

RE-READING LUKE'S GOSPEL ECONOMICALLY:
ASPECTS OF A MARKET ECONOMY AND ECONOMIC RATIONALITY
IN LUKE'S GOSPEL

by

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PREFACE

In this study, I present an economic reading of some selected passages in Luke's Gospel with emphases on two main themes-- aspects of a market economy and economic rationality in the context of the early Roman imperial economy. This study is influenced by three important traces of my journey of life.

First, this study is heavily indebted to my combined academic background of economics and theology. Specifically, more than six years of my scholarly training in Economics at both undergraduate (B.A.) and graduate levels (M.A.), not to mention several years of my post-graduate academic study in New Testament (S.T.M.), has provided strong impetus for the study.

Second, more fundamentally, this study is deeply inspired by my life experience as a Christian who has been living in South Korea and witnessing the triumph of neo-liberalism and the globalization of capitalism. Within these economic circumstances, in retrospect, I have highly valued what I have learned about behaviors of the urban poor, disadvantaged, and ethnic minorities which have made tremendous impressions on my thoughts about socio-politico-economic interrelationships as well as about religion.

Third, this study is more directly triggered by serious economic problems that the present world economic system has caused and intensified, such as growing economic bipolarization, intensified economic competitions, increased economic crises, and severe environmental damages. I have a firm belief that biblical scholarship should not neglect economic problems of the present world and should participate actively in resisting them in order to be of service to

humankind. This study is the first fruit of my quest for economic issues in the New Testament. I hope this study contributes to fighting current economic problems.

I give my special thanks to Professor Carter for his enthusiastic guidance and exhaustive comments on this study. Moreover, I express my deepest gratitude and highest regard to my family, especially my mother (Youngdan Kim) and my father (Choonsik Shim), for their unconditional and untiring love, devotion, and support that enabled this study to come to fruition.

ABBREVIATIONS

Translations of the Bible

NAB	New American Bible
NRSV	New Revised Standard Version

Journals and Books

AB	Anchor Bible
BAR	British Archaeological Reports
BDAG	Bauer, W., F. W. Danker, W. F. Arndt, and F. W. Gingrich. <i>Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature</i> . 3 rd ed. Chicago, 1999.
<i>ET</i>	<i>The Expository Times</i>
<i>JRS</i>	<i>Journal of Roman Studies</i>
<i>JRA</i>	<i>Journal of Roman Archaeology</i>
<i>JSNT</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of the New Testament</i>
<i>JSOT</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of the Old Testament</i>
LCL	Loeb Classical Library
LSJ	Liddell, H. G., R. Scott, H. S. Jones, <i>A Greek-English Lexicon</i> . 9 th ed. With revised supplement. Oxford, 1996.
NICNT	New International Commentary on the New Testament
NIB	The New Interpreter's Bible
NTL	New Testament Library
<i>NTS</i>	<i>New Testament Studies</i>
<i>OJA</i>	<i>Oxford Journal of Archaeology</i>
OLD	P. G. W. Glare, ed. <i>Oxford Latin Dictionary</i> , rep. ed. Oxford: Clarendon, 2002.
TDNT	<i>Theological Dictionary of the New Testament</i> ,
WBC	Word Biblical Commentary

Papyri and Inscriptions

<i>BGU</i>	<i>Berliner Griechische Urkunden. Ägyptische Urkunden aus den Königlichen [staatlichen] Museen zu Berlin</i> . Berlin. 1895-
<i>CIL</i>	<i>Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum</i> . Berlin. 1862-
<i>CPJ</i>	<i>Corpus Papyrorum Judaicarum</i> . Cambridge, MA. 1957-64.
<i>CPR</i>	<i>Corpus Papyrorum Raineri</i> . Vienna. 1895-
<i>IGRR</i>	<i>Inscriptiones Graecae ad res Romanas Pertinentes Auctoritate et Impensis Academiae Inscriptionum et Litterarum Humaniorum Collectae et Editae</i> . Paris. 1911-27.
<i>OGIS</i>	<i>Orientis Graeci Inscriptiones Selectae. Supplementum Sylloge Inscriptionum Graecarum</i> . Leipzig. 1970.
<i>P.Berl.Leihg.</i>	<i>Berliner Leihgabe Griechischer Papyri</i> . Uppsala. 1932-77.
<i>P.Cair. Zen.</i>	<i>Zenon Papyri</i> . Cairo. 1925-40.

<i>P.Col. Zen.</i>	<i>Zenon Papyri: Business Papers of the Third Century B. C. Dealing with Palestine and Egypt.</i> New York. 1934-1940.
<i>P.Enteux.</i>	<i>ENTEYΞEΙΣ: Requêtes et Plaintes Addressées au Roi d’Egypte au IIIe siècle avant J.-C.</i> Cairo. 1931.
<i>P.Flor.</i>	<i>Papiri Greco-Egizii Pubblicati dalla R. Accademia dei Linzei. Papiri Fiorentini.</i> Milan. 1905-1915.
<i>P.Gur.</i>	<i>Greek Papyri from Gurob.</i> Dublin. 1921.
<i>P.Lond.</i>	<i>Greek Papyri in the British Museum.</i> London. 1893-
<i>P.Mich.</i>	<i>Michigan Papyri.</i> Ann Arbor. 1931-
<i>P.Oxy.</i>	<i>The Oxyrhynchus Papyri.</i> London. 1898-
<i>P.Ryl.</i>	<i>Catalogue of the Greek Papyri in the John Rylands Library.</i> Manchester. 1915-1952.
<i>PSI</i>	<i>Papiri Greci e Latini. Pubblicazioni della Società Italiana per la Ricerca dei Papiri Greci e Latini in Egitto.</i> Firenze. 1912-
<i>P.Tebt.</i>	<i>The Tebtunis Papyri.</i> London. 1902-1976.
<i>P.Zen. Pestem.</i>	<i>Greek and Demotic Texts from the Zenon Archive.</i> Leiden. 1980.
<i>SB</i>	<i>Sammelbuch Griechischer Urkunden aus Ägypten.</i> Wiesbaden. 1915-
<i>TPSulp.</i>	<i>Tabulae Pompeianae Sulpiciorum.</i> Rome. 1999.
<i>IEph</i>	<i>Die Inschriften von Ephesos.</i> Berlin. 1979-84.

Classical, Hellenistic, Early Christian Works

<i>Ad Lucil.</i>	Seneca, <i>Epistulae morales ad Lucilium</i>
<i>Agr.</i>	Cato, <i>De Agricultura</i>
<i>Ann.</i>	Tacitus, <i>Annales</i>
<i>Ant.</i>	Josephus, <i>Jewish Antiquities</i>
<i>Ap.</i>	Varro, <i>Aphthonius Aelius Festus</i>
<i>Att.</i>	Cicero, <i>Letters to Atticus</i>
<i>Aug.</i>	Suetonius, <i>Divus Augustus</i>
<i>Capt.</i>	Plautus, <i>Captivi</i>
<i>Dig.</i>	Justinian, <i>Digesta Iustiniana</i>
<i>Ep.</i>	Pliny (the Younger), <i>Epistulae</i>
<i>Ep.</i>	Seneca, <i>Epistulae</i>
<i>Haer.</i>	Irenaeus, <i>Adversus Haereses</i>
<i>Hal.</i>	Oppian, <i>Halieutika</i>
<i>Hdt.</i>	Herodotus, <i>Histories</i>
<i>Hist.</i>	Dio, <i>History of Rome</i>
<i>Hist.</i>	Diodorus Siculus, <i>The Library of History</i>
<i>Hist.</i>	Livy, <i>The History of Rome</i>
<i>Hist.</i>	Polybius, <i>Histories</i>
<i>J.W.</i>	Josephus, <i>The Jewish War</i>
<i>Leg. Agr.</i>	Cicero, <i>On the Agrarian Law</i>
<i>Met.</i>	Apuleius, <i>Metamorphoses</i>
<i>NH.</i>	Pliny (the Elder), <i>Natural History</i>
<i>Off.</i>	Cicero, <i>De Officiis</i>

<i>Pol.</i>	Aristotle, <i>Politics</i>
<i>Pun.</i>	Appian, <i>Punic Wars</i>
<i>Rosc. Am.</i>	Cicero, <i>For Sextus Roscius of Ameria</i>
<i>Rust.</i>	Columella, <i>De Re Rustica</i>
<i>Rust.</i>	Varro, <i>De Re Rustica</i>
<i>Tranq.</i>	Seneca, <i>De Tranquillitate Animi</i>
<i>Verr.</i>	Cicero, <i>Against Verres</i>

Mishnah, Talmud, and Other Jewish and Rabbinic Literature

Bar	2 Baruch
<i>b.</i>	<i>Babylonian Talmud</i>
<i>m.</i>	<i>Mishnah</i>
<i>t.</i>	<i>Tosefta</i>

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

1. Thesis

In this study, I argue that presentations of economic issues in Luke's Gospel display aspects of a market economy and economic rationality within the context of the Roman imperial economy. This argument signifies that Luke's presentations of economic issues reflect indications of how the Roman imperial economy operated and provide evidence of advanced economic features of the Roman economy in terms of its economic development. More concretely, these advanced economic features of the economy consist of two aspects: (1) the economy operates to some extent in accordance with economic rationality centering on economic optimization--the maximization of profit and/or the minimization of cost; (2) the economy assumes to a considerable degree aspects of a market economy. My focus is Luke's Gospel; generally I do not engage the Book of Acts.

By economic rationality I refer to modes of thinking that serve economic agents in best achieving their economic goals.¹ Most frequently, economic rationality is realized in the forms of maximization of profit and minimization of costs. By a market economy I refer to an economy in which human economic activities take place centering on the institution of market.² Here an economy refers to a social realm that is associated with human activities of producing, consuming, contributing goods and services to satisfy needs and desires,³ while a market denotes a physical or abstract space where people's transactions of selling and buying goods and

¹ Robin Bade and Michael Parkin, *Essential Foundations of Economics*, 7th ed. (Boston; New York: Pearson, 2015), 9. I elaborate the concept in Chapter 4, Section 3.2 below.

² Paul A. Samuelson and William D. Nordhaus, *Economics*, 18th ed. (New York: McGraw-Hill/Irwin, 2004), 744. I elaborate the concept in Chapters 3-7.

³ Ricardo F. Crespo, *Philosophy of the Economy: An Aristotelian Approach* (New York: Springer, 2013), 28.

services take place through the mediation of price mechanism.⁴

The above argument contains five key points that require further clarification. First, in this study, I intend to identify in Luke's Gospel evidence to support a historical claim the Gospel inscribes aspects of the Roman imperial economy. Second, I insist that the working principles of the Roman economy influence Luke's construction of economic issues since this economy serves as the primary and crucial context for Luke's text. Third, I insist that presentations of economic issues in Luke's Gospel give evidence of advanced economic features of the Roman economy at least as defined by pre-modern standards. I argue that advanced economic features of the Roman economy provide an overarching concept that undergirds this economic reading of Luke's Gospel. Fourth, I concretize advanced economic features of the economy in two aspects: (1) the economy follows to some degree economic rationality—the key elements of which are economic optimization; (2) the economy possesses aspects of a market economy much more significantly than previously thought. Fifth, to identify such characteristics, I insist that presentations of economic issues in Luke's Gospel should be discussed not in terms of non-economic perspectives such as ethical and anthropological approaches as has been customary in New Testament scholarship, but in terms of economic perspectives such as economic optimization and market economy.

2. Central Issues and Questions

In the study, I intend to study selected passages in Luke to identify evidence of advanced economic features of the Roman imperial economy. Here I do not claim that the Roman imperial economy is an advanced one similar to the market economy of modern capitalism: I identify the

⁴ Samuelson and Nordhaus, *Economics*, 744.

economy as an ancient agricultural economy rather than an ancient capitalistic economy.

Nonetheless, I argue here that the economy assumes some features of an advanced economy, not too far distant from the early stage of a modern economy. To demonstrate this, I primarily focus on two aspects: (1) economic rationality that seeks economic optimization and (2) aspects of a market economy. Among many indicators of economic advancement, I address particularly these two aspects for two reasons: First, the most advanced modern economies today fully realize these two aspects. Second, these two aspects have so far drawn great scholarly attention, especially in the academic discipline of ancient economic history.⁵

In fact, the two aspects are not mutually exclusive but closely related since the economic rationality of optimization has developed in close relationship with the development of a market economy. However, the two aspects are different from each other in their emphases. That the economy follows economic rationality underscores the abilities of ancient economic agents to think and act economically, as today's modern economic agents normally do. Furthermore, it shows the autonomy and the significance of the economy in society. Meanwhile, aspects of a market economy indicate the degree of marketization of the economy, which in turn signifies to what extent the economy has developed beyond a self-sustaining level. In exploring these two aspects in Luke's text, I actively utilize concepts and theories of modern economics, as well as knowledge of ancient economic history.

Moreover, I insist that these working principles of the Roman imperial economy shape Luke's text about economic issues because the Roman economy constitutes the crucial economic context of Luke's text. In this regard, I investigate Luke's text about economic issues in close

⁵ In fact, there exist other important indicators of economic advancement, such as the growth rate, *Human Development Index*, and *Physical Quality of Life Index*. I, however, do not employ these indicators in this study because Luke's text does not provide any meaningful information to conduct quantitative analyses which are required to use these indicators.

association with the developing scholarly discussion of the Roman imperial economy by economic historians and classicists. In so doing, I embrace energetically the ongoing debates of the ancient Roman economy, especially the academic discussion after Karl Polanyi⁶ and Moses I. Finley.⁷

Even though these two scholars have so far exerted enormous influence on scholarship since the mid-twentieth century,⁸ many critics have observed that Polanyi and Finley seem to undervalue aspects of a market economy and the advanced economic performance of the ancient world. To redress their undervaluation, later scholars have engaged energetically with Polanyi and Finley. Among many aspects of this discussion, I pay special attention to the recent emphasis on aspects of a market economy and the evidence of economic advancement (and/or economic performance) in the Roman economy. In light of this emphasis, I examine selected passages in Luke which, I argue, reflect advanced features of the Roman imperial economy. As I have mentioned above, however, I do not present any quantifying analysis because of a lack of appropriate data. Instead, I address economic rationality centering on profit maximization and cost minimization and aspects of a market economy as the indicators of economic advancement.

However, it is a huge project to examine Luke's text in relation to economic issues in the light of recent academic advances in the ancient Greco-Roman economy in order to identify evidence of advanced features of the Roman imperial economy; such a task far exceeds the scope of a single research project. Therefore, due to practical limits of space and time, I narrow the scope and topics of this study. I consequently provide neither an exhaustive survey of the Roman

⁶ Karl Polanyi, *The Great Transformation* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1944); Karl Polanyi, Conrad M. Arensberg, and Harry W. Pearson, eds., *Trade and Market in the Early Empires; Economies in History and Theory* (Glencoe, IL: Free Press, 1957); Polanyi, *Primitive, Archaic, and Modern economies; Essays of Karl Polanyi*, ed. George Dalton (Garden City, NY: Anchor Books, 1968).

⁷ Moses I. Finley, *The Ancient Economy* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1973).

⁸ I will discuss briefly scholarly achievement of Polanyi and Finley in the next section.

imperial economy nor a comprehensive analysis of Luke's economic issues. I instead sketch a broad scholarly tendency of the Roman imperial economy and present readings of selected passages in the Gospel. Primarily, I pay attention to passages that, I argue, represent very well the two aspects mentioned above: economic rationality and aspects of a market economy.

3. Previous Scholarship

Many scholars, such as Hans-Joachim Degenhardt, Walter E. Pilgrim, David P. Seccombe, and Philip F. Esler, have noted that Luke has a particular interest in economic matters.⁹ In Chapter 2, I will engage the history of scholarship on Luke's economic issues in more detail. I will discuss such issues as Luke's attitude toward wealth and poverty, Luke's economic ethics, and the economic characteristic of Luke's community and diverse approaches including ethical, literary, anthropological, and social scientific approaches.

Luke allocates no little space to the discussion of economic issues. Moreover, Luke articulates emphatically his distinctive voice and exhibits his clear stance concerning the issues of wealth and poverty throughout the book. In response to such material in the Gospel, many New Testament scholars have paid attention to economic issues in Luke. Regarding the scholarly discussions of Luke's economic issues so far, two observations merit special attention. First, in dealing with the issues, the majority of scholars, including Luke T. Johnson, Kyoung-Jin Kim, and Christopher M. Hays, have tended to treat them as if they are a part of ethical debates,

⁹ Hans-Joachim Degenhardt, *Lukas—Evangelist der Armen: Besitz und Besitzverzicht in den Lukanischen Schriften* (Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1965); Walter E. Pilgrim, *Good News to the poor: Wealth and Poverty in Luke-Acts* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Pub. House, 1981); David P. Seccombe, *Possessions and the Poor in Luke-Acts* (Linz: A. Fuchs, 1982); Philip F. Esler, *Community and Gospel in Luke-Acts: The Social and Political Motivations of Lucan Theology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 164-69. For more detail, see John R. Donahue, "Two Decades of Research on the Rich and the Poor in Luke-Acts," in *Justice and the Holy*, ed. Douglas A. Knight and Peter J. Paris (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1989), 129-44 and François Bovon, *Luke the Theologian: Fifty-Five Years of Research (1950-2005)* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2005).

especially at the individual level.¹⁰ Second, though some scholars, Philip F. Esler and Halvor Moxnes to name a few, have taken account of a broad economic context of the Mediterranean world around the first century CE in their analysis, they, however, have failed to devote due attention to recent scholarly discussion of the ancient Greco-Roman economy.¹¹

Concerning the first observation, by focusing on the ethical aspects of economic issues in Luke, scholars have tended to reduce many of the economic issues in Luke to the matter of individual choices without considering the more systematic and structural aspects that undergirded the Roman imperial economy in general and Luke's economic scenes in particular.¹² I will return to this point and demonstrate this inattention to structural matters in Chapter 2. However, since the larger socio-economic structure governed so thoroughly and severely the lives of people in the Mediterranean world during the Roman imperial period and set critical limits to individual choice options, it seems to be doubtful whether it is proper (or even possible) to regard Luke's economic discourses as individual ethical issues without taking account of the Roman imperial social and economic structure. The failure to do so can bring about serious problems involving the issue of the individual versus the structural. For instance, individualistic approaches have the possibility of underestimating the social and economic significance of the endeavors of the people living in the Roman world to negotiate the Roman Empire.

As for the second observation, many New Testament scholars, if not all, have not engaged the ongoing debate about the ancient Roman economy. In New Testament scholarship, while few scholars have devoted energy to identifying the broad economic structure of the

¹⁰ For example, Luke T. Johnson, *The Literary Function of Possessions in Luke-Acts*. (Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1977); Johnson, *Sharing Possessions: What Faith Demands*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2011); Kyoung-Jin Kim, *Stewardship and Almsgiving in Luke's Theology* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998); Christopher M. Hays, *Luke's Wealth Ethics: A Study in Their Coherence and Character* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010).

¹¹ Halvor Moxnes, *The Economy of the Kingdom: Social Conflict and Economic Relations in Luke's Gospel* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1988).

¹² For example, Johnson, *The Literary Function of Possessions*; Hays, *Luke's Wealth Ethics*.

Mediterranean world,¹³ some nonetheless have noted the significance of the economic structures of the New Testament world.¹⁴ Not surprisingly, those scholars have relied heavily on the knowledge acquired by ancient Greco-Roman economic historians and classicists, such as Tenney Frank, Karl Polanyi, T. F. Carney, and Moses I. Finley.¹⁵ However, their effort to utilize knowledge of the ancient economy has left much to be desired, notably a lack of familiarity with the latest ongoing scholarly discussion. Many of them, if not all, appear to be satisfied with the economic discourses developed by Polanyi and Finley, showing less enthusiasm for, even awareness of, embracing the academic discussions after Polanyi and Finley.¹⁶

4. Review of Scholarship on the Ancient Economy

To facilitate a further clarification of the issues addressed here, I will provide a brief review of the history of scholarship of the ancient economy. In Chapter 3, I will present a more-detailed review that encompasses such issues as the primitive-modernist debate, substantivism-formalism debate, post-Polanyi and Finley debate, the scale of economy, and economic growth.

Since the nineteenth century, several important issues have stood out as leading paradigms in the scholarship. Prior to Polanyi and Finley, the primitivist-modernist debate (also known as the Bücher-Meyer controversy) had drawn the academic attention of many German

¹³ Even some studies that focus on the economic issues in Luke often neglect to provide the broad economic context of the Mediterranean world. For instances, Thomas E. Phillips, *Reading Issues of Wealth and Poverty in Luke-Acts*. Studies in the Bible and Early Christianity 48 (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press, 2001); James A. Metzger, *Consumption and Wealth in Luke's Travel Narrative* (Boston: Brill, 2007); Hays, *Luke's Wealth Ethics*.

¹⁴ Douglas E. Oakman, *Jesus and the Economic Question of His Day* (Lewiston, NY: E. Mellen Press, 1986); Oakman, "The Countryside in Luke-Acts," in *The Social World of Luke-Acts: Models for Interpretation*, ed. Jerome H. Neyrey (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1991), 151-79; Oakman, "The Ancient Economy," in *The Social Sciences and New Testament Interpretation*, ed. Richard Rohrbaugh (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1996), 126-43; Esler, *Community and Gospel in Luke-Acts*.

¹⁵ Tenney Frank, ed., *An Economic Survey of Ancient Rome*, 6 vols (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1933-40); Thomas F. Carney, *The Shape of the Past: Models and Antiquity* (Lawrence, KS: Coronado Press, 1975).

¹⁶ Oakman, "The Countryside in Luke-Acts"; Moxnes, *The Economy of the Kingdom*; Bruce J. Malina and Richard L. Rohrbaugh, *Social-Science Commentary on the Synoptic Gospels*, 2nd ed. (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2003).

scholars.¹⁷ The scholars in the primitivist circle such as Karl Bücher and Max Weber see the ancient economy as being basically an underdeveloped household economy that belonged to the early stage of economic development, while those in the modernist circle such as Eduard Meyer and Karl Julius Beloch regard it as the earlier version of a modern economy, valuing highly its economic rationality and potential for economic advancement.

Later, Polanyi and Finley led the paradigm shift, and exerted tremendous influence on the discussion of the ancient economy thereafter. Specifically, Polanyi and his colleagues led the substantivism-formalism debate.¹⁸ Polanyi identifies two natures in the notion of economy: substantial nature and formal nature. The substantial nature of an economy relates to the content (or purpose) of an economy (or economic activities), which he identifies as the satisfaction of material needs or wants. The formal nature of an economy involves the form (or way) of an economy (economic activities) to achieve the content (or purpose) of that economy, which he identifies as the pursuit of utility (or profit) in an efficient manner based on the principle of optimization: maximizing profit and/or minimizing cost. He further develops the two natures of economy to describe two different approaches to economy in academic circles. Polanyi and his colleagues refer to *economic substantivism* as the view or approach that focuses primarily on the substantial nature of economy—the satisfaction of human needs or wants. They also name the opposite position as *economic formalism*, the view or approach that concentrates on the formal nature of an economy—the pursuit of utility (or profit) in efficient ways. More specifically, according to Polanyi and his colleagues, *economic formalism* refers to the approach adopted by economists and economic historians who investigate economy from the perspective of the

¹⁷ Karl Bücher, Eduard Meyer, and M. I. Finley, *The Bücher-Meyer controversy* (New York: Arno Press, 1979); André Reibig, *The Bücher-Meyer Controversy: The Nature of the Ancient Economy in Modern Ideology* (Ph.D. Diss., University of Glasgow, 2001).

¹⁸ Polanyi, *The Great Transformation; Trade and Market in the Early Empires; Economies in History and Theory; Primitive, Archaic, and Modern Economies*.

modern market economy.

In the substantivism-formalism debate, Polanyi and his colleagues challenge the view that regards a market economy as a “given,” as if it is normal for human life. They endeavor to demonstrate that a market economy is neither universal nor transhistorical, emerging as a dominant economic system only in the recent period and only in some areas of human society. They further underscore *economic embeddedness*, the notion that the economy is neither independent nor autonomous; on the contrary, they see economy as operating within a much larger social system. Moreover, they try to demythologize market dogmatism by reducing the significance of a market economy into one of several major economic exchange patterns. In so doing, Polanyi and his colleagues resort largely to the anthropological study of the economy of diverse human societies in the world, especially primitive societies isolated from a market economy. The notion of *economic substantivism* has become prevalent in discussions of the economy in the Roman world as it has drawn the academic attention of many scholars.

Though Polanyi left a significant legacy in scholarship, he did not give much attention to the ancient Roman economy. Instead, it was Finley who made a great contribution to Roman economic history.¹⁹ Though Polanyi and Finley did not make a similar argument, they share much in common in their basic perspectives on the ancient economy. Finley also argues that the ancient economy did not exist as a separate entity since ancient people did not develop the notion of economy as a unifying concept that encompasses all their economic activities. Moreover, he argues that the ancient economy was mainly driven by cultural and social factors rather than economic motivations. He especially underscores that the concern for honor and status affected significantly economic decisions of ancient people and the economic performances of the

¹⁹ Finley, *The Ancient Economy*.

economy. Consequently, he rates negatively the economic development of the ancient world. In the same vein, he regards the ancient city as a consumer city rather than a producer city.

Roughly speaking, the post-Polanyi and Finley debate centers on critical reflection of their main arguments. A large number of later scholars have challenged many of their arguments and some of those scholars have revised or modified their claims. Especially, many scholars now admit, either explicitly or implicitly, that Polanyi and Finley underestimated too much the significance of a market economy and the performance of the ancient Roman economy (for example, Keith Hopkins, Joseph Manning, Ian Morris, William Harris, Walter Scheidel, and Peter Temin).²⁰ Therefore, these scholars direct their attention to economic factors in themselves rather than anthropological or cultural factors. Furthermore, their critical reflections on previous scholarship lead them to note diverse and dynamic aspects of the Roman Economy, beyond the traditional image of a self-sustaining agricultural economy.

In light of the above review, the academic lag among New Testament scholars in relation to the ongoing scholarly discussion causes some shortcomings in the study of economic matters concerning New Testament texts. One shortcoming is a lack of a structural understanding of the Roman imperial economy. Specifically, the understanding of the Roman economy based on Polanyi and Finley can create a lopsided image of the entire Mediterranean world, marked by the conventional assumption of a traditional underdeveloped agrarian economy with a huge economic gap between the rich and the poor.²¹ I do not claim here that such an image is entirely wrong. Though this basic idea is still valid, I argue, nevertheless, here that the Roman imperial

²⁰ Keith Hopkins, "Taxes and Trade in the Roman Empire (200 BC-AD 400)," *JRS* 70 (1980):101-125; Joseph Manning and Ian Morris, eds., *The Ancient Economy: Evidence and Models* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2005); William V. Harris, *Rome's Imperial Economy: Twelve Essays* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011); Walter Scheidel, *The Cambridge Companion to the Roman Economy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012); Peter Temin, *The Roman Market Economy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013).

²¹ Ben Witherington, *Jesus and Money: A Guide for Times of Financial Crisis* (Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2010), 43-47; Esler, *Community and Gospel in Luke-Acts*, 171-79.

economy cannot be reduced to such an image only, since the economy, one of the largest economies that ever existed in human history, demonstrates, despite its wide regional and temporal differences, other features that are more active, diverse, and dynamic in its economic activities and performances such as a significant middling group. In this regard, such an image can seriously hinder scholars from recognizing those features and consequently prevents proper and in-depth understanding of the economic issues of New Testament writings in general and the Gospel of Luke in particular.

Moreover, the success of *economic substantivism* brought about a change in methodology in the study of the ancient economy. As *economic substantivism* prioritizes *economic embeddedness*, the scholars in favor of *economic substantivism* tend to put more emphasis on cultural and non-economic aspects, such as honor and shame, patronage, and limited good, rather than on economic factors in their research. In New Testament scholarship, such a tendency also has been prevalent, as many scholars have embraced enthusiastically *economic substantivism* in identifying the economic context of New Testament writings. For example, in *The Economy of the Kingdom*, Moxnes clearly affirms the notion of *economic substantivism*: “Ancient economy was embedded in a total cultural and social universe, in which everything was connected.”²² Likewise, Douglas E. Oakman echoes Polanyi when he states that “what moderns think of as economic realities are in agrarian/peasant societies embedded in political or kinship contexts... ‘The economy’ as an overarching social institution did not exist for the ancient person.”²³ Consequently, economic factors have received relatively little attention in the study of the economic context of New Testament writings. For instance, in light of *economic substantivism*, Moxnes utilizes intensively anthropological concepts such as patronage, purity, and limited good

²² Moxnes, *The Economy of the Kingdom*, 99.

²³ Oakman, “The Countryside in Luke-Acts,” 155-6.

society in his book. By contrast, he discusses economic factors such as exchange, money, and market relatively less energetically.

Similarly, the academic lag in familiarity with the ongoing discussion about the Roman economy seems to intensify the tendency of neglecting the insight that the ancient Roman economy, constituting the primary economic context of New Testament writings, follows economic rationality such as economic optimization. This tendency stems partially from *economic primitivism*, which refers to the view that the ancient economy was underdeveloped. Furthermore, the tendency has become intensified with the academic success of *economic substantivism*.²⁴ Contrary to such a tendency, however, I argue that New Testament writings offer a variety of evidence supporting the notion that the ancient economy operates in accordance with economic rationality, such as economic optimization. Especially, the Gospel of Luke, as it puts heavy emphasis on the economic issues, serves as a good test case to demonstrate this aspect.

Within this context, I deal with such shortcomings in this study, problematizing them by engaging critically with Luke's text about economic issues and drawing scholarly attention to the aspects which previous New Testament scholarship has often neglected. These include the importance of the economic structure of the Roman Empire, the significance of economic factors themselves, and the engagement with the ongoing discussion of the Roman imperial economy--especially, aspects of a market economy and the evidence of economic advancement.

5. Methods

Since I intend to present an economic reading of selected texts in Luke's Gospel, my study

²⁴ Malina and Rohrbaugh, *Social-Science Commentary on the Synoptic Gospels*.

utilizes a mixture of historical and social scientific approaches. The study is historical in that it bases its analysis on the historical investigation and/or reconstruction of the ancient Greco-Roman economy in the first few centuries CE. In addition, the study is social scientific as well in that it focuses on economic constructions in Luke's Gospel and economics itself is a discipline of social sciences.

However, the use of social scientific criticism in my study is quite different from that of major social scientific works of the New Testament. While many social scientific practitioners such as the Context Group scholars and their successors—led by Bruce J. Malina, Richard L. Rohrbaugh, Jerome H. Neyrey, to name a few²⁵--have put heavy emphasis on anthropological studies, I primarily pay attention to knowledge from economics rather than cultural anthropology.

I utilize key categories and concepts of modern economics, such as productivity, opportunity costs, risk premium, functions of money, capital investment, internal labor market, banking and finance, cost-benefit analysis, economic stratification, commerce, commercial agriculture, and land market. In fact, the history of scholarship demonstrates that a wide variety of different schools and thoughts have contributed to the formation and the development of modern economics. Though I show no favoritism among diverse economic schools and thoughts, I primarily utilize, either explicitly or implicitly, methods and concepts of so-called “neo-classical synthesis.”

The notion of “neoclassical synthesis” (or synthesis of neoclassical and Keynesian economics) refers to the scholarly tendency to combine the microeconomic theory mainly

²⁵ John J. Pilch, ed., *Social Scientific Models for Interpreting the Bible: Essays by the Context Group in Honor of Bruce J. Malina* (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2001); Jerome H. Neyrey et al., eds., *In Other Words: Essays on Social Science Methods and the New Testament in Honor of Jerome H. Neyrey* (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2007); Jerome H. Neyrey and Eric Clark Stewart, eds., *The Social World of the New Testament: Insights and Models* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2008).

developed by neo-classical school of thoughts and the macroeconomic theory developed by Keynesian school of thoughts.²⁶ The notion also embraces the tradition of classical economists such as Adam Smith, David Ricardo, and John Stuart Mill. It was classical economists who first offered the general theory concerning the operation of a market economy. They focus mainly on how a free market economy based upon the self-interest of individuals operates in such a way as to benefit a society as a whole by increasing its wealth.²⁷ Neoclassical economists such as William S. Jevons, Carl Menger, Alfred Marshall, and Léon Walras extended the legacy of classical economists and further developed the microeconomic aspects of a market economy by analyzing the decision-making process of economic agents (consumers and producers) with highly sophisticated mathematical tools—especially, how consumers and producers maximize utility and profits given budget constraints.²⁸ Keynesian economists, initiated by John M. Keynes, contributed to the development of the macroeconomic theory of a market economy which deals mainly with the broad aspects of an economy such as aggregate demand, aggregate supply, employment rate, and prices.²⁹ In particular, the main difference between classical theory and Keynesian theory is their view on a self-corrective mechanism of a market economy, especially in the period of economic crisis (or depression). Neoclassical economists argue that an economy has power to restore its full-employment equilibrium automatically and quickly by adjusting its prices and wages in case of economic disequilibrium. The Keynesian economists, by contrast, warn against such overemphasis of the self-corrective mechanism of a market economy, asserting that a government should take measures to restore the equilibrium of an

²⁶ Richard D. Wolff and Stephen A. Resnick, *Contending Economic Theories: Neoclassical, Keynesian, and Marxian* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2012), 105.

²⁷ For more detail, see D.P. O'Brien, *The Classical Economists Revisited* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004).

²⁸ For more detail, see Agnar Sandmo, *Economics Evolving: A History of Economic Thought* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011), 138-237.

²⁹ John Maynard Keynes, *The General Theory of Employment, Interest and Money* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1936).

economy by employing diverse fiscal and monetary policies.³⁰ Later, some leading American and English economists such as John Hicks and Paul A. Samuelson endeavored to embrace both neo-classical approaches and Keynesian approaches, incorporating them into a standard curriculum of economics.³¹

I use the neo-classical method because it has been widely accepted and utilized by many economic historians and classicists in dealing with the ancient Greco-Roman economy. Mainstream schools of modern economics such as the Neo-classical synthesis have well developed quantifying methods that formally construct mathematical models and/or conduct statistical analysis as analytical tools. In this study, however, I do not employ quantifying methods, at least explicitly, since neither Luke's text contains any sufficient information for them nor do they provide fresh insight for a better understanding of the text. Instead, I apply various economic models that are basically quantitatively-oriented to Luke's passage by transforming them in a non-quantitative and descriptive fashion.

Moreover, to get a better understanding of economic rationality behind the economic interactions, I utilize methods from game theory. In the broadest sense, game theory deals with the strategic interactions between two or more parties. In its simple form, a game can be composed of three aspects: players, strategies, and pay-offs (usually, a matrix form). Due to the simplicity of its form, game theory has a wide-range of applicability--from economic to biological, sociological, and political issues.³²

Furthermore, in this study, I try to create a dialogue with the discourse that deals with power issues, especially in relation to the negotiation with the Roman Empire and

³⁰ For more detail, see N. Gregory Mankiw, *Macroeconomics*, 8th ed. (New York: Worth Publishers, 2012).

³¹ Paul A. Samuelson, *Economics* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1948).

³² For more detail, see Avinash Dixit, Susan Skeath, and David Reiley, *Games of Strategy*, 3rd ed. (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2009); Drew Fudenberg and Jean Tirole, *Game Theory* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1991).

postcolonialism. As I have mentioned earlier, I regard the Roman imperial economy as the primary economic context of Luke's text. From this perspective, the significance of the Roman imperial context in the reading of Luke's text in relation to economic issues necessarily involves complex power dynamics between the colonizer and the colonized. Therefore, I briefly discuss the implications of Luke's economic discourses on negotiation with the Roman Empire and postcolonialism.³³ However, this study is basically not a rhetorical study of what economic system Luke argues for but a historical study of how the ancient Roman imperial economy operates, and how the working principles of this economy inform and are inscribed in the presentations of economic matters in Luke's Gospel. Therefore, I address the issue of how Luke is negotiating a place within the economy briefly, rather than systematically and exhaustively. Especially, I discuss the issue of negotiating the Roman power in the realm of economy at the end of the study as part of my closing reflections.

6. Chapter Structure

The rest of this study unfolds as follows. In Chapter 2, I summarize and evaluate the history of scholarship on Luke's economic issues to locate my study within it. Specifically, I review diverse ethical approaches, literary analyses, anthropological studies, and social scientific approaches that discuss a variety of topics including ethical programs in Luke, wealth and poverty, the nature of Luke's community, the economic strata or class, and the economic structure.

In Chapter 3, I provide an analysis of discussions of the Roman imperial economy. I trace

³³ Warren Carter, *Matthew and the Margins: A Sociopolitical and Religious Reading* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2000); *Matthew and Empire: Initial Explorations* (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press, 2001); *John and Empire: Initial Explorations* (New York: T & T Clark, 2008); David Rhoads, David Esterline, and Jae Won Lee, *Luke-Acts and Empire: Essays in Honor of Robert L. Brawley* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2011).

major scholarly debates concerning the nature of the ancient economy such as the primitive-modernist debate, the substantivism-formalism debate, the post-Polanyi and Finley debate, the scale of economy, and economic growth. Moreover, I will describe features of the Roman imperial economy such as land, agriculture, trade, finance, and non-agricultural industry.

In Chapters 4 to 8, I provide economic readings of Luke's Gospel by following the order of the Gospel narrative. In so doing, I primarily focus on some selected passages in Luke that illumine aspects of a market economy and economic rationality. In Chapter 4, I examine some selected passages in Luke 1:1-12:12 that I argue inscribe aspects of a market economy and economic rationality. These passages include the preaching of John the Baptist (3:1-18), the parable of the seed and the soil (8:4-15), the account of Gerasene Demoniac (8:26-39), the account of Jesus's feeding of the five thousand (9:10-17), the account of the commissioning of the seventy disciples (10:1-16), and the parable of the Good Samaritan (10:25-37). I address economic issues concerning the Roman army, Roman imperial tax and its economic impact, the order of sowing and plowing, agricultural productivity, livestock farming, wage laborers, commercial lodging, monetary economy, and functions of money.

In Chapter 5, I investigate some selected passages in Luke 12:12-16:13 to identify evidence of their inscribing of aspects of a market economy and economic rationality. These passages are the parable of the rich fool (12:13-21), the discourse on watchful slaves (12:35-48), the parable of a fig tree in a vineyard (13:6-9), the parable of the great banquet (14:15-24) and the parable of the dishonest steward (16:1-13). I discuss the following economic issues: greed, capital investment, storage, moral hazard and mechanism design, internal labor market, cost-benefit analysis, land and land market, economic stratification of the Roman world, large-scale farming, debt, principal-agent problem, commercial olive production, risk premium,

defrauding, and final stage game.

In Chapter 6, I explore some selected passages in Luke 16:14-19:27 that inscribe aspects of a market economy and economic rationality. These passages include the parable of the unworthy servant (17:7-10), the story of the rich ruler (18:18-30), the story of Zaccheus (19:1-10), and the parable of the ten *minas* (19:11-27). I engage such economic issues as wealth redistribution, intertemporal choices, screening, signaling and commitment, non-agricultural sources of income, small-scale commerce, opportunity costs, banking and finance, money hoarding, the attitude toward the rich and the poor, and reinscribing the Roman imperial economic system.

In Chapter 7, I read some selected passages in Luke 19:28-24:53 that inscribe aspects of a market economy and economic rationality. These passages are the parable of the rebellious tenants (20:9-18), the account of the poor widow's offering (21:1-4), the account of Jesus's prophecy about the destruction of the Jerusalem Temple (21:5-6), and the account of the risen Jesus's appearance to the eleven apostles (24:36-43). I deal with various economic topics including viticulture, tenancy, absenteeism, conflicts between masters and tenants in viticulture, the bargaining power of laborers, labor-management dispute, the economics of altruism and giving, stone trade, and the fishing industry.

In Chapter 8, I review major arguments and findings of this study. I briefly discuss how people of the Roman Empire negotiated Roman power through the means of economic rationality within the context of its growing market economy. Then I discuss contributions and limitations of my study, suggestions for future research, and offer a concluding remark.

CHAPTER 2

Locating Market Economy and Economic Rationality Approaches

in Relation to Previous Scholarship on Luke's Gospel

1. Introduction

In this chapter, I explore briefly a history of scholarship concerning economic issues presented in Luke's Gospel in order to locate the questions and contributions of this study. As I have already discussed in Chapter 1, many scholars have discussed the significance of economic issues presented in Luke's Gospel such as wealth, poverty, possessions, money, and other economic matters. In addition, as far as methodologies are concerned, scholars have utilized recent advances in biblical scholarship in investigating Luke's text related to economic issues. In particular, they have applied a variety of methodologies such as historical, literary, and social-scientific criticism.

In so doing, I divide the review of scholarship into four categories: ethical approaches, historical criticism and historical approaches, literary approaches, and social and social scientific approaches. I recognize, though, that the approaches are not mutually exclusive. Many scholars have employed, to a certain degree, more than one approach in their investigations: for instance, many of those who pay attention to ethical aspects of Luke's texts also focus on the historical context of Luke's community or employ literary analysis in their reading. In this regard, the categorization employed in the chapter is approximate rather than thorough and exhaustive.

Moreover, in the course of this review, I point out aspects that previous scholarship neglected and/or failed to address adequately. The central points of my critique of this previous work are that scholarship has failed to adequately take account of *economic* aspects of the texts,

even though they engaged texts that related to economic issues, and secondly, that some of their knowledge of the Roman imperial economy seems to be outdated. More recent work on the Roman economy has emphasized the dynamics of market economy and economic rationality. These insights have not been brought into conversation with the Lucan texts.

2. Ethical Approaches

2.1. Rich and Poor

In investigating presentations of economic issues in Luke, a large majority of scholars, if not all, have approached Luke's texts related to economic issues in association with the central theme of wealth and poverty (or the rich and poor). Moreover, in so doing, many studies have particularly employed what I call "ethical approaches" since they have put the main emphasis on ethical aspects of the texts. Particularly, they have pointed out that Luke's texts associated with economic issues mainly concern both the poor and the rich, and carry somewhat contrasting messages for each group.³⁴ In doing so, however, many of them, if not all, have neglected the important aspects of the broader social context of the Gospel such as economic, political, and cultural structures. Consequently, their neglect of economic-political factors results in inadequate readings of the Gospel as I will demonstrate below.

The work of Philip F. Esler provides a ready example. In his monograph *Community and Gospel in Luke-Acts* (1987), Esler argues that the gospel which Luke underscores in his writings is "good news for the poor, grim news for the rich."³⁵ According to Esler, Luke reveals his

³⁴ Henry J. Cadbury, *The Making of Luke-Acts* (New York: The Macmillan Company 1927); Walter Schmithals, "Lukas--Evangelist der Armen," *Theologia Viatorum* 12 (1973-74): 153-67; Jacques Dupont, *Les Beatitudes*, 3 vols. (Paris: Gabalda, 1969, 1973); Dupont, "The Poor and Poverty in the Gospels and Acts," in *Gospel Poverty*, ed. M. D. Guinan (Chicago: Franciscan Herald, 1977), 25-52; Pilgrim, *Good News to the Poor*; John Gillman, *Possessions and the Life of Faith: A Reading of Luke-Acts* (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1991).

³⁵ Esler, *Community and Gospel in Luke-Acts*, 187.

preference for the poor in the Gospel. For example, in the Beatitudes, Esler explains, Luke expresses the preference by prioritizing the blessing for the poor. Likewise, in approaching the issue of poverty, according to Esler, unlike some Jewish wisdom writers, Luke never explains causes of their poverty, nor does he attribute their poverty to their laziness, stupidity, or lack of initiative. Instead, he just offers words of comfort that are full of blessing and encouragement. Concerning the rich, for Esler, Luke expresses words of caution, filled with warning and exhortation. Luke consistently warns the rich of the danger of wealth, the incompatibility of wealth in the service of God, and the vanity of the desire to possess in the Gospel.

In the discussion of economic issues in Luke, Esler contributed to scholarship by employing both redaction criticism and socio-political approaches, exploring how Luke's theology as well as rhetoric concerning the rich and poor operates within Luke's community. In this regard, Esler is right since he emphasizes that Luke's theology of the poor is a product of a specific socio-political circumstance that the community faced.

However, it seems that Esler's binary scheme of the rich and the poor and his notion of "good news-grim news" do not adequately grasp all aspects of Luke's discourses on economic issues. For instance, it is not certain whether the parable of the unjust steward (16:1-13) is a message for the poor or the rich; in other words, is it good news or grim news, or both? Does the parable aim to warn the rich of something about wealth or represent the preference for the poor? Can we regard the debtors who owed a significant amount of debt as the poor and marginal? Surely the parable intends to deliver a certain message concerning the proper use of possessions. But the parable seems to be ambiguous in its ethical position. Why does the master in the parable commend the act of the dishonest steward that looks like an immoral or criminal behavior? The parable seems to transcend the traditional ethical realm where what is right and what is wrong

are fairly clear, inviting the readers into the world of economic calculation dominated by selfish or self-protecting economic motive. In this regard, we can better understand the parable by paying attention to the explicitly economic aspects of the parable since the parable is associated with Roman economic practices, particularly those of a market economy as reflected in the action of the steward and the master who exert themselves to maximize their own profit. I will provide an analysis of the parable from the perspective of economic rationality in Chapter 5.

2.2. In Search of Ethical Core Values

In dealing with the issue of wealth and poverty, Luke does not simply deliver a schematic proclamation towards the rich and poor; he further concretizes his exhortations by highlighting several working principles in his writings. For instance, Luke presents Jesus as requiring the rich to renounce their entire wealth. In 14:33, Jesus requires the desertion of wealth as a prerequisite for joining the discipleship. Moreover, Luke underscores some righteous economic practices such as almsgiving and generosity throughout the Gospel (3:10-14; 6:38; 14:12-14; 19:8). Thus many scholars who have explored Luke's text related to economic issues from the perspective of ethical approaches have attempted to find the core values of economic ethics in Luke's writings among the diverse working principles that appear in the Gospel.

For example, Richard Cassidy (1978) observes that Jesus's economic program of relieving the poor in Luke focuses on three elements: (1) "a strong and consistent concern for the poor," (2) the use of surplus possessions for relieving the poor, and (3) the inclusive strategy of accepting the poor and the infirm into community membership.³⁶ Kyoung-Jin Kim proposes that Luke puts consistent emphasis on the practice of almsgiving throughout the Gospel.³⁷ Thomas

³⁶ Richard J. Cassidy, *Jesus, Politics, and Society: A Study of Luke's Gospel* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1978), 32-33.

³⁷ Kim, *Stewardship and Almsgiving in Luke's Theology*.

E. Phillips regards generosity and lack of greed as the main literary themes that provide a consistent reading of issues of wealth and poverty in Luke.³⁸ James A. Metzger argues that ameliorating the poverty of people is the prime objective of Jesus's ministry.³⁹ Christopher M. Hays thinks that Jesus's command of total renunciation is the core of Luke's economic ethics.⁴⁰

By epitomizing diverse commands and discourses related to economic issues into some ethical core values, those scholars have contributed significantly to a well-organized, consistent, and systematic understanding of Luke's economic discourses.

It seems that, however, those scholars cannot escape a critique of over-generalization since the core values that they observed fail to cover the diversity in the Gospel's commands and discourses. For instance, none of those core values addressed above persuasively explains the account of the poor widow's offering (12:41-43). The account seems not to fit easily with Cassidy's three categories since in the scene Luke's Jesus does not express concern for the poor widow, neither does he exhort the audience to use surplus possessions in relieving the poor, nor does he promote acceptance of the poor. Likewise, the scene does not seem to harmonize with almsgiving contrary to that which Kyoung-Jin Kim argues. In a similar fashion, the widow's devotion looks to be at odds with the generosity and lack of greed that Phillips underscores and it does not seem to contribute to ameliorating the poverty as Metzger underscores—in fact, it aggravates the situation of the poor! Finally, the account does not appear to be an act of total commitment to become a disciple of Jesus, because the text does not provide any evidence that Jesus calls the widow as his disciple.

As a matter of fact, and significant for this study, is the observation that the failure of those core values to explain some discourses in Luke reflects a more significant problem—not all

³⁸ Phillips, *Reading Issues of Wealth and Poverty in Luke-Acts*, 92-95.

³⁹ Metzger, *Consumption and Wealth in Luke's Travel Narrative*.

⁴⁰ Hays, *Luke's Wealth Ethics*.

discourses in Luke related to economic issues are ethical in nature: put differently, discourses on economic issues in Luke cannot be reduced to simply ethical matters. For instance, the discourse on the slave (17:7-10), the parable of the ten *minas* (19:11-27), and that of the rebellious tenants (20:9-18) are closely associated with economic issues but they are barely related to economic ethics. In this regard, it seems to be necessary to employ appropriate economic perspectives—including market economy and economic rationality approaches-- to gain a better understanding of the discourses. The account of the poor widow's offering, for instance, can be better understood from the perspectives of economic rationality in the light of economics of altruism and giving, which I will address in Chapter 7.

2.3. The Radical Economic Command of Divestiture and the Problem of Inconsistency

Many scholars who investigated Luke's discourses on economic issues have taken note of the command to complete divestiture in Luke (14:33) because of its radical nature. The command, however, creates confusion since Luke also presents other scenes that suggest partial or no renunciation (3:11; 19:1-10) and almsgiving (11:41; 12:33).

Scholars have differed in their opinions concerning whether the command binds all followers of Jesus or not. Some scholars argue that the command applied to all Christ followers. Cassidy, for instance, points out that the command binds all Christ followers since it corresponds well with Luke's preference for the poor and his description of Jesus.⁴¹ Similarly, Christopher M. Hays insists that the command is the central and consistent economic principle in Luke even though it takes various forms such as partial or no denunciation and almsgiving depending on the vocational situations and financial conditions of each follower.⁴²

⁴¹ Cassidy, *Jesus, Politics, and Society*, 27.

⁴² Hays, *Luke's Wealth Ethics*, 267.

Other scholars, however, restrict the command to a certain group of people. Kyoung-Jin Kim, for instance, argues that Luke proposes a two-tiered economic principle which can be applied according to different types of disciples: itinerant disciples (like Peter, James, and John) and sedentary disciples (such as Mary, Martha, and Levi). Kim further insists that the command to complete divestiture only applied to itinerant disciples and more mild forms of economic practices--such as almsgiving or hospitality--suffice for sedentary disciples.⁴³

Still other scholars argue that the actual practice of Luke's economic instructions is a matter of individual choice. Luke Timothy Johnson (1977) argues that since Luke offers diverse ethical programs to the Christ followers, one cannot reduce presentations of economic issues in Luke's Gospel to any single principle. Instead, Johnson suggests that one can freely decide which principle to follow and how much to perform depending on one's own divine calling and individual preference.⁴⁴

Since Johnson, many scholars have agreed with Johnson's argument: Josef Klauck (1989), for instance, proposes that like another radical command, celibacy, complete divestiture constitutes one of the options that one might choose according to one's calling and circumstance.⁴⁵ Likewise, Hans-Georg Gradl (2005) treats the conflicting economic discourses as expressing diversity rather than inconsistency, arguing that Luke presents various legitimate ethical injunctions to the readers that can be determined with the help of the Holy Spirit.⁴⁶

Those scholars have long endeavored to make sense of the radical economic command of divestiture and the diverse economic discourses in Luke that appear to be contradictory to one

⁴³ Kim, *Stewardship and Almsgiving in Luke's Theology*, 100-110.

⁴⁴ Johnson, *The Literary Function of Possessions in Luke-Acts*.

⁴⁵ Josef Klauck, "Die Armut der Jünger in der Sicht des Lukas," in *Gemeinde, Amt, Sakrament: Neutestamentliche Perspektiven*, ed. Hans-Josef Klauck (Würzburg: Echter, 1989), 192.

⁴⁶ Hans-Georg Gradl, *Zwischen Arm und Reich: das Lukanische Doppelwerk in Leserorientierter und Textpragmatischer Perspektive* (Würzburg: Echter, 2005), 410, 430-31.

another, providing a rich variety of reading strategies and insights by focusing on diversity and/or consistency in the discourses.

However, their efforts seem to leave much to be desired. First, the effort to universalize the command to total divestiture appears to be a somewhat forced generalization. Indeed, the command is contradictory, at least in its literal sense, to other scenes that bear contrary instructions. It appears that some scholarship has been somewhat inconsistent in that it does not take seriously the literal meaning of the command while accepting some ethical instructions literally such as almsgiving and generosity. Moreover, it seems not to be entirely convincing why we should regard partial renunciation, no renunciation, and/or almsgiving as different forms of the same instruction of total divestiture. The scholarly debates seem not to care about the difference in quantity; but the change in quantity is an important matter. To desert one's entire possessions and to desert half of one's possessions are quite different matters since those who desert everything require someone who can support them.

In fact, the command to total divestiture seems to exist beyond the realm of traditional economic theory in terms of profit-maximization. However, economic theory provides some analytical tools to investigate non-profit maximizing behaviors from the perspective of economic rationality. In Luke's discourses, the command in some sense and contexts serve as a criterion to discern potential true disciples among candidates. In terms of game theory, this process is associated with *signaling* and *screening*.⁴⁷ I will discuss how *signaling* and *screening* can be applied in Luke's text in Chapter 6.

⁴⁷ In game theory, *signaling* refers to the sender's act of sending signals concerning the sender's intention, nature, quality, or merit to the receiver in order to influence the decision making process of the receiver who does not have sufficient information about the sender. *Screening* is the selector's act of filtering out unsuitable candidates in the case of selection or choice by designing a mechanism through which each candidate reveals information about her or his own true intention, nature, type, or quality. For more detail, see Dixit, Skeath, and Reiley, *Games of Strategy*; Fudenberg and Tirole, *Game Theory*.

Second, a two-tiered economic ethics based on the type of disciples seems to fail to explain all cases in the Gospel as well, as some critics such as Hays rightly observe.⁴⁸ Above all, Luke's text does not provide any concrete criteria to categorize a person into either of the two types. Consequently, the two-tiered ethics that Kim proposes cannot readily place Levi and the women (8:1-3) into either sedentary or itinerant types. Similarly, does the poor widow's devotion make her an itinerant disciple? Furthermore, it is not clear why, then, Jesus instructs his itinerant disciples to equip themselves with provisions before he is arrested. How can they do so after deserting all their possessions (22:35-38)?

Third, Johnson's proposal which leaves the decision to personal choice or discretion seems to be groundless as well because Luke does not provide any hint that readers can freely choose what they want to do. Moreover, as I have already pointed out in the previous chapter, this approach seems to over-estimate the autonomy of individuals or groups in relation to ethical decisions and therefore not be entirely accurate in understanding ethical implications of Luke's economic discourses. For example, it seems to be doubtful in light of the first-century collectivistic or dyadic (i.e., group-oriented) nature of Mediterranean society that an individual exercise individual choice in this manner.⁴⁹

However, the more significant problem is that these approaches failed to pay due attention to the broader economic matrix within which these so called ethical aspects of Luke's economic discourses are rooted and operated. Put differently, their discussions seem to argue that to a certain degree ethical discourses in Luke--either individual or group—are independent of the

⁴⁸ Hays, *Luke's Wealth Ethics*, 178-181.

⁴⁹ Some social scientific critics argued that the personality of the first-century Mediterranean world is dyadic or collectivistic rather than individualistic. Put differently, because the first-century individuals are more group-oriented, the self-identity of an individual was strongly influenced and determined by the identity of group society and group norms to which a person belongs. For more detail, see Bruce J. Malina, "Understanding New Testament Persons," in *The Social Sciences and New Testament Interpretation*, ed. Richard L. Rohrbaugh (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1996), 41-61; Malina, *The New Testament World: Insights from Cultural Anthropology* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001), 58-80.

rest of the society and societal-economic structures. This neglect of societal-economic structures creates an impression that ethical discourses could operate as imperatives that should be applied in any circumstance. They failed to take account of such questions as: Did the economic structures of the first-century Mediterranean world or material conditions of Luke's community allow Christ followers to keep those commands? Put more specifically, how many people among those who encountered Luke's narrative would have enough economic means to desert or donate or live in a socio-economic structure that enabled such divestiture? Does the command apply to the poor and needy as well? How could the community of Christ followers sustain itself after all the members deserted all their possessions or gave alms comprising a significant portion of their possessions? Asking these sorts of questions helpfully point to some of the issues that readers of the first-century Mediterranean world might raise in understanding the commands. In this regard, the inquiry into the economic aspects of Luke's material, notably the importance of a market economy and economic rationality, will contribute greatly to the better understanding of these passages.

3. Historical Criticism and Historical Approaches

Many scholars who have explored Luke's discourses on economic issues have employed historical approaches such as historical reconstructions of Luke's community and historical criticism such as source and redaction criticism while keeping an eye on ethical aspects of the discourses.

3.1. Source Criticism

By employing source criticism, some German scholars, such as Gerd Theissen (1973), Friedrich

Wilhelm Horn (1983), and Wolfgang Stegemann (1986), claim that the command to total divestiture reflects an ascetical influence inherent in Q or Ebionite literature.⁵⁰ For instance, Gerd Theissen attributes the command for total divestiture to the influence of wandering charismatics while Friedrich Wilhelm Horn attributes it to the Ebionite source.⁵¹ Both scholars, however, argue that Luke qualifies the command by distancing himself from these source materials. For example, Theissen argues that while Luke incorporates the radical economic discourses into the Gospel from his source materials, he does not endorse them because he regards the wandering charismatics as false prophets.⁵² In a similar fashion, Horn insists that Luke selectively accepts the Ebionite source; Luke qualifies the command of divestiture only to the eyewitness disciples while embracing the criticism of wealth and exhortation to almsgiving.⁵³

The source-criticism approach attempts to locate Luke's economic discourses in the historical circumstances within which the discourses were generated; in this regard, they are right in that they pay attention to the changing historical contexts of the discourses to get a better understanding of the texts.

However, the approach depends largely on the hypothetical reconstruction of certain pre-Gospel ascetic groups. Even though it is certain that these groups existed in the Mediterranean world, the relationship between these groups and Luke's source/s are less clear. For instance, it seems purely speculative that the radical economic discourses are indebted to wandering charismatics since few things are known concerning their identities, nature, and locations. What's more, some scholars, such as John S. Kloppenborg, have refuted the argument

⁵⁰ Gerd Theissen, "Wanderradikalismus: Literalursoziologische Aspekte der Überlieferung von Worten Jesu im Urchristentum," *Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche* 70, no. 3 (1973): 245-71; Luise Schottroff and Wolfgang Stegemann, *Jesus and the Hope of the Poor* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1986); Friedrich Wilhelm Horn, *Glaube und Handeln in der Theologie des Lukas*, Göttinger Theologische Arbeiten (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1983).

⁵¹ Theissen, "Wanderradikalismus," 270; Horn, *Glaube und Handeln in der Theologie des Lukas*, 150-54.

⁵² Theissen, "Wanderradikalismus," 270.

⁵³ Horn, *Glaube und Handeln in der Theologie des Lukas*, 197-200.

that the Q source is associated with itinerant teachers, ascribing it to low class scribes in Galilee instead. In this case Theissen's argument based upon acetic sources is not persuasive.⁵⁴

Furthermore, even if we could attribute the Q source to wandering charismatics, it is not clear, however, why Luke does not redact out such acetic materials if he tries to distance himself from the teachings of those wandering charismatics, as Hays rightly points out.⁵⁵ Likewise, the connection between the second-century Ebionite group and first-century Jewish Christians seems to be unclear.

Even though this source-critical approach to Luke's discourses on economic issues asserted some historical groups in relation to the discourses, it failed to engage adequately the relationship between these groups and possible economic situations contextualizing the discourses--especially from the perspective of market economy and economic rationality. What was the economic status of these wandering charismatics or Ebionite group? Did these groups comprise low status persons who populated the bottom of the Roman imperial economic structure? How and to what degree did their economic status influence or reflect their participation in and experience of economic structures--especially a market economy and economic rationality? Put differently, was their attitude to and experience of economic issues similar to or markedly different from that of rich elites--the economic winners of the Roman imperial economy? More specifically, can we assume that their attitude toward a market economy and profit motive are negative based on some radical economic discourses such as the command of divestiture and almsgiving? Did these groups advocate or envision an alternative economic program in contrast to the existing economic structure of the Roman imperial economy? As the above questions demonstrate, engaging the economic situations of these

⁵⁴ John S. Kloppenborg, *Excavating Q: The History and Setting of the Sayings Gospel* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2000), 179-84.

⁵⁵ Hays, *Luke's Wealth Ethics*, 11-12.

groups, including market economy and economic rationality approaches, would take seriously the economic content of Luke's material; and by doing so, it would enrich the source criticism approach.

3.2. *Historical Context of Luke's Readers*

In exploring diverse economic issues in Luke's texts, many scholars have given attention to reconstructing possible social situations of Luke's readers. In doing so, many scholars have argued that the readers of Luke's Gospel include the rich, and many of Luke's texts related to economic issues are directed toward them.⁵⁶

Henry J. Cadbury (1958), for instance, argues that Luke's texts related to economic issues were directed toward relatively wealthy members among those of diverse social standing in Luke's community. In light of this, Cadbury argues that Luke's critique of wealth aimed to dissuade them from doing unjust economic behaviors rather than reflected sympathy for the poor.⁵⁷ In a similar vein, Robert J. Karris (1978) proposes that Luke paid attention to the concerns of wealthy members including the issue of whether material wealth functioned as a hindrance to Christian faith.⁵⁸ Likewise, David Seccombe (1982) insists that Luke's readers were Greco-Roman God-fearers who were free from poverty.⁵⁹ Stegemann (1986) also proposes that Luke's community faced some problems relating to tensions between the rich and the poor,

⁵⁶ Martin Hengel, "Christliche Kritik am Reichtum," *Das Eigentum in der Frühen Kirche* 6 (1973): 21-25; Pilgrim, *Good News to the Poor*, 164; Esler, *Community and Gospel*, 150-65; Halvor Moxnes, "The Social Context of Luke's Community," *Interpretation* 48, no. 4 (1994): 379-89; Kim, *Stewardship and Almsgiving in Luke's Theology*, 36-53.

⁵⁷ Henry Cadbury, *The Making of Luke-Acts*, 2nd ed. (London: SPCK, 1958), 262-63.

⁵⁸ Robert J. Karris, "Poor and Rich: The Lukan Sitz im Leben," in *Perspectives on Luke-Acts*, ed. Charles H. Talbert (Danville, VA: Association of Baptist Professors of Religion, 1978), 112-25, esp. 124.

⁵⁹ Seccombe, *Possessions and the Poor in Luke-Acts*, 99, 133-34. Seccombe further insists that Luke neither prioritized the poor nor idealized poverty since the poor in Luke designates the nation of Israel rather than literal poor people. Moreover, he argues that the command to divestiture was addressed to Jesus's disciples only at the time of Jesus's impending death by way of the disciples' expression of their loyalty to Jesus (Lk 9:51-19:28). Therefore except for the situation of extreme persecution, the command did not bind a general audience in normal circumstances. For more detail, see Seccombe, *Possessions and the Poor in Luke-Acts*, 35-43, 112-16, 130-134, 229.

and Luke attempted to redress the sumptuous and extravagant lifestyles of certain wealthy members through diverse economic discourses, such as the command to divestiture, almsgiving, and the criticism of wealth.⁶⁰

By paying attention to possible socio-economic contexts of Luke's texts, those scholars avoided universalizing the ethical implications in the discourses, as some ethical approach scholars did. However, their attention to a social-economic context was fractional and limited. As is the case with ethical approaches, scholars generally gave insufficient attention to the broader economic contexts of Roman imperial economy that are necessary in discussing the economic discourses in Luke's text. In this regard, it seems to be doubtful whether the historical reconstructions of Luke's community and identification of the social situation surrounding the community based upon those discourses are convincing.

In this manner, most of these scholars, if not all, have somewhat endeavored to neutralize the radical nature of the command to divestiture by setting certain limits to the command. In fact, it seems to be reasonable, at first sight, to think that some of Luke's discourses on economic issues such as the command to divestiture and almsgiving in Luke are more relevant to those who have sufficient economic means to do so rather than those who do not.

Nonetheless, is it correct to identify those who can practice divestiture and almsgiving as the rich? What is the criterion by which we can categorize people into rich or poor? It seems that many of those scholars, if not all, have made their argument by applying very loose definitions of 'rich' and 'poor.' Above all, many do not employ specific economic criteria to define 'rich' and 'poor' in their reconstruction of social standing of the community. Therefore, it could give the impression that those who can desert their possessions or give alms are rich people, which,

⁶⁰ Schottroff and Stegemann, *Jesus and the Hope of the Poor*, 76, 82-87, 106-117, esp. 116.

however, seems to be a possible but not an entirely reliable conclusion. In fact, in Luke's text the commands to divestiture and almsgiving are addressed not exclusively to the rich. For instance, the instructions of John the Baptist do not presuppose that the audiences are rich since he instructs those who have two clothes to share with those who have none (Lk 3:11). Similarly, those who divest themselves to follow Jesus include some fishermen from Galilee (5:1-11). Thus some scholarship has been somewhat imprecise in its use of the categories of 'rich' and 'poor' and has not employed economic criteria to bring precision and economic focus to the discussion.

Moreover, most of these reconstructions of possible Lucan communities are heavily influenced by an inadequate understanding of the economic structures of the Roman imperial economy, namely a dichotomy between the rich and poor marked by a stark economic gap between the two. Yet, this construction of a dichotomized economic structure of the Roman Empire, while basically true in a sense, lacks nuance and is vulnerable to serious criticism from recent scholarship. Instead, Steven J. Friesen has designed a poverty scale that comprises seven levels of economic status and Bruce W. Longenecker has emphasized a more sizeable middling group.⁶¹ Moreover, other scholars such as Walter Scheidel and Peter Temin have proposed a number of economic models that are closely associated with market economy and economic rationality approaches, which I will address in Chapters 3 to 7 in more detail.⁶²

Furthermore, though some scholars have admitted that Luke's community contains members from diverse social standings, they have not developed how this diversity operates in Luke's Gospel; they simply focused on 'rich' and/or 'poor,' providing no room for members of

⁶¹ Steve J. Friesen, "Poverty in Pauline Studies: Beyond the So-called New Consensus," *JSNT* 26, no. 3 (2004): 323-61; Bruce W. Longenecker, "Exposing the Economic Middle: A Revised Economy Scale for the Study of Early Urban Christianity," *JSNT* 31, no. 3 (2009): 243-78.

⁶² Walter Scheidel and Steven J. Friesen, "The Size of the Economy and the Distribution of Income in the Roman Empire," *JRS* 99 (2009): 61-91; Peter Temin, "The Economy of the Early Roman Empire," *The Journal of Economic Perspectives* 20, no. 1 (2006), 133-151.

diverse economic standing. I will engage that diversity in the course of exploring aspects of a market economy and economic rationality in Luke's texts in Chapter 5.

3.3. Redaction Approaches

Scholars have also employed redaction criticism in exploring economic issues in Luke's texts. Mainly they have focused on Luke's theological stance concerning wealth and poverty by investigating Luke's redactional activities reflected in the Gospel.

For example, Alfred Plummer (1896), Hans Conzelmann (1960), and D. L. Mealand (1981) argue that Luke exhibits no particular interest in the issue of wealth and poverty.⁶³ Mealand, for instance, argues that many passages occurring only in Luke merely indicate that Luke retained quite faithfully the tradition that he inherited from the source material.⁶⁴

Conversely, Esler draws the opposite conclusion--arguing that Luke displayed a positive attitude towards the poor and a negative attitude towards the rich. Esler insists that, for instance, Luke exhibits his preference for the poor in his redaction of the Q parable of the Great Feast where he portrays the host as inviting the poor without qualification (Lk 14:15-24) in contrast to Matthew's version in which the host expels a certain man because of the man's incorrect attire (Mt 22:1-10).⁶⁵

Though scholars who employed redaction criticism have provided many helpful insights into Luke's theological notion concerning the issues of wealth and poverty by analyzing Luke's

⁶³ Alfred Plummer, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel according to St Luke* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1896), xxv–xxvi; Hans Conzelmann, *The Theology of St. Luke*, trans. Geoffrey Buswell (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1960), 233; D. L. Mealand, *Poverty and Expectation in the Gospels* (London: SPCK, 1981), 16-20.

⁶⁴ Mealand, *Poverty and Expectation in the Gospels*, 17.

⁶⁵ Luke also redacts the instruction of Jesus to "give to him who asks you" (Mt 5:42) in Q by inserting "everyone" (Lk 6:30); by doing so underscores unconditional nature of the command. Moreover, in the scene of Jesus's confrontation with Satan, Luke makes the physical nature of Jesus's reply stand out by closing the statement with "man does not live by bread alone" (4:4) without referring to the word of God as an alternative as is rendered in Matthew's counterpart (4:4).

additions, omissions, and revisions of Q and Mark and materials unique to Luke's Gospel, their focus has been narrow. They have, consequently, failed to address the complex diversity in Luke's discourses related to economic issues that cannot be reduced to the 'rich' and 'poor.'

For instance, in the parable of the rebellious vineyard laborers (Lk 20:9-18), *pace* Esler,⁶⁶ Luke does not reveal his preference for the poor since he does not redact the text to make it appear more favorable to the poor; instead, he describes a vivid portrayal of the conflict between the landlord and the tenants.⁶⁷ Moreover, in the parable, Luke's Jesus does not regard the tenants as innocent victims oppressed by wicked rich people; rather he describes their rebellious motive and coming destruction (Lk 20:14, 16). In fact, the parable involves other complex economic issues of viticulture, tenancy, and absenteeism, which I will discuss in Chapter 7.

Similarly, as I have already discussed, the dishonest steward (Lk 16:1-13), special material unique to Luke (L), fails to operate under the scheme of the rich and poor since those who receive the grace of significant debt reductions are not poor given the size of their debts. Both parables— those of rebellious vineyard laborers and the dishonest steward--clearly demonstrate that economic motives which act as prerequisites of economic rationality and the development of market economy operated among all economic levels in the Roman imperial world, which I will discuss in Chapters 5 and 7.

3.4. *The Influence of Jewish Wisdom Tradition*

Some scholars have pointed out that Jewish sapiential traditions exerted some influence on presentations of economic issues in Luke. For example, Moxnes points to the connection between the instruction on almsgiving with no hope of repayment and Proverbs 14:31 and

⁶⁶ Esler, *Community and Gospel in Luke-Acts*.

⁶⁷ For more detail, see William R. Herzog II., *Parables as Subversive Speech: Jesus as Pedagogue of the Oppressed* (Louisville, KY: Westminster/J. Knox Press, 1994), 98-113.

19:17.⁶⁸ In those sayings in Proverbs, the sage of the book underscores the importance of almsgiving to the poor by stating that God also created the poor and cares for them, promising a divine repayment for almsgiving to the poor.

However, at some points in Luke's discourses related to economic issues, Luke diverges markedly from Jewish notions of wealth and poverty. Ben Witherington, for instance, insists that in the account of the rich man and Lazarus (Lk 16:19-31), Luke subverts the traditional wisdom view held by Pharisees that links material richness with divine blessing by underscoring that material possessions cannot serve as a criterion with which God evaluates a person.⁶⁹

The examples from Moxnes and Witherington show that the influence of Jewish traditions seems to be partial and limited to certain issues such as Luke's attitude towards the rich and poor and certain economic practices that promote generosity and almsgiving.⁷⁰ In fact, Jewish wisdom traditions address a great diversity of other economic issues that seem not to deny economic initiative and profit motive (Prov.10:4, 15; 21:5, 25; 28:20; Sir. 10:20; 13:21-23; 19:1). In this regard, scholars failed to address such issues as these: What are the economic notions informing Jewish wisdom traditions? Do Jewish wisdom traditions indicate the realities of a market economy and economic rationality? If so, do they adopt a pro-market or anti-market stance? To what degree do Jewish wisdom traditions promote economic rationality in terms of wisdom on wealth?

Moreover, due to the universal characteristics of wisdom sayings, it is hard to identify whether wisdom traditions echoed in Luke's text related to economic issues are purely Jewish or reflect the common wisdom of Near Eastern and Mediterranean world. For instance, David Balch argues that some economic notions reflected in Luke's texts--such as almsgiving, the hope

⁶⁸ Moxnes, *The Economy of the Kingdom*, 121.

⁶⁹ Witherington, *Jesus and Money*, 100-01.

⁷⁰ Moxnes, *The Economy of the Kingdom*, 121; Witherington, *Jesus and Money*, 100-01.

for debt-redemption, and the reversal of fortune between the rich and poor--are heavily influenced by the Greco-Roman world reflected in the writings of Isocrates, Dionysius, and Plutarch.⁷¹ If it is the case, to get a better understanding of wisdom influence on Luke's discourses related to economic issues, it seems to be necessary to explore the above questions in light of the broader context of Mediterranean world.

4. Literary Approaches

4.1. *Literary Function of Possessions*

Scholars have also employed diverse literary approaches in their investigations of Luke's texts related to economic issues. Especially, Johnson (1977) explores how possessions as a literary device operate in Luke-Acts to reveal people's attitude toward Jesus and his disciples. According to Johnson, people who respond positively to Jesus dispose of their possessions in obedience to his instructions and *vice versa*. Moreover, possessions also serve as an indicator of a religious power mechanism among people. Those who are under the authority of Jesus and the apostles pay their deference to these figures by offering their possessions, as the cases of Zaccheus and Barnabas show.

Through his acute literary analysis, Johnson points out the significance of possessions in the development of Luke's narrative; by doing so, he demonstrates how economic activities are closely associated with religious activities.

However, do Johnson's observations about the use and control of possessions simply concern literary phenomena while ignoring economic structures and practices? Or can we interpret them as a reflection of social phenomena? If they reflect social phenomena or

⁷¹ David L. Balch, "Rich and Poor, Proud and Humble in Luke-Acts," in *The Social World of the First Christians: Essays in Honor of Wayne A. Meeks*, ed. L. M. White and O. L. Yarbrough (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 1995), 214-33.

conventions, they may serve as a ready example that economic matters took up a significant position in first-century CE Roman societies since they show that people expressed important social activities such as submitting to authority and exercising power in terms of economic activities, especially the use and control of possessions.

In this case, furthermore, the observations are closely related to the issue of economic substantivism discussed in Chapter 1. Economic substantivism, as I have previously mentioned, underscores that throughout history, economy did not exist as an independent social category but was subsumed under larger social structures such as social, political, and cultural aspects. The observations, however, can be interpreted otherwise; that is, they demonstrate, *pace* Polanyi, that economy exerted a significant role in every aspect of society. In this regard, a more in-depth investigation of economic aspects of the text, including those of market economy and economic rationality, would help illuminate the literary functions of economic activities, including possessions.

Moreover, modern economic theories provide analytical theory to interpret the observations. More specifically, in terms of economic rationality, I suggest that the literary functions of possessions operate as what game theory calls “revelation mechanisms,” involving related discussions of screening, commitment, and signaling, as I will argue in more detail in Chapter 6.

4.2. Reader Response Criticism

Some recent literary studies have utilized reader-response criticism to form a consistent understanding of Luke’s texts related to economic issues. Moreover, using this method, they have attempted to examine the effects of reading Luke’s writings on the economic notions and

practices of the readers.

Thomas E. Phillips, for example, employs Wolfgang Iser's phenomenology of reading process, especially the process of consistency-building, to gain a consistent understanding of Luke's texts.⁷² Phillips argues that Luke severely criticizes inappropriate economic attitudes, especially the mindset that associates self-sufficiency and self-security with possessions while promoting proper attitudes such as "greedlessness" and generosity.⁷³

Likewise, Hans-Georg Gradl employs both linguistic approaches and reader-response criticism, focusing on the role of the reader and the interaction between the text and the reader.⁷⁴ James A. Metzger also eclectically incorporates aspects of reader response criticism, narrative criticism (narratology), and intertextuality in exploring the issues of wealth and consumption in Luke's Travel Narrative.⁷⁵

Those scholars have embraced recent advances in literary criticism in the analyses of literary consistency and effects by focusing on the work of readers. However, the focus on consistency building, such as Phillip's, seems to be somewhat forced and partial in neglecting some passages in Luke's texts related to economic issues such as the parable of the dishonest steward (Lk 16), that of the ten pounds (Lk 19), and that of the rebellious tenants (Lk 20), as I have mentioned earlier in this chapter.

More importantly, however, we can pose questions concerning the construction of a reader and especially knowledge of market economy and economic rationality. How do the notions of economy of the constructed readers influence and are influenced by reading Luke's texts related to economic issues? What role do notions of market economy and economic

⁷² Phillips, *Reading Issues in Wealth and Poverty in Luke-Acts*.

⁷³ Phillips, *Reading Issues in Wealth and Poverty in Luke-Acts*, 182.

⁷⁴ Gradl, *Zwischen Arm und Reich*.

⁷⁵ Metzger, *Consumption and Wealth in Luke's Travel Narrative*.

rationality play in these constructions? These questions seem to be significant to modern as well as the first-century Mediterranean readers because current flesh and blood readers live in modern capitalistic societies and the approaches addressed in this study--market economy and economic rationality—are a cultural product of them. In this regard, in terms of reader response criticism, the economic reading addressed in this study could benefit the readers who want to better understand the modern economy by providing an important point of comparison between the modern and the ancient economy regarding aspects of a market economy and economic rationality.

5. Social Scientific Approaches

Social scientific criticism has also contributed significantly to the investigation of Luke's text related to economic issues. Early practitioners of social scientific criticism, such as Robert M. Grant, John G. Gager, Wayne A. Meeks, and Gerd Theissen, shed light on the study of Luke's texts by focusing on the social history of the early Christianity, though many of them did not directly engage the texts.⁷⁶ Moreover, later scholars such as Richard L. Rohrbaugh, Halvor Moxnes, and Douglas E. Oakman have energetically utilized various social scientific models in their investigation of Luke's Gospel.⁷⁷

5.1. Cultural Anthropology

Many of the later social scientific practitioners have been deeply inspired by cultural

⁷⁶ John G. Gager, *Kingdom and Community: The Social World of Early Christianity* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1975); Wayne A. Meeks, *The First Urban Christians: The Social World of the Apostle Paul* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1977); Gerd Theissen, *Sociology of Early Palestinian Christianity* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1978).

⁷⁷ Richard L. Rohrbaugh, "The Pre-Industrial City in Luke Acts: Urban Social Relations," in Neyrey, *The Social World of Luke-Acts*, 125-49; Moxnes, *The Economy of the Kingdom*; Oakman, "The Countryside in Luke-Acts."

anthropology which has proven to be very useful in identifying characteristics of ancient societies. For instance, in exploring social backgrounds for Luke's criticism of the Pharisees as "the lovers of money" in Luke 16:14, Moxnes, following the example of Moses I. Finley's analysis of Homer's *Odyssey*,⁷⁸ employs various social scientific models and concepts, such as Karl Polanyi's concept of embedded economy,⁷⁹ Marshall Sahlins's three reciprocity patterns,⁸⁰ anthropological models of limited good⁸¹ and patronage,⁸² and James Scott's concept of the moral economy of the peasants.⁸³

Drawing on a variety of anthropological models and economic concepts, Moxnes engages more systematically and thoroughly the socio-economic contexts within which Luke's texts related to economic issues operated and were produced. By doing so, Moxnes reads the texts related to economic issues "more economically" in that he rightly pays considerable attention to the economic aspects of the texts.

However, Moxnes is so heavily influenced by Karl Polanyi's notion of ancient economy—economic substantivism and economic embeddedness--that he seems to lose the balance between social and economic factors by placing more emphasis on cultural and anthropological factors than economic factors.⁸⁴ For instance, even though using the term "economic" or "economy" throughout the book, Moxnes allots only a few pages to his

⁷⁸ Moses I. Finley, *The World of Odysseus*, rev. ed. (Harmondsworth, UK: Penguin Books, 1965).

⁷⁹ Polanyi et al., *Trade and Market in the Early Empires* (1957; repr., Chicago: Henry Regnery, 1971), 250.

⁸⁰ These three patterns are generalized reciprocity, balanced reciprocity, and negative reciprocity. Generalized and negative reciprocity refers respectively to altruistic and exploitive forms of exchange while balanced reciprocity refers to an equal exchange. For more detail, see Marshall D. Sahlins, *Stone Age Economics* (Chicago: Aldine Publishing, 1972), 185-276.

⁸¹ George M. Foster, "Peasant Society and the Image of Limited Good," *American Anthropologist* 67, no. 2 (1965): 293-315.

⁸² Shmuel N. Eisenstadt and Luis Roniger, *Patrons, Clients, and Friends* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984).

⁸³ James C. Scott, *The Moral Economy of the Peasant: Rebellion and Subsistence in Southeast Asia* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1976).

⁸⁴ Moxnes, *The Economy of the Kingdom*, 22-3, 27-32.

discussion of money, market, and other economic concepts in his more than a hundred page description of Luke's socio-economic world.⁸⁵ Consequently, Moxnes's analysis should be augmented by more recent investigations of economic aspects of the first-century Roman world including those of market economy and economic rationality highlighted by Peter Temin and Walter Scheidel, for example, in order to gain a more balanced understanding of the economic *sitz im leben* of Luke's Gospel and of Luke's economic texts.⁸⁶

For example, Moxnes understands first-century Palestine society within the context of a "limited good society" in which a society is operative under the rule of a zero-sum game as it lies in a state of constant undersupply of all valuable resources, both material and immaterial.⁸⁷ Within such circumstance, the gain of some people directly indicates the loss of other people, competition for scarce resources becomes the normalcy of social morality that permeates every aspects of people's life. Moxnes further associates the notion of a "limited good society" with the issue of agricultural land. He, however, does not present concrete and detailed descriptions of the economic operation of a "limited good society."

In this respect, we can further develop Moxnes's analysis by cross-fertilizing anthropological and economic insights. More specifically, modern economics, game theory in particular, offer an excellent analytical tool to explore how people behave in this situation (i.e., a zero-sum game situation) to maximize their own benefit given constraints from the perspective of economic rationality. Therefore, game theory can provide a fresh insight into the notion of a "limited good society" by furnishing vivid portrayals of economic operation in such a society. I will present a more in-depth investigation of game theory in Chapters 5 and 6.

Moreover, Moxnes also adopts James Scott's notion of "the moral economy of the

⁸⁵ Moxnes, *The Economy of the Kingdom*, 35-36, 64-68.

⁸⁶ Scheidel, *The Cambridge Companion to the Roman Economy*; Temin, *The Roman Market Economy*.

⁸⁷ Moxnes, *The Economy of the Kingdom*, 76-9.

peasants,” in the analysis of the economy of the Kingdom that Luke manifests. More specifically, the notion represents the economic value system of certain agriculture-based peasant societies that grants top priority to the “safety first principle.” This principle aims to secure subsistence of the people and serves as the primary ethical criteria for people’s decisions and judgments relating to economic activities. According to this principle, people also develop their own distinctive notions of economic justice and exploitation.

At this point, modern economic theories can supplement the notion of “the moral economy of the peasants” by providing analytical devices to explain the behavioral patterns of those societies in light of economic rationality. For example, under “the safety first principle,” people exhibit the behavioral patterns of risk-aversion as they favor a pay-off system that guarantees them some amount of constant earnings instead of higher but more fluctuating ones. For example, such behavioral patterns lead them sometimes to agree with contracts which take from them a large share at the time of a good harvest while taking a small share in a lean year. These contracts look at first glance more exploitative and disadvantageous for tenant farmers but nonetheless promise them a certain minimum level of income. I will provide a more detailed exploration of the concept of risk in Chapter 5.

5.2. Economic Structures of Luke’s Community

Many social scientific critics have paid attention to the socio-economic situations of Luke’s community as a prime factor in the investigation of Luke’s Gospel.

Concerning the social structure of early Christianity, earlier scholars such as Adolf Deissmann argued that early Christian groups were composed of the members from the poor, the

marginalized, and the social outcast.⁸⁸ Similarly, in his reconstruction of the social strata of Pauline Christian community, Justin J. Meggitt argued for significant poverty among Paul's groups; he proposed that the economic structure of the Roman Empire which was reflected in Paul's communities was extremely unequal since only less than 1% of people lived the life free from poverty.⁸⁹ Conversely, later scholars, such as Wayne A. Meeks and Gerd Theissen, refuted Deissmann's argument and proposed instead that early Christian groups were composed of people from a variety of social standing including those who possess considerable wealth.⁹⁰ Some scholars such as Andrew D. Clarke further suggested that the rich take up a high proportion of early church members.⁹¹

However, some recent scholars such as Steve Friesen have argued that the so-called "New Consensus" failed to take account of such issues as social conflict, poverty, and social injustice.⁹² Instead, Friesen presented more sophisticated criteria, presenting social stratifications with more diverse social groups rather than two or three classes--rich, middle, and poor class. For instance, Friesen proposed a model of social stratification with seven different economic scales based upon levels of income and wealth which Bruce W. Longenecker has revised somewhat in highlighting a greater 'middle' group.⁹³

As the above review demonstrates, a growing number of scholars notice that the economic structure of the Roman Empire was more than a dichotomy between the rich and poor. In this regard, all these scholars, from Deissmann, Theissen, and Meeks to Friesen went beyond

⁸⁸ Adolf Deissmann, *Light from the ancient East; the New Testament Illustrated by Recently Discovered Texts of the Graeco-Roman World*, trans. Lionel R. M. Strachan (New York; London : Harper & Brothers, 1927).

⁸⁹ Justin J. Meggitt, *Paul, Poverty and Survival* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1998), 50.

⁹⁰ Gerd Theissen, *The Social Setting of Pauline Christianity* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1982); Meeks, *The First Urban Christians*.

⁹¹ Andrew D. Clarke, *Secular and Christian Leadership in Corinth: A Socio-Historical and Exegetical Study of 1 Corinthians 1-6* (Leiden; New York: E.J. Brill, 1993), 45.

⁹² Friesen, "Poverty in Pauline Studies," 323-61.

⁹³ Longenecker, "Exposing the Economic Middle," 243-78.

a rich-poor dichotomy in their understanding of Roman economic structures. In particular, the model presented by Friesen and revised by Longenecker provided significant insight into the economic structure of the Roman world. I will discuss their work in more detail in Chapter 5.

Nonetheless it seems that all these scholars' understanding of the Roman economic structure is less thorough since these scholars did not fully explore the implications that their understanding carries for their understanding of the Roman imperial economy. Put more specifically, most of them, if not all, failed to associate their understanding of diverse economy scales of the Roman Empire with diverse and dynamic aspects of the Roman economy, which many ancient economic historians and classists have recently observed.

For instance, in terms of market economy and economic rationality approaches, we can pose such a question: From where do those diverse economic groups get their income or wealth? If the Roman Empire had an economic structure that featured diverse middle groups in their economic scale, it means that the Roman economy provided enough economic outcome to support such a structure, which in turn strongly suggests that some members of the economy, especially those in the middle portion of the structure, achieved their wealth beyond the self-sustaining level through more active and diverse economic activities.⁹⁴ Luke's Gospel also provides ample evidence of such economic activities: diverse accounts involving tenants (20:9-19), stewards (16:1-13), tax collectors (18:9-14; 19:1-10), and businesses (19:11-27). In this regard, a more detailed exploration of market economy and economic rationality can add significant insights into the discussion about the structure of the Roman imperial economy by supplementing and complementing it.

⁹⁴ For more detail, see Emmanuel Mayer, *The Ancient Middle Classes: Urban Life and Aesthetics in the Roman Empire, 100 BCE-250 CE* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2012).

6. Concluding Remark

In this chapter, I have presented a brief history and evaluation of scholarship on Luke's texts related to economic issues to locate my study in relation to this scholarship. In so doing, I have sorted out diverse approaches in terms of methodologies that these approaches employed: ethical, historical criticism/historical, literary, and social/social scientific. With these methodologies, scholars have investigated a variety of economic issues presented in Luke's texts, such as rich and poor, wealth and poverty, the command to renunciation of possessions and the related problem of inconsistency, the historical context and the social structure of Luke's community, and so on.

As I conclude the chapter, I will briefly make some remarks concerning this review. The review has demonstrated that many scholars, especially those who adopted ethical and literary approaches, showed less attention to economic issues in and of themselves; and instead they utilized economic discourses for their own purposes rather than reading economic texts economically.

Though some scholars introduced in the chapter have paid some attention to economic aspects in their analysis of Luke's text related to economic issues, their explorations, however, seem to be limited to only certain aspects of the ancient Roman economy and many of them did not engage economic issues directly even though they utilized the texts related to the issues; instead they made economic issues subservient to other themes relating to ethical or literary matters.

For instance, historical scholars used the texts to identify historical issues such as the historical origin of Luke's economic commands--especially the radical economic command of total divestiture. In a similar vein, they used economic discourses as a source to reconstruct

Luke's community and their situations by exploring Luke's authorial intentions and audience's social situations.

Of course, some scholars, especially those who used historical criticism/historical and social scientific approaches, have investigated more directly the socio-economic context of Luke's texts related to economic issues. Nonetheless, they have seldom provided a comprehensive and broad picture of the Roman imperial economy, even though they engaged some aspects of the Roman economy. Moreover, some of their discussions concerning the ancient economy seem to require more updated knowledge of recent discussions, as I have previously mentioned in Chapter 1. Furthermore, they seem to put too much emphasis on non-economic factors such as cultural and anthropological aspects in their exploration of economic discourses in Luke, causing them to neglect economic dynamics.

Consequently, as I have already pointed out in Chapter 1, many economic aspects still remain for more in-depth scholarly investigation. To redress such scholarly inattention and bias and to fill the neglected lacuna in the scholarship, this study, as I have previously underscored, intends to demonstrate that the Roman imperial economy was far more diverse and dynamic than previously thought, which many economic and classical scholars post Finley and Polanyi have actively underscored. For this purpose, this study employs aspects of market economy and economic rationality in Luke's text related to economic issues as evidence of such diversity and dynamics, which I will investigate in Chapters 4 to 7. Before I engage the investigation, I describe the ancient Roman economy based upon recent scholarly discussions in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 3

The Roman Imperial Economy

1. Introduction

In this chapter, I focus on the nature, structure, and performance of the Roman imperial economy and engage major scholarly debates on them. In so doing, I present a brief overview of features of the Roman imperial economy around the first few centuries CE. Before doing that, I introduce some preliminary notes of caution in discussing the Roman imperial economy.

1.1. Preliminary Notes of Caution

In investigating the Roman imperial economy, there are significant challenges and some caution is needed. In fact, there are some real obstacles to discussing a notion as broad as the “Roman imperial economy.” Particularly there are four matters that are to be noted. First, one problem is the sheer size of territory, diverse peoples, population size, and time scale (or chronological span). More concretely, the Roman Empire took up a unique position in history in that it governed an enormous territory by a single political entity for several centuries; it encompassed the entire Mediterranean basin and surrounding hinterland areas. Besides, its eastern and northern boundaries extended to the Black Sea, the Red Sea, and Britain. The entire Roman imperial territory embraced some 30 different nations and the equivalent to over 3.5 million square kilometers, with, by some estimates, 55-65 million people.⁹⁵ Furthermore, the Roman Empire lasted for centuries—at least 500 years if one employs the time period of emperors from 27 BCE to 476 CE, from the rise of Augustus, the first emperor, to the deposition of Romulus

⁹⁵ Bruce W. Frier, “Demography,” in *The Cambridge Ancient History 11: The High Empire, A.D. 70–192*, ed. Alan K. Bowman, Peter Garnsey, and Dominic Rathbone, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 787–816, esp. 814.

Augustus, the last emperor of the Western Roman Empire. Therefore, such magnitude makes it more difficult to define the economic characteristic of the Roman Empire.

Second, there is a problem in identifying modern equivalents or analogous economies – hence of what theoretical models can be helpfully employed. Due to the uniqueness of the Roman imperial economy, it is not easy to identify modern equivalents. As an archetypical type of later European empires, it shared to some extent common characteristics with modern European empires, but it by far surpassed modern European imperial economies in size and degree. Meanwhile, though it has a regional parallel with the European Union (EU), it was quite different from the EU in that it did not constitute a unified economic entity governed by single economic agents such as central bank or policy institute.

Third, there is the problem of the nature of sources concerning the economy. In many cases, available sources, either written or archeological, from Greco-Roman antiquity are scanty, spotty, fragmentary, and regional, which makes it hard to draw a broader picture of the Roman imperial economy. Besides, some written sources seem to reflect elite propaganda, outlining what should be rather than what really is, and thus require more careful reading.

Fourth, one needs to be cautious about the scope of the study of Roman imperial economy and the related issue of nomenclature. In fact, the Roman imperial economy constitutes one of the most important parts of the economic history of the ancient Mediterranean world.⁹⁶ In its broadest category, scholars of the ancient Mediterranean world have conventionally divided the world into two large areas: the Greek and Roman world vs. the Egyptian and Near Eastern world.⁹⁷ According to this category, the Roman imperial economy is a subset of the Greco-Roman economy. Therefore, a number of studies that deal with the Roman imperial

⁹⁶ In fact, the term “ancient” seems too vague. In this study, I will follow Moses Finley’s conventional category of the period between 1000 BCE and 500 CE. Finley, *The Ancient Economy*, 29.

⁹⁷ Manning and Morris, *The Ancient Economy*, 1.

economy have been published under the category of the Greco-Roman world such as *Non-Slave Labour in the Greco-Roman World* (1980),⁹⁸ *The Cambridge Economic History of the Greco-Roman World* (2007),⁹⁹ and *The Monetary Systems of the Greeks and Romans* (2008),¹⁰⁰ just to name a few.

So any discussion must recognize the problems discussed above and accept some limitations as to what can be said. That being recognized however, scholars have foregrounded certain issues and debated certain approaches, which I take up in the next section of this chapter. Before doing so, I make another preliminary remark. With these cautions in mind, there are some things that can be said about the economy that will provide a foundation for my discussion.

Generally speaking, the Roman imperial economy was a large-scale open economy marked by significant regional and chronological heterogeneity. More precisely, it was a single integrated economy with a large scale since it was composed of a number of different former ethnic-political entities which were forcefully combined after Roman conquest or alliance. It was an open economy since it was involved in trade to a considerable degree. Furthermore it was heterogeneous in nature, marked by complexity, diversity, and uneven development. It contained diverse characteristics within itself--those of a free market, socially-embedded, and a state-driven economy.¹⁰¹

Based upon the above preliminary remark on the characteristic of the Roman imperial economy, in the rest of this chapter, I explore in more detail diverse characteristics featured in the Roman imperial economy—including aspects of a market economy and economic rationality

⁹⁸ Peter Garnsey, *Non-Slave Labour in the Greco-Roman World* (Cambridge: Cambridge Philological Society, 1980).

⁹⁹ Walter Scheidel, Ian Morris, and Richard P. Saller, eds., *The Cambridge Economic History of the Greco-Roman World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

¹⁰⁰ William V. Harris, ed., *The Monetary Systems of the Greeks and Romans* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).

¹⁰¹ David Mattingly defines the Roman economy as a combination of political economy, social economy, and “a true market economy,” with which I basically agree. David Mattingly, “The Imperial Economy,” in *A Companion to the Roman Empire*, ed. David S. Potter (Malden, MA: Blackwell Pub., 2006), 295.

that have received insufficient attention so far in New Testament scholarship.

2. The Unfolding Debate of the Ancient Greco-Roman Economy

In this section, I provide a brief historical survey of major scholarly debates involving the Roman imperial economy as a part of the Greco-Roman economy.¹⁰² In the study of the Greco-Roman economy, scholars have mainly investigated its structure and performance, as Douglass North, a Nobel laureate in economics, suggests.¹⁰³ They have dealt with not only traditional economic activities such as production, distribution, and consumption but also various political, cultural, and social factors and the demographic features that influence economic structure. In particular, many sociologists and economists of the institutional school of thought underscore the mutually formative and influencing natures of socio-cultural structure and economy.¹⁰⁴ Moreover, from a practical standpoint, many scholars have endeavored to find favorable conditions for economic development through historical surveys on how certain economies prospered or failed to do so.¹⁰⁵

2.1. Primitivist-Modernist Debate

In investigating the ancient Greco-Roman economy, a number of scholars have shown their interest in the fundamental question of its characteristics. In the history of scholarship, modern research on the ancient Greco-Roman economy traces back to as early as 1817 when August

¹⁰² Neville Morley presents a helpful overview of the major debates on the ancient economy including the primitivist-modernist debate and the substantivism-formalism debate. His overview focuses primarily on the theoretical aspect of these debates. See Neville Morley, *Theories, Models, and Concepts in Ancient History, Approaching the Ancient World* (London; New York: Routledge, 2004), 33-50.

¹⁰³ Douglas C. North, *Structure and Change in Economic History* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1981), 3.

¹⁰⁴ Institutional Economics pays attention to the role and evolution of diverse human institutions, such as political, judicial, economic, social, and cultural ones, that exert significant influence on human economic activities. For more detail, see Douglas C. North, *Institutions, Institutional Change and Economic Performance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990); John Groenewegen, A. H. G. M. Spithoven, and Annette van den Berg, *Institutional Economics: An Introduction* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010).

¹⁰⁵ Richard Saller, "Framing the Debate over Growth in the Ancient Economy," in *The Ancient Economy*, ed. Walter Scheidel and Sitta von Reden (New York: Routledge, 2002).

Böckh presented research on the Athenian economy. But it was only at the end of the nineteenth century when the first major breakthrough, known as the primitivist-modernist debate, occurred among classical scholarship concerning the characteristics of ancient Greco-Roman economy. Since then many scholars have paid academic attention to the nature of ancient economies by raising various quantitative and qualitative questions and presenting numerous scenarios and explanations to answer them.

Among many questions about the characteristics of Greco-Roman economy, the issue of how to locate the economy within the long history of western economic development attracted the first attention of scholars and ignited the heated debate among them, especially among German scholars--the question is often known as the primitivist-modernist debate.¹⁰⁶ In answering this question, they took special note of the economic structure of classical Athens and the Roman Empire in determining the historical location of such economies.

Scholars who support a primitivist stance claim that the ancient economy is qualitatively, not to mention quantitatively, different from the modern one. By primitivist they mean that the ancient economy is basically the aggregation of self-sufficient households regardless of their total size. Accordingly, the ancient economy belongs to the early stage of economic development, and provided no momentum for later progress. In this regard, primitivist scholars evaluate the overall performance of the economy lowly and thus the term “primitivist” carries somewhat negative connotation, though they do not explicitly express such a view.

For example, from the perspective of economic evolution, Karl Bücher identifies the Greco-Roman economy as household economies, while identifying that of the Middle Age and of the post-Renaissance as city economies and national economies.¹⁰⁷ In terms of methodology,

¹⁰⁶ For some bibliographies, see Chapter 1 no. 13.

¹⁰⁷ Karl Bücher, *Die Entstehung der Volkswirtschaft*, 14th ed. (Tübingen: Laupp, 1920), 83-160.

moreover, one of the most important foundations of the primitivist stance is that we cannot apply modern economic theories to the study of ancient world.

Conversely, those who oppose primitivist thinking are called modernists. Modernist scholars claim that the ancient economy is neither too different from nor far from the modern economy. Roughly speaking, they think that the two economies differ mainly in size: the ancient economy is a small-size version of the early modern one. In identifying the historical location of the ancient economy, modernist scholars place it in the early stage of modern development of capitalism and market economy; thus, it corresponds to the late medieval and early modern period in the continuum of western economic development.

Eduard Meyer, for instance, suggests that ancient Greece of the 7-5th centuries BCE roughly corresponds to Europe of the 14-16th centuries CE in terms of economic development stages.¹⁰⁸ Concerning the economic performance of the ancient economy, contrary to the primitivist group, modernist scholars highly value the economic performance of the ancient Greco-Roman world. For example, Peter Temin insists that the market economy of the Roman Empire was more advanced than that of the Medieval Age.¹⁰⁹ I will engage Temin's works in more detail in Chapters 4-7. Far from being a stagnant economy, they see it as a dynamic economy with fairly developed markets in several industries, demonstrating great potential for later progress. Moreover, in terms of methodologies they think that standard methods and concepts of modern economics such as mathematical modelling and statistical analysis using economic indices and concept--Gross Domestic Product, per capita income, prices, demand of money, and so forth--can be applied to the investigation of the Greco-Roman economy as the ancient economy shows a great proximity to the early modern one.

¹⁰⁸ Eduard Meyer, *Die Wirtschaftliche Entwicklung des Altertums: Ein Vortrag, Gehalten auf der Dritten Versammlung Deutscher Historiker in Frankfurt a. M. am 20. April 1895* (Jena, Ger.: Fischer, 1895), 118-9.

¹⁰⁹ Temin, "The Economy of the Early Roman Empire," 133-151, esp. 133.

In fact, it is hard to determine which standpoint of the two is more valid and useful in the study of the Roman economy since it still remains in dispute in the scholarship. Thus, it seems safer not to adhere to either of them too rigidly. As for this study, it inclines to the modernist standpoint because this standpoint is important for the argument of this study. As already mentioned, the study focuses primarily on Luke's inscribing of aspects of a market economy and economic rationality that the Roman imperial economy exhibited. Those features, moreover, serve as evidence of Roman economic advances that can in no way be negligible. For instance, as modernist scholars have well presented, the advanced features of the economy include volume and size of trade in olive, wine, pottery, and other products that exceeded the local level; the increase in commercial farming in many areas of the Roman Empire; the development of non-agricultural industry in some areas of the Empire; and advances in the Roman monetary economy and financial activities. These advanced features support the modernist standpoint of the Roman economy which I will unfold in more detail later in this chapter. In addition, based upon numerical modelling and quantitative analysis, Peter Temin argues that the Roman economy had well-functioned markets in some areas such as labor, financial, and grain markets.¹¹⁰

2.2. Substantivism-Formalism Debate

In the mid-twentieth century, while the primitivist-modernist debate had not arrived at a satisfactory conclusion, the academic focus on the ancient economy shifted as some leading scholars such as Karl Polanyi, A.H.M. Jones, and Moses Finley led a paradigm shift. Polanyi in particular is among the first who presented new ways of seeing ancient economic issues and thus

¹¹⁰ Peter Temin, "A Market Economy in the Early Roman Empire," *JRS* 91 (2001): 169-181; Temin, "The Economy of the Early Roman Empire," 133-151; David Kessler and Peter Temin, "Money and Prices in the Early Roman Empire" in Harris, *The Monetary Systems of the Greeks and Romans*.

posed new sets of questions. Specifically, his new concept of economy ignited a new scholarly debate: the substantivism-formalism debate.

In presenting a new way of seeing the ancient economy, Polanyi opposes the view that regards a market-economy as the norm of human economic history and development. He relativizes modern capitalism driven by the force of autonomous and independent markets as a type of economic system that has appeared only recently in world history and governed only certain societies in the world.

Drawing largely on historical and anthropological data from Dahomey,¹¹¹ the ancient Near East, and ancient Athens, Polanyi claims that in world economic history, unlike the modern economic system, the role of market in the economic exchange mechanism was limited.¹¹² Instead, he argues that reciprocity and redistribution exerted significant roles in dominating economic exchange patterns throughout world history. In other words, in most societies, it has been not abstract and impersonal laws of markets driven by profit motive but other social relations and cultural values that have governed economic behaviors of people. Even though it is hardly possible to deny that profit motive has functioned as an important motivation of human economic activities, it nonetheless has been, in Polanyi's view, subordinate to other non-profitable social and cultural causes. In this regard, economy *per se* is not independent of but embedded in other social systems.

He calls the embeddedness of economy in society *economic substantivism*, contrary to *economic formalism* that underscores the independence of economy from other social systems. Given that he regards economy as one of several social categories and underscores the role of social and cultural factors in the economic decision-making of people, in the determination of

¹¹¹ Dahomey was a precolonial kingdom in West-Africa that existed from the 17th to 19th centuries CE.

¹¹² For more detailed references of Polanyi's works, see Chapter 1, no. 2.

economic pattern, and finally of the overall performance of the economy, he shares to a great degree the legacy of the sociologist Max Weber who analyzed economy based on its inseparability from society in general.

Moreover, Polanyi's ideas bear some normative implications, as they are revealed in his political and ethical stance. He seems to have thought that reducing economy to something dominated by behaviors in the market is not only epistemologically implausible but also ethically untenable for it justifies profit-seeking behaviors of people based on the individual choice of optimization (i.e., maximizing profit, minimizing cost) by elevating them as an unchangeable law of nature. Furthermore, he seems to have pursued the restoration of the substantial economy by re-imbedding the economy into society, and, by doing so, endeavored to curb the economic game that occurs in the market economy based on selfish profit motive.

In terms of methodologies, economic substantivism relies heavily on sociological methods while economic formalism employs more directly traditional economic methods. Economic substantivism approaches ancient economies as a part of sociological study rather than a part of economics; therefore it takes seriously sociological categories—such as status, social structure, culture, and belief-- and analyzes ancient economies in relation to such categories. By contrast, economic formalism utilizes economic methods and concepts recently developed by modern economics including economic indices and data such as Gross Domestic Product, income distribution, and trade data from, in relation to the ancient economy, including, for example, wine and oil industries.

Polanyi has exerted a great influence on the study of the Greco-Roman economy until today. For instance, Thomas F. Carney develops historical models that explain both static and dynamic aspects of ancient economies by drawing largely upon Polanyi's arguments and

economic anthropology, though he also pays attention to some modern theories such as monetary theories and markets.¹¹³ Though Polanyi's influence has been enormous, so far as the Roman economy is concerned, however, it was Moses Finley who more directly influenced its study. This is so because Polanyi did not engage the Roman economy as much as Finley did. I discuss Finley's view in more detail later. It is sufficient here to say that Finley agrees with Polanyi's economic substantivism in many aspects; and, in this regard, Polanyi's legacy has continued to exert great influence on the study of the Roman economy through the work of Moses Finley.

This study basically agrees with Polanyi's assumption of economic substantivism in that the ancient Greco-Roman economy could not exist independently of its larger society. The study, however, opposes many of Polanyi's arguments since they underestimate aspects of a market economy and economic rationality evident in the Roman economy. I discuss them in more detail later when I discuss the post-Polanyi and Finley debate. Moreover, as far as the methodologies are concerned, of the two categories presented above (i.e., economic substantivism vs. economic formalism), this study relies more heavily on economic formalism since the study extensively utilizes the economic methods and concepts developed by modern economics such as profit maximization, risk premium, opportunity cost, moral hazard, screening, and so forth.

2.3. Finley's View of the Roman Economy

As I have mentioned, Moses I. Finley has greatly contributed to the study of the Roman economy in many aspects. Particularly, in close association with economic substantivism, Finley shares much in common with the basic assumptions and notions of Polanyi's. For instance, following Polanyi and Weber, Finley puts emphasis on status,¹¹⁴ rather than class,¹¹⁵ as the key analytical

¹¹³ Carney, *The Shape of the Past: Models and Antiquity*.

¹¹⁴ Status denotes a social position or rank that a person or group occupies in the social structure. Status is determined

concept.¹¹⁶ This is so because, as Polanyi notes, economy was not an independent social category in antiquity but connected in complex ways with other social categories. In this regard, he thinks that the concept based on the economic category of class did not exert the same role in antiquity as it does in the modern world, and thus prefers status to class. To demonstrate the importance of status considerations in the decision-making of economic activities, Finley cites Cicero's statement concerning the appropriate vocations and reputable economic behaviors for the free. In the statement, Cicero disdains certain profit-making behaviors, regarding them as mostly involved in cheating and exploitation of others; instead, he commends agriculture as the best vocation (*Off.* 1.150-151).

Finley evaluates the influences of status concerns on the ancient economy. Cicero's argument cited above shows how concerns for reputation and honor qualify certain economic opportunities. Finley goes further to suggest that status concerns hindered the development of labor, credit, and land market as well as trade and technology. He points to the negative effect of elevated citizen status and the concerns for status on the economy. The concerns for status limited the citizen's active participation in various economic activities, which led to the growth of non-citizen labor force in diverse vocations.

Furthermore, Finley argues that the bi-polar status distinction between the free and the slave became blurred and a diversified status group among people emerged in society as the centralization of land to few elite members became intensified in the Roman Empire.¹¹⁷ This is

by a variety of factors such as gender, age, ethnicity, education, and wealth. For more detail, see Max Weber, "Class, Status, Party," in *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*, ed. Hans H. Girth and C. Wright Mills (New York: Oxford University Press, 1946), 180-95.

¹¹⁵ In Marxist theory, class is a social position of a person or group determined exclusively by a person or group's relationship with the means of production. Vladimir I. Lenin, "A Great Beginning: Heroism of the Workers in the Rear: 'Communist Subbotniks' in *V. I. Lenin, Collected Works, Volume 29*, 45 vols. (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1965), 421.

¹¹⁶ Finley, *The Ancient Economy*, 35-61.

¹¹⁷ Finley, *The Ancient Economy*, 62-94.

so because most Greco-Roman nobles, if not all, were reluctant to openly engage in some profitable activities such as interest-bearing loan business and long-distance trade. Even though they accumulated wealth through such businesses, they were unwilling to put their hands directly and explicitly into such businesses; thus they hired agents who performed such activities on their behalf. Consequently many slaves, women, and foreigners triumphed in areas of trade and finance.

Finley also attributes the underdevelopment of a labor market in the Roman Empire to the elevated status of citizenship.¹¹⁸ The rise in citizen's power and status made it difficult for the rich to exploit the poor citizen. The direct result of this difficulty was the shortage of an internal labor force as the rich found it more difficult to draw the poor citizen into the labor force. Together with the intensification of land concentration in the hands of fewer wealthy persons and the growth of foreign markets for agricultural products, a rigid and insufficient labor supply triggered the development of large-scale production using slaves in the Roman Empire, known as *latifundia* in the western provinces.¹¹⁹

Moreover, the difficulty in exploiting fellow citizens also intensified the exploitation of people outside citizen status. Especially, exploitation was directed toward the countryside, which consequently created unequal relationships between city and country.¹²⁰ To feed the free citizens in the city who were engaged in limited economic activities, the Roman Empire transferred agricultural products from the countryside to the city through various exploitive means such as

¹¹⁸ Finley, *The Ancient Economy*, 95-122.

¹¹⁹ *Latifundia*, literally means large farms, is especially used to refer to the phenomenon of large-scale farming based on slave labor. It was a form of commercial farming specializing in such crops as grain, olive, and wine. It was prevalent during the early Roman imperial period, 1st to 3rd centuries CE, in some areas of the Roman Empire--such as Sicily, Egypt, North Africa, and Spain. For more detail, see Kenneth D. White, "Latifundia," *Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies* 14, no. 1 (1967): 62-79; Tamara Lewit, *Agricultural Production in the Roman Economy, A.D. 200-400* (Oxford: Tempus Reparatum, 1991); John P. Russo, "The Sicilian Latifundia," *Italian Americana* 17, no. 1 (1999): 40-57.

¹²⁰ Finley, *The Ancient Economy*, 123-49.

tax, tribute, and rent. In this regard, the countryside seems to have functioned to some degree as the internal colonies of ancient cities. Therefore, Finley identifies ancient cities as not producer or trade cities but consumer cities.

It seems that, Finley, as Polanyi did, very much had in mind the ideological and political implications of his research on the ancient Mediterranean economy. Finley approaches economic exploitation in a systemic way for he investigates structural aspects of them in the interwoven social, cultural, and economic system of the Greco-Roman world. He demonstrates how one status group, the free citizen, exploited the other status groups, slaves and countrymen in particular, for their existence. This is a traditional “beggar-thy-neighbor” strategy since it transfers poverty from one group to others, though the strategy is definitely a morally unjustifiable one since it is sustained at the sacrifice of others.

Conclusively, Finley, as Polanyi did, contributed greatly to the study of the Roman imperial economy through his view on the economy--a self-sufficient agricultural economy with an underdeveloped market economy. Overall, status concerns prevailed over economic activities in the society. Consequently, agriculture served as the main source of wealth, and trade played only a limited role in the economy. Long distance trade was restricted to luxury goods, and people made their fortunes through rent-taking rather than by means of trade or industrial production.

Admittedly, this study is deeply indebted to Finley’s view on the Roman Empire in that it starts from Finley’s work and is heavily influenced by later post-Finley discussion. Specifically, in line with recent discussion on the Roman imperial economy, the study critically engages some of Finley’s famous arguments—especially concerning the development of market economy and evidence of economic rationality among people during the early period of the Principate. I

discuss in more detail in what aspects I disagree with his arguments below in association with the post-Finley debate.

2.4. Post-Finley Discussions of the Ancient Greco-Roman Economy

Finley's study on the ancient Greco-Roman economy, as with that of Polanyi, has exerted significant influence on later scholarship. For both proponents and opponents, Finley's arguments serve as a good vantage point. Garnsey and Saller, for instance, echo fairly faithfully Finley's view when they portray the Roman economy as an underdeveloped agricultural economy. As they put it: "The mass of the population lived at or near subsistence level. In a typical underdeveloped, pre-industrial economy, a large proportion of the labour force is employed in agriculture, which is the main avenue for investment and source of wealth. The level of investment in manufacturing industries is low."¹²¹

Moreover, many ancient historians and classicists who showed their interest in socio-economic aspects of Greco-Roman worlds have expanded, criticized, and/or modified Finley's insights and thoughts. Ian Morris attempts to categorize those scholars who have engaged Finley into three groups: the empirist, the oversocialization critics, and the undersocialization critics.¹²² According to him, the empirist refers to those who criticize Finley in light of empirical evidence. The empirist critics insist that Finley's general model falls far short of explaining the details and varieties of Greco-Roman world and is even incorrect in some details.¹²³ The oversocialization critics criticize Finley's excessive emphasis on the influence of

¹²¹ Peter Garnsey and Richard Saller, *The Roman Empire: Economy, Society, and Culture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), 43.

¹²² Ian Morris, "Foreword" to *The Ancient Economy*, by Moses I. Finley, upd. ed. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999).

¹²³ Morris, "Foreword" to *The Ancient Economy*, xxvi. Concerning Finley's factual errors, see Martin Frederiksen, "Theory, Evidence and the Ancient Economy," *JRS* 65 (1975): 164-71.

social status on the economy, especially on the development of market economy. Conversely, the undersocialization critics challenge that Finley failed to take account of ideological aspects in his use of social categories.¹²⁴

As his categorization indicates, Ian Morris underscores social categories, which well reflects Finley's basic notion of the ancient economy—a close relationship between economy and society and the subordination of economy to other social categories.¹²⁵ Yet this study does not follow Morris's categorization since the study focuses primarily on economic aspects, and in this regard his categorization does not serve the purpose of the study. This study, instead, pays primary attention to challenges to economic substantivism--the backbone of Polanyi and Finley's economic notions--which post-Finley scholars have especially addressed. Specifically, this study focuses on the two aspects of post-Finley discussion: methodological issues of economic modeling and data and features of the Roman imperial economy— especially the criticism of the low equilibrium model,¹²⁶ and evidence of a flourishing market economy.

First, concerning economic modeling, some scholars have argued that many of Finley's arguments do not fit the real data they examined.¹²⁷ Put differently, their criticism is mainly aimed at the precision of his model: to what extent does his model explain and match the details of archeological evidence of Greco-Roman antiquities? Furthermore, in terms of methodology,

¹²⁴ However, the notion of undersocialization appears to be somewhat misleading since the term gives the impression that Finley did not engage sufficiently with social categories. In this regard, it seems more adequate to name the third category as ideological critics.

¹²⁵ At this point, Morris follows socialist Mark Granovetter who examined Finley's ideas employing sociological categories. Mark Granovetter, "Economic Action and Social Structure: The Problem of Embeddedness," *American Journal of Sociology* 91, no. 3 (1985): 481-510.

¹²⁶ The low equilibrium model refers to a vicious cycle that a certain economy faces in which a low level of income leads to a low level of saving and investment respectively, which in turn generates a low level of income in the next period. For more detail, see Richard R. Nelson, "A Theory of the Low Level Equilibrium Trap," *American Economic Review* 46, no. 5 (1956): 894-908.

¹²⁷ Hopkins, "Taxes and Trade in the Roman Empire (200 B.C.-A.D. 400)," 101-25; Paul Cartledge, "The Economy (Economies) of Ancient Greece," in Scheidel, *The Ancient Economy*, 11-32; Jean Andreau, "Twenty Years after Moses I. Finley's *The Ancient Economy*," in Scheidel, *The Ancient Economy*, 33-49. See the bibliographies relating to Post-Finley debates below.

the critics put more emphasis on “facts,” “reality,” and/or “evidence” than written documents.

Second, concerning economic data, some scholars have doubted the reliability of ancient texts. They question the validity of some Greco-Roman writers’ arguments, including Cicero’s argument for appropriate economic behaviors and vocations. They argue that such presentations are simply ideological constructs, biased toward “oughtness” rather than reality. They pose a strong doubt as to whether the Greco-Roman elite forsook profitable opportunities in trade and finance and instead remained satisfied with the honorable jobs of farming and land ownership. On the contrary, many nobles, they claim, simply hid their true desire for and interest in wealth through economic activities behind the ostensible cause of maintaining honor and prestige of their status. For example, in the investigation of the ancient Greek economy, Edward Cohen notes Greek people’s notion of a visible and an invisible economy and insists that the size of an invisible economy was large in classical Athens.¹²⁸ An invisible economy includes such businesses as credit, banking, and finance from which Greek nobles gained considerable profit but nonetheless were reluctant to reveal their participation in such activities.¹²⁹ The same is true of Roman aristocrats. John H. D’Arms especially notes that they may have more actively exploited such dishonorable profit opportunities in the areas far from Italy.¹³⁰

In this regard, in terms of methodology, critics of Finley propose that scholars should design models in more formal ways by utilizing economic data, archeological evidence, and cross-cultural comparisons rather than accepting at face value the ancient texts that are full of ideological propaganda.

Third, regarding features of the Roman imperial economy, a number of scholars have

¹²⁸ Edward Cohen, *Athenian Economy and Society: A Banking Perspective* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992).

¹²⁹ Cohen, *Athenian Economy and Society*, 196-206.

¹³⁰ John H. D’Arms, *Commerce and Social Standing in Ancient Rome* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1981).

rejected the low equilibrium model that Finley proposed, claiming that Finley consistently underestimated the size and performance of Greco-Roman economy.¹³¹ In particular, they have presented counter-evidence to Finley's arguments from data on trade, credit, and non-agricultural industries, all of which show dynamic and diverse aspects of the Roman economy. Keith Hopkins, for example, insists that the Roman economy recorded a certain degree of growth during the late republican and early imperial period (200 BCE – 200 CE), marked by the development in trade, service, and other non-agricultural industries as well as the increase in agricultural production and the size of cultivated land.¹³² Likewise, Robert B. Hitchner observes growth in the rural economy on the basis that the large scale of investment in olive production in North Africa provided an impetus for intensive growth¹³³ during the early imperial period.¹³⁴ Paul Millett also notes the development of non-agricultural industries including urban manufacturing and seaborne trade.¹³⁵ In addition, some scholars have argued that the Roman economy achieved both external and internal growth as the population reached its peak during the period with the growth in per capita GDP.¹³⁶

Conclusively, all these scholars underscore that such underestimation of economic

¹³¹ Hopkins, "Taxes and Trade in the Roman Empire;" Hopkins, "Models, Ships and Staples," in *Trade and Famine in Classical Antiquity*, ed. Peter Garnsey and C.R. Whittaker, Proceedings of the Cambridge Philological Society Supplement 8 (Cambridge: Cambridge Philological Society, 1983), 84-109; William V. Harris, ed., *The Inscribed Economy: Production and Distribution in the Roman Empire in the Light of Instrumentum Domesticum: The Proceedings of a Conference Held at the American Academy in Rome on 10-11 January, 1992*, JRA Supplement 6 (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1993).

¹³² Hopkins, "Tax and Trade in the Roman Empire."

¹³³ Intensive growth refers to the economic growth that brings about an increase in per capita output. Note that not all economic growth results in an increase in per capita income since economic growth can occur simply due to population growth.

¹³⁴ Robert B. Hitchner, "Olive Production and the Roman Economy: The Case for Intensive Growth in the Roman Empire," in Scheidel, *The Ancient Economy*, 71-83.

¹³⁵ Paul Millett, "Productive to Some Purpose? The Problem of Ancient Economic Growth," in *Economies beyond Agriculture in the Classical World*, ed. David J. Mattingly and John Salmon (London; New York: Routledge, 2001), 31-5.

¹³⁶ Keith Hopkins, "Economic Growth and Towns in Classical Antiquity," in *Towns in Societies: Essays in Economic History and Historical Sociology*, ed. P. Abrahams and E. A. Wrigley (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978), 35-79; Kevin Greene, *The Archeology of the Roman Economy* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), 9-16.

activity consequently led Finley to neglect the development of the Greco-Roman economy especially that of a market economy exceeding the scale of a self-sufficient economy. As a result Finley reduced the Greco-Roman economy to a primitive household economy. In this regard, David Mattingly calls Finley's view as "the Finleyite primitivists (minimalist) vision."¹³⁷

Fourth, in terms of features of the Roman economy, many scholars have so far presented a variety of counter-evidence illuminating aspects of a growing market economy. For example, Keith Hopkins estimates the scale of long-distance trade utilizing archeological data concerning shipwrecks.¹³⁸ His estimation suggests that trade exerted a considerable role in the Roman imperial economy. Moreover, he argues that tax provided a strong impetus for the development of trade. Likewise, David Mattingly draws on data from rock-cut oil presses in an estimation of the size of the olive oil-producing industry in Roman North Africa.¹³⁹ His estimation shows that the scale of oil production far exceeded the local demand, which suggests that, contrary to Finley's arguments, there existed a well-developed market-oriented oil industry during the Roman imperial period. In a similar vein, Dominic Rathbone investigates a number of letters and accounts in the Heroninos archive from Roman Egypt, and argues that the highly elaborated accounting systems attested in the archive testifies to a high level of economic rationality in the agricultural management.¹⁴⁰ For instance, monthly accounts in the archive were recorded in such a way as to facilitate the calculation of the annual financial profitability of each agricultural unit in the estate.¹⁴¹

¹³⁷ Mattingly, "The Imperial Economy," 283.

¹³⁸ Hopkins, "Taxes and Trade in the Roman Empire"; A. J. Parker, *Ancient Shipwrecks of the Mediterranean and Roman Provinces*, British Archaeological Reports 580 (Oxford: Tempus Reparatum, 1992).

¹³⁹ David Mattingly, *Tripolitania* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1994).

¹⁴⁰ Dominic W. Rathbone, *Economic Rationalism and Rural Society in Third Century AD Egypt: The Heroninos Archive and the Appianus Estate* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

¹⁴¹ Rathbone, *Economic Rationalism and Rural Society*, 399-400.

2.5. *Some Implications of Post-Finley debates*

Post-Finley discussions of the Roman imperial economy suggest that Finley's original insights and thoughts have undergone considerable modifications through diverse critical evaluations. Especially, most scholars now admit that the economic scales of the Roman Empire including sizes of production and trade were much larger than those of Finley's initial assumptions, though we cannot specify them with considerable exactness because of the lack of sufficient data.

The awareness that the Roman Empire was more diverse and dynamic than it was previously thought strongly suggests that the Roman imperial economy was far more advanced in pre-modern standards so far as the primitivist-modernist debate concerns. Moreover, such awareness has triggered a renewed impetus to scholarly investigation of the level of development that the Roman Empire achieved.

Such investigations, furthermore, necessarily require certain quantitative studies on the Roman economy. Thus some recent researchers have focused on quantifying the scale and the performance of the Roman economy systematically by employing basic statistical methods in the hope of getting a better idea of economic growth and the quality of life during Greco-Roman golden periods.¹⁴² Importantly, the tendency to quantify the Roman imperial economy also has a strong implication for the substantivism-formalism debate. Some recent scholars do not cling rigidly to economic substantivism since the quantifying methods belong to the approaches of economic formalism, and take seriously the importance of economic factors in themselves in that they measure economic variables, such as GDP, income, and volume of trade, in their own apart from other social and cultural factors.

¹⁴² Some recent examples include Alan K. Bowman and Andrew Wilson, eds., *Quantifying the Roman Economy: Methods and Problems* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009); Bowman and Wilson, eds., *The Roman Agricultural Economy: Organization, Investment, and Production* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013); Temin, *The Roman Market Economy*.

In the next section, I discuss in more detail the performance of the Roman imperial economy to present a more concrete picture, focusing especially on its dynamic and diverse aspects beyond the image of the underdeveloped agricultural economy. In so doing, in line with Post-Finley debates, I focus especially, *pace* Polanyi and Finley, on how the Roman imperial economy developed beyond a self-sufficient level. This emphasis will support my arguments subsequently on the importance of aspects of a market economy and economic rationality for understanding economic activities in Luke's Gospel.

3. The Performance of the Roman Imperial Economy

In this section, I present recent scholarly discussions on the performance of the early Roman imperial economy. This scholarship sheds some light on the nature of the economy discussed above, especially the primitivist-modernist debate and Post-Finley discussions, by providing some quantitative and concrete examples. In doing so, I pay particular attention to macroeconomic aspects of the Roman imperial economy by focusing on the Gross Domestic Product, the per capita income, the distribution of national income, and the level of economy growth.

3.1. The Scale of the Roman Imperial Economy

In this section, I examine recent estimations on the size and volume of the Roman imperial economy to answer the question whether the economy was underdeveloped or achieved considerable economic growth by pre-modern standards. Generally, modern economists use some quantitative indices such as Gross Domestic Product and per capita GDP to evaluate the scale and the performance of an economy.

I start the section by discussing what the subsistence level of income in the ancient world was; in so doing it addresses some comparative data for regional as well as historical comparison. Concerning the subsistence level of income, some scholars set it as PPP¹⁴³400 dollars in 1990 international prices.¹⁴⁴ A study suggests that the ratio of average income in terms of subsistence income set above does not exceed 2 in 8 countries out of 10 sample economies Holland, England/Wales, Old Castille, Moghul India, Nueva Espana, Bihar (India), Naples, Brazil, and China in the period of mid-sixteenth to nineteenth centuries. In the study, only in Holland (2.8 in 1561 and 5.1 in 1732) and England/Wales (3.5 in 1688 and 5.0 in 1801-3) does the ratio exceed 2. This result sheds light on the relationship between average per capita income and minimum subsistence income of pre-modern economies.¹⁴⁵ In this regard, scholars, including Hopkins who worked as pioneer,¹⁴⁶ generally think that Roman per capita income in imperial period was not very high, not so far from subsistence levels.¹⁴⁷ For instance, Walter Scheidel and Steven J. Friesen propose that it did not exceed the double of subsistence income.¹⁴⁸

As mentioned above, it was Hopkins who first presented a systematic estimation of the GDP of the Roman economy.¹⁴⁹ In his estimation, he approaches the GDP from the consumption side and proposes that GDP of the Roman Empire would have exceeded the

¹⁴³ Purchasing Power Parity (PPP) is a hypothetical unit of currency adjusted for different price levels of many countries, used mainly for international comparison of the value of currencies.

¹⁴⁴ It was Angus Maddison who first proposed the minimum subsistence of PPP 400 dollars. For more detail, see Angus Maddison, *Chinese Economic Performance in the Long-Run* (Paris: OECD, 1998), 12.

¹⁴⁵ Branko Milanovic, Peter H. Lindert, and Jeffrey G. Williamson, "Measuring Ancient Inequality," *NBER Working Paper* 13550 (October 2007), 77 (Table 2). Concerning the Roman Empire they estimated the ratio as 2.1 in 14 CE.

¹⁴⁶ Hopkins, "Taxes and Trade in the Roman Empire."

¹⁴⁷ Walter Scheidel, "Economy and Quality of Life," in *The Oxford Handbook of Roman Studies*, ed. Alessandro Barchiesi and Walter Scheidel (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 596-97. Peter Temin provided an in-depth discussion on the recent estimates on Roman per capita income. See "Per Capita GDP in the Early Roman Empire," in *the Roman Market Economy*, 243-261.

¹⁴⁸ Scheidel and Friesen, "The Size of the Economy," 61-91.

¹⁴⁹ Hopkins, "Taxes and Trade in the Roman Empire," 117-120. Generally, GDP identity of modern neo-classical economics suggests that we can estimate GDP from three perspectives--production, consumption, and redistribution-- and those three estimates must be equal by the definition of identity.

minimum total expenditure of 8.2 billion sesterces. In so doing, Hopkins uses the wheat equivalent as a unit of estimate to capture the idea of minimum subsistence. He calculates the minimum wheat consumption requirement for survival per annum as 250 kg¹⁵⁰ per person and adds one third of it as later production requirement (i.e., seeds for the next year). He then applies the hypothetical price of wheat as 0.458 sesterces per kg and multiplies the assumed total population of 54 million in 14 CE. He conjectures that actual GDP would not have exceeded the double of the minimum total expenditure requirement.¹⁵¹ After several modifications, he later arrives at the revised estimation of actual GDP as 13.5 billion sesterces and per capita GDP as 153 sesterces with the modified demographic assumption of 60 million people.¹⁵²

Hopkins' original reconstruction deeply influenced later study. Many scholars have further refined it by taking account of other consumption aspects. Raymond Goldsmith, among others, presents another estimate of per capita GDP by including several other items such as the portions of non-wheat food consumption and non-food expenditure, and a share of government expenditure. Specifically, he draws on knowledge from other comparative studies to calculate the non-food expenditure, and estimates the government expenditure as 5% of total GDP.

Considering such other consumptions and utilizing other comparative evidence, he proposes the per capita GDP as 380 sesterces (more than doubled comparing to Hopkins's estimation of 153 sesterces) and total Roman GDP as 21 billion sesterces based on the demographic assumption of 55 million in 14 CE.¹⁵³ Furthermore, he approaches the GDP of the Roman Empire on the income side as well. He conjectures the average labor income of the

¹⁵⁰ 1 kg (kilogram) is roughly equivalent to 2.2 lb. (pound).

¹⁵¹ Hopkins, "Taxes and Trade in the Roman Empire," 117-120.

¹⁵² Keith Hopkins, "Rome, Taxes, Rents, and Trade," *Kodai* 6/7 (1995/6): 41-75, esp. 45-6, reprinted in Scheidel, *The Ancient Economy*, 190-230, esp. 198-9.

¹⁵³ Raymond W. Goldsmith, "An Estimate of the Size and Structure of the National Product of the Early Roman Empire," *Review of Income and Wealth* 30, no 3 (1984): 263-88, esp. 273.

Roman period as 3.5 sesterces by taking account of both skilled and unskilled wage rates. By applying 225 annual work days, he calculates about 800 sesterces per employed worker per annum. He then assumes that the unemployment rate was 1.5 times higher than the employment rate. Thus he derives an average labor income as 315 sesterces. In addition, by using the comparative data from the non-labor income share of GDP of under-developed countries in 1970s, he conjectures the share of non-labor income, such as interest, rents, taxes, as taking up 20 % of GDP, which is equivalent to 65 sesterces. By doing so, he obtains the income-based per capita GDP of 380 sesterces, the same figure he derives from his expenditure-based approach.¹⁵⁴

In fact, one of the most difficult problems in quantifying the economy scale of the Roman Empire is to determine the price of wheat, the staple crop, for it varies markedly depending on region and time. Some scholars regard the wheat price as 3 sesterces per modius as a guideline for the first century wheat price following the textual evidence from Tacitus which reports Nero's effort to stabilize the wheat price in Rome at 3 sesterces after the great fire of 64 CE (*Ann.* 15.39).

Meanwhile, other evidence suggests a wide variety of wheat prices in the Roman Empire--ranging from 1.75 sesterces in Egypt¹⁵⁵ to 20 sesterces¹⁵⁶ in Rome.¹⁵⁷ The basic assumption is that generally it was cheapest in the areas of large production, specifically Egypt, while highest in the areas with high living cost, presumably Rome. Therefore, to avoid the problem of identifying the cash value of the wheat price, some scholars, such as Scheidel and Friesen, prefer the real commodity value such as the measure of wheat weight to the monetary

¹⁵⁴ Goldsmith, "An Estimate of the Size and Structure," 269-73.

¹⁵⁵ *P. Mich.* II. 1271.1.8-38.

¹⁵⁶ Pliny the Elder, *Natural History* 18.20.

¹⁵⁷ Concerning diverse wheat prices in the Roman Empire, see Dominic W. Rathbone, "Living Standards and the Economy of the Roman Empire (I-III AD)," in Bowman, *Quantifying the Roman Economy*; Walter Scheidel, "Real Wages in Early Economies: Evidence for Living Standards from 1800 BCE to 1300 CE," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 53, no. 3 (2010): 425-62, esp. 444.

price of wheat.

In their recent in-depth analysis, Scheidel and Friesen¹⁵⁸ present a fairly conservative estimate of the Roman total income while taking a middle position by avoiding both the pessimistic view that assumes the binary structure of the rich and the poor with an enormous economic gap between them¹⁵⁹ and the optimistic view that underscores the extent and significance of a sizeable middling group that takes up a substantial share of national income.¹⁶⁰

Scheidel and Friesen estimate GDP from both expenditure and income perspectives. Concerning the expenditure approach, they argue that Hopkins's assumption of annual minimum subsistence consumption as 250 kg per capita of wheat value is too low according to other comparative analyses.¹⁶¹ Instead, based on Egyptian papyri data, they estimate both the upper and lower parameters of consumption by employing the concept of a "consumption basket." Their notion of a "consumption basket" comprises an adult male-based minimum requirement of food, clothing, heating, and housing. In addition, they adopt Goldsmith's criteria for an average annual per capita public expenditure of 28.6 kg and an investment rate of 6.5% of GDP. For the lower estimate they employ Robert Allen's "bare bones basket,"¹⁶² while for the upper estimate they apply a "respectability basket." They estimate the average annual per capita expenditure as a minimum of 390 kg of wheat and maximum of 940 kg and an aggregate expenditure of 27.3

¹⁵⁸ Scheidel and Friesen, "The Size of the Economy."

¹⁵⁹ P. A. Brunt, *Italian Manpower, 225 BC–AD 14* (London: Oxford University Press, 1971); Géza Alföldy, *The Social History of Rome* (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1988); Patricia Crone, *Pre-Industrial Societies* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1989); Meggitt, *Paul, Poverty and Survival*.

¹⁶⁰ John R. Patterson, *Landscapes and Cities: Rural Settlement and Civic Transformation in Early Imperial Italy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 261; William M. Jongman, "The Early Roman Empire: Consumption," in Scheidel, *The Cambridge Economic History*, 592–618, esp. 597; Longenecker, "Exposing the Economic Middle," 243–278.

¹⁶¹ Colin Clark and Margaret R. Haswell, *The Economics of Subsistence Agriculture*, 4th ed. (London: Macmillan; New York: St. Martin's Press, 1970), 59–64.

¹⁶² Robert C. Allen, "How Prosperous Were the Romans? Evidence from Diocletian's Price Edict (301 AD)," in *Quantifying the Roman Economy*, 327–45.

billion kg and 65.8 billion kg for a population of 70 million people.¹⁶³ The result implies that the “respectability basket” level of consumption is 2.4 times higher than that of subsistence level.

Moreover, in estimating GDP from an income perspective, they start by deriving the unskilled labor income from three sources--two papyri sources ranging from the first to third centuries CE and the Diocletian Edict (301CE) which report respectively wheat equivalent wages as 3.7, 3.8, and 3.6 kg. They take the average of those figures (3.7kg) and apply the annual work days of 225 or 250, which generates the average annual per capita labor income as 833-925kg. Following Goldsmith, they assume the employment rate of 40 % which makes the average annual labor income per person as 333-370kg. In addition, they divide non-labor income as “elite income” and “state and municipal revenue” which they calculate as 4 sesterces and 1 billion sesterces in cash terms respectively or 34.2-42.3 billion kg of wheat depending on the wheat prices (2, 2.5, or 3 sesterces per *modius*).¹⁶⁴ By summing up both labor and non-labor income, they calculate total average per capita annual income as 489-604 kg of wheat. They propose the annual GDP of the Roman economy in the mid-second century CE when the size of the Roman population is thought to have been reaching peak period—they assume the total imperial population as 70 million. They estimate the GDP in terms of grain value as 50 million tons of wheat (approximately 20 billion sesterces).

In conclusion, these estimates have shed some light on the size and scale of the Roman imperial economy by providing concrete figures in spite of a lack of sufficient data. In particular, these estimates seem to affirm the common notion that Roman per capita GDP was not too high above the subsistence level of income—it is roughly equivalent to the double of subsistence income in Scheidel and Friesen’s estimate. The interpretation of these estimates remains open to

¹⁶³ Scheidel and Friesen, “The Size of the Economy,” 68-9.

¹⁶⁴ Scheidel and Friesen, “The Size of the Economy,” 71-2.

dispute. Surely, compared to that of modern economies, the performance of the Roman economy looks very poor and disappointing. Yet by the pre-modern standards, we cannot simply underestimate the economy as an underdeveloped one. The same is true of the Roman economic growth, which I discuss below.

3.2. Roman Economic Growth

The estimation of the scale of the Roman imperial economy provides a basis for chronological comparisons of its performance—in other words, whether the economy achieved growth in certain periods. Unfortunately, scholarly opinions have greatly diverged on the question of Roman economic growth. Distinctive from short-term or periodic fluctuations, economic growth proper means the continuous increase of wealth (or income) of a certain economy over a certain time span.

Generally speaking, Roman economic growth seems to have been quite different in its extent from the dramatic increases of Western European countries during the modern period. For instance, the Netherlands marked about 0.2 percent annual growth in per capita GDP during 1580-1820, while the United Kingdom in the period of 1820-1890 recorded about 1.2 percent. In the twentieth century, the United States recorded about 2.2 percent annual growth rate in per capita GDP from 1890 to 1970.¹⁶⁵ Based upon Keith Hopkins's estimations of Roman per capita GDP,¹⁶⁶ Richard Saller reconstructs a graph that shows the per capita growth of the Roman economy during the second century BCE to the third century CE. According to the graph, the Rome Empire achieved approximately the growth rate of 25 percent in total, equivalent to an

¹⁶⁵ Debraj Ray, *Development Economics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998), 48.

¹⁶⁶ Hopkins, "Taxes and Trade in the Roman Empire"; "Rome, Taxes, Rents and Trade."

annual growth rate of less than 0.1 percent during 200 BCE-100 CE.¹⁶⁷ In particular, Roman economic growth reached its peak in the early imperial period. From a modern standpoint, such a performance can hardly receive a favorable evaluation. For instance, Robert E. Lucas, a Nobel Prize winner in economics, argues that there was virtually no per capita GDP growth prior to 1800.¹⁶⁸ However, some scholars such as Hopkins evaluate the performance more favorably, as he considers it “modest, though significant, economic growth.”¹⁶⁹

Besides the quantitative estimates, some scholars such as Walter Scheidel have argued that the increase of money stock during the late republic and the early imperial periods was correlated with economic growth, though the causality between the two remains an open question.¹⁷⁰ According to modern economic theory, if the increase of money supply occurs to meet money demand and such increased demand is not related to severe inflation, then the most probable cause of the increase of money supply would be economic growth.¹⁷¹ Moreover, given the function of money as a medium of exchange, we can assume safely that such an increase also exerts a positive influence on the economy including investment, trade, and other financial businesses by facilitating economic exchange. In this regard, the increase of volume of Roman money stock thus seems to be suggestive of its economic development. Moreover, some scholars have suggested that the volume of Roman money stocks was larger than that of the eighteenth century Netherlands.¹⁷² Such a large money stock in turn suggests that the Roman monetary

¹⁶⁷ Richard Saller, “Framing the Debate over Growth in the Ancient Economy,” in Manning, *The Ancient Economy*, 230-31.

¹⁶⁸ Robert E. Lucas, *Lectures on Economic Growth* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004), 98.

¹⁶⁹ Hopkins, “Rome, Taxes, Rents and Trade,” 57.

¹⁷⁰ Scheidel, “Economy and Quality of Life,” 598; Kris Lockyear, “Hoard Structure and Coin Production in Antiquity--An Empirical Investigation,” *Numismatic Chronicle*, 159 (1999): 215-43; Jairus Banaji, *Agrarian Change in Late Antiquity: Gold, Labour and Aristocratic Dominance*, upd. ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).

¹⁷¹ Maurice D. Levi, *International Finance: Contemporary Issues* (New York: Routledge, 2005), 470.

¹⁷² Richard Duncan-Jones, *Money and Government in the Roman Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 168-70; Willem M. Jongman, “A Golden age: Death, Money Supply, and Social Succession in the Roman

economy was a highly developed one by pre-modern standards. Scheidel, for instance, claims that in terms of its development, the Roman monetary economy would be comparable to “much later periods of European history.”¹⁷³

3.3. *The Distribution of the National Income*

In fact, the gross national income of an economy does not automatically produce an individual's income by simply dividing the GDP into the size of population. Concerning the share of national income, neo-classical scholars have argued that in free market situations, the share is determined by the contributions of capital and labor to production.¹⁷⁴ However, in most cases and even today, the share of national income has been determined by the relative power of capital and labor. In this regard, we must focus on the structure of income distribution to identify whom the economic growth benefited.

Concerning the Roman imperial economy, Scheidel and Friesen in the above study suggest the income distribution structure as follows. The share of the state and local government was about 5 percent of GDP. The upper and middle groups, which comprised respectively about 1.5 and 10 percent of total population, took up 20 percent of GDP each. Consequently, the majority of people, more than 85 percent of total population who were located near the level of subsistence, took up 55 percent of total income.¹⁷⁵

At this point, we can discuss the relationship between per capita GDP and economic growth. In fact, one of the most important implications of Finley's argument is that if the Roman economy was relatively stagnant, then the distribution of national wealth operated in zero-sum

Empire,” in *Creditoe Moneta Nel Mondo Romano: Atti Degli Incontri Capresi Di Storia Dell'economia Antica: Capri, 12-14 Ottobre 2000*, ed. Elio L. Cascio (Bari: Edipuglia, 2003), 181-96, esp. 187.

¹⁷³ Scheidel, “Economy and Quality of Life,” 598.

¹⁷⁴ N Gregory Mankiw, *Principles of Microeconomics*, 4th ed. (Mason, OH: Thomson South-Western, 2007), 408.

¹⁷⁵ Scheidel and Friesen, “The Size of the Economy,” 62-3.

game situation, namely, if one gets more, the others gets less or lose something. In such a situation, there tends to be a heated competition among players to get a better share of given wealth. In case of the Roman Empire, basically it benefited the noble at the cost of the rest, the Romans at the cost of the colonized, and urban citizens at the cost of country people.

The situation, however, can change to some degree if the Roman economy experienced a considerable economic growth during the imperial period. In this case, though the structure of exploitation, from imperial family and elites to commoners, slaves, and women, remained fairly invariable throughout the imperial history, the degree of exploitation could be lessened and the average income of many people would rise to a certain degree according to the level of economic growth. This is very similar to the idea of the so called “trickle-down effect”—the idea that the increase in the wealth of the rich boosts the economy and benefits the poor through the increased consumption of the rich.¹⁷⁶ In this case, we might evaluate more favorably and positively Roman economic growth. At this point, however, to what degree Roman economic development benefited poor folks remains purely speculative.

3.4. *Human Well-Being*

It is certain that measuring overall human well-being only in terms of economic performance has many limitations since many non-economic factors such as health, gender-equality, public safety, public hygiene, literacy, political participation, human rights, education, and cultural activities would exert considerable influence on human well-being. Therefore more and more scholars seek to design alternative welfare indices that are more comprehensive ones encompassing both economic and non-economic human conditions. Examples include the *Human Development*

¹⁷⁶ For more detail, see Philippe Aghion and Patrick Bolton, “A Theory of Trickle-Down Growth and Development,” *Review of Economic Studies* 64, no. 2 (1997): 151–172; Thomas Sowell, *Trickle Down Theory and Tax Cuts for the Rich* (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 2012).

Index or the *Physical Quality of Life Index*.¹⁷⁷ Unlike GDP or per-capita real income, such indices are composite measures of human welfare, developed by some UN economists, most notably Amartya Sen, since the 1990s, that reflect literacy, education, life expectancy, and living standards.¹⁷⁸ As Scheidel suggests, considering such non-economic aspects will provide us with more sound and comprehensive measure of overall human welfare of the Roman period, though it will make scholarly estimations even more difficult and complicated unless we are sure to find reliable data for such categories, which seems rarely the case in the present situation.¹⁷⁹ Thus, no one has so far tried to estimate human well-being of the Roman Empire using those welfare indices.

4. Some Features of the Roman Imperial Economy

In this section I focus on features of the Roman imperial economy at the more micro or industrial level to provide more detailed pictures of the economy. In so doing, I present a brief portrayal of individual economic sectors of the Roman imperial economy, encompassing four major industrial sectors often evident in Lucan scenes--agriculture and land, non-agricultural industry, commerce and trade, and money and finance. Moreover, the section briefly examines two additional issues --state-driven economic activities and city and country.

4.1. Agriculture and Land

Agriculture occupied by far the most substantial position in the ancient economy, even though it is difficult to quantify the exact portion of agriculture in the Roman industrial structure.

¹⁷⁷ Michael P. Todaro, *Economic Development*, 6th ed. (Boston: Addison Wesley, 1997), 62-8.

¹⁷⁸ Sudhir Anand and Amartya Sen, "Human Development Index: Methodology and Measurement," in *Readings in Human Development*, ed. Sakiko Fukuda-Parr and A. K. Shiva Kumar (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 114-27.

¹⁷⁹ Scheidel, "Economy and Quality of Life," 601.

Accordingly, agriculture seems to have taken up a significant portion of land use in the economy as well.¹⁸⁰ In fact, concerning the size and the share of agriculture in Roman production, only some plausible scholarly guesses are available. A. H. M. Jones, for instance, conjectures that agriculture took up 90% of national income of the Roman Empire—though he does not present any concrete evidence except for some late imperial data--trade tax from Edessa and land tax from Egyptian cities.¹⁸¹ In another guess, Helmuth Schneider suggests that due to low agricultural productivity, in the ancient world in general, about 80 % of the total population had to engage in agriculture in order to meet the agricultural demand of people.¹⁸² Here I will provide a very brief sketch of the scale and some characteristics of Roman agriculture. I will discuss in more detail the market economy relating to agriculture in the next chapter.

In the Roman Empire in general and in the Mediterranean area in specific, three major agricultural products, the so called “Mediterranean triad,” were cereals, wine, and olive oil. Wheat in particular, as it gradually replaced barley, was the most important staple crop in regions of traditional Mediterranean climate and soil.¹⁸³ Moreover, wine and olive production also expanded during the imperial period, coupled with the increase of commercial farming.¹⁸⁴ In addition, dry legumes such as beans and peas seem to have been widely cultivated and consumed.¹⁸⁵ In particular, dry legumes served as the rotating partner of major cereals—wheat and barley—in the crop rotation, which could contribute to the increase of the agricultural

¹⁸⁰ Other land use may include clothing, pottery, and extractive industries such as mining, metallurgy, and quarrying.

¹⁸¹ A. H. M. Jones, *The Roman Economy: Studies in Ancient Economic and Administrative History*, ed. P. A. Brunt (Totowa, NJ: Rowman and Littlefield, 1974), 83; Jones, *The Later Roman Empire, 284-602: A Social Economic and Administrative Survey* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1964), 465.

¹⁸² Helmuth Schneider, “Politisches System und Wirtschaftliche Entwicklung in der Späten Römischen Republik,” in *Production and Public Powers in Classical Antiquity*, ed. Elio Lo Cascio and Dominic W. Rathbone (Cambridge: Cambridge Philosophical Society, 2000), 55-62, esp. 55-6.

¹⁸³ Peter Garnsey, “The Land,” in Bowman, *The Cambridge Ancient History 11*, 679-709, esp. 681.

¹⁸⁴ Annalisa Marzano, “Agricultural Production in the Hinterland of Rome: Wine and Olive Oil,” in Bowman, *The Roman Agricultural Economy*, 85-106, esp. 85.

¹⁸⁵ Garnsey, “The Land,” 682.

revenue.¹⁸⁶

Concerning agricultural productivity, precipitation is the most important factor that affected the Roman crop farming since irrigation played a minor role in the supply of water for farming except for some regions such as Egypt and Mesopotamia.¹⁸⁷ Generally speaking, the ancient Mediterranean climate, with a minimum annual rainfall of 300-400 mm, satisfied the minimum precipitation requirement for major crop cultivation including wheat and barley throughout the Empire.¹⁸⁸ However, regional and seasonal variation in rainfall may have critically influenced the variation in annual crop yield throughout the Empire.¹⁸⁹

Ancient Roman crop farming employed the traditional method of a two-field system in which farmers used only one field in cultivation while leaving the other fallow. It is also known as the “dry-farming” method since it exploited, especially in wheat production, the rainy winter season of the Mediterranean by sowing in winter and reaping in spring.¹⁹⁰ Moreover, in many regions, such as the Apennine valleys in Italy, people widely practiced stock-farming, though it was subservient to agriculture in most cases.

As for the agricultural management types, some Roman agricultural writers, most notably M. Porcius Cato, M. Terentius Varro, and the Spaniard Columella, portray the ideal Roman farm as operating in a self-sufficient mode, consisting of the mixture of crop cultivation and stock raising. This is known as the villa estate since the Romans constructed a villa as an agricultural center, and exploited the land intensively by putting many laborers into it. In fact, the villa estate emerged as one of the most prevalent modes of agricultural management in Italy and the Roman

¹⁸⁶ Dennis P. Kehoe, “The Early Roman Empire: Production,” in Scheidel, *The Cambridge Economic History*, 543-569, esp. 551.

¹⁸⁷ Other important factors may include temperature and the quality of soil.

¹⁸⁸ The minimum requirement for barley cultivation is around 250 mm and that of wheat is about 350 mm.

¹⁸⁹ Peregrin Horden and Nicholas Purcell, *The Corrupting Sea: A Study of Mediterranean History* (Oxford; Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2000), 175-203.

¹⁹⁰ David B. Grigg, *The Agricultural Systems of the World: An Evolutionary Approach* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1974), 123-51.

west, including North Africa, Gaul, Germany, Spain, and Britain, during the first few centuries CE.

Regarding the scale of farming, the Roman imperial period marked a rise in large-scale farming since the first century CE onwards. In fact, the Roman conquest of the Mediterranean areas added a large amount of arable land to the Empire. The Roman authorities initially distributed such newly incorporated land to a variety of people, especially army veterans in the form of small farms. However, as time went by, the large-scale farming, known as *latifundia* in Italy with heavy reliance on slave labor, tended to grow out of such previously small-scale farms throughout the Empire. Consequently, many smallholders sold their land because of their debts and/or unprofitability of their farming, and eventually became tenant farmers or agricultural employees. Since large-scale estates took the form of an aggregation of a number of small-scale farms in many cases, they often featured a complex ownership structure. Moreover, they were cultivated by a variety of tenants, free laborers, and/or slaves.

4.2. *Non-Agricultural Industry*

Even though agriculture was the dominant industry in the Roman imperial economy, evidence suggests that the economy also exhibited growth in non-agricultural industry. For instance, some extractive industries including mining, metallurgy, and quarrying developed during the Roman Empire to meet the demand of raw materials such as gold, silver, copper, and tin. Particularly, northwestern Spain, with some 230 gold mines, showed remarkable scale and extent of mining production in pre-modern standards, as the case of Las Medulas demonstrates.¹⁹¹ According to Pliny, during the first century CE, Las Medulas, the largest opencast gold mine in the area,

¹⁹¹ Peter R. Lewis and Geraint D. B. Jones, "Roman Gold-Mining in North-West Spain," *JRS* 60 (1970): 169-85; Francisco J. Sánchez-Palencia, ed. *Las Medulas (Léon). Un paisaje cultural en la Asturia Augustana* (Léon: Instituto Leonés de Cultura, 2000).

produced as much as 20 thousand pounds of gold per year (*NH.* 22.4.78).

In addition, the analysis of toxic chemical remains buried in the Greenland ice-core layers reports that the records of the Roman imperial period ranked as the highest in relation to the amount of major toxic remains--especially copper and lead--among the pre-industrial period.¹⁹² Such a high degree of environmental pollution signifies indirectly that the extractive industries were greatly thriving during the period.

In a similar vein, quarrying industries, including marble and colored stones, seem to have been booming during the imperial period as the increased use of decorative stones in the early Principate demonstrates.¹⁹³ Mattingly argues that free wage laborers constituted the majority of the workers involved in such extractive industries and they enjoyed the relatively higher wage than other workers did, as the luxurious dietary remains of some quarrying remains suggest.¹⁹⁴

4.3. *Commerce and Trade*

Though we cannot exactly identify the volume and size of Roman trade, written and archeological evidence suggests that the Roman economy was actively involved in local, regional, and foreign trade.¹⁹⁵ For instance, remains of the first-century pottery workshop at La Graufesenque in southwestern France had a kiln that could process thirty thousand pots at a time; a simple calculation suggests that its capacity exceeded several millions, which most probably

¹⁹² Sungmin Hong, Jean-Pierre Candelone, Clair C. Patterson, and Claude F. Boutron, "History of Ancient Copper Smelting Pollution During Roman and Medieval Times Recorded in Greenland Ice," *Science* 272 (1996): 246–9; Kevin J. R. Rosman, Warrick Chisholm, Sungmin Hong, Jean-Pierre Candelone, and Claude F. Boutron, "Lead from Carthaginian and Roman Spanish Mines Isotopically Identified in Greenland Ice Dated from 600 BC to 300 AD," *Environment, Science and Technology* 31, no. 12 (1997): 3413–16.

¹⁹³ Hazel Dodge, "Decorative Stones for Architecture in the Roman Empire," *OJA* 7, no. 1 (1988): 65–80; Dodge, "Ancient Marble Studies: Recent Research," *JRA* 4 (1991): 28–50; John C. Fant, "A Distribution Model for the Roman Imperial Marbles," in Harris, *The Inscribed Economy*, 145–70.

¹⁹⁴ Mattingly, "The Imperial Economy," 292.

¹⁹⁵ For more exhaustive references to the Roman trade, see William V. Harris, "Trade," in Bowman, *Cambridge Ancient History* 11, 710–40.

would aim at a widespread distribution far beyond the supply of neighboring areas.¹⁹⁶ Moreover, Pliny the Elder testifies that long-distance trade was not a special phenomenon as it occurred very commonly throughout the entire Mediterranean (*NH.* 11.118). The extent of Roman long-distance trade reached beyond the Roman imperial world into India, China, and sub-Saharan Africa. Rome imported ivory from India and the eastern African coast, silk from China, and amber and furs from the Baltic.¹⁹⁷

Roughly speaking, the economy's active involvement with trade partially stems from the fact that the Roman Empire had very large cities by the pre-modern standards and other large cities that served as provincial centers. Thus, those cities required the supply of food and other commodities from outside to sustain themselves, which consequently provided strong incentive for trade to develop. Moreover, various luxury items were demanded by Roman imperial families, Roman and regional nobles, and other local aristocrats and rich peoples to satisfy their luxurious tastes, and adorn imperial, public, and religious buildings in Rome and other major and local imperial centers.

The range of goods involved in trade was very diverse: it included not only luxuries such as silk, marble, and jewelry, and major staple crops, such as wheat, wine, and olive oil, but also less valuable items such as cheap pottery wares, glass, fish sauces, and millstones.¹⁹⁸ Likewise, long-distance trade also dealt with diverse items. The commodities transported through the long-sea voyage include cheap items listed above, besides high cost luxuries.¹⁹⁹ Particularly, among diverse trade items, the trade of staple goods, primarily wheat and later olive oil, was

¹⁹⁶ David P. S. Peacock, *Pottery in the Roman World: An Ethnoarchaeological Approach* (London; New York: Longman, 1982), 114-28.

¹⁹⁷ William E. Dunstan, *Ancient Rome* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2011), 339.

¹⁹⁸ For more detail, see Richard Bauckham, "Economic Critique of Rome in Revelation 18," in *Images of Empire*, ed., Loveday Alexander, JSOT Supplement Series 122 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1991), 47-90.

¹⁹⁹ Giuseppe Pucci, "Pottery and Trade in the Roman Period," in *Trade in the Ancient Economy*, ed. Peter Garnsey, Keith Hopkins, and C. R. Whittaker (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1983), 105-17, esp. 110-11.

subject to government intervention. In fact, governmental intervention in the grain supply constituted one of the features of Roman political economy. I discuss briefly aspects of Roman political economy later.

4.4. Money and Finance

The Roman imperial economy was actively involved in a variety of financial activities relating to money, banking, and credit.²⁰⁰ In fact, such activities were not limited to the professional bankers; on the contrary, lending money at interest was widely practiced in the Roman world. Though lending money at interest did not receive ethical justification in the Roman writings, especially in case of usury,²⁰¹ written evidence demonstrates that a wide variety of people, in fact, were involved in money-lending in the Roman period, from small-money lenders, peasant, and merchants to local aristocrats, imperial knights, senators, and even emperors.²⁰² In particular, Seneca and Pliny the Younger confess in their writings that money lending was one of the means of making a fortune.²⁰³

There existed several occupations that were involved in banking and financial activities in the Greco-Roman world.²⁰⁴ These include money changers and professional bankers. For instance, *nummularii* served as money-changers in the Roman west who later operated as bankers in the early imperial period. In addition, the *argentarius* or *cofactor argentarius* provided credit to the participants of auctions. By providing diverse financial services, the activities of such professional bankers played an important role in the development of a market

²⁰⁰ Jean Andreau, *Banking and Business in the Roman World*, trans. Janet Lloyd (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999); Peter Temin, "Financial Intermediation in the Early Roman Empire," *The Journal of Economic History* 64, no. 3 (2004): 705-33; Harris, *The Monetary Systems of the Greeks and Romans*.

²⁰¹ For instance, Plutarch's writing *De Vitando Aere Alieno*.

²⁰² Plutarch, *Moralia* 795 E and F; Tacitus, *Histories* 1.20.3; Juvenal, *Satires* XI. 39-41; Apuleius, *Apologia* 20.3

²⁰³ Seneca, *Ep. Ad Lucil.* IV. 41.7; *Tranq.* VIII. 5; Pliny, *Ep.* III. 19.8.

²⁰⁴ Andreau, *Banking and Business in the Roman World*, 30-63.

economy—they promoted not only commercial sales and trade but also enhanced the degree of monetization of the Roman world.

In harmony with active and diverse financial activities practiced in the Roman world, the Roman imperial economy seems to have achieved a considerable degree of monetization and monetary integration.²⁰⁵ Scholars generally think that money exerts a considerable influence on the development of a market economy, and in this regard, it is noteworthy that the Roman monetary system developed in such a degree as to make the small-scale transaction possible in a local market.²⁰⁶ Moreover, evidence suggests that money served as a unit of account in that money was used to describe and evaluate the value of non-cash transactions.²⁰⁷ Furthermore, Roman writings testify that in the Roman period some financial activities occurred beyond the local level for there is evidence that an inter-regional financial system operated to support maritime trade by providing loans in one port that can be redeemed in another (*Dig.* 45.1.122.1).

4.5. State-Driven Economic Activities

David Mattingly insists that the Roman economy contains aspects of a political economy since the empire exploited wealth from the economy to maintain itself. He presents several aspects of state-driven economic activities such as (1) the food supply system for the inhabitants of the city of Rome; (2) the military supply network for the army, especially in the frontier regions; (3) the extraction and control of diverse metals for the coinage system; (4) the use of marble and decorative stones for the public construction and imperial ornament, especially in the city of

²⁰⁵ Christopher J. Howgego, "The Supply and Use of Money in the Roman World 200 B.C. to A.D. 300," *JRS* 82 (1992): 1-31; Howgego, "Coin Circulation and the Integration of the Roman Economy," *JRA* 7 (1994): 5-21.

²⁰⁶ Mattingly, "The Imperial Economy," 296; Luuk de Ligt, *Fairs and Markets in the Roman Empire: Economic and Social Aspects of Periodic Trade in a Pre-Industrial Society* (Amsterdam: J. C. Gieben, 1993); Joan M. Frayn, *Markets and Fairs in Roman Italy: Their Social and Economic Importance from the Second Century BC to the Third Century AD* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993).

²⁰⁷ Rathbone, *Economic Rationalism and Rural Society*, 318-30.

Rome.²⁰⁸

To feed the Roman citizens, Rome transferred an enormous amount of grain on a regular basis from diverse regions--from Campania and Sicily to North Africa and Egypt.²⁰⁹ Sometimes, the grain supply to Rome transcended normal economic calculation for they often entailed long-distance transportation that involved huge costs. Thus without huge government subsidy or other incentives (either economic or non-economic), such activities would be unsustainable in the normal private sector of the economy.²¹⁰ In addition, military supplies comprise another important aspect of state-driven economic activities. The state furnished the army with some items such as food and clothing, from imperial estate or state-owned facilities, and for some items the army itself met their needs through self-support.²¹¹ Also, the army itself purchased a large number of items from civilian market, such as food, clothing, blankets, and hides.²¹² Moreover, Rome needed a great deal of metals to sustain its monetary system, thus engaged itself in the mining industry. Rome controlled mining activities either directly or indirectly: The state itself ran and monitored directly some mining activities or leased out mining concessions or formed partnerships with private entrepreneurs.²¹³ Furthermore, the Rome Empire was a huge consumer of a variety of decorative stones such as marble, granite, and porphyry for both imperial and civic construction.²¹⁴ Accordingly Tiberius seems to have placed some quarrying

²⁰⁸ Mattingly, "The Imperial Economy," 296.

²⁰⁹ For more detail, see Paul Erdkamp, *The Grain Market in the Roman Empire: A Social, Political, and Economic Study* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

²¹⁰ For more detail, see Peter Garnsey, *Famine and Food-Supply in the Greco-Roman World: Responses to Risk and Crisis* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988); Geoffrey E. Rickman, "The Grain Trade under the Roman Empire," in *The Seaborne Commerce of Ancient Rome: Studies in Archeology and History*, Memoirs of the American Academy in Rome 36, ed. John H. D'Arms and E.C. Kopff (Rome: American Academy in Rome, 1980), 261-276.

²¹¹ Paul Erdkamp, ed. *The Roman Army and the Economy* (Leiden: Brill, 2002).

²¹² Nigel Pollard, "The Roman Army," in *A Companion to the Roman Empire*, Blackwell Companions to the Ancient World, ed. David S. Potter (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2006), 206-227, esp. 221.

²¹³ For more detail, see Alfred Michael Hirt, *Imperial Mines and Quarries in the Roman World: Organizational Aspects 27 BC-AD 235* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).

²¹⁴ Ben Russell, *The Economics of the Roman Stone Trade* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 16. See also,

industry into direct state control (Suetonius, *Tiberius* 49.2).

Such state-driven economic activities consequently generated diverse economic effects on the Roman economy. For instance, the development of long-distance transportation and the presence of special military suppliers (*beneficiarii*) were bi-products of the military support system. Furthermore, such state-driven long-distance transportation may have exerted positive influence on the long-distance trade of other commodities in the form of cross-subsidization and on the demand for some state-driven commodities in the private sector.²¹⁵

4.6. *City and Country: Consumer City*

The notion of a consumer city seems to carry a negative connotation in that the nature of it is basically parasitic, exploiting the wealth and resources of the margins. For instance, Karl Bücher, who first noticed the negative effect of the consumer city--especially the metropolitan city--on the countryside says: "The large cities of antiquity are essentially communities for consumption. They owe their size to the political centralization which collected the surplus products of the extensive areas cultivated by individual husbandry at one point where the governing class was domiciled."²¹⁶ In a similar fashion, Werner Sombart also asserts that consumer cities survive on the surplus production of diverse industries--most notably agricultural products--without transferring any material products in return, and rural areas pay their own costs in the form of taxes and rents.²¹⁷

Originally, Max Weber cited consumer cities as a counterpart to producer cities, along with other ideal types such as industrial cities versus merchant cities to categorize the economic

Hazel Dodge and John B. Ward-Perkins, *Marble in Antiquity: Collected Papers of J.B. Ward-Perkins*, (London: British School at Rome, 1992).

²¹⁵ Mattingly, "The Imperial Economy," 297.

²¹⁶ Karl Bücher, *Industrial Evolution*, trans. S. M. Wickett (New York: Henry Holt, 1968), 371.

²¹⁷ Werner Sombart, *Der Moderne Kapitalismus*, 2nd ed., 2vols (Leipzig and Berlin 1916), 1:142-3.

features of pre-modern cities.²¹⁸ Since city inhabitants are those who are detached from agriculture, Weber regards the establishment of a market center in order to sustain city dwellers as the preliminary condition for the existence of a city. Thus in its economic sense, a city “is always a market center.”²¹⁹

Finley inherits Weber’s notion of consumer city and regards the parasitical nature of the consumer city as one of main hindrances to economic growth, long distance trade, and manufacturing industry.²²⁰ David P. S. Peacock also supports the claim that a city’s main function was consumption rather than production in the Roman imperial economy by focusing on the scale of Roman manufacturing capacity. According to him, the scale was very small and underdeveloped, comprised less than 30 workers with a small degree of division of labor, which suggests that the contribution that a city could make in terms of production was very little.²²¹

However, a number of scholars have presented evidence that counters Finley’s concept of a consumer city by highlighting that some cities actively participated in various production activities such as craft activities for ceramics, metal working, and the extraction of purple dye. For instance, Andrew Wilson demonstrates that Timgad in Algeria actively participated in textile production and Sabratha in Libya in fish-salting production.²²² In addition, some major cities such as Rome and Ostia recorded a considerable growth in construction and service industries.²²³

²¹⁸ Max Weber, “The City (Non-Legitimate Domination),” in *Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretive Sociology*, trans. E. Fischhoff, H. Gerth, A.M. Henderson, F. Kogler, C.W. Mills, T. Parsons, M. Rheinstein, G. Roth, E. Shils and C. Wittich, ed. Guenther Roth and Claus Wittich, 2 vols (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978), 2.1212-1372, esp. 1215-17.

²¹⁹ Weber, “The City (Non-Legitimate Domination),” 1213.

²²⁰ Moses I. Finley, “The Ancient City: From Fustat to Constantinople to Max Weber and Beyond,” reprinted in *Economy and Society in Ancient Greece*, ed. Brent D. Shaw and Richard P. Saller (London: Chatto and Windus, 1981), 3-23.

²²¹ Peacock, *Pottery in the Roman World*, 1-11, 90-128.

²²² Andrew I. Wilson, “Urban Production in the Roman World: The View from North Africa,” *Papers of the British School at Rome* 70 (2002): 231-73.

²²³ Janet DeLaine, *The Baths of Caracalla: A Study in the Design, Construction, and Economics of Large-Scale Building Projects in Imperial Rome*, JRA Supplementary 25 (Portsmouth, RI: JRA, 1997); “Building the Eternal City: The Construction Industry of Imperial Rome,” in *Ancient Rome: The Archaeology of the Eternal City*, ed. Jon Coulston and Hazel Dodge (Oxford: Oxford University School of Archeology, 2000), 119-41; “Bricks and Mortar:

Moreover, archeological evidence from Pompeii suggests that though the scale of individual workshops was small, the aggregate of such small workshops demonstrates the considerable level of production capacity of the city.²²⁴ The same is true of amphora production of Leptiminus in Tunisia.²²⁵ Evidence also testifies to the presence of large-scale production and distribution of pottery. Egyptian documents from the third century CE, for instance, show that a potter contracted the annual supply of 15 thousand amphorae to the owner of a shop as a lease payment (*P.Oxy.* L 3595, 3596, 3597).²²⁶ In addition, scholars have demonstrated that in some urban settings, some non-agricultural industries, such as commerce and manufacture, adopted the incipient stage of specialization of labor.²²⁷ For example, textile workshops in Pompeii adopted a series of different textile processing stages (washing-dyeing- weaving-fulling) in the wool production.²²⁸

4.7. Economic Integration

Scholarly opinions have markedly differed as to the degree of integration in the Roman economy. Certainly, unified political conditions and the development of communication and transformation that the Roman Empire produced created a favorable condition for economic integration. In this regard, Peter Temin, for instance, argues that the Roman imperial economy

Exploring the Economics of Building Techniques at Rome and Ostia,” in Mattingly, *Economies beyond Agriculture*, 230-68.

²²⁴ Ray Laurence, *Roman Pompeii: Space and Society* (London: Routledge, 1994); David J. Mattingly, “Paintings, Presses and Perfume Production at Pompeii,” *OJA* 9, no. 1 (1990): 71–90; Hellen M. Parkins, ““The Consumer City’ Domesticated? The Roman City and Elite Economic Strategies,” in *Roman Urbanism: Beyond the Consumer City?* ed. Hellen Parkins (London: Routledge, 1997), 83-111.

²²⁵ David J. Mattingly, David Stone, Lea M. Stirling, and Nejeh Ben Lazreg, “Leptiminus (Tunisia): A ‘producer’ city?” in Mattingly, *Economies beyond Agriculture*, 66–89; Lea M. Stirling, David J. Mattingly, and Nejeh Ben Lazreg, *Leptiminus (Lamta): A Roman Port City in Tunisia, Report no. 2, the East Baths, Venus Mosaic, Cemeteries and Other Studies*, JRA Supplementary 41 (Portsmouth, RI: JRA, 2001), 215-19.

²²⁶ Helen Cockle, “Pottery Manufacture in Roman Egypt: A New Papyrus,” *JRS* 71 (1981): 87-97.

²²⁷ Mattingly and Salmon, *Economies beyond Agriculture*.

²²⁸ Walter O. Moeller, *The Wool Trade of Ancient Pompeii* (Leiden: Brill, 1976), 10-56.

achieved a considerable integration and efficiency, especially concerning labor, credit, and commodity markets on the grounds that the economic factors of those markets such as income, interest rates, and wheat prices were roughly equal in many areas of the Empire with some adjustments--such as in consideration of distance and population size.²²⁹

Yet other scholars have insisted that the influence that universal Roman rule exerted in economic integration was limited and partial. William V. Harris, for instance, regards the Roman imperial economy as “a system of interconnected sub-economies;” in other words, he understands the economy as a sum of many disparate regional economies that merely occupied the different parts of the imperial territory.²³⁰ In this circumstance, some regions might have been subject to more direct control of its imperial authorities such as the major imperial centers of Alexandria, Antioch, and Carthage not to mention the city of Rome, while other regions might have enjoyed greater economic autonomy, in so far as they paid tax and tribute. Moreover, the variation of economic performances in different regions--such as the West, the East, Roman Egypt, and the frontier areas--seems to have reflected regional differences not only in natural, climatic, and demographic conditions but also in various socio-political dynamics and benefits of imperial policies.²³¹ Such complex causes would have accorded different growth momentum to each region in the Empire, affecting the emergence and the growth of various industries and their performances in the regions.

²²⁹ Temin, “A Market Economy in the Early Roman Empire”; Temin, “The Economy of the Early Roman Empire”; Temin, *The Roman Market Economy*; Kessler and Temin, “Money and Prices in the Early Roman Empire.”

²³⁰ William V. Harris, “Between Archaic and Modern: Some Current Problems in the History of the Roman Economy,” in Harris, *The Inscribed Economy*, 29; Walter Scheidel, “Demographic and Economic Development in the Ancient Mediterranean World,” *Journal of Institutional and Theoretical Economics* 160, no. 4 (2004): 743-757, esp. 744-45.

²³¹ Concerning the regional development in the Roman imperial economy, see Scheidel, *The Cambridge Economic History of the Greco-Roman World*, chapters 24-27.

5. Conclusion

What is the Roman imperial economy? This is the main question with which I have been concerned in this chapter. To answer this question, I have briefly sketched features of the Roman imperial economy by focusing on its nature, structure, and performance. In so doing, I have reviewed major issues raised in the history of scholarship. To begin with, I presented the general characteristic of the Roman imperial economy as a large open economy with a considerable heterogeneity. In particular, I paid special attention to its heterogeneity in the rest of this chapter while tracing the major scholarly debates on its nature, structure, and performance.

Concerning the nature of the economy, I reviewed the primitivist-modernist and the substantivism and formalism debates. The primitivist-modernist debate concerns whether the economy was underdeveloped or relatively well-developed by pre-modern standards. I sided with the modernist circle since in this study I take seriously aspects of market economy and economic rationality that the economy exhibited, even though they were restricted to some areas only. The substantivism-formalism debate is involved with whether the economy was embedded in the broader social categories or if it achieved to some degree its autonomy. I kept a considerable distance from major arguments of economic substantivism even though I agreed with the basic assumption of economic substantivism that the economy in itself cannot stand alone outside the larger social structure. I then examined Finley's view of the Roman economy from a critical standpoint. Specifically, I positioned myself in post-Finley debates, showing particular interest in critical views that have emphasized the economic development and high economic performance that the Roman economy achieved in some, if not all areas of the empire.

I then moved my focus to the performance of the Roman economy at the macro level to provide a more concrete picture of the economy. I introduced some scholarly efforts to estimate

the scale of the Roman economy in spite of the notorious lack of sufficient data. The estimated Roman economic scale does not go against a conventional assumption that per capita income of the economy did not far exceed the subsistence level, which may counter some over-arguments that identify the Roman economy with well-advanced modern ones. Concerning Roman economic growth, the economy seems to have achieved some growth, though its rate looks meager compared to the rate of growth of successful modern market economies. In addition, estimations of the Roman distribution structure show a wide income inequality among people, but the gap was not that high compared to a markedly wide gap that major modern capitalist economies exhibit. I also discussed the limitations of per capita income in estimating overall human welfare and briefly introduced some indices that attend to human welfare beyond only economic measures.

Lastly, I explored features of the Roman economy. I briefly reviewed features of four major economic sectors—agriculture, non-agricultural industry, trade, and finance. In Roman agriculture, the development of villa economies and the increase in large-scale farming, two most important features of Roman agriculture, were closely associated with the economic rationality of commercialized farming and a market economy. Growing evidence demonstrates that non-agricultural industry showed a certain development--especially in some extractive and quarrying industries--in some regions during the imperial period, which strongly refutes the view that regards the Roman economy as an underdeveloped agricultural economy. Similarly, the volume and scale of commerce and trade far exceeded the self-sustaining level, which strongly suggests that market-oriented economic practices driven by profit motive were not insignificant but widely and frequently practiced in the Roman Empire. The Roman economy also recorded an increase in money use and supply, which promoted the monetization of the Roman economy and

consequently the development of a market economy. Moreover, evidence attests that financial activities were widely practiced either directly or indirectly, by a variety of people in the Roman Empire in conjunction with trade, and loan and banking business. The Roman state itself also emerged as an important economic agent in some economic activities such as the grain supply for Rome, business related to military supply, and a state monopoly in some metals and stones. Such state-driven business would have exerted a positive influence on the Roman imperial economy, either directly or indirectly. Cities in the Roman Empire, *pace* Finley, seem to have played an active role as hubs of production and other economic activities in some regions beyond the passive and parasitic nature of a consumer city.

Conclusively, all these features of the Roman imperial economy suggest that aspects of a market economy and economic activities motivated by profit motive were not insignificant in some, if not all, areas of the Roman Empire. This is the economy that Luke assumes and inscribes. Thus toward the goal of engaging Luke's Gospel, I will further explore aspects of a market economy and economic rationality in its texts in the next four chapters.

CHAPTER 4

Economic Readings of Luke's Gospel 1 (1:1-12:12)

1. Introduction

Chapters 4 to 7 will provide economic readings of scenes from Luke's Gospel following its textual sequence. In so doing, this study will engage selected passages in Luke's Gospel since not all passages in it are equally illuminating of economic issues in terms of their focus and significance. Therefore, this study will focus on the passages that well illustrate aspects of a market economy and economic rationality of economic agents.

This chapter engages some selected passages from the first twelve chapters of Luke's Gospel (1:1-12:12). These passages are the preaching of John the Baptist (3:1-18), the parable of the seed and the soil (8:4-15), the account of Gerasene Demoniac (8:26-39), the account of Jesus's feeding of the five thousand (9:10-17), the account of the commissioning of the seventy disciples (10:1-16), the parable of the Good Samaritan (10:25-37). These passages illuminate aspects of a market economy and economic rationality through diverse economic topics including the Roman army, Roman imperial tax and its economic impact, the order of sowing and plowing, agricultural productivity, livestock farming, wage laborers, commercial lodging, monetary economy, and functions of money.

2. The Preaching of John the Baptist (3:1-18)

In the account, John the Baptist preaches the message of repentance and administers baptism to people around the Jordan. I read the account by focusing on the Roman army, Roman imperial tax, the tax business, and the economic impact of tax—economic structures evident in the scene.

2.1. *The Roman Army*

The account is situated in the Roman imperial context. Luke 3 starts by introducing some imperial figures (3:1-2a) such as the Emperor Tiberius, Pontius Pilate (the governor of Judea), Herod (the tetrarch of Galilee), Philip (the ruler of the region of Ituraea and Trachonitis), and Lysanias (the ruler of Abilene). Moreover, the text introduces two imperial agents--tax collectors and the Roman army. These two agents are not only closely attached to the Roman imperial economy, and thus exerted a considerable influence on all local economies of the Empire, but also attest aspects of a market economy.

In this passage, the soldiers are among those who came to John the Baptist to hear his message (v. 14). In other instances in Luke, the army appears in the form of individual soldiers. For instance, the officers of the Jerusalem Temple police (στρατηγός)²³² are among those who come to Jesus to arrest him on the Mount of Olives (22:52). Soldiers appear in the Passion Narrative as executioners of Jesus as well (23:11, 36). Whether they were Roman soldiers or local mercenaries or auxiliaries hired to serve the local authorities or Roman procurators is uncertain. In Luke, the clearest attestation of a Roman soldier occurs in the account of healing the centurion's slave (7:1-10).

At first sight, it seems that the army in these scenes is not directly associated with economic issues. However, their presence implies their participation in the imperial economy. Above all, in the Roman world, maintaining an army required a certain amount of government expenditure.²³³ In this passage, John the Baptist exhorts soldiers not to extort money from people and to be content with their pay (3:14). In the scene, John refers to the salary of soldiers, which signifies that these soldiers are professional and hence constitute a part of a market

²³² LSJ, 1652.

²³³ Peter Kehne, "War- and Peacetime Logistics: Supplying Imperial Armies in East and West," in *A Companion to the Roman army*, ed. Paul Erdkamp (Malden, MA; Wiley-Blackwell, 2011), 323-338, esp. 325.

economy associated with the imperial army.

In the first century CE, the annual salary of Roman legionary soldiers amounted to 225 *denarii* (cf. Tacitus, *Ann.* 1.17), until it was raised to 300 *denarii* in the reign of Domitian (Suetonius, *Domitianus* 7.3). With two rises it seemed to reach around 675-900 *denarii* by 212 CE, and again it experienced a double rise in 235 CE (*Herodian* 3.8.4, 4.4.7, 6.8.8). Scholars have differed in their opinion about the salary difference between legionary and auxiliary soldiers. M. Alexander Speidel suggests a lower salary for auxiliary soldiers (five-sixths of legionary soldiers' pay) while Alston argues that there was no difference between the two groups.²³⁴ MacMullen calculates the approximate annual total army payment as slightly above 100 million *denarii*. He calculates salary costs on the basis of 300 *denarii* for legionary soldiers of 28 legions and 250 *denarii* for auxiliary soldiers.²³⁵ The soldiers also received a one-off retirement pay (3,000-5,000 *denarii* for ordinary soldiers) and certain irregular bonuses at imperial coronations, funerals, or other anniversaries.²³⁶ These are the wages with which soldiers are to be content.

Moreover, the account of the exorcism of the Gerasene Demoniac (Luke 8:26-39) seems to be associated with the Roman army since the name of the demons identified in the story is "Legion (λεγιών)." A legion, originated from the Latin *legio*, is the largest military unit in the Roman army composed of about 5,000-6,000 infantrymen since it had 60 centuries (Aulus Gellius, *Attic Nights* 16.4.6), accompanied by 120 cavalry soldiers (Pseudo-Hyginus, *De Munitionibus Castrorum*, 1, 7, 8, 30; Josephus, *J.W.* 3.120) and other auxiliaries (Tacitus, *Ann.* 1.44; 3.21; Josephus, *J.W.* 3.69). Historically, the Legion X Fretensis stationed in Syria-Palestine

²³⁴ M. Alexander Speidel, "Roman Army Pay Scales," *JRS* 82 (1992): 87-106, esp. 88; Richard Alston, "Roman Military Pay from Caesar to Diocletian," *JRS* 84 (1994): 113-23, esp. 122.

²³⁵ Ramsay MacMullen, "The Roman Emperor's Army Costs," *Latomus* 43 (1984): 571-80.

²³⁶ Pollard, "The Roman Army," 220-221.

since the early first century CE (Tacitus, *Ann.* 2.57.2) may well be the presumed context of the account.²³⁷ Its symbols included a boar or pig, together with a bull, dolphin, and galley.²³⁸ If this is the case, it seems that the large scale of a legion stationed in the region would generate a lot of economic effect on the economy.

For instance, military supplies provided by the state or taken from civil society comprise one of the important aspects of the military economy. The state would furnish the army with some items from imperial estates or state-owned facilities, and for some items the army itself might meet their needs through self-support.²³⁹ Notably, however, some evidence suggests that the army purchased a large number of items from civilian markets, such as food, clothing, blankets, and hides.²⁴⁰ In addition, the Roman army exerted a certain influence on the demand for meat. In this regard, it seems not entirely implausible that in the account of the Gerasene demoniac (8:26-39), the army stationed in the region would consume some of the local pig supply there. In fact, Polybius describes the Roman army as one of the major sources of pig demand in Italy where, according to him, a large number of pigs were slaughtered for consumption (*Hist.* 2.15). In this regard, the stationing army may have stimulated the local economies to a certain degree.²⁴¹

Furthermore, the army directly contributed to imperial wealth through acquisition and exploitation. In war time, it brought a wealth of precious items to Rome in the form of war

²³⁷ Dieter Lührmann, *Das Markusevangelium*, Handbuch Zum Neuen Testament (Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1987), 100; Gerd Theissen, *The Gospels in Context: Social and Political History in the Synoptic Tradition* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 1991), 110; Carter, *Matthew and the Margins*, 212-13.

²³⁸ Jerome H. Farnum, *The Positioning of the Roman Imperial Legions*, BAR International Series (Oxford: Archaeopress, 2005), 22.

²³⁹ Peacock, *Pottery in the Roman World*, 136-50.

²⁴⁰ Pollard, "The Roman Army," 221.

²⁴¹ A. R. Birley, "The Economic Effects of Roman Frontier Policy," in *The Roman West in the Third Century I*, ed. Anthony King and Martin Henig (Oxford: BAR, 1981), 39-53; Lothar Wierschowski, *Heer und Wirtschaft. Das Römische Heer der Prinzipatszeit als Wirtschaftsfaktor* (Bonn: Habelt, 1984); Ian Haynes, "Britain's First Information Revolution: The Roman Army and the Transformation of Economic Life," in Erdkamp, *The Roman Army and the Economy*, 111-26.

booty. In peace time, it also became the spearhead of the exploitation of valuable resources in provinces. Nigel Pollard emphasizes that the army's exploitative actions impinged on the economy of the colonized land.²⁴² The exhortation of John the Baptist to soldiers not to extort money (3:14) would serve as a rebuke of peace time exploitation. Evidence attests the extortion of money by Roman soldiers. Most notably, a second-century CE Egyptian papyrus records that 2200 drachmae were extorted by soldiers, which takes up about 40 percent of all the expenses that appeared in the account (*SB* 9207). In addition, the papyrus also reports that two payments was made to the soldiers at their demand--500 and 400 drachmae, respectively. Moreover, other evidence testifies to peace time exploitation by soldiers through the abuse of *hospitium* and *angaria*, which indicate respectively soldiers' rights to demand accommodations and transportations, such as vehicles, animals, and manual labor, from the civilians.²⁴³ Those texts demonstrate how involuntary (and unjust) wealth transfer from civilians to soldiers affects the local economy during the Roman imperial period. In sum, though its presence does not stand out in Luke's Gospel, Luke provides a glimpse into the Roman army as an economic agent operative in the first-century Roman imperial economy.

2.2. Roman Imperial Tax

In addition to soldiers, the preaching of John the Baptist also draws a response from tax agents (v.13); thus the passage foregrounds Roman imperial taxes. Concerning Roman imperial taxes, first, we don't know a lot about their collection, whether they were standard, or how they developed, though there is evidence for changing methods of collection. Second, available sources for Roman imperial taxes are limited; our primary sources come from ancient Egypt

²⁴² Pollard, "The Roman Army," 221.

²⁴³ Apuleius, *Met.* 9.39-42; *PSI* 446; *IGRR* 3.1119; *Dig.* 1.18.657.

from Hellenistic to Roman periods. Third, while elites benefitted from tax collection, it is not clear what benefits accrued to non-elites.

Despite those limitations, Roman imperial taxes are referenced several times in Luke. For instance, the imposition of tax is implicitly assumed in the reference to the census of Judea under Emperor Augustus and Syrian governor Quirinius (2:1-2). Luke links the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem to the Roman census carried out during the governorship of Quirinius (2:1-7). Historically, the census (ἀπογραφή)²⁴⁴ took place after Archelaus had been deposed in his tetrarchy, and Judea was placed under the rule of governors as a Roman province in 6 CE (*Iudaea*; Josephus, *Ant.* 17.354). The reference to the census in Luke is congruent with Greco-Roman evidence which documents the conduct of censuses in the Roman Empire. Epigraphic evidence shows that regular censuses were carried out in Roman Egypt every fourteen years from the early first century to the third century CE (P.Oxy. 2.254-6).²⁴⁵

Generally speaking, the purpose of a census was to find sources of taxation in the region (or a country) so that the Roman government could impose tax, tribute, and other burdens such as military conscription on the people. Accordingly, Josephus reports that the census of 6 CE ordered the people in Judea to register their property (Josephus, *Ant.* 18.1-3, 26). In this regards, Fabian E. Udoh argues that Rome levied land tax (*tributum soli*) rather than head tax (*tributum capitis*) on the people in Roman Palestine during the pre-70 period.²⁴⁶ Though Josephus refers only to land taxes in his writings, it does not necessarily mean that the Roman Empire did not levy head tax in Judea before 70 CE. In general, Rome levied head tax on provincials.²⁴⁷ At

²⁴⁴ LSJ, 194-95.

²⁴⁵ For more detailed discussion of Roman census, see Claude Nicolet, *Space, Geography, and Politics in the Early Roman Empire* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1991), 123-148.

²⁴⁶ Fabian E. Udoh, *To Caesar What is Caesar's: Tribute, Taxes and Imperial Administration in Early Roman Palestine (63 B.C.E.-70 C.E.)* (Providence, RI: Brown Judaic Studies, 2005), 208-18.

²⁴⁷ Dig. 50.15.8.7; Appian, *Pun.* 135; Dio, *Hist.* 52.3.2-3.

least, there is no direct evidence that the Roman government issued any decree on exemption from head tax for people in Judea. Moreover, Jewish councils (Sanhedrin) seem to have assumed a responsibility for collecting direct taxes (Josephus, *J.W.* 2.405). Josephus states that the census and the taxation of 6 CE provoked the direct resistance of some Jews (*Ant.* 18.4-6). Especially, he attributes the rise of the Zealots to refusal to pay taxes to the Romans (*J.W.* 2.117; *Ant.* 18.9). Acts also confirms Josephus's reports when it states that Judas led the tax resistance movement at Galilee at the time of the census (Acts 5:37). Within this circumstance, as already mentioned, in Luke, Jesus is born in the course of his parents' journey to Bethlehem complying with the decree of the census that orders the people in Judea to register at their own hometown (2:1-7).²⁴⁸

In addition, a more explicit reference to the imperial tax occurs in the account of the question about paying taxes (20:20-26) in which the people who are sent by the scribes and the chief-priests bring the issue of imperial tax to the fore by asking Jesus about the legitimacy of paying taxes, in the form of tribute, to Caesar (v. 22). Later in Luke, the Jewish leaders charge Jesus before Pilate the Roman prefect²⁴⁹ of opposing the payment of taxes to Caesar (23:2). The refusal to pay taxes was regarded as rebellion in the Roman Empire.²⁵⁰ As Josephus has king Agrippa say to the Jewish people who were on the verge of war against the Roman Empire: "your actions are already acts of war against Rome: you have not paid your tribute to Caesar, and you have cut down the porticoes communicating with Antonia. If you wish to clear yourselves of

²⁴⁸ The historicity of associating Jesus's birth with the census has been severely challenged since Luke's dates do not match the other dates. For more detail, see Ian Howard Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1978), 99-104; Wayne Brindle, "The Census and Quirinius: Luke 2:2," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 27 (1984): 43-52; Timothy P. Wiseman, "There Went Out a Decree from Caesar Augustus," *NTS* 33, no. 3 (1987): 479-80; John Nolland, *Luke 1:1-9:20*, WBC 35A (Dallas: Word, 1989), 99-102; Raymond E. Brown, *The Birth of the Messiah: A Commentary on the Infancy Narratives in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke*, 2nd ed. (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1993), 547-56.

²⁴⁹ Herry Vardaman, "A New Inscription Which Mentions Pilate as 'Prefect,'" *Journal of Biblical Literature* 81, no. 1 (1962): 70-71.

²⁵⁰ Carter, *Matthew and Empire*, 15-16; Stephen Dyson, "Native Revolts in the Roman Empire," *Historia* 20 (1971): 239-74.

the charge of insurrection, re-establish the porticoes and pay the tax” (*J.W.* 2.403-404).²⁵¹ In this regard, the references to the tax in Luke well demonstrate its significance for people under the Roman rule.

Furthermore, the Roman government imposed indirect taxes on major ports and roads throughout the Empire (Pliny, *NH.* 12.32, 63-5). The rate of custom duties imposed upon goods crossing Roman tax districts, both imported and exported goods, varied with rates of 2%, 2.5%, or 5%.²⁵² The Roman government also imposed a variety of different toll fees for using roads. According to an Egyptian inscription from the first century CE, different toll fees were charged to people depending on not only their status, gender, and occupation but also their methods of transportation including the kind of drafting animals (*OGIS* 674). Likewise, collection of indirect taxes are clearly visible in Luke’s Gospel at the scene of Jesus’s call to Levi as his disciple when he is sitting in his toll booth (τελώνιον; 5:27).²⁵³

To gather such diverse taxes, various tax administrators operated in the Roman Empire, including tax collectors, toll collectors, and brokers.²⁵⁴ In particular, the term πεντεκοστολόγος refers to a custom official who collects the 2% tax mentioned above (cf. Athenaeus, *Deipnosophists* 2.49).²⁵⁵ In addition to the tax collectors mentioned here as being baptized by John (3:12, 7:29), Jesus’s disciples include a tax collector, Levi (5:27), and other tax collectors join Jesus’s table fellowship (5:29-30). Moreover, Jesus is called a friend of tax collectors (7:34)

²⁵¹ Josephus, *The Jewish War, Volume 1: Books 1-2*, trans. H. St. J. Thackeray, LCL (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1927), 481.

²⁵² Naphtali Lewis and Meyer Reinhold, *Roman Civilization: Selected Readings. Vol. 2: The Empire* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990), 64-65.

²⁵³ LSJ, 1774.

²⁵⁴ H. C. Youtie, “Publicans and Sinners,” *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 1 (1967): 1-20; E. Badian, *Publicans and Sinners: Private Enterprise in the Service of the Roman Republic* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1972).

²⁵⁵ LSJ, 1362.

and he eats with Zacchaeus (19:1-10), a chief tax collector (ἀρχιτελώνης),²⁵⁶ which suggests the operation of tax collectors as a group with a certain hierarchy (19:2). It is noteworthy that the above tax collectors are not government officials but workers in the private sector as tax agents associated with a market economy.

2.3. *Tax Business*

The tax system of the Roman Empire assumes an aspect of a market economy as the Roman imperial government opened the collection of tax to the private sector.²⁵⁷ Specifically, the Roman government put the right to regional tax collecting up for auction every few years. Private individuals or companies could win a governmental contract by participating in the auction. This process is known as *tax farming* whose characteristics I will elaborate shortly. Initially, a right to collect tax had been confined to a certain type of tax such as property taxes, but later it became a comprehensive right, including a variety of taxes *en bloc* in certain regions.²⁵⁸

Under contract, the *publicani*—a general term referring to those who were engaged in state-sanctioned tax collection--made a profit by paying in advance, at least partially, the amount of money they had bid and then they collected a greater sum. The case of *decuma*, an agricultural tax in kind levied on provincial land demonstrates this practice (Cicero, *Verr.* 2.3.75). In this way, the tax collection business in Rome sometimes yielded a great profit since the Republic period. For instance, according to A. H. M. Jones's calculation, the average profit rate of the *publicani* in some sample cities, including Herbita, Aesta, Petra, and Leontini, reflected in Cicero's writing (*Verr.* 2.3) amounted to 120 percent. More specifically, in the calculation, the

²⁵⁶ LSJ, 253.

²⁵⁷ Hironori Asakura, *World History of the Customs and Tariffs* (Brussels: World Customs Organization, 2003), 51-81.

²⁵⁸ Jones, *The Roman Economy*, 151-85, esp. 163.

total sum of contract price in 9 sample cities equaled 431,000 *modii* while that of the profit, which included *lucrum* (profit) and *accessio* (cash bonus), amounted to 531,700 *modii*.²⁵⁹ In Luke, there is no reference to the *publicani*. Nonetheless, the high profitability of tax business seems to be reflected in the account of Zacchaeus where he is introduced as a chief tax collector and rich man (19:2). It seems highly probable that Zacchaeus made his fortune through a tax business, though Luke does not directly mention that he did so.

Moreover, as the tax business in the Roman world was fairly profitable, it was susceptible to corruption. The corruption involving tax business was already well known prior to the imperial period. For instance, Cicero's accusation of Gaius Verres, the former governor of Sicily, includes the charge of a corruptive connection between the governor and tax collectors (*Verr.* 2.3.130). Furthermore, tax collection often involved exploitation of people. The exploitation is well attested in antiquity, even centuries before Luke. Joseph the tax collector of the Ptolemaic period recorded in Josephus's writing serves as a ready example of such exploitation (*Ant.* 12.179-185). According to Josephus, after winning the tax collecting rights, Joseph mobilizes two thousand foot soldiers for exacting taxes in Palestine. In the course of collecting taxes, he executes some twenty leading people of the city of Ascalon, confiscates their property worth about a thousand talents, and sends it over to the king when the citizens refuse to pay the tribute. He does a similar course of action in the city of Scythopolis when the citizens also refuse to pay the tribute.

Such corruption and harsh exaction of taxes through *publicani* made the Roman government change its tax-collecting system: Since the end of the Republic, the state itself collected direct taxes through its own officials.²⁶⁰ This is the reason why *publicani* do not appear

²⁵⁹ Jones, *The Roman Economy*, 120.

²⁶⁰ Temin, *The Roman Market Economy*, 172-73.

in Luke's Gospel. However, this shift does not mean that all corruption and exploitation disappeared. Despite the shift, continued personal profiteering and public resentment still continued in the area of collection of indirect taxes in which a farming system was still operative. For instance, Tacitus reports complaints of the public against harsh exactions of tax farmers who collect indirect taxes during the reign of Nero (*Ann.* 13.50-51). This report suggests that the greed of tax collectors was so severe as to necessitate certain governmental measures during the first century CE.

In a similar vein, Luke's Gospel seems to offer evidence of such bad aspects of the tax business, corruption and exploitation. Above all, in his instruction, John the Baptist directly attacks the corruption involving tax business by ordering the tax collectors to collect the exact amount prescribed for them (3:13). In addition, in the account of Zacchaeus, when Jesus tries to cultivate a relationship with him by expressing his intention to visit his house (19:5-6), the people in the story grumble at the sight of this and explicitly utter their negative view of tax collectors by labelling Zacchaeus a sinner (v. 7). Moreover, upon facing such a negative response of the people, Zacchaeus attests his great wealth by spontaneously presenting his intention to make a four-fold restitution to anyone he has defrauded, even though nobody in the scene explicitly accuses him of such action (v. 8). The above attitude of the people and Zacchaeus's response to it well demonstrate a popular opinion regarding tax collectors and their common practices.

Indeed, such corruption and exploitation would have formed the bad reputation of tax collectors in general, or at least contributed an unenviable status, in the Roman world. For instance, Cicero states that "those means of livelihood are rejected as undesirable which incur

people's ill-will, as those of tax-gatherers and usurers" (*Off.* 1.150).²⁶¹ In the above statement, Cicero regards tax collectors at the same level as usurers, suggesting that tax collectors exploit the public as usurers do. Likewise, Philo describes tax collectors as κοινοὺς λυμεῶνα (*Special Laws* 1.143), perhaps carrying the sense of "common enemies and destroyers"²⁶² or "general agents of destruction,"²⁶³ which epitomizes a common view held by the people of the early Roman imperial period.

Such negative reputation and images of tax collectors are well consonant with those in Luke. After Levi joins Jesus's discipleship, he holds a great feast for Jesus, which attracts criticism from some of the Pharisees and the scribes against Jesus because of his table fellowship with a number of tax collectors who attend at the banquet (5:29). In their complaint, they refer to the tax collectors together with sinners, which suggests that they hold tax collectors in low esteem (v. 30). In his reply, Jesus also seems to acknowledge, at least tacitly, such negative reputation of tax collectors when he speaks of the metaphor of physician and the sick and comments that his mission is for the repentance of sinners (5:31-2). Similarly, in other scenes in Luke, they are referred to with sinners (15:1-2) and described as objects of contempt by some religiously committed fellow countrymen (18:10-11). The exact identity of the "sinner" in Luke is hard to determine.²⁶⁴ The "sinner" here may refer to those who are immoral and involved in despised occupations. Many scholars including Israel Abraham, Joachim Jeremias, I. Howard Marshall, and E. P. Sanders basically understand the term this way.²⁶⁵ Or perhaps the term

²⁶¹ Cicero, *De Officiis*, trans. Walter Miller, LCL, rep. ed. (London: William Heinemann, 1913), 153.

²⁶² *The Works of Philo Judaeus: The Contemporary of Josephus*, Vol. 3, trans. Charles D. Yonge, 4 vols. (London: G. Bell, 1855), 207.

²⁶³ Philo, *On the Decalogue. On the Special Laws, Books 1-3*, trans. F. H. Colson, LCL (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1937), 181.

²⁶⁴ For more detail, see Dwayne H. Adams, *The Sinner in Luke* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Pub, 2008).

²⁶⁵ Israel Abraham, *Studies in Pharisaism and the Gospels, Ser. 1* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1917), 59; Joachim Jeremias, *Jerusalem in the time of Jesus: An Investigation into Economic and Social Conditions during the New Testament Period*, trans. F. H. and C. H. Cave, 3rd ed. (London: SCM Press, 1973), 303-12; Jeremias, "Zöllner

designates the common people who fail to observe thoroughly ritual and other legal regulations in Torah²⁶⁶ or to those who are located in the lower social strata—the poor and the outcasts.²⁶⁷ At any rate, it seems certain that the association of the language of “sinner” with tax collectors reinforces the bad reputation and a popular charge against them.

It is noteworthy that the adoption of tax farming reveals the economic rationality of the Roman imperial government for it greatly benefited the Roman government.²⁶⁸ In fact, tax collection cost the Roman government considerable efforts and expenditures in the course of the identification of the source of taxation and the actual exacting process in that the Roman Empire governed the enormous territory around the entire Mediterranean basin. For instance, to identify sources of taxation, the government had to carry out a census regularly. Furthermore, the government could have encountered a variety of tax resistance in the course of collecting tax, including tax evasion and default. Thus like other public businesses, such as public construction and governmental procurement, the government relieved itself of the burden of tax collection and/or saved administration costs by outsourcing it in the form of lease or sale of the right to collect tax to private individuals.

More importantly, tax revenue was uncertain and variable because it changed in accordance with the economic circumstance of the economy, which is by nature fluctuating and unpredictable. This was especially the case in pre-modern societies whose economy was heavily dependent upon agriculture. In agricultural societies, agricultural output served as the prime tax base and the output fluctuated considerably according to the unforeseeable and uncontrollable

und Sünder,” *Zeitschrift für die Neutestamentliche Wissenschaft* 30, no. 3 (1931): 293-300, esp. 294-5; Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke*, 219; E. P. Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985), 178.

²⁶⁶ Joachim Jeremias, *New Testament Theology: The Proclamation of Jesus*, trans. John Bowden (New York: Scribner, 1971), 109, 112-13;

²⁶⁷ Pilgrim, *Good News to the Poor*, 80-82; David A. Neale, *None but the Sinners: Religious Categories in the Gospel of Luke* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1991).

²⁶⁸ For the general discussion of tax-farming in the Greco-Roman world, see Jones, *The Roman Economy*, 153-8; Margaret Levi, *Of Rule and Revenue* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 71-94.

climatic changes. Consequently, the government could have faced a considerable difficulty in the compilation and execution of its budget and financing public projects owing to the uncertainty and variability of its tax revenue. In this circumstance, farming system enabled the government to secure a somewhat stable--fixed and certain--money flow, facilitating, to some degree, governmental administration.

Furthermore, government benefited by fully exploiting the advantage of the auction system. In fact, ancient tax farming was a highly speculative business because instead of the government, the *publicani* had to bear all the risk relating to tax revenue. Evidence testifies to the petition of a tax collecting company for a reduction of the sum of money it owes. As Cicero puts it: “The people who farmed the province of Asia from the censors, complained in the Senate that their avariciousness had led them to pay too high a price for it, and requested to have the lease annulled” (*Att.* 1.17.9).²⁶⁹

Though Luke does not narrate the above aspects associated with tax farming explicitly, it is worth noting that negative references to tax collectors and their exploitation of people evident in Luke reflect a systematic aspect of the Roman imperial tax. This, in turn, suggests that since Rome established a large empire and dominated vast territory by itself, it may have been unavoidable that the subject people under the Roman Empire suffered from such corruption and exploitation generated by tax business.

Given this systematic nature of tax business, the solution that the Gospel offers through John the Baptist in the account does not exceed a personal level. It does not involve any systematic and wide economic platform associated with tax reform, as Joel B. Green rightly points out.²⁷⁰ However, perhaps the teaching attributed to John might be the best solution in this

²⁶⁹ Cicero, *Letters to Atticus*, Vol. I, trans. E. O. Winstedt, LCL, 3 vols. (London: William Heinemann, 1912), 75.

²⁷⁰ Joel B. Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1997), 179.

circumstance. If John the Baptist required them to quit their job and find a different one, others would take their places, the system remains unchanged, and consequently, corruption and exploitation would continue. In this regard, the instruction attributed to John the Baptist seems wise in that it at least seeks a more honest practice of tax collection.

2.4. Economic Impact of Tax

Finally, I will briefly discuss the economic impact of tax on the economy. Regarding the impact, A. H. M. Jones focuses on the detrimental effect of the Roman tax on the economy. Specifically, he attributes, to a considerable degree, the decline of the Roman Empire to over-taxation starting from the period of Diocletian. According to Jones, over-taxation resulted in the reduction of agricultural profit, which, in turn, caused the decrease of arable land, and led finally to the Roman economic decline.²⁷¹ Some scholars in Luke have taken a similar approach. For instance, Kenneth C. Hanson and Douglas E. Oakman describe the economy of first-century Roman Palestine as “extractive,” “redistributive,” or “tributary,” one due to the dual tax system by governmental (both imperial and local) and religious institutions, which facilitated the wealth transfer from the majority of people to the small upper class.²⁷²

It is noteworthy, however, that the negative evaluation of Roman tax is not the whole story. In opposition to the negative opinion mentioned above, from a different perspective, Keith Hopkins points to the case where government tax during the imperial period acted as stimuli of the Roman economy as a whole that eventually led to growth in production, consumption, monetization, and commercialization of the economy.²⁷³ According to his scenario, taxed

²⁷¹ Jones, *The Roman Economy*, 82-89.

²⁷² Kenneth C. Hanson and Douglas E. Oakman, *Palestine in the Time of Jesus: Social Structures and Social Conflicts*, 2nd ed. (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 2008), 105, 106-08.

²⁷³ Hopkins, “Taxes and Trade in the Roman Empire”; “Rome, Taxes, Rents and Trade.”

farmers exerted themselves more intensely to compensate or meet the surplus extraction from the government. The imposition of monetary tax on farmers made them engage actively in the commercialization of their agricultural surplus so that they could pay tax. The development of an agricultural market economy in turn created a favorable condition for stimulating manufacture and trade by feeding those who were detached from agriculture and engaged in manufacture and trade especially in urban settings. Moreover, both tax payment by farmers and food purchase by city dwellers occurred through the medium of money, which facilitated not only the circulation of money throughout the Empire but also the economic integration of the Roman imperial economy.²⁷⁴ Though Hopkins's model has not been unchallenged,²⁷⁵ it, has, nonetheless, opened up the possibility that tax and rents may have exerted a certain role in the development of the Roman imperial economy.

In fact, Luke does not provide any information on the effect of tax on the economy, either detrimental or beneficial. However, as mentioned above, even though John the Baptist exhorts tax collectors to observe proper occupational ethics, he does not present any radical or revolutionary stance on tax resistance that explicitly supports or sympathizes with the subversion of oppressive and evil imperial tax system. Similarly, in the account of the legitimacy of the Roman imperial tax (20:19-26), Jesus does not articulate, at least explicitly, a more radical and active tax resistance or rejection, nor does he speak of the unnecessary or the uselessness of tax itself. Instead, his response does not preclude the possibility of obedience to the Roman

²⁷⁴ Hopkins, "Taxes and Trade in the Roman Empire," 101-03.

²⁷⁵ An important critique of Hopkins's model comes from Richard Duncan-Jones, *Structure and Scale in the Roman Economy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 30-47. Duncan-Jones challenges Hopkins's model by arguing that the link between tax and trade is weak. He argues that it is uncertain whether the Roman government required a significant portion of direct taxes to be paid in money. He further insists that the increase of trade during the early imperial period may have been caused by government-led trade to feed the city of Rome. For Hopkins's rebuttal, see Hopkins, "Rome, Taxes, Rents and Trade," 190-230.

imperial tax;²⁷⁶ and, in this regard, Luke's Jesus takes a more nuanced stance and an indirect resistance strategy. Conclusively, it seems clear that both John the Baptist and Jesus in Luke do not present a world without tax. In this regard, we cannot exclude the possibility that their attitudes toward tax might reflect their understanding of the positive economic effect of taxation. If this is the case, Luke's presentation reflects the economic rationality of ancient economic agents.

3. The Parable of the Seed and the Soil (8:4-15)

The parable mainly concerns how the seed and the soil interact to produce crops; in this regard, it provides a good vantage point to discuss the larger agriculture-based economy—especially, an agricultural practice of the first-century Roman world—that the scene assumes. Related issues involve an economic rationality reflected in this practice, and agricultural productivity of the Roman farming.

3.1. The Order of Sowing and Plowing

There appear two agricultural technologies in the parable: plowing and broadcast sowing.

Broadcast sowing is the method of scattering seed first and plowing later. Pliny the Elder attests the practice of sowing in the Roman world (*NH.* 18.96). Accordingly, in the parable, a farmer sows his seed in the field by the method of broadcast sowing (v. 5a). Thus, the seed fall on diverse areas, such as along the path, on the rock, among the thorns, and into good soil (vv. 5-8). Consequently, those seeds that do not fall on good soil fail to yield a crop for diverse reasons, including being trampled on (v. 5b), being eaten by the birds of the air (v.5c), lacking moisture

²⁷⁶ Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, 716.

(v. 6), and being choked by the thorns (v. 7). The seed that falls on good soil produces a hundredfold grains upon maturity (v.8).

By contrast, plowing first is a more efficient and advanced method than broadcast sowing.²⁷⁷ In ancient Roman farming, plowing was an important agricultural technique to improve the quality of soils. Plowing facilitates sowing by making the soil broken, loosened, or turned. It also enhances soil fertility by bringing nutrients to the surface and uprooting weeds. In addition, it improves the ability of the soil to absorb and retain moisture. In this way, it helps a successful germination of the seed. Moreover, it can prevent unwanted loss of the seed by the birds. Therefore, Roman agricultural writers emphasize the importance of plowing. As Cato puts it: “What is good cultivation? Good ploughing. What next? Ploughing” (*Agr.* 61).²⁷⁸ Other agricultural writings also support the claim (Columella, *Rust.* 2.4.2; Pliny, *NH.* 13.176, 180-81). Accordingly, Luke’s Gospel attests the agricultural practice of plowing in Jesus’s saying on the ineptitude of a would-be follower who asked Jesus to say farewell to his family first before following Jesus. As it reads: “No one who puts a hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God” (9:61-62).

There has been a scholarly debate concerning the agricultural practice presumed in the story—the order of sowing and plowing. Kenneth D. White argues that the parable does not correspond to ancient farming practice according to which plowing preceded sowing--farmers tilled the soil first and then sowed the seed, covering them immediately to prevent the birds from eating the seed.²⁷⁹ On the contrary, Joachim Jeremias and Philip B. Payne insist that the parable

²⁷⁷ Philip Thibodeau, “Greek and Roman Agriculture,” in *A Companion to Science, Technology, and Medicine in Ancient Greece and Rome*, Volume 2, ed. Georgia L. Irby, 2 vols. (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, 2016), 519-532, esp. 521.

²⁷⁸ Cato and Varro, *On Agriculture*, trans. W. D. Hooper and Harrison B. Ash, LCL (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1934), 73.

²⁷⁹ Kenneth D. White, “The Parable of the Sower,” *Journal of Theological Studies* 15, no. 2 (1964): 301-2.

reflects Palestinian peasant practices at that time, according to which farmers applied different orders of sowing and plowing according to seasons of farming.²⁸⁰ Specifically, in the spring, farmers followed the normal order of plowing first and then sowing, whereas in the fall, sowing could precede plowing since the earth was already broken.

Given the lack of sufficient information, it is difficult to fully identify which explanation makes more sense in this story. It is noteworthy, however, that if we accept Payne's argument, the parable shows the economic rationality of ancient Roman farmers. More specifically, broadcast sowing can be seen as an agricultural technology to save labor—therefore, a cost-minimization strategy. At this point, the understanding of a cost-minimization strategy in relation to economic rationality requires further understanding of the notion of economic rationality.

3.2. *Economic Rationality*

The notion of economic rationality is associated with a premise adopted in economics concerning a certain behavioral pattern of economic agents in their conduct of economic activities. Broadly speaking, *economic rationality* can be defined as the way of thinking by means of which economic agents best achieve their economic objective using the available resources.²⁸¹ In other words, it means that economic agents follow a certain rational and consistent behavioral pattern in their economic decision-making process and actual economic practice. In this light, Mankiw defines rational people as those who “systematically and purposefully do the best they can to achieve their objectives, given the available

²⁸⁰ Joachim Jeremias, *The Parables of Jesus*, trans. S. H. Hooke, rev. ed. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1972), 12; Jeremias, “Palästinakundliches zum Gleichnis vom Säemann (Mark. iv. 3-8 par.),” *NTS* 13 (1966-7), 48-53; Philip B. Payne, “The Order of Sowing and Ploughing in the Parable of the Sower,” *NTS* 25 (1978-79), 123-29.

²⁸¹ Bade and Parkin, *Essential Foundations of Economics*, 9.

opportunities.”²⁸²

It is also noteworthy that economic rationality can be realized in a variety of ways. Apart from the well-known strategy of the maximization of profits, both self-sufficiency and the minimization of costs do not conflict with economic rationality. On the contrary, they can be other forms of the realization of economic rationality. In ancient agriculture, self-sufficiency could be a rational strategy in that if it can be attained, it could guarantee the stable supply of diverse resources, especially in case of agricultural products. Hence it contributed to reducing the risk involved in market purchase of those resources, as Neville Morley rightly points out.²⁸³

Moreover, it is known that cost-minimization can generate a similar economic effect as profit-maximization does. More specifically, in producers’ choice theory, the profit maximization is closely related to cost minimization. In fact, producers who aim to maximize their profits should take account of minimizing production costs. In this regard, “cost minimization is a necessary condition for profit maximization.”²⁸⁴ In neo-classical economic theory, it is known as a *duality theory*.²⁸⁵ According to the theory, if certain mathematical conditions are met, the solution to a maximization problem under a given set of budget constraints is virtually equivalent to the solution of a minimization problem with a given set of profits constraints.²⁸⁶ In other words, under certain conditions, a profit maximization problem has the same effect as a cost minimization problem. Particularly, cost-minimization is important when an increase in production of a business is limited for some reasons, such as the technological constraints or slow growth or stagnancy of the market. In this case, the principal

²⁸² N. Gregory Mankiw, *Essentials of Economics*, 7th ed. (Stamford, CT: Cengage Learning, 2015), 6.

²⁸³ Neville Morley, *Metropolis and Hinterland: The City of Rome and the Italian Economy, 200 BC-AD 200* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 75.

²⁸⁴ Andreu Mas-Colell, Michael D. Whinston, and Jerry R. Green, *Microeconomic Theory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 139.

²⁸⁵ Mas-Colell, Whinston, and Green, *Microeconomic Theory*, 127.

²⁸⁶ David M. Kreps, *A Course in Microeconomic Theory* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), 250-53.

way of increasing profit would be to minimize the production cost. In this regard, the cost-minimization strategy reflected in Payne's explanation on the order of sowing and plowing in the parable can be interpreted from the perspective of economic rationality.

3.3. *Agricultural Productivity*

The parable mainly concerns the productivity of soils. Generally speaking *productivity* is “a measure of average output or real output per unit of input.”²⁸⁷ Especially, the parable uses seed-yield ratio as an indicator of agricultural productivity. Such use agrees well with the economic notion of the ancient Roman world in that the ratio was also accepted as a general measure of productivity in Roman agricultural writings. As Cicero demonstrates: “On an acre of Leontini ground about a *medimnus* of wheat is usually sown, according to the regular and constant allowance of seed. The land returns about eightfold on a fair average, but in an extraordinarily favourable season, about tenfold” (*Verr.* 2.3.112).²⁸⁸ Besides an indicator of productivity, the ratio also played an important role in decision-making of the future production scale—that is, how many seeds are required to yield a certain amount of grains.²⁸⁹

Luke's Gospel also visualizes vividly an ancient farmer's concern for increasing agricultural productivity in the parable of a fig tree in a vineyard (13:6-9) when the gardener presents the plan for promoting the fruitfulness of the tree—digging and manuring (v.8). The gardener's plan coheres with traditional Roman agricultural methods such as plowing up and irrigating land to retain soil moisture and practicing crop rotation and spreading manure to

²⁸⁷ Campbell R. McConnell, Stanley L. Brue, and Sean M. Flynn, *Microeconomics: Principles, Problems, & Policies*, 20th ed. (New York: McGraw Hill Education, 2015), G19.

²⁸⁸ *The Orations of Marcus Tullius Cicero*, trans. C. D. Yonge (London: George Bell & Sons, 1903), 343.

²⁸⁹ Erdkamp, *The Grain Market in the Roman Empire*, 35.

increase fertility of land.²⁹⁰ The reference to manure occurs in Roman writings. Varro values highly the bird droppings as good source of manure (*Rust.* 1.38). Pliny introduces a method of making fertilizers through mixing chalky clays and mined earths (*NH.* 17.42-49). The action of digging around the tree makes the tree root deeply into the soil by cutting down on surface roots. By doing so, the tree can be more resistant to drought (Columella, *Rust.* 2.2.24). In sum, the parables of the seed and the soil (8:4-15) and of a fig tree in a vineyard (13:6-9) illuminate the economic rationality of an ancient farmer who endeavors to maximize agricultural profit by increasing the productivity of the land.

At this point, to better understand the agricultural productivity portrayed in the parable of the seed and the soil (8:4-15), we need more in-depth knowledge of ancient Roman agricultural productivity. In ancient farming, seed-yield ratio of a crop markedly differed depending on regions and the fertility of soils, but it seems that the normal ratio did not exceed fifteen-fold. As Varro states: “Beans are sowed 4 *modii* to the *iugerum*, wheat 5, barley 6, spelt 10, the amount being a little more or less in some localities; more being sowed on rich ground and less on thin ... the locality and the type of soil is so important that the same seed in one district yields tenfold and in another fifteen-fold — as at some places in Etruria” (*Rust.* 1.44.1).²⁹¹ In case of wheat, the normal seed-yield ratio proposed by Varro is one to five, which is slightly lower than the ratio presented by Cicero—a *medimnus* (= 6 *modii*). However, Columella presents a lower figure than those of Varro and Cicero: “For we can hardly recall a time when grain crops, throughout at least the greater part of Italy, returned a yield of four for one” (*Rust.* 3.3.4).²⁹² Moreover, Varro regards that ten-fold and fifteen-fold yield as the cases of bumper harvests, which is higher than

²⁹⁰ Kenneth D. White, *Roman Farming* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1970), 110-145.

²⁹¹ Cato and Varro, *On Agriculture*, 275.

²⁹² Columella, *On Agriculture, Volume 1: Books 1-4*, trans. Harrison B. Ash, LCL (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1941), 255.

Cicero's ratios—eight-fold to ten-fold. In addition, a passage from the rabbinic literature refers to the seed-yield ratio of corn in Roman Palestine as 7.5:1 in good years and 3.75:1 in bad years (*b. Baba Mezia* 105b).²⁹³ In sum, the average ratio of the Roman world seems to have not exceeded tenfold, and fifteen-fold was thought to be the case of exceptionally good harvest.²⁹⁴ In this regard, we can safely assume that the reference to a hundred fold yield in the parable is an extremely high one by pre-modern standards.

However, scholarly opinions have markedly differed as to the possibility of a hundred-fold yield in antiquity. Some scholars, such as Hans-Josef Klauck, Joachim Jeremias, and François Bovon, think of a hundred-fold in the parable as a miraculous harvest, treating it as if it is a purely literary or religious hyperbole given that the ancient crop productivity was fifteen times or less.²⁹⁵

Other scholars, however, have accepted the possibility of a hundred-fold yield because ancient writings occasionally refer to great crop yields—a hundred-fold or more. According to the Hebrew Bible, Isaac reaps a hundred-fold through the farming in Gerar, the land of the Philistines, which is ascribed as divine blessing for him (*Gen* 26:12). In addition, Varro refers to some regions that record seed-yield ratio of a hundred-fold: “Around Sybaris in Italy the normal yield is said to be even a hundred to one, and a like yield is reported near Gadara in Syria, and for the district of Byzacium in Africa” (*Rust.* 1.44.2).²⁹⁶ It is also noteworthy that in the above statement harvest of a hundred-fold occurs in various regions of the Roman Empire encompassing Italy, Syria, and Africa. Theophrastus also reports a hundred-fold yield at Babylon

²⁹³ Gildas Hamel, *Poverty and Charity in Roman Palestine, First Three Centuries C. E.* (Berkeley; Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1990), 127.

²⁹⁴ Arye ben David, *Talmudische Ökonomie: die Wirtschaft des Jüdischen Palästina zur Zeit der Mishna und des Talmud, Vol. I.* (New York: Olms, 1974), 104-05.

²⁹⁵ Jeremias, *The Parables of Jesus*, 150; Hans-Josef Klauck, *Allegorie und Allegorese in Synoptischen Gleichnistexten* (Münster: Aschendorff, 1978), 191; François Bovon, *Luke 1: A Commentary on the Gospel of Luke 1:1-9:50*, trans. Donald S. Deer, Hermeneia (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2013), 86.

²⁹⁶ Cato and Varro, *On Agriculture*, 275.

(*Plants* 8.7.4), and Strabo records hundred- or two hundred-fold yields in Susis—a region near Persis and Babylonia in Mesopotamia (*Geography* 15.3.11). Similarly, Pliny the Elder reports extraordinarily great productivity of wheat and bean in some areas of the Roman Empire (*NH.* 18.95).²⁹⁷

Nothing is more prolific than wheat...inasmuch as a peck of wheat, given suitable soil like that of the Byzacium plain in Africa, produces a yield of 150 pecks. The deputy governor of that region sent to his late Majesty Augustus—almost incredible as it seems—a parcel of very nearly 400 shoots obtained from a single grain as seed, and there are still in existence despatches relating to the matter. He likewise sent to Nero also 360 stalks obtained from one grain. At all events the plains of Lentini and other districts in Sicily, and the whole of Andalusia, and particularly Egypt reproduce at the rate of a hundredfold. The most prolific kinds of wheat are branched wheat and what they call hundred-grain wheat. Also a single beanstalk has before now been found laden with a hundred beans.

Why, then, do the above writings refer to such an incredibly high productivity if it is not implausible? Regarding this question, scholarly explanations seem to have been inadequate to disbelieve those references as mere hyperbole. In the case of some religious writings, there is a good reason to exaggerate the productivity—namely, to highlight divine blessing. However, in so doing, those religious writings present far more unrealistic figures as to the high productivity of crops—such as ten thousand-fold (2 Bar. 29:5-8; Irenaeus, *Haer.* 5.33.3-4) and one and a half million-fold (*b. Ketubbot* 111b-112a). Compared to such figures, a hundred-fold yield seems not so nonsensically great. Moreover, unlike those religious works, agricultural writers like Varro and Pliny seem to have no particular motive for absurdly exaggerating the seed-yield ratio. Why did Varro himself who presented the productivity of one- to fifteen-fold yields undermine the credibility of his agricultural tractate by reporting hundred-fold yields naively if such a great productivity was unconvincingly exaggerated? Why did the high-ranking provincial official

²⁹⁷ Pliny, *Natural History*, Volume 5: Books, 17-19, trans. H. Rackham, LCL (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1950), 249.

make a fool of the emperors with the fabricated samples of grain in Pliny's writing? In this regard, those writings may record such a remarkably high productivity because it was an unusual happening but, nonetheless, it really occurred.

Robert K. McIver doubts the credibility of the references since references to one hundred-fold yield in those writings occurred in exotic locations. Especially, McIver observes that the reference to one hundred-fold yield at Susis in Strabo's writing appears in the context of an exaggerated portrayal of the extreme heat of the region.²⁹⁸ However, the context of Pliny's references is far from exaggeration. In addition, the references are very concrete in their contents: samples of crops with great yields were sent to the Roman emperors twice and one of the crops was named after its fertility--"hundred-grain wheat."

Kenneth D. White, who admits the possibility of a hundred-fold yield, explains that the parable (8:4-15) focuses on "the fertility of individual plants" rather than the productivity of a certain grain as a whole.²⁹⁹ Put differently, it is not the productivity of crops in terms of the aggregate of seeds sown and reaped. If this is the case, White further argues, it is not impossible that a single plant yields one hundred seeds. As he puts it: "It is clear that what we are dealing with here is not an impossibly high or miraculous yield, but the result of a common Mediterranean sowing practice; it is indeed well known that in the drier winter rain areas of the Mediterranean region it is necessary to make rather thin sowings of wheat if a good crop is to be reaped."³⁰⁰ Paul Erdkamp also explains references to high productivity in Roman writings in this light: "Incredibly high yields that are sometimes mentioned in the ancient sources, such as 100:1,

²⁹⁸ Robert K. McIver, "One Hundred-Fold Yield--Miraculous or Mundane? Matthew 13:8, 23; Mark 4:8, 20; Luke 8:8," *New Testament Studies* 40 (1994) 606-608, esp. 608.

²⁹⁹ White, "The Parable of the Sower," 300-307.

³⁰⁰ White, "The Parable of the Sower," 302.

may reflect exceptional growing conditions of individual plants.”³⁰¹

Indeed, the samples of crops sent to emperors in Pliny’s writing (*NH.* 18.95) were individual plants that produced abundant seeds in their head. Similarly, in Luke, the term “seed” (σπόρος)³⁰² occurs as singular rather than plural forms in the parable (vv. 5-8, 11). Thus, the seed in the parable represents individual plants, even if the singular “seed” carries the collective sense. In this regard, Luke T. Johnson understands the productivity of seed in the parable as that of individual plants, seeming to accept the possibility of a hundred-fold yield: “Each seed of corn or wheat that reaches maturity obviously produces in its head many more seeds.”³⁰³ Other scholars have also acknowledged that the productivity presented in the parable may not be impossible.³⁰⁴ Conclusively, it seems that the fact that the ancient crops yield ratio fell between four- to fifteen-fold does not exclude entirely the possibility that a hundred-fold yield could have been realized locally in some very special circumstances, as Kenneth D. White proposes.

If we accept the possibility, the reference to a hundred-fold yield in the parable may demonstrate an advanced feature of Roman agriculture. Or even if we admit that the figures were exaggerated, it seems highly probable that the productivity of some regions was impressively higher than that of other areas in the Roman world at any rate. If this is the case, a hundred-fold yield in the parable may undermine the argument of some primitivist scholars that the productivity of ancient Greco-Roman farming was low. For instance, Kenneth C. Hanson and Douglas E. Oakman insist that “[c]ompared with modern industrial agriculture, ancient

³⁰¹ Erdkamp, *The Grain Market in the Roman Empire*, 34.

³⁰² LSJ, 1630.

³⁰³ Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Gospel of Luke*, Sacra Pagina (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1991), 132.

³⁰⁴ Eduard Schweizer, *The Good News According to Mark* (Richmond: John Knox, 1970), 91. Philip B. Payne, “The Authenticity of the Parable of the Sower and Its Interpretation,” in *Gospel Perspectives*, vol. 1, ed. R. T. France and David Wenham (Sheffield: JSOT, 1980), 181-186. Craig L. Blomberg, *Interpreting the Parables* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1990), 228; William D. Davies and Dale C. Allison, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel according to Saint Matthew, Vol.2: Commentary on Matthew VIII - XVIII*, 3 vols. International Critical Commentary (Edinburg; Clark, 1991), 385.

agriculture was not very productive. Ancients could expect at best a yield of 10 to 15 times the grain seed sown; modern grain production, with aid of tractors and chemical fertilizers, often yields forty times or better.”³⁰⁵

However, their evaluation seems unfair in that they take modern agricultural productivity as a criterion. Concerning the unfairness of the comparison between ancient and modern economies, the criticism from Pieter W. de Neeve seems illuminating: “What they have done is to choose a model which does not even apply to present-day agriculture as a whole, measure the ancient economy by it, establish that the ancient economy does not answer to the model, and conclude that the ancient economy is primitive.”³⁰⁶ De Neeve’s criticism is directed toward the use of modern criteria that belittle the previous achievements and performance of ancient economies. He instead argues that we should apply different criteria for a fair evaluation of the performance of the ancient economy.

In this vein, it is worth noting that some studies using comparative data have shown that ancient Roman agricultural productivity was considerably high by pre-modern standards. Geoffrey Kron, above all, underscores in his article that Roman agriculture was not only “sophisticated” but also “productive” by pre-modern standards.³⁰⁷ Some recent studies corroborate Kron’s argument by showing that the productivity of wheat in ancient Rome is equivalent or higher than that of medieval and modern agriculture.³⁰⁸ For instance, Tchernia André observes that Columella’s statement on the productivity of well-managed vineyards—the minimum yield of 21 hectoliters/hectare--matches that of nineteenth century France, and the

³⁰⁵ Hanson and Oakman, *Palestine in the Time of Jesus*, 98.

³⁰⁶ Pieter W. de Neeve, “The Price of Agricultural Land in Roman Italy and the Problem of Economic Rationalism,” *Opus* 4 (1985), 77-109, esp. 94.

³⁰⁷ Geoffrey Kron, “Food Production,” in Scheidel, *The Cambridge Companion to the Roman Economy*, 156-174, esp. 157.

³⁰⁸ M. S. Spurr, *Arable Cultivation in Roman Italy: c.200 B.C.-c.A.D. 100* (London: Society for the Promotion of Roman Studies, 1986), 82-6; Erdkamp, *The Grain Market in the Roman Empire*, 34-46.

normal produce of that vineyard—31.5-42 hectoliters/hectare --corresponds to that of the mid-twentieth century France.³⁰⁹ Likewise, M. S. Spurr argues that the productivity of Roman farming is comparable with that of sixteenth century CE Italy (3 to 10 times).³¹⁰ Similarly, Carla R. Phillips underscores that the Roman agricultural productivity is similar to that of mid-eighteenth century CE Ciudad Real in Spain (3.7 to 12 times).³¹¹

Conclusively, if we accept the possibility of the one hundred times crop yield in the parable, it serves as good evidence to support the elevated levels of production of ancient farming by pre-modern standards, as Kron and other scholars have argued.

4. The Account of Gerasene Demoniac (8:26-39)

This story mainly concerns the healing of a demon-possessed man in the region of the Gerasenes through encounter with Jesus. From an economic point of view, however, this story also assumes and inscribes practices of ancient livestock farming which I now elaborate.

4.1. Livestock Farming

In the ancient Greco-Roman world, some writers such as Aristotle and Cato regard animal husbandry as the most profitable agribusiness (*Pol.* 1258b 12-21; Cicero, *Off.* 2.89). More concretely, Pliny the Elder refers to Cato who ranks “the good pasture land” and “the pretty good pasture lands” as the best and the second best sources of profit respectively (*NH.* 18.29). In the imperial period, animal husbandry and dairy industry became well developed in north-western

³⁰⁹ Tchernia André, *Le Vine de l'Italie Romaine: Essai d'Histoire Économique d'après les Amphores* (Rome: École Française de Rome, 1986), 359-60.

³¹⁰ M. S. Spurr, *Arable Cultivation in Roman Italy c. 200 B.C.-A.D. 100*, 84.

³¹¹ Carla R. Phillips, *Ciudad Real, 1500-1750: Growth, Crisis, and Readjustment in the Spanish Economy* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1979), 39.

Europe, including Britain, Gaul, and the Danubian provinces, due to its rich pasture condition.³¹² In particular, meat, hides, and wool constituted important export items from Gaul.³¹³ Moreover, the Roman army contributed to some degree to the increase in the demand of meat.³¹⁴

In line with such development, some scenes in Luke seem to illustrate commercialized livestock farming, especially from the perspective of supply side. Most notably, in this account, a large herd of swine is tended on the hillside, which belongs to the region of Hippos (8:32). In the verse, the adjective *ικανός* which occurs frequently in Luke (3:16; 7:6, 12; 8:27, 32; 20:9; 22:38; 23:8-9) carries the sense of “many” or “considerable.”³¹⁵ Moreover, the reference to the plural herdsmen (*οἱ βόσκοντες*, literally those who were feeding them³¹⁶) in verse 34 also suggests that the size of the herd is considerable. Though Luke provides no information about how many pigs are in the herd, the parallel in Mark explicitly refers to the total number of drowned pigs as two thousand (Mark 5:13). In this regard, we can reasonably assume that the size of the herd clearly exceeds that of self-sustainable farming, which suggests that the pigs are raised for a market sale.

Archaeological evidence from the coastal region of Crau in southern France attests large-scale sheep herding, composed of flocks of 700 sheep and 150,000 sheep in total, around the end of the first century CE.³¹⁷ In a similar fashion, the parable of the lost sheep (15:1-10) refers to the size of the flock as a hundred sheep, which also seems to exceed a self-sustaining level and thus aims at market sale (v. 4). In Jesus’s birth narrative, the shepherds -plural- who

³¹² Mattingly, “The Imperial Economy, 283-297, esp. 289.

³¹³ Garnsey, “The Land,” 473.

³¹⁴ Annie Grant, “Animals in Roman Britain,” in *Research on Roman Britain, 1960–89*, ed. Malcolm Todd (London: Society for the Promotion of Roman Studies, 1989), 135-46; Sandor Bökönyi, “Animal Breeding on the Danube,” in *Pastoral Economies in Classical Antiquity*, ed. Charles R. Whittaker (Cambridge: Cambridge Philological Society, 1988), 171–6.

³¹⁵ LSJ, 825; Henry J. Cadbury, *The Style and Literary Method of Luke*, rep. ed. (New York: Kraus, 1969), 196; Karl Heinrich Rengstorff, *TDNT* 3. 293-96.

³¹⁶ LSJ, 322-23.

³¹⁷ Paul Halstead, “Food Production,” in *A Cultural History of Food in Antiquity*, ed. Paul Erdkamp (London; New York: Berg, 2012), 21-39, esp. 35.

receive the angelic message about Jesus's birth and greet him are tending their flock of sheep in the open fields (2:8-20). Verse 8 provides a more detailed information on the *modus operandi* of the shepherds who dwell in the fields (ἀγραυλοῦντες)³¹⁸ and watch the watches of the night. In particular, as Joseph Fitzmyer rightly notes, the use of the verb φυλάσσω and its cognate accusative objective φυλακή carry a connotation of distribution—they take turns in night watches.³¹⁹ In addition, the reference to dwelling in the fields may indicate the practice of transhumant pastoralism--the seasonal movement of livestock between summer and winter. Both epigraphic and archeological evidence testify that transhumant pastoralism was practiced in the Roman world. For instance, Varro states: "I had flocks that wintered in Apulia and summered in the mountains around Reate" (*Agr.* 2.2.9-10). In addition, remains from sheep bones found in a Roman stall at Crau suggest the practice of transhumance in the region.³²⁰ Excavations also show that settlements for transhumance existed in Anab a-Kabir in Roman Palestine.³²¹ Conclusively, the above features of shepherds suggest that the size of flock exceeds that of the small-scale self-sustaining farming in that plural numbers of shepherds stay in the fields and function as night guards.

In the Roman world, the public meat markets, *macella*, sold diverse meats from domesticated animals (such as cattle, goats, sheep, or pigs) as well as wild animals (such as fish, dove, and pheasants).³²² Though Luke lacks a reference to such meat markets, it provides some images of the consumption of animals, which constitutes the demand side of livestock farming

³¹⁸ LSJ, 14.

³¹⁹ LSJ, 1961; Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According to Luke I-IX*, AB, 2nd ed. (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Company, 1985), 409.

³²⁰ Martine Leguilloux, "Les Bergeries du la Crau: Production et Commerce de la Laine" *Revue Archéologique de Picardie* 1 (2003): 339-46; Otello Badan, Jean-Pierre Brun, and Gaetan Congès, "Les Bergeries Romaines de la Crau d'Arles," in *Aux Origines de la Transhumance: Les Alpes et la Vie Patorale d'Hier à Aujourd'hui*, ed. Colette Jourdain-Annequin and Jean-Claude Duclos (Paris: Editions A & J Picard, 2006), 263-310.

³²¹ Ze'ev Safrai, *The Economy of Roman Palestine* (London: Routledge, 1994), 165.

³²² Claire de Ruyt, "Les Produits Vendus au Macellum," in *Sacrifices, Marché de la Viande et Pratiques Alimentaires dans les Cites du Monde Romain*, ed. W. Van Andringa (Turnhout: Brepols, 2008), 135-50.

from the perspective of a market economy. Above all, in a couple of occasions, Luke describes that livestock is consumed as food. In the account of the prodigal son (15:11-32), a fatted (σιτευτός)³²³ cattle is killed for the feast when the prodigal son returns home and repents (15:23, 27, 30). As Luke T. Johnson rightly observes, the fatted cattle here points to grain-fed cattle, distinctive from ordinary grass-fed cattle in the fields, which signifies that special care is taken to gain more weight. According to Kenneth E. Bailey, a fatted cattle would suffice to feed 35-75 or even over 100 persons at the table;³²⁴ in this regard, it would be best suitable for a special feast.³²⁵ The reference to such a fatted cattle suggests that there existed a special demand for livestock for special events such as parties or festivals. In a similar fashion, eggs appear as a food item for which a son asks his father in the question that Jesus addresses to illustrate the willingness of a human father to give his son good things (11:12). Moreover, in Luke, the demand for livestock is not limited to dietary needs. In the parable of the great feast (14:15-24), oxen are utilized as the means of production in agriculture (v. 19). In addition, dehaired skins of animals are used as containers for wine (5:37 cf. Josh 9:4, 13).

Religious use of animals also constitutes a part of the demand for animals in commercial livestock farming in the ancient Roman world.³²⁶ Emperor Julian of the fourth century CE, for instance, states how religious needs boost livestock farming. As he puts it, “we foster these animals [sheep and cattle] and they multiply accordingly, it is only right that they should serve for all our uses and above all for the sacrifices that we honour most” (*Hymn to the Mother of the*

³²³ LSJ, 1601.

³²⁴ Kenneth E. Bailey, *Poet and Peasant* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1976), 187; *Through Peasant Eyes* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1980), 94.

³²⁵ Johnson, *The Gospel of Luke*, 238.

³²⁶ Jonathan Z. Smith, *To Take Place: Toward Theory in Ritual* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 197; Nancy Jay, *Throughout Your Generations Forever: Sacrifice, Religion, and Paternity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), 148; Horden and Purcell, *The Corrupting Sea: A Study of Mediterranean History*, 200.

Gods 177a).³²⁷

In many cases, meat consumption in the ancient Roman world was closely associated with a religious setting or ritual framework.³²⁸ Especially, meat used in rituals was distributed to elite members, and sold in the market in the Roman world.³²⁹ For instance, archeological evidence from Pompeii demonstrates that the meat market in the center of the forum was near the area where more than ten temples were situated. The proximity of the meat market to the temples suggests that cultic animals sacrificed at the sanctuaries may have been sold at the market.³³⁰ Moreover, Suetonius states that more than a hundred and sixty thousand animals were used as sacrifices within the first three months after Caligula ascended to the throne (*Caligula* 14.1). This Roman practice shows the aspect of a market economy associated with the religious use of animals.

Likewise, in pre-70 Roman Palestine, the demand for lambs was further increased by the religious practice of Jewish people, especially at the time of the religious festival of Passover. Accordingly, Luke's Gospel refers to the religious festival of Passover several times (2:41; 22:1, 7, 8, 11, 13, 15, 16). Luke describes that Jesus's parents regularly visit Jerusalem annually to celebrate Passover (2:41-42). Jesus's last supper takes place in the setting of the Passover meal (22:1). Here Luke refers to the Jewish religious practice of killing the sacrificial lambs (πάσχα)³³¹ in the account of the Last Supper (22:7).

Josephus provides some information about the number of sheep slaughtered as sacrifices in Passover: "on the feast called Passover, at which they sacrifice from the ninth to the eleventh

³²⁷ Julian, *Orations* 1-5, trans. Wilmer C. Wright, LCL (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1913), 495.

³²⁸ Peter Garnsey, *Food and Society in Classical Antiquity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 123-124.

³²⁹ John Scheid, "La Spartizione Sacrificale a Roma," in *Sacrificio e Società nel Mondo Antico*, ed. Cristiano Grottanelli and Nicola F. Parise (Rome: Laterza, 1988), 267-92. See also Scheid, *Romulus et ses Frères: Le Collège des Frères Arvales, Modèle du Culte Public dans la Rome des Empereurs* (Rome: École française de Rome, 1990).

³³⁰ Gunnell Ekroth, "Animal Sacrifice in Antiquity," in *The Oxford Handbook of Animals in Classical Thought and Life*, ed. Gordon L. Campbell (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 324-354, esp. 343.

³³¹ LSJ, 1346.

hour, and a little fraternity, as it were, gathers round each sacrifice, of not fewer than ten persons (feasting alone not being permitted), while the companies often include as many as twenty, the victims were counted and amounted to two hundred and fifty-five thousand six hundred” (*J.W.* 6.422-24).³³² E. P. Sanders, however, insists that the figure is exaggerated, and estimates the number of lambs as some 30,000.³³³ At any rate, it seems strongly probable that given the scale of the demand for lambs, there existed a commercial livestock market in Roman Palestine in order to meet such religious demands.

Moreover, in Jesus’s birth narrative, Jesus’s parents bring Jesus to the Jerusalem Temple to present him to God and fulfill purification by offering a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons according to Jewish religious custom (2:24). It is improbable to think that they carry such sacrificial animals with them on their journey. Instead, they would procure them from at the Temple area in Jerusalem. In fact, in ancient Palestine, evidence demonstrates that *shephelah* of Judea raised doves at installations called *columbaria* for the cultic use in the Jerusalem Temple during the Hellenistic period and the early Roman period.³³⁴

The production of animals to supply the Jerusalem temple reflects the sort of production that any temple or altar across the empire needed if animal sacrifice was part of its cultic observance. Conclusively, Luke’s portrayal of livestock farming indicates that the economy inscribed in Luke also participates in the marketization of livestock instead of self-sustaining consumption, more deeply than scholars of primitivists’ and substantivists’ stances have insisted.

³³² Josephus, *The Jewish War, Books 9-12*, trans. H. St. J. Thackeray, LCL (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1961), 499.

³³³ E. P. Sanders, *Judaism: Practice and Belief 63 BCE - 66 CE* (Philadelphia: Trinity Press International, 1992), 126.

³³⁴ John Pollard, *Birds in Greek Life and Myth* (London: Westview Press, 1977), 89-91.

5. The Account of Jesus's Feeding of the Five Thousand (9:10-17)

This story focuses on Jesus's miraculous feeding of a large crowd. From an economic viewpoint, however, it provides evidence of the ancient Roman grain market.

5.1. Grain Market in Luke

It is suggested, accurately, that ancient Mediterranean people were "heavy cereal-eaters."³³⁵

Among all agricultural produces cultivated in the ancient Roman world, cereals, including main staple foods of wheat and barley and minor crops of oats, rye, and millets, seem to have satisfied about 70-75 percent of human calorie needs in the Mediterranean diet.³³⁶ In this regard, cereal farming would constitute the fundamental building block of the Roman agriculture. Accordingly, Luke's frequent references to grain, especially bread, seem to illuminate this reliance on cereals.

In the account of Satan's temptation of Jesus, the devil challenges Jesus to turn stone into bread, while Jesus rejects this by quoting that "one does not live by bread alone" (4:3-4).³³⁷ In the reference to John's diet, John's abstinence from bread and wine makes people think he is demon-possessed (7:33). In the account of sending out the twelve apostles (9:1-9), bread is among the items that Jesus prohibits the apostles from carrying in their mission journey (9:3). In the account of feeding a large crowd (9:10-17), bread appears as the object of Jesus's miracle with which he feeds the large crowd (vv. 13, 16). In the Lord's Prayer, bread is that for which people should ask God as daily provision (11:3). Jesus employs the motif of borrowing three loaves of bread in the middle of the night to underscore the efficacy of prayer (11:5). In the parable of the feast and guests (14:15-24), a dinner guest who hears Jesus's message evokes the

³³⁵ Garnsey, *Food and Society in Classical Antiquity*, 18-19.

³³⁶ For more detail, see Robert Sallares, *The Ecology of the Ancient Greek World* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1991), 313-60.

³³⁷ All biblical quotations are from NRSV, unless otherwise designated.

image of eating bread in heaven (14:15). In the account of the Last Supper (22:14-20), bread constitutes a food item of the Passover meal (22:19). In the account of Jesus's post-resurrection revelation on the journey to Emmaus (24:13-25), Jesus shares bread with the Emmaus disciples (24:30).

In contrast to such frequent references to grain, Luke does not explicitly refer to the grain market. Luke, however, evokes a grain market in the scene of the feeding of five thousand (9:10-17). The disciples answer negatively Jesus's order to give food to the crowd, who followed him up to a remote place from the city of Bethsaida. They raise the possibility of their going and buying food for "five thousand men" (9:13b-14a).³³⁸ Though brief, the verse is important since it serves as straightforward evidence for the existence of a grain market in the narrative world of Luke's Gospel. More concretely, the disciples of Jesus in the account clearly have a grain market in mind to feed the crowd, as a direct reference to the purchase of food (ἀγοράζω)³³⁹ in verse 13 well demonstrates.

The size of the purchase required to feed the crowd in the story is noticeable. Verse 15 suggests that the grain market that the disciples have in mind should be large enough for them to purchase a considerable amount of bread in order to feed more than five thousand people at a time (v. 15). In this light, this story seems to assume the existence of well-established and large-scale grain markets, not simply casual trading in nearby houses in the village.

Regarding those markets and trade in grain, Luke's other volume, the Act of the Apostles, sheds some light. In Acts, Luke describes that Galilee exports some grain to Tyre and Sidon, and for this reason, the people in Tyre and Sidon try to reconcile with Herod Agrippa, the grandson of Herod the Great, when he is angry with them (12:20). Likewise, Luke seems to

³³⁸ A similar act of purchasing food is more clearly articulated in the Gospel of John where it states that disciples went to the city (*polis*) to buy food (4:8).

³³⁹ LSJ, 13.

testify to the presence of the grain trade, especially in association with Alexandria when he describes that Paul and the Italian cohorts who escort him to Rome for the trial before the emperor embark on a ship bound for Rome in Alexandria (Acts 27:6). As a number of commentators point out, the ship seems to be a part of a grain trade fleet since its cargo contains wheat (v. 38).³⁴⁰ Similarly, Luke states in the following chapter that Paul and the escorting soldiers, having gone through various hardships caused by inclement weather conditions, arrives at Puteoli by taking another Alexandrian ship (28:13; cf. Seneca, *Ep.* 77.1-2). It is most likely that this ship is associated with the grain trade too, as Johnson and Marshall rightly note, since the port at Puteoli, located in 130 miles south from Rome, served as the major grain trade hub of Rome in the first half of the first century CE. Ostia emerged as the primary grain harbor city for Rome in the era of Claudius.³⁴¹

Roman literary sources provide information on the grain trade during the Roman imperial period. Pliny the Elder suggests that Rome imported wheat from diverse regions of the Roman Empire, including Gaul, the Chersonese, Sicily, Sardinia, Spain, Egypt, and Africa (*NH.* 18.66-68). In particular, northern Tunisia and the Nile delta in Egypt exported a considerable amount of grain to Rome (Tacitus, *Ann.* 12.43; Josephus, *J.W.* 2.383; Pliny, *Panegyricus* 31). Other evidence attests the practice of sizeable grain trade in the Roman imperial world, not to mention the city of Rome. In particular, Egyptian grain was imported to the eastern areas of the

³⁴⁰ Hans Conzelmann, *A Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, trans., James W. Leitch, Hermeneia (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987), 215; Frederick F. Bruce, *The Acts of the Apostles*, NICNT, 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1990), 513; Luke T. Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, Sacra Pagina (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1992), 446; Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles*, AB (New York: Doubleday, 1998), 770; Ian Howard Marshall, *The Acts of the Apostles*, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries, rep. ed. (Grand Rapids: William. B. Eerdmans, 2001), 405; Darrell L. Bock, *Acts*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007), 732.

³⁴¹ Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 463; Marshall, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 418; Tenny Frank, *An Economic History of Rome*, rep. ed. (New York: Cosimo, 2005), 308-9.

Roman Empire.³⁴² For instance, Josephus testifies to the import of grain to Palestine from Egypt during serious droughts in the reign of Herod (*Ant.* 15.299-316). Moreover, he also states that Queen Helena of Adiabene, who converted to Judaism, during her visit of Jerusalem on pilgrimage, imports grain from Alexandria and dried figs from Cyprus (*Ant.* 20.51-52, 102). Epigraphic evidence of the second century CE attests the import of grain from Egypt to Tralleis (CIG 2927.145). And an inscription from the third century CE attests the existence of an official who was in charge of grain import from Egypt to Ephesus (IEph VII.1.3016). The writing of Gregory of Nazianzus suggests that the grain trade continues at Cappadocian Caesarea in the fourth century CE (*In Laudem Basilii* 34-35). Taking all these into account, therefore, it seems straightforward that a grain market, possibly a well-established and sizeable one, is operative in the narrative world of Luke's Gospel as well as other New Testament writings.

How do grain markets work in Luke's Gospel? Roughly speaking, basic market transactions are composed of at least three components: demand, supply, and price. Luke, however, does not present directly and systematically the operation of grain markets. Nonetheless, some information scattered throughout the Gospel, together with knowledge of the Roman imperial economy, sheds some light on their operation through a reconstruction of Luke's texts.

As for the demand of grain in the Roman world, dwellers of cities and towns would constitute the significant portion of its demand since they did not cultivate their own crops, depending on the supply of crops from outside.³⁴³ Specifically, except for some wealthy elites who could obtain staple food directly from their farms in the countryside, the rest, and majority, of city dwellers who were detached thoroughly from agriculture had to buy their food through

³⁴² Erdkamp, *The Grain Market in the Roman Empire*, 232-3.

³⁴³ Garnsey, *Food and Society*, 24-25; Wim Broekaert and Arjan Zuiderhoek, "Food Systems in Classical Antiquity," in Erdkamp, *A Cultural History of Food in Antiquity*, 41-55, esp. 41.

the network of urban retail trade.³⁴⁴ The establishment of *Pax Romana* promoted the growth of cities in many regions of the Empire, which resulted in the increase of urban food demand, together with the demand of food from army legions stationed in frontier regions.³⁴⁵

Most noticeably, the city of Rome played the prime role in the grain market of the Roman imperial economy.³⁴⁶ Some scholars have attempted to estimate the amount of annual grain import to Rome, which sheds a light on Rome's demand of grain. Peter Garnsey, for instance, derives the total amount of grain import as 60 million *modii* (0.4 million tons) per annum by drawing from two historical sources: Josephus and the fourth-century CE Epitome.³⁴⁷ According to Josephus, North Africa and Egypt respectively provide two thirds and one third of the annual grain supply respectively (*J.W.* 2.383, 386). Moreover, the fourth-century CE Epitome states the amount of total wheat import from Egypt as 20 million *modii* during the reign of Augustus (*Caesar* 1.6), which makes wheat import from northern Tunisia 40 million *modii*, since the supply from northern Tunisia was twice as large as that from Egypt. Moreover, Garnsey proposes that the total amount of grain import is twice as high as the actual wheat requirement for Rome.³⁴⁸ In another estimate, Geoffrey E. Rickman proposes the amount of imports from North Africa and Egypt as 27 and 13 million *modii* respectively on the assumption that the annual requirement of Rome was 40 million *modii*.³⁴⁹ Later, Rickman revised his estimate as 60 million *modii*.³⁵⁰ At this point, it is difficult to determine which estimate better represents the

³⁴⁴ Claire Holleran, *Shopping in Ancient Rome: The Retail Trade in the Late Republic and the Principate* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 261.

³⁴⁵ Garnsey, "The Land," 692.

³⁴⁶ Erdkamp, *The Grain Market in the Roman Empire*, 206; Broekaert and Zuiderhoek, "Food Systems in Classical Antiquity," 43.

³⁴⁷ Garnsey, *Famine and Food-Supply in the Greco-Roman World*.

³⁴⁸ Garnsey, *Famine and Food-Supply in the Greco-Roman World*, 231.

³⁴⁹ Rickman, "The Grain Trade under the Roman Empire," 261-276, esp. 264.

³⁵⁰ Geoffrey E. Rickman, "Problems of Transport and Development of Ports," in *Nourrir la Plèbe: Actes du Colloque Tenu à Genève les 28 et 29. IX. 1989 en Hommage à Denis van Berchem*, ed. Denis van Berchem and Adalberto Giovannini (Basel: F. Reinhardt, 1991), 103-18, esp. 111.

city's demand for grain due to the lack of sufficient information on ancient Rome--such as the size of the population, age structure, sex ratios, and per capita calorie intake.³⁵¹ It is certain, however, that a considerable amount of grain, some 30 to 60 million *modii* of wheat, comprised the demand of the well-established Roman grain market during the imperial period.

In this vein, city dwellers would constitute the significant portion of grain demand in Luke. In fact, one of the key aspects of Luke's Gospel is the presence of cities (πόλις; 1:26, 39; 2:3-4, 11, 39; 4:29, 31, 43; 5:12; 7:11-12, 37; 8:1,4, 27, 34, 39; 9:5, 10; 10:1,8, 10-12; 13:22; 14:21; 18:2-3; 19:17,19, 41; 22:10; 23:19, 51; 24:49), most notably Jerusalem (1:5-23; 2:22-50; 19:28-44). Rabbinic sources also testify to the existence of grain markets in large cities such as Jerusalem in the Roman period (*m.* Hagigah 3:3-4; *t.* Hagigah 3:30-34). Thus, we can safely assume that grain markets are presupposed in Luke.

Concerning the price of grain, Luke's Gospel does not refer to anything, not even in the account of feeding the five thousand (9:13). However, the parallel passages in Mark and John provide a more detailed information on the price of bread. Disciples of Jesus refer to the worth of bread that is required to feed the crowd as two hundred *denarii*—roughly equivalent to eight months of a day laborer's wages (Mark 6:37; John 6:7). Regardless of the exactness of the value of the bread, their reference clearly shows that bread is traded at a certain price at the market. The disciples seem well aware of the practice of market transaction of bread in that they calculate the cost of bread based upon its current price and the size of the crowd.

In fact, evidence suggests that a market economy in agriculture worked normally in the Roman imperial economy. For instance, Pliny the Younger complains that the profit from the farm in the Transpadane region is low owing to the fall of prices caused by a bumper crop (*Ep.*

³⁵¹ Paul Erdkamp, "The Food Supply of the Capital," in *The Cambridge Companion to Ancient Rome*, ed. Paul Erdkamp (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 262-277, esp. 263.

4.61). Though brief, the above example clearly shows awareness that the grain market responds well to the change in the amount of supply and the price adjusts accordingly to reflect such change in supply. In turn, this fluctuation suggests that the grain market operated through the force of price mechanism in the early Roman imperial economy.

The Hebrew Bible also attests a similar operation of price mechanism that a sharp fluctuation of the price of agricultural products is caused by the change of their supply. More specifically, the Book of Second Kings shows the functioning of this price mechanism at the agricultural market during the period of a long famine. In the time of Elisha, Israel goes to war against Aram during the reign of King Jehoram, and Samaria, its capital city, is besieged by the Aramean army. Due to the siege, a severe famine strikes the city, triggering the price of food to soar exorbitantly high: the price of a donkey's head amounts to eighty *shekels* of silver (about 2 pounds) and that of a quarter of a *kab* (probably about a half pint)³⁵² of dove's dung (*ḥārē yôn'im*)—signifying perhaps very small amount of husks³⁵³ or a salt substitute (Josephus, *Ant.* 9.62)—costs five *shekels* of silver (about 2 ounces; 2 Kings 6:25). Later, the siege is lifted suddenly as the Arameans retreat hastily during the night, abandoning all the supplies in their camp (7:5-7). Then the Israelites immediately plunder the Arameans' camp and, as a consequence, due to the sudden increase of supply, the prices of food fall suddenly: the price of a *seah* (probably about 7 quarts)³⁵⁴ of flour is a *shekel* (about 0.4 ounce) and that of two *seahs* of barley is a *shekel* at the market place (7:16)--literally “at the gate of Samaria” (7:1, 18). The above example clearly shows how quickly prices adjust in response to a change of supply in the food market in ancient Israel.

In fact, in the account of Jesus's preaching at the synagogue in Nazareth, Luke's Jesus

³⁵² Choon-Leong Seow, *The First and Second Books of Kings in NIB 3* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1999), 204.

³⁵³ Mordecai Cogan and Hayim Tadmor, *II Kings*, AB (New York: Doubleday, 1988), 79.

³⁵⁴ Seow, *The First and Second Books of Kings*, 205.

refers to two accounts associated with the prophets Elijah and Elisha in the context of the rejection of the prophets by Israelites (4:25-27). During the course of those references, Jesus mentions the long drought lasting for three and a half years, which results in a severe famine throughout the land of Israel (v. 25). This suggests that Jesus and his audience in the story may be well aware of the above story in the book of Second Kings including the sharp fluctuations of price.

Regarding the supply of grain, commercial crop farming in the Roman imperial period gained new momentum as the expansion of the Roman Empire and the establishment of imperial peace resulted in the creation of new economic opportunities. This expansion provided many Roman landowners with opportunity to make a fortune through agribusiness in supplying city dwellers.³⁵⁵ Accordingly, Luke's gospel also provides some examples that illuminate the participation of the agricultural market economy in the supply side. Specifically, those who engage in crop farming beyond subsistence level would serve as suppliers in the grain market since they would have some surplus to sell. By this criterion, the best possible candidates in Luke include the landowner in the parable of a rich fool (12:16-21), the second guest in the parable of great feast (14:15-24), and the father in the parable of the prodigal son (15:11-32). I discuss the topic of commercial crop farming later in Chapter 6 since it is associated with the issue of the level of subsistence farming in antiquity.

5.2. *City and Country*

The discussion of the agricultural market economy and of commercial livestock farming presented in the chapter has a direct bearing on the relationship between city and country. From

³⁵⁵ Garnsey and Saller, *The Roman Empire: Economy, Society and Culture*, ch.4.

the perspective of economic sociology, there are two scholarly approaches to the relationship between city and country in antiquity--a functionalist approach and a conflict approach.³⁵⁶ A functionalist approach views the cities and the countryside as mutually interdependent,³⁵⁷ while a conflict approach sees cities exploiting resources of the countryside.³⁵⁸ As previously mentioned in Chapter 3, scholarly discussion of this relationship has unfolded around the notion of the consumer city, proposed typically by Karl Bücher and Werner Sombart. Luke provides no direct evidence concerning whether the notion of the consumer city is applicable to the economy inscribed in the Gospel or not. However, some indirect inferences in the Gospel intimate the relationship between city and country with the latter as supplier and the former as consumer. This is so because the references to aspects of a market economy in Luke suggest that through the intermediary of markets, a certain amount of agricultural products is transferred from the countryside--the locus of production--to the cities--the place of consumption--so as to feed urban population who are detached from agriculture. Such transfer applies to diverse agricultural products in Luke such as livestock (2:8-20; 8:26-39), grain (14:19; 15:11-32; 16:7), olive (16:6), wine (20:9-18), and processed fish (24:41-43). In this regard, evidence from Luke seems to support the notion of the consumer city as the primary nature of ancient cities. Luke offers no evidence that cities in the Gospel supply rural areas with any products or wealth (i.e., money) in return for such transactions. Moreover, the evidence also suggests that the rural economy inscribed in Luke seems to go along with the atmosphere of the early Roman imperial economy by joining a growing market economy in agriculture.

³⁵⁶ Irwin Sanders, *Rural Sociology* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1977).

³⁵⁷ Ramsey MacMullen, *Roman Social Relations: 50 B.C. to A.D. 284* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1974).

³⁵⁸ G.E.M. de Ste. Croix, *The Class Struggle in the Ancient Greek World*, Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1981; Michael I. Rostovtzeff, *The Social and Economic History of the Roman Empire*, rev. P. M. Fraser, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1957); George M. Harper, *Village Administration in the Roman Province of Syria* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton university, 1928).

Whether the nature of such market transactions is exploitative or not cannot be determined *a priori*, *pace* Gerhard Lenski,³⁵⁹ since it depends mainly on the characteristics of the distributive mechanism of the economy. As already mentioned, Werner Sombart argues that taxes and rents functioned as important mechanisms for wealth transfer from the countryside to cities, both of which Luke attests in the Gospel.³⁶⁰ According to Duncan Jones's estimation, 60 percent of government revenues of Roman Egypt came from taxes on land and farming crops, which suggests that a significant portion of wealth is drawn from the countryside.³⁶¹ The collected taxes may be carried to major political centers that were located in urban areas such as Rome and Jerusalem in the Roman Empire.³⁶² For instance, Aristides portrays how the countryside of Egypt, Sicily, and Africa serves to feed Rome by calling them Rome's farms (*Roman Oration*, 12).

As far as rents are concerned, however, wealth transfer from the countryside to cities happens in the case of absentee landowners who reside in cities. Luke attests to both cases where the landowner is a resident of the countryside (15:11-32) and an absentee landowner (20:9-18). If a landowner who resides in the countryside involves himself in commercial agriculture, as is the case with the parable of a prodigal son (15:11-32), the wealth acquired from the agribusiness could, possibly, remain in the countryside, even though this does not mean that such wealth benefits the majority of the rural population. Conclusively, the relationship between city and country also reflects an aspect of a market economy.

³⁵⁹ Gerhard Lenski, *Power and Privilege: A Theory of Social Stratification*, 2nd ed. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1984), 189-296.

³⁶⁰ Sombart, *Der Moderne Kapitalismus*, 1:142-3.

³⁶¹ Duncan-Jones, *Money and Government in the Roman Empire*, 53.

³⁶² Oakman, "The Countryside in Luke-Acts," 156.

6. The Account of the Commissioning of the Seventy Disciples (10:1-16)

This account pays primary attention to the mission trip of Jesus's disciples and Jesus's instruction in the process. This account also sheds light on wage laborers in the Greco-Roman world in the course of Jesus's instruction.

6.1. Wage Laborers

Early Jewish writings testify to the employment of wage laborers in agriculture (Philo *Agr.* 1; Josephus *J.W.* 9.557). More specifically, some Greco-Roman papyri describe that wage laborers routinely carry out a variety of agricultural work such as leveling, cutting wood, clearing, planting, burning wood, pruning, weeding, hoeing, picking, treading (*P.Lond.* VII 1957; *P.Cair. Zen* IV 59748; 59827). In the Roman world, it seems that the social and economic conditions of wage laborers were much similar to those of slaves. In this light, wage laborers and slaves were held in much the same way as some ancient writers referred to them interchangeably. For instance, Cicero compares wage laborers to slaves: "Unbecoming to a gentleman, too, and vulgar are the means of livelihood of all hired workmen whom we pay for mere manual labour, not for artistic skill; for in their case the very wages they receive is a pledge of their slavery" (*Off.* 1.150).³⁶³ By the same token, Seneca also defines a slave as a lifetime wage laborer (*mercennarius*; *On Benefits* 3.22.1).

In a similar fashion, in this account (10:1-16), Jesus employs agricultural images of the lack of laborers in the season of harvest and the necessity of augmenting the labor force from casual or day laborers (v. 2). Furthermore, Jesus instructs his disciples who are about to be sent out to stay wherever they are received and eat and drink what is provided for them on the ground

³⁶³ Cicero, *De Officiis*, trans. Walter Miller, 153.

that a laborer is worthy of his wages (μισθός; 10:7).³⁶⁴ The reference to wages in verse 7 further clarifies the relationship between the laborers and the employer in terms of a labor market.

Wages are the price of laborers in a labor market, distinctive from a forced labor relationship like slaves.

Scholarly opinions have differed as to the development of a labor market in the ancient Roman economy. Some scholars such as Karl Polanyi, Keith Hopkins, and Moses Finley have argued that due to the prevalence of the slave labor force, a labor market in the Roman imperial world did not function well--though it existed, it operated only occasionally and limitedly.³⁶⁵ By contrast, Peter Temin has insisted that a well-functioning labor market may have existed in some areas of the Roman world, such as in urban areas in Roman Egypt during the second century CE.³⁶⁶ For example, the shortage of labor due to the Antonine Plague triggered a doubling of wages in Egypt, which demonstrates the functioning of a price mechanism in the labor market.³⁶⁷ However, Luke's Gospel does not provide further information concerning a well-functioning labor market in the economy.

At this point, what is notable regarding wage laborers is that Greco-Roman writings testify to landowners' endeavors to keep the wage of day laborers (*mercennarii*) low. This is well reflected in Cato's job description of the agricultural overseer who "must not hire the same day-laborer or servant or caretaker for longer than a day" (*Rust.* 5.4).³⁶⁸ Here Cato points out that the employer can occupy a strong negotiating position in wage bargaining by avoiding making a

³⁶⁴ LSJ, 1137.

³⁶⁵ Polanyi, *The Great Transformation*, Keith Hopkins, *Conquerors and Slaves* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978), 109; Moses I. Finley, *Ancient Slavery and Modern Ideology* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1980), 68.

³⁶⁶ Peter Temin, "The Market of the Early Roman Empire," *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 34, no. 3 (2004): 513-538, esp. 518-519, reprinted in his *The Roman Market Economy*, 114-138.

³⁶⁷ Temin, "The Market of the Early Roman Empire," 519. See also Duncan-Jones, "The Impact of the Antonine Plague," *JRA* 9 (1996): 108-36; Walter Scheidel, "A Model of Demographic and Economic Change in Roman Egypt after the Antonine Plague," *JRA* 15 (2002): 97-114.

³⁶⁸ *Cato and Varro: On Agriculture*, 15.

long term employment relationship. Similarly, Varro offers some advice on how to take full advantage of hired hands: “it is more profitable to work unwholesome lands with hired hands than with slaves; and even in wholesome places it is more profitable thus to carry out the heavier farm operations, such as storing the products of the vintage or harvest” (*Agr.* 2.17.3).³⁶⁹ The reference to the “more profitable” use of wage laborers demonstrate the economic rationality of the Roman employers in the Roman labor market. Employers would benefit from wage laborers by making them undertake hard tasks instead of their slaves. This is so because wage laborers would be more productive than slaves. Wage laborers have a strong incentive to work hard to receive their income while slaves who get nothing in return do not. Moreover, by making wage laborers do hard tasks, the employers can lengthen the durability of their slaves by slowing down the physical wear-and-tear on their slaves.

In sum, the above references well accord with the economic rationality of cost-minimization. Since maintaining slaves was costly, the employment of slaves in agriculture would follow careful economic calculation. In this situation, wage laborers served as a good alternative to slaves since it was more profitable for landowners to hire temporary laborers during peak seasons than to run a permanent slave labor force for farming. Accordingly, Cato refers to the employment of wage laborers for olive picking and processing (*Rust.* 144.3). In addition, in the purchase of a farm, Cato refers to the sufficient supply of labor as an important condition. He also advises landowners to make good terms with neighbors so that they can easily recruit wage laborers in the busy farming season (*Agr.* 4.1). In sum, all these references point to landowners’ effort to save labor costs by lowering wages and reducing the number of permanent laborers.

³⁶⁹ *Cato and Varro: On Agriculture*, 225.

Therefore, Luke's reference to wage laborers seems to carry the same economic connotation mentioned above. In other words, Luke portrays Jesus and/or God in this account (10:7) as Greco-Roman landowners who demonstrate considerable economic rationality in their agricultural business. This identification with landowners becomes more clear in that similar identifications of God with a Greco-Roman master also occur in the discourse on watchful slaves (12:35-48) and in the parable of the unworthy servant (17:5-10). In those parables, God and/or Jesus as Greco-Roman masters exhibit considerable economic rationality. I return to this topic later in Chapter 5 where I explore the topic of the master-slave relationship. At the moment, it is sufficient to say that Luke's portrayals of God and/or Jesus take on definitely economic overtones in delivering what are generally thought to be theological messages. These portrayals suggest that Luke's Gospel may have been deeply influenced by the first-century CE Roman imperial market economy.

7. The Parable of the Good Samaritan (10:25-37)

This parable focuses on the good deed of a certain Samaritan who willingly helps the victim of a robbery. In the course of unfolding the plot, it assumes and employs important information on economic topics of commercial lodging and the ancient monetary economy.

7.1. Commercial Lodging

The parable gives us a piece of information on ancient commercial lodging. In Luke, there appear two different kinds of lodging facilities for travelers: κατάλυμα and πανδοχεῖον. First, the term κατάλυμα occurs in the birth narrative of Jesus (2:7). It denotes a *caravansary*, a provisional unfurnished accommodation for travelers for an overnight stay in which a group of

people would share a common place for rest and unharnessing their animals.³⁷⁰ The same term is also used for “the guestroom” in which the Last Supper of Jesus and his disciples takes place (22:11). Second, Luke employs the term πανδοχεῖον in this parable (10:25-37) when the Samaritan carries the wounded man to the inn to arrange his lodging after taking emergency measures (10:34).³⁷¹ In contrast to a low quality accommodation of caravansary, a πανδοχεῖον was a relatively well-furnished commercial inn.³⁷²

Although the reference to the inn is very brief in the parable, it enables us to glimpse an aspect of a market economy engaged in lodging facilities—an essential aspect of ancient life. In the Greco-Roman world, lodging facilities were installed to meet the needs of travelers, which seems to have provided some profit opportunities to those in both urban and rural areas.³⁷³ Accordingly, the parable refers to the route from Jerusalem to Jericho (v. 30). The route comprises seventeen miles from Jerusalem to Jericho along the downward path from 2,500 to 820 feet, and the inn in the story might be located on this path, though the story is purely hypothetical.³⁷⁴

Moreover, the parable describes the Samaritan paying the innkeeper two *denarii* in advance as a price for the care (and perhaps lodging) of the wounded Jew (v. 35). In fact, little is known about the price for lodging. Polybius provides some information on the price of daily keep at an inn, especially in Cisalpine Gaul around the third or the second century BCE:

³⁷⁰ LSJ, 899; Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According to Luke I-IX*, 408.

³⁷¹ Moreover, there existed various accommodations for travelers in the first-century Roman world, both commercial and non-commercial. In the case of Jewish cultural settings, non-commercial facilities include “private accommodations, boarding houses of synagogues, cottages set up for the overnight stays of pilgrims, roadhouses.” Besides, other commercial accommodations in ancient Greco-Roman world include “the *mutationes* (only for feeding and changing animals) and *mansiones* (for overnight stays, particularly in the cities).” Bovon, *Luke 1*, 86.

³⁷² LSJ, 1296.

³⁷³ For more information on the Greco-Roman lodging facilities, see W. C. Firebaugh and Norman Lindsay, *The Inns of Greece and Rome: And a History of Hospitality from the Dawn of Time to the Middle Ages*, 2nd ed. (Chicago: Pascal Covici, 1928).

³⁷⁴ Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According to Luke X-XXIV*, AB, 2nd ed. (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Company, 1985), 886.

“travellers in this country who put up in inns, do not bargain for each separate article they require, but ask what the charge is per diem for one person. The innkeepers, as a rule, agree to receive guests, providing them with enough of all they require for half an *as* per diem” (*Hist.* 2.15)³⁷⁵ Since one *as* is equivalent to one-sixteenth *denarius* or *drachma*, the price was about three-sixteenth *denarius* or *drachma*. In fact, the main thrust of Polybius’s statement is that due to the fertility of its soil, all food items in the region were cheap and abundant, and the daily rate for stay was addressed here as an example of such affluence. In this light, we can assume that the normal rate for daily keep several centuries later would have been higher than the above rate.

At any rate, verse 35 clearly shows that commercial activity involved lodging facilities. It is noteworthy that commercial lodges took up a certain portion of the urban economy in the Roman world. In Varro’s writing, lodging business in rural areas is portrayed as a promising business: “if the farm lies along a road and the site is convenient for travelers, a tavern (*taberna*) might be built” (*Rust.* 1.2.23).³⁷⁶ In addition, archeological evidence also attests a thriving lodging business in the urban areas during the Roman imperial period. In Roman Pompeii, for instance, archeological evidence suggests that there were about 51 inns and lodges that accommodated overnights guests or travelers. Given that only 60 percent of the town has been excavated, Wim Broekaert and Arjan Zuiderhoek estimate that the total number of lodging facilities in ancient Pompeii would have been equivalent to some 83 houses.³⁷⁷ Moreover, based upon the estimated population of 15,000 people in Pompeii, they further estimate a population-business ratio of lodging facilities of Pompeii (15,000:83), and then apply the same

³⁷⁵ Polybius, *The Histories: Vol 1*, trans. W. R. Paton, LCL, 6 vols. (New York: G. P. Putnam’s Sons, 1922), 277.

³⁷⁶ Cato and Varro, *On Agriculture*, 181.

³⁷⁷ Wim Broekaert and Arjan Zuiderhoek, “Industries and Services,” in Erdkamp, *The Cambridge Companion to Ancient Rome*, 331.

ratio to the city of Rome, proposing that 5500 lodging facilities might have existed in Rome.³⁷⁸

In this regard, the reference to the inn in the parable demonstrates that the economy assumed in the narrative world of Luke's Gospel also accords well with features of a market economy in the early Roman imperial world.

Conclusively, what is notable in the parable is that even though agriculture was the main industry of the first-century CE Roman economy, other industries operated in a market economic system. Put differently, there were features of a market economy in every aspect of life in the first century CE, though its significance for the economy as a whole may have been meager. Indeed, the existence of a market economy in some economic areas was inevitable or necessary for the smooth functioning of the society. In this regard, Donald Engels points out the service economy of Roman Corinth that exert a distinctive role in its economy.³⁷⁹ Finally, this also suggests that the extent of a market economy of the ancient Greco-Roman world may have been far broader and more diverse than scholars of the substantivist circle have recognized.

7.2. *Monetary Economy*

The parable also shows another important aspect of the Roman economy—the use of money and related issues of a monetary economy. In discussing these aspects here, I start by addressing the following question: Does Luke present the economy in the Gospel as a barter economy—in other words, barter as the primary exchange pattern of the economy? I argue here that it may not be the case. Instead, I propose that the monetary economy assumed in the narrative world of Luke may be more advanced by pre-modern standards than scholars of the substantivist circle have recognized. Of course, Luke hints at some aspects of a barter economy. For instance, in the

³⁷⁸ Broekaert and Zuiderhoek, "Industries and Services," 331.

³⁷⁹ Donald Engels, *Roman Corinth: An Alternative Model for the Classical City* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1990), 43-65.

parable of the dishonest steward, debts take the form of agricultural products such as grain and oil rather than money (16:6-7). However, a careful reading of Luke's Gospel illuminates a broader use of money and the development of a monetary economy.

Above all, in the parable of the ten *minas*, profits from the business are expressed in monetary terms—ten *minas* and five *minas* respectively (19:16, 18). A *mina* is roughly equivalent to 100 *denarii* in value. Though in the parable Luke does not refer to what kind of business the slaves engage in, the fact that the slaves render their account of profits in terms of money indicates that their business is associated with monetary transactions rather than barter trades.

Furthermore, diverse monetary units occur in Luke's Gospel—mainly in the form of coins. These include *denarius* (7:41; 10:35; and 20:24), *drachma* (15:8), *assarion* (12:6), and *lepton* (21:2). The *denarius* is a Roman silver coin that has the value of a day's wage for an unskilled worker (Matt. 20:2, 24). Concerning the use of *denarius*, Hanson and Oakman insist as follows: "Estate laborers might be paid with the denarius, but most peasants would be unfamiliar with the coin (a point at issue in Mark 12:16), and it will soon return to Caesar's agents anyway (Mark 12:17)." They seem to suggest in this statement that the *denarius* was mainly used for tax purposes. However, their argument is groundless. Of course, in the account of the question about paying taxes to Caesar (20:20-26), Jesus requests those who are sent by the scribes and the chief-priests to trap him show him a *denarius* (v.24). However, in other scenes in Luke, the *denarius* is described as being used in daily transactions.

For instance, in Luke 7:41, the *denarius* appears in the parable of two forgiven debtors (7:40-43) to describe the amount of debt—500 and 50 *denarii* respectively. In addition, in the parable of the Good Samaritan (10:25-37), the Samaritan uses *denarii* as a means of payment

(10:35). As the above examples in Luke well demonstrate, in light of the Roman imperial economy, the use of Roman currency in the areas outside Rome and Italy signifies, at least in Luke's construction, the integration of those economies into the Roman political as well as economic system to a certain degree.

Moreover, these references seem to support the argument of David Kessler and Peter Temin according to which the degree of monetary integration was high in the Roman imperial economy between the second century BCE and the first century CE.³⁸⁰ In arguing this, they carry out a statistical analysis in which they focus on prices rather than coinage as a measure of evaluating the degree of monetization. Specifically, they take wheat prices around the diverse Mediterranean areas as a test case for both universal monetization and monetary integration. The areas include Sicily, Lusitania of Spain, the Po valley of Italy, Pisidian Antioch of Asia Minor, the Fayum of Egypt, and Palestine. They employ a regression analysis of the Roman wheat market—a statistical method to estimate the relationships among variables (usually between a dependent variable and multiple independent variables) by modelling linear or non-linear functions that are based upon a certain probability distribution.³⁸¹ In their analysis, they take the city of Rome as the central focus and distance discount (the distances from Rome to provinces) and price discount (the price differences of wheat between Rome and provinces) as variables to identify the relationship between them. The test result shows that wheat prices in provinces exhibit a connection with Roman wheat prices in a systematic way, even though the sample size is too small—only six pairs of prices and distances.³⁸² More concretely, there exists a negative

³⁸⁰ Kessler and Temin, "Money and Prices in the Early Roman Empire," 137-159.

³⁸¹ William H. Greene, *Econometric Analysis*, 7th ed. (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2012), 51-52. For more detail, see George Casella and Roger L. Berger, *Statistical Inference*, 2nd ed. (Pacific Grove, CA: Duxbury, 2002), 539-563, 577-601.

³⁸² Roughly speaking, a sufficiently large number of samples, say more than 30 samples, comprises an important virtue for a good statistical analysis, Sheldon M. Ross, *Introductory Statistics*, 3rd. ed. (New York: Elsevier, 2010),

relationship between distance and price. It can be reasoned that such a negative relationship reflects the differences in transportation costs to Rome, though these costs cannot be identified exactly. In sum, the test result indicates the high degree of monetary integration of the Roman world reflected in the wheat market, encompassing Italy, western, eastern, Palestinian, and Egyptian areas.

In addition, the *drachma* is a Greek silver coin whose value is roughly equivalent to that of the *denarius*. In the parable of the lost coin, ten *drachmas* constitute a woman's possessions, one of which she loses and finds later (15:8). While *denarius* and *drachma* were made of silver, *assarion* and *lepton* were made of copper; therefore, *assarion* and *lepton* had less value than silver coins. The *assarion* refers to a copper coin whose value roughly amounted to one sixteenth of that of the *denarius*. In Luke 12:6, Jesus refers to two *assaria* as a price for five sparrows. The *lepton* has the least value of all coins that appear in the New Testament. It has the value of one eighth of that of the *assarion*. In Jesus's teaching on agreement with one's opponent (12:57-59), the *lepton* shows the extent of the judge's verdict according to which the man who is imprisoned must pay the last *lepton* he owes in order to be released from the prison (v. 59). In the verse, the reference to *lepton* underscores the rigorousness of the terms of debt clearance. Moreover, the reference to two *lepta* appears in the story of the poor widow's offering as the amount of her offering (21:2).

Hanson and Oakman admit that Luke attests to small-scale monetary trade in ancient Palestine in Luke 12:6.³⁸³ However, they seem to underestimate the significance of such small-scale trade in the monetary economy when they interpret the verse as follows: "Jesus contrasts the present order with God's and expresses sorrow over the deplorable state of affairs

310. For more detail, see M. M. Desu and D. Raghavarao, *Sample Size Methodology* (San Diego: Academic Press, 1990).

³⁸³ Hanson and Oakman, *Palestine in the Time of Jesus*, 115.

when something as insignificant as sparrows are up for sale! The point belongs to a larger argumentative passage intent on convincing the audience that God's power to establish right relationships and the household economy of God's reign is real."³⁸⁴ Of course, it is true that the main point here is not expounding the commercial transaction of his time as the primary focus of Luke's Gospel lies on theological issues. Nonetheless, in light of economics, the reference provides important information on the development of monetary transactions at that time, which should not be overlooked by the theological significance of the reference. More concretely, the use of small denominations like *assarion* and *lepton* suggests that people in the Greco-Roman world used money even in small-scale transactions, which strongly suggests that the use of money in daily life in antiquity may have been much wider and more frequent than Hanson and Oakman recognize.³⁸⁵

Moreover, Kenneth C. Hanson and Douglas E. Oakman further insist that "[m]oney systems in the Palestine of Jesus, like institutions of agricultural production and organization, reflect a political economy. Modern assumptions about money's general accessibility (everyone can use money to buy anything) mislead as to money's functions in the Gospels."³⁸⁶ Contrary to their argument, however, Luke's Gospel testifies to the fact that diverse economic agents could access various different units of money, from money lenders and debtors (7:41), business slaves (19:16, 18), travelers (10:35), sparrow traders (12:6), a woman (15:8), and a poor widow (21:2). In this regard, Hanson and Oakman seem to underestimate the degree of monetization of the ancient Roman world as reflected in Luke's narrative world.

In sum, the use of diverse denominations suggests that the economy assumed in Luke's

³⁸⁴ Hanson and Oakman, *Palestine in the Time of Jesus*, 118.

³⁸⁵ Emily Mackil, "The Greek *Polis* and *Koinon*," in *Fiscal Regimes and the Political Economy of Premodern States*, ed. Andrew Monson and Walter Scheidel (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 469-491, esp. 471.

³⁸⁶ Hanson and Oakman, *Palestine in the Time of Jesus*, 116.

Gospel operates in a well-established monetary economy, covering various needs for money in the society, from small to large amounts. In addition, such diverse denominations also hint at the fact that the degree of a market economy assumed in the Gospel was considerable in that money is more likely to be used in the context of a market economy rather than a barter or self-sustained economy. It is also notable that the use of local and foreign currencies (Greek and Roman currencies) points to the international nature of the economy assumed in Luke's Gospel. It operates as an open economy rather than a closed one, which again also hints at the fact that the degree of a market economy is broad enough to allow foreign currencies to circulate. In other words, it suggests that the economy assumed in Luke's Gospel functioned as a local economy well integrated into the Roman imperial economy as a whole in that there is no resistance or barriers found in the Gospel for the use of local and foreign currencies.

7.3. *Functions of Money*

Then to what degree did ancient Greco-Roman currencies serve as money? Regarding the question, Hanson and Oakman seem to downplay the economic significance of money's function in the Gospels. They state that "it is surprising to us, given our familiarity with money as a universal medium of exchange, how infrequently in the Gospels money fulfills the function of an exchange medium. Out of twenty-one mentions of money in the Gospel, only three actually refer to money purchase of some item (Luke 10:35; 12:6; Matt 27:10)."³⁸⁷ It seems that their argument cannot be supported by Luke's Gospel. To the contrary, Luke's Gospel indicates that money fulfilled a major function in the ancient Roman imperial economy.

In a narrow sense, *money* can be defined as any commodity, item, asset, and/or token

³⁸⁷ Hanson and Oakman, *Palestine in the Time of Jesus*, 115.

accepted by a group of people or society as means of economic transactions and/or activities including purchase and sale of goods or services.³⁸⁸ More broadly, however, modern economics identifies three major functions for money: *a medium of exchange*, *a unit of account*, and *a store of value*.³⁸⁹ Money as *a medium of exchange* means that people acquire goods and services in their transaction by using money as an intermediary instead of commodity-to-commodity or service-to-service exchange. Money serves as *a unit of account* when people use money to value economic items such as goods, services, and financial assets. Money is *a store of value* because it has value and can be stored and retrieved over time without a significant loss of value.

As David Hollander rightly observes, Roman coinage fulfilled perfectly these three functions of money.³⁹⁰ First, Roman coins served as *a medium of exchange* because some Greco-Roman people bought and sold goods and services using coins instead of using barter exchange. For instance, Pliny the Elder describes that Gaius Gracchus pays 5,000 sesterces per pound for some silver dolphins (*NH.* 33.53). Second, Roman coins functioned as *a unit of account* because people measured or recorded value of goods, services, assets in terms of the amount of coins. Pliny the Elder, for example, estimates the value of jewels that Lollia Paullina, Caligula's wife, wears at a dinner party at 50 million sesterces (*NH.* 9.117). Finally, Roman coins operated as *a store of value* as is clearly demonstrated by the practice of coin hoarding. Cicero, for instance, reports the theft of sesterces and gold stored in a chest (*Pro Cluentio* 179). In 49 BCE, Caesar limited the amount of coin hoarding to 60,000 sesterces per person in Italy to deal with a financial crisis (Tacitus, *Ann.* 6.16; Dio, *Hist.* 41.37-38).

³⁸⁸ Bade and Parkin, *Essential Foundations of Economics*, 480; McConnell, Brue, and Flynn, *Microeconomics: Principles, Problems, & Policies*, G19; Paul Krugman and Robin Wells, *Economics*, 3rd ed. (New York: Worth Publishers, 2013), 844.

³⁸⁹ Frederic S. Mishkin, *The Economics of Money, Banking and Financial Markets*, 10th ed. (Boston: Pearson, 2013), 53-55.

³⁹⁰ David B. Hollander, *Money in the Late Roman Republic*, Columbia Studies in the Classical Tradition 29 (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2007), 16.

Similarly, references to coins in Luke's Gospel point to the fulfillment of these same roles of money. Jesus's reference to two *assaria* as a price for five sparrows in Luke 12:26 indicates that coins operated as *a unit of account* since Jesus values goods (i.e., five sparrows) using coins rather than wheat or wine. Besides, if the amount of debts that occurs in the parable of the two forgiven debtors (Luke 7:41) --50 and 500 *denarii* respectively—were written in a certain form of financial documents, coins would operate as *a unit of account* in the parable as well.

Moreover, the third slave's act of hoarding a *denarius* in the parable of the ten *minas* (19:11-27) points to the function of money as *a store of value* in that a *denarius* still maintains its value after it was out of circulation for a certain period of time. (19:21). Likewise, in the parable of the lost coin (15:8-9), *drachmas* perform the same function. The woman in the story has stored her ten drachmas in her house, which is clear from her act of searching for a lost coin such as lighting a lamp and sweeping the house.

Furthermore, as already mentioned, in the parable of the good Samaritan, the Samaritan pays the innkeeper two *denarii* as a price for the service of care for the wounded man, which signifies that coins function as *a medium of exchange* (10:35). It is also noteworthy that the use of money for travel is well attested in the account of sending out twelve apostles (9:1-6), in which money appears in Jesus's special instructions as an item that disciples should not carry during their missionary journey (v. 3). The main thrust of this instruction is to refuse to follow the normal practice of travel by not carrying basic travel provisions, instead depending entirely on the hospitality of those who accept the apostles (v. 4). In other words, this suggests that the normal practice would include money as a basic travel provision. Most probably, the money would be used to buy some food or to stay a night as Luke's Gospel shows (9:13; 10:35).

In the parable of the good Samaritan, after paying two *denarii*, the Samaritan further promises that he will pay the innkeeper back for whatever exceeds the prepaid amount (10:35). Here the verb ἀποδίδωμι carries the connotation of reimbursement in the context of debts.³⁹¹ Since he has already paid in advance two *denarii* as the cost of care for the wounded man, it seems reasonable to assume that he would pay the extra costs in cash rather than in kind. In this light, money also serves as a means of credit transaction in the parable. Here the use of money as the medium of credit transaction serves as a good indicator of the degree of monetization, which testifies to an advanced feature of the Roman monetary economy in that the Roman coinage system facilitated not only diverse cash transactions but also simple credit interactions.³⁹² Conclusively, Luke's Gospel well reflects such an advanced feature of the Roman monetary economy, which, in turn, further sheds light on the development of the market economy in the Roman imperial period in that money is most frequently used in market transactions.

8. Conclusion

The economic readings presented in this chapter represent aspects of a market economy and economic rationality inscribed in Luke's scenes. In the preaching of John the Baptist (3:1-18) the reference to soldiers displays aspects of a market economy through the adoption of a volunteer military system and interaction with the private economy for military supply. Similarly, the reference to tax collectors reflects the Roman imperial tax system that participates in a market economy by its adoption of a tax farming system. Moreover, such adoption of a tax farming system demonstrates the economic rationality of the Roman Empire in maximizing its efficiency as well as profits.

³⁹¹ LSJ, 197.

³⁹² Rathbone, *Economic Rationalism and Rural Society*, 318-30.

The parable of the seed and the soil (8:4-15) demonstrates economic agents' concern for agricultural profits expressed particularly in terms of a seed-yield ratio. Here the reference to a hundred-fold yield ratio may show the high productivity of ancient Roman agriculture by pre-modern standards, representing an advanced feature of the Roman imperial economy. In addition, the agricultural practice of sowing before plowing displays an agricultural strategy of cost-minimization. The account of the Gerasene Demoniac (8:26-39) attests commercial livestock farming operative in Luke's Gospel through its portrayal of a large herd of pigs and the plural herdsman. Other portrayals of livestock farming in Luke also strongly suggest that the farming is practiced in a scale that is above self-consumption level.

The account of Jesus's feeding of the five thousand (9:10-17) suggests a well-established grain market through the dialogue between Jesus and the disciples. Evidence from other passages in Luke also points to a well-functioning grain market. Jesus's reference to wage laborers in the account of the commissioning of the seventy disciples (10:1-16) also exhibits the landowners' strategy to save labor costs by reducing permanent laborers in farming. The parable of the Good Samaritan (10:25-37) evidences the commercial lodging business and the well-established monetary economy, both of which constitute the necessary context of the Roman imperial market economy in order for the society to function smoothly and well. In addition, Luke's Gospel shows that money carries out its functions well in the economy that Luke inscribes.

All of these features--interaction between military and private economies, a tax farming system, concern for agricultural productivity, agricultural strategies for profit maximization and cost-minimization, commercial livestock farming, the grain market, wage laborers, commercial lodging business, and the monetary economy--show that this section of Luke's Gospel (1:1-12:12) inscribes aspects of a market economy and economic rationality in the context of the

early Roman imperial economy.

CHAPTER 5

Economic Readings of Luke's Gospel 2 (12:12-16:13)

1. Introduction

This chapter continues economic readings of some selected passages in Luke's Gospel from Luke 12:12-16:13 in order to demonstrate how the Gospel inscribes aspects of a market economy and economic rationality in the context of the Roman imperial economy. The selected passages are the parable of the rich fool (12:13-21), the discourse on watchful slaves (12:35-48), the parable of a fig tree in a vineyard (13:6-9), the parable of the great banquet (14:15-24) and the parable of the dishonest steward (16:1-13). These passages are selected because they shed light on diverse economic topics that are closely associated with aspects of a market economy and economic rationality. These topics include greed, capital investment, storage, moral hazard and mechanism design, internal labor market, cost-benefit analysis, land and land market, economic stratification of the Roman world, large-scale farming, debt, principal-agent problem, commercial olive production, risk premium, defrauding, and final stage game.

2. The Parable of the Rich Fool (12:13-21)

The parable vividly describes how a person increases his wealth by building greater barns, storing his grain, and engaging in conspicuous consumption (12:19-20) but nonetheless is helpless against a sudden death. In so doing, the parable foregrounds some economic themes, such as greed, capital investment, and storage.

2.1. Greed

The parable engages the theme of greed, as Jesus refers to it directly: “Take care! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed (πλεονεξία)” (v. 15).³⁹³ According to Plutarch, greed is associated with the tendency to pursue more possessions (*Moralia* 523 E; *On Love of Wealth*, 525-26), which accords well with Luke’s understanding of it. Prior to this parable, Luke reports an account in which Jesus rejects a certain man’s request to mediate in the inheritance between the man and his brother (vv. 13-14), followed immediately by Jesus’s short warning against greed (v. 15). This narrative sequence suggests that Luke’s Jesus regards the man’s request to be motivated by greed. Moreover, God’s verdict at the end of the parable, which denotes someone living contrary to divine purposes, also indicates greed in light of pursuing more possessions (v. 20, “fool”).

As well expressed in Jesus’s warning in verses 15 and 20, greed was generally thought to be a serious vice in the Greco-Roman world. For instance, Diodorus Siculus states: “All vice should be shunned by men of intelligence, but especially greed, for this vice, because of the expectation of profit, prompts many to injustice and becomes the cause of very great evils to mankind (sic). Hence, since it is a very metropolis of unjust acts, it brings many great misfortunes not only on private citizens but even on the greatest kings” (*The Library of History* 21.1).³⁹⁴ In a similar fashion, Thucydides regards greed as the source of evil (3.82.8); and Dio Chrysostom ranks it as “the cause of the greatest evils” (*Discourses* 17).³⁹⁵ Accordingly, in Luke, Jesus refers to riches as one of the impediments, together with cares and pleasures of life, that prevent people from yielding fruit in the parable of the four soils (8:11-15; v. 14).

³⁹³ LSJ, 1416.

³⁹⁴ Diodorus Siculus, *Library of History*, Vol. 11: Books 21-32, trans. C. H. Oldfather, LCL (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1957), 3.

³⁹⁵ Dio Chrysostom, *Discourses* 12-30, trans. J. W. Cohoon, LCL (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1939), 193.

From a different perspective, however, unlike the general negative connotation that it acquired in the Roman world and in this parable, greed, understood as furthering one's own interests and returning a profit, has earned a positive valuation in modern economics. Adam Smith pays particular attention to the significance of self-interest in the well-functioning of an economy. In his *Wealth of Nations*, he convincingly substantiates how the selfish behavior of individuals, motivated by profit motive, can result in socially desirable or beneficial results: "It is not from the benevolence of the butcher, the brewer, or the baker, that we expect our dinner, but from their regard to their own interest. We address ourselves, not to their humanity but to their self-love, and never talk to them of our necessities but of their advantages."³⁹⁶

The main thrust of this statement is that it is not benevolence but self-interest that functions as the catalyst for the well-functioning of an economy since the pursuit of individual self-interest leads to the division of labor. Smith underscores that division of labor is caused by the human activity of exchange and eventually exerts a great influence on the development of the productive power of an economy: "But man (sic) has almost constant occasion for the help of his brethren (sic), and it is in vain for him (sic) to expect it from their benevolence only. He will be more likely to prevail if he can interest their self-love in his favour, and shew them that is for their own advantage to do for him what he requires of them."³⁹⁷

A behavioral pattern, similar to that which Smith's argument explains, can be found in this parable. It is his greed—a concept much akin to Adam Smith's notion of self-interest—that motivates the master to increase his storage capacity as a way to cope actively with a bumper harvest. In other words, Luke's understanding of greed here, not to mention a general ancient Roman understanding of it, is closely interwoven with the profit motive or economic initiative

³⁹⁶ Adam Smith, *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations* (1776; repr., New York: Modern Library, 1965), 23-24.

³⁹⁷ Smith, *The Wealth of Nations*, 23.

that the parable unfolds (vv. 16-21) after Jesus's warning against greed and a brief remark that life and abundance are not connected to each other (vv. 15, 20). It is difficult to identify whether such an understanding of greed is a general principle applicable to the entire Gospel since Luke does not provide any further information. It is clear, however, that at least in this parable, greed is indistinguishable from profit motive vividly portrayed through the economic behaviors of the master.

From a different point of view, then, this suggests that it may be possible to identify a profit motive or economic initiative through the notion of greed, provided that the former is subsumed in the latter to a degree. Moreover, if this is the case, it is plausible that the profit motive and/or economic initiative may be far more prevalent and strong in the narrative world of Luke's Gospel when it is recognized as a form of greed. Concerning this, Thomas E. Phillips's study seems illuminating in that he takes seriously the topic of greed in Luke. More specifically, Phillips presents "greedlessness" that John the Baptist first articulates in the beginning of the Gospel (3:10-14) as one of two overarching ethical concepts, the other being generosity, for reading the economic issues in the Gospel of Luke and the Acts of the Apostle.³⁹⁸ In this regard, an emphasis on "greedlessness" may indirectly indicate the gravity of greed prevalent in the audience of Luke's Gospel, at least in the author's perspective, which in turn may signify a concern with profit motive or economic initiative in Luke's Gospel as well.

2.2. *Capital Investment*

In the parable, the rich man displays a considerable economic rationality through his economic behavior of *investment* in coping with a bumper year. In verse 18, the man decides to invest in

³⁹⁸ Phillips, *Reading Issues of Wealth and Poverty in Luke-Acts*, 3.

the new storage building to prepare for the future by demolishing the old barns and building bigger ones to store crops and other goods. In economics, *investment* is used in two different settings. In production, *investment* means the spending of resources or money for the production of goods and services, the accumulation of capital, or changes to inventories.³⁹⁹ In finance, however, investment points to “the purchase of a financial asset (such as a stock, bond, or mutual fund) or real asset (such as a house, land, or factories) or the building of such assets in the expectation of financial gain.”⁴⁰⁰ In the story, the economic activity of the rich belongs to investment in the sense of production—notably *capital investment*.

More specifically, *capital investment* refers to the use of money or commodity in the purchase or acquisition of capital, either fixed or non-fixed assets that could contribute to the production of goods or services over many years. Fixed capital goods such as land, buildings, plants, and machines have been traditionally referred to simply as capital goods.⁴⁰¹ More formally, in economics, the term *capital* is used in several different ways. In terms of finance, *capital* is the total value of the assets owned by economic agents including cash, stocks bonds and real estates.⁴⁰² In production, however, it refers to any physical resources made by humans such as tools, instruments, machines, and buildings that are used not for direct consumption but for the production of other goods or services.⁴⁰³ Moreover, it includes *inventories*--unsold goods of producers or firms awaiting future sales.⁴⁰⁴ In sum, capital is used in terms of production in the story. In this regard, the rich man rebuilds his storage facility, which points to his act of capital investment in terms of production (12:18).

³⁹⁹ McConnell, Brue, and Flynn, *Microeconomics*, 12, G12; Krugman and Wells, *Economics*, 622, 756.

⁴⁰⁰ McConnell, Brue, and Flynn, *Microeconomics*, G9.

⁴⁰¹ For more detail, see N. Gregory Mankiw, *Principles of Economics*, 7th ed. (Stamford, CT: Cengage Learning, 2014), 22, 237, 354, 357.

⁴⁰² Krugman and Wells, *Economics*, 246.

⁴⁰³ Bade and Parkin, *Essential Foundations of Economics*, 32, 35.

⁴⁰⁴ McConnell, Brue, and Flynn, *Microeconomics*, G12; Krugman and Wells, *Economics*, 622.

Luke portrays in some instances the economic act of *investment*. For instance, in the parable of the ten *minas*, a nobleman entrusts his money to ten of his slaves as start-up capital for business (19:13). Similarly, in the parable of the rebellious tenants, a man plants a vineyard as an initial investment for his agricultural business (20:9). The parallel stories in Matthew and Mark provide more detailed descriptions of the process of establishing a new vineyard, which show more clearly the economic characteristic of capital investment. According to the descriptions, the master “planted a vineyard, put a fence around it, dug a wine press in it, and built a watchtower” (Matt 21:33; Mark 12:1). Conclusively, such features of initial investment in Luke show that they follow the ordinary economic routines for commercial agriculture or commerce, which testifies to aspects of a market economy in the Gospel. Especially, the parable of the rich fool (12:13-21) provides an example of capital investment through the rich man’s acts of demolishing old barns and building larger ones.

2.3. *Storage*

In the parable, the capital investment of the rich man focuses on the extension of *storage* to increase inventories. As the rich man clearly states: “...I will pull down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods” (12:18). In the next verse, the rich man further affirms his inventory by saying to himself “Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years” (v. 19). In fact, inventories as a part of capital require, and are largely confined by, the capacity of *storage*. In economics, *storage* is a technology that enables the maintenance of the commodity for future time.⁴⁰⁵

In his commentary, Joel B. Green rightly points out the economic motif behind the rich’s

⁴⁰⁵ Mas-Colell, Whinston, and Green, *Microeconomic Theory*, 736.

decision to increase storage: “He thus makes it clear that he does not plan to contribute to the current year’s saturation of the market with his surplus, but will hold his harvest back in order to achieve a higher price when the market is not glutted.”⁴⁰⁶ Green’s comment carries a negative connotation since the rich man in the story intends not to sell his abundant surplus at a cheap price on the local market for the sake of others but to keep it so as to enrich himself. Thus, Joel B. Green regards the economic activity of the rich man as an unusually selfish and greedy behavior: “Given the subsistence economy of the peasant population surrounding him, this need for increased personal storage space not directly related to his agricultural activity must have seemed odd in the extreme, if not utterly monstrous.”⁴⁰⁷ Green further criticizes the negative effect of such behavior on the local economy: “...what is ‘good business practice’ for this wealthy farmer-landholder has detrimental consequences for the peasants and tenants who are his neighbors and who far outnumber him in the village economy.... his decision to hold back his produce will reflect harmfully on the regional economy.”⁴⁰⁸

The basic assumptions behind Green’s interpretation seem to be that the economy assumed in the story is basically a subsistence economy and a basic economic notion that governs such an economy is something like “the moral economy of the peasants.” The moral economy of the peasants highlights guaranteeing the subsistence of the community members as the supreme objective in every aspect of social and economic relations, arrangements, and behaviors.⁴⁰⁹ Would, then, the majority of people in the Roman world, including landowners, share and support the same notion of the moral economy of the peasants so as to regard the rich man’s behavior as an anomaly? Evidence from the ancient Roman literature seems to stand in

⁴⁰⁶ Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, 490.

⁴⁰⁷ Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, 490.

⁴⁰⁸ Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, 491.

⁴⁰⁹ For more detail, see Scott, *The Moral Economy of the Peasant*.

tension with such interpretation. Most notably, as early as the late first century BCE, Varro makes it explicit that profitability rather than self-sufficiency is the main motivation of agriculture: “[T]he farmer should aim at two goals, profit and pleasure; the object of the first is material return, and of the second enjoyment. The profitable plays a more important role than the pleasurable” (*Rust.* 1.4.1).⁴¹⁰ In terms of class considerations, Varro’s statement is written from the perspective of the rich who are free from subsistence. Accordingly, the “rich” man in the parable has the resources to expand his profit which smaller peasant farmers do not have.

In maximizing their agricultural profits, ancient Roman people seem to have well understood the importance of storage, especially in the context of a market economy. Even the oldest surviving agricultural tractate of the second century BCE attests its importance in order to enhance profit: “It is well for the master to have a well-built barn and storage room and plenty of vats for oil and wine, so that he may hold his products for good prices; it will redound to his wealth, his self-respect, and his reputation” (Cato, *Agr.* 3.2).⁴¹¹ Moreover, a late first-century BCE agricultural writing by Varro also confirms that storage is closely related with profits in that it can enable crop owners to best exploit the most opportune time to maximize the profit:

As to the crops intended for market, care must be used as to the proper time for taking out each; thus you should take out and sell at once those which do not stand storage before they spoil, while you should sell those which keep well when the price is high. For often products which have been stored quite a long time will not only pay interest on the storage, but even double the profit if they are marketed at the right time (*Rust.* 1.69.1).⁴¹²

Varro also comments that some ancient agronomists “fixed the number of *cullei* so high in order that the farmer might not be forced to sell his wine every year; for old wine brings a better price

⁴¹⁰ Cato and Varro, *On Agriculture*, 185.

⁴¹¹ Cato and Varro, *On Agriculture*, 11.

⁴¹² Cato and Varro, *On Agriculture*, 301-3.

than new, and the same wine a better price at one time than at another” (*Rust.* 1.22.4).⁴¹³

Furthermore, first-century CE Roman literature also testifies that people in the early Roman imperial period pay attention to the importance of storage in agriculture. Columella, for instance, provides detailed instruction on storage facilities:

As to the part devoted to the storage of produce, it is divided into rooms for oil, for presses, for wine, for the boiling down of must, lofts for hay and chaff, storerooms, and granaries, that such of them as are on the ground floor may take care of liquid products for the market, such as oil and wine; while dry products, such as grain, hay leaves, chaff, and other fodder, should be stored in lofts (*Rust.* 1.6.9).⁴¹⁴

Likewise, Pliny the Elder addresses the case where insufficient storage causes the economic loss in the agriculture. “Still, before now I have seen vintagers at work even on the first of January owing to shortage of vats, and must being stored in tanks, or last year’s wine being poured out of the casks to make room for new wine of doubtful quality. This is not so often due to an over-abundant crop as to slackness, or else to avarice lying in wait for a rise in prices” (*NH.* 319-320).⁴¹⁵

Furthermore, the Hebrew Bible offers a vivid example of how a proper use of storage can result in big profits. In the account of Joseph in Genesis, Joseph ensures that the large amount of crops gathered from successive seven years of bumper crops stored in each city of Egypt are available to cope with the following seven years of famine. Moreover, this prudent storing of crops greatly increases the wealth of Pharaoh by collecting money and livestock through the grain trade and later by nationalizing arable lands in Egypt (Gen. 41; 47:13-26).

Archeological evidence also confirms the significance of storage in the Roman imperial economy. Most evidently, the Emporium district in Rome had a number of commercial

⁴¹³ Cato and Varro, *On Agriculture*, 239.

⁴¹⁴ Columella, *On Agriculture, Volume 1: Books 1-4*, 69-71.

⁴¹⁵ Pliny, *Natural History, Volume 5, Books 17-19*, 389-91.

warehouses known as *horrea*.⁴¹⁶ In ancient Rome, *horrea* were widely used to store a variety of items. First of all, they primarily stored agricultural produce such as grains, olives, and wines (Cicero, *Ver.* 2.3.20; Livy 7.31.1; Columella, *Rust.* 12.52.3; Seneca, *Ep.* 117.26.6) and agricultural equipment (Columella, *Rust.* 1.6.7) in rural areas. Besides, in urban areas they seem to have functioned as a secure place where people stored a variety of their valuable items and treasures (Paulus, *Dig.* 1.15.3.2). For instance, Tullus stored various art works including statues in *horrea* (Pliny, *Ep.* 8.18.11) while Galen stored his books and medical instruments with other valuables (*Peri Alupias* 3-12). *Horrea* also stored imperial archives (Galen, *Peri Alupias* 8-9), securities on loans (*TPSulp.* 37, 45-46), and even military equipment (Livy, *Hist.* 29.22.3.1). Such wide use of *horrea* suggests that economic agents of the Roman market economy well understood the importance of storage in their businesses. Conclusively, the above evidence, both written and archaeological, well attests that the use of storage as a means of increasing profits was a well-known agricultural practice—at least to those who were rich enough to do so.

However, Luke's Gospel seems to disapprove of this agricultural practice in the parable (12:13-21). As already mentioned, the parable can be best understood in the context of a warning against greed. Jesus's warning includes an instruction that wealth and life are not associated with each other (v. 15). In this regard, the parable serves as an example of greedy behavior. In addition, at the end of the parable, suddenly God appears and calls him a fool (ἄφρων; 12:20).⁴¹⁷ This term seems to aim at criticizing the rich man's seemingly wise, in that it is economically rational, behavior of exploiting a profit opportunity through storage. Moreover, Luke's Jesus concludes the story as a warning against the one who accumulates possessions for himself but is not rich toward God (v. 21). The meaning of the phrase "rich toward God" could be broadly

⁴¹⁶ Emilio Rodríguez Almeida, *Il Monte Testaccio: Ambiente, Storia, Materiali* (Rome: Ed. Quasar, 1984), 73.

⁴¹⁷ LSJ, 294.

deduced from the general understanding of themes of wealth and religion in Luke's Gospel. Luke T. Johnson, for instance, proposes that the phrase points to responding to faith and sharing possessions with others.⁴¹⁸ Other scholars including Joseph A. Fitzmyer, François Bovon, and John T. Carroll also interpret it similarly.⁴¹⁹ In light of such interpretations, Luke's criticism may suggest that there is a collision between economic rationality and a different focus on relationship with God. The problem of the rich man in the parable seems to lie in his general attitude of life to pursue wealth rather than a more important value of religion. The behavior of the rich man in increasing storage capacity represents his way of accumulating wealth for himself.

Conclusively, even though it is critical of the practice, Luke's Gospel may address the rich man's behavior as an example of a normal practice, rather than an anomalistic one. Or, at least, it addresses the economically rational behavior of those who are engaged with agribusiness and equipped with the profit motive or economic initiative in order to show how they make a profit. In this light, the parable demonstrates both the economic rationality of some Roman landowners and aspects of a market economy of the Roman imperial world.

3. The Discourse on Watchful Slaves (12:35-48)

This discourse mainly uses, without critique, the metaphor of masters and slaves in verses 35-38 and 42-46 as a means of presenting instructions on watchfulness. I will explore the economic rationality reflected in the discourse from the perspective of game theory—especially moral hazard and mechanism design. Moreover, I will investigate an internal labor market that operates

⁴¹⁸ Johnson, *The Gospel of Luke*, 238.

⁴¹⁹ Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According to Luke X-XXIV*, 972; François Bovon, *Luke 2: A Commentary on the Gospel of Luke 9:51-19:27*, trans. Donald S. Deer, Hermeneia (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2013), 203; John T. Carroll, *Luke: A Commentary*, NTL (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2012), 268.

in the discourse.

3.1. Moral Hazard and Mechanism Design

The discourse portrays the relationship between the master and the slaves.⁴²⁰ Especially, in this relationship, the slaves are encouraged to be watchful and faithful to their duties when their master is absent. To get a better understanding of the characteristics of this relationship, I will employ the methods of game theory—more concretely, moral hazard in the principal-agent game and a related issue of a monitoring system.⁴²¹ In so doing, I will take a broader perspective of labor-employment relationships in general that encompass diverse relationships among masters, slaves, tenants, and stewards.

As a preliminary, I will define some terms. According to Mankiw, *game theory* is “the study of how people behave in strategic situations.”⁴²² Here “strategic” points to “a situation in which a person, when choosing among alternative courses of action, must consider how others might respond to the action he (sic) takes.”⁴²³ In addition, an *agent* refers to a person who acts on behalf of another person or persons while *principal* is the person for whom the agent carried out some tasks. In this discourse (12:35-48), the unfaithful slave who takes charge of other slaves is an agent and the master is a principal. Moreover, the *principal-agent problem* points to the problem that occurs between the principal and the agent, most notably due to an asymmetric information structure. In game theory, when one party has more or better information than the

⁴²⁰ I will discuss the general characteristics of Roman slavery later in Chapter 6 when I investigate the parable of the unworthy servant (17:5-10). There, the parable vividly portrays the harsh reality of slaves.

⁴²¹ N. Gregory Mankiw, *Principles of Microeconomics*, 6th ed. (Mason, OH: South-Western Cengage Learning, 2012), 484.

⁴²² Mankiw, *Principles of Microeconomics* (2012), 349.

⁴²³ Mankiw, *Principles of Microeconomics* (2012), 349-50.

other party in a transaction, this is called *information asymmetry*.⁴²⁴ In the discourse (12:35-48), an information asymmetry is in view in verse 39 according to which a master could have prevented a theft if he had known in advance the exact time of the break-in.

Under the situation of *information asymmetry*, if the agent pursues his/her own interest instead of that of the principal, *moral hazard* occurs. *Moral hazard* also takes the form of the agent exerting less effort than is thought to be desirable by the principal or of engaging in dishonest, illegal, and/or undesirable behaviors. Traditionally, moral hazard is likely to occur when the principal is unable to monitor perfectly the behavior of the agent—in this case, information asymmetry is related to the degree of monitoring the actions of the agent. In this discourse (12:35-48), moral hazard is vividly portrayed in verse 45 according to which the unfaithful slave in charge of other slaves takes advantage of the delayed coming of his master, beats other male and female slaves, and indulges in eating, drinking, and getting drunk.⁴²⁵

Indeed, moral hazard involving slaves, which Luke's scene portrays, is well attested in Greco-Roman writings. For instance, as early as the third century BCE, Plautus describes in his comedy a slave who shirks his work but wants to receive rations (*Stichus* 59-61). The description exemplifies the attitude to work of a slave who lacks economic motive and initiatives, which comprises the moral hazard of the slave. Similarly, in his writing, Columella vividly describes the acts of moral hazard of slaves, who have neither incentive nor initiative when they are left without direct monitoring of their masters:

they let out oxen for hire, and keep them and other animals poorly fed; they do not plough the ground carefully, and they charge up the sowing of far more seed than they have actually sown; what they have committed to the earth they do not so foster that it will make the proper growth; and when they have brought it to the threshing-floor, every

⁴²⁴ Robert H. Frank, Ben S. Bernanke, Kate Antonovics, and Ori Heffetz, *Principles of Microeconomics*, 6th ed. (New York: McGraw Hill Education, 2015), 310.

⁴²⁵ In addition, another important example of moral hazard in Luke can be found in the parable of dishonest steward (16:1-13), which I will discuss later.

day during the threshing they lessen the amount either by trickery or by carelessness. For they themselves steal it and do not guard it against the thieving of others, and even when it is stored away they do not enter it honestly in their accounts. The result is that both manager and hands are offenders (*Rust.* 1.7.6-7).⁴²⁶

In fact, slaves' lack of drive to work, economic motivation, and initiative are quite understandable given that slaves originated mainly from the captives of wars, the descendants of slaves, abandoned infants brought up by slaves, and insolvent debtors sold into slavery.⁴²⁷ These origins underscore that the basic nature of slave work was forced labor.

How can economic agents prevent (or solve) moral hazard in the principal-agent problem? Some immediate answers can be readily proposed.⁴²⁸ If a moral hazard occurs due to the imperfect monitoring system, one can prevent (or solve) the problem by providing better monitoring. Most effectively, such better monitoring can best be achieved through the direct management of farming. In this regard, Columella regards the owner's own engagement with farming as the ideal way of agricultural management, and as such encouraged masters to buy the land close to town to enable direct managing and close monitoring (*Rust.* 1.1.18-19; 1.2.1). In Luke, the element of personal management is visible in the parable of the prodigal son (15:11-32) where the elder son of the master is portrayed as working in the fields in person with other laborers (v. 25), even though being the sole heir of his father's estate (v. 31). A subsequent reference notes his successful job performance for several years in all faithfulness without any disobedience (v. 29).

In addition, by way of increasing the level of monitoring, Columella advises landowners to announce more frequent visits to their farms than their actual visits in order to prevent the negligence of duty by both farm managers and laborers (*Rust.* 1.2.1). Cato the Elder also

⁴²⁶ Columella, *On Agriculture, Volume 1: Books 1-4*, 83.

⁴²⁷ Sandra R. Joshel, *Slavery in the Roman World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 67.

⁴²⁸ Mankiw, *Principles of Microeconomics* (2012), 484-85.

provides a similar job description for farm managers (*Agr.* 5). In a similar fashion, in the discourse (12:35-48), the element of unexpectedness dominates the scene (vv. 35-38, 40, 46). Most notably, the metaphor of suddenness of the master's return is well reflected in the phrase: "on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour that he does not know." (v. 46) Clearly, the master regards the prompt reception of his slaves when he returns even during the middle of night as a sign of their alertness and furthermore as a criterion of their job performance. In this regard, from the perspective of economics, the master's return at unknown time is functionally equivalent to a monitoring system of surprise visits of principals to their agents' workplace, which also operates as an effective mechanism of preventing the moral hazard of workers.

Moreover, the principal can use both a stick and a carrot. On the one hand, the principal can use an *incentive mechanism* to handle the problem. In economics, *incentive* refers to something that induces people to perform a designed action.⁴²⁹ On the other hand, the principal can use penalty systems as well. In this discourse (12:35-48), incentive and penalty systems operate in multiple forms.

First, verse 37 portrays the blessing and reward that the faithful slaves receive in the form of the reversal of roles according to which the impressed master lets the slaves enjoy the feast at the table while he girds his loins and serves them. Verse 38 reaffirms that those watchful slaves who await his master in midnight or even until dawn will surely receive a blessing. Second, verse 42 presents an example of the prototype of the faithful and sensible slave who gains promotion to a household manager in charge of the master's slaves and responsible for giving them their food allowance at the proper time (v. 42). Finally, verses 43-44 identify the blessing and reward that the faithful and prudent slave will receive in which Jesus first pronounces a blessing for the slave

⁴²⁹ Mankiw, *Principles of Microeconomics* (2012), 7.

who is seen to be carrying out his task when the master arrives (v. 43), and then promises that the master will appoint him as the manager of all his possessions (v. 44).

Furthermore, the discourse also adopts harsh punishment as a penalty system as it stresses that those who abuse his authority--in economic terms, those who commit a moral hazard--will pay harsh penalties (vv. 45-48). The discourse vividly portrays the punishment that the unfaithful slave will face—cut in two and placed with the unfaithful (v. 46). The discourse also provides a detailed description of the degree of punishment which will vary depending on the degree of responsibility: Among those who do not prepare for the master's return or do not carry out the requirement of his master, the one who knows the master's will is destined to suffer a severe beating (v. 47). The discourse concludes with a more general principle: the degree of accountability is proportional to that of entrustment (v. 48). Such detailed description represents the fairness and sophistication of incentive and penalty systems operating in the discourse, which enables employers to deal with the moral hazard of diverse laborers with varying ranks and positions.

Conclusively, this suggests that ancient Roman economic agents may have exhibited highly developed economic rationality in carrying out their economic activities. Moreover, this reading has a direct bearing on the issue of the realities of slaves. It is true that the life and economic condition of slaves were harsh in ancient Roman world, but this is not the whole story. It is also noteworthy that in Roman society, there existed not solely exploitation; there existed proper motivation as well, as this discourse well demonstrates.

3.2. Internal Labor Market

The master's reference to a reward system in the discourse (12:35-48) also indicates the aspect of

an *internal labor market*. An *internal labor market* refers to the labor market that exists in the inside of a firm or work place. It denotes the practice of a firm or work place hiring employees from the existing workers' pool rather than recruiting from the external labor force.⁴³⁰ In labor economics, an internal labor market helps to understand characteristics and effects of the long-term relationship between employers and employees.⁴³¹

In fact, hiring employees is an important and difficult task for employers since they do not know much about the characteristics of potential employees such as personal attributes like initiative, creativity, competence, honesty, diligence, and so on. Put differently, there exists a lot of information asymmetry between the potential employers and the employees in the job market. In the case of higher level or important jobs, the risk of hiring unknown candidates increases and causes serious damage to the employers if they hire incompetent persons. In this situation, the use of an internal labor market can reduce such risks by hiring those whose characteristics and competence were enough known to the employers. Moreover, an internal labor market can exert a positive influence on the productivity and morale of the employees by giving them the incentive to work hard to get a promotion if they know that the opportunity for upper-level jobs is open only to them.⁴³²

However, an internal labor market also has shortcomings.⁴³³ Above all, it restricts, to a considerable degree, the range of choice open to employers with regard to hiring employees for upper-level jobs, which may hinder employers from selecting the best employees for the jobs. In addition, in conjunction with such restrictions, an internal labor market may serve as a potential

⁴³⁰ For more detail, see Peter Doeringer and Michael Piore, *Internal Labor Markets and Manpower Analysis* (Lexington: Heath, 1971); Paul Osterman, ed., *Internal Labor Markets* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1984).

⁴³¹ Thomas Hyclak, Geraint Johnes, and Robert Thornton, *Fundamentals of Labor Economics*, 2nd ed. (Mason, OH: South-Western Cengage Learning), 244.

⁴³² Hyclak, Johnes, and Thornton, *Fundamentals of Labor Economics*, 262-65.

⁴³³ Ronald G. Ehrenberg and Robert S. Smith, *Modern Labor Economics: Theory and Public Policy*, 12th ed. (Boston: Pearson, 2015), 183.

cause of a moral hazard of employees within a firm or work place if it reduces the competition of the employees for the higher level jobs. This is so because if the employees realize that promotion to upper-level jobs is relatively not too competitive, they may exert less effort to win promotion.

Internal labor markets are likely to be more developed in labor circumstances where the resignation of employees could incur considerable costs for the employers. These costs may include investments or training that the employers offered to the workers. If this is the case, the replacement of workers entails additional costs of investment for the new recruits who fill vacancies. Therefore, the employers have the incentive to establish a long-term employment relationship with the employees to maximize profits.⁴³⁴

Within the above theoretical framework, this discourse (12:35-48) evokes an internal labor market in Jesus's reference to the reward and punishment of the manager in charge of slaves (vv. 42-48). More specifically, Luke's Jesus declares that the faithful manager who performs his job well will be promoted to a much higher task: "Blessed is that slave whom his master will find at work when he arrives. Truly I tell you, he will put that one in charge of all his possessions" (vv. 43-44). In those verses, the aspect of promotion is straightforward as those managers will be in charge of the master's entire wealth rather than of distributing food to other slaves (v. 42). In this verse, Jesus clearly employs the notion of an inside promotion for those who are already at work in a certain labor pool.

Moreover, Jesus presents the second parable (vv. 42-48) as an answer to Peter's question concerning the addresses of the first parable of the watchful slaves (v. 41). In this regard, R. Alan Culpepper suggests that the parable is intended to give instructions to early church leaders like

⁴³⁴ Hyclak, Johnes, and Thornton, *Fundamentals of Labor Economics*, 245.

Peter and the other disciples.⁴³⁵ Especially, according to Culpepper, the authority to manage the distribution of food (v. 42) evokes the image of the seven disciples in Acts 6.⁴³⁶ If this is the case, the parable also seems to provide evidence of an internal labor market which appears to have operated as a general principle among early Jesus's followers in Luke. Indeed, in several occasions in his writings, Luke indicates that the economic rationality associated with an internal labor market is at work.

For instance, out of his disciples, Jesus chooses the twelve apostles—the higher level jobs for Jesus's ministry (6:12-16). Similarly, in Acts, after the ascension of Jesus, his disciples decide to fill the vacancy of an apostleship caused by the suicide of Judas Iscariot (1:12-26). In doing so, they use an internal labor market in replacing Judas, articulating the qualification of the candidates as “one of the men who have accompanied us during all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the baptism of John until the day when he was taken up from us” (1:21-22). This scene shows that an upper-level job is filled by using internal labor markets, which sharply contrasts to the employment of Paul. In the case of Paul, he is recruited not from the inside of the church but from outside as the account of his conversion and commissioning well demonstrates (Acts 9:1-31). In particular, in Acts 9:15, Jesus appears to Ananias, a disciple in Damascus, stating clearly the selection of Paul for an important mission job. As Jesus puts it, Paul “is an instrument whom I have chosen to bring my name before Gentiles and kings and before the people of Israel.” Here, as Robert W. Wall rightly notes, the use of the vocabulary “chosen” (ἐκλογή)⁴³⁷ in describing Jesus's choice of Paul echoes the reference to the selection of the apostles (1:2) and the seven (6:5), both of whom assume higher

⁴³⁵ R. Alan Culpepper, *The Gospel of Luke* in *NIB* 9 (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1995), 263.

⁴³⁶ Culpepper, *The Gospel of Luke*, 264.

⁴³⁷ LSJ, 512.

level jobs in the early Jerusalem community of Jesus-followers.⁴³⁸ Therefore, from an economic standpoint, Jesus' choice of Paul belongs to the practice of an *external labor market*, a counter-concept of an internal labor market.

In other scenes in Luke's writings, an internal labor market also operates. In Acts 6:1-7, when the early Jerusalem community faces the necessity of creating new upper-level jobs in order to solve the inner conflict between the Hellenists and the Hebrews over the issue of the daily distribution of food to widows, they appoint the seven within their own community from "men of good standing full of the Spirit and of wisdom" (6:3; NRSV). In the account of the debate over greatness among his disciples (Luke 22:24-30), Jesus guarantees his disciples that he will bestow on them the kingdom (βασιλεία) which God conveyed to him, letting them enjoy the feasting with him and exercising legal authority over the people of Israel in leadership positions, since they remain loyal to him in time of testing (vv. 28-30). Here, as Joseph A. Fitzmyer notes, the use of the participle κρίνοντες ("judging")⁴³⁹ in verse 30 may carry a broader connotation of political rule.⁴⁴⁰ In this case, the apostles will assume political power as their reward through a series of power transfers from God to Jesus and from Jesus to the apostles.

Conclusively, the presence of an internal labor market operative in Luke's Gospel--and in this passage concerning watchful slaves (12:35-48)--shows that economic rationality is also at work in the area of the labor market.

4. The Parable of a Fig Tree in a Vineyard (13:6-9)

The parable portrays a master's attempt to remove an unfruitful fig tree and his gardener's effort to save the tree through the petition for him to allow it one more year for bearing fruit with his

⁴³⁸ Robert W. Wall, *The Acts of the Apostles* in *NIB* 10 (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2002), 152.

⁴³⁹ LSJ, 996.

⁴⁴⁰ Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According to Luke* X-XXIV, 1419.

promise of careful tending. I will investigate the economic rationality of ancient farming reflected both directly and indirectly in this parable.

4.1. Crop Diversification

The parable states that a fig tree is planted in a vineyard (v. 6). The practice of planting various crops together in a parcel of land is effective since different plants require different nutrients from the soil. Ancient evidence attests this phenomenon. In his writing, Pliny the Elder speaks of the case of fig trees present in a vineyard when he explains how to cultivate vines (*NH*. 17.35.154-5). Likewise, the Hebrew Bible refers to vines and fig trees simultaneously, which suggests that these two types of plants would grow together. In the proclamation of Joel, for instance, vines and fig trees occur simultaneously three times (Joel 1:7, 12; 2:22). In addition, in Micah the reference to one's own vines and fig trees appears as a symbol of peaceful, safe self-sufficiency in the future (Mic. 4:4). Similarly, in the fourth vision of Zechariah, invitations to meet together under one's vine and fig tree emerge as the sign of the future restoration of the land of Israel (Zech. 3:10). The above references suggest that it was a widely practiced phenomena in the ancient Mediterranean world.

Though brief, this reference to a fig tree planted in a vineyard in the parable of Luke 13:6-9 seems to display an economic rationality of ancient farmers. Formally speaking, this is a type of crop diversification in agricultural practice. The agricultural treatises of Cato, Varro, and Columella attest the practice of crop diversification in ancient Roman farming (Cato, *Agr.* 10-11; Varro, *Rust.* 1.13; Columella, *Rust.* 1.2.4-5). In such farming, cash crops such as wine and oil were cultivated for market sale or export, grain, vegetables, timber groves and livestock were grown to feed permanent workers who were stationed in the facilities and to supply building

materials.⁴⁴¹

Crop diversification brings benefits to farmers. First, crop diversification increases the rate of return from land use in agriculture. As Varro puts it, “the methods of cultivation which improve the aspect of the land, such as the planting of fruit and olive trees in rows, make it not only more profitable but also more saleable, and add to the value of the estate. For any man would rather pay more for a piece of land which is attractive than for one of the same value which, though profitable, is unsightly” (*Rust.* 1.4.2).⁴⁴²

Second, as Neville Morley rightly notes, crop diversification further contributes to the efficient use of agricultural laborers--throughout the year without ceasing--especially in the case of agricultural slaves.⁴⁴³ Similarly, Columella also advises landowners to plant different types of grapes in different sections to save labor costs and other expense (*Rust.* 3.21.9-10).

Third, farmers often cultivate a variety of crops to reduce the risk of total crop failure that accompanies crop specialization. In economics, *risk* is associated with uncertainty about future outcomes that a certain economic activity or decision will bring about.⁴⁴⁴ In this light, if farmers specialize with a single crop, they have to buy all other goods from outside, which increases the uncertainty concerning the secure supply of those other goods and makes them more susceptible to fluctuations of market prices in purchasing the goods.⁴⁴⁵ For instance, while comparing his rhetorical technique to the diverse crops that he cultivated on his farm, Pliny the Younger attests the risk-pooling aspect of crop diversification: “I do not sow those fields with only spelt and winter wheat, but employ also barley, beans and the other leguminous plants, so in my pleadings

⁴⁴¹ Richard P. Duncan-Jones, *The Economy of the Roman Empire: Quantitative Studies*, rev. ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 37-38.

⁴⁴² Cato and Varro, *On Agriculture*, 185-7.

⁴⁴³ Morley, *Metropolis and Hinterland*, 76.

⁴⁴⁴ Krugman and Wells, *Economics*, 570.

⁴⁴⁵ Morley, *Metropolis and Hinterland*, 76.

at the bar, I spread at large a variety of matter like so many different seeds, in order to reap from thence whatever may happen to sprout” (*Ep.* 1.20.16-17; cf. 5.6).⁴⁴⁶

In this light, the parable of the dishonest steward in Luke (16:1-13) seems to inscribe such crop diversification in the context of large-scale farming. This is so because two different kinds of crops—wheat and olives--occur in debt bonds in the parable, which suggest the master in the parable practices crop diversification (16:6-7). In addition, the amount of debts in those bonds—one hundred *baths* of olive oil and one hundred *kors* of wheat respectively-- suggests that the crops were intended for market sale rather than self-consumption. Conclusively, it also suggests that the economy inscribed in the narrative world of this parable may have been deeply engaged in a growing market economy of the first-century Roman imperial world.

4.2. Cost-Benefit Analysis

In the parable, the master of the fig tree looks for fruit on it, but finds none (13:6). After observing the barrenness of the tree for three years, he cannot tolerate the tree any more, hence orders the gardener to cut it down because it is wasting the soil (v.7). Here, the master demonstrates the economic calculation of cost-benefit analysis in his decision making, which also exhibits economic rationality. Generally speaking, a *cost-benefit analysis*, the process of comparing total costs and benefits of a certain good (or project),⁴⁴⁷ is used widely in public sector economics, especially in the decision-making process relating to the provision of public goods. In this case, both costs and benefits should be estimated by a certain quantifiable form, such as money.⁴⁴⁸ In the parable, cost-benefit analysis operates as follows: an unfruitful tree

⁴⁴⁶ Pliny, *Letters I*, trans. William Melmoth, rev. W. M. L. Hutchinson, LCL (London: William Heinemann; New York: MacMillan, 1915), 73.

⁴⁴⁷ McConnell, Brue, and Flynn, *Microeconomics*, G4.

⁴⁴⁸ Mankiw, *Essentials of Economics*, 221-23.

exerts negative influences on the agricultural profits in that it not only takes up some space that could be occupied by a fruitful one but also consumes nutrients from the soil that could nourish other productive trees. In this regard, the elimination of the barren fig tree is the economic decision that can contribute to not only reducing the cost but also increasing the profit of farming (vv. 6-7).

In Luke, a similar cost-benefit analysis is also visible in Jesus's metaphor of a tower construction (14:28-30). Here, in the course of instructing his disciples concerning the sacrifice they should make, Jesus compares the sacrifice to the cost of a tower (πύργος)⁴⁴⁹ construction. He says that it is natural that people who intend to build a tower calculate (ψηφίζω)⁴⁵⁰ first the cost of the construction before starting the work to find out whether they have enough funds to complete the work (v. 28). If one fails to do so, Jesus continues, the person would encounter the situation where he cannot complete the work with the foundation of the tower being laid (v. 29a). Consequently, Jesus concludes, such lack of calculation would invite the mockery of people who see the unfinished work (v. 29b-30). In fact, the cost-benefit analysis in this metaphor is incomplete since there is no reference to the benefit of the tower or being disciples of Jesus.

This metaphor does not identify the kind of tower. As Joel B. Green suggests, possible candidates may include a watch tower in a vineyard or a city wall (cf. 13:4).⁴⁵¹ Luke also refers to a tower in Jesus's call for repentance (13:1-9), in which Jesus cites the accident of the collapse of the Siloam tower that causes the death of eighteen persons. He expounds that it is wrong religious reasoning to think of the victims of the collapse as worse sinners than all the other Jerusalemites at the time (13:4-5). Presumably, the tower in this account would be constructed in

⁴⁴⁹ LSJ, 1556.

⁴⁵⁰ LSJ, 2022.

⁴⁵¹ Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, 566.

the city wall for the purpose of security and/or defense, as R. Alan Culpepper suggests.⁴⁵² However, in the metaphor of a tower construction (14:28-30), if a tower is constructed by a person for a private interest rather than by a city for the public benefit, more probably, it would be a watch tower for a vineyard. In fact, evidence suggests that watch towers constitute a normal part of vineyard installations, together with other facilities including palisades, wine press, and water wheel.⁴⁵³ Accordingly, the reference to a tower occurs in other Synoptic Gospels in the context of viticulture as a part of vineyard installation (Matt 21:33; Mark 12:1). This is so because a variety of accidents and crimes happened in vineyards, which necessitated constructing watch towers.⁴⁵⁴ In this regard, Marie-Joseph Lagrange suggests that the builder is a rich man.⁴⁵⁵ Consequently, if the tower in the metaphor indicates a watch tower in a vineyard, it may also serve as good evidence for a thriving agricultural market economy in viticulture reflected in Luke's narrative world. At any rate, no matter what it is, it is certain that a tower will give some benefits to the builder—most probably in relation to security.

In addition, there is another case in Luke where Jesus addresses the language of cost-benefit analysis as a method of appealing to his audience. As he puts it: "What does it profit them if they gain the whole world, but lose or forfeit themselves?" (9:25) In this saying, Jesus underscores the cost of following himself by comparing the benefit of the purchase of the whole world and the cost of the loss or forfeit of self.⁴⁵⁶

Conclusively, the above examples of cost-benefit analysis show that Luke's Gospel adopts, through the speaking of Jesus, the economic rationality of cost-benefit analysis as a method of persuading the audience. Such a strategy suggests that the audience of Luke's Gospel

⁴⁵² Culpepper, *The Gospel of Luke*, 270.

⁴⁵³ *P.Col. Zen* II 79; *BGU* IV 1122; *P.Berl.Leihg.* I 23; *P.Oxy.* XIV 1692.

⁴⁵⁴ For more detail, see no. 724 in Chapter 7.

⁴⁵⁵ Marie-Joseph Lagrange, *Évangile selon Saint Luc*, 2nd ed. (Paris: Victor Lecoffre, 1921), 410-11.

⁴⁵⁶ Carroll, *Luke*, 213-14; Johnson, *The Gospel of Luke*, 152; Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, 375.

in the first-century CE Roman world may have had considerable experience of and familiarity with economic rationality.

5. The Parable of the Great Banquet (14:15-24)

The parable tells the story of a feast in which all the guests invited to the great banquet decline the invitation and are replaced by new guests from much lower social standings. I will read the parable in light of land market and economic stratification.

5.1. Land and Land Market in Luke

The importance of land in human economy, not to mention human survival, cannot be underestimated. Economists have long regarded land as one of the three classical requisites of production.⁴⁵⁷ Land is the source of agricultural and non-agricultural production, such as mineral resources and raw material for clothing and construction. Accordingly, the references to land in Luke occur either directly or indirectly as an essential requisite of agricultural production. For instance, the parable of the rich fool refers explicitly to the land surrounding a city/town (χώρα)⁴⁵⁸ that produces a bumper crop (12:16). Likewise, in the parable of the prodigal son, the older son is working in the field (ἀγρός)⁴⁵⁹ when his younger brother returns home (15:25). In the parable of the slave (17:7-10), Jesus mentions a field as the place where the slave plowed or tended a herd (17:7). In Jesus's teaching on the *Eschaton*, Jesus advises that anyone in the field must not turn back for the things behind (17:31). Similarly, land appears in a variety of ways as a vineyard where a certain man plants a fig tree (13:6), a garden into which one plants a mustard

⁴⁵⁷ The other two are labor and capital. See for instance, John Stuart Mills, *Principles of Political Economy with Some of Their Applications to Social Philosophy*, ed. William J. Ashley (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1909), I.11.1; Mankiw, *Principles of Economics*, 24.

⁴⁵⁸ LSJ, 2015.

⁴⁵⁹ LSJ, 15-16.

seed (13:19), and the fields for raising pigs (15:15). In addition, a vineyard also occurs in the parable of rebellious tenants (20:9-18). Moreover, Luke refers indirectly to land in the parable of seed and soils (8:4-15), since the growth of seed in the good soil indicates arable land (8:8, 15).

Like other commodities, land is bought and sold. In this regard, the land market can be defined as the place where land is traded.⁴⁶⁰ In classical literature, the trade of land is well reflected in the letter of Pliny the Younger to Calvisius Rufus where Pliny seeks his advice on the purchase of some land (*Ep.* 3.19). In the letter, though the land is fertile and adjoining his farm, Pliny hesitates to buy it because of the arrears of tenants on the farm and additional labor costs of using slaves for farming. He expects to buy the land at the price of three million sesterces, which is reduced from the original price of five million sesterces.

In Luke, the land market is clearly attested in the parable of the great banquet (14:15-24) in which the first guest absents himself from the feast because he has to inspect the field that he recently bought (v. 18). Furthermore, the land market also includes the leasing of land, most famously tenancy. In this case, rent is the price of using land.⁴⁶¹ In Luke, such land tenancy occurs in the parable of the rebellious tenants (20:9-18) where a certain man leases his vineyard to farmers (v. 9).

Luke's attestation of a land market directly negates the following argument by Hanson and Oakman: "Land and labor were not readily available for sale in the ancient world...Land, as the primary productive factor and requirement for survival, was held by families as hereditary patrimony (inherited) or taken by conquest... Labor was ordinarily coerced rather than purchased in a free market by willing participants."⁴⁶² To the contrary, those references to the trade of land and the lease of land show that the economy inscribed in Luke operates in a market economy that

⁴⁶⁰ Mankiw, *Principles of Economics*, 405-7.

⁴⁶¹ Mankiw, *Principles of Economics*, 406-7.

⁴⁶² Hanson and Oakman, *Palestine in the Time of Jesus*, 98.

commercializes land as a commodity.

5.2. Economic Stratification of the Roman World

As R. Alan Culpepper rightly points out, this parable of the guests invited to the dinner (14:15-24) well reflects Roman social stratification in the urban setting.⁴⁶³ Accordingly, I will explore here the economic stratification of the Roman Empire in the light of recent scholarly discussion of class, stratification, and the economic middle groups in the Roman world.

As I already discussed in Chapter 2, those who have not been persuaded by a binary classification of the Roman economic social structure, notably, Steven J. Friesen and Bruce W. Longenecker, have proposed other economic stratifications by applying more sophisticated criteria.⁴⁶⁴ In particular, Steven Friesen's analysis of the socio-economic stratifications of early Christian groups has wielded great influence on later study. Instead of a binary scheme of the rich and the poor, he employs a concept of a poverty scale, presenting the model with seven categories of social strata—what he called “PS 1-7.” Especially, in reconstructing Roman imperial social stratification, he primarily focuses on the larger cities with more than ten thousand inhabitants, since he attempts to identify the social matrix of Pauline churches. Friesen's classification is more sophisticated than a binary scheme in that he divides elites into three tiers and non-elites into four tiers.

Later, Bruce W. Longenecker proposes another scenario regarding the economic stratification of the ancient Roman cities.⁴⁶⁵ Roughly speaking, his scenario is a more positive one in that the poor take up a relatively smaller portion in the entire economic structure since Longenecker recognizes a larger middling group. For economic stratification, Longenecker

⁴⁶³ Culpepper, *The Gospel of Luke*, 289.

⁴⁶⁴ Friesen, “Poverty in Pauline Studies,” 323-61; Longenecker, “Exposing the Economic Middle,” 243-278.

⁴⁶⁵ Longenecker, “Exposing the Economic Middle.”

discards the term “poverty scale” since it gives the impression that poverty is a normalcy of ancient society; instead, he proposes an alternative term of “economic scale (ES)” which takes on a more neutral nuance.⁴⁶⁶ Moreover, he avoids using the term “class,” employing instead “the group” and “classification.”

Given this preliminary discussion, Friesen’s and Longenecker’s classifications seem to fit well with the economic stratification reflected in Luke’s Gospel in general, not to mention this parable (14:15-24). Indeed, the parable presents various characters from diverse social standing: the master (v. 16), two land owners (vv. 18-19), slave (vv. 17, 21), and poor people (v. 21).

More specifically, according to Friesen’s proposal, PS 1-3, what he calls the “super rich,” indicate gradations of the rich while PS 5-7 indicate gradations of the poor in terms of the binary scheme.⁴⁶⁷ This super rich class is composed of “imperial elites” (PS 1), “regional or provincial elites” (PS 2), and “municipal elites” (PS 3).⁴⁶⁸ If we admit the general scholarly estimation of the Roman population size of 50-60 million inhabitants, the rich on Friesen’s scale took up respectively 1.23% of the total population of 55 million people.⁴⁶⁹ Friesen proposes that the percentage of the super wealthy class (PS 1-3) rises up to 2.8 % in larger cities based upon the assumption that the general wealth level of urban elites would have been much higher in larger cities.⁴⁷⁰

From this perspective, Luke’s Gospel also attests to the presence of diverse upper class members as well. These include the Roman emperor Augustus (2:1) and Tiberius (3:1), provincial monarch King Herod (1:5), his sons (3:1), and other royal family such as Herodias (3:19), high ranking Roman officials such as Quirinius (2:2) and the governor Pontius Pilate

⁴⁶⁶ Longenecker, “Exposing the Economic Middle, 251.

⁴⁶⁷ Friesen, “Poverty in Pauline Studies, 340.

⁴⁶⁸ Friesen, “Poverty in Pauline Studies, 341.

⁴⁶⁹ Friesen, “Poverty in Pauline Studies, 360-361.

⁴⁷⁰ Friesen, “Poverty in Pauline Studies, 347.

(3:1), and provincial aristocrats such as high priests Annas and Caiaphas and their allies based in Jerusalem (3:2). All these people stand out for their political significance.

However, in the Roman world, political careers presupposed some large amount of economic wealth. Specifically, Rome demanded high class officials to pass certain minimum wealth requirements. Augustus, for instance, set the minimum wealth requirements of senators as one million sesterces (Suet. *Aug.* 41.1; Dio, *Hist.* 54.17.3). Yet, the actual wealth that was expected of senators seems to exceed such minimum requirements by a large margin. For instance, Pliny the Younger thinks that a senator should have more than 60 million sesterces (*Ep.* 2.20.13). According to Duncan-Jones, the value of Pliny the Younger's estates seem to amount to approximately 15-17 million sesterces.⁴⁷¹ In fact, the figure is not that of the wealthiest members of the senatorial class. The very wealthiest members such as Cn. Cornelius Lentulus, Q. Vibius Crispus, L. Annaeus Seneca, and C. Passienus Crispus seem to possess hundreds of millions sesterces.⁴⁷² Likewise, many imperial cities, either in Italy or in provinces, set a certain minimum wealth criterion for the curial classes.⁴⁷³ In this regard, we can safely assume that the upper class members in Luke mentioned above are located in the upper strata of the economic structure.

Besides, in terms of economic wealth, there occur in Luke some unnamed wealthy men such as the father in the parable of the prodigal son (15:11-32), the noble man in the parable of the ten *minas* (19:12-27), and the master of the vineyard in the parable of the rebellious tenants (20:9-18). In particular, the noble man in the parable exerts himself in ascending to local royalty, which suggests that the man possesses considerable wealth. Moreover, the chief tax collector Zacchaeus (19:1-10) seems to possess considerable wealth too as the text introduces him as a

⁴⁷¹ Duncan-Jones, *The Economy of the Roman Empire*, 17-32.

⁴⁷² Duncan-Jones, *The Economy of the Roman Empire*, 17.

⁴⁷³ Duncan-Jones, *The Economy of the Roman Empire*, 3-4.

rich man (v. 2). Furthermore, his job career as the chief tax collector (v. 2), his donation of half of his possession for the poor (v. 8), and his promise of four-fold recompense for dishonest appropriation of others' property (v. 8) further confirm that he is a man of considerable wealth.

Concerning the poor, Friesen follows the general scholarly convention and thus defines the poor as those whose income remains around the margin of subsistence. He, however, defines the subsistence level narrowly in a biological sense. He associates it with "the resources needed to procure enough calories in food to maintain the human body."⁴⁷⁴ Moreover, he divides the poor into three subcategories: "stable near subsistence level," (PS 5), "at subsistence level" (PS 6), or "below subsistence level" (PS 7).⁴⁷⁵ Due to the lack of sufficient data, he follows C.R. Whittaker's approximation of the lower class in his calculation of PS 6-7.⁴⁷⁶ In fact, in his estimation of the degree of the poverty in the city of Rome, Whittaker utilizes data drawn from comparative analysis between the pre-industrial European society and the Roman imperial economy. Whittaker does so because, according to him, they seem to have a similar economic structure in the form of an advanced agricultural economy. Based on the data of pre-industrial European societies, Whittaker proposes that 24-28 % of the population of the Roman Empire could not have met subsistence permanently and 30-40 % of the inhabitants were subject to temporary subsistence crisis.⁴⁷⁷ Taking the upper bounds of Whittaker's approximations, Friesen estimates the rate of PS 6-7 as 28 % and 40 % respectively.⁴⁷⁸

In light of this, Luke also describes some poor in his writing such as the poor widow whose means of subsistence is only two *lepta* (21:1-4). Moreover, the petition for bread in the

⁴⁷⁴ Friesen, "Poverty in Pauline Studies," 343.

⁴⁷⁵ Friesen, "Poverty in Pauline Studies," 341.

⁴⁷⁶ C. R. Whittaker, "The Poor in the City of Rome," in Whittaker, *Land, City, and Trade in the Roman Empire*, Variorum Collected Studies 408 (Aldershot, UK: Variorum, 1993), 301-33.

⁴⁷⁷ Whittaker, "The Poor in the City of Rome," 304.

⁴⁷⁸ Friesen, "Poverty in Pauline Studies," 347.

Lord's Prayer (11:3) suggests that the majority of people are not free from the worry of subsistence, as it reads "give us each day our daily bread" (11:3). In the verse, the use of the unusual word ἐπιούσιος has invited diverse interpretations.⁴⁷⁹ These include (1) the daily bread, (2) the future bread, and (3) the necessary (or essential) bread.⁴⁸⁰ Though the exact meaning is not determined, it is certain that the prayer takes seriously the issue of subsistence. Similarly, the petition for daily bread is well attested in the Jewish tradition, as is reflected in Prov. 30:8: "Feed me with the food that I need." Moreover, the anxiety for basic human needs also occurs in Jesus's exhortation in Luke 12:22-34 where Jesus encourages his audience not to worry over basic material needs for food and clothing by assuring the divine provision of food and clothing. The exhortation sheds light on the economic anxiety of vulnerable social groups.

Furthermore, Friesen inserts PS 4 between his levels of the rich and the poor. This level is composed of peoples with "moderate surplus."⁴⁸¹ In fact, this group is an ancient equivalent of the modern middle class, though he refuses to identify this group with "middle class."⁴⁸² More specifically, he hypothesizes that PS 4 and PS 5 take up 7 % and 22 % of the cities' inhabitants.⁴⁸³ He derives the figures by calculating the remainder of Whittaker's approximation of Roman poverty rate which allots about 54-68 % of the population to the crisis of subsistence, either temporarily or permanently. In fact, due to the lack of sufficient data, he proposes the figures of PS 4 and PS 5 out of speculation on the basic assumption that P4 would have been much smaller in number than P5 "because of the endemic character of poverty in the Roman empire, because of structural impediments in the economy, and because of the large amounts of

⁴⁷⁹ Cf. LSJ, 649.

⁴⁸⁰ Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According to Luke X-XXIV*, 905-6; Culpepper, *The Gospel of Luke*, 234.

⁴⁸¹ Friesen, "Poverty in Pauline Studies," 341.

⁴⁸² Friesen, "Poverty in Pauline Studies," 346.

⁴⁸³ Friesen, "Poverty in Pauline Studies," 346-7.

wealth required to move up the poverty scale.”⁴⁸⁴

By contrast, concerning this economic middle group, Bruce W. Longenecker argues that owing to the strong influence of Finley, Friesen consistently underestimates the ratio of this group while overestimating that of lower classes.⁴⁸⁵ Inspired by scholars who have allotted a higher ratio to the middle group, such as Walter Scheidel, Peter Garnsey and Richard Saller, and Willem Jongman,⁴⁸⁶ Longenecker assigns 17 % and 25 % to ES 4 and 5 respectively.⁴⁸⁷ He derives the figure 17 % by modifying Scheidel’s estimation for the middle group who allotted 20-25 % to it.⁴⁸⁸ He deducts the lower and the upper limit of Scheidel’s range by 5% respectively, and takes the average integer number in the range on the ground that Scheidel overestimates the range.⁴⁸⁹ He lays out a logical basis for the overestimation by drawing on an example of Scheidel’s case study of Ligures Baebiani in which Scheidel presents the relatively lower Gini coefficient⁴⁹⁰ calculation than other ancient sample researches propose.⁴⁹¹

In this regard, Luke also portrays diverse economic agents between the rich and the poor, such as an estate manager (13:7), a financial manager (16:1-13), tax collectors (18:9-14; 19:1-10), business slaves (19:11-27), and tenants (20:9-19). Among these agents, the economic status of estate managers, financial managers, and tenants is hard to determine since Luke’s texts do not provide any specific information that sheds light on their economic status.

⁴⁸⁴ Friesen, “Poverty in Pauline Studies,” 346.

⁴⁸⁵ Longenecker, “Exposing the Economic Middle, 251. For further discussion and critique, see John M. G. Barclay, “Poverty in Pauline Studies: A Response to Steven Friesen,” *JSNT* 26, no. 3 (2004): 363–66; Peter Oakes, “Constructing Poverty Scales for Graeco-Roman Society: A Response to Steven Friesen’s ‘Poverty in Pauline Studies,’” *JSNT* 26, no. 3 (2004): 367-71.

⁴⁸⁶ Garnsey and Saller, *The Roman Empire*, 116; Jongman, “The Early Roman Empire: Consumption,” 592-618, esp. 597; Walter Scheidel, “Stratification, Deprivation and Quality of Life,” in *Poverty in the Roman World*, ed. E. Margaret Atkins and Robin Osborne (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 40-59.

⁴⁸⁷ Longenecker, “Exposing the Economic Middle, 264.

⁴⁸⁸ Scheidel, “Stratification, Deprivation and Quality of Life,” 40-59.

⁴⁸⁹ Longenecker, “Exposing the Economic Middle, 262-4.

⁴⁹⁰ Gini coefficient is a statistical index to measure unequal income distribution of an economy, which ranges from 0, signifying perfect equality, to 1, indicating perfect inequality. For more detail, see Krugman and Wells, *Economics*, 506-7.

⁴⁹¹ Longenecker, “Exposing the Economic Middle,” 263, no. 37.

However, as far as estate managers are concerned, evidence also testifies to the diversity of the social and economic standing of the managers in the Roman Empire--from the rich and high to the poor and low. The Heroninos archive, a collection of papyri from third century CE at Fayûm in Egypt, testifies to some managers who possessed their own estates and held posts of local or imperial office. In the archive, Alypius, for instance, the general manager of the Appianus estate in the Arsinoe nome in Egypt (also known as the Fayum), is described to hold the imperial office of procurator (*ducenarius*) and to possess his own large estate in the Arsinoe nome.⁴⁹² Likewise, Herakleides, a steward (οἰκονόμος) of the Appianus estate, is introduced as the former councilor (βουλευτής) of Arsinoe, possessing his own land at Theadelphia.⁴⁹³

Similarly, the economic standing of tenants seems to have been diverse as well. For instance, Pliny the Younger testifies to the situation in which his tenants pays 80,000 sesterces per year as rent (*Ep.*10.8). In addition, third-century CE epigraphic evidence attests to a tenant whose annual rent amounts to 26,000 sesterces (*CIL* VI 33840). Other evidence suggests that some tenants who were full of entrepreneurship appear to have possessed a modest amount of wealth. Peter Garnsey, for instance, describes some of Pliny's tenants from this perspective (Pliny, *Ep.*7.30):⁴⁹⁴

They were in all probability independent landowners of middle wealth taking a gamble on 'plantation agriculture', without sharing the risk with the owner, and requiring favourable climatic and economic conditions if they were to prosper. When Pliny complained in another letter of the lack of 'suitable tenants' (*idoneiconductors*), echoing a complaint made by Columella more than a generation earlier, he had in mind men who had sufficient financial reserves to bide themselves over bad harvests and low market prices, and who would not have to be bailed out by the owner.

In this regard, the above statements suggest that we should not assume hastily that they belong to the lower strata in their economic standing.

⁴⁹² Rathbone, *Economic Rationalism and Rural Society*, 58-9.

⁴⁹³ Rathbone, *Economic Rationalism and Rural Society*, 63-64.

⁴⁹⁴ Garnsey, "The Land," 704.

From a different point of view, Emanuel Mayer attempts to find evidence for ancient middle classes of the Roman imperial world from the growth of cities in the early Roman Empire.⁴⁹⁵ According to Mayer, the rapid growth of cities all over the Roman world created new economic opportunities for merchants, artisans, and professionals who were engaged in commercial activities targeting city dwellers who were detached from agriculture and thus unable to adopt a self-sustaining lifestyle. Among those merchants, artisans, and professionals, some of them could secure their economic success by providing urban people with basic necessities and other diverse commodities, and thus constituted middle classes between rich landowners and working poor people in the early imperial period. He calls their economic basis a “*taberna* economy” since they carried out their commercial activities centering on taverns, bars, clubhouses, and shops around agora and nearby commercial areas. Archeological evidence from many cities in the Roman Empire such as Pompeii, Herculaneum, and Ostia attest the ubiquity and prominence of *taberna*.⁴⁹⁶ For instance, there were 600 taverns in the first-century CE Pompeii whereas only about 400 houses in the city had atrium or public areas. Similarly, second century CE Ostia had more than 800 taverns.⁴⁹⁷ Moreover, archeological remains from diverse urban art, especially highly decorated and luxurious style of houses, tombs, and sarcophagi that did not belong to the elite, clearly demonstrate that these middle class persons possessed a certain amount of wealth, which thus enabled them to enjoy some luxurious lifestyle and conspicuous spending and imitate, to some degree, elite culture.⁴⁹⁸

In light of the above discussion, it is noteworthy that Luke also describes some people who possess modest wealth, especially in the urban setting. A clear example is the second guest

⁴⁹⁵ Mayer, *The Ancient Middle Classes*.

⁴⁹⁶ Mayer, *The Ancient Middle Classes*, 61-99.

⁴⁹⁷ Mayer, *The Ancient Middle Classes*, 34.

⁴⁹⁸ Mayer, *The Ancient Middle Classes*, 100-212.

who bought five yoke of oxen in this parable (14:15-24). The use of oxen indicates that the owner possessed a parcel of land that exceeded subsistence level. Paul Erdkamp further suggests that these farmers who could employ a yoke of oxen are relatively wealthy among smallholders.⁴⁹⁹ This is so because, according to Varro, two yoke of oxen can work a farm of the size of 200 *iugera* (50 ha. Varro, *Rust.* 1.19.1; Columella, *Rust.* 2.12.7). Pliny the Elder, somewhat differently, suggests that a pair of oxen is sufficient for a farm of the size of 40 *iugera* (10 ha.) of light soil and 30 *iugera* of heavy soil (*NH.* 18.173). In this regard, the man who bought five yoke of oxen would possess land of the size of 150-500 *iugera*--at least 18 times more land than is needed for subsistence farming.⁵⁰⁰ According to Kenneth D. White's categorization, this is medium-size farming (80-150 *iugera*). This suggests that the man possesses at least fairly large amounts of wealth. In this regard, he belongs to the economic middle group (level 4) or, possibly, the lower strata of the rich (level 3). Moreover, the size of farming indicates convincingly that he would be involved in market-oriented production.

Likewise, the first guest in the parable could be ranked in the economic middle group since the man purchases a parcel of land (v.18). Besides, in the account of healing the centurion's slave (7:1-10), a Roman centurion who asks Jesus to visit his house in order to heal his slave appears to be a man of some wealth since he built a synagogue for Jewish people in Capernaum (7:5).

Furthermore, business slaves in the parable of the ten *minas* seem to possess some wealth, at least after they make certain amounts of profit in that they take charge of ten cities and five cities (19:11-27). At this point, it is noteworthy that the economic activities of Roman middle groups were inextricably associated with the heavy influence of elite groups, as some

⁴⁹⁹ Erdkamp, *The Grain Market in the Roman Empire*, 19.

⁵⁰⁰ I will discuss the level of subsistence farming and the scale of farming in Section 6.1.

scholars have rightly pointed out.⁵⁰¹ Accordingly, this parable well illustrates such influence in that the slaves undertake their economic activities under the auspices of their former owners or patrons who serve as key providers of start-up capital for their businesses.

Moreover, Joanna is introduced as the wife of Herod's steward (ἐπίτροπος) Chuza in Luke (8:3). Here, the term ἐπίτροπος refers to one who is in charge of something--it could be used either in an economic or a political context; and he could possibly have been an administrator, trustee, or governor.⁵⁰² In this regard, it is possible that Joanna was from the inner circle of Herod as François Bovon suggests.⁵⁰³ However, Luke provides no further information about her economic status whether she is rich or not except for the fact that she would possess sufficient means to support Jesus.⁵⁰⁴

In conclusion, the social stratification reflected in Luke's Gospel well accords with that of the recently proposed stratifications which highlight the structures and influence of a growing market economy of the Roman world. In turn, this recognition further suggests that the economy inscribed in Luke's Gospel well reflects aspects of a market economy.

6. The Parable of the Dishonest Steward (16:1-13)

This parable mainly pays attention to the behaviors of a steward who struggles to survive in the face of the upcoming dismissal of his job. The parable inscribes diverse economic practices including large-scale farming, debts, a principle-agent problem, commercial olive production,

⁵⁰¹ Pertti Huttunen, *Social Strata in the Imperial City of Rome* (Oulu: the University, 1974), 124; Aaron Kirschenbaum, *Sons, Slaves, and Freedmen in Roman Commerce* (Jerusalem: The Hebrew University Magnes Press, 1987), 128-40; Henrik Mouritsen, *The Freedman in the Roman World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

⁵⁰² LSJ, 669.

⁵⁰³ Bovon, *Luke I*, 301.

⁵⁰⁴ For more detail, see Harold W. Hoehner, *Herod Antipas* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972), 120-21, 303-5, 317, no. 4; Gerd Theissen, *The Shadow of the Galilean: The Quest of the Historical Jesus in Narrative Form* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987), 119-26.

risk premium, defrauding, and final stage game, all of which illuminate aspects of a market economy and economic rationality.

6.1. Large-Scale Farming

As already mentioned, the level of the debts in the parable -- a hundred *baths* of olive oil and a hundred *kors* of wheat--far exceeds that of subsistence farming (16:5-7). At this point, understanding those amounts requires a further clarification of the unit of measure that appears in the parable. According to Josephus, a liquid measure *bath* (βάτος) roughly corresponds to 72 Greek *xestai* (*Ant.* 8.57), equivalent to 9 gallons in modern measurement.⁵⁰⁵ Concerning the dry measure *kor* (κόρος), Josephus, however, presents two markedly different Greek equivalents: 41/70 Attic *medimni* (*Ant.* 3.321) and 10 *medimni* (*Ant.* 15.314). According to his presentation, 1 *kor* equals about either 0.88 or 15 bushels since 1 Attic *medimnus* amounts to about 1 1/2 bushel.⁵⁰⁶ In another calculation, Ralph Marcus proposes that the *kor* equals about 11 bushels; in this regard, among Josephus's two figures, 15 bushels seems to be relatively the more accurate approximation of the *kor*.⁵⁰⁷

Given this information, the amounts of the debts in the story are roughly equivalent to 900 gallons of oil and 1100-1500 bushels of wheat respectively, though we cannot identify exactly the scale. Since 1 Attic *medimni* is equivalent to 6 Roman *modii*, the debt of the second debtor, according to Josephus's maximum value of *kor*, amounts to the production of 257 *iugera* of land, more than 21 times the size of subsistence scale. This calculation is based on knowledge of subsistence levels of farming in the Roman world.

⁵⁰⁵ Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities*, Volume 3: Books 7-8, trans. Ralph Marcus, LCL (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1934), 245, no. c.

⁵⁰⁶ Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities*, Volume 1: Books 1-3, trans. H. St. J. Thackeray, LCL (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1930), 475, no. c.

⁵⁰⁷ Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities*, Volume 3: Books 7-8, 237, no. a.

At this point, a further clarification of the subsistence level of farming in the Roman world is necessary. In the early Roman Republic, Rome allotted two *iugera* of land to the settlers of colony (Livy 8.21.11). Pliny the Elder cites a saying of Manius Curio who regards the plot of 7 *iugera* as a satisfying size for self-sustaining farming (*NH* 18.4). Based upon information on the rations of soldiers and slaves drawn from Cato and Polybius, P. A. Brunt proposes that 2 *iugera* constituted the subsistence level of farming for one adult, and thus 144 *modii* of wheat can support a family of 4 persons.⁵⁰⁸ Dennis P. Kehoe estimates 12 *iugera* (=3 ha.) of land with the produce of 280 *modii* of wheat as the scale of subsistence farming for a family with 6 members.⁵⁰⁹ Rathbone suggests that a family with a draft animal could have worked 15-25 *iugera* of land without the employment of additional labor.⁵¹⁰ Garnsey argues that the size of basic ancient Roman farms ranged from 5 to 16 *iugera* prior to the imperial period.⁵¹¹ Taking all these data into consideration, we can safely assume that subsistence level of farming would not have exceeded 25 *iugera* of land in the Roman world. In this light, the size of the debts in the parable (16:1-13) far exceeds the scale of subsistence level farming.

Other scholarly estimations also confirm that the level of the debts in the parable is beyond that of self-consumption. According to Jeremias's calculation, 100 *kors* amounts to the produce of 100 acres while 100 *baths* equals the yield of 146 olive trees.⁵¹² In another estimate, Douglas E. Oakman proposes a larger amount. According to him, 100 *kors* of wheat equals the

⁵⁰⁸ P.A. Brunt, *Social Conflict in the Roman Republic* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1971), 35.

⁵⁰⁹ Dennis P. Kehoe, *Economics of Agriculture on Roman Imperial Estates in North Africa* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1988), 16.

⁵¹⁰ Dominic Rathbone, "Poor Peasants and Silent Sherds," in *People, Land, and Politics: Demographic Developments and the Transformation of Roman Italy 300 BC-AD 14*, ed. Luuk de Ligt and Simon J. Northwood (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 305-332, esp. 309.

⁵¹¹ Peter Garnsey, "Non-Slave Labour in the Roman World," in *Non-Slave Labour in the Greco-Roman World*, ed. Peter Garnsey (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), 34-47, esp. 37; Garnsey, *Famine and Food Supply in the Graeco-Roman World: Responses to Risk and Crisis* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 46.

⁵¹² Jeremias, *The Parables of Jesus*, 181.

annual food requirement for 150 people.⁵¹³ In deriving the figure, he assumes the annual grain requirement for subsistence level as about 200 kg of wheat, based upon the calculation of Clark and Haswell, and took the Talmudic *kor* as 11 bushels which could hold 297kg (27 kg per bushel).⁵¹⁴ Therefore, the size of debts suggests that the debtors in the parable were engaged in farming suitable for market sales rather than self-consuming.

Furthermore, such a large amount of debts in the parable suggests that the master in the parable operated a large-scale farm, which requires a further clarification. Kenneth D. White categorizes the scale of farms in Roman Italy as small (10-80 *iugera*), medium (80-500 *iugera*) and large (more than 500 *iugera*).⁵¹⁵ Except for some areas with especially poor soil quality, it seems that his categorization can be applied generally to other regions of the Empire. If this is the case, as mentioned above, the second debtor in this parable seems to have run a medium size farm--about 257 *iugera* of land. Moreover, the phrases “one by one,” and “the first...another...” in verse 5 give the impression of taking turns, suggesting strongly that the master’s debtors are numerous and these two debtors are addressed as sample cases.⁵¹⁶ If this is the case, there may be other debtors who owe wheat to the master, which, in turn, strongly suggests that the master would possess a large quantity of wheat which could only be acquired through large-scale farming.

Roman evidence seems to support this scenario as it attests to the case of multiple land holdings. For instance, Pliny the Younger reports that he possesses scattered small farms in Tifernum Tiberinum, many of which he leases out to tenants (*Ep.* 3.19.1). Accordingly, scholars like Moses I. Finley and P. W. de Neeve regard small-scale tenancy as a usual practice in Roman

⁵¹³ Douglas E. Oakman, *Jesus, Debt, and the Lord’s Prayer: First-Century Debt and Jesus’ Intentions* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2014), 37.

⁵¹⁴ Clark and Haswell, *The Economics of Subsistence Agriculture*, 58.

⁵¹⁵ K. D. White, *Roman Farming*, 385-6.

⁵¹⁶ Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According to Luke X-XXIV*, 1100; Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, 592.

agriculture, which means that multiple tenants cultivated the land of a master divided into many parcels.⁵¹⁷ In this vein, Joseph A. Fitzmyer insightfully locates the story within the context of the agricultural structure of *latifundia*--the aggregate of individual small farms, *fundi*, which means that it appeared as the result of a series of augmentations of small lands over time through purchase and/or inheritance. In addition, he identifies the rich master with an absentee landlord who possesses the large-scale farm and the manager as a business professional equipped with more specialized business and financial skills.⁵¹⁸

In fact, large-scale land holdings were a well-attested phenomena in the Roman imperial world.⁵¹⁹ For example, the extant record of the early second century CE from two Italian towns illuminates these phenomena.⁵²⁰ In one town, Ligures Baebiani, the upper 3.5 percent owns 21.3 percent of total land possession while the lowest 14 percent of the population possesses only 3.6 percent of the land. Similarly, in the other, Veleia Romana, one individual possesses 12.4 percent while the lowest 23.9 percent owns 5.2 percent.

Moreover, large-scale holdings were not limited to Rome and Italy. Pliny, for example, laments the growing disastrous effect of large-scale landholdings by stating that “large estates have been the ruin of Italy, and are now proving the ruin of the provinces too—half of Africa was owned by six landlords, when the Emperor Nero put them to death” (*NH.* 18.35).⁵²¹ Archeological evidence also testifies to the existence of large-scale farmsteads in Roman provinces. For instance, a number of Italian-style *villae* with the size of one hundred to two hundred *iugera* (20-40 hectares) are found in Roman Gaul, which date back to the early imperial

⁵¹⁷ Moses I. Finley, “Private Farm Tenancy in Italy before Diocletian,” 105-6; Pieter W. de Neeve, *Colonus: Private Farm-Tenancy in Roman Italy during the Republic and the Early Principate* (Amsterdam: J.C. Gieben, 1984), 85.

⁵¹⁸ Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According to Luke X-XXIV*, 1097.

⁵¹⁹ Hopkins, “Rome, Taxes, Rents and Trade,” 41-75.

⁵²⁰ Garnsey, “The Land,” 695.

⁵²¹ Pliny, *Natural History, Volume 5: Books 17-19*, 213.

period.⁵²² Similarly, excavations show that a number of large farmsteads existed in Roman Palestine, specifically western Samaria, which are composed of large farmhouses, small houses, military settlements, and large towers.⁵²³

In line with this, another scene in Luke seems to suggest large-scale estate holding. In the parable of the ten *minas* (19:12-27), the nobleman rewards the slaves who make profits by allowing them to have authority over ten or five cities respectively (vv. 17, 19). The exact meaning of the phrase “having authority over (ἐξουσίαν ἔχων ἐπάνω)” in verse 17 is not identified clearly as to whether the authority is political, economic, or both. Some commentators such as Robert C. Tannehill and Luke T. Johnson understand the phrase as carrying the political sense, appointing them as governors of those cities.⁵²⁴ In contrast, Za‘av Safrai interprets the nobleman’s reference to ten or five cities as farmsteads in those cities, which makes the nobleman the owner of many farmsteads.⁵²⁵

Evidence seems to support Safrai’s reading as Josephus reports a similar case. According to Josephus, Herod and his family, such as his sister Salome and Queen Bernice, possessed a significant portion of land in Palestine (*Ant.* 17.305-7, 18.31-32). Josephus’s report seems significant in that many commentators have associated the reference to the hatred of the fellow citizens toward the master and their sending of a delegation in opposition to his accession to royal power in verse 14 in the parable with the historical account of Herod Archelaus (Josephus, *Ant.* 17.299-314; *J.W.* 2.6.1-2, 80-92).⁵²⁶ In light of this association, the connection of the

⁵²² Anthony C King, *Roman Gaul and Germany* (Berkeley: The University of California Press, 1990), 92-97, 106-109; Greg Woolf, *Becoming Roman: The Origins of Provincial Civilization in Gaul* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 148-157.

⁵²³ Shim‘on Dar, *Landscape and Pattern: An Archaeological Survey of Samaria 800 B.C.E.-636 C.E.*, 2 vols. BAR International Series (Oxford: BAR, 1986), 1.12-22.

⁵²⁴ Robert C. Tannehill, *Luke*, Abindon New Testament Commentaries (Nashville, TN: Abindon Press, 1996), 281; Johnson, *The Gospel of Luke*, 290.

⁵²⁵ Safrai, *The Economy of Roman Palestine*, 96.

⁵²⁶ Alfred Plummer, *A Critical And Exegetical Commentary Gospel According To St. Luke*, 5th ed. (Edinburgh: T & T

passage with the account of multiple land holdings of Herod and his family seems not entirely impossible. In conclusion, the economic significance of large-scale farming attested in Luke seems straightforward. Large-scale farming is best suitable for commercial farming; in this regard, we can reasonably conclude that the farming assumed in the parables of the dishonest steward (16:1-13) and of the ten *minas* (19:12-27) exhibits aspects of a market economy.

6.2. Debt

The parable also directly concerns the issue of debts--the bi-product of a loan (vv. 5-7). More precisely, the parable refers to debt bonds or a “bill” (γράμμα vv. 6-7), though it does not provide any further information on it. The word γράμμα often refers to legally binding documents.⁵²⁷ In a financial context, it can mean a bond or a promissory note,⁵²⁸ as Josephus employs it to designate a bond written in the name of Agrippa when Marsyas, an agent of Agrippa, tries to borrow money on behalf of Agrippa from Protos (*Ant.* 18.6.3). In Josephus’s story, it occurs interchangeably with the term συμβόλαιον.⁵²⁹ Similarly, the term χειρόγραφον also carries the same meaning as debt bonds, reflecting the fact that the legal contract is binding only when it is written in handwriting and handed to the creditor,⁵³⁰ as the steward in the parable orders two debtors to do (vv. 6-7). Since it did not require witnesses in its composition, the χειρόγραφον, on the one hand, offered great convenience in documenting a variety of small daily transactions, while, on the other hand, it had only limited probative power in the legal situation.⁵³¹ By contrast, in the parable of two debtors (7:40-43), unlike this parable, debts are referred to in cash

Clark, 1922), 438; Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According to Luke X-XXIV*, 1235; Johnson, *The Gospel of Luke*, 290; John Nolland, *Luke 18:35-24:53*, WBC 35C (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1993), 914.

⁵²⁷ LSJ, 358.

⁵²⁸ LSJ, 358.

⁵²⁹ LSJ, 1676.

⁵³⁰ Cf. LSJ, 1985.

⁵³¹ Hans J. Woliff, *Das Recht der Griechischen Papyri Ägyptens in der Zeit der Ptolemaeer und des Prinzipats* (München: Beck, 1978), 110-112.

terms rather than in kind.

Concerning the format of these debt bonds, epigraphic evidence sheds some light. A document from Roman Egypt, for instance, illuminates the practice of financial loans in Roman Egypt during the first century CE (*P.Oxy.* 269). In the third year of Nero (57 CE) at Oxyrinchus, a certain Dioscorus took a loan of 52 *drachmae* from a certain Tryphon. The sum of one and a half would be forfeit, apart from the unspecified interest for the overtime, if the loan was not paid by the due date. Similarly, another papyrus from Oxyrinchus in the thirteenth year of Domitian (94 CE) describes that a certain Lucia took a loan of 3500 *drachmae* from a certain Heraclides at the annual interest rate of 12 percent (*P.Oxy.* 270). The debtor's personal farms, the total size of 24 $\frac{5}{12}$ *arourae* (about 16.3 acres), were pledged as security and could be liquidated to pay for the outstanding debt and interest.

As to the origin of debts in this parable, plausible scenarios might involve rents accrued from landlord-tenant contracts or loans borrowed directly in kind in that the debts take the form of crops rather than money.⁵³² Roman evidence attests to cases where tenants fall into arrears with their rent payment (Pliny, *Ep.* 10.8.5; *CIL* XI 114, col. VI, 72; *Dig.* 33.7.20.1, 3).

The reason the steward dares to lighten the burden of the master's debtors at his own discretion is that he expects something in return from them after he is fired, as the internal monologue of the steward reveals (v. 4). Needless to say, this strategy would have worked within the Roman world in which debtors who fail to pay their outstanding debts could have encountered a terrible predicament. For instance, the story of a veteran in Livy's writing vividly portrays how a man falls into a vicious debt-cycle:

During his service in the Sabine war not only had the enemy's depredations deprived him of his crops, but his cottage had been burnt, all his belongings plundered, and his flocks

⁵³² John Nolland, *Luke 9:21-18:34*, WBC 35B (Dallas: Word Books, 1993), 798.

driven off. Then the taxes had been levied, in an untoward moment for him, and he had contracted debts. When these had been swelled by usury, they had first stripped him of the farm which had been his father's and his grandfather's, then of the remnants of his property, and finally like an infection they had attacked his person, and he had been carried off by his creditor, not to slavery, but to the prison and the torture chamber (2.23.5-6).⁵³³

Similarly, a document from Oxyrinchus in 82 CE reports the claim of a creditor who petitioned a high official to allow him to foreclose the debtor's surety to repay outstanding debt (*P.Oxy.* 285). In the same vein, Pliny the Younger reports the case in which some tenants lost their resources because they were in arrears with the rent (*Ep.* 3.19.6-7). Sometimes, violent means were employed in exacting money from debtors. For example, it is known that a poll-tax collector Nemesion resorted to the military authority to coerce his debtors to pay his private debt at the village of Philadelphia in Egypt in the first century CE.⁵³⁴ The Gospel of Matthew also describes the case in which an insolvent debtor faces a danger of being a debt slave, together with his family--his wife and children (18:25).

A number of documents and lease agreements evidence the imprisonment of defaulting tenants and/or their families (*P.Col. Zen* II 83; *P.Flor.* 1.61) and the imposition of substantial fines in the case of default (*P.Ryl.* IV 583; *BGU* IV 1119, 1122; *P.Oxy.* IV 729). More specifically, a first-century BCE papyrus contains a warning that a defaulting tenant is liable to immediate arrest, imprisonment, and a penalty of an extra half of what is owed (*BGU* IV 1122; cf. Matt. 18:23-34).

In the same vein, Luke also presents a vivid portrayal of how debts put a person in a desperate plight, especially imprisonment. In the parable of the man and his opponent (Luke

⁵³³ Livy: *History of Rome, Vol. 1, Books 1-2*, trans. Benjamin O. Foster, LCL (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1919), 291-3.

⁵³⁴ A. E. Hanson, "Village Officials at Philadelphia: A Model of Romanization in the Julio-Claudian Period," in *Egitto e Storia Antica Dall'Ellenismo All'età Araba: Bilancio di un Confronto*, ed. L. Criscuolo and G. Geraci (Bologna: Cooperativa Libreria Universitaria Editrice Bologna, 1989), 429-40, esp. 433-36.

12:57-59), Jesus draws an example of a lawsuit in which a man is dragged before the judge, and the judge sentences him to imprisonment until he pays all the amount owed--up to the last *lepton* (v. 58). In addition, the verb ἀποδίδωμι suggests that the lawsuit may involve a debt issue (v. 59).⁵³⁵ Moreover, in the parable, the officer who put the man in prison was a πράκτωρ who dealt with some financial affairs such as implementing a judgment for debt or collecting taxes.⁵³⁶

Some evidence further suggests that the issue of debts could result in serious social problems in the early Roman period. For instance, according to Josephus, during the Jewish War in the first century CE, Jewish insurgents carried out an arson attack on the public archives in Jerusalem to burn debt records in expectation of winning the support of debtors and poor people (*J.W.* 2.427). Likewise, some heavy debtors set fire to the market place and the public archives in Antioch for the same purpose (*J.W.* 7.61). Clearly, the above examples show instances in which the economic problem of debts was so serious as to be susceptible to political uprising.

In this regard, it seems that the reference to debt and its remission in the Lord's Prayer in Luke may reflect the hope and, perhaps also the desperation of people in debt to be released from the burden of debts (11:4).⁵³⁷ Likewise, it seems that Jesus's proclamation of the good news in the synagogue at Nazareth (4:16-30) can be understood in the same vein. The phrase "the year of the Lord's favor" is thought by some scholars to carry a connotation of the Jubilee year in the Hebrew Bible (Lev. 25:8-13) in which debts are cancelled and slaves and prisoners become free.⁵³⁸ In line with this, Douglas E. Oakman further insists that widespread indebtedness, compounded by a serious dual tax burden imposed by the Jewish temple system and the Roman

⁵³⁵ Cf. LSJ, 197; Bovon, *Luke* 2, 258-9.

⁵³⁶ LSJ, 1458-9.

⁵³⁷ Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, 212; Carroll, *Luke*, 250; Douglas E. Oakman, "Jesus and Agrarian Palestine: The Factor of Debt," in Neyrey, *The Social World of the New Testament*, 65-82, esp. 79-80.

⁵³⁸ Robert B. Sloan, *The Favorable Year of the Lord: A Study of Jubilarial Theology in the Gospel of Luke* (Austin: Scholar Press, 1977); Sharon H. Ringe, *Jesus, Liberation, and the Biblical Jubilee: Images for Ethics and Christology* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985); Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, 212-3.

Empire, exerted a serious negative influence on the lives of people of Palestine, especially located on the lower economic stratum.⁵³⁹

From a different point of view, however, debts and defaults are a normal part of the business world, as we well know. In this regard, the presence of debts in an economy does not necessarily mean that the economy is in trouble or under-developed though, of course, serious default rates in an economy may indicate its bad economic situation. In fact, there is no sufficient or convincing evidence, *pace* Douglas Oakman, to think that the problem of debts in the Roman world was serious and pervasive enough to exert a crucial negative influence on its economies as David A. Fiensy rightly points out.⁵⁴⁰ To the contrary, the large amount of debts accrued in the parable of the dishonest steward (vv. 6-7) indicates that the debtors might use the resource for running their own business rather than for their own consumption. This recognition leaves room for interpreting the parable under the scenario in which some entrepreneurial economic agents were in debt while they tried to exploit a profit opportunity given by a growing market economy. If it is the case, debts in the parable may hint at this opportunistic aspect of a market economy in Luke.

6.3. Principal-Agent Problem

In the parable, the master is a principal who employs the steward to manage his property (16:1a). As already mentioned in Chapter 5, Section 3.1, the economic problem of moral hazard commonly stems from principal-agent interactions, which in turn is closely related to the governance structure of certain economic institutions, whether farms, shops, firms, assets, or other enterprise. Given the primacy of agriculture, the most important economic institution was

⁵³⁹ Oakman, "Jesus and Agrarian Palestine: The Factor of Debt," 65-82

⁵⁴⁰ David A. Fiensy, "Jesus and Debts: Did He Pray about Them?" *Restoration Quarterly* 44, no. 4 (2002): 233-39, esp. 239.

agricultural farms, and consequently, the governance structure of farms assumed considerable economic importance. In farm management, all landowners have to decide first whether they are directly involved in its daily operation or not. In case of a large-scale farming, however, direct involvement is simply impossible, and landowners have to select indirect involvement, mostly through tenancy and/or agency.

Tenancy is the type through which landowners lease some plots of their land to the farmers who actually cultivate the allotted land or sublet it to other farmers, receiving in return rents of fixed or proportional amounts, in the form of produce or money. In Luke, tenancy is well attested in the parable of the rebellious tenants (20:9-18), for example.

Agency is a system in which landlords entrust agricultural management to others by appointing certain administrative staff. Roman agronomists give advice to landowners concerning choosing between the two types, tenancy or agency, according to their circumstances. Evidence suggests that a variety of economic agents existed in the Roman imperial world. For instance, the Heroninos archive records several administrative titles for estate management, including οἰκονόμοι (stewards). These titles include προνοῦμενος (superintendent), ἐπιτροπαι (stewards), χειριστάι (amanuenses), διαστολεύς (distributor), and παραλημπτής (receiver). As Dominic Rathbone rightly notes, however, there exists little, if any, difference in terms of the functions of ἐπιτροπαι, χειριστάι, and οἰκονόμοι.⁵⁴¹ In addition, the archive refers to other titles for animal husbandry such as ἐπικτηνίτης (the man in charge of the beasts) and ἀρχιποίμην (head shepherd). Moreover, some special titles seem to have been used locally in Roman agriculture. In the Heroninos archive, for instance, προντίς occurs as the managerial unit for agriculture and προντιδής as the manager of this unit. What is important in the use of diverse titles is that they

⁵⁴¹ Rathbone, *Economic Rationalism and Rural Society*, 62.

signify a more sophisticated job division in these industries, which, in turn, suggests some professional complexity. Conclusively, this can illuminate the advanced nature of the Roman imperial economy by pre-modern standards.

Within this context of nomenclature that recognizes sophisticated job divisions, in this parable, the formal title of the agent is οἰκονόμος (v. 1).⁵⁴² This term is the functional equivalent of a farm manager, the *vilicus*. This linguistic equivalent is attested in areas including “Italy, the Danubian provinces, Greece, Asia Minor, Syria, and Egypt.”⁵⁴³ A *vilicus* was a bailiff, appointed mostly from slaves, who took charge of all agricultural tasks and personal management of a farm--except for animal husbandry that belonged to the job of the *magister percoris*. In this regard, the slave in the parable of watchful slaves (12:35-48) who is in charge of other slaves can be thought as a *vilicus* (v. 42).

The tasks of a *vilicus*, however, seem to have expanded as a *vilicus* took charge of diverse economic transactions including the sale of agricultural products. In this regard, Ulpianus includes a *vilicus* in the category of *institores* (*Dig.* 14.3.5.2). An *institor*, as Paulus defines it, refers broadly to a business agent who was in charge of a shop or any place involving business (*Dig.* 14.3.18). Moreover, an *institor* could perform business transactions that were legally binding (*Dig.* 14.3.4). Therefore, a *vilicus* also had the authority to make legal business contracts on behalf of the principal, which means that the principal was liable for his manager’s transactions. However, not every *vilicus* seems to have undertaken such dual duties as a manager and a trader. In the legal context, Paulus confines more narrowly the main task of a *vilicus* as farm manager rather than trader, although he admits that a *vilicus* could engage in trade at the master’s authorization (*Dig.* 14.3.16). These two conflicting legal commentaries suggest that the

⁵⁴² LSJ, 1204.

⁵⁴³ Jean-Jacques Aubert, *Business Managers in Ancient Rome: A Social and Economic Study of Institores*, 200 B.C.-A.D. 250 (New York: Brill, 1994), 33. See especially no. 117.

scope of appointment of a specific *vilicus* influenced decisively the legal liability of the principal.⁵⁴⁴ In sum, the above economic and legal contexts well explain how the steward in this parable could renegotiate the master's debts with the debtors on his behalf and that those deals were legally binding.

Furthermore, a *vilicus* exerted a more significant role in the area where masters could not exercise more direct control, as is the case of absentee landlords. Thus Joseph A. Fitzmyer situates this parable in the context of an absentee landowner and his steward in charge of his estate.⁵⁴⁵ Moreover, the economic significance of a *vilicus* makes Columella underscore the importance of the selection of a good *vilicus*. He warns masters not to select their *vilicus* carelessly, guided by personal preference or relational ties. Instead, he advises them to appoint a *vilicus* from those who meet professional requirements such as competence, leadership, fidelity, diligence, honesty, shrewdness, physical strength, and passion (*Rust.* 11.1.7; cf. 12.1). In this regard, the master's decision to fire the steward (16:2) reflects Columella's advice to some degree (vv. 1-2).

In the parable, the steward appears as a character that wastes his master's property. First, from the beginning of the parable, he is introduced as the man whose charge of squandering is reported to his master (v. 1). More specifically, the verb διασκοπίζω that Luke employs to describe the steward's act of squandering of his master's property⁵⁴⁶ also appears in the parable of the prodigal son (15:11-32) to portray the son's proclivity for dissolute spending (v. 13). The use of the term, though, does not necessarily mean that the charge against the steward relates to loose spending. This is so because we cannot exclude entirely the possibility that the steward's charge of squandering may relate to his occupational incompetence, professional negligence, or

⁵⁴⁴ Aubert, *Business Managers in Ancient Rome*, 8-9.

⁵⁴⁵ Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According to Luke X-XXIV*, 1097.

⁵⁴⁶ LSJ, 412.

job-related fraud, all of which fall short of the above standards anyway.⁵⁴⁷ The parable reveals that the charge is proved to be true as the steward does commit squandering, regardless of whether his squandering happens as the result of a self-fulfilling prophecy or reflects his true character. At any rate, this time, we can easily identify his systematic accounting fraud in reducing the debts owed. In sum, the steward in the parable seems to be below the standard of honesty. He, however, seems to be up to the standard of professional competence and shrewdness.

In addition, the parable demonstrates how each economic agent, the principal and the agent, acts according to economic rationality to maximize his own profit. As for the master, he tries to maximize his profit by firing the manager who wastes his possessions (vv. 1b-2). As for the steward, he maximizes his profit in the given circumstances, in that he endeavors to protect or ensure his future in the face of dismissal, by making his master's debtors his friends through the act of reducing their outstanding debts, regardless of whether the act is right or not (vv. 4-7).

Moreover, the steward's act seems to be possible owing to an information asymmetry between the master and himself. More specifically, the steward appears to freely access the master's financial documents. This is so because the phrase “ἀπόδος τὸν λόγον τῆς οἰκονομίας σου” in verse 2 carries a connotation of auditing accounts for the transfer of duties. Thus, as Joseph Fitzmyer aptly clarifies, the phrase means: “Hand over or give me an inventory of my possessions and prepare an account of the transactions you have made, listing the debtors and what they owe.”⁵⁴⁸ That's why he can present the original debt documents to debtors in renegotiation of their debts (vv. 6-7). This in turn means that the master does not have that financial information in hand and consequently cannot prevent the steward's fraud beforehand.

⁵⁴⁷ Douglas M. Parrott, “The Dishonest Steward (Luke 16.1-8a) and Luke's Special Parable Collection,” *NTS* 37, no. 4 (1991): 499-515, esp. 505.

⁵⁴⁸ Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According to Luke X-XXIV*, 1100.

Moreover, once the renegotiation of debts is completed, we can reasonably assume that the contents of each renegotiated debt would probably remain a secret between each debtor and the steward. This secrecy further intensifies the information asymmetry between the master and the steward, making it hard for the master to recoup his losses afterward. In this way, conclusively, the parable inscribes the practice whereby ancient economic agents displayed economic rationality in their economic situation.

6.4. *Commercial Olive Production*

The parable refers implicitly to olive production (16:6). Olive oil was widely used in a variety of ways as food, fuel, body care product, and medicine,⁵⁴⁹ so it constituted “the Mediterranean (food) triad,” together with vines, and cereals.⁵⁵⁰ Due to its popularity, it was a part of the *annona* system during the Roman imperial period, and urban and military needs further boosted its demand throughout the Empire.⁵⁵¹

In line with this, there are some references to olive and olive oil in Luke. In the account of the synagogue in Nazareth (4:16-30), olive oil is implied in the biblical passage that Jesus narrated in the synagogue as the passage refers to the anointing of the Spirit (v. 18; cf. Isa 61:1). In the parable of the good Samaritan (10:25-37), olive oil appears as the medicine—perhaps the softener of a wound—as the Samaritan pours olive oil and wine on the severely wounded man by the robbers (v.34).⁵⁵²

Moreover, in response to the increased demand in the early Roman imperial period, olive

⁵⁴⁹ Marie-Claire Amouretti, *Le Pain et l’Huile dans la Grèce Antique. De l’Araire au Moulin* (Paris: Les Belles-Lettres, 1986), 177-96; David J. Mattingly “Oil for Export? A Comparison of Lybyan, Spanish, and Tunisian Olive Oil Production in the Roman Empire,” *JRA* 1 (1988): 33-56, esp. 33.

⁵⁵⁰ Garnsey, “The Land,” 681.

⁵⁵¹ Hitchner, “Olive Production and the Roman Economy,” 71-83, esp. 73-75.

⁵⁵² Similarly, in the Letter of James, the author of the book encourages the elders to anoint the sick with oil while they pray over them (5:14).

cultivation grew significantly in the West in the first to the fourth centuries CE, as David Mattingly well demonstrates.⁵⁵³ For instance, archeological work has established that the number of olive presses dating from the Roman imperial period in the region of central Tunisia with the total area of 1500 km² exceeds 350 presses. Similarly, 161 presses were discovered in the same size area of the Guadalquivir valley in Spain. It is also noteworthy that among these sites with olive presses in Tripolitania and the Kasserine in Tunisia, many have multiple presses--as many as 17 presses. Multiple presses suggest that the olive production in the region exceeded the local consumption level and indicates the large-scale production for market sale and export.⁵⁵⁴ According to David Mattingly's estimation, the total annual production of oil of the region would have amounted to 18,000 tons (Tripolitania) and 5,000-10,000 tons (the Kasserine region).⁵⁵⁵ Besides such large-scale oil production, Robert B. Hitchner further argues that the spread of small-scale olive production with one or two presses during the Roman imperial period, especially on marginal areas such as hills and mountains, produced surplus oil production beyond subsistence requirements.⁵⁵⁶

In line with this, Luke's Gospel also suggests olive cultivation in some instances. Olive cultivation is implied in several references to the Mount of Olives. The Mount of Olives occurs twice in the account of Jesus's entrance procession into Jerusalem (19:29, 37) as it is located on the east side of the city (Zech 14:4). In addition, Luke refers to it as the place where Jesus spends the night during his stay at Jerusalem (21:37). Similarly, in Jesus's passion narrative (22:39-46), Luke describes that Jesus went to the Mount of Olives to pray prior to his arrest (v. 39). In Acts,

⁵⁵³ David J. Mattingly, "Megalithic Madness and Measurement, or How Many Olives Could an Olive Press Press?" *OJA* 7, no. 2 (1988): 177-95; "The Olive Boom. Oil Surpluses, Wealth and Power in Roman Tripolitania," *Libyan Studies* 19 (1988): 21-41; "Oil for Export?" 33-56.

⁵⁵⁴ Hitchner, "Olive Production and the Roman Economy," 76.

⁵⁵⁵ Mattingly, "Megalithic Madness and Measurement"; "The Olive Boom. Oil Surpluses."

⁵⁵⁶ Hitchner, "Olive Production and the Roman Economy," 76.

Luke refers to it as the site where Jesus's ascension takes place (Acts 1:12). It is also noteworthy that Mark and Matthew further explain that the name of the place where Jesus prays is "Gethsemane" (Γεθσημανή; Mark 14:32; Matt. 26:36) while John simply refers to it as "a garden" (John 18:1).⁵⁵⁷ Traditionally, Gethsemane is said to be located at the foot of the Mount of Olives and its literal meaning is "oil press."⁵⁵⁸ Thus the name strongly suggests that it was the place where olives were processed.

More importantly, this parable also seems to suggest commercial olive farming. Jacques Dupont indicates that the magnitude of debts of the first debtor (vv. 5-6), amounting to 900 gallons of oil, corresponds to the produce of 140 olive trees.⁵⁵⁹ Bovon proposes that this amount was worth about two years' pay of a day laborer.⁵⁶⁰ According to Lin Foxhall's estimation, the annual consumption of olive oil in the ancient Mediterranean diet would have amounted to about 50 liters per person, while other estimates suggest lower figures of around 20-25 liters.⁵⁶¹ All things considered, it is certain that the amount of the debt far exceeds the level of self-consumption. In this regard, the debtor may engage in commercial olive production, which in turn attests aspects of a market economy in Luke's Gospel.

6.5. Risk Premium

Two crops—olives and wheat—appear in the story (vv. 6-7), which seems to point to crop diversification. One of the merits of crop diversification is risk-pooling. Ancient people well

⁵⁵⁷ For more detail, see Raymond E. Brown, *The Death of the Messiah: From Gethsemane to the Grave*, 2 vols. (New York: Doubleday, 1994), 36, 148-149.

⁵⁵⁸ Plummer, *A Critical And Exegetical Commentary Gospel According To St. Luke* (1922), 508; Gustaf H. Dalman, *Sacred Sites and Ways* (New York: Macmillan, 1935; German orig. 3rd ed., 1924), 322-26.

⁵⁵⁹ Jacques Dupont, *L'exemple de L'intendant Débrouillard* (Lc 16, 1-13), *Assemblées du Seigneur* 56 (1974): 67-78, esp. 68.

⁵⁶⁰ Bovon, *Luke* 2, 448.

⁵⁶¹ Lin Foxhall, *Olive Cultivation within Greek and Roman Agriculture: the Ancient Economy Revisited* (Ph.D. Diss., University of Liverpool, 1990), 79-80; Amouretti, *Le Pain et l'Huile dans la Grèce Antique*, 177-96; Mattingly, "Oil for Export?" 34.

understood the danger of investing money in just one item, and thus appreciated the importance of risk-pooling through diversification of investment. Pliny the Younger hesitates to purchase a piece of land adjoining his own because he doubts that “it is prudent to venture so much of one’s property under the same climate, and to the same casualties; it seems a more sure method of guarding against the caprices of fortune, to distribute one’s possessions into different situations” (*Ep.* 3.19).⁵⁶²

In a similar fashion, the awareness of risk seems to be visible in this parable (16:1-13) in association with the debt reduction ratios. In the parable, the steward is applying different reduction ratios between olive oil and wheat: He applies a 50% reduction ratio for olive oil (from 100 to 50) while 20% (from 100 to 80) for wheat (vv. 6-7). Why does the steward apply different reduction ratios? Ronald G. Lunt suggests that such different discounts reflect the price difference between olives and wheat, therefore the steward discounts the same amount for both debtors.⁵⁶³ However, such an explanation cannot be sustained unless wheat was five times more valuable than olive oil in the Roman world, which seems highly improbable given the difficulty of olive cultivation. Moreover, there seems to be no convincing evidence that a *kor* was worth 5 *baths*, which also makes it less plausible that the steward reduces the same amount in terms of the volume of the two products.⁵⁶⁴

From a different perspective, it seems possible to explain the difference in terms of *risk premium*. In fact, every business involves an element of uncertainty. Especially, there exists a possibility of failing to get an expected return from the business. The notion of *risk premium* reflects the risk that a certain economic activity entails by quantifying the risk into a certain

⁵⁶² Pliny, *Letters I*, 259.

⁵⁶³ Ronald G. Lunt, “Expounding the Parables, III: The Parable of the Unjust Steward (Luke 16:1-15),” *ET* 77, no. 5 (1965-66): 132-36, esp. 132.

⁵⁶⁴ For some scholarly estimations on the ratio between a *kor* and a *bath*, see Bovon, *Luke* 2, 448, no. 42.

measurable value, normally money value. In other words, it is the price of the willingness to take a risk. As the risk that each business faces differs markedly case by case, so does the risk premium. Technically, since the risk is in itself a concept of uncertainty, the actual calculation of it belongs to the realm of probability and/or statistics. In fair trade, rational economic agents would expect the return on a certain business or investment to be equivalent to other business or investment that guarantees a certain amount of secure return, known as *the certainty equivalent*. Furthermore, the attitude toward the risk depends on individual characteristics; it differs from people to people. Some people may prefer risky businesses to risk-free businesses while others may not. Still others may be indifferent. Therefore, those who do not like risky economic activities would require a compensation for the risk.

The cultivation of olive involves more risk than that of wheat. This is so because oleiculture requires several years of a growing period and careful tending to yield produce. Furthermore, unlike the vine which was widely cultivated throughout the Roman Empire, the olive was grown within confined areas. The olive is one of the most drought-resistant crops, surviving in the area with the minimum total precipitation of 200 millimeters. It is, however, vulnerable to cold weather, especially intolerable to frost. Furthermore, the olive requires the rotation of dry season and cold winter to grow.

In this regard, the difference of debt reduction ratio between olives and wheat may reflect the calculation of different profit margins between two crops especially associated with risk premium. In other words, the more generous reduction of olive oil than wheat may reflect the *risk premium* associated with the relatively higher risk that olive cultivation entails. If this is the case, it shows the economic rationality reflected in the agricultural market economy of the Roman imperial world.

6.6. *Defrauding*

What is the nature of steward's act in the parable? At first sight, it appears straightforward that the steward commits wrongdoing. However, the interpretation of his action becomes complicated as the master commends his behavior despite that he blatantly causes substantial damage to his property (v. 8a). In addition, the interpretation becomes further problematic when Jesus's ensuing instruction seems to employ it as a positive example for Jesus's followers (vv. 8b-13). Many attempts have been made so far to explain these difficult points.⁵⁶⁵

For instance, one scenario proposes that the steward's act of debt reduction does not inflict financial damage on the master's wealth. This view regards the original amounts as including the principal, interest, and share of the steward's profit. The amount of reduction reflects the steward's share. Without touching anything belonging to the master (the principal and interest), the steward can reduce the debt by simply forsaking his share.⁵⁶⁶

Another scenario suggests that though the steward causes substantial financial loss to his master's wealth, by doing so, he elevates the honor of his master in return through this commendable act of debt reduction.⁵⁶⁷ Furthermore, such reduction would pay in the long run since the benefaction makes the debtors further bound to the master in the social context of patron-client relations.

In light of game theory, however, the parable seems to describe the moral hazard of the steward in the form of *defrauding*. Above all, evidence suggests that such an act could have happened in real situations in the ancient Roman economic world. As Columella puts it: "Even an illiterate person, if only he has a retentive mind, can manage affairs well enough. Cornelius

⁵⁶⁵ For a brief survey of the literature, see Dennis J. Ireland, "A History of Recent Interpretation of the Parable of the Unjust Steward (Luke 16:1-13)," *Westminster Theological Journal* 51, no. 2 (1989): 293-318.

⁵⁶⁶ For the reference to this view, see Bovon, *Luke* 2, 448, no. 37.

⁵⁶⁷ Kenneth E. Bailey, *Poet and Peasant* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1980), 86-118, esp. 102.

Celsus says that an overseer of this sort brings money to his master oftener than he does his book, because, not knowing his letters, he is either less able to falsify accounts or is afraid to do so through a second party because that would make another aware of the deception” (*Rust.* 1.8).⁵⁶⁸

Moreover, literature evidences some efforts to prevent such moral hazard. For instance, Dio reports the effort of Tiberius to prevent fraud of treasurers as follows: “All the money that he [Tiberius] bestowed upon people was counted out at once in his sight; for since under Augustus the officials who paid over the money had been wont to deduct large sums for themselves from such donatives, he took good care that this should not happen in his reign” (Dio, *Hist.* 57.10.4).⁵⁶⁹ The statement indirectly suggests that the moral hazard of financial agents was not uncommon during the time of Augustus.

In this regard, if we apply the term *defrauding* broadly as the act done purposely against the will of the principal and causing damage to his wealth, we can reasonably regard the steward’s behavior as defrauding, which stems from his economic rationality of maximizing his profit given the situation of principal-agent relation.

6.7. Final Stage Game

Then why does the master commend the behavior of the steward who incurs a serious damage to his property (v.8)? It seems that the master’s praise can be understood in the light of his economic view of the world as François Bovon rightly points out: The steward “acted intelligently, that is, in a self-interested way for his own profit (which is the way a rich man

⁵⁶⁸ Columella, *On Agriculture, Volume 1: Books 1-4*, 85-87.

⁵⁶⁹ *Dio’s Roman history, with an English translation*, trans. Earnest Cary and Herbert Baldwin Foster, 9 vols. LCL (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1914), 7.137.

would see things).”⁵⁷⁰ In other words, his praise may reflect his acknowledgement of the steward’s deeper understanding of economic rationality than his. In terms of game theory, in the parable, the master and the steward behave in the final stage in a *repeated-* or a *multi-stage game*. A *repeated game* refers to the situation where the players play the same game again and again, either finite or (theoretically) infinite times.⁵⁷¹ A *multi-stage game* is the game composed of several different stages in which the players take action sequentially according to the rules of the game—for instance, player 1 acts first at the first stage, then player 2 acts at the second stage, then player 3 acts or player 1 acts again at the third stage, and so on.⁵⁷² In both cases, it is important for each player to calculate how other players will react to current action since each player’s future payoff will also depend on others’ reaction to her (or his) current decision.⁵⁷³

It is also noteworthy that in a repeated game, the players enter into a long term relationship with each other (or one another) as they play the same game again and again. Especially, the players should bear future games in mind to maximize their total output, which enables them to use diverse negotiation strategies such as promise, threat, collusion, and/or cooperation about future behaviors so long as such strategies bring about a mutual benefit to each player by increasing their total payoff.⁵⁷⁴ However, in case of a final stage, the players do not have to consider the next period of games, so every player acts for the best benefit of herself or himself. This action signifies that there will be no more negotiation among each player--no promise, threat, collusion, and/or cooperation is binding at this stage. In this regard, in game theory, economists calculate each player’s payoff from this last stage backwards to get a

⁵⁷⁰ Bovon, *Luke 2*, 449.

⁵⁷¹ Fudenberg and Tirole, *Game Theory*, 145-150; Avinash K. Dixit and Susan Skeath, *Games of strategy*, 2nd ed. (New York; London: W.W. Norton & Company, 2004), 347-356.

⁵⁷² Fudenberg and Tirole, *Game Theory*, 70-72; Dixit and Skeath, *Games of strategy*, 155-184.

⁵⁷³ Dixit and Skeath, *Games of strategy*, 20-21, 77.

⁵⁷⁴ Dixit and Skeath, *Games of strategy*, 311-381; Robert Gibbons, *A Primer in Game Theory* (London; New York: Financial Times Prentice hall, 1992), 82-115.

reasonable, unchangeable, and consistent estimate—this is known as *backward induction*.⁵⁷⁵

In this light, we can regard the relationship between the master and the steward as a repeated game in that it would be a long-term employment relationship since the steward manages the master's financial affairs (16:2, 5-7). Then the master expresses his intention to fire him, which means that the game arrives at its final stage in terms of game theory (v. 2). At the final stage, the performance of the steward is better than that of the master. The steward exhibits a clear understanding of his situation in term of game theory—the relationship between the master and himself will not last any longer. The relationship between them is terminated. Accordingly, the steward acts faithfully according to the rules of the final stage game. He advances his own interest despite his master's financial loss by committing forgery of the debt bonds, which signifies that the manager does not care about his master any more—expecting no more future relationship with his master.

In contrast, the master does not behave according to the rules of the game in that he fails to take appropriate measures in advance so as to prevent his agent's possible opportunistic behaviors before he announces the termination of their relationship. Surely, the master is in position to determine the length of their relationship. In light of game theory, he is in the far superior position to know, actually determine, the final stage. Put differently, there exists a serious information asymmetry between the two players in terms of the information structure of the game. This further means that he has a better knowledge, superior information, and private information; therefore he can maximize his own profits by exploiting this advantage.

In the parable of the watchful slaves (12:35-48), Jesus also underscores the importance of private information when he states, “if the owner of the house had known at what hour the thief

⁵⁷⁵ Fudenberg and Tirole, *Game Theory*, 68-69.

was coming, he would not have let his house be broken into” (v. 39). Jesus’s statement best illuminates how information asymmetry affects the profits (or payoff) of each player in the game—if we understand this situation as a game like “House Break” between the thief and the owner of the house. Furthermore, according to the rules of the game, Jesus utilizes such private information as a means of preventing possible moral hazard among his audience and/or disciples. As he puts it: “You also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an unexpected hour” (v. 40). The master in the parable, however, entirely fails to exploit this advantage; on the contrary, he idly wastes this opportunity by divulging unthinkingly such precious information as to the time of the final stage without taking opportune actions to secure first the accounting books and the debt bonds. By doing so, subsequently, he loses the initiative of the game, handing it over to the steward, who, by contrast, desperately makes the best of a bad job.

What’s more, in a related vein, it was a common view that masters were in general responsible for the behavior of the agents who act on their behalf. For instance, Columella states that masters also should share the responsibility of moral hazard of farm managers for the former have absolute control over personnel affairs, over both the appointment and the dismissal of the latter (*Rust.* 1.7.5).

In sum, the master’s commendation for the steward’s behavior makes sense in light of game theory because it is the result of economic behaviors based on economic rationality. Furthermore, his praise suggests that the master puts much higher value on economic rationality than moral uprightness, at least in relation to this economic issue. Moreover, read from this perspective, this parable, if not all of Luke’s Gospel, clearly shows how Luke’s Jesus understands human nature in terms of economic thinking, namely, *homo economicus* preoccupied with selfish profit motives and equipped with economic rationality as a means to

achieve this goal. Furthermore, Luke's Jesus seems to reflect such nature in his religious and/or moral teaching rather than dismissing or neglecting it.

7. Conclusion

This chapter has investigated some texts in which economic matters are evident from Luke 12:12-16:13. All these passages demonstrate that Luke's Gospel inscribes aspects of a market economy and economic rationality under the growing market economy of the early Roman imperial period.

The parable of the rich fool (12:13-21) attests the economic rationality of ancient economic agents through the behaviors of the rich. Above all, the notion of greed in the parable is interwoven, to a degree, with the profit motive or economic initiative. Likewise, the rich man's acts of capital investment and of a resultant increase of storage exhibits his effort to increase agricultural profits by exploiting the opportune time of sales. The discourse on watchful slaves (12:35-48) displays how each economic agent interacts to maximize her (or his) own profit through the behavioral patterns of masters and slaves. Specifically, the discourse reveals how masters approach the institution of slavery to maximize their profits. It also shows that moral hazard is a rational behavior that slaves can take while diverse mechanisms are rational measures that masters can take in order to prevent the moral hazard of their agents. Furthermore, it also attests the operation of an internal labor market in Luke's narrative world. Other texts in Luke also confirm the inscribing of the practice of an internal labor market. The parable of a fig tree in a vineyard (13:6-9) exhibits how crop diversification serves to increase agricultural profits while reducing farming risks. The parable also reveals how cost-benefit analysis as an expression of economic rationality operates in Luke's Gospel. The parable of the great banquet (14:15-24)

shows the operation of a land market in the narrative world of Luke's Gospel. It also reveals that diverse economic agents from a variety of economic standings, from the rich, the middle, and the poor, are present in Luke's Gospel as recent scholarly presentations of economic stratification in the Roman Empire recognize. The parable of the dishonest steward (16:1-13) attests large-scale farming and olive production, which are best suitable for market sales, and shows the aspect of debts as a bi-product of a market economy. In addition, the parable well represents the economic rationality structuring the economic relationship of principals and agents. Moreover, it portrays how the master and the steward respectively act strategically to maximize their profits from the perspective of a final stage game. Furthermore, it also elucidates economic rationality behind the notions of risk premium and defrauding.

Features in these passages, such as the notion of greed, the act of capital investment through the increase of storage, the behaviors of masters and slaves, an internal labor market, crop diversification, cost-benefit analysis, land market, economic stratification, large-scale farming, commercial olive production, a principal-agent problem, a final stage game, risk premium, and defrauding, demonstrate that this section of Luke's Gospel (12:12-15:32) displays aspects of a market economy and economic rationality in the context of the early Roman imperial economy.

CHAPTER 6

Economic Readings of Luke's Gospel 3 (16:14-19:27)

1. Introduction

This chapter provides economic readings of Luke's Gospel from Luke 16:14-19:27 by focusing on some selected passages. These passages are the parable of the unworthy servant (17:7-10), the story of the rich ruler (18:18-30), the story of Zaccheus (19:1-10), and the parable of the ten *minas* (19:11-27). These passages are selected because they provide insights into diverse economic topics including wealth redistribution, intertemporal choices, screening, signaling and commitment, non-agricultural sources of income, small-scale commerce, opportunity costs, banking and finance, money hoarding, the attitude toward the rich and the poor, and reinscribing the Roman imperial economic system. All these topics illustrate aspects of a market economy and economic rationality in the Roman imperial economy inscribed in Luke's Gospel.

2. The parable of the unworthy servant (17:7-10)

The parable mainly focuses on the works of a slave. In the parable, the slave, who returned from agricultural work, immediately has to prepare his master's dinner and serve at the table. Jesus addresses this parable in the course of his instruction on the discipleship. In so doing, the parable provides a vivid portrayal of aspects of the slave system of the Roman imperial economy.

2.1. Slavery

In the parable, Jesus compares the faithful discipleship required of the relationship between God and believers to that of a master and a slave by addressing a series of rhetorical question

demanding negative answers. According to the first question, when a slave (δοῦλος)⁵⁷⁶ engaged in farming--either plowing in the field or tending flocks-- comes back home from his work, no master would ever immediately allow the slave to partake of his meal before serving his master (17:7).

Luke's portrayal of a slave's working here seems to accord well with features of slave's work in the Roman world. According to Keith R. Bradley, jobs of rural slaves described in the agricultural writing of Columella include "overseer, vine binder, plowman, tree pruner, house cleaner and housekeeper, bird catcher, poultry keeper, goat herder, oil drawer, provisioner, guardians of animals, gamekeeper, jailer, mover, smith, poultry fattener, digger, oxen keeper, head shepherd, vine trimmer, trench digger, pig breeder, pruner, stable keeper, pig herder, animal doctor, grape picker, vine dresser."⁵⁷⁷ Among those diverse jobs, the slave in the parable performs household duties and agricultural work (17:7-8). Similarly, in the discourse on watchful slaves (12:35-48), slaves are portrayed as carrying out household duties. In the discourse, Jesus exhorts his disciples to dress for action and to prepare lamps for a night as slaves do. These actions are those of slaves who are waiting for their master's return from the wedding banquet at night so as to open the door quickly when he arrives at the door (12:35-36).

The employment of slaves in agricultural work in the parable of the unworthy servant (17:7) deserves further attention. In the Roman world, diverse social, political, and economic factors mutually influenced and interweaved in the development of slavery, such as "military hegemony, the rule of law, the privatization of property, urbanism, the accumulation of capital, an enormous market economy."⁵⁷⁸ Among those factors, the economic aspect of slavery stood out as the main motive of slavery in the Roman world as the institution of slavery operated in

⁵⁷⁶ LSJ, 447.

⁵⁷⁷ Keith R. Bradley, *Slavery and Society at Rome* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 60, Table 2.

⁵⁷⁸ Kyle Harper, *Slavery in the Late Roman World, AD 275-425* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 3.

close association with a market economy. As Kyle Harper rightly notes: “Slavery was a profitable institution embedded in circuits of exchange-oriented production.”⁵⁷⁹

In Varro’s writing, slaves appear as one means of agricultural production while he introduced two common opinions on the category of agricultural work: “Some divide these into two parts: men, and those aids to men without which they cannot cultivate; others into three: the class of instruments which is articulate, the inarticulate, and the mute; the articulate comprising the slaves, the inarticulate comprising the cattle, and the mute comprising the vehicles” (Varro, *Rust.* 1.17.1).⁵⁸⁰ Accordingly, in Italy, large-scale farming employing slaves was attested in the classical literature as early as the late second century BCE when the major slave rebellion first took place (Diodorus Siculus, *Hist.* 34.2). In this regard, Luke 17:7, though brief, opens up the possibility that Luke has in mind that the slave is employed in market-oriented farming.

Moreover the portrayal of the slaves’ work in the rest of the parable also reflects basic attitudes of slave masters in the Greco-Roman world. Above all, Roman landowners regarded slaves as commodities that were tradable for the benefit of owners. Cato lists slaves with low qualities as items to be sold off: “Sell worn-out oxen, blemished cattle, blemished sheep, wool, hides, an old wagon, old tools, an old slave, a sickly slave, and whatever else is superfluous” (*Agr.* 2.7).⁵⁸¹ The main thrust of his advice seems to increase agricultural profits by improving the efficiency of agricultural output. In this regard, he approaches the treatment of slaves in terms of utility. Similarly, according to the jurist Gaius, Roman law treats slaves the same as animals in determining the amount of compensation for the dead slaves: “the statute puts a man’s four-footed animals on a level with his slaves, such animals being of the class of *pecudes* and

⁵⁷⁹ Harper, *Slavery in the Late Roman World, AD 275-425*, 8.

⁵⁸⁰ Cato and Varro, *On Agriculture*, 225.

⁵⁸¹ Cato and Varro, *On Agriculture*, 9.

kept in herds, as, for instance, sheep, goats, kine, horses, mules, and asses” (*Dig.* 9.2.2.2).⁵⁸² In sum, those references confirm that ancient Greco-Roman masters basically approached the institution of slaves in light of utility and profits.

In view of that, the master in the parable (17:7-10) takes a similar approach to slavery. Luke 17:8 states that the master would order the slave who comes back from work to prepare his meal and wait on the master during the meal before allowing the slave to eat later. Here the idea that slaves eat after the master is at least satirically in Petronius’s *Satyricon* 74. Also, it is natural that no master would ever express his appreciation to his slave who carried out his order faithfully (v. 9). As for the slave, after fulfilling the assigned orders, he should show humility by saying, “We are worthless slaves; we have done only what we ought to have done!” (v. 10).

As verses 9-10 clearly show, Luke’s Jesus reinscribes the work ethic of slaves that is taken for granted at that time, according to which slaves should be faithful to their assigned duties without expecting any recompense. In fact, from an economic perspective, the extent of profit margin that masters make from owning slaves largely depends on the amount of surplus value that masters extract from slave labor. To exploit slaves fully, it is important to have slaves that are well trained, both physically and mentally. To enable such training, masters must have good slave management skills. According to Cato, slave-owners should make slaves busy at all times. When slaves cannot perform regular agricultural work due to inclement weather conditions, they should work with inside tasks or other housekeeping chores. On holidays, they should carry out other non-agricultural cleaning and repairing tasks. In case of a slave’s illness, masters should reduce the meal portion (*Agr.* 2.3-5).

Moreover, the image of Jesus or God in Luke has direct bearing on the interpretation of

⁵⁸² *The Digest of Justinian, Volume 2*, trans. Charles H. Monro (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1909), 117.

the relationship between masters and slaves. In his book *Stewardship and Almsgiving in Luke's Theology*, Kyung-Jin Kim presents stewardship rather than discipleship as an overarching concept that encompasses economic issues reflected in Luke's Gospel. He is especially concerned with the proper attitude toward and use of possessions by both itinerant and sedentary Jesus-followers. Though insightful, Kim's analysis fails to explore adequately the relationship between masters and slaves in Luke.

According to Kim, the notion of stewardship well describes Luke's emphasis in his ethical code required of disciples: "Luke seems to have a particular interest in the steward figure, because a steward has resources at his disposal like the sedentary disciples, and also, as slave, is responsible to a higher authority for his use of the material possessions entrusted to him."⁵⁸³ Moreover, Kyung-Jin Kim argues that the attitude described in Luke 17:10, namely slaves ought to carry out assigned tasks without claiming any reward from their master, is an essential aspect that Luke underscores as a basic attitude of followers of Jesus.⁵⁸⁴ In arguing so, Kim examines several parables associated with motifs of masters-slaves and masters-stewards to draw characteristics of Christian stewardship. Then he points out that "Luke is seen to be preoccupied with the master-slave motif, presenting Christian disciples as servants and God or Jesus as the Master."⁵⁸⁵

What, then, is the nature of the master whom Luke is thought to identify with God according to Kyung-Jin Kim's argument? Kyung-Jin Kim does not seem to give due attention to the image of God and Jesus. In this parable (17:7-10), no philanthropic consideration for the slave can be found in Jesus's saying. On the contrary, Jesus holds the same view as the Greco-Roman masters as he takes the exploitation of slaves for granted for the benefit of the

⁵⁸³ Kim, *Stewardship and Almsgiving in Luke's Theology*, 130.

⁵⁸⁴ Kim, *Stewardship and Almsgiving in Luke's Theology*, 121.

⁵⁸⁵ Kim, *Stewardship and Almsgiving in Luke's Theology*, 130.

masters. At this juncture, therefore, the image of Jesus in the scene is full of economic motive and rationality, endorsing, consequently, the slave system. In this regard, the presentation of the master in the Roman imperial economy reveals the ethical problem that Luke's Gospel lacks any criticism of the harsh realities of the slave system and, what's worse, approves of it by reinscribing it for pedagogical purposes.

3. The Story of the Rich Ruler (18:18-30)

This account describes how a certain rich ruler fails to follow Jesus because of his abundant wealth. I will read this story from several economic perspectives—wealth redistribution, intertemporal choices, and screening.

3.1. Wealth Redistribution

In the story, Jesus orders the rich ruler to give alms after liquidating all his possessions (18:22). From an economic perspective, Jesus's order can be categorized as a kind of wealth distribution. More specifically, it belongs to private charity--one of the important mechanisms of transferring income and wealth from a person (party) to others, generally from the rich to the poor. Other mechanisms may include charitable funds, redistribution through a local community, and governmental redistribution.

Does Luke's emphasis on wealth redistribution stand in tension with an economic way of thinking or economic rationality? Not necessarily. In fact, modern economics has developed a way of embracing such wealth redistribution in its theoretical framework. More concretely, from the perspective of utilitarianism, drawn mostly notably from Jeremy Bentham,⁵⁸⁶ neo-classical

⁵⁸⁶ Jeremy Bentham, *A Fragment on Government*, ed. Ross Harrison (1776; reprint, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988).

economists have insisted that such transfer could increase the welfare of the entire society. This requires a further knowledge of the concept of *utility*.

According to the consumer choice theory, consumers do not maximize profits because their goal of consuming goods and/or services receives a certain kind of satisfaction (or happiness). To capture such satisfaction (or happiness) from consumption, neoclassical economists have employed a psychological concept of *utility* as the unit of measure.⁵⁸⁷ As Michael Melvin and William Boyes describe it: “You are nourished by a good meal, entertained by a concert, proud of a fine car, and comforted by a nice home and warm clothing. Whatever feelings are described by *nourishment*, *entertainment*, *pride*, and *comfort* are captured in the term *utility*.”⁵⁸⁸ Furthermore, according to the *law of diminishing returns*, an individual’s *marginal utility* (i.e., the increment of satisfaction or happiness through the additional consumption of a good) of income and wealth tends to decrease as her or his amount (or level) of income and wealth increases.⁵⁸⁹ This means that if you are already rich, you feel less satisfied by a small amount of additional money added to your wealth. Consequently, the law suggests that those who are rich normally have a lower level of marginal utility of income and wealth than those who are poor. For example, the rich tend to feel less happy than the poor when they earn, say, 100 dollars.

In Luke, the account of the poor widow’s offering serves as a ready example of this law (21:1-4). In the story, the amount of the widow’s donation is two *lepta* (v. 2). The worth of a *lepton* is one-half of that of a Roman *quadrans*, which is equivalent to 1/128 of that of a

⁵⁸⁷ William S. Jevons, *The Theory of Political Economy* (London: Macmillan, 1871); Léon Walras, *Elements d’Economie Politique Pure*, trans. William Jaffe (1874; repr., London: George Allen and Unwin, 1954); Carl Menger, *Grundsätze Volkswirtschaftslehre*, trans. James Dingwale and Bert F. Hoselitz (1871; repr., New York: New York University Press, 1981); Arthur C. Pigou, *The Economics of Welfare* (London: Macmillan, 1920).

⁵⁸⁸ Michael Melvin and William J. Boyes, *Principles of Economics*, 9th ed. (Mason, OH: South-Western Cengage Learning, 2012), 439.

⁵⁸⁹ Michael Parkin, *Microeconomics*, 9th ed. (Boston, MA: Addison-Wesley, 2009), 183.

denarius—a day laborer’s wage. In this regard, the worth of the widow’s offering is very small in its monetary value, yet her marginal utility of money would be great since she is poor.

At first sight, Jesus’s remark in 21:3-4 seems to be praise for the widow’s religious devotion and her exemplary act of a total commitment,⁵⁹⁰ as R. Alan Culpepper interprets it.⁵⁹¹ If we read from this perspective, then why does Jesus say that the woman makes a greater donation than others who throw much money (or more valuable gifts) into the treasury? Some commentators have shed light on this question by presenting the criteria (or nature) of true gifts from Jesus’s remark. These criteria include (1) the amount of possession left after the donation; (2) the spirit such as self-sacrifice or unconditioned submission rather than the amount of offering; (3) total renunciation of one’s possession; (4) alms and religious gifts in proportion to one’s wealth; and (5) the importance of almsgiving.⁵⁹²

From the perspective of utility theory, Jesus values her donation more highly than anyone else in the scene because the money she puts into the Temple treasury weighs heavily with her utility (or happiness). The marginal utility of the income of the widow is higher than that of the rich, though Jesus does not employ the formal language of the theory. In this regard, based upon each donor’s subjective criterion, she donates what is greatly valuable to her while others do not, which Jesus points out here.

Luke’s Gospel underscores the importance of wealth redistribution and presents some other forms of wealth redistribution. In the exhortation of John the Baptist (3:1-18), it is fleshed out in the form of almsgiving (v. 11). Similarly, Jesus also underscores almsgiving in his teaching (6:38; 12:33; 14:12-14). For instance, in the account of Jesus’s criticism of the

⁵⁹⁰ There is a strong objection to this reading. The alternative reading sees Jesus’s remark as criticism or sarcasm rather than praise, which I will discuss later. For more detail, see Addison G. Wright, “The Widow’s Mites: Praise or Lament?—A Matter of Context,” *CBQ* 44, no. 2 (1982): 257-8.

⁵⁹¹ Culpepper, *The Gospel of Luke*, 396.

⁵⁹² Wright, “The Widow’s Mites: Praise or Lament?” 257-8.

Pharisees and lawyers (11:37-53), Jesus exhorts the Pharisees to give alms with what is inside the person so that the whole person, both inside and outside, will be clean (v. 41). The exact meaning of “the things inside” (τὰ ἐνόντα)⁵⁹³ remains disputed among scholars. For instance, Joseph Fitzmyer argues that the phrase refers to the things within the vessel, which suggests that by giving food or drink to others, one can be clean.⁵⁹⁴ On the other hand, John Nolland regards the phrase as designating the inner integrity of a person; in this case, almsgiving should reflect the inner purity of a person.⁵⁹⁵ Reading against the context of Jesus’s reference to the greed of Pharisees, R. Alan Culpepper suggests that Jesus presents almsgiving as “the most effective antidote to greed.”⁵⁹⁶ Similarly, Luke T. Johnson reads the verse as reflecting that possessions in Luke represent the inner quality of a person; in this light, the verse suggests that almsgiving is the expression of one’s inner purity.⁵⁹⁷ Moreover, in this story (18:18-30), it is concretized as total renunciation of wealth (v. 22; cf. 14:33).

At this point, Luke’s stress on wealth redistribution, to a certain degree, can find its helpful expression, and theoretical justification as well, in modern economic theory. According to utility theory, the transfer of income and wealth from those whose marginal utility of income and wealth is relatively lower to the people whose marginal utility of income and wealth is relatively high can increase (or improve) overall social welfare in terms of the total sum of all individual utilities of a society. This is known as *Pareto-improvement*, a socially desirable outcome in that it makes some people better off without causing others to be worse off.⁵⁹⁸

⁵⁹³ LSJ, 562-63.

⁵⁹⁴ Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According to Luke X-XXIV*, 945.

⁵⁹⁵ Nolland, *Luke 9:21-18:34*, 664-65.

⁵⁹⁶ Culpepper, *The Gospel of Luke*, 247.

⁵⁹⁷ Johnson, *The Gospel of Luke*, 189.

⁵⁹⁸ For more detail, see Randall Holcombe, *Public Sector Economics: The Role of Government in the American Economy* (New Jersey, NY: Prentice Hall, 2006), 33-37, esp. 33; Pigou, *The Economics of Welfare* (1920), 89. For a more formal mathematical introduction to Pareto-optimality, see Mas-Colell, Whinston, and Green, *Microeconomic Theory*, 312-16.

The significance of this theory deserves further remarks. This theory represents the effort of neo-classical economics, which has been developed in accordance with the modern market economy, to include the issue of economic justice into its theoretical framework. By doing so, it can potentially contribute to redressing some of harmful consequences of the market economy such as the centralization of wealth and the aggravation of the gap between the rich and the poor. It does so by providing a sound theoretical foundation for the voice that criticizes the malaise of the modern market economy and stands up for wealth distribution. Consequently, it enables the modern market economy to continue the pursuit of wealth driven by profit motive in a sustainable way.

From this perspective, Luke's emphasis on wealth redistribution carries not only religious overtones. It also can be regarded as another representation of economic rationality in Luke's Gospel.

3.2. *Intertemporal Choices*

The story of the rich ruler (18:18-30) also addresses the issue of time through the discourse on present sacrifice and future reward. In fact, economic theory takes account of time aspects as an important variable. Specifically, economic theory regards the value of present goods, services, money, and utility as different from that of future goods, services, money, and utility. In other words, it thinks of present commodities and future commodities as different goods. Furthermore, based upon such differences of value between present and future, economic agents can make their economic decisions of consumption, saving, or production over time.

In economics, this is known as the theory of *intertemporal choices*.⁵⁹⁹ *Intertemporal*

⁵⁹⁹ Hal R. Varian, *Intermediate Microeconomics: A Modern Approach*, 8th ed. (New York; London: W. W. Norton & Company, 2010), 182-202.

choices refer to economic “decisions involving tradeoffs among costs and benefits occurring at different times.”⁶⁰⁰ Moreover, in the theory of *intertemporal choices*, economists have particularly paid attention to the notion of *time preference* which deals with the human tendency towards time, more specifically, the present versus the future.⁶⁰¹ In general, economic theory assumes that people tend to prefer present to future goods. As Arthur Pigou points out: “Generally speaking, everybody prefers present pleasures or satisfactions of given magnitude to future pleasures or satisfactions of equal magnitude, even when the latter are perfectly certain to occur.”⁶⁰² Besides, people tend to value highly the present rather than the future—or put differently, people tend to discount the future value. Arthur Pigou makes this point clear: “When they [people] have a choice between two satisfactions, they will not necessarily choose the larger of the two, but will often devote themselves to producing or obtaining a small one now in preference to a much larger one some years hence.”⁶⁰³ This assumption points to the *time impatience* of economic agents, which implies that “the distant future does not matter much for current decisions.”⁶⁰⁴

Luke’s account also takes economic aspects of time into consideration. This happens in conjunction with the reference to “treasure (θησαυρός)⁶⁰⁵ in heaven,” which occurs in the context of Jesus’s exhortation to sell one’s possessions and give alms (12:33; 18:22). In this account (18:18-30), Jesus’s invitation to discipleship, takes the form of an *intertemporal choice*. In verse 18, the ruler’s question features *intertemporal choice*. The ruler asks Jesus about what he should do “now” in order to inherit eternal life “later”. This question concerns the choice

⁶⁰⁰ Shane Frederick, George Loewenstein, and Ted O’Donoghue, “Time Discounting and Time Preference: A Critical Review,” *Journal of Economic Literature* 40, no. 2 (2002): 351-401, esp. 351.

⁶⁰¹ McConnell, Brue, and Flynn, *Microeconomics: Principles, Problems, & Policies*, G23.

⁶⁰² Arthur C. Pigou, *The Economics of Welfare*, 4th and rep. ed. (London: Macmillan, 1952), 24.

⁶⁰³ Pigou, *The Economics of Welfare* (1952), 24.

⁶⁰⁴ Mas-Colell, Whinston, and Green, *Microeconomic Theory*, 734; for more detail, see Chapter 20, esp. 732-86.

⁶⁰⁵ LSJ, 801.

between the present activity (or sacrifice) and the future reward (eternal life). Similarly, Jesus's reply in verse 22 also takes into account *intertemporal choice*. In his reply, Jesus manifests the need for total divestment and almsgiving to the poor in the present in order for the ruler to have the heavenly treasure in the future (v. 22). The ruler's grievance in verse 23 shows that he values the present pleasure from his wealth more than the future pleasure from eternal life and/or heavenly treasure. In a similar fashion, when Peter reminds Jesus of the disciples' past commitment (v. 28), Jesus, in reply, guarantees that those who forsake their homes and family in the present will receive in return very much more later as well as eternal life in the future (vv. 29-30). Naturally, this dialogue suggests that the disciples have not yet received those recompenses up to the time of the question. If they already have, Peter has no reason to ask such a question. Therefore, those rewards are to be realized in the future.

Moreover, Jesus's reward package clearly reflects the aspect of time discount in that the reward is far greater than the cost of following Jesus. More specifically, the logic behind this reward perfectly accords with the notion of time impatience and the resultant time discount of future value. That the heavenly treasure is greater than earthly treasure in value is clearly attested in Luke 12:33 in which Jesus associates the act of almsgiving with an unfailing (ἀνέκλειπτος)⁶⁰⁶ treasure in heaven by likening the act of almsgiving to the act of providing themselves with purses that are by far superior in their quality to earthly goods in that heavenly treasures are risk-free (safe) assets--free from the dangers of wear-out, devaluation, theft, and decay. In this way, the exploration of the aspects of time in the account illuminates the economic rationality reflected in this text.

⁶⁰⁶ LSJ, 131.

3.3. Screening

The story of the rich ruler (18:18-30) points to the ineptitude of the rich ruler as Jesus's disciple. I will read the display of this ineptitude in light of game theory. As I discussed in Chapter 5, asymmetric information can cause communication problems between people. To solve asymmetric information problems, economic agents, either those who have information or those who do not, can take actions. Here I will introduce a method by which those who do not have private information, or have inferior information, can overcome their asymmetric information problem.

In a principal-agent problem, the principal can create a certain condition so as to induce the agents to reveal truthfully and voluntarily her (or his) private (or hidden) information since just asking the agents to tell the truth would not work. The principal's act of creating a certain condition is known as *mechanism design*.⁶⁰⁷ If mechanism design is used in the context of decision making (or choice problem), it is also called *screening*.⁶⁰⁸ More formally, *screening* means the strategy of "using observable information to make inferences about private information."⁶⁰⁹

For example, employers can screen job candidates with a low level of intellectual faculty by demanding a college and/or graduate degree as an essential prerequisite. In a more delicate example, an insurance company can screen high-risk drivers—those who are more likely to cause car accidents—from low-risk drivers by providing different insurance policies. One policy might be composed of high premium charges and full coverage for an accident, while the other policy comprises a low premium charge with partial coverage and deductible of, let us say,

⁶⁰⁷ Fudenberg and Tirole, *Game Theory*, 243-46.

⁶⁰⁸ Mankiw, *Principles of Microeconomics* (2012), 489; Mas-Colell, Whinston, and Green, *Microeconomic Theory*, 437, 460.

⁶⁰⁹ Krugman and Wells, *Economics*, 586.

10,000 dollars. In this case, the high-risk drivers would choose the policy composed of high premium without deductible while the low-risk drivers would choose the policy composed of low premium with deductible.⁶¹⁰

In this account (18:18-30), Jesus makes a very rigorous demand on his disciples and the rich ruler, which operates here as a mechanism of screening. In fact, such demand places Jesus's movement in the realm of a strict religion that imposes some rigorous religious demands on its members. A strict religion has some merits. According to Laurence R. Iannaccone, it can increase "overall levels of commitment," "average rates of participation," and "the net benefits of membership" by overcoming free-rider problems.⁶¹¹

Here a *free-rider* problem is closely associated with game theory. Specifically, it occurs in a collective action or in the case of public goods where participants in the action receive benefits from the action without paying any costs.⁶¹² Moreover, two characteristics are related to the occurrence of the free rider problem: non-excludability and non-rivalry.⁶¹³ Non-excludability happens when a good or service is provided for use without any means to prevent anyone from using it. Non-rivalry occurs if the consumption of a good or service by a person does not reduce the amount of consumption of the good or service by others. In addition to these two characteristics, when it is hard to monitor the behavior of each individual participant of the action, participants would have an incentive to increase their net benefit from the action by

⁶¹⁰ Mankiw, *Principles of Microeconomics* (2012), 489.

⁶¹¹ Laurence R. Iannaccone, "Why Strict Churches Are Growing," *American Journal of Sociology* 99, no. 5 (1994): 1118-1211, esp. 1183.

⁶¹² Krugman and Wells, *Economics*, 479-482.

⁶¹³ David N. Hyman, *Public Finance: A Contemporary Application of Theory to Policy* (Stamford, CT: Cengage Learning, 2014), 133.

paying less, leading to the free-rider problem.⁶¹⁴ Information asymmetry also exerts a significant role in this problem, as in the case of principal-agent problems.

In fact, free-rider problems can also be observed in the realm of religion, as Mary Douglas rightly notes.⁶¹⁵ Generally speaking, free-riders in the realm of religion could be characterized as the members of a religious group with low levels of commitment, enthusiasm, and participation. More specifically, Iannaccone points out two types of free-rider problems regarding religion.⁶¹⁶ One type of free-riding involves the religious group composed of members with heterogeneous levels of commitment. In this case, members with low level of commitment could act as free-riders by receiving more benefits than they actually pay for. The other type of free-riding can happen even in the group where members exhibit homogeneous levels of commitment. In this case, everybody can act as free-riders by exhibiting the low level of commitment, making the average level of commitment of the group lower than the optimal level.

Among these two types, an illuminating example of the free-rider problem with heterogeneous level of commitment in Luke, and also in the other canonical Gospels, can be found in the case of Judas Iscariot. Judas can be categorized as a free-rider in that even though he is among the twelve apostles of Jesus, the highest level of religious office among Jesus's followers, he displays a low level of commitment as he betrays and, hence, hands over Jesus to the Jewish authorities for money (6:16; 22:3-6, 47-48).

In this account (18:18-30), the rich ruler can also be thought of as a possible free-rider if he would ever become a disciple of Jesus but display a low level of commitment to Jesus. Later, it becomes clear that he belongs to the type of people with a low level of commitment as he fails

⁶¹⁴ McConnell, Brue, and Flynn, *Microeconomics*, 91-93. For more detail, see Mancur Olson, *The Logic of Collective Action: Public Goods and the Theory of Groups* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1965).

⁶¹⁵ Mary Douglas, *How Institutions Think* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1986), 22-23.

⁶¹⁶ Iannaccone, "Why Strict Churches Are Growing," 1184-85.

to follow Jesus upon hearing the request for total renunciation (vv. 22-23). However, whether he is a free-rider or not is not clear at first sight. This is so because he appears to be very enthusiastic in his religious quest. First, he asks Jesus about what to do in order to inherit eternal life, which reveals his interest in the quest for a deeper issue in religion (v. 18). Second, when Jesus quotes five commandments from the Decalogue in answer (Exod 20:12-16; Deut 5:16-20)—the prohibition of adultery, murder, theft, and false testimony, and the observation of filial piety (v. 20),--he claims his continuous obedience of the commandments from childhood (v. 21). Jesus seems to acknowledge his religious enthusiasm to a certain degree in that he formally invites him to discipleship (v. 22).

In light of game theory, this situation suggests that there exists an information asymmetry between Jesus and the rich ruler as to his true character—whether he is a devout and/or enthusiastic religious man or not. His true character belongs to his private information in that only he himself knows his true character while others in the story don't. At this juncture, this private information, taking the form of a hidden character, would matter if he would ever become another disciple of Jesus—particularly, to avoid a free-rider problem.

This story addresses the issue of a person's true character from the beginning. This happens when the rich ruler addresses Jesus as a “good (ἀγαθός)⁶¹⁷ teacher” (v. 18). In response, Jesus refuses to be called “good (ἀγαθός),” ascribing the character only to God (v. 19). This introductory episode clearly foreshadows that this account pays attention to the issue of a person's true character.

In this regard, Jesus's mechanism design seems wise, and more importantly economically rational, since it enables Jesus to discern the man's true character. More specifically, in this

⁶¹⁷ LSJ, 4.

account Jesus designs a mechanism by manipulating a series of requests, which makes the ruler voluntarily reveal his true character. These requests are composed of three steps, including a radical requirement and a corresponding reward—dispose all his possessions; distribute the proceeds to the poor; and follow him (v. 22). Upon hearing this, the ruler has no choice but to reveal his true character immediately. He becomes sad because of his abundant wealth (v. 23), which hints that he cannot abandon his wealth, hence he cannot become Jesus’s disciple. Jesus’s ensuing comment further confirms that his true character is revealed: “How hard it is for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God!” (v. 24), with a scathing comparison: “it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God” (v. 25). In this way, through using the method of screening, Luke’s Jesus successfully solves a free-rider problem.

In fact, Rachel M. McCleary already points out how strict religions operate as a screening mechanism in solving the free-rider problems. As she puts it: “A form of self-selection takes place with membership of strict religions. Individuals who join strict sects do not consider it a cost to forgo alcohol, premarital sex, and dancing and engage in stigmatic behavior in terms of their hair style, clothing, and physical alterations. These costs of belonging to a sect are worthwhile to endure to secure the benefits of membership as well as screen out slackers.”⁶¹⁸ This scene also confirms that such insight well functions in the reading of Luke’s Gospel. In so doing, it highlights economic rationality reflected in Luke’s Gospel.

4. The Story of Zaccheus (19:1-10)

This story mainly concerns the restoration of Zaccheus as an authentic child of Abraham through

⁶¹⁸ Rachel M. McCleary, “The Economics of Religion as a Field of Inquiry,” in *The Oxford Handbook of the Economics of Religion*, ed. Rachel M. McCleary (New York; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 8.

an encounter with Jesus. I will read this story from the perspective of game theory, especially in light of a mechanism design called *signaling* and *commitment*.

4.1. Signaling and Commitment

I have introduced above an effort to solve asymmetric information problems from the perspective of those who have inferior information. In this story (19:1-10), I will introduce how those who have superior information solve the problem caused by information asymmetry. In game theory, those who have superior information or private information that is hidden to the other party can overcome asymmetric information by means of *signaling*.⁶¹⁹ This term refers to an action of an informed party that reveals voluntarily and truly her (or his) private information to the other by sending a signal in a credible way.⁶²⁰ The reason for her (or his) revelation is to facilitate the communication between two parties so that she (or he) can influence the decision-making process of the other party. For instance, those who try to find jobs can present their college and/or graduate degree certificates and transcripts to their potential employers as evidence of their superior intellectual faculty—in this case, degree certificates and transcripts serve as a signal.

In this account (19:1-10), Zaccheus exerts an effort to receive Jesus into his house. In light of game theory, such effort can be regarded as *signaling* and/or *commitment* (v. 8). Zaccheus seems to have a religious zeal, which is fleshed out in this story in the form of his eagerness to see Jesus. When Jesus is passing through Jericho (v. 1), Zaccheus seeks to get a look at Jesus, but he cannot because there are many people and he is a short man (v. 3). His eagerness to see Jesus triggers him to run to the front and climb a sycamore tree located in

⁶¹⁹ Mankiw, *Principles of Microeconomics*, 487-88; Mas-Colell, Whinston, and Green, *Microeconomic Theory*, 437, 450.

⁶²⁰ Krugman and Wells, *Economics*, 586.

Jesus's path (v. 4). At this juncture, Jesus seems to realize his eagerness so that he approaches the place and orders him to descend from the tree quickly, suggesting further that he wants to lodge with Zaccheus for the day (v. 5). Getting down the tree, Zaccheus accepts this sudden suggestion while betraying his feeling of delight. His eagerness to see Jesus seems to come not merely from curiosity but from his religious eagerness (v. 6). Upon seeing this, the crowd who do not know his religious eagerness begin grumbling that Jesus is going to stay at a sinner's house (v. 7). Most probably, this labeling would stem from his occupation—he is introduced as a wealthy chief tax collector at the beginning of the story (v. 2). Moreover, perhaps the labeling may further imply the crowd's implicit assumption that those who are engaged in tax business would not possess such religious enthusiasm. A similar assumption can also be found in the parable of the two prayers (18:9-14) in which a Pharisee boasts his superior religiosity over a tax collector by offering thanks to God that he is not like the tax collector (v. 11).

At this moment, Zaccheus seems to notice the necessity to prove his religious enthusiasm before Jesus and the public. Hence he sends a signal to both. This signal is composed of his announcement of two economic programs that he would carry out: the renunciation of half of his wealth as an almsgiving to the poor and the quadruple restitution for his defrauding others (v. 8). Jesus confirms that this signal works by announcing Zaccheus's salvation and reestablishing his identity as a son of Abraham in front of the crowd (v. 9).

It is noteworthy that in this account Zaccheus utilizes his possessions as a signal to reveal his religious commitment. This signaling works on the condition that the former accurately represents the latter. In fact, the close linkage between material possessions and the human heart or commitment is well epitomized through Jesus's saying: "where your treasure (θησαυρός) is, there your heart will be also" (12:34). As such, the use of possessions to signal religious devotion

operates widely in Luke's Gospel, as Luke T. Johnson insightfully observes. Luke T. Johnson reads the motif of possessions in Luke's two volumes from the perspective of their literary function. He argues that people's use of possessions reveals their attitude toward the visitation of God, especially through the prophetic message of Jesus—either acceptance or rejection.⁶²¹

In this light, Johnson interprets the account of the rich ruler (18:18-30) as an example of people's rejection of Jesus--especially from the elite.⁶²² According to Johnson, the rejection of the rich ruler in the story manifests itself through his refusal to follow Jesus's command of total renunciation of possessions. By contrast, he employs this story (19:1-10) as an instance that shows the acceptance of Jesus.⁶²³ Unlike the rich ruler, Zaccheus demonstrates his acceptance through his voluntary offer of almsgiving and restitution programs.

Johnson's reading can be reinterpreted around the notions of *signaling* and *screening*. In a broader sense, both activities of the rich ruler and Zaccheus can be regarded as *signaling*. However, Johnson's observations can be further refined through the aid of game theory. More specifically, the case of the rich ruler belongs to *screening* whereas Zaccheus exemplifies *signaling*. Unlike Johnson's reading that makes no distinction between the two cases, my use of game theory can differentiate the two because it pays a much closer attention to the subjects who send the signal first. Whereas Jesus screens the rich ruler by demanding he divest his wealth, Zaccheus signals to Jesus by divesting voluntarily his wealth and promising restitution for any economic harm done to others.

Moreover, we can further refine the pattern of using possessions through the aid of game theory. Following Johnson's observation, we can regard the renunciation of their means of living by Peter, James, John, and Levi (5:11, 28; cf. 18:28) and the provision of financial support for

⁶²¹ Johnson, *The Literary Function of Possessions in Luke-Acts*, 77-78.

⁶²² Johnson, *The Literary Function of Possessions in Luke-Acts*, 144-45.

⁶²³ Johnson, *The Literary Function of Possessions in Luke-Acts*, 145-46.

Jesus by Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Susanna, and many others (8:2-3) as representing their acceptance of Jesus. At this point, we can further regard their behaviors as *commitment*. In fact, commitment is closely associated with signaling. In game theory, a *commitment problem* points to “a situation in which people cannot achieve their goals because of an inability to make credible threats or promises.”⁶²⁴ In this case, the commitment problem can be solved through designing a mechanism known as a *commitment device* that refers to “a way of changing incentives so as to make otherwise empty threats or promises credible.”⁶²⁵ As a matter of fact, *commitment* can be regarded as a kind of *signaling*—that is, signaling is a broader category than commitment. Here, however, the apostles’ behaviors can be regarded as *commitment* in that they send very strong--and thus credible--signals to Jesus. This is so because the apostles are portrayed as disserting their occupations when they first decide to follow Jesus. By doing so, they establish an incentive system in which they have no choice but to exert themselves to follow Jesus through this “burning-their-boats” behavior. Consequently, they successfully convince Jesus that there is no room for double-mindedness in their discipleship. In a similar fashion, the women provide considerable wealth in order to support Jesus’s ministry. Therefore, their use of wealth sends highly credible signals to Jesus concerning their devotion to Jesus. In this regard, the women’s material support can be treated as another expression of commitment.

Furthermore, Johnson points out that a similar pattern of acceptance and rejection represented by the use of possessions can be found in such passages as the parables of the great banquet (14:15-24) and of the dishonest steward (16:1-13).⁶²⁶ In addition, according to Johnson, in some occasions that appear to be seemingly unrelated to the issue of possessions, such as the parable of the strong man (11:21-22), the rich fool (12:16-21), and the days of Noah and Lot

⁶²⁴ Frank, Bernanke, Antonovics, and Heffetz, *Principles of Microeconomics*, 262.

⁶²⁵ Frank, Bernanke, Antonovics, and Heffetz, *Principles of Microeconomics*, 262.

⁶²⁶ Johnson, *The Literary Function of Possessions in Luke-Acts*, 146-47, 156-58.

(17:22-37), Luke also associates the motif of possessions with the fate of individuals by describing that the loss of one's life or power goes hand in hand with the loss of one's possessions.⁶²⁷

More specifically, in the account of the days of Noah and Lot (17:22-37), Luke's Jesus employs the language of possessions through the use of περιποιέω in verse 33 that carries the connotation of "acquiring, grasping and hoarding possessions."⁶²⁸ In this regard, Johnson renders the phrase as "whoever seeks to 'possess' his life"⁶²⁹ or "anyone seeking to hold life as a possession," underscoring that the theme of possessions dominates its meaning.⁶³⁰ Likewise, in the parable of the prodigal son (15:11-32), the significance of possessions is represented indirectly in the fact that human relationship is expressed in association with the metaphor of possessions.⁶³¹ At this juncture, Johnson rightly points out that though the main focus of the parable is the loss and restoration of personal relationship within the family, the language of possessions serves as "a symbolic underpinning" of the story.⁶³²

Furthermore, the inescapable relationship between possessions and political (or social) power is well illustrated in the parable of the ten *minas* (19:11-27) and the parable of the rebellious tenants (20:9-18). In the parable of the ten *minas* (19:11-27), according to Johnson, the political theme of exercising domination over the cities is intricately interwoven with the economic theme of financial management; and, in this light, the theme of possessions well accords with the political theme.⁶³³ The same is also true for the twelve apostles in that their

⁶²⁷ Johnson, *The Literary Function of Possessions in Luke-Acts*, 148-56.

⁶²⁸ LSJ, 1384.

⁶²⁹ Johnson, *The Literary Function of Possessions in Luke-Acts*, 149.

⁶³⁰ Johnson, *The Gospel of Luke*, 263, 265.

⁶³¹ Johnson, *The Literary Function of Possessions in Luke-Acts*, 145-46.

⁶³² Johnson, *The Gospel of Luke*, 240.

⁶³³ Johnson, *The Gospel of Luke*, 292.

authority finds its expression in their charge over property (9:10-17).⁶³⁴

Summarily, all these passages simply demonstrate how powerfully possessions operate in people's lives in the narrative world of Luke's Gospel. Consequently, they, in turn, show how strongly and effectively possessions can work as a signal, including in the realm of religion. Furthermore, given the significance of possessions evidenced well in Luke's Gospel, it suggests that the pursuit of possessions might have been strong as well in the Roman world, though we cannot know how much. Conclusively, if this is the case, it may also suggest that people in the Roman Empire may have had a strong profit motive, a main drive of a market economy, and exhibited highly advanced economic rationality, a fundamental basis of economic activities.

5. The Parable of the Ten *Minas* (19:11-27)

The parable is a story of an elite man who makes his slaves do business during his absence and appraises their performance after his return. It involves diverse economic topics, though it is inextricably interwoven with a political theme as well. Those topics include non-agricultural sources of income, small-scale commerce, opportunity cost, banking and finance, money hoarding, and the attitude toward the rich and the poor.

5.1. Non-agricultural Sources of Income

This parable (19:11-27) attests non-agricultural sources of income through reference to commerce. The parable explicitly describes elite interest in commerce. The parable starts with a certain nobleman who is about to take a journey to a distant country to receive royal power (v. 12). Before he gets on his way, he summons ten of his slaves to entrust to them some funds,

⁶³⁴ Johnson, *The Literary Function of Possessions in Luke-Acts*, 113-4, 165-6.

ordering them to do business with the funds (v. 13). The references to “nobleman (ἄνθρωπος εὐγενής)”⁶³⁵ and “receive royal power to himself (λαβεῖν ἑαυτῷ βασιλείαν)”⁶³⁶ in verse 12 clearly situate him among high-ranking Roman elites. This description then directly negates a schematic and simplistic understanding of the economic mentality of the Roman elites presented by William R. Herzog:

The notion that one could develop a fixed resource base through improved agronomy or allocation of resources was simply not part of the economic thinking of ancient elites. They believed that there were two primary means for extending their wealth, namely, plundering peasants through tribute and various forms of forced obligation (corvée) or expropriating the peasants’ lands and incorporating them into their ever-growing estates.⁶³⁷

The interest in commerce among elites is well attested. Cato the Elder is a ready example of Roman nobles who exhibit considerable entrepreneurial initiative and actively pursue wealth. Above all, Cato clearly understands that business is more profitable than agriculture in pursuing wealth. He is not satisfied with a traditional “decent” income from agricultural produce, farming, and urban rents. Thus he invests his money in diverse businesses such as real estate, maritime trade, and slave trading (Plutarch, *Cato the Elder* 21.5-7).

For instance, Cato makes large profits through buying ponds, hot springs, and fullers’ districts. In addition, he invests some of his money in maritime business. In so doing, by way of diversification and risk sharing, he lends his money to those who form a consortium which is composed of fifty investors and fifty ships and of which he takes only one of fifty shares. Moreover, one of his freedman Quintio acts as his agent in all of these maritime trading activities. Furthermore, he profits from slave trading by buying young slaves and reselling them after increasing their human values through training and education. In pursuing wealth, he seems

⁶³⁵ LSJ, 708.

⁶³⁶ LSJ, 309.

⁶³⁷ Herzog, *Parables as Subversive Speech*, 103-4.

to have no shame at all; on the contrary, he puts a high valuation on increasing property value as Plutarch delivers his word: “a man was to be admired and glorified like a god if the final inventory of his property showed that he had added to it more than he had inherited” (Plutarch, *Cato the Elder*, 21.8).⁶³⁸

Furthermore, it seems that Cato the Elder should not be regarded as an exceptional case on the ground that he showed an extraordinary interest in non-agricultural sources of income while other elites normally did not. Evidence suggests that elites were involved in commercial activities in the Roman world. For instance, in his writing, Cicero delivers the word of a certain Gaius Heius who stated that Verres had a large-size ship. This statement suggests that some elites may have participated in large-scale commerce during the first century BCE (*Verr.* 2.5.13), despite the law (*Lex Claudia* of 218 BCE) that prohibited the Roman senators and their sons from owning a ship that can load more than three hundred amphorae—about seven tons (Livy, *Hist.* 21.63). For instance, from Cicero’s writing, John H. D’Arms conjectures that Roman senators such as C. Sempronius Rufus and P. Sestius may have been involved in commerce.⁶³⁹ More clearly, a second-century CE inscription from Rome records that a certain C. Sentius Regulianus, who belonged to the equestrian order, was involved in oil and wine trade (*CIL* VI 29722). Archaeological and epigraphic evidence from Tritium Magallum in Spain also suggests that an urban elite family (the Mamillii) directly engaged in the production and commerce of *terra sigillate*—fine red Roman pottery during the second century CE.⁶⁴⁰ Likewise, epigraphic

⁶³⁸ Plutarch, *Lives, Volume 2: Themistocles and Camillus. Aristides and Cato Major. Cimon and Lucullus*, trans. Bernadotte Perrin (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1914), 369.

⁶³⁹ John H. D’Arms, “Senators’ Involvement in Commerce in the Late Republic: Some Ciceronian Evidence,” *Memoirs of the American Academy in Rome* 36 (1980): 77-89.

⁶⁴⁰ See also Evan W. Harley, “Roman Elite Involvement in Commerce: The Case of the Spanish TT. Mamillii,” *Archivo Español de Arqueología* 61 (1988): 141-156.

evidence from Thyatira in Asia Minor of the imperial period⁶⁴¹ shows that a low-ranking city official (ἀγορανόμος), named Alexandrus, was engaged in slave trading (*OGIS* 524). Moreover, some scholars, such as Paul Veyne, John H. D'Arms, and Henri W. Pleket, have hypothesized that though Roman urban elites did not directly engage in commerce, some of them may have been involved in commerce through the agency of slaves and free dependents.⁶⁴² Though there is no clear evidence to support their argument, Plutarch's writing seems to suggest that it is a plausible scenario. According to Plutarch, first-rate slaves act as farmers, sailors, and merchants for their masters (*De Liberis Educandis* 7). This statement indicates that Roman masters were generally interested in slaves who could carry out business on their behalf. In this light, the Roman elites could also have employed slaves and freedmen as their commercial agents.⁶⁴³ The parable (19:11-27) also supports this scenario as it portrays slaves carrying out business for the benefit of their master.

At any rate, in the parable, the profit motive of the nobleman clearly stands out in the scene when he demands that they make profit with the money (vv. 13, 15).⁶⁴⁴ At this point, the verb πραγματεύομαι in verse 13 refers to "be engaged in business."⁶⁴⁵ For instance, the word occurs in Plutarch's writing to describe Quintus Titius as an influential Roman doing business in Greece (*Sulla* 17.1). However, as Joel B. Green rightly observes, it "may be too weak a translation for the practices assumed by the text," and, therefore, a more suitable translation would be "turning a profit," in the sense of "exploitation in the service of managing profitably

⁶⁴¹ The exact date is unknown.

⁶⁴² Paul Veyne, "Mythe et Réalité de l'Autarcie à Rome," *Revue des Études Anciennes* 81, no. 3 (1979): 261-80, esp. 277-8; D'Arms, *Commerce and Social Standing in Ancient Rome*, 156-62; Henri W. Pleket, "Urban Elites and Business in the Greek Part of the Roman Empire," in *Trade in the Ancient Economy*, ed. Peter Garnsey, Keith Hopkins, and C. R. Whittaker (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1983), 131-144.

⁶⁴³ Harris, "Trade," 710-740, esp. 733.

⁶⁴⁴ Johnson, *Luke*, 290.

⁶⁴⁵ LSJ, 1458.

the capital at one's disposal."⁶⁴⁶ Evidence also supports that the verb has a connotation of active economic activity to make money. For instance, in another writing of Plutarch's, the word is used to refer to people who are making money (πραγματεύομενους) in Libya through commerce and money-lending (*Cato the Younger*, 59.2). Moreover, the verb διαπραγματεύομαι in verse 15 refers to "gain by trading,"⁶⁴⁷ which further underscores the profit motive. It is noteworthy that οἱ πραγματεύομενοι, the term cognate with πραγματεύομαι, is a Greek equivalent⁶⁴⁸ of Latin *negotiators*, traders.⁶⁴⁹

All things considered, the economic activity of the nobleman in the parable is well congruent with that of Cato the Elder and other elite figures. Consequently, the parable exhibits an aspect of market economy in Luke by portraying one who pursues wealth for profit in the non-agricultural economic sector of commerce.

5.2. Small-Scale Commerce

In the parable (19:11-27), the master gives ten of his slaves one *mina* respectively as an initial capital (v. 13). The size of the money entrusted to them strongly suggests that their scale of commerce would not be large. A monetary unit *mina* occurs only in this parable through the New Testament. Outside the New Testament, it is well attested in some Greek texts such as Egyptian papyri (*P.Lond.* 277.10 and *P.Oxy.* XIV. 1673.22) and the Septuagint (1 Kgs 10:17; Ezra 2:69; Neh 7:71; 1 Macc 14:24). The *mina* seems to have its origin in Aramaic (*mēnā*). Like *talent* or *shekel*, the *mina* was first used as a measure of weight, equivalent to 60 *shekels* (about 6 kilograms), and later it was used as a unit of currency. A *mina* is approximate in value to 100

⁶⁴⁶ Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, 678.

⁶⁴⁷ LSJ, 408.

⁶⁴⁸ LSJ, 1458.

⁶⁴⁹ *OGIS* 532.6.

drachmae. Though a *mina* in the parable is a large sum of money, worth 100 days' wages for a day laborer, it is a much smaller denomination than the *talent*, which is 60 times larger in value than a *mina*, that appears in the Matthew's version of the parable (Matt 25:14-30).

The parable does not provide any information about what kind of business the slaves engage in. Nonetheless, other evidence sheds some light on small-scale commerce. Generally, small-scale trade would have taken place at a market place. The reference to a market place occurs in Luke 7:31-2 where Jesus compares his contemporaries to children in the market place. In addition, in Jesus's denouncing of Pharisees and the scribes, the market places are constructed as the place where they love to be greeted by people (11:43; 20:46). In those references, unlike a periodic market, *agora* means a permanent market,⁶⁵⁰ which is also called *mercatus* in Latin.⁶⁵¹ Archeological evidence attests the existence of permanent markets, especially specialized in one item, in many areas of the Roman Empire, including Italy, Egypt, North Africa, Asia Minor, and the Balkans.⁶⁵² Evidence also shows that there were many permanent markets in large cities and towns in Roman Palestine, such as Sepphoris, Caesarea, and Tiberias.⁶⁵³

What did a Greco-Roman market place look like? Luke's Gospel provides us a glimpse in 7:32 where Luke's Jesus describes a marketplace as the playground for children where they pursue amusement with yelling, piping, and dancing. Jesus's description of boisterous children in the marketplace evokes the image of market places that were crowded with people and full of noise and livelihood. A number of classical literatures describe lively images of market places in

⁶⁵⁰ LSJ, 13.

⁶⁵¹ OLD, 1101; Ben T. Rozenfeld and Joseph Menirav, *Markets and Marketing in Roman Palestine* (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 15.

⁶⁵² John E. Stambaugh, *The Ancient Roman City* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1988), 250; Frayn, *Markets and Fairs in Roman Italy*, 10, 15-16, 38, 44, 88; Stephen Mitchell, *Anatolia: Land, Men, and Gods in Asia Minor, Vol. 2: The Rise of the Church* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995); Stephen L. Dyson, *Community and Society in Roman Italy* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 164;

⁶⁵³ Safrai, *The Economy of Roman Palestine*, 239-243; Daniel Sperber, *The City in Roman Palestine* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 9-47.

which retailers drew the attention of customers, as is the case of today, with loud voices and cries.

Cicero provides a good example of these behaviors. According to him, a fig seller at the harbor of Brundisium shouts so loudly that the soldiers of Marcus Crassus can hear his voice saying, “Cauneas, Cauneas” (Caunian figs), which Cicero regards as an omen for Crassus saying “*cave ne eas*” (beware of going; *De Divinatione* 2.84). Besides, in the Latin world, the term *circulator*--which is used to designate street traders-- originally refers to circus entertainers who perform diverse performances such as juggling, fire eating, tumbling, and snake shows (Seneca, *De Beneficiis* 6.11.2; *Ep.* 29.7). Thus the use of the term *circulator* to refer to street traders suggests their sales pattern of attracting people through some amusing performances.

In addition, some retail sellers seem to have had a way with words. Herodas, a third-century BCE Greek poet, offers a vivid portrayal of retailers with a sale scene. In the scene, Kerdo, a shoe seller whose name means “profiteer,” endeavors to persuade his lady customers to buy his shoes. With his smooth talk, he appeals to them by underscoring the high quality of his shoes.

Look first at this, Metro; this sole, is it not adjusted like the most perfect of soles? Look, you also, women, at the heel-piece; see how it is held down and how well it is joined to the straps; yet, no part is better than another: all are perfect. And the color! May the Goddess give you every joy of life! --you could find nothing to equal it. The color! Neither saffron nor wax glow like this! Three minae for the leather... And this other color! It was no cheaper. I swear, by all that is sacred and venerable, women, in truth held and maintained, with no more falsehood than a pair of scales--and, if not, may Kerdo know life and pleasure no more! ... If this pair does not please you, Metro, you can see more and still more, until you are sure that Kerdo has not been talking nonsense (*Mime* 7).⁶⁵⁴

In light of the above descriptions, Luke’s lively image of a marketplace seems typical of market

⁶⁵⁴ *The Mimes of Herondas*, trans. Mitchell S. Buck, limited ed. (New York: Privately printed, 1921), 97-99.

places where active, amusing, and energetic sales activities of sellers and buyers took place. All things considered, Luke's references to *agora* also mean that the economy that Luke inscribes has a well-established and functioning commercial facility. In turn, this suggests that active commercial activities were carried out in the economy. This, conclusively, represents an aspect of a market economy in Luke's Gospel.

However, there is also another possibility concerning the kind of small-scale businesses that the slaves may engage in. They may act as small-scale retailers who do not have their own shops but sell their commodities at unfixed places such as streets, colonnades, arcades, forums, and theaters or by moving around from place to place—in this regard, they are the modern equivalents of street traders, vendors, hawkers, and peddlers. Luke seems to refer to such sellers in the account of Jesus's expulsion of traders in the temple (19:45-6). It seems highly improbable that they own their shops in the area and Jesus goes into their shops and drives them out from there.

Moreover, Joel B. Green suggests that in the parable of the Good Samaritan (10:25-37), the Samaritan might be a traveling merchant.⁶⁵⁵ In arguing so, he provides two grounds. First, he is traveling with his animal while carrying oil, wine, and money. Second, unlike the two religious characters of a priest and a Levite, he has no part in Jewish religion since he is a Samaritan; but, nonetheless, he shows up on the road between Jerusalem and Jericho.

In the ancient Roman world, sellers were identified with a variety of terms—*ambulator*, *circitor*, *circumforaneus*, *circulator*, and *institor*.⁶⁵⁶ Similarly, in the Greek world, there was no specific term to designate street traders: they were simply called *κάπηλος*, a retailer (Plato, *Sophist* 223c-d; Plutarch *Brutus* 10.6), in contrast to *ἔμπορος*, a large-scale trader (Plato,

⁶⁵⁵ Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, 425.

⁶⁵⁶ Holleran, *Shopping in Ancient Rome*, 197-99. See especially no. 10 on page 198 for classical references for these terms.

Republic 525c; Strabo, *Geography* 16.4.23). In the same manner, the lack of reference to terms for sellers also occurs in the account of the Temple cleansing in Luke. Luke merely calls them “those who were selling” (τοὺς πωλοῦντας 19:45).⁶⁵⁷ Similarly, Luke’s Jesus also states that five sparrows are sold for two *assaria*, without references to any traders involved (12:6).

In sum, the parable (19:11-27), and Luke’s other references discussed above as well, shed some light into small-scale commerce in the Roman Empire. By doing so, it also inscribes an aspect of a market economy that operates in the Gospel’s narrative world.

5.3. *Opportunity Costs*

The parable (19:11-27) addresses the issue of *opportunity costs*. In economics, economic choices occur simply because every valuable resource including time is scarce in that it is limited in quantity. If there are no constraints on resources, time, or budgets, economic problems would not happen. All a person would then need to do is to choose whatever amount she (or he) pleases to consume. In reality, however, due to the scarcity of resources, economic decision making involves choices under certain constraints such as availability of money and time. Moreover in this situation, selecting one thing means deciding not to select other things. This is known as a *trade-off*. More formally, as Michael Melvin and William Boyes well define it, a *trade-off* involves “a sacrifice--giving up one good or activity in order to obtain some other good or activity.”⁶⁵⁸ In economics, *costs* are closely associated with such *trade-off*. In addition, *economic costs* are more than the concept of the price of a good. Rather, it is *opportunity costs* that really matter. These costs refer to “the best alternative that we forgo or give up, when we

⁶⁵⁷ LSJ, 1560.

⁶⁵⁸ Melvin and Boyes, *Principles of Economics*, 23.

make a choice or a decision.”⁶⁵⁹

For example, the *opportunity cost* of going to college includes not just educational costs such as tuitions and other fees, costs of text books, school supplies, transportation, and housing. It must include the foregone opportunity to make money by working at a job during college years.⁶⁶⁰ In fact, the concept of opportunity costs can be widely applied beyond the realm of consumers’ choices to public choices and producers’ choices. For instance, if a government spends resources on a space exploration program, the opportunity costs of the program include the benefit that can be drawn if the resources were spent in other public programs or public goods such as the construction of roads. Similarly, if a firm decides to invest 3000 dollars in buying a new piece of equipment, the opportunity cost of such investment is the interest that could be gained if the money had been deposited in a bank or other financial institutions.⁶⁶¹ In economics, *interest* generally means the price of the use of capital or a loan, either in the form of money or physical goods.⁶⁶² From a viewpoint of finance, however, interest rates are regarded as the opportunity cost of holding money.⁶⁶³ There exists a negative correlation between money hoard and interest rate in that holding money is enormously costly if the interest rate is fairly high and vice versa.

At this point, the main thrust of the above example is exactly what the matter in the parable points out (19:11-27). In the parable, the third slave fails to yield any profit; he just keeps the money initially entrusted to him wrapped up in a piece of cloth and then returns it (v. 20). The slave attempts to justify his behavior by stating that he does so for fear of his master, who is

⁶⁵⁹ Karl E. Case and Ray C. Fair, *Principles of Economics*, 8th ed. (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Prentice Hall, 2007), 2.

⁶⁶⁰ Mankiw, *Principles of Microeconomics* (2012), 5-6.

⁶⁶¹ Case and Fair, *Principles of Economics*, 2.

⁶⁶² Bade and Parkin, *Essential Foundations of Economics*, 37; Krugman and Wells, *Economics*, 664.

⁶⁶³ Melvin and Boyes, *Principles of Economics*, 302.

a harsh (αὐστηρός)⁶⁶⁴ man. According to the slave, the master takes what he does not deposit and reaps what he does not sow (v. 21). The master, however, does not accept the slave's excuse but criticizes his inconsistency. His reason is that even though the slave notices his master's harsh character and greed for gain, he makes no effort to produce some yield for his master with the entrusted money—not even the simple act of putting money into an interest-bearing deposit (vv. 22-23). In fact, ancient Romans seem to well understand the concept of opportunity costs. For instance, Columella took account of the opportunity cost of interest payment in the calculation of agricultural return (*Rust.* 3.3.7-11). The reasoning of the master in the parable, then, well accords with economic rationality in relation to opportunity costs.

5.4. Banking and Finance

The parable (19:11-27) also intimates ancient financial activities. Evidence suggests that interest-bearing loans were practiced in the Roman economy. For instance, Livy refers to the decrease of interest rates from one percent to 0.5 percent per month in the fourth century BCE (7.27.3-4). In another example, Cicero testifies to the increase of interest from 1/3 to 1/2 percent (*Att.* 4.15.7).

In this parable, in verse 21, the phrase “you take what you did not deposit” carries the connotation of deposit and withdrawal of money, while the parallel verse in Matthew retains the agricultural metaphor by stating that “gathering where you did not scatter seed.” Similarly, in verse 23, the phrase “give my silver on a table” signifies depositing money to a bank. The parallel verse in Matthew (25:27) more clearly refers to “bankers” (τραπεζίτης, literally table-men)⁶⁶⁵ instead of “a table” (τράπεζα)⁶⁶⁶ in Luke (19:23). The next phrase “I could have

⁶⁶⁴ LSJ, 278.

⁶⁶⁵ LSJ, 1810.

collected it with interest” portrays the withdrawal of money with a certain amount of rate of return (19:23). The verb πράσσω here means “to exact or press payment”⁶⁶⁷ while the noun τόκος, derived from the verb τίκτω “to beget,”⁶⁶⁸ signifies “interest.”⁶⁶⁹

Similarly, the financial business seems to be also attested in Jesus’s metaphor of two debtors (7:40-43). A certain moneylender has two debtors who owed 500 and 50 denarii respectively. He cancels their debts since both of them lack the ability for repayment (vv. 40-42a). Here the term δανειστής refers to a moneylender or a creditor⁶⁷⁰ while χρεωφειλέτης denotes debtors (cf. 16:5).⁶⁷¹

We cannot determine exactly what the rate of interest in this parable is (19:11-27). In general, the legal annual interest rate in the Roman world normally fell between 4-12 percent per year.⁶⁷² In practice, however, the interest rate tended to vary widely within this range from place to place.⁶⁷³ During the imperial period, for instance, Rome and Italy seem to have enjoyed relatively low and stable rates of 5-6 percent, while the Greek East and Egypt marked 8-9 and 12 percent respectively.⁶⁷⁴ Beside the geographical difference, it would also differ case-by-case depending on not only the size and terms of loans, but also other diverse factors including credit, reputation, social status, personality, and negotiation power of borrowers and lenders.⁶⁷⁵

At any rate, it seems straightforward that the reference to interest in the parable suggests that the economy inscribed in this parable also exhibits an aspect of a market economy since the

⁶⁶⁶ LSJ, 1810.

⁶⁶⁷ LSJ, 1460.

⁶⁶⁸ LSJ, 1792.

⁶⁶⁹ LSJ, 1803.

⁶⁷⁰ LSJ, 369.

⁶⁷¹ LSJ, 2004.

⁶⁷² Sidney Homer and Richard Sylla, *A History of Interest Rates*, 3rd ed., revised (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1996), 44-55, esp. 52.

⁶⁷³ Maurice Sartre, *l'Orient Romain: Provinces et Sociétés Provinciales en Méditerranée Orientale d'Auguste aux Sévères, 31 avant J.-C.-235 après J.-C.* (Paris: Seuil, 1991), 155, 171.

⁶⁷⁴ Andreau, *Banking and Business in the Roman World*, 97. See especially no. 37.

⁶⁷⁵ Andreau, *Banking and Business in the Roman World*, 95-6.

interest rate is evidence of the commercial use of money in that the interest rate serves as a source of profits to moneylenders.

5.5. Money Hoarding

The parable (19:11-27) portrays a practice of money hoarding through the behavior of the third slave (vv. 21-22). Both written and archeological evidence testifies to coin hoarding practices in the Roman world. For instance, according to a papyrus from Euhemeria in Egypt written around 28-29 CE, a certain Orsenouphias accuses the mason Petesouchus of the theft of a little box, hidden into a wall on his premises by his mother, that contains 60 silver *drachmae* along with various other gold and silver jewels (*P.Ryl.II. 125*).⁶⁷⁶ Moreover, several thousands of hoards have been found so far.⁶⁷⁷ One of the most famous hoards is the Reka Devinia hoard, which was found in 1929 near Devnya, north-eastern Bulgaria. The hoard had more than 80,000 Roman silver coins (*denarii*) minted during the period of the first three centuries CE (64-238 CE).

Money hoarding is not an irrational behavior in the light of financial theory. Money hoarding can happen if there is considerable uncertainty about the profitability of businesses and/or other financial assets such as stocks or bonds; in this case, it can be regarded as a part of a so-called speculative demand for money.⁶⁷⁸ Moreover, it would be profitable to buy certain assets or goods when their prices are low and sell when their prices are high. Accordingly, if one expects the prices of certain assets or goods to fall in the near future, it is a rational choice to

⁶⁷⁶ Arthur S. Hunt and Campbell C. Edgar, trans. *Select Papyri II: Non-Literary Papyri, Public Documents*, LCL, rep. ed., 5 vols. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1963), 258-61.

⁶⁷⁷ For more detail, see Michael H. Crawford, *Roman Republican Coin Hoards*, Royal Numismatic Society Special Publication 4 (London: Royal Numismatic Society, 1969); Margaret Thompson, Otto Mørkholm, and Colin M. Kraay, eds., *An Inventory of Greek Coin Hoards*, 2 vols. (New York: American Numismatic Society, 1973).

⁶⁷⁸ Melvin and Boyes, *Principles of Economics*, 302.

hold money until their prices seem to reach their trough, the lowest point.⁶⁷⁹

From this perspective, the third slave may display the feature of a heavy risk-averter in his attitude toward risks. Moreover, perhaps he would think that there is a high risk of default if he deposited the money. There is a good reason to believe so since Cato the Elder asserts that most financial loans carried the risk of default higher than that of agricultural business in the Roman world (cf. Cato, *Agr. praef.* 1). Therefore, to sustain the financial market, the rate of return from the financial business has to be higher than that of agriculture since it has to reflect the risk premium. In this light, the behavior of the third slave demonstrates his economic rationality, though it does not meet the high expectation of the master who is committed to the profit motive.

In addition, the master's subsequent action in the parable also reveals his economic rationality and profit motive. He withdraws the money from the profitless slave and gives it instead to the most profitable slave who made ten times more money than that initially entrusted to him (v. 24). This action signifies that he relocates his money from a poor investment to a much more profitable one. He then makes it clear to the wondering slaves that his principle is to make the rich richer while the poor poorer (vv. 25-26). After he deprives the third slave of the opportunity to run a business in the future, he then takes no account of the slave's behavior any more in that he inflicts no additional punishment. This forms a striking contrast to his more cruel and merciless punishment for his enemies in verse 27 where he orders the slaughter of his enemies who oppose his kingship. In this regard, in his treatment of slaves, he demonstrates his professional attitude which well agrees with economic rationality and is faithful to profit motive.

⁶⁷⁹ Melvin and Boyes, *Principles of Economics*, 302.

5.6. *Attitude toward the Rich and the Poor*

This parable (19:11-27) also causes us to reconsider the issue of whether Luke's Gospel displays an uncompromising favoritism toward the poor and exhorts the categorical economic justice based upon unconditional wealth redistribution in the form of almsgiving and total renunciation of possessions, as Philip F. Esler contends.⁶⁸⁰ Largely, Luke does. In several occasions, Luke sets out his negative attitude toward the rich and favoritism for the poor.

In the Magnificat, this attitude is fleshed out through the voice of Mary who sings that God "has filled the hungry with good things, and sent the rich away empty" (1: 53). Likewise, in the Beatitude, it takes the form of blessings for the poor and woes to the rich: "Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God. Blessed are you who are hungry now, for you will be filled....But woe to you who are wealthy, for you have received your consolation. Woe to you who are now full, for you will hunger" (6:20-21, 24-25).

Moreover, Luke presents several warnings against wealth and the rich in his Gospel. In the parable of the rich fool (12:13-21), Jesus warns of the danger of wealth by dissociating it from the security of life (v. 15). In the parable of the dishonest steward (16:1-13), Jesus teaches that one cannot serve possessions and God simultaneously (v. 13). In the account of the rich ruler (18:18-30), the rich man is portrayed as virtually unable to enter the kingdom of God as Jesus puts it: "it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God" (vv. 24-25). In the parable of four soils (8:4-15), wealth emerges as a hindrance to the fruitful life of people (v. 14).

This, however, is not the whole story. In fact, Luke counters this understanding when Luke's Jesus refers to the principle of the rich-get-richer and the poor-get-poorer in the

⁶⁸⁰ Esler, *Community and Gospel in Luke-Acts*, 187.

exhortation to carefully heed his words. As he puts it, “to those who have, more will be given; and from those who do not have, even what they seem to have will be taken away” (8:18).

Surely, this principle seems to be contradictory to the egalitarian principle which many people have thought that Luke endorses enthusiastically in his writing. In a similar fashion, this parable (19:11-27) also affirms the same principle through the statement of the master: “to all those who have, more will be given; but from those who have nothing, even what they have will be taken away” (v. 26).

In addition, in such passages as the parables of the faithful and wise steward (12:35-48), of the unjust steward (16:1-13), and of the rebellious tenants (20:9-18), neither God nor Jesus is portrayed as standing by the weak in terms of their economic positions. Conclusively, a close reading of Luke’s text associated with economic issues actually shows that Luke displays a more nuanced and ambivalent attitude regarding these issues.

5.7. Reinscribing the Roman Imperial Economic System

Luke’s Gospel employs the metaphor of masters and slaves (or tenants/steward) (12:35-48; 14:15-24; 16:1-13; 17:7-10; 19:11-27; 20:9-18). Luke’s use of the metaphor can find its most insightful commentary in the discourse of *postcolonialism*. *Postcolonialism* as an academic discipline belongs to a branch of studies on colonial discourses; in particular, from a theoretical standpoint, it is a postmodern version of colonial discourse. It pays particular attention to long-lasting influences of colonialism on colonies during and after their independence.⁶⁸¹

Among various discourses and theories, such as those of Edward Said, Homi K. Bhabha, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, and Frantz Fanon, the theories of Homi K. Bhabha, who especially pays

⁶⁸¹ Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin, *Post-Colonial Studies: The Key Concepts*, Routledge Key Guides (London: Routledge, 2000), 186.

attention to the resistant nature of postcolonial culture, provide useful analytical tools to better understand Luke's representation of God and Jesus. More specifically, these are hybridity, mimicry, and ambivalence.

Luke draws the images of God and Jesus from his social context of the Roman Empire, which necessarily involves both the colonizer and the colonized. Consequently, such mixture of both aspects creates the situation within which distinctive features of postcolonialism arise—such as hybridity, mimicry and ambiguity, which exerted a critical influence on every aspect of lives of people living in the Roman imperial world, including the economy.

In the cultural sense, *hybridity* signifies the mixture of two different cultural components, a mixture that inevitably occurs as the result of the encounter of two heterogeneous cultures. Bhabha, however, refuses to see the term as the result of crossbreeding two different species and thus a solution to reconcile cultural conflicts among heterogeneous cultures.⁶⁸² Instead, he focuses on the potential subversive power of *hybridity* in the colonial discourses as it emerges as a counter-discourse that opposes the binary purity system and the power hierarchy established upon it. As Bhabha puts it: "Strategies of hybridization reveal an estranging movement in the 'authoritative,' even authoritarian inscription of the cultural sign. At the point at which the precept attempts to objectify itself as a generalized knowledge or a normalizing, hegemonic practice, the hybrid strategy or discourse opens up a space of negotiation where power is unequal but its articulation may be equivocal."⁶⁸³ In this regard, images of God and Jesus as Roman master in Luke are the product of hybridity in that they attempt to project Roman economic heritages reflected in those images onto Jewish religious notions of God and his agent.

The term *mimicry* refers to the subject people's act of imitating their colonial master's

⁶⁸² Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 1994), 37-38.

⁶⁸³ Bhabha, "Culture's in Between," *Artforum* 32, no. 1 (1993): 167-170, esp. 170.

behaviors. As is the case with *hybridity*, Bhabha underscores the resistant aspects that *mimicry* entails. *Mimicry* of the colonized, according to Bhabha, results in producing, in the eyes of the colonizer, “almost the same, but not quite” imitations of the original master’s version, that is, crude imitations of the second quality. This happens, since in the course of the act of *mimicry*, the subject people imitate their colonial masters in their own way. As a result, the subject people’s product of *mimicry* reflects their own interests and identity.⁶⁸⁴ This *mimicry*, therefore, serves the purposes and interests of the colonized, and transforms the original discourse of the colonizer into the art of resistance. *Mimicry* contains in itself the aspects of mockery and menace as well as of resemblance. These two aspects go together and, therefore, the act of *mimicry* is akin to parody. In this way, *mimicry* insults and resists the colonial domination. As Bhabha notes: “To the extent to which discourse is a form of defensive warfare, then mimicry marks those moments of civil disobedience within the discipline of civility: signs of spectacular resistance.”⁶⁸⁵

In this regard, Luke mimics imperial practices in the realm of the economy by adopting the images of the Roman masters and landlords and embodying them in Jesus and God. This is most clearly visible in several parables where masters/landlords/God/Jesus manage efficiently their estates and wealth with several strategies, discipline effectively their slaves and employees through diverse incentive and penalty systems, and exploit optimally the labor of their subordinates by various maneuvers.

The term *ambivalence*, which Bhabha employs from psychoanalysis, best describes the relationship between the colonizer and the colonized.⁶⁸⁶ It refers to the dual attitude of the

⁶⁸⁴ Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, 86.

⁶⁸⁵ Bhabha, “Signs Taken for Wonders: Questions of Ambivalence and Authority under a Tree outside Delhi, May 1817,” *Critical Inquiry* 12, no. 1 (1985): 144-165, esp. 162.

⁶⁸⁶ Peter Childs and Patrick Williams, *An Introduction to Post-Colonial Theory* (New York: Prentice Hall, 1997),

colonized toward the colonizer. Colonized people, for example, betray somewhat contradictory feelings towards the colonizer, such as attraction and repulsion. On the one hand, the colonized also have strong antagonism toward their colonial masters who dominate and oppress them. On the other hand, colonized people reveal, to some degree, their attraction toward the colonizer. Moreover, these two feelings provide subject peoples with motivations for actions they take and, therefore, play an important role in forming the colonized people's ambivalent attitudes towards the colonial domination: complicity and resistance.

In this regard, seemingly contradictory images of Jesus and God well represent Luke's ambiguous attitude toward the Roman imperial economy. This happens when Luke describes God and Jesus as multi-faceted characters. On the one hand, they appear as the ardent defenders of the socially marginalized, weak, and poor (1:53; 3:11-14; 4:18; 5:30; 6:20-21; 7:22, 34; 14:13, 21; 15:2; 16:19-31; 19:1-10). On the other hand, they assume the characteristics of Greco-Roman masters and/or landowners equipped with considerable economic rationality and the spirit of a market economy. In this regard, they are representatives of a growing market economy of the early Roman imperial world.

Bhabha underscores that, like *hybridity*, *ambivalence* inevitably creates the ambivalent space within the colonial system by increasing uncertainty and as a consequence destabilizes the authority of colonial domination and in turn creates inescapable tensions between the colonizer and the colonized. In sum, these three concepts (*hybridity*, *mimicry*, and *ambivalence*) are closely related to one another and mutually reinforcing, as they threaten the certainty (or increase the uncertainty) of colonial authority and domination.

In this light, Luke's more nuanced and ambivalent attitude may partially be associated

with Luke's intended audience. In the preface of the Gospel (1:1-4), Luke introduces Theophilus, the name literally means "lover of God," as his intended reader (v. 4). If the name indicates a real person rather than a symbolic audience of a wider Gentile Christians⁶⁸⁷ as Joel B. Green argues,⁶⁸⁸ the honorific title *κράτιστος*, which literally means "most excellent,"⁶⁸⁹ strongly suggests that the person would have been high status in the Greco-Roman world. (cf.

Dioscorides, *De Materia Medica* 1; Artemidorus, *Oneirocritica* 2-3; Josephus, *Life* 430; *Against Apion* 1:1; Acts 23:26; 24:3; 26:25). This observation suggests that Luke seems to have had in mind the elite as a readership as Green suggests. If this is so, Luke may have sought to gain a wider audience by marshalling images and practices well familiar with and mostly appealing to such elite group. As Joel B. Green points out: "In this reference, Luke is apparently recognizing the role of Theophilus in providing inspiration or at least impetus for his writing, and especially that, through Theophilus's recommendation and circle of friends and influence, Luke's book will have gained a wider audience."⁶⁹⁰

Furthermore, this reading adds a fresh insight to previous scholarship of the economy of the kingdom.⁶⁹¹ By employing such images, Luke may have achieved his pedagogical goal—the effective and impressive delivery of his message to the audience. By doing so, however, Luke reinscribed the Roman imperial economic system, either consciously or unconsciously, and reproduced it thereafter in Western civilization through the matrix and carrier of Christianity. In this regard, Luke fails to present an entirely new economic agenda and economic structure in his description of the economy of the kingdom, *pace* Halvor Moxnes.⁶⁹²

⁶⁸⁷ See Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According to Luke I-IX*, 299-300; Nolland, *Luke 1:1-9:20*, 10.

⁶⁸⁸ Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, 44.

⁶⁸⁹ LSJ, 991-92.

⁶⁹⁰ Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, 44.

⁶⁹¹ Moxnes, *The Economy of the Kingdom*.

⁶⁹² Moxnes, *The Economy of the Kingdom*, 154-59.

6. Conclusion

This chapter has examined some selected texts associated with economic topics from Luke 16:14-19:27. All these texts show that the economy inscribed in Luke's Gospel reflects aspects of a market economy and economic rationality in the context of the Roman imperial economy.

The parable of the unworthy servant (17:7-10) displays how the institution of slavery exerts its role in the Roman market economy. The parable also reveals the economic rationality of masters who maximize their profit through full exploitation of slaves. The story of the rich ruler (18:18-30) reveals that economic rationality is also operative in a seemingly unrelated act of wealth redistribution. It also shows how intertemporal choices run in the discourse of Jesus and the behaviors of his disciples, and how Jesus employs the mechanism of screening to overcome a free rider problem caused by asymmetric information. The story of Zaccheus (19:1-10) well demonstrates how Zaccheus overcomes asymmetric information problems by means of signaling or commitment. Moreover, diverse scenes in Luke confirm that possessions work powerfully and effectively as a means of signaling as Luke T. Johnson well points out. The parable of the ten *minas* (19:11-27) attests non-agricultural sources of income in the Roman imperial economy, and offers a glimpse into small-scale commerce and banking and finance operative in the economy inscribed in Luke. The parable also demonstrates the economic rationality of the master and the third slave through the concept of opportunity costs and the behavior of money hoarding. Furthermore, the portrayal of the master in the parable suggests that Luke's attitude toward the rich and the poor is multivalent. The discourse of postcolonialism provides an insight into the use of the metaphor of masters and slaves in Luke's Gospel and the Gospel's reinscribing of the Roman imperial economic system.

All these characteristics—wealth redistribution, intertemporal choices, screening,

signaling, commitment, non-agricultural source of income, small-scale commerce, banking and finance, opportunity costs, and money hoarding--demonstrate that the economy assumed in this section of Luke's Gospel (16:14-19:27) features aspects of a market economy and economic rationality in the milieu of the Roman imperial economy.

CHAPTER 7

Economic Readings of Luke's Gospel 4 (19:28-24:53)

1. Introduction

This chapter offers economic readings of Luke's Gospel from some selected passages of Luke 19:28-24:53. The passages are the parable of the rebellious tenants (20:9-18), the account of the poor widow's offering (21:1-4), the account of Jesus's prophecy about the destruction of the Jerusalem Temple (21:5-6), and the account of the risen Jesus's appearance to the eleven apostles (24:36-43). These texts are selected since they inscribe aspects of a market economy and economic rationality. These aspects are viticulture, tenancy, absenteeism, conflicts between masters and tenants in viticulture, the bargaining power of laborers, labor-management dispute, the economics of altruism and giving, stone trade, and the fishing industry.

2. The Parable of the Rebellious Tenants (20:9-18)

The parable concerns a conflict that occurred in a vineyard between a landlord and his tenants. In the parable, the tenants refuse to pay the master the rent; they repeatedly beat the master's agents who come to gather the share of the crop and finally kill his son. The parable ends up with the fall and replacement of the tenants. It involves a variety of economic themes such as viticulture, absenteeism, conflicts between masters and tenants in viticulture, tenancy, absenteeism, conflicts between masters and tenants in viticulture, the bargaining power of laborers, and labor-management dispute. In the parable, slaves act as the representatives of the master (20:10-12), which demonstrates the use of slaves in the context of a market economy. However, I will not address the issue of slavery here since I have already discussed the issue in Chapter 5

(Section 3.1) and Chapter 6 (Section 2.1).

2.1. *Viticulture*

Although the parable (20:9-18) itself does not explicitly state that the farming presumed in the story is intended for selling at the market, a careful observation of the characteristics of ancient viticulture shows that it is an agribusiness best suited to produce products for market. This is so because viticulture is thought to have been a high-risk and high-return business in the ancient Roman world. Above all, viticulture is a high-risk business in that viticulture requires a lot of investment. Specifically, it is both labor-intensive and capital-intensive agribusiness; thus it requires a lot of labor input and substantial capital outlay.

First, as some agricultural writings attest, viticulture was the most labor-intensive form of farming of all agricultural production. For instance, the labor required for a vineyard of the size of 100 *iugera* (about 62.5 acres) was 16 persons according to Cato's calculation--"An overseer, a housekeeper, 10 labourers, 1 teamster, 1 muleteer, 1 willow-worker, 1 swineherd" (*Agr.* 11.1-13).⁶⁹³ For cereal or vegetable cultivation, meanwhile, Columella suggests that a farm with the size of 200 *iugera* requires only two workers, with two yoke of oxen, and six common laborers (*Rust.* 2.12.7). According to Cato's and Columella's suggestions, four times more laborers were needed for grape cultivation (16 workers) than for grain cultivation (8 workers)--given that the size of the grain farm (200 *iugera*) was twice as large as that of the vineyard (100 *iugera*). Moreover, Cato states that viticulture requires more laborers than oleiculture does. He recommends 13 persons for an olive orchard of 240 *iugera*: "An overseer, a housekeeper, 5 labourers, 3 teamsters, 1 muleteer, 1 swineherd, 1 shepherd" (*Agr.* 10.1-3).⁶⁹⁴

⁶⁹³ Cato and Varro, *On Agriculture*, 25.

⁶⁹⁴ Cato and Varro, *On Agriculture*, 23.

Thus, the above suggestion shows that more than twice as many laborers who actually work in the field are required for the cultivation of vines (10 laborers) than for the cultivation of olives (5 laborers)--despite the larger size of the olive orchard (240 *iugera*) compared to the vineyard (100 *iugera*).

In addition, Duncan-Jones points out that more laborers would be needed for the cultivation of vines because Cato's calculation does not take account of other factors such as soil conditions and seasonal variation in labor needs—especially, high labor demand at vintage time.⁶⁹⁵ Similarly, Rathbone suggests that running a vineyard would require the additional cost of feeding the labor force. He insists that it would have required both a cereal farm and a legume farm with the size of 60 *iugera* respectively to feed 20 laborers who worked for the cultivation of olives and vines at the Villa Settefinestre at Cosa.⁶⁹⁶ Furthermore, since grapes are susceptible to decay they should be harvested and processed in a short time once the vintage season arrives, which suggests that intensive labor input is required at the harvest time.

Second, viticulture requires substantial capital investment. According to Cato's writing, capital input required for a vineyard includes storage tanks, storage rooms, vats, amphorae, pots, basins, a treading floor, a press, vessels, vine supports, fences, water wheels, mills, iron tools, and draft animals (*Agr.* 11.2-13.2).⁶⁹⁷ In this regard, in his writing, Varro refers to a negative view held by some that in viticulture, "the cost of upkeep swallows up the profits" (*Rust.* 1.8.1).⁶⁹⁸ What's more, viticulture requires at least four years of initial investment with no return, yet requiring skillful and laborious care in pruning, grafting, and fertilizing to make a new

⁶⁹⁵ Duncan-Jones, *The Economy of the Roman Empire*, 327-33.

⁶⁹⁶ Dominic Rathbone, "The Development of Agriculture in the 'Ager Cosanus' during the Roman Republic: Problems of Evidence and Interpretation," *JRS* 71 (1981): 10-23, esp. 12.

⁶⁹⁷ For an exhaustive listing of Cato's original presentation see John S. Kloppenborg, *The Tenants in the Vineyard: Ideology, Economics, and Agrarian Conflict in Jewish Palestine* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006), 296, no. 71.

⁶⁹⁸ Cato and Varro, *On Agriculture*, 199.

vineyard productive.⁶⁹⁹ Moreover, there is a price risk in viticulture caused by the fluctuation of wine prices. Pliny the Elder states that in viticulture costs might exceed profits when prices are falling (*NH.* 17.213). In this regard, Nicholas Purcell comments that viticulture is agribusiness that is “extremely uncertain and risky, almost marginal.”⁷⁰⁰

On the other hand, viticulture is a high-yield business. Richard P. Duncan-Jones estimates the average yield for viticulture as 7-10%, which is higher than that of other crops (5-6%).⁷⁰¹ Pliny the Elder introduces a story of a person who makes a big fortune through viticulture (*NH.* 14.47-52). In the story, the sale price of the vineyard of a certain freedman Remmius Palaemon quadruples when he sells it to Seneca since it yields a harvest annually worth 400,000 sesterces.

Taking these factors into consideration, it seems clear that only those who can afford a long period of initial investment and substantial capital outlay can take part in viticulture. Moreover, those who can willingly run all those risks and endure several years of non-profit can then make a profit through viticulture. Consequently, all these characteristics strongly suggest that relatively large-scale viticulture was mostly reserved for the rich in the ancient Roman world, as John S. Kloppenborg rightly points out.⁷⁰²

From this perspective, the master in the parable (20:9-18) seems to be a man of wealth and power in that he dispatches multiple slaves as his representatives to collect his share of the produce and later mobilizes force to destroy the rebellious tenants. Moreover, the size of the vineyard assumed in the story seems to exceed a self-consuming level in that the master leases

⁶⁹⁹ For the general nature of modern viticulture, see Albert J. Winkler, James A. Cook, W. M. Kliewer, and Lloyd A. Lider, *General Viticulture* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1974); Ted Goldammer, *Grape Grower's Handbook: A Guide to Viticulture for Wine Production*, 2nd ed. (Clifton, VA: Apex Publisher, 2015).

⁷⁰⁰ Nicholas Purcell, “Wine and Wealth in Ancient Italy,” *JRS* 75 (1985): 1-19, esp. 2.

⁷⁰¹ Duncan-Jones, *The Economy of the Roman Empire*, 59.

⁷⁰² Kloppenborg, *The Tenants in the Vineyard*, 295-303, esp. 296.

his vineyard with plural tenants and exerts a considerable effort to collect his share by sending several slaves and finally his son. In this regard, viticulture in the parable can best be read within the context of commercial viticulture since there is no reason for the master to pay such considerable costs and run high risks merely for self-consuming. Conclusively, viticulture in the parable demonstrates an aspect of a market economy in the Roman agriculture.

2.2. Tenancy

The parable (20:9-18) testifies to the practice of tenancy; it describes that the master gives over his vineyard to some farmers (γεωργός; v. 9).⁷⁰³ It is certain that they are tenant farmers since the master in the story later expects his share of the crop yield. Moreover, the verb ἐκδίδωμι in verse 9 is used in the sense of leasing in some classical writings (Plato, *Leges* 7.806E; Polybius, *Hist.* 6.17.2).⁷⁰⁴ Evidence also suggests that tenancy was widely practiced during the Roman imperial period. Documents from the Fayûm in Egypt show that among all the registered contracts in the public office at the village of Tebtunis in the mid-first century CE, nearly one-fourth are land leases (*P.Mich.* II 123).⁷⁰⁵ In this regard, the parable agrees well with the economic practice of the Roman imperial world.

Why does the master in this parable (20:9-18) adopt tenancy rather than direct farming through his slaves in cultivating the vineyard? It seems obvious that he could utilize his slaves as laborers instead of tenants, as verses 10-12 clearly portray that the master sends several slaves to collect his rent. In fact, the choice of tenancy in the parable seems to demonstrate the economic rationality of the master.

⁷⁰³ LSJ, 347.

⁷⁰⁴ LSJ, 504.

⁷⁰⁵ Lori R. Toepel, *Studies in the Administrative and Economic History of Tebtunis in the First Century AD* (Ph. D. Diss., Duke University, 1973), 136.

As already mentioned in Chapter 5, Columella thinks of direct cultivation as the ideal form of farm management. By contrast, he is highly critically of the possession of remote land:

For men who purchase lands at a distance, not to mention estates across the seas, are making over their inheritances to their slaves, as to their heirs and, worse yet, while they themselves are still alive; for it is certain that slaves are corrupted by reason of the great remoteness of their masters and, being once corrupted and in expectation of others to take their places after the shameful acts which they committed, they are more intent on pillage than on farming (*Rust.* 1.1.20).⁷⁰⁶

Though this statement seems to contain a gross exaggeration, it carries effectively a message of warning to landowners that moral hazard can incur serious damage to their property if the farm is left unattended. In this regard, Columella further suggests that in the case of remote land, it should be leased out to tenants:

On far distant estates, however, which it is not easy for the owner to visit, it is better for every kind of land to be under free farmers than under slave overseers, but this is particularly true of grain land. To such land a tenant farmer can do no great harm, as he can to plantations of vines and trees, while slaves do it tremendous damage: ...Therefore my opinion is that an estate of this sort should be leased if, as I have said, it cannot have the presence of the owner (*Rust.* 1.7.5-7).⁷⁰⁷

The economic rationality behind Columella's advice seems straightforward: Whereas slaves who have no incentive to work hard could do serious harm to the master's property through neglect and idleness, the tenants can benefit the master much more than slaves can. Tenants have a strong incentive to work hard because the increase of produce is associated directly with that of their profit regardless of the forms of rent—either a fixed rent or sharecropping. In this light, Lin Foxhall argues that tenancy, in general, is a more productive way of agricultural cultivation than any other form of farming because of the strong achievement motivation of tenants--what Foxhall calls the “whip of hunger.”⁷⁰⁸

⁷⁰⁶ Columella, *On Agriculture, Volume 1: Books 1-4*, 39.

⁷⁰⁷ Columella, *On Agriculture, Volume 1: Books 1-4*, 83.

⁷⁰⁸ Lin Foxhall, “The Dependent Tenant: Land Leasing and Labour in Italy and Greece,” *JRS* 80 (1990): 97-114, esp. 102.

The parable (20:9-18) describes that the master leaves the country for a long time, therefore, he cannot monitor his farm directly (v. 9). In this regard, the master's choice of tenancy as his farm management method faithfully follows Columella's advice. Therefore, the master's choice serves as another example of a mechanism design operative in Luke's Gospel, and hence it demonstrates the economic rationality of the master.

Moreover, the master in the parable prepares other mechanisms to prevent a possible moral hazard that could arise in his farm tenancy. This time he adopts the measures that Pliny the Younger implemented in his farm. In his book, Pliny complains about a serious moral hazard from some of his tenants who, in despite of his generous debt relief, give up the will to clear off their debts and out of such mentality even keep and consume all their produce without storing it. Pliny, therefore, adopts some methods to redress such inveterate moral hazard. On the one hand, he changes the rent payment custom from rent in cash to rent in kind, a share of produce. He then increases the level of monitoring by appointing some supervisors to monitor farm work and guards to keep the produce (*Ep.* 9.37).

Accordingly, both measures occur in the parable (20:9-18). That the master sends his agent to collect his share in verse 10 strongly suggests that the type of lease payment assumed in the parable is a crop-share rather than a fixed rent as Kloppenborg rightly observes.⁷⁰⁹ More specifically, the master's agent must appear before the tenants during the harvest time since he has to settle the amount of share in the case of a crop-share; otherwise, the tenants simply store the rent in the farm storage in the case of rent in kind or in the safe in the case of rent in cash. Moreover, the master sends his agents at the time of harvest perhaps to increase the level of monitoring during the course of harvest, which suggests that the tenants might experience

⁷⁰⁹ Kloppenborg, *The Tenants in the Vineyard*, 313.

unpleasant supervision of the slaves acting on behalf of the master as Kloppenborg rightly points out.⁷¹⁰ In this regard, Pieter W. de Neeve points out that the tenants with crop-share contracts were far inferior to those with fixed-rent contracts in terms of their socio-economic position.⁷¹¹ Conclusively, the measures that the master takes in the parable--tenancy, sharecropping, and monitoring--exhibit considerable economic rationality in accordance with those provided by ancient Roman agricultural writings.

2.3. *Absenteeism*

In the parable (20:9-18), Luke testifies to the agricultural practice of absenteeism as the master leaves his farm for a long time (v. 9). In fact, not every landowner in Luke lives outside the farm. For instance, in the parable of prodigal son (15:11-32), the landowner and his elder son live on their farm (vv. 20, 25). In this regard, it is difficult to decide whether absenteeism is treated as a normal practice in Luke's narrative world. However, it seems that absenteeism portrayed in the parable is closely associated with a profit motive in that absenteeism is likely to be adopted in the case of commercial farming rather than self-sustaining farming.

There has been a scholarly debate concerning the characteristic of the absentee landowner in the parable (20:9-18). Specifically, the meaning of the verb ἀποδημέω used in verse 9 has been at the center of this debate. The verb can mean either “to be away from home” or “go abroad.”⁷¹² In the writing of Herodotus, for instance, the verb is used in the sense of “going abroad” to portray Polycrates's visit of Oreotes (*Hdt.*3.124) or of “being abroad” to describe the Scythians' foreign campaign (*Hdt.*4.1). Of these two meanings, the Latin Vulgate and many English Bible versions, such as NRSV and NAB, have adopted the meaning of “going abroad.”

⁷¹⁰ Kloppenborg, *The Tenants in the Vineyard*, 313.

⁷¹¹ Pieter W. de Neeve, *Colonus*, 17.

⁷¹² LSJ, 196.

Moreover, verse 9 also states that the master's absence would be "a long time" (χρόνους ἱκανούς),⁷¹³ which seems to support that ἀποδημέω was used in this sense. Furthermore, the reference to the master's long time absence has led some commentators such as Charles Dodd and Joachim Jeremias to regard the master in the parable as a foreigner.⁷¹⁴

However, refuting such interpretation, Kloppenborg insists that ἀποδημέω simply means "to depart," rather than "to go abroad" by addressing the usages from the Ptolemaic and the early Roman periods. For instance, according to Kloppenborg, some third-century BCE papyri from Ptolemaic Egypt use the term in the sense of "departing" to prison (*P.Cair. Zen.* V 59619.3-4) or of departing from one region to another in Egypt (*P.Cair. Zen.* III 59368.31), rather than "going abroad." Likewise, some third-century CE papyri employ the term in the expression of "leaving for" the city of Alexandria (*BGU IV* 1093.8; *P.Ryl.* II 245.23).⁷¹⁵

It is difficult to identify in which sense Luke uses ἀποδημέω in the parable (20:9-18) since the parable does not provide any further information. And the economic situation of the early Roman Empire seems to support either sense. First, the existence of foreign landowners was not uncommon in the Roman imperial economy. In fact, it is closely associated with the expansion of the empire. As the Roman Empire expanded through successive wars and conquests, the imperial government allotted conquered land to colonists and individuals (especially, military veterans), usually at the transition stage from a military regime to civic government after conquest.⁷¹⁶

For instance, Caesar allotted a parcel of land (10 and 12 *iugera*) to the Roman citizens

⁷¹³ LSJ, 825.

⁷¹⁴ Charles H. Dodd, *The Parables of the Kingdom*, rev. ed. (London: James Nisbet & Co, 1961), 97; Jeremias, *The Parables of Jesus*, 75.

⁷¹⁵ Kloppenborg, *The Tenants in the Vineyard*, 279-80, no. 4.

⁷¹⁶ Edward T. Salmon, *Roman Colonization under the Republic* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1969); Brunt, *Italian Manpower*, 332-42.

with 3-4 children (Cicero, *Att.* 2.16.1; *Leg. Agr.* 2.85). Similarly, based upon *Res Gestae* (16.1), P. A. Brunt argued that Augustus allotted more than 5 *iugera* of land to each veteran after the civil wars.⁷¹⁷ Some Roman peasants would have benefited from such allotment policy.

Therefore, Roman imperial expansion provided peasants with the opportunity to compensate for their loss of wealth near the imperial center, which was caused by the exploitation of the rich, as the imperial government granted them a new agricultural base in other distant areas.⁷¹⁸

Consequently, in many regions, Roman absentee landlords and Italian immigrants replaced native proprietors in those regions.

Josephus provides some ready examples of such distribution policy in Roman Palestine. According to him, Herod settled six thousand veterans at Samaria-Sebaste, by allotting the portion of fertile land to them (*Ant.* 15.296; *J.W.* 1.403-5). Likewise, Herod found and settled cavalry veterans at Gaba Hippeon (*Life* 115; *J.W.* 3.36). Josephus also states that Vespasian settled 800 veterans of the Roman army (Legio X Fretensis) at Emmaus near Jerusalem after the Jewish War (*J.W.* 7.217).

In light of this, if the landowner in the parable (20:9-18) is a foreigner, the absentee landownership portrayed in the parable seems to reflect the expansion of the Roman imperial economy and the resultant development of an agricultural market economy, which benefited Italian landowners and soldiers at the cost of native farmers of subordinated countries. In this regard, absenteeism adopted by foreigners displays the profit motive of landowners in the case of large-scale farming that exceeds self-consuming level.

On the other hand, if the landowner is not a foreigner, he may live in a different place, either in a city or countryside. It was not rare in the Roman imperial world that wealthy

⁷¹⁷ Brunt, *Italian Manpower*, 337, no. 3.

⁷¹⁸ Peter Garnsey, "Peasants in Ancient Roman Society," *Journal of Peasant Studies* 3 (1976): 221-35, esp. 224-25.

landowners who stayed in the city possessed some estates in countryside. For instance, Cato's agricultural writing *De Agricultura*, written in the mid-second century BCE, primarily assumes a situation of absentee landlords and gives them ample advice concerning agricultural techniques of specialized crop farming for market production, which suggests that the practice of absentee landlords was already not foreign to Roman people prior to the imperial period.⁷¹⁹ In addition, Columella's criticism of the practice of absentee landlords may indirectly testify to its existence in the early Roman imperial period: "I consequently rate it as most advantageous to have an estate near town, which even the busy man may easily visit every day after his business in the forum is done. For men who purchase lands at a distance, not to mention estates across the seas, are making over their inheritances to their slaves" (1.1.19-20).⁷²⁰ Therefore, absenteeism shows the profit motive of landowners who lived in urban areas but were interested in commercial farming.

In addition, multiple landholdings facilitated absentee landlords in the Roman world. In this case, landlords inevitably become absentee landlords since the number of their estates would normally exceed that of their place of residence even when they stayed in the countryside. Evidence suggests that multiple landholdings were practiced in the Roman world. Some wealthy landowners seem to have possessed relatively small-scale farms in diverse locations. For instance, according to Cicero, Sextus Roscius of Ameria from the equestrian order in the first century BCE had thirteen different farms and most of them were located in the Tiber valley (*Rosc. Am.* 20). Similarly, Israël Shatzman presents a list of senators who possessed multiple estates from the second century BCE to the first century CE, whose number was sixty-seven and

⁷¹⁹ Philip Kay, *Rome's Economic Revolution* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 132, 151, 187.

⁷²⁰ Columella, *On Agriculture, Volume 1: Books 1-4*, 39.

many of whom owned more than ten estates.⁷²¹ Therefore, if the landowner in the parable (20:9-18) is not a foreigner, the landowner would reside in another area, either city or countryside. Moreover, absenteeism caused by multiple landholdings exhibits the profit motive of landowners who were engaged in farming beyond self-consuming level.

In sum, in the parable, whether the master is a foreigner or not, it seems clear that he does not cultivate his own estate. Conclusively, this realization further signifies that he is detached from agriculture for subsistence and invests in the land to gain some profit instead. In this regard, absenteeism portrayed in the parable reflects aspects of a market economy as the master used land for commercial farming.

2.4. Conflicts between Masters and Tenants in Viticulture

The parable (20:9-18) primarily describes a conflict between the master and the tenants. When the harvest time arrives, the master sends his slave as a representative to collect his share of produce. But the tenants refuse to share the produce; instead they beat the slave and send him away empty-handed (v. 10). Then the landlord sends another slave whom they mistreat similarly—beating, insulting, and sending him away with nothing (v. 11). Then the master sends a third slave but they do the same to the slave—wounding and throwing him out (v. 12). After the third try, the master, in a soliloquy, decides to send a more powerful representative--his son—in the hope that the tenants will respect his son (v. 13).

The parable does not provide any information about why the tenants refuse to pay their rent (a share of produce), which leaves room for much academic speculation and conjecture. J. Duncan M. Derrett, for instance, proposes a scenario that the conflict is associated with complex

⁷²¹ Israël Shatzman, *Senatorial Wealth and Roman Politics* (Brussels: Latomus, 1975), 27, 34.

issues about the accounting of the vineyard. According to Derrett's reconstruction, the master does not pay the wages of his tenants, nor does he reimburse the tenants' expenses that are agreed upon in the initial contract. Instead, the master claims the previous three years of rent from the vineyard despite it being a newly planted one. Resisting the master's attempt, the tenants refuse to pay the rent on the basis of the custom that allows exemption from taxation for a newly planted vineyard. For instance, as early as the second century BCE, decrees of King Ptolemy VIII Euergetes II describe the custom of exemption from taxation for five years and the successive reduction of tax for three more years (*P.Tebt.* I 5.93-98). Moreover, Derrett suggests that the tenants in the parable further claim their ownership of the vineyard on the ground that the master did not pay their wages and other capital expenses.⁷²²

Evidence seems to support Derrett's reconstruction. For instance, in a third-century BCE papyrus from Fayûm in Egypt, a son petitions on behalf of his father for recalculating the tax rate imposed on his father's vineyard on the ground that it is newly planted so that the first few years' low productivity should be taken into consideration in assessing the average tax rate of the vineyard (*P.Cair. Zen.* II 59236). In the same vein, the Hebrew Bible also prohibits the landowner of a newly planted vineyard from making a profit from it for the first five years (Lev 19:23-25).

Ancient Greco-Roman documents provide ample evidence that viticulture in general, not to mention tenant-based viticulture, was involved in a variety of conflicts.⁷²³ For instance, Pliny

⁷²² J. Duncan M. Derrett, "Fresh Light on the Wicked Vinedressers," *Revue Internationale des Droits de l'Antiquité*, 3^{me} série, 10 (1963): 11-41, esp. 31. See also Willy Schottroff, "Das Gleichnis von den bösen Weingartnern (Mk 12,1-9 parr.). Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Bodenpacht in Palästina," *Zeitschrift des Deutschen Palästina-Vereins* 112, no. 1 (1996): 18-48, esp. 35.

⁷²³ The vintage period was susceptible to such conflict as it is the prime time of agriculture, hence mounting up the tension among parties including tax collectors (*P.Mich.* X 601; *P.Cair. Zen.* III 59367), and even thieves (*P. Mich.* I 63-64), not to mention masters, tenants, and workers. That's why landowners insisted on their monitoring the harvest in the case of share cropping where profits of landowners depend crucially on the amount of produce while tenants showed a strong dislike for such supervision (Pliny, *Ep.* 9.37). For more detail, see Kloppenborg, *The Tenants in the*

the Younger states conflicts between himself and his tenants several times in his writing (*Ep.* 5.14; 7.30; 9:15; 9:36, 37; 10.8). Likewise, a number of ancient Greco-Roman papyri testify to the occurrence of conflicts between landlords and tenants (*PSI* VI 554; *P.Cair. Zen.* I 59018; *P.Zen. Pestem.* 37; *PSI* IV 414; *PSI* V 502; *P.Oxy.* III 645; *CPR* XVIII A 6).⁷²⁴ Moreover, conflicts in viticulture were often related to legal disputes over the ownership of land (*P.Cair. Zen* II 59179; *P.Oxy.* XLIX 3464; Cicero, *Pro Caecina*, 16-21, 94-95). Perhaps some of those disputes may be partially caused by Roman property law that strictly distinguishes the ownership of land (*dominium*) and various rights to its utilization (*possessio*).⁷²⁵ Moreover, similar to the case in the parable, a third-century BCE Egyptian papyrus records the murder of the landowner's agents (*P.Cair. Zen.* I 59018).

In sum, though we cannot identify exactly the cause of the conflict in the parable (20:9-18), the possible scenarios of the conflicts described above, drawn from ancient sources, suggest that the root of the conflict may be associated with the conflicting economic interests between masters and tenants in the context of commercial farming. In this regard, the conflict exhibits both an aspect of a market economy and the economic rationality of ancient economic agents.

Vineyard, 316-586.

⁷²⁴ Conflicts in viticulture involved a variety of illegal and/or immoral behaviors such as blatant stealing of crops (*P.Mich.* I 63-64; *PSI* IV 345; *P.Cair. Zen.* III 59329; *P.Cair. Zen.* IV 59610; *P.Gur.* 8) and/or farming equipment such as reed canes (*CPJ* I 14), pruning knives (*P.Gur.* 8), illegal occupation of other's vineyards (*P.Cair. Zen.* IV 59624; *P.Oxy.* XLIX 3464; *P.Mich.* VI 422-23), non-payment or delayed-payment of wages (*P.Zen. Pestm.* 37, 52; *P.Cair. Zen.* III 59317; *PSI* IV 414, 421; *P.Lond.* VII 2061), shares (*PSI* VI 554), and pilfering (*P.Oxy.* IV 729.10). Moreover, sometimes conflicts in viticulture were often accompanied by a variety of forms of violence (*P.Cair. Zen.* I 59018; *P.Cair. Zen.* IV 59624; *P.Mich.* I 63-64; *P.Mich.* V 230; *P.Oxy.* XLIX 3464; *P.Mich.* IV 422-425) including physical violence to people (*P.Cair. Zen.* III 59367; *PSI* IV 345; *P.Gur.* 8) and damage to property (*P.Enteux.* 65; *P.Mich.* V 229). For more detail, see Kloppenborg, *The Tenants in the Vineyard*, 338-339. In particular, Appendix I and II of the book (355-586) provide detailed information on ancient written sources on viticulture.

⁷²⁵ For more detail, see Herbert Hausmaninger and Richard Gamauf, *A Casebook on Roman Property Law*, trans. George A. Sheets, American Philological Association Classical Resources Series (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).

2.5. *The Bargaining Power of Laborers*

The parable (20:9-18) portrays the tenants' strongly resistant attitude toward their master when he attempts to collect the rent. Such portrayal seems to be somewhat surprising given the weak economic position of tenants in the Roman world. It is generally believed that labor supply was plentiful in the Roman world and, therefore, tenants could be easily replaced with other tenants.⁷²⁶ As Kloppenborg states: "Free peasants were always available, outnumbering agricultural slaves, even in Italy of the late Republic when slave numbers were at their height."⁷²⁷

However, such plentiful supply of labor does not automatically mean that in all agricultural situations, the landowners were in a favorable or a superior position to exploit freely cheap wage laborers or tenants in the Roman world. For instance, a first-century CE papyrus from Fayûm in Egypt describes a desperate situation of a vineyard owner who is unable to find workers (*BGU* II 530). In the letter, the landowner states that he is in danger of failing to harvest the crop and thus default on public taxes, which could eventually lead him to the loss of his land. The main problem of the owner is that he cannot find laborers to cultivate the vineyard because neither his partner nor any tenants would work in it. He thus desperately asks his son to come and help him with the viticultural works. Though the letter is brief, it clearly shows that it was not always easy to find agricultural workers in the Roman world. This, in turn, seems to shed some light on the portrayal of the tenants' strong attitude in the parable (20:9-18).

Running a productive vineyard requires continuous skillful care. A third-century BCE papyrus illustrates this point (*P.Cair. Zen.* IV 59736). In the document, the addressee reports on the unskilled cutters. He narrates the episode of stopping them from doing the job because they

⁷²⁶ Garnsey, "Non-Slave Labour in the Roman World," 34-47, esp. 35-36.

⁷²⁷ Kloppenborg, *The Tenants in the Vineyard*, 289, 308.

do harm to the vines through their incompetency. Another third-century BCE papyrus also exemplifies the importance of a timely care of a vineyard (*P.Cair. Zen.* III 59300). In the letter, Euempolos, the addresser, urges Zenon, the recipient and the owner of a vineyard, to take immediate action to prepare for the coming harvest. Euempolos warns that the neglect of the vineyard—for instance, the wine vats were not yet prepared and mice were not exterminated--would incur a serious loss of profit. Similarly, Columella states that the neglect of a vineyard would cost the owner constant expenses (*Rust.* 3.3.5). Conclusively, the fact that viticulture is susceptible to failure by neglect and/or incompetence may have a meaningful implication for the bargaining power of vineyard laborers in the Roman world.

Above all, it seems that landowners of high class seldom, if any, had sufficient (and/or specialized) knowledge about viticulture, except for few agricultural writers, such as Cato, Varro, Columella, and Pliny the Elder. Therefore, landowners, in general, would rely heavily on other experts in viticulture. That's why Columella, dissenting from the opinion of the majority, places a high priority on the employment of a skillful vinedresser and thus insists upon the purchase of a slave with expertise in viticulture at the high cost of 6000-8000 sesterces (*Rust.* 3.3.8). Likewise, a fourth-century CE letter from Egypt seems to confirm the importance of specialized laborers in viticulture (*P.Oxy.* XIII 1590). The letter describes a situation where the vineyard owner looks for two tenants who have the specialized skill in irrigation. Though brief, the letter suggests that it was not always easy or available to employ the tenants with viticultural specialties.

To judge from the highly skillful nature of viticultural works, it seems that some vinedressers, if not all, especially experienced and competent ones, may have had advantage over other simple laborers in viticulture with regard to their bargaining power in the negotiation with

their landlords.⁷²⁸ For instance, a third-century BCE papyrus from Fayûm in Egypt reports the protest of Samoelis and Alexander, two tenants of Zenon the landlord, against being denied access to his vineyard (i.e., their work place) through the adjacent property, with the threat of abandoning their lease (*P.Cair. Zen.* III 59367). Their threat seems to be successful because Zenon writes to Sostrates, one of his agents, and to those two tenants respectively in order to prevail on them not to abandon their lease. In the letter, Zenon manifests his anxiety over a substantial financial loss that their abandonment could incur. Kloppenborg further conjectures that since the letter was written in January 240 BCE, Zenon might have worried about the setback in the winter pruning of his vineyard.⁷²⁹ In a similar vein, a third-century BCE papyrus from Egypt illustrates the situation where a vinedresser presses a prospect lessor to offer him a lease immediately, with the reference to a high demand for his viticultural services by other lessors (*P.Oxy.* XLI 2979). Most probably, such expertise in viticulture would have exerted a positive influence on the bargaining power of the vinedresser in the negotiation with landowners.

Moreover, as Columella acknowledges, unlike grain farming, in the case of viticulture, tenants could do serious harm to a vineyard if they are willing to do so, either through direct destruction of vines or more indirect and subtle ways of improper care or neglect. By contrast, they could inflict little crucial damage to a grain field (*Rust.*1.7.6). As mentioned above, timely care is crucial for a vineyard to become productive. Therefore, in viticulture, it is profitable for landowners to maintain good relationships with their tenants rather than taking a hard line to them, especially in the situation of negotiation with them. This realization, therefore, suggests that the bargaining power of tenants might not have been lopsidedly weak in the negotiation with their landlords despite the enormous socio-economic gaps between the two parties in the Roman

⁷²⁸ Dennis P. Kehoe, "Legal Institutions and the Bargaining Power of the Tenant in Roman Egypt," *Archiv für Papyrusforschung* 41 (1995): 232-62; Kloppenborg, *The Tenants in the Vineyard*, 308.

⁷²⁹ Kloppenborg, *The Tenants in the Vineyard*, 425.

world. Conclusively, all things considered, it seems possible that such characteristics of viticulture may contribute to the enhanced bargaining power of the tenants in the parable (20:9-18) and form the basis of a strong attitude toward their master. In this regard, the strong attitude of the tenants toward the master exhibits economic rationality of both the landowner and the tenants in the parable.

2.6. *Labor-Management Dispute*

The parable (20:9-18) foregrounds the conflict between the master and the tenants. This section will try to explain the conflict from the perspective of labor economics, especially labor-management disputes, with an emphasis on the economic rationality of the master and the tenants.

On the one hand, the master's behaviors in the parable seem to agree with Columella's advice on the proper business ethics of landlords. According to the advice, landlords should approach the relationship with their tenants in terms of profitability. First, citing Alfius the usurer, Columella underscores that landlords should lay claim to the debts of their tenants since "[g]ood debts become bad ones if they are not called" (*Rust.* 1.7.2).⁷³⁰ Accordingly, in the parable, the master sends his slaves to collect his rent at the appropriate time of harvest (20:10).

Moreover, the master's repeated sending of his agents after the first abortive attempt to collect the rent seems to show his patience in dealing with the tenants over the issue of rent. Such patience follows Columella's advice as well. As he puts it: "He [the master] should be civil in dealing with his tenants, should show himself affable, and should be more exacting in the matter of work than of payments, as this gives less offence yet is, generally speaking, more profitable"

⁷³⁰ Columella, *On Agriculture, Volume 1: Books 1-4*, 81.

(*Rust.* 1.7.1).⁷³¹ In this regard, the master's seemingly tolerable attitude towards his tenants can be understood in light of his effort to maximize his profits; hence it represents the economic rationality of the master.

On the other hand, the behaviors of the tenants in the parable can be regarded as the kind of job actions that employees take against employers. Among various job actions, the most famous and common one is a strike—other methods may include work slowdowns, sabotage, boycott, demonstrations picketing, occupation of workplaces and so on.⁷³²

Generally speaking, a strike refers to the collective action of employees (or labor unions) who refuse to provide labor service to employers.⁷³³ On the part of employees, a strike has certain merits.⁷³⁴ Above all, in a collective bargaining situation between employers and employees, a strike can be a powerful weapon of employees in winning employers' concessions and enhancing their bargaining position if a strike can impose considerable costs on employers. For example, in the case of agricultural workers, the best time for a strike or threat of a strike would be harvest time, the busiest golden time of the year. In addition, the actual implementation of strikes, periodically or regularly, can serve to maintain the reputation of employees as a whole (or a labor union) and to retain the credibility of their threat of a strike, not to mention it can strengthen the group solidarity of employees.

In this light, the parable describes that the tenants carry out a series of job actions against their master in the right time of the agricultural calendar—harvest time. Their behaviors belong to collective action in that plural tenants are involved in both the decision-making process and

⁷³¹ Columella, *On Agriculture, Volume 1: Books 1-4*, 79.

⁷³² Jarol B. Manheim, *The Death of A Thousand Cuts: Corporate Campaigns and the Attack on the Corporation* (Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2001).

⁷³³ Ehrenberg and Smith, *Modern Labor Economics*, 494.

⁷³⁴ Hyclak, Johnes, and Thornton, *Fundamentals of Labor Economics*, 329-34; Ehrenberg and Smith, *Modern Labor Economics*, 498.

the actual implementation of their decision. First, their collective decision-making process is visible in verse 14 where they (plural) devise a plot to murder his son. Their hope is that they could take over the vineyard after eliminating the master's heir. Second, the actions carried out in the parable--violent treatments of slaves and the murder of his master's son--are all described in verbs with plural forms (vv.10-12, 15),⁷³⁵ which suggests that their behaviors are collective actions.

In fact, ancient Greco-Roman records attest workers' use of threats to strike in the form of decampment or slowdown in order to achieve their goals. For instance, a third-century BCE Egyptian papyrus illustrates a threat of vineyard gardeners to abandon their work unless they receive their unpaid salary while a pressing task of digging the vineyard lie ahead (*P.Zen. Pestem. 37*). Similarly, another third-century BCE letter states a vinedresser's request for full payment of overdue salary, with a veiled threat of a slowdown in his work (*P.Cair. Zen. III 59317*). Likewise, another third-century BCE document reports the case where tenant farmers go on a strike (*PSI V 502*). According to the papyrus, some farmers who cultivate the large estate belong to a certain Apollonios, a financial officer of Ptolemy II, walk out of the land and take refuge in a temple in protest at the decision to change the way of calculating their rent that could affect negatively the profit of the tenants.⁷³⁶

Therefore, the portrayal of collective actions in the parable (20:9-18) well represents the economic rationality of ancient Roman tenants in achieving their economic goals in labor-management dispute. Moreover, their collective actions display an aspect of a market economy in that those disputes have occurred most frequently in the context of commercial

⁷³⁵ These verbs are “ἐξαπέστειλαν” (send away; vv. 10-11), “δείραντες” (lashing; vv.10-11), “ἀτιμάσαντες” (dishonoring; v. 11), “τραυματίσαντες” (wounding; v. 12), “ἐξέβαλον” (cast out; v. 12), “ἐκβαλόντες” (casting out; v. 15), and “ἀπέκτειναν” (kill; v. 15).

⁷³⁶ Jean Bingen, *Hellenistic Egypt: Monarchy, Society, Economy, and Culture*, ed. Roger S. Bagnall (Berkeley and California: University of California Press, 2007), 229-239.

agribusiness.

Furthermore, from a different point of view, according to the asymmetric information model of a strike, employees can use a strike to elicit hidden information from employers concerning the firm's true level of profit.⁷³⁷ Suppose that a firm is in the process of sharing its profit between the employers and the employees. Moreover, it is assumed that the employers know better the firm's true level of profit than the employees do because of their superior information about the details of the enterprise and the firm—in other words, information asymmetry concerning the firm's true level of profit exists between the employers and the employees. If it is the case, in the course of negotiation between the two, the employees can declare the threat of a strike as a means to identify the firm's true level of profit. In this situation, if the employers concede the demands of the employees to avoid a strike, it may show that the employers can afford the demands, which then may indicate indirectly that the firm's true level of profit is higher than the employers announced. Of course, in this situation, the additional assumption is that the firm's profit is sufficiently larger than the additional costs that a strike can incur to the firm. On the contrary, if the employers do not give in to the demands of the employees, deciding to take a strike, it is likely that the firm cannot be financially able to accept the demands due to its low level of profit. In this way, the employees can use a strike as a tool to overcome the asymmetric information concerning the firm's true level of profit.⁷³⁸

The situation reflected in the parable (20:9-18) is somewhat similar to the model described above. More specifically, there seems to be an information asymmetry between the master and the tenants in the parable. In this case, it seems that the tenants possess a better knowledge concerning the true profit of the vineyard. This is so for several reasons. First, the

⁷³⁷ Ehrenberg and Smith, *Modern Labor Economics*, 498.

⁷³⁸ For more detail, see Joseph Tracy, "An Investigation into the Determinants of U.S. Strike Activity," *American Economic Review* 76, no. 3 (1986): 423-436.

master in the parable is an absentee landowner (v. 9) and thus may have less knowledge about the details of farming in his vineyard than the tenants who actually cultivate the vineyard.

Second, there is no reference to the master's supervisor-in-residence who can monitor and report the current situation of the farm regularly. So there is no reason to believe that the master has the same amount of information about the current situation of the farm. Third, the master dispatches his slave several times during the harvest to collect his rent (vv. 10-12). This repeated sending suggests that the master fails to grasp exactly what is happening in his vineyard and the true intention of his tenants. Fourth, in the case of the contract with crop-sharing or a fixed-rent in kind, there is little, if any, incentive for the master to supervise or monitor the situation of the farm closely—neither does he need to know the details of his farm situation. Taking all these into consideration, it seems that it is the tenants who have superior information about the vineyard and its profit.

In the situation where the master does not know the vineyard's true level of profit, his repeated sending of slaves operates as a signal for the tenants that the master is seeking to identify its true level of profit. Moreover, the master's sending the son acts as a much stronger signal than sending slaves. Likewise, the tenants' repeated refusal to share the profit serves as a signal that they send to the master concerning the profitability of the vineyard—that is, the profit margin is not high enough to share the produce with their master. Or they want to keep all the production for themselves. In this regard, the tenants in the parable use a strike as a method not only to express their complaint about the issue of rent payment but also to settle the dispute by sending a series of strong signals to the master.

If a strike is a powerful method of employees to achieve their goals in the negotiation with employers, the permanent replacement of strikers serves as a strong weapon of employers to

counter or deter the attempt of a strike. In particular, the use or threat of the permanent replacement of workers significantly weakens the bargaining power of employees. For instance, according to an estimation by Peter Cramton and Joseph Tracy, the threat of the use of permanent replacements of workers in the U.S. during the period of 1980-89 had the effect of reducing strikes by approximately 8 percent.⁷³⁹

The use of the permanent replacement of workers means the termination of the current employment relationship between employers and employees. Greco-Roman papyri provide evidence of landlords' use of the termination of tenancy contracts as a means of implementing their will, as a last resort to resolve conflicts. A third-century BCE Egyptian papyrus, for instance, reports the expulsion of a tenant by former partners of the landowner (*P.enteux*. 65). In fact, such expulsion could have happened especially in cases of arrears of rent or default, as is endorsed by the Roman laws by way of defending the right of masters (*Dig.* 19.2.54.1). Similarly, a third-century CE papyrus also attests the expulsion of tenants by their masters before their leases run out (*CPR* XVIIA 6).

In the parable, Luke's Jesus narrates the master's replacement of the existing tenants by the new ones (v. 16). The audience responds to the master's act of the replacement with a forceful exclamation, “μὴ γένοιτο,” which means literally “may it not be (so)” and thus carries the connotation of strong negation (v. 16).⁷⁴⁰ Perhaps, this expression may reflect a strong sympathy for the tenants by the audience who identify themselves with the tenants as most of the audience belong to non-elite groups, as some commentators such as Bernard Brandon Scott and John T. Carroll rightly suggest.⁷⁴¹ If so, such a “horrificed” response seems to reflect the

⁷³⁹ Peter Cramton and Joseph Tracy, “The Use of Replacement Workers in Union Contract Negotiations: The U.S. Experience, 1980-1989,” *Journal of Labor Economics* 16, no. 4 (1998): 667-701.

⁷⁴⁰ LSJ, 349-50. See also Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According to Luke X-XXIV*, 1285.

⁷⁴¹ Bernard Brandon Scott, *Hear Then the Parable: A Commentary on the Parables of Jesus* (Minneapolis, MN:

audience's hope that such replacement would not happen.⁷⁴² Therefore, the response appears to confirm the seriousness, and thus the effectiveness, of the permanent replacement of workers in the ancient Roman world. The labor-management dispute described in the parable well exhibits the economic rationality of both the master and the tenants all of whom endeavor to maximize their profits in the context of an agricultural market economy.

3. The Account of the Poor Widow's Offering (21:1-4)

In this account, Jesus observes people's behavior of offering gifts to the temple treasury (vv.1-2). Jesus then states that the poor widow offers more than all the others in that she donates all the living expenses she has (vv. 3-4). This story mainly concerns the issue of religious donation. I will read this story from the perspective of the economics of altruism and giving.

3.1. The Economics of Altruism and Giving

Addison G. Wright insists that Jesus's praise of the widow's act of offering all her living expenses carries a connotation of sarcasm (21:3-4).⁷⁴³ In arguing so, Wright notes that in the story that immediately precedes this account (21:3-4), Jesus severely criticizes the behavior of scribes who devour the house of widows, which portrays how a religion can exploit the poor through the abuse of religious power and authority (20:47). In this regard, Wright interprets Jesus's remark in Luke 21:4 as "a downright disapproval" rather than "an approbation" of her religious piety in the form of a total commitment.⁷⁴⁴ In this case, Jesus's remark merely

Fortress Press, 1989), 251; Carroll, *Luke*, 393-4.

⁷⁴² Tannehill, *Luke*, 291; Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According to Luke X-XXIV*, 1285.

⁷⁴³ Wright, "The Widow's Mites: Praise or Lament?" 256-65.

⁷⁴⁴ Wright, "The Widow's Mites: Praise or Lament?" 262.

demonstrates a negative aspect of the Temple system.⁷⁴⁵ More specifically, in the account (21:3-4), Jesus condemns both “the value system that motivates her action” and “the people who conditioned her to do it.”⁷⁴⁶ In this argument, Wright points out that the widow’s devotion is influenced by a certain value system. Concerning the value system, an economic theory provides a helpful theoretical commentary.

Economic theory explains altruistic behaviors (donating money or providing services to others by sacrificing one’s own time and resources) by applying the consumer choice theory.⁷⁴⁷ More concretely, one’s altruistic behaviors can be included into one’s choice options for consumption so long as such behaviors can give some utility or happiness to her (or him). For instance, if one is concerned with other’s material well-being (or welfare) and can feel happiness or satisfaction when she (or he) sees the improvement of others’ material comfort, her (or his) donation then can give some utility to her (or him). In this light, altruistic behaviors can function as commodities that one can choose to consume depending on one’s individual preference for others’ well-being.

However, not all people may regard altruistic behaviors as desirable economic goods--it totally depends on the subjective preferences of individuals. Those who care little about others’ well-being might get little, if any, utility through altruistic behaviors; and therefore they would not regard such behaviors as desirable economic goods. Of course, the actual decision of altruistic behaviors will be influenced by more complicated factors such as the degree of intensity of caring about others’ happiness and one’s cost of donating money and time. More specifically, those who care more intensely about or value highly the happiness of others would

⁷⁴⁵ For more detail, see Hanson and Oakman, *Palestine in the Time of Jesus*, 123-47.

⁷⁴⁶ Wright, “The Widow’s Mites: Praise or Lament?” 262.

⁷⁴⁷ Edgar K. Browning and Mark A. Zupan, *Microeconomics: Theory and Applications*, 11th ed. (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley, 2012), 74-77.

get more utility from their altruistic activities than those who do not. In this case, those who have a strong preference for altruism may be more willing to give up a much larger portion of their resources to altruistic activities or voluntarily pay high costs of altruism.

In this light, the behavior of the widow in the story (21:1-4) can be regarded as a rational behavior from an economic perspective. More specifically, in light of consumer theory, a possibility is open that her excessive donation beyond her ability may stem from her extraordinarily strong preference for religious piety. In addition, her strong preference may be heavily influenced by her value system as Wright indicates. According to neoclassical economics, individual and/or social preferences (or tastes) are influenced by a variety of elements. These elements include not only cultural, historical, psychological, and physiological needs (such as love, hunger, and thirst) but also “artificially contrived cravings (for cigarettes, drugs, or fancy sports cars)” and “a large element of tradition and religion.”⁷⁴⁸ However, economists generally assume that preferences are given in that they are not determined by economic elements. As N. Gregory Mankiw puts it: “Economists normally do not try to explain people’s tastes because tastes are based on historical and psychological forces that are beyond the realm of economics.”⁷⁴⁹

However, what is missing from Wright’s argument is that Luke’s Gospel also provides several references that promote, either explicitly or implicitly, religious donations, which could potentially lead the audience to behave similarly to the widow. In particular, Luke’s Jesus seems to take a utilitarian approach to altruism and religious commitment in many of those references in that he instructs his audience that those behaviors are not without compensation. For instance, Jesus exhorts his disciples to sell their possessions and give alms so that they can lay up treasure

⁷⁴⁸ Samuelson and Nordhaus, *Economics*, 48.

⁷⁴⁹ Mankiw, *Principles of Microeconomics* (2012), 68.

in heaven rather than in earth (12:33). Put differently, Jesus's exhortation is virtually equivalent to the act of investment in that through their altruistic behaviors disciples deposit a riskless heavenly asset—free from theft or decay. Jesus also made a similar case in the story of the rich ruler (18:15-34) when he orders him to divest his entire wealth (v. 22). In a similar fashion, in Jesus's teaching on the plain, Jesus states that the act of lending without expecting any return would bring a great reward and make them divine children (6:35). Moreover, in this teaching, Jesus shows that the act of giving is a highly profitable trade. As he puts it, "give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap" (6:38). Likewise, the act of inviting the socially marginalized at the feast such as the poor, the crippled, the lame, and the blind is taught to bring recompense at the end time (14:12-14).

In a similar fashion, Luke's Gospel illustrates that the practice of religious donation brings other benefits. For instance, in the account of Jesus's healing the slave of a centurion at Capernaum (7:1-10), some Jewish elders ask Jesus to heal the slave at the request of the centurion, underscoring his love of Jewish people by citing his construction of a synagogue for Jews (v. 5). The elders seem to insist implicitly that such religious devotion merits healing by Jesus (vv. 4-5). Jesus seems to tacitly consent to the elders' reasoning by going with them (v. 6). Similarly, a woman shows her religious devotion to Jesus by anointing him with an alabaster jar of ointment and cleansing his feet with her tears and hairs while he is dining at the Pharisee's house (7:36-38, 44-46). Again, Jesus repays her religious devotion by absolving her "many" sins (vv. 47-48).

By the same token, Jesus's exhortation to prioritize religious commitment (12:22-34) takes on similar utilitarian overtones in that it is associated with reward in both earth and heaven.

In this exhortation, Jesus orders his audience not to worry about material well-being, urging, instead, that they seek the divine kingdom. If they do so, Jesus guarantees, all their material needs will be filled (vv. 29, 31). In addition, he further assures them of receiving the divine kingdom (v. 32).

Moreover, Luke's Gospel seems to present some examples that serve as a guideline for the religious donation of his audience. For instance, Luke reports that a group of women including Mary the Magdalene, Joanna the wife of Herod's steward Chuza, and Susanna support Jesus materially out of their own possessions while Jesus is in his itinerant mission throughout Galilee and Judea with his twelve apostles (8:1-3). Kyung-Jin Kim suggests that Luke seems to present this account as an exemplary behavior that some sedentary disciples of Jesus should follow.⁷⁵⁰

In addition, when he sends the twelve apostles and the seventy disciples on mission respectively (9:1-5; 10:1-16), Jesus orders them not to carry basic provisions such as staff, bag, bread, money, purse, sandals, and even an additional tunic, making them rely solely on the hospitality of people since they deserve it (9:3-4; 10:5-7). At the same time, Jesus also issues stern warnings to those who fail to offer such hospitality—put differently, religious donation. As he puts it: “‘Even the dust of your town that clings to our feet, we wipe off in protest against you. Yet know this: the kingdom of God has come near.’ I tell you, on that day it will be more tolerable for Sodom than for that town” (10:11-12 cf. 9:5). Taken together, the above references seem appealing enough to instill some justification for religious donation into the mind of the audience. By doing so, these instances prepare the audience to emulate such behaviors.

Summarily, such voices would act as a strong ideological force that forms the widow's

⁷⁵⁰ Kim, *Stewardship and Almsgiving in Luke's Theology*, 175-77.

value system and, as a result, exerts a crucial influence on her strong preference for religious donation. In this regard, the behaviors of altruism and giving displayed in Luke's Gospel should not necessarily be regarded as a deviation from economic rationality or a counter example of economic theory. On the contrary, they can be treated as the expression of economic rationality--as a part of non-profit maximization--from the perspective of the economics of altruism and giving in the realm of religion. The act of donating all her money to the Temple treasury represents the altruistic economic rationality of the widow.

4. The Account of Jesus's Prophecy about the Destruction of the Jerusalem Temple (21:5-6)

This account starts with a reference to the beauty of the Temple, its beautiful stones and adornments (21:5). In response, Jesus prophesies the destruction of the Temple, describing its total devastation by referring to "not one stone will be left upon another" (v. 6). In this account, the references to stones in verses 5-6 set the context for the discourse on the Temple—its beauty and its destruction. I will read this account in light of the stone trade of the Roman imperial economy.

4.1. Stone Trade

As the story shows, the beauty of the Temple is closely associated with that of stones (21:5). What kinds of stones are they? What is the economic significance of these stones? Luke provides no information on the kinds and qualities of stones used in the Temple and the economic significance of the stones. However, epigraphic and archeological evidence from the Roman imperial economy provides some clues on these questions and attests further dimensions of the Roman market economy.

Unlike Luke's Gospel, Josephus's writing offers some information about the stones used in the Temple. For instance, in his work *The Jewish War*, Josephus reports that blocks of stone with the length of 40 cubits (about 65.7 feet)⁷⁵¹ were used to lay the foundations of the Temple (5.189).⁷⁵² A low parapet which surrounded the sanctuary and the altar was made of fine stones (5.226). Moreover, the porticoes were made of a single block of the purest white marble (5.190). The open court was paved with many different types of stones (5.192). An elaborately decorated stone balustrade of 3 cubits surrounded the second court (5.193). As the above description well demonstrates, the Temple includes a large number of decorative stones.

In fact, such decorative stones were closely associated with the Roman stone trade in the early imperial period. In the Roman stone industry, the early imperial period saw the growth in the demand for stones of diverse types--especially, the high demand for certain decorative stones.⁷⁵³ These colored stones include the purpled colored *lapis porphyrites*, red-spotted *lithos pyrrhopoecilos*, and yellow/pink Numidian marbles. Most of these colored stones derive their names from their place of origin, such as *marmor claudianum* (Mons Claudianus), *carystium* (Karystos), *numidicum* (Numidia), *phrygium* (Phrygia), and *scyrium* (Skyros).⁷⁵⁴ In this regard, the stones of the Temple, whose beauty fascinates the disciples (21:5), belong with decorative stones such as these.

Moreover, those stones assumed considerable economic significance in the early Roman imperial economy. This significance is well attested in the shipwreck data that shed light on maritime trade items of the Roman Empire. In his recent study, Ben Russell has identified 82

⁷⁵¹ According to Marvin A. Powell 1 cubit corresponds to about 19.7 inches (or 50 cm). Marvin A. Powell, "Weights and Measures," in *The Anchor Bible Dictionary. Volume 6, Si-Z*, ed. David Noel Freedman, 6 vols. (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 897-908.

⁷⁵² In another instance, Josephus described the scale of some of the stones used in the Temple construction as 45 cubits long, 5 cubits high, and 6 cubits wide (*J.W.* 15.224).

⁷⁵³ Russell, *The Economics of the Roman Stone Trade*, 11.

⁷⁵⁴ Russell, *The Economics of the Roman Stone Trade*, 9-10.

shipwrecks with stone cargoes found in the Roman world.⁷⁵⁵ Among these shipwrecks, a large majority of shipwrecks are dated to the imperial period, while only a few shipwrecks are datable to the republican period. In particular, the third century CE records the largest number of the shipwrecks, which is partially attributable to the growth of the sarcophagus industry.⁷⁵⁶ Thus, the high frequency of the shipwrecks during the imperial period simply attests the growth of the large-scale overseas transport of stone during the early imperial period, most probably, in accordance with that of the stone industry. In this regard, Luke's reference to stones in the Temple suggests that the economy inscribed in Luke may participate in the economic boom of the stone industry during the early Roman imperial period. This account exhibits an aspect of a market economy in the Roman Empire.

5. The Account of the Risen Jesus's Appearance to the Eleven Apostles (24:36-43)

In this account, the risen Jesus appears to his apostles and other disciples (24:36). To prove his bodily presence before them, Jesus shows his hands and feet and invites them to examine his body (vv. 38-40). He then eats a piece of broiled fish before them (vv. 42-43). I read this story in light of the ancient fishing industry.

5.1. Fishing Industry

The popularity of fish as food is well attested in the economic history of the Roman Empire. The Roman imperial period marked a considerable increase in the production and the trade of fish products such as salted fish (*salsamentum*) and fish sauces. Especially, *garum* was the most popular fish sauce in the ancient Roman diet (Pliny, *NH.* 31.93-95; Athenaeus, *Deipnosophists*

⁷⁵⁵ Ben J. Russell, "Roman and Late Antique Shipwrecks with Stone Cargoes: A New Inventory," *JRA* 26 (2013): 169-99.

⁷⁵⁶ Russell, *The Economics of the Roman Stone Trade*, 112-118.

2.67b-c).⁷⁵⁷ Other famous fish sauces included *liquamen*, *muria*, and *allec*.⁷⁵⁸ Accordingly, fish occurs as a common food item in some instances in Luke. Besides this account (24:36-43), in the account of Jesus's teaching on prayer, fish appears as a food item that a child requests (11:11). Fish also appear with bread in the account of feeding five thousand people (9:10-17).

In this resurrection account (24:36-43), some interpreters have raised the question as to how city dwellers who do not live near the sea, a lake, or a river could eat fish in their meals (vv. 42-43).⁷⁵⁹ In answering this question, Eric F. F. Bishop, in particular, proposes that the fish in the account may be processed with salt to prevent decay and that some of Jesus's disciples such as James and John would engage in the trade of fish in a small retail shop in Jerusalem.⁷⁶⁰ Moreover, the consumption of fish by city dwellers suggests that fish were distributed beyond the local areas in which they are caught. In this light, Wilhelm H. Wuellner further insists that fish would have been supplied throughout Palestine and might have been exported to other Mediterranean areas.⁷⁶¹

Those arguments are not without probable causes. In the case of Rome, for instance, a second-century CE inscription from the Horrea Galbana suggests that a certain freedwoman Aurelia probably sold fish to consumers as it describes her as *piscatrix*—a female fishmonger (CIL VI 9801). Evidence also suggests that fish were sold in the forum (Plautus, *Capt.* 813-16) and in taverns (Flavius Caper, *De Verbis Dubiis* 108) of the Roman world. Likewise, a funny

⁷⁵⁷ Robert I. Curtis, "Salt-Fish Products around the Strait of Gibraltar," *JRA* 4 (1991): 299–305; Nejib B. Lazreg et al., "Production et Commercialisation des Salsamenta de l'Afrique Ancienne," in *Productions et Exportations Africaines: Actualités Archeologiques*, ed. Pol Troussset (Paris: Editions du Comité des Travaux Historiques et Scientifiques, 1995), 103–42.

⁷⁵⁸ Sally Grainger, "Roman Fish Sauce: An Experiment in Archaeology," in *Cured, Fermented and Smoked Foods: Proceedings from the Oxford Symposium on Food and Cookery 2010*, ed. Helen Saberi (Totnes, UK: Prospect Books, 2011), 121-131, esp. 122.

⁷⁵⁹ Gerald O'Collins, "Did Jesus Eat the Fish (Luke 24:42-43)?" *Gregorianum* 69, no. 1 (1988): 65-76; Eric F. F. Bishop, "With Saint Luke in Jerusalem from Easter Day till Pentecost," *ET* 56, no. 8 (1945): 192-94, 200-223.

⁷⁶⁰ Bishop, "With Saint Luke in Jerusalem from Easter Day till Pentecost," 200-223.

⁷⁶¹ Wilhelm H. Wuellner, *The Meaning of Fishers of Men*, NTL (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1967), 32-33.

episode in Apuleius' novel *Metamorphoses* is set in the fish market (1.24-25).

In fact, live or fresh fish could be sold in urban areas during the Roman period.⁷⁶² For instance, a small boat excavated at Ostia, dating to the first century CE, has a live tank in it. This tank may be used to transport live fresh fish to the city of Rome.⁷⁶³ In most cases, however, fish were processed for the consumption by the city dwellers. Since fish are susceptible to decay in a short time, for a long-term sale, they were generally preserved in the form of salted fish sauces once they were caught. In the ancient Roman world, the methods of fish processing include salting, drying, pickling, and smoking.⁷⁶⁴ Luke's Gospel, however, does not refer explicitly to any processed fish. In this account (24:36-43), the adjective ὀπτός in verse 42 has meanings of "baked," "broiled," or "roasted."⁷⁶⁵ However, it seems highly probable that the fish appeared in the account of feeding the five thousand (9:10-17) may be processed fish in that the parallel passage in the Gospel of John (6:1-15) refers to them as processed fish (ὀψάρια; vv. 9, 11)⁷⁶⁶ which Joseph Fitzmyer identifies with "dried fish."⁷⁶⁷ In addition, John's Gospel also mentions processed fish in the account of Jesus's post-resurrection appearance to his disciples in which Jesus prepares bread and processed fish (ὀψάριον) for his disciples (21:13).

Archeological evidence shows that fish sauces were included in seaborne trade items during the Roman imperial period. For instance, a shipwreck excavated at Port Vendres in France (Port Vendres II) carries a mixed-cargo of mid-first century CE Spanish exports that

⁷⁶² Thomas H. Corcoran, *The Roman Fishing Industry of the Late Republic and Early Empire* (Ph.D. Diss., Northwestern University, 1957), 20-65.

⁷⁶³ Otello Testaguzza, *Portus. Illustrazione dei Porti di Caludio e Traiano e della Città di Porto a Fiumicino* (Rome: Julia, 1970), 132, 143-144.

⁷⁶⁴ David L. Thurmond, *A Handbook of Food Processing in Classical Rome: For Her Bounty No Winter* (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 222.

⁷⁶⁵ LSJ, 1242.

⁷⁶⁶ LSJ, 1282.

⁷⁶⁷ Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According to Luke I-IX*, 767.

includes fish sauces in amphorae.⁷⁶⁸ Based upon the archeological evidence of amphorae, Tønnes Bekker-Nielsen suggests that *garum* may be ranked as another major food item of the Mediterranean diet, together with the Mediterranean triad—wheat, wine, and olive oil—in that it would take up about 10-20 percent or more of the amphorae.⁷⁶⁹

In accordance with the popularity of fish in the Roman world, Luke's Gospel also portrays the fishing industry in some instances. Luke describes that some of Jesus's disciples are engaged in inshore fishing in the sea of Galilee prior to their call to discipleship (5:1-11). In the account, Luke portrays a particular practice of fishing in the ancient Roman world, according to which fishermen put out their boats to the sea or lake and catch fish using nets. Specifically, they let down the nets and/or enclose fish from each direction through the cooperative work of two or more boats. Then they draw out nets into the boats to take out the fish (vv. 4-8).

The above account (5:1-11) directly refutes Thomas W. Gallant's assumption that net fishing from boats was not practiced in the ancient world.⁷⁷⁰ In addition to Luke's account (5:1-11), mosaics from third- and fourth-century CE North Africa also attest the use of nets from boats in the early Roman imperial period.⁷⁷¹ According to Tønnes Bekker-Nielsen, Gallant assumes the non-existence of net fishing from boats in the light of the primitivists' viewpoint--in the tradition of Polanyi and Finley—that claims ancient fishing was inefficient and its

⁷⁶⁸ D. Colls et al., "L'épave Port-Vendres II et le Commerce de la Bétique à l'Époque de Claude," *Archaeonautica* 1 (1977): 1-143; A. J. Parker and Jennifer Price, "Spanish Exports of the Claudian Period: The Significance of the Port-Vendres II Wreck Reconsidered," *The International Journal of Nautical Archaeology and Underwater Exploration* 10, no. 3 (1981): 221-8.

⁷⁶⁹ Tønnes Bekker-Nielsen, "Fish in the Ancient Economy," in *Ancient History Matters: Studies Presented to Jens Erik Skydsgaard on His Seventieth Birthday*, ed. Karen Ascani et al. *Analecta Romana Instituti Danici* Supplementum 30 (Rome: L'Erma di Bretschneider, 2002), 29-37, esp. 34-35.

⁷⁷⁰ Thomas W. Gallant, *A Fisherman's Tale: An Analysis of the Potential Productivity of Fishing in the Ancient World* (Gent: Belgian Archaeological Mission in Greece, 1985), 25.

⁷⁷¹ Tønnes Bekker-Nielsen, "Nets, Boats and Fishing in the Roman World," *Classica et Mediaevalia* 53 (2002): 215-233.

productivity was low.⁷⁷² However, contrary to Gallant's argument, the main thrust of Luke's account (5:1-11) is that the fishermen could catch a lot of fish by net fishing from boats through the miraculous involvement of Jesus. In this regard, the account also refutes Gallant's claim of the inefficiency and the low productivity of ancient fishing. In a similar vein, Tønnes Bekker-Nielsen refutes Gallant's claims by drawing evidence from literary sources, archaeological founding, and mosaics of the Roman imperial world.⁷⁷³ Through the evidence, Tønnes Bekker-Nielsen argues that both shore-based fishing and net-fishing from boats in the Roman world were efficient in that fishing technology similar to ancient technology is still being used in the modern fishing industry.⁷⁷⁴ In addition, a second-century CE poem *Halieutika*, written by Oppian, testifies to the use of diverse fishing methods like spears, tridents (*Hal.* 3.552-554; 4.252-253), lines with multiple hooks (*Hal.* 3.78; 3.468ff), and casting-nets (*Hal.* 3.79-84). Tønnes Bekker-Nielsen suggests that such diverse fishing methods may have brought substantial catches by pre-modern standards, and thus they demonstrate the efficiency of ancient fishing.⁷⁷⁵ In this regard, the ancient fishing industry may be not as inefficient and low-productivity as Gallant argues. Therefore, Gallant's claims demonstrates how preconceived notions of substantivism and primitivism influence a negative evaluation of the ancient fishing industry.

In their article, Kenneth C. Hanson and Douglas E. Oakman provide some detailed information on the practice of fishing and the production of processed fish in the ancient Roman

⁷⁷² Tønnes Bekker-Nielsen, "The Technology and Productivity of Ancient Sea Fishing," in *Ancient Fishing and Fish Processing in the Black Sea Region*, ed. Tonnes Bekker-Nielsen (Aarhus, Denmark: Aarhus University Press, 2005), 83.

⁷⁷³ Bekker-Nielsen, "The Technology and Productivity of Ancient Sea Fishing," 83-96; Bekker-Nielsen, "Nets, Boats and Fishing in the Roman World," 215-233.

⁷⁷⁴ Bekker-Nielsen, "The Technology and Productivity of Ancient Sea Fishing," 86.

⁷⁷⁵ Bekker-Nielsen, "The Technology and Productivity of Ancient Sea Fishing," 89-93; Bekker-Nielsen, "Nets, Boats and Fishing in the Roman World," 215-233.

world.⁷⁷⁶ Yet, they seem to put more emphasis on the dynamics of taxes and the resultant transfer of wealth from producers to the upper Roman and provincial elites by situating the Galilean fishing economy in a broader context of a political economy of Roman Palestine. As they state: “The terms extraction, redistribution, and tribute reflect the political nature of these distributive mechanisms. All of these terms emphasize that the benefits in ancient economy flowed ‘upward’ to the advantage of the elites.”⁷⁷⁷ In this light, they insist that those who were engaged in fishing did not achieve a large profit margin due to high taxation and regulation, and thus they were not economically rich or belonged to a middle class.⁷⁷⁸ Specifically, according to them, the local government regulated fishing and sold fishing rights to brokers with whom fishermen had to make a contract to catch fish. In this circumstance, a considerable portion of the profit from the fishing business fell into the hands of brokers and local elites.

However, the extraction of tax and its effect on wealth redistribution between the lower class and the upper class are not the sole economic implication that can be drawn from ancient fishing industry. Hanson and Oakman focus mainly on the distribution aspect of the fishing economy while paying less attention to the significance of the fishing industry in the development of the Roman market economy. Indeed, there existed an extensive market economy in fish and fish products in the Roman world.

More concretely, evidence testifies to the production of fish products in many areas of the Roman Empire in the early imperial period. Large-scale fish-salting factories with more than 40 cubic yard capacities were found in many areas of the Roman Empire such as the Straits of Gibraltar, the Tunisian coast, and the Black sea, not to mention much smaller workshops widely

⁷⁷⁶ Kenneth C. Hanson, “The Galilean Fishing Economy and the Jesus Tradition,” *Biblical Theology Bulletin* 27, no. 3 (1997): 99-111; Hanson and Oakman, *Palestine in the Time of Jesus*, 99-103.

⁷⁷⁷ Hanson and Oakman, *Palestine in the Time of Jesus*, 117.

⁷⁷⁸ Hanson and Oakman, *Palestine in the Time of Jesus*, 102.

attested along the Mediterranean coasts of Italy, Southern Gaul, and Tripolitania.⁷⁷⁹ Those factories and workshops demonstrate the development of an extensive Roman fishing industry.

Especially, some scholars have recently paid attention to the economic significance of small workshops in the Roman production.⁷⁸⁰ In this vein, it seems that the importance of small workshops in the Roman fishing industry cannot be underestimated. For instance, a number of small workshops (at least 18 workshops) for fish products were clustered in the city of Sabratha in Roman Libya.⁷⁸¹ Though individual shops there were very small in size, having only 2-4 vats, their aggregate significance in the local economy might have been much greater in that this aggregate shows the boom of the Roman fishing industry during the early imperial period.

Furthermore, the fishing industry is closely associated with other industries. As Safrai rightly observes: “The development of the fishing industry is by its nature dependent upon the development of trade and transportation networks. Without such networks it would be impossible to market the fish over long distances.”⁷⁸² More specifically, a fishing industry requires other economic infrastructures such as traders, markets for fish sales, and inland and/or waterborne transports.⁷⁸³ In Rome, for instance, there existed a fish market (*forum piscatorium* or *piscarium*) as early as the third century BCE (Livy, *Hist.* 26.27.3; 40.51.5; Varro, *ap. Festus* 125 L). In the case of Roman Palestine, biblical tradition seems to indicate the existence of a fish market in Jerusalem as one of its city gates had a name of the “Fish Gate” (2 Chr. 33:14; Neh.

⁷⁷⁹ Andrew I. Wilson, “Fishy Business: Roman Exploitation of Marine Resources,” *JRA* 19.2 (2006): 525-37.

⁷⁸⁰ Mattingly, “Paintings, Presses and Perfume Production at Pompeii,” 71–90, Helen M. Parkins, “The ‘Consumer City’ Domesticated? The Roman City and Elite Economic Strategies,” in *Roman Urbanism: Beyond the Consumer City*, ed. Hellen Parkins (New York: Routledge, 1997), 81–108; Ray Laurence, *Roman Pompeii: Space and Society*, 2nd ed. (New York: Routledge, 2007), 62-81.

⁷⁸¹ Andrew I. Wilson, “Commerce and industry in Roman Sabratha,” *Libyan Studies* 30 (1999): 29–52; “Fish-Salting Workshops in Sabratha,” in *Cetariae 2005: Salsas y Salazones de Pescado en Occidente durante la Antigüedad*, ed. Lázaro Lagóstena, Dario Bernal, and Alicia Arévalo, British Archaeology Reports International Series (Oxford: J. and E. Hedges, 2007), 173-81.

⁷⁸² Safrai, *The Economy of Roman Palestine*, 93.

⁷⁸³ Robert I. Curtis, “Sources for Production and Trade of Greek and Roman Processed Fish,” in Bekker-Nielsen, *Ancient Fishing and Fish Processing in the Black Sea Region*, 31-46.

3:3, 12:39; Zeph. 1:10).⁷⁸⁴ Furthermore, the fishing industry also influenced diverse other industries. As Oakman and Hanson rightly point out, diverse producers supplied necessary equipment to fishermen; for instance, “woodmen” provided “boat lumber” while “weavers,” “farmers,” and “stone masons” supplied “sail linen” “net flax,” and “anchors” respectively. Similarly, for fish processing, other producers including “vintners,” “potters,” and “merchants” provided raw material for fish processing industry such as “wine,” “clay vats,” and “salt.”⁷⁸⁵

As for transportation networks, Hanson and Oakman suggest that in supplying fish to the regions beyond the immediate local areas, the fishing industry in Galilee, for instance, would utilize the network that connected major cities around Galilee including Bethsaida, Cana, Tarichaeae and that finally reached Mediterranean port cities such as Ptolemais and Akko.⁷⁸⁶ Likewise, in Roman Spain, fish products were exported to Italy, the Near East, Gaul, Germany, and Britain, through diverse transport networks, such as maritime, river, and channel transports during the first and second centuries CE.⁷⁸⁷ Moreover, fish processing was also concerned with other industries since it required other resources such as salt, wine, oil, and amphorae, as some classical sources well describe (Pliny, *NH*. 31.93-95; Manilius, *Astronomicon* 5.656-681).

Indeed, a heavy tax system might have exerted a considerable influence on the economy in the Roman world. However, it is one thing that the powerful of a society take a significantly large portion of economic earnings from a certain industry--it is the matter of the distribution of national income or output—whereas it is another thing that a certain industry of an economy takes on features of a market economy; it is the matter of an economic structure or system.

⁷⁸⁴ Hagit Lernau and Omri Lernau, “Fish Remains,” in *Excavations at the City of David 1978-1985: Final Report III*, ed. Alon de Groot and Donald T. Ariel (Jerusalem: Institute of Archaeology, Hebrew University, 1992), 131-48.

⁷⁸⁵ Hanson and Oakman, *Palestine in the Time of Jesus*, 101.

⁷⁸⁶ Hanson and Oakman, *Palestine in the Time of Jesus*, 102.

⁷⁸⁷ Robert I. Curtis, “Spanish Trade in Salted Fish Products in the 1st and 2nd Centuries A. D.,” *International Journal of Nautical Archaeology and Underwater Exploration* 17, no. 3 (1988): 205-10.

Moreover, even if economic earnings from fishery were meager in the first-century CE Roman world, it does not automatically indicate that a fishing industry did not operate in the system of a market economy. On the contrary, the fishing industry inscribed in Luke displays aspects of a market economy as is clear from the fact that it supplies fish to city dwellers (24:36-43). To enable such supply, the fishing industry must have interacted with other industries to acquire raw materials and fishing equipment and utilized well-established transportation and commercial networks. In this regard, the fishing industry demonstrates dynamic features of the Roman imperial economy. Jesus's consumption of fish in the urban context portrayed in the account of the risen Jesus's appearance to the eleven apostles (24:36-43) exhibits aspects of a market economy in the Roman Empire.

6. Conclusion

This chapter has explored some selected texts from Luke 19:28-24:53 that are associated with economic topics—especially those that inscribe aspects of a market economy and economic rationality.

The parable of the rebellious tenants (20:9-18) evidences viticulture and absenteeism that constituted a part of Roman agricultural market economy. The parable describes how a conflict between the master and the tenants occurs in the context of a market economy. In addition, it shows how the master and the tenants try to maximize their profits through the economic relationship of tenancy and in the context of the conflict. It also demonstrates how the behaviors of the master and the tenants exhibit their economic rationality from the perspectives of the bargaining power of laborers and of labor-management dispute. The account of the poor widow's offering (21:1-4) represents how religious donation can be treated as an economically rational

behavior in the light of the economics of altruism and giving. Luke's other texts also demonstrate how the notions of religious devotion in Luke contribute to forming the value system that affects people's preference for consumption and influences their decision-making. The account of Jesus's prophecy about the destruction of the Jerusalem Temple (21:5-6) suggests that the economy inscribed in Luke reflects a growing market economy in the stone trade during the Roman imperial period. The account of the risen Jesus's appearance to the eleven apostles (24:33-42) shows that the fishing industry assumed in the scene operates as a market economy in that fish are consumed by city dwellers, regardless of the exploitive redistribution structure of the fishing industry that transfers a significant portion of its profits to the powerful and the rich.

All these features--viticulture, absenteeism, tenancy, conflicts between masters and tenants in viticulture, the bargaining power of laborers, labor-management dispute, religious donation, stone trade, and the fishing industry--attest that the economy inscribed in this section of Luke's Gospel (20:9-24:53) demonstrates aspects of a market economy and economic rationality within the matrix of the Roman imperial economy.

CHAPTER 8

Conclusion

1. Summary

This study has explored economic scenes inscribed in Luke's Gospel by demonstrating the presence of two over-arching themes: aspects of a market economy and economic rationality. In so doing, the study has extensively utilized methods and concepts developed by modern economics. The brief survey of previous scholarship on economic issues in Luke's Gospel revealed that scholarship has failed to pay due attention to these two themes. Inadequate attention to them has prevented a deeper understanding of Luke's texts that are associated with economic issues (Ch.2). Another brief review on the history of scholarship on the Roman imperial economy situated this study in the contexts of major scholarly debates concerning primitivism/modernism, formalism/substantivism, and post-Finley debates concerning the economic structure of the Roman Empire. The review also provided a broader picture of the ancient Roman imperial economy that has the characteristic of a heterogeneous large-scale open economy (Ch.3). Then the study investigated economic topics in Luke's Gospel following its textual sequence (Chs. 4-7).

On the one hand, Luke's texts are replete with scenes that evidence aspects of a market economy. So for example, the preaching of John the Baptist (3:1-18) reveals how the Roman army and tax business assume aspects of a market economy through the mechanism of the mercenary system and of tax farming. The passage also shows what influences the Roman army and the tax system exerted on the Roman imperial economy. The account of Gerasene Demoniac (8:26-39) attests commercial livestock farming. The parable of the Good Samaritan (10:25-37)

demonstrates commercial lodging and a well-established monetary economy. Both commercial lodging and monetary economy exerted their roles in the Roman imperial market economy. Luke's Gospel demonstrates that money carries out important functions in the economy that Luke inscribes. The parable of the great banquet (14:15-24) evokes the land market operative in the narrative world of Luke's Gospel. It also reveals that diverse economic agents from a variety of economic standings--from the rich, the middle, and the poor--are present in Luke's Gospel. The parable of the dishonest steward (16:1-13) evidences large-scale farming and olive production, which are best suitable for market sales. It also shows the aspect of debts as a bi-product of a market economy. The parable of the ten *minas* (19:11-27) attests non-agricultural sources of income in the Roman imperial economy. In addition, the parable offers a glimpse into small-scale commerce as well as banking and finance operated in the economy inscribed in Luke. The parable of the rebellious tenants (20:9-18) evidences viticulture and absenteeism that constitute a part of Roman agricultural market economy. The parable also describes how conflicts between masters and tenants occur in the context of the market economy. The account of Jesus's prophecy about the destruction of the Jerusalem Temple (21:5-6) attests that the economy inscribed in Luke participated in a growing market economy of stone trade during the Roman imperial period. The account of the risen Jesus's appearance to the eleven apostles (24:36-43) testifies that the fishing industry assumed by the scene operated as a market economy in that fish are consumed by city dwellers.

On the other hand, Luke's Gospel contains a variety of scenes that display the economic rationality of people in the Roman Empire. Their economic rationality takes various forms. Above all, it takes the form of maximization of profits and minimization of costs. The parable of the seed and the soil (8:4-15) demonstrates the concerns of economic agents for agricultural

profits expressed particularly in terms of a seed-yield ratio. The reference to a hundred-fold yield ratio in the parable may show the high productivity of ancient Roman agriculture by pre-modern standards, though the reference may contain considerably the aspect of exaggeration. In this regard, the reference may represent an advanced feature of the Roman imperial economy. In addition, the agricultural practice of sowing before plowing displays an agricultural strategy of cost-minimization. Similarly, Jesus's reference to wage laborers in the account of the commissioning of the seventy disciples (10:1-16) exhibits the landowners' strategy to save labor costs by reducing permanent laborers in farming. The parable of the rich fool (12:13-21) displays the economic rationality of the rich man. In the parable, the notion of greed is interwoven, to a degree, with the profit motive or economic initiative. Likewise, the rich man's activities of capital investment and of a resultant increase of storage exhibit his effort to increase profit by exploiting the opportune time of sales.

Furthermore, this study focuses on the economic agents' rational behaviors by employing the analytical tools of game theory. The discourse on watchful slaves (12:35-48) displays how each economic agent interacts to maximize their own profit through the behaviors of masters and slaves. The discourse reveals how Roman masters approached the institution of slavery to maximize their profit. It also shows that moral hazard is a rational action that slaves can take, whereas diverse mechanisms are rational measures that masters can take in order to prevent the moral hazard of their agents. It also attests the operation of an internal labor market in Luke's narrative world. The parable of a fig tree in a vineyard (13:6-9) shows how ancient Roman farmers employed crop diversification to increase profit and reduce risks in farming. Moreover, the parable reveals the operation of cost-benefit analysis as an expression of economic rationality. The parable of the dishonest steward (16:1-13) demonstrates that economic

rationality runs through the relationship of principal and agents. The parable portrays how the master and the steward act strategically to maximize their profit from the perspective of a final stage game. It also elucidates economic rationality behind the notions of risk premium and of defrauding. The parable of the unworthy servant (17:7-10) inscribes how Roman masters utilize the institution of slavery to maximize their profit by means of full exploitation of slaves. The story of the rich ruler (18:18-30) reveals that economic rationality is operative in a seemingly unrelated act of wealth redistribution. In addition, the story shows how intertemporal choices (choices across different time periods, present consumption versus future consumption) run in the discourse of Jesus and the behaviors of his disciples. Moreover, it describes how Jesus employs the mechanism of screening to overcome a free rider problem caused by asymmetric information. The story of Zaccheus (19:1-10) demonstrates how Zaccheus overcomes the problems of asymmetric information by means of signaling or commitment. The parable of the ten *minas* (19:11-27) displays the economic rationality of the master and the slaves through economic concepts of opportunity cost and of money hoarding. The parable of the rebellious tenants (20:9-18) shows how the master and the tenants maximize their profit through the institution of tenancy and in the context of conflicts between them. The parable demonstrates how the behaviors of the master and the tenants reveal their economic rationality from the perspective of the bargaining power of laborers and of labor-management disputes. The account of the poor widow's offering (21:1-4) represents how religious donation can be an economically rational behavior in light of the economics of altruism and giving.

2. Negotiating the Roman Empire

The economic readings presented in this study have a direct bearing on the issue of how the

Gospel engages the issue of negotiating the Roman Empire.⁷⁸⁸ Generally speaking, in the Roman Empire, the vast majority of people outside the elite group, not to mention the downtrodden and those located in the lower part of the social hierarchy,⁷⁸⁹ endeavored to negotiate this world for their survival. As Warren Carter well epitomizes, such negotiation takes a variety of forms.

Sometimes, people may employ extreme ways. At the one end of a spectrum are submission, active participation, and collaboration while at the other end is direct physical resistance, such as the Jewish revolt against Rome in 66-70 CE, and “rhetorical attacks on the empire.”⁷⁹⁰ In addition, there are more nuanced, simultaneous, practical, and compromised methods in between the two ends. More specifically, people in the Roman world adopted protesting strategies that “were hidden or ‘off-stage,’ disguised, calculated, self-protective, anonymous, and intended not to change the system but to assert dignity and facilitate survival,”⁷⁹¹ thus often exhibiting the features of “imitation” and “ambivalence.”⁷⁹²

In particular, people employed diverse rhetorical and literary strategies known broadly as “hidden transcripts” which feature “alternative or counter ideology,” “fantasies of violent revenge and judgment on elites and/or a reversal of roles in favor of non-elites,” “coded talk with secret messages of freedom (‘the reign of God’ or ‘kingdom of God’),” and “double-talk” that encodes a subversive message behind the seemingly submissive one.⁷⁹³ Moreover, people “may reframe an elite action intended to humiliate” non-elites in a way that gives dignity to them “by

⁷⁸⁸ Steve Walton, “The State They Were in: Luke’s View of the Roman Empire,” in *Rome in the Bible and the Early Church*, ed. Peter Oakes (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2002), 1-41; Warren Carter, “Aquatic Display: Navigating the Roman Imperial World in Acts 27,” *NTS* 62, no. 1 (2016): 79-96.

⁷⁸⁹ Friesen, “Poverty in Pauline Studies,” 323-61; Longenecker, “Exposing the Economic Middle,” 243-78.

⁷⁹⁰ Warren Carter, “Roman Empire,” in *The New Interpreter’s Dictionary of the Bible, Me-R, Volume 4*, ed. Katharine D. Sakenfeld, 5 vols. (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2009), 828-35, esp. 833.

⁷⁹¹ Carter, “Roman Empire,” 828-35, esp. 830.

⁷⁹² Carter, “Roman Empire,” 828-35, esp. 834.

⁷⁹³ Carter, “Roman Empire,” 828-35, esp. 830.

attributing to it a different significance” and construct communities that somewhat mimic but differ from Roman imperial ways and values.⁷⁹⁴

Within this context, the economic readings of Luke’s Gospel presented in this study add a helpful insight into the ongoing discussion of the issue of negotiating the Roman Empire. Basically speaking, from the perspective of economics, people in the Roman world would have exerted themselves to maximize profits and/ or minimize costs under the given economic circumstances, especially given the rising trend of a market economy in many economic sectors of the Roman imperial economy. In so doing, they may have displayed considerable economic rationality as their weapon in both representing and negotiating the Roman imperial economy.

As Warren Carter rightly points out, there are many reflections of Roman economic practices in Jesus’s parables which provide a glimpse into the realities of the Roman imperial economy.⁷⁹⁵ Perhaps, mutual solidarity and sharing emerge as ideals in Luke’s Gospel (3:10-14; 6:34-35, 38; 10:25-37; 11:4; 12:33; 14:12-14; 18:18-30). In reality, however, people in the Roman Empire would have exhibited considerable selfish behaviors as modern economic theories posit. Perhaps, this would partially explain why there are exhortations and warnings in Luke’s Gospel regarding economic issues, such as warnings against wealth, greed, and material concerns (8:14; 12:13-21; 12:22-34). Behind such ideological instructions may have been located the basic human nature of economic pursuit, which seems to be a realistic feature of the first-century CE Roman imperial economy.

In some of Luke’s parables, we witness economic conflicts between the powerful and the powerless (12:35-48; 16:1-13; 19:11-27; 20:9-18), which may be driven primarily by a profit motive. For instance, in the parable of the rebellious tenants (20:9-18), the master and the tenants

⁷⁹⁴ Carter, “Roman Empire,” 830.

⁷⁹⁵ Carter, “Roman Empire,” 830.

were in conflict over the issue of a share of produce. In this regard, those parables seem to expose well the faces of economic agents by describing their economic interests and desires frankly. Moreover, the growing market economy of the Roman Empire may exert an important role in economic conflicts by setting the stage for them. The Roman market economy offers the best fitting matrix within which people pursue their economic goals and clash with each other in the course of economic pursuits. Luke's Gospel provides glimpses of a context in which economic conflicts may occur by displaying aspects of the Roman market economy, such as livestock farming (8:26-39), grain market (9:10-17), commercial lodging (10:25-37), land market (14:15-24), commercial olive production (16:1-13), small-scale commerce (19:11-27), viticulture (20:9-18), stone trade (21:5-6), and the fishing industry (24:36-43).

Furthermore, in economic conflicts, economic rationality may serve as a primary weapon through which people--both the powerful and the powerless--realize their economic interests and desires. In this context, diverse economic theories specialized in the study of aspects of a market economy and economic rationality, including game theory, serve as useful analytical tools to investigate the economic conflicts of people from the perspective of negotiating the Roman imperial economy.

More specifically, Luke's Gospel seems to expose diverse strategies for exploitation adopted by the powerful. Frequently in the Gospel, they wear the clothes of landlords or masters in the context of the Roman imperial economy. Those strategies often take the form of economic rationality in the realm of a market economy. In this economic setting, exploitation would take place in the course of profit-maximization and/or cost-minimization by the powerful. The exploitation seems to be fleshed out in the discourse on slaves (17:7-10) as the full utilization of slaves' labor (vv. 7-8), in the parable of watchful slaves (12:35-48) as the implementation of a

monitoring system including a surprise visit (v. 46), and in the parable of the ten *minas* (19:11-17) as the pressure for profit (v. 16-26).

In so doing, the powerful could avoid directly dipping their hands into the dirty process of bloodsucking by placing their economic agents to the fore. The discourse on slaves (17:7-10), the parables of the dishonest steward (16:1-13), of the ten *minas* (19:11-17), and of the rebellious tenants (20:9-18) demonstrate well this use of economic agents. More concretely, in the parable of the dishonest steward (16:1-13), it is through the agency of his steward that the master squeezes his debtors, as the scene of the steward's summons of his master's debtors for the renegotiation of debts well portrays (vv. 5-7). In the parable of the ten *minas*, the powerful engage commerce, and perhaps money-lending, by means of proxy (vv. 13, 23). In the parable of the rebellious tenants, the conflict between the master and the tenants develops through a proxy war between the master's slaves and the tenants (vv. 10-12). By doing so, therefore, the powerful could bypass moral censure for exploitation and, consequently, hide their image as exploiters or oppressors.

At the same time, they may employ incentive and/or penalty systems as mechanisms for preventing or remedying the moral hazard of their agents as the parables of watchful slaves (12:37-38, 43-44) and of the ten *minas* (19:17, 19, 24) demonstrate. In those parables, incentive mechanisms are intended for the best interest of the masters, rather than coming out of humanitarian and/or communal consideration.

In a similar fashion, the powerless, commonly referred to as slaves, tenants, and stewards in the first-century CE Roman economic setting, seem also to utilize their economic rationality as their major weapon in negotiating the Roman imperial economy. Powerless people may display their economic rationality when they pursue profit in their economic activities motivated

by self-interest in the course of struggling for survival under the growing market economy of the Roman Empire. Such economic pursuits by the powerless inevitably bring about the concerned exhortations of John the Baptist (3:10-14) and of Jesus in Luke (8:14; 12:15-21; 29-34; 16:13).

Moreover, their economic rationality is often realized in the form of moral hazard, for the benefit of themselves at the cost of their masters. This is well portrayed in the parables of the watchful slaves (12:45), of the dishonest steward (16:3-7), and of the ten *minas* (19:20-21). In the economic situation where their effort benefits only the powerful, the moral hazard of the powerless expressed as unwatchfulness, dishonest, and money hoarding in those parables may represent a veiled and indirect resistance that enables the powerless to protect themselves better than other direct resistant methods do. At the same time, it would belong to a best possible way of negotiating the Roman imperial economy. This is so because it is drawn by the powerless through their rational decision-making process given their social, political, and economic constraints that are imposed by the Roman imperial economy and hence cannot be changed through their effort. The effectiveness of their moral hazard is well attested in the fact that the moral hazard successfully makes the masters reluctantly design mechanisms to cope with it, including some incentive systems (12:37-38, 43-44; 19:17, 19, 24). In this way, they could share some of their masters' profit.

In the parable of the dishonest steward, the desperate steward shows that the powerless are not mindless at all in judging correctly and shrewdly their economic circumstances. The steward pays back the cold-heartedness of his master (16:1-2) with a far greater cold-heartedness manifested through his merciless actions at the final stage game (16:3-7), which draws finally bitter applause from his master by way of a sign of acknowledging his defeat (16:8). By doing so, the steward successfully proves that the powerless can outwit the powerful as far as economic

rationality is concerned.

In the parable of the ten *minas*, the third slave refuses to play a part in the “rat race” of profit-making that his “harsh” master (19:20-21) designed. By hoarding his money, the third slave deviates from the rule of the game of profit-making (19:20) rather than coming up to the master’s expectation as the other slaves do (19:16, 18). In the parable of rebellious tenants, the economic rationality of the tenants is manifested in the form of collective actions (20:10-12, 14-15). Particularly, the tenants adopt violent means in order to express their strenuous opposition to their master (20:10-12). By doing so, they send a strong, and the most efficient, signal to their master concerning the vineyard’s true level of profit.

Conclusively, economic readings that identify aspects of a market economy and economic rationality contribute to a better understanding of how people negotiated the Roman Empire in the realm of the economy.

3. Contributions and Limitations

This study contributes to scholarship on economic issues in Luke’s Gospel with its emphases on a market economy and economic rationality. Above all, this study helps to redress a somewhat biased understanding of the Roman imperial economy based upon primitivism and substantivism that has been prevalent in New Testament scholarship. By focusing on aspects of a market economy and economic rationality, this study has offered fresh insights into economic issues in Luke’s Gospel and demonstrated how reading Luke’s Gospel can be rich and diverse once we assume viewpoints that are different from primitivism and substantivism concerning the Roman imperial economy. No previous study has identified the ways in which Luke’s Gospel inscribes features of a market economy and economic rationality.

More specifically, this study has shown how the employment of recent scholarly debates on the development of a market economy during the Roman imperial period can provide a variety of insights into understanding economic issues in Luke's Gospel. In addition, based upon the context of a growing market economy of the Roman Empire, this study has demonstrated how close attention to the economic rationality of characters in Luke can reveal various dynamic features that economic agents in the ancient Roman world probably displayed in their pursuit of economic goals, centering on profit-maximization or cost-minimization. Such features may deepen our understanding of the characters in Luke's Gospel in particular and, perhaps, human nature in general.

Moreover, by paying attention to aspects of a market economy and economic rationality in Luke, this study has shown that an economy as a social category may have exerted a more important role in the life of ancient Roman people than scholars of primitivism and substantivism circle have argued.

Furthermore, in some instances, this study has engaged in dialogue with previous scholarship on economic issues in Luke's Gospel, thereby demonstrating how previous scholarly insights can be further refined and deepened through the assistance of recent advances of the economic history of Roman imperial world and of modern economic theories. By doing so, the study has tried to redirect scholarly attention to recent scholarly debates on the Roman imperial economy that serve as a necessary context of economic issues in New Testament writings.

This study has some limitations, however. Above all, in deriving economic insights from Luke's texts, this study has drawn on evidence from the ancient Roman economy. However, that evidence, while plausible and possible, may be regarded as indirect, rather than direct, evidence for explaining economic issues in Luke's texts. We cannot be entirely certain of direct

connections between that evidence and the texts.

Yet, the problem of indirect connections seems inevitable because Luke wrote the Gospel not as an economic tractate but as a story of Jesus, as is clear from the prologue of the book (1:1-4). Therefore, Luke's Gospel does not provide systematic and complete features concerning economic issues. Thus, exploring the economic issues reflected in Luke's Gospel is, by and large, a process of gathering pieces of information scattered randomly throughout the Gospel and placing them into the broad economic structure of the Roman imperial economy. Hence, the study has had to complement and/or supplement textual clues with a variety of other evidence and features from the ancient Roman economy to grasp more comprehensively the economic features that Luke's texts inscribe.

There is a strong rationale for this process. The validity of this process depends on the structural nature of an economy. More specifically, an economy is structural in that each part of an economy does not operate separately or independently but interacts and influences each other so as to constitute an economy as a whole. In this light, this process effectively helps to identify more comprehensive features of the Roman market economy from tiny and fragmentary clues in Luke's Gospel.

Moreover, many observations offered in this study are heavily indebted to and drawn extensively from modern economic theories. In this regard, this study can be regarded as a projection of modern economic theories onto ancient economic phenomena assumed by Luke's texts. Thus, this study may assume, either consciously or unconsciously, modern prejudices to a certain degree.

However, such projection does not negate or undermine a number of insights that this study has offered. In fact, modern economic theories aim to explain economic behaviors and try

to develop diverse analytically tools accordingly. In this light, many observations presented in the study are the result of clarifying economic rationality and aspects of a market economy that already exist in the texts of Luke's Gospel, with the help of theoretical concepts and languages of modern economic theories. For instance, in the case of an internal labor market in Luke (Chapter 5, Section 3.2), the practice of hiring workers not from outside the labor force but from the existing labor pool existed in Luke's writings (Lk 6:12-16; 12: 42-48; 22:28-30; Acts 6:1-7) before this study formally identified the practice as an "internal labor market," borrowing the concept from labor economics. However, the concept of "internal labor market" provides modern readers with an analytical frame to better understand the practice.

As a result of employing modern economic theories and concepts, a number of ancient economic phenomena assumed in Luke's Gospel gain their economic significance that would be otherwise unattended. In this way, this study shows that applying modern economic theories and concepts to ancient economic phenomena can facilitate and deepen modern readers' understanding of economic issues in Luke's Gospel. Therefore, modern prejudices and the projection of modern economic theories onto ancient economic phenomena may do not so much harm as good if it facilitates better understanding of the economic practices and structures inscribed in Luke's Gospel.

Furthermore, the issue of modern prejudices leads us to the decades-long scholarly debates concerning substantivism/formalism and primitivism/modernism. It seems that ideally more balanced approaches should embrace both aspects of these famous scholarly debates. Due to the limit of space and time, this study, however, could not adopt these more ideal and balanced approaches. Instead, this study stands primarily in the position of formalism and modernism, because it is more urgent to redress and/or overcome first some scholarly prejudices prevalent in

New Testament scholarship that are caused by adopting substantivist and primitivist approaches. In this regard, some may think that this study is somewhat biased toward formalism and modernism as a reaction against the prejudices. Consequently, these more ideal and balanced approaches are left for future studies on economic issues in Luke's Gospel.

4. Suggestions for Future Research

Finally I suggest some possible directions for future researches on economic issues in Luke's writings, and perhaps New Testament writings as well. This study has not explored economic issues in Luke's other volume, the Act of the Apostles. Therefore, further researches on Acts focusing on aspects of a market economy and economic rationality will help to understand more comprehensively features of the economy inscribed in the narrative world of Luke's two-volumed writings. This is so because Acts offers not only a broader textual base but also may offer more diverse, including urban, contexts for economic analysis.

In addition, this study has not examined many ethical implications of Luke's economic issues due to the limits of space and time. Thus, exploring further ethical dimensions of Luke's economic topics with emphases on aspects of a market economy and economic rationality may add new insights into the study of Luke's economic ethics.

Moreover, comparative researches on economic issues scattered in other Gospels, both canonical and non-canonical, will elucidate other characteristics that this study does not unearth in that those Gospels may cover topics and contain stories that Luke's Gospel does not address.

Furthermore, this study is only one economic reading of Luke's Gospel that addresses insights from modern economics. Perhaps, there may be other important economic topics that illuminate the economy inscribed in Luke's texts. In this regard, active engagement with modern

economic theories and ancient Roman economic history may contribute to further understanding of economic issues in Luke's Gospel.

Finally, this study provides only very brief sketches of how economic readings can provide fresh insights for other approaches to Luke's Gospel such as postcolonialism and the negotiation of the Roman Empire. Further researches on dialogues between economic approach and other approaches to Luke's Gospel, including postcolonialism and the negotiation of the Roman Empire, may bring fruitful insights.

5. Concluding Remarks

In concluding this study, I briefly make a clarifying remark concerning an implication of this study for the present economic situation. This study has foregrounded two main themes--aspects of a market economy and economic rationality--in reading economic issues in Luke's Gospel. However, the emphasis on the two themes should not be interpreted as the approval of the present market economic system because this study is not intended to offer such approval nor it has provided any material to be interpreted that way.

To the contrary, in terms of social justice, I personally resist any attempt to dogmatize aspects of a market economy and economic rationality by blindly endorsing them as an invariable human tendency and laws in the present situation of the globalized market economy. This is so because the present economic situation has caused serious problems and contradictions, intensifying them on a global scale and at an ever-increasing speed.

These problems and contradictions include, to name a few, the exploitation of the weak by the powerful, the centralization of wealth by the few, the enslavement of people to economic pursuits, the intensification of economic competitions among people, societies, and nations, the

destabilization of the economic status of people, repeated economic crises throughout the world, the destruction of the environment, and the exhaustion of resources for future generations. I hope that future biblical scholarship will pay more attention to these problems and contradictions and will actively resist them to serve humanity.

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