Engaging with  
a relevance-theoretic approach to the connective’s communicative role in Romans  

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Engaging with γύρ: a relevance-theoretic approach to the connective’s communicative role in Romans

Thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
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July 2017
Abstract

Harnessing innovative insights from cognitive pragmatics, this thesis examines the role of the Greek connective γάρ in the letter to the Romans. Traditional accounts which explain γάρ as “causal”, using the English gloss “for”, are inadequate. Γάρ occurs frequently in Romans, at pivotal points, but is treated inconsistently in exegesis. The thesis uses the framework of relevance theory and its notion of procedural meaning to suggest a consistent, cognitively grounded account of the communicative role of γάρ.

The first half of the study presents the findings of the analysis undertaken. It demonstrates a unified explanation of all occurrences of γάρ in Romans, showing that its core function is procedural, guiding towards the inferential procedure of strengthening. Γάρ is not a whiteboard onto which interpreters can impose their prior perspective, but a crucial signpost guiding towards communicator intentions.

The second half of the thesis demonstrates how this procedural account transforms the connective’s contribution to the interpretation of Romans. Firstly, it enables us to decide between major exegetical options in contested passages such as Romans 4:1-2 and 10:4-5. Secondly, in the pivotal passages 1:15-18 and 15:7-13, it throws light on the centre and thrust of the epistle’s argument, and on its purpose. We argue that interpretations which overlook γάρ as inferential signpost at such major argumentative crossroads are in danger of arriving at the wrong destination. Similarly undermined are readings which ride roughshod over the indications γάρ gives of close continuity with the preceding context. So too are interpretations which, by focusing on weighty but supporting theological statements, miss the main thrust of the argument. Meanwhile our analysis supports a context-specific reading of the letter’s purpose as a response to tensions confronting believers in Rome. We finish by following the guidance γάρ gives to trace afresh the argumentative path of Romans 1-4.
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This thesis is dedicated to the memory of two inspirational teachers and friends who have trained me and cheered me on: Dr. Regina Blass, who first taught me Relevance Theory, and Mrs. Susie Herbert, Classicist who never ceased to be curious about γάρ.
# Abbreviations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BDAG</td>
<td>Bauer Danker Arndt Gingrich</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BDF</td>
<td>Blass Debrunner Funk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LCL</td>
<td>Loeb Classical Library</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LSJ</td>
<td>Liddell Scott Jones</td>
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<tr>
<td>LXX</td>
<td>Septuagint</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NA</td>
<td>Nestle-Aland Novum Testamentum Graece. 28th rev. ed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NT</td>
<td>New Testament</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RT</td>
<td>Relevance Theory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SBL</td>
<td>Society for Biblical Literature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UBS</td>
<td>United Bible Societies</td>
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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Reasons for the study

Why should we be concerned at all with the small connective $\gamma\rho$ in the letter to the Romans? It has long been glossed “for” in English; is there anything of fresh relevance to say about it as we interpret Romans? Firstly, $\gamma\rho$ occurs 144 times in the epistle, its highest concentration in any NT text. Secondly, it is by no means as unambiguous as the gloss “for” might suggest. In Romans, in NT Greek more generally, and, indeed, in Classical Greek, many instances of the connective defy easy definition, and the English translation “for” is inadequate, obscuring the clue that $\gamma\rho$ gives to the direction of the communicator’s thought. Agreement continues to elude grammarians and exegetes as to its grammatical status and semantic or conceptual content.

The variety of classifications among scholars of NT Greek is evidence of uncertainty regarding the meaning and role of $\gamma\rho$, both in clauses and in the wider discourse. A glance at the standard NT Greek lexicon BDAG reveals a confusing categorisation of different examples of $\gamma\rho$. It lists three main definitions, the first of which has six sub-categories alone. There is considerable overlap between categories, and an extensive listing of diverse NT examples, but no explanation as to why particular uses are found in different contexts. As a result of such a plethora of sub-definations, there is an implicit assumption among many NT exegetes that $\gamma\rho$ cannot be relied upon as a

---

1 Traditionally scholars have referred to $\gamma\rho$ as a particle (Denniston 1934), or conjunction (LSJ; Kühner & Gerth 1966). I will use the general term “connective”, in keeping with more recent terminology employed in RT (Wilson 2011b) and biblical studies (Wright 2013: 764).
2 As Wright (2013: 765) points out, “for” is somewhat archaic in contemporary English. This adds an additional layer to the confusion regarding its interpretation.
3 The initial impetus for this research came from Bible translation work in minority languages. Finding appropriate terms in fresh host languages to render the apparent range of uses of $\gamma\rho$ presents a considerable challenge. This is compounded by the lack of clarity and consensus regarding the role of $\gamma\rho$.
4 It is variously described as a causative particle (Winer 1870: 558), a “common” particle (Robertson 1908: 159), a coordinating conjunction (BDF: 235), a subordinating conjunction (Elliott 2008: 74), a conjunction having either a logical or adverbial function (Wallace 1996: 673-74) etc.
5 BDAG: 189-90: “1. marker of cause or reason: for…2. marker of clarification: for, you see…3. marker of inference: certainly, by all means, so, then”. Sub-categories include: “1b. used with other particles and conjunctions”, “1c. $\gamma\rho$ is sometimes repeated”, “1d. the general is confirmed by the specific…the specific by the general”, and “1e. oft. the thought to be supported is not expressed, but needs to be supplied fr. the context”.


consistent communicative signal. When confronted with a seemingly problematic occurrence, each scholar tends to interpret it in accordance with her\(^6\) prior reading of the co-text.\(^7\) Instances which are perceived as problematic because they do not sit easily with a preferred interpretation are not infrequently overlooked.

This brings us to a third reason for re-examining γάρ in Romans. It is found in some of the most exegetically contested passages of the letter, and in some that have been made to bear considerable doctrinal weight. Moreover, it occurs at various pivotal points which have a bearing on wider unresolved questions such as the letter’s purpose, and the centre of its argument. The most notorious and thoroughly discussed example is found in 1:18,\(^8\) but there are other seemingly ambiguous occurrences which are potentially of considerable exegetical importance (for instance, 3:9, 4:1, 5:6-7, 10:4-5, 11:25 etc.). The tendency among interpreters to overlook the potentially significant exegetical guidance given by γάρ means that an important clue to communicator intentions is neglected at points where it could provide valuable assistance in making crucial exegetical choices, and in deciding on the direction of the argument.

A final reason for this study is a gap in scholarship in relation to the role of γάρ in NT non-narrative material, and, in particular, in argumentation.\(^9\) My research has not uncovered any systematic study of γάρ in the epistle to the Romans in its entirety, nor indeed in any single Pauline epistle, nor other piece of NT argumentation considered as a communicative whole. Studies have instead focused largely on γάρ in narrative texts,\(^10\) and on isolated problematic occurrences.\(^11\) This is despite the fact that the large majority of NT occurrences are found in non-narrative material, and, in particular, in argumentation. According to Stephen Runge’s statistical analysis, of the 1,1041

\(^{6}\) I will use feminine pronouns when referring in the singular to an addressee, reader or interpreter of a text, and masculine pronouns when referring to the author/communicator. This convention is motivated by considerations of inclusivity but also by ease of reference, given that the author of Romans is male.

\(^{7}\) By “co-text”, I mean the surrounding communicated text, both preceding and following, that is, the “literary context”, whether sentence, paragraph, section or entire piece of communication.

\(^{8}\) For reasons of space, when referring to passages from Romans, I give chapter and verse numbers, but omit the epistle’s name, except where the reference occurs at the beginning of sentences.

\(^{9}\) For my definition of argumentation, see 3.2.1.

\(^{10}\) Black 2002; Edwards 1990; Thrall 1962.

\(^{11}\) E.g. Zakowski 2016; Stowers 1990; Bird 1953.
occurrences of γάρ in the NT, only 10% are to be found in narrative proper.\textsuperscript{12} Stephanie Black’s investigation of γάρ in Matthew’s Gospel shows a similar pattern: out of 124 occurrences, only ten are found in the narrative framework (6% of all occurrences), even though the narrative sections account for 31% of all material in Matthew.\textsuperscript{13} The handful of studies that have investigated γάρ in NT argumentation have concentrated on examples in selected passages in Romans and other epistles,\textsuperscript{14} or have considered γάρ together with other connectives in the pastoral epistles. A systematic study of all occurrences of γάρ in Romans is needed in order to ascertain its role in a piece of argumentation considered as a communicative whole. Romans is the obvious choice for such a study, not only because of its preponderance of occurrences, but also because it is the prime example of sustained argumentation within the NT. Such a study will enable us to explore the possibility of a more satisfactory account of the role of connective as a consistent communicative signal.

1.2 Scholarly treatment of γάρ: traditional accounts

In considering previous scholarship, three distinct areas are pertinent: first, traditional grammatical and lexicographical accounts of γάρ in NT Greek in general (which often build upon accounts of the connective in Classical Greek), second, more recent linguistic accounts, and third, the treatment of γάρ in recent Romans scholarship. Since the latter relies in large part on traditional accounts, I will begin with these and then move on to consider how Romans scholarship makes use of them. After that I will consider some more recent linguistically motivated analyses of γάρ.

1.2.1 Grammatical and lexicographical accounts

The focus of this thesis is the role of γάρ in the Koine Greek of Paul’s letter to the Romans. It is generally agreed, however, that its use in NT Greek has not changed significantly from Classical Greek.\textsuperscript{15} Standard NT lexicons and grammars thus tend to

---

\textsuperscript{12} Runge 2010: 52.

\textsuperscript{13} Black 2002: 254.

\textsuperscript{14} Blass 1993; Larsen 1991. Rudolph’s doctoral thesis (2014) promises much, but, as far as Romans is concerned, focuses almost exclusively on a handful of occurrences in Romans 8.

\textsuperscript{15} Black 2002: 257; Turner 1963: 331; BDF etc.
reflect the categories of their Classical Greek counterparts. Up to the present, the vast majority of NT and Classical lexicons alike adopt a traditional account of the connective which is based on a “semantic apparatus” essentially unchanged since Classical times. They show little awareness of the principles and methods of modern linguistics, but are instead based largely on an outmoded comparative and diachronic philological analysis of language.

The ambiguity surrounding the role of γάρ is related in part to the fact that the connective is grammatically and syntactically optional in any sentence. Any attempt at a sentence level explanation of its function will thus founder. On a traditional account, γάρ is regarded as a “causal” or “explanatory” particle, expressing a semantic relationship of cause, reason or grounds, usually between two adjacent sentences, though the precise reach or scope of γάρ is little discussed. A variation on this traditional causal view is Raphael Kühner & Bernhard Gerth’s identification (in Classical Greek) of an adverbial, confirmatory use alongside a causal/grounds-giving use. In addition, other traditional analyses suggest that in certain instances, such as exclamations and questions, γάρ has an “inferential force”. As Porter points out, a failing of the traditional approach is the erroneous assumption that the way a particle such as γάρ may be translated in English throws light on its function in Greek. Accordingly, γάρ is usually glossed as “for”, masking the fact that in various instances, “for” may not adequately render its function.

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16 For example, BDAG reflects various definitions and sub-definitions of LSJ’s entry for γάρ.
17 Sicking 1993: 7. Standard examples of this traditional approach are LSJ; Kühner & Gerth (1966) for Classical Greek, and BDF; BDAG for NT Greek.
19 See Black 2002: 37.
20 See Winer 1870: 558; Robertson 1919: 1190.
21 BDF: 235; Kühner & Gerth 1966: 335.
22 Similar to the use of the German particle “ja” (Kühner & Gerth 1966: 330).
23 Kühner & Gerth 1966: 335. Wallace (1996: 673-74) broadly follows this division of the uses of γάρ into “logical” and “adverbial”.
24 See Winer 1870: 559.
25 Porter 1993: 84-85. This implies a naïve view of cross-linguistic equivalence, a notion which is a fiction.
Particularly influential within this traditional approach has been J. D. Denniston’s comprehensive discussion of particles in Classical Greek. The work broke new ground in providing a detailed examination of a wealth of data, and in paying attention to co-text. Denniston identifies the primary use of γάρ as “confirmatory and causal, giving the ground for belief or the motive for action.” His study nevertheless displays and reinforces many of the limitations of the traditional approach. His impressive treatment of a range of diverse examples results in a plethora of sub-categories. His work is strong on descriptive detail but says little about the communicative role of γάρ, and provides no satisfying, unified account of its function. In general, the traditional approach does not adequately account for examples which involve implicit information, or information communicated further back in the co-text than immediately adjacent material. Moreover, it shows little awareness of the interplay between the connective and the semantic content of the particular co-texts in which it occurs. Instead, there is an attempt to read conceptual content from the co-text into the meaning of the connective itself, multiplying the apparent functions of γάρ.

Most recent NT lexicons and grammars continue to tread the traditional path reinforced by Denniston, attempting to identify one or two basic definitions or uses for the connective, while listing an array of sub-definitions and categories. These are of limited usefulness in the elucidation of apparently problematic instances of γάρ, and in the understanding of the connective’s communicative role or of the interplay between γάρ and information communicated in the surrounding co-text.

1.2.2 Treatment of γάρ in Romans: commentaries

The majority of commentaries of Romans, including the most recent, following standard NT grammars and lexicons, essentially adopt this traditional view of γάρ,

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26 Denniston 1934.
27 Denniston 1934: 58.
28 Denniston’s approach has been challenged in recent years by Dutch scholars working on Classical Greek particles (Rijksbaron 1997; Sicking & Van Ophuijsen 1993 etc.).
29 Black 2002: 19.
30 See Black 2002: 19.
31 E.g. Wallace 1996; BDAG etc. Porter, while acknowledging the importance of a discourse-analytic approach (1992: 298-307), does not allow this to shape significantly his analysis of NT particles (pp. 204-17).
although in different ways. The following selection of interpretations for discussion from the vast sea of Romans scholarship is based upon four criteria: 1) the relative prominence given to the discussion of γάρ, 2) the recognition, in theory, at least, of the need to account for γάρ as part of the task of exegesis, 3) the influential and sometimes controversial character of the particular interpretations chosen, and 4) the representation of a range of diverging perspectives on Romans. The majority of works discussed here are commentaries which deal systematically with the exegesis of the entire epistle. These are particularly appropriate as conversation partners for my study since they engage with all the data examined in my research, rather than with selected occurrences of γάρ only. I will thus deal firstly with commentaries, and then move on to consider two monographs in which the specific approach taken to γάρ influences the distinctive interpretation of the entire epistle.

Approaches to γάρ in commentaries on Romans, while broadly traditional, can be split into two streams. Firstly, there are those which attempt to pay consistent attention to the connective’s “causal” or explanatory role, in keeping with the basic uses of γάρ identified by traditional grammarians. Second, there are those which, in view of the wide range of sub-categories traditionally proposed, begin from the assumption that γάρ expresses diverse “connections of thought”, some of which are “light” or “bland”. For this latter stream, γάρ is not a consistent exegetical signal, and need not be given consideration in all contexts. This perspective on γάρ has been characterised by one of its critics as the “loose” approach.33

Representative of the first stream is C. E. B. Cranfield’s commentary, which, although published in the 1970s, stands out among commentaries in its careful and consistent treatment of γάρ.34 Cranfield represents a traditional reformed reading of Romans. He regards γάρ as an important piece of linguistic evidence contributing not only to the meaning of the clause in which it occurs, but also signalling relationships between larger chunks of thought. As he puts it,

33 Wright 2013: 764.
34 Cranfield 1975; 1979.
“...where there is continuous argument, [connectives] are a most important clue to the author’s meaning, of which full use should be made. In the exegesis of Romans one is well advised to watch the connectives with utmost attentiveness”.\(^{35}\)

Cranfield glosses \(\gamma\alpha\rho\) as “for”, but consistently discusses it in terms of its function, explaining its role in almost all contexts as explaining, confirming or supporting assertions in the previous co-text. He has a flexible view of its scope, maintaining that in some contexts \(\gamma\alpha\rho\) indicates a relationship between several clauses, or even an entire section, and what precedes it.\(^{36}\) Cranfield’s characterisation of \(\gamma\alpha\rho\) as a “clue to author’s meaning” implies a communicative role. Insights from a linguistic and cognitive-pragmatic understanding of connectives could help to put his reading on a firmer theoretical, linguistic and cognitive foundation. At the same time, the light shone by these insights may expose the cognitive implausibility of some of Cranfield’s claims regarding the scope of \(\gamma\alpha\rho\) over entire sections.

Ulrich Wilckens’ commentary, published shortly after Cranfield’s, though less systematic and thorough in its attention to \(\gamma\alpha\rho\), nevertheless also attempts to interpret the connective consistently.\(^{37}\) Wilckens, while coming from a Lutheran perspective, emphasises the continuity between God’s covenant with Israel and salvation through faith in Christ. He essentially reads \(\gamma\alpha\rho\) as introducing grounds,\(^{38}\) or a rationale, for preceding material, which in certain contexts he describes as an explanation.\(^{39}\) This does not prevent him at times from viewing material introduced by \(\gamma\alpha\rho\) as the beginning of a fresh line of thought, or a new section (see 1:18, 2:12, 8:18, 11:25 etc.), which in some cases he analyses as a “thesis” (1:18, 8:18). In such cases Wilckens acknowledges the tension between the signal given by \(\gamma\alpha\rho\) and the imposition of the traditional divisions on the text, but stops short of challenging these. Instead, while maintaining them, he

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\(^{35}\) Cranfield 1975: 27.

\(^{36}\) In 1:18, Cranfield (1975: 108) asserts that \(\gamma\alpha\rho\) introduces the whole of the section 1:18-3:20, which supports the statement in 1:17.

\(^{37}\) Wilckens 1978-82.

\(^{38}\) “begründend”.

\(^{39}\) E.g. on 7:22 (Wilckens 1980: 89).
attempts to emphasise the close connection between the beginning of the supposed new line of thought introduced by γάρ and what precedes.\footnote{E.g. the discussion of 1:18 (Wilckens 1978: 101) and 8:18 (Wilckens 1980: 147).}

A third advocate of the consistent “causal” approach is N. T. Wright, who pays systematic attention to γάρ in his various treatments of Romans.\footnote{Wright 1991; 2002; 2013. Of these, only 2002 is a commentary.} Wright’s reading of Romans has been characterised as part of the “new perspective” on Paul.\footnote{By the “new perspective” is meant a “family” of related readings of Paul, developed in the wake of Sanders’ paradigm-shifting analysis of Second Temple Judaism (Wright 2010: 37, though Wright elsewhere finds the label unhelpful (2013: 925 n.426)). These share the view that Paul’s teaching about justification by faith was occasioned by a specific historical situation in the early church and thus has a social and ethnic dimension (Dunn 2005: 26). Justification by faith is essentially about the inclusion of the Gentiles into God’s people.} The distinctive characteristics of his interpretation are an emphasis on the renewal and fulfilment, in Christ, of God’s covenant with Israel, so as to include Gentiles together with Jews as members of God’s multi-ethnic family through faith in Christ, Israel’s messiah.\footnote{The kernel of Wright’s reading is set out in his 1991 monograph.} Wright argues forcefully against any reading of γάρ which implies that Paul uses his connectives in a “loose” way.\footnote{Wright 2013: 764.} He maintains that γάρ should be read as indicating a “causal connection”, though with the caveat “until it is definitely proved otherwise”, leaving the door open for alternative analyses.\footnote{Wright 2013: 765.} Wright understands “causal connection” in its broadest sense of a relationship of reason, rationale or explanation. He consistently analyses γάρ as introducing further explanation of preceding material. This works well in many cases, but is not able to account for all “peculiarities” of the use of γάρ in Romans. In a minority of cases, such as 2:25 and 9:17, where an explanatory reading of γάρ does not obviously fit, Wright passes over the connective in silence. Like Cranfield, he views its scope flexibly,\footnote{See Wright’s (2002) discussion of 1:18 and 10:5-9.} but does not provide an explanation of how addressees are to identify the scope in different co-texts.

In his 2002 discussion, Wright draws attention to the series of “successive explanations” in 1:16–17, each introduced by γάρ, which he sees as characteristic of a particular style of argumentation found often in Romans. He maintains that in such a series, the final
explanatory clause (v.17) expresses “the deepest thing Paul wishes to say… the foundation of the whole sequence”, but passes over the fact that the chain of successive explanations introduced by γάρ in fact continues into 1:18. In other passages too, Wright asserts that explanatory theological material introduced by γάρ represents the main thrust of the argument, carrying Paul’s emphasis. This is in tension, however, with the causal understanding of γάρ he espouses, which regards γάρ as introducing a rationale which is essentially in a supporting relation with something that has previously been asserted. It remains to be seen whether a linguistic and cognitive-pragmatic account of the connective is compatible with Wright’s view that certain explanatory theological statements introduced by γάρ represent the heart of the argument, or whether it challenges this tracking of Paul’s argumentative thrust.

The second stream of traditional approaches to γάρ is influenced by the multiplication of sub-categories found in standard NT lexicons such as BDAG. James Dunn’s influential 1988 commentary is representative of this stream. This classic example of a “new perspective” reading of Romans finds the “integrating motif for the whole letter” in the tension between “Jew first but also Greek”. Dunn maintains that the significance of γάρ should not be “overloaded”, since it can indicate “lighter connections of thought”. In 1:18, for instance, Dunn suggests that γάρ may be read as introducing the first stage of the larger argument, and that the connection indicated may be “as much as contrast as of cause”. In other contexts, γάρ is interpreted variously as indicating an explanation, elaboration or development of thought. In 10:4-5, meanwhile, Dunn insists that the “full force” of γάρ must be appreciated. The inconsistency of Dunn’s approach is striking when one compares his “light” reading of the connective in 1:18 with the “weightier” reading he chooses in 10:4-5. The

48 In Wright’s 2013 work, however, he draws attention to the sequence of γάρ clauses in 1:16-18, but nevertheless views 1:18 as the beginning of a major new section in Paul’s argument (p.764).  
49 E.g. his 2002 discussion of 8:3-4; 8:18; 9:11b; 15:8-9.  
50 See BDAG definition 1.e; Denniston 1934: 62; Cranfield 1975: 240 etc.  
51 Dunn 1988a: lxii.  
52 Dunn 1988a: 38.  
53 Dunn 1988a: 38.  
54 Dunn 1988a: 70.  
55 Dunn 1988a: 54.  
importance of the close link between 10:4-5 and the immediately preceding argument is crucial to Dunn’s reading of the Jewish law as the symbol and instrument of Jewish privilege.\textsuperscript{57} His variable approach to γάρ appears to be determined by his prior interpretation of particular passages. A more communicative account of γάρ could potentially challenge not only the inconsistency of his treatment of γάρ, but also certain of his prior assumptions about the centre and direction of Paul’s argument.

This second stream of approaches to γάρ is represented in German scholarship by Ernst Käsemann’s 1973 commentary,\textsuperscript{58} and, most recently, by Michael Wolter’s commentary on Romans 1-8.\textsuperscript{59} Both come to Romans from a Lutheran perspective, emphasising the universal theological significance of the doctrine of justification by faith, and its central role in the epistle’s argument. Käsemann’s treatment of γάρ is multifarious. He asserts a range of different uses, but at no point discusses his general view of the connective’s role. His readings range from “begründend”,\textsuperscript{60} to “explaining the consequence” of a previous statement (2:12),\textsuperscript{61} introducing a result of the previous paragraph (7:14),\textsuperscript{62} introducing a theme (8:18),\textsuperscript{63} summarising (8:22),\textsuperscript{64} communicating the sense “indeed” (15:27),\textsuperscript{65} and an “argumentative use” which starts a new train of thought (2:25 etc).\textsuperscript{66} In many instances, Käsemann simply asserts the connective’s function in the briefest of terms, without explaining the rationale for his reading. In contrast to Wilckens, he seems untroubled by occurrences of the connective at the beginning of supposed new subsections or fresh lines of thought. Like Dunn, his readings of γάρ appear to be predetermined by his interpretation of the co-text. A unified and communicative account of γάρ could throw into question aspects of Käsemann’s reading of the contours of the argument of Romans, and his apparent lack of concern with the connection indicated with the preceding co-text at certain points (see 2:25, 4:13, 8:18 etc.).

\textsuperscript{57} Dunn 1988b: 596.
\textsuperscript{58} Käsemann 1973.
\textsuperscript{59} Wolter 2014.
\textsuperscript{60} Käsemann 1973: 31.
\textsuperscript{61} Käsemann 1973: 57.
\textsuperscript{62} Käsemann 1973: 189.
\textsuperscript{63} Käsemann 1973: 220.
\textsuperscript{64} Käsemann 1973: 226.
\textsuperscript{65} Käsemann 1973: 381: “in der Tat”.
\textsuperscript{66} Käsemann 1973: 67.
Wolter, on the other hand, explicitly acknowledges his dependence on Walter Bauer’s analysis of γάρ. The latter asserts not only a grounds-giving (begründend) use, but also a connective-continuative use (anknüpfend/fortführend) and even an adversative use in certain contexts. In 1:18, Wolter argues that γάρ can be read anaphorically (begründend) or kataphorically (anknüpfend/fortführend/adversativ). In order to decide between these, he jumps forward in the text to 3:21-22, ascertaining the relationship indicated by γάρ in 1:18 by analogy with the one indicated by γάρ in 3:22b. In both cases, γάρ introduces grounds for the claim that salvation is for all, without exception, through faith alone. Wolter’s strategy is thus to begin with the wider argument and to use it to clarify seemingly ambiguous occurrences of γάρ. In other words, the connective is in no sense a basic piece of exegetical evidence which helps to inform and direct an understanding of the argument. Wolter’s treatment of γάρ is curiously patchy: while commenting on some seemingly problematic instances, there are others which are passed over in silence. A fresh communicative account of γάρ could challenge Wolter’s reliance on older lexicographical analyses such as Bauer’s. Moreover, it could revolutionise the connective’s contribution to exegesis, transforming it into a signpost guiding towards communicator intentions, instead of a whiteboard onto which interpreters impose their prior perspective.

1.2.3 Treatment of γάρ in Romans: monographs

One might not generally look to monographs on Romans for the detailed discussion of γάρ that one would expect in a commentary. Neill Elliott’s and Douglas Campbell’s recent monographs, however, both pay attention to the connective at certain key points in the argument. Both are explicit in articulating their approach to the connective, but their approaches stand in stark contrast to each other.

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67 Bauer’s German work forms the basis of BDAG.
70 E.g. the occurrences in 2:25; 4:13; 5:6-7; 7:22 are not discussed.
71 Elliott pays close attention to γάρ as an exegetical signal in both his 1990 and 2008 monographs.
72 Campbell 2009.
Campbell’s work is an “apocalyptic rereading of justification in Paul” which focuses in particular on a rereading of Romans 1-4. Campbell’s aim is to challenge the distorting interpretive grid of “justification theory” which, in his view, has been imposed upon Romans by generations of interpreters. Campbell advocates a loose approach to γάρ, much like Dunn’s and Wolter’s. While recognising that γάρ often carries “causal force”, it is, in his view, best viewed as a “bland signifier” in various contexts.\(^{73}\) It is not clear, however, what criteria Campbell uses to distinguish between instances of “causal force”, and blander uses. He insists that for ambiguous occurrences, the co-text and wider argument are determinative for ascertaining the particular use of γάρ. Campbell is explicit about wishing to avoid placing too much interpretative weight on the connective.\(^{74}\) For him, “γάρ is not an unambiguous signal concerning Paul’s argumentative strategy; rather, the strategy that we conclude is operative… will signal how we are to interpret γάρ”.\(^{75}\)

The attention Campbell gives to the connective is concentrated primarily in his discussion of 1:18, on which his reading of Romans 1-4 hinges. By dismissing γάρ as a communicative clue, he is able to argue that 1:18 represents the beginning of the presentation of an opposing gospel to Paul’s, spoken in the voice of Paul’s opponent, which is in fundamental discontinuity with what precedes it in 1:16-17.\(^{76}\) In other passages which he discusses in considerable detail, however, he is silent regarding γάρ,\(^{77}\) despite the fact that the signal it gives could potentially support his interpretation. Ultimately Campbell’s disregard for γάρ as a consistent communicative signpost deprives him of an important clue to communicator intentions and the direction of the argument. His strategy of disambiguating γάρ from his construal of the wider argument threatens to undermine his own valid concern to reject the imposition of prior interpretative grids. A fresh, communicative account of γάρ would represent a serious

\(^{73}\) Campbell 2009: 340. See also p.1021 n.6 for a range of “senses” of γάρ, inspired by BDAG.

\(^{74}\) Campbell 2009: 340.

\(^{75}\) Campbell 2009: 340.

\(^{76}\) Campbell 2009: 542-43.

\(^{77}\) See Campbell’s (2009:702-3) discussion of 1:16b.
challenge to Campbell’s reading of γάρ at pivotal moments such as 1:18, potentially undermining his entire rereading of the argument of Romans.

In contrast, Elliott emphasises the importance of taking into account the clear indications given by γάρ as to the argumentative flow of the epistle’s argument. In his 1990 work, he takes a rhetorical-critical approach, while in his 2008 monograph he reads Romans from an “ideological-critical”, 78 anti-imperial perspective. For Elliott, γάρ is a “subordinating conjunction”, 79 a “grammatical marker” which indicates a close connection with what precedes. Elliott is scathing of interpretations which disregard the clear indication given by chains of γάρ clauses (see 1:15-18 and 2:1-16) as to the direction of Paul’s argument. These interpretations tear statements such as those in 1:16-17 from their context, and isolate them as self-contained units. 80 This encourages a distorted theological reading of the letter which privileges the doctrine of justification by faith. 81 It is notable that here Campbell and Elliott’s wider concerns coincide, and yet Campbell employs precisely the treatment of γάρ which Elliott criticises as an “interpretive misstep” leading to particular theological readings of the letter. 82

Elliott’s audience-orientated approach, which views the epistle as a piece of persuasion, 83 encourages an essentially communicative view of γάρ, in which the connective helps guide addressees towards the thrust of the argument. In both works, Elliott argues for a reading of Romans which takes account of the fact that the argumentative flow of these passages is from supporting axioms introduced by γάρ backwards towards a main argumentative point. 84 That is, information introduced by γάρ, however theologically weighty, represents premises which support other more argumentatively salient information. Elliott’s view suggests that γάρ allows us to trace the direction of the argument and distinguish between salient argumentative points on the one hand, and weighty supporting theolegoumena on the other. But he applies this

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78 Elliott 2008: 11.
80 Elliott 2008: 74-75.
81 Elliott 2008: 75; 1990: 122.
82 Elliott 2008: 75.
83 Elliott 2008: 19.
84 Elliott 1990: 122.
insight only selectively in his 2008 reading. He does not consider other examples of chains of γάρ clauses, or indeed pivotal single occurrences, which could have implications for identifying the centre of the argument, possibly challenging aspects of his anti-imperial interpretation.85 A fresh, cognitively grounded analysis of γάρ could enhance Elliott’s important insights regarding the direction of argumentation by placing them within a theoretical and communicative framework, ensuring that they are applied more generally to the whole argument of the epistle.

1.3 Scholarly treatment of γάρ: linguistic accounts

While contemporary scholars of Romans have continued in large part to rely upon traditional analyses of γάρ, in the past half century attempts have been made, particularly by some working in the domain of Bible translation, to apply modern linguistic principles to the study of γάρ in NT Greek. These studies are distinguished by a particular awareness of the biblical text as a piece of communication with an audience, and by the assumption that biblical Greek is a human language like any other. This perspective enables an investigation of the language from outside the straitjacket of traditional grammatical categories, using the methodology of descriptive linguistics. Such studies are, however, limited in their scope: most focus on isolated and problematic occurrences of γάρ, particularly within NT narrative.86

1.3.1 Discourse-analytic approaches

Stephen Levinsohn, also working within the field of Bible translation, harnesses a discourse-analytic approach87 in order to explain features of NT Greek, including connectives.88 He characterises his approach as “eclectic” and functional.89 His work focuses mainly on NT narrative material, particularly Acts, and is distinctive in its identification of a single function for γάρ: “to introduce background material that

85 E.g. 8:17-30; 10:1-13; 15:7-13 etc.
87 See the discussion of discourse analysis under 2.6 n.165.
88 Levinsohn 2000.
strengthens some aspect of what has just been presented.” This material does not advance the main line of the narrative or argument, but instead provides an explanation or exposition of the previous assertion. This explanation is a clear departure from the traditional listing of various uses of γάρ in different contexts. The notion of “strengthening” previous information does, however, pick up on a strand in traditional accounts which recognises a confirmatory role for γάρ. Levinsohn’s analysis accords with the views of Dutch scholars applying a pragmatically-orientated discourse-analytic approach to Classical Greek, who view γάρ as a “push” particle which “pushes [or subordinates] the utterance [that it introduces] to a lower level than the preceding discourse.”

Levinsohn’s analysis represents a step forward in its attempt to provide a unified account of the function of γάρ in NT texts, and its recognition of the connective as essentially a structural signal which indicates background information. But his account has limitations. It suggests a close strengthening relationship between information introduced by γάρ and the immediately preceding assertion, but does not address the issue of γάρ clauses which seem to relate to preceding material not immediately adjacent, nor of the strengthening of implicitly communicated information. Despite using the terminology of strengthening, Levinsohn stops short of a cognitive, inferential account of γάρ which would explain in what sense strengthening occurs, and what this means in terms of communicative and persuasive effects for addressees.

Other scholars have built on Levinsohn’s discourse-analytic approach, applying it to a wider range of material. J. A. Heckert uses it to investigate the use of γάρ in the pastoral epistles. He argues that γάρ has one “semantic function” but “one or two pragmatic uses”, concluding that its basic function is “to introduce propositions which confirm and

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90 Levinsohn’s use of the terminology of strengthening appears to be influenced by Blass (1993).
91 Levinsohn 2000: 90.
92 E.g. LSJ: 338, definition 3.b: “to confirm or strengthen something said”; Winer (1870: 558), who states that γάρ can express “generally an affirmation or assent (γε) which stands in relation to what precedes (ὑπό);” Denniston’s identification of a “confirmatory use” (1934: 58).
94 Porter (1995: 107–10) criticises Levinsohn for failing to consider discourse features in a range of NT text types and authors.
strengthen a preceding conjunct, usually one that immediately precedes”.95 His study is not a systematic exploration of all occurrences in the pastoral epistles, however, and contains little illustration or explanation of how γάρ does in fact introduce strengthening material. Runge, meanwhile, in his innovative discourse-analytic grammar of NT Greek, adopts Levinsohn’s basic view of γάρ. He describes its function thus: “the information introduced [by γάρ] does not advance the discourse but adds background information that strengthens or supports what precedes”.96 Runge applies this analysis consistently in his 2014 reading of Romans. Like Levinsohn, however, his work does not consider the possible cognitive and inferential aspects of the role of γάρ, and is ultimately focused on the text itself and its structure, rather than on the text as a communicative stimulus for an audience.

1.3.2 A cognitive-pragmatic approach: procedural meaning

The discourse-analytic approach represented by Levinsohn and Runge makes some progress, then, in identifying a core function for γάρ, but still leaves aspects of its use unexplained, in Romans and elsewhere. The approach needs to be supplemented by more pragmatic97 and context-sensitive models which emphasise that a focus on the text or linguistic form itself, without due attention to its cognitive implications, is not enough to discover its meanings.98 In recent years, the increasing interest among linguists in the phenomenon of connectives99 in many languages has generated a wealth of research from a variety of theoretical perspectives.100 In particular, developments in cognitive pragmatics have opened up possibilities for a new understanding of the role of connectives in terms of giving guidance towards inferences that are drawn by addressees as part of the comprehension process. The ground-breaking notion of procedural meaning, first proposed by Diane Blakemore101 within the framework of

96 Runge 2010: 52.
97 That is, dealing with language in use (not to be confused with philosophical pragmatism: see Pattemore 2004: 13 n.2; Levinson 1983: 1). See 2.1 for a discussion of pragmatics as sub-branch of linguistics.
99 Also referred to as “discourse markers” or “connectors”, depending on the approach adopted.
100 E.g. Levinson 1983; Schiffrin 1987; Blakemore 1987; 2002.
101 See Blakemore 1987, though she does not use the term “procedural” in her early work. Wilson 2011b gives an overview of the development of the notion of procedural meaning.
Relevance Theory (henceforward RT), has served as a basis for unified accounts of a whole host of connectives in diverse languages.¹⁰² RT is a theory of communication which seeks to explain how the interpretation of linguistic communication works. One of its fundamental insights is that the comprehension of all language involves not only decoding but also inferences. Procedural meaning, meanwhile, is to be distinguished from conceptual meaning. It involves the linguistic representation not of concepts, but of instructions which guide addressees towards the derivation of inferences. Blakemore argues that connectives are used by communicators as procedural markers which constrain addressees’ inferential processes, reducing ambiguity. A more detailed account of both RT and the notion of procedural meaning will be given in chapter 2.

The notion of procedural meaning has the potential to provide a unifying explanation for the variety of uses of γάρ, in Romans and beyond, within an overarching, cognitively grounded theoretical framework which recognises the fundamental role of communicator, context and addressees in the interpretative process. In a brief but insightful unpublished sketch, Regina Blass has attempted to apply Blakemore’s procedural account to various Greek connectives in Pauline epistles, explaining their particular roles in “constraining relevance”.¹⁰³ Blass posits a backwards strengthening or confirming function for γάρ which is able to accommodate a variety of uses in different contexts. Her study limits itself to a handful of relatively straightforward examples of γάρ from Romans, however. A systematic examination of all occurrences in Romans needs to be undertaken, in order to discover how far such a procedural hypothesis is able to provide a consistent and unifying account of a diversity of examples, and how it may need to be refined or extended.

Although the notion of procedural meaning has proved influential in pragmatics, it has hitherto had relatively little impact on biblical studies. In general, while older structuralist and functionalist linguistic approaches have penetrated biblical studies to some extent,¹⁰⁴ innovative insights from pragmatics have yet to make a significant

¹⁰³ Blass 1993.
¹⁰⁴ See Porter & Pitts 2008 for an overview of studies applying structuralist and functionalist linguistic approaches to aspects of NT Greek; Fantin 2011: 23-24.
impact on the understanding of NT Greek. Two forward-looking exceptions are Stephanie Black’s examination of sentence conjunctions in Matthew’s Gospel, and Margaret Sim’s study of ἱνα and ὅτι in Koine Greek. Both bridge the gap between biblical studies and linguistics/pragmatics by applying the notion of procedural meaning to NT connectives, offering innovative, unifying accounts of their communicative function across a range of uses. Black starts from a systemic-functional perspective, but is eclectic in her approach, drawing from other streams in her application of new linguistic tools to the study of NT Greek. Her analysis of γάρ is limited in its scope, but is a model of how one may integrate the concept of procedural meaning with aspects of other cognitive approaches, and produce a pragmatic account of connectives which is accessible to biblical scholars. For Black, in narrative material γάρ has a single pragmatic function of directing addressees to “strengthen a preceding proposition, confirming it as part of the mental representation they construct of the discourse”. Her analysis emphasises the interplay between the connective and the semantics of the linguistic co-text, but stops short of discussing the inferential processes which may be involved in comprehending this. Like Levinsohn and Runge, Black emphasises that γάρ introduces material which is “off-line with respect to the sequence of narrative events”.

Sim, meanwhile, taking a relevance-theoretic approach, argues that ἱνα does not carry a fixed lexical meaning, but instead gives procedural instructions to addressees to process information which follows as representing a potential rather than an actual state of affairs. Such an account is superior to a traditional explanation because it enables an understanding of ἱνα in terms of the author’s communicative intention, and the inferences it encourages addressees to draw. Sim’s study serves as an illuminating example of how a relevant-theoretic framework can be employed to throw fresh light on

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106 Black 2002; Sim 2010. See also Zakowski 2016, who uses the notion of procedural meaning to explain γάρ in Mark 5:42.
107 Black’s (2002) chapter on γάρ deals with the ten occurrences found in narrative material in Matthew.
111 Black 2002: 261.
112 Sim 2010: 59.
113 Sim 2010: 197.
features of NT Greek that continue to resist satisfactory analysis using traditional categories.

In brief, insights from the evolving domain of pragmatics not only have the potential to unlock more satisfying and theoretically grounded explanations of connectives in NT Greek, but also encourage more generally the recovery of a communicative view of the biblical text, in which communicator, context and addressees all play a fundamental role. Unlike biblical studies, modern linguistics and pragmatics are relatively recent fields of study, unencumbered by the weight of tradition. They enable the application of fresh cross-linguistic discoveries about the functioning and use of human language to the elucidation of both ancient and modern languages. As cousin disciplines closely related to some of the concerns of biblical studies, they have much to offer their older relative. Their innovative insights need to be seized and harnessed within biblical studies in order to find new ways forward with intransigent exegetical problems. With these new linguistic tools at our disposal, the time is ripe for a systematic exploration of γάρ in Romans.

1.4 Contribution of the study

Given this research context, this study proposes to take a fresh look at γάρ in Romans using an interdisciplinary approach. Its unique contribution will be twofold. Firstly, it will advance systematically a fresh cognitive-pragmatic understanding of the communicative role of γάρ in an entire piece of NT argumentation, Romans, in order to find a more satisfying, unified account of the connective. In so doing, it will take into account all occurrences in the epistle, and will search for a more adequate explanation of aspects of the connective’s use which are not yet satisfactorily accounted for, such as the reach and scope of γάρ. Secondly, it will apply this fresh account to aspects of the letter’s interpretation. It will explore how this may help us move forward in some exegetical debates at the level of individual verses, and, more broadly, how it may illuminate some ongoing contested interpretative questions relating to the letter’s purpose and to the thrust of its argument. My hope is that the study will help to clear up the confusion of approaches adopted by biblical scholars in relation to γάρ, and shed light on the interpretation of Romans by providing support for certain readings, while ruling out others. In addition, I aim to provide a consistent account of γάρ which will be
useful in NT interpretation beyond Romans. Finally, I hope to make innovative linguistic and cognitive-pragmatic insights more accessible to NT studies, and to demonstrate how fruitful interdisciplinary collaboration can be.

1.5 Outline of the thesis

Chapter 2 will present the theoretical framework of RT, concentrating on pertinent aspects, and showing in more detail its advantages for a fresh treatment of γάρ. It will introduce issues related to the audience and purpose of Romans, and consider how RT may provide assistance for secondary interpreters in relation to the vexed question of the use of pertinent and plausible historical information in the interpretation process.

Chapters 3 and 4 will present an analysis of γάρ in Romans, demonstrating from representative examples that all occurrences of γάρ in the epistle can be accounted for in terms of procedural strengthening. Chapter 3 will discuss straightforward and somewhat more complex occurrences. Chapter 4 will deal with occurrences which might be perceived as highly problematic, where an obvious strengthening relationship may be hard to trace, and much is at stake exegetically. Chapter 5 will look at the implications of a procedural account of γάρ for some contested exegetical questions at the level of individual verses. Finally, chapter 6 will consider two pivotal passages, 1:15-18 and 15:7-13, in order to explore how a procedural account may throw light on the coherence and direction of the letter’s argument, and on its purpose. It will engage with some recent interpretations of Romans, showing how a procedural account undermines certain recent construals of the data, while providing support for others.
Chapter 2: Theoretical framework

2.1 Introduction: linguistics, pragmatics and cognitive pragmatics

This chapter will present the theoretical framework and methodology of the study, setting out some basic aspects of RT which are pertinent to the investigation of γάρ in Romans. It will show how RT is a new tool which is particularly well adapted to a re-examination of the old problem of the role of γάρ, and will justify its application to the interpretation of an ancient text.

RT belongs within a cognitive-pragmatic\textsuperscript{114} approach to communication and the interpretation of language. Within the discipline of linguistics, the branch of pragmatics deals with language in use, that is, in relation to users and interpreters, and with the contribution of context to meaning.\textsuperscript{115} This emphasis on communicators, addressees and context is highly pertinent to biblical studies. Pragmatic approaches inspired by the philosopher of language, H. P. Grice, define pragmatics in terms of a semantics/pragmatics distinction, in which semantics is concerned with “what the words say” and pragmatics with “what the speaker means”.\textsuperscript{116} On this view, linguistic semantics is understood as the linguistic encoding of meaning, while linguistic pragmatics deals with meaning which must be inferred from contextual information.\textsuperscript{117} Grice assumed that pragmatic interpretation is based on human rationality,\textsuperscript{118} and accorded a central role to speaker intention in determining meaning.

Cognitive pragmatics affirms these Gricean assumptions. It differs from Grice, however, in its use of the methods of cognitive science and its concern with empirical cognitive processes. It assumes that the inferring of a communicator’s intention from

\textsuperscript{114}Cognitive pragmatics has been described as “the interdisciplinary study of language use and verbal communication within the methodological and theoretical framework of the cognitive sciences” (Sbisà et al., 2011:241).  
\textsuperscript{115}Horn & Ward 2004: xi. For a discussion of different definitions of pragmatics based on diverse linguistic perspectives, see Pattemore 2004: 13 n.2.  
\textsuperscript{116}Clark 2002: 3.  
\textsuperscript{117}Carston 2002: 3.  
\textsuperscript{118}Carston 2002: 357.
the communication context involves a specific kind of information processing.\textsuperscript{119} RT, first proposed by Dan Sperber and Deidre Wilson in the 1980s, represents one specific approach within cognitive pragmatics. It aims to explain how the human cognitive system does the “interpretive work” needed to understand utterances in communication.\textsuperscript{120} It holds that the interpretation of language involves sub-personal\textsuperscript{121} cognitive processes\textsuperscript{122} which are geared towards the maximisation of relevance and guided by the search for it.

\section*{2.2 Pertinent aspects of RT}

RT aims to provide a general, unifying explanation of human communication applicable cross-linguistically. In the years since its initial appearance, RT has spawned a host of publications and continues to stimulate a wide range of research into linguistic and pragmatic phenomena in many languages. It has likewise been applied within various disciplines related to communication: philosophy and psychology, literary, media and translation studies, experimental pragmatics and cognitive science.\textsuperscript{123} It has stimulated vigorous debate within linguistics and pragmatics, and continues to evolve in the light of this.\textsuperscript{124}

\subsection*{2.2.1 Cognition, relevance and ostensive-inferential communication}

RT is concerned with what it terms ostensive-inferential communication.\textsuperscript{125} This includes linguistic communication, but is not limited to it (though RT focuses on this). It asserts that “intentional communication gives rise to expectations which help us to decide what the communicator intends to convey”,\textsuperscript{126} and that language functions as a

\begin{thebibliography}{99}
\item \textsuperscript{119} Sbisà, et al. 2011: 241.
\item \textsuperscript{120} Blakemore 2002: 154-55.
\item \textsuperscript{121} That is, automatic computations which are not under conscious control. See Clark 2013: 34.
\item \textsuperscript{122} Carston 2002: 7.
\item \textsuperscript{124} See, for example, the “Open Peer Commentary” in Sperber & Wilson 1987, and the modifications in the second edition of “Relevance: Communication and Cognition” (Sperber & Wilson 1995: 255-60, 295-98).
\item \textsuperscript{125} This involves an overt intention to communicate on the part of the communicator, and inferencing on the part of the addressee (Clark 2013: 113). See glossary.
\item \textsuperscript{126} Clark 2013: 4.
\end{thebibliography}
clue to those intentions. It works from the presupposition that human minds are highly evolved information processors, automatically paying attention to whatever in their environment brings them most cognitive benefits or effects. RT defines (positive) cognitive effects as “worthwhile differences to the individual’s representation of the world”.\textsuperscript{127} The aim of ostensive communication is to bring about changes and expansion to the addressee’s cognitive environment (see 2.2.3), that is, to the set of “assumptions” that are manifest\textsuperscript{128} to her. Within RT, “assumption” is a technical term referring to a thought or idea which is held as true by, or accessible to, an individual. (See glossary.)

Cognitive processes demand processing effort, however. RT conceives of relevance in terms of a trade-off between worthwhile cognitive effects, and the processing effort involved in acquiring them. Something is optimally relevant to an individual if cognitive effects gained outweigh processing effort. RT claims that “to communicate is to claim someone’s attention”.\textsuperscript{129} By the act of communicating verbally (i.e. ostensively), we automatically claim that the information communicated is relevant to our addressees and worth the effort needed to process it. Ostensive communication thus creates expectations of relevance. RT expresses this in terms of a communicative principle of relevance: “every ostensive stimulus conveys a presumption of its own optimal relevance”.\textsuperscript{130} The mutual recognition of the communicator’s intentions acts as a guarantee that the linguistic stimulus will give rise to an interpretation which will be optimally relevant.\textsuperscript{131} RT claims that this principle of relevance automatically guides inferential comprehension processes. It enables the addressee’s comprehension processes to select a relevant set of contextual assumptions\textsuperscript{132} (i.e. a context), and to derive a relevant interpretation.

\textsuperscript{127} Wilson & Sperber 2004: 608.
\textsuperscript{128} Assumptions are manifest to an individual if they are perceptible or inferable to her (Sperber & Wilson 1987: 39).
\textsuperscript{129} Sperber & Wilson 1987: 697.
\textsuperscript{130} Sperber & Wilson 1995: 158. See also 1995: 270.
\textsuperscript{131} Sperber & Wilson 1995: 267.
\textsuperscript{132} That is, background assumptions used in the interpretation of an utterance. See glossary, and further discussion under 2.2.3.
2.2.2 Decoding, inference and underdeterminacy

In contrast to older code models of communication, RT claims that interpretation of linguistic communication involves two distinct mechanisms: decoding and inference. On this view, decoding involves computations which translate the linguistic forms used by the communicator into mental representations. These are then combined with, and adjusted in relation to contextual information by means of inferential processes, in the search for an optimally relevant interpretation.

RT claims that the linguistic code of all utterances is, for reasons of efficiency, underdetermined in terms of meaning. To make every detail of a communicator’s intention explicit would involve unnecessary effort for both communicator and addressee. Instead, the linguistic code is merely a stimulus supplying necessary clues, from which the addressee infers the communicator’s intention. Ambiguous lexemes, pronominal reference, and ellipsis are all examples of underdetermined code. Interpretation involves drawing inferences to disambiguate and enrich the underdetermined linguistic stimulus using contextual information, to arrive at a semantically complete propositional form. In many cases it also involves drawing inferences from implicit information, in order to arrive at the intended relevant interpretation. A communicator tailors the linguistic stimulus in order to provide an optimal amount of explicit information: neither too little, which would lead to extra inferential work, nor too much, which would result in distracting overload. If a communicator misjudges what is required, an addressee may fail to arrive at a relevant interpretation.

2.2.3 Context and contextual assumptions

In RT terms, the context of an utterance or piece of communication is “the set of premises used in comprehension, chosen in the interpretative process: “a context is a psychological construct, a subset of the hearer’s assumptions about the world.”

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133 See Pattemore’s (2004: 13) critique.
135 RT uses the term “premise” in a technical sense to refer to an assumption which is used in a process of inferences which leads to a conclusion. (See glossary.) This does not imply, however, as in strict logic, that the truth of a premise guarantees the truth of the conclusion.
Communicators and addressees have a unique body of knowledge accessible to them which RT refers to as encyclopaedic knowledge. (See glossary). The context of an utterance may include information from the physical environment and immediately preceding utterances, but also from encyclopaedic knowledge. An addressee may draw on all kinds of manifest contextual information to combine with the information communicated by the linguistic code, in order to comprehend the communicator’s intention. It is the principle of relevance that ensures that addressees select the appropriate contextual assumptions from all manifest information. In the comprehension of a written text, the immediately preceding co-text represents the most highly accessible contextual information.

Furthermore, RT talks in terms of the cognitive environment of individuals. At any given time, individuals have a set of facts or assumptions which are manifest to them, determined by physical environment, cognitive abilities, encyclopaedic knowledge etc. This set of assumptions makes up their unique cognitive environment. The cognitive environments of individuals can overlap to a greater or lesser extent. In order for communication to succeed, communicator and addressees must share an overlapping cognitive environment. According to RT, communication is in essence an attempt to “enlarge the scope of what is mutually manifest to both communicator and audience”.

### 2.2.4 A relevance-guided comprehension heuristic

How does the communicative principle of relevance ensure that an addressee selects the intended contextual assumptions as premises in the inferential interpretation process? Because of the presumption of optimal relevance, an addressee’s sub-personal interpretative processes follow what RT terms a relevance-guided comprehension heuristic. That is, the addressee’s inferential comprehension processes automatically follow “a path of least effort” as they compute cognitive effects. In constructing

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139 Pattemore 2004: 15.
hypotheses about the intended meaning of a linguistic stimulus, the most accessible (the most obvious) interpretation is considered first, and the process of testing interpretative hypotheses stops as soon as the addressee’s expectations of relevance are satisfied. The next most accessible interpretation will only be considered if adequate cognitive effects are not gained from the first.\textsuperscript{141}

\subsection*{2.2.5 Types of cognitive effect}

RT identifies different kinds of cognitive effect, that is, ways in which the cognitive environment of addressees can be modified. These result from different kinds of inferential procedures undertaken. The most notable effect is a contextual implication. This is a new conclusion, derivable from a combination of the input provided by the linguistic stimulus plus contextual assumptions.\textsuperscript{142} A second cognitive effect is particularly pertinent to our study of \( \gamma \alpha \rho \): the strengthening of existing assumptions already held by an addressee, so that she adheres to them more strongly. Blakemore explains the notion of strengthening as follows: “[A]ssumptions about the world come with varying degrees of strength, and… logical computations assign strength to conclusions on the basis of the strength of the premises from which they are derived”.\textsuperscript{143} Blass states that “the strength of an existing assumption may… be modified by the acquisition of new information…[and] new information may achieve relevance by strengthening an existing assumption”.\textsuperscript{144} Other types of cognitive effect include the revision or the abandonment of available assumptions.\textsuperscript{145}

\textsuperscript{141} RT nuances its explanation of the automatic path of least effort by positing three distinct interpretative strategies: naïve optimism, cautious optimism, and sophisticated understanding. These are employed by different addressees, depending on their stance of trust towards the communicator, their cognitive abilities, and their commitment to finding a relevant interpretation (see Clark 2013: 351; Sim 2016: 23-25). Naïve optimism represents the path of absolute least effort, but in some circumstances will not result in a relevant interpretation, in which case an addressee may move on to the second strategy. This involves more effort in order to achieve adequate effects, including making allowances for communicator errors or limitations in abilities.

\textsuperscript{142} Wilson & Sperber 2004: 608.

\textsuperscript{143} Blakemore 1987: 149.

\textsuperscript{144} Blass 1990: 45. The RT notion of strengthening has much in common with Perelman and Olbrecht’s (1969: 44) view that beliefs, once established, can be intensified by argumentation which reinforces them by means of new reasons supporting them.

\textsuperscript{145} Wilson & Sperber 2004: 608.
2.3 Blakemore’s account of strengthening

According to Blakemore, in the inferential procedure of strengthening, an addressee draws certain inferences about the relationship between a newly presented statement and a previously communicated assumption (claim). The new statement is processed as a premise or evidence which provides support for the previous assumption, so that it is held more strongly as valid. RT uses “premise” to refer to an assumption in a process of inference that functions as support for a conclusion. (See glossary). Strengthening involves combining the new premise with highly accessible contextual assumptions in an inferential series. This leads to a conclusion which independently confirms the previously expressed assumption.\(^\text{146}\) \(^\text{147}\)

To illustrate the difference between the procedure of strengthening and the procedure of drawing a contextual implication, Blakemore uses the following example:

a) Tom can open Ben’s safe. b) He knows the combination.\(^\text{148}\)

Depending on the context, statement b) can be processed either as a strengthening premise for a), or as a new conclusion inferred from a). An addressee must use contextual information in order to infer the relationship, and thus the relevance of b). In a context where a) has been processed as a new claim, when an addressee hears b), her comprehension processes infer that this is intended as confirming evidence. These processes then search for the most easily accessible contextual assumption(s) to use as premises to be combined with b) in an inferential series leading to the independent deduction of a) as a conclusion. In this case, the most highly accessible assumption activated by b) from encyclopaedic knowledge will be something like c): “If someone knows the combination of a safe, that person is able to open the safe.”

We can represent the assumptions involved in this procedure as a logical argument which may be something like the following:

\(^{146}\) See Blakemore 1987: 84-85, 88-90.
\(^{147}\) RT proposes a model of non-demonstrable inferences in which the truth of a premise does not guarantee the truth of the conclusion. The process of non-demonstrable inferences is “less a logical process than a form of suitably constrained guesswork” involving hypothesis formation. It uses “deductive rules, but is not totally governed by them.” (Sperber & Wilson 1995: 69).
\(^{148}\) Blakemore 2002: 78.
Series A: strengthening

**Explicitly communicated premise a):** Tom can open Ben’s safe.

**Explicitly communicated premise b):** Tom knows the combination to Ben’s safe.

**Background premise c):** If someone knows the combination of a safe, that person is able to open the safe.

**Conclusion (independently confirming a)):** Tom is able to open Ben’s safe.

Since a) is independently deduced by the addressee as a conclusion on the basis of b) plus background assumptions already available and accepted as valid, the result is an increase in the strength with which claim a) is held as valid. Statement b) is thus relevant in relation to a), contributing to an increase in its relevance.

On the other hand, in a different context, where a) has already been processed as a premise, b) will be interpreted as a new conclusion. We can imagine a scenario which gives rise to this interpretation: for example, Ben is unconscious, and his friends urgently need to know the combination to his safe. They suddenly remember that another friend, Tom, who now lives abroad, has opened the safe in the past. This leads them to infer, and to state explicitly, that he knows the combination. In terms of cognitive effects, this represents a contextual implication which is relevant in its own right, bringing fresh changes in thought, rather than strengthening existing assumptions. In this case, addressees’ comprehension processes will draw a different set of inferences to establish the relevant relation between a) and b), along the following lines:

Series B: new conclusion/implication

**Explicitly communicated premise a):** Tom can open Ben’s safe.

**Conclusion (explicitly communicated in utterance b)):** Tom knows the combination to Ben’s safe.

**Background premise:** If a person can open a safe, that person knows the combination to the safe.
It is possible for an addressee to infer these differing cognitive effects in different contexts from statements a) and b) without additional procedural guidance from the communicator. But Blakemore argues that the insertion of a connective at the beginning of b) (either “you see/after all” indicating strengthening) or “therefore/so” (indicating a new implication) will facilitate comprehension, constraining interpretation and reducing processing effort.149 Such connectives thus encode instructions for inferential procedures to be followed.

2.4 Blakemore and procedural meaning

According to Blakemore’s notion of procedural meaning, in contrast to conceptual information, which, when decoded, becomes input for the construction of mental representations, procedural information encodes instructions guiding towards inferential procedures. The distinction between linguistically encoded conceptual and procedural information corresponds to the two distinct modes of ostensive-inferential communication: decoding and inference. The conceptual/procedural distinction makes particular sense within a cognitive view of interpretation, but has proved influential more generally. It has been adopted both within and outside the framework of RT and applied not only to connectives, but to the analysis of a whole range of linguistic phenomena.150 It continues to evolve as it is applied in fresh areas such as the study of mental states and epistemic vigilance.

In an unpublished sketch, Blass suggested that Blakemore’s procedural account could be applied to the NT Greek connectives οὖν, γάρ, καί, ὥστε, and ἀλλά in the Pauline epistles.151 She proposes that γάρ is a procedural marker which indicates that the assumptions that it introduces should be interpreted as “premises, backwards confirming and strengthening other propositions”.152 Blass asserts that it is the principle of relevance that determines the exact scope of the material introduced by γάρ and which elements of the previous communication it strengthens.153 She recognises the particular

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149 Blakemore 2002: 79.
150 See Wilson 2011b.
151 Blass 1993.
difficulties faced by secondary interpreters\textsuperscript{154} of the biblical text, given the fact that the original communication context is no longer available.\textsuperscript{155} She argues that procedural markers such as γάρ provide valuable constraints on interpretation for contemporary interpreters, guiding towards certain inferences and thus assisting with the selection of contextual assumptions.\textsuperscript{156}

Based on Blakemore’s proposed model, Blass lays out the strengthening procedure triggered by γάρ in Romans 3:22b as a logical argument as follows:\textsuperscript{157}

(Claim for strengthening: Romans 3:22a: The righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ (is) for all who believe.)

**Premise 1:** If there is no distinction, then the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ (is) for all who believe. (Inference drawn from background assumptions.)

**Premise 2 introduced by γάρ:** There is no distinction. (v.22b)

**Conclusion:** The righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ (is) for all who believe. (Backwards strengthening v.22a)

Similarly, she lays out the strengthening series triggered by γάρ in 3:23 as follows:

**Premise 1:** If all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, then there is no distinction (between Jews and Gentiles\textsuperscript{158}). (Inference drawn from implicit background assumptions.)

**Premise 2 introduced by γάρ:** All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

**Conclusion:** There is no distinction (between Jews and Gentiles). (Backwards strengthening v.22b)\textsuperscript{159}

\textsuperscript{154} I use Gutt’s (2000: 76) terminology of “secondary communication situation” to refer to any interpretation undertaken in a situation where the cognitive environment of the first addressees is no longer accessible.

\textsuperscript{155} Blass 1993: 9.

\textsuperscript{156} Blass 1993: 7.

\textsuperscript{157} This is a hypothetical analysis of how the interpretation process may go, rather than a representation of what was actually thought (see Blass 1990: 13). This is the case for the construction of hypothetical inferential series throughout this study.

\textsuperscript{158} Blass translates as “Gentiles” rather than “Greeks”.

\textsuperscript{159} Taken from Blass 1993: 8.
In each case, Blass identifies a single background assumption which is involved in the inferential procedure. Her account seems to explain satisfactorily the handful of isolated occurrences she discusses from Romans, which all are unambiguous instances of γάρ introducing substantiation or confirming evidence for a previous claim. It does not, however, deal with more problematic occurrences, nor does it consider a range of diverse biblical data from a piece of communication in its entirety.

Blass’s study represents a tentative hypothesis for a fresh analysis of γάρ which opens up new possibilities for a more satisfying and cognitively coherent explanation. This proposal requires further exploration and development in order to provide a unifying account for all the seemingly diverse occurrences of γάρ in Romans. If the suggestion is correct that γάρ gives consistent instructions to interpret what follows it as supporting evidence for a preceding claim, we should find that it plays a significant role in argumentation.

2.5 Advantages of a procedural account of γάρ

A relevance-theoretic procedural approach to connectives has a number of strengths which make it a well adapted tool as we seek a more satisfactory explanation of γάρ. First, it provides a cognitively grounded explanation for the phenomenon of connectives within a wider explanatory theory affirming the importance of communicative intention, context and interpretative choices in interpretation. Cross-linguistic evidence from a wide range of languages suggests that procedural meaning may be a universal linguistic phenomenon, just as inferences are a fundamental part of all human communication.\footnote{160 See Blass 1990: 14.}

Second, the notion of procedural meaning opens up new possibilities for a unified account of diverse occurrences of γάρ. The range of partially overlapping meanings or functions traditionally identified could potentially be accounted for by a single set of instructions. This would be flexible enough to account for different outworkings in diverse contexts. Thus a procedural account may be able to explain various problematic instances where a causal or supporting relationship with immediately preceding material is not obvious.
Third, the proposal that connectives encode processing instructions, not concepts, liberates us from the difficulties encountered when we attempt to find a conceptual definition or an explanation of its non-grammatical status and optional use. The notion of procedural instructions makes sense of the fact that γάρ is used at the communicator’s discretion, depending on his assessment of how much guidance a particular audience needs towards a relevant interpretation. In short, a procedural account potentially untangles various knots in the task of defining and explaining γάρ.

2.6 Different contributions to relevance

According to RT, over the course of a piece of communication, an addressee’s cognitive environment is adjusted and expanded as a result of different cognitive effects. A cognitive environment is not a fixed construct, but is “progressively created as the text is processed”.\(^\text{161}\) The interpretation of one utterance contributes to the contextual assumptions available for establishing the relevance of the next.\(^\text{162}\) Consequently, the preceding co-text of any utterance plays a vital role in its interpretation, particularly immediately preceding utterances. Information communicated further back in the co-text may also be made freshly salient by repetition or by the activation of associated assumptions at a particular point, contributing to the cognitive effects derived.\(^\text{163}\)

Within an extended piece of communication such as a literary text, various parts make different contributions to its overall relevance. Some represent highly salient pieces of information from which many contextual implications are drawn; for example, the climax of a story, or the beginning or conclusion of a section of argumentation. Others represent premises which prepare for subsequent conclusions, while others still represent information which strengthens previous assumptions.\(^\text{164}\) We can define salience in terms of relatively high numbers of cognitive effects derived from particular communicated assumptions. Less salient parts of a text (background or supporting information) make a contribution to overall relevance by activating assumptions which

\(^{161}\) Pattemore 2004: 49.

\(^{162}\) Blass 1990: 78.

\(^{163}\) See Pattemore 2004: 53: “… a subsequent passage may provide the missing component of the cognitive environment of an earlier passage… allowing [this] to achieve optimal relevance as the reading proceeds.”

\(^{164}\) Unger 2002: 134-38.
prepare for and support the most salient points. In the case of strengthening, a statement contributes to relevance in relation to previously communicated information, increasing the strength with which it is held as valid, and thereby increasing its salience. Without the contributions to relevance made by less salient information, there would be fewer cognitive effects gained at key salient points. Punch lines would have only weak punch, since contextual assumptions necessary for maximal cognitive effects would not be easily accessible.

A relevance-theoretic approach thus requires that interpreters pay careful attention to the whole previous co-text as potentially relevant contextual information. For this reason, I have chosen to use the entire epistle of Romans as a corpus for the study of γάρ. I will examine occurrences of γάρ in Romans within their wider co-text to explore how γάρ may guide the interpreter at each point in the argument and thus contribute to the argument as a whole. In every case, I will consider previously communicated assumptions which are highly accessible and likely to be involved in the inferential processes of interpretation.

Whereas various discourse-analytic approaches focus on the structure of a text, and on coherence between units of text or discourse which may be indicated by linguistic signals such as discourse markers (connectives), RT focuses on the relationship between the linguistic code of the text and its context, and how this relationship may achieve effects in addressees’ minds. Thus the contours and structure of a piece of communication are ultimately psychological rather than textual, arising from cognitive processes and effects. This is not to say that the linguistic structure of a text, nor its study, is unimportant, but rather that it serves as a series of clues to cognitive realities beyond it. Discourse analysis allows us to analyse more effectively these clues, and

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166 Blass 1990: 14, 24.

167 RT understands the contours of an extended piece of communication in terms of continuity created by sets of closely associated assumptions versus discontinuity caused by switches in psychological context (see Blakemore 2002: 156-57).

the ways they are organised. Insights from discourse analysis will be harnessed in this study to throw light on matters of text type (see 3.2).

2.7 RT and biblical interpretation

While RT is a well adapted tool for the re-examination of a connective such as γάρ, is it more generally suited to the investigation of an ancient literary text? Although the theory has been applied in diverse ways by a handful of biblical scholars, concerns have been raised about the appropriateness of applying a modern cognitive approach to the study of the biblical text. RT claims that the interpretation of literary works involves the same cognitive and communicative abilities as spoken communication, and that the same theoretical notions and principles apply. Since linguistic interpretation takes place in the mind of the addressee and affects thought, any account of interpretation, whether of spoken or written language, must be psychologically plausible. RT allows us to bring recent insights about the way the mind interprets linguistic communication to bear on our interpretation of the biblical text. Moreover, it holds together two fundamentally important concerns for biblical interpretation: a focus on the linguistic code of text on the one hand, and on its communicative purpose on the other. RT leads us to take the linguistic form of the text seriously as a starting point, but also to recognise it as an incomplete stimulus for first audience and secondary interpreters alike, beyond which addressees need to go by means of inferences.

In the light of the problematisation of the notion of authorial intention, some have criticised RT for the role that it accords to communicator intentions. The role of authorial intention is, however, currently being explored in fresh ways by some literary theorists. Indeed, literary critic Stanley Fish, a well known advocate of reader-response theory, recently affirmed the importance of communicator intention: “Words

172 See Wilson’s (2011a: 70) brief account.
173 See Pattemore’s (2004: 23) discussion.
always mean what their speakers intend, and they fail or multiply in their meaning if no intention is attached to them.”\textsuperscript{175} Moreover, RT’s recognition of communicator intentions fits well with the attention paid by historical-critical biblical exegesis to possible authorial intention.

RT’s affirmation of the role of communicator intentions in shaping a piece of communication is, however, only part of the story. The theory affirms equally the role of addressees’ interpretative processes in fulfilling those informative intentions,\textsuperscript{176} by inferring a relevant interpretation. This brings us to another potential criticism of the application of RT to the study of the biblical text. While the theory may leave room for a reader-response approach to interpretation, is it able to assist us with a more historical-critical concern with the recovery of the possible perspectives of the first audience?\textsuperscript{177} RT insists upon an overlapping cognitive environment between communicator and addressees within which a relevant interpretation can be inferred. Biblical interpreters are, however, secondary interpreters, listening in on a communication between biblical authors and the first addressees, whose cognitive environment and contextual assumptions cannot be recovered with any certainty.\textsuperscript{178} How is RT able to help secondary interpreters recover the most important probable inferences derived by the first addressees?

Firstly, RT raises our awareness of the text as “a record of a genuine communication event”.\textsuperscript{179} It compels interpreters to ask questions about the text’s first addressees, the important contextual assumptions probably available to them, and the inferences they might plausibly have drawn in interpretation. It draws attention to the fact that we as secondary interpreters are also limited by our cognitive environments. We likewise constantly make use of contextual assumptions and inferences in order to fill in the gaps

\textsuperscript{175} Fish 2015.
\textsuperscript{176} Pattemore 2004: 29.
\textsuperscript{177} By “first audience” I mean the Roman audiences which first heard the letter, in distinction from subsequent secondary audiences. This raises the question of “implied audience” versus actual or empirical audience, a distinction which is not as clear as Stowers (1994b: 21-22) suggests. See Esler’s critique (2003: 110), and below under 2.8.3.
\textsuperscript{178} See Barclay (1987) for a discussion of the importance and difficulty of reconstructing such perspectives.
\textsuperscript{179} Pattemore 2004: 28.
left by the textual clues, inferences which may be different from those of the first audience.\textsuperscript{180} In short, RT draws attention to the otherness of the text’s first addressees, to our own limited interpretative perspective and to the inevitability of drawing inferences as part of the interpretative process.\textsuperscript{181} It encourages interpreters to be aware of two sets of interpretative inferences: those probably drawn by the first audience, and those we draw ourselves in interpretation.\textsuperscript{182}

Furthermore, RT shows us a way forward with regard to the inaccessibility to secondary interpreters of contextual information available to the first addressees. It encourages the positing of a basic shared cognitive environment for communicator and first audience, within which hypotheses can be made about probable inferences that might plausibly have been drawn.\textsuperscript{183} It underlines the importance of undertaking careful historical-critical research\textsuperscript{184} in order to reconstruct the most plausible shared cognitive environment which makes most relevant sense of the textual data.

Most importantly, RT stipulates a principle by which potential contextual information can be judged and selected as input into the interpretation process. As Pattemore points out, according to RT, it is not the context of communication, but the assumption of relevance which is a constant. Addressees assume that the communication is relevant and search for the appropriate context in order to infer optimal cognitive effects.\textsuperscript{185} Following the principle of relevance, secondary interpreters, too, begin with the textual linguistic clues, and are constrained to consider only the most highly accessible contextual information\textsuperscript{186} as plausible input into the reconstruction of inferential processes. This will be background information which is easily suggested by the textual clues (i.e. does not involve undue processing effort to access), and which produces a

\textsuperscript{180} See Fantin 2011: 4.
\textsuperscript{181} See W. S. Campbell 2010: 176.
\textsuperscript{182} See Pattemore’s (2004: 29) discussion, who talks in terms of “synchronic”/“diachronic” communication situations, rather than primary/secondary.
\textsuperscript{183} Pattemore (2004: 30) suggests that this will consist of shared assumptions derived from membership of a particular community. In the case of a community of faith, as with the audience of Romans, shared assumptions may concern texts, beliefs and traditions.
\textsuperscript{184} Wilson 2011a: 72.
\textsuperscript{185} Pattemore 2004: 17.
\textsuperscript{186} This will be not only assumptions communicated by the co-text, but plausible historical information which the text makes highly accessible.
coherent construal of as much of the textual data as possible. Such a construal will represent the most relevant interpretation of the text. On the other hand, background historical information which is more tangential and speculative, and less obviously suggested by the textual stimulus, can be left out of consideration, since it requires more processing effort. Finally, as well as providing a principle for the identification of likely contextual assumptions, RT also provides models of inferential series, suggesting how interpretative hypotheses may be constructed using contextual information. This study will make much use of RT’s proposed model for the incorporation of probable contextual assumptions in the inferential procedure of strengthening (as demonstrated by Blakemore and Blass).

Of course, there is no guarantee of the validity of the proposed reconstructions of cognitive environments, contextual assumptions and inferences drawn by the first addressees. We can aim for probability and plausibility in such reconstructive work, but not certainty. In response to this, some within biblical studies embrace the epistemological perspective of critical realism. This acknowledges that biblical exegesis is a particularly complex and uncertain task, that interpretative objectivity is unattainable, and that there can be no guarantee of recovery of the communicator’s intention or first interpreters’ context. Nevertheless, it assumes that the biblical text was shaped by the communicative intention of its authors, and that, on the basis of the textual and historical data available to us, it is worth attempting to trace probable communicator intentions, and to suggest interpretations that might plausibly have been reached by the first addressees. The subjectivity of our perspective calls for a basic attitude of humility in the interpretative task, however, holding on to our conclusions lightly. I will adopt a critical-realist perspective in this study, onto which RT maps well.

RT, too, argues that there is no guarantee that an addressee will arrive at the interpretation intended by the communicator, since “intentions cannot be decoded but only non-demonstratively inferred”, so communication and interpretation always take place at a risk. Nevertheless, just as we all engage in the risky business of

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188 This method is set out by Wright (1992) in relation to the study of the NT.


190 Wilson 2011a: 72.
communication because of its potential benefits, so also this interpretative risk is worth taking because of the potential gains.

2.8 Background to Romans: author, audience and cognitive environment

RT encourages us, then, to posit basic elements of a mutual cognitive environment for Paul and his probable Roman addressees, within which relevant contextual assumptions would have been selected. The identity of the author and recipients, as well as the specification of a probable date and location for the letter, all fit within the establishment of this probable mutual cognitive environment.

2.8.1 Author

The apostle Paul is the undisputed author of Romans. Basic assumptions regarding Paul which represent broad building blocks of his cognitive environment include his Jewish ethnicity, his training as a Pharisee and his knowledge of the Hebrew scriptures. To these must be added his Roman citizenship and his Hellenistic first-century diaspora Jewish background. The latter is a complex question. Although Paul was born in the Cilician city of Tarsus, how long he lived there and how far he was educated in Hellenistic culture is a moot point. Though some have argued that Paul was thoroughly Greek in his thought and writing, and versed in Greek rhetoric, the evidence from his letters suggests not more than a general familiarity with Hellenistic philosophy, rhetoric and literature. His Greek does not show evidence of formal Hellenistic education. As Barclay points out, it is good but not polished, and despite making use of the popular style of the diatribe in Romans, Paul does not display the techniques of a

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192 See Rom. 11:1; Gal. 1:13-14; Phil. 3:5; 2 Cor. 11:22; Hengel 1991; Sanders 1977.
trained orator. A third set of foundational assumptions is represented by Paul’s faith in Christ and his calling as an apostle of Christ to Gentile believers, both of which lead him to adapt radically his understanding of his ancestral faith and its law and traditions. As a result, he comes into conflict with fellow Jews. In this respect, Paul is an “anomalous” Jew.

2.8.2 Date and location of writing

There is general agreement that the epistle was written between AD 54 and AD 59, in the early years of the Emperor Nero’s reign, probably in Corinth.

2.8.3 Addressees

Whilst the epistle’s authorship is undisputed, the question of the identity of its addressees is highly contested. The issue is often framed in terms of ethnic-religious background. Descriptions of Paul’s Roman audience range from exclusively Gentile, through various construals of a mixed Gentile-Jewish audience, to F. C.
Baur’s proposal that Paul addresses exclusively Jewish Christians. Most now view Paul’s Roman audience as predominantly Gentile (11:13, 15:16) but suggest varying orientations towards Judaism and Torah among them: some are Jewish-orientated and Torah-observant, while others may have no association with the Jewish faith, or negative attitudes towards it. In addition, there is debate over whether Paul writes to one or more groups of believers in Rome and what the relationship may have been between them.

Before outlining a tentative construal of Paul’s addressees for the purposes of this study, we need to consider the question of the “implied” or “encoded” audience. This notion, drawn from literary criticism, is an interpretative construct referring to “the audience as visualized and entextualized” by the author, which the latter seeks to persuade by means of the communication. It is distinct from the actual audience, with which it may correspond partially. This raises the question of how the implied audience is “entextualised”, and how a secondary reader detects this construct. In his application of the concept, Stanley Stowers makes a distinction between the “encoded explicit” and “encoded implicit” audience. The former is manifest in explicit references and direct addresses, including the use of the second person. The implicit audience, on the other hand, is inferred from the content of the letter, and from the use of sources and literary devices within it. This is a construct built from the “assumptions, knowledge, frames of reference and horizon of expectations” that the communicator assumes the audience to have.

Stowers acknowledges that the boundary between encoded explicit and implicit audience is blurred. From a relevance-theoretic perspective, this makes good sense.

addressed “almost exclusively” to Gentiles, who are, however, “in the context and presence of Jews” (Christ-followers or not) “listening in on the conversation”.

209 Baur 1876: 331.
211 Scholars have problematised the notion of a single “Roman church”. See Adams 2013: 31-33; Jewett 2007: 62; Minear 1971: 7-8.
213 Vorster 1993: 152.
214 Nanos 2012: 22.
we have seen, RT recognises that even textually encoded information represents only a
cue to a relevant interpretation. In all cases, addressees and interpreters must and do
draw inferences from this code in order to achieve cognitive effects, with diverse
addressees sometimes drawing different inferences depending on the context selected. For example, the second person plural, while encoded in the text, is always an
underdetermined clue, and inferences must be drawn to ascertain its referent in any
particular context.

It is therefore not as simple as some imply to identify the limits of encoded textual
information relating to the envisaged audience, or to restrict ourselves to this in our
construal of Paul’s addressees. Interpreters begin with textual clues as basic evidence
regarding Paul’s audience, but these limited explicit clues (“you in Rome” (1:6), “you
Gentiles” (11:13), and “those who know the law” (7:1)) must be disambiguated and
enriched. Moreover, the letter also communicates a wealth of assumptions more
indirectly by means of its argument. These also serve as stimuli for inferences regardi
the audience’s background knowledge, frames of reference etc. In our construal of the
implied audience we need to consider all these, and infer a plausible reconstruction
which makes the most coherent sense of all the data, explicitly and implicitly
communicated. While there is no guarantee that the textual data and the most
plausible inferences drawn from them reflect the actual first audience, I will work from
the presupposition that there is considerable overlap between implied and actual
audiences, and that the textual clues enable us to draw some common sense conclusions
regarding Paul’s probable first audience. These are enough to help us identify the basic
elements of a broad cognitive environment which the Roman addressees plausibly
shared with Paul. They lead to a common sense construal of some general
characteristics of Paul’s addressees, which is sufficient to guide our interpretation in

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217 Thus the statement in 7:1 that Paul’s audience “knows the law” gives rise to diverse inferences
concerning the Jewish or non-Jewish identity of Paul’s addressees, depending on contextual assumptions
accessed.

“I can know with certainty that the audience in the text is gentiles at Rome who know something about
Jewish scripture and Jesus Christ” is simplistic and misleading.

219 See Wedderburn’s (1988: 63-64) discussion of the inevitable “reading between the lines” involved in
any interpretation of Paul’s letters. This includes drawing inferences from plausible historical data, where
these help to make coherent sense of textual clues: see W. S. Campbell 2010: 175.
certain key directions, allowing us to attribute to them access to certain probable contextual assumptions.\textsuperscript{220} 

With these considerations in mind, I propose the following tentative general profile of Paul’s envisaged audience, inferred from a mixture of textual clues and basic historical information. The addressees live in the multi-cultural setting\textsuperscript{221} of imperial Rome (1:7, 15). They are a diverse group of predominantly non-Jewish Christ-believers (11:13), but with a minority of Jewish believers among them.\textsuperscript{222} Various textual clues suggest that Paul assumes that Jewish believers will be part of his audience: the references to Paul’s \textit{συγγενεῖς} in chapter 16,\textsuperscript{223} the exhortation to mutual acceptance (15:7) in a context where Jewish and Gentile interdependence is in view, and the repeated use of Jewish scripture and references to Jewish faith and tradition.\textsuperscript{224} In view of the latter, it also seems reasonable to assume that the majority of Paul’s addressees, whether Jewish or Gentile, are familiar with Jewish scriptures, teaching and customs. For his Gentile addressees, such familiarity would presumably be the result of considerable contact with Jews and Jewish synagogues.\textsuperscript{225} 

Paul’s addressees do not seem to represent one cohesive community.\textsuperscript{226} This is inferred partly from chapter 16 where Paul greets at least five different groups of believers,\textsuperscript{227} and does not use the term \textit{ἐκκλησία} to refer to the Christ-believers in Rome as a whole.\textsuperscript{228} There is some evidence that the envisaged addressees may be going through a period of transition or tension.\textsuperscript{229} Some are stronger and some weaker in their faith (14:1-15:13) and they are dealing with issues of mutual acceptance, and with arrogant

judgemental attitudes towards others who do not share their lifestyle or convictions.\textsuperscript{230} We can infer that the addressees may be dealing with uncertainty concerning their relationship to the Jewish law (chs. 3, 6-8, 9:30-10:13, 13 etc.).\textsuperscript{231} There is also some evidence that they are a vulnerable minority within the wider Roman culture, experiencing discrimination.\textsuperscript{232} It is probable that Paul’s addressees are somewhat diverse in their socio-economic status but most are of low social standing.\textsuperscript{233} Many probably come from slave backgrounds, or are freed slaves, though not all.\textsuperscript{234} Some, however, may be people of considerable material means (such as the mother of Rufus: 16:13), able to support others with their resources.\textsuperscript{235}

The question of the probable educational and literacy level of Paul’s addressees is pertinent, given the kinds of inferential series I will suggest that Paul’s addressees may have drawn in interpretation. The text only gives us the most general clues: the envisaged addressees know the Jewish law (7:1), and they are familiar with and able to interpret not only Jewish midrash (see, for example, Rom. 4),\textsuperscript{236} but also the rhetorical techniques of diatribe (see, for example, Rom. 2).\textsuperscript{237} Research into literacy and orality in first-century Rome suggests that we can assume that only a minority of Paul’s addressees might have been highly literate,\textsuperscript{238} especially if the majority were of lower economic status. Familiarity with Jewish midrashic and Greco-Roman diatribal techniques need not imply a high level of literacy, however, since oratory and the

\textsuperscript{231} Lampe (2003: 73) asserts that “questions about the Jewish Torah observance are central to the conflict” alluded to in chs.14-15. See also Tobin 2004: 41.
\textsuperscript{234} See Lampe’s (2003: 170-95) analysis of the names in ch.16 many of which he identifies as of slave origin.
\textsuperscript{235} Jewett 2007: 969.
\textsuperscript{236} By “midrash” I mean Jewish exegetical exposition of the Hebrew scriptures following Neusner (1987: 9-10). Neusner cites examples from the Hebrew Bible (e.g. Ps. 106:32-33) (p.19), the Dead Sea Scrolls (e.g. a midrash from The Damascus Rule focusing on Num. 21:18) (p.35) and Matthew’s Gospel (1:18-23; 2:1-6; 2:16-18; 3:1-3 (pp.37-38).
\textsuperscript{237} By “diatribe” I mean, following Stowers (1981), a dialogical discourse involving questions and answers, used for rhetorical effect. Diatribe is intended to lead addressees to change their point of view, sometimes by means of an apostrophe to an imaginary interlocutor with whom they identify in some way. Stowers cites as examples the Discourses of Epictetus (e.g. 1.12.9, 1.29.3, 2.12 etc.) and certain of the Orationes of Dio Chrysostom (e.g. 74.28 etc.).
\textsuperscript{238} Osiek 1998: 156-58. See, however, Hurtado’s (2014: 330-31) challenge to the oversimplification of the claim that only a small minority of “the Roman-era populace” were literate.
practice of oral/aural interpretation were pervasive in ancient Greco-Roman society.\textsuperscript{239} But a low level of literacy on the part of an audience does not imply a low level of understanding or an inability to follow relatively sophisticated logical arguments. Indeed, the predominance of oral forms of communication would have meant that addressees would have had a greater capacity to process and commit to memory information communicated orally.\textsuperscript{240} I suggest that Paul’s audience would have been able to retain relatively large chunks of the argument in their short term memory as they listened to the letter being read. They would thus have been able to make associations between assumptions communicated at different stages, and draw fresh implications from previously made points. In addition, we can envisage that the letter may have been read out a number of times to its Roman recipients so that they could discuss and meditate on its contents.\textsuperscript{241} This would have given them the opportunity to grasp the fundamentals of Paul’s argument at whatever level was relevant to them.

Related to this is the question of how Paul’s letter might have been read to its first addressees. The recent growth in performance criticism has led to the suggestion that it would have been dramatically performed multiple times to various groups of believers by the letter carrier, using a “plethora of non-verbal signals”.\textsuperscript{242} It seems more probable, however, that the letter would not have been acted so much as simply read aloud as a written text to groups of gathered believers.\textsuperscript{243} If so, it may have been read out by a different reader to diverse groups on different occasions, and it is not necessary to speculate regarding a single, rehearsed performer.

2.9 Purpose of Romans

Closely connected to the question of the audience of Romans is the highly contested issue of the epistle’s purpose. Unlike the questions discussed under 2.8, this issue does not feed into a construal of the likely background shared cognitive environment of the

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{239} See Hurtado 2014: 323; Achtemeier 1990: 20.
\item \textsuperscript{240} Personal observation of contemporary cultures with a high degree of orality (predominantly oral cultures in Burkina Faso, Uganda and the Democratic Republic of Congo) suggests a much greater capacity for retention and memorisation of information communicated orally than in highly literate cultures.
\item \textsuperscript{241} See Pattemore 2004: 54.
\item \textsuperscript{242} Campbell 2009: 530-32.
\item \textsuperscript{243} Hurtado (2014: 336-39) cites Luke 4:16-21; 2 Cor. 10:9-10; 1 Thess. 5:27; Col. 4:16 as evidence of texts being read out in synagogal or early church contexts.
\end{itemize}
author and addressees. Instead, it is a question which will be resolved only by interpreting the epistle’s argument. Indeed, this is one of the major interpretative questions which I suggest can be illuminated by a consistent procedural analysis of γάρ, as I will discuss in chapter 6. Since some of the questions relating to purpose intersect with issues discussed under 2.8, however, and are relevant to an introduction to the letter, I will present an overview of the debate here.

The issue of the letter’s purpose remains resistant to consensus. Romans displays various characteristics which complicate the question. First, it has a “double character”, as W. G. Kümmel puts it, in terms of content and encoded audience:

it is essentially a debate between the Pauline gospel and Judaism, so that the conclusion seems obvious that the readers were Jewish Christians. Yet the letter contains statements which indicate specifically that the community was Gentile-Christian. Moreover, in contrast to Paul’s other epistles, there is an absence of detailed references to concrete phenomena in the Christ-believing communities in Rome, and no specific evidence of Paul’s personal knowledge of them. Instead, we find sustained theological argument and some possible allusions to objections to Paul’s gospel, and to possible opponents of Paul, both Judaising and anti-nomian (for example, 3:8, 6:1, 15, 7:7, 13, 9:1-2, 16:17-20). This blend of apparently contradictory characteristics leads to ongoing scholarly disagreement and to a plethora of explanations regarding the occasion and purpose of the epistle.

The debate is often framed in terms of two main contrasting positions: the view that the epistle’s purpose is to be located within “Paul’s own ministry and consciousness”, versus the view that its purpose is motivated by the social situation of Paul’s Roman addressees. This polarisation of the debate is criticised by Wolter, however, who insists that all theological discussions always arise from a specific historical and cultural

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244 Barclay 2015: 455.
246 Other than the greetings in chapter 16, which do not provide conclusive proof of personal knowledge: see Watson’s (2007: 182-83) discussion; Thorsteinsson 2016: 12.
247 Longenecker 2011: 111. See Donfried 1991 for a compilation of views representing these two positions.
Along similar lines, Francis Watson points out that in all Paul’s letters he is writing not only for the sake of his addressees, but also for his own: at one level the two concerns cannot be separated. Thus, while following Karl Donfried’s broad brush outline of the debate, we must acknowledge that these two supposed alternatives are inextricably linked, and expressed in a multiplicity of variations. It is best to think in terms of different emphases rather than polarised positions.

Before Baur’s paradigm-shifting scholarship, Romans was viewed (following Martin Luther) essentially as a normative theological treatise which presented a summary of Paul’s gospel, the argument of which could be interpreted without paying detailed attention to the historical situation in which it arose. Baur’s ground-breaking insight was to claim, in contrast, that the argument could not be properly understood without a consideration of the historical circumstances of author and addressees. In the light of this, those who read Romans as essentially a theological presentation of Paul’s gospel find the specific historical occasion for the epistle primarily in the concerns of Paul’s apostolate and ministry plans. This is not, however, to deny the importance of the fact that the epistle is written to Rome; rather it is to emphasise that it is not primarily directed to problems in the Roman congregations. Advocates of a Rome-focused reading, on the other hand, argue that it is the specifics of the historical situation of the Roman believers which are the key to understanding the letter’s purpose, and thus its argument.

250 See Watson 2007: 166.
251 Baur 1876: 310-313.
252 For example, Barclay (2015: 456-7) argues that Paul’s purpose is to present himself to the Roman believers as “apostle to the Gentiles” and thus their apostle, before visiting them and enlisting their support for his mission to Spain. Wolter (2011: 424-25) proposes that the letter not only serves to introduce Paul to the Romans before he visits them and solicits support, but also as a kind of self-evaluation of his theological path hitherto. Jervell (1991) argues that Paul rehearses his arguments for his visit to Jerusalem. See also Dunn 1988a: lx; Dahl 1977: 78; Wilckens 1974: 139 etc.
253 Barclay 2015: 459, n.23.
254 Elliott (2008: 6) and Wright (2002: 404) find in Romans a challenge to imperial pretension. For Watson (2007: 186), Paul writes “to encourage Jewish and Gentile Christians in Rome… to set aside their differences and to worship together”. For Campbell (2009: 495-511), Paul’s purpose is counter the opposing gospel of Judaising counter-missionaries. For Thorsteinsson (2016: 31) Paul aims to persuade his gentile addressees that “the proper path for them is not to try to become Ἰουδαῖος.”
Many scholars, though not all, accept the broad outline of the influential Wiefel hypothesis in their reading of the historical circumstances of Paul’s addressees in Rome. Wolfgang Wiefel’s reconstruction is based on Suetonius’ account of the expulsion of Jews from Rome under Claudius. John Barclay, noting that the basic elements of this hypothesis now form a consensus reading, which he himself critiques as a “tissue of speculation”, nevertheless offers a helpful summary:

the Christian movement in Rome began in the Jewish synagogues, and... caused controversy there during the 40s, climaxing in the expulsion of Jewish-Christians ... in 49 CE on the order of Claudius. During their absence, the Christian movement in Rome became largely separate from the synagogues and developed mostly Gentile-Christian leadership, so that, when the Jewish-Christians returned (on Claudius’s death, 54 CE), there arose internal tension within the Christian communities.

Various scholars use elements of Wiefel’s reconstruction as support for the identification in chapters 14-15 of “the weak” as Jewish believers and “the strong” as Gentile. (See below under 3.6.3.) Moreover, some argue more specifically that Paul’s primary purpose in writing is to address the tensions between Jewish and Gentile Christ-believers (or between Torah-observant and non-Torah-observant believers) evidenced in these chapters.

Some scholars prefer to combine both the Roman situation and Paul’s concerns in proposing a mix of multiple reasons why Paul wrote the letter. Thus Wedderburn sums up the reasons for Romans as

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257 See Watson’s (2007: 167-174) detailed discussion of the various sources which refer to restrictions of Jewish freedoms under Claudius.
258 Barclay 2008: 93.
259 Barclay 2008: 91. Wiefel’s specific hypothesis (1991: 100) further proposes that there was widespread anti-Jewish sentiment in Rome when the Jewish exiles returned. Consequently, Paul writes to counter anti-Jewish prejudice and to ensure that belief in Christ does not become an anti-Jewish movement (Elliott 1990: 51).
260 Dunn 1988a: lvii; Wedderburn 1988: 58; Elliott 1990: 51-57 etc. More recent scholarship has nuanced this, recognising that some of the “weak” may be Torah-observant Gentiles, and some of the strong, non-Torah-observant Jews, like Paul himself. See Barclay 2015: 511; W. S. Campbell 2010: 187.
a cluster of different interlocking factors: the presence of both Judaizing and Law-free Christians in the church there, the present situation of the church in Rome and the present situation of Paul, the visit to Jerusalem now being undertaken and the prospect of a future visit to Rome. All played their part in provoking Paul to write to the Roman Christians as he did....

In sum, the reasons which provoked Paul to write the letter, and his purpose in doing so, remain a source of ongoing disagreement in Romans research. I propose that a procedural reading of γάρ could illuminate this important debate. The question will be pursued further in chapter 6.

2.10 Conclusion

RT’s approach overlaps with key preoccupations in biblical studies, affirming the shaping role of communicator, the varying perspectives of diverse addressees, and the crucial role of context, in interpretation. Its recognition both of the importance of the linguistic code of the text, and of its communicative purpose, coincides with the concerns of biblical interpretation. Its insistence on the linguistic form as starting point, and on the need to go beyond this by means of inferences in order to derive communicative effects, is invaluable for biblical scholars. The principle of relevance, the notion of mutual cognitive environments and the construction of plausible inferential series suggest a method for identifying probable contextual information available to the first audience.

In brief, RT and the notion of procedural meaning are innovative tools which are well suited to the re-examination of the role of γάρ in Romans. They offer exciting possibilities for a way forward for the intransigent and oft overlooked problem of the connective’s role. They have the potential to provide a cognitively grounded, consistent and communicative account of the function of γάρ. Such an account could transform the contribution γάρ makes to the exegesis of Romans, to its argumentative coherence and to tracing the wider argument of the epistle, illuminating some significant unresolved interpretative questions.

263 Wedderburn 1988: 142.
Chapter 3: Analysis of γάρ using a procedural account: Part I

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter I will begin to demonstrate how a procedural account of γάρ is able to provide a unified and consistent explanation of diverse occurrences of the connective in Romans. I will briefly discuss the distribution of occurrences in the epistle, and use insights from discourse analysis to categorise different types of argumentation in the epistle, expository and hortatory. After explaining my proposed categorisation of occurrences of γάρ into three types, straightforward, somewhat complex and problematic, I will demonstrate from representative examples how all occurrences can be accounted for in terms of core procedural instructions towards backwards strengthening.

For the investigation of straightforward occurrences I will discuss six isolated examples, while for the analysis of somewhat complex examples, I have chosen to examine all occurrences in two selected passages. I will show how a procedural strengthening hypothesis can be adapted and expanded to explain various atypical examples. I will finish by considering briefly some of the implications of this account for tracing the contours of the argument in the two passages investigated, in preparation for the later discussion in chapter 6 below.

There are, in total, 144 instances of γάρ in Romans. The greatest concentration of occurrences is found in chapters 7 (thirteen in twenty-five verses), 14 (twelve in twenty-three verses), 10 (ten in twenty-one verses), 11 (ten in twenty-four), and 8 (sixteen in thirty-nine). Clusters occur in particular subsections of the argument, where several consecutive clauses are introduced by γάρ in a series; for example, 1:16-20, 7:14-22, 8:2-7, 10:10-13, 13:1b-7 and 14:3-11. The majority of these clusters follow the presentation of a key claim or point in the argument and often involve a tightly argued logical sequence. Other chapters, by contrast, have a relatively sparse sprinkling of

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264 Including the variants followed in the UBS Greek text, 4th rev. ed., and in NA.
265 The relationship between 1:16-17 and both what follows, and what precedes it, is notoriously disputed. See 6.3.2 below.
occurrences: chapter 12 has only four in twenty-one verses, while the final greetings of chapter 16 contain just three examples in twenty-seven verses.

3.2 Types of material within Romans

3.2.1 Romans as argumentation

The epistle to the Romans is a piece of argumentation contained within an epistolary frame. The frame is generally identified as 1:1-15 and 15:14-16:27. In argumentation, a communicator’s overt aim is to persuade addressees of the validity or truth of certain claims. As Chaïm Perelman and Lucie Olbrechts-Tyteca argue, in continuity with ancient theories of rhetoric such as Aristotle’s, “argumentation is a function of the audience being addressed” and aims to “induce or increase the mind’s adherence…to the theses presented for its assent”. It is future-oriented since it “sets out to bring about some action or to prepare for it” by influencing the minds of addressees. This may be achieved by means of various persuasive strategies: rational argument involving evidence and premises, and leading to logical conclusions, the marshalling of authoritative and accepted material in order to gain addressees’ trust, and the deployment of rhetorical forms which create an impressive persuasive display. In argumentation, the communicator aims to gain the audience’s trust in relation to his own trustworthiness as a source, and in relation to the rationality and coherence of the content of his communication.

266 The precise extent of the letter’s epistolary opening is debated. See 6.3.1 below.
267 I will postpone discussion of the structure of the letter and its argument until chapter 6, where I consider how a procedural account of γόνοι illuminates the question.
269 Perelman & Olbrechts-Tyteca 1969: 47.
270 See Hellholm 1994: 119-20 n.7, who identifies two main types of argumentation: “texts with predominantly logical-theoretical argumentation with the aim of convincing…. And texts with predominantly practical pragmatic argumentation with the aim of persuading the interlocutors emotionally”.
272 Throughout this study I use the masculine pronoun to refer to the communicator, and the feminine to the addressee. See chapter 1, n.6.
The epistle to the Romans contains various types of argumentation, including tight logical argument, Jewish midrashic exposition, passages in a diatribal style employing devices such as rhetorical questions and repetition, and exhortations backed up by authoritative justifications and proofs. With the exception of parts of chapters 6 and 8, chapters 1-11 consist broadly of the presentation of claims and substantiation, with the aim of persuading addressees to accept the validity of these claims. Chapters 12-15:13, on the other hand, consist of exhortations and supporting rationale, the aim of which is to motivate addressees to certain kinds of behaviour and action. It is not the focus of this study to discuss different text types within Romans, but we need to be alert to the fact that the guidance γάρ gives may work itself out differently in Romans depending on the diverse persuasive strategies employed in different passages.

3.2.2 Longacre’s parameters for text types

Defining and identifying text types, or literary genres, is a complex and contested task which is beyond the scope of this study. In their practical handbook dealing with the discourse analysis of texts, Robert Dooley and Stephen Levinsohn argue that text types are culturally specific and maintain that “each text type has a particular social or cultural purpose, around which clusters a characteristic combination of linguistic or textual properties”. They note that diverse text types may be embedded in one piece of communication.

Dooley and Levinsohn draw attention to Robert Longacre’s proposal of four very broad categories for text types across different cultures. This proposal is useful as a general purpose tool which recognises certain basic characteristics of texts, helping us to distinguish between very general types. It is based on two primary parameters:

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274 See ch.2 n.236 above.
275 See ch.2 n.237 above.
276 There is discussion among scholars as to the nature of the paraenesis in chs. 12-15, and how it differs from that in chs. 6 and 8. Although some view chs. 12-15 as generalised exhortation (Bornkamm 1991; Karris 1991), many others read chs. 14-15 in particular as addressing real problems in the Roman congregations (Barclay 2015: 511; 2011a: 41; Watson 2007; Wright 2002: 732; Wilckens 1982: 79). See Reasoner 1999: 37-41 for a detailed discussion. Adams (2000: 210-16) argues that the exhortations in chs. 12-13 are also “context-specific”. In contrast, the exhortations in chs. 6 and 8 (in particular 6:11-13, 19; 8:12-13) do not have the same specificity, and are not practical, dealing with more fundamental issues of mindset, orientation and allegiance (Barclay 2015: 506).
To these primary parameters are added two more, projection and tension. According to this schema, any text can be categorised as minus or plus each of these parameters, with the different combinations of values yielding different text types. Agent orientation relates to whether or not a text deals with events or doings controlled by agents “with at least a partial identity of agent running through the discourse”.\(^{279}\) Contingent temporal succession has to do with whether a text is structured around a temporal sequence in which most events and actions are contingent on previous ones (as is the case with narrative). According to this scheme, “behavioral discourse” (exhortation, eulogy, political speeches etc.) is minus contingent temporal succession but plus agent orientation, since it “deals with how people did or should behave”, and addressees are potential agents. Expository discourse, on the other hand, is minus both temporal succession and agent orientation. A positive value for projection, meanwhile, indicates “a situation or action which is contemplated, enjoined or anticipated but not realised”, while tension relates to whether a discourse reflects a struggle or polarisation of some sort.\(^{280}\) Thus hortatory material would be plus projection, while a polemical academic article would be judged plus tension.

Longacre’s primary parameters, in particular, are of value in tracing very broad types of material in Romans. According to his scheme, we can categorise the paraenetic or hortatory material of chapters 12-15:13 as behavioural. Chapters 1-11, on the other hand (with the exception of the letter opening, and elements of chapter 6), are both minus contingent temporal succession and minus agent orientation, and thus expository

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\(^{280}\) Longacre 1986: 9-10.
Longacre’s schema thus allows us to identify two very broad types of material in the argumentation of Romans, which correspond to a generally recognised distinction between two modes. Even so the boundary between these two is sometimes blurred, as, for example in chapter 6, which is viewed by many scholars as hortatory and dealing with ethics, but also contains stretches of expository, non-agent orientated material. And we will see that paraenesis in Romans is very often supported by expository material which grounds the exhortations in rational argumentation and a theological framework.

### 3.2.3 Distribution of γάρ according to type of material

Given these two broad categories of persuasive material in Romans, we will need to demonstrate that a procedural account of γάρ accommodates occurrences found in both types. In my analysis I will thus consider examples, both straightforward and complex, from both. The connective is fairly evenly distributed between them: certain passages in expository argumentation such as chapters 7 and 8 contain a high concentration, as do certain stretches of hortatory material such as chapter 13:1-7 and chapter 14. On the other hand, certain sections of exposition contain relatively few occurrences (1:24-31 has a single occurrence, and chapter 4 six occurrences in twenty-five verses), as do certain sections of exhortation, such as chapter 12.

### 3.3 Categorising occurrences of γάρ

My investigation of a possible procedural strengthening role for occurrences of γάρ in Romans has led me to group examples into three rough categories for manageable discussion: straightforward, somewhat complex, and highly problematic. (See table of occurrences of γάρ in Appendix B.) This categorisation is not based on strict criteria, but on impressions, formed as a result of consensus or otherwise among commentators about a particular occurrence, ease with which a strengthening series can be constructed and contextual assumptions identified, and exegetical significance of an occurrence.

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281 Within this broad characterisation of expository text are found diverse types of material, however: Jewish critique of idolatry, Hellenistic vice lists, diatribe, midrashic exegesis, hymnic paeans of praise etc.

There is some overlap between the three categories, so that another analyst might evaluate certain examples differently.

Straightforward examples are those where a simple strengthening inferential series which reinforces immediately preceding material is intuitive (so that most commentators agree on the “supporting” role of γάρ as indicating grounds/proof, confirmation or explanation), can be immediately established, and involves only one or two contextual assumptions. On my analysis, this category accounts for 49% of occurrences. Somewhat complex occurrences are those for which the strengthening relation with preceding material is less easy to trace: the inferential series may be more complex to establish, involving several inferential steps, and perhaps some contextual assumptions which are less easily accessible. The strengthened claim may not immediately precede the γάρ clause, or may be implicitly communicated, and the extent of the material introduced by γάρ may also be a subject of disagreement. According to my analysis, this category accounts for 32% of occurrences. Highly problematic occurrences are those for which an obvious strengthening series with preceding material is difficult to construct and may involve the positing of uncertain contextual assumptions. In addition, these occurrences are exegetically problematic. Some are found at points where much is at stake exegetically, and differing readings of the connective lead to sometimes conflicting interpretations which have a significant bearing on the epistle’s wider argument. In my evaluation, this category represents 19% of occurrences.

3.4 Presuppositions, method and template for analysis

I will begin by discussing six straightforward occurrences of γάρ, three from expository and three from hortatory material. These isolated examples will be briefly considered in their co-text, but have been selected as instances where a strengthening relation is obvious even without a detailed awareness of the literary context. I will then move on to discuss the category of somewhat more complex occurrences, considering all instances in 7:7-20 and 14:1-12. This allows us to take fuller account of the role of co-text in the

283 Bearing in mind the impressionistic evaluation of occurrences and the porous nature of the category boundaries.
inferential procedure triggered by γάρ. Because of constraints of space, I will deal with points of exegetical detail only in as far as these have a direct bearing on the analysis of the connective.

The analysis takes as its starting point Blakemore’s deductive paradigm for the inferential procedure of strengthening. Following the procedural strengthening hypothesis proposed by Blass, I assume that γάρ is a procedural indicator giving processing instructions, in order to specify “the sort of inferential relation which the utterance [it prefixes] enters into with existing contextual assumptions”.284 It indicates that the assumptions it introduces “are meant to function as premises, backwards confirming and strengthening” other assumptions.285 That is, when an interpreter comes across γάρ, the connective triggers an automatic mental procedure that takes the statement (or complex of assumptions) introduced by γάρ as a premise (which we will refer to as Q) which strengthens a previously communicated assumption or proposition (referred to in this study as P). It then searches for a contextual (implicit) assumption (IA) to combine with Q in an inferential series which yields a conclusion (C) which independently confirms P.286 This independent confirmation gives rise to the cognitive effect of the strengthening of assumption P so that it is held more strongly as valid in the interpreter’s mind. We will refer to this posited inferential procedure triggered by γάρ as procedure G.287

We have seen in chapter 2 that Blass in her analysis identifies for each example of γάρ a single implicit contextual assumption which is involved in the inferential strengthening procedure triggered. For more complex examples of γάρ, however, additional contextual assumptions will need to be accessed in order to achieve the cognitive effect of strengthening. I will adapt and extend the template suggested by Blass to accommodate such instances. In the case of some problematic occurrences, the analytical work undertaken as part of the study involved the construction of several different strengthening series using different plausible accessible contextual assumptions, in order to ascertain the most plausible and efficient. In the discussion below, for each

284 Carston 2002: 256.
286 See Unger 2012: 47.
287 G standing for γάρ.
example I will present only the constructed series judged, as a result of the analysis, to be most relevant (bringing most effects for least effort).

I will re-organise the presentation of the strengthening sequence of premises and conclusion suggested by Blass (see 2.4) so that it corresponds more obviously to the order in which assumptions are communicated in the text. Thus for each occurrence discussed, I will present:

P: the propositional form of the information needing strengthening

Q: the propositional form of the premise introduced by γάρ

IA(s): the contextual assumption(s) made accessible in the co-text

C: the conclusion confirmed by backwards strengthening.

By “propositional form”, I mean an utterance which has been disambiguated and filled out in key aspects for the purposes of my analysis (for example, key pronouns are assigned referents, ellipses filled out, imperatives are stated as propositions etc.) so that it represents a state of affairs and is capable of being used as input into inferential processes. This means that P and Q in my analysis will sometimes take the form of a disambiguated reformulation or summary of the utterances involved in a particular series.

Following my schema, we can lay out the analysis of 3:22b somewhat differently from Blass (see 2.4 above), as follows:

P (v.22a): The righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ (is) for all who believe.

Q introduced by γάρ (v.22b): There is no distinction.

IA: If there is no distinction, then the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ (is) for all who believe.

288 See glossary.
C (strengthening v.22a): The righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ (is) for all who believe.

For each occurrence, the analysis begins with the linguistic code of the text as a clue to communicator intentions. It regards the preceding co-text as the most important source of highly accessible contextual assumptions. It also posits contextual information which, following our basic reconstruction of the shared cognitive environment of author and addressees, would probably have been highly accessible to the first audience. This involves close exegetical work at pertinent points, and interaction with a variety of commentators, in an attempt to identify the probable highly accessible assumptions at play. The analysis makes hypotheses about strengthening series of inferences which γάρ may plausibly have triggered for Paul’s audience. Following a relevance-guided heuristic, it reconstructs a likely inferential series leading to the strengthening of preceding assumptions. In each case, the constructed series represents a hypothetical analysis of how the interpretation process might plausibly have gone, rather than a representation of what was actually thought. 289

3.5 Straightforward occurrences of γάρ in expository material

It is beyond the scope of this thesis to give more than the briefest of summaries of the co-text of the straightforward examples of γάρ discussed. Moreover, in the presentation of my analysis in chapters 3 and 4 I will not engage with exegetical questions unless a satisfactory account of γάρ is not possible without their clarification.

3.5.1 Romans 8:2

Romans 8:1-11 forms part of the second major section of the epistle which many commentators consider coterminous with chapters 5-8. 290 It is preceded in 7:7-25 by the notoriously disputed exploration of the role of the law in the light of the new reality in Christ (see discussion under 3.9.1). This is expressed in terms of the intense inner conflict experienced by the “I” who wants to obey God’s law, as a result of the two-sidedness of the law 291 and its manipulation by the power of sin, which results in the

290 For different views of the transitional status of ch.5, see under 4.3.1.
law’s powerlessness to enable human righteousness and to bring life. In 8:1-11 there is a dramatic shift in perspective, picking up the themes and confident tone of 5:1-7:6, and developing them from the perspective of the antithesis between life in the flesh and life in the Spirit. Romans 8:1, presented as a conclusion drawn from what precedes, is an emphatic statement of assurance regarding the freedom from condemnation enjoyed by those who are “in Christ Jesus”, which Jewett characterises as a “thesis”, and Dunn as “the restatement of the major theme of the composition”.

8:1: οὐδὲν ἄρα νῶν κατάκριμα τοῖς ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ

8:2: ὁ γάρ νόμος τοῦ πνεύματος τῆς ζωῆς ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ ἠλευθέρωσέν σε ἀπὸ τοῦ νόμου τῆς ἀμαρτίας καὶ τοῦ θανάτου

Commentators variously describe the role of γάρ in 8:2 as explanatory, as introducing the beginning of an exposition or grounding for the theme stated in v.1, as introducing grounds for what precedes in both 8:1 and 7:25a, or a confirmation of the truth of v.1. Given the preceding discussion of the law in 7:7-25, and the clear reference to the Torah in 8:3, it makes best sense to read both occurrences of νόμος in 8:2 as referring to the Mosaic law. The genitive construction τοῦ πνεύματος τῆς ζωῆς can be understood as “the Spirit which brings life”, and the double genitive ὁ… νόμος τοῦ πνεύματος τῆς ζωῆς in terms of the Spirit acting upon the law, making its fulfilment possible: “the law as fulfilled/enabled by the life-bringing Spirit”. Conversely, τοῦ νόμου τῆς ἀμαρτίας καὶ τοῦ θανάτου can be understood in terms of sin

293 Dunn 1988a: 416.
294Throughout the study, I work from the Greek text, USB 4th rev. ed.. Any English translations are my own, unless stated otherwise.
295 Wrig 2002: 574.
298 Paulsen 1974: 32.
301 See Wilckens 2014: 123.
acting upon and manipulating the law, which results in condemnation and death (see 7:7-25).  

We can explain γάρ in 8:2 in terms of procedural strengthening as follows. When addressees hear the statement in v.1 followed by v.2, their comprehension processes check for relevance and compute cognitive effects. I propose that procedure G is triggered by γάρ in v.2, giving instructions to process what follows as backwards strengthening a previous claim. That is, expectations of relevance are raised that the material in v.2 will be relevant as strengthening material in relation to a previously communicated assumption. The procedure includes the instruction to search for the most accessible implicit assumptions which, together with the information introduced by γάρ, lead to the confirmation of the first appropriate preceding assumption available. The search follows a relevance-guided heuristic which takes the path of least effort and stops at the first relevant interpretation.

Following procedure G, addressees’ inferential processes search for the information which is to be processed as input into the strengthening procedure, and construct a hypothesis. We can suggest that it is inferred that the entire statement in v.2 is to be processed as a single complex of assumptions, premise Q (introduced by γάρ), since it consists of a balanced antithetical statement with a single verb. The search for a relevant inferential strengthening relation is immediately satisfied by hypothesising a relationship between the statement in v.2 and the immediately preceding claim in v.1. The processes search for contextual assumptions made highly accessible by Q. I propose that the following assumption is identified, which is highly accessible from assumptions communicated in the previous co-text, in which the concepts of law, sin, condemnation and death are closely associated: “If a person is set free from the law of sin and death, there is no condemnation for that person”. A series is then constructed along the following lines:

**Explicit claim P** (v.1): There is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

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302 See Wilckens 2014: 122; Dunn 1988a: 419.
303 See, in particular, 5:12, 15-21; 7:7-14, 21-25.
Premise Q introduced by γάρ (v.2): The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set those in Christ Jesus free from the law of sin and death.

Implicit premise IA: If a person is set free from the law of sin and death, there is no condemnation for that person.

Conclusion C deduced from Q and IA (independently confirming P in v.1): There is (now) no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

As a result of the hypothesising of this inferential series triggered by γάρ, a strengthening relationship is established between v.2 and v.1. Claim P in v.1 is confirmed with the help of independent evidence supplied from addressees’ own encyclopaedic knowledge, giving rise to the cognitive effect of strengthening: claim P is held more strongly as valid by addressees. This procedural analysis of γάρ corresponds with Cranfield’s reading which views v.2 as “confirming the truth of v.1”. Equally, the combination of Q and IA leading to C could be understood as an explanation or exposition of P, as other commentators suggest. In this case, the inferential procedure increases the comprehensibility of the latter by connecting it with existing assumptions addressees hold about the world. As a result, P also becomes more plausible and is held more strongly as valid.

Within a relevance-theoretic framework, then, the strengthening procedure may be relevant to different addressees and interpreters in different ways, depending on what leads to the most cognitive effects for them in the context. If P raises questions of plausibility because an addressee is not yet fully convinced of its validity, then her comprehension processes will search for a series which is relevant as confirmation. If, however, assumption P raises implicit questions of comprehensibility for other addressees, then they will process γάρ followed by Q by searching for an inferential strengthening series which is relevant as an explanation. Either way, we are able to account for the connective as a procedural indicator which guides towards the inferential procedure of strengthening, constraining interpretation and thereby reducing processing costs. The connective raises expectations that the information that follows

304 In the co-text, the referent of σε is most naturally identified as an addressee who is one of “those in Christ Jesus”. Even if we were to follow the textual variant με, this would still be the case. (See Wolter 2014: 469 n.2 for a discussion of the variants.)
will be relevant in relation to a previously communicated assumption. The information introduced by γάρ in v.2 increases the cognitive effects derived from v.1, and thus augments its argumentative salience.

3.5.2 Romans 10:10

This example occurs in the middle of the sustained argumentation of chapters 9-11, the epistle’s third major section, which deals with the question of the continuing role of ethnic Israel in God’s purposes, in the light of God’s righteousness as revealed in the gospel of Christ. Many scholars regard 10:1-13 as explaining and developing the thought of 9:30-33.305 10:5-13 are viewed by some as a typical Jewish exposition of scriptural passages306 which develops and supports Paul’s claim in 10:4: τέλος ... νόμου Χριστοῦ εἰς δικαιοσύνην παντὶ τῷ πιστεύοντι.307 The exegesis in v.8d of the citation from Deuteronomy 30:14, introduced by τοῦτ᾽ ἐστιν, is further developed by the assertion in v.9. The occurrence of γάρ in v.10 is the first in a series of five which form a tight chain of strengthening statements running from v.10 to v.13.

10:9a: δὴ εἰς ὅπου ὁμολογήσης ἐν τῷ στόματι σου κύριον Ἰησοῦν

10:9b: καὶ πιστεύσῃς ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ σου δὴ ὁ θεὸς αὐτὸν ἤγειρεν ἐκ νεκρῶν, σωθήσῃ·

10:10: καρδίᾳ γάρ πιστεύεται εἰς δικαιοσύνην, στόματι δὲ ὁμολογεῖται εἰς σωτηρίαν.

The occurrence of γάρ in 10:10 is uncontroversial. Commentators generally regard it as introducing an explanation which clarifies and supports the statement of 10:9.308 There is not room at this juncture to discuss πιστεύω, nor δικαιοσύνη (see the discussion of the former under 6.3.3 n.785 and n.794 below and of the latter under n.793). Pending further discussion, I will translate πιστεύω “have faith”,309 and follow Zerwick’s translation of εἰς δικαιοσύνην, “leading to righteousness”.310 I propose the following procedural account of γάρ in 10:10. The connective triggers procedure G. The statement

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307 See the fuller discussion of 10:4 under 5.4 below.
310 Zerwick 1993: 482.
following γάρ in v.10 is identified as premise Q and, following a relevance-guided heuristic, comprehension processes look for preceding information in relation to which this premise is relevant as strengthening material. The preceding statement in v.9 is identified as the most likely candidate for strengthening. This identification is facilitated by the repetition in v.10 of the vocabulary from v.9, “believe with heart”, “confess with lips”. Addressees’ comprehension processes then search for contextual assumptions made highly accessible by v.10 and v.9. We can posit that the following inferential series may be involved:

**P (v.9):** If a person confesses with her mouth that Jesus is Lord and has faith in her heart that God raised him from the dead, she will be saved.

**Q introduced by γάρ (v.10):** It is with the heart that a person has faith, leading to righteousness, and it is with the mouth that a person confesses, leading to salvation.

**IA:** If it is with the heart that a person has faith, leading to righteousness, and with the mouth that a person confesses, leading to salvation, then if a person confesses with her mouth that Jesus is Lord and has faith in her heart that God raised him from the dead, that person will be saved. (Inferable from common sense, plus from encyclopaedic knowledge of the concept of salvation/being saved and its association with the concepts of faith and righteousness, highly accessible from the wider preceding co-text e.g. 3:22-26.)

**C (strengthening P):** If a person confesses with her mouth that Jesus is Lord and has faith in her heart that God has raised him from the dead, she will be saved.

As a result of this strengthening procedure, the statement in v.9 is held more firmly as valid by addressees. The procedure thus gives rise to the cognitive effect of strengthening. The statement is confirmed independently, by inference, with the help of evidence supplied from addressees’ own background knowledge of the world. In this co-text which consists of intricate exposition rather than strong persuasion, I suggest that the strengthening procedure is probably relevant for addressees as an explanation which makes v.9 more comprehensible, rather than as confirming evidence convincing addressees of its truth. This corresponds with commentators’ reading of this occurrence as explanatory. The material introduced by γάρ achieves relevance in relation to the
information in v.9. This makes sense of the intuition that the statement in v.10 supports
the claim in v.9.

3.5.3 Romans 2:11

This example occurs as part of a diatribe, beginning in 2:1, which is addressed to an
imaginary interlocutor. Whatever the specific identity of this conversation partner, the
diatribe challenges self-righteous presumption and hypocrisy by demonstrating the
inescapability and impartiality of God’s eschatological judgement, at which time God
will judge all human beings, Jews and Gentiles alike, on the basis of their works. The
statement in 2:6 that God will pay each person back according to that person’s works is
an accepted Jewish principle, which is then spelled out in vv.7-10 by means of two
antithetical statements. In v.11 we find a Jewish theological axiom introduced by γάρ.

2:6: δεις ἀποδώσει ἕκαστῳ κατὰ τὰ ἔργα αὐτοῦ·
2:7: τοῖς μὲν καθ’ ὑπομονήν ἔργου ἄγαθοῦ δόξαν καὶ τιμὴν καὶ ἁφαρσίαν ζητοῦσιν
ζωὴν αἰώνιον,
2:8: τοῖς δὲ ἐξ ἔρημειας καὶ ἀπειθοῦσι τῇ ἁληθείᾳ πειθομένοις δὲ τῇ ἁδικίᾳ ὑγίᾳ καὶ
θυμός.
2:9: θλιψις καὶ στενοχωρία ἐπὶ πᾶσαν ψυχήν ἀνθρώπων τὸ κατεργαζομένου τὸ
κακόν, Ἰουδαίου τε πρῶτον καὶ Ἑλλήνου·
2:10: δόξα δὲ καὶ τιμὴ καὶ εἰρήνη παντὶ τῷ ἐγκαθαρζομένῳ τῷ ἄγαθῳ, Ἰουδαίῳ τε
πρῶτον καὶ Ἑλλήνι·
2:11: οὗ γάρ ἐστιν προσωπολημψία παρὰ τῷ θεῷ.

311 The identity of the interlocutor in 2:1 is contested (see Barclay 2015: 464 n.35). Some (Linebaugh
2011: 221; Dunn 1988a: 78; Wilckens 1978: 124-26) argue that Paul turns to address Jewish
exceptionalism or pretension (though the Jewish identity of the interlocutor is explicitly identified only in
2:17). Others claim that he addresses the archetype of a hypocritical and judgement person (Elliott 1990:
125-26; Jewett 2007: 197), an arrogant Gentile (Stowers 1994b: 101-4), or a judaising Gentile
(Thorsteinsson 2016: 21).
312 See Jewett 2007: 209; Dunn 1988a: 78 and 85; Ps. 62:12; Prov. 24:12.
313 Cranfield 1975: 146.
Various commentators see the axiom introduced by γάρ in v.11 as providing confirmation, grounds or a conclusion for the statements in vv.6-10.\(^{315}\) We can explain γάρ as a procedural indicator in v.11 in the following way. The connective triggers procedure G, and addressees’ comprehension processes, following a relevance-guided heuristic, search for preceding claims which are not yet optimally relevant and which the statement following γάρ could potentially strengthen. The material immediately adjacent in v.10 is considered. Since it does not stand alone as a statement, but is part of a complex of assumptions beginning in v.6 (the statements in vv.7-10 are grammatically dependent on the verb in v.6), this complex is processed together as a single whole, and the information in vv.6-10 is identified as candidate for strengthening. We can summarise this information in a single statement P as follows: “God will pay back each person according to his/her works, Jews and Gentiles alike: eternal life, glory, honour and peace to those who do good, and wrath and distress to those who do evil.”

I suggest that the following strengthening series may be constructed:

\(P\) (vv.6-10): God will pay back each person according to his/her works, Jews and Gentiles alike (eternal life, glory, honour and peace to those who do good, and wrath and distress to those who do evil).\(^{316}\)

**Q introduced by γάρ** (v.11): There is no partiality with God.

**IA:** If there is no partiality with God, then God will recompense each person according to her deeds, Jews and Gentiles alike.

**C** (confirming P): God will pay back each person according to his/her works, Jews and Gentiles alike (eternal life, glory, honour and peace to those who do good, and wrath and distress to those who do evil).

As a result of this inferential procedure triggered by γάρ, the validity of the assumptions communicated in v.6 and vv.9b and 10b is confirmed. The main assertion that God will pay back each person, according to his/her deeds, plus the claim that this means both Jews and Gentiles, are adhered to more strongly by addressees. This underlines the


\(^{316}\) The information in brackets is not directly strengthened by the inferential series.
argumentative salience of these claims. This example of γάρ is slightly less straightforward than the two previously discussed because addressees must infer that the assumptions to be strengthened stretch back to ν.6. The γάρ clause in ν.11 achieves its relevance in relation to these assumptions, and thus can be viewed as supporting material in the argument. Nevertheless, the strengthening relation is easily traceable by secondary interpreters. The fact that γάρ here introduces a theological axiom, presumably familiar to Paul’s addressees, adds additional weight to the supporting premise. As a statement which carries the authority of accepted wisdom, it brings extra ballast to the buttressing support, further contributing to an increase in adherence to preceding claims. This powerful buttressing suggests that the γάρ clause may provide a response to implicit objections possibly raised by the preceding claims (in particular the claim that Jews and Gentiles will receive the same recompense).317 This is an example of strengthening which is probably relevant as a convincing confirmation rather than an explanation, in which the strongly persuasive strategy of an authoritative axiom is employed as convincing proof. This may be because there is a higher risk that what is communicated here may not be accepted by addressees as valid. We see here that the type of persuasive material in which γάρ occurs influences the outworking of the strengthening procedure triggered.

In RT terms, the axiom in ν.11 is an example of metarepresentation,318 that is, a re-representation of thoughts already represented in a different context.319 Metarepresentations include citations and paraphrases from conventional wisdom, authoritative sources and other individuals, as well as the communicator’s own previous verbal representations of his thoughts. In as far as metarepresentations represent material which is already accepted as valid, and sometimes as authoritative, by addressees, they bring additional weight to supporting material.320 Consequently, we

317 See Rudolph 2014: xx, who argues that γάρ functions as a marker which alerts addressees that what follows is the communicator’s “response to a perceived…question or objection” which inhibits “receptivity to the intended message”.
318 See glossary.
319 In RT terms, all verbal utterances are representations of thoughts.
320 See Moyise 2008: 17-18 on the role of citations from authoritative sources in ancient rhetoric, and Perelman & Olbrechts-Tyteca 1969: 166 on Aristotle’s view of maxims: “the more [the form of a maxim] is traditionally known, the readier will be the acceptance of the statement and of the consequences it involves”. (See Rhetoric, II, 21, 1394a et seq..)
find that γάρ not infrequently introduces metarepresentations, including scriptural citations.

We can summarise our discussion of these three straightforward examples as follows: in expository material, γάρ can be accounted for as giving a set of procedural instructions which guides towards the inferential procedure of strengthening and thus reduces processing costs. In all cases, material introduced by γάρ can be viewed as strengthening or supporting preceding material. Strengthening works itself out as either the confirmation or explanation of previously communicated claims, increasing the strength with which addressees adhere to them as valid. The outworking of strengthening in different co-texts depends on the communicative aims of the passage. Rather than being relevant in its own right, material introduced by γάρ raises expectations of relevance in relation to preceding material, which it supports.

3.6 Straightforward occurrences of γάρ in hortatory material

When we consider occurrences of γάρ in hortatory material, we need to bear in mind that the assumptions strengthened as a result of the procedural guidance γάρ gives are expressed as exhortations, often using imperatival forms, rather than as assertions or claims. These imperatives need to be disambiguated as propositional forms, that is, expressed as statements, before they can be used as input into inferential procedures. RT explains imperatives as expressing states of affairs that the communicator believes would be desirable if realised as real states of affairs.

3.6.1 Romans 13:1

Romans 13:1-7 forms part of the major paraenetic section of the epistle which runs from 12:1-15:13. The pericope has generated fierce controversy because of its apparent quietist attitude towards political authority and endorsement of the ruling status quo, and some have sought to explain it as a non-Pauline interpolation. This debate is not

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directly relevant to our examination of the role of γάρ as a procedural signal which guides exegesis, however. The paraenesis of chapters 12-13 is founded on the preceding theology of chapters 1-11, and there are various links between chapter 12 and 13:1-7. Concepts such as τὸ ἁγιόθον and τὸ κακόν and the notion of “paying back” (ἀποδιδόμι), found in chapter 12, are picked up in 13:1-7 and thus re-activated in hearers’ minds, along with associated contextual assumptions communicated in chapter 12. They form part of the nexus of highly accessible mutually manifest assumptions from which addressees draw inferences to arrive at a relevant interpretation of 13:1-7.

Despite the links with what precedes, Romans 13:1 marks the beginning of a new subsection in Paul’s argument. Whereas 12:9-21 deals with what living as a sacrifice to God (12:1) means in terms of personal relationships guided by love, the exhortation in 13:1a signals a shift to a discussion of the implications of the new life in Christ for relationships with political and civic authorities. This exhortation is often viewed as a thesis or “thematic exhortation” for the argument in vv.1b-7, which elaborates upon it. There is agreement that γάρ in v.1b introduces a rationale or justification for the exhortation in v.1a. This comes in the form of a theologoumenon from Jewish wisdom.

13:1a: Πᾶσα ψυχὴ ἐξουσίας ὑπερεχώσας ὑποτασσέσθω.
13:1b: οὖ γάρ ἔστιν ἐξουσία εἰ μὴ ὑπὸ θεοῦ,
13:1c: αἳ δὲ οὖσαι ὑπὸ θεοῦ τεταγμέναι εἰσίν.

We can explain this occurrence of γάρ in procedural terms as follows. I propose that, on hearing 13:1a followed by 13:1b-c, procedure G is triggered by γάρ. V.1b and v.1c are processed together as a complex of assumptions introduced by γάρ as strengthening premises, since v.1c is the positive restatement of v.1b. We can disambiguate and summarise this as Q: “All authority is from God.” The assumption communicated by

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326 Cranfield 1979: 663; Jewett 2007: 784; Wilckens 2014: 29
327 Dunn 1988b: 761, 770.
means of the exhortation in v.1a is identified as a candidate for strengthening, and is
disambiguated by an inferential process, yielding propositional form P: “It is desirable
to submit to the governing authorities.” A highly accessible background assumption
is then activated to combine with Q. We can posit the following inferential series, or
something similar:

P (v.1a): It is desirable to submit to the governing authorities.

Q introduced by γάρ (v.1b): All authority is from God.

IA: If authority is from God, it is desirable/necessary to submit to it.

C (confirming P): It is desirable to submit to the governing authorities.

As a result of this inferential series, the propositional form of the exhortation is
confirmed as valid, and it is accepted more firmly by addressees as a course of action to
put into practice. The statements in v.1b-c increase the relevance of the exhortation in
v.1a, helping to underline its argumentative salience. The strengthening which γάρ
guides towards here works itself out as relevant as a justification providing grounds for
an exhortation. The fact that the material introduced by γάρ would have been a
theological axiom to Paul’s addressees, given their theocentric worldview, reinforces
the support provided by the γάρ clause. This is another example of γάρ introducing an
authoritative metarepresentation which adds to the persuasiveness of the argument.

3.6.2 Romans 13:8-9

After the discussion of the relationships of believers to public authorities in 13:1-7,
which includes the exhortation in 13:6-7 to pay whatever is due, including taxes, in
13:8-10 the argument moves on to a summarising exhortation to love others.

13:8a: Μηδὲν ἢ μηδὲν ὄφειλετε
13:8b: εἰ μὴ τὸ ἀλλήλους ἀγαπᾶν

328 RT argues that imperatives can be stated as propositional forms following the schema: “It is desirable
to [do something]”.
329 Blakemore (1987: 80-81) shows how non-factual desirable states of affairs such as imperatives can be
strengthened by other communicated assumptions, just as truth conditional assertions can.
13:8c: ὁ γὰρ ἀγαπῶν τὸν ἐτερὸν νόμον πεπλήρωκεν.


We can analyse the occurrence of γὰρ in 13:8c in a similar way to the example in v.1a. The connective triggers procedure G, and the immediately preceding material in v.8b is identified as candidate for strengthening. We can represent the assumptions that are probably involved in the inferential procedure of strengthening as follows:

**Exhortation** (v.8a-b): Do not owe anything to anyone except [the debt of] love for one another.

This command (and the metaphor of love as a debt) can be disambiguated as the following propositional form:

**P** (v.8a-b): (It is desirable not to have anything that must be repaid to other people), and it is desirable to love other people.

**Q introduced by γὰρ** (v.8c): Anyone who loves other people fulfils [God’s] law [by loving other people].

**IA**: If someone fulfils God’s law by doing an action, it is desirable to do that action.

**C** (confirming the desirability of the exhortation in v.8b): It is desirable to love one another.

The result of this inferential procedure, signalled by γὰρ, is that the communicated assumption “It is desirable… to love one another” is held more strongly as valid by addressees, because they have independently verified its reasonableness and logical coherence. Here too, the result of the strengthening procedure is relevant as a justifying rationale. If, as some suggest, the statement in v.8c is an allusion to the Jesus tradition and to Jesus’ summing up of the law in the command of Leviticus 19:18, then the

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330 In inferential series, I use square brackets around information which represents the explication of ellipses.
supporting evidence introduced by γάρ carries additional authoritative weight. This would then be another example of γάρ introducing a metarepresentation as supporting material in order to bolster the persuasive punch of the exhortation it supports.

Similarly, we can explain the occurrence of γάρ in 13:9 as follows. When addressees hear v.9, the connective triggers the inferential procedure of strengthening. This procedure, following a relevance-guided heuristic, takes the complex of assumptions following γάρ in v.9 as strengthening premises for the first preceding claim found which, when strengthened, is optimally relevant. It identifies the immediately preceding statement in v.8c as the candidate for strengthening. The inferential series involved might look something like this:

\[ P \text{(v.8c): Anyone who loves others fulfils God’s law.} \]

\[ Q \text{ introduced by γάρ (v.9, disambiguated and summarised): All the commandments of the law are summed up in the commandment “Love your neighbour as yourself”.} \]

\[ \text{IA: If all the commandments of the law are summed up in the commandment “Love your neighbour as yourself”, then anyone who loves others fulfils the law.} \]

\[ C \text{(confirming P): Anyone who loves others fulfils God’s law.} \]

As a result of this inferential strengthening series, the statement in v.8c is in its turn confirmed by the supporting evidence provided in v.9. As a consequence, the claim in v.8c is held more strongly as valid. Since v.8c itself provides strengthening support for v.8b, the knock-on effect is also to strengthen further the exhortation in v.8b, further convincing addressees that it is desirable to put it into practice. We note that the supporting complex of assumptions in v.9 contains two citations from the Old Testament, one from the Decalogue and the other from Leviticus 19:18. Here again we find that γάρ introduces metarepresentations which function as authoritative evidence to back up previous claims, and that the strengthening procedure is relevant as confirming proof.\(^{332}\)

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\(^{332}\) See Whittle 2015:114-118 for a detailed discussion Paul’s use of these citations.
3.6.3 Romans 15:3

Romans 15:1-6 represents a continuation of the exhortations of chapter 14 concerning tensions between the weak and the strong. Since elements of the subsection (14:1-15:13) will be the focus of our discussion at several points, a brief overview of the debate is in order here. Many scholars regard these instructions as directed towards real rather than hypothetical problems among Roman believers. There have been diverse attempts to identify the weak and the strong. A scholarly majority now argues that the weak are Torah-observant Christ-believers, whether Jewish, or Gentile but Jewish-orientated, while the strong are Christ-believers who do not observe Torah, both Gentile and Jewish. The disagreements between them are best interpreted as differences over the observance of Jewish food laws and sabbaths, which Paul discusses in deliberately non-specific terms perhaps so as not to exacerbate tensions, nor emphasise identities which are irrelevant from the perspective of the gospel. In 14-15:13 as a whole Paul exhorts particularly the stronger in faith, among whom he counts himself, to accept those who are weaker (an evaluation based on their scruples about food and holy day observances). He also admonishes those who have such scruples not to judge those who do not.

15:1a: Ὀφείλομεν δὲ ἡμεῖς οἱ δύνατοι τὰ ἁσθενήματα τῶν ἀδυνάτων βαστάζειν 
15:1b: καὶ μὴ ἐαυτοῖς ἄρεσκειν.
15:2: ἐκαστὸς ἡμῶν τῷ πλῆσιόν ἄρεσκέτω εἰς τὸ ἁγαθὸν πρὸς οἰκοδομήν·
15:3a: καὶ γὰρ ὁ Χριστὸς οὐχ ἐαυτῷ ἤρεσεν, ἀλλὰ καθὼς γέγραπται,
15:3b: Οἵ ὑπερλείποι τῶν ὑπερλεῖπόντων σε ἐπέπεσαν ἐπ᾽ ἐμέ.

The command in 15:2 can be read as a positive restatement and elaboration of the exhortation in v.1, especially v.1b. The repetition of the verb ἀρέσκω draws attention to this. Scholars read the material introduced by γάρ in v.3 as grounds or a rationale for the preceding exhortation. Dunn draws attention to the citation from Psalm 69:9 (LXX) in v.3b which provides “an undergirding of Scripture” for the reference to Christ’s example in v.3a. He suggests that Paul may have used an OT citation here rather than a quotation from the Jesus tradition because the former would have carried particular weight with his addressees. If so, v.3 represents a double dose of weighty theological material which backs up what precedes: a reference to Christ’s example, followed by an OT proof.

This example of γάρ can be explained as a procedural indicator as follows. Procedure G is triggered, and v.3a-b are processed as a single set of strengthening assumptions introduced by γάρ. Following a relevance-guided heuristic, it is inferred that the assumptions communicated in vv.1-2 are to be taken together as a complex which needs strengthening. The further repetition in v.3a of ἀρέσκω from vv.1-2 makes this inference particularly accessible. Highly accessible background assumptions are then identified to combine in an inferential series. Here I propose that two, rather than one, highly accessible background assumptions are accessed in the context. We can represent the probable inferences involved thus:

Complex P (vv.1-2, disambiguated and summarised): It is desirable for the strong among believers to bear with the weak and not to please themselves but their neighbours, for their good and to build them up.

Complex Q introduced by γάρ (v.3): Christ did not please himself but experienced the insults directed at God.

IA1: Christ is a model for believers. (Inferable from encyclopaedic knowledge of Christian teaching.)

IA2: If Christ is a model for believers, and Christ did not please himself but experienced the insults directed at God, then it is desirable for the strong among believers (to bear with the weak and)\textsuperscript{342} not to please themselves but their neighbours (for their good and to build them up).

**Conclusion C** (confirming particular assumptions within complex P): It is desirable for the strong among believers (to bear with the weak) and not to please themselves but their neighbours (for their good and to build them up).

As a result of this inferential procedure, particular assumptions within vv.1 and 2 are confirmed as valid and thus adhered to more strongly as desirable, convincing addressees to put them into practice. Although the assumptions accessed in the inferential series logically strengthen only certain parts of the claims of vv.1 and 2, parts which consequently become particularly relevant and salient, the overall persuasive effect of v.3 is to increase addressees’ acceptance of the whole complex of exhortations in these verses.

Similarly, while the content of the scriptural quotation is itself superfluous to the basic strengthening series, as an authoritative metarepresentation it nevertheless creates a persuasive impression of weighty backing from an authoritative, if not a logical proof. In addition, the material in v.3a may also be a reflection of teaching from the Jesus tradition and of other Pauline passages such as 2 Corinthians 8:9 and Philippians 2:5-8. In this case it, too, would be a metarepresentation of accepted ideas from an authoritative source. The combination of v.3a and v.3b thus provides particularly strong support for vv.1-2.\textsuperscript{343} This strong backing suggests that the strengthened exhortations are highly salient in Paul’s argument and that it is particularly important that addressees accept them. Here we see frontline exhortations which are given a motivating and undergirding rationale by theological truths.

In this example, then, the inferential procedure of strengthening is relevant as grounding proof. The result of the procedure is an increase in the strength with which the

\textsuperscript{342} I use brackets to represent information which, though stated explicitly in the text, is superfluous to a particular strengthening series, logically speaking.

\textsuperscript{343} See Jewett 2007: 880, who refers to the “tremendous force” which the OT citation in v.3b lends to the admonition in v.2.
preceding exhortations are held as valid, and in their argumentative salience. It is of note here that theologically weighty material is marshalled as back-up for more salient assumptions, which represent the thrust of the argument.

3.7 Summary of straightforward occurrences

Our discussion of these six straightforward occurrences has demonstrated that a procedural strengthening account of γάρ is able to provide a unified and consistent explanation of its role in various passages in different types of material in Romans. On this account, the connective is a procedural indicator which gives a set of instructions guiding towards the inferential procedure of strengthening. The connective raises expectations that what follows will be relevant as supporting material for preceding assumptions. The procedure indicates that material following γάρ must be processed as a premise or premises which, when taken together with accessible contextual assumptions, independently confirm the preceding claim. The result is to consolidate or reinforce previously communicated assumptions, giving rise to the cognitive effect of strengthening. This contributes to the persuasiveness and coherence of the argument.

Procedure G follows a relevance-guided heuristic in identifying which assumptions are to be strengthened, in accessing contextual assumptions, and in constructing strengthening series. The strengthening effect is relevant in various ways in diverse contexts and for different addressees. Sometimes it works itself out as confirming evidence increasing the plausibility of preceding claims, sometimes as an explanation increasing comprehensibility, sometimes as a rationale or grounds justifying the desirability of an exhortation, sometimes as convincing authoritative proof. For every occurrence, however, the core strengthening instructions are the same, allowing us to rely on γάρ as a consistent communicative signal which increases the relevance and argumentative salience of preceding assumptions. In this way, the connective constrains interpretation in a particular direction, reducing processing costs. In every case, the material γάρ introduces can be understood as supporting information in relation to the more salient assumptions that it helps to strengthen.
3.8 A procedural account: somewhat complex occurrences in expository material

For this category of occurrences I have chosen to discuss a series of examples within two passages, one expository, 7:7-20, and one hortatory, 14:1-11. I have selected these passages because they both contain a high concentration of diverse occurrences, including various somewhat complex examples (interspersed with some straightforward occurrences). As we examine more complex occurrences, an awareness of the contextual assumptions highly accessible in the co-text becomes more important, since the strengthening inferential procedure sometimes involves assumptions which are not immediately adjacent to the γάρ clause in question. Examining these occurrences in their co-text in a systematic fashion allows us to pay closer attention to potential contextual assumptions at play, and to pertinent exegetical problems as necessary. In addition, a discussion of co-text enables us to trace the role of γάρ within the wider argument. In particular, we can see not only how γάρ flags up supporting or background information, but also how this facilitates the identification of the argument’s more salient points. Furthermore, it increases awareness of how material following γάρ may revisit and reactivate assumptions communicated further back in the argument, increasing their relevance.

As in the previous section, for each example I will demonstrate the procedural role of γάρ by constructing a possible strengthening series for each example. I will do this by adapting and extending the simple template of a logical strengthening series in order to incorporate additional contextual assumptions.

3.9 Somewhat complex occurrences in expository material: Romans 7:7-20

3.9.1 Co-text of 7:7-20

As noted above, a majority of modern commentators regard 5:1-8:39 as the second major section of the epistle. This section might be summed up as a discussion of the new life in Christ which believers enjoy as God’s children, liberated from sin and death, and enabled by the Spirit. The section is characterised by sharp antitheses between the
old age and the new, between Adam and Christ (5:12-21), death and life, sin and righteousness (ch. 6) and life according to the flesh versus life according to the Spirit (ch. 8). The issue of the Jewish law, a recurrent theme in chapters 2-4, also resurfaces in 5:12-21, 8:1-11 and, most notably, in chapter 7.

Various interpreters understand 7:1-6 as a continuation of the discussion in chapter 6 of the antithesis between the old life of slavery to sin and death and the new life in Christ, with the Jewish law now in focus.\(^\text{344}\) We can suppose that Paul’s radical statement in 7:4 concerning the necessity of believers dying in relation to the law, and his assertion in 7:5 that sinful passions are somehow stimulated by the law, may have raised troubling questions for an audience which, according to 7:1, knows and respects the Jewish law. We can suggest, following Dunn, that this issue would already have been raised by the argument of the previous chapters.\(^\text{346}\) In 7:7-25, with the tensions in Paul’s attitude towards the law fully exposed by 5:20 and 7:1-6, he turns to address these questions head on.\(^\text{347}\) Scholars disagree as to how to break down 7:7-25 into subsections. I will limit my discussion to vv.7-20.\(^\text{348}\) Along with various commentators,\(^\text{349}\) I read the parallel rhetorical questions in v.17 and v.13 as marking the beginning of fresh stages in the argument, and will thus treat vv.7-12 and vv.13-20 as separate subsections.

The series of rhetorical questions followed by the emphatic denial, \(\mu \eta \gamma \epsilon \omega \tau \rho \), in v.7 and v.13, is typical of a diatribal style. The second question in v.7, “Is the law sin?”, and the question in v.13, “Has what is good become death to me?” suggest that Dunn is

\(^{345}\) Wolter (2014: 425) views 7:7-25 as “unfolding” the statement in 7:5, and dealing with possible misunderstandings relating to what Paul has just said.
\(^{346}\) Dunn 1988a: 399. See also Kümmel 1974: 46.
\(^{348}\) There is only one occurrence of \(\gamma \alpha \pi \) in vv.21-25, which falls into the category of problematic rather than somewhat complex.
right in asserting that Paul is responding to potential objections concerning the role of the Jewish law, raised by his previous argument. Vv.7-25 are thus an essential part of Paul’s main argument which is necessary to ensure continued receptivity towards his message. These verses have a clear persuasive intent, achieved by means of both logical argumentation and rhetorical devices such as questions and repetition.

Much ink has been spilt over the referent of the first person singular pronoun in this passage. There is not space here to discuss the numerous differing interpretations.\textsuperscript{350} The picture is complicated by the fact that some scholars detect a shift in the referent between 7:7-12 and 7:13-25.\textsuperscript{351} I follow the view that 7:7-13 are to be interpreted in relation to 7:5,\textsuperscript{352} where Paul has referred to the passions aroused by the Jewish law in, it seems, both Jews and Gentiles, given Paul’s use of the first person plural in 7:5. Consequently, 7:7-12 may be understood as describing the role of God’s law in creating consciousness of sin for all human beings who come into contact with it. Scholars note the possible allusions to Genesis 2-3 in these verses.\textsuperscript{353} Adam represents the human race, and Adam’s experience in the face of God’s commandments is the archetypal human response to God’s law. “I” thus refers to humankind’s general experience (“I = Adam = humankind = everyman”\textsuperscript{354}) when confronted with God’s command. Paul describes the effect of God’s commandment primarily in terms of an encounter with the Jewish law, but the probable allusion to Adam suggests that he also sees encompassed in its scope humanity’s universal experience in response to God’s commandments regarding right and wrong.\textsuperscript{355} If so, then Paul speaks autobiographically only in as far as general human experience is his experience too.\textsuperscript{356} This interpretation makes good sense not only in relation to the previous co-text, but also given the predominantly Gentile make up of Paul’s audience.


\textsuperscript{352} See Kümmel 1974: 46.


\textsuperscript{354} Dunn 1988a: 383

\textsuperscript{355} See Dunn 1988a: 400; Cranfield 1975: 342.

\textsuperscript{356} For a contrasting view, see Wolter 2014: 431-32; Wright 2002: 551-54; Moo 1996: 431.
Closely related to the interpretation of the “I” is the interpretation of νόμος in this passage, which occurs some fifteen times. Although there is agreement that the referent is clearly the Jewish law in some instances (7:7, 7:12, 7:14, 7:22), others are much more ambiguous (7:21, 23 etc.) and could potentially be read as referring to a more general universal law, or a principle. I will touch on this question only as it becomes directly relevant to the investigation of γάρ in particular verses.

3.9.2 Romans 7:7

7:7a: Τί οὖν ἕρωμεν; ὁ νόμος ἀμαρτία; μὴ γένοιτο

7:7b: ἄλλα τὴν ἀμαρτίαν οὐκ ἔγνων εἰ μὴ διὰ νόμουν

7:7c: τὴν τε γάρ ἐπιθυμίαν οὐκ ἤδειν εἰ μὴ ὁ νόμος ἔλεγεν, Ὑσκ ἐπιθυμήσεις.

By means of the second rhetorical question in 7:7a, Paul makes explicit a preposterous potential implication which could be drawn from his previous argument: the Jewish law can be equated with sin. He immediately refutes this in the strongest terms: μὴ γένοιτο. In v.7b we then find an assertion which qualifies this emphatic denial: while it is true that the law is absolutely not sin, there is nevertheless a relationship between the two. This assertion begins Paul’s complex response to the potential objection raised by 7:5. It is followed in 7:7c by a clause introduced by τε γάρ, which consists of a negative hypothetical conditional assertion completed by a quotation from the Decalogue, which is an abbreviation of the tenth commandment.

The combination τε γάρ is unusual in NT Greek. Although it is also found in Romans 1:26 and 14:8, it occurs nowhere else in the NT except Hebrews 2:11. Commentators broadly read the two connectives as introducing the rationale for the assertion in v.7b. More specifically, Kümmel interprets them as introducing a more precise “fact” giving grounds for the previous claim, while Lagrange maintains that the combination

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357 Commentators are agreed on reading νόμος in 7:7-12 as the Mosaic law (Wolter 2014: 428; Moo 1996: 431; Dunn 1988a: 378; Küsemann 1973: 183 etc.)
358 Kümmel 1974: 47.
359 “Tatsache” (Kümmel 1974: 47).
of connectives indicates that v.7c is the proof of v.7b. Because of the rarity of the combination in the NT, it seems best to treat the two connectives separately and not as an expression with a single function. We can interpret τέ as meaning “and” or “also”, though a number of commentators choose to leave it untranslated.

Following a procedural account, I propose that γάρ in v.7c triggers procedure G which searches, following a path of least effort, for the most obvious previous assertion with which to hypothesise an inferential strengthening relation. It identifies the immediately adjacent claim in v.7b, which may raise implicit questions for addressees, which would need to be answered in order for this claim to be optimally relevant to them. The procedure then searches for contextual assumptions made highly accessible by the material introduced by γάρ in v.7c (premise Q), given the co-text of v.7b. It combines these contextual assumptions with Q in a strengthening inferential series:

**P** (v.7b, disambiguated): The “I” knew sin through the [Jewish] law.

**Q introduced by γάρ** (v.7c, disambiguated): The “I” knew coveting because the [Jewish] law said, “Do not covet”.

**IA1**: Coveting is sin (accessible from encyclopaedic knowledge of Jewish law).

**IA2**: To know coveting through the Jewish law is to know sin through the Jewish law.

**C** (confirming v.7b): The “I” knew sin through the Jewish law.

In this way, the procedure triggered by γάρ strengthens the claim in v.7b by means of an inferential process involving the specific example given in v.7c. Whether this strengthening procedure achieves relevance as confirming evidence, or as an explanation, depends on whether v.7b raises implicit questions of plausibility or of comprehensibility for particular addressees. The claim in v.7b becomes more comprehensible but also more plausible by means of the particular example introduced.

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360 Lagrange 1916: 168.
363 I will use the expression “the I” to disambiguate the referent of ἐγώ in this passage, to make clear that the referent is a generalised construct.
by γάρ in v.7c. This is an instance of γάρ introducing a specific example which backs up a general assertion. Since the inferential series involves more than a single contextual assumption, it might possibly be regarded as a slightly more complex occurrence of γάρ. It has the same core function as the occurrences we have previously discussed. It gives processing instructions which guide towards backwards strengthening, and signals that the material it introduces is relevant in relation to, and within the context of, this preceding claim, for which it provides support, increasing its argumentative salience.

In this instance, the information introduced by γάρ is at least partially well known to Paul’s addressees (the citation of the tenth commandment). Here too, then, γάρ introduces information that is accepted by his addressees as true and authoritative. This lends weight to the validity of the argument, increasing its persuasive punch. The connective τέ can perhaps be analysed as contributing further to the impact of the evidence presented in v.7c. It may draw attention to this specific example introduced by γάρ as significant and indisputable evidence. At any rate, it does not appear to interfere with or modify the procedural instructions given by γάρ.

3.9.3 Romans 7:8

7:8a: ἀφορμήν δὲ λαβοῦσα ἡ ἁμαρτία διὰ τῆς ἐντολῆς κατειργάσατο ἐν ἐμοὶ πᾶσαν ἐπιθυμίαν·

7:8b: χωρὶς γάρ νόμου ἁμαρτία νεκρά.

Romans 7:8a continues the explanation, begun in v.7b, of how the law is in close relationship with sin. In this verse there is a shift in focus to the topic of sin, which is presented as a personified power which takes advantage of the commandment given by God and produces all kinds of covetous desires in the “I”. Whereas the statement in v.7c, introduced by τε γάρ, provided an explanatory example for the claim in v.7b, the statement in v.8a, introduced by δὲ, represents a new claim about the relationship between sin, the law and the “I”, relevant in its own right. Kümmel and Dunn both take

364 See Bauer 2000: 189, s.v. 1d.
365 Dunn (1988a: 380) argues that the idea that covetousness was the root of all sin was also an established part of Jewish thought.
νόμος and ἐντολὴ as referring to a single reality in vv.7-12. The commandment to which v.8a refers is the one cited in v.7c, which is an example which represents the whole Mosaic law. Some commentators read γὰρ in v.8b as introducing an explanation for the whole of vv.7-8a, an explanation which extends to the end of v.10.

We can explain γὰρ in v.8b as a procedural indicator as follows. Procedure G is triggered by the connective and, following a relevance-guided heuristic, the preceding claim in v.8a is identified as the most likely candidate for strengthening. This claim may raise implicit questions for addressees either regarding its validity, or relating to comprehension (for example, “How is it that sin produced all kinds of covetous desires in the “I” through the commandment?”). The information introduced by γὰρ in v.8b makes accessible additional background assumptions which are combined with it in an inferential series which may be along the following lines:

P (v.8a): Sin seized the opportunity and produced all kinds of covetous desires in the “I” through the commandment.

Q introduced by γὰρ (v.8b, disambiguated): In the absence of the law, sin is powerless/without effect.

IA1: By “the commandment” is meant “the law”, since the commandment is a specific instance of the law. (Highly accessible from encyclopaedic knowledge of the Jewish law, and the citation of the tenth commandment in v.7c.)

IA2: If sin is powerless/without effect in the absence of the law, then sin is powerful/has an effect where the law is present.

IA3: If sin has an effect where the law is present, then the commandment is an opportunity for sin to produce all kinds of covetous desires in the “I”. (Inferable from background knowledge of what it means for sin to have an effect, made highly accessible by v.8a.)

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368 This is a disambiguation of the metaphorical use of νεκρᾶ.
369 See Kümmel and Wright’s views above.
IA4: If the commandment is an opportunity for sin to produce covetous desires in the “I”, then sin will seize that opportunity and produce all kinds of covetous desires in the “I” through the commandment. (Inferable from common sense.)

C (confirming v.8a): Sin seized the opportunity and produced all kinds of covetous desires in the “I” through the commandment.

As a result of this inferential series, deduced automatically by sub-personal processes guided by the principle of relevance, the claim in v.8a is strengthened. In effect, the inferential series provides an answer for possible implicit objections initially raised by v.8a, with the result that the latter is adhered to more strongly by addressees. Given these potential objections, it seems most likely that in this instance the result of the strengthening procedure is relevant as independent confirming evidence which strengthens a previous claim. This strengthening contributes to the persuasiveness of the argument. On this account, γὰρ introduces a confirmation of the immediately preceding assertion rather than an explanation for the whole of vv.7-8a, as some commentators suggest. Nevertheless, the inference that “law” and “commandment” in v.8a and b refer to the same reality in turn reinforces the association with the specific example of a commandment found in v.7c, creating an impression of tight connection between vv.7-8 as a whole. The repetition of “law” throughout vv.7-8 also contributes to this coherence.

This series extends the basic strengthening template we have followed so far in that it accesses a number of background assumptions and involves a number of inferential steps. I suggest that all of these assumptions would plausibly have been highly accessible to Paul’s addressees, given the co-text, and the proposed reconstruction of their cognitive environment.

3.9.4 Romans 7:11

7:10a: ἔγω δὲ ἀπέθανον

7:10b: καὶ εὐρέθη μοι ἡ ἑντολὴ ἡ εἰς ζωὴν, αὕτη εἰς θάνατον·

7:11a: ἡ γὰρ ἁμαρτία ἄφορμήν λαβοῦσα διὰ τῆς ἑντολῆς ἐξηπάτησέν με

7:11b: καὶ δὶ αὐτῆς ἀπέκτεινεν.

In 7:9-10 we find the continuation of the mini-narrative, begun in v.8a, which describes the chain of events which follows from sin seizing the opportunity provided by the law and awakening all kinds of desires in the “I” (v.8a). These events are expressed in sharply antithetical terms, highlighting the contrast between, on the one hand, life for the “I”, and lifeless sin, in the absence of the law, and on the other, sin springing to life, resulting in death for the “I”, in the presence of the law. In 7:11a the participial clause of v.8a is repeated, this time introduced by γάρ, and with ἡ ἁμαρτία fronted. The repetition draws attention to the main argumentative point of 7:7-11, namely that it was sin which exploited the law in order to gain mastery over humanity. At the same time, the fronting further highlights sin’s role as active subject, as does the use of the transitive verb ἀπέκτεινεν. V.11 summarises the thought of vv.8-10, underlining the fact that the blame for the deathly fruit which comes from the law (7:5) is to be laid fairly and squarely at sin’s door.

Commentators generally view the material introduced by γάρ in v.11a as explanatory of what precedes. Kümmel reads it specifically as an explanation of the statement in v.10b. In fact both v.10a and 10b are an elaboration of the thought expressed in 7:5 regarding the sinful passions aroused by the law leading to death. The starkness of this elaboration might well raise implicit questions for addressees, both of comprehension, and of acceptability, meaning that v.10 is not yet optimally relevant as it stands. Consequently, strengthening material is offered in v.11a, introduced by γάρ.

We can explain γάρ in v.11a as a procedural indicator as follows. Procedure G is triggered, and, following a relevance-guided heuristic, the immediately preceding material in v.10 is identified as the most obvious candidate for strengthening. V.10a-b is taken as a single complex of assumptions for strengthening, because the statement in v.10a is a presupposition of the claim in v.10b, and both clauses may raise implicit objections for addressees. V.11, meanwhile, introduced by γάρ, is processed as a single

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371 Interestingly, when the participial clause occurs for the first time in v.8, it is introduced by δέ as part of a set of assumptions relevant in their own right. In v.11, in contrast, it is recycled and introduced by γάρ as part of a complex which addressees expect to be relevant in relation to previously communicated assumptions.

complex of strengthening assumptions which belong very closely together conceptually.

We can split v.10 down into two claims which need strengthening:

**P1** (v.10a): The “I” died.

**P2** (v.10b): The commandment which was intended as a means to life was found to be a means of death for the “I”.

The information introduced by γάρ is taken as a complex of premises:

**Complex Q introduced by γάρ** (v.11): Sin seized the opportunity to deceive the “I” through the commandment and killed the “I” through the commandment.

Addressees’ comprehension processes search for highly accessible background assumptions in order to construct a strengthening series for the claims in v.10 (P1 and P2). I suggest that either one inferential series may be constructed, or alternatively, two in parallel, depending on what is most relevant to particular addressees. Although I will lay these two inferential series out one after the other, we can assume that both series would be processed in parallel as part of the process of searching for the most relevant interpretation which makes best sense of all the data in v.11.

Firstly, I propose that a series is established which strengthens P1 (v.10a):

**P1** (v.10a): The “I” died.

**Q** (v.11b): Sin (seized the opportunity to deceive the “I” through the commandment and) killed the “I” through the commandment.

**IA1**: If sin… killed the “I” through the commandment, then the “I” died.

**C** (confirming v.10a): The “I” died.

As a result, the assertion in v.10a is explained so that it becomes more comprehensible and plausible.

Meanwhile the following background assumptions are made accessible by Q in relation to the strengthening of v.10b:
IA1: If sin deceived and killed the “I” through the commandment, then the commandment brought death instead of life for the “I”.

C (confirming v.10b): The commandment brought death instead of life for the “I”.

As a result of the search, triggered by γάρ, for background assumptions which help to strengthen the claim in v.10b, an inferential series is derived which is relevant either as an explanation or as a confirmation of that claim. In this way, addressees’ expectations are satisfied that the material following γάρ will be relevant by virtue of backwards strengthening. This explanation/confirmation goes some way to answering possible questions raised by v.10, making it either more comprehensible, or more plausible, or both.

Although I have proposed two strengthening series which may potentially be constructed, whether or not both are established will depend on whether a particular addressee finds that both v.10a and v.10b are in need of strengthening in order to be optimally relevant, or only v.10b. In the latter case, a strengthening series will be constructed for v.10b alone. Thus the construction of these inferential series is determined by what best satisfies expectations of relevance for different addressees. As a result of the strengthening procedure, the claims in v.10 become more argumentatively salient, and other implications which potentially follow from them may also be inferred and held as valid by addressees; for example, “God’s law does not bring life as it was intended to”, “God’s law is powerless against sin” and “God’s law is not to blame for death which comes as a consequence of sin.”

Romans 7:12 rounds off the subsection begun in 7:7 by drawing a conclusion from the preceding discussion which answers the question in v.7a, “Is the law sin?” The emphatic implication of 7:7-11, spelled out here, is that the Mosaic law is holy, righteous and good, a continuing part of the purposes of God, despite its manipulation by sin.

7:13a: Τὸ οὖν ἀγαθὸν ἐμοὶ ἐγένετο θάνατος; μὴ γένοιτο·

7:13b: ἀλλὰ ἡ ἁμαρτία, ἵνα φανῇ ἁμαρτία, διὰ τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ μοι κατεργαζομένη θάνατον,

7:13c: ἵνα γένηται καθ’ ὑπερβολὴν ἁμαρτωλός ἡ ἁμαρτία διὰ τῆς ἐντολῆς.
7:14a: οἴδαμεν γὰρ ὅτι ὁ νόμος πνευματικὸς ἐστιν,

7:14b: ἐγὼ δὲ σάρκινος εἰμὶ πεπραμένος ὑπὸ τὴν ἁμαρτίαν.

The subsection 7:13-20,373 like the previous, begins in v.13a with a rhetorical question which expresses a possible false implication to be drawn from the previous argument (particularly in view of v.12), which is immediately emphatically refuted. A corrective to this false implication then follows in v.13b-c, which spells out that it is not the law which brings death to the “I”, but sin, which manipulates the law. In addition, the two final374 ἵνα clauses in v.13 can be read as stating the purpose behind the law, and its role in bringing out and increasing sin.375 The anacoluthon in v.13b is ambiguous, but the overall sense is clear.376 Supplying the phrase ἐμοὶ ἐγένετο θύνατος (from v.13a) after ἡ ἁμαρτία seems the best way of disambiguating here.377 The formula οἴδαμεν ὅτι which introduces v.14 indicates that what follows is a generally accepted fact,378 already well known to Paul’s audience.

3.9.5 Romans 7:14

Given the preceding co-text of 7:7-12, and the clear allusion to the Jewish law in 7:13, the majority of scholars interpret νόμος as referring to Torah in 7:14.379 Meanwhile γὰρ in v.14 is read in various ways. Some explain it in general terms as introducing an explanation or support for v.13,380 or providing grounds for v.13b.381 Kümmel is more precise: while v.14a provides grounds for the denial in v.13a that the law bears responsibility for the death of the “I”, v.14b provides a rationale for the events described

374 Käsemann 1973: 188.
375 See Wright 2013: 895; Dunn 1988a: 387.
376 Dunn 1988a: 386.
380 For example, Cranfield 1975: 355.
381 Wilckens 1980: 85, who sees the “Begründung” extending from vv.14-16.
in 7:8-11 and v.13b. Thus the two parts of v.14 serve as a rationale for v.13 by presenting the “objective premises” for what is described there.\textsuperscript{382}

Following a procedural account, we can explain $\gamma\alpha\rho$ in v.14 as follows. Procedure G is triggered. Addressees’ comprehension processes do not find any potential strengthening series to establish between the material following $\gamma\alpha\rho$ in v.14 and the immediately preceding $\iota\varepsilon\alpha$ clause in v.13c, without undue processing effort. Following a relevance-guided heuristic, the disambiguated information in v.13b is considered next and identified as a candidate for strengthening. The double clause following $\gamma\alpha\rho$ in v.14 is processed as a single complex of assumptions (Q).\textsuperscript{383} Addressees’ comprehension processes search for highly accessible contextual assumptions and construct an inferential series something like the following:

**P** (v.13b, disambiguated): Sin, in order that it might be shown as sin, [became death to the “I”], working death to the “I” through the good [law].

**Q introduced by $\gamma\alpha\rho$** (v.14a-b): The law is spiritual, but the “I” is fleshly, sold as a slave to sin.\textsuperscript{384}

**IA1** (relating to v.14a): If the law is spiritual, the law is good. (Accessible from encyclopaedic knowledge of Jewish teaching, and from 7:6.)

**IA2** (relating to v.14b): If the “I” is fleshly and sold as a slave to sin, sin is the “I”’s master. (Accessible from encyclopaedic knowledge of concept of slavery.)

**IA3**: If sin is the “I”’s master, the good law says that the wage the “I” receives from sin is death. (Accessible from previous co-text: 6:23.)

**IA4**: If the good law says that the wage the “I” receives from sin is death, then sin results in the good law pronouncing death for the “I”.

**IA5**: If sin results in the good law pronouncing death for the “I”, then sin becomes death to the “I”, working death through the good law.

\textsuperscript{382} Kümmel 1974: 58.

\textsuperscript{383} In v.14b $\delta\zeta$ introduces the second statement in an antithetical pair which belong tightly together.

\textsuperscript{384} Literally, “sold under sin”.
C (confirming v.13b): Sin (in order that it might be shown as sin), [became death to the “I”], working death to the “I” through the good [law].

As a result of the procedural instructions given by γάρ in v.14, the assumptions communicated in v.13b are strengthened, and adhered to more strongly by addressees. The assumptions introduced by γάρ in v.14 are thus relevant in relation to the preceding assumptions in v.13b, supporting them and contributing to their salience. This proposed inferential series is more complex than those previously proposed, including several contextual assumptions from background knowledge and the previous co-text. In addition, the proposed series involves splitting the assumptions in v.14a-b into two parts and manipulating them as two separate pieces of input into the series (IA1 and IA2). The strengthening procedure contributes to the coherence of the wider argument by reactivating assumptions communicated further back in the co-text.

This posited inferential series is only one possibility for establishing a strengthening connection between v.14 and v.13b. Depending on contextual assumptions available to different addressees, and differing expectations of relevance, we can envisage that another briefer series might be constructed by certain addressees, requiring less processing effort. Moreover, the strengthening may be relevant as an explanation to some, but as a validating confirmation or justification to others. This freedom to work out the strengthening in whatever way is most relevant accounts for the range of scholarly explanations of γάρ in this verse. Once again, γάρ guides in the direction of strengthening, constraining interpretation, but the details of this strengthening may be worked out in diverse ways.

3.9.6 Romans 7:15

7:15a: ὃ γάρ κατεργάζομαι οὐ γινώσκω

7:15b: οὐ γάρ ὃ θέλω τοῦτο πράσσω, ἀλλ᾽ ὃ μισῶ τοῦτο ποιῶ.

Various scholars read v.15, introduced by γάρ, as the beginning of an explanation of what it means to be “sold under sin”. Cranfield views γάρ in v.15a as indicating the

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385 This analysis undermines Käsemann’s (1973: 189-90) view that v.14 represents the beginning of a new subsection, with the second half of v.14 salient as its theme. I suggest instead that any main summarising point is to be found in v.13b.
relation of the whole of vv.15-23 to v.14, Jewett regards vv.15-16 as a clarification of v.14, while Käsemann considers vv.15-20 to illustrate the theme he finds stated in the second half of v.14.\footnote{Cranfield 1975: 358; Jewett 2007: 462; Käsemann 1973: 191.} Wright, on the other hand, takes v.15a as the beginning of a further explanation of v.13b, while Kümmel interprets v.15 as demonstrating the validity of the claim that the “I” is fleshly and a slave to sin, a claim which is in turn part of the rationale for v.13b.\footnote{Wright 1991: 218, Kümmel 1974: 59.} In contrast, Wolter maintains that γὰρ here introduces a conclusion.\footnote{“folgernd” (Wolter 2014: 446).} Meanwhile commentators are broadly in agreement that γὰρ in v.15b explains, provides grounds for, or supports, v.15a specifically. There is some discussion as to the interpretation of γινώσκω in v.15a. Along with Kümmel and various English translations,\footnote{Kümmel 1974: 59; NET, NIV, ESV, RSV etc.} I will follow the interpretation “understand”. This reading is most compatible with a procedural account of both occurrences of γὰρ in v.15, as we shall see.

The occurrence in v.15a is somewhat complex in that the material it introduces does not achieve relevance as strengthening material on its own, but needs to be completed by the following γὰρ clause in v.15b. This accounts for the observation by commentators that γὰρ in v.15a introduces more than the material in that clause alone. The occurrence in v.15a can be explained as follows. Following procedure G, a strengthening series cannot be easily established between v.15 and either v.14, or v.13, without unreasonable processing effort. That is, v.15a on its own does not satisfy expectations of relevance. Consequently, γὰρ in v.15b then raises expectations that the material following it will achieve relevance by strengthening the statement in v.15a in such a way that it in turn completes its own strengthening task. I suggest that something like the following double inferential series may be involved, in which v.15b strengthens v.15a, and in turn, v.14b:

\textbf{P1 for strengthening} (v.14b): The “I” is fleshly, sold as a slave to sin.

\textbf{P2 for strengthening} (v.15a): The “I” does not understand what the “I” does.
**Complex Q introduced by γάρ (v.15b):** The “I” does not do what the “I” wants to do. The “I” does what the “I” hates.

**IA1:** If the “I” does not do what the “I” wants to do but what the “I” hates, the “I” does not understand what the “I” does. (Inferable from common sense/encyclopaedic knowledge of human experience.)

**C1 (confirming v.15a):** The “I” does not understand what the “I” does.

**IA1:** If the “I” does what the “I” hates and does not understand what the “I” does, the “I” is not master of the “I’s” own actions, but something else is master of the “I”. (Inferable from common sense/human experience.)

**IA2:** If the “I” does what the “I” hates, the “I” does what is wrong. (Inferable from common sense/experience and co-text: 6:20, 21.)

**IA3:** If the “I” does what is wrong, and is not in control of the “I’s” actions, sin is the “I’s” master and the “I” is a slave to sin. (Inferable from common sense, concept of sin/wrongdoing and concept of slavery.)

**C2 (confirmation of v.14b):** The “I” (is fleshly), sold as a slave to sin.

In this way, the statement in v.15b increases the relevance of the statement in v.15a, enabling background assumptions about wrongdoing to be accessed which provide an inferential bridge back to the statement in v.14b. The strengthening triggered by γάρ in both v.15b and v.15a seems most likely to be perceived as relevant as an explanation of previous information which raises questions of comprehension. As a result, the statement in v.14b is in turn strengthened, and v.15a becomes optimally relevant in a strengthening relation with this statement. We can say that the consolidating explanation of v.14b, begun in v.15a, is both completed and further supported by the second γάρ clause in v.15b. Thus not only v.15a, but also v.14b, becomes more comprehensible and plausible for addressees. This makes sense of interpreters’ analysis of v.15b as belonging closely with v.15a as part of a single explanation of what precedes. On the other hand, this analysis rules out Wolter’s reading of γάρ in v.15a as “folgernd”. The occurrences in v.15a and b, and also v.14, form a short strengthening chain which results in the cumulative strengthening not only of the claim in v.14b that
the “I” is sold as a slave to sin, but also to the further strengthening of the claims in v.13b. This highlights the argumentative salience of the latter.

Some commentators remark on the parallels between v.15 and the thought of Greco-Roman writers and philosophers.\(^{390}\) If Paul is indeed here alluding to an epigrammatic formula which may have been familiar to his Roman addressees, then this could be another instance of γάρ introducing a metarepresentation which adds authoritative weight to the support that it provides for preceding assumptions.

### 3.9.7 Romans 7:18-19

7:17: νυνὶ δὲ οὐκέτι ἐγὼ κατεργάζομαι αὐτὸ ἄλλα ἢ οἰκοῦσα ἐν ἐμοὶ ἁμαρτία.

7:18a: οἶδα γὰρ ὅτι οὐκ οἰκεῖ ἐν ἐμοί, τούτ’ ἔστιν ἐν τῇ σαρκί μου, ἄγαθόν·

7:18b: τὸ γὰρ θέλειν παράκειται μοι, τὸ δὲ κατεργάζεσθαι τὸ καλὸν οὗ

7:19: οὐ γὰρ ὃ θέλω ποιῶ ἄγαθὸν, ἄλλα δ’ οὐ θέλω κακὸν τοῦτο πράσσω.

In 7:16 Paul draws a conclusion regarding the law, which rounds off his defence of the law given in answer to the rhetorical question of v.13a. This is a restatement of the claim in v.12 that the law is good, this time inferred from a different premise. In v.17 a fresh argumentative point is made: it is indwelling sin that is to blame for the “I’s” wrongdoing. The argument in vv.13-16 has exonerated the law from responsibility for humanity’s sin and death; now the statement in v.17 claims that the “I” is also not to blame.\(^{391}\) Commentators are broadly agreed that vv.18-19, which contain a series of three γάρ clauses, together explain\(^ {392}\) or provide supporting proof\(^{393}\) for the claim in v.17.

We can explain γάρ as a procedural indicator in v.18a as follows. Procedure G identifies the immediately preceding assumptions in v.17 for strengthening, and the statement in

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\(^{391}\) See Barrett 1971: 147.

\(^{392}\) For example, Wright 2002: 51; Wilckens 1980: 87.

\(^{393}\) Jewett 2007: 467; Cranfield 1975: 360.
v.18 as strengthening premise Q. The following assumptions, or something similar, are combined in an inferential series:

**P** (v.17, disambiguated): It is not the “I” who does this [evil], but the sin living in the “I”.

**Q introduced by γάρ** (v.18a): (The “I” knows that) what is good is not living in the “I”, that is, in the “I’s” flesh.

**IA1**: If what is good is not living in the “I’s” flesh, then sin is living in the “I’s” flesh. (Inferable from common sense and presupposition communicated in v.17.)

**IA2**: If sin is living in the “I’s” flesh, then sin makes the “I’s” flesh carry out evil actions. (Inferable from common sense, concept of sin etc.)

**C** (confirming v.17): It is not the “I” who does this [evil], but the sin living in the “I”.

As a result of this inferential series, or something similar, the claim in v.17 is strengthened, with the result that addressees adhere to it more strongly as valid. The connective gives procedural instructions towards strengthening, and thus functions as a communicative signal. The strengthening procedure γάρ guides towards may achieve relevance as confirming evidence, or as an explanation which makes better sense of v.17, grounding it in addressees’ existing knowledge of the world. Either way, v.18a achieves relevance in relation to v.17, which it reinforces, adding to its argumentative salience.

The occurrence of γάρ in v.18b is a more straightforward instance. The statement it introduces in v.18b is neatly paraphrased by Jewett as “The “I” wants to perform the good but is unable to do so”.

We can use this paraphrase as a disambiguation which expresses the propositional form of premise Q, which becomes input into the inferential procedure triggered by γάρ. The immediately preceding assumption in v.18a is identified as a candidate for strengthening by Q. I propose that the following assumptions, or something similar, may be involved:

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P (v.18a): What is good does not live in the “I”, that is, in the “I’s” flesh.

Q introduced by γάρ: The “I” wants to perform the good but is unable to do so.

IA: If the “I” wants to perform the good but is unable to do so, then it is evidence that good does not live in the “I”, that is, in the “I’s” flesh.

C (confirming v.18a): What is good does not live in the “I”, that is, in the “I’s” flesh.

As a result of the strengthening procedure, the statement in v.18a is confirmed by means of additional contextual assumptions, and v.18a is held more firmly as valid by addressees. I propose that the non-demonstrable inferential series above, or something similar, is enough to satisfy expectations raised that the material introduced by γάρ in v.18b will be relevant as backwards strengthening material. The strengthening procedure may be relevant as a confirmation or an explanation. Since v.18a in turn strengthens v.17, the knock-on effect of this reinforcement of v.18a is to further bolster the strength with which v.17 is held by addressees, emphasising the argumentative salience of the latter.

Romans 7:19 consists of a double, antithetical assertion introduced by γάρ, the content of which is similar to that of v.15b. Here, however, it is explicitly stated that what the “I” wants and fails to do is ἀγαθόν, while what the “I” does not want, but does, is κακόν. Various commentators interpret vv.19-20 as recapitulating what has already been claimed, rather than advancing the line of thought. The occurrence of γάρ in v.19 is relatively straightforward. I propose that the following strengthening series, or something similar, is established as part of procedure G:

P for strengthening (v.18b): The “I” wants to perform the good but is unable to do so.

Q introduced by γάρ (v.19): The “I” does not do the good the “I” want to do. The “I” does the evil the “I” does not want to do.

IA: If the “I” does not do the good the “I” wants to do and the “I” does the evil the “I” does not want to do, then the “I” wants to perform the good but is unable to do so.

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C (confirming v.18b): The “I” wants to perform the good but is unable to do so (that is, “The willing is ready at hand, but the doing of what is excellent is not”).

As a result of this series of inferences, the assumptions communicated in v.18b are independently confirmed, increasing addressees’ adherence to them. Since v.19 is in effect a paraphrase of assumptions already communicated in v.15b, and the inference drawn from the contextual assumption accessed is partially trivial, it seems likely that this series is relevant not as an explanation helping to make sense of v.18b so much as persuasive confirmation of the validity of the assumptions in that verse. I suggest that here the core strengthening instructions that γάρ gives may create an impression or display of compelling supporting evidence, and addressees’ expectations of relevance are satisfied by this impression (that is, they are persuaded to accept v.18b more firmly as valid). This is despite the fact that the inferential series constructed essentially repeats assumptions which are already strongly manifest from the preceding co-text and so does not provide compelling independent evidence from a logical point of view. If, as with v.15, the material in v.19 is a metarepresentation of a well-known formula, this also adds to the persuasive rhetorical effect here. Since, by means of the backwards strengthening chain of γάρ clauses, v.18b supports v.18a which in turn reinforces v.17, the overall effect of this persuasive supporting material is to increase the argumentative impact of v.17, and the cognitive effects which are derived from it. V.17 is thereby highlighted as a particularly salient main point in the argumentation.

Romans 7:20a communicates in a conditional construction an assumption already communicated in vv.15b, 16a and 19b, while 7:20b states an implication already drawn in v.17 and made more salient by the γάρ clauses in vv.18-19. Romans 7:20 thus concludes this subsection by reasserting the argumentative claim already made that it is not the “I” which is responsible for the evil that it does against its will, but instead indwelling sin.

396 Cf. the discussion of rhetorical strengthening in 6:19-20 under 4.6 below.
3.9.8 Summary of findings from Romans 7:7-20

From an examination of γάρ in the expository material of Romans 7:7-20, I have demonstrated that a procedural account is able to explain somewhat more complex occurrences in terms of core procedural instructions guiding towards the inferential procedure of strengthening. In all cases, the connective guides addressees to expect that the material it introduces will be relevant as strengthening premises which, together with highly accessible contextual assumptions, increase the relevance of preceding material by leading to its independent confirmation. In all cases, γάρ guides towards the cognitive effect of strengthening and serves as a communicative signal, reducing processing costs. The procedure it triggers contributes to the persuasiveness of the argument.

We have seen that the procedural strengthening hypothesis can accommodate these somewhat complex occurrences by incorporating a number of highly accessible contextual assumptions into strengthening series of inferences. As well as accounting for strengthening material which is relevant as a confirmation, an explanation or a proof, a procedural account is also able to make sense of information which is relevant as a more specific example of a general claim (v.7b), of occurrences which by themselves do not achieve strengthening but need to be completed by a subsequent γάρ clause (v.15a), and of examples which may primarily create a strengthening impression (v.19) rather than guiding towards a complete logical strengthening series.

While the core procedural instructions given by γάρ remain constant, the strengthening it guides towards thus works itself out differently in diverse co-texts according to the differing expectations of relevance that addressees may have. Consequently, certain occurrences may be interpreted differently by diverse addressees and interpreters. Addressees choose whichever outworking of the inferential procedure best satisfies expectations of relevance for them, so we cannot say with certainty in what way particular addressees will find the strengthening procedure relevant. If a particular claim raises objections and leaves them unconvinced, they are likely to process supporting material introduced by γάρ as confirming evidence; if it leaves them asking questions of comprehension, they are likely to process it as an explanation. The account accommodates the fact that different addressees may not derive identical inferential
series (see v.11). It likewise provides an explanation for the fact that some interpreters may invest more processing effort in establishing full logical series, while others may simply take on trust that the partial evidence supplied does indeed lead to strengthening as γάρ indicates.

I suggest that this procedural explanation throws light on the contours of the argument of this passage. Because γάρ flags up supporting information which consolidates and increases the relevance of preceding claims, it allows us to identify these strengthened claims as relatively important in the argument. Claims that are supported by a whole series of strengthening γάρ clauses leading back to them are particularly argumentatively salient. They give rise to many new cognitive effects, and represent some of the key main points of the argument.

### 3.9.9 Implications of a procedural account of γάρ for tracing Paul’s argument in 7:7-20

In the light of this, it is useful to take stock of some argumentative implications of a procedural account of γάρ in 7:7-20. These will feed into our discussion in chapter 6 of the wider argument of the epistle. We have seen that information introduced by γάρ is relatively less salient, argumentatively speaking, than the preceding material it strengthens, and represents supporting information which consolidates the main argumentative claims. The latter give rise to many new cognitive effects. By increasing the relevance of those main points, information introduced by γάρ helps to highlight what is most argumentatively significant.

On the basis of this, we can propose the following outline of salient claims which, backed up by γάρ clauses, are particularly relevant in 7:7-20, representing main points which advance the argument:

v.7: It is through the law that the “I” became aware of sin.

v.8: Sin produced all kinds of covetous desires in the “I” through the commandment (law).

v.10: The commandment that was intended to lead to life led to death for the “I”.
The explicit implication in v.12 which is then drawn as a conclusion, introduced by ὅστε, is likewise salient in the argument:

v.12: The law is holy and the commandment is holy and righteous and good.

V.13b: It was sin that became death for me, working death through the good [law] (so that sin might be shown as sin and so that sin might become exceedingly sinful through the commandment).

V.16b: The “I” agrees with the law that the law is good.397

V.17: It is not the “I” who produces this evil; it is the sin living in the “I”.398

V.20b: It is no longer the “I” who does what the “I” does not want to; it is the sin living in the “I”.399

This tracing of the main argumentative points in the subsection, based on the guidance given by γάρ, supports interpretations which read 7:7-20 as a defence of the Jewish law. In particular, this analysis is compatible in large part with Wright’s reading of the contours of the argument in these verses.400 Wright’s discussion of this passage is noteworthy for the particular attention it pays to connectives as communicative signals which guide the development of the argument. In contrast, an analysis such as Käsemann’s, which finds in v.14b (“sold as a slave under sin”) the subsection’s theme, and which splits v.13 off from vv.14-20,401 seems incompatible with a procedural strengthening account of γάρ.

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397 The fresh conclusion drawn in the apodosis of the conditional construction in v.16 also represents a salient interim summarising argumentative point, although it is not backed up by a γάρ clause.
398 Both v.13b and v.17 are supported by a cumulative strengthening chain of three γάρ clauses, providing powerful buttressing, and making both particularly argumentatively salient.
399 This restatement of the highly salient v.17 further increases its salience.
400 Wright (1991: 218), who identifies the assertions in v.13b as the main point, or theme, of 7:13-20, while vv.14-20 offer several explanations of this main point. His discussion accords more importance to the two purpose clauses in v.13b-c than the above analysis, however.
3.10 Somewhat complex occurrences in hortatory material: Romans 14:1-12

Having shown that a procedural account of γὰρ is able to provide a consistent and unified explanation for somewhat complex occurrences in a stretch of expository material in Romans, I will now demonstrate that it is also able to account for similar examples in hortatory material.

3.10.1 Co-text of 14:1-12

This subsection forms part of the paraenesis of the major section which runs from Romans 12-15:13 and discusses the ethical and practical implications of the new life in Christ. This life is summed up at the head of the section in the metaphor of believers presenting themselves to God in worship as living sacrifices (12:1-2). It works itself out particularly in terms of relationships both within and outside the Christian community (see the discussion under 3.6.1 and 3.6.3 above).

Within this paraenesis, chapters 14-15:13 represent a switch from the more general ethical instructions of chapters 12-13 to a detailed and sustained discussion of the issue of mutual acceptance within the Christian community, regardless of differing convictions relating to certain practices and observances. In addition to the contested issue of the identity of the strong and the weak (see above under 3.6.3), these chapters raise questions related to the climax and purpose of the letter. I will not engage with the debate at this point, but will revisit the question in chapter 6. A consistent procedural reading of γὰρ may shed light on these questions.

3.10.2 Romans 14:3

14:3a: ὁ ἐσθίων τὸν μὴ ἐσθίοντα μὴ ἐξουθενεῖτο,
14:3b: ὁ δὲ μὴ ἐσθίων τὸν ἐσθίοντα μὴ κρινέτω,
14:3c: ὁ θεὸς γὰρ αὐτὸν προσελάβετο.

In 14:1 we find an imperative, προσλαμβάνεσθε, which is directed particularly at the “strong” among Paul’s addressees, since those addressed are urged to accept the person
who is weak in faith (τὸν ἄσθενοντα). This exhortation sums up the theme of the entire subsection 14:1-15:13: mutual acceptance within the Christian community. 14:2 elaborates on v.1 by giving a specific example, in two contrasting parts, of the kind of situation which might provoke disputes and a lack of mutual acceptance among believers: one person has the faith to eat everything, while a weak person only eats vegetables. Based on this double example, v.3a and v.3b then give two further exhortations which are more specific outworkings of the command in v.1.

Commentators are divided as to whether the γάρ clause in v.3c is to be understood in relation to v.3b only, or in relation to both v.3b and v.3a. I propose the following procedural account of γάρ. Procedure G searches for a preceding communicated assumption in relation to which the γάρ clause is relevant as a strengthening premise. Following a relevance-guided heuristic, it considers the exhortation in v.3b first. Despite the third person singular pronoun in v.3c, which might initially lead addressees to infer that v.3c is relevant only in relation to v.3b as Cranfield and Dunn suggest, several other clues in the co-text lead to the inference that v.3c is relevant in relation to v.3a as well. Firstly, v.3b is the second of a balanced pair formed by v.3a-b, as indicated by the syntactic parallelism of v.3a and v.3b. Secondly, the repetition of the verb προσλαμβάνω in v.3c means that the exhortation in v.1 to accept the one who is weak in faith is very highly accessible. This leads addressees to infer that v.3c must serve as support not just for the exhortation to accept the person who is strong in faith and eats (v.3b), but also for the exhortation to accept the person who is weak in faith and does not (v.3a). The strengthening of the exhortation in v.3b would seem to demand more processing effort in the co-text. V.3a-b is thus selected as a single complex of assumptions for strengthening. I suggest that an inferential series is constructed along the following lines:

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402 See Barclay 2011a: 39, who argues that the background to the abstinence in view is to be found in observance of Jewish food laws by the weak, and Reasoner’s detailed investigation (199:64-87) of the “consumptive asceticism” evidenced.

403 Dunn 1988b: 803; Cranfield 1979: 702.

404 Käsemann 1973: 353; Jewett 2007: 843. Cranfield (1979: 702) judges that Käsemann takes “an unjustifiable liberty with the text” by interpreting οὐρόν as referring to both the non-eater of v.3a and the eater of v.3b.
P (propositional form of v.3): It is desirable for the person who eats not to despise the person who does not eat, and it is desirable for the person who does not eat not to judge the person who eats.

Q introduced by γάρ (v.3c): God has accepted that person.

IA: If God has accepted a person, it is desirable for other people not to despise or to judge that person.

C (confirming v.3): It is desirable for the person who eats not to despise the person who does not eat, and it is desirable for the person who does not eat not to judge the person who eats.

As a result of the procedural instructions γάρ gives, the exhortations in v.3 are confirmed by independent evidence, giving rise to the cognitive effect of strengthening. Given the fact that the aim of the exhortation is to persuade towards action, this strengthening is most likely to be relevant as a justification which convinces rather than as an explanation. We should note that γάρ here introduces a theological statement which may echo Psalms such as 26:10 in the LXX and which adds extra authoritative weight to the supporting material, grounding the exhortation in a theological framework.

A procedural account thus makes sense of this occurrence which is somewhat complex because of the ambiguity regarding the reach of the assumptions strengthened by the γάρ clause. This account of γάρ supports Käsemann’s reading rather than Cranfield’s. The inferential procedure not only strengthens v.3a and b, but also contributes to the coherence of the argument by reactivating (and thus consolidating) the exhortation of v.1.

3.10.3 Romans 14:4

14:4a: σὺ τίς εἶ ὁ κρίνων ἄλλοτριον οἰκέτην;
14:4b: τῷ ἰδίῳ κυρίῳ στήκει ἡ πίπτει

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14:4c: σταθήσεται δέ,

14:4d: δυνατεὶ γὰρ ὁ κύριος στῆσαι αὐτὸν.

In v.4 Paul develops the topic of judging, using a rhetorical question posed in diatrabal style in v.4a, and the metaphor of household slaves, to challenge the presumptuousness of those who judge other believers. The statement in v.4b explains why this is presumptuous: it is the business of a master alone to judge his slaves; the judgement of others is irrelevant. The clear implication is that God is the master, and Lord, of believers, who are God’s slaves (see 6:22); only God has the authority to judge them and approve them to continue in their position. V.4c continues the metaphor, affirming that the slave (the believer) will stand, σταθήσεται δέ, approved by and acceptable to God, “upheld” in his presence. Whether or not this verb has an eschatological dimension as some commentators suggest, I suggest that the declaration may raise implicit questions of plausibility for any addressees who feel justified in judging or despising other believers who have different convictions.

V.4d is introduced by γὰρ. We can give the following procedural account of this straightforward occurrence. Procedure G identifies the immediately preceding claim in v.4c as a candidate for strengthening by the material following γὰρ, searches for highly accessible background assumptions and constructs an inferential strengthening series along the following lines:

P (v.4c): The slave of the Lord will stand.

Q introduced by γὰρ (v.4d): The Lord is able to make the slave stand.

IA: If the Lord is able to make the slave stand, then the slave will indeed stand.

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407 See Moo 1996: 840.
408 Dunn 1988b: 804. Fitzmyer (1993: 689-90) finds here the image of a judge’s tribunal before which the slave stands.
409 σταθήσεται can be interpreted either as middle (“he shall stand”), or as passive. Dunn (1988b: 804) argues that the verb is best taken as a middle; to read it as passive would render the clause in v.4d repetitive.
410 Moo 1996: 841.
C (confirming v.4c): The slave of the Lord will stand.

As a result of the procedural guidance given by γάρ, the claim in v.4c is independently confirmed via the construction of a strengthening series, so addressees are convinced to hold this claim more strongly as valid. I suggest that for most addressees, the strengthening triggered here will be relevant as convincing confirmation rather than as enlightening explanation, since the emphatic declaration in v.4c, σταθήσεται δέ, raises a question of plausibility (and perhaps a reaction of indignation?) rather than comprehensibility. The effect of this strengthening is to draw attention to the point that believers stand and are acceptable before God because of God himself. The resulting salience of this consolidated argumentative claim makes highly accessible other contextual implications which may be relevant to some addressees, for instance, “It is wrong to make a judgement that a fellow believer will not be accepted/approved by God.” This is a straightforward rather than more complex example of γάρ, but one which adds to the overall evidence confirming the validity of a procedural account.

3.10.4 Romans 14:5

14:5a: ὃς μὲν [γάρ] κρίνει ἡμέραν παρ᾽ ἡμέραν,

14:5b: ὃς δὲ κρίνει πᾶσαν ἡμέραν.

14:5c: ἕκαστος ἐν τῷ ἴδιῳ νοῦ πληροφορεῖσθω.

In 14:5a and b, Paul introduces a second paired example of a dispute which leads to a lack of mutual acceptance: the issue of observance of sacred days.\(^{413}\) This example is syntactically parallel with the one in v.2. Dunn’s suggestion seems reasonable that, given the argument of the letter, it is most likely that Paul is here referring to anxiety over abandoning the observance of sabbath and feast days required by the Jewish scriptures and tradition.\(^{414}\) The connective γάρ appears as a textual variant in certain manuscripts, notably Sinaiticus and Alexandrinus, but is omitted from P46, Vaticanus,


\(^{414}\) Dunn 1988b: 806.
Bezae and the corrected version of Sinaiticus. Metzger recognises that the external evidence for omission is slightly stronger than for inclusion. Nevertheless, the committee working on the UBS text have included γάρ in the fourth edition text in square brackets. This is because, in their judgement, copyists may not have appreciated the “Pauline usage” of γάρ according to which the connective is used to express “merely a continuation rather than a causal relationship”. Consequently, copyists may have deleted the original connective. A procedural account of γάρ challenges this: according to this account, the connective does not in fact have a “continuative” function in Paul’s writing, so a justification of its presence in the original text on this basis has no foundation. On the contrary, the fact that it is difficult to establish any kind of strengthening relationship between the double assertion in v.5a-b and the claims in v.4 supports the view that γάρ is not original in this verse and should be omitted, in keeping with the weight of external evidence. We see here that a procedural account of γάρ can, in some cases, contribute to textual criticism, providing support for certain variants, and undermining the case for others.

3.10.5 Romans 14:6

14:6a: ὁ φρονοῦν τὴν ἡμέραν κυρίῳ φρονεῖ·
14:6b: καὶ ὁ ἐσθίων κυρίῳ ἐσθίει,
14:6c: εὐχαριστεῖ γάρ τῷ θεῷ·
14:6d: καὶ ὁ μὴ ἐσθίων κυρίῳ οὐκ ἐσθίει καὶ εὐχαριστεῖ τῷ θεῷ.

In v.5c, a further exhortation expresses a guiding principle for believers in such matters of conduct where freedom of opinion is permitted: each must follow her own conscience. In v.6 Paul then presents three specific examples of Christian conduct to show how all are equally acceptable to God if carried out κυρίῳ, “to/for the Lord”, that is, to honour him. The second of these examples (v.6b) is followed by a γάρ clause. I propose the following procedural account of this occurrence. Procedure G is triggered, and, following a relevance-guided heuristic, the immediately preceding claim in v.6b is

416 NA also includes γάρ in square brackets.
identified as the most likely candidate for strengthening, in relation to which the inferential series should be constructed, rather than both v.6a and v.6b taken together. This is partly because the assertions in v.6a and v.6b do not belong closely together as a contrasting pair which can be interpreted as a single complex thought. More importantly, it is possible to infer a strengthening relation between v.6c and v.6b with ease, but not obviously with v.6a. I suggest this is because the concepts of eating (v.6b) and thanksgiving (v.6c) activate, and belong closely together in, a mental script or schema of contextual assumptions relating to common meals\(^{417}\) and the customary Jewish and Christian blessing spoken at them. On the other hand, no such script seems obvious and easily accessible which brings together the concept of thanksgiving with the observance of sacred days.

I propose that the following assumptions, or something similar, are accessed in the strengthening procedure triggered by γάρ:

**P** (v.6b, disambiguated): The believer who eats honours God in eating.

**Q introduced by γάρ** (v.6c): A believer gives thanks to God [for the food she eats].

**IA**: If a believer gives thanks to God for the food she eats, then a believer acknowledges and honours God in eating.

**C** (confirming v.6b): The believer who eats honours God in eating.

As a result of the procedural guidance given by this occurrence of γάρ, the claim in v.6b is strengthened, causing addressees to adhere to it more strongly. Expectations raised by γάρ in v.6c are thus satisfied: the material in v.6c is relevant in relation to preceding assumptions, which it strengthens. It seems likely that addressees will find the result of this strengthening procedure relevant as confirmation which increases the plausibility of the claim in v.6b. We note that in this example, the strengthening premise introduced by γάρ, while not a theological statement as such, is nevertheless rooted in a theological framework.

\(^{417}\) See Barclay 2011a: 41, who argues that the tensions Paul addresses would have been evidenced specifically as believers met to eat together, and Dunn 1988b: 807, who suggests that Paul may have in mind believers gathering for the common meal.
The fact that v.6b alone is strengthened, and not v.6a, suggests that Paul may perceive the statement in v.6b as more controversial (and perhaps also less understandable) than the statement in v.6a, and thus as needing more support. In terms of the thrust of the argument, does the fact that v.6 is strengthened, but not v.6a, point to the relative importance of v.6b in the argument? This seems hard to reconcile with the direction of the argument set by the initial exhortation in v.1, which suggests that the focus of the argument is especially to convince those who are stronger in faith to accept those who are weaker. In v.6b, however, Paul is arguing for the validity of the behaviour of the strong. It seems more likely that the claim in v.6b is backed up by a γάρ clause primarily because it raises implicit questions in addressees’ minds which need answering in order to v.6b to be accepted and optimally relevant. Nevertheless, the support in v.6c secondarily and indirectly contributes to the evidence accumulating in favour of the perspective of the strong.418

3.10.6 Romans 14:7-9

14:7: οὐδεὶς γάρ ἡμῶν ἕαντος ἵδῃ καὶ οὐδεὶς ἕαντο ἁποθνήσκειν
14:8a: ἐάν τε γάρ ζῶμεν, τῷ κυρίῳ ζῶμεν,
14:8b: ἐάν τε ἁποθνήσκωμεν, τῷ κυρίῳ ἁποθνήσκωμεν.
14:8c: ἐάν τε οὖν ζῶμεν ἐάν τε ἁποθνήσκωμεν, τοῦ κυρίου ἔσμεν.
14:9a: εἰς τοῦτο γάρ Χριστὸς ἀπέθανεν καὶ έζησεν
14:9b: ἱνα καὶ νεκρῶν καὶ ζώντων κυριεύσῃ.

Various commentators interpret vv.7-9 as belonging tightly together as an explanation or rationale. Cranfield, for example, asserts that γάρ in this verse indicates that vv.7-9 are to be read as support for what has been said in v.6.419 Käsemann views vv.7-9 as providing a rationale for the preceding example,420 while Wright reads the verses together as “explaining the argument so far by grounding it in the very heart of the

419 Cranfield 1979: 707.
420 Käsemann 1973: 356. Käsemann appears to mean the three examples in v.6.
Some scholars suggest that in vv.7-9 Paul may be using material already familiar to his audience, either a Christian confessional statement, Paul’s own teaching (see 2 Cor 5:15), Jewish teaching, or the thought of other ancient writers. If this is the case, this is another example of γάρ introducing a metarepresentation already known and accepted by addressees.

The occurrence of γάρ in v.7 is somewhat complex. Procedure G searches for a preceding assumption, the relevance of which is potentially increased by the double statement following γάρ. It finds that the immediately preceding statement in v.6c does not satisfy expectations of relevance (that is, does not give rise to adequate cognitive effects) when taken alone as a candidate for strengthening. Following a relevance-guided heuristic, it next tests out the information in v.6a-b and finds expectations of relevance satisfied by processing v.6a-c together as a set of three examples. This set gives rise to the implication (also inferred from v.5c) that whatever believers do when fully convinced of the rightness of an action, they do for the Lord, honouring him. This implied principle may not be immediately accepted, however, given the disagreements in view among Paul’s addressees. It may, for instance, raise the implicit objection, “Why do you claim that in all these cases the believer’s conduct is “for the Lord”, honouring him?” It is thus identified as a potential candidate for strengthening by the information introduced by γάρ in v.7. Addressees’ comprehension processes search for an inferential strengthening series but find that it is not possible to construct a full series: there is a logical gap, and the claim that believers do everything for the Lord is not yet independently confirmed by v.7. Thus v.7 is not yet optimally relevant to addressees. We therefore have two preceding claims which are not yet optimally relevant, one in v.6 and one in v.7.

The double statement in v.8a-b is closely parallel to the double statement of v.7. V.8 recalls Romans 6:10-11 and may well reactivate for addressees the assumptions communicated in that passage. The occurrence of γάρ in v.8a raises expectations that

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421 Wright 2002: 737.
424 Dunn (1988b: 807) points out that the idea in v.8 of living for God is typical of Jewish and Christian thought.
425 Käsemann 1973: 356.
the material it introduces will achieve relevance by strengthening the double statement of v.7, and, in so doing, will in turn complete the strengthening role of v.7 in relation to preceding information. Procedure G immediately identifies the statement in v.7 as a candidate for strengthening by v.8 since it is not yet optimally relevant. Addressees’ comprehension processes search for highly accessible contextual assumptions to combine in a strengthening inferential series. In a similar way to the double series we traced in 7:15, I suggest that something like the following double inferential series may be constructed, in which v.8 strengthens v.7, and in turn, the implication drawn from v.6:

P1 (implication drawn from v.6): All that believers do [when fully convinced of the rightness of an action],426 they do for the Lord to honour him.

P2 (v.7): No-one lives for herself or dies for herself.

Q introduced by γάρ (v.8, disambiguated): Whether believers live or die, believers live or die for the Lord.

IA1: “No-one” here means “no believer”.

IA2: If, whether believers live or die, believers live or die for the Lord, then no believer lives or dies for herself.

C1 (confirming v.7): No believer (no-one) lives or dies for herself.

IA1: Living and dying encompasses all of life and all that believers do. (Inferred from common sense.)

IA2: If no believer lives for herself or dies for herself, but believers live and die for the Lord, then all that believers do [when fully convinced of the rightness of an action], they do for the Lord to honour him.

C2 (confirming contextual implication drawn from v.6): All that believers do [when fully convinced of the rightness of an action], they do for the Lord to honour him.

426 Inferred from 14:5c.
The procedural guidance given by γάρ in v.8a leads to the strengthening of v.7, enabling background assumptions to be accessed relating to the fact that everything believers do is done for the Lord. These provide an inferential bridge back to the contextual implication drawn from the examples in v.6, resulting in turn in the independent confirmation of this implication. Thus the supporting evidence for the principle drawn from v.6, support which is partially provided in v.7, is both completed and further bolstered by the material in v.8. As a result, both the claim in v.7 and the examples in v.6 are held more strongly as valid by addressees, contributing to the persuasiveness of the argument, and the coherence of the co-text. The close dependence of v.7 on v.8a-b in order to achieve optimal relevance makes sense of commentators’ analysis of vv.7-8 as a single chunk which explains or supports v.6. If vv.7-8 contain metarepresented material as scholars suggest, then this lends extra weight to this supporting evidence, bringing additional back-up behind Paul’s claims, and adding to their persuasive punch.

We have seen that the occurrence of γάρ in v.7 in particular is somewhat complex in more than one respect. There is ambiguity regarding the preceding assumptions in relation to which v.7 is relevant; unusually, it is in fact a contextual implication in the form of a general principle drawn from the three examples in v.6 which is strengthened. Moreover, the γάρ clause in v.7 needs to be completed by a second γάρ clause in v.8 in order to achieve optimal relevance. Nevertheless, we have been able to account for this occurrence as a procedural indicator guiding towards backwards strengthening.

In 14:8c, Paul draws an explicit implication from the assumptions in vv.7-8b: “Whether we (believers) live or die, we are the Lord’s.” This conclusion is then backed up further in v.9, which consists of a theological statement which expresses the purpose behind Christ’s death and resurrection in terms of the establishment of his Lordship. The expression εἰς τὸ ὄνομα which begins v.9 could be interpreted either as anaphoric, referring to the statement in v.8c as the purpose for Christ’s death, or kataphoric, pointing forwards to the clause introduced by ἵνα. In fact, the statement in v.8c and the ἵνα clause of v.9b express essentially the same idea, namely that Christ is Lord of believers.

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427 See Moo 1996: 845 n.87.
whether they live or die, so whether εἰς τὸ τοῦτο points to v.8c or v.9b makes little difference to interpretation.

We can give the following procedural account of γάρ in this verse. Procedure G is triggered. It is inferred that the preceding conclusion in v.8c is to be strengthened, and that the whole of v.9 is to be taken together as a complex of strengthening premises. This is not only because the ἵνα clause of v.9b is dependent on the main clause of v.9a, but, more importantly, because of the close conceptual similarity between v.8c and v.9b. This means that v.9b rounds off the strengthening material with a clause that lends itself very obviously to the strengthening of the assumptions in v.8c. I propose that the following inferential series might be involved:

**P (v.8c):** Whether believers live or die, believers are the Lord’s.

**Q introduced by γάρ (v.9):** Christ died and rose again to make believers the Lord’s, in order that Christ be Lord of the living and the dead.

**IA:** If Christ died and rose again and made believers the Lord’s, in order that Christ be Lord of the living and the dead, then whether believers live or die, believers are the Lord’s.

**C (confirming v.8c):** Whether believers live or die, believers are the Lord’s.

In this way, the procedural instructions given by γάρ in v.9a lead to the strengthening of v.8c, persuading addressees to accept the conclusion in v.8c more firmly as valid. The fact that this occurrence of γάρ introduces an axiomatic theological statement about Christ’s death, resurrection and Lordship which some suggest may be a confessional statement, means that weighty material is brought to bear in support of the statement in v.8c. As a result, I suggest that the strengthening which γάρ guides towards in v.9 is primarily relevant neither as further explanation nor as evidence which provides logical confirmation of v.8c for those addressees who may be sceptical. Rather, it is relevant as authoritative theological proof which backs up the conclusion in v.8c and lends it particular salience. In this case, it is the weight of accepted authority which helps to

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428 This inferential series assumes that εἰς τὸ τοῦτο is anaphoric, but even on a kataphoric reading, the strengthening series would be essentially the same because of the conceptual similarity between v.8c and v.9b.
convince, rather than the construction of an independent, logical series. As Wright
argues, the theological statement in v.9 does not stand on its own, but forms part of the
explanation of vv.7-9, which grounds the exhortations and argument of vv.1-6 in “the
very heart of the gospel”.429 Within this explanation, the conclusion of v.8c is made
salient by the following γάρ clause. We should note that the theological statement in
v.9, weighty and authoritative as it is, plays a supporting role, argumentatively
speaking. We will return to this point.

3.10.7 Romans 14:10-11

14:10a: σῦ δὲ τί κρίνεις τὸν ἄδελφὸν σου;
14:10b: ἢ καὶ σῦ τί ἐξουθενεῖς τὸν ἄδελφὸν σου;
14:10c: πάντες γάρ παραστησόμεθα τῷ βήματι τοῦ θεοῦ.
14:11: γέγραπται γάρ, Ζω ἡγώ, λέγει κύριος, ὅτι ἐμοὶ κάμψει πᾶν γόνυ καὶ πᾶσα
γλώσσα ἐξομολογήσεται τῷ θεῷ.

V.10a-b consists of two rhetorical questions, addressed in second person singular form
to an imaginary interlocutor, as in v.4. After the explanatory material of vv.7-9, Paul
here recapitulates the main line of argument found in vv.3-v.4a, challenging the
presumption of those who judge and despise their fellow believers. The implication to
be drawn from the questions is that they have no right to do so. According to Dunn, the
diatribal style has an “emotional impact”.430 The occurrence of γάρ in v.10c introduces
another accepted truth from Jewish (and Christian) teaching, and is a paraphrase of the
thought communicated in 2:1-16.

We can explain γάρ in v.10c as a procedural indicator as follows. Procedure G is
triggered, and the contextual implication drawn from the rhetorical questions in v.10a-b,
“Believers have no right to judge or despise fellow believers”, is identified as candidate
for strengthening by the following γάρ clause. I propose that something like the
following assumptions may be involved in the construction of a strengthening series:

429 Wright 2002: 737.
430 Dunn 1988b: 797.
P (implication drawn from v.10a-b): Believers have no right to judge or despise fellow believers.

Q introduced by γάρ (v.10c+): All [believers] will be judged by God.

IA1: If all believers will be judged by God, all believers are equal before God and God is their judge. (Thisreactivates assumptions communicated in 2:6-11.)

IA2: If all believers are equal before God and God is their judge, no believer has the higher status or authority over other believers to judge them.

IA3: If no believer has the higher status or the authority over other believers to judge them, then believers have no right to judge or despise fellow believers.

C (confirming v.10a-b): Believers have no right to judge or despise fellow believers.

As a result of the inferential guidance γάρ gives, the implication drawn from the preceding rhetorical questions is strengthened or supported by a compelling theological justification. Given the sharp challenge to arrogance and presumptuousness issued by the rhetorical questions, I suggest that this γάρ clause is relevant as an authoritative justification which, if necessary, counters indignation on the part of addressees and unwillingness to accept the rebuke communicated in v.10a-b. It thereby increases addressees’ acceptance of the less than palatable truth indirectly expressed by means of the questions. Once again, we see that the metarepresentation of a theological statement is wielded as powerful support for hortatory material.

In v.11, γάρ, together with the authoritative introductory formula γέγραπται, introduces a scriptural citation which blends the expression, “As I live, says the Lord”,431 with a citation from the LXX of Isaiah 45:23. Here the material following γάρ is a clear example of an authoritative metarepresentation which lends further weight to the statement it supports in v.10c, which in turn provides backing for the challenge issued in the rhetorical questions. This is a straightforward example of γάρ, and a typical example of the connective introducing a scriptural citation which functions as proof in support of a preceding statement. Procedure G searches for a strengthening series which

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431 See Num. 14:28; Isa. 49:18; Jer. 22:24; Ezek. 5:11 etc.
can be constructed between the citation in v.11 and the statement in v.10c. I propose a
series along the following lines:

**P** (v.10c): All believers will be judged by God.

**Q introduced by γάρ** (v.11, summarised and disambiguated): God says that every
human being will acknowledge that God is Lord.

**IA**: If God says that every human being will acknowledge that God is Lord, then every
human being will submit to God’s authority and judgement. (Inferable from
encyclopaedic knowledge of Jewish and Christian eschatological teaching.)

**C** (confirming v.10c): If every human being will submit to God’s authority and
judgement, then all believers will be judged by God.

As a result of the procedural instructions given by γάρ, which leads to the independent
confirmation of the statement in v.10c, the latter is reinforced for addressees. In this
case, the strengthening γάρ guides towards is surely not relevant as a convincing
confirmation, since v.10c is itself an accepted theological axiom. Instead, in this
example, the strengthening achieved seems relevant as authoritative proof which brings
added weight to bear behind v.10c, with the purpose of backing up in turn the challenge
issued in v.10a-b. Together the two authoritative γάρ clauses in vv.10c-11 contribute to
the punch and argumentative salience of the rhetorical questions, that is, to the cognitive
effects to which they give rise. Dunn notes the persuasive effect of the material
introduced by γάρ here: “the citation of one of the most powerful monotheistic passages
in the scriptures (Isa. 45:23) would have a powerful effect particularly on those seeking
to be loyal to Jewish traditional beliefs.”

I suggest that it is the authoritative character of the material introduced by γάρ, together with the way that it is combined with other
known background assumptions as a result of procedure G, which creates a potent
persuasive effect. It provides compelling buttressing for what has already been claimed,
and counters scepticism or unwillingness to take on board these claims.

In 14:12 we find a conclusion which is drawn from, and sums up, the preceding
material: “Each of us must give an account of ourselves to God”. It rounds off the

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432 Dunn 1988b: 814.
theological support provided for the rebuke communicated in v.10, an admonition which in turn reiterates the main points of Paul’s argument from vv.3-4.

3.10.8 Summary of findings from Romans 14:1-12

From this examination of γάρ in the hortatory material of Romans 14:1-12, I have demonstrated that somewhat complex occurrences, as well as straightforward, can be accounted for in terms of procedural instructions guiding towards the inferential procedure of strengthening. This includes examples where several contextual assumptions must be accessed in order to complete the inferential series, and an occurrence where the strengthening is completed by a second subsequent γάρ clause (vv.7-8). It also covers occurrences where the preceding assumptions which are strengthened are not simply those immediately adjacent to the γάρ clause (v.3), or are not explicitly communicated assumptions, but rather contextual implications (v.6). In all cases, the core instructions given by the connective are the same: γάρ triggers a procedure whereby assumptions it introduces are processed as premises which are relevant in relation to, and as support for, previously communicated assumptions, causing addressees to adhere more firmly to these assumptions. In each case, γάρ guides towards the cognitive effect of strengthening. It serves as a consistent communicative signal, reducing processing costs. By strengthening previous claims (which are often expressed in the form of exhortations), the procedure γάρ triggers, and the supporting material it introduces, contribute to the persuasiveness of the argument. They thus play a part in motivating addressees to act upon the advice or warnings given.

As with other occurrences already discussed, the core procedural instructions guiding towards strengthening work themselves out in diverse ways in different contexts according to what is most relevant to particular addressees. This accounts for the fact that commentators explain the function or “meaning” of γάρ in diverse ways. Thus in 14:1-12 we find examples where the strengthening procedure may be perceived as relevant as a justifying rationale for an exhortation (v.3c), as a convincing confirmation which may counter implicit objections (v.4c and v.6b), as a further explanation (v.8a), and as a weighty and authoritative theological proof, where strengthening is achieved by acceptance of what is authoritative rather than by logic (vv.9-11).
3.10.9 Implications of a procedural account of γάρ for tracing Paul’s argument in 14:1-12

As with 7:7-20, it is useful at this point to note some implications of this procedural strengthening account of γάρ for tracing the contours and thrust of the argument in this subsection. By identifying the assumptions strengthened by γάρ clauses, we can track some of the most salient points of the argument, and start to outline its main thrust. In hortatory material such as chapter 14 we find that the salient argumentative points are most often exhortations. These are frequently supported by grounding theological statements introduced by γάρ, which represent an accepted theological framework and bring powerful persuasive backing behind the exhortations. Rhetorical questions are also salient, potentially giving rise to many cognitive effects in the form of contextual implications.

On the basis of the inferential guidance given by γάρ and the supporting material it flags up, I suggest that the more salient argumentative points in 14:1-12 are the following:

v.1: Accept the weaker believer.

v.3a: The person who eats everything should not despise the person who does not.

v.3b: The person who does not eat everything should not judge the person who does.

v.4a,c: You have no right to judge another person’s slave. The Lord’s slaves will stand.

vv.5-6: Some observe sacred days, while others consider them all to be the same. Each believer should be convinced in her own mind. All that believers do [when fully convinced], they do for the Lord to honour him.

v.10a-b: Believers have no right to judge a fellow believer.

v.12: Each of us will give an account to God.

This suggested highlighting of particularly salient points is not intended to imply a structural analysis which identifies a hierarchy of different levels and units of information. Instead, it simply offers a fresh look at the line of argument in the light of the guidance given by γάρ. Paying attention to the procedural guidance given by γάρ
does not automatically enable us to identify all the main points of Paul’s argument, since not all are followed by γάρ clauses, and some which are form part of an extended supporting explanation (see v.8c). We also need to be aware of other connectives, such as δὲ, οὖν and ἅρμα, which flag up new implications or conclusions, as well as other textual clues. But our analysis of γάρ does help to flag up which statements are more salient in relation to others, and which may be particularly argumentatively significant. It compels us to take seriously the co-text and the close relationship between information introduced by γάρ and previously communicated information, reinforcing the coherence of the communication.

By way of example: having examined γάρ in 14:7-9, we see that there is a clear consolidating relationship between v.6 and these verses, indicated by γάρ in v.7 and v.8a. As a result, the insertion of a paragraph break between v.6 and v.7 such as we find in the NRSV is misplaced and misleading. It appears that the translators have allowed the weighty but supporting theological statement in v.9 to distract them from the main argumentative point, which is the exhortation to addressees to accept one another as fellow slaves of the Lord. By paying attention to γάρ as an indicator of consolidating material, we are able to focus better on the direction and contours of the main line of Paul’s thought and pay attention to what is being consolidated in the previous co-text. We can see that vv.7-9 are neither a “digression”, nor the “central statement of the passage from which all else naturally flows”. Instead, these verses provide the necessary “theological grounding” for Paul’s exhortation to radical mutual acceptance. That is, γάρ here points to background material which provides an accepted theological frame of reference, connecting the main points of the argument back to a Christian understanding of reality, providing a motivating rationale for them. Consequently, a procedural account of γάρ enables us to interpret vv.7-9 in their proper place within the argument as a whole.

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433 See Wright 2002: 737, though Wright erroneously cites the NIV as inserting a break at this point.
434 Käsemann (1973: 356), who disagrees, cites Jülicher (1917) as representing this view.
435 Käsemann 1973: 356.
436 Wright 2002: 737.
3.11 Conclusions: straightforward and somewhat complex occurrences

In this chapter I have demonstrated from representative examples how a procedural strengthening hypothesis for γάρ is able to provide a unified and consistent explanation for a variety of straightforward and somewhat complex occurrences of the connective in Romans. All occurrences, in both expository and hortatory material, can be explained in terms of core procedural instructions which guide towards the inferential procedure of strengthening of preceding assumptions. The connective raises expectations that the material that follows it will be relevant as strengthening material in relation to previous assumptions. The connective constrains interpretation, thus reducing processing costs, and can be relied upon as a communicative signal in exegesis. This is especially useful for modern interpreters who have no access to the cognitive environment of the author or the first addressees, and no certainty regarding the contextual assumptions manifest to them. Reading γάρ as a consistent communicative signal allows us on occasion to make decisions about textual variants, and confirms certain lines of exegesis, while undermining others.

The procedure triggered by γάρ uses a relevance-guided heuristic to infer which preceding claim is to be strengthened, and in what way. The result of the procedure is the consolidation of preceding claims or exhortations. This gives rise to the cognitive effect of strengthening, increasing addressees’ adherence to these assumptions. The strengthening procedure may be relevant to addressees in different ways, according to the type of persuasive material, the communicator’s persuasive aims, the co-text, and the perspective, knowledge and attitudes of addressees. Thus in material which aims to convince sceptical addressees, it may work itself out as independent confirming evidence which convinces by rational argument, whereas in material where the validity of claims is not at stake it is more likely to work itself out as an explanation which increases comprehension. In passages where Paul perhaps seeks to challenge or persuade addressees regarding the desirability of an unpopular course of action, strengthening may work itself out as an authoritative proof which persuades because of trust in the source. Occasionally the strengthening may be relevant as a rhetorical display which creates a convincing impression of compelling evidence.
The assumptions which are strengthened as a result of the procedure are argumentatively salient, very often representing the main thrust of the argument, while the material introduced by γάρ can be seen as supporting or background information. In particular, a chain of consecutive γάρ clauses has a cumulative strengthening effect, leading back to the claim at the head of the chain, which is highly salient in the argument as a result. The connective thus helps us to distinguish between material that moves the argument forward, and material which may be theologically important, representing an accepted theological framework, but which, in argumentative terms, serves as buttressing. The connective, and the inferential procedure it triggers, contribute both to the coherence, and to the persuasiveness of the argument.

This procedural account of γάρ is enlightening in various ways. It enables us to make decisions, in some instances, about textual variants (14:5), and lends support to the interpretations of some commentators on certain exegetical points, while undermining others (a point which will be explored more fully in chapter 5). It helps us to pay attention to the coherence of the whole subsection. It encourages us to recognise the relationship not only between γάρ clauses and immediately preceding assumptions, but also how material introduced by γάρ may reactivate, consolidate and underline assumptions communicated further back in the co-text. Finally, it assists us in tracing the contours of the argument. In particular, γάρ flags up supporting information which bolsters the most salient argumentative points, points which give rise to many fresh cognitive effects. This buttressing material frequently takes the form of accepted and authoritative theological statements, which are often metarepresentations of sayings and ideas, probably well known to Paul’s addressees, attributable to Jewish and Christian teaching, to generally accepted wisdom, and to Paul himself.
Chapter 4: Analysis of γάρ using a procedural account: problematic occurrences

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter I will continue the demonstration of a procedural account of γάρ in Romans. My aim is to show how this account is able to provide a unified and consistent explanation, not only for straightforward and somewhat complex examples, as discussed in chapter 3, but also for occurrences which might be judged problematic. I will demonstrate this from a representative sample of problematic instances. These have been selected to represent the range of difficulties encountered in the interpretation of γάρ in the epistle. They are taken from both expository and hortatory material, and from passages which achieve persuasion primarily by means of rhetorical features, as well as from passages which employ more logical argumentation, based on claims and substantiating evidence. I will briefly discuss the surrounding co-text of each example, in order to provide an orientation to some of the most obvious contextual assumptions which may be at play in interpretation. I will finish by discussing some general observations and conclusions to be drawn from the procedural account of γάρ presented, and their implications for the interpretation of Romans. These conclusions will serve as a foundation for the discussion in chapters 5 and 6, which will illustrate from some specific examples how this account can throw fresh light on some disputed aspects of the interpretation of the epistle.

As outlined in chapter 3, by problematic occurrences of γάρ I mean those atypical examples for which an obvious supporting relationship with preceding material is, on the face of it, difficult to identify, leading to a lack of consensus regarding their interpretation. In procedural terms, a simple strengthening inferential series may be difficult to construct with preceding claims, and the contextual assumptions involved may not be easily identifiable to modern interpreters. In addition, these occurrences are frequently found in passages of considerable exegetical ambiguity and complexity. The

437 Features such as emphatic repetition, metaphor, rhetorical questions, antithetical parallelism, irony etc. These have a persuasive effect based not primarily on the rational substantiation of claims, but on the creation of an impression which affects emotions.
difficulties of interpreting these cases of γάρ in turn compound the interpretative uncertainties of their co-texts. Some of these examples occur at pivotal points in the letter’s argument and in passages which have been made to bear much theological freight (other such examples will form the focus of chapters 5 and 6 below).

Rather than discussing these occurrences in epistolary order, I will consider them in two broad groups. Those in the first group, 2:25, 5:6-7 and 9:11, broadly represent more complex cases of logical strengthening. By this I mean the cognitive effect of strengthening which occurs as the result of a full logical series of inferences providing supporting evidence which rationally and independently confirms a claim. Those in the second group, 7:1, 6:19-20 and 15:24, involve strengthening which is influenced by rhetorical as well as logical factors. By rhetorical strengthening I mean the cognitive effect of strengthening achieved as the result of rhetorical features which create an impression of strengthening which is enough to satisfy expectations of relevance, even if a full logical series is not constructed. As we shall see, both kinds of strengthening may be in evidence in some co-texts, depending on what is relevant to particular addressees, so this division is somewhat artificial, but useful for ease of discussion.

I will discuss the examples of rhetorical strengthening in order of atypicality, rather than epistolary order. Thus 7:1 is an example of logical strengthening which is also exploited for rhetorical purposes, and 6:19 and 6:20 are examples of rhetorical strengthening where the construction of a full logical series is not required, though some inferencing is involved. 15:24, meanwhile, is an example of the core function of γάρ being exploited in an unusual way with a very specific rhetorical purpose.

4.2 Logical strengthening example 1: Romans 2:25

2:23: ὃς ἐν νόμῳ καυχᾶσαι, διὰ τῆς παραβάσεως τοῦ νόμου τὸν θεὸν ἀτιμάζεις;
2:24: τὸ γάρ ὅνομα τοῦ θεοῦ δι᾽ ύμᾶς βλασφημεῖται ἐν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν, καθὼς γέγραπται.

438 The occurrences discussed hitherto have been examples of logical strengthening.
439 Hellholm’s identification of two main types of argumentation (1994: 119-20 n.7) is along these lines (see 3.2.1 n.270 above).
2:25a: περιτομὴ μὲν γὰρ ὁφελεῖ ἐὰν νόμον πράσσεις.

2:25b: ἐὰν δὲ παραβάτης νόμον ἦς, ἢ περιτομὴ σου ἀκραβυστία γέγονεν.

The occurrence of γὰρ in 2:25 is problematic because a supporting relationship with what immediately precedes in v.24 is, at first sight, not obvious. The apparent difficulty of this occurrence is illustrated by BDAG’s categorisation of it under the subheading, “the thought to be supported is not expressed, but must be supplied from the context”. Consequently, scholars disagree as to whether the statement introduced by γὰρ in v.25 represents the beginning of a fresh line of thought (see below). A majority of translations insert a paragraph break before v.25.

4.2.1 Co-text

In 2:17 the diatribal style of 2:1-5 resumes with a fresh speech directed towards an imaginary interlocutor. As in 2:1, the identity of the interlocutor here is fiercely contested. Some understand the same addressee to be in view as in 2:1, their identity now explicit: σὺ Ἰουδαῖος ἐπονομάζῃ. Others argue that in 2:17 Paul makes a shift from the more general address of 2:1 to engage a hypothetical Jew, or a representative of a certain expression of Judaism. Without entering into the details of this debate, it is evident that in vv.17-24 Paul criticises a certain kind of presumptuous and hypocritical attitude, which gains a sense of superiority and moral security from the Jewish law, while failing to put the law into practice. In vv.21-22 a series of four rhetorical questions expose the fundamental hypocrisy of this stance, summarised in the hard-hitting accusation of v.23: “You who boast in the law, you dishonour God by transgressing the law.” In v.24, γὰρ introduces a slightly altered version of Isaiah 52:5

440 Dunn (1988a: 108) takes the addressee to represent a “typical” Jew. See also Cranfield 1975: 138. Watson (2007: 198-203) argues that in 2:1 and 2:17 Paul is criticising the leaders, or teachers, of the Jewish community. For Campbell (2009: 559-60), the figure in 2:17 and 2:1 is “representative of an elite group of literate Jewish males… learned in the law and…Jewish traditions, into which [Paul’s opponent] falls”. In contrast, Thorsteinsson (2003); Thiessen (2016); Novenson (2016) etc. identify the interlocutor of 2:1 and 2:17 as a judaising Gentile. See 3.5.3 n.311 above.


442 See Jewett 2007: 221, and Stowers 1994b: 150-53, 159, who argues that 2:17-29 is a type of prosōpopoia presenting a characterization of “the pretentious teacher”. The addressee is an imaginary Jewish moral teacher, who aims to “transform the gentiles by getting them to do works from the law”.

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(LXX), which contains a probable echo of Ezekiel 36:20ff. The strengthening triggered by this occurrence of γύροδ is relevant as an authoritative proof which buttresses the statement in v.23.

Although 2:25-29 is viewed by some as the beginning of a fresh subsection, most scholars see at least a general connection between these verses and what precedes in 2:17-24. Dunn finds in vv.25-29 a new subsection which abruptly introduces the subject of circumcision, while also paralleling the thought of vv.12-16. In his view, the verses represent the climax of the indictment of Jewish presumption begun in 2:1. Cranfield interprets γύροδ as indicating a connection between the whole of vv.25-29 and “what precedes”. Vv.25-29 confirm and clarify what Paul has previously asserted by answering “an obvious objection from the Jewish side” regarding circumcision as one of the chief grounds of Jewish confidence. Similarly, Barrett argues that in v.25 Paul invokes a particular commandment, circumcision, in response to a Jewish objector. This reading overlaps with BDAG’s analysis that the thought to be supported by the γύροδ clause in v.25 is not expressed. It assumes that certain other background assumptions must also be highly accessible to addressees, in particular, the claim that circumcision is the sign of God’s covenant with the Jewish people, Israel’s special status among the nations, and a reason for Jewish confidence. It also presupposes that circumcision is the example par excellence of Jewish law-keeping, which brings honour to God.

Assuming that such background assumptions will be uppermost in the minds of his audience, on this interpretation Paul passes seamlessly from questions of boasting in,

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444 Cranfield 1975: 171.
446 Dunn 1988a: 125.
448 Cranfield (1975: 171) does not specify which element of the preceding material.
449 Cranfield 1975: 171.
450 Barrett 1971: 57.
451 See Wolter 2014: 200 and Watson 2004: 231, commenting on Jubilees 15:25-28: “Circumcision is the indispensable sign that one is a member of Israel, the holy people, and that one therefore belongs to the Lord.”
452 Cranfield 1975: 171.
453 See Dunn 1988a: 120; Barclay 1998: 544. Cf., however, Wolter 2014: 200, who argues that no Jew would have claimed that circumcision alone was enough to stay in the covenant without law-keeping.
and keeping the Jewish law (vv.17-24), to the question of circumcision (vv.25-29), without explaining further the relevance of circumcision in this context.454

Others view 2:17-29 as a more closely knit pericope.455 Barclay, for instance, reads 2:17-29 as an address to “the Jew” which deals with the question of how Jewish identity is “received and recognized” in God’s sight.456 Wright interprets vv.25-29 as the second paragraph of the subsection 2:17-29, which as a whole outlines the fact that ethnic Israel, resting on its special vocation as God’s people, has not lived up to this vocation. Within this, vv.25-29 present a “stronger and more detailed form” of the argument in vv.13-15 regarding the Torah.457 V.25 can be viewed as an “initial statement” from which the rest of the paragraph “emerges”.458 Stowers, meanwhile, finds a symmetry between the role of 2:25-29 in relation to 2:17-24, and 2:6-16 in relation to 2:1-5. In both cases, “a characterization of the interlocutor through censorious apostrophe (2:1-5, 2:17-24)” is followed by an explanation about “how doers of the law, whether Jew or gentile, will be justified by God” (2:6-16, 25-29).459

4.2.2 Analysis of γὰρ

We can propose the following procedural account of γὰρ in v.25. Procedure G is triggered. Given that the material in v.25a-b is held together as a balanced antithetical whole by the connectives μέν...δέ,460 addressees’ comprehension processes infer that v.25a and v.25b are to be processed together as a strengthening complex of assumptions, within which the material in v.25a represents an accepted presupposition461 and functions as a concessive clause, while the main strengthening statement lies in v.25b.

Following a relevance-guided heuristic, addressees’ comprehension processes search for a strengthening series to construct with the immediately preceding statement in v.24 but

456 Barclay 2015: 469.
458 Wright 2002: 448.
461 Dunn 1988a: 121.
find that this is not possible without unreasonable processing effort. Since the material in v.24 functions as a scriptural proof, we can suggest that this statement is already optimally relevant and does not need further strengthening. The repetition in v.25 of the vocabulary of law-breaking (παραβαίνων νόμου) from v.23, meanwhile, makes the claim in v.23 particularly highly accessible for strengthening by v.25. Moreover, despite the scriptural support provided in v.24, this claim may still raise objections, as various scholars suggest, and may thus not yet be optimally relevant.\textsuperscript{462} The claim in v.23 is accordingly identified as most likely candidate for strengthening, and a strengthening series is constructed, involving contextual assumptions, along the following lines:

\textbf{P} (v.23): You, the one who boasts in the [Jewish] law, dishonour God by transgressing the law.

\textit{Implicit objections raised by P}: How do those who boast in the Jewish law (i.e. circumcised Jews) dishonour God? Does circumcision not count?

\textbf{Q introduced by γάρ} (v.25): Circumcision is of value if you [who boast in the Jewish law] put the law into practice. But if you are a transgressor of the law, your circumcision has become uncircumcision.

\textbf{IA1}: The interlocutor who boasts in the law is a Jew. (Inferable from v.17.\textsuperscript{463})

\textbf{IA2}: If the interlocutor who boasts in the law is a Jew, then the interlocutor who boasts in the law is circumcised.

\textbf{IA3}: Circumcision is of value because it is the outward sign that a person is a member of God’s holy covenant people. (Inferable from encyclopaedic knowledge of Jewish teaching.\textsuperscript{464})

\textbf{IA4}: If, because of transgression of the law, the interlocutor’s circumcision has become uncircumcision, then the outward sign that the interlocutor is a member of God’s holy people has become a contradiction and a sign of hypocrisy. (Inferable from previous context of vv.17-22, knowledge of Jewish teaching, the concepts of

\textsuperscript{462} E.g. “How can you claim that Jews dishonour God by boasting in the law yet transgressing the law, since Jews are circumcised? Does circumcision count for nothing?”

\textsuperscript{463} Following the majority interpretation of 2:17.

\textsuperscript{464} See Wolter 2014: 200; Barclay 1998: 545; Dunn 1988a: 119-120.
circumcision/uncircumcision etc.. Previously communicated assumptions from 2:12-13 may also be reactivated here.)

IA5: If, because of transgression of the law, the outward sign that the interlocutor is a member of God’s holy people has become a sign of hypocrisy, then God is dishonoured by the interlocutor. (Inferable from knowledge of Jewish teaching, concept of hypocrisy etc..)

(IA6: If God is dishonoured by the interlocutor who carries the outward sign of a member of God’s holy people but who transgresses the law, then the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles/nations.)

IA7: If, because of transgression of the law, God is dishonoured by the interlocutor who carries the outward sign of a member of God’s holy people, then the interlocutor who boasts in the law dishonours God by transgressing the law.

C (confirming v.23): You, the one who boasts in the [Jewish] law, dishonour God by transgressing the law.

As a result of this strengthening series, the claim in v.23 is independently confirmed. The accessing of highly accessible contextual assumptions helps to ground this claim in knowledge already accepted by addressees, making it more compelling, and overturning potential objections raised by it. Consequently, addressees are persuaded to adhere to it more strongly and its relevance is increased. Thus the antithetical statement in v.25 serves to back up the point made in v.23.

The proposed strengthening series is here relatively complex. It represents a hypothesis based on our inferences regarding the probable cognitive environment of Paul’s audience. It posits strengthening in response to implicit objections which themselves assume other contextual knowledge (for example, a close link between boasting in the law, law-keeping, circumcision and honouring God). Different addressees may find this strengthening procedure relevant either as a confirming and justifying rationale, or as a further explanation of the way in which the one who boasts in the law dishonours

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465 This confirms the statement in v.24, even though this citation is already optimally relevant.

466 See Dunn 1988a: 125-26, who assumes a close association in Jewish thought between the law, law-keeping, circumcision, and Jewish confidence in God’s favour and salvation.
God. Addressees will choose to construct different inferential series according to the contextual information most easily accessible to them, and to what produces most strengthening effects for least effort. For those who have serious objections to the statement of v.23, the effort invested in constructing a full logical series such as the one above will be necessary and worthwhile. For those who are already convinced of Paul’s viewpoint, on the other hand, expectations of relevance will be satisfied by the general impression of strengthening created by the presence of γάρ as a strengthening signal. Consequently, they will not invest processing effort in constructing a full logical series.

Despite the relative complexity of the strengthening series proposed, a procedural account is nevertheless able to account for this occurrence as a procedural indicator guiding towards strengthening. As a result of its guidance, addressees are encouraged to find the relevance of the material in v.25 in relation to preceding material, rather than as a fresh argumentative point relevant in its own right, or as a statement which primarily looks forward to and serves as a foundation for the statement in v.26. This procedural explanation of γάρ in v.25 supports interpretations such as Stowers’, which view vv.25-29 as part of a single subsection with vv.17-24. Moreover, it provides a cognitively grounded explanation for Cranfield’s view that the material in v.25 answers an implicit objection raised by the preceding material. Because of the contextual assumptions activated by v.23 in the form of these objections, the subject of circumcision is not introduced as abruptly as Dunn claims. The reactivation as part of the inferential series of previously communicated assumptions from vv.12-13 also accounts for the observation that the thought of vv.25-27 parallels that of vv.12-14. In sum, reading γάρ in this way encourages interpreters to look backwards in order to understand the relevance of v.25, rather than reading it as the beginning of a fresh line of thought. This highlights the coherence of the argument of the wider subsection.

At the same time, this analysis of γάρ is compatible with the view that the material in v.25 also serves as a platform for the subsequent discussion of circumcision and

467 E.g. Torah-observant Christ-believers (see Stowers 1994b:158).
468 See Jewett 2007: 221; Wright 2002: 448.
Jewish identity in vv.26-29. Though γάρ itself guides only towards a strengthening procedure, the information it introduces as strengthening premises may subsequently be processed as a foundation upon which vv.26-29 build further. This relationship with the following claims is inferred by addressees from the subsequent co-text but is not signalled by a procedural indicator. In this way, the information in v.25 serves a dual purpose in the argument, looking both backwards and forwards, even though γάρ only indicates the former function.

4.3 Logical strengthening example 2: Romans 5:6-7

5:5: ἡ δὲ ἐλπίς οὐ κατασχόνει, ὅτι ἡ ἁγάπη τοῦ θεοῦ ἐκκέχυται ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις ἡμῶν διὰ πνεύματος ἁγίου τοῦ δοθέντος ἡμῖν.

5:6: ἐτι γάρ Χριστὸς θντων ἡμῶν ἀθηνῶν ἔτι κατὰ καρόν ὑπὲρ ἁσβεῶν ἀπέθανεν.

5:7a: μόλις γάρ ὑπὲρ δικαίου τις ἀποθάνεται.

5:7b: ὑπὲρ γάρ τοῦ ἁγαθοῦ τάχα τις καὶ τολμᾶ ἀποθάνειν.

5:8: συνίστησιν δὲ τὴν έαντον ἁγάπην εἰς ἡμᾶς ὁ θεὸς, ὅτι ἐπὶ ἁμαρτωλῶν θντων ἡμῶν Χριστὸς ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν ἀπέθανεν.

Romans 5:6-7 contains three problematic instances of γάρ, the interpretation of which is bound up with various exegetical difficulties. Scholars disagree regarding the relationship of v.6 with what precedes, since it is difficult to identify an obvious supporting, causal or explanatory relationship with v.5. Meanwhile the interpretation of both occurrences in v.7 is affected by the opacity of the logic of the two statements in this verse. The relationship between v.7a and v.6 is disputed, while the occurrence in v.7b introduces a statement which is taken by some as a correction, albeit awkward and ambiguous, of the claim in v.7a, and by others as a parenthesis. Some have attempted to resolve the difficulties by proposing that vv.6-7 represent a post-Pauline

469 Barclay 2015: 469.
470 See Keck 1979 for a detailed discussion of the exegetical problems.
471 Wolter (1979: 167) views v.7 as an anacoluthon interrupting the line of thought.
interpolation. Given the fact that the verses are also often considered to be of crucial doctrinal significance, these occurrences of γὰρ are prime examples of the problematic category.

4.3.1 Co-text

Romans 5:1-11 may be analysed either as belonging with the first major section of the letter (chapters 1-4), or as opening the second major section of the letter, running to the end of chapter 8. The themes, vocabulary and style of chapters 5-8 are noticeably different from chapters 1-4, and chapters 5-8 are punctuated by the refrain τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ which occurs some six times, at opening and concluding points in the argument. At the same time, the use in 5:1-11 of the vocabulary of justification, faith and boasting, all of which play a key role in the first major section of the letter, leads many to recognise the transitional quality of these verses.

Romans 5:1-5 states the consequences of justification ἐκ πίστεως for believers in Christ: peace with God, grace and the hope of the glory of God. In contrast to 2:17, 23 and 3:27, the notion of boasting in vv.2-3 now has a positive sense. Vv.3-4 consist of a chain sequence of key terms which builds to a small climax in v.5a, the salience of which is increased by the repetition of the term ἐλπίς. This leads various interpreters to identify “Christian hope” as the theme of 5:1-11. This climax rounds off the statement of the present implications of justification and makes use of the vocabulary of shame (ὁ καταταιχύνω), the reverse side of boasting and honour, in order to underline the theme of boasting in the hope of the glory of God. V.5b is introduced by the marker ὅτι, which most scholars read as “because”, but can also be translated “in that”. Thus the fact that God’s Spirit has poured out the love of God in believers’ hearts

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479 See Barclay 2015: 494 n.1; Gathercole 2002: 252-55.
is viewed as the “proof” or ground for the confident claim that hope does not put them to shame. This is the first mention of ἡ ἀγάπη in the epistle, a key concept in the climactic conclusion of chapters 5-8, 8:31-39, and in chapter 13. The ambiguous genitive construction ἡ ἀγάπη τοῦ θεοῦ has historically occasioned much debate. A majority of modern commentators opt for the subjective reading, “God’s love (for believers)”, rather than the objective, “(believers’) love for God”. Opinions differ as to whether to take 5:1-11 as a single pericope, or to treat 5:6-11 as a separate subsection. Most are agreed, however, that 5:6-8 belong closely together. V.8b can be viewed as a restatement of the claim of v.6. Wolter sees v.8a as picking up the thought of v.5b-c, and v.8b taking up v.6. For Wright, v.6 states a basic premise, v.7 comments on this, and v.8 draws the conclusion. Jewett finds in vv.6-8 a “chiastic argument” which uses “traditional creedal formulations interspersed with rhetorical comments”. The fourfold repetition of ἀποθανεῖν in vv.6-8 emphasises the cohesiveness of the thought, as well as the focus on Christ’s death. The chain of three consecutive γάρ clauses in vv.6-7 also contributes to the impression of a close knit complex of thought. I will thus discuss these three occurrences in conjunction with each other.

Many commentators interpret vv.6-8 as explaining, or providing grounds for, what precedes, but disagree as to whether the verses primarily explain further the hope referred to in v.5a, or the love of God in v.5b. Wright reads γάρ in v.6 as indicating that the whole of vv.6-11 explains the previous summary of the argument in vv.1-5, grounding the hope referred to in vv.2-5 in something that has happened. Likewise,
Dunn interprets vv.6-8 as providing “further justification for the hope of vv.3-5”.\textsuperscript{493} Gathercole, meanwhile, regards eschatological hope as the subject of vv.5-10, within which vv.6-8 explain the love of God in the past, which guarantees the future hope. In his view, γάρ in v.6 indicates that these verses explain v.5.\textsuperscript{494} In a similar vein, Wolter argues that while v.5b provides grounds for the thesis about confident hope in v.5a, the aim of the argumentation in vv.6-8 is to “fill in the content” of ἡ ἀγάπη τοῦ θεοῦ (v.5b), in which the hope is grounded.\textsuperscript{495} Others place the emphasis still more firmly on the love of God as the element explained by vv.6-8. For Barrett, the material following γάρ in v.6 represents a proof for the love of God,\textsuperscript{496} while for Cranfield vv.6-8 “describe the nature of the divine love” referred to in v.5.\textsuperscript{497} Käsemann, for his part, understands v.5b to raise the question, “How can one become certain of God’s love through the Spirit?”, to which vv.6-8 then provide an answer by referring to Jesus’ death.\textsuperscript{498}

4.3.2 Analysis of γάρ

The syntax of v.6, and the repetition of ἐτι, is awkward, and a range of textual variants exists, among them some which omit γάρ, such as εἰ γε...ἐτι.\textsuperscript{499} There is a consensus that the difficult combination ἐτι γάρ...ἐτι, which is supported by the best external evidence, is original.\textsuperscript{500} The occurrence of γάρ in v.6 can be explained procedurally in the following way. The connective triggers procedure G, and the material in v.6 is taken as a strengthening premise which should achieve relevance in relation to a preceding assumption. Following a relevance-guided heuristic, the immediately preceding complex of assumptions communicated in v.5 is identified as the most obvious candidate for strengthening. The claims in v.5 may raise implicit questions for some addressees, for instance, “How does God’s love poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit provide grounds for confidence that hope (in the glory of God) will not disappoint us?” Addressees’ comprehension processes search for highly accessible contextual assumptions to combine in an inferential series which will address these questions. I

\textsuperscript{493} Dunn 1988a: 254.  
\textsuperscript{494} Wright 2002: 258.  
\textsuperscript{495} Wolter 1979: 167, 170.  
\textsuperscript{496} Barrett 1971: 105.  
\textsuperscript{497} Cranfield 1975: 263. See also Wilckens 1978: 288.  
\textsuperscript{498} Käsemann 1973: 127.  
\textsuperscript{499} Attested by Vaticanus.  
\textsuperscript{500} See Jewett 2007: 345; Metzger 1994: 453; Wilckens 1978: 294 etc.
propose that a strengthening inferential series involving the following assumptions, or something similar, may be constructed:

**Complex P for strengthening** (v.5): This hope does not put us [Paul and his addressees, believers in Christ] to shame because the love of God has been poured into our hearts by means of the Holy Spirit given to us.

**Q introduced by γάρ** (v.6): While we [believers] were still weak/helpless, Christ at that time died for the ungodly.

**IA1:** We [believers] are the ungodly Christ died for. (Inferred from v.6a and v.6b.)

**IA2:** The weak/helpless and ungodly are without merit and honour. (Inferable from encyclopaedic knowledge of Greco-Roman cultural norms.)

**IA3:** If the weak/helpless and ungodly are without merit and honour, then Paul’s addressees, believers, the weak/helpless and ungodly, did nothing to merit Christ’s help (death) on their behalf.

**IA4:** If Paul’s addressees did nothing to merit Christ’s death on their behalf, Christ’s death on their behalf was an unexpected and incongruous act of mercy in their favour. (Inferable from common sense and knowledge of concept of mercy.)

This series of inferences is logically incomplete, however. It fails to lead to a conclusion which strengthens the claims in v.5. Given the information in v.6, it does not seem possible to establish a complete inferential series without unreasonable processing effort: the connection between Christ’s death for the ungodly and God’s love is not yet highly accessible and easily inferable in the co-text. As a result, the statement in v.6, which γάρ indicates is relevant in relation to preceding claims, has not yet achieved optimal relevance. It may raise implicit questions, such as, “What does Christ’s death for the ungodly have to do with the love of God poured out in our hearts as grounds for

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501 See Jewett 2007: 358 on the theological problems associated with the use of ἀσθενής and κατὰ καιρόν here.
503 To use Barclay’s terminology (e.g. 2015: 490).
504 See Wolter 1979: 171.
505 See 7:15a; 14:7 for similar examples where a subsequent γάρ clause is needed in order to complete the strengthening and achieve relevance.
confident hope?" I suggest that this raises expectations that what follows in v.7 will complete the strengthening which γάρ in v.6 has led addressees to expect.

Moving on to γάρ in v.7a, I suggest that the connective reinforces the expectations of strengthening material which will give rise to adequate cognitive effects from v.6 and, in its turn, v.5, so that both become optimally relevant. Procedure G, triggered by γάρ in v.7, identifies the statement in v.6 as candidate for strengthening. Addressees’ comprehension processes attempt to read the statement following γάρ in v.7a as a strengthening premise, and to combine it with background assumptions in a logical series. But again, the establishment of a complete inferential series is problematic. I propose that something like the following contextual assumptions may be accessed:

**P** (v.6): While we [Paul’s addressees, believers] were still helpless/weak, at that time Christ died for the ungodly [Paul’s addressees, believers].

**Q introduced by γάρ** (v.7a): Someone will scarcely die for a righteous person.

**IA1**: A righteous person has merit and honour, but the antithesis, an ungodly person, has no merit or honour. (Accessible from 2:7 and 2:10 and inferable from knowledge of Jewish teaching and of Greco-Roman cultural norms.)

**IA2**: If someone will scarcely die even for a righteous person, then it is unheard of/shocking/incongruous that someone will die for an ungodly person. (Inferable from common sense and knowledge of Jewish teaching and Greco-Roman norms.)

Although it is possible to draw certain inferences in the direction of a strengthening relation between v.6 and v.7a, a logical gap remains and a complete inferential series cannot be established without unreasonable processing effort. As a result, v.7a, v.6 and v.5 are all not yet optimally relevant for addressees. Moreover, the claim in v.7a itself

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506 See Cranfield 1975: 256; Jewett 2007: 344 etc. The term μόλις can also be read as “rarely” (Dunn 1988a: 245) or “hardly” (Stuhlmacher 1994: 78).

507 Gathercole (2015: 105) argues that in Greco-Roman culture it would be “unthinkable to lay down one’s life for the impious”, who “endanger the gods’ approval of the nation”.

508 Dunn 1988a: 255.

509 Wolter (1979: 172) sees the LXX version of Prov.11:31 providing a background to Paul’s thought here: εἰ ὁ μὲν δίκαιος μόλις σῶζεται, ὁ ἀσεβής καὶ ἄμαρτωλός ποῦ φανεῖται;
potentially raises further questions, for example, “Is it true that someone will scarcely die for a righteous person?” or “Is it not well known that someone may sometimes die for a righteous person?” As a result, the statement in v.7a may not initially be accepted as valid. In short, the clause introduced by γάρ in v.7a does not yet satisfy expectations of relevance as strengthening material. Consequently, I suggest that there is a heightened expectation that further strengthening material in the form of an explanation will follow.

The example of γάρ which introduces v.7b seems to confirm this expectation. Procedure G is triggered v.7b is processed as a strengthening premise, identifying the immediately preceding claim in v.7a as the candidate for strengthening. It searches for accessible contextual assumptions in order to construct a strengthening series. I suggest that something akin to the following assumptions may be involved:

P (v.7a): Someone will scarcely die for a righteous person.

Implicit question raised by P: Is it true that someone will scarcely die for a righteous person?

Q introduced by γάρ (v.7b): Someone may possibly indeed dare to die for a good person.

IA1: “Good person” and “righteous person” are roughly synonymous. (Inferable from encyclopaedic knowledge and from the co-text of v.6.)

510 Wolter (1979: 171-72) notes that the Hellenistic idea of dying for a beloved friend, family member, or native country, may provide a background to v.7b. If so, it may raise implicit questions about the claim in v.7a. Gathercole (2015: 90-103) discusses examples of vicarious deaths in the classical tradition, which provide a background here.

511 In the co-text, both are in basic antithesis with ἀσέβης in v.6. Wolter (1979: 174) asserts that in contemporary literature there is no evidence of the “good” person being valued more highly than the “just” person; instead, the two terms complete each other. See also Jewett 2007: 360; Gathercole 2015: 89. Jewett, however, notes that “many efforts have been made to distinguish between Ἰςκεκου and τὸ ἀγαθοῦ so as to rescue some semblance of logical development”. Some read τὸ ἀγαθοῦ as referring to the category of the truly good person (Barrett 1971: 106) or to a person’s “benefactor” (Cranfield 1975: 264). Wolter himself interprets τὸ ἀγαθοῦ as a neuter noun, meaning “the (public) good”, to salvage the logic of v.7b (1979: 175). But a procedural reading of γάρ allows us to read both Ἰςκεκου and τὸ ἀγαθοῦ as masculine without interpreting them in contrast with each other.
IA2: If someone may possibly dare to die for a good person, then with daring and courage a person will sometimes die for a good person.\(^{512}\)

IA3: If with daring and courage someone will indeed sometimes die for a good person, then it is possible, even if difficult and exceptional, to die for a good/righteous person.

IA4: If it is possible, even if difficult and exceptional, to die for a righteous person, then someone will indeed on rare occasions die for a righteous person.

C: (confirming a modified understanding of v.7a which communicates that dying for a righteous person is possible but exceptional\(^{513}\): Someone will on rare occasions die for a righteous person.

As a result of this inferential series, the statement in v.7a is strengthened. The strengthening procedure draws in extra contextual assumptions which answer implicit objections by making connections with addressees’ existing background knowledge, helping to convince addressees of the validity of v.7a. In this particular case, we might say that the strengthening procedure is relevant as an adjustment to addressees’ previous understanding of v.7a.\(^{514}\) It increases the comprehensibility of v.7b in the co-text by underlining the fact that the death of someone for a righteous person is both exceptional and possible. This strengthening account is able to accommodate commentators’ readings of v.7b as a correction or clarification of v.7a, or indeed as parenthetical. In all these cases, the material introduced by χριστὸν in v.7b achieves relevance in relation to v.7a, which it strengthens.

Although the inferential series triggered by χριστὸν in v.7b leads to the strengthening of v.7a, this does not in turn clarify the strengthening relationship between v.7a and v.6, nor between v.6 and v.5. For the moment, the coherence of these verses remains opaque, and expectations raised by χριστὸν in v.6 and v.7a that the preceding claims will be

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\(^{512}\) Wolter (2014: 331; 1979: 172) argues that in Hellenistic culture there is a widespread association between the concepts τολμᾶν and ἀποθνῄσκειν ὑπὲρ. Together they highlight the idea of dying for another person, one’s country, or for an ideal, as very exceptional, and proof of great courage.

\(^{513}\) This reading fits with Keck’s explanation (1979: 243) that v.7b paraphrases the point of v.7a, expressing “in a more positive way the point of μοίλαις in v.7a. The couplet acknowledges that voluntary death for the sake of someone/something worthy is possible, though rare”. This makes good sense of the sequence of v.7a and v.7b without requiring us to follow Keck’s view of vv.6-7 as an interpolation.

\(^{514}\) See Wolter 2014: 330: “Mit v.7b will Paul den in v.7a ausgesprochenen Gedanken nicht korrigieren, sondern…zuspitzen”. 
strengthened are not yet satisfied. Moving on to v.8, however, the connective δέ, in conjunction with the content of v.8, guides addressees to infer that v.8 as a whole is to be processed as the second half of the antithetical pair of statements begun in v.7a: “Someone will scarcely and very exceptionally die for a righteous person (v.7a), but (God demonstrates his own love towards us in that) Christ died for while we were still sinners.” Thus v.8b completes the antithesis begun in v.7a, while v.8a makes explicit the implication to be drawn from Christ’s death in terms of God’s love. This goes some way to answering the implicit question raised by v.6: “What does Christ’s death for us the ungodly have to do with the love of God poured out in our hearts as grounds for confident hope?” I suggest that v.8 triggers the following inferences in relation to v.6:

**P for strengthening (v.6):** While we [believers] were still weak/helpless, Christ at that time died for the ungodly.

**Q introduced by γάρ (vv.7-8, disambiguated):** Someone will scarcely and very exceptionally die for a righteous person, but God demonstrates his love for us [Paul’s addressees, believers] in that Christ died for us while we were still sinners.

**IA:** If someone will scarcely and very exceptionally die for a righteous person, but God demonstrates his love for [us] believers in that Christ died for believers while believers were still sinners, then Christ’s death for believers, at the time we were weak/helpless as ungodly sinners, demonstrates God’s exceptionally great love for us.

**C:** (strengthening v.6 by increasing its cognitive effects): Christ’s death for ungodly believers, at the time we were weak/helpless, demonstrates God’s exceptionally great love for us.

This new inference drawn from v.6 is then taken as input into a strengthening series which results in the strengthening of v.5:

**Complex P for strengthening (v.5):** This hope does not put us [Paul’s addressees, believers] to shame, in that the love of God has been poured into our hearts by means of the Holy Spirit given to us.
**Implicit question raised by v.5**: How does God’s love poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit provide grounds for confidence that this hope (in the glory of God) will not disappoint [us] believers?

**Q** (inferred from strengthened version of v.6): Christ’s death for [us] believers, the ungodly, at the time we were weak/helpless demonstrates God’s exceptional love for us.

**IA**: If Christ’s death for ungodly believers at the time we were weak/helpless demonstrates the exceptionally great nature of God’s love for us, then the fact that this exceptionally great love of God has been poured out into the hearts of [us] believers by means of the eschatological Holy Spirit is grounds for confident boasting in the eschatological hope of the glory of God, which will not put believers to shame.\(^5\)

**C** (strengthening v.5): This [eschatological] hope will not put us [believers] to shame, because the [exceptionally great] love of God [for us believers who were weak/helpless and ungodly] has been poured out in our hearts by means of the [eschatological] Holy Spirit given to us.

As a result of the strengthening of v.6 which is made possible by the completion in v.8 of the thought begun in v.7, the claims of v.5 are also strengthened, answering the implicit questions raised by them. Consequently, v.5 is likewise held more strongly as valid by addressees and achieves optimal relevance. The overall effect of the series of strengthening γάρ clauses in vv.6-8 is to increase the argumentative salience of the claims in v.5, to which it leads back. This fits with the analysis of various scholars that the theme of the whole of vv.5-10, and indeed of vv.1-11, is eschatological hope. The outcome of this backwards strengthening series accommodates both the view that vv.6-8 further explain God’s love, and the view that vv.6-8 further explain the eschatological hope referred to in v.5a. Because it is the love of God poured out in the heart of believers by the Spirit which provides grounds for the confident hope, the further explanation of the love of God in vv.6-8 ultimately leads to an increased understanding of the hope. We see here how the strengthening procedure triggered by a chain of γάρ

\(^5\) Cf. Wolter’s (1979: 159-176) explanation of the relationship between God’s love shown in Christ’s death, God’s love poured out by the Spirit in believers’ hearts, and eschatological hope.
clauses contributes to the coherence of the subsection, making the theme of hope highly salient as a lynchpin for the whole of 5:1-11 (cf. 5:2, 4, 9, 10 etc.).

I suggest that because of the core strengthening guidance that γάρ gives, the chain of occurrences in vv.6-7 creates an impression of strengthening or supporting material which backs up what precedes in v.5. For addressees for whom Paul’s claims do not raise substantial questions or objections, expectations of relevance may be satisfied by this impression of support, without the extra effort of constructing several inferential strengthening series in order to find logical confirmation for the claims in vv.5-7. This impression of strengthening is sufficient to increase their adherence to the claims communicated. Thus, for some addressees, expectations of relevance may be achieved here by rhetorical strengthening. (See 4.5, 4.6 and 4.7 below for clearer examples of rhetorical strengthening.) For those, on the other hand, who may find Paul’s claims perplexing or controversial, the instances of γάρ in these verses will trigger the search for complete logical strengthening series. This requires more processing effort, but results in the full set of strengthening inferences being relevant as a rational confirmation or explanation.

In sum, all three occurrences of γάρ in 5:6-7 can be explained in terms of the core function of guidance towards backwards strengthening. These occurrences are atypical and, according to our classification, problematic. The examples in v.6 and v.7a do not achieve strengthening on their own but need to be completed by v.7a and v.8. The occurrence in v.7b, meanwhile, is unusual in that it introduces material which has the effect of clarifying addressees’ understanding by adjusting the focus of the claim in v.7a. Moreover, this adjustment is inserted in the middle of the strengthening antithetical pair of statements in v.7a and v.8b, delaying the completion of the strengthening begun in v.7a. Nevertheless, all three examples can be accounted for by a procedural explanation.

We should note that the material that γάρ introduces in these verses represents information which is already familiar to Paul’s audience, both from commonplaces or accepted truths and from the preceding co-text of the epistle. Various previously communicated assumptions are reactivated by v.6, and by the search for a strengthening relationship between v.6 and v.5 and the preceding co-text. For instance, the concept
ἀσεβῶν in v.6 recalls the argument of 4:5, with its reference to the one who justifies the ungodly. In conjunction with this, the vocabulary of hope and of glory reactivate assumptions also communicated in chapter 4 regarding Abraham, who hoped against hope (4:18) and trusted in God, giving glory to him (4:20). V.6 also reactivates the assumption that Christ was handed over to death for the transgressions of believers (who are ungodly like Abraham: 4:25). Meanwhile the concept in v.8 of Christ’s death for sinners reactivates the thought of 3:21-26. Thus information introduced by γάρ consolidates the coherence of the wider context by the (re)activation of highly accessible contextual assumptions, which has the effect of reminding addressees of, and reinforcing, previous points made. I suggest that the backwards strengthening procedure triggered by γάρ and the search for relevant contextual assumptions contributes further to this reactivation.

4.4 Logical strengthening example 3: Romans 9:11

9:10: οὐ μόνον δὲ, ἄλλα καὶ Ρεβέκκα ἐξ ἑνὸς κοίτην ἔχουσα, Ἰσαὰκ τὸν πατρὸς ἡμῶν·

9:11a: μήπω γάρ γεννηθέντων μηδὲ πραξάντων τι ἁγαθὸν ἢ φαύλον,

9:11b: ἵνα ἢ κατ’ ἐκλογὴν πρόθεσις τοῦ θεοῦ μένῃ,

9:12a: οὐκ ἐξ ἔργων ἄλλα ἐκ τοῦ καλοῦντος,

9:12b: ἐρρέθη αὕτη ὅτι ὁ μείζων δουλεύσει τῷ ἐλάσσονι,


The occurrence of γάρ in 9:11 is problematic because of the syntactical complexities of the thought in 9:10-12. Commentators are divided as to the main verb of these verses. The unusual order in which the information is presented in this sentence also complicates matters, with a purpose clause intervening in v.11b before the completion of the summary of the narrative events (which begins in v.10 but finishes only in v.12). As a result, it is not easy to trace an obvious supporting relationship between the material introduced by γάρ and what precedes it. Commentators disagree in their analysis of the connection indicated.
4.4.1 Co-text

This example occurs towards the beginning of the sustained argumentation of chapters 9-11, the third major section of the epistle. After a very personal expression of sorrow over ethnic Israel’s current situation in relation to the gospel (9:1-5), in 9:6 Paul begins a fresh line of argument with the statement, “It is not as though the word of God has failed.” This claim, which can be seen as a negative response to the question implicitly raised by chapters 1-8, “Has God been unfaithful to his promises to Israel?”, drives the argument of chapters 9-11.\(^{516}\) In 9:6-29, using scriptural examples and citations, Paul emphasises God’s sovereignty and freedom in election, demonstrating how God’s choice and call is not based on human criteria or worth.\(^{517}\) The material in 9:6-29 is a complex interweaving of narrative sequence,\(^{518}\) midrashic exposition\(^{519}\) and diatribal elements.\(^{520}\)

In 9:6-13 Paul presents two scriptural examples of election from the point of view of the matriarchs involved: Sarah, mother of Isaac (vv.7-9), and Rebekah, mother of Jacob (vv.10-12). In the first example, God’s promise made regarding Isaac (vv.8-9) is highlighted as the decisive guarantee of election. In v.10, Paul moves on to the second case, which is introduced by οὐ μόνον δὲ, ἀλλὰ καὶ, indicating that a similar point is to be made about Rebekah as Sarah.\(^{521}\) The problematic syntax in this verse leads to various readings. Some argue that the verb is elliptical, and that a verbal phrase or verb must be supplied in v.10, for instance, “[There is] also [the case of] Rebekah”,\(^{522}\) or, drawing an inference from the point made about Sarah in v.9, “Rebekah also [received a promise]”.\(^{523}\) This latter reading helps to highlight the fact that the citation in v.12 represents the promise made to Rebekah regarding Jacob. Others read the passive

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\(^{517}\) See Barclay 2015: 531-36.

\(^{518}\) Wright (2013: 1182-83) argues that Israel’s “story of election” underlies chapters 9-11, and that Paul’s telling of it in 9:6-29 would have been familiar to devout contemporary Jews. In contrast, Watson (2007: 308-9) argues that in 9:6-29 Paul, while preserving the scriptural narrative sequence, engages in scriptural reinterpretation.


\(^{520}\) Jewett 2007: 577.


\(^{522}\) See also Lagrange 1916: 230; Käsemann 1973: 248 etc.

\(^{523}\) Watson 2007: 577.
ἐρρέθη in v.12b as the independent verb upon which the rest of the long sentence in vv.10-12 depends. The idiom ἐξ ἑνὸς κοίτην ἔχουσα can be interpreted as, “as a result of intercourse with one man”, or, alternatively, and more pertinently in the context, “as a result of one act of intercourse”. Either way, the implication is clear: Jacob and Esau had the same father and thus God’s election of Jacob rather than Esau cannot be attributed to different parentage, or different circumstances surrounding their conception (as might be possible in the case of Isaac’s election).

4.4.2 Analysis of γάρ

Various scholars interpret γάρ in v.11 as marking a connection with an unexpressed thought. For Dunn, the connective indicates that “Paul’s thought is fuller than has so far been expressed”, confirming that what follows it in vv.11-12a is a “further but closely related point” which is “brought in as a kind of parenthesis”. Cranfield, too, suggests that γάρ indicates a connexion with an implicit thought, which consists in the recognition that the example of Rebekah demonstrates a fresh characteristic of divine election, namely independence from all human merit. On Cranfield’s reading, it is this unexpressed thought which forms a kind of parenthesis, continued and explained in vv.11-13.

We can explain γάρ in v.11 according to a procedural account as follows. I propose that v.10 is disambiguated by addressees to fill in the ellipsis thus: “Not only this, but Rebekah, who conceived both her sons at one time by one man, our father Isaac, is also another case of God’s election of the children of the promise”. This disambiguated statement is not yet optimally relevant, however, because it raises an implicit question: in what way is the case of Rebekah another example of God’s election of the children of the promise? Consequently, the statement in v.10 is identified as the candidate for strengthening. The material following γάρ in vv.11-12 is processed as a single complex of strengthening assumptions which forms a grammatical unit: the genitive absolute

527 Dunn 1988b: 542, 538. See also Wilckens 1980: 194 and Käsemann 1973: 251, who do not comment on γάρ, regarding vv.11-12a as a parenthesis following on from the anacoluthon in v.10, before the grammatical subject of v.10 is picked up again, in the dative, in v.12b.  
528 Cranfield 1979: 477.
construction in v.11, and the ἵνα clause which modifies it, are all dependent on ἐρρέθη. Addressees’ comprehension processes then search for a strengthening inferential series to construct which increases the relevance of the statement in v.10.

Much of the difficulty with this particular case of γάρ lies in the unusual order of the strengthening information it introduces. We might expect the independent verb ἐρρέθη, and the citation from Genesis 25:23, to follow γάρ immediately in v.11a, since this is the minimum information needed for the establishment of a strengthening series which increases the relevance of v.10. Vv.11b-12a communicate additional background assumptions which are not strictly necessary for the completion of this logical series, but which instead represent further explanation\textsuperscript{529} and theological grounding\textsuperscript{530} for the example of Rebekah. In the inferential series below, I have put these additional assumptions in brackets.

I propose a strengthening inferential series along the following lines:

P (v.10, disambiguated): Rebekah, who conceived both her sons at one time by one man, our father Isaac, is another case of God’s election of the children of promise.

Q introduced by γάρ (vv.11-12b, disambiguated): It was said to Rebekah, “The older will serve the younger”, when the sons were not yet born and had not yet done anything good or bad (so that God’s purposes in election might stand, based not on works but on him who calls).

IA1: “The older will serve the younger” was a promise made by God to Rebekah about her twin sons Esau and Jacob before their birth. (Inferable from encyclopaedic knowledge of Jewish scripture.)

IA2: The promise “The older will serve the younger” is evidence that the younger, Jacob, was chosen before birth by God, not the older, Esau. (Inferable from knowledge of Jewish teaching and from the previous co-text.)
IA3: The promise “The older will serve the younger” is evidence that Jacob, who was chosen by God before his birth, is one of the children of the promise.

IA4: If Jacob, the younger, was chosen by God before birth when the twins had not yet done anything good or bad, then this is evidence that God’s election is based not on human birth or merit, but on God’s purpose, promise and call. (Inferable from the previous co-text, and from vv.11b-12a.)

(Additional implication IA5 inferable from vv.11b-12a: If God’s election is not based on human birth or merit, and his purposes in election are fulfilled in choosing Jacob, then God’s election depends on God’s sovereign will.)

IA6: Since there is evidence that Jacob was chosen by God not because of human birth or merit, but because of God’s promise and call (so that God’s purposes in election might stand, based not on works but on him who calls), then the case of Rebekah and her sons is an example of God’s election of the children of the promise.

C (strengthening v.10): Rebekah who conceived [both her sons] at one time from one man, our father Isaac, is also another case of God’s election of the children of promise.

As a result of this strengthening series, the implicit question raised by v.10 is answered, and the statement in v.10 becomes more comprehensible. The material introduced by γὰρ in vv.11-12 is relevant in relation to v.10, which it helps to explain further, rather than giving rise to fresh cognitive effects in its own right. The information introduced by ἵνα in v.11b-12a represents additional assumptions which make explicit the theological import of the example. These additional assumptions ultimately contribute to the increased argumentative salience of the statement in v.10 by connecting this example with a theological framework, thus bolstering and underlining this second example of God’s election as a main point in Paul’s argument. The sandwiching of these additional assumptions between the statement of v.10 and the main supporting statement in v.12b makes sense of the fact that various scholars interpret vv.11-12a as parenthetical.

A procedural explanation is thus able to account for γὰρ in 9:11, as for other occurrences, in terms of a core function of guidance towards strengthening. Although
elliptical thought and complex syntax make the strengthening relationship with preceding material relatively complex to trace, γάρ nevertheless gives instructions to treat what follows as strengthening premises, which are to be processed in an inferential series involving background assumptions. In this instance, the strengthening procedure is most likely to work itself out as an explanation of the statement in v.10. The material introduced by γάρ includes within it theological statements (vv.11b-12a) which, while weighty, serve as background or supporting information for the strengthened preceding point, namely that the promise made to Rebekah represents a second example of God’s sovereign election of the children of the promise.531

The strengthening material introduced by γάρ in vv.11-12b is followed in v.13 by a further scriptural citation from Malachi 1:2. Although this is not introduced by γάρ, it can be read as introducing additional scriptural proof which further bolsters the strengthening explanation found in vv.11-12, increasing its cognitive effects. The overall effect of v.13, following vv.11-12, is to contribute to the highlighting of the case of Rebekah as a second example of the nature of election, which is based on God’s will and not human criteria.532 The citation shows that the example of Rebekah, like that of Sarah in vv.7-9, has all the authority of scripture behind it. Both examples ultimately serve as supporting evidence for Paul’s statement in v.6b: “Not all who are descended from Israel are Israel”. This statement, introduced by γάρ, in turn confirms and clarifies the main claim of the subsection in v.6a, namely that God’s promises in election are reliable, despite ethnic Israel’s current rejection of the gospel.533 Thus the strengthening effect leads all the way back, via γάρ clauses in vv.6b, 9 and 11, to the statement in v.6a, which is underlined as highly salient in the argument. Once again, the strengthening triggered by γάρ consolidates the coherence of the subsection.

4.5 Rhetorical strengthening example 1: Romans 7:1

532 This challenges Dunn’s (1988b: 544) interpretation of v.13 as the “proof text” which is the “final clincher in the argument”, carrying more argumentative weight than the Genesis citation in v.12b.
533 See Jewett 2007: 580.
7:1b: γινώσκουσιν γάρ νόμον λαλῶ,

7:1c: διδ ο νόμος κυριεύει τοῖς ἀνθρώποις ἐφ᾽ ὅσον χρόνον ἐτή;

Most scholars do not comment on this instance of γάρ, apparently reading it as introducing a parenthetical comment which interrupts the rhetorical question expressed in this verse. The parenthetical nature of the comment is clear from the syntax without γάρ, however, since the remark of v.1b is embedded within the question, which is completed by the ὅτι clause in v.1c. Thus the function of γάρ cannot simply be to introduce a parenthesis. This occurrence is potentially problematic, however, from the point of view of a procedural account of the connective. At first glance, it does not seem possible to identify a strengthening relationship between the statement introduced by γάρ in v.1b and preceding communicated assumptions. Instead, the material introduced by γάρ appears to support what follows, that is, the completion, in 7:1c, of the rhetorical question. Can this occurrence be accommodated within a procedural account?

4.5.1 Co-text

As noted under 3.9.1, 7:1-6 is recognised by a majority of scholars as a continuation of the discussion of chapter 6. The metaphor of lordship, which runs throughout chapter 6, and is picked up in 7:1 (κυριεύω), helps to highlight the continuity between chapters 6 and 7. Some scholars see a close association between the statement in 6:14 that believers are not under law but under grace, and 7:1-6, which develops or elucidates this.534 At the same time, as Dunn argues, a “new phase” in Paul’s argument begins with 7:1, in which the subject of the Jewish law takes centre stage.535

The rhetorical question in 7:1 begins with a direct address to Paul’s audience, Ἡ ἀγνοεῖτε, ἀδελφοί. The formula Ἡ ἀγνοεῖτε is typical of a diatribal style536 and communicates the assumption that Paul’s addressees know what he is about to assert: it

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535 Dunn 1988a: 367. There is disagreement as to whether νόμος in 7:1b-c refers to the Jewish law (Dunn 1988a: 359; Jewett 2007: 430-31; Wilckens 1980: 66), or to a more general law (Wolter 2014: 410; Käsemann 1973: 177), or Roman law (Jülicher 1917: 269). Given the wider co-text, the former seems most likely: the Torah has been hitherto “the exclusive reference of…[νόμος]” (Dunn 1988a: 368).
represents common knowledge for them.\textsuperscript{537} The term of address ἀδελφοί implies a relationship of trust between communicator and addressees. The rhetorical question form underlines that the principle which is articulated in 7:1c is indisputable, namely that the law only has authority over a person as long as that person is alive. It thus communicates an attitude of conviction on the part of the author, lending particular force to what is asserted by the implied answer,\textsuperscript{538} and has a persuasive goal. We can disambiguate the interrogative form in propositional form as follows: “You are certainly not ignorant that (i.e. surely you know very well that) the law has authority over a person only as long as that person is alive.”

4.5.2 Analysis of γάρ

In 7:1b Paul interrupts his rhetorical question with a statement, introduced by γάρ, which makes explicit that he is speaking to people who know the Jewish law. Jewett suggests that γάρ here introduces a “specification of the audience as adept in the law”.\textsuperscript{539} Käsemann, meanwhile, maintains that γάρ here does not so much indicate a rationale, as simply “introduces” what follows in 7:1c.\textsuperscript{540} This observation points to the atypical character of this occurrence, which parallels certain examples of the connective in Classical Greek, sometimes categorised as “anticipatory”\textsuperscript{541}. The fact that the γάρ clause interrupts an incomplete communicated thought, which is then finished in 7:1c, suggests that Paul may be anticipating a possible objection on the part of his addressees and wants to pre-empt this by responding to it before addressees have a chance to formulate it. In this case, γάρ may here provide advance guidance that the premise it introduces contributes to the increased relevance of assumptions which have yet to be communicated in full.

I propose the following procedural account of this occurrence. The connective in v.1b triggers procedure G. Following a relevance-guided heuristic, the incomplete clause in v.1a is identified as the only possible candidate for strengthening. Despite the fact that

\textsuperscript{537} Cranfield 1975: 332.
\textsuperscript{538} As Jewett (2007: 430) notes, “the rhetorical question is intended to elicit the answer, “Of course!””.
\textsuperscript{539} Jewett 2007: 429.
\textsuperscript{540} Käsemann 1973: 177: “Das γάρ begründet nicht so sehr, wie es einleitet”.\textsuperscript{541} Denniston (1934: 68) describes this anticipatory use: “Here the γάρ clause, instead of following the clause which it explains, precedes it, or is inserted parenthetically within it…the early position of the γάρ clause is to be explained… on stylistic and rhetorical grounds”.


the content of the principle which Paul assumes that his audience knows has not yet been articulated, it is possible to construct an inferential series on the basis of the fragmentary linguistic clues given by Ἡ ἀγνοεῖτε in v.1a. I suggest that, because of the grammatically incomplete nature of v.1a, and the fact that it is interrupted, it is inferred that the γάρ clause is relevant in relation to the completed claim towards which v.1a points. I propose that something similar to the following assumptions may be involved:

**P** (v.1a, disambiguated propositional form): You [Paul’s Romans addressees] know the following information very well.

**Q introduced by γάρ** (v.1b): I [Paul] am speaking to those who know the Jewish law.

**IA**: If Paul is speaking to those who know the Jewish law, then Paul’s addressees know the following information very well from their knowledge of the Jewish law.

**C** (confirming v.1a): Paul’s addressees know the following information very well.

As a result of this inferential series, the claim is strengthened that Paul’s addressees know the information (the principle) communicated in v.1c, with the result that potential objections are dealt with. As a consequence, addressees are, I suggest, more disposed to accept this claim about their knowledge as valid even before hearing the content of the information in question. Thus the statement introduced by γάρ in v.1b is relevant in relation to v.1a and 1c combined, strengthening the claim made in v.1a and c together, increasing the cognitive effects that arise from this claim, and underlining its salience. Once the information in v.1c is also communicated, the details of the claim of v.1a and c are accepted firmly by addressees as valid, since the claim is backed up by the appeal in v.1b to their knowledge of the Jewish law. The statement in v.1b, an assumption already accepted by addressees, serves as supporting or background information. In this instance, the strengthening procedure triggered by γάρ is most likely to be relevant as confirming proof which convinces addressees of the validity of a claim. Both the fact that the strengthening premise is embedded in the middle of the claim it strengthens, and the fact that this premise consists of “metatextual”

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542 See glossary.
information about the addressees themselves, lead to the perception that the strengthening information is parenthetical.

The unusual positioning of this γἀρ clause before the completion of the claim which it strengthens can be attributed to rhetorical or persuasive goals, as Denniston suggests.\textsuperscript{543} The statement in v.1b is not essential for comprehension of the rhetorical question and could equally well have been communicated at the end of 7:1c. The insertion of this γἀρ clause in the middle of the main claim of v.1 creates extra processing effort. Given that optimal relevance consists of a balance between cognitive effects and processing effort, the extra processing effort involved here must be offset by extra cognitive effects in order for this γἀρ clause to be relevant as a strengthening premise. I propose that Paul’s swift countering of a potential objection to his claim in v.1 before this claim has even been fully articulated creates an impression of unassailable logic and deft argumentative skills. This give rise to extra effects in the form of trust in Paul’s reliability and skill as a teacher and orator, able to formulate a well crafted logical argument, and deal with objections. This parenthetical comment can thus be explained as a rapid and rhetorically strategic “afterthought” which contributes to the persuasiveness of the argument, and counters epistemic vigilance\textsuperscript{544} targeting both the reliability of the communicator, and the coherence of the argument. In addition, the γἀρ clause may have the extra rhetorical effect of winning over the audience by praise,\textsuperscript{545} by drawing attention to the fact that they are not ignorant with regards to the Jewish faith and law.

It is the content and the positioning of this γἀρ clause which achieves these extra rhetorical effects rather than γἀρ itself. The connective, meanwhile, as in other more typical instances, gives procedural instructions towards strengthening, constraining the potential range of inferences which might be drawn from the information in v.1b, thus reducing processing effort. Its core procedural function is the same as with all the other occurrences examined. In addition to this, however, its core strengthening function is

\textsuperscript{543} Denniston 1934: 68.
\textsuperscript{544} A cognitive capacity, posited by cognitive scientists, which evaluates the reliability of a piece of communication in terms of rational coherence, and trustworthiness of source. See glossary.
\textsuperscript{545} Wolter (2014: 409-10) reads v.1b as a captatio benevolentiae which flatters addressees, strengthening the impact of the rhetorical question.
exploited to create a secondary rhetorical effect, by means of the strategic placement of the γάρ clause.

We can conclude, then, that this atypical example involves a combination of logical strengthening and rhetorical strengthening effect. Inferential strengthening is achieved, and a logical series constructed, despite the fact that the assumptions strengthened are only partially communicated prior to the strengthening premise, and do not achieve their relevance as strengthened assumptions until they are fully communicated in v.1c. As with other occurrences, the information introduced by γάρ is relevant in relation to other, more salient, communicated assumptions, and can be viewed as background or supporting information, rather than giving rise to new argumentative implications in its own right. This makes sense of scholars’ intuition that the information in v.1b is parenthetical: parenthetical information can be classed within the more general category of background information. The fact that the γάρ clause interrupts the assumptions it strengthens, and is, as a result, “bracketed” by them, is to be attributed to the rhetorical goal of creating an impression of convincing argumentation.

4.6 Rhetorical strengthening example 2: Romans 6:19-20

6:17: χάρις δὲ τῷ θεῷ ὅτι ἔτε δούλοι τῆς ἁμαρτίας ὑπηκούσατε δὲ ἐκ καρδίας εἰς ὅν παρεδόθητε τόπον διδαχῆς,

6:18a: ἐλευθερωθέντες δὲ ἀπὸ τῆς ἁμαρτίας

6:18b: ἐδουλώθητε τῇ δικαιοσύνη

6:19a: ἀνθρώπινον λέγω διὰ τὴν ἀσθένειαν τῆς σαρκὸς ὑμῶν.

6:19b: ὡσπέρ γὰρ παρεστήσατε τὰ μέλη ὑμῶν δούλα τῇ ἀκαθαρσίᾳ καὶ τῇ ἀνομίᾳ εἰς τὴν ἀνομίαν,

6:19c: οὕτως νῦν παραστήσατε τὰ μέλη ὑμῶν δούλα τῇ δικαιοσύνη εἰς ἁγιασμόν.

6:20a: ὅτε γὰρ δοῦλοι ἦτε τῆς ἁμαρτίας,

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546 Blass’s phrase “backwards strengthening” may not be entirely appropriate here, though the kernel of the assumption to be strengthened has in fact already been communicated in v.7:1a.
6:20b: ἐλεύθεροι ἦτε τῇ δικαιοσύνῃ.
6:21a: τίνα οὖν καρπὸν ἔχετε τότε;
6:21b: ἐφ᾽ οίς νῦν ἐπαισχύνεσθε,
6:21c: τὸ γάρ τέλος ἐκείνων θάνατος.
6:22a: νυνὶ δὲ ἐλευθερωθέντες ἀπὸ τῆς ἁμαρτίας δουλωθέντες δὲ τῷ θεῷ ἔχετε τὸν καρπὸν ὑμῶν εἰς ἁγιασμόν,
6:22b: τὸ δὲ τέλος ζωῆς αἰώνιον.

I have selected the two occurrences of γάρ in 6:19b and 6:20a as problematic examples for several reasons. With regard to v.19b, there is disagreement among scholars regarding the relationship between the aside in v.19a and the immediately preceding and subsequent co-text. It is difficult to identify an obvious logical strengthening relationship between the material following γάρ in v.19b-c and preceding assumptions. In addition, the main verb of the complex of assumptions introduced by γάρ in v.19b is an imperative, παραστήσατε (v.19c). This is unusual: a γάρ clause usually consists of a statement, often representing familiar or accepted information, as we have seen. Thirdly, the co-text (6:15-23) achieves its persuasive effect not by tight logical argumentation consisting of claims and supporting evidence, but rather by the use of rhetorical devices, in particular repetition and extended metaphor. We should be alert to the possibility that the primarily rhetorical rather than logical character of the argumentation in 6:15-23 may have an influence on the use of the connective here. With regard to γάρ in v.20, meanwhile, there is a divergence of opinion concerning the relation of the statement in v.20 with what precedes, and regarding the extent of the material introduced by γάρ.

4.6.1 Co-text

As part of the epistle’s second major section, Romans 6 discusses the implications for believers of the reign of grace, brought about by the obedience of Jesus Christ (5:12-21). There are obvious continuities between chapters 5 and 6. Both are dominated by the fundamental antithesis between the old life or age in Adam and the new life in
Christ. Both, using the vocabulary of rule and mastery, characterise sin and death as powers which reign in opposition to the reign of God (expressed in terms of righteousness, grace and life). But while 5:12-21 takes a bird’s eye view of the broad sweep of the human story, focusing on Adam and Christ and the vastly asymmetrical effects of their contrasting acts for the whole of humanity, chapter 6 homes in on the present implications of this for believers. Both 5:12-21 and 6:15-23 make use of primarily rhetorical rather than closely reasoned logical argumentation\(^{547}\) in order to persuade addressees of the utter antithesis between the old age and the new.\(^{548}\)

In 6:1-14 Paul discusses believers’ identification with Christ’s death and resurrection through baptism, and the implications for Christian living. 6:12-14 contains antithetical exhortations to believers to present their bodies, not to their old master, sin, but to God, as instruments of righteousness. Some scholars regard the imperatives of vv.12-14 as the beginning of a fresh subsection,\(^{549}\) while others read them as the continuation of the previous pericope.\(^{550}\) The diatrabal style of 6:1-3, with its pattern of rhetorical questions followed by answers, is resumed in v.15. Vv.15-23 are dominated by the antithesis between slavery to sin and slavery to righteousness.\(^{551}\) This is initially stated in v.15 in terms of existence ὑπὸ νόμον versus ὑπὸ χάριν, and is emphasised rhetorically by the use of repetition and of antithetical paired statements (v.18a/v.18b, v.19b/v.19c, v.20a/v.20b, v.20/v.22a, v.21c/v.22b).

V.19a consists of a metatextual remark in which Paul comments on his use of the graphic metaphor of slavery. Various commentators interpret this comment as parenthetical, but disagree as to whether the parenthesis looks backwards\(^{552}\) or forwards.\(^{553}\) Moo argues that it is not necessary to choose between these two alternatives: since the metaphor of slavery is employed both in v.18 and v.19b-c, the

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\(^{550}\) Jewett 2007: 413 and Wright 2002: 536, who sees the parallel questions in v.1 and v.15 as structuring ch.6.


\(^{553}\) See Barrett 1971: 132.
comment in v.19a can be read as a parenthetical explanation of Paul’s use of the imagery of slavery in both.\footnote{Moo 1996: 403. See also Wolter 2014: 399.}

4.6.2 Analysis of \(\gamma\upalpha\)

The occurrence of \(\gamma\upalpha\) in 6:19b introduces a complex clause which is held together by the conjunctions \(\omega\sigma\tau\epsilon\rho\) (v.19b) and \(\omega\dot{\omicron}\tau\omicron\omicron\) (v.19c) and continues to the end of v.19c. This clause, which takes the form of an exhortation, expressed by \(\pi\alpha\rho\alpha\sigma\tau\eta\sigma\alpha\tau\epsilon\) in v.19c, communicates an antithetical comparison between believers’ old way of life as slaves of sin, and their new life as slaves of righteousness. It is, in effect, a restatement of the thought of v.13. Most commentators make no comment on this occurrence. A number, however, read vv.19b-c as providing an explanation for the statements in vv.17-18.\footnote{E.g. Stuhlmacher 1994: 95; Wright 2002: 546: “it is not clear how much a command can actually explain something”; nevertheless, Paul “is explaining the balance of the two “slaveries,” further unpacking the paradox of being “liberated” into a different “slavery”.”} More specifically, Lagrange claims that vv.19b-c explain what slavery, or service, to justice means (v.18).\footnote{Lagrange 1916: 157.} In contrast, Jewett argues that vv.19b-c provides an explanation of why Paul must speak in “human terms” (v.19a).\footnote{Jewett 2007: 420.} Barrett, meanwhile, translates \(\gamma\upalpha\) as “The point of the matter is this”,\footnote{Barrett 1971: 132, though Barrett also notes: “This verse adds little fresh substance to what has already been said two or three times in this chapter.”} suggesting that what follows should be processed as a new or summarising point. The absence of logical development in the subsection has been noted and criticised by some,\footnote{Käsemann 1973: 169-70) criticises Jülicher’s (1917) judgement that “nirgendwo im Briefe würden ohne erkennbaren Fortschritt des Gedankens so viel Worte um die gleiche Sache gemacht”.} but as Käsemann points out, Paul is here concerned not so much with moving the argument forward, as with underlining and emphasising, by means of various rhetorical devices, the dialectic which constantly demands an either-or from believers.\footnote{Käsemann 1973: 170.}

I suggest that the guidance that \(\gamma\upalpha\) gives here is affected by the rhetorical quality of the argumentation in this subsection. We can give the following procedural account of \(\gamma\upalpha\). The connective triggers procedure G and, on the basis of the grammar of v.19b-c, the whole of this complex clause is processed as strengthening premises. But it does not seem possible to construct, without unreasonable processing effort, a strengthening...
inferential series between v.19b-c and either the metatextual aside in v.19a, or the statements of v.18, or v.17, as some propose. Instead, I propose that the strengthening guidance given by γάρ has a rhetorical rather than strictly inferential character. I suggest that addressees automatically associate a strengthening role with γάρ because of its core function in more logically argumentative contexts. Its presence thus automatically raises expectations that what follows it will be relevant as strengthening information. Given the primarily rhetorical rather than logical quality of the persuasion in this subsection, addressees’ expectations of relevance are satisfied with the impression of strengthening created by γάρ together with the rhetorical repetition of previously communicated assumptions. As a result, a full logical series which rationally confirms preceding assumptions is not constructed, since it is not necessary and would lead to undue processing effort.

Paul’s metatextual comment in v.19a suggests that he anticipates that his statements in vv.16-18 regarding slavery to righteousness may raise objections, and need reinforcement in order to be optimally relevant. The material γάρ introduces in vv.19b-c is an exhortation which has already been communicated, and strengthened for optimal relevance, in vv.13-14. Addressees have therefore already accepted it firmly as valid. The exhortation in v.19c, however, differs from v.13b in one respect: the vocabulary of slavery, δοῦλα, is substituted for the vocabulary of tools or weapons, ὅπλα. I suggest that this unusual re-use and adaptation of an exhortation so that it functions as strengthening material introduced by γάρ, rather than as a main argumentative point, contributes to the persuasive effect. While using accepted assumptions from v.13, it presents the metaphor of slavery, previously communicated in vv.16-18, in a new guise. This is presumably in order to persuade addressees of the validity of the metaphor. The combination in v.19b-c of assumptions from v.13 plus this metaphor of slavery, creates a convincing impression that the metaphor is a valid one. The main point of the assertions in vv.16-18 is to communicate, by means of this metaphor, the totality of the antithesis between the old life dominated by sin versus the new life dominated by righteousness. The strengthening complex introduced by γάρ in v.19b-c thus serves as confirmation and reinforcement of this antithesis.
Although a detailed logical series is not constructed between v.19b-c and vv.17-18, I suggest that inferences are nevertheless involved in the processing of v.19b-c, along the following lines:

**P** (vv.17-18, summarised in propositional form): You [Paul’s addressees] were slaves of sin, but you obeyed the pattern of teaching you were taught. Having been freed from sin, you were enslaved to righteousness.

*(Implicit objection raised: Is the metaphor of slavery an appropriate way to describe believers’ experience?)*

**Q introduced by γάρ** (v.19b-c): Just as once you [Paul’s addressees] presented your members as slaves to uncleanness and lawlessness, in the same way now present your members as slaves of righteousness for sanctification.

**IA1:** “You were slaves of sin, but you obeyed the pattern of teaching you were taught. Having been freed from sin, you were enslaved to righteousness” means that addressees’ past life, totally controlled by sin, and present life, totally controlled by righteousness, are two antithetical states.

**IA2:** “It is not desirable to present your members as slaves of unrighteousness, but it is desirable to present your members as slaves of righteousness for sanctification” are accepted assumptions (v.13).

**IA3:** These accepted assumptions (v.13) reinforce the claim in vv.17-18 that addressees’ past life and addressees’ present life are two antithetical states.

**IA4:** This accepted material supports the validity of the metaphor of slavery to describe Paul’s addressees’ experience.

**C:** (confirming vv.17-18): Addressees’ past and present lives are in total antithesis to each other, and the metaphor in vv.17-18 of slavery to different masters is a valid one to describe this experience.

As a result of such inferences, the metaphor of slavery applied to the experience of believers in vv.17-18 is validated. Addressees adhere more strongly to the claim that their experience can be described as slavery, and it becomes optimally relevant for
them. The antithesis between the old life and the new life of believers is buttressed and highlighted, and its argumentative salience heightened. The overall effect of the rhetorical display of strengthening created by γάρ in v.19b, together with the repetition of familiar material in vv.19b-c, is to increase the cognitive effects derived from vv.17-18.

Thus the connective here contributes to a rhetorical display which emphasises the complete antithesis between the old and the new, which is sufficient in itself to satisfy expectations of relevance, without the construction of a complete logical strengthening series. The acceptance of vv.19b-c as strengthening material nevertheless triggers inferences of its own. Thus even rhetorical strengthening involves the drawing of inferences.

Here, as elsewhere, γάρ can be said to give procedural guidance to interpret the information which follows it as strengthening premises, relevant in relation to preceding assumptions. The result of this strengthening seems relevant not so much as an explanation as some commentators suggest, but as back-up for potentially controversial claims related to the metaphor of slavery. Since the overall point of the subsection is the rhetorical underscoring of a basic antithesis rather than a logical development in thought, addressees’ expectations of relevance are satisfied by a general impression of strengthening or reinforcement. As with other examples, the connective in 6:19b gives guidance which limits processing costs by indicating that the information in vv.20-22 is to be taken as strengthening material rather than representing fresh implications. The guidance, however, leads to primarily rhetorical rather than logical strengthening, contributing to a strengthening display which underscores an emphatic contrast. As in 7:1b, then, in 6:19b the core strengthening function of γάρ interacts with, and is adapted to, the rhetorical quality of the passage in which it occurs.

Moving on to 6:20, the statement introduced by γάρ is a virtual reverse mirror of v.18 (repeated once more in v.22a). There is a wide variety of opinion as to how to interpret γάρ, and the relationship between what follows and the preceding co-text. The pair of

This is not dissimilar to examples in which γάρ introduces scriptural citations relevant as authoritative proof, where the supporting material is automatically accepted as back-up for preceding claims without construction of a full logical series.
temporal adverbs ὅτε (v.20) and νυνί (v.22a), as well as the mirroring in v.22 of the vocabulary of v.20, structures the thought of vv.20-22 as a single antithetical whole. This expresses again the dominating antithesis in terms of slavery to sin and slavery to righteousness. Wolter asserts that γάρ in v.20 has simply a “connecting and continuative” function. Cranfield takes vv.20-21 together, interpreting them as supporting and “reinforcing [the] urgency” of the command given in v.19. Wright reads γάρ as introducing vv.20-22, which provide a “yet further explanation”. Moo, meanwhile, suggests that the whole of vv.20-23 provide “the ground of the command in v.19b”. Others, however, limit the supporting statement introduced by γάρ in v.20a to v.20 alone, since v.21a is introduced by the connective οὖν. Dunn reads v.20 as a “more concise formulation” of vv.17-18 which “drives home the contrast” already stated. Similarly, Käsemann interprets v.20 as presenting the antithesis from the other side.

As with the occurrence in 6:19, I propose that this occurrence of γάρ may be explained in terms of a core strengthening function which is influenced by the rhetorical character of the co-text. Addressees automatically associate a strengthening role with γάρ because of its core function in more logically argumentative contexts, and its presence raises expectations that what follows will be relevant as strengthening material. Just as in v.19b, so here too, expectations of relevance are satisfied with the impression of strengthening created by γάρ, and effort is not expended in the search for a logical strengthening series which rationally confirms a preceding claim.

Given the antithetical parallelism between v.20 and v.22, the whole of vv.20-22 is processed as a complex of strengthening assumptions introduced by γάρ. The rhetorical question and answer in v.21a-b, and the information introduced by a further instance of γάρ in v.21c, are all processed as belonging within the larger complex of assumptions in

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563 Cranfield 1975: 327.
564 Wright 2002: 546.
566 Dunn 1988a: 347.
568 Käsemann 1973: 175.
vv.20-22, making accessible further relevant background information within it.\(^{569}\) We have already seen that the immediately preceding material in v.19b-c is essentially a repetition of the exhortations in v.13, themselves reinforced by a confirming rationale in v.14. Thus in v.19b-c this material is employed rhetorically in order to emphasise the dominating antithesis rather than as a genuine exhortation to action at this point. In v.20 γάρ then guides towards the further reinforcement of the antithesis by continuing the display of strengthening material (vv.20-22) which consists largely of a repetition of the statements of vv.17-18. Expectations that the material in vv.20-22 will be relevant as strengthening material are satisfied by this rhetorically powerful repetition of the total contrast between allegiance to sin and allegiance to righteousness presented in vv.16-19. In this way, vv.20-22 bolster the statements of vv.16-19 by further underscoring their main idea. The overall effect of the impression created by the γάρ clauses in v.19b-c and vv.20-22, is to emphasise the total, mutually exclusive antithesis between the old life with sin as master and the new life in Christ, with God as Lord. This account fits with the views of scholars who identify vv.20-22 as a whole as a reinforcing explanation of what precedes.

In sum, as with other examples of γάρ discussed, the occurrences of γάρ in 6:19 and 6:20 both give core guidance towards the strengthening of preceding information, helping to reduce processing costs. Both indicate that the information which they introduce is relevant in relation to previously communicated assumptions, leading to the increase of their cognitive effects and argumentative salience. Instead of guiding towards the construction of complete logical strengthening series, however, in both instances, γάρ helps to create a rhetorical impression of powerful buttressing and consolidation. This is in keeping with the primarily rhetorical rather than logical character of the co-text. A procedural explanation is able to account for these atypical examples of the connective by recognising the interaction between the core function of the connective, and the type of argumentation in this subsection.

\(^{569}\) This background information further increases the implications to be drawn from the antithesis which dominates the subsection. The fact that v.21c forms an antithetical parallel to v.22c is further evidence that vv.20-22 belong together as a single complex of thought. V.22 completes the contrast between the fruit of slavery to sin (v.21) and the fruit of slavery to God.
4.7 Rhetorical strengthening example 3: Romans 15:24

15:23: ἄν δὲ μηκέτι τόπον ἔχων ἐν τοῖς κλίμασι τούτοις, ἐπιποθίαν δὲ ἔχων τοῦ ἐλθεῖν πρὸς ὑμᾶς ἀπὸ πολλῶν ἐτῶν;

15:24a: ὡς ἂν πορεύωμαι εἰς τὴν Σπανίαν

15:24b: ἔλπίζω γάρ διαπορευόμενος θεάσασθαι ὑμᾶς

15:24c: καὶ ὑφ᾽ ὑμῶν προπεμφθῆναι ἐκεῖ

15:24d: ἐὰν ὑμῶν πρὸς τὸν ἀπὸ μέρους ἐμπλησθῶ.

This occurrence of γάρ is problematic because of the elliptical syntax of vv.23-24a, and the absence of an explicit preceding statement, with an independent verb, which is obviously strengthened by the γάρ clause. I have chosen this as a further atypical example of γάρ because here, too, the connective’s core strengthening function is exploited for rhetorical effect.

4.7.1 Co-text

Romans 15:14-33 is generally regarded as the first part of the epistle’s closing section, in which Paul turns from the argumentation of the main body of the letter to the matter of his relationship with his addressees and his apostolic calling to the Gentiles (vv.14-21), and to a discussion of his future plans (vv.22-33). This is then followed by the concluding greetings of chapter 16. Scholars draw attention to the parallels between the content of 15:14-33 and the opening section of the epistle. Dunn identifies a “bracketing effect” created by 1:8-15 and 15:14-33, arguing that the themes of the former are restated in the latter, including the subject of the hindrance Paul has experienced hitherto in coming to Rome (1:13a and 15:22), and his desire to see the Romans for their mutual benefit (1:11-12 and 15:23-24, 28-29). Various scholars note the captatio benevolentiae of 15:14-15, by means of which Paul seeks to win the

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571 Witherington (2004: 16) regards 15:14-21 as the peroratio, and 15:22-33 as a reference to Paul’s travel plans.
goodwill of his addressees.\textsuperscript{573} In 15:16-21 Paul sets forth his unique calling as apostle to the Gentiles, expressed in terms of priestly service.\textsuperscript{574} In vv.17-19 he presents his apostolic credentials, and in v.20 makes explicit the focus of his ministry, namely the evangelisation of regions which have not previously heard the gospel.

In 15:22 Paul moves on to a discussion of his travel plans, and revisits the thought of 1:13a: he has been prevented numerous times from coming to Rome. In v.23 he reaffirms his long held desire to visit the capital. In vv.23-24a we find a series of dependent verbal forms, but no main verb, before the thought is interrupted by the γάρ clause of v.24b. Some later manuscripts have attempted to resolve the anacoluthon by the insertion of the phrase ἐλεύσομαι πρὸς ὑμᾶς at the end of v.24a.\textsuperscript{575}

\subsection*{4.7.2 Analysis of γάρ}

Scholars explain the γάρ clause in 15:24b in various ways. Cranfield reads it in relationship with the implicit claim that Paul will in the future come to Rome, communicated by means of the incomplete statement of v.23-24a. Thus the γάρ clause is “explanatory of the substance of the preceding incomplete sentence”,\textsuperscript{576} and has a parenthetical role.\textsuperscript{577} Similarly, Moo reads γάρ as explanatory, introducing an elaboration on what Paul has “hinted at in vv.23-24a”, namely that he hopes to fulfil his desire to visit the Romans as part of his journey to Spain.\textsuperscript{578} Dunn takes the whole of vv.24-27 as a “sidetracking parenthesis”, in which Paul’s words are carefully chosen to avoid offence, and argues that the unfinished sentence begun in v.23 is only finally completed at the end of v.28: “I will go by way of you to Spain”.\textsuperscript{579}

Along similar lines, various scholars suggest that the γάρ clause of v.24 may function rhetorically, contributing to an impression of indirect or diplomatic communication.

\textsuperscript{574} See Whittle 2015: 182-83; Jewett 2007 on the links between the cultic language of 15:16 and 12:1.
\textsuperscript{575} See Dunn 1988b: 870.
\textsuperscript{576} Cranfield 1979: 769.
\textsuperscript{577} Cranfield 1979: 750.
\textsuperscript{578} Moo 1996: 901. See also Käsemann 1973: 380.
\textsuperscript{579} Dunn 1988b: 871.
Jewett, for instance, argues that the anacoluthon of vv.23-24a may be intentional,\textsuperscript{580} functioning as part of Paul’s “diplomatic strategy” of leaving his missionary plans open to the response of his Roman addressees. He draws attention to the expression προπεμφθῆναι in v.24c, which, in the majority of its NT uses, functions as a quasi-technical term for provision or support for missionary work.\textsuperscript{581} Thus in v.24b Paul can be understood to be indirectly requesting help from his addressees for his planned mission to Spain. Similarly, Käsemann suggests that Paul expresses his wish for assistance in v.24b-d by means of dependent clauses because he dares not speak more freely to the Roman believers.\textsuperscript{582}

I propose the following procedural account of γάρ in v.24. The connective triggers procedure G and v.24b-d is processed as a complex of strengthening premises which is dependent on ἔλπιζω. Addressees’ comprehension processes then search for a preceding claim which is a candidate for strengthening. Despite the anacoluthon, the implicit claim “I plan to come to Rome” is communicated strongly\textsuperscript{583} by vv.23-24a, as various scholars suggest. This claim may raise implicit questions for addressees, however. Since Paul has not succeeding in visiting Rome for so many years, they may be sceptical about his commitment or ability to carry out this plan in the future. Or questions may be raised for them regarding the specifics of his visit. This implicit claim may thus not yet be optimally relevant and may need further strengthening. Processing the material in v.24b-d as strengthening premises, a strengthening inferential series is constructed which results in the confirmation of the preceding implicit claim. I propose that the following assumptions may be involved:


Q introduced by γάρ (vv.24b-d): I hope to visit you when passing through and to be sent on my way there [to Spain] by you [Paul’s Roman addressees] once I have had the pleasure of your company a little.

\textsuperscript{580} Jewett 2007: 924-26. Lagrange (1916: 357), too, suggests that the anacoluthon serves a communicative function, allowing Paul to express feelings of frustration that he cannot come to Rome immediately.\textsuperscript{581} On the latter point, see 1 Cor. 16:6; 2 Cor. 1:16; Acts 15:3; Moo 1996: 901; Dunn 1988b: 872 etc.\textsuperscript{582} Käsemann 1973: 380.\textsuperscript{583} That is, it is easily inferable from vv.23b-24a.
IA: If Paul plans to visit his Roman addressees when passing through Rome and to be sent on his way to Spain from Rome, then Paul has specific future plans to come to Rome.

C (strengthening implicit claim communicated by vv.24b-d): I [Paul] plan to come to Rome.

As a result of this inferential series, the assumption implicitly communicated in vv.23-24a is strengthened with the help of additional assumptions which give more detail regarding how Paul envisages coming to Rome. This explanatory detail strengthens the validity of the claim that Paul does indeed have a firm intention to come to Rome, after so many years when he has not succeeded in coming. The strengthening procedure may be relevant as an explanation for some addressees, and as confirming evidence for others, depending on the particular questions or objections raised for them by vv.23-24a. The material introduced by γάρ serves as supporting, or background detail, which increases the relevance of the preceding claim.

At the same time, I suggest that γάρ also has a secondary rhetorical function here, where Paul is presenting a delicate request for assistance to an audience that he does not know personally. As mentioned above, the request is expressed indirectly by means of the expression ὑφ᾽ ὑμῶν προπεμφθῆναι. It is included as part of the background or supporting information indicated by γάρ, rather than presented as a direct request, which we might expect to be introduced by δὲ.\(^{584}\) The connective here seems to be used in a similar way to the English “you see”, which might be used to introduce a delicate request presented via an explanation: “Now, since I no longer have a role in these regions and since I’ve been wanting to visit you for years, when I go to Spain…. You see, I hope to visit you while passing through and to be sent on my way there by you...”.

If this is so, then a by-product of the core function of γάρ, namely the flagging up of information introduced by γάρ as relatively less salient in argumentative terms, is here exploited by the writer for rhetorical ends. Because it is included as part of the background strengthening information introduced by γάρ, the request for assistance in v.24c is presented as non-salient and therefore non-threatening information. In this case,\(^{584}\) Cf. Paul’s request for prayer in 15:30.
γάρ contributes to the rhetorical effect of the communication, not by introducing a convincing and authoritative metarepresentation, nor by creating a strengthening impression, but instead by helping to attenuate information which might be initially unpalatable. Thus the procedural guidance given by γάρ is exploited for a secondary rhetorical purpose. As always, the connective guides towards the strengthening of the previously communicated implicit assumption, but its function as a flag for supporting information is also used as a cover for Paul’s request for assistance in v.24c. By communicating this request indirectly as part of the complex of assumptions in v.24b-d, Paul leaves the Romans’ potential support for his mission dependent on their response. Here, then, we have not so much a parenthetical remark (which implies purely background and possibly optional information), as an intentionally indirect presentation of information which is in fact communicatively salient and which gives rise to various fresh cognitive effects in the form of implications.

In sum, this atypical occurrence of γάρ can be explained by a procedural account. As with all other cases discussed, the connective gives procedural guidance towards the strengthening of preceding claims. It helps to reduce processing costs by indicating that what follows it is relevant in relation to previously communicated information, which is argumentatively more salient. This procedural guidance involves accessing contextual assumptions in order to construct a strengthening series and leads to the increase in addressees’ adherence to a previous claim. At the same time, because it is associated in addressees’ minds with background information, γάρ in this case secondarily also contributes to a rhetorical effect which softens the directness of a request which requires tact in order to achieve its desired effect.

4.8 Problematic occurrences: conclusions

The above discussion of representative problematic instances of γάρ in Romans has demonstrated that a procedural account is able to explain these occurrences consistently in terms of a core strengthening function. The occurrences in question are problematic for conventional readings of γάρ in a variety of ways. In some cases, the difficulty lies

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585 This reading of the γάρ clause of v.24b-d also fits with the view that the anacoluthon of vv.23-24a is to be attributed to the delicacy of the request.
in identifying a strengthening relationship with the immediately preceding co-text (2:25, 5:6-7, 9:11, 6:19-20). In some, it is because of exegetical disagreement about immediately preceding or subsequent information (5:6-7). In certain instances, the difficulties arise as a result of complex syntax (9:11, 15:24), the unusual placement of the γάρ clause (7:1b), or the apparent interruption of main argumentative points (5:6b, 9:11). In 6:19 γάρ introduces an exhortation which would typically not function as supporting information, and which does not trigger a full logical series of strengthening inferences (6:19, 20). In several examples, the strengthening γάρ guides towards has a rhetorical aspect (6:19, 7:1, 15:24). In all these cases, however, the connective can be explained as a consistent procedural indicator which reduces processing effort. It does this by signalling that the information which it introduces is to be processed as strengthening information, relevant in relation to other previously communicated assumptions, rather than leading to fresh implications. As a result of the strengthening procedure triggered by γάρ, these preceding assumptions are adhered to more strongly by addressees. This procedural account is able to provide a unified and cognitively grounded account of various intuitions and observations offered by more traditional accounts.

The procedural strengthening guidance indicated by γάρ achieves relevance in different ways in diverse co-texts. Thus in 5:6b the strengthening is likely to be relevant as an adjustment or further specification dealing with potential objections. In 7:1b the strengthening is relevant as a rhetorical parenthesis which interrupts the main thought for persuasive effect. In 6:19b-20 the strengthening works itself out as an emphatic repetition. Moreover, the way in which the cognitive effect of strengthening is achieved is influenced by the type of argumentation, whether primarily the closely argued logical development of thought, or argumentation which makes its point by means of rhetorical display and effect. The core procedural instructions γάρ gives guide towards an inferential procedure involving the construction of a strengthening series of inferences. This results in previously communicated assumptions being held more strongly as valid in co-texts where addressees require additional confirming evidence, rationale or explanation in order to be fully convinced of the validity of claims.586 In co-texts where

586 In this case, the rational coherence of claims and supporting evidence counters addressees’ epistemic vigilance mechanisms targeted at the coherence of the argument.
the persuasiveness of the argumentation consists primarily in the use of rhetorical effect, on the other hand, the strengthening effect may be achieved by an impression of strengthening, rather than by the construction of a complete logical series.\textsuperscript{587} I suggest that this is because, as a consequence of the inferential strengthening most typically triggered by \( \gamma\upsilon \rho \), the connective is automatically associated in addressees’ minds with a strengthening effect. In rhetorical co-texts, the presence of \( \gamma\upsilon \rho \), occurring in combination with other rhetorical features, creates a display of reinforcing material which is enough to satisfy addressees’ expectations of relevance without the construction of an inferential series. Thus the strengthening which \( \gamma\upsilon \rho \) helps to achieve is influenced by different argumentative strategies. Moreover, a secondary effect of the connective’s core procedural guidance is to flag up that the material it introduces is supporting or background information which is less argumentatively salient than the assumptions it strengthens.\textsuperscript{588} This secondary effect may be exploited for rhetorical purposes in certain instances. Thus in 7:1b the background information introduced by \( \gamma\upsilon \rho \) is strategically and pre-emptively positioned in order to create an impression of skilful argumentation which deals with objections before they arise. In 15:24, meanwhile, the connective and its associations with background information are used as a cover for the communication of salient but sensitive information.

4.9 Demonstrating a procedural account of \( \gamma\upsilon \rho \): conclusions

In chapters 3 and 4 I have demonstrated the validity of a strengthening procedural hypothesis for \( \gamma\upsilon \rho \) from a representative range of examples in Romans. These have included not only straightforward and somewhat complex occurrences, but also occurrences that might be perceived as problematic on a traditional reading of the connective. My analysis has considered \( \gamma\upsilon \rho \) in different types of argumentation in the epistle, both expository and hortatory, and both closely argued logical subsections and passages where persuasion is achieved primarily by means of rhetorical display. My demonstration of a procedural account has involved the extension of the basic template

\textsuperscript{587} In this case, addressees’ epistemic vigilance mechanisms are countered by impressive rhetorical display which may have an impact on addressees’ emotions.

\textsuperscript{588} This “background” material may be presented as a main argumentative point at other places in the argument (e.g. 6:19b is presented as a salient exhortation, giving rise to many fresh cognitive effects, in 6:13b).
for an inferential strengthening series proposed by Blakemore and Blass in order to explain less straightforward occurrences. The most significant findings of the analysis can be summarised under the four points below.

1. A procedural explanation of γάρ provides a fresh, unified and consistent account of all occurrences in Romans which is cognitively grounded and built on a firm theoretical foundation. This procedural account explains γάρ in terms of a core function of guidance towards the inferential procedure of strengthening. As a result, the connective can be considered to be a consistent communicative signal. In every case, the connective indicates that the information which it introduces is to be processed as relevant in relation to previously communicated assumptions, rather than as relevant in its own right. It raises expectations that the material it introduces, the exact extent of which is inferred from the co-text, will be relevant as strengthening information. In each case, γάρ triggers a strengthening procedure, which results in stronger adherence to preceding assumptions, that is, the cognitive effect of strengthening. The procedural instructions γάρ gives help to constrain interpretation, reducing ambiguity, acting as a signpost for the direction of the argument, and thus diminishing processing costs.

2. The procedural account is flexible: the core procedural instructions given by γάρ towards strengthening work themselves out in diverse ways in different co-texts. The strengthening procedure may be relevant as confirming evidence, a grounding rationale, a further explanation, authoritative proof, a further specification, a parenthetical remark, an adjustment to a previous claim to make it more precise etc. The identification of strengthened assumptions, and of strengthening premises, is in all cases guided by the search for relevance. This provides an explanation for the fact that strengthened assumptions do not always immediately precede the γάρ clause, and that implicitly communicated information may be strengthened.

The strengthening procedure may achieve relevance in various ways for different addressees, depending on their perspectives, encyclopaedic knowledge and attitudes of scepticism or trust. Thus the strengthening procedure may be relevant to some as confirming evidence, but to others as an explanation. Complex inferential series will only be fully constructed by addressees who need further convincing of the validity of Paul’s claims. Those who adopt a stance of basic acceptance of the communicator’s
trustworthiness may have their expectations of relevance satisfied by the construction of a briefer inferential series, or accept the impression of confirming evidence which the presence of γάρ creates. The procedural account thus accommodates the fact that different addressees may derive differing inferential series, or indeed, none, and for the fact that addressees will invest varying degrees of effort in processing, depending on what they hope to gain from the communication.

The strengthening procedure is also affected by the type of argumentation in which a particular example of γάρ occurs, whether expository or hortatory, and whether tightly argued logic or rhetorical display. Thus in closely argued expository passages where the argument is developed logically by means of the presentation of claims and supporting premises, the strengthening procedure is most likely to achieve relevance by means of a complete inferential series. In passages where the main points of the argument are backed up by various scriptural citations, the procedure is likely to achieve relevance as an authoritative proof which convinces as much by virtue of the authoritative source quoted as by the rational quality of the supporting evidence presented. Meanwhile in highly rhetorical passages, strengthening is achieved by means of a rhetorical display of impressive reinforcement. This rhetorical strengthening may take various forms: emphatic repetition of previously communicated assumptions, vivid metaphor, an authoritative metarepresentation, rhetorical questions etc. In such rhetorical contexts, in which the main points of the argument are reinforced not so much by supporting premises as by an appeal to the emotions and the senses, the connective itself can be understood to contribute to the compelling rhetorical display simply by virtue of association in addressees’ minds with persuasive evidence and buttressing, as a result of its core strengthening function. On occasion, the core procedural function of γάρ, and its outworkings, is also exploited with the secondary aim of creating a particular rhetorical effect.

Because of its flexibility, the procedural strengthening account is able to accommodate a range of explanations proposed by scholars for specific occurrences, without treating γάρ as a bland or loose connective which simply takes its meaning from the co-text in which it occurs. In brief, the connective functions as a broad interpretative constraint within which different addressees and interpreters work, using contextual information,
to infer an interpretation which is relevant to them, bringing them adequate cognitive effects.

3. The core procedural guidance given by γάρ contributes to the coherence of the argument of particular subsections, and indeed, of the wider epistle. The search for a consolidating inferential series between material introduced by γάρ and preceding material makes obvious the close relationship between γάρ clauses and the previous context. In addition, the search for accessible contextual assumptions to be combined in the strengthening series of inferences frequently leads to the re-activation of assumptions which have already been communicated further back in the preceding co-text. This re-activation makes such assumptions more memorable, and the whole argument more comprehensible and coherent.

In addition, chains of γάρ clauses such as those in 5:6-8, 7:14-15 and 7:18-19 contribute to the coherence of their co-texts. The effect of such chains is a cumulative backwards strengthening effect, as each γάρ clause in turn functions as a strengthening premise for the previous one, increasing the cognitive effects derived from it. The end result of this cumulative strengthening is the highlighting of the claim at the beginning of the chain, to which the whole chain leads back. The argumentative salience of this claim is thereby underlined, as is its significance for the direction of the wider argument.

Although material introduced by γάρ achieves relevance in relation to preceding assumptions, information introduced by the connective may also subsequently serve as a springboard for further development of the argument, as in 2:25. In such a case the content of the γάρ clause is processed firstly in relation to preceding information, and is then picked up and built or elaborated upon in the subsequent argument. While this material might be viewed as looking in two directions, backwards in support and forwards in order to provide a foundation for the following claims, this double role is to be distinguished from the function of γάρ. The latter purely provides guidance towards strengthening, and does not guide towards the drawing of inferences in relation to the subsequent argument.

4. The demonstration of a procedural account shows that information introduced by γάρ is to be processed as supporting background material which bolsters preceding claims or
exhortations, increasing their relevance and salience. As buttressing material, assumptions introduced by θῦρ play second fiddle, in argumentative terms, to the claims they strengthen. But because their role is to strengthen the validity of these claims, increasing their acceptability to addressees, these strengthening assumptions often take the form of metarepresentations of authoritative or generally accepted truths. These include scriptural citations and theolegoumena as well as familiar axioms from the ancient world, or metarepresentations of Paul’s own thought. Such metarepresentations bring the additional weight of accepted authority behind the claims that are strengthened, lending powerful persuasive punch to the supporting information. In some cases (2:11, 13:8-9, 14:7-11 etc.), these metarepresentations represent an accepted theological framework which provides grounding for the main points of the argument.

The procedural account of θῦρ has significant implications for the interpretation of Romans. Once we assume a core procedural function for θῦρ, it can be relied upon as a consistent communicative signal which contributes to exegesis by lessening ambiguity and guiding interpretation in a particular direction. Consequently, θῦρ should not be dismissed as a bland or loose connective, the meaning of which is discerned once the interpretation of the co-text is already decided upon. Instead, it needs to be paid attention from the outset as an important interpretative signpost which helps interpreters to find their way through the thickets of exegetical detail, and to get a view of the whole shape of the argumentative wood rather than becoming lost in the trees. As a significant linguistic clue, θῦρ can help to confirm certain interpretations and rule out others. This guidance is particularly valuable for modern interpreters, who find themselves in a secondary communication situation in which the contextual assumptions available to the first addressees are no longer accessible. It is to these interpretative implications of the procedural account of θῦρ that we now turn in chapters 5 and 6.
Chapter 5: γάρ as communicative signpost at the micro-exegetical level

5.1 Introduction

In chapters 3 and 4 we saw how a procedural account of γάρ in Romans leads us to regard the connective as a consistent communicative clue which guides interpretation in a particular direction. As a consequence, it can be relied upon in exegesis as an important interpretative signpost. In this chapter, I will demonstrate from two passages where much is at stake exegetically how a procedural account of γάρ provides significant guidance in deciding between major interpretative options. My particular aim here is to demonstrate how a procedural account can serve as a tool for finding a way through interpretative impasses at the micro-level of individual verses and their contested ambiguities. Of course, the exegesis of individual verses cannot be separated from the interpretation of the wider co-text, as we have already seen. The guidance that γάρ provides more widely towards identifying the contours, direction and thrust of whole sections of the argument, however, will be the subject of chapter 6. I will consider various scholarly views in relation to the exegetical problems under discussion and show how a procedural account of γάρ provides support for certain interpretations, but undermines others.

5.2 Choice of examples

For this discussion I have selected two passages containing instances of γάρ, 4:1 and 10:4-5. These occur at points where there is major scholarly disagreement over a particular ambiguous phrase or clause. These disputed phrases play a key role in the development and direction of the argument. In each case, there is a choice between several major interpretative options which have been made to bear considerable argumentative weight, and which feed into significantly different readings of the wider co-text and of the letter as a whole. The exegesis of 4:1-2 has implications for whether the theme of justification by faith is to be understood primarily in terms of universal human experience, or in relation to the question of Jews and Gentiles as members of God’s people. The interpretation of 10:4-5 is crucial for different views of the role of
the Jewish law in God’s purposes, and of the issue of Israel’s stumbling in relation to the gospel. These questions are fundamental to very different scholarly perspectives regarding the centre of Romans, and of Paul’s theology. Despite the fact that the passages in which these examples occur are highly contested, the occurrences of γάρ are themselves relatively little discussed by commentators. As a result, a vital clue to interpretation is overlooked at points where its guidance is potentially highly valuable.

5.3 Exegetical discussion: Romans 4:1-2

4:1: Τί οὖν ἔροδοις εὐρηκέναι Ἀβραὰμ τὸν προπάτορα ἡμῶν κατὰ σάρκα;

4:2a: εἰ γάρ Ἀβραὰμ ἐξ ἔργων ἐδικαιώθη,

4:2b: ἔχει καύχημα,

4:2c: ἀλλ’ οὐ πρὸς θεόν.

5.3.1 Co-text

The relationship between Romans 4 and the preceding argument in chapter 3 is vigorously disputed, leading to a whole range of diverse readings.589 This is, in part, because of the “notorious unclarity”590 of 4:1. The discussion of Abraham in Romans 4 is often interpreted as an example or proof from scripture (specifically, from the Torah itself) which supports the thesis about justification by faith in 3:21-3:31.591 Some scholars argue that 4:1ff. belongs closely with Paul’s specific claim in 3:31 that he does not annul but upholds the Jewish law.592 Others regard the reference to Abraham in 4:1 as the expression of an objection raised by the statement in 3:27 that boasting has been excluded.593 This objection is then dealt with in the subsequent discussion in chapter 4.

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589 See Wright 2013b: 208 for a succinct overview.
590 Hays 1985: 77.
593 Cranfield 1979: 224, 226.
Following Stowers, some interpreters emphasise the close knit continuity of the diatribal exchange, begun in 3:27, which continues into 4:1-2.\(^{594}\) On this view, Paul uses a sequence of questions and answers to bring his Jewish interlocutor round to his point of view. Thus Campbell reads 4:1 as the voice of Paul’s opponent, who, after enumerating in 3:27-31 three challenges to Paul’s gospel as presented in 3:21-26, introduces Abraham as a “star witness” from the Pentateuch to support his challenge.\(^{595}\)

A range of readings of the relationship between chapter 3 and chapter 4 also exists among those who approach Romans from the so-called new perspective.\(^{596}\) Dunn regards chapter 4 as an exposition of the theme of the epistle’s basic argument so far, namely that God justifies both Gentile and Jew through faith, for which Abraham represents a “crucial test case”.\(^{597}\) Richard Hays, on the other hand, argues that, following the claim in 3:27-31 that the one God deals with Jews and Gentiles alike, Paul puts forward a “straw man” position in 4:1. This expresses a particular ethnocentric Jewish view claiming a special status for the circumcised, which Paul then knocks down in the subsequent discussion.\(^{598}\) Both Hays and Wright follow a minority reading of 4:1: “What then shall we say? Have we found… that Abraham is our forefather according to the flesh?”\(^{599}\) (See the fuller exegetical discussion below under 5.3.2). Wright, meanwhile, who argues that 3:21-4:25 must be viewed as a whole,\(^{600}\) finds in chapter 4 an exposition of Genesis 15 “in relation to the covenantal promise of a single worldwide family”, which is part of Paul’s demonstration of God’s faithfulness to the covenant with Israel.\(^{601}\) This follows on from the re-definition of election which Wright claims is outlined in 3:29-30,\(^{602}\) and shows that God’s people, Abraham’s family, consists of all who are characterised by faith as Abraham was, Gentiles as well as Jews.\(^{603}\)

\(^{595}\) Campbell (2009: 724) translates 4:1 as follows: “What then shall we say that we have found in relation to Abraham...?”
\(^{596}\) See 1.2.2 n.42 above.
\(^{597}\) Dunn 1988a: 196.
\(^{598}\) Hays 1985: 87.
\(^{600}\) Wright 2013: 996.
\(^{601}\) Wright 2013b: 207.
\(^{602}\) Wright 2013: 1002.
\(^{603}\) Wright 2013: 1002.
Watson, who, while not embracing the new perspective, takes a sociological approach to Romans, regards chapter 4 as a reinterpretation of the figure of Abraham. This opposes the Jewish view of Abraham as a model of the law-observant Jew, and presents him as a model of faith in the divine promise. \textsuperscript{604} Barclay, meanwhile, affirming aspects of both Lutheran and “new perspective” readings, brings out “Paul’s dual portrayal of Abraham, as both believer in God and father of a multinational family.” \textsuperscript{605} He interprets 3:27-31, with its insistence that boasting is excluded, \textsuperscript{606} and that a person is justified through faith, as the “thematic introduction” to the discussion of Abraham in chapter 4. \textsuperscript{607} Romans 4:1-12 thus unpacks and grounds the claims of 3:27-30. \textsuperscript{608}

5.3.2 Exegetical issues in 4:1

The connective οὖν in 4:1 indicates that what follows is an implication that may be drawn from what has just been said. This inference is communicated in the form of a question. Debate over 4:1 centres on the ambiguous infinitive construction εὑρηκέναι Ἀβραάμ. The textual variant which places this infinitive before the noun Abraham is best attested. Other variants which place it after ἡμῶν, or omit it altogether, can be explained as attempts to resolve the grammatical incompleteness of the phrase. \textsuperscript{609} A majority of scholars take the infinitive construction together with the formula Τί οὖν ἐροῦμεν, and Abraham as subject of εὑρηκέναι, translating variously as “What… are we to say that Abraham… found?”, \textsuperscript{610} “What did Abraham find to be the case?”, \textsuperscript{611} “What…shall we say that Abraham…has discovered?”\textsuperscript{612} On such a reading, however, the formula Τί οὖν ἐροῦμεν does not follow the pattern of its use elsewhere in Romans, \textsuperscript{613} where it functions as a self-standing rhetorical question, which is then followed by another independent rhetorical question, or an independent statement. This leads Hays to propose his alternative interpretation, which is followed in a modified

\textsuperscript{604} Watson 2007: 261.
\textsuperscript{605} Barclay 2015: 480-81.
\textsuperscript{606} That is, that all “human capital” counts for nothing (Barclay 2015: 482).
\textsuperscript{607} Barclay 2015: 482.
\textsuperscript{608} Barclay 2015: 482 n.87.
\textsuperscript{609} See Cranfield’s discussion (1975: 226).
\textsuperscript{610} Cranfield 1975: 225.
\textsuperscript{611} Dunn 1988a: 198.
\textsuperscript{612} Barclay 2015: 483.
\textsuperscript{613} See 6:1; 7:7; 8:31; 9:14; 9:30.
form by Wright\textsuperscript{614} and others,\textsuperscript{615} which takes the formula in 4:1 as a stand-alone question, followed by a second question: “What then shall we say? Have we found Abraham to be our forefather (only) according to the flesh?”\textsuperscript{616} Here Abraham is taken as the object of the infinitive construction, and its implied subject as “we”, by analogy with the preceding rhetorical question.

A further difficulty is posed by the use of the first person plural in 4:1. In other passages in Romans ἐρο RandomForest is used deliberatively\textsuperscript{617} and inclusively, encompassing both communicator and addressees (who are predominantly Gentile). Some, however, argue, on the basis of the expression τῶν προσάτορα ἡμῶν κατὰ σάρκα, that in 4:1 Paul is speaking exclusively as a Jew, addressing questions raised by an imaginary Jewish conversation partner,\textsuperscript{618} or answering a hypothetical Jewish Christian question.\textsuperscript{619} Still others argue that here it is not Paul’s voice speaking, but the voice of the imaginary Jewish interlocutor of 2:17-24, with whom Paul continues to argue.\textsuperscript{620}

The prepositional phrase κατὰ σάρκα is also ambiguous in this verse, both syntactically and conceptually. Most commentators view this as modifying the noun phrase Ἄβραμ τῶν προσάτορα ἡμῶν. Jewett is in a minority in taking it together with the infinitive, so that the question is “what Abraham [our forefather] found on the basis of his fleshly capacities”, the latter expression translating κατὰ σάρκα and referring to “the competitive… propensity of human beings to boast in fleshly achievements”.\textsuperscript{621} Others detect different nuances in κατὰ σάρκα. As Hays notes, the expression is theologically loaded for Paul. Most obviously, it refers simply to natural physical descent,\textsuperscript{622} (see 1:3 and 9:3,5), denoting Abraham as physical progenitor of the Jews.\textsuperscript{623} Hays identifies at least two other dimensions of meaning in Paul’s usage, however: an allusion to

\textsuperscript{614} Wright 2013b: 227: “What shall we say, then? Have we found Abraham to be our ancestor in a human, fleshly sense?”
\textsuperscript{616} Hays 1985: 81.
\textsuperscript{617} See Elliott 1990: 158.
\textsuperscript{618} Wilckens 1978: 244; Hays 1985: 79 n.13.
\textsuperscript{619} Watson 2007: 261-62.
\textsuperscript{620} E.g. Stowers 1994b: 233-34; Campbell 2009: 716-18.
\textsuperscript{621} Jewett 2007: 308.
\textsuperscript{622} Hays 1985: 87-88 n.37.
\textsuperscript{623} Barclay 2015: 483.
circumcision, and to “the mode of human existence apart from God”. Hays finds a “complex interweaving” of these nuances in 4:1. Dunn argues that the expression here has somewhat negative overtones, bringing to mind circumcision and associated notions of boasting in the works of the law.

I propose that a procedural reading of γάρ in 4:2 has the potential to illuminate these exegetical disagreements, providing support for certain of these interpretations, and undermining others.

5.3.3 A procedural reading of γάρ in 4:2

In 4:2a-b γάρ introduces a conditional statement which contains several of the epistle’s key concepts and terms: ἐξέργων, ἐδικαίωθη and καύχημα. For the purposes of this discussion, I will simply use the standard translations “works”, “justified” and “boast” (except when examining the particular interpretation of a scholar who uses an alternative translation). Wolter’s reading of v.1 as an introductory question functioning as a heading, and v.2 as a thesis statement, disregards the clear guidance given by γάρ in v.2. Other scholars pay the connective more attention. For Cranfield, γάρ indicates that what follows it “explains the relevance” of the question in v.1 to the claim in 3:27 that boasting has been excluded. Wright, too, takes v.2a-b to explain the question in v.1, but in very different terms: if Abraham’s covenant membership was defined in terms of “works of Torah”, then he would have an ethnic boast, and Gentiles joining Abraham’s family would have to become ethnic Jews. Jewett, meanwhile, argues from the γάρ clause that the majority reading of κατὰ σάρκα is untenable and incompatible with the preceding co-text. In his view, the γάρ clause provides the reason for the “negative answer” which Paul’s audience must supply in answer to the question, “What shall we say our forefather Abraham found according to the flesh?”

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624 Hays 1985: 87-88 n.37.
625 Dunn 1988a: 199.
627 Cranfield 1975: 227. See also Käsemann 1973: 98.
628 Wright 2013b: 230.
630 Jewett (2007: 307) does not make explicit what this negative answer is.
The protasis of the conditional statement in v.2a can be understood as counterfactual, and the apodosis in v.2b similarly so, though some commentators read the latter as a concession to the idea that Abraham may indeed have had a boast in the sphere of the flesh. Given the claim in 3:27 that boasting is excluded, it seems best to read v.2c as swiftly denying both the assumption communicated in v.2a that Abraham was justified because of works, and that in v.2b that he has a boast, that is, grounds for God’s reward or favour. V.2c is then followed in v.3 by a scriptural citation, introduced by γάρ plus an introductory formula expressed as a rhetorical question. This citation provides strengthening, in the form of authoritative scriptural support, for the claim in v.2c that Abraham does not have a boast before God, which in turn further increases the relevance of the question in v.1.

The occurrence of γάρ in 4:2 can be explained as a straightforward example of guidance towards strengthening. Procedure G is triggered and the conditional clause in v.2a-b is processed as a strengthening premise. The preceding material in v.1 is identified as the most obvious and accessible candidate for strengthening.

Since there are several possible interpretations of v.1, I will examine each in turn for its compatibility with a procedural strengthening reading. First, the majority reading which takes Abraham as subject of εὑρηκέναι. The following assumptions, or something similar, may be involved in the construction of a strengthening series:

P (disambiguated propositional form of v.1): “It is relevant/important to know what Abraham, our [we Jews’] forefather according to the flesh, found (in this matter).”

Q introduced by γάρ (v.2a-b): If Abraham was justified by works, he has a boast.

IA1: If Abraham has a boast if he was justified by works, then the figure of Abraham invalidates the previous claim in 3:27-28 that boasting is excluded because a person is justified by faith without works of the law.

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634 See Barclay 2015: 484.
IA2: If the figure of Abraham invalidates the claim in 3:27-28, then it is relevant/important to the argument to know what Abraham our forefather according to the flesh found [in this matter].

C (strengthening assumptions communicated by v.1): It is relevant/important to know what Abraham our forefather according to the flesh found [in this matter].

On this reading, as a result of this inferential series, the relevance of the rhetorical question in 4:1 is increased, making it more comprehensible within the flow of the argument. The strengthening procedure is thus relevant as an explanation. This explanation is then immediately followed in v.2c by a denial of the assumptions communicated in it. The procedural instructions given by γάρ in v.2a, combined with the information it introduces, encourage addressees to make sense of the question in v.1 in relation to the claims in 3:27-28 regarding boasting and justification by faith without works of the law. The question is explained as a highly accessible inference to be drawn from 3:27-28. As a result, the argumentative pertinence and salience of the question in 4:1 is strengthened, leading to raised expectations of significant cognitive effects which will be derived from the subsequent answer to this question which follows in 4:3-25. A procedural reading of γάρ in 4:2a is thus compatible with the majority reading of 4:1, the relevance of which is increased by v.2a-b when interpreted in relation to the assumptions communicated in 3:27-28.

Following the majority reading of 4:1, then, the strengthening procedure triggered by γάρ consolidates the coherence of 3:27-4:1. Addressees are directed to process 4:1ff as a continuation of the discussion of the exclusion of boasting for all who are justified by faith. We can suggest that this discussion would naturally bring Abraham to mind for Paul’s addressees, familiar as they were with Jewish teaching and the perception of Abraham as the highly regarded model of an obedient, faithful Jew, whose circumcision was a sign of obedience to the covenant with Yahweh.

636 Wolter (2014: 277) suggests that it is the theme of the removal of the difference between Jews and Gentiles which inevitably leads to the question of Abraham (Rom. 3:22, 28, 30).
637 See Watson 2004: 222-36, and Jewett 2007: 308-9, who cites 1 Macc. 2:52 as an example of this view: Αβρααμ ούχ ούπναι παιδασμόν εὑρέθη πιστός, καὶ ἐλογισθη αὐτῇ εἰς δικαιοσύνην;
638 See Gen. 17:9-14.
Second, Hays’ minority reading of 4:1. Is a procedural account of γάρ compatible with this? Once again, I propose that γάρ in 4:2a triggers procedure G, and the information in v.2a is processed as a strengthening premise. Addressees’ comprehension processes search for a strengthening series to construct with the material in 4:1:

P (v.1, disambiguated propositional form): It is relevant/important to know whether Abraham is our [we Jews’] forefather [only] according to the flesh.

Q introduced by γάρ (v.2a-b): If Abraham was justified by works, he has an [ethnic] boast.

It is difficult, without undue processing effort, to construct any strengthening inferential series between v.2a-b and v.1 as construed by Hays. Any attempt involves accessing contextual assumptions which are not readily accessible in the co-text, which would require much effort, and which are speculative, such as the assumption that the expression “forefather according to the flesh” implies an ethnic boast. Additionally, any such series would be considerably more complex than the series proposed for the majority interpretation. On Hays’ reading, then, the information introduced by γάρ in v.2a does not make easily accessible any contextual assumptions from the preceding context which would help to increase the relevance of the question in 4:1.

Hays himself acknowledges that his reading of 4:1 introduces Abraham somewhat abruptly into the argument and is thus problematic in terms of its preceding flow. 639 His solution is to argue that the inference drawn in 4:1, that “Abraham is our forefather κατὰ σάρκα”, is developed from the false suggestion in 3:29 that “God is the God of the Jews only”. 640 Both statements (4:1 and 3:29a) represent a type of “inappropriately ethnocentric” Judaism which Paul wants to demonstrate as false. For Hays, the relevance of the refutation of the false inference in 4:1 will only become fully clear as

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639 Hays 1985: 86.
640 Hays regards this as an assumption against which Paul is arguing. But the rhetorical question of 3:29 implies that Paul regards its answer (“Of course God is not only the God of the Jews, but also of the Gentiles!”) as an accepted truth for his addressees (see Dahl 1977b: 189). Paul uses this axiom of Jewish belief (Stowers 1994b: 216) to bolster his statement in v.28, which in turn strengthens the salient claim of v.27. Pace Hays, the information in vv.29-30 thus does not represent a main argumentative point, but a strengthening theological framework. See also Dunn 1988a: 188, who notes a tension in Paul’s thought here.
Paul continues his argument in chapter 4. He will go on to show that Judaism itself, rightly understood, does not claim its relation to Abraham by virtue of physical descent, but by virtue of sharing Abraham’s trust in God’s promises (vv.10-17).641 But Hays’ interpretation ignores the guidance that γάρ gives that the information in 4:2a-b must be processed as increasing the relevance of preceding assumptions. Even if we take the claim communicated in 3:29a as a highly accessible contextual assumption, as Hays suggests, it is difficult to make sense of v.2a as supporting or explanatory information for the question in v.1 as Hays construes it.642 In short, a procedural account of γάρ in v.2 is not compatible with this reading.

Third, does a procedural reading of γάρ in 4:2 throw any light on Wright’s variation on Hays’ reading? Wright argues that the link between the counterfactual statement in 4:2a-b and 4:1 is to be understood in terms of the association that Paul has made between “works of Torah” and “Jews only” in 3:28-29, and of the redefinition of covenant membership of God’s family found in 3:21-31.643 This reading depends on Wright’s understanding of justification in terms of believers being declared righteous as members of God’s covenant people, Abraham’s family.644 Thus v.2a explains the question of v.1 in terms of whether Abraham’s covenant membership is defined in terms of “works of Torah”, which would mean that he and his family had a valid ethnic boast. Consequently, any Gentiles wanting to belong to this family would have to consider themselves ethnic Jews.645

Following Wright’s reading, γάρ triggers procedure G. Addressees’ comprehension processes search for an inferential series to construct which strengthens the assumptions behind the question in v.1:

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642 As Jewett (2007: 307) notes, Hays’ interpretation “requires an overly subtle argument that must insert the word “only” to make a link between the rhetorical question and the more immediate context of 4:2-10”.
643 Wright 2013: 1000.
644 Wright 2013: 957-59.
645 Wright 2002: 490.
P (v.1): Have we [Gentile and Jewish Christians\(^{646}\)] found Abraham to be our ancestor in a human, fleshly sense?

**Q introduced by γάρ (v.2a):** If Abraham became a member of the covenant family by works of Torah, he has an ethnic boast.\(^{647}\)

?IA1: If Abraham can boast ethnically because of works of the law, Gentiles need to become members of Abraham’s physical family (based on ethnic descent) by circumcision to become members of God’s covenant people. (But this inference is both speculative and a non-sequitur: it is not highly accessible in the co-text and assumes several other presuppositions that are not obvious.\(^{648}\))

IA2: If Gentiles must be circumcised to become members of God’s covenant people, then the claim in v.30 is invalidated that both Jews and Gentiles become members of God’s covenant people by faith.

IA3: If the claim in v.30 is invalidated if Abraham is the ancestor of Gentile and Jewish believers in a human, fleshly sense, then it is argumentatively relevant to know if Abraham is the forefather of Gentile and Jewish believers according to the flesh.

C (strengthening v.1): It is relevant to know if Abraham is the ancestor of Gentile and Jewish believers in a human, fleshly sense.

The result of this inferential strengthening series is not entirely sound, however. It involves non sequiturs, and speculative contextual assumptions. As with Hays’ interpretation, it is difficult to establish a valid strengthening inferential series between v.2 and v.1 without undue processing effort.

Moreover, even if we allow that “works of the law” and “Jews only” are closely associated concepts in the preceding argument, and understand justification in terms of membership of God’s people as Wright does,\(^{649}\) there remains a fundamental problem

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\(^{646}\) Wright 2002: 489.

\(^{647}\) Wright 2002: 490.

\(^{648}\) E.g. that Abraham can boast ethnically because of works of the law, and that a legitimate ethnic boast for Abraham necessitates Gentile circumcision.

\(^{649}\) This is not obvious from a *prima facie* reading of 3:21-31.
with his interpretation. It is this: the direction of Paul’s argument in 3:27-31\footnote{See, in particular, 3:30, with its reference to circumcision.} leads \textit{away} from the conclusion that Gentiles must embrace works of the law, including circumcision (see 3:30), and become part of Abraham’s ethnic family, in order to be justified. Consequently, it seems most unlikely that Paul’s addressees would infer from 3:27-31 that ethnic descent from Abraham is, after all, essential for inclusion in the community of those who are justified by faith, and be led to raise the question in 4:1 of whether Abraham is their ancestor in a human, fleshly sense.\footnote{See Barclay’s comment on the improbability of Gentile believers asking themselves whether they were descended from Abraham’s “fleshly family”: “…as far as we know, no one in Paul’s day considered that Gentiles, even proselytes, could claim physical ancestry from Abraham; circumcision would not mean discovering Abraham to be their “physical father” (Barclay 2015: 483 n.88).} The thrust of the preceding argument leads in precisely the opposite direction. The fact that a procedural strengthening account of \(\gamma\acute{u}\rho\) in 4:2 is not easily compatible with this reading of 4:1 helps to expose this lack of argumentative coherence, which seems the major weakness of this interpretation. While Wright’s interpretation looks back to the preceding co-text in its interpretation of 4:1-2, it does so in a way that creates extra processing effort, neglecting the obvious conceptual links between 4:2 and 3:27-28, which make a strengthening interpretation in terms of the claims in 3:27-28 most easily inferable and thus most relevant. Given the preceding co-text, Wright’s interpretation is less than optimally relevant.

In sum, the procedural instructions given by \(\gamma\acute{u}\rho\) in 4:2 help us to rule out both Hays’ and Wright’s reading of 4:1 as something of an argumentative tangent. If we take seriously the strengthening guidance given by \(\gamma\acute{u}\rho\), we must interpret 4:1 as relevant in relation to the question of whether anyone can be said to be justified by works of the law, and therefore to have a valid boast or merit in God’s eyes, based on their obedience and faithfulness in keeping the Jewish law.

Finally, we should consider how a procedural account of \(\gamma\acute{u}\rho\) may illuminate Jewett’s interpretation of 4:1. Following this interpretation, too, procedure G is triggered by \(\gamma\acute{u}\rho\) in v.2, and a series which results in an increase in the relevance of v.1 is looked for. Something akin to the following assumptions may be involved:
P (v.1, disambiguated propositional form): It is important/relevant to know what our [we believers\(^{652}\)] forefather Abraham found according to his fleshly capacities/achievements.\(^{653}\)

Q introduced by γάρ (v.2a-b): If Abraham was set right\(^{654}\) through works, he has a boast.

?IA1: The expression Abraham’s “fleshly capacities/achievements” alludes to circumcision and other acts of obedience to God’s commands. (?Inferable from background Jewish assumptions\(^{655}\) and 3:29.)

?IA2: Abraham’s circumcision and other acts of obedience are to be understood as “works of the law”. (Inferable from background knowledge of Jewish teaching.\(^{656}\))

IA3: If Abraham has a boast if he is set right through circumcision and other acts of law obedience (works), then this invalidates the claim in 3:27-28 that boasting is excluded because a person is set right by faith without works of the law.

IA4: If what Abraham found in relation to his fleshly capacities/achievements invalidates the claim in 3:27-28, then it is relevant to the argument to know what Abraham our forefather found in relation to his fleshly capacities.

C (strengthening assumptions communicated by v.1): It is relevant to know what Abraham our forefather found in relation to his fleshly capacities/achievements.

As a result of this series, the relevance of the question in v.1 is increased via access to assumptions associated with Paul’s claims in 3:27-28. As in the case of the majority reading, with Jewett’s interpretation also, γάρ guides addressees to make sense of v.1 in


\(^{653}\) Jewett 2007: 308.

\(^{654}\) Jewett 2007: 304.

\(^{655}\) Jewett 2007: 308, particularly n. 20, suggests that this assumption would have been readily accessible to Paul’s audience, but does not cite clear evidence for it. A passage such as Sir.44:19-20 might possibly be understood to make highly accessible the link between flesh, circumcision and faithfulness/obedience to God’s commandments. See also Dunn, 1988a: 199; Phil. 3:1-11; Gal. 6:12-13 etc.

\(^{656}\) See Watson 2004: 230-38, who shows that the author of Jubilees regards Abraham as a Torah-observant Jew, faithful to the law “even before the law’s full revelation”, while Philo regards Abraham as conforming to the unwritten laws of the created order, an earlier articulation of the Mosaic law (2004:242). See also Dunn 1988a: 200-1, who draws particular attention to Sir. 44:19-21.
relation to the preceding claims that boasting is excluded because a person is justified not by works of the law, but by faith. But the above strengthening series involves background assumptions which are not the most immediately accessible given the co-text, in particular the assumption that κατὰ σάρκα in 4:1 would be understood in terms of “fleshly achievements”, especially circumcision. So although Jewett’s interpretation is logically compatible with a procedural reading of γάρ, the strengthening series proposed requires more processing effort, and is thus less relevant than the one proposed for the majority reading.

In sum, a procedural strengthening account of γάρ in 4:2a, which treats the connective as a consistent communicative signal, provides valuable illumination for different construals of the notoriously difficult 4:1. It provides support for the majority interpretation, allowing us to see more clearly how the γάρ clause in 4:2a contributes to the coherence of the co-text. Within this interpretation, κατὰ σάρκα is best understood, as Barclay suggests, as a “standard recognition” of Abraham as the physical ancestor of the Jews, used by Paul for the purposes of argument, before he redefines Abraham’s fatherhood in the subsequent argument in terms of father of all, Jews and Gentiles, who are ungodly and who trust in God who raises the dead. Paul can then also be understood to be using “we” in 4:1 as an exclusive first person plural (“we the Jews”), while addressing an audience which is predominantly non-Jewish. In contrast, the procedural account rules out Hays’ and Wright’s alternative readings as tangential to the argumentative thrust in 3:27-4:25, and provides only weak support for Jewett’s interpretation. Our account of γάρ leads us to conclude that in 4:1 Paul is voicing a possible question raised by the previous argument of 3:27-31 which can be paraphrased thus: “What about Abraham our [Jewish] physical forefather? What has he found as far as boasting is concerned? Doesn’t he, the model of obedience and faithfulness, at least have some merit or worth before God because of his obedient acts?”

657 Barclay 2015: 483.
5.4 Exegetical discussion: Romans 10:4-5

The exegesis of both 10:4658 and 10:5-6659 is the source of major scholarly disagreement and has an important bearing on the interpretation of the wider co-text of 9:30-10:13. 10:4 is a notorious crux interpretum. Because of its perceived theological importance,660 it has sometimes been considered in isolation from its co-text.661 The occurrences of γάρ in 10:4-5, however, are the last two in a strengthening chain of four (10:2-5).662 R. Badenas draws attention to these occurrences of γάρ as implying “a continuous explanation within the development of Paul’s flow of thought. Consequently, both 10:4 and 10:5 should be interpreted in close connection with the co-text, and vv.1-13 taken together as a subsection.663

10:1: Ἀδελφοί, ἡ μὲν εὐδοκία τῆς ἐμῆς καρδίας καὶ ἡ δέσις πρὸς τὸν θεόν ύπὲρ αὐτῶν εἰς σωτηρίαν.

10:2: μαρτυρῶ γάρ αὐτοῖς ὅτι ζήλον θεοῦ ἐχουσιν ἀλλʼ οὐ κατʼ ἐπίγνωσιν;

10:3a: ἀγνοοῦντες γάρ τὴν τοῦ θεοῦ δικαιοσύνην καὶ τὴν ἱδίαν [δικαιοσύνην] ζητοῦντες στήσαι,

10:4: τῇ δικαιοσύνη τοῦ θεοῦ οὐχ ὑπετάγησαν

10:4: τέλος γάρ νόμου Χριστὸς εἰς δικαιοσύνην παντὶ τῷ πιστεύοντι.


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658 See Meyer 2004: 80; Badenas 1985: 2 on 10:4 as a crux interpretum.
660 10:4 read in a particular way encapsulates the perspective that there is a sharp discontinuity in God’s purposes between Israel and the church, law and gospel etc. In Rhyne’s (1981: 8) words: “Rom 10.4 has become the locus classicus for expressing the discontinuity between the Church and the Old Testament”. 661 Gignac (1994: 16) displays this tendency to accord 10:4 a special role, likening it to “un rocher solidement ancré au milieu du courant tumultueux d’une rivière…”. Wilckens (2014: 221, 224), despite viewing v.4 as providing a rationale for v.2, also regards the former as a “thesis”.
662 See Meyer 2004: 86.
This passage occurs in the middle of the third major section of the letter, chapters 9-11 (see 3.5.2 above). These form a close knit argumentative unit, and address the question of the continuing role of ethnic Israel in God’s purposes, and the nature of God’s election, in the light of God’s righteousness and mercy revealed in the gospel of Christ to Jew and Gentile alike. As Friedrich Avemarie notes, while past generations of scholars tended to read in Romans 10 a presentation of unbelieving Israel’s guilt, recent scholarship focuses instead on Israel’s failure of knowledge, its missing of the goal, or its misstep. Many scholars regard the line of argument of chapter 10 as beginning in 9:30-33, where the metaphor of a race is used for Israel’s zealous but unsuccessful pursuit of “the law of righteousness” (9:31), which contrasts with the Gentiles’ unlooked for attainment of righteousness. In 9:33 a blended citation from Isaiah 28:16 and 8:14 refers to the stone of stumbling placed in Zion, which is partially repeated in 10:11. Although Paul’s earnest expression of his desire for the salvation of Israel in 10:1 is regarded by some as a break in the flow of thought, in 10:2-4 his discussion of Israel’s misdirected zeal continues. As Meyer points out, v.2, introduced by γάρ, gives the grounds for Paul’s expression of concern for Israel in v.1 “by characterizing his people both positively and negatively”, while v.3, also introduced by γάρ, “in turn explains v.2 by elaborating on both aspects of the analysis”.

The claim in 10:3 that Israel has sought to establish its own righteousness, and has not understood or submitted to God’s righteousness, is introduced by γάρ. It is relevant as a
further explanation of the claim in v.2 that Israel’s zeal for God is without knowledge. V.3 is dominated by the contrast between τὴν τοῦ θεοῦ δικαιοσύνην and τὴν ἰδίαν [δικαιοσύνην]. The references in the preceding co-text of 9:30-31 to Gentiles’ attainment of δικαιοσύνην ...τὴν ἐκ πίστεως674 and in 9:32 to Israel’s pursuit of righteousness ὡς ἐξ ἐργῶν, throw light on v.3. Israel’s striving to establish its own righteousness is to be understood in terms of the latter, while God’s righteousness is associated with the former. Scholars’ differing interpretations of the concept δικαιοσύνη throughout the letter are determinative for their reading of these terms in this passage.675

5.4.2 Exegetical issues in 10:4

The exegetical difficulties of this verse stem primarily from the ambiguity of the expression τέλος... νόμον Χριστός. In addition, there is a question regarding the relationship of the prepositional phrase εἰς δικαιοσύνην to the rest of the sentence. The noun τέλος has a wide semantic range in Greek and in 10:4 could be interpreted as “termination/cessation” (“Christ has abolished the law”: the temporal interpretation), “goal” (“the law points to Christ”: the teleological interpretation), or “fulfilment” (“Christ fulfils the law”: the completive interpretation).676 These different options potentially lead to polarised views677 of Christ’s role in relation to the Mosaic law,678 although there is also overlap between aspects of these meanings.679 In the twentieth century the temporal interpretation was dominant,680 and continues to be advocated by

674 See Barclay 2015: 539.
675 Thus, for Cranfield (1979: 515), God’s righteousness is “God’s… gift of a status of righteousness”, while Israel’s own righteousness is “a righteous status of their own earning”. For Käsemann (1973: 268-69), the former is God’s power as Lord and Creator, which is contrasted with Israel’s “Leistungsfrömmigkeit” through works of the law. For Dunn, Israel’s own is “Israel’s claim to a righteousness which was theirs exclusively” 1988b: 595), For Wright (2002: 654-55), God’s righteousness is “God’s equitable covenant faithfulness” and Israel’s own, the attempt to set up “a status of “covenant membership” which would be for Jews and Jews only” (Wright 2013: 1169). For Barclay (2015: 538-41), Israel does not submit to “the righteousness of God that has been enacted in Christ”, but seeks instead to validate its own Torah-based righteousness as worthy of God’s favour. 676 Badenas 1985: 4. See Badenas 1985: 38-78 for a detailed study of the semantic range of τέλος in extra-biblical and biblical Greek.
677 See Badenas’ (1985: 7-34) overview of the history of interpretation of the expression.
678 Given the focus on Israel in the co-text, there is agreement that the referent of νόμος is the Mosaic law.
679 Dunn (1988b: 589) cautions against insisting on one sense to the exclusion of the others.
some. Others, while embracing the temporal interpretation, have argued for a more nuanced reading which includes other aspects of the sense of τέλος. In more recent scholarship, the teleological and completive views have enjoyed something of a resurgence.

The phrase εἰς δικαιοσύνην is understood variously as expressing result, purpose or goal, means, accusative of respect, or as consecutive. The expression can either be read as modifying τέλος... νόμον Χριστός (“Christ is the τέλος of the law as a means of righteousness”) or as modifying παντὶ τῷ πιστεύοντι (“for righteousness/ bringing righteousness/resulting in righteousness so that there may be righteousness for all who have faith”).

Various scholars comment on the occurrence of γάρ in this verse, acknowledging that the close relationship that it indicates between 10:4 and what precedes it must be taken into account in interpretation. Cranfield reads γάρ as here indicating that v.4 is an explanation of v.3b, while Wilckens regards it as indicating that v.4 provides grounds for the critique found in v.3. Meyer recognises that γάρ signals that v.4 is an explanation of v.3, and uses this signal as a key to deciding between “Christ the termination of the Torah” and “Christ the goal and intent of the Torah”.

681 E.g. Watson 2004: 335.
682 See Wilckens 2014: 223: “Im Sinn von 8,2 kann man sogar sagen: Christus ist das Ziel des Gesetzes, sofern in Christus Jesus die Toraz zum “Gesetz des Geistes des Lebens” geworden ist.”
683 See Barclay 2015: 540: “What God has given in Christ...is the fulfilment of what was envisaged by the Torah”; Avemarie 2010: 313; D. A. Campbell 2009: 790-91, who argues that Christ is the “end” of the law in the sense of “finishing line” or “goal” which brings the race to an end; Jewett 2007: 620 (goal and fulfilment), Wright 2002: 657 (goal); W. S. Campbell 1992: 62-63 (goal); Badenas 1985: 147 (goal); Rhyne 1981: 104 (goal) etc.
684 Käsemann 1973: 270.
686 Dunn 1988b: 596.
688 Cranfield 1979: 519: “If Christ is the goal of the law, it follows that a status of righteousness is available to everyone who believes”.
689 Dunn 1988b: 596.
690 Zerwick 1993: 482.
691 Käsemann 1973: 270.
693 See Meyer 2004: 86, Jewett 2007: 619, and Dunn 1988b: 589, who argues that failure to take it into account has “marred” discussion of the verse. This is an instance of γάρ which Dunn deems to be significant as a communicative signal, in contrast to some others (see discussion of 1:18 under 6.3.6).
694 Meyer 2004: 86.
reading of γάρ in 10:4 shed on the interpretation of both τέλος... νόμον Χριστός and εἰς δικαιοσύνην in this verse?

5.4.3 A procedural reading of γάρ in 10:4

Let us begin with the “termination/cessation” reading of τέλος... νόμον Χριστός. Is a procedural strengthening account of γάρ compatible with this? Here, following Dunn’s interpretation, I will also read εἰς δικαιοσύνην as expressing means. Procedure G is triggered by γάρ, and the information which follows in v.4 is processed as a complex of strengthening premises. Following a relevance-guided heuristic, addressees’ comprehension processes search for preceding material, the relevance of which would be increased by v.4. As no strengthening series can be constructed between v.4 and v.3b alone without undue effort, the whole of v.3 is selected as a complex of assumptions for strengthening, and an attempt is made to construct a strengthening series, along the lines of the following:

P (v.3): Not knowing God’s righteousness, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, [the people of Israel] did not submit to God’s righteousness.

Q introduced by γάρ (v.4): Christ is the termination of the law as a means to righteousness for all who believe.

IA1: If Christ is the termination of the law as a means to righteousness for all who believe, then the law is obsolete as a means of righteousness.

IA2: By “establishing their own righteousness” is meant that Israel pursued the law of righteousness by accomplishing works of the law. (Possibly inferable from 9:31-32.)

IA3: If Israel pursued the law of righteousness by accomplishing works of the law, but the law is obsolete as a means of righteousness, then Israel pursued the law of righteousness in vain. (Inferable from common sense.)

?IA4: If Israel pursued the law of righteousness in vain, then Israel did not submit to God’s righteousness. (This inference is a non sequitur, however: the fact that Israel pursued the law of righteousness in vain does not necessarily imply that Israel did not submit to God’s righteousness.)
C: Not knowing God’s righteousness, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, [the people of Israel] did not submit to God’s righteousness.

Although on this interpretation it is possible to draw a certain number of inferences from information made accessible by v.4 in relation to v.3, because of the presence of a non sequitur in the sequence above, we are left with a logical gap, and the series is unsound. It is difficult without undue effort to construct a complete logical series between the claim that Christ is the termination of the law, and the claim in v.3 that Israel did not know or submit to God’s righteousness, but sought to establish its own. This interpretation raises further questions for addressees in relation to the statement in v.3, in particular, “What is the link between Christ terminating the law and God’s righteousness?” and “What is the righteousness of God to which Israel did not submit?” (The answer to this second question is available from what has been said in 3:21-26, but it may take considerable processing effort at this point to access assumptions communicated in chapter 3, as they are not made highly accessible here.) As a result, the claim in v.3 remains less than optimally relevant. In this way, a procedural reading of γάρ in v.4 does not support Dunn’s interpretation, “Christ is the termination of the law as a means of righteousness for all who have faith.”

Secondly, is a procedural account of γάρ compatible with the interpretation of τέλος... νόμου Ἀριστός as Christ is the goal or fulfilled intention of the Mosaic law? Since a majority of interpreters who follow this teleological interpretation also read εἰς δικαιοσύνην as communicating purpose or result, I will follow this reading of the expression here. On a procedural reading of γάρ, the connective triggers procedure G and the statement in v.4 is processed as strengthening material for information communicated in the preceding co-text. Following a relevance-guided heuristic, the statement in v.3b is identified as not yet optimally relevant and thus as a candidate for strengthening. Addressees’ comprehension processes search for highly accessible

695 As Meyer (2004: 86) points out, if we read τέλος as termination, then v.4 does not provide any explanation for the main clause of v.3, “Israel did not submit to God’s righteousness”. Meyer also argues that reading εἰς δικαιοσύνην as “as a means to”, as Dunn (1988b: 589) does, is an unwarranted filling in of the ellipsis.

696 Although Badenas begins by distinguishing between “teleological” and “completive” interpretations, he later suggests that the two can be collapsed into one (Badenas 1985: 147), as there is much overlap between them, providing that “goal” is not understood simultaneously as “termination”. See also Barclay 2015: 537; Meyer 2004: 86.
contextual assumptions to combine in a strengthening series which will increase the relevance of v.3b. Something akin to the following assumptions may be involved:

**P** (v.3b): (Not knowing God’s righteousness, and seeking to establish their own), [the people of Israel] did not submit to God’s righteousness.

**Q introduced by γάπ (v.4):** Christ is the goal [fulfilled intention] of the law, bringing righteousness to all who have faith.

**IA1:** The goal of the law is to bring righteousness and life to God’s people. (Inferable from encyclopaedic knowledge of Jewish teaching, and from 7:10, 12-14.697)

**IA2:** If Christ is the goal of the law, bringing righteousness to all who have faith, this means Christ fulfils the intention of the law to bring righteousness and life to God’s people by bringing righteousness to all who have faith. (Inferable from IA1 and from assumptions reactivated from 8:1-4.)

**IA3:** The people of Israel do not have faith in Christ. (Inferable from 9:1-3, 9:30-10:1 etc..)

**IA4:** If the people of Israel do not have faith in Christ, and Christ fulfils the intention of the law to bring righteousness and life… by bringing righteousness to all who have faith, then the people of Israel have not submitted to God’s righteousness.

**C** (strengthening v.3b): (Not knowing God’s righteousness, and seeking to establish their own) the people of Israel did not submit to God’s righteousness.

As a result of the construction of this logical series, the claim in v.3b becomes more comprehensible and plausible, that is, its relevance is increased. The statement in v.4 is relevant as a strengthening explanation of the claim that Israel has not submitted to God’s righteousness. In particular, this strengthening makes immediately accessible the link between Christ as τέλος νόμου and God’s righteousness to which Israel did not submit (v.3): Christ, as goal and fulfilled intention of the law, is the one who brings/realises God’s righteousness and life, so Israel’s failure to trust in him means a

697 See Wilckens 2014: 223; Wright 2013: 1037.
failure to submit to God’s righteousness.\textsuperscript{698} A procedural strengthening reading of γάρ thus supports a goal/fulfilment interpretation of τέλος... νόμου Χριστός.

Thirdly, does a procedural account of γάρ support or undermine a reading such as Wilckens’, which combines the termination and goal senses of τέλος?\textsuperscript{699} Wilckens takes εἰς δικαιοσύνην as communicating purpose or result.\textsuperscript{700} On this interpretation, I suggest that the following strengthening series may be constructed between the statement in v.4 and the material in v.3:

\textbf{P} (v.3): Not knowing God’s righteousness, and seeking to establish their own, [Israel] did not submit to God’s righteousness.

\textbf{Q introduced by γάρ} (v.4): The goal and termination of the law is Christ, bringing righteousness to all who believe (in him).

\textbf{IA1}: The goal of the law is to bring righteousness and life to God’s people.

\textbf{IA2}: If Christ is the goal and termination of the law, bringing righteousness to all who believe in him, it is Christ who brings God’s righteousness to God’s people through their belief in him. (Inferable from IA1 and assumptions reactivated from 8:1-4.)

(\textbf{IA3}: If Christ is the termination of the law, the law is obsolete as a way to righteousness.)

(\textbf{IA4}: By “establishing their own righteousness” is meant that Israel pursued the law of righteousness by accomplishing works of the law.)

(\textbf{IA5}: If Israel pursued the law of righteousness by accomplishing works of the law, but the law is obsolete as a way to righteousness, then Israel pursued the law of righteousness in vain.)

(\textbf{IA6}: If Israel pursued the law of righteousness in vain, then Israel did not submit to God’s righteousness.)

\textsuperscript{698} See Meyer 2004: 86.
\textsuperscript{699} “das Endziel des Gesetzes ist Christus” (Wilckens 2014: 217).
\textsuperscript{700} “zur Gerechtigkeit” (Wilckens 2014: 217).
IA7: Israel has not believed in Christ.

IA8: If Israel has not believed in Christ, Israel has not known or submitted to God’s righteousness.

C: (Not knowing God’s righteousness, and seeking to establish their own), [Israel] did not submit to God’s righteousness.

From the above series, we see that it possible to construct a logical strengthening sequence between v.4 and v.3 in terms of the concept of Christ as goal of the law, but not in terms of Christ as termination of the law. For the latter, we encounter the same difficulties as with Dunn’s interpretation. The attempt to process this concept as a strengthening premise for the claim in v.3 creates undue processing effort and thus leads to a less than optimally relevant interpretation.

In sum, if we take seriously the procedural guidance γάρ gives in v.4, the interpretation “termination” for τέλος is indefensible, leading to an obscuring of the coherence of 10:2-4, whether or not it is combined with the sense “goal”. Furthermore, the interpretation of εἰς δικαιοσύνην as indicating purpose or result is compatible with our procedural account of γάρ (fitting logically, as it does, with the concept of Christ as goal/fulfilment of the law), whereas the interpretation “as a means to righteousness” is irrelevant in the co-text, creating extra processing effort.

5.4.4 Exegetical issues in 10:5-6

As mentioned above, the presence of γάρ in 10:5 is an indication that this verse is to be processed in close relation to v.4, rather than as the beginning as a new paragraph.701 Moreover, there is a parallelism, structural, verbal and conceptual, between v.5 and v.6, created in particular by the noun phrases τὴν δικαιοσύνην τὴν ἐκ [τοῦ] νόμου and ἡ… ἐκ πίστεως δικαιοσύνη, both of which introduce scriptural citations. The two verses are thus most naturally interpreted together as a single block of explanatory material introduced by γάρ, with δὲ in v.6 introducing the second half of the parallel.

701 For Wright (2002: 652), vv.5-9 “explain and undergird” vv.1-4, forming the “exegetical heart of the passage”. For Dunn (1988b: 599), vv.5-10 provide the “scriptural underpinning” for the whole of 9:30-10:4, though he treats 10:5-13 as a separate paragraph.
Furthermore, since the speech of the personified Righteousness by Faith (plus interpretations in the style of a *pesher*, introduced by τὸ τῆς ἐστιν⁷⁰²) continues into v.8, the whole of vv.5-8 can be read as explanatory material introduced by γάρ in 10:5.

10:5 and 6 contain, respectively, citations from the Torah, from Leviticus 18:5, and a composite citation from Deuteronomy 8:17, 9:4 and 30:12.⁷⁰³ The relationship between v.5 and vv.6-8 in Paul’s argument is much contested: are they in sharp contrast, or are they complementary, the citations from Deuteronomy reinterpreting and bringing out the full sense of the Leviticus quotation? Depending on their view of this relationship, some scholars find in these verses clear support for either a termination reading of τέλος... νόμου Χριστός,⁷⁰⁴ or for a goal/fulfilment reading.⁷⁰⁵

The apparent contrast between the citations in v.5 and v.6 is potentially problematic for a goal reading of τέλος in v.4.⁷⁰⁶ The parallel between ἡ δικαιοσύνη ἡ ἐκ τοῦ νόμου which introduces the quotation from Leviticus 18:5, and ἡ ἐκ πίστεως δικαιοσύνη which introduces the citation from Deuteronomy 30:11-14, is frequently read as antithetical. On this reading, Leviticus 18:5, communicated by Moses the lawgiver, represents righteousness as conceived of within the old epoch of the law, which promises life only to those who keep the law.⁷⁰⁷ The adapted version of Deuteronomy 30, on the other hand, is spoken by the personified Righteousness by Faith, who speaks in opposition to Moses and represents the new epoch of righteousness through faith in Christ.⁷⁰⁸ Käsemann notes that all references to law and works are left out of this adapted version of Deuteronomy.⁷⁰⁹

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⁷⁰³ See Whittle’s (2015: 47-50) discussion of Paul’s adaptation in vv.6-8 of the citations from Deuteronomy.
⁷⁰⁴ E.g. Watson 2004: 332; “The initial function of the Leviticus citation… is to confirm the assertion… that “Christ is the end of the law” (10:4); Käsemann 1973: 271; Dunn 1988b: 602.
⁷⁰⁵ For Cranfield (1979: 522), vv.5-13 explain not just τέλος... νόμου Χριστός but also εἰς δικαιοσύνην παντί τῶν πιστεύων.
⁷⁰⁸ See, however, Meyer’s critique (2004: 89) of this reading, since it implies that the law is alien to God, and “law” and “Christ” are in opposition.
⁷⁰⁹ Käsemann 1973: 271. Whittle (2015: 49) also draws attention to the absence in the citation of the reference to hearing and doing the commandment, which is found in Deut. 30:12.
Avemarie, however, argues for a concessive reading of 10:5 in relation to 10:6, which is compatible with the interpretation “Christ is the goal of the law”. This reading recognises the validity of Torah, and keeping its commandments, but the righteousness which comes by faith surpasses this, alone enabling the recognition of Christ as the object of the Torah.\footnote{Avemarie 2010: 314. See also Whittle 2015: 50: “Indeed, law promised life to those doing it…. but, in the hermeneutical move of Righteousness by Faith, law’s promise of life finds it goal not in those who do it, but in those who trust in Christ.”} Badenas, meanwhile, questions the interpretation of δέ in v.6 as introducing a contrast, arguing that the γάρ-δέ construction (in vv.5-6) is used conjunctively here rather than adversatively (as in 3:21-22).\footnote{Badenas 1985: 123 n.282. See also W. S. Campbell 1992: 64-65; Hays 1989:76.} He regards v.5 as a scriptural explanation of the statement in 10:4 that the goal of the law for righteousness is Christ, which then serves as an introductory statement for the citation of Deuteronomy 30:12-14. By bringing these two citations together, Paul equates “the righteousness taught by the law” and “righteousness by faith”, showing that “doing the righteousness taught by the law is coming to Christ for salvation, and thus, receiving life”.\footnote{Badenas 1985: 124.} The speech of righteousness by faith in vv.6-8 can thus be understood as an explanation of v.5, that is, as an interpretation of “what the text means” from the perspective of righteousness by faith.\footnote{Badenas 1985: 129.}

### 5.4.5 A procedural reading of γάρ in 10:5

Let us explore how a procedural reading of γάρ in 10:5 illuminates the question of the argumentative relationship between the citations in v.5 and vv.6-8. First, does a procedural account provide support for an interpretation such as Käsemann’s which takes v.5 and v.6 in antithesis (which I will call interpretation A)? On this reading, γάρ triggers procedure G and the entirety of vv.5-8 is processed as strengthening premises. Following a relevance-guided heuristic, the statement in v.4 is identified as a candidate for strengthening. I suggest that the following strengthening series, or something similar, may be constructed:

\footnote{See also Jewett 2007: 625, who views the citation of Lev.18:5 in v.5 as “the premise required for the reinterpretation of Deut. 30 in vv.6-7”, Wright 2002: 660, 662, and Elliott 1990: 267 n.2: “What Moses writes about ‘the righteousness that comes from the Law’… is given its content through the messianic exegesis of Deut. 30.12-14: faith in Jesus Christ is what Torah itself requires.”}
P (v.4): Christ is the termination of the law, bringing righteousness to everyone who believes.

Q introduced by γάρ (vv.5-8): Moses writes about the righteousness which is from the law, “The one doing these things will live by them.” In contrast, the righteousness by faith says this: “Do not say in your heart, ‘Who will ascend into heaven?’, that is, to bring Christ down, or ‘Who will descend into the abyss?’ that is, to bring Christ up from the dead.” But what does it say? “The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart”, that is, the word of faith we preach.

IA1: If the righteousness which is from the law says, “The one doing these things will live by them”, then righteousness and life from the law is attained by doing/keeping the law.

IA2: If righteousness by faith says…“The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart”, that is, the word of faith we preach, then righteousness by faith involves an internal response of believing in Christ.

IA3: If righteousness and life from the law is attained by doing the law, but righteousness by faith involves an internal response of believing in Christ, then Christ represents the termination of the law, bringing righteousness to everyone who believes in Christ.

C (confirming v.4): Christ is the termination of the law, bringing righteousness to everyone who believes.

As a result of this inferential series, the statement in 10:4 is strengthened. The strengthening procedure is relevant as a further explanation of this claim, which increases its relevance by making it more comprehensible and thus plausible. A procedural account of γὰρ in v.5 is thus compatible with interpretation A of 10:4, and with Watson and Käsemann’s contention that the contrast in vv.5-6 confirms the assertion in v.4 that Christ is the termination of the law.

715 Abbreviated for reasons of space.
Second, does a procedural reading of γάρ in 10:5 fit with a view such as Badenas’, that vv.6ff. are not in antithesis with v.5, but rather in continuity, reinterpreting it and bringing out its fuller meaning, in the light of Christ? I will call this interpretation B. On this reading, too, the entirety of vv.5-8 is processed as strengthening premises, and, following a relevance-guided heuristic, the statement in v.4 is identified as a candidate for strengthening. Here, though, the following strengthening series, or something similar, may be constructed:

**P** (v.4): Christ is the goal/fulfilled intention of the law, bringing righteousness to everyone who has faith.

**Q introduced by γάρ (vv.5-8):** Moses writes about the righteousness which is from the law, “The one doing these things will live by them.” And the righteousness by faith says this: “Do not say in your heart, ‘Who will ascend into heaven?’ that is, to bring Christ down, or ‘Who will descend into the abyss?’ that is, to bring Christ up from the dead.” But what does it say? “The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart”, that is, the word of faith we preach.

**IA1:** If the righteousness which is from the law says, “The one doing these things will live by them”, then the goal/intention/result of the righteousness which comes from obeying the law is life.

**IA2:** If righteousness by faith says…“The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart”, that is, the word of faith we preach, then the divine word/command to be faithful and obey is near in the gospel message about faith in Christ.

**IA3:** If the goal of the righteousness which comes from obeying the law is life, and the divine word to be faithful and obey is near in the gospel of Christ, then the way to obey the law and have life is through faith in Christ.

**IA4:** If the way to obey the law and have life is through faith in Christ, then Christ is the goal/fulfilled intention of the law, bringing righteousness to everyone who has faith.

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716 See Wright 2013: 1174.
717 See Whittle 2015: 50.
718 See Whittle 2015: 50, 56.
C (strengthening v.4): Christ is the goal/fulfilled intention of the law, bringing righteousness to everyone who has faith.

This inferential series leads to the strengthening of the claim in v.4 by means of the authoritative scriptural citations in vv.5-8, which are not set in antithesis, but interpret one another. The strengthening procedure may be relevant as a further explanation, or as validating confirmation, depending on what achieves the most cognitive effects for different addressees. On this interpretation, the claim that the goal of the law is Christ is supported from two different passages from the Torah itself. Together these bring out the life giving intention of the law and its fulfilment through faith in Christ, which is effectively obedience to God’s command to choose life. A procedural reading of γάρ in 10:5 is thus fully compatible with interpretation B of vv.5-8.

Although a procedural account of γάρ in 10:5 fits with both interpretation A and interpretation B above, in deciding between these we need to take into account the whole chain of γάρ clauses in 10:2-5, and the guidance that this gives towards the coherence of the subsection. While the contrastive reading of vv.5-8 is compatible with procedural γάρ, the termination reading of v.4, which the contrastive reading confirms, is not: we have seen that the termination reading cannot be understood to strengthen what precedes it in v.3, without undue processing effort. Ultimately the termination reading of τέλος in v.4, supported by the contrastive reading of vv.5-8, is undermined by a procedural account of γάρ. On the other hand, a teleological or completive interpretation of v.4, supported by a continuative reading of vv.5-8, is confirmed by procedural γάρ, encouraging a reading of 10:1-13 as a seamless whole, and cementing the coherence of the whole argument back to 10:1 (and behind that, 9:30-33).

5.5 Conclusions

In this chapter I have demonstrated the interpretative impact of a procedural account of γάρ at the micro-level of exegesis. Reading γάρ as a procedural indicator enables us to rely on it as consistent communicative clue and significant exegetical signpost. Its

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719 Deuteronomy 30:15, 19.
720 This reading illuminates the statement in 9:31 that Israel pursued the law of righteousness, but did not achieve the law: it did not achieve the law’s life giving intention, though it pursued works of the law.
strengthening guidance allows us to choose between major interpretative options in some highly contested passages, clearing a way through certain exegetical thickets and making a real contribution to exegesis. This procedural account of γάρ has provided significant illumination for two important cruces interpretum in Romans 4:1-2 and 10:4-5. In the former, it confirms a standard reading of 4:1, undermining Hays’ alternative construal. In the latter, it renders less plausible a termination or cessation interpretation of τέλος… νόμον Χριστός, while supporting the interpretation “goal” or “fulfilled intention”. In addition, it suggests that 10:5 and 10:6-8 are best read, not in antithesis, but in continuity with each other, with 10:6-8 interpreting 10:5 in the light of 10:4 and the preceding co-text, to which it leads back via the strengthening chain of γάρ clauses (10:2-5).

In each case, the procedural indicator γάρ serves as a crucial piece of exegetical evidence to be taken into consideration from the outset of exegesis. Interpretations which do not allow for a strengthening relationship between the γάρ clause and preceding claims are ruled out. In addition, the procedure helps to bind the γάρ clause and the strengthened claims with the preceding co-text, since the strengthening towards which γάρ guides involves the accessing of previously communicated contextual assumptions. The procedural reading of γάρ thus supports interpretations which recognise this co-textual coherence, but throws into question those which neglect the close inferential and argumentative links with the wider preceding co-text.

It is to questions of the coherence, direction and thrust of Paul’s argument that we now turn in chapter 6. In what way is this small procedural signpost relevant not only at the micro-level of exegesis, but also on the macro-plane of the wider argument?
Chapter 6: γάρ as communicative signpost at the macro-argumentative level

6.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, I demonstrated how a procedural account of γάρ can throw light on the task of the interpretation of Romans at the micro-level of exegesis. In this chapter, I want to explore the implications of a procedural account at the macro-level of the epistle’s wider argument. I will make use of the insight that γάρ helps us distinguish between strengthening information, and more salient argumentative points. I propose that this allows us to identify the thrust of Paul’s argument, seeing the argumentative wood for the trees, thus avoiding the pitfall of being sidetracked by theological questions which are not Paul’s primary focus. I will show how reading γάρ as a communicative signpost assists us in tracing a path through the exegetical maze at two pivotal points in the letter’s argument. As a result, we are able to rule out certain interpretations as cul-de-sacs. More significantly still, it is my claim that this procedural guidance sheds light on the major interpretative questions of the purpose of the letter and the centre and direction of its argument. Moreover, I will demonstrate how γάρ contributes to the coherence of whole subsections and sections, compelling us to pay careful attention to the wider co-text of the epistle in our interpretation of some pivotal passages.

In order to explore these implications, I will consider two passages, 1:15-18 and 15:7-13, one from the opening of the argument, the other from its close. Both are arguably determinative for the contested issues of the letter’s purpose, and the thrust of its argument. Both are the source of ongoing scholarly debate and give rise to an array of alternative interpretations. Given the constraints of this study, I will limit my discussion chiefly to recent readings of these passages which are illuminated in different ways by a procedural reading of γάρ. In addition, I will consider how this procedural analysis takes us forward in our understanding of the letter’s purpose, audience, and argumentative path.
6.2 Direction and centre of the argument of Romans

In chapter 2 above I discussed the unresolved question of the purpose of Romans, and the related issue of the identity of its first addressees. The debate over the epistle’s purpose is determinative for a third highly contested subject: the direction, centre and thrust of Paul’s argument. While many commentators divide the body of the letter into four major sections based on its content and themes, there is much disagreement as to where its argumentative centre of gravity lies. Many scholars broadly following a traditional Lutheran interpretation regard the exposition of justification by faith in chapters 1-4 as the centrepiece of Paul’s argument. Those who argue for an apocalyptic reading, on the other hand, find its centre of gravity in chapters 5-8. Still others see the discussion of God’s dealings with Israel in chapters 9-11 as the climax of Paul’s argumentation. Some focus on Romans 12:1-2 as central, while others again have identified chapters 14-15 as the key to understanding the letter’s argument and purpose. Finally, some who pay particular attention to the relationship between Jews and Gentiles in Paul’s argument argue that its climactic conclusion is found in 15:7-13.

Related to this issue is the role of 1:16-17 in the epistle’s argument, and its relationship with the surrounding co-text. A standard reading interprets these verses as a thesis statement for the whole epistle, summarising the gospel of God’s righteousness by

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722 This fourfold division falls roughly along the lines of chs. 1-4; 5-8; 9-11; 12-15, though there is variation in relation to ch. 5 (Campbell 2009: 471).
723 Moo (1996:218) cites Luther, who reads 3:23ff. as “the chief point, and the very central place of the Epistle, and of the whole Bible.” See also Seifrid 2004: 107; Cranfield 1975: 199; Käsemann 1973: 85 etc.
725 Barclay 2015: 520.
means of justification by faith.\footnote{E.g. Thiselton 2016: 75; Tobin 2004: 104; Wright 2002; Moo 1996: 63; Fitzmyer 1993: 253; Käsemann 1973: 18; Dunn 1988a: 36. In a variation, Cranfield (1975: 87) identifies 1:16b-17 as the thesis.} This thesis introduces the exposition of the letter body, beginning at 1:18. Many commentators and translators set these verses apart from the surrounding co-text in a subsection all of their own with a separate heading.\footnote{E.g. Cranfield 1975: 199, for whom 3:21-26 is “the centre and heart” not only of 1:18-4:25, but of Rom. 1.16b-15.13.} Indeed the verses are sometimes read as a doctrinal summary not only of Romans, but of Pauline theology.\footnote{Käsemann 1973; Cranfield 1975; Dunn 1988a etc. See Campbell’s (2009: 314) critique of this construal, which he summarises thus: “1) a statement of the problem: 1:18-3:20; 2) a description of the solution in thesis form: 1:16-17; 3:21-31…; and 3) an authoritative scriptural attestation to that solution: 4:1-25.”} On this standard interpretation, the thesis is developed in more detail in 3:21-26,\footnote{See Seifrid 2004: 107.} after an extended demonstration in 1:18-3:20 of humanity’s universal sinfulness, showing the necessity of justification by faith apart from works of the law. Romans 4 then provides a scriptural proof of the validity of the thesis in the example of Abraham.\footnote{See Moo 1996: 65 n.9.} By the end of chapter 4, the thesis has essentially been proved.\footnote{Campbell 2009: 350.} Various scholars, however, find this analysis of 1:16-17 and chapters 1-4 problematic. For a start, large chunks of the epistle’s later argument arguably bear little obvious relation to the thesis statement (for instance, ch. 7 and chs. 12-15).\footnote{Campbell 2009: 350.} Chief among opponents of the standard reading is Campbell, who is highly critical of the prior assumption that 1:16-17 and 3:21-31 represent thesis statements, which are then used as an interpretative grid into which the rest of the argument of the epistle is forced, in a “vicious interpretative circle”.\footnote{See Moo 1996: 65 n.9.} Campbell argues that, while the material in 1:16-17 can be seen in retrospect to summarise the epistle’s later discussion, there is nothing in the text that indicates its thematic status for addressees encountering the letter for the first time.\footnote{See Seifrid 2004: 107.} Campbell is particularly concerned to counter a “foundationalist” reading of 1:18-3:20, which he contends is the bedrock of the citadel of the “justification
theory” he aims to deconstruct. In his view, such a reading regards 1:18-3:20 as a preparatory argument for the thesis announced in 1:16-17. On such a “prospective” reading, the consciousness of the universal culpability of sinful humanity becomes a prerequisite for the arrival of the gospel in 3:21-31. For Campbell, this reading is fundamentally anthropocentric, requiring rational individuals to recognise their sinful plight before the gospel provides them with a solution.

Others question the validity of underlining 1:16-17 as a thesis divorced from its co-text by pointing to its close connection with the surrounding co-text, as signalled by the chain of four γάρ clauses in 1:15-18. As we have seen (see 1.2.3 above), Elliott argues that these verses should be read as a single unit of thought which belongs tightly together. He is sharply critical of the approach commonly adopted by translators and commentators which breaks these connections; such a treatment of the text is “grammatically indefensible”, though “useful to a particular theological reading” of the epistle. Elliott argues that the theme essays composed in Paul’s day had clear indications of their genre, but such indications are missing from Romans. The epistle should therefore be read, not as a theme essay, but according to its “clear epistolary signs”.

In short, the question of the direction, centre and thrust of Paul’s argument is far from settled. It has an important bearing on wider questions of the interpretation of the apostle’s theology, and is integrally linked to the issue of the letter’s purpose. It is my suggestion that a procedural reading of γάρ in the pivotal passages of 1:15-18 and 15:7-13 can throw significant light on the argumentative direction and emphases of Romans, and on its purpose.

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740 This grid assumes that vv.16-17 look forward only, summarising the whole epistle in nuce, and that what follows begins a “proof” of this thesis. See Seifrid 2004: 107.
741 Campbell 2009: 315, 341, 1021 n.7. Campbell is concerned to counter a Western, rationalistic, individualistic construal of the Pauline gospel.
742 Campbell 2014: 139.
743 Elliott 2008: 75; 1990: 82.
744 E.g. a title introducing the subject, and a description of one’s method (Elliott 2008: 75).
745 In contrast to Tobin (2004: 104), who maintains that in 1:16-17 Paul begins “by setting out the basic proposition he wants to argue”, just as Epictetus does in most of his diatribes. Tobin does not mention that Epictetus’ “propositions” are not introduced by γάρ.
6.3 Romans 1:15-18

As the above discussion shows, Romans 1:15-18 occurs at a hotly debated hinge point at the opening of the epistle’s argument. Although there is general agreement that these verses contain some of the epistle’s main concepts and themes, there is much disagreement about their relationship with the preceding epistolary frame, and the ensuing argument. These verses contain a tight-knit fourfold chain of γάρ clauses and include, in 1:18, the most notorious occurrence of γάρ in the letter. The passage is thus a prime candidate for demonstrating how a procedural account of γάρ throws significant light on contested issues relating to the wider argument.

6.3.1 Co-text

Romans 1:15-18 straddles the transition between the letter’s opening epistolary frame (identified variously as vv.1-15, vv.1-16a and vv.1-17) and the main body of its argument. The frame consists of a) an extended prescript (vv.1-7) which includes Paul’s summary of the gospel, b) a thanksgiving and prayer section which is a modified version of a conventional Jewish liturgical εὐχαριστία-formula (vv.8-12), bringing into focus Paul’s desired visit to Rome, and c) a brief narrative account which provides the background for this delayed visit (vv.13-15). In v.13 Paul insists on the sincerity of his desire, explaining the delay in the fulfilment of his wish. His explicitly stated motivation for his eagerness to have spiritual fruit among the Roman believers (v.13) is found in v.14: he is a debtor to Greeks and barbarians, wise and foolish alike, that is, to all Gentiles, because of his apostolic calling (v.5). The implication is that the Roman believers are among those towards whom Paul has an apostolic responsibility and that he is thus motivated by a strong sense of commitment to them. In v.15 Paul rounds off this striking emphasis on his eagerness to visit the Roman believers

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746 Wuellner 1991: 133.
748 Wolter 2014: xii; Wilckens 2014: 76-77.
750 Elliott 1990: 79.
751 Wilckens 1978: 90.
752 Jewett 2007: 123.
753 Wolter (2014: 111-12) argues that by means of these two merisms, Paul designates the whole of non-Jewish humanity.
with a further articulation of his strong desire to preach the gospel (εὐαγγελίσασθαι) to his addressees in Rome. This statement in v.15 effectively summarises the main point and focus of vv.8-15.

The interpretation of εὐαγγελίσασθαι is problematic. Elsewhere Paul uses the verb to refer exclusively to the preaching of the gospel which aims at the conversion of the unevangelised, but ὑμῖν in v.15 indicates that his desire is to preach to his addressees, who are, however, already believers in Christ. Furthermore, this reading of εὐαγγελίσασθαι contradicts 15:20, where the apostle refers to his principle of not proclaiming the gospel where Christ has already “been named”, so as not to build on another’s foundation. In view of this, the verb is best understood not as proclaiming the gospel to the unconverted, but as referring to the preaching and teaching of Paul’s distinctive version of the gospel to the Roman believers, a version which is particularly relevant to the situation in Rome (see below). This reading fits with Paul’s expressed desire in v.11 to impart a spiritual gift for his addressees’ strengthening, and his hope of having “fruit” among them (v.13), which need not be understood in the narrow sense of converts. This reinforces the view that Paul’s claim in v.15 is in fact a summary of the thrust of the whole of 1:8-15.

6.3.2 Romans 1:16-18: Transitional tension and questions raised

The ambiguity regarding the argumentative role of 1:16-18 is due partly to a tension between the conceptual content and communicative signals of these verses. While the content to some extent suggests a turn in v.16 from the formalities and conventions of the letter opening to the subject of Paul’s argument, the occurrences of γύρω suggest a close backwards connection with the material in v.15 (and preceding verses).

Four key questions for these verses are:

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756 Klein’s (1991) explanation of this contradiction seems unconvincing: there is little evidence in the letter that Paul is intending to found a church in Rome because the believers there lack “the authentic apostolic stamp” (1991: 40). Instead, he regards them as a model of faith and maturity (1:8; 15:14).  
758 See Wilckens 2014: 79 n.85.
1. How should we interpret vv.16-17 in relation to the preceding and subsequent co-text?

2. What is the argumentative status of vv.16-17?

3. How should we interpret v.18 in relation to the preceding and subsequent co-text?

4. What bearing do the answers to these questions have on discerning the purpose of the letter?

In seeking to answer these, I will first consider some scholarly attempts to make sense of 1:16-17, and 1:18, in the surrounding co-text, paying particular attention to their reading of γάρ. I will offer a procedural account of γάρ in these verses and show how this throws light on our questions, helping us to decide in favour of particular interpretations. For ease of presentation and analysis, I will discuss the three occurrences in 1:16-17, and the one in 1:18, in two different subsections.759

6.3.3 Romans 1:16-17: Different readings of communicative signals, content and co-text

1:13: οὐ θέλω δὲ ύμᾶς ἀγνοεῖν, ἀδελφοί, ὅτι πολλάκις προεθέμην ἐλθεῖν πρὸς ύμᾶς, καὶ ἐκολοθην ἄρι τοῦ δεύτερο, ἵνα τινὰ καρπὸν σχῶ καὶ ἐν ύμῖν καθὼς καὶ ἐν τοῖς λοιποῖς ἔδεικνυ.

1:14: Ἔλλησιν τε καὶ βαρβάροις, σοφοῖς τε καὶ ἀνοίητοις ὕφειλτης εἰμί,

1:15: οὗτος τὸ κατ᾽ ἐμὲ πρόθυμον καὶ ύμῖν τοῖς ἐν Ῥώμῃ εὐαγγελίσασθαι.

1:16a: Οὐ γὰρ ἐπαισχύνομαι τὸ εὐαγγέλιον,

1:16b: δύναμις γὰρ θεοῦ ἐστίν εἰς σωτηρίαν πάντα τῷ πιστεύοντι, Ἰουδαίῳ τε πρώτον καὶ Ἕλληνι.

1:17a: δικαιοσύνη γὰρ θεοῦ ἐν αὐτῶ ἀποκαλύπτεται ἐκ πίστεως εἰς πίστιν, καθὼς γέγραπται, Ὅ δὲ δίκαιος ἐκ πίστεως ζησεῖται.

This is not because I view 1:18 as belonging to a separate section from 1:16-17: I hope to show precisely the opposite.
1:18: Ἀποκαλύπτεται γὰρ ὑπὲρ θεοῦ ἀπὸ οὐρανοῦ ἐπὶ πᾶσαν ἁσθενίαν καὶ ἀδικίαν ἀνθρώπων τῶν τῆς ἁλήθειας ἐν ἀδικίᾳ κατεχόντων,

Various scholars seem unwilling to accord γὰρ weight as a communicative clue in these verses. Dunn, for instance, dismisses Achtemeier’s analysis of 1:14-2:16 as a complete unit in which 1:16, 17 and 18ff. are all grammatically subordinate to 1:15 because, for Dunn, this is to “overload the significance of γὰρ”. Campbell, too, dismisses the communicative role of γὰρ. He regards the occurrence in v.16a as an example of the “blander” use of the connective, and maintains that Paul’s eagerness to preach in Rome is probably not related to the “absence of shame” mentioned in v.16a. Here Campbell effectively makes a prior decision about the relationship between vv.14-15 and v.16 based on his own wider reading of the letter’s opening, leading him to discount the communicative clue given by γὰρ because it does not fit.

Other commentators pay more attention to γὰρ in v.16a and the relationship it signals with what precedes. Douglas Moo recognises that from the point of view of syntax, Paul’s claim in v.15 that he desires to preach the gospel in Rome is the “main statement in the sequence”. Nevertheless, the language of v.16a suggests “a shift in focus” away from Paul’s own ministry to the gospel itself. So although vv.16-17 are technically part of the “proem” or introduction, they represent the transition into the letter body by stating the epistle’s theme. Cranfield, acknowledging that vv.16-17 belong formally with vv.8-15, breaks up v.16, taking v.16a with the preceding subsection, but regarding vv.16b-17 as the statement of the letter’s “theological theme”. Wilckens, however, criticises both Cranfield’s insertion of a break before v.16b, and Käsemann’s before v.16a, arguing that both destroy the coherence of vv.14-17, arising in turn out of vv.8-13. Wilckens keeps vv.14-17 as a single paragraph, but recognises the difficulties inherent in dividing up this text because of the fluidity of the transition from opening

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760 Achtemeier 1985: 35-36.
763 Campbell 2009: 1021 n.6.
764 Moo 1996: 64.
766 Wilckens 1978: 77.
section to main letter body. R. Dean Anderson argues that formally speaking, Paul’s statement in v.15 might be considered to be the propositio for the entire epistle, because of the series of “causal conjunctions [γάρ]” in vv.16-18. Nevertheless, 1:16-17 represents the real “theme” of Paul’s argument.

Certain scholars, guided by γάρ in v.16a, are more willing to accord the relationship between v.15 and v.16 real argumentative significance. A. J. Wedderburn argues that there is no clear cut division between vv.16-17 and either what precedes or what follows. Influenced by Nils Dahl, he does not limit the thesis statement to vv.16-17. Instead, he identifies three thematic statements in vv.16b-18, each of which is “logically connected” to what precedes by means of γάρ, so that all three “serve as a warrant” for what precedes. In order to make sense of the connection between v.16 and v.15, Wedderburn turns to the letter’s possible social setting. While some commentators interpret v.16a, “I am not ashamed of the gospel” as an introductory “confessional formula” for the thesis statement, Wedderburn reads it differently. He argues that the connection indicated by γάρ in v.16a with Paul’s expressed desire in v.15 makes best sense if there was some situational reason why Paul might potentially be ashamed of preaching the gospel in Rome. He proposes that Paul’s gospel may have been discredited in Rome in some way. Romans 1-11 can then be read as a “defence of Paul’s message and ministry” against charges in Rome that it is shameful.

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767 Anderson 1996: 185. Witherington (2004: 47) explains the propositio as that part of a rhetorical discourse which sets forth “the basic theme or proposition which the author will then advance by a series of arguments”.
769 Wedderburn 1988: 103.
770 Dahl 1977a: 79.
771 Wedderburn 1988: 124
772 Dahl (1977a: 79) argues that the question of whether a statement belongs with what precedes or follows is “anachronistic”, given that the text would have been read aloud and that the original handwriting would have had no paragraph markings.
773 Käsemann 1973: 19; Dunn 1988a: 39 etc.
774 Wedderburn 1988: 103-104.
775 See also Reaoner 1999: 234-39, who argues that the fact that the gospel is not shameful is the primary topos of Romans, occasioned by the situation in Rome where the gospel is in danger of being shamed. The gospel is without shame because it “contains the truth of the righteousness of God….., is in continuity
Peter Stuhlmacher, too, though less interested in the connection between v.16 and v.15, also reads v.16a as a response to a specific “problematic situation” in Rome. Following Weisäcker, he argues that Paul has Judaising critics in Rome, as elsewhere, who are at work among the Roman believers. Paul wants to allay their arguments and the slanderous rumours before he arrives.\footnote{Stuhlmacher 1994: 5-6, 28. See also Barclay 2015: 459, who argues that Paul’s stance on circumcision and Torah “made it easy for Gentile believers to hail him (and for Jewish believers to distrust... him) as leading the Jesus-movement away from its Jewish roots”. This, however, is not a significant factor for the letter’s purpose.}

Paul Minear also emphasises the Roman situation in understanding the connection which γάρ indicates between v.16 and what precedes, but explains this in terms of conflict among believers in Rome. Paul’s statement that he is not ashamed of the gospel (v.16a) must be understood in terms of his intention to preach in Rome (v.15), an intention which is “shaped” by the Roman situation, as described in chapters 14-15.\footnote{Minear (1971: 39) insists that γάρ “should not be overlooked. It links these verses to the preceding statements in which the apostle presented his hopes in sending the letter”. Minear suggests placing a comma after v.15 to bring out more clearly this close connection between v.16f. and v.15.}

Others, too, taking account of γάρ in v.16a, agree that a specific situation in Rome provokes the bold statement it introduces, but claim that the problem addressed is Roman imperial ideology, which the gospel confronts.\footnote{E.g. Jewett 2007: 137-39.}

Wright argues that the whole of 1:1-17 is shaped by the fact that Paul is writing to believers in Rome, the centre of Roman imperial pretension.\footnote{Wright 2002: 404, 426; 2000: 172-73.} It is against this political background that Paul is not ashamed of the gospel. Going further, in his 2008 monograph, Elliott takes an ideological-critical approach to the entire epistle, making an anti-imperial reading the key to its interpretation.\footnote{Elliott 2008: 7.}

He claims that Paul invokes “recognizable themes from imperial propaganda”, thereby implicitly challenging them. Elliott interprets 1:16a as a refusal to be “put to shame” by the Roman imperial “social and political order in which shame is constructed”. Paul is “not ashamed of the proclamation of God’s triumph” (v.16a), because in it “the justice of God” is found.\footnote{Elliott 2008: 51.} 1:16-17 is thus a “declaration of

with Judaism (9-11; 15.8-12) and teach[es] the essence of Torah (3.27-31;13.8-10) and the purpose of Torah (10.4)”.\footnote{Stuhlmacher 1994: 5-6, 28. See also Barclay 2015: 459, who argues that Paul’s stance on circumcision and Torah “made it easy for Gentile believers to hail him (and for Jewish believers to distrust... him) as leading the Jesus-movement away from its Jewish roots”. This, however, is not a significant factor for the letter’s purpose.}

\footnote{Minear (1971: 39) insists that γάρ “should not be overlooked. It links these verses to the preceding statements in which the apostle presented his hopes in sending the letter”. Minear suggests placing a comma after v.15 to bring out more clearly this close connection between v.16f. and v.15.}

\footnote{E.g. Jewett 2007: 137-39.}

\footnote{Wright 2002: 404, 426; 2000: 172-73.}

\footnote{Elliott 2008: 7.}

\footnote{Elliott 2008: 51.}
confidence in God’s saving justice”, which is directly connected, by means of γάρ, both to Paul’s “statement of purpose” in 1:13-15, and to the statement in 1:18 regarding the manifestation of God’s wrath.

Turning to v.16b, this has traditionally been regarded as the beginning of the content of the thesis about the gospel, after the introductory formula of v.16a. Commentators, while paying little attention to this occurrence of γάρ, read the statement it introduces in v.16b as a theological rationale for Paul’s lack of shame in proclaiming the gospel: the gospel is the power of God himself and effects salvation for all who have faith, firstly Jews and also Greeks.

V.17a is introduced by a third occurrence of γάρ. For many interpreters, this verse represents the “heart” of the thesis of vv.16-17. At the same time, most also recognise that it explains and confirms v.16b, providing a justification or grounds for it, “undergirding” it. Wedderburn is atypical in reading v.17 not as the heart, but as the second part of the threefold thematic statement of vv.16b-18. This verse contains the key expressions δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ and ἐκ πίστεως εἰς πίστιν, which generate

783 See Barth 1959: 20.
784 For a discussion of πίστις, see Dunn 1988a: 39, who sums up the concept as “deliverance from peril and restoration to wholeness”; Käsemann 1973: 19.
785 See Campbell 2009: 384-86, 610 for the semantic range of the πίστις word group, encompassing the senses “belief”, “trust”, “faithfulness”, fidelity and faith. Morgan (2015: 273) also argues for the multivalency of πίστις, within which “trustworthiness and faithfulness are always implicit”. In an attempt to communicate this, I will translate πίστις as “faith”, but πιστεύω henceforward as “be faith-ful”.
786 Here Paul uses the standard Greco-Roman term, but the contrast “Jew and Greek” is a Jewish categorisation. (Dunn 1988a: 40).
787 Wright 2002: 424.
788 Cranfield 1975: 91.
789 Dunn 1988a: 37.
790 Wilckens 1978: 86.
792 Wedderburn 1988: 124. See also Barth 1959: 25.
793 The debate regarding δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ has sometimes been polarised, with the objective sense of a righteous status imputed forensically to believers (e.g. Luther 1956: 18; Cranfield 1975: 97) set against the subjective sense of a characteristic or action of God (e.g. Campbell 2009: 699-702). In the latter case, δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ is often understood as God’s saving power or deliverance. Others argue that the two understandings should not be sharply separated (Käsemann 1973: 27-29; Dunn 1988a: 41-42; Wolter 2014: 123).
794 The interpretation of πίστις in v.17 is closely bound up with the interpretation of δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ. Does it mean faith in the sense of belief, trust, or faithfulness, whether God’s, Christ’s or believers’? Wolter (2014: 126) represents a traditional reading of ἐκ πίστεως εἰς πίστιν: “Glaube und nichts als Glaube überall, vom Anfang bis Ende”. For πίστις with reference to the faithfulness of Christ, see Hays...
enormous debate in Pauline interpretation. I will engage with these debates in the following discussion in as far as they are pertinent to the guidance that γάρ gives towards the direction of Paul’s argument. For now I will use standard literal translations of these expressions: “righteousness of God”, and “from faith to faith”, though I will modify my translation of the latter as necessary in the light of my analysis. Many commentators see the citation from Habakkuk 2:4 in v.17b as scriptural proof for the claim in v.17a. The debate regarding the referent of ὁ δίκαιος is not directly relevant to the analysis of γάρ, but it seems best to read the referent as the “righted” human being. Meanwhile, as Morgan suggests, Paul may be deliberately exploiting the ambiguity of ἐκ πίστεως, in order to allude to the role of the faithfulness of God, Christ and human beings in “the economy of salvation”.

6.3.4 Romans 1:16-17: A procedural account

Let us now turn to a procedural reading of γάρ and explore how it helps us trace a path through the exegetical undergrowth of vv.16-17. I propose that it can assist us in finding answers to the questions of the relationship between vv.16-17 and what precedes, and of the argumentative status of vv.16-17, as well as potentially throwing light on the letter’s purpose.

The occurrence in v.16a represents a relatively straightforward case of strengthening. We can suggest that Paul’s claim in v.15 (which summarises the main implication of vv.8-15), may not be optimally relevant as it stands. It may raise implicit questions as to whether the apostle is really so eager to preach in the capital, given his past failure to do...
so: “Is it really true that Paul is eager to preach the gospel to those of us in Rome?” We can hypothesise that addressees might suspect that Paul is reluctant to preach to them given that there are many Jewish-influenced/Torah-observant Christ-believers in Rome, while Paul advocates Torah non-observance, and some say his gospel is anti-Jewish.  

Paul anticipates such objections and addresses them in vv.16-17 (and v.18) by means of the information introduced by the chain of γάρ clauses. This material provides the bolstering evidence needed in order to convince addressees of the validity of Paul’s claim in v.15. Procedure G is triggered by γάρ in v.16a and the immediately preceding assumptions communicated in v.15 are identified as needing strengthening in order to be optimally relevant. I propose that something like the following inferential series may be constructed:

**P** (v.15): I am eager to preach the gospel to you [believers] who are in Rome also.

**Q introduced by γάρ** (v.16a): I [Paul] am not ashamed of the gospel.

**IA1**: If Paul is not ashamed of the gospel, Paul is confident in/boasts in/glories in the gospel.

**IA2**: If Paul is confident in/boasts in/glories in the gospel, then Paul is motivated/eager to preach the gospel to those who are in Rome. (Inferable from common sense.)

**Conclusion** (strengthening v.15): I [Paul] am eager to preach the gospel to [you] believers who are in Rome also.

As a result of this proposed strengthening series, v.15 is confirmed by means of independent evidence, with the result that the claim in v.15 is accepted somewhat more firmly as valid. But I suggest that the statement introduced by γάρ in v.16a may itself not yet be optimally relevant as it stands, raising further implicit questions for sceptical addressees, such as: “Is it really true that Paul is not ashamed of preaching his gospel in Rome? Are there not aspects of his gospel for him to be ashamed of in Rome?” Paul anticipates these further objections and provides additional strengthening evidence, introduced by γάρ in v.16b, in order to bolster the claim of v.16a.

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Moving on, then, to the occurrence of γάρ in v.16b, depending on how we construe the situation and perspective of the Roman addressees, it is possible to construct more than one inferential strengthening series between v.16a and v.16b, with the help of accessible background assumptions. For example, if we take elements of Stuhlmacher’s reconstruction of the Roman situation, and suggest that Paul is countering an anti-Jewish charge, we can construct a different inferential series. This need not imply Stuhlmacher’s contention⁸⁰⁰ that throughout the letter Paul is arguing, by means of rhetorical questions, with Jewish opponents. I propose instead that Paul is concerned to address the misgivings of Jewish-influenced believers in the wake of the Galatian controversy, modifying the presentation of his gospel to emphasise the role of Israel in relation to faith in Christ,⁸⁰¹ in order to calm incipient tensions among Roman believers.

On this construal, we can propose the following:

Series A (countering an anti-Jewish charge):

**P** (v.16a): I [Paul] am not ashamed of the gospel.

**Q introduced by γάρ** (v.16b): [The gospel] is the power of God for salvation for all who are faith-full,⁸⁰² Jew first and also Greek.

**IA1**: There are a number of Jewish-orientated, Torah-observant Christ-believers⁸⁰³ in Rome.⁸⁰⁴ (Inference dependent on a reconstruction of the Roman situation based on historical clues such as Ambrosiaster’s statement regarding the Jewish origins of Roman

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⁸⁰² As shorthand for the multi-valent concept “having faith/trusting” and “being faithful”, I translate πιστεύω henceforward as “be faith-full”.
⁸⁰³ Whether Jewish, or Gentile proselytes. See Zetterholm 2016: 55-56, who talks in terms of “non-Jews...[who] were Torah-observant to some extent...”.
Christianity, and evidence that some Gentiles were attracted to Judaism in the first century.

IA2: Some in Rome are claiming that Paul’s gospel is anti-Jewish, anti-nomian and supersessionist. (Inference based on a particular reconstruction of the situation in Rome.)

IA3: If the gospel is the power of God for salvation for all who are faith-full, Jew first and also Greek, then the gospel is not anti-Jewish.

IA4: If the gospel is not anti-Jewish, then Paul does not need to be ashamed of it in Rome where there are many Jewish-orientated Christ-believers.

Conclusion (confirming v.16a): I [Paul] am not ashamed of the gospel.

As a result of this inferential series, Paul’s claim in v.16a is strengthened and accepted more firmly as valid. This proposed series fits with the view that there are those who accuse Paul’s gospel of being anti-Jewish. These critics of Paul’s are influencing, or could potentially influence, the Roman believers, many of whom have been shaped by Jewish Christianity and may be Torah-observant, if they are not Jewish themselves. The effect of such influence could be to destabilise believers and exacerbate tensions between the Torah-observant and the non-Torah-observant. In response, Paul reinforces his claim that he is not ashamed to preach the gospel to those in Rome by emphasising that his gospel of salvation, while being for all who are faith-full, respects Jewish priority. This is achieved in v.16b with the striking expression Ἰουδαίω τε πρῶτον καὶ Ἑλληνι. See also Watson 2007: 189-90, who argues that reading v.16b in conjunction with the reference to the Roman situation in v.15 makes sense of the unexpected assertion in v.16b that the gospel is “for the Jew first, and also for the Greek”. He regards this historically contextualised interpretation of v.16b as more plausible than a “theological interpretation”.

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806 See Zetterholm 2016: 55, citing Josephus, Jewish War 7.45; Against Apion 2.282; Seneca, Epistles 108.22.
808 Barclay 2015: 461.
809 See also Watson 2007: 189-90, who argues that reading v.16b in conjunction with the reference to the Roman situation in v.15 makes sense of the unexpected assertion in v.16b that the gospel is “for the Jew first, and also for the Greek”. He regards this historically contextualised interpretation of v.16b as more plausible than a “theological interpretation”.
If, on the other hand, we follow an anti-imperial reading of the epistle’s purpose, we can posit another set of background assumptions which may be made highly accessible for addressees, and combined in a strengthening series (B). This would be constructed along the following lines:

Series B: (anti-imperial reading):

**P** (v.16a): I [Paul] am not ashamed of the gospel.

**Q introduced by γάρ** (v.16b): [The gospel] is the power of God for salvation for all who are faith-full (Jew first and also Greek).

**IA1**: Roman imperial ideology claims that the Roman emperor has the power to save people. (Inferred from encyclopaedic knowledge of Roman culture.\(^\text{810}\))

**IA2**: If the gospel is the power of God for salvation for all who are faith-full, then the gospel is powerful enough to challenge Roman imperial ideology.

**IA3**: If the gospel is powerful enough to challenge Roman imperial ideology, then the gospel is something to boast in/glory in.

**IA4**: If the gospel is something to boast in/glory in, then Paul is not ashamed of the gospel.

**Conclusion** (confirming v.16a): I [Paul] am not ashamed of the gospel.

Series B also strengthens Paul’s claim in v.16a, so that addressees adhere to it more strongly, and it becomes more relevant for them. But here the strengthening comes from assumptions related to the issue of the clash between the gospel and imperial ideology. The fact that such a strengthening series is logically possible provides support for Elliott’s construal of Romans. In an environment where the Roman emperor is lauded as saviour of the world, Paul reinforces the validity of his claim that he is truly eager to preach the gospel in Rome by drawing attention to the saving power of the gospel.

Series A and B are both logically possible and compatible with the procedural guidance given by γάρ in v.16b. I suggest that addressees could construct one or other of these

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\(^{810}\) See Georgi 2000: 148-49, 152; Elliott 2008: 73 etc.
strengthening series, depending on what background assumptions are highly accessible to them given their particular perspective and concerns. The compatibility of these two construals with the wider argument of Romans remains to be seen.

Turning to γάρ in v.17, this is a straightforward example of guidance towards strengthening. The information it introduces is a complex of strengthening premises which backs up the statement of v.16b and which is relevant as a further explanation. Whichever of the major interpretations we follow, it is possible to construct a strengthening inferential series between v.17a and v.16b without undue processing effort, with the result that the claim in v.16b is strengthened. The theological statement of v.17a is followed by a scriptural citation in v.17b which in turn provides authoritative support for the claim in v.17a. I will examine possible inferential series triggered by γάρ in v.17 in more detail as part of the discussion of 1:18.

6.3.5 Romans 1:16-17: Argumentative implications of a procedural reading

A procedural reading of γάρ in v.16a-b supports both a “pro-Jewish” or “Jewish-orientated” construal (series A) and an anti-imperial construal (series B) of the epistle’s purpose. Either way, the strengthened claim that Paul is not ashamed of the gospel is closely connected by means of γάρ with the immediately preceding claim in v.15 that Paul is keen to preach the gospel to those in Rome. Whichever strengthening series is constructed, the knock-on effect of the strengthening of v.16a is to bolster further this claim, increasing its argumentative salience. V.16b, which in turn strengthens v.16a, is likewise to be understood in relation to v.15. So if we follow a “pro-Jewish” view of Paul’s purpose, we need to infer a reason why Paul is intent on demonstrating that his gospel affirms the priority of the Jewish people in the purposes of God as revealed in Christ. The occurrences of γάρ in v.16a and v.16b indicate that this verse cannot be understood as a self-standing, context-less distillation of the gospel which Paul is about to present. Instead, the specific articulation of relevant aspects of Paul’s gospel in v.16 is shaped by the fact that Paul aims to show the specific relevance of his gospel for his Roman addressees.

As far as v.17 is concerned, the strengthening material introduced by γάρ is to be viewed as supporting information which is argumentatively less relevant (producing
fewer cognitive effects) than the preceding claims it strengthens. This is despite the fact that it contains information of great theological weight. Wright characterises the statement in v.17 as “the deepest thing Paul wishes to say”, and the “foundation” of the whole sequence of explanatory clauses in vv.16-17.\(^{811}\) This analysis, however, seems to confuse the theological freight of the statements in both v.17 and v.16 with their argumentative role. The latter is consolidating, as \(\gamma\uprho\) indicates, rather than spearheading.\(^{812}\)

Our procedural reading of \(\gamma\uprho\) thus throws new light on vv.16-17, confirming interpretations which throw into question a context-less, thematic reading. The close relationship with v.15 suggests that these verses do not represent a timeless, universal summary of Paul’s gospel, but rather a tailored, context-dependent extract, shaped by the contingencies of his communication with the Romans, as v.15 indicates.\(^{813}\) Paul aims to convince his addressees that his gospel is relevant to them in Rome, that it is good news that he can announce to them with confidence, and he communicates here elements of his gospel which support that aim. At the same time, the supporting material in vv.16-17 gives snatches of what is to come in the development of Paul’s argument in Romans, rather like melodies in an overture to an opera. This is to be expected, given that vv.16-17 represent selected aspects of the tailored gospel which Paul will unfold in the rest of the epistle. Wedderburn’s description of vv.16b-18 as “programmatic” or introductory allows us to take a step away from the interpretative grid imposed by the notion of “thesis statement” which Campbell warns against.\(^{814}\)

Let us pause to take stock of our findings in relation to our four initial questions (6.3.2).

Partial answers to three of the four questions have emerged. 1) On the basis of a procedural analysis of \(\gamma\uprho\), vv.16-17 should be interpreted in a close inferential

\(^{811}\) Wright 2002: 423. Wright regards the whole of the epistle as effectively “unpacking” the “dense statement” of 1:16-17.

\(^{812}\) Cf. Elliott 2008: 75. Wright (2002: 423) does recognise the dual argumentative function of vv.16-17, noting that Paul offers the thematic statement as “the further explanation of his desire to come to Rome and announce the gospel there”, but does not exploit the implications of this.

\(^{813}\) Paul’s expressed desire to strengthen the Roman believers (v.11) is evidence that he is concerned with their specific situation.

\(^{814}\) Campbell 2009: 602. Campbell himself characterises 1:16-17 as an “argumentative wedge” of “traditional material that Paul and the Roman Christians share”, This fits with a reading of vv.16-17 as material which consolidates rather than spearheads.
strengthening relationship with Paul’s claim in v.15. V.17 strengthens the statement in v.16b, v.16b the assertion in v.16a, and v.16a the statement in v.15, in a cumulative strengthening chain. It remains to be seen how these verses relate to what follows in v.18 (question 3). 2) The information in vv.16-17 thus looks backwards, argumentatively speaking, to the claim in v.15, supporting it and lending it persuasive punch. Vv.16-17 can be understood as shaped and tailored by the contingencies of this claim, and should not be regarded as a context-less, summarising thesis which heralds the exposition of Paul’s gospel from v.18 onwards. As for our question 4), answers 1) and 2) point to a purpose which is Rome-directed. Paul writes because he wants to share his gospel with the Roman believers, and the glimpses we have of that gospel in vv.16-17 are uniquely expressed in Rome-relevant, Jewish-rooted yet multi-ethnic terms. Whether or not this means that Paul aims to address a particular situation among addressees in Rome remains an open question. We will need to come back to it in the light of our discussion of 15:7-13.

6.3.6 Romans 1:18: Different readings of communicative signals, content and context

1:17a: δικαιοσύνη γὰρ θεοῦ ἐν αὐτῷ ἀποκαλύπτεται ἐκ πίστεως εἰς πίστιν, καθὼς γέγραπται, Ὅ δὲ δίκαιος ἐκ πίστεως ζήσεται.

1:18: Ἀποκαλύπτεται γὰρ ὄργη θεοῦ ἀπ’ οὐρανοῦ ἐπὶ πᾶσαν ἁσβείαν καὶ ἁδικίαν ἀνθρώπων τῶν τῆς ἀλήθειαν ἐν ἁδικίᾳ κατεχόντων,

In this section I will address question 3) in particular, and also consider how this throws further light on questions 1), 2) and 4). We have already noted that the occurrence of γὰρ in 1:18 is the last in the chain of γὰρ clauses beginning in 1:16, and have suggested that it thus cannot simply be divorced from what precedes, however we interpret the relationship. Scholars privilege this occurrence with an unusual amount of attention. This not only because of its strategic argumentative location and crucial significance as
macro-argumentative signpost, but also because of the incompatibility of a traditional causal reading of γάρ with a reading of 1:18 as the beginning of a major section.

We have already noted the problem of the relationship between the supposed thesis of 1:16-17 and the statement concerning the revelation of God’s wrath in 1:18. A standard reading of Romans 1 views 1:18 as the beginning of the epistle’s first major section, and yet v.18 is introduced by γάρ. Furthermore, this signal of close backwards connection is corroborated by the striking parallelism created by the repetition in v.18 of the present passive ἀποκαλύπτεται from v.17a, and the repetition in v.18 of terms from the δίκαιος word group. The verb ἀποκαλύπτεται has strikingly different subjects in the two verses: righteousness of God in v.17, and wrath of God in v.18. Various scholars argue that the verb implies a background of Jewish apocalyptic and eschatological thought which expected the definitive revelation of the righteousness/justice of God as eschatological judge at the end of the present age. This would take the form of the vindication of God’s righteous people on the one hand, and the visitation of God’s wrath against the injustice and wickedness of their enemies on the other. The present tense in vv.17 and 18 suggests that Paul conceives of this revelation as already taking place. Many scholars understand this to be whenever the gospel is announced.

Against this apocalyptic background, Wilckens emphasises the antithetical nature of the parallelism between v.17 and v.18: God’s righteousness and God’s wrath are in sharp contrast, even while being part of the same eschatological event.

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815 Wright (2013: 764) sums up its significance: “The problem posed by the opening main section of Romans… can be sharpened to an extremely fine point. Why does Paul say γάρ at the start of 1.18?”
817 Jewett 2007; Wright 2002; Moo 1996: 90; Dunn 1988a: 36; Käsemann 1973: 18; Wilckens 1978: 93 etc.
819 The double use of ἀδικία in v.18 contrasts with δικαιοσύνη and δίκαιος in v.17 (Dunn 1988a: 56; Jewett 2007: 152).
822 Cranfield 1975: 91-92; Wilckens 1978: 102-104; Wright 2013: 767-68 etc.
contrast, regards the parallelism as complementary: the statement concerning God’s wrath in v.18 represents a dimension of the eschatological revelation of God’s righteousness. Thus v.17 and v.18 present two complementary aspects of God’s saving activity, setting right what is wrong: if one is taking place, the other is also taking place. God’s righteousness and God’s wrath throw light on each other as two aspects of the saving power of God (v.16b), newly revealed in the gospel. In contrast, other scholars, among them Campbell, are reluctant to associate the notion of the wrath of God in any way with God’s righteousness or with the gospel announcement that God saves.

The way interpreters choose to read (or ignore) γάρ in v.18 seems often to follow from their prior interpretation of the parallelism or otherwise between v.17 and v.18. Wright catalogues five different explanations offered by different interpreters for γάρ in v.18, before presenting his own. In fact, these can be reduced to three broad categories: a “loose” approach, in which γάρ essentially plays no guiding or constraining role, a traditional account, which attempts to take γάρ seriously as an exegetical signal by reading it as causal or explanatory, and a third approach which treats the connective as a communicative signal and pays attention to it within its preceding co-text.

Representatives of the first approach effectively deny that the connective functions as a communicative signal (see 1.2.2 above). The role of γάρ is determined by the co-text. This approach leads some commentators to view γάρ in 1:18 as “transitional” or indicating continuation, while others interpret it as “adversative”, or as introducing grounds for the preceding claim, depending on the particular construal of 1:18ff. already chosen. This approach is advocated by BDAG, which asserts that the occurrence

826 E.g. Campbell 2009: 542.
827 Wright 2013: 764-767.
828 Porter 2015: 63; Zerwick 1993: 459: “γάρ normally explanatory, here merely continues what goes before”. A majority of translations adopt this approach, leaving γάρ untranslated here (NIV; REB; FC; Semeur etc.). NLT, meanwhile, translates with the adversative “but”.
829 Dodd 1932: 18; Lagrange 1916: 21: γάρ indicates “une légère opposition”.
in 1:18 is an instance in which the connective “appears to be used adverbially like our “now”.” The loose approach admits of a diversity of interpretations of 1:18 in its context. These range from traditional readings of 1:18ff. as a “counterpoint” or antithesis to the gospel, with 1:18 as a “heading”, through Dunn’s “new perspective” interpretation, to Campbell’s provocative rereading of 1:18-32 as spoken in the voice of Paul’s opponent. Many interpretations adopting this approach are incompatible with a procedural view of γὰρ. This approach effectively deprives itself of the communicative guidance offered by the connective.

Since Campbell’s entire construal of the argument of Romans potentially stands or falls with his interpretation of 1:18 and its relationship to its co-text, we need here to examine his reading of this verse in more detail. As noted above, Campbell’s concern is to challenge so-called “justification theory”, which, in his view, erroneously locates the argumentative centre of Romans in chapters 1-4. In contrast, Campbell himself understands chapters 5-8, with their participatory and “liberative” view of salvation, to be the heart of Paul’s distinctive gospel. Campbell is troubled by what he sees as the irreconcilable contradictions between the “foundationalist” view of salvation he finds in much of chapters 1-4, and the “apocalyptic” view of chapters 5-8. His innovative solution to this perceived conundrum is to view parts of chapters 1-4 as representing a counter-gospel taught by a Jewish opponent of Paul’s, the Teacher. Campbell contends that the latter is operating in Rome, and threatens to influence and undermine the faith of the Roman believers with a judaising version of the gospel. Campbell construes the whole of 1:18-32 as a parodic speech-in-character which directly represents the views of the Teacher in his voice. From 2:1, Paul begins to dismantle this gospel progressively, exposing its inconsistency.

831 BDAG 2000: 189.
833 E.g. Stuhlmacher 1994: 34.
834 Dunn 1988a: 51.
835 Campbell 2009: 542-43
836 See Griffith-Jones 2014: 172, who suggests that by undermining Campbell’s reading of 1:18, an essential block in his argument is removed so that “the cracks may spread through the whole wall, and …bring the wall down.”
837 Campbell 2009: 542.
838 Campbell 2014: 176.
A key claim of Campbell’s is that although there are no explicit textual signals indicating a switch in voice from Paul to his opponent in 1:18, Paul’s addressees would have detected this by the non-verbal performative signals\textsuperscript{839} that Phoebe, the letter carrier and reader, would have given as she read. This is an argument from silence and thus on one level unassailable. But in fact the text itself carries a vital and explicit communicative clue as to how it should be interpreted in its surrounding co-text: γάρ. This clue points in precisely the opposite direction from Campbell’s interpretation.\textsuperscript{840} According to our analysis, γάρ indicates that the material in v.18 is to be interpreted as strengthening or bolstering what has just been claimed in v.17, and not as presenting an antithetical parallel to it. Campbell and others point to the fact that in certain cases in Classical Greek and the LXX γάρ occurs in dialogue where there is a switch in speaker.\textsuperscript{841} But on closer analysis of the examples given, γάρ can be understood in each case as introducing information which further strengthens preceding communicated assumptions (usually by means of explanation), whether these have been communicated by a previous speaker or the current interlocutor. In no case does γάρ itself introduce information which represents fresh information relevant in its own right as a new implication, and which requires a switch to a completely new communicative context. Nor in any case does γάρ itself indicate a switch in speaker.

Campbell’s loose approach to γάρ is based on the premise that it is the wider argument of the co-text that must be determinative for the interpretation of the connective, rather than vice versa. Although he pays lip service to the importance of finding an explanation for γάρ in 1:18,\textsuperscript{842} he shies away from stating explicitly how he does read the connective, beyond the suggestion that it is probably an example of “blander” use.\textsuperscript{843} He implies, however, that γάρ is used adversatively. In an attempt to find support for this reading, he misrepresents Cranfield’s reference to a view from which Cranfield in

\textsuperscript{839} Campbell 2009: 530-32.
\textsuperscript{840} See Barclay 2015: 462 n. 29; Griffith-Jones 2014: 170: “Why… did Paul not… simply introduce the change of direction and tone with an adversative ἀλλά (instead of the quite misleading γάρ), [and] flag up the change of speaker and place ῥήμα ῥευματικά emphatically?”
\textsuperscript{841} See Campbell 2014: 180; Rodriguez 2014.
\textsuperscript{842} Campbell 2009: 313.
\textsuperscript{843} Campbell 2009: 340, 1021, n.6. See also 2009: 1082 n.61, where Campbell talks of a “muted link”, a “pleonastic use” and a “clarifying or emphatic reading”, as diverse examples of bland uses.
fact distances himself, namely that 1:18 is an instance of “an adversative γάρ” which “signals an unexpressed “no” in a dialogical text”. Campbell’s treatment of γάρ allows him to argue for a fundamental discontinuity between 1:16-17 on the one hand, and 1:18 on the other. He argues that the “stylistic parallel” between v.17 and v.18 in fact denotes a “deliberate contrast” between two quite different theological programs. 1:18 states the Teacher’s “programmatic theological claim” which can in no way be understood as a development of the statement concerning God’s righteousness in 1:17. Instead, in 1:17 and 1:18 is found “a fundamentally incompatible juxtaposition denoting two irreconcilable gospels and interpretations of the Christ event”.

On Campbell’s reading, then, 1:18 cannot in any way be interpreted as strengthening or supporting Paul’s statement in 1:17. Consequently, a procedural strengthening account of γάρ undermines Campbell’s construal at this crucial point to the extent that his whole edifice is in danger of coming crashing down. In this way, a procedural account of γάρ has fundamental implications for an influential interpretation of the wider argument of Romans. It establishes the connective as a key communicative signpost which, when found at a major argumentative crossroads such as 1:18, is ignored by interpreters at their peril.

The second approach to γάρ in 1:18 is more briefly dealt with. Various scholars attempt to take the connective seriously following the traditional causal reading, but simultaneously regard 1:18 as the beginning of a major section in Paul’s argument, despite the connection with the preceding argument which γάρ indicates. On this reading, γάρ introduces a supporting rationale for the thematic statement of vv.16-17, which is nevertheless set apart as a result of the section break. The major section begun in v.18, however, provides support for, rather than a radical contrast to, the notion of God’s righteousness which is revealed in the gospel (vv.17). As a result, there is closer

844 Campbell 2009: 1021 n.6, citing Cranfield 1975: 106.
845 Campbell 2009: 543.
846 Campbell 2009: 543.
848 Campbell 2009: 707.
continuity than on a radically antithetical reading such as Campbell’s. Interpreters taking this approach tend to emphasise the parallelism between v.17 and v.18 and to view God’s righteousness and God’s wrath as two closely related sides of one revelation.\footnote{Bornkamm 1969: 63-64; Linebaugh 2011: 225-26.}

This approach to γάρ is adopted not only by some who follow a traditional “plight-solution” interpretation of chapters 1-4,\footnote{E.g. Sanday and Headlam 1902: 40; Barrett 1971: 34. Cranfield (1979: 108) follows a modified version, arguing that γάρ indicates that the whole of 1:18-3:20 supports the specific claim that in the gospel the righteousness of God is being revealed from faith to faith.} but also by more recent interpreters proposing a variety of interpretations.\footnote{E.g. Barclay 2015: 462; Jewett 2007: 150-52; Linebaugh 2011: 216, 223. Linebaugh’s interpretation is, however, atypical, in that he takes vv.16-18 together as the “kerygmatic proclamation”: see 6.3.9.} Most share in common the reading of vv.16-17 as a de facto thematic statement. Among these is Wright. He reads γάρ as causal at “each point in the sequence” of vv.16-18, arguing that if the passage was read in reverse, “therefore” could be substituted for each “for”.\footnote{Wright 2013: 765.} 1:18ff. explains and unpacks the “dense” thematic statement of 1:16-17,\footnote{Wright 2002: 428.} and v.17 balances v.18 in a presentation of divine saving purposes and divine justice.\footnote{Wright 2013: 769.} 1:18-2:16 then explain the “depth and universal impartiality” both of sin, and of judgement against wickedness, which are revealed in the gospel of Jesus the Messiah. The gospel reveals that the human disease of sin demands “drastic divine surgery” within Israel itself.\footnote{Wright 2013: 768-69.} If unpacking is understood in terms of explanation, Wright’s reading of γάρ in v.18 is broadly compatible with a procedural reading.\footnote{Throughout his discussions of Romans, Wright consistently reads γάρ as introducing explanations which “unpack” preceding statements.} This interpretation of γάρ leads him to regard the material in 1:18-3:20 as on the one hand supporting the thematic statement,\footnote{Wright 2002: 428.} while on the other unfolding a new and radical understanding of the depth of human sin. But this reading of γάρ does not explain the strengthening connection indicated by the series of γάρ clauses from v.18 all the way back to v.15. This is despite the fact that Wright acknowledges that Paul offers the statement in vv.16-17 as the further explanation of his
desire to preach the gospel in Rome, and argues that Paul’s gospel confronts Roman imperial ideology.

In general, this second approach to γάρ, though broadly compatible with a strengthening procedural explanation, does not fully exploit the communicative guidance given by γάρ. In particular, it does not encourage us to pay attention to the role played by previously communicated assumptions from the preceding co-text in establishing a strengthening relationship. As a result, it does not emphasise the way in which γάρ contributes to the coherence of wider subsections. Consequently, this approach misses the significance of the tight chain of γάρ clauses leading all the way back to v.15, and does not seek to integrate this into an explanation of v.18, and vv.16-17.

The third scholarly approach to γάρ in 1:18 is most compatible with a procedural reading. It not only takes the connective seriously as a communicative signal but also pays close attention to the fourfold chain of γάρ clauses in vv.16-18. Runge, who applies insights from discourse analysis to Romans, is one example of this approach. Runge views γάρ as a discourse marker or structural signal which indicates that the material which follows it functions as supporting information or “motivational material”, and represents a “digression” from the main argument. Information introduced by γάρ is “embedded” within the higher level of the argument of the information which it supports. Each γάρ clause in vv.16-18 thus represents an argumentative digression which “sidestep[s] onto an embedded argument line”, taking Paul further away from his “big idea” in 1:8-10, which is his desire to visit Rome. Despite recognising the structural significance of this desire to visit Rome, Runge’s interpretation of the epistle’s argument seems unaffected by it. Runge (2014: 19) views this mismatch between “structure” and argument as problematic but does not attempt to resolve it. His analysis of γάρ is helpful to the extent that it recognises that each chunk of motivating material introduced by the connective “looks backward rather than forward”.

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858 Wright 2002: 423.
859 Runge (2014: 19) views this mismatch between “structure” and argument as problematic but does not attempt to resolve it.
860 Runge 2014: 5.
861 Runge 2014: 19.
however, Runge gives more attention to the hierarchical structure of the text than to Paul’s communicative intentions. Thus for Runge, 1:18-4:25 represents “one giant digression in Paul’s overall argument”. His perspective prevents him from considering Paul’s desire to visit Rome, and the situation there, as a key to tracing the coherence of Paul’s thought in vv.15-18.

In contrast, other representatives of this approach give close consideration to the coherence of the assumptions communicated in the preceding co-text of v.18, viewing vv.15-18 as a single complex of thought which should not be broken up by the imposition of a section heading. Dahl, for instance, finds in 1:16 “the encompassing theme for the whole main body of the letter”, and in vv.17 and 18 two sub-themes. He recognises the close link between the “thematic statement” of vv.16-18, and Paul’s “travel plans” in vv.14-15, and makes sense of this in terms of Paul’s missionary concerns, which are behind the purpose of the letter. The thematic statement about the gospel as God’s power for salvation provides a motivation for why Paul is not ashamed of the gospel but wants to “confess it boldly to all people everywhere, even in Rome” (my emphasis). Wedderburn, on the other hand, also views the statement in v.18 as the third part of the programmatic statements of vv.16b-18, but construes the letter’s purpose quite differently. God’s wrath is part of the “two-edged quality” of God’s righteousness. The statement in v.18 thus provides a rationale for the claim in v.17: “God’s righteousness is being revealed [in the gospel], since, for a start, this aspect of it, God’s wrath, is being revealed [in the preaching of Paul’s gospel]”. The triple programmatic statement gives a “threefold” reason why Paul is not ashamed of the gospel. This claim in turn provides a rationale for why Paul is keen to preach the good news to those in Rome, specifically related to the situation there, where there is a danger that Paul’s gospel may be viewed as shameful (see above under 6.3.3).

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862 Runge 2014: 19
864 Dahl (1977a: 82), who reads v.17 and v.18 as dealing with two antithetical themes.
865 Dahl 1977a: 78.
Elliott, meanwhile, uses his anti-imperial reading to make sense of the relationship between 1:15 (and preceding) and 1:16-18. He argues that in order to make sense of the series of γάρ clauses we must answer the question, “How is God’s justice revealed through the revelation of God’s wrath?” The answer is that God’s justice is being demonstrated in the gospel in a publically manifest way in the current situation in Rome, in the execution of God’s wrath against the wicked and unjust. \(^{869}\) Elliott contends that the statement in v.18 is an allusion to the notorious depravity and savagery of the imperial house, and, further, that the whole of 1:18-32 can be read as a “catalog of misdeeds… of the Julio-Claudian dynasty”, against whom God’s wrath is being demonstrated in the spectacular deaths of emperors such as Gaius. \(^{870}\) Thus in Romans Paul declares a message of God’s sovereignty and justice in the Messiah, and an imminent day of reckoning, which challenges imperial injustice.

In sum, this third approach to γάρ in 1:18 comes closest to paying full attention to the connective’s communicative guidance, though it does not recognise the inferential guidance that γάρ gives. Dahl, Wedderburn and Elliott all effectively treat γάρ as a communicative signpost, respecting the integrity of the sequence of γάρ clauses in vv.15-18. As a result, all take into careful account the preceding co-text all the way back to v.15. A procedural account is most compatible with interpretations taking this approach. But these three interpreters arrive at three quite different construals of these verses in relation to the letter’s main argument and purpose. Can the application of a procedural account of γάρ help us to decide between them?

6.3.7 Romans 1:18: Applying a procedural account

Let us consider first Dahl’s interpretation (D). Dahl translates 1:16b as follows: “The gospel is God’s power for salvation, for Greeks as well as for Jews.”\(^{871}\) V.17, “In the gospel God’s righteousness is being revealed, ‘from faith to faith’” and v.18, “The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and wickedness of the

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\(^{868}\) Elliott 2008: 76-77.
\(^{869}\) Elliott 2008: 77.
\(^{870}\) Elliott 2008: 82.
\(^{871}\) Dahl 1977a: 78. Dahl reverses the order of “the Jew… and also the Greek”, and leaves out “for all who believe”.

“human race” are read as two antithetical sub-themes which are dealt with “in reverse order”, in 1:18-3:20 and 3:21-4:25 respectively. On a procedural reading of \( \gamma \alpha \rho \), v.18 represents a complex of strengthening premises, and the statement in v.17 a claim that needs strengthening. Following Dahl’s antithetical reading, however, no strengthening inferential series between v.18 and v.17 obviously suggests itself without undue processing effort. The connection between v.17 and v.18 can only be understood in the light of the subsequent argument in chapters 1-4, not immediately established inferentially in the light of the preceding co-text. It is equally difficult to establish an inferential strengthening series between v.18 and the whole of v.16b-17:

Series D:

\[ \textbf{P} \quad (v.16b-17): \text{The gospel is God's power for salvation, for Greeks as well as for Jews.} \]

\[ \text{In the gospel God’s righteousness is being revealed, ‘from faith to faith’.} \]

\[ \textbf{Q introduced by } \gamma \alpha \rho \quad (v.18): \text{The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and wickedness of the human race.} \]

\[ \textbf{IA}: \text{If the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and wickedness of the human race, then all humanity needs saving.} \]

We are left here with a logical gap: it does not follow from the fact that all humanity needs saving, that the gospel is therefore God’s power for salvation. Despite Dahl’s recognition that vv.16-18 must be understood as closely connected, a procedural reading of \( \gamma \alpha \rho \) does not support his interpretation.

Secondly, we consider Elliott’s interpretation (E). Following a procedural account of \( \gamma \alpha \rho \) in v.18, v.17 is identified as needing strengthening, and v.18 as a complex of strengthening premises. Is it possible to construct a strengthening series between the two?

Series E:

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872 Dahl 1977a: 82.
873 Dahl is silent regarding the citation in v.17b.
P (v.17): In the proclamation of God’s imminent triumph the justice of God is revealed, through faithfulness, to faithfulness; as it is written, “The one who is just will live by faithfulness.”

Q introduced by γάπ (v.18): The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all impiety and injustice of those who by their injustice suppress the truth.

IA1: The injustice and ungodliness in question are the injustice and ungodliness of the Roman emperors and imperial house. (Highly accessible in the social setting of Rome, according to Elliott’s construal.)

IA2: God’s wrath against Roman imperial injustice is revealed publically in the spectacular deaths of the emperors. (Elliott contends that this would have been easily inferable for Paul’s addressees, but this is speculative.)

IA3: The gospel is the proclamation of the triumph of Jesus’/God’s alternative, counter-imperial lordship. (Highly accessible in the social setting of Rome, according to Elliott.)

IA4: If God’s wrath is revealed publically against imperial injustice in the deaths of the emperors, it demonstrates that God’s justice is being revealed in the proclamation of the triumph of God’s lordship. (But this is based on the speculative IA2, and is also a non sequitur.)

C: (strengthening v.17a): In the proclamation of God’s imminent triumph, the justice of God is revealed (through faithfulness to faithfulness; as it is written, “The one who is just will live by faithfulness.”)

Series E is problematic in two ways. Firstly it depends on accessing speculative background assumptions, particularly those concerning the deaths of the emperors as a demonstration of God’s justice. Secondly, it involves a non sequitur and so is not a

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874 Elliott’s (2008: 74) translation of “in the gospel”.
875 Elliott 2008: 74.
876 This view is challenged by Barclay (2011b).
877 Elliott 2008: 51, 74. See also Wright 2002: 404; Jewett 2007: 138; Georgi 2000 etc.
878 It is not possible, without undue effort, to infer a logical connection between the deaths of the emperors and the proclamation of the gospel.
complete series. So a strengthening procedural account of γάρ in v.18 rules out Elliott’s anti-imperial reading of vv.15-18, despite the noteworthy attention he pays to Paul’s claim in v.15 in his construal of vv.16-18.

Thirdly, we turn to Wedderburn’s interpretation of vv.15-18 (F). In relevance-theoretic terms, this reading acknowledges that assumptions communicated in vv.15-17 are all highly accessible as part of the comprehension of v.18. Applying a procedural analysis, the information in v.18 is identified as strengthening premises, and the statement in v.17 as needing strengthening. I suggest that the following strengthening series might be constructed, triggered by γάρ in v.18:

Series F:

P (v.17a): In the gospel [that Paul preaches] God’s righteousness is being revealed, ‘from faith to faith’. 880

Q introduced by γάρ (v.18): The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and wickedness of the human race.

IA1: God’s wrath881 is the negative side of the eschatological revelation of God’s righteousness.882 (Accessible from encyclopaedic knowledge of Jewish teaching.883)

IA2: The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and wickedness of the human race in the preaching of Paul’s gospel.884 (Inferable from the fact that the gospel is the topic of v.16, and salient in the preceding co-text: vv.1-5, v.9, v.15.)

IA3: If God’s wrath against ungodliness and wickedness of the human race is the negative side of the revelation of God’s righteousness, and is revealed in the preaching of the gospel, then the gospel reveals God’s righteousness (‘from faith to faith’).885

880 Wedderburn is silent regarding the citation in v.17b.
881 See Rom. 2:5 for the eschatological character of God’s wrath.
883 E.g. Is. 13:6-14:8; Is. 59:15-18; Zeph. 1:14-2:3; Zeph. 3; Mal. 4:1-5.
884 Wedderburn 1988: 120.
885 I have put this expression in brackets because it is not relevant to this strengthening series. See discussion below.
Conclusion (strengthening v.17a): In the gospel [that Paul preaches] God’s righteousness is being revealed (‘from faith to faith’).

This inferential series leads to the strengthening of the statement in v.17a, with the result that it is held more firmly as valid by addressees. Wedderburn’s interpretation is, then, compatible with a procedural reading of γάρ. Moreover, IA4 and IA5 below, although logically superfluous to the strengthening of v.17a, are, on Wedderburn’s analysis, made highly accessible following on from IA3 of this series, and contribute to the further strengthening of v.16a, via the chain of γάρ clauses:

IA4: If the gospel reveals God’s righteousness, it demonstrates that God is righteous.

IA5: If the gospel demonstrates that God is righteous, then the gospel is not shameful.

Wedderburn’s reading of v.18 is thus supported by a procedural reading of γάρ both in v.18, and in the whole strengthening chain of vv.16-18. But it has a weakness: while contributing to the strengthening of the claim that God’s righteousness is being revealed in the gospel, it does not provide further support for the assumption communicated in v.17a that this revelation happens ἐκ πίστεως εἰς πίστιν. In focusing on an explanation of v.18 in terms of the previous statements about God’s righteousness and the claim that the gospel is not shameful, Wedderburn neglects the equally significant claims regarding the relationship between πίστις and the gospel in v.16b and v.17a. Since these claims are not further strengthened by v.18 on his construal, they become less argumentatively salient than the claim regarding God’s righteousness.

Is it possible to find an interpretation which both recognises the strengthening role of v.18 in relation to what precedes and respects the chain of γάρ clauses in vv.16-18, as Wedderburn does, and at the same time accords argumentative significance to the whole of v.17a, including the expression ἐκ πίστεως εἰς πίστιν? The scriptural citation from Habakkuk in v.17b brings weight behind this expression, highlighting its argumentative importance (as does the repetition of the πιστ- root four times in v.16b-17).
I propose that a solution is possible if we follow a reading of πίστις as faithfulness in v.17, along the lines of Wright, Morgan and others. On such an interpretation, πίστις can be understood both in relation to God’s righteousness in v.17a and God’s wrath in v.18, as God demonstrates his faithfulness to his faithful people in saving them from unrighteousness and injustice, setting the world to rights. In this way, we can make sense of v.18 as strengthening material for the claim that God’s righteousness is revealed ἐκ πίστεως εἰς πίστιν. Following Wright’s interpretation, I propose the strengthening series below (G). The citation from Habakkuk 2:4 is omitted from this because the series increases the relevance of v.17a rather than v.17b. I suggest that the citation, as authoritative scripture, is already optimally relevant as it stands and does not need further strengthening. Addressees’ comprehension processes therefore jump over v.17b and select the statement in v.17a as the candidate for strengthening.

Series G:

**P** (v.17a): In the gospel the righteousness of God is being revealed from [God’s] faithfulness to [human] faith-fullness.

**Q introduced by γάρ** (v.18): The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of human beings who suppress the truth in unrighteousness.

**IA1**: The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness…in the preaching of Paul’s gospel.

(**IA2**: Paul’s gospel is about Jesus as Messiah and eschatological Lord (inferable from 1:3-4).)

**IA3**: God’s wrath against unrighteousness, revealed in the gospel, is the negative side of the eschatological revelation of God’s righteousness, and part of his salvation of his faith-full people.

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886 Wright (2013: 1001,1466-71) understands the πίστις of believers as a complex concept in which faith/trust in God and faithfulness as God’s people merge.

887 Morgan 2015: 286.
IA4: If God’s wrath against unrighteousness, revealed in the gospel, is part of his salvation of his faith-full people, then God’s wrath is an expression of God’s faithfulness towards his faith-full people.

IA5: If God’s wrath, revealed in the gospel, is an expression of God’s faithfulness towards his faith-full people, then in the gospel God’s righteousness is revealed out of God’s faithfulness towards those who are faith-full.

Conclusion (strengthening v.17a): In the gospel the righteousness of God is being revealed from [God’s] faithfulness to [human] faith-fullness.

Unlike series F, this proposed inferential series leads not only to the strengthening of the claim that God’s righteousness is being revealed in the gospel, but also to the strengthening of the information that this is revealed ἐκ πίστεως εἰς πίστιν. It thus increases the comprehensibility of the whole statement in v.17a so that it is held more strongly as valid, thereby augmenting its argumentative relevance and salience. As with Wedderburn’s interpretation, this series is able to make sense of v.18 both in the immediately preceding co-text of v.17 and the wider co-text of vv.15-18. Backed up in this way by v.18, v.17 in turn provides further strengthening for the claim in v.16b:

P (v.16b): The gospel is the power of God for salvation for all who are faith-full, Jews first and also Greeks.

Q introduced by γάρ (v.17a): In the gospel God’s righteousness is being revealed out of God’s faithfulness towards those who are faith-full.

IA: If, in the gospel, God’s righteousness is being revealed out of God’s faithfulness towards those who are faith-full, shown in his wrath against unrighteousness, then the gospel is the power of God for salvation for all who are faith-full, Jews first and also Greeks.

C (strengthening v.16b): The gospel is the power of God for salvation for all are faith-full, Jews first and also Greeks.

As a result of this series, v.16b is also strengthened so that addressees hold it more firmly as valid and it produces increased cognitive effects. The confirmation of v.16b
leads in turn to the further reinforcement of v.16a, convincing sceptical addressees of the validity of the claim that Paul is not ashamed of the gospel (as good news to be proclaimed in Rome). If we revisit series A (countering an anti-Jewish charge) which we proposed above for the strengthening of v.16a, we find that our analysis of vv.17-18 fits well with it:


Q (v.16b, introduced by γάρ): [The gospel] is the power of God for salvation for all who are faith-ful, Jew first and also Greek.

IA1: There are many Jewish-orientated Christ-believers in Rome.

IA2: Some in Rome are claiming that Paul’s gospel is anti-Jewish.

IA3: If the gospel is the power of God for salvation for all who are faith-ful, Jews first and also Greeks, then the gospel is not anti-Jewish.

Here we can insert an additional inference now gained from vv.17-18 as further bolstering support for the assertion that the gospel is not anti-Jewish:

+IA4: If God’s eschatological righteousness and wrath are revealed in the gospel, out of God’s faithfulness towards his faith-ful people, then the gospel is not anti-Jewish, but built on Jewish eschatological teaching and expectation.

IA5: If the gospel is not anti-Jewish, then Paul does not need to be ashamed of it in Rome where there are many Jewish-orientated Christ-believers.

C (confirming v.16a): I [Paul] am not ashamed of the gospel.

In this way, as a result of the cumulative strengthening created by the series of γάρ clauses in vv.16b-18, the confirming evidence in v.16b is reinforced, and the relevance of v.16a is in turn further increased. Finally, this has the knock-on effect of emphatically buttressing the claim in v.15 regarding preaching the gospel to those in Rome, to which the entire strengthening chain leads back. Consequently, the claim in v.15 is underlined as a highly salient and relevant point in Paul’s communication, from which many potential implications are to be derived for the Roman addressees.
6.3.8 Romans 1:18: Argumentative implications of a procedural account

This proposed reading of v.18, based on the procedural guidance provided by γάρ, provides a way of understanding it so that there is no conflict between the communicative signal and our construal of the direction and thrust of the argument. The statement in v.18 is relevant in relation to v.17 as a strengthening complex of assumptions which increases the cognitive effects to be derived from v.17a. Specifically, it makes accessible assumptions which enable addressees to understand better in what way God’s righteousness as revealed in the gospel is an expression of God’s faithfulness towards his faith-full people. It is revealed as he deals with unrighteousness and injustice, fulfilling his commitment to save them from these realities.

This procedural reading of γάρ in v.18 thus provides an answer to our third question. It compels us to interpret v.18 in a close strengthening relationship with v.17 and, in turn, with vv.16 and 15. It lends support to interpretations which seek to account for the relationship between vv.16-18 and Paul’s claim in v.15. The reading provides a coherent and integrated understanding of the entirety of vv.15-18, in keeping with the guidance given by the chain of γάρ clauses. It identifies v.15 as highly salient in Paul’s communication. The fact that this highly salient claim makes explicit reference to the believers in Rome also leads to the inference that the situation in Rome is uppermost in Paul’s mind as he writes the letter. This begins to suggest an answer to our fourth question, namely that the situation in Rome is directly related to Paul’s purpose in writing.

The weighty theological material of vv.16b-18 is brought behind Paul’s claim that he is not ashamed of the gospel, and thus also behind his assertion that he desires to preach it to those in the capital, in order to bolster these claims and give them persuasive punch. This suggests that Paul anticipates that his statement in v.15 will raise implicit questions for some of his addressees, and will not be accepted as valid without further evidence to strengthen it. This bolstering material therefore takes the form of pertinent aspects of Paul’s gospel tailored in order to persuade his Roman addressees that he does indeed have good reason to want to share it with them, because it is good, relevant news for them.
In vv.16-18, then, Paul presents tailored aspects of his version of the gospel, of its power to save, its universality, its eschatological character and its Jewish-rootedness. He does this in order to make clear that he is not ashamed of this gospel as something to be announced in Rome to the multi-cultural mix of Roman believers, many of whom have been influenced by the Jewish faith, and who live in a minority situation in the dominant Greco-Roman culture. What follows in the letter body is best understood as an expression of Paul’s gospel specifically geared to this audience in Rome.

6.3.9 Romans 1:19-32

There is not space here for a detailed examination of 1:19-32 in the light of my analysis of 1:15-18, or of its place in the epistle’s argumentation. Nevertheless, some observations on its relationship with 1:15-18, and its role in the progression of the argument, are in order. We have already ruled out Campbell’s reading of 1:18-32. The procedural analysis of γὰρ in 1:16-18 also sheds light on other interpretations of these verses. It suggests strongly that 1:18-3:20 cannot be read as an elaboration of the theme of the revelation of the wrath of God, with 1:18 as its heading. Neither can v.18 be viewed as an opening bracketing statement which finds its corresponding closing in 1:32, with vv.18-32 an explanation of what is implicit in the thematic statement of vv.16-17. At the same time, Elliott’s reading of vv.18-32, while respecting the close connection of v.18 with vv.15-17, seems unlikely, with no explicit textual evidence to support it.

When considering the question of the division of the text into sections, we need to heed Dahl’s warnings regarding the inappropriateness of imposing rigid artificial divisions on the text. Nevertheless, the occurrence of διότι in 1:19a brings to an end the tight fourfold strengthening chain of γὰρ clauses in 1:16-18. As a result, I suggest that what

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888 See Barclay 2015: 460.
889 Pace Dahl 1977b: 79.
890 Pace Wright 2002: 430.
893 I have not undertaken a detailed analysis of διότι, but suggest that it does not play the same procedural role as γὰρ and does not guide towards the construction of an inferential strengthening series. Instead, it introduces a reason or cause and may communicate some semantic content in a way that γὰρ does not.
follows from v.19 onwards belongs less closely with what precedes it in vv.15-18, and should not be viewed as part of the cumulative buttressing found in vv.16-18 for the claim in v.15. In v.19a διότι introduces a reason why God’s wrath is being revealed against wickedness and unrighteousness of those who suppress the truth: it is because what can be known about God is plain to them. This statement in v.19a then in turn becomes a springboard for the development of thought in vv.19-32, which traces the “history of sin” in the face of humanity’s “creation-related knowledge of God”.

Based on our analysis of 1:15-18, the statement in v.19a can thus be viewed as the basis of a fresh line of thought found in vv.19-32 (a basis which is itself strengthened by γάρ clauses in v.19b and v.20). Using material influenced by Jewish teaching, vv.19-32 trace the story of how humanity has refused to recognise its creator, and has instead turned to idolatry. Such a reading of vv.19-32 shares elements in common with Jonathan Linebaugh’s analysis of 1:16-32. Paying careful attention to γάρ in vv.16b-18, Linebaugh interprets these verses as an “apocalyptic kerygma” which proclaims the “double apocalypse of divine righteousness and wrath” revealed in the gospel event. In the context of this kerygmatic proclamation, vv.19-32 then represent a “targeted polemic” which catalogues the idolatry and immorality of all humanity, including Israel. Although Linebaugh’s identification of this proclamation in vv.16-18 differs from the more contextualised reading of these verses proposed above, and their relationship to v.15, his recognition of a distinction between vv.16-18 and vv.19-32 is nevertheless compatible with this analysis.

I suggest that the parallels between this section and Wisdom of Solomon 13-15 may be part of Paul’s strategy for persuading his addressees that his gospel is not anti-Jewish, but arises out of Jewish teaching and a Jewish worldview, and is in continuity.

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894 See Linebaugh’s (2011:216) analysis of vv.16-18 on the one hand, and vv.19-32 on the other.
895 Linebaugh 2011: 216. See n.177 below.
897 Linebaugh (2011: 216) finds in 1:19-32 “the history of sin”, within which Israel is allusively included.
900 See Linebaugh 2011; Barclay 2015: 462-64; Watson 2004: 405-11 for discussions of parallels and crucial differences between the two texts, through which Paul makes his point that Jews are included in the indictment of idolatry in Rom. 1:18-32. In contrast, see Zetterholm 2016: 58; Stowers 1994b: 85-97.
This is similar, I suggest, to his use in vv.17-18 of the Jewish eschatological concept of the two-sidedness of justice/righteousness. But although in vv.19-32 Paul uses aspects of this Jewish critique of Gentile idolatry, he adapts it to include elements that allude to Israelite disobedience, thus preparing the way for his fundamental claim (3:9, 3:22) that there is no difference between Jews and Gentiles when it comes to the issue of rebellion against God. Moreover, I propose that this gradual introduction of a critique of Jewish sin and idolatry by means of allusions to stories from Israel’s history and a modification of Wisdom’s perspective may also arise from Paul’s concern not to be perceived as anti-Jewish.

Thus in vv.16-18 pertinent aspects of Paul’s gospel are presented, in Jewish conceptual terms (and citing Jewish scripture), as God’s power to save all who are faith-full (Jews first and also Greeks), through the revelation of God’s righteousness, which expresses his faithfulness in saving his faith-full people from injustice/unrighteousness. In vv.19-32, however, the unrighteousness from which those who trust in God’s righteousness are to be saved is exposed, not as that of their oppressors or enemies, but as none other than their own, whether Gentile or Jewish. The enemy from which those who trust in God are to be powerfully delivered is not primarily Roman oppressors and imperial injustice, but their own ungodliness (1:18), which is further revealed later in Paul’s argument as the power of sin (3:9, 5:12-21, 7:13-25 etc.). I suggest that Paul frames his gospel in this particular way at the beginning of Romans in order to rebut charges of anti-Jewish tendencies and therefore of a gospel that is shameful to proclaim in Rome (vv.15-16a). His aim is to redress the balance in the wake of the Galatian controversy, demonstrating that his gospel recognises Jewish priority, while showing that this does not consist in a moral or ontological difference between Jews and Gentiles in relation to sin.

901 Linebaugh (2011: 217) argues that there is continuity between Wisdom and Romans. Paul, however, situates his engagement with Wisdom within an “antithetical argument”, in order to include Israel in the polemical critique and “establish the essential unity of humanity”.
902 See Barclay 2015: 463, who draws attention to the echoes of “a biblical rebuke of Israelite idolatry” in Rom. 1:23 (cf. LXX Ps. 105:20).
903 These emphasise the gospel’s continuity with the Jewish faith (Walters 1993: 74-75).
904 To which God has himself handed them over: 1:24, 26, 28.
905 Barclay 2015: 461, 64.
6.3.10 Summary: questions answered

In sum, the application of a procedural account to γάρ in 1:15-18 has thrown light on our four questions as follows:

1. The statements in vv.15-18 are bound together by the procedural guidance given by γάρ. Consequently, they should not be separated from one another in interpretation by the imposition of major section breaks in the text. The fourfold strengthening chain of γάρ clauses leads back to v.15, supporting the claim in that verse and underlining its argumentative salience. In other words, many cognitive effects are to be derived from it for Paul’s addressees. The fact that this reference to Rome is highly salient as Paul opens his argument suggests that the Roman destination of the epistle is central to his purpose in writing.

2. Vv.16-17 thus need to be interpreted as strengthening material within the context of Paul’s desire to preach the gospel to those in Rome, rather than regarded as an isolated thesis statement which summarises a gospel of justification by faith and thereby announces the epistle’s theme. Nevertheless, since this material represents extracts of the Rome-relevant version of the gospel which Paul develops throughout the epistle, it is to be expected that we find here snatches of the themes to come. These verses are neither a digression, as Runge maintains, nor “the heart” of what Paul has to say, as Wright argues. Instead, vv.16b-18 represent a powerful theological rationale backing up the claim in v.16a that Paul is not ashamed of the gospel. This in turn backs up the expression in v.15 of his desire to preach the gospel to those in Rome. The Jewish-rooted yet multi-ethnic way Paul tailors this theological supporting evidence is shaped by what Paul perceives as specifically relevant to his Roman addressees, and what he wishes to achieve among them. We should not allow its theological weight to distract us from the argumentative salience of the statement in v.15, which it strengthens.

3. V.18 should be interpreted as part of the complex of assumptions in vv.16-18 marshalled to bolster Paul’s claim in v.15, and not as a heading for a new section describing God’s wrath against humankind. The statement concerning God’s wrath is to be understood as part of the revelation of God’s righteousness which is nothing less than God’s power to save his faith-full people who put their trust in him.
Whereas v.18 looks backwards to vv.15-17, in v.19 a new phase of thought begins (though we should be wary of imposing sharp breaks on the text). While telling the story of humanity’s sinfulness, vv.19-32 should not simply be viewed as the “proof” of humanity’s guilt which paves the way for the presentation of the gospel “solution” in 3:21-26. Nor should they be regarded as a progressive acknowledgement of guilt through which individuals must pass before responding to the gospel. Instead, they can be understood as Paul’s radical presentation, in the light of the revelation of God’s righteousness in Christ, of just what it is that God’s faith-full people, both Jews and Gentiles, are delivered/saved from: not unrighteous enemies, but their own ungodliness and unrighteousness, that is, the power of sin.

4. We can suggest that a coherent account of the totality of the strengthening information in 1:16-18 is potentially provided by the proposal that Paul writes to counter criticism in Rome that his gospel is anti-Jewish and thus shameful, and to address concerns that it may disrupt relations between Torah-observant and non-Torah observant believers in Rome, threatening unity. In so doing, Paul is responding to tensions caused by various kinds of ethnocentrism, Gentile-orientated and Jewish-orientated, among Roman believers, which would be exacerbated by the perception that his gospel is anti-Jewish. Paul thus uses Jewish themes and scripture in his theological rationale in vv.16-18, and emphasises the priority of Jews in God’s saving purposes. At the same time, his insistence that all, Jews and Gentiles, are accepted by God on the basis of faith-full trust in Christ, hints at the fact that he aims to counter all forms of ethnocentrism and arrogance, Jewish and Gentile (see the discussion of 15:7-13 below).

Following such a construal, Paul would thus be writing to counter various misperceptions and tensions among his Roman addressees, with the aim of building unity, as a witness to the power of the gospel. Such a hypothesis would account for all

907 Wedderburn 1988: 103-104 and Tobin 2004: 14, 73-77 suggest that such an anti-Jewish charge threatens to bring Paul’s gospel into disrepute.
908 Wedderburn 1988: 142.
909 Walters 1993: 75; Russell 1988: 182-84.
910 In particular, the revelation of God’s righteousness and his wrath at unrighteousness.
911 See Barclay 2015: 464, who argues that the motif in 1:16b emphasises “the priority of the Jew in both salvation and judgement” and “the common position of Jew and Greek”.
of the material in vv.16-18 in relation to v.15 (and preceding). But in order to be plausible, it needs corroboration from evidence in the rest of the letter. It remains to be seen whether such a construal is supported by a procedural analysis of γάρ in 15:7-13, and whether this can throw more specific light on the way the Roman situation may shape Paul’s purpose and argument. It is to this passage that we now turn.

### 6.4 Romans 15:7-13

This passage, occurring at the opposite end of the epistle’s argument from 1:15-18, is potentially equally significant for determining the letter’s direction and purpose. 15:7 functions on one level as a conclusion to the whole argument of 14:1-15:6, and scholars’ reading of that sub-section determines to a certain extent their view of the role of 15:7-13. For some who read the discussion of the weak and the strong as responding to a specific situation among the Roman believers, 15:7-13 serves as an argumentative key for the entire epistle. There is a single occurrence of γάρ, in 15:8. It is my contention that this plays a decisive role in identifying the thrust of Paul’s argument not only in these verses, but in the wider co-text. Its guidance helps shed light firstly on the identity of the weak and the strong, secondly on the identity of Paul’s addressees more generally, and thus, thirdly, on the situation in Rome which Paul writes to address.

Several important questions are raised by 15:7-13:

1) Whom is Paul addressing?

2) Is it the exhortation in v.7, or the theological rationale of vv.8-9, which is most argumentatively salient in these verses, leading to most cognitive effects?

3) Does 15:7-13 represent the argumentative climax of the entire epistle?

4) How does our reading of 15:7-13 fit with our reading of 1:15-18?

I suggest that a procedural account of γάρ in v.8, in helping us to answer these questions, has significant implications for the interpretation of the whole letter.

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912 As highlighted by the repetition in 15:7 of the imperative προσλαμβάνοσθε from 14:1 etc.

913 E.g. Watson 1991: 206-207 (see discussion below).
I will give a brief overview of scholarly opinion regarding the argumentative significance of these verses, and discuss their co-text, before examining pertinent exegetical issues. I will then propose a procedural analysis of γάρ in v.8, and explore the exegetical and argumentative insights that this yields.

6.4.1 Argumentative role of Romans 15:7-13?

Various scholars regard 15:7-13, and more specifically, either 15:7, or 15:8-9, as playing an important role in the argumentation of Romans. Barclay views 15:7-13 as a “framing passage” which matches 1:1-7 and emphasises that the gospel is rooted in promises made to Israel, the realisation of which includes the Gentiles. 914 Jewett views the statement in v.7b, “Christ welcomed you” as encapsulating the letter’s main argument. 915 William Lane argues that the focus on the relationship between Jews and Gentiles forms the letter’s “dominant framework”, Paul’s specific aim being the “reconciliation” of Jews and Gentiles in one church, 916 within which the appeal for mutual acceptance in 15:7 features prominently. Similarly, W. S. Campbell understands 15:7 as “the climax of Paul’s exhortation”, which is “based on the work and example of Christ” (15:8-9), and resonates with the conclusion of chapters 9-11. 917 Sarah Whittle, who reads Romans through the lens of the covenant-renewal narrative of Deuteronomy, and finds in it the theme of Gentile inclusion in God’s covenant with Israel, argues that the statement in 15:7-8 “sums up Paul’s reading of Israel’s history through the Deuteronomic narrative”. 918 Watson’s sociological approach leads him also to identify 15:7-13, and particularly 15:7, as a key to unlocking the situation of the Roman addressees and the epistle’s purpose. 919

Other scholars emphasise the importance of 15:8-9 rather than 15:7. Michael Bird finds in these verses the “pinnacle of the letter”. 920 Dunn views 15:7 as an “opening call” for

914 Barclay 2015: 459-60.
916 Lane 1998: 201.
918 Whittle 2015: 142.
920 Bird 2013: 198.
mutual consideration, but argues that Paul’s main concern is found in 15:8-9 in the underlining of “the twin themes of Christ as guaranteeing both the continuity of God’s purpose to the circumcised and faithfulness of God to his covenant promises”. ¹²¹ Wright, meanwhile, argues that v.7 is a “paragraph-opening” containing elements to be developed,¹²² but that 15:8-12 represents the “theological climax of the whole letter”,¹²³ summing up its argument, within which v.12 is climactic.¹²⁴ I will return to the question of the relative salience of v.7 in relation to vv.8-9 below.

6.4.2 Co-text

14:1-15:13 is regarded by most as forming a single subsection within the major section of chapters 12-15.¹²⁵ The major section contains hortatory material which consists of specific ethical instructions and examples for life within the community of believers. These have as their foundation and motivation the mercy of God, presented in the previous theological argument of chapters 3-11, in particular the immediately preceding argument of chapters 9-11.¹²⁶ Within chapters 12-15, there is a switch in 14:1 to exhortations which address tensions between those characterised as “the weak” and “the strong”.

In 15:1-2 Paul begins to draw together the exhortations of chapter 14 with a general exhortation¹²⁷ to the strong to bear with the weaknesses of those who are not, looking to build the weak up, rather than pleasing themselves. These exhortations are powerfully backed up in 15:3-4 by two γάρ clauses which contain a “double dose” of weighty theological material in v.3 in the form of a christological example plus an authoritative citation from the LXX of Psalm 69:9.¹²⁸ The aim of this buttressing theological framework is to persuade addressees to put the instructions in vv.1-2 into practice. The argumentative effect is to underline the salience of these exhortations, pointing towards

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¹²¹ Dunn 1988b: 845.
¹²² Wright 2002: 746.
¹²³ Wright 2013: 1494.
¹²⁴ Wright 2013: 1455 n.2.
¹²⁷ See Wilckens 1982: 100.
¹²⁸ See Jewett 2007: 880.
them as main argumentative points, from which many relevant implications are to be derived. Vv.5-6 take the form of a prayer for unity among the Roman addressees, leading to united worship which glorifies God. This prayer, which also functions as an implicit exhortation to unity, sums up the thrust of the whole of the hortatory section from 14:1.

6.4.3 Exegetical issues in Romans 15:7-9

15:7a: Διό προσλαμβάνεσθε ἀλλήλους,
15:7b: καθὼς καὶ ὁ Χριστὸς προσελάβετο ὑμᾶς εἰς δόξαν τοῦ θεοῦ.
15:8a: λέγω γὰρ Χριστὸν διάκονον γεγενῆσθαι περιτομῆς ύπὲρ ἀληθείας θεοῦ,
15:8b: εἰς τὸ βεβαιῶσαι τὰς ἐπαγγελίας τῶν πατέρων,
15:9a: τὰ δὲ ἔθνη ύπὲρ ἐλέους δοξάσαι τὸν θεόν,
15:9b: καθὼς γέγραπται,

Διὰ τοῦτο ἐξομολογήσομαι σοι ἐν ἔθνεσιν
καὶ τῷ ὑνόμιτί σου ψαλῶ.
15:10: καὶ πάλιν λέγει,

Εὐφράνθητε, ἔθνη, μετὰ τοῦ λαοῦ αὐτοῦ.
15:11: καὶ πάλιν,

Αἰνεῖτε, πάντα τὰ ἔθνη, τὸν κύριον
καὶ ἐπανεσάτωσαν αὐτὸν πάντες οἱ λαοὶ.
15:12: καὶ πάλιν Ἡσαίας λέγει,

'Εσται ἡ ρίζα τοῦ Ἰεσσαὶ
καὶ ὁ ἀνιστάμενος ἀρχεῖν ἔθνὼν,
ἐπ᾽ αὐτῷ ἔθνη ἐλπιοῦσιν.
15:7 is introduced by διό, signalling that the exhortation which follows is a conclusion drawn from the preceding argument. The concluding effect is reinforced by the repetition in v.7a of the verb from the opening exhortation of 14:1. But whereas in 14:1 the exhortation was indirectly addressed to the strong in reference to their attitude towards the weak, here the use of the reciprocal pronoun ἀλλήλους makes the imperative more general in its scope. The Roman addressees are urged to accept or welcome one another. This imperative is followed in v.7b by a clause, introduced by καθώς, which presents as a model Christ’s welcome or acceptance of believers. Whether καθώς is read as “causal,” or as introducing a comparison, the clause serves as an initial christological motivation for the imperative, lending it weight. There is disagreement, however, over the referent of the pronoun ὑμᾶς in v.7b. The textual variant ὑμᾶς is better supported by the external evidence than the variant ἡμᾶς, and is “in harmony with the other instances of the second person plural in the context” (vv.5-7). Most scholars therefore take ὑμᾶς as the original reading. Depending on the position taken regarding the identity of the Roman addressees, some read the pronoun as referring exclusively to Gentile believers, and others to a mixed Jewish-Gentile audience. The variant ἡμᾶς may have arisen precisely in an attempt to deal with this ambiguity, and to make better sense of the subsequent supporting theological statement in vv.8-9, which refers to the role of both Jews and Gentiles in God’s purposes.

The strengthening relationship indicated by γάρ in v.8 is not as straightforward as in some instances. The extent of the strengthening premises needs to be determined, as well as the preceding element which is strengthened (see below). The real difficulty associated with this occurrence of γάρ, however, lies with the exegetical complexities of the theological statement in vv.8-9a which it introduces. The infinitive clause of v.9a is

930 See Wilckens 1982: 105. The scope of Paul’s address is here not precisely defined and we can infer from the preceding co-text that it extends to include everyone referred to directly or indirectly in 14:1-15:7.
931 Käsemann 1973: 369.
934 See, however, Schlier 1977: 424.
935 Cranfield (1979: 740) claims that γάρ marks the relationship between vv.8-12 and the imperative in v.7. In contrast, Wilckens (1982: 105) reads v.8 alone as an explanation of the “christologische Begründung” of v.7b.
Scholars are divided as to whether δοξάσαι should be read as dependent on the prepositional construction εἰς τό in v.8b, or as directly dependent on λέγω in v.8a. In the former case, δοξάσαι is parallel with βεβαιῶσαι in v.8b. Christ’s service to the circumcised is thus understood as having a dual purpose: confirming the promises to the fathers939 and leading the Gentiles to praise God for his mercy. In the latter case, δοξάσαι is parallel with γεγενήσθαι, and Christ’s service to the circumcised is understood as a separate event, not integrally linked with God’s mercy shown to the Gentiles. This second interpretation seems, however, to contradict what Paul has argued earlier in the letter (see, for example, 4:16, 9:8, 11:28-31 etc.).940

6.4.4 A procedural analysis of γὰρ in 15:8

Following a procedural account, we can say that the statements in vv.8-9a are processed as a single complex of strengthening premises, since they are all grammatically dependent on λέγω (whether directly or indirectly). We can also identify the statement in v.7b as the candidate for strengthening by the γὰρ clause. Since v.7b itself serves as a theological rationale for the exhortation in v.7a, however, I suggest that the knock-on effect of any strengthening of v.7b is, in turn, to increase the relevance of v.7a.

A procedural reading of γὰρ always directs us to a close consideration of the previous co-text and the accessing of previously communicated assumptions in the construction of a strengthening series. Thus, on a procedural reading, the “dual purpose” interpretation of v.9a is to be preferred, because, as Dunn notes, it is the most coherent with the preceding argument. This interpretation also serves as powerful theological strengthening for the exhortation to mutual acceptance in v.7a, whereas the “single purpose” interpretation does not. This is because the former points to the

936 Cranfield 1979: 742; Whittle 2015: 141 for an overview of interpretations.
939 τὰς ἐπαγγελίας τῶν πατέρων can be understood as referring firstly to the promises to Abraham (see 4:13-16), but also to the other patriarchs (see 9:7-13). Dunn (1988b: 528) suggests that the promises in view are those that included the blessing of the nations (Gen. 12:2-3; 18:18; 22:18; 26:4; 28:14; Sir. 44:21). Whittle (2015: 142-46) reads the expression also in relation to promises of covenant renewal in Deuteronomy.
940 Dunn 1988b: 848.
interdependence between Jews and Gentiles in God’s purposes, in particular to the
dependence of the Gentiles on Christ’s ministry to the Jews. In contrast, the single
purpose interpretation provides no theological back-up for the exhortation in v.7a, and
only weak back-up for the theological motivation in v.7b.941 If we follow the single
purpose reading, the statement in v.8 regarding Christ’s ministry to the Jews becomes a
free floating theological statement which does not contribute to argumentative
coherence, in contradiction to the guidance given by γάρ regarding its argumentative
role. It is questionable whether the single purpose interpretation achieves adequate
relevance as a piece of strengthening evidence for the preceding material in v.7. If we
read γάρ as an indicator of procedural strengthening, and assume that vv.8-9a function
as strengthening premises for v.7, only the dual purpose interpretation achieves
adequate cognitive effects. Assuming a procedural strengthening function for γάρ thus
supports the dual purpose interpretation.

6.4.5 Light thrown on the identity of Paul’s addressees

Let us consider how a procedural analysis of γάρ in v.8 sheds light on the wider
argumentative questions raised in relation to 15:7-13. Once we assume that the
information following γάρ in vv.8-9a is to be processed as strengthening premises, some
proposed interpretations will be more coherent and logical than others. I propose that a
procedural reading of γάρ illuminates the identity and ethnic make-up of Paul’s
addressees, by throwing light on the referent of ὑμᾶς in v.7b. We need to test out the
different possibilities in relation to this question, to see which is most compatible with a
strengthening account. Since the dual purpose interpretation of 15:8-9a is strongly
compatible with a procedural reading of γάρ, I will assume this interpretation as I work
through a procedural analysis in relation to the question of the audience’s ethnic make-up.

Interpretation G: ὑμᾶς referring to exclusively Gentile addressees

On this reading, I propose that γάρ in v.8 may trigger something like the following
inferential series:

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941 Assuming that ὑμᾶς refers to at least some Gentile addressees, if not exclusively so.
**P** (v.7b): Christ welcomed you [Gentile believers in Rome] to the glory of God.

**Q introduced by γάρ** (vv.8-9a): Christ became a servant of the circumcised for the sake of God’s truth, in order to confirm the promises to the patriarchs, and in order that the Gentiles\(^{942}\) may glorify God for his mercy.

**IA1:** The promises to the patriarchs include the promises to bless the Gentiles through the patriarchs (especially Abraham) and their descendants. (Inferable from 4:16-17 in particular.\(^{943}\))

**IA2:** If Christ became a servant of the circumcised for the sake of God’s truth in order to confirm the promises to bless the Gentiles, and in order that the Gentiles may glorify God for his mercy, then Christ welcomed the Gentiles.

**IA3:** If the Gentiles glorify God for his mercy because Christ welcomed the Gentiles, then Christ welcomed the Gentile believers to the glory of God.

**C** (strengthening v.7b): Christ welcomed you [Gentile believers in Rome] to the glory of God.

Following a reading of ὑμᾶς as referring exclusively to Gentiles, then, it is possible to construct an inferential series which results in the strengthening of the statement in v.7b. The strengthening procedure is relevant as an explanation which increases the comprehensibility of this statement so that addressees adhere to it more strongly. But on this reading, the strengthening premise in v.8a regarding Christ becoming a servant of the circumcised for the sake of God’s truth seems of little argumentative relevance in the immediately preceding co-text. It does not provide evidence for the way Christ accepted/welcomed the Gentiles. The strengthening series between vv.8b-9a and v.7b is logically complete without it, achieving adequate cognitive effects and increasing the relevance of v.7b.

**Interpretation H:** ὑμᾶς referring to both Gentile and Jewish addressees

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\(^{942}\) Since ἔθνη here stands in contrast with περιτομή, used as a metonym for Israel, I translate it as “Gentiles”.

\(^{943}\) See the use of βεβαιόω in conjunction with ἐπαγγέλια in 4:16.
On this reading, I propose that γάρ in v.8 may trigger the following series:

P (v.7b): Christ welcomed you [Jewish and Gentile believers in Rome] to the glory of God.

Q introduced by γάρ (vv.8-9a): Christ became a servant of the circumcised for the sake of God’s truth, in order to confirm the promises to the patriarchs, and in order that the Gentiles may glorify God for his mercy.

IA1: If Christ became a servant of the circumcised for the sake of God’s truth, this demonstrates that Christ welcomed/accepted the Jews. (Inferable from encyclopaedic knowledge of concepts of circumcision, and of servant/service.)

IA2: The promises to the patriarchs include the promises to bless the Gentiles through the patriarchs (especially Abraham) and their descendants. (Inferable from 4:16-17 etc.)

IA3: Christ welcomed the Jews in order to confirm the promises to bless the Gentiles through the patriarchs. (Inferable from IA2, and from vv.8-9.)

IA4: If Christ welcomed the Jews in order to confirm the promises to bless the Gentiles through the patriarchs, and in order that the Gentiles may glorify God for his mercy, then Christ’s welcome of the Jews brings God’s mercy and blessing to the Gentiles, with the result that the Gentiles glorify God for his mercy.

IA5: God’s mercy and blessing to the Gentiles demonstrates that God welcomed the Gentiles. (Inferable from encyclopaedic knowledge of concepts of mercy and welcome.)

IA6: If Christ’s welcome of the Jews confirming the promises to the patriarchs brings God’s welcome to the Gentiles, with the result that they glorify God for his mercy, then God’s welcome to the Gentiles by means of Christ’s welcome to the Jews brings glory to God.

C (strengthening v.7b): Christ welcomed you [Jewish and Gentile believers in Rome] to the glory of God.

We see that a strengthening series based on interpretation H also leads to the strengthening of the statement in v.7b so that it becomes more comprehensible and
more relevant to addressees. Moreover, this second series is more compatible with a procedural analysis than the first, because it involves as strengthening premises not only the assumptions communicated in vv.8b-9a, but also those in v.8a regarding Christ becoming a servant of the circumcised. It is thus better able to provide a coherent account of the information communicated in vv.8-9a in relation to the preceding context. So a procedural strengthening account of γὰρ confirms most strongly interpretation H, which posits a mixed Jewish-Gentile audience, and is less compatible with a reading that insists on exclusively Gentile addressees.

Since v.7b is grammatically tightly connected with the exhortation in v.7a and provides a theological motivation for it, the knock-on effect of the strengthening triggered by γὰρ in v.8 is to provide further back-up for this exhortation, underlining its argumentative salience. Again, the strengthening provided by the γὰρ clause in vv.8-9a is strongly compatible with a reading of v.7a as an exhortation to Jewish and Gentile believers to accept/welcome one another, but less compatible with an interpretation which understands “one another” to refer to different groups of Gentile believers. In this way, a procedural analysis of γὰρ in 15:8 throws light on the question of Paul’s addressees, supporting the view that they are a mixture of Gentiles and Jews, even if the majority are Gentile.

6.4.6 Light thrown on the argumentative role of 15:7-13

Thus the inferential procedure triggered by γὰρ in v.8 contributes, via the strengthening of v.7b, to the reinforcement and underlining of the exhortation to mutual acceptance in v.7a, increasing its argumentative salience. Moreover, there is more to the strengthening than simply the inferential procedure. The information in vv.8-9a may additionally carry weight as a metarepresentation of commonly known and authoritative material within the Christian community. Some suggest that in the reference to Christ as servant in v.8a, Paul may have in mind the tradition behind Mark 10:43-45. The solemn introductory formula λέγω likewise draws attention to the authoritative nature of the material

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944 Lane (1998: 206-207) argues that the appeal to mutual acceptance, supported by the reference to the significance of the incarnation for both Jews and Gentiles, would be pointless, if both groups were not represented in the Roman church.

945 Jewett 2007: 891; Dunn 1988b: 846 etc.
introduced. In this way, the authoritative character of the strengthening material brings a double dose of persuasive punch behind the exhortation in v.7, convincing addressees more strongly of its validity and importance.

The strengthening material of vv.8-9a is followed in vv.9b-12 by a series of four citations from the LXX, all expressing the theme of the nations, or Gentiles, praising God.946 This provides further authoritative buttressing for the theological statement in vv.8-9a.947 The quotation in v.9b from Psalm 18:49 is spoken from the perspective of a devout Jew singing God’s praise among the Gentiles.948 The second and third citations, in vv.10 and 11, from Deuteronomy 32:43 and Psalm 117:1 respectively, exhort Gentiles to join God’s people in praising him. The final citation, in v.12, is from Isaiah 11:10, and recapitulates the theme of Israel’s Messiah bringing blessing (hope) to the Gentiles.949 Wright claims that this citation has “explosive political implications” and that Paul produces it as the “final move” in his whole argument.950

The cumulative effect of this weighty catena of scriptural support is to bring powerful theological backing firstly for the declaration introduced in vv.8-9a. The focus on the Gentiles’ worship of God alongside Israel in a messianic context provides support both for the statement that the Gentiles glorify God for his mercy (v.9a), and for the implication that the Gentiles’ experience of God’s mercy is dependent on Christ’s ministry to Israel (vv.8-9a). The strengthening of vv.8-9a thus also has the knock-on effect of further increasing the relevance of v.7b that Christ’s acceptance of believers leads to God’s glory. This in its turn increases the relevance of the exhortation in v.7a, further increasing its argumentative salience.

The overall effect of the supporting catena plus strengthening procedure is therefore to increase the relevance of the exhortation to mutual acceptance. As a result, many

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946 See Whittle’s (2015: 135-39) discussion of these citations, which she views as emphasising the inclusion of the Gentiles alongside Israel in the worshipping community.
949 For Whittle (2015: 139), this citation brings together “major themes” of the letter: “Christ as Davidic Messiah, the resurrected one, the one who rules the Gentiles, and in whom they have hope”.
950 Wright 2002: 748.
cognitive effects are derived from v.7a and addressees are forcefully persuaded to accept its desirability, and motivated to put it into practice. Consequently, it can be understood as the main point of 15:7-13, representing the thrust of the argument, from which the greatest number of cognitive effects arise.

This analysis challenges Wright’s view that the significance of vv.7-13 lies not so much in the exhortation in v.7, as in the “theological climax” of vv.8-12. A procedural account of γάρ in v.8 points in the opposite direction. The material in vv.8-12 is indeed theologically weighty and a summary of various of the letter’s themes, but is nevertheless marshalled in the service of the concluding exhortation in v.7, bringing persuasive ballast behind it. Vv.8-12 thus fulfil a supporting function in argumentative terms. The main cognitive effects or personal implications of the subsection are to be derived from the imperative “Welcome one another”, addressed to Jews and Gentiles. The grounding theological rationale of vv.8-12 does not itself generate new implications for addressees, but represents assumptions that are already accepted, some of which have been communicated previously (see, for example, 11:11-17 and 30-31). It is for this reason that the rationale may be perceived as a summary of letter’s theology.

This analysis supports the view of those who accord 15:7 special importance as the climax of Paul’s exhortation. It suggests that those who read vv.8-9 as the focus of the subsection are allowing themselves to be distracted from Paul’s main point by the theological significance of this supporting material. Similarly, Wright’s reading of v.12 as the “final move” in Paul’s argument contradicts the guidance given by γάρ which indicates that v.12 is relevant not in its own right, but as further support for vv.7-9. If we ignore this guidance, we risk missing the point of Paul’s argument: Gentile-orientated and Jewish-orientated believers are to accept one another in unity, bringing glory to God, because of what Christ has done for them, which binds them together inextricably in God’s purposes.

The final verse in the subsection, 15:13, on the other hand, is introduced by δὲ, indicating, I suggest, that the information which follows it is not to be processed as part of the strengthening rationale of vv.8-12. Instead, v.13 is relevant in its own right,

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951 Wright 2013: 1494.
leading to fresh implications for addressees. The verse contains a prayer which parallels the one in 15:5-6, rounding off its subsection in a similar fashion,\(^{952}\) and drawing together many of the key concepts of the epistle.

### 6.4.7 Light thrown on the purpose of the epistle

The recognition of the argumentative salience of 15:7 at this very strategic closing point supports the view that the exhortation to mutual acceptance and unity among the Roman addressees, which arises out of the exhortations of 14:1-15:6, is central to an understanding of the epistle’s argument and purpose. The salience of the exhortation is so marked, given its location in the argument, and the supporting information brought behind it so weighty, that it can be regarded as a summary not only of chapters 14-15:13, or chapters 12-15, but of the thrust of the entire letter. I suggest that the exhortation can be viewed as the epistle’s most relevant point, from which multiple cognitive effects and behaviour-transforming implications are to be derived.\(^{953}\) Here at this pivotal closing juncture, Paul spells out and sums up the practical personal and communal implications for Roman believers of the aspects of the gospel discussed in the epistle.

We have seen that a procedural account of γάρ confirms the view that Paul’s Roman addressees probably include Jewish as well as Gentile believers. The exhortation in v.7 is best understood in terms of mutual acceptance and unity between Torah-observant/Jewish-orientated believers on the one hand, and non-Torah-observant believers/Gentile-orientated believers on the other. The issue of relations between these two groups, which is bound up with an understanding of the continuing role of Israel in God’s purposes, takes centre stage at this crucial and highly salient point. From this we can infer that addressing the issue of unity among representatives of these differing perspectives is a key aspect of Paul’s purpose in writing, as various scholars suggest.\(^{954}\)

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\(^{952}\) See Jewett 2007: 887; Wright 2002: 744.

\(^{953}\) Barclay (2015: 460) notes resonances of 1:16 in 15:8-9. According to a procedural reading, both 1:16 and 15:8-9, which emphasise that Paul places “Jew and Gentile on a par on a distinctly Jewish foundation”, serve as supporting theological rationales for what I suggest is the main point of Paul’s argument, namely to address problems and tensions in the Roman situation.

\(^{954}\) E.g. Esler 2003; Walters 1993; W. S. Campbell 1992; Russell 1988; Wedderburn 1988; Wiefel 1991; Minear 1971 etc. See Bird 2013: 187 for an extensive list of variations on this hypothesis.
We can conclude that his aim is to build bridges and mutual understanding between Jewish-orientated and Gentile-orientated tendencies in Rome, confronting ethnocentrism\textsuperscript{955} and factionalism among believers.

The hypothesis that Paul writes to address tensions and issues of unity in Rome accounts for the fact that Paul writes at such length. It seems unlikely that the apostle would write such a lengthy exposition of his gospel to the Roman believers as a self-introduction.\textsuperscript{956} More plausible is the suggestion that he writes because he is motivated by reports of concrete problems or incipient tensions in Rome, and wishes to provide teaching which strengthens the faith and builds up the communit(ies) of believers there (see 1:11). These tensions are hinted at in the course of his argument in chapters 1-11, and then addressed more directly in chapters 12-15, and especially chapters 14-15, as we have seen.

I suggest that Paul’s concern to demonstrate that his gospel is not anti-Jewish, but affirms the priority and continuing role of Israel in God’s salvific purposes in Christ, is to be understood in relation to this unifying aim. Responding to the charge that his gospel is dismissive of Israel and encourages a supersessionist perspective, he presents the gospel in a way that differs from his other epistles in emphasising the continuity between the gospel and God’s dealings with Israel.\textsuperscript{957} He makes extensive use of Jewish scripture and other traditional material (e. g. in 1:19-32), and focuses on Israel’s history and unique place in God’s purposes.\textsuperscript{958} In this way, he seeks to allay the fears and criticisms of Jewish-orientated believers, perhaps in the wake of the Galatian controversy, and to confront the incipient arrogance and potential supersessionism of non-Torah-observant believers. At the same time, he continues to insist on the core of his faith-based gospel (as expressed in Galatians), namely that there is no difference between Jew and Gentile from the fundamental point of view of the justification of the ungodly, which is based on faith in Christ. Paul is determined to show to Jewish-orientated and non-Torah-observant groups alike that his gospel is not shameful or

\textsuperscript{955} We have seen that the factions are probably more complex than a straightforward Jewish-Gentile division.

\textsuperscript{956} See W. S. Campbell 2010: 175.

\textsuperscript{957} See Beker’s (1980: 94-108) comparison between Romans and Galatians.

\textsuperscript{958} Barclay 2015: 459-60.
unworthy to be heard in Rome, but reveals God’s power to save all, and God’s faithfulness to his people, bringing righteousness/justice in the world. Paul’s aim of building unity between believers who are divided over their relationship to the Jewish heritage also explains his repeated warnings against any kind of boasting and arrogance in human credentials, whether perceived moral superiority (2:1; ch. 14), Torah observance (3:27-4:25) and Jewish “advantage”, or a non-Jewish ethnocentrism with supersessionist tendencies (11:13-24). Paul’s Roman version of the gospel is thus designed to counter various expressions of factionalism and ethnocentrism in the diverse multi-cultural Roman situation. These tensions between different groups, if left unaddressed, threaten to throw into question the power and validity of the gospel.

The hypothesis that Paul addresses issues of, and threats to, unity among Roman believers fits well with our proposed construal of 1:15-18. We noted that the Rome-specific reading of the epistle’s purpose suggested by a procedural account of γάρ in these verses needed to be corroborated by further evidence. Our analysis of 15:7-13 provides this. In both passages, the emphasis both on the inclusion of Jews and Gentiles together in God’s salvific purposes in the gospel, and on the priority of the Jewish people, suggests that Paul is addressing a specific situation of tensions in Rome arising from different stances towards the role of Jewish beliefs, traditions and heritage for Christ-believers.

While our reading of 15:7-13 lends support to interpretations which identify a concern for unity as a key to the epistle’s purpose, it does little to confirm an anti-imperial construal of the epistle. Although this reading makes sense of elements of 1:15-18, it is ultimately unsatisfying as an explanation of the data of the wider epistle. The fact that the key closing passage of 15:7-13 bears no obvious traces of an anti-imperial message undermines the plausibility of such a reading.

962 Wright’s claim to find an argumentatively significant challenge to Caesar in 15:12 is questionable, as we have seen.
6.4.8 Light thrown on the argument of the epistle

If we view the letter as countering factionalism and ethnocentrism and building unity in Rome, this accounts for the recurrent emphasis on both the priority and the responsibility of Israel in God’s purposes.\(^\text{964}\) It explains the exploration of the universality of sin and ungodliness in chapters 1-3, and the interweaving of the theme of arrogance and boasting into this. Paul aims to undercut all pretension, Jewish and Gentile, Torah-observant and non-Torah-observant, leaving all his addressees with an awareness that the injustice from which God brings deliverance in the gospel is not the unrighteousness of others, but their own ungodliness. This purpose provides an explanation for the focus on God’s righteousness and faithfulness, and on faith-full trust in Christ, as the sole criterion that counts when it comes to God’s acceptance of the ungodly. It accounts for the exploration of the ambivalent role of Torah, and for the implication that Torah is fulfilled (rather than kept\(^\text{965}\)) in Christ, and thus in believers, through the Spirit’s enabling. It provides an explanation for the extended discussion of the role of Israel in God’s continuing purposes, and of the interdependence of Jews and Gentiles in those purposes, in order to bring mercy to all.\(^\text{966}\) It makes sense of the exhortation to unity in diversity in 12:3-6, to love in chapter 13:8-10, and of the exhortations to mutual acceptance in chapters 14-15. It accounts for the recurrent theme of arrogance and boasting in human criteria versus boasting and glorying in God. In short, as W. S. Campbell puts it,

Jews and Gentiles are inextricably intertwined in the purposes of God so that one may not boast over the other and so that one without the other cannot find the salvation of God.\(^\text{967}\)

The conclusion that a concern for Jewish-orientated and Gentile-orientated mutual acceptance shapes the letter’s argument fits well with the view, argued for above, that 1:16-17 does not function as the letter’s thesis statement. If Paul’s aim in the letter is to address tensions in Rome, not to present an exposition of the gospel as summarised in 1:16-17, this accounts for the fact that parts of the letter do not fit obviously into the

\(^{964}\) See Barclay 2015: 454.
\(^{965}\) See Whittle 2015: 125-29.
\(^{967}\) W. S. Campbell 2010: 184.
grid of 1:16-17. Once we assume a Rome-specific purpose, we are released from the interpretative grid that the so-called thesis imposes. This helps to answer Campbell’s valid concerns about the circular and individualistic character of interpretations which take 1:16-17 as a starting point. An understanding of Paul’s purpose as addressing disunity among Torah-observant and non-Torah-observant believers points to chapters 9-11 as the climax of the letter’s theological argument, which serves as a compelling foundation for the hortatory section. The latter builds to its most relevant point in 15:7, from which multiple practical personal and communal implications are derived.

6.4.9 Summary

In summary, a procedural account of γάρ in 15:7-13 has illuminated several important interpretative questions:

1. An understanding of the strengthening guidance γάρ gives helps us to resolve a major exegetical disagreement, providing support for the “dual purpose” interpretation of 15:8-9a.

2. The guidance γάρ gives supports a reading of ὑμᾶς in 15:7b as referring to both Gentile and Jewish believers. This in turn lends weight to the view that Paul is addressing a mixed Jewish/Jewish-orientated and Gentile/Gentile-orientated audience in Rome.

3. Our analysis points to the exhortation in 15:7 as the most argumentatively salient and relevant point of the subsection 15:7-13, and of the section 14:1-15:13. The material in 15:8-12, on the other hand, serves as a powerful theological rationale which persuasively backs up the exhortation, creating many cognitive effects by convincing addressees that it is crucial that they put it into practice.

4. The fact that this exhortation is made highly salient at this argumentatively crucial closing point leads us to infer that the issue of mutual acceptance and unity among Roman believers with different orientations is a key to understanding the epistle’s purpose.

5. Taking the issue of unity between Jewish-orientated and Gentile-orientated believers in Rome as the principal reason for the letter allows us to make sense of many facets of
its argument and of the tensions within it. In particular, it makes sense of the Jewish-grounded version of the gospel which Paul gives. This can be explained as a response to criticism that his gospel is perceived as anti-Jewish and therefore threatens unity among believers in Rome. It also makes sense of his concern to quash boasting and arrogance.

6. The hypothesis of a situation among Roman believers where unity is at stake reinforces insights into the letter’s purpose and argument suggested by our analysis of 1:15-18. The communicative guidance given by γάρ in both passages represents significant cumulative evidence pointing to the specific Roman situation as a key to understanding the epistle’s theological argument.

7. Other Rome-specific interpretations of the letter’s purpose and argument, such as an anti-imperial view, are not confirmed by the procedural analysis of 15:7-13.

6.5 Tracing the path of argument in Romans 1-4

Finally, drawing on the illumination provided by our analysis, I suggest the following partial sketch of the main points and flow of Romans 1-4, to illustrate how a procedural account assists us in tracing the path of Paul’s argument. This is not comprehensive; it focuses only on those main argumentative points which are highlighted by buttressing γάρ clauses or chains. It does, however, show how an awareness of the strengthening role of γάρ clauses enables us to step aside from a traditional reading of this contested section and take a look at its argumentative thrust and contours with fresh eyes. It draws our attention to the particular argumentative salience of certain main points which give rise to many new cognitive effects for addressees. It also underlines the coherence of the argument, recognising some significant moments of continuity which are neglected by the standard reading.

In this sketch, statements which are rendered highly salient by a subsequent strengthening chain of γάρ clauses are highlighted in bold. Other salient information (often introduced by connectives διό, οὖν or δέ), communicating implications which are relevant in their own right though not supported by γάρ clauses, is also included at points such 3:1-8, to complete the skeleton of the argument. Buttressing γάρ clauses or chains are inset and preceded by the symbol ← to show their backwards strengthening
role. Sub-section headings are presented in uppercase and represent a pause in the flow of thought.

1:13-18: PAUL IS EAGER TO PREACH THE GOSPEL IN ROME: HIS JEWISH-ROOTED GOSPEL IS RELEVANT TO JEWISH AND GENTILE BELIEVERS ALIKE

v.15: I eagerly desire to preach the gospel to you who are in Rome

← vv.16-18: fourfold buttressing γάρ chain: God’s righteousness saves all who are faith-full from unrighteousness.

1:19a-32: ALL ARE UNGODLY, GENTILES AND JEWS ALIKE: THE STORY OF HUMANITY’S REBELLIOUS IDOLATRY

v.19a: what is known about God is plain to humanity

← vv.19b-20: twofold γάρ chain: God has made it plain since the creation of the world

v.20c: So people are without excuse...

2:1-16: NO ROOM FOR ARROGANT JUDGING BY CHRIST-BELIEVERS: JEWS AND GENTILES ALIKE WILL BE JUDGED BY GOD

v.1a: YOU are without excuse, whoever you are who judges [Jewish or Gentile Christ-believer]

← vv.1b-c: twofold γάρ chain: in judging others you condemn yourself

vv. 6-10: God will pay all people back according to their works...Jew first and also Gentile

← v.11: γάρ there is no partiality with God.

← vv.12-15: threefold γάρ chain buttressing v.11, which in turn buttresses 2:6-10.
2:17-28: NO ROOM FOR BOASTING IN THE JEWISH LAW: HEART CIRCUMCISION BY THE SPIRIT IS WHAT COUNTS, FOR JEWS AND GENTILES ALIKE.

vv.17-23: You who call yourself Jew and boast in the law, dishonour God by breaking the law

← vv.24-25: twofold γὰρ chain

vv.26-27: If the uncircumcised keep the law, their uncircumcision will be counted as circumcision and they will judge you, circumcised law-breaker

← vv.28-29: γὰρ ...it is the person who is a Jew in a hidden way, circumcised in the heart by the Spirit, who receives praise not from human beings but from God.

3:1-8: GOD IS FAITHFUL TO HIS PROMISES TO THE JEWISH PEOPLE

vv:1-8: The Jews nevertheless have many advantages as God’s people. God is faithful [to his promises to them], even if some of them were unfaith-ful. This does not mean that God condones unrighteousness, however. That is blasphemy!

3:9-20 BUT JEWS AND GENTILES ALIKE ARE ALL UNDER THE POWER OF SIN: THE ENEMY IS OUR OWN UNGODLINESS

v.9a: So are we Jews better off [when it comes to sin]? Not at all!

← v.9b: γὰρ we have already made the charge that Jews and Gentiles are all under the power of sin.

vv.10-18: scriptural proof of Jews as well Gentiles under the power of sin.

v.19-20a: The whole world is under God’s judgement. No-one is made righteous by keeping the Jewish law

← v.20b: γὰρ the Jewish law brings knowledge of sin.

3:21-26: GOD’S RIGHTEOUSNESS IS REVEALED APART FROM THE JEWISH LAW TO ALL WHO ARE FAITH-FULL, JEWS AND GENTILES ALIKE.
vv.21-22a: God’s righteousness is revealed apart from the Jewish law, through faithfulness\(^{968}\) of Jesus Christ, to all who are faith-full

\(\leftarrow\) vv.22b-26: γ\(\acute{\text{a}}\)ρ there is no difference [between Torah-observant and non-Torah observant]: all have sinned…and are freely made righteous by God’s grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus…

3:27-4:25: NO-ONE HAS A BOAST, NOT EVEN ABRAHAM, WHO IS FATHER OF ALL THE UNGODLY WHO ARE FAITH-FULL, JEWS AND GENTILES.

v.27: Boasting is therefore excluded

\(\leftarrow\) vv.28-29: γ\(\acute{\text{a}}\)ρ a person is made righteous by faith without works of the Jewish law. God is God of Jews AND Gentiles.

v.31: But we uphold the Jewish law.

4:1: So what did our forefather Abraham find in this matter [of boasting in works of the law]?

\(\leftarrow\) v.2a: γ\(\acute{\text{a}}\)ρ if Abraham was made righteous by works, he has a boast…

v.2b: But not before God

\(\leftarrow\) v.3: γ\(\acute{\text{a}}\)ρ “Abraham was faith-full towards God and it was counted to him as righteousness.”

vv.11-12: Abraham was counted righteous by being faith-full towards God when he was uncircumcised, in order to be father of all the uncircumcised who are faith-full… and father of the circumcised who follow his example of uncircumcised faith-fullness…

\(\leftarrow\) vv.13-15: threefold γ\(\acute{\text{a}}\)ρ chain buttressing vv.11-12.\(^{969}\)

\(^{968}\) See Morgan 2015: 289.

\(^{969}\) In contrast to the widespread tendency to divide the text between 4:12 and 4:13, our analysis suggests close continuity here.
There are no occurrences of ϒάρ in the remainder of chapter 4. The statement in v.16, however, introduced by έις τοῦτο, is a reprise of the implication expressed in vv.11-12. This repetition further underlines the salience of the thought of vv.11-12.

From this sketch, we see that:

1) 1:15, 2:6, 3:9, 2:21-22a and 4:11-12 are made especially salient in the path of the argument by buttressing ϒάρ clauses.

2) The flow of argument in chapters 1-4 can be summarised thus: Paul’s gospel is of vital importance to Roman believers (1:15): there is no difference between Jew and Gentile as far as sin, judgement and justification are concerned (2:6, 3:9, 2:21-22a), and no grounds for boasting. God’s faith-full people are not delivered from unrighteous enemies, but from their own ungodliness, that is, the power of sin. As ungodly but faith-full children of Abraham (4:11-12), Jews and Gentiles belong together in God’s Jewish-rooted purposes.

3) In terms of continuity/discontinuity, 1:15-18 belong tightly together, as do 4:10-15. Furthermore, while pauses for breath may be taken at each of the suggested subsection headings, any formal imposition of breaks and headings is artificial and potentially misleading. What is striking is the overall argumentative continuity from 1:8 to the end of chapter 4. Although there is a switch in Paul’s thought at 3:21, from exposing human ungodliness to explaining God’s righteousness and Christ’s faithfulness, this takes place as part of the larger continuing theme of no difference between Jew and Gentile, and no grounds for boasting.

6.6 Conclusions

We can draw a number of conclusions from our application of a procedural account of ϒάρ to Romans 1:15-18 and 15:7-13. We have seen that the connective serves as a crucial communicative clue at pivotal points in the epistle’s argument. This is especially important for us as secondary interpreters who are not party to all the contextual assumptions accessible to the letter’s first addressees.

Not only does the guidance ϒάρ gives assist us in making exegetical decisions at the level of individual points of exegesis, but it also throws significant light on the epistle’s
wider argument. It helps us to track, and pay attention to, the most salient argumentative points which carry the greatest number of potential cognitive effects and are thus most relevant to addressees. It prevents us from becoming distracted by theologically weighty material which does not represent the main thrust of the argument, but rather provides a theological buttressing framework for the main points. By helping us to turn our focus away from supporting material towards the parts of the argument which give rise to the greatest cognitive effects for addressees, a procedural account compels us to become more aware of the epistle as a piece of communication which is addressee-directed. This has wider implications for Pauline interpretation, discouraging a universalising, “doctrinal compendium” approach to the reading of Paul’s epistles.

This understanding of γάρ and of the guidance it offers thus leads us away from a view of Romans as a timeless theological treatise which sets out Paul’s theology. It throws into question, for instance, the traditional thesis reading of Romans 1:16-17 and the interpretative grid it imposes. Instead, it supports an interpretation of Romans in which the specific situation in Rome is the key for understanding the letter’s purpose and argument. It compels us to read the epistle and its argument as context-specific and context-shaped, a tailored version of Paul’s gospel written to build unity among his addressees. It suggests that we should read the whole of the argument of Romans in the light of this situation. This lends support to the view that the argumentative climax of the letter is to be found in 15:7-13. Furthermore, the guidance γάρ gives in 15:8 allows us to see the argumentative wood for the trees, focusing on the exhortation in 15:7 as crucially important, and confirms that Paul’s addressees must include Jewish as well as Gentile addressees. In sum, a reading of γάρ as a signpost throws light on major unresolved issues in the interpretation of Romans.

Furthermore, this procedural account challenges us in general to pay careful attention to the whole co-text and its previously communicated assumptions in the interpretation of disputed and argumentatively pivotal passages. It warns us against imposing artificial breaks on the text (for instance, at 1:16 and 1:18) which obscure the coherence of the argument, resulting in misleading or atomising interpretations.

We have seen the danger of ignoring the important guidance provided by γάρ. The signpost is disregarded at our peril: the result may be an interpretation which takes us in
completely the wrong direction, such as Campbell’s construal of 1:18-32. Reading γάρ as a procedural indicator enables us to identify and rule out such interpretations. On the other hand, its guidance helps to confirm the validity of certain other interpretations, such as Wedderburn’s, which argue for a context-specific explanation of the epistle’s argument.
Chapter 7: Conclusions

This interdisciplinary study has harnessed the theoretical framework of relevance theory in order to shed fresh light on the stubborn but neglected problem of the interpretation of γάρ in the letter to the Romans. The research has found RT to be a powerful tool for dispelling confusion related to the interpretation of γάρ and for illuminating the connective’s communicative role, shedding light on argumentatively pivotal points in the epistle. By applying the innovative notion of procedural meaning to the connective, we have found a way beyond the inadequacies of the traditional causal explanation and the loose approach to γάρ. RT opens up a consistent, contextually sensitive and cognitively grounded reading of γάρ. The result is that γάρ is accorded a significant role as a communicative signpost, guiding interpretation. This has many implications for the interpretation of Romans, not only at an exegetical level, but also in relation to wider unresolved questions relating to the letter’s argument and purpose. More broadly still, it has a bearing on more general questions of Pauline interpretation, and biblical studies in general, and suggests various possibilities for future interdisciplinary interaction and research.

7.1 Summary of findings: a procedural account of γάρ

7.1.1 A consistent, unified account

The theoretical framework of the study was introduced in chapter 2. The research that was undertaken tested a procedural strengthening hypothesis for all occurrences of γάρ in Romans, adapting and extending this hypothesis in order to account for all the data. This analysis was presented in chapters 3 and 4. These chapters demonstrated, from a representative sample of occurrences, both straightforward and complex, the validity of the procedural account and its ability to provide a unifying explanation for seemingly diverse uses of γάρ. By examining all instances, in both expository and hortatory material, the research ascertained that all can be consistently explained in terms of procedural instructions which guide towards the inferential process of backwards strengthening.
The connective can thus be said to have a core procedural function and should be regarded as a consistent communicative signpost. Rather than carrying conceptual meaning, γάρ is a procedural signal, constraining interpretation in a particular direction, thereby reducing ambiguity. It indicates that the information it introduces is to be processed as relevant in relation to previously communicated assumptions, rather than introducing fresh implications and being relevant in its own right. The connective raises expectations that the material it introduces will be relevant as strengthening premises for preceding claims. The inferential procedure triggered consists of the sub-personal construction of a strengthening series of inferences involving the premises introduced by γάρ plus highly accessible contextual assumptions, and yields a conclusion which reinforces previously communicated information. This results in the cognitive effect of strengthening; that is, it increases addressees’ adherence to this previously communicated information. In this way, the guidance γάρ gives contributes to the persuasiveness of the argument.

7.1.2 A flexible, context-sensitive account

The analysis presented in chapters 3 and 4 showed that a procedural strengthening account of γάρ is not only unified and consistent, but also flexible and context-sensitive. The connective’s core strengthening guidance works itself out differently in diverse contexts in Romans. Given the co-text, addressees must infer in what way the strengthening procedure is relevant, and in relation to which preceding information. The result of the procedure triggered by γάρ may be relevant as confirming evidence, a grounding rationale, a further explanation, an authoritative proof, a further specification, a clarifying adjustment to a previous claim, a parenthetical remark, and so on. In different types of argumentation, the strengthening procedure is likely to be relevant in different ways. In closely argued passages where the argument is developed logically by means of claims and supporting premises, it is likely to achieve relevance by means of the construction of a logically complete strengthening series. In passages where the main argumentative points are backed up by scriptural citations, it may achieve relevance as a proof which convinces by virtue of the authoritative source. In some highly rhetorical contexts, γάρ may contribute to a persuasive strengthening display even without triggering a full inferential procedure, if the display itself is enough to satisfy
addressees’ expectations of relevance. On occasion the connective’s core strengthening guidance may be exploited with the secondary aim of achieving a particular rhetorical effect. For example, the association γάρ has with supporting material may function as a cover for the communication of salient but sensitive information (see 15:24).

Furthermore, the strengthening procedure achieves relevance in varying ways for different addressees, depending on their perspectives, background knowledge and attitudes of scepticism or trust. Thus the strengthening triggered may be relevant to some as confirming evidence increasing the plausibility of a preceding claim, but to others as a further explanation increasing its comprehensibility. Full inferential series, especially more complex ones, will only be constructed where addressees are prepared to invest the processing effort required because the resulting cognitive effects will meet a felt need for more evidence. If, on the other hand, no implicit questions are raised for addressees by preceding claims, they may be content simply to accept the impression of strengthening which γάρ creates. This explains the fact that diverse addressees may derive differing inferential series, or indeed, none, on the basis of γάρ, and invest varying degrees of effort in interpretation.

Because of its flexibility, the procedural account is able to accommodate a range of explanations proposed by scholars for specific occurrences of γάρ in Romans, without dismissing it as a loose connective which simply takes its meaning from the co-text. Instead, γάρ functions as a broad interpretative constraint within which different addressees and interpreters work, as, using contextual information, they infer an interpretation relevant to them. The procedural explanation also accounts for various observations regarding the uses of γάρ which are made, but not explained, by more traditional accounts. It provides an explanation for the fact that the preceding claim strengthened by the γάρ clause is on occasion not immediately adjacent to it, but further back in the co-text. Similarly, it accounts for the fact the strengthened information may have been communicated implicitly rather than explicitly in the preceding co-text.

7.1.3 An account which highlights coherence

A procedural account of γάρ is, then, both consistent and contextually sensitive, two indispensable qualities for an exegetically useful reading of the connective.
Furthermore, it also emphasises the contribution that \( \gamma\alpha\rho \) makes to a coherent understanding of Romans as a whole. A relevance-theoretic view regards the entire context of the epistle as accessible and potentially relevant contextual information which must be borne in mind in interpretation. The procedural guidance given by \( \gamma\alpha\rho \) cements the coherence of the argument of particular subsections, and indeed, the wider epistle. This is because the search for a reinforcing inferential series between information introduced by \( \gamma\alpha\rho \) and preceding communicated assumptions consolidates the close relationship between \( \gamma\alpha\rho \) clauses and the previous context. In addition, the search for accessible contextual assumptions to deploy in the strengthening series frequently leads to the re-activation of assumptions communicated previously, whether in the immediately adjacent context or earlier in the letter. These assumptions are made more memorable by the re-activation. As a result, the whole argument becomes more comprehensible and coherent, as links between current claims and previously presented information are emphasised.

Furthermore, tight chains of \( \gamma\alpha\rho \) clauses such as those in 1:15-18, 5:6-8, 7:14-15, 18-19 and 10:2-5 are particularly significant for the coherence of the argument. The effect of such chains is a cumulative backwards strengthening, each \( \gamma\alpha\rho \) clause functioning as a strengthening premise for the preceding, increasing the strengthening effects derived from it. The argumentative impact is to highlight the assumptions communicated at the head of the chain, to which the whole cumulative sequence leads back. Backed up as it is by the supporting weight of the strengthening sequence, the argumentative salience of this claim is underlined. It stands out as a main point from which many cognitive effects in the form of fresh implications are to be derived. Such salient claims are significant for the wider thrust and direction of the argument. A procedural account encourages interpreters to read chains of \( \gamma\alpha\rho \) clauses as tightly knit and coherent complexes of thought which have an important role in underscoring key claims in the argument.

Although a procedural account shows that information introduced by \( \gamma\alpha\rho \) achieves relevance as strengthening premises in relation to preceding assumptions, this information may also subsequently serve as a springboard for the further development of the argument (see 2:25). In such a case the content of the \( \gamma\alpha\rho \) clause is processed firstly in relation to preceding information, and is then itself picked up and built or
elaborated on in the subsequent argument. We might characterise such material as looking in two directions: firstly, backwards as reinforcing material, and secondly, forwards as a foundation for further development. The double role that such information plays is to be distinguished, however, from the function of γάρ. The latter purely provides guidance towards backwards strengthening. It does not direct the drawing of inferences in relation to the subsequent argument. What is clear is that an inferential procedural account of γάρ encourages close attention to assumptions communicated in the previous co-text, and thus to the epistle as a whole as a single piece of coherent communication.

7.1.4 An argumentatively illuminating account

The procedural guidance given by γάρ has a secondary effect which is of considerable argumentative significance. The connective flags up the fact that the strengthening premises it introduces function as background information, increasing the relevance and salience of preceding claims. This strengthening material plays second fiddle, in argumentative terms, to the claims which it strengthens. This is despite the fact that the strengthening premises often take the form of authoritative or generally accepted truths, whether familiar axioms from the ancient world, metarepresentations of Paul’s own thought, scriptural citations, or other theological statements. Such material brings the additional weight of accepted authority behind the claims that are strengthened, lending them persuasive punch. Thus material which is theologically weighty is marshalled not as main points or steps forward in the argument, but instead in the service of more salient preceding claims, which represent the thrust of the argument. By facilitating the identification of relatively less salient background information, a procedural account of γάρ allows us also to track the main argumentative points which are thereby strengthened. It directs us to look away from strengthening material, which is frequently familiar, and towards the claims which are reinforced as the main argumentative implications, in order to gain optimal cognitive effects.

7.2 Implications for the interpretation of Romans

A procedural account of γάρ has multiple implications for the interpretation of Romans, both at the micro-level of the exegesis of individual verses, as I explored in chapter 5,
and on the macro-plane of the epistle’s wider argument, as chapter 6 has demonstrated. Although γάρ is a small connective, it has a big interpretative impact, reducing ambiguity and assisting us in choosing between possible interpretations. The constraints it imposes upon the drawing of inferences are invaluable for modern interpreters, operating as we do in a secondary communication situation. This signpost thus demands our attention and respect. An approach to γάρ which dismisses it as a bland connector, used loosely, is to be rejected. If we ignore the guidance γάρ gives, treating it as an interpretative chameleon to be fitted in once an interpretation has already been decided upon, we deprive ourselves of an indispensable clue to a relevant interpretation. Like a driver who overlooks a road sign at a major crossroads, we may find ourselves travelling in the wrong direction, and arriving at an unwanted destination.

7.2.1 Exegesis of Romans

This study leads to the conclusion that we need to give careful consideration to the procedural guidance provided by γάρ from the outset of the exegetical task, rather than reading it retrospectively in the light of a prior interpretation. As an indicator which instructs us to look backwards in order to find the relevance of the information it introduces, it is a basic clue to the structuring and coherence of the argument. It compels us to pay attention to the preceding co-text as integral to the interpretation of information introduced by γάρ. It thus helps us trace where there is argumentative continuity rather than discontinuity, assisting us with identifying argumentative chunks of thought which should be held together, and preventing us from interpreting γάρ clauses in isolation from what precedes. The connective cautions us against the imposition of breaks and section headings which obscure the inferential strengthening relationship between γάρ clauses and preceding claims.

The procedural instructions given immediately rule out interpretations which deny a strengthening connection between information introduced by γάρ and previously communicated assumptions. Similarly, the procedural account throws into question interpretations which assert that material introduced by γάρ represents a fresh implication or step forward in the argument, or a salient argumentative point, rather than supporting information. It likewise undermines readings which view the information in a γάρ clause as in contrast with, or antithetical to, the immediately preceding co-text.
The guidance given is particularly helpful in the case of highly contested passages where the apparent ambiguity of the connective contributes to a plethora of readings. For example, it allows us to rule out Campbell’s reading of Romans 1:18 as the beginning of the voice of the Teacher, supposedly in fundamental contradiction to Paul’s gospel as programmatically stated in the previous verses. It also challenges traditional readings of 1:18 which view the verse as the introduction of a major new section in the argument. In the case of 4:1-2, we have seen that a procedural explanation of γάρ rules out Hays’ alternative reading of 4:1, because of its lack of coherence with the direction of the argument in the immediately preceding context.

Given the limited scope of this study, it has not been possible to discuss all contested occurrences of γάρ in Romans. A procedural explanation of γάρ provides support, however, for certain interpretations of other highly disputed and argumentatively pivotal passages (for example, 3:9, and 11:25-26), which argue that these verses must be interpreted in close relationship with their preceding context. A demonstration of the light a procedural account throws on the argumentative thrust of these passages and on the debates surrounding them could form the subject of a future study.

7.2.2 Unresolved issues of the wider argument

In chapter 6 I argued that a procedural account of γάρ sheds significant light upon the highly contested issues of the epistle’s purpose, and of the centre of its argument. The analysis of γάρ in two argumentatively pivotal passages, 1:15-18, and 15:7-13, led to the conclusion that Paul wrote to address specific issues confronting his addressees in Rome, and that his Roman version of the gospel is tailored to be relevant to that situation. More specifically, Paul aims to build unity among believers in a multi-cultural, multi-ethnic environment, where there are ethnocentric and factional tensions. These are fuelled by perceptions about the implicitly anti-Jewish, supersessionist character of Paul’s gospel in a situation where many believers have Jewish roots, or have been influenced by the Jewish faith. The epistle’s argument is thus shaped to address the question of the interdependent relationship of Jews and Gentiles in God’s purposes, and of parity between Jews and Gentiles as far as being accepted by God is concerned. It demonstrates that Jews and Gentiles alike are ungodly, all under the power of sin, and justified by faith-full trust in Christ, even while Jews have priority both in
God’s saving purposes, and in his judgement. Within this, chapter 11 is especially important as a theological climax which paints a breathtaking picture of the interdependent interweaving of Jews and Gentiles in God’s merciful purposes. Chapter 15:7, meanwhile, with its summarising and climactic exhortation to mutual acceptance, represents the argumentative thrust of the entire epistle, the most pertinent point, from which a multiplicity of fresh implications are to be derived for Paul’s Roman addressees in their specific situation.

A procedural account of γὰρ in 1:15-18 also throws light upon the so-called thesis statement of 1:16-17. It compels us to view these verses not as a summary of Paul’s gospel of justification by faith, nor of the theme of the epistle, but rather as powerful theological support for Paul’s claims that he desires to preach the gospel to those in Rome, and is not ashamed to do this. 1:16-17 must be read within the context of these Rome-specific claims as specially tailored strengthening material which shows the relevance of Paul’s gospel to those he writes to in Rome. Following a procedural account of γὰρ, the verses cannot be read as a summarising statement which announces and controls the letter’s argument. These conclusions support D. A. Campbell’s valid concern that these verses should not be misused as a prior interpretative grid which is imposed upon the epistle’s interpretation. Consequently, however, these verses should not be artificially set in isolation from the surrounding co-text, both preceding and subsequent. A procedural reading of γὰρ shows that 1:18 in fact belongs with 1:16-17 as the final statement in the complex of strengthening premises. In this respect, the findings of this study present a major challenge to Campbell’s controversial construal of the argument of Romans, as well as throwing into question some more standard interpretations.

While the procedural account affirms a Rome-specific reading of the letter’s purpose, it does not support all Rome-specific interpretations. For example, the textual clues provided in the strengthening premises in 1:16-18, and more particularly in 15:8-9, do not provide strong support for an anti-imperial interpretation of the epistle such as Elliott’s. Instead, the focus both on Jewish priority and on Jewish and Gentile parity and inclusion (for example, in the expression Ἰουδαίω τε πρῶτον καὶ Ἑλληνι in 1:16b and
in the theological statement of 15:8-9) leads to the inference that Paul seeks to address issues of Jewish-Gentile roles and relationships among believers in Rome.

### 7.2.3 Broader interpretative implications

As well as throwing light on these specific contested issues, the findings of this study have other broader implications for our reading of Romans. We have seen that γάρ assists us in tracking the most relevant parts of the argument. A strengthening account of γάρ thus allows us to distinguish the argumentative wood from the trees, facilitating a focus on the argumentative thrust of the epistle. It prevents us from being sidetracked by the lure of theologically weighty information which, argumentatively speaking, functions simply as a buttressing theological framework for the most important argumentative implications which carry the argument forward. A procedural reading of γάρ thus discourages an interpretative preoccupation with strengthening theological explanations which risks confusing Paul’s argumentative thrust with background information, albeit often authoritative, and doctrinally significant. Such a preoccupation contributes to a misleading “theological compendium” treatment of Romans. This sometimes gives rise to a distorted version of Paul’s theology which is cut adrift from its contextual moorings and results in interpretations that are irrelevant in new interpretative contexts.

The thesis statement reading of 1:16-17 is one case in point. As Campbell rightly warns, the preoccupation with this material as a theological statement leads to an interpretative grid which is then imposed not only upon Romans, but also upon Pauline theology more generally.\(^\text{970}\) Divorced from its argumentative and Rome-specific context, and interpreted through the lens of a dominant though oft unacknowledged individualistic Western construal of justification by faith,\(^\text{971}\) the statement is in danger of functioning as a distortion of the Pauline gospel. The result may be an influential but truncated version of Paul’s gospel which is opaque and irrelevant to believers in non-Western cultures,\(^\text{972}\) with negative repercussions for the comprehension and contextualisation of the gospel. It limits the relevance of the epistle, and of Pauline theology, in fresh

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\(^{970}\) Campbell 2009: 350.

\(^{971}\) Campbell 2009: 7-8. See also Stendahl 1963.

\(^{972}\) See Russell 1988: 179-80.
contexts, neglecting significant aspects of Paul’s argument which may be highly pertinent (for example, the emphasis on family membership and solidarity in chapter 4, the exhortation to welcome the other in chapters 14-15, and the challenge to ethnocentrism throughout the letter). Furthermore, reading such material as timeless theological statements without due attention to their co-text and addressees encourages interpreters to read into the text what they are predisposed to find there, shaping it in the image of their own cultural presuppositions. This impoverishes our reading of Romans, depriving the letter of its quality of otherness. Paying attention to γάρ and other communicative clues assists us in guarding against such distorting and limiting interpretative tendencies.

Related to this is another interpretative implication. A relevance-theoretic informed reading draws attention to the fact that the text, viewed as a communicative stimulus addressed to an audience, is not an autonomous object, complete in itself without a context. Instead, shaped by a communicator, it is a set of fragmentary and undetermined clues pointing towards a relevant interpretation which must be inferred by addressees in a specific context. The procedural account takes us beyond the limitations of approaches which focus on the structure of the text itself, and on hierarchical units of discourse. It is not possible simply to limit ourselves to the linguistic code of the text in interpretation. Guided by its fragmentary clues, we must look beyond the text, making use of contextual information, in order to infer a relevant reading of Romans.

In this regard, a procedural reading makes us aware that both the first addressees, and we ourselves as secondary interpreters, inevitably engage in the drawing of inferences in the comprehension process. For secondary interpreters, contextual information will need to be drawn not only from assumptions communicated in the co-text, but also from plausible background assumptions about the probable historical situation in which the letter arose and to which it was addressed. While there can be no certainty about such background information, it is nevertheless possible to make informed judgements from

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973 See W.S. Campbell’s apposite remarks (Campbell 2010: 177) regarding unacknowledged interpretive presuppositions and supposedly context-less, “theological” interpretations: “What… must be recognized is that all interpreters have an envisaged “context,” even if it is described as not being a context!”
historical data about basic assumptions that were probably accessible to the first addressees, and to use these in order to arrive at the most coherent construal of all the textual data.

7.3 Wider ramifications and avenues for future research

Many of the implications drawn from this study of γάρ in Romans are highly pertinent to the study of other Pauline epistles. Comparative research remains to be undertaken into the use of γάρ in Paul’s other letters, and into the correlation between its use and the argumentative and persuasive character of different epistles. The line of argument of letters such as Galatians could fruitfully be re-examined in the light of a procedural understanding of γάρ. The study potentially also has multiple benefits for New Testament studies and biblical studies more generally. It challenges biblical scholars to give due consideration in interpretation to the role of both communicator intentions and addressees’ inferential processes, to textual clues, co-text and contextual information alike. It has the potential to bring together the sometimes polarised interpretative positions of those who insist on the author’s intention on the one hand, and those who argue for a reader-response perspective on the other. It highlights the importance of taking all communicative clues into careful consideration as the starting point for exegesis. It fosters a respect for the coherence of texts as communicative wholes, guarding against atomising interpretations. It encourages interpreters to remove their theological spectacles and take a fresh look at the argumentative thrust974 of biblical texts, re-examining their presuppositions regarding the most relevant and salient parts of the argument. It recognises a role for pertinent historical data in inferring a relevant interpretation, and suggests a way of integrating such data into a plausible reconstruction of addressees’ inferential processes.

The study has shown the fruitfulness of interdisciplinary collaboration. The application of innovative insights from cognitive pragmatics to a stubborn problem of biblical exegesis has proved to be a very fruitful exercise. Harnessing a relevance-theoretic approach allows us to find a way forward out of the impasse of traditional explanations of γάρ to a more satisfying and exegetically useful explanation of the connective’s

974 Or, in the case of narrative material, the narrative event-line.
communicative role. There are potentially many other fruit to be harvested from such interdisciplinary interaction. Innovative approaches and cutting edge research from the fast developing fields of linguistics and pragmatics have much to offer biblical studies, with the potential to throw fresh light on other old problems. Dialogue with these related disciplines and awareness of ongoing developments within them is, I suggest, not simply desirable, but necessary for the continuing vigour, validity and relevance of biblical studies. Openness to new linguistic developments increases the intellectual rigour of biblical interpretation, as its established assumptions and methods are scrutinised, challenged and strengthened in the light of new discoveries about human language, communication and cognition.

The account of γάρ given in this study likewise makes a contribution to research in cognitive pragmatics. Specifically, it adds to the growing body of research applying RT cross-linguistically. The results of the systematic analysis of occurrences of γάρ in Romans serve as a further exemplar of the way in which the notion of procedural meaning provides a compelling account of connectives in diverse languages. In addition, the study presents another example of the various ways in which different languages encode procedural meaning.

The findings of this thesis also have implications for the study of Koine Greek. The procedural reading of γάρ in Romans demonstrated here needs to be explored using other Koine data. There is a need to examine its validity in relation to other non-Pauline NT texts, including non-argumentative text types such as narrative material. If the account holds for other texts and text types, it has the potential to shed light on various exegetical ambiguities in other biblical texts, as it does in Romans. In addition, this account of γάρ should be explored in comparable contemporary extra-biblical material, such as the Discourses of Epictetus and the Orations of Dio Chrysostom. From a lexicographic point of view, this study suggests that standard lexicon entries for γάρ such as those in BDAG need to be revised. A procedural understanding of γάρ requires us to reject the attempt to reduce γάρ to a single gloss, or even several glosses. Instead,

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975 A Thesaurus Linguae Graecae search reveals 691 occurrences of γάρ in Epictetus’ Discourses, and 1860 occurrences in Dio Chrysostom’s Orations.
γάρ needs to be explained in terms of core instructions which lead to diverse outworkings, depending on the particular co-text, and inferred from this.

Furthermore, the notion of procedural meaning throws opens the door to a cognitively grounded, unified account of the function of other Koine Greek connectives. For example, a procedural account needs to be developed for ὄν, ἀρ, ἄλλα, and καί. The procedural role and distinct function of each will help to throw light on the function of all the others. Ideally, such research would have been undertaken in tandem with the analysis of γάρ, but this was beyond the scope of this limited study. Similarly, there is a need to explore the function of ὅτι from a procedural point of view, and establish its role in distinction to the procedural role of γάρ. More generally, a relevance-theoretic account of procedural meaning opens up the way for a more satisfactory explanation of other aspects of Koine Greek which are not adequately accounted for by traditional grammatical analysis. These include tense, mood and aspect.\footnote{976 See Sim 2010: 260; 2016: 118-19.}

In relation to Bible translation, the domain which triggered the initial impetus for this research, this study confirms that the translation of γάρ, and other NT connectives, into fresh languages, requires careful preparatory research. While γάρ in Greek communicates a broad inferential constraint, encompassing a wide range of types of strengthening, many other languages do not possess a single connective which covers this same range. Instead, a language may communicate strengthening guidance by means of several terms, depending on the more specific ways in which the strengthening procedure is relevant in different contexts.\footnote{977 Modern English, for example, introduces strengthening in a whole variety of different ways: “you see” to introduce a further explanation, “after all” to introduce confirming evidence which is already known, a colon to introduce a specification, and so on. In spoken English, strengthening guidance is often given via intonation rather than by means of a lexeme.} Linguists and translators in a particular language need to begin by identifying the range of linguistic features used to give procedural guidance towards strengthening. Next, when undertaking exegesis of the biblical text, they must seek to understand the type of strengthening guidance γάρ primarily gives in a particular co-text, and select the most appropriate linguistic feature which translates this. This may sometimes mean limiting the broad guidance given by
γάρ to more specific strengthening guidance in a particular passage, reducing the interpretative choices available to addressees in the host language.978 In conclusion, at the broadest level, a relevance-theoretic approach encourages interpretation undertaken on a thoroughly communicative foundation, which respects the biblical text as shaped by a communicative intention and designed to produce effects on addressees. It affirms the validity of a variety of relevant interpretations, acknowledging the role of diverse perspectives and background knowledge in contributing to differing effects of the text, while recognising the guiding role of communicator intentions in shaping it. It requires us to acknowledge the distinction between first addressees and secondary interpreters, recognising that the text will be relevant in different ways to each. The awareness that all interpretation involves inferences involving contextual assumptions encourages an attitude of humility in the biblical interpretative task. We are compelled to recognise our limitations as secondary interpreters who cannot be certain of the contextual assumptions available to the first addressees, and thus to hold onto our conclusions lightly. In the light of this, the direction offered by procedural indicators such as γάρ as a clue to communicator intentions is all the more valuable. Such communicator guidance functions as an anchor amid the uncertain currents of contextual information and audience perspectives. Despite the risks and uncertainties, the interpretative task ultimately remains worthwhile, because the text, shaped by a communicator, has continuing relevance: it is a stimulus to fresh cognitive effects provoked by someone and something that is Other, beyond ourselves.

978 As with all translation, the translation of connectives involves compromise.
Bibliography

A. Primary sources:

1. Biblical text:


2. Other ancient sources:


**B. Secondary Literature**


Appendix A: Glossary

This glossary contains a combination of terms used within RT and more general terms. It explains the specific way that these are employed within this study. In some cases, the strict RT definition has been adapted slightly.

γάρ clause: an explicitly communicated assumption, or set of assumptions, introduced by γάρ. The connective indicates that these assumptions are to be processed as strengthening premises. A γάρ clause may be a sub-sentential clause, a full grammatical sentence, or two or more conjoined clauses which are inferred to belong together as a complex of strengthening premises.

argumentation: communication in which a communicator’s overt aim is to persuade addressees of the validity or truth of certain claims. A communicator may make use of different kinds of strategies to achieve this aim, for example, rational/logical strategies, rhetorical devices, or the deployment of authoritative sources.

assertion: an explicitly communicated assumption by which the communicator represents a particular state of affairs as true.

assumption: a thought which is held by, or accessible to, an individual, and is treated by that individual as a representation of the actual world. An assumption may be explicitly stated, implicitly communicated, or already held by the addressee as part of her background knowledge.

claim: (interchangeable with assertion): an explicitly communicated assumption by which the communicator affirms that a particular state of affairs is true.

cognitive effects: “Adjustments to the way an individual represents the world.”

comprehension mechanism: a posited cognitive mechanism which deals with the interpretation of language. The comprehension mechanism has as its input mental representations derived from a linguistic stimulus, and from contextual assumptions,

980 Clark 2013: 363.
and computes inferences so as to arrive at the comprehension of a linguistic stimulus. It follows the relevance-guided comprehension heuristic.\(^981\) In this study, the expression “comprehension processes” is often used as a substitute for this more technical term.

**Conclusion**: an explicitly stated implication which is inferred from the previous argument and which sums up, or restates, a major point in the argument. All conclusions are implications, but not all implications are conclusions.

**Contextual assumption**: an implicit or background assumption accessible to the addressee, and used in the interpretation of an utterance.\(^982\)

**Co-text**: The text (linguistic stimulus and communicated assumptions) which surrounds or accompanies a particular part of a text or communication under discussion, both preceding and following. The co-text is referred to by some scholars as the “literary context”. The term may refer to a sentence, paragraph, section or to the entire piece of communication, depending on what is pertinent in a particular case.

**Encyclopaedic knowledge**: the unique body of background knowledge, that is, mentally represented assumptions, stored in the mind and accessible to an individual. This comes from the unique experiences of the individual, and consists of contextual assumptions in the form of beliefs, memories, cultural information and values etc.

**Epistemic vigilance**: a cognitive capacity on the part of addressees aimed at detecting false information. RT and cognitive scientists posit a suite of cognitive mechanisms which evaluate the reliability of a piece of communication, both in terms of the rational coherence of its content and the trustworthiness of its source.

**Explicit assumption**: an assumption which is explicitly communicated in the text.

**Expository argumentation**: argumentation in which the communicator aims to persuade addressees, by means of claims, and supporting evidence, of the truth or validity of certain states of affairs.

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hortatory argumentation: argumentation in which the communicator aims to persuade addressees, by means of exhortations and supporting rationale, to put into practice certain desirable actions.

implication: an assumption which is inferred from a series of premises. This series starts with an explicitly communicated premise and includes at least one implicit premise (contextual assumption) which is already held by the addressee, or accessible to her. An implication represents a change in thought, or a cognitive effect, for the hearer. An implication may be inferred by an addressee as the result of explicit or implicit communication, and may or may not be intended by the communicator. An explicitly stated implication often represents a new thought, or step forward in the line of argument.

inference process: “the process by which an assumption is accepted as true or probably true on the strength of the truth or probable truth of other assumptions. It is thus a form of fixation of belief.” 983

logical argumentation: argumentation which achieves its aim of persuading addressees of the validity of certain claims primarily by the presentation of claims which are backed up by supporting premises, or evidence, are rationally coherent, and lead to certain logical conclusions.

mainline of the argument: the series of main points, or implications (leading to fresh cognitive effects), in an argument, each of which represents a new step forward in the development of the thought.

metarepresentation: a representation which represents another representation. In RT terms, all verbal utterances are representations of thoughts. If a verbal utterance (or a thought attributed to a person or context) is later re-represented in another context, either as a citation or a paraphrase, this is a metarepresentation.

metatextual: used of a comment within the text/communication, which refers to communicated assumptions, to the manner of communication, or to the communicator

or addressees; in short, a comment which functions at a higher level of representation, by referring to the communication itself, which in turn represents a state of affairs.

**mutually manifest assumptions:** Those assumptions, contextual or communicated, which are accessible, and capable of being held as true, by both communicator and addressees.

**ostensive-inferential communication:** transmission of information which involves, on the part of the communicator, an overt intention to communicate by means of a stimulus, and, on the part of the audience, inferences which are drawn in order to arrive at the comprehension of this stimulus.

**premise:** I use this term as RT uses it, to refer to an assumption which is used in a process of inferences which leads to a conclusion. Thus a premise serves as support for a conclusion. This does not imply, however, as in strict logic, that the truth of a premise guarantees the truth of the conclusion. Instead, RT talks in terms of non-demonstrable inferences, in which evidence may suggest a conclusion but does not guarantee its truth.984 Premises may be entertained by addressees as a result of being explicitly or implicitly communicated, or may accessed from background knowledge.

**propositional form:** the disambiguated and filled-out form of an utterance which is semantically complete in the sense that it expresses a state of affairs and is capable of being true or false. It can thus serve as input into inferential processes and be stored in encyclopaedic knowledge.

**procedure G:** a posited strengthening inferential procedure, triggered by the connective γύρo (hence G). The procedure processes a newly communicated assumption, or complex of assumptions, introduced by γύρo, as a premise which supports a previously communicated assumption. It searches for contextual assumptions made highly accessible by the new assumption to combine with it in a strengthening inferential series. This leads to a conclusion which independently confirms the previously communicated assumption, causing it to be adhered to more strongly.

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**relevance-guided comprehension heuristic:** the rule of thumb automatically followed at a sub-personal level by addressees’ mental processes when drawing inferences in order to arrive at a relevant interpretation. This heuristic consists of two parts:

a. Follow a path of least effort in computing cognitive effects. Test interpretative hypotheses in order of accessibility.

b. Stop as soon as expectations of relevance are satisfied.

**rhetorical features/devices:** Formal features and literary/stylistic devices such as emphatic repetition, metaphor, rhetorical questions, antithetical parallelism, irony etc., which have a persuasive effect by creating an impression which affects emotions, rather than by the rational substantiation of claims.

**rhetorical effect:** a persuasive effect created in a piece of argumentation by means of rhetorical devices and features which appeal primarily to the emotions and senses, rather than by rational argument consisting of claims and supporting premises.

**rhetorical argumentation:** argumentation which achieves its aim of persuading addressees of the validity of certain claims primarily by means of rhetorical features and devices (repetition, metaphor, parallelism, antithesis, chiasm, rhetorical questions etc.), rather than by rational argument.

**strengthening procedure:** an inferential procedure which involves the combination of explicitly communicated premises, and implicit background assumptions, to give rise to a conclusion which causes addressees to adhere more strongly to a previously communicated assumption.

**strengthening effect:** a cognitive effect, or change in thought, which consists of an existing assumption being held more strongly as valid, that is, adhered to more strongly, by an addressee.

**utterance:** a linguistic stimulus consisting of a phonetic representation, given by a communicator in a particular situation. This linguistic stimulus serves as a clue to an assumption or thought which the communicator intends to communicate. This clue

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985 Clark 2013: 366.
needs to be disambiguated and filled out in the context in order to represent this communicated assumption.\footnote{See Sperber & Wilson 1995: 8-10.}
### Appendix B: Table of occurrences of γάρ in Romans

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