

Nag Hammadi and Manichaean Studies 93

# The Gospel of Thomas and Plato

*A Study of the Impact of Platonism  
on the "Fifth Gospel"*

Ivan Miroshnikov

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## The Gospel of Thomas and Plato

# Nag Hammadi and Manichaean Studies

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on the “Fifth Gospel”*

*By*

Ivan Miroshnikov



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## A Note to the Reader

Throughout this book, the Coptic text of the Gospel of Thomas is reproduced from the edition prepared by Bentley Layton.<sup>1</sup> I use two English translations of the Coptic text of the Gospel of Thomas: that prepared by the Berliner Arbeitskreis für koptisch-gnostische Schriften and revised by Stephen J. Patterson and James M. Robinson<sup>2</sup> and, to a lesser degree, that prepared by Thomas O. Lambdin for Layton's edition.<sup>3</sup> Whenever I deem it necessary, I modify these translations according to my understanding of the Coptic text.<sup>4</sup> The Greek fragments of the Gospel of Thomas are cited as they were edited and translated by Harold W. Attridge, with occasional modifications.<sup>5</sup> I refer to the subunits within the individual sayings of the Coptic version of the Gospel of Thomas according to the versification used by the Berliner Arbeitskreis.<sup>6</sup> As for the Oxyrhynchus fragments, I follow the numeration of verses introduced in *Q-Thomas Reader*,<sup>7</sup> with one exception: P.Oxy. 1.1, ll. 27–30 is numbered Gos. Thom. 30:3–4, not Gos. Thom. 77:2–3.

My references to the Sahidic New Testament manuscripts follow the SMR (Schmitz-Mink-Richter) citation method. With the exception of the Gospel of Thomas, all texts from the Nag Hammadi codices, Berlin codex, and codex Tchacos are quoted according to the page and line numbers. The abbreviations I use for these texts, as well as for the biblical texts, apostolic fathers, and the so-called Old Testament pseudepigrapha and New Testament apocrypha are the ones prescribed in the *SBL Handbook of Style* (2nd ed., 2014).

All other works in Latin and Greek are cited according to their Latin titles. The titles for the Greek texts are from the online version of the *TLG Canon* (updated 6 June 2017), with a few exceptions.<sup>8</sup> Unless otherwise stated, all quotations from the Greek works reproduce the texts of the editions utilized in the

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1 See Layton 1989, 1:52–92.

2 See Bethge et al. 2011.

3 See Lambdin 1989.

4 Thus, I prefer to translate πᾶξε-, πᾶξας with the past tense (“he said,” etc.) and not, like the Berliner Arbeitskreis, with the present (“he says,” etc.); for the rationale behind the latter translation, see Plisch 2008, 24–25.

5 See Attridge 1989a.

6 See Bethge et al. 2005.

7 See Kloppenborg et al. 1990, 156–158.

8 For instance, for the sake of brevity, I cite Alcinous' handbook as *Didascalicus*, not as *Epitome doctrinae Platonicae sive Διδασκαλικός*.

TLG digital library; the editions that are not in TLG are included in the bibliography. My references to these texts follow the divisions employed in TLG.<sup>9</sup>

Unless otherwise stated, all translations of ancient sources quoted in this book are my own. Whenever another English translation is cited, the reference to the ancient source is followed by the name of the translator, the publication of whom is included in the bibliography. The translations of the Platonic<sup>10</sup> and Aristotelian corpora I cite are mostly from Plato's *Complete Works*, edited by John M. Cooper, and *The Complete Works of Aristotle*, edited by Jonathan Barnes.<sup>11</sup> All English translations of Philo and Plutarch are from the Loeb Classical Library,<sup>12</sup> with a few exceptions.<sup>13</sup>

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- 9 Again, with a few exceptions—e.g., I follow the common practice and cite Holl's edition of Epiphanius' *Panarion* according to the chapter, section, and subsection numbers, not the page and line numbers.
- 10 Throughout this work, I use the adjectives "Platonic" and "Platonist" with a consistent difference: the former is used to mean "pertaining to Plato" (= "Plato's"), the latter "pertaining to Platonism."
- 11 Cooper 1997; Barnes 1995.
- 12 Colson et al. 1929–1962; Babbitt et al. 1927–2004.
- 13 For instance, for Philo's *De opificio mundi*, I occasionally use the English translation from Runia 2001, 47–93.



## Setting the Scene

It is difficult to overestimate the importance of Platonist metaphysics for the development of Christian thought. The reasons why Christians turned their attention to Platonism are not difficult to fathom. As Walter Burkert once noted, “since Plato there has been no theology which has not stood in his shadow. For many centuries Platonism was simply the way in which god was thought of and spoken about, in the West as in the Islamic East.”<sup>1</sup> It is no secret that Christian dogmatic theology adopted a generous number of its concepts from Platonist philosophy; by the time of the Cappadocian fathers, it was customary to talk about divine matters in Platonist terms.

It is, however, much more difficult to track the Platonist influence during the formative centuries of Christianity. Although the term “Christian Platonism” is usually applied to the two Alexandrians, Clement and Origen,<sup>2</sup> it is clear that Clement was not the first Christian intellectual who was familiar with and appropriated certain ideas from the Platonist tradition. As Henry Chadwick put it, “the way had been mapped out in advance by the second-century apologists, above all by Justin Martyr, who is certainly the greatest of them besides being the most voluminous.”<sup>3</sup> Justin himself tells us that before his turn to Christianity he “took delight in the teachings of Plato” (*2 Apol.* 12.1; trans. D. Minns and P. Parvis; cf. *Dial.* 2.6). Furthermore, as Runar M. Thorsteinsson has convincingly demonstrated, “in essence Justin remained a Platonist after his turn to Christianity,”<sup>4</sup> so that Middle Platonism continued to serve as “his primary philosophical-theological frame of reference.”<sup>5</sup>

It is worth noting, however, that apart from those early Christian thinkers for whom Platonism constituted their main “philosophical-theological frame of reference,” there are various early Christian texts that exhibit Platonizing tendencies. These texts would not qualify as “Platonist,” for Platonist ideas are just one of many diverse elements that constitute the fabric of these texts, yet

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1 Burkert 1985, 321.

2 See, e.g., Dillon 1996, 396 and 420–421.

3 Chadwick 1966, 9; cf. Chadwick 1970, 160: “The first serious beginnings of Christian philosophy appear in Justin Martyr in the middle years of the second century.”

4 Thorsteinsson 2012, 509.

5 *Ibid.*, 516.

if we appreciate the fact that these texts occasionally draw on Platonist ideas, images, and terms, we might gain better insight thereto.

It fact, it would hardly be an exaggeration to say that the study of the earliest Christian engagements with philosophy in general and with Platonism in particular is one of the vital tasks of the scholars of the New Testament and early Christianity. Nevertheless, even today, many scholars of ancient Christianity continue to work in isolation from historians of philosophy, operating under the assumption that the first Jesus-believers were, so to speak, philosophically innocent.

Fortunately, the situation is gradually changing. As Tuomas Rasimus, Troels Engberg-Pedersen, and Ismo Dunderberg have recently noted in their preface to a collected volume dedicated to the interaction between early Christianity and Stoicism that, over the last few decades, “attempts have been made to take the role of philosophy in early Christianity further back into the first century.”<sup>6</sup> Within this trajectory of scholarship, researchers seem to fall into two major categories: those who argue for a Stoic element in early Christian writings and those who attempt to make a case for the impact of the Platonist tradition.

The former avenue of research has been extensively championed by Engberg-Pedersen,<sup>7</sup> who claims that “the worldview of the apostle Paul was basically a Stoic one.”<sup>8</sup> Niko Huttunen follows Engberg-Pedersen’s suit in his comparative study of the concept of νόμος in Paul and Epictetus, going so far as to call Paul “a Christian Stoic.”<sup>9</sup> In a recent book, building upon the work of Gitte Buch-Hansen on the Stoic background of the Johannine πνεῦμα,<sup>10</sup> Engberg-Pedersen similarly maintains that Stoicism is the key heuristic tool for understanding the Gospel of John.<sup>11</sup>

On the other hand, among the scholars who have discussed the Platonist impact on early Christian literature, Stanley K. Stowers has argued that, along with a Stoic element, there is also “a Platonic mixture in Paul’s thought.”<sup>12</sup> In a similar vein, Emma Wasserman makes a case for Paul’s use of the Platonist notion of the divided self in Rom 7:7–25.<sup>13</sup> The importance of the Platonist tradition for understanding early Christian literature is also recognized by Wil-

6 Rasimus, Engberg-Pedersen, and Dunderberg 2010, vii.

7 See Engberg-Pedersen 2000, 2010a.

8 Engberg-Pedersen 2010b, 11.

9 Huttunen 2009, 36.

10 Buch-Hansen 2010.

11 Engberg-Pedersen 2017.

12 Stowers 2017, 252; see also Stowers 1994, 2003, 2009.

13 See Wasserman 2007, 2008, 2013.

fried Eisele, who has done a comprehensive study of the affinities between Middle Platonism and the New Testament epistle to the Hebrews,<sup>14</sup> as well as by Gregory E. Sterling and George H. van Kooten, who have studied the appropriation of Platonist ideas in the Johannine prologue (discussed in detail below, pp. 16–25).<sup>15</sup>

Combining the methods of and findings from both camps of research, this monograph contributes to the academic study of the interaction between early Christianity and Greco-Roman philosophy. Its focus will be on an early Christian sayings collection known as the Gospel of Thomas. The core hypothesis of my monograph is that Platonism in its “Middle” form had a significant impact on this text and that a Platonist lens is indispensable for making sense of at least some Thomasine sayings. This hypothesis does not assume that the author(s) behind the Gospel of Thomas self-identified as Platonist(s) in any kind of socio-historical capacity, nor that the Gospel of Thomas either was at the forefront of the contemporary philosophical debate or exhibits original philosophical ideas. Rather, the Platonist influence seems to have been transmitted by common-place notions of Middle Platonist thought.

The main part of this book comprises seven chapters, wherein I contribute to the discussion of the impact of Platonism on the Gospel of Thomas. The book is structured as a journey from the simple to the complex: while, in the first chapters, I discuss the sayings that make sense without reference to Platonism (even though, as I will argue, Platonist metaphysics allows us to attain better insight into them), in the last chapters, I focus on those sayings that have long remained enigmatic, and for the understanding of which Platonism is key. In chapters 2 (“The Gospel of Thomas and the Platonists on the World”) and 3 (“The Gospel of Thomas and the Platonists on the Body and Soul”), I reflect on the Platonist impact on the Thomasine views of the phenomenal realm (i.e., the world and the human compound). Having discussed the Thomasine understanding of the mundane, I turn to its understanding of the divine, which goes hand in hand with the notion of human perfection. Thus, chapters 4 (“The Gospel of Thomas and the Platonists on Oneness”), 5 (“The Gospel of Thomas and the Platonists on Stability”), 6 (“The Gospel of Thomas and the Platonists on Immutability and Indivisibility”), and 7 (“The Gospel of Thomas and the Platonists on Freedom from Anger”) deal with Thomasine and Platonist views on ultimate reality and assimilation to the divine. Finally, in chapter 8 (“Thomasine Metaphysics of the Image and Its Platonist Background”), I discuss the impact of Platonism

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14 See Eisele 2003.

15 See Sterling 1993; van Kooten 2005.

on the Thomasine metaphysics of the image; the notion of the image, as I argue, is essential to the understanding of the Thomasine views on both the mundane and the divine.

In this introductory chapter, I set the scene before proceeding to the heart of the matter. First, I discuss the phenomenon of Middle Platonism. Nevertheless, since a comprehensive introduction to this important page in the history of ancient philosophy is beyond the scope of this study, I limit myself to the issues that are immediately relevant to the subsequent discussion. Next, by way of illustrating the inquiry into the early Christian appropriation of Middle Platonist metaphysics, I offer a discussion of the Platonizing tendencies of the Johannine Prologue. I then turn to the Gospel of Thomas. In lieu of a comprehensive overview of the problems pertaining to the interpretation of this text, I restrict myself to the preliminary matters requisite for a further analysis of the text—viz., the original language, date, and compositional history of the Gospel of Thomas. Finally, I outline the history of research on the Gospel of Thomas in relation to ancient philosophy in general and Middle Platonism in particular.

### Middle Platonism: A Debated Concept

The focus of this book is on the impact of Middle Platonism on the Gospel of Thomas. It is fitting, then, to provide the reader with a few introductory notes regarding the term “Middle Platonism” and the historical movement it designates. Moreover, since the term “Middle Platonism” is modern and sometimes considered problematic,<sup>16</sup> it seems reasonable to offer arguments that would prove the validity of the term.

First and foremost, it should be noted that only the “Middle” part of “Middle Platonism” is modern. The second part, “Platonism,” is hardly problematic. Admittedly, “einen Begriff wie ὁ Πλατωνισμός hat es in der Antike nicht gegeben,”<sup>17</sup> yet ancient sources call a significant number of people, including many of those whom we call Middle Platonists, “Platonic philosophers.” A Platonic philosopher is, as John Glucker puts it, “the follower of a philosophical ‘persuasion,’ ἀίρεσις, whose originator is believed to be Plato.”<sup>18</sup> As far as can be determined, the first to be called a “Platonic philosopher” was Ofellius Lae-

16 See, e.g., Zambon 2006, 561–562; Tarrant 2010, 66.

17 Baltes 2005, 179.

18 Glucker 1978, 206.

tus.<sup>19</sup> In 1981, Johannes Nollé published an honorary inscription from Ephesus (IEph 7.2.3901), praising Ὀφέλλιος Λαίτος Πλατωνικός φιλόσ[οφος] and claiming that he was no less than a Plato *redivivus*.<sup>20</sup> On the basis of the letter forms of the inscription Nollé securely dated the inscription to the first century CE.<sup>21</sup> A year later, G.W. Bowersock plausibly identified this Ofellius Laetus with the Laetus mentioned by Plutarch (see *Aet. phys.* 91f and 913e), placing him within the “international group of cultured men whom Plutarch knew in the reign of Domitian.”<sup>22</sup> Thus, the expression “Platonic philosopher” emerged towards the end of the first century CE. It gradually gained popularity and, in the middle of the second century, a number of Platonists are described by contemporary sources as “Platonic philosophers.”<sup>23</sup>

As for the term “Middle Platonism,” it was coined, according to Heinrich Dörrie,<sup>24</sup> less than one century ago by the German classicist Karl Praechter.<sup>25</sup> Indeed, it is not hard to understand why this term is modern: it would be very surprising to learn that some ancient philosopher considered himself to be “in between.” The following passage from John M. Dillon’s afterword to his seminal work on Middle Platonism is very much to the point and worth quoting in full:

Now it must be admitted that being a “middle” anything is a rather troublesome state. If one declares oneself, or is identified as, a “neo-X” (a neo-Thomist, say, or a neo-Kantian, a neo-Marxist, or a neo-Freudian), one knows more or less where one stands. One is basically remaining true to the basic insights of the revered figure in question, while reserving the right to reinterpret them in the light of more recent developments. But who ever claimed to be a *middle-X*? No one can, I think, conceive of himself as such a creature. It is not, therefore, I think, to be expected that “Middle Platonists” should ever have seen themselves as such.<sup>26</sup>

19 See Runia 1988, 243. For a comprehensive overview of all sources that appear to give an account of the intellectual profile of this philosopher, see Opsomer 2017.

20 Nollé 1981, 197 and pl. 5a.

21 *Ibid.*, 204–205.

22 See Bowersock 1982, 276–278.

23 See Glucker 1978, 134–139.

24 See Dörrie 1987, 45.

25 See Praechter 1919, 536: the title of § 70 is “Der mittlere Platonismus.”

26 Dillon 1996, 423.



While it is significant that the term we apply to these philosophers is modern, this does not *ipso facto* constitute a sufficient argument to abandon this term altogether. Inventing heuristic terms that would provide us with a better understanding of the subject matter is, in fact, part and parcel of academic research. The field of linguistics contains particularly illuminating examples: Middle Egyptian, Middle Persian, Middle Chinese, Middle English, just to name a few. It is very unlikely that Chaucer, for instance, was aware of the fact that he was writing in Middle English. Yet it does not prohibit us from using such a term in our research.

Just as “Middle English” designates a chronological period in the history of the English language, so, too, does “Middle Platonism” designate a chronological period in the history of ancient Platonism.<sup>27</sup> This period starts with “the renaissance of dogmatic Platonism which undoubtedly took place in the first century BC”<sup>28</sup> and ends with the emergence of Neoplatonism in the third century CE. In what follows, I would like first to discuss the end of this period, then return to its beginning.

Since the previous passage attempts to define Middle Platonism by setting it against Neoplatonism, it seems that the term “Middle Platonism” is valid if and only if the term “Neoplatonism” is valid. Is it possible that “Neoplatonism” itself is a dubious category?

Until quite recently “Neoplatonism” was considered to be a modern term. Helmut Meinhardt was able to trace the origins of the term to the German scholarship of the latter half of the eighteenth century, suggesting that it was coined by Anton Friedrich Büsching.<sup>29</sup> He also pointed out that, according to Büsching and subsequent historians of philosophy, these “Neoplatonists” were “Verfälscher Platons.”<sup>30</sup> As Leo Catana notes in a recent article, for Büsching and others the term Neoplatonism “came to denote a discontinuity in the Platonic tradition, a corruption of genuine ancient Platonism, and a low point in the history of philosophy.”<sup>31</sup> In the same article, Catana argues that these German scholars were heavily influenced by the historiographical model proposed in the 1740s by Johann Jacob Brucker. It was Brucker who “cemented a sharp historiographical divide between Middle Platonism (ca. 80 BCE to ca. 220 CE) and

27 Cf. Bechtle 1999, 68: the terms “Middle Platonism” and “Neoplatonism” should be used “in a merely chronological sense” and “as an equivalent for the words *pre-* and *post-Plotinian*, with reference to philosophers.”

28 Whittaker 1987, 81.

29 See Büsching 1772–1774, 2:467: the title of § 72 is “Neue Platoniker.”

30 Meinhardt 1984, 6:755.

31 Catana 2013, 187.

Neoplatonism (ca. 200 to ca. 550 CE), identifying eclecticism and sectarianism as distinctive features of the latter.”<sup>32</sup> Catana concludes that the divide between Middle Platonism and Neoplatonism should be abandoned “since it cannot be justified in the essentialistic manner proposed by Brucker.”<sup>33</sup>

While Catana’s article contains valuable insights, his conclusion seems to be somewhat hasty. Contrary to popular belief, the term “Neoplatonism” was not invented by eighteenth-century German scholars. As Jens Lemanski has pointed out,<sup>34</sup> the term is attested already in *The Court of the Gentiles* by Theophilus Gale published in the latter half of the seventeenth century.<sup>35</sup> Moreover, Gale’s expression “New Platonicks” is merely a development of similar expressions attested in early modern works as early as the sixteenth century: “Platonici iuniores” and “Platonici recentiores.”<sup>36</sup> The latter expression, as Lemanski has demonstrated, derives from Augustine’s *Cons.* 1.23.35—where Augustine speaks of “philosophi eorum recentiores Platonici, qui iam christianis temporibus fuerunt”: “Damit ist zwar ein entscheidender Anhaltspunkt dafür geliefert, dass eine begriffsgeschichtliche Variante des Ausdrucks ‘Neuplatonismus’ von Augustinus aus dem Jahr 399/400 stammt.”<sup>37</sup>

“Neoplatonism” is, therefore, not strictly a modern term, but rather one that can be traced back to an expression used by an ancient author. Neither was it coined by Büsching, nor did it initially have a negative connotation. It is also worth noting that Catana seems to be exaggerating somewhat when he says that Brucker “cemented” the division between Middle Platonism and Neoplatonism: as Dörrie argued, “Vor 1900 sind nicht selten solche Platoniker, die sich in zeitlichem Abstand von Platon befinden, als Neuplatoniker bezeichnet worden.”<sup>38</sup> Thus Büsching, as Lemanski points out,<sup>39</sup> lists among his “Neue Platoniker” Theon of Smyrna, Alcinous, Apuleius, and Numenius—i.e., all the philosophers that are nowadays classified as Middle Platonists. It was only in 1864 that Heinrich von Stein made a proposal to confine the use of the term “Neoplatonism” to the historical phase of Platonism that started with Ammo-

32 Ibid., 167.

33 Ibid., 196.

34 See Lemanski 2011, 46–48.

35 See Gale 1670, 247: the title of chapter 4 of book 3 is “Of the Academicks and New Platonicks of Alexandria.”

36 See Lemanski 2011, 49–50.

37 Ibid., 51. Note that Lemanski’s reference “23.55” should be corrected to “23.35.”

38 Dörrie 1987, 44.

39 See Lemanski 2011, 36.

nius Saccas and Plotinus.<sup>40</sup> Quite remarkably, in order to justify his proposal, von Stein referred not to the preceding German scholarship, but to Augustine.

What is perhaps even more important for the present discussion is that if we turn to the Neoplatonist sources we realize that Neoplatonists themselves clearly distinguished themselves from the preceding Platonists whom we now conventionally label as “Middle Platonists.”<sup>41</sup> On this self-designation, two fifth-century authors, Hierocles of Alexandria and Proclus, seem to provide us with sufficient evidence. The former argued that true Platonism was rediscovered by Ammonius Saccas, the latter, by Plotinus, Ammonius’ student.

As Hermann S. Schibli puts it, Hierocles “saw in Ammonius an axial figure in the history of philosophy.”<sup>42</sup> Hierocles was convinced that Plato’s philosophy was in agreement with that of Aristotle. According to him, before Ammonius, whom he calls “the one who was taught by God” (Ἀμμώνιος ὁ Ἀλεξανδρεὺς ὁ θεοδίδρακτος), many Platonists and Aristotelians (πολλοὶ τῶν ἀπὸ Πλάτωνος καὶ τῶν ἀπὸ Ἀριστοτέλους) denied the unanimity of Plato and Aristotle. Moreover, “their contentiousness and daring have driven them to the point of falsifying the writings of their teachers in order better to show that these philosophers fought against each other” (Photius, *Bibl.* 251.461a.24–31 Bekker; trans. H.S. Schibli).

When Ammonius’ wisdom “shone forth” (διέλαμψεν), the decline of Platonism was brought to an end. It was Ammonius who “purified the opinions of the ancient philosophers, removed the useless elements that clung to them both, and proved that the mind of Plato and Aristotle was in harmony regarding the important and most necessary doctrines” (Photius, *Bibl.* 214.172a.2–9 Bekker; trans. H.S. Schibli). Hierocles called Ammonius’ school (ἡ διατριβή) “the sacred race,” ἡ ἱερὰ γενεά,<sup>43</sup> and claimed that all the members of this school (Plotinus, Origen, Porphyry, Iamblichus, and others) were in accord with “the philosophy of Plato in its purified form” (ἡ Πλάτωνος διακεκαθαυμένη φιλοσοφία) (214.173a.32–40 Bekker; trans. H.S. Schibli).

A similar concept of the history of Platonism was professed by Proclus. As Glucker puts it, the preface of Proclus’ *Theologia Platonica* “provides us with Proclus’ own version of the story of the long ‘underground existence’ of genuine Platonism and its rebirth and rediscovery at the school of Ploti-

40 See von Stein 1864, 316.

41 Cf. Baltes 2000, A8:294.

42 Schibli 2002, 30.

43 This expression is also attested in Damascius, *Vit. Isid.* fr. 73a Athanassiadi (= Photius, *Bibl.*, 242.342b.31–34 Bekker). According to Athanassiadi 1999, 189, ἡ ἱερὰ γενεά “must be an ‘insider’s’ term for the Neoplatonists.”

nus.”<sup>44</sup> According to Proclus, Plato’s philosophy was firmly established in the innermost sanctuaries (τῶν ἀδύτων ἐντὸς ἰδρυθείσα ἀσφαλῶς) and remained unknown to many of those who entered them (τοῖς πολλοῖς τῶν εἰσιόντων ἀγνωθεῖσα). Yet, in ordained periods of time (ἐν τακταῖς χρόνων περιόδοις), it was revealed by certain true priests (τινὲς ἱερεῖς ἀληθινοί). Proclus claims that these “interpreters of Platonic revelation who unfolded to us the most sacred explanations of the divine matters and obtained the nature that was nearly equal to their teacher (οἱ τῆς Πλατωνικῆς ἐποπτείας ἐξηγηταὶ καὶ τὰς παναγεστάτας ἡμῖν περὶ τῶν θεῶν ὑφηγήσεις ἀναπλώσαντες καὶ τῷ σφετέρῳ καθηγεμόνι παραπλησίαν τὴν φύσιν λαχόντες)” are Plotinus, his students (Amelius and Porphyry), the students of those students (Iamblichus and Theodorus of Asine), and those who followed “this divine chorus” (ὁ θεῖος οὗτος χορός) (*Theologia Platonica* 1.6.7–7.8 Saffrey and Westerink).

The idea that it was Plotinus and his students who rediscovered Plato’s philosophy is also presupposed in Proclus’ *In Platonis Timaeum commentaria*.<sup>45</sup> Here, Proclus repeatedly distinguishes two kinds of “interpreters of Plato” (οἱ τοῦ Πλάτωνος ἐξηγηταί) (3.234.9 Diehl). The first group is called “the more ancient interpreters,” οἱ παλαιότεροι τῶν ἐξηγητῶν (1.218.2–3; 3.234.15 Diehl) or οἱ πρεσβύτεροι (sc., ἐξηγηταί) (2.212.14 Diehl). This group consists of those interpreters whom Proclus, in quite a belittling manner, calls “Attici, Albini, and others of such sort” (τοὺς Ἀττικοὺς λέγω καὶ Ἀλβίνους καὶ τοιοῦτους τινάς), contrasting them with “the ones who are more moderate (μετριώτεροι) and mild (πραότεροι) than them” (3.234.17–19 Diehl). The latter interpreters are the ones “who approach the words of Plato in a more philosophical manner (φιλοσοφώτερον)” (2.154.1–2 Diehl; trans. D. Baltzly). This second group is called “the more recent interpreters,” οἱ δεύτεροι (sc., ἐξηγηταί) (2.212.13 Diehl), or νεώτεροι (sc., ἐξηγηταί) (3.245.19–20 Diehl). Unsurprisingly, the “more recent” group comprises Plotinus and the other “true priests” described in the preface of *Theologia Platonica* (see, e.g., *Comm. Tim.* 1.218.8–14 Diehl, where the opinions of the unnamed “more ancient interpreters”<sup>46</sup> are contrasted with those of “divine Iamblichus” and “our teacher”—i.e., Syrianus).

In sum, it seems that there are sufficient reasons not to abandon the divide between Middle Platonism and Neoplatonism. It is fairly clear that the philosophers whom the scholarship of the modern era labeled as “Neoplatonists” saw themselves as “the sacred race” (Hierocles) and “the divine chorus” (Proclus),

44 Glucker 1978, 312.

45 Cf. Baltes 2005, 197–198.

46 According to Baltes 1976–1978, 1:99–100, Proclus refers to Albinus.

which was different from and superior to those philosophers who are now conventionally termed “Middle Platonists.” Moreover, the term “Neoplatonism,” although it was not employed as a self-designation, does not appear to be problematic. This term, as Lemanski has shown, goes back to Augustine’s expression “recentiores Platonici,” and it seems likely that the Neoplatonists themselves would hardly have found this appellation objectionable, since, according to Proclus, it was “the more recent interpreters” of Plato who revived Platonism after a long period of decay.

Having discussed the delimitations of Middle Platonism and Neoplatonism, I move on to the main trait that distinguishes both Middle Platonists and Neoplatonists from their predecessors—viz., their dogmatism. As Julia Annas puts it, “From about 273 BC, when Arcesilaus of Pitane took over its headship, until it petered out in the first century BC, Plato’s school, the Academy, practised and taught a form of scepticism.”<sup>47</sup> It was in the first century BCE that, while academic skepticism was “petering out,” the dogmatic approach to Plato’s heritage gained currency.

It is worth noting that both of the terms used in modern times to distinguish “dogmatism” from “skepticism” were employed by the ancients themselves. The difference between skepticism and dogmatism is conveniently spelled out by Diogenes Laertius in an introductory section of his biography of Greek philosophers: “Philosophers may be divided into dogmatists (οἱ δογματικοί) and sceptics (οἱ ἐφεκτικοί): all those who make assertions about things assuming that they can be known are dogmatists; while all who suspend their judgement on the ground that things are unknowable are sceptics” (*Vit. philos.* 1.16; trans. R.D. Hicks).

Our main source for the ancient skeptic tradition, Sextus Empiricus, offers another definition of “dogmatism.” According to him, the dogmatists are those who claim that they have discovered the truth (*Pyr.* 1.2–3). Sceptics, on the other hand, do not make such a claim, nor do they subscribe to any dogmas. Sextus uses the word “dogma” (δόγμα) to designate philosophical and scientific theories and defines it as “assent to something unclear” (πράγματι ἀδήλω συγκατάθεσις) (1.16; trans. J. Annas and J. Barnes) or, more precisely, “assent to some unclear object of investigation in the sciences” (ἢ τινι πράγματι τῶν κατὰ τὰς ἐπιστήμας ζητουμένων ἀδήλων συγκατάθεσις) (1.13; trans. J. Annas and J. Barnes).<sup>48</sup>

47 Annas 1992, 43.

48 For a discussion of this definition, see, e.g., Frede 1997, 18–19; Burnyeat 1997a, 50–51; 1997b, 114–115.

It is worth noting that the dogmatic philosophers also employed the word “dogma,” though, unlike the skeptics, they did not seem to provide us with their definition of the term. Nonetheless, the contexts in which the term is used allow us to understand its meaning. In his thorough study of “the sense and the colour of the word δόγμα,”<sup>49</sup> Jonathan Barnes points out that “the first author we know to have made frequent use of δόγμα” is Philo of Alexandria and that Philo’s usage of the term is “typical.” In his writings δόγματα “are almost invariably philosophical tenets or religious beliefs—the δόγμα that the soul is immortal, the δόγμα that the world was created by God, the δόγματα of Moses.” In sum, Philo’s δόγματα are “weighty, substantial beliefs—tenets, doctrines, principles.”<sup>50</sup>

As John Whittaker points out, a prominent feature of Middle Platonism is the assumption that “the writings of Plato contain along with much else a certain number of Platonic δόγματα which can be removed from their contexts and forged together into a systematic whole.”<sup>51</sup> The supposition that Plato’s dialogues contain dogmas and that these dogmas can be discerned probably made its way even into the ancient copies of the philosopher’s works. According to Diogenes Laertius, *Vit. philos.* 3.65–66, the manuscripts of Plato’s dialogues were annotated with a wide array of marginal markers. One of those markers, the diplē, was employed to isolate Plato’s δόγματα. *PSI 15.1488*, a papyrus fragment from the collection of the University of Florence, contains a text with similar such marginal markers in Plato’s works. It is very likely that *PSI 15.1488* is a witness to the text of the source employed by Diogenes in *Vit. philos.* 3.65–66.<sup>52</sup> While the relevant part of the papyrus (*PSI 15.1488*, ll. 1–3) is partially lost, it can be securely restored on the basis of the parallel text in Diogenes: [ἡ δὲ διπλῆ > πρὸς τὰ δόγματα] λαμβάνε[ται καὶ τὰ ἀρέσκοντα Πλ]άτωνι, “[the diplē >] indicates [the dogmas and opinions] of Plato.” *PSI 15.1488* was dated by its editor, Vittorio Bartoletti, to the middle of the second century CE,<sup>53</sup> placing Diogenes’ source well into the Middle Platonist timeframe.

Notably, the question of whether or not Plato held dogmas was a matter of debate in the ancient world. As Diogenes Laertius reports, “there is great division of opinion between those who affirm and those who deny that Plato was a dogmatist (οἱ μὲν φασιν αὐτὸν δογματίζειν, οἱ δ’ οὐ)” (*Vit. philos.* 3.51; trans.

49 See Barnes 1990, 2627–2631.

50 *Ibid.*, 2628.

51 Whittaker 1987, 109.

52 See Dörrie and Baltes 1990, 348; cf. Mejer 1992, 3572.

53 See Bartoletti 1964, 25.

R.D. Hicks). Similarly, the anonymous author of the Middle Platonist Commentarium in Platonis Theaetetus says that some people think that “Plato was an Academic in so far as he did not hold any dogmas (Ἀκαδημαϊκὸς ὁ Πλάτων ὡς οὐδὲν δογματίζων)” (54.40–43).<sup>54</sup> As for the author of the commentary himself, he does not have any doubts about Plato’s dogmatism: τὸν Πλάτωνα ἔχειν δόγματα καὶ ἀπ[ο]φαίνεσθαι πεπιθότως πάρ[εστιν] ἐξ α[ὐ]τοῦ λα[μβάν]ει[ν], “that Plato held dogmas and confidently declared them can be determined from Plato himself” (55.8–13).

Similarly, both authors of the only two extant introductions to Middle Platonist philosophy, Alcinous and Apuleius, describe their handbooks as systematic accounts of Plato’s dogmas. In the opening passage of his work, Alcinous describes his work as τῶν κυριωτάτων Πλάτωνος δογμάτων διδασκαλία, “an introduction to Plato’s principal dogmas” (*Didasc.* 1.1). In the same fashion, Apuleius, after giving a brief account of Plato’s life, says, “Quae autem consulta, quae δόγματα graece licet dici, ad utilitatem hominum vivendique et intellegendi ac loquendi rationem extulerit, hinc ordiemur,” “And now we will relate the decrees that may be called δόγματα in Greek and that he (i.e., Plato) set for the benefit of humanity as the manner of living, thinking, and speaking” (*Plat. Dogm.* 189).

Thus, to recapitulate, dogmatism is the most fundamental trait that distinguishes Middle Platonism from its predecessor, academic skepticism. The point of departure for the reemerging dogmatic Platonism was the conviction that Plato himself was a dogmatist, that his δόγματα were laid down in his dialogues, that these dogmas could be identified; excerpted; and fused together into a coherent philosophical system, and that this system would constitute the ultimate truth.

The validity of Middle Platonism as a term aside, there are some peculiar features of Middle Platonism worth noting. Certainly, it is insufficient to say that Middle Platonists were dogmatists. After all, the same applies to the majority of their contemporaries. Sextus Empiricus, for instance, gives the following list of dogmatic philosophers: “Aristotelians, Epicureans, Stoics, and others (οἱ περὶ Ἀριστοτέλην καὶ Ἐπίκουρον καὶ τοὺς Στωϊκοὺς καὶ ἄλλοι τινές)” (*Pyrr.* 1.3).

Whereas there can be little doubt that Middle Platonists occasionally appropriated certain concepts and terminologies of their competitors, especially those of the Aristotelians and the Stoics,<sup>55</sup> Middle Platonist sources reveal to us the breadth of their distinctive and recurring δόγματα. These “dominant

54 For the Greek text, see Bastianini and Sedley 1995.

55 See, e.g., Whittaker 1987, 110–117.

themes” of Middle Platonism—e.g., the definition of τέλος as ὁμοίωσις θεῶ κατὰ τὸ δυνατόν, “becoming as like God as possible” (Plato, *Theaet.* 176b; trans. M.J. Levett and M. Burnyeat)—are conveniently summarized by Dillon;<sup>56</sup> particular instances of dogmas with a direct bearing on the interpretation of the Gospel of Thomas will be thoroughly discussed in the following chapters.

What should be said at the outset is that regardless of a given Middle Platonist’s personal preferences and idiosyncrasies, there was always a strong commitment to “a transcendent supreme principle, and a non-material, intelligible world above and beyond this one, which stands as a paradigm for it.”<sup>57</sup> The premise that there are prior metaphysical causes for our physical universe is what distinguishes Middle Platonists from any other dogmatic ἄρσεις, be that the Aristotelianism, Stoicism, or Epicureanism.<sup>58</sup>

It is worth noting that the distinction between the sensible and intelligible realms was perceived as the salient feature of Platonism already in the ancient world. This point is illustrated in *Vitarum auctio*, a satirical work by Lucian of Samosata. In this dialogue, Zeus puts to bid ten philosophers, each of whom represents a respective philosophical school. The following passage offers an ironic exposition of Plato’s teaching, personified by Socrates. When asked to summarize the salient features of his teaching, Socrates replies, “The forms and the models of existing things; for of everything you see, the earth, the things on the earth, the sky, the sea, there are invisible images outside the universe” (*Vit. auct.* 18).<sup>59</sup>

The last subject that should be touched upon in this introductory chapter is the matter of principal sources for the Middle Platonist doctrines. Unfortunately, as it is often the case with ancient history, our evidence is rather limited. For some figures, little more than a name has survived.<sup>60</sup> Sometimes we are

56 See Dillon 1996, 43–51; cf. Zambon 2006, 569–571.

57 Dillon 1996, 51.

58 As Boys-Stones 2017, 79, puts it, by the third century CE, Platonism had become the dominant philosophical movement thanks to “the success of their position on transcendent causes ... which they effectively argued against not only the Stoics but Epicureans and Aristotelians as well.”

59 Following the Middle Platonists, Lucian employs the term εἰκών, “image,” as a synonym for παράδειγμα, “model.” I come back to the meaning of “image” in Middle Platonism in general and to this passage in particular in chapter 8.

60 Such is the case, e.g., with Ofellius Laetus (see above, pp. 4–5) as well as Arria the Platonist (Ἀρρία Πλατωνική), who is mentioned in a Roman inscription (SEG 43.661; see Rigby 2001). This Arria must be identical with Galen’s “dearest Arria,” who was greatly praised by the emperors “for perfect philosophy and for taking a special delight in Plato’s words (διὰ τὸ φιλοσοφεῖν ἀκριβῶς, καὶ τοῖς Πλάτωνος μάλιστα χαίρειν λόγοις)” (Galen, *Theor.* 14.217.16–18



luckier and a later author provides us with the title of a Middle Platonist's work and a few fragments thereof. In other cases, there is a considerable number of texts preserved by direct transmission—e.g., the works of Plutarch and the handbooks of Alcinous and Apuleius.

It does not seem to be necessary to go through every prominent Middle Platonist and each datum of evidence that allows us to reconstruct his or her ideas; this information can be obtained from the only systematic treatment of the subject that has so far been written, Dillon's book *The Middle Platonists*. There are, however, several figures that deserve special attention, Philo in particular, to whose thinking much of this monograph refers. While some scholars identify him as a Middle Platonist, others resist this label. The most thorough discussion of this issue has been conducted by David T. Runia.<sup>61</sup> In his article, Runia delineates a wide spectrum of positions on Philo's relation to philosophy and points out that only the following three are plausible:

1. "that Philo is a *de facto* Middle Platonist, i.e. does not belong to the school, but has a philosophical stance which is fundamentally Platonist and might well make him welcome in such circles";
2. "that Philo is a Platonizing expositor of scripture, showing a marked preference for using Middle Platonist doctrines in his exegesis";
3. "that Philo is an eclectic philosophical expositor of scripture, who appropriates various school doctrines as it suits his exegetical purposes."<sup>62</sup>

Runia's own view coincides with the second position in this list: Philo was not a Middle Platonist, but rather a "Platonizing exegete of scripture." As an exegete of the Pentateuch and a devotee of Mosaic wisdom, Philo "is doing his own thing, and only secondarily concerned with philosophy."<sup>63</sup> It is nevertheless important to bear in mind that it is Platonism that provides Philo with "fundamental convictions in his philosophical views."<sup>64</sup> As Gregory E. Sterling wittily puts it, Philo saw himself as a devoted follower of Moses, but his Moses "was not

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Kühn). Arria appears to be the only woman who was undoubtedly a Middle Platonist; unfortunately, no account of her philosophy has survived. According to George Boys-Stones (personal communication), two other women who were possibly Middle Platonists are Clea, the addressee of Plutarch's *Mulierum virtutes* and *De Iside et Osiride*, and the anonymous dedicatee of Diogenes Laertius' account of Plato (see *Vit. philos.* 3.47).

61 See Runia 1993, 124–139.

62 *Ibid.*, 125.

63 *Ibid.*, 189.

64 *Ibid.*, 130.

a Hebrew Moses; he was a Middle Platonist.”<sup>65</sup> Similarly, Dillon, while admitting that Philo is not a Platonist, claims that “his basic orientation is Platonist” and even regards him as “our best evidence for Middle Platonism at the earliest stage of its development.”<sup>66</sup> To sum up, while it is clear that Philo adapted contemporary Platonist tradition for his own purposes and that Philonic evidence must be used with caution, the study of Middle Platonist δόγματα does not have the luxury to disregard this evidence. In the following chapters, I will often refer to Philo, but, in order to demonstrate that a particular Philonic passage bears witness to common-place notions in Middle Platonism, his evidence will be supplemented with the testimonies of “proper” Platonists.

Another ancient writer who must be mentioned in this connection is Galen. Galen explicitly refuses to declare allegiance to any philosophical ἀρσεις (*Aff. dign.* 8.8 = 5.43 Kühn), and thus can hardly be reckoned among the “proper” Platonists. Yet it seems clear that Galen often finds himself in fundamental agreement with Middle Platonist doctrines and thus at the very least can be described as “an author with Platonist sympathies.”<sup>67</sup> Just like Philo, Galen provides us with evidence that cannot be ignored in the study of the Platonist ideas contemporary with early Christianity.

Finally, there is a trend in ancient philosophy, often referred to as “Neopythagoreanism,” which likewise cannot be ignored in this study. To this “Pythagorean strand of Middle Platonism,” as Dillon calls it,<sup>68</sup> belong those Platonists who professed themselves to be the followers of what they conceived as the teaching of Pythagoras. Admittedly, at least some of these thinkers, just like Philo and Galen, would most certainly have objected to their description as “Platonic philosophers.” For instance, as Dominic J. O’Meara notes, several ancient authors rather referred to Numenius as a “Pythagorean” (ὁ πυθαγόρειος) and “Pythagoric philosopher” (ὁ πυθαγορικὸς φιλόσοφος), titles that probably derived from his own self-description,<sup>69</sup> yet if his thinking “is placed in the context of his own time, his is best understood as part of a widespread and varied effort in the first centuries AD to interpret Plato’s dialogues so as to

65 Sterling 1993, 111.

66 Dillon 1993b, 151; cf. Dillon 1996, 439.

67 Barnes 2015, 240.

68 Dillon 1996, 361 and 383.

69 See Numenius, frs. 1b, 1c, 29, 53 des Places (Origen); frs. 1a, 5, 24 des Places (Eusebius); fr. 4b des Places (Nemesius); fr. 52 des Places (Calcidius). Porphyry seems to be the source of the fragments preserved in Nemesius and Calcidius; see Dörrie 1959, 129–131; Waszink 1964, 11–12 and 24–25.

reach a systematic Platonic dogma.”<sup>70</sup> This conclusion can in fact be applied to all “Neopythagoreans”: as Dillon puts it, these philosophers, “whatever their claims, are working within a Platonic universe.”<sup>71</sup> That is to say, regardless of however “Neopythagoreans” styled themselves, their thinking is characteristically Platonist in nature.

This section was not intended to serve as a comprehensive introduction to Plato and Platonism. My sole goal was instead to present my position on the questions that have direct bearing on the investigation of the Middle Platonist elements in the Gospel of Thomas. Thus, I pointed out that, while the term “Middle Platonist” was never used as a self-designation, there are compelling reasons not to dismiss it. I sided with the scholars who contend that Middle Platonism should be understood as a chronological period in the history of ancient Platonist tradition that was brought about by the revival of the dogmatic approach to Plato’s heritage. I also suggested that the main feature that distinguished Middle Platonists from their philosophical rivals was their conviction that there is an intelligible realm beyond the sensible one. Finally, I brought up the matter of Middle Platonist sources, pointing out that, notwithstanding the fact that Philo, Galen, and “Neopythagoreans” did not identify themselves as adherents of the ἀρρεσις of Plato, they should still be counted among the most important sources for the Middle Platonist tradition.

### Early Christian Appropriation of Platonism: The Prologue of John

Though the history of the interactions between early Christianity and Platonism is still to be written, some important research has already been done. One of the texts that have recently been scrutinized from this perspective is the Johannine Prologue. A solid case has been made for the claim that, in order to gain better insight into this text, we must recognize the fact that its author appropriated certain ideas from the Platonist metaphysics. The four major points of contact between the Johannine Prologue and Platonism are the contrast between being and becoming, the notion of Logos, prepositional metaphysics, and the notion of the true light.<sup>72</sup>

70 O’Meara 1989, 10. Cf. Dillon’s comment of Nicomachus of Gerasa: “Despite his ‘Pythagorean’ stance, Nicomachus’ philosophy fits comfortably within the spectrum of contemporary Platonism” (Dillon 1996, 353).

71 Dillon 1996, 359.

72 This section is heavily indebted to Sterling 2005, 123–130. Since Sterling sometimes presents his case in a very concise manner, in what follows, I will not only summarize his

### 1 *The Contrast between Being and Becoming*

The Johannine Prologue emphatically contrasts Logos with creation. This contrast manifests in the use of the Greek verbs εἶμι and γίγνομαι: whereas Logos “was,” creation “came into being.” The opposition of being and becoming is carefully maintained throughout the Johannine Prologue and becomes apparent already in the first verses of the text: “In the beginning was (ἦν) the Word (ὁ λόγος), and the Word was (ἦν) with God, and the Word was (ἦν) God. He was (ἦν) in the beginning with God. All things (πάντα) came into being (ἐγένετο) through him, and without him not one thing came into being (ἐγένετο)” (John 1:1–3; NRSV). The only instance where this terminological distinction is disrupted is John 1:14 with its claim that the Word became flesh (ὁ λόγος σὰρξ ἐγένετο). According to Gregory E. Sterling, “The uniqueness of this statement sets it off and makes it a focal point in the Prologue.”<sup>73</sup>

The distinction between Logos which “was” and creation which “became” is in full agreement with the terminological tradition of Platonism. Plato himself described the sensible realm as “that which always becomes, but never is (τὸ γιγνόμενον μὲν ἀεί, ὃν δὲ οὐδέποτε),” and the intelligible realm as “that which always is and has no becoming (τὸ ὄν ἀεί, γένεσιν δὲ οὐκ ἔχον)” (*Tim.* 27d–28a). An even closer parallel to John’s Prologue is *Tim.* 28b, where Plato asks whether the world always was (ἦν) or came into being (γέγονεν), and immediately answers: “It came into being (γέγονεν).”

### 2 *The Notion of Logos*

The three main personages of the Johannine Prologue are God, the world, and Logos, which acts as a mediator between the former two. The most important predecessor of the Johannine Logos is the Logos of Philo. This Logos, which is, as John M. Dillon puts it, “the divine reason-principle,” “the active element of God’s creative thought,” and “a ‘place’ of the Ideas,”<sup>74</sup> plays the central role in the Philonic metaphysics. It should be noted, however, that Philo’s philosophy of Logos is hardly original: by and large, it is what Dillon terms “orthodox Middle Platonic doctrine.”<sup>75</sup>

First of all, as Sterling points out, as an intermediary metaphysical character, the Logos of Philo is functionally identical to other Middle Platonist

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arguments, but also occasionally expand and supplement them with references to other relevant sources and publications.

73 Sterling 2005, 125.

74 Dillon 1996, 159.

75 *Ibid.*, 161.

intermediaries—e.g., to the demiurgic god (ὁ δημιουργικὸς θεός) of Numenius (see fr. 12 des Places = Eusebius, *Praep. ev.* 11.18.6–8).<sup>76</sup> Moreover, Philo was not the only Middle Platonist who employed the term λόγος with regard to a metaphysical principle.

In fact, the term seems to appear already in Antiochus, “a precursor of the Middle Platonic synthesis.”<sup>77</sup> One of our main sources for Antiochus is Cicero’s *Acad.* 1.15–42, where Varro presents the Antiochean history of philosophy. A part of Varro’s speech is a detailed account of the physical doctrines of the early Academy (*Acad.* 1.24–29). According to Brad Inwood, “since we have no reason to think that Antiochus distinguished his own views from those that he claimed for the early Academy we can conclude that the account given here is a good representation of Antiochus’ own theory as well.”<sup>78</sup>

According to *Acad.* 1.28–29, the world is held together by a force (“vis”) described as “a sentient nature possessed of perfect reason (natura sentiens, in qua ratio perfecta insit)” (trans. C. Brittain). This force is also called the world-soul (“animus mundi”), an intellect (“mens”), a perfect wisdom (“sapientia perfecta”), and God (“deus”). Cicero’s “ratio” most certainly corresponds to the Greek term λόγος;<sup>79</sup> thus, Logos, according to Antiochus, is the divine force immanent in the world.

Admittedly, this example is hardly decisive for our case. While Antiochus does seem to posit Logos as a metaphysical principle, his concept of Logos lacks any characteristically Platonist elements. As Heinrich Dörrie put it, “in der Tat jede Einzelheit, die Antiochos/Varro hier vorträgt, gängiger stoischer Lehre entspricht.”<sup>80</sup> While the expression “animus mundi” would certainly bring to the reader’s mind the cosmology of Plato’s *Timaeus*, the world-soul of Antiochus, unlike that of Plato, lacks the transcendent aspect. Antiochus, therefore, speaks of the world-soul in the same way the Stoics did: it is merely another designation for the governing principle of the universe.<sup>81</sup>

Similarly, what Antiochus says about Logos is “thoroughly Stoic.”<sup>82</sup> Just as Antiochus claims that the world is held together by Logos, which is also called God, so also did Zeno, Cleanthes, and Chrysippus teach how “that which is

76 See Sterling 2005, 126.

77 Dillon 1996, 433.

78 Inwood 2012, 195–196.

79 See Brittain 2006, 141.

80 Dörrie 1987, 475.

81 See Dörrie 1987, 474–475, and Görler 2004, 92.

82 Reid 1885, 133.

acted upon is unqualified substance, i.e. matter; that which acts is the reason in it, i.e. god (τὸ μὲν οὖν πάσῃον εἶναι τὴν ἄποιον οὐσίαν τὴν ὕλην, τὸ δὲ ποιῶν τὸν ἐν αὐτῇ λόγον τὸν θεόν) (Diogenes Laertius, *Vit. philos.* 7.134 = *SVF* 1.85; trans. A.A. Long and D.N. Sedley). The Logos of Antiochus, therefore, is not the Platonist mediator between the world and transcendent God, but the Stoic God immanent in the world.<sup>83</sup>

There is, however, at least one Middle Platonist source which provides us with a perfect parallel to Philo's doctrine of Logos: Plutarch's *De Iside et Osiride*. In this text, Plutarch expounds a Middle Platonist exegesis of Egyptian mythology. He explicitly identifies Horus, Isis, and Osiris with the γένη τριττά of *Tim.* 50a–b, “that which comes to be, that in which it comes to be, and that after which the thing coming to be is modeled, and which is the source of its coming to be (τὸ μὲν γιγνόμενον, τὸ δ' ἐν ᾧ γίγνεται, τὸ δ' ὅθεν ἀφομοιούμενον φύεται τὸ γιγνόμενον)” (trans. D.J. Zeyl). Thus, according to Plutarch, Isis is matter (ἡ ὕλη), Osiris the intelligible (τὸ νοητόν), and Horus their offspring, the world (*Is. Os.* 373e–374a).

Whereas Horus is neither pure nor uncontaminated (οὐκ ὦν καθαρὸς οὐδ' εἰλικρινής), his father, Osiris, is in himself (αὐτὸς καθ' ἑαυτὸν) unmixed and unaffected reason (λόγος ἀμιγῆς καὶ ἀπαθής) (373b). Osiris is thus identified with Logos.

Furthermore, Plutarch's Osiris has two aspects, the transcendent and the immanent.<sup>84</sup> He is present both in the body and in the soul of the world: in the soul of the world, Osiris is mind and reason (νοῦς καὶ λόγος), and in its body, he is “that which is ordered and established (τὸ τεταγμένον καὶ καθεστηκός)” (371a–b). In other words, in his immanent aspect, Osiris is “the force of cosmic order and stability.”<sup>85</sup>

The two aspects of Osiris are also identified with his body and soul. Whereas the soul of Osiris is eternal and imperishable (ἀίδιον καὶ ἄφθαρτον), his body suffers dissolution and destruction. According to Plutarch, “that which is and is intelligible and good (τὸ ὄν καὶ νοητὸν καὶ ἀγαθόν) is superior to destruction and change; but the images (εἰκόνες) from it with which the sensible and corporeal (τὸ αἰσθητὸν καὶ σωματικόν) is impressed (ἐκμάττεται), and the principles, forms,

83 As Bonazzi 2012, 333, puts it, “in the battlefield of Platonism, Antiochus advanced so far beyond the Stoic lines that he was viewed as a defector, an ally of the school he had tried so resourcefully to conquer.” Indeed, as Boys-Stones 2017, 68, points out, Antiochus was not recognized as “one of their own” by later Platonists; see Plutarch, *Cic.* 4.1–2; Numenius, fr. 28 des Places.

84 Cf. Dillon 1996, 200.

85 Betz and Smith 1975, 68.

and likenesses (λόγοι καὶ εἶδη καὶ ὁμοιότητες) which this takes upon itself, like impressions of seals in wax (καθάπερ ἐν κηρῷ σφραγίδες), are not permanently lasting (οὐκ αἰεὶ διαμένουσιν), but disorder and disturbance overtakes them" (*Is. Os.* 373a; trans. F.C. Babbitt, altered). Thus, the body of Osiris is the sum-total of forms immanent in matter.<sup>86</sup> His soul, in turn, should be understood as the sum-total of the transcendent forms, described in 375a–b, where Plutarch says that whereas "the things that are scattered in objects liable to be affected (τὰ ἐν τοῖς παθητικοῖς διεσπαρμένα)" (trans. J.G. Griffiths) are subject to destruction, "God's principles, forms, and emanations (οἱ λόγοι καὶ εἶδη καὶ ἀπορροαὶ τοῦ θεοῦ) abide in heaven and stars and never change."<sup>87</sup>

The double role of Plutarch's Osiris is determined by his intermediary status: in order to act as an intermediary between the transcendent God and the world, he needs to participate in both transcendence and immanence. The very same double role is ascribed to Logos in Philo: according to *Mos.* 2.127, the cosmic Logos deals with both "the incorporeal and paradigmatic forms (αἱ ἀσώματοι καὶ παραδειγματικαὶ ἰδέαι)" and the visible objects (τὰ ὄρατά) that imitate these forms.<sup>88</sup> The fact that Philo's Logos and Plutarch's Osiris are functionally identical and that Osiris can also be called Logos demonstrates that Philo's philosophy of Logos was part of a larger Middle Platonist tradition and that this tradition as a whole should be recognized as a possible background for the Johannine Logos.

### 3 *Prepositional Metaphysics*

One of the notable features of the Johannine Prologue is that it repeatedly emphasizes the instrumental agency of Logos. It is *by means of* Logos that the universe was created: "all things came into being through him (πάντα δι' αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο)" (John 1:3; NRSV), "the world came into being through him (ὁ κόσμος δι' αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο)" (John 1:10; NRSV). The notion that the universe was created "through" (διὰ) Logos immediately reminds the reader of the metaphysics of the Philonic corpus.

According to Philo, God used Logos as an instrument (*Leg.* 3.96: ᾧ καθάπερ ὄργάνῳ προσχρησάμενος ἐκοσμοποιεῖ; *Migr.* 6: ἐκοσμοπλάστει χρησάμενος ὄργάνῳ τούτῳ), through which (*Sacr.* 8: δι' οὗ καὶ ὁ σύμπας κόσμος ἐδημιουργεῖτο; *Spec.* 1.81: δι' οὗ σύμπας ὁ κόσμος ἐδημιουργεῖτο) he created the world. Sometimes Philo

86 Cf. Jones 1916, 102.

87 It is worth noting that Plutarch calls the immanent forms "images" (εἰκόνες) and "likenesses" (ὁμοιότητες). In doing so, he seems to indicate that the immanent forms derive from the transcendent ones.

88 See also the discussion of this passage in chapter 8 (p. 240).

applies this language of instrumentality to Wisdom and says that the world was created through her (*Fug.* 109: δι' ἧς τὰ ὅλα ἦλθεν εἰς γένεσιν; *Det.* 54: δι' ἧς ἀπετελέσθη τὸ πᾶν), which, as Sterling puts it, “is not terribly surprising since he can thus equate the Logos with Wisdom.”<sup>89</sup>

For the purposes of the present discussion the key Philonic passage is *Cher.* 125–127. Here, Philo formulates his position on causes. According to him, “to bring something into being, many things must come together (πρὸς τήν τινας γένεσιν πολλὰ δεῖ συνελθεῖν).” Namely, there are four such things: the cause (τὸ αἷτιον), matter (ἡ ὕλη), the instrument (τὸ ἐργαλεῖον or τὸ ὄργανον), and the purpose (ἡ αἰτία). Philo states that the cause is τὸ ὑφ' οὗ, “that by which,” matter is τὸ ἐξ οὗ, “that from which,” the instrument is τὸ δι' οὗ, “that through which,” and the purpose is τὸ δι' ὃ, “that for which.” Philo then applies this fourfold classification to the creation of the universe: “its cause (αἷτιον) is God, by whom (ὑφ' οὗ) it has come into being, its material (ὕλη) the four elements, from which (ἐξ οὗ) it was compounded, its instrument (ὄργανον) the Logos of God, through which (δι' οὗ) it was framed, and the purpose (αἰτία) of the building is the goodness of the craftsman” (*Cher.* 127; trans. F.H. Colson and G.H. Whitaker, slightly altered).

This passage is one of the finest examples of what is sometimes termed prepositional metaphysics, which David T. Runia defines as “the practice, frequently found in both Middle and Neoplatonism, of using prepositional phrases to express the causes required for an object (and especially the cosmos) to come into being.”<sup>90</sup> The Middle Platonists produced several different schemes of prepositional phrases—e.g., the threefold one attested in *Plac. philos.* 1.11.2 (ὑφ' οὗ, “that by which,” ἐξ οὗ, “that from which,” and πρὸς ὃ, “that to which”)<sup>91</sup> and the fivefold one attested in Seneca, *Ep.* 65.8: “id ex quo” (“that from which”), “id a quo” (“that by which”), “id in quo” (“that in which”), “id ad quod” (“that according to which”), and “id propter quod” (“that for which”).

89 Sterling 1997, 229.

90 Runia 1986, 171. The phrase “Metaphysik der Präpositionen” was introduced in Theiler 1930, ix and 33.

91 *Placita philosophorum* is the conventional title of the hypothetical common source for Pseudo-Plutarch, *Placita philosophorum*, and Stobaeus, *Anthologium*. Diels 1879, 45–69, attributed this text to a certain Aëtius; as Lebedev 1988, 813–815, has pointed out, this attribution is problematic (see now Lebedev 2016, where he responds to the counterarguments in Mansfeld and Runia 1997–2010, 1:333–338, arguing that *Placita philosophorum* was compiled by Arius Didymus).



It seems that, apart from Philo's scheme in *Cher.* 125–127 (see also *QG* 1.58; *Prov.* 1.23), none of the attested Middle Platonist classifications of causes includes the instrumental cause (“that through which”). Yet, as Runia points out, “the use of the instrumental cause in order to ‘liberate’ God from the manual labour of creation was a concern for most Middle Platonists and led to the doctrine of a first and second god.”<sup>92</sup> Moreover, as the following parallels demonstrate, Philo is hardly unique in his technical use of the preposition *διὰ*. My first example comes from Atticus' lost polemical treatise:

Plato claims for the world that it is the noblest work made by the noblest of craftsmen, and invests the maker of all with a power (*δύναμις*) through which (*δι' ἧς*) he made the world which did not previously exist, and having made it, will if he so wishes preserve it ever in safety.<sup>93</sup>

As Carl Andersen pointed out, this unnamed demiurgical “power” is the world-soul of Plato's *Timaeus*.<sup>94</sup> Indeed, in another fragment from the same work (fr. 8 des Places = Eusebius, *Praep. ev.* 15.12.1), Atticus identifies the world-soul (*ψυχὴ*), providence (*πρόνοια*), and nature (*φύσις*) and claims that, according to Plato, the world-soul puts everything in order and penetrates everything (*τοῦ Πλάτωνος λέγοντος τὴν ψυχὴν διακοσμεῖν τὰ πάντα διήκουσαν διὰ πάντων*).<sup>95</sup> What

92 Runia 1986, 174.

93 Atticus, fr. 4 des Places (= Eusebius, *Praep. ev.* 15.6.7), trans. E.H. Gifford, slightly altered.

94 Andersen 1952–1953, 191–192.

95 Cf. Pseudo-Origen, *Ref.* 1.21.1 (= *SVF* 1.153): according to Chrysippus and Zeno, God's providence (*πρόνοια*) “penetrates everything (*διὰ πάντων διήκειν*).” It is worth noting that, according to the conventional view, *Refutatio omnium haeresium* was authored by Hippolytus. However, in recent years, a number of scholars have argued that the biblical exegete Hippolytus, whose works are listed in Eusebius (*Hist. eccl.* 6.22) and Jerome (*Vir. ill.* 61), could not have written *Refutatio* and that the authorship of this text thus remains unknown (see Brent 1995; Cerrato 2002, 1–123; Litwa 2016, xxxii–xl). It is worth noting that the manuscript tradition unanimously ascribes *Refutatio* to Origen (see Litwa 2016, xxvii and xxxii). It seems that Theodoret held the same view, since, in many passages of his *Haereticarum fabularum compendium*, he draws upon *Refutatio* (see Volkmar 1855, 22–55) and refers to Origen as his source (see, for instance, the chapter on the Elkesaites, PG 83:393.5–30). Moreover, Photius reports that some people attribute the work entitled “The Labyrinth (*ὁ λαβύρινθος*),” which should probably be identified with *Refutatio* (see Brent 1995, 132), to Origen (Photius, *Bibl.* 48.12a.5–6 Bekker). Given that Origen certainly was not the author of *Refutatio* (see Brent 1995, 128–131), it seems reasonable to call the author of this text “Pseudo-Origen” (I am grateful to István Bugár for this suggestion, as well as the references to Theodoret and Photius).

is important for the present discussion is that Atticus emphasizes the agency of the world-soul in creation in the same fashion Philo (and John) emphasizes the instrumental agency of Logos.

My second example comes from another lost work, Porphyry's *Commentarii in Aristotelis Physica*. In one of the extant fragments from this commentary (fr. 120 Smith = Simplicius, *Comm. Phys.* 10.35–11.4 Diels), Porphyry summarizes Aristotle's doctrine of four causes (i.e., material, formal, efficient, and final; see *Phys.* 194b–195a). Just like the Middle Platonists, Porphyry uses prepositional phrases to describe these causes: first, τὸ ἐξ οὗ, "that from which," or matter (ἡ ὕλη), second, τὸ καθ' ὃ, "that after which," or the form (τὸ εἶδος), third, τὸ ὑφ' οὗ, "that by which," or "that which makes" (τὸ ποιοῦν), and fourth, τὸ δι' ὃ, "that for which," or the purpose (τὸ τέλος). Then, Porphyry claims that, according to Plato, there are two more causes. As George E. Karamanolis puts it, Porphyry's point is that "Aristotle adopted an incomplete set of Plato's principles" and that "the doctrine outlined in Aristotle's text must be credited entirely to Plato."<sup>96</sup>

According to Porphyry, the two missing causes are τὸ πρὸς ὃ, "that to which," or the model (τὸ παράδειγμα), and τὸ δι' οὗ, "that through which," or the instrument (τὸ ὀργανικόν).<sup>97</sup> This last cause from Porphyry's list immediately invites comparison with Philo's notion of the instrument (τὸ ὄργανον) as "that through which" (τὸ δι' οὗ) something comes about. Since it is unlikely that Porphyry was familiar with *De cherubim*, it seems reasonable to conclude that both Philo and Porphyry learned about the instrumental cause from the Middle Platonist tradition.

As these two examples demonstrate, Philo was not the only Middle Platonist who speculated about an intermediate figure "through which" God created the universe, nor was he the only Middle Platonist who recognized "that through which" as one of the causes. What is unique about Philo is that in his cosmology he assigns the instrumental function to Logos. Thus, as far as the concept

96 Karamanolis 2006, 273.

97 This is the earliest attestation of the sixfold classification of causes which became quite popular in Neoplatonism. Cf. Simplicius, *Comm. Phys.* 3.16–19 and 316.23–26: according to the Peripatetics, there are two causes in the proper sense (τὰ κυρίως αἴτια), the efficient (τὸ ποιητικὸν αἴτιον) and the final (τὸ τελικὸν αἴτιον), and two contributory causes (τὰ συναίτια), the material (τὸ ὕλικὸν αἴτιον) and the formal (τὸ εἰδικὸν αἴτιον); Plato, however, expanded the list and added the paradigmatic cause (τὸ παραδειγματικὸν αἴτιον) to the first group and the instrumental cause (τὸ ὀργανικὸν αἴτιον) to the second.

of creation through Logos is concerned, the Johannine Prologue seems to be indebted not to Middle Platonism in general, but rather either directly to Philo, or, if we suppose that there were other Jews with similar metaphysical convictions, to the Platonizing trend within Hellenistic Judaism.<sup>98</sup> Be that as it may, it is clear that, as this survey has demonstrated, the concept of the instrument in creation is not merely a Philonic/Hellenistic Jewish concept (certainly, not everything in Philo is Platonist), but also a Middle Platonist concept, which the Johannine Prologue received via Philo or some other like-minded Platonizing Jewish intellectuals.

#### 4 *The Notion of the True Light*

In John 1:9, Logos is described rather Platonically as “the true light, which enlightens everyone (τὸ φῶς τὸ ἀληθινόν, ὃ φωτίζει πάντα ἄνθρωπον).” The Platonist background of the notion of the Johannine true light was suggested already by C.H. Dodd in his seminal study on the fourth gospel.<sup>99</sup> Yet it was not until recently that the most striking parallel to the Prologue’s “true light” was discovered. As George H. van Kooten has demonstrated, this expression can be traced back to the eschatological myth of Plato’s *Phaedo*, where Socrates speaks about “the true heaven, the true light (τὸ ἀληθινὸν φῶς), and the true earth” (*Phaed.* 109e).<sup>100</sup>

According to van Kooten, “In the entire ensuing Platonic tradition, this true light, the ἀληθινὸν φῶς, is also known as the intellectual light, the νοερόν φῶς, or, alternatively, as the mental light, the νοητόν φῶς, the light which falls in the province of νοῦς, as opposed to the visible, aesthetic light.”<sup>101</sup> The intelligible light is “true,” because the sensible light is merely its derivative. According to Plato’s analogy of the sun, the sun is “the offspring of the good (τάγαθόν), which the good begot as its own analogue.” The sun’s relation to the visible realm is thus the same as that of the good to the intelligible realm (*Resp.* 508b–c). Moreover, as we learn from the allegory of the cave, the light of the fire is to the sunlight as the sun is to the form of the good (ἡ τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ ἰδέα). It is this idea that gives birth to both the sensible light and the sun as its sovereign (φῶς καὶ ὁ τούτου κύριος) in the visible realm, whereas in the intelligible realm the good is the sovereign (κυρία) itself (517b–c).

98 Cf. Tobin 1990, 259–260.

99 See Dodd 1953, 139–140.

100 See van Kooten 2005, 151–153.

101 *Ibid.*, 152.

The “true light” as an expression thus has a Platonic background, and it is the Platonist tradition that allows us to gain insight into the meaning of this curious expression in the Johannine Prologue. Moreover, the Platonist interpretation of the expression fits the immediate context in which the expression is used. As van Kooten has pointed out, the notion that the true light “enlightens everyone” (John 1:9) makes sense in light of Platonist metaphysics; according to *Resp.* 540a, the good itself (τὸ ἀγαθὸν αὐτό) is “that which provides light for all (τὸ πᾶσι φῶς παρέχον).”

It follows that the Johannine “true light” is the intelligible light of the Platonist tradition. As Dodd put it, τὸ φῶς τὸ ἀληθινόν of the Prologue “is the archetypal light, αὐτὸ τὸ φῶς, of which every visible light in this world is a μίμημα or symbol.”<sup>102</sup>

The four points of contact between Platonism and John’s Prologue seem to provide us with sufficient evidence to suggest that the author of this text drew on Platonist metaphysics. Each of the four Johannine notions outlined above should be regarded as a part of a cumulative argument for the Platonizing nature of the Prologue. Treated individually, these notions may perhaps be given alternative explanations; together, they point in one direction—viz., to Platonism.

Whether or not these conclusions may be transposed from John’s Prologue to the rest of the gospel goes beyond the scope of this discussion. It is worth noting, however, that several scholars have contributed to the discussion of this question. For instance, van Kooten proposed that “the resonances of particular Platonic themes from the cave parable make themselves heard throughout John’s Gospel.”<sup>103</sup> Similarly, Harold W. Attridge has recently argued for the Platonist origins of the Johannine “religious epistemology.”<sup>104</sup>

### Preliminary Notes on the Gospel of Thomas

In this book, I make a case similar to that presented in the previous section, arguing that the Platonist tradition made a substantive impact on the Gospel of Thomas. According to an ancient doxographer, Plato was by no means a thinker of many doctrines (πολύδοξος), but certainly one of many voices (πολύφωνος) (Stobaeus, *Anth.* 2.7.4a; cf. 2.7.3f).<sup>105</sup> This eloquent remark also applies

102 Dodd 1953, 140.

103 Van Kooten 2005, 176.

104 Attridge 2017.

105 These two passages belong to the segment in Stobaeus that is often designated “Dox-

to the subject of this study: the Gospel of Thomas is most certainly a polyphonic text. As the scholars of the Gospel of Thomas have shown, some sayings in the Gospel of Thomas resonate with the Jewish Wisdom literature,<sup>106</sup> while others probably draw upon apocalyptic traditions,<sup>107</sup> preserve the voice of the historical Jesus,<sup>108</sup> etc. However, previous scholarship has largely been unable to hear one voice in particular. Not only did the Gospel of Thomas, like Plato, have many voices; as I will demonstrate in this book, one of its voices was that of Plato—to be sure, not that of the “real” Plato, but that of the Plato as people knew him in contemporary times: the Plato of Middle Platonism.

Before approaching the Platonizing tendencies in the Gospel of Thomas, however, some preliminary work needs first to be done. The historical circumstances in which the text was produced is of particular interest and a necessary preliminary to the explication of the text itself. More than half a century has passed since the *editio princeps*<sup>109</sup> was published and though numerous, important studies on the Gospel of Thomas have been published, few facts have been established within scholarly consensus.

At least the following facts are generally undisputed:

- (i) The Gospel of Thomas is not a narrative and, therefore, in terms of its genre, is not a gospel but rather a collection of chreiai and gnomic maxims. It is thus structurally similar to such texts as Lucian’s *Demonax* and Epicurus’ *Ratae sententiae*.
- (ii) Successive Thomasine sayings are often connected by catchwords—e.g., sayings 27 and 28 are linked by “the world” (ὁ κόσμος in the Greek text; πκοσμος in the Coptic).
- (iii) Sometimes a group of sayings seems to be united by a common theme.
- (iv) Some of the Thomasine material is similar or even almost identical with that of the Synoptic tradition. Yet in the Thomasine context these sayings often seem to convey a message that is rather different from that of their Synoptic counterparts.

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ography A” (*Anth.* 2.7.1–4b; see Hahm 1990, 2945). Scholars often identify the author of Doxography A with Arius Didymus. For a critique of this identification, see Göransson 1995, 221–226; however, cf. Lebedev 2016, 612–613.

106 See Davies 1983.

107 See DeConick 1996.

108 See, e.g., Patterson 1993, 217–241; 2006.

109 See Guillaumont et al. 1959.

All modern scholars of the Gospel of Thomas would most certainly agree with the facts summarized in the above list. Otherwise, there is an ongoing debate about seemingly every fact pertaining to the Gospel of Thomas. For instance, whereas there is no doubt that the Gospel of Thomas is organized by catchwords, it is unclear whether there are any other organizing principles in this text. Similarly, there are different opinions about what should be considered to be a catchword and what should not be. There is no consensus on the question of the text's dependence on the Synoptic tradition. Different parties have opposing views on the relevance of this text for the study of historical Jesus. The list goes on and on.

It is unfair to expect from one book to unearth all the mysteries that have remained unsolved by the academic community over the last half century. There are, nevertheless, at least two major topics that have to be demystified in this introductory chapter: the date and the original language of the Gospel of Thomas. The latter question seems to be less challenging than the former, and, in light of recent research, does not seem to require a long and detailed discussion.

Apart from a few quotations, of which only one seems to be undisputed (Pseudo-Origen, *Ref.* 5.7.20; cf. *Gos. Thom.* 4),<sup>110</sup> there are four witnesses to the text of the Gospel of Thomas. The Greek text of the Gospel of Thomas survives in three fragmentary manuscripts from the site of the ancient Egyptian city of Oxyrhynchus (P.Oxy. 1.1, P.Oxy. 4.654, and P.Oxy. 4.655). The Coptic text of the Gospel of Thomas survives as the second writing of NHC II. Since the text of the Gospel of Thomas comes down to us in two languages, Greek and Coptic, one of the first problems that scholars were supposed to solve was the relation between the Greek and the Coptic Gospel of Thomas. In the earliest days of Thomasine scholarship, Gérard Garitte suggested that the Greek text of the Gospel of Thomas attested by the Oxyrhynchus fragments was a translation from Coptic.<sup>111</sup> A year later, however, Garitte's arguments were successfully refuted by Ernst Haenchen, who also pointed out that Garitte's hypothesis presupposed the existence of a Coptic Gospel of Thomas already in the second century CE, which appears to be extremely unlikely.<sup>112</sup>

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110 It is worth noting that this quotation must not be seen in isolation from its immediate context. As Johnson 2010, 305–321, has recently argued, it is likely that both the quotation and the preceding remarks in this passage (*Ref.* 5.7.20) come from a Naassene source and that together they “manifest knowledge of, and reflection on,” *Gos. Thom.* 2–5.

111 See Garitte 1960; see also Kuhn 1960, 319–320.

112 See Haenchen 1961, 157–160.

If the Greek text of the Oxyrhynchus fragments was not translated from Coptic, then it follows that the opposite must likely be true: the Coptic Gospel of Thomas attested by NHC II is translated from a Greek *Vorlage*. Some scholars, however, have made attempts to add yet another language to the mix, proposing that the Semiticisms in the Gospel of Thomas indicate that the Greek text is, in fact, a translation from either Aramaic or Syriac. However, these Semiticism hypotheses do not hold up to further scrutiny. As Simon Gathercole has recently demonstrated, there is no reason to suspect a Semitic Gospel of Thomas behind the Greek one.<sup>113</sup>

The former question that needs demystifying, the date of the Gospel of Thomas, is a much more complicated issue and thus merits a thorough discussion. To begin with the material evidence, the earliest witness to the text of the Gospel of Thomas is P.Oxy. 1.1.<sup>114</sup> P.Oxy. 1.1 is a fragment of a leaf from a papyrus codex. Larry Hurtado estimates the original size of the leaf to be 10–13+ × 27+ cm, which means that P.Oxy. 1.1 belongs to Eric G. Turner’s “Group 8” of papyrus codices<sup>115</sup>—i.e., “one of the more common shapes among codices of the second and third centuries CE.”<sup>116</sup> Paleographically, however, P.Oxy. 1.1 is commonly dated to the early third century CE;<sup>117</sup> this latter date was suggested already by the first editors of the fragment, Bernard P. Grenfell and Arthur S. Hunt.<sup>118</sup>

The fact that our earliest textual witness was produced in the early third century CE establishes the most reliable *terminus ante quem* for the Gospel of Thomas; hence, the text that is attested by the Oxyrhynchus fragments and NHC II must have been composed somewhere between the first generations of the Jesus movement and the early third century CE. Remarkably, the range of dates that are theoretically possible almost coincides with the range

113 See Gathercole 2012, 19–125. See also my critical notes on the alleged Semitic background of the Thomasine term *μοναχός* in chapter 4 (pp. 116–118).

114 For the high-quality images of P.Oxy. 1.1, see Wayment 2013, 391–392.

115 See Turner 1977, 20–21.

116 Hurtado 2008, 21.

117 See Attridge 1989a, 96–97; Hurtado 2008, 22; cf., however, Roberts and Skeat 1983, 41, where P.Oxy. 1.1 is dated to the second century, and Turner 1977, 91 and 143, where it is dated to the turn of the second century (i.e., ± 200 CE).

118 In the *editio princeps* of P.Oxy. 1.1, Grenfell and Hunt write that, based on the scribe’s hand, “the papyrus was probably written not much later than the year 200” (Grenfell and Hunt 1897, 6). Seven years later, in their *editio princeps* of P.Oxy. 4.654 and 4.655, Grenfell and Hunt revise this date slightly; having assigned P.Oxy. 4.654 to “the middle or end of the third century,” they note that P.Oxy. 1.1 “also belongs to the third century, though probably to an earlier decade” (Grenfell and Hunt 1904, 9–10).

of dates that have actually been suggested: from 50–70 CE, as suggested by Stevan Davies,<sup>119</sup> to about 200 CE, as suggested by Han J.W. Drijvers.<sup>120</sup>

This disparity of opinions may to some degree be explained by the fact that the Gospel of Thomas itself provides us with what the field of law dubs “conflicting evidence.” The most telling data come from the study of Synoptic parallels to the Gospel of Thomas. There are Thomasine sayings that are demonstratively dependent on the Synoptics, as Risto Uro, for instance, has noted, in the Matthean editorial traits in the wording of Gos. Thom. 14:5. If we accept the view shared by the vast majority of New Testament scholars—i.e., that Mark was a source of Matthew—then Matt 15:11 appears to be one of those instances where Matthew used Mark as his source, as there are compelling reasons to think that this verse is a redactional reformulation of Mark 7:15. Thus, since Matt 15:11 and Gos. Thom. 14:5 are “almost identical,” the Gospel of Thomas in this particular case appears to depend on Matthew.<sup>121</sup>

While the list of Thomasine borrowings from the Synoptic gospels can still be added to, it seems unlikely that all Synoptic parallels in the Gospel of Thomas come *ipso facto* from Synoptic gospels. While some of the Synoptic-resembling sayings in the Gospel of Thomas clearly exhibit the traits of Synoptic redaction (as is the case with Gos. Thom. 14:5), others do not seem to contain such traits.

To be sure, numerous Thomasine sayings may have no parallels in the Synoptic gospels, but do have parallels to other texts—e.g., the lion saying in Gos. Thom. 7 and Didymus the Blind, *Comm. Ps.* 315.27–316.4 Gronewald.<sup>122</sup> Since in most cases there is no reason to suspect that these latter texts depend on the Gospel of Thomas (e.g., there is no reason to think that Didymus the Blind depends on Gos. Thom. 7 or vice versa), we must surmise that at least some non-Synoptic Thomasine sayings that are attested outside the Gospel of Thomas did not originate from the Gospel of Thomas.

In other words, the Gospel of Thomas accumulated various traditions, both Synoptic-resembling and otherwise; these traditions come from various sources, including, but not limited to, the Synoptic gospels. Since the Synoptic tradition is only one of the many Thomasine sources, and since it is likely that other sources also contained Synoptic-resembling sayings, it seems plausible that some of the Synoptic-resembling Thomasine sayings do not come from a

119 See Davies 1983, 146.

120 See Drijvers 1982, 173.

121 See Uro 1998b, 23.

122 I discuss this saying in chapter 7. See also the parallels listed in Grosso 2012, 283–298; Pesce 2004, 58–73 and 570–582.



Synoptic gospel (or a source dependent on the Synoptic tradition). Thus, I suggest that in the cases when a Synoptic-resembling Thomasine saying does not exhibit any Synoptic editorial traits, the Gospel of Thomas deserves to be given the benefit of the doubt and thus to be treated as an independent witness of a given tradition. While the relation of the Gospel of Thomas to the Synoptic Gospels is beyond the scope of this book, in the following chapters I will occasionally discuss the Synoptic-resembling Thomasine sayings that seem to be independent from the Synoptic tradition.

Perhaps, the most remarkable example of a saying that can claim independence from the Synoptics is Gos. Thom. 65, the Thomasine version of the Parable of the Tenants. As John S. Kloppenborg has demonstrated, and indeed in remarkable detail,<sup>123</sup> unlike its Synoptic counterparts, Gos. Thom. 65 lacks any secondary allusions to Isa 5:1–7 LXX. Moreover, while the Synoptic versions of the parable are unrealistic and allegorized, Gos. Thom. 65 “reflects accurately the patterns of vineyard ownership in the first century CE, the economic and agrarian practices associated with viticulture, and the legal situation of the owner in instances of conflict with tenants.”<sup>124</sup> According to Kloppenborg, since narrative realism does not seem to be one of the strong suits of the Gospel of Thomas, it is hard to imagine how the realistic Thomasine version could derive from an unrealistic Synoptic one.

Finally, it is not enough to say that the Synoptic-resembling Thomasine sayings sometimes appear to be independent from their Synoptic counterparts; occasionally, a case can be made for Thomasine priority. As early as 1938, before the Nag Hammadi codices were discovered and the text of P.Oxy. 4.655 identified as the Gospel of Thomas,<sup>125</sup> T.C. Skeat made a compelling argument that the reading attested in what we now know as Gos. Thom. 36:2 (P.Oxy. 4.655 col. i, ll. 9–10) antedates the parallel reading in Q, the hypothetical Synoptic Sayings Source. While, according to the Greek Gospel of Thomas, the lilies “[ο]ὐ ξα[ί]νει οὐδὲ ν[ήθ]ει,” “neither card nor spin,” Q 12:27 reads, “Consider the lilies, how they

<sup>123</sup> See Kloppenborg 2006.

<sup>124</sup> Kloppenborg 2014, 220.

<sup>125</sup> The suggestion that the three Oxyrhynchus fragments attest the same text as the second writing of NHC II was initially made in Puech 1958. Before the discovery of the Nag Hammadi codices, scholars were able to identify P.Oxy. 1.1 and P.Oxy. 4.654 as witnesses to the same text, but P.Oxy. 4.655 was usually considered to be a fragment of a different “apocryphal” gospel; see, e.g., the *editio princeps* of P.Oxy. 4.655: Grenfell and Hunt 1904, 39–47. The view that P.Oxy. 655 is a witness to the same text as P.Oxy. 1.1 and P.Oxy. 4.654 was expressed already in Bartlet 1905, 124, but did not receive any support (see, e.g., Evelyn White 1920, xlix–li).

grow (ἀξάνει): they neither toil nor spin (οὐ κοπιᾷ οὐδὲ νήθει).” As Skeat demonstrated, the reading of Q 12:27 must be later, since ἀξάνει is most certainly a corruption of οὐ ξάνει. The most likely explanation for the emergence of this later reading is that, first, due to scribal error οὐ ξάνει οὐδὲ νήθει became \*ἀξάνει οὐδὲ νήθει, which made the Greek text ungrammatical; and second, οὐ κοπιᾷ was inserted in order for οὐδέ to be preceded by a negative verb. In the words of Paul Maas, Skeat’s proposal is “as surprising as it is convincing”;<sup>126</sup> recently, Skeat’s argument has been supported and elaborated upon by Christoph Heil and James M. Robinson.<sup>127</sup>

Thus, there are Thomasine sayings that, in all likelihood, depend on the Synoptics; there are Synoptic-resembling sayings that are arguably independent from the Synoptic tradition; and there are sayings that may attest to pre-Synoptic tradition. To explain this hodgepodge of “conflicting evidence,” then, and to offer a plausible date for the Gospel of Thomas is a daunting task. To complicate already complicated matters, we must also take into account Thomasine material that is without parallels to other sources. The most striking example comes from Gos. Thom. 12:

12:1 ΠΕΧΕ ΜΜΑΘΗΤΗΣ ΝΙΣ ΧΕ ΤΗΣΟΟΥΝ ΧΕ ΚΝΑΒΟΚ ΝΤΟΟΤΗ ΝΙΜ ΠΕ ΕΤΝΑΡ  
 ΝΟΓ ΕΡΡΑΙ ΕΧΩΝ 12:2 ΠΕΧΕ ΙΣ ΝΑΥ ΧΕ ΠΜΑ ΝΤΑΤΕΤΗΕΙ ΜΜΑΥ ΕΤΕΤΝΑΒΟΚ  
 ΩΔ ΙΔΚΩΒΟC ΠΔΙΚΑΙΟC ΠΑΕΙ ΝΤΑ ΤΠΕ ΜΝ ΠΚΑΖ ΩΩΠΕ ΕΤΒΗΤΓ

12:1 The disciples said to Jesus: “We know that you will depart from us. Who (then) will rule over us?” 12:2 Jesus said to them: “Where you came from [read ‘Wherever you come from’],<sup>128</sup> you should go to James the Just for whose sake heaven and earth came into being.”

The fascinating feature of saying 12 is that it seems to send “mixed signals” to the audience of the Gospel of Thomas. Taken out of its Thomasine context, saying 12 would appear to contain a praise of James. Johannes Munck even went as far as to call Gos. Thom. 12 “the strongest description of the place of James in the Salvation story.”<sup>129</sup> Yet when we read saying 12 in its proper context, we realize that what Jesus says about James is in fact “both ironic and negative.”<sup>130</sup>

126 Maas 1958, 40.

127 See Skeat 2004; Robinson and Heil 1998, 2001; Robinson 2007.

128 For a discussion of the Greek *Vorlage* of this phrase, see appendix 1.

129 Munck 1959–1960, 106.

130 Valantasis 2000, 74.

Let us first approach saying 12 as an isolated text. The disciples ask Jesus who is going to be their leader after his departure: ΝΙΜ ΠΕ ΕΤΝΔΡ̄ ΝΟΣ ΕΡΡΑΪ ΕΧΩΝ, “Who will be the greatest over us?” Jesus seems to give a straightforward answer to this question by announcing the name of his successor: “wherever you come from” (i.e., regardless of your native land and the faith of you forefathers) it is James the Just, Ἰακώβος Πδικαῖος (the Greek *Vorlage* most certainly read Ἰάκωβος ὁ δίκαιος), to whom you should go. James’ epithet, ὁ δίκαιος (“the just/righteous one”), is well-attested in early Christian sources and is always used as an honorary epithet. It occurs already in Hegesippus, who claims that James has been called ὁ δίκαιος “since the time of the Lord” and that this epithet was given to him “because of his excessive righteousness” (Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 2.23.4 and 2.23.7; trans. R.J. Deferrari). Jesus also says that James the Just is the one “for whose sake (εἰ τῆν ἡτῆ) heaven and earth came into being.” This expression certainly refers to the exalted status of James and has numerous parallels. According to various early Jewish and early Christian sources, the world was created for the sake of Israel (As. Mos. 1.12; 4 Ezra 6.55, 59; 7.11), for the sake of the righteous (2 Bar. 14.19; 15.7; 21.24), or for the sake of the church (Herm. Vis. 1.1.6 [1:6]; Herm. Vis. 2.4.1 [8:1]).<sup>131</sup> To sum up, if we disregard the context of and read Gos. Thom. 12 as an isolated text, this saying appears to regard James in high esteem.

The situation changes drastically when we approach saying 12 as a part of the Gospel of Thomas. As Uro has pointed out, there is “a tension between the basic thrust of *Gos. Thom.* 12 and some central theological emphases of *Thomas* found elsewhere in the gospel.”<sup>132</sup> First of all, a need for leadership expressed by the disciples reveals their ignorance. As Antti Marjanen notes, the ultimate goal of spiritual progress, according to the Gospel of Thomas, is to become “masterless.”<sup>133</sup> Jesus exhorts people to become like him (see Gos. Thom. 108), not to follow him. In the saying that immediately follows Gos. Thom. 12, Jesus says to Thomas, the only disciple who has the full understanding of his teaching, “I am not your teacher/master (πῆκσαρ)” (Gos. Thom. 13:5), implying that he and Thomas are equals. Thus, the very premise of the question that the disciples ask Jesus in Gos. Thom. 12 is flawed, for it implies that Jesus is their leader and that, after he is gone, someone else must replace him. The disciples are unaware of the fact that Jesus expects them to be masterless. Saying 12, as it were, exposes their ignorance.<sup>134</sup>

131 This motif is also attested in the rabbinic sources; see Ginzberg 1909–1928, 5:67–68.

132 Uro 2003, 87.

133 See Marjanen 1998c, 90.

134 It is worth noting that the motif of the disciples’ ignorance is present throughout the Gospel of Thomas; see, e.g., sayings 18, 43, 51, 52, and 113.

Second, the words that Jesus says about James become much less flattering when we consider them against their Thomasine background. It turns out that there is nothing spectacular about the world that came into being for James' sake. As Uro has pointed out,<sup>135</sup> sayings 11 and 12 are connected by the catchword  $\pi\epsilon$ , "heaven." While, according to Gos. Thom. 12, heaven ( $\tau\pi\epsilon$ ) and earth came into being for the sake of James the Just, in the preceding saying Jesus says that "this heaven ( $\tau\epsilon\epsilon\iota\pi\epsilon$ ) will pass away, and the (heaven) above it will pass away" (Gos. Thom. 11:1). Saying 11 resonates with another saying: "The heavens and the earth will be rolled up in your presence" (Gos. Thom. 111:1). This latter saying, in turn, shares its anti-cosmic sentiment with Gos. Thom. 56 and 80, where Jesus claims that the one who recognizes the unworthiness of the world is worthier than the world itself.<sup>136</sup> Thus, the Thomasine sentiment toward the world, just as its sentiment toward leadership and authority, are hardly positive.

In sum, the context of Gos. Thom. 12:2 suggests that Jesus' description of James is not one of praise, but rather one of caustic irony.<sup>137</sup> While those who lack hermeneutical acumen would take this statement at its face value, an insightful reader would immediately recognize the disciples as ignorant and Jesus' reply to their inquiry for a successor replete with irony. To be sure, there is nothing great about this world and, therefore, nothing great about the man for whose sake this world came into being.

We can draw several conclusions from the "mixed signals" of Gos. Thom. 12. It seems reasonable to surmise that the Gospel of Thomas in its present form could not have been the original *Sitz im Leben* of saying 12. What, then, was its original *Sitz im Leben*? Ultimately, there are two possible answers. Saying 12 could have been part of the Gospel of Thomas from the very beginning, in which case it belongs to an early redactional layer of the text, to something that we might call a "Proto"-Gospel of Thomas.<sup>138</sup> Presumably, this "Proto"-Gospel of Thomas regarded James in high esteem; later, however, when the text obtained a new editorial layer, the attitude towards James changed drastically. Alternatively, saying 12 could have originated from a different source, one sympathetic to James, but that eventually made its way into the Gospel of Thomas.

Having sketched out the "conflicting evidence" and "mixed signals" in the Gospel of Thomas, I now turn to the hypotheses that might explain these phenomena. Two possible scenarios explain the compositional history of the Gospel of Thomas: either the text of the Gospel of Thomas was produced within

135 See Uro 2003, 86.

136 For a detailed discussion of these two sayings, see chapter 2.

137 Cf. Dunderberg 2006, 193.

138 Cf. Patterson 1993, 116–117.

a limited period of time, or the text was produced over a long period of time. The latter option was first suggested by R.McL. Wilson, who proposed that the text of the Gospel of Thomas grew “with the passing of time.”<sup>139</sup> Wilson was following in the footsteps of Henry Chadwick, who wrote on the Sentences of Sextus: “collections of this kind come to possess the qualities of a snowball.”<sup>140</sup> Similar ideas have recently been expressed by Hurtado who noted that “it may be inappropriate to think of a single act of composition,” since the Gospel of Thomas “may be the product of multiple redactions, or perhaps even a process of agglutination like a rolling snowball.”<sup>141</sup> From the standpoint of this “growing collection” hypothesis, saying 12 together with the Synoptic-resembling sayings that seem to be independent from the Synoptic tradition would probably belong to the earlier stages of the compositional history of the Gospel of Thomas, while the sayings that depend on the Synoptic gospels would be considered later additions.

The alternative to the “growing collection” hypothesis might be dubbed the “single-step composition” hypothesis. This hypothesis regards the Gospel of Thomas as the result of a single act of composition by a single author. Since, as we have seen, the bulk of Thomasine material has parallels in other early Christian texts and thus in most cases did not seem to originate with the Gospel of Thomas, the author of the Gospel of Thomas must have had access to multiple sources. From the standpoint of this “single-step composition” hypothesis, saying 12 would probably be seen as a borrowing from an unknown Jewish-Christian source and the Synoptic-resembling sayings as borrowings from the Synoptic gospels or the sources dependent upon them, as well as from the sources that were independent of the Synoptics.

It should be added that one can easily imagine a scenario that would combine certain elements of the two hypotheses: it is possible, for instance, that the Gospel of Thomas was, in fact, a product of a single act of composition, but that one of the sources utilized by its author was a growing collection like the Sentences of Sextus. The problem with all these hypothetical scenarios is that there seems to be no methodologically sound procedure that would allow us to make definitive conclusions with regard to the compositional history of the Gospel of Thomas. Whereas one of these hypotheses must be true, it seems impossible to determine which that one is.

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139 Wilson 1960, 231.

140 Chadwick 1959, 159.

141 Hurtado 2003, 453.

This being the case, it seems reasonable to focus on the version of the Gospel of Thomas that is attested by its extant textual witnesses. Certainly, both the Greek fragments of the Gospel of Thomas (P.Oxy. 1.1, P.Oxy. 4.654, and P.Oxy. 4.655) and the Greek *Vorlage* of the Coptic Gospel of Thomas from NHC II go back to a common prototype. From this point onward, it is this textual prototype that I call the Gospel of Thomas.

There seems to be no reason to discard any of these four witnesses to the text of the Gospel of Thomas as unreliable, since there is clearly a general agreement between the Greek fragments and the Coptic version, both in the form of the individual sayings and in their sequence.<sup>142</sup> While the disagreements between our witnesses indicate that occasionally at least one witness deviates from its prototype, these disagreements are minor, suggesting that the transmission of the text of the Gospel of Thomas was relatively stable and that our textual witnesses are more or less trustworthy.

I would like to underline the fact that it is the *Vorlage* of the Coptic version that is to be considered a witness to the text of the Gospel of Thomas, since the Coptic text as it stands quite often does not make good sense and appears to be either a clumsy or even erroneous rendering of the Greek original.<sup>143</sup> It is also clear that in certain instances the text became corrupt after its translation into Coptic: for instance, the Coptic version of Gos. Thom. 6:4 reads ἄπεντο εβολ ἡττε, “in the sight of heaven,” while the Greek text according to P.Oxy. 4.654, ll. 9–10 reads [ἐνώπιον τῆ]ς ἀληθ[ε]ίας, “in the sight of truth.” It is plausible that, as was suggested already by the first editors of the Gospel of Thomas,<sup>144</sup> the former reading came about because the copyist mistook με, “truth,” for πτε, “heaven.” Thus, the *Vorlage* of the Coptic version agrees with P.Oxy. 4.654 and appears to be a faithful witness to the text of Gos. Thom. 6:4. It is possible, therefore, that in some cases the Coptic version deviates from its textual prototype, while its Greek *Vorlage*, if reconstructed properly, accurately reproduces the text of the Gospel of Thomas.

It might be tempting to suppose that the readings of the Oxyrhynchus fragments have priority over those of NHC II by default, since the Coptic Gospel of Thomas is a translation and since NHC II postdates all three of the Greek fragments. Indeed, there are several instances of disagreement between the Coptic text and the Greek fragments where the reading of an Oxyrhynchus fragment

142 Cf. Kloppenborg 2014, 207.

143 For a clumsy translation of the original Greek text, see the discussion of saying 12 in appendix 1; for an erroneous one, see the discussion of Gos. Thom. 7:2 in chapter 7.

144 See Guillaumont et al. 1959, 4.

is to be considered original and the reading of NHC II secondary.<sup>145</sup> Yet there is at least one saying, Gos. Thom. 5, which appears to be a case where NHC II has priority over an Oxyrhynchus fragment.<sup>146</sup> It is fairly clear, therefore, that in order to establish the original text of the Gospel of Thomas, we must approach each saying individually.

Unfortunately, the portions of the Greek text preserved by the Oxyrhynchus fragments are relatively small, so in the cases where a saying is attested only by NHC II, we must rely on rational conjecture and parallels from other sources when available.<sup>147</sup> I must add that there is no need to lose heart or to become hypercritical in the instances wherein NHC II is the only witness to a Thomasine saying; as I have already pointed out, the general agreement between the Oxyrhynchus fragments and the *Vorlage* of the Coptic version suggests that the latter appears to be a reliable witness to the text of the Gospel of Thomas. The fact that, at least in one instance, the reading of the Coptic version is prior to the parallel reading of a Greek fragment also supports the trustworthiness of the Coptic Gospel of Thomas.

To conclude the discussion of the date of the Gospel of Thomas and to sum up the results, if the Gospel of Thomas is to be understood as the prototype of both NHC II and the three Oxyrhynchus fragments, then the most reliable *terminus ante quem* appears to be the date of the earliest textual witness; as I have pointed out above (p. 28), the earliest witness to the text of the Gospel of Thomas is P.Oxy. 1.1, commonly dated to the early third century CE. As for the *terminus a quo*, since some of the Thomasine sayings are dependent on the Synoptic gospels, the Gospel of Thomas must postdate the Synoptics. Thus the *terminus a quo* of the Gospel of Thomas is the end of the first century.

The following argument proposed by Ismo Dunderberg also supports the claim that the Gospel of Thomas is post-Synoptic: it is evident that, while the Synoptic gospels are anonymous compositions,<sup>148</sup> the Gospel of Thomas, like the Gospel of John, is a pseudonymous one. As Dunderberg points out, both of these two texts are attributed to the disciples of Jesus (Thomas and the Beloved Disciple, respectively) in order to authenticate their contents. This phenomenon is known generally as “authorial fiction”<sup>149</sup> and is most likely to be

145 See, e.g., the discussion of the saying about splitting wood and lifting stones in chapter 2.

146 For a discussion of saying 5, see appendix 2.

147 For an example of rational conjecture, see the discussion of Gos. Thom. 12:2 in appendix 1; for an emendation based on the testimony of an independent witness to a saying, see the discussion of Gos. Thom. 7:2 in chapter 7.

148 See, e.g., Aland 1961, 41–42; Sanders and Davies 1996, 13–15; Brown 1997, 585.

149 Dunderberg borrows this term from Kloppenborg 1987, 274–275.

explained by the fact that the Gospel of Thomas and the Gospel of John needed to gain advantage over competing Jesus traditions. The Synoptic gospels do not seem to be affected by this struggle for authentication and thus belong to an earlier historical period. I cite the following passage in full, since it conveniently summarizes Dunderberg's findings:

My conclusions on the relationship between the Gospel of John and the *Gospel of Thomas* lend support to the view that neither of these gospels, at least in their extant forms, can be dated very early in the first century CE. The way authenticating figures are presented in these gospels connects them with Christian writings that are later than the earliest gospels, in which such ascriptions are missing. However, in John and *Thomas* authorial fiction took less concrete forms than in some other early Christian writings. This indicates that they still stood at the threshold of this development, which gradually led to the increasingly detailed authentication of early Christian pseudepigraphical texts.<sup>150</sup>

Thus, the composition of the Gospel of Thomas should be located somewhere between the late first and early third centuries CE. Admittedly, many might find this conclusion rather disappointing, but it does not seem possible to arrive at a more precise date. Moreover, this conclusion seems to suffice for the purposes of the present book.

The proposed date of the Gospel of Thomas makes this text roughly contemporary with the wide range of Greco-Roman intellectuals and philosophical schools. Moreover, the Gospel of Thomas was written in Greek, the main language of the philosophical enterprise in the ancient world. Hence, there seems to be no reason to deny the possibility of the influence of the philosophical traditions on the Gospel of Thomas. The goal of this book is, then, to demonstrate that such an influence was not only possible, but in fact very likely. It should be noted, however, that to some extent the interaction between the Gospel of Thomas and philosophy has already been discussed in scholarly literature. The following section offers a short survey of this avenue of research.

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150 Dunderberg 2006, 204.



## The Gospel of Thomas and Philosophy: A History of Research

While the Gospel of Thomas has never ceased to attract scholarly attention, and the academic publications on this early Christian text number in the thousands, there are very few studies related to the topic of the Gospel of Thomas and philosophy. This being the case, the following survey of research will be relatively short.

Four schools of ancient philosophy have been taken into account by the scholars of the Gospel of Thomas: Pythagoreanism, Cynicism, Stoicism, and Platonism. The affinities between the Gospel of Thomas and Pythagoreanism were outlined by John S. Kloppenborg in 1987. According to him, the Gospel of Thomas requires a type of hermeneutic similar to that of the Pythagorean σύμβολα and ἀκούσματα (see Diogenes Laertius, *Vit. philos.* 8.17; Porphyry, *Vit. Pyth.* 42). The Pythagorean sayings, as Kloppenborg points out, “were formulated in a deliberately obscure fashion in order to prevent outsiders from understanding”;<sup>151</sup> just like the Thomasine sayings, they “require interpretation in order to become efficacious.”<sup>152</sup>

That the Gospel of Thomas demands the same sort of hermeneutic is evident from its incipit: “Whoever finds the meaning (ἑρμηνεία) of these words will not taste death.” The refrain “Whoever has ears to hear should hear” (sayings 8, 21, 24, 63, 65, and 96) repeatedly reminds the reader of the importance of interpretation. Kloppenborg describes the hermeneutical procedure presupposed by the Thomasine and Pythagorean sayings as a process of “sapiential research.”<sup>153</sup> While Kloppenborg’s insights into the intended use of the Gospel of Thomas as sayings collection are certainly of great value, it is worth noting that the parallels he draws between the Thomasine and Pythagorean sayings are meant to expose their typological similarity and are not to be regarded as evidence of the Pythagorean influence on the Gospel of Thomas.

A case for affinities between Cynicism and Gos. Thom. 36 and 78 was presented by Stephen J. Patterson in 1993. Patterson understands saying 36 as an advice to the itinerant beggars “not to give much thought to dressing fashionably.”<sup>154</sup> Consequently, he argues, this saying contains “common secular wisdom promoting a position familiar especially in Cynic circles,” supporting

151 Kloppenborg 1987, 304–305.

152 Ibid., 301.

153 See Kloppenborg 1987, 305; cf. Kloppenborg 2014, 230.

154 Patterson 1993, 139.

this thesis with references to the Cynic epistles (Pseudo-Diogenes, *Ep.* 7 and 32; Pseudo-Crates, *Ep.* 9 and 30) and Seneca's testimony for Demetrius (*Ep.* 20.9).<sup>155</sup>

Patterson detects similar affinities with Cynicism in saying 78, wherein Jesus contests the conventional wisdom that clothes make the man: "Why did you go out to the countryside? To see a reed shaken by the wind, and to see a man dressed in soft clothing [like your] kings and your persons of rank? They are the ones dressed in soft clothing and they will not be able to recognize the truth." Patterson believes that this saying has "a sharp political edge"<sup>156</sup> and "reminds one of the sort of witty criticism of kingship heard among Cynics of the period, which tended to earn them the ire of the emperor and periodic expulsion from Rome";<sup>157</sup> the parallel passages listed by Patterson include Pseudo-Crates, *Ep.* 23, and testimonies for Socrates (Diogenes Laertius, *Vit. philos.* 2.25), Diogenes (Epictetus, *Diss.* 1.24.7), Demonax (Lucian, *Demon.* 41), and Peregrinus (Lucian, *Peregr.* 18).

The affinities between the Gospel of Thomas and Cynicism detected by Patterson, however, are rather isolated and hardly warrant speculation about the Cynic influence on the Gospel of Thomas. Quite remarkably, John W. Marshall, the only scholar who went to the trouble of bringing the Gospel of Thomas into the discussion of the historical Jesus as a Cynic, did not list Gos. Thom. 36 and 78 among the sayings that suggest practices resembling those advocated by Cynics.<sup>158</sup> It is likely, therefore, that the similarities between these two sayings and Cynicism should be explained instead by the widespread ethos shared by various contemporary groups and individuals.

Even so, drawing an analogy between Thomasine theology and Cynic traditions may still be a worthwhile enterprise in that it would bring new insights and prevent us from making certain far-reaching conclusions. As Risto Uro has pointed out, the ethical radicalism that places the Gospel of Thomas in close quarters with the Cynic tradition does not necessarily point to the fact that the Gospel of Thomas was a product of the tradition of wandering charismatics. Cynic traditions of ethical radicalism were often transmitted "in circumstances that were neither 'extreme' nor 'on the fringe of society.'"<sup>159</sup> Similarly, the radical overtones of sayings 36 and 78 may have nothing to do with the social reality behind the Gospel of Thomas.

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155 Ibid., 76.

156 Ibid., 150.

157 Ibid., 237.

158 See Marshall 1997, 56–57.

159 Uro 2006, 28.

An important landmark in the history of research on the Gospel of Thomas and Greco-Roman philosophy is the collection of essays by Uro published in 2003. In this work, Uro acknowledges the Platonizing tendencies in the Gospel of Thomas: he speaks of “the general Platonic flavour of the gospel”<sup>160</sup> and admits that the Gospel of Thomas contains “a Platonic cosmology”<sup>161</sup> and “Platonic-Christian ideas about immortality and afterlife.”<sup>162</sup> Uro’s main concern, however, is the ideological affinities between the Gospel of Thomas and Stoicism. According to Uro, the Stoic “understanding of the body and the world comes surprisingly close to that expressed in *Thomas*.”<sup>163</sup> Uro argues that these affinities are present in sayings 56 and 80. According to these two sayings, the world is not worthy of those individuals who realize that it is a body (σῶμα) and a corpse (πτῶμα). In Uro’s view, while the idea that the world is a body was accepted by various schools, the Gospel of Thomas is remarkably similar specifically to Stoicism, since “Stoic philosophers could teach their students to regard their bodies as if they were dead.”<sup>164</sup> With these parallels in mind, Uro points out that from the Stoic point of view the body belongs to the realm of the “indifferents” (τὰ ἀδιάφορα = indifferentia), or “middle things” (τὰ μέσα = media), arguing that it is possible to read sayings 56 and 80 “as expressing *indifference*, rather than strong hostility with respect to the outside world” and that the metaphor of “the world as a corpse” could encourage “moderate or internalized detachment and not necessarily extreme asceticism.”<sup>165</sup>

Uro’s line of argument is nuanced and avoids any sweeping generalizations. He does not claim that Stoicism influenced the Gospel of Thomas in general or sayings 56 and 80 in particular; rather, he seems to argue that a Stoic-minded reader would have recognized the affinities between sayings 56 and 80 and certain Stoic concepts (i.e., that the world is a body and that bodies are corpses), interpreting these two sayings from a Stoic perspective. While we have no knowledge of the ancient Stoic-minded readers of the Gospel of Thomas, which means that Uro’s proposal is ultimately a thought experiment, it is certainly an important contribution to the overall discussion of the ancient readership of the Gospel of Thomas.

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160 Uro 2003, 63.

161 Ibid., 46.

162 Ibid., 70.

163 Ibid., 6.

164 Ibid., 69.

165 Ibid., 69–70.

I believe that Uro's argument nevertheless requires certain modifications. It is far from obvious that the parallels between Stoic and Thomasine ideas on the body and the world are "surprisingly close." Moreover, even if the hypothetical Stoic-minded readers of Gos. Thom. 56 and 80 had recognized the similarities between these sayings and the Stoic tradition, they also would also have had to detect the fundamental difference between Thomasine theology and Stoicism. Whereas the Gospel of Thomas proclaims that the world is a corpse and that it is inferior to individuals who possess the true understanding of its nature, Stoics believed that the world was a living being and that nothing was superior to it, a view that goes back to Zeno:

Again, Zeno says: "The rational is superior to the non-rational. But nothing is superior to the world. Therefore the world is rational (λογικός). And similarly with 'intelligent' and 'participating in animation.' For the intelligent is superior to the non-intelligent, and the animate to the non-animate. But nothing is superior to the world. Therefore the world is intelligent (νοερός) and animate (ἔμψυχός)."166

This understanding of the world is attested throughout the history of Stoicism; Diogenes Laertius informs us that, according to several major Stoic teachers, "the world is a living being, rational, animate and intelligent (καὶ ζῶον ὁ κόσμος καὶ λογικὸν καὶ ἔμψυχον καὶ νοερόν)" (*Vit. philos.* 7.142 = *SVF* 2.633 = Posidonius, fr. 99a Edelstein & Kidd; trans. R.D. Hicks). Thus any Stoic-minded reader of Gos. Thom. 56 and 80 would most certainly see these sayings as alien to and incompatible with Stoicism. A Stoic reading of these sayings thus seems to be an exercise in vain, for, in order to interpret them from a Stoic perspective, one would need to ignore their main thrust, which is essentially anti-Stoic.<sup>167</sup>

Thus, Uro's Stoic reading of Gos. Thom. 56 and 80 is problematic. Is it possible, then, to adopt a different strategy and argue that the understanding of body and world in these sayings is in some way indebted to the Stoic tradition? This option is also unlikely. It seems that the Gospel of Thomas is unaware of any specifically Stoic ideas. In fact, whenever there is an ideological affinity between the Gospel of Thomas and Stoicism, a similar concept is also attested in contemporary Platonist tradition. Sayings 56 and 80 illustrate this rule. Included in these sayings are notions attested in both Platonist and Stoic

166 Sextus Empiricus, *Math.* 9.104 (= *SVF* 1.111), trans. A.A. Long and D.N. Sedley.

167 In chapter 2, I suggest that sayings 56 and 80 should be understood as polemical attacks against the Greco-Roman reverence for the world.

sources (viz., that bodies are corpses and that the world is a body), but neither they nor any other Thomasine sayings betray any knowledge of the distinctively Stoic doctrine of the three classes of existing things. Were one to conjecture that sayings 56 and 80 presuppose the Stoic theory of three classes of existing things and the concept of τὰ ἀδιάφορα,<sup>168</sup> thus regarding the world as one of the “indifferents,” he or she would need to read the concept of τὰ ἀδιάφορα into the Gospel of Thomas, for the text of the Gospel of Thomas itself does not corroborate such an interpretation. Moreover, while the notion that bodies are corpses was widely attested among the Middle Platonists roughly contemporary with the Gospel of Thomas, it was not especially popular among Stoics. The only two Stoic authors, in fact, who mention this notion are Epictetus (*Diss.* 1.19.9; 2.19.27; 3.10.15; 3.22.41) and Marcus Aurelius (*Medit.* 4.41; 9.24), and even then the latter author explicitly states that he borrows the notion from the former author. It is quite possible that Epictetus appropriated this notion from contemporary Platonists, which means that unless we postulate that the Gospel of Thomas depends on Epictetus, Stoic influence on the Gospel of Thomas is unlikely.

If the notions that bodies are corpses and that the world is a body in sayings 56 and 80 are not due to the Stoic influence, then where do they come from? In chapter 2, I demonstrate that whereas the latter notion was common knowledge in the ancient world, the former in all likelihood derives from Platonist tradition. First, this hypothesis does not compel us to impose upon the text of the Gospel of Thomas any concepts that are foreign to it. Second, the notion that the human body is a corpse seems to have emerged from Platonist circles and, as I have already pointed out, is widely attested among Middle Platonists. Finally, throughout this book I will argue that various Thomasine sayings allude to and make use of certain Platonist motifs and concepts. It seems reasonable, therefore, to surmise that it was the Platonist tradition that bore sway over sayings 56 and 80.

In sum, the relationship of the Gospel of Thomas and Stoicism does not seem to be the most promising avenue of research. While it is impossible to prove that the Gospel of Thomas was not read by Stoic-minded individuals or that some Thomasine sayings could not have been interpreted from the Stoic perspective, it nevertheless seems that the text of the Gospel of Thomas neither presupposes nor invites such an interpretation; if anything, it actively resists Stoic reading. In other words, a Stoic reading of the Gospel of Thomas does not seem to have any particular advantage over an Epicurean reading of the

168 See SVF 1.190 (= SVF 3.70 = Stobaeus, *Anth.* 2.7.5a): τῶν δ' ὄντων τὰ μὲν ἀγαθὰ, τὰ δὲ κακὰ, τὰ δὲ ἀδιάφορα; see also SVF 1.191–196; 3.71; 3.117.

Gospel of Thomas nor, for instance, that from the perspective of an Isis worshipper. Similarly, there seems to be no reason to think that sayings 56 and 80 presuppose certain Stoic concepts; in fact, there are several considerations against it. On the other hand, a Platonist background of these sayings is very likely.

This finally brings me to the discussion of the interactions between the Gospel of Thomas and Platonism. The first scholar to take these interactions seriously was Howard M. Jackson. In his doctoral dissertation, defended in 1983 and published as a monograph in 1985,<sup>169</sup> Jackson draws upon Plato's famous metaphor illustrating the three components of the human soul (*Resp.* 588b–592b) to illuminate Gos. Thom. 7, an obscure saying about a man and a lion. Although Jackson's train of thought was not impeccable (for instance, he was not aware of the fact that the lion saying is attested in Didymus the Blind, which gives enough ground to conclude that the Coptic text of Gos. Thom. 7 is an erroneous rendering of its Greek *Vorlage*), it certainly provided a fine example of the research on the affinities between the Gospel of Thomas and Platonism.<sup>170</sup>

Jackson's line of thinking has recently been taken up by Patterson, who, in his programmatic essay "Jesus Meets Plato: The Theology of the *Gospel of Thomas* and Middle Platonism,"<sup>171</sup> offers a survey of previous attempts to define the theological profile of the Gospel of Thomas. As Patterson points out, the efforts to understand the Gospel of Thomas as a "Gnostic" text were fruitless;<sup>172</sup> in fact, the very concept of "Gnosticism" has been rightly problematized in recent years.<sup>173</sup> Several proposals have been made to understand the Gospel of Thomas as an ascetic or mystical text. While it may be true to some degree that the Gospel of Thomas is ascetic and/or mystical, it is important to keep in mind that asceticism and mysticism "were ancillary to any number of theological orientations and ancient schools of thought."<sup>174</sup> What previous scholarship, including Patterson himself, failed to notice was the fact that there are certain

169 See Jackson 1985.

170 For a detailed discussion of Jackson's interpretation of Gos. Thom. 7, see chapter 7.

171 See Patterson 2013, 33–59; originally published as Patterson 2008.

172 This has been demonstrated, e.g., in DeConick 1996, 3–27; Marjanen 1998a; Uro 2003, 31–53.

173 See Williams 1996, 2005; King 2003. It is worth noting that the term "Gnosticism" was coined in the seventeenth century by the Cambridge Platonist Henry More in the context of Protestant polemics against Roman Catholicism; see Layton 1995, 348–349. For a defense of "Gnosticism" as a heuristic category, see Marjanen 2008, 203–211.

174 Patterson 2013, 34–35.

distinctively Platonist ideas in the Gospel of Thomas that allow us to locate this text confidently “in the Middle Platonic conversation, which found many diverse participants in the first two centuries of the common era.”<sup>175</sup>

In his relatively short article, Patterson manages to discuss the possible Platonist background of a wide range of Thomasine sayings. Quite naturally, my interpretation of a particular saying does not always agree with that of Patterson,<sup>176</sup> but his main conclusion, that the Gospel of Thomas “works with one of the dominant religious and philosophical schools of its day, Middle Platonism,”<sup>177</sup> is extremely compelling. This new perspective on the Gospel of Thomas seems to provide the academic community with a welcome opportunity to gain deeper insight into the elusive theology of this text.

It is worth noting that Patterson’s article is not itself a comprehensive study of the Platonizing tendencies in the Gospel of Thomas; rather, it is an invitation to explore a new and exciting avenue of research. I accept this invitation by developing Patterson’s hypothesis in the following chapters of this book: chapters 2 and 3 deal with how the Gospel of Thomas and the Platonists discourse on the universe and human nature; chapters 4, 5, 6, and 7 discuss Thomasine and Platonist views on ultimate reality and human perfection; chapter 8 analyzes the Platonist influence on the Thomasine understanding of salvation history.

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175 Ibid., 37.

176 In chapter 3, for example, I express doubts over Patterson’s suggestion that the Thomasine notion of “spirit” (πνεῦμα) is identical to the Platonist notion of “mind” (νοῦς).

177 Patterson 2013, 59.

## The Gospel of Thomas and the Platonists on the World

Together with the following chapter, chapter 2 deals with the key anthropological categories of antiquity, *σῶμα* and *ψυχή*, and the way they are treated in the Gospel of Thomas. It is worth noting that an interpreter working with the sayings discussed in these two chapters probably would not face challenges comparable to those pertaining to some of the sayings discussed later. Unlike, for instance, Gos. Thom. 83 and 84, these sayings seem to have been comprehensible even to philosophically illiterate readers. However, with regard to these sayings, the Platonist tradition, at the very least, offers a heuristic value—viz., it offers contextual material which allows us to make sense of some of the peculiar notions in the Gospel of Thomas. Moreover, taken together with the arguments presented in the later chapters, the parallels offered here contribute to the cumulative case for the impact of Platonist metaphysics on the Gospel of Thomas.

In this chapter, I discuss the Thomasine views on the world as a body and on bodily existence in general. My focus will be on sayings 56 and 80. As I will try to demonstrate, these two sayings draw their inspiration, on the one hand, from the fount of Platonist wisdom, yet, on the other hand, they may be regarded as pessimistic Thomasine rejoinders to an optimistic Stoic-Platonist attitude towards the visible universe. I will also ascertain whether the message of sayings 56 and 80 is consistent with Thomasine soteriology.

### The Text of Sayings 56 and 80

Since sayings 56 and 80 are strikingly similar, the first question I address is whether they should be considered identical. I then turn to the discussion of their Platonist background and their connection with other Thomasine sayings. Finally, I will consider the polemical overtones of the two sayings.



56:1 πεχε ιϛ χε πενταρσογων <sup>1</sup> πκοσμος αφρε ευπτωμα	80:1 πεχε ιϛ χε πενταρσογων πκοσμος αφρε επσωμα
56:2 αγω πενταρρε ε(γ)πτωμα <sup>2</sup> πκοσμος ἡπφα ἡμοϗ αν	80:2 πενταρρε δε επσωμα πκοσμος ἡπφα ἡμοϗ αν
56:1 Jesus said: “Whoever has come to know the world has found a corpse. 56:2 And whoever has found (a) corpse, of him the world is not worthy.”	80:1 Jesus said: “Whoever has come to know the world has found the body. 80:2 But whoever has found the body, of him the world is not worthy.”

The structure of both sayings is clearly chiasmic: world—corpse (body) / corpse (body)—world. The expression “of him the world is not worthy” (πκοσμος ἡπφα ἡμοϗ αν) parallels “of whom the world was not worthy” (ὧν οὐκ ἦν ἄξιος ὁ κόσμος) of Heb 11:38.<sup>3</sup> As Harold W. Attridge points out, its phrasing follows the established proverbial pattern—see, e.g., Prov 8:11 LXX (nothing precious is worthy of wisdom) and Matt 10:37 (he who is too attached to his family is not worthy of Jesus; cf. Gos. Thom. 55).<sup>4</sup>

The point of both sayings is the same: the one who recognizes the unworthiness of the world is worthier than the world itself. Similar sentiments are attested not only in Heb 11:38 (cf. Heb 11:7), but also in the wide range of early Jewish and early Christian documents.<sup>5</sup>

1 In ΝΗC Π εταρ is used interchangeably with ενταρ/ἡταρ; “ετα” in Layton 1989, 1:10 (§12), is incorrect and should be corrected to “εταρ.” Cf. Nagel 1969, 448, and Funk 1984, 111.

2 I accept the emendation suggested by the *editio princeps* (see Guillaumont et al. 1959, 30; cf. Nagel 2014, 134). Layton 1989, 1:74, attempts to remain faithful to the reading of ΝΗC Π: πενταρρεε απτωμα. To explain the form ρεε, Layton refers to Polotsky 1957, 348–349, where Polotsky describes the reduplication of the last vowel of a monosyllabic word if the word stands before a copular pronoun. This phenomenon has nothing to do with Gos. Thom. 56:2, since ρεε here is not followed by a copular pronoun. Admittedly, the form ρεε, along with the form ρνε, is attested in Sahidic as a variant spelling of ρε (see Crum 1939, 637a–638b; the form ρεε is also attested in P. Bodmer VI, the sole witness to dialect P). The problem, however, is with the fact that the form ρεε is not attested elsewhere in ΝΗC Π. The anarthrous πτωμα in Gos. Thom. 56:2 is also problematic, especially since in Gos. Thom. 56:1 πτωμα has an indefinite article. The emendation of α to γ seems to be the most logical way to solve both problems.

3 As noted in Marjanen 1998a, 127.

4 Attridge 1989b, 351.

5 See, e.g., the texts referred to in BDAG, s.v. “κόσμος,” 7.b.

The first matter that deserves discussion is whether the two sayings are identical in their meaning and whether the terms ΠΤΩΜΑ and ΣΩΜΑ are synonyms. In his seminal work on the doublets in the Gospel of Thomas, Jón Ma. Ásgeirsson answered these questions affirmatively. According to Ásgeirsson, unlike the other Thomasinic doublets, the doublet that constitute sayings 56 and 80 is recitational—i.e., the two sayings are “practically identical except for the commonly interchangeable concepts for ‘body’ and ‘corpse’ and less relevant variations in expression and/or vocabulary.”<sup>6</sup>

Ásgeirsson’s claim is most probably correct with regard to the Coptic text of the Gospel of Thomas. The translators who produced the Sahidic New Testament probably did not see any difference between these two words: as Antti Marjanen points out,<sup>7</sup> in the Sahidic New Testament, the Greek word πτώμα is most often rendered with the Greek loan-word ΣΩΜΑ.<sup>8</sup> Another important example comes from the study by W.A. Girgis. While the word ΠΤΩΜΑ never occurs in the Sahidic New Testament,<sup>9</sup> the translator of the book of Judges decided to retain it, but also found it necessary to explain with the word ΣΩΜΑ, “which was more familiar.”<sup>10</sup> Hence, he translated ἐξέκλινεν ἰδεῖν τὸ πτώμα τοῦ λέοντος (“he turned aside to see the carcass of the lion”) as αϣῤῥακτϥ εἰναϥ εἰπε-πῤῥωμα ἡ εἰπσωμα μῑμμοϥῑ (“he turned aside to see the carcass, or the body, of the lion”) (Judg 14:8).<sup>11</sup> These examples demonstrate that those who translated, copied, and read the Coptic text of the Gospel of Thomas most probably did not see any difference between sayings 56 and 80.

I am inclined, however, to think that, in the Greek *Vorlage* of the Gospel of Thomas, the two sayings did not simply reiterate, but rather resonated with and supplemented each other. Even though it is clear that the word σώμα can refer to a *dead* body,<sup>12</sup> I would like to argue that the difference between

6 Ásgeirsson 1997, 78–79.

7 Marjanen 1998a, 126.

8 At least four times: Matt 24:28; Mark 6:29; Rev 11:8, 9. See Lefort 1950, 291–295. The two other instances, Matt 14:12 and Mk 15:45, are uncertain, since πτώμα might have been replaced by σώμα already in the Greek *Vorlagen* of the Coptic translations, as was the case, for instance, with the Majority Text (see the apparatus to NA<sup>28</sup>, ad loc.). The only passage that does not render πτώμα with ΣΩΜΑ is Rev 11:9, where πτώμα occurs twice and in the first instance is rendered as ϣωτῃ̄.

9 Draguet 1960, 152.

10 Girgis 1963–1964, 71.

11 Sahidic text from Thompson 1911, 215.

12 See LSJ, s.v. “σώμα.”

these two sayings goes beyond stylistic variation. The fact that Gos. Thom. 80 uses the word *σῶμα* is significant.

Perhaps it could be conjectured that *ϥΩΜΑ* in Gos. Thom. 80 renders *πτῶμα* of the Greek *Vorlage*, as it does in the Sahidic New Testament. This would mean that the Coptic translator was inconsistent, since he forgot to dispose of *πρωμα* not only in Gos. Thom. 56, but also in Gos. Thom. 60. It is, however, difficult to believe that the translator was that careless. As Simon Gathercole points out, a comparison of the Coptic text of the Gospel of Thomas with P.Oxy. 1.1, P.Oxy. 4.654, and P.Oxy. 4.655 shows that in almost every case where a Greek loan-word is used in the Coptic text, the same word is also used in the Greek fragments.<sup>13</sup> Therefore, there is no reason to suspect that the Greek loan-words used in the Coptic translation of the sayings that did not survive in Greek are different from the words that were used in the Greek *Vorlage*.

### The World as a Body and as a Corpse

According to Gos. Thom. 80, the world is wretched, because it is a body. While the conclusion of this statement would probably sound unusual for an ancient philosopher, its premise was universally acknowledged. Both the Platonists and the Stoics claimed that the world is a body, *ὁ κόσμος σῶμά ἐστιν* (Sextus Empiricus, *Math.* 9.79 = *SVF* 2.1013).<sup>14</sup> This idea appears for the first time in Plato's dialogues. According to *Phileb.* 29e, the world is a body. It is, however, not just a body; since it is in every respect better than our body, it is what produces our bodies, and since our bodies have souls, it must be animated (30a). The same

13 See Gathercole 2012, 106–108. The only exceptions are the instances where different conjunctions are used (*ἀλλὰ* instead of *καί* in Gos. Thom. 3:3; *οὐδέ* instead of iterated *οὔτε* in Gos. Thom. 32) and where the translator uses a cognate word (*εἶρε ἡπικαμβατον ἡκαμβατον* instead of *σαββατίζω τὸ σάββατον* in Gos. Thom. 27:2; *ῥ̅θεραπεγε* instead of *ποιέω θεραπείας* in Gos. Thom. 31:2). Gos. Thom. 30:2 is a special case: the Greek loan-word *η* has no parallel in the Greek version of the saying. As Wilfried Eisele convincingly argues, the Coptic version of the saying witnesses a later attempt to harmonize the saying with Matt 18:20 (cf. *κηγ η* in Gos. Thom. 30:2 and *δύο ἦ* in Matt 18:20). See Eisele 2010, 158–159 and 171.

14 See also *SVF* 2.550 (= Plutarch, *Stoic. rep.* 1054e–f): according to Chrysippus, “the universe is a perfect body (*τέλεον μὲν ὁ κόσμος σῶμά ἐστιν*) whereas the parts of the universe are not perfect, since their existence is not independent, but is their particular relation to the whole” (trans. H. Cherniss); cf. Philo, *Plant.* 7: the world “is the largest of material bodies (*τὸ μέγιστον σωμάτων ἐστὶ*), and holds in its bosom as parts of itself a mass of other material bodies” (trans. F.H. Colson and G.H. Whitaker).

holds true for a similar account in *Timaeus*. The universe, which is sometimes called “heaven” (οὐρανός), sometimes “world” (κόσμος), is visible (ὄρατός), tangible (ἄπτός), and corporeal (σῶμα ἔχων) (28b). Yet the world also has its invisible constituent: God put soul in body and reason in soul (νοῦς μὲν ἐν ψυχῇ, ψυχὴ δ’ ἐν σῶματι), thus making the world “an animated and intelligent living being” (ζῶον ἔμψυχον ἔννοον) (30b).<sup>15</sup> In Middle Platonism the idea that the world has two constituents, a body and a soul, became a common assumption:<sup>16</sup>

There are two constituent parts of the universe, body and soul.<sup>17</sup>

The components out of which the world is put together are two, to wit, body and soul, of which the former is visible and tangible, while the latter is invisible and intangible, and each of them possesses a different power and constitution.<sup>18</sup>

Thus, a philosophically-minded ancient reader of Gos. Thom. 80 would definitely agree with the first part of the saying: it was beyond dispute that the world was (or had) a body. On the other hand, he or she would most probably find its second part confusing. Why would the world having a body lead to the conclusion that the world is wretched?

The answer is given in saying 56: the world is wretched, because it is a corpse, a *dead* body. While the Gospel of Thomas agrees with the Platonists that the world is a body, it additionally claims that the world is *nothing but* a body. In other words, the world has no soul. It is not a living being; it is a dead thing. The one who understands the true nature of the world understands that, unlike this lifeless world, he or she has a soul and hence is a living being. It is this understanding that makes him or her worthier than the world.

15 The view that the world was a living being was later embraced by the Stoics; see *SVF* 2.528; 2.633–645.

16 Cf. Varro, *Ant. fr.* 226 Cardauns (= Augustine, *Civ.* 7.6): “God is the soul of the world, which the Greeks call κόσμος, and this world itself is God. But, he says, just as a wise man, though formed of body and soul, is nonetheless called wise by virtue of his soul, so the world is called God by virtue of its soul, even though it too consists of soul and body” (trans. R.W. Dyson, slightly altered). For the Stoic background to this passage, see Cardauns 1976, 2:226.

17 Plutarch, *Plat. quaest.* 1001b, trans. H. Cherniss.

18 Alcinous, *Didasc.* 13.1, trans. J.M. Dillon.

## Bodies are Corpses

As I have tried to demonstrate, whereas at the Coptic stage of the transmission of the text of the Gospel of Thomas, sayings 56 and 80 were probably considered identical, at the Greek stage, they probably were not. While Gos. Thom. 80 argues that the world is worthless by referring to the *locus communis* that the world is a body, Gos. Thom. 56 spells out the reason why it is a bad thing that the world is a body: it is so because it is a corpse, a dead body. The Gospel of Thomas seems thereby to allude to the Platonist notion that bodies are nothing but corpses.

It appears that, in sayings 56 and 80, the Gospel of Thomas intends to engage in a debate with the Platonist tradition: it agrees with the Platonists that the world is a body, but, unlike Platonists, it does not feel any reverence for the world. Quite to the contrary, the Gospel of Thomas uses the Platonist metaphor to argue that, due to the very fact that the world is a body, it should be despised. Perhaps in doing so, the Gospel of Thomas even wants to correct its teachers (being, in a way, a better Platonist than Plato): if we all agree that the world is a body, why don't you treat it with contempt, like I do?

In what follows, I offer an overview of the use of the notion that bodies are corpses in ancient philosophical and religious literature. The purpose of this survey is to demonstrate that this notion was not only quite popular, but also as a general rule occurred in Platonist and Platonizing sources.<sup>19</sup>

Notably, this notion never occurs in Plato's dialogues. It is quite likely, however, that without Plato it would never come into existence. Its closest parallel is the  $\sigma\omega\mu\alpha$ - $\sigma\eta\mu\alpha$  formula, which is either explicitly mentioned or alluded to three times in Plato's dialogues—viz., *Crat.* 400c, *Gorg.* 493a, and *Phaedr.* 250c.

It should be noted that Plato appears to be the earliest witness of the  $\sigma\omega\mu\alpha$ - $\sigma\eta\mu\alpha$  formula. Contrary to E.R. Dodds' opinion,<sup>20</sup> it is most certainly not Heraclitean, since fr. 47d<sup>3</sup> Marcovich<sup>21</sup> seems to be a later reformulation of an

19 It is worth noting that this notion also appears in two Stoic works: Epictetus' *Dissertationes* (1.19.9; 2.19.27; 3.10.15; 3.22.41) and Marcus Aurelius' *Meditationes* (4.41; 9.24). As I have already pointed out in chapter 1 (p. 42), Epictetus probably appropriated the notion that bodies are corpses from contemporary Platonists; as for Marcus Aurelius, he explicitly states that he borrowed the notion from Epictetus.

20 See Dodds 1959, 300.

21 Sextus Empiricus, *Pyr.* 3.230: "Heraclitus says that both living and dying are in all living and in all dying: while we live our souls are dead and buried in us, and when we die our souls revive" (trans. J. Annas and J. Barnes).

obscure saying of Heraclitus that mentions neither bodies nor tombs;<sup>22</sup> it is clearly inauthentic as is the famous saying ascribed to Philolaus.<sup>23</sup> Despite the fact that these two sayings most certainly postdate Plato, they are particularly noteworthy, since they indicate that later authors used the *σῶμα-σημα* formula to express their negative feelings towards bodily existence.

While there can be no doubt that in later times the *σῶμα-σημα* formula was used to express a negative attitude towards the body, it is quite remarkable that the close reading of the three afore-mentioned Platonic passages may cast some doubt on the opinion that, in Plato's view, the body is the tomb of the soul. The most detailed discussion of the formula that Plato offers is in *Cratylus*:

Thus, some people (τινές) say that it is the tomb (σημα) of the soul, on the grounds that it is entombed (τεθαμμένη) in its present life; and again, it is correctly called "a sign" (σημα), because the soul signifies (σημαίνει) whatever it wants to signify by means of the body. But I think it is most likely the followers of Orpheus (οἱ ἄμφι Ὀρφέα) who gave the body its name, with the idea that the soul is being punished (δίκην διδούσης τῆς ψυχῆς) for something, and that the body is an enclosure (περίβολος) or prison (δεσμωτήριον) to keep the soul safe (ἵνα σώζηται)—as the name *σῶμα* itself suggests—until the penalty is paid; for, on this view, not even a single letter of the word needs to be changed.<sup>24</sup>

The thorough interpretation of this famous passage from *Cratylus* is beyond the scope of this study, so I would like to limit myself to pointing out several details that are relevant to the discussion of the idea that body is a corpse.

It is clear that, in view of Plato's Socrates, there are at least two different etymologies of the word *σῶμα*: while, according to "some people," it derives from the noun *σημα* and means either "tomb" or "sign," the "followers of Orpheus"

22 Fr. 47a Marcovich (= fr. 22 B 62 Diels & Kranz = Pseudo-Origen, *Ref.* 9.10.6): "Immortals are mortal, mortals immortal, living the others' death, dead in the others' life" (trans. C.H. Kahn).

23 Fr. 44 B 14 Diels & Kranz (= Clement of Alexandria, *Strom.* 3.3.17.1): "It is also worth noting Philolaus' remark. The follower of Pythagoras says, 'The theologians and seers of old are witnesses that the soul is yoked (συνέζευκται) to the body to undergo acts of punishment (διὰ τινὰς τιμωρίας) and is buried in it as in a grave'" (trans. J. Ferguson). For an argument against the authenticity of this saying, see Huffman 1993, 404–406; cf. Burkert 1972, 248. See also the discussion of the provenance of the Philolaic fragments in Thesleff 1961, 92–93 and 102–104.

24 Plato, *Crat.* 400c, trans. C.D.C. Reeve, altered.

believe that it derives from the verb σῶζω, “to keep safe.” It is worth noting that, according to Socrates, it was the Orphics who coined the word σῶμα and thus the latter etymology should be preferred to the former one.<sup>25</sup> This in mind, we can now proceed to the second Platonic passage wherein the σῶμα-σῆμα formula is mentioned:

SOCRATES: So then those who have no need of anything are wrongly said to be happy?

CALLICLES: Yes, for in that case stones and corpses (οἱ νεκροί) would be happiest.

SOCRATES: But then the life of those people you call happiest is a strange one, too. I shouldn't be surprised that Euripides' lines are true when he says:

*But who knows whether being alive is being dead  
And being dead is being alive?*

Perhaps (ἴσως) in reality we're dead. Once I even heard one of the wise men (τις τῶν σοφῶν) say that we are now dead and that our bodies are our tombs (σῆμα).<sup>26</sup>

Although one might find the context of this Platonic passage to be “playful and even ironic,”<sup>27</sup> the possibility that Plato adhered to the view that the body was the tomb of the soul cannot be ruled out. It is significant, however, that, in this passage, Socrates makes several reservations: he says that we are “probably” (ἴσως) dead and ascribes the σῶμα-σῆμα formula to a certain “wise man” (it is worth noting that, in *Cratylus*, the same view is ascribed to “some people”). As Rein Ferwerda points out, these details could be interpreted as Plato's attempt to distance himself from the view that the body is the soul's tomb.<sup>28</sup>

The third passage that is relevant for our discussion, *Phaedr.* 250c, is the only instance where Plato clearly accepts the σῶμα-σῆμα formula. The way Plato interprets it in *Phaedrus* is, however, a matter of debate. In this passage, Socrates discusses the experience of the soul that reaches “the place beyond heaven”:

25 Cf. Sedley 2003, 75; Dodds 1956, 169–170.

26 *Gorg.* 493a, trans. D.J. Zeyl.

27 Ferwerda 1985, 269.

28 *Ibid.*, 270.

That was the ultimate vision, and we saw it in pure light because we were pure ourselves, not buried (ἀσήμαντοι) in this thing we are carrying around now, which we call a body (σῶμα), locked (δεδεσμευμένοι) in it like an oyster in its shell.<sup>29</sup>

It is customary to understand the adjective ἀσήμαντος in this sentence as “not entombed.”<sup>30</sup> The usual meaning of the word is, however, “unmarked,” and one might conclude that ἀσήμαντος has the same meaning in *Phaedr.* 250c—i.e., that, in this passage, Plato speaks of the body as a sign of the soul. Ferwerda passionately defends this interpretation of ἀσήμαντος in *Phaedr.* 250c, arguing, “There is no indication whatsoever that Plato had something else in mind.”<sup>31</sup>

This statement, however, does not seem to be justified. It is quite remarkable that, in the very same passage where the word ἀσήμαντος is used, Socrates says that those who carry around their bodies are imprisoned (δεδεσμευμένοι) in them.<sup>32</sup> The notion that our bodies are our prisons reveals an attitude towards the body that is by no means positive. The famous discussion of the hostile relations between the body and the soul in *Phaedo* (64a–70b) is especially revealing: the body constitutes the chains (δεσμοί) of the soul (67d); it is evil (66b), so we should disdain the body (65d) and separate the soul from it as far as possible (67c). Later on (82e), Socrates compares the human body to a prison (εἰργμός): according to him, the soul in the body is enchained and fast-bound (διαδεδεμένη καὶ προσκεκολλημένη).<sup>33</sup>

It follows that in *Phaedr.* 250c, the word ἀσήμαντος should also be understood as an expression of negative attitude towards the body. While the meaning “not entombed” is unusual, it seems to fit the context. There can be little doubt that, in *Phaedr.* 250c, Plato employed the word ἀσήμαντος as an allusion to the σῶμα-σῆμα formula (ἀσήμαντοι ... σῶμα), which, according to *Crat.* 400c, has two valid interpretations: the body is either the soul’s tomb or the soul’s

29 *Phaedr.* 250c, trans. A. Nehamas and P. Woodruff.

30 See LSJ, s.v. “ἀσήμαντος,” III.

31 Ferwerda 1985, 273.

32 Cf. also *Crat.* 400c (quoted above, p. 51), where Socrates reports the Orphic notion that the body is the soul’s prison (δεσμωτήριον).

33 What Plato says in *Phaedo* appears to be very straightforward, so I do not find it possible to agree with de Vogel 1988, 242, who claims that, in Aristotle’s *Protrepticus* (cited below, pp. 54–55), “we find quite a different approach” to the human body. Quite the contrary, in this regard, Aristotle appears to be a devout disciple of his great teacher.



sign. Given that *Phaedr.* 250c explicitly condemns the body as the soul's prison, it is hard to see why the former aspect of this formula should not be at play in this passage.

In sum, *Phaedr.* 250c, appears to be an occasion where Plato adheres to the notion that our bodies are our tombs. This conclusion suggests that the reservations made earlier about two other relevant Platonic passages (*Crat.* 400c and *Gorg.* 493a) may, in fact, be unnecessary. Although, in *Crat.* 400c, Plato disagrees with those who derive the word  $\sigma\hat{\omega}\mu\alpha$  from  $\sigma\eta\mu\alpha$ , he may very well be in agreement with the sentiment behind this etymology. Similarly, he may agree with the "wise man" mentioned in *Gorg.* 493a.

The notion that bodies are tombs is not terribly different from the notion that bodies are corpses. The first document that attests this view is Aristotle's dialogue *Protrepticus*. Unfortunately, the complete text of the dialogue is lost and only a few fragments quoted by later authors have survived.<sup>34</sup> Luckily, the authenticity of the relevant fragment (fr. 60 Rose = fr. 10b Ross = frs. B 106–107 Düring) is beyond doubt: two different authors, Iamblichus and Cicero, attest it independently of each other and the latter even explicitly attributes it to Aristotle. In a recent study, D.S. Hutchinson and Monte Ransome Johnson convincingly describe the text cited by Iamblichus as "a pure quotation from Aristotle" and maintain that the most probable source of the quotation is *Protrepticus*, though there is a possibility that it comes from another Aristotelian dialogue that contained an exhortation to philosophy (e.g., *Eudemos* or *De philosophia*).<sup>35</sup>

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Iamblichus, *Protr.* 8 (trans. J. Barnes and G. Lawrence)

Augustine, *C. Jul.* 4.15.78 = Cicero, *Hort.* fr. 95 Müller (trans. W.D. Ross)

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Which of us, looking to these facts, would think himself happy and blessed? For all of us are from the very beginning (as they say in the initiation rites) shaped by nature as though for punishment. For it is an inspired saying of the ancients

How much better and nearer the truth than yours were the views about the generation of men held by those whom Cicero, as though led and compelled by the very evidence of the facts, commemorates in the last part of the dialogue

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34 For a history of the reconstruction of the text, see Chroust 1973, 2:86–104, 332–345, and Hutchinson and Johnson 2005, 196–201.

35 See Hutchinson and Johnson 2005, 255–258.

Iamblichus, *Protr.* 8 (trans. J. Barnes and G. Lawrence)

Augustine, *C. Jul.* 4.15.78 = Cicero, *Hort.* fr. 95 Müller (trans. W.D. Ross)

that the soul pays penalties (διδόναι τὴν ψυχὴν τιμωρίαν) and that we live for the punishment of great sins. For indeed the conjunction of the soul with the body looks very much like this.

*For as the Etruscans are said often to torture captives by chaining (προσδεσμεύοντες) dead bodies face to face with the living, fitting part to part, so the soul seems to be extended throughout and affixed (προσκολληθῆναι) to all the sensitive members of the body.*

*Hortensius!* After mentioning the many facts we see and lament with regard to the vanity and the unhappiness of men, he says: “From which errors and cares of human life it results that sometimes those ancients—whether they were prophets or interpreters of the divine mind by the transmission of sacred rites—who said that we are born to expiate sins committed in a former life, seem to have had a glimpse of the truth, and that that is true which Aristotle says, that *we are punished much as those were who once upon a time, when they had fallen into the hands of Etruscan robbers, were killed with studied cruelty; their bodies, the living with the dead, were bound as exactly as possible one against another: so our minds, bound together with our bodies, are like the living joined with the dead.*”

It is noteworthy that this Aristotelian fragment has numerous parallels with Plato: first, the saying about the soul paying penalties alludes to the Orphic beliefs reported in *Crat.* 400c;<sup>36</sup> second, the verb προσκολλάω comes from *Phaed.* 82e; finally, the living are chained to the dead in a similar way that we are enchained (δεδεσμευμένοι) according to *Phaedr.* 250c. Moreover, as Ingemar Düring pointed out, the entire final section of *Protrepticus* (frs. B 104–110 Düring) is “inspired” by *Phaed.* 64a–70b.<sup>37</sup> It is quite possible that Aristotle authored the notion that bodies are corpses, and it seems that his intention was to offer a vivid way to express a sentiment that was already well-known from Plato’s dialogues.

36 Noted already by Bywater 1869, 61.

37 Düring 1961, 261–262.

Eventually, Aristotle's idea that bodies are corpses became quite popular among Platonists and Platonizing authors. It seems to occur most often in the works of Philo.<sup>38</sup> The most remarkable text is Philo's *Legum allegoriae*. According to *Leg.* 3.69–72, the body “is evil and plots against the soul (πονηρόν τε καὶ ἐπιβουλον τῆς ψυχῆς)”; it is “eternally lifeless and dead (νεκρὸν καὶ τεθνηκὸς αἰεὶ).” Philo urges the reader to realize that “everyone is nothing but a corpse-bearer (μὴ γὰρ ἄλλο τι ἕκαστον ἡμῶν ποιεῖν ἢ νεκροφορεῖν).” To become a philosopher means to understand that and act accordingly; in this regard, philosophers are the opposite of athletes:

On this account there is a difference between the soul of an athlete and the soul of a philosopher. For the athlete refers everything to the well-being of the body, and, lover of the body that he is, would sacrifice the soul itself on its behalf; but the philosopher being enamoured of the noble thing that lives in himself, cares for the soul, and pays no regard to that which is really a corpse, the body, concerned only that the best part of him, his soul, may not be hurt by an evil thing, a very corpse, tied to it.<sup>39</sup>

Elsewhere in the same treatise (*Leg.* 1.108), Philo not only repeats that living bodies are corpses, but also combines this metaphor with the σῶμα-σῆμα formula. It is worth noting that this passage is usually thought to be about physical death: “Only after the death of the body will the soul be liberated from its ‘tomb’ and enjoy its proper life.”<sup>40</sup> However, this understanding does not seem to make sense. As Sami Yli-Karjanmaa has demonstrated, this passage concerns “living” and “dying” in an ethical sense: “life” here refers to the state of moral death, described by Philo as “the death of the soul” (*Leg.* 1.105); conversely, “death” means dying with regard to what he earlier calls “the life of wickedness” (*Leg.* 1.107).<sup>41</sup>

Heraclitus, who on this point followed Moses' teaching, phrased it well. “We live,” he says, “their death, and are dead to their life” (fr. 47d<sup>1</sup> Marcovich).<sup>42</sup> He means that now, when we are living, the soul is dead and

38 See, for instance, *Gig.* 15; *Somn.* 2.237; *Migr.* 21; *Agr.* 25; *Her.* 58.

39 *Leg.* 3.72, trans. F.H. Colson and G.H. Whitaker.

40 Schäfer 2009, 161; cf. Zeller 1995, 47; Geljon and Runia 2013, 118–119.

41 See Yli-Karjanmaa 2015, 64; cf. Yli-Karjanmaa 2016, 269–270.

42 This is yet another later reformulation of the famous saying of Heraclitus (fr. 47a Marcovich; see above, pp. 50–51).

has been entombed in the body as in a sepulchre (τεθνηκυίας τῆς ψυχῆς καὶ ὡς ἂν ἐν σήματι τῷ σώματι ἐντετυμβευμένης); whereas, should we die, the soul lives forthwith its own proper life, and is released from the body, the baneful corpse to which it was tied.<sup>43</sup>

Another Platonizing<sup>44</sup> text that combines the two metaphors is treatise 7 of the *Corpus Hermeticum*. According to this graphic diatribe against bodily pleasures, the human body is “the portable tomb” (ὁ περιφόρητος τάφος) and “the sentient corpse” (ὁ αἰσθητικὸς<sup>45</sup> νεκρός) (*Corp. Herm.* 7.2). Although logically the idea that bodies are tombs, on the one hand, and the idea that, on the other, bodies are also corpses seem to contradict each other (in the first case, the soul is dead; in the second, it is alive), it is clear that Philo and the anonymous Hermetic writer considered both notions to be variants of the same idea—viz., that “to be confined in a body is a grim business for the soul and prevents it from enjoying its true life.”<sup>46</sup>

The other texts that bear witness to the popularity of the idea the bodies are corpses in the Platonist circles are the letters of Pseudo-Heraclitus, Celsus’ polemical treatise preserved in Origen’s *Contra Celsum*, an epitome of the Arabic translation of Galen’s *De moribus*,<sup>47</sup> and Numenius’ lost work *De bono*. At the end of his letter, Pseudo-Heraclitus writes,

Perhaps my soul is already prophesying its release from this prison (ἐκ τοῦ δεσμωτηρίου τούτου), and, while the body quivers, peers out and remembers the homeland from which it has descended and wrapped around itself a body in a perpetual state of flux and change, a body dead, though appearing to others to be alive, with phlegms, bile, juices and blood, made solid by sinews, bones and flesh.<sup>48</sup>

43 *Leg.* 1.108, trans. F.H. Colson and G.H. Whitaker, altered.

44 “The dark enclosure,” ὁ σκοτεινὸς περιβόλος, in *Corp. Herm.* 7.2, is clearly an allusion to *Crat.* 400c.

45 The reading αἰσθητικὸς is attested only by A<sup>2</sup> (= *manus secunda* of Codex Laurentianus 71.33), but still seems to be preferable to the αἰσθητός of the majority of manuscripts. Cf. Nock and Festugière 1945–1954, 1:81.

46 Guthrie 1962–1981, 1:331. Guthrie’s remark is a reply to the discussion of the authenticity of 44 B 14 Diels-Kranz (cited above, p. 51) in Bywater 1868, 49.

47 For a detailed discussion of this source, see chapter 7 (pp. 208–212).

48 Pseudo-Heraclitus, *Ep.* 5.3, trans. D.R. Worley, altered.

Although the letters ascribed to Heraclitus “reflect attitudes and traditions most closely associated with Cynicism,”<sup>49</sup> it is evident that letters 5 and 6 “are marked by a series of commonplace Platonic notions about death as an escape of the soul from its bodily prison.”<sup>50</sup> The fact that the word δεσμωτήριον (cf. Plato, *Crat.* 400c) is employed in the cited passage is especially telling in this regard.

As for Celsus, one of his favorite ways of attacking Christianity is to ridicule the belief in bodily resurrection. God created the soul, but not the body (Origen, *Cels.* 4.52). Dead bodies are, according to the Heraclitean saying (fr. 76c Marcovich = fr. 22 B 96 Diels & Kranz), “worse than dung”;<sup>51</sup> God would never bring them back to life, because this would be contrary to reason (5.14). Christians are thus a “body-loving race (φιλοσώματων γένος)” (7.36); they “are completely bound to the flesh (τῆ σαρκὶ ἐνδεδεμένοι; cf. *Phaed.* 82e) and see nothing pure” (7.42; cf. 8.49). In other words, they “live for the body which is a dead thing” (7.45; trans. H. Chadwick).

According to the epitome of the second book of the Galenic treatise *De moribus*, only the rational soul, *al-nafs al-nāṭiqah*, is the true human being; thus, assimilation to the divine means release from the body and from the lower parts of the soul.<sup>52</sup> In this life, we should seek to become as divine as possible. Galen argues that, while it is only a god who can live without eating and drinking, we can become almost divine, if we restrict ourselves “to what is absolutely necessary for the life of the body” (trans. J.N. Mattock). Then, he tells us a beautiful fable that deserves to be quoted in full:

You have a choice between honouring your soul by making it like the angels (*al-malā'ikah*)<sup>53</sup> and treating it contemptuously by making it like the brute beasts. It is said that two men simultaneously went to a seller of idols and bargained with him for the same idol representing Hermes. One of them intended to set it up in a temple, in honour of Hermes, and the other intended to erect it over a tomb, in remembrance of a dead man. They could not come to an agreement about buying it that day and so they postponed the business until the next. The seller of idols dreamt

49 Attridge 1976, 3.

50 Ibid., 8.

51 According to Marcovich 2001, 410, the saying was originally “a criticism of the traditional funerary practices”; cf. Kahn 1979, 212–213.

52 See chapter 7 for further discussion.

53 The Arabic word *al-malā'ikah* (“the angels”) renders θεοί (“gods”) in the Greek original; see the discussion in chapter 7 (p. 211).

that night that the idol said to him: “O excellent man, I am now something that you have made. I have taken on a likeness that is attributed to a star, and I am now no longer called ‘a stone’ as I used to be, but I am called ‘Hermes.’ You must choose now whether to make me a memorial to something that does not decay or to something that has already decayed.” This is what I say to those who seek to investigate their own souls; their decision, however, is greater than in the case of an idol, since no-one else has any jurisdiction over them, for they are free and masters of their will. It is right that someone who is in this situation should place his soul in the highest rank of honour; there is no honour greater than that of imitating God, so far as is possible for a human being. This is achieved by despising worldly pleasures and preferring the Beautiful.<sup>54</sup>

It is worth noting that, as Richard Walzer pointed out,<sup>55</sup> Galen was not the author of this fable, since it is also narrated by Babrius:

A sculptor was trying to sell a marble statue of Hermes which he had just carved and two men were thinking of buying it. One of them wanted it for a gravestone, since his son had recently died, and the other, an artisan, intended to set it up as an image of the god himself. It was late in the day and the sculptor had not yet sold his statue, having agreed to show it to the buyers again when they came in the morning. In his sleep that night the sculptor saw Hermes himself at the gate of dreams, saying: “So, then, my fate is being weighed in your balances: it remains to be seen whether you will make me a corpse or a god.”<sup>56</sup>

The last line of the Babrian fable is, in fact, a nice summary for Galen’s line of thought in the second book of *De moribus*: everyone has to choose between two alternatives, to become “either a corpse or a god,” ἢ νεκρὸν ἢ θεόν. While Galen does not explicitly claim that our bodies are corpses, this is the conclusion that the reader would most certainly draw from the analogy between honoring the body and making a memorial to “something that has already decayed.” It seems likely, therefore, that, according to Galen, by disregarding our souls, we indulge our bodies, which are nothing but corpses.

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54 Translated by J.N. Mattock.

55 See Walzer 1962, 165.

56 Babrius, *Myth. Aesop.* 30, trans. B.E. Perry.

Thus, the fable that Galen relates at the end of the second book of *De moribus* alludes to the Platonist idea that human bodies are corpses; the choice that the reader must make is essentially between becoming a god and becoming a corpse. When Galen claims that his reader faces the same dilemma as the fable's sculptor, he implies that we either seek to become like gods by looking after our rational souls or identify ourselves with our bodies and in so doing willingly turn ourselves into corpses.

Finally, according to Numenius, matter, either by itself or as bodies, is not τὸ ὄν, "that which is." With respect to the latter option, matter as bodies, he points out that bodies can hardly be "that which is," for they always require something to hold them together (τὸ καθέξον or τὸ κατασχῆσον). Such a cohesive principle is necessary, since bodies are by nature "inanimate and dead, carried hither and thither, and not abiding in one stay (τεθνηκότα καὶ νεκρὰ καὶ πεφορημένα καὶ οὐδ' ἐν ταύτῳ μένοντα)" (fr. 4a des Places = Eusebius, *Praep. ev.* 15.17.6; trans. E.H. Gifford).<sup>57</sup>

These abundant examples from the Platonist and Platonizing sources demonstrate that Gos. Thom. 56 and 80 seem to be drawing upon the Platonist tradition. In addition, one more detail seems to demonstrate the extent to which the Gospel of Thomas is indebted to Platonism. While the sources that identify bodies with corpses are quite numerous, none of them employs the word πτώμα. In fact, there are relatively few Greek texts where the word πτώμα is used in the same way it is used in Gos. Thom. 56 and 60—i.e., meaning "corpse" (the primary meaning of the word is "fall," "act of falling") and without a modifier in genitive, as in τὸ πτώμα τοῦ λέοντος in Judg 14:8 (see above, p. 47). It seems that the rare word is used in order to provide the reader with a memorable paronomastic slogan. As was pointed out above, the two notions (viz., bodies are tombs and bodies are corpses) were sometimes considered resonant with and complementary to each other. It is, therefore, possible that sayings 56 and 80 bear witness to an attempt to give the second metaphor the catchy formula (σῶμα-πτώμα) that the first metaphor had (σῶμα-σημα). The σῶμα-πτώμα formula does not seem to be attested elsewhere, so it is impossible to ascertain whether the author of sayings 56 and 80 coined it himself or borrowed it from elsewhere. In any case, the Gospel of Thomas seems to bear witness to how negative attitudes towards the body evolved along Platonist lines. So much for the background of and parallels to Gos. Thom. 56 and 80.

57 It is worth noting that, whereas the previous examples dealt specifically with human bodies, this passage indicates that, in fact, all corporeal objects are by nature dead.

The differences between the two sayings are perhaps of even more significance. Indeed, no ancient source except the Gospel of Thomas argues that the world is a corpse. It is especially remarkable that no Platonist ever expressed a thought that the world, in so far as it is a body, is a corpse. Even though one can easily use the reasoning behind Gos. Thom. 56 and 80 to construct a syllogism (all bodies are corpses; the world is a body; therefore, the world is a corpse) and even though Platonists would have accepted both premises, they would still have rejected the conclusion.

To my knowledge, Cicero was the only ancient author who made a similar argument and came quite close to saying that the world is a dead thing. In his famous *Somnium Scipionis* (= *Rep.* 6.9–29), he argues that we are not our bodies, but our minds, and as long as we are minds, we are gods:

Know, then, that you are a god, if a god is that which lives, feels, remembers, and foresees, and which rules, governs, and moves the body over which it is set, just as the supreme God above us rules this universe. And just as the eternal God moves the universe, which is partly mortal, so an immortal spirit moves the frail body.<sup>58</sup>

In this passage, Cicero compares the human mind (“mens”) to God and human body to the world. Yet he does not apply to the world the unflattering remarks he usually makes with regard to human bodies. Although he often calls the human body a prison and says that our life (i.e., bodily existence) is in fact death (thus alluding to the *σῶμα-σῆμα* formula),<sup>59</sup> something prevents him from speaking ill of the world (which is also a body). He says that the world is “ex quadam parte mortalis,”<sup>60</sup> but his reverence for the world does not allow him to say that it is “mortuus.”<sup>61</sup>

So far, I have discussed the meaning and background of Gos. Thom. 56 and 80. The Thomasine views on the world as a body are, in a sense, both Platonist and anti-Platonist. On the one hand, the Gospel of Thomas draws the notions that the world is a body and that bodies are corpses from the fount of Platonist wisdom. On the other hand, the Gospel of Thomas insists that the contempt for

58 Cicero, *Rep.* 6.26, trans. C.W. Keyes.

59 See, e.g., *Scaur.* 4; *Tusc.* 1.75; *Rep.* 6.14.

60 In saying so, Cicero probably alludes to the Stoic doctrine of *ἐκπύρωσις* (see *SVF* 2.585–632).

61 Admittedly, Cicero never says that bodies are corpses. It is tempting, however, to think that it is in order to avoid speaking ill of the world that he does so.



the body must apply to the world as well, thus expressing a negative attitude towards the world that is incompatible not only with Platonism, but, in fact, with any Greco-Roman school of thought.

It might seem logical to conclude that, by emphasizing the worthlessness of the world, sayings 56 and 80 imply that one should seek ultimate reality outside of the physical universe. This is not the case, however, for, according to the Gospel of Thomas, it is in this world that we may find the kingdom of the Father. This paradox is important for the understanding of sayings 56 and 80 in the context of the Gospel of Thomas, so I would like to discuss it in further detail.

### What is Alive is Hidden in What is Dead

According to the Gospel of Thomas, the salvific substance is somehow present in the world, but it is by no means a part of the world. It is concealed inscrutably in the world, so that only a few can see through the mundane and find salvation.<sup>62</sup> Saying 113 seems to be the most illuminating saying in this regard. When the disciples ask Jesus about the coming of the kingdom, Jesus says that *ΤΗΝ-ΤΕΡΟ ΜΠΕΙΩΤ ΕΣΠΟΡΩ ΕΒΟΛ ΖΙΧΝ ΠΚΑΖ ΑΥΩ ΡΡΩΜΕ ΝΑΥ ΑΝ ΕΡΟC*, “the kingdom of the Father is spread out upon the earth, and people do not see it.”<sup>63</sup> I believe that the following saying about splitting wood and lifting stones (Gos. Thom. 30:3–4/77:2–3) is also relevant for this discussion:

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#### Gos. Thom. 30 (P.Oxy. 1.1)

30:1 [λέγ]ει [Ἰ(ησοῦ)ς· ὅπ]ου ἐὰν ᾧσιν [τρ]ε[ίς],  
 ε[ίσι]ν ἄθεοι·  
 30:2 καὶ [ὁ]που ε[ίς] ἐστιν μόνος, [λ]έγω· ἐγὼ εἰμι  
 μετ’ αὐτ[οῦ].

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#### Gos. Thom. 30 and 77 (NHC II)

30:1 ΠΕΧΕ ΙϚ ΧΕ ΠΜΑ ΕΥΝ ΩΟΜΤ ΝΝΟΥΓΤΕ ΜΜΑΥ  
 ΖΝΝΟΥΓΤΕ ΝΕ  
 30:2 ΠΜΑ ΕΥΝ ΣΝΑΥ Η ΟΥΑ ΔΝΟΚ †ΩΟΟΠ  
 ΝΜΜΑΥ  
 77:1 ΠΕΧΕ ΙϚ ΧΕ ΔΝΟΚ ΠΕ ΠΟΥΟΕΙΝ ΠΑΕΙ  
 ΕΤΖΙΧΩΟΥ ΤΗΡΟΥ ΔΝΟΚ ΠΕ ΠΤΗΡΥ ΝΤΑ ΠΤΗΡΥ  
 ΕΙ ΕΒΟΛ ΝΖΗΤ ΑΥΩ ΝΤΑ ΠΤΗΡΥ ΠΩΖ ΩΑΡΟΕΙ

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62 Cf. Liebenberg 2001, 241 and 488–489.

63 The saying is also attested in Pseudo-Macarius, *Serm. (coll. B)* 35.5: ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ χαμαι ἤπλωται καὶ οἱ ἄνθρωποι οὐκ ἐμβλέπουσιν αὐτήν; this parallel was first discovered in Quispel 1964, 226.

## Gos. Thom. 30 (P.Oxy. 1.1)

30:3 ἔγει[ρ]ον τὸν λίθο(ν)<sup>64</sup> κάκει εὐρήσεις με·  
 30:4 σχίσον τὸ ξύλον κάγω ἐκεῖ εἶμι.

30:1 [Jesus said], “Where there are [three], they are without God,  
 30:2 and where there is but [a single one], I say that I am with [him].

30:3 *Lift up the stone, and you will find me there.*  
 30:4 *Split the piece of wood, and I am there.”*

## Gos. Thom. 30 and 77 (NH 11)

77:2 πωρ ἡνογωε ανοκ †ἡμαγ  
 77:3 ρι ἡπωνε ερραῖ αγω τετναρε ερρει  
 ἡμαγ

30:1 Jesus said, “Where there are three gods, they are gods.

30:2 Where there are two or one, I am with him.”

77:1 Jesus said, “It is I who am the light which is above them all. It is I who am the all. From me did the all come forth, and unto me did the all extend.

77:2 *Split a piece of wood, and I am there.*

77:3 *Lift the stone, and you will find me there.”*

The comparison of the Greek and Coptic versions raises two questions related to the original text of the stone/wood saying. First, where did this saying initially belong (saying 30 or saying 77)? Second, which of the two versions (Gos. Thom. 30:3–4 or Gos. Thom. 77:2–3) is original? Let me start with the first question. One could perhaps argue that the premise of this question is false, since the stone/wood saying could have initially accompanied both Gos. Thom. 30:1–2 and 77:1. Repetitive formulas are one of the most recurrent literary devices in the Gospel of Thomas, and it is possible that one such formula was the stone/wood saying. This option, however, appears to be unlikely, since the stone/wood saying does not accompany Gos. Thom. 30:1–2 in the Coptic version. It is hard to imagine why one would omit the saying in one place, while retaining it in the other. It seems more reasonable to surmise that the stone/wood saying initially accompanied one of the Thomasine sayings, but was later relocated.

The Coptic text of saying 77 has a pun: πωρ in Gos. Thom. 77:1 means “to reach,”<sup>65</sup> while πωρ in Gos. Thom. 77:2 means “to break.”<sup>66</sup> This fact is often

64 According to Reitzenstein 1905 (see also Reitzenstein 1921, 167–168), this phrase, ἔγειρον τὸν λίθον, is quoted in Etym. Gud. 393.22 de Stefani.

65 Crum 1939, 281a–282a.

66 Ibid., 280a–281a.

used as a reason to give preference to the Greek version.<sup>67</sup> This argument is hardly compelling: although the word play in the Coptic version is clearly secondary, it does not necessarily mean that “the parts were joined during the transmission process only after the text was translated into Coptic.”<sup>68</sup> It is hypothetically possible that, already in the Greek text the Coptic translator had at his disposal, Gos. Thom. 77:2–3 followed Gos. Thom. 77:1, and that this translator simply wanted to give the saying a more refined form and thus decided to render the Greek verbs he found in Gos. Thom. 77:1 and 77:2 with a pair of Coptic homonyms.

That the presence of the Coptic pun does not necessarily imply that the original text was rearranged after it was translated into Coptic is clear from Gos. Thom. 33:1–2, where we encounter another pair of homonyms: in Gos. Thom. 33:1 ⲙⲁⲗⲁⲭⲉ means “ear,”<sup>69</sup> whereas in Gos. Thom. 33:2 ⲙⲁⲗⲁⲭⲉ means “measure.”<sup>70</sup> While P.Oxy. 1.1 preserves only the beginning of Gos. Thom. 33:1 (and thus we cannot know whether or not it was followed by Gos. Thom. 33:2), Gos. Thom. 33:1–2 appears to be preserved in the report on the teaching of the Naassenes in Pseudo-Origen, *Ref.* 5.7.28.<sup>71</sup> Hence, as Simon Gathercole points out, it is evident that Gos. Thom. 33:1 and 33:2 were juxtaposed already at the Greek stage.<sup>72</sup> While the Coptic translator of Gos. Thom. 33:1–2 may have intentionally decided to translate two Greek nouns (most probably ὠτίον and μῶδιος) with the pair of homonyms ⲙⲁⲗⲁⲭⲉ (“ear”) and ⲙⲁⲗⲁⲭⲉ (“measure”),<sup>73</sup> he did not rearrange the text of the saying.<sup>74</sup>

The presence of the Coptic pun does not *ipso facto* prove that the Coptic version is secondary. There is, however, another reason to prefer the Greek version. Unlike the Coptic text, the Greek text is formally structured: the two

67 See, e.g. Kuhn 1960, 317–318; Montefiore and Turner 1962, 81; Leipoldt 1967, 70; Neller 1989–1990, 6.

68 Plisch 2008, 182.

69 Crum 1939, 212b–213a.

70 *Ibid.*, 213a.

71 As Johnson 2010, 316, points out, this passage must refer to saying 33, since it is only in the Gospel of Thomas that the Lampstand and Rooftops sayings are contiguous.

72 See Gathercole 2014b, 271–273.

73 In the Sahidic New Testament, Greek μῶδιος is rendered as ⲙⲓ, “measure” (see Wilmet 1957–1959, 3:1182–1183). It is possible that the Coptic translator decided to use ⲙⲁⲗⲁⲭⲉ instead of ⲙⲓ in order to imitate the phonetic similarity between ὠτίον and μῶδιος of the Greek *Vorlage*; the phonetic similarity of these Greek words would have been especially pronounced to a Coptic speaker, who would not have heard a difference either between omicron and omega, or between delta and tau.

74 *Pace* Patterson 1993, 32; 2015, 241.

“where”-sentences of the first part (Gos. Thom. 30:1–2) correspond to the two “there”-sentences of the second part (Gos. Thom. 30:3–4).<sup>75</sup> Since chiasmic and parallel structures are each among the most frequently-used literary devices in the Gospel of Thomas, it follows that P.Oxy. 1.1 most likely preserves the original arrangement of the text (Gos. Thom. 30:1–2 → Gos. Thom. 30:3–4).

It is now time to address the question of the original form of the stone/wood saying. The two versions of the saying differ from each other in two respects. First, whereas the Greek version addresses one person (ἔγειρον ... εὐρήσεις ... σχίσον ...), the Coptic text addresses a group (ἑἱρησεῖ). Second, the order of the two strophes is reversed: in the Greek version, the lifting of the *stone* precedes the splitting of the *wood*, whereas, in the Coptic, the splitting of the *wood* precedes the lifting of the *stone*.<sup>76</sup> In both cases, the Coptic version appears to be secondary for the following reasons.

First, according to Gos. Thom. 30:1–2, Jesus will be with the one who is solitary; Gos. Thom. 30:3–4 is clearly an address to this solitary person, which is expressed by the verbs in the singular. Since, as we have already established, the stone/wood saying initially belonged to Gos. Thom. 30:1–2, and since the singular form of the verbs in Gos. Thom. 30:3–4 correspond to the praise of solitude in Gos. Thom. 30:1–2, there can be no doubt that the phrasing of Gos. Thom. 30:3–4 is original. As for the second-person plural in Gos. Thom. 77:2–3, it should be noted that the second-person plural also occurs in sayings 76 and 78; it is likely, therefore, that this change “is due to assimilation to the context.”<sup>77</sup>

Second, the text of Gos. Thom. 77:2–3 also appears to be secondary with respect to the order of the two strophes. To return to the discussion of homonyms in saying 77, while the fact that there is a pair of homonyms in the Coptic text does not prove that the stone/wood saying initially belonged to Gos. Thom. 30:1–2, it might become relevant once we have established that Gos. Thom. 30:1–2 was in fact the original context of the saying. I find it dif-

75 Cf. Evelyn White 1920, 38: “the balancing of ὅπου ... ὅπου in the first part against ἐκεῖ ... ἐκεῖ in the second is surely not fortuitous.”

76 According to Jeremias 1964, 108, there is one more disagreement between the two versions: while the Greek text reads τὸ ξύλον, “the piece of wood,” the Coptic text reads οὐαε, “a piece of wood,” which means that its Greek *Vorlage* omitted the article. It is worth noting, however, that the same phenomenon is attested in the Sahidic version of Acts 16:24, where τὸ ξύλον is rendered with οὐαε. It does not seem to be necessary to postulate that the Greek *Vorlage* of Gos. Thom. 77:2 and that of the Sahidic version of Acts 16:24 omitted the article. It is more likely that both cases merely illustrate the difference between Greek and Coptic idiom.

77 Jeremias 1964, 108.

difficult to agree with Miroslav Marcovich that the vicinity of the homonyms in Gos. Thom. 77:1–2 is “a pure coincidence,”<sup>78</sup> since in fact Gos. Thom. 77:1 and 77:2 are linked by not one, but two catchwords:  $\pi\omega\lambda$  (“to reach”/“to break”) and  $\lambda\text{NOK}$  (“I”). The following scenario seems to offer the most plausible explanation of this catchword connection. Initially the stone/wood saying belonged to a parallel structure ( $\delta\pi\omicron\upsilon \dots \delta\pi\omicron\upsilon \dots \acute{\epsilon}\chi\epsilon\acute{\iota} \dots \acute{\epsilon}\chi\epsilon\acute{\iota} \dots$ ), but it was no longer the case once it was relocated. The person responsible for this rearrangement needed to link the stone/wood saying with its new context, Gos. Thom. 77:1, and thus changed the order of the strophes so that the catchword connection would become more evident.

The pair of catchwords,  $\pi\omega\lambda$  (“to reach”) and  $\pi\omega\lambda$  (“to break”), could have been used only at the Coptic stage of the transmission of the text. It follows that it was either the Coptic translator or a later copyist/editor who moved the stone/wood saying from its original place (Gos. Thom. 30:3–4) to the place it occupies in  $\text{NHC II}$  (Gos. Thom. 77:2–3), reversed the order of the strophes to accentuate the catchword connection, and finally changed the second-person singular to the second-person plural to assimilate the saying to its context.<sup>79</sup>

So far, we have established that the stone/wood saying was originally preceded by Gos. Thom. 30:1–2 and that P.Oxy. 1.1 preserves the original wording of the stone/wood saying. As I have already mentioned in chapter 1, the Coptic text of Gos. Thom. 30:1–2 is extremely problematic. It is tempting to accept the suggestion made by Harold W. Attridge—viz., that the cryptic remark about gods being gods in the Coptic text is due to an attempt made by the Coptic translator to make sense of a Greek text that had already suffered textual corruption (according to him, the privative alpha in  $\acute{\alpha}\theta\epsilon\omicron\iota$  was accidentally lost at some point during textual transmission).<sup>80</sup> Moreover, as I have already pointed out, Eisele is probably right that the reading  $\epsilon\acute{\iota}\varsigma \mu\acute{o}\nu\omicron\varsigma$  (“only one”) of the Greek version of Gos. Thom. 30:2 is original, while  $\text{CNA}\gamma \text{H OY}\lambda$  (“two or one”) of the Coptic

78 Marcovich 1988, 73.

79 It seems impossible to ascertain who is responsible for this rearrangement, the Coptic translator or the Coptic copyist/editor. It is possible that the translator faithfully translated the original text of the Gospel of Thomas, then later on the copyist/editor noticed the potential catchword connection between Gos. Thom. 30:3–4 and 77:1 (see appendix 3, where I argue that Gos. Thom. 77:1 was probably part of the original text of the Gospel of Thomas) and decided to bring them together. It is also possible that it was the translator who rearranged the sayings; in this case, we can hypothesize that he intentionally translated the Greek text in such a way that Gos. Thom. 77:1 and 77:2–3 would be linked by not one, but two catchwords.

80 See Attridge 1979, 156–157.

version is a later attempt to harmonize the saying with Matt 18:20.<sup>81</sup> It seems clear, therefore, that P.Oxy. 1.1 preserves not only the original sequence (Gos. Thom. 30:1–2 → Gos. Thom. 30:3–4) but also the original text of Gos. Thom. 30:1–2 and 30:3–4.

Let us, therefore, proceed to the interpretation of the Greek text of saying 30. Attridge, who examined P.Oxy. 1.1 with the use of ultraviolet light and to whom we are indebted for the standard restoration of the Greek text of Gos. Thom. 30:1–2, points out that this passage should be read in connection with the sayings that speak of being or becoming *μοναχός*.<sup>82</sup> According to him, “the fragment asserts that any *group* of people lacks divine presence.”<sup>83</sup> As Stephen J. Patterson puts it, it is only “in the singleness of an individual,” and not in an organized community, that the presence of Jesus is guaranteed.<sup>84</sup>

In Gos. Thom. 30:3–4, Jesus explains how his presence is made available for this solitary individual: “Lift up the stone, and you will find me there. Split the piece of wood, and I am there.” Scholars have proposed different interpretations for these two verses. One of the more popular interpretations was offered already in 1897, the same year when P.Oxy. 1.1 was discovered, by Adolf Harnack and H.B. Swete. According to them, the stone/wood saying is quite similar to Eccl 10:9, “Whoever quarries stones will be hurt by them; and whoever splits logs will be endangered by them” (NRSV). As Harnack put it, “Our text cannot be without some connexion with this passage, and clearly it is an intentional antithesis to it.”<sup>85</sup> Read against this background, the saying seems to argue that “Jesus can be encountered in everyday life of the world, even when at work; whoever wants to find him does not need special practices of piety.”<sup>86</sup> Wilfried Eisele has recently offered a similar interpretation; according to him, regard-

81 It is also worth noting that the Coptic text does not have a parallel for the Greek λέγω; perhaps the omission of λέγω should also be seen as a later harmonization of Gos. Thom. 30:2 to Matt 18:20 (I owe this suggestion to Timo Tekoniemi). The other explanations appear to be less satisfactory. According to Plisch 2008, 99, it is possible that a scribe copied from a damaged manuscript where λέγω was illegible; the scribe then recalled Matt 18:20 and conjectured that the text in the lacuna was ἡ δύο. This hypothesis is problematic, since in that case the Coptic version of Gos. Thom. 30:2 would have read ογα η κναγ (“one or two”), not κναγ η ογα (“two or one”). According to Marcovich 1988, 71, λέγω was accidentally omitted because of a homoeoteleuton with ἐγώ. This hypothesis is also problematic, since in this case the scribe would have omitted ἐγώ, not λέγω.

82 I discuss these sayings in chapter 4.

83 Attridge 1979, 156, emphasis his.

84 Patterson 1993, 153.

85 Harnack 1897, 336; cf. Swete 1897, 548.

86 Plisch 2008, 183; cf. Jeremias 1964, 110–111.

less of the place and form of the stone/wood saying, its fundamental message remains the same both in Gos. Thom. 30 and in Gos. Thom. 77—it preaches “eine Mystik des Alltags”:

Entscheidend ist dann nicht, *wo* und *wie* genau man sich die Präsenz Jesu vorzustellen hätte, sondern *dass* er  $\bar{\mu}\mu\lambda\gamma$ , das heißt ganz allgemein bei so weltlichen Beschäftigungen wie Holzspalten und Steineaufheben, gegenwärtig ist.<sup>87</sup>

This interpretation of the stone/wood saying is problematic for several reasons. First, Harnack’s suggestion that Gos. Thom. 30:3–4 alludes to Eccl 10:9 is open to criticism. The Greek text of Eccl 10:9 features a person who *removes* stones ( $\acute{\epsilon}\xi\alpha\acute{\iota}\rho\omega\nu\ \lambda\acute{\iota}\theta\omicron\upsilon\varsigma$ ), rather than a person who *lifts* them; it additionally differs from the Gospel of Thomas both in the aspect (present vs. aorist) of the verbs and in the number of the nouns. More importantly, the combination of “stones” and “logs” is so typical for ancient literature (see below, p. 69) that it is absolutely unnecessary to conclude that Gos. Thom. 30:3–4 is somehow dependent on Eccl 10:9. Second, as insightful as it is, the suggestion that “there” ( $\acute{\epsilon}\chi\epsilon\acute{\iota}/\bar{\mu}\mu\lambda\gamma$ ) in the stone/wood saying refers to physical labor (which means that Jesus is saying, “I am there with you when you lift stones and split logs”) is far-fetched. As Walter Lock pointed out, had the author of the saying wanted to refer to the act of raising and splitting, he would have used  $\omicron\upsilon\tau\omega\varsigma$  rather than  $\acute{\epsilon}\chi\epsilon\acute{\iota}$ .<sup>88</sup>

It is more natural to interpret Gos. Thom. 30:3–4 to the effect that Jesus is present under the stone and within the log. How should we understand this statement? It certainly should not be understood in the pantheist sense. The identification of Jesus with the world would go against the most unflattering claims about the world that Jesus makes in Gos. Thom. 56 and 80. Moreover, the pantheist interpretation would do injustice to the text of Gos. Thom. 30:3–4, since Jesus does not seem to say that he is the stone and the log; rather, he is under the stone and within the log. In other words, he is not *everything*, but rather *everywhere*; he is omnipresent.<sup>89</sup>

There is, however, one possible objection to this interpretation of Gos. Thom. 30:3–4. As Melissa (née Philip) H. Sellev has pointed out, the two examples that Jesus chose to describe his omnipresence “are rather odd and even a little disgusting,” Sellev asks, “what squalor and insects do we usually find when we lift

87 Eisele 2010, 169.

88 See Lock and Sanday 1897, 24.

89 Cf. Davies 1992, 664; Pagels 1999, 484.

a rock or split open a log?" Although this question contains a bit of rhetorical exaggeration (quite often there is no squalor underneath a rock and no insects in a log), this choice of examples most certainly requires an explanation. In fact, an important detail has been overlooked in the discussion of the stone/wood saying.

As Gustav Adolf Gerhard once pointed out, the expression λίθοι καὶ ξύλα "fungieren typisch als verächtlichen Ausdruck für leblose Baustoffe im Gegensatz zum Menschen und seinem Geist."<sup>90</sup> This expression occurs in numerous ancient sources, including the Old Testament (Jer 3:9).<sup>91</sup> The saying ascribed by Plutarch to the Spartan king Agesilaus II is especially remarkable. When asked why Sparta did not have the city walls, Agesilaus answered, "Cities ought not to be fortified with stones and timbers, but with the strong virtues of their inhabitants" (Plutarch, *Apoph. lac.* 210e; trans. F.C. Babbitt). The point of Agesilaus' saying is that inanimate/lifeless stone and wood cannot protect the city, but the citizens' spirit can.

Given that stone and wood were the conventional examples of lifelessness in the ancient world, it is quite likely that the author of saying 30 had an intention to play on this motif. The saying, therefore, claims that Jesus (whom the Gospel of Thomas calls the "living" Jesus) can be paradoxically met even among lifeless, material objects. In this regard, the stone/wood saying is a reformulation of the idea expressed in sayings 56 and 113. According to sayings 56 and 113, we can find the kingdom that is secretly present in the world, even though the world is a dead body; according to saying 30, we can find Jesus under stones and within logs, even though stones and logs exemplify lifelessness.

## Conclusions

In this chapter, I have discussed the Thomasine understanding of the world. My focus has been on sayings 56 and 80. As I have demonstrated, these two sayings do not simply repeat each other, but rather direct the reader towards two different aspects of the same complex problem. While saying 80 refers to the well-known Platonist notion that the world is a body, saying 56 seems to allude to the Platonist notion that bodies are corpses. What is remarkable about the Gospel of Thomas is that it uses these two Platonist premises to express its non-Platonist and, perhaps, even anti-Platonist contempt for the world. It is not

<sup>90</sup> Gerhard 1909, 139–140.

<sup>91</sup> See the references *ibid.*, 140.



enough, therefore, to say that the Gospel of Thomas was indebted to the Platonist tradition; rather, it was engaged in a dialogue with Platonism, accepting some ideas, while repudiating others.

In order to place the world-rejecting message of sayings 56 and 80 in the broader Thomasine context, I have offered a reflection on the stone/wood saying (Gos. Thom. 30:3–4/77:2–3). According to this peculiar saying, we can encounter Jesus within logs and under stones. Stones and logs were the conventional examples of lifelessness in the ancient world, so the stone/wood saying describes a paradox: even lifeless objects are not devoid of the living Jesus. Similarly, the world is not only a corpse (i.e., a lifeless and soulless object, essentially equivalent to lifeless stones and logs), but also a place where a perceptive individual can discover Jesus and the kingdom (Gos. Thom. 113). These observations on the peculiar interplay between cosmology and soteriology in the Gospel of Thomas make it possible to discern a key difference between the Platonist and Thomasine views on the world: while Plato maintained that the world was a “perceptible god” (*Tim.* 92c), the Gospel of Thomas holds that it is the opposite of the divine, yet somehow infiltrated by it.

## The Gospel of Thomas and the Platonists on the Body and the Soul

In this chapter, I would like to discuss the Thomasine views on the nature of the human soul and its relationship with the body. I will mainly discuss sayings 29, 87, and 112. I will argue that the Gospel of Thomas does not adhere to the tripartite anthropological model. In my opinion, sayings 29, 87, and 112, while using different terms (“soul” vs. “spirit”), express the same idea of body-soul dualism. I will also argue that, while the importance of Platonism for the understanding of Thomasine anthropology can hardly be overestimated, saying 112 should not be read as a concise paraphrase of *Tim.* 87c–89a. A much more viable option is to read this saying against the background of *Phaed.* 64a–70b.

In what follows, I will briefly present the sayings that appear to be crucial for this discussion—viz., sayings 29, 87, and 112. I will then focus on the terminology employed in these sayings and ascertain whether the Gospel of Thomas distinguishes the flesh (σάρξ) from the body (σῶμα), and the soul (ψυχή) from the spirit (πνεῦμα). My answer to both questions will be in the negative: Thomasine anthropology is bipartite; the only anthropological distinction this text maintains is between the corporeal (body/flesh) and the incorporeal (soul/spirit). Finally, I will point out that the Gospel of Thomas does not commend the balance of the body and the soul, but rather maintains that the body and the soul are hostile to each other and thus exhorts the reader to despise the former and take care of the latter.

### Interpretative Notes on Sayings 29, 87, and 112

29:1 πεχε ιϭ̅ εωδε ν̅τα τσαρζ ωωπε ετβε π̅να<sup>1</sup> ογωπηρε τε 29:2 εωδε π̅να δε ετβε π̅ωμα ογωπηρε ν̅ωπηρε<sup>2</sup> πε<sup>3</sup> 29:3 αλλα ανοκ ι̅ρ̅ ωπηρε  
 112:1 πεδε ιϭ̅ εωδε ν̅τα τσαρζ ωωπε ετβε π̅να<sup>1</sup> ογωπηρε τε 29:2 εωδε π̅να δε ετβε π̅ωμα ογωπηρε ν̅ωπηρε<sup>2</sup> πε<sup>3</sup> 29:3 αλλα ανοκ ι̅ρ̅ ωπηρε  
 112:1 πεδε ιϭ̅ εωδε ν̅τα τσαρζ ωωπε ετβε π̅να<sup>1</sup> ογωπηρε τε 29:2 εωδε π̅να δε ετβε π̅ωμα ογωπηρε ν̅ωπηρε<sup>2</sup> πε<sup>3</sup> 29:3 αλλα ανοκ ι̅ρ̅ ωπηρε

1 For the omission of the definite article π- before nouns beginning with π in ΝΗC II, see Nagel 1969, 399.

2 The literal meaning of ογωπηρε ν̅ωπηρε is “a marvelous marvel,” which would correspond to θαύμα θαυμαστόν in the Greek *Vorlage*. It is likely, however, that the *Vorlage* of Gos. Thom. 29:2

29:1 Jesus said: “If the flesh came into being because of the spirit, it is a wonder. 29:2 But if the spirit (came into being) because of the body, it is a wonder of wonders. 29:3 Yet I marvel at how this great wealth has taken up residence in this poverty.”<sup>4</sup>

Although Gos. Thom. 29:1–2 is sometimes interpreted as an allusion to a creation myth,<sup>5</sup> I tend to agree with Risto Uro who points out that such an interpretation “remains but one of the alternatives.”<sup>6</sup> It seems reasonable to try to take this saying at face value, interpreting it as a verbalized thinking process. Jesus is speculating on how the unholy mix of flesh and spirit came into being. If it is on account of the spirit that the flesh came into existence, then the flesh is a wonder; if, on the other hand, the spirit came into existence on account of the flesh, then the spirit is a wonder of wonders. Regardless of what came first and what later, the fact that these two entities are combined with each other is astonishing. It is astonishing, because the spirit is “wealth” and the flesh is “poverty”; in other words, they have nothing in common. In any case, what is important for the following discussion is that the spirit is clearly superior to the body.

87:1 ΠΕΧΑΔΙ Ν̄ΒΙ ῙΣ̄ Χ̄Ε ΟΥΤΑΛΛΑΙΝΩΡΟΝ Π̄Ε Π̄ΣΩΜΑ ΕΤΑΩΕ Ν̄ΟΥΣΩΜΑ 87:2  
ΑΥΩ ΟΥΤΑΛΛΑΙΠΩΡΟΣ Τ̄Ε ΤΥΓΧΗ ΕΤΑΩΕ ΝΝΑΕΙ Μ̄Π̄ΣΝΑΥ

87:1 Jesus said: “Wretched is the body that depends on a body. 87:2 And wretched is the soul that depends on these two.”

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read *θαύμα θαυμάτων*, “a marvel of marvels,” as in Pseudo-Origen’s report on the teaching of the Naassenes (*Ref.* 5.8.18). Admittedly, the expression *θαύμα θαυμάτων* is not a unique phrase: it also occurs in T. Ab. A7.10 and Galen, *Us. part.* 15.7 (= 4.248 Kühn = 2.365 Helmreich). Yet the fact that, elsewhere, the Naassenes of Pseudo-Origen make use of sayings 4 (*Ref.* 5.7.20), 11 (5.8.32), and 33 (5.7.28) makes it very likely that *θαύμα θαυμάτων* in 5.8.18 is an allusion to Gos. Thom. 29:2.

- 3 Grammatically, *Π̄Ε* in Gos. Thom. 29:2 may refer back to either *Π̄Ν̄Δ* or *Π̄ΣΩΜΑ*, but the parallel structure of Gos. Thom. 29:1–2 makes it clear that Jesus refers to the spirit: since *Τ̄Ε* in Gos. Thom. 29:1 refers to *Τ̄ΣΑΡ̄Ζ*, *Π̄Ε* in Gos. Thom. 29:2 must refer to *Π̄Ν̄Δ*.
- 4 The Berliner Arbeitskreis puts the closing quotation mark after Gos. Thom. 29:2 and suggests that the “I” of Gos. Thom. 29:3 “belongs to some commentator” (Plisch 2008, 96). I do not find this proposal appealing, since the whole saying makes perfect sense as a coherent argument made by one person.
- 5 See, e.g., Patterson 2013, 43.
- 6 Uro 2003, 64.

112:1 ΠΕΧΕ ΙϚ ΔΕ ΟΥΟΕΙ Ν̄ΤΣΑΡΖ ΤΔΕΙ ΕΤΟΩΕ Ν̄ΤΥΧΗΗ 112:2 ΟΥΟΕΙ Ν̄ΤΥΧΗΗ  
ΤΔΕΙ ΕΤΟΩΕ Ν̄ΤΣΑΡΖ

112:1 Jesus said: “Woe to the flesh that depends on the soul. 112:2 Woe to the soul that depends on the flesh.”

Sayings 87 and 112 constitute one of the five pairs of doublets in the Gospel of Thomas; they resemble each other lexically, structurally, and conceptually.<sup>7</sup> On the other hand, there are notable differences between these two sayings. Most remarkably, saying 112 has no parallel for the notion of the body that depends on another body in saying 87. Scholars have offered several different interpretations for these two “bodies.” For instance, according to Uro,<sup>8</sup> since the world, according to sayings 56 and 80,<sup>9</sup> is a body, the body on which the other body depends is the world. As insightful as it is, this interpretation appears to be problematic from a strictly grammatical perspective: in all likelihood, the fact that the indefinite article ΟΥ precedes the word ΣΩΜΑ indicates that, in the Greek *Vortage* of Gos. Thom. 87:1, the word σῶμα was anarthrous. Thus, according to Gos. Thom. 87:1, every single body that depends on another body is wretched.

The principle described in Gos. Thom. 87:1 is, therefore, universal. While it is applicable to an individual body that is dependent upon the world, it is also applicable to the human body, “which depends for sustenance on the devouring of corpses,”<sup>10</sup> to the lover who depends on the object of his desire, to the slave who depends on his master, and so on. There can be little doubt that saying 87 is intentionally formulated in such a universalistic and abstract fashion that any of the aforementioned interpretations would do it justice. What is important, however, is that the discussion of the bodies in Gos. Thom. 87:1 lays the groundwork for the description of the misfortunes of the embodied soul in Gos. Thom. 87:2. The ultimate point of saying 87 is the following: every single body that is dependent upon another body is wretched, but the soul that is dependent upon a body, which is itself dependent upon another body is doubly wretched.

It is also worth noting that, while saying 87 contrasts the body with the soul, saying 112 contrasts the soul with the flesh. Although some early Christian texts

7 See Ásgeirsson 1997, 75.

8 See Uro 2003, 61.

9 I discuss these two sayings in chapter 2.

10 Davies 1983, 76.

certainly make a distinction between the flesh and the body,<sup>11</sup> the fact that sayings 87 and 112 constitute a doublet makes it likely that, in these two sayings, the terms  $\kappa\alpha\rho\acute{\nu}$  and  $\kappa\omicron\mu\alpha$  are, in fact, synonyms. Moreover, in Gos. Thom. 29:1–2 (quoted above, pp. 71–72), these two terms also appear to be synonymous.<sup>12</sup> Thus, it follows that the Gospel of Thomas uses the terms “body” and “flesh” interchangeably.

### Tripartite Anthropology in the Gospel of Thomas?

While saying 29 speaks of the relations between the body/flesh and the *spirit*, sayings 87 and 112 speak of the relations between the body/flesh and the *soul*. Moreover, while saying 29 asserts that body/flesh is “poverty” and spirit, “wealth,” sayings 87 and 112 do not explicitly state whether the body/flesh or the soul is superior to its counterpart. These facts could indicate that the soul and the spirit play different roles in Thomasine anthropology. In what follows, I would like to demonstrate that this is not the case and that the two terms are, in fact, synonyms.

It is well known that some early Christians acknowledged a difference between the soul and the spirit (see, e.g., 1 Cor 2:13–15; 15:46–47; Jude 19). Not everyone in the ancient world was, however, familiar with the distinction: as Richard A. Horsley points out, in Wis 15:11 the terms  $\psi\upsilon\chi\acute{\eta}$  and  $\pi\nu\epsilon\acute{\upsilon}\mu\alpha$  are used as synonyms.<sup>13</sup> Which of the two scenarios are we dealing with in the case of the Gospel of Thomas?

In his seminal article on the impact of Platonism on the Gospel of Thomas, Stephen J. Patterson suggested that the Gospel of Thomas adhered to the tripartite anthropological model outlined in Plutarch’s *Fac.* 943a. According to Plutarch, every human being is a combination of three elements: the body, the soul, and the mind ( $\nu\omicron\upsilon\varsigma$ ). It is wrong to think of the mind as a part of the soul: “for in the same degree as soul is superior to body so is mind better and more divine than soul” (trans. H. Cherniss and W.C. Helmbold). According to Patterson, the anthropology of the Gospel of Thomas is identical with the one outlined by Plutarch with only one exception: instead of the term  $\nu\omicron\upsilon\varsigma$ , the Gospel of Thomas employs the term  $\pi\nu\epsilon\acute{\upsilon}\mu\alpha$ .

11 See, e.g., the discussion of Paul’s anthropology in Bultmann 1952–1955, 1:192–203, 232–239.

12 Cf. Uro 2003, 62–63; Plisch 2008, 96.

13 See Horsley 1976, 272.

There is certainly some truth to Patterson's point; as I will try to show in this chapter, it is indeed very likely that Thomasine anthropology is indebted to Middle Platonist anthropology. On the other hand, it seems that Patterson attaches too much importance to the quoted Plutarchan passage. In fact, Plutarch seems to make such a sharp distinction between soul and mind in *Fac.* 943a, in order to make his anthropology coherent with the eschatological myth he tells shortly after.<sup>14</sup> It is not the only instance where Plutarch acts as the occasion demands: when telling another eschatological myth (*Gen. Socr.* 591d–e), he modifies his anthropology by saying that νοῦς, being a δαίμων, exists outside the human being. As Werner Deuse has recently pointed out, there is no “uniform conception” of mind-soul relations in Plutarch's writings. In order to understand why Plutarch chose this particular anthropological model, one should ascertain what the intention of the text in question is.<sup>15</sup> Remarkably, in *Virt. mor.* 441d–442a, where Plutarch does not hide behind the mask of a fictional character,<sup>16</sup> he follows Plato in speaking about two parts of the soul, the rational and the irrational.

It is evident that the view outlined in Plutarch's *Fac.* 943a should not be seen as a *communis opinio*;<sup>17</sup> in fact, νοῦς and ψυχή were sometimes used as mere synonyms. As Horsley points out, this is the case with *Wis* 9:15.<sup>18</sup> The same holds true for the Corpus Hermeticum. According to Horsley, Poimandres does not “maintain any anthropological distinction” between νοῦς and ψυχή; according to him, νοῦς and ψυχή “stand more in a parallel relationship than in a superior-inferior one.”<sup>19</sup> See especially Corp. Herm. 1.17:

ὁ δὲ ἄνθρωπος ἐκ ζωῆς καὶ φωτὸς ἐγένετο εἰς ψυχὴν καὶ νοῦν, ἐκ μὲν ζωῆς ψυχὴν, ἐκ δὲ φωτὸς νοῦν.

14 See Deuse 2010, 185–186.

15 See Deuse 2010, 186.

16 The narrator of the myth in *De facie in orbe lunae* is Sulla; the narrator of the myth in *De genio Socratis* is Simmias.

17 This is not to say that this passage in Plutarch is unparalleled in ancient Platonism. See the discussion of Philo, *Mos.* 2.288, in chapter 4 (pp. 107–109).

18 Horsley 1976, 272: “In 9:15 ψυχή and πνεῦμα [sic] are parallel, synonymous terms for the soul which the corruptible, earthly body weighs down.” Horsley's πνεῦμα is clearly a misprint for νοῦς.

19 Horsley 1976, 270. It is worth noting, however, that Horsley mistakenly states that in Poimandres νοῦς and πνεῦμα are synonyms. In reality, the Hermetic πνεῦμα is, as C.H. Dodd puts it, “one of the higher material elements, along with fire and air.” See Dodd 1953, 216.

From life and light the man became soul and mind; from life came soul, from light came mind.<sup>20</sup>

According to Corp. Herm. 1.21, one can obtain salvation only by learning that he or she came from light and life, because the deity, called ὁ θεὸς καὶ πατήρ (“god and father”), is light and life.<sup>21</sup> Since soul and mind originate from life and light, and since life and light are clearly not subordinate to each other, Horsley’s observation is most certainly correct.

Another problem with Patterson’s interpretation is that, according to him, the Gospel of Thomas adheres to the Platonist tripartite anthropological model as described by Plutarch, even though the term νοῦς is never employed in the Gospel of Thomas, which, instead of νοῦς, speaks of πνεῦμα. Patterson argues that this latter term is “a middle Platonic synonym for νοῦς.”<sup>22</sup> There is, however, only one ancient author who sometimes appears to use the term πνεῦμα as an equivalent for the term νοῦς: Philo. The reason why Philo employed the term in such a way is, according to Patterson, the Platonist exegesis of the biblical account of the creation of humankind; thus, God’s “breath” (Gen 2:7 LXX: πνοή) was understood as πνεῦμα, and πνεῦμα as νοῦς.<sup>23</sup>

Patterson’s hypothesis appears to be quite similar to the claim Birger Pearson made in 1973. According to Pearson, Hellenistic Jews preferred to use the term πνεῦμα instead of the term νοῦς.<sup>24</sup> As Horsley has pointed out, this claim is unsubstantiated.<sup>25</sup> The same holds true for Patterson’s train of thought. First, it is clear that some Jews distinguished between πνεῦμα and νοῦς—e.g., Paul (see 1 Cor 14:14). Some early Christians were also aware of this distinction—e.g., the author of the Gospel of Mary (BG 10.20–23). Second, as I will demonstrate, Philo’s exegesis of Gen 2:7 does not bear witness to any tradition that might have credited the Thomasine πνεῦμα with its alleged Platonist meaning.

Let us consider *Det.* 80–84. In this passage, Philo deals with an exegetical problem: his goal is to make away the discrepancies between the ψυχῆ ζῶσα of Gen 2:7 and the ψυχῆ σαρκός of Lev 17:11. Philo says that within all of us is both an animal and a human being and that there are two respective powers in each of us, the vital one, ἡ ζωτικὴ (sc., δύναμις), and the rational one, ἡ λογικὴ (sc., δύναμις). When Moses says, “The soul of all flesh (ἡ ψυχὴ πάσης σαρκός) is its

20 Corp. Herm. 1.17, trans. B.P. Copenhaver.

21 Cf. Pearson 1973, 8.

22 Patterson 2013, 42.

23 Ibid., 40–41.

24 Pearson 1973, 11.

25 See Horsley 1976, 271.

blood" (Lev 17:11), he refers to the vital force. When he says that God breathed into the human's face a spirit of life (Philo alters πνοή ζωής to πνεῦμα ζωής) and "the human (ὁ ἄνθρωπος) became a living soul" (Gen 2:7), he refers to the rational force. Thus, according to Moses, there are two souls: blood is the carnal soul (σαρκὸς ψυχή) (Lev 17:11), while the human soul (ἀνθρώπου ψυχή) is πνεῦμα (Gen 2:7). The latter, according to Philo, is the superior form of the soul (τὸ τῆς ψυχῆς ἄριστον εἶδος), which is also called "mind" and "reason" (νοῦς καὶ λόγος).

At first glance, one might think that, in this passage, Philo uses πνεῦμα and νοῦς as synonyms. However, in order to understand Philo, we must distinguish his *explanatio* from the biblical *explanandum* (i.e., that which needs to be explained). As Sami Yli-Karjanmaa points out, in all instances that Philo uses πνεῦμα in a "spiritual" sense (i.e., not as a "breath" or "wind"), it is always as a *biblical lemma* (= *explanandum*), rather than a bona fide Philonic term.<sup>26</sup> Thus, πνεῦμα makes an appearance in *Det.* 80–84 only because it is part of the biblical lemma in question.<sup>27</sup> It is then "translated" by means of the Platonist categories of "mind," "reason," and "soul." To consider "spirit" to be Philo's synonym for "mind" would, therefore, be to misunderstand his biblical exegesis.

It follows that the identification of νοῦς with πνεῦμα was likely not a widespread Middle Platonist notion that could have made its way into the Gospel of Thomas. Although one might argue that *Det.* 80–84 and similar Philonic passages could have inspired some less insightful readers to use πνεῦμα as a synonym for νοῦς, it does not seem justified to consider them as a background for the Thomasine use of πνεῦμα, since there are no indications of a Philonic influence on the Gospel of Thomas. Therefore, it is unlikely that πνεῦμα in the Gospel of Thomas is used to designate the Middle Platonist notion of νοῦς.

Admittedly, while it is not identical with the Middle Platonist νοῦς, the Thomasine πνεῦμα might also not be identical with ψυχή. It is worth noting, however, that there is nothing in the Gospel of Thomas that would imply that ψυχή and πνεῦμα are *not* synonyms. As I have already pointed out, these two terms are synonymous in Wis 15:11. The same may be the case with the Gospel of Thomas. It seems that at least one Thomasine saying supports this claim.

In Gos. Thom. 114:2, Jesus tells his male disciples that he will make Mary as they are, meaning that she will become "a living πνεῦμα" (οὐπῆνᾶ εφορη). As I have argued elsewhere,<sup>28</sup> it is likely that the Thomasine notion of a "living

26 Yli-Karjanmaa 2016, 281–282.

27 Although the biblical text of Gen 2:7 speaks about πνοή, not πνεῦμα, it seems clear that, according to Philo, πνεῦμα is what Moses meant. See the discussion of Gos. Thom. 114:2 below (pp. 77–78).

28 See Miroshnikov 2017.



spirit” is inspired by the creation narrative of Gen 2:7;<sup>29</sup> thus, what is meant by becoming a “living spirit” is the attainment of the condition of Adam, as he, too, had become a “living soul” (ψυχή ζῶσα).

Admittedly, the word πνεῦμα does not occur in Gen 2:7. However, the Biblical text does employ a cognate to πνεῦμα—viz., πνοή—and at least some ancient readers of Gen 2:7 certainly thought that the text spoke about πνεῦμα. For instance, in *Det.* 80—as I have noted above (p. 77)—and *Leg.* 3.161, Philo quotes Gen 2:7, substituting πνεῦμα ζωῆς for πνοή ζωῆς. In *Opif.* 135, Philo writes that what God breathed into the human was nothing other than a “divine spirit,” πνεῦμα θεῖον. As Yli-Karjanmaa, notes, it seems that Philo considered πνεῦμα to be a more appropriate (biblical) category than πνοή.<sup>30</sup> This suggestion receives support from Wis 15:11, a passage that clearly alludes to Gen 2:7, in which the biblical ψυχή ζῶσα and πνοή ζωῆς become ψυχή ἐνεργούσα and πνεῦμα ζωτικόν.

Since the notion of a “living spirit” draws upon Gen 2:7, where God makes Adam a “living soul,” it seems reasonable to surmise that, saying 114 in particular and the Gospel of Thomas in general does not seem to distinguish between ψυχή and πνεῦμα. Thus, my conclusion is that not only is the term πνεῦμα in the Gospel of Thomas not equivalent to the Middle Platonist term νοῦς, but also that it is in fact likely that the anthropology of the Gospel of Thomas is not tripartite (flesh/body vs. soul vs. spirit), but bipartite (flesh/body vs. soul/spirit).

### The Body vs. the Soul

The next question I need to address is what the Gospel of Thomas says about the relationship between the body and the soul. I would like to focus on the interpretation of the nature of the soul in saying 112. Quite notably, two prominent scholars of the Gospel of Thomas, Uro and Patterson, have recently offered a reading of the saying against the background of *Tim.* 87c–89a. The line of argument goes as follows.

According to Timaeus, the main dramatis persona of the dialogue, the living being (τὸ ζῶον), is the combination (τὸ συναμφότερον) of the body and the soul. Hence, “in determining health and disease or virtue and vice (ὕγίεια καὶ νόσοι ἀρεταί τε καὶ κακίαι), no proportion or lack of it (συμμετρία καὶ ἀμετρία) is more important than that between soul and body” (87d; trans. D.J. Zeyl). If the soul

29 Cf. Perkins 1995, 558–560; DeConick 1996, 19–20; Kvalbein 2006, 214.

30 Yli-Karjanmaa 2016, 280–281.

is strong and excellent, but the body that carries it about is too weak, then the living being as a whole is not beautiful (οὐ καλόν). If the proportion is disturbed in the opposite way, the outcome is equally unfortunate. If, however, the body and the soul are a match, then the living being is “the most beautiful and the most pleasant of all things to behold (πάντων θεαμάτων κάλλιστον καὶ ἔρασιμιώτατον).” Timaeus then goes on to provide examples of the mismatch between body and soul:

When within it (i.e. the living being) there is a soul more powerful than the body and this soul gets excited, it churns the whole being and fills it from inside with diseases, and when it concentrates on one or another course of study or inquiry, it wears the body out. And again, when the soul engages in public or private teaching sessions or verbal battles, the disputes and contentions that then occur cause the soul to fire the body up and rock it back and forth, so inducing discharges which trick most so-called doctors into making misguided diagnoses. But when, on the other hand, a large body, too much for its soul, is joined with a puny and feeble mind, then, given that human beings have two sets of natural desires—desires of the body for food and desires of the most divine part of us for wisdom—the motions of the stronger part will predominate, and amplify their own interest. They render the functions of the soul dull, stupid and forgetful, thereby bringing on the gravest disease of all: ignorance.<sup>31</sup>

In order to avoid this unhappy quarrel, the body and the soul should be “in equipoise” (ἰσορρόπων). We should neither exercise our souls without also exercising our bodies nor our bodies without our souls (μήτε τὴν ψυχὴν ἄνευ σώματος κινεῖν μήτε σώμα ἄνευ ψυχῆς). It is necessary for a mathematician to practice gymnastics and for an athlete to apply himself to arts (μουσική) and philosophy. As A.E. Taylor pointed out, Timaeus lays out the Pythagorean theory that health is ἰσονομία, the balance between the body and the soul.<sup>32</sup> It is also worth noting that this passage in *Timaeus* made an impact on some Middle Platonists. The importance of maintaining body and soul in equilibrium was later repeated by Plutarch (see, e.g., *Tu. san.* 135e–f; *Quaest. conv.* 681d–f; *Cons. ux.* 610a–b) and Apuleius (*Plat. Dogm.* 216–218).

Although Uro and Patterson both interpret saying 112 against the background of *Tim.* 87c–89a, their interpretations are significantly different. Patter-

31 *Tim.* 87e–88b, trans. D.J. Zeyl.

32 See Taylor 1928, 623.

son ascribes to the Gospel of Thomas the tripartite anthropology of the mortal body, the mortal soul, and the divine and immortal spirit (see above) and argues that the focus of saying 112 “is on the difficult relationship that exists between the body and the soul.” While the soul is not superior to the body, they are both inferior to the mind. They always struggle with each other, and what Plato described as the lack of balance between the body and the soul is, in fact, “the essence of mortal existence.”<sup>33</sup>

Even leaving aside Patterson’s questionable suggestion that the Thomasine anthropology is tripartite, his interpretation of saying 112 still remains problematic. The Gospel of Thomas does not hold that the body and the soul are equally abominable; while the body is malicious (see chapter 2), nothing indicates that there is something wrong with the soul. That the attitude of the Gospel of Thomas towards the soul is positive is clear from the wording of sayings 25 and 28.

In Gos. Thom. 28:3, Jesus says that his soul became afflicted for the sons of men. As Joachim Jeremias pointed out, “my soul” (ἡ ψυχή μου = ταΰχη) is a Semiticism that also occurs in Mark 14:34 (περίλυπός ἐστιν ἡ ψυχή μου, “my soul is deeply grieved”) and John 12:27 (ἡ ψυχή μου τετάρακται, “my soul is troubled”). In all these instances, “my soul” is identical with “I.”<sup>34</sup> It is unlikely that the Thomasine Jesus would use this expression to refer to himself, if the Thomasine term “soul” designated the mortal element within as distinct from the divine and immortal element.

In Gos. Thom. 25:1, Jesus says, “love your brother like your soul,” μερε πεκσον ἵνε ἡτεκΰχη. Gos. Thom. 25:1 is a version of the love commandment from Lev 19:18 LXX (ἀγαπήσεις τὸν πλησίον σου ὡς σεαυτόν, “you shall love your neighbor as yourself”) that achieved wide circulation among early Christians. It is worth noting that some texts (e.g., Mark 12:31) present this commandment the same way as phrased in Lev 19:18 LXX, while others (e.g., Barn. 19:5), like the Gospel of Thomas, counsel the love of one’s soul rather than of oneself. Quite remarkably, the Didache includes both variants and exhorts the reader to love others both ὡς σεαυτόν, “as yourself” (Did. 1:2) and ὑπὲρ τὴν ψυχὴν σου, “more than your soul” (Did. 2:7). There can be no doubt that these two expressions, used in the different versions of the love commandment, “your soul” and “yourself,” are synonymous.<sup>35</sup> It is unlikely that, in Gos. Thom. 25:1, the Thomasine Jesus would

33 Patterson 2013, 41–42.

34 See Jeremias 1958, 71. This Semitism first appears in the Septuagint (see, e.g., Ps 41/42:7, where it renders Hebrew נַפְשִׁי); it is also attested in various Old Testament pseudepigrapha (see Bertram et al. 1974, 9:633).

35 Cf. Wengst 1984, 94; Niederwimmer 1998, 93; Plisch 2008, 90–91.

say “as your soul” instead of “as yourself,” if the soul were among the inferior elements of the human compound.

In sum, a careful reading of sayings 25 and 28 demonstrates that the Gospel of Thomas by no means treats the body and the soul as equals. Jesus refers to himself as “my soul” in Gos. Thom. 28:3, and he means “yourself” when he says “your soul” in Gos. Thom. 25:1. The phraseology of these sayings makes it clear that, in the Gospel of Thomas, the word “soul” designates one’s own “self” or one’s own “person.” The Thomasine Jesus would not phrase these sayings the way they are, unless he considered the human being to be nothing other than the soul itself.

Jesus’ attitude towards the body is drastically different; in saying 28, before he identifies himself with his soul (Gos. Thom. 28:3), he says that he merely “appeared” in the flesh (Gos. Thom. 28:1), implying that being in the flesh is incidental to his existence and unrelated to his true self. This unflattering portrayal of the body becomes even more evident when we turn to the other Thomasine sayings: the body is “poverty” (saying 29) and has no worth unless the soul inhabits it (cf. my discussion of sayings in 56 and 80 in chapter 2).

Uro’s reading of saying 112 is different from that of Patterson. He points out that the Gospel of Thomas is aware of different ways of characterizing “the immortal or divine part of the human being,” including but not limited to the “spirit,” the “soul,” the inner “kingdom” (Gos. Thom. 3:3), and the inner “light” (Gos. Thom. 24:3).<sup>36</sup> Thus, unlike Patterson, Uro does not assume that Thomasine anthropology presupposes fundamental differences between the soul and the spirit, but rather sees these two entities as identical. Uro furthermore argues that saying 112 expresses ideas that fundamentally agree with what Plato says about the body-soul relationship in his *Timaeus*:<sup>37</sup>

[Gos. Thom. 112:1] reveals a concern about the body. The body, too, can become unhappy if it depends upon the soul. Although *Thomas* does not say it, the logical implication is that the reverse can also be true. The body *can* be happy and healthy if no unhealthy relationship between body and soul exists.<sup>38</sup>

36 Uro 2003, 64.

37 Admittedly, Uro’s primary focus here is on Plutarch, as he was roughly contemporary with the production of the Gospel of Thomas; it is worth noting, however, that, as I have already pointed out, in his observations on the body-soul relationship Plutarch merely follows in the footsteps of Plato’s *Timaeus*.

38 Uro 2003, 59.

The saying, then, is not “an exhortation to neglect the body completely or to regard the body and soul as being hostile to each other.”<sup>39</sup> As fascinating as this interpretation is, I do not think it does justice to the intellectual outlook advocated by the Gospel of Thomas. Saying 112 does not necessarily imply that the body and the soul should be in equipoise. The saying deals with the relationship between the embodied soul and the ensouled body. According to Gos. Thom. 112:1, the flesh/body that depends on the soul is wretched; according to Gos. Thom. 112:2, the soul that depends on the flesh/body is also wretched. Significantly, the third option, a harmonious coexistence of these two, is never mentioned. Nothing indicates that it is even on the table.

As I have already pointed out, sayings 87 and 112 constitute a doublet. The second halves of these two sayings (Gos. Thom. 87:2 and 112:2) are nearly identical and most certainly constitute the focal point of either of them: the soul that depends on the body is wretched—i.e., the soul should not depend on the body. Unlike their second halves, the first halves of these sayings are different: Gos. Thom. 87:1 discusses the body that depends on another body; Gos. Thom. 112:1 discusses the body that depends on the soul.

It is unlikely that either Gos. Thom. 87:1 or Gos. Thom. 112:1 have any significance in isolation from their respective counterparts. Rather, Gos. Thom. 87:1 and 112:1 pave the way for Gos. Thom. 87:2 and 112:2. It is the second halves of these two sayings that deliver the main message of the respective sayings overall: the soul should be independent from the body. It does not seem likely that Gos. Thom. 87:1 reveals a concern for those bodies that depend on other bodies; rather, the purpose of Gos. Thom. 87:1 is to place emphasis on Gos. Thom. 87:2 (even bodies suffer when they depend on other bodies; imagine what it is like for souls!). Similarly, Gos. Thom. 112:1 does not reveal any concern for the body that depends on the soul, but rather depicts an alternative to the situation described in Gos. Thom. 112:2. Thus, saying 112 contrasts the human dominated by the soul with the human dominated by the body, urging its reader to choose between two mutually exclusive options: either you subordinate your body to your soul, to the detriment of the body (Gos. Thom. 112:1), or you subordinate your soul to your body, to the detriment of the soul (Gos. Thom. 112:2).

Moreover, other Thomasine sayings hardly provide any support for the claim that the Gospel of Thomas is concerned with bodily wellbeing. Thomasine views on the body are by no means favorable. As I have pointed out in the previous chapter, the Gospel of Thomas maintains that bodies are corpses, as worthless and lifeless as stones and logs. Moreover, according to Gos. Thom.

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39 Ibid., 60.

29:3, the spirit/soul is “great wealth” and the body is “poverty,” and it is thus astonishing that the former should have taken up residence in the latter. It is clear, therefore, that the two entities in question, the body and the soul, are not of equal value. The Gospel of Thomas praises the soul and defames the body. The soul’s wellbeing is important; the body’s is not.

It follows, therefore, that, according to the Gospel of Thomas, the body and the soul are mortal enemies: they are in constant struggle and, whenever one of them prevails, the other necessarily suffers. Surely, there can be no doubt on whose side the Gospel of Thomas is: of the two alternatives presented in saying 112 (viz., the dominance of the body at the expense of the soul and the dominance of the soul at the expense of the body), the reader is supposed to choose the latter option.

Thus, it is unlikely that saying 112 should be read against the background of *Tim.* 87c–89a. The fact that Platonists sometimes commended the balance of the body and the soul does not seem to have any bearing on the understanding of the Gospel of Thomas. With regard to the dialogues of Plato, the closest parallel to the sentiment expressed in sayings 29, 87, and 112 comes from *Phaedo*.

According to this dialogue, there are two classes of existence (δύο εἶδη τῶν ὄντων): the one that is invisible and always remains the same and the one that is visible and always changes (79a). The soul is more like the invisible existence than the body, whereas the body is more like the visible existence than the soul (79b). Clearly, then, the difference between the soul and the body is fundamental; as Plato’s Socrates puts it, “the soul is most like the divine, deathless, intelligible, uniform, indissoluble, always the same as itself, whereas the body is most like that which is human, mortal, multiform, unintelligible, soluble and never consistently the same” (*Phaed.* 80b; trans. G.M.A. Grube).

The body ought to be subjected to the soul: “Whenever the soul and the body are together, nature ordains the latter to be slave and to be ruled and the former to rule and be master (ἐπειδὴν ἐν τῷ αὐτῷ ὡσι ψυχὴ καὶ σῶμα, τῷ μὲν δουλεύειν καὶ ἄρχεσθαι ἢ φύσις προστάττει, τῇ δὲ ἄρχειν καὶ δεσπόζειν)” (79e–80a).<sup>40</sup> The soul exercises its power by mastering the affections of the body (τὰ κατὰ τὸ σῶμα πάθη) and opposing them—e.g., by not letting the body drink when it

40 Cf. *Tim.* 34c, where the demiurge makes the world’s soul “to be the body’s mistress and to rule over it as her subject” (trans. D.J. Zeyl). Cf. also Aristotle’s *Protrepticus*: “Further, part of us is soul, part body; the one rules, the other is ruled; the one uses, the other is present as its instrument” (fr. 6 Ross = fr. B 59 Düring = Iamblichus, *Protr.* 7; trans. J. Barnes and G. Lawrence). In Hutchinson and Johnson 2005, 244–251, this fragment was proven to belong to Aristotle; cf. Jaeger 1948, 65–66.

is thirsty and eat when it is hungry (94b–e). It is worth noting, however, that Plato’s “nature” is a normative concept. As David Gallop points out, “the soul’s ‘natural’ fitness to rule the body does not mean that it always does so, just as in *Respublica* (430e–431a) the ‘natural’ superiority of reason does not mean that it is actually in control.”<sup>41</sup>

Thus, while the soul ought to rule over the body, the unsavory truth is that we are slaves to our own bodies (66b–d) and that the body acts as both the chains (67d) and the prison (82e) of the soul. The body is a hindrance to the soul’s philosophical quest, and the soul of a true philosopher “most disdains the body, flees from it and seeks to be by itself” (65d; trans. G.M.A. Grube). We will never fully possess the truth “as long as we have a body and our soul is contaminated by such an evil (τοιούτου κακόν)” (66b). For this reason, Socrates says that τὸ μελέτημα τῶν φιλοσόφων, “what philosophers practice doing,” is λύσις καὶ χωρισμὸς ψυχῆς ἀπὸ σώματος, “freeing and separating of the soul from the body”—i.e., death (67d).<sup>42</sup>

Similar sentiments often occur in writers of Platonist persuasion of the historical period roughly contemporary with the composition of the Gospel of Thomas. I will discuss one author, Maximus of Tyre, as an example. It is worth noting that, as M.B. Trapp points out, Maximus was not “a declared and partisan Platonist”—even though the principal manuscript of his *Dissertationes*, Parisinus Graecus 1962, calls Maximus a “Platonic philosopher,” Πλατωνικὸς φιλόσοφος. While he acknowledges “the division of philosophy into a multiplicity of competing sects,”<sup>43</sup> he never approves of it. Moreover, Maximus was by no means “a school philosopher offering a systematic course of instruction in philosophical doctrine.”<sup>44</sup> On the other hand, it is clear that the philosophical component of *Dissertationes* “is in practice consistently Platonizing, whatever the explicit account of philosophy and his own orientation within it Maximus may give.”<sup>45</sup>

41 Gallop 1975, 141.

42 Cf. the opening paragraph of Alcinous’ handbook, where he defines philosophy as λύσις καὶ περιαγωγή ψυχῆς ἀπὸ σώματος, “freeing and turning around of the soul from the body” (*Didasc.* 1.1; trans. J.M. Dillon). Dillon 1993a, 52, points out that this definition is a combination of *Phaed.* 67d and *Resp.* 521c, where Socrates speaks of “turning a soul (περιαγωγή ψυχῆς) from a day that is a kind of night to the true day” (trans. G.M.A. Grube and C.D.C. Reeve).

43 Trapp 1997b, 1949.

44 Trapp 1997a, xxiii.

45 *Ibid.*, xxvii.

In what follows, I summarize the notions on the body-soul relationship that Maximus expresses in *Diss.* 7, an oration where Maximus draws on the imagery of Plato's dialogues to convince his audience of the superiority of the soul over the body.<sup>46</sup> The manuscript title of this oration is "Which Illnesses Are the More Harsh, Those of the Body or Those of the Soul" (trans. M.B. Trapp).

The human being (ὁ ἄνθρωπος) is a compound of the body and the soul. These two components are not equal (*Diss.* 7.1). The latter rules over the former (τὸ μὲν αὐτοῦ ἄρχον, τὸ δὲ ἀρχόμενον). The body is like a people, and the soul is like their ruler. "The people are a creature swift to anger, vehement in its desires, dissipated in its pleasures, spineless in grief, and harsh in its rages (χρήμα ὄξυ ἐν ὀργαῖς, ἰσχυρὸν ἐν ἐπιθυμίαις, ὑγρὸν ἐν ἡδοναῖς, δύσθυμον ἐν λύπαις, χαλεπὸν ἐν θυμοῖς), exactly like the passions of the body, which is itself desirous (ἐπιθυμητικόν), impetuous (ἰτητικόν), hedonistic (φιλήδονον), and impulsive (ὄρμητικόν)" (trans. M.B. Trapp). The ruler, on the other hand, is by nature the strongest, most authoritative, honorable, prudent, and rational element in a state, just as the soul is in the human being. Hence, "the soul is more valuable than the body" (*Diss.* 7.2; trans. M.B. Trapp, slightly altered).

Later on, Maximus argues that the noble soul even welcomes the dissolution of the body (οὐδὲ ἀκούσῃ εἶναι τῇ γενναίᾳ ψυχῇ φθορὰν σώματος). He illustrates his point in the following passage, where he combines Plato's notion of the body as the soul's prison, Plato's notion of the body as the soul's tomb (*Crat.* 400c; *Gorg.* 493a; *Phaedr.* 250c),<sup>47</sup> and the imagery of Plato's allegory of the cave (*Resp.* 514a–517a):

You might compare the case of a prisoner who can see the wall of his prison (δεσμωτήριον; cf. Plato, *Crat.* 400c) rotting and crumbling and waits for release and freedom from his place of confinement (εἰργμός; cf. Plato, *Phaed.* 82e), so that he can step from the deep and murky dark in which he has hitherto been buried (κατωρῶρυκτο), and look up to the high skies and glut himself on the bright light of day.<sup>48</sup>

Skin, bones, and flesh are nothing else but "short-lived mantles and flimsy and tattered rags" of the soul. Thus, the good soul (ἡ ἀγαθὴ ψυχὴ) has no care (ἀμελεῖ) for the body and desires to strip it off (ἐφέρεται γυμνωθῆναι) as soon as possible. "But the wretched soul (ἡ δειλὴ ψυχὴ) that is earthed (κατωρῶρυγμένη)

46 Cf. *ibid.*, 59.

47 I discuss these Platonic passages in chapter 2 (pp. 50–54).

48 *Diss.* 7.5, trans. M.B. Trapp.



into the body like a sluggish creature in its burrow loves (φιλεῖ) that burrow and wishes never to be parted from it or to have to crawl out of it" (trans. M.B. Trapp). This love for the body will make the soul suffer until it comes to realize that "death is indeed a healer that will free you from misfortune and from an insatiable, disease-ridden beast [i.e., from the body]" (*Diss.* 7.5; trans. M.B. Trapp).

The ideological affinities between the Platonist notions of the body-soul relationship and sayings 29, 87, and 112 are evident. According to the Gospel of Thomas, the human being has two components, the body (occasionally called "the flesh") and the soul (occasionally called "the spirit"). To describe the relationship between these two components, the Gospel of Thomas uses the term "dependence." Either the soul depends on the body, or the body depends on the soul. In other words, either the soul dominates and the body obeys, or vice versa; there is no third option. In both cases, the component brought into subjection is "wretched." As long as the human being lives, the embodied soul and the ensouled body are engaged in a constant struggle for dominance. The outcome of this struggle is a matter of utmost importance, since the body and the soul are by no means of equal worth: whereas the body is "poverty," the soul is "great wealth," and it eludes Jesus' understanding how the latter has taken up residence in the former. Thus, in the struggle between the soul and the body, the Gospel of Thomas clearly vouches for the soul, meaning that the reader of the Gospel of Thomas ought to nurture the soul, disdain the body, and by no means allow the soul to become subjected to the body.

Thomasine anthropology thus makes great sense in light of the Platonist body-soul dualism. Plato and later Platonists maintained that the two components of the human being are in all respects different, and that the soul is undeniably better than the body. The passions are the body's allies and together they go to great lengths to prevent the soul from contemplating the divine realm. The soul's mission is thus to rule over and discipline the body, but the grim reality of human life is that instead of being in control, the soul remains the body's slave. For this reason, we should neither regret nor resist the death of the body. While the ignorant soul inevitably feels attached to the body, the wise soul longs to escape its imprisonment from the body, to liberate itself from "this useless garment (τὸ δύσχρηστον τοῦτο περιβλημα)" (Maximus, *Diss.* 7.4).

It is worth noting that such comparison with the Platonist notions of the body-soul relationship makes better sense of the reasoning behind the "anthropological" sayings of the Gospel of Thomas. For instance, while the Thomasine Jesus never explains why the body that depends on the soul is wretched, it is likely that the body's misery is rooted in its inability to pursue its urges. It is also

likely that these sayings presuppose a positive evaluation of physical death. In the end, only the death of the body can terminate the soul's captivity. Thus, it is possible that, when he says that the soul that depends on the body is wretched, the Thomasine Jesus envisions death as the soul's ultimate escape from its misery, since only after the dissolution of the body will the soul achieve complete independence.

It seems plausible, therefore, that the author(s) of sayings 29, 87, and 112 had Platonist inclinations and that these sayings should be understood against a Platonist background. This thesis receives additional support from the fact that the Thomasine understanding of the body expressed in sayings 56 and 80 is, as I have argued in chapter 2, both indebted to and in dialogue with the Platonist tradition. Finally, it should be noted that the very dualism of Thomasine anthropology—i.e., the division of the human being into two opposing parts, a corporeal and an incorporeal one, identified as the body and the soul—also appears to be a Platonizing tendency.

According to Jackson P. Hershbell, "it is difficult to find any clear emphasis on the *σῶμα-ψυχή* division" in the early Christian literature before the apologists.<sup>49</sup> It is not until the time of the apologists that Hershbell is able to single out Diogn. 6 as a text with a "clearly formulated division of man into body and soul."<sup>50</sup> This passage elaborates upon the analogy of the relationship between the soul (*ψυχή*) and the body/flesh (*σῶμα/σάρξ*) and that between the Christians and the world. According to this passage, the body is a "mortal dwelling place (*θνητὸν σκήνωμα*)" of the immortal soul (Diogn. 6:8); it hates (*μισεῖ*) the soul and is at war (*πολεμεῖ*) with it (Diogn. 6:5); the soul "is not of the body"

49 Admittedly, there are several exceptions—e.g., Matt 10:28, where Jesus contrasts persecutors, who can kill the body but not the soul, with God, who can destroy both the body and the soul in Gehenna. This verse presupposes that the body and the soul are distinct and separable (cf. Gundry 1976, 115; *pace* Schweizer 1976, 247–248, who argues that, here, as in Matt 6:25, the terms *ψυχή* and *σῶμα* "designate man as a whole, but under different aspects"). Yet the Matthean Jesus does not contrast the body with the soul, but rather physical death with eternal punishment after the resurrection and the judgement. His point is not that the sufferings of the soul are worse than the sufferings of the body, but that the destruction of the whole person, the reunited body and soul, is far more serious than the destruction of the body alone. The embodiment of the soul is thus a prerequisite for eternal damnation. As Milikowsky 1988, 242, points out, in Matthew, "Gehenna is the place of retribution for the reunited body and soul; the soul by itself has no real existence and does not receive retribution." Thus, the Matthean anthropology is dualistic, but only to some extent: while the soul can survive the dissolution of the body, it does not seem to be alive in the truest sense of the word, until it reunites with the resurrected body.

50 Hershbell 1978, 146.

(οὐκ ἔστι ἐκ τοῦ σώματος) (Diogn. 6:3); it is imprisoned (φρουρεῖται) (Diogn. 6:4) in and confined (ἐγκέλεισται) (Diogn. 6:7) within the body.

With respect to the present discussion, it is especially remarkable that, as Clayton N. Jefford has pointed out, “this vibrant image draws on various middle-Platonic considerations of reality.”<sup>51</sup> Already in the nineteenth century, Johann Karl Theodor Otto noted that the phrase “Christians are detained in the world as in prison (ὡς ἐν φρουρᾷ)” (Diogn. 6:7; cf. 6:4) is reminiscent of *Phaed.* 62b, where Socrates says that we are all “in a sort of prison (ἐν τινι φρουρᾷ).”<sup>52</sup> Henry G. Meecham pointed out that the claim that Christians are not allowed to abandon the position (τάξις) to which God (ὁ θεός) has appointed them reflects *Apol.* 28e–29a (cf. *Phaed.* 62b), where Socrates refuses to desert the post (τάξις) to which “god (ὁ θεός)” (i.e., Apollo) has ordained him.<sup>53</sup> Finally, Jefford has recently argued that the anthropology of Diogn. 6 ultimately derives from *Phaedr.* 245c–250c.<sup>54</sup>

Of all early Christian texts, Diogn. 6, with its portrayal of the opposition of the body to the soul, appears to offer the closest parallel to the Thomasine body-soul dualism. Diogn. 6 is also the most striking instance of the indebtedness of the author of Diognetus to the Platonist tradition.<sup>55</sup> It can hardly be a coincidence, and it seems likely that the Gospel of Thomas with its body-soul dualism also found its inspiration in Platonism.

Moreover, it seems that Thomasine anthropology is in a way more faithful to the Platonist understanding of the body-soul relationship than that of Diogn.

51 Jefford 2013, 64.

52 Otto 1879, 182.

53 See Meecham 1949, 117.

54 See Jefford 2013, 224–225.

55 Another early Christian text from the times of the apologists that divides the human person into body and soul is *Legatio pro Christianis* by Athenagoras (see 1.4; 36.2). Quite remarkably, *Legatio pro Christianis* is indebted to Platonism to a far greater degree than Diognetus. Not only did Athenagoras read Plato (see Barnard 1972b, 6–7) and admire him (see *Leg.* 23.5–10; cf. Geffcken 1907, 213), he was also, as Jacobsen 2014, 82, puts it, “well placed in the Middle Platonic tradition.” Malherbe 2014, 2:827, even describes him as a “Christian Platonist.” It is worth noting that, though the biography of Athenagoras largely remains a mystery, some of the evidence suggests that he had Platonist affiliations: according to Philip of Side (*Hist. Christ.* fr. 2; see Heyden 2006, 214–215), Athenagoras “became a Christian while wearing the philosopher’s cloak and presiding over the Academy (τῆς Ἀκαδημαϊκῆς σχολῆς προϊστάμενος).” Moreover, he may be the same Athenagoras to whom Boethus dedicated his *Περὶ τῶν παρὰ Πλάτωνι ἀπορουμένων λέξεων*, “On Difficult Expressions in Plato” (Photius, *Bibl.* 155.100a.19–21 Bekker). Admittedly, this identification is questionable, but not impossible; cf. Zahn 1884, 60; Barnard 1972a, 16; Dyck 1985, 81.

6. According to Diogn. 6:5–6, the flesh/body hates the soul, but the soul loves (φιλεῖ) the flesh/body nevertheless. This stands in marked contrast to what Maximus says in his *Diss.* 7.5 (cf. the discussion above): only the wretched soul loves the body; this love will cause nothing but misery. The Gospel of Thomas stresses the unworthiness of the body, which means that love for the body is most certainly out of the question.<sup>56</sup> In this respect, therefore, Diognetus goes against the Platonist tradition, whereas the Gospel of Thomas agrees with it.

### Conclusions

In this chapter, I have discussed the anthropology of the Gospel of Thomas. The results of my study are as follows. First, while, in my opinion, Patterson's suggestion that the Gospel of Thomas draws on Platonist anthropology is right, I find it unlikely that the Thomasine πνεῦμα is an equivalent of the Platonist νοῦς. As I have argued, while it may seem that Philo occasionally identifies νοῦς with πνεῦμα, the latter term is always part of the biblical lemma and thus belongs exclusively to the *explanandum* of the text. In other words, πνεῦμα—in a sense that would be synonymous with νοῦς—did not belong to Philo's philosophical vocabulary and, by inference, is not attested in the Middle Platonist lexicon.<sup>57</sup>

Second, it is unlikely that the Gospel of Thomas adheres to a certain variety of the tripartite anthropology whereby it would consider the soul to be an entity inferior to the spirit. In all likelihood, just like different Thomasine sayings call the corporeal and inferior part of the human being either "body" or "flesh," so also they call the superior and incorporeal part either "soul" or "spirit." As I have argued, the use of the term ψυχή in sayings 25 and 28 suggests that the

56 Only the soul is worthy of love (Gos. Thom. 25:1). As I have argued above (pp. 80–81), "your soul" in Gos. Thom. 25:1 means "yourself," which implies that the Gospel of Thomas identifies the soul with the true self of the human person. This notion is in line with the Platonist understanding of the body-soul relationship: "Since a man is neither his body, nor his body and soul together (τὸ συναμφότερον), what remains, I think, is either that he's nothing, or else, if he *is* something, he's nothing other than his soul" (Pseudo-Plato, *Alc. maj.* 130c; trans. D.S. Hutchinson); "For each of us is a soul, an immortal living being locked up in a mortal prison (τὸ θνητὸν φρούριον)" (Pseudo-Plato, *Ax.* 365e; trans. J.P. Hershbell); cf. Plato, *Leg.* 959a–c.

57 The only sort of πνεῦμα that belonged to Philo's philosophical vocabulary is the πνεῦμα of Stoic physics (see, e.g., *Deus* 35). Interestingly, he uses the term πνεῦμα in the Stoic sense in *Fug.* 134 (*pace* Burton 1918, 158, 160–161), where he applies to νοῦς the Stoic definition of ψυχή (Diogenes, *Vit. philos.* 7.157: ψυχή is πνεῦμα ἔνθερμον), saying that ὁ νοῦς is ἔνθερμον καὶ πεπρωμένον πνεῦμα.

Gospel of Thomas envisions the soul as the true self of the human person and the body as an entity that is incidental to a person's existence. Such an antithesis of the body and the soul appears to be identical with that of the body and the spirit in saying 29, which describes the spirit that dwells in the body as the "great wealth" that has taken up residence in "poverty." The hypothesis that the Thomasine "soul" or "spirit" are synonymous receives additional support from my analysis of Gos. Thom. 114:2. As I have suggested, it is likely that the Thomasine notion that men are "living spirits" draws on the creation narrative of Gen 2:7, where God makes Adam "a living soul." The fact that Gos. Thom. 114:2 substitutes the  $\psi\upsilon\chi\eta$  of Gen 2:7 with  $\pi\nu\epsilon\upsilon\mu\alpha$  indicates that the Gospel of Thomas does not envision these two terms as significantly different.

Third, it does not seem likely that Thomasine anthropology is indebted either to *Tim.* 87c–89a or to later Platonists who commend a balance between the body and the soul along the lines of this Platonic passage. It does not seem possible to reconcile the idea that the body and the soul can and should be in equipoise with the Thomasine contempt for the body. It is much more likely that, according to the Gospel of Thomas, the body and the soul are enemies, and that the Gospel of Thomas favors the soul. This sentiment has close parallels in the Platonist tradition, starting from Plato's *Phaedo* with its detailed account of the hostile relations between body and soul. As I have argued, it seems that the Platonist body-soul dualism had an impact on the Gospel of Thomas. It is against this background that Thomasine anthropology should be studied.

In the opening paragraph of his handbook, Alcinous defines philosophy as "freeing and turning around of the soul from the body" (*Didasc.* 1.1; trans. J.M. Dillon). As I have tried to argue, though the Gospel of Thomas is not a philosophical treatise, its understanding of human perfection is not much different from that of Alcinous and other Platonist and Platonizing authors. If we appreciate the Thomasine appropriation of Platonist body-soul dualism, we gain a deeper understanding of the theological orientation of this text and insight into the reasoning behind the sayings that deal with the human compound and its components.

## The Gospel of Thomas and the Platonists on Oneness

The following four chapters focus on the Thomasine notion of perfection. I begin with the notion of “oneness.” Many Thomasine sayings invite the readers to “become one.” This motif was discussed in a seminal article by A.F.J. Klijn, who argued that it comes from the Jewish speculations about Adam being “one.”<sup>1</sup> In this chapter, I am going to revisit Klijn’s hypothesis and show that, even though the Thomasine motif of becoming one might have been influenced by certain Jewish traditions, it was to a great extent shaped by Platonist thought. I am also going to discuss whether the Platonist origins of the motif might shed some light on the sayings of the Gospel of Thomas that employ the term *μοναχός*.

### The Androgynous Protoplast?

Thomasine sayings 4, 11, 22, 23, and 106 discuss being (or becoming) either *ογα*, “one,” or *ογα ογωτ* (i.e., *ογα ἵογωτ*),<sup>2</sup> “one and the same.” The most important and influential contribution to the discussion of the Thomasine motif of becoming one was offered by Klijn in his 1962 article. Although this article was published more than half a century ago, contemporary scholars often refer to it with approval.<sup>3</sup> It is thus worth opening this chapter with an analysis of Klijn’s hypothesis.

According to Klijn, these sayings preach “a return to the original state” of oneness, because they were “inspired by Jewish ideas about Adam, his fall and redemption.”<sup>4</sup> Thomasine theology rests, therefore, on a Jewish myth. According to this myth, Adam was initially one (i.e., androgynous), but then he became two (i.e., male and female). The division of Adam led to the fall, which means that salvation is possible only by regaining the original oneness.

1 Klijn 1962, 278.

2 For the omission of *ἵ*- before prevocalic *ογ* in NHC II, see Emmel 1981, 142.

3 See, e.g., Patterson 1993, 152; DeConick 1996, 89.

4 Klijn 1962, 275.

This myth, as Klijn himself admits, is not attested in early Jewish sources. There are, however, several Nag Hammadi writings<sup>5</sup> that seem to be aware of the myth of Adam who was first an androgynous being and was later on divided, a process which led to the corruption of human nature. Still, as Klijn rightly points out, all these sources “miss the emphasis on Adam’s being originally one and having become two.”<sup>6</sup> It is this emphasis on oneness that Klijn attempted to explain in his contribution.

Klijn believes that the key to the Thomasine motif of becoming one is Philo. Philo was allegedly aware of the myth and conceived of oneness as human perfection. Philo and the Gospel of Thomas thus are “in striking agreement,” meaning that they must both have drawn “from the same sources.”<sup>7</sup> I am inclined to think that Klijn exaggerates the importance of Philo for the understanding of the Gospel of Thomas. There is no reason to think that Philo adhered to the myth of the androgynous Adam. According to Richard A. Baer, there is only one passage where Philo might be speaking about the androgyny of Adam, *Opif.* 151–152. Due to the importance of this passage for the discussion, it is worth citing the passage in full:

But, since nothing is stable in the world of becoming and mortal beings necessarily undergo reverses and changes, the first human being too had to enjoy some ill fortune. The starting-point of a blameworthy life becomes for him woman. As long as he was single, he resembled God and the cosmos in his solitariness (μέχρι μὲν γὰρ εἷς ἦν, ὡμοιοῦτο κατὰ τὴν μόνωσιν κόσμῳ καὶ θεῷ), receiving the delineations of both natures in his soul, not all of them but as many as a mortal constitution could contain. But when woman too was moulded (ἐπλάσθη), he observed a sisterly form and a kindred figure. Rejoicing at the sight, he came up to her and gave her a greeting. She, seeing no other living creature that looked more like herself than he, was glad and modestly responded to his greeting. The love that ensues brings together the two separate halves of a single living being as it were, and joins them into unity (ἔρως δ’ ἐπιγενόμενος καθάπερ ἑνὸς ζώου διττὰ τμήματα διεστηκότα συναγαγὼν εἰς ταῦτόν ἀρμόττεται), thereby establishing in both a desire for union with the other in order to produce a being similar to themselves. But this desire also gave rise to bodily plea-

<sup>5</sup> See, e.g., Gos. Phil., NHC II 68.22–26 and 70.9–22.

<sup>6</sup> Klijn 1962, 276.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 278.

sure, which is the starting-point of wicked and lawbreaking deeds, and on its account they exchange the life of immortality and well-being for the life of mortality and misfortune.<sup>8</sup>

It is by no means evident that Philo speaks of Adam as an androgyne in this passage. First, it is noteworthy that he says that Eve was created (ἐπλάσθη), not that androgynous Adam became male and female. Second, as Richard A. Baer points out, “logically it is difficult to see how the androgynous man motif, if understood literally, could fit into Philo’s schema.”<sup>9</sup>

Admittedly, this passage is “strongly reminiscent of Plato’s myth of the androgynous man” (see *Symp.* 189c–193d).<sup>10</sup> I am, however, inclined to agree with David T. Runia that Philo calls Adam and Eve διττὰ τμήματα διεστηκότα, “two separated pieces,” figuratively, in order to highlight “the powerful attraction that love brings about” by alluding to Plato’s famous dialogue (cf. *Symp.* 191d–e).<sup>11</sup> It is hard to believe that Philo here seriously adheres to the doctrine that he elsewhere calls τὰ τῶν μύθων πλάσματα, “mythical fictions” (*Contempl.* 63).

More importantly, neither here nor elsewhere does Philo describe salvation as the return to an androgynous state.<sup>12</sup> Philo used the categories of male and female in several different ways, but when he used sexual imagery to describe progress in the moral and religious life, he described it as becoming male. This gendered approach to ethical and religious mores is “directly related to Philo’s practice of associating the sense-perceptible sphere with woman and the female, whereas the realm of the rational soul is male and is symbolized by the man.”<sup>13</sup>

To sum up, even though Philo most definitely believed that achieving the ideal state meant becoming one (the relevant passages are cited below, pp. 106–110), he did not understand becoming one as becoming an androgyne. In what follows, I will argue that both the Philonic and the Thomasine fondness of oneness come from the Platonist rather than the Jewish tradition.

I proceed to a discussion of the myth of the androgynous Adam in the Gospel of Thomas. Although, as I have tried to argue, Philo’s idea of human perfec-

8 *Opif.* 151–152, trans. D.T. Runia.

9 Baer 1970, 88.

10 *Ibid.*, 38; cf. Runia 2001, 357–358.

11 Runia 2001, 358.

12 Cf. Baer 1970, 72.

13 *Ibid.*, 48.



tion does not have much to do with this myth, it is possible that the Thomasine theology is nonetheless indebted to it.

The Gospel of Thomas mentions Adam by name twice (sayings 46 and 85), and there is no doubt that the stories about Adam were among the sources for Thomasine theology. Nothing prevents us from assuming that there was a myth about Adam being male and female at the time of the composition of the Gospel of Thomas. In fact, there seem to be two Thomasine sayings that may allude to such a myth. One of them (Gos. Thom. 11:4) speaks about “one” becoming “two”; another (Gos. Thom. 22) speaks about “two” becoming “one.” I begin with the former passage:

11:4 ἑμ̄ φοοῦ ἐτετῆνο ἵογα ἀτετῆειρε ἡπικναῦ ροταν δε ἐτετῆωα-  
ωωπε ἵκναῦ οὔ πε ἐτετῆναααϣ

11:4 On the day you were one, you became two. But when you become two, what will you do?

It is possible that when Jesus refers to the state of being “one,” he refers to primordial humanity embodied in the androgynous protoplast; it is also possible that his reference to becoming “two” signifies the division of the protoplast into a man and a woman. Yet since the saying is formulated in quite an obscure fashion, a wide variety of alternative interpretations can be offered.

For instance, Uwe-Karsten Plisch thinks that the saying seeks to answer the following question: “What is the use and meaning of a union between a man and a woman in light of the rapidly approaching end of the world?”<sup>14</sup> According to Plisch, the day of becoming two is the wedding day, when “husband and wife merge into one flesh but also establish the duality of their partnership.” In this case, the last question of the saying “has to be understood as a critical request.”<sup>15</sup>

I would not go as far as to insist on the interpretation suggested by Plisch; it might very well be that the author of Gos. Thom. 11:4 did intend to allude to the myth of androgynous Adam. What is fairly certain, however, is that the phrasing of this saying is intentionally vague. The only thing that the reader may be confident about is that oneness is of great value and that its loss is to be avoided. It seems that this saying is, at the very least, not only about Adam.

14 Plisch 2008, 59–60.

15 Ibid., 60.

The other saying that may allude to the myth of the androgynous protoplast is Gos. Thom. 22 (discussed in detail in the following section). In this saying, Jesus gives the commandment to “make the two into one” (Gos. Thom. 22:4) and “to make the male and the female into a single one” (Gos. Thom. 22:5). He also says that there is a resemblance between little children and those who enter the kingdom (Gos. Thom. 22:2) and that, in order to enter the kingdom, one needs to make “an image instead of an image” (Gos. Thom. 22:6).

It is possible that Gos. Thom. 22:2 and 22:6 reflect certain traditions about Adam. First, a number of early Christian authors claim that Adam was a child when he was in the Paradise;<sup>16</sup> hence, it is possible that Gos. Thom. 22:2 refers to the return to the prelapsarian condition of the protoplast. Second, the difficult phrase ΟΥΖΙΚΩΝ ΕΠΙΔ ΝΟΥΖΙΚΩ(Ν), “an image instead of an image,”<sup>17</sup> (Gos. Thom. 22:6) seems to allude to the Genesis narrative, where God first creates Adam κατ’ εικόνα θεοῦ (Gen 1:26–27 and 5:1 LXX), and then Adam begets Seth κατὰ τὴν ἰδέαν αὐτοῦ καὶ κατὰ τὴν εἰκόνα αὐτοῦ (Gen 5:3). Thus, according to Gos. Thom. 22:6, s/he who wishes to enter the kingdom has to transform “the image of Adam” into “the image of God.”<sup>18</sup> It seems that the same motif is present

16 See Theophilus, *Autol.* 2.25; Irenaeus, *Dem. ap. praed.* 12; 14; *Haer.* 3.22.4; 3.23.5; 4.38.1–2; Clement, *Protr.* 11.111.1. Cf. DeConick and Fossum 1991, 134–135; Murray 2004, 304–305.

17 According to Plisch 2008, 86, since this phrase comes after Jesus’ command to replace the eyes, hands, and feet, ΖΙΚΩΝ “must also refer to a body part.” In support of this proposal, the Berliner Arbeitskreis (see Bethge et al. 2005, 526) refers to Acts Pet. 12 Apos., ΝΗC VI 2.24, where the context does suggest that ΖΙΚΩΝ means “face.” Schenke 2003, 424, cites a Eucharistic prayer in Sahidic (O.Crum 4+7 and O.Hermitage inv. 1133; see Quecke 1971, 1974; see also Henner 2000, 6–8) as another example of ΖΙΚΩΝ meaning “face.” Schenke’s suggestion, however, is hardly warranted, since the relevant passage of the prayer, ΘΙΚΩΝ ἸΠΠΕΙΑΤΗΛΥ ΕΡΟQ is in fact an allusion to “the image of the invisible God” (εἰκὼν τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ ἀοράτου) of Col 1:15 (cf. Crum 1902, 2) and, therefore, can hardly mean anything other than “the image of this invisible one.” Thus, Acts Pet. 12 Apos., ΝΗC VI 2.24 appears to be the only text where ΖΙΚΩΝ possibly means “face,” making the proposal of the Berliner Arbeitskreis highly problematic. It is also worth noting that the closest parallel to the Thomasine expression ΟΥΖΙΚΩΝ ΕΠΙΔ ΝΟΥΖΙΚΩΝ, the passage from the Letter of Peter to Philip (see the following footnote), clearly refers to images, not faces.

18 The Letter of Peter to Philip uses the expression “an image instead of an image” to describe the reverse process: the demiurge (ΠΑΥΘΑΔΗC, “the arrogant one”) tries to create an imitation of the image of the divine being and makes “an image instead of an image” (Tchacos 4.16: ΟΥΖΙΚΩΝ ΔΗΤ ΟΥΖΙΚΩΝ; ΝΗC VIII 136.9: ΟΥΖΙΚΩΝ ΕΠΙΔ ΝΟΥΖΙΚΩΝ]). See Meyer 1981, 128.

in 1 Cor 15:49, where Paul speaks about carrying ἡ εἰκὼν τοῦ ἐπουρανίου (i.e., of Christ) instead of ἡ εἰκὼν τοῦ χοϊκοῦ (i.e., of Adam).<sup>19</sup>

If Gos. Thom. 22:2 and 22:6 allude to the stories of Adam, it is possible that Gos. Thom. 22:5 alludes to such a story as well. It is thus possible that “to make the male and the female into a single one” refers to an androgynous Adam in Paradise. Whether regaining primordial androgyny (Gos. Thom. 22:5) is identical to becoming one (Gos. Thom. 22:4) is, however, another issue. As I will demonstrate in the following section, there are good reasons to doubt whether Gos. Thom. 22:5 is a paraphrase or an explicative definition of Gos. Thom. 22:4. The myth of Adam is, at the very least, not the only thing that Gos. Thom. 22 revolves around.

The conclusion I reach is, therefore, twofold. On the one hand, it cannot be ruled out that some of the Thomasine sayings that promote oneness allude to the myth of an androgynous Adam. On the other hand, it would be quite unfair to the author(s) of these sayings to reduce the motif of oneness to the myth of Adam, especially since their allusions to Adam, even if present, are remarkably vague. It is likely that these sayings were intentionally formulated in an ambiguous way. It seems, at any rate, that the author(s) gave the abstract idea of oneness preference over the mythical story of the androgynous proto-plast.

### Becoming Asexual?

One of the Thomasine sayings that promotes oneness, Gos. Thom. 22, also promotes the annulment of gender. It is reasonable to ask whether “becoming one” is just an extravagant way to express the idea of becoming asexual. In what follows I will argue that it is not the case. Below is the Coptic text of Gos. Thom. 22 and its English translation by the Berliner Arbeitskreis:

22:1 αἰϯ ναγ ἀρῆνκοϥεἰ εϥχι ερωτε 22:2 πεχαϩ ἡνεϥμαθητηϥ δε νεει-  
κοϥεἰ ετχι ερωτε εϥτῆντων ἀνετβωκ εροϥν ἀτμηῆτερο 22:3 πεχαϩ  
ναϩ δε εειενο ἡκοϥεἰ τῆνδβωκ εροϥν ετμηῆτερο 22:4 πεχε ιϯ ναγ  
δε ροταν ετετῆνϩαρῖ πснаγ ογα αγω ετετῆνϩαρῖ πса ηροϥν ἡθε ἡπса  
нвоλ αγω пса ἡвоλ ἡθε ἡπса ἡροϥν αγω пса (η)тпε ἡθε ἡпса ἡпттῆ  
22:5 αγω ϩινα ετετῆνδαιρε ἡφοϥт ἡῆ τϩιμε ἡππογα οϩωт δεκαδс ηе  
φoϥт ῖ ρooϥт ἡτε τϩιμε ῖ ϩιμε 22:6 ροταν ετετῆνϩαιρε ἡρῆβαλ

19 See Fitzmyer 2008, 599–600; Collins 1999, 572.

ΕΠΜΑ ΝΟΥΒΑΛ ΔΥΩ ΟΥΓΙΛΞ ΕΠΜΑ ΝΝΟΥΓΙΛΞ ΔΥΩ ΟΥΕΡΗΤΕ ΕΠΜΑ ΝΟΥΕΡΗΤΕ  
 ΟΥΖΙΚΩΝ ΕΠΜΑ ΝΟΥΖΙΚΩ(Ν) 22:7 ΤΟΤΕ ΤΕΤΝΑΒΩΚ ΕΖΟΥΝ Ε[Τ]Μ̄Ν̄[ΤΕΡ]Ο

22:1 Jesus saw little (children) being nursed. 22:2 He said to his disciples: “These little ones being nursed are like those who enter the kingdom.” 22:3 They said to him: “Will we enter the kingdom as little ones?” 22:4 Jesus said to them: “When you make the two into one and when you make the inside like the outside and the outside like the inside and the above like the below,—22:5 that is, to make the male and the female into a single one, so that the male will no longer be male and the female no longer female—22:6 and when you make eyes instead of an eye and a hand instead of a hand and a foot instead of a foot, (and) an image instead of an image, 22:7 then you will enter [the kingdom].”

One of the problems an interpreter of this saying has to face is the connection between its first and second parts; in other words, how is becoming like a child in Gos. Thom. 22:1–3 related to the various requirements listed in Gos. Thom. 22:4–7? According to Plisch, while Gos. Thom. 22:1–3 praises the infants for their “not-yet-gender,” Gos. Thom. 22:4–7 describes the “transformation of a binary gender into a unitary (non-)gender.”<sup>20</sup> Plisch builds his case on the assumption that Gos. Thom. 22:5 identifies becoming one with the annulment of gender.

It is noteworthy that Plisch admits that this identification is made “via a rather awkwardly inserted syntactic element.”<sup>21</sup> Indeed, it is quite difficult to make sense of the Coptic text in this sentence. Gos. Thom. 22:5 starts with the words ΔΥΩ ΟΥΝΑ ΕΤΕΤΝΑΕΙΡΕ (“and in order that you make”), where ΔΥΩ ΟΥΝΑ most probably renders καὶ ἕνα of the Greek *Vorlage*. The hypothesis that underlies the translation of the Berliner Arbeitskreis is that Gos. Thom. 22:5 was introduced by an exegetical καὶ<sup>22</sup> in the Greek *Vorlage* and thus specified the purpose of the actions described in Gos. Thom. 22:4.

This interpretation is problematic for several reasons. First, it is doubtful that an exegetical καὶ can introduce a final clause (τοῦτ’ ἔστιν would be more suitable for this purpose). Plisch offers only one example where, as he claims, καὶ ἕνα can be used in the same way as in Gos. Thom. 22:5—viz., Barn. 12:2:<sup>23</sup>

<sup>20</sup> Plisch 2008, 86.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> For examples of exegetical (or explicative) καὶ in the New Testament, see BDAG, s.v. “καὶ,” 1.c; for a discussion of this grammatical phenomenon in documentary papyri, see Ljungvik 1932, 57–59; Mayser 1934, 141.

<sup>23</sup> Plisch 2008, 87.

Λέγει δὲ πάλιν τῷ Μωϋσῆ, πολεμουμένου τοῦ Ἰσραὴλ ὑπὸ τῶν ἀλλοφύλων, καὶ ἵνα ὑπομνήσῃ αὐτοὺς πολεμουμένους, ὅτι διὰ τὰς ἀμαρτίας αὐτῶν παρεδόθησαν εἰς θάνατον· λέγει εἰς τὴν καρδίαν Μωϋσέως τὸ πνεῦμα, ἵνα ποιήσῃ τύπον σταυροῦ καὶ τοῦ μέλλοντος πάσχειν, ὅτι ἐὰν μή, φησὶν, ἐλπίσωσιν ἐπ’ αὐτῷ, εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα πολεμηθήσονται.

When Israel is attacked by a foreign people, he again speaks to Moses to remind them, the ones who are attacked, that they are being handed over to death because of their sins. The Spirit speaks to the heart of Moses that he should make a type of the cross and of the one who was about to suffer, that they might realize, he says, that if they refused to hope in him, they would be attacked forever.<sup>24</sup>

The clause introduced by ἵνα neither explains nor particularizes the preceding text, so it is hardly the case that καὶ is exegetical and that we should translate λέγει ... καὶ ἵνα ὑπομνήσῃ “he speaks ..., that is, to remind.” The quoted passage clearly follows a parallel structure, as both sentences therein follow the same pattern: λέγει ... ἵνα ... ὅτι. It thus seems logical to suggest that καὶ ἵνα in the first sentence and ἵνα in the second sentence have the same function. While the function of καὶ, on the other hand, in καὶ ἵνα is debatable, I would suggest that it is stylistic: the participle πολεμούμενος occurs twice in this passage, and it is likely that καὶ is used to emphasize that repetition. Thus, Plisch’s only example of ἵνα preceded by an exegetical καὶ does not seem to hold up under scrutiny.

Another problem with Plisch’s interpretation is that it does not seem to do justice to Gos. Thom. 22:4–5. Let us, for the sake of argument, accept the translation offered by the Berliner Arbeitskreis and try to make sense of the idea that Jesus identifies becoming one with becoming asexual by encouraging the disciples to “make the two into one” in order to “make the male and the female into a single one.” The verb εἶπε with the conditional conjugation base is repeated twice in Gos. Thom. 22:4. Grammatically, ὡς in Gos. Thom. 22:5 must qualify either the second conditional clause, or both of them. In either case, it is necessary to explain why Jesus says that, in order to blend maleness with femaleness, one should “make the inside like the outside and the outside like the inside and the above like the below.” Plisch does not address this question in particular, so I will need to improvise.

It is possible that Jesus’ advice to “make the inside like the outside and the outside like the inside” refers to the genitalia. According to Galen, there is no

24 Barn. 12:2, trans. B.D. Ehrman, altered.

difference between male and female body, except that there are certain organs inside the bodies of women, but outside the bodies of men: ἀ γὰρ ἔνδον ταῖς γυναιξί, ταῦτ' ἔξω τοῖς ἀνδράσιν (*Us. part.* 14.6 = 4.16o Kühn = 2.297 Helmreich).

The problem with this interpretation is that it would not seem to address how one can make “the above like the below.” I do not understand how this prescription could be related to the annulment of gender and am inclined to think that the whole phrase “make the inside like the outside and the outside like the inside and the above like the below” expresses an abstract idea of the elimination of opposites. It is, therefore, quite similar to what we encounter in the apocryphal acts—e.g., “Unless you make the things on the right as the things on the left and the things on the left as the things on the right, the things above as the things below, and the things behind as the things in front, you will not recognize the kingdom” (Acts Pet. 38.8; trans. R.F. Stoops).

Since the translation by the Berliner Arbeitskreis is problematic, I would like to offer a few alternative ones. The first two proposals are based on the assumption that the structure of Gos. Thom. 22 is elliptic: ὡνά introduces a subordinate clause that depends on a main clause, which has to be supplied. According to the third proposal, the Coptic text here follows the syntax of its Greek *Vorlage*, wherein ἵνα was used imperatively and introduced a main clause.<sup>25</sup>

(1) The first possible solution is to surmise that Gos. Thom. 22:4–5 and 22:6–7 are two independent sentences. The second sentence consists of one subordinate clause introduced by ἄρα and one main clause introduced by τότε. The first sentence consists of two subordinate clauses—one introduced by ἄρα and another one by ὡνά—and one unexpressed (elliptical) main clause—τετηναβωκ ερογν ετηνῆτερο, “you will enter the kingdom”—that can be easily inferred from Gos. Thom. 22:1–3. Hence, the translation by the Berliner Arbeitskreis should be altered as follows:

22:1 Jesus saw little (children) being nursed. 22:2 He said to his disciples: “These little ones being nursed are like those who enter the kingdom.” 22:3 They said to him: “Will we enter the kingdom as little ones?” 22:4 Jesus said to them: “**(You will enter the kingdom)** when you make the two into one and when you make the inside like the outside and the outside like the inside and the above like the below 22:5 and **(you will enter the king-**

25 Another possible, though less preferable, way to deal with the problem is to assume that the text is corrupt. According to the Berliner Arbeitskreis, it is possible that a certain part of the saying was accidentally omitted by a copyist. See Bethge et al. 2005, 526.

**dom) in order** to make the male and the female into a single one, so that the male will no longer be male and the female no longer female. 22:6 **When** you make eyes instead of an eye and a hand instead of a hand and a foot instead of a foot, (and) an image instead of an image, 22:7 then you will enter [the kingdom].”

A very similar ellipsis is present in Gos. Thom. 60:3. This sentence consists of one subordinated clause introduced by  $\chi\epsilon\kappa\alpha\alpha\varsigma$  and one main elliptical clause inferred from Gos. Thom. 60:2:

60:2  $\pi\epsilon\chi\lambda\alpha\gamma \bar{\nu}\bar{\nu}\epsilon\varphi\mu\alpha\theta\eta\tau\eta\varsigma \chi\epsilon \pi\eta \bar{\mu}\pi\kappa\omega\tau\epsilon \bar{\mu}\pi\epsilon\rho\iota\epsilon\upsilon\beta$  60:3  $\pi\epsilon\chi\lambda\alpha\gamma \bar{\nu}\lambda\alpha\gamma \chi\epsilon\kappa\alpha\alpha\varsigma \epsilon\varphi\eta\mu\alpha\mu\omicron\upsilon\tau\gamma\tau\eta \bar{\nu}\varphi\omicron\gamma\omicron\mu\eta$

60:2 He said to his disciples: “That (man) is pursuing the lamb.”<sup>26</sup> 60:3 They said to him: “(He is pursuing the lamb) in order to kill it (and) eat it.”

If this understanding of Gos. Thom. 22 is correct, then Jesus does not say that to make “the two into one” and to make “the male and the female into a single one” are the same thing, but rather that these actions are two different stages of the process of salvation. Gos. Thom. 22:4 lists numerous requirements that have to be met in order to enter the kingdom, and Gos. Thom. 22:5 subsequently describes what happens after one enters. In order to enter the kingdom, one should work on the elimination of opposites, and the outcome or consequence of entering the kingdom is becoming asexual. The problem with this translation is that it implies that entering the kingdom is not the last stage of one’s salvation, which seems to contradict the other Thomasine sayings (see, e.g., Gos. Thom. 27 and 49).

(2) Another option is that  $\varphi\upsilon\iota\eta\lambda$  in Gos. Thom. 22:5 is used elliptically or, in other words, that  $\varphi\upsilon\iota\eta\lambda$  qualifies a clause that is not expressed. A similar usage for  $\bar{\nu}\nu\alpha$  can be found in a number of early Christian texts (e.g., Barn. 7:5 and Herm. Sim. 8.6.1 [72:1]).<sup>27</sup> The phrase to be supplied may be  $\dagger\chi\omega \bar{\mu}\omicron\varsigma$

26 According to the suggestion of the Berliner Arbeitskreis,  $\bar{\mu}\pi\kappa\omega\tau\epsilon \bar{\nu}$ - is an erroneous (or rather too literal) rendering of the Greek expression  $\epsilon\iota\mu\iota \pi\epsilon\rho\iota \tau\iota$  (LSJ, s.v. “ $\epsilon\iota\mu\iota$ ,” C.IV.6: “to be engaged in”). See Bethge 1998, 48; Plisch 1999, 527–528.

27 These examples are from Blass, Debrunner, and Funk 1961, 247 and 255–256. See also the examples from classical literature in LSJ, s.v. “ $\bar{\nu}\nu\alpha$ ,” B.II.3.a (correct “D. [= Demosthenes] 45.5” to “D. 24.14”).

ΝΗΤῆ, “I tell you.”<sup>28</sup> In this case, Gos. Thom. 22:5 would be an independent sentence that is sandwiched between two subordinate clauses introduced by ἸΟΥΤΑΝ.

22:1 Jesus saw little (children) being nursed. 22:2 He said to his disciples: “These little ones being nursed are like those who enter the kingdom.” 22:3 They said to him: “Will we enter the kingdom as little ones?” 22:4 Jesus said to them: “When you make the two into one and when you make the inside like the outside and the outside like the inside and the above like the below—22:5 **and (I tell you)** to make the male and the female into a single one, so that the male will no longer be male and the female no longer female—22:6 (and) when you make eyes instead of an eye and a hand instead of a hand and a foot instead of a foot, (and) an image instead of an image, 22:7 then you will enter [the kingdom].”

While this understanding of Gos. Thom. 22:5 makes the saying intelligible, it is still open to criticism, since, in the case of an elliptical construction, the choice of the main clause to be supplied will always remain a matter of personal judgment.

(3) The most satisfactory solution to the problem is to see that, in the Greek *Vorlage* of Gos. Thom. 22:5, ἴνα was used imperatively, and that the Coptic translator produced a literal rendering of what he found in the Greek text. The imperative use of ἴνα is attested not only in the New Testament (see especially Eph 5:33),<sup>29</sup> but also in early Jewish (2 Macc 1:9) and classical (Epictetus, *Diss.* 4.1.41; Marcus Aurelius, *Medit.* 11.4) texts.<sup>30</sup> The verb introduced by ἴνα is therefore equivalent to the imperative.

22:1 Jesus saw little (children) being nursed. 22:2 He said to his disciples: “These little ones being nursed are like those who enter the kingdom.” 22:3 They said to him: “Will we enter the kingdom as little ones?” 22:4 Jesus said to them: “When you make the two into one and when you make the inside like the outside and the outside like the inside and the above like the below—22:5 **and make** the male and the female into a single one, so

28 The Berliner Arbeitskreis supplies  $\alpha\epsilon$  (understood as a recitative  $\delta\tau\iota$ ) in Gos. Thom. 114:3 with the same expression. See Bethge 1998, 50; Plisch 1999, 528.

29 See Zerwick 1963, 141–142 (§ 415); Blass, Debrunner, and Funk 1961, 195–196 (§ 387).

30 These examples are from Cadoux 1941, 166; see also LSJ, s.v. “ἴνα,” B.11.3.b.



that the male will no longer be male and the female no longer female—22:6 (and) when you make eyes instead of an eye and a hand instead of a hand and a foot instead of a foot, (and) an image instead of an image, 22:7 then you will enter [the kingdom].”

According to this interpretation, there are two main conditions for entering the kingdom: the elimination of opposites (22:4) and the replacement of body parts and images (22:6). There is, however, a third condition—the annulment of gender (22:5)—and quite an important condition at that. Gos. Thom. 22:5 seems to explain how the general rule described in 22:4 may be applied to a particular domain of human life—i.e., to sexuality. Since sexuality is given special attention, it was certainly of great importance to the author of the saying. Nevertheless, the annulment of gender is only one among other transformations that takes place when becoming one.

The whole saying might, then, be interpreted as follows. In Gos. Thom. 22:2, Jesus says that there is a resemblance between little children and those who enter the kingdom. I am inclined to agree with Plisch that the infants of Gos. Thom. 22:2 exemplify asexual beings.<sup>31</sup> The disciples, however, take his words literally (Gos. Thom. 22:3).<sup>32</sup> In order to correct them, Jesus lists a number of things one must do in order to enter the kingdom. According to him, the main requirement is to become one through the elimination of opposites (Gos. Thom. 22:4).

Having established this ground rule, Jesus then explains his opening remark: since the quality of being male or female constitutes an important pair of opposites, one should seek to regain the asexuality of an infant (Gos. Thom. 22:5). The grammar of Gos. Thom. 22:5 is not “awkward,” but it does disturb the flow of the text. Perhaps we should see it instead as an attempt to highlight Gos. Thom. 22:5 as a link between Gos. Thom. 22:1–3 and 22:4–7.

After this interlude, Jesus exhorts the replacement of body parts (“hand,” “foot,” and “eye”) and “images” (Gos. Thom. 22:6). As Plisch points out, the list

31 It should be noted, however, that a few alternative suggestions can be offered. In a paper presented at the 2013 Society of Biblical Literature International Meeting at St. Andrews, Scotland, Calogero A. Miceli argued that the emphasis in Gos. Thom. 22:2 is on the fact that the infants are being nourished (ἄι ἐρωτε, “take milk”). If this is the case, the simile probably refers to receiving and “ingesting” Jesus’ teaching; the content of this teaching is then explicated in Gos. Thom. 22:4–7.

32 As Miceli points out in his paper (see previous note), the misunderstanding of the disciples in Gos. Thom. 22:3 is quite similar to the story of Jesus and Nicodemus in John 3:1–9. Cf. Plisch 2008, 85–86.

of the body parts in Gos. Thom. 22:6 is the same as in Mark 9:43–47.<sup>33</sup> Although the meaning of this Markan passage is debatable, I find the following interpretation by Joel Marcus to be the most appealing:

As in many biblical contexts ... the *hand* is the instrument for the commission of sin, the *foot* is the means of transport to the place of its commission, and the *eye* is the means by which the temptation to commit it enters in.<sup>34</sup>

It seems reasonable to surmise that the Gospel of Thomas employs this list of body parts in the same vein as Mark; it is thus possible that “hand,” “foot,” and “eye” stand metonymically for the inner impulses that can lead an individual astray. As for the command to replace the “images,” this may refer to the restitution of God’s image (see the previous section). What is important for the present discussion is that Gos. Thom. 22:6, just like Gos. Thom. 22:4, seems to describe a transformation that is different from the one described in Gos. Thom. 22:5. While becoming asexual is important (Gos. Thom. 22:5), there is much more that has to be done (Gos. Thom. 22:4 and 22:6).

It is clear that to make “the two into one” and to make “the male and the female into a single one” are not the same. Gos. Thom. 22:5 does not explicate the purpose of what is described in Gos. Thom. 22:4. The relationship of what is described in these two sentences is rather that of genus and species. This claim can also be validated by the fact that Gos. Thom. 22:4–7 constitutes a doublet with Gos. Thom. 106:1:

106:1 ΠΕΧΕ ΙϚ ΧΕ ΖΟΤΑΝ ΕΤΕΓΝΩΑΡ̄ ΠΣΝΑΥ ΟΥΑ ΤΕΤΝΑΩΩΠΕ ΝΩΗΡΕ  
ΜΠΡΩΜΕ

106:1 Jesus said: “When you make the two into one, you will become sons of man.”

As Jón Ma. Ásgeirsson puts it, doublets are “a typical device of rhetorical progression.”<sup>35</sup> Sometimes the sayings of a doublet are identical, which means that a saying is merely recited (as in Gos. Thom. 56 and 80), but more often than not a saying becomes either augmented or condensed. Hence, according to

33 See Plisch 2008, 86.

34 Marcus 2009, 697.

35 Ásgeirsson 1997, 57.

Ásgeirsson, Gos. Thom. 22:4–7 and 106:1 are respectively the augmented and condensed versions of the same saying.<sup>36</sup>

If Ásgeirsson is correct and Gos. Thom. 106:1 summarizes what is said in Gos. Thom. 22:4–7, it is then noteworthy that the summary does not deal with sexual imagery, but rather repeats the abstract exhortation to make the two into one. “The two” here is by no means confined to the categories of male and female; it may refer to any binary opposition. Importantly, whoever wrote the summary was more interested in oneness than in asexuality.

That becoming one implies the elimination of all possible opposition is also clear from Gos. Thom. 4:2–3. This saying does not associate oneness with becoming asexual, but rather with becoming neither first nor last:

Gos. Thom. 4:2–3 (P.Oxy. 4.654)	Gos. Thom. 4:2–3 (NHC II)
4:2a ὅτι πολλοὶ ἔσονται π[ρῶτοι ἔσχατοι]	4:2a χε ογῆ ραε ἡωορι ηαῖ ραε
4:2b [καὶ] οἱ ἔσχατοι πρῶτοι,	
4:3 καὶ [εἰς ἓν καταστήσου]σιν. <sup>37</sup>	4:3 αγω ἡσεωοπε ογα ογωτ
4:2a For many who are [first] will be [last],	4:2a For many who are first will be last.
4:2b [and] the last will be first,	
4:3 and [they will become one].	4:3 And they will become a single one. <sup>38</sup>

It is worth noting that Gos. Thom. 22 is the only saying that mentions the annulment of gender as a particular example of becoming one. It is quite striking how often the motif of becoming one occurs in the Gospel of Thomas, but it is also striking that, unlike saying 22, sayings 4, 11, 23, and 106 formulated the notion

36 See Ásgeirsson 1997, 78–79; 1998, 328.

37 The restoration of the lacuna in P.Oxy. 4.654, l. 26 with [εἰς ἓν καταστήσου]σιν was suggested in Marcovich 1988, 63–64. Surprisingly, the Berliner Arbeitskreis and April DeConick follow the suggestion of Otfried Hofius, restoring the lacuna with [εἰς γενήσου]σιν (see Hofius 1960, 32; Bethge et al. 2005, 520; DeConick 2007, 58–59). Needless to say, this restoration is impossible, since γίγνομαι is a deponent verb.

38 It is worth noting that Gos. Thom. 4:2b is omitted in the Coptic version. Given that the version of the saying about the first and the last preserved in the Greek text of the Gospel of Thomas is identical with the version preserved in the Synoptics (see, e.g., Mark 10:31), it seems that the omission of Gos. Thom. 4:2b in the Coptic version is secondary; cf. Plisch 2008, 45–46.

of becoming one in abstract categories. The only ancient tradition that has the same obsession with the abstract idea of oneness is Platonism. I thus believe that it is, again, against the Platonist background that the Thomasine motif of becoming one should be analyzed.

### Platonists on Becoming One

According to James Adam, the phrase εἷς ἐκ πολλῶν “is a sort of Platonic motto or text.”<sup>39</sup> Plato uses the expression twice in *Respublica*. In one of the passages (443d–e), Socrates discusses justice, pointing out that a just person is one who is able to make peace between the rational (τὸ λογιστικόν), the appetitive (τὸ ἐπιθυμητικόν), and the spirited (τὸ θυμοειδής) parts of the human soul:

One who is just does not allow any part of himself to do the work of another part or allow the various classes within him to meddle with each other. He regulates well what is really his own and rules himself. He puts himself in order, is his own friend, and harmonizes the three parts of himself like three limiting notes in a musical scale—high, low, and middle. He binds together those parts and any others there may be in between, and from having been many things he becomes entirely one (παντάπασιν εἷς γενόμενος ἐκ πολλῶν), moderate and harmonious.<sup>40</sup>

In another passage (423 c–d), Socrates explores the question of the ideal size of a city, arguing that it is important for the city (ἡ πόλις) to be in unity (μία). Such an objective can be achieved, if all groups of the city, just like the three parts of the human soul, are put in the right order and if all citizens commit to their roles in society. One person should perform one task appropriate to him or her. If this is the case, then such a person comes into unity, and the city of unities becomes a unity in itself. Becoming one is, therefore, not only an anthropological but also a social ideal:

This was meant to make clear that each of the other citizens is to be directed to what he is naturally suited for (πρὸς ὃ τις πέφυκεν, πρὸς τοῦτο ἕνα πρὸς ἓν ἕκαστον ἔργον δεῖ κομίζειν), so that, doing the one work that is his own, he will become not many but one (ἓν τὸ αὐτοῦ ἐπιτηδεύων ἕκαστος

39 Adam 1963, 1:264.

40 443d–e, trans. G.M.A. Grube and C.D.C. Reeve.

μή πολλοὶ ἀλλ' εἷς γίγνηται), and the whole city will itself be naturally one not many (σύμπασα ἢ πόλις μία φύηται ἀλλὰ μή πολλοί).<sup>41</sup>

This motif was further developed by the Platonists of the Old Academy. Philip of Opus in the *Epinomis* maintains that he who contemplates the cosmos is one and obtains the wisdom that is also one (986c–d). Moreover, in Philip's thought, becoming one takes on an eschatological meaning; perfect unity is something a wise man can hope for after he dies, because, as Leonardo Tarán puts it, “in this life we continue to be disturbed by our manifold perceptions”:<sup>42</sup>

I maintain also, both in jest and in earnest, that when any of these people fulfills his destiny by dying (if indeed he still exists in death), he will no longer be affected by a multitude of perceptions as he is now but will participate in a destiny of unity. Having become one from many (μῆς τε μοίρας μετελιηφώς μόνος καὶ ἐκ πολλῶν εἷς γεγωνώς), he will be happy, most wise, and blessed—whether in his blessed state he dwells on continents<sup>43</sup> or islands [the Isles of the Blest]—and he will enjoy this fortune forever.<sup>44</sup>

The next ancient author who knew of the idea of becoming one is Philo. The interpretation of Philo is crucial for the assessment of Klijn's argument. As the cited below passages show, Philo's speculations about becoming one are very similar to the thoughts of the other philosophers quoted in this survey, which means that, in this instance, Philo does not bear witness to a Jewish myth, but rather thinks as a Platonist.

The term Philo usually employs to express the idea of oneness is μονάς, “monad.” According to Klijn, Philo's God is a monad;<sup>45</sup> this claim receives some support from *Her.* 183, where Philo says that God “is in his singleness (κατὰ τὴν μόνωσιν) a monad.”<sup>46</sup> However, elsewhere, Philo avoids this identification and seems to apply the term μονάς to Logos. Thus, God precedes the monad (*Praem.*

41 423d, trans. G.M.A. Grube and C.D.C. Reeve.

42 Tarán 1975, 349.

43 The notion that the blessed ones dwell on continents probably comes from the myth Plato narrates in *Phaedo*. See Tarán 1975, 349–350.

44 992b, trans. R.D. McKirahan.

45 Klijn 1962, 276.

46 For the view of God as a monad, see Xenocrates, fr. 15 Heinze (= fr. 213 Isnardi Parente): the monad (ἡ μονάς) is the first god (πρώτος θεός); see also Numenius, fr. 52 des Places = Calcidius, *Comm. Tim.* 295: God (“deus”—i.e., ὁ πρῶτος θεός, “the first god”) is “singularity” (“singularitas”—i.e., μονάς); cf. van Winden 1959, 106–107.

40), being more ancient than it (*Contempl.* 2). As Philo puts it, “the ‘one’ and the ‘monad’ are, therefore, the only standard for determining the category to which God belongs. Or, rather, the One God is the sole standard for the ‘monad’ (τέτακται οὖν ὁ θεὸς κατὰ τὸ ἓν καὶ τὴν μονάδα, μᾶλλον δὲ ἡ μονὰς κατὰ τὸν ἕνα θεόν)” (*Leg.* 2.3; trans. F.H. Colson and G.H. Whitaker, slightly altered). The monad is “an incorporeal image of God (ἀσώματος θεοῦ εἰκῶν) whom it resembles (ἐξομοιοῦται) in its singleness (κατὰ τὴν μόνωσιν)” (*Spec.* 2.176),<sup>47</sup> while the dyad (δυάς) is the image of divisible matter (*Spec.* 3.180: διααιρετῆς ὕλης [sc., εἰκῶν]). The monad is thus the semblance of God, the creator of the universe, while the dyad is the semblance of passive matter and creation (*Spec.* 3.180; *Praem.* 46; *Somn.* 2.70).

Therefore, since the monad is the image of God, to become a monad would mean to become like God. It would certainly be an extraordinary achievement, since, as Philo contends in *Leg.* 2.1–2, while God is always one, a human being is always many:

ὁ θεὸς μόνος ἐστὶ καὶ ἓν, οὐ σύγκριμα, φύσις ἀπλή, ἡμῶν δ' ἕκαστος καὶ τῶν ἄλλων ὅσα γέγονε πολλά· οἶον ἐγὼ πολλά εἰμι, ψυχὴ σῶμα, καὶ ψυχῆς ἄλογον λογικόν, πάλιν σώματος θερμὸν ψυχρὸν βαρὺ κοῦφον ξηρὸν ὑγρὸν· ὁ δὲ θεὸς οὐ σύγκριμα οὐδὲ ἐκ πολλῶν συνεστῶς, ἀλλ' ἀμιγῆς ἄλλῳ.

God is, alone, a Unity, in the sense that His nature is simple not composite, whereas each one of us and of all other created beings is made up of many things. I, for example, am many things in one. I am soul and body. To soul belong rational and irrational parts, and to body, again, different properties, warm and cold, heavy and light, dry and moist. But God is not a composite Being, consisting of many parts, nor is He mixed with aught else.<sup>48</sup>

Thus, we are many because we are composite: each human individual consists of a body and a bipartite soul. To become a monad would mean to cease being

47 In a similar fashion, the anonymous author of *Theologoumena arithmeticae*—in a passage which seems to have been excerpted from Nicomachus' treatise of the same title—argues that the monad resembles God but does not claim that God is the monad (*pace* O'Meara 1989, 21; Dillon 1996, 355): according to Nicomachus, “the monad corresponds to God (τὸν θεόν τῇ μονάδι ἐφαρμόζειν)” (*Theol. arithm.* 3.1–2 De Falco); it resembles God as a unifying principle (*Theol. arithm.* 3.14–17 De Falco) and as “a sort of creative principle (λόγος τις τεχνικός)” (*Theol. arithm.* 4.6–7 De Falco).

48 *Leg.* 2.2, trans. F.H. Colson and G.H. Whitaker.

a composite being. Only one person in the history of the people of Israel was able to do so. According to Philo's *Mos.* 2.288, Moses as a human being was once a dyad (δυάς), composed of a soul and a body, but afterwards was transformed by God into a mind (νοῦς), thus becoming a monad (μονάς):<sup>49</sup>

Afterwards the time came when he had to make his pilgrimage from earth to heaven, and to leave this mortal life for immortality, summoned thither by the Father who resolved his twofold nature of soul and body into a single unity (ὃς αὐτὸν δυάδα ὄντα, σῶμα καὶ ψυχὴν, εἰς μονάδος ἀνεστοιχείου), transforming his whole being into mind, pure as the sunlight (εἰς νοῦν ἡλιοειδέστατον).<sup>50</sup>

A comment on the Platonist background of this passage seems to be in order. To encounter the notion that νοῦς is a monad in a Middle Platonist treatise is by no means surprising (see, e.g., Theon of Smyrna, *Util. math.* 98.1–2 Hiller). It seems that this notion goes back to Xenocrates, a famous pupil of Plato's, who claimed that the monad (ἡ μονάς), the primary divine principle, was νοῦς (fr. 15 Heinze = fr. 213 Isnardi Parente).<sup>51</sup> Moreover, it is sometimes assumed that, in his lost dialogue *De philosophia* (fr. 11 Ross = *De an.* 404b22), Aristotle ascribed a similar view (τὸ ἔν is νοῦς) to Plato himself,<sup>52</sup> though it is probable that, as Harold Cherniss argued,<sup>53</sup> this Aristotelian testimony is in fact a report of Xenocrates' doctrine.<sup>54</sup>

Be that as it may, it is clear that Philo describes the transformation of Moses in Platonist terms. The closest parallel to this passage comes from Sulla's speech in *De facie in orbe lunae*, expounding on the process of dying. According to Plutarch's Sulla, "one death reduces man from three factors to two and another reduces him from two to one (ὁ μὲν ἐκ τριῶν δύο ποιεῖ τὸν ἄνθρωπον ὁ δ' ἐν ἐκ δυοῖν)" (*Fac.* 943a–b; trans. H. Cherniss and W.C. Helmbold)—that is, the soul

49 Cf. a similar passage in *QE* 2.29.

50 *Mos.* 2.288, trans. F.H. Colson.

51 See Dillon 2003, 107.

52 See, e.g., Gaiser 1963, 44–46.

53 Cherniss 1944, 565–580; 1977, 423–438.

54 Surprisingly enough, in another lost work, *De Pythagoreis* (fr. 13 Ross = Alexander, *Comm. Metaph.* 39.13–15 Hayduck; on the attribution of this passage to Aristotle, see Wilpert 1940, 372), Aristotle ascribes the view that τὸ ἔν is νοῦς to the Pythagoreans. As Zhmud 2012, 431, points out, this testimony is not historically reliable. The same certainly holds true for the report of the author of *Placita philosophorum*, who claims that Pythagoras himself taught that ἡ μονάς was νοῦς (1.3.8 and 1.7.18; Diels 1879, 281–282 and 302).

(in which the mind exists) first separates from the body, then the mind from the irrational part of the soul, what Runia terms “the theory of the double death.”<sup>55</sup>

Other historical figures were not as advanced as Moses, even though some of them came quite close. In *Opif.* 151 (cited above, p. 92), Philo says that, as long as Adam was one (εἷς), he was like the world and God in his singleness (κατὰ τὴν μόνωσιν).<sup>56</sup> Philo borrows the expression κατὰ τὴν μόνωσιν from *Tim.* 31a, where Plato states that the demiurge created only one cosmos in order to make it like him in its singleness. As David T. Runia points out, in so doing Philo adapts Plato’s doctrine of ὁμοίωσις θεῶ.<sup>57</sup> Philo “applied the relation of unicity that Plato draws between model and cosmos ... to the relation between God, the cosmos, and the first human being.”<sup>58</sup>

It is quite telling, however, that Philo never describes Adam as a monad. As Baer points out, while Adam’s oneness was “a state of original harmony in which the body was completely subservient to the sovereign mind” (see *Opif.* 136–139), in the case of Moses, the “twofold nature of soul and body was transformed into the unity of pure mind.”<sup>59</sup> Moses’ level of being is thus clearly superior to that of Adam.

The same probably holds true for everyone else. Samuel is said to be shaped (κεκόσμηται) “according to the one and the monad (κατὰ τὸ ἓν καὶ τὴν μονάδα)” (*Deus* 11), and even the angels are only *like* the monad (ἄγγελοι, ἀσώματα ψυχαί ... μονάδι ὁμοιούμεναι) (*Spec.* 1.66).<sup>60</sup> Yet none of them, except for Moses, is a monad himself. It is therefore possible to speak of different levels of oneness in Philo: God, who is above the monad; Moses, who became a monad; and angels and righteous men, who are like the monad.

On the other hand, however unique Moses may be for him, Philo’s quotation of *Theaet.* 176a–b in *Fug.* 63 amounts to an embrace of the Platonic idea therein—i.e., that of “becoming as like God as possible.” In this respect, it is worth considering Sami Yli-Karjanmaa’s claim that “monadization” may well have been part of Philo’s conception of the *universal* goal—i.e., one that everyone is capable of achieving. Thus, even though, in the Philonic corpus, Moses is the only figure said to have become a monad, this does not necessarily mean

55 Runia 1986, 331.

56 Cf. a similar train of thought in Tg. Ps.-J. Gen 3:22, where God says, “Behold, Adam was alone on the earth as I am alone in the heavens on high” (trans. M. Maher); see also Tg. Neof. Gen 3:22.

57 Runia 1986, 342.

58 Runia 2001, 356.

59 Baer 1970, 50.

60 These references are from Völker 1952, 533.



that no one else is capable of accomplishing the same thing. This suggestion receives support from *QE* 2.29, where Philo seems to argue that becoming a monad is possible for every mind “that can be deemed to have progressed to the stage of being ‘prophetic.’”<sup>61</sup>

Another author who deserves to be mentioned in this survey is Plutarch. In his *De E apud Delphos*, Plutarch maintains a view that is quite similar to that expressed by Philo in his *Leg.* 2.2 (cited above, p. 107). According to Plutarch, true unity is one of the features that make divinity different from humanity. While every human being is subject to constant change (and therefore is not one, but many), God is both immutable and one.<sup>62</sup> That is why he is called Apollo, “the one who rejects multiplicity” (393c: ἀρνούμενος τὰ πολλά).<sup>63</sup>

Dead is the man of yesterday, for he is passed into the man of today; and the man of today is dying as he passes into the man of tomorrow. Nobody remains one person, nor is one person; but we become many persons (μένει δ' οὐδείς οὐδ' ἔστιν εἷς, ἀλλὰ γιγνώμεθα πολλοί).<sup>64</sup>

But He, being one (εἷς), has with only one “now” completely filled “forever.” Only what is after this pattern truly is (μόνον ἔστι τὸ κατὰ τοῦτ' ὄντως ὄν), nor having been nor about to be, nor has it had a beginning nor is it destined to come to an end. Under these conditions, therefore, we ought, as we pay Him reverence, to greet Him and to address Him with the words, “Thou art (εἶ)”; or even, I vow, as did some of the men of old, “Thou art one (εἶ ἔν).” In fact the deity is not many (οὐ γὰρ πολλά τὸ θεῖόν ἔστιν), like each of us ... But being must have unity, even as unity must have being (ἔν εἶναι δεῖ τὸ ὄν, ὥσπερ ὄν τὸ ἔν).<sup>65</sup>

Finally, we come to Clement of Alexandria. Clement agrees with Philo in placing God above monad; in *Paed.* 1.8.71, he quotes John 17:21–23, pointing out that “God is one, beyond the one, and even above the monad (ἔν δὲ ὁ θεὸς καὶ ἐπέκεινα

61 Yli-Karjanmaa 2015, 40–41.

62 As John Whittaker points out, the same concept occurs in the Gospel of Truth: “It is within Unity (ἑνότητι) that each one will attain himself; within knowledge he will purify himself from multiplicity (οὐκ ἑνότητι) into Unity” (NHC I 25.10–15; trans. H.W. Attridge and G.W. MacRae). See Whittaker 1969a, 191.

63 Plutarch understands the name Ἀπόλλων as privative ἀ + πολλά. This etymology is attested in various sources; see Whittaker 1969a, 187.

64 392d, trans. F.C. Babbitt.

65 393a–b, trans. F.C. Babbitt, altered.

τοῦ ἑνός καὶ ὑπὲρ αὐτὴν μονάδα).<sup>66</sup> As Salvatore R.C. Lilla points out, Clement identifies the monad with Christ. “This is the reason why Clement, when speaking about the perfection of man, uses such terms as μοναδικός or μονάς: since Christ, the Logos, is the μονάς, man must become μοναδικός as well in order to reach the ὁμοίωσις with God.”<sup>67</sup>

The main point of disagreement between Philo and Clement is that, while Philo thought that only Moses was able to become a monad, in Clement’s view it is something that in theory is within everyone’s powers. In *Strom.* 6.11.87, Clement speaks of “the progress of a righteous person that reaches completion in becoming a unity (εἰς μονάδα τελευτώσα ἢ τοῦ δικαίου προκοπή).” There are several other passages that illustrate Clement’s use of the motif of the righteous becoming one; according to these passages, there seem to be three different aspects of achieving oneness. What is striking is that, in every instance, Clement emphasizes the role of the divine mediator, the Son.

First, in order to come into unity a person needs to imitate Christ by getting rid of his or her passions. In *Strom.* 4.23.151–152, Clement quotes a Pythagorean saying,<sup>68</sup> “it is also necessary that a human becomes one (ἓνα γενέσθαι καὶ τὸν ἄνθρωπον δεῖν),” noting that it is so, because the archpriest is one and God is one. A human can become one by means of ἀπάθεια: “when a human makes himself divine by getting rid of passions he immaculately becomes unitary (εἰς δὲ τὴν ἀπάθειαν θεούμενος ἄνθρωπος ἀχράντως μοναδικός γίνεται).”

Elsewhere (*Strom.* 3.10.69; cf. 3.13.93), Clement says that the one who has risen above anger (θυμός) and passion (ἐπιθυμία) “has become like the Saviour (κατὰ τὴν πρὸς τὸν σωτῆρα ἑξομοίωσιν) and has attained to a state of continence (ἐγκράτεια) no longer maintained with difficulty. He has united (ἑνώσας) knowledge, faith, and love. Thenceforth he is one (εἷς) in his judgment and truly spiritual” (trans. H. Chadwick). It is remarkable that, while Clement agrees with Plato in his understanding of human perfection as oneness, he sees the process of becoming one quite differently: τὸ ἐπιθυμητικόν and τὸ θυμοειδής should be completely annihilated, not merely made subordinate to reason.<sup>69</sup>

Second, since the Son is a unity, it is through faith in him that a person can be united with him and become a unity. This issue is discussed in one of the

66 See also Lilla 1971, 216.

67 Lilla 1971, 112; cf. Krämer 1964, 283.

68 According to Whittaker 1978, 216–217, this saying is identical with the “vetus dictum” quoted by Ambrose in his *Ep. ex. coll.* 14 (63).60: “Assuesce unus esse.”

69 See the discussion of Clement’s partition of the soul in chapter 7 (p. 212).

most fascinating passages of Clement's corpus, *Strom.* 4.25.156–157. In this passage, Clement speculates about the oneness of the Son. Christ is one in the sense that he is the unity of all his powers. It is in him that all the powers of the Spirit become one. In a similar vein, if a person believes in him, he or she becomes unitary, because faith transforms the believer into a unity with the Son. The unfaithful, on the other hand, are divided, because their disbelief separates them from the Son:

πάσαι δὲ αἱ δυνάμεις τοῦ πνεύματος συλλήβδην μὲν ἓν τι πράγμα γενόμεναι συντελοῦσιν εἰς τὸ αὐτό, τὸν υἱόν, ἀπαρέμφατος δὲ ἐστὶ τῆς περιέκαστης αὐτοῦ τῶν δυνάμεων ἐννοίας. καὶ δὴ οὐ γίνεται ἀτεχνῶς ἓν ὡς ἓν, οὐδὲ πολλὰ ὡς μέρη ὁ υἱός, ἀλλ' ὡς πάντα ἓν. ἔνθεν καὶ πάντα· κύκλος γὰρ ὁ αὐτὸς πασῶν τῶν δυνάμεων εἰς ἓν εἰλουμένων καὶ ἐνούμενων ... διὸ δὴ καὶ τὸ εἰς αὐτὸν καὶ τὸ δι' αὐτοῦ πιστεῦσαι μοναδικόν ἐστι γενέσθαι, ἀπερισπάστως ἐνούμενον ἓν αὐτῷ, τὸ δὲ ἀπιστήσαι διστάσαι ἐστὶ καὶ διαστήναι καὶ μερισθῆναι.

Having become one deed, all the powers of the Spirit produce one Son, and it is not possible to limit him to the concept of any of his individual powers.<sup>70</sup> And the Son neither simply becomes one as one, nor many as parts, but he is one as all, and all comes from him. For he is the circle of all the powers being bound and united into one ... That is why to become unitary means to believe in him and by him and to become one in him without distraction. On the other hand, to disbelieve means to hesitate, to be separated and to be divided.

The Platonist background of *Strom.* 4.25.156 was recognized by a number of scholars.<sup>71</sup> By saying that the Son is one ὡς πάντα ἓν (i.e., in the same sense as all is one) Clement conceptualizes the Son in terms of the second hypothesis of Plato's *Parmenides*:

Furthermore, the one is all the parts of itself (καὶ μὴν τά γε πάντα μέρη τὰ αὐτοῦ τὸ ἓν ἐστὶ), and not any more or less than all ... So if all its parts are actually in a whole, and the one is both all the parts and the whole itself

70 As Colson 1921, 156–158, pointed out, ἀπαρέμφατος is a grammatical term that signifies the infinitive mood. Thus, Clement's point is that “the idea of the Son does not call up the thought of powers exhibited singly and one to the exclusion of another, but of powers blended into a single whole.”

71 See, e.g., Whittaker 1969b, 99, and Lilla 1971, 205.

(ἔστι δὲ τὰ τε πάντα τὸ ἐν καὶ αὐτὸ τὸ ὅλον), and all the parts are contained by the whole, the one would be contained by the one; and thus the one itself would, then, be in itself.<sup>72</sup>

By applying the second hypothesis of the *Parmenides* to the Son, Clement introduces the social dimension to his theology of oneness. The Son is “one as all” in the sense that he is the totality of all his powers. Through faith, every Christian can become a part of this totality.

That Clement thought of oneness not only as individual perfection, but also as *social* perfection, is evident from the third and final passage that I want to discuss, *Protr.* 9.88. In this passage, Christians, called “the worshippers of the good” (οἱ τὰγαθοῦ προσκυνηταί) and “the admirers of the good things” (οἱ τῶν ἀγαθῶν ζηλωταί), are exhorted to unite “into one love” after the manner of Christ, the divine monad. Moreover, it is under the guidance of this sole leader that they can become “the unity of many.”

Let us who are many (οἱ πολλοί) hasten to be gathered together into one love (εἰς μίαν ἀγάπην) according to the unity of the monadic being (κατὰ τὴν τῆς μοναδικῆς οὐσίας ἔνωσιν). Similarly, let us pursue unity (ἑνότης) by the practice of good works (ἀγαθοεργούμενοι), seeking the good monad (ἡ ἀγαθὴ μονάς). And the unity of many (ἡ ἐκ πολλῶν ἔνωσις), bringing a divine harmony out of polyphony and dispersion (ἐκ πολυφωνίας καὶ διασποράς), becomes one symphony (μία συμφωνία), following one leader and teacher (εἷς χορηγὸς καὶ διδάσκαλος), the Word, and never ceasing till it reaches the truth itself, with the cry, “Abba Father.”<sup>73</sup>

It is clear, therefore, that Clement’s theology of oneness goes hand in hand with his Christology. First, to become one means to extirpate the two lower parts of the tripartite soil, just like the Son did. Second, it means to become one with the Son, who is “one as all.” Finally, it means for the whole community to become a unity by being guided by one leader, the Son, and by imitating his oneness.

This survey shows that the notion of becoming one was quite popular among Platonists and Platonizing authors. It also shows that the notion had many versions and that each of the authors discussed above had his own views on certain aspects of becoming one. For instance, we learn that oneness can be achieved

72 Plato, *Parm.* 145c, trans. M.L. Gill and P. Ryan.

73 *Protr.* 9.88.2–3, trans. G.W. Butterworth, altered.

either in this life (Plato) or in the afterlife (Philip of Opus), or it cannot be achieved at all, since it is a divine attribute that has nothing to do with the human race (Plutarch). Moreover, according to Clement, every individual can aim at becoming one; the same seems to hold true in Philo's thought, though Philo, on the other hand, explicitly names only one person, Moses, who was capable of this transformation.

It is clear that the Thomasine concept of oneness, if compared with those of the other authors, reveals certain distinctive features as well: while Plato sees oneness as the harmonizing of the parts of the soul and Philip of Opus sees it as freedom from all perceptions, the Gospel of Thomas sees oneness as the elimination of binary oppositions. Yet I would say that all these authors share the same sentiment. It is against this background that the Thomasine sayings about becoming  $\sigma\gamma\alpha \sigma\gamma\omega\tau$  should be read. Even if the author(s) of these sayings knew the myth of Adam's original androgyny, Platonist philosophy was apparently far more appealing.

Comparing the sayings in question with the Platonist tradition enables me to make the following two observations that might be relevant for the interpretation of the Gospel of Thomas:

(1) First, it is noteworthy that the Gospel of Thomas, Plato, and Clement understand oneness as both individual and social perfection. As we have seen, in Plato's *Respublica*, a properly balanced city resembles a properly balanced soul. The city becomes a unity only after all its citizens are united. The same seems to hold true in the case of Clement's theology as well. Clement differs from Plato, however, in arguing that it is only through the agency of the divine mediator, the Son, that oneness can be achieved.

It is quite possible that the Gospel of Thomas also recognized both the personal and social aspects of oneness. Admittedly, when Jesus speaks of becoming one, he always addresses his disciples in the plural, and it is uncertain whether he speaks about the transformation of an individual or about the group as a whole. Yet, while the physiological details of saying 22:4–7 (“a hand instead of a hand,” “a foot instead of a foot”) make it unlikely that the author spoke about the transformation of a group, such a transformation might well have been in the mind of the author(s) of Gos. Thom. 4:2–3 (cited above, p. 104) and 23 (cited below, pp. 126–127). It is noteworthy that, unlike sayings 22 and 106, which speak of becoming one from “the two,” Gos. Thom. 4:2–3 speaks of becoming one from “many” ( $\pi\omicron\lambda\lambda\omicron\iota / \chi\alpha\chi$ ). The saying resonates with the Platonic motto  $\epsilon\acute{\iota}\varsigma \epsilon\kappa \pi\omicron\lambda\lambda\acute{\omega}\nu$  both in its terminology and its content, which makes it quite likely that it refers not only to the individual oneness, but also to the unity of the group of individuals.

It is worth noting that the same motto, εἷς ἐκ πολλῶν, is applied to social transformation in a Valentinian theory reported by Clement in his *Exc.* 21–22 and 35–36.<sup>74</sup> As Einar Thomassen points out, the theory provides “a mythological framework for baptismal initiation.”<sup>75</sup> According to this myth, the seed of Sophia consisted of two parts, the angels, or τὰ ἄρρηνικά, and the Valentinians, or τὰ θηλυκά. When we are baptized, “we are raised up ‘equal to angels’ (Luke 20:36), and restored to unity<sup>76</sup> with the males, member for member (ἐγχειρόμεθα οὖν ἡμεῖς, ἰσάγγελοι τοῖς ἄρρεσιν ἀποκατασταθέντες, τοῖς μέλεσι τὰ μέλη, εἰς ἔνωσιν)” (*Exc.* 22.3; trans. R.P. Casey).<sup>77</sup>

The unification with angels is a prerequisite of our return to the Pleroma. Because the angels came from a single source (ἀπὸ ἑνός), they were produced in unity (ἐν ἐνότητι) and are one (εἷς) (*Exc.* 36.1). But, since we were divided (οἱ μεμερισμένοι), “Jesus was baptized that the undivided should be divided (τὸ ἀμέριστον μερισθῆναι) until he should unite (ἐνώσῃ) us with them in the Pleroma.” The ultimate goal is that we, who are many, become one (ἡμεῖς, οἱ πολλοί, ἐν γενόμενοι) and “might all be mingled in in the One which was divided for our sakes” (τῷ ἐνὶ τῷ δι’ ἡμᾶς μερισθέντι ἀνακραθῶμεν) (36.2; trans. R.P. Casey).<sup>78</sup>

Unlike us, the many, the angels are one; they, however, became many in order to enable us to become one. Thus, there are two stages in the process of unification. Only after an individual is united with his or her angel can he or she become one with the rest of the seed of Sophia and, ultimately, with the Pleroma. To be united with an angel is, therefore, necessary, but not enough. As Thomassen puts it, “the ritual unification with one’s angel here below may be thought of as a preliminary union, a prefiguration, or an image, of an eschatological union.”<sup>79</sup>

74 See Thomassen 2006, 377–383.

75 *Ibid.*, 377.

76 Cf. Irenaeus, *Haer.* 1.21.3 (= Epiphanius, *Pan.* 34.20.2). Clement uses the phrase εἰς ἔνωσιν in *Strom.* 7.3.14.1: “every man who is won over for holiness is enlightened into an indissoluble unity (ἐκφωτιζομένου εἰς ἔνωσιν ἀδιάκριτον παντὸς τοῦ ἀναληφθέντος εἰς ἀγιοσύνην ἀνθρώπου)” (trans. J.B. Mayor and H. Chadwick). It is worth noting that Clement also seems to use the expression in a baptismal context, since, as Joseph B. Mayor pointed out, “The word φωτισμός was commonly used for baptism” (Hort and Mayor 1902, 220).

77 I agree with Robert Pierce Casey that τοῖς ἄρρεσιν belongs to εἰς ἔνωσιν (*pace* Sagnard 1970, 101, and Thomassen 2006, 379). Cf. *Exc.* 21.3: “the females, becoming men, are united to the angels (ἐνοῦται τοῖς ἀγγέλοις) and pass into the Pleroma” (trans. R.P. Casey).

78 Sagnard 1970, 138, and Thomassen 2006, 382, assume that τῷ ἐνὶ refers to Jesus. It is quite possible, however, that Casey’s translation is accurate and it is τὸ ἐν that is implied in the text; in this case “the One” designates the divine realm as a whole.

79 Thomassen 2006, 396.

This Valentinian theory demonstrates that the notion of oneness as human perfection was highly valued among various early Christian groups. There is no need to assume that this common interest in oneness stems from the “Gnosticism” of Valentinianism and the Gospel of Thomas; rather, it is due to their shared indebtedness to Platonism.

There is, however, an important difference between the Thomasine notion of oneness and the one expounded in Clement’s *Excerpta ex Theodoto*. While the Gospel of Thomas attempts to supplement a myth about Adam with Platonist metaphysics or, perhaps, even to substitute the former with the latter, the Valentinian theory transforms said metaphysics into a myth about male angels and female humans. It is this latter phenomenon that lends some color of truth to A.D. Nock’s witty notion of “Gnosticism” as “Platonism run wild.”<sup>80</sup>

(2) There is yet another corollary to my survey of Platonist ideas about oneness. The way Philo and Clement speak about becoming *μονάς* or *μοναδικός* might be relevant for the discussion of the Thomasine sayings about becoming *μοναχός*. The question of the meaning of the word *μοναχός* in the Gospel of Thomas is not an easy one. However, as I will show below, there are reasons to believe that the Thomasine word *μοναχός* has several meanings, including “he who is a unity.” In this case, Philo and Clement provide us with parallels that are similar to the Thomasine sayings not only in their content, but also in their wording.

### Aramaic Background of the Term *μοναχός*?

While there is no doubt that the motif of “becoming one” is present in sayings 4, 11, 22, 23, and 106, some scholars believe that it is also present in sayings 16, 49, and 75, the three of which all speak of being or becoming *ΜΟΝΑΧΟC*. Klijn is the first scholar to have made such a suggestion.

According to Klijn, the three terms employed in the Coptic text of the Gospel of Thomas, *ΟΥΑ*, *ΟΥΑ ΟΥΩΤ*, and *ΜΟΝΑΧΟC*, render the same word, “single one.” The fact that that the Coptic text has three terms instead of one implies that the fourth-century translator did not realize that he was dealing with a technical term. Klijn argues that these three Coptic terms “go back” to either Greek *εἷς* or Syriac *ܐܝܢܐ*.<sup>81</sup> This hypothesis, despite its ingenuity, is impossible to accept. If we assume that *ΟΥΑ*, *ΟΥΑ ΟΥΩΤ*, and *ΜΟΝΑΧΟC* render Greek *εἷς*, we would

80 Nock 1986, 2:949.

81 See Klijn 1962, 271–272. It worth noting that Klijn avoids the question of the original lan-





refer to oneness as human perfection, which, notwithstanding, does not necessarily mean that all these terms must go back to the same Syriac or Aramaic expression.

### The Meaning of *μοναχός* in the Gospel of Thomas

The only copy of the Gospel of Thomas that contains sayings 16, 49, and 75 comes from a codex that was produced in Egypt in the fourth century. Since the first witness of the Greek noun *μοναχός* meaning “monk” comes either from 324 (P.Col. 7.171, a document from the archive of Aurelius Isidoros),<sup>88</sup> or possibly even from 311/312 (Pseudo-Athanasius, *Pat.* PG 26:1305.26–28),<sup>89</sup> it is possible that for the readers of the Nag Hammadi version of the Gospel of Thomas, and indeed maybe already for its Coptic translator,<sup>90</sup> the expression *ΝΗΜΟΝΑΧΟΣ* / *ἸΜΟΝΑΧΟΣ* in the text designated monks.<sup>91</sup>

As E.A. Judge puts it, “whatever the literary origin of the Coptic work, we must recognize the possibility that the Greek loan-word was adopted by the Coptic author ... because at the time he was writing he knew that *μοναχός* was the name of a recognized social type in Egypt.” If this is the case, then “the

88 Judge 1977, 86. For a list of fourth-century documentary papyri in Greek and Coptic employing the word *μοναχός*, see Choat 2002, 9–10.

89 Tetz 1990, 102; cf. Bumazhnov 2010, 24.

90 Unfortunately, it does not seem possible to ascertain the date of the Coptic translation of any individual text from the Nag Hammadi codices. “The original translation from Greek into Coptic, in any given case, may date as far back as the second half of the third century, or it may have taken place during the years around 350, shortly before the production of the copy known to us. The Nag Hammadi collection of texts may well include any number of specimens located somewhere between these extremes, but there is no way of identifying them” (Funk 1995, 143). It is tempting to suggest a third-century date for the Coptic translation of the Gospel of Thomas, since the Nag Hammadi version of this text seems to presuppose a complex history of dialectal editing. According to Funk 1993, 170–171, it is likely that the original Coptic Gospel of Thomas was written in a southern dialect, but at some point in its transmission was more or less successfully “Sahidicized.” Moreover, the person who edited the Coptic text of the Gospel of Thomas cannot be identified with the scribe of *NHC II*, since the latter was quite reluctant “to impose his own standards of spelling on his work” (Funk 1995, 133). Yet we must keep in mind that, as Funk 1995, 144, notes, “The most extensive dialectal rewriting and editing, even if it involved several stages and a number of different persons in different places, may have been implemented, theoretically, only a few weeks before the production of our codices.”

91 Cf. Lundhaug and Jenott 2015, 261.

meaning of the word in the Gospel of Thomas could be that of ‘monk,’ provided that the dating of the Coptic composition fell later than the time at which that sense became current in Egypt.”<sup>92</sup>

Whereas the word ΜΟΝΑΧΟΣ of the fourth-century Coptic manuscript of the Gospel of Thomas could have been understood as “the name of a recognized social type,” the word μοναχός of the “original” Greek Gospel of Thomas, as I defined it in chapter 1 (see pp. 35–37), must have a different meaning. A sceptic could perhaps raise an objection and suggest that sayings 16, 49, and 75 were never part of the “original” Gospel of Thomas, but were added to the collection at the Coptic stage of its textual transmission.<sup>93</sup> In what follows, I will argue that this is not the case.

The last verse of saying 16 reads, ἀγῶ κενάωζε εἰρατοῦ εἶο ἡμοναχος, “And they will stand as solitary ones” (Gos. Thom. 16:4). One could suggest that this verse, if not the whole saying, was added to the Gospel of Thomas to appeal to its alleged monastic audience.<sup>94</sup> It is worth noting, however, that Gos. Thom. 16:4 is strikingly similar to Gos. Thom. 23:2, ἀγῶ κενάωζε εἰρατοῦ εἶο οὐα οὐωτ, “And they will stand as a single one.” Since doublets and repetitive formulas are important Thomasine rhetorical devices, it is likely that both these verses were part of the “original” Gospel of Thomas. The content of these two verses also indicates that they were part of the “original” text. As I have already noted, Gos. Thom. 23:2 is part of a group of sayings that understands human perfection as being/becoming one. That these sayings were part of the “original” Gospel of Thomas is clear from the fact that one of them, Gos. Thom. 4, is attested not only by ΝΗC II, but also by P.Oxy. 4.654.

92 Judge 1977, 87.

93 Another alternative is to suppose that sayings 16, 49, and 75 were part of the “original” text, but that these sayings did not contain the word μοναχός. Klijn (see above, p. 116) seems to entertain this possibility and think that the Coptic translator might have used the word ΜΟΝΑΧΟΣ to render Greek εἶς. According to Klijn 1962, 272, by doing so the translator “obviously tries to render a term unknown to him with the help of a word familiar to his readers.” As I have already pointed out, this hypothesis seems to be very unlikely, since it leaves unclear why the translator was inconsistent—i.e., why he did not always render εἶς with ΜΟΝΑΧΟΣ, but occasionally used οὐα and οὐα οὐωτ. It is also worth noting that, as I have pointed out in chapter 2 (p. 48), the Coptic translator seems to have tried to be careful with terminology of the Gospel of Thomas and not to render a Greek word with a different Greek word.

94 It is worth noting that some scholars hypothesize about the monastic setting of the Nag Hammadi codices. For a discussion of this hypothesis see, e.g., Khosroyev 1995; Jenott and Pagels 2010; Lewis and Blount 2014; Lundhaug and Jenott 2015.

It is also likely that saying 75 was part of the “original” Gospel of Thomas. While it is doubtful that there is an organizing principle that would explain the structure of the sayings collection as a whole, it is clear that certain groups of sayings constitute thematic units. For instance, sayings 63, 64, and 65 are a triad of parables in each of which “figures who seek or possess wealth or who strive for status-recognition among their peers are criticized and their pursuits lamppooned.”<sup>95</sup> Similarly, sayings 73, 74, and 75 are a triad of antithetic aphorisms offering “three variants of the theme of the fewness of the elect.”<sup>96</sup> There seems to be no reason to doubt that the “original” Gospel of Thomas employed thematic grouping as an organizing principle. It seems clear, in fact, that sayings 73, 74, and 75 comprised one of those “original” thematic groups, since, as Howard M. Jackson has shown, saying 74 is alluded to in the “Celestial Dialogue” quoted by Celsus (see Origen, *Cels.* 8.15), this allusion being “the earliest attestation to the *Gospel of Thomas* yet known.”<sup>97</sup>

Finally, it does not seem reasonable to assume that saying 49 is a later addition to the “original” text of the Gospel of Thomas. The peculiar expression that we find in this saying, ΝΜΟΝΑΧΟC ΔΥΩ ΕΤCΟΤΠ, also occurs in the Dialogue of the Savior (NHC III 120.26: ΝCΩΤΠ ΜΝ̄ ΝΜΟΝΟΧΟC; cf. NHC III 121.18–20). As Risto Uro points out, even though the Dialogue of the Savior might not be directly dependent on the Gospel of Thomas, “the great number of parallels and affinities” between the two texts indicates that they share a “symbolic universe.”<sup>98</sup> There seems to be no reason to doubt that the affinities between the Dialogue of the Savior and the Gospel of Thomas were present already in the Greek versions of these two texts and that the expression ΝΜΟΝΑΧΟC ΔΥΩ ΕΤCΟΤΠ was one of these affinities.

Thus, the original meaning of the word μοναχός in the Gospel of Thomas was different from the one it might have had in the fourth century. What, then, did this word mean? The most widespread view on the meaning of μοναχός in the Gospel of Thomas is expressed by April D. DeConick: “ΜΟΝΑΧΟC in *Thomas* is the Greek translation (μοναχός) of the Syriac word ܡܢܚܐ,”<sup>99</sup> which is a technical term for “a person who lives singly,” “a celibate.”<sup>100</sup>

As D.F. Bumazhnov points out, the problem with this hypothesis is that the word ܡܢܚܐ received this technical meaning in the first half of the fourth

95 Kloppenborg 2006, 43.

96 Montefiore and Turner 1962, 80. See also the discussion of saying 75 below (pp. 123–124).

97 Jackson 1992, 305.

98 See Uro 2003, 46–51.

99 DeConick 1996, 4.

100 See Vööbus 1958, 108.

century: “Diese späte Bezeugung muß bei der Erwägung der eventuellen Beeinflussungsmöglichkeiten berücksichtigt werden.”<sup>101</sup> Risto Uro has also put the hypothesis into question: “it does not seem methodologically sound to read all the later technical meanings of **אֶחָד** into the *μοναχός* of the *Gospel of Thomas*, which by any dating is much earlier than the Syriac texts which use this word.”<sup>102</sup>

Perhaps the most important source that sheds light on the Thomasine use of the term *μοναχός* is the corpus of Greek translations of the Hebrew Bible by Aquila, Symmachus, and Theodotion. The word appears in these texts seven times (Gen 2:18 *οι λ’*; 22:2 *α’*; Ps 21/22:21 *α’*; 24/25:16 *α’*; 34/35:17 *α’*; 67/68:7 *σ’* and *θ’*; Prov 4:3 *α’*).<sup>103</sup> In six out of the seven cases, it renders Hebrew **יְחִיד**, “only one,” “isolated one.”

As Klijn points out, “in circles where these translations originated the word was not considered a technical term” and did not have a fixed meaning.<sup>104</sup> While in Gen 2:18 and Ps 67/68:7, *μοναχός* can be translated as “bachelor,” in other instances it probably has other meanings. For instance, in Gen 22:2, the word is applied to Isaac, the *only* son of Abraham, while, in Ps 24/25:16, it means that David is *lonely*.

What is more, in his translation of Ps 85/86:11, Aquila renders the Hebrew verb **יחד** (“unite,” *PI‘ĒL* of **יחד**, “be united”) with the Greek verb *μοναχόω*, “make one,”<sup>105</sup> which is unattested elsewhere.<sup>106</sup>

יחד לְבַבִּי לְיָרְאָה שְׁמֶךָ

Μονάχασσον τὴν καρδίαν μου τοῦ φοβεῖσθαι τὸ ὄνομά σου.

Make my heart one so that I fear your name.

We encounter a similar translation of this sentence in Symmachus’ version, even though he did not use any words cognate to *μοναχός*:

101 Bumazhnov 2007, 259.

102 Uro 1998a, 158; cf. Uro 1997, 225.

103 See Hatch et al. 1998, 932; Reider and Turner 1966, 160; see also the table in Morard 1973, 348.

104 Klijn 1962, 272.

105 Cf. Harl 1960, 469.

106 See Reider 1916, 109.

Ἐνωσον τὴν καρδίαν μου εἰς φόβον τοῦ ὀνόματός σου.<sup>107</sup>

Unite my heart to make me fear your name.

In what follows, I will argue that all the three aspects of the meaning of μοναχός in these translations—uniqueness, loneliness, unity—are present in the Gospel of Thomas as well. While the solitude of the Thomasine μοναχοί has been scrutinized in a large number of publications, the two other aspects have never been properly discussed in the scholarly literature.

(1) Μοναχός = “lonely,” “solitary.” As I have noted in chapter 2 (p. 67), Gos. Thom. 30:1–2 praises solitude and condemns communal living. There is no doubt that a similar ideal of becoming solitary underlies the Thomasine term μοναχός. Saying 16 is the most revealing source for the understanding of this aspect of the meaning of the word. Here, Jesus encourages his followers to leave their families behind and be alone.

16:1 ΠΕΧΕ ΙϚ ΧΕ ΤΑΧΑ ΕΥΜΕΕΥΕ Ν̄ΣΙ Ρ̄ΡΩΜΕ ΧΕ Ν̄ΤΑΕΙΕΙ ΔΝΟΥΧΕ Ν̄ΟΥΙΡΗΝΗ  
ΕΧ̄Ν ΠΚΟΣΜΟΣ 16:2 ΑΥΩ ΣΕΣΟΟΥΝ ΔΝ ΧΕ Ν̄ΤΑΕΙΕΙ ΔΝΟΥΧΕ Ν̄Ρ̄ΝΠΩΡΧ ΕΧ̄Ν  
ΠΚΑΖ ΟΥΚΩΖΤ ΟΥΣΗΦΕ ΟΥΠΟΛΕΜΟΣ 16:3 ΟῩΝ ΤΟΥ ΓΑΡ ΝΑΩΩΠΙΞ Ζ̄Ν ΟῩΝΕΙ  
ΟῩΝ ΟΥΜΤ ΝΑΩΩΠΕ ΕΧ̄Ν ΣΝΑΥ ΑΥΩ ΣΝΑΥ ΕΧ̄Ν ΟΥΜΤ ΠΕΙΩΤ ΕΧ̄Ν ΠΩΗΡΕ  
ΑΥΩ ΠΩΗΡΕ ΕΧ̄Ν ΠΕΙΩΤ 16:4 ΑΥΩ ΣΕΝΑΩΖΕ ΕΡΑΤΟΥ ΕΥΟ Μ̄ΜΟΝΑΧΟΣ

16:1 Jesus said: “Perhaps people think that I have come to cast peace upon the earth. 16:2 But they do not know that I have come to cast dissension upon the earth: fire, sword, (and) war. 16:3 For there will be five in one house: there will be three against two and two against three, the father against the son, and the son against the father. 16:4 And they will stand as solitary ones.”<sup>108</sup>

According to Uro, the word μοναχός here refers to those “who have been compelled to break away from family,” but does not necessarily mean “a celibate.”<sup>109</sup>

107 Both Greek texts are cited in Eusebius' *Comm. Ps.* PG 23:1036.40–43. See Field 1875, 2:237.

108 For the sake of the reader's convenience, I leave the translation of the Berliner Arbeitskreis unaltered, even though a more justified approach would be to leave the word μοναχός without any translation, since the point of the present chapter is that the word μοναχός has several different meanings.

109 Uro 1998a, 159.

It is not clear whether the dissolution of family ties had to be done once and for all or whether certain sexual activity was after all acceptable.

In spite of the clear ascetic inclination, one can recognize a certain ambiguity in *Thomas'* relation to the issue of marriage versus celibacy. *Thomas* praises those who have broken with their families and have become "solitary," but never directly rejects marriage and sexual intercourse.<sup>110</sup>

Even though Uro appears at first glance to make a solid point, there is at least one argument that can be made against his understanding of Thomasine take on celibacy. Unlike saying 16, saying 75 is built on sexual imagery:

75 ΠΕΧΕ ΙϞ ΟΥΝ ΖΑΖ ΔΖΕΡΑΤΟΥ ΖΙΡἸ ΠΡΟ ΔΛΛΑ ἸΜΟΝΑΧΟC ΝΕΤΝΑΒΟΚ  
ΕΖΟΥΝ ΕΠΜΑ ἸΩΕΛΕΕΤ

75 Jesus said, "Many are standing at the door, but it is the solitary who will enter the bridal chamber."

A comment on the translation of this saying is in order. I agree with Thomas O. Lambdin who renders ΠΜΑ ἸΩΕΛΕΕΤ as "the bridal chamber." The Berliner Arbeitskreis renders it as "the wedding hall." The latter translation is justified, if we presuppose that ΠΜΑ ἸΩΕΛΕΕΤ renders οἱ γάμοι of the Greek *Vorlage*, as it does, for example, in the Sahidic translation of Matt 25:10. It should be noted, however, that wedding imagery is also present in Gos. Thom. 104:3, where the Coptic text employs two Greek loan words, ΝΥΜΦΙΟC, "bridegroom," and ΝΥΜΦΩΝ. As Plisch has pointed out, it seems that the Thomasine terms ΝΥΜΦΩΝ and ΠΜΑ ἸΩΕΛΕΕΤ have the same meaning and both derive from νυμφών.<sup>111</sup> In turn, the primary meaning of the word νυμφών is "bridal chamber."<sup>112</sup>

I agree with Uro that the saying does not refer to any ritual "through which celibate persons only could enter the community."<sup>113</sup> I find it difficult, however, to believe that the words ἸΜΟΝΑΧΟC and ΠΜΑ ἸΩΕΛΕΕΤ are combined in the saying unintentionally. It seems that the word μοναχός is employed here pre-

110 Ibid., 161.

111 See Plisch 2008, 179 and 227. That the same Greek word is sometimes translated and sometimes retained should come as no surprise: cf., e.g., ΕΜΠΟΡΟC in Gos. Thom. 64:3 and ΕΩΩΤ in Gos. Thom. 64:12 and 76:1-2.

112 See BDAG, s.v. "νυμφών."

113 Uro 1998a, 158-159; cf. Plisch 2008, 179.

cisely because, in a marital context, *μοναχός* means “single” (cf. Aquila’s, Symmachus’ and Theodotion’s translations of Gen 2:18 and Ps 67/68:7).

This being the case, why would these celibate *μοναχοί* enter the bridal chamber? As Antti Marjanen has suggested, the bridal chamber and the bridegroom in Gos. Thom. 104:3 are metaphors for salvation and the person that attained salvation respectively.<sup>114</sup> Since Gos. Thom. 75 and 104:3 share their imagery and terminology, there can be little doubt that the former should be interpreted with due regard to the latter. It thus follows that both sayings portray salvation as the bridal chamber and that the same perfected individual is called *ΜΟΝΑΧΟΣ* in Gos. Thom. 75 and *ΝΥΜΦΙΟΣ* in Gos. Thom. 104:3. It makes sense, therefore, to suggest that the same metaphor of the bridegroom(s) entering/leaving the bridal chamber is present both in Gos. Thom. 75 and 104:3.

Thus, I propose that in Gos. Thom. 75 a *μοναχός* is likened to the bridegroom who is allowed in the bridal chamber, while the rest stand outside.<sup>115</sup> The saying describes a paradox: while the earthly bridal chambers are for those who desire to procreate, the heavenly ones are for those who abstain from sex. Hence, I am inclined to think that to become a *μοναχός* does in fact mean to live a sexually abstinent life.

(2) *Μοναχός* = “unique,” “one of a kind.” Unlike saying 16, saying 49 does not emphasize the social isolation of the *μοναχοί*, but rather their exceptional status:

49:1 ΠΕΧΕ ΙϚ ΔΕ ΖΕΝΗΜΑΚΑΡΙΟΣ ΝΕ ΝΜΟΝΑΧΟΣ ΔΥΩ ΕΤΣΟΤΤΙ ΔΕ ΤΕΤΝΑΖΕ  
ΑΤΜΗΝΤΕΡΟ 49:2 ΔΕ ΝΤΩΤῚ ΖῆΝΕΒΟΛ ἸΖΗΤῚ ΠΑΛΙΝ ΕΤΕΤΝΑΒΩΚ ΕΜΔΥ

49:1 Jesus said, “Blessed are the solitary and elect, for you will find the kingdom. 49:2 For you are from it, and to it you will return.”<sup>116</sup>

Here, the term *ΜΟΝΑΧΟΣ* is paired with the term *ΣΟΤΤΙ*, “chosen,” and it seems that the two words are used as at least partial synonyms. As I have already

<sup>114</sup> See Marjanen 1998b, 171–172.

<sup>115</sup> Valentinians adhered to a somewhat similar view. According to Irenaeus, *Haer.* 1.7.1 (= Epiphanius, *Pan.* 31.21.12), οἱ πνευματικοί “will be given as brides (*νύμφαι*) to the angels who surround Savior” (trans. D.J. Unger and J.J. Dillon); cf. *Exc.* 64. See also Thomassen 2006, 405.

<sup>116</sup> In this instance, I also prefer Lambdin’s translation to that of the Berliner Arbeitskreis. As I argue below (p. 125), there is no reason to think that ΔΥΩ in this saying renders an epexegetical καί.

noted, the term *μοναχός* in Aquila's translation occasionally means "the only one." It is worth noting that Aquila's use of the term is just as that of classical Greek authors. Already in Aristotle, the word *μοναχός* means "unique":<sup>117</sup>

ὥσπερ οὖν εἴρηται, λαμβάνει ὅτι ἀδύνατον ὀρίσασθαι ἐν τοῖς αἰδίοις, μάλιστα δὲ ὅσα μοναχά, οἶον ἥλιος ἢ σελήνη.

As has been said, then, people do not realize that it is impossible to define in the case of eternal things, especially those which are unique, like the sun or the moon.<sup>118</sup>

As Alfred Adam points out, the word *μοναχός* was used to designate unique objects up until the period of Late Antiquity and often functioned as a technical term in documentary papyri.<sup>119</sup> According to Friedrich Preisigke, in documentary texts, *μοναχός* designates "eine Urkunde, die nur in einer einzigen Ausfertigung vorliegt (ohne Nebenausfertigung oder Doppel)."<sup>120</sup> Hence, we read about, for example, τὸ [χει]ρόγραφον μοναχόν (*BGU* 2.637, ll. 9–10 [212 CE]) or ἡ ὁμολογία μοναχή (*BGU* 1.13, l. 16 [289 CE]). Sometimes, we encounter the substantivized expression τὸ μοναχόν, "document written in a single copy" (e.g., P.Oxy. 12.1473, l. 37 [201 CE]).<sup>121</sup>

It seems that the same idea of singleness is implied in Gos. Thom. 49. I would, therefore, understand *νημοναχος αγω ετσοτι* as "the unique and elect" (the Greek *Vorlage* of this saying probably read οἱ μοναχοὶ καὶ ἐκλεκτοί). The proposed translation makes the Berliner Arbeitskreis' suggestion that *αγω* in this phrase renders an exegetical καὶ unnecessary. It is much more natural to consider the phrase a hendiadys, where two similar expressions are linked by a conjunction in order to increase the rhetorical effect of the entire phrase. Moreover, my proposal calls into question Bumazhnov's theory of Aramaic influence on the Gospel of Thomas. The meaning of the word *μοναχός* itself explains why it was combined with the idea of being chosen. There is no need to speculate about the Jewish background of the concept.

The idea of the uniqueness and rareness of the *μοναχοί* is also present in Gos. Thom. 75 (cited above, p. 123). As Jackson has pointed out, sayings 73,

117 See LSJ, s.v. "μοναχός."

118 *Metaph.* 1040a27–29; trans. W.D. Ross.

119 Adam 1953–1954, 213–214.

120 Preisigke 1915, 127; cf. Preisigke 1910, 205; Preisigke 1912–1920, 1:109; Preisigke and Kießling 1925–1931, 2:114–115.

121 Preisigke and Kießling 1925–1931, 2:114.



74, and 75 form a thematic unit. Each of the three sayings is phrased as an antithetic parallel construction and is intended to reveal “a contrast between the many and the few, the spiritually indecisive rabble and the committed elect.”<sup>122</sup> Saying 73 opposes the harvest that is great to the laborers that are few in number. Saying 74 states that there is a multitude standing around the well, but no one is brave enough to dive into the well.<sup>123</sup> It seems natural to read Gos. Thom. 75 along these lines and to conclude that ἡΜΟΝΑΧΟC are contrasted with “many,” because the Thomasine μοναχοί are unique and exceptionally rare.

(3) Μοναχός = “unitary.” The suggestion that the term μοναχός in the Gospel of Thomas means “he who is one,” “he who is a unity” has been made by D.F. Bumazhnov, who discussed “die mögliche Konnotation der inneren Einheitlichkeit” of the Thomasine term ΜΟΝΑΧΟC.<sup>124</sup> Unfortunately, the arguments Bumazhnov offers are hardly convincing, since the parallel sources he cites<sup>125</sup> come from a much later historical period and hence are irrelevant to the discussion. Nevertheless, the hypothesis itself appears to be correct and, as I will try to demonstrate, can be substantiated by the text of the Gospel of Thomas itself.

My conjecture is that the person(s) responsible for the shape and arrangement of Thomasine sayings intended to hint at the oneness of μοναχοί by making the terms ΟΥΑ ΟΥΩΤ and ΜΟΝΑΧΟC resonate with each other. First of all, even though there is no reason to hypothesize about a single expression underlying both terms, it is still remarkable that not only the μοναχοί are called chosen (saying 49, cited above, p. 124), but also those who become ΟΥΑ ΟΥΩΤ (saying 23):

23:1 ΠΕΧΕ ΙϚ ΧΕ ΤΗΝΑCΕΤΠ ΤΗΝΕ ΟΥΑ ΕΒΟΛ ΖἸ ΩΟ ΔΥΩ CΝΔΥ ΕΒΟΛ ΖἸ ΤΒΑ<sup>126</sup>  
 23:2 ΔΥΩ CΕΝΔΩΖΕ ΕΡΑΤΟΥ ΕΥΟ ΟΥΑ ΟΥΩΤ

122 Jackson 1992, 304.

123 For an interpretation of Gos. Thom. 74, see Jackson 1992, 300–305.

124 Bumazhnov 2006, 295.

125 Pseudo-Macarius, *Hom. 7 (coll. HA)* 56.1; Philoxenus of Mabbug, *Letter to Patricius of Edessa* 35.

126 According to Funk 2002, 86, the anarthrous form ΤΒΑ is problematic. It is possible that the original Coptic text read ΖἸ ΖἸΤΒΑ (a literal rendering of ἐκ κυρίων) and that later the plural definite article ΖἸ has dropped out through haplography.

23:1 Jesus said: “I will choose you, one from a thousand and two from ten thousand.<sup>127</sup> 23:2 And they will stand as a single one.”

Second, it is remarkable that sayings 16:4 and 23:2 are quite similar in their wording:<sup>128</sup>

Gos. Thom. 16:4	Gos. Thom. 23:2
ΑΥΩ ΣΕΝΑΩΞΕ ΕΡΑΤΟΥ ΕΥΟ ΜΜΟΝΑΧΟC	ΑΥΩ ΣΕΝΑΩΞΕ ΕΡΑΤΟΥ ΕΥΟ ΟΥΑ ΟΥΩΤ
And they will stand as solitary ones.	And they will stand as a single one.

As I have said earlier, the use of repetitive formulae is one of the main rhetorical devices in the Gospel of Thomas. However, unlike sayings 8, 21, 24, 63, 65, and 96 with their unified formula (“whoever has ears should hear!”), these two sayings are terminologically different. Unlike the expression ΟΥΑ ΟΥΩΤ, the word ΜΟΝΑΧΟC has something to do with uniqueness and loneliness. Yet the two words are inserted in the same formula in order to echo or mirror each other, which makes it plausible that, among other things, the term μοναχός in the Gospel of Thomas is supposed to mean “he who is one.” That the word could have had such a meaning is confirmed by the fact that the verb μοναχόω meant “to make one” in Aquila’s translation of Ps 85/86:11.<sup>129</sup>

127 Gos. Thom. 23:1 has multiple parallels in early Christian literature. See Irenaeus’ report on Basilides (*Haer.* 1.24.6; cf. Epiphanius, *Pan.* 24.5.4); Pistis Sophia (134 = 350.11–12 Schmidt). According to Carlson 2014, 146–148, Gos. Thom. 23:1 is the source of a quotation in Origen’s *Pasch.* 1.101 (= 126.11–12 Witte): εἰς πού [ἐκ] χιλίων καὶ δύο ἐκ μυρίων, “perhaps one [from] a thousand, and two from ten thousand.” For the quotations of Gos. Thom. 23:1 in Manichaean literature, see Funk 2002, 85–92.

128 The Thomasine motif of “standing” reflected in these sayings will be discussed in chapter 5.

129 Having established that the Thomasine term μοναχός presupposes the notion of oneness as perfection, we may take a closer look at Gos. Thom. 16:2, where Jesus says that he brought “divisions,” διῆπρωξ, into this world. Going through these “divisions” is a prerequisite of becoming a μοναχός. Thus, just like saying 75, saying 16 presents the reader with a paradox: according to saying 75, the bridal chamber is for the celibates; according to saying 16, division brings unity.

## Conclusions

In this chapter, I have dealt with two important Thomasine expressions,  $\text{ΟΥΑ ΟΥΩΤ}$  (sayings 4, 11, 22, 23, and 106), and  $\text{ΜΟΝΑΧΟΣ}$  (sayings 16, 49, and 75). My conviction is that both terms express the Platonist idea of oneness as perfection.

First, I discussed the background of the expression  $\text{ΟΥΑ ΟΥΩΤ}$ . My first objective was to revisit the widespread interpretation of the sayings about becoming  $\text{ΟΥΑ ΟΥΩΤ}$  that was once proposed by Klijn. According to Klijn, the theology of the Gospel of Thomas presupposes a Jewish myth about Adam, who was originally an androgyne but was later divided into two parts. The fundamental feature of the myth the Gospel of Thomas knew of was the idea of Adam's initial oneness. According to Klijn, the only Jewish author that shares this tradition with the Gospel of Thomas is Philo. As I tried to point out, Klijn's hypothesis is hardly compelling, since Philo does not seem to adhere to said myth. As for the Gospel of Thomas, a few Thomasine sayings might allude to this myth, but the Thomasine motif of becoming one can hardly be explained away by it.

My second objective was to demonstrate that becoming  $\text{ΟΥΑ ΟΥΩΤ}$  in the Gospel of Thomas should not be identified with becoming asexual. The most important saying in this regard is Gos. Thom. 22. As scholars of the Gospel of Thomas have recently realized, the Coptic of the saying is quite difficult. I find the understanding of the text of the saying I have proposed in this chapter the most economical one. According to my interpretation, to become neither male nor female is one of many transformations required for becoming one.

My third objective was to show that the sayings about becoming  $\text{ΟΥΑ ΟΥΩΤ}$  should be studied against the background of Platonist metaphysics. Various Platonist authors, including Philo and Clement, understood human perfection as oneness. Although the texts disagree in details, and the Gospel of Thomas is no exception, the fundamental sentiment underlying these speculations is the same.

I then discussed the meaning of the Thomasine term  $\text{ΜΟΝΑΧΟΣ}$ . I started with calling into question the hypothesis of the same Syriac or Aramaic expression underlying  $\text{ΟΥΑ ΟΥΩΤ}$  and  $\text{ΜΟΝΑΧΟΣ}$ . Indeed, it is quite clear that the concepts  $\text{ΟΥΑ ΟΥΩΤ}$  and  $\text{ΜΟΝΑΧΟΣ}$  are not entirely identical.

Since there are reasons to believe that the sayings about the  $\text{μοναχοί}$  were present in the "original" Gospel of Thomas, the original meaning of the word  $\text{μοναχός}$  cannot be "monk." I believe that the word is used in the Gospel of Thomas as a technical term and has three different aspects of meaning.

That the word *μοναχός* has these three aspects is evident from the way it is used in the translations of Aquila, Symmachus, and Theodotion. First, it means “the one who is lonely.” This aspect of the term *μοναχός* is evident from its use in saying 16, where it designates the individuals who acquired aloneness through the dissolution of family ties. Moreover, I believe that the context in which the word is used in Gos. Thom. 75 reveals that it means “the one who is sexually abstinent.” Second, it means “the one who is unique,” “one of a kind,” which is quite in accord with the way the word is used by classical authors and in documentary papyri. The fact that the word has this aspect of meaning explains why the Gospel of Thomas associates being a *μοναχός* with being chosen. Third, it means “the one who is a unity.” That the word is supposed to have such a meaning may be inferred from the fact that in sayings 16:4 and 23:2 the words *ογα ογωτ* and *μοναχοc* are used as if they were synonyms. Another argument in favor of this hypothesis is that those who are *ογα ογωτ* and *μοναχοc* are both called “chosen.” It is, therefore, tempting to understand the Thomasine term *μοναχός* as an equivalent to Philo’s *μονάς* and Clement’s *μοναδικός*.

## The Gospel of Thomas and the Platonists on Stability

In the previous chapter, I argued that the Thomasine expressions  $\text{ΟΥΑ ΟΥΩΤ}$  and  $\text{ΜΟΝΑΧΟC}$  express the Platonist idea of oneness as perfection. An important detail, however, was left unexplained, though it certainly deserves to be discussed in detail. Two of the sayings that deal with oneness as perfection, Gos. Thom. 16:4 and 23:2, associate oneness with “standing”:

Gos. Thom. 16:4	Gos. Thom. 23:2
$\lambda\gamma\omega\ \text{c}\epsilon\text{n}\alpha\omega\delta\epsilon\ \epsilon\text{p}\alpha\tau\omicron\gamma\ \epsilon\gamma\omicron\ \bar{\mu}\text{m}\omicron\text{n}\alpha\chi\omicron\text{c}$	$\lambda\gamma\omega\ \text{c}\epsilon\text{n}\alpha\omega\delta\epsilon\ \epsilon\text{p}\alpha\tau\omicron\gamma\ \epsilon\gamma\omicron\ \text{ΟΥΑ ΟΥΩΤ}$
And they will stand as solitary ones.	And they will stand as a single one.

In what follows, I argue that “standing” in these, as well as in a few other Thomasine sayings, denotes the Platonist idea of divine stability; it is, therefore, no coincidence that these two metaphysical concepts, stability and oneness, are brought together. I first discuss interpretations of Thomasine “standing” by April D. DeConick, Michael Allen Williams, and Robert Murray, and argue that the context of the Thomasine sayings that deal with “standing” does not support the proposals of these scholars. I then discuss the multifold meanings of the expression  $\omega\delta\epsilon\ \epsilon\text{p}\alpha\tau\epsilon\varsigma$  in these sayings as well as in their Greek *Vorlagen*. Finally, I discuss the Platonist parallels to the sayings that seem to refer to “transcendental ‘standing.’”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> I borrow this expression from Williams 1985, 74.

### DeConick, Williams, and Murray on “Standing” in the Gospel of Thomas

Before I discuss different contexts in which the expression  $\omega\rho\epsilon\ \epsilon\rho\alpha\tau\tau\epsilon$  is used in the Gospel of Thomas, I would like to offer a brief survey of scholarly opinions regarding Thomasine “standing.” First, according to DeConick, “standing” in sayings 16, 18, and 23 refers to the attainment of angelic status and participation in “the cultic service before God’s throne.”<sup>2</sup> The angels are “described as those who ‘stand’ before God” in a number Jewish apocalyptic texts (1 En. 39.12–13; 47.3; 68.4;<sup>3</sup> 2 En. 21.1; T. Ab. A7.11; A8.1). The expression can also be applied to the righteous ones, who thus assimilate to the condition of angels (Ascen. Isa. 9.9; 2 En. 21.3; 22.6–10).

Second, Williams has suggested that there was a connection between the practice of “standing in one place, absorbed in prayer and contemplation”<sup>4</sup> attested among Christian monks (see, e.g., Palladius, *Hist. Laus.* 43.2) and the “standing” in the Gospel of Thomas. Since the Syrian monks, according to Theodoret of Cyrhus (*Hist. rel.* 27.1), also practiced continual standing, it is possible that the designation  $\text{ܕܢܘܨܬܐ}$ , “covenanters,” could also mean “those who are characterized by the upright stance”;<sup>5</sup> this Syriac term, in turn, “could very well illuminate” the language of standing in sayings 16, 18, and 23 of the Gospel of Thomas, “which seems to have a Syrian ancestry.”<sup>6</sup>

Third, Murray also tried to connect Thomasine “standing” with the traditions of Syriac Christianity.<sup>7</sup> In the Syriac-speaking area, the word  $\text{ܕܢܘܨܬܐ}$  designated ascetics that “formed a kind of ‘church within the Church’ called the  $\text{ܕܢܘܨܬܐ}$ .”<sup>8</sup> When the aspirants were baptized, they swore to celibacy and joined

2 See DeConick 1996, 90; cf. Robbins 2013, 128–129.

3 DeConick and Robbins refer to 1 En. 68.2, which is clearly due to a misprint.

4 Williams 1985, 87.

5 Williams follows the suggestion made by Adam 1953–1954, 224–228. It is worth noting that, although Vööbus 1958, 98–99, criticized this suggestion, it may be accurate. The Syriac noun  $\text{ܕܢܘܨܬܐ}$ , “covenant,” comes from the verbal root  $\text{ܢܘܨ}$ , “rise up,” “stand.” As Griffith 1998, 232, points out, “It is the nature of Semitic languages and their semantics to employ polyvalent terms. Given the presumption that all forms derive from a particular set of root consonants, they carry a reference to all the other lexical possibilities implicit in their shared roots.”

6 See Williams 1985, 89–90.

7 A similar attempt has recently been made by D.F. Bumazhnov, who also relates sayings 16, 23, and 75 to  $\text{ܕܢܘܨܬܐ}$ , but does not offer any interpretation of Thomasine “standing.” See Bumazhnov 2011.

8 Murray 2004, 14.

this “covenant.”<sup>9</sup> The very semantics of the term ܩܘܪܒܐ hints at the baptismal context: in the act of baptism, “a new member ‘took his stand’ for Christ and in the name of Christ.”<sup>10</sup> Since the Syriac *Vorlage* of the Gospel of Thomas spoke of “standing” as a single one, ܩܘܪܒܐ,<sup>11</sup> Thomasine sayings 16, 23, 49, and 75 bear evidence of “an early Judaeo-Christian baptismal exhortation.”<sup>12</sup>

Although all these interpretations are quite insightful, none of them is supported by the text of the Gospel of Thomas. First, sayings 16, 18, and 23 neither mention nor even allude to the notion of angels and their heavenly liturgy. Angels are mentioned in the Gospel of Thomas twice, in Gos. Thom. 13:2 and 88:1,<sup>13</sup> and both times in a context that can be hardly interpreted as sympathetic. In Gos. Thom. 13:2, Simon Peter says that Jesus is “like a righteous angel,” but his view is inferior to the one of Thomas (Gos. Thom. 13:4).<sup>14</sup> Jesus is clearly much more than an angel, and, since, according to saying 108, our ultimate goal is to become like Jesus, it is very unlikely that assimilation to the angels is to be seen as a worthwhile enterprise.

Moreover, it is unlikely that we can learn anything useful from the angels. The meaning of Gos. Thom. 88:1, “the angels and the prophets will come to you and give to you those things you (already) have,” is uncertain, but since many believed that the law of Moses was given through angels (Jub. 1.27; 2.1; Gal 3:19), it is probable that Jesus in saying 88 denies the authority of “the law and the prophets”—i.e., of the Hebrew Scriptures.<sup>15</sup>

Second, it is unlikely that Thomasine sayings ever refer to the practice of standing. While there are two sayings that clearly mention literal standing, sayings 75 and 99 (see below, pp. 135–137), neither of them allude to any such practice. Moreover, it is doubtful that literal standing is implied in sayings 16, 18,

9 See Murray 2004, 15.

10 Murray 1974, 78.

11 Murray assumes that both ܡܘܢܐܚܘܥ and ܘܥܕܐ ܘܥܘܬܐ render ܩܘܪܒܐ (ibid., 70). See chapter 4 for my critique of this theory.

12 Murray 2004, 16; cf. Murray 1974, 68–70, 77–78.

13 Plisch 2008, 64 and 198 (cf. Schenke 2012, 882–883), argues that the noun ܐܘܪܘܘܠܐܘܥ in sayings 13 and 88 means “messenger” rather than “angel,” but his arguments do not seem appealing. First, since some angels are evil (Matt 25:41), there is no reason why the others cannot be called “just” (saying 13). Second, ܡܘܢܐܚܘܥ ܡܢ ܡܘܢܐܚܘܘܬܐ is not necessarily equivalent to οἱ ἀπόστολοι καὶ προφῆται of Did. 11:3.

14 In this respect, Gos. Thom. 13:2 is similar to Gos. Thom. 114:1, where Peter also expresses an inadequate opinion that is later corrected by Jesus; cf. Uro 2003, 90.

15 The same idea seems to be present in saying 52, where “twenty-four prophets” probably stand for the Hebrew Scriptures; see Miroshnikov 2012, 183.

and 23. It is much more likely that these sayings describe not the means of spiritual progress, but its outcome. Finally, in light of the fact that physical standing was generally associated with worship and prayer,<sup>16</sup> it is quite telling that the Thomasine attitude towards prayer is profoundly negative: Jesus refuses to fast and pray in saying 104, even claiming that prayer leads to condemnation in Gos. Thom. 14:2.<sup>17</sup>

Third, there is no reason to suppose that sayings 16, 23, 49, and 75 are somehow connected to baptism. Although Jonathan Z. Smith and several other scholars after him have tried to place a number of Thomasine sayings, especially saying 37,<sup>18</sup> within a baptismal context, their attempts were hardly successful.<sup>19</sup> Moreover, as Risto Uro has pointed out, some of Thomasine regulations seem to be incompatible with any “type of baptismal process we know about from other first- and second-century sources.”<sup>20</sup> For instance, while Did. 7:4 exhorts the one being baptized to fast one or two days prior to his or her baptism, Gos. Thom. 14:1 claims that fasting is sinful.

### The Varieties of “Standing” in the Gospel of Thomas

The expression  $\omega\lambda\epsilon\ \epsilon\pi\alpha\tau\tau\epsilon$  is used seven times in the Coptic Gospel of Thomas—viz., in sayings 16, 18, 23, 28, 50, 75, and 99. Since the Coptic text of the Gospel of Thomas is a translation from Greek, it seems necessary to discuss the terminology employed in the Greek *Vorlage* of the Gospel of Thomas before proceeding to the analysis of Thomasine “standing.”

In the vast majority of instances where the Sahidic New Testament reads  $\lambda\epsilon\pi\alpha\tau\tau\epsilon$  (in Sahidic Coptic, the stative form  $\lambda\epsilon$  is often used instead of the infinitive form  $\omega\lambda\epsilon$ ), the Greek text reads  $\psi\sigma\tau\eta\mu\iota$ .<sup>21</sup> There is little doubt that, as a rule,  $\omega\lambda\epsilon\ \epsilon\pi\alpha\tau\tau\epsilon$  in translated Coptic texts renders  $\psi\sigma\tau\eta\mu\iota$  in their Greek *Vorlagen*.

The same certainly holds true for the Gospel of Thomas for the following reasons. First, P.Oxy. 1.1 preserves the beginning of the Greek text of saying 28, and there is no reason to doubt that it is identical to the *Vorlage* of the Coptic text:

16 Cf. Williams 1985, 91.

17 For a detailed analysis of these sayings, see Marjanen 1998b, 170–172.

18 See Smith 1978, 1–23; Davies 1983, 117–137; MacDonald 1987, 50–63.

19 See the discussion in Uro 2003, 70–72.

20 Uro 2003, 72.

21 See Wilmet 1957–1959, 2:1155–1160.



<b>Gos. Thom. 28:1 (P.Oxy. 1.1)</b>	<b>Gos. Thom. 28:1 (NHG 11)</b>
λέγει Ἰ(ησοῦ)ς· ἔ[σ]την ἐν μέσῳ τοῦ κόσμου καὶ ἐν σαρκὶ ὥφθην αὐτοῖς.	πεχε ιϥ δε δειωρε ερατ ρη̄ τμητε μη̄κοκμοκ αγω δειογωνη εβολ ναγ ρη̄ σαρξ

Second, the phrasing of Gos. Thom. 99:1 is remarkably similar to that of Matt 12:47 and Luke 8:20. The expression  $\alpha\chi\epsilon\pi\alpha\tau\tau$  in the Sahidic version of Luke 8:20 corresponds to ἵστημι in the Greek text, so we can be fairly certain that the same Greek verb was used in the *Vorlage* of the Gospel of Thomas. The following synoptic table compares Gos. Thom. 99:1 only with Luke 8:20, because the Sahidic New Testament, as well as a few other important witnesses, omits Matt 12:47:<sup>22</sup>

<b>Luke 8:20 (NA<sup>28</sup>)</b>	<b>Luke 8:20 (sa 1)</b>	<b>Gos. Thom. 99:1</b>
ἀπηγγέλη δὲ αὐτῷ· ἡ μήτηρ σου καὶ οἱ ἀδελφοί σου ἐστήκασιν ἔξω ἰδεῖν θέλοντές σε.	αχχι πογω δε ναγ δε τεκμααγ μη̄ νεκσνηογ αχερατογ ρι πσα ββολ εγωγεω ναγ εροκ <sup>23</sup>	πεχε μη̄μαθητς ναγ δε νεκσνηγ μη̄ τεκμααγ σεαχερατογ ρι πσα νβολ

I proceed now to the discussion of the various aspects of the meaning of “standing” in the Gospel of Thomas. It is evident that neither Greek ἵστημι nor Coptic  $\omega\chi\epsilon\pi\alpha\tau\tau$  has only a single meaning. It is the context rather that determines if it is to be understood either literally or figuratively.<sup>24</sup>

I suggest that  $\omega\chi\epsilon\pi\alpha\tau\tau$  denotes one of the three following kinds of “standing” in the Gospel of Thomas: (1) literal standing, (2) standing as presenting or revealing oneself, and (3) transcendental standing.

22 It is worth noting that, since Matt 12:47 is necessary to the flow of the narrative, it must have been in the original text. Metzger 1994, 26–27, argues that it “apparently was accidentally omitted because of homoeoteleuton”: verses 12:46 and 12:47 both end with *λαλήσαι*.

23 Quecke 1977, 156.

24 Thus, for instance, as Alexey Somov has recently shown, in certain early Jewish and early Christian texts, ἵστημι “occasionally represents the concept of resurrection”; see Somov 2017, 207–208.

### 1 *Literal Standing in Sayings 99 and 75*

It seems that  $\omega\rho\epsilon\ \epsilon\rho\alpha\tau\zeta$  in Gos. Thom. 99:1 refers to literal standing. Gos. Thom. 99:1 serves as the narrative framework for Gos. Thom. 99:2–3. When the disciples mention his relatives standing outside, Jesus uses this opportunity to define who his real relatives are:

99:1  $\pi\epsilon\chi\epsilon\ \bar{\mu}\nu\alpha\theta\eta\tau\eta\varsigma\ \nu\alpha\upsilon\ \chi\epsilon\ \nu\epsilon\kappa\sigma\eta\eta\ \mu\bar{\eta}\ \tau\epsilon\kappa\mu\alpha\alpha\upsilon\ \sigma\epsilon\alpha\delta\epsilon\rho\alpha\tau\omicron\upsilon\ \gamma\iota$   
 $\pi\sigma\alpha\ \nu\beta\omicron\lambda$  99:2  $\pi\epsilon\chi\alpha\upsilon\ \nu\alpha\upsilon\ \chi\epsilon\ \nu\epsilon\tau\bar{\eta}\nu\epsilon\epsilon\iota\mu\alpha\ \epsilon\tau\epsilon\ \bar{\mu}\rho\omicron\upsilon\omega\omega\ \bar{\eta}\pi\alpha\epsilon\iota\omega\tau$   
 $\nu\alpha\epsilon\iota\ \nu\epsilon\ \nu\alpha\sigma\eta\eta\ \mu\bar{\eta}\ \tau\alpha\mu\alpha\alpha\upsilon$  99:3  $\bar{\eta}\tau\omicron\omicron\upsilon\ \pi\epsilon\ \epsilon\tau\eta\alpha\beta\omega\kappa\ \epsilon\zeta\omicron\upsilon\eta\ \epsilon\tau\mu\bar{\eta}\tau\epsilon\rho\omicron$   
 $\bar{\eta}\pi\alpha\epsilon\iota\omega\tau$

99:1 The disciples said to him: “Your brothers and your mother are standing outside.” 99:2 He said to them: “Those here, who do the will of my Father—they are my brothers and my mother. 99:3 They are the ones who will enter the kingdom of my Father.”

As Stephen J. Patterson has pointed out, Gos. Thom. 99:3 is the Thomasine addition to its source.<sup>25</sup> Although this addition does not contribute much to the content of the saying, it certainly refines its literary form: while Gos. Thom. 99:1 and 99:2 contrast blood relatives with spiritual ones, Gos. Thom. 99:1 and 99:3 contrast those who “stand outside” with those who “go inside” ( $\beta\omega\kappa\ \epsilon\zeta\omicron\upsilon\eta$ ). Thus, “standing outside” is meant literally in Gos. Thom. 99:1 and then reinterpreted allegorically as spiritual imperfection in Gos. Thom. 99:3.

In a similar fashion,  $\omega\rho\epsilon\ \epsilon\rho\alpha\tau\zeta$  refers to literal standing in saying 75. Quite remarkably, saying 75, just like saying 99, contrasts “standing outside” with “going inside”:

75  $\pi\epsilon\chi\epsilon\ \bar{\iota}\tau\ \omicron\upsilon\eta\ \gamma\alpha\gamma\ \alpha\delta\epsilon\rho\alpha\tau\omicron\upsilon\ \gamma\iota\rho\bar{\eta}\ \pi\rho\omicron\ \alpha\lambda\lambda\alpha\ \bar{\mu}\mu\omicron\eta\alpha\chi\omicron\varsigma\ \nu\epsilon\tau\eta\alpha\beta\omega\kappa$   
 $\epsilon\zeta\omicron\upsilon\eta\ \epsilon\pi\mu\alpha\ \bar{\eta}\psi\epsilon\lambda\epsilon\epsilon\tau$

75 Jesus said, “Many are standing at the door, but it is the solitary who will enter the bridal chamber.”

<sup>25</sup> See Patterson 1993, 68. Whether saying 99 is dependent on the Synoptic tradition or draws on a source that was parallel to it is a matter of debate. Patterson 1993, 67–68, champions Thomasine independence from the Synoptics; Gathercole 2012, 196–198, argues against it. I am inclined to agree with Kloppenborg 2014, 213, who has recently called Gathercole’s arguments into question and concluded that saying 99 may well represent “an independent performance of the saying.”

D.F. Bumazhnov has recently suggested that saying 75 refers to “religiously motivated standing.”<sup>26</sup> His hypothesis is based on the observation that saying 75, along with Gos. Thom. 16:4 and 23:2, depicts “single ones” as “standing.” Since “standing” in Gos. Thom. 16:4 and 23:2 appears to have a technical or semi-technical meaning, this may also be the case with saying 75.

This suggestion is, however, problematic. While sayings 16:4 and 23:2 associate “standing” with being either *ογα ογωτ* or *μοναχος*, saying 75 claims that standing at the door of the bridal chamber is the lot of those who are not *μοναχοι*. Moreover, as I have pointed out in the previous chapter (p. 120), saying 75 belongs to the thematic unit of sayings 73, 74, and 75. Each of these sayings is built on a particular metaphor (73: religious instruction is the gathering of the harvest; 74: entering the world is diving into a well; 75: salvation is entering a bridal chamber), and each contrasts the many with the few. “Standing” in saying 75 should thus be seen as the vehicle of the saying’s metaphorical language: while the grooms (i.e. the *μοναχοι*) enter the bridal chamber, the suitors (i.e., the spiritually weak) stand outside. It follows, therefore, that “standing” here is meant literally and is not used in a technical sense.

One may even conclude that “standing” plays no meaningful role in this metaphor: the saying simply emphasizes the fact that the suitors are not allowed to go inside the bridal chamber; it does not elaborate on the things they are doing outside. Indeed, while, as I have already pointed out, *ωξε ερατ* usually renders *ἴστημι*, there are notable exceptions to the rule. According to Crum,<sup>27</sup> *αξερατ* in the Sahidic Bible occasionally renders *εἰμί* (see Num 5:13, Isa 14:13, and Wis 9:9). The most remarkable example, not listed by Crum,<sup>28</sup> is the Sahidic version of Mark 15:40:

Mark 15:40 (NA <sup>28</sup> )	Mark 15:40 (sa 1)
ἦσαν δὲ καὶ γυναῖκες ἀπὸ μακρόθεν θεωροῦσαι.	νεγῆ ρενριομε <sup>29</sup> δε αξερατογ ἱπογε εγωωτ <sup>30</sup>

26 Bumazhnov 2011, 77.

27 See Crum 1939, 537b.

28 I borrow it from Wilmet 1957–1959, 2:1156.

29 It should be noted that at least one manuscript, sa 16L, reads *νεγῆ ροιμε*; see Balestri 1970, 135. This reading must be regarded as a corruption of *νεγῆ ρενριομε*.

30 Quecke 1972, 176.

We may very well encounter a similar phenomenon in saying 75, in which case “standing” would be an irrelevant detail, just like it is irrelevant here in the Sahidic version of Mark 15:40. Unfortunately, it does not seem possible to reconstruct the exact phrasing of the lost Greek *Vorlage* of saying 75. Even so, while one may suspect that in this particular case  $\omega\chi\epsilon\ \epsilon\pi\alpha\tau\epsilon$  renders Greek  $\epsilon\dot{\iota}\mu\acute{\iota}, \dot{\iota}\sigma\tau\eta\mu\acute{\iota}$  at least appears to be a better candidate, because it contributes to the antithetic structure of the saying.

There are three pairs of opposites that are contrasted here: first, the few ( $\bar{\nu}\mu\omicron\nu\alpha\chi\omicron\varsigma$ ) and the many ( $\epsilon\lambda\lambda\epsilon$ ); second, being inside the bridal chamber and being at its door; third, going and standing. “Standing,” therefore, should be regarded as an important antithetical component of the parallel structure of the saying.

What is quite remarkable is that in both cases where “standing” is meant literally (Jesus’ relatives standing outside in saying 99 and suitors standing at the door of the bridal chamber in saying 75), it is associated with being “outside” and contrasted with “going inside.” Moreover, in both cases this literal standing is allegorically interpreted as spiritual imperfection, which prevents an individual from being saved, and, in turn, is contrasted with cases where “standing” is meant metaphorically, referring to divine stability (see the discussion of sayings 16, 18, 23, and 50, below).

## 2 “Standing” as Presenting or Revealing Oneself in Saying 28

In saying 28, “standing” has a different meaning. As I have already pointed out, thanks to P.Oxy. 1.1, the beginning of the saying is preserved in Greek. BDAG mentions Gos. Thom. 28:1 among the examples where the verb  $\dot{\iota}\sigma\tau\eta\mu\acute{\iota}$  means “to come up in the presence of others,” “to appear.”<sup>31</sup> It is worth noting that  $\dot{\iota}\sigma\tau\eta\mu\acute{\iota}\ \acute{\epsilon}\nu\ \mu\acute{\epsilon}\sigma\omega$ , the very same expression we encounter in P.Oxy. 1.1, occurs also in other early Christian texts in similar contexts.<sup>32</sup> What is perhaps even more important for the present discussion is that both Gos. Thom. 28:1 and 28:2 have a parallel structure:

28:1a  $\pi\epsilon\chi\epsilon\ \bar{\iota}\bar{\varsigma}\ \chi\epsilon\ \delta\epsilon\iota\omega\chi\epsilon\ \epsilon\pi\alpha\tau\ \epsilon\lambda\lambda\ \tau\eta\mu\eta\tau\epsilon\ \bar{\mu}\bar{\nu}\bar{\kappa}\bar{\omicron}\bar{\varsigma}\bar{\mu}\bar{\omicron}\bar{\varsigma}$  28:1b  $\delta\alpha\gamma\omega\ \delta\epsilon\iota\omicron\gamma\omega\eta\varsigma$   
 $\epsilon\beta\omicron\lambda\ \eta\alpha\gamma\ \epsilon\lambda\lambda\ \varsigma\alpha\pi\zeta$

28:2a  $\delta\epsilon\iota\chi\epsilon\ \epsilon\pi\omicron\omicron\gamma\ \tau\eta\theta\omicron\gamma\ \epsilon\gamma\tau\alpha\chi\epsilon$  28:2b  $\bar{\eta}\bar{\pi}\bar{\iota}\bar{\rho}\bar{\epsilon}\ \epsilon\lambda\lambda\alpha\gamma\ \bar{\eta}\bar{\rho}\bar{\eta}\bar{\mu}\bar{\tau}\bar{\omicron}\bar{\gamma}\ \epsilon\theta\omicron\beta\epsilon$

28:1a  $\lambda\acute{\epsilon}\gamma\epsilon\iota\ \bar{\iota}(\eta\sigma\omicron\upsilon)\varsigma\ \acute{\epsilon}[\sigma] \tau\eta\eta\bar{\nu}\ \acute{\epsilon}\nu\ \mu\acute{\epsilon}\sigma\omega\ \tau\omicron\upsilon\ \kappa\acute{\omicron}\sigma\mu\omicron\upsilon$  28:1b  $\kappa\alpha\iota\ \acute{\epsilon}\nu\ \varsigma\alpha\rho\kappa\acute{\iota}\ \acute{\omega}\phi\theta\eta\eta\bar{\nu}$   
 $\alpha\upsilon\tau\omicron\iota\varsigma$

31 Cf. Robbins 2013, 132.

32 See BDAG, s.v. “ $\dot{\iota}\sigma\tau\eta\mu\acute{\iota}$ ,” B.2.

28:2a καὶ εὐρον πάντας μεθύοντας 28:2b καὶ οὐδένα εὐρον δεῖψά(ν)τα ἐν αὐτοῖς.

28:1a Jesus said: “I stood in the middle of the world, 28:1b and in flesh I appeared to them.

28:2a I found all of them drunk. 28:2b None of them did I find thirsty.”

Both Gos. Thom. 28:1 and 28:2 comprise two sentences that use different yet not dissimilar phrasing to make the same point. “Everyone” and “being intoxicated” in Gos. Thom. 28:2a correspond to “none of them” and “being thirsty” in Gos. Thom. 28:2b. In a similar manner, Gos. Thom. 28:1 parallels “being in the middle of the world” (28:1a) and “being in flesh” (28:1b), as well as “standing” (28:1a) and “being visible” (28:1b).<sup>33</sup>

Thus, the literary structure of Gos. Thom. 28:1–2 indicates that in this saying ἴσθημι designates presenting or even revealing oneself, as it does in the other examples listed in BDAG, s.v. “ἴσθημι,” B.2.

### 3 *Transcendental “Standing” in Sayings 16, 18, 23, and 50*

It is now time to turn to the notion of “standing” in sayings 16, 18, 23, and 50. As Williams has pointed out, the verb ἴσθημι “has a long history in the Greek literature as a technical term for Rest (vs. Motion).”<sup>34</sup> A number of Middle Platonists and Platonizing authors used this verb to describe stability as an attribute of ultimate reality and, consequently, stability as human perfection. In what follows, I argue that ὤρε εἶπατῃ in sayings 16, 18, 23, and 50 should be interpreted against the background of this Platonist notion of transcendental “standing.”

#### Platonists on Transcendental “Standing”

Before I discuss the notion of transcendental “standing” in the Gospel of Thomas, I would like to outline the history of the use of the term among Platonists. I will start with Plato and then discuss the Middle Platonists: Alcinous, Philo, Numenius, and Clement of Alexandria.

33 Cf. Jeremias 1958, 71.

34 Williams 1985, 39.

1 *Plato*

It is worth noting that Plato himself did not often use the verb ἵστημι to describe noetic stability. Williams refers to the following two Platonic passages in his monograph:<sup>35</sup>

These forms are like patterns set in nature (τὰ μὲν εἶδη ταῦτα ὡσπερ παραδείγματα ἐστάναι ἐν τῇ φύσει), and other things resemble them and are likenesses; and this partaking of the forms is, for the other things, simply being modeled on them.<sup>36</sup>

My friend, there are two patterns set up in reality (παραδειγμάτων ἐν τῷ ὄντι ἐστώτων). One is divine and supremely happy; the other has nothing of God in it, and is the pattern of the deepest unhappiness.<sup>37</sup>

The problem with these two passages (*pace* Williams) is that, though they apply the verb ἵστημι to the forms and patterns, it is doubtful whether this verb describes their immovability. In both cases, stability of the noetic realm is hardly the issue; the emphasis is not on “standing” (as opposed to “movement”), but rather on “being.” According to LSJ, s.v. “ἵστημι,” B.I.1, this verb is often used as “merely a stronger form of εἶναι, *to be* in a certain place or state” (hence, Plato’s modifiers ἐν τῇ φύσει and ἐν τῷ ὄντι). I am inclined to think that the translations quoted above render these two passages quite accurately.

Moreover, in *Sophista*, where ἵστημι does refer to stability, Plato seems to decline to use the term with regard to ultimate reality:

VISITOR: But for heaven’s sake, are we going to be convinced that it’s true that change (κίνησις), life, soul, and intelligence are not present in that which wholly is (τὸ παντελῶς ὄν), and that it neither lives nor thinks, but stays changeless, solemn, and holy, without any understanding (σεμνὸν καὶ ἅγιον, νοῦν οὐκ ἔχον, ἀκίνητον ἐστὸς εἶναι)?

THEAETETUS: If we did, sir, we’d be admitting something frightening.<sup>38</sup>

Although Plato does not apply the verb ἵστημι in its technical sense to the noetic realm, the myth Socrates narrates in *Phaedrus* portrays the perfect souls (i.e.

35 Ibid., 41.

36 *Parm.* 132d, trans. M.L. Gill and P. Ryan.

37 *Theaet.* 176e–177a, trans. M.J. Levett and M. Burnyeat.

38 *Soph.* 248e–249a, trans. N.P. White.

gods) as “standing” on the back of heaven, τὸ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ νῶτον. This myth describes the procession of gods led by Zeus and headed toward the place beyond heaven, ὁ ὑπερουράνιος τόπος. Once they have completed their ascent, they devote themselves to the contemplation of true being, ἡ οὐσία ὄντως οὐσα (*Phaedr.* 247b–c):<sup>39</sup>

But when the souls we call immortals reach the top (ἄκρος), they move outward and take their stand on the high ridge of heaven (ἔστησαν ἐπὶ τῷ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ νῶτῳ), where its circular motion (ἡ περιφορά) carries them around as they stand (στᾶσαι) while they gaze (θεωροῦσι) upon what is outside heaven.<sup>40</sup>

While “standing” here is meant literally, the image of the divine souls “taking their stand” on the heaven is probably not supposed to be taken at face value, rather serving as an allegory. As Williams has pointed out, in his myth “Plato stresses the antithesis between the realm of stability and the realm of confusion and disturbance.”<sup>41</sup> The contemplation of true being, enjoyed by the divine souls, is contrasted with the constant struggle between the “charioteer” and his “horses”—i.e., the antagonistic forces of the human soul. This struggle brings about “disorder, conflict, and excessive sweat (θόρυβος καὶ ἀμιλλα καὶ ἰδρῶς ἔσχατος)” (248b). It follows, then, that the “standing” of gods hints at their stability as opposed to the endless unrest of human souls.

## 2 Alcinous

Unlike Plato, the Middle Platonists did not have any reservations with regard to transcendental “standing.” A graphic example of this remarkable shift comes from Alcinous. One of the sections of his handbook, *Didasc.* 10.4, “is devoted to an exposition of the ‘negative’ method (κατὰ ἀφαίρεσιν) for attaining an understanding of the nature of God.”<sup>42</sup> In the final remark of this section, Alcinous

39 This passage has two remarkable parallels in Plato’s corpus. First, Plato makes the same connection between literal standing and contemplation in his accounts of Socrates’ trance-like states in *Symp.* 175a–b and 220c–d. Second, Plato’s description of gods standing on heaven while they are carried around by its revolution is reminiscent of *Tim.* 40a–b, where “the heavenly race of gods (οὐράνιον θεῶν γένος)” —i.e., the fixed stars—follows two motions, axial rotation and circular revolution (cf. Taylor 1928, 225), but is “immovable and stationary (ἀκίνητον καὶ ἐστός)” with respect to the other five motions.

40 *Phaedr.* 247b–c, trans. A. Nehamas and P. Woodruff.

41 Williams 1985, 75.

42 Dillon 1993a, 107.

makes a striking revision of *Parm.* 139b.<sup>43</sup> While, according to the first hypothesis of Plato's *Parmenides*, the One (τὸ ἓν) "is neither at rest nor in motion (οὔτε ἔστηκεν οὔτε κινεῖται)" (139b; trans. M.L. Gill and P. Ryan), Alcinous declares that God ("the first intellect," ὁ πρῶτος νοῦς, and "the first god," ὁ πρῶτος θεός) "neither moves anything, nor is himself in motion (οὔτε κινεῖ οὔτε κινεῖται)."

The readers of the handbook might be surprised to learn that God bears no relationship to motion, since, earlier (*Didasc.* 10.2), Alcinous attributes to God the characteristics of the Aristotelian "unmoved first mover," τὸ πρῶτον κινουῦν ἀκίνητον (*Phys.* 267b; *Metaph.* 1012b; 1074a).<sup>44</sup> It is worth noting that Alcinous does not contradict himself. According to him, "the mind of the whole heaven," ὁ νοῦς τοῦ σύμπαντος οὐρανοῦ, is moved by God in the same way that "desire," ἡ ὀρεξις, is moved by "an object of desire," τὸ ὀρεκτόν.<sup>45</sup> The cosmic mind is moved not by God, but rather by its own longing for God,<sup>46</sup> from which premise Alcinous concludes that God does not move anything.<sup>47</sup>

Yet, for the purposes of the present discussion, what Alcinous does not say is more relevant than what he does. Unlike Plato, he does not claim that God is not at rest. On the contrary, throughout his handbook, Alcinous describes God as motionless, ἀκίνητος. As John Whittaker pointed out, Alcinous revised Plato's formula in order to bring it into accordance with the Middle Platonist conviction that supreme reality is immovable.<sup>48</sup> Alcinous does not speak about transcendental "standing," but this passage from his handbook explains why others did.

### 3 *Philo*

As Williams has pointed out, it is in the works of Philo that we find the well-established usage of the term ἵστημι "as a description of the transcendent realm."<sup>49</sup> Just like "the first intellect" of Alcinous, Philo's God is the Aristotelian

43 Cf. *ibid.*, 108.

44 Cf. Dillon 1996, 283.

45 As Dillon 1993a, 103, points out, this is one of the "salient features" from Aristotle's "unmoved mover" that Alcinous grants to his God (cf. *Metaph.* 1072b: God moves "by being loved," ὡς ἐρώμενον).

46 Cf. Dörrie et al. 2008, 328–329; Alt 1996, 15.

47 Cf. Dörrie et al. 2008, 337: "Gott bewegt *nicht* so, daß er dabei selbst bewegt bzw. verändert würde. In *diesem* Sinne ist ihm Bewegen und Bewegtwerden abzusprechen."

48 Cf. Whittaker 1976, 158.

49 Williams 1985, 42. For some discussions of transcendental "standing" in Philo, see, for instance, Pascher 1931, 228–238; Völker 1938, 326–327; Williams 1985, 25–27, 42–43, 76; cf. Grundmann 1971, 7:644–645.



“first mover”: “that which is [i.e., God] moves and turns all else, but is itself exempt from movement and turning (τὸ ὄν τὸ τὰ ἄλλα κινουῦν καὶ τρέπον ἀκίνητόν τε καὶ ἄτρεπτον)” (*Post.* 28; trans. F.H. Colson and G.H. Whitaker, altered). Elsewhere, Philo makes the same point, saying that God moves everything, though He is “the one who always stands,” ὁ κατὰ τὰ αὐτὰ ἑστῶς (*Mut.* 54).<sup>50</sup> The paradox of divine immovability, Philo says, is that “whereas the heavenly bodies as they go past moving objects (τὰ κινούμενα) are themselves in motion (κινούμενοι), God who outstrips them all is motionless (ἑστῶς)” (*Post.* 19; trans. F.H. Colson and G.H. Whitaker).

“The standing one,” ἑστῶς, is one of Philo’s favorite epithets of God that refers to the divine stability (see, e.g., *Somn.* 1.246; 2.221; *Mut.* 57). It is this stability that is implied whenever the Pentateuch speaks of God “taking His stand.” For instance, εἰστήκει in Exod 24:10 is Moses’ testimony to God’s immutability, τὸ μὴ τρέπεσθαι τὸ θεῖον, “for by the standing (στάσις) or establishment (ἴδρυσις) he indicates His immutability (τὸ μὴ μεταβάλλειν)” (*Somn.* 2.222; trans. F.H. Colson and G.H. Whitaker).

Divine “standing” is eternal: “for in God’s case standing is not a future but an ever present act (οὐ γὰρ στήσεται ὁ θεός, ἀλλ’ αἰεὶ ἔστηκεν)” (*Post.* 30; trans. F.H. Colson and G.H. Whitaker). It is also autonomous: nobody should think that something assists God in standing firm, τὸ παγίως στήναι (*Somn.* 1.158). Stability is inherent to other divine entities as well. “Standing,” στάσις, is the prerogative of both that which is (τὸ ὄν) and its word (ὁ τοῦ ὄντος λόγος), “which it calls its covenant (διαθήκη)” (*Somn.* 2.237; trans. F.H. Colson and G.H. Whitaker, altered). Elsewhere, Philo says that chance, τὸ τυχηρόν, should be subordinate to wisdom, τὸ φρόνιμον, “since the unstable (τὸ ἄστατον) ought to be guided on its course by the stable (τὸ ἑστῶς)” (*Mut.* 91; trans. F.H. Colson and G.H. Whitaker).

“Standing” is what distinguishes God from his creation. According to Philo, “quiescence and standing are characteristic of God, but change of place and all movement that makes for such change is characteristic of creation (θεοῦ μὲν ἴδιον ἡρεμία καὶ στάσις, γενέσεως δὲ μετάβασίς τε καὶ μεταβατική πᾶσα κίνησις)” (*Post.* 29; trans. F.H. Colson and G.H. Whitaker, altered). When Abraham falls on his face (Gen 17:3) before “the standing one,” he intends to demonstrate that, unlike God, he “is never firmly set in a stable position (οὐδέποτε ἐν ταύτῳ βεβαίως ἰδρυμένος)” (*Mut.* 55; trans. F.H. Colson and G.H. Whitaker). According to *QG* 1.42, humankind had stability and immovability “before there was any tasting of evil [i.e., before the Fall]” and lost it “after they had come into asso-

50 Unfortunately, the Greek text of this sentence is corrupt, but the underlying idea is clear.

ciation with deceit” (trans. R. Marcus). At the same time, as they ceased to be immovable, they started to live under the delusion that there was alteration and change in God himself.

Only the most advanced human being, the sage (ὁ σοφός), can regain this stability that was so tragically lost. In *Somn.* 2.219 (cf. 2.297; *Leg.* 3.71; 3.204), Philo alludes to Plato’s enigmatic statement in *Tim.* 53d.<sup>51</sup> According to Plato, there are principles, ἀρχαί, that are more ultimate than the triangles, but they “are known only to God and to men who are His friends (ἀνδρῶν ὃς ἂν ἐκείνῳ φίλος ᾖ)” —i.e., to philosophers.<sup>52</sup> According to Philo, when the Pharaoh in Gen 41:17 says, “I thought I stood (ᾤμην ἐστάναι),” he reveals his ignorance of the fact that “to be unswerving and stable belongs only to God and to such as are the friends of God (μόνῳ θεῷ τὸ ἀκλινὲς καὶ πάγιόν ἐστιν οἰκτεῖον καὶ εἴ τις αὐτῷ φίλος)” (trans. F.H. Colson and G.H. Whitaker). Thus, Philo’s “friends of God,” the sages,<sup>53</sup> not only know that God is free from alteration, but are also themselves immovable.

As Harold Tarrant has pointed out, ὁμοίωσις θεῷ κατὰ τὸ δυνατόν, “becoming as like God as possible” (Plato, *Theaet.* 176b), is “the standard goal of Middle Platonism.”<sup>54</sup> Philo is no exception to this rule. It is through the assimilation to God that one acquires immutability:

Proximity to a stable object (τὸ ἐστῶς) produces a desire to be like it (ὁμοιότητος ἐφίεσθαι) and a longing for quiescence (ἡρεμία). Now that which is unwaveringly stable (τὸ ἀκλινῶς ἐστῶς) is God, and that which is subject to movement (τὸ κινήτόν) is creation (γένεσις). He therefore that draws nigh to God (ὁ προσίων θεῷ) longs for stability (στάσις), but he that forsakes Him, inasmuch as he approaches the unresting creation (γενέσει τῇ τρεπομένη προσίων) is, as we might expect, carried about.<sup>55</sup>

According to Philo’s vivid simile, God is like a straightedge, κανών, to a person that wants to assimilate to Him: just as a straightedge straightens crooked objects, so also God makes moving objects immovable.

51 Cf. Amir 1983, 204; Winston and Dillon 1983, 261. It is worth noting that the notion of “God’s friend (φίλος θεοῦ)” frequently occurs in the works of Philo. This Philonic notion is inspired not only by *Timaeus*, but also by the biblical passages like Exod 33:11 LXX (see *Mos.* 1.156; cf. *Sacr.* 130; *Ebr.* 94).

52 Cf. Taylor 1928, 364.

53 See *Her.* 21: οἱ σοφοὶ πάντες φίλοι θεοῦ, “all the sages are God’s friends.”

54 Tarrant 2007, 419.

55 *Post.* 23, trans. F.H. Colson and G.H. Whitaker.

Stability (στάσις) and immutable quiescence (ἡρεμία ἀκλινης) are those which we experience at the side of God, who Himself always stands immutable (παρὰ τὸν ἀκλινώς ἐστῶτα ἀεὶ θεόν), for a correct straightedge (ὕγιής κανών) necessarily straightens all that is set beside it (τὰ παρατιθέμενα).<sup>56</sup>

For I take it that, just as crooked things are straightened by a true straightedge (κανὼν ὀρθός), so moving things (τὰ κινούμενα) are brought to a stop and made stationary (ἵσταται) by the force of the standing one (ὁ ἐστῶς).<sup>57</sup>

As Williams has pointed out, with regard to achieving immutability, Philo considered two figures from Israel's history as paradigmatic, Abraham and Moses.<sup>58</sup> Whenever the Pentateuch mentions their "standing," it in fact refers to their immovability. While Jacob received his new name from an angel, it was the unchanging God (ὁ ἄτρεπτος θεός) himself who gave Abraham his new name (Gen 17:5). God did it in order that "the standing he was about to receive" (τὸ μέλλον στήσεσθαι) might be firmly established by "the one who stands and is always the same" (ὁ ἐστῶς καὶ κατὰ τὰ αὐτὰ καὶ ὡσαύτως ἔχων) (*Mut.* 87). When the Pentateuch says that Abraham "was standing before the Lord" (Gen 18:22), it means that he had an unchanging soul (ἄτρεπτος ψυχή), and, when it says that he "drew near" (Gen 18:23), it implies that only an unchanging soul stands (ἵσταται) near the standing God (ὁ ἐστῶς θεός) (*Post.* 27).

In a similar fashion, "the always-standing God" (ὁ ἐστῶς ἀεὶ θεός) honored Moses with a gift akin to His "entirely unswerving and unwavering power" (ἡ ἀκλινης καὶ ἀρρεπής πρὸς πάντα δύναμις). Thus, when He says to Moses, "Stand here with me" (Deut 5:31), He is commanding him to put off the dispositions of the unstable soul (ἀβεββαίου ψυχῆς διαθέσεις)—i.e., doubt and hesitation—and to put on the firmest and most constant disposition (ἡ ὀχυρωτάτη καὶ βεβαιωτάτη διάθεσις)—i.e., faith (*Conf.* 30–31).

The last quoted passage is of special interest, since it explains what transcendental "standing" means with regard to human individuals. Faith, in the sense of firm conviction, is that which distinguishes a sage, like Abraham or Moses, from a fool (ὁ ἄφρων); it is in the nature of the latter "never to plant himself firmly and fixedly on any principle" (ἐπὶ μηδενὸς ἐστάναι παγίως καὶ ἐρηρεῖσθαι δόγματος) (*Post.* 24; trans. F.H. Colson and G.H. Whitaker; cf. *Leg.* 3.53).

<sup>56</sup> *Gig.* 49, trans. F.H. Colson and G.H. Whitaker, altered.

<sup>57</sup> *Post.* 28, trans. F.H. Colson and G.H. Whitaker, altered.

<sup>58</sup> See Williams 1985, 27.

Other important aspects of transcendental “standing” are quiescence (ἡρεμία) (see, e.g., *Deus* 23), peace (εἰρήνη) (*Somn.* 2.229), and tranquility or inner calm (εὐστάθεια) (*Post.* 28), enjoyed by the “standing” sage. The latter term deserves additional commentary. According to BDAG, s.v. “εὐστάθεια,” it is “a favorite term for describing stable political conditions.” Others have pointed out that, in applying the term εὐστάθεια to the human soul, Philo follows a well-established philosophical tradition that goes back to Democritus.<sup>59</sup> What is remarkable about Philo’s use of the term is that he associates it with the transcendental “standing,” which comes as no surprise, since εὐστάθεια and ἵστημι derive from the same root.

In the Philonic corpus, εὐστάθεια denotes both the tranquility of the state (see, e.g., *Flacc.* 94) and that of the soul. The inner εὐστάθεια is a natural product of piety (εὐσέβεια) (*Conf.* 132). Along with εὐνομία, “good order,” εὐστάθεια springs from education (παιδεία) and virtue (ἀρετή) (*Post.* 118).

The soul’s tranquility (εὐστάθεια) is far more important than that of the state. In a similar fashion, the riot (στάσις) in the soul is far more dangerous than that in the state (Philo’s word play seems to be intentional). God, according to Philo, “rejoices at the firm establishment of good order and tranquility (εὐνομίας καὶ εὐσταθείας βεβαίωσις), at the abolishing of wars and riots (στάσεις), not only those which occur between cities, but also of those that arise in the soul; and these are greater and more serious than those, for they outrage reason, a more divine faculty than others within us” (*Post.* 184; trans. F.H. Colson and G.H. Whitaker, altered). In fact, political unrest is a mere imitation of the restlessness of the soul; the former will vanish as soon as the latter is no more:

From this it appears that states would have done rightly if before bringing against one another arms and engines of war, with the enslavement and complete overthrow of the enemy in view, they had prevailed on their citizens one by one to put an end to the riot (στάσις) which abounds within himself, and which is so great and unceasing. For, to be honest, this is the archetype (ἀρχέτυπον) of all wars. If this be abolished, neither will those occur which still break out in imitation (κατὰ μίμησιν) of it, but the human race will attain to the experience and enjoyment of profound peace (βαθεία εἰρήνη), taught by the law of nature, namely virtue, to honour God and to be occupied with His service, for this is the source of long life and happiness (πηγὴ εὐδαιμονίας καὶ βίου μακράωνος).<sup>60</sup>

59 See Amir 1983, 201–203; Winston and Dillon 1983, 261–262.

60 *Post.* 185, trans. F.H. Colson and G.H. Whitaker, slightly altered.

The concluding remark of this passage brings up the last but not the least important aspect of Philo's notion of εὐστάθεια: the soul's tranquility results in happiness, εὐδαιμονία. The same holds true for transcendental "standing." The "standing" sage, according to Philo, is near divine happiness (θείας εὐδαιμονίας ἐγγύς) (*Cher.* 19). An unidentified Greek fragment from *QE* (fr. 12 Petit) puts it even more emphatically: "Unswerving and unwavering standing in God alone is the consummation of happiness (πέρας εὐδαιμονίας τὸ ἀκλινώς καὶ ἀρρεπῶς ἐν μόνῳ θεῷ στήναι)."61

#### 4 *Numenius*

A short comment on Numenius' Platonism should perhaps precede the discussion of his notion of noetic stability. As John M. Dillon has pointed out, one of the distinctive features of Numenius' metaphysics is "the distinction made between the Supreme God and the Demiurge."<sup>62</sup> Numenius calls his supreme god "the first god," ὁ πρῶτος θεός (frs. 11–13, 15–16 des Places), and "the first mind," ὁ πρῶτος νοῦς (fr. 17 des Places), identifying him with "that which is," τὸ ὄν (frs. 2–4a, 5–8 des Places), and "the Good," τὸ ἀγαθόν (frs. 2, 16, 19–20 des Places).<sup>63</sup>

Another distinctive feature of Numenius' philosophy is its "marked dualism."<sup>64</sup> Matter and the first god are "completely unrelated and eternally opposed principles."<sup>65</sup> Thus, according to Calcidius' report of Numenius' doctrine, "God is the principle and cause of all good, matter of all evil" (fr. 52 des Places = Calcidius, *Comm. Tim.* 296; trans. J.C.M. van Winden).

Numenius' dualism is manifest in his emphasis on noetic stability as opposed to the instability of the sensible realm. Quite a few surviving fragments of his lost work *De bono* employ the verb ἵστημι and describe this stability as transcendental "standing."

According to Numenius, matter does not "stand" and, therefore, cannot be τὸ ὄν, "that which is":

61 In fact, it can even be surmised that Philo considered stability to be one of the prerequisites of salvation. See, e.g., *QE* 2.40—a passage which draws inspiration from the myth of the ascent of the soul in Plato's *Phaedrus* (discussed above, pp. 139–140)—in which the souls that lack steadfast desire for God are drawn to the depths of Tartarus (according to Yli-Karjanmaa 2015, 185, this phrase "is meant as a reference to their ending up in a new incarnation").

62 Dillon 1996, 367.

63 Cf. Dodds 1960, 12.

64 Dillon 1996, 374.

65 Turner 2001, 389.

So it is well stated in the argument that, if matter (ἡ ὕλη) is infinite (ἄπειρος), it is undefined (ἀόριστος); and, if undefined, irrational (ἄλογος); and, if irrational, it cannot be known (ἄγνωστος). But as it cannot be known it must necessarily be without order (ἄτακτος), as things arranged in order must certainly be easy to be known: and what is without order, is not stable (τὸ δὲ ἄτακτον οὐχ ἔστηκεν): and whatever is not stable cannot be that which is (ὃ τι δὲ μὴ ἔστηκεν, οὐκ ἂν εἶη ὄν).<sup>66</sup>

At the end of this fragment, Numenius concludes that “the only nature that stands (αὕτη ... φύσεων πασῶν μόνη ἔστηκε)” is the incorporeal, τὸ ἀσώματον (fr. 4a des Places = Eusebius, *Praep. ev.* 15.17.8). Later on, he identifies the incorporeal with “that which is” (fr. 6 des Places). The most detailed description of “that which is” is given in the following passage:

For that which is (τὸ ὄν) is eternal (ἄϊδιον) and constant (βέβαιον) and always remains the same (ἀεὶ κατὰ ταῦτόν καὶ ταυτόν). It has not been generated and destroyed, nor increased and diminished: nor did it ever yet become more or less: and certainly neither in other senses nor yet locally will it be moved (κινήθησεται). For it is not right for it to be moved, either backward or forward: nor upward ever, nor downward: neither to the right hand nor to the left shall that which is ever pass: nor shall it ever be moved around its own center; but rather it shall stand fast (ἑστήξεται), and shall be fixed and set firm (ἀραρός τε καὶ ἑστηκός ἔσται), ever in the same conditions and same mode (κατὰ ταῦτὰ ἔχον ἀεὶ καὶ ὡσαύτως).<sup>67</sup>

Elsewhere, Numenius argues that, while that which is “remains the same and always stands” (μένει κατὰ τὰ αὐτὰ καὶ ὡσαύτως ἔστηκε), the corporeal realm is in flux (ρεῖ) and, therefore, is not (οὐκ ἔστιν) (fr. 8 des Places = Eusebius, *Praep. ev.* 11.10.12–13). Thus, “standing” is a distinctive feature of that which is; it is “standing” that distinguishes the noetic realm, which is, from matter, which is not.

The last passage by Numenius I would like to discuss deals with the appropriate ways to approach “the Good,” τὸ ἀγαθόν (which, as I have pointed out, is identical to “that which is,” τὸ ὄν). According to Numenius, “the Good” is incorporeal and, therefore, cannot be apprehended from any sensible object that resembles it (ἀπὸ ὁμοίου αἰσθητοῦ). Hence, one should

withdraw far from the things of sense, and commune with the Good one on one, where there is neither man nor any other living thing, nor

66 Fr. 4a des Places (= Eusebius, *Praep. ev.* 15.17.3), trans. E.H. Gifford, altered.

67 Fr. 5 des Places (= Eusebius, *Praep. ev.* 11.10.4–5), trans. E.H. Gifford, altered.

body great or small, but a certain immense, indescribable, and absolutely divine solitude (ἐρημία θεσπέσιος), where there are the abodes, amusements, and splendors of the Good, and the Good itself, that which is quiescent (τὸ ἤρεμον), the guiding power, graciously floats upon being (ἡ οὐσία) in peace (εἰρήνη) and benevolence.<sup>68</sup>

As I have pointed out earlier, transcendental “standing” in the Philonic corpus is often associated with quiescence, ἤρεμία. According to Numenius, the supreme god himself (who is so consistently described as “standing”) is identical to τὸ ἤρεμον, “that which is quiescent.”<sup>69</sup> It is evident, therefore, that for both Philo and Numenius immovability is intimately related to tranquility and peace.<sup>70</sup>

### 5 *Clement of Alexandria*

The last figure that I would like to discuss in this survey is Clement. It is worth noting that Clement was familiar with Philo’s corpus. Since transcendental “standing” was one of Philo’s favorite topics, it comes as no surprise that “standing” comes up in a passage where Clement draws his material from Philo.

As Annewies van den Hoek has pointed out, *Strom.* 2.11.51.3–52.1 is heavily dependent on *Post.* 22–28.<sup>71</sup> The following passage both illustrates Clement’s dependency on Philo and introduces the topic of divine immutability:

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**Philo, *Post.* 27**

ὄντως γὰρ ἀτρέπτω ψυχῇ  
πρὸς τὸν ἀτρεπτον θεὸν μόνῃ πρόσδοδος ἐστι.

For access to the immutable God is only  
for a truly immutable soul.

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**Clement, *Strom.* 2.11.51.6**

ὄντως γὰρ ἀτρέπτω  
πρὸς τὸ ἀτρεπτον ἡ προσαγωγή.

For approach to the immutable is for that  
which is truly immutable.

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68 Fr. 2 des Places (= Eusebius, *Praep. ev.* 11.22.1), trans. E.H. Gifford, altered.

69 Cf. Pépin 1992, 302.

70 As Runia 1995, 200, points out, the similarity between Numenius’ and Philo’s treatment of the theme of transcendental “standing” is rather striking. It is worth noting that, while Philonic influence on Numenius is impossible to prove, we can be certain that Numenius read Jewish scriptures and gave them allegorical interpretation (fr. 1b des Places = Origen, *Cels.* 1.15; fr. 1c des Places = Origen, *Cels.* 4.51). It is possible, therefore, that in using “standing” as an epithet of God both Numenius and Philo were inspired by the same biblical passages (e.g., Exod 24.10).

71 See van den Hoek 1988, 161–163.

In the very next sentence (*Strom.* 2.11.52.1), Clement cites Gen 18:22 and Deut 5:31 as examples of this principle: “Hence (οὕτως), ‘Abraham was standing before the Lord and drew near, saying’ (Gen 18:22), and it is said to Moses, ‘Stand here with me’ (Deut 5:31).” Clement borrows both of these quotations from *Post.* 27–28, and, just like Philo, interprets them as references to transcendental “standing.”<sup>72</sup>

Moreover, Clement occasionally speaks of transcendental “standing” even when he is not borrowing from Philo. In *Strom.* 7.10.57.5, he says that when the Gnostic enters the Lord’s dwelling-place, he becomes “light that stands firm, always remains the same, and is absolutely and in every respect immutable,” φῶς ἐστὸς καὶ μένον ἀϊδίως, πάντῃ πάντως ἄτρεπτον. Notably, the passage in question begins with the description of spiritual progress as movement towards “the supreme place of repose (ὁ κορυφαῖος τῆς ἀναπαύσεως τόπος)” (*Strom.* 7.10.57.1). Like Philo and Numenius, Clement associates transcendental “standing” with tranquility.

Finally, it is worth noting that the passage quoted above (*Strom.* 7.10.57.5) is parallel to *Strom.* 1.24.163.6, where Clement speaks of “God’s stable permanence and his unchanging light, which no form can catch (τὸ ἐστὸς καὶ μόνιμον τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ τὸ ἄτρεπτον αὐτοῦ φῶς καὶ ἀσχημάτιστον)” (trans. J. Ferguson). It is by no means a coincidence, then, that Clement’s understanding of human perfection is similar to his description of the deity. As Walther Völker points out, “Vergleicht man beide Stellen miteinander, so erkennt man sofort, daß Clemens vom Gläubigen eine ἐξομοίωσις πρὸς τὸν θεόν, eine Nachfolge Gottes, fordert und seine Schilderung des Gnostikers in enge Berührung mit dem Gottesgedanken bringt.”<sup>73</sup>

### Transcendental “Standing” in the Gospel of Thomas

I now proceed to a discussion of the impact of the Platonist notion of transcendental “standing” on the Gospel of Thomas. As I see it, there are two reasons why it is likely that Thomasine sayings 16, 18, 23, and 50 allude to said notion.

(1) First, as I have tried to demonstrate in chapter 4, the motif of “becoming one” in Gos. Thom. 16:4 and 23:2 (quoted above, p. 130) stems from Platonist metaphysics. Since “oneness” as perfection is a Platonist motif and since Gos. Thom.

72 Cf. Williams 1985, 55.

73 Völker 1952, 513.



16:4 and 23:2 associate “oneness” with “standing,” it seems reasonable to read the Thomasine sayings about “standing” against the background of Platonist metaphysics.

Moreover, the association of “oneness” and “standing” appears to be quite natural for Platonist thought, since both “oneness” and “standing” are attributes of ultimate reality. As Williams has pointed out, Philo provides us with a good example of such an association.<sup>74</sup> In *Gig.* 52, Philo contrasts uttered speech with silent contemplation. “That which is in the form of utterance (τὸ μετὰ λόγου τοῦ κατὰ προφοράν)” (Philo borrowed this term from the Stoics; see *SVF* 2.135) is not constant (οὐ βέβαιον), because it is a dyad (δυάς). In contrast, “the speechless contemplation by soul alone of that which is (τὸ ἄνευ φωνῆς μόνη ψυχῆ τὸ ὄν θεωρεῖν)” is very firm (ἐχυρώτατον) because “it is made stationary in accordance with the indivisible monad (κατὰ τὴν ἀδιαίρετον ἴσταται μονάδα).”

Thus, unlike uttered speech, silent contemplation is firm, because it is intimately related to the monad. The monad, in turn, is characterized not only by oneness (hence its indivisibility), but also by stability and firmness.<sup>75</sup>

The same divine qualities are attributed to the μοναχοί of saying 16 and to the chosen ones of saying 23. According to saying 23, the exceptional individuals whom Jesus deems worthy will, just like Philo’s monad, enjoy oneness and stability:

23:1 ΠΕΧΕ ΙϞ ΧΕ †ΝΑϞΕ†ΠΙ ΤΗΝΕ ΟΥΑ ΕΒΟΛ ΖἸῆ ΟΩ ΑΥΩ ϞΝΑΥ ΕΒΟΛ ΖἸῆ ΤΒΑ  
23:2 ΑΥΩ ϞΝΑΩΖΕ ΕΡΑΤΟΥ ΕΥΟ ΟΥΑ ΟΥΩΤ

23:1 Jesus said: “I will choose you, one from a thousand and two from ten thousand. 23:2 And they will stand as a single one.”

Gos. Thom. 16:4, on the other hand, opposes “standing” to the struggle and unrest described in Gos. Thom. 16:1–3:

16:1 ΠΕΧΕ ΙϞ ΧΕ ΤΑΧΑ ΕΥΜΕΕΥΕ ἸῆϞ ῤῥΩΜΕ ΧΕ ἸῆΤΑΕΙΕΙ ΑΝΟΥΧΕ ἸΟΥΕΙΡΗΝΗ  
ΕΧἸ ΠΚΟϞΜΟϞ 16:2 ΑΥΩ ϞϞΟΟΥΝ ΑΝ ΧΕ ἸῆΤΑΕΙΕΙ ΑΝΟΥΧΕ ἸῆἸΠΩΡΧ ΕΧἸ  
ΠΚΑΖ ΟΥΚΩΖΤ ΟΥϞΗϞΕ ΟΥΠΟΛΕΜΟϞ 16:3 ΟΥἸ †ΟΥ ΓΑΡ ΝΑΩΩΠΕ ΖἸῆ ΟΥΗΕΙ  
ΟΥἸ ΟΩΜΤ ΝΑΩΩΠΕ ΕΧἸ ϞΝΑΥ ΑΥΩ ϞΝΑΥ ΕΧἸ ΟΩΜΤ ΠΕΩΤ ΕΧἸ ΠΩΗΡΕ  
ΑΥΩ ΠΩΗΡΕ ΕΧἸ ΠΕΩΤ 16:4 ΑΥΩ ϞΝΑΩΖΕ ΕΡΑΤΟΥ ΕΥΟ ἸῆΜΟΝΑΧΟϞ

74 See Williams 1985, 43.

75 For a discussion of the role of the monad in Philonic corpus, chapter 4.

16:1 Jesus said: “Perhaps people think that I have come to cast peace upon the earth. 16:2 But they do not know that I have come to cast dissension upon the earth: fire, sword, (and) war. 16:3 For there will be five in one house: there will be three against two and two against three, the father against the son, and the son against the father. 16:4 And they will stand as solitary ones.”

In this saying, Jesus proclaims that he has come not “to cast peace (ΟΥΕΙΡΗΝΗ) upon the earth” (16:1) but “to cast dissension upon the earth: fire, sword, (and) war (ΟΥΠΟΛΕΜΟΣ)” (16:2). As I have pointed out earlier, Middle Platonists associated transcendental “standing” with peace and tranquility; it is perhaps because of this association that “standing” comes up at the end of the saying. In Gos. Thom. 16:4, Jesus develops the argument about the dialectic of war and peace that he initiated in Gos. Thom. 16:1–2. His point is that stability can be acquired only as the result of a long process. It is only after one dissolves his or her family ties and becomes a *μοναχός* that he or she can “stand.”

(2) The second reason why I think it is likely that the Gospel of Thomas is familiar with the idea of transcendental “standing” is due to the peculiar phrasing of saying 50. In a similar way to Clement and his “standing light,” *φῶς ἐστός*, the author of this saying speaks about the light that “took its stand.” There is little doubt that, just like in Clement, the “standing” of the light in saying 50 refers to the light’s immutability:

50:1a ΠΕΧΕ ΙC ΧΕ ΕΥΩΑΝΧΟΟC ΝΗΤῆ ΧΕ ΝΤΑΤΕΤῆΩΠΕ ΕΒΟΛ ΤΩΝ ΧΟΟC  
ΝΑΥ ΧΕ ΝΤΑΝΕΙ ΕΒΟΛ Ζῆ ΠΟΥΟΕΙΝ 50:1b ΠΜΑ ΕΝΤΑ ΠΟΥΟΕΙΝ ΩΠΠΕ ἩΜΔΥ  
ΕΒΟΛ ΖΙΤΟΟΤΥ ΟΥΑΑΤΥ ΑΦΩΖ[Ε ΕΡΑΤΥ] ΔΥΩ ΑΦΟΥΩΝΖ Ε[Β]ΟΛ Ζῆ ΤΟΥ-  
ΖΙΚΩΝ 50:2 ΕΥΩΑΧΧΟΟC ΝΗΤῆ ΧΕ ΝΤΩΤῆ ΠΕ ΧΟΟC ΧΕ ΑΝΟΝ ΝΕΦΩΗΡΕ  
ΔΥΩ ΑΝΟΝ ΝCΩΤΠ ἩΠΕΙΩΤ ΕΤΟΝΖ 50:3 ΕΥΩΑΝΧΝΕ ΤΗΥΤῆ ΧΕ ΟΥ ΠΕ  
ΠΜΔΕΙΝ ἩΠΕΤῆΙΩΤ ΕΤΖῆ ΤΗΥΤῆ ΧΟΟC ΕΡΟΟΥ ΧΕ ΟΥΚΙΜ ΠΕ Μῆ ΟΥΑΝΑ-  
ΠΑΥCΙC

50:1a Jesus said: “If they say to you: ‘Where did you come from?’, say to them: ‘We came from the light, 50:1b the place where the light came into being on its own accord and established [itself] and became manifest through their image.’ 50:2 If they say to you: ‘Are you it?’, say: ‘We are its children, and we are the elect of the living father.’ 50:3 If they ask you: ‘What is the sign of your father in you?’, say to them: ‘It is movement and repose.’”

As one of the most puzzling sayings of the whole collection, saying 50 seems to deserve special commentary. According to Antti Marjanen, this saying is an instruction that Jesus “gives his disciples who have to explain their identity.” The purpose of the instruction is extremely ambiguous. Admittedly, “the non-identification of the interrogators with archontic powers, the fact that the interrogators are not portrayed as hostile figures as well as the lack of explicit evidence of a mystical *visio Dei* experience” suggest that the saying can be seen as “simply a catechesis created to give the audience of the Thomazine Jesus answers to fundamental questions which occupied people’s minds everywhere in antiquity.” On the other hand, saying 50 “has its closest parallels in those Gnostic texts which describe the post-mortem ascent of the soul past archontic powers back to the realm of light.”<sup>76</sup>

For the purposes of the present discussion, it is perhaps sufficient to accept that (i) the context presupposed by the instruction is that of either a trial or a test, and (ii) the questions asked during the interrogation have right answers and such answers must be known in order to pass the test.<sup>77</sup>

The first puzzle of the saying is the meaning of  $\tau\omicron\upsilon\zeta\iota\kappa\omega\nu$ , “their image” in Gos. Thom. 50:1b. The possessive article  $\tau\omicron\upsilon\zeta\iota$ - is in third person plural and, therefore, refers neither to the interrogators nor to the addressees, since in this case one would expect to find the possessive article either in second- or first-person plural (i.e., either  $\tau\epsilon\tau\bar{\iota}\bar{\nu}$ - or  $\tau\bar{\iota}\bar{\nu}$ -). An ingenious solution to this problem has been offered by April DeConick. According to her, there were several stages in the textual history of saying 50. The initial response to the first question (Gos. Thom. 50:1a) “has been redacted at some point in the history of the transmission of this saying in order to explain the light origin in more detail.”<sup>78</sup> Thus, Gos. Thom. 50:1b is a later addition to Gos. Thom. 50:1a; it is no longer a part of the direct discourse, but rather an explanatory note added by an anonymous commentator. In her translation of saying 50, DeConick thus puts quotation marks around Gos. Thom. 50:1a and places Gos. Thom. 50:1b in parentheses.

The weakness of DeConick’s hypothesis is that, unlike in academic English, Coptic does not possess quotation marks and parentheses. The Coptic text of saying 50 betrays no indication that would help its ancient reader understand Gos. Thom. 50:1b as a comment on Gos. Thom. 50:1a. If Gos. Thom. 50:1b were to

76 Marjanen 1996, 34.

77 Perhaps the identity of the interrogators is not revealed in order to point out that the content of the conversation is more important than its context. In other words, the context is intentionally universal: we are presented with questions that people must face whenever they are on a spiritual journey.

78 DeConick 1996, 65.

be understood as an explanatory note, it would have to have been introduced as an explanatory relative clause (i.e., by  $\epsilon\tau\epsilon \pi\alpha\epsilon\iota \pi\epsilon$  or by another, similar expression). Grammatically,  $\pi\omicron\upsilon\theta\omicron\epsilon\iota\omicron\upsilon$  in Gos. Thom. 50:1a and  $\pi\mu\alpha$  in Gos. Thom. 50:1b stand in apposition. The only natural way to understand Gos. Thom. 50:1 is to see Gos. Thom. 50:1b as a continuation of the direct discourse amplifying the “light” of Gos. Thom. 50:1a. Thus, Gos. Thom. 50:1b should be seen as part of the answer to the first question of the interrogators. Consequently, it seems unproductive to speculate about the redactional activity behind saying 50, since the alleged addition of Gos. Thom. 50:1b does not help to uncover the referent of  $\tau\omicron\upsilon\gamma\zeta\iota\kappa\omega\upsilon\omicron\upsilon$ .<sup>79</sup>

The most appealing explanation of  $\tau\omicron\upsilon\gamma\zeta\iota\kappa\omega\upsilon\omicron\upsilon$  has recently been offered by Christian Tornau, according to whom,  $\tau\omicron\upsilon\gamma$ - of the Coptic text renders  $\acute{\epsilon}\alpha\upsilon\tau\acute{\omega}\nu$  of the Greek *Vorlage*.<sup>80</sup> It is important to keep in mind that, in Greek, (i) the reflexive pronoun can be used in place of the possessive one, and (ii) the reflexive pronoun of the third person can be used in place of that of the first or second person. Thus,  $\acute{\epsilon}\alpha\upsilon\tau\acute{\omega}\nu$  in the Greek *Vorlage* of saying 50 would have been used in the same sense as it is in Heb 10:25—namely, as an equivalent of  $\eta\mu\acute{\omega}\nu$ .

It is possible, therefore, that the translator misunderstood the Greek text of saying 50, or rather, as Plisch puts it, “simply translated it too mechanically.”<sup>81</sup> It is also possible that the Greek *Vorlage* of the Coptic translation was corrupt and had  $\acute{\alpha}\upsilon\tau\acute{\omega}\nu$  instead of  $\acute{\epsilon}\alpha\upsilon\tau\acute{\omega}\nu$ , or that the Greek text was correct, but the translator misread it.

The “image,” therefore, belongs to the addressees. When they are asked about their origins, they are supposed to say that they come from self-generated immovable light, which produced their image. This image, as I will argue in chapter 8, is identical with the “new” image that replaces the “old” one (Gos. Thom. 22:6), the image of the father (Gos. Thom. 83:2), and the images that neither die nor reveal themselves (Gos. Thom. 84:2).

The second puzzle of saying 50 is the second question asked by the interrogators:  $\bar{\eta}\tau\omega\tau\bar{\eta} \pi\epsilon$  (“Is it you?” in the translation by Thomas O. Lambdin; so also the Berliner Arbeitskreis). Plisch finds the phrasing of this question “strange”

79 One could perhaps suggest that Gos. Thom. 50:1b was initially a marginal gloss that was eventually interpolated into the main text by a careless scribe. This does not seem to be a likely option, however, since no other traces of mechanical interpolation are attested in the Gospel of Thomas. For a detailed discussion of the phenomenon of mechanical interpolation, see Wildberg 2013, 144–150.

80 See Tornau 2008, 358–359.

81 Plisch 2008, 131; see also the discussion of Gos. Thom. 61:2 as a literal rendering of a Greek idiom and Gos. Thom. 7:2 as an erroneous translation of the double nominative in chapters 6 and 7.

and suggests an emendation:  $\bar{\eta}\tau\omega\tau\bar{\eta}$  ( $\langle\text{NIM}\rangle$ ), “Who are you?”<sup>82</sup> According to him, those who wish to make sense of the Coptic text as it stands have to “understand the question as a direct reaction” on the part of the interrogators to the first answer—i.e., “Is it (really) you?”<sup>83</sup>

I am inclined to think, however, that there is hardly anything “strange” about the phrasing of the second question. The sentence  $\bar{\eta}\tau\omega\tau\bar{\eta}$   $\pi\epsilon$  in fact belongs to pattern 10 of Bentley Layton’s classification of nominal sentence patterns.<sup>84</sup> The subject of the sentence is  $\bar{\eta}\tau\omega\tau\bar{\eta}$ , and the invariable pronoun  $\pi\epsilon$ , the predicate;  $\pi\epsilon$  is anaphoric (or retrospective)—i.e., it “refers back to some item outside of the present sentence which was already mentioned in the text.”<sup>85</sup> Thus,  $\pi\epsilon$  represents an outside item (i.e., the antecedent) and predicates it to the subject of the sentence. I suggest that the antecedent of  $\pi\epsilon$  is  $\rho\omicron\gamma\omicron\epsilon\text{IN}$ . The question that the interrogators ask is, therefore, “Are you it?” In other words, in Gos. Thom. 50:2, the interrogators inquire whether the addressees are the light that was mentioned in Gos. Thom. 50:1.<sup>86</sup>

The proposed interpretation of the second question fits nicely with the rest of the saying and has certain implications for the understanding of the second answer. When the addressees say  $\lambda\text{NON}$   $\text{NEQ}\omega\text{HP}\epsilon$ , they mean, “We are its children” (i.e., “We are the children of the light”), not “We are his children” (*pace* the Berliner Arbeitskreis).

In the next sentence, the addressees add, “And we are the elect of the living father.” As I have argued in the previous chapter (p. 125),  $\text{NMON}\lambda\text{XOC}$   $\lambda\gamma\omega$   $\epsilon\tau\text{COT}\pi$ , “the unique and elect,” in Gos. Thom. 49:1 is clearly a hendiadys. In a similar fashion, “the children of the light” and “the elect of the living father” in Gos. Thom. 50:2 can hardly be anything other than a hendiadys. Thus, Gos. Thom. 50:2 identifies the father with the light.

This brings us to the last detail of Gos. Thom. 50:2 that is of particular interest for the present discussion—the notion of election. The addressees of saying 50 recognize themselves as the elect of the immovable light. Saying 50, therefore, establishes a connection between transcendental “standing” and election. This very connection is also established in saying 23 (quoted above, p. 150), where Jesus says that the chosen ones “will stand as a single one.” Thus, just

82 This emendation was proposed already in the *editio princeps*—see Guillaumont et al. 1959, 28–29. This is also suggested by the Berliner Arbeitskreis—see Bethge et al. 2005, 532.

83 Plisch 2008, 130.

84 See Layton 2011, 220–221 (§ 282).

85 Ibid., 208 (§ 267).

86 Cf. the Finnish translation by Marjanen and Uro: “Oletteko te se valo?” (“Are you that light?”) (Dunderberg and Marjanen 2005, 303).

like Philo and Clement, the Gospel of Thomas reserves transcendental “standing” to the most commendable individuals: in Philo, it is the sages who “stand”; in Clement, the Gnostics; in the Gospel of Thomas, the elect.

Unlike the first two puzzles, the third is not of a linguistic nature but rather of an exegetical one—namely, the meaning of the expression “movement and repose” in Gos. Thom. 50:3. It seems natural to assume that the third answer of the addressees is an integral part of saying 50 and should not be isolated from its immediate context.<sup>87</sup> Since, as I have tried to argue, Gos. Thom. 50:1 refers to the concept of transcendental “standing,” it is likely that the competent reader of the saying was supposed to recognize and make sense of its Platonizing language. It seems reasonable, therefore, to approach “movement and repose” of Gos. Thom. 50:3 from the perspective of Platonist metaphysics.<sup>88</sup>

The third question asked during the interrogation is “What is the sign of your father in you?” In other words, the interrogators inquire, “Is there anything in you that would prove your alleged kinship with your father?” The addressees who claim to have come from the divine light and to be its children are now supposed to say whether they share any divine attributes with it (it should be kept in mind that, according to Gos. Thom. 50:2, “the light” and “the father” are two different names for the same ultimate reality).<sup>89</sup>

Let me now proceed to the third answer. On the one hand, there is little doubt that it is supposed to be seen as a paradox—i.e., it combines two mutually exclusive elements. On the other hand, “movement” (Coptic  $\kappa\iota\mu$  renders Greek  $\kappa\acute{\iota}\nu\eta\sigma\iota\varsigma$ ) and “repose” seem to be an unusual pair of opposites, at least at first sight. The antonym of  $\kappa\acute{\iota}\nu\eta\sigma\iota\varsigma$  is  $\sigma\acute{\tau}\acute{\alpha}\sigma\iota\varsigma$ , not  $\acute{\alpha}\nu\acute{\alpha}\pi\alpha\upsilon\sigma\iota\varsigma$ . There is, however, a way to explain why these two elements are opposed to each other and how their polarity can be transcended.

87 Pace Davies 1992, 670, who understands “movement and repose” as a reference to the seven days of creation that “begin with the Spirit moving upon the waters” and “conclude with a day of repose.” While this interpretation is certainly very appealing, it does not take into account the fact that saying 50 does not seem to contain any allusions to the biblical creation narrative.

88 The Platonist background of Gos. Thom. 50:3 was first suggested in Patterson 2013, 54–59. Although my conclusions are somewhat different from Patterson’s, it was his research that instigated my interest to the metaphysics behind Gos. Thom. 50:3.

89 It is worth noting that in the context of a heavenly ascent narrative  $\pi\mu\lambda\epsilon\iota\mu$ , “the sign,” may have various meanings; cf. the discussion of the term  $\pi\iota\sigma\mu\iota\omicron\mu$ , “the sign,” in the Apocalypse of Paul (NH C V 23.22–26) in Kaler 2005, 266–268. Yet the modifier  $\epsilon\tau\epsilon\tau\eta\tau\eta\tau\eta$  and the answer of the addressees both indicate that “the sign” in Gos. Thom. 50:3 refers to a certain inner quality.

I would like to start with “repose.” As I have pointed out, stability is an important feature of ultimate reality both in Platonism and Gos. Thom. 50:1. This stability, often described as “standing” (στάσις), is emphatically associated with tranquility, peace, and quiescence. Numenius even goes as far as to say that ultimate reality is τὸ ἤρεμον, “that which is quiescent.” It is possible, therefore, that the “repose” that Gos. Thom. 50:3 pairs with “movement” hints at the notion of divine immovability, which is intimately related to tranquility.

It is worth noting that when Philo speaks of pious and impious humans in *Abr.* 27, he contrasts exactly these two terms, κίνησις and ἀνάπαυσις. According to Philo, the opposite (τὸ ὑναντίον) of repose is “unnatural movement,” ἡ παρὰ φύσιν κίνησις,<sup>90</sup> which is “the cause of turmoil and disorder and riots and wars (ταραχῶν καὶ θορύβων στάσεων τε καὶ πολέμων αἰτία).” It is the wicked people (οἱ φαῦλοι) who pursue this movement. Unlike them, those who value nobleness (οἱ καλοκάγαθιαν τετιμηκότες) pursue “a life which is quiescent, silent, steadfast, and peaceful (ἡρεμαῖος δὲ καὶ ἡσυχάζων καὶ σταθερὸς ἔτι δὲ καὶ εἰρηνικὸς βίος).” There can be little doubt that just like this passage contrasts movement and repose, so also it contrasts the four outcomes of movement and the four predicates of noble life:

κίνησις	ἀνάπαυσις
ταραχαί	ἡρεμαῖος (sc., βίος)
θόρυβοι	ἡσυχάζων (sc., βίος)
στάσεις	σταθερὸς (sc., βίος)
πόλεμοι	εἰρηνικὸς βίος

Thus, according to this passage, Philo associates repose with peacefulness and steadfastness; just like he contrasts repose with movement, so also he contrasts peacefulness with wars and steadfastness with riots (cf. a similar word play in *Post.* 184, quoted above, p. 145). Repose, therefore, belongs to the same domain as stability, peace, and quiescence. As this passage demonstrates, “movement” and “repose” did constitute a conceivable pair of opposites in the symbolic universe of ancient Platonism.

A much more difficult question is the meaning of “movement” in Gos. Thom. 50:3. Indeed, immovability is the distinguishing feature of ultimate reality. Yet surprisingly there is a place where movement marries rest. The most important piece of evidence is the following passage from Numenius’ *De bono*:

90 Philo borrows this expression from the Stoics. According to *SVF* 3.476, a passion of the soul (τὸ τῆς ψυχῆς πάθος) is an unnatural movement (κίνησις παρὰ φύσιν); cf. *SVF* 3.462.

Now the modes of life of the first god and of the second are these: evidently the first god will be at rest (ἔστως), while the second on the contrary is in motion (κινούμενος). So then the first is engaged with the intelligible realm, and the second with both the intelligible and sensible. And be not surprised at my saying this, for you are going to hear something far more surprising. For instead of that motion (κίνησις) which belongs to the second I assert that the rest (στάσις) which belongs to the first is an innate motion (κίνησις σύμφυτος), from which both the order of the world (ἡ τάξις τοῦ κόσμου), and its eternal continuance (ἡ μονή ἡ αἰδιος), and its preservation (ἡ σωτηρία) is diffused throughout the universe (τὰ ὅλα).<sup>91</sup>

According to Numenius, there is a paradox that lies at the core of ultimate reality: the first god's rest (στάσις) is his innate movement (κίνησις σύμφυτος) and is the cause of the order, continuance, and preservation of the world. Previous scholarship has noted that the notion of God's κίνησις σύμφυτος could have been inspired by *Soph.* 248e (quoted above, p. 139), where Plato attributes movement, κίνησις, to "that which wholly is," τὸ παντελῶς ὄν.<sup>92</sup> Regardless of whether or not he had this particular Platonic passage in mind, it is clear that Numenius adhered to the idea that ultimate reality has a dynamic aspect. As Dillon puts it, Numenius' first god "produces the stability and order of everything else" and, therefore, "must have motion in some sense."<sup>93</sup>

Thus, the "standing" god of Numenius is not entirely deprived of movement. It is worth noting that a somewhat similar train of thought occurs in Philo's exegesis of Exod 17:6. While the initial text of Exod 17:6 LXX read ὃδε ἐγώ (rendering Hebrew וַיִּהְיֶה), Philo attests an alternative reading (ὧδε ἐγώ), which allows him to interpret Exod 17:6 as a reference of God's omnipresence:

"Here I stand there before you were" (ὧδε ἐγὼ ἔστηκα ἐκεῖ πρὸ τοῦ σέ) (Exod 17:6). He shows hereby that He subsists (ὑφέστηκε) before all created being, and that He who is here exists also there and elsewhere and everywhere, for He has filled all wholly and entirely and left nothing where His presence is not. For He does not say "I will stand here and there," but even now, when I am present here, I stand at the same time there also.

91 Fr. 15 des Places (= Eusebius, *Praep. ev.* 11.18.20–21), trans. E.H. Gifford, altered.

92 See, e.g., Krämer 1964, 70; des Places 1973, 110.

93 Dillon 1996, 369.



My motion is not one of transference in space, where the traveler leaves one place when he occupies another, but it is a motion of self-extension and self-expansion (τονικὴ κίνησις).<sup>94</sup>

In this passage, Philo uses the concept of “tonic movement” (a Stoic expression, cf. *SVF* 2.448; 2.450–451; 2.864; Marcus Aurelius, *Medit.* 6.38) in order to explain how his “standing” God can be omnipresent. This movement is unique, since it has nothing to do with changing from one location to another. It is a type of movement that is compatible with immovability.

Thus, both Numenius and Philo claim that the “standing” God moves and rests at the same time. In order to describe this paradox, they introduce new varieties of movement: κίνησις σύμφυτος, in the case of Numenius, and τονικὴ κίνησις, in the case of Philo. I believe that these two examples of divine “motionless motion” are important for understanding Gos. Thom. 50:3.

Although movement is not explicitly attributed to the light, Gos. Thom. 50:1 reports that it was involved in a certain creative activity. Despite its immovability, the light is not entirely passive: it generated itself before it “stood,” and, after it “stood,” it produced the image. Thus, it is possible to surmise that “movement and repose” refer to the dialectic nature of ultimate reality: its stability goes hand in hand with its creativity.

It is also conceivable why the addressees are supposed to say that they somehow share these two divine attributes. As I have tried to argue, Gos. Thom. 16:4 and 23:2 envision human perfection as stability. But this stability is not lifeless and static. Just like the self-generated light revealed itself in the image, so is it also the nature of the children of light to radiate light. According to Gos. Thom. 24:3, the light that does not shine is darkness:

A ΟΥΝ ΟΥΘΕΙΝ ΩΘΟΠ ΗΦΟΥΝ ΝΗΟΥΡΗΘΟΥΘΕΙΝ  
 Β ΔΥΩ ΥΡ ΟΥΘΕΙΝ ΕΠΚΟΜΟΣ ΤΗΡΥ  
 Β' ΕΥΤΗΡ ΟΥΘΕΙΝ  
 Α' ΟΥΚΑΚΕ ΠΕ

A There is light within a person of light,  
 B and it lights up the whole world.  
 Β' If it does not shine,  
 Α' it is darkness.

94 *Sacr.* 67–68, trans. F.H. Colson and G.H. Whitaker, altered.

It seems that the structure of Gos. Thom. 24:3 is chiasmic: if there is light (A), then it shines (B); if it does not shine (B'), then there is no light (A'). This is a simple truth formulated as a paradox: to shine is in light's nature; if light does not shine, it is darkness.<sup>95</sup>

It is reasonable to suggest that the "people of light" of Gos. Thom. 24:3 and the "children of light" of Gos. Thom. 50:2 refer to the same group of commendable individuals. Thus, I conclude that, by their "movement," the addressees of Gos. Thom. 50:3 mean their radiance. They claim that their stability does not interfere with their luminous nature. They are at rest, yet they shine. A somewhat similar notion occurs in Alcinous' handbook (*Didasc.* 10.2), who says that God is motionless, yet acts (ἐνεργεῖ) upon the cosmic mind in the same way the sun acts upon vision.<sup>96</sup>

It is difficult to ascertain what exactly this movement/radiance means with regard to the addressees of saying 50. While the self-generated light of Gos. Thom. 50:1 seems to assume a demiurgic role of some sort, the "movement" of the "children of light" probably refers to a different type of activity. The most likely option is religious instruction. The use of light imagery in Gos. Thom. 33:2–3 supports this interpretation:

33:1 ΠΕΧΕ ἸϞ ΠΕΤΚΝΑϞΩΤῼ ΕΡΟΥ Ζῼ ΠΕΚΜΑΑΧΕ Ζῼ ΠΚΕΜΑΑΧΕ ΤΑΩϞ ΟΕΙΩ  
 ἸΜΟϞ ΖΙΧῼ ΝΕΤῼΧΕΝΕΠΩΡ 33:2 ΜΑΡΕ ΛΑΑϞ ΓΑΡ ΧΕΡΕ ΖΗΒϞ ἸϞΚΑΑϞ ΖΑ  
 ΜΑΑΧΕ ΟΥΔΕ ΜΑϞΚΑΑϞ Ζῼ ΜΑ ΕϞΖΗΠ 33:3 ΑΛΛΑ ΕΩΑΡΕϞΚΑΑϞ ΖΙΧῼ ΤΛΥΧ-  
 ΝΙΑ ΧΕΚΑΑϞ ΟΥΟΝ ΝΙΜ ΕΤΒΗΚ ΕΖΟΥΝ ΑΥΩ ΕΤῼΝΗΥ ΕΒΟΛ ΕΥΝΑΝΑϞ ΑΠΕ-  
 ϞΟΥΟΕΙΝ

33:1 Jesus said, "That which you (sg.) will hear in your (sg.) ear preach into the other ear from your (pl.) housetops. 33:2 For no one lights a lamp and puts it under a bushel, nor does he put it in a hidden place, 33:3 but rather he sets it on a lampstand so that everyone who enters and leaves will see its light."

According to Gos. Thom. 33:2–3, the light should not be hidden (ΖΗΠ); on the contrary, everyone should see it. Just like the self-generated light revealed itself (ΟΥΩΝΖ ΕΒΟΛ) in the image, so also the children of light are supposed to pro-

95 Alexey Somov has drawn my attention to a similar paradox in Mark 9:50, where Jesus exhorts his disciples not to become ἄλας ἄναλον, "unsalted salt"; for discussions of this metaphor, see, e.g., Nauck 1952, 173–176; Latham 1982, 227–228; Garlington 2011, 740–742.

96 Alcinous probably alludes to the sun simile from *Resp.* 508a–b; cf. Whittaker and Louis 1990, 22; Dillon 1993a, 103.

claim the truth to those less advanced in their spiritual journey. Their mission is to enlighten the world (Gos. Thom. 24:3).

The last saying that I need to discuss before I conclude this chapter is Gos. Thom. 18:3. I believe that the notion of the self-generated light from Gos. Thom. 50:1 is crucial for the understanding of the notion of “standing” in Gos. Thom. 18:3:

18:1 ΠΕΧΕ ΜΑΘΗΤΗΣ ΝΙC ΧΕ ΧΟΟC ΕΡΟΝ ΧΕ ΤΗΞΑΗ ΕCΝΑΩΩΠΕ ΝΑΩ ΝΞΕ  
 18:2 ΠΕΧΕ IC ΑΤΕΤΝΩΛΠ ΝΤΑΡΧΗ ΧΕΚΑΔC ΕΤΕΤΝΑΩΠΙΝΕ ΝCΑ ΘΑΞΗ ΧΕ ΞΜ  
 ΠΜΑ ΕΤΕ ΤΑΡΧΗ ΜΜΑΥ ΕΘΑΞΗ ΝΑΩΩΠΕ ΜΜΑΥ 18:3 ΟΥΜΑΚΑΡΙΟC ΠΕΤΝΑ-  
 ΩΞΕ ΕΡΑΤΥ ΞΝ ΤΑΡΧΗ ΑΥΩ ΦΝΑCΟΥΩΝ ΘΞΔΗ ΑΥΩ ΦΝΑΧΙ †ΠΕ ΔΝ ΜΜΟΥ

18:1 The disciples said to Jesus: “Tell us how our end will be.” 18:2 Jesus said: “Have you already discovered the beginning that you are now asking about the end? For where the beginning is, there also will be the end. 18:3 Blessed is he who will stand at the beginning. And he will know the end, and he will not taste death.”

The beatitude that Jesus says here, “Blessed is he who will stand at the beginning,” is quite peculiar. As I have tried to argue in this chapter, “standing” is an important part of the Thomasine metaphysical vocabulary. It seems legitimate, therefore, to suggest that the phrasing of Gos. Thom. 18:3 is meaningful and that the saying refers to the notion of transcendental “standing.”

While the disciples of saying 18 do not know about the beginning, the addressees of saying 50 are well aware of it. They know that in the beginning the divine light generated itself, “stood,” and produced their image. It seems reasonable to surmise, then, that “to stand in the beginning” means to imitate the primordial light that “stood” after it generated itself.

As I have pointed out earlier, there is a notable similarity between Clement’s “standing light,” φῶς ἐστός, and the light that “stood” in Gos. Thom. 50:1. It is also worth noting that Clement considers becoming φῶς ἐστός to be the final stage of spiritual progress: it is the perfect Gnostic who transforms into φῶς ἐστός. It is possible, therefore, that the beatitude of Gos. Thom. 18:3 refers to the same transformation into the standing light.

## Conclusions

In this chapter, I have discussed the significance of Platonist metaphysics for the understanding of the notion of “standing” in the Gospel of Thomas. I began

with a survey of the interpretations of Thomasine “standing” offered in the publications by DeConick, Williams, and Murray. These interpretations, though quite ingenious, are not appealing, because they do not seem to do justice to the Thomasine context in which the notion of “standing” occurs.

I then made an attempt to classify various aspects of the meaning of “standing” in the Gospel of Thomas. First, there are two cases of literal standing: in saying 75, suitors stand at the door of the bridal chamber, and, in saying 99, Jesus’ relatives stand outside. Interestingly, both relatives and suitors stand outside and are contrasted to those who go inside. Furthermore, in both cases, this contrast between going and standing serves as an allegory for excellence and imperfection. Thus, these two instances of literal standing allegorized as imperfection may be seen as a counterbalance to the cases where “standing” is meant metaphorically and refers to divine stability. Second, there is one saying, saying 28, where “standing” refers to presenting oneself, which is evident both from the saying’s structure and from the parallels from other early Christian texts. Finally, sayings 16, 18, 23, and 50 refer to the notion of transcendental “standing,” which, I believe, is one of the many instances where the Gospel of Thomas is indebted to the Platonist tradition.

Having surveyed various perspectives on the notion of transcendental “standing” in Plato, Alcinoüs, Philo, Numenius, and Clement, I turned to the metaphysics of sayings 16, 18, 23, and 50. There are two reasons why it is likely that these sayings refer to transcendental “standing.” First, sayings 16 and 18 associate “standing” with oneness. As I have demonstrated in chapter 4, the Gospel of Thomas borrows the notion of oneness as perfection from the Platonist tradition. Since both oneness and “standing” are divine attributes, it seems natural to assume that Thomasine “standing” also comes from Platonism. In fact, Philo associates oneness with “standing” in *Gig.* 52 and thus provides us with an important parallel to sayings 16 and 18. Second, the notion of the light that “stood” in saying 50 is remarkably similar to Clement’s notion of “standing light.” It seems reasonable to suggest that the Gospel of Thomas, Philo, and Clement speak the same language and that, when it comes to the foundations of metaphysics, all of them have similar views.

Just like Philo and Clement, the Gospel of Thomas applies the concept of transcendental “standing” to both ultimate reality and human individuals. Its metaphysics of “standing” can be summarized as follows. Ultimate reality is self-generated immovable light. Paradoxically, this “standing” light is not deprived of movement, as it revealed its creative nature by producing the image. Similarly, the worthy individuals who will assimilate to immovable light and “stand” will not be entirely passive either. Since they are luminous beings, it is in their nature to shine—i.e., to proclaim the truth to others. The truth

that these less spiritually advanced individuals are yet about to learn pertains to what happened in the beginning—i.e., how the light came to be, “stood,” and produced the image; for such an individual, spiritual progress means to imitate this process and thus to become a “standing” light.

Finally, it is worth noting that the metaphysics of “standing” present in sayings 16, 18, 23, and 50 has remarkable similarities with other Platonist and Platonizing texts discussed in this chapter. First, according to Philo, human beings can regain the divine stability and immutability that humanity tragically lost only once they have advanced to the stage of being friends of God and sages. According to Clement, it is the sole prerogative of the Gnostic to transform into “standing light.” Similarly, according to the Gospel of Thomas, only the chosen ones will “stand” (sayings 23 and 50). Second, Philo and Numenius recognized an intimate connection between stability, on the one hand, and peace and quiescence, on the other; the Gospel of Thomas also seems to be aware of this connection (sayings 16 and 50).

## The Gospel of Thomas and the Platonists on Immutability and Indivisibility

In this chapter, I deal with the Platonist background of Gos. Thom. 61, a short dialogue between Jesus and a certain woman by the name of Salome. Most scholars believe that the Coptic text of Gos. Thom. 61 is corrupt; therefore, along with interpreting the dialogue, I will also offer philological analyses of certain Coptic words and expressions present in the text. Below is the Coptic text of Gos. Thom. 61 and its English translation:

61:1 ΠΕΧΕ ΙϞ ΟΥΝ̄ ΣΝΑΥ ΝΑΜ̄ΤΟΝ̄ ἸΜΑΥ ΖΙ ΟΥΒΛΟϞ ΠΟΥΑ ΝΑΜΟΥ ΠΟΥΑ ΝΑ-  
ΩΝΖ  
61:2 ΠΕΧΕ ΣΑΛΩΜΗ Ν̄ΤΑΚ ΝΙΜ ΠΡΩΜΕ ΖΩϞ ΕΒΟΛ Ζ̄Ν̄ ΟΥΑ ΔΚΤΕΛΟ ΕΧ̄Μ̄ ΠΑ-  
ΒΛΟϞ ΔΥΩ ΑΚΟΥΩΜ ΕΒΟΛ Ζ̄Ν̄ ΤΑΤΡΑΠΕΖΑ  
61:3 ΠΕΧΕ ΙϞ ΝΑϞ ΔΕ ΔΝΟΚ ΠΕ ΠΕΤΩΟΠ ΕΒΟΛ Ζ̄Ν̄ ΠΕΤΩΗΩ ΔΥ† ΝΑΕΙ ΕΒΟΛ  
Ζ̄Ν̄ ΝΑ ΠΑΕΙΩΤ  
61:4 ΔΝΟΚ ΤΕΚΜΑΘΗΓΗΣ  
61:5 ΕΤΒΕ ΠΑΕΙ †ΧΩ ἸΜΟϞ ΔΕ ΖΟΤΑΝ ΕΦΩΔΩΠΕ ΕΦΩΗ(Ω) ΦΝΑΜΟΥΖ  
ΟΥΟΕΙΝ ΖΟΤΑΝ ΔΕ ΕΦΩΔΩΠΕ ΕΦΠΗΩ ΦΝΑΜΟΥΖ ἸΚΑΚΕ

61:1 Jesus said: “Two will rest on a dining couch. One will die; the other will live.”

61:2 Salome said: “Who are you, man? As if you were from someone (important), you have gotten a place on my dining couch and you have eaten at my table.”

61:3 Jesus said to her: “I am the one who comes from the One who is equal (to himself). I was given some of that which is my Father’s.”

61:4 “I am your disciple!”

61:5 “Therefore, I say: If he is (equal) (to himself), he will become full of light. But if he is divided, he will become full of darkness.”

I start with discussing the setting of the dialogue between Jesus and Salome. I then analyze the contents of the dialogue, primarily how the saying is influenced by the Middle Platonist philosophy. In the end, I address the integrity of the dialogue, since it has been questioned by a number of scholars.

## The Setting of the Dialogue

In what follows, I discuss the circumstances in which Jesus and Salome engage in their dialogue. First, I argue that the setting of Gos. Thom. 61:1–2 is that of a banquet. Then, I offer several arguments in support of Harold W. Attridge's interpretation of Gos. Thom. 61:2 and a suggestion as to how Salome's reply might be related to Jesus' opening remark in Gos. Thom. 61:1.

### 1 *Jesus on a Dining Couch*

The Coptic noun Ⲅⲗⲟⲥ occurs in Gos. Thom. 61 twice. Even though the primary meaning of Ⲅⲗⲟⲥ is “bed,” in Gos. Thom. 61, it should be understood as “dining couch.” Most probably, the Coptic noun Ⲅⲗⲟⲥ in Gos. Thom. 61 renders the Greek noun κλίνη, since Ⲅⲗⲟⲥ is the most frequent equivalent of κλίνη in the Sahidic New Testament<sup>1</sup> and perhaps in other translated texts as well.<sup>2</sup> Although it is theoretically possible that Ⲅⲗⲟⲥ here renders κράβαττος,<sup>3</sup> the parallel text in Luke 17:34 seems to rule this option out. In turn, the Greek noun κλίνη means both “bed” and “dining couch,” but since, in Gos. Thom. 61:2, we encounter the Greek loan-word τράπεζα, there can be no doubt that the latter meaning was implied.

The ancient practice of reclining on a dining couch (κλίνη) and eating from a table (τράπεζα) is well-known. The following two examples from classical literary sources describe the setting that is essentially similar to the one presupposed in Gos. Thom. 61:<sup>4</sup>

Then how should I feed these people, Glaucon? I asked.

In the conventional way. If they aren't to suffer hardship, they should recline on proper couches (ἐπὶ τε κλινῶν κατακεῖσθαι), dine at a table (ἀπὸ τραπεζῶν δειπνεῖν), and have the delicacies and desserts that people have nowadays.<sup>5</sup>

1 Draguet 1960, 114.

2 See Crum 1939, 815a.

3 See Wilmet 1957–1959, 3:1695–1696.

4 As for the early Jewish and early Christian literature, the same practice seems to be attested in Ezek 23:41 LXX: “you would sit on a covered couch (ἐπὶ κλίνης ἐστρωμένης), and a table adorned in front of it (τράπεζα κεκοσμημένη πρὸ προσώπου αὐτῆς)” (NETS). In the New Testament, κλίνη seems to mean “dining couch” in Mark 7:4 and Luke 17:34.

5 Plato, *Resp.* 372d–e, trans. G.M.A. Grube and C.D.C. Reeve.

Exactly the same thing holds true also in reference to the kitchen: in any establishment where one and the same man arranges the dining couches (κλίνην στρώννυσι), lays the table (τράπεζαν κοσμεῖ), bakes the bread, prepares now one sort of dish and now another, he must necessarily have things go as they may.<sup>6</sup>

In Gos. Thom. 61:1, Jesus speaks of two individuals reclining on one couch; the saying thus reflects communal dining customs of the ancient world. I believe that Uwe-Karsten Plisch is accurate when he suggests that the setting of Gos. Thom. 61 is a banquet, where Salome is host and Jesus, one of the guests.<sup>7</sup> Indeed, this seems to be the most natural way of interpreting the saying. While a couch in a typical Greek ἀνδρῶν usually measured 1.80–1.90 × 0.80–0.90 m and could accommodate either one or two guests, a couch in a Roman triclinium was larger, measuring 2.20–2.40 × 1.20 m and accommodating three persons.<sup>8</sup> It is this latter piece of furniture that Thomasine 6Λ06 designates.

Since Salome is the host, she says that Jesus reclines on “her” couch and eats from “her” table. It seems unlikely that she and Jesus recline on the same couch:<sup>9</sup> as Matthew B. Roller convincingly argues, a man and woman reclining together in Roman times “thereby announce a licit, proprietary sexual connection.”<sup>10</sup>

To this must be added that a woman present at a banquet is not necessarily either an entertainer or a prostitute. While in Greece, according to Katherine Dunbabin, “reclining at dinner was a male prerogative,” in Roman times, respectable women “participated in banquets reclining together with men.”<sup>11</sup> This phenomenon is attested by both literary and non-literary sources—for example, a mosaic panel from Capua (first or second century CE) depicts “women who to all appearances are portrayed in their dress and demeanour as respectable members of society, participating in the feast on equal terms with men.”<sup>12</sup>

6 Xenophon, *Cyr.* 8.2.6; trans. W. Miller.

7 Plisch 2008, 151.

8 See Dunbabin 2003, 38–40.

9 Pace Corley 1999, 86 and 88–89; Alikin 2010, 22–23; Gathercole 2014a, 443.

10 Roller 2006, 121.

11 Dunbabin 2003, 22–23.

12 *Ibid.*, 68.



## 2 *Jesus Has Come from Someone Special*

Salome says that Jesus got a place (literally, “came up” or “climbed”) on her dining couch and ate from her table  $\chi\omega\varsigma \epsilon\beta\omicron\lambda \ \xi\bar{\nu} \ \omicron\gamma\alpha$  (i.e., “as from one”). The majority of scholars believe that the text “is near to nonsense”<sup>13</sup> and therefore has to be emended.

If we cannot convincingly interpret the text as it stands, an emendation would certainly be in order. If this were the case, the best option would probably be to accept H.J. Polotsky’s proposal that \* $\acute{\omega}\varsigma \ \xi\acute{\epsilon}\nu\omicron\varsigma$  of the Greek *Vorlage* was mistranslated as \* $\acute{\omega}\varsigma \ \xi\acute{\xi} \ \acute{\epsilon}\nu\omicron\varsigma$ .<sup>14</sup> Indeed, the improved text fits nicely into the setting of the dialogue, as it was described above. While Salome is the host of this banquet, Jesus is lying on her dining couch and eating the food from her table as her *guest*.<sup>15</sup>

As insightful as Polotsky’s proposal is, it is every scholar’s duty to try to interpret the text as it stands, and propose emendations only after proving that the text as it stands is meaningless.<sup>16</sup> Hence, I would like to discuss the proposals of Harold W. Attridge and Ismo Dunderberg, who both believe that the phrase in question “can be understood as it stands.”<sup>17</sup>

In his 1977 translation of the Gospel of Thomas, Lambdin rendered  $\chi\omega\varsigma \epsilon\beta\omicron\lambda \ \xi\bar{\nu} \ \omicron\gamma\alpha$  “as though from the One.”<sup>18</sup> According to Attridge, this translation is inaccurate: “If  $\omicron\gamma\alpha$  is indeed a translation of a Greek  $\acute{\epsilon}\nu\omicron\varsigma$ , used in this metaphysical sense, we would certainly not expect it to be anarthrous in either language.”<sup>19</sup> According to Attridge,  $\omicron\gamma\alpha$  renders  $\tau\acute{\iota}\varsigma$ , which in this context means “someone special.”<sup>20</sup>

13 Plisch 2008, 150.

14 See Layton 1989, 1:74.

15 See LSJ, s.v. “ $\xi\acute{\epsilon}\nu\omicron\varsigma$ ,” I.2.

16 Another alternative is to suggest that the Coptic translator understood the interrogative pronoun  $\tau\acute{\iota}\varsigma$  as the indefinite pronoun  $\tau\acute{\iota}\varsigma$ . See Petersen 1999, 198–199. As I point out below, the Coptic text makes good sense as it stands; therefore, there is no reason to think that the translator misunderstood the Greek expression.

17 Dunderberg 2006, 90.

18 Lambdin 1977, 125.

19 Attridge 1981, 31. It seems that Lambdin found Attridge’s argumentation convincing, since “the One” is not mentioned in subsequent editions of his translation. Thus, in Layton’s edition of the Gospel of Thomas, Lambdin notes that the passage is corrupt, leaving  $\chi\omega\varsigma \epsilon\beta\omicron\lambda \ \xi\bar{\nu} \ \omicron\gamma\alpha$  untranslated (Lambdin 1989, 75); it is worth noting that, due to a misprint, the text is missing an ellipsis (cf. Lambdin 1996, 133, where, instead of translating  $\chi\omega\varsigma \epsilon\beta\omicron\lambda \ \xi\bar{\nu} \ \omicron\gamma\alpha$ , he puts “...”).

20 See Attridge 1981, 31–32; cf. LSJ, s.v. “ $\tau\acute{\iota}\varsigma$ ,” A.II.5; BDAG, s.v. “ $\tau\acute{\iota}\varsigma$ ,” 2.

Indeed, this special meaning of τῖς is securely attested in early Christian literature—see, e.g., Acts 5:36, “claiming to be someone (important) (λέγων εἶναι τινα ἑαυτόν),” and Ign. *Eph.* 3:1, “I do not give you orders as if I were someone (important) (ὡς ὢν τῖς).” Yet Attridge does not give any examples where the indefinite pronoun ΟΥΔΑ renders τῖς with this meaning.<sup>21</sup> There is, however, at least one example that supports his hypothesis. In the Lycopolitan (dialect L6) text of the Acts of Paul, published by Carl Schmidt from P.Heid. Inv. Kopt. 300+301,<sup>22</sup> τινές (here, “some important people”) is rendered as ΖΑΕΙΝΕ (ΖΟΕΙΝΕ in Sahidic), the plural form of ΟΥΔΑ:

And Paul, seeing Onesiphorus, smiled; and Onesiphorus said, “Hail, O servant of the blessed God.” And he said, “Grace be with you and your house.” And Demas and Hermogenes were jealous and showed greater hypocrisy, so that Demas said, “Are we not of the blessed God that you have not thus saluted us?” And Onesiphorus said, “I do not see in you the fruit of righteousness, but if you are some important people (εἰ δὲ ἔσστε τινές = [ΕΥΩΠΙΕ ΔΕ ΝΤ]ΩΤῆ ΖΑΕΙΝ[Ε]), come also into my house and refresh yourselves.”<sup>23</sup>

Attridge’s hypothesis seems to be the most convincing explanation of Salome’s words. Dunderberg, however, disagrees with Attridge. According to him,<sup>24</sup> ΖΩΟ ΕΒΟΛ Ζῆ ΟΥΔΑ might render either \*ὡς ἐξ ἑνός or \*ὡς ἀφ’ ἑνός.<sup>25</sup> Dunderberg argues that there are two possible interpretations for Salome’s words. First, since, in *Exc.* 36.1, εἷς occurs without the article and since “it is doubtless used in the metaphysical sense meaning God,” the same might also be true of Gos. Thom. 61. Second, Salome might have the equality of all people in mind, as the author of Hebrews does in Heb 2:11.<sup>26</sup> Both these suggestions are very insightful, but I do not find them compelling.

21 Thus, of the two examples cited above, the Sahidic translation of Acts 5:36 reads, ΕΥΧΩ ΜΗΟΣ ΕΡΟΥ ΧΕ ΔΗΟΚ ΠΕ, “saying about himself, ‘I am someone important’”; for a discussion of the nominal sentence pattern employed in this passage, see Layton 2011, 221 (§ 283). As for Ign. *Eph.* 3:1, no Coptic translation of this verse is preserved; only the very beginning of the Sahidic version of the letter survived—see Lefort 1952, 52.

22 See Schmidt 1905, 4\*–19\*.

23 Acts Paul 3.4, trans. J.K. Elliott, altered.

24 Dunderberg 2006, 95.

25 Both retroversions are possible. In the Sahidic New Testament, ΕΒΟΛ Ζῆ ΟΥΔΑ renders ἀφ’ ἑνός in Heb 11:12 and ἐξ ἑνός in Acts 17:26, Rom 5:16 (var. ΕΒΟΛ ΖῆΤῆ ΟΥΔΑ), and Heb 2:11.

26 There is also a third interpretation proposed by Dunderberg (viz., Salome speaks about the equality of friends sharing a meal), but, grammatically speaking, this is not a significantly different option.

Both expressions that, according to Dunderberg, might have been present in the Greek *Vorlage* (i.e., either \*ὡς ἐξ ἑνός or \*ὡς ἀφ' ἑνός) are present in Alexander of Aphrodisias' commentary on Aristotle's *Metaphysica*. (i) In his comment on *Metaph.* 988b22–24, Alexander says that there are those who (erroneously) think that the universe (τὸ πᾶν) is one, because it has only one (material) cause. If this is the case, says Alexander, ἐν ὡς ἐξ ἑνός—i.e., “(the universe is) one as (coming) from one (thing)” (*Comm. Metaph.* 64.17 Hayduck). (ii) In his comment on *Metaph.* 1003b16, Alexander says that there is one science (ἐπιστήμη μία) that deals with the things that are said in various ways ὡς ἀφ' ἑνός τε καὶ πρὸς ἕν—i.e., “by derivation from one thing and with reference to one thing” (*Comm. Metaph.* 244.10 Hayduck; trans. A. Madigan). These two examples show that it is not true that the expression as it stands “is near to nonsense,” since it is quite meaningful in Alexander's commentary. Moreover, it is evident that the expression might have been used in a metaphysical sense. Having said that, I would like to point out that in different metaphysical contexts ἑνός has different metaphysical meanings, but the one that Attridge rejects (ῥωσ εβολ ρñ ογα = “as though from *the* One”) is indeed impossible in Gos. Thom. 61:2. The two examples from Alexander's commentary illustrate Attridge's point:

- (i) Since it originates from a single source (and not from two, three, etc., sources), the universe is one (= there is no second universe);
- (ii) One science deals with multiple objects as long as these objects come from one thing (and not from two different things).

The second example is, in fact, very similar to the two parallels Dunderberg draws in his book:

ἐν ἐνότητι μέντοι γε προεβλήθησαν οἱ ἄγγελοι ἡμῶν, φασίν, (εἰς ὄντες),<sup>27</sup> ὡς ἀπὸ ἑνός προελθόντες.

They say that it is in unity that our angels were put forth, for they (are one), having come forth from one.<sup>28</sup>

ὅ τε γὰρ ἀγιαζῶν καὶ οἱ ἀγιαζόμενοι ἐξ ἑνός πάντες.

27 The manuscript reads εἰσιόντες, “going in.” The emendation (εἰς ὄντες) was proposed in Schwartz 1908, 131.

28 *Exc.* 36.1.

For the one who sanctifies and those who are sanctified are all from one (God).<sup>29</sup>

The point in Heb 2:11, *Exc.* 36.1, and in Alexander's comment on *Metaph.* 1003b16 is the same: there are multiple objects that have something in common, because they originated from one and the same thing. Even though all these passages, including Heb 2:11, are metaphysical in a sense, none of them refers to the metaphysical concept of "the One."

As for the second interpretation proposed by Dunderberg—i.e., "as (coming) from one (Father) you have gotten a place on my dining couch and you have eaten from my table"—it does not seem to be supported by the context for a couple reasons. First, the Father is not mentioned in the dialogue yet; therefore, it would not be clear to whom Salome is referring. Second, Salome is not saying that *both* Jesus *and* she are "from one." Remarkably, Gos. Thom. 61:2—unlike Heb 2:11, *Exc.* 36.1, and Alexander's comment on *Metaph.* 1003b16—does not mention multiple objects that are "from one." Only Jesus is said to be "from one."

Hence, it is very unlikely that Salome speaks about her or someone else's equality with Jesus. Since Dunderberg's proposal is open to criticism, I accept Attridge's hypothesis as the most likely explanation of  $\rho\omega\varsigma \epsilon\beta\omicron\lambda \xi\bar{\nu} \omicron\gamma\alpha$  and render this expression with "as if you were from someone (important)."

The last question I address in this section is how the initial words of Jesus and Salome's reply are related to each other. The brevity of the saying does not seem to allow us to give a decisive answer to this question. Nevertheless, I would like to present what I believe to be the most plausible option.

As Plisch has pointed out, Jesus' opening remark and Salome's reply are linked by the catchword  $\sigma\lambda\omicron\sigma$ ; therefore, "Salome obviously understood the saying in the first sentence as referring to a situation at a banquet."<sup>30</sup> Thus, Salome's answer means that she sees Jesus' words as a threat. It is tempting to assume that, when Jesus spoke of "the one who will die," Salome deduced that he spoke about her. In this case, his words are a wake-up call of sorts: even though we are dining together now, something bad may happen to you in the near future if you do not seek salvation. This option is, however, very unlikely.

29 Heb 2:11. Translation from NRSV, slightly altered.

30 Plisch 2008, 151. The following interpretation differs from the one offered by Plisch, since he relies upon the text altered according to Polotsky's emendation. According to Plisch, Salome's reply is a reprimand: she finds Jesus' words inappropriate, as killing the guests' mood and thus reminds him that he is but a guest (\*ξένος) in her house.

First, as I have noted above (p. 165), nothing indicates that Jesus and Salome are lovers; therefore, they probably recline on separate couches. Second, if the author of the saying wanted to say that Jesus would live and Salome would die, he would not have used two masculine pronouns (i.e., *πουα*), but rather one masculine and one feminine (i.e., *τουει*).

It is, therefore, reasonable to surmise that Salome thinks that Jesus is speaking about the guests of the banquet she is hosting. She understands his words as a grim prophecy of sorts and is terrified by them. She wants to know who gave him the authority to talk like this. Perhaps she even interprets his words as a direct threat to everyone present at the banquet. It is possible that she suspects him to be a representative of the Roman authorities and that he came to her banquet as a participant in a punitive expedition. All in all, her question indicates that she is in the dark about Jesus' divine nature; her reply invites Jesus to reveal who he truly is.

### The Contents of the Dialogue

In what follows, I argue that we might gain better insight into the words of Jesus in Gos. Thom. 61:3 and 61:5, if we appreciate their indebtedness to the Platonist metaphysics of divine immutability and indivisibility.

#### 1 *Divine Immutability*

In Gos. Thom. 61:3, Jesus says that he “exists from *πετωηω*.” As Antti Marjanen observes, the meaning of *πετωηω* is problematic. For the same reason, a number of recent translations interpret *ωηω* “in light of its present context and in light of Thomasine theology” (e.g., “to be integrated,” “to be undivided,” “to be whole”), even though “no parallel for this kind of use of *ωηω* has been found.”<sup>31</sup>

Two details should be pointed out with regard to the Greek *Vorlage* of this expression. First, different forms of *ωωω* almost always render *ἴσος* and *ἴσος* + a verb in the Sahidic New Testament.<sup>32</sup> Second, according to W.E. Crum, the Greek adjective *ἴσος* and its derivatives are quite often rendered *ωηω*, the stative form of *ωωω*<sup>33</sup>—see, for instance, the Sahidic translations of Athanasius

31 See Marjanen 1998c, 91.

32 See Draguet 1960, 105.

33 See Crum 1939, 606.

of Alexandria, *Vit. Ant.* 14.4,<sup>34</sup> Exod 26:24, Ezek 40:5, Mark 14:56, Can. ap. 7 (= Const. ap. 8.47.22–24 Metzger),<sup>35</sup> Zech 4:7, Sir 9:10, Pseudo-John Chrysostom, *Jos. cast.* PG 56:587.26.<sup>36</sup> The *Concordance du Nouveau Testament sahidique* adds Rev 21:16 to the list.<sup>37</sup> Since the examples are quite numerous,<sup>38</sup> I believe it is reasonable, then, to conclude that the Coptic translator had ἴσος or a cognate form of ἴσος in the *Vorlage*.<sup>39</sup> Therefore, in Gos. Thom. 61:3, Jesus says that he comes either from “the one who is equal” or from “the thing that is equal.”

I do not find the second option compelling. To be sure, ΠΕΤΩΗΩ might be a rendering of a Greek neuter noun (i.e., τὸ ἴσον). This expression does come up in philosophical literature—e.g., Plato discusses αὐτὸ τὸ ἴσον (i.e., “the equal itself”) in *Phaed.* 74a–75c (cf. 78d), and Alexander of Aphrodisias says that there are various species (τὰ εἶδη) of τὸ ἔν: τὸ ταῦτόν, τὸ ὅμοιον, τὸ ἴσον and many others (*Comm. Metaph.* 255.5–7 Hayduck). Still, the context hardly allows us to assume that Jesus speaks about an abstract entity different from the Father. Perhaps one could argue that “what is equal” refers to the divine realm as a whole; if this is the case, the point of the next sentence is that Jesus is not only from the divine realm, but also has an intimate connection with the Father himself. Yet this interpretation implies that Gos. Thom. 61:3 presupposes a complex system of divine beings, which does not seem to find any support in the other Thoma-sine sayings. Therefore, I prefer the simplest solution: since Jesus talks about the Father in the second sentence of Gos. Thom. 61:3, ΠΕΤΩΗΩ in the first sentence of Gos. Thom. 61:3 most certainly refers to the Father as well.

The problem is, as Dunderberg points out, that, in Gos. Thom. 61:3, “being equal” “is maintained without defining the point of comparison (to *whom* is one equal?).”<sup>40</sup> My suggestion is that, in this instance, Gos. Thom. 61 is indebted to the Platonist tradition, and that the philosophical texts contemporary with Gos. Thom. 61 might shed light on this text.

34 Garitte 1949, 20.

35 Lagarde 1883, 211.

36 Rossi 1889, 21.

37 See Wilmet 1957–1959, 3:1310.

38 This list can easily be expanded. For instance, while one of the Coptic versions of the Wisdom of Jesus Christ reads ϷΙCΩΝ (NHG III 95.8), the parallel passage in another version reads ΩΗΩ (BG 87.2).

39 I do not agree with Jesse Sell that the *Vorlage* had “some form of ἴσος εἶναι” (Sell 1980, 30), since, in fact, there are many cognates of ἴσος attested for ΩΗΩ, any of which could have been used here.

40 Dunderberg 2006, 97.

In what follows, I show that a number of Middle Platonist sources state that ultimate reality is (among other things) always equal to itself. I would like to start with two remarkable passages in Philo.<sup>41</sup> First, according to *Aet.* 43, God is equal to himself:

For God is equal to Himself and like Himself (ἴσος γὰρ αὐτὸς ἑαυτῷ καὶ ὁμοιος ὁ θεός); His power admits neither relaxation to make it worse, nor tension to make it better.<sup>42</sup>

It is worth noting that Valentin Rose attributed *Aet.* 39–43 to Aristotle; he listed this passage as a fragment of the lost Aristotelian work *De philosophia* (fr. 21 Rose = fr. 19c Ross).<sup>43</sup> Yet, as Bernd Effe points out, in *Aet.* 43–44, we encounter Philo's own thoughts.<sup>44</sup> As for the statement that God is “equal to Himself and like Himself,” it is quite possible that Philo borrowed the expression from *De universi natura*, a second-century BCE pseudepigraphon ascribed to the ancient Pythagorean Ocellus of Lucania. According to *Univ. nat.* 5, the universe (τὸ ὅλον καὶ τὸ πᾶν) “always remains the same, equal to itself and like itself (ἀεὶ κατὰ ταῦτὸ καὶ ὡσαύτως διατελεῖ καὶ ἴσον καὶ ὁμοιον αὐτὸ ἑαυτῷ).”<sup>45</sup> In *Aet.* 12, Philo says that he read (ἐνέτυχον) *De universi natura*, and there is thus no reason to doubt his testimony.<sup>46</sup> In turn, the expression ἀεὶ κατὰ ταῦτὸ καὶ ὡσαύτως in *Univ. nat.* 5, clearly comes from Plato's dialogues.<sup>47</sup>

The second Philonic passage that is relevant for this discussion is *Sacr.* 8–9. In this passage, Philo takes as a point of departure Exod 7:1 LXX, where God says to Moses, “I have given you as a god to Pharaoh (δέδωκά σε θεὸν Φαραώ).” Since God “appointed him as a god (εἰς θεὸν αὐτὸν ἐχειροτόνει),” Moses “had room for neither addition nor taking away (μήτε πρόσθεσιν μήτε ἀφαίρεσιν κευρωρηκώς).” Thus, not only God is equal to himself; Moses, being a god, was also equal to himself:

41 The references to Philo's works are from Stählin 1965, 3:351 (Stählin's reference “*Sacr.* AC, 10” is to be corrected to “*Sacr.* AC, 9”).

42 *Aet.* 43, trans. F.H. Colson.

43 See Rose 1886, 36–37. For the arguments in favor of this attribution, see Effe 1970, 16–17.

44 See Effe 1970, 20.

45 Cf. Cyril of Alexandria's quotation from a Hermetic writing, below (pp. 175–176), where Aristotelian attributes of the universe are applied to a deity.

46 Pace Harder 1926, 32; cf. Niehoff 2006, 46.

47 See especially *Phaed.* 78c–80b; cf. the same expression in Plutarch, Celsus, and Clement in the passages cited below.

A god is not subject to either reduction or addition, being complete and eminently equal to himself (πλήρης καὶ ἰσαίτατος ὢν ἑαυτῷ).<sup>48</sup>

The second important philosophical source is Apuleius. In his handbook, he makes a distinction between the intelligible substance and the sensible:

Οὐσίας, quas essentias dicimus, duas esse ait, per quas cuncta gignantur mundusque ipse; quarum una cogitatione sola concipitur, altera sensibus subici potest. Sed illa, quae mentis oculis comprehenditur, semper et eodem modo et **sui par ac similis** inuenitur, ut quae uere sit; at enim altera opinione sensibili et inrationabili aestimanda est, quam nasci et interire ait. Et, sicut superior uere esse memoratur, hanc non esse uere possumus dicere.

He [i.e., Plato] says that there are two οὐσίαι (we call them “substances”). Everything comes into being through them, including the world itself. One of them is grasped only by thought, the other one may be laid before the senses. The one that is comprehended by the eyes of intellect is always found in the same state, **equal and similar to itself**, since it truly is. The other one should be estimated by sensible and irrational opinion. He says that it comes into existence and ceases to be. And, since it is said that the former truly is, we can say that this one truly is not.<sup>49</sup>

It is worth noting that neither Philo nor Apuleius invented the concepts they formulated in the passages quoted above, but rather follow the Platonist speculative tradition and spelled out the ideas that were generally accepted among Platonists. The idea that God is immutable and always the same comes from *Resp.* 380d–381e; it was a *locus communis* in Middle Platonism. For instance, in order to prove that the incarnation of God is impossible, Celsus simply paraphrases Plato’s words:

I have nothing new to say, but only ancient doctrines. God is good and beautiful and happy, and exists in the most beautiful state. If then He comes down to men, He must undergo change, a change from good to bad, from beautiful to shameful, from happiness to misfortune, and from what is best to what is most wicked. Who would choose a change like this?

48 *Sacr.* 9.

49 Apuleius, *Plat. Dogm.* 193.



It is the nature only of a mortal being to undergo change and remoulding, whereas it is the nature of an immortal being to remain the same without alteration (κατὰ τὰ αὐτὰ καὶ ὡσαύτως ἔχειν). Accordingly, God could not be capable of undergoing this change.<sup>50</sup>

Apuleius' doctrine of the two substances comes from Plato's dialogues as well (see, e.g., *Phaed.* 79a). It is also present in the works of the Middle Platonist authors (Plutarch, *Def. orac.* 428b; Alcinous, *Didasc.* 4.7).<sup>51</sup> According to Plutarch, there are two natures, "one evident to the senses, subject to change in creation and dissolution, carried now here now there, while the other is essentially conceptual and always remains the same (ἀεὶ κατὰ ταὐτὰ ὡσαύτως ἔχουσα)" (trans. F.C. Babbitt).

When Philo states that God is equal to himself and when Apuleius states the same with regard to the intelligible substance, they hardly say something new, but rather rephrase the widespread concept that ultimate reality is not subject to any changes. The next logical step in this line of reasoning would be to maintain that equality as such is one of many divine attributes. As I will show, this step was made not only in Gos. Thom. 61, but also in a number of other Platonist and Platonizing texts, both Christian and non-Christian. One of the texts that attribute equality to God is Clement of Alexandria's *Stromata*:

It is hidden from them, even though they happen to be near us, that God gave us so many things that have nothing to do with him. He gave us birth, even though he was not born. He gave us food, even though he is self-sufficient. He gave us growth, even though he is in equality. He gave us happy decline of life and happy death, even though he is immortal and ageless.<sup>52</sup>

It is worth noting that, as Otto Stählin points out, this passage is dependent on Philo, *Sacr.* 98; 100:<sup>53</sup>

<sup>50</sup> Origen, *Cels.* 4.14, trans. H. Chadwick.

<sup>51</sup> The reference to Plutarch is from Moreschini 1966, 41.

<sup>52</sup> *Strom.* 5.11.68.2.

<sup>53</sup> See Stählin, Früchtel, and Treu 1985, 371.

Philo, *Sacr.* 98; 100Clement, *Strom.* 5.11.68.2

μυρία γὰρ ἡμῖν ἡ φύσις<sup>54</sup> ἐπιβάλλοντα ἀνθρώπων  
γένοι δεδώρηται,  
ὧν ἀμέτοχος ἀπάντων ἐστὶν αὐτή,  
γένεσιν ἀγένητος οὐσα,  
τροφὴν τροφῆς οὐ δεομένη,  
αὔξησιν ἐν ὁμοίῳ μένουσα ...  
τίς οὖν ἀγνοεῖ ὅτι εὐγγρία καὶ εὐθανασία μέγιστα  
τῶν ἀνθρωπείων ἀγαθῶν ἐστίν, ὧν οὐδετέρου κοι-  
νωνὸς ἡ φύσις ἀγήρωσ τε καὶ ἀθάνατος οὐσα;

λέληθεν δ' αὐτούς, κἄν πλησίον ἡμῶν τύχωσιν,  
ὡς μυρία ὅσα δεδώρηται ἡμῖν ὁ θεός,  
ὧν αὐτὸς ἀμέτοχος,  
γένεσιν μὲν ἀγένητος ὧν,  
τροφὴν δὲ ἀνευδεῆς ὧν,  
καὶ αὔξησιν ἐν ἰσότητι ὧν,  
εὐγγρίαν τε καὶ εὐθανασίαν ἀθάνατός τε καὶ ἀγήρωσ  
ὑπάρχων.

In his paraphrase, Clement changed ἐν ὁμοίῳ μένειν to ἐν ἰσότητι εἶναι. The expression μένειν or διαμένειν ἐν ὁμοίῳ (“to remain in the same condition”) occurs quite regularly in Philo’s corpus.<sup>55</sup> Although Clement introduced several changes to the Philonic passage,<sup>56</sup> there is no reason to think that he disagreed with Philo’s understanding of divine nature. Philo would most certainly consider these two expressions synonymous—see, for instance, *Spec.* 4.143, where he says that the laws established “at the beginning (ἐξ ἀρχῆς)” should be kept ἐν ἴσῳ καὶ ὁμοίῳ (i.e., “in an equal and similar state”). Therefore, to say that God is immutable is the same as to say that his distinctive feature is equality, that he is “equal.”

An even closer parallel to the words of Jesus in Gos. Thom. 61 comes from a lost Hermetic writing, a fragment of which is preserved in Cyril of Alexandria’s *C. Jul.* 1.46.28–35:

Καὶ ὁ αὐτὸς ἐν λόγῳ πρώτῳ τῶν “Πρὸς τὸν Τὰτ διεξοδικῶν” οὕτω λέγει περὶ Θεοῦ· Ὁ τοῦ δημιουργοῦ Λόγος, ὦ τέκνον, ἀίδιος, αὐτοκίνητος, ἀναυξής, ἀμείωτος, ἀμετάβλητος, ἀφθαρτος, μόνος, αἰεὶ ἑαυτῷ ὁμοίος ἐστίν, ἴσος δὲ καὶ ὁμαλός,

54 It is worth noting that ἡ φύσις in this passage is equivalent to God. Cf. Goodenough 1969, 51.

55 *Opif.* 97; *Cher.* 37; *Gig.* 25; *Deus* 28; *Agr.* 167; *Plant.* 91; *Mut.* 87; *Somn.* 1.154; 1.192; *Jos.* 134; *Mos.* 1.30; 1.118; 2.26; 2.264; *Spec.* 1.47; *Virt.* 21; 151; 193; *Aet.* 61; 115; *Legat.* 241; *QG* 4.204.

56 Most notably, Clement changed ἡ φύσις to ὁ θεός. On this subject, see van den Hoek 1988, 167 and 226.

εὔσταθής, εὔτακτος, εἷς ὢν μετὰ τὸν προεγνωσμένον Θεόν<sup>57</sup> σημαίνει δέ, οἶμαι, διὰ γε τουτουῖ τὸν Πατέρα.

And the same person [i.e., thrice-greatest Hermes] says the following about God in the first of the “Detailed Speeches to Tat”: “O child, the word of the creator is eternal and self-moved, it does not increase, it does not diminish, it is immutable, immortal and unique, it is always like itself, equal and even, it is stable and well-ordered, being one after the God who is beyond knowledge.” I believe he means the Father by this term.<sup>58</sup>

The expression ὁ τοῦ δημιουργοῦ λόγος in the Hermetic fragment is a bit puzzling. This “creator’s word” is probably identical to the “creative word” (ὁ δημιουργός λόγος) mentioned in other Cyril’s quotations (see *C. Jul.* 1.46.11–12 and 15). According to Cyril’s source, the creative word is ungenerated (ἀγέννητος) and infinite; being the first power of “the lord of all” (ὁ πάντων δεσπότης), it emerges from him and rules over everything he has created (*C. Jul.* 1.46.15–18). The “creator’s word” is, therefore, a divine being (or perhaps a divine hypostasis) and not the visible world,<sup>59</sup> even though, as A.D. Nock points out, many of the creator’s word’s attributes seem to come from Aristotle’s *De caelo*.<sup>60</sup>

57 Iamblichus (*Myst.* 10.7) and Lactantius (*Inst.* 4.7.3) were aware of a similar Hermetic name for the supreme deity: ὁ προεγνωσμένος θεός, “the God who transcends intellection” (for this translation see Clarke, Dillon, and Hershbell 2003, 353). This expression is also attested in *De sancta ecclesia* ascribed to Anthimus of Nicomedia (this text was probably written by Marcellus of Ancyra; for a survey of scholarly arguments for and against this attribution see Logan 2000, 82–87). According to *Sanct. eccl.* 15, Hermes gave this name to the second god. This contradicts the reports of Iamblichus and Lactantius; thus, Nock, in his edition of this passage from Pseudo-Anthimus, assumed that there was a lacuna (see Nock and Festugière 1945–1954, 4:143). It is not necessary, however, to think that the text is corrupt. As A.-J. Festugière points out, when the expression ὁ προεγνωσμένος θεός is applied to the second god, it probably means that the second god is simply envisaged by the first god before everything else (Nock and Festugière 1945–1954, 4:112 and 4:144).

58 Cyril of Alexandria, *C. Jul.* 1.46.28–35.

59 Cf. the divine triad of Poimandres: Mind the God (ὁ νοῦς ὁ θεός), the creative mind (ὁ δημιουργός νοῦς), and the word of God (ὁ τοῦ θεοῦ λόγος) (*Corp. Herm.* 1.9–11). See also Kroll 1928, 56–57.

60 See Nock and Festugière 1945–1954, 4:136. Nock refers to *Cael.* 277b27–29, where Aristotle says that the heaven is εἷς, αἰθῆρος, and ἀφθαρτος. One might also keep in view *Cael.* 288a34–288b1 (ἀφθαρτος and ἀμετάβλητος); see also 270a12–14 (the “primary body”—i.e., αἰθήρ, the fifth element—is ἀφθαρτος and ἀναυξής) and 287a23–24 (the motion of the heaven is ὁμαλῆς and αἰθῆρος).

The fragment nicely illustrates the intellectual context in which the point Jesus makes in Gos. Thom. 61:3 becomes understandable. When Salome shows her ignorance of Jesus' true identity, he says that he comes from the one who is equal. He could also say that he comes from "the one who is alike" or "the one who is even," because all these characteristics describe the same thing—viz., the immutability of the divine realm. In order to make sure that Salome is headed in the right direction, Jesus reformulates the same thought in a more explicit manner—i.e., "I was given some of that which is my Father's."

There is one last parallel that has to be mentioned in this context. According to the Tripartite Tractate (NHC I 67.36–37), the Father<sup>61</sup> did not "reveal his equality (ΠΑΘΩ ΝΤΕΥ)<sup>62</sup> to those who had come forth from him" (trans. H.W. Attridge and E.H. Pagels).<sup>63</sup> In saying that being equal is divine, the Tripartite Tractate is most certainly on the same track as Gos. Thom. 61, yet I do not think that this gives us a reason to assume that the Gospel of Thomas "was read by some Valentinians and that it had an impact on their beliefs."<sup>64</sup> As the sources I cited above seem to show, due to Middle Platonist speculations, the idea that divinity is equal was quite well-known in the first centuries CE. Hence, it is safer to suggest that the Gospel of Thomas and the Tripartite Tractate share the same outlook without being dependent on one another.

In Gos. Thom. 61:5, this discourse on divine equality takes another twist: it is not only God who is equal to himself; human beings could also and indeed should become equal to themselves. As we have already seen, this idea is not unprecedented; according to Philo, not only is God equal to himself, but Moses was also "eminently equal to himself." Moreover, the idea that underlies this expression (viz., that of becoming an immutable being) was well-known. Perhaps, the most illustrative example is *Strom.* 7.10.57.5, where Clement says that the Gnostic who enters the Lord's dwelling-place becomes "light that stands firm, always remains the same, and is absolutely and in every respect immutable," φῶς ἑστὸς καὶ μένον ἀιδίως, πάντα πάντως ἄτρεπτον.

61 According to Attridge and Pagels 1985, 273, the subject of NHC I 66.5–67.37 is the Son. It is more likely, however, that, starting from NHC I 66.29, the subject is the Father "en tant qu'il est révélé comme une unité-dans-le-multiplicité dans le Fils" (Painchaud and Thomassen 1989, 311).

62 According to Painchaud and Thomassen 1989, 312, ΠΑΘΩ here probably renders ἰσότης of the Greek *Vorlage*.

63 The reference is from Dunderberg 2006, 97.

64 *Ibid.*, 99.

As I have pointed out in chapter 5, Clement's understanding of human perfection is similar to his description of the deity, especially in *Strom.* 1.24.163.6, where he speaks of "God's stable permanence and his unchanging light, which no form can catch (τὸ ἐστὸς<sup>65</sup> καὶ μόνιμον τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ τὸ ἀτρεπτον αὐτοῦ φῶς καὶ ἀσχημάτιστον)" (trans. J. Ferguson).<sup>66</sup> As Walther Völker points out, comparing these two passages reveals that Clement's idea of perfection gravitates around the notion of "becoming as like God as possible"; his perfect Gnostic is a reflection of his perfect God.<sup>67</sup> As I have pointed out, the same holds true for Philo, and it holds true for the Gospel of Thomas as well: the description of the Father in Gos. Thom. 61:3 clearly matches the idea of human perfection expressed in Gos. Thom. 61:5.

Finally, it is necessary to comment on the ethical dimension of the term ἴσος. Knowing that the Father is "equal," ancient readers of the Gospel of Thomas would probably assume that he is "equal" not only in the metaphysical sense, but also in moral one—i.e., "impartial" and "equable."<sup>68</sup> The following examples from early Christian authors illustrate these notable nuances in the meaning of the term ἴσος.

Already in classical texts, the adjective ἴσος can mean "impartial" if applied to a human being—e.g., to a judge (see, for instance, Plato, *Leg.* 957c). Clement in his *Protr.* 6.69.3, applies this term to God. It is worth noting that in this passage Clement alludes to *Phaed.* 78c–80b (see above, p. 172); thus, in his view, divine immutability goes hand in hand with divine impartiality:

But the one true God, who is the only just measure, because He is always uniformly and unchangeably impartial (ἴσος ἀεὶ κατὰ τὰ αὐτὰ καὶ ὠσαύτως ἔχων), measures and weighs all things, encircling and sustaining in equilibrium the nature of the universe by His justice as by a balance.<sup>69</sup>

The Gnostic, according to *Strom.* 7.12.69.1, is also ἴσος; since he is free from passions, he treats all people equally, even if some of them are hostile to him:

65 For a discussion of the notion of transcendental "standing" in *Strom.* 7.10.57.5 and 1.24.163.6, see chapter 5 (pp. 149).

66 Cf. *Strom.* 6.12.104.3 (God always remains "unchangeably the same in his beneficence," ἐν ταυτότητι τῆς ἀγαθωσύνης), 7.3.13.1 (the Gnostic souls are honored with "an unchanging preeminence," ταυτότης τῆς ὑπεροχῆς), and 7.3.15.4 (God is "unchangeably the same in his just beneficence," ἐν ταυτότητι τῆς δικαίας ἀγαθωσύνης).

67 See Völker 1952, 513.

68 See LSJ, s.v. "ἴσος," 11.3, and PGL, s.v. "ἴσος," B.

69 *Protr.* 6.69.3, trans. G.W. Butterworth.

But the Gnostic, being such as we have described him in body and soul, is found to be fair alike (ἴσος καὶ ὅμοιος) towards all his neighbours, whatever their legal position, whether servant or foeman or whatever it be.<sup>70</sup>

The term is employed in a similar fashion by Athanasius of Alexandria. In his *Vit. Ant.* 14.3–4, Athanasius describes the equability Anthony achieved after about twenty years of ascetic life. The Coptic text of *Vita Antonii* renders ἴσος εἶναι with the stative form of ὡῶῶ, thus giving us an interesting parallel to Gos. Thom. 61:<sup>71</sup>

The disposition of his soul was pure again, for it was neither contracted from distress, nor dissipated from pleasure, not constrained by levity of dejection. Indeed, when he saw the crowd, he was not disturbed, nor did he rejoice to be greeted by so many people. Rather, he was wholly balanced, as if he were being navigated by the Word (ὄλος ἦν ἴσος, ὡς ὑπὸ τοῦ λόγου κυβερνώμενος = ΝΤΟΥ ΤΗΡῆ ΕΝΕΦῶΗῶ ΖΩΣ ΕΡΕΠΛΟΓΟΣ ᾤ ΖΗΜΕ ΜΗΟῶ) and existing in his natural state.<sup>72</sup>

The context in which the word πετῶῶῶ is employed in Gos. Thom. 61:3 seems thus to accentuate the metaphysical dimension of the term—i.e., the divine immutability. It is, however, important to bear in mind that the same term had an important ethical dimension along with the metaphysical one. This moral dimension of the term may be the reason why, in Gos. Thom. 61:5, εφῶῶῶ(ῶ) defines human perfection.

## 2 *Divine Indivisibility*

The word πῶῶ in Gos. Thom. 61:5 is the stative form of the verb πῶῶε; it means “to be divided,” “to be separated.” Two different interpretations of the phrase εφῶῶῶῶπε εφῶῶῶ, “if he is separated,” are possible. It means that someone is either divided—i.e., separated from himself—or separated from someone else, perhaps from God. The latter interpretation was proposed by Hans-Martin Schenke: “If he is ⟨equal⟩ (to God), he will become full of light. But if he is separated (from God), he will become full of darkness.”<sup>73</sup> I do not find this interpretation compelling, since it presupposes that ῶῶῶ has different meanings

<sup>70</sup> *Strom.* 7.12.69.1, trans. J.B. Mayor and H. Chadwick.

<sup>71</sup> See Garitte 1949, 20.

<sup>72</sup> *Vit. Ant.* 14.3–4, trans. D. Brakke.

<sup>73</sup> Schenke 2012, 881.

in Gos. Thom. 61:3 and 61:5—i.e., “equal (to himself)” and “equal (to God).” It is more probable that, in both instances, we are dealing with an idea of being equal in an “absolute” sense, which in turn leads to the conclusion that the term ΠΗΘΥ is also used in an “absolute” sense. The idea is that someone is divided, not that someone is separated from God; being “divided” (ΠΗΘΥ) is, therefore, the opposite of being “one and the same” (ΟΥΔΑ ΟΥΩΤΥ).<sup>74</sup>

Since the use of ΠΕΤΩΗΘΥ in the dialogue of Jesus and Salome shows that Gos. Thom. 61 most probably took on certain elements of Platonist metaphysics, it is reasonable to surmise that Platonist motifs might be present elsewhere in Gos. Thom. 61. It seems that, in Gos. Thom. 61:5, Jesus spells out the anthropological implications of what has been said in Gos. Thom. 61:3. In what follows, I will show that, just like immutability, indivisibility is a Platonist attribute of ultimate reality; in other words, to be divided means to be outside the divine realm.

Middle Platonists often attributed indivisibility to ultimate reality. The following passage from Numenius is quite illustrative in this regard:

Ὁ θεός ὁ μὲν πρῶτος ἐν ἑαυτοῦ ὧν ἐστὶν ἀπλοῦς, διὰ τὸ ἑαυτῷ συγγιγνώμενος διόλου μὴ ποτε εἶναι διαιρετός.

Being in himself, the first God is simple, because, as the one who keeps company with himself, he is in no way divisible.<sup>75</sup>

In fact, a view similar to the one of Numenius is expressed already by Aristotle who states in *Phys.* 267b25–26 that the “first mover” is ἀδιαίρετος and ἀμερής. Alcinous in his *Didascalicus* offers an explanation why God is indivisible: “God is partless (ἀμερής), by reason of the fact that there is nothing prior to him. For a part, and that out of which a thing is composed, exists prior to that of which it is a part” (10.7; trans. J.M. Dillon).<sup>76</sup> The Christian Platonists were also aware of this idea:

For God does not exist in darkness. He is not in space at all. He is beyond space and time and anything belonging to created beings. Similarly, he is

74 For a discussion of the motif of being/becoming one, see chapter 4.

75 Fr. 11.11–13 des Places (= Eusebius, *Praep. ev.* 11.18.3).

76 Therefore, as Plutarch puts it, “it is surely fitting that things permanent and divine should hold more closely together and escape, so far as may be, all segmentation and separation (τομήν ἄπασαν καὶ διάστασιν)” (Plutarch, *Def. orac.* 428c; trans. F.C. Babbitt).

not found in any section. He contains nothing. He is contained by nothing. He is not subject to limit or division.<sup>77</sup>

Elsewhere (*Strom.* 5.12.81.5–6), Clement describes God in terms of the first hypothesis of Plato's *Parmenides*. Clement calls God "the One" (τὸ ἓν) and, just like Plato (see *Parm.* 137c–d; 142a), describes the One as not being a whole (ὅλον), having no parts (μέρη), infinite (ἄπειρον), without form (ἄσχημάτιστον), and nameless (ἄνωμόαστον). According to John Whittaker, who discovered the dependence of this passage on *Parmenides*,<sup>78</sup> Clement seems to draw "from a theologically inclined Middle Platonic commentary upon the *Parmenides*, or at least from a Middle Platonic theologico-metaphysical adaptation of the First Hypothesis."<sup>79</sup> For the purposes of the present discussion, it is worth noting that, according to Clement, the One is not composed of parts (οὐδὲ μὴν μέρη τινὰ αὐτοῦ λεκτέον), because it is indivisible (ἀδιαίρετον γὰρ τὸ ἓν).

All these statements about divine nature have important implications for the overall anthropology. As Francis M. Cornford puts it, "the World-Soul and all individual souls belong to both worlds and partake both of being and of becoming."<sup>80</sup> On the one hand, as Plato puts it in his *Phaedo*, "the soul is most like the divine, deathless, intelligible, uniform, indissoluble (ἀδιάλυτος), always the same as itself, whereas the body is most like that which is human, mortal, multiform, unintelligible, soluble (διαλυτός) and never consistently the same" (*Phaed.* 80b; trans. G.M.A. Grube). On the other hand, the World-Soul (and, consequently, the individual souls) belongs to both the noetic realm, distinguished by its indivisibility, and to the sensible realm, distinguished by its divisibility (*Tim.* 35a).

According to Plato, the soul is made up of three components: first, a mixture of the being that is "indivisible and always changeless" (ἡ ἀμέριστος καὶ αἰεὶ κατὰ ταῦτὰ ἔχουσα οὐσία) and the being that is "transient and divided in bodies" (ἡ περὶ τὰ σώματα γιγνομένη μεριστή); second, a mixture of the part of the same (ταυτό) that is indivisible (ἀμερής) and the part of the same that is divided in bodies; third, a mixture of the part of the different (θάτερον) that is indivisible and the part of the different that is divided in bodies.

In my reading of *Tim.* 35a, I follow the proposal made by G.M.A. Grube.<sup>81</sup> It is most certainly the correct understanding of the Greek text. As Cornford

77 Clement, *Strom.* 2.2.6.1–2, trans. J. Ferguson.

78 See Whittaker 1976, 156–157; cf. Whittaker 1983, 305–306.

79 Whittaker 1976, 158.

80 Cornford 1956, 63.

81 See Grube 1932, 80–81.



points out, this interpretation *Tim.* 35a is attested by several ancient sources, most notably, by Alcinoüs in his *Didasc.* 14.2.<sup>82</sup> It is worth noting, however, that the majority of ancient commentators tended “to simplify Plato’s account of the composition of the soul” by identifying the indivisible being with the same and the divided one with the different.<sup>83</sup>

Be that as it may, it is evident that, regardless of how the ancient Platonists interpreted *Tim.* 35a, they all agreed that, as a combination of both intelligible and sensible realms, the soul is both divisible and indivisible. As A.E. Taylor put it, “The soul can be neither simply a thing eternal nor merely a creature of time; in its life the eternal and the temporal must somehow be combined in the closest interpenetration.”<sup>84</sup> From this point of view, a human being is divisible in two different aspects: as a union of a body and a soul and as a union of two realms in the soul itself.

To be clear, I do not intend to maintain that Gos. Thom. 61 is engaged in the discussion on the correct exegesis of the *Timaeus*. My suggestion is merely that the author of this saying was aware of certain Middle Platonist ideas; he knew that ultimate reality is indivisible and believed that a human being is capable of becoming “undivided.”

There was at least one philosopher, Philo, who also believed that such a transformation is possible. As I have pointed out in chapter 4, Philo understands human perfection as becoming a monad (μονάς). The most important example is, once again, Moses: as a human being, he was a dyad (δυάς) and consisted of a soul and a body, but afterwards, he was transformed by God into a mind (νοῦς), and thus became a monad (*Mos.* 2.288).

What is important for the interpretation of Gos. Thom. 61:5 is that the Philonic monad is indivisible (ἀδιαίρετος), while the dyad is divisible (διαίρετός) (*Spec.* 1.180; cf. *Gig.* 52). The monad is unmixed, simple, and suffers neither combination nor separation (*Deus* 82). Moreover, it is important that Moses was transformed into νοῦς, since νοῦς as the rational part of human soul, τὸ λογικόν (sc., ψυχῆς μέρος), is indivisible (ἄτμητος) and undivided (ἄσχιστος) (*Her.* 232; cf. *Agr.* 30).<sup>85</sup> Therefore, when Philo says that Moses became a monad and a mind, he is implying that Moses became undivided. I think that, in Gos. Thom. 61:5, Jesus suggests that his followers should try to do the same thing as Philo’s Moses did.

82 See Cornford 1956, 64–65.

83 Runia 1986, 210–211.

84 Taylor 1928, 135.

85 See also Baer 1970, 16–18.

It is worth noting that the Gospel of Thomas is not the only early Christian text that understands human imperfection as being divided. As I have pointed out in chapter 4, Clement and the Valentinians express the same sentiment. All of them, however, have distinguishing features. Clement understands being divided as the separation of a person from the Son, caused by the person's unbelief; Valentinians, as the separation of the elect from their angelic bridegrooms; the Gospel of Thomas, just like Philo, as the involvement in the corporeal realm.

As I have pointed out earlier, the understanding of equality as human perfection has not only a metaphysical dimension, but also an ethical one. The same seems to hold true in the case of indivisibility. Let us now turn to Gos. Thom. 72, another Thomasine saying that employs the verb  $\pi\omega\delta\epsilon$ :

72:1 [πε]ξε ουρ[ωμ]ε ναϋ δε χοοc ν̄ναcνηϋ ωινα εϋναπωδε ν̄ν-  
 ζνααϋ ἡπαειωτ ν̄νμαει

72:2 πεχαϋ ναϋ δε ω πρωμε νιμ ν̄ταζαατ ν̄ρεϋπωδε

72:3 αϋκοτῶ ἀνεϋμαθητc πεχαϋ ναϋ δε μη εειωοοπ ν̄ρεϋπωδε

72:1 A [man said] to him: "Tell my brothers that they have to divide my father's possessions with me."<sup>86</sup>

72:2 He said to him: "Man, who made me a divider?"

72:3 He turned to his disciples (and) said to them: "I am not a divider, am I?"

It is quite clear that the point Jesus makes here is not that he is merely unqualified for the task (i.e., that he is not an arbitrator). The fact that Jesus repeats the same question twice enhances the dramatic effect of the scene, as if Jesus were deeply insulted by the request to divide someone's property.<sup>87</sup> According to Gos. Thom. 61:5, everyone who is divided is wretched; the point of Gos. Thom. 72 is, therefore, that Jesus has nothing to do with division.<sup>88</sup> It is, therefore, evident that the notion of division in Gos. Thom. 72 has a metaphysical ring; nevertheless, it is quite remarkable, that it is the matter of business that

86 In the translation of the Berliner Arbeitskreis, the word "Father" is capitalized (Bethge et al. 2005, 537; Plisch 2008, 173; Bethge et al. 2011, 17). No explanation of this decision is given, and Plisch's commentary implies that the text refers not to a divine being, but to an actual parent. In a personal communication, Plisch wrote to me, clarifying that "Father" was merely a misprint.

87 Cf. Plisch 2008, 173–174.

88 Cf. Baarda 1975, 140.

triggers this reaction. We can, at any rate, deduce that the idea of indivisibility as human perfection has important ethical implications. To be indivisible means to refrain from worldly activities. It is likely, therefore, that Gos. Thom. 72 spells out the practical consequences of the metaphysical idea expressed in Gos. Thom. 61:5.

### The Integrity of the Dialogue

The last question that I would like to address is the integrity of Gos. Thom. 61. I believe that it is not necessary to assume that “some words have been erroneously omitted,” as Lambdin suggested, in order to make sense of Gos. Thom. 61:5.<sup>89</sup> I also disagree with Schenke and Plisch who argue that Gos. Thom. 61:5 “falls entirely outside of the narrative framework”<sup>90</sup> of the saying and that the best solution to the problem is to suggest that the speaker of Gos. Thom. 61:5 “is neither Jesus nor Salome, but a commentator.”<sup>91</sup> According to Plisch, the word-play in the Coptic text (ⲠⲎⲁⲓⲛⲁ) and ⲡⲎⲁⲓ) indicates that the last sentence “could be a Coptic gloss that entered the text rather late.”<sup>92</sup> I disagree for the following reasons.

First, I admit that the fact that there is a pun in the Coptic text may be indicative of the editorial activities of the Coptic scribes, though one might wonder whether it is merely a coincidence that two words in the same sentence have similar endings. Be that as it may, there is no reason to think that the Greek *Vorlage* lacked Gos. Thom. 61:5, though it is unlikely that the Greek text contained a similar pun.

Second, Gos. Thom. 61:5 makes good sense as the concluding remark uttered by Jesus. The main question is to whom Jesus is referring. The most reasonable answer seems to be that, in Gos. Thom. 61:5, Jesus refers to the two individuals mentioned in Gos. Thom. 61:1. Jesus therefore returns to the initial topic of the dialogue and explains why one of these two individuals will live, while the other will die. According to Gos. Thom. 61:5, these two individuals illustrate the two options which every human being has. He who is equal will live, or, in other words, will become full of light; he who is divided will die, or, in other words, will become full of darkness.

89 Lambdin 1989, 75.

90 Schenke 2012, 892.

91 Plisch 2008, 152.

92 Ibid.

If my interpretation is accurate, we may conclude that life and death in Gos. Thom. 61:1 are meant metaphorically. It is possible that, before it became a part of Gos. Thom. 61, the saying about two individuals lying on a couch was “a straightforward wisdom saying pondering the apparent capriciousness of death.”<sup>93</sup> However, in its present context, Gos. Thom. 61:1 most certainly refers to spiritual perfection, or lack thereof.

Moreover, as April D. DeConick points out, the Gospel of Thomas follows the Jewish tradition, which uses the word “living” as an attribute of the deity; thus, in the incipit of the Gospel of Thomas, “Jesus is portrayed as a divine being because he too has the title ‘living.’”<sup>94</sup> Since, as we have seen, Gos. Thom. 61 urges its readers to imitate God’s equality, it is reasonable to conclude that “to live” in Gos. Thom. 61:1 means to get one’s own fair share of the divine realm.

I would like to conclude this section with a brief summary of the dialogue between Jesus and Salome as I understand it. The dialogue takes place at a banquet hosted by Salome. Jesus, as one of her guests, reclines on a couch. In his opening remark, Jesus utters a cryptic saying about two individuals lying on one couch (Gos. Thom. 61:1). The subject matter of this saying is influenced by the fact that Jesus is himself lying on a couch. As we will later learn from Gos. Thom. 61:5, the point of his remark is that everyone in the room has to choose from two options: either to assimilate to God and live, or to be sunk in the corporeal realm and die.

Salome’s reply shows that she does not grasp the metaphorical meaning of Jesus’ remark (Gos. Thom. 61:2). She understands his words literally and thinks that Jesus is threatening her guests. In her reply, she inquires about Jesus’ identity; she wants to know who invested him with the authority to make such statements.

Salome’s question invites Jesus to reveal who he truly is (Gos. Thom. 61:3). He reveals that he comes from God, who is immutable, always the same, and equal to himself. Jesus is God’s son, and it is God who shared with Jesus his authority, giving him “some of that which is his.”

After Salome realizes whom she is talking to, she declares herself Jesus’ follower (Gos. Thom. 61:4). This is, however, not what Jesus wants her to do. Once again, Salome, like the rest of his disciples, misses his point (cf. Gos. Thom. 22:3). Jesus does not reveal his identity in order to make her his disciple. As Antti Marjanen points out, the ultimate goal of spiritual progress is exactly the

93 Patterson 1993, 47; cf. Patterson 2011a, 800–801, 810.

94 DeConick 1996, 123–124.

opposite—i.e., to become masterless, like Thomas did (see Gos. Thom. 13:5). Jesus exhorts people to become like him (see Gos. Thom. 108), not to follow him.<sup>95</sup>

In his concluding statement, Jesus returns to the initial topic of the conversation (Gos. Thom. 61:5). The formula “therefore I say,”  $\epsilon\tau\upsilon\epsilon\ \pi\alpha\epsilon\iota\ \tau\acute{\alpha}\omega\ \bar{\mu}\mu\omicron\varsigma\ \chi\epsilon$ , belongs to Jesus, not to a commentator, as Schenke and Plisch suggested. First, the formula connects Gos. Thom. 61:5 with Gos. Thom. 61:3: Jesus comes from God; therefore, he is within his rights to speak of life and death. Second, it explains Gos. Thom. 61:1 on the grounds of Gos. Thom. 61:3: God is immutable; therefore, in order to assimilate to God and live, one should become immutable, or else he or she will be enslaved by the corporeal realm and die.

### Conclusions

I would like to sum up the suggestions that were made above. As I tried to point out, Gos. Thom. 61:3 and 61:5 make good sense, if we approach them from the Middle Platonist point of view. When Jesus says that he comes from “the one who is equal,” he is referring to the generally accepted Platonist view that God is immutable. As the sources that are either somewhat earlier than or roughly contemporary with Gos. Thom. 61 indicate, the idea that ultimate reality is immutable might be expressed in different ways, and the attribution of equality to Godhead is just one of many options. To be sure, the “absolute” use of the word “equal” is a bit unusual, but it is not entirely unprecedented. Perhaps this “absolute” use of the word “equal” indicates that, at the time Gos. Thom. 61 was composed, this word was known as a technical term.

Gos. Thom. 61:5 seems to be an anthropological corollary to what Jesus says in Gos. Thom. 61:3. If equality is a divine attribute, then it is essential for everyone who seeks salvation to become equal. As I have pointed out, Gos. Thom. 61 is not the only ancient text to suggest that a human being is capable of becoming  $\bar{\iota}\sigma\omicron\varsigma$  (i.e., equal to him- or herself): Philo expresses the same idea, when he says that, having been appointed as a god (Exod 7:1), Moses became equal to himself.

According to Gos. Thom. 61:5, becoming equal is the opposite of becoming divided. Why are these two conditions set against each other? I suppose that the answer is that dividedness and indivisibility are also philosophically loaded

95 See Marjanen 1998c, 92.

concepts. Both equality and indivisibility are Platonist attributes of ultimate reality; therefore, to be equal means to be divine, while to be divided means to lack divinity.

Platonist sources maintain that ultimate reality is indivisible, while both human body and soul are of composite nature and, therefore, divisible. According to Gos. Thom. 61:5, in order to reach the perfect state, one should seek to attain indivisibility. Once again, the Gospel of Thomas shares this sentiment with Philo, who spoke of the transformation of Moses from the dyad of body and soul into the indivisible monad of pure mind.

Finally, it is significant that the notion of perfection as being equal as well as the notion of imperfection as being divided both have not only a metaphysical, but also an ethical dimension. While an ancient reader could understand Gos. Thom. 61:5 as a metaphysical statement on human perfection (i.e., as an exhortation to become immutable like Philo's Moses), he or she could also read it from the ethical perspective (i.e., as advice to become equable like Clement's Gnostic). Similarly, the same reader could interpret the notion of division in Gos. Thom. 61:5 from the point of view of metaphysics (viz., as a defect of human nature that Philo's Moses was able to escape), but he or she could also understand it as a state of moral corruption condemned by Jesus in Gos. Thom.

## The Gospel of Thomas and the Platonists on Freedom from Anger

In this chapter, I deal with the Platonist background of Gos. Thom. 7. I revisit Howard M. Jackson's suggestion that Gos. Thom. 7 should be interpreted along the lines of Plato's allegory of human soul (*Resp.* 588b–592b) and show that this suggestion is basically correct. I demonstrate that certain modifications of Jackson's hypothesis are in order, and that the lion in the saying does not stand for the passions in general, but rather represents anger, as it does in Plato's train of thought.

### The Text of Gos. Thom. 7

The following is the Coptic text of Gos. Thom. 7 and its English translation:<sup>1</sup>

7:1a πεξε ε̅ ι̅ ο̅γμακαριος πε πμογει παει ετε πρωμε ναογομϩ

7:1b αγω ν̅τε πμογει ωωπε ρ̅ρωμε

7:2a αγω ρβητ̅ ν̅βι πρωμε παει ετε πμογει ναογομϩ

7:2b αγω πμογει ναωωπε ρ̅ρωμε

7:1a Jesus said, "Blessed is the lion that a person will eat

7:1b and the lion will become human.

7:2a And cursed is the person whom a lion will eat,

7:2b and the lion will become human."

1 The part of the papyrus that may contain the Greek text of Gos. Thom. 7 (P.Oxy. 4.654, ll. 40–42) is badly damaged and is of little help for the reconstruction of the Greek *Vorlage* of the Coptic text. It is probable that P.Oxy. 4.654 contained a version of the lion saying, since line 40 undoubtedly reads [μα]χαρι[ός] ἐστιν. The legible letters on line 41 are the epsilon, sigma, and tau; the most likely restoration is ἔστ[αι]. The letter traces preceding ἔστ[αι] are paleographically ambiguous. Gathercole 2006, 357–358, points out that the usual reconstruction [λέ]ων is problematic and tentatively suggests χαῖ. On line 42 only the nu is clear. All in all, I agree with Gathercole 2006, 359, that to restore the Greek text of P.Oxy. 4.654, ll. 40–42 is "an extremely hazardous, and probably superfluous, enterprise."

A number of scholars,<sup>2</sup> most recently April D. DeConick,<sup>3</sup> Simon Gathercole,<sup>4</sup> and Peter Nagel,<sup>5</sup> noted that the last sentence is problematic, since it disrupts the would-be chiasmic structure of the saying (lion—man / lion—man / man—lion / man—lion) and suggested that the reading ⲁⲮⲱ ⲡⲙⲟⲮⲉⲓ ⲛⲁⲩⲱⲡⲉ ⲡⲣⲱⲙⲉ is due to a mistake made during the Coptic stage of the transmission of the text. The last sentence of the Coptic text should thus be altered to ⲁⲮⲱ ⲡⲣⲱⲙⲉ ⲛⲁⲩⲱⲡⲉ ⲓⲙⲟⲮⲉⲓ, “and the man will become a lion.”

As Jackson convincingly demonstrates, such a transcriptional mistake behind Gos. Thom. 7:2b is unlikely.<sup>6</sup> We could suspect such a mistake if, as Jackson argues, the text of Gos. Thom. 7:1b were identical with that of Gos. Thom. 7:2b. In this case, we would be forced to imagine a careless scribe repeating Gos. Thom. 7:1b instead of copying the original Coptic text, which contained the chiasmic structure. In reality, however, Gos. Thom. 7:1b and 7:2b are not identical: Gos. Thom. 7:1b comprises a conjunctive clause, whereas Gos. Thom. 7:2b employs the future tense. Thus, emending the Coptic text seems to be an unwarranted enterprise.

Jackson notes that the present wording of Gos. Thom. 7:2b might have resulted from a different kind of error: a translational one. That the text of Gos. Thom. 7:2b was the result of a mistake made by the Coptic translator was hesitantly suggested by Rodolphe Kasser already in 1961. Kasser hypothesized that the Greek *Vorlage* of both Gos. Thom. 7:1b and 7:2b read καὶ λέων ἔσται ἄνθρωπος. Because the phrasing was ambiguous, the Coptic translator would not have realized that Gos. Thom. 7:1b and 7:2b had different subjects.<sup>7</sup>

While Jackson admits that “this is an interesting suggestion and in itself within the realm of possibility,”<sup>8</sup> he still rejects this hypothesis. In his view, the difference in the Coptic wording of Gos. Thom. 7:1b and 7:2b must reflect a difference in the wording of their Greek *Vorlage*. This point is certainly valid, yet Jackson’s conclusion must be reconsidered in light of new evidence. When Jackson was working on his monograph, he was not aware of a source that strongly supports Kasser’s proposal.

2 See, e.g., Guillaumont et al. 1959, 4; Hofius 1960, 41–42; Haenchen 1961, 160; Montefiore and Turner 1962, 94; Leipoldt 1967, 26 and 57; Marcovich 1988, 70.

3 See DeConick 2007, 66.

4 See Gathercole 2014a, 228–229.

5 See Nagel 2014, 110.

6 Jackson 1985, 4–7.

7 See Kasser 1961, 38.

8 Jackson 1985, 11.



As Dieter Lührmann has shown, Didymus the Blind was familiar with a saying similar to the one we have in Gos. Thom. 7.<sup>9</sup> Below is the relevant section from his commentary on Ps 43/44:12. The Greek words in bold face indicate the vocabulary of the lion saying disseminated throughout the passage. The italicized clauses demonstrate that Didymus' version of the saying employs a chiasmic structure:

ἐὰν οὖν ὁ ἄνθρωπος ὁ σφύζων τὸ κατ' εἰκόν[α] καὶ τὸ κ[αθ' ὁμοίωσιν θ(εο)ῦ διδάσκαλος κατὰ Ἰ(ησοῦ)ν γενόμενος ἄγριον ἄνθρωπον διὰ τοῦ παιδεύ[σαι] φάγη [καὶ ἀναλώσῃ αὐτὸν ἢ λέων ἐστίν, ἐκεῖνος βρωθε]ῖς ὑπὸ τοῦ διδασκάλου καὶ τροφή αὐτοῦ γεγεννημένος οὐκ ἔσται λέων. διὰ τοῦτο **μακάριός ἐστιν** καὶ μα[καρίζ]εται οὐχ ὅτι λέων ἐστίν, ἀλλ' ὅτι *ἄνθρωπος γέγονεν*. εἰ δέ ποτε ἄνθρωπος λογικός καὶ λογικῶς κινού[μενο]ς ὑπὸ ὠμοθύμου τινὸς ἀγρίου ἀνθρώπου ἢ πονηρᾶς δυνάμεως βρωθεῖη, *γίνεται λέων καὶ τάλας ἐσ[τίν ὁ το]ιοῦτος*: “οὐαὶ” γὰρ “τῷ ἀνθρώπῳ ὃν φάγεται λέων.”

Therefore, if the **man** that preserves what is according to God's image and [likeness, having become a teacher like Jesus], **eats** a wild man by means of education [and consumes him insofar as he is a lion, this one who was eaten]<sup>10</sup> by the teacher and became his food **will not be a lion**. Therefore, **he is blessed** and he is being blessed not because he is a **lion**, but because *he became a man*. But if a reasonable **man** who was led by reason was eaten by some savage-hearted wild man or by an evil force, *he becomes a lion* and such a man is wretched. For “**Woe to the man whom a lion will eat.**”<sup>11</sup>

9 See Lührmann 1990, 312–316; Lührmann and Schlarb 2000, 116–117; Lührmann 2004, 164–167. Scholars of the Gospel of Thomas tend to ignore Lührmann's publications on saying 7. Curiously, Roig Lanzillotta 2013, 119, refers to one of Lührmann's publications in a footnote, but does not mention Didymus' version of the lion saying in his discussion of the text of Gos. Thom. 7.

10 See Gronewald 1970, 138 and 140. For the reader's convenience, I have translated, above, the reconstructed Greek text offered by Michael Gronewald in a footnote. Needless to say, the length of the lacuna makes every reconstruction a guesswork—this also applies to Gronewald's filling of the lacuna that precedes this one. It should be noted, though, that the text in the square brackets does not significantly influence our understanding of the whole passage.

11 Didymus the Blind, *Comm. Ps.* 315.27–316.4.

Even though Didymus quotes only one verse of the saying and paraphrases the rest, we can still easily see that it has almost the same structure as Gos. Thom. 7. The following table contrasts Didymus' version of the saying with Didymus' interpretation of it:

The lion saying according Didymus	Didymus' exegesis of the lion saying
Blessed is the lion	Blessed is the wild man
Whom a man will eat	Whose teacher is a reasonable man
And the lion will become a man.	For he is no longer wild.
And wretched is the man	And wretched is the reasonable man
Whom a lion will eat	Whose teacher is a wild man
And the man will become a lion.	For he is no longer reasonable.

The only major difference between the two versions of the saying (viz., that in the  $\text{NHC II}$  and that in Didymus) is that, according to Didymus, the man who is eaten by the lion becomes a lion.<sup>12</sup> How, then, did this discrepancy come about? The most plausible explanation is that the reading of the Coptic text,  $\text{πμογει ναωπε ρρωμε}$ , is an erroneous translation of the Greek *Vorlage*.

While the reconstruction of the exact wording of the *Vorlage* of saying 7 would be a hazardous undertaking, it seems very likely that the Greek version of Gos. Thom. 7:2b would have had the verb  $\text{ἔσται}$  with a double nominative construction. The translator would then have mistaken the nominative complement ( $\text{λέων}$ ) for the subject ( $\text{ἄνθρωπος}$ ) and vice versa; he would probably have been influenced by Gos. Thom. 7:1b, wherein  $\text{λέων}$  was in fact the subject, whereas  $\text{ἄνθρωπος}$  was the nominative complement.

Thus, Kasser's hypothesis seems to be correct. While there might be a grain of truth in Jackson's objection,<sup>13</sup> it would not vitiate Kasser's argument. The difference between the versions of the lion saying in Didymus and in the Coptic

12 Pace Lührmann 1990, 314–315; 2004, 165. I fail to understand why Lührmann thinks that the version of the lion saying that Didymus knew did not have the last line (“and the man will become a lion”).

13 It cannot be ruled out that the different wording of  $\text{ἢτε πμογει ωπε}$  in Gos. Thom. 7:1b and  $\text{πμογει ναωπε}$  in Gos. Thom. 7:2b reflects a different wording of the corresponding verses in the Greek text.

version of the Gospel of Thomas is best explained by my proposed scenario, in which the Coptic translator of the Gospel of Thomas overlooked the chiasmic structure of the saying and misinterpreted the double nominative.

To sum up, as the Didymus parallel demonstrates, the initial structure of Gos. Thom. 7 was chiasmic: the lion is eaten by a man (Gos. Thom. 7:1a); the lion becomes a man (Gos. Thom. 7:1b); the man is eaten by a lion (Gos. Thom. 7:2a); the man becomes a lion (Gos. Thom. 7:2b). However, as Jackson initially noted, it is quite improbable that the reading  $\alpha\lambda\omega\ \pi\mu\omicron\gamma\epsilon\iota\ \nu\alpha\omega\upsilon\pi\epsilon\ \rho\bar{\rho}\omega\mu\epsilon$  is due to scribal error and that the Coptic text must be emended. Rather, this reading is due to the Coptic translator's misunderstanding of the double nominative construction in the Greek text.

### Recent Research on Gos. Thom. 7

There is little doubt that Gos. Thom. 7 was intentionally formulated in an obscure fashion and therefore was open to various interpretations.<sup>14</sup> Yet it would be unreasonable to assume that there was no original meaning intended, and the saying was coined simply to puzzle or to amuse its readers.<sup>15</sup>

I surmise that Gos. Thom. 7 addresses competent readers, and that the background of these readers allowed them to interpret the saying correctly (i.e., the way the author intended). The task, therefore, is to determine the readers' background in order to offer an interpretation of the saying that fits this background. The correct interpretation is the one that competent readers would find the most convincing. To be sure, our conjectures regarding the readers' competence and the author's intention will always be, to a certain extent, a matter of speculation. It would be dishonest to promise more than a best guess. As Morton Smith puts it, "we can never recover the actual past event; therefore we have to accept, *faute de mieux*, the most probable explanation as the historical one."<sup>16</sup>

The most crucial question about Gos. Thom. 7 is whether the saying is meant metaphorically—i.e., that the lion, and perhaps the man as well, stand for something else. In what follows, I show that the non-metaphorical interpretations of the saying are unsatisfactory, then discuss its possible metaphori-

14 Cf. Uro 2003, 41.

15 Pace François Bovon, who calls Gos. Thom. 7 "senseless words" (Bovon 2009, 171).

16 Smith 1996, 1:4.

cal meaning. Two non-metaphorical interpretations of the saying have been offered so far, an ascetical one by Richard Valantasis and an eschatological one by Andrew Crislip.

### 1 *Gos. Thom. 7 as a Dietary Regulation?*

According to Valantasis, Gos. Thom. 7 describes a hierarchy of being. A lion benefits from being eaten by a human, because it “rises to a higher place in the hierarchy.” On the other hand, a human who either eats lions or is eaten by them suffers losses, because he is dragged into “the lower rungs in the hierarchy of being.” Valantasis leaves open the possibility that the saying emerged “during the time of the formation of ascetic and monastic communities” and that its focus “revolves about the question of eating meat, as opposed to observing a vegetarian diet, and to carefully regulating a very small intake of food.”<sup>17</sup>

There is no doubt that a lion can easily eat a human, but the opposite process would have been quite unusual in ancient times. Otto Keller went as far as to write, “Das Fleisch der erlegten Löwen wurde natürlich nicht gegessen.”<sup>18</sup> There are, however, at least two ancient authors who discuss the edibility of lions, Pliny the Elder and Galen.<sup>19</sup>

In his treatise on black bile, Galen says that “those who willingly (ἡδέως) eat lions, lionesses, panthers, leopards, bears and wolves leave aside the spleen as being inedible” (*Atr. bil.* 7.7 = 5.134 Kühn; trans. M. Grant, altered). The point is that the spleen of the animals of a hot and dry temperament is inedible, while the rest of them can be digested. In this passage, Galen does not seem to be speculating, but rather appears to be aware of real cases of lion-eating.

In his treatise on the powers of foods, he writes, “Some people serve bears, although they are much worse than lions and leopards, boiling them once or twice” (*Alim. fac.* 3.1.10 = 6.664 Kühn; trans. M. Grant, altered). Galen says that bear meat is worse than lion meat, yet he attests its consumption (cf. Petronius, *Sat.* 66).<sup>20</sup>

Hence, I would like to point out that Crislip certainly goes too far when he says, “To eat lion flesh would place one among the most bizarre of the barbarians, barbarians who exist perhaps only in the realm of imagination.”<sup>21</sup> Even the passage from Pliny the Elder, cited by Crislip in order to validate his statement, is not as obvious as it might seem.

17 Valantasis 2000, 64–65.

18 Keller 1909–1913, 1:44.

19 The references are from Steier 1927, 13.2:982.

20 Keller 1909–1913, 1:179–180.

21 Crislip 2007, 604.

In his *Nat.* 6.195, Pliny lists a number of peoples that he himself qualifies as fictitious. Among others, he mentions “the eaters of wild animals” (“agriophagi”) “who live chiefly (maxime) on the flesh of panthers and lions” (trans. H. Rackham). The question is what exactly makes Pliny mark these “agriophagi” as fiction. Perhaps, the word “maxime” is the key. Pliny seems to be saying that, while lion flesh is edible, it is hard to believe that there are people whose main diet is lion meat.

This being said, I still side with Crislip in his general conclusion that “if one were to compose a *λόγος σοφῶν* designed to impart a lesson about ascetical fasting, one could much more appropriately choose a representative animal that would normally constitute part of the audience’s diet.”<sup>22</sup> Even though Galen is a witness to the fact that lion-eating was not entirely nonsensical in the ancient world, it would still have been a rare and unusual practice. Therefore, it is very unlikely that in *Gos. Thom.* 7 the eating of meat is exemplified by the consumption of lion flesh.

## 2 *Gos. Thom. 7 as a Discourse on Resurrection Physiology?*

Crislip’s own suggestion is that *Gos. Thom.* 7 reflects early Christian speculations on the bodily resurrection that are attested in a number of sources (e.g., Pseudo-Athenagoras, *Res.* 3–7). *Gos. Thom.* 7, in Crislip’s view, deals with two theological issues, (1) what happens to animals eaten by a resurrected human in his or her earthly life, and (2) how a human body eaten by a lion can be resurrected. The answer to the first issue is that those animals are “blessed,” because they “share in the eschatological blessings that are God’s special dispensation to humans.” As for the second issue, the body will be resurrected, even though it was eaten. According to Crislip, the resurrected one is “cursed” in the same fashion Jesus is “cursed” in *Gal* 3:13.<sup>23</sup>

Although the proposed interpretation is quite elegant, its weaknesses prevail over its advantages for several reasons. First, it is open to the same criticism as the one discussed previously: given that lion consumption was a rare and unusual practice, why would the lion serve as an example of an animal eaten by a human? The second part of Crislip’s interpretation also seems unpersuasive: there is no early Christian source that states that all the humans that are supposed to be resurrected are cursed. Paul’s notion of Jesus being “cursed” comes from his exegesis of *Deut* 27:26 and 21:23. Nothing indicates that a similar train of thought is presupposed in *Gos. Thom.* 7.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 607–609.

### 3 *Jackson's Hypothesis*

Since the non-metaphorical interpretations of the saying do not seem to be convincing, we have to surmise that the lion in the saying serves as a representation of a different entity. I believe that there is at least one lion metaphor that might have been known by the competent reader of Gos. Thom. 7. It comes from the Platonist tradition and describes anger as a lion that lives inside every human being. The suggestion that the symbolism of Gos. Thom. 7 might be indebted to Plato's allegory of human soul was first proposed by Howard M. Jackson. It is therefore necessary to outline and evaluate Jackson's interpretation of Gos. Thom. 7.

Three main assertions seem to constitute the core of Jackson's hypothesis.

- (i) The lion and the man in Gos. Thom. 7 come from Plato's allegory of the soul.<sup>24</sup> I believe that this suggestion is correct; I discuss Plato's allegory in detail below.
- (ii) While Plato thought that anger was a potential ally of reason, the author of Gos. Thom. 7 denied that there was any nobility in anger. He followed the Stoics, who considered anger a passion.<sup>25</sup> From the point of view of the author of the saying, the appetitive and the spirited parts of human soul are confusingly similar, if not the same thing. Hence, the lion in Gos. Thom. 7, according to Jackson, is a metaphor for human passions. On the one hand, I agree that Stoicism is the key witness of the anthropological shift that led to the reevaluation of anger in antiquity. On the other, if the author of Gos. Thom. 7 did not make any distinction between anger and the appetites of the flesh, why would he appeal to Plato's allegory at all? Besides, why would the lion metaphorically represent this amalgam of the appetitive and the spirited parts of the soul?
- (iii) Finally, as an advocate of the reading preserved by the Coptic text, Jackson attempted to offer a Platonist interpretation of Gos. Thom. 7:2b, "and the lion becomes man." As Jackson puts it, Plato and Gos. Thom. 7 agree that even if the passions prevail over the true self, the latter "is unaltered because it is unalterable." Referring to *Phaedr.* 249b, Jackson notes, "in Plato's theory of the transmigration of souls a human soul may live the life of a beast, but it remains a *human* soul."<sup>26</sup> Curiously, Jackson quite elegantly explains why, according to Gos. Thom. 7:2b, the man eaten by

<sup>24</sup> Jackson 1985, 184–187.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 194–195.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 203.

the lion does not become a lion (although, as we now know, he actually does), but does not explain why, in his view, the lion who ate the man becomes a man.

I think that we do not need to turn to *Phaedrus* in order to understand Gos. Thom. 7; rather, we need to take a closer look at the allegory of the soul presented in *Respublica*. According to Plato, the human soul is tripartite; it consists of the rational part (τὸ λογιστικόν), the irrational and appetitive part (τὸ ἀλόγιστόν τε καὶ ἐπιθυμητικόν), and the spirited part (τὸ θυμοειδές) (*Resp.* 436a–441c). According to Plato's allegory, the appetitive part is like a "multicolored beast with a ring of many heads" (trans. G.M.A. Grube and C.D.C. Reeve), while the spirited one is like a lion and the rational one like a human being; these three creatures are united into one, and this unity appears to be like a human being (588c–d). Therefore, there are two men in the allegory, "the inner man" (ὁ ἐντὸς ἄνθρωπος; 589b) and the outward, or the composite one.

It is worth noting that the imagery of feeding and starving is quite important for the allegory. The one who commits injustice *feeds* the beast, the lion and all that pertains to the lion (τὰ περὶ τὸν λέοντα), and at the same time makes the inner man *starve*. If the inner man does not intervene, the beast and the lion will *eat* each other *up* (588e–589a). Plato does not explicitly say that the beast or the lion can devour the inner man, but this seems to be an option as well.

As I will try to show later, up to this point Gos. Thom. 7 is completely like-minded with Plato. Yet, there is also a key area of disagreement. In 589a–b, Socrates says that, if someone is just, his inner man will dominate over the composite man, which means that he will take care of the beast, make the leonine nature (ἡ τοῦ λέοντος φύσις) his ally, and become friends with both the lion and the beast. As Crislip has already pointed out in his criticism of the Jackson's hypothesis, while Gos. Thom. 7 speaks of the annihilation of the lion, Plato suggests working in concord with it.<sup>27</sup> Yet it does not mean that the Platonist interpretation of Gos. Thom. 7 should be rejected once and for all.

I suggest that the objective of Gos. Thom. 7 is to correct Plato's anthropology. According to Gos. Thom. 7, there is no way the inner man and the inner lion can peacefully coexist. They are invariably enemies, and, in order to live, one of them has to get rid of the other one. There are two questions that I need to answer in order to prove my case. First, what does the inner lion stand for? Second, why do Plato's views on the relationship between the man and the lion differ from the views of the author of Gos. Thom. 7?

27 Crislip 2007, 601–602.

### The Lion within a Human is Anger

According to Jackson, the author of Gos. Thom. 7 considered the beast and the lion in Plato's allegory of the soul one and the same thing. In fact, a reader of the last pages of the ninth book of *Respublica* might have an impression that Plato intentionally fuses the soul's appetitive and spirited parts. First, he says that "the lion-like part" (τὸ λεοντῶδες) is also "snake-like" (τὸ ὀφειῶδες), then he says that the inner lion can become an ape (590b) and finally simply calls both the lion and the beast "the animals" (τὰ θρέμματα) (590c). From then on, Plato opposes the rational part of the soul with the rest of it, so that the spirited and the appetitive parts are collectively designated as "the beast-like parts of human nature" (τὰ θηριώδη τῆς φύσεως) (589d; cf. 591b–c and *Pol.* 309c).<sup>28</sup> Yet Plato never compromises his metaphor by calling the whole bestial component of the soul a lion. The lion in Plato's allegory is unambiguously associated with a particular emotion, and I think the same is the case with Gos. Thom. 7.

Therefore, the weakest point of Jackson's hypothesis is that in his view the lion in Gos. Thom. 7 no longer stands for anger in particular, but rather represents the passions in general. This point is challenged, for instance, by Risto Uro, who asks, "Why would the lion, representing the nobler feelings, stand for sexual passion, if the saying had been modelled upon the Platonic trichotomous hybrid?"<sup>29</sup> To answer Uro's question, I argue that the lion in Gos. Thom. 7 should be understood as representing anger in particular, rather than the passions in general, and that anger for the author of the saying is no longer a noble feeling. This interpretation fits nicely into the context of the Gospel of Thomas. Moreover, the saying in this case would then be on the same page as contemporary trends in the Greco-Roman philosophy. In order to prove my case, I will now examine a few relevant features of Stoic ethics.

As Jackson pointed out in his study, Stoic anthropology appears to be responsible for a peculiar shift in the philosophy of emotions. Stoicism maintained that anger was a passion and, therefore, was always opposed to virtue. Two Greek terms designate anger in Stoic philosophy, ὀργή and θυμός. The word ὀργή is considered a more general category and is employed more often; θυμός is considered a species of ὀργή. According to the school definition, ὀργή is a "passionate desire (ἐπιθυμία) to punish the one who seemingly committed injustice,"

28 It is worth noting that Plato by no means contradicts himself, since the soul's dichotomy and trichotomy are not to be understood as mutually exclusive doctrines. See below, pp. 200–201.

29 Uro 2003, 41.



while θυμός is ὀργή ἐναρχομένη (i.e., “ὀργή on the rise”) (*SVF* 3.397; cf. 3.395–396). Contrary to what Plato thought, Stoics maintained that anger is always hostile to reason. In Chrysippus’ view, anger (θυμός) was “an irrational and rejecting reason impulse (φορά)” that was most widely shared; θυμός was described as “the taking leave (ἡ παραλλαγή) and withdrawing from oneself (ἡ ἐξ αὐτοῦ ἀναχώρησις)” that was occasioned “by nothing other than the rejection of reason” (trans. P. de Lacy) (*SVF* 3.475).

It should be noted that the Stoics were in agreement with Plato in linking anger and lions. It is indeed remarkable, because one of the key Stoic principles is that only humans are rational beings and as such are capable of irrational emotions. Animals, by contrast, do not possess reason and therefore cannot be angry. As Seneca puts it in his lengthy treatise on anger, “wild animals are incapable of anger (*ira*<sup>30</sup>), as is everything, apart from man. Anger may be the enemy of reason. It cannot, all the same, come into being except where there is a place for reason” (*Ir.* 1.3.4; trans. J.M. Cooper and J.F. Procopé). Yet later on Seneca says that animals are capable of being angry. Lions are the most obvious example for the author:

“The noblest animals are reckoned to be those with a lot of anger in them.” It is a mistake to find an example for man in creatures that have impulse in place of reason: man has reason in place of impulse. But not even in their case is the same impulse of use to all. Temper (*iracundia*) aids the lion, fear the stag, aggression the hawk, flight the dove. Anyway, it is not even true that the best animals are those most prone to anger (*iracundissima*). I may very well think that wild beasts, that get their food by seizing their prey, are the better the angrier (*iratiore*s) they are: but the endurance of the ox and the obedience of the horse to the bridle, are what I would praise.<sup>31</sup>

Seneca certainly contradicts himself when he says that lions can feel rage (*iracundia*). The only possible explanation seems to be that the association of a given emotion with a given animal—e.g., the association of lions with anger—was so commonplace that it somehow suggested itself. Galen points at the

30 The word “*ira*” in Seneca’s work is the Latin equivalent of Greek ὀργή. Cf., e.g., Seneca’s reference to Aristotle’s definition of ὀργή as ὄρεξις ἀντιλυπήσεως (*De an.* 403a) in *Ir.* 1.3.3: “Aristotelis finitio non multum a nostra abest; ait enim iram esse cupiditatem doloris repouendi.”

31 *Ir.* 2.16.1–2, trans. J.M. Cooper and J.F. Procopé.

same contradiction in Chrysippus' thought. In order to prove that both reason and the passions reside in the chest, Chrysippus quotes numerous poets, including a verse from Tyrtaeus, "with a tawny lion's spirit (*θυμός*) in his breast" (fr. 13 West); Galen comments:

We all know very well that a lion has spirit (*θυμός*), even before hearing it from Tyrtaeus; and yet it was not appropriate for Chrysippus to cite the line, since Chrysippus denies spirit to lions. He holds that none of the irrational animals has the spirited (*τὸ θυμοειδές*) or the desiderative (*τὸ ἐπιθυμητικόν*) or rational part (*τὸ λογιστικόν*); as I said also in the first book, every Stoic, so far as I know, contrary to all clear evidence deprives them of all these (parts). But Tyrtaeus, like Homer and Hesiod, and, in short, all poets, says that lions have the most violent spirit, and that is why they compare the most spirited (*θυμοειδέστατος*) persons to lions. And quite apart from the poets, all men speak of very high-spirited persons (*τοὺς θυμικωτάτους*) as lions, and every day without end they urge athletes on in this way.<sup>32</sup>

This passage from Galen is quite important for understanding Gos. Thom. 7. It shows that the notion of the lion as anger incarnate is by no means peculiar to Plato, even though it was Plato himself who portrayed anger as the inner lion. On the contrary, the affinity between lions and anger was common knowledge in the ancient world.<sup>33</sup> Even the Stoics appealed to this common knowledge, although they rejected the idea that animals have emotions.

As a matter of fact, there was even a Stoic explanation for a lion's anger. According to Aristotle, from the physiological point of view, anger is "the boiling (*ζέσις*) of the blood and heat around the heart" (*De an.* 403a–b).<sup>34</sup> This definition was adopted by the Stoics (*SVF* 2.878; 2.886; 3.416). In *Ir.* 2.19.2–3, Seneca points out that "the fiery constitution of the soul will produce wrathful men (*iracundos fervida animi natura faciet*)."<sup>35</sup> Heat level is actually the main parameter that distinguishes lion souls from human ones:

32 Galen, *Plac. Hipp. Plat.* 3.3:25–29 (= 5.309–310 Kühn = 275–276 Müller), trans. P. de Lacy.

33 See Nisbet and Hubbard 1970, 210–211; cf. the examples from Statius, Lucan, Silius, and Virgil discussed in Braund and Gilbert 2003, 256–258, 261, 263, 266–267.

34 See also *Crat.* 419e, where Plato says that the word *θυμός* derives "from the raging and boiling of the soul" (*ἀπὸ τῆς θύσεως καὶ ζέσεως τῆς ψυχῆς*), and *Tim.* 69e–70b, where *θυμός* is located in the chest.

οἱ μὲν γὰρ Στωϊκοὶ λέγουσι μὴ εἶναι ψυχὴν, ἀλλ' ἐκ τῆς κράσεως τῶν στοιχείων ἀποτελεῖσθαι τὴν γένεσιν· ὅταν μὲν γὰρ πλεονάσῃ τὸ θερμὸν, ποιεῖ τὸν λέοντα, ὄθεν, φησί, καὶ θυμικός ἐστίν· ὅταν δὲ κατὰ λόγον καὶ σχεδὸν ἐξ ἴσου συνέλθῃ, ποιεῖ τὸν ἄνθρωπον.

For the Stoics say that the soul does not (always) exist, but that it comes into being from the blending of elements. Therefore, when the hot element prevails, the elements produce the lion, and that is why, as the Stoics say, the lion is wrathful. And when the elements combine proportionally and more or less evenly, they produce the human being.<sup>35</sup>

To sum up, Stoic authors do not refer to the allegory of the soul from Plato's *Respublica*, nor do they portray anger as the lion within a human being. Still, the Stoics were familiar with the notion of the extreme anger of lions and frequently appealed to this notion, even though this made them contradict themselves, since they maintained that irrational emotions belonged to the human realm. This indicates that the association of lions with anger was a *locus communis* for the ancients. Moreover, the fact that Stoics considered anger a dangerous and most shared vice points us in the direction of how Plato's allegory might have been read in the first centuries CE and why the inner lion could no longer be the inner man's ally.

### Tripartite or Bipartite?

It is worth noting that, while Stoics certainly played a major role in demoting anger to the level of the passions, the reevaluation of the role of anger is evident already in Plato and the early Academy. As I have already noted, at the end of the ninth book of his *Respublica*, Plato sets the rational part of the human soul in opposition to the other two, which now fall under the umbrella term "the beast-like parts of human nature" (589d). As D.A. Rees noted in his seminal article, this tendency towards a bipartition of the soul is also present in the tenth book of *Respublica* and in *Timaeus*.<sup>36</sup> In these latter texts, Plato tends to see the spirited and the appetitive parts as a unity, the irrational and mortal part of the soul, as opposed to the rational and immortal one.

35 SVF 2.789.

36 See Rees 1957, 112–113.

Admittedly, “Plato nowhere explicitly abandons the tripartition of the soul.”<sup>37</sup> It is worth noting, however, that Plato’s last work, *Leges*, “carefully avoids committing itself definitely either to a bipartition or to a tripartition.” The most remarkable passage here is *Leg.* 863b, “where it is left undetermined, whether θυμός is a μέρος of the soul or a πάθος.”<sup>38</sup> According to Rees, the main reason for considering θυμός a separate part of the soul “lay in the political structure of the ideal state.”<sup>39</sup> The late Plato “was no longer concerned to advocate a three-class state on the basis of a three-class soul,”<sup>40</sup> and, therefore, did not consider the difference between the two ways to partition the soul important.<sup>41</sup>

While the evolution of Plato’s thought on this issue may be disputed, it seems clear that the Platonists of the Old Academy knew that “the fundamental division of the soul was bipartite.”<sup>42</sup> The evidence in support of this claim comes from Aristotle. In *Protrepticus*, a dialogue written at the time when he still belonged to the Academy, Aristotle claims that the soul has two parts: one of those “has reason and thought,” another one “follows and is of a nature such as to be ruled” (fr. 6 Ross = frs. B 60–61 Düring = Iamblichus, *Protr.* 7; trans. J. Barnes and G. Lawrence).<sup>43</sup> In *Magn. Mor.* 1182a23–26, he ascribes this view to Plato himself.

The Middle Platonists are well aware of Plato’s tripartition of the soul, yet, as Runia has observed, “they regard the division into rational and irrational as more basic.”<sup>44</sup> According to Plutarch, the human soul has two parts, “the intelligent and rational one” (τὸ νοερόν καὶ λογιστικόν) and “the affective, irrational, variable, and disorderly one” (τὸ παθητικόν καὶ ἄλογον καὶ πολυπλανὲς καὶ ἄτακτον). The latter, in turn, is divided into the appetitive part and the spirited

37 Ibid., 113.

38 Rees 1960, 196.

39 Rees 1957, 114.

40 Rees 1960, 197.

41 It is also worth noting that, as a rule, Plato in *Leges* characterizes anger negatively. As Sassi 2008, 137, notes, “although in the *Laws* Plato continues to attribute to θυμός an important role in moral psychology, in this text his attention is focused more on its irrational and uncontrollable manifestations, which make it a decidedly unlikely candidate for that alliance (συμμάχια) with reason which is hinted at in both the *Republic* and the *Timaeus*”; cf. Schöpsdau 2011, 301.

42 Dillon 1993a, 139.

43 Cf. *Eth. Nic.* 1102a26–28, where Aristotle says that, according to οἱ ἕξωτερικοὶ λόγοι, one part of the soul has reason and one does not. According to Rees 1957, 117–118, Aristotle here refers to his *Protrepticus*.

44 Runia 1986, 305.

one (*Virt. mor.* 442a). Seneca, who in this case is influenced by the Platonist tradition,<sup>45</sup> maintains that the soul is divided into two parts, the rational one and the irrational one (*Ep.* 92.1), and that the irrational part, in turn, consists of a spirited part that depends on emotions (*pars animosa posita in adfectionibus*) and a lower part that is addicted to pleasures (*pars humilis voluptatibus dedita*) (92.8). Alcinous in his handbook says that the soul is divided into two parts, the ruling one (τὸ ἡγεμονικόν) and the affective one (τὸ παθητικόν); the latter, in turn, consists of the spirited part (τὸ θυμικόν) and the appetitive one (τὸ ἐπιθυμητικόν) (*Didasc.* 5.2; 17.4). Galen distinguishes two forms of the soul (τὰ τῆς ψυχῆς εἶδη): the rational one (τὸ λογιστικόν) and the irrational one (τὸ ἄλογον), the latter of which is twofold (*Plac. Hipp. Plat.* 9.6.61 = 5.776 Kühn = 794 Müller). Finally, Clement of Alexandria, who also adopted the Platonist tripartition of the soul (see, e.g., *Strom.* 3.9.68.5; 5.12.80.9; *Paed.* 3.1.1.2),<sup>46</sup> maintained that anger (θυμός) and desire (ἐπιθυμία) constitute the irrational part of the soul (τὸ ἄλογον μέρος) (*Strom.* 5.8.53.1).

Admittedly, even demoted to passion and absorbed into the irrational part of the soul, anger still does not necessarily have to be an enemy to reason. Alcinous teaches us that our emotions (πάθη) are divisible into the savage ones (ἄγρια) and the tame ones (ἤμερα).<sup>47</sup> Anger belongs to the latter category, and it is necessary “for repelling and taking vengeance on enemies” (*Didasc.* 32.4; trans. J.M. Dillon). Yet, as I will show in the following section, Alcinous’ is not the view that was generally accepted among his fellow Platonists.

### Platonists on Anger

In this section, I discuss the evidence for the negative attitude towards anger in the Middle Platonist tradition. Many Platonists and Platonizing authors disagreed with what Plato said in *Respublica* and claimed that anger must be eradicated. I show that this is the case with at least four prominent authors, Philo, Plutarch, Galen, and Clement. At the end of this section, I briefly discuss the excerpt from Plato’s *Respublica* from ΝΗC VI, which also seems to bear witness to this intellectual trend.

45 See Costa 1988, 214.

46 The references are from Lilla 1971, 81.

47 As Dillon 1993a, 196, notes, this division ultimately derives from Plato’s allegory of the soul, where Socrates says that some of the heads of the many-headed beast are tame and some are savage.

1 *Philo*<sup>48</sup>

In *Leg.* 3.114–115, Philo argues that our soul is tripartite (τριμερής) and that the head is the seat of the rational part (τὸ λογιστικόν), the breast of the spirited part (τὸ θυμικόν), and the abdomen and the belly of the appetitive part (τὸ ἐπιθυμητικόν) (3.115; cf. 1.70). As David T. Runia has demonstrated, Philo's trilocation of the soul in this passage is inspired by the physiological section of Plato's *Timaeus* (69c–89d).<sup>49</sup>

Philo considers Plato's tripartition and trilocation of the soul to be the key to interpreting God's curse on the serpent in Gen 3:14 LXX, "upon your chest (στῆθος) and belly (κοιλία) you shall go" (NETS).<sup>50</sup> According to Philo, the serpent in Gen 3:14 represents pleasure.<sup>51</sup> The breast and the belly represent the parts of the human soul located in them. Thus, the meaning of Gen 3:14 is that pleasure operates in the spirited and the appetitive parts of the soul:

For passion (τὸ πάθος) has its lair in these parts of the body, the breast and the belly. When pleasure (ἡ ἡδονή) has the materials it needs to produce it, it haunts the belly and the parts below it. But when it is at a loss for these materials, it occupies the breast where wrath (ὁ θυμός) is; for lovers of pleasure when deprived of their pleasures grow bitter and angry.<sup>52</sup>

As Runia points out, despite the fact that Philo is clearly drawing upon Plato's *Timaeus*,

he associates not only the ἐπιθυμητικόν with pleasure but also the θυμικόν (lovers of pleasure become angry when deprived of it). It could thus be argued that he is losing sight of the intermediate status of the spirited part between the rational and the appetitive parts, for this part is presented by Plato as often assisting rather than opposing the rational part.<sup>53</sup>

48 For a discussion of anger in Philo, see also Dunderberg 2015, 46–48.

49 See Runia 1986, 306–308. That it was specifically *Timaeus* that Philo had in mind is clear from the numerous allusions to it in *Leg.* 3.115 (the Philonic images of the bodyguards, δορυφόροι, the citadel, ἄκρα ἐν πόλει, and the breastplate, θώραξ, undoubtedly come from *Timaeus*—see θώραξ in *Tim.* 69e; ἀκρόπολις in *Tim.* 70a; δορυφορικὴ οὐκισις in *Tim.* 70b).

50 Philo's exegesis was probably instigated by the shared vocabulary of Gen 3:14 and the physiological section of *Timaeus* (69e: στῆθος; 73a: κοιλία).

51 See *Leg.* 3.61; 3.66; 3.68; 3.75–76.

52 *Leg.* 3.114, trans. F.H. Colson and G.H. Whitaker.

53 Runia 1986, 303.

Thus, Philo takes issue with Plato's notion of anger. According to *Leg.* 3.114, anger belongs to the realm of passion.<sup>54</sup> It is "a fierce disease of the soul" (νόσημα χαλεπὸν ψυχῆς) (3.124) and "a discordant offspring of the quarrelsome and contentious soul" (τῆς ἐριστικῆς καὶ φιλονείκου ψυχῆς πλημμελὲς γέννημα) (3.131). Clearly, then, a perfect human being, such as Moses, cannot be associated with the spirited element of the soul. So when the Pentateuch says that Moses separated the breast (τὸ στηθύνιον) from the ram of consecration (Lev 8:29 LXX), what it means is that he cut anger out from his soul (3.129).

Just as in the case of Gen 3:14, Philo's interpretation of Lev 8:29 draws its inspiration from Plato's trilocution of the soul. According to him, στηθύνιον (= στηθος) in the biblical text metonymically stands for the part of the soul it contains—i.e., θυμός:

For it was the business of the man who loved virtue and was beloved of God, when he had contemplated the entire soul, to seize the breast (τὸ στηθος), which is the spirited element (ὁ θυμός), and to cut it off and take it away, in order that, through the excision of the warlike part, the remainder might have peace (εἰρήνη).<sup>55</sup>

Thus, human perfection, according to Philo, presupposes the eradication of anger.<sup>56</sup> Philo shares this notion, as we will see shortly, with some of the later philosophers of a Platonist persuasion.

## 2 *Plutarch*

Plutarch's most important work on the subject is *De cohibenda ira*. His position is formulated already in the Greek title of the work, "On Freedom from Anger" (περὶ ἀοργησίας). Anger is a passion (πάθος) and a disease (νόσημα) of

54 Thus, according to Philo, the soul is fundamentally bipartite. As Dillon 1996, 175, has noted, each anthropological model that Philo uses, including a division into the rational, spirited, and appetitive parts, "expresses some aspects of the truth, but the most basic truth remains the division into rational and irrational." For various types of division in Philo, see, e.g., Drummond 1888, 1:318–320; Billings 1919, 51–52; Wolfson 1962, 1:385–389; Baer 1970, 84; Runia 1986, 304.

55 *Leg.* 3.130, trans. F.H. Colson and G.H. Whitaker.

56 What is also worth noting here is that, according to Philo, there is an intimate connection between freedom from anger and inner peace. As I have pointed out in chapter 5, Philo also associates peace with stability, another aspect of human perfection. Thus, it seems fair to surmise that Philo's "transcendental" standing presupposes freedom from anger, and vice versa.

the soul (462f). In fact, it is not just a passion, but “the most hated and the most despised of the passions” (455e; trans. W.C. Helmbold). On the other hand, freedom from anger is a divine attribute.<sup>57</sup> Zeus, the king of the gods, is called “the gracious one” (μειλίχιος); only the beings that are not divine and do not belong to the realm of Olympic gods (οὐ θεῖον οὐδ’ ὀλύμπιον), the Erinyes and demons, are prone to anger (458b–c). Given that Plutarch was so fond of Plato’s concept of assimilation to God (see *Sera* 550d–e),<sup>58</sup> this notion clearly has a direct bearing on his understanding of human perfection.

Plutarch even goes as far as to claim that anger “is not, as someone has said (ὥς τις εἶπε), like ‘sinews of the soul (νεῦρα τῆς ψυχῆς),’ but like the strainings and convulsions of the soul when it is stirred too vehemently in its impulse to defend itself” (457b–c; trans. W.C. Helmbold). This passage is quite remarkable, since it was none other than Plato’s Socrates who considered anger to be the sinews of the soul (*Resp.* 411b).<sup>59</sup> Plutarch avoids saying Plato’s name, probably out of respect,<sup>60</sup> yet he clearly implies that Plato is wrong to say that anger does not necessarily have to be eradicated.

Several scholars have claimed that, despite its overall negative attitude towards anger, *De cohibenda ira* nevertheless leaves some room for anger that comes from righteous indignation (μισοπονηρία). According to William V. Harris, when Plutarch writes that “those of whom it is true that righteous indignation causes them frequently to be overwhelmed by anger should get rid of its excessive and violent form” (463b; trans. W.C. Helmbold), he implies “that the righteously indignant may properly feel *moderate* anger.”<sup>61</sup> It should be noted, however, that Plutarch was quite skeptical about righteous indignation itself. Just a little later he says that he who turns reason from the external things to what is inside (ἔξωθεν εἶσω τὸν λογισμὸν ἀναστρέφῃ) and keeps asking himself, whether he is, in fact, as corrupt as others,<sup>62</sup> will not be subject to righteous

57 Cf. Betz and Dillon 1978, 188, and Harris 2001, 120.

58 As I have already noted in chapter 5, according to Tarrant 2007, 419–420, assimilation to the divine was “the standard goal of Middle Platonism.” Cf. the discussion of Galen and Clement below.

59 In *Jr.* 6 (= fr. 17 col. 31, ll. 24–32), Philodemus ascribes the same view to “some of the Peripatetics” (ἔνιοι τῶν Περιπατητικῶν).

60 Dumortier and Defradas 1975, 294.

61 Harris 2001, 119; cf. Tsouna 2011, 206.

62 Plutarch cites a saying by Plato that is not attested by any other ancient author: “Is it possible that I am like them?” See also *Rect. rat. aud.* 40d; *Inim. util.* 88e; *Tu. san.* 129d.



indignation.<sup>63</sup> I am therefore inclined to side with John M. Dillon and Hans Dieter Betz, who conclude that the doctrine of *De cohibenda ira* is “straightforward and uncompromising.”<sup>64</sup>

It is necessary, however, to clarify Dillon’s position. According to him, Plutarch’s disapproval of anger in *De cohibenda ira* is due to the fact that in some of his ethical works, he writes “within a well-defined tradition, that of the Cynic-Stoic diatribe, on the basic themes, or *τόποι*, of which he is only playing a series of variations.” It is for this reason that Plutarch, in *De cohibenda ira*, “advocates the extirpation of anger (*ἀοργησία*) rather than its mere control,” while, in his other work on the same topic, *De ira*, he expresses a different outlook—viz., “that anger, *θυμός*, should be made ‘the ally of virtue’ and thus subject to Reason, and that only its excess should be expelled from the soul.”<sup>65</sup>

It is reasonable, therefore, to briefly discuss the contents of *De ira*. Unfortunately, only one fragment of this work has been preserved (fr. 27 Bernardakis = fr. 148 Sandbach). Stobaeus cites it in his *Anth.* 3.20.70. Stobaeus’ citation seems to be an epitome of the work rather than a mere excerpt.<sup>66</sup> The text is corrupt in a number of instances and several scholars have suggested different emendations. Dillon’s summary of *De ira* seems to rely on the most recent edition of the text prepared by F.H. Sandbach. The following passage is of crucial importance to his interpretation:<sup>67</sup>

οὐ μὴν ἀλλ’ ἐπιμελείας εἰς αὐτὰ δεῖ καὶ μελέτης (ἢ) καὶ μάλιστα ἀλίσκονται κατ’ ἄκρας· (κατορθοῦσι δὲ μάλιστα) οἱ παραδεξάμενοι τὸν θυμὸν ὡς σύμμαχον ἀρετῆς, ἀπολαύοντες ὅσον αὐτοῦ χρήσιμόν ἐστιν ἐν τε πολέμῳ καὶ νῆ Δί’ ἐν πολιτείαις.

Not that success can be had without pains and training; otherwise men meet with utter disaster. Those men do best who accept anger as virtue’s ally, making use of it in so far as it is helpful in war and indeed in politics.<sup>68</sup>

As Geert Roskam has pointed out, Sandbach’s emendations are hardly necessary.<sup>69</sup> In this particular instance, the text makes good sense as it stands. In

63 Cf. van Hoof 2005, 502.

64 Betz and Dillon 1978, 171.

65 Dillon 1996, 189.

66 See Roskam 2003, 60–62.

67 See Sandbach 1967, 91.

68 Fr. 27 Bernardakis (= fr. 148 Sandbach), trans. F.H. Sandbach.

69 Roskam 2003, 48–50.

what follows, I reproduce the same passage as it is printed in the edition by G.N. Bernardakis, who did justice to the text of the manuscripts:<sup>70</sup>

οὐ μὴν ἀλλ' ἐπιμελείας εἰς αὐτὰ δεῖ καὶ μελέτης. ἢ καὶ μάλιστα ἀλίσκονται κατ' ἄκρας οἱ παραδεξάμενοι τὸν θυμὸν ὡς σύμμαχον ἀρετῆς, ἀπολαύοντες ὅσον αὐτοῦ χρήσιμόν ἐστιν ἔν τε πολέμῳ καὶ νῆ Δί' ἐν πολιτείαις.

But in any case, there is need of attention and practice. And for that reason, those men are utterly ruined who admit temper as ally of virtue, taking advantage of it to the extent that it is useful in war and, by Zeus, in politics.<sup>71</sup>

It is, therefore, clear that what Plutarch says in this passage is the exact opposite of what Dillon claims he says. No one, according to Plutarch, should seek to make anger virtue's ally; otherwise, he or she would be utterly ruined. There seems to be no disagreement between the outlook of *De ira* and that of *De cohibenda ira*.

One could, however, argue that Plutarch was not quite consistent in his psychology. Indeed, there seems to be some contradiction between the works where he argues for the eradication of anger (*De cohibenda ira* and *De ira*) and the works that deal with the tripartite nature of the soul, where he speaks positively of the spirited part of the soul (*De virtute morali* and *Platonicae quaestiones*). In *De virtute morali*, he says that the spirited part of the soul sometimes sides with the appetitive part and sometimes “lends strength and vigour to reason” (442a; trans. W.C. Helmbold). It is worth noting, however, that the very next sentence demonstrates that “in fact Plutarch believes the spirited element is more closely related to the appetitive, for he emphasizes the opposition between the two irrational parts, on the one hand, and reason, on the other.”<sup>72</sup>

In much the same way, his work *Platonicae quaestiones* claims that it is natural (κατὰ φύσιν) for the spirited part of the soul to obey reason and punish the appetitive part whenever it disobeys it (1008b). Even more, the spirited part is “for the most part” reason's ally (1008c). Yet, a little later (1008d–e), as Jan Opsomer points out, Plutarch “emphatically claims that the spirited is more

70 See Bernardakis 1888–1896, 7:138–139.

71 Fr. 27 Bernardakis (= fr. 148 Sandbach), trans. G. Roskam.

72 Opsomer 2012, 321.

closely related to the appetitive than to reason, pointing out that some philosophers even regard the spirited and the appetitive as identical, given their similarity.<sup>73</sup>

Admittedly, despite all the reservations Plutarch makes, there is still a peculiar discrepancy between *De cohibenda ira* and *De ira*, on the one hand, and *De virtute morali* and *Platonicae quaestiones*, on the other. Roskam is perhaps on the right track, when he suggests that the difference “can perhaps to a certain extent be explained by the different perspective” of these works.<sup>74</sup> *De virtute morali* and *Platonicae quaestiones* are theoretical works, wherein Plutarch affirms his allegiance to Plato; *De cohibenda ira* and *De ira* are therapeutic works, where anger is treated as a terrible disease, and the reader is thus encouraged to become a physician of his or her own soul. In the latter context, Plutarch even dares to claim that Plato’s views on anger are inaccurate.

### 3 Galen<sup>75</sup>

As I have pointed out above, Plutarch considered the eradication of anger to be an important component of assimilation to the divine. In what follows, I will show that Galen’s views were in agreement with Plutarch’s train of thought. What is important for the present discussion is that neither Galen nor Plutarch, though they both try to remain true to Plato, maintain the same level of positive appreciation of anger that we encounter in Plato’s *Respublica*.

Galen’s treatise *De moribus* offers the most detailed discussion of the assimilation to the divine.<sup>76</sup> This work was divided into four books and, according to Richard Walzer, was written between 185 and 192 CE.<sup>77</sup> Unfortunately, the Greek text of the treatise is lost.<sup>78</sup> The treatise was translated into Arabic in the ninth century CE by Ḥunayn ibn Iṣḥāq.<sup>79</sup> This translation is also lost, though there

73 Opsomer 2012, 329.

74 Roskam 2003, 50.

75 In what follows, I limit myself to Galen’s philosophical works. For a discussion of anger in his medical works, see von Staden 2012, 72–87.

76 It should be noted, however, that this concept is present in Galen’s other works as well. For instance, in *Aff. dign.* 3.7 (5.11 Kühn), he argues that only the sage, ὁ σοφός, is completely free from fault, ἀναμάρτητος (i.e., free from passions, πάθη). In this respect, the sage is not human, and that is why, according to “the most ancient philosophers,” “wisdom is becoming like God,” ὁμοίωσιν εἶναι θεῶ τὴν σοφίαν.

77 Walzer 1962, 144.

78 The Greek title of the treatise, Περὶ ἠθῶν, is mentioned twice in the Greek corpus of Galenic works—namely, in *Libr. propr.* 12 (= 19.45 Kühn) and *Aff. dign.* 6.1 (= 5.27 Kühn).

79 See Lamoreaux 2016, 120–121; Bergsträsser 1925, 49 (Arabic text), 40 (German translation); 1932, 23, 25, 29 (corrections).

are numerous quotations from it in Arabic,<sup>80</sup> as well as in Hebrew.<sup>81</sup> There is, however, an epitome of the translation that was published by Paul Kraus.<sup>82</sup>

According to Walzer,<sup>83</sup> the epitome of the second book preserves an interesting “protreptic chapter.”<sup>84</sup> It is in this chapter that Galen offers a detailed account of assimilation to the divine. The chapter begins with a discussion of why we are given the lower parts of the tripartite soul:<sup>85</sup>

You must also realize that the body is joined to you only in order that you may use it as an instrument with which to do things, that the appetitive soul (*al-naḥs al-shahwāniyyah*) is planted in you only for the sake of the body and that you possess the spirited soul (*al-naḥs al-ghaḍabiyyah*) only in order that you may call upon it for help against the appetitive soul.

A commentary on Galen’s terminology seems to be in order. According to the epitome of the first book of *De moribus*, there is no terminological difference between “soul” and “part of the soul”:

I have explained this in the book that I wrote on *The Views of Hippocrates and Plato*, and I have shown there that man possesses something that is responsible for thought, something else that is responsible for anger and a third thing that is responsible for desire. It makes no difference how I refer to these three things in this book, whether as separate souls, as parts of the one human soul or as three different faculties of the same essence. I shall, in fact, in this book, call that which is responsible for thought “the rational soul” and “the cogitative soul,” whether it be a separate soul, a part or a faculty; I shall call that which is responsible for anger “the spirited soul” or “the animal soul” and that which is responsible for desire “the appetitive soul” or “the vegetative soul.”

Indeed, Galen discusses this issue at length in *Plac. Hipp. Plat.* 6.2 (5.514–519 Kühn = 499–506 Müller) and argues that “it would be correct to term the rational, the spirited and the appetitive both ‘forms’ (εἶδη) and ‘parts’ (μέρη) of the

80 See, e.g., Stern 1956, 97–101 (Arabic text), 91–97 (English translation).

81 See Zonta 1995, 29–80.

82 Kraus 1937, 25–51.

83 Walzer 1962, 165.

84 See Kraus 1937, 39–41; Mattock 1972, 248–249.

85 The following quotations are taken from the English translation of *De moribus* by J.N. Mattock (occasionally, slightly altered). See Mattock 1972, 236–259.

soul” (6.2.2 = 5.514 Kühn = 500 Müller; trans. P. de Lacy, slightly altered). In order to support his view, he quotes *Tim.* 77b (6.2.7 = 5.516 Kühn = 502 Müller), where the appetitive part is called “the third form of soul,” τὸ τρίτος ψυχῆς εἶδος.

Quite remarkably, the same terminology seems to be employed in another work of Galen’s translated by Ḥunayn, *Compendium Timaei Platonis*.<sup>86</sup> The Arabic terms used in this text are “the reasonable soul” (*al-nafs al-nāṭiqah*) and “the appetitive soul” (*al-nafs al-shahwāniyyah*). The latter term in *Compendium Timaei Platonis* corresponds to, e.g., τὸ τρίτος ψυχῆς εἶδος of *Tim.* 77b.<sup>87</sup>

It is certain, therefore, that, in this instance, the Arabic translation of *Compendium Timaei Platonis* and *De moribus* faithfully reproduces the wording of the lost Greek *Vorlagen*—i.e., ἡ λογιστικὴ ψυχή, ἡ θυμοειδὴς ψυχή, and ἡ ἐπιθυμητικὴ ψυχή. As we have seen, Galen used these terms as equivalents of Plato’s τὸ λογιστικόν, τὸ θυμοειδές, and τὸ ἐπιθυμητικόν.

I now proceed to the content of the passage. Galen expresses the same idea—i.e., that the spirited part of the soul, τὸ θυμοειδές, can be used as an ally in the struggle against the appetitive part, τὸ ἐπιθυμητικόν—in *Aff. dign.* 6.1 (5.27 Kühn). What is somewhat surprising, however, is that, in the same treatise, Galen lists anger, θυμός, among the soul’s passions (3.1 = 5.7 Kühn) and, like Philo and Plutarch, considers it to be a disease of the soul (νόσημα ψυχῆς) (5.5 = 5.24 Kühn). According to him, to be enslaved to anger means to cease being human:

Man alone, as compared with other things, has the special gift of reason; if he casts this gift aside and indulges his anger, he is living and acting like a wild animal rather than a man.<sup>88</sup>

86 This *Compendium* was part of Galen’s “Summary of Plato’s Dialogues” (Πλατωνικῶν διαλόγων σύνοψις) in eight books (*Libr. propr.* 13 = 19.46 Kühn). According to Ḥunayn’s report, he discovered a copy of this work containing four of the eight books. The first book contained epitomes of *Cratylus*, *Sophista*, *Politicus*, *Parmenides*, and *Euthydemus*; the second one, of the four books of *Respublica*; the third one, of *Timaeus* and of the other six books of *Respublica*; the fourth one, of the twelve books of *Leges*. See Lamoreaux 2016, 124–127; Walzer and Kraus 1951, 35–36 (Arabic text), 97–98 (Latin translation). The Greek original of Galen’s “Summary” is lost. Of the Arabic translation, only the epitome of *Timaeus* and few fragments of other epitomes are extant.

87 See Walzer and Kraus 1951, 26 (Arabic text), 81 (Latin translation).

88 *Aff. dign.* 5.3 (= 5.23 Kühn), trans. P.W. Harkins.

Thus, Galen considers anger to be reason's enemy, but, at the same time, claims that the spirited part of the soul can be an ally of the rational part. In order to avoid contradiction, he makes remarkable adjustments to the doctrine of the tripartite nature of the soul.

In *De placitis Hippocratis et Platonis*, he points out that anger, θυμός, and faint-heartedness, ἀθυμία, are a pair of extremes and that either of them has to be avoided, "for faint-heartedness is a deficiency in the motion of the spirited part, whereas the motion of anger is extreme and in excess of the proper amount" (6.1.15 = 5.509 Kühn = 494–495 Müller; trans. P. de Lacy). The ultimate source of this notion is the Peripatetic tradition, though the Aristotelian pair of extremes is irascibility, ὀργιλότης, and inirascibility, ἀοργησία (*Eth. Nic.* 1108a).

Thus, Galen considers anger to be a passion, but, at the same time, speaks positively of the spirited part. Yet, as we read in *De moribus* a little further below, Galen's positive appreciation of the spirited part had its limitations:

Since you are a man only by virtue of your rational soul (*al-nafs al-nāṭiqah*), and you can remain alive and intelligent by virtue of this soul, without the appetitive and the spirited souls, and if the rational soul were freed from the other two it would not have an evil way of life, you should treat as of no account the actions and accidents of the other two. If, being freed from these two souls at the same time as you are freed from the body, you are able to be intelligent and understanding, as clever philosophers claim for man's state after death, you must know that your way of life after your release from the body will be like that of the angels (*al-malā'ikah*).

Undoubtedly, Galen did not speak of becoming like the angels in the Greek *Vorlage* of the Arabic translation. As Walzer pointed out, while the Arabic text reads "angels," "gods" "was certainly to be read in the Greek original."<sup>89</sup> This phenomenon is also attested in *Compendium Timaei Platonis*, where "the angels," *al-malā'ikah*, correspond to "gods," θεοί, of *Tim.* 41c, 42d, and 51e.<sup>90</sup> Thus, in this passage, Galen speaks of the assimilation to the divine. According to him, the assimilation to the divine implies the extirpation of the lower parts of the soul.

The conclusions that I was able to reach in this overview of Galen's views on anger are as follows. First, what Galen says about the lower parts of the soul in *De moribus* elaborates the ideas he expresses elsewhere: the spirited part can

89 Walzer 1962, 166.

90 See Walzer and Kraus 1951, 9, 11, 14 (Arabic text), 50, 53, 58 (Latin translation).

be the reasonable part's ally, but inasmuch as the imperfect (i.e., bodily) existence is concerned. Second, becoming like God, according to Galen, implies the extirpation of the lower parts of the soul, which comes quite close to Clement's train of thought.

#### 4 *Clement*

The modifications Clement introduced to Plato's division of the soul are quite similar to those we have encountered in the works of Plutarch and Galen. Clement agrees that the soul is tripartite, but clearly has a low regard for the spirited part:

The soul consists of three parts. The intelligence (τὸ νοερόν), which is also called the reason, is the inner man, the ruler of the external man. But it is led by someone else, that is, by God. The part in which anger resides (τὸ θυμικόν) is akin to the beasts and lives close to madness. The third part, desire (τὸ ἐπιθυμητικόν), takes many forms and is more changeable than Proteus the sea god, assuming a different form for every different occasion, seeking satisfaction in adultery, promiscuity, and seduction.<sup>91</sup>

In the passage quoted above, Clement does not speak of any advantages of anger, but rather says that it is “akin to the beasts (θηριώδες ὄν)” and “lives close to madness (πλησίον μανίας οἰκεῖ).” Elsewhere (*Strom.* 4.23.151.1), he says, “God is free from every passion, both from anger and desire (θεὸς δὲ ἀπαθῆς ἄθυμός τε καὶ ἀνεπιθύμητος).” A little later (*Strom.* 4.23.152.1), he points out that the same holds true for the Savior.<sup>92</sup> Finally, since freedom from anger and desire are divine, and since salvation, in Clement's thought, is assimilation to God, one should rise above these passions in order to obtain perfection (*Strom.* 3.10.69.3–4; 3.13.93.2).

It seems clear that Galen and Clement are in fundamental agreement with respect to assimilation to the divine. The only conceptual difference between Galen and Clement is that, according to Galen's *De moribus*, the extirpation of the lower parts of the soul takes place after the soul leaves the body.

<sup>91</sup> *Paed.* 3.11.2, trans. S.P. Wood.

<sup>92</sup> It is worth noting that the Savior, according to Clement, destroyed anger and desire at once, since anger is a form of desire—namely, the desire for retribution (τιμωρίας ἐπιθυμία). Thus, Clement follows the Stoic definition of anger (quoted above, p. 197).

## 5 *The Nag Hammadi Excerpt*

Since anger, as it turns out, is in fact a passion and a disease, it follows that the role of the lion in Plato's allegory has to be reconsidered. Clement never refers to Plato's allegory of the soul,<sup>93</sup> but luckily there still is at least one source that bears witness to its transformation: the excerpt from Plato's *Republica* in the Nag Hammadi collection of texts (NHC VI 48.16–51.23).

This fragment seems to be of some significance for the understanding of Gos. Thom. 7. First, the excerpt contains the part of the dialogue that includes Socrates' allegory of the soul (588a–589b). The fact that this text was read in certain early Christian circles indicates that, even if neither the author of Gos. Thom. 7 nor his audience had read *Republica* down to the last page, they might still have been well aware of the allegory.

Second, the excerpt gives us important evidence of the reception history of the allegory of the soul. It is clear that neither the Coptic translation of the excerpt nor its Greek *Vorlage*<sup>94</sup> had high regard for the lion. As Jackson rightly pointed out, "the excerpt breaks off precisely at the point where Plato is about to mention the lion for its beneficial function ('making an ally of the lion's nature')."<sup>95</sup> It seems that whoever excerpted this passage from *Republica* did not favor the idea that anger might be of use to anyone.

Jackson's observation provides us with a better understanding of the intellectual context where Gos. Thom. 7 was coined. Both the lion saying and the

93 Pace Schenke 1974, 238. Admittedly, *Strom.* 7.3.16.1–4, shares some of its terminology with *Resp.* 588c–589b (cf. Stählin 1936, lxvi). Clement talks about the Gnostic who takes care of himself (ἑαυτοῦ ἐπιμελόμενος) and becomes superior to the evil forces within in the same manner as he is superior to wild beasts (θηρία); should this Gnostic ever rule over other people, he will tame (ἐξημερώσεται) that which is savage (ἄγριον) and disobedient. Another passage that might seem reminiscent of Plato's allegory of the soul is *Protr.* 1.4.1–4 (see below, p. 215), where Clement says that Jesus tamed (ἐτιθάσεν) most savage beasts (ἀγριώτατα θηρία) and transformed them into civilized humans (ἄνθρωποι ἡμεροί). Yet the similarity with Plato is hardly striking, since, both here and elsewhere (see, e.g., *Strom.* 4.3.12.4; *Paed.* 1.13.102.1), Clement appears to be merely following a well-documented tradition of describing passions and pleasures, as well as people indulging in them, as θηρία, which must be tamed (see Malherbe 2014, 1:44–49). It does not seem necessary, therefore, to treat either *Strom.* 7.3.16.1–4, or for that matter *Protr.* 1.4.1–4, as an allusion to Plato's allegory.

94 There seems to be no reason to suspect that the Greek *Vorlage* of the excerpt was significantly different from the Greek text of *Republica* that has come down to us. Most of the peculiar readings of the Coptic text are clearly due to the incompetence of the translator; cf. Schenke 1974, 239–241.

95 Jackson 1985, 209.



Greek *Vorlage* of the excerpt from *Respublica* reflect the same tendency in the reception history of Plato's allegory of the soul. They both know that anger is a dangerous passion, and they both portray the lion as the inner man's enemy.

### The Meaning of Gos. Thom. 7

Having described the philosophical texts and ideas that form the most convincing context for Gos. Thom. 7, I now proceed to a discussion of the meaning of the saying. There is little doubt that Gos. Thom. 7 warns the readers against the destructive force of anger. Anger is a bestial force that constitutes a menace to human nature.

As I have already pointed out, the lion is an animal that ancient literature invariably associates with anger. More importantly, there is a first-hand testimonial of an ancient reader who clearly thought that the lion saying was about anger. I therefore turn to Didymus' exegesis. Didymus' commentary on Ps 43/44:12 is the only witness to the reception history of the lion saying.<sup>96</sup> In the section that deals with the expression πρόβατα βρώσεως ("sheep for eating"), Didymus remarks that "it is often said that the student becomes the food of the [teacher]" (λέγεται πολλάκις βρώμα γίνεσθ[αι] ὁ μαθητῆς τοῦ [διδασκάλου]) (*Comm. Ps.* 315.23), referring to John 4:34 and 4:32.<sup>97</sup> He then brings up the lion saying and shows that it also addresses the issues of student-teacher relations (*Comm. Ps.* 315.27–316.4; for the Greek text and its translation, see above, p. 190). What is crucial for the present discussion is that Didymus connects the man and the lion of the saying with ἄνθρωπος λογικός and ἄνθρωπος ὠμόθυμος, respectively. As Dieter Lührmann puts it, "auf die Erziehung angewandt findet sich auch hier die auf Platon, *Politeia* 9 (588B–589B), zurückgehende Anthropologie des Gegensatzes von λόγος und θυμός."<sup>98</sup> According to Didymus, the lion saying portrays the constant struggle between reason and anger, the latter being tightly bound to savageness and ignorance.

Didymus' exegesis of the lion saying resonates with Clement's portrayal of Jesus Christ as a cultural hero. Clement compares Jesus with the legendary

96 It should be pointed out that it is not clear whether Didymus knew the lion saying from a version of the Gospel of Thomas or from some other source.

97 It is worth noting that the quotation from John 4:34 reads ἵνα τις ποιήσῃ τὸ θέλημα τοῦ πατρὸς μου instead of ἵνα ποιήσω τὸ θέλημα τοῦ πέμψαντός με. Didymus clearly adapts the text of John 4:34 for his purposes. Cf. Ehrman 1986, 136.

98 Lührmann 1990, 316; cf. Lührmann 2004, 166.

Greek minstrels, Amphion, Arion, and Orpheus. While the latter were possessed by demons, the former brought an end to demonic tyranny (*Protr.* 1.3.1–2). It was Jesus the minstrel who civilized mankind:

He at least is the only one who ever tamed the most intractable of all wild beasts—man: for he tamed birds, that is, flighty men; reptiles, that is, crafty men; lions, that is, irascible men (οἱ θυμικοί); swine, that is, pleasure-loving men; wolves, that is, rapacious men.<sup>99</sup>

A little later, Clement says that, with his heavenly song, Jesus transformed “all these most savage beasts” “into civilized humans” (1.4.3) and “made humans out of beasts” (1.4.4). It is worth noting that, when Clement describes Jesus as a cultural hero who tamed savage and uncivilized humans, he repeats a τόπος that is well-attested in ancient literature. The most striking parallel is the following passage from Horace’s *Ars poetica*:<sup>100</sup>

While men still roamed the woods, Orpheus, the priest and prophet of the gods, made them shrink from bloodshed and brutal living; hence the fable that he tamed ravening tigers and lions.<sup>101</sup>

Irascible men are, in Clement’s thought, similar to lions. According to this simile, the lion that is tamed by a man and becomes man is an irascible person who becomes a rational person under the influence of another rational person. Didymus alters the simile slightly by replacing the taming of the lion with its consumption. He also mentions the possibility of a downward path: a man eaten by a lion becomes a lion, or, to put it plainly, a rational person can become an irascible person under the influence of another irascible person.

It should be noted, however, that Didymus’ exegesis of the lion saying is not to be seen as the only viable interpretative option. It is possible that the lion in the saying stands for anger itself, as it does in Plato’s allegory of the soul.

The fact that a Thomasine saying presupposes knowledge of a Plato’s dialogue should not come as a surprise, since, as I argue in other chapters, quite a few Thomasine sayings allude to or rely on the Platonist tradition. To be sure, the erudition of the individuals that authored the Gospel of Thomas is miles

99 *Protr.* 1.4.1, trans. G.W. Butterworth, altered.

100 See also Cicero, *Inv.* 1.2–3, and the passages discussed in Solmsen 1932, 151–154.

101 Horace, *Ars* 391–393, trans. H.R. Fairclough, altered.

behind that of refined Christian intellectuals like Clement. Yet the fact that the excerpt from Plato's *Respublica* was included in NHC VI proves that Plato's allegory was of some interest to all kinds of early Christian groups.

I therefore suggest that the author of the lion saying knew Plato's allegory of the soul and assumed that his audience was also aware of it. What is remarkable about the lion saying is that its author was confident that anger was a vice, contrary to what Plato thought. Moreover, the author of the saying considered anger a particularly serious threat for his audience. He therefore reformulated Plato's allegory in order to adjust it to his views on anger. According to Plato, the creatures that live inside the composite man might hate and try to devour each other. According to the author of Gos. Thom. 7, however, it is, in fact, the only option. The inner man and the lion cannot be at peace; the inner life of every human is a constant struggle. It is wonderful when the inner man eats the lion, tragic when the lion eats the inner man.

The views of Gos. Thom. 7 on anger are exactly the same as the views we encounter in Seneca's treatise on anger:

Is anger in accordance with nature? The answer will be clear, if we turn our eyes upon man. What is milder than man, when he is in his right mind? But what is crueller than anger? What is more loving of others than man is? What more adverse than anger? Man was begotten for mutual assistance, anger for mutual destruction. The one would flock together with his fellows, the other would break away. The one seeks to help, the other to harm; the one would succour even those unknown to him, the other would fly at even those who are dearest. Man will go so far as to sacrifice himself for the good of another; anger will plunge into danger, if it can draw the other down.<sup>102</sup>

The only difference between Seneca and the author of the lion saying is that the latter expresses his views using and reshaping a well-known Plato's allegory. The lion of the saying is anger, a dangerous vice. The man that consumes the lion (Gos. Thom. 7:1a) and the man that is consumed by the lion (Gos. Thom. 7:2a) are one and the same man, the inner man (i.e., reason, the true self, the divine element in the human being).

It seems reasonable to surmise, then, that the man the lion becomes (Gos. Thom. 7:1b) and the man who becomes the lion (Gos. Thom. 7:2b) are the inner man, too. In this case, Gos. Thom. 7:1, the beatitude, depicts the victory of the

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102 Seneca, *Ir.* 1.5.2, trans. J.M. Cooper and J.F. Procopé.

true self over anger. The result of the victory is the transformation of the inner lion into the inner man, which means that anger is absorbed by the true self and cannot cause any more damage. Gos. Thom. 7:2, the woe, describes the true self's defeat. However, this interpretation hardly exhausts the symbolic wealth of the saying.

If we take Gos. Thom. 7:1b and 7:2b to refer *only* to the inner man, then we must admit that these verses simply repeat what has already been said in Gos. Thom. 7:1a and 7:2a: when the man eats the lion, the lion becomes the man; when the lion eats the man, the man becomes the lion. In other words, Gos. Thom. 7:1b and 7:2b state the obvious: the eaten becomes a part of the eater (cf. Gos. Thom. 11:3).

On the other hand, if we read the saying with Plato's allegory in the background, we may take Gos. Thom. 7:1b and 7:2b to refer also to the composite man. In this case, the saying acquires a deeper meaning; the point of Gos. Thom. 7:1b and 7:2b would thus be that the outcome of the struggle between anger and reason affects the whole human being. The fate of the inner man determines the fate of the composite one.

There might be different answers to the question of what sort of transformation the author means by becoming a man and becoming a lion.<sup>103</sup> One option is to suggest that the lion saying presupposes the doctrine of reincarnation. According to Plato, "the walking and beast-like race" (τὸ πεζὸν καὶ θηριῶδες [sc., φῶλον])—i.e., wild terrestrial animals—came from men who "followed the lead of the parts of the soul that reside in the chest" (*Tim.* 91e; trans. D.J. Zeyl). Since anger resides in the chest, it is quite natural for a wrathful person to be reincarnated into a lion. The transformation of an animal into a human is also possible (*Phaedr.* 249b; *Resp.* 620d), though Plato never elaborated upon this issue.<sup>104</sup>

It is more probable, however, that the lion saying does not refer to actual reincarnation but rather presupposes that some flawed humans, though human in form, are in fact animals—a notion which Ismo Dunderberg, in a

103 As Meyer 1988, 161, pointed out, the lion saying fits the general context of the Gospel of Thomas as one of the many sayings dealing with anthropological transformation: "the lion becoming human in the *Gospel of Thomas* is paralleled by other similar statements of transformation (e.g., the two becoming one in logion 22, a person becoming Christ in logion 108, and the female becoming male in logion 114)."

104 See also the summary of *Resp.* 620a–d in Exp. Plat. 8.23–24: "But he [i.e., Plato] says that at some point the souls of the dead pass into the bodies of dumb animals and in turn the animals' souls are transfigured into the bodies of men" (trans. J.A. Stover). According to Stover 2016, 31–44, *De Platonis pluribus libris expositio compendiosa* might be identical with the third book of Apuleius' *De Platone et eius dogmate*.

different context, has described as *realized* reincarnation.<sup>105</sup> This doctrine is spelled out in the Gospel of Philip: “there are many animals in the world which are in human form,” but the disciple of God will not be deceived by the bodily forms, because he will see the condition of each soul (NHC II 81.1–8; trans. W.W. Isenberg). In a similar fashion, the Authoritative Discourse makes the following remark with regard to the embodied soul:

Having left knowledge behind, she fell into bestiality. For a senseless person exists in bestiality, not knowing what it is proper to say and what it is proper not to say.<sup>106</sup>

Thus, to turn into a man means to become human not only in appearance, but also in essence; to turn into a lion means to cease being human, to become an animal in human form. When anger, the inner lion, defeats the inner man, the composite man turns into a beast. When the inner man defeats the lion, the composite man becomes truly human.<sup>107</sup>

### Conclusions

The original structure of the lion saying was chiasmic. Due to an error made by the Coptic translator of the Gospel of Thomas, its text became corrupt. Luckily, Didymus the Blind paraphrases the same saying in his commentary on Psalms. A comparison of the two versions of the sayings makes it clear that, initially, the last line of Gos. Thom. 7 read “and the lion becomes the man.”

While some scholars have called Gos. Thom. 7 “senseless words,” others have proposed several elegant interpretations of the saying. These interpretations fall into two groups, literal and metaphoric. Despite their elegance, the literal interpretations of Valantasis and Crislip are not compelling, since they disregard the fact that the consumption of lion meat was highly unusual in the ancient world.

The most insightful metaphoric interpretation of Gos. Thom. 7 was offered by Jackson, who argued that the saying derives its imagery from Plato’s alle-

<sup>105</sup> Dunderberg 2015, 26.

<sup>106</sup> NHC VI 24.20–26, trans. G.W. MacRae. See also Auth. Disc., NHC VI 33.4–9. A similar notion is attested in Corp. Herm. 10.24: if a soul is “clinging to the body, held down and smothered by it,” the mind leaves it behind, and the soul “acts like an animal without reason” (trans. B.P. Copenhaver). I am grateful to Christian H. Bull for this reference.

<sup>107</sup> Cf. Gilhus 2006, 203.

gory of the soul. Unfortunately, Jackson did not fully realize the importance of the fact that the lion of the allegory represents anger. In fact, the association of lions with anger was a *locus communis* of the ancient world, which is evident *inter alia* from Didymus' interpretation of the lion saying.

Although Plato maintained that the inner lion could be tamed and turned into the inner man's ally, a great number of philosophers of the later age considered anger to be a vice. This shift is most strongly pronounced in the writings of the Stoics, but even their adversaries, the Middle Platonists, were no longer willing to see the positive side of anger. For instance, Plutarch, in his dialogue on the freedom from anger, goes as far as to say that Plato was wrong when he remarked that anger is "the sinews of the soul." The same holds true for Clement, who clearly accepted the Platonist partition of the soul, yet had nothing good to say about anger. Another important witness to the same sentiment is the excerpt of *Respublica* in NHC VI that breaks off precisely when Socrates turns the discussion to the usefulness of anger.

Hence, it should come as no surprise that the Gospel of Thomas, a Platonizing text, opts for the eradication of anger. There seem to be several ways to interpret the lion saying. First, we can follow Didymus, who thought that the saying referred to the interaction between rational and irascible individuals. If a rational person transforms an irascible person into a rational person, it is a blessing. The other way around, it is a tragedy.

Another option is to interpret the saying in light of Plato's allegory of the soul. In this case, Gos. Thom. 7 refers to the struggle of anger and reason that takes place inside every individual. The point of the saying is that the outcome of this struggle affects the whole person: if the inner lion destroys the inner man, the composite man turns into a lion; if, on the other hand, the inner man prevails, the composite man becomes truly human.

According to the latter interpretation, Gos. Thom. 7 employs the same *dramatis personae* as Plato does in his allegory (i.e., the inner lion, the inner man, and the composite man). The only exception is the beast. As I have tried to point out, the author of the saying, as well as his contemporaries, considered anger to be a passion, or even perhaps *the* passion, a passion *par excellence*. Since the beast was no longer different from the lion, it was omitted.

It is worth noting that the two interpretations of Gos. Thom. 7 listed above are not mutually exclusive, but rather supplement each other. The lion saying is laconic and cryptic and was probably intentionally phrased this way in order to induce the reader to seek out its meaning. Yet the saying is not meaningless, since its imagery is governed by distinct semantics. The message of the saying is, in fact, quite straightforward: being perfect means being free from anger.

This message certainly coheres with the rest of the Gospel of Thomas. As I have pointed out in chapter 4, a number of Thomasine sayings describe human perfection as oneness, which brings the Gospel of Thomas close to Clement. Clement, in turn, was confident that oneness implies the elimination of anger. The Gospel of Thomas was certainly of the same mind.

Moreover, the idea of oneness has implications for social life. The unity of a group of individuals is as important as individual oneness. Several Thomasine sayings emphasize certain communal values, most importantly brotherly love (saying 25) and peace (saying 48).<sup>108</sup> Anger, on the other hand, is a threat to living in concord, since an irascible person might disturb the communal peace.<sup>109</sup> Freedom from anger is thus crucial for both individual and social oneness.

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108 See also chapter 5, where I argue that the Gospel of Thomas seems to be in agreement with the Middle Platonists who postulated an intimate connection between peace and transcendental “standing.”

109 Cf. *Leg.* 3.130 (quoted above, p. 204), where Philo associates freedom from anger with peace.

## Thomasine Metaphysics of the Image and Its Platonist Background

Chapters 2 and 3 of this book reflected on the Thomasine outlook on the phenomenal realm. As I have pointed out, not only does the Gospel of Thomas share with the Middle Platonists a fundamentally negative attitude towards the human body, but also, unlike the Middle Platonists, projects this negative attitude onto the body of the world. In chapters 4 to 7, I discussed the Platonist impact on the Thomasine views on divinity—namely, the notions of oneness, stability, immutability, indivisibility, and freedom from anger. As I have noted, these notions apply not only to ultimate reality, but also to human perfection, since the qualities of the ideal human often reflect the divine ones.

In this chapter, I discuss the notion of the image according to sayings 22, 50, 83, and 84. The Thomasine metaphysics of the image is, in a way, a territory where the phenomenal and the transcendent realms (discussed in the previous chapters) converge. On the one hand, the term for “image” in these sayings, εἰκῶν, is polysemantic and may be applied to both mundane and divine objects. On the other hand, the metaphysics of the image in the Gospel of Thomas is, as I will argue, an integral part of the Thomasine salvation history: it explains the present-day misery of our worldly existence and informs us about our future reunification with the godhead. In order to attain insight into the Thomasine metaphysics of the image, it is necessary to recognize its indebtedness to the Platonist tradition.

I have already touched upon the topic of Thomasine images in previous chapters: chapter 4 discusses the allusions to Genesis in Gos. Thom. 22:6, and chapter 5 analyzes the meaning of ΤΟΥΤΙΚΩΝ in Gos. Thom. 50:1. These findings, however, are insufficient for the reconstruction of the Thomasine metaphysics of the image, since saying 83, by far the most puzzling saying that deals with images, has been left out of the discussion. It is now time to fill this gap.

Thus, I begin this chapter with a discussion of the text of saying 83, its Platonist background, and its meaning. Then, I turn to other sayings that deal with images (i.e., Gos. Thom. 22, 50, and 84), and offer a reconstruction of the metaphysics that they presuppose.



### The Text of Gos. Thom. 83

Bentley Layton's edition and Thomas O. Lambdin's English translation of the Coptic text present saying 83 as follows.<sup>1</sup>

83:1 ΠΕΧΕ ΙC ΧΕ ΝΖΙΚΩΝ CΕΟΥΟΝΖ ΕΒΟΛ ΜΠΡΩΜΕ ΑΥΩ ΠΟΥΟΕΙΝ ΕΤΝΖΗΤΟΥ  
 ΟΖΗΠ ΖΝ ΘΙΚΩΝ ΜΠΟΥΟΕΙΝ ΜΠΕΙΩΤ  
 83:2 ΟΝΑCΩΛΠ ΕΒΟΛ ΑΥΩ ΤΕΟΥΖΙΚΩΝ ΖΗΠ ΕΒΟΛ ΖΙΤΝ ΠΕΟΥΟΕΙΝ

83:1 Jesus said, "The images are manifest to man, but the light in them remains concealed in the image of the light of the father.  
 83:2 He will become manifest, but his image will remain concealed by his light."

The meaning of this text is obscure. As Peter Nagel puts it, saying 83 "ist ebenso tiefgründig wie unverständlich."<sup>2</sup> Scholars who have made an attempt to ascertain the meaning of the saying have faced insurmountable difficulties. Perhaps the most remarkable attempt to make sense of the Coptic text as it stands was made by April D. DeConick. According to her, the visible images described in Gos. Thom. 83:1 correspond to our material bodies, while the image that conceals their light corresponds to God's glory, the *קְבוֹד* of Jewish mysticism, "surrounded by radiant light."<sup>3</sup> Thus, Gos. Thom. 83:1 maintains that "the human's image or body is visible while the light within the human body is hidden in the light enveloping God's body or *קְבוֹד*."<sup>4</sup> Gos. Thom. 83:2, according to DeConick, deals with the mystic who will see God's *קְבוֹד* "hidden by a screen of light."<sup>5</sup>

Despite its ingenuity, DeConick's exegesis of saying 83 has a serious weakness. She interprets the text of Gos. Thom. 83:1 as if it read "the light of the image of father." Gos. Thom. 83:1 in fact deals with the image of the light, not with the image of God (= God's *קְבוֹד*, according to DeConick). The light concealed within human beings is hidden in the image of God's light, not in the light that emanates from God's image. Thus, DeConick's interpretation of saying 83

1 The versification follows Kloppenborg et al. 1990, 148–149.

2 Nagel 2004, 251.

3 DeConick 1996, 102.

4 Ibid., 115.

5 DeConick 2007, 248.

demonstrates how difficult the phrase “the image of the light of the father” is to interpret and how eager scholars are to gloss over it.

Indeed, the phrase  $\Theta\text{ΚΩΝ } \bar{\text{M}}\text{ΠΟΥΘΕΙΝ } \bar{\text{M}}\text{ΠΕΙΩΤ}$  appears to be overwhelmingly problematic and unparalleled in ancient sources. It is tempting, therefore, to approach the saying from a different perspective. It is likely that the solution to the problem is not exegetical, but text-critical. In other words, it is possible that the text is incomprehensible, because it is corrupt. I subscribe to the opinion expressed by the Berliner Arbeitskreis that the preposition  $\bar{\text{M}}$ - before  $\text{ΠΟΥΘΕΙΝ}$  is a scribal error.<sup>6</sup> The English translation of the emended text is as follows:

83:1 Jesus said, “The images are manifest to man and the light in them is concealed in the image.

83:2 The light of the father will become manifest and his image will be concealed by his light.”<sup>7</sup>

There are two reasons why this emendation should be accepted. One has to do with the structure of the saying, the other with its content. First, the emended text boasts a much more refined form. While the text of the saying as preserved by  $\text{NHC II}$  has no parallelism, the emended text has an elaborate chiasmic structure: image—light—image / light—image—light:

83:1 A—B—A the **images** are manifest; the **light** is concealed in the **image**

83:2 B—A—B the **light** will be manifest; the **image** will be concealed by the **light**

It does not seem probable that a saying that originally had no parallel structure would attain such a structure by omitting a single letter; it is much more likely that the original structure of the saying was chiasmic and that, at some point, a Coptic copyist made a mistake that distorted the parallel structure.<sup>8</sup>

What makes it even more likely that the original structure of saying 83 was chiasmic is the fact that the Gospel of Thomas clearly has a soft spot for this literary device. There are at least nine other instances of chiasmically structured

6 See Bethge 1998, 48–49.

7 The conjunction  $\Delta\text{ΥΩ}$  in Gos. Thom. 83:1 and 83:2 seems to render a “consecutive”  $\kappa\alpha\iota$ , not an “adversative” one; see Blass, Debrunner, and Rehkopf 1990, 367 (§ 442, 1–2).

8 For another instance of the copyist’s mistake in the Coptic text of the Gospel of Thomas, see the discussion of the text of Gos. Thom. 6:4 in chapter 1.

Thomasine sayings: Gos. Thom. 4:2,<sup>9</sup> 5,<sup>10</sup> 7,<sup>11</sup> 24:3, 28:1,<sup>12</sup> 36:1,<sup>13</sup> 43:3, 56 and 80 (a doublet),<sup>14</sup> and 112.<sup>15</sup>

4:2a	A—B	the <b>first</b> will be <b>last</b>
4:2b	B—A	the <b>last</b> will be <b>first</b>
5:1	B—A	come to know the <b>manifest</b> and you will know the <b>hidden</b>
5:2	A—B	for there is nothing <b>hidden</b> which will not become <b>manifest</b>
7:1a	A—B	the <b>lion</b> is eaten by the <b>man</b>
7:1b	A—B	the <b>lion</b> becomes a <b>man</b>
7:2a	B—A	the <b>man</b> is eaten by the <b>lion</b>
7:2b	B—A	the <b>man</b> becomes a <b>lion</b>
24:3a	A—B	if <b>there is light</b> , then it <b>shines</b>
24:3b	B'—A'	if it <b>does not shine</b> , then <b>there is no light</b>
28:1a	A—B	<b>I stood in the middle of the world</b>
28:1b	B—A	<b>In flesh I appeared</b> to them
36:1a	A—B	worry not from <b>morning</b> to <b>evening</b>
36:1b	B—A	nor from <b>evening</b> to <b>morning</b>
43:3b	A—B	they love the <b>tree</b> ; they hate the <b>fruit</b>
43:3c	B—A	they love the <b>fruit</b> ; they hate the <b>tree</b>
56:1/80:1	A—B	he who has come to know the <b>world</b> has found a <b>corpse/body</b>
56:2/80:2	B—A	of him who has found a <b>corpse/body</b> , the <b>world</b> is not worthy

9 As I argue in chapter 4, the original wording of this saying is preserved in P.Oxy. 4.654; the omission of Gos. Thom. 4:2b in the Coptic text is secondary.

10 As I argue in appendix 2, the original wording of this saying is preserved in the Coptic text; Gos. Thom. 5:3, attested by P.Oxy. 4.654, is a later addition.

11 For a reconstruction of the original text of this saying, see chapter 7.

12 For a discussion of Gos. Thom. 24:3 and 28:1, see chapter 5.

13 Gos. Thom. 36:1 is attested in two textual witnesses, NHC II and P.Oxy. 4.655; the subsequent verses, Gos. Thom. 36:2–4, are attested only in P.Oxy. 4.655.

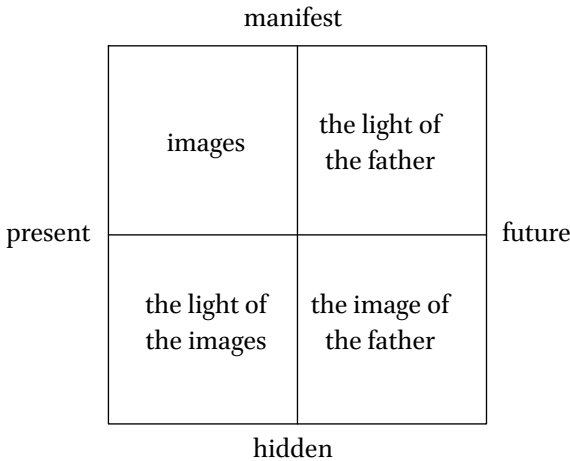
14 For a discussion of these two sayings, see chapter 2.

15 For a discussion of this saying, see chapter 3.

- 112:1        A—B    **flesh** depends upon the **soul**
- 112:2        B—A    the **soul** depends upon **flesh**

My second argument in support of the emendation suggested by the Berliner Arbeitskreis is concerned with the content of saying 83. As the following discussion of the background and meaning of the saying will demonstrate, the improved text clearly makes much more sense than the one attested by NHC II.<sup>16</sup>

It seems reasonable to make an inventory of the constituting elements of the saying before proceeding to a discussion of its background and meaning. Gos. Thom. 83 is a chiasm and thus comprises two opposing statements. The first statement deals with what is; the second, with what will be. The saying also opposes two types of images, the mundane with the divine. They differ with regard to their visibility: the divine images are hidden, the mundane images manifest. Moreover, there is an intimate relationship between images and light, and there is a principle that describes their relations: if the images are manifest, then the light is hidden, and vice versa. All these elements of the saying can be represented by the following diagram:



Thus, to offer a thorough exegesis of the saying, an interpreter would need to answer a long list of questions. What are these visible images? Why is there light in them? Why will the light of the father become manifest? What is the image of

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16    *Pace* Popkes 2008, 419, who maintains that “this reading does not clarify the content matter of the text.”

the father? How is it that it will be concealed by the light? I will give my answers to these questions as soon as I have discussed the Platonist background of the saying.

### The Two Types of Images in Middle Platonism

It is quite remarkable that saying 83 contrasts the images that are visible and mundane with the images that are invisible and divine. The only intellectual tradition contemporary with the Gospel of Thomas that was aware of these two different types of images was Middle Platonism. It is thus very likely that Thomasine metaphysics of images is indebted to the Platonist tradition.

In this section, I discuss the Platonist background of Gos. Thom. 83. I argue that the notion of image in Gos. Thom. 83:1 comes from Plato's dialogues and that ΝΗΙΚΩΝ (\*εἰκόνες) here are the objects present in the sensible world. I also argue that the notion of the image of the father (Gos. Thom. 83:2), to which these mundane images are contrasted, can be traced back to Middle Platonist speculations about paradigmatic images.

#### 1 *The Mundane Images*

As Friedrich-Wilhelm Eltester puts it, "Plato kann die Ideen als Vorbilder (παράδειγματα) für die Sinnendinge auffassen, die ihrerseits εἰκόνες der Ideen darstellen."<sup>17</sup> It is certainly true that Plato in his dialogues often maintains that all sensible, or mundane,<sup>18</sup> objects are "images" (εἰκόνες) of the forms (εἶδη) which serve as their models (παράδειγματα).<sup>19</sup> It would not, however, do justice

17 Eltester 1958, 27.

18 The term "mundane" appears to be more accurate than "sensible." For instance, a just law would probably qualify as an image of justice, but it most certainly would not qualify as a sensible object.

19 Sensible objects can also be called εἶδωλα ("images"), μιμήματα ("imitations"), ὁμοιώματα ("likenesses"), and φαντάσματα ("apparitions"). On Plato's image terminology, see Patterson 1984, 30–31. It is worth noting that, as Cornford 1935, 198, points out, "Plato is never rigid in his use of terms." Thus, although the terms εἰκών and εἶδωλον are often used interchangeably, in *Soph.* 235b–236c, Plato makes an exception. Here, he distinguishes between two types of ἡ εἰδωλοποιικὴ τέχνη, "the art of making εἶδωλα." The first type is ἡ εἰκαστικὴ τέχνη, the art of making εἰκόνες. It is "the one we have when someone produces an imitation (μίμημα) by keeping to the proportions of length, breadth, and depth of his model (παράδειγμα), and also by keeping to the appropriate colors of its parts" (trans. N.P. White). The second type is ἡ φανταστικὴ τέχνη, "the art of making φαντάσματα." It is the sort we

to Plato to reduce the opposition of an image with its model to the relationship between the sensible and noetic realms, since, as we will see, it is possible for a sensible object to be an image of another sensible object. Thus, it would be perhaps more accurate to argue that εἰκῶν is one of the terms Plato applies to sensible objects in order emphasize the fact that they are not independent and, therefore, do not truly exist. In what follows, I would like to list the main features of Plato's understanding of εἰκῶν:

- (i) The one who makes εἰκόνες is the craftsman (ὁ δημιουργός). In order to create an εἰκῶν, craftsmen have to look (βλέπειν) at a model. If a craftsman looks at something changeless (τὸ κατὰ ταῦτ' ἔχον ἀεί), the εἰκῶν will be beautiful, but if he looks at something that came into being (γεγονός), it will not be (*Tim.* 28a–b).
- (ii) Images differ with regard to their faithfulness to their models. For instance, when Socrates discusses names as εἰκόνες created by a “craftsman of names” (ὁ δημιουργὸς ὀνομάτων), he notes that if this craftsman imitates (ἀπομιμῆσθαι) the essence of things (ἡ οὐσία τῶν πραγμάτων) correctly, that εἰκῶν will be beautiful. If he fails to do so, it will not be. Accordingly, some names are fashioned beautifully (καλῶς) and some crudely (κακῶς) (*Crat.* 431c–e).
- (iii) Everything we encounter in this world is an image. Even time is a moving εἰκῶν of eternity (*Tim.* 37d). Moreover, the world itself is an image produced by its craftsman according to the eternal model (*Tim.* 29a–b; cf. 39e). As a perceptible god (θεὸς αἰσθητός), it is the image of the intelligible living creature, εἰκῶν τοῦ νοητοῦ (sc., ζῴου) (*Tim.* 92c).<sup>20</sup>
- (iv) Images are not duplicates of their models. An exact copy of Cratylus is another Cratylus, not an image of Cratylus (*Crat.* 432b–c).<sup>21</sup>
- (v) Every εἰκῶν is always a transitory apparition of something else (*Tim.* 52c; see below, pp. 228–229). For this reason, εἰκόνες do not truly (ἀληθῶς) exist

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have when someone distorts the proportions of his model. It is worth noting that this passage does not distinguish between a “good” and a “bad” type of imitation. Rather, the former type is, as Robinson 1953, 219, puts it, “at best, only less bad” than the latter. Thus, despite its peculiar terminology, this passage is as unfavorable to images as the ones I discuss below.

20 The construction is explained in Taylor 1928, 648. Festugière 1936, 478, argued for “the image of the intelligible god,” εἰκῶν τοῦ νοητοῦ (sc., θεοῦ), which is less likely; cf. Cornford 1956, 359.

21 For an analysis of Plato's train of thought in *Crat.* 432b–c, see Sedley 2003, 137–138.

(*Soph.* 240b). Moreover, our discourses (οἱ λόγοι) about εἰκόνες are εἰκότες (i.e. not firm, but only probable) (*Tim.* 29b–c).

- (vi) In this world, we occasionally encounter images of the objects that are dear to our souls—e.g., the images of justice (δικαιοσύνη) and temperance (σωφροσύνη)—but these images have no splendor (φέγγος).<sup>22</sup> Yet some are able to see (θεᾶσθαι) in these εἰκόνες the nature of what they represent (τὸ τοῦ εἰκασθέντος γένος) (*Phaedr.* 250a–b).<sup>23</sup>
- (vii) Images are of no use to the soul that strives to reach the uppermost level of the intelligible reality (*Resp.* 510b; see below, pp. 229–231).

In what follows, I would like to offer a somewhat more detailed discussion of two of the passages mentioned in this bulleted survey of Plato's metaphysics of εἰκῶν. First, *Tim.* 52c certainly deserves to be discussed at greater length. As Edward N. Lee points out, in this passage, "Plato enunciates the suddenly technical, doctrinally concise definition of the being of an image (εἰκῶν) as dependent both upon that 'in which' it occurs and that 'of which' it is an image."<sup>24</sup> This passage belongs to the part of the dialogue wherein Timaeus explains the relation between the form, the image, and the receptacle:

Since even that with an eye to which an image came to be does not belong to the image (οὐδ' αὐτὸ τοῦτο ἐφ' ᾧ γέγονεν ἑαυτῆς ἔστιν), which is always a transitory apparition of something else (ἐτέρου δέ τινος ἀεὶ φέρεται φάντασμα), it stands to reason that the image should therefore come to be in something else (ἐν ἐτέρῳ προσήκει τινὶ γίγνεσθαι), somehow clinging to being, or else be nothing at all.<sup>25</sup>

The expression τοῦτο ἐφ' ᾧ γέγονεν is problematic and has thus received various interpretations.<sup>26</sup> In his very learned and detailed article on this expression, Harold Cherniss suggested that it should be translated as "that which an image signifies," arguing that the point here is

22 Later (250c–e), Plato points out that beauty (κάλλος) holds an exceptional position and, as Patterson 1984, 28, puts it, provides us "with many distinct visual images."

23 Cf. de Vries 1969, 149.

24 Lee 1966, 347.

25 *Tim.* 52c, trans. D.J. Zeyl, altered.

26 See Cherniss 1977, 364–375.

that any particular image stands for something, refers to something, means something and that this meaning the image has not independently as its own but only in reference to something else, which is not dependent upon it but of which, as the parallel and complementary clause says, “it is always a transitory apparition.”<sup>27</sup>

I am, however, inclined to side with Richard Patterson who called this interpretation into question, arguing that the passage is not about an image as a sign of its model, but rather about the “of-ness” of images,<sup>28</sup> or, as Lee put it, “the internal, continuing, essential relatedness” of an image to its model.<sup>29</sup>

From the fact that images are always *of* something else, Plato draws an inference that they must also be *in* something else.<sup>30</sup> As Richard Patterson puts it, the text stresses “a double dependence” of images, “dependence at once on the model *of* which it is an image and on the medium *in* which it must come to be if it is to be anything at all.”<sup>31</sup>

The second Platonic passage I would like to examine in this survey is the famous Simile of the Divided Line (*Resp.* 509d–511e). Indeed, a discussion of Plato’s εἰκόνες cannot do without mentioning it. According to James Adam, this simile contains “more Platonic teaching than any passage of equal length in Plato’s writings, and is of primary and fundamental importance for the interpretation of his philosophy.”<sup>32</sup> Scholarly publications offering various attempts to understand the simile are almost innumerable.<sup>33</sup> In what follows, I will not delve into a detailed interpretation of this passage, but rather focus on the significance and various types of εἰκόνες in it.

According to the simile, the two unequal sections of a divided line represent the intelligible and sensible realms. Each of these two sections, in turn, is unequally divided into two subsections, each of which represents a particular type of objects and corresponds to one of the four conditions (παθήματα) of the soul:

27 Cherniss 1977, 374.

28 See Patterson 1984, 45–46.

29 Lee 1966, 354.

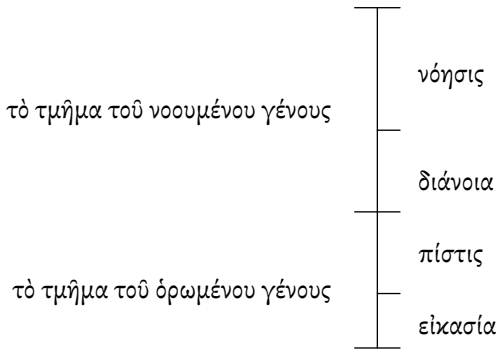
30 Cf. Taylor 1928, 348.

31 Patterson 1984, 175, emphasis his.

32 Adam 1963, 2:63.

33 See, e.g., *ibid.*, 2:156–163; Ross 1951, 45–69; Wedberg 1955, 99–111; Austin 1979, 288–303.





The first subsection of the lower part of the line consists of shadows (σκιαί), reflections (φαντάσματα), and other objects of this sort which Plato categorizes as images (εἰκόνες). The corresponding condition of the soul is εἰκασία, “conjecture” (i.e., grasping the nature of an object by means of its image).<sup>34</sup> The next subsection of the lower part of the line consists of that which εἰκόνες resemble—i.e., animals, plants, and artificial objects (τά τε περὶ ἡμᾶς ζῶα καὶ πᾶν τὸ φυτευτὸν καὶ τὸ σκευαστὸν ὅλον γένος). The corresponding condition of the soul is πίστις, “belief.”

The first subsection of the upper part of the line includes that aspect of the intelligible reality which is the object of geometry and related sciences. The corresponding condition of the soul is διάνοια, “thought.” In order to approach the objects of διάνοια, mathematicians use as their εἰκόνες the objects of πίστις (which, as we remember, have their own εἰκόνες—i.e., shadows and reflections). “These figures that they make and draw, which have shadows and images in water (ὧν καὶ σκιαὶ καὶ ἐν ὕδασιν εἰκόνες εἰσὶν), they now in turn use as images (ὡς εἰκόσιν), in seeking to see those others themselves that one cannot see except by means of thought (τῇ διανοίᾳ)” (*Resp.* 510e–511a; trans. G.M.A. Grube and C.D.C. Reeve, altered).

Finally, the last and uppermost subsection of the line includes that aspect of the intelligible reality which is the object of dialectic and which is clearer and truer (σαφέστερον) than that of mathematics. The corresponding condition of the soul is νόησις, “understanding.” At this level, the soul operates without images (ἄνευ τῶν εἰκόνων) that were used at the level of διάνοια. It is completely detached from sensible objects and makes its investigation through forms alone (αὐτοῖς εἶδεσι δι’ αὐτῶν τὴν μέθοδον ποιουμένη).

34 Cf. Robinson 1952, 120; 1953, 190–191.

As Anders Wedberg puts it, “it seems that the relation of image to original is part of the very meaning of the relationship which the simile of the line asserts between the various classes of objects.”<sup>35</sup> It also seems that the four conditions of the soul are distinguished by different types of involvement with images. Conjecture operates with the images of the sensible objects, belief with sensible objects themselves; at the level of understanding, however, sensible objects reappear as images. It is only at the level of thought that the soul is by no means involved with images.

The two passages discussed above, *Tim.* 52c and *Resp.* 509d–511e, are crucial to understanding Plato’s εἰκόνας. His attitude towards them is hardly favorable. While the former passage emphasizes the transient nature of images and their lack of independence, the latter describes the ascent to ultimate reality as a gradual detachment from them. Richard Robinson goes as far as to describe the philosophy of Plato as the “condemnation of images”:

Plato’s whole theoretical philosophy is largely a condemnation of images and a struggle to get away from them. Man, he holds, has the misfortune to be so circumstanced that he inevitably begins life by taking shams for realities. The world revealed by the senses, which engrosses all of us at first, is only a half-real *image* of true being; and wisdom lies in the progressive substitution of the pure for the adulterated, looking forward to the day when “we shall know through ourselves all that is pure” (*Phd.* 67AB). In accordance with this view he urges us to abandon the senses and seek knowledge by the soul alone; his insistence that the best knowledge makes no use whatever of sensibles, even as images of the real, is itself a condemnation of images (e.g., *Rp.* 510–511).<sup>36</sup>

It comes as no surprise, then, that the Middle Platonists inherited Plato’s notion that all mundane objects are imitations and images (εἰκόνας) of their models. The following passage from Alcinous’ handbook illustrates the Middle Platonist use of this notion:<sup>37</sup>

35 Wedberg 1955, 105.

36 Robinson 1953, 220, emphasis his.

37 This passage is strikingly similar to that of Arius Didymus, preserved in Eusebius, *Praep. ev.* 11.23.3–6, and Stobaeus, *Anth.* 1.12.2a; see the synoptic table in Diels 1879, 447. The usual explanation for this similarity—viz., that Alcinous copied from Arius Didymus (see, e.g., Whittaker 1987, 93–94; Dillon 1993a, 115)—has been questioned by Göransson 1995, 196–202, who suggests the inverse scenario—viz., that Arius Didymus copied from Alcinous. Lebedev 2016, 610–613, offers a critique of Göransson’s arguments, defending the tradi-

Since of natural individual objects of sense-perception there must exist certain definite models (παράδειγματα), to wit the forms (ιδέαι), which serve as the objects of scientific knowledge and definition (for besides all (individual) men one possesses the concept of Man, and besides all (individual) horses that of Horse, and in general, beside all living things the ungenerated and indestructible form of Living Thing, just as from one seal there derive many impressions, and of one man myriads upon myriads of representations (εἰκόνες), the form being the cause and principle in virtue of which each thing is such as it itself is)—since, then, that is so, it is necessary that the most beautiful of constructions, the world, should have been fashioned by God looking to a form of World, that being the model of our world, which is only copied from it (παράδειγμα ὑπάρχουσαν τοῦδε τοῦ κόσμου ὡς ἂν ἀπεικονισμένου ἀπ’ ἐκείνης), and it is by assimilation to it that it is fashioned by the creator.<sup>38</sup>

In this passage, Alcinous employs two cognate words, εἰκών (“image”) and ἀπεικονίζω (“to represent in an image,” cf. εἰκάζω in 12.3). The first term designates images in the nontechnical sense—i.e., portraits and statues (cf. 9.1). Just as there may be many portraits and statues of one human being, so also may numerous sensible objects derive from a single form. The second term, however, is applied to the world; according to Alcinous, the world is an image of its model (cf. 12.3). By implication, all other sensible objects are also images of their models.

It is now possible to see the relevance of the Platonist metaphysical terminology for the understanding of saying 83. A natural conclusion a reader of Plato’s dialogues might have made would be that every object of the sensible world had a model and a craftsman and could thus have been called εἰκών. I believe that this is the conclusion the author of saying 83 made. The images that are visible to the human being are the objects present in the sensible world.

## 2 *The Paradigmatic Images*

Quite surprisingly, the term εἰκών received a new meaning in Middle Platonism. While in Plato, εἰκών serves as an equivalent of μίμημα (“imitation”), Middle Platonists sometimes use it as an equivalent of παράδειγμα (“model”). A

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tional explanation. My inclination is somewhere between these two positions—viz., that Alcinous and Arius Didymus used the same source (see Dörrie and Baltes 1993, 237).

38 *Didasc.* 12.1, trans. J.M. Dillon.

model is an image in the sense that it serves as the “blueprint” of a mundane object. Hence, there are paradigmatic images in addition to Plato’s mundane ones.

Interestingly, this new usage of the term εἰκών made its way into several accounts of Plato’s teaching. One instance occurs in the summary of Platonic doctrine by Pseudo-Origen (*Ref.* 1.19).<sup>39</sup> According to this summary, there are three first principles (ἀρχαί)—viz., God, matter, and the model.<sup>40</sup> In turn, the model is an intelligible image (εἰκόνισμα), which the demiurge reproduces in sensible objects:

τὸ δὲ παράδειγμα τὴν διάνοιαν τοῦ θεοῦ εἶναι· ὃ καὶ ἰδέαν καλεῖ, οἷον εἰκόνισμα τι, (ῶ) προσέχων ἐν τῇ ψυχῇ ὁ θεὸς τὰ πάντα ἐδημιούργει.

The model is the thought of God; he [i.e., Plato] also calls it “form,” a kind of image which God looked at in his soul and created everything.<sup>41</sup>

Another instance of the term εἰκών with a Middle Platonist flavor is in Lucian’s *Vitarum auctio*, which gives an ironic exposition of Plato’s teaching. When a customer asks about the main point of his wisdom (τῆς σοφίας τὸ κεφάλαιον), Socrates gives the following answer:

αἱ ἰδέαι καὶ τὰ τῶν ὄντων παραδείγματα· ὅποσα γὰρ δὴ ὄρας, τὴν γῆν, τὰπὶ γῆς, τὸν οὐρανόν, τὴν θάλατταν, ἀπάντων τούτων εἰκόνες ἀφανεῖς ἐστᾶσιν ἔξω τῶν ὄλων.

The forms and the models of existing things; for of everything you see, the earth, the things on the earth, the sky, the sea, there are invisible images outside the universe.<sup>42</sup>

39 Pseudo-Origen’s exposition of Plato’s doctrines is based on a Middle Platonist source; cf. Dillon 1996, 410–414.

40 On this traditional Middle Platonist triad of first principles, see, e.g., Tobin 1985, 14–15. As Dörrie 1976, 342, puts it, “Die Drei-Prinzipien-Lehre, wonach Gott, Idee und Materie die Ursachen der Welt sind, ist der Kernsatz des Mittelplatonismus.” See also the list of references to the triad in Gersh 1986, 244–246. On παράδειγμα in the singular, see the discussion of Pseudo-Timaeus, below (pp. 235–236).

41 *Ref.* 1.19.2.

42 *Vit. auct.* 18.

In her commentary on this passage, Thérèse Beaupère pointed out that, in his *Vitarum auctio*, Lucian was usually quite faithful to the terminology of the philosophers he was trying to ridicule. Yet the way the term εἰκόνες is used here is clearly inappropriate, since in Plato's dialogues it is employed in the opposite sense. She concludes that Lucian speaks tongue in cheek: the models are pure abstractions and, therefore, "images" that do not truly exist.<sup>43</sup> As Jacques Bompaire puts it, this is "une plaisanterie désinvolte sur la théorie de Platon."<sup>44</sup> This suggestion, however, becomes unnecessary if we presuppose that Lucian was familiar with the Middle Platonist use of the term. While the whole dialogue between Socrates and the customer is full of irony, it was probably intended to be seen as a relatively faithful account of Plato's doctrines.

A third instance of such a use of the term is in Galen's *Compendium Timaei Platonis* written ca. 180 CE,<sup>45</sup> one of the two extant Middle Platonist epitomes of Plato's *Timaeus*.<sup>46</sup> Galen maintains that there are three causes of the world: first, effective cause, 'illah fā'ilah (i.e., the creator, *al-khāliq*); second, "the image (*al-timthāl*) according to which he [i.e., the creator] created it [i.e., the world]"; and third, God's generosity, *jūd Allāh*.<sup>47</sup> As A.-J. Festugière pointed out, this list of causes is identical to the one Proclus has in his commentary on the *Timaeus*; according to Proclus, Plato taught that the world had three causes, the demiurgic one (τὸ δημιουργικὸν αἴτιον), the paradigmatic one (τὸ παραδειγματικὸν [sc., αἴτιον]), and the final one (τὸ τελικὸν [sc., αἴτιον]) (*Comm. Tim.* 1.4.26–

43 See Beaupère 1967, 2:99–100.

44 Bompaire 2008, 91.

45 Walzer 1949, 16.

46 A very short summary of *Timaeus* is also present in Exp. Plat. 32. It is also plausible that, in al-Fārābī's *Falsafat Aflāṭun* ("The Philosophy of Plato"), the summary of Plato's dialogues, including *Timaeus*, draws upon a lost Middle Platonist source (see Walzer and Rosenthal 1979, xii–xvi; Connelly 2016). On the other hand, *De natura mundi et animae* by Pseudo-Timaeus, is, as noted in Baltes 1972, 10, "keine Timaios epitome im eigentlichen Sinne." All in all, there can be little doubt that, in antiquity, epitomes of this dialogue were, as put in Runia 1986, 55, "in plentiful supply." For instance, we know from Simplicius that Aristotle wrote "a summary (σύνοψις) or abridgement (ἐπιτομή) of *Timaeus*" (*Comm. Cael.* 379.15–17 Heiberg; cf. 296.16–18 Heiberg = Aristotle, fr. 206 Rose). This epitome might be identical to Aristotle's "Excerpts from *Timaeus* and the Works of Archytas" (Τὰ ἐκ τοῦ Τιμαίου καὶ τῶν Ἀρχυτείων) in one book (Diogenes Laertius, *Vit. philos.* 5.25; cf. Moraux 1951, 106–107; Düring 1957, 47). In this case, Aristotle must have seen a connection between the doctrines of Plato's *Timaeus* and those of Archytas, "doch wohl in der Richtung, daß Platon sich von Archytas habe anregen lassen" (Gigon 1987, 407).

47 See Walzer and Kraus 1951, 4–5 (Arabic text), 38–40 (Latin translation).

28 Diehl). Festugière also noted that this interpretation is in fact quite faithful to Plato's own account; one could easily deduce that the demiurgic cause is discussed in *Tim.* 28a–c; the paradigmatic one, in *Tim.* 28c–29d; and the final one, in *Tim.* 29d–30c.<sup>48</sup>

There is, however, an important detail that distinguishes Galen's account from that of Plato. Unlike Plato, Galen does not make any distinction between the model and its image.<sup>49</sup> In his view, the model is the image (there can be little doubt that *timthāl* corresponds to εἰκῶν of the lost Greek original), according to which the world was created. Galen is therefore one of those Middle Platonists who employed the concept of paradigmatic image.

While Galen, in his *Compendium*, mentions only the paradigmatic image, quite a few Middle Platonists employ the term εἰκῶν in both senses. One of the earliest texts aware of both the mundane images and the paradigmatic ones is *De natura mundi et animae*, a first-century BCE or first-century CE<sup>50</sup> pseudepigraphon written in Doric and ascribed to Timaeus of Locri.

Pseudo-Timaeus is familiar with Plato's use of the term. In *Nat. mund. an.* 30, he paraphrases *Tim.* 37d,<sup>51</sup> saying that time is the image of eternity. He goes on to say that time imitates its model, eternity, in the same fashion as the heaven (ὠρανός)—i.e., the universe<sup>52</sup>—imitates its model, the ideal world (ὁ ἰδανικός κόσμος). This implies that the universe is also an image.

At the same time, Pseudo-Timaeus is one of the first authors to use the term εἰκῶν in the sense of "model." According to *Nat. mund. an.* 7, there are three first principles: God, "the craftsman of the better" (ὁ θεός δαμιουργός τῷ βελτίονος), matter (ὑλα), and the form (ἰδέα). Interestingly, Pseudo-Timaeus always uses the terms ἰδέα and εἶδος in the singular. This peculiarity occurs in a number of sources, most importantly in Alcinoüs (*Didasc.* 9.1; 10.3; 12.3).<sup>53</sup> According to Dillon, "the adoption of this curious collective noun is presumably influenced by the presentation of the world of forms as a coherent whole."<sup>54</sup> In short, the

48 See Festugière 1971, 495.

49 Cf. Walzer and Kraus 1951, 39–40.

50 For this date, see Tobin 1985, 3–7.

51 This famous Platonic passage is also paraphrased by Plutarch and Apuleius (see below), Alcinoüs (*Didasc.* 14.6), and Diogenes Laertius in his summary of Plato's doctrines (*Vit. philos.* 3.73). It is also mentioned in Plac. philos. 1.21.2 (see Diels 1879, 318).

52 Cf. Baltes 1972, 49.

53 See also Plutarch, *Quaest. conv.* 720a–b; Pseudo-Origen, *Ref.* 1.19.2 (cited above, p. 233); Plac. philos. 1.3.21.

54 Dillon 1993a, 93.

term ἰδέα in Pseudo-Timaeus designates the sum total of the forms.<sup>55</sup> What is important for the present discussion is that this unified form is elsewhere referred to as εἰκῶν.<sup>56</sup> The following passage is a good illustration of this use of the term:

After the establishment of the world, he [i.e., the demiurge] began to plan the generation of mortal living beings, so that the world would be made complete in every way in relationship to the image (ἄ εἰκῶν).<sup>57</sup>

Another important source for the Middle Platonist use of the term εἰκῶν is Plutarch. According to his *Plat. quaest.* 1007c–d, time and the world are two images of God (εἰκόνες τοῦ θεοῦ): time is the image of eternity (τῆς ἀιδιότητος [sc., εἰκῶν]) in movement (ἐν κινήσει; cf. *Tim.* 37d), while the world is the image of being (τῆς οὐσίας [sc., εἰκῶν]) and a god in becoming (ἐν γενέσει θεός; cf. *Tim.* 92c). A similar statement occurs in *Is. Os.* 372f, where Plutarch argues that “becoming is the image of being in matter and that which comes into being is the imitation of that which is (εἰκῶν γὰρ ἐστὶν οὐσίας ἐν ὕλῃ (ἢ) γένεσις καὶ μίμημα τοῦ ὄντος τὸ γινόμενον).”<sup>58</sup> Interestingly, the last notion is repeated almost verbatim by Numenius, who says that ἡ γένεσις is εἰκῶν καὶ μίμημα of ἡ οὐσία (fr. 16 des Places = Eusebius, *Praep. ev.* 11.22.3).

At the same time, Plutarch is familiar with paradigmatic images. In *Quaestiones convivales*, Tyndares argues that, according to Plato, geometry draws us away from the sensible realm and turns us towards the intelligible one. This is why Plato opposed the geometricians, who use mechanical devices instead of reason:<sup>59</sup> because of that, geometry falls back on sensible objects and no longer

55 Cf. Baltes 1972, 35; according to Tobin 1985, 16, the form in Pseudo-Timaeus becomes the intermediate figure between God and matter.

56 Cf. Baltes 1972, 136.

57 *Nat. mund. an.* 43, trans. T.H. Tobin.

58 The Greek text is from Bernardakis 1888–1896, 2:528, who accepted the emendation of Johann Jakob Reiske. Following the suggestion of Jeremiah Markland, most editions (Nachstädt, Sieveking, and Titchener 1971, 54; Griffiths 1970, 53; Froidefond 1988, 226) read (ἢ) ἐν ὕλῃ γένεσις. Paleographically, Reiske's proposal is more plausible. It also makes better sense: according to Plato's *Tim.* 52c, every image is of something and in something; it is this Platonic pattern that Plutarch follows both in *Platonicae quaestiones* (when he says that time is the image of eternity in movement, and the world is the image of being in becoming) and in *De Iside et Osiride* (when he says that becoming is the image of being in matter).

59 For this (historically improbable) anecdote and its possible origins, see Riginos 1976, 145–146.

lays hold of “the eternal and immaterial images in the presence of which God is always God (αἱ ἀίθριοι καὶ ἀσώματα εἰκόνες, πρὸς αἴσπερ ὧν ὁ θεὸς ἀεὶ θεὸς ἐστίν)” (718f; trans. E.L. Minar). Quite remarkably, the last part of this passage alludes to *Phaedrus*, where Socrates describes the forms as “those realities by being close to which the gods are divine (πρὸς οἷσπερ θεὸς ὧν θεϊὸς ἐστίν)” (249c; trans. A. Nehamas and P. Woodruff).<sup>60</sup>

Apuleius was also aware of the distinction between εἰκῶν as μίμημα and εἰκῶν as παράδειγμα. The Latin term he employs is “imago.” In *Plat. Dogm.* 200–201, he paraphrases *Tim.* 37d, saying that “truly, time is an image of eternity, although time moves, while the nature of perpetuity is fixed and immovable (tempus uero aevi esse imaginem, si quidem tempus mouetur, perennitatis fixa et inmota natura est).” A comparison of Plato’s text with Apuleius’ paraphrase leaves no doubt that Apuleius uses the Latin noun “imago” as an equivalent of Greek εἰκῶν.

Just like in Plato, “image” here refers to an imitation of a model—i.e., time is an imitation of eternity. Similarly, in his exposition of the doctrine of the two substances, the sensible and intelligible ones,<sup>61</sup> Apuleius claims that the former is “so to speak, a shadow and an image (ueluti umbra et imago)” of the latter (*Plat. Dogm.* 194). In other words, the sensible substance is an imitation of the intelligible one. There is one passage, however, where “image” is a synonym of “model”:

Ἰδέας uero, id est formas omnium, simplices et aeternas esse nec corporales tamen; esse autem ex his, quae deus sumpserit, exempla rerum quae sunt eruntue; nec posse amplius quam singularum specierum singulas imagines in exemplaribus inueniri gignentiumque omnium, ad instar cerae, formas et figurationes ex illa exemplorum inpressione signari.

Truly, ἰδέαι, the forms of everything, are simple and eternal, but not corporeal. Those of them, which God chose, are models of the things that either are or will be. It is not possible to find in the models more than particular images of particular species. Forms and shapes of all things that come into being, just like those of wax, are marked by this impression of the models.<sup>62</sup>

60 Cf. Teodorsson 1989–1996, 3:167.

61 I discuss this doctrine in chapter 6 (p. 173).

62 *Plat. Dogm.* 192–193.



The last sentence of the cited passage provides us with an additional reason why models may be called “images.” Wax is molded by a seal; in a similar fashion, sensible objects of a certain species are molded by a model;<sup>63</sup> this model is, in turn, the image of this species. Just like impressions in clay or wax are all copies of a single image carved on a seal, so also all images (i.e., mundane objects) are likenesses or imitations of one image, their model. In other words, a model of an image is a paradigmatic image, an image of which other images are likenesses and imitations.

The last Middle Platonist that deserves to be mentioned in this survey is Theon of Smyrna. He is also familiar with the concept of paradigmatic image. According to him, the triad (ἡ τριάς) is the image (εἰκῶν)—i.e., the model—of the plane (*Util. math.* 100.21–22 Hiller), while the tetrad (ἡ τετράς) is the image (εἰκῶν) of the solid (101.11 Hiller).

As the following passage demonstrates, Theon was also aware of the concept of the mundane image. In fact, the last sentence of this passage provides us with one of the most articulate and concise definitions of the relationship between the intelligible and sensible realms: τὰ αἰσθητά are the images of τὰ νοητά. Theon’s point is that nobody can be a philosopher without imitating the forms—that is, without making his life the image of the intelligible realm (the implicit premise of this argument is that like is known by like):

ἡ δὲ τῶν ἰδεῶν γνῶσις περὶ τὸν φιλόσοφον· οὐδὲ γὰρ εἰδείη τις ἂν τὸ κόσμιον καὶ σῶφρον καὶ εὐσχημον αὐτὸς ὧν ἀσχήμων καὶ ἀκόλαστος· τὸ δ’ ἐν βίῳ εὐσχημον καὶ εὐρυθμον καὶ εὐάρμοστον εἰκόνες τῆς ὄντως εὐσχημοσύνης καὶ εὐαρμοστίας καὶ εὐρυθμίας, τουτέστι τῶν νοητῶν καὶ ἰδεῶν εἰκόνες τὰ αἰσθητά.

Philosophers ought to seek the knowledge of the forms. Should one be indecent and incontinent, one would not be able to learn that which is well-ordered, reasonable, and noble. The things that are noble, well-proportioned, and harmonious in our life are the images of true nobility, harmony, and proportion. That is to say, the sensible objects are the images of the intelligible objects and forms.<sup>64</sup>

63 For other instances of models compared to seals, see, e.g., the passage from Alcinous quoted above (p. 232) and the parallel material in Arius Didymus; cf. Philo, *Opif.* 129. This metaphor goes back to *Tim.* 50c.

64 *Util. math.* 12.4–9 Hiller.

It is now time to draw the conclusions. According to saying 83, there are two types of images: the mundane and the divine. The mundane ones are manifest, the divine ones, as we learn from Gos. Thom. 84:2 (see the discussion below, pp. 251–253), are immortal and hidden. This contrast between the two types of images is very similar to the one attested in Platonism. According to several Middle Platonists, there are mundane images and there are paradigmatic ones. Sensible objects are transitory, because they are mere images of their eternal and intelligible models, yet these eternal and intelligible models are also often called images. Not only are these two different meanings of “image” attested in Middle Platonism; as we have seen, both types of images are often mentioned by the same author and even in the same text.<sup>65</sup> In view of this remarkable terminological similarity, it seems reasonable to suggest that both the phrasing and metaphysics of saying 83 are indebted to Middle Platonism.

### Εἰκῶν θεοῦ as a Paradigmatic Image

There is, however, an important detail that deserves to be discussed at length—viz., that the paradigmatic image of Gos. Thom. 83:2 is the image of the father. To be sure, it is grammatically possible for ΤΕΦΖΙΚΩΝ in Gos. Thom. 83:2 to refer to ΠΟΥΟΕΙΝ as opposed to ΠΕΙΩΤ. Yet “the image of the light of the father” is quite an obscure expression; it was the incomprehensibility of this expression that forced scholars to emend the text in the first place.

“Father” is the regular name of the true deity in the Gospel of Thomas, and it seems quite natural to suggest that “the image of the father” refers to the Genesis narrative about the creation of the humankind κατ’ εἰκόνα θεοῦ (Gen 1:26–27).<sup>66</sup> Hence, it is reasonable to surmise that the Gospel of Thomas belongs to the tradition of the Platonizing exegesis of Gen 1:26–27 and interprets εἰκῶν θεοῦ as a paradigmatic image, the model, of which humans are imitations. Notably, this interpretation is not unknown in Middle Platonism. In what follows, I discuss Philo and Clement, who were left out of the previous section precisely because of their metaphysics of εἰκῶν θεοῦ.

65 See the discussion of Pseudo-Timaeus, Plutarch, Apuleius, and Theon, above; see also the discussion Philo and Clement, below.

66 It is worth noting that we have already encountered the expression εἰκῶν θεοῦ above (p. 236): according to Plutarch, time and the world are God’s images. This particular passage, however, is hardly relevant for the interpretation of Gos. Thom. 83:2, since both time and the world are mundane images and, therefore, belong to ΝΖΙΚΩΝ of Gos. Thom. 83:1.

Let us start with Philo. Like the majority of Platonists discussed in the previous section, he is familiar with the concept of mundane image. It is worth noting that, in addition to εικῶν, Philo uses the term ἀπεικόνισμα, yet there seems to be no terminological difference between these two words (see, e.g., *Her.* 231, where they are used interchangeably). In *Mos.* 2.127, he argues that the priest's oracle (τὸ λογεῖον) is twofold (διπλοῦν) (cf. Exod 28:23–27), because ὁ λόγος is double (διττός) both in the universe and in human nature. In human nature, these two λόγοι are the indwelling reason (ὁ ἐνδιάθετος [sc., λόγος]) and the uttered speech (ὁ προφορικός [sc., λόγος]).<sup>67</sup> There are also two of them in the universe: first, there is the principle that deals with “the incorporeal and paradigmatic forms (αἱ ἀσώματοι καὶ παραδειγματικαὶ ἰδέαι), from which the intelligible world was framed.” Second, there is the principle that deals with “the visible objects (τὰ ὀρατά) which are the imitations and images (μιμήματα καὶ ἀπεικονίσματα) of those ideas and out of which this sensible world was produced” (trans. F.H. Colson, altered). When Philo describes the creation of the visible world, he similarly describes it as an image and imitation of the intelligible one:

For God, being God, assumed that a beautiful copy (μίμημα) would never be produced apart from a beautiful pattern (παράδειγμα), and that no object of perception would be faultless which was not made in the likeness of an original discerned only by the intellect (οὐδέ τι τῶν αἰσθητῶν ἀνυπαίτιον, ὃ μὴ πρὸς ἀρχέτυπον καὶ νοητὴν ἰδέαν ἀπεικονίσθη). So when He willed to create this visible world He first fully formed the intelligible world, in order that He might have the use of a pattern wholly God-like and incorporeal in producing the material world, as a later creation, the very image (ἀπεικόνισμα) of an earlier, to embrace in itself objects of perception of as many kinds as the other contained objects of intelligence.<sup>68</sup>

This meaning of εικῶν is also attested in those Philonic works that are preserved only in Armenian. The Armenian word that corresponds to Greek εικῶν is ԷԻՐԱՊԱՐԱՄԻ. Admittedly, this Armenian word is polysemantic<sup>69</sup> and, according to the *New Dictionary of the Armenian Language*, might render various Greek nouns—e.g., μορφή, ἰδέα, εἶδος, σχῆμα, ὁμοίωμα, etc.<sup>70</sup> Yet, according to

67 This distinction comes from Stoicism; see *SVF* 2.135.

68 *Opif.* 16, trans. F.H. Colson and G.H. Whitaker.

69 See Bedrossian 1985, 343.

70 See Awetik'ean, Siwrmēlean, and Awgerean 1836–1837, 1:1092.

Ralph Marcus' *Index*, when it comes to Philo's *Quaestiones*, there seems to be one-to-one correspondence between ԼԵՐԱՄԱՐԱՄԻ of the Armenian translation and εἰκῶν of the Greek original, judging from the surviving Greek fragments.<sup>71</sup> Hence, there is no reason to doubt that in *QG* 4.115, ԼԵՐԱՄԱՐԱՄԻ renders εἰκόνες: "And the righteousness and truth among men are, to speak properly, likenesses and images (ԼԵՐԱՄԱՐԱՄԻ), while those with God are paradigmatic principles and types and ideas" (trans. R. Marcus).<sup>72</sup> Thus, just like the sensible world is the image of the intelligible one, so also is human righteousness in the image of the divine one.<sup>73</sup>

On the other hand, it is in Philo that the term εἰκῶν in the sense of "model" appears for the first time, though it is unlikely that it was Philo who introduced this new meaning.<sup>74</sup> The most remarkable example is *Somn.* 1.79, where he claims that we turn to sense-perception, "when we are no longer able to remain in company with holiest forms (αἱ ἱερώταται ἰδέαι), which are as it were incorporeal images (εἰκόνες ἀσώματοι)" (trans. F.H. Colson and G.H. Whitaker).<sup>75</sup>

In Philo's interpretation of εἰκῶν θεοῦ of Gen 1:27 these two meanings of εἰκῶν are brought together. According to Philo, and this is the point that he repeats again and again, the image of God is his Logos.<sup>76</sup> This image of God is at the same time the model of all creation, including humanity. "Just like God is the model for the image (ὥσπερ γὰρ ὁ θεὸς παράδειγμα τῆς εἰκόνης)," argues Philo, "so also the image is the model for other things (οὕτως ἡ εἰκὼν ἄλλων γίνεταί παράδειγμα)." Thus, Gen 1:27 is to be interpreted to the effect that "the image was modeled according to God (κατὰ τὸν θεὸν ἀπεικονισθεῖσα), while the

71 Marcus 1933, 268; see *QG* 2.62; 4.110 (not listed by Marcus); *QE* 2.66. Admittedly, in the Armenian translation of *De vita contemplativa*, ԼԵՐԱՄԱՐԱՄԻ translates σχήμα (*Contempl.* 51) and εἶδωλον (*Contempl.* 72).

72 There are two other passages in the Armenian *Quaestiones* where ԼԵՐԱՄԱՐԱՄԻ seems to render εἰκόνες in the sense of mundane images: *QG* 1.54 and *QE* 2.58.

73 It is worth noting that the other meaning of εἰκῶν, that of the paradigmatic image, seems to be also attested in the Philonic works preserved only in Armenian: see *Anim.* 29 and 95, where, according to Terian 1981, 145 and 200, ԼԵՐԱՄԱՐԱՄԻ renders εἰκῶν.

74 Cf. Theiler 1970, 499. Willms 1935, 29–30, and Baltes 1972, 21–22, assume that this meaning originated from the circle of Antiochus of Ascalon, an etiology which, as Tobin 1985, 25, notes, is by no means certain.

75 According to Willms 1935, 76–77, Philo finds grounds for treating the terms ἰδέα and εἰκῶν as synonyms in Gen 5:3.

76 See, e.g., *Spec.* 1.81; *Somn.* 1.239; *Fug.* 101; *Conf.* 97; 147. It should be noted, however, that sometimes Philo offers alternative interpretations of the εἰκῶν θεοῦ of Gen 1:27; see Sterling 2013, 47–56.

human being was modeled according to the image (κατὰ τὴν εἰκόνα), which had acquired the force of a model" (*Leg.* 3.96).

While the Pentateuch says that only the human being was created according to God's image, Philo is confident that the same holds true for the sensible realm *in toto*. He gives reasons for this claim in *Opif.* 25. In this passage, as Gregory E. Sterling points out,<sup>77</sup> the Alexandrian offers an *argumentum a minore ad maius*: if humanity is a part of the world and was created according to God's image, then the world was also created according to God's image:

Now if the part is image of an image (εἰκὼν εἰκόνης), it is plain that this is also the case for the whole. But if this entire sense-perceptible cosmos, which is greater than the human image, is a representation of the divine image (μίμημα θείας εἰκόνης), it is plain that the archetypal seal, which we affirm to be the intelligible cosmos (νοητὸς κόσμος), would itself be the model (τὸ παράδειγμα) and archetypal idea of the ideas (ἀρχέτυπος ἰδέα τῶν ἰδεῶν), the Logos of God (ὁ θεοῦ λόγος).<sup>78</sup>

As Sterling puts it, "Philo has a three-tiered hierarchy: God, the Logos, and humanity."<sup>79</sup> In this hierarchy, Logos is the mediator and therefore plays a dual role: it is both an imitation and a model. Thus, when, in *Somn.* 2.45, Philo says that God sealed (ἐσφράγισε) the universe "with the image and form—i.e., with his Logos (εἰκόνι καὶ ἰδέᾳ, τῷ ἑαυτοῦ λόγῳ)," his point is that Logos is both the image (= imitation) of God and the form (= model) of the universe.<sup>80</sup> This is also the reason why God is at the same time the model of the image (παράδειγμα τῆς εἰκόνης) (*Leg.* 3.96, quoted above) and the model of a model (παράδειγμα <παραδείγματος>) (*Somn.* 1.75).<sup>81</sup>

In *Her.* 230–231, Philo insists that it is crucial that, according to Gen 1:27, God did not make man his image, but rather after his image. The image is the Logos, and the man that was created according to the image is "the mind in each of us" (ὁ καθ' ἕκαστον ἡμῶν νοῦς). There are, therefore, two types of reason (δύο λόγοι),

77 See Sterling 2013, 45.

78 *Opif.* 25, trans. D.T. Runia. The translation departs from Cohn's text and follows the readings suggested in Runia 2001, 94.

79 Sterling 2013, 45.

80 Cf. Colson et al. 1929–1962, 5:607; Runia 1986, 163.

81 This conjecture was suggested in Colson et al. 1929–1962, 5:336, and accepted by Sterling 2005, 132.

the archetypal reason above us and its imitation within us. Philo concludes that the human mind is the impression of the image (τῆς εἰκόνας ἐκμαγαεῖον),<sup>82</sup> and the cast that is two removes from the maker (τρίτος τύπος ἀπὸ τοῦ πεποιηκότος; cf. Plato, *Resp.* 597e; cf. also Clement, *Strom.* 7.3.16.6), while Logos is the middle cast (ὁ μέσος [sc., τύπος]) that is the model of the human mind and the image of God (παράδειγμα μὲν τούτου, ἀπεικόνισμα δὲ ἐκείνου).

Interestingly, Philo also addresses the fact that man was made not only after the image, but also after the likeness (Gen 1:26). In *Opif.* 71, he notes that not all the images resemble their models, but, in fact, many are dissimilar (ἀνόμοιοι).<sup>83</sup> Since this has nothing to do with divine creation, Moses added “after the likeness” (καθ’ ὁμοίωσιν) in order to emphasize that, in this case, we are dealing with “accurate and clearly marked impression” (ἀκριβὲς ἐκμαγαεῖον τρανὸν τύπον ἔχων).

It has already been pointed out that a model may be called the image of an object in so far as the former acts as some sort of blueprint for the latter. Moreover, I have suggested that a comparison of models with seals may also shed some light on this use of the term “image”: models are like the images on the seals that are imitated by their impressions in wax or clay. Philo provides us with yet another explanation: some models are images, because they have their own models; sometimes, there is a model of which this model is an image. Thus, the supreme model is the model of the lower model, the lower model is the image of the supreme model, and the images of the lower model are images of the image.

It is now time to turn to Clement. Although the notion of the mundane image does not play an important role in his writings, he is nevertheless familiar with it. According to *Strom.* 5.14.93.4, the barbarian philosophy—i.e., the Bible—is aware of the fact that the visible universe is the image and imitation of the noetic one. According to Salvatore R.C. Lilla, this is one of those instances where Philo is Clement’s “teacher and model”:<sup>84</sup>

Κόσμον τε αὐθις τὸν μὲν νοητὸν οἶδεν ἢ βάρβαρος φιλοσοφία, τὸν δὲ αἰσθητὸν, τὸν μὲν ἀρχέτυπον, τὸν δὲ εἰκόνα τοῦ καλουμένου παραδείγματος

82 Philo likens the paradigmatic image (= Logos) to the seal, and the imitations of the image (= human minds) to the impressions of the seal. Cf. the discussion of this imagery in Apuleius, above (p. 238).

83 This notion is reminiscent of Plato’s discussion of poorly and finely made images (*Crat.* 431c–e; see above, p. 227).

84 See Lilla 1971, 191–192.

Moreover, the barbarian philosophy knows that there is the intelligible world and the sensible one and that the former is the archetype and the latter is the image of the so-called model.

It is, however, more important for the present discussion that Clement follows Philo in his interpretation of Gen 1:26–27.

Like Philo, Clement argues that the image of God is God's Logos, whom he identifies with the Son, and that the man made after this image (= the image of the image) is the human mind: "the image is God's divine and royal Logos, the human being that is free from passions, and the image of the image is the human mind (εἰκῶν μὲν γὰρ θεοῦ λόγος θεῖος καὶ βασιλικός, ἄνθρωπος ἀπαθής, εἰκῶν δ' εἰκόνας ἀνθρώπινος νοῦς)" (*Strom.* 5.14.94.5). Elsewhere, Clement specifies that the common element in this threefold hierarchy of God, his Logos, and humanity is the mind: the human mind is the image of Logos, who is the son of the mind (= God).<sup>85</sup> Notably, Philo offers a very similar hierarchy of minds in *Her.* 230–231 (see the discussion above).

For "the image of God" is His Logos (and the divine Logos, the light who is the archetype of light, is a genuine son of the mind [υἱὸς τοῦ νοῦ γνήσιος]); and the image of Logos is the true man, that is, the mind in man (ὁ νοῦς ὁ ἐν ἀνθρώπῳ), who on this account is said to have been created "after the image" of God, and "after the likeness," because through his understanding heart he is made after the image (παρεικαζόμενος) of the divine Logos, and so reasonable (λογικός).<sup>86</sup>

There is, however, a remarkable innovation that Clement makes in his interpretation of Gen 1:26–27.

Unlike Philo, Clement interprets καθ' ὁμοίωσιν of Gen 1:26 from the standpoint of the Platonist doctrine of the goal of human life—i.e., ὁμοίωσις θεῷ κατὰ τὸ δυνατόν, "becoming as like God as possible" (Plato, *Theaet.* 176b).<sup>87</sup> As Clement puts it, "some of our people (τινὲς τῶν ἡμετέρων) accept the view that a human being has received 'according to the image' at birth, but will secure 'according to the likeness' later, as he attains perfection" (*Strom.* 2.22.131.6; trans. J. Ferguson). That, by "some of our people," Clement refers to himself is clear from the following exhortation, which Clement puts in the Son's mouth (*Protr.* 12.120.4).

85 Cf. Casey 1924, 46.

86 *Protr.* 10.98.4, trans. G.W. Butterworth, altered.

87 Cf. Runia 2001, 233.

ὦ πάσαι μὲν εἰκόνες, οὐ πάσαι δὲ ἐμφερεῖς· διορθώσασθαι ὑμᾶς πρὸς τὸ ἀρχέ-  
τυπον βούλομαι, ἵνα μοι καὶ ὅμοιοι γένησθε.

All of you are images, but not all of you resemble your archetype; I want to restore you to order, so that you may become like me.

In his interpretation of καθ' ὁμοίωσιν, Clement starts from the same premise as Philo did: not all images faithfully imitate their models. Yet the conclusions they reach are different. Philo offers a “static” interpretation, arguing καθ' ὁμοίωσιν is added to κατ' εἰκόνα precisely in order to emphasize that Gen 1:26–27 refers to images that accurately resemble Logos. Clement, on the other hand, offers a “dynamic” interpretation, claiming that human beings are imperfect images of Logos and that their goal is to set themselves right and to become like their model.

This survey of the Platonizing interpretations of Gen 1:26–27 allows me to take a step forward in the interpretation of saying 83. Since this saying is familiar with the Platonist dialectic of mundane and paradigmatic images and since this saying also alludes to the Biblical concept of God's image, it seems reasonable to conclude that the Gospel of Thomas shares its understanding of Gen 1:26–27 with Philo and Clement and interprets εἰκῶν θεοῦ as the paradigmatic image after which humanity was created.

### The Meaning of Gos. Thom. 83:1

It is now possible to proceed to the interpretation of saying 83. The structure of the saying is antithetic; its two parts are set against each other, the first dealing with the mundane images, the second with the paradigmatic images. I begin with the first part. Gos. Thom. 83:1 consists of three statements: (i) there are images that are manifest to the humankind (there can be little doubt that ΠΡΩΜΕ is used in the collective sense; cf. the discussion of ΘΙΚΩΝ below); (ii) there is light within these images; (iii) this light is concealed “in the image.” Let us discuss these statements one by one.

- (i) First of all, it seems reasonable to suggest that Gos. Thom. 83:1 makes use of the Platonist metaphysical vocabulary and employs the term ΝΗΚΩΝ (\*εἰκόνες) in the sense of the sensible (mundane) objects.<sup>88</sup> As my survey

88 This interpretation was first suggested in Patterson 2011b, 56.



has shown, this meaning of εἰκῶν originated with Plato and is attested in various Middle Platonists, including Philo, Pseudo-Timaeus, Plutarch, Alcinous, Apuleius, Numenius, Theon, and Clement.

- (ii) Second, the idea that there is light within the mundane objects would not be confusing for the readers of the Gospel of Thomas. The Gospel of Thomas calls the ultimate reality that everyone has to look for “the light” and “the kingdom” (cf., e.g., sayings 49 and 50) and a number of Thomasine sayings teach that the kingdom/the light is already present in the world, yet no one can see it.<sup>89</sup>
- (iii) Third, the claim that the light of the images is concealed εἰς τὸ εἰκῶν, “in the image,” is somewhat problematic. The antithetic structure of saying 83 suggests that Gos. Thom. 83:1 and 83:2 are supposed to mirror each other: if, according to Gos. Thom. 83:2, the image of the father is concealed by the light, then, according to Gos. Thom. 83:1, the light must be concealed by the images. The problem, however, is that the light is said to be concealed in the image (εἰκῶν), not in the images (ἐν εἰκῶν). Why is it in the singular and not in the plural?

It is possible that εἰκῶν refers to the world. As my survey has shown, the world is qualified as an image in Plato, Philo, Pseudo-Timaeus, Plutarch, Alcinous, and Clement. The world can also be called *the* image, since, as the greatest of all images, it contains in itself all other images.

It is more plausible, however, that the author is merely making a generic point.<sup>90</sup> It is fairly certain that πρῶμος in Gos. Thom. 83:1 is used in the collective sense and refers to every single human being. Similarly, πετῆεινε in Gos. Thom. 84:1 (quoted below, p. 251) means “your likeness” in general (i.e., “anything that resembles you”). Thus, it seems reasonable to suggest that the singular number of εἰκῶν is supposed to be understood in the same way. It is also possible that the author wrote εἰκῶν, in order to accentuate the antithetic parallelism of the two parts of the saying: the singular number of εἰκῶν in Gos. Thom. 83:1 matches the singular number of τετραεἰκῶν in Gos. Thom. 83:2. Thus, the image that conceals the light is contrasted to the image that is concealed by the light.

89 See the detailed discussion of this Thomasine motif in chapter 2.

90 Stephen J. Patterson pointed this out to me in a personal communication.

### The Meaning of Gos. Thom. 83:2

While Gos. Thom. 83:1 describes the present situation, Gos. Thom. 83:2 deals with what is going to happen in the future. Gos. Thom. 83:2 states that, in the future, the light of the father will become manifest. The implication of this statement is that the light of the father is not yet manifest in the present. And, if the light of the father is not manifest in the present, there has to be a reason for this. Since the focal point of Gos. Thom. 83:2 is the relationship between the light of the father and the image of the father, it seems reasonable to suggest that the hiddenness of the light of the father in the present is somehow related to the current state of the image of the father.

My suggestion is that the author of saying 83 shares with some other early Christians their belief that humanity had lost their divine image, εἰκὼν θεοῦ, after the Fall.<sup>91</sup> In the present, the light of the father is hidden, because the image of the father is lost; in the future, the divine image will be restored, and this will make the divine light manifest.

The notion of the loss of God's image as a postlapsarian condition is present, for instance, in Tatian's *Oratio ad Graecos*. According to Tatian, the first human beings had both the soul and something that was greater than the soul, the spirit. The spirit was θεοῦ εἰκὼν καὶ ὁμοίωσις (12.1). Initially (ἀρχῆθεν), the spirit was the soul's companion, but "gave it up when the soul was unwilling to follow it" (13.2; trans. M. Whittaker). This happened because of sin (διὰ τὴν ἁμαρτίαν) (20.1). After the transgression, the one who was made in the image of God was separated from the spirit and became mortal (7.3).<sup>92</sup> Hence, "we ought now to search for what we once had and have lost (ὅπερ ἔχοντες ἀπολωλέκαμεν τοῦτο νῦν ἀναζητεῖν)" (15.1; trans. M. Whittaker).

The motif of the lost image of God is present in Gos. Thom. 22:6 and 84:2. As I have argued in chapter 4 (pp. 95–96), the exhortation to make "an image instead of an image," ΟΥΓΙΚΩΝ ΕΠΙΜΑ ΝΟΥΓΙΚΩ(Ν), seems to refer to the transformation of "the image of Adam" (Gen 5:3) into "the image of God" (Gen 1:26–27 and 5:1 LXX). The fact that this transformation is necessary implies that, in the present, humankind is not in possession of the image of God, that the divine image was replaced with another, non-divine image.

The same notion of the loss of God's image seems to be attested in saying 84. This saying (quoted below, p. 251) contrasts the vision of our sensible likenesses (reflections, portraits, statues, etc.) with the vision of our divine images.

91 Cf. DeConick 1996, 157–164.

92 This idea seems to be attested already in Wis 2:23–24.

The implication seems to be that both likenesses and images exist outside of us. Moreover, according to Gos. Thom. 84:2, they came into being before us, and, unlike us, they will not perish. Most importantly, divine images do not become manifest. Just like the divine light is hidden in Gos. Thom. 83:2, so also are the divine images hidden in Gos. Thom. 84:2. While our likenesses are easily accessible, our images are elusive: they are concealed from us and therefore evade our grasp. Since they are virtually out of our reach, it takes effort to obtain vision of them. When obtained, this vision is hardly bearable. Although saying 84 does not provide us with any explanation why our images are removed from us, it is reasonable to conclude that these images were in us at some point and that we later became separated from them (i.e., lost them).

Thus, Gos. Thom. 83:2 presupposes that the protoplast was in the possession of God's image when he was in paradise and that he was deprived of it after the Fall. The loss of God's image is the reason why the light of the father is hidden. The question remains, however, what exactly does "the light of the father,"  $\rho\omicron\gamma\omicron\epsilon\iota\omicron\upsilon\iota\ \bar{\mu}\pi\epsilon\iota\omega\tau$ , mean? Since loss of the divine image is a postlapsarian condition, it seems natural to suggest that the disappearance of the divine light is also a postlapsarian condition. I suggest, therefore, that "the light of the father" refers to the divine light that surrounded Adam before the Fall.

A number of early Jewish texts maintain that, before the Fall, Adam was a luminous being. The absence of visible radiance is thus a postlapsarian condition: it indicates that human nature has become perverted. When human beings restore their nature, they will once again be luminous. As Louis Ginzberg points out, "the splendor of Adam's countenance is the concrete expression of the legend of the divine nature of man before his fall, and belongs to the view concerning the light of the pious in the world to come, which is prevalent in Jewish, as well as in Christian, eschatology."<sup>93</sup>

Many early Jewish literary texts state that, after the transgression, Adam lost his glory.<sup>94</sup> According to the *Life of Adam and Eve*, when Eve ate from the fruit, she realized that she committed a sin and said, "I have been separated from my glory ( $\acute{\alpha}\pi\eta\lambda\lambda\omicron\tau\rho\iota\omega\theta\eta\upsilon\iota\ \acute{\epsilon}\kappa\ \tau\eta\varsigma\ \delta\acute{o}\xi\eta\varsigma\ \mu\omicron\upsilon$ )" (LAE 20.2). Later on, after she persuaded Adam to eat the fruit, he said, "You have separated me from God's glory ( $\acute{\alpha}\pi\eta\lambda\lambda\omicron\tau\rho\iota\omega\sigma\acute{\alpha}\varsigma\ \mu\epsilon\ \acute{\epsilon}\kappa\ \tau\eta\varsigma\ \delta\acute{o}\xi\eta\varsigma\ \tau\omicron\upsilon\ \theta\epsilon\omicron\upsilon$ )" (LAE 21.6).

It should be reminded at this point that, in the Hebrew Bible, the glory is quite often understood as a visible radiance (see, e.g., Exod 24:16; 1 Kgs 8:10–11). This is also the case in early Christian literature (Luke 2:9; 9:31–32). It is quite

93 Ginzberg 1909–1928, 5:112.

94 See, e.g., Rom 3:23 and 3 Bar 4.16. See also the examples listed in Jervell 1960, 45.



To sum up, Gos. Thom. 83:2 describes the relationship between two entities, the light of the father and the image of the father. This expression, “the image of the father,” should be understood as the Thomasine equivalent of εἰκῶν θεοῦ of Gen 1:26–27. The metaphysics of saying 83 is indebted to the Platonizing interpretation of Gen 1:26–27 attested in Philo and Clement. According to this interpretation, εἰκῶν θεοῦ is a paradigmatic image, a model after which the humankind was created.

Interestingly, however, there are certain motifs that Gos. Thom. 83:2 borrowed from non-Platonist sources. First, it adheres to the notion that the image of God was lost. It is because of the loss of God’s image that humanity became so miserable. Second, not only did mankind lose the divine image; it also became deprived of its luminosity. It seems that the reason why humans are not luminous at the present time is due to the loss of God’s image.

Luckily, the situation is going to change. According to Gos. Thom. 83:2, mankind will regain its divine image, along with which, mankind will also reclaim its luminosity. It is this blinding splendor that Gos. Thom. 83:2 describes, when it notes that the image of the father will be concealed in the light of the father. The point is that the light will be so bright that it will make it impossible to see anything else.

### The Metaphysics of the Image in Sayings 22, 50, and 84

Having discussed the meaning of Gos. Thom. 83, I proceed to other sayings that deal with images—viz., Gos. Thom. 22, 50, and 84. I have already offered an interpretation of the replacement of images in Gos. Thom. 22:6 in the previous section (p. 247). As I have already pointed out, Gos. Thom. 83:2 refers to end times, when the humankind will regain its divine image. Gos. Thom. 22:6 explains how this image was lost and how it can be restored. This saying tells us that some time in the past, the (glorious and divine) image of God was replaced with the (non-divine) image of Adam. To attain salvation means to follow the reverse procedure, replacing the image of Adam with the image of God.

In Gos. Thom. 50:1, when the interrogators ask them where they came from, the addressees of Jesus’ instruction are supposed to give the following answer: “We came from the light, the place where the light came into being on its own accord and established [itself] and became manifest through their [read ‘our’]<sup>99</sup> image.” In other words, their image was produced by self-generated,

99 See the discussion in chapter 5 (p. 153).

immovable<sup>100</sup> light. There seems to be no reason why this image should not be identified with the divine image of Gos. Thom. 22:6 and 83:2, the one that was lost in the past and will be found in the future.

While Gos. Thom. 83:2 deals with eschatology (i.e., the salvific event that will take place in the future), Gos. Thom. 50:1 deals with protology (i.e., the moment that laid the foundation for the history of salvation). There is certainly some similarity between Thomasine eschatology and protology, but the two are by no means identical. Rather, what we have here is antithetic parallelism. In the beginning, the light revealed itself in the image. In the end, the image will be hidden in the light.

Thus, the Thomasine history of salvation presupposes a progress in the dialectic of the image and the light. After light had generated itself and become immovable, it produced the image; it is by means of this image that it became manifest (Gos. Thom. 50:1). When humanity regains its image, the light of the image will be so bright that the light will conceal the image. In other words, the image will produce the light; it is by means of this light that the image will become manifest (Gos. Thom. 83:2). In the past, the image was the manifestation of the light; in the future, the light will be the manifestation of the image.

The last saying to be discussed in this survey is Gos. Thom. 84. Just like Gos. Thom. 83, it offers a fusion of Biblical and Platonist motifs. Certainly, the saying borrows its combination of likeness and image from Gen 1:26, reinterpreting both terms from the Platonist perspective. The Coptic text of Gos. Thom. 84 and its English translation are as follows:

84:1 ΠΕΧΕ ΙϞ ΔΕ Ν̄ΖΟΥ ΕΤΕΤ̄Ν̄ΝΑΥ ΕΠΕΤ̄Ν̄ΕΙΝΕ ΩΡΕΤ̄Ν̄ΡΑΩΕ 84:2 ΖΟΥΤΑΝ  
ΔΕ ΕΤΕΤ̄Ν̄ΩΑΝΝΑΥ ΔΝΕΤ̄Ν̄ΡΙΚΩΝ Ν̄ΤΑΖΩΩΠΕ ΖΙ ΤΕΤ̄Ν̄ΕΖΗ ΟΥΤΕ ΜΑΥΜΟΥ  
ΟΥΤΕ ΜΑΥΟΥΩΝΖ ΕΒΟΛ ΤΕΤ̄Ν̄ΑϞΙ ΖΑ ΟΥΗΡ

84:1 Jesus said: “When you see your likeness,<sup>101</sup> you are full of joy. 84:2 But when you will see your images that came into existence before you—they neither die nor become manifest—how much will you bear?”

The phrasing of Gos. Thom. 50:1 (*our* image) and 84:2 (*your* images) indicates that both sayings refer to the same phenomenon.<sup>102</sup> Since εἰκῶν in Gos. Thom.

100 For the motif of “transcendental” standing in Gos. Thom. 50, see chapter 5.

101 As I have noted above (p. 246), ΠΕΤ̄Ν̄ΕΙΝΕ (“your likeness”) in the singular should be understood in the collective sense (i.e., “anything that resembles you”).

102 For a discussion of the plural number of ΝΕΤ̄Ν̄ΡΙΚΩΝ, “you images,” see below (pp. 253–254).

84:2 designates the same paradigmatic image as it does in sayings 22, 50, and 83, it follows that the term εἶνε in Gos. Thom. 84:1 is probably also used in the Platonist sense. It probably should be understood as a likeness (ὁμοίωμα) or an imitation (μίμημα) of a model. Thus, πετῆεἶνε, “your likeness,” probably refers to something like a portrait or a reflection in the water.<sup>103</sup>

It is difficult to ascertain which Greek word, ὁμοίωμα or ὁμοίωσις, was rendered as εἶνε in Gos. Thom. 84:1. On the one hand, in the Sahidic Bible, εἶνε usually renders Greek ὁμοίωμα.<sup>104</sup> On the other hand, in the Sahidic version of Gen 1:26, καθ’ ὁμοίωσιν is rendered as κατὰ πενεῖνε.<sup>105</sup> Since saying 84 contrasts “likeness” with “image” and, therefore, most certainly alludes to Gen 1:26, it is possible that εἶνε renders ὁμοίωσις.

Thus, the author of the saying could have altered the Biblical expression (εἰκῶν + ὁμοίωσις) to the one that sounds more Platonic (εἰκῶν + ὁμοίωμα). Alternatively, he could have retained the Biblical expression: it is possible that the author did not see any significance in the variation between ὁμοίωμα and ὁμοίωσις and assumed that the two words are synonymous.

That ὁμοίωσις can be used as a synonym of ὁμοίωμα and designate an imitation of a model is clear from the treatise “On Harmony,” a third- or second-century BCE<sup>106</sup> pseudepigraphon written in Doric and ascribed to Aristaeus of Croton, allegedly a pupil of Pythagoras and his immediate successor as head of the Pythagorean school (Iamblichus, *Vit. Pyth.* 36.265). Having postulated that the first principle (ἁ ἀρχή)—i.e., God—is eternal, the author argues that “the images and likenesses of this first principle are both among the things produced by nature and the things produced by art (εἰκόνες δὲ καὶ ὁμοιώσεις τὰς ἀρχὰς ταύτας καὶ ἐν τοῖς φύσει γινομένοις καὶ ἐν τοῖς κατὰ τέχνην)” (Περὶ ἀρμονίας fr. 1 Thesleff = Stobaeus, *Anth.* 1.20.6).

Be that as it may, εἰκῶν in Gos. Thom. 84:2 designates a model, while εἶνε in Gos. Thom. 84:1 designates an imitation of a model. The saying, therefore, contrasts the objects that are our imitations with the objects that are our models. Jesus’ question may be reformulated in the following fashion: “If you rejoice when you see the things of which you are models, what will happen to you when you see the things that were the models according to which you were made?” In other words, the joy of those who see their mundane likenesses is nothing compared to the reverent awe of those who see their paradigmatic images.

103 Cf. Patterson 2013, 47.

104 See Crum 1939, 80b; Wilmet 1957–1959, 1195; Draguet 1960, 131a.

105 See Lemm 1906, 098.

106 For this date, see Thesleff 1961, 101–102.

The list of qualities attributed to images also seems to emphasize the distinctiveness of paradigmatic images. According to Gos. Thom. 84:2, the images came into being before humans; moreover, they do not die. Thus, while humans and their likenesses are transitory and perishable, images are primeval and immortal. It is also said that images do not become manifest. Thus, unlike humans and their likenesses, images are hidden. While our likenesses readily present themselves, the images are concealed from us and, therefore, difficult to grasp. Thus, Jesus' question can also be reformulated as follows: "If you rejoice when you see the things that are ephemeral, what will happen to you when you see the things that are indestructible? If you rejoice when you see the things that are manifest, what will happen to you when you see the things that are hidden?"

This last detail, that the images are hidden, is most certainly an indication of their salvific role: the hidden things, after all, are those that Jesus reveals to the ones who become like him (saying 108). The hiddenness of images makes Gos. Thom. 84:2 resonate with Gos. Thom. 50:1 and 83:2. According to these sayings, the light and the image play the major role in the salvation history; this salvation history is conceptualized as the dialectic of being hidden and being manifest. According to Gos. Thom. 50:1, the light became manifest through the image. According to Gos. Thom. 84:2, images do not become manifest. According to Gos. Thom. 83:2, the light that will conceal the image will become manifest.

It seems appropriate to summarize the tenets of the Thomasine metaphysics of image, which, as I have pointed out, is a constituent of the Thomasine salvation history. The salvation history comprises three defining points: the beginning, the Fall, and the final restoration. In the beginning, the light produced itself, established itself ("stood"—i.e., became immovable) and revealed itself through the paradigmatic image. This is the image after which humanity was made (hence, "our" image in Gos. Thom. 50:1). Then, the catastrophic event took place: the divine image was replaced with a counterfeit. Hence, the misery of the present-day world: our images do not reveal themselves (Gos. Thom. 84:2), and the light is concealed in mundane images—i.e., sensible objects (Gos. Thom. 83:1). This situation will change only when we replace the counterfeit image with the true one (Gos. Thom. 22:6). Then and only then will the final restoration take place: humanity will regain its paradigmatic image; the divine light surrounding the image will be revealed; this light will be so bright that no one will be able to see the image (Gos. Thom. 83:2).

The last issue that I must address in this chapter is the seemingly inconsistent use of the singular and plural forms. When Gos. Thom. 84:2 describes the current state of affairs, it refers to divine *images*, in the plural. Thus, not only are



the images hidden, they are also not one, but many. All other sayings, however, deal with the divine *image*, in the singular. Why is this so? It seems reasonable to conjecture that this alternation of the singular number with the plural has something to do with the Thomasine metaphysics of oneness.<sup>107</sup> The Thomasine salvation history is not only about the lost and regained divine image; it is also about the lost and regained oneness.

As I noted in chapter 4, a number of Thomasine sayings are indebted to the Platonist idea of oneness as perfection. Humanity lacks oneness, and the Thomasine Jesus, much like Middle Platonists, exhorts the reader to “become one.” Moreover, just like the Thomasine metaphysics of image is a creative fusion of Platonist and Biblical motifs, so also is the Thomasine metaphysics of oneness. A number of Thomasine sayings (see especially Gos. Thom. 11:4) are likely to presuppose a myth of Adam’s initial oneness. Once again, the Gospel of Thomas offers us a tripartite scheme: mankind was one in the beginning; it is devoid of oneness now; and it will regain its oneness in the future.

Once we compare the “history” of oneness and that of the image, it becomes clear why the image was one in the beginning and will be one in the end, and why it is not one now. The fact that “our” images are many (Gos. Thom. 84:2) indicates that, at the present day, humanity lacks oneness and therefore suffers from imperfection. Once we attain perfection and become one, the divine image will also be one, just as it was one in the beginning.

### Conclusions

I began this chapter with a discussion of the text of Gos. Thom. 83. NHC II is our sole witness for the text of this saying. As a rule, the text of the manuscript, as long as it is grammatical, should be accepted as it stands. Yet Gos. Thom. 83 appears to be an exception to this rule. The expression “the image of the light of the father” is bizarre and does not seem to have any parallels in ancient literature, whereas a small and elegant emendation suggested by the Berliner Arbeitskreis makes the saying comprehensible and draws out its resonance with various Greco-Roman and early Jewish traditions. Moreover, the same emendation transforms the saying into a chiasm, one of the frequently-used literary devices in the Gospel of Thomas.

In my discussion of the background of saying 83, I pointed out that the only intellectual tradition that, just like the Gospel of Thomas, makes a distinc-

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107 For a detailed analysis of this Thomasine motif, see chapter 4.

tion between two types of images, the mundane and divine ones, is Platonism. While Plato uses the term εἰκῶν, “image,” only in the former sense (i.e., as a designation of the sensible objects), Middle Platonists since Philo’s times use this term also as a synonym of παράδειγμα, “model.” Moreover, at least two authors of a Platonist persuasion, Philo and Clement, interpret the creation account in Genesis along the lines of the Platonist metaphysics of the image and thus argue that God’s image, after which humanity was made, was in fact the paradigmatic image.

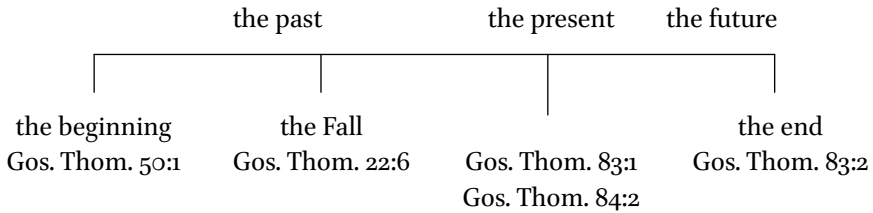
Having discussed the background of saying 83, I proceeded to its interpretation. The first verse of the saying, Gos. Thom. 83:1 describes our existence in the present-day world. The visible images manifest to us are images in Plato’s sense (i.e., sensible objects). There is light in these images, but we cannot see it. The second verse, Gos. Thom. 83:2, describes the moment in the future when the situation will drastically change. Today, we cannot see the light inside the sensible objects. In the future, humanity will regain its divine light—i.e., the splendor that once surrounded the protoplast—and this light will be visible. Humanity will also have restored to it its divine image—i.e., the image according to which the protoplast was made—but, unlike the mundane images of Gos. Thom. 83:1, this image will be invisible because of the brightness of the divine light.

These findings allowed me to gain better insight into other sayings that deal with images. As I pointed out, Gos. Thom. 50:1 deals with protology (i.e., how the paradigmatic image came about). Gos. Thom. 22:6, on the other hand, deals with the tragic moment in the past, when the paradigmatic image, the image of God (Gen 1:26–27 and 5:1 LXX), was replaced with a counterfeit, the image of Adam (Gen 5:3). To attain salvation means to undo this process and to regain the divine image. Gos. Thom. 84:2 deals with the current state of affairs: it describes the relationship between our images and us in the present.

It is worth noting that, just like saying 83 seems to draw on Platonist speculations about mundane and paradigmatic images, so also does saying 84 appear to be aware of the Platonist notions of the likeness and the model. The “likeness” of Gos. Thom. 84:1 is what Plato called ὁμοίωμα in his dialogues: an imitation of a model—e.g., a reflection in the water or a portrait made by an artist. The “image” of Gos. Thom. 84:2 is the model (i.e., the paradigmatic image). Thus, Gos. Thom. 84:1 describes that which imitates us, whereas Gos. Thom. 84:2 describes that which we imitate. In other words, saying 84 portrays the contrast between different levels of being. Just as a human is greater than his or her likeness, so also is the paradigmatic image of this human greater than the human him- or herself.

Having treated each of the relevant sayings individually, I proceeded to a discussion of the Thomasine metaphysics of the image as a whole. Most signif-

icantly, the Gospel of Thomas employs the language of the image to talk about salvation history. The sayings discussed in this chapter provide us with sufficient information to reconstruct the Thomasine views on the three defining points in history (the beginning, the Fall, and the end) and the three historical stages (the past, the present, and the future), represented thus:



In the beginning, the light revealed itself by means of the paradigmatic image (Gos. Thom. 50:1). Later, this image was replaced with a counterfeit (Gos. Thom. 22:6), which is the reason why, today, the light is concealed in mundane images (Gos. Thom. 83:1) and the paradigmatic images do not become manifest (Gos. Thom. 84:2). In the end, the situation will change: the restored image will reveal itself by means of the light (Gos. Thom. 83:2). As this summary demonstrates, Thomasine protology and eschatology do not duplicate each other; the Gospel of Thomas does not envision salvation as merely returning to the original state. Rather, there is an antithetic parallelism between protology and eschatology; the end is, in a way, the opposite of the beginning.

Finally, at the end of this chapter, I offered a reflection on the alternation between the singular and plural numbers in the sayings that deal with the paradigmatic image. The fact that the plural form occurs only in Gos. Thom. 84:2, the saying that deals with the current state of events, makes it likely that the use of the plural number is intentional. As I pointed out, to attain salvation in the Gospel of Thomas means not only to restore the image, but also to “become one.” Moreover, just like we had the image, but lost it, so also we were “one,” but then became “many.” Thus, “our images” in the plural in Gos. Thom. 84:2 reflects the woeful fact that present-day humanity is devoid of oneness.

## Concluding Remarks

A certain sixth-century Alexandrian Neoplatonist wrote the following in the very beginning of his or her<sup>1</sup> introduction to philosophy:

Those who have a longing for philosophical arguments and have tasted their pleasure with the tip of a finger (ἄκρω δακτύλῳ), having bid farewell to all life's cares, are manifestly impelled towards these arguments by some kind of sane madness (σώφρονί τινι μανίᾳ) and rapidly evoke (ψυχάγωγοῦσι) the longing (ἔρωσ) for them by means of the knowledge of the things that are.<sup>2</sup>

This passage describes the force with which philosophy transforms an individual, even if this individual has touched it with just “the tip of a finger.” This individual leaves all his or her earthly concerns behind, yields to “sane madness” and longs for philosophical discourse (an allusion to Plato’s notion of longing, ἔρωσ, as a type of divine madness, θεία μανία; see *Phaedr.* 265a–b).

The Gospel of Thomas is neither a philosophical text nor a Platonist one. Unlike philosophical works, the Gospel of Thomas does not attempt to persuade its readers by means of an argumentative discourse. The majority of Thomasine sayings have nothing to do with Platonist philosophy. The Gospel of Thomas savored the delight of philosophy with the fingertip, which makes it quite understandable why the Platonist flavor of this text went almost unnoticed by scholars of the Gospel of Thomas. Yet even a gentle touch of philosophy makes a significant impact.

As Stephen J. Patterson has put it, Middle Platonism is a “dialect”<sup>3</sup> spoken by the Gospel of Thomas. Surely, the Gospel of Thomas is a polyglot and speaks

1 Although it is often assumed that this text was written by a Christian named David, it is worth noting that we seem to have no reliable information on the identity of its author. As Wildberg 1990, 44–45, demonstrates, except for his name, nothing about David or his works seems to indicate that he was a Christian; it is entirely possible that these works were originally anonymous and were only later attributed to an author with a Christian name.

2 David, *Proleg. philos.* 1.4–7 Busse.

3 Patterson 2013, 36.

many tongues, but Platonism is important nonetheless. In this book, I have demonstrated that Platonism provides us with a better understanding of some sayings in the Gospel of Thomas. Moreover, Platonism is the key to gaining insight into a number of the Thomasine sayings that have for decades been exegetical problems (e.g., Gos. Thom. 7, 61, and 83). Without appreciating the Thomasine appropriation of Platonist metaphysics, a considerable number of its sayings would remain a riddle wrapped in enigma.

At this point, it seems appropriate to repeat what I have already noted in chapter 1: it is impossible to produce a reliable reconstruction of the compositional history of the Gospel of Thomas; hence, it seems reasonable to focus on the text attested by the extant witnesses. The subject of this study, therefore, was the prototype of P.Oxy. 1.1, P.Oxy. 4.654, P.Oxy. 4.655, and the second writing of NHC II. This prototype was a Greek text composed somewhere between the late first and early third centuries CE; it is this text that throughout this study has been called the Gospel of Thomas.

In this book, the sayings that exhibit Platonizing tendencies were discussed in their Thomasine textual performance and as an integral part of the Gospel of Thomas. The questions of the provenances of these sayings, their “original” formulations (if different from the Thomasine one), their reception in late antique Egypt, etc., lie outside the scope of this study. Having made this clarification, it is now appropriate to make an inventory of the Platonizing sayings in the Gospel of Thomas:

- (i) Sayings 56 and 80 make use of the Platonist notions that the world is a body and that every human body is a corpse in order to express a view of the world that is essentially anti-Platonist: the world is nothing but a despicable corpse.
- (ii) The opposition of the body to the soul portrayed in sayings 29, 87, and 112 presupposes a stark dualism of the corporeal vs. the incorporeal and appears to be indebted to Platonist anthropology.
- (iii) The Thomasine notion of being/becoming  $\sigma\upsilon\lambda\alpha$  (sayings 11 and 106),  $\sigma\upsilon\lambda\alpha$   $\sigma\upsilon\omega\tau$  (saying 4, 22, and 23), and  $\mu\omicron\nu\alpha\lambda\omicron\varsigma$  (sayings 16, 49, and 75) has the closest parallels within Platonist speculation about oneness as an attribute of a perfect human, a perfect society, and God.
- (iv) The expression  $\omega\rho\epsilon$   $\epsilon\rho\alpha\tau\epsilon\iota\varsigma$  in sayings 16, 18, 23, and 50 reflects the Platonist usage of the Greek verb  $\iota\sigma\tau\eta\mu\iota$  as a technical term for describing the immovability of the transcendent realm.
- (v) Gos. Thom. 61 appropriates the opposition of being equal (to oneself) vs. being divided from the Platonist metaphysics of divine immutability and indivisibility.

- (vi) The imagery of the lion and the man in saying 7 portrays the struggle between reason and anger and is derived from Plato's allegory of the soul, reinterpreted from a Middle Platonist perspective.
- (vii) The notion of the image in sayings 22, 50, 83, and 84 should be interpreted against the background of the Middle Platonist metaphysics, where the Greek term εἰκῶν came to designate both the model (= παράδειγμα) and its imitation (= ὁμοίωμα).

As this inventory shows, there are at least nineteen Thomasine sayings (i.e., one-sixth of the entire collection) that were in some way influenced by the Platonist tradition.<sup>4</sup> While this discovery is important, its significance has its limits. For instance, the fact that the Gospel of Thomas is a Platonizing text seems to have no bearing on the question of its date. As recent studies have demonstrated (see chapter 1), Platonist theories already made an impact on the first generations of Jesus believers. In other words, the Platonist nature of a given Christian text is an indicator of its author's theological preferences, but not of the historical period from which it comes.

It should also be noted that a number of questions related to the Platonizing tendencies in the Gospel of Thomas will most probably remain unanswered. It seems unlikely, for instance, that the people behind the Gospel of Thomas identified themselves as "Platonic philosophers" or ever had any Platonist affiliations. It is also unlikely that they were either versed in the "proper" philosophical literature or informed of the dogmatic divides between the contemporary schools. Yet they had some knowledge of Platonism. Where did it come from? Did Plato's name ring a bell for any of them? Would they ever have admitted that the Gospel of Thomas is indebted to the Platonist tradition?

What seems clear, at any rate, is that the nineteen Platonizing sayings and, consequently, the Gospel of Thomas as a whole bear testimony to the fact that, during the nascent years of Christianity, certain individuals acknowledged *de facto* that the Platonist tradition possessed theoretical principles, concepts, and terminologies that could adequately describe and convincingly explain the nature of ultimate reality. These Christians recognized, though perhaps only implicitly, the validity of the claim that Plato, at least to a certain degree, came to know the way things truly are.

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4 Sayings 4, 7, 11, 16, 18, 22, 23, 29, 49, 50, 56, 61, 75, 80, 83, 84, 87, 106, and 112; of those, sayings 16, 22, 23, and 50 combine several Platonizing notions: oneness and immovability (sayings 16 and 23), oneness and paradigmatic image (saying 22), and paradigmatic image and immovability (saying 50).

The Gospel of Thomas is neither the first nor the only early Christian text with Platonizing tendencies. Rather, it appears to be an important witness to the early stages of the process that eventually led to the formulation of Christian dogmas in Platonist terms. This brings me to the last issue that has to be mentioned in these concluding remarks: prospects for future research. The history of early Christian engagement with Platonism is yet to be written. While quite a few scholars have recently written on Platonizing tendencies in particular early Christian texts (and with this book I aspire to join their ranks), a lot of work is still ahead of us before the appearance of a study offering a comprehensive analysis of the phenomenon. We are still to learn to what extent Middle Platonism influenced early Christianity and why early Christians found Platonist metaphysics attractive in the first place.

## The Greek *Vorlage* of Gos. Thom. 12:2

In chapter 1, I have dealt with the “mixed signals” of saying 12. It is worth noting that the text of this saying appears to be problematic. Since the analysis of Gos. Thom. 12 plays an important role in my discussion of the date and compositional history of the Gospel of Thomas, it seems justified to give here a treatment of the problems related to the text of this saying.

The expression ΠΜΑ ΝΤΑΤΕΤῆΙ ΜῆΜΑΥ, “(the place) where<sup>1</sup> you came from,” in Gos. Thom. 12:2 is problematic. Quite remarkably, the Berliner Arbeitskreis offers two different interpretations of this phrase. In the first edition of their translation of the Gospel of Thomas, they suggested that ΠΜΑ renders the Greek expression ὅπου ἐάν, as it does in the Sahidic translation of Matt 8:19. According to their hypothesis, in the Greek *Vorlage* ὅπου ἐάν was followed by a verb in the aorist subjunctive, which was probably confused with the aorist in the indicative and thus rendered as the Coptic perfect. Assuming that ΜῆΜΑΥ should be understood as ΕΜΑΥ,<sup>2</sup> they suggested the following rendering of ΠΜΑ ΝΤΑΤΕΤῆΙ ΜῆΜΑΥ: “Wherever you will have come to.” This is essentially a translation not of the Coptic text, but of its Greek retroversion, ὅπου ἐάν ἔλθῃτε.<sup>3</sup>

In the subsequent editions of the translation by the Berliner Arbeitskreis, this hypothesis was revised. According to their second, much more appealing, proposal, εἰ ΜῆΜΑΥ in Gos. Thom. 12:2 stands in contrast to ΒΘΚ ΟΥΔ, “to go to,” and thus should express the idea of “coming from.” Indeed, there are reasons to suspect that ΜῆΜΑΥ can be used as an equivalent of ΕΒΟΛ ΝῆΗΤϣ or ΕΒΟΛ ΜῆΜΑΥ.<sup>4</sup> Thus, the definitive English translation of Gos. Thom. 12 prepared by the Berliner Arbeitskreis (and slightly modified by Stephen J. Patterson and James M. Robinson) reads as follows:<sup>5</sup>

12:1 The disciples said to Jesus: “We know that you will depart from us. Who (then) will rule over us?” 12:2 Jesus said to them: “(No matter) where you came from, you should go to James the Just for whose sake heaven and earth came into being.”

1 For ΠΜΑ expanded by a relative clause constituting a subordinate “where”-clause, see Layton 2011, 429 (§ 522).

2 It is worth noting that the substitution of ΕΜΑΥ with ΜῆΜΑΥ is a rare and late phenomenon; see Crum 1939, 197a.

3 See Bethge et al. 1996, 522; Plisch 1999, 526.

4 See Plisch 1998, 77; Bethge 1998, 45.

5 Bethge et al. 2011, 3; cf. Bethge et al. 2005, 522. This understanding of the Coptic text of Gos. Thom. 12:2 was embraced in Nagel 2014, 113.



Yet the text of Gos. Thom. 12:2 remains problematic. In the Sahidic New Testament, πμα often renders an adverb of place: ὅπου, οὐ, ὅθεν, etc.<sup>6</sup> This is also the case with Gos. Thom. 30:1–2. Unfortunately, the Coptic text of this saying is extremely problematic, the Greek text preserved in P.Oxy. 1.1, ll. 23–27 has suffered serious damage, and the relationship between the two is unclear, since there are several significant differences between the two texts.<sup>7</sup> It is clear, however, that πμα in Gos. Thom. 30:1 and 30:2 renders Greek ὅπου.

It follows that πμα in saying 12 likely corresponds to a Greek adverb of place. If, as the Berliner Arbeitskreis argues, ἡμαγ in Gos. Thom. 12:2 is an equivalent of εβολ ἡμαγ, we might conclude that behind the phrase πμα ντατετῆει ἡμαγ lies something like ὀπόθεν ἦλθετε, “where you came from.” This phrase, however, hardly makes good sense in the context of saying 12: note the parenthetical words the Berliner Arbeitskreis inserts into their translation in order to make the English text coherent.

It is tempting to suppose that the original Greek text of Gos. Thom. 12:2 meant something along the lines of what the Berliner Arbeitskreis has suggested; in this case we must surmise that πμα ντατετῆει ἡμαγ is a clumsy translation of a Greek idiom. Which idiom could that be? Translating the Gospel of Thomas back into Greek is certainly an ungrateful task, yet in this particular instance, in order to make sense of Gos. Thom. 12:2, it is necessary at least to make an attempt to reconstruct the original Greek text and to propose a scenario that would explain the emergence of πμα ντατετῆει ἡμαγ.

The second retroversion suggested by the Berliner Arbeitskreis is πόθεν ἔλθητε.<sup>8</sup> This retroversion is hardly plausible, since πόθεν is an interrogative adverb. Moreover, the relative clause that employs the subjunctive mood usually requires the particle ἄν.<sup>9</sup> I would, therefore, suggest that the Greek text behind πμα ντατετῆει ἡμαγ is ὀπόθεν ἄν ἔλθητε, “wherever you come from”; cf. ἡνίκα ἄν ἔλθητε (Judg 18:10 LXX), “whenever you go.” If πμα ντατετῆει ἡμαγ indeed corresponds to ὀπόθεν ἄν ἔλθητε of the *Vorlage*, then we may surmise that the Coptic translator struggled with the Greek syntax of Gos. Thom. 12:2 and came up with only an approximate translation.

To complete the picture, I suggest an alternative scenario: it is also possible that the Greek text available to the translator was corrupt and indeed read ὀπόθεν ἦλθετε, “where

6 See Wilmet 1957–1959, 1:314–324; cf. Crum 1939, 154b.

7 For an attempt to resolve some of the difficulties pertaining to this saying, see Attridge 1979; see also chapter 2.

8 See Plisch 2008, 60. Curiously enough, the retroversion of this phrase in Bethge et al. 2005, 522, is identical with that of Bethge et al. 1996, 522 (ὅπου ἔάν ἔλθητε), which seems to be due to an oversight.

9 See, e.g., Turner 1963, 107.

you came from,” instead of *ὅπόθεν ἄν ἔλθητε*. According to this scenario, at some point *ἔλθητε* was confused with *ἦλθετε*, whereas *ἄν* was omitted due to a homoeoteleuton.

While both of these scenarios start from unverifiable assumptions (i.e., either a somewhat incompetent scribe or a corrupt Greek manuscript), they at least shed some light on what could have brought about the phrasing of Gos. Thom. 12:2. I propose, therefore, that Gos. Thom. 12:2 originally read *ὅπόθεν ἄν ἔλθητε*, “wherever you come from,” which agrees with the basic premise of the second translation proposed by the Berliner Arbeitskreis. The Coptic text that we have, *πμα ντατετ̄νει ἡμαγ*, “the place where you came from,” is either a clumsy translation of the original reading, or an accurate rendering of a corrupt one, which could have been *ὅπόθεν ἦλθετε*.

## The Secondary Nature of Gos. Thom. 5:3

In chapter 1, I pointed out that when the readings of ΝΗC II and the Oxyrhynchus fragments differ, we do not always have to take the reading preserved by the Oxyrhynchus fragments to be the more original one. In this appendix, I will argue that Gos. Thom. 5 presents us with a case where ΝΗC II has priority over P.Oxy. 4.654. One difference between the two witnesses to the text of saying 5 is quite remarkable: whereas P.Oxy. 4.654 includes Gos. Thom. 5:3, ΝΗC II omits the entire verse. In what follows, I will demonstrate that the Coptic version preserves the original text of the saying and that the extra verse in P.Oxy. 4.654 is a secondary development.

### Gos. Thom. 5 (ΝΗC II)

5:1a πεξε ιϛ̅ χε  
 5:1b σοϣων πετ̅η̅πι̅το̅ η̅πεκρο εβολ  
 5:1c αϣω πεθηπ εροκ  
 5:1d φνασωλπ εβολ νακ  
 5:2a μη̅ λααγ γαρ εφρηπ  
 5:2b εφναοϣωνη εβολ αν

### Gos. Thom. 5 (P.Oxy. 4.654)

5:1a λέγει Ἰη(σοῦ)ς·  
 5:1b γ[νωθι τὸ ὄν ἐμπροσ]θεν τῆς ὀψεώς σου,  
 5:1c καὶ [τὸ κεκρυμμένον]<sup>1</sup> ἀπὸ σου  
 5:1d ἀποκαλυφ(θ)ήσεται[αὶ σοι]·  
 5:2a [οὐ γάρ ἐσ]τιν κρυπτὸν  
 5:2b ὃ οὐ φανε[ρὸν γενήσεται],  
 5:3a καὶ θεθαμμένον<sup>2</sup>  
 5:3b ὃ ο[ὐκ ἐγερθήσεται].<sup>3</sup>

1 This restoration presupposes that ϣηπ in Gos. Thom. 5:1c and 5:2a corresponds to two cognate words in the Greek text; cf. Johnson 2010, 325–326. The restoration preferred in Attridge 1989a, 115, [τὸ κεκαλυμμένον], is less likely, since the usual Coptic equivalent of the Greek verb καλύπτω and its cognates is ϣωβϛ; see, e.g., the Sahidic version of Matt 10:26.

2 Read τεθαμμένον.

3 This restoration, suggested already in the *editio princeps* (Grenfell and Hunt 1904, 18) is plausible, though not uncontested (see the apparatus in Attridge 1989a, 115). It is worth noting that the funerary shroud, which contains a parallel to the text of Gos. Thom. 5:3 (published in Puech 1955, 127), appears to be a modern forgery (Alin Suciu, personal communication; cf. the remark by Willy Clarysse and Peter van Minnen that “this is no doubt a falsum” on Leuven Database of Ancient Books, [www.trismegistos.org/text/62841](http://www.trismegistos.org/text/62841)). The only image of it is published as the frontispiece of Puech 1978. According to Luijendijk 2011, 390, the present whereabouts of the shroud are unknown.

## Gos. Thom. 5 (NHC II)

5:1a Jesus said,  
 5:1b “Recognize what is in your (sg.) sight,  
 5:1c and that which is hidden from you (sg.)  
 5:1d will become plain to you (sg.).  
 5:2a For there is nothing hidden  
 5:2b that will not become manifest.”

## Gos. Thom. 5 (P.Oxy. 4.654)

5:1a Jesus said,  
 5:1b “[Recognize what is in] your (sg.) sight,  
 5:1c and [that which is hidden] from you (sg.)  
 5:1d will become plain [to you (sg.)].  
 5:2a [For there is nothing] hidden  
 5:2b which [will] not [become] manifest,  
 5:3a nor buried  
 5:3b that [will not be raised].”

A hidden/revealed saying similar to that of Gos. Thom. 5:1c–2b is attested in the Synoptic gospels (Mark 4:22; Matt 10:26; Luke 8:17 and 12:2). Scholars have long realized that Gos. Thom. 5:3a–b, the resurrection strophe, was a secondary expansion of the saying.<sup>4</sup> It is worth noting, however, that, whereas this strophe is not a part of the original hidden/revealed saying, it may still have been a part of the original the Gospel of Thomas. On this latter issue, scholars have postulated different scenarios. Some have argued that the resurrection strophe was added to saying 5 at some point of the textual transmission of the Gospel of Thomas.<sup>5</sup> Others have suggested that P.Oxy. 4.654 preserved the original text of the saying. Of this latter camp of scholars, some have thought that the resurrection strophe was deliberately deleted by a later editor.<sup>6</sup> Others have argued that a copyist could have accidentally omitted it due to a homoeoteleuton (γενήσεται ... ἐγερθήσεται).<sup>7</sup> Finally, AnneMarie Luijendijk believes that it is impossible to ascertain whether the resurrection strophe was omitted from or added to the original text of the Gospel of Thomas.<sup>8</sup>

It is hard to disagree with Luijendijk: caution is always appropriate in matters pertaining to textual criticism. Steven R. Johnson’s recent attempt to solve the problem of

4 See, e.g., Jeremias 1958, 16; Bultmann 1972, 91 and 94; Fitzmyer 1974, 383–384.

5 See, e.g., Grobel 1961–1962, 368–369; Marcovich 1988, 67–68; Patterson 1993, 21; Riley 1995, 165–167; DeConick 2007, 60.

6 See, e.g., Mueller 1973, 269; Dunderberg 2006, 62–63.

7 See, e.g., Gärtner 1961, 83–84.

8 Luijendijk 2013, 295: “Whether the longer form of the saying results from an ‘orthodox corruption’ of the *Gospel of Thomas* by addition of this phrase to a form of the saying as now preserved in NHC II, or whether the shorter Nag Hammadi reading is an abbreviation by a more spiritually-minded Christian, cannot be determined on the basis of the current evidence.”

Gos. Thom. 5:3a–b is a nice illustration of the fact that you can never be too careful. According to Johnson, it is NHC II that preserves the original Thomasine reading, since the scenario in which the resurrection strophe was added to the original the Gospel of Thomas is much easier to imagine than the alternative. In this case, we simply presume that the Gospel of Thomas originally contained the hidden/revealed saying similar to the one attested by the Synoptics and that, at some point, this Thomasine saying was supplemented by the resurrection strophe. The alternative scenario is much more complicated, since, in this case, “one must postulate *two* stages of redaction: the insertion of the resurrection strophe at some point of time in the transmission history of the Gospel of Thomas, as reflected in Greek Thomas 5; and its subsequent omission at a later date, as represented by Coptic Thomas 5.”<sup>9</sup>

While the argument by principle of *lex parsimoniae* is perfectly acceptable—indeed, as Morton Smith put it, history is “the most probable account of what happened”<sup>10</sup>—it does not seem to apply in this particular situation. Johnson’s argument does not seem to work, because both of his proposed scenarios presuppose two redactional stages. Even if Gos. Thom. 5:3a–b were a later expansion of the text, Gos. Thom. 5:1a–b cannot be, since it is present both in NHC II and P.Oxy. 4.654. Because Gos. Thom. 5:1a–b does not have any parallels in the Synoptics, it must belong to the Thomasine redaction. Hence, according to one scenario, the first stage of redaction was the insertion of Gos. Thom. 5:1a–b and the second the insertion of Gos. Thom. 5:3a–b; according to another scenario, the first stage of redaction was the insertion of Gos. Thom. 5:1a–b and 5:3a–b and the second the omission of Gos. Thom. 5:3a–b.

	Pre-Thomasine saying	First redaction (original Gospel of Thomas)	Second redaction
Scenario #1	Gos. Thom. 5:1c–2b	+ Gos. Thom. 5:1a–b	+ Gos. Thom. 5:3a–b
Scenario #2	Gos. Thom. 5:1c–2b	+ Gos. Thom. 5:1a–b + Gos. Thom. 5:3a–b	– Gos. Thom. 5:3a–b

Thus, what is left of Johnson’s argument is an appeal to common sense: Scenario #2 appears to be a little suspicious, since it presupposes that the same strophe was first inserted and then omitted. Yet this hypothetical course of events is imaginable and cannot be dismissed without further argumentation to the contrary.

9 Johnson 2002, 178–179.

10 Smith 1996, 1:4.

Nevertheless, I do not think that the situation is hopeless. I suggest that Scenario #1 is more likely and that the formal structure of saying 5 indicates that Gos. Thom. 5:3a–b was a secondary expansion. First, there can be little doubt that the Synoptic/pre-Thomasine version of the hidden/revealed saying has a parallel structure: hidden—manifest / hidden—manifest (A—B / A—B). The following synoptic table illustrates the structure of the saying according to Gos. Thom. 5:1c–2b and Matt 10:26:

Gos. Thom. 5:1c–2b			Matt 10:26		
A	5:1c	καὶ [τὸ κεκρυμμένον] ἀπὸ σου	A		οὐδὲν γὰρ ἔστιν κεκαλυμμένον
B	5:1d	ἀποκαλυφ(θ)ήσεται[αἱ σοι].	B		ὁ οὐκ ἀποκαλυφθήσεται,
A	5:2a	[οὐ γὰρ ἔσ]τιν κρυπτὸν	A		καὶ κρυπτὸν
B	5:2b	ὁ οὐ φανε[ρὸν γενήσεται].	B		ὁ οὐ γνωσθήσεται.

Once the hidden/revealed saying became a part of the Gospel of Thomas and was expanded by Gos. Thom. 5:1b, it could no longer retain the formal structure it had before. The redactor, however, did not destroy or disregard the parallelism of the saying; rather, he transformed it. Whereas in the pre-Thomasine version of the saying, Gos. Thom. 5:1c and 5:1d functioned as two opposing units, in the Gospel of Thomas they form a single unit: Gos. Thom. 5:1c–d. In this new parallel structure, Gos. Thom. 5:1c–d stands opposite to Gos. Thom. 5:1b, just as Gos. Thom. 5:2b stands opposite to Gos. Thom. 5:2a. As a result, the redactor came up with a chiasmic saying: come to know that which is *manifest* and you will know that which is *hidden*, for there is nothing *hidden* which will not become *manifest* (B—A / A—B).<sup>11</sup> The following table illustrates the new parallel structure of the saying:

B	5:1b	γ[νώθι τὸ ὄν ἔμπροσ]θεν τῆς ὀψιῶς σου,
A	5:1c–d	καὶ [τὸ κεκρυμμένον] ἀπὸ σου ἀποκαλυφ(θ)ήσεται[αἱ σοι].
A	5:2a	[οὐ γὰρ ἔσ]τιν κρυπτὸν
B	5:2b	ὁ οὐ φανε[ρὸν γενήσεται].

The fact that Gos. Thom. 5:1b–2b is a chiasm is crucial for the textual criticism of the saying. After the insertion of Gos. Thom. 5:1b, the saying acquired its chiasmic structure. Gos. Thom. 5:3a–b, the resurrection strophe, disturbs this chiasmic structure; hence, it

<sup>11</sup> Chiasm appears to be one of the more frequently-used structural devices in the Gospel of Thomas. See the discussion in chapter 8 (pp. 223–225).

seems reasonable to give preference to Scenario #1, which presupposes the insertion of Gos. Thom. 5:1a–b and 5:3a–b at two different redactional stages. Thus, Gos. Thom. 5:3a–b must be a later addition.

Moreover, it seems that the person who added the resurrection strophe to the saying did not recognize that it was a chiasm. Having ignored Gos. Thom. 5:1b, he disregarded the structural difference between the Thomasine and Synoptic versions of the hidden/revealed saying. Treating the Thomasine version of the saying as if it were formally identical with the Synoptic one (A—B / A—B), he inserted Gos. Thom. 5:3a–b as a third parallel unit, where being buried and being raised correspond to the being hidden and being manifest of the first two parallel members. As a result, he came up with the parallel structure (A—B / A—B / A—B) that follows Gos. Thom. 5:1a–b:

	5:1a–b	λέγει Ἰη(σοῦ)ς· γ[νῶθι τὸ ὄν ἔμπροσ]θεν τῆς ὀψεώς σου,
A	5:1c	καὶ [τὸ κεκρυμμένον] ἀπὸ σου
B	5:1d	ἀποκαλυφ(θ)ήσεται[αὶ σοι].
A	5:2a	[οὐ γὰρ ἐσ]τιν κρυπτὸν
B	5:2b	ὃ οὐ φανε[ρὸν γενήσεται],
A	5:3a	καὶ θεθαμμένον
B	5:3b	ὃ ο[ὐκ ἐγε]ρθήσεται].

In sum, there were three stages in the development of the hidden/revealed saying: (1) the pre-Thomasine version, attested by the Synoptics; (2) the original Thomasine version, attested by ΝΗC II; (3) the secondary expansion of the Thomasine text, attested by P.Oxy. 4.654. As this survey has demonstrated, saying 5 provides us with an example of the priority of the Coptic text over the Greek fragments of the Gospel of Thomas.

## A Note on Gos. Thom. 77:1

In chapter 2, I have argued that the stone/wood saying was originally preceded by Gos. Thom. 30:1–2, and that the sequence we find in NHC II, where the stone/wood saying follows Gos. Thom. 77:1, is secondary. This conclusion arouses suspicion that Gos. Thom. 77:1 could have been a later addition to the Gospel of Thomas. In what follows, I will argue that this is not the case; rather, Gos. Thom. 77:1 was part of the original text.

77:1a πεξε ιϛ δε ανοκ πε πογοειν παει ετχιλωου τηρουγ  
 77:1b ανοκ πε πτηρηγ  
 77:1c ν̄τα πτηρηγ ει εβολ ν̄ρητ  
 77:1d αγω ν̄τα πτηρηγ πωρ ωαροει

77:1a Jesus said: “It is I who am the light which is above them all.  
 77:1b It is I who am the all.  
 77:1c From me did the all come forth,  
 77:1d and unto me did the all extend.”

In Gos. Thom. 77:1a Jesus says that he is the light that is “above them all (χιλωου τηρουγ).” The identity of “them” appears to be obscure. One could, perhaps, argue that Jesus refers to the moth (χοολες) and the worm (υφν̄τ) of Gos. Thom. 76:3. This, however, appears to be a very unlikely option: successive Thomazine sayings may be united by catchwords or a common theme, but they never contain explicit references to each other.

It seems more plausible that χιλωου τηρουγ in the Coptic text is a clumsy rendering of ἐπάνω πάντων or a similar Greek expression. In fact, a very similar rendering is present in another saying, Gos. Thom. 6:4, which is partially preserved in Greek. While the relevant part of the Greek text is lost, Attridge’s restoration seems to be secure, so we can be fairly certain that “they all” in the Coptic version corresponds to πάντα in the original Greek text:



## Gos. Thom. 6:4 (P.Oxy. 4.654)

## Gos. Thom. 6:4 (NHC II)

[πάντα ἐνώπιον τῆς ἀληθείας  
ἀν[αφαίνεται].

ϞΕϞΟΛΠ ΤΗΡΟΥ ΕΒΟΛ ἸΠΕΜΤΟ ΕΒΟΛ  
ἸΤ(Μ)Ε<sup>1</sup>

[*All things* are plain in the sight] of truth. *They all* are plain in the sight of (truth).

Moreover, the Greek phrase ἐπάνω πάντων is translated as “above them all” in the early Fayyūmic (dialect *F4*) version of John 3:31. This verse is preserved by a Greek-Coptic diglot stored at the British Library (Or. 5707).<sup>2</sup> The manuscript has been dated paleographically to the sixth century CE.<sup>3</sup> The following synoptic table compares the Greek and early Fayyūmic texts of John 3:31 according to this manuscript:

ὁ ἄνω[ω]θεν ἐρχόμενος ἐπάνω πάντων ἐστίν·  
ὁ [ὧν ἐ]κ τῆ[ῆ]ς γῆς [ἐκ τῆς γῆς ἐ]στι καὶ ἐκ  
τῆς γῆς λαλεῖ. ὁ ἐκ τοῦ οὐ(ρα)νοῦ ἐρχόμενος  
ἐπάνω πάντων(ν) ἐστίν.<sup>4</sup>

ΠΕΤΑϞΙ Ε[ΒΑΛ] ΖΜ ΠΧΙ[ϞΙ ϞΕ]ΧΕΝ ΟΥ[ΔΑΝ  
ΝΙΒΙ] Π[ΙΕ]ΒΑΛ Δ[Ε ΖΜ ΠΚΕ]ΖΙ ΟΥ[ΕΒΑΛ]  
Ζ[Μ ΠΚΕ]ΖΙ ΠΕ[ ΔΥΩ ΔϞΥΕΧΙ ΕΒΑΛ ΖΜ  
ΠΚΕΖΙ · ΠΕΤΑϞΙ ΕΒΑΛ ΖΜ ΠΧΙϞΙ · ϞϞΑΠΧΙϞΙ  
ΜΜΔΥ ΤΗΛΟΥ<sup>5</sup>

The one who comes from above is above all; the one [who is] of the earth belongs [to the earth] and speaks about earthly things. The one who comes from heaven is above all (NRSV).

The one who comes from on high is above everyone; the one who is out of the earth is out of the earth; and it is out of the earth that he speaks. The one who comes from on high is above them all.

As this synoptic table demonstrates, in the early Fayyūmic version of John 3:31, the Greek phrase ἐπάνω πάντων ἐστίν is rendered in two different ways. In the first instance, it is translated as [ϞΕ]ΧΕΝ ΟΥ[ΔΑΝ ΝΙΒΙ], “he is above everyone” (cf. ϞΕΙΧΝ̄ ΟΥΟΝ ΝΙΜ in the Sahidic version of John 3:31 and ϞϞΑΠϞΩΙ ΝΟΥΟΝ ΝΙΒΕΝ in the Bohairic one). In the second instance, however, it is translated as ϞϞΑΠΧΙϞΙ ΜΜΔΥ ΤΗΛΟΥ, “he is above

1 This emendation is discussed in chapter 1 (p. 35).

2 It is numbered as Uncial 086 in the Gregory-Aland system and as fa 6 in the SMR database. See Aland and Aland 1989, 120; Askeland 2012, 158–160.

3 See Crum and Kenyon 1900, 415.

4 Schmid, Elliott, and Parker 2007, 92–93.

5 Crum and Kenyon 1900, 425.

them all.” This translation is clumsy, as it results in the sudden appearance of “them.” It is very likely that the Coptic text of Gos. Thom. 77:1a is similarly a result of a poor decision made by the translator.

Since the Coptic text of Gos. Thom. 77:1a is a clumsy translation of the Greek text, it follows that Gos. Thom. 77:1 likely existed before it was joined together with Gos. Thom. 77:2–3 (as I have argued in chapter 2, Gos. Thom. 77:1 and 77:2–3 were probably joined together at the Coptic stage of the transmission of the text). What is less clear is whether or not Gos. Thom. 77:1 was part of the original Gospel of Thomas. While some might think that it was, others might suspect that it was a later addition. The following two tables describe these two possible scenarios:

Scenario #1

Original Gospel of Thomas	Redaction #1
Gos. Thom. 30:1–4	– Gos. Thom. 30:3–4
Gos. Thom. 77:1	+ Gos. Thom. 77:2–3

Scenario #2

Original Gospel of Thomas	Redaction #1	Redaction #2
Gos. Thom. 30:1–4		– Gos. Thom. 30:3–4
	+ Gos. Thom. 77:1	+ Gos. Thom. 77:2–3

While Scenario #1 involves only one editorial stage, Scenario #2 presupposes two such stages. It seems reasonable, therefore, to prefer Scenario #1 as the more economical explanation—that is, unless there is a reason to give preference to the more complex option. Indeed, one might argue that there is perhaps such a reason: while in sayings 56 and 80, Jesus says that the world is a corpse, in Gos. Thom. 77:1, he declares that he is the all. The latter claim seems to have pantheistic overtones and thus seems to contradict the former with its emphatically negative attitude towards the universe.

It is worth noting, however, that, whereas ancient readers of Gos. Thom. 77:1 would certainly have understood the text as a pantheistic statement, this does not necessarily mean that a pantheistic interpretation does justice to Gos. Thom. 77:1. It is more reasonable to approach Jesus’ statement in Gos. Thom. 77:1b, ἀνοκ πε πτηρυϛ (“I am the

all”), in its immediate context. In Gos. Thom. 77:1c–d, Jesus says that the all (πτηρη) came from him and reached him, which implies that Jesus and the all are two separate entities, at least to some extent. This distinction between Jesus and the all is also presupposed in Gos. Thom. 77:1a, where Jesus says that he is “the light that is above all.” Hence, the words ἀνοκ πη πτηρη should not be taken at face value, but with a certain qualification: Jesus is not the all in the absolute sense; rather, in some respect, he is the all and, in some respect, he is not.

Since, in Gos. Thom. 77:1a, Jesus explicitly describes himself as the light, it follows that, according to Gos. Thom. 77:1b, he is the all in so far as he is the light. The idea that Jesus as the light is the all appears to be in line with other Thomasine sayings. According to the Gospel of Thomas, ultimate reality, which can be called either “the kingdom” or “the light” (these two names of ultimate reality are essentially synonymous; see, for instance, Gos. Thom. 49:2 and 50:1), is spread out upon the earth (saying 113). As I point out in chapter 2, according to Gos. Thom. 30:3–4, Jesus (who, incidentally, calls himself “the light” in Gos. Thom. 77:1a) is omnipresent, for he pervades everything, including lifeless objects. Finally, as I argue in chapter 8, Gos. Thom. 83:1 advances the idea that there is light within mundane objects. These Thomasine parallels make it plausible that Gos. Thom. 77:1b should be understood to the effect that Jesus is the all inasmuch as he is the all-pervading light. Thus, Gos. Thom. 77:1a–b seems to describe the dual nature of Jesus: he is the light that is both above everything and in everything; he is omnipresent, yet superior to all things.

This interpretation of Gos. Thom. 77:1 seems to provide us with an opportunity to gain better insight into the reason why the stone/wood saying was moved to the place it occupies in ΝΗC II (Gos. Thom. 77:1 → Gos. Thom. 77:2–3). The redactor responsible for this rearrangement likely discovered that the stone/wood saying may supplement the portrayal of Jesus as the light. In other words, in the context of saying 77, the stone/wood saying describes Jesus’ luminous nature. As Sellev puts it, “What places are darker and less open to the light, under normal circumstances, than the inside of logs and what lies underneath stones?”<sup>6</sup> Hence, the point that Jesus makes in Gos. Thom. 77:2–3 is that, as the light, he is able to reach and illuminate the darkest and remotest places. It is possible that by adding the stone/wood saying to Gos. Thom. 77:1, the redactor made an attempt to reconcile the two aspects of Jesus’ nature described in Gos. Thom. 77:1a–b. Jesus can be superior to everything and, at the same time, omnipresent thanks to the all-pervading nature of light. As the sun is above all things and at the same time reaches everything with its rays of light, so also is Jesus as a luminous being above everything and at the same time pervades everything.<sup>7</sup>

6 Sellev 2006, 51.

7 Cf. Eisele 2010, 167–168.

To sum up, while Gos. Thom. 77:1 and 77:2–3 were probably juxtaposed only at the Coptic stage, there seems to be no good reason to assume that Gos. Thom. 77:1 was a later addition to the “original” Gospel of Thomas. This saying seems to be at home with other Thomasine passages that describe ultimate reality as the light that is alien to this world, yet somehow present in it. As for the stone/wood saying, while it was not originally a part of saying 77, the redactor’s decision to rearrange the original text was not entirely unreasonable: after it was added to Gos. Thom. 77:1, it became an important part of the description of Jesus as the light.

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