his rejection at the hands of the Jews.” (Knight & Knight 1998: 87)

¹⁴⁹ “He, not the Sabbath commandment [...], is the Lord who rules over his disciples. Consequently, his disciples need not concern themselves about appearing irreligious or pay any attention to criticism when they are with him and are carrying out their urgent task to God. The Sabbath conflict becomes an opportunity to make a christological point.” (Garland 2012: 263)

being obedient to the law is important, rather the people of God are the center of his interpretation of the law¹⁵⁰.

Scene c (Lk 6:12–16) is located on ‘the mountain’ (v. 12). After a night of prayer Jesus chooses twelve disciples and names them apostles (v. 13). This full list of apostles can be integrated in the social network. It is important to notice that a crucial change within the social network once again occurs in an isolated location: Between liberation from sickness and sin and before moving into the new society and the teaching to a crowd again Jesus seeks solitude. This is also supported by the words used.

The term ἀπόστολος is derived from ἀποστέλλω and shows the sending character of these twelve¹⁵¹. For a Lucan perspective, they seem to be a fixed set of actors¹⁵². Thus, we identify the apostles in the social network with ‘Simon, whom he named Peter, and Andrew his brother, and James and John, and Philip, and Bartholomew, and Matthew, and Thomas, and James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon who was called the Zealot, and Judas the son of James, and Judas Iscariot, who became a traitor.’¹⁵³ (vv. 14-16) Most of these actors were not mentioned previously¹⁵⁴. Generally, the twelve as particular actors do not play an active and thus central role in the Gospel of Luke. Some of them are mentioned more often, for example Peter and John, but the majority of them do not move into the foreground until the last part of the Gospel. However, their naming is not limited to the credibility of Luke’s writing¹⁵⁵. This is yet another observation which we will discuss using SNA in Chapter 9 and in part III.

¹⁵⁰ “In einem Fall ist Jesus liberaler als das Gesetz, im anderen radikaler. Weshalb schwimmt er immer gegen den Strom? Weil er den Menschen und das Gottesvolk ins Zentrum stellt (vgl. V 8: εἰς τομέσον und nicht den Gehorsam als solchen, d. h. das Gesetz als Gesetz.” (Bovon 1989: 269) In contrast, Green highlights the christological perspective of his scene: “For Jesus, though, the question remains, who interprets Scripture (and so, the Sabbath law), correctly? Or, to put it more starkly, who knows and represents God’s will?” (Green 1997: 252)

¹⁵¹ Spicq (1982: 52) emphasizes the different meanings, “gardent comme ce verbe une grande variété de nuances que décèle le context”.

¹⁵² “In Lukan perspective this group is definitive, except for the replacement of the apostate Judas by Matthias (Acts 1:15-26).” McFarland (2011: 211) Together with the Pauline Letters the situation changes, since Paul identifies himself as apostle. Choosing twelve apostles “anchors this choice in Israel’s salvation history” (Garland 2012: 273)

¹⁵³ Klein (2006: 239) describes the problem with different lists in Mk 3:16–19, Mt 10:2–4 and Lk 6:14–16, Ac 1:13. While he presents several possible solutions, we will omit this discussion because we focus primary on Luke-Acts.

¹⁵⁴ It seems indeed that “as a collective group they have been accompanying Jesus quietly, the promise of a significant mission in ‘catching people alive’ (5:10) as yet unfulfilled.” (Carroll 2012: 140)

¹⁵⁵ Against Bovon (1989: 284): “die Namensnennung dient allein der Verlebendigung und Verstärkung der Glaubwürdigkeit“.

Scene d (Lk 6:17–19) is located at a ‘level place’ (ἐπὶ τόπου πεδινοῦ, v. 17)¹⁵⁶. But the spatial setting is not limited by mountains and plains, there are people from ‘Judea and Jerusalem and the seacoast of Tyre and Sidon’ who come to see him. Thus, we find a contraction of spatiality in this scene. Together with Jesus, ‘a great crowd of his disciples’ and ‘a great multitude of people’ are mentioned. Bovon (1989: 286) highlights that with the previous scene we find three groups: the apostles, the disciples and the other people. Luke’s integration of the apostles underlines the fact, that their role is rather first among equals. Again, Jesus teaches, heals and cures people from unclean spirits.

6.3 Wonders and Signs (Lk 7:1–17)

This short section comprises two miracle and signs narratives: (a) Jesus heals a centurion’s servant (Lk 7:1–10) and (b) Jesus raises a widow’s son (7:11–17). Although these stories are rather short, we can observe interesting spatial aspects and in particular extend the social network with novel actors.

The first story is located in Capernaum (first scene, vv. 1–5) and near the Centurion’s house (second scene vv. 7:6–10). The spatial setting of this story is rather complex: The first scene comprises the ‘love for the nation’ and building ‘our synagogue’ (v. 5). The second scene is located outside the centurion’s house, because he claims to be ‘not worthy to have you [Jesus] come under my roof’ (v. 6). Jesus answers ‘I tell you, not even in Israel have I found such faith’ (v. 9) which – again – brings the nation in focus. The centurion is a stranger, most likely a Roman¹⁵⁷. Thus, within this scene Luke locates and embeds the story within the spatial setting of the Roman Empire: “As in earlier episodes, faith and the healing power of Jesus overcome socio-religious barriers” (Green 1997: 288).

¹⁵⁶ The ‘coming down’ (καταβαίω) in v. 17 might refer to OT motifs of a meeting between God and his people (cf. Bovon 1989: 286). Green (1997: 258) refers to a more general association “in Jewish literature with theophanic episodes and divine revelation.” Other scholars like Garland (2012: 275) imagine the mountains as place of prayer, the level ground as place of teaching.

¹⁵⁷ In Luke-Acts “centurions appear in these narratives as representative Gentiles and metonymies of Roman authority” (Callahan et al. 2010). Green (1997: 284–285) discusses if this scene is located in the “presence of a social relationship of patronage” and states: “After all, he has just undermined the whole system of patronal ethics by abolishing the distinctions and inequities on which that system is based.” In contrast Klein (2006: 269) claims: “Ein sachlicher Bezug zum Vorhergehenden besteht nicht.” But we should not ignore the narrative construction of Luke.

The second story is organized in one scene which is located at the town Nain near ‘the gate of the town’ (v. 12) but it spans the spatial setting to ‘the whole of Judea and all the surrounding country’ (v. 17). Here, two crowds meet: Jesus travels with ‘his disciples and a great crowd went with him’ (v. 11) and the man’s funeral was attended by ‘a considerable crowd’ (v. 12). In this story, Jesus not only heals but he raises the dead son of a widow, a young man (v. 14)¹⁵⁸. This woman experiences solidarity: a considerable crowd attends the funeral and although she faces material problems, she is not left alone¹⁵⁹. But Jesus’ compassion has three reasons: a dead son, the material situation and the social situation (cf. Garland 2012: 302). This is not the only important element: Whereas in the first story the πίστις of the Roman centurion was the reason, here Jesus ‘the Lord [] had compassion’ on the widow (ὁ κύριος ἐσπλαγχνίσθη, v. 13). The title κύριος has been introduced to Jesus in Lk 5:8 by Simon Peter. The audience’s response is fear and they glorify God, who ‘has visited his people’ (v. 16). V. 17 highlights the importance of this section.

Both the centurion and the widow are unnamed and thus we need to prove their significance for the SNA: The widow is part of those marginal people who receive help from Jesus. The centurion is special because he belongs to a different cultural background which foreshadows Acts.

6.4 Jesus and Society (Lk 7:18–8:21)

This section D is in a central position of the narrative structure in Lk 4:14-9:50. It can be divided into four sections δ_1 - δ_4 which describe important topics: The first section δ_1 (Lk 7:18–35) highlights the difference between John and Jesus and brings his story to an end. His death is briefly reported in Lk 9:7–9, although references can be found in Lk 9:19, 11:1; 16:16; 20:4-6 and Ac 1:4; 10:37; 11:16; 13:24-25; 18:25; 19:3-4. The next section, δ_2 gives relevant information about forgiveness and women (Lk 7:36–8:3). The third section δ_3 comprises parables (Lk 8:4–18); the fourth section δ_4 is dedicated to Jesus’ mother and brothers which summarizes the social setting of his disciples (Lk 8:19–21). These sections

¹⁵⁸ The social status of this woman is marginalized, “without a visible means of support and, certainly, deprived of her access to the large community and any vestiges of social status within the village” (Green 1997: 291).

¹⁵⁹ See also Klein (2006: 176).

give additional information about how Jesus sees society in the kingdom of God, but they give only limited information about the social network in Luke. Thus, we will mainly focus on these two aspects.

Jesus and Women (Lk 7:36–8:3): This section is divided into two narratives: The first part (vv. 7:36–50) narrates how Jesus eats in Simon’s – a Pharisee – house and forgives the sins of a woman. The second part (vv. 8:1–3) is a summary: Here, Luke includes several women among the followers of Jesus. While the first section provides additional information about the kingdom of God, the second section is very important for the social network. These stories continue the topic of expectations and in particular polarization around Jesus.

In the first section, only three actors are mentioned: Jesus, Simon, a Pharisee¹⁶⁰, and a woman. This woman is not named, but she is definitely “more than an object lesson, [] she is depicted more fully than many other persons”(Green 1997: 306). She is a sinner, ἁμαρτωλός, maybe a prostitute¹⁶¹, which seems to be a direct confrontation with ἐν τῇ οἰκίᾳ τοῦ Φαρισαίου. The spatial setting is not precise¹⁶² (‘city’, v. 37 and Simon’s house, v. 36). The sinful woman ‘brought an alabaster flask of ointment, and standing behind him at his feet, weeping, she began to wet his feet with her tears and wiped them with the hair of her head and kissed his feet and anointed them with the ointment’ (v. 27b–38). This behavior was not only unexpected, it was scandalous and indeed extravagant. Asking Jesus as teacher¹⁶³, Simon receives an answer that rather his own behavior was lacking in love¹⁶⁴. Jesus forgives the woman’s sins ‘for she loved much’ (v. 47). To her, he underlines her πίστις and restores her position in society in εἰρήνη: ‘Your faith has saved you; go in peace’ (v. 50). This story is indeed dedicated to the community of God’s

¹⁶⁰ Luke does not tell us why he invited Jesus, Garland (2012: 324) suggests ‘presumably he is interested in judging Jesus for himself’. Indeed, this underlines Luke’s narrative interests: “Nicht nur weil Jesus, wie es in V 34 steht, ißt und trinkt und bei Sündern weilt, sondern weil der Gang der Erzählung die dramatische Spaltung Israels (VV 29–30) veranschaulicht.”(Bovon 1989: 387) Carroll (2012: 176) underlines the conflicts associated with the Pharisees centering here in particular “on and thus clarifies the differing religious and communal visions of host and guest.”

¹⁶¹ See further Green (1997: 309).

¹⁶² Green (1997: 305) suggests they are still in Nain.

¹⁶³ More precise, Simon refuses to address him as a prophet (προφήτης), although διδάσκαλος is “normally found on the lips of those who are outside the circle of Jesus’ followers but who are open to learning or want to receive something from him.”(Green 1997: 311) It is not clear, if this is a rejection, Carroll (2012: 178) for example sees a narrative element: “Addressed as a teacher, Jesus will respond as one.”

¹⁶⁴ Garland (2012: 326) suggests that “Simon is unmoved by the woman’s tears”.

people¹⁶⁵

In the second part, vv. 8:1–3, Luke mentions Jesus’ teaching and traveling in ‘cities and villages’ (v. 1 the forms διώδευεν and διηκόνουν in v. 3 are in imperfect tense, thus indicating a longer period of time). Luke highlights the ‘good news of the kingdom of God’. His travel companions are ‘the twelve’ apostles and ‘some women’. Luke is quite precise, these women have been healed by Jesus from several diseases and in particular spiritual, or maybe psychospiritual, diseases. It can be said that it is important to notice that Luke mentions three names: Mary, called Magdalene, Joanna¹⁶⁶ and Susanna. This does not only highlight the importance of the previous part¹⁶⁷. From this scene it is not clear what the women’s role is, although they provide part of the material means¹⁶⁸, but we will keep that question in mind and answer it with a holistic view on Luke-Acts. This section gives us additional information for the social network: We can add three female actors and a group of women. The twelve are already well-known.

Jesus’ Mother and Brothers (Lk 8:19–21): This short section comprises three verses, an introduction stating Jesus’ mother – one of the protagonists of the first part of the Gospel – and his brothers come but could not reach him due to the crowd (ὄχλος, v. 19). Luke does not give any additional information about how he sees Jesus’ family after the first part of the Gospel, indeed “their distance from him seems unavoidable in light of the magnitude of the gathered crowds and their own late arrival on the scene.” (Green 1997: 330) The last two verses introduce the message to Jesus and his answer:

¹⁶⁵ See Green (1997: 313): “Such language cannot be limited to ‘spiritual’ well-being or even, in other co-texts, to ‘physical’ vitality, but speaks of a restoration to wholeness, including (even if not limited to) restoration to the full social intercourse from which she has been excluded.” Bovon (1989: 396) adds the importance of encounter: “Die Überwindung der Sünde, besser gesagt die Beseitigung der vernichtenden Vorurteile in der *Gesellschaft* (der Klischees, die von den Drogensüchtigen bis zu den Bankiers reichen) wie die eigene Selbstprüfung (wo liegt meine Sünde?) beim *Individuum*, erfolgt hier nicht in der gesetzlichen Kontrolle von Unfähigkeit und in der Anwendung schriftlicher Regeln, sondern in einer *Begegnung*.”

¹⁶⁶ Joanna is the only one introduced as married and especially having a husband in Herod’s household. Her status, her husband’s position and why Luke introduces her here is puzzling (cf. Green 1997: 320-321). In contrast to Bovon (1989: 440), Luke does not pay special attention to Herod.

¹⁶⁷ Green (1997: 318) takes the view that some of them might be widows and prostitutes: “Luke portrays them as recipients of Jesus’ gracious ministry but also as benefactors of that ministry.” In any case these three verses are important: “The shifts in gender roles and in family and kinship relations are intriguing.” (Carroll 2012: 186) The usage of διακονέω is most likely not only limited to help, but will also include financial support (cf. Garland 2012: 341).

¹⁶⁸ In contrast, Bovon (1989: 397-398), for example, sees only an internal role for the women: “Durch die Männer verbreite sie die Botschaft nach außen, durch das ‘Dienen’ der Frauen wurde die Gemeinde nach innen gefestigt.”

v. 20: Ἡ μήτηρ σου καὶ οἱ ἀδελφοί σου ...

v. 21: - Μήτηρ μου καὶ ἀδελφοί μου ...

Jesus fills the statement with new content, not his relatives are most important, but rather ‘those who hear the word of God and do it.’ “Luke uses this incident to highlight Jesus’ declaration that enlarges his family under the reign of God beyond kinship lines.” (Garland 2012: 346). It is necessary here to clarify exactly whether Jesus enlarges his family, rejects his family or prioritizes the mission. Jesus’ answer is not a rejection, and in contrast to Klein (2006: 311) it does not seem that he re-prioritizes his family¹⁶⁹, but rather underlines the need for a new community within the kingdom of God¹⁷⁰.

6.5 Signs and Wonders (Lk 8:22–56)

This section comprises three stories with signs and wonders. Luke prepares the sending of the disciples (called in section B, in B’) with these three stories. They “gradually learn who Jesus is by observing high mighty power” (Garland 2012: 351). The spatial setting and the actors are carefully laid out, see Table 6.5. The first story in vv. 22-25 includes Jesus and his disciples¹⁷¹, and is located on a boat when Jesus calms a storm.

The second story (vv. 26-39) is located in the ‘country of the Gerasenes’ which is ‘opposite Galilee’ (v. 26) at the ‘other side of the lake’ (v. 22)¹⁷². Here, Jesus heals a man possessed by a demon (called Λεγιών, v. 30), and meets not only herdsmen who

¹⁶⁹ “In der Nachfolge gilt es, Mutter und Brüder zurückzustellen. Das Wort in seinen Dimensionen des Sprechens, Hörens und Tuns hat Priorität.” (Klein 2006: 311)

¹⁷⁰ Bovon (1989) underlines the character of a *new* family: “Damit entsteht eine neue Definition von Familie, denn diese Wahlverwandtschaft hängt von der göttlichen Initiative wie von der menschlichen Bereitschaft (ἀκούοντες) und Durchhaltekraft (ποιούντες) ab.”

¹⁷¹ Green (1997: 332) is critical of the inclusion of more than the twelve apostles, because of the boat’s size and because Luke uses the term ‘disciples’ very unspecific.

¹⁷² The important fact is, that Jesus leaves Galilee and “crossed cultural boundaries into Gentile lands where pigs are kept.” (Garland 2012: 357) Bovon (1989: 429) is critical on a reference to gentile mission: “Eine Anspielung auf die heilsgeschichtliche Berufung der Heiden ist nicht überzubewerten, da Lukas die markinische Reise Jesu nach Tyrus und Sidon (Mk 7,24-37) übergeht.” (Klein 2006: 316) focuses on belief as reaction: “Für Lk ist diese Erzählung ein Bericht über die Anfänge der Mission zur Zeit Jesu in heidnischem Gebiet. Hier wird ein direkter Kontakt mit Jesus beschrieben. Aber es kommt nicht zum Glauben, nicht zur richtigen Verkündigung.” Indeed, the reaction of the people is fear. This is also seconded by Green’s spatial observations: “In this sense, the expression ‘opposite Galilee’ is more than a geographical designation, even if it is significant at this level for the way it signals Jesus’ crossing of the geographical boundaries characteristic of this section of the Third Gospel.” (Green 1997: 335)

vv.	Spatial Setting	Actors
	Capernaum?	Disciples
	↓	
22-25	Lake	
	↓	
26-39	Country of the Gerasenes ← country	A Man with a Demon
	↓	Herdsmen, People
40-50	Capernaum?	Crowd, Jairus, a woman
	↓	
51-56	Jairus' house	Peter, John, James, father and mother

Table 6.5: Spatial setting and actors in Lk 8:22–56

spread the news ‘in the city and in the country’¹⁷³ (v. 34), but also people (v. 35) who came to see what happened. In v. 37 all the people of the surrounding country of the Gerasenes asked Jesus to leave.

The third story in vv. 40-56 is most likely again located in Capernaum, the last scene in verses 51-56 in particular in Jairus’ house. In the first scene Luke mentions Jesus and his disciples and a crowd – it is the first time Luke mentions negative aspects for the ὄχλος¹⁷⁴ –, Jairus (the ‘ruler of the synagogue’, a prestigious position¹⁷⁵) and a woman who has been healed due to secretly touching Jesus¹⁷⁶ (or more precisely: due to her πίστις: ‘Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace’, v. 48). Here, Luke talks about Jesus’ δύναμις (see 6:19, 5:17 and 4:36). The crowd and the woman cause a delay, Jairus’ daughter died in the meantime (v. 49).

Luke composes several motifs in these stories. First, the calming of the storm is dedicated to rescue in a tempest. The disciples seek shelter and wake Jesus up¹⁷⁷. But

¹⁷³ This is not a hint of Luke ‘thinking’ about spatiality as Bovon (1989: 438) suggests: Luke “denkt sich also [...] die Geographie so, daß es in dieser Gegend eine Stadt gibt.”

¹⁷⁴ On the one hand, the crowd is awaiting Jesus back, on the other hand “they are described in a way reminiscent of the thorns of the story of the sower, as unwanted foliage growing up alongside sprouting seedlings that will eventually choke the desired vegetation.” (Green 1997: 344) And Luke carefully prepares the coming dramatic changes in the crowd’s reception of Jesus.

¹⁷⁵ “In contrast to the temple, which was run by the high priest, the synagogue was a lay institution run by the local community. Rabbis also did not dominate the synagogue. The synagogue ruler was the presiding officer who attended to the public meetings, maintained order, and bestowed honors such as appointing those who would read in the service” (Garland 2012: 366).

¹⁷⁶ Which already describes breaking rules of society: “Nach dem Gesetz und seiner damaligen Auslegung dürfte sich die unreine Frau nicht in der Menge aufhalten. Daß sie jemand berührt (V 44), ist sündig und verunreinigt Jesus für einen Tag.” (Bovon 1989: 448)

¹⁷⁷ “Sie suchen Zuflucht bei ihrem Herrn, indem sie zu ihm gehen, ihn wecken und ihn ansprechen.” (Bovon 1989: 425-426). The disciples experience Jesus’ δύναμις which is mentioned in the next story, “wie er auch der Herr der Elemente ist und sie ihm gehorchen”(426).

Jesus has not only power over ‘the wind and the raging waves’ (v. 24) but also τὰ δαιμόνια, indeed even on a great multitude of them, λεγεῶν (v. 30). In the last story, he heals a woman and raises a little girl. Thus, in these three stories again Luke summarizes the wonders and signs.

6.6 Jesus’ preaching and his disciples (Lk 9:1–50)

The Twelve Apostles Being Sent by Jesus (Lk 9:1–6): This story is arranged around a central discourse from Jesus (vv. 3-5): He calls the apostles (‘the twelve’, v. 1) and sends them, equips them with ‘power and authority’, in particular to heal, and ‘proclaim the kingdom of God’ (v. 2). This is a shift towards an active role¹⁷⁸. Jesus gives detailed instructions on how this journey should be organized, that they should not carry anything unnecessary with them (v. 3) and they shall stay where they are received and leave where they are not received (v. 4-5)¹⁷⁹. The spatial setting of this story is the coming to Jesus (v. 1), being sent and traveling ‘through the villages’ (v. 6). The basic purpose of sending the apostles is also mentioned at the end: ‘preaching the gospel and healing *everywhere*’. There is another spatial reference, the disciples went κατὰ τὰς κώμας, but we should, however, not over-interpret this fact, for example, the villages are the right place for the disciples to “test” their work, while Jesus works within the towns¹⁸⁰.

¹⁷⁸ “Despite such potentially exhilarating prospects, until this point in the narrative Peter and the rest have been surprisingly passive, joining ‘with’ but hardly working alongside Jesus.” (Green 1997: 357)

¹⁷⁹ While Green (1997: 360) argues that this foreshadows the Gentile mission, this point seems rather unclear: “No longer working narrowly with an ethnic definition of Israel as the people of God, he now declares that those who refuse the salvific vocation of God — present not only in his ministry but also in the extension of his ministry via these twelve envoys — are to be regarded as though they were outside the people of God.” Rather, this seems related to the social status within the kingdom of God, “he now wants his disciples to be as ‘radical dependent on God to supply their physical needs’ as he has been” (Garland 2012: 377) in the first part of the Gospel (cf. Klein 2006: 331). Knight & Knight (1998: 99) second this view: “The reason that the Twelve are to take nothing for their journey is because they are expected to receive support from the towns and villages that they visited.”

¹⁸⁰ Against Bovon (1989: 459): “Die Wahl des Wortes ‘Dorf’ erfolgt bewusst. Lukas sieht Jesus selbst am Werk in den Städten. Er empfindet die Dörfer als adäquate Probestätten für die unerfahrenen Zwölf.” The rural setting of Galilee might support this idea (cf. Jensen 2012 Frankel 1992). In addition, Luke mentions κώμη only two times before 9:6 (5:17, 8:1) and πόλις 19 times. But the most important argument against that can be found in Lk 9:5, where Jesus sends the disciples even to towns. The general issue of where Jesus and his disciples taught is still heavily discussed. According to Tiwald (2021: 149), Jesus was active only in the rural regions while Zangenberg (2021: 143) takes a broader approach: “Still, Jesus’ range of activity according to the Gospels does not cover the full cultural and social spectrum of Galilee. Recent archaeological research has underlined the importance of cities, relativizing the NT preponderance of towns, villages and ‘small people.’” We will return to this question within the detailed SNA analyses.

Jesus, John and Herod (Lk 9:7–9): This short section brings Herod back into the focus of the narrative and finally ends the story of John whom he beheaded (v. 9). Herod will play an important role in the last part of the Gospel as John played an important role in the first part. Thus, this section is carefully located at this position in the narrative.

It is important to mention that Herod was confused about Jesus' function: Some people refer to Jesus as John, Elijah or 'one of the prophets of old' (v. 8)¹⁸¹. This list again highlights that 'the old' is completed with Jesus and 'the new' starts. Repeating this in 9:19 underlines this.

Jesus and his Disciples (Lk 9:10–50): This is a collection of one large story and several short stories including Jesus and his disciples after their return to him from their mission. Indeed, Luke now presents them as real actors, not only minor characters¹⁸². The main topics, christology and discipleship are narrated closely together and affect each other¹⁸³.

The spatial setting is vague: they leave Bethsaida (v. 10) and he teaches the crowd that follows him to a 'desolated place' (ἐρημος, v. 12). This place is another OT reference to those places of encountering God. In v. 18, the spatial setting changes to a place, where 'he was praying alone' with the disciples. The scene of action changes in v. 28, when Jesus together with Peter, John and James 'went up on the mountain to pray'. Here, a spatial reference to Jerusalem is set as a narrative link to the cross (v. 31). In v. 37 they 'come down from the mountain' and the spatial setting remains vague.

Lk 9:10–50 is mainly concerned with christological aspects¹⁸⁴, about the nature of following Jesus (discipleship as taking up the cross, vv. 23-27, being the greatest among the disciples, vv. 46-48) and about prominent disciples, most of all Peter.

¹⁸¹ Indeed, that question 'Who is this?' is important for Luke: "Similarly, his quest to see Jesus anticipates his ongoing role in the narrative, just as his bewildered reaction presages the hostile nature of that role." (Green 1997: 362) Klein (2006: 332) underlines this argument with even more narrative references and Carroll (2012: 206) highlights the narrative tension: "Luke's audience already knows what characters in the narrative long to discover; nevertheless, the repeating questions about Jesus' identity effectively build toward a definitive divine disclosure to which a select trio of disciples—with readers overhearing—will soon be privy (9:28–36)."

¹⁸² According to Green (1997: 351-352), here "they are active agents involved in the mission of Jesus, and they begin to be developed less as companions and more as characters in their own right within the larger narrative of Luke-Acts."

¹⁸³ See further '§12 Christology and Discipleship in Luke 9:1-50' in Green (1997: 352ff).

¹⁸⁴ Jesus is 'the Christ of God', 'The Son of Man', and 'God's son, his chosen one' (v. 35) Jesus foretelling his death twice – "Taking up the cross of suffering" (Garland 2012: 396).

Betweenness Centrality	Closeness Centrality	Eigenvector centrality
Jerusalem	201.05	Jerusalem 0.69
Galilee (2)	64.01	Galilee (11) 0.15

Table 6.6: Comparing Jerusalem and Galilee in different centrality measures. Considering Betweenness Centrality, Galilee is on position 2, while in Closeness and Eigenvector Centrality Galilee is on position 10 and 11.

6.7 Summary: Disciples catching People

In Lk 4:14-9:50, Luke narrates Jesus' ministry in Galilee. Sections B (Lk 5:1-6:49) and B' (Lk 9:1-50) are dedicated to Jesus' preaching and his disciples, the calling of the disciples and the coming crisis and the confrontation with society and rulers. Sections C (Lk 7:1-17) and C' (Lk 8:22-56) are an interlude narrating mainly signs and wonders. Part D (Lk 7:17-8:21) describes Jesus' relation to John, women and family and further crucial theological issues. There are two main concerns of this part: Who is this? Luke develops carefully the theological and societal issues of Jesus. The next concern is dedicated to the disciples: They are catching people; sending the apostles in Lk 9:1-6 forms a narrative link to the next part. The SNA of this part can show the considerable impact of the two elements: Galilee as location and the disciples as actors. While we present some preliminary results and further questions, the detailed analysis of Luke's Gospel is presented in Chapter 9 and we will also discuss several issues in part III.

Table 6.6 shows a comparison between Jerusalem as narrative and theological center of Luke's Gospel and Galilee as spatial setting of Lk 4:14-9:50. Ranking on position two for *Betweenness Centrality (BC)*, we can identify Galilee as the location which controls information flows between other actors in the network. And this is true, since Galilee forms a bridge between the rural and urban scenery, between the beginning of Jesus' works, his origins and the target in Jerusalem. The results change rapidly when considering *Closeness (CC)* and *Eigenvector Centrality (EC)* (rank 10 and 11). According to the results of SNA, in particular CC and EC, Galilee is a location that can't establish trust within the early Christian network, it has low chances to build new relations and spread information within the network. In Chapter 22 we will discuss, if we have enough data for these observations. However, this is an interesting statistical observation, because it may give information about the later spread of the Gospel according to Luke and also about

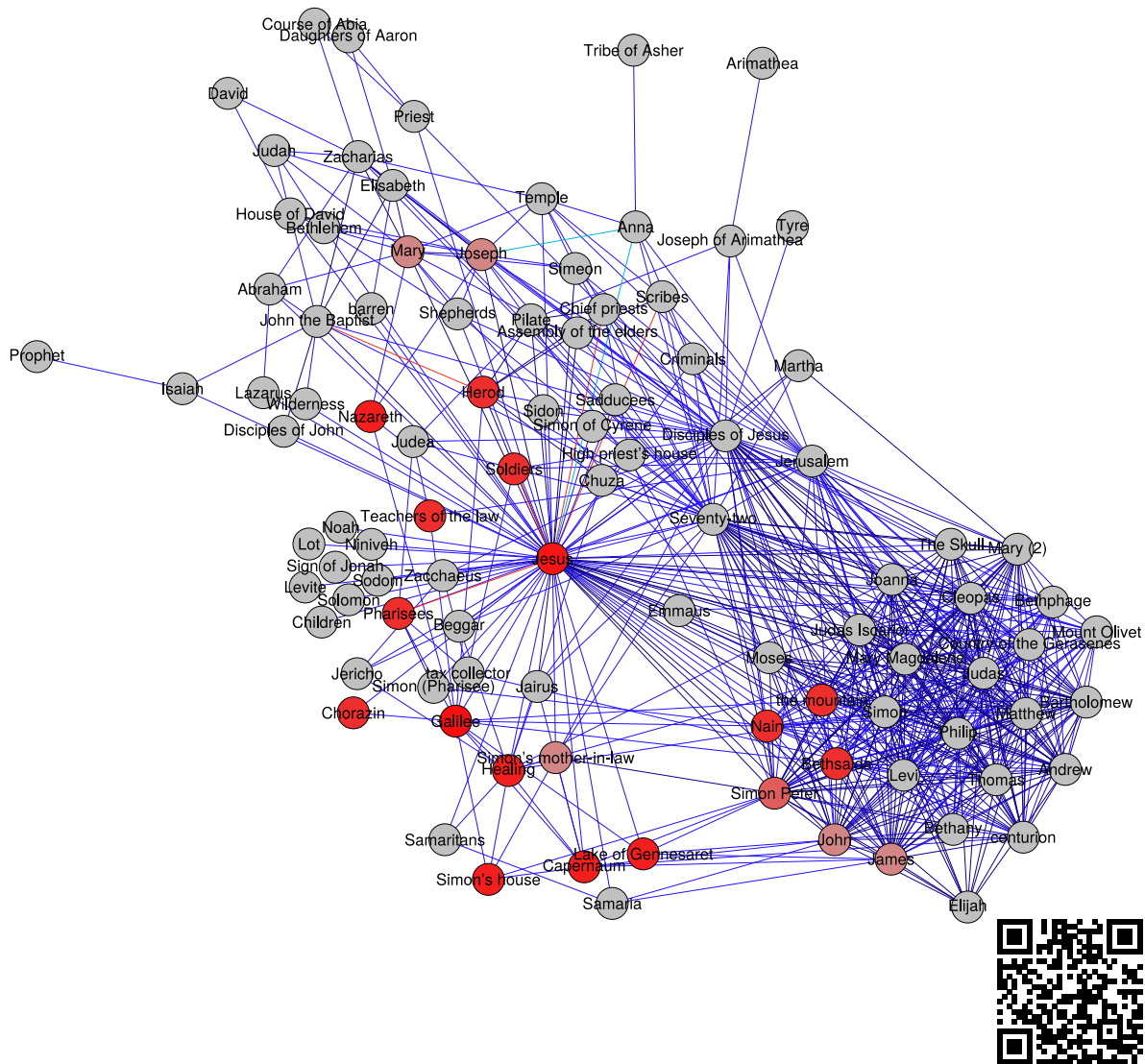


Figure 6.1: Social network of the Gospel of Luke.
Red nodes describe Galilee and its neighborhood in the network.

the difference between rural and urban world. Last, the EC supports this idea: Galilee is most likely not the place having a great influence and importance for ‘emerging trends’ in this story.

The visualization in Figure 6.1 supports this. The neighborhood of Galilee is very small. Although a large part of the Gospel is dedicated to Galilee, actors and locations mostly vanish in the fog of diffuse and largely unnamed locations and the *ὄχλος*, a crowd of unnamed people. We will follow up on a detailed discussion about spatiality in Chapter 9. Figure 6.2 shows the social network of the Gospel of Luke, where green nodes represent the inner circle of disciples and their neighborhood in the network. First, we can make some interesting observations about Luke’s narrative style of describing spatiality: For example, Galilee is not directly connected to the disciples. Only indirect references can be seen, e.g. with towns or villages or Simon’s house. This highlights that Luke is not so much concerned about Galilee in itself, but about the spatial aspect of moving which is also supported by Jesus’ travels and sending the twelve. Some actors which are associated with Galilee are not touched by the twelve, for example Simon the Pharisee. Second, a lot of entities – elements in the network which are neither actors nor locations, but are descriptive elements in the network – are not connected to the disciples highlighting that the disciples themselves are not that important for Luke to explain christological and theological aspects.

Nevertheless, the disciples already cover a good part of the network. This underlines that they are – despite Jesus as main actor – the most important actors for Luke in his Gospel. In this narrative, they form the new core of the kingdom of God which is clearly visible in Figure 6.2.

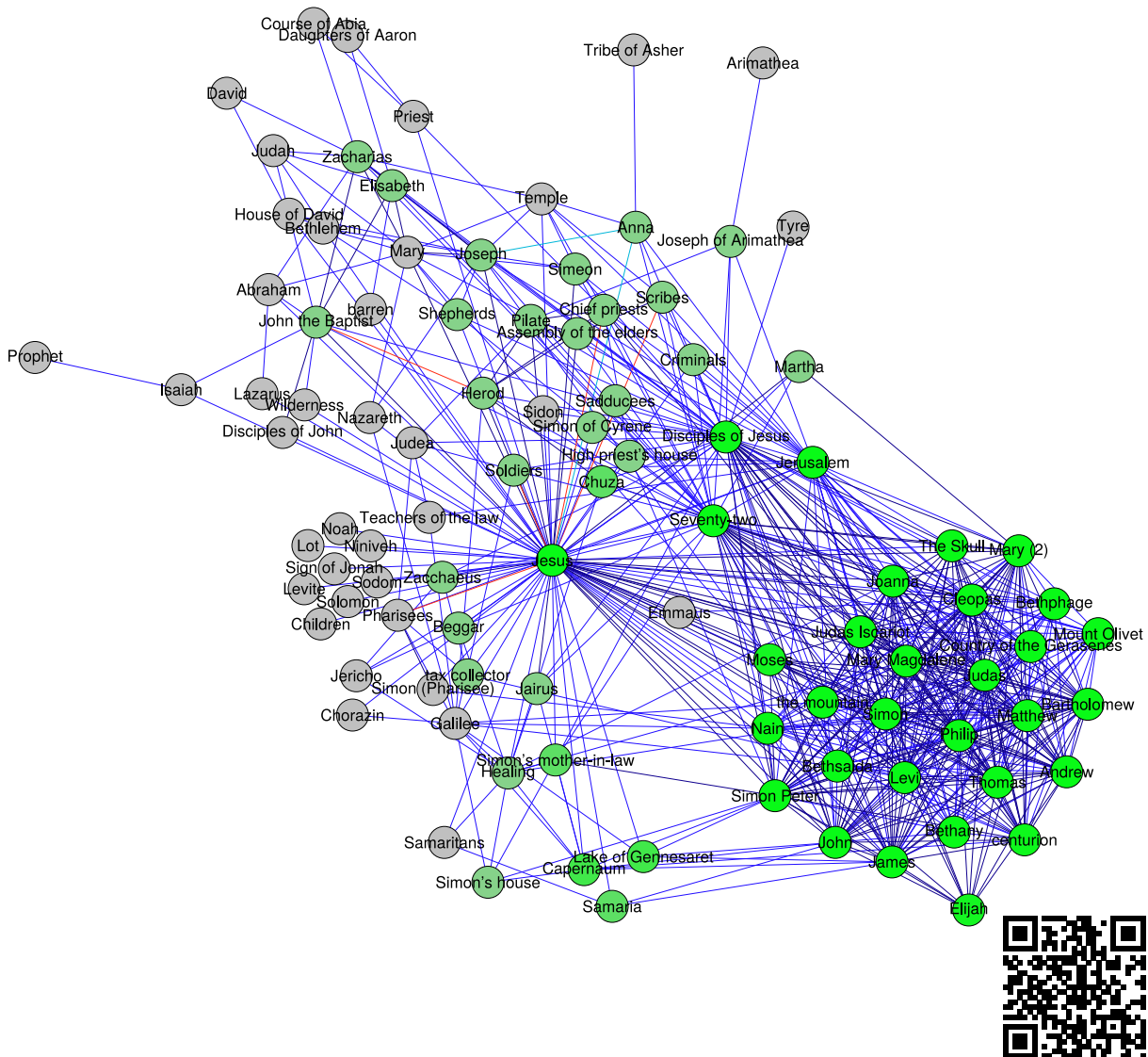


Figure 6.2: Social network of the Gospel of Luke.
Green nodes describe the inner circle of disciples and their neighborhood in the network.

7 Traveling through Samaria and Jerusalem (Lk 9:51–19:48)

While the previous section of the Gospel is located in Galilee, in this section Luke describes the journey to Jerusalem. It can be divided into six sections A-F: A and F frame the departure and arrival, B and E Jesus' teaching about prayer and the kingdom of God. Parts C and D describe wonders, signs and parables. The main purpose of this section is to explain that Jesus would be the cause of division in Israel, and needs to suffer rejection and be killed, which is the connection to the conclusion of the section in Galilee. Green (1997: 397) also points out that the failure of the disciples moves into the foreground, and it is clear "a major purpose of the Jerusalem journey narrative is to prepare for the time following Jesus' departure."¹⁸⁵ However, it is clear that Luke combines mainly narratives, preaching and discussion with just a few remarks on travel, but also a spatial setting in villages¹⁸⁶ embedded in the story of reaching the big city Jerusalem as destination and climax. We will analyze in particular the movement of spatiality in firstspace, secondspace and thirdspace. The departure begins in Lk 9:51: 'When the days drew near for him to be taken up, he set his face to go to Jerusalem.' This is one significant narrative turning point in the Gospel: Until now, Luke has described the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ into the world. Now this Lord is on his way to Jerusalem, to suffer and be glorified.

This part of the Gospel is on the one hand very loosely interconnected¹⁸⁷. However, we find several criteria for identifying sections, topics, and subsections. Thus, we will suggest

¹⁸⁵ Indeed this seems quite reasonable, while we will later argue that the travel narrative for Luke is closely connected to a theological 'travel'. Other scholars like Carroll (2012: 227) refer to OT references: "In a circuitous journey toward Jesus' exodos, occasional healings continue, but the narrative is dominated by teaching—including many memorable parables—and dialogue."

¹⁸⁶ Although some scholars like Klein (2006: 357) see this embedded in a substory of wandering missionaries ("Wanderprediger") this remains unclear.

¹⁸⁷ Ernst (1977: 453) even states: "Für die Gliederung der Erzählfolge gibt es keine voll überzeugenden Kriterien."

the following structure. However, since this part mainly contains parables, speeches and wonders, the exegetical analysis will remain brief.

A The journey to Jerusalem: Discipleship

*A*₁ Rejection in Samaria and the cost of following Jesus (Lk 9:51–62)

*A*₂ Mission of the 72 (Lk 10:1–23)

*A*₃ Parable of the Good Samaritan (Lk 10:25–37)

B Jesus and Prayer

*B*₁ Martha and Mary (Lk 10:38–42)

*B*₂ The Lord's Prayer (Lk 11:1–13)

C Wonders and Signs

*C*₁ Demons and unclean spirits (Lk 11:13–26)

*C*₂ True Blessedness (Lk 11:27–28)

*C*₃ The sign of Jonah (Lk 11:29–36)

*C*₄ Woes to the Pharisees and Lawyers (Lk 11:37–54)

D Parables and Preaching

*D*₁ Have No Fear ? (Lk 12:1–12)

*D*₂ Parables (Lk 12:13–59)

*D*₃ Repent or Perish (Lk 13:1–5)

*D*₄ Parables (Lk 13:6–30)

E The coming Kingdom

*E*₁ Jesus and Jerusalem (Lk 13:31–35)

*E*₂ Confrontation with Pharisees: Preaching and Parables (Lk 14:1–16:31)

*E*₃ Responding to the coming Kingdom: Increase faith (Lk 17:1–10)

*E*₄ Jesus Cleanses Ten Lepers (Lk 17:11–19)

E_5 The kingdom (Lk 17:20–18:8)

E_6 Entering the kingdom (Lk 18:9–19:27)

F Arrival in Jerusalem (Lk 19:28–48)

F_1 (Lk 19:28–40)

F_2 (Lk 19:41–44)

F_3 (Lk 19:45–48)

We should also discuss the destination of the journey, since the motif of travel is significant in Luke’s Gospel¹⁸⁸. While with Lk 9:51 Jerusalem seems to be the preliminary destination, in Section 9.6 we will present a detailed discussion that this is only limited to the firstspace and secondspace while the perspective in thirdspace clearly has a theological dimension¹⁸⁹.

However, the original research question, what kind of network, which social or group identities are described by Luke and how do both describe the spread of the Gospel into other social groups and locations, will be answered using SNA. Thus, as in the previous parts, we present and collect exegetical observations relevant for topical and social network concerns in a first step. We limit this to the relevant parts, omitting others. At the end of each part of the Gospel, as a second step, we will present some preliminary network observations and bundle the questions concerning the social network. A detailed SNA of Luke’s Gospel is presented as a third step in Chapter 9 and especially in Section 7.7 we will discuss some preliminary aspects and analysis with focus on the travel narrative, and present a perspective on the entire Gospel in Section 9.6.

¹⁸⁸ Garland (2012: 408) sees it as a “distinctive feature of Luke”.

¹⁸⁹ And some scholars even argue that the spatial movement remains vague: “Jesus’ movement lacks any clear progression that can be traced on a map, and time references are nebulous.” (Garland 2012: 408)

7.1 The Journey to Jerusalem: Discipleship (Lk 9:51–10:37)

Rejection in Samaria and the Cost of Following Jesus (Lk 9:51–62): This section introduces the motif of the journey to Jerusalem: ‘When the days drew near for him to be taken up, he set his face to go to Jerusalem.’ (Lk 9:51)¹⁹⁰. V. 52 mentions the sending of messengers (ἄγγελος) and in particular their arrival εἰς κώμην Σαμαριτῶν, so we have another reference to κώμη. Interestingly, they did not welcome him due to his spatial orientation towards Jerusalem (... ὅτι τὸ πρόσωπον αὐτοῦ ἦν πορευόμενον εἰς Ἱερουσαλήμ, V. 53). This negative picture of Samaria will have a follow-up within the parable of the Good Samaritan (Lk 10:25–37)¹⁹¹. Luke mentions in particular James and John (v. 54)¹⁹².

In v. 57 Luke describes the journey: they were ἐν τῇ ὁδῷ, which is a motif which will reoccur in Acts¹⁹³. The following conversation of three actors with Jesus is centered around following Jesus (ἀκολουθεῖω). It is not totally clear if these three actors were potential disciples as Carroll (2012: 230) suggests. They could also be followers from the wider circle. However, while two person said ‘I will follow you’ (vv. 57.61), Jesus calls yet

¹⁹⁰ As we will discuss within the next parts, Luke has included a rich variety of allusions: “Verse 51 marks a decisive shift in the narrative’s direction and combines several significant images: a journey with Jerusalem as its goal; a being taken up, or ascension, as the mode of Jesus’ departure there; and fulfillment or completion as its meaning.” (Carroll 2012: 228)

¹⁹¹ This is carefully arranged here. “In this gospel, which gives special attention to Samaritans, their first mention does not present them in a positive light.” (Garland 2012: 408) But the focus is on the pattern that Jesus gets rejected at a beginning of a new narrative section. Carroll (2012: 229) states that even though a lot of things are omitted, “this brief, enigmatic encounter with Samaria links Jerusalem and rejection of Jesus, thus contributing to a crucial plot development. At the same time, it raises a question for Luke’s audience: What will become of Samaria?” Again, Luke carefully arranges this scenario with spatial and social references, against Klein (2006: 364) who states that Luke adds these references only due to missing knowledge about Jesus’ mission in Samaria.

¹⁹² However, although this is yet another reference to the social network, we should not overestimate this passage as Wolter et al. (2021: 45) did: “This episode is also a discipleship story. Its theme is the dissonance between Jesus and the two Zebedees. Thus, the series of stories that illustrate the disciples’ lack of understanding is continued.” Although the verb ἐπιτιμάω refers to a rather harsh response, we have to discuss two issues: First, Luke is rather referring to James’ and John’s character instead of a generic misunderstanding – although Wolter is right, Luke-Acts is full of these misunderstandings. But in this case the explicit identification of both as someone “who accompanied Jesus in the scene of transfiguration, and who thus heard Jesus and his message legitimated in the most profound way possible” (Green 1997: 406) supports their personal inadequacy rather than a generic narrative.

¹⁹³ See for example Ac 9:2,19:9, etc. see also Garland (2012: 415) and Green (1997: 406): “Expected notations about the journey — for example, current location and direction of travel — are characteristically missing; what is important is that they are ‘on the road,’ for it is on the journey that instruction leading to the formation of faithful disciples will be provided.”

another other person saying ‘Follow me!’ (v. 59). While in his first reaction Jesus claims that he has no spatial place to rest – ‘the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head’ (v. 58) – the other two add conditions to the following (Κύριε ... ἐπίτρεψόν μοι, vv. 59.61) which he rejects. Luke ties together travel and discipleship – following Jesus –, and thus lays out his central motif for this section as we will discuss in Section 7.7.

When Jesus left Galilee, he traveled through the area east of the Jordan and Judea, ... πορεύεσθαι εἰς Ἱερουσαλήμ, v. 51. These landscapes were governed by the tetrarch Herod, and by the Roman governor Pontius Pilate (9:51-19:27).

Mission of the Seventy-Two (Lk 10:1–23): In these verses Jesus sends a larger group of disciples, in particular ‘seventy-two others, and sends them on ahead of him, two by two, into every town and place where he himself was about to go.’ (v. 1) This sending includes his followers very early in his mission, and in addition it is connected to the sending of the twelve disciples earlier¹⁹⁴. Again, we see the motif of sending (vv. 1-12), but also a spatial setting to πόλις and τόπος¹⁹⁵ and in particular οἶκος (v. 5)¹⁹⁶. The mission of the 72 concerns εἰρήνη and in particular the βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ¹⁹⁷. Vv. 13-16 focus on woes to unrepentant cities. Luke in particular names Χοραζίν, Τύρος, Σιδών, Καπερναούμ, and promises a more tolerable judgment to the non-Jewish cities which underlines the seriousness of rejecting Jesus¹⁹⁸. Interesting is the reference in v. 15

¹⁹⁴ However, there are differences: They are not explicitly given authority over demons although according to Ac 10:17–20 they state ‘even the demons are subject to us’. Thus, Green (1997: 410) assumes that “the instructions provided earlier are presumed in successive accounts of sending, even though Luke’s audience is spared the redundancy this entails.” We will discuss this issue in more detail within the SNA.

¹⁹⁵ What are these places? Carroll (2012: 234) thinks, Jesus “sends them to all the places he intends to visit himself”, Schnabel (2002: 317) sees a more generic movement towards Jerusalem. However, this is not clear.

¹⁹⁶ For a detailed discussion we refer to Chapter 20. However, against Klein (2006: 378) we cannot simply see these houses as missionary centers (“Das Haus der Erstbekehrung bleibt Missionszentrum”), since Luke uses the term here completely different to Acts.

¹⁹⁷ “The successful mission of the Seventy-Two in proclaiming the presence of God’s reign and the revelation about Jesus as God’s Son reveal that the advance of God’s reign is unstoppable and Jesus will ultimately triumph.” (Garland 2012: 422) However, there are also references to OT understanding of shalom, see Green (1997: 413).

¹⁹⁸ See Garland (2012: 427-8) and Carroll (2012: 238): “While Sodom, Tyre, and Sidon remain accountable for their misdeeds, it is Jesus’ neighbor towns in Galilee that may expect the harshest judgment. Why? Because they had an opportunity few have enjoyed: God’s Messiah has brought to them the liberating power and grace of God’s realm (cf. 10:23–24). Yet they have not truly seen and heard, have not listened and then aligned their actions with the divine purpose.” Again, Luke highlights the importance of social relations, of encountering people in public space and in particular how to perceive other people, in particular Jesus.

to ᾗδης which comes from the Greek mythology – which might be yet another hint for the overcoming of cultural borders¹⁹⁹.

Vv. 17-23 describe the return of the Seventy-Two. While the spatial setting of the previous narrative remains vague Luke offers two interesting apocalyptic references: Jesus says ‘I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven.’ (v. 18) and on the other hand ‘...but rejoice that your names are written in heaven.’ (v. 23) While there is an ongoing discussion about whether these reference are related to end-time events or OT prophets (cf. Garland 2012: 428-9), we see a spatial reference which cannot be analyzed with SNA.

Parable of the Good Samaritan (Lk 10:25–37): In these verses a lawyer (νομικός) is mentioned, addressing Jesus as διδάσκαλος. The man ‘stood up’ from the crowd, while in v. 23 Jesus was talking privately. It is Luke’s way to push the narrative, playing with the audiences, and it seems impossible to really distinguish between private or public teaching whenever Luke himself is not precise²⁰⁰. Luke explicitly states that the lawyer wants to justify himself. His question ‘What shall I do to inherit eternal life?’ leads to the question ‘And who is my neighbor?’ in v. 28. Jesus answers with the parable of the Good Samaritan²⁰¹. The conclusion is that ‘the one who showed him mercy’ (v. 37) proves to be a neighbor²⁰². This includes a Samaritan, thus a crossing of borders²⁰³. However, Luke

¹⁹⁹ “Not heaven but Hades is the destination that Jesus envisages for the town where he has focused so much of his own energies. Here Luke draws from the fund of Greek mythology dealing with the afterlife, where Hades is the abode for the dead; the antinomy heaven–Hades shows that the latter is not the future home of all the deceased but a place reserved for those deserving condemnation” (Carroll 2012: 238)

²⁰⁰ However, since it is part of his narrative art, it is not necessary. However, some reasonable guesses can be made: “Within the journey narrative, Jesus’ audience is fluid. He has just addressed the disciples (10:1–24), but the notice of teaching something ‘in private’ (v. 23) shows that the crowd is present as well, though in the background. Out of that crowd, a man steps forward to raise a challenge to Jesus’ way of interpreting Scripture and practicing it (v. 25).” (Carroll 2012: 243) See also Green (1997: 425) for a discussion on the abrupt interruption and “the boundaries between the disciples and others outside the circle of Jesus’ followers”. Since this point remains unclear we are unable to bring this perspective within the SNA – however, SNA can contribute to yet another perspective to this question, see Chapter 9.

²⁰¹ This parable is found only in Luke’s Gospel. It reflects the responsibility to care for others, whether they are our friends or strangers.

²⁰² Whereas Garland (2012: 439) states that the lawyer “wants to know from whom can he safely withhold his love”, but instead of this, Jesus offers a new definition: “The neighbor is someone who acts with compassion and mercy to assist someone in need. It prevents one from defining neighbor as someone whom we must love, which, in effect reinforces group boundaries.” (:446)

²⁰³ Or, in other words, the concept of neighbors “is not so much to offer a legal ruling about the identity of neighbours, including ethnic neighbours, as to expose the hardness of heart which had created certain restrictive attitudes towards neighbours. Of those who see the wounded man, only the Samaritan helps him. He is the neighbour, despite the traditional hostility between Jews and Samaritans.” (Knight &

does not report a missionary activity in Samaria before Acts.

7.2 Jesus and Prayer (Lk 10:38–11:13)

Martha and Mary (Lk 10:38–42): This scene is located in a particular *χώμη* (v. 38)²⁰⁴ and introduces two women, Martha and her sister Mary²⁰⁵, who is genuinely listening to Jesus. This is considered more important than earthly service (vv. 41-42)²⁰⁶. However, this scene indicates yet another crossing of borders, since the male space and female space were more strictly separated²⁰⁷.

7.3 Wonders and Signs (Lk 11:13–54)

The sign of Jonah (Lk 11:29–36): This scene contains some spatial references in thirdspace: ‘For as Jonah became a sign to the people of Nineveh, so will the Son of Man be to this generation.’ (v. 30)²⁰⁸, the ‘queen of the South’ (v. 31) and again the ‘men of Nineveh’ (v. 32). The queen of the south is most likely an OT reference to the queen of Sheba: “The queen of the South, a non-Israelite, came from the ends of the earth and recognized Solomon’s legitimacy and deferred to his wisdom” (Garland 2012: 486) –

Knight 1998: 107)

²⁰⁴ Wolter et al. (2021: 58) observes: “For the first time since 9.57 Jesus and his disciples are traveling again”.

²⁰⁵ This is a very common name, and we cannot identify her with the other persons with the same name (cf. Green 1997: 435).

²⁰⁶ As Green (1997: 434) summarizes: “although ‘service’ is perfectly acceptable against the moral landscape of her first-century world, the manner of Martha’s practices exposes them as ill adapted to the sort of hospitality for which Jesus seeks.”

²⁰⁷ See further Garland (2012: 453) in contrast to Wolter et al. (2021: 86) who sees the narrative point differently: “The episode narrates a story about two conceivable reactions to the encounter with Jesus. Does one continue as before or does one interrupt everyday life? Thus, the fact that it is a story about Jesus’s encounter with two women is not decisive for the attainment of the narrative goal.” Although some scholars seem to exaggerated the mentioning of two women (cf. Klein 2006: 496), we cannot simply ignore the explicit mentioning of women.

²⁰⁸ There are several suggestions for this reference: it “may refer to his divine rescue from certain death [...], his preaching of repentance [...] or his preaching of judgment” (Garland 2012: 485). However, other interpretations are open: “He himself, the Son of Man, is the sign that they seek (vv. 29-30). His wisdom is not valued by this generation, although it surpasses the wisdom of Solomon (v. 31). This generation has not repented at his ‘kerygma,’ although it surpasses Jonah’s kerygma (v. 32). This saying reflects the experience of rejection that Jesus received from the side of almost all his contemporaries. The concern, however, is not with a saying directed to ‘this generation’ but with a saying about it. Its addressees were probably originally the disciples.” (Wolter et al. 2021: 111)

in contrast to the people of Nineveh²⁰⁹. This again indicates the crossing of thirdspace distances. In vv. 33-38 Luke adds the parable of the lamp.

Woes to the Pharisees and Lawyers (Lk 11:37–54): In this scene we find yet another conversation of Jesus, who publicly woes to the Pharisees and lawyers. Again, we find a scene located at a meal. There are no other spatial references, but we find several links to OT prophecy. For example the ‘tombs of the prophets whom your fathers killed’ (v. 47)²¹⁰, and Zechariah (v. 51). The whole scene is full of tension: “Even given the possibility of reading this episode within the literary frame of Greco-Roman symposium, where lively argumentation is expected, such vitriolic exchange departs from the ordinary.” (Green 1997: 468)²¹¹ Thus, the conflict to both Pharisees and lawyers gets more intensive.

7.4 Parables and Preaching (Lk 12:1–13:30)

Have No Fear? (Lk 12:1–12): In this scene Luke reintroduces the audience, ‘many thousands of the people’ (... τῶν μυριάδων τοῦ ὄχλου, v. 1). However, Luke arranges this scene within the whole plot line (‘in the meantime...’) and the conflict line to the Pharisees (cf. Green 1997: 479). Again, in his teaching Jesus plays with the borders of spatiality: ‘Therefore whatever you have said in the dark shall be heard in the light, and what you have whispered in private rooms shall be proclaimed on the housetops.’ (v. 3) This passage includes a warning against false teaching.

²⁰⁹ Green (1997: 466) adds: “The possibility of repentance is left open; what is not debatable for Jesus is the certainty that one’s inner constitution is broadcast in one’s behaviors.” But it may also be the function of a witness rather than a judge (cf. Wolter et al. 2021: 114). However, beside these spatial references the whole scenery cannot be interpreted within the framework of SNA.

²¹⁰ The point is striking: “Dead prophets cannot trouble or threaten them. Like their forefarthers, they resist all who call them to account: prophets(7:30), the Messiah, and his apostles.” (Garland 2012: 496)

²¹¹ Against Wolter et al. (2021: 119-20) who does not support his view with narrative forms.

7.5 The coming Kingdom (Lk 13:31–19:27)

Confrontation with Pharisees: Preaching and Parables (Lk 14:1–16:31): This scene contains sections of preachings and parables. Beginning, with the healing of a man on the Sabbath (vv. 1-6), Jesus responded to the piety of the Pharisees and their strict observance of the Sabbath with a healing miracle. It is followed by several parables. Luke embeds this in a loose spatial and scenario setting, ‘great crowds accompanied him’ (v. 25). However, he emphasized that there was a variety of people in his audience, ‘... tax collectors and sinners were all drawing near to hear him’ (15:1)²¹², but he also ‘... said to the disciples’ (16:1). Green (1997: 586) states: this “demonstrates again the degree to which the disciples are not yet portrayed as a distinctive group within the Lukan travel narrative.” In Chapter 9 we will show, how SNA supports this view, in particular in contrast to Acts. Interestingly, the confrontation with Pharisees and Scribes gets more extensive Luke introduces them ‘Pharisees and the scribes grumbled’ (15:2), ‘the Pharisees, who were lovers of money, heard all these things, and they ridiculed him’ (16:14). In any case, these preachings and parables once again underline that Jesus overcomes thirdspace distances, overcoming social and religious borders. Or in the words of Garland (2012: 618): Jesus is “breaking down prejudices”.

Jesus Cleanses Ten Lepers (Lk 17:11–19): This scene is located ‘on the way to Jerusalem’ (... ἐν τῷ πορεύεσθαι εἰς Ἱερουσαλὴμ, v. 11) and in a village (κώμη, v. 12)²¹³ and describes the healing of the ten lepers. While all ten demonstrated their faith and obedience to the word of Jesus, only one of them returned in gratitude, a Samaritan (v. 16). Jesus answers ‘Was no one found to return and give praise to God except this foreigner?’ (v. 18). His faith brought him not only physical healing but also spiritual salvation. Here, Luke “indicates a direct correlation between faith/faithfulness and proper

²¹² Garland (2012: 611) observes: “The sinners [...] could be apostate Jews (1 Macc 1:34; 2:44, 48) who were not simply the wrong sort of people but notorious and persistent lawbreakers who brought dishonor to their fellow Jews.” But, however, this remains unclear in this context and Luke may have referred to all those who are more or less distant to faith.

²¹³ Green (1997: 622) adds the following questions: “The geographical (and, thus, socio-religious) ambivalence of v 11 is continued in Luke’s reference to ‘a village’. Is it Galilean? Samaritan? This is unimportant for the moment, though this lingering vagueness may lull Luke’s readers into false assumptions.” However, Garland (2012: 688-9) suggests a different reading: The phrase διήρχετο διὰ μέσον Σαμαρείας καὶ Γαλιλαίας as ‘along between’ may refer to a “liminal zone”, where transition is possible. In any case, Luke is rather literally playing with the borders of socio-geographic distances: As we have discussed several times, he is carefully arranging his story as overcoming distances.

identification of Jesus” (Green 1997: 618). SNA analysis of Acts will support the view that this identification is also a crucial element in entire Luke-Acts.

Entering the kingdom (Lk 18:9–19:27): This section contains several stories. Again, Luke introduces a variety of people in the audience: ‘some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous’ (v. 18:9), ‘a ruler’ (v. 18:8), ‘the twelve’ (v. 18:31). The spatial setting is again not very clear Luke is only concerned about a place ‘near to Jericho’ (v. 18:35) and the town of Jericho (v. 19:1)²¹⁴. However, we find additional signs of spatiality, for example within the conversion of Zacchaeus, ‘he was a chief tax collector²¹⁵ and was rich.’ (19:2) As a rich tax collector Zacchaeus was despised by his fellow Jews, however, he desired to give²¹⁶, who, in turn, desired much more to give to him: ‘today salvation has come to this house’ (... σωτηρία τῷ οἴκῳ τούτῳ ἐγένετο, 19:9). Here, Jesus is overcoming social distances²¹⁷. This also happens in Jesus’ reaction after his disciples tried to rebuke the infants (18:15-17).

7.6 Arrival in Jerusalem (Lk 19:28–48)

The first scene (Lk 19:28–44) describes the triumphal entry of Jesus into Jerusalem. Here, Luke gets more precise: Jesus traveled via Bethphage and Bethany, Mount Olivet (v. 29)²¹⁸. Again, Jesus sends messengers (vv. 29-31) in the *χώμη* – however, the city of

²¹⁴ Indeed, the journey now comes to an end: “Because Jerusalem is the ultimate destination, because suffering and death had come to be associated with Jerusalem, and because Jericho is located only ca. 20 kilometers from Jerusalem, this and the events Luke records in ch. 19 are bathed with a heightened urgency that give them added christological significance.” (Green 1997: 662)

²¹⁵ However, it is unclear if this is referring to a job description (cf. Green 1997: 668).

²¹⁶ Either to Jesus or more precisely to the poor and to those who he has defrauded. Garland (2012: 749) states: “It is more likely that Zacchaeus is enthusiastically announcing a change in his life’s direction,” since he still keeps half of his wealth.

²¹⁷ “In a paradoxical way, this narrative unit provides a notable illustration of ‘good news to the poor’ — laying stress both on the bearer of this good news (Christology and mission) and on appropriate response to the beneficence of God. As such, this unit constitutes an important and carefully crafted rhetorical exercise on the part of the Third Evangelist. Employing categories fully developed in the prior narrative in incongruous, even oxymoronic juxtaposition — ‘ruler,’ ‘toll collector,’ ‘wealthy,’ and ‘sinner’ — Luke articulates by means of this account a pivotal element of his narrative theology.” (Green 1997: 667)

²¹⁸ Here, narrative time is slowed down, especially due to the geographic references which Luke widely omitted within the travel narrative. Jerusalem is, however, the narrative climax of Luke’s Gospel: “because of [it’s] [...] status as the Holy City — location of the temple, abode of God, nexus between human and divine, inviolable territory — the question of the relationship between Jesus and Jerusalem is inevitable.” (Green 1997: 683) In addition, “The convergence with the angel’s praise of God from

Jerusalem is already visible on the horizon. This, together with the ‘rejoice and praise’ (v. 37) draws the tension in firstspace and secondspace as the end of the journey comes nearer. But it also includes a theological progress in thirdspace, which Luke carefully arranges in this section. However, there is a confrontation with the Pharisees (v. 39). Jesus – still not arrived in Jerusalem – is weeping over Jerusalem (Lk 19:41–44) which slows down the narrative and prepares for the climax. Green (1997: 690) suggests that Jerusalem is more a metaphor for “its role as a cultural center [...], so mention of the city relates primarily to the temple system and the leadership that draws its legitimacy from the temple.” This is valid, but Jerusalem is also a place in firstspace and secondspace, see our discussion in Section 7.7.

In Lk 19:45–48 Jesus has arrived in the temple. Here, Luke describes the cleansing of the temple²¹⁹ and that Jesus ‘was teaching daily in the temple’ (v. 47)²²⁰. Green (1997: 683) provides a very important spatial observation: “In analogous scenes, the person who enters the city does not do so in order to claim kingship; rather, entry presupposes an already achieved victory.” This indicates that both travel and entering Jerusalem has yet another spatial meaning for Luke: God’s victory is yet to come in firstspace and secondspace. However, Luke is more interested in thirdspace, for which we will gather more indications and provide a detailed discussion in Chapter 10.

At the end of Lk 19:28-48, the story comes to a first climax: ‘the chief priests and the scribes and the principal men of the people were seeking to destroy him, but they did not find anything they could do, for all the people were hanging on his words’ (vv. 47.48).

2.13-14 cannot be missed (see also Brandenburger 1973, 33; G. Klein 1997, 146; Lambrecht 2003, 107). Just as it was τὸ πλῆθος of the angels at Jesus’s birth, so it is now τὸ πλῆθος of the disciples that praises God (αἰνεῖν τὸν θεόν both here and there). And as the angels shouted δόξα ἐν ὑψίστοις θεῷ and ἐπὶ γῆς εἰρήνη from heaven, so the disciples now join this doxology and give the greeting of peace back to heaven (ἐν οὐρανῷ εἰρήνη καὶ δόξα ἐν ὑψίστοις ; v. 38b; see G. Klein 1997, 150– 51). Their exclamation is situated on the same level of interpretation as 2.14, and through this Luke places the activity of Jesus in the light of the angel’s praise of God. The peace proclaimed over the whole world, which Jesus has brought as messianic Savior, can be experienced in his deeds of power.” (Wolter et al. 2021: 368) However, against Klein (2006: 357), we cannot simply state that Luke was neither interested in history nor geography: He is carefully arranging the different views of spatiality, making the travel narratives significant in firstspace, secondspace, and thirdspace.

²¹⁹ Again, two OT references are mentioned by Luke: Is 56:7; Jr 7:11. This contrast between the ‘house of prayer’ and a ‘den of robbers’ highlights yet another distance in thirdspace since it “condemns the temple’s corruption that has made it a place of false security where bandits retreat to their hideout to seek asylum from justice.” (Garland 2012: 775) However, the purpose of the cleansing was not solely Jesus’ teaching as Ernst (1977: 530) suggests. It is rather yet another spatial approach bringing back what his is own, see Lk 2:49.

²²⁰ But Luke clarifies in Lk 21:37: “And every day he was teaching in the temple, but at night he went out and lodged on the mount called Olivet.”

While with Jerusalem the Gospel reaches its first climax, we need to specify the spatial setting which introduced Jerusalem already in the first part of the Gospel. According to Luke, Jesus has not been in the temple since his previous visit. Second, the journey of Jesus to Jerusalem with his parents was not so much in Luke's interest, although it was one of a few events narrated by Luke. This highlights the importance of this journey, but since Luke has not paid particular interest in the firstspace and secondspace spatiality, it is a crucial observation that this journey is particularly concerned about the thirdspace and in particular the theological issues. We will collect more observations with methods of SNA and question in the next section, and provide a detailed discussion in Chapter 10.

7.7 Summary: The spatiality of travel

In Figure 7.1 we present a social and spatial summary of the travel narrative in Lk 9:51–19:48. Here, we see that the social network in this section is composed and embedded in spatiality – Luke carefully arranges and interweaves both perspectives. The destination of the journey, Jerusalem, is a central motif, but Luke also uses the act of traveling in itself as a significant motif in his Gospel²²¹. While with Lk 9:51 Jerusalem seems to be the primary destination, in Section 9.6 we will present a detailed discussion that this is only limited to the firstspace and secondspace while the perspective in thirdspace clearly has a theological dimension. The firstspace and secondspace movement remains vague: Where is the 'ahead', Jesus sends the Seventy-Two? Who, in particular, is Jesus' audience? Is Samaria a secondspace reference (Lk 9:51–62) or a thirdspace reference (Lk 17:1–19)? Some of these questions will be answered when building the social network for the detailed analysis in Chapter 9.

As we have seen, there is an ongoing debate on how to understand the travel narrative²²². However, the following points are important to understand Luke's spatial thinking about the journey from Galilee to Jerusalem:

- Luke's spatial references to locations are sparse, and so are his references to particular actors. His disciples are mostly reduced to the apostles, or the Seventy-Two. His

²²¹ Garland (2012: 408) sees it as a "distinctive feature of Luke".

²²² See Schnabel (2002: 258-260) and the detailed discussion in Section 9.6.

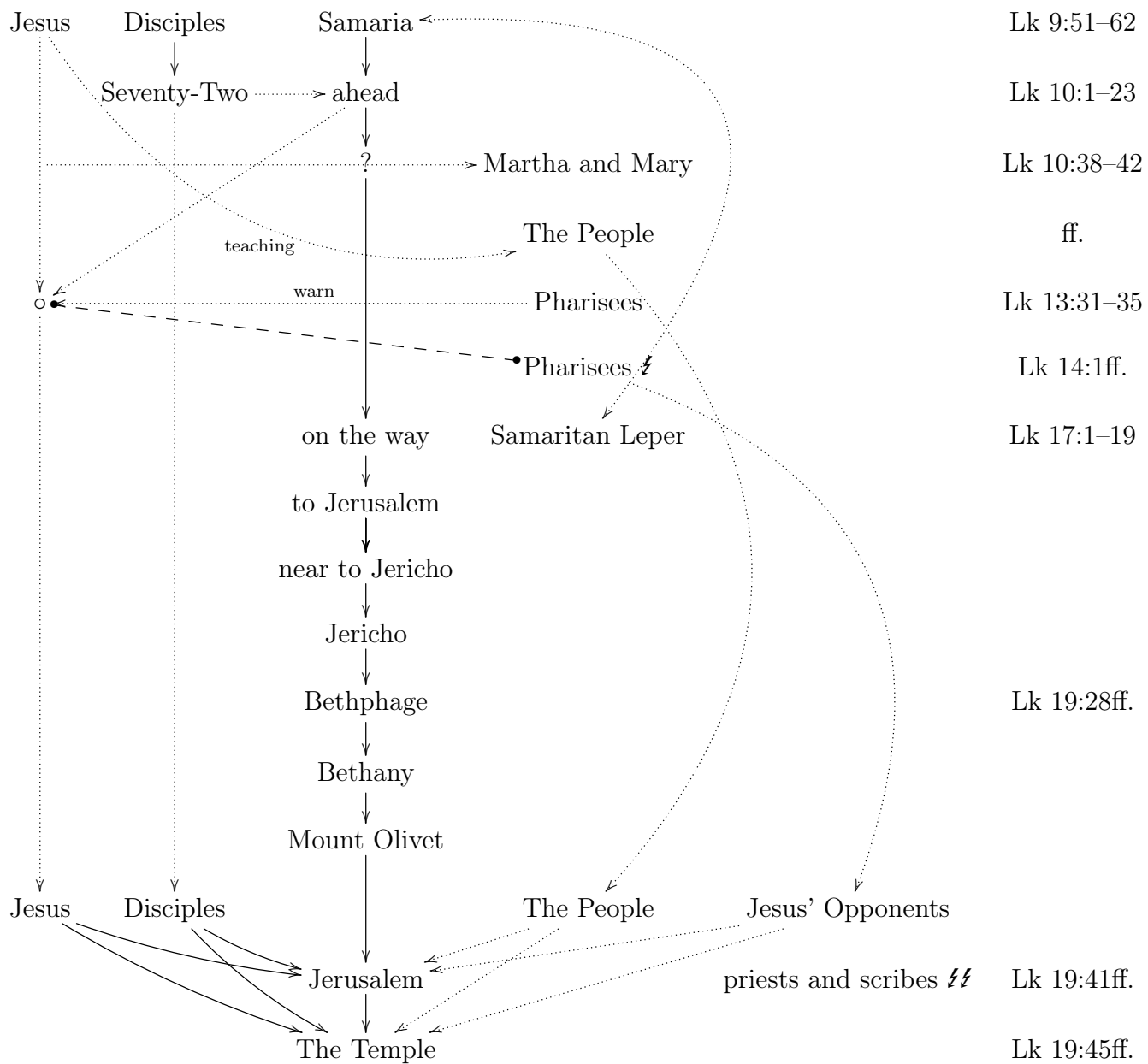


Figure 7.1: The spatiality of the travel narrative in Lk 9:51–19:48. The left columns locate Jesus, his disciples and people following them. The middle column refers to locations. The right columns locate the people, Jesus’ opponents. Arrows (→) refer to a firstspace movement or location, for example Jesus and his disciples travel to Jerusalem. The people (in Jerusalem) in general have may have a firstspace and secondspace relation to the temple, which is indicated by a dotted arrow (→). A dashed arrow indicates a direct confrontation. This figure illustrates the complex movement in both social relations as well as different perspectives on spatiality. A lightning symbol (⚡) refers to ongoing confrontation and conflict.

audience is diverse and mostly anonymous. Luke's primary interest is the increasing confrontation, e.g. with the Pharisees which increases in parallel to the spatial movement.

- Luke arranges the travel narrative with a primary interest in thirdspace: It is mainly a theological journey, the Son of God in confrontation with his opponents which leads to the first climax. However, firstspace and secondspace are especially concentrated at the beginning and end of this part.
- Thus, understanding the travel narrative purely as realistic description of a travel is a category mismatch. Luke indeed does describe a journey, but his narrative interest is to provide a basis for the coming climax in Jerusalem.

In summary, Luke carefully arranges the spatiality of the travel narratives, of travel in general, and of travel with the Son of God in particular. It is both a conflictful and a shared journey. The βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ is the central theological motif, and it is not without reason that the disciples are a vague group of people: the social network and issues of spatiality are deeply connected. In other words: traveling with the Son of God refers to both the spatial movement *and* a social movement. In Chapter 9 we will show that the spatial movement is primary in thirdspace, making it a theological concern of Luke. However, the travel motif will also re-occur in the next part of the Gospel and continue in Acts.

8 Jesus in Jerusalem (Lk 20:1–24:53)

The last part of Luke’s Gospel is divided into three parts. Luke continues with teaching – Jesus ‘was teaching daily in the temple’ as introduced in v. 47, bracketed by Lk 21:37 – , parables, and discussions with the scribes, chief priests, Sadducees, and maybe Pharisees. Thus, the confrontation between Jesus and them – carefully arranged by Luke in the last part – is now coming to its climax²²³. The second part describes the suffering and death of Jesus, the third one the resurrection of Jesus:

A Teaching in Jerusalem (Lk 20:1–21:38)

B Suffering and Death of Jesus (Lk 22:1–23:56)

C The Resurrection of Jesus (Lk 24:1–53)

All scenes are located in Jerusalem, which is the location of the climax²²⁴. The actors are basically arranged around Jesus: The people and his opponents. However, the disciples are more in the background even though “on stage” until the last part²²⁵. Here, *C* is the transition to Acts, providing story motifs which are closely connected.

²²³ “This allusion to confrontation actually introduces the leitmotif of this section of Luke’s Gospel — namely, conflict surrounding the question, Who has legitimate authority?” (Green 1997: 696).

²²⁴ It “has been a place of conflict for Jesus — both in anticipation [...] and reality [...]. Because, according to Jesus’ own predictions, Jerusalem is the site of his demise [...], his continued presence in the Holy City speaks strongly against his safety. Jerusalem, after all, is the abode of the Jewish leadership, repeatedly positioned against the purpose of God as this has been articulated by Jesus and, thus, against Jesus himself” (Green 1997: 744). However, some scholars argue that climax and triumph are not yet located here, for example Schweizer: “man darf den Einzug nicht als endgültigen Triumph mißverstehen. Daher unterstreicht er auch das ‘Wandern’ Jesu als Führer (‘voran’) nach Jerusalem. Das Wort ‘wandern’ erscheint seit 9,51 zum neunten Mal und V. 36 nochmals, so wichtig ist es Lukas.” (Schweizer 1993: 196)

²²⁵ Wolter et al. (2021: 378) suggests: “Luke creates a scenic complex whose coherence is established by the constellation of the narrative characters. Jesus, the Jerusalem λαός, and Jesus’s opponents form a dramatic triangle.”

8.1 Teaching in Jerusalem (Lk 20:1–21:38)

The Authority of Jesus Challenged (Lk 20:1–8), The Parable of the Wicked Tenants (Lk 20:9–18): Luke now introduces scenes that are located in the Temple (v. 1), the time is not entirely clear (... ἐν μιᾷ τῶν ἡμερῶν), but the scene introduces confrontation with ‘the chief priests and the scribes with the elders’. However, both v. 1 and 9 introduce a crowd or the people (λαός) as part of the audience. They are not only his audience and a “buffer between Jesus and his opponents” as Green (1997: 696) suggests, but they are also part of the now occurring conflict triangle between Jesus and his opponents.

Paying Taxes to Caesar (Lk 20:19–26): This scene increases the tension between scribes, chief priests, and Jesus (they ‘sought to lay hands on him at that very hour, for they perceived that he had told this parable against them, but they feared the people’, v. 19). This confrontation leads to a spatial gap, they send spies (ἐγκάθετος) to him. However, the initial question, if it ‘is lawful [...] to give tribute to Caesar’ (v. 22) was declared as out of scope by Jesus: ‘Then render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s’ (v. 25). This underlines Luke’s spatial thinking: While the journey to Jerusalem was mainly a travel in thirdspace, the same holds for Jesus’ spatial thinking according to Luke²²⁶. Jesus is mainly concerned about ‘God’s things’²²⁷.

Sadducees Ask About the Resurrection (Lk 20:27–40): In this scene, Jesus is discussing the topic of resurrection with the Sadducees. Luke uses Σαδδουκαῖος only once in his Gospel, while in Acts we find five references²²⁸. The result is a response from the

²²⁶ We refer to Green (1997: 711-712) for a detailed discussion on the symbolic connotations.

²²⁷ Similar to Carroll (2012: 396): “His wit again enables him to best his adversaries; while publicly acknowledging the legitimate claim of the Roman Empire, he continues at the same time to affirm the sovereign rule of God.”

²²⁸ Wolter et al. (2021: 399) is right: “Luke communicates to the readers about them what is absolutely necessary for the understanding of the following dialogue.” Thus, the Sadducees are part of the social network, but they play – not surprising – only a marginal role. Similar Carroll (2012: 405): “The narrator’s first introduction of this character group gives them only one identifying badge: they oppose the notion of resurrection”. Their role, however, remains puzzling, against Green (1997: 717) who reduces their role as “a further attempt to ensnare Jesus by embarrassing him before the people.”

scribes²²⁹ ‘Teacher, you have spoken well’ (v. 39) and they ‘no longer dared to ask him any question.’ (v. 40)

The Widow’s Offering (Lk 21:1–4), Discourses (Lk 21:5–38): The first verses offer Jesus’ perspective on a poor widow giving more than a wealthy man. It refers to motifs from the first part of the Gospel: time, piety, and wealth. This seems to indicate that Jesus heavily criticizes leadership and the economical situation of the people²³⁰. The following passages are not only a picture of the future awaiting the Temple, but also Jesus’ last public teachings. These parts are mainly concerned with apocalyptic topics²³¹ and the return of Jesus. The scene ends with a remark, that when Jesus returns early in the morning to the Temple, after sleeping on the Mount of Olives (Ἐλαιῶν), ‘all the people came to him in the temple to hear him.’ This πᾶς ὁ λαός is still positive towards Jesus. However, this situation will now change.

8.2 Suffering and Death of Jesus (Lk 22:1–23:56)

The Plot to kill Jesus, Judas betrays Jesus (Lk 22:1–6): This scene defines a break after the public ministry of Jesus by introducing the conspiracy to kill Jesus²³². V. 2 offers an impression of the social confrontations: ‘the chief priests and the scribes were seeking how to put him to death, for they feared the people’. Thus, Luke increases the tension in the triangle chief priests/scribes, people, Jesus²³³. The λαός plays an interesting

²²⁹ However, Luke has not introduced them earlier – again, the audience is unclear. Carroll (2012: 407) suggests they have been “[s]ome scribes who have listened to the exchange between Jesus and Sadducees”.

²³⁰ “Jesus delivers a scathing attack on the temple leadership and on an economically powerful but oppressive and exploitative institution that is ripe for judgment.” (Carroll 2012: 411) Or even harsher Green (1997: 728): “And thus does Luke draw attention to a system, the temple treasury itself, set up in such a way that it feeds off those who cannot fend for themselves. What is even worse, because it is the *temple* treasury, it has an inherent claim to divine legitimation. how could it be involved in injustice?”

²³¹ Against Wolter et al. (2021: 414) for this passages do not “lack a reading instruction”.

²³² Green (1997: 744) is right, when he assumes conflict to be one particular motif: “the most pervasive and important of which is the motif of conflict. Conflict, too, has been a primary force driving the narrative plot forward to this point.” However, there is both a social and a spatial component: The conflict is embedded in the conflict triangle between Jesus/God, his opponents and the double-minded people. Additionally, Luke embeds this in a thirdspace spatiality which represents the theological component of this conflict.

²³³ However, Carroll (2012: 425) observes, that v. 2 “identifies fear of the people as a principal motive for the leaders’ actions in the passion drama. By the end of the Passion Narrative, however, ‘all the people’ will have aligned themselves, if only momentarily, with their leaders.”

role for Luke, since he plays with spatiality and social positions to indicate the change of allegiance.

Judas' betrayal is described in vv. 4-6. Here, an additional actor, Σατανᾶς, enters the stage. However, as discussed earlier, similar to angels, we cannot add him to the SNA. Nevertheless, the spatial setting is interesting. Judas²³⁴ 'went away' (participle ἀπελθών) and coordinated his betrayal with the chief priests and the officers. The process should be done ἄτερ ὄχλου (v. 6), which again refers to the critical triangle chief priests/scribes, people, Jesus²³⁵. Judas was promised money (v. 5), an important motif for Luke²³⁶.

The Passover with the Disciples and Teachings (Lk 22:7–38): This scene introduces the last Passover meal²³⁷, and the Lord's supper. Luke does not offer a spatial setting in the beginning, but starts with the time: 'the day of Unleavened Bread, on which the Passover lamb had to be sacrificed' (v. 7). However, they enter a house (οἰκία, v. 11) which is shown to them in a mysterious prophetic way. Luke applies the words κατάλυμα – only used in the context of Jesus' birth in Lk 2:7 – and ἀνώγειον, which is only used here. Usually, Luke uses the term ὑπερῶον in Acts. However, Garland (2012: 853) rightly states the parallels to Jesus' birth narrative where no room was available for him.

In v. 14 the disciples are mentioned, and the narrative changes to a "poignant farewell discourse through which Jesus interprets for the Twelve the events about to occur, including his death, and equips them for their future role" (Carroll 2012: 429). Again, Peter and John play a particular role and search for the accommodation (v. 8). However, the dispute ἐν αὐτοῖς (v. 24) refers to all twelve²³⁸. Vv. 31-34 are dedicated to Jesus'

²³⁴ It is important to mention that Judas is especially entitled as someone 'who was of the number of the twelve.' (v. 3) This emphasizes the intimacy of friendship and highlights the case of betrayal.

²³⁵ Which – again – increases the narrative tension. Carroll (2012: 427) observes: "The agreement struck by Judas and the temple authorities creates suspense for Luke's audience. How will Judas seek to execute his plan? Ironically, when in a few short hours he succeeds in delivering Jesus to the temple leadership group, he will do so with a crowd present, not absent, though it is one composed of the temple authorities themselves and others affiliated with them."

²³⁶ And indeed Judas contradicts Jesus: "Judas setzt auf den Mammon, zu dem der Christ auf Distanz gehen soll" (Klein 2006: 659), see also Garland (2012: 846) who sees a primary role for Satan. However, this is not clear in this context.

²³⁷ Albeit Luke is not very clear at this point. Carroll (2012: 427) summarizes: "The account here (v. 7) identifies the seven-day Festival of Unleavened Bread with Passover, as in v. 1, and curiously reduces it to one day. The sense intended may be that this is the first day of the feast (as in Mark 14:12)."

²³⁸ We argue against Carroll (2012: 431) that the role of the Twelve is not limited to – but includes – the representative roles: "The Twelve are present at this meal not as individuals privileged to enjoy association with Jesus but in their representative role as commissioned leaders of the community that Jesus is gathering around himself, as the nucleus of an Israel undergoing restoration (cf. 22:28–30),

foretelling Peter's denial, again a hint for his prominent role. But, however, his role is – although prominent – not a solely positive one. There is yet another reference to Σατανᾶς (v. 31)²³⁹, see remarks above. Most interesting is the dispute among the disciples, as to who is the greatest (vv. 24-30). Jesus is changing the social order and the status of people. V. 27 is the center of this argumentation: 'For who is the greater, one who reclines at table or one who serves? Is it not the one who reclines at table? But I am among you as the one who serves.' This is a paradigm shift and in Acts²⁴⁰, Luke gives an idea of how this leadership will emerge (see Chapter 14 for a detailed discussion).

Green (1997: 745) points out another interesting point: The disciples, Jesus' close friends, come "dangerously close to siding with Jesus' opponents". Indeed, the opponents of Jesus are willing and upset the fragile balance. However, we will discuss these spatial reflections and the social conflicts later with SNA and refer to Section 8.4 for more remarks on this complex question.

Jesus Prays on the Mount of Olives (Lk 22:39–46): This scene introduces a spatial change, Jesus 'went, as was his custom, to the Mount of Olives' (v. 39) and the disciples followed him. Thus, we may assume, that more people followed, although Luke is not very specific. Luke adds a reference to another ἄγγελος (v. 43). As we have already discussed in Section 5.6, it is not possible to add this divine messenger to the social network. Although Jesus expects the disciples to stay awake and pray with him²⁴¹ 'when he rose from prayer, he came to the disciples and found them sleeping for sorrow' (v. 45).

and in preparation for their future vocation as witnesses (e.g., 24:48; Acts 1:8, 21–22; 5:32; 10:41; 13:31)."

²³⁹"Satan is resolved to shift Jesus' intimate associates like wheat, to test the strength of their character and the vigor of their faith. Thus they venture into a world of threat; not only the integrity of their faith and the persistence of their commitment but also their very lives are now in danger." (Carroll 2012: 442)

²⁴⁰See also Carroll: "In this meal setting, Jesus again commends an alternative pattern of leadership to be exercised by the apostles, and by other members of the community in which they will exercise authority. With the images of radical status inversion in vv. 26–27, Jesus rewrites the cultural scripts relating to power, benefaction, and status." (Carroll 2012: 439)

²⁴¹"Confronted by life-threatening peril, Jesus models for his followers, and for Luke's audience, authentic prayer that petitions honestly but, in sustained communion with the God who is a gracious, providing Father (cf. 11:1–13; 12:22–32), seeks alignment with the divine purpose." (Carroll 2012: 445)

Betrayal and Arrest of Jesus, Jesus Before the Council (Lk 22:47–71): V. 47 introduces the coming of an ὄχλος, this time not positively, but Judas leading them, they come to arrest Jesus. V. 52 mentions that ‘the chief priests and officers of the temple’ were among them²⁴². The following scene mentions that ‘one of them struck’ a servant, but Jesus heals him²⁴³. Interestingly, Luke does not mention which disciple did this. Resisting without violence: Luke once again highlights the different approach of Jesus. In vv. 54-62 Peter again has a prominent role while he denies Jesus. However, Jesus still takes the active part²⁴⁴ which will also bridge the narrative towards Acts.

In vv. 66-71 Luke narrates Jesus before the council, which comprises ‘the assembly of the elders of the people [...], both chief priests and scribes’ (v. 66). V. 70 is the climax of this hearing: asked if he is the Son of God, Jesus replies ‘You say that I am’. There is no formal judgment, but it seems enough to bring Jesus before the Roman authorities. Although the spatial setting is not clear, we can assume that they meet in a house. Green (1997: 786) observes:

First, he [Luke] locates both Jesus and Peter geographically in the high priest’s mansion — that is, in the courtyard of the high priest’s quarters. Then, having established Jesus’ role as a prophet by narrating the precise fulfillment of his prediction concerning Peter, he clears the stage of Peter so that the narrative focus might remain centrally on Jesus.

²⁴² Indeed, this is carefully arranged by Luke, as Carroll (2012: 447) states: “The presence of an ochlos is ironic since the powerful enemies of Jesus have been seeking a way of isolating him from the ochlos (22:6), to capture him away from the throngs of people drawn to him (19:47–48; 20:19; 22:2). This crowd, however, does not come from the people (laos) but, the narrator later discloses (v. 52), from the local, temple-based power elite: chief priests, elders, and temple (security force) officers.” However, Green (1997: 782) pays more attention to Luke’s narrative composition: “As though he were working with an adjustable lens, he dramatizes this scene with clear, sharp changes in focusing — moving quickly from the crowd to Judas, then gradually to allow the crowd greater definition. Indeed, only as the scene unfolds are we allowed access to the identity of those who make up the crowd, and this is important for Luke’s narrative rhetoric since it portends all the more the turning of every imaginable force against Jesus and the divine purpose.” This underlines the specific social arrangement of this scene. However, this also underlines the people who change allegiance, now supporting the evil opponents. Judas will play an interesting role in the complete social network of Luke-Acts, see Chapter 16 – although he betrayed Jesus. Thus this is also yet another reference that the social network of Christianity is not yet complete, but as we are on the direct crossing to Acts, the story will soon unfold the coming of the Spirit.

²⁴³ The active part of Jesus – while being arrested! – is notable. Carroll (2012: 443) summarizes: “Throughout the arrest scene, Jesus and his words dominate, providing the interpretive lens through which readers experience the event as an act of betrayal and the momentary triumph of the power of evil, but also the working out of the divine purpose and confirmation of Jesus’ fidelity, under duress, to his vocation and commitments”.

²⁴⁴ “The prophecy of Jesus finds precise fulfillment, but despite the eminent apostle’s threefold denial of association with Jesus, his Lord sustains active connection with him, nurturing conditions for Peter’s return and restoration.” (Carroll 2012: 449)

Indeed, Luke carefully arranges the spatial setting. Most interestingly: Peter comes close to Jesus' opponents, both in firstspace and secondspace, but also in thirdspace: His denial proves this. But, as we will discuss in Section 8.4, the situation is quite complex. While firstspace and secondspace movements are quite obvious, Luke arranges the thirdspace very implicitly. In addition, it remains unclear how faith and thirdspace are linked.

Jesus Before Pilate and Herod (Lk 23:1–25): This section comprises two parts: First, Jesus is brought before Pilate (vv. 1-5) and Herod (roughly vv. 6-23.12). They both became friends (v. 12). However, Pilate answers 'You brought me this man as one who was misleading the people. And after examining him before you, behold, I did not find this man guilty of any of your charges against him. Neither did Herod, for he sent him back to us. Look, nothing deserving death has been done by him. I will therefore punish and release him.' (vv. 14-16). This is a sharp contrast to the fact that "local elite, convened by the high priest, have found what they consider sufficient cause for handing Jesus over to the Roman governor" (Carroll 2012: 454). However, this is not surprising. Green (1997: 791) states that the Jewish leaders are clearly "the single constant in this narrative unit". Interestingly, the people now are rather in the background, the conflict is on a different level. Due to the public mood Pilate delivers Jesus to be crucified. Certainly, this is "the first obvious signal that the people, at least those present, have now come over to the side of Jesus' adversaries" (Carroll 2012: 459).

The Crucifixion (Lk 23:26–49): This scene begins with a reference to Simon of Cyrene²⁴⁵ (v. 26), who was seized to carry the cross behind Jesus. A 'great multitude of the people and of women' (... πολὺ πλῆθος τοῦ λαοῦ καὶ γυναικῶν ...) followed him²⁴⁶. They mourned and lamented him, which indicates yet another movement in allegiance, or another subgroup. Vv. 28-31 offer Jesus' response to them. However, it remains unclear,

²⁴⁵ Green (1997: 814) summarizes that this Greek name does not necessarily imply that Simon was Greek, with Ac 6:9 and Ac 2:10 he argues that he could well be a Jew.

²⁴⁶ However, it is striking that Luke does not explicitly mention the apostles or other disciples. But against Carroll, we cannot simply argue that their reference is only symbolic. While we may assume them in the crowd, Luke highlights yet another point which he will develop further in Acts: Leadership is significant different, the only really important leader for Luke is Jesus. "Unlike Simon of Cyrene, they have chosen their location and movement, but in each case this spatial representation of discipleship is only symbolic [...]. Where are the apostles and other disciples? Although not mentioned here, they did not flee from the arrest [...], and they must be present among the persons observing ('all those known to him') from a distance" (Carroll 2012: 463).

to which people the form ἀπήγαγον in v. 26 refers²⁴⁷. V. 32 introduces two criminals who were crucified with him. Luke does not describe the way to ‘The Skull’²⁴⁸ (v. 33) explicitly, but it can be seen as a minimized version of the travel narrative, yet coming to the climax of last part.

V. 35 mentions the λαός watching the crucifixion, v. 36 mentions the soldiers (στρατιώτης). The last words of Jesus before his death are ‘Father, into your hands I commit my spirit!’ (v. 46). The spatial references – among others²⁴⁹ – are striking: ‘the curtain of the temple was torn in two’ (v. 45). While the ὄχλος goes home (v. 48), ‘his acquaintances and the women who had followed him from Galilee stood at a distance watching these things.’ (v. 49)

8.3 The Exaltation of Jesus (Lk 24:1–53)

Lk 24:1–53 is composed in a very dense manner. It does not only contain several theological aspects²⁵⁰, but also the motif of travel reoccurs, and it is the transition “from the story of Jesus to the story of his witnesses” (Green 1997: 832). While we will pay special attention to spatiality, one aspect needs to be examined in more detail, namely, the specific Lucan announcement of the risen Jesus to the apostles to remain in Jerusalem (Lk 24:49; Ac 1:4), which forms a bridge between Luke’s Gospel and Acts. The conclusion of Lk 24 contains several temporal leaps and it remains to be exegetically justified why Lk 24:49 describes the time of Jesus immediately before his ascension.

²⁴⁷ This seems to be a vague set of people, including Jesus’ opponents. Green (1997: 814), however, suggests a more theological reading including Lk 9:23, 14:27 as opposite to “those who want to follow him in discipleship”. We will argue later that this is partially true, but with reference to the spatial setting remains unclear.

²⁴⁸ It is worth a side note that this location is outside of Jerusalem (cf. Garland 2012: 920): Thus, this is the first time Luke mentions that Jesus leaves Jerusalem and it is thus parallel to the travel to Emmaus.

²⁴⁹ See for example Carroll (2012: 469): “The hour controlled by the ‘power of darkness’ (i.e., evil, 22:53) has yielded to three hours that exhibit the divine, judging presence even amid the darkness”.

²⁵⁰ “These include (1) the disciples’ misperception and lack of understanding, which (2) is overcome by Jesus’ interpreting Scripture in the light of the (apparently disconfirming) events of the passion, and interpreting those events in the light of the Scriptures; (3) revelation-bearing hospitality at table; and (4) the inauguration of a Scripture-mandated mission to the nations, (5) continuing Jesus’ activity of granting forgiveness and enabling reordered lives.” (Carroll 2012: 474)

The Resurrection (Lk 24:1–12): Luke continues the story with the yet unnamed women from Galilee. According to v. 11 they are ‘Mary Magdalene and Joanna and Mary the mother of James’. The time is after the Sabbath, on the ‘first day of the week, at early dawn’ (v. 1). Unexpectedly, two angels tell them about the resurrection²⁵¹, ‘and returning from the tomb they told all these things to the eleven and to all the rest.’ (v. 9) It is noteworthy that only the women “receive heavenly communication” as Green (1997: 836) suggests. Significant is also that only eleven apostles remain – this gap is filled in Acts, see the discussion in Chapter 11. They did not believe the women (v. 11). However, we should not overestimate the story. The gap in this story is arranged between believers and unbelievers, not between male and female disciples as Green (1997: 839) suggests. This raises many more questions, and we will come back to this question in Section 9.5 with a SNA perspective on the whole Gospel.

On the Road to Emmaus (Lk 24:13–35): This story contains a post-Easter encounter with two disciples (δύο ἐξ αὐτῶν, v. 13). It remains unclear if at least one of the two is an apostle. Thus, this text concerns two disciples, one named Cleopas, (Lk 24:18, one unidentified. Edwards (1998: 51-52) presents some arguments as to why the second disciple might be Jesus’ brother James, but this remains speculative. According to early church tradition picked up by Eusebius, Cleopas (cf. Jn 19:25) was the brother of Joseph, Jesus’ father, and his companion was his son Simeon. Emmaus (according to v. 28 a κώμη) was about 12 km from Jerusalem. Here, Luke re-introduces the travel motif and bridges between his Gospel and Acts: The longer travel narrative was a travel with Jesus. This journey is a journey that at first does not include Jesus, but they encounter the living Jesus uncovering the fact that he is still there²⁵². The travels are thus also travels accompanied by Jesus²⁵³. Jesus ‘interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the thing concerning himself.’ (v. 27) The keyword “Moses” points to the Pentateuch. However, the

²⁵¹ Carroll (2012: 478) observes: “In a brief notice to conclude the empty tomb scene—actually, it is far from empty, with the flurry of activity there; the only thing missing is the body of the one who is not dead but living—the narrator relates that the women did remember the words of Jesus”. She is right, because we observe a lot of interaction and in particular God’s messengers appear once again. In addition, the return to the remaining apostles underlines this vivid scene. However, we see much more theological issues rather than social interactions applicable to the SNA.

²⁵² In addition to the observations of Green (1997: 843): “repeated references to travel in this pericope are all the more noticeable.”

²⁵³ Extending the argument of Carroll (2012: 480): “The passage sews together important narrative threads as it recapitulates the events of the Jerusalem ministry and passion, relates them to the hope of a people’s (and city’s) liberation, and through interpretation of Scripture and solidarity at table brings followers of Jesus from lack of sight and insight to deepened perception.”

two do not recognize Jesus until they eat with him (v. 31). The motif of hospitality was introduced by Luke throughout the Gospel, but will continue to play an important role in Acts. In addition, ‘they rose that same hour and returned to Jerusalem. And they found the eleven and those who were with them gathered together’ (v. 33) and tell them that the ‘Lord has risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon!’ (v. 34). This indicates that the remaining apostles and other disciples were still together and Luke arranges Jerusalem as the bracket for his story. Emmaus seems to be an unimportant goal²⁵⁴.

Jesus Appears to His Disciples (Lk 24:36–49): Here, Jesus appears to those assembled in v. 33. The risen Lord proves that he is not a spirit by the fact that they touched him, talked with him, and he eats before them. Again, he is teaching: ‘he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures’ (v. 33) and declares that the promises and predictions of Scripture concerning him must be fulfilled: ‘Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, and that repentance for the forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. Thus, Jesus is clearly announcing the overcoming of the spatial distance to the Gentiles²⁵⁵. However, Luke is mainly concerned about the Holy Spirit and thus about discipleship. In this, a direct reference to Ac 1:8 can be seen, for “the disciples were not to attempt their mission on their own strength; to do so, in fact, would be disobedience” (Keener 2012: 676). Luke puts also particular importance on the future and the further development of early Christianity. In this respect, it is not surprising that the content discussed here is found not only in Luke’s Gospel, but also in Acts²⁵⁶.

Once again, it is the power of the Holy Spirit that shapes the view of discipleship. Jerusalem becomes a city of new beginnings, also because, according to Luke, the decisive

²⁵⁴ Against Wolfe (1989: 39): “By detouring through Emmaus, northwest from Jerusalem, he probably was thinking to elude any authorities or other people who might go in search of him. From Emmaus only zigzag byways led through the Hill Country of Ephraim toward the north. He apparently decided on returning to Galilee by those little-traveled roads on which he was not likely to be recognized and be returned to Jerusalem forcibly.” See also Dörpinghaus (2021b).

²⁵⁵ Green (1997: 853) summarizes Luke’s careful arrangement, not only concerning the way to the Gentiles: “We may see in Jesus’ ministry throughout the Gospel of Luke how the way has been paved for such a mission — particularly with reference to Jesus’ offer of restoration to people living at the margins of Jewish life — but this does not mask the fact that he has interacted only rarely with non-Jews.” In being witnesses, this issue will be solved and bridges to Acts.

²⁵⁶ Schnabel (2002: 362-3) states that in addition the OT roots is particularly important for the understanding of *μάρτυρες*: Es “verbindet die Momente der persönlichen Gegenwart, der Deutung des Gesehenen und Erlebten, und des Eintretens für das Bezeugte.”

giving of the Holy Spirit took place here. It has already been noted that Luke points to the importance of Jerusalem like no other evangelist:

Among the Synoptic Gospels, Luke gives far more prominence to Jerusalem than Matthew or Mark. ... Jesus' mission, including the passion, resurrection and ascension, is brought to completion in Jerusalem (24:50). In contrast to Matthew, Luke locates all the appearances of the risen Christ to the disciples in the vicinity of Jerusalem (24:13-53); they are also instructed to remain in Jerusalem (Luke 24:49). (King 1992: 764)

In view of these considerations, it is justified to place them all in the context of following Jesus. Thus, Lk 24:29 refers to the possibility of discipleship after Christ's ascension. After Good Friday, the Son of God rose from the dead and continued to appear to the disciples until his ascension. After that, the Holy Spirit stands by the disciples in a perspective including Acts. In this respect, the followers of Jesus remain in a continuity that is also relevant for churches and believers today. However, Luke's account concludes with an emphasis on worldwide proclamation. Now salvation is offered to the whole world.

The Ascension (Lk 24:50–53): These three verses are embedded with a movement 'out as far as Bethany' (v. 50), and the return to Jerusalem (v. 52) with great joy. The ascension is the final climax of the Gospel and Luke once again composes it into spatial movement and travel. These verses are deeply connected to Acts, see Section 11.1.1.

8.4 Summary: The Spatial Setting of Confrontation

As we have discussed above, Luke carefully arranges his narrative and presents complex movements in both social relations as well as different perspectives on spatiality (see the summary in Figure 8.1 which presents the spatial and social movement in Lk 20:1–24:53). Here, one column locates Jesus, his disciples and people with a positive view on him. The middle column refers to locations. The right columns locate the people, Jesus' opponents and people with a negative view on Jesus. Some actors change allegiance, clearly Judas. As yet another example, Peter is very close to it in the denial scene, although he does not change allegiance. This shows a very complex perspective and raises several questions about the 'in' and 'out' of the social group of followers. Is Judas still faithful to Jesus? According to Ac 1:15ff he killed himself and thus finally excludes himself from all spatiality

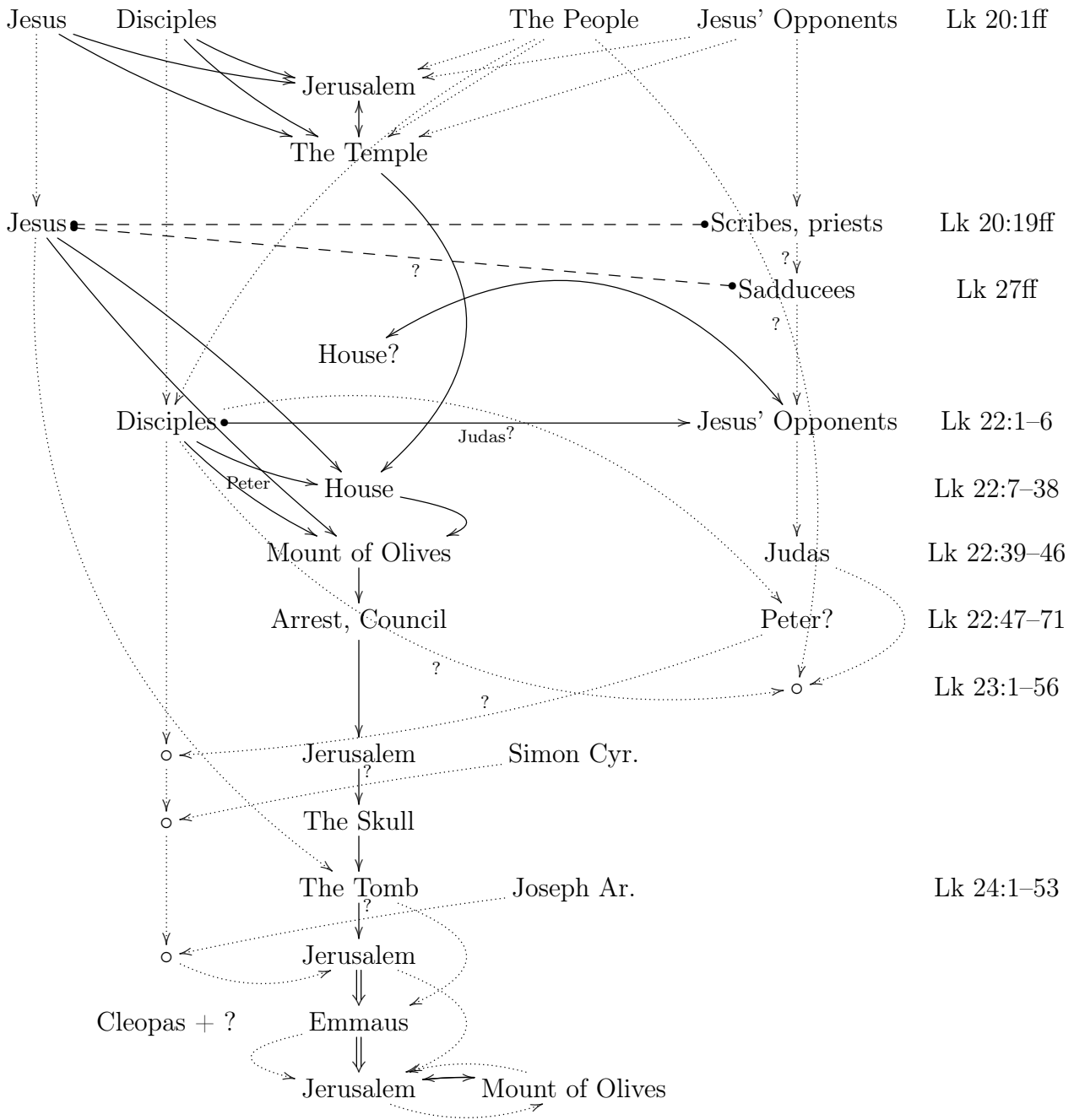


Figure 8.1: The spatial movement in Lk 20:1–24:53. The left columns (1-2) locate Jesus, his disciples and people with a positive view of them. The middle column refers to locations. The right columns (4-5) locate the people, Jesus’ opponents and people with a negative view of Jesus. Arrows (→) refer to a firstspace movement or location, for example Jesus and his disciples travel to Jerusalem. The people (in Jerusalem) in general may have a firstspace and secondspace relation to the temple, which is indicated by a dotted arrow. A dashed arrow (---→) indicates a direct confrontation. This figure illustrates the complex movement in both social relations as well as different perspectives on spatiality.

and from the social network. The question is even more complex for Peter. Clearly, he is in the firstspace and secondspace “realm of the enemies”, and Luke suggests that he is also near to its thirdspace. This indicates the dangers of firstspace and secondspace encounters, but does not really help to find answers with respect to faith. However, we refer to Section 9.5, where we will discuss more aspects of this question with the assistance of SNA. Other actors like Joseph of Arimathea are clearly identified as supporters of Jesus, at least after his death. The crowd of people changes allegiances, or at least sides, but then again, it is not clear how homogeneous these groups were. In Figure 8.1 arrows refer to a firstspace movement or location, for example, Jesus and his disciples travel to Jerusalem, Jesus goes to the Mount of Olives, etc. The people (in Jerusalem) in general may have a firstspace and secondspace relation to the temple, which is indicated by a dotted arrow. The same holds for their perception of the disciples or Peter’s denial of Jesus after his arrest. A dashed arrow indicates a direct confrontation which occurs between Jesus, the scribes, priests and Sadducees.

Thus, we see a lot of movement in the spatial organization of social relations. But – especially in comparison to the previous part of Luke’s Gospel – the same holds for firstspace and secondspace: This section reflects the composition of the whole Gospel including the late ‘travel narrative’ from Jerusalem to Emmaus and back.

To sum up, Luke carefully arranges the spatial setting of confrontation at the climax of his Gospel: Not only the firstspace and secondspace are in motion, but also the thirdspace, and especially the social relations reflecting all three spaces. This ‘earthquake’ of fluctuations reflects the theological implications and underlines the narrative importance of this section. But there are some issues which have not yet been covered, for example the Holy Spirit and the eschatological topics. We will provide a detailed analysis within the next chapter and in particular in Part III. However, at this point we can summarize with Green (1997: 834): “Luke entices his audience to ‘turn the page,’ as it were, to move from volume one to volume two in anticipation of the report”. But before complementing our analysis with Acts, we will provide a detailed SNA analysis of Luke’s Gospel including all statistical overviews and methods and their discussion.

9 Social Network Analysis of Luke

In this section, we will combine all information exegetically collected in the last chapters and provide a social network analysis of Luke. As we have seen, not all questions can be answered directly. Thus, this chapter is organized as follows: We will present an overview about statistical values, networks structures and the output of community detection approaches. The first section is dedicated to centrality measures, the second section covers the spanning tree analysis. In section three we present the results of community detection approaches. While some suggestions for interpretation are made, the deep analysis, especially referring back to the biblical text, is presented afterwards. The last sections are dedicated to our initial research questions: How Luke describes communities and how his spatial environment can be analyzed with SNA approaches. We will focus on the communities, structural and spatial analysis, and the references to Israel and the community of Jesus-followers. An overview of the analysis methods, particular approaches and abbreviations can be found in Table 9.1. However, some questions will still remain unanswered and we refer to part III, where we present some remarks on Luke-Acts.

Analysis	Approach	
Centrality Measures	Betweenness centrality	BC
	Closeness centrality	CC
	Harmonic closeness centrality	HC
	Eigenvector centrality	EC
Network Structures	Minimum Spanning Tree	MST
	Degree Distribution	
Community Detection	Leiden	
	Fluid Communities	FluidC
	Girvan-Newman	

Table 9.1: An overview of the analysis methods, approaches, and their abbreviations.

In the first sections, we will collect hypotheses. Although we will verify some of them in the later sections, we will nevertheless present them at the earliest possible occasion.

The evidence presented in the last section suggests that Luke is highly interested in people and spatial information, which mutually influence the other. Although some actors and locations remain anonymous or vanish in an unnamed ὄχλος, he carefully arranges protagonists and antagonists, movement and places. In this chapter we present a general social network analysis, while we so far studied just a few particular scenarios and gathered research questions.

As discussed earlier, other scholars also applied SNA on the Gospels. While Duling (1999, 2000) is mostly concerned with Jesus' ego-network and provided interesting analysis of direct neighborhoods of single actors (=ego-network) and combined them with external information, e.g. from archaeological research, McClure (2016, 2020) was the first to provide a computable social network of all Gospels. She focused her analysis on "his family and followers, the civil and religious authorities, and stigmatized people" (:36) and provided basic statistical analysis. While our approach is limited to Luke, our data is more generic and not limited to actors but includes locations and other entities as discussed in Chapter 3. In addition, we present a more general methodological approach and seek to extend and compare our results with those presented by Duling and McClure.

9.1 Centrality Measures

In Tables 9.2 and 9.3 we present an overview on the individual centrality values and their interpretation. Further information on centrality measures can be found in Section 3.1.4²⁵⁷. Centrality measures allow us to draw conclusions about a person's position in a social network. The possibilities of influencing the entire network that arise from a high centrality measure of individual actors depend on the type of measure chosen. We present a complete overview for actors in Table 9.2 and for locations in Table 9.3.

Betweenness centrality measures the number of times a node is on a shortest path between other nodes. Thus, it measures whether a node is a bridge between different nodes in the network. This can be used to identify persons who can influence or break

²⁵⁷ And in the works of Freeman (1978), Carrington et al. (2005) or Collar (2013).

information flows in the network. Jesus has the highest value here with 2559. The group “Disciples of Jesus” follows with 591, the group “Seventy-two” with 397 and – that is a surprise, because this actor was on stage only once – Zacharias with 118. While the ordering is quite obvious for Jesus – the central actor of the Gospel – and the wider group of disciples, Zacharias, Anna, Joseph of Arimathea and John the Baptist are surprising. In Section 9.5 we will present one possible solution explaining these values, based on another observation: In section 9.3 we will see that Luke does not describe a network with multiple communities. Rather, he describes *the* single community of followers and some antagonists. Thus the betweenness is not solely describing bridge-builders but also actors who are important for the progress within the narrative. As we can see, interpreting the centrality values is complex and we need to foreshadow results presented later. However, this leads to our first hypothesis:

Hypothesis 1. *The Gospel of Luke is concerned with a single, unified community of Jesus followers. The plot-developing characters are mostly connecting the ‘old’ and ‘new’ part of the plot.*

While we will attempt to provide evidence in support for the first statement in Sections 9.3 and provide an in-depth analysis in Sections 9.4 and 9.5, we will continue with those most significant characters.

- First, we notice those actors not directly connected to the disciples: Zacharias, Anna, Joseph of Arimathea, John the Baptist, Elisabeth and Joseph. Their significance is important to understand Luke’s concern about making a connection to the OT narratives.
- Second, while we see that Simon Peter has the highest BC of all disciples, and John, James and Levi follow, we see that this is not really significant: The groups have a far higher value while other actors contradict all approaches to argue for higher importance.

The *closeness centrality* (CC) is key for understanding the close connectedness of the community, and it measures nodes based on their proximity to all other nodes in the network. Thus, it measures the shortest paths to other nodes. Actors that are in a particularly

Name	Sex	Background	Group	CC	BC	HC	EC
Jesus	male	Jew		0.859649	2559.485191	0.921769	1
Disciples of Jesus			Disciples	0.675862	591.273918	0.763605	0.837122
Seventy-two			Disciples	0.657718	397.277572	0.746599	0.830088
Zacharias	male	Jew		0.460094	117.829597	0.508503	0.097069
Anna	female	Jew		0.5	97.577721	0.52381	0.141338
Joseph of Arimathea	male	Jew		0.426087	97.240816	0.460034	0.094932
Simon Peter	male	Jew	Disciples;Apostles	0.583333	80.9264	0.666667	0.822265
John the Baptist	male	Jew		0.518519	69.91724	0.54932	0.12759
Elisabeth	female	Jew		0.453704	68.303865	0.496599	0.091146
Mary	female	Jew	Women	0.515789	49.830487	0.554422	0.122489
Joseph	male	Jew		0.532609	45.13344	0.571429	0.187304
John	male	Jew	Disciples;Apostles	0.576471	31.818602	0.656463	0.813825
James	male	Jew	Disciples;Apostles	0.576471	31.818602	0.656463	0.813825
Joanna	female	Jew	Disciples;Women	0.566474	23.233406	0.641156	0.779934
Pilate	male	Roman		0.502564	22.226432	0.528912	0.127347
Levi	male	Jew	Disciples;Apostles	0.569767	21.582594	0.646259	0.800848
Cleopas	male	Jew	Disciples	0.563218	18.584307	0.636054	0.77192
Chief priests				0.513089	18.105851	0.545918	0.185448
Simon's mother-in-law	female	Jew		0.497462	16.247016	0.522109	0.149351
Pharisees	male		Pharisees	0.487562	13.746075	0.511905	0.079767
Herod	male	Roman		0.507772	12.673885	0.535714	0.136888
Judas Iscariot	male	Jew	Disciples;Apostles	0.569767	11.984842	0.646259	0.804937
Soldiers	male	Roman		0.497462	9.294139	0.518707	0.136734
Mary (2)	female	Jew	Disciples;Women	0.563218	8.946609	0.636054	0.774195
Mary Magdalene	female	Jew	Disciples;Women	0.563218	8.45018	0.636054	0.775792
centurion	male	Roman	Disciples	0.544444	6.235786	0.619048	0.71524
Matthew	male	Jew	Disciples;Apostles	0.566474	5.657919	0.641156	0.797673
Thomas	male	Jew	Disciples;Apostles	0.566474	5.657919	0.641156	0.797673
Bartholomew	male	Jew	Disciples;Apostles	0.566474	5.657919	0.641156	0.797673
Judas	male	Jew	Disciples;Apostles	0.566474	5.657919	0.641156	0.797673
Andrew	male	Jew	Disciples;Apostles	0.566474	5.657919	0.641156	0.797673
Philip	male	Jew	Disciples;Apostles	0.566474	5.657919	0.641156	0.797673
Zacchaeus	male	Jew		0.49	4.571119	0.510204	0.108183
Beggar	male	Jew		0.492462	2.921444	0.511905	0.111771
Shepherds				0.494949	2.446311	0.517007	0.118675
Teachers of the law	male			0.395161	1.932812	0.42517	0.034519
Jairus	male	Jew		0.492462	1.921162	0.511905	0.116425
Chuzas	male	Jew		0.426087	1.456293	0.460034	0.104525
Scribes				0.494949	1.222166	0.517007	0.138098
Assembly of the elders				0.494949	0.707483	0.520408	0.126706
Simon (Pharisee)	male	Jew	Pharisee	0.471154	0.333333	0.490646	0.06488
Martha	female	Jew		0.487562	0.040816	0.505102	0.130535
Simon of Cyrene	male	Jew		0.485149	0.040816	0.5	0.102214
Criminals	male	Jew		0.49	0.040816	0.506803	0.127963
Sadducees				0.485149	0.040816	0.5	0.102214
Disciples of John				0.47343	0	0.488946	0.044644

Table 9.2: Various statistical values on the social network of Luke's Gospel. Only persons are listed here. Indicated are the *closeness centrality* (CC), *betweenness centrality* (BC), *harmonic closeness centrality* (GC), and *Eigen centrality* (EC). This table is sorted ascending according to BC.

good position to influence the network have a high value. Excluding antagonists, we see a very harmonic arrangement of values, see Table 9.2.

While the brief statistical overview discussed limited to BC and CC is rather surprising, we continue with *Eigenvector centrality* (EC) which helps to identify actors who have a great influence on the whole network and who are important for emerging trends. Here, we see that Jesus has the highest value of 1. We can broadly separate the rest of the network in two groups: Disciples and followers have a high EC-value between 0.6 and 0.85. The rest of the network has a low value. There is no difference between the apostles, women or other groups. Indeed, this last analysis is the proof of concept for using SNA on the Gospel of Luke, since it allows a clear separation between Jesus, his followers and other actors. This is linked to the narrative world of Acts, separating story-driving actors from

Name	CC	BC	HC	EC
Jerusalem	0.590361	201.050148	0.666667	0.685721
Galilee	0.505155	64.011908	0.551871	0.14958
Nain	0.541436	17.127594	0.60034	0.604373
Bethlehem	0.485149	14.827535	0.511054	0.061543
Capernaum	0.492462	13.332427	0.529762	0.182096
Temple	0.505155	10.566958	0.534014	0.107889
Judea	0.422414	7.956829	0.456633	0.048215
the mountain	0.538462	4.958943	0.595238	0.60149
Bethsaida	0.538462	4.958943	0.595238	0.60149
Judah	0.367041	1.866667	0.39881	0.022833
Nazareth	0.482759	1.645855	0.502551	0.058878
Samaria	0.471154	1	0.494048	0.101163
Jericho	0.475728	0.85	0.497449	0.055217
Simon's house	0.395161	0.646825	0.434524	0.056973
Lake of Gennesaret	0.478049	0.47619	0.502551	0.135432
Country of the Gerasenes	0.532609	0.255267	0.588435	0.595097
Mount Olivet	0.532609	0.255267	0.588435	0.595097
Bethphage	0.532609	0.255267	0.588435	0.595097
Bethany	0.532609	0.255267	0.588435	0.595097
The Skull	0.538462	0.255267	0.595238	0.620846
High priest's house	0.480392	0.24359	0.5	0.102625
Niniveh	0.464455	0	0.478741	0.039029
Sodom	0.464455	0	0.478741	0.039029
Arimathea	0.299694	0	0.314116	0.004013
Emmaus	0.466667	0	0.483844	0.067271
Wilderness	0.47343	0	0.488946	0.044644
Chorazin	0.471154	0	0.487245	0.045423
Tyre	0.404959	0	0.42602	0.031793
Sidon	0.482759	0	0.494898	0.070823

Table 9.3: Various statistical values on the social network of Luke's Gospel. Only locations are listed here. Indicated are the *closeness centrality* (CC), *betweenness centrality* (BC), *harmonic closeness centrality* (GC), and *Eigen centrality* (EC). This table is sorted ascending according to BC.

minor actors.

In Table 9.3 we show the same values for locations. BC shows that Luke is most of all concerned about Jerusalem, but it also underlines the importance of Galilee. The CC underlines the closeness in the social network. Only three locations are not as closely tied to the network: Judea, Judah and Arimathea. EC highlights those locations being important for emerging trends. This sheds an interesting perspective on the Gospel: Clear is the narrative importance of Jerusalem, 'the mountain', 'Mount Olivet', 'The Skull' – but what about Nain, Bethsaida, the 'Country of the Gerasenes', Bethphage and Bethany? We will discuss these observations in depth in Section 9.6 together with other spatial observations in Luke's Gospel.

9.2 Network Structures and Spanning Tree

In Figure 9.1 we show the degree distribution representation of Luke's Gospel. It shows the 'long tail' of the scale-free distribution, see Section 3.1.4. Nevertheless, we see missing nodes, especially at an average node degree. They are not part of Luke's Gospel; obviously

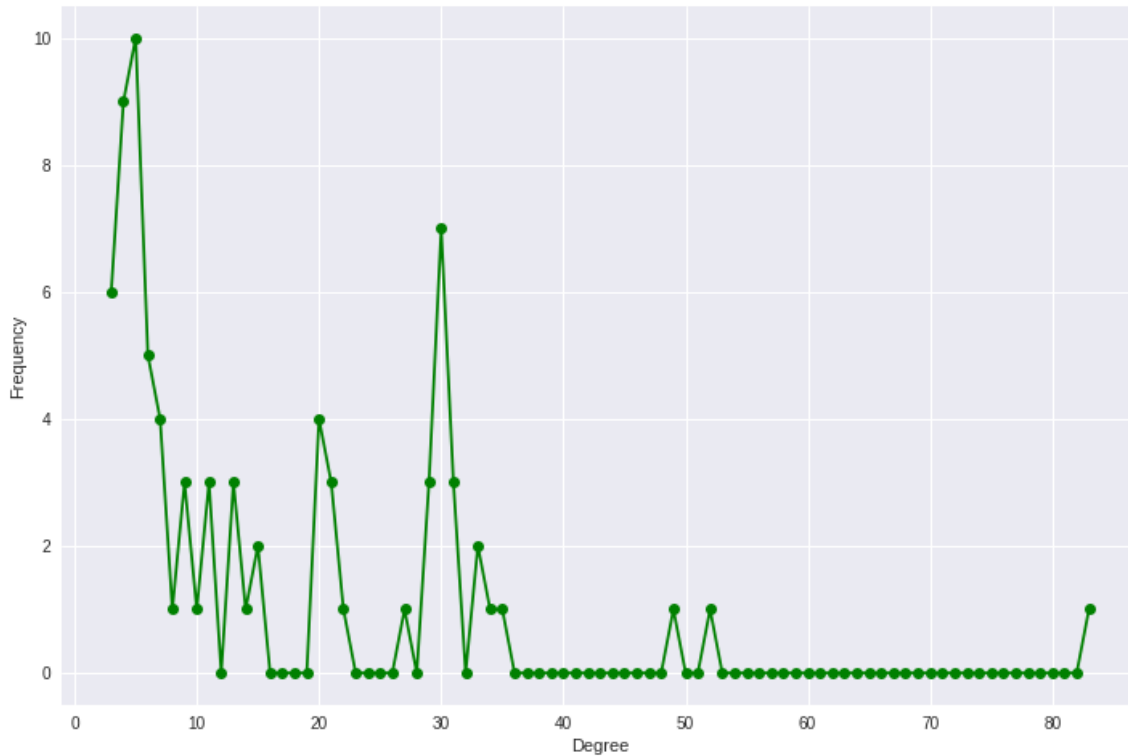


Figure 9.1: Degree distribution representation of Luke's Gospel.

he did not present a complete social network, but his representation works sufficiently enough so that we can continue to work with it.

A *Minimum Spanning Tree* (MST) is a subset of a network containing all nodes, but a minimum number of edges, so that every node is still connected. Usually this is used to compute cost-efficient networks (e.g. electrical power networks or traffic route rowlocks, see for example Scellato et al. (2006)). It thus gives an answer to the question: What are possible edges and relations between actors that are necessary to maintain communication in a network? We may call these subnetworks a backbone, see for example Du et al. (2007)²⁵⁸. A MST is a not unique, several may exist. Thus, when discussing the MST, we need to keep in mind that other backbones are also possible and their choice is based on random decisions, although limited by the network structure. Nevertheless, every possible output presents such a backbone and usually the network structure is limiting in a way supporting the significance of the output.

We refer to Figure 9.2 for an illustration of one MST for the Gospel of Luke. The

²⁵⁸ MST have been used in various networks and for various research questions. It has also been used for community detection, see Mokhlissi et al. (2015) and Basuchowdhuri et al. (2014). For small networks, this is not feasible.

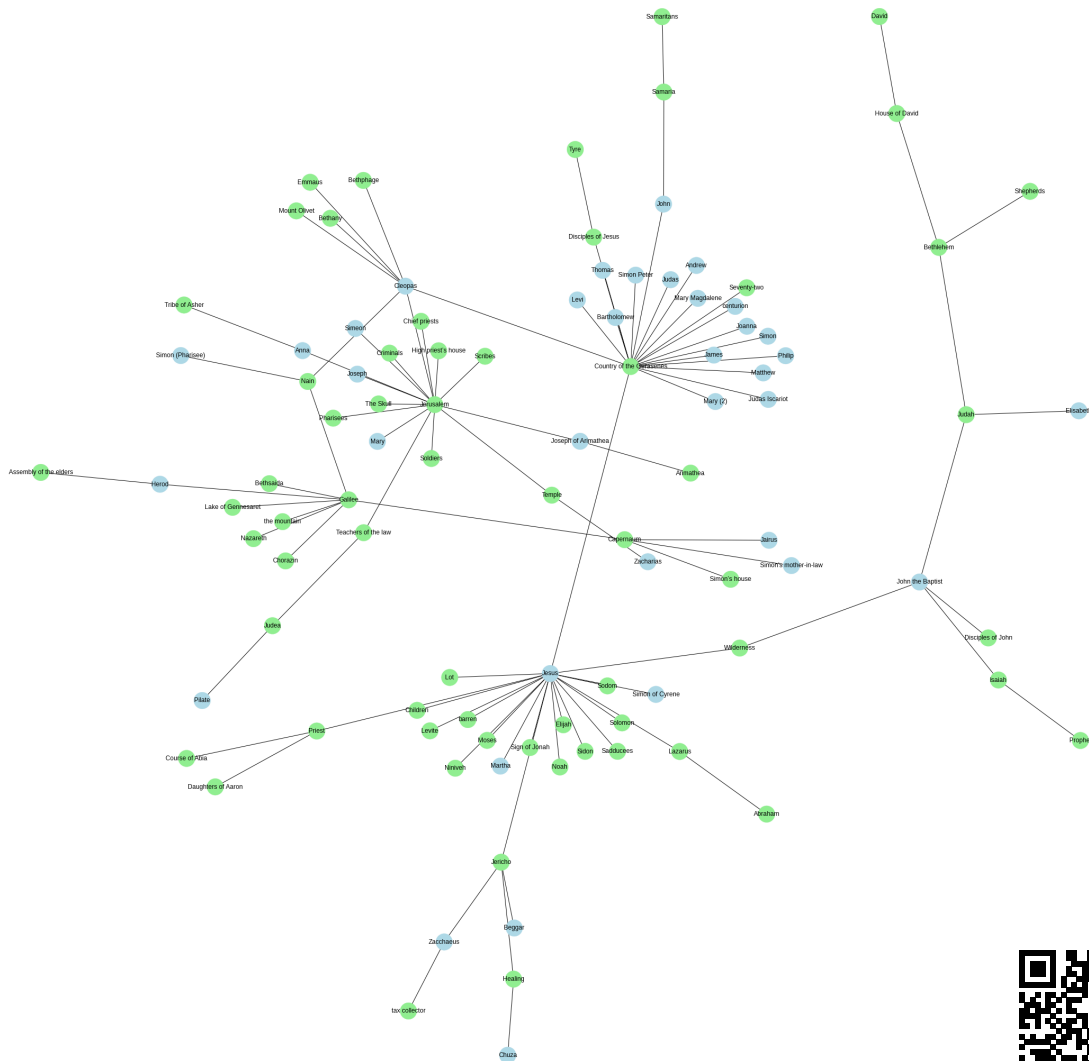


Figure 9.2: Minimum Spanning tree representation of Luke's Gospel.

dense network surrounding Jesus is not surprising; an arbitrary set of edges is chosen to create the MST. The same holds for Galilee and Jerusalem. Surprisingly the Country of the Gerasenes can be a bridge between Jesus and his disciples. While this is a very artificial example, it is mainly due to the fact that the algorithm arbitrarily chooses nodes and other spanning trees are also possible. In part III, we will present a possible representation of edges with a centrality measure on them. However, a better example about minimum spanning connections is the relation Jerusalem – Teachers of the law – Judea – Pilate identifying a plausible but not obvious relation. In addition, the branch connected to John the Baptist is totally isolated and contains Judah and the House of David.

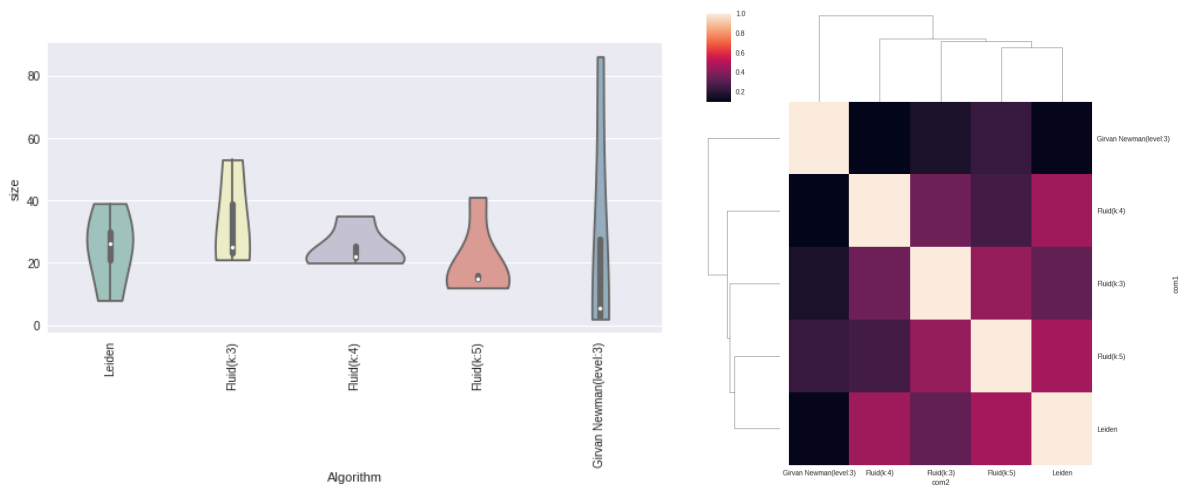


Figure 9.3: Left: Violin plot of several methods to compute communities in Luke. The y -axis refers to the size of communities and the widths of a plot for a particular algorithm to the number of clusters with this size. We can see that especially the Fluid Communities (FluidC) lead to a specific number of communities while Leiden and Girvan-Newman have a different output leading to either a few large or multiple small communities. Right: Clustermap describing different mutual information in different communities computed by different methods. Here, a dark color refers to little similarity to another approach. We can see that in particular the Girvan-Newman approach differs from other algorithms.

Our first observation concerns the randomly chosen edges to create a MST. It can unveil hidden patterns, but it does not necessarily do so. The second observation is that not *one* backbone of the social network is described. But the network itself is stable, which is the third observation. It is mostly centered around Jesus and Jerusalem but contains also larger subtrees with antagonists and with John the Baptist.

Hypothesis 2. *The Gospel of Luke narrates a social network that has mostly a reliable and stable structure. The leadership in this network is arranged around Jesus*

While MST gives first hints for this hypothesis, community detection and a detailed structural analysis of the network will provide more evidence. Thus, we will continue this analysis in the next section and in 9.4.

9.3 Community Detection

For community detection we are limited to a few methods as discussed in Section 3.1.6. In Figure 9.3 we give a first overview about the different outcomes of the chosen methods.

We can see that especially the Fluid Communities (FluidC) lead to a specific number of communities while Leiden and Girvan-Newman have a different output leading to either a few large or multiple small communities. In addition, the output of these algorithms also leads to a very varied output. The clustermap describing different mutual information in the communities shows that there is a small intersection between the Fluid Communities (FluidC) and the Leiden algorithm – which is not surprising for the small numbers of communities – but Girvan-Newman shows a very different result which we will analyze in detail later.

Since it is important to note that these methods output only a possible segmentation of a network in communities, we will take a closer look at these communities.

The output of Leiden algorithm shown in Fig. 9.4 shows a very clear output of four communities.

- First, we notice that Jesus is part of an ‘outer’ network (purple) containing his childhood, heritage and attributes.
- Second, the main actors are divided in two groups: a group containing particular locations and actors like the disciples (green) and a group containing more abstract groups like “Disciples of Jesus” and “Seventy-two” — and antagonists like the Sadducees, Scribes, Chief priests etc.
- The fourth community is mostly related to Galilee.

We can make the observation that the very stable algorithm can’t compute reasonable communities. And indeed, this result is not surprising with respect to the Closeness Centrality values: while some nodes can be added to more than one community (e.g. Jesus or the disciples), the network structure allows a separation between attributes and entities (“Sign of Jonah”, “Prophet”, etc.) and even antagonists. We can also see that some parts of the network like Galilee might form their own community, although the evidence provided by the Leiden algorithm is not offering a lot of support for this idea.

We started Fluid Communities (FluidC) algorithm with several numbers of communities $k = 3, 4, 5$. We chose these values because lower and higher values were found to produce artefacts. The output for three communities shown in Fig. 9.5 is comparable but not similar in detail to Leiden algorithm. There are similar problems in differentiating

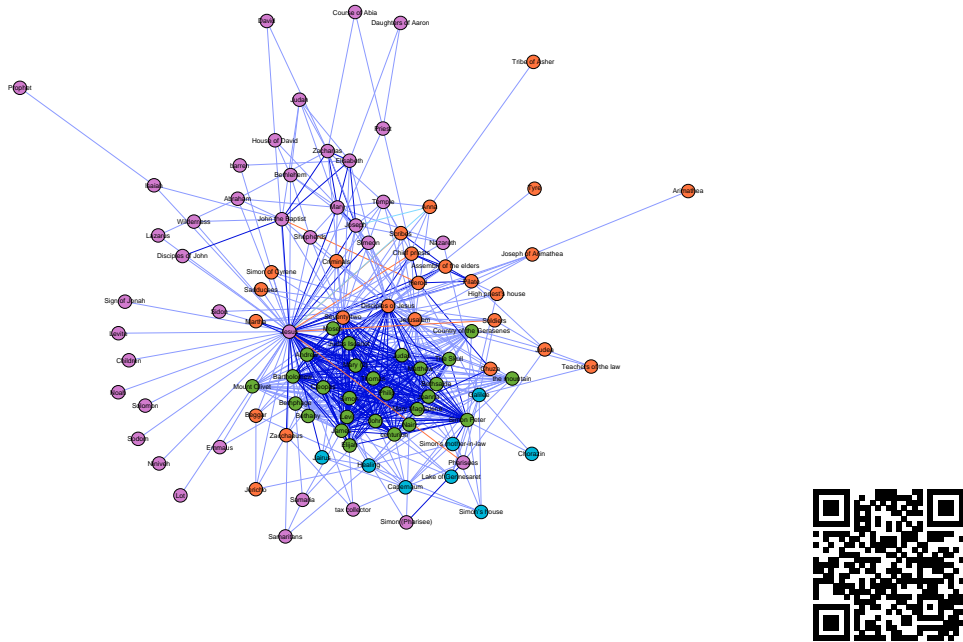


Figure 9.4: Communities in Luke computed by Leiden algorithm with 4 communities.

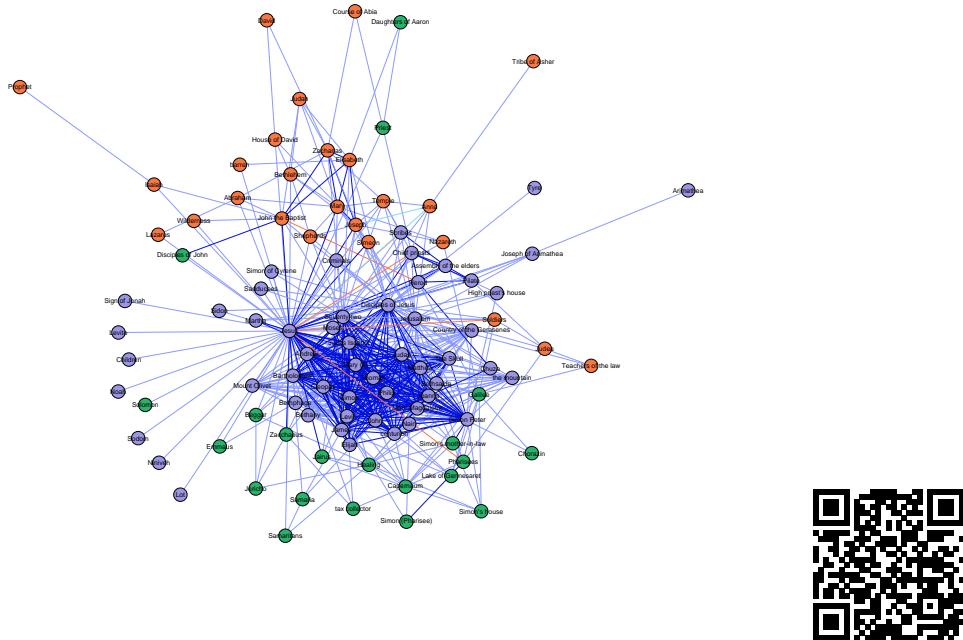


Figure 9.5: Communities in Luke computed by Fluid Communities (FluidC) algorithm with $k = 3$.

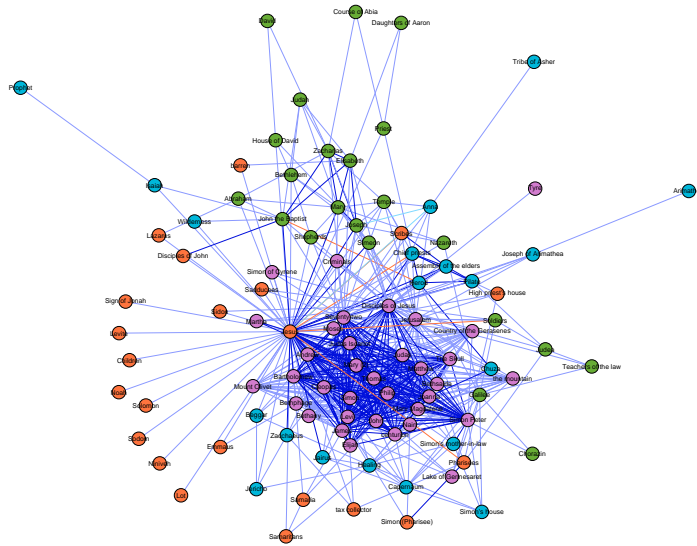


Figure 9.6: Communities in Luke computed by Fluid Communities (FluidC) algorithm with $k = 4$.

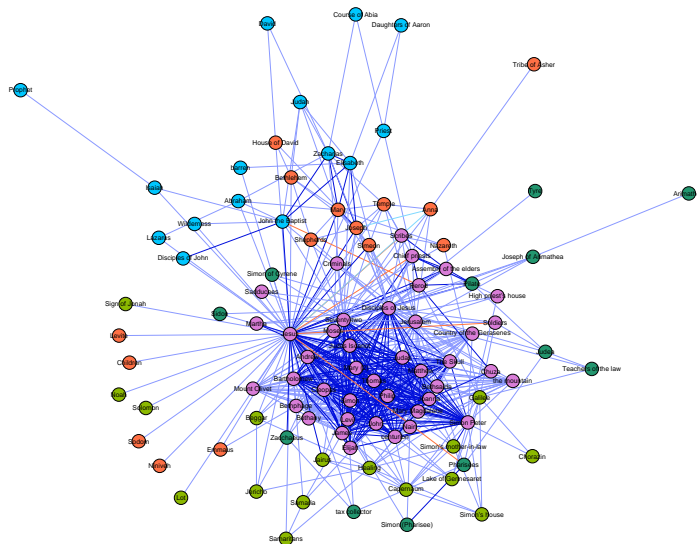


Figure 9.7: Communities in Luke computed by Fluid Communities (FluidC) algorithm with $k = 5$.

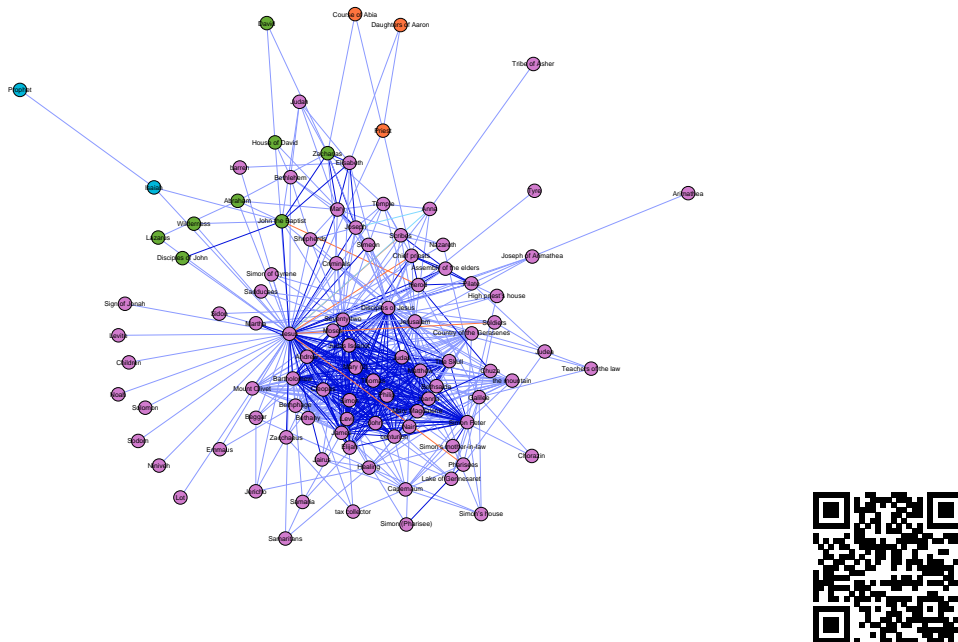


Figure 9.8: Communities in Luke computed by Girvan-Newman algorithm with four communities.

between subgroups and communities. Also, it does not correctly differentiate between antagonists, entities, John the Baptist or Galileean actors. This is also true for the four and five communities shown in Fig. 9.6 and 9.7. Both for $k = 4$ and $k = 5$ the algorithm is not capable to isolate meaningful communities.

The Girvan-Newman algorithm shown in Fig. 9.8 tends to compute rather large communities and also supports the mixed results shown above. It shows the large center of Jesus' community and those elements which are more isolated: First, as second community, John the Baptist and his disciples. But it is unclear, why this community contains Lazarus. The third and fourth communities are only related to OT-references. We can see two important results: Girvan-Newman underlines once again the stability of Jesus' network and it emphasizes the importance of John's network.

As can be seen, both the CC and the community detection approaches show a relatively well connected network, centered around Jesus. Although some actors are much better linked, there are no confrontations, multiple clusters or communities or a general "dualistic" worldview. Although community detection approaches can't unveil more information, we will present other SNA approaches in Section 9.4. McClure (2020: 44)

presents a different approach for community detection in Luke:

Luke's relational structure [...] has five subgroups. The first includes Jesus, John the Baptist, stigmatized people, people related to Jesus's crucifixion (criminals, Simon of Cyrene, centurion, soldiers, etc.), and almost all of the civil and religious authorities. The second subgroup includes the disciples, when coded as a group and those who interacted with them, while the third subgroup includes the twelve individual disciples and people who interacted with specific disciples. The fourth subgroup includes ten lepers whom Jesus healed (Luke 17:11–19), and the fifth subgroup is mainly Jesus's family members, like Mary, Joseph and his brothers, as well as people who interacted with them during Jesus's infancy, like the shepherds and Symeon (:43-44).

Her results could not differentiate between different groups, e.g. John the Baptist and Jesus. While providing new perspectives and analysis for the comparison of the four Gospels, her analysis mainly supports our finding which leads to the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 3. *The network described in Luke's Gospel is spatially rooted in Jerusalem and Galilee.*

Hypothesis 4. *The main actor is Jesus. There are only few antagonists and people related to the connection to previous or side narratives, e.g. John the Baptist.*

Hypothesis 5. *Studying isolated communities strongly supports the thesis of a single community of disciples.*

We will complete these analyses in the next section and discuss more details in section 9.4.

9.4 Communities in Luke: A detailed analysis

The question of how the faith community is presented before the death of Jesus is exciting. First, a brief overview is given in order to then compile the literature²⁵⁹ on the social network of the faith community and from there compile the network using methods of SNA for the rest of this work. Searching for the term *ἐκκλησία* proves to be futile,

²⁵⁹ Although this is not a complete survey, we need to summarize the critical points of current research. A detailed study, which also includes the gospels, can be found at Bockmuehl & Thompson (1998).

because the term is only used twice in the Gospel of Matthew. The post-Easter assembly in Jerusalem is also named much later in Acts, (cf. Bockmuehl & Thompson 1998: 47ff)²⁶⁰. A better candidate for the community is the βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ. The content of the pre-Easter proclamation of the βασιλεία in Luke's Gospel is the successive fulfillment of the divine plan of salvation in the mission as well as the work, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ (cf. Gäckle 2018: 161).

There is a difference between the inner circle of Jesus' followers, the μαθητάι, and a wider circle of followers, and the crowd standing at a distance. Köstenberger sees this in the ὄχλος, the crowd. It is defined, he says, by the fact that it follows Jesus only from a distance, is impressed only by his miracles, and is otherwise divided in its opinion and does not understand him (cf. Köstenberger 2009: 483f). Whether the term μαθητής refers to the inner circle of the twelve disciples or to a wider circle of disciples is often unclear²⁶¹. However, we can assume that these are not the only people who follow Jesus. Thus, the concept of disciple is softened to the extent that it can also be applied to later spiritual discipleship without temporal and spatial limitation.

With reference to Figure 9.9 from Duling (2000) (left) as a simple illustration Duling (2000: 7) reflects:

In a network a major problem is that as the network expands, Ego spends increasing time and resources holding it together in the face of competition from other focal members. Rivalry develops in what is already an unstable alliance.

It is significant, that we can't find Duling's 'tertiary charismatics' which he wants to find in a 'second order zone' (meaning: nodes with distance 2 to Jesus).

To analyze this community, Duling (2000) observes that following Jesus establishes a kind of new family. For this purpose, he analyzes the family ties:

²⁶⁰ Extending this perspective, according to John, the community of faith is defined by a constant 'abiding in Jesus' and the church members belong by virtue of having been called by Jesus Christ of Jesus Christ (Jn 10:27f), they are chosen by God (Jn 17:24 etc.). The individual believers form the community, but in the foreground is the calling of the individual to faith, in this Hörster (2004: 233) agrees. Another important aspect is that the community of faith faces the world. This is especially clear in Jn 15:18, Jn 14:17,19,14:29; 15:18–16:11; 17:14.16.

²⁶¹ This is a special topic of John. The important distinguishing feature, however, according to Köstenberger, is faith: "[w]hile Jesus wanted people to believe [...], John notes that, despite Jesus' many signs, the crowds would still not place their faith in him" (Köstenberger 2009: 484).

Jesus' natural family was the Joseph family. The most visible cluster in his intimate network consisted of Peter, James, and John [...] The three families are the Joseph family, the Zebedee family, and the Jonah family. (Duling 2000: 8).

The excerpt in Figure 9.9 (right) is constructed by Duling (2000) as follows: Peter and Andrew, as well as James and John, were brothers and certainly shared other social spheres besides family, gender and location. However, as part of Jesus' close network, they certainly shared more. Assuming that the flow of ideas and thoughts from Jesus to them was the same, the four disciples will also have had exchanges with each other. They were traveling together with Jesus and thus talking with each other. This can also be safely assumed according to Lk 22:24. They must also have had close relations with the other part of the network, i.e. the narrower and wider circle of disciples. This shows the great difficulty of integrating additional elements into the SNA. Specific kinship edges or flow edges for ideas are not provided.

But how should the strong and weak relations be set at this point? Duling (2000), looking at triads in networks, posits that “[t]hree of the four must have been most adjacent to Jesus, and so they must have developed strong ties.” (Duling 2000: 10) He leaves open the crucial question of who these three are. This question does not seem to be answerable in this detail. Much more crucial – especially with regard to the post-Easter perspective – is that the narrower circle of disciples had strong relationships among themselves.

No sound statement can be made about the degree of friendship among the disciples and later apostles. They appear in the Gospels together, but also occasionally at odds with each other (Lk 22:24). The strong relationship among themselves characterizes the mission of the disciples according to the model of Jesus' mission²⁶². Thus, mutual love and unity become core concepts that disciples should strive for. Thereby, the internal relations among each other are, however, not more important than the external relation to the world as Schnabel (2002: 278) concludes. The core idea is always the active and concrete missionary activity.

In such a community and against the background of the pre-Easter encounter with Jesus one can probably only speak of a strong relationship. The situation is different with the extended circle of disciples. Here, no general statements can be made about strong

²⁶² More focused in the Gospel of John, e.g. Jn 17:18.

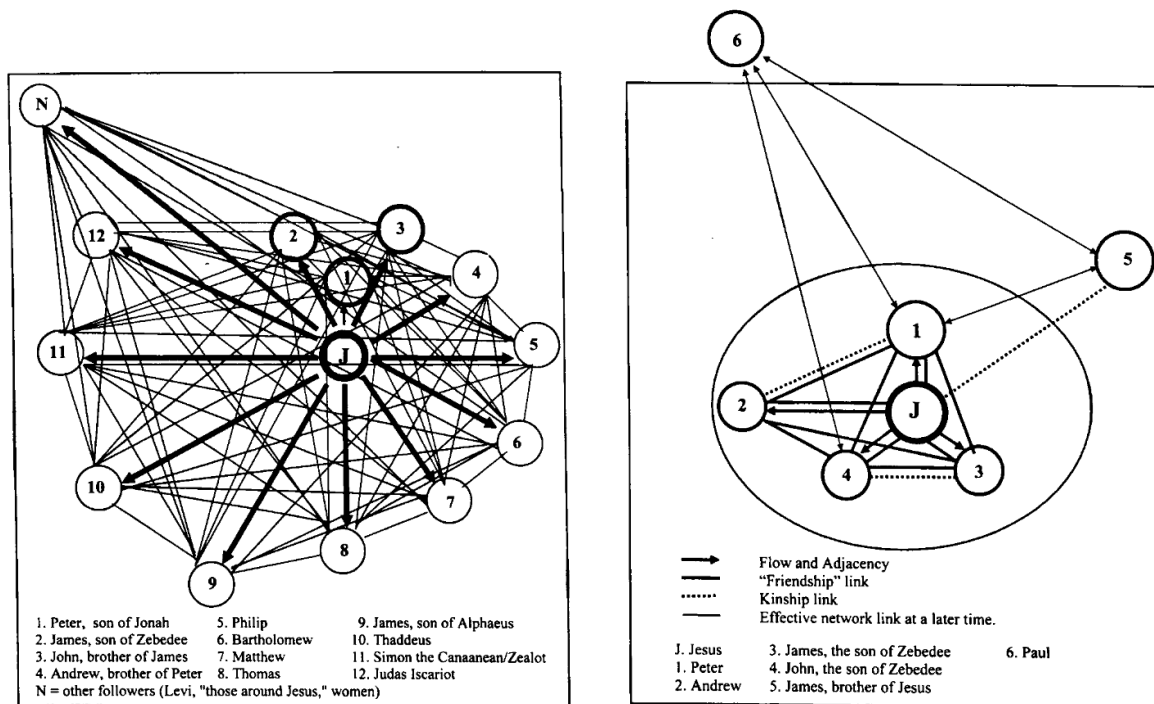


Figure 9.9: Two illustrations from Duling (2000: 10). Jesus' intimate network (left), meaning a subset of his direct neighborhood, and an excerpt from the pre-Easter near network of Jesus entitled 'Some Links to the Core of Jesus' Intimate Network'. A dashed connection signifies kinship, a black friendship, and a red connection with arrow signifies the flow of ideas and thoughts. This representation carries additional elements such as kinship or special flow edges into the SNA.

and weak relationships and they would have to be examined in individual cases. Also, at this point the question about the relationship to the women who accompanied Jesus (e.g. Lk 8:1–3) has to be skipped because of the silence of the sources, see Section 22.3 for a detailed discussion.

It is important that now the basis for the analysis of the post-Easter events is laid. Of course, this only describes a fraction of the people Jesus came into contact with. In particular, we cannot include all the negative relationships and enmities that continue to play an obvious role in Acts. This is not only due to the fact that negative relations are hard to include in social networks, but also due to technical issues combining the two networks, see Chapter 16. All remaining disciples from the narrower circle of disciples, i.e. the later apostles as well as the group of women have a strong relationship. The relationship with all other followers is assumed to be a weak relationship without further reference, as discussed in Chapter 3. How can these aspects of SNA be brought back to exegetical thinking?

The hypotheses formulated in the last sections are not novel. Luke's Gospel is widely considered to describe christological and theological concerns about the kingdom of God and the "structural changes" (Cahill 1990: 388) rooted in them²⁶³. In general, we can see that Luke describes social relations always embedded in theological relations²⁶⁴. In addition, we need to realize two additional points: First, Luke is concerned about particular actors, he "tells us about a great number of individuals, often people of whom we do not read elsewhere" (Morris 1990: 212). Second, he is also concerned about the 'new' social life in Jesus and about the belonging to the βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ²⁶⁵).

However, this leaves open the close vision. And indeed, what remains to be fervently discussed is Luke's primary concern. Is he focusing on the 'humble and poor', as Green (2020: 54) suggests? Children, as Morris (1990: 206) suggests? Or on women, as Carroll suggests: "The shifts in gender roles and in family and kinship relations are intriguing" (Carroll 2012: 186). Is Luke concerned about healing, health or purity? Shellberg (2015: 11) argues that these terms also underline the unity of Luke-Acts and that "the acceptability of Gentiles by virtue of their cleansed hearts becomes the fulfillment of Jesus' announcement of the 'dektes years of the Lord.'" However, Koet (2000: 93) argues that purity is not "a prime example of the essential barrier between 'legalistic' Judaism and the freedom supposedly preached by Jesus and practiced by him and his followers as depicted in the New Testament." We will discuss these aspects on an inclusion/exclusion-basis and deepen the discussion already provided in exegetical literature of Klein (2006: 213). Together with Acts we will continue the discussion in Section 14.4.

It is striking that McClure (2020), applying SNA, found the 'stigmatized people' as core concept in Luke's Gospel:

These actors reflect how Luke strongly emphasizes the stigmatized people in society who were disadvantaged and sometimes excluded, and it includes many narratives about the poor, lepers, blind people, others with sicknesses

²⁶³ See also Karris (1979). Other scholars like LaVerdiere & Thompson (1976) were most of all concerned about the audience of Luke being "communities in transition" (:570).

²⁶⁴ See for example how he embeds this in thinking about the kingdom of God: "Der Inhalt der vorösterlichen ‚Verkündigung der βασιλεία‘ ist im Lukasevangelium die sukzessive Erfüllung des göttlichen Heilsplanes in der Sendung sowie dem Wirken, Sterben und Auferwecktwerden Jesu Christi" (Gäckle 2018: 161). But Luke is also concerned about God's love which leads to loving others and salvation: "Die Heilskraft der Gottesherrschaft ist Gottes Liebe, in der er die Verlorenen rettet. Sie ist zugleich die lebendige Autorität, die die von ihr Erretteten bewegt und verpflichtet, in entsprechender Liebe einander anzunehmen und füreinander dazusein." (Wilckens 2014: 251)

²⁶⁵ "Wer sich von Jesus rufen lässt, wer seine Lebenshingabe annimmt, wer ihn als messianischen Menschensohn erkennt, der gehört zu der neuen Herde, zu dem neuen Volk." (?) [227] schnabel

	mean	count
female	0.518428	8
male	0.516130	41

Table 9.4: The average *closeness centrality* values on the social network of Luke’s Gospel ordered by sex.

	mean	count
lower	0.544859	29
higher	0.485037	19

Table 9.5: The average *closeness centrality* values on the social network of Luke’s Gospel ordered by social status.

and disabilities, tax collectors and other “sinners,” as well as Gentiles and Samaritans, who were often seen as outsiders in Jewish society (McClure 2020: 46).

In addition, she mentions women (:44) as a special focus of Luke. Her analysis is limited to two centrality measures, and we will continue to discuss her findings in the light of our analysis.

Tables 9.4, 9.5 and 9.6 show the average CC values of the social network of Luke’s Gospel arranged by different subgroups: sex, social status and cultural background. While sex and cultural background are easy to determine, the social status is not as trivial as we have seen during the exegetical studies in the previous chapter. For some people, we know they are or were wealthy but had a very low reputation in society, for example the tax collector Levi. Others had a higher reputation but were not wealthy, for example Mary and Joseph. To sum up the thoughts collected in the last chapter, we will label actors with a ‘higher’ status in society when they either belong to an important and well-known elite (e.g. Zacharias, Elizabeth, John the Baptist, Scribes, Pharisees, etc.) or foreign elites (e.g. the centurion). All other people are labeled with a ‘lower’ status, although Simon Peter, for example, might have been a wealthy fisherman. We will continue the discussion about the feasibility of this approach and others in Section 14.4. However, all other actors – where the label is not applicable or the question cannot be answered – are excluded from our analysis.

In Figure 9.10 the status is added using the colors green and blue as indicators to the social network. Together with Table 9.5 we see that some actors with ‘higher’ status are

	mean	count
Jew	0.535275	34
Roman	0.513061	4

Table 9.6: The average *closeness centrality* values on the social network of Luke’s Gospel ordered by cultural background.

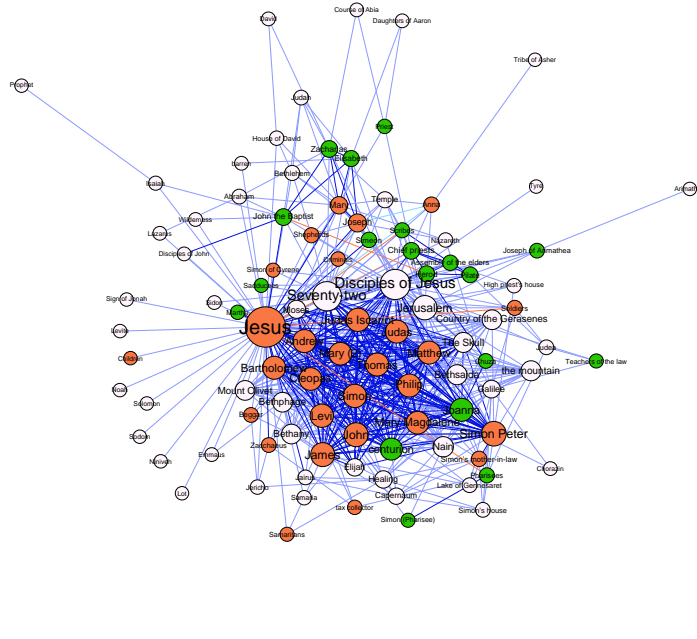


Figure 9.10: The social network of Luke’s Gospel with social status: ‘green’ (orange) and ‘lower’ (orange). The nodes’ size refers to the BC values.

antagonists, others like John the Baptist are only related to the community around Jesus – but most of them are equally integrated in this community. This is not a great surprise given the fact that the CC values are not significantly different.

McClure (2020: 37) presented a detailed analysis limited to normalized degree centrality and normalized eigenvector centrality differentiated on ‘Jesus’s family and followers’, ‘civil and religious authorities’, ‘stigmatized people’ and ‘women’. In general, we could reproduce her findings although it is important to notice the different groups explaining the different values for “Jesus’ family and followers”. In addition, choosing different centrality measures closely linked to the narrative composition of Luke’s Gospel underlines the fact that Luke describes a unique network. However, interpreting this with respect to the exegetical results of the previous chapter is not easy:

4:18	6:20	7:22	14:13	14:21	16:20.21	21:2-4
Poor πτωχός Captive αἰχμάλωτος Blind τυφλός Oppressed θραύω	Poor πτωχός Hungry πεινάω Mournful κλαίω Harassed μισέω	Blind τυφλός Lame χωλός Lepser λεπρός Deaf κωφός Dead νεκρός Poor πτωχός	Poor πτωχός Maimed ἀνάπηρος Lame χωλός Blind τυφλός	Poor πτωχός Maimed ἀνάπηρος Blind τυφλός Lame χωλός	Poor (2x) πτωχός Ulcerated ἐλκώω Hungry (χορτάζω)	Poor widow πενιχρός Poor widow πτωχός Need/Poverty ὑστέρημα

Table 9.7: Table showing significant descriptive elements of the *poor* in the Gospel of Luke, extended version of Green (2020: 215)

7:37	8:2	8:43-47	10:38-42
Sinner ἁμαρτωλός Faith πίστις	healed θεραπεύω	faith πίστις	distracted περισπάω anxious μεριμνάω troubled τυρβάζω choice of the good portion τὴν ἀγαθὴν μερίδα ἐξελέξατο

Table 9.8: Table showing significant descriptive elements of particular *women* in the Gospel of Luke

Again and again in Luke's narrative, vertical status reversal takes concrete form in words of Jesus that focus on wealth and poverty. Indeed, there is an abundance of material on wealth in this Gospel, yet it does not paint one uncomplicated picture of faithful response to God in the domain of money and property (Carroll 2014: 373).

Green supports this view: "It almost goes without saying that possessions and the poor are central to Luke's Gospel." (Green 2020: 211) At least we can find seven occurrences and descriptions of *poor* in the Gospel, see Table 9.7. While this highlights Luke's thinking about this group, we need to gather material for the other groups as well.

Luke is rather silent regarding actors with a non-Hebrew cultural background. The Roman authority is characterized as bad. In addition, Herod beheaded John (Lk 9:8), is connected to the killing of Jesus (13:31) and 'treated him [Jesus] with contempt and mocked him' (23:11). Pilate, on the other hand, says 'I find no guilt in this man.' (Lk 23:4) and was '... desiring to release Jesus' (Lk 23:20). But both became friends 'for before this they had been at enmity with each other' (Lk 23:11). The only actor which comes the nearest to be interpreted as part of the network around Jesus was the Roman centurion (ἑκατοντάρχης, Lk 7:2). He is characterized as worthy (ἄξιος, v. 4) for he loves the Jewish people (...ἀγαπᾷ ... τὸ ἔθνος ἡμῶν, v. 5). But he is also aware of the power implications of his position: 'For I too am a man set under authority, with soldiers under me' (v. 8)

Luke mentions women within parables (13:21;14:20.26;15:8;18:29) and in particular during Jesus' crucifixion ('And there followed him a great multitude of the people and of women who were mourning and lamenting for him.' Lk 23:27; 'And all his acquaintances and the women who had followed him from Galilee stood at a distance watching these things.' v. 49; 'The women who had come with him from Galilee followed and saw the tomb and how his body was laid.' v. 55). Women found the empty tomb (24.22-24). An additional analysis of Luke's description of particular women is presented in Table 9.8.

Comparing Tables 9.7, 9.8 and the observations about the Gentiles and Romans, we can see that all descriptions are interchangeable: A woman could be poor or sick, a man could be a sinner or troubled, and the same holds for Gentiles. It is crucial to observe that Luke composes the groups without intersections. Thus, it seems that "Luke may have used his own literary tools to narrate a more positive view of women than we had previously

thought” (Karris 1994: 19). However, SNA supports the view that this argument is also valid for all other groups as well! It is yet another argument that underlines the importance of an open community. We can extend Green’s argument on the poor:

The obvious answer is correct, as far as it goes: ‘the poor’ include those who make their lives at or below what is required to sustain life. For Luke’s Gospel, though, the measure of life’s sustenance of life cannot be reduced to one’s financial wherewithal. Wealth and poverty, rich and poor – these terms are worked out in terms of a social stratification grounded in experiences of belonging (or exclusion), in the distribution and exercise of power (or abuse), in being labeled with reference to religious purity (or contamination). Reflecting on Luke and Jesus’s mission to the poor, then, invites a surprisingly wide range of sensibilities not limited to such categories as annual income or daily caloric intake, or the presence of stable or surplus resources. For Luke, ‘good news to the poor’ is nothing less than God’s gracious word of invitation and welcome to the dispossessed. (Green 2020: 216)

The same holds for sex and cultural background: Luke describes a network where *everybody* can make new connections, can influence the network, and have a safe place in a closure. Regarding the total number of actors for a given sub-network, we can summarize that Luke is concerned about mentioning women and even Roman actors. But we should not exaggerate the results found here, as for example Duling (2000: 8) does with his SNA, which follows Theissen’s assertion that “all members of the Jesus Movement shared with Jesus three features: charisma, self-stigmatization, and a share in the promise; they were a ‘group Messianism’; (Gruppenmessianismus)”. According to SNA, Luke is very clear about the fact that Jesus has a special position in the network and thus the βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ is centered around him.

We should not ignore some references to pagan actors in the network, for example in Lk 6:17: ‘a great crowd of his disciples and a great multitude of people from all Judea and Jerusalem and the seacoast of Tyre and Sidon’. Thus, we can find more links to the pagan world than those explicitly named actors in Lk 7:1-10; 8:26-39; 23:47. The BC values in Table 9.3 underline this argument: CC, HC, and EC are in particular significant for those places. While Schnabel (2002: 324ff) suggests that this might be a hint for reference to Gentile missions intended by Jesus, we will leave this question for a detailed analysis together with Acts, see part III. Here, we only have implicit references in the social network to groups. However, the network also includes explicitly named groups. For example, it also remains sometimes unclear what kind of actors are hidden in the

groups of the Disciples and in the seventy-two. As Green (2020: 219) suggests, our observations on society might be a starting point to find a perspective on discipleship:

This is because Jesus's advent marks the decisive disclosure of God's kingdom, which exposes as false all competing attempts to shape and evaluate human life. Good news to the poor levels the playing field, so that the dispossessed, widows, children, and the disabled are honored and, indeed, are welcomed at the table. Necessarily, then, discipleship raises immediate and pressing questions concerning possessions, with Luke calling for forms of distribution in which the needy receive care and friendship and the wealthy give without expectation of return.

Luke's primary focus is the inclusion of every single person. Other scholars support this: "Throughout his public ministry Jesus is portrayed not as a lone itinerant prophet, but rather as one who is surrounded by community of disciples" (Reid 1996: 38). For example, Jesus is concerned about inclusion of women (cf. Reid 1996: 87) and not about exclusion²⁶⁶.

But the opposite is also important: As we have elaborated previously, the SNA of Luke's Gospel does not allow any conclusions about the fact that Luke in his composition intended a group to play a special role in the community, even the apostles. Thus, scholars like Rodriguez (2012) are right when they see a social liberation aspect in Luke's Gospel, although it is *not* limited to a particular group, but a generic one. But we are also not yet at a purely ecclesiological reading as Green (1997: 22) suggests.

In addition, we can't solve some spatial questions related to Jesus' network here²⁶⁷. The network is located *around* Jesus being the center of Luke's narrative and theological intentions.

Thus, Luke's primary narrative interest *in composing interpersonal relationship* is the idea of *participation* in the βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ. But SNA can also unveil more information

²⁶⁶ D'Angelo (1990: 461) disagrees: "Luke never denies that women take part in the spirit-filled ministry, but rather treats their appearances with acute, not to say terminal, discretion." However, the key problem is that Luke's primary interest was *not* to include or rank any particular part of the network. As discussed above he is most of all concerned about the inclusion of *everybody*. Thus, we may agree with Carroll (2014: 371) who offers the thesis that Luke presents a 'double message' regarding women.

²⁶⁷ For example Duling will be proved false: "I am convinced that it is possible to hold together both the more complicated picture of the physical connections current among Regionalists and a faction coalition/Ego-centered network." (Duling 2000: 10) Our discussion of Luke-Acts is not complete without Acts. We will come back to this question later.

about the ‘in’ and ‘out’ of a network. Thus, we will continue our analysis in the next section with perspectives on those actors *not* in the network.

9.5 Structural analysis of ‘in’ and ‘out’ in Luke’s Gospel

In the last section we have discussed who is ‘inside’ the social network that Luke presents. He tells us very little about specific structures and actors ‘outside’ this network although he presents the antagonists and the (spiritual) structures opposing Jesus. But the concept of *perception bias* gives us more detailed hints on the ‘out’ in network structures of Luke’s Gospel. This ‘perception bias’²⁶⁸ is mainly due to the structure of social networks and in particular “on the level of homophily and its asymmetric nature, as well as on the size of minority group” (Lee et al. 2019: 1078). Thus, in a thought-complete network we see minority and majority groups which are arranged in a complex network structure. In our case, the minority group is the network of people following Jesus.

We cannot utilize the community-detection approaches presented in Section 9.3, not only because they lead to one particular network, but also due to network structure issues:

As we vary what a community represents, the optimal method for identifying communities will correspondingly change. In particular, it is important to have an idea of how community structure affects network formation. (Jackson 2010: 449)

Nevertheless, this approach relies on the distribution of minority and majority actors in a community. Since Luke presents mainly a network comprising minority actors which means followers of Jesus, this does give additional hints on how Luke sees the ‘outer’ network and, in particular, the relation between the followers of Jesus and the ‘world’, although this term is primarily used for the Gospel of John and we can only infer this perspective from SNA.

²⁶⁸ This bias is related to small group and communities: “Members of such insular communities often tend to overestimate the frequency of their own attributes in the overall society.” (Lee et al. 2019: 1078)

The perception bias has been analyzed in several environments, for example on the question of vaccinations (cf. Bruine de Bruin et al. 2019), or in digital social networks (cf. Bak-Coleman et al. 2021), and even on beliefs (cf. Galesic et al. 2021). Here, in general, an ‘actor environment’ is divided into possible belief states, the social network and the cognitive representation about the actor’s and the network environments’ states. This results either in low or high homophily and dissonance. Although their work is limited with respect to practical concerns, Galesic et al. (2021: 5) highlight several findings:

Complex social systems with similar belief and network structures can still give rise to different patterns of belief dynamics because of various cognitive processes operating on these structures. The way people represent their individual beliefs and social networks, the dissonance they feel regarding them and their strategies for updating their beliefs and network links can all contribute to different belief dynamics.

While, for example, in the Gospel of John the community of Jesus is more or less permanently in conflict, either with the Jews or with ‘the world’ – the κόσμος – this is a more subtle topic for Luke as our summary in Section 8.4 shows. Nevertheless, Luke also does not focus on the ἐκκλησία (cf. Köstenberger 2009: 481). Green (1997: 22) shares the same understanding:

Luke’s emphasis on the divine purpose severs his ecclesiological and hermeneutical interests. [...] In fact, Jesus’ struggle with the Jewish leadership and with Jewish institutions is essentially hermeneutical: Who understands God’s purpose? Who interprets the Scriptures faithfully?

Luke’s main concern is christology. These christological glasses help to understand the ‘in’ and ‘out’: For Luke it is not the bias within the original Christian community that is important. Rather, this purely human ‘bias’ is to be abolished, and the only thing which matters is the person’s faith²⁶⁹. This is mentioned several times, for example when sending the seventy-two (‘But whenever you enter a town and they do not receive you...’, Lk 10:10). At the same time, however, the ‘bias’ remains towards and from the outside. This is the decisive starting point for understanding the social network in Luke’s Gospel. While the inner network is characterized by love and has a high homophily, not only concerning belief but also overcoming social distances like social status, gender etc., see

²⁶⁹ “[Das] Leben in der Jünergemeinschaft [soll] ganz und gar bestimmen []: die Liebe zu dem einzigen Gott und die Liebe zum Nächsten. Die Liebe zum Nächsten soll der Liebe Gottes entsprechen, der die Rettung des Verlorenen will” (Wilckens 2014: 281).

Figure 9.10. In fact, according to Luke, Jesus talked and discussed with everybody: Scribes, pharisees, priests, but also tax collectors and the humble and poor. The fact that decides about ‘in’ and ‘out’ is faith and how people perceived him. Was Jesus especially concerned about those people marginalized by society²⁷⁰? Given the fact that no group has a special position in the network and observing that Jesus was not seeking contact for example with Gentiles (cf. Schnabel 2002: 377), we can extend this to a generalized observation: Jesus was interested in μετάνοια and ἄφρασις. He was not seeking contact with a particular group of people but to *all* people. This new society of μάρτυρες eliminates all social hurdles and forms a new community of people ‘in’, showing those ‘out’ how the βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ forms a new society. In particular, Jesus is concerned about all people in his commission (...εἰς πάντα τὰ ἔθνη, Lk 24:47-49).

The categories mentioned in Section 9.4 come to nothing, because Luke carefully composes his work in such a way that (a) no group has a special position and (b) the participation in the βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ *also* results from the interpersonal encounter outside. Not every follower of Christ was previously excluded from society, but *new (different) social participation* always results afterwards. Thus, SNA highlights the aims of Jesus according to Luke. The perception and interpretation of those needing ‘inclusion’, which refers to salvation, or have the feeling of being ‘out’ is settled in the space of contemporary interpretation, and giving space for those experiencing these feelings towards a christological reflection. The divine work always turns concern (e.g. social concern) into participation. According to this, rejection, unkindness and exclusion are serious offenses.

9.6 Spatial analysis: The early Christian Network in Galilee and Jerusalem

According to the Gospels, Jesus ministered mainly in Galilee. He was active there for a long time in many places and also did not go through the country alone, as we read in

²⁷⁰ For example Schnabel (2002: 376): Jesus “bemühte sich aber vor allem um die Nichtprivilegierten, die Bauern und Fischer, die Landarbeiter und Pächter, die Tagelöhner und Schuldknechte, die Handwerker und Gewerbetreibende, Bettler und Prostituierte; er suchte Kontakt mit Männern und mit Frauen und hat auch Kinder nicht abweisen”.

Lk 8:1–3²⁷¹. Capernaum was the center of Jesus’ ministry, the place where he lived (at least according to Mt 9:1) and where Peter was also at home. Scholars like Duling (1999) enriched his SNA with archaeological information, and we will compare the impact of this additional data. We will summarize the broad spatial setting in Luke and provide some references to the general discussion afterwards, followed by a general review of spatial analysis in the Gospel of Luke:

1. *Galilee*, where the places mentioned in the previous section are to be combined for the sake of clarity²⁷².
2. *Caesarea Philippi* as link to Acts and *Caesarea Maritima* as center of the Roman power.
3. The region of *Samaria*.
4. The city of *Jerusalem*.
5. The Roman province of *Judea*.

Judea and Samaria are other important areas where Jesus was active²⁷³. Luke already hints at earlier activity in Judea in Lk 4:43.44²⁷⁴. In any case, the climax and end of Jesus’ life takes place in Jerusalem. It must be questioned whether the gospels deliberately exclude Judea²⁷⁵. Lk 9:51–56 does not speak of Jesus’ activity in Samaria, but of his rejection by some Samaritans. Lk 17:11–19, in turn, mentions the healing of ten lepers,

²⁷¹ Schnabel points to the following cities in Galilee explicitly mentioned in the Gospels: “Nazaret, Kaper-naum, Chorazin, Nain und Kana. Auffallend ist, dass Sepphoris und Tiberias, die größten Städte Galiläas, nicht erwähnt werden” (Schnabel 2002: 23).

²⁷² We have to mention the connection to the actors: “Thus, Capernaum was something of a physical ‘Ego’; not more than a day’s walk from Galilean villages to the West and South or a boat rides to the North, East, and South. Near Capernaum were Chorazin and Bethsaida. If Jesus condemned these three towns together, the condemnation is strong evidence that they were linked and that Jesus was active there. All this suggests that if the itinerant radicals shook off the dust – or fish scales! – from their feet and moved on, they could return to either Peter’s (or Jesus’) house in Capernaum, from whence they could again depart in many directions.”(Duling 2000: 10) Indeed, the spatial connection (First- and Secondspace) is striking. But we will falsify Duling’s general assumption later.

²⁷³ This is also supported in other Gospels: Mt 19:1 and Mk 10:1 mention at the beginning of the passion story that Jesus was active in Judea and beyond the Jordan.

²⁷⁴ Also, according to Mt 4:25 Jesus had a large audience from Judea even before this.

²⁷⁵ Schnabel comments that Jesus came to Judea only at the end of his public ministry is correct and intended at all may be doubted: “Ob der im Matthäus- und Markusevangelium erweckte Eindruck, Jesus sei erst am Ende seines öffentlichen Wirkens nach Judäa gekommen, richtig und überhaupt beabsichtigt ist, darf bezweifelt werden.” (Schnabel 2002: 257)

one of whom is a Samaritan. Evidence of an encounter with Jesus in Samaria is found only in Jn 4:1–42.

However, Jesus also ministered in Batanaea, Betsaida, and Caesarea Philippi as well as in the Decapolis. Directly adjacent to Galilee was the city of Betsaida, which, however, lay beyond the Jordan and thus in Batanaea (cf. Schnabel 2002: 251). The city is mentioned in Lk 8:26.32²⁷⁶. Caesarea Philippi, located about 40 km north of the Sea of Galilee, is only mentioned in Mt 16:13 and Mk 8:27; as we have discussed earlier, this city was added to the network, because it foreshadows Acts. There is no indication in the Gospels, however, as to how successful Jesus' preaching was in this region or whether he ministered publicly there at all.

Jesus' stay in the Decapolis is not mentioned in Luke's Gospel, but in Mk 7:31. However, with Maxwell (1980) we may approximate this location as part of the network. But since information in Luke's Gospel is missing, we did not add this location to the network. Jews also lived in cities in this region and there was active trade with Galilee. Yet there is no recorded preaching by Jesus in this area²⁷⁷. To sum up, spatial or geographical analysis of the Gospel of Luke usually focuses on a specific topic and cannot be reviewed without the results on other Gospels, in particular Mark²⁷⁸, due to, for example, Jesus' post-Easter occurrences or Luke's limited knowledge of geography²⁷⁹. Nevertheless, research in this field started with Lohmeyer (1936), who worked on the question of Jesus' appearances after his resurrection. His work mainly focused on Mark, but more research followed, especially with a focus on a Galilee community or church, see, for example, Lightfoot (1938) and Elliott-Binns (1956). In any case, Lohmeyer's work had several implications for the perception of Luke in research (cf. Völkel 1973 Conzelmann 1993)²⁸⁰. Other scholars like

²⁷⁶ And as well in Mt 1:20–21; Mk 8:23.26; Lk 9:10; Jn 1:44 and probably in Jn 9:10; 10:40.

²⁷⁷ "In den Texten ist an keiner Stelle davon die Rede, dass Jesus gepredigt oder gelehrt hätte" (Schnabel 2002: 257). However, Jesus could not have been an unknown in this region if a large crowd from the Decapolis followed him and his miracles, cf. Mt 4:25.

²⁷⁸ While using a narrative approach, we will not focus on this issue. Nevertheless, we need to add information about the ongoing discussion and that these work for example "lay important groundwork for an investigation of Luke's Galilee. Not only has Luke borrowed Galilean material from Mark, but just as importantly, he has conspicuously omitted the extra-Galilean material" (Bruegge 2016: 143).

²⁷⁹ This view is supported by Bruegge: "Geographical analyses of Lukan material, however, are not easily reviewable since they are usually found scattered through commentaries or embedded within larger works. Even where there is discernible interest, the focus often lies elsewhere, whether with Jerusalem, the list of nations at Pentecost, or the missionary activity of Paul." (Bruegge 2016: 130)

²⁸⁰ See, for example, some methodological concerns formulated by Völkel: "Methodengeschichtlich wird man jedoch Lohmeyers Untersuchung allenfalls als Präludium des durch die sogenannte redaktionsgeschichtliche Forschungsmethode eigentlich zum Prinzip erhobenen exegetischen Bemühens sehen

Reed (2002) mainly worked on archaeological questions. In general, it seems that the general consensus is critical of Luke's geography:

Luke is assumed to be geographically aware and astute prior to the travel narrative, as in 4:44, and after the travel narrative, especially in the book of Acts, but when discussing the travel narrative itself he becomes geographically apathetic or illiterate. It is safe to say that Luke is not the only one who is potentially inconsistent with geography. (Bruegge 2016: 155-156)

This becomes of increasing importance when building bridges between Luke's Gospel and the Book of Acts, which is considered more reliable (cf. Keener 2012: 582ff). In any case, a narrative approach should also think about Luke's literary intentions. In addition, what are the reasons for the scarcity of research on the spatial setting of Luke focusing only on particular issues like the parousia? Interestingly, this is highly linked to both theological and social (or in particular identity) questions:

The author [Luke] has a definite geographical emphasis, but that emphasis is on Jerusalem over and against Galilee, both as the place of destination (destiny? Luke 13:33) for Jesus in Luke and as the point of distribution for the gospel in Acts. Furthermore, those interested in the geography of Luke-Acts have found much more captivating terrain in the 'end of the earth' scope of Acts than in the more limited, provincial, and ostensibly misconceived space of Luke. (Bruegge 2016: 130)

However, Moxnes (2009: 91) was among the first to directly address the relation between place and identity: "Social structures are always places. Families and households are located in a home place; larger communities are associated with landscapes" (:92). Assuming that Luke has no knowledge about the landscape²⁸¹, what meaning does he refer to? It is important to analyze the spatial setting *within* the social setting to come closer to an answer. In addition, we will utilize the concepts of 'emplacement', 'displacement' and 're-placement' introduced by Habel (2016: 482-487). The *emplacement* is mainly given by *how* Luke reads or interprets a given place. The *displacement* is given by the movement of actors and the *distance* to the place where their goal is, which is also analyzed with the ongoing *re-placement*: The actors are on a way to a destination. This is

dürfen, grundsätzlich in den topographischen und chronologischen Angaben der synoptischen Evangelien weniger auf den äußeren Verlauf der Geschichte Jesu zielende Bemerkungen zu erblicken, als vielmehr sachlich-theologische Angaben von größtem Gewicht."(Völkel 1973: 222) For a detailed overview on this issue see also Dörpinghaus (2021b).

²⁸¹ For example: "His description of the landscapes of Palestine should not be measured by geographical correctness, but understood from Luke's main purpose, to present the landscape as shaped by Jesus and his message" Moxnes (2009: 105).

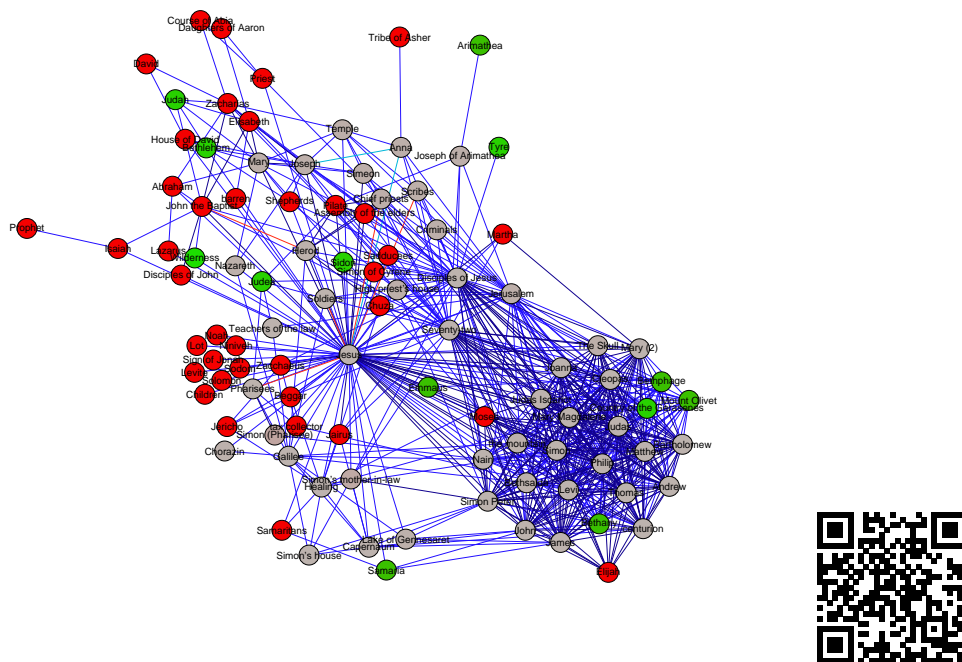


Figure 9.11: Nodes which are neither directly connected to Galilee nor Jerusalem (red and green). The green nodes indicate locations.

obviously mixing theological and social with spatial concepts. The βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ is a social and theological concept. The kingdom of God can be seen as part of the thirdspace: “Underlying the narrative lies a deeper structure that gives meaning to the listeners of the story when they created their Kingdom space through a repetition of the words of Jesus” (Moxnes 2009: 104). We will begin our analysis not with Galilee or Jerusalem, but with all nodes in the network which are neither directly connected to Galilee nor Jerusalem, see Figure 9.11.

It is apparent from this figure that a significant number of locations is not directly linked to the two most important places in the Gospel. Interestingly, again the origin of Jesus (Bethlehem, BC 14.83) and the network around John the Baptist is left out. In addition, Samaria (BC 1, see Dar 1992), the wilderness (BC 0) and Mount Olivet (BC 0.26) are isolated. This again highlights the importance of locations with a direct encounter of God although the BC values show that these places are not pushing the narrative forward, they are not important for the displacement and re-placement. For the general explanation of emplacement the CC is more important, underlining the positive reception of these locations in the Gospel. In general, this Figure reveals that Luke is

not only concerned about Galilee and Jerusalem. Thus, adding archaeological information may even show more, but the network as it is already supports an understanding of Luke's narrative interest. However, the generic data structure of knowledge graphs provides the possibility to add these archaeological additions, but this is out of the scope of this study. We will proceed with a more detailed analysis of both locations Galilee and Jerusalem.

In Figure 9.12 we present the neighborhood of Galilee (top) and a heatmap with distances to Galilee (bottom) and in Figure 9.13 for Jerusalem. It is possible to differentiate between parts of the Gospel which are concerned with one particular location. Luke offers a direct reading of his intentions: While Galilee is – obviously! – primarily mentioned in the context of Jesus' teaching and initial controversy (cf. Bock 2002: 92-94), Jerusalem is part of the 'new' in the story, leaving out OT references like prophets, John the Baptist and David. While they reflect a theological reading, it is striking to realize that the community of followers is involved in both the starting point and the location at the end of the Gospel. These followers are on a way home, to the βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ, of which Jesus is the center, and which is linked to what happened at the cross in Jerusalem²⁸².

Luke is not inasmuch concerned about the differences between κώμη and πόλις²⁸³ or the bridging between two distant regions²⁸⁴ as he is about human interaction, community, and about forming a moral landscape reflecting the journey of a community, its displacement, to the βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ, and its re-placement. From this perspective, we will now take a closer look at the journey between Galilee and Jerusalem.

The journey between Galilee and Jerusalem has several challenging ancillary bound-

²⁸² Or in other words: It is the "battle in the campaign of the Kingdom of the Messiah" as Bock (2002: 248) stated.

²⁸³ See, for example, Moxnes and the discussion in Section 20: "In the elite literature of Greek antiquity, city and city life represented a higher value than the rustic countryside. In Luke the opposite appears to be the case" Moxnes (2009: 100).

²⁸⁴ Frankel's assertion that Galilee as the place where Jesus conducts "a successful ministry of healings and exorcisms and where he is to be reunited with his chosen disciples" (Frankel 1992: 898) was thus significant in ancient literature is not very likely. First, as Frankel clarifies himself, Galilee was not mainly in focus, but prophetically important for the OT theology: "Since Galilee was geographically distant from Jerusalem, the seat of the Judean palace, temple, archives, and scribes, events occurring there are rarely mentioned in the Hebrew Bible and its history is therefore difficult to reconstruct." (Frankel 1992: 879) Second, there is an ongoing interrelatedness between both places. And indeed, "gerade als Landschaft im ursprünglichen, d. h. geographischen Sinne, größte Bedeutung zu. Die Bedeutung Galiläas als Anfang des Wirkens Jesu verrät, daß der Evangelist geographisch-historische Bedingungen des Lebens Jesu in seine Reflexion einbezieht und zwar bewußt als historische Bedeutungen, um mittels dieses Verfahrens theologische Aussagen – im Falle Judäas und Jerusalems – erst zu ermöglichen" (Völkel 1973: 230f).

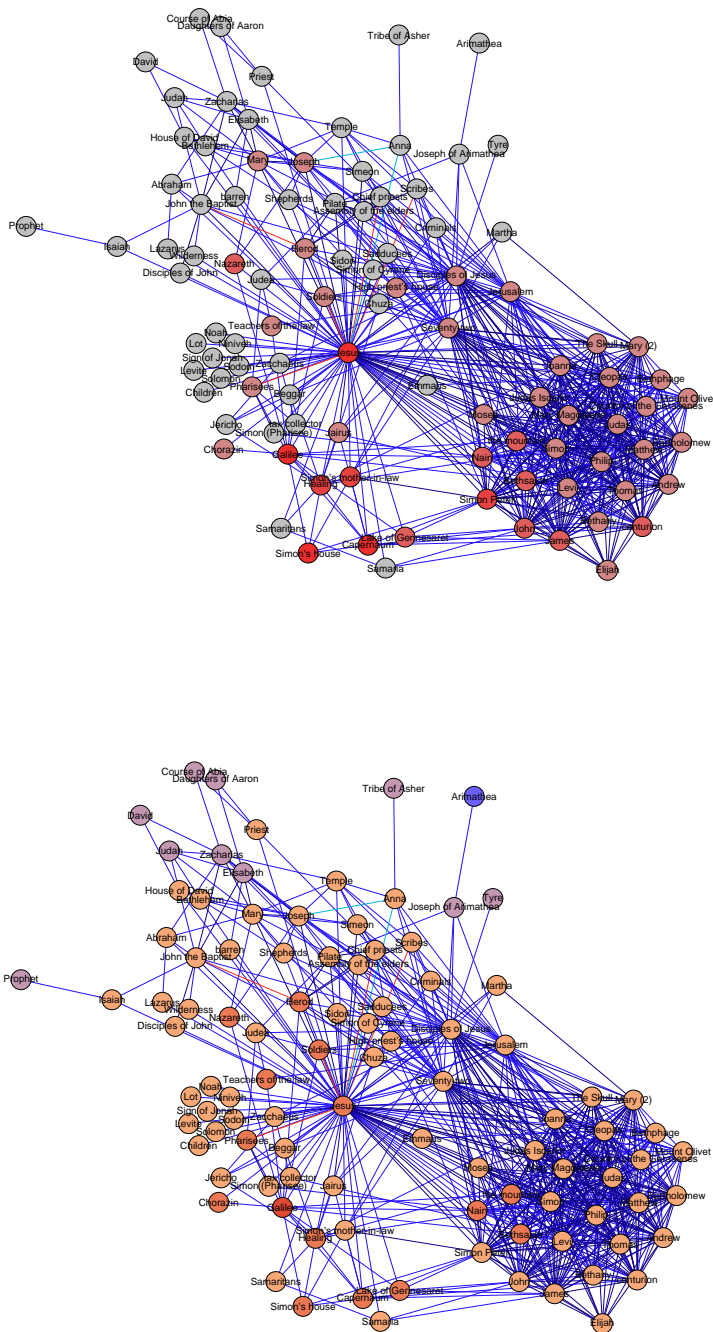


Figure 9.12: Neighborhood of Galilee (top) and a heatmap with distances to Galilee (bottom).

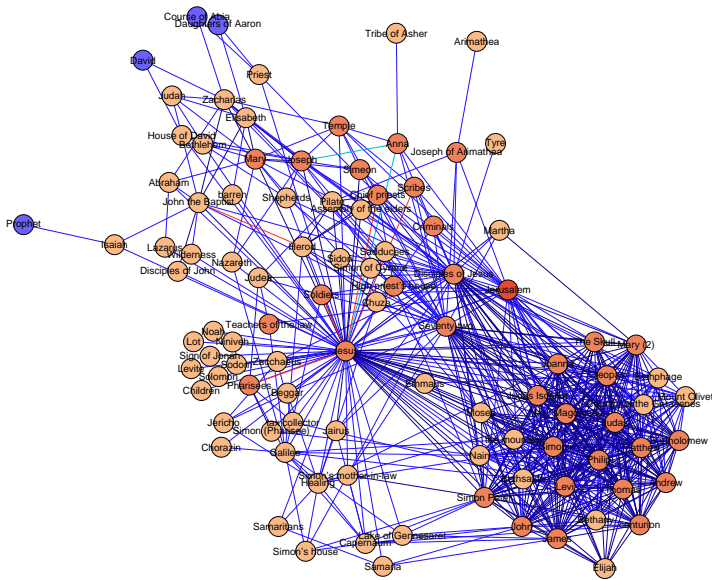
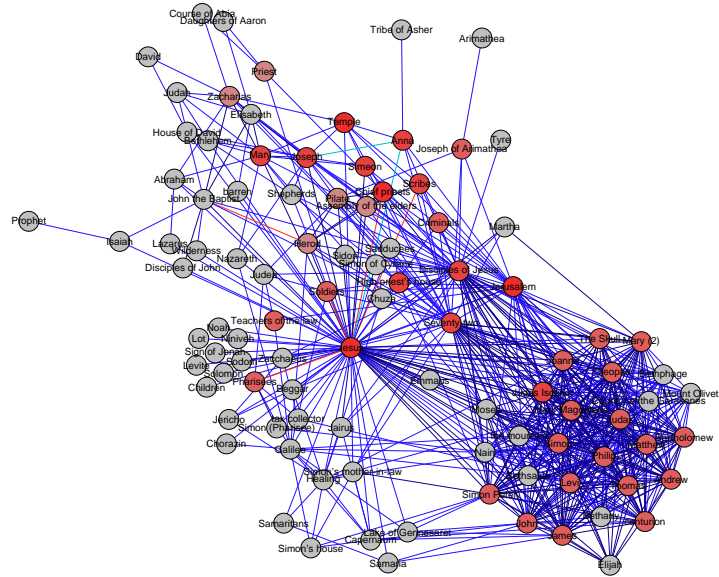


Figure 9.13: Neighborhood of Jerusalem (top) and a heatmap with distances to Jerusalem (bottom).

aries²⁸⁵. First, we need to consider how to continue our analysis between two fixed points. Robinson (1960: 29) made the following observation: “In a sense then the trip has no locale of its own but is constructed with reference to its function as a transition between the two important places of the pattern, Galilee and Jerusalem.” It is true that Luke challenges a theological and re-placement reading of the journey as we have shown above. But, on the other hand, we should not ignore the fact that we have a limited amount of fixed points: “Luke seems to be notoriously imprecise about place.” (Bruegge 2016: 144) But this is not Luke’s narrative concern, as we can derive from Figure 9.11. Luke is in his emplacement as writer, reading the space ‘in between’ and even ‘before’ Galilee as the place to make christological statements and figure the Kingdom of God. The same holds for the travel narrative²⁸⁶. It is a widely discussed fact “that the author attached significance to the arrangement of his material, and that such significance was not just aesthetic but carried theological import with regard to his overall purpose in writing” (Robinson 1960: 20). And the christological perspective is also well-perceived: “The journey is expressed in time, not direct geographic direction. Jesus is headed to Jerusalem and his fate there.” (Bock 1994: 961) Even other aspects have been discussed, in particular the

literary and theological functions of movement, travel, hospitality, and place in Luke-Acts. These texts can help shape an imagination and communal identity that sees other communities as partners in faithful discernment, not as foreign threats or strange folks one must merely tolerate. In this way, “a gospel on the move” shapes an imagination of welcome, wonder, and embrace when it comes to migrants, immigrants, and other “people on the move.” (Barreto 2018)

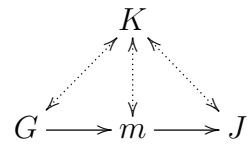
While the SNA can’t reproduce a ‘gospel on the move’, it can highlight the different readings of Luke’s spatial scenery and underline the narrative importance of traveling as we will summarize now. Luke not only describes a firstspace movement m from G (Galilee) to J (Jerusalem), he is also concerned about the thirdspace location K , the Kingdom of God. Thus, we get the following summary:

²⁸⁵ While there was an ongoing discussion about these travel narrative in Luke’s Gospel (cf. McCown 1938), the journey-motif was accepted as one central topic in Luke-Acts (cf. Filson 1970). In general, there is not much discussion about the fact itself: “es gab keinen Grund, weshalb Lukas das Reisemotiv hätte erfinden sollen” (Schnabel 2002: 313).

²⁸⁶ Moxnes was even more generic in his conclusion: “Luke reveals the identity of Jesus and of his followers through their movement in space” (Moxnes 2009: 98).

Thirdspace

First- and Secondspace



The movement in First- and Secondspace is used to illustrate those aspects within the Thirdspace which are important for Luke's theological concerns. The important aspect of Secondspace which is shown in Figures 9.12 and 9.13 was also highlighted in Section 9.5: The spatial scenery underlines the importance of the Kingdom of God which is reflected in the social network open for all those who believe. In Chapter 20 we will continue this analysis with a perspective on Luke-Acts. In the next section, we will examine whether the social network according to Luke's Gospel provides some hints for mapping Israel and the followers of Jesus, which will lead to the nascent Christian movement in Acts.

10 Conclusion

In this part, we provided short, targeted exegetical parts collecting spatial and social observations in Chapters 5 to 8, to render a detailed social network analysis in Chapter 9. We could show that our analysis provides a more detailed perspective on the Gospel, Luke's spatial thinking, and the social relationships extending the results of other scholars, for example McClure (2020: 47).

First, Lk 1:1-4:13 is both an introduction to the Gospel of Luke and a narrative subsection with its own lines of suspense. Here, Luke introduces the social view as the narrative develops it. This section introduces the main lines of suspense which converge in the theological meaning of the salvation in Jesus and is combined with the reading of OT scripture identifying God's plans. Luke highlights in particular the social component of the imbalance of earthly power and slavery, wealth and hunger. Luke presents a social network being the center of God's works containing both the 'humble and poor' and the religious elite. John's preaching and Jesus' temptation already introduce many leitmotifs of the Gospel and prepare the coming lines of suspense. The quote from Is 61:1 which is referred to later in Lk 4:18,19 is a good summary of this narrative: 'to bring good news to the poor'.

The second part of Luke's Gospel, Lk 4:14-9:50, narrates Jesus' ministry in Galilee including Jesus' preaching, the calling of the disciples, the coming crisis, and the confrontation with society and rulers. There are two main concerns of this part: First, the identity of Jesus Christ. Luke develops carefully the theological and societal issues of Jesus. The second concern is dedicated to the disciples: They are "catching people", sending the apostles in Lk 9:1-6 forms a narrative link to the next part. In the social network, the neighborhood of Galilee is small, which, in turn, means only few nodes are directly linked to Galilee, although a large part of the Gospel is located in Galilee, and actors

and locations mostly vanish in the fog of diffuse and largely unnamed locations and the ὄχλος, a crowd of unnamed people.

The third part of Luke's Gospel, Lk 9:51–19:48, comprises the so-called travel narrative. The destination of the journey, Jerusalem, is a central motif, but the fact that Luke also uses travel as motif is significant in his Gospel. While with Lk 9:51 Jerusalem seems to be the preliminary destination, in Section 9.6 we presented a detailed discussion that this destination is only limited to the firstspace and secondspace while the perspective in thirdspace clearly has a theological dimension. In order to understand Luke's spatial thinking about the journey from Galilee to Jerusalem, we first observed that Luke's spatial references to actual locations are sparse, and so are his references to particular actors. However, he arranged the travel narrative with a primary interest in thirdspace: It is mainly a theological journey, the Son of God in confrontation with his opponents which leads to the first climax. Firstspace and secondspace are concentrated at the beginning and end of this part. To summarize, Luke carefully arranges the spatiality of the travel narratives, of travel in general, and of traveling with the Son of God in particular. It is both a conflictful and a shared journey. The travel motif also re-occurs in the next part of the Gospel, in Lk 20:1–24:53.

In this last part of Luke's Gospel, the spatial setting of confrontation at the climax of the Gospel is carefully arranged: Not only the firstspace and secondspace are in motion, but also the thirdspace, and especially the social relations. This 'earthquake' of fluctuations clearly reflects the theological implications and underlines the narrative importance of this section. But there are some issues which are not yet uncovered, for example, the Holy Spirit and the eschatological topics. However, this part is also the transition to Acts, which we will analyze in the next part.

In Chapter 9 we provided a detailed SNA of Luke's Gospel. Until then, we only had analyzed particular sections. The perspective on the complete Gospel reveals some interesting observations. The different centrality measures and MST analysis showed that Luke narrates a social network that has mostly a reliable and stable structure. The leadership in this network is arranged around Jesus. As we were able to demonstrate, both the CC and the community detection approaches show a relatively well-connected network, centered around Jesus. Although some actors are much better connected –

John the Baptist is a counter example – there are no confrontations, multiple clusters or communities or a general “dualistic” worldview.

In general, the network described in Luke’s Gospel is spatially rooted in Jerusalem and Galilee. The main actor is Jesus. There are only few antagonists and people related to the connection to the previous narrative, e.g. John the Baptist. Studying isolated communities strongly supports the thesis of a single community of disciples.

Further analysis showed that Luke’s primary focus is on the inclusion of every single person. Thus, he is concerned about inclusion of women and not about exclusion. However, his interest is *not* limited to women, but he opens the perspective to all people. Thus, the opposite is also important: The SNA of Luke’s Gospel does not allow any conclusions that Luke intended a group to play a special role in the community in his composition. The network is built around Jesus being the center of Luke’s narrative and theological intentions. Thus, Luke’s primary narrative interest in composing interpersonal relationship is the idea of participation in the βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ.

A SNA of Luke’s Gospel can also unveil more information about the ‘in’ and ‘out’ of a network. Luke carefully composes his work in such a way that (a) no group has a special position and (b) the participation in the βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ also results from the interpersonal encounter outside. Not every follower of Christ was previously excluded from society, but new (different) social participation always results afterwards. Thus, the divine work always turns concern (e.g. social concern) into participation.

Another perspective was provided by analysing the spatial movement. The movement in first- and secondspace is used to illustrate those aspects within the thirdspace which are important for Luke’s theological concerns. The important aspect of secondspace underlines the importance of the Kingdom of God which is reflected in a social network open for all believers.

We will now continue with an analysis of Acts in part II and provide a detailed analysis of Luke-Acts in part III.

Part II

Acts

11 Judea and Syria (Acts 1:1-12:25)

This chapter collects data and exegetical observations for the early Christian network in Acts 1-12, which covers Judea and Syria. After exegetical considerations and the gathering of research questions, we demonstrate how SNA can help answering exegetical questions concerning the social network in Ac 1–12 offering ways for re-thinking and re-interpretation. We will discuss more aspects of SNA in Chapter 14, covering Ac 1–28. Due to Acts' unique nature, the steps and order of elements from Part I are not applicable. First, we will divide the analysis of Acts into two parts, as explained in Chapters 3 and 4.

The network represents the first fulfillment of the charge given in Ac 1:8. Moreover, it allows us to distinguish between protagonists and their influence. Using different distance measurements, we are not only able to describe the high level of solidarity in this network, but could also find strong evidence for Peter, Philip and Barnabas being key figures. Ac 1–12 describes the mission of the nascent church as led by God and performed by different people with Jerusalem as the center of activity. This mission is both peripheral and open to people with diverse social, religious, and geographic backgrounds. In the novel network of people belonging to the body of Christ human leadership is not important.

11.1 Acts 1 as Prolegomenon

Starting from chapter 4.2 with a detailed discussion about Luke's audience, it is worthwhile to have a look at Ac 1. First of all, a person named Theophilos is mentioned as the addressee of the Gospel and Acts. We may assume that he is a real person but being outside of the narrative, we cannot include him in the social network. See also Section 5.1 for a detailed discussion.

11.1.1 The Constitution of the Community (Ac 1:1–14)

The present pericope can be divided into three parts: First, in Ac 1:1,2 there is the address and introduction for Theophilos²⁸⁷. This transitions smoothly into the account of Christ's ascension (Ac 1:2–11). Finally, verses Ac 1:12–14 portray the constitution of the post-Easter community and thus are the link to the next pericope. First, we will consider the content, then locations and then actors.

First, Jesus promises his disciples the Holy Spirit, who takes the place of Jesus as a person in the network of the disciples. This circumstance is difficult or even impossible to depict in terms of network theory. In this context, the reference to John is interesting. The form χωρίζεσθαι (v. 4), infinitive passive, is interpreted by Keener (2012: 676) as meaning that the disciples should have left Jerusalem after Pentecost: "That the original apostles stay in Jerusalem much longer than necessary for evangelizing Jerusalem [...] may imply their misunderstanding. Jesus tells them to stay there only until they receive the Spirit". But more precisely, first, they will be Jesus' witnesses according to v. 8. However, this would be an important hint for the interpretation of the network, but cannot really be justified on the basis of the Greek text. Since the statement cannot be clearly interpreted in this way, it must be assumed that this interpretation was not the primary intention.

The concluding three verses in Ac 1:12–14 contain two locations, 'the mount called Olivet' (Ἐλαιῶνος), which lies at the distance of the length of a 'Sabbath day's journey' (σαββάτου ἔχρον ὁδόν) from Jerusalem, and the 'upper room', where they were staying in Jerusalem. After considering content and locations, we will now discuss the actors in Acts 1:1-14.

An abundance of persons representing Israel are named by Luke in these few verses: "Peter and John and James and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus and Simon the Zealot and Judas the son of James," as well as the unspecified women and Mary, the mother of Jesus, and the brothers of Jesus. But there is also another perspective with regard to Luke's Gospel. In Lk 8:2–3, besides Mary Magdalene, also Joanna as wife of Chuza and Susanna are introduced. In Lk 24:10 a

²⁸⁷ A separation is not clearly possible. This is clearly seen in Keener (2012: 658), he takes 3.4 as the introduction, but also divides verses 3-8 into a sense section (:662). Other commentators, e.g. Zmijewski separate after verse 3.

further person is found: “Mary the mother of James.” Looking at Lk 23:49.55, it can be assumed that we also find her in the group of women²⁸⁸.

Jesus’ brothers probably include James, though he is not explicitly introduced by Luke until Ac 12:17. We can assume strong ties among the family members, as well as among the disciples and women themselves. It is not clear what the relationship is between these groups, so we can only assume a complete network with weak ties here. In verse 15, a larger group of brothers and sisters is introduced. It is not clear whether the $\tau\epsilon$ is to be interpreted as $\delta\epsilon$ or indicates continuity. Thus, this larger crowd may have already been with the one on the Mount Olivet.

11.1.2 Replacing Judas (Ac 1:15–26)

The pericope Ac 1:15–26 includes a long speech by Peter in Ac 1:16–22 and a prayer in verses Ac 1:24–25. The remaining verses Ac 1:15.23.26 describe the action: a meeting of about 120 brethren ($\acute{\alpha}\delta\epsilon\lambda\phi\omicron\iota$) takes place and Peter takes the floor to suggest a by-election of the missing twelfth apostle. In his wording, however, the word ‘apostle’ does not appear, but rather a person is to be re-elected who will become a witness to Jesus’ resurrection with the others ($\mu\acute{\alpha}\rho\tau\upsilon\rho\alpha\ \tau\eta\varsigma\ \acute{\alpha}\nu\alpha\sigma\tau\acute{\alpha}\sigma\epsilon\omega\varsigma\ \alpha\upsilon\tau\omicron\upsilon\ \sigma\upsilon\nu\ \gamma\epsilon\nu\acute{\epsilon}\sigma\theta\alpha\iota\ \acute{\epsilon}\nu\alpha\ \tau\omicron\upsilon\tau\omega\nu$, Ac 1:22). It is not until verses 25 and 26 that Luke mentions that the person chosen is to become an apostle. In Ac 1:23, two candidates are mentioned: Joseph, called Barsabbas, surnamed Justus, and Matthew. Verse 26 reports the election of Matthias.

Peter’s speech in Ac 1:16–22 and prayer in verses Ac 1:24–25 contain some relevant information. Peter speaks primarily about the fate of Judas, which has already been announced in two psalms of David (Ps 69:26 and Ps 109:8). About Joseph and Matthias the only other information we can glean is that they were followers of Jesus since Jesus was baptized by John, and thus probably came from Galilee²⁸⁹.

²⁸⁸ See also Keener (2012: 748): “For one who approached Acts after having recently heard Luke’s Gospel the identity of ‘the women’ would have been clear enough.” Despite all this, they are not mentioned in Acts and are thus referenced – without technically changing the network structure – under the node “women”.

²⁸⁹ For discussion of names and epithets, see also Keener (2012: 770f). He assumes that all names were commonly encountered. Different is Pervo (2009: 55), who sees in Justus the Greco-Roman form of Joseph. Thus, it could be argued that Joseph belongs to the upper class.

11.1.3 Conclusion

The first chapter of Acts describes a continuity with the account of the Gospels, as shown by the verses Ac 1:13–15. This continuity is found, on the one hand, between the pre-Easter and post-Easter communities and, on the other hand, between Israel and the community of faith, and is discussed in many ways in the literature²⁹⁰.

Acts 1 allows a reconstruction of the early Christian network with many names, for which, however, further information is often completely lacking. For example, we know little about the candidates for the by-election. The role of women and Jesus' family in Ac 1:14 remains unclear²⁹¹. However, the question arises why Luke mentions this group and yet takes it into consideration. We will come back to these observations in Chapters 12 and 14

11.2 Pentecost, Community and Persecution (Ac 2:1–7:60)

In Ac 1:8 Jesus calls his disciples to be his witnesses “in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth”. At first the disciples stay in Jerusalem. The significance of Pentecost is important here: after the Pentecost event, the community grew greatly, for the Lord ‘added to the church daily those who were being saved.’ (Ac 2:47) The community thereby already consisted at this time not only of the disciples, but even of priests (Ac 6:7) and later Pharisees (Ac 15:5), and perhaps also Essenes²⁹². Sick people were brought to them in Jerusalem to be healed (Ac 5:16).

It is difficult to analyze the relationship among the apostles. It seems right to assume that their relationship is multiplex in Luke's Gospel and in Acts, since they form not only

²⁹⁰ Primarily by German-speaking exegetes this is also seen skeptically, cf. e.g. Jervell (1998: 123).

²⁹¹ Pervo (2009: 47) see their mention as a surprise. However, this can be countered by the clustered mention in the Gospel. Luke seems either to have had no interest in these persons or simply not to have considered it relevant at this point to mention further information. For example, Keener (2012: 746): “because of his theme, he pauses to explicitly mention the women present, as he often does”.

²⁹² In this sense Ac 6:7 can also be interpreted. Among the Pharisees there were hardly any priests, but very well among the Essenes and Sadducees. Schnabel states: “A mass conversion of Sadducees is hardly to be assumed, since their leading representatives were substantially involved in the trial against Jesus. Essenes, as an apocalyptic movement with a strong messianic expectation, were more prepared for conversion to faith in Jesus.” (Schnabel 2002: 413).

a very close unity of collaboration, perhaps even of friendship, but they work together, and some of them are even relatives (e.g. Peter and Andrew, James and John). They also came together on other occasions, especially in common prayer (Ac 1:14; Ac 2:46). They were all commissioned by Jesus as a group. Independently, there are other questions and conflicts, such as whether an inner governing body of Peter, John, and James was later formed from the body of twelve. So a strong relationship must be assumed here.

Schnabel cites a thrust of the apostles' mission in Jerusalem in three directions: public teaching, teaching in synagogues and working in house communities²⁹³. We will use SNA for a spatial view on Acts and discuss the results in particular in Chapter 20.

11.2.1 Pentecost

In the second chapter of Acts, the reception of the Spirit in the Pentecost event is described. Ac 2:1–36 is divided into three sections. In Ac 2:1–4, the actual Pentecost event, the pouring out of the Spirit, is described. In verses 5–13, follows the reaction of the outsiders, with 9–11 giving a list of those present. In verses 12–36 the response is described in terms of Peter's speech.

Güting (1975: 157) points out that Ac 2:9–11 mixes languages, countries, and regions and in addition lists extinct states and languages (cf. Bauer 2012: 4). Greek, as well as the Samaritans, Cypriots, Cilicians, Syrians and others are missing. It turns out that not even the countries of a certain region, for example Asia Minor, are mentioned completely. Does the list intend to give only a selection as a representation of a whole? If one wants to follow this approach, the question is: which whole this can be and what could Luke have referred to? Thus, this is the first possibility: Luke deliberately names only parts to refer to a large whole.

Bauer (2012) does not find such an interpretation convincing. It is true that such a list, especially with regard to the miracle of Pentecost, does not have to be complete and exhaustive. But some problems would be found:

²⁹³“1. Öffentliche Verkündigung im Tempel durch die Apostel (3,1; 4,1-2; 5,12.20-21.42). 2. Verkündigung in Synagogen (6,8-10) durch Stephanus und sicherlich durch andere Christen. 3. Die Ausstrahlungskraft von Hausgemeinden mit ihrer Gemeinschaft, Mahlfeier, der gegenseitigen Versorgung, Anbetung Gottes und Verkündigung (2,46-47; 5,42).” (Schnabel 2002: 409) However, an evidence for those home churches may be found in Ac 8:3, see also the extensive discussion with SNA methods in Dörpinghaus (2020).

Gerade unter diesem Gesichtspunkt aber befremdet die einseitige Konzentration auf die Welt des Vorderen Orients. Mag es aus dem Blickwinkel eines Bewohners des östlichen Mittelmeerraumes vielleicht noch angehen, den gesamten Westen unter dem Stichwort Römer zu subsumieren, so lässt sich dennoch kein Grund erkennen, warum der Vf. der Apostelgeschichte auf die Nennung des griechischen Mutterlandes verzichtet. (Bauer 2012: 10)

Bauer mentions two possibilities here: Either Luke's geographical knowledge is not sufficient, but this is extremely unlikely. Or there is the possibility that Luke wanted to refer to the political order of a past time in this geographical area. It was suggested that Luke made use of Babylonian astrological tables. On the other hand, Luke may have simply listed the countries where Jews lived. These came to Jerusalem in view of Ac 2:5 for the feast or had returned to Jerusalem from the Diaspora²⁹⁴. Thus the finding coincides to a moderate extent with the letter *Legatio ad Gajum* of Philon of Alexandria. Thus Bauer: "Als umfassende geographische Umschreibung der jüdischen Diaspora kann keine der beiden Listen gelten." (Bauer 2012: 18) In addition, the question remains why Luke mentions Judea – which makes little sense to begin with, since it is the Jewish motherland. So this is the second possibility: Luke wants to indicate the places where Jews lived, the Jewish diaspora. The miracle of Pentecost takes place in front of the gathered people of Israel²⁹⁵.

Gilbert (2002) also points to an interesting political component of lists of nations in antiquity: they served as imperial propaganda, for example, for the Roman Empire. Luke may have reflected this critically. Bauer adds, however, that

der Vf. der Apostelgeschichte [will] nicht die Diskrepanz zwischen dem propagandistisch formulierten Anspruch und der tatsächlichen territorialen Ausdehnung des Imperium Romanum markieren [...], sondern dass er in einen geschichtstheologischen Diskurs über die Größe und Sendung Roms eintritt, der erstmals in der hellenistisch-römischen Geschichtsschreibung fassbar wird und seit der augusteischen Reform zunehmend Literatur und Kunst im Imperium Romanum bestimmt. (Bauer 2012: 23)

Thus, the list is a list of disintegrated empires and states incorporated into the Roman Empire.

²⁹⁴ The form κατοικοῦντες Ἰουδαίαι in v. 2:5 might indicate this, but might refer to both a permanent inhabitant or a perhaps longer, but not permanent, stay.

²⁹⁵ See also Schnabel (2012: 122f).

The account in Ac 2:9–11 is a list of territories and regions from which Jews and proselytes came to Jerusalem for the Feast of Pentecost or Diaspora Jews that were permanent inhabitants of Jerusalem. Thus, this list coincides with part of the Jewish diaspora network. It can be inferred that Jews from these areas witnessed the Pentecost event. But how many of these Diaspora Jews joined the three thousand described in Ac 2:41 converting to the Christian movement must remain open. How many of these people returned to their homeland can also not be answered. Since the connections were not broken off, the new message may also have returned to the old homeland through embassies or travelers. SNA analysis shows that both strong and weak ties have not been broken only because of great distance. The ancient infrastructure and the various communication possibilities were too good. We will elaborate on these observations during our analysis in Chapter 14. Thus, it is possible that already in the 30s of the 1st century the gospel of Jesus Christ came to these distant lands²⁹⁶.

In addition, we know little about the mission in Egypt. Nevertheless, most scholars assume that Egypt and especially the city of Alexandria, with its large Jewish population, was an attractive and easy-to-reach destination for the early Christian mission (cf. the references in Schnabel 2002: 829). There are also various extra-biblical indications and possible references to this in Ac 13:1 and Ac 18:24–26. The early church tradition sees Mark as a missionary to Alexandria and Egypt²⁹⁷.

This list spans a wider arc not only to the mission territories in Babylonia and Parthia, about whose early period there is relatively little information, cf. Schnabel (2002: 866ff). It is a charming but ultimately unprovable idea which would, for example, explain the question why Paul already finds an existing church in Rome. Thus, the list of peoples in Ac 2:9–11 indicates the space in which Christian missionary activity or the presence of a small Christian community can be assumed with high probability²⁹⁸.

²⁹⁶ This idea would support scholars like Schnabel (2002: 1428). It is interesting to think that this assumption could also close many gaps in the historiography. Very little is known about the Jewish diaspora in the Asian region. Sinclair & Schott (1981: 712) state: “Unser Wissen bezieht sich im wesentlichen auf die griechisch-römische Welt [...]. Über die Juden Babyloniens ist uns demgegenüber nur sehr wenig bekannt, obwohl gerade sie einen wichtigen Faktor der jüdischen Geschichte zur Zeit des Zweiten Tempels bildeten.” Bauckham (2000) agrees: ‘For first-century Jews the eastern diaspora was at least as important as the western.’

²⁹⁷ For a more detailed account and for references in the patristic and apocryphal literature, see Schnabel (2002: 834ff).

²⁹⁸ See also the discussion in Dörpinghaus (2020). It can be seen that much of the representation coincides with the map material at Collar (2013: 204f). It visualizes the western network of the Jewish diaspora. This, too, allows the conclusion that this could be an early potential area of expansion of the early

11.2.2 The early Christian Network in Jerusalem (Ac 3:1–4:31)

Ac 3:1–4:31 contributes little to the analysis of the early Christian network. Essentially, it describes the healing of a paralytic in the temple and the subsequent imprisonment of Peter and John, as well as their interrogation before the Jewish Council and the reaction of the community. The opponents cannot be meaningfully integrated into the network. In the same way, other parts of the Jerusalem population belonged to the apostles' network as sympathizers; they can only with difficulty be integrated into the network due to the existing sources or the lack thereof. Luke, however, has incorporated several longer speech units into his text. These are surprisingly productive, and so this section will be examined below with a special focus on these speeches and prayers.

In summary, it is noticeable that in Ac 3:1–4:31 various distances of the Christian network to the wider population are overcome by the action of God or other boundaries are overcome or leveled. Specifically, these are:

- In Ac 3 the Christian network overcomes social barriers and social exclusion. This is exemplified in the healing of a paralytic. However, this external sign cannot be seen as a condition; rather, it is the connection to the two apostles that adds the healed man to the early Christian network.
- In Ac 4:1–22 it is shown that the early Christian network does not succeed in every case in overcoming social barriers to the upper class. Rather, it is strongly determined by content; a sense of belonging arises only through the confessing of Jesus as the Messiah.
- Ac 4:23–31 offers interesting aspects for the self perception and external perception of the Original Christian network. It becomes clear that the cohesion of this network is perpetuated by the power of God. Further, the cohesion and equality of all believers is described, and the attack on the network by forces that oppose God's rule.

Christian movement.

11.2.3 Constitution and Persecution (Ac 4:32–7:60)

In Ac 4:32,33 the aspect of the Christian network is taken up again and its relationship in the secondspace is defined: they were among themselves “one heart and one soul” (καρδία and ψυχή) and shared their goods as a community. With reference to the previous verses, it is important to note that they ‘with great power [...] were giving their testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus’.

A more detailed description of the sharing of communal goods follows in Ac 4:34–37. Schnabel (2012: 268) rightly concludes that a new “social identity” is described here. In the sense of first- and secondspace, different people grow together to form a community. In the sense of thirdspace, it is about this new identity in Christ, which also affects the network. In Ac 4:36, ‘Joseph, who was also called by the apostles Barnabas’ is introduced. This person is important to the network and we provide a detailed discussion in Section 19.1. At this point he can be included in the network with the following data: Barnabas, Levite and Jew from Jerusalem. He has a connection to Cyprus, since he was born there. As to further connections, at least weak ties to all apostles, must be assumed. More can hardly be inferred from the phrase ‘laid it at the apostles’ feet’.

The account of the death of Hananias and Sapphira in Ac 5:1–11 can also be examined with regard to *critical spatiality*, but offers no further information for the network.

The description of the healing miracles by the apostles in verses 5:12–16 shows that news of their miracles also spread to the villages around Jerusalem. “Luke does not say where these people gathered. Some assume that they came to Jerusalem” (Schnabel 2012: 293). But it is also noteworthy that according to verse 12, *all* apostles perform miracles. So the supposedly ‘silent’ apostles are also actively involved in the events. Since they all meet ‘in Solomon’s hall,’ teaching and instruction continued in that place despite the instructions of the authorities. It is also interesting to note in verse 13 that although many people kept their distance from the fledgling community out of reverence, they held it in high esteem. Verse 14 reports a further increase in the number of believers. This is also with hindsight to the previous pericope an indication of the holiness of God and thus the holiness of the young community. “All motivations and actions that contradict God’s holiness – deception, lies, attempting to gain prestige, and honor – have no place in the life of believers.” (Schnabel 2012: 295).

The apostles' continuing confrontation with the established religious leaders is described in Ac 5:17–33. High priests and Sadducees have the apostles thrown into a public prison.

In Ac 5:34–42 Luke also introduces Gamaliel. He was, according to Ac 22:3, Paul's teacher. As a Pharisee, he was the son or grandson of Rabbi Hillel (cf. Zmijewski 1994: 269). In a speech in Ac 5:35–39, he refers to previous movements that had disappeared and concludes 'but if it is of God, you will not be able to overthrow them'. Thus, the work of the young church can continue, but no further information can be gleaned from this passage for the network. In Ac 5:42 we read only that the preaching continued in the homes and in the temple.

The choice of deacons in Ac 6:1–6 provides ample data. First, verse 6:1 contains the reference to Greek and Hebrew Jews (Ἑλληνισταί and Ἰβραῖοι). Interestingly, Schnabel (2012: 329) observes, "Luke provides no evidence to suggest social or theological differences between these two sets of believers or two separate congregations." We refer to Chapters 12 and 14 for a detailed analysis of these two groups. However, this observation by Schnabel is important. It shows that they are not two completely separate networks. Also interesting is the indication that the community had widows to care for. In terms of *critical spatiality*, caring for the poor is about overcoming distance in second- and thirdspace. The fact that this was done selectively evokes a conflict in thirdspace that could only be resolved by the choice of the seven deacons. "These Greek-speaking widows probably had no relatives in Palestine and thus no provisions except for assistance by the church." (Schnabel 2012: 330) The helpers overcome these limitations. To this end, the twelve apostles called the entire congregation together for an election. How this election was held and whether there were other candidates remains open.

In Ac 6:5 we find the names Stephanus, a presumably Greek immigrant²⁹⁹, and Philip, both of whom play a major role in Luke's further narrative. We provide a detailed discussion on Philip in Section 19.2. Further Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas and Nicolaus, who was a proselyte from Antioch, are mentioned. Only Nicolaus is called a proselyte, so it can be assumed that all the others were native Jews. His origin from Antioch must also be noted. Otherwise, information can only be obtained from context: all the deacons have Greek names. It can be assumed that they were diaspora Jews who

²⁹⁹ See further Keener (2013: 1282).

could speak Greek, but probably also Aramaic. Otherwise Philip's preaching activity in Samaria (Ac 8) would not have been possible. Νικάνωρ is the only name that may refer to Jewish roots. Both Πρόχορος, Τίμων and Παρμενᾶς have names that were not known among Jews from Judea, cf. Schnabel (2012: 334) und Keener (2013: 1283f). It can be assumed that the deacons all had a strong bond among themselves, since they worked together regularly. A weak bond must be assumed with all the apostles, since they explicitly did not have the same area of responsibility (6:4). Nevertheless, they must have had points of contact in their leadership functions. Even though the common term 'deacon' is followed here, it must be pointed out that Luke always uses οἱ ἑπτὰ. Here, Schnabel (2012: 330) indicates that their ministry was limited primarily to food distributions rather than monetary gifts, since these, unlike food, did not have to be given daily³⁰⁰.

With Ac 6:7, Luke concludes the section Ac 1:1–6:7. Not only did the number of disciples increase, but many priests also came to believe. This significantly expands the early Christian network. Probably this results in stronger connections into all of Judea where priests lived, cf. Lk 1. It can be assumed that there is a connection between this growth and the double focus on the diakonia of the Seven and on the preaching and prayer by the apostles. Schnabel (2012: 336) emphasizes this and even concludes that “[a]uthentic church leaders focus on prayer and proclamation.”

Stephen later also comes into conflict with the Sanhedrin because of his missionary work among Greek-speaking Jews, as Luke reports in Ac 6:8–15. But Luke describes the chronology and story of this conflict to be more complex. First, there is a dispute with men of the “synagogue of the Freedmen (as it was called), and of the Cyrenians, and of the Alexandrians, and of those from Cilicia and Asia” (verse 9). This is a reference to the network of opponents, but also raises the question if it refers to a synagogue of Hellenists³⁰¹. We also see freed slaves and diaspora Jews. Stephen thus proclaims the

³⁰⁰ For a detailed discussion of *diakonia* in the New Testament, see also Hentschel (2007: 318ff). She sees in this a new governing body, which in particular also has a theological dimension, since “im Lukasevangelium die Witwen [als Leidtragende] u. a. als eine Gruppe dargestellt werden, an der sich der wahre oder nur geheuchelte Glaube messen lässt, was insbesondere für die religiösen Führer des Judentums gilt.” (Hentschel 2007: 324).

³⁰¹ See for example Keener (2013: 1298): “That Stephen was indicated by fellow Hellenists may mean that they felt responsibility for disciplining members of their own community in Jerusalem. Even more than this, however, it suggests that they felt the threat because many of their own members were being converted”. However, the situation is quite complex as Schnabel (2002: 644-7) summarizes. However, the SNA cannot analyze these nuances and we refer to the literature for further details.

Location	Spatiality	rel.	cult.	soc.	geog.
Samaria	Second- and Thirdspace	x	x	x	
Ethiopia	First-, Second- and Thirdspace		x	x	x
Damascus	Second- and Thirdspace				
Lydda, Joppa, Caesarea	Second- and Thirdspace				
Jerusalem	Mission to the Gentiles				
Antiochia					

Table 11.1: Locations and spatiality found in Ac 8:1–12:25.

gospel among his compatriots³⁰². The execution of Stephen in Ac 7 is the onset of the persecution of the church in Jerusalem.

In summary, regarding the distances in terms of *critical spatiality*, spatial distance in *firstspace* is limited to a perimeter of the city of Jerusalem. Obviously, the existing followers of Jesus in the surrounding countryside are not of interest to Luke. However, the apostles all come from Galilee, other mentioned members of the church even from Cyprus or Antioch. An exciting but open question is whether and how these strangers integrated into the local city population as Jews or proselytes. Looking at *secondspace* and *thirdspace*, it can be observed that no religious barriers are overcome. The mission concerns only Jews and proselytes, not Gentiles. However, from a social point of view, people from diverse backgrounds meet in the church, from fishermen from Galilee to the rich proselyte from Cyprus. Thus, great social distances are overcome.

11.3 Mission outside of Jerusalem (Ac 8:1–12:25)

The execution of Stephen described in Ac 7:54ff had far-reaching consequences for the church in Jerusalem as it concerned not only the theological peculiarities of the Hellenistic Jewish Christians in Jerusalem. The problems that the apostles had hitherto had with the established religious authorities now escalate into general persecution. The persecution seemed spontaneous but organized, “Jewish organs actively proceeded against the Jewish Christians of Jerusalem with the aim of forcing them to surrender their religious convictions or of destroying them” (Schnabel 2002: 654). The persecution seems to have

³⁰² Schnabel (2012: 346) points to a particular confrontational possibility: “They would have felt that the ancestral faith that brought them back to the center of the Jewish commonwealth was betrayed by those who believed that Jesus is Israel’s Messiah and Savior.”

affected the whole church except the apostles³⁰³, though in the course of the persecution many fled. At first they fled into the surrounding countryside, “throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria” (Ac 8:1). Others came as far as Phoenicia and Cyprus and Antioch (11:19). In 8:4 Luke reports, “Those then who had been scattered went about preaching the word.” But a part of the congregation could remain in Jerusalem, cf. Acts 11 and 12.

Thus, persecution accomplishes the opposite of what it aims to do. Schille (1989: 197) summarizes that the church is not dissolved but spreads out; for those who are scattered are themselves missionaries and form new communities elsewhere. Thus, persecution in Jerusalem resulted in the spread of the Christ-believers, see Table 11.1. It can be inferred from Ac 11:19 that at first it was purely a mission among Jews. It is important to observe that one of the “main actors”, namely Peter, does not appear again actively as a missionary or “church visitor” until Ac 9:32–35. Luke has thus “not suppressed ‘the historical fact that the first impetus for genuine Gentile mission came not from Peter but from other, anonymous Cypriatic and Cyrenian Hellenistic Jewish Christians,’” as Schnabel (2002: 656) puts it³⁰⁴. However, the beginning of the mission to the Gentiles is attributed to Peter, cf. Acts 10. But this has to be discussed in detail in Chapters 12 and 14.

In the following chapters, special attention will be paid to the actively acting persons and Luke’s description. Also, in the sense of critical spatiality, it must be asked what perception of space is present and, above all, what spatial categories or what re-evaluation or re-perception of existing categories and concepts is present.

³⁰³ This is debated in literature (cf. Zugmann 2009). What is certain, is that Luke in no way expresses that the apostles gave up leadership of the church. The phrase *πλην τῶν ἀποστόλων* in Ac 8:1 does not necessarily say that the apostles were exempt from persecution, cf. Schnabel (2002: 655). Weidemann (2016), however, concludes that the persecution affected primarily the Hellenistic Jews: “When Luke in Ac 8:3 tells us that Saul ‘entered the houses’ during the persecution, this will refer to the houses of members of Stephen’s circle where they held meal celebrations. Of persecution of other Hellenists, such as Barnabas, who did not belong to the circle of Stephen, Luke is silent, and that ‘the apostles’ were excluded from the expulsion he himself must admit.” (Weidemann 2016: 51)

³⁰⁴ That this is striking, is also described by Schille (1989: 194), who among other things discusses the thesis that here a subsequent creation of legend attributes to the more significant (here Peter) the successes of the insignificant (here Philip).

11.3.1 Samaria (Ac 8:4–25)

In Ac 8:4–25 Luke writes about the first church in Samaria³⁰⁵. The scattered church began to proclaim the good news in various areas, as 8:4 indicates. The pericope is divided into four sections, two sections each depicting the ministry of Philip and the apostles Peter and John, the others each depicting the confrontation with Simon the magician. In verses Ac 8:4–8 Philip’s first missionary success is described. He performed signs and wonders and preached Christ. In verse 8 the result is that “great joy arose in that city.” Ac 8:9–13 describes the conversion of Simon the magician, who was baptized by Philip. Verses 8:14–17 describe the sending of Peter and John by the church in Jerusalem. Through them the Holy Spirit comes upon the baptized. The following confrontation of John and Peter with Simon, in which the latter offers the apostles money for the gift of the Spirit, is found in verses 8:18–25. Verse 8:25 follows the return home to Jerusalem of the two apostles, who preach “the gospel in many villages of Samaria” along the way.

Jesus had already ministered in Samaria, see Part I. Although his mission was not primarily to Samaria and he was also rejected there, according to Jn 4:19–24 and Lk 17:11–19 there had to be at least some sympathizers there. Samaria refers both to a mountain,

³⁰⁵ The history of the population and religion of this region is widely discussed in research. Dexinger (1998) summarizes:

In der frühen nachexilischen Zeit lebten, wie Ezr 4:1–5 noch erkennen läßt, neben einem heidnischen bzw. synkretistischen Bevölkerungselement auch die nicht deportierten Angehörigen der vorexilischen Jahwereligion in Samaria. Diesen Bevölkerungsteil, dessen kultische Beziehung zu Jerusalem trotz des eigenen kultischen Zentrums auf dem Garizim nach wie vor bestand, sollte man noch nicht Samaritaner, sondern vielmehr Proto-samaritaner nennen. Samaritaner sind sie erst ab dem Zeitpunkt, da Jerusalem keinerlei religiöse Relevanz mehr für sie hatte. Diese Entwicklung vollzog sich erst in der Makkabäerzeit. (Dexinger 1998: 752)

It is thus not clear whether the mission to Samaria can really be considered a Gentile mission or whether the inhabitants could still be considered “partly apostate members of the saving people of Israel” (Schnabel 2002: 656). So too Stenschke (1999: 64): “for two groups of people, namely the Samaritans and the Herods, it is difficult to assess whether Luke saw them as Jews or Gentiles.” That in either case a troubled relationship prevailed between Jews and Samaritans can be seen from, e.g. Jn 4:9. Mt 10:5 names the Samaritans *next to* the Gentiles. Further references are found in Josephus (cf. Dexinger 1998 Böhm 1999). It remains unclear, then, whether the Samaritans were Jews, Gentiles, or something “in between.” If the pericope is to be analyzed in terms of critical spatiality, it should first be noted that the journey from Jerusalem was only about 60km (cf. Schnabel 2002: 658). Thus, the firstspace measures a small distance. However, in the secondspace, the mental space, and in the thirdspace, the social space, this distance must have been enormous with regard to Jn 4:4 or Lk 10:25–36 in both the religious and social realms. The question of whether the religious distance was actually even greater can only be answered if the inhabitants of Samaria can be clearly classified as Gentiles or Jews. The structural design of Acts offers reason to place the Samaritans in a category with Jews or Proselytes.

the residence city of the kings of the northern kingdom of Israel, and to corresponding province in Assyrian and Persian times (cf. Is 36:19 or Neh 3:34). The usage in the 1st century is difficult to reconstruct: Exactly where Philip proselytized cannot be clearly identified. Nestle-Aland regards the originality of the article τὴν in 8:5 as uncertain. If it were εἰς τὴν πόλιν τῆς Σαμαρείας, it would probably mean the capital of Samaria, Sebaste. Otherwise it would be simply a city of Samaria, which is more likely.³⁰⁶ Ac 8 talks about a systematic preaching and teaching activity by Philip in Samaria as a result of him fleeing from Jerusalem. This was met with great success: ‘And the people inclined with one accord to what Philip said, as they listened to him and saw the signs which he did’ (Ac 8:6). This is the only passage where readers get the impression that a whole city comes to faith. After all, many people were baptized (8:12). In between, there is the account of the magician Simon. We cannot decide if Luke explicitly implies that Philip also missionized the Gentile population of Samaria. This depends on our understanding of δὲ οἱ ὄχλοι in v. 6. His preaching alone precludes such a conclusion – he proclaims Christ. He proclaims Christ (8:5) and not the renunciation of a Gentile polytheism. At the same time, however, this presupposes a messianic knowledge or even expectation. Again, this is an important indicator of distance in *thirdspace*. The Samaritans shared important religious elements with the Jews, and only against this background can the proclamation of Christ fall directly on fertile ground.

Also important for the early Christian network is that the apostles in Jerusalem join in the activity of the dispersed Hellenists. Peter and John travel together from Jerusalem (Ac 8:14). John, however, appears strangely uninvolved at this point; he is not mentioned again. Zmijewski (1994: 352) indicates that their journey was decided by all the apostles. This is suggested by the verb ἀπέστειλαν in verse 14. The two also appear together elsewhere, see Ac 3:1–5, Ac 4:19, or even Lk 22:8. So it is obvious to see here a proven team of two sent to Samaria by the apostles in Jerusalem, or, at least two witnesses. Peter and John must have worked well together, even if Peter plays the more active part at this point.

That Samaria is not only geographically close to Jerusalem but also well integrated into the existing network of Christians is also supported by SNA, see Chapter 12. The

³⁰⁶ For discussion, see also Schnabel (2002: 660), who sees the capital of Samaria/Sebaste as unlikely, since it was a pagan reconstruction of the city. Pesch (2012a: 272) sees here rather the city of Shechem as the religious center of Samaria as a sure candidate for this reason. Cf. also (Zmijewski 1994: 349)

nodes in the network and their distance in the network to Samaria do not reflect geographic distance, but how *close* the actors in the network are to each other. After all, three connections can be traced through Philip, Peter and John. Only single nodes like Damascus are almost isolated. This suggests that with the conversion of the Samaritans, existing boundaries also dissolved. New connections are possible and were most likely also used, even if they are not directly reported.

11.3.2 Ethiopia (Ac 8:25–40)

After his activity in Samaria, Philip is told by a messenger of God (ἄγγελος δὲ Κυρίου) to wait at a road between Jerusalem and Gaza (Ac 8:26). This place is “desolate” or just located in the desert, both of which can be described by the word ἔρημος. Where exactly this place is must remain unsettled³⁰⁷. Keener (2012: 1548) also discusses this fact. He discusses the thesis that the city of Gaza itself was ἔρημος, that is, devastated. However, this also remains uncertain. And so, in any case, one can assume a desolate, inhospitable place. Perhaps the danger of robbery (cf. Lk 10:25–37) existed.

Thus, the distance to Philip’s previous stay in firstspace could not have been greater than a two days’ walk. With regard to secondspace and thirdspace this distance must have been certainly greater. Nobody likes to go to a barren or desolate place without a reason or leave a prospering work. Only the direct invitation of God’s messenger leads Philip to this place.

Acts reports that Philip meets a eunuch there from Ethiopia and enters into conversation with him about the prophet Isaiah. He asks him the question, “Do you understand what you are reading?” (8:30) As a result of their conversation, the eunuch is baptized (8:38) and ‘went his way cheerfully’ (8:39).

Ethiopia (Gr. Ἰθιοπία) originally denoted all regions in Africa south of Egypt (cf.

³⁰⁷ “Die Ortsbezeichnung bleibt offen; nicht der Treffpunkt, nur seine Formation (Steppe) wird angegeben. Es gab zwei solche Straßen. Soll man an den Ort Gaza denken [...]? Doch wozu wäre dann vorher die Straße erwähnt worden? Vorzuziehen ist die grammatische Beziehung der Nachbemerkung auf der Straße. [...] In der Tat war Gaza die letzte Station vor der Wüste. Der Nachsatz blickt also über die Grenzen des bewohnten Landes hinaus.” (Schille 1989: 210) So auch Jervell (1998: 270): “Die Straße ist öde, ἄτη könnte sich sowohl auf die Straße als auch auf Gaza beziehen. Die Szene findet aber auf dem Wege statt.”

Keener 2012: 1535)³⁰⁸. In addition, Keener speaks of cross-cultural mission (Keener 2012: 1544)³⁰⁹. His observations on Nubia and Africa in general are valuable. It was an “indigenously and traditionally African culture, albeit with trade connections to the north, south, and east” (:1546). Keener also discusses the status of the chamberlain as a God-fearer or proselyte. Both are not excluded: “There had been Semitic-speaking Jews in Elephantine, near Aswan [...] and at least some in Ethiopia as well” (:1566). It is precisely this religious distance in the secondspace which is also observed by Keener: “For some Jews it would have been culturally difficult to approach an obvious foreigner on the road, especially before Philip hears him reading Scripture and surmises that he is a God-fearer” (:1581). Likewise, Keener notes the socioeconomic distance (:1571). The explicit observation that the gospel overcomes not only great spatial distances but also social, economic, and cultural barriers is usually not considered in research (cf. Schnabel 2012 Keener 2013). Ethiopia is not geographically close to Jerusalem and not well integrated into the existing network of Christians; it leads to new connections and we do not know about the eunuch’s social network back home. They cannot be integrated in the network without problems. This is also supported by SNA, see Chapter 12. The node for Ethiopia is almost isolated. This suggests that with the conversion, existing boundaries also dissolved. New connections are possible and were most likely also used, even if they are not directly reported. However, the overcoming of social, economic, and cultural barriers did not start with the beginning of the Gentile mission in chapters 10 and 11 and

³⁰⁸ The facts are extremely complex: “Das Wort ist die griech. Übertragung des Namens »Kush« in der HB durch die LXX; anscheinend ist es auch das Äquivalent zu »Ham« in der äth. Lit., so wie sie aus fremden (arab.) Quellen übersetzt worden ist. Es bezieht sich daher in der Antike auf hist. Berichte über Wanderbewegungen schwarzer Völker beiderseits des Roten Meeres und nicht ausschließlich auf das heutige Ä. Im Laufe der Zeit wurde der Name ausdrücklich auf alle Völker Afrikas südlich der Sahara angewandt. (Haile 2018)” In Nubia the queens had the title *Kandake*. However, due to Roman campaigns, the capital was destroyed, but from that time on there was evidence of regular exchanges and contacts. The Ethiopian king resided at Meroë on the east bank of the Nile, cf. Schnabel (2002: 667). The queen of Ethiopia thus denotes the ruler of the Meroitic empire, cf. Pesch (2012a: 289). The theological and literary implications are great, but also highly speculative. For a detailed discussion, see Keener (2012: 1541ff). Thus, they cannot be used here to clarify the distances.

³⁰⁹ Was the eunuch a proselyte and thus a Jew or a God-fearer and thus a Gentile? Since this cannot be deduced from the context, the question rather concentrates on the clarification of the word εὐνοῦχος. Is he, then, a eunuch who could not become a Jew according to Dt 23:2–9, cf. Pesch (2012a: 289), or an able-bodied high official who could very well be a proselyte. Schnabel (2002: 668) notes in this regard that the word εὐνοῦχος became accepted as a synonym for high official: “Whether the *eunuchos* in Ac 8:26–40 was a neuter, or whether the expression is to be regarded as a title, remains disputed.” However, since a Gentile mission would certainly be noted in Acts, it must be assumed that he was a proselyte or at least a God-fearer who was a chamberlain, i.e., minister of finance, at the court of Candace. This can be assumed as almost certain from his journey to Jerusalem alone. So the metadata that can be included in our network is rather thin. We do not know his name and store him under *Minister of finance of Ethiopia*. He is male, and a God-fearer, or maybe even a proselyte.

from chapter 13 on, they start in Ac 8.

11.3.3 The Church in Damascus (Ac 9:1–25)

The pericope Ac 9:1–25 can be divided roughly into four sections. In verses 9:1–9, Acts describes how Saul requests the authority of the chief priests to go to the synagogues in Damascus to persecute the “followers of this way” there and bring them back to Jerusalem. In a first part of the speech in verses 9:4–6, the conversation between Saul and Jesus, who appeared to him, is described. It then describes how Saul, who was blind, is brought to Damascus.

Saul’s meeting with the disciple named Hananias, at whose house he was baptized, is described in the second part Ac 9:10–19. This encounter, with a brief speech portion in verse 17, is preceded by Hananias’ encounter with Jesus and a lengthy second dialogue in verses 9:10–16. In Ac 9:19 it is noted “But Saul stayed a few days with the disciples in Damascus.” Thus, we have the first location of Saul in the network: In Damascus and with Hananias.

After a brief missionary period in Damascus, which is described in a third section in verses 9:20–22. Saul was persecuted by the Jews living there and flees to Jerusalem. This is described in the last section in verses 9:23–25. Upon His arrival, he was not initially received by the disciples living there, since they were all afraid of him and did not believe that he was a disciple (Ac 9:26). We see a strong connection between Paul and Barnabas (9:27), which is carefully introduced by Luke at this point of the narrative. To sum up, Saul was integrated in the network in Jerusalem – his second location in the network – but afterwards he is disbanded and maybe even disposed. This information is important for the SNA and we will discuss them in detail in Chapters 12, 14, and in Part III.

11.3.4 Mission to the Cities of Lydda, Joppa, Caesarea: Ac 9:26–10:48

Acts 9 again takes Barnabas into focus and introduces Saul to the apostles. Ac 9:29 can be taken that Saul also met Hellenistic Jews during his further preaching activity.

Again, Saul went first to Caesarea and further to Tarsus, his home. Luke concludes in Ac 9:31, “So then the church had peace in all Judea and Galilee and Samaria, and was building itself up and living in the fear of the Lord and multiplying under the assistance of the Holy Spirit.”

Already in Ac 8:40, we find the note: ‘But Philip found himself at Azotus, and as he passed through he preached the gospel to all the towns until he came to Caesarea.’ Whether this resulted in a church plant in Azotus, Luke leaves open. For Lydda, Joppa and Caesarea, however, this can be inferred from Acts. The form of the mission can also not be inferred from the report. Is it an “unsystematic long-distance mission from Jerusalem,” as Löning (1987) argues? In terms of network analysis, it can be assumed that it was rather a systematic use of social networks³¹⁰, even if the overall missionary approach might have been rather unplanned. A good hint for this would be the appearance of Peter and John in Samaria in Ac 8:14.

Important for the reconstruction of the network is Ac 9:32: Peter came also to the saints who dwelt at Lydda. The phrase *κατελθεῖν καὶ πρὸς τοὺς ἁγίου τοὺς κατοικοῦντας Λύδδα* suggests not so much a visit by an itinerant missionary than a church visit, e.g. a visitation by the apostles who seem to be responsible for more than Jerusalem. Also, *εὐρίσχω* in Ac 9:33 probably does not refer to being surprised about finding Jesus-followers³¹¹. Thus, we cannot reconstruct the beginnings of the church at Lydda. It will have been founded either by Philip or by other refugees from Jerusalem. Again, as in Ac 8:14, we have the situation that an apostolic visit from Jerusalem was arriving. It need not have been a “visitation trip”, but Peter seems to have met people and churches known to him on his journey – planned or unplanned. We keep the connections to the individual places of Lydda and Joppa in the network. With these travels new links and connections can be established.

Acts 10 describes the encounter of Peter with the centurion (*ἑκατοντάρχης*) Cornelius in Caesarea. *Καيسάρεια*, also *Caesarea Maritima* was a young, primarily Roman port city.

³¹⁰ This is also supported by Ac 9:31, which underlines the importance and connectance of the churches in Judea, Galilee, and Samaria. However, we should also note that this might also include pre-existing connections and relations. Of course, Philip will have established new links and connections, but as discussed earlier, we should assume a well-connected social network within society and at least between Judea and Galilee and within Samaria. However, this network seems to be growing together.

³¹¹ On the other hand, we cannot assume Peter visiting the church in the role of an ‘apostle prince’, as Schille (1989: 237) portrays the situation without justification.

Various temples could be found here. Schnabel (2002: 673) finds that most Greco-Roman cults had a presence in the city. Samaritan inhabitants were also found. From the year 6 A.D., Caesarea was the seat of the Roman administration.

Cornelius³¹² was “pious and God-fearing with all his house, and gave much alms to the people, and always prayed to God” (Ac 10:2) – an unusual description for a Gentile. Pervo (2009: 264) describes the two contrasts that clash here: “this first Gentile convert was not some anonymous member of the urban or rural workforce but a prominent soldier and citizen, and the agent of his conversion was no ‘Hellenist’ or radical but the very leader of the apostles.” Whether Cornelius adheres to a Jewish community, remains as unclear as the answer to the question of whether there was already a local Christian community. No Christian community is mentioned before Acts 10. As in Lydda, it might be assumed that a church plant in Caesarea goes back to Philip according to Ac 8:40 – but this assumption cannot be verified.

Important for Ac 10:1–22 is the parallelism of the persons as well as the places: Peter stays in Joppa, Cornelius in Caesarea. It is not until Ac 10:23 that both storylines come together. Peter sets out for Caesarea “and some brothers from Joppa went with him.” Besides the tanner Simon, Luke mentions an amazing number of people in these few verses: Cornelius sends “two of his servants and a pious soldier” (Ac 11:7) to Joppa. So not only was the whole house (Ac 11:2) of Cornelius pious (φοβούμενος τὸν Θεόν), but so were some of his soldiers.

From Ac 10:24 onward there is again a change of place – Peter arrives with some brothers in Caesarea³¹³. Whether Simon the tanner came along as ἀδελφός is not men-

³¹² On the basis of an apparition, Cornelius sent for Peter from Joppa. This is an important clue: The incentive for the Gentile mission – although Cornelius was a God-fearing man – came from the outside. Thus, it is a divine preparation of Peter. However, at this point, this familiarity with Jewish thought is an important prerequisite. “It is not any arbitrary type of εὐσέβεια, [...] which leads to such positive assessment. It was Cornelius’ prayer to the living God and his alms to the Jewish people, following Jewish practices of piety and charity, that were recognized by God; not any Gentile prayer, piety or charitable expression.” (Stenschke 1999: 159). This observation must be kept in mind when discussing secondspace and thirdspace.

³¹³ Here an illustrious mixture of Gentiles and God-fearers, perhaps also of Jews, if Cornelius held to a synagogue, seems to have met. This is also made clear by Peter’s direct question: “You yourselves know how unlawful it is for a Jew to associate with or to visit anyone of another nation, but God has shown me that I should not call any person common or unclean. So when I was sent for, I came without objection. I ask then why you sent for me.” (Ac 10:28–29). Ac 10:30–33 offers another account of what happened. Peter’s sermon follows (Ac 10:34–43). Here the use of people of Israel, Judea, Galilee (verses 36 and 37) and of “country of the Jews” and “Jerusalem” (verse 39) is striking. Peter makes clear the previous limitation to the people of Israel in their geographical boundaries. In

tioned. In any case, Cornelius invited not only his relatives but also his closest friends (ἀναγκαίους φίλους). This is an interesting remark from a network point of view, Ac 10:27 can be taken to mean that there were many who had come together. Thus, Cornelius not only used his strong relationships, but probably called together his entire extended social network. What we find here, is a confirmation of the observation of Collar (2013), which emphasizes the importance of existing networks for the spread of faith.

The following insights emerge from a network perspective:

- The initiative does not come primarily from people. God can lead people to faith, cf. Schnabel (2002: 693).
- Further, connections to people are used to communicate faith. That these are partly new connections is shown by Cornelius' encounter with an angel (Ac 10:1–8). Here, network analysis reaches its methodological limits.
- The encounter in a house has an important meaning, the presumed table fellowship (cf. also Ac 11:13).
- Again, in the sense of critical spatiality it is shown that the firstspace contains only a relatively short distance. In the secondspace, the mental space, and in the thirdspace, the social space, this distance to pagans must be regarded as large as worked out above. On the other hand, due to the devotion of Cornelius and his house to the living God and the attachment to the Jewish faith, it is just – similar to the Samaritans – not an unbridgeable distance. But this distance increases continuously, as we will discuss within the next sections and in Chapter 12.

11.3.5 Mission to the Gentiles (Ac 11:1–18)

Word of the conversion of Cornelius and his house in Caesarea spreads quickly, a fact that already speaks for well-functioning inter-congregational connections and networks. ‘The

contrast, it is now true “that God shows no partiality, but in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him” (Ac 10:34–35). This is followed by the reception of the Spirit and baptism of Cornelius and the others who believed (Ac 10:44–48). In verse 45, Acts describes the astonishment of the believing Jews who had come with Peter. But Peter responds, “Can anyone withhold water for baptizing these people, who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?” (Ac 10:47–48). So they serve as witnesses, but again cannot be specifically included in the network, since further details are missing.

apostles and the brothers who were throughout Judea heard this and argued with Peter after his return to Jerusalem, cf. Ac 11:1–2. The important question here is whether non-Jews can be admitted to the people of God, and if so, under what conditions³¹⁴. Here, the rebuke ‘You went to uncircumcised men and ate with them’ in verse 3 is slightly irritating. After all, Cornelius was a God-fearing man who knew the Jewish dietary rules. Thus, only social and political reasons remain, which form the impetus of this reproach. Thus, the accusation of disregarding Jewish commandments and a lack of preservation of Jewish identity by Peter is valid.³¹⁵

Pervo (2009: 283) sees in Ac 11:1–18 a beginning decline of Peter’s power and influence: “He is called on the carpet, as it were, by the entire community. This loss of prestige is associated with the Gentile mission.” This view is understandable if one assumes clear leadership and power structures in the community. This is countered by Peter’s detailed description in Ac 11:4–17 of the incidents in Ac 10:1–48. With reference to John the Baptist, he makes it clear that God has overcome this distance and that salvation is now available not only to Jews but also to Gentiles. In this, then, it is clear:

The fact that Peter was the spokesman of the Twelve and the leader of the Jerusalem church does not mean that his decisions were automatically accepted by the other apostles and the Jerusalem congregation. (Schnabel 2012: 507)

We will provide a detailed proof utilizing SNA in Chapters 12 and 14. However, we will foreshadow that these observations point to the community’s leadership structures not being hierarchical.

Is the silence and agreement of the congregation in verse 18, then, a reaction to the manifest will of God? For the reconstruction of the network and the spatiality it can at least be stated: (a) Gentiles can now be included as Gentiles in the original Christian network, and (b) the great distance between Gentiles and Jews in the secondspace and thirdspace loses its relevance, even if the further findings in Acts and in the New Testament

³¹⁴ “[O]b Heiden in die Heilsgemeinde aufgenommen werden können, und wenn ja, unter welchen Bedingungen” (Schnabel 2002: 698)

³¹⁵ Keener (2013: 1819) points out that merely entering a Gentile house was critical, since it was already considered unclean (against Baltes 2011, 2016). Thus, in the reproach is found an experienced or even imagined great distance in secondspace and thirdspace. Keener (2013: 1817) even argues in his work that irony is found here: “they heard that the Gentiles had ‘received God’s message’ [...], but here they appear more concerned about the breach of custom than about the miracle of conversion, despite the fact that in this case (unlike Samaria) the believers had already received the Spirit.” This interpretation also supports the idea of a great distance.

letters point to further disputes. Pervo (2009: 288) rightly points out that Acts does not describe what decisions were actually made. Thus, the so-called apostles' convention in Ac 15 does not remain superfluous. However, perhaps no decisions were taken.

11.3.6 Antioch (Ac 11:19–30)

Ac 11:19–30 consist of three parts. In 11:19–24, Acts introduces the church and mission at Antioch and describes Barnabas' visit. Verses 11:25.26 introduce Paul and Antioch. The last section in 11:23–30 describes the gathering of the 'brothers who dwelt in Judea.' Acts describes the anonymous missionary work of Hellenistic Jewish Christians who fled Jerusalem because of persecution. These went to 'Phoenicia and Cyprus and Antioch' (11:19) and carried on mission exclusively among Jews. However, there are also reports of men from Cyprus and Cyrene who came to Antioch and actively approached non-Jews and preached the gospel to them. It can be considered certain that these men were Hellenistic Jewish Christians. The distance in the secondspace to the locals is therefore small, since there were no language barriers.

Antioch (Gr. *Αντιόχεια*) was founded only around 300 BC and was an important city³¹⁶ and the capital of the Roman province of Syria with a population of about 250,000; cf. Schnabel (2002: 763). The inhabitants were primarily Greek-speaking and came from Athens, Macedonia, Crete, and Cyprus. There were also Jewish communities, although other religions dominated (cf. Keener 2013: 1836ff).

Nicolaus, one of the deacons of the Jerusalem community, a proselyte, was originally from Antioch (Ac 6:5). To what extent he maintained contacts with the Antioch congregation must remain open. It also remains unclear whether Simeon, called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene mentioned in Ac 13:1 were part of the first mission to Antioch³¹⁷.

³¹⁶ "Trotz zahlreicher Erdbeben und Kriege wurde Antiochien nach der Aussage des Josephus (Bell 3,29) im 1. Jh. n. Chr., sicher jedoch nach der Zerstörung Seleukias am Tigris im Jahre 165 n. Chr., zur drittgrößten Stadt des römischen Imperiums nach Rom und Alexandrien und blieb es bis zur Zerstörung durch die Perser im Jahre 540 n. Chr. (Libanius, Or. 20; Procopius, Bell. 1,7,36; 2,5–9)." (Norris & Drewery 1995: 99)

³¹⁷ The thesis of Schnabel (2012: 519) is exciting: "Whether there is a causal connection between the persecution in Jerusalem and the expansion of the church through missionary activity seems doubtful." He bases his rejection primarily on the fact that persecution had already been a reality in Jerusalem, and secondly that people called by God to preach, such as Philip and Barnabas, were likewise not first forced to do so by persecution. Certainly, for logical reasons, persecution was not needed, but it can also be observed that persecution led to greater mobility. This enabled new connections in the network, i.e. overcoming distances in firstspace, but certainly also cultural in second- and thirdspace.

Once again, news of the mission in Antioch is heard in Jerusalem³¹⁸. Here, one discovers the narrative goal of Acts: mission is always tied to Jerusalem, since mission is a fulfillment event (Ac 1:8) going from there to the world.

The scheme of mission and visits from Jerusalem appears in a few places in Acts so far: Samaria (Ac 8:14), Lydda (Ac 9:32), and Joppa (Ac 9:38). Mission activities happen locally and the apostles in Jerusalem send a messenger directly to establish contact³¹⁹. Ac 11:27–30 reports that prophets came from Jerusalem to Antioch. One of them is mentioned by name, Agabus. He appears one more time in Ac 21:10 to predict Paul's arrest in Jerusalem. At this point he predicts a famine. The church at Antioch puts together a collection (διακονία) (11:29) and sends it through Barnabas and Saul to Judea (11:30). That the delegation goes πρὸς τοὺς πρεσβυτέρους needs to be clarified. Pesch (2012a: 357) sees this as an indication that Acts antedated this event and that this event should be placed in the time when James leads the church in Jerusalem with a council of elders. Rather Zmijewski (1994: 452) is to be followed in this regard, who sees here the first appearance of a corresponding governing body of the church. This is also supported by Keener (2013: 1860), who assumes in it a substitute for the killed apostle and deacons.

11.3.7 Persecution of the Church (Ac 12)

Acts 12 tells of a persecution of the church by Agrippa I and his death. While the picture of Herod in Josephus is rather positive, Acts paints a gloomy picture of him as a persecutor of the young church. It is proven that he was ambitious and that his support among the population fluctuated (cf. Keener 2013: 1867ff).

Keener (2013: 1832) supports this view: “This passage shows the cross-cultural spread of the gospel, through Diaspora Jews to Gentiles”. Thus, it can be summarized that the distance in secondspace was small because the mission took place in a place where these people now lived. The distance in secondspace is conceivably small because there were no linguistic and few cultural boundaries to cross. The distance in thirdspace, on the other hand, may have been greater, since the refugees did not have as dense a network as the locals.

³¹⁸ Exciting is the statement of Keener (2013: 1844): “gossip networks and travelers made the quick spread of word to the Christian ‘capital’ almost inevitable”. This clearly shows how quickly information could spread.

³¹⁹ Is this, as Zmijewski (1994: 443) states, a “supervisory right” of the early church? Jervell (1998: 323) denies this, saying it is neither a visitation nor a review. But as in Ac 18:14, the messenger's actual objective remains unclear. Presumably, from a network perspective, he simply serves to establish and maintain contact and liaison with the church in Jerusalem.

With the verses 12:1–17 and 12:18–25, Acts 12 is divided into two sections. In this pericope, one cannot yet recognize a “change of power” in Jerusalem, as Pervo (2009: 307) formulates it: “When Peter has ‘gone to another place,’ James will lead.” So also Jervell (1998: 332): “Two of the Twelve Apostles disappear [...]. The time of the Twelve is over, but this is not said or commented on in a single word.” Haenchen (1977: 335) agrees and sees in the pericope only an attempt by Luke to prepare literarily the replacement of Peter by James to be found in Ac 15. None of this is found in the present pericope, since Luke does not describe such a change. However, the question remains why James and the brothers suddenly appear³²⁰. From a narrative point of view, the perspective changes: Although actors appear and disappear, the SNA in Chapter 14 supports the idea of a continuum.

From a network theory point of view, the Christian network can be extended to include various actors around the house of Mary³²¹. It is noticeable that James is mentioned again here for the first time. He must have played a special role for Peter. Whether he also played a further role for the church in Jerusalem, which is not specified here, is unclear from the network point of view. This is neither historically nor literarily addressed by Luke. In terms of critical spatiality, the close coexistence of the community can again

³²⁰ This is not the first time in Acts that such questions arise. Much more likely, Schnabel (2012: 544) is to be followed when he sees leadership in God: “the growth of the church [...] does not depend on one person nor on a particular group of leaders; rather, it depends always, and only, on the power of the word of God.”

³²¹ For example, Luke describes Peter appearance in the house of Mary. This house of Mary, the mother of John surnamed Mark, is mentioned by 12:12.3. Keener (2013: 1893) argues that Mary is a widow, since it is referred to as *her* house. From this he deduces a greater willingness to receive guests or to join new religious currents. The house has its own gatehouse, so it must have had some size, even though verse 12:17 suggests that only part of the congregation gathered here. Here we find the only mention of Rhoda (gr. Ῥόδη), a slave of Mary. It can be assumed as certain that she also belonged to the community of faith, cf. e.g. Schnabel (2012: 539). So too Keener (2013: 1905f), who, however, also discusses Rhoda’s social position. The presumption of those present that she is out of her mind (verse 15) describes the great surprise of Peter’s deliverance and escape. The message of his deliverance is to be conveyed to the master brother James and the brethren (verse 17). Who “the brothers” are remains unclear. Perhaps the elders mentioned in Ac 11:30? Keener (2013: 1950) sees here rather the whole congregation addressed. Pervo (2009: 307) give consideration that then, however, those present would also be included, so such a division would not make sense. One solution would be for Peter not to enter the house at all, but to stop at the door and speak to those standing at the door. Thus, it can be reasonably assumed that “the brethren” means the entire congregation. It also remains unclear why James should be informed at this point. Acts did not mention him before, but does not need to explain him to its readers. Thus, James seems to have been known to the readers. Keener (2013: 1950f) cites various theses on this, such as that James succeeded the killed apostles in office. This remains unclear, but his ministry in Jerusalem must certainly have been known. Since the reports about him have not changed since Ac 1, no further function – neither literary nor historical – can be assigned to him. However, he is important for the progress of the narrative, in Ac 15 he plays an important role.

be noted, but also the increasingly clear separation from the rest of the population. A possible explanation might be the admission of Gentiles or the compromising of Jewish identity (see the detailed discussion in Chapter 14).

Verse 12:25 describes both Barnabas and Paul going back to Antioch and taking John Mark with them. Luke leaves open what they had experienced and done in Jerusalem in the meantime. Schnabel (2012: 543) dates Peter's flight to the year 41 and Barnabas' and Saul's visit to Jerusalem to the year 44. Thus, there is a time gap between the prophecy of the famine and the journey to Jerusalem, and it is likely that there is a temporal break before verse 25.

In addition, it remains unclear whether John Mark traveled along as a representative of the Jerusalem community as Zmijewski (1994: 473) supposes. Keener (2013: 1981f) suggests that he had traveled as a disciple as with a rabbinical mentor. It can be inferred from Col 4:10 that Mark is the cousin of Barnabas. While currently collecting information, we will provide a detailed analysis in Chapter 14 and in particular in Chapter 19.

Luke prepares another narrative turn, when Paul begins his missionary journeys. In summary, then, the early Christian network can be expanded in Ac 12. Changes in church leadership in Jerusalem seem faint at best, but no usable information is found about them. God intervenes and again helps the young community to grow. It turns out that interesting details about individuals and the community are given in this chapter. Since in Ac 12:25 the description of Paul's missionary activity is announced, the previous facts are discussed with SNA in the next chapter.

12 Social Network Analysis of Acts

1:1-12:25

In this section, we will combine all information exegetically collected in the last chapters and provide a social network analysis of Acts 1-12. In Ac 2–12, Luke traces the spread of the nascent Christian movement from Jerusalem to the eastern Mediterranean World. Much of the information is difficult to reconstruct. Both Philip and Peter, for example, were engaged in the coastal region; perhaps Peter visited churches founded by Philip during his journey. But Samaria should also be mentioned, where a first encounter with people who do not clearly belong to the Jewish context takes place. Crossing of both borders and boundaries is successively increased until it results in the integration of non-Jews into the Jewish Christian network. A real confrontation due to this integration occurs in Jerusalem, so that the character of this missionary work is emphasized as reconciliation. So also Schnabel (2002: 675), who sees the achievement in “proclaiming the message of Jesus in regions traditionally difficult for Jews”.

Also ‘non-existent’ connections are used to spread the faith. That the mission happens partly through unknown or newly emerging connections is shown by Cornelius’ encounter with divine intervention in Ac 10:1–8. Here, network analysis reaches its methodological limits because transcendence is not covered. Thus, the inclusion of the Ethiopian eunuch in our network might make sense, but it clearly demonstrates that the network does not include spatial distances. Also, other persons like Herod or Simon the Tanner cannot be considered meaningfully.

12.1 Centrality Measures

In Section 3.1.4 we introduced centrality measures and discussed their interpretation.³²² Centrality measures allow us to draw conclusions about a person's position in a social network. The possibilities for influencing the entire network that arise from a high centrality measure of individual actors depend on the type of measure chosen. See Table 12.1 for an overview.

However, betweenness centrality further measures the number of times a node is on a shortest path between other nodes. Thus, it measures whether a node is a bridge between different nodes in the network. This can be used to identify persons who can influence or break information flows in the network. Peter has the highest value here with 475. Paul follows with 265, Philip and Barnabas with 177 and 167. Significant values are still found for the eunuch from Ethiopia, the apostle John, and John Mark.

Considering the women, interestingly, the servant Rhoda has the highest betweenness centrality value with 4.5. On the contrary, Mary, the mother of John Mark, has a centrality value of 0.9. This is due to the fact that Rhoda has a direct edge – albeit a weak one! – to Peter in the network. How meaningful is the short contact between Peter and Rhoda? This emphatically shows the importance of exegesis, i.e., interpretation of the sources: Didn't Peter meet Mary earlier? But Luke's report is silent about this. Likely, he knew her before, otherwise he would hardly have found her house. However, we have already discussed the importance of houses and house communities in Acts. We will present a detailed discussion in Chapter 20 – and thus we can assume the following points: First, Luke mentions Rhoda as a distinct actor, her name was known and her particular role in the narrative qualifies her for being shown. Second, she is part of a house community and a house is an important narrative feature for Luke. We should not overestimate Rhoda's role in Acts. However, these hints underline that she indeed played a more prominent role than being a 'once in a lifetime' character in Acts. Thus, the conclusion remains that the house of Mary must have played a central role in the information flow of the Jerusalem community.

Interesting are the different actors with a betweenness centrality value of zero. Here

³²² Further information on centrality measures can be found at Freeman (1978), Carrington et al. (2005) or Collar (2013).

Name	Sex	Background	Group	Id	CC	BC	HC	EC
Simon Peter	male	Jew	Apostles	93.296	0.776119		0.86859	1
Paul	male	Jew		93.294(1)	0.675325	264.998625	0.772436	0.830242
Philip 93.379(3)	male	Jew	Deacons	93.379(3)	0.658228	177.290745	0.759615	0.925253
Barnabas	male	Jew	Jerusalem	93.65	0.597701	146.520516	0.703526	0.614594
Ethiopian eunuch	male	Gentile			0.40625	51	0.440705	0.038707
John	male	Jew	Apostles	93.190(2)	0.658228	28.667539	0.753205	0.963144
John Mark	male	Jew		93.190	0.504854	20.227906	0.549679	0.114261
Agabus	male	Jew	Jerusalem	93.8	0.481481	7.343032	0.522436	0.113233
Matthew	male	Jew	Apostles	93.244	0.641975	5.8	0.740385	0.957995
Judas Iscariot	male	Jew	Apostles	93.173(1)	0.641975	5.796111	0.740385	0.957995
Thomas	male	Jew	Apostles	93.155	0.641975	5.796111	0.740385	0.957995
Philip 93.379(1)	male	Jew	Apostles	93.379(1)	0.641975	5.796111	0.740385	0.957995
Simon the Zealot	male	Jew	Apostles	93.341(2)	0.641975	5.796111	0.740385	0.957995
Matthias	male	Jew	Apostles	93.246	0.641975	5.796111	0.740385	0.957995
James 93.158(3)	male	Jew	Apostles	93.158(3)	0.641975	5.796111	0.740385	0.957995
Bartholomew	male	Jew	Apostles	93.62	0.641975	5.796111	0.740385	0.957995
Judas	male	Jew	Apostles	93.173(2)	0.641975	5.796111	0.740385	0.957995
Andrew	male	Jew	Apostles	93.25	0.641975	5.796111	0.740385	0.957995
James 93.158(1)	male	Jew	Apostles	93.158(1)	0.641975	5.796111	0.740385	0.957995
Rhoda	female	Jew	Women	93.314	0.460177	4.505556	0.49359	0.049382
Nicolaus	male	Gentile	Deacons	93.283	0.611765	1.271697	0.714744	0.91128
Prochorus	male	Gentile	Deacons	93.303	0.611765	1.271697	0.714744	0.91128
Stephen	male	Gentile	Deacons	93.349(1)	0.611765	1.271697	0.714744	0.91128
Parmenas	male	Jew	Deacons	93.292	0.611765	1.271697	0.714744	0.91128
Nicanor	male	Jew	Deacons	93.280	0.611765	1.271697	0.714744	0.91128
Timon	male	Jew	Deacons	93.362	0.611765	1.271697	0.714744	0.91128
Maria - 93.253(6)	female	Jew	Women	93.253(6)	0.385185	0.92619	0.430128	0.03404
Cornelius	male	Gentile		93.219	0.444444	0	0.474359	0.047212
Aeneas	male	Jew		93.15	0.448276	0	0.483974	0.046916
Josef Barsabbas	male	Jew		93.66(1)	0.495238	0	0.589744	0.551843
Ananias	male	Jew		93.24	0.412698	0	0.445513	0.036746
James 93.158(2)	male	Jew	Jesus Family	93.158(2)	0.547368	0	0.665064	0.813937
Maria - 93.253(1)	female	Jew	Women	93.253(1)	0.547368	0	0.665064	0.813937
Simon	male	Jew		93.341(6)	0.448276	0	0.483974	0.047297
Tabitha	female	Jew		93.355	0.448276	0	0.483974	0.047297
Women	female	Jew	Women		0.547368	0	0.665064	0.813937

Table 12.1: Various statistical values on the social network of Acts 1-12. Only persons are listed here. Indicated are the closeness centrality (CC), betweenness centrality (BC), harmonic closeness centrality (GC), and eigen centrality (EC).

we find individuals on the fringes of the network such as Cornelius and Tabitha, but also important players and central individuals in the Jerusalem community. They either have only one or two edges – like Cornelius and Tabitha – or are part of an almost complete network like the Jerusalem community. A particularly large number of women or the group of women appear here, but non-Jews also tend to have a lower centrality value by this measure. Did women or Gentiles have no part in the flow of information? In the network that Acts describes, they are of little importance. However, the question about the network behind this network – which means the hidden actors which are omitted by Luke – cannot be answered. But it has already been pointed out that the description and naming of the women and pagans alone was an important step. They will have had – beyond the network reconstructed here – an important role.

The eigen centrality (also: eigenvector centrality) also measures the influence of a node based on the number of connections to other nodes in the network, but also uses information about how many connections the node itself has and iterates this value over all neighbors, see Chapter 3 for details. Thus, this value also provides information about

how well connected the node's links are – thus measuring the node's influence on the entire network, rather than just its immediate neighbors. This reveals more indirect influence.

Here, it is clear that the apostles have strong influence. Peter has the highest value, all the others a value of 0.96³²³. The importance of the circle of seven can also be determined: they have a value of 0.91. Whether Stephen really functioned here as *primus inter pares* (see Schnabel 2002: 417), cannot be corroborated by these results. Paul is already less significant here with a value of 0.83.

The direct comparison with the betweenness centrality is interesting. The eunuch from Ethiopia is insignificant considering his eigen centrality. Likewise, however, also John Mark has a lower value. Compare actors like Josef Barsabbas with a value of 0.55 and James as well as Mary and even the group of women with a value of 0.81. The eigen centrality is thus a proven means to show the weaknesses of betweenness centrality. Here it is clear that the women have a distinct – albeit indirect – influence on the Lukan network. Although we will follow up on this discussion in section 14.4, we may formulate the following thesis:

Hypothesis 6. *Luke presents a diverse network. He does not omit women, Gentiles, or other groups. While his narrative in Acts 1-12 focuses on men, women play a vital role in Luke's description of the early Christian network.*

The closeness centrality measures nodes based on their proximity to all other nodes in the network. Thus, it measures the shortest paths to other nodes. Actors that have a particularly good place to influence the whole network have a high value. The highest value of 0.78 is again found with Peter. Paul has only a slightly lower value at 0.68. This is an astonishing high value for his rather minor role in Acts 1-12. All the other apostles have comparably high values. Since the values are all close together, it is difficult to interpret this centrality measure. Therefore, the closeness centrality cannot be used meaningfully for analyzing these chapters.

The harmonic closeness centrality essentially only measures how close each node is to others and thus how reachable it is to other actors (cf. also Abay et al. 2011). Here, table

³²³ This directly coincides with the summary of Schnabel (2002: 415): “Die zwölf Apostel waren bis Apg 11,1 die Leiter der Jerusalemer Gemeinde, mit Petrus als Hauptverantwortlichem.” See the detailed discussion in Chapter 19.

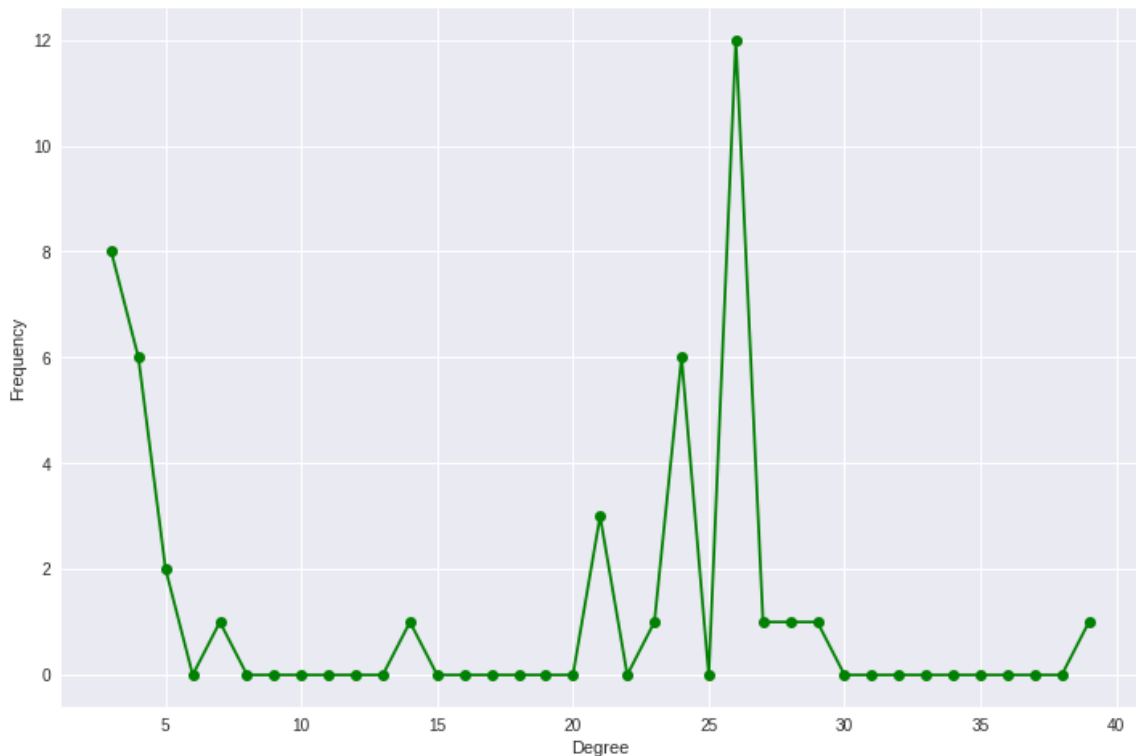


Figure 12.1: Degree distribution representation of Acts 1-12.

12.1 offers few surprises³²⁴. Basically, both closeness centrality and harmonic closeness centrality show the stability of the reconstructed network, but cannot be used meaningfully for its interpretation.

12.2 Network Structures and Spanning Tree

In Figure 12.1, we show the degree distribution representation of Acts 1-12. We can vaguely discern the ‘long tail’ of the scale-free distribution, see Chapter 3 for details. Nevertheless, we see a lot of missing nodes, especially at a low and average node degree. Luke obviously does not present a complete social network, and this is in particular due to the fact that we have analyzed only the first half of Acts, see Section 14.2. However, presenting a complete social network was also not his intention, see the detailed discussion on Lk 1:1–4 in Section 5.1 and Ac 1 in Section 11.1.

³²⁴ Whether this was a real reflection of the situation at the time or is a result of the way Acts is written must remain open. When Frend ends the discussion on this with “The facts may have been more complex” (Frend 1985: 87), he must be agreed with in this respect. However, that Acts would create a complete social utopia here cannot be read from the reconstruction of the social network.

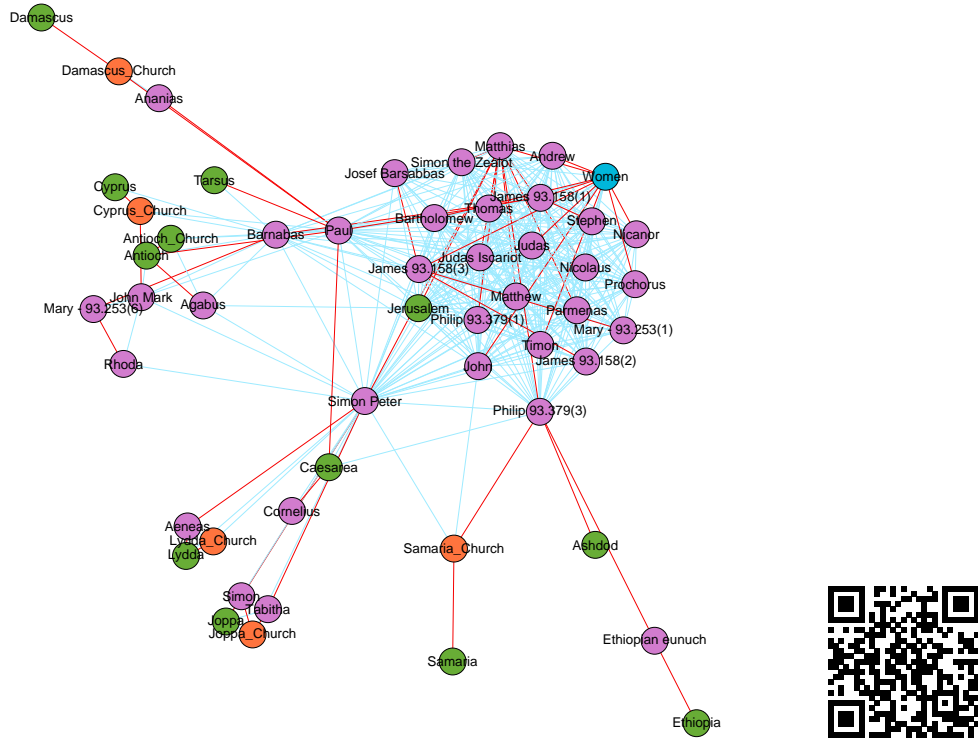


Figure 12.2: Minimum spanning tree representation of Acts 1:1-12:25.

A *minimum spanning tree* (MST) is a subset of a network containing all nodes, but a minimum number of edges, so that every node is still connected. Usually this is used to compute cost-efficient networks, e.g. electrical power networks, see for example Scellato et al. (2006). It thus answers the question: What are the possible edges and relations between actors that are necessary to keep the communication going in a network? We may call these subnetworks a backbone, see for example Du et al. (2007)³²⁵. A MST is not unique, several may exist. Thus, when discussing the MST we need to keep in mind that other such ‘backbones’ are also possible.

We refer to Figure 12.2 for an illustration of one MST for the first part of Acts. The dense network within Jerusalem is not interesting. Since nearly all nodes are interconnected an arbitrary set of edges can be chosen to create the MST. Here, the algorithm outputs a random subset, while we see more interesting results for lowly connected parts of the network. For example, consider the small subgroups Damascus, Cyprus, Antioch, the group around John Mark, Lydda, Joppa, Samaria and Ethiopia: While the case is clear for Damascus (connected to Paul), Lydda, Joppa (connected to Simon Peter), and

³²⁵ MST has been used in various networks and for various research questions. It has also been used for Community Detection, see Mokhlissi et al. (2015) and Basuchowdhuri et al. (2014). For small networks, this is not a feasible way.

Ethiopia (connected to Philip), there are several connections which are not unique:

- Cyprus is not connected via Barnabas, but with its church to John Mark. This refers to a marginalia in Acts. But it might be a better choice, since the communication in this network was carried out with connections between churches.
- Antioch is connected to Paul, whereas it could also be connected to Barnabas.
- The fraction of the group around John Mark is artificial, but describes the openness of this group. While John Mark is unlikely connected to Cyprus before Ac 13, Mary is the link between Rhoda and Barnabas; Agabus is connected to Antioch.
- Samaria could have been connected to either Philip, John, or Simon.

To sum up, there is not one single ‘backbone’ of the social network described in Acts 1-12. The network itself is a stable and yet emerging network showing some weak links to Lydda, Joppa and Samaria. While scholars working on emerging networks mostly rely on artificial-intelligence-models (see Kaushal & Patwardhan 2018), others try to extract interesting subgraph structures. The subgraphs described in Figure 12.2 show some structures which can be found in online trend discovery, see Rehman & Asghar (2020: 67). Although it is worth noting that these outcomes have been reported in the past, see Scott (1988). Acts 1-12 describes a typical emerging network.

While this network is quite clear from a trend-analysis perspective, there are several issues which we need to discuss concerning religious networks. Bromley (2012: 14-15) emphasizes several points that are important for social networks of emerging *new religious movements*:

- (1) Converts,
- (2) atypical membership,
- (3) charismatic authority,
- (3) external antagonism and
- (4) movement transformation.

While – naturally – we see converts in this network, the membership is not limited to atypical people from a particular social class. Although Luke focuses on the “humble and plain”, there is a variety of people in this network.

Meuser et al. (2016) describe several attributes to identify charismatic leaders in a network which cannot be applied in our case due to category mismatches. Brands et al. (2015: 1212) suggest, that a charismatic leader is surrounded by a centralized network. Or in other words:

Charisma resides not in a leader, nor in a follower, but in the relationship between a leader who has charismatic qualities and a follower who is open to charisma, within a charisma-conducive environment. (Klein & House 1995: 183)

Since the network described in Figure 12.2 is not centralized, we do not see an instance of charismatic leadership – although some of the actors might be charismatic – but a transformational leadership³²⁶. In addition, while there is some hostility – both internal as well as external – described in Acts, it is not due to an “excessive submission to the movement leader”(Bromley 2012: 15).

The movement transformation aspect cannot be judged from Acts. Thus, it is not clear from a social network perspective, whether Luke’s portrayal of early Christianity can be described as a new religious movement according to this concept. But while we could not apply present categories, it might help vice versa to understand present movements.³²⁷

According to Woolf (2016: 54) there is a more general problem:

The idea that religion is about ideas might even be considered a Christianizing assumption, were it not that that would give too much credence to just a few

³²⁶ See Northouse (2021: 263) for more details: “Although the transformational leader plays a pivotal role in precipitating change, followers and leaders are inextricably bound together in the transformation process. In fact, transformational leadership focuses so heavily on the relationship between leader and follower that some (Andersen, 2015) have suggested that this bias may limit explanations for transformational leadership on organizational effectiveness.”

³²⁷ The lack of historical research in this area has been noticed: “Overall, we argue that a historical perspective on new religious movements seems not only promising but theoretically sound. The lack of in-depth engagement with new religions studies by historians seems largely due to perceived links between new religions studies and late modernity, and consequent references to sociological theories of modernization and pluralization tend to misrepresent the religious diversity of premodern Europe”(Pietsch & Steckel 2018: 27-28). In addition Melton (2018: 88) claims, “a more sophisticated assessment of pluralism in previous centuries and more attention to methodological issues will provide a firmer foundation for current claims of a growing religious diversity in the contemporary world.”

strands of Christian thought. Ritual, observance, and belonging have always been as important as dogma to many Christians.

This is a valid approach, but at least some aspects are outside the scope of network analysis. However, we already discussed that the idea of belonging to the people of God is a central topic in Luke-Acts. Thus, we may sum up the results of this section in the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 7. *Acts 1-12 describes an emerging network which has a reliable and stable structure. The leadership in this network is transformational. Although people like Peter and Paul might be charismatic, they do not follow a modern charismatic leadership paradigm. This network does not comply with modern definitions of new religious movements.*

We will continue this analysis in the next sections.

12.3 Community Detection

For community detection, we are limited to a few methods as discussed in Section 3.1.6. In Figure 12.3, we give a first overview of the different outcomes of the chosen methods. We can see that especially Fluid Communities (FluidC) map to a specific number of communities while Leiden and Girvan-Newman have a different output leading to either a few large or multiple small communities. In addition, these algorithms create a very varied output. The clustermap describing different mutual information in the communities shows that there is a small intersection between the Fluid Communities (FluidC) and the Leiden algorithm – which is not surprising for the small numbers of communities – but Girvan-Newman shows a very different result. This shows that the output of all algorithms need to be evaluated one by one.

Since it is important to notice that these methods output only a possible segmentation of a network in communities, we will take a closer look at these communities.

The result of the Leiden algorithm shown in Fig. 12.4 shows a very clear output of four communities: A first cluster is dedicated to a group centrally located in *Jerusalem* with a very dense network of relations. The second community is related to *Simon Peter* and his

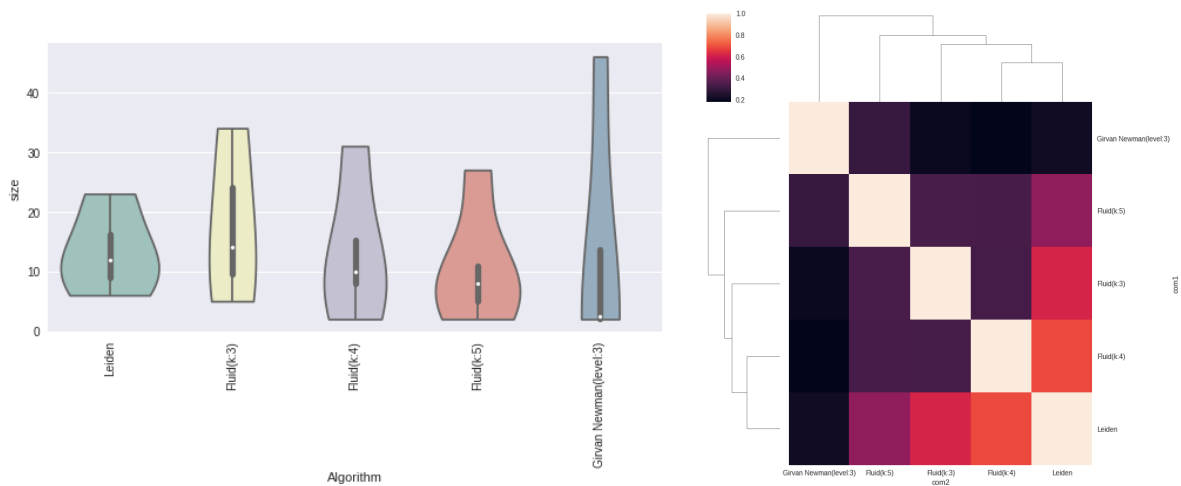


Figure 12.3: Left: Violin plot of several methods to compute communities in Acts 1-12. While, for example, Leiden computes several small communities, Girvan-Newman computes several very large communities. Right: Clustermap describing different mutual information in different communities computed by different methods. This summarizes that the output of all algorithms needs to be evaluated one by one.

relations to Lydda and Joppa. The third community is related to *Philip*, Samaria, Ashdod and Ethiopia. The fourth community holds nodes related to *Paul—Barnabas*. Here, the picture is not as clear as in the other communities. Is it Paul or Barnabas dominating this community? Or does this community highlight the non-dominance of actors? We will present a detailed perspective on this issue on Acts in Chapter 14.

We used the the FluidC algorithm with several numbers of communities $k = 3, 4, 5$. We chose these values because lower and higher values were found to produce artefacts. The result for three communities shown in Fig. 12.5 is similar to Leiden algorithm. The *Paul—Barnabas* community is the same, but the *Jerusalem* community is now extended. The third community comprises Caesarea, Ashdod and Ethiopia. This leads to the following observations: The *Paul—Barnabas* community is very stable, but it is not clear how to distinguish between the Jerusalem and the non-Jerusalem community. Yet it is possible to distinguish between nodes more isolated from Jerusalem, which points us to community three: We have little information about those locations. The FluidC algorithm also computes communities of non-connected subnetworks which is both an advantage as well as a disadvantage³²⁸, making it necessary to discuss the output carefully.

This is especially true for the four and five communities shown in Fig. 12.6 and 12.7. While for $k = 4$ the algorithm isolates Samaria and Simon Peter, it adds Ethiopia and

³²⁸ This issue is well-studied in literature, see for example Xu et al. (2019).

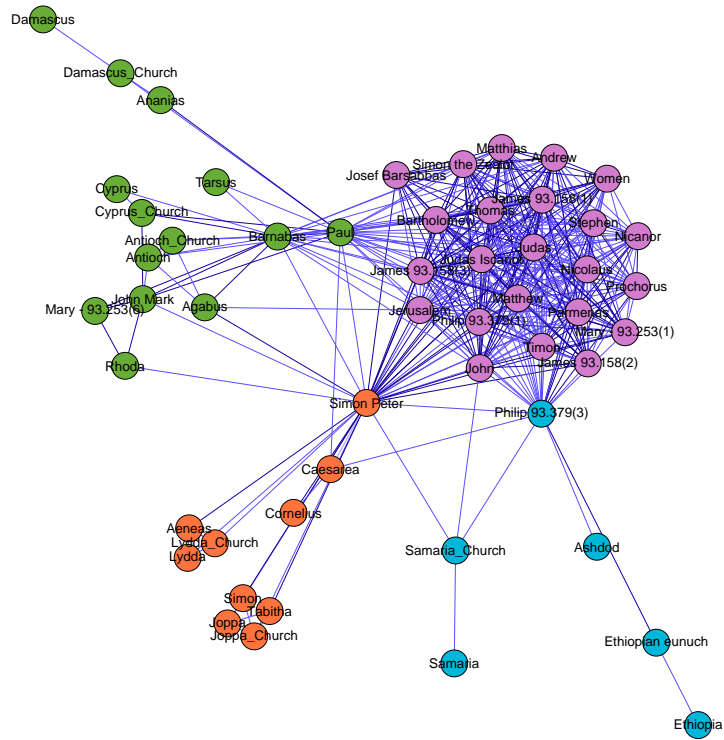


Figure 12.4: Communities in Acts 1-12 computed by the Leiden algorithm with 4 communities.

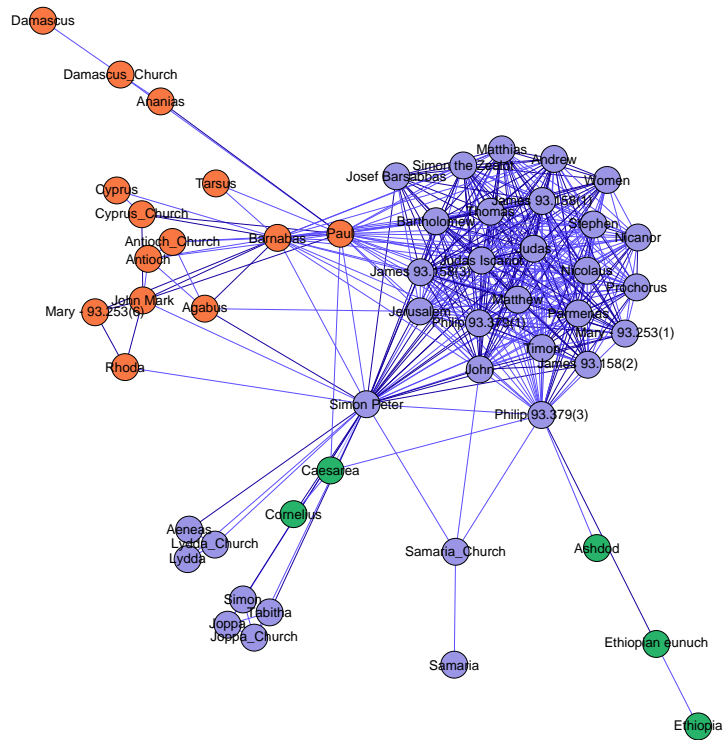


Figure 12.5: Communities in Acts 1-12 computed by the Fluid Communities (FluidC) algorithm with $k = 3$ communities.

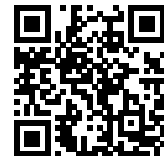
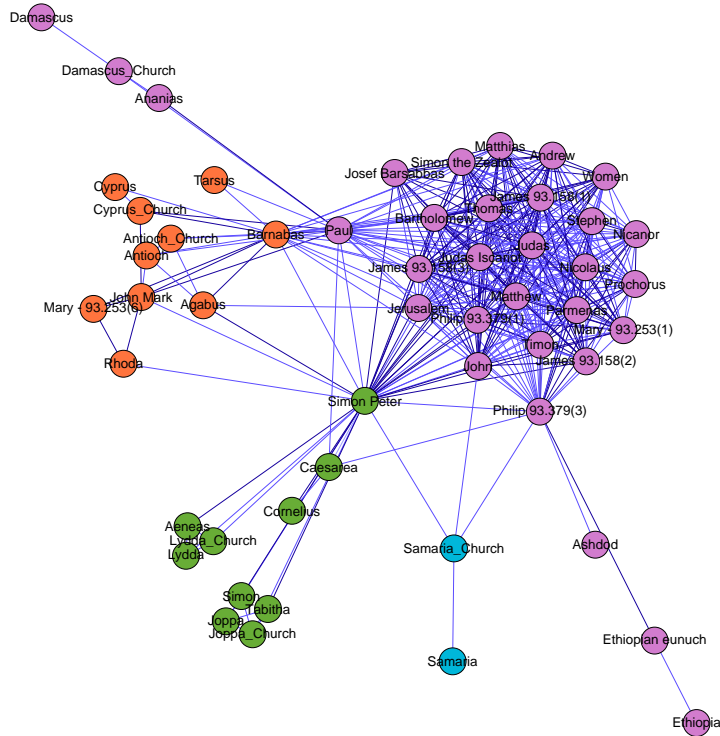


Figure 12.6: Communities in Acts 1-12 computed by Fluid Communities (FluidC) algorithm with $k = 4$ communities.

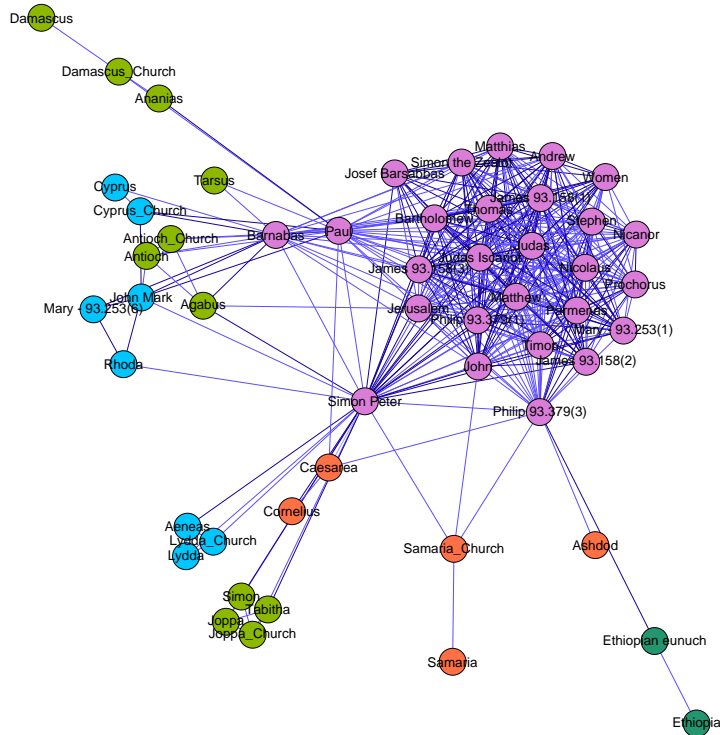


Figure 12.7: Communities in Acts 1-12 computed by Fluid Communities (FluidC) algorithm with $k = 5$ communities.

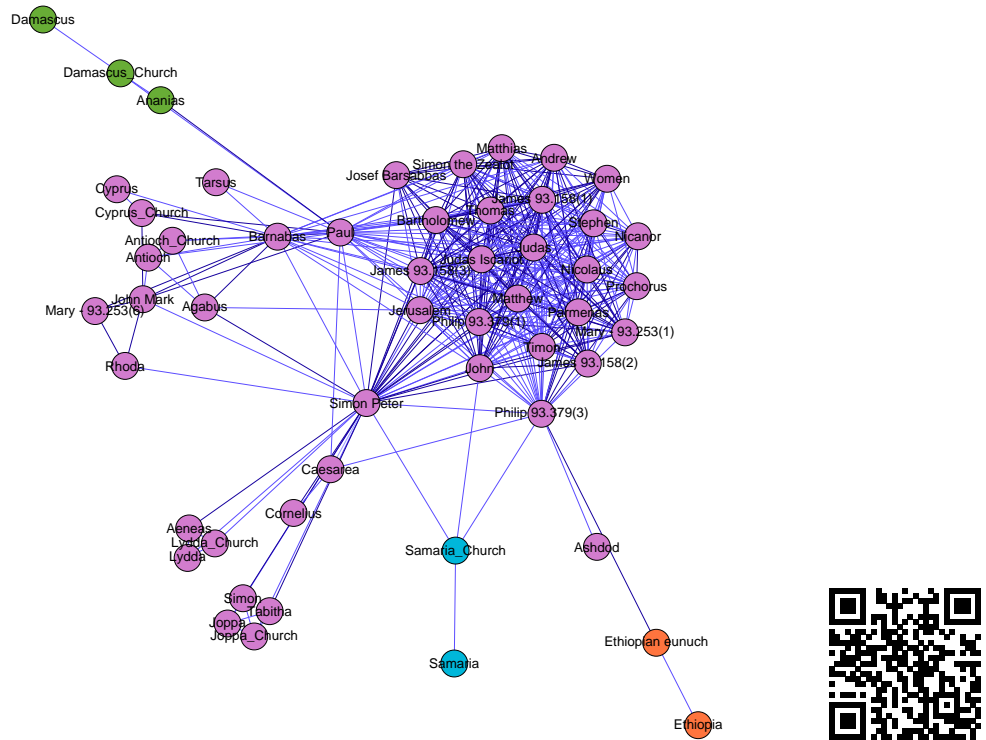


Figure 12.8: Communities in Acts 1-12 computed by Girvan-Newman algorithm with four communities.

Damascus to the center in Jerusalem. This is reasonable, since it highlights the early connectedness of these groups to Jerusalem: The meeting of Philip with the Ethiopian eunuch is described in Ac 8, and the church in Damascus existed before Paul traveled there. It is noteworthy that here Paul is added to the Jerusalem community while another community comprises Barnabas and John Mark. This highlights that there is no need to describe the previous *Paul—Barnabas* communities as solely relying on Paul. It underlines the importance of other actors like Barnabas and John Mark. For $k = 5$ (see Fig.12.7), the communities get even more fractional which indicates that this algorithm works better for large graphs, see Parés et al. (2017).

The Girvan-Newman algorithm shown in Fig. 12.8 tends to generate rather large communities. It shows the large centers of early Christianity like Jerusalem and those communities which are more isolated: Damascus, Samaria and Ethiopia. This is a valuable – although very obvious – description. It shows those regions which are not described in detail in Luke’s writing. It describes a literary view and asks questions about these communities which cannot be answered by focusing solely on Luke-Acts.

Our analysis leads to the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 8. *The network described in Acts 1-12 is rooted in Jerusalem.*

Hypothesis 9. *The main actors leading to further mission are Peter, Philip and Barnabas.*

Hypothesis 10. *The importance of Paul is usually exaggerated in research and popular perception, even in Acts 1-12, and is due to his many connections to other actors.*

Hypothesis 11. *Studying isolated communities does only unveil a specific perspective on communities, but these may also overlap, as people may belong to several communities. The study of multiple different community detection approaches thus is key to understand a network.*

We will collect more data for Ac 13:1–28:31 in Chapter 13, complete the analyses, and discuss more details in Section 14.5.

13 Paul's Mission (Ac 13:1–28:31)

In the second part of Acts, Luke changes his narrative perspective, focusing solely on Paul, his co-workers, and their mission. It is not only the spatial setting, bringing good news to the end of the earth, “but this new mission differed in its deliberate, premeditated, and commissioned focus on evangelization instead of simply carrying the message as one traveled for other reasons.” (Keener 2013: 1974) Thus, we will not solely focus on the well-studied spatial setting of the narrative, but also analyze the social aspects which can be found in the social network found in Acts. In doing so, we find mobility as a central topic (cf. Reinbold 2000: 310) which is closely linked to Luke's travel motif. However, the following exegetical considerations are mainly summarizing and collecting evidence for a detailed analysis in the next chapter and the next part. In addition, we need to consider that even though some actors seem to be highlighted (e.g. Apollos, Timothy) they are also embedded in the context of churches and communities. However, we will present a detailed discussion on the SNA perspective on this issue in the next chapter.

The central role of Paul is widely – and heavily – discussed. Bock (2008: 436), for example, highlights the importance of centers other than Jerusalem, while Schnabel (2002: 887) questions the general emphasis on Paul. To complete the view, we need to mention there is an ongoing discussion as to whether Luke took over Paul's theological views and whether he modified them (cf. Vielhauer 2012: 3).

Paul was introduced by Luke in the first part of Acts, and this period covers several years. Paul was in Jerusalem and Damascus. Luke mentions visits to Jerusalem (Ac 9:26–28), Tarsus (Ac 9:30) and Antioch, accompanied by Barnabas (Ac 11:25f). Together with Barnabas and Titus, he travels to Jerusalem (Ac 11:29f; Gl 2:1–10). On the way back to Antioch, they take John Mark with them (Ac 12:25).

Activity	Cyprus, Galatia (Acts 13-15)	Macedonia, Greece (Acts 15:40-18:22)	Asia (18:23-20:38)	Rome
Choosing	13:1	15:40	18:24	20:4
Holy Spirit	13:2	16:6	19:7	21:10
Sermon	13:15	17:22	20:18	28:17
Healing	14:8	16:16	20:7/19:11-12	28:8
Council	15:1	–	21:18	–
False disciple	13:6	15:36	19:13	23:1
Suffering and Danger	14:19	16:22	19:23	21:27
Upturn in the narrative	14:20	16:25	20:7	Acts 28

Table 13.1: Narrative Cohesion of Acts 13-28 according to Keener (2013: 1974) and Goulder (1964). This table highlights the repetition of themes and underlines the division of Acts 13-28 into four narrative sections.

The approach of Goulder (1964) to see Acts as a story of the church which repeats the story of Jesus is still considered in research: “Goulder builds on the widely canvassed view that Luke parallels the journeys of Jesus and Paul to Jerusalem.” (Walton 2000: 37) Together with Talbert (1974) and Rackham (1901), they present several approaches to analyze parallels between the Gospel and Acts. Interestingly, the SNA will also highlight some parallels. However, we will discuss these parallels only with a focus on the social network and spatiality in Chapter 16. Most interestingly, Keener (2013: 1974-1975) uses these approaches to present a narrative structure of the second part of Acts, see Table 13.1.

Thus, the central sections of the second part of Acts describe Paul’s wider mission – the first missionary journey – and the Council in Jerusalem in Ac 13:1–15:34, Paul’s second missionary journey (Ac 15:35–18:22), Paul’s third missionary journey (Ac 18:23–20:38), Paul in Jerusalem and his apprehension in the temple (Ac 21:1–22:29), and his journey to Rome (Ac 22:30–28:31). We see an ongoing debate about the so-called three missionary journeys³²⁹. However, since these travels form narrative blocks, we use the traditional labeling. In this chapter, we will again conduct a narrative summary and present exegetical results in preparation for the detailed SNA in the next chapter.

In general, we refer to Chapter 14 for a detailed overview about actors, locations and churches used for the SNA. There is much discussion on the existence of churches and

³²⁹ They seem to rather refer to stages in Paul’s life. See for example Schnabel (2002: 1384), who summarizes: “Die Tatsache, dass Paulus bei der Achaia- und der Asia-Mission mehrere Jahre in Korinth bzw. Ephesus zubrachte, zeigt, dass man schlecht von ‘Reisen’ sprechen kann”. See also Schnabel (2012: 548-9).

VV.	Location	Persons	Remarks
13:1-3	Antioch	Barnabas, Saul, John	Holy Spirit
4	Seleucia		
4.5	Salamis (Cyprus)		
6-12	Paphos (Cyprus)		
13	Perga in Pamphylia	John → Jerusalem	
14-52	Antioch in Pisidia		
14:1-5	Iconium		
6.7	Flight to surrounding country		
8-19	Lystra		Persecution (v. 19)
20	Derbe		
21-23	Lystra, Iconium, Antioch		
24	Pisidia, Pamphylia		
25	Perga, Attalia		
26-28	Antioch		

Table 13.2: Locations and actors in Paul's first missionary journey (Ac 13:1–14:28).

missionary success. We will mainly focus on the narrative picture within Acts.

13.1 Wider Mission and the Council in Jerusalem (Ac 13:1–15:34)

This first missionary journey covers Acts 13:1-14:28, but we will also add the so-called Apostolic Council in Jerusalem in Ac 15. For the geographical description of Paul's first missionary journey, it is important to note that Luke in Acts mainly uses the regional names and only rarely Roman province names.

13.1.1 Paul's First Missionary Journey (Ac 13:1–14:28)

Acts 13 and 14 report about Paul's and Barnabas' activities, see Table 13.2. They are both sent by the Antioch church after their return from Jerusalem. Luke mentions 'prophets and teachers' (v. 13:1) and in particular 'Simeon, who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen a lifelong friend of Herod the tetrarch' and of course Barnabas and Saul. Bock

(2008: 439) highlights the Greek names: “God is gifting the church without ethnic distinctions.”³³⁰

The breaking of cultural boundaries is also introduced with the remark that Saul was also called Paul (v. 9). Switching to his Roman name not only indicated the cultural change (cf. Jervell 1998: 347), but may also be an indication that “Paul is becoming the prominent and leading member of the group” (Bock 2008: 445). Keener (2013: 2017-2022) agrees with his role and adds: “That he introduces Paul’s Roman name here, during ministry to a Roman official, rather than at Paul’s conversion, signals that the Diaspora mission leading to Rome—and hence Paul’s call—the focus of his role in the book.” Although several other suggestions have been made³³¹ we will provide a detailed SNA analysis in the next chapters. However, the second name can’t be represented in this network, and we will label the node with Paul’s ‘new’ name. This timepoint corresponds roughly with the first and second half of Acts and we will derive some ideas on Luke’s narrative perspective from this analysis.

In summary, some Jews and Gentiles, in particular God-fearers³³², accepted the message and then formed local communities. Despite the danger posed by the Jews and the fact that their assistant John Mark abandoned them in Perge (Ac 13:13)³³³, Paul and Barnabas succeeded in establishing churches in the Pisidic Antioch: Iconium, Lystra, Derbe, and possibly also in Perge, see Table 13.2. The focus of missionary preaching shifted to the Jewish diaspora, but also included Gentiles (cf. Ac 13:46: ‘I have made you a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring salvation to the ends of the earth.’) when the leading Jewish representatives rejected the gospel³³⁴. In particular the vv. 13:48–50 are

³³⁰ In contrast to Pervo (2009: 322), and Keener (2013: 1984), who stated the “ethnicity of the leaders is less clear than their geographic diversity”. See his detailed discussions for further information.

³³¹ For example McDonough (2006) suggests another OT reference and his naming “serves for the author of Acts as a vivid illustration of Paul’s transformation from the proud ‘big man’ who persecuted the church, to the servant of ‘little’ David’s messianic offspring”.

³³² Probably referring to “Greeks in the audience who respect the God of Israel, as distinguished from children of Israel” (Bock 2008: 451).

³³³ “The reason for his departure is not noted, but later it will be a source of irritation between Paul and Barnabas (15:37-38)” (Bock 2008: 450). The meaning of ὑπηρέτης is not entirely clear, Keener (2013: 2005) seeks OT references and parallels in the Greek cultural world, but the role of John Mark – rarely involved in public activities – remains unclear.

³³⁴ Pervo (2009: 334) argues with Cook (1988), that in particular the God-fearers were just a literary device for Luke, being “low-hanging fruits whose openness to the Christian message is a foil to the general obstinacy of the Jews.” But Luke’s concerns together with the Pauline Letters show a different picture as Stenschke (1999: 286) concludes: “Drawing conclusions from these to Gentiles prior to faith, it appears broadly speaking that Luke saw them as sinners lacking holiness and dedication to God; as unbelievers, lacking confident trust in him; as not on the way of the Lord but on their own ways. They

interesting because, on the one hand Luke describes how Gentiles receive the Gospel, and ‘the word of the Lord was spreading throughout the whole region’ and, on the other hand, the Jews incited ‘women of high standing and the leading men of the city’ to persecute Paul and Barnabas. It is not totally clear whether it is meant against the Gentile mission or the preaching to both Jews and Gentiles (cf. Bock 2008: 465)

Since Barnabas is introduced as being from Cyprus which, with a length of 227 km and a width of 95 km, is the third-largest Mediterranean island and lies in the eastern part of this sea, about 100 km west of the Syrian coast (cf. Mitchell 2009: 1733). Trade relations with Greece have existed since about 1400 B.C. Increased immigration of Peloponnesian Greeks occurred from 1200 B.C. “gleichzeitig läßt sich eine starke Hellenisierung (Hellenismus) in allen Bereichen beobachten,” according to Stephan et al. (2018). Cyprus became a Roman province in 30 B.C., having already been annexed by the Roman Senate in 48 B.C. and ruled by changing powers (cf. Kollmann 1998: 14). It was administered senatorially, with the administrative seat being Paphos until the 4th century C.E., then Samalis-Constantia. Thus, Barnabas hails from an area that is culturally both Greek and Roman, and is thus able to make new contacts more easily because of his knowledge of the language and culture.

There are few mentions of Cyprus in biblical texts. It is found as *Elisha* in Gn 10:4 par. and 1 Ch 1:7 as well as in Ezk 27:7. Otherwise, it is found in connection with the Greeks as Kittaeans. It can be stated that Jews resided on Cyprus in the 1st century A.D. (cf. Ulbrich et al. 2004: 812). There were also strong economic ties between Judea and Cyprus (cf. Öhler 2003: 175).

Ac 11:19 mentions that some Christians had fled to Cyprus and were proclaiming Jesus among Jews. Öehler draws the further finding as follows:

In 11,20 ist im Gegensatz dazu von einigen Flüchtlingen in Antiochia die Rede, die aus Zypern und der Cyrenaika kamen und auch Heiden mit einigem Erfolg bekehrten. Zum ausdrücklichen Thema wird Zypern am Beginn der Missionsreise von Barnabas mit Paulus, denn dort beginnt ihre Verkündigungstätigkeit und sie gewinnen die Gunst des römischen Statthalters (13,4-13). Zypern wird auch zum Thema, als sich Barnabas und Paulus trennen, denn ersterer reist gemeinsam mit Johannes Markus noch einmal auf die Insel

did not know, learn or do God’s word; they were not part of God’s people in intimate relationship with him and not aligned with the plan and purposes of God and his history of salvation.” Other scholars like Green (2015) support this view.

(15,39). Neben der zweimaligen Nennung Zyperns als Orientierungspunkt auf Seereisen (21,3; 27,4) begegnet uns mit Mnason, eine ἀρχαῖος μαθητής, noch einmal ein Zypriote, der in Jerusalem wohnt (21,16). (Öhler 2003: 98)

The exact background and meaning of Cyprus, however, remains unclear. Öhler (2003: 177) assumes that just this environment – a Jewish diaspora, neither completely assimilated nor completely isolated – was the important reason for a successful spreading of the Gospel. Keener (2013: 1998) adds: “Cyprus was strategically located for having impact on other eastern Mediterranean sites; it was centrally located, a place where sea routes from Egypt, Asia Minor, and Syria converged”. Thus, we might expect both reasons ‘by chance’, strategic thoughts, and a mixture of both: Similar to Paul, reaching out from Tarsus, Barnabas’ activities are centered around Cyprus.

The second goal of travel is Antioch, but Luke describes the places on the route³³⁵, in particular Perga, having between 13,000 and 15,000 inhabitants (cf. Keener 2013: 2029). Antiochia was an even larger city, comparable to other cities in the region (cf. Mitchell 2016). Thus, again, we need to address the question as to whether strategic thoughts lead Paul and Barnabas to Antioch. Some scholars saw the importance of Antioch in being “the principal Roman colony in the Greek East.” (Mitchell 1995: 76) Keener (2013: 2037) is more careful, but expects Antiochia to qualify for a strategic goal (see also Schnabel 2008: 71-4). While Paul indicates that many Jewish people lived in Antiochia, Keener (2013: 2043) states that this hypothesis is often questioned³³⁶. Nevertheless, as “a Roman colony Antioch may have attracted even more Jews than many parts of Phrygia [...] [and even] [i]f the Jewish community was not large, it would nevertheless provide a base to begin making proclamation to Gentiles”.

In summary, the spatial setting of this journey includes the provinces of Syria, Cyprus,

³³⁵ The exact route is heavily discussed (cf. Wilson 2009). See also Breytenbach (2014) for a general discussion of Paul in Galatia. Since the year 25 B.C. a province Galatia with a Celtic population exists around the present city of Ankara within the Roman Empire, but this province also includes the areas Lycaonia and Pisidia, which were separated from it again in the 2nd century. This travel report describes southern Galatia churches which were founded by Paul. Paul will visit them again during his 2nd missionary journey.

³³⁶ “Die Landschaft Galatien ist weithin ein unfruchtbares Steppengebiet. [...] Die antiken Straßenverbindungen durch diese Region waren schlecht, und von jüdischen Ansiedlungen, die Paulus normalerweise als Anlaufpunkt seiner Mission benutzte, wissen wir so gut wie nichts. [...] Anders steht es dagegen mit den von Paulus und Barnabas auf der sog. ersten Missionsreise [...] durchzogenen Gebieten, der römischen Provinz Galatien. [...] Hier gab es seit 200 v. Chr. starke jüdische Gemeinden, gute Straßenverbindungen, und Griechisch war die allgemeine Verkehrssprache.” (Stuhlmacher 1998: 226)

Lycia, and Galatia. With Keener (2013: 1974) and Schnabel (2012: 561-563), we can also observe: It included hostility of Jews³³⁷ and the early return of John Mark. Most remarkable is that Paul and Barnabas visited the locations on their return journey. The mission was authenticated by the Holy Spirit and supported by local churches³³⁸.

To construct the network, we rely on the information collected in Table 13.2. However, we will discuss several aspects of hostility and inner-community conflicts within the next chapter with a perspective on the complete network of Acts.

13.1.2 The Council in Jerusalem (Ac 15:1–34)

The break between the first and the second missionary journey, which initially intended to strengthen the newly founded churches, is filled with a consultation at Jerusalem. Beside the prominent spatial setting in the center of the Christian movement, this text presents the most urgent theological issues. Luke describes the dispute with the Jewish Christians, who took offense at the proclamation of the gospel of Paul to Gentiles and the model of their inclusion into the people of God³³⁹.

Bock (2008: 486) sees a central question of Acts answered at this point: “The resolution issuing from the consultation at Jerusalem is an affirmation of Gentile inclusion and equality with Jews.” This clarifies how they should behave toward the Law and Jewish customs and traditions. Some Jewish Christians insisted that Gentiles who had become believers needed to be circumcised and adhere to the Mosaic laws if they wanted to be recognized as equal members of the Christian community. Bock (2008: 487) underlines the impact of this question, circumcision is a covenant sign: “If anything in the law should be followed, it should be the covenantal sign that reaches back to Abraham. Of course, the NT never tells us the detailed argument from the other side, but surely it was something close to this.” See also the detailed discussion in Keener (2014: 2215-2222)

³³⁷ Schnabel (2012: 561) names it “confrontation with the forces of evil and their representatives”. Zmi-jewski (1994: 551) goes one step further: “Christliche Existenz ist immer bedrängt!”

³³⁸ Here Schnabel (2012: 562) suggests a detailed view on the role of Antioch and Jerusalem: “It should be noted, however, that the church in Antioch was not the ‘sending church’ of Paul; Barnabas and Saul were commissioned and sent by the Holy Spirit [...]. It was neither the church in Jerusalem nor the church in Antioch that decided on the details of the missionary work of Barnabas and Paul in the cities of Cyprus.”

³³⁹ See also Gl 2:11ff. For a detailed discussion about Galatians and Acts, we refer to Keener (2014: 2194ff), Schnabel (2002: 965-966) and Pervo (2009: 367ff).

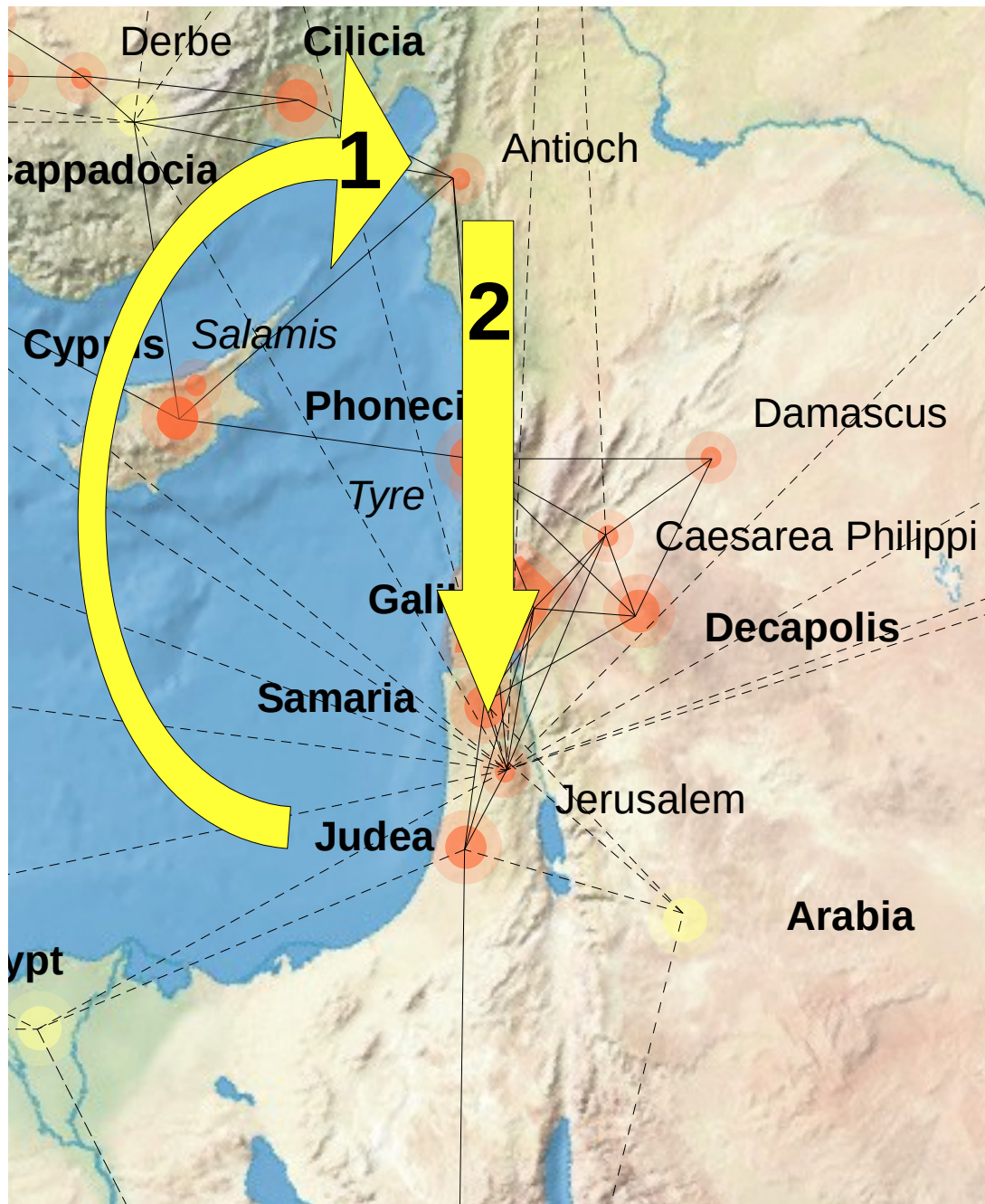


Figure 13.1: The map representing movements during the Council in Jerusalem (Ac 15:1–34): ‘some men came down from Judea’ (v. 1), ‘Paul and Barnabas and some of the others were appointed to go up to Jerusalem’ (v. 2) and passed ‘Phoenicia and Samaria’ (v. 3). This also includes several new, but also the updated links and relations due to travel, hospitality, and escort.

who also adds that “Gentiles were welcome as God-fearers, in any case. Whether they were considered full members of the covenant community is another question.” (:2018) Maybe this discussion also includes the law as to how the people of God should live. But this raises some questions which cannot be answered: Paul was not the first to preach to Gentiles and the historical process is unclear³⁴⁰.

After their return to Antioch, Paul and Barnabas recognized in this movement a serious danger for the basic truth and substance of the Gospel and expressed their opposition. “Because of its special cultural sensitivity, the Antioch church had pioneered the Gentile mission (11:20-21; 13:1-4), as Luke has recently reminded his audience (14:24). The Jerusalem church had approved of their mission (11:22-23) especially because the Antiochene church had continued to demonstrate faithfulness for the poor in Jerusalem” (Keener 2014: 2210-2011). Paul learned that the Judaistic heresy was beginning to penetrate his recently established churches in Galatia: ‘Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved’ (Ac 15:1)³⁴¹. Then, Paul addressed a sharp letter to them (the ‘Letter to the Galatians’), in which he powerfully unfolds his confession.

These events in Antioch caused a major theological crisis in the church. To resolve the problems, the Antiochene church sent Paul, Barnabas and ‘some of the others’ (Ac 15:2) to Jerusalem to discuss with the church (ἐκκλησία), ‘apostles and elders’ (ἀπόστολοι καὶ πρεσβύτεροι, Ac 15:4). See Figure 13.1 for a spatial illustration: ‘some men came down from Judea’ (v. 1), ‘Paul and Barnabas and some of the others were appointed to go up

³⁴⁰ “1. Hat Paulus wirklich erst seit dem Beginn der Südgalatien-Mission im Jahr 45 auf die Forderung der Beschneidung verzichtet? Dies ist unwahrscheinlich, wenn schon Petrus im Zusammenhang der Bekehrung des Römers Cornelius um das Jahr 37 auf die Beschneidung verzichtete. 2. Wenn Paulus bereits seit dem Beginn seiner Missionstätigkeit in Arabien und in Syrien/Kilikien, d. h. seit dem Jahr 32/33, auf die Beschneidung von bekehrten Nichtjuden verzichtete, und wenn die Gemeinde in Antiochien, die wahrscheinlich um das Jahr 35 entstand, rasch bekehrte Heiden zu ihren Mitgliedern rechnete, warum wurde die Frage, ob bekehrte Nichtjuden beschnitten werden sollten, erst auf dem Apostelkonvent im Jahr 48, also fünfzehn bzw. dreizehn Jahre später diskutiert? 3. Weshalb ist das Thema der Beschneidung in Jerusalem noch strittig, nachdem man die Aufnahme des Römers Cornelius öffentlich behandelt und gutgeheißen hatte (Apg 11,18)? [...] 4. Warum wird die Beschneidungsforderung der bekehrten Pahrissäer zuerst ‚geprüft‘ (Apg 15,6), und nicht von Jakobus und den Aposteln sofort zurückgewiesen? 5. Inwieweit ist die Argumentation des Jakobus, der mit der Schrift beweist, dass die Wiederherstellung Israels mit der Heidenmission verbunden ist, eine Antwort auf die Frage, ob unbeschnittene Heiden in die Gemeinde aufgenommen werden können, ohne dass man sie zuerst beschneiden muss?” (Schnabel 2002: 966-7) Some scholars like Schille (1989: 325) argue for a rejection of Luke’s composition.

³⁴¹ There is an ongoing debate about who these people were. Bock (2008: 495) makes two suggestions: “(1) they may be messengers from James (Gal. 2:12) who exceed their authority by insisting on circumcision, or (2) they may be ‘false brothers secretly brought in’ (Gal. 2:4) to spy out Paul and company”. Keener (2014: 2211) argues for the second option, but in the end we can’t make a decision (cf. Schnabel 2012: 638). See also Chapter 20.

to Jerusalem' (v. 2) and passed 'Phoenicia and Samaria' (v. 3). This also includes several new, but also the updating of links and relations due to travel, hospitality, and escort. In Jerusalem, not only the apostles and elders are mentioned, but also 'some believers who belonged to the party of the Pharisees' (... ἀπὸ τῆς αἰρέσεως τῶν Φαρισαίων πεπιστευκότες ..., v. 5)³⁴². Keener (2014: 2229) underlines another, political issue:

to what degree should the vote of the local church in Jerusalem, influenced by local concerns, shape the future of other local churches struggling with different, often conflicting concerns? Did the mother church define the basis for unity?

Especially the hint to local concerns is, on the one hand, important for the analysis of a multi-centric network, and, on the other hand, it is ambiguous because Luke does not provide any further information on this issue. We will come back to this question in the next chapter, providing a detailed SNA of Acts and in Chapter 20, analyzing the spatial setting of Luke-Acts. Peter, James, Barnabas and Paul are particularly named. Peter referred to his encounter with Cornelius and how God made a choice (ἐκλέγομαι) 'that by my mouth the Gentiles should hear the word of the gospel and believe' (v. 7). The word εὐαγγέλιον is rarely used by Luke. "Here Peter summarizes the proper response to the gospel as faith, a key term for response in Acts 13-14" (Bock 2008: 500). In addition, Peter concludes in v. 11: 'But we believe that we will be saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, just as they will'³⁴³.

The council³⁴⁴, in particular James³⁴⁵ as a speaker, decided that no other burden was to be imposed on the Gentiles than that of abstaining from 'the things polluted by idols, and from sexual immorality, and from what has been strangled, and from blood.'" (Ac

³⁴² "The term 'party' [...] refers to a distinct subgroup that has distinct beliefs [...]. The term is used descriptively of the Sadducee in Acts 5:17, of the Pharisees in 26:5, and of the Christians in 24:5, 14 and 28:22. All of this suggests that Luke presents Christianity as a natural extension of Judaism because promises given originally to the Jews are now offered in the new community formed by Jesus the Messiah." (Bock 2008: 496) Keener (2014: 2227) disagrees on this interpretation of αἵρεσις, it "might be closer in sense to a political party than to a modern denomination."

³⁴³ Interestingly, this is the last reference to Peter in Acts.

³⁴⁴ We use all descriptions synonymously (cf. Schnabel 2002: 965). Bock (2008: 486) is very clear in his view: "We call this meeting a consultation. It is not a council in the later technical ecclesiastical sense [...]. It includes more than the apostles and engages the Jerusalem congregation in a major way." Other scholars like Pervo (2009: 369) disagree, but for this work the correct label is not important. We are collecting locations and people involved and their interaction with each other.

³⁴⁵ Another remarkable person which is only mentioned in Acts 1:13, 12:17, and 21:18: "Both passages that focus extensively on James emphasize his leadership role in Jerusalem church and his approval of Paul and his message." (Keener 2014: 2241)

15:20.29)³⁴⁶. Practically, this decision confirmed Paul’s conviction that the Gentiles were not obligated to keep the Mosaic Law. After the debate, they sent a Council’s letter to the Gentile believers³⁴⁷ and chose Judas Barsabbas and Silas,³⁴⁸ two leading men among the brothers to deliver the letter (Ac 15:22–23). Ac 15:30–34 describes the reaction in Antiochia and their return to Jerusalem.

This section does not provide detailed data for a social network, however, but raises certain questions about the Lucan network, in particular about its diversity and its stability within crisis. In addition, it shows again how important mobility within the nascent Christian movement was (cf. Stenschke 2011: 441).

13.2 Paul’s Second Missionary Journey (Ac 15:35–18:22)

According to Ac 15:35 ‘Paul and Barnabas remained in Antioch, teaching and preaching the word of the Lord, with many others also.’ We do not know about these ‘many others’, but in summary this reflects the outcome of what was discussed in Jerusalem: “There was to be a unity on the essential centrality of Jesus, God’s grace, and on the uniqueness of salvation in that grace by faith alone.”(Bock 2008: 514) However, it is also evident that according to Luke the manifold links between different towns and churches were deepened and also new links were established (cf. Stenschke 2011: 445). Thus, this section is a narrative follow-up on the last part.

³⁴⁶ This compromise solution solves also another central issue of concern, the table fellowship between Jews and Gentiles (cf. Keener 2014: 2259). For a detailed discussion of various backgrounds and interpretations of the decree see Keener (2014: 2260-2269) who also offers a detailed evaluation of samples of Jewish rules expected of Gentiles.

³⁴⁷ “What is communicated is an agreement by the entire church, not a rehashing of what the original sides may have held.” (Bock 2008: 508) Keener (2014: 2289) agrees: “Luke’s portrayal of consensus emphasizes the product of the council rather than the friction that led to it, though he does not suppress the latter (Acts 15:1-2,5). This portrayal has apologetic values for Luke; he displays the church’s rational conduct in resolving deep-seated conflicts.” See also Schnabel (2012: 647): “It is indeed the whole body of believers in Jerusalem, as well as leading missionaries such as Barnabas and Paul, who are involved in the debate and its outcome.”

³⁴⁸ According to v. 26 ‘men who have risked their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ’. Keener (2014: 2290) suggests this as proper translation of παραδεδωκóσι τὰς ψυχὰς αὐτῶν, since “tested willingness to die for Christ was an important criterion for recognizing devoted servants of Christ”.

VV.	Location	Persons	Remarks
15:35	Antioch	Paul, Barnabas	
15:39.40		Paul, Silas	Disagreement
41	Syria, Cilicia		
16:1	Derbe, Lystra	+ Timothy	
2	Lystra, Iconium		
6	Phrygia and Galatia		
8	Mysia, Troas		
11	Samothrace, Neapolis		
12-40	Philippi	+ Lydia from Thyatira	Persecution
17:1	Amphipolis, Apollonia		
1-9	Thessalonica	+ Jason	Persecution
10-15	Berea		Persecution
16-34	Athens	Paul + Dionysius, Damaris	
18:1-4	Corinth	+ Aquila & Priscilla	
5		Silas, Timothy	
7-10		+ Titius Justus, Crispus	Persecution
11-17	Paul stayed in Corinth for a year and a half		
18-19	Ephesus	Paul, Priscilla, Aquila	
20-21		Paul	
22	Caesarea, Jerusalem, Antioch		

Table 13.3: Locations and actors in Paul's second missionary journey (Ac 15:35–18:22). See Schnabel (2002: 1077) for further hypothetical locations.

The initial goal of what is called Paul's second missionary journey³⁴⁹ was to strengthen the churches founded previously: 'Let us return and visit the brothers in every city where we proclaimed the word of the Lord, and see how they are.' (v. 36.41)³⁵⁰ This phrase κατὰ πόλιν πᾶσαν describes the spatial setting and the will to travel (δέ).

According to vv. 37-40 there was a heated discussion about who travels with whom³⁵¹. Because of these differences with Barnabas, which concerned the person of John Mark (Ac 15:37-39), Paul chose Silas (Acts 15:40-18:22), a witness of the Council in Jerusalem³⁵². Later, he was joined by Luke (cf. Bock 2008: 519) and, a little later, Timothy went with him, see Table 13.3. First, Paul and Silas visited and strengthened the churches in Syria, Cilicia and Lycaonia (Ac 15:40-16:5): From Antioch they traveled by land to the churches in southern Galatia, and at Lystra they were joined by Timothy, having a Jewish mother and and Greek father, as a fellow worker in their group (Ac 16:1). He had a good reputation 'by the brothers at Lystra and Iconoim' (v. 2)³⁵³. Interestingly, Paul 'took him and circumcised him because of the Jews who were in those places, for they all knew that his father was a Greek.' (v. 3) Obviously, Paul wants to avoid any possible conflict. But is it really as easy to reduce this issue to "what to do with someone of a mixed Jewish-Gentile background, not a Gentile of unmixed ancestry as in the debate in

³⁴⁹ We will analyze the literary work of travel as Luke sees it. But we should not ignore Keener's observation: "Scholars have assigned diverse chronologies to the journey that begins in this section. Too many variables exist for any of the chronologies to be exact, but they can provide us some approximate estimates." (Keener 2014: 2297) We refer to (:2298) for more details.

³⁵⁰ Although Barrett (2002: 242) raises the issue: "The plan of revisiting 'First Journey' churches is speedily given up (16.6)." Keener (2014: 2311) sees a different perspective: "Luke often speaks of 'strengthening' churches (14:22-23; 18:23); the apostolic model was not just evangelism but planting self-propagating churches that would continue to evangelize their communities". We will come back to that question in the next chapters.

³⁵¹ Schille (1989: 331) argues the phrasing would be neutral, but the word παροξυσμός is not. See also Schnabel (2012: 662).

³⁵² Bock (2008: 519) describes the different layers of the conflict, in addition, according to Col 4:14 John Mark is the cousin of Barnabas. Keener (2014: 2300-1) offers several explanations and describes the ancient view on the different conflict layers. He summarizes: "Some hearers would value Barnabas's point here, though for most, as for Luke, Paul is the larger narrative's main protagonist." (:2301) Öhler (2003: 443) also mentions that Barnabas now 'vanishes' from Acts: "Damit verschwindet Barnabas (gemeinsam mit Johannes Markus) auf ähnliche Weise aus der Aostelgeschichte wie Petrus in 12,17, Paulus in 9,30 oder Philippus in 8,40. Da die beiden ersten bereits wieder aufgetreten waren, ist für Leserinnen und Leser damit das letzte Wort über Barnabas noch nicht gesprochen." (Öhler 2003: 443). What we can, however, reject, is the opinion that it were solely theological reasons for the break as Roloff (1993: 122) suggests (cf. Schnabel 2012: 662) or reliability (cf. Pesch 2012b: 93). We refer to Chapter 19.1 and Schnabel (2002: 1079ff) for more details.

³⁵³ "He is not mentioned in the account of Paul's earlier visit, and one guesses that he was not converted at that time, though at 1 Cor. 4:17 Paul speaks of him as his child." (Barrett 2002: 244) This is often seen as reason why his convention is related to Paul Zmijewski (cf. 1994: 589), but this is not very likely: Why should Luke omit that fact in his narrative?

Acts 15” (Bock 2008: 522)? However, this is not totally clear³⁵⁴. Timothy is yet another implicit reference to existing links between towns and regions as Stenschke (2011: 449) notes.

But when he then came to Phrygia and Galatia (v. 6)³⁵⁵, they traveled in a northerly direction, passing through Galatia, where some people were probably converted (cf. Acts 16:6; 18:23), in particular to Mysia, and to Bithynia (16:7), to the northwest of Asia Minor. Here, the Spirit of God denied their ministry in Asia (16:6)³⁵⁶. This is another reference to how the Spirit influences the journey. Finally, they are called to Macedonia in Troas³⁵⁷ (v. 11) through a vision (Acts 16:6-10): ‘a man of Macedonia was standing there, urging him and saying, come over to Macedonia and help us.’ (v. 9) Paul and his group went immediately, εὐθὺς³⁵⁸. Here, the ‘we’-passages occur for the first time, indicating that most likely Luke has joined the group³⁵⁹.

³⁵⁴ See also Barrett (2002: 245): “Perhaps (it is said) because in the course of the mission Paul would wish to take him into synagogues and Jewish places of prayer. But (in Acts) Paul never does this; in any case, uncircumcised Gentiles favourable to Judaism were admitted to at least some synagogues (see on 10.2). If (see on v. i) it was held that Timothy’s maternal ancestry, if it did not legally make him a Jew, connected him so closely with Judaism as to make it desirable for him to live as a Jew”. See also Keener (2014: 2312-2317), who presents a discussion about Jewish-Gentile intermarriage. He concludes: “At the same time [...], specification of Timothy’s ambiguous ethnic status is no coincidence. His ‘hybrid’ status (in the language of current postcolonial scholarship) symbolizes the intersection of Jew and Greek, so that he embodies in himself the goal of the church’s unity”. But we cannot, however, conclude, that Luke was simply wrong, as Barrett did. There is simply not more we can make of this yet (cf. Stenschke 1999: 155), but we will come back to this in the next Chapters.

³⁵⁵ However, Barrett (2002: 246-7) raises the question of what is precisely meant: “The question that arises here is whether Phrygia is to be regarded as a noun or is an adjective, in which case it would share with Galatian the government of territory. The political geography that lies behind this question is the incorporation in 25 BC of part of Phrygia (and some other districts) in the newly formed province of Galatia, which was based upon the old kingdom of Galatia. Did the travellers go through (what remained of) Phrygia and Galatian territory, or through territory that was (or had been) Phrygian but was (now) also Galatian, through what has been called (though the expression is not known to have been used in antiquity) Thrygo-Galatic territory’?” However, Keener (2014: 2324) is quite clear on that issue: “in the earliest reading the definite article for the region precedes and brackets both Phrygia and Galatia, strongly suggesting that Luke means one region rather than two.”

³⁵⁶ Bock (2008: 526) raises the question, what exactly is meant by “Asia”: “Is it the Roman province, ancient Asia, or simply cities on the Aegean coast?”

³⁵⁷ See Keener (2014: 2334-5) for more details on Troas, he suggests that it was not by chance, “Paul and Silas probably hope to be permitted to minister somewhere besides Troas”.

³⁵⁸ Barrett (2002: 248) raises another concern: “Much is sometimes made of the move from Asia to Europe. This is an error. The whole journey was within the Roman Empire, of which both Mysia (Asia) and Macedonia were provinces. In Philippi Paul would speak the same Greek that he had spoken all the way from Antioch.” Keener (2014: 2339) adds another concern: “We should also keep in mind the serious danger of understanding these categories anachronistically. For example, Asia Minor and Greece now belonged to the shared cultural sphere of the Hellenistic fusion of Greek and ‘Asian’ cultures.”

³⁵⁹ We refer to the second chapter and to Keener (2014: 2350-2374) for a detailed discussion. From a literary perspective, it is worth considering that the author of Luke-Acts wants to remain his focus on Paul.

In Macedonia, churches were established in Philippi, Thessalonica, and Berea; in Achaia, Athens and Corinth were visited (Acts 17 and 18). Philippi was πρώτη τῆς μερίδος Μακεδονίας πόλις, according to Bock (2008: 533) not referring to a large, but a leading city³⁶⁰. This wealthy city was involved in selling of copper, silver and gold. In addition to the imperial cult, “the city was home to the worship of many gods.” He also suggests that enough Jews for a synagogue (i.e. more than 10 men) might have lived here³⁶¹. In Philippi, Paul meets Lydia from Thyatira³⁶². Although we cannot decide what her connection to Thyatira was, we do not omit this reference for the network and refer to Section 19.6 for further details³⁶³. It is also worth noticing that here Luke presents one of the first house-communities (cf. Zmijewski 1994: 607)³⁶⁴.

Afterwards, they ‘passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia’³⁶⁵ and arrived in Thessalonica (v. 1). Here, Paul again went to the synagogue and some believed, ‘as did a great many of the devout Greeks and not a few of the leading women’ (v. 4)³⁶⁶. The following persecution by the Jews in particular affected Jason³⁶⁷. Bock (2008: 552-553) sees two charges: disrupting civil peace and bringing a new practice to Thessalonica, spreading their views. Secondly, “acting against the decrees of Caesar”. Although being offended

³⁶⁰ See also Barrett (2002: 251): “Philippi, about ten miles inland, made a colony by M. Antonius after the victory of 42 B.C. and subsequently augmented by Octavian (Augustus). As a colonia it was treated, in justice and administration, virtually as if it were on Italian soil. It was a leading city of the province of Macedonia: the text here is uncertain; this gives the probable sense.” See also Keener (2014: 2382-3).

³⁶¹ See also the works of Brélaz (2018) and Mentzos (2021) for more details

³⁶² We refer to Ascough (2009) and Chapter 19.6 for more details. Without any doubts, Luke mentions her because of her ideal attributes: Sie “betete, [war] gastfrei, gütig und demütig []. Damit beschreibt Lukas eine ‘Gottesfürchtige’, wie sie dem Ideal entsprach.” (Schnabel 2002: 1103)

³⁶³ See the discussion in Schnabel (2012: 680): “Lydia may have lived in Thyatira while owning a retail shop in Philippi that she occasionally visited, or she may have settled in Philippi permanently.”

³⁶⁴ As we have discussed earlier, the SNA perspective in Luke-Acts does not allow a detailed reconstruction and in particular analysis of the communities, however, we will discuss these spatial issues in detail in Chapter 20.

³⁶⁵ Barrett (2002: 259) suggests, they were following the Via Egnatia. “Amphipolis, the capital of the first district of Macedonia, was so called because it was surrounded on two sides by the River Strymon, and was visible from both sea and land. Apollonia was further inland. It is possible that the two towns formed stages on the way to Thessalonica. There is no record of preaching in them, possibly because the preachers found no synagogue to serve as a point of entry.”

³⁶⁶ “Luke has literary reasons (cf. Luke 1:3) to emphasize the conversion of aristocrats and other people of influence (Acts 13:7-12), including some wealthy women (Luke 8:2-3; Acts 17:34). The poor could minister to the rich [...], but the examples of rich converts would especially encourage higher-status members of Luke’s ideal audience.” (Keener 2014: 2543)

³⁶⁷ He cannot be identified (cf. Bock 2008: 551). Barrett (2002: 261) suggests he could be a new brother: “It is probably, though not certainly, implied that Jason too was a (Christian) brother.” Schnabel (2002: 1116-7) adds another hypothesis: “Wir finden Jason später als Mitarbeiter des Paulus in Korinth (Röm 16,21). In Apg 20,4 erfahren wir die Namen von zwei weiteren Christen aus Thessalonike: Aristarchos und Secundus.”

and disturbed, ‘they had taken money as security from Jason and the rest, [and] they let them go’ (v. 9).

In Athens, Paul discussed in synagogues and on the marketplace ‘every day’ (v. 17). In particular, he also discussed with ‘Epicurean and Stoic philosophers’³⁶⁸ (v. 18) who judged him as *σπερμολόγος* or ‘Ξένων δαιμονίων δοκεῖ καταγγελεὺς εἶναι’. Paul’s speech to the Areopagus is mentioned in vv. 22-31³⁶⁹. While some rejected him, ‘some men joined him and believed, among whom also were Dionysius the Areopagite and a woman named Damaris and others with them.’³⁷⁰ (v. 34)

Thus, following the founding of the Macedonian churches and after a stay in Athens Luke describes the founding of the church of Corinth (Ac 18:1–17), where Paul remained for almost two years. Vv. 9-10 describe a vision that Paul will be protected while continuing his preaching: “Three promises are made: (1) ‘I am with you,’ and (2) ‘no man shall harm you, for (3) I have many people in this city.’ So there will be pressure, but also success in terms of response.” (Bock 2008: 579-580) Here, Paul meets the Jews ‘Aquila, a

³⁶⁸ More numerous was the school of Stoics. “The Epicureans [...] were indifferent to gods, viewing them as too removed to be objects of concern [...]. The Stoics [...] were pantheists who argued for the unity of humanity and kinship with the divine”. (Bock 2008: 561)

³⁶⁹ Barrett (2002: 267) suggests again some sort of court against Paul: “They got hold of him. Luke’s word may imply an arrest, with or without violence, or a friendly approach - Come and let us talk this over. The intention was probably to bring Paul to the Areios Pagos court (not necessarily for a formal trial); less probably to bring him to the Areios Pagos hill for an open-air discussion. The history of the Areopagus court in the first century is obscure, but it remained the supreme authority in Athens, with the right to interfere in any aspect of corporate life and to try cases of any kind. It met often but perhaps not always on the Areopagus hill. The court, or some members of it, make a polite inquiry: May we know... ?” Keener, however, suggests a primary literary intention: “The bulk of Luke’s narrative about Athens consists of a speech [...] which was also perhaps Luke’s primary interest when he decided to include this narrative. Nevertheless, the setting that Luke provides for the speech is intriguing.” (Keener 2014: 2570) A third hypothesis is provided by Schnabel (2002: 1126): “Man brachte ihn zum Rat (Βουλή) des Areopag, der auch prompt von seinem Recht (δφνάμεθα) sprach, ihn zu befragen und in dieser Sache, d. h. der Frage neuer Gottheiten, die in Athen angebetet werden sollen, eine Entscheidung zu treffen (17,19). Die Bitte an Paulus zum Vortrag seiner religiösen Lehre war höflich: Paulus wurde nicht zur ‘Verteidigung’ seiner Überzeugung aufgefordert, er stand nicht als Angeklagter vor dem Areopag, sondern er wurde als Verkünder von Gottheiten befragt, die den Athenern neu sind.” Other scholars like Winter (1996: 90) disagree and state it “would be misleading to cast Paul in the role of a defendant in a trial in Acts 17, as was the case in Acts 24–26 where he appears before Roman judges. Rather, because some saw him as the herald of new gods, the Areopagus informed him of its legitimate role in this matter in Athens.” As the historical truth is not completely clear, however, we can identify how carefully Luke has arranged this piece of story.

³⁷⁰ These persons are hidden characters, we do not know more about them. However, it is striking that Luke mentions their names including others “(ἄλλοι) were converted as well. Luke’s comment in v. 34 thus reports the conversation of at least one prominent Athenian, of at least one woman, and of other citizens.” (Schnabel 2012: 743) See ?676-2683]keener2014acts3 for detailed overview about the scientific discourse.

native of Pontus' and 'his wife Priscilla', both being tentmakers as Paul (vv. 2.3)³⁷¹. In v. 5 the arrival of Silas and Timothy is mentioned. In v. 6 Luke describes Paul further avoiding the Jews: 'Your blood be on your own heads! I am innocent. From now on I will go to the Gentiles.'³⁷² He stayed in the house of Titius Justus, 'next door to the synagogue' (v. 7). Given two Latin names, we can assume that he was a Roman citizen (cf. Keener 2014: 2745). In general, there was some success, Crispus³⁷³ and his household – the ruler of the synagogue – and many other 'believed and were baptized.' (v. 8) Again, the Jews tried to bring Paul to a tribunal before Gallio, the proconsul of Achaia. He refuses to make a judgment³⁷⁴.

In summary, the spatial setting of this journey includes the regions Syria, Cilicia, Lycaonia, Mysia, Samothrace, Macedonia, Achaia, Lydia, and subsequent Judea. With Keener (2013: 1974) and Schnabel (2012: 696) we can also observe: It included hostility in general and originating from Jews. Neither did the initial plan to strengthen the churches work till the end nor could he continue his work in Asia or Bithynia (cf. Schnabel 2002: 1077). The mission was again authenticated by the Holy Spirit and supported by local churches and households.

To construct the network, we rely on the information collected in Table 13.3. However, we will discuss several aspects of hostility within the next chapter with a perspective on the complete network of Acts.

³⁷¹ Keener (2014: 2711) highlights, that most scholars refer to Claudius' expulsion to explain why Luke does not mention their conversion. "Perhaps Luke's silence stems mainly from his need to abridge a great deal of material. In any case, Paul's role in founding the Corinthian church (1 Cor 4:15) need not imply that he was the first Christian in Corinth." Other scholars agree, because Luke does not mention any conversion which is striking: "Da Aquila und Priszilla Paulus aufnehmen und ihm ermöglichen, seinen Lebensunterhalt zu verdienen, von ihrer Bekehrung durch Paulus aber nichts verlautet, muß angenommen werden, daß sie schon in Rom Christen geworden waren und zu den Führungspersonen der dortigen judenchristlichen Gemeinde gehört hatten." (Pesch 2012b: 147) We refer to the discussion in Section 19.4 for further details.

³⁷² "Unless we should think that Paul, an ideal character in Luke's story, offers idle threats that he will not carry out [...], these pronouncements represent purely *local* judgments [...]. They must in some sense also further God's agenda as well as Luke's plot, for the commission to the nations was already Jesus's command" (Keener 2014: 2744).

³⁷³ Again, the Latin name may indicate a Roman citizen, "but we cannot be sure" (Keener 2014: 2748).

³⁷⁴ "Gallio does not let Paul speak, but instead renders a verdict. In his judgment, there is no wrongdoing [...] or vicious, fraudulent crime [...]. This is just a dispute about words, names, and Jewish law that he will let them settle, refusing to make a judgment." (Bock 2008: 581) Barrett (2002: 280) adds: "Gallio had no patience with the Jews. If Luke's account is correct, he judged that they were wasting the time of his court; either the charge was irrelevant (a matter of Jewish theology) or there was not even *prima facie* evidence that Paul constituted a danger to the Empire."

VV.	Location	Persons	Remarks
18:23	Antioch	Paul	
	region of Galatia and Phrygia		
24-26	Ephesus	Apollos	from Alexandria
		Priscilla, Aquila	
27	Achaia, Corinth	Apollos	
19:1-41	Ephesus	Paul	
22	He sent ... Timothy and Erastus, to Macedonia, while he stayed in the province of Asia a little longer.		
			Persecution
20:1	Macedonia		
2	Greece		stayed three months
3	Macedonia	Paul, Sopater, Aristarchus, Secundus, Gaius, Timothy Tychicus, Trophimus	
5	Troas		
6-12	Philippi, Troas		
13	Assos		
14	Mitylene		
15-38	Chios, Samos, Miletus		met the elders from Ephesus
[21:1-17]	Paul's travel to Jerusalem		

Table 13.4: Locations and actors in Paul's third missionary journey (Ac 18:23–20:38).

13.3 Paul's Third Missionary Journey (Ac 18:23–20:38)

The strengthening of the churches was Paul's most important task besides founding new churches³⁷⁵. That is why he did not stay long in Antioch, but set out again for Asia Minor accompanied by Luke, Timothy and Titus (the so-called third missionary journey). We present an overview about this journey in Table 13.4. After strengthening the already existing churches (διερχόμενος καθ'εξῆς, v. 23) in Galatia and Phrygia, Paul continued his travels. From Antioch, he traveled by land through the Galatian region near to Ephesus³⁷⁶. There he met 'disciples,' including Apollos³⁷⁷, who were familiar with John the Baptist and maybe also Jesus (Ac 18:24ff), see the discussion in Section 19.5. This 'Apollos, a native of Alexandria' (v. 24) is of some interest, 'being fervent in spirit, he spoke and taught accurately the things concerning Jesus, though he knew only the baptism of John.' (v. 25) It is especially striking that Luke mentions the Spirit and although this could refer to his emotions, it is most likely that – although he does not know about the baptism of

³⁷⁵ Besides Acts, the Paul's Letters testify to his work and struggle for the growth of the church of Christ outwardly and inwardly. However, Schnabel (2002: 1146-1148) combines Acts with the Pauline Letters and divides the third journey in seven phases. Since we solely focus on the Lukan material, we add a reference to these approaches to complete the picture.

³⁷⁶ It is not entirely clear where exactly he was and Luke does not mention any other information. Schnabel (2002: 1152) suggests the following: "Von Ephesus aus hatte Paulus in Alexandria Troas, möglicherweise auch in Milet missioniert. Von Ephesus aus haben Mitarbeiter in Laodikeia, Hierapolis und in Kolossä Gemeinden gegründet."

³⁷⁷ The long form of his name would have been 'Apollonius' (cf. Bock 2008: 591). See in particular the detailed discussion about Apollos in Section 19.5.

the Spirit! – he is able to preach effectively³⁷⁸. Apart from Timotheus' baptism in Lystra it is worth to notice that no baptism is mentioned.

Luke also mentions Priscilla and Aquila (v. 26) and again, nothing “about the way [they] instruct Apollos gives one the sense that he has yet to believe or repent, which is how Luke describes conversion.” (Bock 2008: 592) In vv. 27.28 Luke describes Apollos' ministry and travels to Achaia, where Paul had been previously and he would be a benefit for these communities³⁷⁹.

According to Ac 19:1, Apollos was at Corinth when Paul came to Ephesus, which was an important city near the Mediterranean Sea. A church existed before Paul arrived and may have been founded by Priscilla and Aquila (cf. Barrett 2002: 285). We do not find much information about the members of the Ephesus church. Ephesus was – unlike Corinth – not a *colonia*:

Für die Zusammensetzung der Gemeinde und eine soziologische Beschreibung der Christen in Ephesus haben wir keine näheren Angaben, von der Auskunft abgesehen, dass sie aus Judenchristen und Heidenchristen bestand. Die Gemeinde in Korinth sollte man nicht vorschnell zum Vergleich heranziehen, weil Korinth eine römische Kolonie war und aus diesem Grund dort von einer anderen Zusammensetzung der Einwohnerschaft ausgegangen werden muss. Welche Detailinformationen der Abschiedsrede an die Ältesten von Ephesus in Milet (Apg 20,17-36) für die Anfänge der Gemeinde in Ephesus abzulesen sind, bleibt umstritten (Schnabel 2002: 1175).

However, Luke mentions twelve men who have only heard of John's baptism. Some scholars suggest that the phrase *τινας μαθητάς* in v. 1 refers to disciples of John the Baptist, but it might also refer to Christ-believers³⁸⁰. But although the case is far from

³⁷⁸ See also Bock (2008: 591-2) who in opposition to Marshall (1988: 303) and Käsemann (1964) sees a particular danger for the community. Keener (2014: 2797) offers a very detailed discussion and summarizes: “Though Luke's focus is on Paul, Apollos was too important a figure to omit. But Apollos learns from Paul's colleagues, and Luke again portrays the relative harmony of early Christian leaders.” (:2799) We will deepen the discussion of this particular issue in the next part, see in particular Section 19.5.

³⁷⁹ Here, the Western text and Codex Bezae differ. However, we could ask if Codex Bezae is a witness for the Western text in contrast to the Alexandrian text. These differences, including relations between Corinth and Ephesus, do not add information to the social network, so we can omit them. But Barrett (2002: 286) summarizes these changes: “This may be pure fancy, but it is not impossible that the Western editor knew traditions still in his time current in Corinth.”

³⁸⁰ “Diese ‘Jünger’ [...] werden sehr unterschiedlich interpretiert. Traditionell gelten sie als Johannesjünger. Manche haben vorgeschlagen, Paulus habe sie zunächst für Christen gehalten, was sich dann jedoch als Irrtum herausstellte. Wenn man diese Jünger als Christen interpretierte, dann meistens als ‘unfertige’ Christen. In jüngerer Zeit haben manche Ausleger die ‘Jünger’ als Judenchristen interpretiert, die sich durch das Wirken des Apollos bekehrt hatten.” (Schnabel 2002: 1163) Bock

clear, we can assume that they were not Christians in Luke's opinion. Paul baptized them and the Spirit came on them (v. 19:1-7). Because the synagogue in general did not receive him well ('some became stubborn and continued in unbelief, speaking evil of the Way before the congregation...', v. 9), he continues his work in the 'hall (σχολή) of Tyrannus.'³⁸¹ (v. 9) He taught daily (καθ' ἡμέραν διαλεγόμενος) and 'all the residents of Asia heard the word of the Lord, both Jews and Greeks' (v. 10). The exact outcome of his activities is again not mentioned by Luke, but obviously it had some success. Schnabel (2002: 1167) suggests: "Wahrscheinlich ist an die Gemeinden in Laodikeia, Hieapolis und Kolossä im Lykos-Tal am oberen Mäander zu denken, die durch Epaphras gegründet wurden (Kol 1,3-8; 4,13), und vielleicht an eine Gemeinde in Milet [...]. Ob die Gemeiden in Smyrna, Pergamon, Thyatira, Sardes und Philadelphia [...] ebenfalls während dieser Zeit entstanden, lässt sich nicht sagen."

Luke mentions that 'God was doing extraordinary miracles by the hands of Paul' (v. 11) and 'this became known to all the residents of Ephesus, both Jews and Greeks. And fear fell upon them all, and the name of the Lord Jesus was extolled' (v. 17). The church grew, and God performed such extraordinary miracles through it that some Jewish exorcists tried – admittedly without success – to use the name of Jesus preached by Paul for their own miracles.

Resistance against Paul soon arose from the ranks of the worshippers of Artemis (Artemis or Diana was the patron goddess of Ephesus). Demetrius, a wealthy manufacturer of idols, succeeded – certainly not primarily for reasons of religiosity³⁸² – in inciting the people to riot. After this riot (Acts 19:21-40)³⁸³, Paul had to leave the city³⁸⁴ – not

(2008: 599) however, is voting for Christian believers whereas Keener (2014: 2815) believes "they were not Christians at all". We find reasonable arguments for all positions. The literary findings, however, suggest, that Luke wants to express not too much distance with the term 'disciples'. So whatever their belief was, we might expect – and Luke narrates – that they were open to the Gospel.

³⁸¹ "The name is not uncommon in inscriptions at Ephesus. [...] Tyrannus may have been a philosopher, otherwise unknown, or the owner of the building." (Barrett 2002: 291-2) The σχολή, however, was an arbitrary meeting point "anywhere the lecturer and the pupils agreed" (Keener 2014: 2827). Thus, in summary, we know nothing particular about Tyrannus. Zmijewski (1994: 688) raises additional questions: Is Tyrannus the owner, the lector or is the hall named after him?

³⁸² Schnabel (2002: 1169) for example thinks "Lukas schildert Demetrios als Exponent einer am Tempel nur ökonomisch interessierten Zunft".

³⁸³ It is worth to mention, that this is one of two confrontations with the Greco-Roman religion in Acts: "Paul is not really the subject of this the passage; rather, the movement he represents and the power of God associated with it are." (Bock 2008: 606)

³⁸⁴ Barrett (2002: 299) points us at a speculative issue which does not affect the social network, but should be added to receive a complete picture: "It was not only Christian disciples who were concerned for Paul's safety. There were also officials who were ready if not to take his part at least to advise caution,

without encouraging the disciples (20:1) –, and he moved by land through Macedonia to Greece where he stayed three months (v. 2), most probably for the winter³⁸⁵. Acts 20:4 mentions his travel companions: Sopater the Berean, son of Pyrrhus, Aristarchus and Secundus from Thessalonica, Gaius from Derbe, Timothy, and Tychicus and Trophimus from Asia³⁸⁶. They were waiting for Paul and a subset of his companions (‘we’ in v. 5) in Troas, who came from Philippi.

Paul sailed ‘constrained by the Spirit’ (v. 22) to Jerusalem, where he was sure to be arrested. Luke links this risk of danger to the passion predictions of Jesus: “Historically, that Paul was aware as early as his recent visit to Corinth (20:3) that hostility might await him in Jerusalem is clear from a letter he wrote from Corinth (Rom 15:31). Luke as a historian cannot fully identify Paul’s mission to Jerusalem with that of Jesus, knowing that Paul was not executed here.” (Bock 2008: 342) Thus, it is carefully arranged by Luke at this point, and the following warnings (21:4, 10.11) support this view. However, this did not deter Paul, maybe because the province of Asia had been reached with the Gospel and with Rome his next goal was already before his eyes.

In summary, the spatial setting of this journey includes the regions and provinces of Syria, Phoenicia, Lydia, Galatia, Asia in the region of Phrygia, Macedonia, Mysia, Lesbos, Chios, Samos, Ionia, Achaia, Rhodes, Lycia and afterwards Judea. With Keener (2013: 1974) and Schnabel (2012: 860-5) we can also observe: It included hostility in general and from the Jews. Luke narrates several contrasts: For Paul, these years brought success but also defeats, both joy and disappointments. In particular, he could preach but was also threatened. He could be active but was also in dangerous situations, e.g. in Ephesus (Ac 9:21–39). Maybe this gave him the opportunity for theological reflection and several of

some of the Asiarchs who were well disposed to him. The Asiarchs were undoubtedly leading figures in the province, but details of their function are obscure. There is evidence that suggests that it was from among the Asiarchs that the provincial high priest of the emperor was chosen, but the relation between these offices probably changed from time to time. Martyrdom of Polycarp 12.2 refers to the Asiarch Philip. It is only some of the Asiarchs who were friendly to Paul, and their attitude was informal and at most advisory. There is no ground for questioning the veracity of Luke’s statements”

³⁸⁵ Schnabel (2002: 1200) suggests that Paul stays in Corinth: “die meiste Zeit sicherlich in Korinth. Dies war nach nahezu übereinstimmendem Urteil der Exegeten der dritte Korinthbesuch des Apostels (2Kor 12,14; 13,1), während dem der Brief an die Christen in Rom entstanden ist. Dieser Korinthaufenthalt ist auf den Winter 56/57 zu datieren (Dezember bis Februar?).”

³⁸⁶ Bock (2008: 618) suggests: “These saints represent his success from a wide-ranging mission. Macedonia, Asia, and Galatia are mentioned. Sopater may well be a shortened form of Sosipater of Rome.” However, Keener (2014: 2954) renders several hypotheses about why Titus is omitted in this list, “but the definitive answer is likely lost to us”. In addition, we cannot simply assume that these actors are identically with those mentioned in the Pauline Letters.

From	To	Transport	
Kos, Rhodes	Patara	Ship	Ac 21:1
	Tyre		Ac 21:3
Tyre, Ptolomais	Caesarea		Ac 21:7f
Caesarea	Jerusalem		Ac 21:15

Table 13.5: Paul’s journey to Jerusalem in Acts 21.

the Pauline Letters were written during that time. Paul changes his plans several times. Finally, he wants to reach Jerusalem and Rome. The mission was again authenticated by the Holy Spirit and supported by local churches and households.

To construct the network, we rely on the information collected in Table 13.4. However, we will discuss several aspects of hostility within the next chapter with a perspective on the complete network of Acts.

13.4 Paul in Jerusalem and his Apprehension and Subsequent Custody (Ac 21:1–22:29)

It is not entirely clear where the so-called third missionary journey ends. However, from a narrative perspective we have chosen Acts 21 as the beginning of the journey to Jerusalem. Acts describes the way to Jerusalem as shown in Table 13.5.

Via Kos and Rhodes, Paul and his companions finally arrive in Patara (Ac 21:1), where they board a ship to Phoenicia and disembark in Tyre. In this church he is warned again, ‘And through the Spirit they were telling Paul not to go on to Jerusalem.’ (v. 4) Paul travels on via Tyre and Ptolomais to Caesarea (Ac 21:7f): They ‘entered the house of Philip the evangelist, who was one of the seven’³⁸⁷. There Paul is again warned by a prophet named Agabus (probably the same as in Ac 11:28). He ‘came down from Judea’³⁸⁸, ‘took Paul’s belt and bound his own feet and hands’ and in the Spirit he said:

³⁸⁷“That we find Philip here in Caesarea is not surprising. Just as Luke’s narrative leaves Saul in Tarsus and revisits him there (9:30; 11:25), and probably the narrator himself in Philippi (16:10; 20:6), so it returns to Philip in Caesarea, where an earlier evangelistic itinerary left him (8:40).” (Keener 2014: 3087-8) However, Pervo (2009: 537) sees some opposition to women in these verses. See the detailed discussion on Philip in Chapter 19.2.

³⁸⁸ Barrett (2002: 325) suggests: “Agabus is said to come from Judaea: but Caesarea was in Judaea - that is, from the Roman administrative point of view. This from Judaea may reflect Jewish use.”

‘This is how the Jews at Jerusalem will bind the man who owns this belt and deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles’ (vv. 10-12). Again, Paul is not dissuaded from going to Jerusalem. Keener (2014: 3109) emphasizes Luke’s narrative motifs: “Their concluding acceptance of God’s will (Acts 21:14) reinforces Luke’s tracing of divine design in Paul’s, like Jesus’, suffering.” (Keener 2014: 3109) We will discuss this in more detail in the next chapters.

The arrival in Jerusalem is found in Acts 21:15: They stayed in ‘the house of Mnason of Cyprus, an early disciple’ (v. 16)³⁸⁹. Paul and his fellow travelers are warmly welcomed by the Christian community in Jerusalem. Paul meets the elders of the church and James (Ac 21:17f). It is worth of notice that Paul talks with James. Peter no longer appears in Acts. They advise Paul to join four men in their Nazarite vow, since the accusation would be made against him that he was teaching apostasy from Moses and rejecting the law (Ac 21:20–21): “James is not asking Paul to revisit old decisions but to be sensitive to Jewish concerns about Jewish practice among Jewish believers.” (Bock 2008: 643)³⁹⁰ With this custom, Levitical purity could be restored (cf. Pesch 2012a: 220). Ac 21:20 also describes the Jerusalem church as ‘zealous for the law’. Lohse (2009: 259) explains the suggestion as follows:

Vorausgesetzt ist dabei ein alter Brauch sog. Nasiräer, die um des dem Gott Israels geschuldeten Dienstes willen jede Verunreinigung mieden, sich des Genusses von Wein enthielten und auch das Haar nicht schnitten. Am Ende der gesetzten Frist fand dann am Tempel eine Opferhandlung statt, deren Kosten zu bestreiten als verdienstliches Werk angesehen wurde.

Perhaps there were enmities between the Jews in Jerusalem and the Jerusalem church, but also a clear distance between some Jewish Christians in Jerusalem and Paul (cf. Schnelle 2009: 386). The fact that the collection is not further discussed in Acts is probably another indication of these tensions. Keener (2014: 3114) emphasizes a different point: “Disagreement did not require hostility, nor does Luke’s perspective on unity require him

³⁸⁹ Again, this person is a hidden actor. Being ‘an early disciple’ may suggest, that he was following Jesus before his crucifixion: “It is not impossible that he was among the early Cypriot believers who were forced to leave Jerusalem after Stephen’s execution and who preached the gospel in Antioch (11:20). This would explain why Paul and his travel companions stayed with him in Jerusalem.” (Schnabel 2012: 859)

³⁹⁰ There is an ongoing discussion about this passage. Pervo (2009: 543) for instance sees a “conflict” between Paul in Jerusalem and the rest of Acts: It “shows that for Luke the Jewish mission, in the sense of a mission to Jews who will remain observant, belongs to the past.” However, our analysis in the next section begs to differ. For a detailed discussion, see Schnabel (2012: 874).

to suppress disagreement.” We will discuss this in more detail in the next chapter with methods from SNA³⁹¹

The always close, yet also sometimes tense cooperation between Paul and some actors in the church in Jerusalem seems to have given way to a clear opposition at this point. It is interesting that Acts reports no attempt by the church in Jerusalem to free Paul after his subsequent imprisonment. Nevertheless, it remains unclear how the church could have done so. However, Schnelle makes the judgment that at the end of the fundamental epoch of early Christianity there is no unity but divisiveness.³⁹² At least this is a loose end to which Luke may have pointed with his narrative.

Acts is the only available source for this event. Thus, as mentioned earlier, this account is controversial. But even a critic of Acts like Lohse thinks it possible that James made such a mediation proposal, and likewise that Paul accepted it for he was disposed to meet the Jews as a Jew, and those who are under the law as one under the law (1 Cor 9:20), in order to win them who are under the law³⁹³.

³⁹¹ Another widely discussed issue is the collection for the Jerusalem church which seems to be mentioned only in Paul’s speech to the governor Felix in Acts: ‘Now after several years I came to bring alms to my nation and to present offerings.’ (Ac 24:17) Thus, it remains unclear whether Paul’s fear mentioned in his Letter to the Romans came to pass, and the ministry was not welcome to the saints. Lohse suspects that assuming Luke, writing some decades after the events, evidently was unaware of the importance Paul had attached to this sign of solidarity of the Gentile Christians with the church in Jerusalem: Das es den “Berichterstatte, der einige Jahrzehnte nach den Ereignissen schrieb, [...] offensichtlich nicht bekannt [war], welche Bedeutung Paulus diesem Zeichen der Solidarität der Heidenchristen mit der Mutterkirche in Jerusalem beigemessen hatte” (Lohse 2009: 259).

But if the collection is thus relegated to the background, it is necessary to clarify why, according to Acts, Paul makes the journey to Jerusalem. It is his personal decision to be in Jerusalem (Ac 19:21). However, Schnelle collects three possible explanations: First, it was possible that the collection was received only with great difficulty and perhaps only unofficially. Further, the collection could have been used gradually or partially in connection with the above-mentioned Nazirite. A last possibility is that the collection was simply not accepted. Schnelle considers this possibility the most likely: Many things speak for the fact that the early church rejected the collection, but Luke kept silent about this failure because it did not correspond to his ecclesiology of a unified church of Jews and Gentiles: “Vieles spricht dafür, dass die Urgemeinde die *Kollekte ablehnte*, Lukas aber über diesen Misserfolg schwieg, weil er nicht seiner Ekklesiologie einer einheitlichen Kirche aus Juden und Heiden entsprach.” (Schnelle 2009: 387). Reasons for the rejection, for example, were said to be consideration for the synagogues and the strong support that Jewish Christians who were strict adherents of the Mosaic law possessed in Jerusalem.

³⁹² “Am Ende der grundlegenden Epoche des frühen Christentums steht nicht die Einheit, sondern die Entzweiung!” (Schnelle 2009: 388) Whether one must or can follow this opinion without further ado would also have to be judged in light of early church history. Paul’s other letters, however, speak strongly to his opinion in this regard.

³⁹³ “Denn er war dazu bereit, den Juden wie ein Jude zu begegnen und denen, die unter dem Gesetz sind, wie einer unter dem Gesetz, obwohl er selbst nicht unter dem Gesetz als zum Heil notwendigen Weg stand – um sie zu gewinnen, die unter dem Gesetz sind (1. Kor. 9,20).” (Lohse 2009: 259)

Ac 21:26–27 describes the execution of James’ proposal³⁹⁴. However, when the men went with Paul to the temple, a disturbance was stirred up by Jews from the province of Asia. They accused him of leading Greeks into the temple and thus desecrating the holy place and of teaching “against the people, the law and the temple” (Bock 2008: 651) Entering the inner court of the temple was forbidden to Gentiles on penalty of death (cf. Lohse 2009: 260). In verse 29, Luke explicitly expresses that this was a false accusation.

This disturbance that arose eventually led to the intervention of the Roman soldiers (Acts 21:31-36). They took Paul into custody, both for his protection and to verify what was happening.

Acts describes the trial of guilt and innocence as a lengthy process with several stations and an end in Rome. It includes two major defense speeches by Paul, one before Jewish listeners (Ac 22:1–21; ‘I am a Jew, from Tarsus in Cilicia, a citizen of no obscure city. I beg you, permit me to speak to the people.’ v. 21:39), about to be flogged, he again refers to his Roman citizenship (21:25), and before the Jewish king Agrippa and the Roman governor (Ac 26:1–29). This is a strong literary foreshadowing that Paul’s missionary travels are coming to an end. Now he is under arrest. Keener (2014: 3159) emphasizes the turn to the Gentile world: “Acts enters its final phase, turning again from Jerusalem to the Gentile world, this time to the heart of the real world of Luke’s audience—namely Rome.” While this turn is a final one, it is not the first turn in this direction, as we have discussed previously.

13.5 Paul’s Journey to Rome (Ac 22:30–28:31)

This section begins with Paul before the Jewish Council (Ac 22:30–23:11). Paul states that he is a Pharisee and refers to the hope and resurrection : “Brothers, I am a Pharisee, a son of Pharisees. It is with respect to the hope and the resurrection of the dead that I am on trial.” (v. 6) The original charges are not considered. Thus, as Bock (2008:

³⁹⁴ As to the question whether James’ proposal was a trap for Paul, Keener (2014: 3139) states: “Against scholars who think that James and his colleagues sent Paul into a trap, these leaders themselves held a precarious position vis-à-vis their enemies, although insecure for reasons other than those affecting Paul. Apparently, James and the Judean Jesus movement were well liked by many of the people (cf. Ats 2:47; Jos. *Ant.* 20.201), but they also had to remain sensitive, since they had some high placed enemies who could make their situation tenuous (cf. Jos. *Ant.* 20.200).”

667) states, if “Paul can convince the tribune [Claudius Lysias] that this is but a religious dispute, the Romans will stay out of it.” Afterwards, in vv. 12-22 Luke narrates the uncovering of a plot against Paul. This plot was developed by more than forty οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι (v. 13). It is uncovered by the son of Paul’s sister (v. 16)³⁹⁵. He is sent to the tribune (χιλίαρχος), who sends Paul with ‘two hundred soldiers, with seventy horsemen and two hundred spearmen’ (v. 23) to Caesarea to Felix the Governor. He sends a letter, and his opinion is part of Luke’s narrative: ‘I found that he was being accused about questions of their law, but charged with nothing deserving death or imprisonment.’ (v. 29) Keener (2014: 3319) states that Luke tries to convey a positive perspective on the Romans, and although this is doubtful – Keener himself adds: “Although this is not always possible, Luke seems to pursue it whenever he can.” – it clearly shows the new focus on the Romans in general. Paul continues to talk about the Gospel, but the reactions are varying:

When we combine this section with the previous one, we see an array of characters reflecting diverse responses to the gospel. The Jewish leadership is mostly hostile, though some are willing to entertain the ideas Paul sets forth. For the most part, the Romans are strictly functional in their reaction. They are more interested in living through and carrying out the duties of their everyday lives than seriously engaging what Paul is setting forth. (Bock 2008: 684)

What changed after ‘Felix was succeeded by Porcius Festus’ (v. 24:27) is that he wanted to close the case as soon as possible. Consulting with the ‘the chief priests and the principal men of the Jews’ (v. 25:2) he offered to transfer the case to Jerusalem (v. 9). But Paul insisted on his Roman citizenship: ‘I am standing before Caesar’s tribunal, where I ought to be tried. To the Jews I have done no wrong, as you yourself know very well.’ (vv. 10-11) And Festus had no choice: ‘To Caesar you have appealed; to Caesar you shall go.’ (v. 12)³⁹⁶. The following hearing of evidences before Agrippa and Bernice ends with

³⁹⁵ Again, we have no further information about her. However, Barrett (2002: 355) summarizes: “Paul had friends in Jerusalem, even if only those whom he brought with him. Again, if it is correct that Paul spent his youth in Jerusalem (22.3) it is not impossible that a married sister lived there.” Keener (2014: 3309) agrees on Luke’s silence and adds: “Beyond Luke’s report, we can only speculate about Paul’s relatives in Jerusalem. Romans 16:7 is not likely to help.”

³⁹⁶ Schnabel (2002: 1205) assumes, that Paul was expecting to be acquitted: “Er stand schon mehrfach vor einem römischen Gericht und wurde stets freigesprochen. Weil er befürchtete, er könne vom Prokurator gerichtlich seinen jüdischen Gegnern ausgeliefert werden, die dann als Ankläger und zugleich als Richter fungieren würden, stellte er sicher, dass er an einem neutraleren Ort einen fairen Prozess bekommt.” However, Bock (2008: 699) sees a slightly different literary connotation: “The scene paints Festus as competent and engaged in his role, and Paul as innocent. Still, again against the tenor of the examination, Paul continues to be held in custody.”

Agrippa saying to Festus: ‘This man could have been set free if he had not appealed to Caesar.’ (v. 26:32) It might be a strategic reaction or simply Paul was not left with another option as Barrett (2002: 375) suggests: “By appealing to the emperor he took the case not merely out of Jerusalem but out of Judaea and assured himself (as far as there could be any assurance) of a safe passage to Rome”. Schnabel summarizes the missionary impacts of his apprehension and the change in his audience to Roman officials:

Paulus war während seiner zweijährigen Gefangenschaft in Cäsarea in seiner geographischen Reichweite eingeschränkt, vor allem konnte er die geplante Spanien-Mission nicht in Angriff nehmen. Aber er hatte mit höchsten Vertretern der römischen kaiserlichen Verwaltung Kontakt, was seit der Zypern-Mission nicht mehr der Fall gewesen war, sieht man von dem kurzen Zwischenfall in Korinth und dem Auftritt vor dem dortigen Statthalter Gallio ab. Er hatte Kontakt mit römischen Soldaten, Hauptleuten und Obersten (Apg 21,32.37), er bezeugte das Evangelium vor zwei römischen Statthaltern und vor dem jüdischen König (Schnabel 2002: 1208).

However, this implicit network of relations and links between Paul and the Roman administration cannot be easily included in the network. But in the next chapter, we will analyze if SNA provides implicit hints for this network.

It is certain that Paul, as a Roman citizen, had a right to present his case to an imperial court. Thus, he will have been brought from Caesarea to Rome towards the end of the 50s of the first century C.E.. The prisoners started their journey by ship under the supervision of a Roman officer. During this journey, there were several contacts to followers of Jesus (e.g. Ac 28:15), which, however, are only mentioned implicitly. Thus, we may well add relations between Paul and churches, but not to single actors. Stops were Malta³⁹⁷, Syracuse, Rhegium and Puteoli. Afterwards they went on foot via Forum Appii and Res-Tabernae, where they meet Jesus-followers, to Rome. See also Table 13.6.

The portrayal of Paul in the section Ac 27:1–28:16, describing his travel to Rome, is interesting. He appears not only as an alerter of impending disaster (27:10, 31), but also as a comforter (27:21ff; 27:34). His mission to appear before the emperor is also

³⁹⁷ Wherever this island is located, we need to rely on Luke’s naming. However, Barrett (2002: 414) summarizes: “The island has usually been taken to be that now known as Malta, but an eighth-century writer thought rather of an island in the Adriatic now known as Meleda, Melite, or Mljet, in antiquity as Cephallenia, and this has been taken up by some modern writers. To go in detail into all the arguments, nautical, topographical and archaeological, that have been adduced on either side is impossible; the most important points will be mentioned in the notes as they arise.” See in particular Rapske et al. (1994) who collects arguments for Malta.

From	To	Transport	
Caesarea	Sidon	Ship	Ac 27:3
Sidon	Myra		Ac 27:5
<i>we arrived with difficulty off Cnidus, sailed under the lee of Crete off Salmone</i>			Ac 27:7–8
Fair Havens, near Lasea			Ac 27:8
<i>Shipwreck at Malta</i>			Ac 28:1
Malta	Syracuse		Ac 28:12
Syracuse	Rhegium		Ac 28:13
Rhegium	Puteoli	Ac 28:13	

Table 13.6: Paul’s journey to Rome which ends with ‘And the brothers there, when they heard about us, came as far as the Forum of Appius and Three Taverns to meet us’ in Ac 28:15.

confirmed once again by an angel of God (27,23f). In any case, he continues to preach: “Im Verlauf des [...] Prozesses zeigt sich, dass dieser sich jede ihm bietende Gelegenheit zur Verkündigung des Evangeliums wahrnahm.” (Schnabel 2002: 1205-6) But it is not clear whether Luke really portrays Paul as leading the journey or if it is rather God’s will leading the events³⁹⁸

The two miracles in Acts 28 – the snakebite and the healing of Publius’ father – are also significant. In Ac 28:3–6, Paul is mistaken by the locals for a murderer because of the snakebite. By shaking off the snake without harm, his innocence is proven. The healing of Publius’ father in 28:7-10 occurs through prayer.³⁹⁹

Schnelle points out two purposes of Paul’s account: it was God’s will that the gospel arrive in Rome with Paul, and Paul – who had no longer any social reputation as a prisoner – would remain a righteous man before men and before God, and could freely preach the gospel in Rome (cf. Schnelle 2009: 390). The first point is valid, for without God’s will Paul might not have arrived in Rome. The second point is to be questioned at least critically. Is it really important for the proclamation at this point that Paul be judged to be righteous by the people? The report of Acts and also his letters show that

³⁹⁸ As Bock (2008: 726) points out: “One of the main themes of the account, beyond God’s sovereign protection, is that Paul can influence events even as a prisoner.”

³⁹⁹ Pesch concludes that Luke wanted to show what honors Paul still received from Gentiles shortly before reaching his destination of Rome (cf. Pesch 2012a: 299f). In contrast, Bock (2008: 728) sees an exaggeration here: “Paul’s stature as a figure thereby grows, for his survival indicates that God has marked him out as an unusual man, a hero in the best sense of the term. Finally, those who listen and follow the message of Paul experience deliverance, a symbol of what his real message also brings.” Thus, it is rather divine confirmation. However, others totally disagree (e.g. Barrett 2002: 398), but we refer to Chapter 18.2 for a further discussion of Luke’s portrayal of Paul.

Paul was not judged as righteous by some people and was even persecuted because of that. We do not consider this aspect to be a primary goal of Luke's portrayal of Paul, see also Chapter 18.2.

In Rome, Paul was allowed to live alone but under guard. This stay in a *libera custodia* (house arrest) was a legal option of Roman citizens awaiting trial (cf. Lohse 2009: 264). See also Schnabel (2002: 1212-3) for a wider discussion with focus on the Pauline Letters.

The narrative of Acts breaks off shortly after Paul's arrival in Rome, but refers to the period of two years during which Paul had ministered in Rome (Ac 28:30). Luke concludes: 'He lived there two whole years at his own expense, and welcomed all who came to him, proclaiming the kingdom of God and teaching about the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness and without hindrance.' (Ac 28:30,31). Here, again, we see an implicit hint for a larger network hidden in the narrative: Who were *all* who came to him? We can expect Jews, Gentiles, and also co-workers. This hint may well serve as another narrative bridge towards the Pauline Letters.

Before that, Luke only mentions a meeting with the leaders of the Jews (Ac 28:17-22), who declare their interest, a renewed meeting (28:23-28) in which the disunity of the Jews is described. There is a significant difference in scope between the narratives of Paul's journey, trial, and imprisonment and his stay in Rome.

The trial against Paul is not mentioned in Acts, so it does not seem to be relevant for Luke. It is also interesting that, although there was already a community of Jesus-followers in Rome, Paul initially sought contact with the synagogue (Ac 28:17ff). Does Luke's tendency, often described in literature, to absolve the Romans of complicity in Jesus' death shine through here? Does the report of Acts want to give the impression that Paul founded the church in Rome⁴⁰⁰? Another question is risen by Barrett (2002: 421):

There are further problems. For a long time Paul had been regarded as the enemy of Judaism. The Sanhedrin had done their best to destroy him, regarding him (conscientiously and understandably) as an enemy of the people. Is it

⁴⁰⁰ This is most likely according to a social network perspective the wrong question, since this issue rather highlights the mobility of people and in particular the spread of the nascent Christian movement: Mobility is "ein Faktor, ohne den sie nicht die Wirkung gehabt hätte, die sie hatte: die Mobilität der Christen und Christinnen" (Reinbold 2000: 310).

credible that no whisper of this should have reached the Jewish community in Rome? And is it likely that Jews in Rome should have no first-hand knowledge of or contact with the Christians, some of whom were themselves Jews?

The answer must probably remain unclear⁴⁰¹. That this abrupt end of Acts led and still leads to various speculations is understandable. The question remains, however, whether what is missing would be theologically relevant. We will present a detailed SNA perspective on this question with data of Luke-Acts in Chapter 16.

To construct the network, we rely on the information collected in Tables 13.5 and 13.6. However, we will discuss several aspects of SNA and spatiality within the next Chapter with a perspective on the complete network of Acts.

⁴⁰¹ Regarding the situation in Rome, Schnelle makes four points: The Jewish-Christian part of the congregation had been greatly weakened by the Claudius edict, which led to the separation from the synagogues. This also resulted in Christians now being perceived as a separate religion. He refers to Seneca, who declares the Christians as enemies of the Jews. That in any case, the Jews were not affected in the persecutions of the Christians was a success of the strategy to actively separate from the Christians. The community in Rome must also have grown quickly, as Tacitus wrote about the persecution of Christians under Nero (cf. Schnelle 2009: 411f).

14 Social Network Analysis of Acts

In this section, we will combine all information exegetically collected in the last chapters and provide a social network analysis of Acts 1-24. As we have seen from the exegetical considerations in the previous chapters, in the second part of Acts, Luke changes his narrative perspective. From a general Jerusalem-centered view, he is now aiming at the center of the Roman Empire. He is mainly focusing on Paul and his mission, writing about his – at least – three journeys and his changing focus on the Jews and the Gentiles. Luke repeatedly uses the motifs of choosing, in particular by the Holy Spirit, sermon, healing, and facing false disciples, danger and suffering. It is not only the spatial setting, but the whole narrative that is focused on bringing good news to the end of the earth as we will show in Section 14.5 – although the narrative itself focuses on a limited spatial environment.

In this section, we will combine all information exegetically collected in the last chapters and continue our analysis of Ac 1–12 presented in Chapter 12. As we have seen, not all questions can be answered directly. Thus, this chapter is organized as follows:

- We will present an overview about statistical values, networks structures and the output of community detection approaches.
- The first section is dedicated to centrality measures, the second section covers the Spanning Tree analysis.
- In section three we present the results of community detection approaches. While some suggestions for interpretations are made, the in-depth analysis, especially referring back to the biblical text, is presented afterwards.
- The last sections are dedicated to our initial research questions: How does Luke describe communities and how can his spatial environment be analyzed with SNA

approaches? We will focus especially on the communities, structural and spatial analysis, and the inclusive perspective on the community of Jesus-followers.

However, some questions, for example on particular actors and co-workers, will still remain unanswered and we refer to part III.

In the first sections, we will collect hypotheses. Although we will provide evidence in support for some of them in the later sections, we will nevertheless present them at the earliest possible occasion.

14.1 Centrality Measures

It is obvious that Luke's narrative focus shifts to Paul. However, against Filson (1970: 76) we may well conclude that Barnabas, Timothy and Silas are also important actors according to Luke. SNA underlines this. Peter is a prominent actor that remains silent, others show up on Luke's stage, for example James. Philip, as another example, is one of the re-occurring characters.

Thus, at the beginning, we will provide a short presentation of the individual centrality values and how to interpret these values. Further information on centrality measures can be found at Freeman, Carrington et al. or Collar. Centrality measures allow us to draw conclusions about a person's position in a social network. The possibilities for influencing the entire network that arise from a high centrality measure of individual actors depend on the type of measure chosen.

For a better overview of the centrality measures, we present a complete illustration of the network with BC-values in Figure 14.1 and a selective overview in Table 14.1. There are several changes in comparison to Acts 1-12 in Chapter 12 which need to be discussed.

First, *betweenness centrality* (BC) measures the number of times a node is on a shortest path between other nodes. Thus, it measures whether a node is a bridge between different nodes in the network. This can be used to identify persons who can influence or break information flows in the network. While in Acts 1-12 Peter had the highest betweenness centrality, now Paul has by far the highest value (5105). Peter follows with

Name	Sex	Background	Group	CC	BC	HC	EC
Paul	male	Jew		0.78125		0.870667	1
Simon Peter	male	Jew	Apostles	0.568182	1094.550554	0.645333	0.844247
Barnabas	male	Jew		0.573394	623.395087	0.664667	0.62972
Philip 93.379(3)	male	Jew	Deacons	0.560538	591.957773	0.633333	0.823985
Silas	male	Jew		0.510204	176.733981	0.572	0.185763
Aquila	male	Jew		0.337838	130.339869	0.3792	0.029791
Apollos	male	Jew		0.336927	129.885504	0.3752	0.026839
Ethiopian eunuch	male	Proselyte		0.362319	124	0.3852	0.033943
Lydia	female	Gentile		0.446429	124	0.473333	0.057351
John Mark	male	Jew		0.486381	104.44037	0.527333	0.145345
Timotheus	male	Jew		0.426621	100.557066	0.492	0.156295
Agabus	male	Jew		0.510204	89.835989	0.548	0.240123
Priscilla	female	Jew		0.469925	87.557209	0.509333	0.088081
John	male	Jew	Apostles	0.538793	77.380909	0.597333	0.801097
Aristarchus	male	?		0.408497	43.420951	0.464	0.137023
Mnason	male	?		0.471698	37.384161	0.509333	0.130853
Sopater	male	?		0.400641	25.127645	0.454667	0.132298
Andrew	male	Jew	Apostles	0.534188	14.41472	0.592	0.796889
Bartholomew	male	Jew	Apostles	0.534188	14.41472	0.592	0.796889
James 93.158(1)	male	Jew	Apostles	0.534188	14.41472	0.592	0.796889
James 93.158(3)	male	Jew	Apostles	0.534188	14.41472	0.592	0.796889
Judas	male	Jew	Apostles	0.534188	14.41472	0.592	0.796889
Judas Iscariot	male	Jew	Apostles	0.534188	14.41472	0.592	0.796889
Matthew	male	Jew	Apostles	0.534188	14.41472	0.592	0.796889
Matthias	male	Jew	Apostles	0.534188	14.41472	0.592	0.796889
Philip 93.379(1)	male	Jew	Apostles	0.534188	14.41472	0.592	0.796889
Simon the Zealot	male	Jew	Apostles	0.534188	14.41472	0.592	0.796889
Thomas	male	Jew	Apostles	0.534188	14.41472	0.592	0.796889
Gaius 93.83 (2)	male	?		0.398089	13.692194	0.449333	0.129596
Secundus	male	?		0.398089	13.692194	0.449333	0.129596
Trophimus	male	?		0.398089	13.692194	0.449333	0.129596
Tychicus	male	?		0.398089	13.692194	0.449333	0.129596
Nicanor	male	Jew	Deacons	0.527426	5.587422	0.582667	0.753889
Nicolaus	male	Proselyte	Deacons	0.527426	5.587422	0.582667	0.753889
Parmenas	male	Jew	Deacons	0.527426	5.587422	0.582667	0.753889
Prochorus	male	Jew	Deacons	0.527426	5.587422	0.582667	0.753889
Stephen	male	Jew	Deacons	0.527426	5.587422	0.582667	0.753889
Timon	male	Jew	Deacons	0.527426	5.587422	0.582667	0.753889
Rhoda	female	Jew	Women	0.375375	4.453582	0.403867	0.043389
Mary - 93.253(6)	female	Jew		0.368732	3.804762	0.3988	0.036448
Sergius Paulus	male	Gentile		0.451264	0.97619	0.482667	0.091371
Judas 93.173(5)	male	Jew		0.464684	0.560334	0.490667	0.117851
Women	female	Jew	Women	0.401929	0	0.480533	0.659814
Aeneas	male	Jew		0.365497	0	0.391867	0.038352
Ananias	male	Jew		0.443262	0	0.465333	0.046808
Bar-Jesus	male	Gentile		0.446429	0	0.473333	0.080182
Cornelius	male	Gentile		0.372024	0	0.3972	0.042296
Crispus	male	Jew		0.451264	0	0.473333	0.053227
Damaris	female	Gentile		0.443262	0	0.468	0.049974
Dionysius	male	Gentile		0.443262	0	0.468	0.049974
James 93.158(2)	male	Jew		0.523013	0	0.574667	0.704014
Jason 93.163(1)	male	Jew		0.44484	0	0.472	0.060161
Josef Barsabbas	male	Jew		0.389408	0	0.4492	0.448007
Lucius	male	Jew		0.448029	0	0.477333	0.085988
Manahen	male	Jew		0.448029	0	0.477333	0.085988
Mary - 93.253(1)	female	Jew	Women	0.401929	0	0.480533	0.659814
Publius	male	Gentile		0.440141	0	0.46	0.0442
Simeon	male	Jew		0.448029	0	0.477333	0.085988
Simon	male	Jew		0.365497	0	0.391867	0.03866
Tabitha	female	Jew		0.365497	0	0.391867	0.03866
Titius Justus	male	Proselyte		0.451264	0	0.473333	0.053227

Table 14.1: Various statistical values on the social network of Acts 1-28. Only persons are listed here, see also Tables 14.2 and 14.3. Indicated are the *closeness centrality* (CC), *betweenness centrality* (BC), *harmonic closeness centrality* (GC), and *Eigen centrality* (EC).

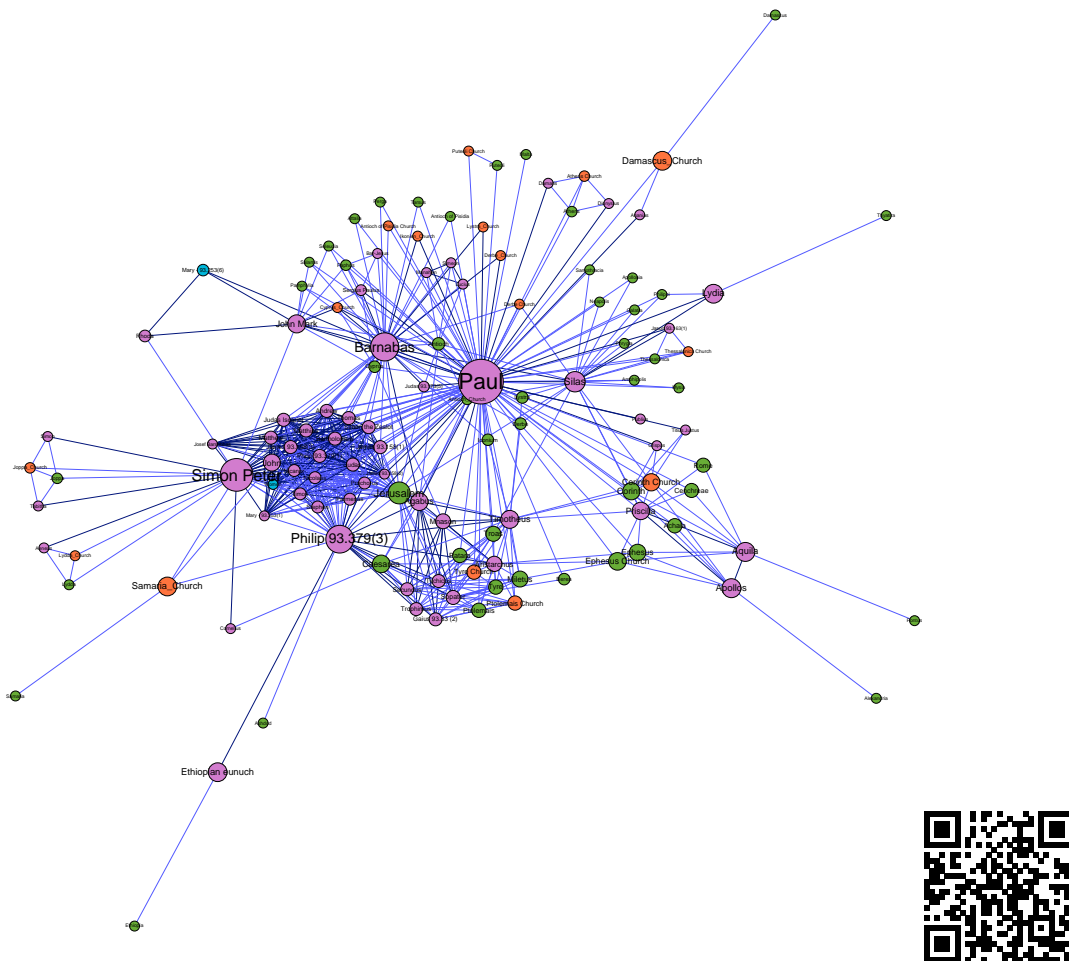


Figure 14.1: The social network of Acts 1-28. The node size is linked to BC values. The node color is linked to the type: actors (purple), locations (green), churches (orange), and groups (blue).

(1095) and it is worth taking notice that Barnabas and Philip have a similarly high value. While Silas has a high value (177) interestingly Aquila, Apollos, the Ethiopian Eunuch and Lydia follow. Only John Mark and Timotheus are measured higher than 100. The other Apostles have a value of around 14 and only a few actors have a higher measure: Agabus, Priscilla, John (the Apostle), Aristarchus, Mnason, and Sopater.

In Figure 14.2 the direct neighborhood of both Paul and Simon Peter are illustrated. It is striking that both actors cover large areas of the network, but there are still a considerable number of actors which are not *directly* related to both according to Luke. They are mainly related to Philip or refer to origins of several actors (e.g. Alexandria or Pontus). We will consider this within our first analysis and especially within the detailed analysis in Section 19.

The *closeness centrality* (CC) is key for understanding the close connectedness of the community; it measures nodes based on their proximity to all other nodes in the network. Thus, it measures shortest paths to other nodes. Actors that are in particularly good position to influence the network have a high value. CC shows a similar output to BC, but ranks Barnabas higher than Peter. It tends to measure women as less important for the network but in general the range for CC is between 0.6 and 0.4. Thus, we may assume the lower values to be significant, see for example the CC values for Aquila, Apollos, Gaius, etc. The same holds for *harmonic closeness centrality*. We refer to our detail analysis of particular actors in Chapter 19. In general, we can again see a *stable* network with a great value of closeness. The greater variance of values may be an indication for (a) a wider spread of the community or (b) fraction. We will continue the discussion about groups, communities, and their importance in combination with other analysis in Section 14.3 and continue with some basic observations.

It is very important to note that this picture changes when considering the *Eigen centrality* (EC). EC helps to identify actors who have great influence on the whole network and who are important for emergent trends. Here Paul has the highest value (1). Peter (0.844), Philip (0.82), and John (0.80) have similar values. The least values are assigned to Apollos (0.03) and Aquila (0.03). In general, the EC illustrates the ongoing continuity within the network: The Apostles, the Deacons, Jesus' family and in particular the women and Mary are still important actors within the network. We will notice the following names for a later discussion: Silas, Aquila, Apollos, Lydia, John Mark, Timothy, Agabus, Priscilla, Mary and John.

To sum up, as an intermediate result, women are not less important in Acts in general, the results depend on the centrality values considered, and we will continue this discussion in a later section with a more detailed analysis. Second, the focus of the narrative shifts from Peter to Paul. This is not a great surprise, although the analysis does not indicate that the other actors are no longer important for Luke. Third, the focus shifts from Jerusalem (with the Apostles and Deacons) to the Eastern Mediterranean world and the Jewish Diaspora network. We will thus continue our first analysis with locations and churches and in particular present those considered important to create new research questions for further analysis.

In Table 14.2 we present an overview of different centrality values for locations, in

Name	CC	BC	HC	EC
Jerusalem	0.560538	241.523306	0.636	0.872039
Caesarea	0.502008	91.750291	0.534667	0.171543
Corinth	0.464684	82.384006	0.5	0.081197
Ephesus	0.461255	66.772679	0.489333	0.06422
Miletus	0.471698	54.658894	0.505333	0.094652
Troas	0.464684	39.276391	0.501333	0.100281
Achaia	0.44964	29.399897	0.469333	0.046328
Ptolemais	0.464684	28.77657	0.501333	0.095871
Patara	0.462963	28.77657	0.497333	0.090806
Tyre	0.464684	28.77657	0.501333	0.095871
Cenchreae	0.452899	25.585155	0.474667	0.051444
Rome	0.452899	25.585155	0.474667	0.051444
Antioch	0.469925	9.395098	0.508	0.122326
Lystra	0.448029	4.046543	0.474667	0.088584
Derbe	0.448029	4.046543	0.474667	0.088584
Cyprus	0.462963	3.920203	0.492	0.09349
Berea	0.443262	3.714221	0.465333	0.050723
Iconium	0.446429	3.350353	0.470667	0.079109
Paphos	0.44964	0.392857	0.478667	0.08693
Joppa	0.366569	0.333333	0.395867	0.040625
Athens	0.44484	0.333333	0.472	0.052536
Seleucia	0.446429	0	0.470667	0.078343
Malta	0.440141	0	0.46	0.0442
Phrygia	0.441696	0	0.464	0.053675
Neapolis	0.441696	0	0.464	0.053675
Lydda	0.365497	0	0.391867	0.038352
Damascus	0.308642	0	0.319733	0.002608
Thessalonica	0.44484	0	0.472	0.060161
Galatia	0.441696	0	0.464	0.053675
Samaria	0.27533	0	0.289067	0.004422
Amphipolis	0.441696	0	0.464	0.053675
Salamis	0.446429	0	0.470667	0.078343
Mysia	0.441696	0	0.464	0.053675
Philippi	0.44484	0	0.469333	0.056798
Ethiopia	0.266525	0	0.278	0.001844
Antioch of Pisidia	0.443262	0	0.465333	0.071249
Pontus	0.253036	0	0.269467	0.00231
Puteoli	0.441696	0	0.464	0.046723
Pamphylia	0.446429	0	0.470667	0.078343
Apollonia	0.441696	0	0.464	0.053675
Thyatira	0.309406	0	0.321067	0.003123
Tarsus	0.443262	0	0.465333	0.071249
Samothracia	0.441696	0	0.464	0.053675
Perga	0.443262	0	0.465333	0.071249
Ashdod	0.360231	0	0.379867	0.03337
Alexandria	0.252525	0	0.268133	0.002128
Attalia	0.443262	0	0.465333	0.071249

Table 14.2: Various statistical values on locations in the social network of Acts 1-28. Indicated are the *closeness centrality* (CC), *betweenness centrality* (BC), *harmonic closeness centrality* (GC), and *Eigen centrality* (EC).

Name	CC	BC	HC	EC
Samaria Church	0.378788	124	0.409867	0.099959
Damascus Church	0.44484	124	0.469333	0.047339
Ephesus Church	0.471698	91.821669	0.5	0.068968
Corinth Church	0.464684	82.384006	0.5	0.081197
Tyre Church	0.464684	28.77657	0.501333	0.095871
Ptolemais Church	0.464684	28.77657	0.501333	0.095871
Athens Church	0.44484	0.333333	0.472	0.052536
Joppa Church	0.366569	0.333333	0.395867	0.040625
Antioch Church	0.461255	0.6	0.490667	0.103336
Puteoli Church	0.441696	0	0.464	0.046723
Cyprus Church	0.448029	0	0.474667	0.083025
Derbe Church	0.443262	0	0.465333	0.071249
Lystra Church	0.443262	0	0.465333	0.071249
Lydda Church	0.365497	0	0.391867	0.038352
Thessalonica Church	0.44484	0	0.472	0.060161
Ikonien Church	0.443262	0	0.465333	0.071249
Antioch of Pisidia Church	0.443262	0	0.465333	0.071249
Derbe Church	0.44484	0	0.469333	0.080724

Table 14.3: Various statistical values on particular named churches in the social network of Acts 1-28. Indicated are the *closeness centrality* (CC), *betweenness centrality* (BC), *harmonic closeness centrality* (GC), and *Eigen centrality* (EC).

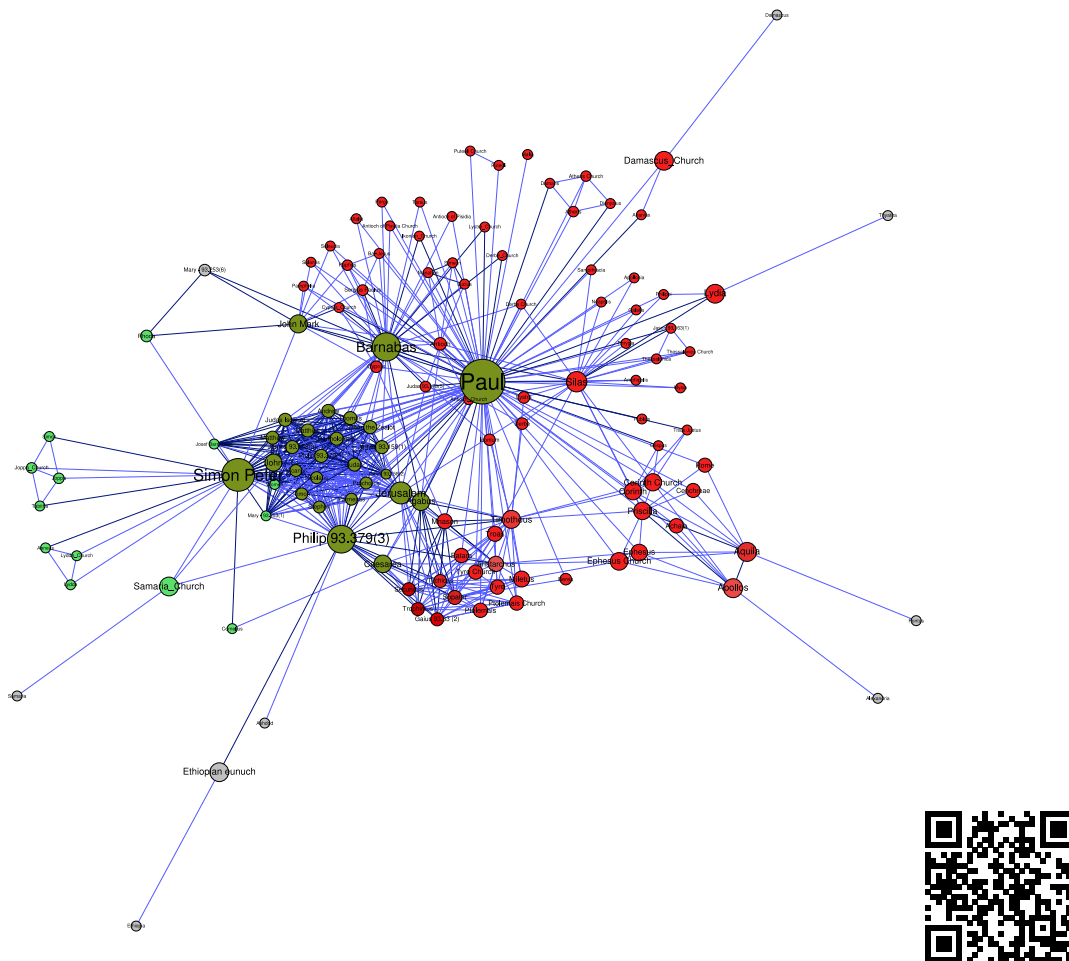


Figure 14.2: The social network of Acts 1-28. The red nodes indicate the neighborhood of Paul, the green nodes the neighborhood of Simon Peter – mixed colors refers to nodes in both neighborhoods.

Table 14.3 for churches. Here, we only add those churches or congregations which have been founded or named particularly in Acts. There is no doubt that Jerusalem is *still* the most important location in this network: The BC, CC and EC values are striking. The BC values in general are not surprising, forming a descending list of important locations within Acts.

The analysis of CC indicates a well-connected network of locations. Significantly less connected are Joppa, Samaria, Ethiopia, Pontus, Thyatira and Alexandria.

This is surprising, since the church in Samaria is as important with respect to BC as Damascus – whilst its CC value is again lower. Samaria plays a minor role in Acts⁴⁰².

⁴⁰² While some scholars are mainly interested in the sources for Luke’s composition (cf. Dickerson 1997), others try to find biases within different authors: “This diverse situation has been understood to mean that the milieu of Matthew was against the Samaritans, John’s community was positive, and Luke plus

Damascus, a large multicultural city, had a more significant role with respect to trade and economy. As discussed in section 11.3.3, Luke knows of a community of Jesus-followers in Damascus (Ac 9), but its origins remain unclear (cf. Schnabel 2002: 682-684). A lot of knowledge about different locations and churches is speculative, since we have only very limited historical sources. Nevertheless, the statistical analysis of Acts may give additional hints about narrative emphases of some locations. Thus, we will now continue with a detailed analysis of those places considered important centers of early Christian mission, despite Jerusalem's prominence. In Section 14.5 we present a general overview of Luke's perspective on spatiality, its changes and in particular some network illustrations of some locations.

While *Antioch* has an average BC value of 9.40 and a solid CC value of 0.47, the church has a low BC value of 0.6 and an average CC value of 0.46, because we have only very limited information about the nascent Christian movement in Antioch (cf. Schnabel 2002: 1429) it may be that the church was founded not long after Pentecost, see Ac 11:19, 13:1.

Corinth is an important church within the network (BC 82.38, CC 0.46) and also a significant location (BC 82.38, CC 0.46). Luke describes the founding of the church of Corinth (Ac 18:1–17), where Paul remained for almost two years. Here he meets the Jews Aquila his wife Priscilla. Luke does not portray them as founders of the church in Corinth (cf. Schnabel 2002: 1136). However, Corinth was the first place where Paul stayed for a longer time during his travels. There are several reasons why Corinth was an important city for Paul: due to “its political and economic prominence; possibly its moral reputation; its connections with Rome and Romanization (although it retained Greek elements as well); possibly its Jewish community; certainly its geographic connection to Paul's southward route from Athens; and its paganism (which, though akin to other ancient paganism, had its own distinctive characteristics, as did that of each city).” (Keener 2014: 2684) It might be a strategic decision for Paul to stay in Corinth, but it may also be due to the fact that he was more welcome here or his opponents were not successful. However, he was able to establish a basis for further mission. In any case, the situation in

Acts had a balanced to them” (Kartveit 2019: 2). It is nearly impossible to find a proper approach to the Samaria question due to missing sources (cf. Fabre 2019). Schnabel (2002: 245-249) lists all possible locations for churches and assemblies in Samaria but concludes “Über die Entwicklung der samaritanischen Gemeinden ist nichts bekannt.” (:749).

Corinth is changing, and Ephesus as a cosmopolitan city is just another step ahead into a religious and cultural diverse world.

Although it is unclear, who founded the church in *Ephesus* (BC 66.77, CC 0.46; church BC 91.82, CC 0.47)⁴⁰³, Ephesus is connected to Aquila and Priscilla (Ac 18:18) and Apollos. It is important to ask what Paul's strategy was: "One purpose may have been to provide a geographic link between the churches of South Galatia for which Paul needed to provide some guidance and churches in Macedonia and Achaia. More important, however, was that this was a strategic city for the gospel, just like Corinth; Paul had apparently even considered targeting it earlier (Acts 16:6)." (Keener 2014: 2789-90) Ephesus can be described as "cosmopolitan harbor city" (:2791) with many religions, ethnic groups and languages, although its identity was Greek. Thus, we may assume that again, Paul was heading towards a diverse non-Jewish world. However, we will evaluate the impact of this city on mission and the spatial development later.

As we have seen in the last chapter, the origins of the church in *Rome* (BC 25.59, CC 0.45) are unclear⁴⁰⁴. But obviously Paul wanted to travel to Rome and visit this church (Ac 19:21). Keener (2014: 2860) asks for the literary purpose: "Paul's movements earlier in Luke's narrative may suggest that Paul was interested in Rome earlier, but here the narrative turns explicitly toward this goal." He is right in both cases. However, Rome is just a final narrative turning point towards the Roman world which was indicated by Luke earlier.

It is very interesting to see *Alexandria* (BC 0, CC 0.25) in the network: The origin of the church in the city is unclear⁴⁰⁵, however, Luke provides references several times (Ac

⁴⁰³ For example Schnabel (2002: 814): "Ob man von einer vor die Ankunft des Paulus in Ephesus zu datierenden judenchristlichen Mission sprechen kann, 'darf man zumindest fragen'."

⁴⁰⁴ "Wir wissen nicht, wann und wo Juden Roms mit dem Evangelium zuerst in Kontakt bekamen. Folgende Möglichkeiten wurden in der Forschung erwogen: 1. Juden aus Rom, die anlässlich des Pfingstfestes im Jahr 30 als Pilger Jerusalem besuchten [...] 2. Stadtrömische Juden könnten auf Reisen in anderen Städten im östlichen Mittelmeerraum mit Christen in Kontakt gekommen sein [...] 3. Petrus ging nach seinem erzwungenen Weggang aus Jerusalem im Jahr 42 möglicherweise nach Rom [...] 4. Der Statthalter Zyperns, Sergius Paulus, der sich im Verlauf der Zypern-Mission von Paulus und Barnabas im Jahr 45/46 bekehrt hatte, half nach seiner Rückkehr nach Rom als Patron beim Aufbau der Gemeinde." (Schnabel 2002: 778) Although Schnabel provides a summary of hypotheses, none of them have yet found any substantial proof. We should also add the hint in Ac 28:14 that a church in Puetoli exists. But again: "Wann und durch wen in Puetoli missioniert wurde und eine Gemeinde entstand, entzieht sich unserer Kenntnis." (:793)

⁴⁰⁵ "Die meisten Forscher gehen davon aus, dass das Evangelium früh von Palästina, genauer von Jerusalem aus nach Ägypten bzw. Alexandria gelangte. Die große Judenschaft Ägyptens, besonders Alexandriens, wird von manchen Forschern als zu attraktiv angesehen, als dass die urchristlichen

6:9, 13:1, 18:24–26).

It is however striking, that we can see at least some places which were considered as centers of early Christian mission – Jerusalem, Antiochia, Corinth, Ephesus, Rome and according to Schnabel (2002: 1427-1430) even Alexandria – as important places in Acts. However, Tables 14.2 and 14.3 suggest that Luke primarily uses them to develop his narrative. Nevertheless, we learn about those spatial settings which are not his primary concern.

Some scholars tried to investigate which were the most important places in Acts (cf. Barnett 2002). For example, Crowe (1997) focuses on Jerusalem and Antioch, speaking of a tale of two cities'. In Antioch there was a “transition from the Jewish to the Hellenistic world [...] [which] confronted situations entirely different from those encountered by Jesus in Galilee and never envisaged by his first followers in Jerusalem.” (:xiv) Other scholars like Brown & Meier (1983) see Rome and Antioch as centers, and they emphasize that mission in both cities did not begin with Paul (cf. Brown & Meier 1983: 9). Some scholars also include sociological research to analyze the importance of Christianity in Antioch (cf. Zetterholm 2003). However, Acts is both helpful and silent for these considerations at the same time.

For the time being, we can summarize the results of a first short overview about centrality measures with the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 12. *SNA helps to unveil locations and churches in Acts which are used in the narrative to push the story, but also those which are simply Luke’s remarks or side-notes. In general, Luke describes the Christian movement as redundant network with multiple locations.*

We will continue the discussion about locations and churches in Acts with a detailed analysis in Section 14.5 and in Part III, combining the picture of Luke-Acts. In particular, we will discuss how SNA can help to understand the spatiality of Luke’s narrative and also if this leads to novel insights. However, we will also use different methods and thus continue with the analysis of network structures.

Missionare Jerusalems diese hätten ignorieren können.” (Schnabel 2002: 829)

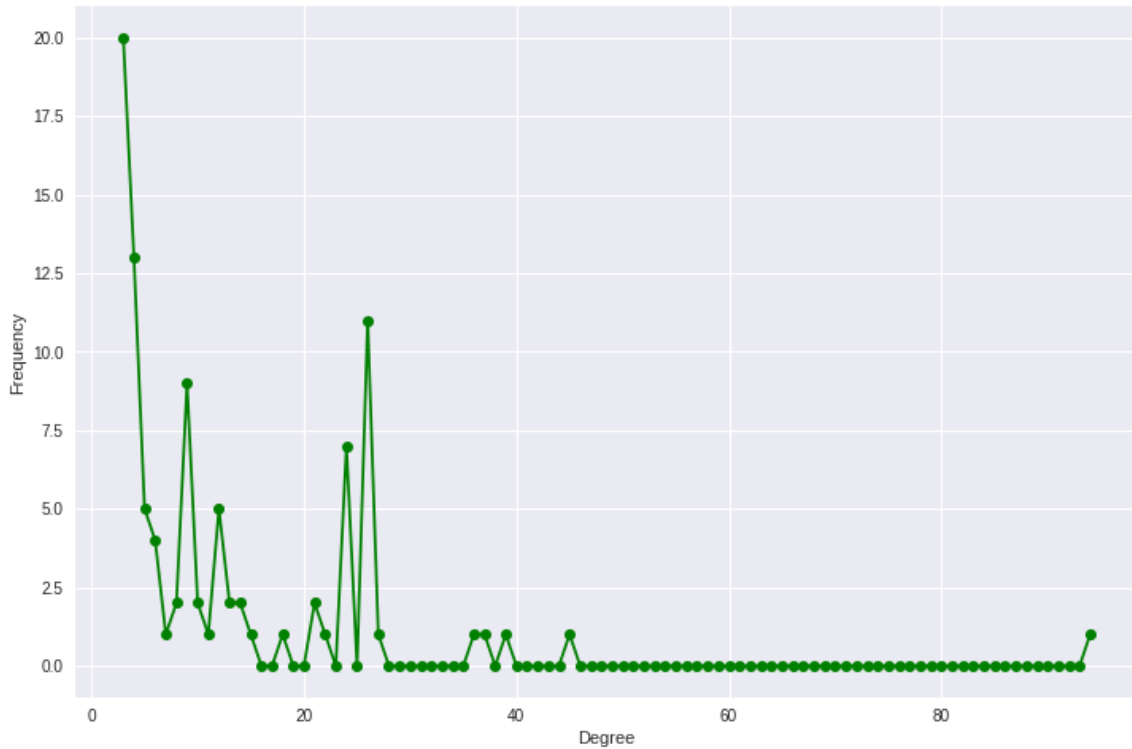


Figure 14.3: Degree distribution representation of Acts.

14.2 Network Structures and Spanning Tree

In Figure 14.3 we show the degree distribution representation of Acts. In comparison to our analysis of chapters 1-12 in Section 12.2 we can now see the ‘long tail’ of the scale-free distribution. Nevertheless, we see missing nodes, especially at an average node degree. They are not part of Luke’s Gospel. Obviously he did not present a complete social network, but his representation works sufficiently enough so that we can continue to work with it.

A Minimum Spanning Tree for Acts 1-28 is shown in Figure 14.4. Due to the high number of nodes and edges it is a challenge to draw this network⁴⁰⁶. Again we can see, that this network is quite stable, since there is not one single ‘backbone’ of the social network – Luke describes a reliable network with several lines of communication in the network. Although quite a number of different minimum spanning trees can be computed, this tree shows some interesting facts:

⁴⁰⁶ This is not only due to its size, but also due to the fact that drawing a network may be seen as a first step of interpretation. Thus, as mentioned in Section 4.3, we provide the networks online at Dörpinghaus (2022e).

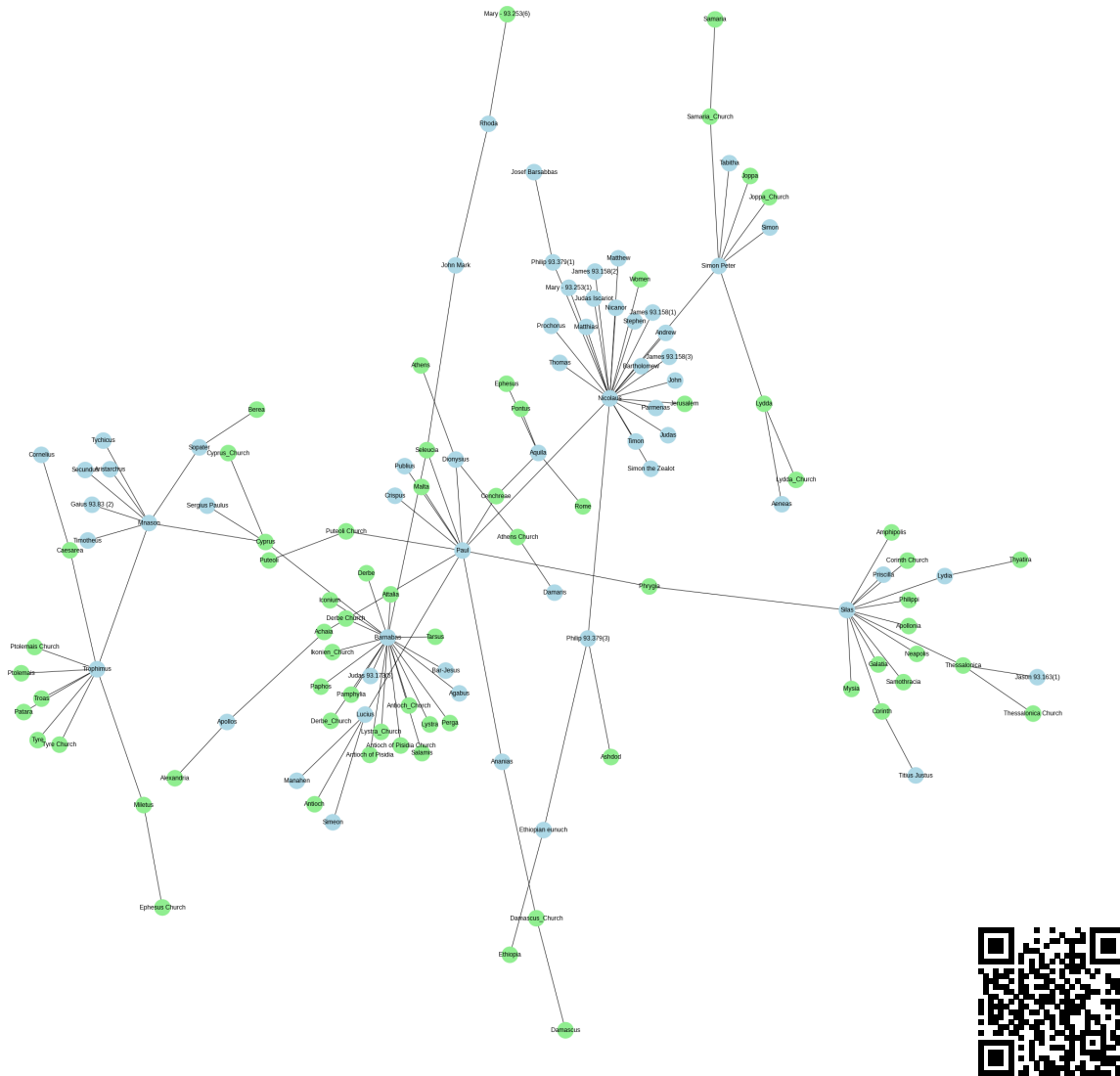


Figure 14.4: Minimum Spanning Tree representation of Acts 1-28.

- Besides Paul and Peter connecting persons are Trophimus, Mnason, Barnabas, Lucius, Nicolaus (who can be exchanged with any other member of the Jerusalem community and were chosen randomly by the algorithm).
- John Mark, Silas and Philip.
- Here, Peter seems to be just an extension to the community in Jerusalem which is due to the fact that the narrative focus has moved to Paul.
- Even Paul is not a real backbone of the social network described in Acts 1-28 – only very few relations are directly linked to him.

- A simple test unveils that the the nascent Christian network described in Acts will *not* fracture if Paul is removed.

This emphasized the factor of co-workers mission in Acts. This topic has been widely considered in research on Paul, see for instance Ollrog (1979), Strelan (2016), Akasheh (2000), and Öhler (2013). It is most striking that these results are mainly based on the Pauline Letters, since Acts is usually not considered to pay special attention to Paul's co-workers⁴⁰⁷. While other actors also collaborated with co-workers (e.g. Peter), we need to provide a more detailed analysis of co-workers in Chapter 17 and specific actors involved in co-working⁴⁰⁸ and their attitude towards mission and works in Chapter 19.

In Section 12.2 we have already discussed the aspects of charismatic leadership and the critique of Woolf (2016: 54). However, following the approach of Brands et al. (2015: 1212) with the above results we cannot find indications for a strong ego-network – while Luke presents a Jesus-centered network in his Gospel, see Chapter 9. The idea of belonging to the βασιλεία τοῦ Θεοῦ is a central topic in Luke-Acts and here we see the difference between Jesus' earthly ministry – a network and a hierarchy rooted in Jesus – and Acts. Thus, our analysis supports the idea of a flat hierarchy within the nascent Christian movement⁴⁰⁹.

Thus, we may combine hypothesis 7 and the results of this section in the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 13. *In the way in which Luke presents his network in Acts, we find an emerging network which has a reliable and stable structure. The leadership in this network is transformational. Although people like Peter and Paul might be charismatic, they do not*

⁴⁰⁷ “Die Darstellung der Apostelgeschichte unterscheidet sich im Vergleich mit dem Corpus Paulinum, auch wenn Lukas die Bedeutung der Mitarbeiter nicht völlig unterminiert. So werden typische Titel für die Mitarbeiter oder ausführliche Mitarbeiterbeschreibungen, wie sie bei Paulus bekannt sind, nicht erwähnt. Erklärbar ist dies damit, dass Lukas hauptsächlich an der Person des Paulus interessiert ist und dass wir mit der Apostelgeschichte eine andere Gattung haben” (Drews 2006: 161). However, we can find numerous actors to analyze the setting: “There are a number of names of travellers given in Acts and Paul's epistles with very little information about their participation in the Gentile mission.” (Pillette 1992: 323)

⁴⁰⁸ As we have already highlighted: Luke provides far more details about several actors. The centrality values suggest that a more detailed analysis is needed. It is important “... weiter dem aktuellen Trend zu folgen und über die großen Gestalten Petrus und Paulus hinauszukommen. Dafür ist es wichtig, die Rolle und Bedeutung der Mitarbeitenden und Partner der paulinischen Mission genauer zu erfassen, die neben dem Apostel bei den übergemeindlichen Verbindungen eine entscheidende Rolle spielen.” (Stenschke 2019: 37)

⁴⁰⁹ “Paulus hielt – anders als manche seiner Interpreten – nicht sich selbst für den die Einheit gewährleistenden Mittelpunkt, machte seine Person nicht zum umschließenden Band in der Vielzahl seiner Mitarbeiterschar, sondern das Konstitutivum war für ihn allein das Werk” (Ollrog 1979: 72).

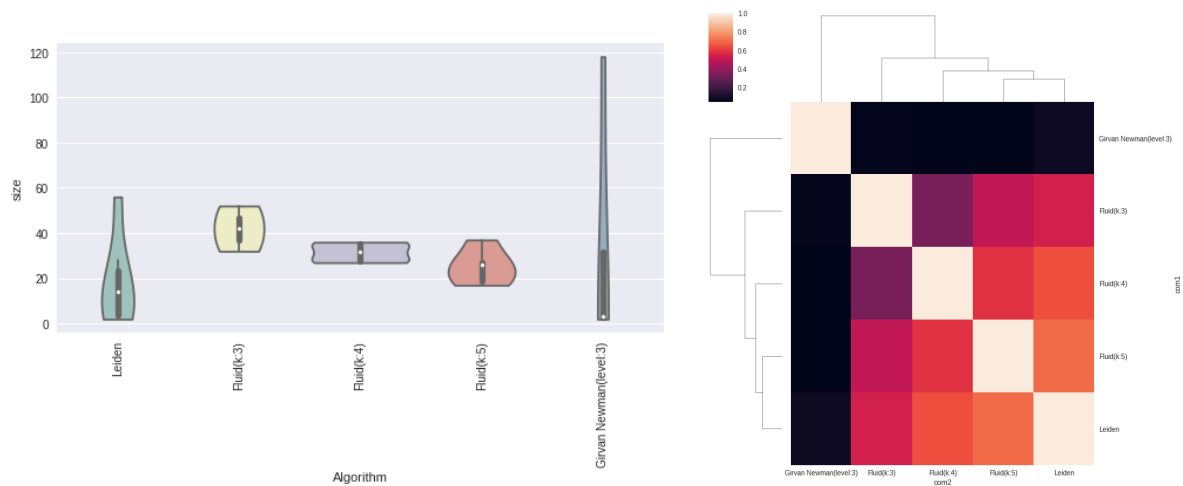


Figure 14.5: Left: Violin plot of several methods to compute communities in Acts 1-28. The y -axis refers to the size of communities and the widths of a plot for a particular algorithm to the number of clusters with this size. We can see that especially the Fluid Communities (FluidC) lead to a specific number of communities while Leiden and Girvan-Newman have a different output leading to either a few large or multiple small communities. Right: Clustermap describing different mutual information in different communities computed by different methods. Here, a dark color refers to little similarity to another approach. We can see that in particular the Girvan-Newman approach differs from other algorithms.

follow a charismatic leadership paradigm. This network does not follow modern definitions of new religious movements.

14.3 Community Detection

For community detection, we follow the approach described for Acts 1-12 in Chapter 3. In Figure 14.5 we give a first overview about the different outcomes of the chosen methods. We can see, that especially Fluid Communities (FluidC) maps to a specific number of communities while Leiden and Girvan-Newman have a different output leading to either a few large or multiple small communities. But the picture is also different from the results for Acts 1-12 in Chapter 14. In general, these approaches work better for larger graphs and we can identify the different perspective of different algorithms. In addition, the output of these algorithms also leads to a very varied output. The Clustermap describing different mutual information in the communities shows that there is a small intersection between Fluid Communities (FluidC) and Leiden algorithm – which is again not surprising for the small numbers of communities – but Girvan-Newman shows a very different result, see the remarks in Chapter 3.

Since it is important to notice that these methods describe only a possible segmentation of a network in communities, we will take a closer look at these communities.

The Leiden Algorithm (Fig. 14.6) computes seven communities. We find a very large Pauline network (top, purple), a network related to Timotheus—Caesarea (bottom, blue), a network related to Corinth—Ephesus (bottom right, orange). The rest of the network is similar to what we saw in Acts 1-12: A Jerusalem-centered network, Joppa, Lydda and Ethiopia as isolated ‘dead ends’ in the narrative.

The Fluid Communities (FluidC) algorithm again tends to arbitrarily break up existing groups and merge even not-connected parts of the network. We chose these values $k = 3, 4, 5$, because lower and higher values were found to produce artefacts. Here, we see a very interesting outcome for $k = 5$ in Figure 14.9. This algorithm breaks up the large Pauline community and highlights John Mark and Silas as links to different sub-communities.

The output of the Girvan-Newman algorithm in Figure 14.10 indicates four communities. Although this seems rather meaningless, we should not neglect this result. It highlights that the the nascent Christian community in Jerusalem and Judea is a large, well-connected community in itself. Only some parts (Ethiopia, Philippi, Damascus) are more isolated in Luke’s description. But what is the portrayal in Acts of city and rural life and especially of the isolated parts in the network? It is important to notice, that here the isolated parts in the network are large cities. Is it true, as Chrysostom suggests, that Paul and Silas “pass through the small towns and hurry to the biggest, since the word was to flow to nearby cities as from a source” (Martin & Oden 2006: 211)? It is, of course, possible to state “Paul was a city person” as Meeks (2003: 9) did – but we should not neglect three observations from the social network:

- Paul is also linked to rather rural regions or larger regions which do not only contain large cities (e.g. Cyprus).
- He also traveled through rural areas.
- His preaching and work in cities definitely influence the surrounding rural regions.

It is important to remember that the network is a representation of Luke’s narrative and thus limited to the information Luke provides. But when comparing the network of Acts

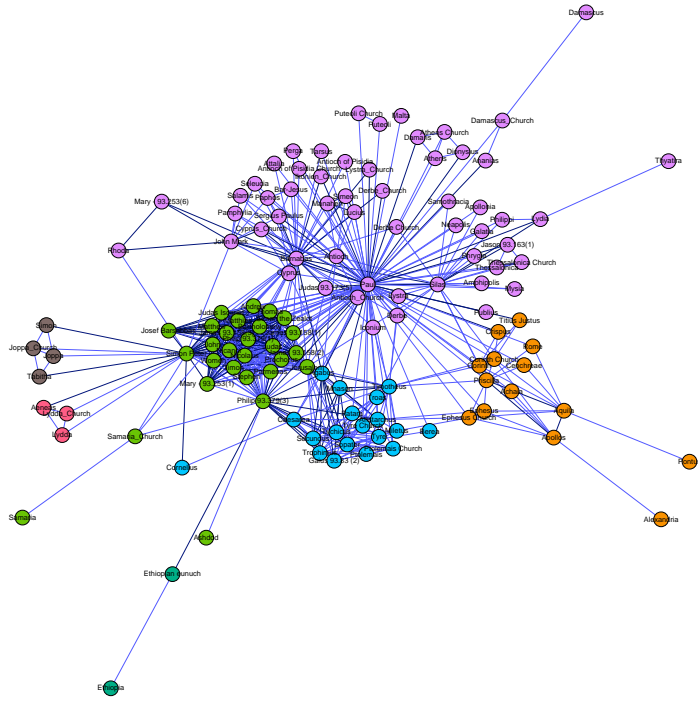


Figure 14.6: Communities in Acts 1-28 computed by Leiden algorithm with 7 communities.

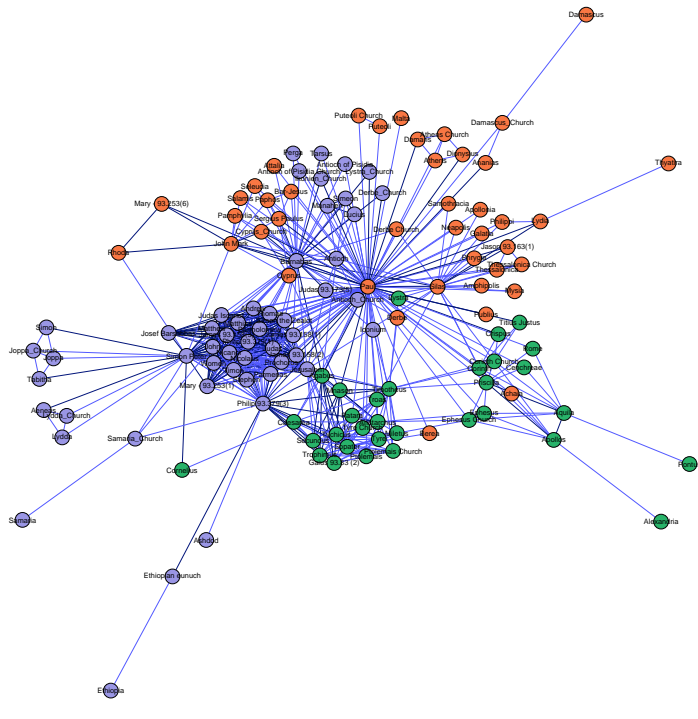


Figure 14.7: Communities in Acts 1-28 computed by Fluid Communities (FluidC) algorithm with $k = 3$.

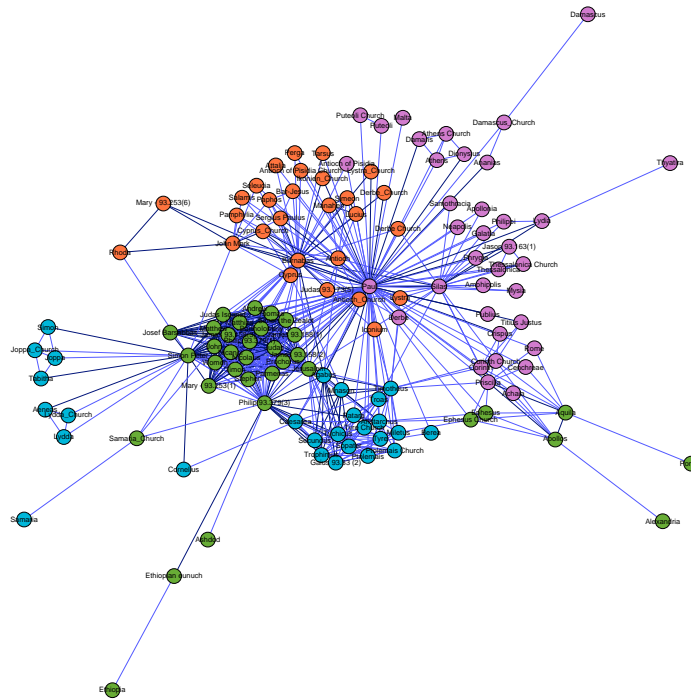


Figure 14.8: Communities in Acts 1-28 computed by Fluid Communities (FluidC) algorithm with $k = 4$.

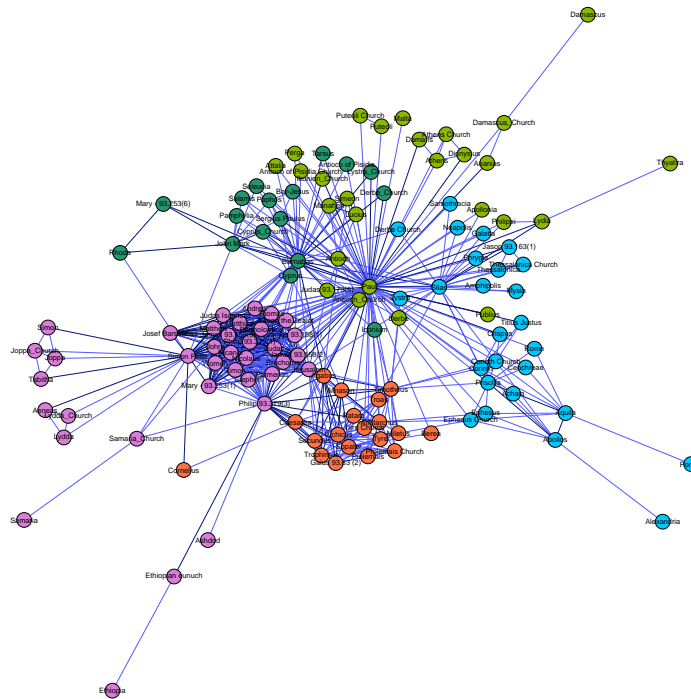


Figure 14.9: Communities in Acts 1-28 computed by Fluid Communities (FluidC) algorithm with $k = 5$.

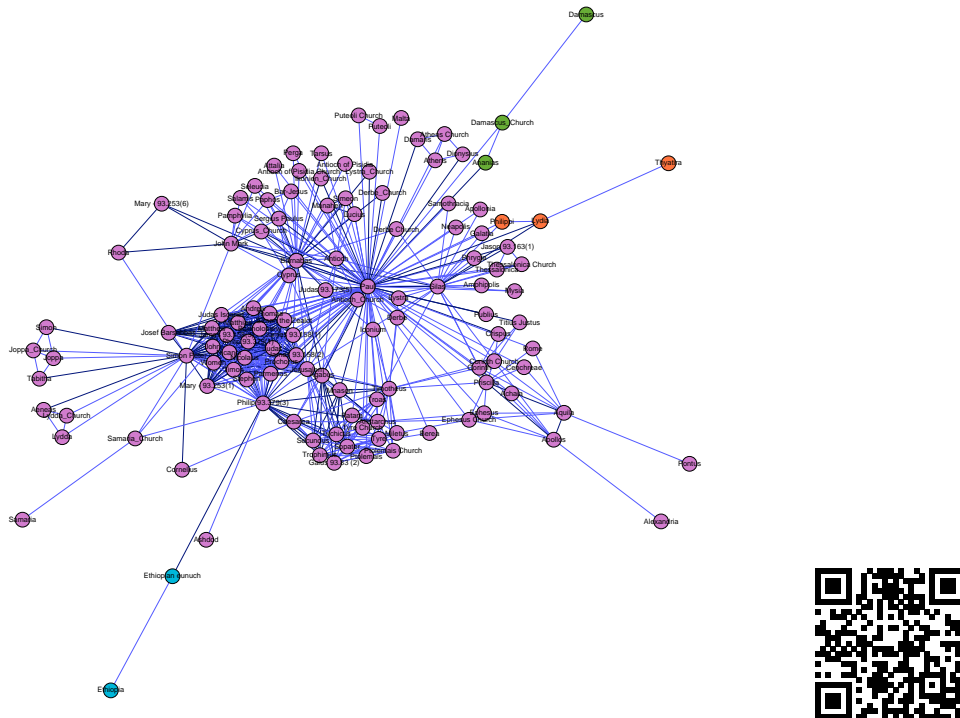


Figure 14.10: Communities in Acts 1-28 computed by Girvan-Newman algorithm with four communities.

to Luke’s Gospel there are only two possible conclusions: Either the nascent Christian movement developed from a rural beginning in Galilee to a city-based movement⁴¹⁰ or the rural communities are out of Luke’s scope for Acts⁴¹¹. But combining the social network of Luke-Acts – see also Chapter 16 – leads to a different understanding: The rural communities in the nascent Christian movement were not lost and forgotten and there was still a vital rural Christian life.

However, we should also pay attention to what the network does *not* show. Or in the words of Woolf (2016: 49):

Attribute analysis faces different kinds of problems with missing data. It is

⁴¹⁰ For example Moxnes (1995: 107), but this question cannot be answered by focusing solely on Acts. But when we include the Pauline Letters this also leads to more questions like the “sociological classification of the great majority of the city population” (Theissen 2001: 72). Thus, here we need not sum the current consensus, “Christians [have] an impact mainly on the cities” (Keener 2012: 590).

⁴¹¹ Which is seconded by Keener (2012: 590): Luke’s view on cities “probably gives some indication of the cultural presuppositions of his implied audience.” There are again more problems to discuss: “Placing Luke’s depictions of Paul’s travels within the context of Greek cities struggling to articulate their subject identity and superior paideia, on the one hand, and the establishment of city leagues under the Roman Empire, on the other, does not explain all of Luke’s theology and ideology.” (Nasrallah 2008: 536) And indeed, this is why we need to look back to the social network reconstruction of Luke’s Gospel in Part III.

conventional to say that early Christians were more likely to be urban than rural dwelling, Greek than Latin speaking, of socially intermediate status rather than aristocratic and so on.

There are several indications that the network has “holes” covering the rural landscape: The long travel of several actors (e.g. Peter, John, Philip, Barnabas, Paul, and others) through the rural areas and Luke’s silence on that⁴¹². We see explicit references in Ac 9:31, 8:25, and 15:3. While we will present a more detailed analysis in Section 14.5 with a perspective on Luke-Acts in Chapter 20, we will now summarize our findings in the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 14. *Luke tells of a mission that is mainly aiming at cities. Although the large nascent Christian communities were in cities, we may assume that they also spread to the rural landscape.*

When analyzing Ac 1–28, we should finalize our previous observations on new religious movements (cf. Woolf 2016: 44-45). Although the network size increases, the results of spanning-tree analysis and the centrality measures lead to the conclusion that there are no so-called charismatic leaders in the network, although some actors might be charismatic. But does Luke really provide a narrative of ‘organized anarchy’ as Alexander (2003: 169-170) suggests:

A closer look at Acts, however, presents a rather more complicated and much less centralized picture. Luke’s narrative implies a vigorous network of autonomous local churches, managing their own affairs and initiating and maintaining their own links with other churches.

The network structure suggests a non-centralized pattern, although now we can find more dense subnetworks or communities outside of Jerusalem. But these communities are in turn not solely linked to local churches, and thus we can both argue for their autonomy but also for their connectedness through central actors in the network. Albeit the reality in mission, travel, and migration cannot be reconstructed⁴¹³, the multiple ways for cross-town

⁴¹² Indicating his interest and world view, but not necessary omitting these information. There are also other indications, especially for Paul: “although he focused his ministry on towns and especially cities, much of the territory through which he traveled when evangelizing Phrygia was rural and foreign to his own background.” (Keener 2012: 596)

⁴¹³ This would require a longitudinal modeling of the network based on other material, e.g. archeological data. See further the study by Mills et al. (2018) on several Chaco Migration scenarios in South America.

links and communication can be evaluated. However, together with our first observations on co-workers, traveling and spatiality we can make the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 15. *Luke describes the spread of Christian communities connected by – but not solely relying on – external traveling missionaries.*

In addition to the spread of information, we need to pay attention to distinct places. We already discussed that some places are more isolated in this network. But where is the center? Is it still Jerusalem? “Within the New Testament, Luke in particular combines the global vision of the church’s mission with the much older idea of Jerusalem as the center from which knowledge of God’s Torah will shine out across the whole world.” (Alexander 2003: 166) However, considering the distribution of locations in the network, we can see (1) Jerusalem, Caesarea as one center, (2) Patara, Troas, Tyrus, Miletus and Ptolomais as another one, (3) Antioch, Cyprus, Lystra, Derbe, Iconium and (4) Corinth, Ephesus, Achaia, Cenchrea. Another center might be found in (5) Rome, but this is unclear. We will discuss whether particular locations have a special position in the narrative later, for example in Section 14.5 and in Chapter 20.

The first locations, Jerusalem and Caesarea, are located nearby and may well form a well-connected subnetwork. Things are more complicated for the other subsets, since they were computed from the network structure and not from geographic information. While Ptolomais and Tyrus are located in Phoenicia, Patara, Troas and Miletus are located in Asia Minor. However, they are reachable via ships. For Antioch, Cyprus, Lystra, Derbe, Iconium, Antioch may form a center, but there are no further hints for that. While we will provide a detailed analysis of locations in Section 14.5 and spatiality in Luke-Acts in Chapter 20, we can for now summarize:

Hypothesis 16. *Luke presents a well-connected nascent Christian network with multiple network centers.*

We will now return to the perspective of actors with a focus on particular groups.

14.4 The Inclusion Perspective on the Network

In this section we will utilize the results of Section 12 for a holistic analysis of Acts and compare these results in particular with our detailed analysis of the Gospel of Luke in Section 9.4 where we highlighted Luke's interest *in emphasizing interpersonal relationships* as *participation* in the βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ.

It is an ongoing discussion, whether Luke's perspective on women and gender is 'positive' or 'negative' as Keener (2012: 597) summarizes⁴¹⁴. It is well accepted (see the previous chapter), that Luke did not omit women⁴¹⁵ and this is possibly a unique stance for antiquity (see Budin & Turfa 2016 D'Angelo 1990). Czachesz (2011) used SNA to analyze the nascent Christian network. He argues that the spread of early Christianity is heavily connected to women and charity due to network structure: "It is in this indirect way that I argue that there were more weak links in Early Christianity than in other religious groups." (:142) But his thesis can neither be proven nor falsified for the network of Acts, nor is it clear if the spread of information is due to weak or strong ties⁴¹⁶

Another approach to study the importance of women was presented by a study on Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages. The authors conclude that "quantitative approaches and mathematical analysis of networks allow us to draw out these rhetorical functions of female characters in late antique" sources (Hillner & MacCarron 2021: 40). Their network analysis heavily relied on degree measures. Since we could show that women played an important role in the network using other measures, we will discuss this in more detail.

While in contrast to the Gospel the community detection algorithms found several reasonable communities with respect to spatial conditions and in particular missionary

⁴¹⁴ And a lot of unusual theses were developed, for example "All that can be claimed is that a nontrivial portion of Christian growth probably was due to superior fertility'." (Stark 1996: 127-128) Stark was heavily criticized that this portrait "bears an uncanny resemblance to the ideal of Christian womanhood produced so forcefully by early Christian apologetic literature and moral discourse." (Castelli 1998: 229)

⁴¹⁵ See for example Flanagan (1978) or Maly (1980: 99): "It is a fact readily acknowledged by all that in Luke's Gospel not only are women mentioned more often than in the other Gospels but also, and more importantly, are they seen to play more significant roles."

⁴¹⁶ However, Balch (2020) for example argues: "Roman cultural, social, and sometimes military pressure was a key factor that influenced Luke to suppress narration of earlier women's leadership among followers of Christ." (:97) But as we have shown, SNA indicates that although Luke was not primary interested in narrating about women, he did not omit them.

	mean	count
?	0.410456	7
Gentile	0.433778	6
Jew	0.484511	44
Proselyte	0.447003	3

Table 14.4: The average *closeness centrality* values on the social network of Acts ordered by cultural background.

	mean	count
female	0.409135	8
male	0.478120	52

Table 14.5: The average *closeness centrality* values on the social network of Acts ordered by sex.

works by Peter, Paul, Barnabas etc., the CC values in comparison to the Gospel are still comparable. The network in Acts still has a disparate value of closeness.

While a detailed analysis differentiating ‘lower’ and ‘upper’ social status is no longer possible because the social status is no longer Luke’s primary narrative interest⁴¹⁷, we present an analysis for cultural background and sex in Tables 14.4 and 14.5. While we can see that CC is higher for those with a Jewish background⁴¹⁸, the difference is not significant in comparison with other actors. The same holds for women and men, although there is a significant change when comparing the results to Section 9.4.

First, we need to compare these values with BC, which highlights the narrative importance of a Jewish background (mean BC 193.34) in comparison to non-Jewish (mean BC 20.83) and proselytes (mean BC 43.20). The results for sex return a mean BC for women 27.48 and 167.35 for men. A similar relation is given by EC.

These results lead to the following observations:

⁴¹⁷ Luke provides several hints on links and interaction to upper-class, wealthy people, and Roman officials. However, comparing these mostly implicit hits to our observations on the Gospel in Chapter 11, it is clear that it is no longer his primary interest.

⁴¹⁸ This includes the Hellenistic Jews, which can’t be clearly distinguished: “The Lukan usage is not entirely clear: Luke applies the term successively to a Christian community in Jerusalem (Acts 6:1), to Jews that are hostile to Paul (Acts 9:29), and to the non-Jewish population of Antioch (Acts 11:20); however, his intention throughout is to emphasize the difference with respect to those who belong to Jewish culture.” (Marguerat 2019) However, Schnabel (2002: 637) raises the question, if the Hellenists are to be classified by language or their origin in diaspora. See also the discussion by Zugmann (2009). There is still an ongoing discussion in literature but for the SNA it is impossible to clearly use this group.

- First, Luke is – that is no surprise – primarily narrating about Jesus-followers with a Jewish background. But they share a common, close community. The spatial distribution seems to be one reason why CC values are decreasing.
- Second, it is important to notice that *despite* the distances, the network is very closely connected.
- Third, when comparing these results with Table 14.1 we can see that Luke presents a diverse nascent Christian network where actors from a different cultural background and women also play an important role to move forwards.

For example, the Ethiopian eunuch, Lydia, Priscilla, etc. It is also important to notice that the group ‘women’ has an EC value of 0.66 which underlines their general importance, while Luke does not present their activities or what happened to them. Stenschke summarizes:

From its beginning the Christian community includes people with various experiences of migration. For different reasons they came to Jerusalem from Galilee and different areas of the Jewish diaspora. With all their appreciation of Jerusalem and its spiritual significance they know that their God is not limited to this place. They bring to the task experiences and abilities, which are highly significant for the spread of the Gospel beyond areas defined by Jewish language and culture. (Stenschke 2018a: 133)

This presents a picture that coheres with other NT writings, in particular the Pauline Letters⁴¹⁹. In the next part, we will see further evidence in support for these observations within the detailed analysis of actors and collaboration in Acts.

These results are underlined by the illustrations in Figures 14.11 and 14.12. While the network centers contain Jewish actors (ca. 35%), the Gentiles play a less important role (ca. 5%) and are mostly – but not generally! – connected to Paul’s subnetwork. The Proselytes (ca. 2.5%) play only a marginal role while we can find both as bridges (e.g.

⁴¹⁹ The for example Keener on Galatians: “Circumcision and its contrary, uncircumcision, are irrelevant and matters of indifference ‘in Christ.’ This religious but also ethnic and cultural distinction is declared to be irrelevant. Paul here restates what he wrote in 3:28: in Christ, there is neither Jew nor Greek.” (Keener 2019: 318) However, this topic is frequently considered in NT research: “Thus, being in Christ was not considered an abstraction – something to ‘believe in’ but a reality that should be embodied by those ‘in Christ’ in all aspects of their lives (e. g., Romans 12). Such embodiment is not a matter of individual members, but can only be enacted relationally, that is, in community.” (Ehrensperger 2020: 113) In any case this topic is far too significant for a short analysis (against Neuenhausen 2018: 58-61).

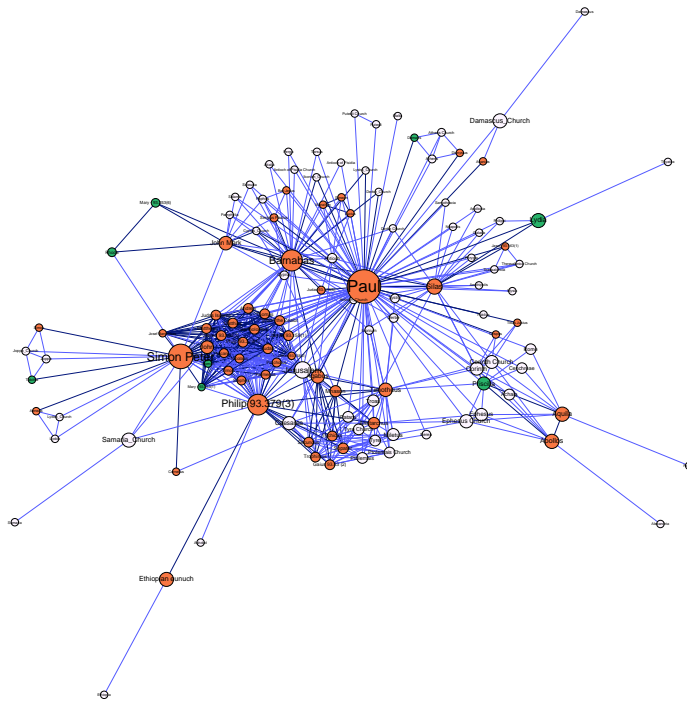


Figure 14.11: The social network of Acts 1-28. The orange nodes indicate male actors while green nodes indicate female actors.

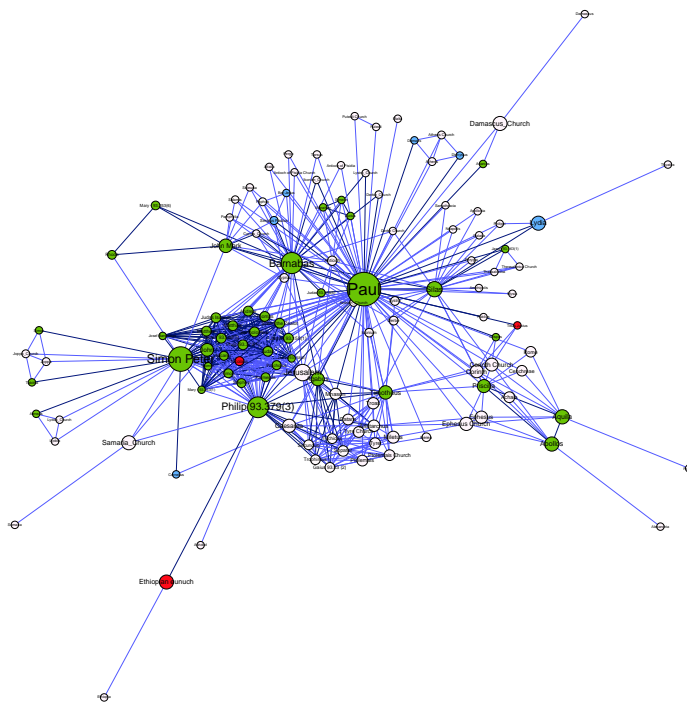


Figure 14.12: The social network of Acts 1-28. Green nodes indicate actors with a Jewish cultural background, red nodes Proselytes and blue nodes non-Jews.

Ethiopian Eunuch, Lydia, Dionysioius) and close part of a subnetwork (e.g. Nicolaus, Sergius Paulus).

A similar picture is presented in Figure 14.11: female actors are both part of a central network (e.g. Mary) or are bridges (e.g. Lydia, Priscilla). What we can learn from this analysis is that Luke is not limiting his focus. It is perhaps too much to see Acts as a possible source of women's history, as D'Angelo (1990) did. It would be necessary to see the boundaries of an analysis. Stenschke (2009), for example, limited his analysis to married women in Acts and asks if this would be an exception and what was the rule. He concludes: "the significance of ordinary women (and men) of whatever marital status for spreading and revitalising the faith needs to be re-discovered and emphasized" (:189) The SNA supports this view. While Forbes & Harrower (2015: 211) present theological propositions for women and their participation in Luke-Acts⁴²⁰, other scholars focus on the impact of cross-gender leadership and authentic leadership (cf. Sharma 2020). We will focus on these points in Chapter 19 when we consider single actors and characters in the network.

We can extend hypothesis 6 with the following results:

Hypothesis 17. *Luke presents a diverse network. He does not omit women or other groups. While his narrative in Acts includes more men than women, women play a vital role in the network. In addition, we can follow the growing extension of his network to non-Jews.*

We will now return to a spatial perspective and discuss the impact of locations and movements in Acts.

14.5 Locations and movements in Acts

In general, mission in Luke-Acts is not considered within the scope of movements and locations, but in terms of salvation for all. Nevertheless, Jerusalem is perceived as the

⁴²⁰ He suggests: "It is unavoidable apparent that Luke and Luke's Jesus do not follow stereotypical roles of women, and women in God's kingdom are no longer defined by socially regulated roles" (Forbes & Harrower 2015: 207).

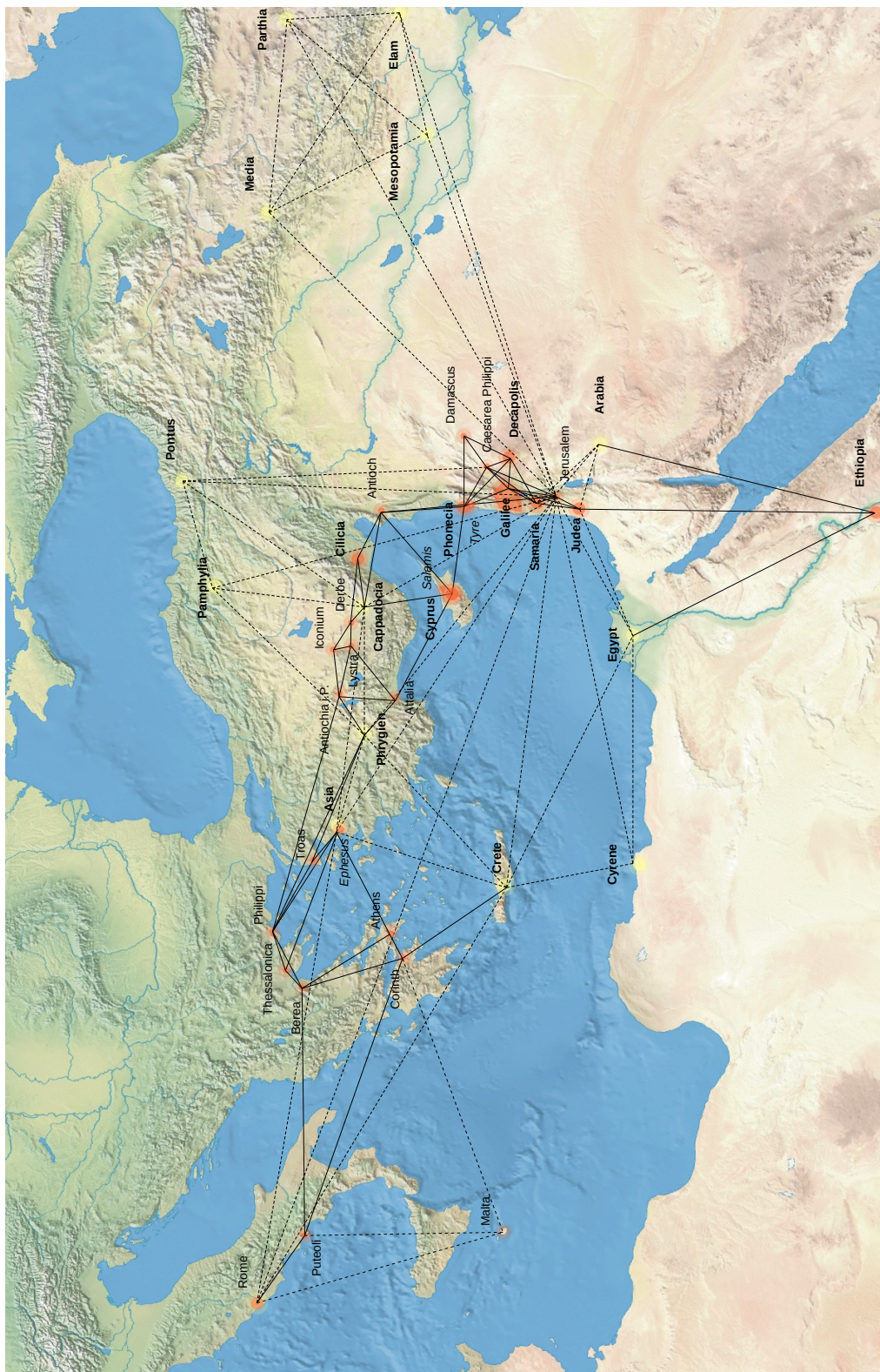


Figure 14.13: The network of locations mentioned within Acts including known churches and mission activities. Dashed lines represent the connections to landscapes and regions from the list of peoples in Ac 2:9–11. While the existence of Christian communities is not provable there, it may show only a possible Jewish diaspora network as described by Collar (2013). Thus, it makes yet another perspective of SNA visible: While Luke mentions these locations, he does not provide any further information. However, according to other scholars Luke’s hints on these locations overlap with another network, the Jewish diaspora network. Further research could show, how reliable these implicit hints from one network to another are. The edges are added according to PPA which means the three closest locations are connected.

center of the nascent Christian movement. As we have discussed earlier, Luke's Gospel and the first part of Acts payed special attention to traveling. In particular Paul's missionary journeys are intensively researched⁴²¹. In any case, as we have seen, Acts is a book of – both planned and unplanned – travels and journeys, and we will deepen that observation later. To sort the issues, we might first ask: What is at the end of Luke's "journey"? Blajer (2014) states two possible answers: Jerusalem or the ends of the world (Ac 1:8). These are the two open ends we might take.

What are 'the ends of the world'? It might be Rome, which is at the end of Acts, and according to Puskas it is the place to "fulfill generally Christ's command to preach to all nations" (Puskas 2009: 113). There are several arguments that would support this thesis. First, Rome was the center of the Roman Empire and thus obviously a good starting point for further mission. Second, it is the end of Luke's narration, and thus it is of importance⁴²².

There are also good arguments to *not* identify Rome with the final spatial goal of Acts. The most important question is "how did some early Christian communities imagine the space of the world? What kind of geographical thinking did they engage?" (Nasrallah 2008: 533)⁴²³ The following argument is striking: Considering Figure 14.14, we see that Rome is indeed not an important place within Acts. Only very few actors and nodes are associated with Rome, and the centrality values in Table 14.2 support this view. There

⁴²¹ For example Köstenberger & O'Brien (2006: 158-159): "Luke's account traces the progress of the gospel from Jerusalem, the centre from which the word of the Lord sounds forth. As the story progresses, Paul too is commissioned as a 'witness' and *sent* to carry Jesus' name to the Gentiles, their kings and the people of Israel". See also Keener: "Luke, however, maintains his newly stated focus on the Gentile mission throughout this volume. [...] The mission's expansion here is expressed geographically, but Acts develops it ethnically as well, so that the gospel crosses all barriers; we blandly call this the 'Gentile mission' but could also call it the 'universal mission'." (Keener 2012: 697)

⁴²² Puskas summarizes his arguments: "Jerusalem and Rome both have significance for Luke. Jerusalem is the holy city of the Jews where the prophecies find their fulfillment. Rome is the center of the Gentile world, and the final goal of Christian mission in Acts." (Puskas 2009: 108) Several researchers like Lampe (2003) support this view; the Christians living in Rome would also provide "a new context" for early Christian's "social status" and even newer studies support his view Dresken-Weiland (2021)

⁴²³ Nasrallah's hypothesis to see Acts is not convincing, as we will see: "Acts is a product of the Second Sophistic: it crafts a story of a city league formed by the ambassadorial presence of Paul; it looks back to the first generation of the Jesus movement and to the ancient traditions of Israel." (Nasrallah 2008: 565) But Nasrallah (2008: 566) is right when she asks for traces of "Roman ideology" or if Luke wants to "imitate Roman geography to support or to undermine it" or if his spatial thinking is a "quotation of Jewish eschatological traditions". Although she sees "Luke hybridizes Christianity to the Greekness that was so prestigious and marketable in the Roman Empire and seeks to make of 'one race' many peoples, using available discourses, including those available to Aelius Aristides and Hadrian." (Nasrallah 2008: 566) Other scholars disagree, see for example Kotrosits (2015: 111) or Barreto (2010: 3).

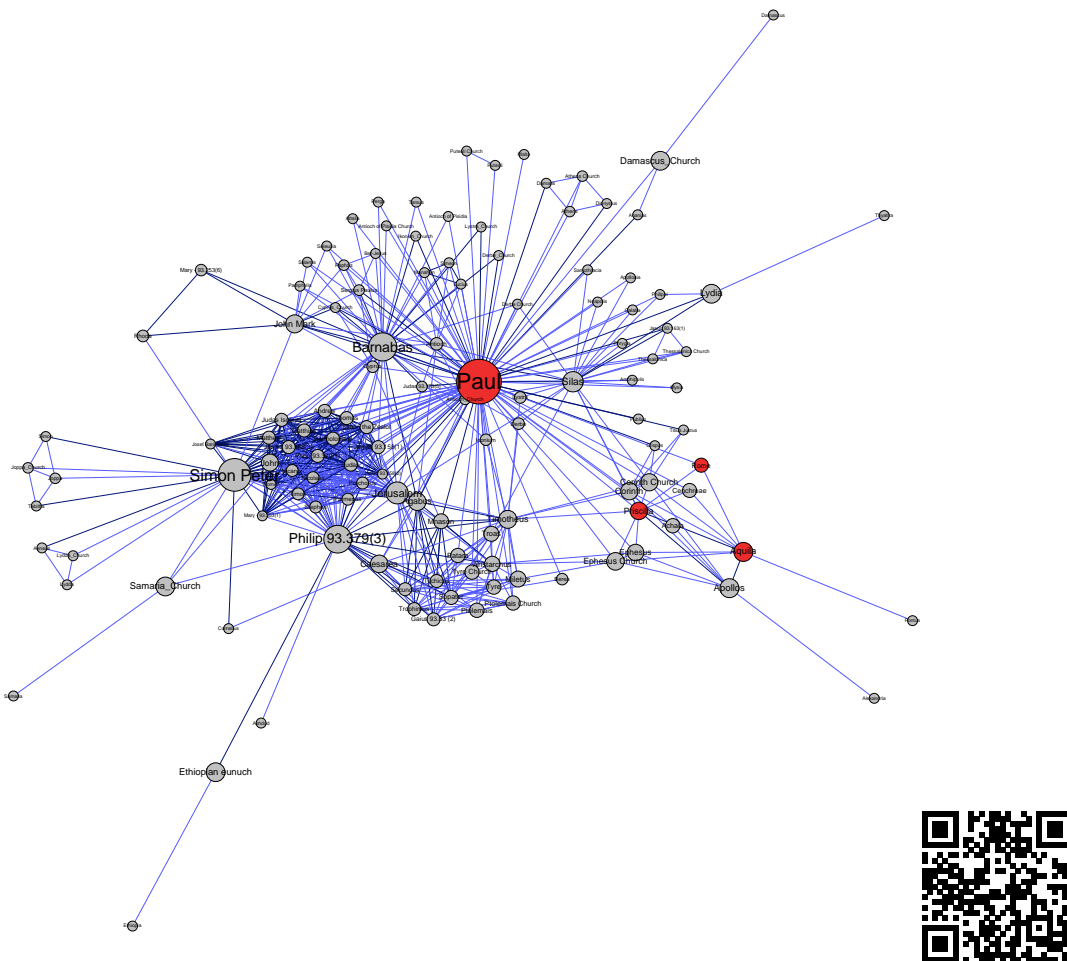


Figure 14.14: The social network of Acts 1-28. The red nodes indicate the direct neighborhood of Rome, which can be found on the bottom right.

might be two reasons for that: either Rome is not an important location in the narrative, but more or less an accidental place where Paul ends up while his plans were to travel to Spain (at least according to Rm 15:28). Or Rome is an important location in the narrative, but Luke pays no special importance to it, since everybody is aware of it. We also refer to the research overview in Section 2.

Keener makes an interesting observation, when he sees good reasons to not associate Rome with the ends of the world: “Despite this possible references to Rome, Rome was not what most people in the eastern empire thought of when they heard ‘ends of the earth’. For most, the people of the ends of the earth would have been ‘Germans, Scythians, Indians and Ethiopians’, as well as Britons.” (Keener 2012: 707) Here, we benefit from the Proximal Point Analysis (PPA) view on spatiality in Acts in Figure 14.13⁴²⁴ PPA does

⁴²⁴ PPA emerged in the 1970s in the context of anthropological studies in the Pacific, cf. Kaplan (1976)

not provide information about the absolute connectedness of nodes, i.e. the presence or absence of links, but a relative degree of connectedness.⁴²⁵ This shows that this model is particularly easy to implement, since no special data need to be collected and entered. However, this also shows the fundamental problem of this method: If the data basis is not complete, partial areas must be simulated. This means that the results are often not accurate. Our first observation on Figure 14.13 is that it is related to Collar's view on the Jewish diaspora (cf. Collar 2013) and we can assume that it displays some accuracy. Indeed, Luke does provide several – more or less – detailed hints on the Jewish diaspora network: See our discussion on Pentecost in Section 11.2, consider Barnabas (Ac 4:36), the deacons (Ac 6:5), etc. Second, Keener's idea about the ends of the world are far better integrated than Rome. Third, these 'ends' are hypothetical and related to the reconstruction of the Jewish diaspora and not about Acts. Thus, this construct is again related to a perspective of society and mission. The concept of the βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ is such a generic concept that should be applied to all people, till the ends of the world. Spatiality and society are linked closely by Luke. We will now continue with some observations about cities in the social network of Acts.

As we have seen, there is no need to discuss the importance of Jerusalem for the narrative itself, since we have already discussed its importance in Chapter 9. In Acts, the central position of Jerusalem can be identified in Figure 14.15. It is not only the city of Jesus' suffering and resurrection, but also the link between the Gospel and Acts. When illustrating Corinth and Ephesus in Figures 14.16 and 14.17 we see that these cities play a marginal role in the social network. Even Antioch and Alexandria are only at the margin of the networks. However, Alexandria is most interesting since, according to Schnabel (2002: 1429, 1430) it was one of the centers of early Christian life. Here we see links to a network which is not part of Luke's narrative, which can be historically proven.

These results are rather surprising and show a gap between our view on the nascent Christian mission in Acts and the SNA reconstruction of Luke's narrative. For example, we have already discussed Luke's usage of πόλις and his emphasis of city life. Conn (1985:

and Terrell (1977). In the work of Broodbank (1993), this procedure was used to analyze the interconnectedness of settlements in the Early Bronze Age. Thus, there can be no isolated nodes in the network.

⁴²⁵“PPA has been used to explore centrality and isolation (i.e., the degree of influence a site exerts on regional interactions), by observing which points are best connected and where most communication routes appear to be.” (Collar 2013: 27)

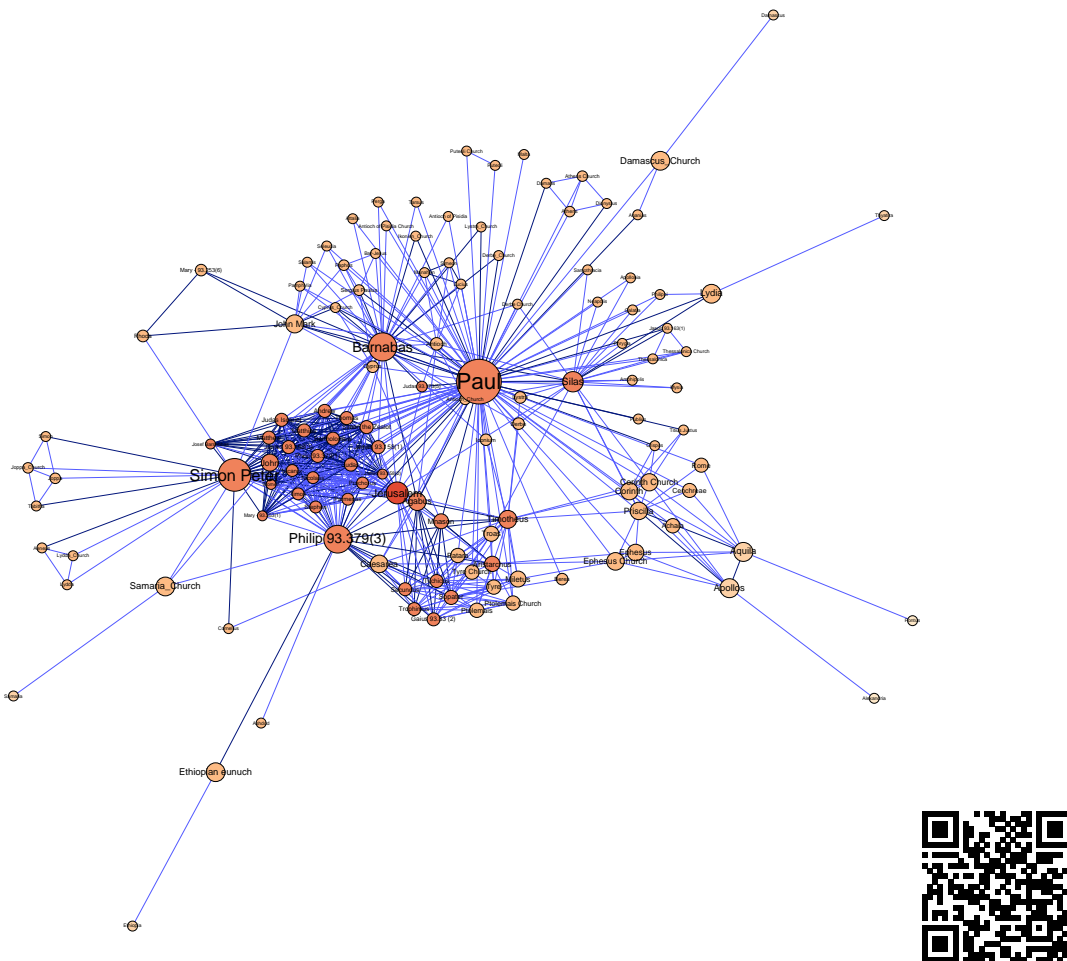


Figure 14.15: The social network of Acts 1-28. The red nodes indicate the Heatmap indicating the neighborhood and distance from Jerusalem.

422) summarizes:

If Pauline Christianity was urban, the city breathing through Paul’s language, so too was Lucan Christianity. And this not only in his history of the extension of the Christian movement through the cities of the Roman Empire. Luke argues that even the earthly ministry of Jesus constantly crisscrossed the streets of the cities. Luke’s mobility of language may not sound appropriate in speaking simplistically of a ‘village culture of Palestine.’

On the one hand it is clear that we have limited access to historical sources; on the other hand the success of Christian proclamation in several cities and locations is unquestioningly visible⁴²⁶. But if Luke is not primarily interested in the particular cities and places,

⁴²⁶ “Die Informationen, die wir haben, sind spärlich, ihr historischer Wert of zweifelhaft. Unbestritten ist aber, dass durch die Missionstätigkeit judenchristlicher Missionare im 1. Jh. in Dutzenden von Städten des Römischen Reiches Gemeinschaften von Jesusbekennern entstanden sind.” (Schnabel 2002: 883)

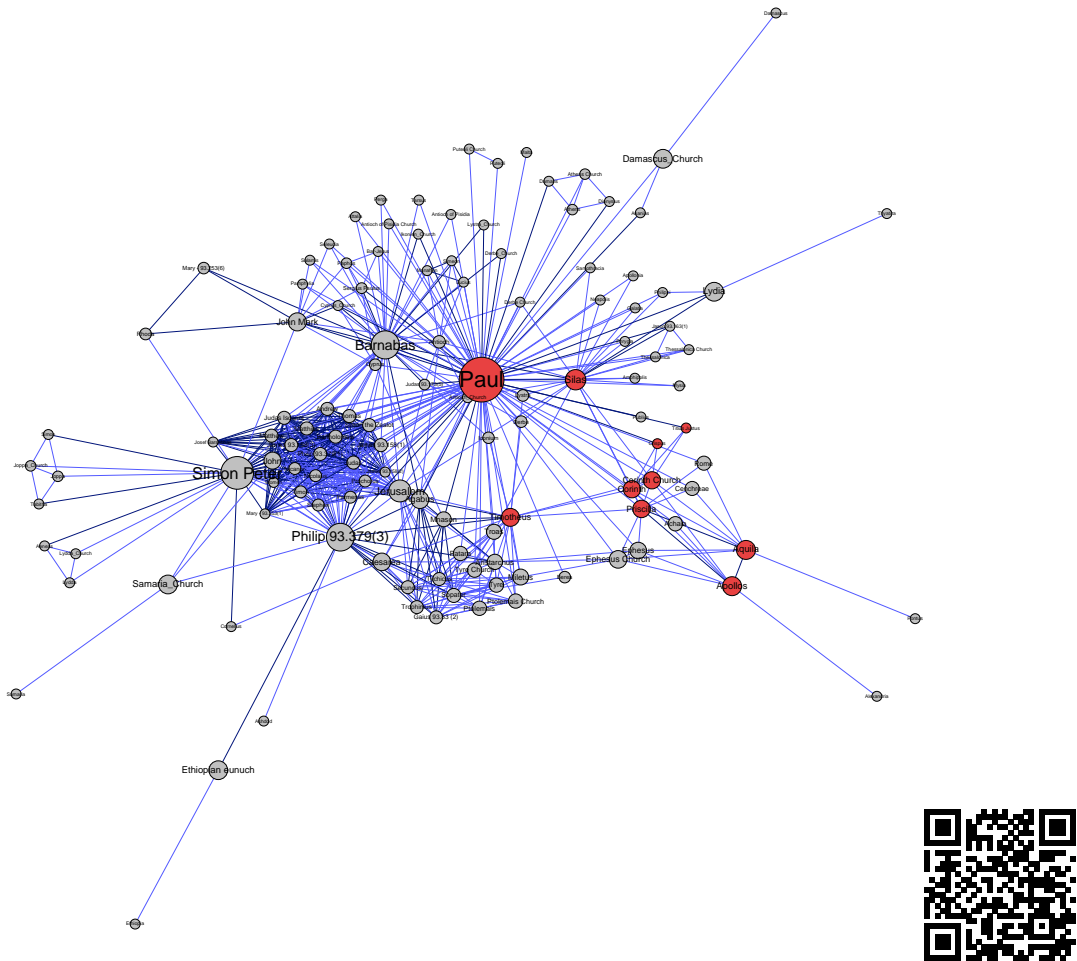


Figure 14.16: The social network of Acts 1-28. The red nodes indicate the direct neighborhood of Corinth.

we should ask whether Luke is paying special consideration to the way of mission as Schnabel (2002: 1420) sees it: Paul could have pursued an overall international strategy in his mission, wanting to preach the gospel in provinces, in regions and cities, where no other missionary had preached before him (see Rm 15:23). However, questions of whether Paul pursued a geographical strategy must remain open if one is not satisfied with the reference to his geographical movement from Antioch via Ephesus, Corinth and Rome to Spain⁴²⁷. The obvious objection to be made is, that only the second half of Acts is dedicated to Paul. And even regarding Paul there are several discussions about his mission strategies⁴²⁸. However, there are more topics within spatiality and movement, which

⁴²⁷ “Paulus verfolgte in seiner Mission eine internationale Gesamtstrategie: Er wollte in Provinzen und Landschaften, in Regionen und Städten das Evangelium von Jesus Christus verkündigen, in denen vor ihm kein anderer Missionar gepredigt hatte. Die Frage, ob Paulus eine geographische Gesamtstrategie verfolgte, muss offen bleiben, wenn man sich nicht mit dem Hinweis auf seine geographische Bewegung von Antiochien über Ephesus, Korinth und Rom nach Spanien zufrieden gibt.” (Schnabel 2002: 1420)

⁴²⁸ See for example Köstenberger & O’Brien (2006: 161-199), Schnabel (2002: 887ff), Bosch & Reppen-

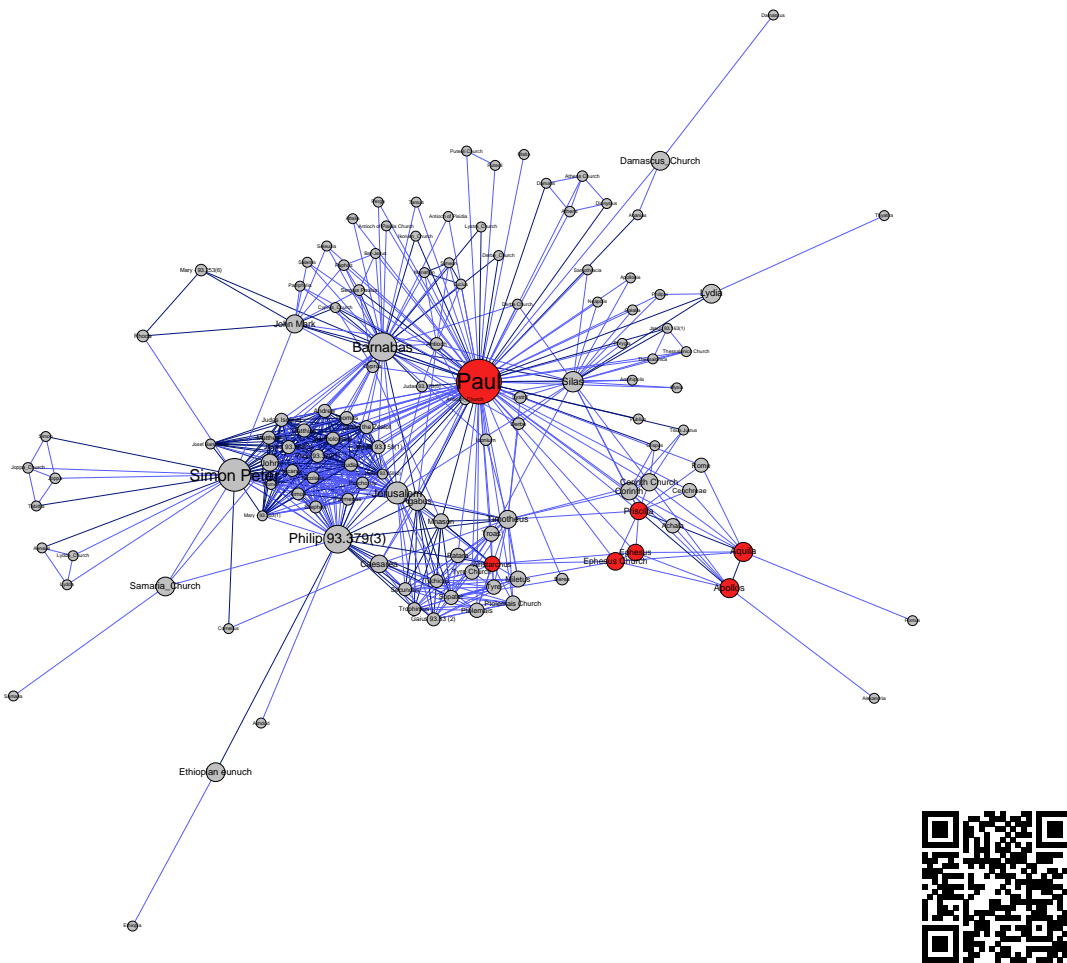


Figure 14.17: The social network of Acts 1-28. The red nodes indicate the direct neighborhood of Ephesus.

need to be considered.

Stenschke (2018a: 144), for example, points at the impact of refugees: “On first sight, refugees, dispersion and migration are not major themes in Acts. Yet on closer scrutiny this estimate needs revision.” In the previous chapter we have worked out the impact of suffering, danger, and persecution – but also divine calling – which is also evident in the first part of Acts⁴²⁹. Be it the forced displacement or Spirit-driven mission, Luke

hagen (2012: 142ff) or the discussion in the previous section.

⁴²⁹ Stenschke (2018a: 143) sees Luke’s primary interest here: “Luke’s focus is on those Christians who have to leave Jerusalem voluntarily or due to persecution (8:3; 9:2), and follows their wanderings and ministry in different places. This focus is noteworthy in view of his otherwise strong interest in Jerusalem in the Gospel of Luke and in Acts 1–7, where the gathering and restoration of Israel takes place and is described in detail.” According to the statistical observations in the last sections, we may add that Luke also points the reader at those people in other cities which are in the end not wandering but remain on a single location or are no longer in the scope of his narrative.

describes the ‘wandering people of God’⁴³⁰. However, we should not exaggerate these observations, since the “latter half of Acts, and the geography of Acts more generally, are best understood in light of contemporaneous political and cultural discourses about Greek cities under Rome” (Nasrallah 2008: 534). The spatial setting, as we have seen in the last chapters, is deeply connected to the Greco-Roman world, and the setting which Luke describes for mission is rooted in churches and their – but also divine – initiatives.

Considering and summing up the information in Figures 14.15 and 14.13, we have to agree with the observation Stenschke provides: “According to Acts, many early Christian missionaries served in places that were not their places of origin, voluntarily or by force: the disciples ended up in Jerusalem and eventually at the ends of the earth.” (Stenschke 2018a: 129). It is an interesting question how much of these travels were divine callings, strategic considerations, due to persecution, or other reasons⁴³¹. We will focus on that question in more detail in the next part.

However, what we can see is the narrative purpose of Luke: While in his Gospel he mainly considers theological ‘movements’ – and the spatial movement from Galilee to Jerusalem – in Acts he describes the spatial movement from Jerusalem to the world⁴³². The Gospel overcomes different distances in different spaces. These motifs grounded by Luke in the Gospel are re-occurring and developing in Acts.

14.6 Crisis and Fraction in Acts

In the previous section we have already discussed the importance of suffering, danger and persecution for mission. In this section, we try to examine the impact of internal crisis and fraction. While external crises lead to growing internal relations and a strengthening of the community structures (cf. Schnabel 2002: 1470ff), internal problems may also disturb this growth. Luke does not omit crisis and fraction: “Acts presents a Christian community that

⁴³⁰ See also Stenschke (2016b) and Kahl (2015).

⁴³¹ However, it is easy to see that God lets people change their plans: “It is no real answer to this question to say that this journey narrative shows, as do other parts of the Biblical narrative, that God’s purpose may be realized in ways that man has not planned or expected.” (Filson 1970: 73)

⁴³² And although this might be a ‘political’ movement, as Filson suggests, it is also a narrative description: “It comes nearer to the truth to say that in this final narrative of The Acts Jerusalem and its spiritual leaders lose their opportunity to be the focus and centre of the Christian movement. To put it in other words, these closing chapters of The Acts attest both the potential continuing import and the actual dispensability of Jerusalem and its temple for the Christian church.” (Filson 1970: 74)

is not harmonious and ideal, but had its significant dissensions and conflicts.” (Stenschke 2021: 59) In this section, we will investigate how SNA can contribute to understand Luke’s narrative picture on this topic.

We have several problems here, which are also discussed as methodological critique in Section 22.3: First, we do not have external sources to extend the network which Luke provides⁴³³. Second, for applying current research results, the network in Acts is not sufficient⁴³⁴. Third, we already have a view on crisis and friction which may be shaped by reading the New Testament. But an open-minded approach would be necessary in a situation with limited resources⁴³⁵. Fourth, Luke does primarily present a religious scenario. But SNA is – and cannot – be limited to a particular social environment. Cheadle & Schwadel (2012: 14) highlights this issue: “We have shown that religion can be important and pervasive in other social contexts too. Religious contexts are not self-contained, and they clearly spill-out to influence social processes in other settings.” Thus, we need to elaborate on what we can contribute with SNA. A conclusion on this issue will be drawn in Section 22.3.

Stark (1996: 73-74), for example, raises yet another issue, with the main focus on the latter, post-Acts perspective: “I suggest that had classical society not been disrupted and demoralized by these catastrophes [e.g. epidemics, diseases], Christianity might never have become so dominant in faith.” Yet, we can raise the same concerns as in Chapter 9.4: Luke’s primary narrative interest *in describing interpersonal relationship* is the idea of

⁴³³ We may add the information given in the Pauline Letters, but this is out of scope of this work (cf. Vollenweider 2018). However, current historical approaches rely on more information: “Initial applications of network science to the study of ancient religions included the analysis of travel and pilgrimage, the dissemination of new religions, the circulation of coins, and various properties of religious texts.” (Czachesz 2021). Woolf supports this lack of information: “First, how complete a picture do the letters that ended up in our New Testament, supplemented by Luke-Acts, present of Paul’s network? Some letters may have been lost, some removed in the edit, some simply discarded as not contributing to the aims of the collection.” (Woolf 2016: 48)

⁴³⁴ “When viewed cross-sectionally, the youth in this study prefer friendships to those who are religiously similar. Even so, religious participation, devotion, and identification changed for many, and these changes were systematically related to changes in the friendship network.” (Cheadle & Schwadel 2012: 13) In addition, we would have multiple critical issues to solve on an exegetical basis. For example, some scholars see even more fraction within the church in Jerusalem, for example between Antiochia, Jerusalem, Peter, and James, Jesus’ brother: “Dog må han profilere sig i forhold til Jerusalem-kredsen og Jakob, Jesu bror, men åbenbart især i konkurrence med Peter. Som tilknyttet menigheden i Antiochia rejser han til Jerusalem og opnår her kollegial bekræftelse og en form for arbejdsdeling med Peter” (Fatum 2010: 148).

⁴³⁵ “It is important to keep in mind that we are not the first readers of Acts, and our own mental maps are shaped by centuries of reading and interpreting Christian origins” (Alexander 2003: 165). He adds: “This particular mental map is so familiar that it is hard to remember that it is (like all mental maps) a construct arising out of a particular social and rhetorical situation.” (Alexander 2003: 167)

participation in the βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ. As we have seen in Section 14.4, SNA can also unveil more information about the ‘in’ and ‘out’ of a network. Taking also into consideration the network structure in Section 14.2 we can see that Luke is also concerned with these stable structures that form a response to the external crisis. This view is supported by research in sociology and SNA⁴³⁶. Can we see a dominant role of leadership, as Alexander (2003: 165) states⁴³⁷? The SNA supports a different view: Luke is mainly interested in the relationship between actors forming a society of followers. Although he mentions leadership and hierarchy in the churches, this is not his motif. As we have seen in Section 9.5 the only approach usable on this data base is the level of homophily and the network’s asymmetric nature, as discussed in Chapter 9.

If we consider the nascent Christian network to be a minority network it has a high level of homophily. This helps to create a stable network which is not heavily affected by internal crisis, but both open to people from the outside and reliable for those being part of the network. What will help to analyze this network, is the definition of religious conflicts. Mayer (2013: 5) defines religious conflicts with the following conditions:

- (1) two or more collective agents are involved and agents derive, for example, from separate religious, separate factions within the same religion, from within the same faction in the same religion, and/or secular authority;
- (2) a domain – e.g., ideology/morality, power, personality, space/place, group identity – is contested, singly or in combination;
- (3) there are enabling conditions – e.g. political, social, economic, cultural and psychological; and
- (4) religion is involved (the degree to which it is involved is deemed irrelevant).

While conditions 1 and 4 are fulfilled within Acts as narrative topic, condition 2 is more complicated. However, we can assume that either ideology or morality is a topic (e.g. a reason for the Council in Jerusalem, Ac 15:1–34) or – and that is what SNA focuses on – personality and group identity (e.g. the conflict between Paul and Barnabas in Ac

⁴³⁶ See for example Cheadle & Schwadel (2012). But it finds also support in the reception of Stark’s work: “His [Stark’s] work to bring sociological theory to bear on this new material is particularly laudable since early Christianity has often been treated as qualitatively different from many other religious innovations that have emerged in different times and places. That special treatment can usually be traced back to some form of theological privileging or related queasiness.” (Castelli 1998: 229)

⁴³⁷ “The relationship between the apostles and the rest of Christendom is conceived in a strictly hierarchical fashion”.

15:37–39). Turning to the analysis of religious conflicts gives not only perspectives on crisis and faction, but might also help to tackle issues related to space and spatiality.

Partially unclear is if condition 3 is applicable. But when referring to the literature, we see that even in Acts most issues lead to benefits (or not) in the areas of politics (for example Ac 4:1–4), social environment (as discussed earlier), economy (for example Ac 4:32–35) or culture (for example Ac 8:26–40): “Recorded in Acts are issues of power and influence and control over identity.” (Stenschke 2016a: 211) However, as we have argued above, we rely on Acts as source, which in some case leads to more questions than answers: For example the “sharp disagreement (παροξυσμός 15:39) between Paul and his spiritual ‘mentor’ Barnabas. The reason for this dispute between the ‘topmost’ Apostles was totally insignificant.” (Despotis 2020: 563) And indeed, this conflict seems to be a foreign matter in Acts, as we will see. We need to add that, especially when extending our view to the Pauline Letters we need to differentiate between resolutions of conflicts and reconciliation (cf. Stenschke 2021).

Luke portrays individuals, see also Chapter 19. But they share a common identity, e.g. in the community in Jerusalem or in general in the nascent Christian community (cf. Stenschke 2016a: 214). Schnabel (2012: 867) adds a focus on Paul visiting James in Jerusalem (Ac 21:18–26): “It demonstrates the importance of efforts to maintain the unity of the church by addressing existing tensions, and it underlines the importance of efforts to vindicate the gospel against false accusations.”

The confrontation between Barnabas and Paul in Ac 15:37–39 supports this view: While Luke remains silent about both, we learn from the Pauline Letters, that there was some sort of reconciliation. It is widely assumed that Luke had a narrative interest in adding this conflict⁴³⁸ to the story. The question remains why. While some scholars see this as problems in the growth of churches (e.g. Jones & Decker 2001), others see leadership problems (e.g. Singfiel 2018). But Luke does not add any further references to Cyprus when his narrative focuses on Paul. But with Tables 14.2 and 14.3 the SNA supports the idea that their work in Cyprus was still successful and it was simply not in Luke’s interest to add more specific details.

⁴³⁸ For example Kucicki (2015: 87): “The function of the account is to indicate the point when Luke’s narration changes from a general approach (a history of the first-generation Christians) to a particular approach (a history of Paul’s mission activities).”

The church was not founded by Paul (Ac 11:19, cf. Schnabel (2002: 1032f)) and it is plausible that Barnabas could follow up his work without any rivalry, although Luke does not provide a direct hint. The crucial point SNA supports is that Luke does not omit the emotional confrontation between Barnabas and Paul. The nascent Christian network had a strong inclusive parameter with enough space for many actors⁴³⁹. This thesis is also supported by Stenschke (2010: 522): Barnabas was a person “who could accept it when his own role changed and others moved to centre stage, or when his co-worker took over as main leader”. See also Phillips (2001): With Acts, she follows that church should “not be to avoid conflict, but to create a community of faith in which a spirit of love and reconciliation prevails.” In general, we see that conflicts in Acts “bound the Christian community even closer together internally” (Stenschke 2016a: 241)

Thus, although we cannot apply current models to the question of crises and faction, at least the analysis of in- and out-groups in Acts allows some assumptions about internal crises and faction in Acts: Again, Luke carefully composes his work in such a way that (a) no group has a special position and (b) the participation in the βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ *also* results from the interpersonal encounter outside of the group. Not many followers of Christ were previously excluded from society – this is rather a topic in the Gospel –, but *new (different) social participation* always results afterwards.

To summarize, the divine work always turns concern (e.g. social concern) into participation, although Luke’s narrative emphasizes different aspects in his Gospel and Acts. According to this, unkindness and exclusion are no trivial offenses. However, Luke is very precise in his portrayal of Christian society, both during Jesus’ earthly ministry and in Acts. More research needs to be conducted in this field. We will provide more insight on this in Chapter 22.

⁴³⁹ We will discuss some of these aspects and issues within the next part of this work.

15 Conclusion

This part of our study has described and reviewed the key aspects of the social network presented by Luke in Acts. The “Acts-network” is different to the network presented in Luke’s Gospel, and not primary concerned about theology, but rather about the spread of early Christianity and in particular the forming of a Christian community.

The first part of Acts is mainly focusing on Peter, John, Barnabas and Philip. Most of these actors vanish within the second part of Acts, where Luke shifts to Paul and his journeys. We will present a more detailed view on different actors, and especially the ‘hidden’ characters in Chapter 19. Obviously, Luke presents a selection which is interesting for him – or which he thinks is interesting for his readers. The same holds for locations and his view on spatiality: Luke does not only present churches founded by Peter or Paul, but also a lively and vital exchange between them. The network described in Acts is rooted in Jerusalem as the single center of Christianity, see further Chapter 20. But the network is not depending on Jerusalem, being a stable, redundant network, and an expanding network. Neither does Acts present isolated communities. It rather refers to strong interactions between people who belong to several communities which is key to understand a network.

Acts narrates an emerging network which has a reliable and stable structure. The leadership in this network is transformational. Although people like Peter and Paul might be charismatic, they do not follow a charismatic leadership paradigm. However, SNA leads to the hypothesis, that this network does not follow a modern definition of new religious movements.

Acts describes different actors with different behavior and different character. The importance of Paul is usually exaggerated, and is first due to his many connections to other actors. Second, it is due to the fact that Luke focuses his narrative on Paul. We will

focus on co-workers in Acts in more detail in Chapter 17. In addition, the SNA shows, that Luke is not by purpose omitting information. SNA can help identify locations and churches which are also important while not in his focus. In addition, we can provide some basic observations on Luke's view on community: He presents a diverse network. He does not omit women, gentiles, or other groups. While his narrative in Acts describes more men than women, women play a vital role in the network he describes. In addition, we can follow the growing extension of his network to non-Jews.

We presented exegetical observations and the basic results of SNA on Acts. In the next part, we will discuss more details.

Part III

Analysis

16 Social Network comparison: Connecting Luke's Gospel to Acts

In this part, we will combine all information and analysis collected in the last parts on Luke's Gospel and Acts. The chapters presented here are loosely related. This chapter examines the social networks of Luke and Acts. The following chapters concentrate on Acts because of its unique features (see Chapters 3 and 4). Initially, we will study mission co-workers, and from these observations on collaboration, we will provide a detailed study of Peter and Paul, as well as some minor characters in Acts. A study about locations and spatiality follows, and concluding remarks are given in the last chapter. We will begin this chapter by connecting the social network of Luke's Gospel to Acts. In the previous two parts of this work, we have either worked on the Gospel or on Acts. But obviously there is a narrative connection between both.

Mathematically, given the social network G of the Gospel and the social network A of Acts, we want to compute the complete network S

$$S = G \cup A.$$

Here, all nodes which occur in both networks result in the same node, and therefore actors do not appear twice. The new network S has 1237 edges and 212 nodes. Overlapping nodes – and thus the factor which guarantees the narrative continuity between Luke and Acts – are mainly the followers of Jesus.

However, there is an ongoing discussion about the unity and narrative continuity between both works. Critical works have been published aplenty, most important the works of Parsons & Pervo (1993) and Gregory & Rowe (2010). For a detailed overview we refer to Spencer (2007) and Green (2011). And indeed, there are several loose ends,

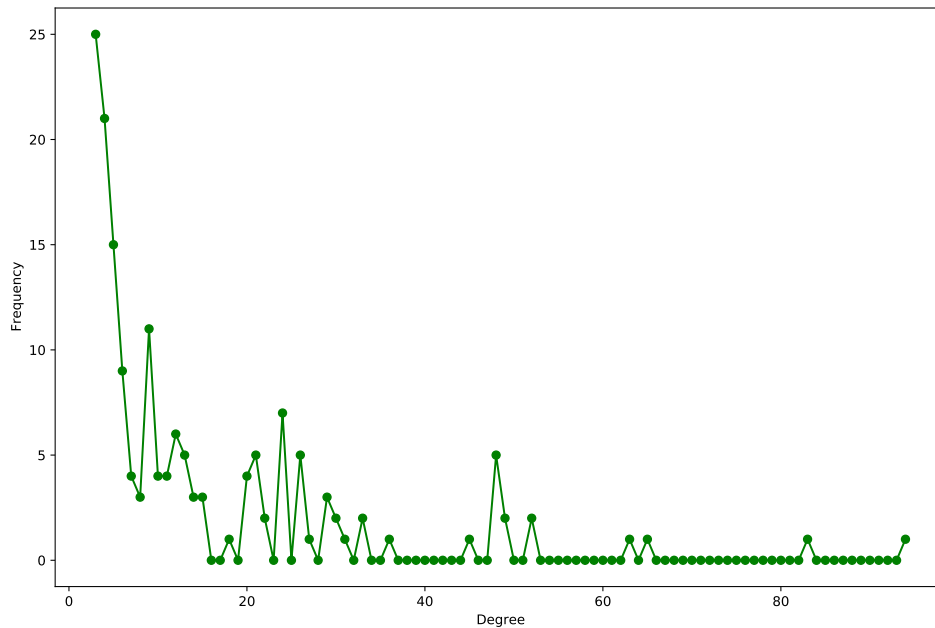


Figure 16.1: Degree distribution representation of Luke-Acts.

“and all of these have also been proposed or defended in the literature.” (Verheyden 2012: 27). Our work can contribute to the narrative interpretation of this issue.

Figure 16.1 indicates the degree distribution representation of the complete network of Luke-Acts. The ‘long tail’ of the scale-free distribution is clearer when comparing with Figures 9.1, 12.1 and 14.3. This clearly indicates the narrative relation between the Gospel and Acts, presenting a coherent social network. Before we continue with a more detailed analysis, we will briefly discuss how this embeds into the larger context of NT research, as presented in Chapter 3.

Clearly, one hypothesis is that Luke and Acts are not connected. Or more clearly: “Luke does not require Acts.” (Pervo 2009: 19) With the result presented in Figure 16.1 we can show that the social network presented in both clearly form a network structure which follows – with some minor and major gaps which we will discuss later – a scale-free distribution which would be expected for a connected narrative network. Despite the analysis of the distribution, we can also focus on a more narrative perspective as Green (2011: 115) suggests: “Key to the question of narrative unity, then, is the initial introduction of a deficit that presses the narrative forward in a more-or-less typical series

of movements, a narrative cycle, by which this state of deficiency is addressed (or not).” While we have already summarized the deficits – the incomplete distribution of actors –, combing both volumes clearly shows that this deficit decreases. Since our network also comprises locations, and thus movements, and narrative topics which are connected and related to the social network, we will step-by-step show and analyze how deeply connected both narratives are. Thus, from a SNA perspective we can clearly state: each work requires the other.

As we have discussed in Chapters 9, 12, and 14, all part analyses of distributions showed major gaps. From a narrative perspective on the social network, the Gospel is incomplete without Acts, and Acts is incomplete without the Gospel. Although the overlap between both networks is small, the view of social networks rejects another hypothesis: “Luke originally wrote two autonomous works, each with its own purpose and character, which, at the end or shortly after, he tried to connect with each other” (Verheyden 2012: 28). A rushed adjustment of both works would lead to less overlap between both works. However, a careful composition would have decreased the approximation towards a scale-free distribution. Thus, from a SNA perspective the only possibility is that both works initially formed one narrative.

Our analysis underlines that each part of the network (Luke, Acts 1-12 and Acts 1-28) shows that the distribution of the social network changes and gets closer to the expected distribution of the network, the scale-free distribution. We can assume a narrative intention and one initial story. Another hypothesis is not as clear, “the view that Acts was written before the Gospel [and] that Luke-Acts are but the first two parts of an incomplete trilogy” (Verheyden 2012: 28). This might be one explanation for the gaps in the network, although we might consider other reasons – as we will discuss in the next sections. Thus, we can still conclude: “Several of these explanations are plausible.” (Schnabel 2012: 1063) The SNA cannot reject the hypothesis that Luke had more material and planned another volume (against Pervo 2009: 688). Thus, our analysis suggests that a narrative perspective on Luke-Acts supports the hypothesis that Luke composed one single work.

We have not yet drawn any conclusions on how to read Luke-Acts or about its genre. We used a narrative reading and our results highlight the outcome of this approach. However, due to the methodological presuppositions, we are mostly unable to comment on this point. Some scholars have already proposed narrative views on Luke-Acts, as

Betweenness Centrality	
Paul	9263.436320
Jesus	5684.192655
Jerusalem	3457.468582
Simon Peter	2828.166269
Barnabas	1576.521740
Disciples of Jesus	1421.582886
Seventy-two	1005.089924
John	900.378092
Philip 93.379(3)	834.109840
Judas Iscariot	666.581023

Table 16.1: A selection of actors sorted decreasing after their Betweenness Centrality in Luke-Acts.

Closeness-Centrality	
Jerusalem	0.567204
Simon Peter	0.565684
Paul	0.549479
John	0.546632
Judas Iscariot	0.542416
Matthew	0.541026
Judas	0.541026
Bartholomew	0.541026
Andrew	0.541026
Thomas	0.541026

Table 16.2: A selection of actors sorted decreasing after their Closeness-Centrality in Luke-Acts.

discussed extensively in Section 4.1. We might follow for example Smith & Kostopoulos: “we propose reading Luke-Acts as a unified narrative influenced by and modelled after a wide range of Greek prose narratives, rather than representing one genre in particular” (Smith & Kostopoulos 2017: 390). This shows the methodological limitations of our approach.

In Tables 16.1, 16.2, and 16.3 we present a selection of actors in decreasing order according to several centrality values for Luke-Acts. When comparing these results with our analysis of the Gospel and Acts, there are several striking observations:

- First, Paul has a larger BC value than Jesus. This is mainly due to the fact that Jesus is not an active actor in Acts, despite appearances of the Risen (e.g. Ac 1:11, 9:4–6, etc.) which cannot be included in the network. This does not imply that

Eigenvector-Centrality	
Simon Peter	0.215395
John	0.210131
Matthew	0.207306
Bartholomew	0.207306
Thomas	0.207306
Andrew	0.207306
Jerusalem	0.192370
Jesus	0.166369
James	0.145851
Simon	0.145082
Disciples of Jesus	0.144667

Table 16.3: A selection of actors sorted decreasing after their Eigenvector-Centrality in Luke-Acts.

Luke is not interested in the encounter between God and human beings. But after Ascension Day, this connection is provided mainly by the Spirit after Pentecost, who cannot be separated from Jesus. While there seems to be a gap, this again supports the view of narrative unity because both work address different topics which are reflected in the network (see also Green 2011: 117-118).

- We may formalize this observation as follows: Jesus was active in the spiritual center of Israel and in particular in Jerusalem (ranked on the third place). When the Gospel starts spreading ‘to the ends of the earth’, Luke mainly focuses on Paul’s mission.
- This mission is spiritually rooted in Jerusalem and in particular in the early Christian network, which is not only related to Peter (fourth place), but in particular to the whole community (disciples and the seventy-two on the fifth and sixth place).
- Other actors were important as well, for example John and Philip. It is unexpected to see Judas Iscariot on this list, but he played a particular role for Luke’s narrative at the intersection between Gospel and Acts.

The values for CC and EC, see Tables 16.2, and 16.3, show no real surprises. The early Christian network according to Luke is centered in Jerusalem. And although the situation in the Gospel and in Acts is widely different, this again highlights Luke’s theological concern about this city. However, there is an ongoing discussion about the importance of

Jerusalem and in particular the temple. Scholars mostly connect this issue to Israel and the ‘New Age’ (cf. Bormann 2019 Bachmann 2021). However, our study suggests that both are not limited to a salvation-historical perspective (against Bachmann 2021: 266). Rather, we can empirically support the hypothesis of Shin (2022) who utilized spatiality to highlight “the complex ambivalence of Jerusalem without having to reduce one aspect over the other” (:41).

It is striking so see that other apostles like Matthew, Bartholomew, Andrew, and Thomas also have a high closeness in the Luke-Acts network. While Duling (2000: 10) suggested in his SNA to pay special attention to the brothers among the apostles, our study shows that Luke’s narrative is not inasmuch concerned about connections and fractions within the network around Jesus, as he is about its unity. EC shows that for the stability of the early Christian network as Luke portrays it, Peter, John and other apostles have a similar position to Jesus. This does not point to a higher theological value, but in turn shows that for Luke-Acts the direct encounter with Jesus is succeeded by the close and stable community established by his followers. This is striking, because again this underlines the deep narrative connection between Luke and Acts: the social network of the narrative is connected to theological motifs and story-telling elements. This constitutes a perspective which is not solely concentrated on the post-Easter mission.

A different aspect was presented by Blumenthal (2018: 78) who emphasizes the narrative importance of Jesus as protagonist in both Luke and Acts. Our analysis shows that he is both right and wrong: Luke is, of course, interested in the earthly ministry of Jesus in his Gospel. In Acts, Jesus is part of the theological conception of the apostolic witness proclamation, and the belief in Jesus is the most important concern of Luke. But from a narrative point of view, Jesus is – as we have discussed previously – no longer a direct actor on stage, but transcendent and so to say the driving factor that helps to spread the Gospel in connection to the Holy Spirit. However, it is not possible to show this in a reasonable way within the social network. Other actors take over to push the narrative forward, while Luke is always presenting the theological discourse and foundations. Thus, Jesus is, of course, the point which connects both Luke and Acts, but he is not the sole protagonist. Again, SNA can only contribute to parts of the narrative analysis. However, we can summarize that SNA can contribute to the initial question of a narrative unity between Luke and Acts. Two particular strengths are the clarity of numbers and distribu-

tions and the clear methodological boundaries. SNA supports the view that each works of Luke-Acts requires the other.

However, we can also analyze what Luke omits in both volumes. As we can see in Figure 16.1 the network structure shows that Luke omits locations and persons. This observation is not surprising. For example, Luke often presents an unnamed *ὄχλος* of people, summarizes wanderings and travels. Omissions in Luke can be measured – at least, when assuming an ideal scale-free distribution of the network. Given this, we should be rather surprised about how few entities are omitted by Luke. As we continue our analysis in the next chapters, we will see that Luke also points us to facts which are not in his narrative interest simply because he adds details which would not be necessary to understand the story itself, for example about fellow travelers. On the other hand, we already discussed the fact that Luke carefully arranged his narrative. For example, we were able to demonstrate that fellow travelers show that Paul was not an isolated missionary. Thus, we can assume a balance between omitted and non-omitted places and actors.

It is also worth to notice that the SNA of Luke-Acts omits Luke himself (cf. Schnabel 2002: 1369). The we-passages in Acts are usually considered as an eyewitness claim (cf. Keener 2014: 2366). While we see a trace of him, it is nearly impossible to derive his relations and where exactly he was a companion of the actors⁴⁴⁰. Another omission is Theophilus, to whom Luke dedicates his writing. We have no more information about him, see Chapter 5. Thus, SNA cannot contribute to a narrative analysis of the author itself, or the addressee of his works. Just like the transcendent Jesus in Acts, the Holy Spirit or God itself, the boundaries between narrated world and measurable spaces elude a mathematical analysis.

Figure 16.2 shows how Luke-Acts successively increases firstspace, secondspace and thirdspace distances that led to the Gentile mission. Most motifs are laid out in the Gospel (red arrows). The mission of Jesus overcame all three spaces. However, while being the most important theological narrative bringing salvation to the earth, in comparison to

⁴⁴⁰ Other scholars disagree, for example Keener: “Although Luke includes notice of his participation, however, his use of the first person plural minimizes focus on it far more than even third-person usage would have. He avoids needing to mention himself separately [...] by simply including himself in group actions.” (Keener 2014: 2374) But even these group actions do not provide enough information to include Luke in the social network.

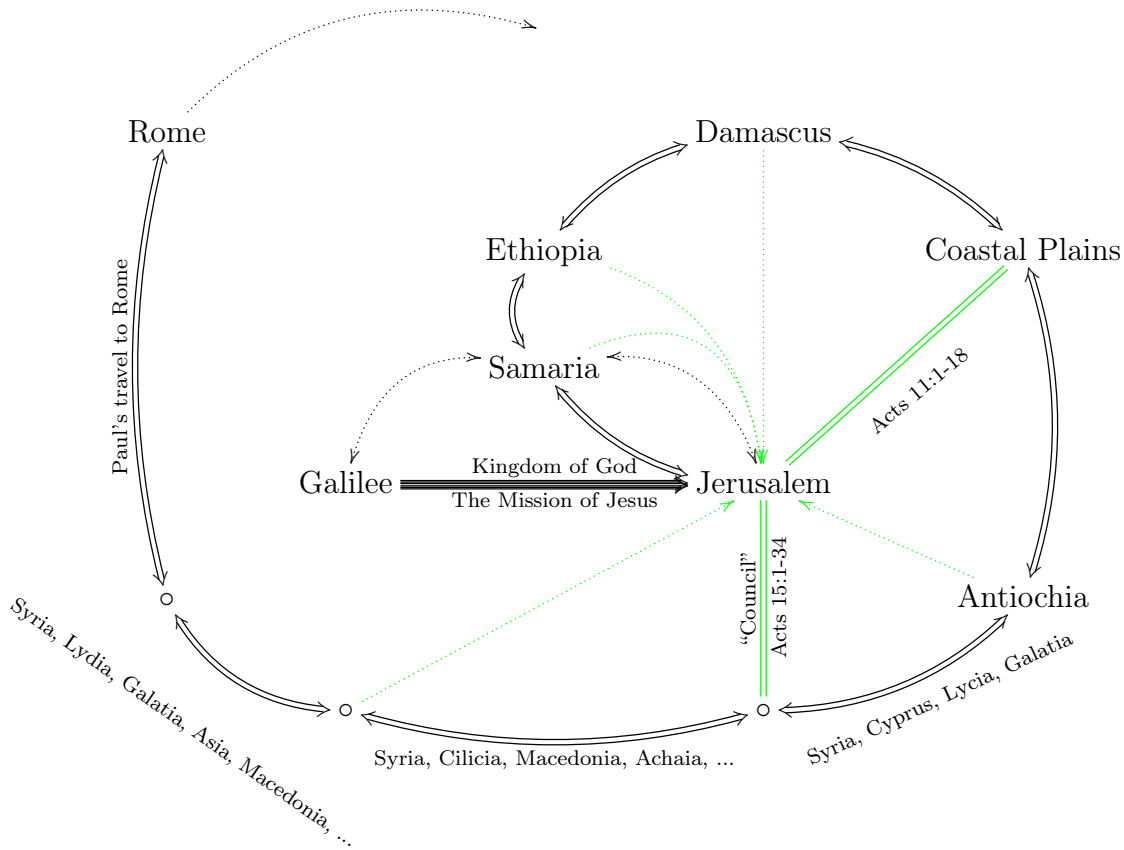


Figure 16.2: Illustration of how Luke-Acts successively increases firstspace, secondspace and thirdspace distances that led to the Gentile mission. Red arrows indicate the spatial movement within the Gospel, the green arrows indicate the connection to Jerusalem.

Acts the firstspace, secondspace and thirdspace distances remain limited. The mission in Samaria – already foreshadowed in the Gospel – had to primarily deal with distances in the religious, social and cultural domain. With a presumed proselyte from Ethiopia, in addition to the great spatial distance, much greater distances had to be overcome – although the actor came to the Temple in Jerusalem to pray. The persecution of the Christian network led to overcoming secondspace and thirdspace distances. The conversion of Saul again bridges distances, this time by someone who wants to maintain the Jewish identity. Thus, the next step, the baptism of the Roman Cornelius, leads to the Gentile mission, which, however, still has to prevail against internal resistance. With Antioch at the end of the first half of Acts, it becomes clear that one episode in Acts is ending and a new one is beginning. The promise of Ac 1:8 is fulfilled by God's action. The second half of Acts underlines this observation. As we have shown, Paul and other missionaries were working in all three spaces: The mission came with Paul to Rome and with other mostly unknown missionaries to other places. Luke emphasizes this mission

‘to the end of the earth’ overcoming firstspace and secondspace distances. We could also show, that the secondspace is actively overcome by the inclusion of all people from diverse backgrounds, not only the ‘humble and poor’, marginalized, and not only Jews – everyone is welcome. The thirdspace is also a special focus for Luke: He underlines the importance of overcoming barriers in the minds of people, overcoming prejudices, forming an inclusive community. While we initially used critical spatiality in our work as a vehicle to overcome the missing distances in SNA, we were able to show that this links several theological motifs to social concepts within the narrative. While these motifs are well-known in research, our research presents a unique perspective on them, and shows how carefully they were arranged within the narrative. More work in this field could identify even more elements⁴⁴¹.

As we have shown in Chapters 7, 8, 9 and 14, Luke carefully arranges firstspace, secondspace and thirdspace. In his Gospel, thirdspace is mainly reserved for theological movement, while firstspace and secondspace represent the ‘earthly’ movement and travel. In Acts, thirdspace changes to the spiritual reception of the previous theological movement. God sent his Son to earth, and this movement in an encounter between divine and human now changes the hearts of people, creating a new community of followers. While the motif of travel and journey is well studied in literature (cf. Robinson 1960 Filson 1970 Zangenberg 2021), our study suggests a reading within different contexts. Spatiality is not solely a vehicle for Luke to transport “the certainty of authentication and preparation of the apostolic witness on which the church was built” as Robinson (1960: 31) examined. However, it is also not solely an OT reference and Luke’s presentation does not only find its “goal [...] reported in the climactic final third of the Book of The Acts” as Filson (1970: 77) suggests. SNA leads to a different narrative reading of spatiality, embedded both in the social network – bridging boundaries and linking actors – and in theological motifs which are linked to the narrative and in particular Luke’s presentation of Jesus’ ministry and the nascent Christian community. While we utilized critical spatiality primary for representing distances in the social network, our study suggests that a careful examination of Luke-Acts with regard to critical spatiality might lead to new narrative insights⁴⁴².

⁴⁴¹ According to our knowledge, only very limited research was carried out on critical spatiality within Luke-Acts (cf. Sleeman 2009 Robbins et al. 2016 Robbins 2010).

⁴⁴² See the observations of Sjöberg (2002: 40-41) on vertical and horizontal structures: “Lukasevangeliet markerar detta genom en *vertikal* social struktur (hög och låg, rik och fattig betonas parallellt genom hela evangeliet). Den har sin motsvarighet i Apostelgärningarna, men här är strukturen *horisontell*.”

In summary, our analysis of Luke-Acts leads to the following results: (a) Luke presents a surprisingly complete social network which follows a scale-free distribution. Thus, (b) this underlines the narrative connection of both works, and more research in the field of social network analysis should focus on those actors present in both. SNA supports the view that both parts of Luke-Acts requires the other and that Luke presents one coherent narrative. (c) Luke describes a social network dedicated to follow Jesus, who himself is the protagonist of the Gospel, in Acts he works through his apostles. Luke is concerned with theological issues, which is the reason for him to write. In the second half of Acts, the story-driving actors change. (d) This early Christian network according to Luke has a high closeness and forms a reliable network centered in Jerusalem. Here, SNA and critical spatiality suggest that Luke presents neither his network nor places like Jerusalem or the temple for one particular reasons, but that narrative, motifs, and theology are deeply connected and influence each other. While these motifs are well-known in research, our research presents a unique perspective on them, and shows how carefully they were arranged within the narrative. Since (e) Luke omits locations and actors, we will now continue with a more detailed analysis: first, of how Luke describes collaborations in Acts and in particular co-workers in mission. Second, we will provide a detailed analysis of characters and locations.

17 Mission Co-workers in Acts

While the previous chapter focuses on Luke and Acts, we will now turn to a more-in-detail study on Acts. Within this chapter we discuss the topic of missionary co-workers from different perspectives: For example, whether Luke describes co-workers (cf. Ollrog 1979 Drews 2006), or a hierarchy of missionaries (cf. McGinnis 2022), or even a distinct leadership role of Paul (cf. Kümmel 1987). Other scholars seek a connection between mission, especially Paul's mission and a particular theology of mission (cf. Briones 2019) or examine how co-workers were chosen (cf. Schille 1989). Here, we will discuss whether SNA can provide a new perspective on Luke's presentation of co-workers and collaboration in mission. First, we will motivate this research and briefly summarize the current state of research.

Even though the second half of Acts is dedicated to Paul and his activities, and although especially the BC values in our analysis in Chapter 14 highlighted the narrative importance of Paul, Luke underlines, that he is not working alone. In research we find different perspectives. While Ollrog (1979) mainly seeks a holistic perspective on Acts, Schnabel (2002: 1367) argues that the significance of Paul in Acts is mainly due to the fact that Luke does not provide further information about other early Christian missionaries⁴⁴³. Paul has several co-workers and the SNA shows them, their connections and their work. Schille observes that Paul's choice of co-workers was also due to practical reasons:

Die Hauptfrage aller Missionsreisen stellt und löst Lukas stets zuerst, die Mitarbeiterfrage. [...] Das Motiv für die Wahl des Begleiters ist nicht psychologisch, sondern praktisch: Paulus kann nur die besten Mitarbeiter, nicht kritikwürdig (wie Markus) gebrauchen. (Schille 1989: 369)

⁴⁴³“Die große Zahl der Mitarbeiter ist nicht zuletzt deshalb so auffallend, weil wir für die anderen Apostel keine entsprechenden Angaben besitzen.”(Schnabel 2002: 1367)

But the choice of co-workers is also related to their particular gifts and skills, see our detailed analysis in the next chapter⁴⁴⁴. However, Paul begins his third travel alone, see Ac 18:22. Obviously, working together not only requires a particular level of agreement, but it has also a strategic component: “Luke mentions Paul’s multiple co-workers to emphasize the strategic value of team ministry, mentoring, and leadership development” (McGinnis 2022: 177). However, as we have discussed on several occasions, it remains unclear if Luke presents strategic decisions or if actors are guided by chance or God (see for example Ac 16:6). Although some interpretations seem to be more or less arbitrary, because Luke does not provide detail information about leadership⁴⁴⁵, we will show that SNA can contribute to this question as well.

There is also an ongoing discussion about a particular Pauline theology of mission and its integration in his missionary activities described in Acts. Briones summarizes:

God’s mission to bring salvation to the ends of the earth therefore involves the creation of selfgiving communities that not only benefit from Christ in the gospel but also participate in Christ through the gospel, perpetuate God’s work of rescuing many from sin and death, and reenact the Christevent, as a ‘nonidentical repetition,’ to a sinstricken world. (Briones 2019: 301)

Although there seems to be a consent in research that Luke describes co-workers, this was still heavily debated. Kümmel, for example, states that Luke portrays mission as deeds of single persons⁴⁴⁶. According to him, in particular the lists in Paul’s Letters (e.g. Rm 16, Col 4, Phlm 1) would be misunderstood when interpreted as a list of co-workers.

[Dies] beruht auf der unbewiesenen Voraussetzung, daß die zu runden Zahlen ergänzten Listen von Berufenen und Grüßenden ‘Mitarbeiterlisten’ seien, die in Wirklichkeit ein organisiertes Missionskollegium mit ‘Weisungsbefugnis’ darstellten, doch fallen mit dieser unhaltbaren Voraussetzung alle daraus abgeleiteten Folgerungen (Kümmel 1987: 274).

But as we have discussed previously, Acts does not support this view. Luke does not omit the missionary activities of other people, neither does he describe solo attempts nor does

⁴⁴⁴ This is also supported by Sjöberg (2002: 115): “Lärjungarna kommunicerar inte evangeliet på bara ett sätt i Apostelgärningarna. Här används en mängd olika metoder.”

⁴⁴⁵ See for example in Ac 14: “In beiden Modellen ist kollegial geleitet worden, ähnlich wie bei einem Gemeinderat oder Kirchenvorstand. Lukas ist ein wichtiger Zeuge für diese Verbindung.” (Söding 2020: 199)

⁴⁴⁶ Es sei die “lukanischen Darstellung der ‘großen Vorstöße einzelner’” (Kümmel 1987: 273).

he ignore the works of others⁴⁴⁷. Maness (1998) was among the first to analyze actors in a ‘network’ and within their social relations. He summarizes: “no single determinant acts as the ‘driving’ force for the co-workers as a whole; and, these co-workers exhibit varying degrees of dependence and independence on these determinants in the execution of their ministries” (:141). But how are co-workers generally defined and described in Acts? A comprehensive study was provided by Drews. He summarizes the research situation and claims that all research in this field “fehlt – bei aller Berechtigung der am Leben der Mitarbeiter orientierten Darstellungsweise – die Untersuchung des Mitarbeiterphänomens unter übergreifenden Gesichtspunkten.” (Drews 2006: 4)

We will (1) show that the social network of Acts highlights the importance of co-workers in mission in general, not only for Paul’s activities. While Luke presents differences in how different actors work, he emphasizes the community aspect of mission. After that, we will (2) discuss these results within the framework of current research.

In Section 14.1 we provided a detailed analysis of centrality measures within Acts. It underlined the significant role of Paul in Acts, but also highlighted the fact that Luke did not omit other actors while his primary narrative focus was on Paul. This may well have apologetic and theological reasons, but in any case reflects Luke’s narrative world. This will be analyzed in the next two chapters, where we will provide a more detailed analysis of some actors in the network. The network of Acts is an emerging network with reliable and stable structures as we elaborated in parts I and II. This means that no structural holes exist and thus, Paul is not the decisive single actor in the early Christian network involved in mission. The same holds for other actors as well. Paul, in particular, is embedded by Luke in the nascent Christian network, rooted in Jerusalem. Thus, we cannot assume the social network according to Luke to describe a division between Paul and – for example – Peter (cf. Sanders 2009 Schnabel 2008: 458). While our community detection analysis supported the contrary view, it also highlighted the importance of traveling missionaries. It is most likely that other connections did exist, but Luke pays special attention to them. For example, in Acts, Paul appears on stage within the mission in Antioch, rooted in Jerusalem. While crisis and faction could be handled reasonably

⁴⁴⁷ Schnabel agrees: “Die Mission des Paulus war ein integraler Bestandteil der urchristlichen Mission. Sie stellte keine Sonderaktion innerhalb der Urchristenheit dar, sondern verlief parallel zu den Missionsunternehmungen der anderen Apostel und anderer Missionare.”(Schnabel 2002: 1359-60) See also Sjöberg (2002: 117) who emphasizes “hur väsentligt det var för den unga kyrkan att arbeta utifrån en tydlig gemenskap och tillsammans finna Guds ledning i olika situationer”.

	BC	EC	CC	N
Simon Peter	185.8	0.131	0.486	39
Paul	87.0	0.080	0.478	94
John	122.2	0.097	0.486	27
Barnabas	129.9	0.093	0.486	45
Philip	149.5	0.103	0.491	26
Silas	160.5	0.098	0.489	24
Aquila	157.3	0.095	0.486	9
Priscilla	172.9	0.092	0.486	11
Apollos	170.0	0.089	0.484	8
Lydia	186.0	0.089	0.485	4

Table 17.1: The average centrality of a node’s neighborhood. Indicated are the *closeness centrality* (CC), *betweenness centrality* (BC), and *Eigen centrality* (EC). In addition, we have added the total number of neighbors in the network (N).

well, the early Christian network according to Luke had a strong inclusive bent.

While the analysis so far brought up important information about particular actors and the network structure, we now need to go one step further. In particular if we want to analyze collaboration and co-working, we should analyze how the direct group of linked actors behaves. This can help to characterize this direct area of closely connected actors. In Table 17.1 we provide the average centrality of a node’s neighborhood. This means for a particular actor v and an arbitrary centrality measure c we calculated

$$ac(v) = \frac{1}{|N(v)|} \sum_{u \in N(v)} c(u).$$

Using this formula, we can evaluate how good these measures are for all actors related to v . This does not only result in some surprises, but also in some artifacts. We need to omit Lydia in this list, because she has only 4 neighbors and one of them is Paul with a very high BC value. In general, this method would work better for an equal distribution of neighbors in the network. This means that the normalization approach does not work here, particularly because Luke provides very limited knowledge about her other relations. However, outlier detection is usually necessary in data driven analysis. For further details, we refer to Section 22.3.

First, we observe that the BC of Peter’s neighborhood is the highest (185.8), whereas Paul’s is the lowest (87.0). This shows two aspects: (a) Peter is connected to many different actors driving the narrative and is well-connected in the network of Acts. (b)

Paul is himself driving the narrative, but while having more than twice as many neighbors than Peter, these actors are in general not that important for Luke's narrative. While we can assume that Luke's narrative interest is a very important reason for this outcome, the difference is nonetheless significant. We can see that Paul is not a teamplayer on the same level as the other people in the list: he is more interested in acting on his own. But another observation puts this into another perspective: While the closeness centrality is a little bit lower, it nevertheless underlines that Paul is building a closure, a subnetwork with close relations⁴⁴⁸. We can again see an interesting mixture of contrasts that pushed Paul (cf. Sanders 2009: 27). Again, our analysis presents an interesting new perspective on the actors presented by Luke supporting the need for an interpretation of them in relation to other actors.

Can this analysis help to understand the dependencies and leadership roles in the network? Indeed, they show a particular perspective: Paul is by no means a lone hero. He is embedded in a close network and the BC values underline that he depends on the close networks others have built. When Öhler (2003: 388-9) paints Barnabas as the leading partner⁴⁴⁹ he is most probably not entirely wrong, in particular in the beginning (for example Ac 13:13). Luke describes the close relationship between Paul and Barnabas, and it is not unrealistic to assume that Paul learned how to collaborate with other missionaries from his mentor⁴⁵⁰. Stenschke (2010: 507) supports this view, presenting "Barnabas, the mentor – Paul, the apprentice". However, as we could show the mentor–apprentice relation, and in particular any leadership relation is presented in a particular including way, challenging our western approaches of today (cf. Stenschke 2010: 523). However, there is yet another difference between Paul's and Barnabas' approach. We can assume that Paul was more of a restless traveler ("Ein Vulkan beginnt zu brodeln", Schnelle 2014: 95), although he stayed longer in some places, for example Corinth or Ephesus (cf. Schnabel 2002: 1382).

⁴⁴⁸ Schnabel (2002: 1382-3) summarizes: "Paulus unterhielt regen und regelmäßigen Kontakt mit seinen Mitarbeitern. Mindestens folgende Gründe sind dafür verantwortlich: 1. Die Fülle an persönlichen Bindungen und Beziehungen muss eine nicht unwichtige Rolle in der Bewältigung der Beschwerden gespielt haben, die das Missionsleben mit sich brachten, vor allem der Heimatlosigkeit. 2. Eine wichtige Rolle spielte die individuelle Fürbitte."

⁴⁴⁹ "Paulus war [somit] noch nicht der große Einzelkämpfer, er war eingebunden in eine Mission, deren mindestens gleichwertiger, wahrscheinlich aber doch führender Partner Barnabas war" (Öhler 2003: 388-9).

⁴⁵⁰ "Bei der zweiten Missionsreise – nach dem Streit und der Trennung von Barnabas – wählt Paulus nach dem Vorbild seines Mentors Mitarbeiter um sich. Insbesondere Silas erscheint in der Darstellung des Lukas als ein Partner des Paulus, während in Bezug auf Timotheus nur seine Berufung und Einführung zum Dienst im Mittelpunkt steht." (Drews 2006: 160)

However this would also add another possible explanation why Paul's and Barnabas' ways parted at the beginning of the second missionary travel. Obviously, not all co-workers had the same tasks⁴⁵¹. With some exceptions Paul meets them in new churches.

This is also a paradigm shift to other co-workers in Acts: When Peter and John worked together, e.g. in Ac 3, two well-known and well-integrated actors collaborated. It was not until Barnabas mentored Paul that Luke narrates the missionary activities of new members. As we can see in Table 17.1 Paul, John and Barnabas had a community of more 'equal' actors when considering their BC values. How does leadership work in Paul's network?

Schnabel (2002: 1368) claims that authority within Paul's co-workers was established by apostolic status. Despite the general weakness in betweenness centrality, we find many 'strong' actors in Paul's network, for example Silas, Aquila, Apollos, Timotheus and even John Mark. Does this support the role of Paul's co-leadership as introduced by Okhakhu (2021), who saw Paul as 'first among equals' (:341)? Or was Paul rather a manager? We will utilize some observations from sociological research to analyze the social network of Acts.

The SNA points to the very special approach by Paul which may make his approach different to those of other missionaries in Acts. It is not solely the collaboration with co-workers, not solely his leadership, but in particular the concrete setting of co-workers and local churches, mobility (extensive traveling) and being in one place for a longer time, e.g. in Corinth (Ac 18:1–17), but also the cultural environment *and* being embedded in a dense, inclusive, and reliable network of early Christianity. We find parallels in recent studies. Mintzberg (1973) analyzed managing and "stressed the role of managers in monitoring and disseminating information among co-workers" (:421). This can be directly evaluated in the network. Lengyel & Eriksson (2017) as another example provided a case study and stated that the "mobility of workers is an important source of regional dynamics, but the effect of mobility on regional productivity growth is not straightforward, as some firms tend to win while others lose from mobility." (:635) Eriksson & Lengyel (2019) analyzed the importance of co-workers in Sweden. He highlighted the importance of dense co-worker networks, and in particular those links to 'related' fields and their impact on more generic sectors.

⁴⁵¹ For a detailed analysis of Paul's letters we refer to Schnabel (2002: 1379).

It is in particular interesting that Paul could overcome so many distances in First-, Second- and Thirdspace as we have discussed earlier. To summarize, our SNA of Acts leads to the following observations regarding the portrayal and characterization of Paul within Luke's narrative:

- Paul was not a 'lonely hero', but a person embedded in the early Christian network (cf. Drews 2006: 162).
- Luke does not omit co-workers in general⁴⁵², but highlights collaboration in mission not only with Paul, but also for Barnabas, Peter and John.
- SNA suggests that all these actors use different strategies to collaborate with co-workers, although we cannot prove it, see Section 19.8.

It would not be very far fetching to assume, that while Luke mainly narrates Paul's story in the second half of Acts, he does this due to the fact that Paul was the most active and far-traveling actor in the early Christian network. But Luke clearly narrates some other – most probably famous – actors. Drews (2006: 161) sees a serious limitation in assuming the focus on Paul⁴⁵³, but the statistical analysis can identify outliers like Lydia. In general, this study leads to further research questions and in particular underlines the importance of further investigations on the role of co-workers as Drews also highlighted: "Trotz der Tendenz, die Rolle der Mitarbeiter im Missionswerk des Paulus stärker zu betonen, sind einige Fragestellungen in Bezug auf das Thema noch nicht bzw. nicht umfassend genug erforscht worden." (Drews 2006: 161) In particular, while our analysis is limited to Acts, it would be beneficial to analyze and compare the social network described in the Pauline Letters and other NT books.

In this chapter, we examine the functionality of the social network in Acts, particularly the description of missionary cooperation. Subsequently, the next two chapters will analyze major and minor characters and how SNA can augment a narrative perspective on Luke-Acts.

⁴⁵² See also Drews: "Der anfängliche Eindruck – Lukas interessiert sich allein für die Person des Paulus und übergeht die Bedeutung der Mitarbeiter im paulinischen Missionswerk – ist nach der Untersuchung der Apostelgeschichte grundsätzlich zurückzuweisen. Lukas weiß um die Mitarbeiter neben Paulus, er setzt sie jedoch anders 'ins Szene'." (Drews 2006: 160)

⁴⁵³ "Erklärbar ist dies damit, dass Lukas hauptsächlich an der Person des Paulus interessiert ist und dass wir mit der Apostelgeschichte eine andere Gattung haben." (Drews 2006: 161)

18 Main Characters

In our SNA of Luke-Acts, we could identify several actors which are clearly important for Luke or who have a surprisingly high centrality value. Peter and Paul are the main characters of the first group. We will thus first discuss Luke's portrait of Peter, and then determine if Paul is really Luke's particular main character. However, a detailed study of all aspects of recent perception of Paul in Acts is not within the scope of this work. Much research is dedicated to Paul, and we will present only some ideas and analysis as to how SNA might help to contribute.

In addition, we may discuss whether Philip and Barnabas belong to this group. But there are also various 'hidden' actors who are more or less in the focus of research: Silas, Aquila and Priscilla, Apollos, Lydia and John. After studying Peter and Paul, we will present an analysis of the 'minor' actors in Chapter 19. An intermediate conclusion is drawn in Section 19.8.

This list is by no means complete. We could easily add more names, for example John Mark, Timothy, Agabus and Mary. But this would go beyond the scope of this work, and we made a selection of these actors where SNA can contribute. Thus, these actors were chosen according to their centrality measures. However, we will see that also other factors influence how much information we can extract. We should also mention that other scholars argued for more detailed studies of these characters, and we will support this plea (cf. Drews 2006: 161-2).

18.1 Peter

The question of Peter's role often ignites research on passages such as Mt 16:17-19, in which Jesus promises him the keys to the kingdom of heaven. But even apart from such

striking passages, his position and role are discussed again and again. Biblically, four sources emerge for research of Peter: (a) the Gospels, (b) the Pauline epistles, (c) the Acts of the Apostles, and (d) the Petrine epistles. We will now discuss to what extent the SNA helps to understand the person of Peter in Luke-Acts. The present study is based primarily on Acts, due to the fact that the Gospel of Luke is rather concerned about a single, unified community of Jesus followers, as we have discussed in Chapter 9. Whenever appropriate, other sources will be used. Thus, social and cultural backgrounds will be carefully compiled on this basis. What was Peter's network like? How did he use it? What distances did he overcome?

Jn 1:44 states that Peter was from Bethsaida and according to Jn 1:42 he was the son of John (Σίμων ὁ υἱὸς Ἰωάννου) and to Mt 16:17 the son of Jonah. In the same verse in the Gospel of Matthew, he is given the byname Κηφᾶς by Jesus. The Aramaic word כִּיפָא means *rock* or *stone*, and was also used as the Greek translation Πέτρος. The original name of Peter is Simon. This original Hebrew name is found in the form Συμεών only in Ac 15:14 and 2 Pt 1:1⁴⁵⁴.

Peter lived in Capernaum, see Mk 1:16–18. Concerning his family, we find only a reference that he was married in Mk 1:29 and 1 Cor 9:5. In Lk 4:31 we find the encounter between Jesus and Peter's mother-in-law. Together with Andrew they are the two apostles who were called in the beginning. Whether they lived in one household, as Lampe et al. (2018), suppose must remain open, but can be assumed in view of Mk 1:29. However, it is clear that both made a living from fishing.

18.1.1 The social network of Peter in the Gospel

The discussion about Peter in the Gospels and in particular Luke's Gospel is mainly concerned about his vocation, discipleship and his leadership role: "We learn from the Synoptic Gospel that Peter actually occupies a *unique* position within the group of disciples. Together with the sons of Zebedee and his brother Andrew he belongs to the

⁴⁵⁴ Hengel (2006: 162f) emphasizes that the name כִּיפָא goes back to Jesus and that the Greek name πέτρος was formed very early after Easter. Böcher & Froehlich (1996: 268) list as an important point that "[d]ie griechischen Namen Simon und Andreas [] auf eine gewisse Offenheit des Elternhauses gegenüber der hellenistischen Kultur, vermutlich auch auf frühe griechische Sprachkenntnisse des Petrus schließen" This could be an important indication of the later mission among Gentiles, but also already of openness to Greek-speaking Jews.

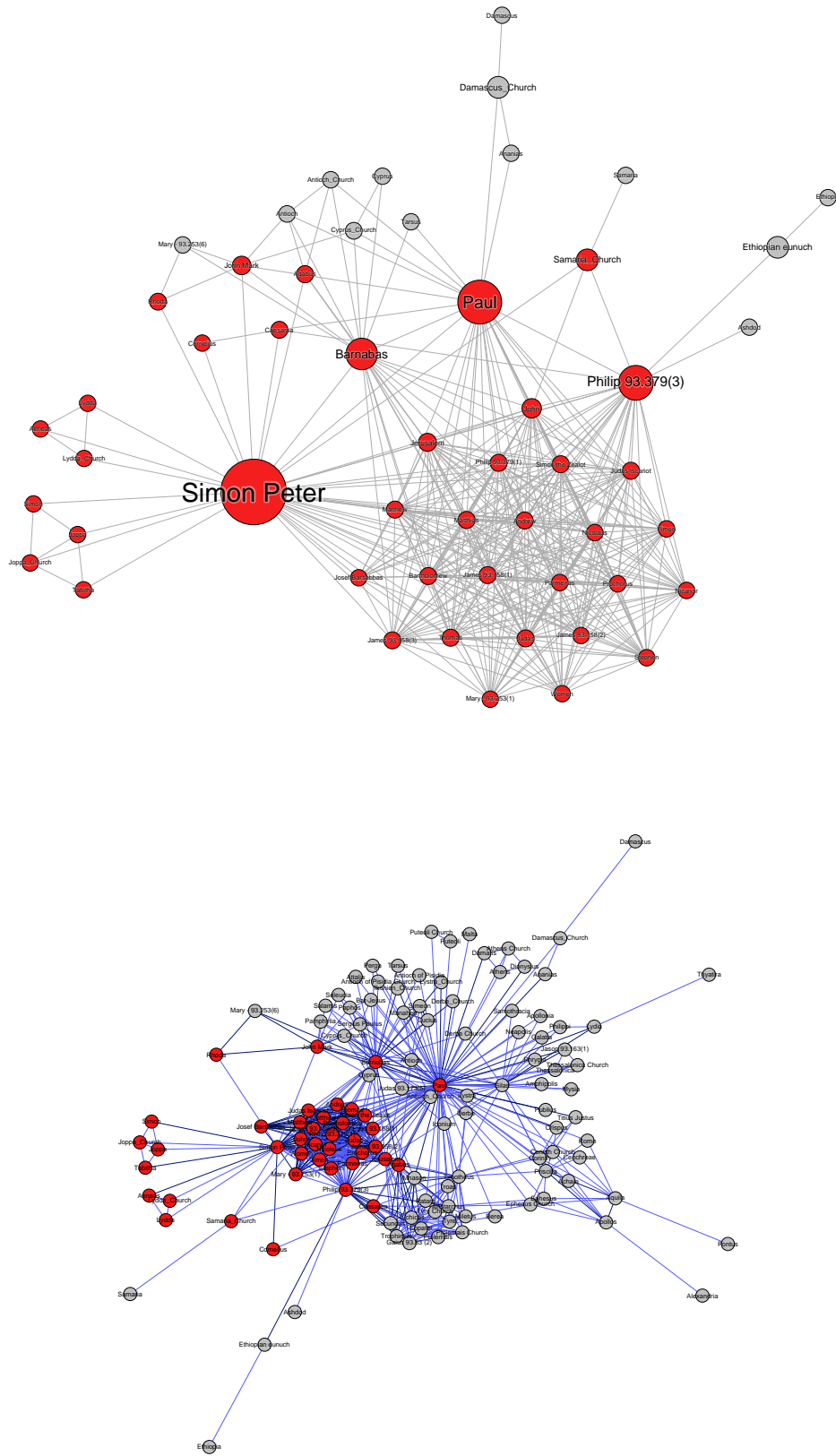


Figure 18.1: Peter in the social network of Acts 1-12 (top) and Acts 1-28 (bottom). Nodes in the neighborhood of Peter are colored in red.

intimate circle of those who gathered about Jesus.”(Cullmann 1962: 257) Interestingly, there seems to be a consensus ranging from a clear leadership role⁴⁵⁵ to equality with John, but maybe as *primus inter pares* (cf. Böttrich 2013: 80-87).

It is striking that no analysis in Chapter 9 really supports this view. Clearly, his BC value of 81 is higher than the other apostles’ values, but the general group of disciples and even the seventy-two have higher values (591, 397). The narrative is pushed forward with Jesus (2559) and by presenting a unified community of followers. The same observations can be made for CC, which indicates that Peter had a high centrality in the Gospel’s network, but not a significant value. He was certainly a significant part of the inner network of followers. His EC value supports this view.

18.1.2 Peter as leader of the church in Jerusalem

In Ac 1:13 Peter is at the beginning of the list of apostles. Ac 1:14 concludes that all the apostles, along with the women and Mary, “held fast to prayer with ‘one accord.’” Jervell (1998: 118) correctly observes that Acts reports only on the first three apostles. But when he concludes that “die Zwölf [] auch nicht als Einzelpersonen wichtig [sind], sondern als Zwölfergremium”, this viewpoint can be questioned in light of the SNA findings. To do this, Peter’s role in this network can be examined, and the way in which he acts as a possible ‘leader.’ His function in the election of Matthias in Ac 1:15–26 is often cause for questioning Peter’s role. Some exegetes see Peter in a clearly dominant leadership role⁴⁵⁶, however, Jervell (1998: 123) states, “Peter emerges as the leader of the church without further justification.” This image is supported entirely by his duties in the church, as preacher, spokesman and miracle worker.

Is Peter really described in Ac 1 as a spontaneous, enthusiastic, eloquent disciple of Jesus with undoubted leadership qualities⁴⁵⁷? Peter is not concerned with a leadership role, but with the ‘word of Scripture’ (Ac 1:16). It is not he himself who sets himself as leader, but it is God himself who acts.

⁴⁵⁵ “Peter was in the inner circle of Jesus, but even within this select group he is clearly the leader.”(McDowell 2016: 55)

⁴⁵⁶ For example: “Er drängt auf die Wahl eines Nachfolgers und gibt die Richtlinien an, nach denen die Wahl vorgenommen werden soll” (Brown et al. 1976: 41).

⁴⁵⁷ For example “[ein] spontaner, begeisterungsfähiger, wortgewaltiger Jesusjünger mit unbestrittenen Führungsqualitäten” as Schnabel (2002: 387) puts it.

Is Peter always the sole protagonist, leader and speaker? At first glance, this seems to be the case in the healing miracle in Ac 3 where John's role seems noteworthy (cf. Cullmann 1962: 35). The question remains, then, whether John was more than a minor character next to Peter. This was discussed in detail in Chapter 11. John does not play a purely passive role in the account and also makes a significant contribution to the events, see also the detailed discussion on John in Section 19.7. Luke cannot be accused of a one-sided focus on Peter, but it can be stated that Peter plays a predominant role, perhaps even that of a leader of the church. Since Acts does not explicitly mention this, however, narrative characterization and SNA indicate his role rather as *primus inter pares*. This is also evident in his dealings with his fellow apostles. He does not command, but leads, if at all, through prayer and responsibility before God as well as through relationships⁴⁵⁸.

Luke is also clear in Acts: Peter is portrayed as a person who cultivates and uses relationships. For example, the paralytic in Ac 3 plays an important role as actor, otherwise we miss an important point. John and Peter first command the blind man to look at them, that is, to establish a relationship with them. The fact that the paralytic subsequently clings to them clearly shows that he has now become part of the Original Christian network – whether as a believer or as a close person. In addition, Ac 10:1–11:18 suggest that Peter can also use new relationships.

Figure 18.1 shows Peter's immediate neighborhood in the network. This highlights that he himself did not have a direct relationship, especially to the direct mission fields of Philip, Barnabas and Paul. This again indicates that he worked through relationships. Luke-Acts is very concerned with God's action and with the relationship with him and in the church with one another. Thus, Peter not only overcomes various distances through God's action and opens up a larger network, but he also leads in relationship to others and according to God's will.

18.1.3 Peter as mediator

Even though Peter and John travel to Samaria (Ac 8:14), Peter's missionary activity outside Jerusalem does not begin until Ac 9. Here, he visits churches in Lydda and

⁴⁵⁸ This is also supported by Böttrich (2013: 145): "Petrus scheint hier von Anfang an die organisatorische Hauptverantwortung in der Jerusalemer Gemeinde zu tragen. Er bleibt jedoch stets in ein kollegiales Miteinander verschiedener Konstellationen eingebunden."

Joppa, which may also go back to the missionary activity of Philip. Initially he moves primarily in a Jewish context, building relationships and teaching.

Only in Ac 10 does Peter cross not only social distances as in Ac 3, see our discussion in Chapter 11, but also religious and cultural ones. After baptizing Cornelius and his household, Peter must give an account to the church in Jerusalem. He does so, explaining that the inclusion of Gentiles in the early Christian network is God's initiative. Here, God is again the driving force. Peter thus becomes a mediator. He mediates between people and God's mission, but equally he mediates between people, communities and places.

This importance of Peter can also be clearly derived from the analysis of the social network in section 12. Peter not only has relationships with the nearest level of leadership, but his relationships carry through the complete network⁴⁵⁹. Figure 18.1 confirms this hypothesis.

18.1.4 Peter after Acts 12

Peter is mentioned in Acts only one more time, during the Council in Jerusalem (Ac 15:1–34). Here, Luke adds a summary talk, where Peter referred to his encounter with Cornelius and how God made a choice (*ἐκλέγομαι*) 'that by my mouth the Gentiles should hear the word of the gospel and believe' (v. 7). In addition, Peter concludes in v. 11: 'But we believe that we will be saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, just as they will'. Luke portrays Peter again as mediator: "Die Petrus-Rede beruhigt die Gemüter, es trat Schweigen in der Versammlung ein" (Schnabel 2002: 971).

In Acts 21, when Paul travels back to Jerusalem, he meets the elders of the church and James (Ac 21:17f). It is worth noticing that Paul discusses with James. Peter does not appear again in Acts. Was mission getting more important for him than leadership in Jerusalem as Schnabel (2002: 513) suggests, or was life in Jerusalem no longer safe⁴⁶⁰? Figure 18.1 shows that Peter is still an actor with many connections in Acts 1-28. But Luke does not provide further details about his life. Schnabel (2002: 704-710) discusses several hypotheses about Peter's later work. However, he summarizes that we can neither

⁴⁵⁹ However, this perspective on the relational level is hardly found in literature. Only in the meticulous work of Keener (2013) discusses some aspects of it.

⁴⁶⁰ "Die Führungsaufgaben in der Jerusalemer Zentrale konnten offensichtlich mit Führungsaufgaben in der Mission der Gemeinde nicht mehr vereinbart werden." (Schnabel 2002: 513)

prove or falsify them⁴⁶¹. Probably he died in Rome, and 1 Cor 9:5 tells us about his missionary travels with his wife. According to Gl 2:11–14, Peter visited Antioch, but we have no more knowledge about this trip (cf. Böttrich 2013: 188). The “New Testament information about Peter leaves a number of gaps in the account. Later Christian traditions fills out many of the missing details.” (Perkins 2000: 131) The SNA of Dunn (2009: 1152) suggests with 1. Peter that Peter founded the churches in Pontus, Cappadocia, and Bithynia (cf. Ehrman 2006: 81ff).

However, it is even unclear if Peter traveled to Rome. McDowell (2016: 59ff) discusses several inquiries on Peter and his Martyrdom in Rome. “Das Ende des Petrus in Rom gilt der kirchlichen Tradition als ein sicheres Faktum. Doch weder sein Weg dorthin noch sein Aufenthalt in Rom selbst lassen sich aus den älteren Quellen zweifelsfrei nachweisen.” (Böttrich 2013: 195) Zwierlein (2010: 2) sees just a thin connection (‘dünnnes Band’) between Rome and Peter. Hengel summarizes:

Based on this mass of vastly different indicators, one can assume, not only that Peter’s heart was concerned to make sure that the missionary proclamation went forward, but that his concern extended to matters of the development, structure, and unified activity of the admittedly very different communities, initially in Jewish Palestine, but after the conversion of Cornelius and after the expulsion at the time of Agrippa, also beyond its borders into Syria and finally all the way to Rome. And thus, just as Paul developed a ‘network’ of communities that were beholden to him, there would also have been such a network of communities that would have been aligned with Peter. (Hengel 2010: 90)

Following Hengel, we rely on Acts⁴⁶². But the results are nevertheless striking: With a BC of 1094.6 Peter is still the second most important actor for Luke’s story. Peter’s role is even emphasized when focusing on Luke-Acts, as we have discussed in Chapter 16. And we should note: Peter is one of the main characters in Luke’s Gospel *and* in the first part of Acts. Paul acts as main character only in the second part of Acts. While his story contains more travels, from a narrative perspective we cannot judge if one story contains more tension and adventures than the other.

⁴⁶¹ “Sicherheit lässt sich im Blick auf die Geographie der Missionstätigkeit des Apostels Petrus nach dem Jahr 41 nicht gewinnen.” (:709)

⁴⁶² Nicklas (2020: 186) finds barely a “mentale Erinnerungslandschaft” in other sources. However, within the narrative world of Acts, this memory is not reproducible with SNA.

As we have discussed in Chapter 17 Luke describes a different kind of leadership and – of course – character⁴⁶³. We cannot underestimate Peter’s role as mediator and in particular his central function within the early Christian network as described by Luke.

18.1.5 Conclusion

While a lot of research focuses on Peter’s leadership or his role as *primus inter pares*, especially in the Gospels⁴⁶⁴ not much research focuses on his narrative and social role in Luke-Acts.

The SNA and *critical spatiality* offer reason to reconsider Peter’s role in the early Christian network. Was he really a “pure” leader, the person who had the absolute authority over all decisions? In my opinion, this is a one-dimensional view. Rather, Luke-Acts gives reason to see him as a man seeking a relationship with people and with God. Whether he perceived himself as a leader cannot be inferred from Luke-Acts, while some scholars see it this way⁴⁶⁵. However, it is clear that Acts does not explicitly describe him as a leader⁴⁶⁶. See also Hengel’s observations: “At this point, Peter holds the position — in its basic nature a historically significant one — of serving a unique *bridging function* between the activity of Jesus and Paul’s mission to the nations.” (Hengel 2010: 79-80) As we have shown, SNA supports this view. However, in Section 19.1 we will discuss that Barnabas was even more a bridge-builder, but between different worlds. SNA clearly helps to examine these social structures.

⁴⁶³ “Both Peter and Paul were premier — in fact, unique — early Christian teachers; *we thank both of them for the decisive content of their apostolic witness*, which Paul conveys by means of his letters and which Peter provides for us through the Synoptic Gospels, especially Mark and Matthew. Luke, by contrast, in his two-volume work, seeks of necessity to convey the story by seeking common ground with both of them.” (Hengel 2010: 102)

⁴⁶⁴ “Die Zahl der exegetischen Untersuchungen hat seither einen kaum noch überschaubaren Umfang angenommen. Kein Stein ist dabei auf dem anderen geblieben, keine These nicht probiert, kein Bezug nicht berücksichtigt worden.” (Böttrich 2013: 19)

⁴⁶⁵ For example: “Durchgängig gilt ihm Petrus als der Erstapostel und Wegbereiter, womit die Grundlinie des Evangeliums auch im zweiten Teil des Doppelwerkes ihre Fortsetzung findet” (Böttrich 2013: 22).

⁴⁶⁶ “Wir sollten nicht vergessen, das Petrus weder in den Evangelien noch in der Apostelgeschichte als ‘Nachfolger’ Jesu beschrieben wird, der sich von den anderen Aposteln grundsätzlich unterscheidet, und Lukas beschreibt den Wechsel in der Leitung der Jerusalemer Gemeinde als Folge einer Verfolgung, in der Gott souverän bleibt: Die geschichte der Gemeinde wird letztlich nicht von Personen, und schon gar nicht primär-autoritär von Petrus geleitet, sondern von dem allmächtigen Gott, dem Herrn der Geschichte und der Gemeinde.” (Schnabel 2002: 710)

Peter's role as a missionary is also underestimated in research. Peter mediates and uses his relationships. In research, Peter is reduced primarily to theological issues and mission (cf. Bockmuehl 2012 Brown et al. 1976: 41f). However, Hengel (2006: 84ff) also cites for the development of Peter only the three reasons: Gentile mission, authenticity through Jesus traditions and his no longer law-abiding Jewish-Christian lineage.

18.2 Paul

Paul is one of the most popular research topics in the field of New Testament, and it contains several streams⁴⁶⁷. However, here we are mostly interested in how Acts portrays Paul. A first study was presented by Burchard (1970), who is mainly interested in the traditions presented by Luke. We also need to mention the works of Porter (1999) Porter et al. (2014) who summarizes the interest of research as “basic information about Paul and the chronology of his life, his personal traits as he approached his missionary endeavors, and his theology” (:124). The study of Skinner (2003) analyzed Paul's places of custody with narrative criticism and summarizes that “what changes is not Paul's activity but the settings in which he finds him self and the audiences they bring.” (:2) Similar to Burchard, the collection of essays in Hoppe & Köhler (2009) seeks to find the tradition of Paul in Acts (die “deutende Erinnerung an den Völkermissionar als der neben Petrus entscheidenden Gründungsgestalt der urchristlichen Bewegung”). In addition, Marguerat (2013) dedicated one chapter of his work on Paul to Acts. Along these research topics on Acts, several large monographs have been published on Paul in general and his life⁴⁶⁸. However, we also need to mention that Merk (1988: 75) highlights two other trends in Pauline research, first rhetoric-criticism and narratological studies⁴⁶⁹, and sociological

⁴⁶⁷ A first general research overview was published by Bultmann (1934). In retrospective, Bultmann's approach still has an impact on current research: “And when we (rightly) develop our accounts of Paul's historical situation do we make contemporary appropriation more difficult? Bultmann was clear why he was fusing theology and history, and what he thinks both involve.” (Morgan 2020: 318). Later overviews emphasize the vast amount of literature and research published on Paul: “Auf wenigen Feldern der neutestamentlichen Wissenschaft geht es gegenwärtig derart betriebsam zu wie im Bereich der Paulusforschung.” (cf. Klein 1988: 40). The most central topic and paradigm shifts were the research of Ferdinand Christian Baur (cf. Horn 2013: 16ff), the ‘Religionsgeschichtliche Schule’, Rudolf Bultmann, and the New Perspective on Paul (cf. Dunn 2008).

⁴⁶⁸ See for example Becker (1989), Murphy-O'Connor (1996), Lohse (2009), Sanders (2009), Baur (2021).

⁴⁶⁹ “Zu den herkömmlichen (und methodisch notwendigen) Fragestellungen, die der Herausarbeitung eines Gesamtbildes des Apostels und seiner Theologie dienen, haben sich Untersuchungen zur antiken/hellenistischen Rhetorik und zur Linguistik als bereichernd erwiesen, und Fragen moderner Erforschung der Psychologie sind ebenso auf dem Wege, in die Paulusforschung einzudringen, wie soziologische

studies exploring the different contexts in Jewish, Greek and Roman culture⁴⁷⁰.

While we have discussed several issues of Paul's life in Chapter 13, we have presented an extensive discussion of Paul's co-worker mission in Chapter 17. What do we learn about Paul in Acts?

- Paul was born in Tarsus (Ac 9:11;22:3) and was a citizen of this town (Ac 21:39), but lived also for a longer time in Antioch and Corinth.
- He was a Roman Citizen (e.g. Ac 22:25–29).
- He could speak Greek (Ac 21:37), but also Hebrew and maybe Aramaic (Ac 21:40, the word Ἑβραΐς might refer to both).
- He spent some time in Jerusalem, learned from Gamaliel, and had relatives there (Ac 22:3;23:16;...).
- Maybe he was part of the Diaspora-Jewish community in Jerusalem (Ac 6).

While the BC value of Paul is even significant in the first half of Acts, it indicates Paul's important narrative role in Acts. However, against Marguerat (2013: 22) we were able to show that Paul is not “the only character in the NT other than Jesus to be the subject of a biographical presentation”. Luke carefully arranges the biography of Peter, and we will see that he also provides several details on Philip and Barnabas. The analysis also supports the view that Paul was an independent actor⁴⁷¹. Figure 18.2 underlines the narrative importance of Paul: A large amount of actors and locations in Acts are in some way related to Paul. However, when analyzing Luke-Acts in Chapter 16, it was shown that Paul has an even higher BC value than Jesus, but the CC and EC values are significantly lower. This shows that Luke was interested in presenting Paul as an emerging character pushing the story forward. His wandering and traveling underlines the fact that his closeness in the network is not too high. In particular, the EC highlights that Paul

Bezüge zur Erfassung des Propriums paulinischen Wirkens und Denkens beigetragen haben” (Merk 1988: 75). See for example the studies of Heilig (2020) and Treu (2018).

⁴⁷⁰ Kobel states: “Schon alleine dadurch, dass Paulus in seiner Person Elemente jüdischer, griechischer und römischer Lebensvollzüge vereint, weist er eine hochkomplexe Persönlichkeit auf.” (Kobel 2019: 2) Other scholars “explore the potential of a new paradigm for the analysis of the activity and communication of Paul in a context which was so significantly marked by diverse peoples, cultures and languages.” (Ehrensperger 2013: 1)

⁴⁷¹ “At such a distance from Jerusalem and Antioch, Paul also exercised considerable independence” (Keener 2014: 2297).

was not the single relevant person for missionary activities and Luke does not omit this information, even though he does not pay special attention to other protagonists of the early Christian mission.

Our analysis in Chapter 17 provided an analysis of the direct actor's neighborhood in a network. We could show that the BC of Paul's network is significantly lower than that of other actors. While his network is the largest, it is not driving the narrative and plays no important bridge-building functions. This is due to two reasons: (1) Luke is not interested in the missing links, e.g. to Damascus, Pontus or Alexandria. Thus, several nodes in Paul's network have a small value for BC. (2) While Acts focuses on the activities of Paul, Luke does not omit the strong network built up before and during Paul's work. Thus, against Marguerat (2013: 32) Paul is not cast in a "hero image".

The resolution of the SNA of Acts cannot contribute to the concept of places and house churches within Pauline mission, as it was discussed by Becker (1989: 255). Neither can it contribute to Paul's missionary work as preacher or within personal discussions⁴⁷². However, Paul's activities are not limited to this. Schnabel (2008: 288) summarizes "synagogues, marketplaces, lecture halls, workshops and private houses". This interesting observation was also presented by Reinmuth (2018: 45). One major requirement for the success of Paul's mission would be the existence of Diaspora-Jewish communities⁴⁷³. Indeed, comparing the PPA according to Luke presented in Figure 14.13 on Page 282 with the PPA representation of diaspora Jews according to Collar (2013) shows that both maps have a significant overlap (cf. Ameling 1996: 29ff). Connecting Paul to the Jewish Diaspora network – either positively or negatively, as an apostate – was proposed several times (cf. Barclay 1996, 2011), and while PPA was only a secondary concern of our work, together with SNA it shows the need for further investigations on this topic.

In Section 14.4 we presented an analysis of the different cultural backgrounds within Luke's network. These results imply that there is not yet a completely 'new' network, but the social network of Acts is deeply related to a Jewish, maybe even a Jewish diaspora network. However, this network is open to everybody, no matter what cultural or religious

⁴⁷² Sanders for example underlines this fact: "Am wirkungsvollsten war er wahrscheinlich im Gespräch zu zweit oder mit kleinen Gruppen." (Sanders 2009: 36)

⁴⁷³ "Sie lässt erkennen, dass die jüdische Diaspora eine entscheidende Voraussetzung war. Die wandernden Missionare predigten zunächst in der örtlichen Synagoge oder Gebetsstätte. Hier waren nicht nur Juden unter ihren Hörern, sondern auch Nichtjuden, die sich von jüdischem Glauben und jüdischer Ethik angezogen fühlten." (Reinmuth 2018: 45-46)

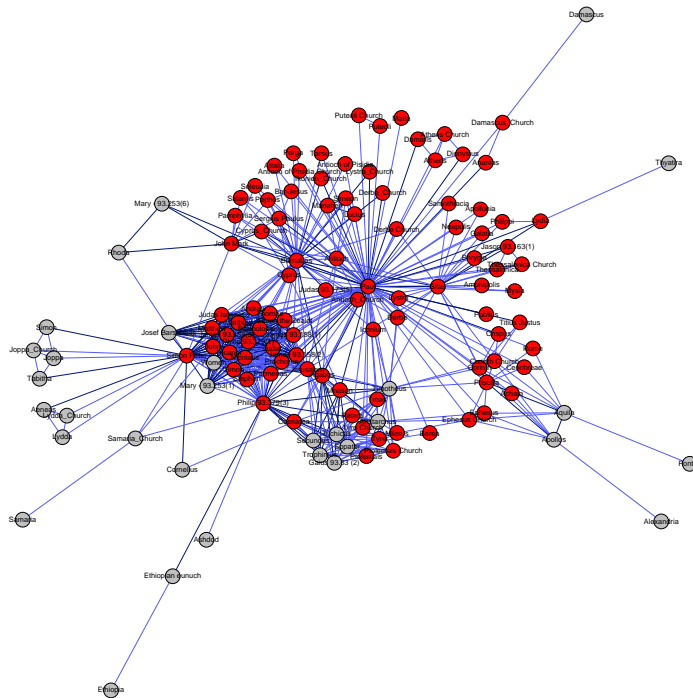


Figure 18.2: Paul in the social network of Acts 1-28. Nodes in the neighborhood of Paul are colored in red.

background. This question needs more attention. Our study was able to show that Luke indeed is interested in what will later become church life, the community of Jesus-followers. Yet another interesting observation, mission through work, in workshops or shops, will be discussed later, especially with focus on Lydia, and Aquila and Priscilla.

Figure 18.2 and Chapter 17 highlight the importance of co-workers for Paul’s activities. Paul is a specialized bridge-builder and restless traveler who is not participating in many close subnetworks, but rather bridges gaps in the network. We should not overestimate the work of these co-workers, since (1) we will show that most of them were presented as independent actors in Acts, (2) it seems that other collaborators and missionaries followed in Paul’s wake to strengthen the ties and build closures, and (3) according to SNA it is not clear how much of what the co-worker did as a missionary is due to Paul’s character and how much was planned by him⁴⁷⁴. We should also keep in mind that in Chapter

⁴⁷⁴ And it is striking that conflicts are also mentioned by Luke: “Demgegenüber stehen aber auch die (zunehmenden) Konflikte, die sich zwischen Paulus und einigen Mitarbeitern oder unter den Mitarbeitern selbst ergeben haben [...]. Deshalb darf die Kollegialmission des Paulus nicht idealisiert werden [...]. Auch in den eigenen Reihen kannte Paulus Enttäuschungen, Untreue und Versagen. Das hat ihn aber nicht davon abgehalten die Gemeinschaft derer zu suchen, die sich in der Verkündigung und im Leben für das Evangelium bewährt haben.”(Drews 2006: 158)

17 we were able to show that according to Acts co-working was not limited to Paul, but every collaboration presented by Luke had a significant different character and form – which is mainly due to the fact that Luke portrays unique characters with different skills and properties.

There is one serious limitation of our analysis. Porter et al. (2014: 137) noted when comparing Acts and the Pauline Letters that there “are many, especially in recent discussion, who note that the differences posited between the two accounts are not as telling as has often been supposed.” An SNA comparison between Acts and the Pauline Letters would definitively provide a new perspective on this question and in particular could show how Paul himself sees his network and how Luke presents it.

To sum up, Luke presents Paul clearly as his protagonist in Acts. But Luke is overall primarily concerned with God’s mission carried out by a multitude of different actors. SNA was not only able to show the different missionary strategies for Peter and Paul, but also point to different character traits. Our analysis of Paul remains short and – due to the multitude of research and the Pauline Letters – mostly raises novel questions as the above mentioned: His connection to the Jewish Diaspora network, how his role within his Letters and in Luke-Acts corresponds. In addition, it seems a critical endeavor to enrich the network presented in this work with the Pauline Letters to get a better understanding of Paul. However, we will now continue with other characters and their SNA.

19 Minor Characters

While our first two analyses focused on Peter and Paul, we will now continue with Silas, Aquila and Priscilla, Apollos, Lydia and John. We have a very different amount of information about them, but the SNA highlighted their importance for Luke-Acts.

19.1 Barnabas

The sources on the person of Barnabas are sparse⁴⁷⁵. As in the previous section, we will discuss to what extent the SNA or *critical spatiality* help to better understand Barnabas in Acts. Thus, we will consider the social and cultural background: What did Barnabas' network look like? How did he use it? What distances did he cross?

It is not surprising that Öhler (2003) calls the endeavor to approach Barnabas historically almost keenly ('verwegen'). Apart from his work and the quite old work of Braunsberger (1876), only Kollmann (1998) published a comprehensive work on Barnabas. Based on the results of our network analysis, we support Öhler (2003: 1) when he claims the lack of engagement with Barnabas also contributed to neglecting his part in the history of early Christianity⁴⁷⁶. The novel approach of his investigation is interesting here, since he works social-historically and asks what kinds of social relations are suitable to reconstruct the ancient world of Barnabas. In addition to Öhler, however, Kollmann (1998: 7) also states that Barnabas has an important function, since he, more than anyone else, encounters all the distinctive situations of early Christianity in an authoritative

⁴⁷⁵ Besides Acts and the New Testament epistles – he is mentioned five times by Paul –, we find the Barnabas Epistles, the Barnabas Acts dating from the 6th century, and other apocryphal writings.

⁴⁷⁶ "Daß die fehlende Beschäftigung mit Barnabas auch dazu beitrug, seinen Anteil an der Geschichte des frühen Christentums zu vernachlässigen."

capacity and decisively determined the fate of the church in the 1st century C.E.⁴⁷⁷.

Thus, at this point, the biblical findings on Barnabas will be compiled, exegetically enriched and classified with the help of social network analysis. In doing so, the three main works presented will provide a direction. Important for the SNA are his social origins as a Levite, his cypriotic origins, and Paul's introduction to Jerusalem, which we will discuss in the next sections.

Barnabas, who is referred to in Ac 4:36 as Ἰωσήφ ὁ ἐπικληθεὶς Βαρναβᾶς (Joseph, who was called Barnabas) was introduced as a Levite from Cyprus: Κύπριος τῷ γένει⁴⁷⁸. Not explicitly mentioned, but very likely he lived – at least temporarily – in Jerusalem. Thus, two edges were added to the social network: one to Cyprus, one to Jerusalem.

We know little about Barnabas' family. Only in Col 4:10 Paul conveys the greetings of Μάρκος ὁ ἀνεψιὸς Βαρναβᾶ. The word ἀνεψιὸς can mean a relative, nephew or cousin. If we add Ac 12:12 to this information and assume John Mark is a nephew of Barnabas, then either Mary, the mother of John Mark, or her husband would be his sibling. If it is a cousin, then Mary is an aunt of Barnabas. Thus, a (at least) weak tie in the social network will be added to both.

Whether a special closeness to the circle of the apostles can be derived from Barnabas' naming must remain open. But at least we can assume a weak connection between both. Öhler (2003: 92), at any rate, concludes that according to Acts the apostles held Barnabas in special esteem, for only he is given an honorary name⁴⁷⁹ Ultimately, the question must

⁴⁷⁷ Da "er wie kein anderer an allen markanten Situationen des Urchristentums in maßgeblicher Funktion begegnet und das Geschick der Kirche im 1.Jhdt.n.Chr. entscheidend bestimmt hat."

⁴⁷⁸ Öhler (2003: 97) cites two possibilities: Either Barnabas was a native of Cyprus or a Galilean-born descendant of Cyprus-born Jews. He, too, follows Schnabel with reference to Ac 18:24 and sees Barnabas as a Diaspora Jew born in Cyprus

⁴⁷⁹ Dass es "die Apostel Barnabas besonders geschätzt [haben], denn nur er erhält einen Ehrennamen." However, he also discusses the translation of the name by the author of Acts, which he believes is incorrect. Rather, a translation of Βαρναβᾶς by 'Son of (the God) Nebo' would be more accurate, thus allowing far-reaching insight into the biography of Barnabas drawn by Acts (cf. Öhler 2003: 139). Öhler (2003: 142) separates the name Βαρναβᾶς into בַּר, son, and the ending -אָס which serves a Greek form of the names in the NT. Only the middle of the word -אָס- remains mysterious. If it is a patronymic, we have no further information. Öhler (2003: 149) compiles a list of – only pagan – names for this purpose. According to this, however, the translation by the author of Acts would be wrong. Likewise, a designation of origin is unlikely, for an honorific designation only נְבִי or Hebr. נְבִיא to appear as a prophet, to prophesy, which Öhler (2003: 153) also rejects, because there are too many vowel changes. Kollmann (1998: 23) also points out this problem and suspects either a folk etymology or an error by Luke when he translates the name as 'son of consolation'. Ultimately, this aspect must remain open. More likely, the translation 'son of prophecy' is more accurate, in which case the translation of Acts would have to be clarified. Pesch (2012a: 183) merely states that the

remain unanswered.

The early church tradition places Barnabas in the environment of Jesus early on (cf. Schnabel 2002: 747). There are various traditions, including Eusebius, that see Barnabas as a member of the circle of 72 disciples from Lk 10:1. But this is not provable according to Schnabel (2002: 415). Thus, far from speculation, the missing edges to the apostles remain to be added to the social network. They are – since nothing else is provable – at least weak relations.

Ac 4:36–37 reports how Barnabas sells a field in Jerusalem and lays the proceeds at the feet of the apostles as church leaders. It is important, however, that Acts now reports a practical exercise of the community of goods of the early church, which he introduces in Ac 4:32–35.

19.1.1 The Levite from Cyprus

Barnabas is introduced as a Levite. This additional information means at first only that Barnabas belongs to the tribe of Levi (לֵוִי). According to Nehemiah and Ezra, only a few Levites returned from exile. They found their primary tasks as temple musicians, temple guards, temple servants and possibly, but not demonstrably, also as scribes. They were also forbidden land ownership, as can be read in Nm 18:20 and Dt 18:1. However, this commandment was no longer obeyed even under Nehemiah, cf. Neh 13:10. Öhler (2003: 96) consequently sees the designation of Barnabas as a Levite primary as vocation. However, the perspective changes considering the influence of Levites. Kollmann (1998: 17) formulates cautiously that the Levites had a higher social status⁴⁸⁰. But, however, the influence of the Levites and priests should be noted. They not only owned land, but would also have had to work on it, since they could hardly have lived on royalties from the other Israelites. Achenbach (2018) also assumes a growing political importance of the Levites in the Hellenistic-Roman period.

translation cannot be verified. Kraft (1986) also takes up the possible mistranslation, but does not formulate a problem.

⁴⁸⁰ Sie standen “dem Ansehen nach über den gewöhnlichen Israeliten”. Öhler (2003: 171)

However, certain findings are thin⁴⁸¹. So which facts are certain? First, Barnabas could speak at least Aramaic and Greek. See for example Öhler (2003: 99):

Als Levit, der zur priesterlichen Schicht Jerusalems gehört, spricht er Aramäisch und weiß sich den väterlichen und kultischen Traditionen besonders verpflichtet. Als Diasporajude spricht er Griechisch und ist mit der besonderen Situation jüdischer Gemeinden in einer hellenistischen Umgebung und den damit verbundenen Traditionen vertraut. Diese besondere doppelte Identität erlaubt es Lukas, Barnabas im weiteren Verlauf der Acta als Mann Jerusalems und Antiochiens zu präsentieren.

Of some consequence in this otherwise speculative area is only the significance of Barnabas' conversion. This can be used as an argument that Luke is merely processing a tradition handed down to him⁴⁸². Ultimately, this part of Barnabas' life remains unclear. However, even considering the detour via Paul's apostle definition, for example in 1 Cor 9:1 resp. 1 Cor 15:8, which with 1 Cor 9:5–6 leads to the argumentation that Barnabas "only" came to faith through an epiphany of the risen Lord, so his conversion must be located after Easter, cf. Kollmann (1998: 19f), is speculative. The conversion of Barnabas and the significance of his Levitical origin remain obscure. Only greater language skills can be inferred in connection with his origin from Cyprus.

19.1.2 Barnabas in Jerusalem

Ac 4:36–37s reports Barnabas selling a field for the benefit of the early church in Jerusalem. In general, only the interpretation of the early Christian community of goods is discussed with regard to this passage⁴⁸³. However, even if the text is left to stand on its own, especially the interpretation of *ἅπαντα κοινά* gives rise to speculation. Although the property was still private a more rigid tendency towards sharing occurred.

⁴⁸¹ "Über Levi und die Leviten weiß man nicht viel Sicheres, und manches wird auf Dauer umstritten bleiben." (Seebaß 1991: 36) But even about their function "im 1. Jhd. n.Chr. sind wir [] relativ schlecht informiert, da sie selten erwähnt werden." (Öhler 2003: 167)

⁴⁸² "Anders als bei den Priestern in 6,7 berichtet [Lukas] nicht vom Gläubigwerden des Leviten, und weder in 11,19ff. noch in 13,1ff. oder 15,36ff. wird die Herkunft aus Zypern aufgenommen." (Öhler 2003: 133)

⁴⁸³ Kollmann (1998: 21) sees here the processing of an existing tradition by the author of Acts in order to generate an ideal image afterwards, which is determined by a Pythagorean-Essenian ideal conception. Marguerat et al. (2018), with regard to the Essenes and Qumran, see the possibility of community of goods being practiced in the early church, but also suspect an exaggeration.

That this interpretation causes difficulties is also discussed by Horn (1998). Like Marguerat et al. (2018), Klauck (1982) also describes the sharing of goods among Essenes and at Qumran, but also their literary reflection in extra-biblical writings. In summary, there is little reason to doubt the wording of the Acts account: the community of goods was not just “in the heart” but lived in charity. However, Luke does not provide any details. That he emphasizes this aspect – which is not to be equated with literary exaggeration – is perhaps also due to the special concern of Acts. However, as we have discussed in Section 5.9 Luke comes back to an important topic of his Gospel. The poor and humble are embedded within a community of supply. The motifs for Luke’s description of the βασιλεία τοῦ Θεοῦ are not forgotten, they are still important. This must be discussed and evaluated later. Not to be clarified – and also irrelevant for the present account – is, on the other hand, whether the field sold by Barnabas was located in Cyprus or nearby Jerusalem.

We can only speculate about the amount that was given to the apostles. The same holds true for the rest of Barnabas’ fortune. The dimension and absoluteness of this gift of love therefore remain open. With regard to Ac 2:46 or Ac 12:12–17 it can be assumed with Ac 4:32 that there was a common fund of goods, in which besides money also the meeting rooms and a basic supply (cf. Ac 6:1) were granted. Öhler (2003: 99,106ff) refers to different aspects: The early church could be interpreted as an ancient association, Barnabas as a benefactor. But it remains to assume with regard to 1 Cor 9:6 that Barnabas continued to pursue other work.

In Figure 19.1, we notice that Barnabas is not associated with the complete Jerusalem church. He will certainly have been known to most of the members, but Acts reports this implicitly and does not explicitly mention these connections. Since Barnabas was acquainted with the apostles and the other leaders of the church, the report in Ac 9:27 is not surprising. Here, Barnabas introduces Paul to the Christ-believing community in Jerusalem.

To this end, Sommerfeld (2016: 590) interprets the relation between Paul and the Jerusalem church as a structural hole⁴⁸⁴. However, there is no structural hole in the proper sense, since there is no nonredundant connection. Nor can Barnabas have been the only

⁴⁸⁴“Saulus [...] war an Jesus gläubig geworden und versuchte, in Jerusalem Verbindung zu den Jüngern zu bekommen. [...] Barnabas erkannte dieses ‚strukturelle Loch‘ im Netzwerk der Gläubigen und überbrückte es” (Sommerfeld 2016: 590).

personal bridge between the two churches in Antioch and Jerusalem. Nevertheless, the description of Sommerfeld (2016) cites some interesting aspects of Barnabas' ministry.

19.1.3 Sent by the church in Jerusalem – Acts 11:19-12:24ff

Another connection outside Jerusalem to Antioch occurs in Figure 19.1. Ac 11:22 reports that the Jerusalem church sends Barnabas to Antioch. Barnabas uses his connection with Paul to bring the latter from Tarsus to Antioch (Ac 11:25). Both travel later to Jerusalem to deliver a gift to the church there (Ac 11:30). Upon their return, they take John Mark with them (Ac 12:25).

According to Lindemann (2018), Barnabas now derives a leadership role in Antioch⁴⁸⁵. However, Kollmann (1998: 35) states that, above all, Barnabas, even before Paul and independently of Paul's activity, settles in Antioch. This is an important observation, as it shows that, Barnabas independently selects both Paul and John Mark as co-workers. Both were known to him directly or indirectly through his contacts, even though Acts does not mention this – at least with regard to John Mark – beforehand. This shows impressively how many connections Barnabas had.

19.1.4 Barnabas' travels

In Chapter 17 we have already discussed the relation between Barnabas and Paul which began shortly after his conversion when Barnabas introduced him to the church in Jerusalem (see Ac 9:26–30; 11:22–25). Barnabas was also joined by Paul for his first missionary travel (Keener 2014: 2300) which began in Cyprus and also attended the Council in Jerusalem (Ac 15:1–34). 'Paul and Barnabas and some of the others were appointed to go up to Jerusalem' (15:2) which underlines Barnabas' significance in the early Christian network.

Paul and Barnabas' fellowship broke up before Paul's second missionary journey:

The disagreement between Paul and Barnabas was in fact sharp; the partnership of chs. 13 and 14 was broken. Barnabas took Mark and sailed away to Cyprus - his native place (4.36). A different ground of controversy between

⁴⁸⁵“Aus 11,22 – 30 ergibt sich eine führende Rolle in Antiochien.”

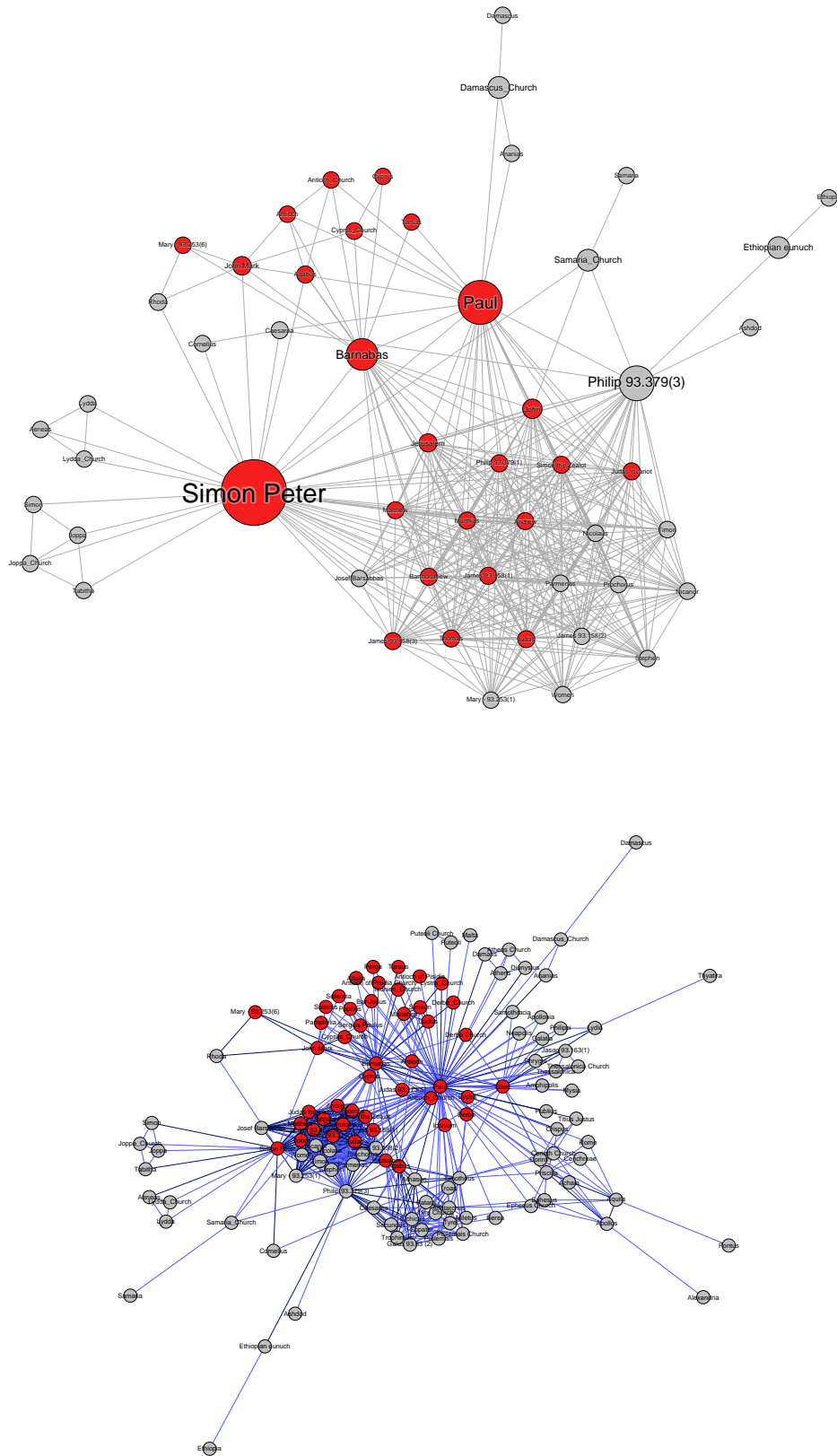


Figure 19.1: Barnabas in the social network of Acts 1-12 (top) and Acts 1-28 (bottom). Nodes in the neighborhood of Barnabas are colored in red.

Paul and Barnabas is given in Gal. 2.13. The rebuke Paul delivered to Peter in Gal. 2.14-18 would have applied equally to Barnabas, who was carried away by Peter's hypocrisy. Nothing is said in Galatians about Mark. It may be that there were two distinct quarrels; it may be that there was one quarrel with two elements; it may be that Paul gives the true ground of separation and Luke prefers to find a personal rather than a theological reason for the split. There is no reason to think the story about Mark a pure invention. (Barrett 2002: 243)

John Mark and Barnabas traveled to Cyprus, his place of origin. After that, Luke does not provide any further information about Barnabas: "Im übrigen verschwindet Barnabas für den Leser hiermit endgültig in seine Heimat Zypern (4,36). Das ist etwa einer Angabe über dessen klassisches Missionsgebiet entsprechend." (Schille 1989: 331). Whether Luke does not care or if he did not have any further information remains unclear.

But according to our analysis in Chapter 14 Acts does show some more information about Barnabas. Only Paul and Peter have a higher BC value (Barnabas: 623.4) and he has a high BC value. His EC value shows, that although he is well integrated in Luke's network, there is obviously omitted information. This is also supported by our analysis on Luke-Acts in Chapter 16: It seems that, although Barnabas is well-connected with the community in Jerusalem, he is a stranger, a Jew from the diaspora and from Cyprus. His BC, however, indicates that we should not forget his role as bridge-builder between cultures, locations and actors in the network.

19.1.5 Conclusion

To sum up, we can support the conclusion of Öhler (2003: 473): Barnabas is an important figure for Luke within the history of the first Christians. His importance not only corresponds to the apostles, Stephen, Philip and Paul, but he is also essential to the progress of the narrative itself⁴⁸⁶. However, we need to support Kollmann (1998: 72) who sees the need to correct the deficient perception in research. This is impressively verified by the betweenness centrality in Acts 1-12 with a value of 146.52 as shown in Table 12.1 on page 215. Peter has a value of 475, and most of the network has a lower value, in some cases far below 8. However, Barnabas' eigen centrality has a value of only 0.61. Here

⁴⁸⁶ "Barnabas ist für Lk eine wichtige Figur innerhalb der Geschichte der ersten Christen. Er entspricht nicht nur in den Reden und Taten den Aposteln, Stephanus, Philippus und Paulus, sondern ist auch wesentlich für den Fortgang der Erzählung selbst."

most members of the Jerusalem church have values of 0.83 or far higher. Thus, Barnabas is a person “with connections,” a typical networker. He does not necessarily try to get the most or “best” contacts in the process, otherwise his eigen centrality would be much higher. This is supported by Table 14.1 on page 259 describing Acts 1-28.

Therefore, the conclusion of Öhler (2003: 478) that Barnabas was purely a traveling missionary is to be questioned. It is not so much the changes of place as primarily the relationships that make up Barnabas’ significance. Whether Barnabas was really strongly connected with Diaspora Judaism, more precisely with Judaism on Cyprus, as Kollmann (1998: 72) assumes, remains questionable, but must be seriously considered.

As Figure 19.1 describes, Barnabas’ sphere of activity is not congruent with Peter or Philip. Thus, the SNA impressively shows that Acts here describes an independent missionary with his own area of activity. In this respect, Öhler (2003: 473) is right when he sees a narrative change in Acts. There is room for speculation here, and some aspects remain open. However, we were able to show that Kollmann (1998: 74) was right in seeing Barnabas as bridge-builder.

Adding the Pauline Letters might add further information. Thus, our analysis can only put a new perspective on Barnabas’ independent missionary activity and significance and highlight his many relationships. Because of relationships, Barnabas became a central figure in the translocal early Christian network and the bridge or link between Jerusalem and Paul’s later mission.

19.2 Philip

For both Barnabas and Philip, the list of literature on these actors is very short as Spencer (1992: 13) observed several decades ago: “One major reason why there are plenty of matters to deal with is that Philip has been virtually ignored in New Testament scholarship. Current monographs devoted to the study of Philip are in very short supply.” Even nearly 30 years later, Schnabel (2002: 658) also complains that only very little research is carried out focusing on Philip⁴⁸⁷. Spencer’s work is particularly important because he focuses

⁴⁸⁷ Das “Wirken des hellenistischen Judenchristen Philippus [ist] in der neutestamentlichen Forschung mehr als stiefmütterlich behandelt worden”.

on a narrative analysis of relations: The relationships between Philip and the converted individuals, groups, or persons such as Peter and Paul.

In addition, there is a more recent work by von Dobbeler (2000), who also sees Philip as a poor cousin of New Testament Research (:13). Yet, like Stephen, he belonged to the “Circle of Seven,” which soon became the “Circle of Stephen” in research. But Spencer (1992: 14) correctly states, “Philip also is associated on some level with all three Lukan heroes [...]: Stephen (Acts 6:5), Peter (8.5-25) and Paul (21.8); if a man is judged by the company he keeps, then Philip seems to deserve more respect.” However, there are other accounts of him, one concerning his itinerant mission to Samaria, the coastal plain in Ac 8:4–40, and his ministry and family circumstances in Caesarea.

The source material on Philip is thin, and here we can only rely on Acts. For “Luke’s presentation remains both the earliest and fullest account of Philip available to us,” as Spencer (1992: 16) correctly states. The identification of various persons with the name *Philippus* is the subject of controversies (cf. Zugmann 2009).

19.2.1 Philip in Jerusalem

Philip is introduced in Ac 6:5 as a member of the “circle of seven.” Ac 21:8 records Paul and his traveling companions coming εἰς τὸν οἶκον Φιλίππου τοῦ εὐαγγελιστοῦ, ὄντος ἐκ τῶν ἑπτὰ and staying there. Here, too, it seems important to note that he was not only an evangelist, but is clearly identified with the Philip of the Circle of Seven. Early on, confusion came up identifying different persons with the same name⁴⁸⁸. Since the confusion of names does not cease, especially with regard to Ac 8:4–40, the question of the exact identification has to be asked. To this end, however, von Dobbeler (2000: 29) concludes that this seems to be nearly impossible⁴⁸⁹.

Philip is thus to be assigned to the Hellenists. With regard to Figure 19.2 we can see that Philip was well-connected in the community. In the text, this importance is hard to see, as Kollmann’s assessment show⁴⁹⁰.

⁴⁸⁸ “Polykrates von Ephesus identifiziert ihn im ausgehenden 2. Jhdt. n. Chr. mit Philippus dem Apostel, dem gleichnamigen Mitglied des Zwölferkreises (Mk 3,18)” (Kollmann 2000: 552).

⁴⁸⁹ Dass es “nahezu unmöglich erscheint, Hypothesen im strengeren Sinne zu verifizieren oder zu falsifizieren, [und so] kann es – will man nicht die Alternative des ‚radikalen Schweigens‘ wählen – nur darum gehen, eine Hypothese mit möglichst großer Plausibilität zu wählen.”

⁴⁹⁰ “Wenn Philippus in der Siebenerliste Apg 6,5 unmittelbar hinter Stephanus rangiert, war er offenkundig

19.2.2 Mission in Samaria and the coastal plain

Philip is mentioned apart from Ac 6 by Luke as a central figure in Ac 8. Thus, we learn more about him in Acts than about the majority of the apostles. He is mentioned as a missionary to Samaria and probably as a pioneer of the mission to the Gentiles (cf. Kollmann 2000: 306). It became clear that Philip, with the help of God, crossed various cultural, social and religious boundaries. Thus, he has not only manifold, partly unique missionary connections in the network of the original Christian community, cf. Figure 19.2, but is also one to cross and overcome cultural and social distances. The scope of these events is pointed out by Kollmann (2000: 306):

Die Überlieferungen legen dabei den Schluß nahe, daß sich der missionarische Schritt über die Grenzen Israels hinaus nicht etwa historischer Zufälligkeit oder persönlicher Willkür verdankt, sondern einem Konzept entspricht, daß in Anknüpfung an Is 56:3ff in der Einbeziehung der ‚Fremden‘ und der ‚Verschnittenen‘ die Erfüllung prophetischer Verheißungen sah und damit den heilsgeschichtlichen Rahmen markierte, in dem die Samaritaner- und Heidenmission des Philippus verstanden werden konnten.

Philip is a classic pioneer who is able to use new social connections with God's help. However, no general conclusions can be drawn from this as to how exactly he uses these connections. The thesis of Kollmann (2000: 307) that in "Unterschied zu Petrus, dessen Begegnung mit Simon auf Ausgrenzung hinausläuft, [] Philippus ein auf Integration abzielendes Verhalten zeigt" is not only difficult to justify exegetically, but also does not show up in either the aspects that can be worked out for Peter and Philip. In section 18.1 the mediating nature of Peter was worked out. Thus, it is much more likely that Simon excluded himself. Philip, on the other hand, leaves further pastoral ministry to the apostles.

In Acts 1-12 Philip has a *betweenness centrality* of 177.29, see Table 12.1 on page 215. For comparison, Barnabas has a value of 146.52, Peter 475, most of the network about a value in part far below 8. This value is thus the third highest in Acts 1-12 after Peter and Paul. The eigen centrality is 0.93. This value is not significant, but higher than, for

bereits in Jerusalem die zweitwichtigste Figur des Stephanuskreises und wird wie Stephanus selber eine zumindest ansatzweise kritische Haltung gegenüber dem Gesetz eingenommen haben. Zudem ist Philippus das einzige Glied des Stephanuskreises, über dessen missionarische Aktivitäten konkrete Einzeltraditionen vorliegen." (Kollmann 2000: 553)

example, Barnabas. We can deduce from this that Philip was not integrated into the central network of the Jerusalem church to an above-average degree. His strength, however, consisted primarily in holding together various parts of the early Christian network that extended beyond Jerusalem. Here, Philip is an enormously important person. This also becomes clear through the analysis in terms of critical spatiality, since Philip constantly overcomes social and cultural distances.

19.2.3 Philip in the second half of Acts

We meet Philip once again in Caesarea (Ac 21:8): They ‘entered the house of Philip the evangelist, who was one of the seven’. In Ac 21:9 we learn that he had four unmarried daughters who prophesied. While other actors like Barnabas do not reappear in the narrative, Luke pays special attention to Philip. He is not only clearly identified as ‘one of the seven’, but also as εὐαγγελιστής. “Philip evidently settled in Caesarea, the seat of the Roman governor, bought a house, and preached the gospel before Jews and, presumably, Gentiles in Caesarea and the surrounding areas.” (Schnabel 2012: 856) While the latter is not provable, it is interesting that Luke again portrays hospitality which has a clear link to the social network. Keener observes: “Paul and his former nemesis Philip will have stories to tell; news spread whenever people from different cities came together [...], and guests carried news.” (Keener 2014: 3089) If we consider Table 14.1 on page 259, we see that Philip has a very high BC value (591.9) in Acts 1-28, only Barnabas, Peter and Paul have larger values. This implies, despite the fact that Luke does not provide further information about him, he is still one of those actors that pushed the narrative and indeed is well-connected. EC indicates, that his connections have a ‘better’ quality than for example Barnabas’. Our analysis of the neighborhood in Table 17.1 proves this assumption. This is very likely, because Philip belonged to ‘the seven’ and is deeply rooted in the community in Jerusalem.

What we also learn is the fact that besides Peter, Philip is also a married missionary. There is an ongoing discussion about his daughters:

The reference to Philip’s four unmarried daughters reinforces the community setting of the incident, which has been indicated by the theme of hospitality (the house of Philip) and the description of Philip as an evangelist. There is no good reason why Luke mentions the fact that Philip’s daughters were

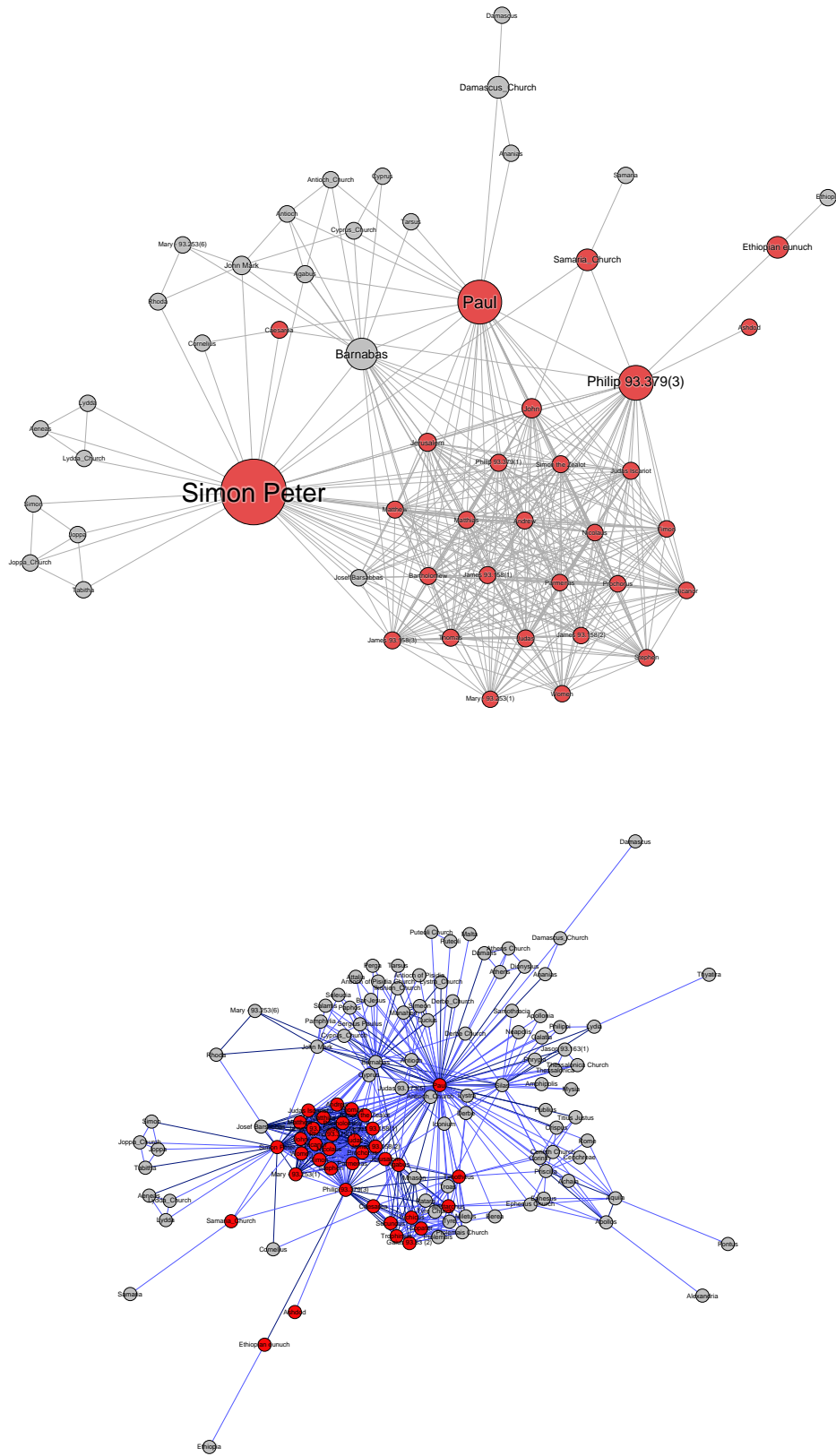


Figure 19.2: Philip in the social network of Acts 1-12 (top) and Acts 1-28 (bottom). Nodes in the neighborhood of Philip are colored in red.

unmarried (παρθένοι, ‘virgins’) unless he wants to indicate that they were of marriageable age. (Schnabel 2012: 856)

However, Luke does not pay special attention to them. What is more interesting is the question, why Luke provides further information about Philip. To Keener, this is a very clear situation:

That we find Philip here in Caesarea is not surprising. Just as Luke’s narrative leaves Saul in Tarsus and revisits him there (9:30; 11:25), and probably the narrator himself in Philippi (16:10; 20:6), so it returns to Philip in Caesarea, where an earlier evangelistic itinerary left him (8:40). (Keener 2014: 3087-8)

In contrast, Pesch (2012b: 215) sees Luke’s primary interest in narrating Philip’s lower status⁴⁹¹. But this is rather unlikely, since Paul seems to know him and in particular chooses Philip’s house as accommodation. The SNA also does not support the view that Philip was assigned some sort of lower status. Philip seems to be an independent actor, and in particular an independent missionary.

There are also some possible links between Luke and Philip in the second half of Acts as Redditt (1992: 312) summarizes:

Luke may have received information about persons and events of the early years of Christianity in Judea from the daughters of Philip. Papias received information about Joseph Barsabbas (Acts 1:23) from the daughters of Philip (he confuses him with Philip the Apostle) (Eus. Hist. Eccl. 3,39.9-10). Polycrates, bishop of Ephesus, mentions that Philip, one of the twelve apostles, and two virgin daughters who grew quite old were buried in a tomb at Hierapolis (Eus. Hist. Eccl. 3.31.2-3). Eusebius understands this reference to, be to Philip the Evangelist, for he goes on to quote Proclus from the Dialogue of Gaius that the four daughters of Philip were prophetesses who worked and were buried in Hierapolis along with their father Philip. In support, Eusebius cites Acts 21:8 as the biblical reference to the family (Eus. Hist. Eccl. 3.31.4—5).

These references are out of scope of this work. However, they are a good argument for further research on the social network role of Luke himself as author of Luke-Acts.

⁴⁹¹ Philippus erscheine in einem “deutlich in einem den Aposteln nachgeordneten Amt” (Pesch 2012b: 215).

19.2.4 Conclusion

Spencer (1992) notes three main aspects in the portrayal of Philip: that of the pioneering missionary the dynamic prophet, and the cooperative servant. Thus, he acknowledges the multiple ministries through his diagonal, kerygmatic, missionary, and community work. Apart from this, he discusses the relational level and social contacts. Further, he observes the multiple relationships with other characters in Acts – but there is no in-depth analysis of these relationships (:275).

According to Kollmann (2000: 310), “erscheint Philippus durchweg als pneumatisch begabter und charismatisch wirkender, führender Vertreter eines sich wesentlich an prophetischen Traditionen orientierenden Christentums, für das die praktische Diakonie nicht nur als Ausdruck ‚wahrer Prophetie‘ zentrale Bedeutung hatte, sondern als Legitimationsgrundlage schlechthin.” Thus, his consideration of the relational level falls short of the work of Spencer (1992).

However, the present study makes it clear that the key to understanding Philip’s ministry lies in the relational aspects and the crossing of social, cultural, and religious distances that are a key to understanding Philip’s ministry. Further attention to these aspects would be necessary for further discussion.

For example, eigen centrality offers reason to re-examine his role in Jerusalem. Unlike Barnabas, he is better, or more networked with the “more important” people. At the same time, he has the greater betweenness centrality value after Peter and Paul. This wider, presumably Jewish network, has been neglected in previous research. The results of the investigation also show that Philip’s missionary sphere is independent of other missionary activity (cf. Figure 19.2). Thus, a more detailed study of this mission could also lead to a better understanding of Philip’s activity.

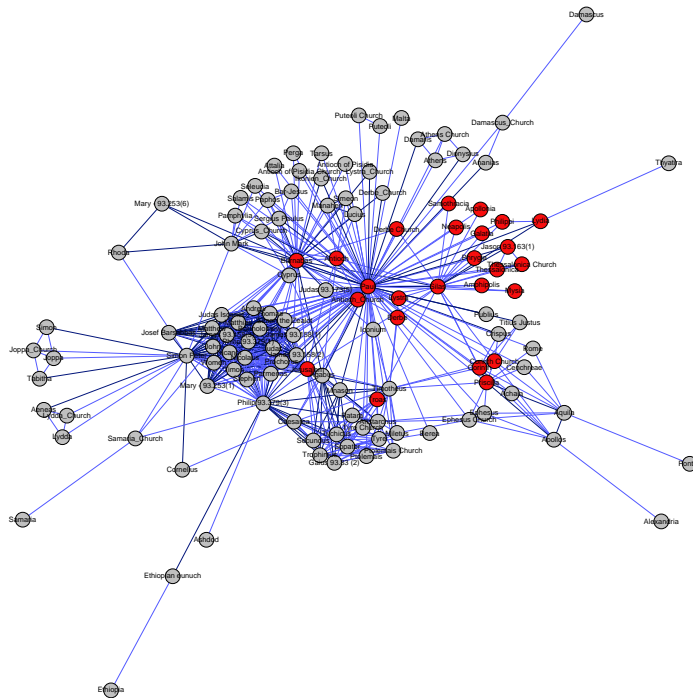


Figure 19.3: Silas in the social network of Acts 1-28. Nodes in the neighborhood of Silas are colored in red.

19.3 Silas

Silas is mentioned in Ac 15:22 as a messenger and teacher. After attending the Jerusalem council⁴⁹² and later Antioch (Ac 15:27.34)⁴⁹³, he is selected by Paul (Ac 15:40). It seems that he “was an obvious candidate for the mission; he is named in the decree letter itself (15:27) and appears to be a Roman citizen (16:37), a status useful in the eastern empire.” (Keener 2014: 2310) Indeed, little more can be said about Silas and why Paul chose him (cf. Pesch 2012b: 93). Schnabel (2002: 1370) assumes that he was a very important co-worker for Paul⁴⁹⁴. We can observe that Silas was as Barnabas and Paul yet another

⁴⁹² “Silas and Jude are two respected and leading members of the Jerusalem church. They are chosen in the assembly as delegates for the Jerusalem church in regard to the matter in dispute.” (Kaye 1979: 14)

⁴⁹³ “Despite Acts’ usual narrative logic, Luke does not explain how Silas returned to Antioch after leaving. Silas could have returned between 15:34 and 15:40, since the events are ‘after some days’ [...] or if Silas and Judas were only the two *leading* members of the Jerusalem delegation, it is possible that the mention of those sent away in Acts 15:33 simply refers to the delegation as a whole (not including Silas in particular) and that the emphasis of sending ‘in peace’ was more important than the individuals send.” (Keener 2014: 2295)

⁴⁹⁴ “Die herausragende Rolle, die er in der Apostelgeschichte spielt, sowie die Tatsache, dass er von Paulus immer vor Timotheus erwähnt wird, deuten darauf hin, dass er ein wichtiger Mitarbeiter war.” (Schnabel 2002: 1370)

person from Jerusalem who accompanied Paul on his travels. Maybe Luke highlights him to show yet another witness or someone to guarantee that the results from the Jerusalem council are done. We will show how SNA can support this view.

In Acts 1-28 Silas has a BC value of 176.7, see Table 14.1 on page 259. This value is significant because only Paul, Simon Peter, Barnabas and Philip have a higher value. This implies that Silas is rooted in the early Christian network, which is also supported by the CC value (0.51). However, Figure 19.3 shows another interesting observation: He is also well-connected in Paul's missionary network. The EC value is very low (0.19) which indicates that Silas is not making his own connections. He does not appear as an independent missionary, but – together with the observations above – as a reliable partner for the church in Jerusalem and Paul. Kaye (1979: 26) supports this view: “In the travel narrative from Philippi to Corinth Silas is given prominence by Luke and he and Paul work through the Jewish institutions.” However, some scholars argue that Paul chose Silas also for theological considerations because he was a Jewish Christian from Jerusalem (cf. Zmijewski 1994: 583). Table 17 also highlights that Silas had a particular special environment and strong relations (average BC of his neighborhood: 160.5).

However, after Ac 18 Luke does not mention Silas again. It is not clear if Silas can be identified with Σιλουανός in 1 Pt 5:12, although some scholars assume so (cf. Keener 2014: 2281) and others see this as given fact (cf. Gilman 1992: 22). Maybe the silence is due to changing missionary paradigms: “in Corinth Luke portrays a change from this pattern to a gentile mission which is not based on the synagogue, and it is significant that at this point Silas drops from view entirely.” (Kaye 1979: 26) But maybe Luke does not mention Silas again because (1) his role as witness ended, or (2) he did not consider participating in Paul's travel for a second time – but the reasons remain vague.

Silas is an important actor in Acts. Luke describes him as a well-connected, reliable, and respected member of the church in Jerusalem. While being part of Paul's travel fellows, he is also presented as reliable and faithful when supporting Paul during his troubles. Thus, we see a character totally different to Paul, Peter, Philip and Barnabas. Perhaps Silas is more engaged in organizing and mediating. In any case, he is a respected person. That he is so important for the early Christian network underlines the fact that Luke describes different characters and their work in mission.

19.4 Aquila and Priscilla

Several scholars tried to analyze Aquila and Priscilla and their role in Acts and for the early Christian mission. Extensive studies were presented by Schumacher (1920), Keller (2010), and Barbero (2001). He summarizes: “NT texts regarding Priscilla and Aquila do not give a complete picture of their life and activity. There are many aspects of this couple’s life that cannot be immediately gleaned from the NT texts.” (Barbero 2001: 99) They are mentioned in Ac 18:1–3, 18:18–19, 18:26–27 and in 1 Cor 16:19, Rm 16:3–5, and 2 Tm 4:19. This material is manageable, and it is one of the seldom cases where the relation between Acts and the Pauline Letters are not discussed: “While Luke and Paul give us different information about Priscilla and Aquila, in the end there is a great similarity in what they tell us.” (Keller 2010: 59) In general, based on Barbero (2001: 99) we can make the following observations:

- They are a married couple. Maybe Aquila had a higher social status⁴⁹⁵.
- Often, they travel through large cities and lived in Rome⁴⁹⁶.
- They have an open house and host several christian communities.
- They are related to Paul and the cities of Corinth, Ephesus, Rome and also Pontus⁴⁹⁷.
- Lampe (1992b: 467) suggests that at least Prisca was freeborn due to the fact that the name would not be a slave name.

An open question is whether they were Christians before meeting Paul. Keener states: “This is a reasonable assumption, though it is not completely certain. Luke’s silence about the couple’s faith, in contrast to Luke’s explicit statement that Paul stayed with them

⁴⁹⁵“Paul once and Luke twice (out of three times) refers to Prisca before her husband. Normally the husband was named first unless the wife was of higher social status. Since Luke and Paul write for Christians, she may have exercised a higher status in the Christian community or in their ministry. We cannot say for certain in which circles the higher status applied, but it was at least known and respected in the church.” (Keener 2014: 2713)

⁴⁹⁶ SNA suggests more research on the topic migrants as missionaries introduced by vanThanh (2013).

⁴⁹⁷ Den Dulk (2020) argues against Keener (2014: 2721) that Pontus as region of barbarians would have been famous in the Greco-Roman world for its ignorance and “Given how uncivilized Pontus was according to many Greco-Roman authors and how harsh they imagined the climate and general existence in that region to be, it is not surprising that its inhabitants were thought to be uneducated.” (Den Dulk 2020: 184).

because of their shared occupation, seems strange if they were already believers.” (Keener 2014: 2711) Schnabel (2002: 1374) assumes, that they were missionaries before meeting Paul⁴⁹⁸. Pesch even assumes that a reasonable guess about their life in Rome would be possible: “Da Aquila und Priszilla Paulus aufnehmen und ihm ermöglichen, seinen Lebensunterhalt zu verdienen, von ihrer Bekehrung durch Paulus aber nichts verlautet, muß angenommen werden, daß sie schon in Rom Christen geworden waren und zu den Führungspersonen der dortigen judenchristlichen Gemeinde gehört hatten.” (Pesch 2012b: 147) However, we do not have enough information to prove one of these assumptions.

Again, the story is linked to hospitality, Paul ἔμενεν παρ’ αὐτοῖς (v. 18:3): “Priscilla and Aquila opened their home on a number of occasions, and in a number of places. Undoubtedly, they hosted other Judean Christ believers in Rome before Claudius expelled them” (Keller 2010: 61). In any case, they were “providing extensive assistance to Paul’s gospel activity in Corinth and Ephesus before returning to Rome.” (Manuell 2021: 218) In general, it is not completely clear if either hospitality, faith or trade ties (cf. Keener 2014: 2719-22) connects Paul and the couple⁴⁹⁹. Again, we can only provide an educated guess. In particular, it is heavily discussed if this trade leads to a humble or good social status⁵⁰⁰. Pesch sees them as wealthy actors: “Vermutlich waren sie vermögend, da sie in Korinth alsbald wieder eine Werkstatt eröffnen konnten.” (Pesch 2012b: 147) However, the amount of tools needed for a workshop and trade cannot be compared to modern times. Thus, Schnabel (2008: 105) agrees that “their occupation indicates low status” (:316). In contrast, Lampe (1992b: 468) sees evidences for the contrary. But in any case it is nearly impossible to provide an answer: “New Testament evidence is not sufficient to provide a definite picture of Aquila and Priscilla’s economic status, but it is possible to offer some reasonable guesses.” (Keener 2014: 2714)⁵⁰¹ But there is another reasonable

⁴⁹⁸ “Wahrscheinlich trafen sich in ihrem Haus Christen der Gemeinde Korinths, manche bezeichnen ihr Haus in Korinth als ‘Keimzelle der korinthischen Stadtmission’. Nicht auszuschließen ist, dass Priska und Aquila ‘selbstständige Missionare’ waren, ein ‘missionierendes Ehepaar’, das Paulus nahestand, und bereits vor der Ankunft von Paulus in Korinth missionierte.” (Schnabel 2002: 1374)

⁴⁹⁹ Müller (2009a) for example argues for both: “Priscilla and Aquila are closely connected to Paul, not only by way of their faith story [...] but their profession is also similar to his [...] [and they] provide Paul with lodging and employment after his arrival in Corinth”.

⁵⁰⁰ And there is even more discussion about what precisely their profession was: “Contrary to the traditional view that both were leather workers selling primarily to the military, they more likely sewed linen tents for private customers for use as, tents on the beach, sunshades in the atrium, or market stalls (see Lampe 1987; leather tents for the military were sewn mainly by imperial slaves and freedmen or by the soldiers themselves, many of whom were craftsmen” (Lampe 1992a: 319).

⁵⁰¹ See also Stambaugh & Balch (1992: 67): “Die normale Lebenshaltung bewegte sich auf einem zu niedrigen Niveau, zu nahe am Existenzminimum, als daß sie dem Absatz von Luxusgütern, von den

guess which seems possible: “Working in the officina of Aquila and Priscilla would have brought Paul in contact with people who already trusted this couple—presumably not only Jews but also Gentile customers.” (Schnabel 2008: 298)

The SNA in Chapter 14 provides a first overview about Aquila and Priscilla: Their BC is high (88 and 130), their CC average, but their EC relatively low. Again, we can assume that they were independent missionaries and pushing the borders of the nascent Christian movement. Keller is probably right when he assumes: “If ever a sentence captures this couple, it is this one: Priscilla and Aquila walk the talk everywhere we meet them.” (Keller 2010: 60) They were actively pursuing their faith and were actively contributing to their mission. The low EC value indicates that they are not actively making connections, but supported by Schnabel’s observations, we can assume that the connections simply find them, for example either in their shop or in the church. When Luke narrates their encounter with Apollos in v. 18:26, they προσελάβοντο αὐτὸν – which also supports this as a part of their character. However, they build a solid, albeit not that close, subnetwork on their own. Analyzing the direct network of Aquila and Priscilla in Table 17 shows that its BC is very high, and this underlines that they had solid ties to others.

Duling (2013: 143) provided some interpretations with SNA and focuses also on hospitality and their common trade:

The author of Acts claims that Paul stayed with Aquila, a Judean believer from Pontus, and his wife Priscilla (Prisca) at Corinth as their guest (Acts 18:1–3; Keller: 1–13). The Acts account also says that Aquila had come from Italy (presumably expelled from Rome under Claudius), that they had the same trade as Paul, “tentmakers,” that they worked together with him.

In addition, he assumes that Paul and Aquila and Priscilla had strong ties (cf. Duling 2013: 148). However, what we can add with Figure 19.4 is the fact that both do not seem to be pioneer missionaries. Their subnetwork overlaps with Paul’s network. However, Duling’s view on both is limited to houses and Paul’s friendship network in general. Our analysis rather supports a perspective perceiving Aquila and Priscilla as independent narrative actors. However, since no further sources are available, this seems to be a vague trait.

To sum up, SNA supports the view that Aquila and Priscilla “worked independently in several major cities” (Schnabel 2008: 316). It is special and striking that Luke portrays

Oberschichten größerer Städte einmal abgesehen, hätten förderlich sein können.”

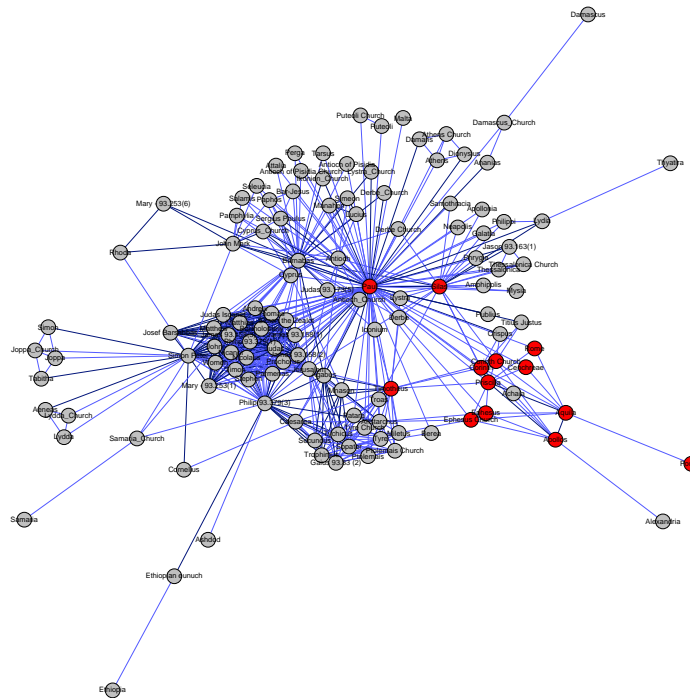


Figure 19.4: Aquila and Priscilla in the social network of Acts 1-28. Nodes in the neighborhood of Aquila and Priscilla are colored in red.

them as a couple. In any case, SNA again helps to identify their activities and maybe provide an idea about their characters. We can also reject Barbero’s statement that “they live somewhat in Paul’s shadow” (Barbero 2001: 99). However, more research needs to be done and a social network adding the Pauline Letters might help to provide a better understanding.

19.5 Apollos

With Apollos we will continue to analyze the more ‘hidden’ actors in Acts. Ker (2000: 76) summarizes “that we know frustratingly little about him”. And it is not a big surprise that only some works are solely dedicated to him, for example Hart (1905), Hartin (2009) and Dickerson (1998: 2) who summarized the problem: “What is seldom found in scholarly literature are discussions of Apollos as a figure of interest in his own right, rather than as a means to a larger end.”

Apollos was introduced as a Jew, ‘a native of Alexandria’⁵⁰² who came to Ephesus (Ac
⁵⁰²“The note that he was ‘instructed: in his own country in the word of the Lord’ (Acts 18:25), if genuine,

18:24–28). We find another reference about him being in Corinth (19:1) and he is mentioned in 1 Cor 1:12,3:4–6.22, 4:6, 16:22, and Tt 3:13. We do not find contrary information between Paul and Acts⁵⁰³. Luke introduces him in v. 18:24 as λόγιος, ‘eloquent’ and in particular he was ἦν κατηχημένος τὴν ὁδὸν τοῦ κυρίου (v. 25) and ζέων τῷ πνεύματι. Thus, maybe he is not only well-educated, but also driven by the Spirit⁵⁰⁴. Den Dulk (2020: 178) supports this view, since Alexandria was regarded as a center of ancient education and “the audience would almost certainly have thought of Alexandria’s rich intellectual traditions”. In any case, he has a different background than Paul, although he possibly was educated by a Rabbi (cf. Ker 2000: 77)⁵⁰⁵.

He spoke and taught (λαλέω and διδάσκω) and after ‘Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they took him aside and explained to him the way of God more accurately’ (v. 26). This raises some issues. First, what kind of instruction was this? Some scholars see a gap between his old teaching and his new and emphasize the collaboration⁵⁰⁶. Others argue that these instructions are mainly covering special topics of Pauline theology⁵⁰⁷. There is another observation: Why were these instructions particularly provided by Aquila and Priscilla? In Section 19.4 we described that inhabitants of Pontus may have been regarded as uneducated in Greco-Roman world while Apollos obviously was educated⁵⁰⁸. But this

does not prove that Christianity had reached Alexandria by A.D. 50.” (Hurst 1992: 301)

⁵⁰³ “Except for the statement that Apollos was an Alexandrian Jew, all of the information about Apollos in this passage that is not Lucan creation could be deduced from 1 Corinthians: his wisdom and oratorical ability, as well as his arrival in Corinth following Paul’s first visit. His Alexandrian background could well derive from Ephesian local tradition. The introduction is heavily loaded.” (Pervo 2009: 459) Against Dickerson (1998: 4) “Since Paul actually knew Apollos, 1 Corinthians is the appropriate beginning point for systematic analysis, and is the topic of chapter two below. Chapter three is concerned with Apollos in Acts. Since Luke wrote a generation or so after the time of Paul and Apollos, the information provided by the book of Acts is no better than the sources used by Luke.” Thus, we remain in the narrative analysis of Luke-Acts.

⁵⁰⁴ Schille goes even one step ahead: “λόγιος = ‘beredt’, ‘gelehrt’ geht auf das hellenistische Bildungsideal ein [...]. Daß die Schriftgelehrsamkeit eigens vermerkt wird, soll Apollos als Lehrer zeichnen. Es geht also nicht nur um Belesenheit, sondern um ein pneumatisches Charisma.” (Schille 1989: 374)

⁵⁰⁵ Hartin (2009: 7-19) added some more research on the “first-century Mediterranean’s conception of self” and applied it to Apollos to underline the differences in thinking between him and Paul. However, he concludes that both had been close partners.

⁵⁰⁶ “In sum, this unit shows how growth can occur in the church. Priscilla and Aquila minister to and encourage Apollos in his new ministry. They instruct him. Apollos, for his part, is open to their instruction. Thus, these ministers encourage each other in a task they know they share. They are aware that it is a task bigger than any one of them.” (Bock 2008: 593-4)

⁵⁰⁷ “Daß das Ehepaar dem Apollos ‘den Weg Gottes [...] genauer [...] auseinandersetzte’ [...] besagt wohl, daß es ihm die entwickeltere paulinische Theologie und deren heilsgeschichtliche Sicht vom Weg Gottes zu Juden *und* Heiden darlegte.” (Pesch 2012b: 161-2) See also Dickerson (1998: 179).

⁵⁰⁸ Den Dulk summarize: “Anyone familiar with the widespread negative views of Pontus would certainly have been surprised that someone from this region would offer instruction and correction to a learned man from sophisticated Alexandria.” (Den Dulk 2020: 186)

may be just another hint that the early Christian community turned social ‘conventions’ upside down.

However, another point is also heavily discussed: What was Apollos’ faith before being instructed? Several options seem possible: Was he a Christian and disciple of John the Baptist at the same time? The phrase ἐπιστάμενος μόνον τὸ βάπτισμα Ἰωάννου in v. 25 might indicate this. And indeed, he might as well have converted earlier in Ephesus⁵⁰⁹. It might also be possible that Luke links the Spirit to a special community (cf. Dickerson 1998: 179). Some scholars argue that Apollos is a representative of an Alexandrian or, as Pesch (2012b: 161-2) argues, a non-Pauline Theology. However, there is no trace in the sources for the first, while the latter is not described by Luke. At the same time, it is also possible that the reference plays a more important role. In particular it

is a letter of reference implied by v. 26, which was written by Priscilla and Aquila, though Luke altered the source in various ways. The analysis of Acts 19:1-7 suggests that the source is an account of the rebaptism of a group of Christians from Ephesus who, like Apollos, were baptized with a Christian baptism called the baptism of John. A link between these Ephesian Christians and Apollos cannot be proven, but remains a possibility. (Dickerson 1998: 156)

However, we can neither prove nor reject these hypotheses.

The SNA in Chapter 14 provides a first overview about Apollos. His BC value is very high (129.9), his CC (0.34) as well his EC (0.03) values are low. In particular, he is the only explicit link to Alexandria (despite a reference in Ac 6:9) and has links to Corinth and Ephesus. Figure 19.5 shows his small neighborhood in the network, showing his isolation in what Luke presents. His CC indicates that he is an ‘outsider’, not related and connected to the community in Jerusalem. Despite his description, SNA suggests that he does not seem to easily form new connections, as EC indicates. This might also be a reason why he receives a reference letter from Aquila and Priscilla. However, this remains speculative and the high BC value indicates another interesting characteristic of the network: He is an independent actor and has high freedom to act. Again the question

⁵⁰⁹ And indeed there are good reasons for this view: “Apollos wird nun deutlich als *Judenchrist* vorgestellt; denn er ‘war unterwiesen’ (vgl. Lk 1,4; Apg 21,21.24) über ‘den Weg des Herrn’ [...], d.h. in der ‘christlichen Lehre’, die vom Weg Gottes, der durch Jesus erschlossen wurde, handelt.” (Pesch 2012b: 161) Other scholars emphasize also the fact that Luke seems to emphasize the limited status of Apollos: “Damit hat der Acta-Vf das Apollosbild der Tradition natürlich stark verändert. Nach lukanischer Darstellung ist Apollos, obwohl er korrekt über Jesus spricht, zunächst nur so etwas ein ein jüd. ‘Jesusanhänger’ [...], aber noch kein vollgültiger Christ und Missionar.” (Zmijewski 1994: 675)

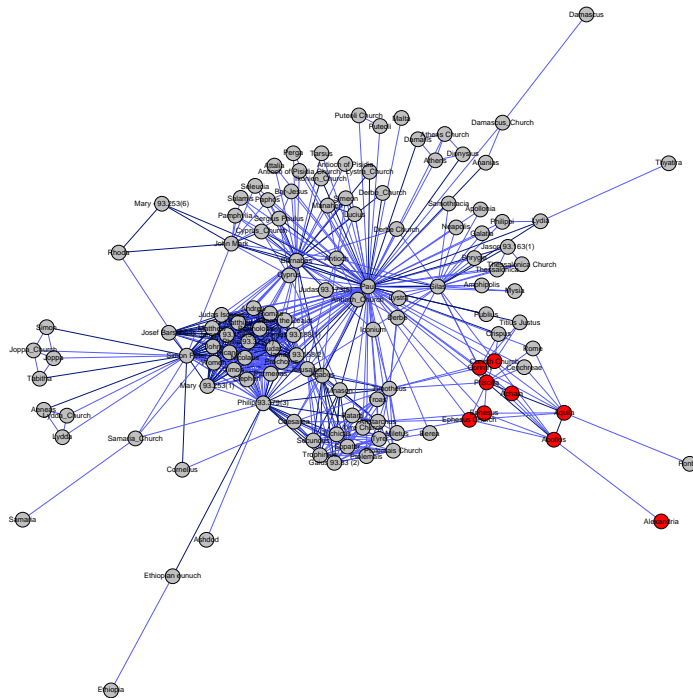


Figure 19.5: Apollos in the social network of Acts 1-28. Nodes in the neighborhood of Apollos are colored in red.

arises, if SNA can contribute to those actors where we have little evidence in the narrative or in the source materials. We will discuss this issue in Section 22.3.

What we can reject is the hypothesis introduced by Vollenweider (2021: 325) that Apollos was primarily a wandering missionary. Luke describes only three spatial settings, and the centrality values do not support the idea that Apollos traveled as restlessly as other characters in Acts. In addition, the Pauline Letters give no further hints on this. Again, Luke implies pre-Pauline Christian traditions in Ephesus⁵¹⁰. This also leads to the question, how Apollos and Paul are related.

Mihaila (2009: 3) summarizes: “Not much has been written on the Paul-Apollos relationship, at least not in the format of a monograph that takes into consideration all the recent research into the rhetorical and socio-historical background”. However, we find several scholars including Mihaila who claim that both were close partners (see also Hartin 2009: 102). Other scholars like Ker (2000) and Wilson (2013) argues for tensions in their

⁵¹⁰ “Wenigstens indirekt wird auch der in der Tradition gegebene Hinweis darauf, daß schon vor Paulus (wohl nicht zuletzt aufgrund der missionarischen Tätigkeit des Apollos) in Ephesus eine christl. Gemeinde entstanden war (vgl. V. 27a), durch den 1. Korintherbrief bestätigt.” (Zmijewski 1994: 675)

relation. However, again, we can only make an educated guess because our information is limited.

A widely considered hypothesis is Apollos' dependence on Paul: "A reasonable interpretation is that Luke wished to subordinate Apollos to Paul and did so through the agency of Priscilla and Aquila. The Alexandrian was not a rival to or independent of Paul." (Pervo 2009: 461)⁵¹¹. Other scholars like Hurst (1992: 301) are more careful:

The figure of Apollos has become symbolic of both eloquence and knowledge of scripture. Certainly the picture of him that emerges from the NT is of one who was a firm supporter of Paul, and of one who was, despite his natural abilities, in no way interested in competing with or subverting Paul's influence and authority. He seems to have preferred taking the subsidiary role of helping to strengthen churches which had already been established.

However, the SNA rather supports the view that Apollos was an independent actor. The SNA again sheds another perspective on Apollos' way of working and maybe even his character. However, these findings cannot be proven because we do not have more sources.

19.6 Lydia

In our analysis in Chapter 14 we found Lydia to be a very significant actor in Acts with a BC value of 124. However, very little is known about her – her name Λυδία is only mentioned twice, in Ac 16:14 and 16:40 –, although she is often considered in research. Detailed analyses were provided by Sterck-Degueldre (2004), Gruca-Macaulay (2016) who offered a sociorhetorical analysis and Ascough (2009) with a social network analysis. Gruca-Macaulay (2016: 1) summarizes the research: Lydia "has almost universally been reduced to that of a supplier of material resources, a role that is either praised as a model of generous hospitality or critiqued as another example of 'Luke's' having exclusively restricted the role of women to that of resource suppliers."⁵¹² Black agrees: "It is hard to find any remarks in the literature scholarship concerning the function of this [Lydia's]

⁵¹¹ See also Haenchen (1977: 533) and Dickerson (1998: 179), who claims that Luke's goal was to "subordinate Apollos and the Ephesian disciples to Paul in order to demonstrate the unity of the church, as a message to the church of his own time."

⁵¹² See also Sterck: "Tatsächlich fehlt eine solide recherchierte, systematisch durchgeführte redaktionskritische Untersuchung zu Apg 16,11-40 bisher." (Sterck-Degueldre 2004: 3)

story in Luke-Acts.”(Black 1985: 166-7) However, what is so significant about her in Acts? In Table 14.1 on page 259 we can identify several interesting facts: First, she is the first (single, next to Priscilla) woman in the list⁵¹³. Second, she most likely has a Gentile background. Third, as we have already discussed in Chapter 17 she has a very small neighborhood, which means in turn she is not very well-connected.

We can further proceed with the following assumptions:

- She is most likely unmarried⁵¹⁴.
- She is a ‘seller of purple goods’⁵¹⁵.
- She is from Thyatira, although we do not what her ties to this city might be⁵¹⁶.
- She and her household were baptized by Paul.
- We have no information about her social status⁵¹⁷.
- All other approaches to find more about her setting, dwelling, about business opportunities and religious cults are speculative⁵¹⁸

Gruca-Macaulay (2016: 5) tried to overcome the limited knowledge with a sociorhetorical analysis:

⁵¹³ Despite a number of other woman supporting mission in Luke-Acts: “Regarding Lydia’s gender, she is one of a number of named and unnamed women in Luke-Acts who are depicted as joining and supporting the work of God [...], as part of the narrative’s portrayal of both women and men as enthusiastic participants in the new movement”(Snyder 2019).

⁵¹⁴ Pervo argues: “Nothing is said of her marital status. It is likely that she is to be perceived as single, divorced, or widowed. In any case, she was the head of her household, and a person of some means.”(Pervo 2009: 403)

⁵¹⁵ Which, however, was very common, although “[v]iews regarding women keeping shops and regarding their activity in the market varied from one part of the empire to another”, as Keener (2014: 2397) shows.

⁵¹⁶ See McLauchlin (1992) and Barrett (2002: 252): “It is not clear whether Lydia was a commercial traveler in purple cloth who visited Philippi frequently enough to know her way to the place of prayer, or had opened a retail establishment there.”

⁵¹⁷ Sterck summarizes: “Über das soziale Statut der Lydia finden sich in der heutigen Forschung grob dargestellt zwei Meinungen. Einerseits gilt die Purpurchändlerin u. a. aufgrund ihrer Herkunft – wie der Name verrate – als sozial bedeutungslos. Sie ginge einer ‘schmutzigen Arbeit’ nach, deshalb sei sie von Berufs wegen verachtet und ist den unteren Schichten zugeordnet worden. Andererseits herrscht in den gängigen Kommentaren zu der Stelle der Standpunkt vor, daß Lydia aufgrund des Handels mit den teuren Purpurwaren wohlhabend war, sogar zu den oberen Schichten zählte.”(Sterck-Degueuldre 2004: 233-4) See for example Schille: “Das Lydia vermögend war, steht nicht da.”(Schille 1989: 341) See in contrast Zmijewski (1994: 607).

⁵¹⁸ See for example Ascough (2009) discussing the cosmopolitan environment of Lydia as Paul’s host.

As a result of the pervasive influence of the history of interpretation on Lydia's portrayal, such attempts at joining the Lydia passages to the broader narrative are built on data that limits our ability to discern the rhetorically active points of connection between Lydia and other key elements of the Philippi visit and the rhetorical fabric of Luke-Acts generally. (:5)

In particular, she argues that Paul places a woman at this part of his narrative to “destabilize audience expectations” and emphasize the inclusion of women in the early Christian network as a marginalized group⁵¹⁹. Other scholars share her view⁵²⁰ and we already discussed the inclusive form of the network according to Acts in Section 14.4. But the situation gets even more confusing when analyzing what Paul and his companions did ἡμέρα τῶν σαββάτων (Ac 16:13). What kind of ‘place of prayer’ did they expect? Pesch, for example, argues that Lydia might also attend a synagogue: “man mag sich ebenso vorstellen, daß sich Paulus und seine Mitarbeiter zu den vor der Synagoge versammelten Frauen setzten und deren Interesse, insbesondere das der Lydia, sie nicht dazu kommen ließ, den Synagogengottesdienst zu besuchen.”(Pesch 2012b: 105) In contrast, Schnabel (2002: 1102) argues that προσευχή would in any case not refer to a synagogue. The situation is far from clear.

However, her hospitality – inviting Paul and his fellows: ‘come to my house and stay’ (Ac 16:15) – is often discussed in literature⁵²¹. Opening a house for guests is, as we have discussed, several times a recurring motif in Acts and important for mission: “The focus here is particularly on his encounter with Lydia and the flourishing of this mission in a distinct and different place with new opportunities for the development and growth of leadership and community.”(Canavan 2019: 421) Keener (2014: 2406-9) asks if her hospitality as woman had been a scandal, but shows several examples for women's participation in patronage.

⁵¹⁹ “Luke deployed the topos of gender in order to begin to destabilize audience expectations after opening the rhetorical unit with a Macedonian warrior/divine victory blend. Instead of first encountering men, [...] the Pauline group not only encounters women but also sits with them”(Gruca-Macaulay 2016: 266)

“When the Pauline group does go to Lydia, the argumentative *inclusio* is completed. Lydia is affirmed as faithful to God as defined through the touchstone *synkrisis*, and therefore her loyalty is not to profit, nor to shows of superficial ritual piety, nor to protecting her personal security, nor to beneficial social alliances. Lydia and those assembled with her have remained in faith, and in Paul's final act of encouragement, the Macedonian's call for aid is fulfilled.”(Gruca-Macaulay 2016: 272)

⁵²⁰ See for example Zmijewski (1994: 613): “Es ist von Bedeutung, daß die allererste christl. Gemeinde auf europäischem Boden ‘in einem gesellschaftlichen Abseits’ entsteht, nämlich ‘in einer Gruppe von Frauen, die bereits als solche diskriminiert’ sind”.

⁵²¹ See also for example Fleming (2019) and McCarty (2014).

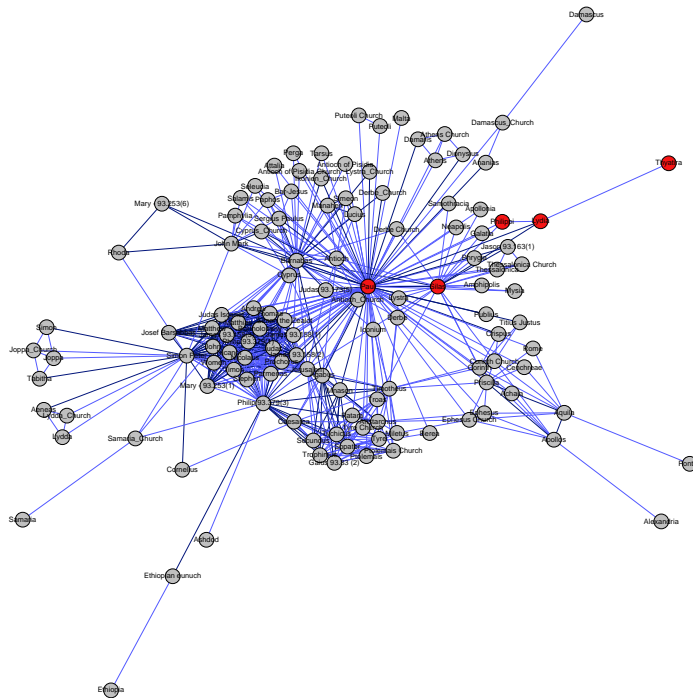


Figure 19.6: Lydia in the social network of Acts 1-28. Nodes in the neighborhood of Lydia are colored in red.

Interestingly, Ascough (2009: 1) already provides some results utilizing SNA, and he summarizes: “Not much is known about Lydia beyond what Luke narrates in three verses—Acts 16:14-15,50. She appears nowhere else in the New Testament, not even a mention in the letter Paul sent to Philippi, the urban center in which Lydia was the first to come to believe in Jesus.” We discussed in Chapter 17 that we have too little data to analyze Lydia’s subnetwork. However, Table 14.1 on page 259 shows that her BC value of 124 is significant high, the CC (0.44) is average while EC (0.06) is very low. This implies that Lydia is rooted in the early Christian network, which is also supported by the CC. However, Figure 19.6 shows that she has very few ties to other actors in the network and the EC indicates that she will not very likely make new connections.

The situation may be similar to Aquila and Priscilla: Due to her trade, she is well-connected but does not have a ‘networking’ character. She seems to be a reliable and perhaps a respected member of her community. Does that make her a leadership person, as some scholars argue? For example, Ascough (2009: 94) takes this as given fact: “Since women played a key public and social role at Philippi, it is thus not surprising to find evidence that women had prominent roles among the Jesus group at that same city in

Paul's letter". Foxwell (2020: 201) goes even one step further (against Adams 2013: 64):

As part of the new order that belongs to the new creation, Lydia was not subject to the same restrictions on women's leadership that were customary in the synagogue. The role of women in the ministry of Jesus models this new situation. As *domina* (the female form of the Latin word for master or owner) of her household and patron of the house church, she functioned as a congregational leader.

For sure, "Paul has the upper hand in terms of honor" as Keener (2014: 2531) suggests. All other hypotheses can neither be verified nor falsified. However, SNA may give some additional hints. Lydia's BC value supports her freedom to act in Luke's network. As far as we know, she is not a traveling person, and we may assume that she used her skills in Philippi. Although this does not contradict the hypothesis and with so little data available it is a more educated guess, the low EC value might suggest that she had no role as a protagonist.

19.7 John

John as Apostle plays an important part not only in Luke's Gospel, but also in Acts⁵²². While extensive studies focus on John's role in the Gospels, especially in the fourth Gospel, to our best knowledge no study focuses on John's portrayal in Acts (cf. Frey et al. 2006 Gardner et al. 2017). Even Duling (2013) does not include John in his SNA. However, our study supports the view that John in Acts deserves more attention. Given the few references to John in Acts, Keener summarizes:

John the apostle has few speaking parts in Acts. In literary terms, he is a flat, secondary character, though his presence pays homage to the knowledge that he played an important role in the Jerusalem church (Gal 2:9). His fewer speaking parts could, however, also reflect historical traditions about his personality vis-à-vis Peter's. (Keener 2013: 1063)

But according to the detailed SNA for Luke's Gospel provided in Chapter 9 he had the second-highest BC of the Apostles, only Peter was higher. In general, the focus of the Gospel is more on describing the group of the Twelve than on particular actors. What changes in Acts? We presented the SNA of Acts in Chapters 12 and 14. Table 12.1

⁵²² His name is very common, and we see multiple references to persons with the same name in Luke-Acts Sandmel (cf. 1962: 930).

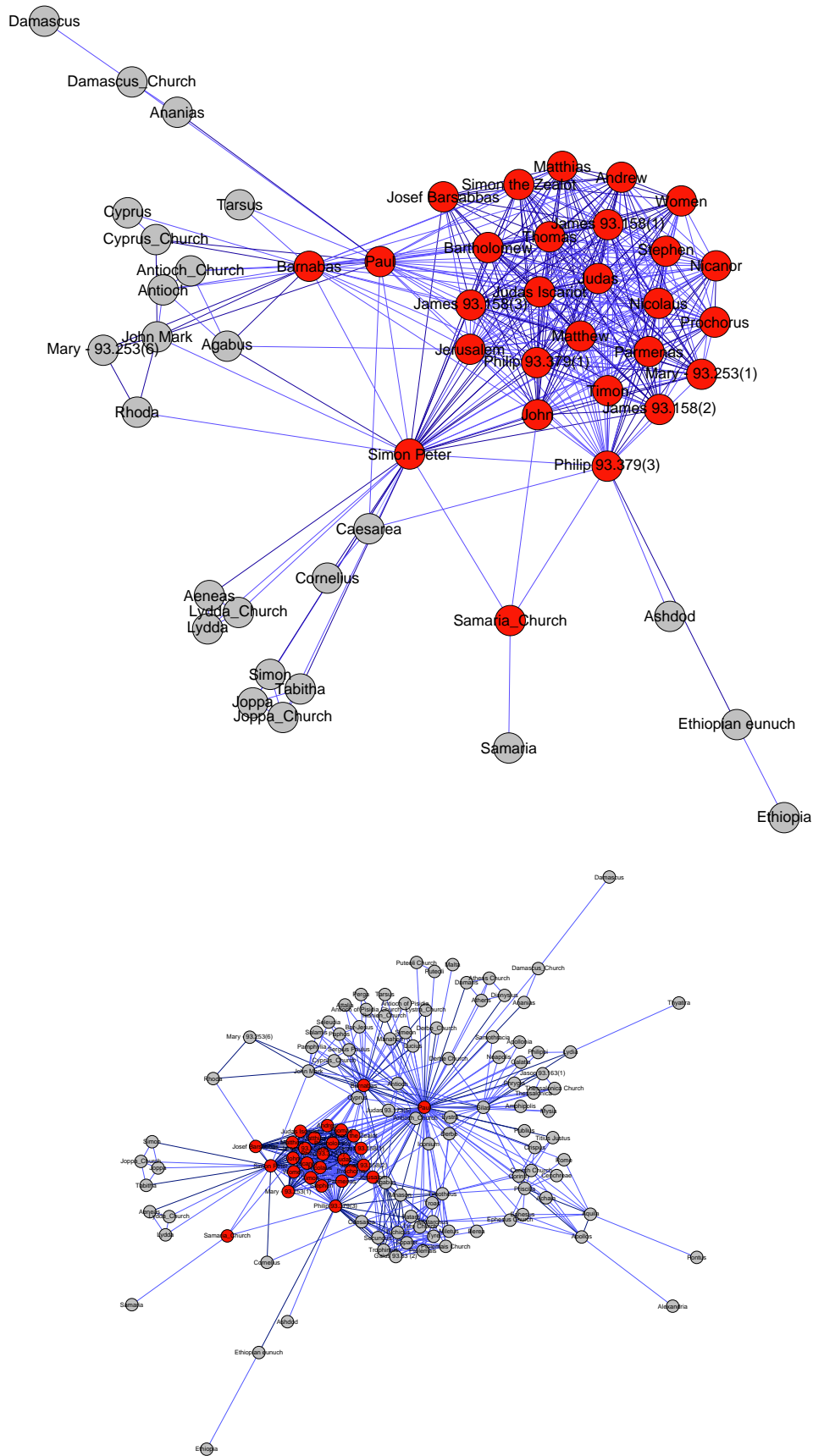


Figure 19.7: John in the social network of Acts 1-12 (top) and Acts 1-28 (bottom). Nodes in the neighborhood of John are colored in red.

on page 215 provides a first overview of the centrality values in Acts 1-12. Here, the situation is similar to the Gospel. John is still the second most important Apostle, but new characters have a higher BC value: Paul, Philip and Barnabas. John has a particular high CC and EC value. Table 14.1 on page 259 provides the centrality values in Acts 1-28. Again, John remains an important Apostle, but when more actors show up, John moves to the bottom. While his CC value is still high, his EC decreases. Thus, we see – although the Luke’s narrative focus changes, and new characters occur on stage – the social network of apostles is quite stable. Surprisingly, SNA shows an important role for John even in Acts, as we will show.

In the Gospel, Luke does not provide extensive information about John. We know that he is a fisherman, a partner of Simon, the Son of Zebedee and has a brother called James (Lk 5:10)⁵²³. John’s role in the Gospel is that of a minor character – mentioned for example in Lk 6:14;9:49, but highlighted in a group of Peter, Mark, John and James in Lk 8:51; 9:28, or Peter and John in Lk 22:8 –, although he sometimes plays a prominent role (e.g. in Lk 9:54, see Section 7.1). To sum up, although Luke does not paint a detailed picture of John in his Gospel, SNA and narrative analysis support the idea that he has a prominent role as minor character⁵²⁴.

In Acts, John is named in the list of followers in Ac 1:13. Gardner et al. (2017) notice that this is the only time John is listed second. In Ac 3:1–11 he is collaborating with Peter when healing the lame beggar. While Peter is the active part speaking afterwards in Solomon’s Portico, he nevertheless plays an active part in this story⁵²⁵. In Ac 4 both are imprisoned and were questioned before the Council. In Ac 8 John collaborates again with Peter, and they travel to Samaria. Thereafter, there is mostly silence about John. However, in Gl 2:9 Peter mentions him, and it seems clear that until then he had a leading position in Jerusalem: “Er gehörte, zumindest in den ersten Jahren, zu den wichtigsten

⁵²³ Collins (1992: 883) summarizes all information: “The Gospels are less clear about the name of John’s mother than they are about the name of his father. Mark indicates that a woman named Salome was a bystander at the crucifixion of Jesus’ (Mark 15:40) and Matthew tells that the mother of the sons of Zebedee was one of the onlookers (Matt 27:56), leading to the plausible suggestion that Salome was the name of John’s mother. By trade John was a fisherman (Matt 4:21; Mark 1:19; Luke 5:10; cf. John 21:3), the trade of his father. The family business was moderately successful, and the family seems to have been of some means, because they had hired servants (Mark 1:20). From Mark 1:21 it would appear that they lived near Capernaum, on the N shore of the Sea of Galilee.”

⁵²⁴ See for example Collins (1992: 885) “Luke seems occasionally to intimate that John had a more important role in the early Church than did his older brother.”

⁵²⁵ Against Pesch (2012a: 137) and other scholars. We discussed this collaboration between Peter and John in Section 18.1.

Leitern der Jerusalemer Gemeinde” (Schnabel 2002: 267). Schnabel argues again for this hypothesis in Schnabel (2013: 41), however it is also supported by other scholars like Collins (1992: 885):

Acts does not ascribe any particular role to John at the so-called Council of Jerusalem: (Acts 15:4-30). Nonetheless, in what appears to be a reference to those events, Paul (Gal. 2:9-10) mentions John, along with James (the brother of the Lord) and Cephas as one of the pillars [...] of the community of Christians in Jerusalem. The pillars not only extended a gesture of fellowship to Paul and Barnabas but also, according to Paul’s say-so, recognized the legitimacy of the latter’s mission to the gentiles.

But neither does Luke provide further information nor do we have additional sources to consult, thus this issue remains unclear (cf. Schnabel 2002: 796)⁵²⁶. However, Ac 11:27–3 might also support this. We refer to Figure 19.7 which highlights the changing narrative focus between the Gospel and Acts: John is not an essential figure or protagonist in Acts, but Luke nevertheless provides several details about his work. In particular, he describes his collaboration with Peter, see also Section 18.1.

John is the last ‘hidden’ actor whom we analyze. His case summarizes two particular challenges for SNA in Luke-Acts: First, although SNA puts the spotlight on some actors and provides suggestions about their way of work and also character, we usually do not have enough data to either proof or falsify these suggestions. This is in particular the case for John: Luke does not mention any of his activities suggested by other sources. Second, we have only limited data to precisely draw the development of actors. While John played an important role in Acts, it is most likely that he continued to be a somewhat important actor in Acts. SNA supports this view.

We will now continue with a general conclusion and an overview of both main actors and ‘hidden’ actors.

⁵²⁶ For example, we find several references to John’s activities in Syria and Ephesus:

The anachronistic process of reading the New Testament in the light of second-century conceptions of ecclesial space can be seen already in Hist. Eccl. 3.23.1, where the Apostle John is treated as exercising a kind of episcopate over the whole province of Asia from his seat in Ephesus. Irenaeus makes a similar move in his analysis of Paul’s Miletus speech. (Alexander 2003: 169)

	Actor			Neighborhood		
	BC	CC	EC	BC	CC	EC
Peter	X	X	X	X	X	X
Paul	XX	X	X	–	X	–
Barnabas	X	X	X	X	X	X
Philip	X	X	X	–	X	X
Silas	X	X	–	–	X	X
Aquila and Priscilla	X	–	–	–	X	X
Apollos	X	–	–	–	X	–
Lydia	X	X	–	–	X	–
John	X	X	X	–	X	X

Table 19.1: Significant centrality values for selected actors and their neighborhood in the network of Luke-Acts. XX refers to very significant, X to significant, – to not significant.

19.8 Conclusion

In this and the last chapter, we provided a detailed SNA for those actors which were found to be important in the analysis of Luke (Chapter 9), Acts 1-12, and Acts 1-28 (Chapters 12 and 14). Our first observation is that for some actors enough data for a detailed analysis could be found, for example for Luke, Paul, Barnabas and Philip. For other actors, some results remain very vague. Nevertheless, the SNA shows several striking results.

First, we could identify several characteristics of actors. While God is the leading actor and empowering the mission and the missionaries, everybody has different skills and different characteristics. In particular

- Peter is embedded in network structures which indicate that he was primarily a mediator,
- Paul is a specialized bridge-builder and restless traveler who is not participating in many close subnetworks,
- Barnabas is a generic bridge-builder, important in several subnetworks and very much a networking person,
- Philip is presented as a pioneering missionary, overcoming social, cultural and religious distances while not being as integrated in the early Christian network.

Other actors were shown to be respected members of churches, but not as much involved in networking or building up new connections, e.g. by traveling. While Silas did travel,

		Betweenness
Simon Peter	Paul	572.524575
Philip	Paul	308.650910
Ethiopian eunuch	Philip	248.000000
Lydia	Paul	217.265325
Priscilla	Paul	144.627767
Barnabas	Simon Peter	131.711085
John Mark	Paul	119.087141

Table 19.2: Edge betweenness values for selected edges between actors in the network of Ac 1–28.

Lydia and maybe even John did not. These characters are very important backbones of the network. Aquila, Priscilla and Apollos are portrayed as traveling people, but not being involved in pioneering mission. They are – like Lydia – more like ‘outsiders’ without direct connections to the church in Jerusalem like Silas and John. The SNA indicates, however, that they also did not build new connections but remained in an existing network.

In Table 19.1 we summarize significant centrality values for selected actors and their neighborhood in the network of Luke-Acts. This highlights, however, that Luke describes actors not only as singular characters but also their style of mission.

Another point is also striking: We know that Peter, Paul, Aquila and Priscilla, Lydia and John were plying a trade. Paul, Barnabas, Apollos, and maybe even Silas had some formal higher or even religious education. Trade and shops might play a significant role for mission for those people who did not, according to Luke, travel that much or were not networking people: Aquila and Priscilla (although mentioned in different places) as well as Lydia.

Second, this clearly underlines the fact that Luke does not solely focus on Paul and his activities. His narrative protagonist is Paul, but he pays special attention to other activities – as long as they are somehow related to his story.

Third, SNA helps to identify all these actors as mostly independent of Peter or Paul. Only Silas could be identified as a co-worker, mainly supporting Paul. This also supports our results about co-workers in Acts described in Chapter 17 which showed that the success of mission according to Luke is not only dependent on God’s plan but also due to a very complex combination of different conditions. Similarly, we could show that these

actors were important for early Christian mission – which is most likely the reason why Luke included them in their story – due to a variety of reasons: (1) Belief and trust in God, (2) reliability, (3) skills as mediators, (4) skills as bridge-builder between cultural, religious and social gaps, (5) skills as overcomer of these gaps, (6) rooted in the Christian Network, (7) classical networking skills within or to another subnetwork.

Fourth, Table 19.2 shows the edge betweenness values for selected edges between actors in the network of Ac 1–28. As we have discussed above, some nodes are ‘dead ends’ in the network because we have no further knowledge about them, for example Lydia or the Ethiopian eunuch. Thus, some high values are not surprising: Philip is the only connection to Ethiopia and most information to Lydia needs to flow over Paul – at least in the network, which Luke presents. In this overview, however, Paul is very prominent, which underlines his function as specialized bridge-builder. These values nevertheless also highlight the importance of Paul as bridge between himself and Simon Peter, Philip, and other subnetworks. Nevertheless, he is not covering structural holes as we discussed earlier: For example, we find an important tie between Barnabas and Simon Peter.

Fifth, we can see that a diverse set of actors is important, e.g. Gentiles, diaspora Jews, women. Czachesz (2011: 146ff) claims that the inclusion of women in the community was *the* crucial point for success. Luke mentions women often in his Gospel and in Acts, and they are also found in the Epistles. This is indeed striking and often discussed in research⁵²⁷. At this point it is relevant to point out that women had a significantly different social network than men – and often still have in different cultural settings⁵²⁸. However, SNA points out that this inclusion is not limited to women, but being part of the body of Christ is not linked to gender, culture, or language. It is linked to faith⁵²⁹. A variety of other possible social ties were available to a possible house community.

Sixth, centrality measures show actors and their development in the narrative. Thus,

⁵²⁷ Early Christianity would form “a social network in which diverse groups are connected by weak links fosters the improvement of cognitive abilities that make it possible for people to assume and appreciate different points of view.” (Czachesz 2011: 151) See also Eisen (2000) and Greschat et al. (1983). The latter points out an important aspect: The interpretation of the New Testament texts in relation to the role of women depends on the social location of the interpreters and their perspective.

⁵²⁸ See the studies of (Budin & Turfa 2016) or (Huebner & Nathan 2016: 215), which present evidence of the different social networks of women in antiquity.

⁵²⁹ This view is also supported by Stenschke (2018b: 143): “Acts provides an instructive case study of the management of increasing diversity among different groups of people. The challenges that existed on this road were overcome. At the end of this process, the church emerged as a diverse group, well quipped for its commission by the risen Jesus to Jews and gentiles (Acts 1:8)”.

SNA helps to understand central roles, for example of the twelve apostles. However, this clearly also shows the limitations of SNA on a narrative. As we could show in Chapter 16, the node distribution indicates that the network of the three parts is incomplete without the additional data. An SNA of Luke-Acts as narrative text is thus limited to the narrative text Luke presents. We could derive several points which are based on information which Luke did not emphasize or omit. We will discuss these limitations in Chapter 22.3 and continue with a similar analysis of locations and spatiality.

While we will address critical reflections at a later stage, our current focus in the next chapter is on examining locations and spatiality.

20 Locations and Spatiality

Our analysis of Luke (Chapter 9), Acts 1-12, and Acts 1-28 (Chapters 12 and 14) showed several interesting observations about spatiality in Luke-Acts. While the Gospel presents spatiality embedded in theological concerns, the travel from Galilee to Jerusalem in firstspace and secondspace embeds the spatial movement of the Kingdom of God. In Acts, the spatial movement is related to the spread of early Christianity and mission. In general, the mission in Luke-Acts is not considered within the scope of movements and locations, but in terms of salvation for everyone. On the other hand, Luke describes numerous spatial relations and travels through different landscapes and cities. Before considering the observations in the social network, we refer to some generic information about spatiality and mobility.

The Roman Empire created the possibilities for an enormously mobile society. Roman or Greek were lingua franca, a large network of roads existed in the provinces, and there were many regular shipping connections in the Mediterranean. At the same time, the roads were relatively safe and the sea nearly free of pirates⁵³⁰. Travel was therefore usually fast and safe (cf. Stambaugh & Balch 1992: 33f)⁵³¹. The streets were often paved, and there were way stations and traveler inns at regular intervals (cf. Heinz 2003: 73). People usually walked; those who could afford it took a donkey, horse or wagon (cf. Stambaugh & Balch 1992: 34). An example is the Ethiopian eunuch in Ac 8:26–31. In principle, the Roman road system also plays a role in the Romanization and subjugation of conquered territories. But it is also true that it provided enormous mobility⁵³². At the

⁵³⁰ See Giebel (1999: 151) and Casson (1994: 149): “Rome’s efficient administration, at least during the first two centuries A.D., had swept the seas clear of pirates and chased away most of the bandits from the main highways.”

⁵³¹ Travel was by no means exclusively comfortable and safe. See Paul in 2 Cor 11:25–27.

⁵³² “Das römische Straßensystem, diese nach Ausdehnung und Fläche sicherlich größte zivilisatorische Errungenschaft der Römer, bedeutete, dass definierte Zielorte geplant miteinander verknüpft und damit auch im Prinzip für jedermann erreichbar wurden.” (Heinz 2003: 12)

same time, the eastern part of the Mediterranean was much more Hellenized. This cultural aspect led – besides the infrastructure – to the fact that the Mediterranean “developed an international, cosmopolitan culture” (Casson 1994: 117).

According to Stambaugh & Balch (1992: 36), the main travelers were (a) government officials, possibly even the emperor, (b) soldiers (c) businessmen, (d) slaves entrusted with a message, and (e) groups of showmen. Casson (1994: 75) cites another reason: Private excursions (cf. Casson 1994: 138ff). It is disputed whether private travelers could also partly use the network of the state post, the *cursus publicus*⁵³³. Travel speeds ranged from 20 miles per day (i.e., about 30 km/h) to a maximum of 40 kilometers, which was probably only achieved by the state postal service (cf. Heinz 2003: 82)⁵³⁴.

An overview of trade and information networks in the Roman Empire is provided by Malkin et al. (2013) and Knappett (2013). What is certain is that there were extensive networks for trade, communication, and the flow of goods⁵³⁵. These extended as far as India and China, but also into the European north. Unfortunately, these networks are often difficult to reconstruct and have to be extrapolated from literature or archaeological evidence. For example, it can be proven that aristocrats had a large network of mutual aid⁵³⁶. One possible way to reconstruct these networks was presented by Graham. According to his analysis, places in each province in the Roman Empire could be reached via circa 5 intermediate steps. In the whole Roman Empire, this number grows to an average of 18.6 steps. Graham (2006: 51) summarizes “that the perception of fragmentation would have a real impact on a traveler’s journey. Roman travelers would not necessarily have known the actual physical routes between places on the list”. This allows two conclusions: On the one hand, the regional network must also be considered for the spread of new ideas in a region. We will consider this idea when we discuss the SNA perspective on cities and houses. On the other hand, the wider network is relevant, since it determines how these

⁵³³ The *cursus publicus* was the official transport system for government embassies and for the military. Others had to pay a fee for its use. In return, the road infrastructure was massively expanded. “Although the sea-routes were vital for certain aspects of transport and trade, they were highly dangerous. Land-routes allowed the movement of troops, food and information, slower, for sure, but safer” (Collar 2013: 49).

⁵³⁴ For a detailed overview, see Thompson (1998: 61).

⁵³⁵ However, these network were not static: “As we would expect, markets fluctuated over time: the Italian peninsula began as a key exporter of wine and oil, but by the first–second centuries A.D., this had reversed, with wine, oil and *garum* imported from Iberia and Gaul, and then from North Africa” (Collar 2013: 51).

⁵³⁶ See the works of Stambaugh & Balch (1992: 59) and Rollinger (2014).

ideas are transmitted from one network to other networks.

The first observation is that Luke mostly omits the rural regions and focuses on the cities. What is Luke's map? Does his usage of πόλις go hand in hand with his emphasis on city life⁵³⁷? In Chapter 14 we highlighted that Luke does not really describe a missionary strategy that goes beyond the general spread of the Gospel and in particular the pioneering mission (cf. Schnabel 2002: 1420). We will come back to this later, but discuss at least some contribution SNA has made for the analysis of rural and urban spatiality in Luke's network.

SNA for rural regions is usually considered for the management of resources. Nevertheless, a few researchers worked on the topic of how rural regions and SNA come together (cf. Wei et al. 2021). In particular, Seifried (2016) could show in her thesis the relation between classical anthropological concepts and social network analysis for rural regions.

In his Gospel Luke focuses on rural regions⁵³⁸ but the goal of his journey is Jerusalem. Keener (2012: 590) highlights the importance of cities for culture, religion and thus for a missionary perspective⁵³⁹. On the other hand, he summarizes:

The contrast between urban and rural communities also highlights dimensions of Paul's travels and ministry; although he focused his ministry on towns and especially cities, much of the territory through which he traveled when evangelizing Phrygia was rural and foreign to his own background. (Keener 2012: 56)

Thus, we should pay special attention to the holes in the network and narrative references to rural regions. The only direct references to rural mission may be found in Ac 14:6, Ac 16:11–12, or Ac 18:23: Paul 'went from one place to the next through the region of Galatia and Phrygia, strengthening all the disciples.' Paul διερχόμενος καθεζῆ and

⁵³⁷ "If Pauline Christianity was urban, the city breathing through Paul's language, so too was Lucan Christianity. And this not only in his history of the extension of the Christian movement through the cities of the Roman Empire. Luke argues that even the earthly ministry of Jesus constantly crisscrossed the streets of the cities. Luke's mobility of language may not sound appropriate in speaking simplistically of a 'village culture of Palestine.'" (Conn 1985: 422)

⁵³⁸ We should consider Galilee as rural (cf. Reicke 1982: 122) and also Frankel (1992: 879) argues for not only rural but also "geographically distant from Jerusalem, the seta of the Judaeian palace, temple, archives, and scribes".

⁵³⁹ Several researchers have highlighted the importance of cities and city life for Luke, see for example Evans (2016) and Conn (1985).

the reference to rural regions can also be found in the usage of $\chi\acute{\omega}\rho\alpha$ ⁵⁴⁰. The reference in 16:4 is not clear, because $\delta\iota\epsilon\pi\omicron\rho\epsilon\acute{\upsilon}\omicron\nu\tau\omicron \tau\acute{\alpha}\varsigma \pi\acute{\omicron}\lambda\epsilon\iota\varsigma$ does not offer a concrete reference and the reference $\pi\acute{\omicron}\lambda\iota\varsigma$ might only refer to the rural regions between cities. But Luke also offers implicit references. If Paul walked long distances with his travel companions – would he proclaim the good news in villages and during his rests? We cannot make a decision, but would Luke’s portrayal of Paul as restless missionary not imply this on several occasions? In Paul’s case, however, another important component in ancient travel is also evident: Taking advantage of the hospitality of friends, relatives or acquaintances, but also offering it to others (cf. Arterbury 2005). This aspect is especially evident in his missionary journeys. Hospitality was an elementary part of ancient culture; an innkeeper, that is, someone who allowed himself to be paid for hospitality, was poorly respected (cf. Hiltbrunner 2005: 123).

However, as we have discussed above, the network representation only shows cities. We can use the methodological overlap according to Seifried (2016) to approximate the rural connections in communities as detected in Section 14.3. These approaches were able to not only highlight that the network according to Acts presents a close network, but also – as we have highlighted in Hypothesis 14 – several close subnetworks. The rural holes were most likely covered by the long travel of several actors (e.g. Peter, John, Philip, Barnabas, Paul and others). In addition, we can assume kinship connections and other travelers and trade to have spread information.

However, these crosstown links are very important for information flow in the network. On the one hand, we see that Luke has theological concerns not only in his Gospel, but also in Acts. The spread of early Christianity is deeply connected with God’s will for witnesses till ‘the ends of the earth.’ We have already discussed earlier that some scholars regard Rome as the ‘ends of the world’ and thus as the spatial goal of Acts⁵⁴¹. But according to Luke, spatiality seems deeply rooted in (a) thinking about spatiality as room to encounter God and mission, and (b) as related to actors linked to and empowered by God. Thus, the ‘end of the earth’ are – in the perspective of SNA – not directly related to a particular place, but rather the literally $\xi\sigma\chi\alpha\tau\omicron\varsigma$ as the most far or even final point

⁵⁴⁰ Whereas some scholars argue that Paul and his companions “durchziehen die Städte – gemeint sind näherin die der früheren Missionsreise” (Zmijewski 1994: 590). But this is, however, not convincing.

⁵⁴¹ See Schille: “Die lukanische Topographie, die ganz und gar auf den Endpunkt Rom eingestellt ist” (Schille 1989: 406).

		Edge betweenness centrality
Damascus Church	Paul	246.000000
Ephesus	Paul	160.224543
Paul	Ephesus Church	157.471210
Achaia	Paul	147.632040
Corinth	Paul	145.791771
Paul	Corinth Church	145.791771
Rome	Paul	140.529599
Cenchreae	Paul	140.529599
Pontus	Aquila	125.000000
Apollos	Alexandria	125.000000
Malta	Paul	125.000000
Philip	Ashdod	125.000000
Ethiopia	Ethiopian eunuch	125.000000

Table 20.1: Edge betweenness values for selected edges between actors and locations in the network of Ac 1–28.

including and spanning the whole world. With the Gospel, we may assume that Luke had a theological ‘direction’ in mind, but his uttermost spatial concern is about ‘filling the gaps’ of the network: both spacial and social.

In Table 20.1 we present the edge betweenness values for selected edges between actors and locations in the network of Ac 1–28. We need to compare these values with Table 19.2, where we discussed ties between actors. What is striking is that most spatial links are related to Paul. This fits perfectly to the SNA portrayal which we discussed in the last chapter: Paul is a specialized bridge-builder between spatial distances due to his restless travels. But it is also a chicken-and-egg problem – was he a bridge-builder due to his travels or were his travels due to his connections and his work as bridge-builder? However, we see also Aquila, Apollos, Philip and the Ethiopian eunuch in this list. Here, we see statistical artifacts caused by missing data: Luke does not provide further information about Ethiopia, Alexandria or Pontus. However, these ‘dead ends’ within the network show not only the ‘end’ of information, but provide also further links for research. Further research should thus focus on the Letters and sources from the early church period. Luke did not provide this spatial information by chance, but composed them in his narrative. However, it is unclear and doubtful if more information can be found for these ends.

According to Table 14.2 providing the centrality measures of locations and the results of community detection in Section 14.3, we showed that Luke describes a well-connected early

Christian network with multiple network centers (Hypothesis 16). On the other hand, we showed that Luke emphasizes Christian communities connected by – but not solely relying on – external travelling missionaries. This is clearly supported by Table 20.1, since Paul, Aquila, Apollos, Philip and the Ethiopian eunuch can be identified as traveling people. However, for Aquila and Apollos the amount of travel remains unclear. And according to Acts, Philip settles down in Caesarea. These hints combined with the mobility in the Roman Empire (cf. De Ligt & Tacoma 2016) also support this view. An ancient network has different conditions as Collar (2013: 24) summarizes: “In the ancient world, however, physical distance constricted network closeness differently to modern networks.” If we assume the ancient society to be more localised, this supports both thinking of larger closeness in cities and the rural environment and emphasizes the spread of early Christianity. On the other hand, ‘early adopters’ might be more visible in the network with this presupposition, as Collar (2013: 25) argues. But we should not underestimate mobility in the Roman Empire⁵⁴². Thus, several ‘mysterious’ displacements, disappearing and reappearing characters in Luke might in the end be due to this mobility. Luke also mentions several links and the flow of information without mentioning the carrier or link. For example Ἀκούσαντες δὲ οἱ ἐν Ἱερουσαλῦμοις ἀπόστολοι ... (Ac 8:14), Καί τινες κατελθόντες ἀπὸ τῆς Ἰουδαίας ... (Ac 15:1). Thus approximating the network structure, given the general mobility in the Roman Empire and Luke’s hint, we may assume far more crosstown and crossprovince links than we can see in the network. They were the rule rather than an exception. However, Luke mentions only some of them, and we should, on the other hand, not underestimate Paul, his co-workers, but also Peter, Philip and Barnabas. Thus, the PPA evaluation of Acts presented in Figure 14.13 on Page 282 might provide a feasible representation of Luke’s spatial thinking. However, it also correlates with the Jewish diaspora network. More research could clarify this.

We can prove another assumption about spatiality in Acts: There is no singular center of mission or early Christianity. Luke is nevertheless especially concerned with Jerusalem. This has theological reasons, but certainly narrative reasons as well: The apostles gathered and began their mission in Acts here⁵⁴³. However, further studies could analyze if and

⁵⁴² See for example Scheidel (2004: 1): “From military mobilization, urbanization, slavery, and the nexus between taxation and trade to linguistic and religious change and shifting identities, the most pervasive consequences of empire all had one thing in common: population movements on an unprecedented scale.” Compare also Foubert & Breeze (2016).

⁵⁴³ Which is supported by Schnabel: “In diesem Sinn gab es im 1. Jh. keine einzige Missionszentrale, am nächsten kommt solchen Vorstellungen höchstens Jerusalem in den zwölf Jahren zwischen 30 und 42

how the narrative of Acts might fill the gap to early church history.

However, other spatial elements can be considered as well and we will try to ‘zoom in’ to a closer view. Thus, we close with some remarks on the terms οἶκος and οἰκία. Luke uses them 52 times in his Gospel, and 34 times in Acts. While these terms may refer to the house of Israel or the temple⁵⁴⁴, it is usually used as a particular house or household linked to a name⁵⁴⁵. At the same time, while these spatial references refer to a location which is not clearly identified, it helps to fill a particular gap, especially when we consider synagogues to be houses as well⁵⁴⁶. However, we should not forget the explicit references to οἶκος in the Gospel. For example, in Lk 10:5 Jesus explicitly sends the seventy-two into houses and he himself is often entering or visiting people in houses (for example Lk 5:29–32; 5:38; 10:38–42), usually as a guest (but for example not in Lk 8:51). Moreover, hospitality was even more important within Jewish culture than in Greco-Roman culture (cf. Koenig 1992: 300), and thus it is not a big surprise that Luke adds many references to houses and hospitality. In Ac 5:42 Luke mentions how mission was done ‘in the temple and from house to house’, καὶ κατ’ οἶκον. SNA could help to identify – and approximate – the gap between rural and city life, and we can use a similar approximation for the inner-city – and perhaps even a generic approximation applicable to both rural and city life in community – gaps: Teaching, ministry and mission are related to households and perhaps houses, including workshops⁵⁴⁷. By far the most information is provided for the church in Jerusalem.

An important question concerns the meeting places, size and composition, i.e. the form of the ‘house churches’, for example in Jerusalem. Was it a single large congregation with several thousand members that Luke talks about⁵⁴⁸? In Ac 3:1 Luke reports that

n.Chr.”(Schnabel 2002: 1362)

⁵⁴⁴ See Ac 7:42: ‘οἶκος Ἰσραήλ’, or 7:47: ‘Σολομῶν δὲ οἰκοδόμησεν αὐτῷ οἶκον’.

⁵⁴⁵ See Ac 18:7: ‘εἰς οἰκίαν τινὸς ὀνόματι Τιτίου’, or 18:8: ‘Κρίσπος δὲ ὁ ἀρχισυνάγωγος ἐπίστευσεν τῷ κυρίῳ σὺν ὄλῳ τῷ οἴκῳ αὐτοῦ’, or 17:5: τῇ οἰκίᾳ Ἰάσονος. In the story of Lydia, we find two usages in 16:15: ... καὶ ὁ οἶκος αὐτῆς ... and εἰσελθόντες εἰς τὸν οἶκόν μου μένετε as invitation to Paul.

⁵⁴⁶ Which, however, is a simplification and further attention should be paid to this difference (cf. Schnabel 2002: 1242-1243). The word ἐκκλησία in ancient usage denotes the “Vollversammlung der rechts- und wehrfähigen Vollbürger der πολίς” (Coenen 2014: 1136). The significant word συναγωγή, despite its Jewish origin, is used in the NT only for the assembly or meeting house of the Jews (:1140)

⁵⁴⁷ These actions are clearly part of Acts: “Innerkirchliche Lehrunterweisung (διδασκαλία) und Evangelisierung nach außen gehören als die beiden entscheidenden Weisen der Verkündigung des Wortes Gottes untrennbar zusammen und sind für die Kirche zu allen Zeiten unverzichtbar.”(Zmijewski 1994: 577) But, however, the spatial connection is not always clearly identified and linked (cf. Adams 2013).

⁵⁴⁸ See for example Kellner (1998: 16): “Nachdem die Jerusalemer Urgemeinde eine bestimmte Größe erreicht hatte, kam für sie als Versammlungsort der gesamten Gemeinde nur das Tempelareal mit

Peter and John go to the temple together, see also Ac 5:2. But are meetings in the temple coherent with Ac 8:3 or Ac 1:13⁵⁴⁹? Further evidence of other non-central meeting places is found in Ac 12:12, where the house of Mary, mother of John, is mentioned.

Ac 1:14 mentions ‘all these with one accord were devoting themselves to prayer’, which seems possible for a few hundred people. But Ac 2:46 adds the breaking of bread in houses. However, Ac 4:31; Ac 5:12 and Ac 5:42 again point to a single, large gathering of the church, with the latter verse also mentioning preaching and teaching in houses. We will gather some information and combine them with SNA to explore the structures.

Pérez Mayo (2015: 4ff) for example also examines this subject in terms of the early reception of house churches in patristic literature. He states that this did not become a subject in research until 1939 in the work of Filson (1939). This is true, for house churches were not the focus of exegesis for a long time. However, a distinction must be made whether the home is considered a place of assembly or a house church. The former became the focus of scholars in the early 19th century (cf. Adams 2013: 2). Filson (1939) provided a systematic study of the circumstances and realities of the early church. In addition to the passages already cited that imply a meeting in houses, Filson cites in particular Ac 12:17: “[T]his was not a meeting of the whole Jerusalem church, but only of one group, indicating that as the group grew in size it became increasingly difficult for all the believers in the city to meet in one house.” (Filson 1939: 106) Five points are particularly important to Filson:

1. The house churches gave the followers of Jesus the opportunity for worship and discipleship.
2. The house churches would give a partial explanation for the frequent mention of family life in early Christian writings.
3. Also, disputes between local churches in the coexistence within a city could be plausibly explained.
4. The house church makes a significant contribution to explaining the social composition of early Christian communities.

seinen Höfen und Hallen in Frage”. This is provided by Schenke (1990: 73f), who, however, sees the Greek-speaking Jewish Christians as a special community

⁵⁴⁹ “...εἰς τοῦ περὶ οὗ ἀνέβησαν οὗ ἦσαν καταμένοντες”; not only did the 120 disciples meet here, but this is where the further events of Pentecost took place.

5. According to Filson, the development of church leadership cannot be understood without house churches.

The social composition of the first Christian congregations and the congregation as a starting point and as a means of original Christian mission also came into focus from the 1960s onward. All these aspects are important for SNA reconstruction. However, there is no consensus in the research: “[C]onsensus has begun to be undermined by new thinking about the kinds of domestic spaces that might have constituted early Christian meeting places” (Adams 2013: 2).

Since we have only very limited material and sources⁵⁵⁰, the concept and understanding of οἶκος differs in different cultures and changed over time. In most languages, it has the double meaning of a building and a group of people associated with it. This distinction was made in Greek with the terms οἶκος and οἰκία, but could no longer be found in this way in the NT (cf Pérez Mayo 2015: 95). Klauck (1981: 17), who describes the two terms as circles with overlapping meanings, disagrees⁵⁵¹. However, we find both meanings, but all related to actors, as we have argued above. Goetzemann (2014: 876ff) cites the οἶκος θεοῦ for the temple or house of Israel, in addition to the meanings house, family, residential community. Adams (2013: 5f) criticizes the association of “house” with a Roman villa, a *domus*. One should rather think of rooms, apartments, or even workshops. Supporting our argumentation, he adds: “Some scholars have suggested stores and workshops as domestic locales for early Christian meetings.” If one wants to approach the question, which extend a οἶκος had and which people are to be counted to it, one has various starting points. Green (1970: 241) for examples states, that the *amici* often counted as close friends and confidants to the house as well. The question whether slaves were part of the house is also interesting: “Die Sklaven in einem christlichen Haus waren nicht unbedingt christlich, so war z. B. Onesimus noch nicht christlich, als er aus seinem Haus floh (Phlm 10 und 39). Aber die Hinweise darauf, dass die Sklaven ‚im Gefolge ihrer Herren zum neuen Glauben gefunden haben‘, sind zahlreich, und wenn ein Sklave in einem heidnischen Haus Christ wird, kann er unter seinen Mitsklaven neue Gläubige zu gewinnen suchen.” (Pérez Mayo 2015: 98). Again, it is only the context that matters.

⁵⁵⁰ “Die Forschung betont heutzutage die Bedeutung der Hausgemeinden für die Entwicklung der Kirche in der Ursprungszeit, obwohl wir auf sehr wenig Material und kaum archäologische Befunde zurückgreifen können.” (Pérez Mayo 2015: 100)

⁵⁵¹ Es finden “sich im Neuen Testament neben den dominierenden Stellen mit Oikos auch solche mit Oikia.”

Whether children, slaves, co-workers, friends or relatives are included in the term *oikos* cannot be deduced.

Thus, three important aspects of the house church are found: The *oikos* (1) as a place of residence, trade, or workshop, or (2) as a residential community. In either case, (3) it is always under the authority of a householder. Thus, the house represents a basic social function in the ancient world. It was both an infrastructure used by the early church and a model that was an ideal for the church as a social structure. Free people thus had the possibility to come into a new family house structure. “Wir können also davon ausgehen, dass diese Juden in ihren bisherigen sozialen, familiären und religiösen Bezügen verblieben, dass sich aber offenbar mit den abendlichen Symposien eine weitere, zusätzliche Form der Gemeinschaft etablierte.” (Weidemann 2016: 50) Thus, the concept of house churches was at the same time a foundation of early Christian communities, since they provided the framework of communal worship and service (cf. Wick 2002). However, it was also a basic cell for further missionary activities (cf Pérez Mayo 2015: 101). Consequently, house churches served as an important base not only for Paul’s mission, but also before Paul’s time in Ac 2 and Ac 9.

However, in Acts only a few times mission activities and success are not linked to houses, for example when Paul addresses the Areopagus in Ac 17:34 Luke names Dionysius, Damaris, and ‘others with them’. Thus, we can assume that our approximation is usually related to special locations like the Areopagus or – fare more often – to houses and households.

To sum up, SNA helps to understand locations and spatiality in a network. We have pursued three different approaches: First, the relations between other existing networks and the one we analyzed. The social network of Luke-Acts could be embedded into the Jewish Diaspora network, but also in trade and travel networks in the Roman Empire. Second, SNA provides several statistical approaches which can be used to analyze spatiality. Third, we tried to approximate the rural landscape and houses as spatial elements implicitly indicated by Luke.

21 Conclusion

In this third part, we provided a detailed analysis of several selected topics. First, we discussed how SNA can help to provide a complete perspective on Luke-Acts. We were able to show that Luke presents a surprisingly complete social network which follows a scale-free distribution, although he omits several actors, locations and links. This emphasizes the narrative connection of both works, although Luke describes a social network dedicated to following Jesus, who is the protagonist of the Gospel. Luke is concerned about theological issues which are reflected in the social network. This early Christian network as portrayed by Luke has a high closeness and forms a reliable network centered in Jerusalem.

In Chapter 17 we provided an analysis of the social network focusing on co-working and collaborations according to Luke. SNA highly supports the hypothesis that Paul was not a ‘lonely hero’, but a person deeply embedded within the early Christian network. In particular, Luke does not omit co-workers in general, but highlights collaboration in mission not only with Paul, but also for Barnabas, Peter and John. All these actors use different strategies to collaborate with co-workers. We were able to show that SNA helps to analyze these strategies, but also presents hints for character traits and the general role of actors in the network.

Thus, in Chapter 19 we followed up with a detailed analysis of main actors like Peter and Paul, but also Philip and Barnabas, and various ‘hidden’ actors like Silas, Aquila and Priscilla, Apollos, Lydia and John. Since Paul is extensively studied in the field of ‘Paulusforschung’ based on his letters, we focused on the other actors while only providing a few suggestions and further research questions concerning the person of Paul. We were able to show that SNA provides data to identify several characteristics of these actors. While God is the leading actor, empowering the mission and the missionaries, every actor has different skills and different characteristics: For example Peter as a mediator, Paul as

a specialized bridge-builder and restless traveler who is not participating in many close subnetworks, Barnabas as a general bridge-builder, and Philip as pioneering missionary, overcoming social, cultural and religious distances while not being wholly integrated in the early Christian network. This analysis also supports the assessment that Luke does not solely focus on Paul and his activities. For Luke a diverse set of actors is important, e.g. Gentiles, diaspora Jews, women.

In Chapter 20 we provided an analysis of spatiality in the social network of Luke-Acts. The edge betweenness analysis supports the view of Paul as traveler and bridge-builder. Combining these results with the results of community detection in Section 14.3, we see more indication that Luke describes a well-connected early Christian network with multiple network centers. In particular, Luke's spatial thinking correlates with the Jewish diaspora network. While the resolution of the network is not high enough to 'zoom in' and get additional information about the mission in rural regions and within the cities, SNA could offer several clues which could be analyzed in further research. If we see *οἶκος* and *οἰκία* as generic concept, comprising houses, households, workshops and even synagogues, SNA provides some support for the house as a mission concept or mission network in early Christianity:

- First, the 'house' as a mission concept was the intuitive use of already existing connections in the social network. Only later it may have become a reflected component of early Christian mission.
- Second, houses provided an intimate setting for missionary conversations and for worship events.
- Third, in this setting, not only practiced charity but also the inclusion of women's and other social networks ensured outreach across social classes.
- Fourth, in this context, house churches offered the possibility of a certain range of options and worldviews, which would be supported by the existence of Greek-speaking house churches.

This section marks the end of Part III, and we will proceed with a summary of the outcomes and deductions, accompanied by critical reflections.

22 Summary and Outlook

This chapter summarizes Parts I, II, and III and offers an outlook of the whole thesis.

Social networks play an important role in the social sciences and have been widely used for several decades, both in theory and in application. Understanding social interactions and networks and how they influence society are important issues. Most studies from historians and exegetes have only focused on understanding how the New Testaments constructs networks and identity. In this work, on the one hand, we have developed a mathematical computational social network using exegetical methods. On the other hand these results have also raised new questions and have provided a new perspective on biblical texts. Previous work has been limited to only one of these goals.

In particular, we were concerned about the question what the nature of Christian society and belonging to the βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ according to Luke-Acts is. What is Luke's particular perspective on relationships and society and who where the persons involved in the first Christian social networks according to his narrative. We were able to demonstrate that methods from the humanities, in particular social network analyses, can bring fresh perspectives to our understanding of Luke-Acts. While the Gospel of Luke focuses on the connection between theological and christological motifs with social aspects in thirdspace, and in particular described the 'in' and 'out' in the inclusive network of Jesus-followers, Acts is more concerned about the firstspace and secondspace spread of the network and in particular how the network developed and filled the previously introduced motifs. Our approach also has the benefit that it includes an analysis of the methodological overlap between SNA, literary approaches, and narrative criticism.

However, the main results of this work do not only include methodological results, and a social network representation of Luke-Acts, but also several observations about the nature of Luke's narrative network.

Is this question also relevant for the community of believers today? In today's world, we face several challenging theological and ethical discussions. Some of them are related to lifestyle and the personal opinion about topics related to 'liberal' or 'conservative' positions. All of them are related to thirdspace. Luke is very clear in his message that the good news overcame not only firstspace and secondspace distances, but in particular thirdspace distances. Thus, Luke emphasizes that the early Christian community is open for all, no matter what their religious or cultural background is.

In this chapter, we will draw our conclusions, in particular also some critical reflection on SNA and theology, and provide an outlook for further research. In the first section, we will try to answer the question whether SNA provides fresh perspectives on biblical texts. This also includes a critical reflection of our results. The second section is dedicated to the question 'Unde venis, quo vadis?', and we will in particular evaluate how assumptions influence hypothesis finding in SNA on biblical texts. The third section tries to evaluate the impact and challenge of missing data and "quiet sources" for SNA in general and HNA. This question would be particularly interesting, if we would perspectively leave the framework of narrative analysis. Or, in other words, could SNA also provide new insights for historical and critical research? Some observations and an outlook on Digital Humanities and the future of digital theology are drawn in the last section.

22.1 SNA: Fresh perspectives on biblical texts?

In Section 4.1 we have introduced and discussed, how different narrative approaches provide different perspectives on biblical texts. We could also show, what common techniques were and how deeply related they are to social networks and SNA. We highlighted people, actors, and interactions as key elements of the social network within the narrative, and the importance of locations, and space as well as the unresolved problem of time within the narrative. We also provided some preliminary remarks on digital methods and exegesis, in particular their limitations and synergies. We will focus on this question in Section 22.4 and continue with some general conclusions whether SNA provides fresh perspectives on biblical texts as narrative and on further gaps in research.

As we have seen, SNA focuses on characters, or 'actors', in narrative texts. The

character analysis can be separated into a quantitative and a qualitative question: When is a character present (in dramas: ‘stage presence’) and with whom does he interact? Qualitatively, we consider content (the ‘character’s speech’) or characterizations. The first is answered by the so-called ‘figure configuration’⁵⁵² and its ‘configurational structure’: In the first, the person and their interactions are inferred; in the second, they are juxtaposed. While the simple exegetical extraction of characters when mentioned in narrative texts is not very difficult, the accurate analysis of ‘hidden’ actors and in general interactions is challenging. This highlights that a simple focus on ‘co-presence’ in scenes is not enough⁵⁵³. As we already discussed, in New Testament studies figure constellations are generated manually so far (cf. Cornils 2006 Dörpinghaus 2022d). Thus, this also holds true for social networks as several works already showed⁵⁵⁴. However, while the exegetical work is still handcrafted, the SNA is a digital method.

The exegetical work with narrative texts has – obviously – some ambiguities. Our analysis shows that exegesis must pay special attention to actors, locations, interactions, spatiality and time. This focus already lead to novel findings and brings together different research works. However, although we provided the extensive discussion of several issues, we could show that they nearly never influence the social network representation as it is: See for example the discussion about Lydia’s hometown in Section 19.6 or the analysis of Jesus in the Temple in Section 5.7 (Lk 2:22–40). A special case is Luke’s narrative on Paul’s travel companions – since Luke usually omits them –, or the mentioning of Luke himself in Acts: Here, we consider the narrative as it, provides indirect information or – if omitting was not by chance – a stylistic device. Thus, SNA cannot contribute to questions regarding Luke’s narrative view and the historical perspective directly, because it provides only information about the first. We will come back to historical perspectives in Section 22.3 and continue with the SNA as method for interpreting narrative texts.

⁵⁵² From German ‘Figurenkonstellation’, see Cornils (2006: 75). This concept was first introduced by Pfister (1988). He suggested to apply methods social network analysis: “[Es] erschließt sich die Möglichkeit, Methoden der Soziometrie, wie sie für die Untersuchung sozialer Gruppenstrukturen entwickelt wurden, auf die Analyse der Struktur des Dramenpersonals zu applizieren.” (:233) But combining narrative studies with SNA is indeed a newer development, see Trilcke (2013) or Dörpinghaus (2021a).

⁵⁵³ See for example Krautter et al. (2020). Digital models for automated extraction are still an ongoing challenge (cf. Elson et al. 2010b Wiedmer et al. 2020). In particular: “Narratologische Basiskategorien wie Ereignis, Plot oder indirekte Charakterisierung sind bislang kaum automatisch extrahierbar. Das gilt umso mehr für höherstufige Operationen, z. B. die Identifikation und Deutung von komplexen Formen uneigentlicher Rede wie Symbolen oder die Verbindung von Erzähltexten mit Kontexten wie der Ideen-, Diskurs-, Sozial- oder Kulturgeschichte.”(Jannidis 2017: 606)

⁵⁵⁴ See Duling (1999, 2000, 2013), Dörpinghaus (2020) and the works of McClure (2016, 2018, 2020).

According to our best knowledge, most scholars in the field of theology use methods from SNA only to evaluate or create new hypothesis⁵⁵⁵, while Dörpinghaus (2020) and McClure (2016, 2018, 2020) generated computable social network representation of NT texts. However, this study tries to overcome methodological concerns for the previous works. While McClure worked with a harmonized version of all gospels, Dörpinghaus only provided a social network representation of Acts 1-12. Thus, for a better theological interpretation, we considered the Gospel of Luke and Acts. This presented not only a unique view on a particular Gospel and Acts, but could also provide a detailed analysis of two texts which are clearly two parts of one narrative.

In general, we applied several unique methods from SNA to Luke-Acts and extended the toolbox for biblical texts:

First, we combined social with spatial information, which provided an extended picture of information flow within the network presented by Luke. We also included other specific information about actors, for example gender, social, and cultural status. With this, SNA supports the hypothesis that Luke narrates a diverse and inclusive network.

Second, we combined an analysis of centrality measures and community detection with novel methods, for example the analysis of network structures, spanning trees, neighborhoods forming an actor-specific subnetwork and edge-centrality measures. While our general observations clarify and specify results from research, we could not only provide more generic results within the methodological framework, but also provide new perspectives. For example, McClure (2020: 44) could not differentiate between different groups, e.g. John the Baptist and Jesus. While providing new perspectives and analysis for the comparison of the four Gospels, her analysis mainly supports our findings. On the other hand, comparing our results to Dörpinghaus (2020), our results emphasize the unique role of particular actors in the network representation while highlighting the inclusive character of the network.

Third, although the social network is a representation of Luke's narrative, it allows for a discussion with all results from social network research. In particular, we were able to show how interconnected the networks of Luke's Gospel and Acts are and how they rely on each other. We were also able to highlight the collaboration of co-workers in Acts

⁵⁵⁵ See for example Thompson (1998) Roitto (2019) Kloppenborg (2019) or the works of Duling (1999, 2000, 2013). We will discuss the boundaries of digital methods in the next section.

and introduced it as a general, rather than a solely Pauline, concept. This also led to a very actor-centric perspective and to an in-depth analysis of several main actors, and supporting actors in the narrative. Here, SNA provided several suggestions for character traits and the style of missionary work. These findings lead to a unique window into Luke-Acts as a narrative. However, these novel methods could also contribute to Luke's spatial thinking which correlates with the Jewish diaspora network. While the resolution of the network is not high enough to 'zoom in' and get additional information about the mission in rural regions and within the cities, SNA could offer several clues which could be analyzed in further research.

Fourth, according to our knowledge, this work is the first to present an extended visual analysis of actors, structures, and locations. In addition, we provide the data as open data set to support reproducibility and accessibility of data.

This project clearly demonstrates that a new perspective for the interpretation of biblical texts can arise with SNA. However, working close to the texts is critical due to the need for a constant transfer of information between the different scientific domains, see the next sections for a detailed reflection on this. A novel aspect lies in the close relationship between SNA and narratological exegesis⁵⁵⁶. This can and may open new perspectives for exegesis, since, on the one hand, it embeds what is known in a new visual or analytical context or, on the other hand, enables statistically valid statements to be made about literary representation.

Two problem areas can be identified: One is the question of how valid statements based on small samples of data are. The other problem arises from the distance to the biblical findings, specifically whether exegetical-theological presuppositions are taken into account or withdrawn and whether textual statements are updated or prepared for the social sciences operating close to the present. Therefore, the exegetical discussion with the text, i.e. an integration into the perspective of exegesis, is necessary. We will discuss these issues in Sections 22.2 and 22.3.

Another perspective arises from the direct application of theories within SNA. It is possible to evaluate different possibilities and scenarios of situations where there is clearly too little data. Methodologically, this is not a quantitative network analysis in the strict

⁵⁵⁶ Beside the discussion in Chapter 3 see also Dörpinghaus (2021a, 2022b).

sense. Here, too, a theologically valid hypothesis needs to be rooted in the text itself. However, we find several problems of bias in quantitative research:

- Algorithm bias: Are there any problems with the methods/algorithms used?
- Sample bias: Are there problems with the (training) data? In this type of bias, the data sets used are either not large enough or not representative enough to train the system.
- Prejudice bias: In this case, the (training) data reflect existing biases, stereotypes, and/or flawed societal assumptions, which causes the same real-world bias to be carried over into the new model.
- Measurement bias: Are there problems with the accuracy of the data and the way they were measured, selected, or assessed?
- Exclusion bias: Are important data points omitted from the data used?

This quite complex overall picture shows that further research is needed not only in the field of SNA in theology, but also interdisciplinary works in the field of Digital Humanities or Digital Theology. We will discuss these issues in Section 22.4.

However, SNA also opens a unique window into the biblical texts, since the underlying social structures are not limited to – although influenced by – the historical context. A brief recapitulation of the the results of Luke’s Gospel underlines that Luke carefully composes his work in such a way that (a) no human group or actor has a special position and (b) the participation in the community of Christ *also* results from the interpersonal encounter outside of the body of Christ. Not every follower of Christ was previously excluded from society, but *new (different) social participation* always results afterwards. Acts supports this view and SNA helps to highlight the inclusive character of the social network. In particular, Luke pays quite a lot of attention to minor characters in his narrative. Obviously, the center of his social network is Jesus and God leading his community. Exclusion from this network is limited to special occasions (see for example Ac 5:1–11; 8:21–22; nota bene: the conflict between Paul and Barnabas in Ac 15:37–39 did not lead to an exclusion from community!), and thus is not Luke’s narrative interest. In particular, we do not see any *external* criterion for excluding actors from the community.

This observation is challenging for every reader of Luke-Acts, because according to Luke the nascent Christian network is interdependent with society in general, but he clearly shows that the rules of ‘outer’ society are not applied within the Christian network. In other words: Luke does not describe this network as being apart from society – it is still part of it. However, it is a stronger network, offering participation for those who have no chance elsewhere, due to social, religious, or other reasons. With this, Ac 4:32–37 does not present a narrative reflection on a social utopia, but rather a reflection on how the nascent Christian network was intended to be. Luke emphasized what was important for him. And strikingly this was *also* what was different about the Christian network in contrast to the wider society.

Thus, we should not dismiss these parts of Acts which might refer to an utopia. The SNA points out that they should indeed rather challenge contemporary churches and communities. Without going into depth, we have collected some questions which could lead to further discussions and reflections. Obviously, we need more discussion on what the inclusive and exclusive parts of the Christian network are and a critical reflection about the reception of this discussion being itself a factor for exclusion. If the community of faith is inclusive, can we identify reasons for exclusiveness? Examples for exclusion are the treatment of disabled people with regard to the topics healing and salvation⁵⁵⁷ or the problems arising in intercultural communities⁵⁵⁸. What is characteristically different about how Christian communities deal with people who are ‘different’ in terms of health, material wealth, social standing, cultural background, opinions, etc.? However, it is also important to ask the following question: If society excludes or marginalizes people, may churches do likewise? This is in particular an important question during the COVID-

⁵⁵⁷ See for example Reynolds (2012) or the works of Ulrich Bach, who proposed a ‘theology even with the ground’ (ebenerdige Theologie). The problem itself was sketched by Stössel (1999: 120) as critical: “Bei gesundheitlichen Verheißungen dürfen die Macher und Verwerter eine hohe Akzeptanz erwarten. Der Zweck, drohende Gefahren für Leib und Leben abzuwenden, heiligt den potentiellen Abnehmer medizinischer Errungenschaften nahezu jedes Mittel. Mit ein bißchen Hoffungszauber, von Werbeschamanen inszeniert, genügt als moralische Maxime: Wer heilt, hat recht.” However, Krauß (2014: 93) identified anthropological fictions, drawing the human being predominantly in certain ideal concepts like healthy, disabled, etc. – the irregular and ultimately as things to be corrected. Bach himself is clear that these categories are not part of Biblical texts and our analysis – at least for Luke-Acts – supports this view: “Die Frage nach Gesundheit (im Sinne eines vom Arzt festgestellten ‘ohne Befund’) und Krankheit (im Sinne eines vom Arzt feststellbaren Befundes) ist kein zentrales Thema biblischer Verkündigung.” (Bach 1988: 45) He concludes “... dann gehören die Gaben, Fähigkeiten, Kräfte (*und* Bedürfnisse) der ‘Starken’ wie auch die Einschränkungen, Belastungen (*und* Begabungen) der ‘Schwachen’ uns allen miteinander: Wie ‘schmeißen zusammen’ im Vertrauen auf den uns allen väterlichen Gott, daß es für uns miteinander schon reichen wird.” (Bach 1988: 73)

⁵⁵⁸ See for example Wijsen (2001).

19 pandemic which began in 2019. Many countries, including Germany, and Austria, restricted access to churches, services, and other community activities to people who were not vaccinated – which is clearly a non-theological reason. However, we should also pay attention to reasons why people exclude themselves from the Christian network and why this network could not provide a stable social network, or in other words a social “home”, for them.

However, these questions and assumptions may also influence hypotheses when working with biblical texts and in particular digital methods. Thus, the next section will discuss these issues.

22.2 Unde venis, quo vadis? How assumptions influence hypotheses

We were able to show that SNA leads to fresh perspectives on biblical texts as narratives without the glasses (avoiding the word ‘prejudices’) of nearly two thousand years of theological research and reception. However, we pointed at several serious limitations and we will discuss one particular, how assumptions influence hypotheses in SNA. Or, in other words, do we have a bias in research in our interdisciplinary work?

First, we need some coordinates to map the research results in the areas of DH, digital methods, and theology. For this, we will work with the evaluation method introduced in Dörpinghaus (2021a, 2022c) that extends an initial idea provided by Stegbauer & Häußling (2010: 21). This fourfold characterization depends on the usage of methods from computer science and their feedback or dialogue to the original research domain:

1. The usage of models derived from methods used in DH to evaluate theses or to create new hypothesis within the field of theology or religious studies.
2. The usage of models and methods from DH to work with empirical data within the field of theology or religious studies.
3. Using methods from visual computing (e.g. visualization and interactive tools) to explain, present and discuss the results generated when applying.

4. Generating a mathematical and/or computational model which abstracts the data from 2. to create novel models or method within the field or DH.

Each category of this scheme includes the preceding categories. This means, for example, the usage of models and methods on empirical data (2) includes the usage and theoretical reflection of existing models and methods (1). These categories include methods and approaches from DH on a different level. We will discuss some short examples from the field of social network analysis (SNA) in theology to illustrate the scheme.

1. In this category, scholars examine social relations between actors, i.e. individuals or institutions. Here, scholars do not yet collect data empirically. This includes, above all, works that use methods and ideas of SNA to build theories or models and bring them into a dialogue with the biblical text. See, for Thompson (1998) Roitto (2019).
2. Since scholars usually apply visualization in this category, we continue with (3).
3. Theology is generally not an empirical science, but empirical data can be generated using Biblical texts. Besides exegetical findings and historical sources, cities, roads, harbors, and especially archaeological findings can be integrated. Scholars collect data empirically and visualize accordingly. See, for example, the works of Duling (1999, 2000, 2013) Kloppenborg (2019).
4. In this fourth category, we go one step further, to heuristic models, which are formally computer-aided models in the form of data points. These are mathematical models in the sense of graph theory. See, for example, the works of McClure (2020) Dörpinghaus (2020).

Depending on the scholars' perspective and how broadly we see the field of DH in theology, we find more or less literature and scholars using the above methods. This explains why we see divergent views on the usage of digital methods within theology.

It is easy to see that at different levels of digital approaches and theology, different limitations and synergies exists. We will continue discussing these aspects in the next sections. And in category 4, many interdisciplinary challenges from computer and data science occur. Digital methods (e.g. from DH) always includes a methodological transfer of a scientific domain to computer science which includes the representation of domain

data with data points and data records. This step always relies on hermeneutic preconditions. For an analysis, the data needs to be re-transformed to the original scientific domain, which again relies on hermeneutic preconditions. In this case, the methodological difference between theology or any other domain within humanities can be found in this step of interpretation and re-interpretation. Thus, we argue that in these cases where theology and humanities have a broad overlap, we may assume that methods from the humanities can be applied without any (further) methodological precondition.

The situation is slightly different when it comes to subdomains of theology where methods from the humanities are not that present. For example, biblical studies work with biblical texts, and thus use computational methods only in a particular setting like cross-lingual semantic concordances, manuscript management, or parallel bible corpora. Here, these settings are embedded within an exegetical context of (re-)thinking sources and Biblical texts. Theologians already use hermeneutics within their scientific activities. It “entails critical reflection on the basis, nature, and goals of reading, interpreting, and understanding communicative acts and processes” (Thiselton 1998: 95). It is the nature of biblical studies to apply hermeneutics to the interpretation of biblical texts (cf. Oeming 2007). Thus, even before applying methods from DH we have a step of interpretation. We are coming back to “perform a double act of interpretation” as Anderson (2018) suggested. But – and this fact is widely neglected – we also need this double act of interpretation on the way back. Once we have results from DH, we not only need to interpret them within the framework it departed from, but we also need to go one step ahead and re-think this result within the context of the hermeneutics we used, for example in the exegesis of biblical texts.

As an example, when applying methods from SNA to biblical studies, it is not only important to understand how social networks are created (which is a similar step to the hermeneutics used in social sciences), but also how we interpret biblical texts. Once having created a social network, how is it interpreted and what kind of questions does it bring to the original step of exegesis? If we miss this step, we are using DH applied on the result of an exegetical analysis of a biblical text, but we are not using DH in theology, because this would return scientific questions or results back to the starting domain of theology.

When an SNA reconstruction of Acts based on narrative exegesis and literature anal-

ysis discovers central actors, for example Barnabas or Philip, what does that imply for the initial step of exegesis? For example, Philip may be seen as a bridge-building person or Barnabas as a central person with a lot of connections to different clusters within the social network of early Christianity. But these claims simply omit the last step of discussion with the preliminary exegetical step. The question should rather be: Why does Luke describe both like that? What is his theological goal? Why does he omit other things which are indicated by the social network or which we might expect because of the network structure? The application of methods from DH leads to new research questions within the original field.

To sum up: first, we consider the theological subdomains which apply methods from the humanities without any methodological precondition. Due to the large methodological overlap between humanities and theology we see basically no imitations when applying methods from DH. There might be ethical limitations, but the problem can be summarized within the hermeneutical discussion which needs to be tackled beforehand.

Second, considering the subdomains of theology where methods from the humanities are not widely used, the synergies are not that clear because of the double act of interpretation. The most limiting factor is that scholars need to be capable of doing hermeneutical steps both in theology and a domain in humanities and apply computational methods from digital humanities. This is a great challenge in rethinking theology with the eyes of two different disciplines using a double interdisciplinary approach. But it is also a great chance, because there is a growing awareness of hermeneutic transfer processes within DH, and theology could be a good matching domain field to improve scientific results also within the other scientific domains. Here, we find another broad field of possible synergies – but they are yet to come, see Section 22.3.

Thus, generally speaking, the more extra-theological methods are applied, the less bias we see in the output. This is due to the fact that we were able to show that exegetical questions do only impact the social and spatial relations in the network in rare cases. The first direction of interpretation is consequently, albeit not without problems, not a crucial part of bias. Thus, while the usage of methods and ideas of SNA to build theories or models and bring them into dialogue with the biblical texts may lead to a particular bias due to the selected models, a quantitative analysis of a social network extracted from narratives will present a more ‘objective’ perspective. However, this ‘objectivity’ is

limited to numbers, statistics, and the results of computer-based methods. If we return to theology, we need to re-interpret these results. Omitting the theological discourses and the biblical texts would certainly lead to a biased perspective.

Thus, we can either collect proof for or arguments against hypotheses in literature and in several cases clearly show that some assumptions are not supported by Luke's narrative description of the social network. For example, the roles of Peter and in particular Paul are usually exaggerated. In addition, Luke does not portray Paul as a 'lonely hero', but as being deeply embedded in a a close network and collaborating with numerous actors.

To sum up, it is not only important to apply hermeneutics and exegesis during the direction *to* the computational model, but also on the way back to the domain of theology. In every step of interpretation, there is the risk of biased research. This is a well-known problem in data science and empirical research. However, due to (1) the limited amount of data, (2) the discussion with hermeneutics, exegesis, and theology, and (3) providing a FAIR data model, we hope for a minimization of bias.

22.3 The challenge of missing data and quiet sources

While we already discussed how to reduce the impact of prejudice, measurement, and exclusion biases, we still need to consider algorithm and sample biases. Or in other words: Do we have enough data for the algorithms we are using? While this question is usually considered within big data analysis, there is only very limited research in the field of historical network analysis. According to our knowledge, de Valeriola (2021) was the first to systematically evaluate the impact of missing data in networks. He summarizes:

Our results show that, from a global point of view, centrality is a sufficiently stable quantity to be used in such a context. However, we have also shown that the hazards experienced by the sources have impacts that differ in magnitude depending on the network studied, the comparison statistic used, and the centrality metric considered (:120).

De Valeriola provided a ranking of centrality measures. EC is the most robust, followed by DC and BC. CC was found to be the least robust. Thus, in general, we can trust the first three measures. This is also supported by the fact that we are not working with historical sources, but with an ancient narrative to reconstruct a narrative network.

A more systematic approach for DC and BC was presented by Dörpinghaus et al. (2022). Here, the authors showed that the robustness of centrality measures is mainly depending on the underlying graph structure. In general, scale-free networks are more robust. Thus, although only little research has been carried out in this field, we can assume that the results are an appropriate representation of the narrative world Luke presents. Assuming they represent or reflect a historical network, we can assume that the centrality measures analysis carried out is by and large reliable.

However, centrality measures also show actors and their development within the narrative. Thus, SNA helps to understand central roles, for example of the twelve apostles. However, this clearly also shows the limitations of SNA on a narrative. As we were able to show in Chapter 16, the node distribution indicates that the network of any of the three parts of our analysis of Luke-Acts is incomplete without the additional data. A SNA of Luke-Acts as narrative text is thus, however, limited to the narrative perspective Luke presents. We were able to derive several points which are based on information, Luke did not place prominently but neither omitted.

However, we faced several problems with missing data, so-called artifacts. When analyzing co-workers, we needed to omit Lydia in this list, because she has only four neighbors and one of them is Paul with a very high BC value. This overestimates here analysis, because Luke does not provide additional information about her, she is a so-called outlier in our analysis. In general, we can assume that SNA on narrative texts performs best when focusing on the main actors because we will find most information about them. The lowly-linked dead-ends of the network are most likely not an appropriate representation of the narrative world.

In summary, SNA can only model and evaluate what the narrator explicitly states, while it is limited to modelling and evaluating inferred or implied activities and relationships. In some cases, however, it opens up new perspectives on otherwise silent sources.

However, a different question would occur when assuming Luke-Acts is a historical source. More research on this issue could clarify this. However, since our approach was a narrative one, this is out of the scope for our work.

22.4 Digital Humanities and the future of Digital Theology

In Chapter 3 we have already introduced “Digital Humanities” (DH), where digital methods are used on research questions and research data from the humanities. In Dörpinghaus (2022c) we discussed the special character of theology, leading to the idea of “Digital Theology” (DT). Due to the methodological overlap between humanities and theology we see no limitations when applying methods from DH. However, in theology methods from the digital humanities are not widely used, and the synergies are not clear because of the necessary double act of interpretation. The most limiting factor is that scholars need to be capable of doing hermeneutical steps both in exegesis and a domain in humanities and apply computational methods from digital humanities. There is little reflection of this within the field of theology. Methods are usually seen as “library resources” according to Robinson (2019: 68), and the applications are limited: “the relationship between theology and the digital humanities currently is a relationship, more accurately, between biblical studies, historical theology, and theological librarianship, and digital humanities, with limited further applications in quantitative research” (Robinson 2019: 70). However, although the synergies are more clear in these areas (cf. Dörpinghaus 2022b), there are several issues:

- Digitale resources are not only digital library resources (against Robinson 2019: 68), but should refer to linked and interoperable data.
- Digital methods are complex and sometimes offer other explanations than the common approaches in the humanities, for example, their output is more complex than pure enumeration (see Dörpinghaus 2022b).
- Applying digital methods does not automatically lead to DH or DT (cf. Guzek & Słomka 2021). It is not only important to define steps and locate them in one particular domain (computer science or humanities), but also to clarify the hermeneutical space of interpretation (cf. Dörpinghaus 2022c).

There are also other reasons to introduce and discuss DT as such. The “closed” scientific domain of theology is an optimal framework for interdisciplinary approaches. For example, biblical corpora have been used in other domains for several decades, e.g. by specialists in

modern literature. Thus, it is not surprising that scholars like Sutinen & Cooper (2021) and Cooper (2021) tried to summarize the existing approaches in this area⁵⁵⁹. However, they were among the first to present a holistic perspective on DT, also including the field of “digital religion” (against Garner 2022 van Oorschot 2020: 231). According to Sutinen & Cooper, DH

applies theological thinking and ethics to the field of digital technology; applies computational and design thinking, processes and approaches to the field of theology; applies digital technology to the practice and study of theology; facilitates meaning making of faith through digital expression; and implements research approaches at the intersection of computer science and theology. (Sutinen & Cooper 2021: 17)

How can we locate our study in this holistic definition? We did apply theological thinking to a digital technology – at least, when analyzing social networks within the framework of theology. We found this to be the most important step, because otherwise the results are not transferred back and remain ambiguous. We applied computational thinking, and computational approaches to a research question settled in the field of biblical studies. The social network approach, social network thinking and the visualization of its results can be seen as a digital expression which helps to facilitate meaning making. And for sure, we did not only work at the intersection of computer science and theology, but crossed the borders several times. However, we need to ask, whether this approach is suitable for biblical studies.

In Section 4.1.4 we explicitly introduced the double act of interpretation understood as step from theology to humanities and from humanities to computer science, which is needed when working with digital methods. In Sutinen’s definition, there is only a vague echo of this. However, this is both a chance and a limit. It is a chance, because it allows different perspectives, new insights, and novel methods *within* the framework of theology. It is a border which cannot be crossed without interdisciplinary knowledge. A researcher cannot cross the border of theology without exegetical and hermeneutical knowledge. And a researcher cannot cross the border of computer science without a solid knowledge

⁵⁵⁹ For other approaches, see Phillips et al. (2019). They summarize: “Digital Theology is still focusing its identity. This is perhaps to be expected in such a nascent field – a teenager striving to determine who she will be in the world and how she will differentiate herself from the masses. But at the same time, Digital Theology reflects many of the issues found in Digital Humanities as a whole and in particular around the concept of ‘big tent’ Digital Humanities.” (:40) This seems to be an ongoing process, although we claim that it is more an issue of interdisciplinary exchange than of methodological concerns.

in programming and the foundations of informatics. However, such incompetent crossings happen regularly and lead to several misunderstandings which in turn lead to frustration and missing communication. As already mentioned, biblical texts are widely used in computer linguistics because they provide well-studied multilingual corpora for artificial intelligence and analysis. However, the domain of theology is not accustomed to accessible and interoperable data, which in turn leads to several challenges – both technical and due to license restrictions – when working with this data (cf. Dörpinghaus 2022b). The external perception of theology is often one of a voluntarily walled-in discipline rather than being open for interdisciplinary exchange⁵⁶⁰.

To be clear: We believe that DT is a great chance for multiple disciplines, and we see several advantages within theology which could push the frontiers in other domains as well: First, the automated analysis of well-studied (narrative) texts offers multiple chances for AI methods, since it offers evaluation and so-called “gold standards” to train models. Second, digital methods have an “impact” within the domain of theology and offer new ways towards dissemination of scientific results. Third, as discussed above, it offers a growing awareness of hermeneutic transfer processes within DH, and theology could be a good matching domain field to improve scientific results also within the other scientific domains.

As a conclusion of our study within the computational analysis of natural language we were able to show that we cannot solely rely on digital methods, but that exegetical analysis is still crucial (cf. Dörpinghaus 2022d). However, methodologically, the step from narrative texts to SNA has so far been too little perceived in its interdisciplinary field of tension. At the same time – apart from the further possibilities mentioned above – exciting aspects for narrative exegesis already arise with the methods already established: How can space and time be investigated with methods of computational linguistics? Would sentiment analysis yield new perspectives on narratives? The following questions have been raised by Dörpinghaus (2022a): How does social network analysis relate methodologically to narrative exegesis? What are the possibilities of the various partial tension

⁵⁶⁰ However, these walls are also ethical issues excluding not only researchers from other domains, but also from a different background and without financial support. This issue has been noticed for a while: “On the one hand, we will need to resist the colonization of the means of production of and access to theological knowledge on the part of wealthy, well-positioned Western nations and churches. On the other hand, we should be aware of the self-isolation and extinction of vital theologies that will inevitably result in the West if we fail to recognize non-Western theologies as legitimate and up-to-standard, let alone important knowledges.” (Robinson 2019: 72)

arcs determined by computer-based methods for a look at the tension arc of narrative texts? It is important to observe that not only do the results of computational linguistics open up new perspectives, but also the discussion of methods in itself can provide impulses for biblical studies. Thus, we are still at the beginning of a new interdisciplinary perspective on biblical texts.

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B.4 Glossary

Betweenness It analyzes critical connections between nodes and thus gives an indication of individuals that can change the flow of information in a network. This measure is based on the number of paths in a network. See p. 30.

Betweenness centrality See p. 31.

Centrality Measures They describe properties to evaluate actors and their position in the networks. These properties can be used to calculate statistical parameters, so-called *centrality measures*. They answer the question “Which nodes in this network are particularly significant or important?”. See Chapter 3.1.4.

Closure Describes closed groups, meaning clusters or communities. See p. 32.

Closeness centrality See p. 32.

Clique A subgraph $C \subset G$ is called a *clique* if all nodes in C are pairwise connected. See p. 34.

Community Detection See Section 3.1.6.

Degree If we are interested in the size of a \rightarrow neighborhood we calculate the node *degree* given by $deg(v) = |N(v)|$.

Degree distribution The *degree centrality* for a node $v \in V$ is given by

$$dc(v) = \frac{deg(v)}{n - 1}$$

The output value ranges between 0 and 1 and gives a reference to the direct connections. See p. 29.

Eigenvector centrality Measures the location of direct neighboring nodes in the network. See p. 32.

Harmonic closeness centrality See p. 32.

Historical Network Analysis See Section 3.1.1.

HNA \rightarrow Historical Network Analysis.

Knowledge Graph See Section 3.1.2.

Multiplex network In a dense and multiplex network, everyone knows everyone else.

Minimum Spanning Tree (MST) is a subset of a network containing all nodes, but a minimum number of edges, so that every node is still connected. See p. 35.

Neighborhood The *neighborhood* of a vertex v is denoted with $N(v)$ and describes all nodes connected to v . If we are interested in the size of this neighborhood we calculate the node *degree* given by $deg(v) = |N(v)|$.

Path A *path* p in a graph $G = (V, E)$ is a set of pairwise connected vertices v_1, \dots, v_n , for example written as

$$p = [v_1, \dots, v_n],$$

where $(v_i, v_{i+1}) \in E$ for $i \in \{1, \dots, n-1\}$.

RNA Religious Network Analysis \rightarrow SNA.

Scale-Free Network See p. 29.

Shortest path \rightarrow path.

Small World Network See p. 29.

SNA \rightarrow Social Network Analysis.

Social Network Analysis See Sections 2 and 3.1.

Stable set A subset $S \subset G$ is called *stable* or a *stable set* if there are no edges at all between the vertices of S , that is, $(u, v) \notin E$ for all $u, v \in S$. See p. 34.

Strong and Weak Ties See Section 3.1.3.

Struktural hole \rightarrow Stable set. See also p. 35.

Transitivity Ties in triangular form are transitivity: Here, for three individuals A , B , and C , it holds that the stronger the friendship relationship between individuals A and B and individuals A and C , the more likely that B and C know or will know each other. Easley & Kleinberg (2010: 48) call this ‘Triadic Closure’.

Triadic Closure \rightarrow Transitivity.

Uniplex network In a thin and so-called uniplex network, not all people know each other and there is usually only one type of relationship between people.

Weak Ties See Section 3.1.3.