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The Meaning of Acts 14

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Καὶ συναλιζόμενος παρήγγειλεν αὐτοῖς ἀπὸ Ἱεροσολύμων μὴ χωρίζεσθαι. The meaning of these words has long been a matter of uncertainty. *Συναλίζω*, *collect* or *assemble*, is common in classical and Hellenistic Greek, and many interpreters have naturally understood the word in this sense here. Thus Luther, taking *συναλιζόμενος* as a middle participle, translated it *als er sie versammelt hatte*. But the middle voice, though on *a priori* grounds defensible as indicating the interest felt by the subject in the action, does not occur in actual use. The A.V. and the R.V. in the text regard the participle as passive and render it *being assembled together with them*, i.e. *meeting with them*. On the other hand, the Vulgate translates *συναλιζόμενος* by *convescens*. This interpretation antedates the time of Jerome in the West, and may extend back into the second century;¹ and in the East it was known certainly as early as the third century.² It is also found in Epiphanius, Chrysostom, and some other Greek interpreters,³ as well as in the margin of

¹ Codex *d* reads *simul convivens*. Dr. Rendel Harris suspects that the basis of the Old Latin translation found in this Ms. existed in the early part of the second century (cf. *Texts and Studies*, II. i. p. 225). But on the whole *d* is 'European' and in general represents a Latin text of the third or fourth century. Codex *e*² reads *convescens*. But this corrector belongs perhaps to the end of the sixth century and has probably introduced the word from the Vulgate.

² Cf. Tischendorf, *ad loc.*

³ Cf. Epiphanius (Migne, *Patr. Graec.* xli. 277; xlii. 88); Chrysostom (Migne, *op. cit.* li. 104 *bis*, 107; lx. 19, 22); Theodoret (Migne, *op. cit.* lxxxiii. 160); Oecumenius (Migne, *op. cit.* cxviii. 48); Theophylact (Migne, *op. cit.* cxxv. 508).

both the A.V. and the R.V. The rendering *while he ate with them*—for so the present participle with this meaning must be understood⁴—presents an impressive picture, which comports well with the notices concerning the breaking of bread and the eating of a piece of broiled fish in Lk. 24 30, 41-43 and with the declaration of Peter in Ac. 10 41. These passages would naturally commend the interpretation *eating with* in Ac. 1 4 to a Greek writer if he was acquainted with *συναλιζομαι* in that sense.

There is no doubt that the meaning *eat with* was attached to *συναλιζομαι*, and it seems highly probable that there were two verbs quite distinct in etymology and meaning—*συνᾶλιζω*, *collect* or *assemble* (from *ἀλής*, *crowded*), and *συνᾶλιζομαι*, *eat with* (from *ἄλις*, *salt*).⁵ In prose writings the two verbs would be easily confused in the passive.

Συναλιζομαι, *eat with*, was known to others than the ecclesiastical writers above mentioned. It occurs once without doubt in the pseudo-Clementine *Homilies*.⁶ The *Grund-schrift* of the *Homilies* and *Recognitions* was written in the third century,⁷ and hence this example of the word cannot antedate that period.

There is probably another instance of *συναλιζομαι*, *eat with*, in an astrological poem of composite authorship which is wrongly ascribed to Manetho.⁸ So far as the sense is concerned, *συναλιζόμενον* might be either from *συνᾶλιζω*, *collect*, or from *συνᾶλιζομαι*, *eat with*. But unless the writer disregarded the quantity of the *α*, the participle must be from the latter verb.⁹ The verse in question occurs in a part of

⁴ Cf. Weiss, *Die Apostelgeschichte*,² p. 20.

⁵ Cf. Woolsey in *Bib. Sacr.* xxxix. p. 608.

⁶ Cf. [Clem.], *Hom.* 18. 4 : *αὐτοῖς συναλιζόμεθα*. Cf. also *Recog.* 7. 29 : *cum eis cibum sumimus*, which is parallel to the above passage in the *Homilies*.

⁷ Cf. Waitz in *Texte und Untersuchungen*, xxv. p. 75 ; Harnack, *Die Chronologie der altchristlichen Litteratur*, ii. p. 533.

⁸ Cf. [Manetho], *Apotelesmatica*, 5. 339 : *τῆμα λυγρῶ γαμετῆ συναλιζόμενον κακοῦθες* (of a bad wife).

⁹ So Stephanus, *Thesaurus Graecae Linguae*, s.v. ; and Woolsey in *op. cit.* xxxix. p. 610.

the poem which is considerably later than the time of Julian (A.D. 361-363).¹⁰

In Ps. 140 4 (Heb. 141 4) an anonymous translator, whose work has been preserved in Origen's *Hexapla*, has used the word *συναλισθῶ*.¹¹ The Hebrew at this place is *אָחַזְתִּי* from *אָחַז*, *eat*, and Symmachus's version has *συμφάγοιμι*; but the LXX reads *συνδοιάσω* from *συνδοιάζω*, *join oneself with*. The versions of Aquila and Theodotion are wanting in this place. Some, in accordance with the LXX, have taken *συναλισθῶ* from *συναλίζω*, *collect*.¹² But the anonymous translator, who probably lived in the second century of the Christian era, seems to have been following the Hebrew text as we have it.¹³ Hence *συναλισθῶ* must be from *συναλίζομαι*, *eat with*.¹⁴

I have not been able to find any instance of *συναλίζομαι*, *eat with*, in the papyri, and it seems to be unknown in modern Greek.¹⁵ In short, there is no evidence for the existence of *συναλίζομαι*, *eat with*, before the second century after Christ,¹⁶ and even thereafter it is extremely rare.

We should not adopt this unusual meaning for *συναλιζόμενος* in Ac. 14, especially since there is no proof that it was known before the second century of our era, unless we are forced to do so by weighty considerations. Luke uses the unambiguous *συνεσθίω* three times in the Gospel and the Acts,¹⁷ and there seems to be no reason why he should not

¹⁰ Cf. Riess in Pauly-Wissowa, *Real-Encyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft*, ii. col. 1824.

¹¹ Cf. Migne, *op. cit.* xvi. 1237.

¹² So Stephanus, *op. cit.* s.v.; and Woolsey in *op. cit.* xxxix. p. 608 f.

¹³ Heb. *אָחַזְתִּי בְּמִנְחָתִי*

LXX. *καὶ οὐ μὴ συνδοιάσω μετὰ τῶν ἐκλεκτῶν αὐτῶν.*

Anon. *μὴ συναλισθῶ ἐν ταῖς τερπύρτησιν αὐτῶν.*

Sym. *μηδὲ συμφάγοιμι τὰ ἕδρα αὐτῶν.*

¹⁴ So the Latin translation in Migne, and Meyer (cf. his *Kommentar über das N.T.* 4 on Ac. 14). Dr. Woolsey thought this interpretation improbable because of the unlikelihood of there being an aorist passive form from this verb (cf. Woolsey in *op. cit.* xxxix. p. 609). But *συνηλισθη*, *ate with*, occurs in Epiphanius (cf. Migne, *op. cit.* xlii. 88).

¹⁵ The so-called *Etymologicum Magnum* recognizes the two meanings *collect* and *eat with* under the word *συναλιζόμενοι*.

¹⁶ So Woolsey in *op. cit.* xxxix. p. 612.

¹⁷ Lk. 15 2; Ac. 10 41; 11 2.

have used the same word here if he had wished to express the idea of *eating with*. However, several modern commentators of the highest rank have felt obliged to take *συναλιζόμενος* here in the sense of *eating with*.¹⁸ Weiss gives succinctly the two reasons which are thought to require the adoption of this meaning: (1) on account of the present tense of the participle, and (2) because of its reference to a single person.¹⁹ I shall discuss the second of these reasons first.

There is one certain case in which *συναλλίζω*, *collect*, is used in the passive of a single person. It is found in a fragment ascribed to Petosiris, a semi-mythical Egyptian priest and astrologer, which has been preserved by the philosopher Proclus. The trustworthiness of Petosiris in certain theurgic matters is based on his association with gods and angels.²⁰ Hence there can be no objection to taking *συναλιζόμενος* in Ac. 14 from *συναλλίζω*, *collect*, on the ground that it refers to a single person.²¹

The present tense of the participle presents a more serious difficulty. The aorist *παρήγγειλεν* is understood of a single act in past time, and the present participle is at once seen to be incongruous.²² For with this interpretation of *παρήγγειλεν* it can only mean *as he met with them*; whereas the sense *when he had met with them*, which would be quite intelligible here, requires the aorist participle *συναλισθείς*.²³ Dr. Woolsey

¹⁸ So Meyer, Overbeck, Blass, Wendt, Holtzmann, and Weiss; but not de Wette.

¹⁹ Cf. Weiss, *op. cit.* p. 20.

²⁰ Cf. Riess in *Philologus*, Supplbd., vi. p. 380, frag. 33: *εἰ δὲ ταῦτα γράφωσι Πετρόσειρις ἐστὶν ἀξιόχρους, ἀνὴρ παντοίας τάξεσι θεῶν τε καὶ ἀγγέλων συναλισθείς*.

²¹ If Stephanus and Woolsey are right in referring *συναλισθῶ* in the anonymous translation of Ps. 1404 to *συναλλίζω*, *collect*, we have another instance of this verb used of a single person. The present writer, however, believes that *συναλισθῶ* in this place is from *συναλιζομαι*, *eat with* (cf. *supra*, p. 124). With *συναλιζόμενος* we may compare the use of *συνάγω* in Jn. 182: *συνήχθη Ἰησοῦς ἐκεῖ μετὰ τῶν μαθητῶν αὐτοῦ*.

²² Thus Blass (*Acta Apostolorum*, p. 42) says, "praesens plane ferri nequit."

²³ Hesychius, *s. v.*, explains *συναλιζόμενος* by *συναλισθείς*. This may give rise to a suspicion that *συναλιζόμενος* in Ac. 14 was sometimes explained by the aorist (cf. Woolsey in *op. cit.* xxxix. p. 613 f.); but it is certainly no warrant for our taking the present as an aorist.

says, "the verb in the passive with a deponent meaning can denote, if I mistake not, both the transitory act of being assembled or meeting with another, and the permanent condition of being in a meeting."²⁴ In support of this opinion he cites a passage from the *Iliad* (Ω 801 f.):

αὐτὰρ ἔπειτα
εὖ συναγερόμενοι δαίνοντ' ἑρικυδέα δαῖτα
δόμοσιν ἐν Πριάμοιο διοτρεφέος βασιλῆος

(the funeral feast of Hector). But the Homeric passage is quite different. It depicts a scene in which the crowd is seen gathering together and feasting. Dr. Woolsey's interpretation of Ac. 14 gives to the present *συναλιζόμενος* the force of the perfect. *Συνηλισμένος* would mean that he had met with them and was still in their company when the charge was given. The present participle, however, denotes an action, and not an abiding condition resulting from an action. Hence this solution of the difficulty must be abandoned. On account of the supposed impossibility of explaining the present tense if *συναλιζόμενος* is connected with *συναλλίζω*, *collect*, a number of modern commentators have adopted the meaning *eating with*.²⁵

But it is possible to preserve the proper force of the present participle without giving to the word this unusual meaning. Vss. 3 and 4 are closely connected in thought, both recounting incidents of the forty days subsequent to the Lord's resurrection.²⁶ The aorists *παρέστησεν* and *παρήγγειλεν* are complexive, and present a summary view of a whole course of past action.²⁷ The course of action so summarized extended throughout the forty days, Jesus appearing and meeting with the disciples at intervals during that period. The complexive aorist differs from the imper-

²⁴ Cf. Woolsey in *op. cit.* xxxix. p. 126.

²⁵ Cf. *supra*, p. 126.

²⁶ Therefore the colon of Tischendorf and Weiss is preferable to the period of Westcott and Hort at the end of vs. 3.

²⁷ For this use of the aorist, which is also called the constative or the concentrative, cf. Brugmann, *Griechische Grammatik*,² p. 475 f.; Moulton, *A Grammar of N. T. Greek*,³ i. p. 109.

fect in that the latter represents an action as progressing through its successive stages, whereas the former regards the entire course of action as concentrated in a single point.²⁸ The present participle can be used with its proper force in connection with the complexive aorist.²⁹ In Ac. 14 the present participle *συναλιζόμενος*, like *ὄπτανόμενος* and *λέγων* in the preceding verse, is iterative and refers to the several occasions on which Jesus bade his disciples to remain in Jerusalem. It is therefore coincident in time with the course of action summarized in *παρήγγειλεν*. Hence we may translate *καὶ συναλιζόμενος παρήγγειλεν αὐτοῖς ἀπὸ Ἱεροσολύμων μὴ χωρῖσθαι* thus: *and meeting with them (from time to time) he charged them not to depart from Jerusalem.*

If this interpretation is adopted, the meaning which is lexically more probable for *συναλιζόμενος* may be retained and the use of the present participle with the aorist *παρήγγειλεν* can be satisfactorily explained.

²⁸ The distinction between the complexive aorist and the imperfect can be clearly seen in Ac. 28 30: *ἐνέμεινε δὲ διατρίαν ἡμέραν ἐν ἰδίῳ μισθώματι, καὶ ἀπεδέχετο πάντας τοὺς εἰσπορευομένους πρὸς αὐτόν.*

²⁹ Cf. Thuc. II. 47, 4: *ὅσα τε πρὸς ἱεροῖς ἱκέτευσαν ἢ μαρτεῖοις καὶ τοῖς τοιοῦτοις ἐχρήσαντο, πάντα ἀνωφελῆ ἦν, τελευτῶντές τε αὐτῶν ἀπέστησαν ὑπὸ τοῦ κακοῦ νικώμενοι (i. e. during the plague at Athens).*