

New Trends  
in the Research  
on the Apocryphal  
Acts of Thomas

ISRAEL MUÑOZ GALLARTE  
LAUTARO ROIG LANZILLOTTA  
(eds.)

PEETERS

NEW TRENDS IN THE RESEARCH  
ON THE APOCRYPHAL ACTS OF THOMAS

STUDIES ON EARLY CHRISTIAN APOCRYPHA

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# Preface

Much has been written on the *Apocryphal Acts of Thomas* (*ATh*) since the work of Lipsius, Wright, and Bonnet.<sup>1</sup> The theme was booming both among Orientalists at the end of 19th century and at the History of Religions School at the beginning of the 20th. But the *ATh* kept scholars busy for many decades afterwards: The seminal work by James in the 1920s, that of Klijn in the 1960s, or Poirier in the 1980s on the ‘Hymn of the Pearl’ helped to clarify some of the numerous queries around this intriguing text. This does not mean, however, that everything is clear around the *ATh*. Far from that, many of the crucial questions about its origin remain still today open: When was the text composed? In which language was it written, Greek or Syriac? And most importantly, where in the ancient world did the text see the light? Also the nature and structure of the text remain in doubt: What is the nature of the text we have at our disposal? How was the text transmitted throughout the Middle Ages? Which of its branches should we favour? Many scholarly publications claim that the *ATh* is the only of the five early apocryphal Acts (*AAA*) to be transmitted completely. However, what does this assertion mean, exactly? Do we have to assume that Bonnet’s edition faithfully reflects the primitive text written in late antiquity? Or do we rather have to postulate different redactional interventions along its long textual history? And if so, which parts are primitive and which are later reworkings and/or additions?

The present volume intends to provide answers at least to some of these questions. Its title, *New Trends in the Research to the Apocryphal Acts of Thomas*, however, shows that it at the same time intends to break new ground in the analysis of the text, revising some old, vexed problems.

<sup>1</sup> W. Wright, *Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles* (London, 1871); R.A. Lipsius, *Die apokryphen Apostelgeschichten und Apostellegenden* (Braunschweig, 1887); M. Bonnet, *Acta Philippi et Acta Thomae* (Hildesheim, 1903).



This volume begins with a chapter by Lautaro Roig Lanzillotta, ‘Reinterpreting the Textual Transmission of the *Acts of Thomas*. Towards a New Understanding, Classification, and Chronology of the Greek Testimonies.’ Of the five main texts constituting the AAA, the *ATH* alone seems to have been transmitted in its entirety, or, at least, this is what researchers have claimed since the end of the nineteenth century. This general assessment, however, simplifies the reality of the complicated transmission of the text and accepts *a priori* that the text edited by Bonnet coincides with the primitive narrative of the *ATH*. This statement is very problematic, however. On the one hand, Bonnet’s edition is not one, but many texts; on the other, these texts bear obvious redactional traces. To date, various theories have tried unsuccessfully to explain these from different angles. In the author’s view, however, the peculiarities of the text are explained in all, or almost all, cases, as interventions into the narrative to eliminate or rework sections of the primitive text for various reasons. Roig Lanzillotta analyses the different testimonies, distinguishes several groups and classifies them according to their visible objectives. He then applies an intertextual approach that intends to both explain the individual witnesses and achieve an overall understanding of the *ATH*’s textual transmission.

Along these lines, the second chapter, ‘New Textual Witnesses for the Greek Apocryphal *Acts of Thomas*’, by Israel Muñoz Gallarte, deals with the presentation of the witnesses of the *ATH* currently preserved in the historical libraries. After briefly discussing Max Bonnet’s introduction to his edition and his methodology, Muñoz Gallarte explores modern databases and bibliography with a view to producing the most complete list of codices known to date. Indeed, Muñoz Gallarte manages to provide a much more comprehensive list of manuscripts which includes, besides the twenty-one manuscripts collated, consulted or known to the German editor, another sixty-one codices.

The third chapter, by Lautaro Roig Lanzillotta, is ‘Codex Valli-cellianus B 35: An Assessment of the Only Extant Greek Manuscript of *Acta Thomae* Including the ‘Hymn of the Pearl’.’ Vallicell. gr. B 35, U according to Bonnet’s nomenclature, is crucial for the reconstruction of the Greek archetype of the *ATH*. In fact, along Codex P (BNF, Gr. 1510), U provides unique testimony to the primitive structure of *ATH*, as these are the only witnesses that preserve all the known stations of Thomas’ travels and adventures. More importantly,

U is the only manuscript known to date to transmit the Greek text of the well-known ‘Hymn of the Pearl’. Having examined the manuscript in situ, at the Vallicellian Library in Rome, Roig Lanzillotta’s study presents, for the first time, a complete codicological examination of the manuscript. Approaching it from different angles, he first analyzes its recent and not-so-recent history and provides a complete codicological description that discusses both external and internal aspects of the manuscript. He then offers a palaeographical analysis of the manuscript and includes an overview of its contents.

Susanne Luther’s study turns to the contents of the Apocryphal Acts. Her study, ‘Plays on Words and Toying with Narrative Ethics: Reading the *Acts of Thomas* from a Speech-Ethical Perspective’, provides a new approach to the ethics of the *ATH*. The ethics of the *ATH* have thus far usually been analysed in terms of their ascetic or encratic tendencies. However, the text also contains clear references to the ancient discourse on speech-ethics, insofar as language is used and evaluated by the characters within the narrative, but also insofar as the correct use of language is an issue for discussion. The *ATH* uses different aspects of speech-ethical paraenesis that can also be found in the early Christian tradition, for example in New Testament texts, and transforms them into illustrative, fable-like narratives with ethical implications. Luther examines three episodes from the *ATH* with respect to their speech-ethical claims and located within the ancient discourse on speech-ethics.

Anthropology and Christology come to the fore in the fifth chapter, ‘Σῶμα and Material Reality in the Greek *Acts of Thomas*’, by Andrés Sáez Gutiérrez. In it, Sáez Gutiérrez focuses on one central point, namely the terminological use and meaning of the words σῶμα, σάρξ, and material reality. The occurrences of these words are organized in the following four sections: (1) creational / cosmological, (2) Christological, (3) sacramental, and (4) anthropological / soteriological. The analysis of the terms from these angles allows him to draw some conclusions regarding the primitive thought of the *ATH*, especially in relation to such themes as anthropology and Christology.

In his ‘Building a Palace in Heaven: Sapiential Stories within Biographies and the *Acts of Thomas*’, Sergi Grau deals with one of the better-known passages of the apocryphon. Scholarly literature has recently drawn attention to the elements shared by various texts that are considered “open,” “pluriform,” “fluid” or even “popular

literature,” such as, for example, the *Life of Alexander* by Pseudo-Callisthenes, the *Life of Aesop*, or some apocryphal Acts, in particular those of Paul, Peter and Thomas. Undoubtedly, the fluidity of this type of texts explains well some of their compositional technics and the complex vicissitudes of their transmission. According to Grau, however, we need to take into account some caveats: to begin with, it is important not to lose sight of the fact that authors share a common rhetorical training and the same audience expectations. Also important is not to obviate differences and idiosyncratic elements of each work, even if they allow us to trace some significant common trends. The comparative analysis of the *ATH* with materials typical of the biographical tradition of sages and philosophers and other works of the same chronological frame, the 3rd century AD, allows the researcher to shed some light on the literary motif of building a palace in heaven (second Act, cc. 17-26).

The seventh chapter, ‘The *Apocryphal Acts of Thomas*, Its Tradition, and Its Influence on Late Antique Literature’, by Ángel Narro, explores two important items in the research about the *Acts of Thomas*. On the one hand, Narro provides a comparative overview of the five major *Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles* (AAA) in order to attempt to determine a relative chronology of the five works. On the other, he examines the *ATH*’s relationship with hagiographic literature. To this end, Narro begins with an evaluation of the literary innovations of the apocryphon in comparison with the rest of AAA, and then he focuses on the hagiographic genre. All in all, the analysis allows Narro to find the common milieu in which the hagiographic themes were created, formed, disseminated and expanded.

The final chapter, ‘Rewriting and Modulation Techniques in Text Type ‘Arabic 1’ of the *Acts of Thomas*: A Survey of Evaluation’, by Juan Pedro Monferrer Sala opens the view to the transmission of the *ATH* in a language other than Greek, namely Christian Arabic. In its pages, the author follows the research of Michel van Esbroeck in analysing the interesting translations of the *ATH* into Arabic, the so-called ‘Arabic 1’ and ‘Arabic 2’. In doing so, Monferrer Sala tries to determine the *Vorlagen* of both traditions and draws attention to the comparison with the Greek and Syriac versions, which allows him not only to determine the sources of the texts, but also to gain a better understanding of the translation techniques used by the translator.

The conference that formed the basis for this book was held at the University of Córdoba in the winter of 2018 and brought together

specialists from several European universities such as the University of Groningen, University of Valencia, Ecclesiastical University San Dámaso (Madrid), and University of Barcelona. We are grateful to the Faculty of Philosophy and Humanities of the University of Córdoba for allowing us to hold this meeting at the historical building of Cardinal Salazar. The conference was part of the research project ‘Edition, Translation, and Commentary of the Apocryphal Acts of Thomas’, sponsored by both the University of Córdoba XIII Programa Propio de Fomento a la Investigación (2018-2020) and the Spanish Ministry of Science, Innovation and Universities (PID2019-111268GB-I00). Special thanks are due to Bárbara Serrano, who has been of great help in shaping the indexes. Even more special thanks are due to Jan N. Bremmer, Tobias Nicklas and Janet Spittler, who kindly revised and corrected the manuscript.

Israel Muñoz Gallarte  
Lautaro Roig Lanzillotta



# List of Abbreviations

<i>AB</i>	<i>Analecta Bollandiana</i>
<i>AM</i>	<i>Analecta Malacitana</i>
<i>ANRW</i>	<i>Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt</i>
<i>Apocrypha</i>	<i>Apocrypha. International Journal of Apocryphal Literatures</i>
<i>ARW</i>	<i>Archiv für Religionswissenschaft</i>
<i>Augustinianum</i>	<i>Augustinianum</i>
<i>CCO</i>	<i>Collectanea Christiana Orientalia</i>
<i>DR</i>	<i>Deutsche Rundschau</i>
<i>EC</i>	<i>Estudios clásicos</i>
<i>Elenchos</i>	<i>Elenchos</i>
<i>EsEc</i>	<i>Estudios eclesiásticos</i>
<i>Gregorianum</i>	<i>Gregorianum</i>
<i>Harp</i>	<i>The Harp</i>
<i>HZ</i>	<i>Historische Zeitschrift</i>
<i>JASB</i>	<i>Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal</i>
<i>JECH</i>	<i>Journal of Early Christian History</i>
<i>JECS</i>	<i>Journal of Early Christian Studies</i>
<i>JHS</i>	<i>The Journal of Hellenistic Studies</i>
<i>JHistS</i>	<i>Journal of the History of Sexuality</i>
<i>JÖB</i>	<i>Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik</i>
<i>JSP</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha</i>
<i>JThS</i>	<i>Journal of Theological Studies</i>
<i>KÅ</i>	<i>Kyrkohistorisk Årsskrift</i>
<i>Lexis</i>	<i>Lexis. Poetica, retorica e comunicazione nella tradizione classica</i>
<i>MHA</i>	<i>Memorias de Historia Antigua</i>
<i>Nassab</i>	<i>Nuovi annali della scuola speciale per archivisti e bibliotecari</i>
<i>NTS</i>	<i>New Testament Studies</i>
<i>OLP</i>	<i>Orientalia Lovaniensia Periodica</i>
<i>RAC</i>	<i>Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum</i>
<i>REG</i>	<i>Revue des Études Grecques</i>

<i>RET</i>	<i>Revista española de teología</i>
<i>RThPh</i>	<i>Revue de Théologie et de Philosophie</i>
<i>Scripta</i>	<i>Scripta. Revista Internacional de Literatura i Cultura Medieval i Moderna / International Journal of Medieval &amp; Modern Literature &amp; Culture</i>
<i>Sefarad</i>	<i>Sefarad</i>
<i>SNTU, Serie A</i>	<i>Studien zum Neuen Testament und seiner Umwelt</i>
<i>SPhV</i>	<i>Studia Philologica Valentina</i>
<i>VigChris</i>	<i>Vigiliae Christianae</i>
<i>ZNW</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für die Neutestamentliche Wissenschaft</i>

## Notes on Contributors

**Sergi Grau** b. 1975, is Associate Professor of Ancient Greek Philology at the University of Barcelona (Spain), and affiliated researcher at the Institut Català d'Arqueologia Clàssica (ICAC). His lines of research focus on the rhetorical topics of Ancient Greek biography (especially the biography of philosophers, and in particular Diogenes Laertius), the construction of the image of authors through the biographical genre and their relationships with other genres, especially ancient drama and late antique hagiographies. He has recently published *Les santes putes del desert* (Martorell, 2021) about the hagiographical subgenre of the so-called Holy Harlots of the Desert, and he is co-author of 'Procopius on Theodora: ancient and new biographical patterns', *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 113 (2020) 769-788. He is currently researcher of the project *Construction of the Past in Archaic and Classical Greece: Compositional Devices, Genealogies, Catalogues* (PID2019-110908GB-I00), supported by the Spanish Ministry of Science, Innovation and Universities.

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**Israel Muñoz Gallarte** b. 1978, is Associate Professor of Classics and the Origins of Christianity at the University of Córdoba (Spain). He has published extensively on Imperial Greek Literature (Plutarch), Early Christian Apocrypha, and Semantics. He is the author of *Los sustantivos-Hecho en el Nuevo Testamento* (Madrid: UCM, 2008) and co-author of *Plutarch in the Religious and Philosophical Discourse of Late Antiquity* (Leiden-Boston: Brill, 2013). He is currently the Principal Investigator of the project *Edition, Translation, and Commentary of the Apocryphal Acts of Thomas* (PID2019-111268GB-I00), supported by the Spanish Ministry of Science and Innovation.

**Ángel Narro** b. 1985, is Associate Professor of Greek Philology at the University of Valencia. His most recent publications include *Vida y Milagros de Santa Tecla* (2017) and *El culto a las santas y los santos en época tardo-antigua y bizantina* (2019). He is author of more than 50 scholarly articles and book chapters and serves as main editor of the journal *Studia Philologica Valentina* and the series *Rhemata Textos Griegos*.

**Lautaro Roig Lanzillotta** b. 1967, is Full Professor of New Testament and Early Christian Studies at the Faculty of Theology and Religious Studies of the University of Groningen. His main areas of interest are Early Christian Literature, especially early Christian Apocrypha and the Nag Hammadi Library, and Ancient Greek Philosophy. He is

Editor-in-Chief of *Gnosis: Journal of Gnostic Studies*; of the *Nag Hammadi Bibliography Online*, and co-editor of the series Brill's Plutarch Studies. He publishes on Early Christianity, Gnosticism and Late antique philosophy. He is the author of *Acta Andreae Apocrypha* (Geneva: Patrick Cramer, 2007); *Diccionario de Personajes del Nuevo Testamento* (Barcelona: Herder, 2017), editor of *Frederick E. Brenk on Plutarch, Religious Thinker and Biographer* (Leiden: Brill, 2017), and co-editor of *Gnostic Countercultures* (Leiden: Brill, 2016), of *Sharing and Hiding Religious Knowledge in Early Judaism, Christianity, and Islam* (Berlin-Boston: De Gruyter, 2018); of *A Man of Many Interests. Plutarch on Religion, Myth, and Magic* (Leiden: Brill, 2019); and of *Plutarch's Religious Landscapes* (Leiden: Brill, 2021). His most recent monograph is *The Apocalypse of Paul (Visio Pauli) in Sahidic Coptic. Critical Edition, English Translation and Commentary* (Leiden: Brill, 2022) co-authored with J. van der Vliet.

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# I. Reinterpreting the Textual Transmission of the *Acts of Thomas*. Towards a New Understanding, Classification, and Chronology of the Greek Testimonies

LAUTARO ROIG LANZILLOTTA

## 1. Introduction

Composed in the later second century, the five major *Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles* (AAA) underwent a tumultuous textual transmission. After some initial years of wide dissemination during the second and third centuries – perhaps among Christians of a higher cultural level and better education – these texts were classified, beginning with Eusebius (*HE* 3.35.6), as “spurious” (*nothos*). From the beginning of the fifth century, however, the sources specialize and begin to relate the AAA to Manicheism. If the mentioning of the heterodox origin of the AAA had begun to hinder their circulation from the end of the fourth century, in the fifth, the rumours regarding their alleged use by the Manicheans determined their prohibition and consequent removal from the list of accepted readings.<sup>1</sup>

Of the five main texts constituting the AAA, the *Acts of Thomas* (*ATh*) alone seems to have been transmitted in its entirety, or, at least, this is what researchers have claimed since the end of the nineteenth century. This general assessment, however, not only simplifies the

<sup>1</sup> See L. Roig Lanzillotta, *Acta Andreae apocrypha* (Geneva, 2004) 96-97; I. Muñoz Gallarte, ‘*Los Hechos apócrifos de Tomas: La supuesta fase maniquea*’, in L. Bonhome Pulido and E. Macarena García García (eds), *De Qumran al Qur’an. Textos y grupos sectarios en el oriente próximo tardoantiguo* (Madrid, 2022) 109-28.

reality of the complicated transmission of the text; it is also very problematic, since it includes the *petitio principii* of considering that the text edited by Bonnet coincides with the primitive text of the *ATH*. Anyone who skims through this text, however, will immediately notice that Bonnet's edition consists of many texts. Indeed, the huge differences in the various branches of textual transmission forced the German philologist to at times print the text in two or even three parallel columns: such is the case, for example, for chapters 83 to 86 (pp. 198-201), 93 (p. 206), 99 to 100 (pp. 211-213), 116-118 (pp. 227-228), 132, 137, 138, and 139 (pp. 239, 243, 245, and 246, respectively). At other times, Bonnet includes two versions of the text, one below the other, as is the case for chapters 6 to 29 (pp. 110-146) and 144 to 149 (pp. 251-258), but also in the Martyrdom (pp. 269-288).

Similarly, to affirm that the text has been transmitted in complete form conceals the evident fact that the Greek textual transmission of the *ATH* knows three types of texts, namely: a) Acts and Martyrdom of the Apostle Thomas; b) the Martyrdom of Thomas; and c) Acts of the Apostle Thomas, whose testimonies in the sections they have in common do not always coincide with each other. In saying that the *ATH* is "complete," we affirm that only one of these three types, namely, the one that includes both the Acts and the Martyrdom, reflects the original intention of the work, which, however, cannot be confirmed with absolute certainty. Even if admitting that this was the original plan of the *ATH*, there is no guarantee that the text at our disposal reflects the entirety of the primitive text. Suffice it to point out one example: the first testimonies about Thomas locate his evangelizing activity in Parthia, which the current text does not contemplate.<sup>2</sup>

More importantly, perhaps, such a statement seems to ignore the characteristics of the text before our eyes, which often bears obvious redactional traces. To date, various theories have tried unsuccessfully to explain these from different angles. In my opinion, however, the peculiarities of the text are better explained in all or almost all cases as interventions into the narrative in order to eliminate or rework sections of the primitive text for various reasons.

The objective of the present study is to offer a new approach to the manuscript transmission of the *ATH* on the basis of the

<sup>2</sup> Thus Origen, *In Genes.* III; Ps. Clement, *Recognit.* IX.29; Eusebius, *HE* III 1; Rufinus, *HE* I 92; Socrates, *HE* I 19.3.

transcriptions made by two members of our research team, Israel Muñoz Gallarte and Ángel Narro. Combined with an overview of the manuscripts and the sections of the *ATH* that they transmit, it is my intention to present a reasoned explanation of the textual transmission of the *ATH*, which will hopefully allow us to understand both the diversification of the witnesses, as well as their genesis, chronology, and objectives. With this purpose in mind, my presentation consists of five sections: after a preliminary assessment of some aspects regarding the text and its date of composition, the second section presents a new approach to the testimonies that intends to highlight their reworked character. I start from the hypothesis that, if the *ATH* had been transmitted in “complete” form, this can only be because it was expurgated beforehand of everything that could either be problematic to later orthodoxy, or undesirable or inappropriate for readers of later times. The third section offers a classification of the materials at our disposal, starting from the sections of the *ATH* that they transmit, that is, either the Acts or the Martyrdom alone, or else a combination of both. In this part, I will also outline the later reworkings, such as homilies, epitomes, eulogies (*laudatio*) and lives of the apostle. The fourth section proposes an intertextual approach to the various groups visible in the transmission and attempts, on the one hand, to explain the textual diversification and, on the other, to offer an approximate chronology of the process of reworking of the ancient *ATH*. The fifth and last section will offer some conclusions.

## 2. *Text, Composition, and Date of the Acts of Thomas*

The *ATH* is traditionally dated to the first half of the third century. However, none of the arguments used to do so during the twentieth century seem to be conclusive. This is perhaps not the place to go into the thorny question of the *ATH*'s date of composition. However, allow me to briefly recall the main five arguments in favour of a date in the third century: 1) the *ATH*'s dependence on the *Acts of Peter*;<sup>3</sup> 2) the use of Roman names in the *ATH*;<sup>4</sup> 3) Origen's reference to the

<sup>3</sup> See A.F.J. Klijn, *The Acts of Thomas* (Leiden, 1962, <sup>2</sup>2003) 18-26.

<sup>4</sup> According to J.N. Bremmer, 'The *Acts of Thomas*: Place, Date and Women', in id. (ed.), *The Apocryphal Acts of Thomas* (Leuven, 2001) 74-90 (updated in idem, *Maidens, Magic and Martyrs in Early Christianity*:

*ATH* alongside the other four Acts; 4) knowledge and/or contact with Bardesanes of Edessa;<sup>5</sup> 5) the advent of Mani and Manicheism.<sup>6</sup>

Susan Myers has recently demonstrated, correctly in my view, that none of these arguments constitutes conclusive evidence that fixes the text's composition in the first half of the third century.<sup>7</sup> However, I cannot accept her use of internal evidence to claim a composition in the second half of the third century either. Her analysis, notwithstanding this, is impeccable. The issue of the inter-relationships between the five Apocryphal Acts is still open to discussion and anything but definitive. The scholarly literature offers a variety of views on their apparent interdependence. In addition, it can be argued that the contact between the different Acts may not be due to dependence but simply the result of the common background of the texts. The use of Roman names is, in my view, also inconclusive: first, Jan Bremmer's argument is only valid on the assumption that this text was composed in Syriac and in Edessa, which I rejected in 2015; second, this is also the case in numerous other Apocryphal Acts. As for Origen's knowledge (*apud* Eusebius) of the five Apocryphal Acts, there is nothing to assure us that Origen is referring to the text that we know, since, as already advanced, he considers Parthia to be the region of Thomas' activity. Moreover, Bardesanes' contact with the *ATH* is rather tenuous. Finally, in my opinion, there is nothing in the *ATH* that betrays knowledge of Manicheism.

Given the lack of conclusive elements to argue a date in the third century and the general consensus that places the other four Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles in the second half of the second century, I do not see any reason not to place the *ATH* in the same period.

However, let me get back the main theme of this study: the textual transmission of the *ATH*.

*Collected Essays* [Tübingen, 2017] 167-179), the use of Roman names and terms seems to indicate a date posterior to the deposition of King Abgar in 212-213 CE.

<sup>5</sup> G. Bornkamm, 'Thomasakten', in Wilhelm Schneemelcher (ed.), *Neutestamentliche Apokryphen*, II (Tübingen, 1964) 297-372 at 307.

<sup>6</sup> However, any influence of Manichaeism on our text, as proposed since Thilo, Bousset and Bornkamm, has already been disproved by P.H. Poirier, 'Les Actes de Thomas et le Manichéisme', *Apocrypha* 9 (1998) 263-89, at 274-79.

<sup>7</sup> S.E. Myers, *Spirit Epicleses in the Acts of Thomas* (Tübingen, 2010) 44-55.

### 3. *Selection and Reworking in the Acts of Thomas*

#### 3.1. *The Hypothesis*

As I anticipated, it seems clear that if the *ATH* gives the impression of having been transmitted intact, this can only be because it was expurgated in advance of everything that did not meet the expectations of readers of the text during the Middle Ages. Given the heterodox background of the *AAA*, it is not surprising that their tenor could be inappropriate to later orthodoxy. A clear example of this can be found in the Syriac version of the *ATH*, which introduced a severe orthodox revision. However, U and P,<sup>89</sup> namely the Vallicellian and Parisian manuscripts of the Acts, the two most important manuscripts for the reconstruction of the Greek *ATH*, also show, as we will see, clear traces of orthodox revision. Furthermore, we must not exclude the possibility that there were other reasons behind the process of selection and reworking of the Acts. For example, changes in the literary taste during the long period between its composition in the second century and the late Middle Ages, or even the new functions that texts fulfilled in the latter period, could also explain the transformation of some passages and the elimination of others.

#### 3.2. *Comparative Analysis of the Texts*

The uneven character of the text of the *ATH* has not gone unnoticed by scholars. In particular, the divergences between the Greek and Syriac texts have drawn their attention. The different ways in which both versions rework the text have received various explanations. In my view, the most striking of these postulates a Syriac original, later translated into Greek, which in turn was later translated back into Syriac.<sup>10</sup> Eric Junod does not go quite this far, since he limits himself to affirming that neither the current Greek text nor the Syriac coincide with the original text of the *ATH*, a view that I completely endorse.<sup>11</sup> Antonio Piñero and Gonzalo del Cerro, in the Spanish edition in the

<sup>8</sup> See *contra* H.J.W. Drijvers, 'The Acts of Thomas', in *NTA* 2.322-411 at 327 and 337.

<sup>9</sup> U = Vallicellianus B35; P = Parisinus gr. 1510.

<sup>10</sup> Klijn, *The Acts of Thomas*, 13-17.

<sup>11</sup> E. Junod, 'Créations romanesques et traditions ecclésiastiques dans les Actes apocryphes des Apôtres', *Augustinianum* 23 (1983) 271-85.



*Biblioteca de autores cristianos*, also only affirm that the preserved text is not the original, as does Hans-Josef Klauck.<sup>12</sup>

Always starting from a comparison of the Greek with the Syriac, the late Yves Tissot defended the view that the important differences between the texts are due to the fact that the *ATH* is an example of a “composite collection” (*recueil composite*), a description with which he indicated the reworked character of our sources.<sup>13</sup> More recently, Susan Myers has also noted the redactional traces in the *ATH* text. In reference to the work of Christine Thomas, Myers mentions the “fluidity of the story and the freedom enjoyed by the copyists and editors.”<sup>14</sup> However, in dealing with redactional traces in her study of the *epicleses* of the *ATH*, she again focuses only on the comparison of the Greek and Syriac versions of the text.

My study of redactional traces in the *ATH*, in contrast, focuses exclusively on the Greek text. That the Syriac version reworks the *ATH* text is obvious, but the reworking in the Greek text is not always so clear or at least it is not mentioned so often in the scholarly literature on the *ATH*. Yet, how can we determine what is redaction and what is primitive and how can we establish the points at which reworking takes place without having something to compare it with? In order to clarify both aspects, I undertook a comparative analysis of a substantial number of manuscripts of the *ATH* (thus far a total of 42). On first approach, there are indications that it is always the same sections that are subject to the most pressure in textual transmission, namely, the discursive sections, especially those that include speeches by the apostle.

After identifying in U – the only manuscript that includes all the known chapters of the *ATH* – those chapters that include speeches of the apostle or of other characters, I compared these sections in the other manuscripts at my disposal to determine what happens with the text in these sections. To my surprise, I found that whenever U includes a speech, a large number of the manuscripts tend to intervene

<sup>12</sup> A. Piñero and G. del Cerro, *Hechos apócrifos de los apóstoles I* (Madrid, 2004) 15; H.-J. Klauck, *The Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles* (Waco, 2008) 141.

<sup>13</sup> Y. Tissot, ‘Les actes de Thomas, exemple de recueil composite’, in F. Bovon *et al.* (eds), *Les actes apocryphes des apôtres* (Geneva, 1981) 223-32.

<sup>14</sup> Myers, *Spirit Epicleses*, 58; Ch.M. Thomas, *The Acts of Peter, Gospel Literature, and the Ancient Novel: Rewriting the Past* (Oxford, 2003).

in the text. There are fundamentally two types of intervention: either elimination or rewriting. Scissors are obviously the fastest method of intervening. Reworking, on the other hand, in general tends to reduce the text in question by offering a synthesis or adaptation of the passage, which requires some literary skill from the copyist or reviser.

The percentage of manuscripts that intervene in the text varies according to the section of text that we are dealing with. The first two Acts are represented in 40 of the 42 manuscripts consulted. Here, the percentage of manuscripts that intervene in the text ranges between 20% and 52%. Let us now pay attention to the first Act as an example, which includes the Bride's Hymn (chapters 6 and 7), two speeches by Thomas (chapters 10 and 12), and two speeches by the bride (chapter 14) and the groom (chapter 15), respectively. A favourite target of revisers, these speeches have been eliminated or reworked in a substantial number of manuscripts, as detailed in the following overview:

	Chapter	Include	Rework	Lack
Hymn of the Bride	6-7	19	--	21
Speech by Thomas	10	25	1	14
Speech by Thomas	12	32	2	6
Speech by the Bride	14	25	5	10
Speech by the Groom	15	22	6	12

The same happens with the second Act, where redactional traces accumulate in chapters 25, 27 and 28, which all include speeches by the apostle. Of these, approximately half of the manuscripts intervene in the text:

	Chapter	Include	Rework	Lack
Speech by Thomas	25	20	10	10
Speech by Thomas	27	16	8	16
Speech by Thomas	28	14	4	22

In this case, the percentage of manuscripts that intervene in the text ranges between 50% and 65%. As the chart shows, the proportion in the first two Acts, which appear in most of the manuscripts, is not so dramatic. The picture changes when we approach Acts 3 to 13, which

are only preserved complete in two manuscripts, and partially in two others. This section of the *ATh* is rich in speeches, both by the apostle and by other characters and, as a result, the intervention of the editors has been more drastic: of the thirteen manuscripts that could have included them, ten eliminate them almost completely. The percentage of manuscripts intervening in the text is, therefore, much higher, oscillating between 75% and 80%. The following table includes the most dramatic example, that of Act 6, about the young murderer.

	Chapter	Include	Rework	Lack
Speech by Thomas	52	3	--	10
Speech by Thomas	53	3	--	10
Speech by Thomas	58	3	--	10
Speech by Thomas	60	3	--	10
Speech by Thomas	61	3	--	10

I could include more examples of the other sections of the *ATh* showing the same characteristics, but I think that the ones presented so far give an idea of the behaviour of the manuscripts with respect to the text.

### 3.3. *Editorial Interventions in U (Vallicellianus gr. 35) and P (Paris. gr. 1510)*

Once the problematic passages – from the point of view of textual transmission – have been identified precisely as discursive sections, especially those speeches of the apostle Thomas which have major redactional interventions, we can turn to the two manuscripts that allegedly best preserve the primitive text.

An initial analysis of both manuscripts indicates that, while preserving the discursive passages that have been eliminated in other manuscripts, these testimonies also show evident redactional traces: reworking into an orthodox sense, the addition of abundant New Testament quotations, and reduction and/or expansion are some of their most obvious features. This seems to confirm the hypothesis stated above that in order to be transmitted, these sections must have been transformed. That U and P tend to preserve these sections in a reworked version is certainly due to different literary purposes and/or diverse intended audiences, but probably also to the superior literary skills of their revisers, who chose to rewrite instead of deleting.

An example of this is Act 3, which concerns the serpent. Eminently discursive in nature, the passage includes a speech by the serpent (chapter 32), a dialogue between the serpent and the apostle (chapter 33), the speech of the repentant boy (chapter 34), the apostle's reply to him (chapter 35), and the exhortation of the apostle to become detached from earthly matters (chapters 36-37). As was to be expected, of the thirteen manuscripts that could have included the section, eight have deleted it altogether. Only five manuscripts retain the text, of which two only do so after visibly reworking the section.

Chapter	U	P	Ms 51	Ms 25	Ms 8
32	Includes	Includes	Includes	Reworks	Lacks
33	Includes	Includes	Includes	Reworks	Reworks
34	Includes	Includes	Includes	Reworks	Lacks
35	Includes	Includes	Includes	Reworks	Lacks
36	Reworks	Reworks	Reworks	Lacks	Lacks
37	Primitive?	Reworks	Primitive?	Includes	Lacks
38	Reworks	Lacks	Reworks	Reworks	Lacks

It is chapter 36 of manuscript U that most interests us, because here Thomas focuses on the rejection of material goods in favour of spiritual ones. After section 36.1, which introduces the theme by praising the intrinsic superiority of spiritual matters, section 36.2 presents a clear amplification of the text, which includes up to six nested New Testament citations of a clearly secondary nature.<sup>15</sup> Although the theme remains the same, the tone changes considerably: while the previous section had praised spiritual goods due to their inherent superiority, this section of the chapter derives this idea from various New Testament admonitions in this regard. Chapter 37, however, returns to the initial tone that we found in 36.1.

Let us now take a look at Act 5, about the general, found in chapters 62-67. After the general's discourse and Thomas' reply, the apostle asks Xenophon to gather the people. He then begins a long discourse that occupies chapters 66 and 67. That Act 5 included a problematic section is obvious from the fact that only five of the

<sup>15</sup> Mt 19:23; Mt 11:8; Mt 6:25; Jn 15:1; Mt 6:20; 1 Cor 2:9.

thirteen manuscripts at our disposal preserve it. At the same time, we see that these five testimonies tackled the section that consisted of Thomas' discourse in different ways. Manuscript U, supported by V (Vat. Gr. 1190), includes a text with obvious traces of reworking activity.<sup>16</sup> Once again, the presence of New Testament references that are lacking in the other witnesses reveals to us the secondary nature of U's testimony. In chapter 66, Thomas refers to Jesus as a helper of those who believe in him. U, V, and manuscript 25 (Athens, Nat. Libr. 2504) include a strange tautological sentence with obvious textual problems: "When you sleep in this slumber weighing down the sleepers, he sleeps not and watches" (καθευδόντων ὑμῶν ἐν τῷ ὕπνῳ τούτῳ τῷ βαροῦντι τοὺς καθεύδοντας αὐτὸς ἄπνους ὢν διαφυλάσσει). According to P, however, it is said: "He won't abandon those of you who are in sleep, since while you are in this slumber weighing you down, being awake himself he protects all of you" (καὶ οὐ μὴ καὶ αὐτὸς καθευδόντων ὑμῶν καταλείπη, ἐν τούτῳ ὕπνῳ τούτῳ τῷ καταβαροῦντι ὑμᾶς αὐτὸς ἄπνους ὢν διαφυλάττει πάντας ὑμᾶς). The same can be said of the remainder of the text. According to U, V, and 25, Thomas affirms that those who are in danger in the sea are protected by Jesus, who, in a clear reference to Mt 14:24-33 and par., walks on the waters: "And when you travel by sea and are in danger and there is no one to help, he walks upon the waters and helps" (καὶ ἐν θαλάσῃ πλεόντων ὑμῶν καὶ ἐν κινδύνῳ ὄντων καὶ οὐδενὸς βοηθεῖν δυναμένου αὐτὸς περιπατῶν ἐπὶ τῶν ἰδάτων ὑπορθοῖ βοηθῶν). The testimony of P, however, shows that the primitive text had something different in mind: "He always knows how to help those of us who are in danger in the sea of this (earthly) life" (ἐν τε τῇ τοῦ βίου τούτου θαλάσῃ πλεόντων ἡμῶν καὶ ἐν κινδύνῳ ἡμῶν ὄντων, ἀεὶ βοηθεῖν οἶδεν ἡμᾶς). This shows us that before its reworking, in the primitive version of this sentence the mention of the sea section was not meant literally but was a metaphor for "this life". As for manuscripts R and 25, they drastically rework the discourse of the apostle Thomas, reducing chapter 66 to the minimum and deleting chapter 67.

<sup>16</sup> For the nomenclature and an overview both of the manuscripts used by Bonnet and the new ones added to the list in the context of the Research Project on the Acts of Thomas at the University of Córdoba, see Muñoz Gallarte's Chapter 2, *New Textual Witnesses for the Greek Apocryphal Acts of Thomas*, 25-42 at 35-41.

Act 9, about Charisius' wife, found in chapters 82-88, also offers an interesting example. This section, only preserved in U, includes several speeches by the apostle. Although most of the manuscripts of the *ATH* delete the entire passage, three of them, namely P, 51 (Naroden Musej, Ohrid 004), and 25, partially preserve the apostle's speeches after transforming them.<sup>17</sup>

Chapter	U	Ms 25	P	Ms 51	Syriac
82	Reworks	Reduces	Includes	Lacks	Reworks
83	Reworks	Reduces	Reworks	Lacks	Reworks
84	Primitive?	Reduces	Lacks	Lacks	Reworks
85	Primitive?	Reduces	Lacks	Lacks	Reworks
86	Reworks	Reduces	Reworks	Lacks	Reworks
87	Reworks	Reduces	Reworks	Reworks	Reworks
88	Primitive?	Reworks	Reworks	Reworks	Reworks

Let us take a closer look at this passage taking our starting point from the testimony of U. The end of chapter 82.2 in U already shows traces of reworking, with several nested New Testament quotes related to the theme indicating that we are dealing with a reworked passage.<sup>18</sup> New Testament references continue in Thomas' speech in chapter 83. Chapters 84 and 85 may preserve a rather primitive character, even if the text appears profoundly transformed in the Syriac version.<sup>19</sup> Chapter 86, again, shows clear redactional traces, visible in the high number of New Testament references that dot the text. The apostle's speech in chapter 88, however, seems to take up the tenor of the primitive text, at least in its second part, 88.2, since it turns again to themes dear to the Acts: the ephemeral nature of earthly goods and the need to reject everything transient.

Manuscript 25, in turn, severely reduces chapters 82 to 86, which are replaced by a few lines. After also reducing chapter 87 by half, it

<sup>17</sup> Letters normally refer to those used in Bonnet's edition. Numbers, in contrast, correspond to the nomenclature used by Israel Muñoz Gallarte, Chapter 2.

<sup>18</sup> Mk 8:18; Mk 4:9; Mt 11:28.

<sup>19</sup> Strikingly enough, Piñero and Del Cerro, *Hechos apócrifos de los Apóstoles II*, 1059-61, include all redactional interventions of the Syriac version in their edition.

introduces a profound reworking of chapter 88, which eliminates most of the important elements in it, such as contempt for the world, adornment and dress, and the “dirty union with your husband” (U: ἡ κοινωνία ἡ ῥυπαρὰ ἡ πρὸς τὸν ἄνδρα σου). As far as P is concerned, this manuscript presents a similar revision: although it includes the start of the text at chapter 82, after reducing chapters 84 to 85 to a few lines, it introduces a version of chapters 86 and 87 which is similar to that of U. Manuscript 51, in turn, eliminates the entirety of chapters 82 to 86 and only retains chapters 87 and 88 in a clearly reworked version. As might be expected, the equivalent passage in the Syriac version profoundly transforms the text throughout. In my opinion, the intense redactional activity of the manuscripts in this part of the *ATh* is a clear sign that the speeches of Thomas created a problem that each manuscript attempted to solve in its own way.

A similar case is found in Act 12, about the son of Misdæus, found in chapters 139 to 149, which includes an abundance of speeches by Thomas. The vast majority of manuscripts have chosen to drop the section altogether. Of the thirteen manuscripts we have for the section, seven delete it and six rework it. Moreover, of those that preserve it, some do so partially, and some occasionally transpose the section to the martyrdom itself. This is the case for manuscripts P, 37 (Bib. Ambrosiana A063 inf.), S (Paris gr. 1613), Z1 (St Petersburg gr. 95) and two martyrdom manuscripts, namely 27 (Trinity College Dublin 0185) and L (Paris 764). Only U and manuscript 51 retain the passage as it is in its current position in Bonnet’s edition, although manuscript 51 does so only after omitting some sections and reworking others.

Both the position and the character of the text in U are problematic: first, U introduces the passage immediately after Thomas’ imprisonment, when there is not yet a direct danger to his life. Second, precisely this aspect is equivocal, because in chapter 143, U reads: “All those present were listening to the apostle as he said these words, and they thought that at that moment he was going to give up his life” (Λέγοντος δὲ τοῦ ἀποστόλου ταῦτα πάντες οἱ ἐκεῖ ἠκροό(ω)ντο, νομίζοντες ἐκείνην τὴν ὥραν τοῦ βίου αὐτὸν μεταστῆναι). This last statement is, in any case, surprising, since there is nothing in the previous or subsequent passage that allows us to explain it. The continuation of the passage in chapter 143 also shows clear redactional traces, such as we are used to from U, again with copious New Testament citations. The same can be said of chapter 144 and the rest of the prayer that occupies chapters 145 to 146 and 148 to

149: the abundance of New Testament quotations, on the one hand, and the marked orthodox tone, on the other, indicate that U has profoundly reworked the content of this passage. The fact that U does not include chapter 147 is also significant. On the basis of P and, especially, of manuscript 51, which preserve it, we can see that it probably formed the thematic centre of the prayer.

If we now focus on manuscript 51's version of the passage under scrutiny, as I anticipated, 51 preserves the text in the same position as U, although it abounds in redactional traces. First of all, this manuscript does not include chapter 143, with the problematic reference to the imminent death of the apostle, nor what follows, which in U abounds in New Testament citations. It could be objected that it is not U that makes an addition, but 51 that eliminates. However, the fact that P also does not have a chapter 143 seems to indicate that it was added in U, perhaps as a transition to the passages in chapters 144 to 148, which it was transposing into this section. Second, manuscript 51 also removes the first part of chapter 144, which in U includes a Lord's Prayer of a clearly secondary character, and of which 51 only preserves three lines. While manuscript 51 coincides with the text of U from 144.2 to 146, its version of chapter 147 is completely different and, in my opinion, superior to that of P, although the latter is the version followed by both English and Spanish translations.<sup>20</sup>

It seems clear that we are in a delicate area of the *ATH*: the editorial traces in all the branches of the transmission indicate that we are dealing with a section that originally included a speech by Thomas that, due to its content or length, was eliminated, reworked or transposed. The question of whether the prayer of chapters 144 to 148 should be where U and 51 place it, that is, before the martyrdom, or in the martyrdom itself, must remain open for the time being. In any case, James claimed there is testimony from several Greek witnesses (such as P, S [Paris. gr. 1613], Z1 [St. Petersburg. Gr. 95] and 37 [Ambros. A063], 27 [Trinity College, Dublin 0185], and L [Paris. gr. 764]), in addition to the Latin and the Ethiopic transmission, to place it in the martyrdom,<sup>21</sup> and in this he is followed by several translators.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>20</sup> See Piñero and Del Cerro, *Hechos apócrifos de los Apóstoles II*, 1165 and note 777; J.K. Elliott, *The Apocryphal New Testament* (Oxford, 1993) 509. Bonnet 255-56, includes both texts one above the other.

<sup>21</sup> M.R. James, *The Apocryphal New Testament* (Oxford, 1924, repr. 1983) 364, 428-36.

<sup>22</sup> Elliott, *The Apocryphal New Testament*, 502, with note 70.



### 3.4. *Why Were the Speeches Targeted by Text Revisers?*

As I had occasion to demonstrate in my research on the apocryphal *Acts of Andrew*,<sup>23</sup> the apostle's speeches often form the conceptual centre of these texts. In the manner of medieval altarpieces, the *Apocryphal Acts'* description of the apostle's *praxeis* provided exemplary stories with clear ethical models to be followed by the Christian public. As in the case of the altarpieces, where the images were complemented with oral interventions by the priest or other spiritual guides, the apostle's speeches, which followed the stories, offered a guideline and an interpretation of those stories. The apostle's speeches made explicit the ethical message that the narrations transmitted in a more implicit way.<sup>24</sup> In this sense, the AAA present a clear evolution with respect to the New Testament, in whose narrative scholars have found an implicit ethical message.<sup>25</sup> In the AAA, the ethical message is no longer found exclusively in the narratives, but is accompanied by an argument that, in a certain sense, attempts to systematize the ethical message of the text.

It is therefore no surprise that it was precisely these sections that were subject to the greatest pressure in textual transmission. On the one hand, the apostle's speeches with a markedly ascetic tenor could include suspicious elements for later orthodoxy, especially in areas or periods in which ascetic paraenesis could be associated with currents considered heretical. Such is the case, for example, of Priscillianism in Hispania and Gaul. On the other hand, their message could have ceased to be interesting. Combined with the tendency to reduce the texts, which can be observed in the textual transmission of the AAA, both factors sufficiently explain their elimination or reworking.

<sup>23</sup> Roig Lanzillotta, *Acta Andreae*.

<sup>24</sup> On the ethical message of the *ATh* see Luther, this volume, Ch. 4.

<sup>25</sup> See, e.g., S. Luther, 'Die ethische Signifikanz der Wunder. Eine Relecture der Wundererzählungen der apokryphen Thomasakten unter ethischer Perspektive', in B. Kollmann and R. Zimmermann (eds), *Hermeneutik der frühchristlichen Wundererzählungen. Geschichtliche, literarische und rezeptionsorientierte Perspektiven* (Tübingen, 2014) 345-68; S. Finfern, 'Narrative Ethik und Narratologie: Methoden zur ethischen Analyse und Kritik von Erzählungen', in U. Volp *et al.* (eds), *Metapher – Narratio – Mimesis – Doxologie: Begründungsformen frühchristlicher und antiker Ethik* (Tübingen, 2016) 141-67. On the ethics of the *ATh*, see Benjamin Lensink, Doctoral Dissertation in progress.

#### 4. *Classification of the Materials of the Acts of Thomas at our Disposal*

A brief look at the manuscripts that transmit the *ATh* shows that we are not dealing with an ordinary type of textual transmission. The witnesses of the *ATh* do not transmit the text in a homogeneous way, but rather present a conscious selective transmission of it. On the basis of the sections of the text that they transmit (or their character), I distinguish four textual groups among the forty-two manuscripts studied: a) manuscripts that transmit the totality of the text; b) manuscripts that only transmit the martyrdom of the apostle; c) manuscripts that only transmit the Acts; d) new texts on Thomas based on materials from the old *ATh*.

The first group includes thirteen manuscripts containing both the Acts and the Martyrdom. Of these, only two, U and P, intended to convey the complete Acts according to what appears to have been the primitive plan of the work. If its first part narrates the travels and works of the apostle, the second describes his imprisonment and subsequent martyrdom. Although they are not free from specific problems, both manuscripts include the entirety of the known text, and although they tend to preserve the apostle's speeches, as already mentioned, they do so with a reworked version of them. The other eleven manuscripts apparently convey the entire text as well, but in fact include only a smaller portion of it, generally omitting the entire section between the end of the second Act and the beginning of the martyrdom, thus reducing the text to less than 25% of what we find in U and P. This is the case of manuscripts 37 (Ambrosianus 063), 50 (Sinait. Gr. 497), A (Paris. gr. 881), R (Paris. gr. 1551), S and Z1.

The second group of manuscripts only transmits the section on the martyrdom of the apostle. These manuscripts focus on the apostle's death, and therefore include only the events leading up to his foreseeable end. This group is the smallest and includes only four of the 42 manuscripts analysed. Two of them, manuscripts 27 and L, drastically intervene in the text by eliminating all the apostle's speeches. For the other two, namely M and O, it remains to be determined, as their transcription is still in progress.

The third group of texts includes the large group of manuscripts that exclusively transmit the Acts of the apostle. Of these, most focus on the first two Acts and therefore retain the first 29 chapters. Only one of them, D (Paris. gr. 1176), includes Acts 1 to 6 and thus covers

chapters 1 to 61. As stated above, most of these manuscripts systematically delete the apostle's speeches. Manuscripts in this group seem to have opted for a selective transmission of the *ATh*, retaining only the narration of the apostle's works and eliminating the discursive parts. As a result, the texts acquire an eminently narrative character.

The fourth group of manuscripts feature later reworkings about Thomas based on older material. Among the 42 manuscripts analysed, we have two texts of this nature, namely manuscripts 1 (Paris. BN gr. 1554) and 30 (Jagiellonian Univ. Krakow gr. 279). This group includes the numerous homilies, epitomes, laudationes, and orationes on the apostle Thomas, widely represented in Halkin's repertoire.<sup>26</sup> One example is offered by the paraphrase of Nicetas of Thessalonica. Transmitted by five manuscripts (Paris gr. 1516; Collegi novi Oxoniensis C. 149; Leningrad 95; Sinaiticus gr. 516; and Atton. Pantokrator 21), its introduction has been diligently edited by P.H. Poirier.<sup>27</sup> As indicated by the text itself, in addition to removing the shadow of the possible heresy that its words might contain,<sup>28</sup> the purpose of these reworkings, at least in the case of Nicetas, was to correct "a prosaic and artless text; and one even too heavy" (τῆ συγγραφῆ πεζώτερον μὲν πῶς συντεθείση καὶ ἀφελέστερον, μάλλον δὲ διακορέστερον). According to Nicetas, he decided to summarize and adapt the text to make it more elegant and accesible (παρ' ἡμῶν δὲ τὰ νῦν εὐχῆς χάριν καὶ τοῦ κοινωφελοῦς συντετμημένη καὶ μετενηνεγμένη πρὸς τὸ εὐφραδέες καὶ εὐσύνοπτον). While the second and third textual groups select specific sections of the work, the fourth group, in contrast, exhibits a holistic tendency and the desire to include an overview related to the works and the martyrdom of the apostle. In order to do so, however, they present an extreme reduction of the primitive *ATh*, which means that nothing remains of the speeches: these new creations mainly retain the thread of the narrative, highlighting its most salient aspects.

<sup>26</sup> F. Halkin, *Bibliotheca hagiographica graeca II* (Brussels, 1957) 301-04.

<sup>27</sup> P.H. Poirier, *L'Hymne de la Perle des Actes de Thomas* (Turnhout, 2021) 345-51.

<sup>28</sup> Nicetas of Salonica, *Acta Thomae*. Prol 1, 8-11. See Poirier, *L'Hymne de la Perle*, 290.

### 5. *An Intertextual Approach to the Various Groups in the Textual Transmission of Acts of Thomas*

An initial approach to these four textual groups could give the impression that we are dealing with manuscripts that randomly transmit different parts of the original text of the *ATh*. However, nothing could be further from the truth. In fact, manuscripts from all four groups present a clear plan that tends to reduce or rework the discursive sections of the primitive text. Their selective transmission of the *ATh* is also neither random nor meaningless.

As far as reworking is concerned, fear would have played a role, as being responsible for transmitting heterodox, even heretical, thought was not something that a copyist or transmitter of the text could afford, especially in times of persecution.<sup>29</sup> In an early phase of the text's history, this was perhaps the greatest concern of the copyists. After its alleged circulation in a wide spectrum of early Christian groups, from the beginning of the fifth century CE our indirect testimonies locate the *ATh*, along with the other *AAA*, exclusively among Manichaeans. It is considered that from then onwards, the *AAA* were composed, interpolated or used by the Manichaeans.<sup>30</sup> The first consequence for the texts was their expurgation: those sections that could include suspicious doctrines were reworked or eliminated.

As far as the meaning of the selective transmission of the *ATh* is concerned, I believe that it should be sought in the changing function and objective that the texts acquired during the long period of their transmission, which spans approximately one millennium. The primitive text of the *ATh* was composed in a specific period of late antiquity, in my opinion in the second century CE, and in a precise context, the ancient Mediterranean world. Emerging in the same cultural context as the Greco-Roman romance, the *AAA* obviously pursue a similar entertaining goal; however, they also intended to educate the

<sup>29</sup> See below, for example, Nicetas of Thessalonica's disclaimer in his introduction to his paraphrase of the *Acts of Thomas*.

<sup>30</sup> According to J.N. Bremmer, 'Apocryphal Acts: Authors, Place, Time and Readership', in id., *The Apocryphal Acts of Thomas*, 149-70 (updated in id., *Maidens, Magic and Martyrs in Early Christianity: Collected Essays* [Tübingen, 2017] 219-34), it is plausible to think that a Latin translation of the five major Acts might have been made by a Manichean between 359 and 385 CE in North Africa). See Roig Lanzillotta, *Acta Andreae*, 96-97.

Christian elites. On the one hand, the narration of numerous adventures during an apostle's journeys was entertaining, while at the same time instructive for Christians by teaching the Christian principles behind the text. The ethics implicit in these stories offered a clear behavioural model, which was highly critical of the values of Greco-Roman society, mainly those that concerned food customs and relationships between men and women, since, as M.J. Edwards put it, Christians refrained from anything that had to do "with the altar and with the bed."<sup>31</sup> On the other hand, the abundant speeches of the apostle Thomas sought to systematize this teaching, explaining the values implicit in them and exhorting both characters in the narrative and readers/listeners without it to adopt them. It is plausible to think that once the time and the context of these texts changed, the ethical message included in them could become obsolete. The medieval world in which the AAA's textual transmission takes place is quite different from the Greco-Roman world in which they first saw light. Consequently, the texts were changed and adapted to the needs of the different times and contexts in which they were used. It is only an intertextual approach to the *ATH* that can help us to understand the textual differences in the four groups of manuscripts that transmit it.

Let's now take a look at them.

### 5.1. *The Full Version of the Acts of Thomas*

The circulation of the full version of the *ATH* text can be safely assumed in the two centuries between its composition in the late second and the end of the fourth century CE. The indirect transmission confirms the circulation of the AAA over a wide geographical area and among groups with different ideologies. The various references in the Manichaean Psalm Book seem to indicate that by the end of the third century CE, the AAA were read by the Manichaeans.<sup>32</sup> Eusebius

<sup>31</sup> M.J. Edwards, 'Some Early Christian Immoralities', *Ancient Society* 23 (1992) 71-82, with Roig Lanzillotta, 'Early Christians and Human Sacrifice', in J.N. Bremmer (ed.), *The Strange World of Human Sacrifice* (Leuven, 2007) 81-102 at 100.

<sup>32</sup> See C.R.C. Allberry, *A Manichean Psalm-Book*, II (Stuttgart, 1938) 142.20ff; 143.13ff, and 192.26ff. According to Allberry, the Coptic text can be dated to 340. See also Allberry, 'Manichaean Studies', *JThS* 39 (1938) 347-49; J.D. Kaestli, 'L'utilisation des actes apocryphes des apôtres dans le manichéisme', in M. Krause (ed.), *Gnosis and Gnosticism* (Leiden, 1977)

considers the AAA to be spurious<sup>33</sup> and Epiphanius, in his turn, locates them among Encratites, Apotactians, Ebionists, Origenists, and Western ascetic groups.<sup>34</sup> If anything, the different orientation of these groups indicates that we are dealing with texts which had no specific sectarian features and which at this stage plausibly still circulated in their primitive form.

The testimonies of manuscripts U and P might reflect the structure of the primitive text as it circulated at this time, namely an extensive narrative dealing with both the activity of the apostle Thomas, that is, his travels and adventures in the ancient world, and his martyrdom in a distant and inhospitable place. While the tone, character, and intention of the text show contact with the Greek novel, its structure reflects the clear influence of the early Christian Passion narrative, such as we also find in the canonical gospels.<sup>35</sup> From the point of view of textual transmission, despite their more or less complete version of the primitive text, as already mentioned, these two manuscripts also intervene in the text, reworking or eliminating discursive sections in which the apostle gives a speech. Behind these interventions, which have left clear traces in the text, we see attempts to adapt a text written in a period marked by a diversity of Christian currents and beliefs to the prevailing orthodoxy of later periods.

Alongside manuscripts U and P, we have eleven other manuscripts allegedly conveying both the Acts and the Martyrdom of Thomas. In this case, however, the manuscripts are not as comprehensive, transmitting a very reduced version of the Acts, and they might represent a later phase in the history of the text. Based on the full primitive text, this set of manuscripts in fact seems to be a later product intended to meet the needs of a changing readership or public. In fact, the production of shorter “complete” texts that included the beginning and end of the apostle’s career fitted very well the goal and needs of the medieval *menologium*. Of the eleven manuscripts, nine

107-16 at 114-15, however, believes that the attribution of some of the Psalms to direct disciples of Mani, such as Thomas and Heraclides, implies that the Psalter can be dated to the end of the third century.

<sup>33</sup> Eusebius, *HE* 3.25.6.

<sup>34</sup> Epiphanius, *Adv. haer.* 47.1.5 (Encratites); 61.15 (Apotactics); 30.16 (Ebionites); 63.2.1 (Origenists).

<sup>35</sup> See J.M. Robinson and H. Köster, *Trajectories in Early Christianity* (Philadelphia, 1971) 158-204.

offer a highly reduced version of the text, which retains only the first two Acts (chapters 1-29) and a shortened version of the martyrdom (chapters 159-170).<sup>36</sup>

## 5.2. *The Transmission of the Martyrdom Text*

Although the heterodoxy of the primitive AAA could have meant their destruction or oblivion, certain developments at the end of the fourth and early fifth centuries contributed to their preservation. Both the growing demand for texts to be read during the service and their evident scarcity facilitated a change in attitude towards the AAA. As a matter of fact, from the end of the fourth century, the Council of Carthage (397 CE) allowed the reading of the passions of the martyrs *cum anniversarii eorum dies celebrantur*.<sup>37</sup> This fact had a decisive impact on the transmission of the AAA: on the one hand, it facilitated their preservation; on the other, it undoubtedly determined their selective transmission. It is plausible to think that it is from then onwards that the martyrdom of the AAA began to be transmitted separately from the rest of the text.

The restructuring of the *ATH* text, now focused on the martyrdom of the apostle; the new narrative framework, which was more concise, simple, and focused on the object of devotion, that is, the anniversary of the apostle; and its shorter length, all facilitated its reading in different ritual contexts. The martyrdom of the *ATH*, in fact, appears frequently in the medieval menology to celebrate the death of the apostle on October 6.

In addition to the four testimonies included in our group of 42 manuscripts, the martyrdom is represented by an extensive list of codices. The numerous witnesses of the martyrdom of Thomas collected by Halkin show us the success of this type of text.<sup>38</sup> Although the production of this variant of the text can be plausibly dated

<sup>36</sup> Only in two cases, namely manuscripts V (Vat. gr. 1190) and 25 (Athens, Nat. Libr. 2504), do the witnesses behave differently: while the first of them preserves the integral version of Acts 4 to 8 and a long version of the martyrdom (chapters 150-170), the latter profoundly reworks Acts 2, 3, 4, 5 7, 8 and 9, and includes a highly summarized version of the martyrdom.

<sup>37</sup> *Reg. Eccl. Carth. Exc. Canon 46* (CCSL 149, p. 186. 135-36 Munier). See also Preuschen *ap.* J. Flamion, *Les Actes Apocryphes de l'apôtre André* (Leuven, 1911) 41 note 3.

<sup>38</sup> Halkin, *Bibliotheca hagiographica graeca* II, 299-300.

immediately after the above-mentioned Council of Carthage, that is, from the fifth century onwards, its large number of exemplar variants suggests that its production never completely ceased and continued in subsequent centuries.

### 5.3. *The Transmission of the Acts of Thomas without the Martyrdom*

From the fifth century CE, our indirect sources begin to detect a clear dichotomy in the AAA between the doctrine and the miracles of the apostles. Turribius from Astorga (ca. 450 CE) is our first explicit mention in this regard, since he distinguishes between the doctrine of the AAA, considered false and attributable to heretics, and miracles, which he considered true and attributable to the apostles.<sup>39</sup> The same assessment can be found in the introduction to the *Passio Iohannis* attributed to Bishop Melito of Laodicea, who claims to appreciate the miracles but rejects the doctrine.<sup>40</sup> As I pointed out elsewhere,<sup>41</sup> these mentions allow us to see both a clear mistrust of rational argumentation and a growing appreciation for narratives of a miraculous nature. This attitude towards the transmission of the AAA is well documented in the sixth century by Gregory of Tours in his *Epitome of the Acts of Andrew* and also by the author of the *Miracula beati Thomae apostoli*, which Bonnet attributed to Gregory himself, but which according to Zelzer is not by his hand.<sup>42</sup> In both cases, the authors declare that they have expurgated the text of its (*nimia*) *verboſitas* to further highlight the truth contained in the apostle's miracles. The same attitude is found at the beginning of the seventh century in John of Salonica's prologue to the *Dormitio Mariae* (PO 19.377, 5-14).<sup>43</sup>

<sup>39</sup> Turribius of Astorga, *Epist. ad Idac. et Cip. Episc.* 5 (PL 54.694C).

<sup>40</sup> Pseudo-Melito (PG 5.1239), *Volo sollicitam esse fraternitatem vestram de Leutio quodam, qui scripsit apostolorum Actus Joannis evangelistae et apostoli sancti Andree et Thomae apostoli; qui de virtutibus quidem quas per eos Dominus fecit uera dixit, de doctrina uero eorum plurimum mentitus est.* On this text, see K. Schäferdiek, 'Die *Passio Iohannis* des Melito von Laodikea und die *Virtutes Iohannis*', *AB* 103 (1985) 367-82.

<sup>41</sup> Roig Lanzillotta, *Acta Andree*, 98.

<sup>42</sup> Bonnet, *Acta Thomae*, in *Supplementum Codicis apocryphi* (Leipzig, 1883) xiii-xvi; K. Zelzer, *Die alten lateinischen Thomasakten* (Berlin, 1977) xxvi-xxix.

<sup>43</sup> Gregory of Tours, *Epitome*, prolog. 11-13: *quia inuolatam fidem non exegit multitudo uerboſitatis, sed integritas rationis et puritas mentis.* See M. Bonnet, 'Georgii Florentii Gregorii Episcopi Turonensis liber de Beati



This dichotomy is responsible for the creation of a new literary genre focused exclusively on the miracles of the apostle, well documented in the third group. As in the texts of the previous group, we also see here the need to produce a shorter text that could be read in public; although, instead of selecting the last part, this group retains the first. The dichotomy between miracles and doctrine explains both the selective transmission of the *Acts of Thomas* alone and the intervention in the text either to eliminate sections suspected of heterodoxy or to rework them when narrative needs prevented their total elimination.

#### 5.4. *Later Reworkings of the Acts of Thomas*

I still need to assess the fourth group, which includes the new texts created on the basis of primitive materials about Thomas. The activity of Nicetas Paphlagonius and Simeon Metaphrastes in the tenth century, and that of Nicetas of Thessalonica in the eleventh century, offer good examples of the new literary creation of the period I am referring to. Common to all of them is the attempt to offer a comprehensive overview of the life and work of the apostle, a feature they share with some texts of the first type. The superior literary skills of the authors, however, allow them to rewrite the history of the apostle Thomas, retaining only those elements of the primitive text that most appealed to the literary taste of the time.

Here, we are facing a new phase in the transmission of the ancient *ATH*, which is now included in texts of a new sort: eulogies, paraphrases, sentences, narrations and epitomes. The common characteristic of these texts is a markedly biographical interest; we find a new conception of the figure of the apostle, who is now imagined as a traveller whose mission was completed by means of his itinerary spanning the known world. Interestingly, this new view of the apostle is reflected in the denomination of the *AAA* as *periodoi* or “travels, journeys” of the apostles, already known earlier, but used more

Andreae apostoli’, in B. Kruisch (ed.), *Monumenta Germaniae Historica. Scriptorum rerum merovingicarum* t. 1 (Hannover, 1885) 371-96. On the text of *De miraculis beati Thomae apostoli*, 2.14-16, see Zelzer, *Die alten lateinischen Thomasakten*, 45.14-16: *De quo libello, quod a quibusdam non recipitur, verbositate praetermissa pauca de miraculis libuit memorare, quod et legentibus gratum fieret et ecclesiam roboraret.*

frequently from the seventh century onwards.<sup>44</sup> This new interest in the life and activity of the apostle Thomas appears in a large number of texts.

## 6. *Conclusions*

It is now time to offer some conclusions:

6.1. The first and most important is, perhaps, the evidence that the transmitted text of the *ATH* presents clear redactional traces in all the branches of its transmission. The comparative analysis of the manuscripts allows us to confirm that while U and P present the best text of the textual transmission, they also intervene in the text of the *ATH*. This finding must be decisive when analysing the text in order to postulate the character and tenor of the primitive *ATH* and, therefore, its date and place of composition. The transmitted text cannot serve the recovery of the conceptual world of the *ATH*. A detailed analysis and scrutiny of the texts is first required to distinguish what is primitive and what is not in each case.

6.2. The sections of the *ATH* that were most severely subject to the weight of textual transmission are clearly the discursive parts, especially those by the apostle. In the *AAA*, they represent the conceptual centre of the texts, since the words of the apostle tend to systematize the ethical message that is presented in a narrative and implicit way. In the first phase of the history of the text, the elimination or reworking of these sections was intended to remove the supposed danger of heresy. Later, however, other reasons intervened. On the one hand, the changing audience of the text made the apostle's message obsolete; on the other hand, the desire to obtain a more compact and reduced text determined the complete elimination of the discursive sections, only the narrative parts being retained.

6.3. The four textual types visible in the textual transmission of the *AAA* in general, and of the *ATH* in particular, present a selective transmission of the primitive text. In this sense, the witnesses do not

<sup>44</sup> John of Thessalonika, *Dorm. Mariae*, prol.; Photius, *Bibliotheca*, Codex 114; P. Nagel, 'Die apocryphen Apostelakten des 2. und 3. Jahrhunderts in der manichäischen Literatur', in K.W. Tröger (ed.), *Gnosis und Neues Testament* (Berlin, 1973) 149-82 at 154 note 17; in reference to C. Schmidt, *Acta Pauli* (Hamburg, 1936) 94 note 2.

always transmit the text in a homogeneous way and cannot, therefore, be simply included in a traditional *stemmatica Lanchmaniana*. Shortened, reworked, reused and adapted to different contexts and audiences, the four textual types differentiated in the textual transmission of the *ATh* reflect different stages in the history of the text.

6.4. While the witnesses of the *ATh* do not allow us to faithfully reconstruct the primitive text, they do help us to reconstruct its history in the different contexts in which it circulated from late antiquity to the Middle Ages. An intertextual approach to the various texts we encounter in the textual transmission of the *ATh* can help us reconstruct the interpretations, intentions, concerns, and objectives of various communities of readers and their way of approaching ancient texts to update them to their needs.

## II. New Textual Witnesses for the Greek *Apocryphal Acts of Thomas*

ISRAEL MUÑOZ GALLARTE

### 1. *Introduction*

We can all agree that any translation or commentary of a given text must come from an edition that is as accurate as possible. In order to meet this criterion, it is mandatory to exhaustively compile all witnesses that transmit the whole or parts of the work. Equally important is to achieve a deep knowledge of how these witnesses of an ancient work have been transmitted up to the present day. This laborious commitment, however, is not referenced in most of the current manuals and translations, which actually accept, sometimes even blindly, the most recent edition in the alleged language of the original.

A good example of this issue is *The Apocryphal Acts of Thomas* (*ATh*), a really problematic work, but one deserving of the masterly 1903 edition by Lipsius and Bonnet.<sup>1</sup> 120 years later, it seems like a good moment to take a look back and evaluate the basis on which the editors' work is founded, and to deal with the problems they faced in order to try to solve them with the tools of today. Regarding the subject we will approach in these pages – the compilation of Greek materials – it is beyond any doubt that we are now in a more privileged position than before, thanks to the good number of digital tools and corpora that allow for a systematic and exhaustive search of the old witnesses, and even the direct consultation of microfilms and digitalized images by the researcher.

Therefore, with the intention of shedding some light on this subject, the present chapter begins with a short overview on the information enclosed within the aforementioned manuals, translations of, and commentaries on *ATh*. Secondly, we will focus on the editorial work

<sup>1</sup> M. Bonnet, *Acta Philippi et Acta Thomae* (reprint Hildesheim, 1990).

of Bonnet to analyze briefly the manuscripts that the researcher was able to collate. Thirdly, we will deal with the new findings of manuscripts during the last century, and finally we will draw some conclusions.

## 2. *Manuals and Introductions*

*ATh*,<sup>2</sup> which seems to have been fully preserved, is transmitted in two versions, one Syriac and one Greek, by a good number of witnesses. The version in Syriac, which almost all researchers agree was the language of the original,<sup>3</sup> was originally edited by Wright (1871).<sup>4</sup> He was followed by Burkitt and Smith Lewis (1900)<sup>5</sup> who also took into account the new codicological developments of the time. This is all clearly documented in the well-known translation and commentary of Klijn.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Included in the apocryphal *Acts of Andrew, John, Peter and Paul* all works dated to around the second or third century CE and attributed to Lucius Carinus. On the issue of this attribution, a suggestive hypothesis is provided by K. Schäferdiek, 'Die Leukios Charinos zugeschriebene manichäische Sammlung apokrypher Apostelgeschichten', in W. Schneemelcher (ed.), *Neutestamentliche Apokryphen*, 2 vols (Tübingen, 1987-1989) 2.81-93, who argues that Charinus could have been the compiler of the five *Acts*, from within in a Manichaean environment, corroborated by J.N. Bremmer, *Maidens, Magic and Martyrs in Early Christianity: Collected Essays* (Tübingen, 2017) 221-25. *Contra* F. Bovon, *New Testament and Christian Apocrypha. Collected Studies*, vol. II (Tübingen, 2009) 198-99. Regarding *ATh*'s date and place of composition, see J.N. Bremmer, 'The Acts of Thomas: Place, Date and Women', in id. (ed.), *The Apocryphal Acts of Thomas* (Leuven, 2001) 74-90, updated in id., *Maidens, Magic and Martyrs*, 167-79). However, N.J. Andrade, *The Journey of Christianity to India in Late Antiquity* (Cambridge, 2018) 32-36, advocates a redaction 'in the middle or late third century CE' (at 33).

<sup>3</sup> A.F.J. Klijn, *The Acts of Thomas. Introduction, Text and Commentary* (Leiden, 2003<sup>2</sup>).

<sup>4</sup> W. Wright, *Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles*, 2 vols (London, 1871) 2.146-298.

<sup>5</sup> F.C. Burkitt, 'Fragments of the Acts of Judas Thomas from the Sinaitic Palimpsest', in A. Smith Lewis (ed.), *Select Narratives of Holy Women* (London, 1900) Appendix VII, 23-44.

<sup>6</sup> See Klijn, *The Acts of Thomas*, 1-2.

On the other hand, the editions of Thilo (1823)<sup>7</sup> and, most recently, Bonnet (1903) presented the Greek version.<sup>8</sup> In producing his edition, the latter collated a larger number of manuscripts. Thilo only used the four Parisian volumes for editing the first six acts, with the exception of the fourth.<sup>9</sup> Tischendorf, as a midpoint, used five in his edition of 1851,<sup>10</sup> adding also the martyrdom of Thomas. Bonnet, however, collated twenty or twenty-one in an edition that would eventually include the Greek edition of the *Hymn of the Pearl* (HPrI).<sup>11</sup>

In the most recent bibliography, however, this subject is only touched upon tangentially, taking the latest edition for granted and focusing on the supposedly-better Syriac version.<sup>12</sup> Thus, Klijn, in his commentary of 1962 (revised ed. 2003), argues that he follows the edition of Wright, although with an eye to other Syriac versions, such as the important text transmitted by the Sinai palimpsest 30, dated to around the fifth or sixth century, as well as the Greek.<sup>13</sup> As far as the latter is concerned, Klijn uses Bonnet's edition, but highlights that this is shorter than the Syriac version. In any case, Klijn accepts the German editor's distribution of chapters whilst highlighting some difficulties, for example, the different location of chapters 144-148 in the manuscripts U and P.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>7</sup> J.C. Thilo, *Acta S. Thomae Apostoli* (Leipzig, 1823). Regarding the first investigations concerning *ATh* carried out by Richard Simon, probably based on the ms. 1835 of the 'Library of the King' and wrongly associated with D in Bonnet's edition, see S.E. Myers, *Spirit Epicleses in the Acts of Thomas* (Tübingen, 2010) 9-10 and n. 35.

<sup>8</sup> Bonnet, *Acta Philippi et Acta Thomae*.

<sup>9</sup> See Myers, *Spirit Epicleses*, 6-7.

<sup>10</sup> C. Tischendorf, *Acta Apostolorum Apocrypha* (Leipzig, 1851).

<sup>11</sup> See Myers, *Spirit Epicleses*, 73-74; Andrade, *The Journey of Christianity*, 29 n. 7.

<sup>12</sup> See, for instance, B. Pick, *The Apocryphal Acts of Paul, Peter, John, Andrew, and Thomas* (Eugene, OR, 2006) 223-24; H.W. Attridge, *The Acts of Thomas* (Santa Rosa, 2010) 3-4; Andrade, *The Journey of Christianity*, 29-30.

<sup>13</sup> Klijn, *The Acts of Thomas*, 1-2, 8-9. There are also new findings regarding the Syriac version, such as the Kerala manuscript; see F. Briquel-Chattonnet, A. Desreumeux, and J. Thekeparampil, 'Découverte d'un manuscrit très important contenant des textes apocryphes dans la bibliothèque de la métropole de l'Église de l'Est à Trichur, Kérala, Inde', in R. Lavenant (ed.), *Symposium Syriacum VII* (Rome, 1998) 587-597.

<sup>14</sup> Klijn, *The Acts of Thomas*, 3, 9.

In his introductory chapter to the English version of Schneemelcher's *New Testament Apocrypha*, Drijvers follows the arguments of Klijn regarding the two versions and adds a little more information regarding the transmission of *ATH* by affirming that this process was 'extremely complicated', due to 'interpolations, revisions, reworkings, and adaptations'.<sup>15</sup> However, the information is very scarce when Drijvers comes to deal with the Greek version, limited to merely providing the number of consulted manuscripts. Klauck follows suit, but reports something interesting: 'Bonnet based his edition on twenty-one Greek manuscripts; by now, approximately eighty are known'.<sup>16</sup> Unfortunately, the researcher does not offer any further information, nor a footnote to substantiate his assertion.

More informative are Susan Myers in her *Spirit Epicleses in the Acts of Thomas* and Lautaro Roig Lanzillotta in his 'A Syriac Original for the *Acts of Thomas*?'.<sup>17</sup> Indeed, the researchers update and review a good part of what we already knew about the manuscripts used in Bonnet's edition. As they confirm, Bonnet consulted 22 manuscripts dated from the ninth to the fifteenth century, but only collated 21 for his edition of 1903. Two of these were the most valuable, to wit, the so-called U, Vallicellanus B 35 (XI CE) and P, Parisiacus graecus 1510 (ca. XI-XII CE). Both volumes attest to almost the same text, practically the whole *ATH*, but with some evident differences, such as that the final Acts are longer in the copy preserved in P; and, more importantly, U is the only witness of the *Hymn of the Pearl* in Greek. The rest of the manuscripts, as we will see, only partially transmit the Acts, especially the first two.

Moreover, it is known that an epitome circulated that only contained the first two Acts – namely the manuscripts GHZ and B<sup>18</sup>

<sup>15</sup> See H.J.W. Drijvers, 'The Acts of Thomas', in W. Schneemelcher (ed.), *New Testament Apocrypha II* (Cambridge, 1992) 323.

<sup>16</sup> H.J. Klauck, *The Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles. An Introduction* (Waco, 2008) 142.

<sup>17</sup> Myers, *Spirit Epicleses* and L. Roig Lanzillotta, 'A Syriac Original for the Acts of Thomas? The Hypothesis of Syriac Priority Revisited', in I. Ramelli and J. Perkins (eds), *Early Christian and Jewish Narrative. The Role of Religion in Shaping Narrative Forms* (Tübingen, 2015) 105-33.

<sup>18</sup> See I. Muñoz Gallarte and Á. Narro, 'XII. The Abridged Version(s) of the So-Called Family Γ of the *Apocryphal Acts of Thomas*', in T. Nicklas et al. (eds), *The Apostles Peter, Paul, John, Thomas and Philip with their Companions in Late Antiquity* (Leuven, 2020) 254-69.

– along with some summaries of *ATH*.<sup>19</sup> The last difficulty highlighted by the researchers is related to the problematic location of Thomas's prayer, due to the fact that some manuscripts place it during the martyrdom of the saint (U), and others in chapter 167. In addition, the style of the account of the martyrdom differs from manuscript to manuscript.<sup>20</sup>

### 3. *The Edition of Bonnet and the Principal Witnesses*

Bonnet explains in his introduction that his edition was planned with the intention of completing the previous work of Tischendorf and offering the whole plot of *ATH*. To sum up, in addition to the current collocation of some chapters, as well as the addition of some important passages, the improvements include meaningful variants in chapters 1, 2 and 9, when compared with Thilo's edition.<sup>21</sup>

In doing so, the editor claims to have consulted a higher number of manuscripts, but new problems arose. Indeed, the preserved witnesses do not transmit the whole text of *ATH*. Thence, for some Acts Bonnet took into account no less than 17 witnesses, but for others only a few – not only for *HPrl*, but also for sections 147-159.<sup>22</sup> This means the following:<sup>23</sup>

- Only the manuscripts DPUY transmit the third Act, including the stories of the speaking snake, the repentant youth, and the exhortation to shed all materiality.

<sup>19</sup> See, for example, the summary transmitted by the manuscripts Par. Gr. 1554 (XIV CE) 20r-22v and Hierosol. Hagios Sabas 151 (XVI CE) 415v-418r, BHG 1836e.

<sup>20</sup> See Myers, *Spirit Epicleses*, 15-16; Roig Lanzillotta, 'A Syriac Original', 122-23.

<sup>21</sup> For instance, Bonnet, as well as Klijn, follow the Syriac version in placing the long prayer of Thomas after chapter 144, instead of at chapter 167 as in the Greek version; Myers, *Spirit Epicleses*, 7. However, Bonnet keeps Thilo's numbering of each chapter during the first three Acts, but differs in the fifth and sixth acts due to the addition of three chapters in the fourth Act – in any case, Bonnet maintains the numbering between brackets.

<sup>22</sup> This happens not only with the *Hymn of the Pearl*, but also with the surrounding chapters.

<sup>23</sup> Bonnet, *Acta Philippi et Acta Thomae*, XVII-XVIII; the list of collated manuscripts at XVI. See also Myers, *Spirit Epicleses*, 7, n. 19.



- The short fourth Act, which includes the story of the donkey that wanted to be baptized, is transmitted by PUY.
- The fifth Act, regarding Thomas's combat against the demon in love that has possessed a woman, is transmitted by PUVY.

Similarly, if the unequal number of Greek manuscripts posed a problem for Bonnet,<sup>24</sup> the transmission of the work was no less problematic. Due to the high number of witnesses and their differences, the editor tried to collect the various families depending on the transmitted parts of *ATh*, and not to offer a *stemma codicum*. Thus, he established that in the central part of the Acts there should be two families: D, on the one hand, and Π, PRUVY, on the other, with clear similarities between some of them, especially between U and V.<sup>25</sup>

Regarding the most difficult parts of the work, the first and final sections, Bonnet again considers there to be two traditions, Γ and Δ: while the former includes GHMZ as well as B, a clear case of *contaminatio* with Δ, the latter is composed of A and Φ, represented by B, CD, FTX, PUY, Q<sup>26</sup>R and SV. Therefore, in Bonnet's view, there were two archetypes, AΦ, that would be united without distinction, thus presenting numerous problems.<sup>27</sup>

Similarly, two families constitute the last section of the Apocryphal Acts, Ω, which includes KO<sup>28</sup>RUVY and P with Σ, including FLSZ.<sup>29</sup>

Bonnet also discusses the relationship between the traditions transmitted in Greek and Syriac. Here, the German editor explains that even if he was sceptical at the beginning – because (among other reasons) it is difficult to understand why the original languages of the *Apocryphal Acts of Andrew/John* are not under suspicion, as is the

<sup>24</sup> It is also important to note at this point that the manuscript E, which transmitted Acts 1-3 and 5-6, seems to have been lost between the edition of Thilo and that of Bonnet; Myers, *Spirit Epicleses*, 8, n. 21.

<sup>25</sup> Bonnet, *Acta Philippi et Acta Thomae*, XVIII-XIX.

<sup>26</sup> See also Myers, *Spirit Epicleses*, 19 n. 62. The content of the final section mostly coincides with Σ, but differs because it is presented without any context.

<sup>27</sup> Bonnet, *Acta Philippi et Acta Thomae*, XIX.

<sup>28</sup> The Clarkianus 43 (XI CE), whose text consists of the first part of *ATh*, does not, in Bonnet's view, include anything new, and its section on Thomas's martyrdom had already been consulted by Tischendorf.

<sup>29</sup> Bonnet, *Acta Philippi et Acta Thomae*, XIX-XX.

case with an evidently-related work, *ATH*<sup>30</sup> – he acknowledges the reasoning of his contemporary researchers, and quotes Wright, Burkitt, Schroeter, Macke, and Nöldeke, who have convinced him that ‘*librum syriace a principio scriptum, dein in linguam graecam conversum esse*’.<sup>31</sup> However, his doubts remain in two different areas. Regarding the relationship between both families along the genealogical tree, Bonnet notices that the adduced Syrianisms are neither numerous, nor do they appear in the text in a way that is congruent with the copyist having both versions in his hands. Secondly, he wonders which tradition is older, taking into account only the volumes that were still extant in his day. The German editor determines that, only after *ATH* had been written in Greek was it translated into Syriac, except for the last part, which was preserved in P and the family Σ. At an unknown later time, the rest of chapters were translated into Syriac, creating the family ΑΩ.<sup>32</sup>

In addition to a brief description of the codices used for his edition and some sketches regarding tradition, Bonnet gives some information about other volumes he knew of and in some cases consulted, albeit not systematically. These are as follows:<sup>33</sup>

- Parisiaci graeci 1554 (14th cent.), 947 and 1611 (16th cent.). These three volumes transmit sections of the first Acts and had already been edited, both in an unpublished text of Simon and in Migne’s *Patrology*<sup>34</sup>.
- Parisiacus graecus 1156 (15th cent.), which was edited by Tischendorf in his edition.

<sup>30</sup> Bonnet, *Acta Philippi et Acta Thomae*, XXII.

<sup>31</sup> Bonnet, *Acta Philippi et Acta Thomae*, XX-XXII; see also A. Puech, ‘Acta Apostolorum Apocrypha, II.2. Acta Philippi et Acta Thomae; accedunt Acta Barnabae; edidit M. Bonnet. Lipsiae, H. Mendelssohn 1903’, *RÉG* 16-70 (1903) 286.

<sup>32</sup> Bonnet, *Acta Philippi et Acta Thomae*, XXIII-XXIV. Finally, he lists all those witnesses which were not used in his edition, mainly because he considered them to be later works, such as the Ethiopian and Coptic translations of *ATH*.

<sup>33</sup> Bonnet, *Acta Philippi et Acta Thomae*, XXIV-XXV.

<sup>34</sup> Myers, *Spirit Epicleses*, 11 n. 35: ‘(The) manuscript known to Simon, therefore, seems to have been lost, destroyed, or perhaps moved to a different location’.

Others were known by Bonnet, including:

- Codex Monacensis 255, which is a summary of the first Acts, and was analysed by A. Thenn.
- Coislianus 304 from the 14th century, which in Bonnet's view does not add anything new to the first Acts, despite including the incipit telling of the saint's martyrdom.

From the Vatican Library, Bonnet also had access to the following manuscripts:<sup>35</sup>

- Codex Vaticanus graecus 866 (ca. 12th or 13th cent.), which was only used for some notes. On the other hand, Bonnet admits that he was not able to consult manuscript Vat. gr. 1608, contemporary with 866. He had to be satisfied with the description included in the Bollandists' catalogue, which allowed him to deduce that the volume belongs to the family PΣ. The manuscript Vat. gr. 1985 (11th CE) presented the same problems and, in this case, the editor deduced that it was similar to R.
- Ottobonianum 1 (ca. 11th or 12th cent.) coincides substantially with the version transmitted by PQR, even if it includes some variants.

In Oxford, the following two manuscripts from the Bodleian Library presented some issues for the German editor, specifically:<sup>36</sup>

- He could not consult Baroccianus 180 from the 12th cent.
- Laudianus 68, from the 11th cent., had previously been collated in the edition of 1883, and presents common characteristics with the families Γ and Φ.

From the Library of Brussels, Bonnet already knew the codex II 2047 (10-11th cent.), which transmits the first three Acts and the martyrdom of Thomas. Regarding the first section, Bonnet determines that the text belongs to the family with the most witnesses, while the martyrdom should be assimilated to Σ, especially to L.<sup>37</sup>

<sup>35</sup> Bonnet, *Acta Philippi et Acta Thomae*, XXV.

<sup>36</sup> Bonnet, *Acta Philippi et Acta Thomae*, XXV-XXVI.

<sup>37</sup> Bonnet, *Acta Philippi et Acta Thomae*, XXVI. See also, J. Bidez, *Description d'un manuscrit hagiographique grec palimpseste avec des fragments inédits* (Brussels, 1900); J. Van Den Gheyn, *Catalogue des manuscrits de la Bibliothèque Royale de Belgique* (Brussels, 1901) 317.

As for the other quoted testimonies, which he was not able to consult or could do so only with serious difficulties, Bonnet writes of the following:<sup>38</sup>

- Codices Mosquenses 162 (11th cent.) and 290 (16-17th cent.) were known to the editor only through descriptions, which allow him to link them with the  $\Phi$  family.
- Codex A 4 (16th cent.) in the Library of Smyrna had already been collated by Lipsius.
- Hierosolymitani 66 (15th cent.) and 22 (11th cent.), of which neither were consulted, but the information from an existent catalogue and a paleographic description allow him to infer that they transmit the text of the first Acts.
- One more manuscript which was found in the Library of Amphilochius Archimandrit, but only as a paleographic description, since the catalogue that Bonnet consulted was almost destroyed – ‘*inveni pro thesauro carbones*’.

To sum up, it is evident that Max Bonnet completed a solid project, facing some of the difficult problems of his day, such as the high number of copies to collate that were not so easy to consult, and a devious transmission that does not go back to one archetype, but to two. Instead of editing those individual sections, which were likely to preserve traces of the primitive text, Bonnet apparently favoured to offer the whole work as it is attested especially by U and P. However, as we know nowadays, *ATh* was the product of numerous changes, additions, and removals, from practically the moment it was first written.<sup>39</sup>

#### 4. *New Findings*

Despite the number of years that have lapsed from the publication of Bonnet's work to the present day, certain processes in the editing of Greek texts have not changed, as Bovon brilliantly explains in his ‘Editing the *Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles*’ regarding the *Acts of Philip*. The two first stages of finding a text and locating the manuscripts, prior to editing, are as mandatory as they ever were. However,

<sup>38</sup> Bonnet, *Acta Philippi et Acta Thomae*, XXVI-XXVII.

<sup>39</sup> Drijvers, ‘*The Acts of Thomas*’, 338; Roig Lanzillotta, this volume, Ch. 1.

against the dramatically large amount of all kinds of publications – catalogues, manuals, companions, particular articles about different collections, etc. – the digital humanities provide a useful tool for satisfactorily completing these preliminary stages.<sup>40</sup> In the case of *Ath*, publications like that of Sinkewicz, *Manuscript Listings for the Authors of Classical and Late Antiquity* (1990)<sup>41</sup> or Olivier, *Répertoire des bibliothèques et des catalogues de manuscrits grecs de Marcel Richard* (31995),<sup>42</sup> represented an advance in the collection of information from the historical catalogues, as well as providing the most complete bibliography up to that point. However, both works became out-dated from the moment of being printed. On the basis of these publications, and with the same intention, the so-called Greek Index Project was founded at the Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies in Toronto. This project ‘aimed to catalogue all the manuscripts of all Greek authors from Antiquity to the end of Byzantium’.<sup>43</sup> The project was later transferred to the French Institut de Recherche et d’Histoire des Textes of the CNRS, which gives access to the database *Pinakes: Textes et manuscrits grecs*.<sup>44</sup> In 2014 and 2015, *Pinakes* was associated with *BHGms*, the Bollandist Society of Brussels, devoted to compiling all hagiographic manuscripts, and with *Para-TexBib*, which provided the description, analysis and editions of para-texts of biblical manuscripts.

The search for the text we are dealing with in these platforms, which also allow for cross searching, online consultation of historical

<sup>40</sup> For an overview, see P. Degni *et al.* (eds), *Greek Manuscript Cataloguing: Past, Present, and Future* (Turnhout, 2018). Regarding the Syriac sources, see also K.S. Heal, ‘Digital Humanities and the Study of Christian Apocrypha: Resources, Prospects and Problems’, in T. Burke (ed.), *Forbidden Texts on the Western Frontier* (Eugene, OR, 2015) 270-81.

<sup>41</sup> R.E. Sinkewicz, *Manuscript Listings for the Authors of Classical and Late Antiquity. Greek Index Project Series 3* (Toronto, 1990).

<sup>42</sup> J.-M. Olivier, *Répertoire des bibliothèques et des catalogues de manuscrits grecs de Marcel Richard* (Turnhout, 1995<sup>3</sup>), with the recent *Supplément au Répertoire des bibliothèques et des catalogues de manuscrits grecs de Marcel Richard*, 2 vols (Turnhout, 2018).

<sup>43</sup> A. Classen (ed.), *Handbook of Medieval Studies: Terms – Methods – Trends* (Berlin, 2010) 230-31.

<sup>44</sup> See <https://pinakes.irht.cnrs.fr> [last accessed: 24/9/2021]; see Classen, *Handbook of Medieval Studies*, 230-31, 324-25, 328.

libraries' catalogues,<sup>45</sup> the current bibliography,<sup>46</sup> and the reading of digitalized and/or physical manuscripts, provides us with the following results:

**Manuscripts collated by Bonnet  
(lost or relocated in grey)**

Name	Library	Quote in catalogue	Date	Folios	Content (Bonnet's división in cc.)
A*	Bibliothèque nationale de France, Par.	Gr. 881	X	313 <sup>v</sup> -330 <sup>r</sup>	1-29; 161-170
B*	Bibliothèque nationale de France, Par.	Gr. 1468	XI	91 <sup>r</sup> -95 <sup>r</sup>	1-27
C*	Bibliothèque nationale de France, Par.	Gr. 1454	X	99 <sup>r</sup> -107 <sup>r</sup>	1-29
D*	Bibliothèque nationale de France, Par.	Gr. 1176	XII	66 <sup>r</sup> -81 <sup>v</sup>	1-38; 42-61

<sup>45</sup> C. Van de Vorst and H. Delehay, *Catalogus codicum hagiographicorum graecorum Germaniae Belgii Angliae* (Brussels, 1913); A. Ehrhard, *Überlieferung und Bestand der hagiographischen und homiletischen Literatur der griechischen Kirche von den Anfängen bis zum Ende des 16. Jahrhunderts* (Leipzig, 1937-1943); R. Devreesse, *Bibliothèque Catalogue des manuscrits grecs, II: Le Fonds Coislin* (Paris, 1945); K. Clark (ed.), *Checklist of Manuscripts in the Libraries of the Greek and Armenian Patriarchates in Jerusalem microfilmed for the Library of Congress, 1949-1950* (Washington, 1953); F. Halkin, *Bibliotheca hagiographica graeca II* (Brussels, 1957); id., *Manuscrits grecs de Paris. Inventaire hagiographique*. (Brussels, 1968); id., *Catalogue des manuscrits hagiographiques de la Bibliothèque nationale d'Athènes* (Brussels, 1983); A.M. Giorgetti Vichi and S. Mottironi, *Catalogo dei manoscritti della Biblioteca Vallicelliana* (Rome, 1961); V.N. Benešević, *Catalogus codicum mancriptorum graecorum qui in monasterio Sanctae Catharinae in Monte Sina asservantur*, 2 vols (Hildesheim, 1965<sup>2</sup>); G. de Andrés Martínez, *Catálogo de los códices griegos de la Real Biblioteca de El Escorial*, 3 vols. (Madrid, 1965).

<sup>46</sup> J. Henry, 'Acts of Thomas', *E-Clavis: Christian Apocrypha*, [www.nas-scal.com/e-clavis-christian-apocrypha/acts-of-thomas](http://www.nas-scal.com/e-clavis-christian-apocrypha/acts-of-thomas) [last accessed: 24/9/2021]; *Biblioteca Digitale Italiana*, <http://catalogohistorici.bdi.sbn.it/ricerca.php> [last accessed: 24/9/2021]; M. D'Agostino and P. Degni, 'La Perlschrift dopo Hunger: prime considerazioni per una indagine', *Scripta* 7 (2014) 77-93.

Name	Library	Quote in catalogue	Date	Folios	Content (Bonnet's división in cc.)
E	Collated by Thilo but lost in Bonnet's edition. <sup>47</sup>				
F*	Biblioteca Angelica, Rom.	B 2.2 / Gr. 108	XI	32 <sup>r</sup> -43 <sup>r</sup>	1-29; 30; 163; 146-148; 168-170
G*	Real Biblioteca del Escorial, Mad.	Y II 9 / 264	XI	50 <sup>v</sup> -58 <sup>v</sup>	1-29
H*	Real Biblioteca del Escorial, Mad.	Y II 6 / 314	XII	100 <sup>v</sup> -106 <sup>v</sup>	1-29
K*	Biblioteca Apostolica, Vat., Chig. (Chisianum)	R VII 51 / Gr. 42	XI-XII	7 <sup>r</sup> -20 <sup>r</sup>	1-19; 156-171
L*	Bibliothèque nationale de France, Par.	Gr. 764	IX	440 <sup>r</sup> -441 <sup>v</sup>	163-167; 144-148; 168-169
M*	Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Mün.	Cod. graec. 262	IX	106 <sup>r</sup> -109 <sup>v</sup> (palim.)	170-171
O*	Bodleian Library, Ox.	Clarke 43	XII	23 <sup>r</sup> -33 <sup>r</sup>	4-6; 8-29; 159; 161-171
P*	Bibliothèque nationale de France, Par.	Gr. 1510	X	161 <sup>r</sup> -230 <sup>r</sup>	1-171
Q*	Bibliothèque nationale de France, Par.	Gr. 1485	X	40 <sup>r</sup> -46 <sup>v</sup>	1-6a; 27-29; 6b-21; 144-148
R*	Bibliothèque nationale de France, Par.	Gr. 1551	XIV	17 <sup>v</sup> -31 <sup>v</sup> , 38 <sup>r</sup> -42 <sup>v</sup>	1-29; 42-50; 62-66; 157-159; 161-171
S*	Bibliothèque nationale de France, Par.	Gr. 1613	XV	137 <sup>v</sup> -156 <sup>r</sup>	1-27; 144-149; 163-167; 146-148; 168-170
T*	Bibliothèque nationale de France, Par.	Gr. 1540	XI	126 <sup>r</sup> -126 <sup>v</sup> , 1 <sup>r</sup> -10 <sup>r</sup>	1-29
U*	Biblioteca Vallicellana, Rom.	B 35	XI	91 <sup>v</sup> -141 <sup>r</sup>	1-171
V*	Biblioteca Apostolica, Vat.	Gr. 1190	XVI	100 <sup>r</sup> -112 <sup>v</sup>	1-16; 41-81; 149-171

<sup>47</sup> Apparently, the manuscript was lost in the period between Thilo and Bonnet. The latter relied on the notes taken by Thilo. See Bonnet, *Acta Philippi et Acta Thomae*, XVI; Thilo, *Acta S. Thomae Apostoli*, LXX-LXXII; see also the discussion in Myers, *Spirit Epicleses*, 9-10 n. 35.

Name	Library	Quote in catalogue	Date	Folios	Content (Bonnet's división in cc.)
X*	Bibliothèque nationale de France, Par.	Gr. 1173 A	XII	217 <sup>v</sup> -225 <sup>v</sup>	1-29
Y*	Biblioteca Apostolica, Vat.	Gr. 797	X	140 <sup>r</sup> -170 <sup>r</sup>	1-59
Z <sup>48</sup> =Z1*	Rossijskaja Nacional'naja biblioteka, St. Pet.	Φ. 906 (Gr.): 94 (Granstrem 334)	XII	22 <sup>r</sup> -28 <sup>r</sup> ;	1-3; 17-29; 163-167; 146-148; 168-170

\* Available online and/or collated by members of the research team *in situ*.

#### Manuscripts known and/or consulted by Bonnet

Name	Library	Quote in catalogue	Date	Folios	Content (Bonnet's división in cc.)
1*	Bibliothèque nationale de France, Par.	Gr. 1554	XIV	20 <sup>r</sup> -22 <sup>v</sup>	Epitome ( <i>BHG</i> 1836)
2*	Bibliothèque nationale de France, Par.	Gr. 947	XVI	289 <sup>v</sup> -295 <sup>r</sup>	Epitome ( <i>BHG</i> 1836)
3*	Bibliothèque nationale de France, Par.	Gr. 1611	XVI	429 <sup>v</sup> -439 <sup>r</sup>	Epitome ( <i>BHG</i> 1836)
4*	Bibliothèque nationale de France, Par.	Gr. 1156	XV	n. 53	
5*	Bayerische Saatsbibliothek, Mün.	Cod. graec. 255	XVI	78 <sup>v</sup> -82 <sup>v</sup>	Epitome ( <i>BHG</i> 1836)

<sup>48</sup> Ms. Z in Bonnet's edition is problematic. He only quotes the witness as *Petroburguesem Caesarum 94 saec. XII* (Bonnet, *Acta Philippi et Acta Thomae*, XVI), and, later on, offers some brief information regarding his reading: *regis Itolorum et imperatoris Russorum ad me missos (scil. UZ) hic aut descripsi aut cum exemplo Tischendorfiano vel meo contulit*. However, we nowadays know that there are two different mss. that transmit *ATh*, numbers 94 and 213 (Gr.), which we have renamed Z1=Z (Petrob. gr. 94) and Z2=61 (Petrob. gr. 213), below. See Á. Narro and I. Muñoz Gallarte, 'The Acts of Thomas in codex Vat. Gr. 544 (Palimpsest)', *Eikasmós* 32 (2021) 273-82 at 278 n. 14; Muñoz Gallarte and Narro, 'XII. The Abridged Version(s)', 257.



Name	Library	Quote in catalogue	Date	Folios	Content (Bonnet's división in cc.)
6*	Bibliothèque nationale de France, Par.	Cois. 304	XIV	27 <sup>r</sup> -30 <sup>r</sup>	Epitome ( <i>BHG</i> 1836)
7*	Biblioteca Apostolica, Vat.	866	XI-XII	38 <sup>r</sup> -40 <sup>r</sup>	1-25
8*	Biblioteca Apostolica, Vat.	1608	XII-XIII	1 <sup>r</sup> -12 <sup>r</sup>	2-6; 8-33; 155-157; 159-170
9*	Biblioteca Apostolica, Vat.	1985	XI	77 <sup>r</sup> -101 <sup>r</sup>	1-30; 150-170
10*	Biblioteca Apostolica, Vat.	Ottob. gr. 1	XI-XII	18 <sup>v</sup> -26 <sup>r</sup>	1-27
11*	Bodleian Library, Ox.	Barocci 180	XII	41 <sup>v</sup> -49 <sup>v</sup>	1-6; 8-11; 13-20; 22-29
12*	Bodleian Library, Ox.	Laud. Gr. 68	XI	52 <sup>v</sup> -63 <sup>r</sup>	1-29; 290; 163-167; 146; 168-170
13*	Bibliothèque Royale Albert Ier, Bruss.	II.02407 (504)	XI	Fragmenta: ff. 012-23 = ff. 246&247, 244&249, 251&258, 284&289, 300&305, 270&271, 269&272, 299, 283&290, 252&257, 268&273, 301&304 (palim.)	3, 4, 14, 33, 38, 117, 146, 147 Severely damaged
14*	Gosudarstvennyj Istoriceskij Musej, Moscow	Sinod. gr. 162 (Vlad 380)	1023 <sup>49</sup>	50 <sup>v</sup> -57 <sup>r</sup>	1-6; 8-26

<sup>49</sup> Surely 1023 because of the annotation at f. 370: Θεοφάνους / σφλ' ἔτους.

Name	Library	Quote in catalogue	Date	Folios	Content (Bonnet's división in cc.)
15*	Gosudarstvennyj Istoriceskij Musej, Moscow	Sinod. gr. 290	XVI-XVII	n. 14	
16	Evangelical School of Izmir [destroyed in 1922]	A 04	XVII	Damaged and lost in 1922	
17*	Patriarchike bibliotheke, Jer.	Panaghios Taphos 66	XV	90 <sup>v</sup> -106 <sup>r</sup>	1-29
18 <sup>50</sup>	Patriarchike bibliotheke, Jer.	Saba 22	XI	Lost or relocated	

## New witnesses

Name	Library	Quote in catalogue	Date	Folios	Content (Bonnet's división in cc.)
20*	Mone tou Hagiou Ioannou tou Theologou Hypselou, Antissa	38	1591	279 <sup>v</sup> -288 <sup>r</sup>	1-2; 5-6; 8-27
21*	Mone tou Hagiou Ioannou tou Theologou Hypselou, Antissa	57	1604	25 <sup>r</sup> -28 <sup>r</sup>	1-29
22*	National Library of Greece, Ath.	Fonds principal 284	1599	499 <sup>v</sup> -516 <sup>v</sup>	1-6; 8-26
23*	National Library of Greece, Ath.	Fonds principal 346	1497-1498	71 <sup>r</sup> -76 <sup>r</sup>	1-14; 16-27
24	National Library of Greece, Ath.	Fonds principal 1027	XII	53 <sup>r</sup> -58 <sup>v</sup>	Severely damaged
25*	National Library of Greece, Ath.	Fonds principal 2504	XII	14 <sup>r</sup> -42 <sup>r</sup>	1-35; 37-50; 62-107; 115-122; 134-142; 150-151; 159-171
26	Mone Kosinises, Drama	368	XII		
27*	Trinity College, Dub.	0185 (E.3.35)	XI	45 <sup>r</sup> -49 <sup>v</sup>	160-167; 145-148; 168-170

<sup>50</sup> Bonnet mentions a manuscript as 19 / Archimandrita Amfilochija, Moscow / XI-XII (1022), but there is no further information about it, and if it existed, it is now lost or misplaced.

Name	Library	Quote in catalogue	Date	Folios	Content (Bonnet's división in cc.)
28	Bibliotheke tes Metropoleos, Gjirokaštër, Albania	5	XVII	30 <sup>r</sup> -36 <sup>r</sup>	Surely lost
29*	Patriarchike bibliotheke, Jer.	Saba 373	XVI	104 <sup>r</sup> -116 <sup>v</sup>	1-29
30	Uniwersytet Jagiellonski, Biblioteka Jagiellonska Berlin, Krakow	Graec. 1 <sup>o</sup> .43.I (279)	XI-XII	29 <sup>v</sup> -33 <sup>v</sup>	Severely damaged
31*	British Library, Lon.	Add. 10014	XVI	143 <sup>r</sup> -148 <sup>v</sup>	3-6; 8-20
32*	British Library, Lon.	Add. 34554	XVI	26 <sup>v</sup> -43 <sup>r</sup>	Byzantine paraphrase ( <i>BHG</i> 1831d)
33	Mone Metamorphoseos, Meteora	81	XV-XVI	92 <sup>r</sup> -104 <sup>r</sup>	
34*	Mone Metamorphoseos, Meteora	382	XV	88 <sup>r</sup> -93 <sup>v</sup>	1-14; 16-28
35*	Biblioteca dell'Istituto 'A. Reres', Mezzojuso	2 (Mioni 95)	XIV	70 <sup>v</sup> -76 <sup>r</sup>	1-6; 8-27
36*	Library of the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor	Special Collections Research Center 36	XVI	29 <sup>r</sup> -36 <sup>r</sup>	1-6; 8-14; 16-30
37*	Biblioteca Ambrosiana, Milano	A 063 inf. (Martini-Bassi 798)	XII	221 <sup>r</sup> -240 <sup>v</sup>	1-6; 8-29; 163-167; 146-148; 168-170
38*	Gosudarstvennyj Istoriceskij Musej, Moscow	Sinod. gr. 303 (Vlad. 395)	XVI-XVII	90 <sup>r</sup> -103 <sup>v</sup>	1-27; 82-88; 95-105; 117-143; 149-171
39*	Bibliotheke tou Protatou (Karues), Mount Athos	002 (Lambros 2)	XI	67 <sup>r</sup> -71 <sup>r</sup>	1-6; 8-26
40*	Mone Esphigmenou, Mount Athos	044 (Lambros 2057)	XII-XIII	22 <sup>v</sup> -30 <sup>r</sup>	1-27; 29
41*	Mone Iberon, Mount Athos	0275 (Lambros 4395)	XII	88 <sup>r</sup> -94 <sup>v</sup>	1-6; 8-26
42*	Mone Iberon, Mount Athos	0476 (Lambros 4596)	XIV	81 <sup>r</sup> -86 <sup>v</sup>	11-25

Name	Library	Quote in catalogue	Date	Folios	Content (Bonnet's división in cc.)
43*	Mone Karakallou, Mount Athos	008 (Lambros 1521), Mon. 048	X-XI	40 <sup>v</sup> -49 <sup>r</sup>	1-29
44*	Mone Koutloumousiou, Mount Athos	056 (Lambros 3125)	XII	64 <sup>v</sup> -94 <sup>v</sup>	1-27; 82-88; 95-105; 117-143; 149-171
45*	Mone Koutloumousiou, Mount Athos	684 (Polites 110)	XIV	9 <sup>v</sup> -15 <sup>v</sup>	Epitome ( <i>BHG</i> 1855)
46*	Mone Megistes Lavras, Mount Athos	Δ 050 (Eustratiades 426)	1040	122 <sup>r</sup> -135 <sup>v</sup>	1-29; 289; 161-170
47*	Mone Megistes Lavras, Mount Athos	H 206 (Eustratiades 861)	XVI	62 <sup>r</sup> -66 <sup>r</sup>	1-2; 5-6; 8-27
48*	Mone Pantokratoros, Mount Athos	040 (Lambros 1074)	XI (2/2)	59 <sup>r</sup> -70 <sup>r</sup>	1-29
49	Mone Philotheou, Mount Athos	009 (Lambros 1772)	XI	267 <sup>v</sup> -268 <sup>v</sup> , 272 <sup>v</sup>	1-7
50*	St. Catherine's Monastery, Mount Sinai	Gr. 497	X-XI	115 <sup>v</sup> -129 <sup>r</sup>	1-29; 289; 161-170
51*	Naroden Muzej, Ohrid	004 (Mosin 76)	X	217 <sup>r</sup> -269 <sup>r</sup>	1-6; 8-29; 138-171; 30-50
52*	Bodleian Library, Ox.	Holkham gr. 027	XV	283 <sup>v</sup> -291 <sup>v</sup>	1-14; 16-29
53*	Bibliothèque nationale de France, Par.	Gr. 1556	XV	138 <sup>r</sup> -141 <sup>v</sup>	1-6; 8-11; 13-27; 163, 166-168
54*	Bibliothèque nationale de France, Par.	Coisl. 121	1342	9 <sup>r</sup> -10 <sup>v</sup>	9-14; 16-29
55*	C'rkovno-istoriceski i archiven Institut, Sofia	805	1345	3 <sup>r</sup> -8 <sup>v</sup>	1-6; 8-11; 13-27; 163-168
56*	Biblioteca Apostolica, Vat.	Gr. 544	XI	45 <sup>r</sup> -143 <sup>r</sup>	1-37
57	Biblioteca Apostolica, Vat.	Gr. 1238	XI	Lost or relocated	
58*	Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, Venice	Gr. VII. 039 (coll. 1386)	1587-1588	315 <sup>r</sup> -326 <sup>v</sup>	1-29; 163; 166-168

Name	Library	Quote in catalogue	Date	Folios	Content (Bonnet's división in cc.)
59*	Brescia Biblioteca Queriniana	A.III.03	XVI	344 <sup>r</sup> -355 <sup>r</sup>	1-29
60*	Patriarchikê Bibliothêkê, Istambul	Hagia Trias 102	X	281 <sup>r-v</sup> (palim.)	56-58
61* =Z2	Rossijskaja Nacional'naja biblioteka, St. Pet.	Φ. 213 (Granstrem 283)	XII	121 <sup>r</sup> -130 <sup>v</sup>	1-3; 17-29
62*	Hellenic Parliament Library, Ath.	HPL 45 (GA n. 2049)	XVI	153 <sup>r</sup> -171 <sup>v</sup>	1-29
63*	Manchester John Rylands University Library	Gr. 24	XVII	12 <sup>v</sup> -27 <sup>r</sup>	Byzantine paraphrase

### 5. Conclusions

It is time to draw some conclusions. It is accepted that in this changing world these pages carry with them the risk of becoming completely outdated in the very moment of being published. The possibility of new findings that could tear apart what we know about *ATH* are high. However, 120 years since the valuable edition of Bonnet is too long a time, and the data collected with the new telematics, catalogues, and commentaries is overwhelming: from 21 manuscripts that Bonnet was able to collate, this first revision gives us more than 80, some of them older than the collated 21 or contemporary to them, which justifies a reconsideration of Bonnet's work. It is now necessary to take a fresh look at all the materials, even those sources which Bonnet barely consulted, in order to then check the data of the catalogues. In contrast to Bonnet's proposal to give the whole plot of the text, we now know that not only *ATH*, but all of the *Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles* were built and rebuilt along different stages of their timelines, so it is essential to recompose section by section, recognising which parts are primitive, which were added later, and which were corrupted under the influence of diverse prevailing doctrines. Only then will we be in a position to make a reliable edition that will eventually allow us to attend to the translation and commentary of our Apocryphon.

### III. Codex Vallicellianus B 35: An Assessment of the Only Extant Greek Manuscript of *Acta Thomae* Including the ‘Hymn of the Pearl’

LAUTARO ROIG LANZILLOTTA

#### 1. *Introduction*

Codex Vallicellianus B 35 (hereafter Vallicell. B 35) is a very special manuscript. The three-page “Elenco dei Lettori,” alone, is indicative of the interest aroused by this codex over the last century.<sup>1</sup> This document lists forty-two persons who, beginning from 1895, have studied the manuscript and includes the names of renowned scholars, such as A. Ehrhard, H. van Thiel, R. Carter, J. Leroy, J. Ferreira, D.G. Harlfinger, J. Duffy, and F. Bovon. One reason for this heightened interest is that Vallicell. B 35 is the only known extant Greek manuscript containing a version of the Greek *Apocryphal Acts of Thomas* (*ATH*) including the renowned ‘Hymn of the Pearl’. The centrality of the Hymn in the work of R. Reitzenstein, and the separate, erudite<sup>2</sup> edition of the ‘Hymn of the Pearl’ by P.H. Poirier testify to

<sup>1</sup> The full title of the document is ‘Elenco dei Lettori che hanno studiato il seguente Manoscritto’.

<sup>2</sup> See E. Preuschen, *Zwei gnostische Hymnen: mit Text und Übersetzung* (Gießen, 1904); R. Reitzenstein, ‘Zwei hellenistische Hymnen’, *ARW* 8 167-90, 171-78. On the Egyptian origin of the Hymn, see id., *Hellenistische Wundererzählungen* (Leipzig, 1906) 103-23; id., *Historia Monachorum und Historia Lausiaca* (Göttingen, 1916) 33-50; id., *Erlösungsmysterium: Religionsgeschichtliche Untersuchungen* (Bonn, 1921) 70-74; idem, ‘Iranischer Erlösungsglaube’, *ZNW* 20 (1921) 1-23; *Die Göttin Psyche*. SB der Heidelberger Akademie der Wissenschaften, Phil.-hist. Klasse 10. Abhandl. (1917) 16-18; id., ‘Gedanken zur Entwicklung des Erlöserglaubens’, *HZ* 126 (1922) 1-57; id., ‘Ein Gegenstück zu dem Seelenhymnus der Thomasakten’, *ZNW*

the extraordinary interest in this work in the period between the last quarter of the nineteenth century and the last of the twentieth century.<sup>3</sup>

Beginning with the first scholarly publications on the ‘Hymn of the Pearl’, there has been a prevailing consensus that this work does not belong to the primitive text of the *ATH*.<sup>4</sup> In general, scholars point to differences in tone, style, and character between the Hymn and the rest of the *ATH*. However, in my view, these differences are due to the fact that the *ATH*—excluding the ‘Hymn of the Pearl’ (Vallicell. B 35, ff. 124r–125v) and perhaps also the ‘Hymn of the Bride’ (also included in Vallicell. B 35, ff. 93r–94r but absent in numerous manuscripts of the *Acts*<sup>5</sup>)—have been extensively re-worked, abridged, and rewritten to fit the later Christian contexts in which they circulated.<sup>6</sup> The resulting sharp contrasts between the tone and character of both hymns and the rest of the (revised) *ATH* convinced scholars that they could never have belonged to the same primitive text. However, these differences can be attributed to varying levels of editorial intervention, being more extensive in the *Acts* than in the Hymns.<sup>7</sup>

21 (1922) 35-37; id., ‘Hellenistische literarische Texte’, in E. Lehmann and H. Haas (eds), *Textbuch zur Religionsgeschichte* (Leipzig, 1922) 2:218-22; id., ‘Vorchristliche Erlösungslehren’, *Kyrkohistorisk Årsskrift* (1922) 94-128. On Reitzenstein’s analysis, see P.H. Poirier, *L’Hymne de la Perle des Actes de Thomas: Introduction, Texte, Traduction, Commentaire* (Louvain-la-Neuve, 1981; Turnhout, 2021<sup>2</sup>) 83-104.

<sup>3</sup> Poirier, *L’Hymne de la Perle*.

<sup>4</sup> This view was first propounded by Th. Nöldeke, ‘Rev. of Apocr. Acts Wright’, *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* 15 (1871) 670-79. While concurring with Wright that the Syriac version of the Acts of Thomas was a translation of the original Greek text, Nöldeke posited that the Hymn of the Pearl was a Syriac original composition that did not belong to the primitive text of *ATH*.

<sup>5</sup> See A.F. Klijn, *The Acts of Thomas. Introduction, Text, Commentary* (Leiden, 1962) 4 for an overview of the manuscripts in which the ‘Hymn of the Bride’ is included and those in which it is excluded.

<sup>6</sup> See Roig Lanzillotta, this volume, Ch. I.

<sup>7</sup> On the issue and possible reasons thereof, see Roig Lanzillotta ‘A Syriac Original for the Acts of Thomas? The Theory of the Syriac Priority Revisited, Evaluated and Rejected’, in I. Ramelli and J. Perkins (eds), *Early Christian and Jewish Narrative: The Role of Religion in Shaping Narrative Forms* (Tübingen, 2014) 105-33 at 107.

My autopsy of the manuscript housed at the Vallicellian library in Rome was originally aimed at gathering codicological or paleographical evidence to support my conviction that the ‘Hymn of the Pearl’ does, in fact, belong to the primitive text. Even though I was unable to find any conclusive evidence in the manuscript regarding this issue, I made other discoveries that could aid in the reconstruction of the history of the manuscript itself, enabling us to trace the origin of the copies included in it, notably the *ATh*.

## 2. *A General Description and History of Vallicellianus B 35*

Vallicell. B 35, or Vallicell. gr. 11 according to the new numbering introduced in Martini’s catalogue, is a Greek parchment manuscript of medium size and plain appearance.<sup>8</sup> The codex is part of the legacy of the Portuguese humanist, Achille Staius (Aquiles Estaço: 1524–1581) that constituted the original core of the Vallicellian library.<sup>9</sup> Martini hesitatingly noted that Vallicell. B 35 could include scholia handwritten by Staius. This particular point has been confirmed in recent studies on the Portuguese humanist.<sup>10</sup> At the Vallicellian library I also explored Codex Vallicell. P 186, which contains the *Statianae bibliothecae Index* developed by Padri Filippini in the hopes of identifying Vallicell. B 35 among the manuscripts and books that Staius left to Filippo Neri (1515–1595), founder of the Congregation of the Oratory. However, the overly general and brief description of the volumes made this task impossible.

Thanks to the discovery of important codicological evidence, some plausible details in the manuscript’s history can be confirmed. The first set of details concerns the cover page and indexes of the codex occupying (paper) folios II–V. The Vallicell. B 35 includes two

<sup>8</sup> E. Martini, *Catalogo di manoscritti greci esistenti nelle biblioteche italiane*, 2 vols (Rome, 1967 [1893-1902]) 17-21.

<sup>9</sup> E. Pinto, *La biblioteca Vallicelliana in Roma* (Rome, 1932) 12, mentions that Staius’ testament could be considered a foundational document of the Biblioteca Vallicelliana. See also G. Finochiaro, *La Vallicelliana secreta e pubblica. Fabiano Giustiniani e l’origine di una biblioteca ‘universale’* (Rome, 2011) 138.

<sup>10</sup> M.T. Rosa and P. Formica, ‘Contributo per una ricostruzione della biblioteca manoscritta di Achille Stazio’, *Accademie e biblioteche d’Italia* 55 (1987) n. 2, 5-16 at 15.



indexes composed during different periods. In all likelihood, the oldest of these indexes on page V dates to the beginning of the seventeenth century when the librarian, Fabiano Giustiniani (1605–1617), developed the first systematic index, thereby introducing some order into the Vallicellian Library collection.<sup>11</sup> Vallicell. P 185 includes Giustiniani's *Indices duo alphabetici*. A comparison of the handwriting of this index and that of the oldest index in Vallicell. B 35 shows that the latter was compiled by the librarian, thus confirming the timing of the composition. By contrast, the first index of the volume on folios IIIr and IIIv and the cover page with the title *Opuscula et Vitae Sanctorum* on folio II probably date to the eighteenth century, when the librarian Vincenzo Vettori (1740–1749) completed a general inventory of the manuscripts and codices of the Vallicellian Library.<sup>12</sup> It is possible that the yellowish leather binding originates in the middle of the eighteenth century.

The red stamp from the R. Società Romana di Storia Patria on p. II, with its relatively low number 104, shows that B 35 was one of the first manuscripts to be classified during the tenure of the librarian Carlo Moroni, following the transfer of ownership of the Vallicelliana collection to the Italian state in 1883. Some years later in 1887 or 1888, probably under the auspices of the librarian, Enrico Celani (1888–1892), a restoration seems to have taken place. However, the most recent restoration occurred in 1962, as indicated by a penciled note found on the inside of the back cover. With the generous help of the current librarian, Ms. Livia Marcelli, I attempted to retrieve the “scheda d'intervento,” which describes the activities carried out during the restoration. Unfortunately, this was not possible, as the Vallicellian Library only began to keep records of such interventions starting from 1970. However, during a consultation at the Istituto Centrale di Pathologia del libro, I learned that the 1962 intervention entailed a disinfecting treatment of 17 parchment and paper codices. It is therefore likely that the numerous restorations conducted in the external

<sup>11</sup> Finocchiaro, *La Vallicelliana secreta e pubblica*, 31. According to Pinto, *La biblioteca Vallicelliana in Roma*, 12-18, the exact dates of Fabiano Giustiniani's service to the Vallicelliana are May 3, 1605 to April 1, 1617. A comparison of the handwriting in the second index and that in Giustiniani's index of manuscripts and books in Vallicell. P 185 shows that this index was created by the librarian.

<sup>12</sup> Pinto, *La biblioteca Vallicelliana in Roma*, 99-100.

areas and lower edges of some folios (e.g., ff. 95, 97, 150, and 165) and the strengthening of the inner areas of some quires (e.g., quires 3 and 20) occurred during the eighteenth or nineteenth century.

### 3. *Codicological Description*

Valllicell. B 35 is a medium-sized Greek parchment codex measuring 29 cm × 24.5 cm. As its cover page and its vague title, *Opuscula et Vitae Sanctorum*, indicate, this codex is broad in scope and encompasses works of a diverse nature, including homiletical writings and the lives and martyria of various saints. This is due to the fact that our manuscript is not a *menologium*, or calendar of the Greek Orthodox Church containing biographies of the saints. Albert Ehrhard also categorizes this manuscript (at least the older part) as a non-menological collection.<sup>13</sup> Given that manuscripts of this sort were normally intended for personal use,<sup>14</sup> they were generally smaller in size and had a simple form.<sup>15</sup>

Valllicell. B 35 is a mixed or combined manuscript comprising two distinct parts, the second of which is a palimpsest. The original beginning and end of the manuscript are mutilated. Valllicell. B 35 was restored on several occasions and its edges have been cut, probably more than once. Consequently, quire signatures, present on the first and last folios, are sometimes invisible or only partially visible.

#### 3.1. *External Description*

Valllicell. B 35 has a simple appearance. Except for the signature on the spine of the book, its modest yellowish leather bears no

<sup>13</sup> *Pace* the website of the Bib. Vallicelliana, which calls Valllicell. B 35 a ‘menologium’: [www.internetculturale.it/it/16/search/detail?instance=&case=&id=oai%3Awww.internetculturale.sbn.it%2FTeca%3A20%3ANT0000%3ARM0281\\_Vall\\_B\\_35&qt=-](http://www.internetculturale.it/it/16/search/detail?instance=&case=&id=oai%3Awww.internetculturale.sbn.it%2FTeca%3A20%3ANT0000%3ARM0281_Vall_B_35&qt=-)

<sup>14</sup> A. Ehrhard, *Überlieferung und Bestand der hagiographischen und homiletischen Literatur der griechischen Kirche*, III Band, 2 Hälfte (Leipzig, 1952) 725: ‘Unter diesen Sammlungen verstehe ich jene hagiographischen und homiletischen Hss, deren Texte nicht nach Maßgabe des Heiligenkalenders bzw. des beweglichen Kirchenjahres geordnet sind, sondern ohne ersichtliches Ordnungsprinzip in bunter Mischung aufeinander folgen’.

<sup>15</sup> Ehrhard, *Überlieferung und Bestand*, 726; Valllicell. B 35 is described on pages 730 and 731.

decorations or motifs. Apart from the folio belonging to the binding and five paper folios featured at the beginning (see above), which include the previously mentioned title and indexes of the volume, and a final folio at the end, the current version comprises 191 parchment folios measuring 29 cm × 24.5 cm. However, the (most recent) numeration erroneously lists the last folio as number 189 (see the section on numeration below). The parchment is generally of medium quality, with some parchments being of both higher and lower quality. The current version comprises 24 quires, in general quaternions, except for quires 1 (ternion), 21 (quinion),<sup>16</sup> and 23 (quinion). In a few cases, such as quires 3, 20, and 24, the last folios are missing in the quaternions, which consequently comprise seven folios.

*A Combined Manuscript.* The manuscript consists of two clearly differentiated parts: the different types of parchment as well as variations in structure, number of columns (one or two), and ink clearly point to a combined manuscript. The first, older section, written in two columns of 40 lines and probably dating to the late tenth or early eleventh century (see below), runs from ff. 1 to 155. The second and more recent section, written in one column and probably dating to the twelfth or thirteenth centuries, runs from ff. 156 to 189.

*Older part of the manuscript.* The first section of Vallicell. B 35, as it exists now, comprises twenty quires. Numerous stains left by dirt and humidity can be seen on f. 155v, providing clear evidence that the older part of the manuscript circulated separately for a long period of time and that its last missing quire was lost in an early stage of the manuscript's history. The more recent part was probably added to the manuscript during the first restoration of the codex, possibly in the thirteenth century.

Emidio Martini roughly dates this older part of the manuscript to the eleventh century.<sup>17</sup> However, Reinhold Merkelbach and Helmut van Thiel, who include the "Hymn of the Pearl" in their *Griechisches Leseheft*,<sup>18</sup> date it more precisely to the beginning of the eleventh

<sup>16</sup> Martini, *Catalogo*, 17 omits any reference to this quinion, considering quire 21 as a quaternion.

<sup>17</sup> Martini, *Catalogo*, 17.

<sup>18</sup> R. Merkelbach and H. van Thiel, *Griechisches Leseheft zur Einführung in Paläographie und Textkritik* (Göttingen, 1965) 69-72 (text 22).

century. Their dating is plausible, as my study of the writing of Vallicell. B 35 in comparison with dated examples consistently reveals close parallels to manuscripts dated to the end of the tenth century.<sup>19</sup> This conclusion seems to be confirmed by the irregular use of red ink for titles and initial capitals. Even if the use of special red ink was avoided in the first quires, with uppercase letters written using the same ink as for the rest of the writing (e.g., in ff. 11, 12v, and 14v), the use of red ink gradually increases as the manuscript progresses.<sup>20</sup>

*The More Recent Part of the Manuscript.* The second part of Vallicell. B 35 runs from ff. 156 to 189 and consists of four quires. This part is a palimpsest dated by Martini to the twelfth or thirteenth century.<sup>21</sup> The thinner and whiter parchment is of better quality than that in the older part. However, its uneven quality indicates that its folios are derived from different manuscripts. This conclusion is supported by evident differences in the lower textual layer of the palimpsest. Whereas the external bifolio of quire 21 (a quinion) in ff. 156rv and 165rv shows a double column of text written in “Perlschrift” of rather small size,<sup>22</sup> the rest of the quire and those that follow depict single columns of text in what is apparently the “bouletée” script from a later period. Martini dates the (oldest?) underlying text to the tenth century, but, in my view, its style suggests a later date, as indicated by the reintroduction of capital letters in the minuscule writing.<sup>23</sup> The reddish ink in the upper writing is darker than that in the previous section; however, the red ink of the titles is brighter.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. K. Lake and S. Lake, *Dated Greek Minuscule Manuscripts to the year 1200* (Boston 1934-39), Bibl. Marc. Cod. 454 (AD 968); Rome Bib. Vat., codex Urb. Gr. 20 (AD 992) and Moscow, Hist. Museum cod. VI 185 (313) (AD 992).

<sup>20</sup> After their first appearance in f. 44v, larger capital letters written in red ink are used regularly in the rest of the manuscript; see, for example, ff. 51, 60, 68, 78, 86v, 92v, and 96v.

<sup>21</sup> According to Martini, *Catalogo*, 17, this part of the manuscript dates to the thirteenth century. However, Ehrhard 210-211 dates it more precisely to between the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.

<sup>22</sup> H. Hunger, ‘Die Perlschrift, eine Stilrichtung der griechischen Buchschrift des 11. Jahrhunderts’, in id., *Studien zur griechischen Paläographie* (Vienna, 1954) 22-32.

<sup>23</sup> J. Irigoin, ‘Une écriture du Xe siècle La minuscule bouletée’, in id. (ed.), *La Paléographie grecque et byzantine* (Paris, 1977) 191-199.

### 3.2. *Internal Description*

*Material and Ruling.* In the older part of the manuscript (ff. 1–155v) the parchment is generally thick, but its quality is inconsistent. The thickness changes from quire to quire, even if the light yellowish color remains more or less uniform. The sizes of the folios are also irregular, generally measuring 29 cm × 24.5 cm, with the first and last quires being slightly smaller because of the cutting of the manuscript. In the more recent part of the codex, the quality of the parchment is better, but it is also irregular, as in the older part. The thickness changes from folio to folio, with the parchment in ff. 156rv and 165rv being especially thick. As previously discussed, this is evidence of the manifold provenances of the parchment leaves, which would seem to be confirmed by the different scripts of the underlying texts of the palimpsest.

In general, the ruling in the manuscript is clearly visible. In some places, perforation lines are also observable. The current manuscript includes two different types of ruling that correspond respectively to the two parts of the codex. The first type (A) applies to ff. 1–155v; the second type (B) extends from ff. 156 to 189.

*Ruling type (A).* This section presents two columns. The ruling comprises four vertical lines: two external and two internal (column) margin lines. External margin lines are double, whereas lines in the internal (column) margins are single. All four vertical lines protrude beyond the superior and inferior margin lines. There are sixteen horizontal lines in total; two external lines, which are not strictly linked to the writing, are positioned above (simple) and below (double), protruding beyond both (double) vertical lines of the external margins. The remaining fourteen lines are related to the writing, including superior and inferior margins. These horizontal lines always protrude beyond the vertical lines of the internal margins on the left side, but they never extend beyond the right margin of the folio. Horizontal lines also regularly cross the inter-column space, and they sometimes even protrude beyond the internal line of the double vertical external margins.

In Leroy's system, this type of ruling is categorized as one of the "types de réglure spéciaux" since of the three lines of writing only one has a ruling line.<sup>24</sup> Leroy classified this special ruling type as

<sup>24</sup> J. Leroy, *Les types de réglure des manuscrits grecs* (Paris, 1976) 54.

“X2,” which is then followed by the number of the general ruling pattern, namely 23C2d (see fig. 1). Sautel only exclusively includes one example of this type of ruling, namely that in Vallicell. B 35.<sup>25</sup>

*Ruling type (B).* There is just one column of text in this section. The ruling includes three vertical lines that reach the external sides of the folio: two double vertical lines function as the text margin, with a third simple line at the right margin. There are thirty-one horizontal lines in total. Whereas the two external ones, above and below, protrude beyond the vertical lines, this is not the case for the remaining twenty-nine horizontal lines that are related to the writing. These lines protrude only beyond the left double vertical line. Sautel categorizes this type of ruling as “types de réglure normaux,” which correspond to Leroy’s 31c1b (see fig. 1).

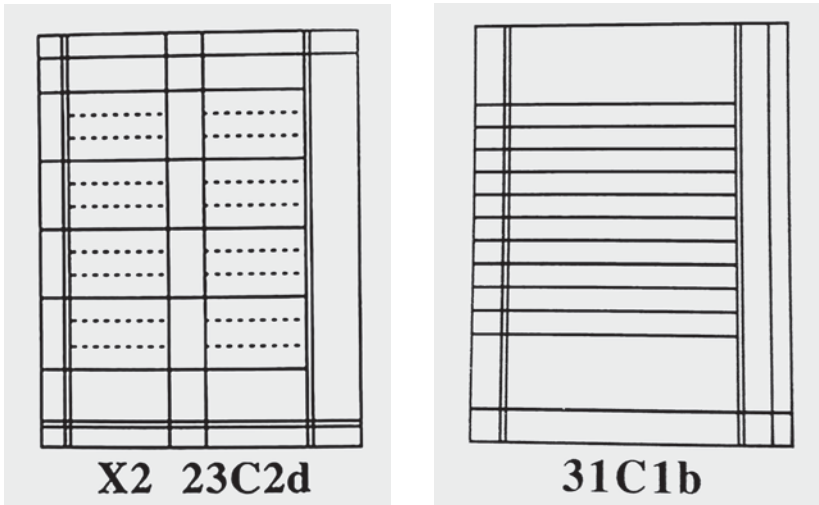


Figure 1. Ruling types in older and more recent parts of the manuscript

<sup>25</sup> J.H. Sautel, *Répertoire de réglures dans les manuscrits grecs sur parchemin* (Turnhout, 1995) 27 describes this special type of ruling as follows: ‘À indice X (p. 258-265): Ce sont les types où dans une page se trouve l’alternance d’une ligne écrite avec rectrice et d’une ligne écrite sans rectrice... Si l’alternance se produit régulièrement entre une ligne avec directrice et deux, trois ou quatre lignes écrites sans rectrice, on notera ce fait par les indices X2, X3, X4’.

*Various Numerations.* The manuscript includes several types of numeration:

1. There is a more recent Arabic numeration running from 1 to 189, with two versions evident in Vallicell. B 35: an older one in dark, reddish ink and a more recent penciled one.
2. There is an older quire signature with Greek numerals.
3. The sequence of the texts within the manuscript are also numbered with Greek numerals preceded by the abbreviation for  $\lambda\acute{o}\gamma(\omicron\varsigma)$ .
4. The texts occasionally include references to their place in the synaxarion. According to Martini, a librarian may have added these references,<sup>26</sup> but this interpretation is open to debate, given differences in the styles and handwriting evident in the references.

A comparative study of the four different types of numeration leads to interesting conclusions regarding the structure of the manuscript, its primitive character, and its later transformation.

- A. Folio numeration with Arabic numbers. Two different versions of Arabic numbering can be distinguished: an older one written in dark, reddish ink and a more recent penciled one, likely to date to one of the last restorations of the manuscript. This Arabic numeration is located on the superior right angle and runs from 1 to 189. As previously mentioned, although the last folio of the codex displays the number 189, the manuscript actually comprises 191 pages, since the numbers 108 and 166 are used twice,<sup>27</sup> and are numbered 108, 108a, and 166, while 166a is in penciled Arabic numeration. Irrespective of their states of conservation, all of the folios have visible numbers.

However, the Arabic numeration in the current version of the text only accounts for the length of the existing manuscript. From the presence of other types of numeration in the manuscript, we can infer that the older section of the codex was originally much longer than the current version.

- B. Older quire signature. An older quire signature sheds light on several internal lacunae in the manuscript. In general, quires were signed with Greek numerals along the superior right angle of the first folio and on the lower right angle of the last folio of each

<sup>26</sup> Martini, *Catalogo*, 17.

<sup>27</sup> Martini, *Catalogo*, 17.

quire. Many of these signatures have been lost or are only partially visible, possibly because of (subsequent) cutting of the manuscript. Nevertheless, in most cases, one or both signatures are visible, enabling us to confirm whether or not there is continuity between the quires.

The present-day manuscript comprises 24 quires, numbered with Greek numerals from β to λγ. Given that the older and more recent part of the manuscript seamlessly follow one another, it appears that the quire numeration was retained by adapting the more recent part when these two parts were combined. It appears from these signatures that a total of nine quires are missing, namely α, δ, ε, θ, ιγ, ιδ, ιζ, ιζ, and ιη. Assuming that the missing quires are all quaternions, as evidenced by the basic pattern of the older part of the manuscript, it can be confirmed that seventy-two folios are missing. To these should be added five more folios that are missing from current incomplete quires (two folios missing from quire 1, one folio missing from quire 3, one folio missing from quire 20, and one folio missing from quire 24). Consequently, a total of at least 77 folios are missing. However, given that the last text of John Chrysostomos is incomplete, we cannot rule out the possibility of another missing quire at the end of the older part of the manuscript, which might have completed Chrysostomos' *De diabolo tentatore* (PG 49, 263–76). In fact, the text in Vallicell. B 35 stops at PG 270, line 4, which means that six columns of Migne's text or 239 lines of text are still needed to reach the end of Chrysostomos' text, provided that both texts are similar. Now, every half folio (= one page) of Vallicell. B 35 approximates to 34 lines of Migne's text and every folio to 68 lines. This means that three and a half folios or perhaps four folios are needed to complete the text. This reasoning implies that the older section of Vallicell. B 35, which currently comprises 155 folios, originally comprised at least 232 or, possibly, 236 folios.

- C. Sequence of writings included in the manuscript. The third numeration, which also features Greek numerals and is always preceded by the term λόγ(ος), runs from α to κε, indicating the original sequence of writings within the current manuscript. Differences in handwriting and ink used in the numeration of both parts of the manuscript clearly indicate that the current running numeration from α to κε is not primitive. Even if the older section



runs from  $\alpha$  to  $\iota\zeta$  (16), the older part does not include sixteen texts, given that numbers  $\alpha$  to  $\gamma$  are missing due to various *lacunae*. The first (partially visible) number is  $\lambda\delta\gamma(\omicron\zeta)$   $\delta$  on f. 44v. This means that the *Vita Basilii Magni*, written by Amphilochius (PG 161A–207C), was the second text to appear in the manuscript and not the first as is the case in the present-day manuscript. Furthermore, the Greek numerals  $\zeta$  and  $\theta$  are also missing because of the loss of folios.

When the more recent part of the manuscript was added (in the twelfth or thirteenth century), the compiler retained the older numeration of the texts in order to present it as a coherent whole. Thus, starting from f. 156, the numeration runs from  $\iota\zeta$  (17) to  $\kappa\epsilon$  (25).

- D. Place of the texts in the *synaxarium* or Eastern liturgical calendar. This fourth numeration is more irregular than the previous three examples, partly because of the loss of folios or fascicles in the manuscript and partly because of the nature of the texts, which are not always liturgical in character. It is normally placed on top of the folios in which a given text commences and indicates their place in the *menologium*.

The older part of the manuscript includes a total of five references to the place of a given text in the calendar.

These references are as follows:

1. F. 44v,  $\mu\eta(\nu\iota)$   $\nu\omicron\epsilon(\mu\beta)\rho(\iota\omega)$   $\text{I}\Delta$ , 14 November, which corresponds to the Feast of St Philip in the Eastern calendar.
2. F. 51r,  $\mu\eta(\nu\iota)$   $\nu(\omicron\epsilon\mu\beta)\rho\acute{\iota}\omega$   $\text{K}\Delta$ , 24 November, which corresponds to the Feast of St Catherine of Alexandria in the Eastern calendar.<sup>28</sup>
3. F. 60r,  $\delta\epsilon\kappa\epsilon(\beta\rho\acute{\iota}\omega)$   $\text{I}\Gamma$ , 13 December, which corresponds to the name day of the martyrs, Eustratius, Auxentius, Mardarius, Eugene, and Orestes in the Eastern calendar.
4. F. 77r,  $\nu\omicron(\epsilon\mu\beta)\rho(\iota\omega)$   $\Lambda$ , 30 November, which corresponds to the Feast of the apostle, St Andrew.

<sup>28</sup> According to the Western calendar, this feast is celebrated on November 25, which is also the case in several Eastern regions. Originally, a feast held in honor of Saint Catherine of Alexandria was celebrated on November 24. However, the date was changed at the request of the Church and Monastery of Mount Sinai so that the festival of Saint Catherine, their patron, would coincide with the Apodosis of the Feast of the Entry of the Theotokos.

5. F. 91v, ὀκτοβρίω ζ, 6 October, which corresponds to the name day of the apostle, St Thomas.

Whereas the first four references are similar in style, form, and ductus, including the use of abbreviated names of the months in all four cases, the fifth is notably different and includes the unabbreviated name of the month.

In the more recent part of the manuscript, there are seven other references to the dates of the saint's feast, according to the liturgical calendar:

6. F. 156r, σεπτεβρίω Η, 8 September, which corresponds to the Nativity of the Virgin Mary in both the Eastern and Western calendars.
7. F. 162r, σεπτεβρίω ΙΔ, 14 September, which is the Feast of the Exaltation of the Cross.
8. F. 164v, νοεβρίω ΚΑ, 21 November, which is the Feast of the Presentation of the Virgin Mary.
9. F. 167v, δεκεβρίω ΚΕ, 25 December, the Nativity.
10. F. 170v, ιαννουαρίω ζ, 6 January, the Epiphany.
11. F. 173r, φεβρουαρίω Β, 2 February, the Feast of Jesus' presentation in the temple, according to the Eastern calendar.
12. F. 178v, μαρτίω ΚΕ, 25 March, the Annunciation of the Lord.

*Composition.* The present-day manuscript comprises twenty-four quires. Twenty of these quires belong to the older part of the manuscript, and four to the more recent part. As previously noted, the signatures of the quires allow us to reconstruct the older stadia of the first part of the manuscript, which originally consisted of twenty-nine quires, of which nine are missing. Whereas the older part of the current manuscript includes a total of 155 folios, the original version had a maximum of 236 folios (see above).

Below is a complete list of the quires originally included in the older part of B 35, with the irregularities found in the manuscript indicated in bold font:

- Quire *α* missing
- Quire 1 (signed β), ff. 1–6, ternion (4 + 2), **INCOMPLETE**, 6ff.
- Quire 2 (signed γ), ff. 7–14, quaternion, **COMPLETE**, 8ff.
- Quire δ missing
- Quire ε missing

- Quire 3 (signed ζ), ff. 15–21, quaternion, INCOMPLETE, 7ff.  
 Quire 4 (signed ζ), ff. 22–29, quaternion, COMPLETE, 8ff.  
 Quire 5 (signed η), ff. 30–37, quaternion, COMPLETE, 8ff.  
 – Quire θ missing  
 Quire 6 (signed ι), ff. 38–45, quaternion, COMPLETE, 8ff.  
 Quire 7 (signed ια), ff. 46–53, quaternion, COMPLETE, 8ff.  
 Quire 8 (signed ιβ), ff. 54–61, quaternion, COMPLETE, 8ff.  
 – Quire ιγ missing  
 – Quire ιδ missing  
 Quire 9 (signed ιε), ff. 62–69, quaternion, COMPLETE, 8ff.  
 – Quire ιζ missing  
 – Quire ις missing  
 – Quire ιη missing  
 Quire 10 (signed ιθ), ff. 70–77, quaternion, COMPLETE, 8ff.  
 Quire 11 (signed κ) ff. 78–85, quaternion, COMPLETE, 8ff.  
 Quire 12 (signed κα) ff. 86–93, quaternion, COMPLETE, 8ff.  
 Quire 13 (signed κβ), ff. 94–101, quaternion, COMPLETE, 8ff.  
 Quire 14 (signed κγ), ff. 102–108a, quaternion, COMPLETE, 8ff.  
 Quire 15 (signed κδ), ff. 109–116, quaternion, COMPLETE, 8ff.  
 Quire 16 (signed κε), ff. 117–124, quaternion, COMPLETE, 8ff.  
 Quire 17 (signed κς), ff. 125–132, quaternion, COMPLETE, 8ff.  
 Quire 18 (signed κζ), ff. 133–140, quaternion, COMPLETE, 8ff.  
 Quire 19 (signed κη), ff. 141–148, quaternion, COMPLETE, 8ff.  
 Quire 20 (signed κθ), ff. 149–155, quaternion, INCOMPLETE, 7ff.  
 Quire 21 (signed λ), ff. 156–165, quaternion, COMPLETE, 10ff. (external sheet ff. 156r-v; 166r-v is a palimpsest proceeding from a manuscript in a two-column format and written in *Perlschrift*; the other four bifolia constitute a palimpsest sourced from a manuscript in a single-column format, probably written in bouletée script in ff. 157r–164v).  
 Quire 22 (signed λα), ff. 166–172, quaternion, COMPLETE, 8ff.  
 Quire 23 (signed λβ), ff. 173–182, quaternion, COMPLETE, 10ff.  
 Quire 24 (no signature), ff. 183–189, quaternion, INCOMPLETE, 7ff.

#### 4. *Paleographical Description*

##### 4.1. *Older part of the Manuscript*

The older part of the manuscript shows text organized in two columns, each of 40 lines. In general, the writing remains within the

vertical indentation lines, with only an occasional letter placed beyond them. Sometimes the intention is to highlight a new section, but this is not always the case. However, this procedure is rare, and, in general, the appearance of the page is “clean.” There are also differences in the ink; while the reddish-brown ink predominates, a darker hue is apparent in a different part of the manuscript.

The older part of the manuscript indicates the work of several hands. Certain peculiarities help to differentiate the scribes, the most important differences being the diverse *ductus* and different ways of highlighting the beginning of new text or sections of text.<sup>29</sup> Up to f. 44r, no red capital letters are evident, and new sections are emphasized by means of simple capital letters that are slightly above the normal size. In the case of the external column, these letters are placed outside the body of the text between the two external left vertical lines of the *réglure*. In the case of the internal column, they appear in the space between the columns. The first red capital letter appears in f. 44v, but such letters are then used sparingly to highlight the beginning of new texts, for example in ff. 51r, 60r, 68r, or 77. It is only in the section that includes *ATH* (91v–141r) that red capital letters are used abundantly to highlight the beginning of the different πράξεις or episodes. These letters, which are intended to emphasize the beginning of a text or to highlight the beginning of the different acts, are normally placed in the intercolumn section or in the left margin and are of larger size than other letters, sometimes conveying artistic intentions. The decoration that appears above the titles of new text also enable different copyists to be distinguished. Whereas in the first texts of the manuscript they consist of somewhat sober horizontal red drawings, starting from f. 77, they become more artistic. Another difference among the copyists is their use of diverse ligatures. There is also variation in the capital letters reintroduced in the minuscule: in general, it concerns the kappa and lambda only, but certain scribes tended to reintroduce the eta and epsilon as well.

The round writing can be compared with the *Perlschrift* identified by Hunger.<sup>30</sup> The reddish-brown writing is fairly regular. The *ductus* is round and soft, and the letters relatively large. A comparison with

<sup>29</sup> This point has also been made by S. Moretti, ‘Vulgo “Miniatura” appellatur: I manoscritti greci miniati e decorati delle biblioteche pubbliche statali di Roma’, *Nassab* 18 (2004) 61-97, note 40.

<sup>30</sup> Hunger, ‘Die Perlschrift’, 22-32.

dated examples of *Perlschrift* shown in K. Lake and S. Lake reveals interesting similarities with manuscripts dated to the end of the tenth century. The space between the lines is also regular. Kappa and lambda are the only letters that systematically alternate between minuscule and capital types, with other capital letters being very rare. Capitalized eta, epsilon, nu, eta, and pi, which were routinely used in the eleventh century, are almost completely absent. Alpha regularly appears in cursive form and the semi-uncial variety is reserved for titles. Beta is always minuscule. Gamma is always angular and typically has a v-form. Delta is always minuscule, with its superior arc always leaning toward the left. In combination with iota and epsilon, delta produces nice ligatures. Epsilon normally exhibits a closed inferior part, while its superior line extends upward and occasionally joins the following letter: when combined with xi, it sometimes forms a rudimentary and angular “ace of spades.” Zeta, with its characteristic rounded three-form, appears regularly. Theta is normally minuscule and mainly found in ligatures. Eta mostly has a rounded, minuscule form. Iota presents either a normal appearance, appearing within the body of the text, or it appears larger, extending vertically above and below the writing. In combination with delta, it is slightly inclined toward the right. Mu and nu are always minuscule. Pi and omega are always closed. Ypsilon is generally small and narrow; especially in combination with chi and pi, it sometimes has an open-bowl form. Phi presents a characteristic violin form with an inferior widening. Psi regularly exhibits a cross form.

#### 4.2. *More Recent Part of the Manuscript*

The more recent part of the manuscript displays text in a single-column format of 29 lines. Titles, signatures, and the numbers of sequences within the synaxarion are regularly written in red ink. The writing in the body of the text hangs from the ruling lines and always remains within the vertical indentation lines. Only occasionally is a letter placed beyond them with the intention of highlighting a new section. In this part, the manuscript includes numerous red capitals. Whereas the red ink in the titles and capital letters are brighter than those in the previous part of the manuscript, the ink is generally darker in the body of the text.

This part shows twelfth- or thirteenth-century writing, which includes numerous *nomina sacra* (theou, patros), ligatures, and abbreviations: for καί the copyist uses two forms, ϰ and ϸ; for the combination of omicron and ypsilon (ou), the copyist uses the characteristic 8; and the usual ligature for the combination of epsilon and iota. Genitives are also frequently abbreviated and often written above the line of writing. Accents and breath diacritics are large, giving this script its characteristic appearance. The scribe shows a high proclivity to reintroduce capitals for beta, delta, eta, theta, and kappa. Alpha appears in its regular cursive form, although its larger Greek, uncial form, consisting of a rather long vertical line inclined toward the left and a small round section, also appears regularly. Beta is always capitalized. Gamma alternates between its regular cursive form and a capitalized version, with a very long vertical line protruding from the ruling line. In general, delta is minuscule and upright, even if its superior arc may incline slightly toward the left, but some examples of the capital variant can also be found. Zeta typically has a “two-shape” of large proportions that protrudes beyond the ruling line. Kappa is always capitalized, and lambda is always minuscule. Mu and nu are mainly minuscule, but nu may occasionally represent a small “u shape.” Rho has an upright and small form, but when it appears in the last line of the page, it may include a very long tail. Tau also has two variations: a normal one and a long version that protrudes vertically beyond the ruling line. Ypsilon is generally small, even though it may sometimes appear as an open semicircular version. Phi alternates between the violin-shaped and capitalized forms. Psi regularly displays a cross form. Omega is always small and closed in the form of a horizontal figure of eight.

## 5. *Content*

### 5.1. *Older Part of the Manuscript*

Ehrhard categorizes the older part of the manuscript as a non-menological codex, which means that from the perspective of content, it includes both hagiographical and homiletic texts in no apparent order. The fourth type of numeration included in the manuscript (see section 2.2) clearly reflects this aspect, given their appearance within

the following irregular sequence: November 14, November 24, December 13, November 30, and October 6. Vallicell. B 35 is actually a fragment of such a non-menological collection, which includes fourteen texts, some of which are incomplete.<sup>31</sup>

### 5.2. *More Recent Part of the Manuscript*

The more recent part of the manuscript in turn includes a menaion panegyric for the entire year belonging to Type A, or rather a fragment thereof. If the first unknown text included on page 156r<sup>32</sup> is discounted, this part comprises nine texts, some of which are fragmentary. In line with the type described by Ehrhard,<sup>33</sup> it begins at September 8 and includes the important feasts held on September 14, November 21, December 25, January 6, February 2, and March 25. If this manuscript had been complete, it should have continued up to August 29.<sup>34</sup>

## 6. *Closing Remarks*

Apart from its unique status as the only extant complete Greek version of *ATH* with the “Hymn of the Pearl,” which naturally sparks attention, the annotations of one of its owners, the Portuguese humanist, Achille Staius, make Vallicell. B 35 a fascinating manuscript.

Given its plain appearance and mixed content, Vallicell. B 35 was probably a volume intended for private use, which could also account for its mixed character. Its production for private use could explain the non-menological nature of the first part, which was later combined with a menaion panegyric covering the entire year. If it was intended for personal use, the nature and order of the writings included in it was not particularly relevant in the original version. However, the later introduction of a fourth type of numeration (see above 3.2, various numerations D) indicating the place of the texts in the synaxarion reveals that over the course of its long existence, the manuscript may have been adapted for more public, ritualized use.

<sup>31</sup> See Martini, *Catalogo*, 18-19.

<sup>32</sup> Martini, *Catalogo*, 19-20.

<sup>33</sup> Ehrhard, *Überlieferung und Bestand*, 202-244.

<sup>34</sup> Ehrhard, *Überlieferung und Bestand*, 210-11.

# IV. Plays on Words and Toying with Narrative Ethics: Reading the *Acts of Thomas* from a Speech-Ethical Perspective

SUSANNE LUTHER

## 1. Introduction

‘For many centuries, as is well known, the allegorical exegesis of biblical texts was generally preferred, where we should say that the authors intended to be taken literally. What is less obvious, is that the opposite also happened, although much more seldom’.<sup>1</sup> The literary phenomenon described concerns the literal reception of biblical metaphors in later texts. For example, the reception of the prophecy in Num 24:17<sup>LXX</sup> in the narrative of Mt 2:2 transforms ἀνατελεῖ ἄστρον ἐξ Ἰακώβ into the star that guides the Magi to the manger: εἶδομεν γὰρ αὐτοῦ τὸν ἀστέρα ἐν τῇ ἀνατολῇ καὶ ἦλθομεν προσκυνῆσαι αὐτῷ. A similar transformation can be observed when looking at ethics in the *Apocryphal Acts of Thomas*. While early Christian ethical traditions – which are also manifest in the canonical New Testament texts – are offered to the reader of the New Testament as abstract, imperative instructions, to the reader of the *ATH*, they are presented as short, entertaining, fable-like narratives with an ethical impetus.

In the following, I will provide a short overview of narrative ethics in the *ATH* (Section 2); focus on the contribution of the *ATH* to

<sup>1</sup> A. Hilhorst, ‘Biblical Metaphors Taken Literally’, in T. Baarda *et al.* (eds), *Text and Testimony* (Kampen, 1988) 123-31 at 123; cf. also A. Merz, ‘The Contribution of Meal Scenes to the Narrative Theology of Acts of Paul’, in S. Al-Suadi and P.-B. Smit (eds), *T&T Clark Handbook to Early Christian Meals in the Greco-Roman World* (London and Oxford, 2019) 177-98 at 5.3, with a view to the narrativization of liturgical aspects.



the early Christian discourse on speech-ethics (Section 3); analyse three examples of the narrative transformation of early Christian speech-ethical tradition in the *ATH* (Section 4); and conclude with a summary of the findings (Section 5).

## 2. *Narrative Ethics in the Acts of Thomas*

In the *ATH*, ethics is conveyed above all at the level of the plot, which expounds the character of the apostle – his example and teaching. The apostle journeys from city to city, begins preaching in each and gains the approval of the women, who are persuaded to lead an ascetic life and subsequently reject their husbands.<sup>2</sup> The latter then expel the apostle from the city, after which he arrives in another city, and an analogous scenario takes place.<sup>3</sup> From an ethical point of view, chastity and the rejection of worldly sexuality are central themes. They are closely linked with Christian teaching about the relationship with God or Christ depicted in the image of bridal love, which competes with worldly sexual relationships.<sup>4</sup> The ethics advocated in the *ATH* have therefore often been characterized as exhibiting encratic tendencies<sup>5</sup> with an eschatological perspective.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>2</sup> V. Burrus, *Chastity as Autonomy. Women in the Stories of the Apocryphal Acts* (Lewiston N.Y., 1986) 101-17 at 107-17, argues that narratives in which women play a leading role have especially been handed down by women.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. R. Söder, *Die apokryphen Apostelgeschichten und die romanhafte Literatur der Antike* (1932<sup>1</sup>, reprint Darmstadt, 1969) 21, 25-26, 37 for the basic motif of ‘journey’ in the *Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles*; cf. *ibid.* 133-34, the narrative structure resulting from preaching, conversion and a new understanding of ethical life.

<sup>4</sup> R. Zimmermann, *Geschlechtermetaphorik und Gottesverhältnis. Traditionsgeschichte und Theologie eines Bildfelds in Urchristentum und antiker Umwelt* (Tübingen, 2001) 553. This leads to the conclusion: ‘Die himmlische Hochzeit schließt sexuelle Aktivität auf Erden aus ([*Acts of Thomas*] 11), was entweder zur Erhaltung der Jungfräulichkeit ([§] 12-13) oder zum nachträglichen Entschluss der Enthaltensamkeit nach bereits vollzogener Sexualgemeinschaft unter Eheleuten führt’ (*ibid.* 553-554).

<sup>5</sup> Cf. § 51; 98; 101; 126; cf. further § 85; 88; 124; 139; cf. here Y. Tissot, ‘Encratisme et Actes Apocryphes’, in F. Bovon *et al.* (eds), *Les Actes Apocryphes des Apôtres* (Geneva, 1981) 109-19 at 118-19; cf. also Y. Tissot, *L’encratisme des Actes de Thomas*, in *ANRW* II/25.6 (Berlin, 1988) 4415-4430.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. here S.H. Griffith, ‘Ascetism in the Church of Syria. The Hermeneutics of Early Syrian Monasticism’, in E. Ferguson (ed.), *Doctrinal Diversity. Varieties of Early Christianity* (New York, 1999) 326-51.

Marriage and sexual intercourse are marked in explicitly negative terms in the *ATh*. This tendency is reflected in a typical way in the narrative of the wedding night of the daughter of the king of Andrapolis in § 11-12, which leads to a vow of chastity by both spouses. In § 12, marital intercourse is described as a ‘dirty community’, which brings forth misguided children who commit all sorts of crimes, such as adultery, murder, theft or promiscuity. Therefore, union for procreation is considered an act of contempt (§ 88; cf. also § 101 etc.).<sup>7</sup> Faith and eternal life are presented as a direct consequence of the decision to abstain, especially in sexual terms.<sup>8</sup>

However, the rigorous, ascetic ethics advocated in the *ATh* go far beyond sexual asceticism. The apostle is described as a model of both dietary asceticism and modesty: he has no possessions, he fasts and lives exclusively from bread and salt, he only drinks water, accepts nothing from anyone and passes on what he possesses to those in need (cf. § 5; 20; 96, etc.).<sup>9</sup> The renunciation of desires (ἐπιθυμία), wealth (πλοῦτος) and possessions (κτῆσις) is mentioned as a prerequisite for

<sup>7</sup> Concerning the function of ascesis for women in early Christianity, cf. A. Clark Wire, ‘The Social Functions of Women’s Asceticism in the Roman East’, in K.L. King (ed.), *Images of the Feminine in Gnosticism* (Philadelphia, 1988) 308-23. Cf. also more generally, on the topics of love and sexuality in the *Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles*, A.J. Droge, ‘Discerning the Body. Early Christian Sex and Other Apocryphal Acts’, in M.M. Mitchell and A. Yarbro Collins (eds), *Antiquity and Humanity. Essays on Ancient Religion and Philosophy, Festschrift H.D. Betz* (Tübingen, 2001) 297-320 at 308-20; and Söder, *Apostelgeschichten*, 120: ‘in den asketischen wuchern ganz üppig auch die erotischen Motive, wie wir sie aus dem Liebesroman kennen, zumeist allerdings [...] in vergeistigter, verfeinerter Weise’.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. J.E. Spittler, ‘The Anthropology of the *Acts of Thomas*’, in C.K. Rothschild and T.W. Thompson (eds), *Christian Body, Christian Self. Concepts of Early Christian Personhood* (Tübingen, 2011) 203-16, for the meaning of the body in the dualistic (body-mind) anthropology of the *Acts of Thomas*: ‘it is the state of the body – what sort of dwelling place it is [for God or for demons, S.L.], what sort of marriage it participates in [the conventional marriage or the new and better marriage with Jesus, the true bridegroom, S.L.], its fitness as beast of burden [sexually active or ascetic like the wild asses, S.L.] – that ultimately determines the human being’s fate after death’ (ibid. 216). Cf. also S.L. Davies, *The Revolt of the Widows. The Social World of the Apocryphal Acts* (Carbondale and Edwardsville, 1980) 85-86.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. J.E. Spittler, *Animals in the Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles* (Tübingen, 2008) 192. With reference to § 96, cf. H.W. Attridge, ‘Intertextuality in the Acts of Thomas’, *Semeia* 80 (1997) 87-124 at 116-17.

acquiring faith and knowledge (§ 37) and as a precondition for the attainment of eternal life (§ 100). The apostle's simple, undemanding way of life (§ 20) is supported by his sermon exhorting abstention from 'lewd behavior', as well as greed and immoderation (§ 28). The latter are said to be the main reasons for lawlessness and, at the same time, sources of those conditions that impair body and soul.<sup>10</sup>

Within the narrative framework of the *Ath*, ethics is conveyed, on the one hand, through paraenetic passages delivered in direct speech and, on the other hand, through narrative passages which reflect and support the paraenetic teaching through the exemplary life of the characters, thus interlinking paraenesis and narrative.<sup>11</sup> To begin with the latter, the characters function as positive or negative ethical examples of *conduct*. The character of Thomas is used as a prime ethical example<sup>12</sup> – through his actions the apostle functions as a model for the readers of the text.<sup>13</sup> However, the other characters in the narrative also represent positive or negative examples of ethical conduct.

An important role in this can be ascribed to the anonymization of the narrative characters involved – as types they offer the reader possibilities for identification.<sup>14</sup> Through this involvement of the readers

<sup>10</sup> Cf. here P. Germond, 'A Rhetoric of Gender in Early Christianity. Sex and Salvation in the *Acts of Thomas*', in S.E. Porter and T. Olbricht (eds), *Rhetoric, Scripture and Theology* (Sheffield, 1996) 350-68 at 358-61.

<sup>11</sup> M. Hofheinz, 'Narrative Ethik als "Typfrage". Entwicklungen und Probleme eines konturierungsbedürftigen Programmbegriffs', in M. Hofheinz et al. (eds), *Ethik und Erzählung. Theologische und philosophische Beiträge zur narrativen Ethik* (Zürich, 2009) 11-66 at 18.

<sup>12</sup> Cf. F. Bovon, 'Miracles, magie et guérison dans les Actes apocryphes des apôtres', *J ECS* 3 (1995) 245-59 at 250-53.

<sup>13</sup> Cf. P.J. Hartin, 'The Role and Significance of the Character of Thomas in the *Acts of Thomas*', in J.M. Asgeirsson et al. (eds), *Thomasine Traditions in Antiquity. The Social and Cultural World of the Gospel of Thomas* (Leiden and Boston, 2006) 239-53 at 242: 'The apostle's role is predominantly that of an agent for the transcendent God. His task is to reveal Christ and to carry out God's plan of salvation. His role illustrates what it means to be a disciple and how this discipleship is carried out in practice. He exercises his role through what he says (particularly through his prayers) and what he does (his miracles). His deeds culminate in a death that is described in terms reminiscent of the death of Jesus'.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. I. Czachesz, 'The Bride of the Demon. Narrative Strategies of Self-definition in the Acts of Thomas', in J.N. Bremmer (ed.), *The Apocryphal Acts of Thomas* (Leuven, 2001) 36-52 at 47.

in the narrative, emotion and participation are generated, with recipients motivated to relate to the characters; to identify with them or to distance themselves from them; to criticize them or develop themselves on their basis.<sup>15</sup> It lies within the responsibility of the reader to interpret and critically examine the ethical conduct of the characters and to draw conclusions with regard to their own ethical conduct<sup>16</sup>. Based on the positive and negative examples of action presented by the characters in the stories, the *ATh* aim to shape the ethical behaviour of the recipients and critically question their predisposition to ethical conduct.<sup>17</sup>

In addition to conduct, ethical aspects are also communicated in the apostle's (or other characters') *speeches*. It is noteworthy that apostolic paraenesis often takes place in the context of a miracle story and refers to its ethical valence.<sup>18</sup> The text repeatedly constructs a connection between illness, sin, ethically unacceptable behaviour, or even death, and the demand for a change in ethical disposition and lifestyle.<sup>19</sup> For example, the journey to hell recounted in § 55-57 names a wide range of moral offences and their punishments in the afterlife, including fornication, adultery, slander, shamelessness, theft and selfishness, as well as the violation of the commandments of giving alms, visiting the sick and burying the dead. The apostle responds to the description of hell with the following paraenesis:

<sup>15</sup> Cf. Hofheinz, 'Narrative Ethik', 35-36.

<sup>16</sup> Cf. D. Mieth, 'Narrative Ethik. Der Beitrag der Dichtung zur Konstituierung ethischer Modelle', in idem (ed.), *Moral und Erfahrung. Beiträge zur theologisch-ethischen Hermeneutik* (Freiburg, 1977) 60-90 at 77-80.

<sup>17</sup> F. Bovon, 'Canonical and Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles', in id., *New Testament and Christian Apocrypha. Collected Studies II* (Tübingen, 2009) 197-222 at 212, emphasizes that the *Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles* attach great importance to the individual modification of conduct.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. S. Luther, 'Die ethische Signifikanz der Wunder. Eine Relecture der Wundererzählungen der apokryphen Thomasakten unter ethischer Perspektive', in B. Kollmann and R. Zimmermann (eds), *Hermeneutik der frühchristlichen Wundererzählungen* (Tübingen, 2014) 559-88.

<sup>19</sup> Moreover, the person who experiences a miracle 'has to manifest the implications of the gospel in her or his existence. The canonical acts as well as the apocryphal open an ethical path. The virtues celebrated may differ; perseverance is relevant in one case [...], asceticism in another [...]; but in all cases the ethical component is highly present and constitutes a common element', Bovon, 'Canonical and Apocryphal Acts', 210-11.

Let every one of you put off the old man and put on the new, and leave your former course of conduct and behavior. Those who steal, let them steal no more, but let them live laboring and working. The adulterers are no more to commit adultery, lest they give themselves up to eternal punishment. For with God adultery is an evil exceedingly wicked above all other evils. Put away also covetousness and lying and drunkenness and slandering, and do not return evil for evil! For all these are alien and strange to the God whom I preach. (§ 58; cf. § 84-85)<sup>20</sup>

While referring to transgressions, which are also mentioned in conventional early Christian vice catalogues and reveal a specific focus on sexual-ethical misconduct, this paraenesis identifies speech-ethical transgressions such as slander, lying and retaliating against evil with evil.

Thus, ethics in the *ATH* are conveyed above all in narrative form through the *conduct* and *speech* of the characters.<sup>21</sup> Encratitic aspects and an eschatological orientation also play key roles: the apostle repeatedly points out the consequences of human behaviour for the hereafter and reminds the audience to follow his ethical teachings.<sup>22</sup> In relation to exorcisms and the raising of the dead, this aspect is of particular relevance, as resurrection narratives repeatedly focus on the best use of a second chance, with the new life that is given serving to correct the previous life on earth and thus to fundamentally change the eschatological consequences.<sup>23</sup>

The ethics of the *ATH* often focuses on πράξεις in general, for example when Mt 16:27 is quoted: ἀποδώσει ἐκάστῳ κατὰ τὴν πράξιν αὐτοῦ, for ‘at his coming and appearance at the end time, no one who is about to be judged by him has a word of excuse, as if he had

<sup>20</sup> Translation by J.K. Elliott, *The Apocryphal New Testament* (Oxford, 2005) 471.

<sup>21</sup> See, here, Roig Lanzillotta, this volume, Ch. 1, who claims that the apostle’s speeches played a crucial role in conveying the ethical message in the primitive text, and that the elimination of the apostle’s speeches during the textual transmission of the *Acts of Thomas* might be responsible for the mainly narrative character of many of its passages.

<sup>22</sup> Cf. in analogy to this, the argument in reference to the *Acts of Andrew*: D.W. Pao, ‘Physical and Spiritual Restoration. The Role of Healing Miracles in the Acts of Andrew’, in F. Bovon *et al.* (eds), *The Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles* (Cambridge, 1999) 259-80 at 269-71.

<sup>23</sup> Luther, ‘Ethische Signifikanz der Wunder’, 582.

not heard' (§ 28).<sup>24</sup> While the focus in this passage is on ethics in general, and speech acts are not referred to specifically – as is the case in Mt 12:36-37, for example – the emphasis on the importance of the correct ethical conduct includes *speech* as well as all other actions. In other instances, the *ATH* refer directly to speech-ethical aspects through both the conduct and speech of the narrative characters. Nevertheless, the *ethics of speech* and the contribution of the *ATH* to the early Christian discourse on speech-ethics have thus far been neglected in studies on the ethics of the *ATH*. Especially the distinct form of the reception of traditional speech-ethical aspects in the *ATH*, that is, the strategy of receiving speech-ethical admonition from early Christian tradition and rephrasing it in narrative form, has not been given due consideration. Therefore, the following will focus on these two aspects: the reception and creative reshaping of speech-ethics in *ATH*.

### 3. *Aspects of Speech-Ethics in Ancient and Early Christian Literature*

The issue of speech-ethics is prevalent in all genres of ancient literature (e.g. comedy, drama, epigrams, letters, treatises, handbooks) as well as many fields of life (e.g. law, ethics, rhetoric, religion, philosophy).<sup>25</sup> A broad spectrum of *topoi* are addressed, such as the adequate or inadequate use of speech, insulting language, judging and correction, oath taking and oath formulas, angry, jocular, humorous and obscene speech, the aesthetics of language, silence, ethical aspects of rhetoric and elocution, the possibility and preconditions of controlling speech, and the truthfulness and integrity of the person in speech and action, among many other topics.<sup>26</sup>

Every person's responsibility for the 'correct' use of speech in everyday situations, as well as in literary and rhetorical contexts, was of central concern in ancient philosophical and ethical discourse. Ancient literature testifies to the fact that different aspects of the proper and improper use of speech were discussed, and that there were ethical ideals concerning the use of speech. In addition,

<sup>24</sup> Translation by Elliott, *Apocryphal New Testament*, 459.

<sup>25</sup> Cf. S. Luther, *Sprachethik im Neuen Testament. Analyse des frühchristlichen Diskurses im Matthäusevangelium, im Jakobusbrief und im 1. Petrusbrief* (Tübingen, 2015) passim; cf. also S. Halliwell, 'Comic Satire and Freedom of Speech in Classical Athens', *JHS* 111 (1991) 48-70.

<sup>26</sup> Luther, *Sprachethik im Neuen Testament*, 405-39.

anthropological as well as educational and cultural preconditions were considered, and strategies to control and shape the use of speech were debated. From the very beginning, early Christianity was also involved in this discourse on the ethical use of speech.

The term 'speech-ethics' describes the discourses (a) on ethical paradigms and moral instruction concerning verbal communication in interpersonal relationships, (b) ethical reflection on the anthropological and theological preconditions and consequences of the use of language and (c) the significance of the right use of language for the relationship between God and humans. Among the New Testament writings, the Gospel of Matthew and the Letters of James and 1 Peter are indicative of a distinct interest in 'speech-ethics'; in particular, ethical matters concerning the accurate use of language in everyday inter-human verbal communication in the form of ethical instruction and admonition. The *topoi* received in the New Testament from the ancient discourse on speech-ethics, which are taken up repeatedly in the New Testament writings to form the pillars of the New Testament speech-ethical discourse, include: angry speech, the evil of the tongue, control of the tongue, examples of inadequate or incorrect use of speech, the truthfulness and integrity of the person in speech and action, as well as the *topoi* of judging and *correctio fraterna*. Other topics from the contemporary discourse, such as the recourse to theoretical reflection on obscene speech, on jocular or humorous language, on the aesthetics of language, and on silence and rhetoric, are not taken up in the New Testament writings. However, those *topoi* that are received are reinterpreted within the Christian worldview, thus forming separate, distinctive, but uniform positions within the contemporary speech-ethical discourse.<sup>27</sup>

In the Gospel of Matthew, ethical reflection on speech can primarily be found in the Matthean *Sondergut* or in pericopes which testify to Matthean redaction. It might therefore be concluded that Matthew emphasized or even inserted speech-ethical aspects into his textual sources by redaction. Matthew has recourse to the *topoi* of speech and emotions (especially anger, Mt 5:21-26; 23:17), oaths (Mt 5:33-37), judging (Mt 7:1-5), fraternal correction (Mt 18:15-18), the importance of integrity (Mt 21:28-32), and the inner disposition

<sup>27</sup> See Luther, *Sprachethik im Neuen Testament*, 3-15 for a definition of the term 'personal speech-ethics'. Cf. also W.R. Baker, *Personal Speech-Ethics in the Epistle of James* (Tübingen, 1995) 2.

(Mt 15:10-11, 15-20) in the use of language. Matthean ethical reflection and admonition concerning speech focuses primarily on the formation of the disposition of the addressee rather than on specific speech-ethical regulations. Therefore, abstract, programmatic presentations of the prerequisites for and consequences of the right use of language dominate specific speech-ethical instruction.<sup>28</sup>

In the Letter of James, the ethics of speech is conveyed on three levels: firstly, on the meta-level, in the form of a general argumentative paraenesis (Jas 1:19-27), in which the author appeals to the addressees to live a life of correct ethical conduct; secondly, by applying a theoretically substantiating discourse on the evil of the tongue (Jas 3:1-18), in which possible objections to his admonitions in Chapter 1 are countered and the problematics of the adequate use of the tongue come into focus; and thirdly, in a series of concrete speech-ethical admonitions (Jas 4-5), which motivate the addressees to engage in correct conduct, for example with regard to oaths, fraternal correction, and arguments, embedding these admonitions within an eschatological framework.<sup>29</sup>

While Matthew and James form explicit and comprehensive early Christian discourse positions, 1 Peter testifies to a distinct interest: the addressees are instructed to speak in a manner that represents the Christian community to the surrounding world in a positive light. The interpersonal consequences of speech, or the consequences for the speaker's relationship with God, are not touched upon. Ephesians, Colossians, and the Pastoral Epistles adopt individual *topoi* of the ancient discourse on speech-ethics, with a focus on specific examples of and admonitions concerning the inadequate use of speech. Although they are apparently aware of speech-ethical discourse, they only partially partake in it, and the few aspects of speech-ethical discourse taken up do not allow for the reconstruction of a discourse position of these writings.<sup>30</sup>

The narrative texts of the New Testament, primarily the Gospel narratives, also betray an interest in speech-ethics. Through the direct speech of the characters, through their silence and their speech-actions, they set an example and convey the early Christian norms and

<sup>28</sup> Luther, *Sprachethik im Neuen Testament*, 407-14.

<sup>29</sup> Luther, *Sprachethik im Neuen Testament*, 414-22.

<sup>30</sup> Luther, *Sprachethik im Neuen Testament*, 422-28.



maxims of speech-ethical conduct. This becomes evident, for example, in Jesus' silence before Pilate in the context of his trial.<sup>31</sup>

This brief overview of New Testament speech-ethics shows that the way of conveying speech-ethics through the speech-actions of the narrative characters, as well as through the content of their paraenetic words in the *ATh*, exhibits analogies to the New Testament transmission of speech-ethics. The importance of adequate speech is repeatedly emphasized in *ATh* when portraying human as well as non-human characters as speaking out and preaching the 'gospel' (e.g. § 12; 28; 78). As such, silence is not advocated nor is an asceticism of words in general, although the apostle sometimes refrains from speaking (e.g. § 8). The speech-actions of characters are also discussed as to their value and truthfulness, such as in the story of King Gundafor (§ 17-27). In the context of paraenetic passages conveyed through the characters' words, speech-ethical transgressions such as slander, lies and retaliating against evil with evil are identified (e.g. § 58; 84), as in the New Testament vice catalogues. Thus, clear references to the ancient discourse on speech-ethics can be found in the *ATh*, insofar as language is used and evaluated by the characters within the narrative, and also insofar as the correct use of language is discussed.

In addition, the apocryphal literature presents another, specific and characteristic way in which early Christian ethical norms are presented. In the following, the focus will be on the reception of early Christian speech-ethical traditions in later early Christian literature taking the *ATh* as an example.

#### 4. *The Reception of Speech-Ethics in the Acts of Thomas*

Using three narrative episodes from the *ATh* as examples, I will illustrate how the text takes up different aspects of speech-ethical admonition from the early Christian tradition that can also be found in the paraenetic (explicitly imperative) passages of the New Testament.<sup>32</sup>

<sup>31</sup> Cf. S. Luther, "Reden ist Silber...". Die Bedeutung des Schweigens in der sprachethischen Unterweisung des Matthäusevangeliums', *SNTU*, Serie A 40 (2015) 43-61.

<sup>32</sup> This approach does not presuppose literary dependence, or even knowledge of the New Testament writings, but works on the assumption of the reception of the early Christian tradition in the *Acts of Thomas*. However, as passages from Mt, for example, are explicitly referred to (e.g., § 28), a certain

In the *Ath*, these traditions adopt a different form, they are ‘transformed’ into illustrative, fable-like narratives with clear ethical implications.<sup>33</sup>

#### 4.1. *King Gundafor: Lies or Plays on Words?*

In § 17-29, the following story is told: King Gundafor wanted Thomas, who had been introduced as a carpenter and master builder (who understands the art τὴν τεκτονικὴν καὶ τὴν οἰκοδομικὴν, § 17), to build him a palace. The apostle, however, takes all the riches provided for this purpose and gives them to the poor and needy, while at the same time reporting to the king on his progress in building the palace. Through his good works, carried out in the name of the king, he intends to erect a palace in heaven, rather than a temporal palace on earth. When the king learns there has been progress, he wants to inspect the building site in person, but is told by the apostle that he can only see the palace when he departs from this life. The king does not understand the implications of the apostle’s actions, has Thomas thrown into prison, and contemplates an appropriate form of death for the apparent deceiver. The following night, the king’s brother suddenly becomes ill and dies, attributing his death to the injustice done to the king (ἐγὼ γὰρ διὰ τὴν ἐπὴρειαν τὴν συμβᾶσάν σοι ἐλυπήθην καὶ ἰδοὺ ἀποθνήσκω, § 21). In heaven, the deceased is shown the palace of his brother, which Thomas has built for him.<sup>34</sup> He immediately requests a return to earth in order to ask the king to sell him this palace. The request is granted, and after his return to the world, he is able to interpret Thomas’ actions to the king. Both the king and his

knowledge of some canonical New Testament traditions or texts can be assumed.

<sup>33</sup> For a focus on the narrative staging of early Christian instructions regarding the sacraments, cf. Merz, ‘The Contribution of Meal Scenes’, 177-198 at 5.3, where Merz describes an analogous phenomenon with a view to an admonition about the Lord’s supper in Eph and the description of a meal scene in *Acts of Paul*; see also A. Merz, ‘First Lady trifft Paulus (Die Taufe der Artemilla als Mysterieninitiation) ActPl 9,16-21.27f.’, in R. Zimmermann *et al.* (eds), *Kompendium der frühchristlichen Wundererzählungen*, vol. 2 (Gütersloh, 2017) 476-99 at 494-95; Hilhorst, ‘Biblical Metaphors Taken Literally’, 123-31, for the narrativization of Biblical metaphors.

<sup>34</sup> H.-J. Klauck, ‘Himmlisches Haus und irdische Bleibe. Eschatologische Metaphorik in Antike und Christentum’, *NTS* 50 (2004) 5-35 at 28, considers this as a reception and continuation of Jn 14:2-3 and Mt 6:20.

brother convert to Christianity and Thomas is saved from premature martyrdom.<sup>35</sup>

This narrative is explicitly ethically embedded, for the apostle's action is based on his fundamental ethical convictions – he takes the king's money to give to the poor and to proclaim the new faith, to nurture the sick, to cast out demons and to perform other miracles. He himself eats only bread and salt, drinks water, and has only one garment, giving everything he possesses to those in need (§ 20).<sup>36</sup> Thus, he lives according to Jesus' teaching in the Sermon on the Mount, which is quoted in the narrative: he does not worry about food or clothing but trusts in God's providence (Mt 6:25-34, quoted in § 28). The king does not understand the eschatological significance of this conduct at first but wants to use his money for his own purposes, particularly to build an extravagant palace in this world. Only through the death and the subsequent report of his brother does he come to the realization that Thomas' lifestyle and ethical orientation are preferable to his own.

This narrative very graphically illustrates Jesus' saying in the Sermon on the Mount: Μὴ θησαυρίζετε ὑμῖν θησαυροὺς ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς, ὅπου σῆς καὶ βρῶσις ἀφανίζει καὶ ὅπου κλέπται διορύσσουσιν καὶ κλέπτουσιν· θησαυρίζετε δὲ ὑμῖν θησαυροὺς ἐν οὐρανῷ, ὅπου οὔτε σῆς οὔτε βρῶσις ἀφανίζει καὶ ὅπου κλέπται οὐ διορύσσουσιν οὐδὲ κλέπτουσιν (Mt 6:19-21). The revelation of this truth through the rapture into heaven causes the king and his brother to convert, to be baptized and – as is explicitly stated – to change their life and conduct: the king and his brother follow the example of the apostle according to Jesus' teaching (§ 26).

The narrative strategy of the text underplays the fact that the conduct of the apostle could, first of all, be regarded as ethically unacceptable, insofar as the apostle clearly disregards his duty and acts unethically through his disloyalty to the king. The hierarchy of values and the moral significance that characterize the text are based on the norms preached by Jesus, which find their way into the narrative in the form of apostolic action and preaching. In this section of the text,

<sup>35</sup> Cf. Luther, 'Ethische Signifikanz', 567-68.

<sup>36</sup> For the motif of pious fraud and the palace in heaven in ancient literature, cf. A. Hilhorst, 'The Heavenly Palace in the Acts of Thomas', in J.N. Bremmer (ed.), *The Apocryphal Acts of Thomas* (Leuven, 2001) 53-64, esp. 57-64.

they are established by recourse to aspects of the Gospel tradition as authoritative ethical norms for the evaluation of the action of the characters (above all § 20; cf. also § 36f.). In the later hagiographical literature, conduct analogous to Thomas' appears regularly under the caption of 'pious fraud'.<sup>37</sup> The apostle begins by misleading the king, but when the moment of truth comes, it is found on another level: the apostle has built the palace, not on earth, but in heaven.

The narrative repeatedly refers to the language of the characters as well as to the perception of their speech-actions by other characters. At the beginning of the narrative, the apostle seems to be preparing the construction of the palace: he inspects the building site, takes measurements, and plans the construction (§ 18). He reassures the king, stating: 'Yes, I shall build it [the palace] and finish it' (§ 17),<sup>38</sup> but as soon as the king has left, the apostle devotes his time and the king's money to taking care of the poor – despite his promises to the king. The king's informants tell him quite plainly: 'he has neither built a palace, nor did he do anything of that which he promised to do' (§ 20). It is quite obvious that the apostle's speech acts are judged negatively by the other characters in the narrative as breach of promise and fraud. When the king enquires about the building, he receives a clear response from the apostle: 'Yes, I have built it [the palace]' (§ 21). The subsequent explanation: 'Now you cannot see it, but you shall see it when you depart this life' (§ 21),<sup>39</sup> is unintelligible to the king at this time, and he contemplates the punishment for the apostle's deception. His brother even dies because of the 'insult' (§ 21) inflicted on the king. At the narrative level, the behaviour of the apostle is initially perceived and evaluated by the other characters as serious verbal misconduct. Only when the metaphorical meaning of the apostle's words is revealed to the king – and the reader – does it become clear that the apostle has spoken the 'truth' all along.

The point made in this narrative is perfectly in line with ancient speech-ethical rules, where truthful speech is highly valued, and betrayal or fraud are judged negatively. The New Testament contains corresponding statements: tricking or defrauding (cf., e.g., δόλος, 1 Pet 2:1,22; γόης, 2 Tim 3:13) is condemned in the New Testament paraenesis on interpersonal verbal communication, as is lying (cf.,

<sup>37</sup> Cf. Hilhorst, 'Heavenly Palace', 57-58.

<sup>38</sup> Translation by Elliott, *Apocryphal New Testament*, 454.

<sup>39</sup> All translations by Elliott, *Apocryphal New Testament*, 455.

e.g., ψεύδομαι, Matt 5:11; μὴ ... ψεύδεσθε κατὰ τῆς ἀληθείας, Jas 3:14; ψεύστης, 1 Tim 1:10; ψεύδος, Eph 4:25; ψεύδομαι, Col 3:9). Credibility, however (cf., e.g., ἔστω δὲ ὁ λόγος ὑμῶν ναὶ ναί, οὐ οὐ; Mt 5:37; ἦτω δὲ ὑμῶν τὸ ναὶ ναὶ καὶ τὸ οὐ οὐ, Jas 5:12; πιστός ἐν πᾶσιν, 1 Tim 3:11; λαλεῖτε ἀλήθειαν, Eph 4:25), and speaking as befits a member of the Christian community (cf., e.g., λάλει ἅ πρέπει, Tit 2:1) are promoted. Christian speakers should also be models through their speech (cf., e.g., τύπος γίνου [...] ἐν λόγῳ, 1 Tim 4:12) and thus should not fail in their words (cf., e.g., ἐν λόγῳ οὐ παταίει, Jas 3:2).<sup>40</sup>

The *ATH* transform these paraenetic traditions – which are primarily expressed in the form of explicit imperatives in the New Testament texts – into an illustrative narrative that uses the verbal actions of the apostle as an impetus, encouraging the addressees to receive the abstract instructions of the New Testament writings and to discuss them, communicating them in an appealing and implicit form. The narrative provides readers with the opportunity to evaluate the speech conduct of the characters, to review their assessment on the basis of the different evaluations presented in the text, and to adapt their own speech conduct if necessary. The distinctive way of conveying ethics in this text, that is, the transformation of authoritative and imperative early Christian speech-ethical traditions into an appealing non-directive narrative, is – from the perspective of ancient *paideia* – much more effective and beneficial for the formation of the readers' character than attempting to impose authoritative rules and abstract norms. At the same time, the concept of 'truth' is fundamentally questioned. 'Truth' in the Christian context might not initially be grasped as such, for earthly truth does not necessarily equal heavenly truth, and therefore the evaluation of the truthfulness of speech proves much more difficult than it seems at first glance.

#### 4.2. *The Serpent: Speech Poisoned by the Devil*

Another miracle story in the *ATH* (§ 30-33) tells of a great dragon/snake (in Greek: δράκων μέγας; in Syriac it is a black snake) who fell in love with a girl.<sup>41</sup> He observes her engaging in sexual activities

<sup>40</sup> Cf. Luther, *Sprachethik im Neuen Testament*, 12-13; for the ancient context literature on speech-ethics, cf. *ibid.* *passim*.

<sup>41</sup> Cf. for the motif of the dragon/snake, G. Gäbel, 'Geplatzt vor Bosheit! Himmlischer Bräutigam besiegt altbösen Feind (ActThom 30.31-33)', in

with her lover and a little later kills the young man out of jealousy (τύψας ἐθανάτωσα αὐτόν, § 31).<sup>42</sup> The reason given to the apostle by the beast suggests an ethical motivation: καὶ μάλιστα κατατολήσασα αὐτόν τῇ κυριακῇ ἡμέρᾳ τοῦτο διαπράξασθαι (‘especially as he had dared to do this on the Lord’s Day’, § 31).<sup>43</sup> Thomas asks the animal about its origin, whereupon it describes itself as a snake (ἐπτυστής) and son (υἱός) or relative (συγγενής) of evil. Through a series of ‘I am’ sentences (ἐγώ εἰμι), with allusions to both Old and New Testament scenes,<sup>44</sup> the dragon proves to be related to the evil power, Satan (§ 32).<sup>45</sup>

In this narrative, the apostle is depicted as an exorcist who gains power over the demon by knowing his name and origin.<sup>46</sup> He orders him to suck the poison out of the young man and thereby bring him back to life (§ 33). At first the dragon resists, but eventually he obeys the order and then swells up so much that he bursts and dies. At this point, a gulf opens up and devours the dragon (§ 33). The young man, however, stands up and immediately turns to the apostle, giving him a report on his vision and an account of the knowledge of the Christian faith and Christian ethics which he attained while dead.

Here, the ascetic tradition of the *ATh* is mainly concerned with the relationship of the lovers, especially with their conduct on the

Zimmermann, *Kompendium der frühchristlichen Wundererzählungen*, vol. 2, 700-12 at 705-10.

<sup>42</sup> The Syriac version of the text here mentions that Thomas prayed to God to give the animal the power of human speech, § 33. On animals thinking rationally and on speaking animals in ancient literature, cf. C.R. Matthews, ‘Articulate Animals. A Multivalent Motif in the Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles’, in Bovon, *Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles*, 205-32.

<sup>43</sup> Translation by Elliott, *Apocryphal New Testament*, 460.

<sup>44</sup> Cf. Spittler, *Animals*, 193-99, esp. 195-96. Cf. also *ibid.* 196-98, for literary parallels to snakes in love with humans in ancient pagan literature. Cf. further for Old and New Testament parallels, T. Adamik, ‘The Serpent in the Acts of Thomas’, in J.N. Bremmer (ed.), *The Apocryphal Acts of Thomas* (Leuven, 2001) 115-24 at 118-22. Cf. further P. Chalmet, ‘Le pouvoir de guérir. Connaissances médicales et action thaumaturge dans les plus anciens Actes apocryphes des Apôtres’, in V. Boudon-Millot and B. Pouderon (eds), *Les Pères de l’Église face à la science médicale de leur temps* (Paris, 2005) 193-215 at 200-04, for the parallels in the miracle healings in Epidauros.

<sup>45</sup> Cf. P. Vielhauer, *Geschichte der urchristlichen Literatur* (Berlin and New York, 1978) 712.

<sup>46</sup> Cf. here, Gäbel, ‘Geplatzt vor Bosheit’, 703.

Lord's Day.<sup>47</sup> Therefore, the killing of the young man may at first be interpreted as just punishment for his ethical misconduct. The ethical norm on which this evaluation is based – as the dragon claims, with a view to the justification of his actions – is the ideal of sexual asceticism, as preached by the apostle (cf., e.g. § 11-12; 76), but disregarded by the two young people. On the narrative level, this ethical tradition prominently represented in the *ATh* seems to claim fundamental validity, despite being cited in terms of the negative connotations of the mythical creature – and possibly even with a hypocritical intention. The interpretation of death as just punishment for unethical behaviour seems to stand in contrast to the apostle's efforts to raise the young man from the dead. However, the narrative links the resurrection to life with an ethical reorientation brought about by the adoption of the true faith. The miracle is the linchpin: death is the consequence of an individual's ethically negative actions, and being resurrected enables a fundamental transformation through a new understanding of ethical values. The resurrected young man associates his former behaviour with the influence of evil, while his knowledge about the correct ethical behaviour that follows the miracle is located in Jesus' sphere of influence. This explicitly refers back to the dragon, who, as the son of Satan, is a representative of deceitful, misguided conduct, though he presents his misguided actions as ethically justified and thus lacks any moral integrity.<sup>48</sup>

The narrative also shows a series of thematic – not semantic – allusions to the speech-ethical admonition in Jas 3:1-12, especially vv. 6-8:

καὶ ἡ γλῶσσα πῦρ. ὁ κόσμος τῆς ἀδικίας ἡ γλῶσσα καθίσταται ἐν τοῖς μέλεσιν ἡμῶν ἡ σπιλοῦσα ὅλον τὸ σῶμα καὶ φλογίζουσα τὸν τροχὸν τῆς γενέσεως καὶ φλογιζομένη ὑπὸ τῆς γεέννης. πᾶσα γὰρ φύσις θηρίων τε καὶ πετεινῶν, ἐρπετῶν τε καὶ ἐναλίων δαμάζεται καὶ δεδάμασται τῇ φύσει τῇ ἀνθρωπίνῃ, τὴν δὲ γλῶσσαν οὐδεὶς δαμάσαι δύναται ἀνθρώπων, ἀκατάστατον κακόν, μεστή ἰοῦ θανατηφόρου.

<sup>47</sup> On the encratic orientation of the discussion about sexuality, cf. Zimmermann, *Geschlechtermetaphorik und Gottesverhältnis*, 544-54 at 553-54.

<sup>48</sup> Cf. for the complex character of the demon, Czachesz, 'The Bride of the Demon', 40-48. For the allusions to Gen 3, cf. Adamik, 'The Serpent in the Acts of Thomas', 118.

The passage in the *ATH* repeatedly refers to aspects of James' speech-ethical teaching, which describes the tongue as the restless evil that sets the entire world on fire, and is itself set on fire by hell, as well as being full of deadly poison. The mythical figure of the fire-breathing dragon can be interpreted as a personification of the evil force of the tongue, and the use of poisonous words inspired by evil are illustrated in the story of the murder of the young man. Sucking the poison – or the poisonous words – from the young man (perhaps a metaphorical rendering for taking them back), so fills the dragon with poison that he dies.

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus equates the uttering of angry words with murder (Mt 5:21-22). Here, again, a parallel can be discerned, for the serpent is obviously angry at the conduct of the young man on the Lord's Day, or at least gives this as the reason for his actions, and therefore the poison of the serpent may denote the poisonous words that have the potential to kill, as mentioned in the teaching attributed to Jesus. However, the dragon is 'evil and destructive, but also just and jealously loving'<sup>49</sup> towards the woman. He is therefore portrayed as a creature that is internally divided, speaking with a forked tongue, evil and good at the same time.

This provides another link to Jas 3:10, where the author writes that ἐκ τοῦ αὐτοῦ στόματος ἐξέρχεται εὐλογία καὶ κατάρα, which is not acceptable within the Christian community. Thus, the speech-acts of the dragon are judged, and this judgement must lead to his death. This text, consequently, provides the reader with another narrative transformation of paraenetic New Testament material, with a fable-like metaphorical illustration of previously abstract admonitions.

#### 4.3. *Speaking Animals: Through the Mouth of the Unlearned*

A story of a young ass (§ 39-41) depicts a speaking animal. In this narrative, the foal, who has the gift of speaking a human language, comes to Thomas and offers to carry him to the next town. As a reason, the animal states that it wants to give the apostle some respite. The apostle then addresses a prayer to Jesus, whom he describes as the personification of rest and silence (ὁ ἡ ἡσυχία καὶ ἡ ἡρεμία, § 39). Then, he turns to the ass, asks about its descent, and learns that the ancestors of the animal had already worked for Balaam and

<sup>49</sup> Czachesz, 'The Bride of the Demon', 39.



carried Jesus (§ 40). The ass then announces its intention again: *καὶ γὰρ νῦν ἀπεστάλην σε ἀναπαῦσαι καθεσθέντα ἐπάνω μου* ('and now I have been sent to give you rest as you sit on me', § 40). And because of this action of carrying the apostle the ass will receive his due portion, 'which shall be taken from me if I do not serve you' (*καὶ ὅταν σοι διακονήσω, ἐξ ἐμοῦ λαμβάνεται*, § 40).<sup>50</sup> The ass thus makes an explicit connection between its service to the apostle in accordance with its mission and a subsequent 'reward'. It then carries Thomas to a city, where it collapses and dies. Thomas does not bring it back to life, despite the requests of bystanders, and justifies his refusal to perform a miracle by claiming that the ass has fulfilled the purpose of its earthly life, and that, after the accomplishment of its mission, its death corresponds to the will of God (§ 41).<sup>51</sup> On the instruction of Thomas, the bystanders then bury the ass.

Ethical implications are evident in this encounter with the speaking servant foal. The ass is sent to perform a clearly defined service ordained by God, and when this is completed, its death is the natural consequence that befits such an obedient servant (*ὅτι τοῦτό ἐστιν τὸ συμβαλλόμενον αὐτῷ καὶ συμφέρον*, § 41). With regard to the refusal to raise the animal from the dead, Klijn has pointed out that in § 21 death is regarded as liberation from the world and is therefore preferable to life.<sup>52</sup> From an ethical perspective, the reason for the

<sup>50</sup> Translation by Elliott, *Apocryphal New Testament*, 464.

<sup>51</sup> H.-J. Klauck, *Apokryphe Apostelakten. Eine Einführung* (Stuttgart, 2005) 169, reads this narrative as a prolepsis to the death of the apostle in the last chapter; the death is presented as the necessary end of a fulfilled and perfect life. Spittler, *Animals*, 216-21, esp. 218, proposes 'that both the ass and the wild asses represent not just the body, but two different models of how to live in a body. These two different modes of living, in turn, correspond to two different modes of Christianity, only one of which – the one represented by the wild ass [who lives an encratic life; the other corresponds to the donkey, who is interpreted as pack animal, S.L.] – leads to eternal life'. This interpretation also emphasizes the ethical significance of miracles, especially their focus on the encratic way of life. Cf. here also Droge, 'Discerning the Body', 297-320 at 310, with reference to *Acta Pauli* 3:12, and the explanation that, without encratic life, resurrection is not possible.

<sup>52</sup> Cf. A.F. Klijn, *The Acts of Thomas. Introduction, Text, and Commentary* (Leiden, 2003<sup>2</sup>) 112. Differently, Spittler, *Animals*, 202, with reference to Acts 3 and 6, in which human beings are nevertheless raised from the dead and hence life seems to be preferred over death. Cf. also *ibid.* 202-03, with

apostle's actions can be interpreted differently: the foal has already lived its life, which is marked by the fulfilment of its expected mission. In the other resurrection stories in the *ATH* (especially acts 3 and 6), the deceased had engaged in ethical misconduct beforehand, but after their resurrection they change their way of life and demonstrate correct ethical conduct. The eschatological reward, which the ass had already acquired through its ministry, was yet to be acquired by these other characters. Therefore, they had to be brought back to life, while the ass could remain dead.<sup>53</sup>

With a view to speech-ethics, this text refers to a preaching through the unlearned. As the apostle says expressly in his prayer, it is through 'unreasoning animals' (διὰ ἐν τοῖς ἀλόγοις ζῴοις νῦν λαλούμενε, § 39) that the word of the Lord is preached. In addition, in the conversation between Thomas and the ass, the apostle says: 'For surprising and strange is that which was spoken by you. These things are also hidden from many' (ἐκπληκτα γάρ εἰσι τὰ διὰ τοῦ στόματός σου ἐκφανθέντα καὶ παράδοξα ἅτινα ἀπόκρυφα τοῖς πολλοῖς ὑπάρχει, § 40).<sup>54</sup>

'Unreasonable' animals are a common *topos* in ancient literature, including the Old and New Testaments. For example, in 2 Peter 2:12 – significantly in the context of a passage on false teachers (2:1-22) – a comparison is drawn between false teachers and the unreasonable (ἀλόγος) animals, whose corrupt nature, unrighteousness, and ignorance are emphasized. The text names Balaam and his dumb beast of burden, who spoke with a human voice to ward off the folly of the prophet. In this comparison, the preaching of the false teachers is equated with empty, incomprehensible words. In an analogous context, Jude 10 also compares false teachers with unreasonable animals and alludes to the Balaam narrative.

Both New Testament passages thus depict the unreasonableness of the false teachers – their spreading of false teachings – in close connection with the unreasonableness of the animals. This irrationality, however, can be overcome even in the animal kingdom, if God

reference to the fact that in the *Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles* animals often die after speaking to the apostles; this is, however, different in § 81.

<sup>53</sup> That the asses in act 8 do not die after rendering their service does not contradict this ethical interpretation. The reason for the death of the ass in § 41 is not directly mentioned, only that its resurrection was unnecessary.

<sup>54</sup> Translations by Elliott, *Apocryphal New Testament*, 464.

provides insight and speech. As is stated in Ps 8:2, God is to be praised from the mouth of the unreasonable and children, and in Eph 5:17, a closely related verse – not semantically, but thematically – commends: διὰ τοῦτο μὴ γίνεσθε ἄφρονες, ἀλλὰ συνίετε τί τὸ θέλημα τοῦ κυρίου. Moreover, Matt 10:19 promises that God’s Spirit will give words to those who have to testify, and they need not worry about what they should say. These aspects of early Christian speech-ethical teaching are once again reflected in the *ATh* in a fable-like, illustrative narrative, which presents the personification of a speaking animal as an ethical role model.

##### 5. *Findings: Reading the Acts of Thomas from a Speech-Ethical Perspective*

How do the apocryphal *ATh* transmit speech-ethical admonitions? On the one hand, this is done through a description and evaluation of the conduct and speech of the characters, especially the main character, the apostle Thomas. On the other hand, the *ATh* take up early Christian tradition, as is often found in the form of abstract, imperative paraenesis in the canonical New Testament writings. This tradition is presented in a ‘trans-formed’ manner, in the form of illustrative narratives, sometimes including fictive characters such as the dragon or the speaking ass, thus transferring abstract norms and imperative admonitions into fable-like stories. Through the narrative mode, the ethical teaching is conveyed in a form that is open to the interpretation of the reader; it is non-authoritative and readily understandable and accessible. Some might say that it is even entertaining, but nevertheless it is normative with respect to the ethical principles and norms represented and taught by the main character, the apostle Thomas.

# V. Σῶμα and Material Reality in the Greek *Acts of Thomas*

ANDRÉS SÁEZ GUTIÉRREZ

## 1. Introduction

Studies on the *Acts of Thomas* in the last decades have certainly helped to make progress in its knowledge. At the same time, this research has revealed considerable gaps in our understanding of this apocryphal work and has raised new questions about it. First of all, the challenges posed by the textual tradition of the *ATH*<sup>1</sup> are so huge that the conclusions that are drawn are often quite uncertain.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> On the Greek textual tradition of *The Acts of Thomas*, see Muñoz Gallarte, this volume, Ch. 2. For the whole textual tradition, cf. A.F.J. Klijn, *The Acts of Thomas. Introduction – Text – Commentary* (Leiden, 1962) 1-17; idem, *The Acts of Thomas. Introduction, Text and Commentary* (Leiden, 2003<sup>2</sup>) 1-4; F. Bovon and P. Geoltrain (eds), *Écrits apocryphes chrétiens*, I (Paris 1997) 1323-27; M. Geerard, *Clavis apocryphorum Novi Testamenti* (Turnhout 1992) n. 245-49, 148-52. There is no solid agreement with respect to fundamental questions concerning the *Acts of Thomas* (date, place of origin, original language, authorship, literary composition). For these issues, in addition to various the introductions to the *Acts of Thomas*, see more specifically S.E. Myers, 'Revisiting Preliminary Issues in the *Acts of Thomas*', *Apocrypha* 17 (2006) 95-112; J.N. Bremmer, 'The *Acts of Thomas*: Place, Date and Women', in id. (ed), *The Apocryphal Acts of Thomas* (Leuven, 2001) 74-90, updated in id., *Maidens, Magic and Martyrs in Early Christianity: Collected Essays* (Tübingen, 2017) 167-79; see also Roig Lanzillota, this volume, Ch. 1.

<sup>2</sup> The assertion of P.H. Poirier more than twenty years ago in his paper 'Les *Actes de Thomas* et le manichéisme', *Apocrypha* 9 (1998) 263-87, 264, remains accurate: 'S'ils ont le privilège d'être les seuls à avoir été intégralement conservés, les problèmes posés par leur situation textuelle sont de telle nature que les conclusions que l'on cherche à tirer à leur propos ou

Secondly, literary and historical issues are far from solved.<sup>3</sup> Last but not least, the *ATH* presents theological variegation such that a wide range of characters and original contexts—gnostic, encratite, Bardesanic, Tatianic, Platonic<sup>4</sup>—have been proposed for the apocryphal writing.<sup>5</sup>

Given this situation, the scope of this paper can only be quite limited. My aim is to present how the Greek text<sup>6</sup> of the *ATH* makes use of terminology regarding *σῶμα*, *σάρξ* and material reality. This issue has already been treated occasionally by other scholars, but, as far I know, only partially and mainly from an anthropological

l'utilisation que l'on fait sont toujours grevés d'une incertitude plus ou moins grande'.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. for example Y. Tissot, 'Les Actes de Thomas, exemple de recueil composite', in F. Bovon *et al.*, *Les Actes apocryphes des apôtres* (Genève, 1981) 223-32.

<sup>4</sup> The gnostic character of the *Acts of Thomas* is the classic opinion of G. Bornkamm in *Mythos und Legende in den apokryphen Thomas-Akten* (Göttingen, 1933) and in his introduction to our writing in E. Hennecke, and W. Schneemelcher (eds), *New Testament Apocrypha*, (Philadelphia, 1965) (German original 1964) 425-42, followed afterwards by many scholars. The Tatianic influence has been held by H.J.W. Drijvers, 'The Acts of Thomas', in the sixth edition of W. Schneemelcher (ed.), *Neutestamentliche Apokryphen*, II (Tübingen, 1997) 289-303; and in connection with encratism also by Y. Tissot, 'L'encratisme des Actes de Thomas', in *ANRW* II,25,6 (Berlin – New York, 1988) 4415-30. For a Hellenistic-Platonic character of the *Acts of Thomas*, cf. G.P. Luttikhuisen, 'The Hymn of Jude Thomas, the Apostle, in the Country of the Indians (*ATH* 108-113)', in Bremmer, *The Apocryphal Acts of Thomas*, 101-14.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Poirier, 'Les Actes de Thomas et le manichéisme', 265.

<sup>6</sup> As we noted above (cf. n.1), the original language of the *Acts of Thomas* is debated, cf. L. Roig Lanzillotta, 'A Syriac Original for the Acts of Thomas? The Theory of the Syriac Priority Revisited, Evaluated and Rejected', in I. Ramelli and J. Perkins (eds), *Early Christian and Jewish Narrative: The Role of Religion in Shaping Narrative Forms* (Tübingen, 2015) 105-33. There seems to be more agreement on the fact that the extant Greek version is in most cases closer to the original than the extant Syriac one. For a summary of this point, cf. S.E. Myers, 'Antecedents of the Feminine Imagery of Spirit in the *Acts of Thomas*', *Apocrypha* 26 (2015) 103-18, 104 n.1, which cites the more thorough debate developed by H.W. Attridge, 'The Original Language of the Acts of Thomas', in *id. et al.* (eds), *Of Scribes and Scrolls: Studies on the Hebrew Bible, Intertestamental Judaism, and Christian Origins* (Lanham, MD, 1990) 241-50.

perspective.<sup>7</sup> For my part, I would like to lay out the data in detail and to introduce them according to the following four categories: (1) creational / cosmological, (2) christological, (3) sacramental, and (4) anthropological / soteriological. In this way, I hope to contribute to a global overview of the subject and broaden the debate about the theological position of the text. Concerning this last issue, I will limit myself to making some brief and partial considerations at the end of this paper.

As we unfortunately lack a modern critical edition of the Greek *ATH*, we have taken as a critical text the old but valuable edition published by M. Bonnet in 1903.<sup>8</sup>

## 2. *God and Material Creation in the Acts of Thomas*

In his monograph about the Syriac *ATH*, A.F.J. Klijn affirms that the doctrine of the writing is dominated ‘by the contrast between corruptible and incorruptible’.<sup>9</sup> This assertion, valid also for the Greek *ATH*, is applied by Klijn first to the anthropological field, where the body represents the corruptible element and the soul the incorruptible or the potentially incorruptible.<sup>10</sup>

There is no doubt that, in this framework, the material world belongs, along with the body, to the corruptible side. In fact, in the

<sup>7</sup> Cf. for instance the chapter about the doctrine of the writing in Klijn, *The Acts of Thomas* (1962) 34-37 and *The Acts of Thomas* (2003<sup>2</sup>) 10-11 (although Klijn translates and focuses on the Syriac version); J. Bolyki, ‘Human Nature and Character as Moving Factors in the *Acts of Thomas*’, in Bremmer, *The Apocryphal Acts of Thomas*, 91-100.

<sup>8</sup> R.A. Lipsius and M. Bonnet (eds), *Acta apostolorum apocrypha*, II.2: *Acta Philippi et Acta Thomae* (Leipzig, 1903). This edition was based upon twenty-one manuscripts. The most important among them are: 1) Romanus Vallicellanus B 35 (U), the only complete one; 2) Parisiacus graecus 1510 (P). When the differences between them are too great, the text of P is placed under the text of U in Bonnet’s edition. We will mention the textual divergences when they are significant for our purpose. In addition, we will refer to the Syriac version with S. We base our English translation of the passages of the *Acts of Thomas* upon the one contained in J.K. Elliot (ed.), *The Apocryphal New Testament* (Oxford 1993) 447-511, but we modify it if necessary. We have also made use of M. Lipinski, *Konkordanz zu den Thomasakten* (Frankfurt, 1988).

<sup>9</sup> Klijn, *The Acts of Thomas*, 34.

<sup>10</sup> Regarding this point, see *infra* the final considerations.

third act concerning the serpent, the apostle distinguishes, on the one hand, ‘the world above’ (τὸν ἄνω κόσμον, *ATh* 36) – a world whose inhabitants are God, the angels, the watchmen, and the saints, and whose trappings are the ambrosial food, the true wine, the clothing that endures and does not grow old, and things which eye has neither seen nor ear heard – and, on the other hand, this physical, perishable world, which is ‘the land of error’ (τῆι χώρῃ τῆς πλάνης), ‘the troubled sea’ (τὴν θορυβώδη θάλασσαν), ‘the thirsty land’ (τῆι χώρῃ τῆι διψαλέῃ), and ‘the place of the hungry’ (τῷ τῶν πεινῶντων τόπῳ, *ATh* 37). A similar description is also found in *ATh* 156. Just before the anointment and baptism of Ouzanes, Tertia and Mnesara, the apostle prays that the Lord be their guide ‘in the land of error’ (ἐν χώρῃ πλάνης), their physician ‘in the land of sickness’ (ἐν χώρῃ νοσήματος), and their rest ‘in the land of the weary’ (ἐν χώρῃ καμνόντων).<sup>11</sup>

However, it would be a mistake not to take into account that this perishable world is also the world in which God reveals himself, in which he can be known, and in which the soul can be saved.<sup>12</sup> More precisely, for the *ATh* this world is God’s creation<sup>13</sup> and plays a role in God’s providence and salvific design. This balances, although only to a certain degree, our text’s often negative conception of this world. According to this perspective, although in a context where a special care for souls is clearly shown, the Lord and God, Jesus Christ, is called ‘Saviour of all creation, who gives life to the world’ (σωτὴρ πάσης κτίσεως, ὁ τὸν κόσμον ζωοποιῶν, *ATh* 10). Furthermore, using some expressions that suggest a stoic origin, the apostle describes him as the one who is in all things and passes through all

<sup>11</sup> Cf. also *ATh* 21. As they are carried to prison, the apostle says to the merchant that brought him to India: ‘Fear nothing, believe only in the God who is preached by me, and you shall be freed from this world, and obtain life in the world to come (καὶ ἀπὸ μὲν τούτου τοῦ κόσμου ἐλευθερωθήσῃ, ἀπὸ δὲ τοῦ μέλλοντος αἰῶνος ζωὴν κομίση)’.

<sup>12</sup> Cf. for instance *ATh* 146 (P): ‘I have planted your vine in the earth (τὴν ἄμπελὸν σου ἐφύτευσα ἐν τῆι γῆι); it has sent down its roots to the depth (τὰς ρίζας καθῆκεν εἰς τὸ βάθος), and its growth is spread out in the height, and the fruits of it are stretched forth upon the earth (οἱ δὲ ταύτης καρποὶ ἐπι γῆς ἐξετάθησαν), and they who are worthy of you are made glad by them, whom also you have gained’.

<sup>13</sup> The Syriac version contains some expressions that convey this feature even more clearly. Cf. *ATh* 34 (S).

things<sup>14</sup> (ὁ ἐν πᾶσιν ὄν καὶ διερχόμενος διὰ πάντων<sup>15</sup>, *Ath* 10). In fact, when in the last part of the *Acts*, King Misdæus commands that flat slabs be heated to torture the apostle by making him stand on them barefoot, Judas makes manifest that God has power over the water, because it was he ‘who bound this nature and united it in one place and who sent it out to different lands, who brought order out of disorder’ (ὁ ἐξ ἀταξίας εἰς τάξιν μεταγαγών, *Ath* 141).<sup>16</sup>

In *Ath* 123, Mygdonia prays after her baptism to get free from her husband, Charisius, as she is assured that though God’s dwelling place is certainly in the heights, the depths are not hidden from him (ὁ θεὸς ὁ τὰ ὕψη ἔχων καὶ τὰ βάθη μὴ λανθάνων).<sup>17</sup> A similar distinction between God’s own permanent sphere and God’s revelation sphere is found in *Ath* 37. As a crowd joins the apostle and the man just healed by him from a serpent’s bite, the apostle addresses them, calling them to conversion, by presenting God as the one ‘who dwells in the heights and now is found in the depths’ (ἐκεῖνον τὸν ἐν ὕψει διατρίβοντα καὶ νῦν ἐν βάθει εὕρισκόμενον). The particle νῦν is significant because it indicates either a kind of fullness of time, in which God couldn’t be found before and can be found now, or that the presence of the Lord ἐν βάθει will not last forever because of the transitory character of this visible world.

In light of all of this, it is not surprising that Jesus is called ‘Lord of heaven and earth’ (κύριος... οὐρανοῦ τε καὶ γῆς<sup>18</sup>, *Ath* 163)),

<sup>14</sup> The statement probably has general validity. In its context it is directly applied to God’s power to come to the aid of the daughter of Andrapolis’ king and her bridegroom in the wedding night, so that they can remain pure.

<sup>15</sup> Cf. SVF 102, in R. Radice (ed.), *Stoici antichi. Tutti i frammenti. Secondo la raccolta di Hans von Arnim* (Milan, 2002) 53, for the verb *διέρχομαι*, which is applied here to the mixture of substances. But the same doctrine was also applied with analogue verbs to the mixture of the active principle—god, spirit, logos—with the passive one, material reality. This conception is attested in Hellenistic Judaism, for example in the *Sapientia Salomonis*; and in ancient Christianity. For references, see A. Sáez, ‘Cristo y la creación en la Homilía Pascual de Melitón de Sardes’, *RET* 73 (2013) 55-80 at 72-79.

<sup>16</sup> Cf. also in this regard *Ath* 66: ‘When you sleep in this slumber weighing down the sleepers, he sleeps not and watches. And when you travel by sea and are in danger and there is no one to help, he walks upon the waters and helps’.

<sup>17</sup> P presents a different reading here.

<sup>18</sup> In the context it is clear that the Lord of heaven and earth is Thomas’ Lord, the one who saved him; and also, according to the apostle’s words,



‘Lord and God of all’ (κύριος καὶ θεὸς πάντων<sup>19</sup>, *ATH* 26), ‘the Lord of all possessions’ (ὁ κύριος ἀπάντων κτημάτων, *ATH* 156), the one ‘who filled creation with his riches’ (ὁ πληρώσας τὴν κτίσιν τοῦ ἑαυτοῦ πλούτου<sup>20</sup>, *ATH* 156), ‘physician of everything visible and invisible’ (τῷ πάντων ἰατρῷ ὄρατῶν τε καὶ ἀοράτων, *ATH* 143 [U]), the one who provides also physical help for those who need it,<sup>21</sup> and the one who manifests his power through numerous sensible miracles.<sup>22</sup> Thus, God has power over material creation and everything within it, while at the same time he encourages, as we will see, the abandonment of this sensitive sphere.<sup>23</sup> As Thomas affirms briefly at the end of *ATH* 143, Jesus Christ is the one ‘who, having power over the world and its pleasures, treasures, and enjoyment (ἐξουσίαν ἔχων τοῦ κόσμου καὶ τῶν ἐν αὐτῷ ἡδονῶν καὶ κτημάτων καὶ ἀνέσεως), abstains from all these things and urges his subjects to make no use thereof.’

In summary, the relationship between God as Creator and the physical world as creation implies, as J. Bolyki rightly points out, that

king’s Misdaeus’ Lord: ‘Ὁ κύριός μου, φησιν ὁ Θωμᾶς, ὁ ἐμὸς δεσπότης καὶ σὸς ἐστιν, κύριος ὑπάρχων οὐρανοῦ τε καὶ γῆς (*ATH* 163 [P is similar]). Therefore, there is also a certain relationship between God and the pagans or non-believers.

<sup>19</sup> In this context πάντων probably indicates that Jesus Christ is the Lord and God of the visible and the invisible.

<sup>20</sup> There is a similar expression in *ATH* 34: τὴν ἑαυτοῦ κτίσιν φωτίζει. On the contrary, the devil and his coreligionists have put poison into creation. Cf. *ATH* 33: ‘Ὁ δὲ δράκων εἶπεν... τί με ἀναγκάζεις λαβεῖν ὃ εἰς τοῦτον κατέβαλον καὶ ἀποθανεῖν πρὸ καιροῦ; καὶ γὰρ ὁ ἐμὸς πατήρ ἐπὶ ἀνιμήσῃται καὶ ἐκμυζήσῃ ὃ ἐπέρριπεν τῇ κτίσει, τότε αὐτοῦ γίνεται τὸ τέλος.

<sup>21</sup> Although the apostle’s works refer mainly to spiritual activities such as the preaching of a new unique God, the driving out of the demons, continuous fasting and praying and an austere way of life (cf. *ATH* 20), Thomas dispenses and gives alms from the money he receives from the king (cf. *ATH* 19). In this last context, it is said about God in *ATH* 19: αὐτὸς παρέχει ἐκάστῳ τὴν τροφήν· αὐτὸς γὰρ ἐστιν ὁ τροφεὺς τῶν ὀρφανῶν καὶ οἰκονόμος τῶν χηρῶν, καὶ πᾶσι τοῖς τεθλιμμένοις αὐτὸς γίνεται ἄνεσις καὶ ἀνάπαυσις.

<sup>22</sup> Cf. for example *ATH* 40. God has shown his power by enabling the colt to speak, what is obviously a perceptible capacity.

<sup>23</sup> According to *ATH* 36, life in this world is only a ‘temporary rest’ (ἀνάπαυσιν τὴν πρόσκαιρον).

‘the author of *ATH* sees a metaphor for the heavenly in every phenomenon of this world.’<sup>24</sup> As creation is under God’s providence, the world can reflect, although imperfectly, divine realities. This fact seems to be clearly limited by two elements. The first is intrinsic and lies in the fact that material creation points to heavenly realities but is not destined to be definitely transformed by them. The second seems to be extrinsic to material creation and has to do with the actions of the demons that have led humankind astray,<sup>25</sup> making human beings, without God’s ransom, incapable of interpreting the provisional value of this physical world.

Finally, it is important to underline that the statements quoted above refer usually not to the Father, but to Jesus Christ, who seems to be the one capable of dealing immediately with this world.<sup>26</sup>

### 3. *Σῶμα and Material Reality in Christological Context*

3.1. Along with the passages in which *σῶμα* or *σάρξ* appear explicitly in the *ATH* within a christological context, it is proper to consider in this section the significance our text assigns to Jesus’ life on earth. In this regard, the references to the mysteries of Jesus’ life are much more frequent than should be expected, at least if we compare the *ATH* with, for example, the *Acts of John*, in which Jesus’ human life and reality are completely absent.<sup>27</sup> Besides the frequent statements about

<sup>24</sup> Bolyki, ‘Human Nature and Character’, 94.

<sup>25</sup> According to *ATH* 32-33, the devil is also under God’s providence. Men have been subjected to the devil through their disobedience to God and their obedience to him. But they are not actually the devil’s possession, but Jesus’.

<sup>26</sup> Cf. also *ATH* 39 with regard to the Mother: *δοξάζομεν καὶ ὑμνοῦμεν σὲ καὶ τὸν ἀόρατόν σου πατέρα καὶ τὸ ἅγιόν σου πνεῦμα καὶ τὴν μητέρα πατρῶν κτίσεων.*

<sup>27</sup> Cf. E. Junod and J.-D. Kaestli (eds), *Acta Iohannis*, 2 vols (Turnhout, 1983) 2.680-81: ‘Mais l’élément le plus extraordinaire est sans conteste la christologie. Le texte célèbre un seul Dieu, le Seigneur Jésus, immuable, bon et éternel. Aucune distinction entre le Père et le Fils, aucune référence à l’incarnation, à un ministère terrestre, à la passion et à la crucifixion ne sont présentes dans les *AJ*... Les *AJ* ignorent le thème de l’envoi et de la médiation du Fils...’. These assertions are not valid for chapters 94-102 and 109, which are of Valentinian provenance. For further details in this regard, cf. E. Junod and J.-D. Kaestli, ‘Les traits caractéristiques de la théologie des *Actes de Jean*’, *RThPh* 26 (1976) 125-45.

Jesus' divine origin and condition,<sup>28</sup> the *ATH* mentions:<sup>29</sup> his coming (*ATH* 59), his being called son of the Virgin Mary (*ATH* 143), his temptations (*ATH* 156), his preaching, healings, and miracles (*ATH* 47; *ATH* 59<sup>30</sup>), his fight against the demons (*ATH* 45), his transfiguration (*ATH* 143), Jesus' entrance into Jerusalem (*ATH* 40), the sufferings of Jesus, the Good Shepherd (*ATH* 25), his crucifixion (*ATH* 59), the drinking of the gall and the vinegar at the Cross (*ATH* 158), the spittle he received (*ATH* 158), the strike with the reed and the crown of thorns (*ATH* 158), the offering of his blood and soul for the salvation of all (*ATH* 72), his temporary death (*ATH* 19); his being wrapped in the linen cloth and his burial (*ATH* 158), his descent to Hades (*ATH* 156), his resurrection from the dead on the third day (*ATH* 59), his appearances (*ATH* 47), and his ascension to heaven (*ATH* 80). Finally, it is worth noting that, for the *ATH*, Jesus accomplished in this way all things that the Scriptures had foretold of him (*ATH* 59).<sup>31</sup>

Certainly, it is necessary to inquire about the meaning of these references, namely, how the *ATH* has understood Jesus' humanity. Now, the author of our text obviously did not intend to make a plain assertion about this, and so we are obliged to interpret the ambiguous statements we find in it. Rather than trying to solve every problematic assertion, which would evidently require a broader and deeper analysis, I will confine myself here to indicating the difficulties in moving forward. Let's have a look at them.

<sup>28</sup> Cf. for example *ATH* 10; 25; 26; 39; 47; 60; 69; 70; 72; 80; 81; 88; 121; 122; 132; 135; 139; 140; 141; 144; 156; 167.

<sup>29</sup> The list does not pretend to be comprehensive nor to solve the doubts some passages can raise regarding the events in Jesus' life they reference.

<sup>30</sup> *ATH* 59 refers explicitly to Thomas' activity of preaching and healing, but there is no doubt that the author intends to depict Thomas according to Jesus' model.

<sup>31</sup> 'He himself did not cease to preach and to speak to them and to show that this Jesus is the Messiah of whom the Scriptures have spoken (περὶ οὗ αἱ γραφαὶ ἐκήρυξαν) that he should be crucified and be raised after three days from the dead. He also showed to them and explained, beginning from the prophets (ἀπὸ τῶν προφητῶν ἀρξάμενος), what was said concerning the Messiah, that it was necessary for him to come, and that everything had to be accomplished which had been prophesied of him (ὅτι ἔδει αὐτὸν ἐλθεῖν καὶ ἐν αὐτῷ τελεσθῆναι πάντα τὰ προλεχθέντα περὶ αὐτοῦ)'.

3.2. In the fifth act concerning the demon that dwelt in a woman, it is said in *ATH* 45 that the demons were deceived during Jesus' earthly lifetime because of 'his unattractive form, his poverty, and his neediness' (τῆ μορφῆ αὐτοῦ τῆ δυσειδεστάτη καὶ τῆ πενία αὐτοῦ καὶ τῆ ἐνδεία).<sup>32</sup> Seeing him to be such, they thought that he was a man wearing flesh (ἐνομίσαμεν αὐτὸν σαρκοφόρον ἄνδρα εἶναι) and did not realize that it was he who gives life to men (μὴ εἰδότες ὅτι αὐτός ἐστιν ὁ ζωοποιῶν τοὺς ἀνθρώπους). For our purposes, the question is what the expression ἐνομίσαμεν αὐτὸν σαρκοφόρον ἄνδρα εἶναι connotes. Put in the mouth of the serpent and in a context in which the demons confess that, confused by his weaknesses, they were unable to ascertain Jesus' true identity and were thus confident they could bring him under the yoke, it is likely that they considered him to be a man like any other man, that is, a man carrying real flesh.<sup>33</sup> Now, just as the demons failed in their judgment and missed Jesus' divine character, it seems prudent not to assume immediately that the demon's opinion about Jesus' humanity must also be the position of the author of the *ATH*.

3.3. The second passage we have to take into consideration is found in the seventh act, in which General Siphor asks the apostle to heal his wife and daughter. In order to accompany him, the apostle must leave the community that has gathered around him in a certain place in India, and to whom he has preached the Gospel (cf. *ATH* 62). To prevent any kind of disappointment among the disciples due to his leaving, the apostle says in *ATH* 66:

Τέκνα μου καὶ ἀδελφοὶ οἱ εἰς τὸν κύριον πιστεύσαντες, παραμείνατε ἐν ταύτῃ τῇ πίστει... Ξενοφῶντα δὲ τὸν διάκονον καταλιμπάνω πρὸς ὑμᾶς εἰς τὸν τόπον μου· καὶ γὰρ καὶ αὐτὸς ὡσπερ κἀγὼ καταγγέλλει

<sup>32</sup> Does the expression τῆ μορφῆ αὐτοῦ τῆ δυσειδεστάτη καὶ τῆ πενία αὐτοῦ καὶ τῆ ἐνδεία refer to Jesus' human life as a whole and, perhaps, mainly to his Passion; or does it refer only to this last event?

<sup>33</sup> With the expression 'real flesh', we mean here anyone's flesh, a flesh with real substance or ὑποκείμενον and real properties, in contrast to a flesh with perceptible properties but not a real substance or ὑποκείμενον, as it was the case in some gnostic groups. Cf. for example the testimony of Irenaeus of Lyons about Ptolomaeus and/or his disciples in AH I,6,1. For further explanation to this regard, cf. M. Aroztegi, *La amistad del Verbo con Abraham según San Ireneo de Lyon* (Rome, 2005) 45-55.

τὸν Ἰησοῦν· οὔτε γὰρ ἐγὼ εἰμί τι οὔτε αὐτός, ἀλλὰ Ἰησοῦς· καὶ γὰρ κἀγὼ ἄνθρωπος εἰμι σῶμα ἐνδεδυμένος, υἱὸς ἀνθρώπου ὡς εἷς ἐξ ὑμῶν.<sup>34</sup>

My children and brethren, who have believed in the Lord, remain in this faith... I leave with you in my place deacon Xenophon, for he also preaches Jesus like myself. For neither am I anything nor he, but Jesus only. For I am also a human being, clothed with a body, a son of human being like one of you.

The context makes clear that the main purpose of this passage is to underline the difference between Jesus and his ministers and disciples: there is only one Saviour, Jesus. In fact, a few lines further down, we read: ‘Let the hope, therefore, be in Jesus Christ, the Son of God’ (ἔστω οὖν ἡ ἐλπὶς εἰς Ἰησοῦν Χριστὸν τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ θεοῦ, *ATH* 66). This view is confirmed by a somewhat parallel passage in *ATH* 160, in which the apostle, just before definitively leaving this world, says to his disciples: ‘I am not Jesus, but I am his servant. I am not Christ, but I am his minister. I am not the Son of God, but I pray to become worthy of God.’ In this sense, this must also be the immediate purpose and meaning of the expression κἀγὼ ἄνθρωπος εἰμι σῶμα ἐνδεδυμένος, υἱὸς ἀνθρώπου ὡς εἷς ἐξ ὑμῶν.<sup>35</sup> Jesus’ divine and salvific character is not shared by Judas Thomas, Xenophon or any other human being.

If our considerations are correct, then the formulation contains no specific evidence that would allow us to determine whether or not it also downplays Jesus’ human character. We limit ourselves to point out that the negative answer could be suggested by the fact that the *ATH* attributes to Jesus Christ – as we will see below – a σῶμα ἀνθρώπινον (*ATH* 143), an expression that seems to connect Jesus’ human body with Thomas and anyone’s body.

3.4. The third passage, *ATH* 165, is difficult due to both textual and theological issues.<sup>36</sup> Just before his martyrdom, Thomas is led by two

<sup>34</sup> Manuscript P differs from U: καὶ γὰρ κἀγὼ ἄνθρωπος εἰμι σάρκα φορῶν ὡς καὶ ὑμεῖς καὶ ὡς εἷς οἶδα τυγχάνειν ὑμῶν. The idea transmitted is in any case the same.

<sup>35</sup> Cf. also *ATH* 140, where Judas says to Ouazanes: ‘I am a man like yourself, and do these things by the power of Jesus Christ (Ἄνθρωπος εἰμι κατὰ σέ, δυνάμει Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ ταῦτα ποιῶ)’.

<sup>36</sup> For our purpose, the textual problems are not decisive.

soldiers at each side, while an officer holds his hand and supports him. The apostle then comments upon the scene by establishing a contrast between Jesus, whom Thomas addresses as ‘my Lord’ (ὁ κύριός μου), and himself. On the one hand, Thomas has been seized and is going to be pierced by four soldiers, because he stemmed from the four elements (ἐπειδήπερ ἐκ τῶν τεσσάρων στοιχείων<sup>37</sup>), which seems to refer to Thomas’ body. At the same time, he is led by only one officer, because he is or belongs to one (ἐπειδήπερ ἑνός), to whom he goes, which could be understood as a reference to Thomas’ soul in its relationship to God. On the other hand, Jesus was pierced only by one, because he stemmed from one (ἐπειδήπερ ἕξ ἑνός). The question is actually the same as before. That the Lord stems from one (ἕξ ἑνός) likely reflects his divine origin from the Father and his salvific power. It could be objected that, due to the connection of ἐπειδήπερ ἕξ ἑνός with the fact that Jesus was pierced, the expression could refer directly to Jesus’ body. But in this case, an explicit subject would be expected (for example, ‘my Lord’s body’) and not the generic ‘my Lord’ (ὁ κύριός μου). Therefore, rather than indicating a difference in the character of Jesus’ and the apostle’s body, the passage more likely points out the different origins, divine in the case of Jesus, and creatural, from the four elements, in the case of the apostle.<sup>38</sup> However, it must be acknowledged that, according to this interpretation, it is difficult to infer any implications for Jesus’ body from these lines.

3.5. In the twelfth act, Ouazanes, the son of King Misdaeus, is introduced to the plot. After referring to Jesus’ divine reality and origin (ὕψιστος παρὰ τοῦ μεγίστου γέγονεν, υἱὸς βάθους μονογενής), *Ath* 143 declares that Jesus was called the ‘son of the Virgin Mary’<sup>39</sup> and was termed ‘the son of Joseph the carpenter’ (ἐκλήθη υἱὸς Μαρίας παρθένου καὶ ἠκούσθη υἱὸς τέκτονος Ἰωσήφ). There seems to be a triple gradation: a) in the intra-divine sphere, the Only-begotten Son γέγονεν; b) in relationship with Mary, Jesus ἐκλήθη; c) in relationship with Joseph, Jesus ἠκούσθη. The difference between b) and c) could simply reflect the different relationships

<sup>37</sup> P has ἐκ τεσσάρων.

<sup>38</sup> This was also the opinion of A. Orbe, *Cristología gnóstica. Introducción a la soteriología de los siglos II y III*, I (Madrid, 1976) 389-90.

<sup>39</sup> This statement is omitted in the Syriac version.

established by the Gospels between Jesus and Mary on the one hand, and Jesus and Joseph on the other hand. But why does the *ATH* use the verb ἐκλήθη to present Jesus' sonship from Mary the Virgin instead of just εἶμι or γίγνομαι? Is this just to indicate a difference between the divine sphere (a) and the human one (b)? Or could this have implications for the nature and the properties of Jesus' humanity, as if the *ATH* were distancing itself from a traditional fact? A clear answer is difficult, because ἐκλήθη does not necessarily imply that Jesus 'was called' but 'was not' Mary's son, that is, it does allow the interpretation that Jesus was really what he was called.

Still in the same paragraph, Jesus' description continues as follows: (1) he is the one 'whose human body we touched even with our hands' (οὗ τὸ σῶμα ἀνθρώπινον καὶ ταῖς χερσὶν ἐψηλαφήσαμεν), (2) 'his appearance we saw transformed with our eyes' (τὴν δὲ θέαν εἶδομεν ἐνηλλοιωμένην τοῖς ἡμετέροις ὀφθαλμοῖς), (3) 'but his heavenly form on the mountain we were not able to see' (τὸν δὲ τύπον αὐτοῦ τὸν οὐράνιον ἐν τῷ ὄρει ἰδεῖν οὐκ ἠδυνήθημεν). Two questions rise from these words of the apostle. First, who is meant by the implicit subject of the verb? All the apostles? Some of them? And connected with this: is the author referring to one concrete scene or to several? Scholars usually point to the episode of the Transfiguration.<sup>40</sup> If this is the case, then it is clear the author of the *ATH* has reinterpreted the scene, making not only Peter, James and John appear in it, but at least Thomas as well.<sup>41</sup> Second, what does the particle καὶ mean in the expression καὶ ταῖς χερσὶν ἐψηλαφήσαμεν, and how does it affect the understanding of οὗ τὸ σῶμα ἀνθρώπινον? In my opinion, among the adverbial meanings of καὶ, the particle is here best translated as 'even'. Thus, the author probably intended to underline the sensible character of the apostolic experience and therefore the sensible character of Jesus' body. This accords with the general structure of the passage. In fact, there seems to be a threefold progression in it: 1) The first step consists, as we have already pointed out, of making clear that touching Jesus implies a sensible experience. 2) The apostles could not only check this character of Jesus' body, but they

<sup>40</sup> The participle ἐνηλλοιωμένην is similar to the one in the episode of the transfiguration according to some witnesses of Lk 9,29. In any case, it is usually noted as a reference to 1Jn 1,1 as well.

<sup>41</sup> So A. Orbe, *Cristología gnóstica. Introducción a la soteriología de los siglos II y III*, II (Madrid, 1976) 108.

could see his appearance transformed with their eyes; this transformation affects Jesus' body and implies a change in its aspect. 3) The highest degree consists of seeing Jesus' celestial form, which the apostles were not able to experience on the mountain. Thus, the author seems to have described the way to progress in the knowledge of Jesus, from the bottom to the top.<sup>42</sup> Unfortunately, we don't know what sort of relationship the author established between Jesus' divine form and his body. If the mountain the passage refers to is Mount Tabor, then it is probable that Jesus' divine form could only be revealed, for the author of the *ATH*, after the Resurrection.<sup>43</sup>

3.6. There are still some other expressions that should be added to our discussion to complete the picture. In *ATH* 72, a paragraph that belongs to the eighth act (concerning the wild asses), Thomas describes Jesus as the one 'who took a form and became as a human being and appeared to all of us' (ὁ τύπον λαβὼν καὶ γενόμενος ὡς ἄνθρωπος καὶ πᾶσιν ἡμῶν φανείς) in order not to separate us from his love.<sup>44</sup> The interpretation of the sentence obviously depends upon the meaning of τύπον<sup>45</sup> λαβὼν and above all of γενόμενος ὡς ἄνθρωπος.<sup>46</sup> Concerning τύπον λαβὼν, it can be noted that we have seen that Jesus had, according to *ATH* 143, a celestial form.<sup>47</sup> In the present case, the author surely means a human τύπος, as the second participial construction (γενόμενος ὡς ἄνθρωπος) makes clear. To interpret

<sup>42</sup> This hypothesis links the three sentences and offers an explanation for the meaning of the two particles δὲ that join them.

<sup>43</sup> This, of course, leads us to consider the writing's understanding of this mystery of Jesus' life. We will make some remarks about it further down, in the anthropological / soteriological section.

<sup>44</sup> These words of the apostle continue with a reference to the death of Christ on the Cross: 'Lord, you are he who has given himself for us and has bought us at a price with your blood' (σὺ εἶ κύριε ὁ ἑαυτὸν δοὺς ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν καὶ τῷ αἵματι σου ἡμᾶς ἐξαγοράσας).

<sup>45</sup> For τύπος in the *Acts of Thomas*, cf. *ATH* 6; 18 (only in some witnesses); 37; 72; 77; 143.

<sup>46</sup> Cf. the related expression in *ATH* 80: δόξα τῆ θεότητί σου ἢ δι' ἡμᾶς εἰς ἀπεικασίαν ἀνθρώπων ὄφθη.

<sup>47</sup> Cf. *ATH* 143: τὸν δὲ τύπον αὐτοῦ τὸν οὐράνιον ἐν τῷ ὄρει ἰδεῖν οὐκ ἠδυνήθημεν.



this last expression,<sup>48</sup> it is proper to consider *ATH* 47, where we also find the construction ὡς ἄνθρωπος in a passage with formal resemblances to *ATH* 72. In *ATH* 47, Jesus, presented simultaneously as Saviour and in need, is the one ‘who rests from the toil of the journey as a human being and walks upon the waves as God’ (ὁ ἐπαναπαυόμενος ἀπὸ τῆς ὁδοιπορίας τοῦ καμάτου ὡς ἄνθρωπος καὶ ἐπὶ τοῖς κύμασι περιπατῶν ὡς θεός). Now, this last statement distinguishes the two dimensions of Jesus’ life. The original one, that is, the divine (ὡς θεός) and the one that he has assumed, the human one (ὡς ἄνθρωπος). The parallelism of the formulation would invite us to see in the human side the same reality as in the divine side. In other words, if Jesus can walk on the waves because he is really God, he has to rest from the weariness of travelling because he is really a man, and more precisely a man with a body, a man that can be affected by weariness. Now, although a more thorough analysis of the concepts of ἄνθρωπος and ἀνθρωπότης in the *Acts of Thomas* is needed, our text does not seem to refer to different kinds of human beings. Rather, the *Acts of Thomas* seems to refer, during life on earth, to the one human being composed of a soul and a body in substance and properties,<sup>49</sup> so that at first sight it is difficult to see an exception in this passage. This also seems to be suggested by the use of the term ἀνθρωπότης. In fact, the apostle praises Jesus’ ἀνθρωπότης, ‘which died for us, to make us live’ (ἥτις δι’ ἡμᾶς ἀπέθανεν, ἵνα ἡμᾶς ζωοποιήσῃ, *ATH* 80); and in *ATH* 136, Jesus is called ‘Saviour of all humankind’ (σωτήρ... πάσης ἀνθρωπότητος), so that a correspondence appears to be established between Jesus’ ἀνθρωπότης and everyone’s condition without further distinction.<sup>50</sup>

For the moment we can leave this issue here. We would like to find clearer statements about Jesus’ human character. It is clear that his origin and primary nature are divine. There are also simple sentences that reflect that he has operated as a human being, indeed, as any other human being. So far, we have not found any strong

<sup>48</sup> Some scholars state this expression is near docetism. But beyond the fact that it would be necessary to define what docetism is, I do not think this is always the case. Cf. for example Phil 2,7.

<sup>49</sup> Cf. *supra* n.33.

<sup>50</sup> Cf. *infra* the anthropological / soteriological section for further remarks in this regard.

evidence to deny that human operation in Jesus also implies for him a real flesh in substance and properties.<sup>51</sup> I will complete these christological remarks when I consider Jesus' resurrection and parousia in connection with the destiny of the soul, below.

But before continuing to the next section, I would like to note that, in my opinion, irrespective of the position adopted on the question raised above, the soteriological value of Jesus' life for the *ATH* – that is, his role as mediator – is undeniable. For this reason, I find untenable those positions on the *ATH*'s christology that hold that the text has no soteriology in the sense of a doctrine about a Saviour,<sup>52</sup> and that it does not contain references to the incarnation, crucifixion, resurrection and ascension of Christ.<sup>53</sup> From this perspective on the *ATH*, human beings work their own salvation, and Jesus is only a teacher and example for believers.<sup>54</sup> Besides some contradictions within the argument itself,<sup>55</sup> this position does not fit well with either

<sup>51</sup> Cf. n.33.

<sup>52</sup> Cf. the introduction of H.J.W. Drijvers in the sixth edition of the *Neutestamentliche Apokryphen*, vol. II, 289-303. He is followed in this point by Luttikhuisen, 'The Hymn of Jude Thomas', 112.

<sup>53</sup> Cf. what we said at the beginning of this section. In particular, cf. *ATH* 59 for Jesus' crucifixion, *ATH* 72, 19, and 158 for his death, *ATH* 59 and 80 for his resurrection, and *ATH* 80 for his ascension.

<sup>54</sup> Cf. Drijvers, *Neutestamentliche Apokryphen*, II, 295. He also says there is no mention of χάρις. But besides the role the Spirit plays in our writing, χάρις is not absent. Cf. for example *ATH* 28: 'Come to him who is truly good, that from him you may receive grace and place his sign upon your souls!' (ἔλθετε πρὸς τὸν ὄντως ἀγαθόν, ἵνα παρ' αὐτοῦ τὴν χάριν δέξησθε, καὶ τὸ αὐτοῦ σημεῖον ἐγκαταθήσεσθε ταῖς ὑμετέραις ψυχαῖς). Cf. also *ATH* 3; 13; 24; 27 (only in some manuscripts); 49; 153; 160; 165; 169 (only in some manuscripts).

<sup>55</sup> Although Drijvers, *Neutestamentliche Apokryphen*, II, 295, says there is no actual soteriology in the *Acts of Thomas*, he calls Jesus 'Saviour' ('Erlöser') on pages 294-295. In addition, he states the following on page 299, regarding the pneumatology and sacramentology of our writing: 'Er (= der Geist) wird 'heiliger Name Christi' genannt (c. 27, 132), 'Kraft des Höchsten' (c. 27), 'Kraft, die in Christus wohnt' (c. 132), 'unsichtbare Kraft', 'durch welche die Täuflinge erneuert werden' (c. 132). Diese Rolle des Heiligen Geistes im Erlösungsprozess bringt ganz konsequent eine Geist-Christologie mit sich'.

the mediatorial character of Christ in our text,<sup>56</sup> or with the *ATH*'s ministerial and sacramental conceptions, the aspects of the latter we will now present.

#### 4. *The 'Body of Christ' in Sacramental Context*

The prayers and epiclesis related to anointment, baptism, and the Eucharist are some of the more often-studied elements of the *ATH*.<sup>57</sup> For our purposes, it is necessary to underline one aspect within this field, namely the fact that the *ATH* speaks of the Eucharist as 'the body of Christ' and as his 'holy body'.

The context of the following passages is ritual. In *ATH* 49, in the fifth act concerning the devil who lived in a woman, the apostle completes the Christian initiation of the believers with their participation in the Eucharist of the holy body and blood of Jesus (τῆς εὐχαριστίας τοῦ σώματός σου τοῦ ἁγίου καὶ τοῦ αἵματος). Here τοῦ σώματός σου τοῦ ἁγίου καὶ τοῦ αἵματος is an objective genitive of τῆς εὐχαριστίας, so that the whole expression means that the Eucharist is the holy body and blood of Jesus. We find a similar terminology in the tenth act, where the apostle, after conferring anointment and baptism to Mygdonia, 'broke bread, took a cup of water, and made her partake of the body of Christ and the cup of the Son of God' (τῷ τοῦ Χριστοῦ σώματι καὶ ποτηρίου τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ, *ATH* 121 [U]<sup>58</sup>). Finally, the expression 'your holy body' (τὸ σῶμά σου τὸ ἅγιον) is contained in *ATH* 158, a paragraph that we will quote and discuss below.<sup>59</sup>

<sup>56</sup> Other questions are raised by Jesus' mediatorial character. For instance, does it imply a complete and real flesh or body in both substance and properties? How is this body involved in the soteriological act? But these questions only specify the kind of mediator and Saviour Jesus is.

<sup>57</sup> Cf. the bibliography in Bremmer, *The Apocryphal Acts of Thomas*, 173-75. Important remarks can also be found in A. Orbe, *Hacia la primera teología de la procesión del Verbo. Estudios Valentinianos*, I (Rome, 1958), *La teología del Espíritu Santo. Estudios Valentinianos*, IV (Rome, 1966) and *Cristología gnóstica*. Cf. also Bornkamm, *Mythos und Legende*, 89-103.

<sup>58</sup> P presents another reading: '...and made her partake of the mysteries of Christ'.

<sup>59</sup> The *Acts of Thomas* also refers to 'the Eucharist of Christ' (τῆς εὐχαριστίας τοῦ Χριστοῦ, *ATH* 27), 'the bread of the Eucharist' (ἄρτον τῆς εὐχαριστίας, *ATH* 29), 'your (= of Jesus) Eucharist' (τῆ σῆ εὐχαριστία, *ATH* 49

As to its meaning, we have already noted that the eucharistic rite was seen as the completion and fulfillment of Christian initiation.<sup>60</sup> In fact, the narrative itself repeatedly presents a similar pattern in which conversion is followed by the ritual initiation, the final step of which is the eucharistic rite. Moreover, the perfecting function the Eucharist performs is explicitly stated in *ATH* 26.<sup>61</sup> It can also be seen in the fact that taking part in it arouses joy and gladness among the believers,<sup>62</sup> as is also the case in other early Christian texts.<sup>63</sup> The Eucharist also builds communion between Jesus and the believers,<sup>64</sup>

[P omits these words]), ‘the Eucharist of the Lord’ (τῆς εὐχαριστίας τοῦ κυρίου, *ATH* 51), ‘bread of life’ (ἄρτον ζωῆς, *ATH* 133 [U], P presents a similar text) or simply ‘this Eucharist’ or ‘Eucharist’ (cf. *ATH* 26, 29, 50, 51, and 158) or ‘bread’ (cf. *ATH* 133).

<sup>60</sup> On the other hand, the *Acts of Thomas* reflects the repeated celebration of this rite.

<sup>61</sup> ‘And the apostle said to them: ‘I am glad and entreat you... to take part with me in this Eucharist and blessed meal of the Lord and to be made perfect by it’ (καὶ κοινωνῆσαί μοι εἰς τὴν εὐχαριστίαν ταύτην καὶ εὐλογίαν τοῦ κυρίου καὶ τελειωθῆναι ἐν αὐτῇ [P has εἰσαυτῶ instead of ἐν αὐτῇ]).

<sup>62</sup> Cf. *ATH* 27: ‘And when dawn came and it was light, he broke bread, and made them partakers of the Eucharist of Christ. And they rejoiced and exulted’ (κλάσας ἄρτον κοινωνοὺς αὐτοὺς κατέστησεν τῆς εὐχαριστίας τοῦ Χριστοῦ. ἔχαιρον δὲ καὶ ἠγαλλιῶντο); *ATH* 158: ‘May this Eucharist be for your salvation and joy and for the healing of your souls’ (Γενέσθω ὑμῖν ἡ εὐχαριστία αὕτη εἰς σωτηρίαν καὶ χαρὰν καὶ ὑγίειαν τῶν ψυχῶν ὑμῶν).

<sup>63</sup> Cf. for Ptolomaeus and/or his disciples Irenaeus of Lyons, *Adversus haereses* I,2,6. Cf. M. Aroztegi, ‘La filiación, la pasión de Sophia y la formación del Pléroma (*Adversus haereses* I,2 y I,4)’, in A. Sáez *et al.* (eds), *Filiación. Cultura pagana, religión de Israel, orígenes del cristianismo. Gnosis, Valentín, valentinianos*, VII (Madrid, 2018) 233-11 at 273-79 and ‘Eucaristía y filiación en las teologías de los siglos II y III’, in P. de Navascués *et al.* (eds), *Filiación. Cultura pagana, religión de Israel, orígenes del cristianismo*, V (Madrid, 2012) 257-89 at 260-66.

<sup>64</sup> Cf. *ATH* 49: ‘And the apostle stood by it and said: ‘Jesus, who have deemed us worthy to partake of the Eucharist of your holy body and blood (Ἰησοῦ ὁ καταξιώσας ἡμᾶς τῆς εὐχαριστίας τοῦ σώματός σου τοῦ ἁγίου καὶ τοῦ αἵματος κοινωνῆσαι), behold, we are emboldened to come to your Eucharist and to invoke your holy name: come and have communion with us (ἔλθε καὶ κοινωνήσον ἡμῖν).’

and is for them salvation,<sup>65</sup> piety and compassion,<sup>66</sup> forgiveness of sins,<sup>67</sup> and eternal life.<sup>68</sup>

As we can see, the doctrine of the *ATH* concerning the Eucharist contains, starting with the terminology of ‘body of Christ’, several traditional elements that, at least at this generic level, could easily be shared by many Christian authors of the first three centuries. However, focusing on a more specific level, one important issue arises for our argument, namely, the effects of the Eucharist from an anthropological perspective.<sup>69</sup> In fact, although the terminology of *σῶμα* is

<sup>65</sup> Cf. *ATH* 158: ‘Your holy body which was crucified for us we eat; and your blood that was shed for us to salvation we drink (Τὸ σῶμά σου τὸ ἅγιον τὸ ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν σταυρωθὲν ἐσθίομεν καὶ τὸ αἷμά σου τὸ ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν ἐκχυθὲν εἰς σωτηρίαν πίνομεν); may therefore your body be salvation for us and your blood be for forgiveness of sins (γένηται οὖν ἡμῖν τὸ σῶμά σου σωτηρία καὶ τὸ αἷμά σου εἰς ἄφεσιν ἁμαρτιῶν)... May this Eucharist be for your salvation and joy and for the healing of your souls (εἰς σωτηρίαν καὶ χαρὰν καὶ ὑγίειαν τῶν ψυχῶν ὑμῶν)’.

<sup>66</sup> Cf. *ATH* 29: ‘May this Eucharist be for you for compassion and mercy and not for judgement and retribution (εἰς εὐσπλαγγίαν καὶ ἔλεος καὶ μὴ εἰς κρίσιν καὶ ἀμοιβήν)’.

<sup>67</sup> Cf. *ATH* 50: ‘This shall be for you for remission of sins’ (Ἔσται σοι τοῦτο εἰς ἄφεσιν ἁμαρτιῶν). We do not treat the textual problem just after these words. Cf. also *ATH* 133: ‘You (= bread of life) have been deemed worthy to receive a gift, that you may become to us forgiveness of sins... Let the power of blessing come and let the bread be established, that all the souls which partake of it may be washed from their sins’ (ἀπὸ τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν); and *ATH* 158, where forgiveness of sins is specifically connected with the blood of Christ: ‘May therefore your body be to us salvation and your blood for forgiveness of sins’ (εἰς ἄφεσιν ἁμαρτιῶν) (in U is connected with the body of Christ).

<sup>68</sup> Cf. *ATH* 120, where Mygdonia says to her servant Marcia, just before receiving the initiation: ‘Be my partner for eternal life’ (γενοῦ μοι κοινωνὸς τῆς αἰωνίου ζωῆς); *ATH* 121: ‘You have received your seal. Obtain for yourself eternal life (κτίσαι σεαυτῇ ζωὴν αἰώνιον)’; and *ATH* 133: the Eucharist is called ‘bread of life’ (ἄρτον ζωῆς) and it is said that those who eat it shall be ‘incorruptible’ (ἄφθαρτοι) and ‘immortal’ (ἀθάνατοι).

<sup>69</sup> For the different theologies of the Eucharist in the second and third centuries, cf. Aroztegi, ‘Eucaristía y filiación’, 257-89. In this paper, Aroztegi ascribes *ATH* 27 to Valentinianism and explains it in the light of other Valentinian texts, such as the *Excerpta ex Theodoto*. Now, the similarities of this passage with Valentinianism are clear and are not to be denied. In any case, we wonder if this Valentinian character can be attributed to the whole

present throughout the sacramental field of the *Ath*, the Eucharist received by the believers seems to have an effect only or at least mainly upon their souls. Let us consider two passages in this respect.

In *Ath* 133, during the initiation of Siphor, his wife, and his daughter, the apostle, after setting bread on the table and blessing it, addresses the bread itself in personal terms:

Ἄρτον ζωῆς ὃν οἱ ἐσθίοντες ἄφθαρτοι διαμείνωσιν.<sup>70</sup> ἄρτος ὁ κορεννὺς ψυχᾶς πεινώσας τοῦ αὐτοῦ μακαρισμοῦ.<sup>71</sup> σὺ εἶ ὁ καταξιώσας δέξασθαι δωρεὰν ἵνα γένη ἡμῖν ἄφεσις ἁμαρτιῶν καὶ οἱ ἐσθίοντές σε ἀθάνατοι γένωνται· ἐπιφημίζομέν σε τὸ τῆς μητρὸς ὄνομα, ἀπορρήτου μυστηρίου ἀρχῶν τε καὶ ἐξουσιῶν κεκρυμμένων· ἐπιφημίζομέν σου ὄνοματί σου Ἰησοῦ. Καὶ εἶπεν· Ἐλθάτω δύναμις εὐλογίας καὶ ἐνιδρύσθω ὁ ἄρτος, ἵνα πᾶσαι αἱ μεταλαμβάνουσαι ψυχαὶ ἀπὸ τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν ἀπολούσονται.

Bread of life, those who eat of which remain incorruptible, bread, which fills hungry souls with its blessedness. You are the one who deems [us] worthy to receive the gift, that you may become to us forgiveness of sins, and that those who eat you may become immortal. We invoke over you the name of the mother, of the unspeakable mystery of the hidden powers and authorities: we invoke upon you the name of your Jesus. And he said: Let the power of blessing come and let the bread be established, that all the souls which partake of it may be washed from their sins.

According to the passage, the ‘hungry souls’ (ψυχᾶς πεινώσας) are the main receivers of the eucharistic gifts. It could be objected that the text presents incorruptibility and immortality as promises for those who partake of the Eucharist. This is true, but, as we will see below, it only confirms what we have just stated. For, according to the anthropological view of the *Ath*, the body seems to be destined for corruption – and not because of moral reasons.

The second passage, *Ath* 158, belongs to the thirteenth act, in which Ouazanes, Tertia and Mnesara take part in the initiation rites.

writing or not. If not, it would mean that texts such as *Ath* 27—with Valentinian elements or with elements similar to Valentinianism—would have been assembled in a wider narrative of different ideology.

<sup>70</sup> Ἄρτον ζωῆς ὃν οἱ ἐσθίοντες ἄφθαρτοι διαμείνωσιν: U presents here a similar reading.

<sup>71</sup> ἄρτος ὁ κορεννὺς ψυχᾶς πεινώσας τοῦ αὐτοῦ μακαρισμοῦ: U; P omits it.

After they come out of the water, the apostle takes bread and a cup, blesses them, and says:

Τὸ σῶμά σου τὸ ἅγιον τὸ ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν σταυρωθὲν ἐσθίομεν καὶ τὸ αἷμά σου τὸ ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν ἐκχυθὲν εἰς σωτηρίαν πίνομεν· γένηται οὖν ἡμῖν τὸ σῶμά σου σωτηρία καὶ τὸ αἷμά σου εἰς ἄφεσιν ἁμαρτιῶν. ἀντὶ δὲ τῆς χολῆς ἧς ἔπιες δι' ἡμᾶς περαιοῦσθω ἀφ' ἡμῶν ἡ τοῦ διαβόλου χολή· ἀντὶ δὲ τοῦ ὄξους οὗ πέπωκας ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν ἐνδυναμούσθω ἡ ἀσθένεια ἡμῶν· ἀντὶ δὲ πτύσματος οὗ ἐδέξω δι' ἡμᾶς δεξώμεθα δρόσον τῆς σῆς χρηστότητος· καὶ ἐν τῷ καλάμῳ ᾧ ἔτυπάν σε δι' ἡμᾶς δεξώμεθα τὸν οἶκον τὸν τέλειον· ὅτι δὲ ἀκάνθινον στέφανον ἔλαβες δι' ἡμᾶς, στέφανον ἀναδησώμεθα ἀμαράντινον οἱ ἀγαπήσαντές σε· ἀντὶ δὲ σινδόνης ἧς ἐνειλήθης καὶ ἡμεῖς περιζωσθῶμεν τὴν ἀήττητόν σου δύναμιν· ἀντὶ δὲ μνημείου καινοῦ καὶ ταφῆς ἀνακαινισμόν τῆς ψυχῆς δεξώμεθα καὶ τοῦ σώματος, ὅτι δὲ ἀνέστης καὶ ἀνεβίωσας, ἀναβίωσαντες ζήσωμεν καὶ στῶμεν πρὸ σοῦ ἐν κρίσει δικαίᾳ. Καὶ κλάσας τὴν εὐχαριστίαν ἔδωκεν Οὐαζάνῃ καὶ Τερτία καὶ Μνησάρα καὶ τῇ τοῦ Σιφόρου γυναικὶ καὶ θυγατρὶ καὶ εἶπεν· Γενέσθω ὑμῖν ἡ εὐχαριστία αὕτη εἰς σωτηρίαν καὶ χαρὰν καὶ ὑγίειαν τῶν ψυχῶν ὑμῶν. Καὶ αὐτοὶ εἶπον· Ἀμήν. Καὶ φωνὴ ἠκούσθη λέγουσα· Ἀμήν· μὴ φοβεῖσθε ἀλλὰ μόνον πιστεῦσατε.

Your holy body, which was crucified for us, we eat; and your blood that was shed for us for salvation, we drink; therefore, may your body be salvation for us and your blood be for forgiveness of sins. For the gall which you drank for our sakes, may the gall of the devil be taken away from us; and for the vinegar which you drank for us, may our weakness be strengthened; for the spittle which you received for our sakes, may we receive the dew of your goodness; and in the reed with which they struck you for our sakes, let us receive the perfect house; and because you received a crown of thorns for our sake, may we who have loved you crown ourselves with an imperishable crown; and for the linen in which you were wrapped, let us also be clothed with your invincible power; and for the new tomb and burial let us receive renewing of soul and body. And because you rose again and came to life, let us rise again and live and stand before you in righteous judgement. And he broke the bread of the Eucharist and gave it to Ouzanes and Tertia and Mnesara and to the wife and daughter of Siphor and said: May this Eucharist be to your salvation and joy and to the healing of your souls. And they said: Amen. And a voice was heard, saying: Amen. Be not afraid, but only believe.

The text is interesting because we find together in the same context the body of Christ that was crucified, the body of Christ that is eaten in the Eucharist and the effects that it produces in the believer who

receives it. With regard to the christological dimension, it is remarkable to find such concrete references to the crown of thorns, to the strikes with the reed, to the spitting, etc., which, at least at first sight, conveys a sense of the reality of the events. Second, it is to be noted that a connection is built between the body of Christ that was on the cross and the Eucharist, the sacramental body. Thus, the *ATH* establishes a kind of continuity between the former and the latter. Finally, concerning the matter in question (that is, the effects of the Eucharist in the believer), we can observe a small discrepancy within our text. While we read at first that the Eucharist should be a ‘renewing of soul and body’ (ἀνακαινισμόν τῆς ψυχῆς... καὶ τοῦ σώματος) ‘for the new tomb and burial’, at the end of the passage, just when the apostle breaks the bread and gives it to the little congregation, it is said that the Eucharist should be ‘to your salvation and joy and to the healing of your souls’ (εἰς σωτηρίαν καὶ χαρὰν καὶ ὑγίειαν τῶν ψυχῶν ὑμῶν).

Now, what can we say about this? First, it must be noted that the mention of the body in such a context is rather rare in our text, although we have to acknowledge that the textual evidence is not very extensive, so this remark must be taken with caution. Second, that the Eucharist may have a permanent effect in the believer’s body does not fit very well with the anthropology of the *ATH*, as we will see in the next section. For this reason, we are disposed to explain the reference to the body in *ATH* 158 in light of the healing practice of the apostle and of the moral requirements for the believers, given that both aspects affect not only the soul, but also the material part of the human being during this earthly life.<sup>72</sup>

##### 5. *Σῶμα and Material Reality in an Anthropological and Soteriological Context*

There seems to be no doubt that for the *ATH* the ἄνθρωπος is composed, during this life, of a soul and a material body.<sup>73</sup> While they are

<sup>72</sup> Cf. also the term ἀνακαινισμός in *ATH* 132 in a baptismal context, where the soul seems to be the receiver of salvation. This passage is followed by the text we have quoted first, that is, *ATH* 133.

<sup>73</sup> However, there are some expressions (ὅλον τὸν ἄνθρωπον, ὅλον τὸ σῶμα) in *ATH* 28 that would deserve some analysis to determine if our writ-



together, they constitute a certain unity and interact with each other. For instance, we see that sins have their effect not only in the soul, but also in the body according to *ATH* 28.<sup>74</sup> In this sense, the moral standards concern not only the soul, but the body as well;<sup>75</sup> and, to some extent, the latter has to be taken care of during this life.<sup>76</sup> Nevertheless, their condition is very different due, above all, to their contrary destinies.

It is true that material reality is not bad in itself, and, in fact, the believers are asked to relieve the needs of the poor, sick, or even dead.<sup>77</sup> Moreover, if in *ATH* 29 ‘the creditor’ is actually to be identified with the body, it is proper to nourish it according to what is due.<sup>78</sup> Besides, the apostle, although repeatedly stating in other contexts that physical beauty is destined to disappear, can even confess to have lost heart as he saw a young woman dead, for she was beautiful (εὐμορφος, *ATH* 53).<sup>79</sup> We even see (cf. *ATH* 170) that the bones of the apostle or the dust around it can be a vehicle of the divine power to heal a demonic possession. The latter is, in any case, striking, when

ing applies also occasionally the term ἄνθρωπος merely to the soul. Cf. maybe also *ATH* 66.

<sup>74</sup> ‘For fornication destroys the mind and darkens the eyes of the soul and becomes a hindrance to the right regulation of the body, changing the whole human being into feebleness and throwing the whole body into disease. Greediness brings the soul into fear and shame, being inside the body, and robs what belongs to another, and suspects that, in returning to the owners their property, it will be put to shame’.

<sup>75</sup> Cf. for instance *ATH* 126.

<sup>76</sup> This can be seen in different ways. Cf. *infra*. With regard to the healing activity of the apostle, it could be said briefly that the soul has to be saved, whereas the body has to be healed (temporarily). Cf. for example *ATH* 36 and 37: during this life, Jesus is ἀνάπαυσις ταῖς ψυχαῖς ὑμῶν, ἰατρός δὲ καὶ τῶν σωμάτων (P omits these words); *ATH* 42: διὰ σοῦ γὰρ οὗτος κηρύσσεται ὁ σωτήρ τῶν ψυχῶν τῶν πρὸς αὐτὸν ἐρχομένων, καὶ διὰ σοῦ ἰατρεύεται τὰ σώματα τῶν ὑπὸ τοῦ ἐχθροῦ κολαζομένων.

<sup>77</sup> Cf. *ATH* 18, 20, 34, 59, and 85.

<sup>78</sup> Although it is necessary to take care not to give too much to the body, for it will ask for more than is proper. Cf. *ATH* 29.

<sup>79</sup> Cf. also *ATH* 8, where it is said about the apostle: ἦν δὲ καὶ τῆ ἰδέα ὄραϊος ὑπὲρ πάντας τοὺς ἐκεῖσε ὄντας; *ATH* 30, where we are told that the apostle saw the body of a handsome young man lying (νέου εὐμόρφου κείμενον); *ATH* 31, in which the serpent says a certain woman was beautiful (Γυνή τίς ἐστιν ὄραία).

considered within the whole character of the text, and so has been considered by some scholars a later addition.

However, reigning in our text is the conviction that the body, along with material creation, is subject to corruption; that is, its destiny is to return to its nature, which is dust.<sup>80</sup> For example, in *ATH* 37, the reason to exhort the audience to lift themselves up out of their former ways of life and of the whole body is that this latter grows old and vanishes, 'returning to its own nature' (ὕποστρέφον εἰς τὴν ἑαυτοῦ φύσιν<sup>81</sup>).<sup>82</sup> This condition has been made even more manifest by the moral corruption that unbelief has brought about among mankind.<sup>83</sup>

Certainly, the salvation bestowed by Jesus is received by the soul through a message preached in this physical world, while the soul itself is within material creation, within a particular body. But although this latter is described explicitly as a receptacle of the heavenly gift,<sup>84</sup> and although the body is often the object of the apostle's healings, it is not implied that the body takes part in the revealed divine reality and is destined to be transformed by it. This is the case in other Christian streams of the second and third centuries, in particular and most clearly in the so-called Asiatic tradition.<sup>85</sup> In other words, while the

<sup>80</sup> There seems to be a weakness that belongs to the human body of flesh. Cf. also *ATH* 1, where Thomas refuses in the first moment to travel to India διὰ τὴν ἀσθένειαν τῆς σαρκός.

<sup>81</sup> P's different reading seems to make less sense in the context.

<sup>82</sup> This constitutes the main contrast between soul and body. Although not bad in itself, the body is in this sense 'strange' to the soul. This would be reflected in *ATH* 39 if we assume that 'the alien bodies' which the apostle refers to are not only the animals' bodies, but also, as an image, the human bodies which the souls inhabit during this earthly life. Cf. also for this contrast *ATH* 61, 88, 95, 117, 124, 127, 129, 130, 135, 136, and 139.

<sup>83</sup> Cf. for example *ATH* 12.

<sup>84</sup> Cf. *ATH* 94: 'The apostle said: 'Lord, these souls which are yours praise and thank you; the bodies which you deemed worthy to be habitations of your heavenly gift thank you' (εὐχαριστοῦσιν σοι τὰ σώματα ἃ κατηξίωσας γενέσθαι οἰκητήρια τῆς δωρεᾶς σου τῆς ἐπουρανίου [P presents here a different reading]). Cf. maybe in an implicit way *ATH* 87, 88, 156.

<sup>85</sup> Represented for example by Irenaeus of Lyons. For theological traditions in the pre-Nicene period, cf. A. Orbe, 'Sobre los inicios de la teología. Notas sin importancia', *EsEc* 56 (1981) 689-704 and 'La patristica y el progreso de la teología', *Gregorianum* 50 (1969) 543-69.

visible world and the human body are God's creation, they are not the object of God's gospel or salvation.

On the contrary, the soul is seen as having a special affinity with the divine world.<sup>86</sup> Whether this affinity is to be identified with substantiality or not is a question deserving of further and more profound book-length analysis. I am inclined to think that, as a whole, the *ATH* does not consider the soul to be strictly divine.<sup>87</sup> In any case, the soul is the true recipient of salvation.<sup>88</sup> Textual proofs of this are innumerable.<sup>89</sup> For example, in *ATH* 93 (in the ninth act), answering those who fear for the salvation of Mygdonia because of the important social and political position of her husband, Charisius, the apostle says: 'If the Lord has truly and indeed risen in her soul (*ἀληθῶς καὶ βεβαίως ἀνέτειλεν ὁ κύριος εἰς τὴν ταύτης ψυχὴν*) and she has received the sown seed, she will neither care for this earthly life nor fear death, nor will Charisius be able to harm her in any way. For he whom she has received into her soul is greater (*μείζων γὰρ ἐστὶν ἐκεῖνος ὃν ὑπεδέξατο εἰς τὴν ἰδίαν ψυχὴν*)'. And in *ATH* 95, although it is known that the apostle is able to heal the body, Mygdonia says to her husband that Judas is 'a physician of souls, for most physicians heal bodies, which decay, but he heals souls, which do not perish (*ἰατρός ἐστὶν ψυχῶν· οἱ γὰρ πολλοὶ τῶν ἰατρῶν σώματα ἰατρούουσιν τὰ λυόμενα, οὗτος δὲ ψυχὰς τὰς μὴ φθειρομένας*).

This aspect of the anthropological thought of the *Acts of Thomas* appears even clearer in the passages with an eschatological context. Thus, Mygdonia says to Charisius in *ATH* 117 (still in the ninth act):

<sup>86</sup> For *συγγένεια* or *συγγενής* in connection with this meaning, cf. *ATH* 34, 39, 43, 61, 109, and 142.

<sup>87</sup> I am conscious that this statement is problematic. First of all, what is the *ATH* as a whole? For example, are the nuptial hymn and the hymn of the pearl original or later additions? Besides the concept of *συγγένεια* (cf. the previous note), it would be necessary to study the passages in which the origin and the destiny of the soul are treated. Cf. for example *ATH* 15, 43, 46, 141, and 144. Acknowledging that there are expressions that underline strongly the affinity of the soul with the divine world, on the other hand, there are some features of the *ATH* that seem at first sight not compatible with its divine character. For example, the punishments for the wicked and unbelieving souls are considered eternal. Cf. *ATH* 66.

<sup>88</sup> The physical healings point to the salvation of the soul. Cf. for instance *ATH* 36. Cf. A. Orbe, *Cristología gnóstica*, II, 44-45.

<sup>89</sup> Cf. for example *ATH* 22-29, 93, 95, 117, 139, 141, 142, 143, and 157.

‘Only Jesus remains forever, and the souls which hope in him’ (Ἰησοῦς δὲ μόνος μένει εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα καὶ αἱ ψυχαὶ αἱ εἰς αὐτὸν ἐλπίζουσαι). There was a time (as Mygdonia continues in *ATH* 124, now in the tenth act, after receiving the seal) for this life, for the temporal marriage, for the corruptible union, for the mortal spouse, but now it is time for the eternal life, for the everlasting marriage, for the eternal union, for the immortal spouse, Jesus. Because of this, Mygdonia asks the mysterious mother that the remainder of the last day of her life be cut off so that she may depart from this life (μετασταίην ἐκ τοῦ βίου, *ATH* 129 [U]) and go to the one in which ‘there is neither day and night nor light and darkness, neither good and bad nor poor and rich, male and female, free or bond, no proud one subduing the meek’.

The same meaning is to be given to the passages in which the last moments of the apostle’s life are reported. In *ATH* 142, in the twelfth act, as he entered into prison, he says: ‘I rejoice and am glad, since I know that the times are fulfilled, so that I might go in and receive (ἰδοὺ χαίρω καὶ θάλλω εἰδὼς ὅτι ἐπληρώθησαν οἱ χρόνοι ἵνα εἰσελθὼν ἀπολάβω [U]<sup>90</sup>)’. In *ATH* 149, in a similar way, he states: ‘my soul already rejoices, because my time is at hand to receive him (= Jesus)’ (ἐμοῦ γὰρ ἤδη τέθηλεν ἡ ψυχὴ, ὅτι μου ὁ καιρὸς ἐγγύς ἀπολαβεῖν αὐτόν [U]). A few paragraphs later, the last time he is imprisoned, the apostle addresses the women that accompany him, conscious that he will not speak ‘anymore in the body’ (ἔτι ἐν σώματι, *ATH* 159 [U]). In this context, it is important to note that the apostle interprets his physical death as only an apparent death. Truly, it is only the ‘setting free and releasing of the body’ (ἀπαλλαγὴ δὲ καὶ τοῦ σώματος λύσις, *ATH* 160 [U]<sup>91</sup>), ‘which I welcome gladly, that I might depart and receive that one who is beautiful, the compassionate one (*ATH* 160 [P])’.<sup>92</sup> The only worry of the apostle is stated in his last prayer, in which Thomas asks God to let no evil power take

<sup>90</sup> P’s reading is different, but the sense is similar.

<sup>91</sup> P presents a similar reading.

<sup>92</sup> Cf. also *ATH* 163, where Judas says to Misdaios: ἤλθον ἐνταῦθα ἵνα πολλοὺς σφῶσω, κἀγὼ δὲ διὰ τῶν χειρῶν σου ἀποστῶ τοῦ σώματος τούτου; and *ATH* 166, where the apostle says to those who hold him: Ακούσατέ μου νῦν γοῦν ὅτι ἐν ἐξόδῳ τῇ ἀπὸ τοῦ σώματος ἔστηκα. In both cases, P is different, but the meaning is similar.

his soul, and to give his soul freedom and perfection.<sup>93</sup> Finally, after his apparent death, as Siphor and Ouazanes remain in front of the tomb, he appears to them saying: ‘I am not here. Why are you sitting and keeping watch over me? I have gone up and received what had been hoped for’ (ἀνῆλθον γὰρ καὶ ἀπέλαβον τὸ ἐλπιζόμενον, *ATH* 169 [U]<sup>94</sup>).

Before coming to the final considerations, there still remain two christological remarks we had deferred because of their relationship with the destiny of souls. The first one refers to the meaning of the *παρουσία* of Christ according to the *ATH*. In *ATH* 160, after declaring that death is truly the definite birth to eternal life, the apostle exhorts Tertia, Mygdonia and Marcia to ‘wait for his coming (= of Christ), so that he receives you in his coming’ (προσδοκᾶτε οὖν τὴν παρουσίαν αὐτοῦ, ἵνα ἐλθὼν ἀπολάβῃ ὑμᾶς).<sup>95</sup> What does the *παρουσία* of Christ mean here? We said before that the presence and significance of the mysteries of Jesus’ life in the *ATH* are remarkable. In fact, they seem to play a concrete role within God’s historical design. Now, after considering the eschatological destiny of the body and the soul, it seems difficult to insert the *παρουσία* of Christ, according to the meaning it has in *ATH* 160, in this same frame. In this case, the coming of Christ is probably to be identified with the positive side of the physical, apparent death of the individual. It would not be a unique historical and social event, but a personal one, taking place at the moment of the definitive union of the soul with Jesus. Does this mean that the *ATH* does not contemplate a last, social coming of Christ, associated with his juridical activity? The answer depends on the interpretation of a passage in *ATH* 28, in which Thomas, after making the believers partakers of the Eucharist, exhorts them to remain pure and to wait for the Lord’s coming (τὴν τούτου παρουσίαν), ‘for he is the judge of living and dead (ὁ κριτὴς ζώντων καὶ νεκρῶν) and he gives to each one according to his deeds, and at his coming and his latter appearing (ἐν τῇ ἐλεύσει αὐτοῦ καὶ ἐπιφανείᾳ τῇ ὑστέρᾳ) no one who is about to be judged by him has a word of excuse, as if he had not heard’. Should this passage actually receive an eschatological

<sup>93</sup> Cf. *ATH* 167: ὁδήγησόν με σήμερον ἐρχόμενον πρὸς σέ. μὴ λαμβανέτω τὴν ἐμὴν ψυχὴν μηδεὶς, ἢν παρέδωκά σοι.

<sup>94</sup> P has a different reading, but a similar sense.

<sup>95</sup> U does not present any text here. Bonnet follows manuscripts K and V. P is different, but the meaning is the same.

interpretation, then some questions arise quite spontaneously: What does this latter manifestation add to the first parousia, to the individual one at the moment of each person's death? What does the expression ὁ κριτῆς ζώντων καὶ νεκρῶν mean? Does it presume some kind of resurrection of the dead? This would be strange, because for the *Ath* there does not seem to be a resurrection of the body. Another possibility would be more consistent with our text, namely that the living and the dead are to be identified with the souls that have come to life and with those that have not, respectively. In this case, the last judgement would be an eschatological confirmation of the individual judgement at the moment of each person's death.

The second christological point remaining concerns a passage in *Ath* 80 in which the destiny of Christ and the destiny of the souls are explicitly connected:

σοὶ δόξα ἐλεῆμον καὶ ἡρεμε· σοὶ δόξα λόγε σοφέ· δόξα τῇ εὐσπλαγχνία σου τῇ ἐπικυηθείσῃ ἡμῖν· δόξα τῷ ἐλέει σου τῷ ἐφ' ἡμᾶς ἀπλωθέντι· δόξα τῇ μεγαλωσύνῃ σου τῇ δι' ἡμᾶς μικρυνθείσῃ· δόξα τῇ ὑψίστῳ σου βασιλείᾳ ἣτις δι' ἡμᾶς ἐταπεινώθη· δόξα τῇ ἰσχύι σου ἣ δι' ἡμᾶς ἡλαττώθη· δόξα τῇ θεότητί σου ἣ δι' ἡμᾶς εἰς ἀπεικασίαν ἀνθρώπων ὤφθη· δόξα τῇ ἀνθρωπότητί σου, ἣτις δι' ἡμᾶς ἀπέθανεν, ἵνα ἡμᾶς ζωοποιήσῃ· δόξα τῇ ἀναστάσει σου τῇ ἀπὸ τῶν νεκρῶν· διὰ γὰρ ταύτης ἔγερσις καὶ ἀνάπαυσις ταῖς ψυχαῖς ἡμῶν γίνεται· δόξα καὶ εὐφημία τῇ ἀνόδῳ σου τῇ ἐπὶ τοὺς οὐρανοὺς· δι' αὐτῆς γὰρ ἡμῖν ὑπέδειξας τὴν ἄνοδον τοῦ ὕψους ἐπαγγελιάμενος ἡμῖν ἐκ δεξιῶν σου καθεσθῆναι καὶ συγκρῖναι τὰς δώδεκα φυλάς τοῦ Ἰσραὴλ· σὺ εἶ ὁ ἐπουράνιος λόγος τοῦ πατρός· σὺ εἶ τὸ ἀπόκρυφον φῶς τοῦ λογισμοῦ, ὃ τὴν ὁδὸν ὑποδεικνύων τῆς ἀληθείας, διώκτα τοῦ σκότους καὶ τῆς πλάνης ἐξαλειπτά.

Glory be to you, merciful and tranquil one. Glory to you, wise Word. Glory to your compassion that was born to us. Glory to your mercy, which was spread out over us. Glory to your greatness, that was made small for us. Glory to your most high kingship, which was humbled for us. Glory to your might, which was made low for us. Glory to your deity, which for us appeared in the likeness of human beings. Glory to your humanity, which died for our sakes that it might make us live. Glory to your resurrection from the dead, for through this rising and refreshment come to our souls. Glory and praise to your ascension into heaven, for through it you have shown us the path on high and promised us that we will sit with you on your right hand and with you judge the twelve tribes of Israel. You are the heavenly Word of the Father; you are the hidden light of the understanding, the one who shows the way of truth, who drives away the darkness, and who wipes out error.

What is interesting for us here is the relationship established in the passage between the resurrection of Christ and the destiny of souls. In fact, what the *ATH* declares as an effect or consequence of Christ's resurrection is the rising and rest, not of the bodies, but of the souls: δόξα τῇ ἀναστάσει σου τῇ ἀπὸ τῶν νεκρῶν· διὰ γὰρ ταύτης ἔγερσις καὶ ἀνάπαυσις ταῖς ψυχαῖς ἡμῶν γίνεται. Does this have any meaning for our comprehension of the Christology and anthropology of the *ATH*?

Regarding the ἀνάστασις of Christ, we are sure that our text has assumed the traditional fact that it took place on the third day,<sup>96</sup> as well as the traditional expression that it took place ἀπὸ τῶν νεκρῶν<sup>97</sup> or ἐκ νεκρῶν.<sup>98</sup> However, there is no certainty as to whether the *ATH* considers this a corporeal resurrection or not. While it is true that the corporeal resurrection of Christ is not explicitly denied, we must also note that our writing does not reflect any kind of interest in the corporeal identity of the risen Christ. On the contrary, references to his spiritual features can be found throughout the narrative.<sup>99</sup> In any case, even if the answer were affirmative, then we would have to inquire into the salvific relevance of the corporeal resurrection, because, as we have already observed, there seems to be no resurrection of the body from an anthropological perspective, as *ATH* 80 confirms.

In fact, according to *ATH* 80, what corresponds to the risen Christ is the ἔγερσις καὶ ἀνάπαυσις ταῖς ψυχαῖς ἡμῶν. The statement has a general scope, but primarily refers to Siphor's wife and daughter. In this context, ἔγερσις probably indicates that they return to their normal lives, as they were before the attack of the demons, as the prayer of the apostle to deliver the women in *ATH* 81 shows: 'I beseech you, let these souls be healed and rise up (ἰαθεῖσαι αἱ ψυχαὶ ἀναστήτωσαν) and become again as they were before the demons struck them'. For its part, ἀνάπαυσις is a term frequently used in the *ATH* referring to the spiritual sphere, whether in a christological, sacramental or

<sup>96</sup> Cf. *ATH* 59.

<sup>97</sup> Cf. *ATH* 80.

<sup>98</sup> Cf. *ATH* 59.

<sup>99</sup> Cf. *ATH* 34 *in fine*: the voice of Jesus does not belong to the nature of this bodily organ (οὐκ ἔστιν γὰρ τῆς φύσεως τούτου τοῦ ὀργάνου τοῦ σωματικοῦ), *ATH* 53, and 65, where it is said the risen Jesus cannot be seen with the bodily eyes, but with the eyes of the soul.

soteriological context.<sup>100</sup> Here *ἀνάπαυσις* probably indicates the salvation to which Siphor's wife and daughter are destined, in a first stage during this earthly life, and in a second one after their physical deaths, eternally. Altogether, the weight of the statement is put on the soul, as the dative *ταῖς ψυχαῖς ἡμῶν* indicates. Certainly, we have to admit that the body plays a role in the first step. In fact, without a body, the souls cannot return to this earthly life. Yet the body does not seem to be destined to take part in the *ἀνάπαυσις*. In summary, even if we assume Christ has risen in a corporeal way, this event would have no correspondence in the anthropological field.

## 6. *Final Considerations*

At the end of this journey through the *ATh*, we are conscious that we have raised rather more questions and problems than we have answered or solved. Precisely for this reason, our first conclusion is that there is still a long way to go to achieve a better knowledge of the *ATh*, a way that needs various book-length studies on key issues and detailed analyses of numerous problematic passages. Apart from this general and methodological remark, we dare to make two final comments following the argument developed above.

First, once more we can verify what the Spanish scholar A. Orbe pointed out for the whole of pre-Nicene Christian theology, namely, the importance of anthropology in sorting authors and texts and in establishing relations among them. From our study of the anthropology of the *ATh*, it is clear that the text is far from Asiatic theology, which hinges upon the salvation of the flesh (*salus carnis*). On the other hand, I do not think there is enough evidence to classify this text as a whole as 'gnostic', even if we must acknowledge that there are passages and features with undeniable 'gnostic' parallels. First, there is no trace of an inferior god or of an angel directly charged with this material world, even less identified with Yahweh. On the contrary, the God that is the Father of Jesus seems also to be the Creator. Second, I tend not to attribute a divine character to the soul in the *ATh*, at least in the whole of the plot, although its affinity with the divine world is undeniable. This is an issue that deserves deeper analysis. In this respect, the anthropology of the *ATh*, even if within a Christian

<sup>100</sup> Cf. for instance *ATh* 37, 39, 80 (*in initio*), 94.



system, could be brought together with those of other authors, previous or subsequent, pagan, Jew or Christian, that have been influenced by a platonic view of man, such as Seneca, Philo and Origen.

In any case, the presentation of the evidence has shown, if our argumentation is accepted, a terminological gap between anthropological and christological/sacramental statements in the *ATH*. This fact accords with what has been often pointed out: the *ATH* has been used, after its initial composition, in many different contexts, from ecclesiastical to Manichean and even in other circles in which the Hymn of the Pearl, if it is assumed that it is not original, may have been added. Now, I think that this gap between the anthropology and Christology/sacramentology, at least regarding the terminology, has made possible this varied history of reception. However, in relation to the original Greek of the *ATH*, should we tend to interpret the ambiguous christological statements from the point of view of the more platonic anthropological assertions? Or should we admit that there is really a gap between christological and anthropological ideology in the Greek *ATH*, such that the author or redactor could not have agreed with the famous axiom ‘the Savior assumed what had to be saved’?

## VI. Building a Palace in Heaven: Sapiential Stories within Biographies and the *Acts of Thomas*

SERGI GRAU

### 1. *Introduction: the Quest for a Genre*

One of the most debated points regarding the texts that make up the corpus of the so-called *Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles* (AAA)—the major five, but in particular those of Paul, Peter and Thomas—is the question of genre. This aspect is closely related to the concept of authorship that must be applied to this type of text, as well as the type of public to which AAA were addressed. In recent decades scholars have paid attention mainly to formal elements:<sup>1</sup> unlike works of scholarly literature and historiography, AAA do not cite the authorities, they are not interested in defining the chronological framework or making explicit their intentions as authors; in fact in no case—at least in the early apocryphal acts—do we find authors identifying themselves, nor anything resembling an authorial statement. However, their narrative techniques are exactly the same as those of historiography, or, more specifically, those of ancient biography: direct speeches are transcribed, and the materials are organised by linking

<sup>1</sup> See, especially, J.N. Bremmer, 'The Five Major Apocryphal Acts: Authors, Place, Time and Readership', in id. (ed.), *The Apocryphal Acts of Thomas* (Leuven, 2001) 149-70, updated in id., *Maidens, Magic and Martyrs in Early Christianity: Collected Essays I* (Tübingen, 2017) 219-34; R.F. Stoops, Jr. (ed.), *The Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles in Intertextual Perspectives*, *Semeia* 80 (1997); and the interesting remarks by C.M. Thomas, *The Acts of Peter, Gospel Literature, and the Ancient Novel. Rewriting the Past* (Oxford, 2003). For the connections with the ancient novel, see, especially, J.N. Bremmer, 'The Novel and the Apocryphal Acts: Place, Time and Readership', in H. Hofmann and M. Zimmerman (eds), *Groningen Colloquia on the Novel IX* (Groningen, 1998) 157-80.

various anecdotes in which the action serves as a framework for wisdom expressions. This is what the ancient rhetorical tradition called *χρηῖται*: short stories destined to be of profit, as the etymology of the term indicates.

The AAA have also been considered alongside the novel: both seek to fictionally reconstruct the past in a way that is meaningful to the present, and they abound with travel stories, wonders, aretalogy and eroticism.<sup>2</sup> However, as Ben Perry pointed out, the various texts that can be classified as Christian novels seek to propagate the Christian ascetic ideal, and not only to entertain readers with the adventures of the protagonists.<sup>3</sup>

Indeed, if we look at their basic narrative structure, it seems clear that the AAA are nothing more than biographies,<sup>4</sup> not very different from, for example, the *Life of Apollonius of Tyana* by Philostratus. However, other extra-narrative elements<sup>5</sup> that also affect their structure bring the works to a great extent closer to texts such as the

<sup>2</sup> Essential, in this sense, are the studies of R. Söder, *Die apokryphen Apostelgeschichten und die romanhafte Literatur der Antike* (Stuttgart, 1932), B.P. Reardon, *The Form of Greek Romance* (Princeton, 1991) 6-7, and, above all, J. Perkins, 'The Apocryphal Acts of Peter: a Roman à Thèse', *Arethusa* 25 (1992) 445-57, who affirms that the *Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles* are a novel subgenre, close to the modern roman à thèse. See also T. Szepessy, 'Les actes d'apôtres apocryphes et le roman antique', *Acta Antiqua* 36 (1995) 133-61, who concludes, however, that they are simply 'un type spécial du récit chrétien'. E. von Dobschütz, 'Der Roman in der altchristlichen Literatur', *DR* 111 (1902) 87-106, even postulated that Christian authors deliberately took advantage of the novelistic genre as a literary model for their own propaganda, which was criticised by R. Reitzenstein, *Hellenistische Wundererzählungen* (Leipzig, 1906). About fictionality and fictionalisation in ancient literature beyond genres, see the important contribution edited by K. De Temmerman and K. Demoen (eds), *Writing Biography in Greece and Rome. Narrative Technique and Fictionalization* (Cambridge, 2016).

<sup>3</sup> B.E. Perry, *The Ancient Romances: A Literary-Historical Account of Their Origins* (Berkeley, 1967) 31.

<sup>4</sup> See C.H. Talbert, 'Luke-Acts', in E.J. Epp and G.W. MacRae (eds), *The New Testament and Its Modern Interpreters* (Philadelphia, 1989) 297-310 at 310.

<sup>5</sup> These elements include anonymity, the coexistence of different versions in different languages with wide-ranging textual differences, and the profusion of materials of very different origins that the different redactors bring

anonymous *Life of Secundus the Silent Philosopher*, the *Life of Aesop* or the *Alexander Romance* by pseudo-Callisthenes, as noted by Richard Pervo,<sup>6</sup> who catalogues both the canonical and the apocryphal *Acts* as historical novels,<sup>7</sup> because they present fictions about famous historical figures.<sup>8</sup> In all three cases, we usually refer to them as examples in ancient times of “popular literature”, even of “lowbrow literature”, according to some scholars,<sup>9</sup> although it must be honestly recognised that we do not know the real routes of transmission of this type of work, and that the labels respond more to our modern ideas than to the ancient conceptions. The easy solution is to talk about “fictional biography” or “fringe novel”, a term that became quite fashionable a few years ago to refer to a whole series of works that do not belong to the most typified categories of the ancient novel.<sup>10</sup>

together with remarkable freedom, such that it is very difficult to try to determine an original text.

<sup>6</sup> R. Pervo, ‘The Ancient Novel Becomes Christian’, in G. Schmeling (ed.), *The Novel in the Ancient World* (Leiden, 1996) 685-711 at 689.

<sup>7</sup> In fact, L. Wills, *The Quest for the Historical Gospel: Mark, John, and the Origins of the Gospel Genre* (London, 1997) 16-17 has pointed out that the canonical Gospels are also closer to these types of more popular biographical novels than to the erudite biographies of the type written by Plutarch or Diogenes Laertius. More recently, D. Konstan and R. Walsh, ‘Civic and Subversive Biography in Antiquity’, in De Temmerman and Demoen, *Writing Biography*, 26-43, have postulated for the Gospels a genre of so-called ‘subversive biography’, close to the *Life of Aesop* or the *Alexander Romance*, or Xenophon’s *Memorabilia*, and opposed to ‘civic biography’, represented by Xenophon’s *Agesilaus*.

<sup>8</sup> R. Pervo, *Profit with Delight: The Literary Genre of the Acts of the Apostles* (Philadelphia, 1987) 121-35. The nuances added by Thomas, *The Acts of Peter*, 8-10, are, however, important: most Greek novels are, in a certain sense, historical, since the protagonists are usually historical, although adapted to narrative fiction, as E.L. Bowie, ‘The Novels and the Real World’, in B.P. Reardon (ed.), *Erotica Antiqua* (Bangor, 1997) 91-96, already pointed out.

<sup>9</sup> See especially I. Gallo, ‘Biografie di consumo in Grecia: il Romanzo di Alessandro e La vita del filosofo Secondo’, in id. (ed.), *Studi sulla biografia greca* (Naples, 1997) 185-200.

<sup>10</sup> For a remark on the term and an argument in favour of including some of these biographies fully within the genre of the novel, see N. Holzberg, ‘The Genre: Novels Proper and the Fringe’, in G. Schmeling (ed.), *The Novel in the Ancient World* (Leiden–New York–Köln, 1996) 11-28 at 26-27. For this type of remark on the *Alexander Romance*, see C. García Gual, ‘Éléments

The main problem in all these works—the *Life of Aesop*, the *Alexander Romance* and the *AAA*—is that they are texts subjected to a textual transmission process different from the one we are used to for canonical works inasmuch as attribution to a specific author naturally gives a text authority and a more inviolable character. These popular texts, on the other hand, tend to consist of multiple traditions, that is, they are a kind of “open text”,<sup>11</sup> subjected to changes of all kinds, including the omission and addition of materials and the transposition of entire scenes or episodes according to the tastes of the copyists; at the same time, the basic structure of these texts—which is, in fact, the basic structure of a typical Hellenistic biography—tends not to be significantly altered by these changes. Under these conditions, it is manifestly impossible to pretend to edit anything that resembles an original text, in the sense in which we can speak of an original in canonical texts put under the authority of an author. At best we can get close to a fluctuating text composed from various recensions and adaptations of rather uneven fidelity: an editor producing a critical edition must be content with assessing the status of each one of the redactions at a specific moment.<sup>12</sup> The materials collected and their uses present a similar situation: pre-existing epistolary collections reorganised in the new context, paradoxographic and travel stories (the more exotic the better), and materials from different cultural traditions that are adapted to have new meanings. Fortunately, in any case, the search for distinctions between reality and fiction in this type of texts seems to have been overcome.<sup>13</sup>

mythiques et biographie romanesque: la *Vie d'Alexandre* du Pseudo-Callisthène’, in C. Calame (ed.), *Métamorphoses du mythe en grèce antique*, (Genève, 1998) 127-38, and R. Stoneman, ‘The *Alexander Romance*’, in J.R. Morgan and R. Stoneman (eds), *Greek Fiction: The Greek Novel in Context* (London, 1994) 117-29.

<sup>11</sup> D. Konstan defines the text this way in ‘The *Alexander Romance*: The Cunning of the Open Text’, *Lexis* 16 (1998) 123-138; Stoneman takes up and develops the definition in his introduction to the collective volume on the *Alexander Romance*: R. Stoneman et al. (eds), *The Alexander Romance: History and Literature* (Groningen, 2018).

<sup>12</sup> See R. Stoneman, *Il romanzo di Alessandro*, vol. I (Milan, 2007) LXXIII-LXXXVIII.

<sup>13</sup> For the specific case of the *ATh*, see, especially, J.F. McGrath, ‘History and Fiction in the Acts of Thomas: The State of the Question’, *JSP* 17 (2008) 297-311, and J. Thomaskutty, *Saint Thomas the Apostle. New Testament, Apocrypha, and Historical Traditions* (London, 2018).

If by literary genre we understand a series of expectations held by the audience that can be followed, transformed or subverted by the authors, the best way to understand the functioning of works such as the AAA, which are recreated almost with each copy, is to apply to them some mechanisms of analysis similar to those applied to the study of oral texts, which are also recreated with each performance,<sup>14</sup> as stated by Christine M. Thomas.<sup>15</sup> This type of analysis also allows us to understand the process of successive diverse redactions—redactions that pretend to be identical, but actually change each time. This basic narrative strategy preserves the sense of a story's authority, while allowing for necessary adaptations for contemporary communities. This is what anthropologists call the homeostatic character of cultural tradition: the representation of the past is continually updated within the story to reflect the present, such that the past never ceases to be significant, and the community perceives the story as always the same.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>14</sup> The question of variations in performance was raised already in the pioneering studies of Albert Lord, *The Singer of Tales* (Cambridge, Mass., 1960) 100: 'Our real difficulty arises from the fact that, unlike the oral poet, we are not accustomed to thinking in terms of fluidity. We find it difficult to grasp something that is multiform. It seems ideal to us to construct an ideal text or to seek an original, and we remain dissatisfied with an ever-changing phenomenon. I believe that once we know the facts of oral composition we must cease trying to find an original of any traditional song. From an oral point of view each performance is original'. For a detailed exposition of the phenomenon, especially in his later written reflections, see G. Nagy, *Poetry as Performance. Homer and Beyond* (Cambridge, 1996). Specifically, we take his assertion that 'The need for a multitext format in editing text is most evident in the case of manuscript traditions where the phenomenon of phraseological variation seems to reach all-pervasive proportions' (Nagy, *Poetry as Performance*, 26).

<sup>15</sup> Thomas, *The Acts of Peter*, 82-86.

<sup>16</sup> Particularly useful are the syntheses by Thomas, *The Acts of Peter*, 108-113, and J. Goody and I. Watt, 'The Consequences of Literacy', in J. Goody (ed.), *Literacy in Traditional Societies* (Cambridge, 1968) 28-34. Nagy, *Poetry as performance*, 22, summed it up very well: 'The fact that even this poetic injunction against variation survives by way of variants is a striking example of a paradox that is characteristic of a wide variety of oral traditions: a tradition may claim unchangeability as a founding principle while at the same time it keeps itself alive through change'.

In any case, I think that the most appropriate label for all these prose texts is that of “text network”, coined by Daniel Selden.<sup>17</sup> We cannot consider them texts in the conventional sense of the term, nor ascribe them to a specific traditional genre; rather, they must be thought of as a complex conglomerate of interrelated texts, which appear in different forms according to each period and cultural context. It is precisely the heterogeneity of materials and their capacity to adapt to new meanings and communities that constitute their value and make them particularly apt to become ancient “best-sellers”, so to speak. Perhaps, for this reason, we should stop worrying about the ideological disparities they contain, or the type of concrete community that produced and consumed them, but study them simply for what they are: elastic, cross-cultural literary products, capable of becoming significant for different human groups at different times, thanks to their enormous capacity for adaptation and their skilful use of the materials they collect.

All these particularities give a good account of the compositional mechanisms of this type of work, and how they connect authorial and public typologies in a specific context between the 2nd and 3rd centuries AD. However, on this occasion, I would rather draw attention to the fact that the redactors of all these works undoubtedly come from a common rhetorical training, and that the expectations of their audiences are also very similar, so that some significant common trends can be traced. Specifically, all these works present more or less obvious characteristics of what we could qualify as a “wisdom novel”, that is, a taste for presenting the protagonists as wise men—not in the style of philosophers, but rather as cunning characters, capable of getting out of any situation with the resources of their wit, in the style of the Seven Wise Men or Aesop himself, who is the model for this type of imagery.

## 2. *The Sapiential Characterisation of Alexander and Aesop*

Indeed, in the *Alexander Romance*, Alexander is characterised as a sage, especially by his use of words. Just like the Aesop of the *Life of Aesop*, the Alexander depicted by Pseudo-Callisthenes is more than a great warrior: he appears as a character capable of controlling

<sup>17</sup> D.L. Selden, ‘Text Networks’, *Ancient Narrative* 8 (2010) 1-24.

situations and interlocutors, even of deliberately deceiving them, thanks to his cunning use of words. In this way he evokes Odysseus, whom he almost surpasses in travels, rather than Achilles, despite his explicit desire for this comparison. Most of the anecdotes related in the *Alexander Romance*, like those of the *Life of Aesop*, contribute fundamentally to the demonstration of the protagonists' verbal skill and the cunning, staging games of logic or fast dialogues that emphasise their superior wit.<sup>18</sup> Contrary to what one would expect in a work like this, the scenes of war and courage in the *Alexander Romance* almost fade before the attention to the games of wit by the Macedonian king, about whom Queen Candace of Ethiopia goes so far as to state (A III 23):<sup>19</sup>

For you have taken the cities not by war, but by the great acuity of your mind (οὐ γὰρ πολέμῳ ἐχειρώσω τὰς πόλεις, ἀλλ' ἀγχινοία πολλῇ).

Also, during the revolt of Mothone, Philip sends Alexander with a great army to appease it, but he (β I 23):<sup>20</sup>

By sagacious words persuaded the citizens to become subjects (λόγοις συνετοῖς ἔπεισε τούτους ὑπηκόους γενέσθαι).

It is also with his verbal skills that he manages to reconcile Philip and Olympias after the king repudiates his wife because of the suspicions that Alexander was not his son. In the course of his father's new marriage to another woman, Alexander mocks Philip, kills his counsellor and takes his sword. Instead of unleashing his fury, however, he waits for ten days to pass and then using only words he convinces his parents to make peace, using the discourse that suits each (β I 20-22). Similarly, the Aesop of the *Life* is explicitly described as εὔρεσίλογος (*Vita* G 34), that is, 'able to find the right thing to say at all times', something that is especially manifested in his verbal confrontations with the "official" philosopher Xanthus.<sup>21</sup> Alexander is also immune to the rhetoric of Ismenias—a kind of stereotyped

<sup>18</sup> See Konstan, 'The *Alexander Romance* text', 123-38.

<sup>19</sup> For text A, I follow the edition by W. Kroll, *Historia Alexandri Magni (Pseudo-Callisthenes) I. Recensio Vetusta* (Berlin, 1926).

<sup>20</sup> For the text β, I follow the edition by L. Bergson, *Der griechische Alexanderroman, Rezension β* (Stockholm – Göteborg – Uppsala, 1965).

<sup>21</sup> For Aesop's expressive skills, see especially S. Jedrkiewicz, *Sapere e paradosso nell'Antiquità: Esopo e la favola* (Rome, 1989) 183-89 and 191-94.



rhetor equivalent of the Aesopic Xanthus in the sphere of sophistry—who tries to convince him not to destroy Thebes (A I 46):

With sophistic and forged words you have tried hard to deceive Alexander? (σοφιστικούς μοι καὶ πεπλασμένους μύθους εἰπὼν ὑπέλαβες ὅτι πλανᾷς Ἀλέξανδρον;)

Alexander's answers, which seem to be maxims of wisdom in the Greek philosophical tradition, are often quite forced in the context in which they are presented, as in the following example (β I 18):

He [Nicolaus] approached Alexander and greeted him with these words: 'Greetings, young gentleman'. He replied: 'Greetings also to you wherever and wherever you may be'. Nicolaus said to Alexander: 'I am Nicolaus, the son of the king of the Acarnanians'. And Alexander said: 'Do not be so haughty, King Nicolaus, and do not boast as if you were sure to live tomorrow. For fortune is not stable anywhere, and a setback can bring down the proud'. (μὴ οὕτω γαυριῶ, Νικόλαε βασιλεῦ, φρυαττόμενος ὡς τὸ ἱκανὸν ἔχων τῆς αὔριον ζωῆς. τύχη γὰρ οὐχ ἔστηκεν ἔφ' ἑνὸς τόπου. ῥοπή δὲ τοὺς ἀλαζόνας κατευτελίζει.)

Alexander responds, therefore, with a maxim of wisdom totally out of place with the introduction made by the king. Other maxims, also well out of context, can be easily identified as aphorisms from philosophical collections because we have preserved parallels, as in this case (β III 30):

Having heard this, Alexander placed his affairs in order every day (καὶ ταῦτα ἀκούσας Ἀλέξανδρος τὰ καθ' ἑαυτοῦ διετύπου πράγματα καθ' ἡμέραν).

The expression τὰ καθ' ἑαυτοῦ διετύπου πράγματα καθ' ἡμέραν is an aphorism attributed to the Socratics or the Stoics in the *Gnomologia* (this is the apothegm 102 Sternbach), with the sense of preparing for death. However, it is used here in a totally superficial manner — more or less as the maxim in the previous example. It demonstrates, in any case, what kind of rhetorical formation the redactors of this text had received and from what kind of sources they borrowed their materials.

### 3. *Building a Palace in Heaven: Sapiential Stories in the Acts of Thomas*

The case study to which I wish to draw particular attention on this occasion concerns the story of the building of a palace in heaven (*Ath*

17-29). Despite the fact that the subject was treated in depth by Anton Hilhorst,<sup>22</sup> regarding the antecedents and parallels in the Eastern and early Christian tradition, it can be analysed from another point of view, namely in line with what we have expressed so far. Let us briefly recall the passage: the Indian king Gundaphor (or Gudnaphar, in the Syriac tradition)<sup>23</sup> sends a trusted merchant, Abban, to Jerusalem to hire a carpenter; there he meets Jesus Christ himself, who sells Thomas as a slave, pretending that he was his property, which the apostle confirms through a series of tricks and ambiguities that closely recall the puns and double meanings of the wisdom novels to which we have been referring (*ATH* 2):

And [he] wrote a bill of sale saying: ‘I, Jesus, son of the carpenter, declare that I have sold my slave (δοῦλον), Judas by name, to you, Abban, a merchant of Gudnaphor, king of the Indians.’ When the purchase was completed, the Saviour took Judas, also called Thomas, and led him to Abban, the merchant. When Abban saw him, he said to him: ‘Is this your master?’ (οὗτος ἐστὶν ὁ δεσπότης σου;) The apostle answered and said: ‘Yes, he is my Lord’ (Ναί, κύριος μου ἐστίν). And he said: ‘I have brought you from him.’ And the apostle was silent.<sup>24</sup>

After a rest in Andrapolis, or Sandaruk in the Syriac version (*ATH* 4-16), they finally arrive at the court of the Indian king, who asks him to build a palace, to which Thomas agrees; they both sketch the plans, and the king leaves him a large sum of money to pay for the works, which the apostle distributes to the poor, while claiming that he is actually building the palace for the king. However, after a time, alarmed by the reports of some friends, the king decides to go personally to see the progress of the works and discovers the truth (*ATH* 21):

<sup>22</sup> A. Hilhorst, ‘The Heavenly Palace in the Acts of Thomas’, in Bremmer, *The Apocryphal Acts of Thomas*, 53-64.

<sup>23</sup> In fact, this king has been identified as a royal historical figure, who reigned in northern India around 30-15 BC: see J.T. Reinard, ‘Mémoire géographique, historique et scientifique sur l’Inde antérieurement au milieu de XIe siècle de l’ère chrétienne’, *Mémoires de l’Académie des Inscriptions et Belles Lettres* XVIII, 2e partie (Paris, 1849); A. Cunningham, ‘Coins of Indian Buddhist Satraps with Greek Inscriptions’, *JASBengal* 23 (1854) 679-719; and, more recently, Thomaskutty, *Saint Thomas the Apostle*, 130-33.

<sup>24</sup> All translations of *ATH* by J.K. Elliott, *The Apocryphal New Testament* (Oxford, 1993), slightly modified.

And he sent for the merchant who had brought him, and for the apostle, and said to him: 'Have you built the palace?' And he said: 'Yes, I have built it.' The king said: 'When shall we go to inspect it?' And he answered and said: 'Now you cannot see it, but you shall see it when you depart from this life' (νῦν αὐτὸ ἰδεῖν οὐ δύνασαι, ἀλλ' ὅταν τοῦ βίου τούτου ἐξέλθῃς βλέπεις αὐτό).

The king puts the apostle in prison while he ponders what kind of death will be most appropriate for him for such an insult. In the meantime, his brother Gad falls ill and ends up dying, which leads to this climactic scene (*ATH* 22):

While this was going on, angels received the soul of Gad, the king's brother, and took it up into heaven, showing him the places and mansions there, asking him, 'In what place do you wish to dwell?' And when they came near the edifice of the apostle Thomas, which he had erected for the king (ὅτε δὲ ἤγγισαν εἰς τὴν οἰκοδομὴν Θωμᾶ τοῦ ἀποστόλου, ἦν ἔκτισεν τῷ βασιλεῖ), upon beholding it, said to the angels, 'I entreat you, my lords, let me dwell in one of these lower chambers.' But they said to him, 'In this building you cannot dwell.' And he said, 'Why not?' They answered, 'This palace is the one which that Christian has built for your brother.' (τοῦτο τὸ παλάτιον ἐκεῖνό ἐστιν ὃ οἰκοδόμησεν ὁ χριστιανὸς ἐκεῖνος τῷ ἀδελφῷ σου). But he said, 'I entreat you, my lords, allow me to go to my brother to buy this palace from him. For my brother does not know what it is like, and he will sell it to me.' (οὐ γὰρ οἶδεν ὁ ἀδελφός μου ὅποιόν ἐστιν, καὶ πιράσκει μοι αὐτό)

Gad's soul returns to his body and he asks his brother, under oath, to grant him whatever he requests; the king cannot refuse, therefore, and thanks to this ruse he sells his heavenly palace to him, after which Gad explains what he has seen while he was dead. Naturally, Gundaphor converts to Christianity, asks to keep his heavenly palace, and convinces his brother to ask Thomas to build another even better one for him (*ATH* 23-24).

As Hilhorst rightly points out,<sup>25</sup> the story has parallels in some Christian texts, such as the lives of Saints Laurus and Florus, who also distributed to the poor the money entrusted to them by Licinius, the son of the Empress Elpidia, to build a temple;<sup>26</sup> however, as Hilhorst

<sup>25</sup> Hilhorst, 'The Heavenly Palace', 56-57.

<sup>26</sup> F. Halkin, 'Une Passion inédite des saints Florus et Laurus. BHG 662z', *JÖB* 33 (1983) 37-44.

himself indicates,<sup>27</sup> there is no trace of a heavenly palace in this account. Nor is there any trace in other “pious frauds” of the hagiographic tradition, such as that of the monk Macarius in the *Lausiac History* (VI), who promises a rich woman some gemstones and instead spends her money to pay for a hospital. Nor do we consider relevant the Greek antecedents that Hilhorst indicates for the heavenly palaces:<sup>28</sup> neither the Olympus of the gods, nor the palace of the Sun that Ovid represents in the *Metamorphoses* (II, 1-30), nor the Islands of the Blessed share, in my view, the characteristics of this heavenly palace from the *ATh*. It is exactly the same type of enclave that the biblical tradition refers to for the heavenly palace of God (Amos 9:6), where he has his throne (Ps 103:19). To really find passages where heavenly palaces reserved for pious humans appear, we have to look at the deuterocanonical works of the OT, such as Wis (2:1-9; 4:7; 5:15-16) or 2 Macc 7:36, a motif that will become common in the NT<sup>29</sup> and very frequent in patristic literature.<sup>30</sup>

It is evident that the writer of this passage in the *ATh* has taken into account the biblical tradition, but the specific aspects of the account of the construction of the heavenly palace require us to evaluate other possible sources as well. In this vein, the episode of the construction of the heavenly palace in the *Story of Ahiqar* seems pertinent. According to the story, Ahiqar was minister-scribe to the Assyrian king Sennacherib (7th century BC), a man of sixty years without descendants, accused of treason by his adopted son Nadan/Nadab or Nadin (who was in fact the son of his sister), who does not receive an inheritance because he wasted the goods and possessions of his adoptive father. Ahiqar is sentenced to death, but the officer helps him by killing, in his place, a slave who was sentenced to death in prison. Ahiqar is hidden until the king needs to send a sage to Egypt

<sup>27</sup> Hilhorst, ‘The Heavenly Palace’, 57.

<sup>28</sup> Hilhorst, ‘The Heavenly Palace’, 58-59.

<sup>29</sup> For example, when speaking of an eternal treasure in heaven that must be preferred to the transient rewards of the earth (Mt 6:19-20, Lk 18:22), something that already goes back to Jewish tradition (Ezra 7:77, Bar 14:12). The Syriac tradition, in any case, assigns this approach to Thomas, as Ephrem of Nisibis does in one of his hymns (IV 705-706).

<sup>30</sup> Hilhorst, ‘The Heavenly Palace’, 60-61. However, he does not take into account the description of the heavenly tower in *The Shepherd of Hermas* (*Visio* 3:2-8 and *Similitudo* 9:3-14 = 10-16 and 80-90 Whittaker), which could have influenced the *ATh*.

because the Pharaoh has asked an architect to build him a palace in heaven, in exchange for a three-year tribute; if he does not succeed, it will be the Assyrians who must pay tribute to Egypt for the same period. Ahiqar uses his cunning skills to achieve his goals: he has brought some young eagles from Assyria that carry ropes tied to their legs, which are mounted by children whom he has instructed to say: ‘Give the builders mud, mortar, tiles, bricks, for they are idle!’<sup>31</sup> Upon arriving before the king of Egypt, he promises to build the palace for him, but of course no one is able to deliver the materials to the children, so the king is forced to renounce his claim. This is part of a series of tests of wit in which Ahiqar always succeeds:

Then the King was indignant with me, and said to me: ‘Thou art gone clean mad, Ahiqar: who is able to carry up anything to these boys?’ And I said to him: ‘Concerning the affairs of Sennacherib my lord, say ye nothing; for if he had been at hand, he would have built a couple of castles in one day.’<sup>32</sup>

Ahiqar, then, when he returns from Egypt, punishes Nadan and instructs him with the proverbs, one of the typical genres of wisdom literature, although Nadan ends up hanging himself after hearing them. Most scholars are of the opinion that the original language of the work was Aramaic, since a papyrus has been found in Elephantine from the 5th century BC containing the story,<sup>33</sup> but it is possible that the proverbs come from a different more ancient Assyrian collection, usually dated to the 7th century BC.<sup>34</sup> Versions of the story and proverbs also circulated in Syriac, Arabic, Armenian, Karshuni, Old

<sup>31</sup> Translation from the Syriac version by J. Rendel Harris in F.C. Conybeare *et al.* (eds), *The Story of Ahiqar from the Aramaic, Syriac, Arabic, Armenian, Ethiopic, Old Turkish, Greek and Slavonic Versions* (Cambridge, 1913<sup>2</sup>).

<sup>32</sup> Translation from the Syriac version by J. Rendel Harris.

<sup>33</sup> See P. Grelot, ‘Les proverbes araméens d’Ahiqar’, *Revue Biblique* 68 (1961) 178-94.

<sup>34</sup> Among the bibliography on Ahiqar, especially important are the studies by J.M. Lindenberger, *The Aramaic proverbs of Ahiqar*, (Baltimore, 1983), J.C. Greenfield, ‘The Wisdom of Ahiqar’, in J. Day *et al.* (eds) *Wisdom in Ancient Israel. Essays in Honour of J.A. Emerton* (Cambridge 1995) 43-52, and, specially, I. Konstantakos, *AKIXAPOΣ. ἡ διήγησις τοῦ Ἀχικὰρ στὴν ἀρχαῖα Ἑλλάδα*, 3 vols. (Athens, 2008-2013).

Slavonic, and Ethiopian.<sup>35</sup> The comparison with the texts that we have been analysing here is very pertinent, because, like Aesop, Alexander and Thomas, Ahiqar was, in all probability, a historical figure. The story, moreover, was known very early in Greece: according to Clement of Alexandria (*Strom.* I 15, 69), Democritus (68 B 299 DK) integrated in his own writings the stele of Ahiqar, in translation (τὴν Ἀκικάρου στήλην ἐρμηνευθεῖσαν τοῖς ἰδίοις συντάξει συγγράμμασι); also Diogenes Laertius, in his list of works by Theophrastus (DL V 50) includes a volume entitled Ἀκίχαρος (perhaps a dialogue with the protagonist oriental sage, as suggested by Konstantakos),<sup>36</sup> and Strabo (XVI 2, 39) places Ahiqar, with the name Ἀχαῖκαρος, among the Bosporenes, alongside other foreign sapiential figures, such as Indian gymnosophists or the Persian magicians.

Significantly, the *Life of Aesop*, in chapters 101 to 123, takes from this *Story of Ahiqar* various narrative elements, adapting them to the new context. Aesop, on his travels, goes to the Babylonian court, where the king sends him to Egypt for a wisdom contest that must free Babylon from paying tribute for three years, which naturally Aesop wins with his cunning and with the same mechanism of the children mounted on eagles in order to build a tower that does not touch heaven or earth (*Life of Aesop* 116):<sup>37</sup>

Nectenabo was struck by the wit of Aesop and the aptness of his tongue (<τὴν> εὐστοχίαν αὐτοῦ εἰδῶς καὶ τὸ εὐθετον τῆς γλώττης) and said to him: ‘Have you brought us people to build the tower?’ Aesop replied: ‘They are ready, if you will show us the place.’ The king, impressed,

<sup>35</sup> See R. Contini and C. Grottanelli (eds), *Il saggio Ahiqar. Fortune e trasformazioni di uno scritto sapienziale. Il testo più antico e le sue versioni* (Brescia, 2005).

<sup>36</sup> Konstantakos, *AKIXAPOΣ*, vol. 2, 225-70.

<sup>37</sup> Some scholars have also seen references to this episode in the construction of the towers in the sky in the *Birds* of Aristophanes (837-845; 1125-1151), although it is a controversial question: see M.J. Luzzatto, ‘Grecia e Vicino Oriente: Tracce della Storia di Ahiqar nella cultura greca tra VI e V secolo aC’, *Quaderni di Storia* 36 (1992) 30-42, which takes up the study of Q. Cataudella, ‘Aristofane e il cosiddetto ‘romanzo di Esopo’’, *Dionisio* 9 (1942) 5-14, with a sequel in Luzzatto, ‘Ancora sulla ‘Storia di Ahiqar’’, *Quaderni di Storia* 39 (1994) 253-77; for the arguments against it, see Konstantakos, *AKIXAPOΣ*, vol. 1, 83-122, which concludes that the similarities come from a common Near Eastern source or narrative pattern.

accompanied Aesop outside the city and, measuring out the area, gave it to Aesop, who stationed himself at the corner of the area designated. Getting the birds and their cargo ready with his feet and giving them trowels, he ordered them to fly up. Once in the air, they gave voice: ‘Give us mortar, brick, wood and all the things necessary to build a house.’ Nectenabo, looking at the children carried on by the eagles, said: ‘Tell me how it is that men have wings.’ Aesop replied: ‘But Lycurgus has them. Do you, a man, wish to contend with a demi-god?’ (σὺ δὲ θέλεις ἄνθρωπος ὑπάρχων ἰσοθέῳ βασιλεῖ ἐρίζειν;) [Trans. by A. Alcock, slightly modified]

The names are transformed: Sennacherib is Lycorus or Lycurgus; the stepson Nadan is here the adopted son of Aesop, who receives the name of Enos (Αἴνος), that is, the fable itself transformed into an anthroponym; the king of Egypt is Nectanebo II, protagonist of the Milesian novel that made him father of Alexander the Great, as it is taken up, not by chance, in the *Alexander Romance*. Most scholars believe that the assimilation between Ahiqar and Aesop must have occurred around the 5th century BC, or already in Hellenistic times (the *terminus ante quem* is, of course, the composition of the *Vita*). Surely, the reasons that caused the assimilation are that Aesop also acts as political adviser, both in Samos and, later, at the court of Croesus, who is an oriental king; another reason is, perhaps, his unjust accusation at Delphi, which assimilates him even more to Ahiqar, unjustly accused by his son Nadan.<sup>38</sup> It is important to note, however, that the maxims of oriental wisdom present in Ahiqar have been replaced in their equivalent of Aesop’s life by Greek maxims very similar, if not practically identical, to those of the Seven Sages. Perhaps we should affirm that a story crosses cultural boundaries more easily than a paraenesis, but, with respect to what interests us now, it is clear that, as in popular tales, a story can be adapted without any difficulty to different characters and contexts, maintaining at the same time differentiated cultural axes that should be distinguished for each occasion.

In any case, I believe that the story of the palace in heaven, as it appears in the *Story of Ahiqar* and in the adaptation made by the *Life of Aesop*, offers a much better narrative model for the episode of the *ATh*: in all three cases, the one who requests the construction of

<sup>38</sup> See L. Kurke, *Aesopic Conversations. Popular Tradition, Cultural Dialogue and the Invention of Greek Prose* (Princeton–Oxford, 2011) 179.

the palace is a king of a faraway land for the protagonists; the protagonist, characterised singularly by his cunning, accepts the challenge because he knows in advance that he is going to get away with hoodwinking the king, thanks to his wit; furthermore, he does it not for selfish gain, but because his own king and lord has asked him to. In all cases, the king is at first indignant, but later recognises the superiority of the foreign sage, who, finally, puts the king in his place, stating that he is a mortal, while his lord is a god. Exactly the same sense is manifested at the end of the *Alexander Romance*. When the monarch tries to reach the ends of the earth mounted on a basket held by two birds, he hears a voice from heaven that tells him (β II 41):

Alas, Alexander, have you not understood what is on earth and are you looking for what is in heaven? (ὦ Ἀλέξανδρε, ὃ τὰ ἐπίγεια μὴ καταλάβῳν τὰ ἐπουράνια ἐπιζητεῖς;)

The sentence also brings to mind, of course, the famous response of the Thracian slave to Thales of Miletus when the philosopher falls into a hole (Plato, *Theaetetus* 174a and Diogenes Laertius I 34, inspired by the Aesopic fable XL).

As it could not be otherwise, there are obvious differences for each concrete context: the master of Thomas is Jesus Christ, and not an Assyrian or Babylonian king (although the treatment during the story is comparable), and the final result is the conversion of the king, as opposed to the cessation of the sending tributes. The narrative structure, however, is identical, and, above all, the characterisation of the protagonist as a wise cunning character capable of outsmarting the king within the framework of a novel marked by his sapiential taste is also very similar. Even Gad's ruse to try to get his brother to sell him the palace is a very close reminiscence of Aesop's cunning.

#### 4. *Sapiential Tastes in the 2nd to 4th Centuries AD*

Another example of this style of "wisdom novel" written in Greek that we have been analysing is the famous *Joseph and Aseneth*. Of course, Joseph represents in the biblical narrative (Gen 37-39) the same characteristics of the wise counsellor of kings believed dead who reappears and solves all sorts of riddles and challenges of wit: as Ahiqar and Aesop solve riddles by the king of Egypt, Joseph interprets the Pharaoh's dreams; Ahiqar and Aesop are hidden in an empty



tomb, and Joseph is imprisoned in a dry cistern by his brothers, then in an underground dungeon by order of the Pharaoh.<sup>39</sup> Not only does Joseph appear in the novel *Joseph and Aseneth* with the usual attributes of a sage, but also his brother Levi, who is presented as a prophet, able to know what is written inside men (XXIII, 8)<sup>40</sup> and is equipped with the usual *παρηρησία* of the sages (XXIII, 10). Moreover, the destiny of the righteous is also presented as a *τόπον τῆς καταπαύσεως ἐν τοῖς ὑψίστοις*, a place built on the heights, made of immutable and eternal walls, whose foundations rest on the rock of the seventh heaven (XXII 13). In fact, some scholars<sup>41</sup> have suggested that, given the multiplicity of materials it collects and adapts, the novel must have been written in the context of 3rd and 4th centuries Syriac Christianity by a variety of author-redactors, as evidenced by the varied textual tradition. Indeed, we seem to face here a similar situation as in other works, numerous versions of *Joseph and Aseneth* are preserved, in Syriac, Greek, Armenian, Ethiopian, Latin, Old Slavic, and Romanian, and it has even been proposed that a Coptic version, now lost, also existed. As in the works we are connecting, the various versions incorporate extensive textual variants and recycle previous fragments, particularly, in this case, hymns.<sup>42</sup> As Tim Whitmarsh rightly suggests about the permeability of narrative materials in the ancient Greek novel, ‘perhaps we should not be speaking of narrative forms as proper to one culture or another. Perhaps the walls between cultures were not as secure as we, in our heavily nationalised world, like to think: maybe in Hellenistic and early imperial

<sup>39</sup> The proximity of this episode to that of Croesus, saved from execution and hidden by Cambyses in Herodotus III, 36 has also been pointed out, although perhaps it is a Near Eastern account that Herodotus would have received from a Persian informant: see S. West, ‘Croesus’ Second Reprieve and Other Tales of the Persian Court’, *Classical Quarterly* 53 (2003) 418-28.

<sup>40</sup> Λεὺις ἦν ἄνθρωπος προφήτης καὶ ἐθεώρει ὀξέως τῆ διανοίᾳ αὐτοῦ καὶ τοῖς ὀφθαλμοῖς αὐτοῦ καὶ ἀνεγίνωσκε τὰ γεγραμμένα ἐν τῆ καρδίᾳ τῶν ἀνθρώπων.

<sup>41</sup> Specially R.S. Kraemer, *When Aseneth Met Joseph. A Late Antique Tale of the Biblical Patriarch and His Egyptian Wife, Reconsidered* (New York–Oxford, 1998).

<sup>42</sup> See the interesting remarks by D. Maggiorotti, ‘Giuseppe e Aseneth’, in P. Sacchi (ed.), *Apocrifi dell’Antico Testamento*, vol. IV (Brescia, 2000) 450-58.

culture, ideas, narratives, tropes and memes were shared promiscuously among all Greek speakers, without regard for religion or ethnicity'.<sup>43</sup>

An important common denominator, as I have pointed out, is the markedly sapiential character of the protagonists of all these works, who fundamentally resolve the adventures they face through the skilful use of their words and the cunning application of their wit. It could be said, therefore, that there was at this time a certain “fashion” or literary taste for this kind of character with practical cunning, riding between the θεῖος ἄνθρωπος and the trickster of the mythological tradition. This is, in fact, the common feature of sages and philosophers in the biographies of Diogenes Laertius, who, not by chance, belongs to the same period. Furthermore, in this literary taste we must recognise the influence of the prestige of intellectuals in the period of the Antonines: this motif itself was defined by the stereotypes of the iconography of the philosophers of the past — as is the case today with footballers or pop stars— especially in the context of the Second Sophistic.<sup>44</sup> Culture was clearly en vogue and the popular, albeit superficial, interest in ancient philosophers, as well as in the representatives of the literary and cultural canon of conventional education, spread throughout the empire.

Precisely in the biographical tradition, the philosopher, as the sages already did, communicates knowledge in the form of puns or apothegms; the exposition of the philosopher's concrete doctrinal system is left to doxography, which is always added independently.<sup>45</sup> The image preserved in the biographical tradition has more to do with a piece of wisdom applied to specific situations of daily life and developed through their words, which are skilful, witty, quick and often poignant. The philosopher always has the last word and always laughs last: he can get out of the most compromised situations and accusations through the skilful use of the word, usually in the context of a χρεία, which presents the philosopher's answer in the framework

<sup>43</sup> T. Whitmarsh, *Dirty Love. The Genealogy of the Ancient Greek Novel* (Oxford, 2018) 30.

<sup>44</sup> P. Zanker, *La maschera di Socrate. L'immagine dell'intellettuale nell'arte antica* (Turin, 1997) [expanded translation of the German original, *Die Maske des Sokrates. Das Bild des Intellektuellen in der antiken Kunst* (Munich, 1995)] 246-71.

<sup>45</sup> S. Grau, 'Come parlavano i filosofi? Analisi delle forme espressive dei filosofi greci nella biografia antica', *Lexis* 27 (2009) 405-46.

of a very simple anecdote. The philosopher of the biographical tradition does not construct an elaborate doctrinal system but says the right word on a very specific occasion that arises for him, just as Alexander and Aesop do in their respective *Lives* — and just as Thomas does in some chapters of the *ATH*.

##### 5. *Some Concluding Remarks: the Rhetorical παιδεία of the Redactors*

It seems clear, then, that these materials come from the rhetorical training where both the authors and redactors of biographies and those of these works that we often call “popular”, in the style of *Alexander Romance* and the *AAA*, completed their παιδεία, precisely through, among many other exercises or προγυμνάσματα, the learning and elaboration of χρεῖαι.<sup>46</sup> We know that the χρεῖαι were widely used, especially during the Hellenistic period, as repertoires for the rhetorical exercises of schools, where students were trained to lengthen or reduce this type of narration, while being provided with anecdotes for appropriate use during their performances.<sup>47</sup> The collections of χρεῖαι were therefore part of the different educational levels and could be used as an introduction to the study of philosophy or as an ethical textbook, and thus constituted a literary system in itself that at the same time entertained and edified the readers.<sup>48</sup> Diogenes Laertius himself must have used collections of this kind:<sup>49</sup> in fact, practically all the words of philosophers appear integrated in the context of narrative constructions of practical wisdom, which constitute the main and longest part of his biographies, thus revealing the fundamental interest of biographers in these everyday manifestations rather than in

<sup>46</sup> See R. Criboire, *Gymnastics of the Mind. Greek Education in Hellenistic and Roman Egypt* (Princeton, 2001), and Y.L. Too (ed.), *Education in Greek and Roman Antiquity* (Leiden, 2001) 241-59.

<sup>47</sup> See A. Júnior, ‘Importância da cria na cultura helenística’, *Euphrosyne* 17 (1989) 31-62, and J.K. Kindstrand, ‘Diogenes Laertius and the Chreia Tradition’, *Elenchos* 7 (1986) 217-43.

<sup>48</sup> See Kindstrand, ‘Diogenes Laertius’, 233, and M.T. Luzzatto, ‘L’impiego della ‘chreia’ filosofica nell’educazione antica’, in M.S. Funghi (ed.), *Aspetti di letteratura gnomica nel mondo antico*, vol. II (Florence, 2004) 157-87.

<sup>49</sup> See Kindstrand, ‘Diogenes Laertius’, 241.

their dogmatic system. It seems clear that the concrete materials of the *Alexander Romance* by Pseudo-Callisthenes must have come from this kind of rhetorical school exercise, and it is for this reason, that this markedly “cunning sapiential taste” or “wisdom flavour”, so to speak, of the monarch’s exploits and anecdotes, sometimes seems a little out of place.

The redactors of these texts have evidently studied in the same schools of rhetoric, where they exercised precisely in their προγυμνάσματα the techniques to expand or condense a story, or, rather, the basic elements that constitute it, that is, the χρεῖαι.<sup>50</sup> We might therefore recognise that the materials which fluctuate in the narrative of the AAA include both elements that we can consider popular, from different cultures, as well as some motifs proper to the scholarly tradition that constituted their exercises. Indeed, the types of texts with which they habitually worked in the schools were not perceived as immutable and sacrosanct, so they were subjected to high doses of variation, precisely like the works to which we have been referring;<sup>51</sup> this is something that, of course, did not happen with the works that constituted the academic curriculum of these same schools.

Compositional devices and some narrative materials, as I have tried to demonstrate, are shared by the more conventional biographies and by these works that we usually call “biographical novels” or “fringe novels”. Surely, this is because there is no other way to generate a meaningful present if it is not in the terms and recognizable conventional narrative elements shared by the community. The tastes of the public of all these works, erudite or popular, which take shape between the 2nd and 3rd centuries AD, clearly opt for biographical narratives that serve as a context for a series of anecdotes in which the protagonists exhibit, above all, their superiority in wit, usually through the quick verbal response, and where paradoxography, nonetheless, has a preponderant presence. In any case, it seems that, when

<sup>50</sup> I am in substantial agreement with the analysis of Thomas, *The Acts of Peter*, 85-86, which also offers a very eloquent example of this expansion procedure taken from the manual of *Προγυμνάσματα* by the 1st century AD rhetor Aelius Theon.

<sup>51</sup> ‘Commentaries, lexica and other works of a grammatical nature were rightly regarded as collections of material to be pruned, adapted or added to, rather than as sacrosanct literary entities’, as pointed out by M.L. West, *Textual Criticism and Editorial Technique* (Stuttgart, 1973) 16.

thinking of ancient reception, we should reconsider the limits of the generic categories that we moderns are comfortable with. And also, of course, we should reconsider the place that the canons and exercises of the schools of rhetoric occupy in the process of representation, as a significant typification, of the past.

## VII. The *Apocryphal Acts of Thomas*, Its Tradition, and Its Influence on Late Antique Literature

ÁNGEL NARRO

### 1. *The Acts of Thomas (A<sub>Th</sub>) and the Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles (A<sub>AA</sub>)*

The relationship between the five main *Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles* (*The Acts of Andrew, John, Paul, Peter and Thomas*) has been widely debated. These five texts are traditionally dated between the end of the second and the first half of the third century CE. As it is evident that all of them belong to the same literary tradition, namely narratives concerning the evangelistic missions of some of the most relevant collaborators of Jesus to spread the Christian doctrine, this chronology is established on the basis of similarities in both form and content among the different πράξεις. Schmidt and Schubart at the beginning of the twentieth century pointed out that the *Acts of Peter (A<sub>Pt</sub>)* was composed between 180 and 190<sup>1</sup> and was the most ancient text of the group. Afterwards, the *Acts of Paul (A<sub>Pl</sub>)* followed between 185 and 195, according to Schneemelcher and Wilson.<sup>2</sup> MacDonald, however, drew up a different *stemma* in which *A<sub>Pl</sub>* was the first text of the group.<sup>3</sup> The relationships established by MacDonald were in

<sup>1</sup> C. Schmidt and W. Schubart, *Πράξεις Πάυλου. Acta Pauli* (Glückstadt and Hamburg, 1936). A similar opinion was shared by C.M. Thomas, *The Acts of Peter, Gospel Literature and the Ancient Novel. Rewriting the Past* (New York, 2003) 37-39.

<sup>2</sup> W. Schneemelcher and R.Mcl. Wilson, *New Testament Apocrypha*, 2 vols (Cambridge, 2003) 2.235.

<sup>3</sup> D.R. MacDonald, 'Which Came First? Intertextual Relationships Among the Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles', *Semeia* 80 (1997) 11-41.

turn answered by Pervo,<sup>4</sup> who highlighted the difficulty in identifying one text as the source of another in such a context. In addition, Klauck placed the *Acts of John (AJ)* at the beginning of this tradition,<sup>5</sup> which shows that the debate regarding the intertextual connections between these texts and their dates of composition seems far from being closed.

Nevertheless, and in spite of Peterson's opinion,<sup>6</sup> today it is without doubt that *ATH* is the latest text of the five major AAA.<sup>7</sup> A key to understanding its position in the series is its great literary dependence on *API*.<sup>8</sup> The beginning of the third century is chosen as the preferred chronology for this text, as suggested by Bornkamm,<sup>9</sup> Klijn,<sup>10</sup> Del Cerro<sup>11</sup> and Piñero,<sup>12</sup> although some authors have postulated a later date, towards the end of the third century, as the more likely.<sup>13</sup> An alleged Syriac original of *ATH* has been traditionally suggested by most scholars,<sup>14</sup> although this idea has been

<sup>4</sup> R. Pervo, 'Egging on the Chickens: A Cowardly Response to Dennis MacDonald and Then Some', *Semeia* 80 (1997) 43-45.

<sup>5</sup> H.-J. Klauck, *Los Hechos apócrifos de los Apóstoles. Una introducción* (Santander, 2008) 11-15. [Spanish translation of H.-J. Klauck, *The Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles: An Introduction* (Waco, 2008)].

<sup>6</sup> E. Peterson, 'Einige Bemerkungen zum Hamburger Papyrus-Fragment der Acta Pauli', *VigChr* 3 (1949) 142-62.

<sup>7</sup> A. Piñero and G. Del Cerro, *Hechos apócrifos de los Apóstoles. Vol. I. Hechos de Andrés, Juan y Pedro* (Madrid, 2004) 68.

<sup>8</sup> P. Devos, 'Actes de Thomas et Actes de Paul', *AB* 69 (1951) 119-30.

<sup>9</sup> G. Bornkamm, *Mythos und Legende in den apokryphen Thomas-Akten: Beiträge zur Geschichte der Gnosis und zur Vorgeschichte des Manichäismus* (Göttingen, 1933).

<sup>10</sup> A.F.J. Klijn, *The Acts of Thomas: Introduction, Text, and Commentary* (Leiden, 2003<sup>2</sup>) 26.

<sup>11</sup> G. Del Cerro, 'Cronología de los Hechos Apócrifos de los Apóstoles (AAA)', *AM* 15 (1992) 85-96.

<sup>12</sup> A. Piñero, 'Cronología relativa de los Hechos apócrifos de los Apóstoles. Reflexiones sobre ediciones recientes', in R.M. Aguilar *et al.* (eds), *XAPIΣ ΔΙΔΑΣΚΑΛΙΑΣ, Studia in honorem Ludovici Aegidi, Homenaje a Luis Gil* (Madrid, 1994) 451-65.

<sup>13</sup> M. Erbetta, *Gli apocrifi del Nuovo Testamento, Vol. II* (Turin, 1969) 311.

<sup>14</sup> H.W. Attridge, 'The Original Language of the Acts of Thomas', in H.W. Attridge *et al.* (eds), *Of Scribes and Scrolls. Studies on the Hebrew Bible, Intertestamental Judaism, and Christian Origins Presented to John Strugnell on the Occasion of His Sixtieth Birthday* (Lanham, 1990) 241-50; F.C. Burkitt, 'The Original Language of the Acts of Judas Thomas', *JThS* 1 (1900) 280-90; Klijn, *Acts of Thomas*.

recently contested by Roig Lanzillotta,<sup>15</sup> who argues for the primacy of the Greek text.

In addition to the numerous resemblances with *API*, two other reasons have also been highlighted for *ATH*'s place in the chronology: the literary dependence on the *Acts of Andrew (AAn)* and the theological maturity of the narration.<sup>16</sup> The first is explained both by the use of structural patterns shared by the five major *AAA*, and by the influence of encratism in both texts.<sup>17</sup> The second is argued on the basis of the dogmatic, hierarchical and liturgical aspects of *ATH*.<sup>18</sup>

The innovation of *ATH* when compared to the other major *AAA* is precisely the starting point of my work, though I will apply a literary analysis to the text. From this point of view, *ATH* clearly represents a later stage in the creation of the five major *AAA* and an intermediate testimony between the literary tradition of this genre and late antique hagiography. Whereas many significant narrative parallels with other *AAA*, especially *API*, are featured in *ATH*, other motifs, which will become quite popular in the literature of Late Antiquity, particularly later *AAA* and hagiography, represent an innovation within the whole group.

Thus, this study is aimed at analyzing *ATH* from a literary point of view, taking into perspective both the previous literary tradition to which it is ascribed, and later *AAA* and hagiographical texts in which these stories of apostles and saints find their natural milieu to be spread, shaped and expanded. Even if a linguistic analysis might show closer and more certain relationships among the texts concerned, especially since the five major *AAA* lack a general survey of their language and style,<sup>19</sup> and linguistic studies focused on a single text

<sup>15</sup> L. Roig Lanzillotta, 'A Syriac Original for the Acts of Thomas? The Hypothesis of Syriac Priority Revisited', in I. Ramelli and J. Perkins (eds), *Early Christian and Jewish Narrative. The Role of Religion in Shaping Narrative Forms* (Tübingen, 2015) 105-34.

<sup>16</sup> Del Cerro, 'Cronología de los Hechos Apócrifos', 94.

<sup>17</sup> J.M. Prieur, *Acta Andreae*, 2 vols (Turnhout, 1989) 1.389-94.

<sup>18</sup> A. Piñero and G. Del Cerro, *Hechos Apócrifos de los Apóstoles, Vol. II, Hechos de Pablo y Tomás* (Madrid, 2005) 871.

<sup>19</sup> D.H. Warren, 'The Greek Language of the Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles: A Study in Style', in F. Bovon *et al.* (eds), *The Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles* (Cambridge, MA, 1999) 101-24; E. Zachariades-Holmberg, 'Philological Aspects of the Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles', *ibid.*, 125-43.



are also rare,<sup>20</sup> my approach will be limited to a literary comparison between texts. However, linguistic evidence will also be evoked in some cases, in order to support the intertextual connection,<sup>21</sup> although either a direct or indirect influence is difficult to determine, even when linguistic evidence is afforded. This aspect is much more problematic in the case of *ATH*, since the text established by the editions of Thilo and Lipsius-Bonnet is clearly outdated, and new editions of both the Greek and Syriac versions are needed.

## 2. *Common Motifs of ATH and the Rest of the AAA*

As the latest of the five major AAA, *ATH* borrows many literary motifs already found in the other four texts of the group. On this occasion, I will focus on three specific motifs: the accusation of magic against the apostle, the social relationships between Thomas and women, and the presence of (talking) animals in the text. Since these three motifs are perhaps the most debated topics of *ATH*, bibliography is abundant, and approaches from varied perspectives very common. Even so, as these episodes are also largely imitated by later texts on apostles and other saints, they support the argument for a general influence of the literary tradition of the AAA on later texts that will be studied in the second part of this article.

### 2.1. *The Accusation of Magic*

The accusation against an apostle of being a magician is a very widespread *topos* among the five major AAA. Their capacity for persuasion, which prompts many conversions of non-Christians, the miracles they perform, and their extravagant behavior lead the non-Christian characters of the texts to this accusation. This simplistic view of the apostles' activities and ways of life should be interpreted within a larger social perspective, which viewed them as wreckers of the well-established social conventions of the Greco-Roman society of

<sup>20</sup> For a general study on the language of the *Acts of Peter and Paul*, see J.A. Artés, *Estudio sobre la lengua de los Hechos Apócrifos de Pedro y Pablo* (Murcia, 1999).

<sup>21</sup> An important study of the use of Christian Scripture in *ATH* is H.W. Attridge, 'Intertextuality in the Acts of Thomas', *Semeia* 80 (1997) 87-124.

the time, as for example Paul in the *Acts of Paul and Thecla* (*APTh*).<sup>22</sup> That they took this attitude would have been interpreted by Christian communities as a sign that they were doing God's work, but, in contrast, non-Christian people were frightened and perturbed by such rare abilities.

In *Ath*, the ascetic attitudes of the apostle are found strange by the non-Christian inhabitants of the royal city of Andrapolis, where Thomas attends with the merchant Abbanes the wedding of the local king's daughter. In *Ath* 5 it is said that the apostle does not taste the food (ἐγεύσατο) at the nuptial banquet, whereas the other attendants are dining and drinking (δειπνησάντων δὲ αὐτῶν καὶ πiónτων). Later, in *Ath* 20 King Gundafor's friends tell him that the man who is supposed to be building his palace is constantly fasting, and that he just ate bread with salt and drank water (καὶ ἄρτον ἐσθίει μόνον μετὰ ἄλατος, καὶ τὸ ποτὸν αὐτοῦ ὕδωρ). A few chapters later, in *Ath* 29, the apostle himself distributes among his followers basic aliments such as bread, oil, vegetables and salt (ἔλαβεν ἄρτον καὶ ἔλαιον καὶ λάχανον καὶ ἄλας). Similar foods were shared by Paul, Thecla, Onesiphorus and his family when celebrating Thecla's escape from her first trial in Iconium (*APTh* 25). Barrier identifies this scene in *APTh* as a representation of the Eucharistic or *agape* meal,<sup>23</sup> whereas Piñero and Del Cerro underline the absence of wine and meat,<sup>24</sup> which matches some of the alimentary restrictions of the Encratite sect. In *Ath*, an image of this sort shows Thomas's abstinence from food, in general a common motif of the Christian saint, at the beginning of his own journey towards attaining holiness.

In any case, this behavior is doubtlessly perceived as unreasonable conduct by the non-Christian characters in the narrative, who are unable to understand the spiritual reasons for adopting such a way of life. This interpretation can be clearly inferred from Charisius's words to Mygdonia when he tries to convince his wife that she was being fooled by Thomas, because the apostle does not eat nor drink and he has nothing (καὶ ὅτι οὐδὲ ἐσθίει οὔτε πίνει, μὴ οὖν νομίσης ὅτι διὰ δικαιοσύνην οὔτε ἐσθίει οὔτε πίνει· τοῦτο δὲ ποιεῖ διὰ τὸ μηδὲν κεκτῆσθαι αὐτόν) (*Ath* 96). Charisius's view is in accordance with

<sup>22</sup> A.S. Jacobs, 'A Family Affair: Marriage, Class, and Ethics in the Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles', *JECS* 7 (1999) 105-38 at 105-07.

<sup>23</sup> J.W. Barrier, *The Acts of Paul and Thecla* (Tübingen, 2009) 133.

<sup>24</sup> Piñero – Del Cerro, *Hechos Apócrifos*, Vol. II, 755, n. 133.

the general and prototypical perception of the apostles by non-Christian characters. In fact, their way of life is described by these characters as itinerant, bizarre, weird and unusual. They are portrayed as travelers who go from place to place, fasting, performing magic rituals, despising material goods, and spreading a cryptic message containing exhortations to act against traditional Greco-Roman social values.

As a result, they are often accused of being magicians. An interesting parallel can be found in Apuleius's *Apologia* (82), in a scene in which the Roman author himself comes to Oea, in modern Libya, to visit an old Athenian friend who has persuaded him to marry his widowed mother. Instead, however, the brothers of the dead husband accuse Apuleius of being a magician.<sup>25</sup> In contrast, in Greek novels – a literary genre normally compared to the five major AAA because of shared narrative patterns and structure – magic is observed as a remedy for extreme love, as is the case in Xenophon's *Ephesian Tale of Anthia and Habrocomes* (1, 5, 6-8) or in Achilles Tatius's *Leucippe and Clitophon* (5, 26, 12).<sup>26</sup>

In the AAA, however, magic has negative connotations, as in Apuleius's anecdote. In these texts the charge of “magician” always evokes the external perception of the behavior, miracles and discourse of the apostles, who are considered too bizarre or even dangerous for certain well-established social values. Poupon identifies three terms with which the apostles are portrayed as magicians—*μάγος*, *φαρμακός* and *γόης*—and conceives of such accusations as a literary *topos*. The apostles, they claim, would use a sort of enchantment in order to attract attention, and persuade non-Christian women to be converted.<sup>27</sup> In the *Martyrdom of Peter* 34, Albinus encourages the emperor Agrippa to accuse Peter of being a “man of magic” (*περίεργον ἄνδρα*), since he has prompted the conversion of Xanthippa, wife of

<sup>25</sup> J.N. Bremmer, ‘Magic, Martyrdom and Women’s Liberation’, in id. (ed.), *The Apocryphal Acts of Paul and Thecla* (Kampen, 1996) 36-59 at 45, updated in his *Maidens, Magic and Martyrs in Early Christianity* (Tübingen, 2017) 149-66.

<sup>26</sup> C. Ruiz Montero, ‘Magic in the Ancient Novel’, in M. Paschalis *et al.* (eds), *The Greek and Roman Novel. Parallel Readings* (Groningen, 2007) 38-56 at 39-41.

<sup>27</sup> G. Poupon, ‘L’accusation de magie dans les Actes apocryphes’, in F. Bovon *et al.*, *Les actes apocryphes des apôtres. Christianisme et monde païen* (Geneva, 1981) 71-85.

Albinus, and other Roman matrons.<sup>28</sup> In *APTh* 15, an enraged crowd asks the governor of Iconium to cast the apostle out of the city on the grounds that he is a magician and has corrupted the women there (ἀπάγαγε τὸν μάγον· διέφθειρεν γὰρ ἡμῶν πάσας τὰς γυναῖκας). In the *Martyrdom of Paul* 4, he is again accused of being a magician by a furious crowd (ἄραι τὸν μάγον, ἄραι τὸν φαρμακόν).

Similar scenes are also featured in *ATh*. In chapter 16 the Indian king Gundafor asks his guards to find “the magician” (φαρμακός). Later on, in chapter 20, his friends tell him that they believe Thomas to be a magician (μάγος). During the long episode of Mygdonia, her husband Charisius refers to Thomas as a magician three times (*ATh* 96 and 101: μάγος; *ATh* 130: φαρμακός), since he has prompted a radical behavioral change in his wife and converted her to the Christian faith. A little later, the general Siphor also calls Thomas “magician” (*ATh* 104: μάγος). Finally, King Misdeus, who is ultimately responsible for the martyrdom and death of Thomas, speaks similar words in *ATh* 134, whereby the apostle is defined as a φαρμακός, and his wonder-working abilities interpreted as evidence of his magic powers (*ATh* 152).

The point of all this, as highlighted before, is that this motif does not seem to be exclusive to the AAA, as it was also used by the Roman writer Apuleius. Its appearance in early Christian literature, however, is far more significant, since, as Aigrain pointed out,<sup>29</sup> it commonly occurs in the narratives of the Acts of Martyrs of that time. Two clear examples can be found in the *Martyrdom of Saint George* (*BHG* 670a-b) and the *Martyrdom of Procopius* (*BHG* 1576). In addition, this motif is inherited and greatly developed by later hagiography, in which saints are often accused of being magicians after miraculous interventions.<sup>30</sup> In these cases the situation is quite different, since the accusation is commonly articulated by Christian believers who disparage the divine gift of the saint. The conflict after all is still present, but a number of different narrative solutions can be suggested.

<sup>28</sup> Poupon, ‘L’accusation de magie’, 71-73.

<sup>29</sup> R. Aigrain, *L’hagiographie. Ses sources—Ses méthodes—Son histoire* (Paris, 1953) 146-47.

<sup>30</sup> G. Marasco, ‘L’accusa di magia e i cristiani nella tarda antichità’, *Augustinianum* 51 (2011) 406-18.

## 2.2. *The Social Relationship with Women*

The major importance of the role of women in the AAA has been debated primarily through individual and widely contested works, such as those of Davies or Burrus.<sup>31</sup> This topic has also attracted the attention of feminist studies. In general terms, there are two main ideas at the core of this debate. The first is the central role of women in the conversion stories of the AAA. The second is a shared basic structure. This latter feature is not as exhaustive as Burrus suggested,<sup>32</sup> but nevertheless the AAA feature several episodes repeated in different guises. This points to a folkloristic origin and, in certain cases such as that of *ATH*, to the direct influence of one of the previous AAA.

The impact of the evangelistic message of Thomas is particularly strong on women from the very beginning of the narration. The first interaction with a woman takes place during the wedding celebration in Andropolis, when the Hebrew flute player recognizes Thomas's origins and plays her instrument on the apostle's head. After the so called "Hymn of the Daughter of Light" which, following Klijn,<sup>33</sup> consists of "a description of glories awaiting those who are being in company of the daughter of the light", the text describes how the Hebrew woman is the only one to understand the content of this hymn. The effects of Thomas's words on the woman are expressed in terms of "love" (ἀγαπάω), which can be observed in the allusion to the flute player, who is constantly looking at the apostle (*ATH* 8):

καὶ ἀποστᾶσα ἀπ' αὐτοῦ ἤλκει τοῖς ἄλλοις, εἰς αὐτὸν δὲ τὰ πολλὰ ἀφείωρα καὶ ἀπέβλεπεν· πάνυ γὰρ ἠγάπησεν αὐτὸν ὡς ἄνθρωπον ὁμοέθνον αὐτῆς· ἦν δὲ καὶ τῆ ἰδέα ὠραῖος ὑπὲρ πάντας τοὺς ἐκεῖσε ὄντας. καὶ ὅτε ἐτέλεσεν ἡ αὐλήτρια πάντας καὶ αὐλήσασα, ἀντικρυσ αὐτοῦ ἐκαθέσθη, ἀφορῶσα καὶ ἀτενίζουσα εἰς αὐτόν·

And leaving him she played the flute to the others, but repeatedly looked back and gazed at him. For she loved him as one belonging to her race, and he was also beautiful in appearance above all who were there. And

<sup>31</sup> S.L. Davies, *The Revolt of the Widows* (Carbondale, 1983); V. Burrus, *Chastity as Autonomy. Women in the Stories of the Apocryphal Acts* (Lewis-ton, 1987).

<sup>32</sup> Burrus, *Chastity as Autonomy*, 34-35.

<sup>33</sup> Klijn, *Acts of Thomas*, 177.

when the flute-girl had finished her flute-playing, she sat down opposite him, and looked steadily at him.<sup>34</sup>

This passage uses a very common *topos* of the Greek novel: the eyes are the channel whereby love penetrates into a lover's body.<sup>35</sup> In the context of the *AAA*, this 'love' must be interpreted as spiritual (*ἀγάπη*), rather than corporeal (*ἔρωσ*). A parallel can be established with the scene in *APTh*, in which Thecla hears Paul's preaching in Onesiphorus's house. As the Hebrew flute player, Thecla was sitting at a window listening, in her case, to the words of Paul. The author of *APTh* uses "romantic language"<sup>36</sup> in describing the reaction of the Thecla, as does the author of *ATh*.

The effects of Thomas on the Hebrew flute player are roughly the same as those prompted by Paul on Thecla.<sup>37</sup> Both stories, however, greatly diverge in their development, since Thecla will accompany the apostle on his evangelistic journey, despite Paul's advice, whereas the Hebrew woman will remain in Andrapolis, having been left behind as described in *ATh* 16: *καὶ εὔρον ἐκεῖ τὴν ἀυλήτριαν κλαίουσαν καὶ ἀνωμένην, ἐπειδὴ μὴ παρέλαβεν αὐτὴν μεθ' ἑαυτοῦ* (and [they] found there the flute player weeping and vexed, because he had not brought her with himself). The conversion of the Hebrew woman to Christianity, as in Thecla's story, is clearly expressed at the moment when she breaks her flute, which can be understood as a metaphorical sign of repentance. As Piñero and Del Cerro point out,<sup>38</sup> flute players in Antiquity were often prostitutes, suggesting another widespread *topos* throughout the monastic literature of Late Antiquity: that of the repentant harlot.<sup>39</sup>

<sup>34</sup> Translation from J.K. Elliott, *The Apocryphal New Testament* (Oxford, 1993) 450-51.

<sup>35</sup> J. Garzón, 'El amor en la novela griega', *MHA* 13-14 (1992-1993) 43-76.

<sup>36</sup> Barrier, *Acts of Paul and Thecla*, 88.

<sup>37</sup> A similar opinion is shared by J.N. Bremmer, 'The Acts of Thomas: Place, Date and Women', in J.N. Bremmer (ed.), *The Apocryphal Acts of Thomas* (Leuven, 2001) 74-90, updated in his *Maidens, Magic and Martyrs in Early Christianity* (Tübingen, 2017) 167-80.

<sup>38</sup> Piñero – Del Cerro, *Hechos Apócrifos*, 2.933, n. 90.

<sup>39</sup> On this topic, the well-known work of Ward should be taken into account: B. Ward, *Harlots of the Desert. A Study of Repentance in Early Monastic Sources* (Kalamazoo, 1987).

This woman becomes the first member of the Christian community of Andrapolis. She is the first to recognize Thomas's status after the death of the cupbearer, who is cursed by the apostle's words after slapping Thomas in the face. The flute-playing girl claims that Thomas is either a god or an apostle of God (*ATH* 9: οὗτος ὁ ἄνθρωπος ἢ θεός ἐστιν ἢ ἀπόστολος τοῦ θεοῦ), as she is the only one who understands the words pronounced by Thomas in Hebrew against the cupbearer. As a result, the miracle is evoked to authenticate the status of the apostle and his message.<sup>40</sup> Some of the wedding guests trust the flute player. Among them is the local king, who asks the apostle to enter into the bridal chamber and pray for his daughter.

The following scene is of great importance for several reasons. Since this analysis is only focused on the apostle's social relationships with women, I will pass over some interesting motifs in this scene, such as Jesus's apparition in the shape of Thomas. What is precious for my analysis is the conversion of the young couple by the words of both the apostle and Jesus. The former pronounces a prayer to God full of elements which sound gnostic.<sup>41</sup> The latter recommends, for his part, that both the bride and groom renounce marriage, and enlightens them about the benefits of chastity, which shows the extreme Encratite position of *ATH*.<sup>42</sup>

The couple is converted to Christianity, but their individual discourses are significantly different. As Tissot indicates,<sup>43</sup> one of Tatian's theories was that Encratite continence must be confirmed by spiritual marriage. The bride's words in *ATH* 14, the day after her conversion, insist on this, since she claims that she has experienced love (ἀγάπη), considers Jesus as her husband (ἀνὴρ), and expresses her renunciation of carnal marriage. On the other hand, the groom's discourse in *ATH* 15 is quite divergent from that of his counterpart, as he expresses his gratitude to Thomas for teaching him the message of

<sup>40</sup> J.A. Kelhoffer, *Miracle and Mission. The Authentication of Missionaries in the Longer Ending of Mark* (Tübingen, 2000) 304-05.

<sup>41</sup> Piñero and *Del Cerro, Hechos Apócrifos*, 2.921.

<sup>42</sup> On encratism in the AAA see Y. Tissot, 'Encratisme et Actes Apocryphes', in Bovon, *Les Actes Apocryphes des Apôtres*, 109-19. This author highlights that *ATH* are 'les seuls des cinq Actes où le kérygme encratite soit expressament cité' (118). For further discussion see also G. Sfameni Gasparro, 'Gli Atti Apocriphi degli Apostoli e la tradizione encratita', *Augustinianum* 23 (1983) 237-307.

<sup>43</sup> Tissot, 'Encratisme et Actes Apocryphes', 118.

Christ and liberating him from corruption (φθορά) and hard-to-heal illness (δυσίατος). These different perspectives, stemming from a conversion to Christianity, depend on gender. Women appear destined to become brides of Jesus in a kind of spiritual union, whereas men remain free to focus on progressing further in their spiritual lives. This interpretation is confirmed in later episodes of *ATH* concerning new conversions, such as in the cases of Mygdonia, wife of King Misdeus's relative Charisius, and Tertia, wife of Misdeus himself.

Both stories represent remarkable examples of a double coincidence (both narrative and structural) between *ATH* and *AP*, and especially between *ATH* and *APTh*. The conversions of both Mygdonia and Tertia are narrated throughout acts 9-13 (chapters 82-158 [ed. Bonnet]). This motif, the conversion of a noblewoman betrothed or married to a local prince or governor, as mentioned above, is constantly repeated in the other four *AAA*. This type of story, the so-called "chastity story" or "woman's story", portrays a bizarre love triangle in which a relationship is broken by the arrival in town of an apostle and the subsequent conversion of the pious noblewoman, impressed by the Christian preacher's words of salvation, chastity and resurrection.

The most widespread story from this group is that of Thecla, a female character possessing all the main traits defining several archetypal profiles of female saints throughout Late Antiquity and the Byzantine period. In this context, similarities in the *ATH* stories of both Mygdonia and Tertia with *APTh* are well-known and evident, not only in the similar narrative structure that is used in both texts, but also in the linguistic echoes and direct quotations that strengthen the links between them.

Concerning the main structure of these chapters, it all starts with the *mise en scène* of Mygdonia, who is the wife of Charisius, a relative of the Indian king Misdeus. This noblewoman listens to a discourse by Thomas on chastity and purity and, moved by his words and persuaded by his message, asks the apostle to intercede before God on her behalf. Here *ATH* references the seal (σφραγίδα), a key word for understanding the recreation of this scene on the basis of *APTh*, in which the seal of Christ is requested by the young woman (*APTh* 25, 8). The main difference between both scenes is in the length and depth of the apostle's first discourse prior to the woman's conversion. In any case, from this moment onwards the structure of *ATH* is roughly modeled on the shape of *APTh*.



After the conversion of Mygdonia, she avoids any intercourse with her husband, as Thecla rejects the marriage with her betrothed Thamyris. Her very first reaction is akin to that of Thecla sitting by the feet of the apostle in *APTh* 18. In my opinion, the image of Thecla sitting at Paul's feet in order to hear the word of God presents a clear parallel to the scene in the Gospel of Luke when Mary of Bethany sits at the feet of Jesus to hear him preaching (Lk 10:39). This iconic scene is reused anew a further three times by the author of *ATH* to show the submission of Mygdonia to the apostle's authority:

[ἦ] καὶ παρακαθεσθεῖσα πρὸς τοὺς πόδας τοῦ κυρίου ἤκουεν τὸν λόγον αὐτοῦ (*Lk.* 10:39).

(she) who sat at the Lord's feet to listen to his teaching

καὶ καθίσασα παρὰ τοὺς πόδας αὐτοῦ ἤκουσεν τὰ μεγαλεῖα τοῦ θεοῦ (*APTh* 18).

and she sat by his feet listening to the great things of God.<sup>44</sup>

καὶ ἑαυτὴν ῥίψασα ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς ἔμπροσθεν τοῦ ἀποστόλου καὶ τῶν ποδῶν αὐτοῦ ἀπτομένη καὶ δεομένη ἔλεγεν· (*ATH* 87) / καὶ Μυγδονίαν πρὸς τοῖς ποσὶν αὐτοῦ (*ATH* 102) / καὶ ἡ Μυγδονία πρὸς τοῖς ποσὶν αὐτοῦ ἐκάθητο (*ATH* 105)

and she threw herself on the ground before the apostle and touched his feet and asked him / and (he found) Mygdonia at his feet / And Mygdonia was sitting at his feet.

When Mygdonia comes back home she refuses any food or drink (*ATH* 89-90), as does Thecla in *APTh* 7-8. In this case, as Mygdonia was already married, she avoids sleeping with her husband. The imitation of *APTh* is so evident that the author of *ATH* even introduces a scene in which the apostle pronounces a series of beatitudes (*ATH* 94), as does Paul at Onesiphorus's house in *APTh* 5-6.<sup>45</sup> In both cases, twelve beatitudes are pronounced. The differences between the two discourses emerge in the details of each prayer. Thus, Paul pronounces twelve beatitudes with the classic structure μακάριοι οἱ, plus another one with the neuter form μακάρια τὰ σώματα τῶν παρθένων; Thomas, instead, prefers the formula μακάριοι ἐστε + subject,

<sup>44</sup> Barrier, *Acts of Paul and Thecla*, 113.

<sup>45</sup> For further information, see: K. Zamfir, 'Asceticism and Otherworlds in the Acts of Paul and Thecla', in T. Nicklas *et al.* (eds), *Other Worlds and Their Relation to This World* (Leiden, 2010) 281-304.

repeated nine times, to either the classic μακάριοι οἱ (...), used twice, or μακάρια τὰ (...), used only once. Even if deeper examination is required to identify common sources and conceptions in both sets of beatitudes, a preliminary reading is adequate for recognizing the presence of similar ideas on chastity, purity of soul, and asceticism.

After some episodes focusing on the marital tension between Mygdonia and Charisius, the latter accuses Thomas of being a magician before the king Misedeus, his friend, as does Thamyris, the betrothed of Thecla, before the governor of Iconium in *APTh* 17. When Misedeus orders that the general Siphor be found, the latter is eventually discovered listening to the words of Thomas in the second of the scenes portraying Mygdonia at the feet of the apostle (*ATh* 102). The subsequent interrogation regarding Thomas's activities also recalls the meeting of Thamyris with Demas and Hermogenes, who have been prepared by Thecla's betrothed in order to build a solid accusation against Paul before the governor. The final consequence in both narratives is the same: the imprisonment of the apostle.

This micro-section also clearly imitates the structure of *APTh*. Like Thamyris in *APTh* 20-21, Charisius attracts a crowd and accuses Thomas of being a magician, as a result of which the apostle is flogged. The imitation of this model continues when Mygdonia takes ten *denarii* and bribes the gatekeeper of the prison in order to see Thomas (*ATh* 151). Divergences between both stories emerge at the point where Paul is freed in *APTh*, whereas Thomas will be martyred and killed. The similarities between both texts, however, point to an intertextual connection in which *APTh* is the source used by the author of *ATh* to create these climactic episodes.

This statement can be supported, as I have done, with textual evidence, including linguistic subtleties indicating that the author of *ATh* is echoing a previous text such as *APTh*. In addition, it must be taken into account that *APTh* was quite popular at that time and was probably circulated independently of the other extant parts of *AP*. The reason for the success of *ATh* and *APTh* can be found not only in their content – the conversion of a noblewoman and her subsequent struggles and sufferings – but also in their use of a narrative structure shared with Greek erotic novels. With regards to *ATh*, the imitation of the style and structure of well-known stories such as that of Thecla would have assured a larger diffusion, since the author of the text was creating a narrative modelled on the latest fashion, one fairly proficient at keeping the attention of early Christian communities.

### 2.3. *The Presence of Talking Animals*

As studies on this topic are abundant,<sup>46</sup> I will argue this point only briefly and expose a few general ideas regarding the presence of animals in this context. First of all, the prominence of these animal scenes correlates with Hellenistic literature's great interest in this topic. On the one hand, natural history, fable and paradoxographical sources can be discerned as possible inspirations for these episodes, and on the other, Scripture offers a wide range of scenes featuring animals.

Secondly, it is precisely within the biblical tradition that the presence of these animals should be understood, since they are also creations of God and, as is clearly expressed in Genesis 1:28, human beings have dominion over these creatures. A second key for understanding the general role of animals in the *AAA* is found in Isaiah 11:6-9 and 65:25, in which the prophet alludes to an ideal reminiscent of the Garden of Eden, namely paradise, in which a universal peace between human beings and animals would reign.<sup>47</sup>

Thirdly, these scenes are quite often used as evidence of the thaumaturgic abilities and divine status of the apostles. Here emerges, in my opinion, an anthropological conscience, which considers one who is able to domesticate a wild animal as a sort of divinity. From this point of view, apostles can even be observed as Christian *δέσποται θηρῶν*, a common terminology for graphically describing this phenomenon not only in prehistorical art, but also in many different kinds of material sources from antiquity.

The scenes with animals in *ATh* comply with the above-mentioned criteria. Further argumentation on each scene can be found either in Spittler's study or my own;<sup>48</sup> here I will only enumerate and roughly

<sup>46</sup> For further discussion, see J.E. Spittler, *Animals in the Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles* (Tübingen, 2008). A general survey: Á. Narro, 'Ecos de la πότνια y el δεσπότης θηρῶν en los cinco principales *Hechos* apócrifos de los apóstoles', *Minerva* 28 (2015) 185-220. The presence of animals in antique literature is also analyzed in I.S. Gilhus, *Animals, Gods and Humans: Changing Attitudes to Animals in Greek, Roman, and Early Christian Ideas* (New York, 2006).

<sup>47</sup> C.R. Matthews, 'Articulate Animals: A Multivalent Motif in the Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles', in Bovon, *The Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles*, 205-32.

<sup>48</sup> Spittler, *Animals in the Apocryphal Acts*, 190-223; Narro, 'Ecos de la πότνια', 200-04, 207-08.

describe the episodes in which animals become involved in the plot. Three scenes featuring animals appear in *ATH*: 1) the serpent who has killed a young man who had sexual intercourse with a woman loved by the animal; 2) the talking ass's colt who offers its help to the apostle; 3) the herd of wild asses assisting Thomas on his trip.

The most complex scene is probably that of the serpent. As Spittler points out, "stories of snakes in love with human beings were actually quite popular in antiquity".<sup>49</sup> In Adamik's opinion,<sup>50</sup> this fragment was written taking Aristotle's *Poetics* as its basis. It all starts when Thomas finds the corpse of a young man. He prays for his soul and, suddenly, a serpent arrives at the crime scene and, with a human voice, gets into an intense conversation with the apostle, in which it gives its reasons for having killed the man, and explains its animal and demonic nature. The serpent tells of how it killed the young man for having sexual intercourse with a woman with whom the serpent was in love. The sexual connotations of the scene are in accordance with the general use of this animal to denote and embody sexual desire in antiquity,<sup>51</sup> which in turn relates to one of the most repeated representations of the devil from early Christian literature onwards.

This long scene (*ATH* 30-33) comes to an end when the apostle commands the serpent to do some good and suck the poison out of the body of the dead young man in order to bring him back to life. Accordingly, the serpent obeys immediately and, as a result, the young lover is raised from the dead by the animal which had previously killed him. Thus, with this scene the author attempts to exhibit the superiority of the apostle over the devil by making Thomas give the order for the serpent to undo what it has done. Finally, the serpent dies. Thomas wins.

The second episode in which an animal plays a central role is that of the speaking colt who offers its help to the apostle, which has been seen as reminiscent of the story of Balaam's ass in Numbers 22:21-35.<sup>52</sup> In *ATH* (39-40) the ass starts to speak spontaneously (as does the

<sup>49</sup> Spittler, *Animals in the Apocryphal Acts*, 197.

<sup>50</sup> T. Adamik, 'The Serpent in the *Acts of Thomas*', in Bremmer, *Apocryphal Acts of Thomas*, 115-24 at 116-18.

<sup>51</sup> R. Merkelbach, 'Drache', in *RAC* 4 (1952) 226-50.

<sup>52</sup> G.J. Riley, 'Thomas Tradition and the Acts of Thomas', in E.H. Lovering (ed.), *Society of Biblical Literature 1991 Seminar Papers* (Atlanta, 1991) 533-42; I. Czachesz, 'Speaking Asses in the Acts of Thomas: An Intertextual and Cognitive Perspective', in G.H. van Kooten and J. van Ruiten (eds),

speaking lion of Jericho in *AP*),<sup>53</sup> and offers its services to the apostle. The ass recounts its whole story up to the actual moment of narration and encourages the apostle to mount it, sit and rest (ἀνελθὼν ἐπικαθέσθητί μοι καὶ ἀναπάηθι ἕως ἂν εἰς τὴν πόλιν εἰσέλθῃς).

The last scene, that of the herd of wild asses, reveals the supernatural powers of Thomas, who domesticates the beasts in order to transport all the people and supplies travelling with him, since their own animals are exhausted and in need of rest (*ATH* 69-73). The asses obey the orders of Thomas and, once in the city, one among them is used as a herald before the demons possessing the wife and daughter of King Misedeus's general. The wild ass is told to enter the courtyard of the house where the two women are resting and order the demons to leave the bodies that they are possessing. The wild ass executes the command of the apostle immediately. The story ends when the two women come out of the house (*ATH* 75) and the apostle is able to perform the exorcism by means of his divine gift (*ATH* 76-77). The wild asses then remain throughout the following chapters (*ATH* 78-81). In fact, the speaking wild ass takes advantage of its astonishing capacity to talk to the apostle and a crowd gathered to be converted. Finally, Thomas orders the wild asses to follow him to the gates of the city, and there he lets them go in peace to their pasturelands (*ATH* 81: Ἀπέλθετε μετ' εἰρήνης ἐπὶ τὰς νομὰς ὑμῶν).

### 3. Innovative Motifs. *ATH* as Inspiration for Later Hagiography

As mentioned above, *ATH* represents an intermediate point between early Christian literature and late antique hagiography. In my opinion, this is key to understanding the transition from proto-hagiography to proper hagiography. The former was integrated into the *AAA* and the earliest acts of the martyrs, whereas the latter emerges at the beginning of the third century, one of the most likely dates for *ATH*. In this period, several literary patterns and trends, essentially inherited from Greco-Roman biography, are adapted and reinterpreted by Christian

*The Prestige of the Pagan Prophet Balaam in Judaism, Early Christianity and Islam* (Leiden, 2008) 275-86.

<sup>53</sup> Though the bibliography on this topic is vast, a recent approach can be seen in I. Muñoz Gallarte, 'Fantasía y simbología en los *Hechos Apócrifos de los Apóstoles*: el relato del león bautizado en *Acta Pauli*', *SPhV* 20 (2018) 89-110.

authors to create a genuine hagiographical discourse ultimately acquiring a notable degree of rhetoricization and presenting a wide range of literary *topoi*.<sup>54</sup> Being the latest of the major AAA, in *ATh* one can observe a tension between tradition and innovation. As I have already argued, literary connections with the rest of the AAA are clear, but at the same time the text contains unique motifs and scenes, anticipating many elements in common use within later hagiographical discourse. This look at the literary panorama of the fourth and fifth centuries has been traditionally disregarded in most studies devoted to the AAA, as the majority are focused on the five earlier texts and exclude later narratives such as the *Acts of Philip* (*APh*). Nevertheless, these later AAA offer an interesting profile of the Christian novelistic literature of Late Antiquity, in which stories and popular legends about the apostles are used, and some literary patterns that will be later developed during the first *floruit* of eastern hagiography are anticipated, having already occurred in *ATh*. Accordingly, some of these scenes will be reviewed in the following pages.

From the beginning, *ATh* presents one of these motifs shared with later texts, namely the scene of the distribution of the different regions of the world among the apostles. The author of the text is the first to exploit this legend regarding the evangelistic missions of the closest followers of Jesus. As it appears at the beginning of the story and seems to be somehow independent of the rest of the narrative, one may speculate whether this passage is a later addition. In my opinion, the presence of a very similar scene at the beginning of *APh* guarantees

<sup>54</sup> See Á. Narro, *El culto a las Santas y los Santos en la antigüedad tardía y la época bizantina* (Madrid, 2019) 24-29. This idea insists on the theories pointing to common elements shared by novels, biographies and hagiography in late imperial Greek literature. On this topic, one must consider the following studies: R.A. Burridge, *What are the Gospels? A Comparison with Graeco-Roman Biography* (Cambridge, 1992); D. Frickenschmidt, *Evangelium als Biographie. Die vier Evangelien im Rahmen antiker Erzählkunst* (Tübingen, 1997); M. Van Uytenghe, 'L'hagiographie: un 'genre' chrétien ou antique tardif?', *AB* 111 (1994) 135-88. On the rhetorical *topoi* of the lives of saints of the middle Byzantine period, an essential work is the study of T. Pratsch, *Der hagiographische Topos. Griechische Heiligenviten in mittelbyzantinischer Zeit* (Berlin and New York, 2005). I applied a similar approach to the collections of miracles of the late antique period: Á. Narro, 'Tópicos retóricos de las primeras colecciones bizantinas de milagros (θαύματα)', *EC* 151 (2017) 93-121.

its authenticity, or at least its integration into the Thomas narrative before the composition of *APH* (fourth century C.E.)<sup>55</sup>.

Κατ' ἐκεῖνον τὸν καιρὸν ἤμεν πάντες οἱ ἀπόστολοι ἐν Ἱεροσολύμοις, Σίμων ὁ λεγόμενος Πέτρος καὶ Ἀνδρέας ὁ ἀδελφὸς αὐτοῦ, Ἰάκωβος ὁ τοῦ Ζεβεδαίου καὶ Ἰωάννης ὁ ἀδελφὸς αὐτοῦ, Φίλιππος καὶ Βαρθολομαῖος, Θωμᾶς καὶ Ματθαῖος ὁ τελώνης, Ἰάκωβος Ἀλφαίου καὶ Σίμων ὁ Καναναῖος, καὶ Ἰούδας Ἰακώβου, καὶ διείλαμεν τὰ κλίματα τῆς οἰκουμένης, ὅπως εἶς ἕκαστος ἡμῶν ἐν τῷ κλίματι τῷ λαχόντι αὐτῷ καὶ εἰς τὸ ἔθνος ἐν ᾧ ὁ κύριος αὐτὸν ἀπέστειλεν πορευθῆ. κατὰ κλῆρον οὖν ἔλαχεν ἡ Ἰνδία Ἰούδα Θωμᾶ τῷ καὶ Διδύμῳ.

At that time we apostles were all in Jerusalem -Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, Philip and Bartholomew, Thomas and Matthew the tax-gatherer, James the son of Alphaeus and Simon the Cananaean, and Judas the son of James- and we portioned out the regions of the world, in order that each one of us might go into the region that fell to him by lot, and to the nation to which the Lord had sent him. By lot India fell to Judas Thomas, also called Didymus.<sup>56</sup>

Scenes of this sort, imagining the distribution among the apostles of the regions of the world in order to spread Jesus's words, were quite common in late antique narratives about the apostles. This is demonstrated by the appearance of such a scene in the *Acts of Philip* (8.1), a text considered to belong to the so-called “second wave” of literary production concerning the apostles in the fourth and fifth centuries,<sup>57</sup> as well as in the so-called *Acts of Thomas and His Wonderworking Skin*,<sup>58</sup> a different version of *ATH*, in which martyrdom scenes and miracles play a major role, and also in the *Life and Miracles of Saint Thecla* (*Mir.* 4:21-24), a literary paraphrase of the second century's

<sup>55</sup> F. Bovon and C.R. Matthews, *The Acts of Philip: A New Translation* (Waco, 2012).

<sup>56</sup> Translation at Elliott, *The Apocryphal*, 447.

<sup>57</sup> P. Piovanelli, ‘Le recyclage des textes apocryphes à l’heure de la petite mondialisation de l’Antiquité tardive (ca. 325-451). Quelques perspectives littéraires et historiques’, in A. Frey and R. Gounelle (eds), *Poussières de christianisme et de judaïsme antiques* (Prahins, 2007) 277-95.

<sup>58</sup> J. Holste and J.E. Spittler, ‘The Acts of Thomas and His Wonderworking Skin: An Introduction and Translation’, in T. Burke (ed.), *New Testament Apocrypha: More Noncanonical Scriptures* (Grand Rapids, 2020) 316-39.

*APTh*,<sup>59</sup> that is considered to be one of the first testimonies of Byzantine hagiography.<sup>60</sup> In Kaestli's opinion, this scene becomes a literary *topos* created by the author of *ATh* from different legendary materials regarding the first spread of Christian doctrine in the apostolic era.<sup>61</sup>

The author of the first above-mentioned example in *APh* reinterprets this scene and details the regions assigned by God to Peter (Rome), Thomas (Parthia and India), Matthew (Pontus), Bartholomew (Lycaonia), Simon the Canaanite (Spain), Andrew (Achaia) and Philip (Greece), but ignores Paul. In the second example (the *Acts of Thomas and His Wonderworking Skin*), the author affirms that Jesus divided the world into twelve regions and asked his apostles to go and preach his gospel.<sup>62</sup> In the third example (the *Life and Miracles of Saint Thecla*), the anonymous hagiographer asserts that it was Christ who divided the regions and cities among the saints (τῶν ἀγίων), with Seleukeia and its region being assigned to Thecla, Judaea to Peter, and the nations to Paul (ὡς Πέτρῳ τὴν Ἰουδαίαν, ὡς Παύλῳ τὰ ἔθνη), thereby alluding to the general narrative of the canonical Acts.<sup>63</sup> It is worth noting that Thecla was also considered as an apostle in the early Christian milieu, as can be inferred from the narratives of her life.<sup>64</sup>

Motifs of this sort, shared also by later texts, indicate how the AAA were used as models for creating new narrative fictions in late antique hagiography. Actually, further analysis is needed in order to determine whether a given motif can be observed as originating exclusively in the AAA, and later reused in the lives of saints, or as being always common both to the AAA and emerging hagiography. In my opinion, it depends on the author's point of view, and whether these texts are considered to be closer to or further from biblical tradition.

<sup>59</sup> On the rewriting of this text, see S.F. Johnson, *The Life and Miracles of Thecla: A Literary Study* (Cambridge, MA, 2006) 67-112.

<sup>60</sup> G. Dagon, *Vie et Miracles de Sainte Thècle* (Brussels, 1978).

<sup>61</sup> J.-D. Kaestli, 'Les scènes d'attribution des champs de mission et de départ de l'apôtre dans les actes apocryphes', in Bovon, *Les actes apocryphes des apôtres*, 249-64.

<sup>62</sup> Holste and Spittler, *The Acts of Thomas*, 326.

<sup>63</sup> Á. Narro, *Vida y milagros de Santa Tecla* (Madrid, 2017) XLVIII-XLIX.

<sup>64</sup> Á. Narro, 'The Cloud of Thecla and the Construction of Her Character as a Virgin (παρθένος), Martyr (μάρτυς) and Apostle (ἀπόστολος)', *Collectanea Christiana Orientalia* 16 (2019) 99-129.



It should be made absolutely clear, however, that from the mid-fourth century onwards the tradition of the AAA can be considered as integrated within hagiographic literature, though preserving its own peculiarities.

Nevertheless, the apostles are the Christian models of θειοῖ ἄνδρες (divine men), both as the direct inheritors of Jesus and as venerated saints. Accordingly, the reusing of certain motifs from the AAA will become a common feature of hagiographical texts, since the characterizations of the apostles, as of the later saints, were made on the basis of a clear *imitatio Christi*, in which their virtues and abilities were portrayed by prototypical scenes which can be traced back to the five major texts. Thus, asceticism, wonder-working and martyrdom will be repeated and constantly reshaped in both literary traditions, the most ancient represented by the AAA, their later evolution by hagiography.

A second element anticipating a broadly spread *topos* of late antique and Byzantine hagiography occurs in a story of a possessed woman who was healed by Thomas's intervention. The story is featured in the fifth act of the book (*Ath* 42-50). To all appearances, this narrative does not present any particularity other than the intervention of the speaking animal. Nonetheless, if one reads between the lines, many particular elements are revealed, although due to time constraints my analysis will be reduced to alluding to some interesting aspects connecting *Ath* to later literary traditions.

The main core of the story should be read with the same mindset as the late antique hagiographers, who constantly evoke the spirit of fornication (τὸ πνεῦμα τῆς πορνείας), an idea that appears at least as early as the Greek version of the book of Hosea (4, 12), not only as a sign of immoral feelings and impulses, but also as a specific term with which to define demonic possession with evident sexual connotations. A specific detail links this story to later hagiographical texts: the demonic assault in the baths. This common motif has been studied in late antique hagiography by Bonner, and appears in popular texts of this period such as the *Martyrdom of Demetrius of Thessaloniki* (*BHG* 496) and the *Life of Gregory the Wonder-worker* by Gregory of Nyssa (*BHG* 715).<sup>65</sup>

<sup>65</sup> C. Bonner, 'Demons of the Baths', in S.R.K. Glanville (ed.), *Studies presented to F.L.I. Griffith* (London, 1932) 203-08.

The same spirit will appear in the story of the possession of the wife of King Misdeus's general and their daughter. Both women are attacked by two devils who penetrate their bodies. The apostle is able to cast the bad spirits out and restore the health of both women. In *ATH* 64, the mother recounts the possession and describes the man attacking her as completely black (ὄλος μέλας), a quite common depiction of the devil in literature from the third century onwards, as is demonstrated by its repeated use, such as in Athanasius's *Life of Anthony* (*BHG* 140), to give one example. The identification of the demon as a black man becomes a *topos* of late antique and Byzantine hagiography, in which the term 'Ethiopian' (Αἰθίοψ) for describing such a demonic spirit also became very popular.<sup>66</sup>

Finally, in the martyrdom of Thomas one can also find interesting elements anticipating some significant aspects of hagiographical literature. This scene provides an ironic description of divine punishment as a result of the apostle's incredulity in *Jn* 20:27-29, when Jesus asked the apostle to put his finger into his side that he may believe in his presence. For this incredulity, the apostle will be struck and killed by the spears of four soldiers in *ATH* 168.

This kind of ingenious account of martyrdom was common among the written acts of the martyrs of early Christianity and Late Antiquity. In this precise case, it would have masked a message addressed to Christian communities exhorting them to believe and strengthen their faith.

Towards the end of the text, one can find another important motif, in this case pointing to a later cult of the apostle. Nevertheless, due to its location at the end of the narrative, special caution is needed as it could be a later addition. This would explain the similarities between this scene and those included in hagiographical works. Here, Misdeus announces that he is going to take a bone from the tomb of the apostle with which to heal his possessed son by contact with the relic; this demonstrates one of the most common methods of healing in the hagiographical sources.<sup>67</sup> However, the bones of Thomas had been robbed and transported to the West, as is highlighted by the author of the text (*ATH* 170: Ὁ δὲ Μισδαῖος οὐχ εὔρεν τὰ ὀστᾶ· κεκλόφει γὰρ αὐτὰ εἷς τῶν ἀδελφῶν καὶ εἰς τὰ τῆς δύσεως μετήνεγκε μέρη). This

<sup>66</sup> D. Brakke, 'Ethiopian Demons: Male Sexuality, the Black-Skinned Other, and the Monastic Self', *JHistS* 10 (2001) 501-35.

<sup>67</sup> Narro, *El culto a las Santas*, 51-52.

is a typical scene in the acts of the martyrs, in which members of the community, aiming to preserve the memory of the martyr, recover the mortal remains of the saint in order to create a cult around his tomb and/or relics (*ATH* 170). At the same time, this scene may also have served as evidence with which to later authenticate the material relics of Thomas.

#### 4. *Final Remarks*

Literary analysis of *ATH* reveals this text's deep connections with the apocryphal legendary tradition represented by the major AAA, and the presence of many elements which became popular in later Eastern hagiography. In fact, all the elements presented by the AAA will be incorporated into the narrative repertoire of motifs used by hagiographers from the fourth century onwards. From this point of view, *ATH* represents a new step along this process, since, being the latest of the five major AAA, it maintains the same structural and narrative patterns, but features new elements, such as those reviewed in the last part of this paper. Thus, the role of the AAA in the transition from proto-hagiography to proper hagiography is quite significant. Deeper examination of this transition is required in order to determine either the direct or indirect influence of *ATH* over later hagiography. This paper at least demonstrates that many of the motifs that are constantly repeated in hagiographical narratives were already present in *ATH*. Three such motifs are: 1) the *incipit*, with the allusion to the division of the earth and distribution of the parts for evangelistic mission among the apostles, 2) some of the miracles performed by them, and 3) a particular kind of martyrdom and subsequent veneration of relics.

# VIII. Rewriting and Modulation

## Techniques in Text Type ‘Arabic 1’ of the *Acts of Thomas*: A Survey of Evaluation\*

JUAN PEDRO MONFERRER-SALA

*Michel van Esbroeck, in memoriam*

### 1. Introduction

The full text of the work known as *Acta Thomæ* has been preserved in several languages: Syriac, Greek, Latin, Coptic, Arabic, Ethiopic, Armenian, Georgian and Old Church Slavonic.<sup>1</sup> While many scholars argue that later versions ultimately derive from a Syriac original,<sup>2</sup>

\* This study is part of the Research Project PGC2018-096807-B-I00: ‘Biblical and Patristic Graeco-Arabic and Latin Manuscripts’, granted by the Spanish Ministry of Science, Innovation and Universities.

<sup>1</sup> J.K. Elliott, *The Apocryphal New Testament* (Oxford, 1993) 442-43; M. Geerard, *Clavis apocryphorum Novi Testamenti* (Turnhout, 1992) 244-46.

<sup>2</sup> W. Michaelis, *Die apokryphen Schriften zum Neuen Testament*. Übersetzt und erläutert (Bremen, 1956, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed.) 402; F.C. Burkitt, ‘The Original Language of the Acts of Judas Thomas’, *JTS OS 1* [2] (1900) 280-90; id., ‘Another Indication of the Syriac Origin of the Acts of Thomas’, *JTS OS 3* [9] (1901) 94-95 and ‘Fragments of the Acts of Thomas from the Sinaitic palimpsest’, in A. Smith Lewis (ed.), *Select Narratives of Holy Women from the Syro-Antiochene or Sinai Palimpsest* (London, 1900) 23; H.W. Attridge, ‘The Original Language of the Acts of Thomas’, in id. *et al.* (eds), *Of Scribes and Scrolls: Studies on the Hebrew Bible, Intertestamental Judaism, and Christian Origins Presented to John Strugnell on the Occasion of His Sixtieth Birthday* (Lanham, 1990) 241-50; A.F.J. Klijn, *The Acts of Thomas. Introduction, Text and Commentary* (Leiden, 2003<sup>2</sup>) 15; and ‘The Acts of Thomas Revised’, in J.N. Bremmer (ed.), *The Apocryphal Acts of Thomas* (Leuven,

others hail the Greek version as the *Vorlage*;<sup>3</sup> doubts remain, however, and are justified in great measure by the complex nature of the issue.<sup>4</sup>

Due largely to the prominence achieved by the figure of the Apostle Thomas in the Christian tradition,<sup>5</sup> the text underwent an interesting process of reception in other languages throughout Christendom, prompting recensions which in turn gave rise to a range of narrative developments, for example in Armenian.<sup>6</sup> A substantial portion of this process can also be traced in the Christian Arab tradition, in which three different components can be discerned: the *Acta* themselves, the *Prædicatio* and the *Martyrium*.

This study focuses on several extracts from one of the two surviving Arabic versions, which have themselves been traced to two different originals, one in Syriac and the other in Coptic.<sup>7</sup> Although the Arabic version (text type 'Arabic 1') was dismissed by Klijn – whose knowledge of Christian Arabic texts was somewhat deficient

2001) 1-10 at 4; A. Desreumaux, 'Les apocryphes apostoliques', in M. Debié *et al.* (eds), *Les apocryphes syriaques* (Paris, 2005) 71-96 at 89-90.

<sup>3</sup> J.N. Bremmer, 'The Acts of Thomas: place, date and women', in *idem*, *Maidens, Magic and Martyrs in Early Christianity: Collected Essays* (Tübingen, 2017) 167-179 at 170; L. Roig-Lanzillotta, 'A Syriac Original for the Acts of Thomas? The Theory of the Syriac Priority Revisited, Evaluated and Rejected', in I. Ramelli and J. Perkins (eds), *Early Christian and Jewish Narrative: The Role of Religion in Shaping Narrative Forms* (Tübingen, 2015) 105-33. Cf. Klijn, *The Acts of Thomas*, 8.

<sup>4</sup> G. Bornkamm, 'Thomasakten', in E. Hennecke (ed.), *Neutestamentliche Apokryphen II* (Tübingen, 1964) 297-372 at 299 (cf. H.J.W. Drijvers, 'The Acts of Thomas', in W. Schneemelcher [ed.], *New Testament Apocrypha*, English translation edited by R.McL. Wilson, 2 vols (London, 1991-1992) 2. 322-411 at 323). See also N.J. Andrade, 'The Acts of Thomas and Its Impact', in *id.*, *The Journey of Christianity to India in Late Antiquity: Networks and the Movement of Culture* (Cambridge, 2018) 27-66 at 29.

<sup>5</sup> K. Rätsep, 'The Apostle Thomas in Christian Tradition', *Studia Orientalia* 64 (1988) 107-30.

<sup>6</sup> L. Leloir, 'Rapports entre les versions arménienne et syriaque des Actes apocryphes des Apôtres', in F. Graffin and A. Guillaumont (eds), *Symposium Syriacum, 1976* (Rome, 1978) 137-48.

<sup>7</sup> Geerard, *Clavis apocryphorum*, 149. Cf. P.-H. Poirier (ed.), *La version copte de la Prédication et du Martyre de Thomas* (Brussels, 1984).

– as being of minor importance, van Esbroeck highlighted the value of the Sinai text produced in the mid-tenth century.<sup>8</sup>

The text was transmitted in the Christian Arab tradition through a series of manuscripts,<sup>9</sup> some of which have already been edited.<sup>10</sup> Among them, the *disjecta membra* of the ‘Mingana Fund’ at Birmingham University, Bryn Mawr College and Leiden,<sup>11</sup> belonging to the mid-10<sup>th</sup> century Sinai manuscript, were collected and recomposed by Esbroeck. These fragments, which contain the “History of the Apostle Thomas and his teachings to the Indians” (*Qiṣṣat Tūmā al-rasūl wa-talmiḍatihi ahl al-Hind*), constitute one of the most significant Arabic manuscript witnesses.<sup>12</sup>

Although Klijn, following Mingana, accepted the dating of the section preserved in *Cod. Mingana Chr. Arab. 94* [91 in the Catalogue] (fols. 8<sup>v</sup>-11<sup>v</sup>) as “about A.D. 830”,<sup>13</sup> the manuscript recomposed by van Esbroeck was in fact copied over a century later, in 950.<sup>14</sup> It is, nonetheless, a copy of an earlier text, as noted by van Esbroeck: “(...) le manuscrit initial (...) a été écrit en 950, mais qu’il

<sup>8</sup> M. van Esbroeck, ‘Les Actes apocryphes de Thomas en version arabe’, *Parole de l’Orient* 14 (1987) 14-15.

<sup>9</sup> G. Graf, *Geschichte der christlichen arabischen Literatur* (Città del Vaticano, 1944) 1.264. Cf. M. van Esbroeck, ‘Une collection de 35 apocryphes apostoliques’, *Parole de l’Orient* 24 (1999) 179-99.

<sup>10</sup> Edition of an unidentified manuscript from *Dayr al-Suryān*, in Wādī al-Naṭrūn, Egypt, by A. Smith Lewis, *Acta Mythologica Apostolorum, Transcribed from an Arabic Ms. in the Convent of Deyr-es-Suriani, Egypt, and from Mss. in the Convent of St Catherine, on Mount Sinai* (London, 1904) 67-79 (English translation 80-93); J.-M. Sauget, ‘Reconstitution d’un manuscrit double originaire du Tūr ‘Abdīn et actuellement dépecé: Sbath 125 + Mingana syriaque 88’, in *Atti della Accademia nazionale dei Lincei* 378 (1976) 358-439; Van Esbroeck, ‘Les Actes’, 11-77.

<sup>11</sup> S. Khalil, ‘On A.F.J. Klijn, *The Acts of Thomas*’, *Bulletin d’Arab Chrétien* II:2-3 (1978) 26-28.

<sup>12</sup> M. van Esbroeck, ‘Remembrement d’un manuscrit sinaitique arabe de 950’, in S. Khalil (ed.), *Actes du premier congrès international d’études arabes chrétiennes* (Rome, 1982) 115-47; for the *Qiṣṣat Tūmā*, 140-41, 145.

<sup>13</sup> A. Mingana, *Catalogue of the Mingana Collection of Manuscripts. II: Christian Arabic Manuscripts and Additional Syriac Manuscripts* (Cambridge, 1936, repr. Piscataway, NJ, 2008) 2.122.

<sup>14</sup> Van Esbroeck, ‘Remembrement’, 136 and ‘Les Actes’, 11.

recopia un modèle beaucoup plus ancien dont l'écriture coufique, surtout au debut, influe sur la plume du copiste".<sup>15</sup>

Using the information provided by Klijn in the first version of his study of the *Acta Thomæ*,<sup>16</sup> Samir Khalil drew up an outline of the textual tradition from a Syriac original. Text type 1 ('Arabic 1') derived directly from that original, whereas a second text type ('Arabic 2') derived directly from a Coptic version, itself made from a Greek version whose *Vorlage* was the same Syriac original. The 'Arabic 1' type is represented by the Sinai MS edited by van Esbroeck, and 'Arabic 2' by the unidentified Egyptian MS edited by Smith Lewis. Samir Khalil additionally noted the existence of a third, abbreviated, type represented by two MSS, dating from the 15th and 16th centuries, respectively, which have not as yet been studied.<sup>17</sup>

In a comparative description of the Arabic versions, van Esbroeck underlines the difficulty in identifying the possible *Vorlage* used by the Arab translator. In some cases, as van Esbroeck reported, the Arabic text clearly follows a Greek redaction, whereas it also includes passages only to be found in Syriac, together with others unique to the Arabic version.<sup>18</sup>

## 2. *The Arabic Recensions*

As Samir Khalil has noted, 'Arabic 1' and 'Arabic 2' represent two different textual traditions, drawing on two different *Vorlagen*. A single example, to which we shall return later, suffices to highlight the difference between the two text types:

<sup>15</sup> Van Esbroeck, 'Les Actes', 11.

<sup>16</sup> Klijn, *Acts of Thomas*, 9, 12-13,

<sup>17</sup> Khalil, 'On A.F.J. Klijn, *The Acts of Thomas*', 25-26.

<sup>18</sup> Van Esbroeck, 'Les Actes', 13-15.

‘Arabic 1’<sup>19</sup>

(٢) وفي غد ذلك اليوم إذا برجل يقال له  
 جابان تاجر لاوتوفر ملك الهند كان قد أتى  
 إلى أورشليم فلقيه سيّدنا يسوع المسيح  
 فقال له تشتري منّي هذا العبد الذي تراه  
 فقال له التاجر إن كان صانعا فأنا اشتريه  
 لأنّ الملك أوصاني [أن] أشتري له عبد  
 أمان فقال له ربّنا يسوع المسيح اعلم أنّه  
 بناءً ونجّاراً كريماً عارفاً بجميع الصناعات  
 فقال التاجر لثوما هذا الرجل مولك فقال  
 ثوما نعم (٣) فباعه إلهنا يسوع المسيح  
 بعشرين درهماً من التاجر فقال له التاجر  
 اكتب لي براءة فكتب له سيّدنا المسيح  
 هكذا أنا يسوع بعث لجابان التاجر عبدي  
 ثوما بعشرين درهماً السلام عليك فقال  
 ثوما هوأك ياربّ يكون فقال له ربّنا  
 المسيح خذ ثمنك ومعك تكون قوّتي  
 وأذهب وأنا معك وليس اتاركك فأخذه  
 تاجر ملك الهند وذهباً من أورشليم جميعاً  
 صاروا إلى البحر فلما صعد والي المركب  
 طابت له الرياح فبلغوا بعض المدن

‘Arabic 2’<sup>20</sup>

وفيما هم جلوس واتا اليهم رجل من  
 اصحاب قنطوريس ملك الهند ونظر  
 التلاميذ جلوساً مثل الغربا قال لهم من اين  
 انتم ايها الاخوة قالوا له سل ما احببت قال  
 لهم ليس الا خير لانني راياكم قوما احيارا  
 وانا اطلب عبدا اشتريه يكون مثلهم قال له  
 بطرس نحن الثلاثة عبيد لرب واحد اسمه  
 يسوع المسيح وهو يحضر الى هذه  
 المدينة وعند حضوره من اردته منا [يبيعك  
 اياه لان مدينتنا وكل نواحيها رجال  
 [ا] خيار وكان يقول ذلك والرب يسمع ما  
 يقوله بعضنا لبعض وفي تلك الساعة ترايا  
 لهم الرب وكلمهم باللغة التي يعرفونها  
 وقال السلام يابطرس الكريم وتوما الاميى  
 الحكيم ومثيس الوديع قد عرفتكم اني لا  
 افارقكم بل انا حاضر معكم كل حين كما  
 وعدت من ابى اتقدمكم الى كل موضع  
 تسبرون اليه وكان صاحب الملك الهند  
 حاضرا ولم يعرف اللغة التي كان الرب  
 يخاطبهم بها وبعد هذا ظهر لهم الرب مثل  
 رجل غنى وجلس على موضع في المدينة  
 قال بطرس للرجل صاحب الملك هذا ربنا  
 الذى عرفناك انه يحضر انظر من تريد منا  
 هو يبيعك اياه قال الرجل للرب السلام ايها  
 الرجل الصالح ظاهرهك يشهد لك انك  
 رجل كريم هل انت راضى تبيعنى واحدا  
 من هولاي العبيد الذين لك قال الرب من  
 اردته من هولاي الاثني [ا] يبيعك اياه فاما

<sup>19</sup> Van Esbroeck, ‘Les Actes’, 16-17 §§ 2-3.

<sup>20</sup> Smith Lewis, *Acta Mythologica Apostolorum*, 77-78.



هذا الشيخ هو مولد في ديار اباي لا ابيعه  
 ونظر الرجل الى تماس واعجبه انه كان  
 رجلا جسيما قوى النفس فقال له تبيعني  
 هذا قال له الرب ثمنه ثلاثة ارطل ذهب  
 اجابه الرجل وقد اشتريته منك وسلم اليه  
 الثمنم وقال له تكتب لي كتاب شراه في  
 وسط شارع المدينة قال له الرب ما تحتاج  
 الي من يكتب انا اكتب لك خطي بيدي  
 اعترف لك فيه ان هذا العبد الذي بعته  
 اياه انت ياديامس ناحب قنطوريس ملك  
 الهند وتم الكتاب كما يجب وتجلا عنهم  
 الي السما بمجد

The English translation of both texts is as follows:

Ar. 1<sup>21</sup>

(§ 2) “The day after that day, a man named Gābān, a merchant of Ūtūfar king of India, arrived in Jerusalem. And our Lord Jesus Christ met him and told him: ‘Do you wish to obtain from me this slave whom you see?’ And the merchant told him: ‘If he is a craftsman, I will buy him, because the king ordered me to buy him a faithful slave’. And our Lord Jesus Christ told him: ‘I know he is an architect, an excellent carpenter, competent in all works’. And the merchant told Thomas: ‘This man is your master?’ And Thomas said: ‘Yes!’ (§ 3) And our God Jesus Christ sold him for twenty drachmas to the merchant. And the merchant said to him: ‘Write me a

Ar. 2<sup>22</sup>

“And while they were sitting, a man came up to them, one of the friends of Contūrīs [Qunṭūrīs], the king of India”. And he looked at the disciples sitting like foreigners. He said unto them: ‘Whence are ye, O ye brethren?’ They said unto him: ‘Ask for what thou dost wish’. He said unto them: ‘It is nothing but good, for I see that ye are very fine men; and I am seeking for a slave who will be like you, that I may buy him’. Peter said unto him, ‘We three are servants of one Lord, whose name is Jesus the Christ, and He is present in this city. And when He shall appear, He will sell thee whomsoever of us thou desirest; for [in] our city and all the country round it the men are handsome’.

<sup>21</sup> French versión in Van Esbroeck, ‘Les Actes’, 46 §§ 2-3.

<sup>22</sup> Smith Lewis, *Acta Mythologica Apostolorum*, 81-82.

certificate'. And our Lord the Christ wrote thus: 'I Jesus sold to Ġābān the merchant my slave Thomas for twenty drachmas. Peace be upon you!' And Thomas said: 'Your desire, Master, be fulfilled!' And our Lord Christ told him: 'Take the money of your value, and my strength will be with you. Go and I will be with you and I will not abandon you!' And the merchant of the king of India took him, and they both left Jerusalem together. They went to the sea, and when he got into the boat, the wind was favorable to them, and they reached some cities".

And when he had said this—the Lord was listening to what they were saying to each other—immediately the Lord appeared unto them, and spoke to them in the language which they knew, and said, 'Peace! O noble Peter and faithful learned Thomas, and meek Matthias! I have told you that I will not forsake you: but I will be present with you always as I have promised from my Father. I will go before you to every place to which ye shall journey'. And a friend of the king of India was present, who did not know the language in which our Lord was speaking to them. And afterwards the Lord appeared unto them like a rich man, and sat down on a place in the city. Peter said unto the man, the friend of the king, 'Our Lord, about Whom I have told you, is present. Look at which of us thou dost wish, He will sell him to thee'. The man said unto the Lord: 'Peace, O thou good man! Thine appearance witnesseth for thee, that thou art a nobleman. Art thou willing to sell me one of these thy slaves?' The Lord said: 'Which of these two dost thou wish me to sell thee? Now, this one, the elder, was born in the household of my fathers; I will not sell him'. And the man looked at Thomas and admired him, for he was sturdy and strong in spirit. And he said unto him: 'Sell me this one'. The Lord said unto him: 'His price is three pounds of gold'. The man replied unto him: 'And I have bought him for thee', and he delivered the price to him. And he said unto him: 'Write out the bill of his sale for

me in the street of the city'. The Lord said unto him: 'Thou dost not need anyone to write. I will write for thee in my own hand; I will acknowledge to thee in it that this is the slave whom I have sold unto thee, O Deyâmus [Diyâmus]! Friend of Contûrîs [Qunṭûrîs], king of India'. And he finished the deed, as was right, and departed from them to heaven with glory".

The differences between the two versions are evident, and point unambiguously to two different traditions: in narrative terms, the account offered by 'Arabic 2' is considerably expanded with respect to the more succinct 'Arabic 1'. Logically enough, 'Arabic 2', which draws on a Coptic *Vorlage*, differs markedly from the treatment found in the Syriac and Greek traditions, to which 'Arabic 1' is obviously more closely linked.

### 3. *Analysis of the Fragments*

This example would suggest that 'Arabic 1' is the closer of the two to the original text. In the light of the opinions voiced by Samir Khalil, to the effect that the original of 'Arabic 1' is a Syriac text, and by van Esbroeck, for whom that ascription is – at least in some cases – by no means certain, this paper analyses several extracts from 'Arabic 1' and compares them with their possible Syriac and Greek *Vorlagen*, with a view to offering new information regarding the nature of the Arabic version.

The text quoted above provides a suitable starting-point. Comparison with the Syriac and Greek versions<sup>23</sup> yields a number of

<sup>23</sup> For the Syriac and Greek texts discussed below, see W. Wright, *Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles Edited from Syriac Manuscripts in the British Museum and Other Libraries*. 2 vols. (London, 1871) 1.173-74; English trans. 2.147-48; P. Bedjan, *Acta martyrum et sanctorum* (Paris and Leipzig, 1892) 3.4-5; R.A. Lipsius and M. Bonnet, *Acta Apostolorum Apocrypha: Acta Philippi et Acta Thomae accedunt Acta Barnabae* (Leipzig, 1903) 101-02 (trans. M.R. James, *The Apocryphal New Testament* [Oxford, 1924, repr. 1983] 365).

interesting findings: the proper noun جابان (*Ġabān*) corresponds to the Syriac ܗܒܒܢ (*Habbān*)<sup>24</sup>, where the change /ǧ/ < /h/ is readily accounted for in the Arabic manuscript tradition by the addition of a diacritic on /h/. The reading given in the Greek text, Ἀββάνης, is less explicable in Arabic, since /ǧ/~ /h/ cannot result from /ā/<sup>25</sup>.

The reading given in the Arabic text (وتوفر *Ūtūfar*) is a defective transcription of the Syriac ܓܘܢܕܢܦܘܪܘܨ (*Gūdnapar*) rather than of the Greek Γουνδάφορος,<sup>26</sup> attributable to corruption in the manuscript tradition. Moreover the complete construction given in the Arabic text is تاجر لاوتوفر ملك الهند (“a merchant of Ūtūfar king of India”), whilst the Syriac version gives ܘܘܫܬܘܪܘܫܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܓܘܢܕܢܦܘܪܘܫܐ (“and he was sent by the king Gūdnapar”) and the Greek ἀπὸ τοῦ βασιλέως Γουνδάφορου (“sent from the King Gundaphorus”); neither of these match the Arabic version.

The expression سيّدنا يسوع المسيح (“our Lord Jesus Christ”), equating to what we may regard as the *lectio originalis*, could in principle derive either from Syriac ܡܠܝܚܐ (“our Lord”) or from Greek ὁ (δὲ) κύριος (“(and) the Lord”), although in fact it is a modulation based on the Syriac *Moran*, to which the Arab translator has added يسوع المسيح (“Jesus Christ”).

Of particular interest in terms of the composition in Arabic is the clause فلقبه سيّدنا يسوع المسيح فقال له تشيتري منّي هذا العبد الذي تراه فقال له التاجر إن كان صانعا فأنا اشتريه لأن الملك أوصاني [أن] اشتري له عبد أمان (“and our Lord Jesus Christ met him and told him: ‘Do you wish to obtain from me this slave whom you see?’ And the merchant told him: ‘If he is a craftsman, I will buy him, because the king ordered me to buy him a faithful servant’”). The Greek and Syriac texts, shown below with their respective translations, provide the following accounts:

<sup>24</sup> F.C. Burkitt, ‘The Name *Habbān* in the Acts of Thomas’, *JThS* OS 2 [7] (1901) 429-32.

<sup>25</sup> Cf. Van Esbroeck, ‘Les Actes’, 12.

<sup>26</sup> On this character, see K. Luke, ‘Gondopharnes’, *The Harp* 8-9 (1995-1996) 431-50.

καὶ ἐντολὴν παρ' αὐτοῦ εἰληφότα  
τέκτονα πριάμενον ἀγαγεῖν αὐτῶ.  
ὁ δὲ κύριος ἰδὼν αὐτὸν ἐν τῇ  
ἀγορᾷ περιπατοῦντα τὸ  
μεσημβρινὸν εἶπεν αὐτῶ· Βούλει  
τέκτονα πρίασθαι; Ὁ δὲ εἶπεν  
αὐτῶ· Ναί

ܟܘܪܐܟ ܟܝܘܢܐ ܟܝܘܢܐ ܟܘܪܐܟ  
ܗܠܝܟܬܐ ܘܥܠܝܬܐ ܡܠܥܘܒܐ ܡܠܥܘܒܐ  
ܟܝܘܢܐ ܡܠܝܚܝܟܐ ܟܘܢܝܐܟܐ  
ܗܘܐ ܡܠܝܚܝܟܐ ܥܝܕܝܐ ܕܘܟܐ ܟܘܢܐ

“(…) and having commandment  
from him to buy a carpenter and  
bring him unto him. Now the Lord  
seeing him walking in the  
market-place at noon said unto  
him: ‘Wouldest thou buy a  
carpenter?’ And he said to him:  
‘Yea’”.

“(…) that he might bring to him a  
skilful carpenter. And our Lord saw  
him walking in the way, and said to  
him: ‘Thou wishest to buy a  
carpenter?’ He said to him: ‘Yes’”.

Even though the Syriac and Greek texts differ in some respects – for example τέκτονα (“carpenter”) versus ܟܘܪܐܟ ܟܝܘܢܐ (“skilful carpenter”), ἀγορᾷ (“market-place”) versus ܟܘܢܝܐܟܐ (“way”) and μεσημβρινόν (“at noon”), with no match in Syriac – in terms of syntax they share a similar compositional structure. By contrast, the Arabic version modifies the structure by displacing one of the syntactic components. This becomes clearly apparent in the following table:

—	καὶ ἐντολὴν παρ' αὐτοῦ εἰληφότα τέκτονα πριάμενον ἀγαγεῖν αὐτῶ.	ܟܝܘܢܐ ܟܘܪܐܟ ܡܠܥܘܒܐ ܟܘܪܐܟ ܟܝܘܢܐ ܡܠ
فلقبه سيّدنا يسوع المسيح فقال له	ὁ δὲ κύριος ἰδὼν αὐτὸν ἐν τῇ ἀγορᾷ περιπατοῦντα τὸ μεσημβρινὸν εἶπεν αὐτῶ·	ܘܥܠܝܬܐ ܘܥܠܝܬܐ ܟܘܢܝܐܟܐ ܗܠܝܟܬܐ ܡܠܝܚܝܟܐ
تشترى منّي هذا العبد الذي تراه	Βούλει τέκτονα πρίασθαι;	ܕܘܟܐ ܟܘܢܐ ܟܝܘܢܐ ܥܝܕܝܐ
فقال له التاجر إن كان صانعا فأنا اشتريه لأنّ الملك أوصاني [أن] اشتري له عبد أمان	Ὁ δὲ εἶπεν αὐτῶ· Ναί	ܗܘܐ ܡܠܝܚܝܟܐ

The opening sentence of the Syriac and Greek texts has not been omitted; instead, the translator has placed it at the end, shrewdly using it to modulate the affirmative adverb “yes” (ναί / *in*), and thus to some extent rewriting the original.<sup>27</sup> The Arabic version, moreover, makes no reference to either of the elements mentioned above (ἀγορᾶ ≠ ܠܘܚܐ and μεσημβρινόν), thus departing from both texts; while with regard to τέκτονα ≠ ܠܘܚܐܐ ܕܘܚܐ the Arabic translator’s use of *ṣāni‘* (“artisan”),<sup>28</sup> may point to the Greek text, although the final reading أمان appears to render the Syriac ܠܘܚܐܐ.

This view is confirmed in the subsequent dialogue, where the Arabic translator again modulates the base text, including the reference to the carpenter. The Greek and Syriac texts, identical except for two very minor differences (ὁ κύριος = ܠܘܚܐܐ; καὶ βούλομαι αὐτὸν = ܠܘܚܐܐ), read as follows:

καὶ ὁ κύριος ἔφη αὐτῷ· Ἔχω  
δοῦλον τέκτονα καὶ βούλομαι  
αὐτὸν πωλῆσαι

ܠܘܚܐܐ ܠܘܚܐܐ ܠܘܚܐܐ ܕܘܚܐ ܠܘܚܐܐ  
ܠܘܚܐܐ ܕܘܚܐܐ ܠܘܚܐܐ

“And the Lord said to him: ‘I have a slave, a carpenter, and I desire to sell him’”.<sup>29</sup>

“Our Lord saith to him: ‘I have a slave, a carpenter, whom I will sell to thee’”.

Here again, the translator opts for a twofold modulation of the source text. He expands it in order to include the additional detail regarding the carpenter, but at the same time omits the last sentence, presumably taking the information as read, thus giving: فقال له ربنا يسوع المسيح فقال له ربنا يسوع المسيح (‘‘And our Lord Jesus Christ told him: ‘I know he is an architect, an excellent carpenter, competent in all works’’’).

<sup>27</sup> On the technique of rewriting and its varieties, see J. Barr, *Comparative Philology and the Text of the Old Testament. With Additions and Corrections* (Oxford, 1968; repr. Winona Lake, IN, 1987) 255-59. See also, M. Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel* (Oxford, 1985) 154-60, 164-66.

<sup>28</sup> On the term τέκτων, see U. Holzmeister, *De Sancto Ioseph quaestiones Biblicae* (Rome, 1945) 17-21; J.P. Monferrer-Sala, ‘Notas sobre la recepción fuentística en el *Kitāb al-‘Ibar* de Ibn Ḥaldūn: el caso del *Kitāb Ya‘qūb* de Ibn Yūsuf al-Nağğār’, in J. Martos and J. L. Garrot (eds), *Miradas españolas sobre Ibn Jaldún* (Madrid, 2008) 219-39 at 231 n. 10. Cf. J. P. Monferrer-Sala, ‘A propósito de la expresión *Ibn al-Nağğār*’, *CCO* 8 (2011) 217-28.

<sup>29</sup> On δοῦλος/‘abdā (‘servant, slave’), see J.A. Glancy, ‘Slavery in Acts of Thomas’, *JECH* 2:2 (2012) 3-21.

A more drastic change, in narrative terms, is to be found in the following clause. The Greek and Syriac texts break this segment into two parts, the first in indirect and the second in direct speech:

καὶ ταῦτα εἰπὼν ὑπέδειξεν αὐτῷ  
τὸν Θωμᾶν ἀπὸ μακρόθεν, καὶ  
συνεφώνησεν μετ' αὐτοῦ τριῶν  
λιτρῶν ἀσήμου

ܘܐܘܬܘܪ ܘܡܫܘܩ ܩܢ ܗܘܐ ܬܘܡܫܐ  
ܕܥܫܪܝܢ ܩܘܨܝܢ ܕܩܘܨܝܢ  
ܕܦܘܠܩܝܢ

“And so saying he showed him  
Thomas afar off, and agreed with  
him for three litrae of silver  
unstamped”.

“And he showed him Thomas at a  
distance, and bargained with him  
for twenty (pieces) of silver (as)  
his price”.

Two interesting differences are evident between the Syriac and Greek texts: *ܘܐܘܬܘܪ ܘܡܫܘܩ ܩܢ ܗܘܐ ܬܘܡܫܐ* (“and he showed him Thomas at a distance”) versus *καὶ ταῦτα εἰπὼν ὑπέδειξεν αὐτῷ τὸν Θωμᾶν ἀπὸ μακρόθεν* (“and so saying he showed him Thomas afar off”) and *ܕܥܫܪܝܢ ܩܘܨܝܢ ܕܩܘܨܝܢ ܕܦܘܠܩܝܢ* (“twenty (pieces) of silver (as) his price”) versus *τριῶν λιτρῶν ἀσήμου* (“three litrae of silver unstamped”). By contrast, the Arabic version offers a rewrite, again resulting from modulation. Moreover, indirect speech is merged with direct speech, suggesting that the translator made use of both the Syriac and Greek texts: *فقال التاجر* (“and the merchant said”) appears to be an adaptation of *καὶ ταῦτα εἰπὼν* (“and so saying”), whereas the amount for which Thomas is sold, *عشرين درهما* (“twenty drachmas”), draws on the Syriac text *ܕܥܫܪܝܢ ܩܘܨܝܢ* (“twenty (pieces) of silver”).

Highly interesting is the following case. The Syriac and Greek texts run as follows:

καὶ ἔγραψεν ὠνήν λέγων· Ἐγὼ  
Ἰησοῦς υἱὸς Ἰωσήφ τοῦ τέκτονος  
ὁμολογῶ πεπρακεῖναι ἐμὸν δοῦλον  
Ἰούδαν ὀνόματι σοὶ τῷ Ἀββάνῃ  
ἐμπόρῳ Γουνδαφόρου τοῦ  
βασιλέως τῶν Ἰνδῶν. Τῆς δὲ ὠνῆς  
τελεσθείσης ὁ σωτήρ παραλαβὼν  
Ἰούδαν τὸν καὶ Θωμᾶν ἀπήγαγεν  
πρὸς Ἀββάνην τὸν ἔμπορον· καὶ  
ιδὼν αὐτὸν ὁ Ἀββάνης εἶπεν πρὸς  
αὐτόν· Οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ δεσπότης  
σου; Καὶ ἀποκριθεὶς ὁ ἀπόστολος

ܕܥܫܐ ܕܦܘܠܩܝܢ ܕܥܫܪܝܢ  
ܕܩܘܨܝܢ ܕܦܘܠܩܝܢ ܕܥܫܐ  
ܕܥܫܪܝܢ ܕܩܘܨܝܢ ܕܦܘܠܩܝܢ  
ܕܥܫܐ ܕܥܫܪܝܢ ܕܩܘܨܝܢ  
ܕܦܘܠܩܝܢ ܕܥܫܐ ܕܥܫܪܝܢ  
ܕܩܘܨܝܢ ܕܦܘܠܩܝܢ ܕܥܫܐ  
ܕܥܫܪܝܢ ܕܩܘܨܝܢ ܕܦܘܠܩܝܢ  
ܕܥܫܐ ܕܥܫܪܝܢ ܕܩܘܨܝܢ  
ܕܦܘܠܩܝܢ ܕܥܫܐ ܕܥܫܪܝܢ  
ܕܩܘܨܝܢ ܕܦܘܠܩܝܢ ܕܥܫܐ  
ܕܥܫܪܝܢ ܕܩܘܨܝܢ ܕܦܘܠܩܝܢ  
ܕܥܫܐ ܕܥܫܪܝܢ ܕܩܘܨܝܢ  
ܕܦܘܠܩܝܢ ܕܥܫܐ ܕܥܫܪܝܢ  
ܕܩܘܨܝܢ ܕܦܘܠܩܝܢ ܕܥܫܐ  
ܕܥܫܪܝܢ ܕܩܘܨܝܢ ܕܦܘܠܩܝܢ





Judas saith to him: ‘Yes, he is my master’”), καὶ ἰδὼν αὐτὸν ὁ Ἀββάνης εἶπεν πρὸς αὐτόν· Οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ δεσπότης σου; Καὶ ἀποκριθεὶς ὁ ἀπόστολος εἶπεν· Ναί, κύριός μου ἐστιν (“and when Abbanes saw him he said unto him: ‘Is this thy master?’ And the apostle said: ‘Yea, he is my Lord’”). This exchange is not to be found at the same point in the Arabic version, since the translator – pursuing his rewriting strategy – opts to place the text in an earlier segment (cf. فقال التاجر لثوما هذا الرجل مولاك فقال ثوما نعم “and the merchant asked Thomas: ‘Is this man your master?’ And Thomas said: ‘Yes!’”), and thus omits it here.

The following segment of the account in the Arabic version is again a rewrite of the original, omitting the *incipit* given in the Syriac and Greek texts (ܡܘܠܝܢ ܡܘܠܝܢ ܡܘܠܝܢ ܡܘܠܝܢ / τῆ δὲ ἑξῆς ὄρθρου εὐξάμενος καὶ δεήθεις τοῦ κυρίου, “and in the morning he/the apostle arose and prayed/having prayed and entreated his/the Lord”). The first section, presented as a dialogue, partly matches the Syriac and Greek versions (فقال ثوماس هواك يارب يكون “and Thomas said: ‘Your desire, Master, be fulfilled!’ < ܡܘܠܝܢ ܡܘܠܝܢ ܡܘܠܝܢ ܡܘܠܝܢ “the apostle said: ‘Lo, our Lord, as Thou wilt, let Thy will be (done)’”) / εἶπεν ὁ ἀπόστολος· Πορεύομαι ὅπου βούλει κύριε Ἰησοῦ· τὸ θέλημα τὸ σὸν γενέσθω, “I will go whither thou wilt, Lord Jesus: thy will be done”). The second part, other than the initial sentence (فقال له ربنا المسيح خذ ثمنك “and our Lord Christ told him: ‘Take the money of your value’”), bears no relation, as we shall see, to either the Greek or the Syriac: (ومعك تكون قوتي واذهب وأنا معك وليس اتاركك “and my strength will be with you. Go and I am with you and I will not abandon you!”), and constitutes an expansion of the original.

The remaining text is linked to this sentence, but in the Arabic version forms part of the earlier sentence group, reflecting the translator’s decision to relocate texts outside the position in which they appear in the Greek and Syriac texts. The correspondence between the three texts is shown in the following comparative table:

<p>فقال له ربنا المسيح خذ ثمنك</p>	<p>Ἀπῆλθεν δὲ πρὸς Ἀββάνην τὸν ἔμπορον μηδὲν ὄλως τι μεθ' ἑαυτοῦ κομισάμενος ἀλλ' ἢ τὸ τίμημα αὐτοῦ μόνον. δεδώκει γὰρ αὐτῷ ὁ κύριος λέγων· Ἦτω μετὰ σοῦ καὶ ἡ τιμὴ σου μετὰ τῆς χάριτός μου ὅπου ἂν ἀπέρχῃ.</p>	<p>ⲁⲓⲕⲁ ⲁⲗⲏ ⲛⲉⲥ ⲕⲗ ⲛⲓⲁ ⲓⲁ ⲛⲓⲗⲏⲁ ⲕⲗⲕ ⲛⲓⲁⲥⲓⲁ ⲓⲁⲥⲓⲁ ⲛⲓⲁⲥⲓⲁ ⲓⲁⲕⲕ ⲕⲓⲣⲓⲟⲥ ⲓⲁ</p>
<p>And our Lord Christ tells him: 'Take the money of your value'</p>	<p>And he departed unto Abbanes the merchant, taking with him nothing at all save only his price. For the Lord had given it unto him,</p>	<p>And he went to Ḥabbān the merchant, without carrying anything with him except that price of his, for our Lord had given to him.</p>
<p>فأخذه تاجر ملك الهند</p>	<p>Κατέλαβεν δὲ ὁ ἀπόστολος τὸν Ἀββάνην</p>	<p>ⲕⲓⲁⲥⲓⲁ ⲁⲓⲕⲁ ⲛⲓⲁⲥⲓⲁ ⲛⲓⲁⲥⲓⲁ</p>
<p>And the king's merchant took him,</p>	<p>And the apostle found Abbanes</p>	<p>And Judas went and found Ḥabbān (...)</p>
<p>وذهبا من أورشليم جميعًا and they both left Jerusalem together.</p>	<p>— —</p>	<p>— —</p>
<p>صاروا إلى البحر فلما صعد والي المركب طابت له الريح فبلغوا بعض المدن</p>	<p>ἴσως τὰ σκεύη αὐτοῦ ἀναφέροντα εἰς τὸ πλοῖον· ἤρξατο οὖν καὶ αὐτὸς συναναφέρειν αὐτῷ.</p>	<p>ⲓⲁⲕⲕ ⲓⲁ ⲕⲓⲗⲏⲁ ⲕⲗⲕⲕ ⲛⲓⲁⲥⲓⲁ ⲛⲓⲁⲥⲓⲁ ⲓⲁⲕⲕⲕⲕ</p>
<p>They went to the sea, and when he got into the boat, the wind was favorable to them, and they reached some cities</p>	<p>carrying his baggage on board the ship; so he also began to carry it aboard with him</p>	<p>(...) the merchant carrying his goods on board the ship, and he began to carry (them) on board with him.</p>

It is apparent that the Arabic translator modulated the original, again through a rewriting involving adaptation, omission and expansion wherever it suited his own compositional interests.

A further example is to be found at the very start of the work, beginning with the title.<sup>30</sup> In Arabic, after the initial invocation المسيح الإلهي وقوتي وخلصي (“the Messiah is our God, our strength, our saviour”), the title is given as: هذا ميمر ثوماس السليح وعجائبه اذ كان بأرض الهند عندما باعه سيدنا المسيح and his miracles, according to what happened in the land of India after our Lord sold him”), for which the Syriac and Greek texts give:

Πράξεις τοῦ ἁγίου ἀποστόλου  
Θωμᾶ

ܩܪܝܫܬܐ ܕܩܘܪܬܐ ܕܩܘܪܬܐ  
ܕܩܘܪܬܐ ܕܩܘܪܬܐ ܕܩܘܪܬܐ  
ܕܩܘܪܬܐ ܕܩܘܪܬܐ ܕܩܘܪܬܐ

Acts of the Holy Apostle Thomas

The (first) Act of Judas Thomas the  
Apostle, when He sold him to the  
merchant Ḥabbān, that he might go  
down (and) convert India

The title of the Arabic version, though not fully matching the Syriac text, shares certain common features with it, but not with the Greek. Strikingly, moreover, the term used to describe the work (πράξεις = ܩܘܪܬܐ) was not rendered in Arabic by *a'māl* (“Acts”) or even by a transcription of the Greek (*abraksīs*),<sup>31</sup> as found in the Syriac text, but rather by *maymar* (< Syr. *memrā*), i.e. “homily”;<sup>32</sup> this internal feature is not without significance, in that it hints at the homiletic purpose which may have underpinned the translator’s compositional approach.

As early as the opening lines, the Arabic translator makes clear that his is to be no mere translation of a source text. Though rewriting the first sentence (لَمَّا اجتمعوا السليحين بأورشليم), “when the apostles met in Jerusalem” < κατ’ ἐκεῖνον τὸν καιρὸν ἡμεν πάντες οἱ ἀπόστολοι ἐν Ἱεροσολύμοις, “at that season all we the apostles were at

<sup>30</sup> Wright, *Apocryphal Acts*, I 172, English trans. II 146-147; *Acta martyrum et sanctorum*, ed. Bedjan, III 3-4; Lipsius and Bonnet, *Acta Apostolorum Apocrypha*, 99-101 (English trans. James, *The Apocryphal New Testament*, 365).

<sup>31</sup> G. Graf, *Verzeichnis arabischer kirchlicher Termini* (Leuven, 1954) 1.

<sup>32</sup> Graf, *Verzeichnis*, 110.

Jerusalem” / **ⲁⲛⲟⲩ ⲛⲁⲛⲏⲛⲁⲓ ⲛⲁⲛⲏⲛⲁⲓ ⲛⲁⲛⲏⲛⲁⲓ**, “and when all the Apostles had been for a time in Jerusalem”), he then omits the list of apostles provided in the Greek and Syriac texts (Σίμων/**ⲛⲁⲛⲏⲛⲁⲓ** ... Ἰούδας Ἰακώβου/**ⲛⲁⲛⲏⲛⲁⲓ ⲛⲁⲛⲏⲛⲁⲓ**).

Having omitted the names, the Arabic translator embarks on a rewriting of the account, making copious use of *reductio*, as shown in these two examples:

<p>واقتسموا الدنيا كلها بينهم</p> <p>They shared the whole universe among themselves</p>	<p>καὶ διείλαμεν τὰ κλίματα τῆς οἰκουμένης</p> <p>And we divided the regions of the world,</p>	<p><b>ⲁⲛⲟⲩ ⲛⲁⲛⲏⲛⲁⲓ ⲛⲁⲛⲏⲛⲁⲓ</b></p> <p>They divided the countries among them,</p>
<p>ليخرجوا ويبشروا الناس ويهدوهم</p> <p>to go out to evangelize men and guide them</p>	<p>ὅπως εἷς ἕκαστος ἡμῶν ἐν τῷ κλίματι τῷ λαχόντι αὐτῷ καὶ εἰς τὸ ἔθνος ἐν ᾧ ὁ κύριος αὐτὸν ἀπέστειλεν πορευθῆναι.</p> <p>that every one of us should go unto the region that fell to him and unto the nation whereunto the Lord sent him</p>	<p><b>ⲛⲁⲛⲏⲛⲁⲓ ⲛⲁⲛⲏⲛⲁⲓ ⲛⲁⲛⲏⲛⲁⲓ</b></p> <p>in order that each one of them might preach in the region which fell to him and in the place to which his Lord sent him.</p>

The phrase **ⲁⲛⲟⲩ ⲛⲁⲛⲏⲛⲁⲓ ⲛⲁⲛⲏⲛⲁⲓ** clearly draws on the Syriac text, although **ⲁⲛⲟⲩ ⲛⲁⲛⲏⲛⲁⲓ** would appear to echo the Greek **τὰ κλίματα τῆς οἰκουμένης** rather than the Syriac **ⲛⲁⲛⲏⲛⲁⲓ**. The following segment, by contrast, is a modulation *cum reductio* of the Syriac text, as can be inferred from the use of *yubašširū* to render the Syriac *nakrez*,<sup>33</sup> modulating **ⲛⲁⲛⲏⲛⲁⲓ ⲛⲁⲛⲏⲛⲁⲓ ⲛⲁⲛⲏⲛⲁⲓ** (= τῷ λαχόντι αὐτῷ καὶ εἰς τὸ ἔθνος ἐν ᾧ ὁ κύριος αὐτὸν ἀπέστειλεν πορευθῆναι) as

<sup>33</sup> See J.P. Monferrer-Sala, ‘*Kērýssō* and its Arabic renditions in a bilingual Gospel of Luke (BnF ‘Supl. grec 911’, 1043 CE)’, in S. Khalil Samir and J.P. Monferrer-Sala (eds), *Graeco-Latina et Orientalia. Studia in honorem Angeli Urbani heptagenarii* (Córdoba, 2013) 221-36.

ويهدوهم. Finally, الناس may be linked to τὸ ἔθνος, which is missing in the Syriac text.

The Arabic translator's mastery of the modulation technique, involving selective additions and omissions, is clearly apparent in the following extract:

<p>فخرجت قرعة ثوماس إلى أرض الهند</p>	<p>κατὰ κλῆρον οὖν ἔλαχεν ἡ Ἰνδία Ἰούδα Θωμᾶ τῷ και Διδύμῳ</p>	<p>ܟܘܕܝܢܐ ܡܘܨܝܘܢ ܟܘܕܝܢܐ ܟܘܕܝܢܐ ܟܘܕܝܢܐ ܟܘܕܝܢܐ ܟܘܕܝܢܐ</p>
<p>And the fate of Thomas fell on the land of India.</p>	<p>According to the lot, therefore, India fell unto Judas Thomas, which is also the twin:</p>	<p>And India fell by lot and division to Judas Thomas (or the Twin) the Apostle.</p>
<p>فلم يهوا الخروج إليهم وقال للسلحين</p>	<p>οὐκ ἐβούλετο δὲ ἀπελθεῖν, λέγων</p>	<p>ܟܘܕܝܢܐ ܟܘܕܝܢܐ ܟܘܕܝܢܐ ܟܘܕܝܢܐ</p>
<p>He did not want to go with them and said to the apostles:</p>	<p>but he would not go, saying</p>	<p>And he was not willing to go, saying:</p>
<p>ليس لي قوّة بالذهاب إلى الهند</p>	<p>μὴ δύνασθαι μήτε χωρεῖν διὰ τὴν ἀσθενείαν τῆς σαρκός,</p>	<p>ܟܘܕܝܢܐ ܟܘܕܝܢܐ ܟܘܕܝܢܐ ܟܘܕܝܢܐ ܟܘܕܝܢܐ ܟܘܕܝܢܐ</p>
<p>‘I do not have the strength to go to India,</p>	<p>that by reason of the weakness of the flesh he could not travel,</p>	<p>‘I have not strength enough for this, because I am Weak.</p>
<p>لأنني رجل عبرانيّ وليس أعرف لسانهم</p>	<p>καὶ ὅτι Ἄνθρωπος ὢν Ἑβραῖος πῶς δύναμαι πορευθῆναι ἐν τοῖς Ἰνδοῖς κηρύξαι τὴν ἀλήθειαν</p>	<p>ܟܘܕܝܢܐ ܟܘܕܝܢܐ ܟܘܕܝܢܐ ܟܘܕܝܢܐ ܟܘܕܝܢܐ ܟܘܕܝܢܐ ܟܘܕܝܢܐ ܟܘܕܝܢܐ</p>
<p>because I am a Hebrew and I do not know their language,</p>	<p>and ‘I am an Hebrew man; how can I go amongst the Indians and preach the truth?’</p>	<p>And I am a Hebrew: how can I teach the Indians?’</p>

وهذا أمر يثقل عليّ

and this order weighs  
on me'

Pursuing his policy of simplifying names, the translator reduces the couplet Ἰουδᾶ Θωμᾶ / ܟܘܕܐ ܕܬܘܡܐ to ثوماس and omits ܐܦܠܘܨܬܐ (“apostle”) – also absent from the Greek text – possibly because its plural form (ܫܠܚܝܢ) appears in the following segment as an addition not present in either the Syriac or the Greek texts. The Arabic version does not include the *lectio graeca* Διδύμω, which is missing from the Syriac version due to redundancy, since ܟܘܕܐ ܕܬܘܡܐ in Aramaic means “twin”.<sup>34</sup> This twofold option also suggests that the Arabic text drew on the Syriac version.

The remainder of the segment is a modulation of the Syriac text, with the exception of ܠܐܢܝ ܪܗܝܢ ܗܝ ܕܢܫܐ ܥܝܪܐܢܝܝܐ (“because I am a Hebrew man”), which is an adaptation of ܕܢܫܐ ܕܥܝܪܐܢܝܝܐ / Ἀνθρωπος ὢν Ἑβραῖος (“I am a Hebrew man”), and وهذا أمر يثقل عليّ (“and this order weighs on me”), an addition not found in the Syriac and Greek texts.

The latter part of this paragraph contains a rewrite of the original, again involving modulation; here, the modulation is regressive, in that it makes use of a *reductio* technique to summarise the information provided by the original:

<p>ترايا له سيدنا يسوع المسيح وقال له</p>	<p>Καὶ ταῦτα αὐτοῦ διαλογιζομένου καὶ λέγοντος ὄφθη αὐτῷ ὁ σωτὴρ διὰ τῆς νυκτός, καὶ λέγει αὐτῷ·</p>	<p>ܕܢܫܐ ܕܥܝܪܐܢܝܝܝܐ ܕܢܫܐ ܕܥܝܪܐܢܝܝܝܐ ܕܢܫܐ ܕܥܝܪܐܢܝܝܝܐ ܕܢܫܐ ܕܥܝܪܐܢܝܝܝܐ</p>
<p>Our Lord Jesus Christ appeared to him and said to him:</p>	<p>And as he thus reasoned and spoke, the Saviour appeared unto him by night and said to him:</p>	<p>And whilst Judas was reasoning thus, our Lord appeared to him in a vision of the night, and said to him:</p>

<sup>34</sup> Cf. M. Jastrow, *A Dictionary of the Targumim, the Talmud Babli and Yerushalmi, and the Midrashic Literature* (London, WC – New York, 1903), 1642a; R. Payne Smith, *Thesaurus syriacus*. Collegerunt Stephanus M. Quatremere et al., 2 vols. (Oxford, 1879, 1901) 4372-73.

<p>اذهب إلى أرض الهند فبشّرهم كما قد خرج في قرعتهم</p>	<p>Μὴ φοβοῦ Θωμᾶ, ἀπέλθε εἰς τὴν Ἰνδίαν καὶ κήρυξον ἐκεῖ τὸν λόγον· ἡ γὰρ χάρις μου ἐστὶν μετὰ σοῦ.</p>	<p>ܟܘܢܟܐ ܕܝܘܕܐ ܠܐ ܟܘܢܟܐ ܕܝܘܕܐ ܠܐ ܟܘܢܟܐ ܕܝܘܕܐ ܠܐ ܟܘܢܟܐ ܕܝܘܕܐ ܠܐ</p>
<p>‘Go into the land of India and evangelize them as fate has appointed you’.</p>	<p>Fear not, Thomas, go into India and preach the word there, for my grace is with you.</p>	<p>‘Fear not, Thomas, because my grace is with you’.</p>
<p>فقال ثوما ياربّ ليس لي طاقة بأرض الهتك</p>	<p>Ὁ δὲ οὐκ ἐπειθέτο, λέγων·</p>	<p>ܠܐ ܟܘܢܟܐ ܕܝܘܕܐ ܠܐ ܟܘܢܟܐ ܕܝܘܕܐ ܠܐ ܟܘܢܟܐ ܕܝܘܕܐ ܠܐ</p>
<p>And Thomas said: ‘Oh Lord, I have no contempt on despicable ground!’</p>	<p>But he would not obey, saying:</p>	<p>But he would not be persuaded at all, saying:</p>
<p>ابعتني حيث أحببت فأنا في أرض الهند ليس أذهب</p>	<p>Ὅπου βούλει με ἀποστεῖλαι ἀπόστειλον ἀλλαχοῦ· εἰς Ἰνδοῦς γὰρ οὐκ ἀπέρχομαι.</p>	<p>ܠܐ ܟܘܢܟܐ ܕܝܘܕܐ ܠܐ ܟܘܢܟܐ ܕܝܘܕܐ ܠܐ ܟܘܢܟܐ ܕܝܘܕܐ ܠܐ</p>
<p>Send me where you want, but I will not go to land of India’.</p>	<p>Whither thou wouldst send me, send me, but elsewhere, for unto the Indians I will not go.</p>	<p>‘Whither soever Thou wilt, our Lord, send me; only to India I will not go’.</p>

Here, the Arabic translator has reduced the account to its minimum narrative elements. Interestingly, the sentence *ذهب إلى أرض الهند كما قد خرج في قرعتهم*, is clearly drawn from the Greek *ἀπέλθε εἰς τὴν Ἰνδίαν καὶ κήρυξον ἐκεῖ τὸν λόγον· ἡ γὰρ χάρις μου ἐστὶν μετὰ σοῦ*.

A third group of examples will, in conjunction with the two sets analysed earlier, suffice to yield a number of conclusions. The fragments are taken from the Second Act, and more specifically from paragraph 17, using Bonnet’s division.<sup>35</sup>

<sup>35</sup> Van Esbroeck, ‘Les Actes’, 19 § 17; Wright, *Apocryphal Acts*, I qfh (English trans. II 159); *Acta martyrum et sanctorum*, ed. Bedjan, III 17-18;

فلما بلغوا مدينتهم دخل  
 جابان التاجر وأعلم الملك  
 فقال له قد اشتريت لك  
 ياسيدي عبدا هوذا بناء نجار  
 عارف بجميع الصناعات

Ὅτε δὲ εἰση̄λθεν ὁ  
 ἀπόστολος εἰς τὰς  
 πόλεις τῆς Ἰνδίας  
 μετὰ Ἀββάνη τοῦ  
 ἐμπόρου, ἀπῆλθεν ὁ  
 Ἀββάνης εἰς  
 ἄσπασμόν  
 Γουνδαφόρου τοῦ  
 βασιλέως,  
 προσανήνεγκεν δὲ  
 αὐτῷ περὶ τοῦ τέκτο-  
 νος ὃν μετ' αὐτοῦ  
 ἤγαγεν.

כּוּדאסוּס חל הוּבא  
 חבבא כּוּדאסוּס חבבא  
 כּוּדאסוּס חבבא  
 חבבא כּוּדאסוּס חבבא  
 חבבא כּוּדאסוּס חבבא  
 חבבא כּוּדאסוּס חבבא

And when they reached  
 their city, Habban the  
 merchant came in, and  
 reported to the king :  
 ‘I have bought you, O  
 my Lord, the servant  
 here, an architect, an  
 expert carpenter in all  
 arts’.

Now when the  
 apostle was come  
 into the cities of  
 India with Abbanes  
 the merchant,  
 Abbanes went to  
 salute the king  
 Gundaphorus, and  
 reported to him of the  
 carpenter whom he  
 had brought with  
 him.

And when Judas had  
 entered into the realm  
 of India with the  
 merchant Ḥabbān,  
 Ḥabbān went to salute  
 Gūdnaphar, the king of  
 India, and he told him  
 of the artificer whom  
 he had brought for  
 him.

ففرح به الملك فرحا شديدا  
 وأمر بإدخاله اليه وإنّ جابان  
 أتى به حتّى أوقفه قدّام  
 الملك فقال له الملك أيش  
 تحسن من الصناعات

ἐχάρη δὲ ὁ βασιλεὺς  
 καὶ πρὸς αὐτὸν  
 εἰσελθεῖν αὐτὸν  
 προσέταξεν.  
 εἰσελθόντος οὖν  
 αὐτοῦ εἶπεν αὐτῷ ὁ  
 βασιλεὺς· Ποίαν  
 τέχνην ἐπίστασαι;

חבבא כּוּדאסוּס חבבא  
 חבבא כּוּדאסוּס חבבא  
 חבבא כּוּדאסוּס חבבא  
 חבבא כּוּדאסוּס חבבא  
 חבבא כּוּדאסוּס חבבא  
 חבבא כּוּדאסוּס חבבא

And the king greatly  
 rejoiced and ordered  
 him to enter him. Then  
 Habban took him away  
 until he was in front of

And the king was  
 glad, and commanded  
 him to come in to  
 him. So when he was  
 come in the king said

And the king was very  
 glad, and ordered Judas  
 to come into his  
 presence. And the king  
 said to him: ‘What art

Smith Lewis, *Acta Mythologica Apostolorum*, 192, col. a; Lipsius and Bonnet, *Acta Apostolorum Apocrypha*, 124-125 (English trans. James, *The Apocryphal New Testament*, 371).



the king, and the king said to him: 'What kind of works do you know how to do?'

أجابہ ثوما وقال أبتاء نجار  
فقال الملك أي عمل تعرف  
من اصناف النجارة

unto him: 'What craft understandest thou?'

Λέγει αὐτῷ ὁ ἀπόστολος· Τὴν τεκτονικὴν καὶ τὴν οἰκοδομικὴν. Λέγει αὐτῷ ὁ βασιλεὺς· Τίνα οὐκ οἶδας ἐν ξύλοις ἐργασίαν, καὶ τίνα ἐν λίθοις;

dost thou know to practise?'

κτισματῶν ἰσθῶν  
καὶ ἰσθῶν ἰσθῶν  
καὶ ἰσθῶν ἰσθῶν  
καὶ ἰσθῶν ἰσθῶν  
καὶ ἰσθῶν ἰσθῶν

Thomas answered and said: 'Architecture and carpentry'. The King said to him: 'What type of carpentry do you know?'

قال السليح أنا أعمل الأنبار  
والفدادين والمراكب  
والسقوف وأشباه ذلك وأبني  
بالحجارة قصورا للملوك

The apostle said unto him: 'The craft of carpentering and of building'. The king saith unto him: 'What craftsmanship, then, knowest thou in wood, and what in stone?'

Λέγει ὁ ἀπόστολος· Ἐν μὲν ξύλοις ἄροτρα ζυγῶν τρυτάνας τροχιλέας καὶ πλοῖα καὶ κόπας καὶ ἰστῶν, ἐν δὲ λίθοις στήλας ναῶν καὶ πραιτώρια βασιλικά.

Judas saith to him: 'I am a carpenter, the servant of a carpenter and architect'. He saith to him: 'What dost thou know to make?'

κτισματῶν ἰσθῶν  
καὶ ἰσθῶν ἰσθῶν  
καὶ ἰσθῶν ἰσθῶν  
καὶ ἰσθῶν ἰσθῶν  
καὶ ἰσθῶν ἰσθῶν  
καὶ ἰσθῶν ἰσθῶν  
καὶ ἰσθῶν ἰσθῶν  
καὶ ἰσθῶν ἰσθῶν  
καὶ ἰσθῶν ἰσθῶν

The Apostle said: 'I make granaries, plows, wagons, ceilings and everything that looks like them, and I build stone palaces for kings'.

The apostle saith: 'In wood: ploughs, yokes, goads, pulleys, and boats and oars and masts; and in stone: pillars, temples, and court-houses for kings'.

Judas saith to him: 'In wood I know (how) to make yokes and ploughs and oxgoads, and cars for barges and ferryboats, and masts for ships; and in hewn stone, tombstones and monuments and palaces for kings'.

فقال الملك امثلك كنت  
أطلب فابني لي قصرا قال له  
ثوماس نعم أنا أبني لك قصرا  
ولذلك أتيت إلى ملكك

Kaì ò βασιλεὺς  
εἶπεν· Οἰκοδομεῖς  
μοι παλάτιον· Ὁ δὲ  
ἀπρεκρίθη· Ναί,  
οἰκοδομῶ καὶ  
τελίσκω· διὰ τοῦτο  
γὰρ ἦλθον,  
οἰκοδομῆσαι καὶ  
τεκτονεῦσαι.

ܟܝܢ ܡܠ ܝܗܘܕܐ  
ܠܥܒܪܐ ܕܟܢܝܘܢܐ  
ܟܢܝܢ ܟܘܨܬܐ ܕܘܫܐ  
ܡܠ ܝܗܘܕܐ ܟܢܝܢ  
ܟܠܗ ܕܡܠ ܟܘܨܬܐ  
ܡܠ ܝܗܘܕܐ ܟܢܝܢ  
ܟܢܝܢ ܟܘܨܬܐ  
ܕܟܢܝܢ ܟܘܨܬܐ  
ܕܟܢܝܢ ܟܘܨܬܐ  
ܕܟܢܝܢ ܟܘܨܬܐ

And the king said:  
‘Someone like you, I  
was seeking. So build  
me a palace’. And  
Thomas said to him:  
‘Yes, I will build you a  
palace. That’s why I  
came to your  
kingdom’.

And the king said:  
‘Canst thou build me  
a palace?’ And he  
answered: ‘Yea, I  
can both build and  
furnish it; for to this  
end am I come, to  
build and to do the  
work of a carpenter’.

The king saith to  
Judas: ‘And I want  
such an artificer’.  
Judas saith to him: ‘I  
will build it and finish  
it, for I am come to  
work at building and  
carpentering’.

The first text is a rewriting of the original, including a regressive modulation of the first part (فلمّا بلغوا مدينتهم دخل جابان التاجر وأعلم) = الملك, “And when they reached their city, Habban the merchant came in, and reported to the king”); the original is likely to have been the Syriac text, given the similarity of the constructions ببناء نجار عارف and ܟܘܨܬܐ ܟܢܝܢ, as distinct from τέκτονος.

By contrast, the second text appears to derive from the Greek, given that وأمر بإدخاله اليه (“and ordered him to enter unto him”) = καὶ πρὸς αὐτὸν εἰσελθεῖν αὐτὸν προσέταξεν (“and commanded him to come in to him”), as against ܟܘܨܬܐ ܕܟܢܝܘܢܐ ܕܟܢܝܘܢܐ (“and ordered Judas to come into his presence”).

The third text is a hybrid composition, drawing in one case on Greek: أبناء نجار (“Architecture and carpentry”) < τὴν τεκτονικὴν καὶ τὴν οἰκοδομικὴν (“The craft of carpentering and of building”) ≠ ܟܘܨܬܐ ܟܢܝܢ ܟܘܨܬܐ ܕܟܢܝܘܢܐ (“I am a carpenter, the servant of a carpenter and architect”); and in another from Syriac, although with some rewriting: أي عمل تعرف من اصناف النجارة (“What type of carpentry do you know?”) < ܟܘܨܬܐ ܕܟܢܝܢ ܟܘܨܬܐ (“What dost thou know to make?”) ≠ τίνα οὐκ οἶδας ἐν ξύλοις

ἐργασίαν, καὶ τίνα ἐν λίθοις (“What craftsmanship, then, knowest thou in wood, and what in stone?”).

Despite the similarity between the Arabic قال السليح and the Greek Λέγει ὁ ἀπόστολος (cf. Syr. ܩܘܠ ܠܡܫܝܚܐ), it is difficult to determine which original served as the basis for the fourth text, since the Arabic version has modulated the original by simplifying the enumerative structure and adding subtle touches of rewriting.

The fifth text also displays parallels with both Syriac and Greek: الملك فقال = καὶ ὁ βασιλεὺς εἶπεν (cf. ܩܘܠ ܠܡܫܝܚܐ ܠܡܠܟܐ), whereas ܩܘܠ ܠܡܫܝܚܐ = قال له ثوماس (cf. Ὁ δὲ ἀπρεκρίθη). Yet there is a certain similarity between كنت أطلب امثلك (“Someone like you, I was seeking”) and ܩܘܠ ܠܡܫܝܚܐ ܠܡܠܟܐ ܕܢܝܘܢܐ ܕܢܝܘܢܐ (“And I want such an artificer”), as distinct from Οἰκοδομεῖς μοι παλάτιον (“Canst thou build me a palace?”), which suggests a markedly different reading. Finally, the Arabic version of Thomas’ reply to the king is a complete rewriting.

#### 4. Conclusions

Van Esbroeck noted possible matches between the Arabic version and both the Greek manuscript groups featured in Bonnet’s edition and the Syriac texts edited by Wright, Smith Lewis and Bedjan, and also analysed the redactions and added material found in the Sinai Arabic text.<sup>36</sup> Given the links with the secondary Greek MS family and the Syriac tradition, van Esbroeck rightly highlighted the importance of the Sinai Arabic version for the general process of reception of the work in Arabic, as a third witness to the ancient tradition of the *Acta Thomæ*:

“(…) Toutes ces différences font des Actes de Thomas en arabe un témoin important d’une étape dans l’élaboration de la légende. Qu’il lui arrive de s’accorder avec la famille secondaire grecque, si résumée, mais en même temps avec le palimpseste syriaque, montre que cette forme arabe n’a aucune raison d’être écartée de la tradition la plus ancienne”.

While van Esbroeck’s view is undoubtedly valid, and although this Arabic witness displays a clear link with both the Greek and the

<sup>36</sup> Van Esbroeck, ‘Les Actes’, 12, 13, 14, 15, 46 *et passim*.

Syriac traditions, it is not to be dismissed merely as an intermediate form. The Arabic version certainly plays a major role in the history of the text as a whole, but it also offers its own peculiar features in terms of both translation and composition. This is largely because the Arab translator, a Melkite working in the multilingual environment characteristic of Melkite monasteries in southern Palestine during the 9th and 10th centuries,<sup>37</sup> was – like many of his peers – fluent not only in Arabic but also in Greek and Syriac.

Despite the well-attested cosmopolitan, multilingual atmosphere of the Palestinian Melkite monasteries during the Byzantine and early Islamic periods, Greek was undoubtedly the dominant language; even so, the Christian Palestinian Aramaic spoken by Christian communities in this monastic milieu flourished alongside Greek.<sup>38</sup> Since the 4th century CE, moreover, Aramaic had coexisted with Arabic in the monasteries of Palestine and Transjordan.<sup>39</sup>

The Melkite translator, familiar with three languages, would make use of both the Syriac and Greek texts – copies of which were available in Saint Catherine's Monastery on Mount Sinai – when producing his Arabic version. The question of the source text used, while important, is to some extent marginal, since in a number of passages the translator produced his own version through wholesale and in some cases free rewriting. By these means, he provided exclusive readings, thus giving rise to expansive rewriting.

The technique most frequently adopted by the Arabic translator was modulation, in a variety of forms, through which he was able to enlarge or reduce the source text; he successfully combined modulation with rewriting and a range of essentially lexical and syntactic strategies. Omission and addition are clearly features inherent in modulation and rewriting. Even so, at some points the Arabic version also

<sup>37</sup> S.H. Griffith, 'The monks of Palestine and the growth of Christian literature in Arabic', *The Muslim World* 78 (1988) 1-28.

<sup>38</sup> S.H. Griffith, 'From Aramaic to Arabic: The Languages of the Monasteries of Palestine in the Byzantine and Early Islamic Periods', *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 51 (1997) 11-31.

<sup>39</sup> J.P. Monferrer-Sala, 'Dos fragmentos en arameo cristiano-palestinense del libro del Génesis procedentes de la Mezquita de los Omeyas de Damasco', *Sefarad* 77:1 (2017) 66.

includes literal translation,<sup>40</sup> apparently drawing in some cases on the Syriac and in others on the Greek text.

‘Arabic 1’, then, is the work of what we might term a translator-rewriter, who – familiar with the twofold textual tradition of the *Acts of Thomas* in Syriac and Greek – opted to produce a third version in Arabic, using for that purpose a series of translation strategies and compositional techniques. The result was a new text which, though closely following the twin originals, recast their content in Arabic guise by means of a carefully planned, meticulously wrought and intelligent rewriting of the Greek and Syriac source texts.

<sup>40</sup> On this issue, see J. Barr, *The Typology of Literalism in Ancient Biblical Translations* (Göttingen, 1979).

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