

## THE COMPOSITION OF THE GOSPEL OF THOMAS

This book addresses two central questions in current research on the *Gospel of Thomas*: what was its original language, and which early Christian works influenced it? At present, theories of *Thomas* as a Semitic work abound. Simon Gathercole dismantles these approaches, arguing instead that *Thomas* is Greek literature, and that the matter of *Thomas*'s original language is connected with an even more controversial question: that of the relationship between *Thomas* and the canonical New Testament. Rather than arguing that *Thomas* is independent of Matthew, Mark and Luke (as in most Western Aramaic theories of *Thomas*) or thoroughly dependent on the four Gospels (as in most Syriac approaches), Gathercole develops a newly refined approach to how *Thomas* is influenced by the Synoptic Gospels. *Thomas* can be seen to refer to Matthew as a Gospel writer, and evidence is discussed showing that *Thomas* incorporates phraseology distinctive to Luke, while also extending that special Lukan language.

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# The Composition of the Gospel of Thomas

Original Language and Influences

SIMON GATHERCOLE



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*Soli deo gloria.*

## ABBREVIATIONS

AB	Anchor Bible
AH	<i>Against Heresies/Adversus Haereses</i> (of Irenaeus)
ANRW	<i>Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt</i>
ARC	<i>ARC, The Journal of the Faculty of Religious Studies</i> (McGill University)
Asc. Isa.	<i>Ascension of Isaiah</i>
As. Mos.	<i>Assumption of Moses</i>
ATANT	Abhandlungen zur Theologie des Alten und Neuen Testaments
BCNH	Bibliothèque copte de Nag Hammadi
BETL	Bibliotheca Ephemeridum theologiarum Lovaniensium
BHT	Beiträge zur historischen Theologie
BIFAO	<i>Bulletin de l'Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale</i>
BThZ	<i>Berliner Theologische Zeitschrift</i>
BZ	<i>Biblische Zeitschrift</i>
BZNW	Beihefte zur <i>Zeitschrift für die Neutestamentliche Wissenschaft</i>
CBQ	<i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i>
c. Cels.	<i>Contra Celsum</i>
CCSA	Corpus Christianorum. Series Apocryphorum
CIS	<i>Corpus Inscriptionum Semiticarum</i>
CJT	<i>Canadian Journal of Theology</i>
CRINT	<i>Compendia Rerum Iudaicarum ad Novum Testamentum</i>
Dem.	<i>Demonstrations</i> (of Aphrahat)
DSS	Dead Sea Scrolls
EH	<i>Ecclesiastical History</i> (of Eusebius)
ETL	<i>Ephemerides theologicae Lovanienses</i>
ETR	<i>Études théologiques et religieuses</i>
EvTh	<i>Evangelische Theologie</i>
ExpT	<i>Expository Times</i>
GCS	Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller

<i>GTh</i>	<i>Gospel of Thomas</i>
<i>HE</i>	<i>Historia Ecclesiastica</i>
<i>HO</i>	Handbuch der Orientalistik
<i>HTR</i>	<i>Harvard Theological Review</i>
<i>HTS</i>	<i>Harvard Theological Studies</i>
<i>ICC</i>	International Critical Commentary
<i>Int</i>	<i>Interpretation</i>
<i>JAAR</i>	<i>Journal of the American Academy of Religion</i>
<i>JAC</i>	<i>Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum</i>
<i>JBL</i>	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
<i>JETS</i>	<i>Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society</i>
<i>JSNT</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of the New Testament</i>
<i>JSNTSS</i>	Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series
<i>JSOT</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of the Old Testament</i>
<i>JSOT</i>	Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Press
<i>JSP</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha</i>
<i>JSPSS</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha</i> Supplement Series
<i>JTS</i>	<i>Journal of Theological Studies</i>
<i>LAB</i>	<i>Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum (Biblical Antiquities of Ps.-Philo)</i>
<i>LNTS</i>	Library of New Testament Studies
<i>LSJ</i>	Liddell-Scott-Jones, <i>Greek-English Lexicon</i>
<i>LTK</i>	<i>Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche</i>
<i>LXX</i>	Septuagint
<i>Neot</i>	<i>Neotestamentica</i>
<i>NHD</i>	<i>Nag Hammadi Deutsch</i>
<i>NHMS</i>	Nag Hammadi and Manichaean Studies
<i>NHS</i>	Nag Hammadi Studies
<i>NIGTC</i>	New International Greek Text Commentary
<i>NovT</i>	<i>Novum Testamentum</i>
<i>NovTSuppS</i>	<i>Novum Testamentum</i> Supplement Series
<i>NTA</i>	Neutestamentliche Abhandlungen
<i>NTD</i>	Das Neue Testament Deutsch
<i>NTS</i>	<i>New Testament Studies</i>
<i>NTT</i>	<i>Nederlands theologisch tijdschrift</i>
<i>NTTS</i>	New Testament Tools and Studies
<i>OECGT</i>	Oxford Early Christian Gospel Texts
<i>OrChr</i>	<i>Oriens Christianus</i>
<i>OS</i>	Old Syriac

PG	<i>Patrologia Graeca</i> (ed. Migne)
PGL	Lampe, <i>Patristic Greek Lexicon</i>
PL	<i>Patrologia Latina</i> (ed. Migne)
Plant.	<i>De Plantatione</i> (of Philo)
RBL	<i>Review of Biblical Literature</i>
REJ	<i>Revue des études juives</i>
RevB	<i>Revue biblique</i>
SBL	Society of Biblical Literature
SBLSP	<i>Society of Biblical Literature Seminar Papers</i>
SC	Sources Chrétiennes
SCM	Student Christian Movement
SecCent	<i>The Second Century: A Journal of Early Christian Studies</i>
SJC	<i>Sophia of Jesus Christ</i>
SNTSMS	Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series
Soph.	<i>Sophist</i> (of Plato)
Strom.	<i>Stromateis</i> (of Clement of Alexandria)
TC	<i>TC: A Journal of Biblical Textual Criticism</i>
ThR	<i>Theologische Rundschau</i>
TLG	<i>Thesaurus Linguae Graecae</i>
TLZ	<i>Theologische Literaturzeitung</i>
TS	<i>Theological Studies</i>
TU	Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur
TynB	<i>Tyndale Bulletin</i>
TZ	<i>Theologische Zeitschrift</i>
VigChr	<i>Vigiliae Christianae</i>
VigChrSupps	<i>Vigiliae Christianae Supplements</i>
Vir. Ill.	<i>De viris illustribus</i> (Jerome)
WBC	Word Biblical Commentary
WMANT	Wissenschaftliche Monographien zum Alten und Neuen Testament
WUNT	Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament
ZAC	<i>Zeitschrift für Antikes Christentum/ Journal of Ancient Christianity</i>
ZNW	<i>Zeitschrift für die Neutestamentliche Wissenschaft</i>
ZPE	<i>Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik</i>



## INTRODUCTION

### 1 Theme: the composition of *Thomas*

In some ways, the *Gospel of Thomas* needs, as the old cliché goes, no introduction. Its place in the origins and development of the Jesus-movement is one of the most hotly debated topics in early Christian studies at present. It has already been the subject of hundreds of books and articles, but the present volume does nevertheless hope to make a fresh contribution for the reasons set out below. It may well be asked why we should have another study of *Thomas* at this particular moment, especially a study which is in part concerned with the old *canard* of *Thomas*'s relationship with the Synoptic Gospels. For many scholars, as we shall see, this matter is settled. In reality, however, the two principal (and intersecting) subjects of this book are very much still bones of contention.

The title of the present book can obviously encompass a range of different topics: “composition” is on its own not a terribly illuminating term. The English word is ambiguous in being able to refer either to the *process* by which a work is composed or the factors involved therein (the “composing”), or that of which a work consists (what it is composed of). So it is necessary to specify that the present book is focused in two areas, first *Thomas*'s original language, and second the early Christian influences upon *Thomas*.

#### 1.1 Original language

The first matter, then, is that of the original language of *Thomas*, covered in Part I. The only surviving complete manuscript of the *Gospel of Thomas* is in Coptic, but no scholars consider *Thomas* to be an original Coptic composition. It may be a surprise to those outside of the small Thomasine guild that the work's original language could be such an emotive issue, but opposing positions have – since the very beginnings

of *Thomas* scholarship – been vigorously argued on various different sides. One reason for this is that conclusions on this matter can impinge upon the questions of the date and provenance of *Thomas*, as well as of its relationship to the canonical Gospels. This is because, as we shall see in more detail later, a *Western Aramaic* original for *Thomas*, or parts thereof, often means that it occupies a position in the study of Christian origins at least as important as that of the Synoptic Gospels, and perhaps an even more important one.<sup>1</sup> A *Syriac Thomas*, on the other hand, often means *Thomas* is consigned to the long grass of the late second century – where it is often three stages removed from Jesus, via not only the Gospels but also Tatian’s *Diatessaron* as well.<sup>2</sup> Part I of the present book argues that both of these extreme views are dependent on a number of (often similar) misjudgements about Aramaisms whether in general or in particular instances. An argument will be made here instead for a *Greek* original. This first part of the present book is, as far as I know, the first time that a sustained critique of the Aramaic/Syriac hypothesis has been mounted in combination with positive evidence being given for a Greek original.

## 1.2 Influences from other early Christian literature

This has several implications (spelled out in Chapter 5) for the subject of Parts II and III, which focus on works which – it will be argued – have exerted an influence upon *Thomas*: Matthew and Luke, as well as Paul, Hebrews and the early Christian “Two Ways” tradition. In brief, two of the implications of Part I can be mentioned at this stage. (1) The putative early Aramaic *Thomas* credited by some scholars would be unlikely to be influenced by the Synoptics, but with a Greek *Thomas* the question of the relationship between it and the Greek Gospels (and epistles) arises more naturally. (2) If divergent Greek translations of sayings from Aramaic can be identified in the Synoptics on the one hand and *Thomas* on the other, then this would speak in favour of *Thomas* being independent of the Synoptics: Chapters 2–3 show, however, that such divergent translations are difficult to find.

<sup>1</sup> A.D. DeConick, *The Original Gospel of Thomas in Translation: With a Commentary and New English Translation of the Complete Gospel* (LNTS 287; London/New York: T&T Clark International, 2006), for example, argues for a very early (mid-first-century CE) Aramaic core of *Thomas*.

<sup>2</sup> See e.g. N. Perrin, *Thomas and Tatian: The Relationship between the Gospel of Thomas and the Diatessaron* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2002).



Part II of the book aims to cut through another dichotomy which has plagued *Thomas* scholarship, namely that of scribal versus oral approaches to *Thomas*. To take an extreme example of the former, Quispel (or, “early Quispel”, at least) took the Gospel in its entirety to be a combination of two literary sources (the *Gospel of the Hebrews* and the *Gospel of the Egyptians*) and nothing else. On the other hand, it is rather more fashionable now to talk of *Thomas*’s independence from earlier literary productions and to focus on *Thomas* as essentially an oral composition.

The present book aims to avoid an overly “scribal” approach to *Thomas*’s relationship to its sources, while also raising problems with views of *Thomas*’s independence. This latter approach is fraught with difficulties. The most significant of these are discussed in Part II (in Chapter 5 in particular), where subsequently (in Chapter 6) a positive method is set out through which reliable results on “*Thomas* and the Synoptics” question might be obtained. On this matter of *Thomas*’s relationship to the Synoptics, the present book has two aims. First, the intention is to make a case which has the best chance of persuading scholars of where *Thomas* has incorporated Matthew’s and Luke’s redaction of Mark: this is regarded as the most reliable method for identifying influence, because we are dealing with three more or less known literary works. Second, a subsidiary aim is to establish how great a proportion of *Thomas*’s material might be influenced by the Synoptics, that is, whether the influence is trifling or significant. After this focus on the Synoptic Gospels, some additional briefer studies in Part III will touch upon possible lines of influence upon *Thomas* from the other works mentioned above. It should be noted here that Parts II and III of this book do not of course provide any sort of systematic attempt to identify all the sources of *Thomas*, as if that were possible.

## **2 Some incongruities in current *Thomas* scholarship and an alternative approach**

As noted above, a *cadit quaestio* should not yet be pronounced on the matter of *Thomas*’s independence from the Synoptics. Similarly, the problem of *Thomas*’s original language is far from solved. Part of the impulse for the present book stems from a need to see these problems in the light of a number of tectonic shifts which have taken place in recent years not only (or even primarily) in *Thomas* research but also in scholarship on early Judaism, New Testament/early Christian studies more widely and Classics. Rather than providing a tedious

history of research into *Thomas* here, we will sketch some of the most important of these tectonic shifts, and the problems they raise for the assumptions held in some sections of *Thomas* scholarship.

### 2.1      The revival of Semitic theories of *Thomas*'s composition in light of recent scholarship on Semitisms

As we will see illustrated in Part I of this study, on the problem of *Thomas*'s original language, there is now a resurgence of interest in arguing for Semitic backgrounds both to *Thomas* as a whole and to individual sayings. This was already prominent in the late 1950s and into the 1960s, but since then the only scholar who consistently continued to push this agenda in any sustained manner was Gilles Quispel. (David Scholer's bibliographies list 41 articles and books by Quispel on *Thomas*, almost all of which touch in some way upon *Thomas*'s Semitic background and relationship to the *Gospel of the Hebrews*.) An emphasis on a Semitic substratum (though without any particular attachment to the *Gospel of the Hebrews*) has come to the fore again in recent times, but in two quite distinct ways. On one side, DeConick has recently begun to champion an early (Western) Aramaic core of *Thomas* (originating in Jerusalem before 50 CE). At the other end of the spectrum, arguments for *Thomas*'s Aramaic original have been advanced by Perrin's contention that *Thomas* was composed in Syriac and drew upon Tatian's *Diatessaron*. Since the original language of *Thomas* has once more become a crucial factor in identifying the place of *Thomas* in early Christianity, these two theses will be discussed in some detail in Part I.

It is notable, however, that at the same time as segments of scholarship have grown more confident in finding Semitic substrata to *Thomas*, scholarship in cognate fields has become more suspicious of parallel enterprises. One of the difficulties underlying both DeConick's and Perrin's constructions is that they treat the discovery of Semitisms and Semitic *Vorlagen* as though it were an easy task. Nearly thirty years ago now, Wilcox emphasised the fact that one must have a sufficient body of Aramaic or Syriac literature from the period to provide a grammar and a lexicon upon which to draw.<sup>3</sup> In her discussion of the Coptic translations of the LXX, Perttilä has discussed a number of the difficulties involved in identifying a Greek *Vorlage* through the retroversion of a Coptic text.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>3</sup> M. Wilcox, 'Semitisms in the New Testament', *ANRW* 2.25.2 (1984), 978–1029.

<sup>4</sup> E. Perttilä, 'How to Read the Greek Text behind the Sahidic Coptic', in A. Voitila and J. Jokiranta, eds. *Scripture in Transition: Essays on Septuagint, Hebrew Bible, and Dead Sea Scrolls in Honour of Rajja Sollamo* (Leiden/New York/Cologne: Brill, 2008), 367–77.

Furthermore, a recent article by Davila on Old Testament Pseudepigrapha highlights further difficulties with identifying Semitic *Vorlagen*.<sup>5</sup> One must identify problems in the Greek (or in our case Coptic) – something which you need to be quite good at the language to do; one must know that the surviving text has been translated literally; one must be sure that the Semitisms are not Egyptianisms or Septuagintalisms, and so on. None of these factors is sufficiently discussed by DeConick or Perrin. This particular shift in *Thomas* scholarship is in my view a misguided one, and one which needs to be re-evaluated in the light of work such as that of Davila. As has been noted already, this whole area will be the subject of discussion in Chapters 1–4 in Part I.

## 2.2 Continued attachment to form-critical “laws” in light of the exposure of their subjective nature and even falsification

A different kind of tectonic shift is the accumulation of suspicions which have been raised about form criticism. To be sure, form criticism is no mere twitching corpse, but it is clear that it cannot hold its head as high as it once could, now that so many of its old certainties can no longer be trusted. Bultmann had talked of recognising the ‘Gesetzmäßigkeit’ of the development of material and of ‘the laws governing popular narrative and tradition’.<sup>6</sup> Jeremias in the 1950s and 1960s developed his ‘laws of transformation’, thus using Bultmann’s weapons against him.<sup>7</sup> In connection with the *Gospel of Thomas*, Quispel could thus easily write in 1966 of ‘a law of text-criticism, form-criticism and source criticism that short forms tend to become longer’.<sup>8</sup> Although few would state such things so categorically now, it is clear that many still operate whether tacitly or expressly with similar assumptions. In 2008, Plisch commented that elements of *Thomas*’s parable of the mustard seed (*GTh* 20) are ‘simpler and more original’ over against their Synoptic counterparts.<sup>9</sup> In his 2009 commentary, Pokorný similarly accepts the premise that *Thomas*’s parable of the sower is simpler than that of the Synoptics, and is therefore

<sup>5</sup> J.R. Davila, ‘(How) Can We Tell if a Greek Apocryphon or Pseudepigraphon Has Been Translated from Hebrew or Aramaic?’, *JSP* 15 (2005), 3–61.

<sup>6</sup> R.K. Bultmann, *Die Geschichte der synoptischen Tradition* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1931), 7. The latter phrase is the title of Chapter 4 in R. Bultmann and K. Kundsin, *Form Criticism: Two Essays on New Testament Research* (New York: Harper, 1962).

<sup>7</sup> J. Jeremias, *The Parables of Jesus*, rev. ed. (London: SCM Press, 1963), 114.

<sup>8</sup> G. Quispel, ‘Gospel of Thomas and the Gospel of the Hebrews’, *NTS* 12 (1966), 371–82 (378).

<sup>9</sup> U.-K. Plisch, *The Gospel of Thomas: Original Text with Commentary* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2008), 79.

independent.<sup>10</sup> The influence in particular of John Dominic Crossan and Helmut Koester has been marked here.

Two contributions in the late 1960s, however, should have led to much greater caution in this area. First, in 1968, Michael Goulder's neglected article on the parables showed that there was no "graph" along which one could plot linear developments in the literary evolution of parables: for example, while Matthew's parables are more allegorical than Mark's, Luke's are less so.<sup>11</sup> In the following year, E.P. Sanders showed beyond reasonable doubt that in so much as there are 'tendencies in the Synoptic tradition', they are highly variable, and rules such as those expressed by Quispel sometimes apply, but sometimes do not.<sup>12</sup> Sanders' importance for the present study is that his conclusions show that a simplistic application of the simple/orderly/elegant → complex/disorderly/convoluted evolution is unsustainable when comparing, for example, a parable in Matthew and *Thomas*. This applies not only to those who use this criterion to show the primitivity of *Thomas*'s sayings (as the "laws" are most often used) but also to those who seek to show *Thomas*'s dependence. *Thomas* scholarship has been rather slow in catching up with these crucial developments most strikingly seen in the work of Goulder and Sanders, a point to which we return at greater length in Chapter 5.

### 2.3 Confident assessments of oral factors in *Thomas* in light of scepticism elsewhere about their predictability and distinctiveness

On the other hand, it seems rather anomalous that precisely at the moment in which confidence in form criticism has been on the wane, there has been a rise in confidence in *Thomas* scholarship in what characterises oral transmission and oral performance. It is all too common to find scholars remarking upon turns of phrase in *Thomas* as 'the result of oral transmission rather than literary development',<sup>13</sup> or as 'understandable

<sup>10</sup> P. Pokorný, *A Commentary on the Gospel of Thomas: From Interpretations to the Interpreted* (London/New York: T&T Clark, 2009), 49, on the grounds of its lacking allegorical interpretation.

<sup>11</sup> M. Goulder, 'Characteristics of the Parables in the Several Gospels', *JTS* 19 (1968), 51–69.

<sup>12</sup> E.P. Sanders, in *The Tendencies of the Synoptic Tradition* (SNTSMS 9; Cambridge University Press, 1969), may have been premature in his application of these literary observations to oral tradition as well, but to this we will return later.

<sup>13</sup> DeConick, *The Original Gospel of Thomas in Translation*, 129.

within an oral climate',<sup>14</sup> or as 'normal developments of an independent tradition in an oral environment'.<sup>15</sup> In his discussion of the parables, Koester operates with a sharp bifurcation of oral and literary modes of transmission: 'parables are told, sometimes with suggestive alterations; or else parables are copied and allegorized. ... In the first instance, the conscious use of written sources and their redaction is highly unlikely; in the latter case, written materials are probably always utilized and deliberately edited.'<sup>16</sup> Two particular difficulties with such assertions have emerged, however, in the light of wider tendencies in scholarship. These will be discussed further in Chapter 9, though they can be noted here.

First, the rise in "oral factors" is anomalous not because orality and performance are elements irrelevant to the study of *Thomas* but because their effects are probably impossible to measure. We can at least *measure* literary and scribal tendencies, even if there are no consistent results. But it is in the nature of the case impossible to identify these distinctive tendencies of orality of which some scholars are so confident. As we shall see in Chapter 9, orality is itself culturally specific: not only is it impossible to distil anthropologically universal features of oral transmission, but such features have even been shown to vary according to how a particular culture treats a particular kind of material. To relate this again to our previous point about form-critical principles: if we can no longer rely on the old certainties about the 'laws of transformation' in literary settings for which we have tangible evidence, *a fortiori* how can we have any degree of confidence in what constitute "oral factors"?

Second, and just as problematically, it is very difficult to identify not only what is characteristic of oral transmission but also what is distinctive about it. That is, even if we could pinpoint tendencies in oral tradition, would these necessarily be different from the features of literary adaptation or scribal copying? Whittaker's essay on literary adaptation in Greek literature (especially the Platonic tradition) has drawn attention to the ways in which later authors, even with full access to their literary sources, can be seen to add, subtract, substitute, re-order and engage in all manner of other sorts of revision with respect to the material on which

<sup>14</sup> A.J. Dewey, 'Keep Speaking until You Find ...: Thomas and the School of Oral Mimesis', in R. Cameron and M.P. Miller, eds. *Redescribing Christian Origins* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2004), 109–32 (111).

<sup>15</sup> G.J. Riley, 'The Gospel of Thomas in Recent Scholarship', *Currents in Research 2* (1994), 227–52 (235).

<sup>16</sup> H. Koester, 'Three Thomas Parables', in A. Logan and A. Wedderburn, eds. *New Testament and Gnosis: Essays in Honour of Robert McLaughlan Wilson* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1983), 195–203 (195).

they are drawing.<sup>17</sup> In short, the way in which these authors use their sources, as we will see in Chapter 9, is remarkably difficult to distinguish from the vagaries of oral transmission.

#### 2.4 The assumption of detailed knowledge of Q in light of recent “unfreezing of the Synoptic problem”

Another important aspect of recent scholarship is a further manifestation of what J.A.T. Robinson in 1975 called the ‘unfreezing of the Synoptic problem’.<sup>18</sup> He was referring to the persistence of W.R. Farmer and his students in arguing that the Griesbach hypothesis provided a viable alternative to Markan priority. In our time, this defrosting is of a rather different kind from that referred to by Robinson. Markan priority probably holds at least as robust a position in Synoptic studies as it ever has, and the Griesbach hypothesis has not really had any strong support recently. On the other side, it is probably true to say that Q scepticism is stronger now than it has been at any time since the Second World War. What was in the times of Farrer and Goulder viewed as somewhat eccentric has now, in large measure through the work of Goodacre, become a more mainstream if certainly still a minority position.<sup>19</sup>

This has obvious implications for the study of *Thomas*, in part because of the widely heralded similarity of *Thomas* to Q, the two together evincing the importance of both the “sayings-Gospel” genre and wisdom theology, as opposed to a *theologia crucis*, in early Christianity. In the past, confident reconstructions of the contents of Q have played an important part in arguments for the independence of *Thomas* from the Synoptics. Koester, for example, has argued that certain sayings of *Thomas* preserve a more primitive form than the version in Q which is used by Matthew and Luke.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>17</sup> J. Whittaker, ‘The Value of Indirect Tradition in the Establishment of Greek Philosophical Texts or the Art of Misquotation’, in J.N. Grant, ed. *Editing Greek and Latin Texts: Papers Given at the Twenty-Third Annual Conference on Editorial Problems* (New York: AMS Press, 1989), 63–95.

<sup>18</sup> J.A.T. Robinson, ‘Parable of the Wicked Husbandmen: A Test of Synoptic Relationships’, *NTS* 21 (1975), 443–61 (443).

<sup>19</sup> Most recently, Goodacre’s influence is evident in e.g. F.B. Watson, ‘Q as Hypothesis: A Study in Methodology’, *NTS* 55 (2009), 397–415, and the survey of Q scepticism in J.C. Poirier, ‘The Synoptic Problem and the Field of New Testament Introduction’, *JSNT* 32 (2009), 179–90.

<sup>20</sup> H. Koester, *Ancient Christian Gospels* (Philadelphia: Trinity Press International, 1990), esp. 89–90.

On the other hand, Tuckett has argued that certain Matthean and Lukan redactions of Q have found their way into *Thomas*.<sup>21</sup> Thus *Thomas* can be shown to be dependent upon the written Gospels in so far as these have edited Q. Tuckett himself acknowledges some of the difficulty here, however: the process requires that Matthew and Luke have Q in exactly the same form.

There are thus two principal difficulties in employing reconstructions of Q to solve the problem of *Thomas*'s relationship to the Synoptics. The first is the existence of Q in the first place, which is coming increasingly into question, even though the majority view is clearly in favour of its existence. The second problem is a more serious one, however. Although recent years have seen the publication of the actual text of Q – you can now hold in your hands the critical edition! – one must be sceptical about how reliably we can reconstruct its text. It needs to be remembered that comparisons between a saying in Q and *Thomas* are usually between a reconstruction of Q on the basis of decisions about Matthew and Luke on the one hand, and a retroversion of the *Thomas* saying from the Coptic on the other. Even as certain a Q advocate as Patterson has remarked: ‘The reconstruction of the text of Q is a difficult task that often produces results that are only tentative at best.’<sup>22</sup> Combined with parallel uncertainties in the reconstruction of the original text of *Thomas*, this is hardly great grounds for confidence. As such, it behoves scholars now, in my opinion, to eschew reliance on Q in assessments of *Thomas*, as is the case in the present book. Or at the very least in the current climate, it is probably necessary for arguments built upon Q to take a distant back seat in the process.

## 2.5 Persistent polarisation of “independent oral tradition” vs “literary dependence” despite some questioning within *Thomas* scholarship

Most scholars would agree that, as Riley has put it, ‘The single most controversial issue facing scholars is whether or not the GTh is a genuine

<sup>21</sup> See e.g. C.M. Tuckett, ‘Thomas and the Synoptics’, *NovT* 30 (1988), 132–57; Tuckett, ‘Q and Thomas: Evidence of a Primitive “Wisdom Gospel”?’ A Response to H. Koester’, *ETL* 67 (1991), 346–60.

<sup>22</sup> S.J. Patterson, ‘The Gospel of (Judas) Thomas and the Synoptic Problem’, in P. Foster, A. Gregory, J.S. Kloppenborg and J. Verheyden, eds. *New Studies in the Synoptic Problem: Oxford Conference, April 2008. Essays in Honour of Christopher M. Tuckett* (Leuven/Paris/Walpole, MA: Peeters, 2011), 783–808 (791); cf. S.J. Patterson, ‘Yes, Virginia, There Is a Q’, *Bible Review* 11.5 (1995), 39–40!

witness to an independent stream of tradition reaching back to Jesus.<sup>23</sup> From the very beginning of scholarship on *Thomas*, the relation between *Thomas* and the canonical (especially Synoptic) Gospels has been the most divisive issue. At that time, the division was not necessary binary: while Quispel argued vociferously for independence and McArthur for dependence, Wilson replied by saying that the matter was not black and white, but rather comprised ‘several shades of grey’.<sup>24</sup> Despite Wilson’s caution, however, much of the rhetoric was antithetical, the most egregious example being Quispel: for him, *Thomas*’s independence was simply ‘established’. In response to Kasser’s assertions to the contrary, Quispel questioned ‘the level of his mind’, just as he castigated the editorial board of *ZNW* for printing the ‘biased nonsense’ in Krogmann’s criticisms of him.<sup>25</sup>

One of the interesting points of the earlier phase of debate, however, was that – unlike the majority of discussion today – the disagreement was not between “conservatives” in favour of dependence and “liberals” for independence. For Quispel, Jeremias and others, *Thomas* provided not a Gospel in competition with the Synoptics, but rather – in a context of Bultmannian scepticism – a kind of external corroboration of them. Hence Quispel’s statement: ‘the Gospel of Thomas confirms the trustworthiness of the Bible’.<sup>26</sup> At the same time, however, Sieber’s dissertation, and the early work of Koester and Crossan (both by this time in the United States) began to promote *Thomas* as an alternative to the Synoptics, and as containing more primitive versions of the sayings of Jesus by comparison.

In the 1970s there emerged the beginnings of what Stephen Patterson has called a ‘continental drift’, a growing difference in attitude to *Thomas* between Europe on the one hand and North America on the other.<sup>27</sup> With Quispel’s advocacy of independence gaining relatively little ground in Europe, most scholars in Britain and on the continent argued that *Thomas*

<sup>23</sup> Riley, ‘The Gospel of Thomas in Recent Scholarship’, 232.

<sup>24</sup> R.McL. Wilson, ‘Thomas and the Synoptic Gospels’, *ExpT* 72 (1960), 36–9 (36).

<sup>25</sup> Quispel, ‘The Discussion of Judaic Christianity’, 85.

<sup>26</sup> G. Quispel, ‘The Gospel of Thomas and the New Testament’, *VigChr* 11 (1957), 189–207 (207).

<sup>27</sup> S.J. Patterson, *The Gospel of Thomas and Jesus* (Sonoma, CA: Polebridge, 1993), 10. Interestingly, writing in Canada, Horman felt in 1979 that he had to argue that the dependence question was not settled, feeling strongly that there was near consensus about the dependence of *Thomas* on the Synoptics. J.F. Horman, ‘The Source of the Version of the Parable of the Sower in the Gospel of Thomas’, *NovT* 21 (1979), 326–43. It is notable perhaps, however, that the various scholars whom he cites as evidence are (with the exceptions of Grant and Freedman) all European.



was influenced by the Synoptics, Haenchen and Schrage being perhaps particularly influential. J.-M. Sevrin noted that those arguing for total independence were few in number.<sup>28</sup> On the other hand, *Trajectories through Early Christianity* by Koester and Robinson discussed *Thomas* briefly, advocating its independence, while also setting a wider framework for that independence through its advocacy of a Bauerian perspective on gospel origins.

At times, there has been not only lack of agreement, but even a lack of agreement about the level of agreement. Yamauchi noted in 1984 two entirely contradictory statements by MacRae and Kaestli about whether the majority of scholars was in favour of (respectively) independence from or dependence on the Synoptics.<sup>29</sup> (This is also perhaps explicable on the basis of MacRae's North American outlook and Kaestli's Swiss viewpoint.) From the United States, Davies commented that the independence of *Thomas* was not only a majority view but actually a consensus: it is noteworthy, however, that he refers to only two foreign-language publications in his entire book.<sup>30</sup> Some misperceptions of where consensus lay had a rhetorical purpose, though of course while some seek solace in the 'accepted' view some prefer to be an embattled minority! In part, it began to be quite difficult to identify where majority opinions existed on particular issues in *Thomas* study because of the sheer volume of scholarship. 1971 saw the first volume of David Scholer's *Nag Hammadi Bibliography* (1948–69), of which items 1789–2244 (i.e. 456 items) consisted of studies of *Thomas*. Between 1970 and 1994, 465 items were added, and a further 448 items came from 1995 to 2006.

Nevertheless, what remained clear was the continued division of opinion. 1985 saw the convening of the Jesus Seminar, which not only placed the *Gospel of Thomas* (as well as the *Gospel of Peter* and other works) on an even footing with the Synoptic Gospels, but also pronounced various new *Thomas* sayings (e.g. *GTh* 97, 98, 113) as authentic.<sup>31</sup> In 1988, Tuckett

<sup>28</sup> J.-M. Sevrin, 'L'Évangile selon Thomas: paroles de Jésus et révélation gnostique', *Revue théologique de Louvain* 8 (1977), 265–92 (277–8).

<sup>29</sup> E.M. Yamauchi, 'Pre-Christian Gnosticism, the New Testament and Nag Hammadi in Recent Debate', *Themelios* 10 (1984), 22–7 (24).

<sup>30</sup> S.L. Davies, *The Gospel of Thomas and Christian Wisdom* (New York: Seabury Press, 1983), 5.

<sup>31</sup> See R.W. Funk and R.W. Hoover, eds. *The Five Gospels: The Search for the Authentic Words of Jesus* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1993), for what the Jesus Seminar thinks authentic, and J.D. Crossan, *The Historical Jesus: The Life of a Mediterranean Jewish Peasant* (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1991), xiii–xxvi, for what he views as dominical in *Thomas*.

warned of the danger of continuing polarisation.<sup>32</sup> A *Forschungsbericht* of Fallon and Cameron from the same year notes that scholars remained ‘sharply divided’.<sup>33</sup> Neirynek’s sense in 1989 was that the debate was ‘still very lively’,<sup>34</sup> and in another history of research from 1994, Riley still comments: ‘Scholars remain divided on fundamental issues concerning the theological character of the GTh and its relationship to the canonical Gospels.’<sup>35</sup> In 1995, Wilson commented that Tuckett’s concern had not been laid to rest, given the opposing positions exhibited in the monograph by Patterson and the commentary of Fieger.<sup>36</sup>

Neirynek also refers to polarisation on the basis of two totally opposing views of Davies’ monograph *The Gospel of Thomas and Christian Wisdom*, Crossan having described it as the best book on *Thomas*, Blomberg referring to it as egregiously one-sided.<sup>37</sup> The years 1989 to 1990 saw conflicting essays in a special issue of *Second Century* (issue 7, 1989–1990) by Snodgrass and Hedrick. Snodgrass also distinguishes between the shifting position in the US and the clear view of dependence in Britain and continental Europe.<sup>38</sup> In something of a dismissive fashion, Robinson comments that this is not so much a substantive difference, but merely that European scholarship has been late in catching up with North American scholarship’s appreciation of the importance of the Nag Hammadi discoveries.<sup>39</sup> Contrastingly, Petersen in 1999 talked of how ‘diese Einschätzung der Thomas-Parabeln entspricht einer Tendenz der amerikanischen Forschung’.<sup>40</sup> Still in 2001, Liebenberg

<sup>32</sup> Tuckett, ‘Thomas and the Synoptics’, 132.

<sup>33</sup> F.T. Fallon and R. Cameron, ‘The Gospel of Thomas: A Forschungsbericht and Analysis’, *ANRW Principat* 2.25.6 (1988), 4195–251 (4213). On the same page, the authors provide a list of scholars taking *Thomas* to be dependent.

<sup>34</sup> F. Neirynek, ‘The Apocryphal Gospels and the Gospel of Mark’, in J.-M. Sevrin, ed. *New Testament in Early Christianity: La réception des écrits néotestamentaires dans le christianisme primitif* (Leuven University Press/Peeters, 1989), 123–75 (133).

<sup>35</sup> Riley ‘Gospel of Thomas in Recent Scholarship’, 244.

<sup>36</sup> R.McL. Wilson, ‘The Gospel of Thomas Reconsidered’, in C. Fluck, L. Langener and S. Richter, *Divitiae Aegypti: Koptologische und verwandte Studien zu Ehren von Martin Krause* (Wiesbaden: Reichert, 1995), 331–6 (335–6), in re M. Fieger, *Das Thomasevangelium: Einleitung, Kommentar und Systematik* (Münster: Aschendorff, 1991), and Patterson, *The Gospel of Thomas and Jesus*.

<sup>37</sup> Neirynek, ‘The Apocryphal Gospels and the Gospel of Mark’, 133.

<sup>38</sup> Snodgrass, ‘The Gospel of Thomas: A Secondary Gospel’, *SecCent* 7 (1989–90), 19–38 (20); cf. later C.M. Tuckett, ‘The Gospel of Thomas: Evidence for Jesus?’, *NTT* 52 (1998), 17–32 (22).

<sup>39</sup> J.M. Robinson, ‘The Study of the Historical Jesus after Nag Hammadi’, *Semeia* 44 (1988), 45–55 (48–9).

<sup>40</sup> S. Petersen, ‘Adolf Jülicher und die Parabeln des Thomasevangeliums’, in U. Mell, ed. *Gleichnisreden Jesu 1899–1999: Beiträge zum Dialog mit Adolf Jülicher* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1999), 179–207 (184), adding that the majority of German scholarship thinks in terms of *Thomas*’s dependence upon the Synoptics.

wrote, in reference to the dependence vs independence question, of a ‘transcontinental stalemate’.<sup>41</sup> Similarly, in 2005, Wood commented: ‘At present, the question over the origin of *Gos. Thom.* appears to be at a stalemate or, less optimistically, a shouting match.’<sup>42</sup>

At times scholars – seemingly always those in favour of independence – have attempted to pronounce the debate over. Sieber has commented: ‘Most of those who have championed the view that Thomas is dependent on the New Testament for its synoptic sayings did their work in the early 1960s.’<sup>43</sup> Sellw also consigned the matter to ancient history in his reference to ‘the 1960s and early 1970s with the famous debates about *Thomas*’s relationship with the NT Gospels’.<sup>44</sup> This is a rather cheeky rhetorical ploy, however, as clearly the debate has continued. In the same edited volume as this comment of Sellw, Sevrin protested: ‘Despite the increasing success of the critical approach that considers the *Gospel of Thomas* as independent of the Synoptics, the discussion over its sources cannot be considered concluded.’<sup>45</sup> With some trepidation, the present study enters this continued fray.

There are nevertheless some ways – some “tectonic shifts” already to some extent apparent within *Thomas* scholarship – which might have the potential to defuse this polarisation, and of which the present volume aims to take full account.

First, one of the polarities in the past generation has tended to be that of an oral, independent *Thomas* over against a *Thomas* which is *directly* dependent upon the Synoptics in a rather woodenly scribal manner. To quote Kaestli as an example of the polarity:

From where did the author of the GTh take the words of Jesus which agree with the Synoptic Gospels? Has he drawn them directly from Mt, Mk and Lk? Or has he used a parallel tradition,

<sup>41</sup> J. Liebenberg, *The Language of the Kingdom and Jesus: Parable, Aphorism, and Metaphor in the Sayings Material Common to the Synoptic Tradition and the Gospel of Thomas* (Berlin/New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2001), 519.

<sup>42</sup> J.H. Wood, ‘The New Testament Gospels and the Gospel of Thomas: A New Direction’, *NTS* 51 (2005), 579–95 (585).

<sup>43</sup> J.H. Sieber, ‘The Gospel of Thomas and the New Testament’, in J.E. Goehring, C.W. Hedrick and J.T. Sanders, eds. *Gospel Origins and Christian Beginnings: In Honor of James M. Robinson* (Sonoma, CA: Polebridge, 1990), 64–73 (65).

<sup>44</sup> P. Sellw, ‘The Gospel of Thomas: Prospects for Future Research’, in J.D. Turner and A. McGuire, eds. *The Nag Hammadi Library after Fifty Years: Proceedings of the 1995 Society of Biblical Literature Commemoration* (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 327–46 (328).

<sup>45</sup> J.-M. Sevrin, ‘L’Interprétation de l’Évangile selon Thomas, entre tradition et rédaction’, in J.D. Turner and A. McGuire, eds. *The Nag Hammadi Library after Fifty Years: Proceedings of the 1995 Society of Biblical Literature Commemoration* (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 347–60 (359, in the English summary).

independent of the canonical gospels? It is not surprising that this question of the sources of the GTh has held pride of place in the attention of NT exegetes.<sup>46</sup>

Although there were some antecedents, Risto Uro has advocated the concept of “secondary orality” as a way through the orality/textuality divide. On this model, it is not simply that *Thomas* is copying (for example) Matthew, but rather that Matthew has influenced the oral tradition which feeds into *Thomas*. This may at least have some potential to bring together those who want to do justice to literary and oral factors, though we will see that this too may be somewhat speculative. This will come into focus more in Chapters 6 and 9 below.

Second, there is a growing recognition of what the most important method for identifying the influence of the Synoptics upon *Thomas* will be. In some ways, the “dependence theory” got off to a bad start. The most substantial study arguing for it in the early days was that of Schrage, based on the problematic method of comparing *Thomas* primarily with the Coptic translations of the Gospels.<sup>47</sup> Understandably, Koester pounced, declaring that ‘the wisdom of the methodological procedure . . . is beyond my comprehension’.<sup>48</sup> Most on every side now agree with this sentiment.

Some other attempts to show dependence have been similarly ill-grounded. We have already touched upon the difficulties with the view of Perrin, which will be the subject of more detailed discussion in Chapters 2 and 3. More recently still, John Halsey Wood’s study offers a number of telling criticisms of the form-critical and literary-critical assumptions of Koester and those who have followed him.<sup>49</sup> On the other hand, his

<sup>46</sup> J.-D. Kaestli, ‘L’Évangile de Thomas: son importance pour l’étude des paroles de Jésus et du Gnosticisme chrétien’, *Études théologiques et religieuses* 54 (1979), 375–96 (381): ‘D’où l’auteur de l’*ETH* tient-il les paroles de Jésus qui concordent avec les Évangiles synoptiques? A-t-il puisé directement dans Mt, Mc et Luc? Ou bien a-t-il utilisé une tradition parallèle et indépendante des Évangiles canoniques? Il n’est pas étonnant que cette question des sources de l’*ETH* ait retenu au premier chef l’attention des exégètes du NT.’ Translation mine.

<sup>47</sup> W. Schrage, *Das Verhältnis des Thomas-Evangeliums zur synoptischen Tradition und zu den koptischen Evangelienübersetzungen: Zugleich ein Beitrag zur gnostischen Synoptikerdeutung* (BZNW; Berlin: Töpelmann, 1964).

<sup>48</sup> H. Koester, ‘GNOMAI DIAPHOROI: The Origin and Nature of Diversification in the History of Early Christianity’, in J.M. Robinson and H. Koester, *Trajectories through Early Christianity* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1971), 114–57 (130–1 n. 45). Cf. Sieber, ‘The Gospel of Thomas and the New Testament’, 66–8; Fallon and Cameron. ‘The Gospel of Thomas: A Forschungsbericht and Analysis’, 4216. Perhaps strangely, Sevrin notes that the reception of Schrage’s book was reasonably positive at the time. Sevrin, ‘L’Évangile selon Thomas’, 279.

<sup>49</sup> Wood, ‘The New Testament Gospels and the Gospel of Thomas’.

positive proposal is rather too vague to be compelling. He argues that *Thomas* fits the profile of the way in which other second-century works (specifically, the Longer Ending of Mark, the writings of Justin and Tatian's *Diatessaron*) make use of the NT, specifically, by way of 'redaction, adaptation, and harmonization' or again, 'different arrangements, apparent harmonizations, editing, and augmentation of NT gospel material'.<sup>50</sup> These items are very general, however, and – left undefined – could include almost any sort of usage. Wood concludes: 'it may be that *Gos. Thom.*'s inconsistent and fluid use of gospel material is exactly what demonstrates its dependence upon the NT gospels'.<sup>51</sup> This is open to the obvious charge that it puts Wood in a win-win situation: if *Thomas* had quoted the NT more substantially and exactly, this would have shown dependence; the fact that it does not shows dependence anyway.

More promisingly, especially with the work of Christopher Tuckett (though again there are antecedents), the use of the "redactional method" has been prominent. That is, scholars arguing for *Thomas* as secondary have tried to identify places where Matthean and Lukan redaction has crept into *Thomas*, and this has certainly become an area of some agreement. There is need for further refinement of this method to make it more secure, however. In an earlier article I made some attempts at this,<sup>52</sup> and Chapter 6 aims to do this in a more thorough manner.

Thirdly, it has been a noticeable problem with much scholarship on *Thomas* that it often fails to engage properly with opposing camps. From my own British/European vantage point, it seems almost incredible that books such as Crossan's *Historical Jesus* and Patterson's *Gospel of Thomas and Jesus* fail even to mention Tuckett's important *Novum Testamentum* article. Jens Schröter's significant monograph *Erinnerung an Jesu Worte* has also suffered neglect.<sup>53</sup> We have already mentioned the woeful lack of reference to foreign-language literature in Davies' influential monograph, which is not improved in the 2005 second edition. There appears to be something of a sectarian character to a good deal of *Thomas* research. Nor is this merely a matter of Europe being neglected or marginalised by the US. In another context, I have referred to the neglect of Spanish scholarship by other Europeans, particularly the copious articles of Trevijano.<sup>54</sup> Another way in which the divide is not merely

<sup>50</sup> Wood, 'The New Testament Gospels and the Gospel of Thomas', 589, 593.

<sup>51</sup> Wood, 'The New Testament Gospels and the Gospel of Thomas', 594.

<sup>52</sup> S.J. Gathercole, 'Luke in the *Gospel of Thomas*', *NTS* 57 (2011), 114–44.

<sup>53</sup> Neukirchen: Neukirchener, 1997.

<sup>54</sup> In S.J. Gathercole, "'The Heavens and the Earth Will Be Rolled Up': The Eschatology of the Gospel of Thomas", in H.-J. Eckstein, C. Landmesser and H. Lichtenberger,

continental is in the dismissive attitude sometimes displayed by iconoclastic Bauerians such as Koester to more conservative scholars such as Snodgrass even within the US. There are nevertheless some pockets of scholarship on *Thomas* where there is – even if without any resolution – at least healthy debate.<sup>55</sup> There could still be a great deal more, however, and the present book aims at least to attempt to cover a reasonably full international spread of scholarship on *Thomas*.<sup>56</sup> This book will not of course please everybody (or even anybody at all) but it does seek to do justice to the opposition by tackling the arguments point by point. I am not naive enough to imagine that I write from a vantage point of unemotional objectivity *sine ira et studio*, but it is the aim of this book to inject some sobriety into a debate which – notwithstanding the thousands of footnotes exchanged – is highly emotive.

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<sup>55</sup> Witness the extensive discussion, involving James Robinson, Christoph Heil, Stanley Porter and Jens Schröter, on the earliest form of *GTh* 36.

<sup>56</sup> I only regret that my Dutch is not sufficient for me to engage properly with that literature extensively, though comparatively little is untranslated.

PART I

**The original language of *Thomas***





# 1

## THE PROBLEM OF THE ORIGINAL LANGUAGE OF *THOMAS*

‘A series of translation mistakes makes it certain that the original was written in Aramaic.’ So wrote Peter Nagel of the *Gospel of Thomas* in 1968.<sup>1</sup> Certainly not all have shared the view that an Aramaic original is ‘certain’, but the great majority of publications discussing *Thomas*’s original language has focused on the subject of Semitisms in the book. In the earliest days of *Thomas* scholarship, a variety of opinions about the original language of the work was put forward. Puech’s notice of the discovery of the complete *Gospel of Thomas* proposed, in contrast to Nagel, that it was ‘sure’ that we were dealing with a Greek original.<sup>2</sup> A year later, Guillaumont had already proposed a number of mistranslations, and differences between *Thomas* and the Synoptics, as arguments for sayings having been translated from Aramaic.<sup>3</sup> G. Garitte in 1960 then proposed a Coptic original.<sup>4</sup> In response Guillaumont reasserted some of his earlier arguments for a Semitic composition,<sup>5</sup> to which Garitte retorted that it is far better to suggest a known version as original,

<sup>1</sup> P. Nagel, ‘Erwägungen zum Thomas-Evangelium’, in F. Altheim and R. Stiehl, eds. *Die Araber in der alten Welt*, vol. V, pt 2 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1969), 368–92 (379): ‘Eine Reihe von Übersetzungsfehlern machen jedoch zur Gewißheit, daß das Original aramäisch geschrieben war.’

<sup>2</sup> H.-C. Puech, ‘Une collection de paroles de Jésus récemment retrouvée: L’Évangile selon Thomas’, *Académie des Inscriptions et Belles Lettres: comptes rendus* (1957), 146–67 (147: ‘sûr’).

<sup>3</sup> A. Guillaumont, ‘Sémitismes dans les logia de Jésus retrouvés à Nag Hamâdi’, *Journal asiatique* 246 (1958), 113–23.

<sup>4</sup> G. Garitte, ‘Les “Logoi” d’Oxyrhynque et l’apocryphe copte dit “Évangile de Thomas”’, *Muséon* 73 (1960), 151–72, proposing in particular that in *GTh* 3.1 the Coptic  $\text{ⲛⲉⲣⲟⲩⲕ ⲉⲛⲏⲧⲉ}$  is much more likely to stand behind the Greek οἱ ἔλκοντες than vice versa (156–60), and that the same applies to  $\text{ⲣⲟⲉⲣⲁⲛⲉⲅⲉ}$  and ποιεῖν θεραπείας (*GTh* 31.2). These were the two main planks in the argument, to which Garitte added a number of what he regarded as smaller indications.

<sup>5</sup> A. Guillaumont, ‘Les “Logia” d’Oxyrhynchos sont-ils traduits du copte?’, *Muséon* 73 (1960), 325–33. He also presented a case for seeing οἱ ἔλκοντες as going back to a Semitic origin (327–8), and argued on the basis of a parallel in Plato’s *Statesman* 298e for ποιεῖν θεραπείας being idiomatic Greek (330).

rather than one which is 'purely conjectural'.<sup>6</sup> Both this response and the rejoinder also appeared in the same volume of *Le Muséon*, as further did an article by K. Kuhn emphasising that a number of the Semitisms proposed by Guillaumont were merely biblical idioms which did not necessitate the conclusion of a composition in a Semitic language.<sup>7</sup> On the other hand, Guillaumont's arguments have been widely cited, influencing Ménard, for example, to conclude that *Thomas* was a product of 'a nascent Syriac gnosis'.<sup>8</sup>

Since this initial melee, a series of articles has sought to strengthen the case for a Semitic original. Quispel has published a number of pieces seeking to establish a Semitic origin in a great many sayings, with a view to confirming his hypothesis that *Thomas*, like Tatian's *Diatessaron*, was heavily dependent upon the *Gospel of the Hebrews*.<sup>9</sup> The article already mentioned by Nagel pressed the arguments for mistranslations. In 1981, Guillaumont published an additional article which was at the same time more nuanced than previous treatments in its attempt to distinguish the various kinds of Semitisms in *Thomas*, while also providing a number of new arguments that additional sayings offer support for a Semitic original.<sup>10</sup> This received some criticism, however, in an essay

<sup>6</sup> G. Garitte, 'Les «Logoi» d'Oxyrhynque sont traduits du copte', *Muséon* 73 (1960), 335–49 (340): 'purement conjectural'.

<sup>7</sup> K. Kuhn, 'Some Observations on the Coptic Gospel according to Thomas', *Muséon* 73 (1960), 317–23.

<sup>8</sup> J.E. Ménard, *L'Évangile selon Thomas: introduction, traduction, commentaire* (NHS 5; Leiden: Brill, 1975), 27: 'une gnose syriaque naissante'. It is likely here, however, that Ménard means 'syriaque' in a cultural, rather than a linguistic sense. The present book will use "Syrian" as a geographical, and "Syriac" as a linguistic epithet. Ménard himself discusses a number of possible cases of Semitisms in 'Les Problèmes de l'Évangile selon Thomas', in M. Krause, ed. *Essays on the Nag Hammadi Texts in Honour of Alexander Böhlig* (Leiden: Brill, 1972), 59–73; see also Ménard, 'Der syrische Synkretismus und das Thomasevangelium', in A. Dietrich, ed. *Synkretismus im syrisch-persischen Kulturgebiet* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1975), 65–79, and 'La tradition synoptique et l'Évangile selon Thomas', in F. Paschke, J. Dummer, J. Irmscher and K. Treu, eds., *Überlieferungsgeschichtliche Untersuchungen* (Berlin: Akademie, 1981), 411–26 (415–17).

<sup>9</sup> See e.g. (among many other places) the clear statement in G. Quispel 'The Gospel of Thomas and the New Testament', *VigChr* 11 (1957), 189–207 (194); also Quispel, 'L'Évangile selon Thomas et les Clémentines', *VigChr* 12 (1958), 181–96; Quispel, 'Some Remarks on the Gospel of Thomas', *NTS* 5 (1958–9), 276–90; Quispel, 'L'Évangile selon Thomas et le Diatessaron', *VigChr* 13 (1959), 87–117.

<sup>10</sup> A. Guillaumont, 'Les sémitismes dans l'Évangile selon Thomas: essai de classement', in R. van den Broek and M.J. Vermaseren, eds. *Studies in Gnosticism and Hellenistic Religions Presented to Gilles Quispel on the Occasion of His 65th Birthday* (Leiden: Brill, 1981), 190–204; see 190 n. 1 on the aim of differentiation among the various kinds of Semitisms.

by Alexander Böhlig covering the Nag Hammadi corpus more widely.<sup>11</sup> Most recently, two large-scale treatments of *Thomas* have in different ways offered a barrage of material aiming to establish extensive Semitic influence pervading the original composition. Nicholas Perrin has argued that the nature of the catchwords in *Thomas* points to a Syriac composition and dependence upon the *Diatessaron*, and this has found some influence.<sup>12</sup> April DeConick's recent commentary has assembled a large body of material favouring a composition in Western Aramaic, which was subsequently redacted, or reformed, in a Syriac-speaking milieu.<sup>13</sup> Most recently, Perrin has responded to DeConick's arguments in favour of Western Aramaic and argued that some of her cases of Aramaic originals only work in Syriac.<sup>14</sup> In addition to all these publications which in different ways have aimed at offering a spread of evidence for a Semitic original, various articles have also appeared arguing for Aramaic or Syriac originals of individual sayings.<sup>15</sup> Occasionally

<sup>11</sup> A. Böhlig, 'Das Problem aramäischer Elemente in den Texten von Nag Hammadi', in F. Junge, ed. *Studien zu Sprache und Religion Ägyptens*, vol. II, *Religion* (FS W. Westendorf) (Göttingen: F. Junge, 1984), 983–1011; reprinted in A. Böhlig, *Gnosis und Synkretismus: Gesammelte Aufsätze zur spätantiken Religionsgeschichte*, pt 2 (WUNT 48; Tübingen: Mohr, 1989), 414–53. Subsequent page references are to the 1989 version.

<sup>12</sup> N. Perrin, *Thomas and Tatian: The Relationship between the Gospel of Thomas and the Diatessaron* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2002). This has been followed up by his 'NHC II,2 and the Oxyrhynchus Fragments (P.Oxy 1, 654, 655): Overlooked Evidence for a Syriac Gospel of Thomas', *VigChr* 58 (2004), 138–51. A summary of the arguments in the monograph is found in N. Perrin, 'Thomas: the Fifth Gospel?', *JETS* 49 (2006), 67–80. These arguments are accepted in e.g. C.A. Evans, *Fabricating Jesus: How Modern Scholars Distort the Gospels* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2006), 73, and N.T. Wright, *Judas and the Gospel of Jesus* (London: SPCK, 2006), 36. C.L. Blomberg, *Jesus and the Gospels: An Introduction and Survey*, 2nd edn (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2009), 39, presents Perrin's theory as an option, as do R. Buth & B. Kvasnica, 'Temple Authorities and Tithe Evasion: The Linguistic Background and Impact of the Parable of the Vineyard, the Tenants and the Son', in R.S. Notley, M. Turnage and B. Becker, eds. *Jesus' Last Week: Jerusalem Studies in the Synoptic Gospels. Volume One* (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 53–80 (61).

<sup>13</sup> A.D. DeConick, *The Original Gospel of Thomas in Translation: With a Commentary and New English Translation of the Complete Gospel* (LNTS 287; London/New York: T&T Clark International, 2006). The arguments here for Semitisms are mainly an assembly of the secondary literature noted at 12 n. 17; there is also a very convenient summary of the data on 14–15. See also A.D. DeConick, *Recovering the Original Gospel of Thomas: A History of the Gospel and its Growth* (LNTS 286; London/New York: T&T Clark, 2005), 232–3.

<sup>14</sup> N. Perrin, 'The Aramaic Origins of the *Gospel of Thomas* – Revisited', in J. Frey, J. Schröter and E.E. Popkes, eds. *Das Thomasevangelium: Entstehung – Rezeption – Theologie* (BZNW 157; Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2008), 50–9.

<sup>15</sup> See below, in the discussions of individual sayings, especially: Baarda (*GTh* 8); Quecke (*GTh* 21); Quispel (*GTh* 25); Guillaumont, Baker (*GTh* 27); Baarda (*GTh* 42); Gershenson and Quispel (*GTh* 72); Strobel (*GTh* 86); DeConick (90); Guey (*GTh* 100).

arguments have also been made for some sayings originating in Hebrew, but these are rare, and have not to my knowledge extended to theories about a whole composition of *Thomas* in the language.<sup>16</sup>

It is not the case that there is an overwhelming consensus in favour of an Aramaic or Syriac composition, but clearly all the running has been made in recent times by those pressing such lines.<sup>17</sup> No one to my knowledge now holds to Garitte's view of a Coptic original.<sup>18</sup> Statements about composition in Greek have been fairly frequent, but have neither really engaged with the literature on the Semitic side, nor provided any positive reasons for concluding in favour of Greek. Early on, Robert Grant stated unequivocally that 'the Gospel of Thomas was originally written in Greek'.<sup>19</sup> Helmut Koester does the same in the introduction to *Thomas* in the Coptic Gnostic Library edition.<sup>20</sup> Valantasis and Pearson have recently expressed an opinion in favour of Greek.<sup>21</sup> Most of those who have opted for Greek have probably assumed (not unreasonably) that, given the extant evidence of Greek and Coptic texts, a Greek original should be the default assumption. There has never been, to my knowledge, any substantive argument for a Greek original, however.

The question of the original language is not only interesting in its own right, but also has implications for the related questions of provenance and date and therefore for the interpretation of the work and for

<sup>16</sup> See the discussions below in Chapter 3 of e.g. *GTh* 3, 42 and 61.

<sup>17</sup> T. Baarda should also be noted as an advocate of a Syriac original, given that he has written so much on *Thomas*. See e.g. for an early statement his 'The Gospel Text in the Biography of Rabbula', *VigChr* 14 (1960), 102–27 (112). He assumes a Greek intermediary, however: see his comment on the Greek *Vorlage* of the Coptic in his, "'The Cornerstone": An Aramaism in the Diatessaron and the Gospel of Thomas?', *NovT* 37 (1995), 285–300 (295).

<sup>18</sup> J.-M. Sevrin, 'L'Évangile selon Thomas: paroles de Jésus et révélation gnostique', *Revue théologique de Louvain* 8 (1977), 265–92 (272): 'Reste l'hypothèse du copte original. Elle n'a guère eu de partisans déclarés.' One exception, according to F.T. Fallon and R. Cameron, 'The Gospel of Thomas: A Forschungsbericht and Analysis', *ANRW Principat* 2.25.6, 4195–251 (4199), is the study of P. de Suarez, *L'Évangile selon Thomas: traduction, présentation et commentaires* (Marsanne: Éditions Métañoia, 1974). E. Haenchen, 'Literatur zum Thomasevangelium', *ThR* 27 (1961), 147–78 (157–60) is effective in its criticisms of Garitte's position.

<sup>19</sup> R.M. Grant, 'Notes on the Gospel of Thomas', *VigChr* 13 (1959), 170–80 (170).

<sup>20</sup> H. Koester, 'Introduction' (to the *Gospel of Thomas*), in B. Layton, ed. *Nag Hammadi Codex II, 2–7, together with XIII, 2\**, *Brit. Lib. Or. 4926(1)*, and *P. Oxy. I, 654, 655*, vol. I (NHS 20; Leiden: Brill, 1989), 38–49 (38): 'The language of composition was Greek.'

<sup>21</sup> R. Valantasis, *The Gospel of Thomas* (New Testament Readings; London: Routledge, 1997), 3; B.A. Pearson, *Ancient Gnosticism: Traditions and Literature* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2007), 267; J.M. Robinson, 'A Pre-Canonical Greek Reading in Saying 36', in Robinson, *The Sayings Gospel Q: Collected Essays* (Leuven University Press, 2005), 845–83 (859), also talks of the 'Greek original'.

the wider questions about Christian origins upon which *Thomas* may or may not touch. If *Thomas* was written in Greek, for example, this gives a much wider range of options for dates and places of composition than does Syriac. In terms of dating, according to Perrin, a Syriac composition entails a time of writing 'no earlier than the mid-second century';<sup>22</sup> at the other extreme, arguments for a Semitic original play a role in DeConick's case that the core of *Thomas* was a book of speeches composed in Aramaic and originating in the early Jerusalem mission in the mid first century.<sup>23</sup>

The first part of this book presents a criticism of the proposals for an Aramaic or Syriac original for the *Gospel of Thomas* and proposes in turn that a Greek original is much more likely. The argument has three parts. Chapter 2 will make some cautionary remarks about the possibility of marshalling evidence for a Semitic original. In Chapter 3, the proposed Semitisms will be systematically – and as comprehensively as is reasonably possible – evaluated. In Chapter 4, some suggestive arguments with positive evidence for Greek composition will be presented. This conclusion in favour of a Greek original will pave the way for seeing a closer relationship to the New Testament Gospels than is often seen in current scholarship.

<sup>22</sup> Perrin, 'NHC II,2 and the Oxyrhynchus Fragments', 151; cf. H.J.W. Drijvers, 'Facts and Problems in Early Syriac-speaking Christianity', *SecCent* 2 (1982), 157–75 (173), who also argues for a Syriac original, and a date of around 200 CE.

<sup>23</sup> DeConick, *Original Gospel of Thomas in Translation*, 21. The current debate between DeConick and Perrin is in many ways a rerun of the very similar series of exchanges between Quispel and Baarda a generation ago. On the other hand, for Guillaumont the compositional process is so complicated that the Semitic original of *Thomas* is apparently influenced both by Aramaic sayings of Jesus independent of the Synoptics, but also by the Syriac versions of those same Gospels. Such is apparently implied by Guillaumont, 'Les sémitismes dans l'Évangile selon Thomas', 197.

## 2

### METHODOLOGICAL PROBLEMS WITH SEMITIC THEORIES

#### Introduction

Before embarking in Chapter 3 on the treatment of individual sayings and finally in Chapter 4 on the positive evidence for a Greek original, it will be useful to consider general problems associated with identifying and reconstructing a Semitic *Vorlage* for a text extant in a different language. (Because the *Gospel of Thomas* survives in three Greek fragments and a near complete Coptic text, here we are dealing with a Semitic substratum beneath Greek and Coptic.) This area has already been the subject of a great deal of discussion, especially in New Testament research, but also in the study of the OT Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha, as can be seen in an important recent article by J.R. Davila.<sup>1</sup>

The following set of cautionary considerations falls broadly into three areas. The first area surrounds the question of how to identify and assess Semitisms. This involves the consideration of difficulties with how one might: (1) get an argument for Semitic influence off the ground by drawing attention to a deficiency or oddity in the Greek and/or Coptic; (2) identify a corpus of Aramaic/Syriac material which one might use as the basis for a reconstructed *Vorlage*; (3) classify the different Semitisms with a view to (4) assessing their significance for answering the question of the language of composition. Thereafter, we will examine the difficulties with identifying the proposed *causes* of these Semitisms, namely (5) the identification of a mistranslation or woodenly literal rendering of the Semitic original, or through (6) the identification of divergent translations, where differing Greek or Coptic texts of *Thomas*, or differing Thomasine and canonical readings, might be accounted for by reference to a common Semitic *Vorlage*. Finally

<sup>1</sup> J.R. Davila, '(How) Can We Tell if a Greek Apocryphon or Pseudepigraphon Has Been Translated from Hebrew or Aramaic?', *JSP* 15 (2005), 3–61.

(7–10, cf. also 2), we will examine four additional problems specifically attending the idea of Syriac composition.

## 1 The need to eliminate Greek and Coptic explanations before arguing for a Semitism

As has been noted, the difficulties associated with the identification and evaluation of Semitisms have already been much discussed in New Testament scholarship. The copious literature on the subject frequently discusses the difficulty of identifying a construction as Semitic and not acceptable Greek. To take one recent observation by a classicist, Colvin's recent book on the history of Greek notes that Mark's parataxis is 'often invoked as Aramaic (or LXX) influence ... but it seems also to reflect contemporary vernacular Gk'.<sup>2</sup> One might add that Aristotle also had a fondness for it.<sup>3</sup>

Since a precondition for seeing a Semitism is a problematic Greek or Coptic construction, distinguishing between acceptable and unacceptable Greek or Coptic is a *conditio sine qua non*. Several factors should be borne in mind here.

First, it is an especially unwise strategy to posit a *Vorlage* in another language when the extant text is acceptable as it stands: perhaps the least convincing cases of alleged Semitisms in *Thomas* are those where the Greek or Coptic is quite in order. We will see in the discussion of the individual sayings in Chapter 3 that particularly unremarkable are the phrases 'in heaven' (*GTh* 44), 'which is in his heart' (*GTh* 45), and the reflexive in 'he purchased *for himself* this single pearl' (*GTh* 76).

Second, a possibility which at least requires consideration is that of a problem at the stage of original composition. The appendix in the grammar of Moulton and Howard notes this in the discussion of NT Semitisms, commenting that, 'Even when there is the strongest reason

<sup>2</sup> S. Colvin, *A Historical Greek Reader: Mycenaean to the Koine* (Oxford University Press, 2007), 269.

<sup>3</sup> It may well be, however, that there is in a particular work a Graecism or Copticism which is at the same time a Semitism, and which can be better explained as deriving from Semitic influence. In practice, however, determining that the feature is more likely to be a Semitism is hard. Two cases where it would be particularly difficult to decide are (1) in the area of simple overlap between Greek/Coptic and Semitic grammar and semantics, but also (2) in the area of what Psichari called the use of Semitisms which are 'en quelque sorte, négatifs'. Here, Semitisms sound archaising or Attic in style, and so come across both as Semitic and as lofty Greek at one and the same time. See J. Psichari, 'Essai sur le grec de la Septante', *REJ* 55 (1908), 161–208 (202), giving examples including ἐν ὀνόματι for *b'shem*.

to suspect a translator's error, we are often left in doubt whether this is due to a corruption in the original document [or] to a mistranslation of the original text.<sup>4</sup> The wonderful example which they provide is that of the appearance of "fireworks" (in place of "fire-brigade") in the English version of Mommsen. Was there an error by Mommsen (or the German printer) which led to the printing of *Feuerwerk* for *Feuerwehr* in the original? Or was the mistake that of the translator? The confusion is of roughly equal size in each case. Moulton and Howard suggest that one cannot necessarily presume a flawless original.

Third, scribal corruption is another reason why a text might not make sense. This will be seen in our discussion of *GTh* 27, where the odd phrase νηστεύειν τὸν κόσμον is taken by Taylor to be a scribal error, whereas others see it as a Syriacism. Similarly, the errors in *GTh* 13.8 and *GTh* 60.1 have been taken as evidence by some for a Semitic original and by others as a copyist's mistake.

Fourth, the difficulty which the appeal to Semitism alleges to solve may arise out of the fact that the phraseology in question has been misunderstood. In a case in Acts, for example, Torrey proposed a problem with οἱ πρεσβύτεροι ἀδελφοί in Acts 15.23 originating in the Aramaic "1 Acts" source,<sup>5</sup> a problem which de Zwaan says 'is a case of exegesis. The difficulties may be wholly imaginary and "the elder brethren" the final solution.'<sup>6</sup> For our purposes, we will see that *GTh* 12.2, *GTh* 69 and *GTh* 80 are instances of this.

Finally, it is also possible that the situation is even more difficult with a work like the *Gospel of Thomas*, which sets out explicitly to be a writing which is not straightforwardly comprehensible: in a programmatic statement at the beginning of the work, Jesus says, 'Whoever finds the interpretation of these sayings will not experience death' (*GTh* 1).<sup>7</sup> Furthermore, according to the saying following, this

<sup>4</sup> J.H. Moulton and W.F. Howard (with C.L. Bedale), 'Appendix: Semitisms in the New Testament', in Moulton and Howard, *A Grammar of New Testament Greek*, vol. II *Accidence and Word Formation* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1929), 411–85 (479).

<sup>5</sup> C.C. Torrey, *The Composition and Date of Acts* (HTS 1; Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1916), 7, 39, where he describes it as 'faultless Aramaic idiom', following Harnack's and Preuschen's assessment of its difficulty.

<sup>6</sup> J. de Zwaan, 'The Use of the Greek Language in Acts', in F.J. Foakes Jackson and K. Lake, eds. *The Beginnings of Christianity*, pt 1, *The Acts of the Apostles*, vol. II, *Prolegomena II: Criticism* (London: Macmillan, 1922), 30–65 (49).

<sup>7</sup> 'The Gospel purposely obscured its meaning.' Thus C.C. Richardson, 'The Gospel of Thomas: Gnostic or Encratite?', in D. Neiman and M.A. Schatkin, eds. *The Heritage of the Early Church: Essays in Honor of Georges Vasilievich Florovsky* (Rome: Pont. Institutum Studiorum Orientalium, 1973), 65–76 (69). Cf. the view of Sevrin that *Thomas* is deliberately obfuscatory: J.-M. Sevrin, 'L'Interprétation de l'Évangile selon Thomas, entre



interpretation requires “seeking” and “finding” – with perhaps deliberately surprising and disturbing results: ‘Let him who seeks continue seeking until he finds. When he finds, he will become troubled. When he becomes troubled, he will be astonished’ (*GTh* 2)! A number of sayings have appeared incomprehensible to scholars as a result, perhaps, of insufficient tolerance for Thomasine oddity: we will see this in the treatment of a number of sayings below (including those mentioned in the previous paragraph). If we were to remove from *Thomas* everything “strange”, we would probably end up with a much abbreviated version.

## 2 The need to establish the linguistic base for identification of Semitisms

It is a serious difficulty for the study of Semitisms in a document, like *Thomas*, from the first or second century CE if insufficient attention is paid to matching a hypothetical underlying expression with linguistic data from the right time and place; that is, if an Aramaic or Hebrew word is simply grabbed from a much later period, for example, and supposed to feature as part of a Gospel’s *Vorlage*. Without getting into the rights and wrongs on this particular matter, some views of the Son of Man problem have been criticised for not paying sufficient attention to chronological developments in Aramaic.<sup>8</sup> We will have reason in Chapter 3 below to question instances of such anachronistic evidence in the case of *Thomas*, such as Nagel’s appeals to Mandaic idiom in his discussion of the Aramaic originals of various sayings (see e.g. on *GTh* 27.2 below).

Wilcox, on the other hand, rightly notes that as soon as we begin to suppose Semitic originals for NT documents (the scope of his treatment), ‘this at once raises the question of the materials upon which we should base our models of First Century A.D. Jewish Aramaic and Hebrew’.<sup>9</sup> His criteria for such materials include their geographical and chronological proximity, the requirement that they themselves be Semitic in

tradition et rédaction’, in J.D. Turner, and A. McGuire, eds. *The Nag Hammadi Library after Fifty Years: Proceedings of the 1995 Society of Biblical Literature Commemoration* (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 347–60 (359–60).

<sup>8</sup> See e.g. P. Owen and D. Shepherd, ‘Speaking up for Qumran, Dalman and the Son of Man: Was *Bar Enasha* a Common Term for “Man” in the Time of Jesus?’, *JSNT* 81 (2001), 81–122; P.M. Casey, *The Solution to the “Son of Man” Problem* (LNTS 343; London/New York: T&T Clark, 2007), 45–6 and elsewhere responds by arguing for the stability of the Aramaic language.

<sup>9</sup> M. Wilcox, ‘Semitisms in the New Testament’, *ANRW* 2.25.2 (1984), 978–1029 (986).

composition (not translation documents) and that they be large enough to provide a usable sample.<sup>10</sup> The corpora which fit these criteria best are the Qumran, Masada, Murabbaat and Bar Kochba texts, along with other inscriptions from the period.<sup>11</sup> This illustrates well a properly rigorous approach to the matter, and against this backdrop reliance upon applying, for example, Mandaic grammar to a text from the first or second century must be treated with a good deal of scepticism. The point here is not necessarily that Qumran texts and the others noted above are the *only* Aramaic sources which should be used, but one ought to be suspicious if a proposed Semitic *Vorlage* is based on a construction or word which is merely attested rarely, or in a considerably later text.

The problems are even more serious, however, when one considers the possibility of Syriac as the original language of *Thomas* in whole or in part (even if one proposes a very late date for *Thomas*). In this case, judgements about a Syriac *Vorlage* for our Greek and Coptic text inevitably rest on a very poor linguistic base.<sup>12</sup> Our knowledge of Syriac in the first century, for example, is based on a grand total of two inscriptions, one from 6 CE consisting of nine incomplete lines, and one from 73 CE, a monumental inscription of nine complete lines.<sup>13</sup> We then have nothing again until the 160s, when there is some further epigraphic and numismatic evidence (about a dozen inscriptions and three or four coins).<sup>14</sup> The situation for the second century might be improved by our possession of the *Odes of Solomon* (though their original language is disputed: see below), and the Peshitta of the OT, which may well come from the right time, is of use; since, however, the latter is *translation* literature, it is not a clean example of Syriac literature to form a reliable benchmark: it would not, for example, meet Wilcox's requirement noted above that

<sup>10</sup> Wilcox, 'Semitisms in the New Testament', 986.

<sup>11</sup> Wilcox, 'Semitisms in the New Testament', 986–7. Similarly, Casey stresses the importance especially of the DSS: 'Where words are not found in the Scrolls, we must use other Aramaic with care.' P.M. Casey, *An Aramaic Approach to Q: Sources for the Gospels of Matthew and Luke* (SNTSMS 122; Cambridge University Press, 2002), 61.

<sup>12</sup> A.D. DeConick, *The Original Gospel of Thomas in Translation: With a Commentary and New English Translation of the Complete Gospel* (LNTS 287; London/New York: T&T Clark International, 2006), 8, 13, argues not for a Syriac composition, but rather for Syriac elements coming in between 50–120 CE, after a move of *Thomas* from Jerusalem to Syria.

<sup>13</sup> For the list of dated inscriptions, see H.J.W. Drijvers and J.F. Healey, *The Old Syriac Inscriptions of Edessa and Osrhoene: Texts, Translations, and Commentary* (HO 42; Leiden: Brill, 1999), 4, and the inscriptions on pp. 140–4 and 193–7.

<sup>14</sup> Drijvers and Healey, *Old Syriac Inscriptions*, 4 on the inscriptions in general and pp. 225–9 for the coins. Extant parchments appear in the mid third century: see Drijvers and Healey, *Old Syriac Inscriptions*, 231–48.

materials for comparison should have been composed in the relevant language. Davila's comment that the reconstructed *Vorlage* 'must be in the dialect from the right time and place' highlights the problem that we know so little about Syriac at the time of the composition of *Thomas*.<sup>15</sup> It is not surprising that advocates of a Syriac *Vorlage* must appeal to much later writers for parallels, but this clearly raises as many questions as it purports to solve.

### 3 The difficulty of classifying Semitisms

After the identification of Semitisms, the next stage prior to assessing their significance is that of classification. As de Zwaan put it: 'Without proceeding any further, it is evident that the notion "Semitism" must be sharply defined in order to avoid constant confusion between translation-Greek and "sacred prose" and several other misunderstandings.'<sup>16</sup>

First, it is generally accepted in the study of Semitisms that one needs to be especially cautious about attaching any particular significance to Semitic phraseology which is reproduced in the Greek of the translations of the OT.<sup>17</sup> These are usually called Septuagintisms, and this term can be used – even if not altogether satisfactorily, however narrowly or widely one might define "Septuagint" – as an umbrella term for Semitisms which have, through the Bible, entered into Greek. In the discussion of Acts, de Zwaan identifies two reasons for the influence of Septuagintal language: one is Luke's interest in providing "local colour", that is, in making the relevant characters speak like Jews; the other is that it is simply a function of Luke's desire to write 'sacred prose'.<sup>18</sup> An example of the relevance of this to discussions of *Thomas* arises from the fact that Guillaumont and DeConick take the phrase 'a way which is distant', an idiom for 'a long journey' appearing in *GTh* 97.2, to be evidence for *Thomas*'s translation from a Semitic source (see discussion below). It is a problem for this view, however, that the same idiom is reproduced in some of the Greek (and indeed, Coptic) Bible translations: as a result, it could easily be influential at the Greek stage of *Thomas*'s transmission.

<sup>15</sup> Davila, 'Translated from Hebrew or Aramaic?', 44.

<sup>16</sup> De Zwaan, 'Use of the Greek Language in Acts', 53.

<sup>17</sup> For discussions of this, see e.g. C.F.D. Moule, *An Idiom-Book of New Testament Greek*, 2nd edn (Cambridge University Press, 1959), 171–2; Davila, 'Translated from Hebrew or Aramaic?', 31–7, and the bibliographies they provide.

<sup>18</sup> De Zwaan, 'Use of the Greek Language in Acts', 46–7.

These instances of what in Greek and Coptic are strictly speaking nonsense because they reflect a special Hebrew idiom can be distinguished from cases where the language makes good sense as it stands, but is “biblical expression”. Examples of this in *Thomas* will be discussed below with respect to *GTh* 33.3 (‘going out and coming in’) and *GTh* 36 (‘from morning until evening and from evening until morning’).

Furthermore, even when Greek phrases might not be biblical per se, they might well be what Deissmann called ‘analogical formations’, that is, coined on the basis of, or as an approximation to Greek-biblical language.<sup>19</sup> In *GTh* 27.2, for example, the phrase σαββατίζειν τὸ σάββατον is so close to the Greek Bible’s σαββατίζειν τὰ σάββατα that influence is probable.

Finally, we can identify certain idioms clearly of Semitic origin, but which are not found in the Bible – one might term them post-biblical Semitisms. Phrases like “tasting death” and “the world is not worthy of”, however, are common in a number of languages used by Jews, and so are not indicative of any particular linguistic background.<sup>20</sup>

#### 4 **The difficulty of assessing the significance of Semitisms for the original language of a composition**

Even once one has assembled a set of meaningful Semitisms, from which Septuagintalisms and other less significant elements are excluded, further evaluation is still necessary.

First, it is extremely common to find Jewish and Christian compositions, the Greek origins of which are beyond question, which are replete with Semitisms. The *Didache*, for example, is generally assumed to

<sup>19</sup> G.A. Deissmann, *Bible Studies* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1901), 166.

<sup>20</sup> The distinction is also frequently, though not consistently, made between “primary” and “secondary” Semitisms. In de Zwaan’s account, the difference is between an author or translator with imperfect knowledge of Greek introducing (primary) Semitisms because of his/her own natural idiom (see below under the discussion of “bilingual interference”), and the person for whom idiomatic Greek is natural but who introduces (secondary) Semitisms either by self-conscious design (in the case of composition) or – in the event of translation – because of the constraints of the Semitic source (de Zwaan, ‘Use of the Greek Language in Acts’, 54). In the case of *Thomas*, it is very difficult to distinguish between these two general types. It is a further difficulty in the secondary literature on Semitisms, however, that “primary” and “secondary” are by no means also distinguished in the same sense as here: indeed, Moulton and Howard use the two categories almost in reverse. See the (albeit confusing) discussion of “pure” and “secondary” Semitisms in Moulton and Howard, ‘Semitisms in the New Testament’, 414.

have been written in Greek, despite Rendell Harris having very quickly identified an enormous collection of Semitisms in the work.<sup>21</sup>

On the subject of Septuagintalisms, it is not necessarily the case that we should declare, as does de Zwaan, that ‘current Septuagintalisms are to be eliminated’ from the discussion.<sup>22</sup> Rather, as Davila more reasonably puts it,

we must reckon with the possibility that apparent Semitisms in Greek works could be stylistic features imitating the LXX. The logical conclusion, noted by numerous scholars, is that Septuagintalisms – expressions found frequently in LXX Greek as well as direct allusions to specific LXX passages – cannot be advanced as *decisive* proofs of Semitic interference due to translation from a Semitic Vorlage.<sup>23</sup>

As Guillaumont comments, of the mountain of Semitisms that he identifies in *Thomas*, many of them are fairly insignificant because they are Septuagintal, and there are numerous instances of biblical idiom which add a strong Semitic colour, but which do not establish anything like *direct* Semitic influence.<sup>24</sup> Recently, in a parallel case, Watson and Davila have argued that the apocryphal book of Baruch is likely to have been of Greek composition. Davila concludes: ‘In short, the book of Baruch was composed in Greek. The apparent Semitic influence is an illusion arising from the fact that the author borrowed heavily from the content and style of the Greek Bible.’<sup>25</sup> This view might not necessarily be right, but at present it is very difficult to show that it is wrong.

Finally, it might be noted that the identification of part of a composition to have been of Semitic origin does not mean that the whole is. In the canonical Gospels, for example, there are clearly parts which go back ultimately to Semitic sources (most indisputably, the OT quotations), as well as Jesus tradition which by common consensus is dominical (e.g. his proclamation of the kingdom of God).<sup>26</sup> There are also, however, other

<sup>21</sup> J.R. Harris, *The Teaching of the Apostles* (with facsimile text) (London: C.J. Clay and Sons, 1887), 78–90.

<sup>22</sup> De Zwaan, ‘Use of the Greek Language in Acts’, 47.

<sup>23</sup> Davila, ‘Translated from Hebrew or Aramaic?’, 34. Emphasis mine.

<sup>24</sup> A. Guillaumont, ‘Les sémitismes dans l’Évangile selon Thomas: essai de classement’, in R. van den Broek and M.J. Vermaseren, eds. *Studies in Gnosticism and Hellenistic Religions Presented to Gilles Quispel on the Occasion of His 65th Birthday* (Leiden: Brill, 1981), 190–204 (190, 191).

<sup>25</sup> Davila, ‘Translated from Hebrew or Aramaic?’, 54; cf. F.B. Watson, *Paul and the Hermeneutics of Faith* (London/New York: T&T Clark, 2004), 456–8.

<sup>26</sup> See e.g. E.P. Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism* (London: SCM Press, 1985), 326 and his classification of elements of Jesus tradition which are ‘certain or virtually certain’.

parts which are large sections of almost unquestionably Greek composition (e.g. John 1.1–14).<sup>27</sup>

If all of these potential pitfalls have been avoided, there are two principal ways which have been proposed for identifying a Semitic *Vorlage* to *Thomas*, namely the identification of mistranslations and of divergent translations.

## 5 Mistranslations or wooden translations

One of the clearest markers of a *Vorlage* in a language other than that of the extant text is a sign of a mistranslation, that is text which is nonsense or gravely difficult but which makes very good sense when retroverted into the hypothesised original language.<sup>28</sup> Once we are satisfied that the extant text is sufficiently quirky that we have some explaining to do, we are left with mistranslation as almost the only secure grounds for a Semitic *Vorlage*.<sup>29</sup> Even those most committed to this approach, however, have often expressed the serious difficulties involved in the task. Torrey remarked that identification of mistranslation is ‘immensely valuable in the rare cases where it is convincing; there is no other internal proof of translation which is so immediately cogent’, but adds:

But the need of caution is greater here than anywhere else. The more experience one has in this field, the more plainly he sees the constant danger of blundering ... Hence it happens in nine cases out of ten that renewed study of the “mistranslations” which we have discovered shows us that there was no translation at all, or else that it was quite correct.<sup>30</sup>

If identification of a mistranslation is to be convincing, it is necessary for the proposer to supply a reconstruction of the misunderstood original text. One of the principal difficulties in attempting retroversion, however, is that its possibility depends upon (in our case) a Semitic *Gospel of Thomas* having been translated into Greek and Coptic in a manner that is

<sup>27</sup> There have been some attempts to argue for a Semitic original even here, however: see the discussion in Casey, *Aramaic Approach to Q*, 59.

<sup>28</sup> See e.g. Moulton and Howard, ‘Semitisms in the New Testament’, 479; Davila, ‘Translated from Hebrew or Aramaic?’, 39 and the bibliography in 39 n. 92.

<sup>29</sup> See e.g. in his discussion of Torrey’s three criteria – (1) a Semitic ring; (2) mistranslation; and (3) consistent use of Semitic idiom – Moulton dismisses (1) and (3) as easily imaginable in a composition in Semitising Greek as in a translation from a Semitic language.

<sup>30</sup> C.C. Torrey, ‘The Translations Made from the Original Aramaic Gospels’, in D.G. Lyon and G.F. Moore, eds. *Studies in the History of Religions: Presented to Crawford Howell Toy* (New York: Macmillan, 1912), 269–317 (283, 284).

very literal (or “formal” – the distinction is not relevant for the purposes of the present argument). This situation is exacerbated further when one is imagining how a Coptic saying (for which we have no Greek) may go back to an Aramaic or Syriac original via a Greek intermediary. Guillaumont, for example, embarks on this process on several occasions, and is quite happy to hypothesise the phraseologies of both the Greek version and the Syriac grandparent.<sup>31</sup> It must be considered hazardous, however, to assume that both processes of translation have been literal enough to facilitate this retroversion.

The problem is not just our ignorance, though this in itself is a considerable obstacle. The difficulty is also that this much-needed literalness of translation is actually contradicted by the evidence, as we will see in the discussion of divergent translations below.

A number of scholars also note the problem of scholarly disagreement over identifying mistranslations in practice. On the NT cases, Moulton commented that ‘the Semitists themselves are not in agreement’.<sup>32</sup> For the OT Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha, Davila has issued the caution: ‘Unfortunately, it is very difficult to demonstrate such misunderstandings in the absence of the *Vorlage*, and although many mistakes of this type have been proposed for Greek texts, very few have found general acceptance among scholars.’<sup>33</sup>

A good example of this in studies of *Thomas* appears in *GTh* 61, with the odd question which Salome poses to Jesus: ‘Who are you, o man, who *as from one* (ⲉⲱⲟⲥ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ ⲉ̅ⲛ ⲟⲩⲁ) has come up onto my couch and eaten from my table?’ A number of editors consider the text to be corrupt here and expunge the offending words, but there are also two quite brilliant suggestions of a possible *Vorlage* from which the Coptic arises (see discussion of *GTh* 61.2 below). Unfortunately, one is a suggestion of a mistranslated Aramaic, the other of a mistranslated Greek *Vorlage*: the two explanations are mutually exclusive but equally ingenious, and as unproveable as they are unfalsifiable. In all this, the difficulty is that there is no control on scholarly ingenuity.

There is a further difficulty when one considers that the author may be bilingual. In this case, as Davila notes, ‘it is entirely possible – likely, even – that the writer would produce a [Greek] text containing elements of Semitic interference purely because he or she thought in a Semitic

<sup>31</sup> A. Guillaumont, ‘Sémitismes dans les logia de Jésus retrouvés à Nag Hamâdi’, *Journal asiatique* 246 (1958), 113–23 (e.g. 119, 120 and see 123 n. 20).

<sup>32</sup> Moulton and Howard, ‘Semitisms in the New Testament’, 478.

<sup>33</sup> Davila, ‘Translated from Hebrew or Aramaic?’, 39.

language'.<sup>34</sup> We would be dealing, as Moulton and Howard put it, with 'a linguistic confusion in the writer's mind with no documentary cause at all'.<sup>35</sup> This is illustrated by their experience of hearing 'so perfect a bilingualist as Mr. Hilaire Belloc in a lecture on the French Revolution speak of "the sermon in the tennis court"' (saying "sermon" for the French "serment").<sup>36</sup> This, they comment, raises the spectre of a possible real (in some sense) Aramaic version of, say, John's Gospel – but one which only ever existed in the mind of the author as he was writing his Greek. This might come in when we are dealing with a Greek or Coptic form which is either mistranslated (leading to a translation with a *faux ami*), or which is translated in a woodenly literal manner (see e.g. discussion of *GTh* 102 below).

When we come to consider *Thomas*, many have pointed out in connection with various works that a Syrian provenance is naturally no bar to composition in Greek.<sup>37</sup> Indeed, if one suspects Edessa as the place of composition – as most advocates of Syrian provenance do – then one must reckon with the fact that she 'was culturally a Greek city', where 'Greek linguistic influence at least was strong from the beginning'.<sup>38</sup> Recent scholarship has seen a growing appreciation of Edessa as bilingual: 'The recently discovered archive with legal documents in Greek and Syriac and with subscriptions in both languages can only confirm this picture of a thoroughly bilingual culture, where language did not function as a cultural barrier'.<sup>39</sup> However, if one envisages a Greek composition in a Syrian milieu, the possibility of interference from Aramaic/Syriac must be borne in mind.

## 6 Identifying divergent translations

In the case of *Thomas*, it may also be that we are in the happy position of not relying exclusively on mistranslation for the establishment of a Semitic *Vorlage*. This is because *Thomas* may enable us to identify

<sup>34</sup> Davila, 'Translated from Hebrew or Aramaic?', 37.

<sup>35</sup> Moulton and Howard, 'Semitisms in the New Testament', 479.

<sup>36</sup> Moulton and Howard, 'Semitisms in the New Testament', 479.

<sup>37</sup> H.-J. Klauck, *Apocryphal Gospels: An Introduction* (London/New York: T&T Clark, 2003 [2002]), 108 on *Thomas*. See also below in Part III the discussion of the Nag Hammadi texts, such as the *Gospel of Philip* and the *Book of Thomas the Contender*. See also A.F.J. Klijn, 'Christianity in Edessa and the Gospel of Thomas: On Barbara Ehlers, "Kann das Thomasevangelium aus Edessa stammen?"', *NovT* 14 (1972), 70–7 (72–3): as the title suggests, Klijn criticises Ehlers for neglecting the use of Greek in Edessa.

<sup>38</sup> Drijvers and Healey, *Old Syriac Inscriptions*, 32.

<sup>39</sup> Drijvers and Healey, *Old Syriac Inscriptions*, 38, noting also Greek inscriptions at Edessa. The volume also includes the bilingual inscriptions and parchments.



places where a Semitic *Vorlage* may have been translated divergently: hence, (1) a Semitic *Vorlage* being identifiable from places in *Thomas* where the Greek and Coptic texts diverge, as well as (2) a Semitic *Vorlage* being identifiable from places where *Thomas* and the canonical Synoptics diverge.

The identification of divergent translations from an Aramaic source has already been part of the discussion of “Q” for over a century now. One of the earliest, and still most widely acclaimed pieces of evidence for an Aramaic Q is Wellhausen’s argument about Matthew 23.26 and Luke 11.41. Wellhausen commented that Matthew’s reference to “purifying” and Luke’s reference to “giving alms” goes back to a confusion between Aramaic *dakkau* and *zakkau*.<sup>40</sup> Moulton and Howard comment on this as follows:

There is no more brilliant conjecture in Wellhausen’s work on the Gospels than his solution of the difficult τὰ ἐνόντα δότε ἐλεημοσύνην (Lk 11<sup>41</sup>). The sense requires καθάρισον, which is actually found in the Matthaean parallel (Mt 23<sup>26</sup>), and, as we have seen ..., Wellhausen makes this a moral certainty by restoring the Aramaic.<sup>41</sup>

Streeter considered this ‘quite the most striking of the very few cases in the Gospels where the diversity between Matthew and Luke can be plausibly accounted for by independent translation from Aramaic’.<sup>42</sup> Similarly, in his monograph on the Aramaic background to Q, Casey draws several times on Wellhausen at this point.<sup>43</sup> Black had already commended the hypothesis as having ‘survived criticism’.<sup>44</sup>

On the other hand, there have been a number of dissonant voices questioning its survival. Moule notes anecdotally how in Prof. C.H. Dodd’s Seminar the ‘apparently brilliant suggestion’ was subjected to a great deal of criticism on various grounds.<sup>45</sup> More recently, Williams has presented some fairly devastating arguments against Wellhausen’s theory, not least

<sup>40</sup> J. Wellhausen, *Einleitung in die drei ersten Evangelien*, 2nd edn (Berlin: Georg Reimer, 1911), 27.

<sup>41</sup> Moulton and Howard, ‘Semitisms in the New Testament’, 479.

<sup>42</sup> B.H. Streeter, *The Four Gospels: A Study in Origins*, rev. edn (London: Macmillan, 1930 [1924]), 254 n. 1, cited in W.D. Davies and D.C. Allison, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel according to Saint Matthew: Matthew 19–28* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1997), 283–4: they ‘strongly suspect’ Wellhausen to be correct (299).

<sup>43</sup> Casey, *An Aramaic Approach to Q*.

<sup>44</sup> M. Black, *An Aramaic Approach to the Gospels and Acts*, 3rd edn (Oxford: Clarendon, 1967), 2; this reference (in an earlier edition) comes from Moule, *Idiom-Book*, 186.

<sup>45</sup> Moule, *Idiom-Book*, 186.

on a number of points quite specific to the Matthean and Lukan contexts.<sup>46</sup> One element, however, is of more general application, and will be echoed at several points in our treatments of problems attending discussions of sayings in *Thomas*, viz. the criticism: ‘While Wellhausen’s suggestion would be plausible if the two sayings were close except that one evangelist used καθάρισον and the other used δότε ἐλεημοσύνην, this is not the case.’<sup>47</sup> In fact, the sayings in Matthew and Luke are quite different across the board. This is a problem in a number of Thomasine cases.

In the first place, we have the discrepancies between the Greek and the Coptic versions of *Thomas*. This can be seen to present significant problems for the idea of a literal translation, and therefore for the task of retroversion, in the cases of, for example, *GTh* 3.2 and *GTh* 6, as discussed below. In the second place, when the attempt is made to seek a *Vorlage* common to both *Thomas* and one or more of the Synoptic Gospels, we have abundant evidence of differences among the four Gospels in question (i.e. Matthew, Mark, Luke and *Thomas*). In the cases of, for example, *GTh* 12, 35 and 48, the similarities between *Thomas* and the Synoptics are certainly not close enough to be able to posit a common *Vorlage* which has been translated literally in both cases. Similarly, in *GTh* 107, Guillaumont supplies a missing Aramaic/Syriac *Vorlage* to the Synoptics’ Greek verb and *Thomas*’s Coptic verb respectively; there are so many differences between the Synoptics’ version and *Thomas*’s version, however, that we already know that they simply *cannot* both be literal translations.

As a result, there is a problem with Guillaumont’s description of Coptic *Thomas* in the opening words of his last article on this question as ‘Traduit plus ou moins fidèlement du grec’.<sup>48</sup> Does the project of retroversion, however, not require a translation closer than merely ‘more or less faithful’? Similarly, Perrin refers to his ‘assumption that the Coptic is loosely based on the Greek’.<sup>49</sup> However, the process of retroversion relies on an extant version being much more than just ‘loosely based’ on its *Vorlage*. The more one sees places where Greek and Coptic are

<sup>46</sup> P.M. Head and P.J. Williams, ‘Q Review’, *TynB* 54 (2003), 119–44 (132–6 on the Wellhausen argument). The article notes, in a rather coded manner, that Williams is responsible for the discussion of Casey’s treatment of Q (p. 120 n. 4).

<sup>47</sup> Head and Williams, ‘Q Review’, 133. Similarly J.S. Kloppenborg, *The Formation of Q: Trajectories in Ancient Wisdom Collections* (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 1999), 58: ‘appeal to mistranslation does not explain the other (substantial) differences between Matthew and Luke’.

<sup>48</sup> Guillaumont, ‘Les sémitismes dans l’Évangile selon Thomas’, 190.

<sup>49</sup> N. Perrin, ‘NHC II,2 and the Oxyrhynchus Fragments (P.Oxy 1, 654, 655): Overlooked Evidence for a Syriac Gospel of Thomas’, *VigChr* 58 (2004), 138–51 (149).

only ‘loosely’ or ‘plus ou moins’ similar, and where parallels between *Thomas* and the Synoptics are not especially close, the more precarious the whole project of reconstructing hypothetical *Vorlagen* becomes.

A further difficulty which we will encounter is that the divergences to which scholars have drawn attention are often very small. Unlike the instance noted by Wellhausen, in which there is a clear difference between ‘purifying’ and ‘giving alms’, we are sometimes in the cases below dealing with very minor differences: between, for example, ‘drawing’ and ‘dragging’ (*GTh* 3 and 114), the soul ‘suffering’ and the soul ‘being in pain’ (*GTh* 28) and the like. Sometimes, it will be clear that the divergence is even quite imaginary (see e.g. on *GTh* 33.2). Even when there is a difference, however, if it is only quite minor it hardly justifies appeal to a third entity to explain it.<sup>50</sup>

An additional problem with the project of identifying divergent translations from another language is that an appeal to another language to explain extant divergences is bound to produce positive results, whichever language is employed. Let us imagine two Greek words, “word 1” and “word 2”, which are reasonably close in meaning without having actual semantic overlap – that is, without there ever being a context in which they might be interchangeable. Another language, however, will not have two words with *exactly* the same semantic fields as “word 1” and “word 2”; they may well have two words which are often used to translate them: let us call them “word A” and “word B” respectively. If, however, “word 1” and “word 2” are semantically close, then it may well be that “word A” will sometimes be employable in a context which in Greek would tend to use “word 2”, and/or that “word B” would have some semantic overlap not only with “word 2” but also with “word 1”. The mere fact of adding another language into the equation – and it would not matter in the slightest which language it was – would automatically enable one to generate explanations of divergent translations. This means that the task of finding what one is looking for is made much easier, but also that the conclusion is much less secure.

Finally, if the discussion of Q has not led to much, if any, agreement about divergent translations, then the situation can only be worse in the case of *Thomas*. The reason for this is that we do not have two Greek versions (as with Luke and Matthew) hailing from a theoretical Aramaic source; rather we are usually comparing – as has already been noted – Coptic *Thomas* with either Greek *Thomas* or a Greek canonical Gospel.

<sup>50</sup> As Kloppenborg remarked in response to Bussmann, a number of the latter’s alleged translational variants are virtual synonyms (Kloppenborg, *The Formation of Q*, 55–6).

It might be added that the possibility of bilingual interference, as in the case of alleged sheer mistranslation above, causes difficulties in the task of identifying divergent translations as well.

It may be that in theory there is a greater check on scholarly speculation in that a theory of divergent translation must fit *two* elements rather than just the one element in the case of alleged simple mistranslation, but the fate of Wellhausen's theory about Matthew 23.36 and Luke 11.41 shows that even the most 'brilliant conjecture' can be very vulnerable.

Finally, four additional problems beset theories specifically of *Syriac* composition.

## 7 The paucity of Syriac literature in the relevant period

We must also consider the point that if the *Gospel of Thomas* was composed in Syriac in some part of the first or second century, it would require the history of Syriac literature virtually to be rewritten, for we do not have any record of literature clearly composed in Syriac until the *Book of the Laws of the Countries* and the *Acts of Thomas* in the early third century. The *Epistle of Mara to Serapion* is a possible earlier example, but its date is quite uncertain.<sup>51</sup>

The *Odes of Solomon* is a possible, but only a possible, early contribution to the Syriac literary corpus. While there is consensus on the Syrian provenance of the *Odes*, and a majority probably in favour of a date somewhere between the end of the first and the middle of the second century,<sup>52</sup> the original language (Greek or Syriac) is very much a bone of contention. Some argue for Greek, some for Syriac;<sup>53</sup> others comment that the question is unresolved,<sup>54</sup> or even insoluble.<sup>55</sup>

<sup>51</sup> The new monograph/edition by A. Merz, D. Rensberger and T. Tieleman, *Mara bar Serapion: Letter to His Son* (Tübingen: Mohr, 2011), is almost certainly in a minority in dating this work to the first century CE.

<sup>52</sup> M. Lattke, 'Dating the *Odes of Solomon*', *Antichthon* 27 (1993), 45–59; reprinted in Lattke, *Oden Salomos in ihrer Bedeutung für Neues Testament und Gnosis*, 4 vols. (Fribourg: Éditions Universitaires, 1979–98), IV.113–32 (127), argued that there is a *terminus ad quem* for the Greek *Odes* of the first quarter of the second century; in Lattke, 'Oden Salomos', in *LTJ* 7 (3rd edn; 1998), 972–3, he comments as to *Zeit*, 'wahrscheinlich frühes 2. Jh. nC., kaum 1. oder 3. Jh.' (973).

<sup>53</sup> See M. Franzmann, *Odes of Solomon: An Analysis of the Poetical Structure and Form* (Freiburg Universitätsverlag/Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1991), 3, for recent scholars in favour of Syriac.

<sup>54</sup> Franzmann, *Odes of Solomon*, 3: 'The debate remains unresolved as to a Syriac or Greek original'. M. Lattke, *Oden Salomos: Übersetzt und eingeleitet* (Fontes Christiani 19; Freiburg: Herder, 1995), 16–18 notes this question under the heading of 'Offene Fragen'; in Lattke, *The Odes of Solomon* (Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2009), 11, however, he is more definite about a Greek original.

<sup>55</sup> B. Ehlers (Aland), 'Kann das Thomasevangelium aus Edessa stammen?' *NovT* 12 (1970), 284–317 (300).

There are Syriac Bible translations early on with the appearance of the Peshitta Old Testament (c. mid to late second century?),<sup>56</sup> Tatian's *Diatessaron* (c.180) and the Old Syriac Gospels (early third century?).<sup>57</sup> In terms of literary works composed in Syriac, however, the field is almost bare for the first two centuries CE. As a result, then, the earlier one dates a hypothetical Syriac *Thomas*, the more one has to regard it as an almost unprecedented example of the use of Syriac as a literary language.

## 8 The rarity of the translation of Syriac works into Greek

Sebastian Brock has commented that the body of work translated from Syriac into Greek is 'diminutive compared with the vast number of Greek texts that were translated into Syriac'.<sup>58</sup> The earliest example of this diminutive corpus which Brock notes is the extract of the *Book of the Laws of the Countries* coming into Greek in the Pseudo-Clementine literature, and into Eusebius' *Praeparatio*.<sup>59</sup> Then there is Eusebius' notice that the Jesus–Abgar correspondence was translated into Greek from Syriac.<sup>60</sup> Jerome says that he knows several of Ephrem's works in Greek; some other works from the pseudo-Ephrem corpus (Ephrem graecus) appear to go back to Syriac originals, though some do not.<sup>61</sup> Brock further notes some later *Martyr Acts*. From the fifth century onwards, several other works are rendered into Greek from Syriac.<sup>62</sup> This is clearly a

<sup>56</sup> P.J. Williams, 'Syriac Versions of the Bible', in J.N. Carleton Paget and J. Schaper, eds. *The New Cambridge History of the Bible*, vol. I (Cambridge University Press, forthcoming).

<sup>57</sup> See N. Perrin, *Thomas and Tatian: The Relationship between the Gospel of Thomas and the Diatessaron* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2002), 19–21, and Williams, 'Syriac Versions', on the scholarly consensus about the priority of the Diatessaron vis-à-vis the Old Syriac Gospels.

<sup>58</sup> S. Brock, 'Greek into Syriac and Syriac into Greek', in Brock, *Syriac Perspectives on Late Antiquity* (London: Variorum, 1984), 1–16 (11), reprinted from *Journal of the Syriac Academy* 3 (1977), 1–16. Indeed, he goes on: 'when one considers the general lack of receptivity on the part of Greek and Latin to the literatures of other cultures, it is perhaps surprising that any Syriac texts got translated into Greek at all'. (11). This generalisation about such a 'lack of receptivity', however, is at least questionable.

<sup>59</sup> Brock, 'Greek into Syriac and Syriac into Greek', 12.

<sup>60</sup> Brock, 'Greek into Syriac and Syriac into Greek', 13.

<sup>61</sup> Brock, 'Greek into Syriac and Syriac into Greek', 13.

<sup>62</sup> In the fifth and sixth centuries, it is largely popular literature which is translated. In the seventh century, one finds two writers translated: the author of the *Apocalypse of Methodius* and Isaac the Syrian (Brock, 'Greek into Syriac and Syriac into Greek', 15). Brock considers that in many other cases, it is very difficult to assess whether a work came first in Greek or Syriac (p. 14). Later still in the eleventh century, the tale of *Sinbad* was translated into Greek from a Syriac version which itself was a translation from Arabic

small collection, especially in the earlier period. Again, then, a supposed original Syriac *Thomas* subsequently translated into Greek would be, as in the case of point (7) above, a relative historical oddity. Brock's article does now need updating in the light of the evidence for Manichaean works which were translated from Syriac into Greek (e.g. the Cologne Mani Codex), but this is not especially relevant to the study of *Thomas*, which clearly pre-dates Mani and the Manichees.<sup>63</sup>

## 9 The possibility of bilingual composition

A further complicating factor is that, if we are to conclude that the *Gospel of Thomas* was composed very late in Syria, as some believe, we could have to reckon with a composition which is bilingual from the beginning. When one looks at, for example, the *Acts of Thomas*, some scholars consider the work to be written in Syriac and subsequently translated into Greek. Klauck, however, takes the view that we might have 'a more or less contemporaneous conception of the work in both languages'.<sup>64</sup> Or again, in his translation and commentary on the work, A.F.J. Klijn considers that *Acts of Thomas* was originally written in Syriac, but also (almost simultaneously) in Greek: according to him, the Greek is probably not a translation of the Syriac.<sup>65</sup> The same may in theory be true of the *Gospel of Thomas*, again, if one is committed to the hypothesis of Syrian origin.

## 10 The difficulty of the "catchword" theory

The overall attempt here in Part I is not to focus on particular scholars' own views, but the recent monograph of N. Perrin merits comment. Chapter 3 will focus on Semitisms proposed by more than one scholar or which have been the subject of detailed comment, and so will make no attempt to include discussion of all 502 Syriac catchwords proposed by

(again, itself perhaps from a Pahlavi original) (p. 16). The same translator put some of Aesop back into Greek from a Syriac version (pp. 16–17).

<sup>63</sup> For a comment on the translation of the Mani Codex from Syriac into Greek, see Böhlig, 'Das Problem aramäischer Elemente in den Texten von Nag Hammadi', in F. Junge, ed. *Studien zu Sprache und Religion Ägyptens*, vol. II, *Religion* (FS W. Westendorf) (Göttingen: F. Junge, 1984), 983–1011; reprinted in A. Böhlig, *Gnosis und Synkretismus: Gesammelte Aufsätze zur spätantiken Religionsgeschichte*, pt. 2. (WUNT 48; Tübingen: Mohr, 1989), 414–53 (415).

<sup>64</sup> H.-J. Klauck, *The Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles: An Introduction* (Waco, TX: Baylor, 2008 (2005)), 142.

<sup>65</sup> A.F.J. Klijn, *The Acts of Thomas: Introduction, Text and Commentary*, 2nd rev. edn (NovTSuppS; Leiden: Brill, 2003), 1, 3.

Perrin!<sup>66</sup> Perrin's *Thomas and Tatian* is a sustained attempt to argue for a Syriac original to *Thomas*, to which is linked the argument for dependence upon Tatian's *Diatessaron*. The principal means by which the case for a Syriac original is bolstered is by means of the numerous Syriac catchwords which appear when *Thomas* is translated back into Syriac.

The major methodological problem is that, to a much greater extent than with proposed mistranslations or divergent translations, there is little or no control. In the case of mistranslations, one must identify a problematic Greek or Coptic word X, for which a Semitic equivalent must be found which makes better sense in the context. In the case of divergent translations, one has words X and Y (paralleled either in Greek and Coptic *Thomas* or in *Thomas* and the Synoptics) for which must be found a Semitic term which overlaps with both. In the search for catchwords, however, there is far greater "opportunity". Let us take at random two medium-sized adjacent sayings: *GTh* 76 and 77. These sayings have 43 and 33 Coptic words respectively: as a result, there are potentially 1419 word-pairs to test. And of course in most of these word-pairs, more than one Syriac equivalent can be found for both Coptic words in the pair, multiplying further the potential for finding links. Moreover, a catchword is defined as 'any word which can be semantically, etymologically, or phonologically associated with another word found in an adjacent logion'.<sup>67</sup> So it is evident how great the danger is for pure invention. As one critic has put it: 'Is it not likely that [Perrin] will offer reconstructions that introduce the very catchword associations he is looking for?'<sup>68</sup>

A number of more specific problems with reconstructions have been identified by Syriac and *Diatessaron* specialists. In the first place, there is the counterevidence against the argument for *GTh* 44–5's shared order with the *Diatessaron*, removing the positive case for a literary relationship with Tatian.<sup>69</sup> Though of course a systematic evaluation of all the proposals has not been attempted, those particular instances from the best attested sections of *Thomas* have been discussed by Williams.<sup>70</sup> Another scholar has identified the use of unidiomatic, rare and even non-existent Syriac words.<sup>71</sup> As a result, it hardly seems likely that

<sup>66</sup> Perrin, *Thomas and Tatian*.

<sup>67</sup> Perrin, *Thomas and Tatian*, 50.

<sup>68</sup> R.F. Shedinger, Review of Perrin, *Thomas and Tatian*, *RBL* 3 (2003).

<sup>69</sup> D.C. Parker, Review of Perrin, *Thomas and Tatian*, *TC* 8 (2003), §§6–11; Shedinger, Review of Perrin, *Thomas and Tatian*.

<sup>70</sup> See P.J. Williams, 'Alleged Syriac Catchwords in the Gospel of Thomas', *VigChr* 63 (2009), 71–82.

<sup>71</sup> J. Joosten, Review of Perrin, *Thomas and Tatian*, *Aramaic Studies* 2 (2004), 126–30 (128).

many of Perrin's proposed catchwords will be assigned much importance, though we will examine those in Chapter 3 which are discussed at greater length in some of his articles, some of which are also part of the debate with DeConick over whether their proposed Semitic substratum is more likely to be a form of Western Aramaic or Old Syriac.

### **Conclusion**

In sum, these caveats may lead us to wonder whether an Aramaic or Syriac original is identifiable; at the very least they should mean that the burden of proof lies heavily on those who would argue for such a Semitic *Vorlage*. It is surely such factors as the above which led even such an enthusiast as Ménard to compare the terrain of the study of Semitisms to quicksand.<sup>72</sup> As we proceed to investigate the particular instances, we will see that the terrain is uncertain indeed.

<sup>72</sup> J.-E. Ménard, *L'Évangile selon Thomas: introduction, traduction, commentaire* (NHS 5; Leiden: Brill, 1975), 23: 'le terrain des sémitismes est un peu un sol mouvant'.



# 3

## PROPOSED SEMITISMS IN *THOMAS*: A CRITICAL ANALYSIS

### Introduction

This section scrutinises a large body of Semitisms proposed by scholars as evidence for an Aramaic or Syriac *Vorlage* to *Thomas*.<sup>1</sup> One convenient list of these is that included in DeConick's volume *The Original Gospel of Thomas in Translation*, which assembles a number of those identified particularly by Quispel and Guillaumont.<sup>2</sup> The present chapter also supplements this list with other examples elsewhere in scholarly literature, especially where proposals have been made by more than one scholar, or have been the subject of particular studies. Even the large total which eventually results from these publications is a selection.<sup>3</sup> It will be noticed, however, that it is a large selection. Clearly, any attempt to problematise a Semitic background requires discussion of a reasonably large sample of alleged Semitisms; it is not sufficient merely to discuss a small number and to claim a premature victory on the basis of discussing only a small part of the evidence. It is hoped that the present chapter will show that in almost every instance, alternative explanations are readily available, and to suggest that, as a result, the case for a Semitic *Vorlage* underlying our Greek and Coptic texts has been greatly exaggerated and is in fact very vulnerable. In addition to the immediate concern with the original language, this chapter is also significant for the question (which will loom large later, in Part II) of *Thomas*'s independence, since we will

<sup>1</sup> Aramaic and Syriac are printed below in transliterated form, because for the period under discussion the distinction between the two is not clearly marked either in language or orthography. For consistency, then, the few Hebrew words are also printed in transliteration.

<sup>2</sup> See A.D. DeConick, *The Original Gospel of Thomas in Translation: With a Commentary and New English Translation of the Complete Gospel* (LNTS 287; London/New York: T&T Clark International, 2006), 14–15 (as DeConick notes, mainly a compilation from others: see 12 n. 17).

<sup>3</sup> As noted in Chapter 2 above, I make no attempt to include discussion of all 502 Syriac catchwords proposed in N. Perrin, *Thomas and Tatian: The Relationship between the Gospel of Thomas and the Diatessaron* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2002).

treat here a number of alleged cases of Aramaic *Vorlagen* translated differently (and thus independently) by *Thomas* and the Synoptics.

### Saying 1

In some discussions of the first saying, we encounter the bold claim that the phrase ‘to taste death’ is suggestive of a Semitic original composition.<sup>4</sup> The phrase may go back to an Aramaic or specifically Syriac *Vorlage*, but there is no need for this. Indeed, the earliest cases of the phrase are in clearly Greek works: Matthew, Mark, Luke and John all have the phrase (Matt. 16.28; Mark 9.1; Luke 9.27; John 8.52). Moreover, in the case of Hebrews 2.9 (Jesus dying ὅπως χάριτι θεοῦ ὑπὲρ παντὸς γεύσῃται θανάτου) we have an example which does not even claim to go back to an Aramaic speaker: the phrase has become a part of Jewish/Christian Greek idiom. As such, appeal to a Semitic *Vorlage* in the case of *GTh* 1 (and the other instances of the idiom, in *GTh* 18, 19 and 85) is unnecessary.

### Saying 3.1

Guillaumont early on argued that the reference in the Greek of *GTh* 3 to ‘those who drag you’ (οἱ ἔλκοντες <ύ>μᾶς) is odd,<sup>5</sup> and that the Greek as well as the Coptic (ⲛⲉⲧⲥⲱⲕ ρⲏⲧⲏⲛⲉⲧⲏ, ‘those who lead you’) are best explained as going back to Aramaic *ngd* (‘drag’, or ‘lead’).<sup>6</sup> Others have clearly felt that the meaning must be ‘lead’ in *GTh* 3 here.<sup>7</sup> This rests, however, on a lack of appreciation for the wider usage of ἔλκω:<sup>8</sup> οἱ

<sup>4</sup> See e.g. DeConick, *Original Gospel of Thomas in Translation*, 47, citing other discussions of the phrase.

<sup>5</sup> In fact, the first was Garitte, in his argument noted above that the Greek was a translation from the Coptic.

<sup>6</sup> A. Guillaumont, ‘Les “Logia” d’Oxyrhynchus sont-ils traduits du copte?’, *Muséon* 73 (1960), 325–33 (327–8), and Guillaumont, ‘Les sémitismes dans l’Évangile selon Thomas: essai de classement’, in R. van den Broek and M.J. Vermaseren, eds. *Studies in Gnosticism and Hellenistic Religions Presented to Gilles Quispel on the Occasion of His 65th Birthday* (Leiden: Brill, 1981), 190–204 (194); DeConick, *Original Gospel of Thomas in Translation*, 52.

<sup>7</sup> DeConick, *Original Gospel of Thomas in Translation*, 52: ‘Clearly the meaning is “to lead.”’; cf. N. Perrin, ‘NHC II,2 and the Oxyrhynchus Fragments (P.Oxy 1, 654, 655): Overlooked Evidence for a Syriac Gospel of Thomas’, *VigChr* 58 (2004), 138–51 (148), on the Syriac possibility.

<sup>8</sup> Guillaumont and Perrin also downplay the significance of the compound verb ⲥⲱⲕ ρⲏⲧⲏ in their argument that both Greek οἱ ἔλκοντες and Coptic ⲛⲉⲧⲥⲱⲕ are basically synonymous (‘those pulling’), but odd as designations of those who might be likely to confront the Thomasine disciples with strange views of the kingdom (Guillaumont, ‘Les

ἔλκοντες can reasonably be taken to refer to those who might drag the Thomasine disciples off before a court or magistrate. This is the sense of ἔλκω in James 2.6 (cf. Acts 16.19), for example. The *Martyrdom of Conon* provides an instance of the similar phrase οἱ ἐφέλκοντες αὐτόν (referring to the *neokoros* and the soldiers taking Conon before the prefect).<sup>9</sup> As such, both Greek and Coptic make good enough sense as they stand: the Coptic verb (ⲥⲟⲕ Ϸⲏⲧⲉ) is just rather more general than the Greek ἔλκω.<sup>10</sup> An appeal to a third language is therefore not necessary.

### Saying 3.2

The difficulty to be explained here is the difference between the Greek's reference to 'under the earth' (ὕπὸ τῆν γῆν) and the Coptic 'in the sea' (Ϸⲏ θⲁⲗⲁⲥⲥⲁ). Marcovich considered *GTh* 3.2 here as suggesting a Hebrew origin for the saying, since both Greek and Coptic could be interpretations of Hebrew *thwm*.<sup>11</sup> Recently, Perrin has echoed this in his argument that the two versions go back to a Syriac *Vorlage* referring to the abyss (*thwm*). He refers to the difference between 'under the earth' and 'in the sea' as a 'discrepancy'; the problem lies with the former; the latter, 'in the sea', Perrin treats as a literal translation of *bthwm*.<sup>12</sup> This is a problematic argument, however, as θάλασσα never translates *thwm* in any of its OT occurrences; nor is NT θάλασσα ever

sémitismes dans l'Évangile selon Thomas', 194; Perrin, 'NHC II,2 and the Oxyrhynchus Fragments', 148).

<sup>9</sup> *Mart. Con.* 2.7. In the text, the participial phrase is in the dative. On the date of the *Martyrdom of Conon*, see the brief discussion and bibliography in J. Carleton Paget, 'The Four among the Jews', in M. Bockmuehl and D.A. Hagner, eds. *The Written Gospel* (Cambridge University Press, 2005), 205–21 (219).

<sup>10</sup> Even here, however, Böhlig notes that ⲥⲟⲕ Ϸⲏⲧⲉ is found as an equivalent for Latin *compellere* in the parallel versions of *Asclepius*: A. Böhlig, 'Das Problem aramäischer Elemente in den Texten von Nag Hammadi', in Böhlig, *Gnosis und Synkretismus: Gesammelte Aufsätze zur spätantiken Religionsgeschichte*, pt 2 (WUNT 48; Tübingen: Mohr, 1989), 414–53 (444). While ἔλκω is not attested to my knowledge as an equivalent for ⲥⲟⲕ Ϸⲏⲧⲉ, the Greek verb is often rendered with simple ⲥⲟⲕ (see examples in Crum 325a, b; 326a) and its other compounds (Crum 326b; 327a, b; 328a). Guillaumont, 'Les "Logia" d'Oxyrhynchus sont-ils traduits du copte?', 327–8, however, does note that ἔλκω has the sense of 'entraîner', 'conduire' in 1 Macc. 10.82. For further discussion of some of the various senses, see W. Eisele, 'Ziehen, Führen und Verführen: Eine begriffs- und motivgeschichtliche Untersuchung zu *EvThom* 3,1', in J. Frey, J. Schröter and E.E. Popkes, eds. *Das Thomasevangelium: Entstehung – Rezeption – Theologie* (BZNW 157; Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2008), 380–415.

<sup>11</sup> M. Marcovich, 'Textual Criticism on the Gospel of Thomas', *JTS* 20 (1969), 53–74 (59); Perrin, 'NHC II,2 and the Oxyrhynchus Fragments', 148–9.

<sup>12</sup> Perrin, 'NHC II,2 and the Oxyrhynchus Fragments', 149: *bthwm* 'is supposed in the original text'.

translated in the Old Syriac or Peshitta Gospels by *thwm'* (it is almost always *ym'*).<sup>13</sup> Marcovich and Perrin are undoubtedly correct to say that both versions refer to the abyss, but one does not need to posit another version underlying the Greek and Coptic to make sense of them: both versions make good sense as they stand.

Perrin comments that 'it is not easily imagined how, on the assumption that the Coptic is loosely based on the Greek, one might move from "under the earth" to "in the sea"'.<sup>14</sup> There are two difficulties here, however. First, as we have already noted, the whole project of retroversion into Aramaic or Syriac depends upon the putative translation into Greek having been done consistently and formally, not just 'loosely'. Second, it is only from the viewpoint of modern cosmology that a transition from 'under the earth' to 'in the sea' in *GTh 3* is hard to imagine. 'Under the earth' in the Greek is explicitly where the fish live, so 'in the sea' would be a perfectly reasonable rendering.<sup>15</sup>

### Saying 3.3

Perrin goes on to argue that in 'And/But (Greek *καί*; Coptic *ⲗⲗⲁ*) the kingdom (of God) is within you' the *καί* and *ⲗⲗⲁ* are best understood as going back to an Aramaic or Syriac *w-*.<sup>16</sup> It is unclear, however, why it is more likely that a Coptic translator should translate a *w-* as an adversative than that a Coptic translator should interpret a *καί* as a *καί* *adversativum*, and translate it as *ⲗⲗⲁ*. Perhaps there is an assumption here that a Greek loan-word in Coptic always goes back to the same word in Greek. In the case of conjunctions, however, this is an especially unreliable principle.

In his study of the Coptic versions of the NT, G. Mink has drawn special attention to the unpredictability of Coptic particles, referring to the

<sup>13</sup> The sample is forty-seven occurrences in the Gospels.

<sup>14</sup> Perrin, 'NHC II,2 and the Oxyrhynchus Fragments', 149.

<sup>15</sup> Tertullian cites an apocryphon which gives an instance of the fish occupying the same place as the dead, thus cementing the identity in some sense of 'the sea' and the region 'under the earth': 'And I will command the fish of the sea, and they shall vomit up the bones that were consumed, and I will bring joint to joint and bone to bone.' (*On the Resurrection of the Flesh* 32). Translation from R.J. Bauckham, 'Resurrection as Giving Back the Dead: A Traditional Image of Resurrection in the Pseudepigrapha and the Apocalypse of John', in J.H. Charlesworth and C.A. Evans, eds. *The Pseudepigrapha and Early Biblical Interpretation* (Studies in Scripture in Early Judaism and Christianity 2; JSPSS 14; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993), 269–91 (273; text on 272), where see also discussion of the passage (and 281). The reference here *may* be simply to those who died at sea (as per *I En.* 61.5), but this is not clear.

<sup>16</sup> Perrin, 'NHC II,2 and the Oxyrhynchus Fragments', 149–50.

use of Greek loan-word particles as ‘ziemlich wahllos’.<sup>17</sup> Feder notes that in the Sahidic version of the Jeremiah corpus, καί can be represented by Coptic words for ‘and’ (ⲁⲮⲱ, ⲙⲏ, Ⲓ), but also by ⲁⲗⲗⲁ, ⲁⲉ or ⲏ.<sup>18</sup> Statistical data has been supplied very recently by Elina Perttilä for another case, that of the Coptic version of 1 Samuel. She comments that, of all the instances of καί in 1 Samuel, only 32 per cent are translated by the standard Coptic word for ‘and’ (ⲁⲮⲱ).<sup>19</sup> For the particular case here in *GTh* 3.3, that of καί / ⲁⲗⲗⲁ, she notes that there are six cases of καί being translated with ⲁⲗⲗⲁ in 1 Samuel.<sup>20</sup> She sums up: ‘To read the Greek behind the Coptic text is in the case of conjunctions mostly impossible.’<sup>21</sup> This presumably applies equally to efforts to reconstruct a Semitic original behind a Coptic text.

### Saying 6.1

Saying 6 is alleged to exhibit divergence which ‘can only be explained by a Syriac urtext’.<sup>22</sup> The questions in the Greek (‘How should we fast?’) and its Coptic equivalent (‘Do you want us to fast?’) are taken, because of their difference, to derive from an ambiguous Syriac original. The problem here again lies in the assumption that the translation is literal, an assumption which is plainly contradicted by the two forms of the saying: on any hypothesis, either the Greek has omitted a reference to ‘Do you want ...’ (ⲕⲟⲮⲱⲱ ⲉⲧⲣ-) or the Coptic has introduced it.

### Saying 7.2

The first of Peter Nagel’s ‘series of translation mistakes’ mentioned in Chapter 1 is one of the most mysterious sayings in *Thomas*: ‘Blessed is

<sup>17</sup> G. Mink, ‘Die koptischen Versionen des Neuen Testaments: Die sprachlichen Probleme bei ihrer Bewertung für die griechische Textgeschichte’, in K. Aland, ed., *Die alten Übersetzungen des Neuen Testaments, die Kirchenväterzitate und Lektionare: Der gegenwärtige Stand ihrer Erforschung und ihre Bedeutung für die griechische Textgeschichte* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1972), 160–299 (242). I am grateful to Christian Askeland for information on this discussion.

<sup>18</sup> F. Feder, *Ieremias, Lamentationes (Threni), Epistula Ieremiae et Baruch* (Biblia Sahidica; Berlin/New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2002), 86–7.

<sup>19</sup> E. Perttilä, ‘How to Read the Greek Text behind the Sahidic Coptic’, in A. Voitila and J. Jokiranta, eds. *Scripture in Transition: Essays on Septuagint, Hebrew Bible, and Dead Sea Scrolls in Honour of Raija Sollamo* (Leiden/New York/Cologne: Brill, 2008), 367–77 (371).

<sup>20</sup> Perttilä, ‘How to Read the Greek Text behind the Sahidic Coptic’, 372.

<sup>21</sup> Perttilä, ‘How to Read the Greek Text behind the Sahidic Coptic’, 376.

<sup>22</sup> Perrin, ‘NHC II,2 and the Oxyrhynchus Fragments’, 150.

the lion which the man eats *and the lion becomes man*; cursed is the man whom the lion eats, *and the lion becomes man* (ΔΥΩ ΠΙΜΟΥΕΙ ΝΑΩΩΠΙΕ ΠΡΩΜΕ).<sup>23</sup> This second instance of the lion becoming man is often taken to be a problem, since the parallelism is apparently broken – one might expect in the curse that the man becomes lion. Nagel says that this can be explained by an Aramaic *Vorlage* in which the word order does not determine which word is the subject and which is the predicate; he admits that normally the subject will come before the predicate, but notes the possibility of the reverse. This explanation is possible but it would have to reckon with an extremely incompetent piece of Aramaic composition: one would be left with a saying that, while satisfying a canon of parallelism, would be made even more unclear in its meaning in Aramaic than in the already near-incomprehensible Coptic. The syntax in the Coptic is clear, even if the resulting sense is mysterious. An Aramaic *Vorlage* such as that suggested by Nagel would have counterintuitive syntax: if the subject usually precedes the predicate, then it would be odd for the Aramaic author to reverse the order in a case where which is subject and which is predicate makes a difference. As a result, the unclarity of the saying would be compounded further. Appeal to a reconstructed Aramaic *Vorlage*, then, makes the situation even more complicated – which may be a sign that it is not justified.

### Saying 8.3

The difficulty here, in the parable of the dragnet, concerns a discrepancy between Matthew's reference to fishermen who *collected* the good fish (συνέλεξαν τὰ καλὰ in Matt. 13.48) and *Thomas's* fisherman who *chose* the large fish (ΔΥΩΩΠΙ ΠΙΠΙΝΟϑ ΝΤΩΠΤ; *GTh* 8.3). The (Western) Aramaic advocates argue that the difference between 'choosing' and 'collecting' arises out of the ambiguous *gb'*;<sup>24</sup> others argue, on the other hand, that the two verbs must go back to a specifically Syriac original.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>23</sup> P. Nagel, 'Erwägungen zum Thomas-Evangelium', in F. Altheim and R. Stiehl, eds. *Die Araber in der alten Welt*, vol. V, pt 2 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1969), 368–92 (381).

<sup>24</sup> For Quispel's arguments and (negative) evaluation of them, see T. Baarda, "'Chose' or 'Collected': Concerning an Aramaism in Logion 8 of the Gospel of Thomas and the Question of Independence", *HTR* 84 (1991), 373–97 (384).

<sup>25</sup> Guillaumont, 'Les sémitismes dans l'Évangile selon Thomas', 197–8 offers the Syriac on the basis of the verb *gb'* being used in the Syriac versions of Matt. 13.48; see also Baarda, "'Chose' or 'Collected'", 386, although he is very tentative about *Thomas* reflecting an Aramaic/Syriac substratum here; N. Perrin, 'The Aramaic Origins of the *Gospel of Thomas* – Revisited', in J. Frey, J. Schröter and E.E. Popkes, eds. *Das*

In fact, however, this whole question is a red herring. The difference in the verbs is demanded by the two quite different stories: Matthew's parable of eschatological judgement is about God's vindication of the *plural* righteous – hence the reference to gathering. It is impossible, however, to συλλέγειν only one fish, hence *Thomas's* story must inevitably use a different verb. The different verbs are decided by the different objects: they are each part of the shaping of the particular narratives in which they occur, and so one does not need to seek an explanation from this or that unknown *Vorlage*.

### Saying 9.2 (a)

In the parable of the sower,<sup>26</sup> the Synoptic Gospels have seed falling παρά the path in Mark 4.4 and parallels; Coptic *Thomas* has it falling 'upon (εχῆ) the way/path'. For a number of scholars, the incongruity between these prepositions results from their both going back to Aramaic 'l.<sup>27</sup> At least three factors need to be borne in mind here, however. First, παρὰ τὴν ὁδὸν makes perfectly good sense ('along the path'), as does the Coptic, and the prepositions are not really very different. Second, it has been noted that Coptic translations of the NT are not consistent in their rendering of prepositions.<sup>28</sup> Third, one might reasonably expect variation in the area of prepositions in transmission even in the same language.<sup>29</sup> When the various prepositions used with the four soils in the

*Thomas*evangelium: Entstehung – Rezeption – Theologie (BZNW 157; Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2008), 50–9 (56).

<sup>26</sup> The reference to 'filling the hand' noted by DeConick as a Semitic expression is not very remarkable (*Original Gospel of Thomas in Translation*, 72).

<sup>27</sup> G. Quispel 'The Gospel of Thomas and the New Testament', *VigChr* 11 (1957), 189–207 (201–2); also Quispel, 'Some Remarks on the Gospel of Thomas', *NTS* 5 (1958–9), 276–90 (277–8); M. Black, *An Aramaic Approach to the Gospels and Acts*, 3rd edn (Oxford: Clarendon, 1967), 162 (noting how this discussion preceded the discovery of *Thomas*, with Wellhausen and Torrey having discussed a possible *Vorlage* with 'l); Guillaumont, 'Les sémitismes dans l'Évangile selon Thomas', 199; DeConick, *Original Gospel of Thomas in Translation*, 14, 72; Perrin, 'Aramaic Origins of the Gospel of Thomas', 52–3.

<sup>28</sup> J.M. Plumley, 'Limitations of Coptic (Sahidic) in Representing Greek', in B.M. Metzger, *The Early Versions of the New Testament: Their Origin, Transmission, and Limitations* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1977), 141–52 (148): 'It is rarely possible to establish with absolute certainty what Greek prepositions are represented in the original Greek texts.'

<sup>29</sup> Note the textual variation apparent in this parable in e.g. Mark's version: e.g. in Mark 4.7, N\* and B have εἰς where CDW have ἐπὶ. See R. Swanson, ed. *New Testament Manuscripts: Variant Readings Arranged in Horizontal Lines against Codex Vaticanus: Mark* (Sheffield Academic Press, 1995), 51.

earliest forms of the parable are compared, it can be seen that no two works are identical:

Mark	παρά ...	ἐπί ...	εἰς ...	εἰς ...
Matthew	παρά ...	ἐπί ...	ἐπί ...	ἐπί ...
Luke	παρά ...	ἐπί ...	ἐν μέσῳ ...	εἰς ...
<i>Thomas</i>	εχῆ ...	εχῆ ...	εχῆ ...	εχῆ ...
Justin <sup>30</sup>	εἰς ...	εἰς ...	ἐπί ...	ἐπί ...
( <i>I Clement</i> <sup>31</sup> εἰς ... εἰς ...)				

It is just as reasonable to suppose that here *Thomas* (or its source) is dependent on a Greek version like that in the Synoptics, but simply smooths out the four instances by employing the same preposition without variation.

Interestingly, one finds the same sort of “smoothing out” happening elsewhere in the transmission of the parable. In Mark’s references to the different destinations of the seed, he has (1–3) seed singular (ὁ μὲν ..., ἄλλο ... ἄλλο ...), but finally (4) seeds plural (ἄλλα).<sup>32</sup> All the other versions – Matthew, Luke and *Thomas* – smooth these out one way or the other: Matthew makes all four singular, Luke and *Thomas* make them all plural.

As the evidence from other versions shows, then, natural variation is a very likely explanation for the various differences, rather than necessarily divergent translations from a Semitic *Vorlage*.

### Saying 9.2 (b)

Guillaumont comments that a further difference between the Synoptics and *Thomas* can be accounted for by a common Aramaic *Vorlage*, in the phrasing of what the birds do with the seed that falls on the path. The Synoptics all have the birds eating (κατέφαγεν), while *Thomas* has them collecting (ἀγκατφογ, from κωτϕ = ‘gather’, ‘collect’). Guillaumont comments that Syriac *lqt* accounts nicely for both, since it can mean both ‘collect’ and ‘peck’, noting that Syrus Sinaiticus translates καταφαγεῖν with *lqt* in Matthew 13.4.<sup>33</sup>

There are three points relevant here. In the first place, we cannot easily be dealing with an Aramaic substratum common to both *Thomas* and the

<sup>30</sup> Justin, *Dial.* 125.

<sup>31</sup> *I Clem.* 24.5; the parallel is not exact.

<sup>32</sup> There is variation in the textual tradition here, however: e.g. the first corrector of Codex Sinaiticus corrects the original hand.

<sup>33</sup> Guillaumont, ‘Les sémitismes dans l’Évangile selon Thomas’, 198; see also J. Payne Smith, *Compendious Syriac Dictionary* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1902), 244.



Synoptics here. *lqt* is glossed with the possible meaning of ‘eat’ in Payne Smith’s *Dictionary*, though only one quite tenuous instance is provided. No such gloss appears in either Jastrow or the *Comprehensive Aramaic Lexicon*, suggesting that *lqt* did not have this sense in Western Aramaic. We are not dealing here, then, with two divergent translations from an Aramaic original.<sup>34</sup> The only possible direct relationship, if there is one, would be: GkMatt→OSMatt→*GTh* or GkMatt→*GTh*→OSMatt.

Second, there is considerable semantic overlap here. The sense of both Matthew (in all versions) and *Thomas* is that the birds are ‘gleaning’, that is gathering up what has been left by the wayside. The Synoptics’ κατέφαγεν is merely a prosaic description of what happens, but the description in *Thomas* picks up the “gleaning” motif: of course, though, when a bird gleans the result is immediate eating as well. So the two versions in their contexts are not so different. In the Synoptics, the birds are gleaning and eating (though it is the eating which is marked); in *Thomas*, they are doing the same, though it is the gleaning which is marked.

The only question in need of an answer, then, is: why do OS Matthew and *Thomas* agree against the Greek Synoptics? It may be that the gleaning scene in the parable led both *Thomas* and the Old Syriac to supply a term for gleaning. Or it may be that *Thomas* is influenced by a local Syrian telling of the parable, or even by a text in Syriac.<sup>35</sup> One would need quite a lot of examples of the latter, however, to mount a case for an actual Syriac original of *Thomas*. On the other hand, it may be that the focus on “collecting”/ “gathering” in two of the adjacent parables (the parable of the tares and its interpretation, and the parable of the dragnet) has exercised some influence (all three appear in Matthew 13; cf. *GTh* 8, 9, 57).

### Saying 12.1

The next saying contains the disciples’ question about who will succeed Jesus in leadership over them when he goes: ‘We know that you will depart from us: who will *be our leader* (-ḫ̄ nos ʿzraʿi ʿxwan)?’ A number of scholars identify a common source here with the disciples’ question

<sup>34</sup> *Pace* the suggestion of DeConick: ‘a Semitic substratum is supported by the fact that the Syriac word *lqt* can mean both “to gather” and “to peck”’ (*Original Gospel of Thomas in Translation*, 72). It seems to be an inconsistency here that DeConick sees a Syriac influence here at the level of the *kernel* (the material pre-dating 50 CE). The attribution of the saying to the kernel appears in *Original Gospel of Thomas in Translation*, 72; cf. the other Syriac terms on p. 14 in the list of kernel Aramaisms.

<sup>35</sup> Alternatively, it is even possible that the Syriac translator of Matthew was influenced by *Thomas*.

in Matthew 18.1: τίς ἄρα μείζων ἐστὶν ἐν τῇ βασιλείᾳ τῶν οὐρανῶν; For Guillaumont a positive adjective in Aramaic, reflected also in Coptic *Thomas*, has become a comparative (μείζων) in Greek.<sup>36</sup> This is questionable, however; indeed, Guillaumont himself says the Coptic could merely be a translation of Greek ἄρχειν, and so it is a good example of something explicable in different ways. Another question is whether *GTh* 12.1 and Matthew 18.1 are really parallels at all. As such, the quest for a reconstructed Semitic *Vorlage* is rather superfluous unless one has decided at the outset that there must be one.

### Saying 12.2

Jesus's answer to the disciples' question about his successor is that their leader will be 'James the just, for whose sake heaven and earth came into being (παει ἵτα τιε μῖ πκαζ ωωπε ετβητῳ)'. Nagel has suggested that such an idea of the universe being created for James' sake is incomprehensible, though again we should remember our earlier caution about deciding what we can dismiss as nonsense, especially in the case of *Thomas*.<sup>37</sup> This odd reference should be seen, Nagel comments, as going back to a Syriac statement about heaven and earth existing in the presence of or before the face of ('I'py, which can also mean 'for the sake of') James.<sup>38</sup> This is to explain the clearer by the less clear, however: the idea of creation coming into being for the sake of people is fairly common hyperbole in Jewish literature, the New Testament and in the Nag Hammadi corpus.<sup>39</sup> It is, therefore, much easier to comprehend the Coptic text as it stands than Nagel alleges.

### Saying 13.8

This example is perhaps another of the stronger cases, given that the argument is again for a mistranslation. The situation is that of the disciple

<sup>36</sup> See e.g. Guillaumont, 'Les sémitismes dans l'Évangile selon Thomas', 192, followed by DeConick, *Original Gospel of Thomas in Translation*, 15, 80.

<sup>37</sup> Nagel, 'Erwägungen zum Thomas-Evangelium', 383–4.

<sup>38</sup> Nagel, 'Erwägungen zum Thomas-Evangelium', 384.

<sup>39</sup> For Jewish examples, see E. Bammel, 'Rest and Rule', *VigChr* 23 (1969), 88–90; cf. 1 Cor. 8.6 (Jesus is πετρερε πτηρεῖ ωωπε ετβηητῳ); John 1.3; Col. 1.16; Heb. 1.2. As far as the Nag Hammadi writings are concerned, one example is the *Apocryphon of John*, where Barbelo glorifies the Virginal Spirit because thanks to him she had come forth (χε ετβηητῳ ασοωωηε εβοχ: II 5.3–4); Barbelo then requested Foreknowledge from the Virginal Spirit, and so Foreknowledge glorified Barbelo because it was on her (Barbelo's) account that she, Foreknowledge, had come into being (χε[ε η]γααωωπε ε[ετβηη]τῳ: II 5.19–20).

Thomas threatening the possibility of fire burning up the other disciples. Some scholars have argued that the reference to fire (masculine in Coptic) burning with a feminine singular prefix on the verb (ογκωστ ... νερωσκ) is a hangover from an Aramaic original, in which fire (*šr'*, or *nwr'*) is feminine. As the Coptic noun is masculine, and the most common Greek word for fire (πῦρ) is neuter, this makes a Semitic *Vorlage* highly likely, the story goes.<sup>40</sup>

There are two problems with this, however. The major obstacle is that it requires a translation directly from Aramaic into Coptic, with no intermediate translation into Greek in between: if there were an intermediary translation in Greek, this would certainly have removed the incongruity, since Greek – unlike Coptic – does not mark gender in the conjugations of its verbs.<sup>41</sup> As we shall see below, however, a Greek *Vorlage* for the extant Coptic version is very difficult to question.<sup>42</sup>

Second, if the feminine subject of the Coptic verb is the result of interference from the source language, one could equally explain this on the basis of Greek, perhaps by πυρινή ('fire'), or by the common biblical word φλόξ ('flame', which would work well in the context). The aim here is not to propose *the* Greek alternative, but merely to suggest that there are other possibilities. Böhlig mentions the possibility that the 3rd fem. sing. could be impersonal here, as is sometimes (albeit rarely) the case elsewhere.<sup>43</sup> Alternatively, most editors of the text propose a textual corruption. In a saying with nine Greek loan-words one perhaps needs a more robust case for a Semitic origin.

### Saying 14.3

Guillaumont was the first to argue that the phrase in *GTh* 14, 'do harm to your spirits', goes back to a reflexive expression in Aramaic or Syriac, with 'your spirits' being a Semitism meaning 'yourselves'.<sup>44</sup> There are

<sup>40</sup> Guillaumont, 'Les sémitismes dans l'Évangile selon Thomas', 196; DeConick, *Original Gospel of Thomas in Translation*, 15, 84.

<sup>41</sup> Guillaumont, 'Les sémitismes dans l'Évangile selon Thomas', 196, in fact considers that this saying could even 'inviter à mettre en question l'existence d'un intermédiaire grec'.

<sup>42</sup> Guillaumont, 'Les sémitismes dans l'Évangile selon Thomas', 196, proposes this Semitism very half-heartedly, and considers that in fact the Coptic is translated from the Greek.

<sup>43</sup> Böhlig, 'Das Problem aramäischer Elemente', 446.

<sup>44</sup> A. Guillaumont, 'Sémitismes dans les logia de Jésus retrouvés à Nag-Hamâdi', *Journal asiatique* 246 (1958), 113–23 (117–18); Guillaumont, 'Les sémitismes dans l'Évangile selon Thomas', 201–2.

difficulties, however, which make this theory far from certain. First, ‘spirit’ is not the standard way of expressing reflexivity in Aramaic or Syriac. (The use of *npš* is much more common than that of *rwḥ*.) Guillaumont does cite some parallels from Payne Smith’s *Thesaurus* with *rwḥ*, but these are not without difficulty: probably none of them is really reflexive.<sup>45</sup> Second, ‘spirit’ is thematised in *Thomas* (*GTh* 29, 53, 114). It is glossed as ‘great wealth’ in *GTh* 29: as what is infinitely precious, then, one can understand a concern on *Thomas*’s part not to harm it. Third, reference is fairly common in Greek literature to the idea of ‘harming the soul’ (e.g. Philo, *Det.* 109; *Sent. Sext.* 318, both with βλάπτει ψυχὴν in Greek; cf. Acts 14.2: ἐκάκωσαν τὰς ψυχὰς). The closest parallel specifically to *Thomas*’s ‘harming the spirit’ is probably in the *Shepherd of Hermas*: ἄρον οὖν ἀπὸ σεαυτοῦ τὴν λύπην καὶ μὴ θλίβε τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον τὸ ἐν σοὶ κατοικοῦν (*Mand.* 10.2.5), where the sense of ‘spirit’ is neither merely reflexive nor yet a divine hypostasis. One might also compare the need to treat the spirit well in Seneca.<sup>46</sup> Finally, again, it needs to be borne in mind that the Coptic in *Thomas* makes good sense here as it stands.

### Saying 16.2

Quispel remarks that in Jesus’ claim to be bringing ‘divisions and fire and sword and war (οἰσμηγε οἰπολεμος)’ in *GTh* 16, the last two elements are a double translation from Aramaic *hrb*, which can mean both ‘sword’ and ‘war’.<sup>47</sup> This is true in a sense, but it is not quite right to say that *hrb* means ‘war’; rather, this is just a metaphorical use of ‘sword’. Metaphorical uses of ‘sword’ such as this appear in a number of languages. The English proverb ‘the pen is mightier than the sword’ has continued in use despite the advent of modern warfare and the diminishing use of the pen. To give a NT Greek example, in Romans 13.4, it has the sense of judicial punishment. So there is nothing distinctively Aramaic here. It is of course already metaphorical in Matthew 10.34, so

<sup>45</sup> (1) In the case of the parallel from Exod. 5.21, it is not a reflexive because the subject is second person and the (supposed) object is first person (‘you have made our spirits bad ...’). In the case of the other two, Prof. Graham Davies has commented to me that it is preferable to regard references to ‘souls’ and ‘spirits’ as reflexive in meaning when there is not a clearly internal emphasis. This is precisely what is present in the other two instances, however: (2) in Mal. 2.15 there is a pairing of spirit and flesh, and (3) in Sir. 2.17 there is a parallelism between heart and spirit.

<sup>46</sup> ‘A holy spirit dwells within us ... as it is treated by us, so it treats us’ (*Ep. Mor.* 41.2).

<sup>47</sup> Quispel, ‘Some Remarks on the Gospel of Thomas’, 279. See Jastrow 498a, sub *hrb*.

πολεμος in *GTh* 16.2 could equally be an interpretative expansion<sup>48</sup> – and given that the word is πολεμος, one might naturally incline towards seeing this happening in a Greek version of *Thomas*.

### Saying 16.3

In this complicated example, Guillaumont argues that the Coptic *Thomas* and Syriac versions of Luke 12.52–3 (Syr<sup>c</sup> and especially Syr<sup>s</sup>) preserve more accurately the original Aramaic syntax of the saying about division among the five in the house.<sup>49</sup> The difficulty is with the διαμεμερισμένοι in the Greek, which could go with the opening clause (‘... five in one house ...’) or with the ‘... three against two ...’: Guillaumont comments that the Greek is not really satisfactory with the Greek participle having been inserted improperly.<sup>50</sup> The Coptic, with its elegant simplicity (and no verbs of division at all, in contrast to the two in Greek), will have preserved the original form of the saying.

There are some complicating factors to Guillaumont’s theory of the priority of the Sinaitic Syriac and Coptic forms of the saying, however. First, this difficult participle could itself be a Semitism, as is illustrated by the parallel given by Guillaumont.<sup>51</sup> Perhaps the main difficulty, however, is that the Sinaitic Syriac and Coptic forms are not actually as close as Guillaumont implies, because the Coptic has simply omitted all mention of verbs of division, a feature which it does not share in common with any other version of the saying.

Furthermore, Guillaumont’s main argument for a Semitic background, that the scene-setting statement at the beginning (‘there are five in one house’) is a Semitic way of expressing the protasis of a conditional, is a feature common to all versions of the saying. There is no problem with this – it is a common enough instance of Semitic syntax.<sup>52</sup> All this means, however, is that Luke 12.52–3 and *GTh* 16 ultimately go back to

<sup>48</sup> So C.M. Tuckett, ‘Thomas and the Synoptics’, *NovT* 30 (1988), 132–57 (147).

<sup>49</sup> Guillaumont, ‘Sémitismes dans les logia’, 118–19. Compare Luke 12.52–3: ἔσονται γὰρ ἅπο τοῦ νῦν πέντε ἐν ἐνὶ οἴκῳ διαμεμερισμένοι τρεῖς ἐπὶ δυσὶν καὶ δύο ἐπὶ τρισὶν διαμερισθήσονται πατὴρ ἐπὶ υἱῷ καὶ υἱὸς ἐπὶ πατρὶ κτλ. and *GTh* 16: πεχε ἰσ χε ... οὔη ἰου γαρ ναφρηε ρη οὔη οὔη φοντ ναφρηε εχῆ σναγ αγω σναγ εχῆ φοντ πεωτ εχῆ ποηρε αγω ποηρε εχῆ πεωτ.

<sup>50</sup> Guillaumont, ‘Sémitismes dans les logia’, 118, 119; he is followed by J.-E. Ménard, ‘Les Problèmes de l’Évangile selon Thomas’, in M. Krause, ed. *Essays on the Nag Hammadi Texts in Honour of Alexander Böhlig* (Leiden: Brill, 1972), 59–73 (63). The point is also repeated in Guillaumont, ‘Les sémitismes dans l’Évangile selon Thomas’, 193, and followed by DeConick, *Original Gospel of Thomas in Translation*, 96.

<sup>51</sup> He cites *m. Abot* 3.2, referring to ‘two who are gathered’ (*she-yōshevim*).

<sup>52</sup> Cf. the parallel from *m. Abot* noted above.

a Semitic source, but not that *GTh* 16 is independent of Luke's Greek necessarily, as Guillaumont must maintain for the argument to work.<sup>53</sup>

Finally, Guillaumont's assertion that the simplicity of *Thomas*'s version means that it is more original is just that – mere assertion. As will be discussed further in Chapter 5, simplicity is by no means a reliable indicator of primitivity. Indeed, one might use a similar criterion for the originality of Luke's version: *Thomas* refers to five in the house, two against three and three against two, but only mentions a father and a son. Luke's version is more elegant, however, because he has five family members, father, mother, daughter, son and daughter-in-law. As a result, one could in theory use Guillaumont's criterion against him.

### Saying 16.4

Gilles Quispel has remarked, 'The Gospel of Thomas is the first writing in the history of the universe to use the noun "monachos".'<sup>54</sup> These references to *μοναχος* in *Thomas* have been debated for a number of different reasons, and Guillaumont has argued that the term is evidence for a Syriac *Vorlage* to the statement 'and they will stand as *singles* (*ἴμοναχος*)'.<sup>55</sup> He comments that before the fourth century and the spread of monasticism, the word *μοναχός* is rare in Greek, and is not attested as a substantive. By contrast, the Syriac *yhydy'* – before acquiring the meaning 'monk' – in the earliest Syriac texts where the term is used, referred to a special category of faithful ascetics. As Guillaumont himself notes, however, these earliest Syriac texts where the term is used are Aphrahat and Ephrem, writing in the fourth century.<sup>56</sup> The first Greek attestation of *μοναχός* in the sense of a Christian devotee in fact appears

<sup>53</sup> Guillaumont notes that it is difficult to question that Coptic *Thomas* and Syrus Sinaiticus have preserved the primitive syntax of the logion ('Sémitismes dans les logia', 119).

<sup>54</sup> G. Quispel, 'The Gospel of Thomas Revisited', in B. Barc, *Colloque international sur les textes de Nag Hammadi* (Quebec City: Presses de l'Université Laval, 1981), 218–66 (237).

<sup>55</sup> Guillaumont, 'Les sémitismes dans l'Évangile selon Thomas', 202–3; also DeConick, *Original Gospel of Thomas in Translation*, 98.

<sup>56</sup> For discussion, see the very useful summary in S.H. Griffith, "'Singles" in God's Service: Thoughts on the Ihidaye from the works of Aphrahat and Ephraem the Syrian', *The Harp: A Review of Syriac and Oriental Studies* 4 (1991), 145–59. He discusses the usage in Aphrahat and Ephrem, and notes that the term does not appear in the *Odes of Solomon* or the *Acts of Thomas*, while raising the possibility of its appearance in the *Vorlage* of *Thomas*. I am grateful to Dr J.F. Coakley for this reference. The most recent discussion, with some up-to-date bibliography, is D.F. Bumazhnov, 'Some Further Observations Concerning the Early History of the Term MONAXOC', in J. Baun, A. Cameron, M.J. Edwards and M. Vincent, eds. *Studia Patristica*, vol. XLV (Leuven: Peeters, 2010), 21–6.

at around the same time (6 June 324!).<sup>57</sup> It is of course possible that the Syriac usage goes back two centuries (or more: DeConick dates this logion to 80–120 CE),<sup>58</sup> but there is at present no evidence for this. As such, a Syriac original for this saying is not only speculative, but also rather unguarded speculation at that.<sup>59</sup> It is notable that the author of the most learned study of the *monachos* terminology changed her mind from an earlier confidence in a Syriac original to a greater acceptance later of the possibility of a Greek.<sup>60</sup>

It should also be noted, in respect of Quispel's observation above, that it is often difficult to tell whether a word is a noun or an adjective, and indeed it is not clear whether *Thomas* is using *monachos* straightforwardly as a noun. Indeed, the phrase 'blessed are the *monachoi* and elect' (ἘΝΗΜΑΚΑΡΙΟΣ ΝΕ ΝΗΜΟΝΑΧΟΣ ΑΥΩ ΕΤΣΟΤΤΙ) in *GTh* 49 suggests that it might well *not* be a noun. If one encountered the phrase 'elect *monachoi*' (something like ἤΜΟΝΑΧΟΣ ΕΤΣΟΤΤΙ) then one might assume that ΜΟΝΑΧΟΣ was a noun. In fact, however, we see the two words joined with an 'and': 'blessed are the *single* and elect'. (Indeed, the beatitudes in Matthew and Luke most commonly employ adjectives and participles.) The point should not be pressed, but if it is right, it removes any difficulty with a Greek *Vorlage* at a stroke, because Greek μοναχός is attested as an adjective from the time of Aristotle and Epicurus.<sup>61</sup> Finally, the word ΜΟΝΟΧΟΣ (*sic*) is attested in the *Dialogue of the Saviour* (120.26, 121.18), a work which as far as I am aware is not taken by any scholars to go back to a Syriac original.<sup>62</sup>

<sup>57</sup> See E.A. Judge, 'The Earliest Use of *monachos* for "Monk" (P. Coll. Youtie 77) and the Origins of Monasticism', *JAC* 20 (1977), 72–89 (and 86–8 on *Thomas*).

<sup>58</sup> DeConick, *Original Gospel of Thomas in Translation*, 99.

<sup>59</sup> For a more cautious assessment of the meaning of ΜΟΝΑΧΟΣ, which does not rely on reading later conceptions back into *Thomas*, see R. Uro, 'Asceticism and Anti-Familial Language in the Gospel of Thomas', in H. Moxnes, ed. *Constructing Early Christian Families: Family as Social Reality and Metaphor* (London: Routledge, 1997), 216–34 (224–5). For further discussion of the term, see M. Harl, 'À propos des logia de Jésus: le sens du mot μοναχός', *Revue des études grecques* 73 (1960), 464–74; L. Leloir, 'Infiltrations dualistes chez les Pères du désert', in J. Ries, Y. Janssens and J.-M. Sevrin, eds. *Gnosticisme et monde hellénistique* (Université Catholique de Louvain, 1982), 326–36 (331).

<sup>60</sup> F.-E. Morard, 'Monachos, moine: histoire du terme grec jusqu'au 4<sup>e</sup> siècle', *Freiburger Zeitschrift für Philosophie und Theologie* 20 (1973), 332–411 (333 and 362–77 on the Syriac background to the usage in *Thomas*); F.-E. Morard, 'Encore quelques réflexions sur monachos', *VigChr* 34 (1980), 395–401 (399), for agnosticism about a Greek or Syriac original.

<sup>61</sup> See the evidence in Morard, 'Monachos, moine', 338–40.

<sup>62</sup> Morard, 'Encore quelques réflexions sur monachos', 395, refers to the *Dial. Sav.* parallels, and they are perhaps significant for her change of mind about the necessity of *Thomas* having a Syriac original.

**Saying 18.3**

On “tasting death”, see above on saying 1.

**Saying 19.3**

In the enigmatic saying in which Jesus promises five trees in paradise to the disciples, Nagel poses the question of why *five*, especially since such a number of trees would be incommensurate with the *twelve* disciples.<sup>63</sup> He provides a fascinating answer with a number of stages. (1) The Aramaic original referred to a single tree in the middle of the garden, as per the traditional picture in Genesis 3.3. (2) This middle position was expressed by an Aramaic phrase meaning ‘halfway’ (*bħms* = ‘half-way’, ‘in the middle’). (3) This was then mistaken for *ħms* ( = ‘five’): hence the five trees in paradise. In Nagel’s summary (putting the sequence the other way): ‘Im Aramäischen konnte *ħammeš*, *ħamša* „fünf“ angesichts der häufigen Vertauschung von š und s als *\*bħms* statt *\*bħmš* verstanden werden, und dieses war ἐν ἡμίσει, also zu jüd.-aram. *hēmīsū*, *hūmes* ἡμισοῦ gehörig, vgl. *ħmysyn*, syr. *ħmysyn* „ἡμισείον, *semissis*“.<sup>64</sup> Nagel proposes, then, that the original meant, ‘Denn ihr habt dort in der Hälfte (= halbwegs) einen Baum im Paradies.’<sup>65</sup>

A number of questions present themselves here. First, we have to assume the confusion of š and s, which, though rare, is perhaps not an insuperable obstacle. This is by no means all that one has to assume, however. Second, one needs to introduce ‘in’ (*b-*) into the presupposed *Vorlage* to get from ‘five’/‘middle’ to ‘in the middle’. Third, it appears we also have to assume a confusion between *ħ* and *h*: Syriac *ħmysyn* is attested in the sense of ‘half’/‘a half-denarius’ (and even then only in Bar Bahlul’s *Lexicon*), but is not to my knowledge attested with *ħ* as the initial letter.<sup>66</sup> Fourth, the word-order is problematic. We would surely expect ‘in the middle (of)’ to appear immediately before the reference to paradise (as it is in Gen. 3.3; *Ep. Diogn.* 12.3; *G. Phil.* 73.15–16), but in the Coptic the word in question (ⲛⲧⲟϥ) appears before the trees, not before paradise. Finally, is the loan-word in question attested in the sense of ‘middle’ as well as in the sense of ‘half’? Nagel certainly does not present any evidence in favour of this sense.

<sup>63</sup> Nagel, ‘Erwägungen zum Thomas-Evangelium’, 382.

<sup>64</sup> Nagel, ‘Erwägungen zum Thomas-Evangelium’, 383.

<sup>65</sup> Nagel, ‘Erwägungen zum Thomas-Evangelium’, 382.

<sup>66</sup> See R. Payne Smith, *Thesaurus Syriacus* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1901), 1020.



Additionally, the presence of five trees in paradise is by no means rare: the motif appears elsewhere in *Pistis Sophia*, 1–2 *Jeu*, the *Untitled Text* from the Bruce Codex, the *Kephalaia*, the Manichaean *Psalms Book* and a Balaizah fragment.<sup>67</sup> It is a possibility that a mistranslation in the transmission history of *Thomas* prompted all the other occurrences, but there are no other indications that this may be the case.<sup>68</sup> The extensive application of the theme would also suggest that the presence of such a number of trees in paradise is not as incongruous as Nagel suggests.

### Saying 19.4

On “tasting death”, see above on saying 1.

### Saying 21.4

According to Perrin and DeConick, an Aramaism appears in the parable of the children living in a field who ‘strip off’ (σεκακαζην) and leave the field when the owners come to claim it. This “stripping off” can be explained by reference to Syriac *srq*, which can mean ‘strip off’, but also ‘renounce’, with the latter being a better fit here (i.e., the children would renounce the field on which they had no claim).<sup>69</sup> There are difficulties with this interpretation, however. First, the connection between children and nakedness appears later on in *Thomas*, in *GTh* 37. This makes good sense in *GTh* 21 which is clearly about a confrontation with archontic powers, and where “stripping off” is probably a metaphor for the abandonment of the body, as DeConick also says.<sup>70</sup> Second, as Joosten notes, ‘strip off’ does not seem to be the normal sense of *srq*, which is nearer

<sup>67</sup> See *PS* I.1; I.10; II.86; II.93; II.96; *1 Jeu* 41; *2 Jeu* 42, 44 (*bis*), 50; *Untitled Text* 4; *Keph.* VI, p. 30, for the translation of which see I. Gardner and S.N.C. Lieu, ed. and tr. *Manichaean Texts from the Roman Empire* (Cambridge University Press, 2004), 200; n.b. also *Psalms Book* 161,17–29. Finally, the five trees represent five powers in the little-known Balaizah fr. 52, for which see W.E. Crum, ‘A Gnostic Fragment’, *JTS* 44 (1943), 176–9, and reprinted as ‘Appendix 6: Bala’izah Fragment 52’, in M. Waldstein and F. Wisse, eds. *The Apocryphon of John: Synopsis of Nag Hammadi Codices II,1; III,1; and IV,1 with BG 8502,2* (NHMS 33; Leiden/New York/Cologne: Brill, 1995), 195. For discussion of the theme, see H.-C. Puech, *En quête de la gnose*, vol. II, *Sur l’Évangile selon Thomas: esquisse d’une interprétation systématique* (Paris: Gallimard, 1978), 99–105.

<sup>68</sup> *Psalms Book* 161.17–29 seems to be an allusion to *GTh* 19, however.

<sup>69</sup> Perrin, *Thomas and Tatian*, 44; DeConick, *Original Gospel of Thomas in Translation*, 15, 109.

<sup>70</sup> DeConick, *Original Gospel of Thomas in Translation*, 109: ‘This child abandons this world to the ruling demons when he or she strips naked, a metaphor for renouncing the body.’ It is difficult to square this with her statement, then, that the reference to “stripping naked” is a ‘translation error’ (*Original Gospel of Thomas in Translation*, 15).

to ‘empty’; Payne Smith gives only one comparable example, in a reference to taking off armour.<sup>71</sup> Additionally, it is in the *ethpéel* that *srq* has this sense of ‘take off’, but probably in the *páel* that it would mean ‘renounce’.<sup>72</sup> This would not merely be a difference of pointing, but – supposing a participle – of a consonant, a *mem* (if not a participle, then more than one consonant): furthermore, since *srq* begins with *semkath*, in the *ethpéel* participle the *s* and the *t* of the *ethpéel* preformative would change places, making a misreading even less likely. Third, a reference to ‘renouncing’ without an object would sound odd: one would expect a pronominal suffix (‘it’) in the original which – in the case of a literal translation would, one presumes, have survived into the Coptic. There are several difficulties, then, with the proposed Syriac original which conspire to make it unworkable.

### Saying 21.5

A further possible Semitism in this saying is the curious phrase ‘his house of his kingdom’ (πεφνει ν̄τε τεφν̄ν̄τερο), which has been taken by Quecke as an Aramaism, and as evidence for a Syriac background.<sup>73</sup> Guillaumont has picked up Quecke’s view enthusiastically, arguing that a Syriac background here is ‘very probable’.<sup>74</sup> There are four problems with this example, however.

First, there are two places in *Exegesis on the Soul* which have the same doubling of the possessive, in the phrases ‘her newness of her nature’ (τεσν̄ν̄τврре ... ѱπεсфускон, 131.35–132.1) and ‘her disgrace of her widowhood’ (тесасхн̄носуне н̄тесн̄н̄тхн̄ра, 133.13–14). Since *Exegesis on the Soul* surely goes back to a Greek original,<sup>75</sup> the phraseology cannot easily be determined to be a Semitism. Böhlig supplies an

<sup>71</sup> J. Joosten, Review of Perrin, *Thomas and Tatian, Aramaic Studies* 2 (2004), 126–30 (127); Payne Smith, *Compendious Syriac Dictionary*, 393a. Cf. the view of Perrin, that it is ‘the standard word for “disrobe”’ (*Thomas and Tatian*, 44).

<sup>72</sup> See Payne Smith, *Thesaurus Syriacus*, 2747–9.

<sup>73</sup> H. Quecke, “‘Sein Haus seines Königreichs’”: Zum Thomasevangelium 85,9f., *Museon* 76 (1963), 47–53. Guillaumont, ‘Les sémitismes dans l’Évangile selon Thomas’, 195.

<sup>74</sup> Guillaumont, ‘Les sémitismes dans l’Évangile selon Thomas’, 195: ‘très vraisemblable’.

<sup>75</sup> W.C. Robinson, ‘The Expository Treatise on the Soul: Introduction’, in B. Layton, ed. *Nag Hammadi Codex II, 2–7, together with XIII, 2\**, *Brit. Lib. Or. 4926(1)*, and *P. Oxy. 1*, 654, 655, vol. II (NHS 21; Leiden/New York/Cologne: Brill, 1989), 136–41 (Leiden: Brill, 1989), 136–41 (136). With its quotations from Homer, *Exeg. Soul* is one of the clearest examples of a Nag Hammadi tractate which goes back to a Greek composition. Additionally, in the individual phrases here (τεсн̄н̄тврре ... ѱπεсфускон and тесасхн̄носуне н̄тесн̄н̄тхн̄ра), three of the four nouns are Greek loanwords, which might also speak in favour of Greek originals for these phrases.

instance, albeit in the Bohairic dialect, that of ‘my words of my commandments’ (ⲛⲁⲥⲁⲭⲓ ⲛⲧⲉ ⲛⲁⲈⲚⲦⲟⲗⲏ) from Proverbs 2.1.<sup>76</sup>

Second, the phrase ‘the house of his kingdom’ in Syriac (*byth dmlkwth*) would be pronounced *baytah dmalkuteh* (‘its house, viz. that of his domain’), because *mlkwth* is feminine.<sup>77</sup> Since ‘kingdom’ is feminine in Syriac and Coptic, we would expect a literal translation to be ‘his house of its [fem.] kingdom’ (ⲛⲉϥⲏⲉⲓ ⲛⲧⲉ ⲧⲉⲥⲙⲏⲧⲉⲣⲟ) not ‘... of its [masc.] kingdom’ (... ⲧⲉϥⲙⲏⲧⲉⲣⲟ). In this case, we must expect of the translator not only a woodenly literal translation but also a misreading of the Syriac.

Third, if (as is probable) ‘house’ and ‘kingdom’ are not differentiated and ‘of his kingdom’ is exegetic, this does not go happily back into Syriac: Nöldeke comments that the anticipatory possessive suffix only occurs in Syriac with the genitive of *possession*. The possessive suffix in cases of genitives of identity and quality ‘would hardly be admissible’, he remarks.<sup>78</sup>

Finally, on the assumption of a Greek intermediary between a Semitic original and the extant Coptic, we need to suppose not only that a Greek translator bumblingly translated this as something like ὁ οἶκος αὐτοῦ τῆς βασιλείας αὐτοῦ, but also that the Coptic translator unthinkingly repeated an apparently nonsensical phrase (which in fact is not so odd in Coptic after all). The first of these criticisms, the parallel with *Exegesis on the Soul*, is damaging enough to Quecke’s hypothesis; the second, third and fourth compound the difficulty. Overall, it is not so ‘very probable’ after all.

### Saying 25.1

Perhaps one of the most common proposals for a Syriacism in *Thomas* is saying 25: ‘Love your brother *like your own soul*’: as Perrin notes, this phrase is much more of a Syriacism than it is at home in Western Aramaic.<sup>79</sup> Similarly to what we saw in the case of saying 14, it is

<sup>76</sup> Böhlig, ‘Das Problem aramäischer Elemente’, 446.

<sup>77</sup> I am grateful to Dr J.F. Coakley for this observation. Guillaumont, ‘Les sémitismes dans l’Évangile selon Thomas’, 195, glosses over this problem, simply commenting that the first noun is ‘lu masc. –eh, au lieu de fém. –āh.’

<sup>78</sup> T. Nöldeke, *Compendious Syriac Grammar* (London: Williams and Norgate, 1904), 205C.

<sup>79</sup> Perrin, ‘Aramaic Origins of the *Gospel of Thomas*’, 58, for Syriac, against DeConick, *Original Gospel of Thomas in Translation*, 124, for Aramaic; similarly, Guillaumont, ‘Les sémitismes dans l’Évangile selon Thomas’, 197 sees a Syriac backdrop here. Compare the various Targums to Lev. 19.18, where reflexive with *npš* is not used. It was noted as

supposed (and not unreasonably so), that in the Semitic *Vorlage*, ‘your soul’ functioned in a reflexive sense, just as ‘... as your soul’ (ʿyk npšk) appears in all the instances of the commandment in the Old Syriac and Peshitta Gospels.<sup>80</sup> On the other hand, however, there is an interesting variation on the second love-commandment in the second century, alive and well in Greek: ἀγαπήσεις τὸν πλησίον σου ὑπὲρ τὴν ψυχὴν σου (*Barn.* 19.5; cf. 1.4; *Did.* 2.7: ... οὗς δὲ ἀγαπήσεις ὑπὲρ τὴν ψυχὴν σου).<sup>81</sup> There are no arguments, as far as I am aware, for original Semitic versions of the *Epistle of Barnabas* or the *Didache*,<sup>82</sup> and since these two works at this point are probably dependent upon an early form of the *Doctrina Apostolorum*, such a Greek formulation may well go back to the first century. The *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*, also likely to have been Greek compositions (though this is disputed), have two similar instances: Joseph ἠγάπησεν ἡμᾶς ὡς τὴν ψυχὴν αὐτοῦ (*T. Sim.* 4.6), and the ‘good man’ τοὺς δὲ δικαίους ἀγαπᾷ ὡς τὴν ψυχὴν αὐτοῦ (*T. Benj.* 4.3). (Interestingly, one manuscript has ὑπὲρ in place of ὡς at *T. Benj.* 4.3.) Given how early it is as a Greek formulation, there seems to be no reason why *Thomas*’s saying here should not go back to a Greek original. The possibility that this saying developed in a Greek context close to that of the *Epistle of Barnabas* is perhaps strengthened by the fact that the second half of *GTh* 25 (‘Guard him like the pupil of your eye’) has an extremely close parallel to *Epistle of Barnabas* 19.9: ἀγαπήσεις ὡς κόρην τοῦ ὀφθαλμοῦ σου πάντα τὸν λαλοῦντά σοι τὸν λόγον κυρίου. It is striking that maxims adjacent in *Thomas* (*GTh* 25.1 and 25.2) are paralleled in such proximity in

an Aramaism already in G. Garitte, ‘Le Premier Volume de l’édition photographique des manuscrits gnostiques coptes et l’Évangile de Thomas’, *Muséon* 70 (1957), 59–73 (65–6).

<sup>80</sup> Perrin, ‘Aramaic Origins of the *Gospel of Thomas*’, 58 n. 32; for the texts, see G.A. Kiraz, *Comparative Edition of the Syriac Gospels: Aligning the Sinaiticus, Curetonianus, Peshitta and Harklean Versions* (Leiden: Brill, 1996).

<sup>81</sup> See also the text of the *Doctrina Apostolorum* as reconstructed by Rordorf-Tuillier, reprinted in H. van de Sandt and D. Flusser, *The Didache: Its Jewish Sources and Its Place in Early Judaism and Christianity* (CRINT; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995), 114–16. On the formulation in the *Didache*, see G. Quispel, ‘Love thy Brother’, in Quispel, *Gnostic Studies*, vol. II (Leiden: Nederlands Historisch-Archaeologisch Instituut te Istanbul, 1975), 169–79 (172–8). Quispel concludes that the combination of the *Didache* and *Thomas* shows that the saying circulated in a form with ‘as your soul’ very early on in Western Syria. The question of the saying’s antiquity or provenance need not detain us here, however, since we are concerned merely with its language.

<sup>82</sup> A. Milavec, *The Didache: Text, Translation, Analysis, and Commentary* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2004), xii, comments that the language is typical of first-century koine, although this is probably not quite correct: NB the mountain of “Hebraisms” assembled in J.R. Harris, *The Teaching of the Apostles* (with facsimile text) (London: C.J. Clay and Sons, 1887), 78–90.

*Barnabas* (*Ep. Barn.* 19.5 and 19.9), a point which will be developed in Chapter 12 below.<sup>83</sup>

### Saying 27.1

Several scholars have commented that the phrase ‘fast (to) the world’ (νηστεύειν τὸν κόσμον) strongly suggests a Syriac original.<sup>84</sup> In Greek, for the verb νηστεύειν to take a direct object is a solecism;<sup>85</sup> fasting ‘from’ normally takes the genitive, with or without ἀπό.<sup>86</sup> It is argued that the Greek here is a wooden translation of Syriac *šm l’lm’* (‘fast (to) the world’). This theory is strengthened by the fact that the phrase *šm l’lm’* occurs three times in the *Liber Graduum* as well as in Aphrahat.<sup>87</sup> Additional support, the argument goes, comes from the Coptic’s reference to ‘fasting to the world’ (ῤῆστᲉϥᲉ ᲉᲑᲕᲟᲥᲙᲟᲥ): as such, Fitzmyer and Baker conclude that both Syriac *šm l* – and Coptic ῤῆστᲉϥᲉ Ᲊ- mean ‘fast to’, that is, ‘fast with respect to’, with ‘world’ as the indirect object.<sup>88</sup> Hence, both Greek and Coptic go back to a Syrian milieu and probably to Syriac phraseology as well.

The first difficulty, however, has been a confusion about the meaning of the Coptic ῤῆστᲉϥᲉ ᲉᲑᲕᲟᲥᲙᲟᲥ. Far from being an instance of ‘the dative “to”’, as Fitzmyer and Baker reckon, we have here Ᲊ- of separation.<sup>89</sup> As such, it is not the case that ‘we are still left to wonder what prompted the Coptic gospel to supply the *dative*’.<sup>90</sup> The Coptic makes

<sup>83</sup> Interestingly, one also encounters the variation between ὦς and ὑπέρ in the version of Matt. 10.16 in the “Jewish Gospel”, which has not the recommendation to be wise ‘as’ (ὦς, so Matthew) serpents but to be wise ‘more than/beyond’ (ὑπέρ) them. See A.F.J. Klijn, *Jewish-Christian Gospel Tradition* (VigChrSupps 17; Leiden/New York/Cologne: Brill, 1992), 109–10 (#28).

<sup>84</sup> A. Guillaumont, ‘NHETEYEIN TON KOΣMON (*P. Oxy.* 1, verso, l. 5–6)’, *BIFAO* 61 (1962), 15–23 (21); A. Baker, “‘Fasting to the World’”, *JBL* 84 (1965), 291–4; Guillaumont, ‘Les sémitismes dans l’Évangile selon Thomas’, 203; Perrin, ‘NHC II,2 and the Oxyrhynchus Fragments’, 145–6.

<sup>85</sup> The exception is the cognate accusative (νηστεῖον νηστεύειν), as in 1 Kgs. 20.9; Zech. 7.5. Accusatives of time in Greek are also common with reference to fasting.

<sup>86</sup> LSJ 1175a cites an example from Empedocles; Lampe *PGL*, 912b–913a notes Clement, *Strom.* 3.15; 7.12, and also mentions *GTh* 27. Strangely, Baker (‘Fasting to the World’, 291, 294) thinks that Clement’s genitive is odd.

<sup>87</sup> *Liber Graduum*, Memra 15.16 (col. 373) bis; Memra 29.7 (col. 828); Aphrahat, *Dem.* 14.

<sup>88</sup> J.A. Fitzmyer, ‘The Oxyrhynchus *Logoi* of Jesus and the Coptic Gospel according to Thomas’, *TS* 20 (1959), 505–60 (533); Baker, ‘Fasting to the World’, 292; Baker, ‘The Gospel of Thomas and the Syriac *Liber Graduum*’, *NTS* 12 (1965), 49–55 (50).

<sup>89</sup> So, rightly, Guillaumont, ‘NHETEYEIN TON KOΣMON’, 17.

<sup>90</sup> Baker, ‘Fasting to the World’, 292. Emphasis mine.

very good sense, and means not ‘fast (with respect) to the world’ but ‘fast from the world’.

Perhaps the most significant problem with the idea of a Syriac *Vorlage* to *GTh* 27 with *š'm l' lm'* is that this Syriac phrase is no less odd than νηστεύειν τὸν κόσμον or English ‘fast to the world’ (although *Thomas* scholarship has become accustomed to the quirky English expression). As Payne Smith’s *Thesaurus* amply attests, the standard way to refer to ‘fast from’ is with *š'm mn*, not *šwm l-*. As far as the *Liber Graduum* (mid–late fourth or early fifth century<sup>91</sup>) is concerned, it is quite likely that the phrase there is borrowed from *Thomas*: the *Liber Graduum* has various connections not only with apocryphal literature and “agrapha” generally, but also with the *Acts of Thomas*<sup>92</sup> and probably the *Gospel of Thomas*.<sup>93</sup> The same is true, though to a lesser extent, of Aphrahat: he might well have known something of *Thomas* indirectly.<sup>94</sup> Kowalski has concluded on the *Liber Graduum* (albeit by a different route) that ‘quest’ *insolita espressione*’ is ‘dipendente con molta probabilità da uno dei *Logia Iesu* scoperti fra i papiri di Oxyrhynchos’.<sup>95</sup> As far as *LG* is concerned, this is likely; the instance in Aphrahat leaves open the possibility of a Semitism behind *GTh* 27.1, though it must be remembered that even though Aphrahat’s *Demonstrations* pre-date *LG*, the former are still later than *Thomas* by about two centuries.

To turn to the Greek, there is clearly a difficulty here: we probably do not have acceptable Greek. Several alternative explanations have been provided. Some have retained the phrase, despite its oddity. Some have opted for a scribal error.<sup>96</sup> In favour of the theory of a scribal error are the instances of non-standard spelling and mistakes at points in *P. Oxy.* 1.<sup>97</sup> It

<sup>91</sup> R.A. Kitchen and M.F.G. Parmentier, *The Book of Steps: The Syriac Liber Graduum* (Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian, 2004), viii, gives a date of mid–late fourth century. I. Hausherr, ‘Quanam aetate prodierit Liber Graduum’, *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* I (1935), 495–502, gives a date at the end of the fourth or beginning of the fifth century.

<sup>92</sup> M. Kmosko, *Liber Graduum: Patrologia Syriaca*, vol. I, pt 3 (Paris: Firmin-Didot, 1926), clxvii.

<sup>93</sup> See Baker, ‘The Gospel of Thomas and the Syriac Liber Graduum’.

<sup>94</sup> On the striking similarity observed by Poirier between *Thomas*’s references to standing solitary, see P.-H. Poirier, ‘L’Évangile selon Thomas (log. 16 et 23) et Aphraate (*Dém.* XVIII, 10–11)’, in [no editor] *Mélanges Antoine Guillaumont: contributions à l’étude des christianismes orientaux* (Geneva: Patrick Cramer, 1988), 15–18.

<sup>95</sup> A. Kowalski, *Perfezione e giustizia de Adamo nel Liber Graduum* (Orientalia Christiana Analecta; Rome: Pontificum Institutum Orientale, 1989), 134 n. 33.

<sup>96</sup> I.e. the scribe ought, like Clement, to have written τοῦ κόσμου. So C. Taylor, *The Oxyrhynchus Logia and the Apocryphal Gospels* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1899), 11.

<sup>97</sup> In addition to the common confusions of ε/α1 and ε1/ι1 (verso ll. 6, 7, 13; recto l. 14) which the scribe at one point corrects (recto l. 1), there is ο1 for ω (recto l. 15); at recto l. 17 the scribe wrote υψηλους, and tried partially to rub out the wrong final sigma. There is also probably a missing relative pronoun (ὁ) at recto l. 20.

also remains a possibility that τὸν κόσμον is an accusative of respect.<sup>98</sup> Positing a Syriac *Vorlage* to *Thomas* at this point, however, does not do away with the problems as easily as some have suggested.

### Saying 27.2

Secondly on this saying, the phrase σαββατίζειν τὸ σάββατον is adduced as a Semitism.<sup>99</sup> Since it is so close to the Septuagintalism σαββατίζειν τὰ σάββατα (LXX Lev. 23.32; cf. Lev. 23.35; 2 Chr. 36.21), however, it cannot be considered with much confidence to be significant evidence for a Semitic original.

Alternatively, Nagel notes that in the Coptic version's use of the phrase εἶπε ... ἡϛαββατον, the εἶπε could hark back to Aramaic 'bd, which can mean 'celebrate'.<sup>100</sup> This is on the one hand unnecessary, since εἶπε ... ἡϛαββατον is perfectly understandable as a translation of the extant Greek's σαββατίζειν; one might compare the Coptic phrase ρ-ππαϛα in Matthew 26.18. Another difficulty is that it relies – as Nagel says – on a direct translation from Aramaic to Coptic without a Greek intermediary.<sup>101</sup>

Additionally, Nagel goes on to deduce from the thoughts (1) that the second reference to Sabbath is redundant, and (2) that 'Sabbath' is spelled differently on each occasion (ϛαμβατον / αββατον), that the words might actually go back to different roots in the original. In fact, however, the double reference to Sabbath is not a redundancy, since as we have already noted the phrase σαββατίζειν τὰ σάββατα is Septuagintal. Additionally, Nagel's explanation of the second αββατον is problematic: he takes it to go back to Aramaic šbt' ('praise'), but this is only clearly attested in Mandaean Aramaic, in three works whose dates are hard to establish as very ancient.<sup>102</sup> Additionally, on Nagel's hypothesis, the Greek and Coptic translators have independently mistranslated the

<sup>98</sup> So Fitzmyer, 'The Oxyrhynchus *Logoi* of Jesus', 533.

<sup>99</sup> DeConick, *Original Gospel of Thomas in Translation*, 131.

<sup>100</sup> Nagel, 'Erwägungen zum Thomas-Evangelium', 382.

<sup>101</sup> Nagel, 'Erwägungen zum Thomas-Evangelium', 382: 'Freilich würde es dann zur Annahme zwingen, dass die koptische Übersetzung aus dem aramäischen Original unmittelbar erfolgt sei, ohne griechische Zwischenübersetzung.'

<sup>102</sup> See E.S. Drower and R. Macuch, *A Mandaic Dictionary* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1963), 439a. The references are DC (= Drower Collection) 48, a sixteenth-century manuscript (A.H. 972), and *Alf Trisar Šuialia* II no. 146 and II no. 345. For the dates of the MSS, see E.S. Drower, *The Thousand and Twelve Questions/Alf Trisar Šuialia* (Berlin: Akademie, 1960), 3 (one manuscript from the nineteenth century, one manuscript from 1684 [= A.H. 1088], one manuscript older, though she is not specific). See further J.J. Buckley, *The Mandaean: Ancient Texts and Modern People* (Oxford University Press, 2002), for discussion of the (very uncertain) date of *ATŠ*.

Aramaic, producing – by coincidence – exactly the same result. In sum, then, Nagel’s two suggestions are ingenious but overly speculative.

### Saying 28.3

Perrin comments here that there is something of a discrepancy between Jesus saying ‘my soul is concerned/anxious (πονείν)’ in the Greek and ‘my soul is in pain (ⲧ ⲕⲕⲁϥ)’ in the Coptic: the latter is more intense than the former.<sup>103</sup> The best explanation of this, according to Perrin, is that both reflect different lines of translation from the Aramaic/Syriac ‘n’. In the *pe’al*, the verb can mean ‘to be concerned with’, whereas in the *aph’el*, it might have a more intense sense. A confusion between a *pe’al* and an *aph’el* cannot simply be glossed over, however, since the word would be spelled differently in each case: if one were to suppose a participle behind the present tenses in *Thomas*, the *aph’el* would require the prefix *m-*. Additionally, an explanation purely on the basis of Greek and Coptic is not hard to find. The first equivalent which Crum gives for ⲕⲕⲁϥ is πόνος, a fact which should give us pause before looking for any explanation more complicated than πονεῖν being translated with ⲧ ⲕⲕⲁϥ.<sup>104</sup> This is not surprising, because πονεῖν is not necessarily merely to be ‘concerned’ or ‘anxious’, but can also easily mean ‘suffer’.

### Saying 30.1

Guillaumont’s pioneering 1958 article aimed to eliminate some of the peculiarities of saying 30. The Coptic ‘where there are three gods, they are gods’ is difficult enough, and the difficulties are magnified further in the lacunose Greek version. For Guillaumont, the meaning of the ‘three gods’ is explained by the Rabbinic exegesis of Psalm 82 in Mishnah *Abot* 3.6:<sup>105</sup>

R. Halafta b. Dosa of Kefar Hanania said: If ten men sit together and occupy themselves in the Law, the Divine Presence rests among them, for it is written, *God standeth in the congregation of God* (Ps. 82.1). And whence [do we learn this] even of

<sup>103</sup> Perrin, ‘NHC II,2 and the Oxyrhynchus Fragments’, 146.

<sup>104</sup> Crum 407b. To Crum’s examples Rev. 16.11 can be added.

<sup>105</sup> Guillaumont, ‘Sémitismes dans les logia de Jésus’, 114–16; repeated in ‘Les sémitismes dans l’Évangile selon Thomas’, 194–5; DeConick, *Original Gospel of Thomas in Translation*, 136–7, and the additional article noted below; cf. Perrin, ‘NHC II,2 and the Oxyrhynchus Fragments’, 146–8.



five? Because it is written, *And hath founded his group upon the earth* (Am. 9.6). And whence even of three? Because it is written, *He judgeth among the gods/judges* (Ps. 82.1). etc.

(tr. Danby)

As such, the allusion in *Thomas* is to a Jewish interpretation of Psalm 82, which formed the basis for the Rabbinic idea of three judges being necessary and sufficient for pronouncing judgement in the presence of God. Similarly, *GTh* 30 refers to this quorum of three judges: as Guillaumont translates the saying, ‘where there are three gods/judges (*lhym*), they are judges’.<sup>106</sup> Guillaumont himself notes, however, that such an interpretation is a function of a Semitic milieu, rather than necessarily of a Semitic *Vorlage*.<sup>107</sup> A difficulty with extending the argument for linguistic influence is that it seems to require a Hebrew origin: Aramaic *lh*(<sup>?</sup>) cannot denote ‘judges’ as easily as can Hebrew *lhym*.<sup>108</sup> Furthermore, Mosser’s study of the early reception of Psalm 82 indicates that many of the patristic readings of the Psalm have elements in common with its Second-Temple Jewish interpretations, and so it may not even be a matter of a Semitic milieu, but merely of a common interpretative tradition.<sup>109</sup>

### Saying 33.2

DeConick comments that putting a lamp ‘in a cellar’ (εἰς κρύπτην, Luke 11.33) or ‘in a hidden place’ (ἐν ἑκκεκρυμμένῳ, *GTh* 33) are divergent translations which might reasonably be expected to go back to an Aramaic *Vorlage* with a reference to a *str*(<sup>?</sup>) (‘hidden place’ or ‘cellar’).<sup>110</sup> Perrin objects, however, that κρύπτη might just as easily mean ‘hidden

<sup>106</sup> A.D. DeConick, ‘Corrections to the Critical Reading of the Gospel of Thomas’, *VigChr* 60 (2006) 201–8 (203) mistakes Guillaumont as agreeing with her view, viz. that the sense of the original was ‘where there are three (people), Elohim is there’. Hence on this reading, the plural Elohim has been mistranslated as meaning a multiplicity of gods, hence, θεοί.

<sup>107</sup> He notes at the end of his discussion of this saying that he is going to move on to discuss saying 80, which ‘semble se résoudre par le recours non seulement à un contexte, mais à un substrat sémitique’ (‘Sémitismes dans les logia de Jésus’, 116).

<sup>108</sup> Neither Jastrow nor Payne Smith gives ‘judge’ as a dictionary definition for *lh* or *lh*(<sup>?</sup>).

<sup>109</sup> C. Mosser, ‘The Earliest Patristic Interpretations of Psalm 82, Jewish Antecedents, and the Origin of Christian Deification’, *JTS* 56 (2005), 30–74, e.g. 71: ‘From even this brief discussion of rabbinic interpretations numerous similarities with patristic readings of the psalm are obvious ... While there may be traces of exegetical contact in the patristic and rabbinic interpretations of the psalm, it is almost certain that the main common features were inherited from an interpretative tradition current in the Second Temple era.’

<sup>110</sup> DeConick, *Original Gospel of Thomas in Translation*, 14, 145.

place’, removing any difference between the Greek and Coptic for which explanation is required from a third entity.<sup>111</sup> In support of Perrin’s point about the Greek is the rarity of the word κρύπτη,<sup>112</sup> and the fact that the Vulgate translates εἰς κρύπτην with *in abscondito*. *In abscondito* just means, as does the Coptic, ‘in a hidden place’. The certainty of the whole enterprise is also undermined by the text-critical problems in various places in Luke 11.33, not least that P45 and some other manuscripts have εἰς κρύπτον in the place under discussion here.<sup>113</sup>

### Saying 33.3

Guillaumont remarks here that Luke’s reference to the illumination of the lamp for ‘whoever enters’ is in *Thomas* for ‘whoever enters *and goes out*’, that is, in a more complete Semitic form, expressing merismus.<sup>114</sup> This is merely a common biblical expression, however, and no indication particularly of a Semitic *Vorlage*.<sup>115</sup> Indeed, it is highly likely – as will be argued in Chapter 8 – that *Thomas* has incorporated a Lukan redactional element here (Luke 8.16’s οἱ εἰσπορευόμενοι is not paralleled in Mark 4.21 or Matt. 5.15), and supplemented it further with a balancing ‘and those who go out’.

### Saying 35.1

In Jesus’ saying about the binding of the strong man, *Thomas* talks of the strong man threatening to ‘take by force’ (Ⲫⲓ ... ⲛⲉⲗⲛⲁⲗ) the house in question, while Mark and Matthew have ‘plunder’ ([δϛ]αρπάσαι). These both go back to independent translations from Aramaic *’ns* according to Quispel.<sup>116</sup> There are two questionable elements here, however. In the first place, the translation of the phrase has clearly not been literal in both cases: *Thomas* has ‘and take it [*sc.* the house] by force’, whereas the Synoptics have ‘and snatch his property’ (Mark

<sup>111</sup> Perrin, ‘Aramaic Origins of the *Gospel of Thomas*’, 53.

<sup>112</sup> LSJ 1000a notes only one other instance.

<sup>113</sup> On *GTh* 33.1, Guillaumont, ‘Les sémitismes dans l’Évangile selon Thomas’, 195, mentions that ‘in your ear, in the other ear’ may be a Semitism, *viz.* a distributive repetition: he sportingly notes, however, this is also good Coptic, and in the first place he requires (as do many other editors) that ⲡⲕⲉⲙⲁⲗⲁⲗⲉ be emended to ⲡⲕⲉⲙⲁⲗⲁⲗⲉ.

<sup>114</sup> Guillaumont, ‘Les sémitismes dans l’Évangile selon Thomas’, 200; DeConick, *Original Gospel of Thomas in Translation*, 144.

<sup>115</sup> See e.g. 1 Sam. 29.6; 2 Sam. 3.25; 2 Kgs 19.27; Ps. 121.8; Isa. 37.28; cf. also 4Q405 23.i.8–9.

<sup>116</sup> Quispel, ‘Some Remarks on the Gospel of Thomas’, 280–1.

3.27; Matt. 12.29; cf. Luke 11.22). Since the translation has obviously not been literal, it is not clear that one can attribute the difference between verbs to two literal but different translations from a Semitic original. This is doubly the case because the objects of the verbs are different in each, which – as we saw in the case of saying 8 above – would influence, if not determine, the choice of verb. Additionally, however, are the two actions in each case, (δι)αρπάσαι and χι ... ἄχνηα, really very different?<sup>117</sup>

### Saying 36

Guillaumont and DeConick comment that in *Thomas*'s version of Jesus' saying against anxiety, 'from morning until evening and from evening until morning' is a Semitic idiom meaning 'continuously', noting Exodus 18.13 (ἀπὸ πρωῒθεν ἕως ἑσπέρας) and 27.21 (ἀφ' ἑσπέρας ἕως πρωῒ). In the first case, however, the parallel is not exact: what one has in Exodus is two phrases, one meaning 'all day' and one meaning 'all night'. These are not idiomatic: they can mean what they say on the surface – indeed, ἀφ' ἑσπέρας ἕως πρωῒ, is intended very precisely in Exodus 27. Second, these are as much Septuagintalisms as Semitisms, and so cannot be seen as evidence of an original Semitic composition: in Acts, for example, Paul preaches ἀπὸ πρωῒ ἕως ἑσπέρας (Acts 28.23); Philo incorporates the phrase from Exodus 27.21 with a slight difference (... ἕως πρωῒας; *Spec. Leg.* 1.296). *I Clement* – a clearly Greek composition – uses Exodus 18's phrase ἀπὸ πρωῒθεν ἕως ἑσπέρας in a quite different context (*I Clem.* 39.5). Third, this sort of expression is perfectly imaginable in Greek not influenced by the Bible. Diodorus Siculus (*Hist.* 10.5.1), for example, describes the Pythagoreans as daily training their memories by recalling everything they had done the previous day, beginning with the morning and finishing with the evening (τὴν ἀρχὴν ἀπὸ τῆς πρωῒας, τὴν δὲ τελευτὴν ἕως ἑσπέρας ποιοῦμενοι). As in the case of *GTh* 33.3, we cannot conclude that a particular saying goes back to a Semitic original because it contains a phrase similar to something in the Bible.

<sup>117</sup> χι ... ἄχνηα is more usually a translation not of ἀρπάζειν but of βιάζεσθαι. In Matt. 11.12, however, the two verbs βιάζεσθαι and ἀρπάζειν are used to describe what the famous "violent men" are doing to the kingdom of heaven. Moore's study of the two verbs shows that they have very similar meanings, and that in Josephus each is commonly used to reinforce the other. See G.E. Moore, 'ΒΙΑΖΩ, ΑΡΠΑΖΩ and Cognates in Josephus', *NTS* 21 (1975), 519–43.

**Saying 39.1**

*GTh* 39 contains a woe on those who both refuse to enter, and prevent others from entering the kingdom (cf. Matt. 23.13; Luke 11.52). An incongruity, however, apparently arises from the fact that Luke's indictment is of their 'taking away' (ἀῖρειν) the key of knowledge, and *Thomas's* is of their merely 'receiving'/'taking' (χι) it. These two verbs have been considered by various scholars to have arisen divergently from a Western Aramaic (Guillaumont: *qbl*; Quispel: *šql*) original or to be linked specifically by Syriac *nsb* (Perrin).<sup>118</sup> However, it must be questioned whether the difference between Luke's Greek and *Thomas's* Coptic is sufficient to warrant appeal to a hypothetical *tertium*. Certainly, Greek ἀῖρω is usually translated with Coptic ϣ, whereas χι more usually translates λαμβάνω. The verbs ϣ and χι, however, frequently appear as variants for each other.<sup>119</sup> This is hardly surprising, given that the two Coptic verbs have overlapping semantic fields. Furthermore, the two references here in Luke and *Thomas* to the 'taking (away)' of the key of knowledge are clearly identical in meaning, and acceptable as they stand.

**Saying 40.1**

'A vine has been planted outside of *the Father* (παιωτ), but it is not established. It will be pulled up from its root and will perish.' This is in many ways close to the Matthean saying where Jesus talks of the uprooting of every plant not planted by 'my heavenly *Father*' (ὁ πατήρ μου ὁ οὐράνιος). Quispel proposed this as a good example of evidence for an Aramaic original: since Aramaic 'b' can mean 'father' or 'my father', this Aramaic has probably given rise to *Thomas's* 'the Father' and Matthew's 'my Father'.<sup>120</sup> This has been taken up by DeConick and Perrin, who have – as in the previous saying – discussed whether it is best attributable to a Western Aramaic or a Syriac *Vorlage*.<sup>121</sup>

Here again, however, this process only works if one supposes a literal translation. Whatever has happened in the transmission from the earliest form of the saying to its incorporations into Matthew and *Thomas*,

<sup>118</sup> Quispel, 'The Gospel of Thomas and the New Testament', 202; Guillaumont, 'Les sémitismes dans l'Évangile selon Thomas', 199; DeConick, *Original Gospel of Thomas in Translation*, 157, appears to allow either of Guillaumont's or Quispel's proposals; Perrin, 'Aramaic Origins of the *Gospel of Thomas*', 56–7.

<sup>119</sup> For examples, see Crum 620a–b, 748a.

<sup>120</sup> Quispel, 'L'Évangile selon Thomas et les Clémentines', 188–9.

<sup>121</sup> DeConick, *Original Gospel of Thomas in Translation*, 161, on Aramaic; Perrin, 'Aramaic Origins of the *Gospel of Thomas*', 53–4 gives either as a possibility. See also M. Wilcox, 'Semitisms in the New Testament', *ANRW* 2.25.2 (1984), 978–1029 (996–8), on the (Mishnaic) Hebrew evidence as well.

however, the process cannot be said to have been a matter merely of two literal but divergent translations. (This echoes the point made in reference to the Wellhausen hypothesis mentioned in Chapter 2.) The sayings in Matthew and *Thomas* are too different in form. Furthermore, Matthew's reference to a 'heavenly Father' really necessitates a possessive pronoun in connection with the 'heavenly' epithet. There is a great number of references to a 'heavenly Father' in early Christian writings (20x in Matthew; 1x in Mark; 1x in the *Didache*), but all of these have a possessive pronoun ('your/my/our Father in heaven'). By contrast, references to 'the Father' in the Gospels (as we have in *Thomas*) are never modified with a heavenly adjective. So this other factor affects Matthew's inclusion and *Thomas*'s exclusion of the possessive pronoun.

### Saying 42

Quispel, Baarda and others have suggested a Semitic original for *Thomas*'s shortest, but perhaps most enigmatic saying, 'Be passers-by!' (ⲱⲡⲛⲉ ⲉⲧⲉⲧⲏⲣⲓⲡⲁⲣⲁⲒⲉ). Quispel takes the 'passer-by' to go back to the Hebrew 'ober, that is, an itinerant teacher.<sup>122</sup> Baarda rightly questions whether 'ober had this technical sense, however, and instead wonders about a possible meaning, 'Be Hebrews ('bryyn)'; he suggests this merely as a speculation, however.<sup>123</sup> If one retains the meaning 'pass by', it is by no means impossible that this saying could have a Semitic original – one could retrovert the saying into any language at all. The problem, however, is that such retroversions do not solve any of the problems with the verse. Suggesting a retroversion still means that one has to supply what it is that is to be by-passed.<sup>124</sup> None of these Semitic proposals, then, can be read as carrying much weight.<sup>125</sup>

<sup>122</sup> G. Quispel, *Makarius, das Thomasevangelium und das Lied von der Perle* (NovTSuppS; Leiden: Brill, 1967), 20–2. DeConick, *Original Gospel of Thomas in Translation*, 164, also says 'Hebrew'.

<sup>123</sup> See T. Baarda, 'Jesus Said: Be Passers-By: On the Meaning and Origin of logion 42 of the Gospel of Thomas', in Baarda, *Early Transmission of the Words of Jesus: Thomas, Tatian and the Text of the New Testament* (Amsterdam: Free University Press, 1983), 179–205 (194), on the lack of evidence for Quispel's claim. Baarda imagines that it is possible that, in combination with *GTh* 43, the claim of *GTh* 42 is that the Thomas community identifies itself as constituted by true "Hebrews", in contrast to the negatively valued "Jews" of the following saying.

<sup>124</sup> Hence DeConick, *Original Gospel of Thomas in Translation*, 164, associates it with Ps. 119 and passing away from looking at vanities, taking the reference in Thomas to be passing by 'the teachings of the Pharisees and other teachers', though in a later redaction of the Gospel she considers it may have taken on a different cast.

<sup>125</sup> Guillaumont, 'Les sémitismes dans l'Évangile selon Thomas', 192, admits that syntactically it might reflect as much Coptic as Aramaic syntax.

**Saying 43.3**

On saying 43, a criticism of the Jews who ‘love the tree and hate its fruit, *and* love the fruit and hate the tree’, the claim is made that the ‘*and*’ (αὐτὸ) in the middle is a mistranslation of Aramaic *w-*: it should rather have been translated ‘or’.<sup>126</sup> The same point is made about a similar case in saying 78. One faces the problem here again, however (as we noted above on saying 3.3), that conjunctions such as καί are often the least predictably translated. Indeed, as we will see below, there are three cases in our Coptic text where the loan words are not the same as in the Greek fragments: one of the three is καί, another is ἢ – the two words specifically at issue here.

**Saying 44.3**

The reference to being forgiven ‘neither on earth nor in heaven’ has led some to see the ‘in heaven’ as a Semitism meaning ‘by God’.<sup>127</sup> This is a trivial example, however. Probably every language in existence has employed something like the phrase ‘in heaven’. There is no need, either, for it to mean ‘by God’ – indeed, when paired with ‘earth’, it is unlikely to refer *directly* to God.

**Saying 45.3**

In *Thomas*’s version of Jesus’ saying about good and bad trees, good and bad hearts, and good and bad fruit (cf. Matt. 12.35, Luke 6.45), Quispel and others have identified the phrase ‘from his evil treasury *which is in his heart*’ as a ‘striking Semitism’. What is meant by this is that *Thomas*’s ‘which is in his heart’ (ⲉⲣⲁⲛⲏ ⲛⲉⲢⲉⲛⲏⲣ) parallels the phrase *dblbh* which appears in some of the Syriac versions of Matthew 12.35 (the Sinaitic and Curetonian) and Luke 6.45 (the Sinaitic and Peshitta).<sup>128</sup>

In the first place, it is hard to assess the significance of this. Presumably, the scholars in question here are not saying that this is a survival of a pre-Matthean/pre-Lukan Aramaic form which – bypassing the Greek versions of Matthew and Luke – has made it into the Syriac translations

<sup>126</sup> Guillaumont, ‘Les sémitismes dans l’Évangile selon Thomas’, 193; also DeConick, *Original Gospel of Thomas in Translation*, 165.

<sup>127</sup> G. Quispel, ‘The Latin Tatian or the Gospel of Thomas in Limburg’, *JBL* 88 (1969), 321–30 (328–9); DeConick, *Original Gospel of Thomas in Translation*, 166.

<sup>128</sup> Quispel, ‘Some Remarks on the Gospel of Thomas’, 286; similarly, Guillaumont, ‘Les sémitismes dans l’Évangile selon Thomas’, 197: ‘l’expression de caractère très sémitique’; DeConick, *Original Gospel of Thomas in Translation*, 169.

of the NT in the early third century. On the other hand, equally difficult to accept is Guillaumont's view that this phraseology in *Thomas* actually has its source in the Syriac versions of the NT:<sup>129</sup> this would mean on the one hand an unusually late date for *Thomas* and/or an unusually early date for the Syriac Gospels.

Second, it must also be questioned whether the phrase 'which is in his heart' really has as Semitic a colouring as has been claimed by the scholars noted. The phrase in question is a very simple and straightforward one, which can be imagined as occurring in any language. Indeed, Wilson has countered the suggestion by noting that it is equally idiomatic Coptic.<sup>130</sup>

Third, references to the 'heart' come fairly indiscriminately in Matthew's, Luke's and *Thomas*'s versions of the saying: Luke 6.45 has 'treasury of the heart' where Matthew 12.35 just has 'treasury', though they both have, as does *Thomas*, reference to the 'abundance of the heart'. *Thomas*'s distinctive relative clause, 'treasury which is in his heart', is really not so remarkable given that Luke has 'treasury of the heart' – the difference is very minor indeed.<sup>131</sup> Perhaps the most that could be argued is that this is potential evidence for the formulation of *Thomas*'s version (again, assuming an absolutely literal translation) in a Syrian milieu.

### Saying 47.2

The saying about the impossibility of serving two masters is considerably shorter in *Thomas* than in the Synoptics (see Table 3.1).

According to Quispel, both *Thomas* and Q independently translate this saying from Aramaic.<sup>132</sup> From the verb 'hb and śn', *Thomas* produces ḫ-ⲧⲏⲙⲁ (presumably via ⲧⲏⲙⲁⲛ) and ḫ-ⲉⲅⲃⲣⲓⲗⲉ (presumably via ḫⲃⲣⲓⲗⲉⲓⲛ); the Synoptics (or Q) produce a double translation with ἄγαπᾶν/ἀντέχειν and μισεῖν/καταφρονεῖν. Quispel's theory is not particularly convincing, however. One might naturally connect 'hb and śn' with ἄγαπᾶν and μισεῖν, but other Aramaic pairings would suggest themselves more readily as sources for ἀντέχειν and καταφρονεῖν, or for ḫ-ⲧⲏⲙⲁ and ḫ-ⲉⲅⲃⲣⲓⲗⲉ. *Thomas*'s version could also easily be an

<sup>129</sup> Guillaumont, 'Les sémitismes dans l'Évangile selon Thomas', 197.

<sup>130</sup> R.McL. Wilson, *Studies in the Gospel of Thomas* (London: Mowbray, 1960), 120.

<sup>131</sup> Additionally, references to the 'heart' can be seen to be introduced in Coptic translations. The translator of the *Sentences of Sextus*, for example, three times renders νόμιζε as χοος εἴ πεκρητ (*Sent. Sext.* 315, 324); εἴ πεκρητ is also employed in translating κρῖνης in 329, ἡγοῦ in 375, and ἀνάφερε in 390.

<sup>132</sup> Quispel, 'Some Remarks on the Gospel of Thomas', 279.

Table 3.1

Matthew 6.24/Luke 16.13	<i>GTh</i> 47.2
οὐδεὶς (Luke + οἰκέτης) δύναται δυσὶ κυρίοις δουλεύειν· ἢ γὰρ τὸν ἓνα μισήσει καὶ τὸν ἕτερον ἀγαπήσει, ἢ ἐνὸς ἀνθέξεται καὶ τοῦ ἐτέρου καταφρονήσει.	אגו מנן סוסי נןטע אגמזאל אמאע זאויס סנאג  ה קנארטימא מןפוגא אגו פקעווגא קנארזגברזע מןמוק

abbreviation of the Synoptics' version: the *h* in *GTh* 47.2 might well suggest that the common 'either (ἢ) ... or (ἢ) ...' has been abbreviated, leaving the less common use of ἢ as 'or else', 'otherwise':<sup>133</sup> the converse (an expansion), however, is also theoretically possible, but a "double translation" would certainly not be necessary to explain this.

### Saying 48

In Matthew's and *Thomas's* sayings, 'If two agree/make peace ...', a Western Aramaic *Vorlage* with the verb *šlm* or a Syriac with *šw'* is assumed to be necessary to explain the discrepancy between *Thomas's* peacemaking (ῑ-εἰρηνη) and Matthew's agreeing (συμφωνήσωσιν) in Matthew 18.19.<sup>134</sup> Again, however, the difficulty is an assumption of a literal translation process all the way along, when this is far from apparent in the two very different forms of the saying (or really, two different sayings) in Matthew and *Thomas*: compare *Thomas's* 'If two make peace with each other in a single house, they can say to the mountain, "Move" and it will move', with Matthew's 'If two of you agree on the earth on any matter about which you ask, it will come to them from my Father in heaven.' If the differences elsewhere in the sayings are so substantial, one should not assume that the references specifically to agreement and peace-making are the products of literal but divergent translation.

<sup>133</sup> This view is taken by H.W. Bartsch, 'Das Thomas-Evangelium und die synoptischen Evangelien: zu G. Quispels Bemerkungen zum Thomas-Evangelium', *NTS* 6 (1960), 249–61 (252) and W.A. Beardslee, 'Proverbs in the Gospel of Thomas', in D.E. Aune, ed. *Studies in New Testament and Early Christian Literature: Essays in Honor of Allen P. Wikgren* (Leiden: Brill, 1972), 92–103 (99).

<sup>134</sup> DeConick argues that the *Vorlage* must be Western Aramaic, not Syriac; Perrin argues it could be either. DeConick, *Original Gospel of Thomas in Translation*, 177; Perrin, 'Aramaic Origins of the *Gospel of Thomas*', 55.



**Saying 49**

On ΜΟΝΑΧΟΣ, see on 16.4 above.<sup>135</sup>

**Saying 52.2**

Saying 52 is the first example in a list supplied by Guillaumont of perfect tenses with a present meaning: these, he suggests, are Hebraisms.<sup>136</sup> In this saying, the disciples have made what sounds like a reverential statement about the prophets foretelling Jesus' coming. They receive the following reply, however: 'You *have omitted* (ἀτετῆκω) the one living in your presence and *have spoken* (ἀτετῆωαλε) only of the dead.' A perfect tense (the Coptic First Perfect) is not so unusual here, however: this tense can either have a preterite meaning (not appropriate here), but equally can have a sense similar to the perfect tense in English, that is, 'present-based description of the past'.<sup>137</sup> Furthermore, Böhlig makes the simple observation that Jesus is responding to what the disciples *have* said in *GTh* 52.1.<sup>138</sup> It is an exaggeration to say that the Coptic does not make good sense here as it stands.

**Saying 53.3**

This is another example where Guillaumont proposes a *Vorlage* of a Hebrew perfect tense with present meaning.<sup>139</sup> After rejecting physical circumcision, Jesus says that 'the true circumcision in spirit *has become completely profitable* (αφσῆ ζηγ τηρη)'. Although put like this, the phrase sounds as odd in English as it presumably did in French to Guillaumont, it is certainly not strange if one supposes a Semitic *Vorlage*. It is also quite acceptable Greek, however. Indeed, in the closest parallel to saying 53 in the New Testament, one finds a similar perfect tense with present meaning: περιτομή μὲν γὰρ ὠφελεῖ ἐὰν νόμον πράσσης· ἐὰν δὲ παραβάτης νόμου ᾖς, ἡ περιτομή σου ἀκροβυστία γέγονεν (Rom. 2.25).<sup>140</sup> There are two main verbs in this verse: the first is present

<sup>135</sup> Guillaumont, 'Les sémitismes dans l'Évangile selon Thomas', 202–3; DeConick, *Original Gospel of Thomas in Translation*, 15, 179.

<sup>136</sup> Guillaumont, 'Les sémitismes dans l'Évangile selon Thomas', 193: 'Ainsi de nombreux parfaits sont à entendre comme des parfaits hébreux à sens présent.'

<sup>137</sup> B. Layton, *A Coptic Grammar*, 2nd rev. edn (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2004), §334.

<sup>138</sup> Böhlig, 'Das Problem aramäischer Elemente', 442.

<sup>139</sup> Guillaumont, 'Les sémitismes dans l'Évangile selon Thomas', 193.

<sup>140</sup> On the similarities between *GTh* 53 and Rom. 2.25–3.2, see Chapter 10 below, and S.J. Gathercole, 'The Influence of Paul on the Gospel of Thomas (§§ 53. 3 and

(ὠφελεῖ) and the second is perfect (γέγονεν), even though there is no distinction of time intended. Again, then, appeal to a Semitic original of a perfect tense with present meaning is unnecessary.

### Saying 55.1–2

In the Synoptic Gospels, the saying referring to the need for the disciple to hate his mother and father only has one instance of the possessive pronoun (Luke 14.26: τὸν πατέρα ἑαυτοῦ καὶ τὴν μητέρα καὶ τὴν γυναῖκα καὶ τὰ τέκνα κτλ., cf. Matt. 10.37). On the other hand, in *Thomas*, the possessive marker occurs with each noun: ‘Whoever does not hate *his father and his mother* (πεφειωτ ... μὴ τεφμααχ) ... And whoever does not hate *his brothers and his sisters* (νεφσνηγ μὴ νεφσωνε) ...’. This is taken by a number of scholars to be indicative of Aramaic or Syriac influence.<sup>141</sup> Similarly, in Jesus’ stipulation of this abandonment of family as a requirement for ‘being disciples to me’ (ῥ-μαθητης ... ναει; cf. Luke’s μου μαθητής), this ‘to me’ is taken to be an oddity, albeit one explicable from an Aramaic standpoint.

Kuhn, however, very early on replied that, both in the cases of possessive markers, and in the language of ‘disciples to me’, *Thomas*’s phraseology exactly parallels Luke 14.26–7 in the Sahidic New Testament!<sup>142</sup> This, then, is a poor example of something requiring a Semitic *Vorlage*. Additionally, as Guillaumont himself has noted, a parallel to *Thomas*’s reference to becoming disciples ‘to me’ (ναει) appears in Greek in John 13.35 and 15.8.<sup>143</sup> μαθητης ναει is perhaps a good way of expressing μαθητής μου, because the normal way of expressing possession in Coptic requires the introduction of a definite article (in this case, it would be παμαθητης), which increases the level of definiteness (μαθητης ναει is only relatively definite).<sup>144</sup>

17)’, in J. Frey, J. Schröter and E.E. Popkes, eds. *Das Thomasevangelium: Entstehung – Rezeption – Theologie* (BZNW 157; Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2008), 72–94 (esp. 75–9).

<sup>141</sup> See e.g. Quispel, ‘Some Remarks on the Gospel of Thomas’, 287; DeConick, *Original Gospel of Thomas in Translation*, 189.

<sup>142</sup> K.H. Kuhn, ‘Some Observations on the Coptic Gospel According to Thomas’, *Muséon* 73 (1960), 317–23 (322). Guillaumont comments that *Thomas*’s Coptic is acceptable here (‘Les sémitismes dans l’Évangile selon Thomas’, 192).

<sup>143</sup> Guillaumont, ‘Les sémitismes dans l’Évangile selon Thomas’, 191: ἐν τούτῳ γίνονται πάντες ὅτι ἐμοὶ μαθηταὶ ἐστε ... (John 13.35); cf. 15.8: ... καὶ γένησθε ἐμοὶ μαθηταί.

<sup>144</sup> Guillaumont comments further that the negation carrying over from 55.1 to 55.2 is a familiar feature of Hebrew syntax, but also notes that this appears in the Synoptic parallels

### Saying 56

In this logion, with its strange reference to the positively valued action of ‘finding the corpse’ (cf. *GTh* 80: ‘finding the body’), Guillaumont proposes a reasonable Aramaic *Vorlage* in which the verb *mš*’ means not what it does in Hebrew (i.e. ‘find’) but what it means in Aramaic (or Syriac), viz. ‘master’, ‘dominate’. A reference to ‘mastering the corpse/body’ makes much better sense, he notes.<sup>145</sup> Again, however, we need to be cautious.

In the first place, on a minor note, Guillaumont’s reservation is that ‘l’expression “trouver le corps” est étrange dans un contexte gnostique’.<sup>146</sup> This assumption of a Gnostic *Thomas* – set out in his opening sentence – is obviously not one shared by a large number of interpreters, indeed, neither by myself nor – as far as I know – by any of those who consider *Thomas* to have been composed in (at least Western) Aramaic. Moreover, there is the difficulty noted in Chapter 2 of identifying “mistranslations” or language which is ‘étrange’: especially in the case of *Thomas*, we need to be very careful before dismissing what is strange or foreign.

Second, on the Syriac side, one might query whether *mš*’ on its own commonly means ‘master’ or ‘dominate’ in Syriac. Payne Smith’s *Thesaurus* suggests that this sense is equivalent to *mš*’ in composition with *hyl*’, or at least with prepositions *b-* or *l*’.<sup>147</sup>

Third, the ‘finding’ (ϩε ε-) comes in parallel in both *GTh* 56 and 80 with ‘knowing’ (ϩοογν), and ‘knowing’ works well in parallel with ‘finding’ as it stands. Indeed, since the phrase ‘knowing the world’ is not transparent, one might expect a parallel phrase which similarly requires glossing (cf. ‘knowing *the truth about* the world’ and ‘discovering *the body/world to be* a corpse’). As such, one should not necessarily look for a solution which removes the ellipsis from one part of the saying.

Finally, this use of ‘finding’ may also be a Septuagintalism. It has been widely noted that, in fact, the meaning of the verb *mš*’ in Hebrew is not limited to ‘finding’, but can also have senses which are more regularly associated with the Aramaic verb, namely ‘reaching’, ‘overtaking’, ‘mastering’, and so on.<sup>148</sup> These instances of *mš*’ are still regularly translated

to 55.2 (e.g. Luke 14.27) in both Greek and Coptic (‘Les sémitismes dans l’Évangile selon Thomas’, 193).

<sup>145</sup> Guillaumont, ‘Les sémitismes dans l’Évangile selon Thomas’, 194.

<sup>146</sup> Guillaumont, ‘Sémitismes dans les logia’, 116.

<sup>147</sup> Payne Smith, *Thesaurus Syriacus*, 2190–2; ditto J. Payne Smith, *Compendious Syriac Dictionary*, 296.

<sup>148</sup> See e.g. A.R. Ceresco, ‘The Function of *Antanacclasis* (*mš*’ “to find” // *mš*’ “to reach, overtake, grasp”) in Hebrew Poetry, Especially in the Book of Qoheleth’, *CBQ* 44 (1982), 551–69.

with εὐρίσκω in the Greek versions even when the meaning is clearly ‘mastering’ or ‘understanding’. Most interestingly for our purposes, Ceresco has noted several instances in Job, Proverbs and Ecclesiastes in which *mš* /εὐρίσκω are paired with verbs of knowing or understanding.<sup>149</sup> At the very least, this reinforces the point above that a verb of ‘finding’ is unremarkable when paired with a verb of knowing, but the evidence may also indicate that εὐρίσκω in the Septuagint can have this sense of mastering, grasping or understanding. Given this, it may be that εὐρίσκω underlies the Coptic and already made good sense, but this – like the other proposed retroversions – is also speculative.

### Saying 56.1

In connection with another point on this saying, Guillaumont clearly forces the Aramaic background too far again when he appeals to a Semitic origin (Aramaic *pgr*’ meaning either ‘body’ or ‘corpse’) to explain the divergent πτώμα (in *GTh* 56) and σώμα (in *GTh* 80).<sup>150</sup> This is surely a case, however, where an inner-Greek or inner-Coptic variation is very natural. In the first case, there may be already a tradition of a punning relation between the two Greek words, as attested in one of Aesop’s proverbs: ‘The body thinks, the corpse thinks not’ (τὸ νοοῦν σῶμα, τὸ μὴ νοοῦν πτώμα).<sup>151</sup> In addition to their assonance, the semantic fields of the two words overlap considerably, and as such in the Synoptic Gospels they can be used interchangeably in the case of the saying, ‘Where the corpse/body is, there the vultures/eagles will gather’ (Matt. 24.28/Luke 17.37): Matthew has πτώμα, Luke σώμα. Or again, in the account of the burial of Jesus, his body is referred to usually as a σῶμα (Mark 15.43; Matt. 27.58, 59; Luke 23.52, 55; 24.3, 23; John 19.38, 40; 20.12), but also as a πτώμα in Mark 15.45, only two verses after Mark’s use of the other word. πτώματα are simply a subset of σώματα.

Kuhn notes that the similarity in Coptic is even stronger, where one has the addition of the definite article to σώμα (→ πσώμα). In this case, it looks and sounds even more like πτώμα.<sup>152</sup> Moreover, one should bear

<sup>149</sup> Ceresco, ‘The Function of *Antanaclasses*’, 560–7.

<sup>150</sup> Guillaumont, ‘Sémitismes dans les logia’, 117; Guillaumont, ‘Les sémitismes dans l’Évangile selon Thomas’, 194.

<sup>151</sup> See B.E. Perry, *Aesopica* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1952), 281 (Proverb 106). Its date is uncertain, however.

<sup>152</sup> It may be that πτώμα is treated as if its initial π doubles as the definite article (cf. e.g. ολλασσα): compare αφε εγτώμα (indefinite) in 56.1, with πενταρρεε απτώμα (definite) in 56.2, and the latter phrase with αφε επσώμα in *GTh* 80.1 and πενταρρε δε επσώμα in 80.2.

in mind Plumley's observation that the (Sahidic) Coptic translators of the NT sometimes "translate" an uncommon Greek word with another, more common, Greek word, and he gives as one example the replacement of πτωμα with σωμα.<sup>153</sup> Guillaumont's conclusion that 'l'alternance de πτωμα en *Matthieu* 24, 28 et de σωμα en *Luc* 17, 37 ne peut s'expliquer que par un substrat araméen' and that one should thus prefer a similar explanation in the case of *Thomas*, is clearly put far too strongly.<sup>154</sup>

### Saying 56.2

In the reference to the fact that 'the world is not worthy of' the person who has found the corpse, some have seen a Semitic idiom.<sup>155</sup> The phrase is common, however, not only in works of Semitic origin, but is – like 'tasting death' – also common in Greek works: to take three early examples, the phrase is used not only in the *Mekhilta de-Rabbi Ishmael*, but also by Philo and the Epistle to the Hebrews. (On this connection between *Thomas* and Hebrews, see Chapter 11 below.)

### Saying 60.1

This saying, introduced with a reference to a Samaritan carrying a lamb, has a number of peculiarities, not least the nonsensical Coptic at the beginning (αγσαμαρειτης εφι νηογριβ). This is usually resolved by emendation: Layton, for example, reads <αγναγ> αγσαμαρειτης, offering the double possibility of omission of the initial verb either by homoioarcton or homoioteleuton;<sup>156</sup> others, such as the Berliner Arbeitskreis text in Aland's new *Synopsis*, have <αφναγ> αγσαμαρειτης.<sup>157</sup> Nagel and DeConick, on the other hand, suggest recourse to an Aramaic original. Nagel comments that the α- prefix (αγσαμαρειτης = α- + ογσαμαρειτης) means that the Samaritan can only be the subject of the verb, not the

<sup>153</sup> Plumley, 'Limitations of Coptic (Sahidic) in Representing Greek', 147.

<sup>154</sup> On 'worthy of you', Guillaumont suggests it means 'equal to you', going back to the Aramaic where *šwh* means both 'equal to' and 'worthy of' (Guillaumont, 'Les sémitismes dans l'Évangile selon Thomas', 193–4). This seems unnecessary, however. In any case, Böhlig comments, with reference to Bauer's *Lexicon*, that ἄξιος can also mean 'equal' (Böhlig, 'Das Problem aramäischer Elemente', 444).

<sup>155</sup> DeConick, *Original Gospel of Thomas in Translation*, 192, referring to an unpublished observation from M. Meyer.

<sup>156</sup> B. Layton, ed. and T. O. Lambdin, tr. 'The Gospel according to Thomas', in Layton, ed. *Nag Hammadi Codex II, 2–7, together with XIII, 2\**, *Brit. Lib. Or. 4926(1)*, and *P. Oxy. I, 654, 655*, vol. I (NHS 20; Leiden: Brill, 1989), 52–83 (74).

<sup>157</sup> K. Aland, ed. *Synopsis Quattuor Evangeliorum* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1996), 534.

object, and so the emendations must be wrong.<sup>158</sup> As such, the  $\lambda$ - +  $\epsilon\eta\kappa\iota$  is the Coptic translator's attempt to capture an Aramaic sentence with a noun as the subject and a participle as the predicate.<sup>159</sup>

Nagel's insistence that 'das Praefix  $\lambda$ - kann nur dem Subjekt, nicht einem Objekt vorangehen' is not correct. It could be a verbal (I Perfect) prefix  $\lambda$ -, but it could equally be a variant form of the preposition  $\epsilon$ -. *Thomas*, and Codex II as a whole, is full of examples where the regular Sahidic  $\epsilon$ - is replaced with  $\lambda$ -: there are ten other examples in *Thomas*.<sup>160</sup> Layton includes this non-standard feature in his catalogue of "Subachmimicisms": 'The A<sup>2</sup> preposition  $\lambda$ - 'to' occurs frequently, alternating with its standard Sahidic equivalent  $\epsilon$ -. The form  $\lambda$ - is open to confusion for a speaker of standard Sahidic, who will expect a I perfect conjugation.'<sup>161</sup> Interestingly, this is the same expectation which Nagel expressed. The fact that this Lycopolitan feature is so common in *Thomas*, however, reduces the need for appeal to a Semitic original. The text is still not without difficulty, but the conventional solution proposed by most editors is at least satisfactory and no more speculative than that of Nagel.

### Saying 60.2

A second oddity of this saying is the statement that the Samaritan 'is around the lamb' ( $\tau\eta\ \bar{\eta}\kappa\omega\tau\epsilon\ \bar{\eta}\pi\epsilon\zeta\iota\epsilon\upsilon\beta$ ). Two different proposals have been made here for an Aramaic background. First, Nagel has suggested that the Samaritan is 'upon' the lamb, in the same hostile sense that the Philistines were 'upon' Samson (Judg. 16.9, 12, 14, 20): Nagel adduces Sirach 46.5 as a close parallel where 'being around'/'surrounding' has a threatening sense. It is the context in Sirach 46.5, however, which establishes this: it is only because the enemies are *plural* that they can surround the afflicted one. It is much more awkward to envisage the singular Samaritan to be encompassing the lamb like a band of enemies.

<sup>158</sup> Nagel, 'Erwägungen zum Thomas-Evangelium', 379.

<sup>159</sup> Nagel, 'Erwägungen zum Thomas-Evangelium', 379; cf. DeConick, *Original Gospel of Thomas in Translation*, 198.

<sup>160</sup> For examples in *Thomas*:  $\epsilon\pi\omega\mu\epsilon\ \tau\bar{\eta}\tau\omega\bar{\eta}\nu\ \lambda\gamma\omega\upsilon\omega\zeta\epsilon\ \bar{\rho}\bar{\eta}\bar{\eta}\bar{\zeta}\bar{\eta}\bar{\eta}\tau$  (8.1);  $\bar{\eta}\zeta\epsilon\bar{\alpha}\bar{\iota}\ \bar{\eta}\zeta\bar{\eta}\tau\omega\upsilon\ \lambda\zeta\epsilon\ \lambda\gamma\eta\sigma\bar{\eta}\ \bar{\eta}\tau\bar{\upsilon}\bar{\tau}$  (8.2);  $\epsilon\sigma\tau\bar{\eta}\tau\omega\bar{\eta}\nu\ \lambda\gamma\upsilon\lambda\upsilon\bar{\iota}\epsilon\ \bar{\eta}\omega\lambda\tau\bar{\alpha}\bar{\eta}\nu$  (20.2);  $\epsilon\upsilon\epsilon\bar{\iota}\bar{\eta}\bar{\eta}\ \bar{\eta}\zeta\bar{\eta}\omega\bar{\eta}\bar{\eta}\epsilon\ \omega\bar{\eta}\bar{\eta}\ \epsilon\upsilon\zeta\epsilon\bar{\iota}\bar{\eta}\tau\ \lambda\gamma\omega\omega\zeta\epsilon\ \epsilon\tau\omega\upsilon\ \lambda\bar{\eta}\ \tau\epsilon$  (21.2);  $\tau\bar{\eta}\bar{\eta}\tau\epsilon\bar{\rho}\omega\ \bar{\eta}\pi\epsilon\bar{\iota}\omega\tau\ \epsilon\sigma\tau\bar{\eta}\tau\omega\bar{\eta}\nu\ \lambda\gamma\omega\mu\epsilon$  (57.1);  $\tau\bar{\eta}\bar{\eta}\tau\epsilon\bar{\rho}\omega\ \bar{\eta}\pi\epsilon\bar{\iota}\omega\tau\ \epsilon\sigma\tau\bar{\eta}\tau\omega\bar{\eta}\nu\ \lambda\gamma\omega\mu\epsilon\ \bar{\eta}\epsilon\omega\omega\tau\ \epsilon\upsilon\bar{\eta}\tau\alpha\zeta\ \bar{\eta}\bar{\eta}\lambda\gamma\ \bar{\eta}\omega\upsilon\phi\omega\bar{\rho}\tau\bar{\eta}\tau\bar{\eta}\nu\ \epsilon\lambda\zeta\epsilon\ \lambda\gamma\bar{\eta}\bar{\alpha}\bar{\rho}\gamma\bar{\alpha}\bar{\rho}\tau\bar{\eta}\tau\bar{\eta}\nu$  (76.1 bis);  $\lambda\gamma\omega\ \tau\epsilon\tau\bar{\eta}\bar{\alpha}\zeta\epsilon\ \lambda\gamma\bar{\alpha}\bar{\eta}\bar{\lambda}\bar{\rho}\bar{\alpha}\bar{\gamma}\bar{\alpha}\bar{\zeta}\bar{\iota}\ \bar{\eta}\bar{\eta}\tau\bar{\eta}$  (90.2);  $\tau\bar{\eta}\bar{\eta}\tau\epsilon\bar{\rho}\omega\ \bar{\eta}\pi\epsilon\bar{\rho}\bar{\iota}\omega\tau\ \epsilon\bar{\iota}\sigma\tau\bar{\eta}\tau\omega\bar{\eta}\nu\ \lambda\gamma\omega\mu\epsilon$  (97.1);  $\lambda\gamma\omega\zeta\epsilon\bar{\upsilon}\ \bar{\iota}\bar{\zeta}\ \lambda\gamma\bar{\eta}\omega\upsilon\bar{\upsilon}\bar{\upsilon}$  (100.1).

<sup>161</sup> Layton, 'Introduction', in Layton, ed. *Nag Hammadi Codex II, 2–7*, vol. I, 11.

DeConick, on the other hand, sees the ‘around’ as going back to the ambiguous Syriac *krk*, which can mean ‘be around’/‘surround’, but also – sensibly for the context here – ‘bind’.<sup>162</sup> However, one might equally envisage something like the Greek verb περιέχω, which could refer to the man ‘being around’ the lamb, but also the man ‘holding on to’ or ‘clinging to’ the lamb as he was walking along to Judaea. Or again, a Greek *Vorlage* of περιάγω could have its principal sense of ‘lead around’ but also mean ‘go around’ (used transitively in e.g. Matt. 9.35). Again, this is not to suggest that one or other of these Greek verbs is the real source, but merely to highlight again the lack of controls available to detect a mistranslation. DeConick’s (though probably not Nagel’s) reconstruction remains a distant possibility, but no more.

### Saying 61.1

In the saying, ‘two will rest on a couch; one (πογα) will die, one (πογα) will live’, an objection has been raised to the pattern πογα ... πογα ...: according to various scholars, this is not a happy Coptic pattern (one would expect πογα ... πκεογα ...), and it is further objected that ὁ εἷς ... ὁ εἷς ... is not good Greek.<sup>163</sup> It does, on the other hand, correspond well to Aramaic (*hd ... whd ...*) or Hebrew (*ḥd ... wḥd ...*).<sup>164</sup> This is on the face of it not a bad hypothesis.

However, it is marred by the fact that it is not so unusual in Greek. Various scholars note at this point an example from the LXX,<sup>165</sup> and Origen can also use such syntax.<sup>166</sup> Additionally, without definite articles,

<sup>162</sup> DeConick, *Original Gospel of Thomas in Translation*, 198.

<sup>163</sup> Although Grobel, ‘How Gnostic is the Gospel of Thomas?’, *NTS* 8 (1962), 367–73 (370), merely says that it is ‘unknown to the Greek N.T.’, which is not a particularly relevant consideration. He also notes 1 Kgs 12.29 and τὴν μίαν... τὴν μίαν...

<sup>164</sup> Guillaumont, ‘Les sémitismes dans l’Évangile selon Thomas’, 192; DeConick, *Original Gospel of Thomas in Translation*, 200.

<sup>165</sup> καὶ ἔθετο τὴν μίαν ἐν Βασιθῆλ καὶ τὴν μίαν ἔδωκεν ἐν Δαν (1 Kgs 12.29), noted by e.g. Grobel, ‘How Gnostic is the Gospel of Thomas?’, 370.

<sup>166</sup> In Origen’s discussion of the two goats of Lev. 16.8, 10 (ἕνα τῶ κυρίῳ ... ἕνα τῶ ἀποπομπάῳ ...), he comments: κακεῖ γὰρ ὁ εἷς θύεται καὶ ὁ εἷς πέμπεται εἰς τὴν ἀποπομπὴν αὐτοῦ (*In Lev. Hom. VIII.10*: W.A. Baehrens, *Origenes Werke*. vol. VI, *Homilien zum Hexateuch in Rufins Übersetzung*, pt 1 *Die Homilien zu Genesis, Exodus und Leviticus* (GCS; Leipzig: Teubner, 1920), 409). In a second example in Origen, there is not even an obvious example of Hebrew influence. In his disagreement with Heracleon about John 4.37 (ἐν γὰρ τούτῳ ὁ λόγος ἐστὶν ἀληθινὸς ὅτι ἄλλος ἐστὶν ὁ σπεῖρων καὶ ἄλλος ὁ θερίζων) Origen responds that ‘he (*sc.* Heracleon) does not at all clearly prove that there are two Sons of Man, of whom one sows and one harvests (ὧν ὁ εἷς σπεῖρει καὶ ὁ εἷς θερίζει)’. See Origen, *Commentary on John*, ad Jn 4.37 (§49 (324): E. Preuschen, *Origenes Werke*, vol. 4, *Das Johannesevangelium* (GCS; Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1903), 276).

εἶς ... εἶς ... is found many times in the Greek NT.<sup>167</sup> Indeed, Guillaumont classes this as a possible Semitism, but which is also current in the Greek of the Gospels, and indeed Classical Greek, and in Coptic.<sup>168</sup>

Furthermore, the construction even appears in some texts of this cluster of ‘two ... one ... one ...’ sayings. Although the Lukan textual tradition consistently has (ὁ) εἶς... (ὁ) ἕτερος ... in Luke 17.34 (cf. 17.35), the Matthean manuscript tradition has variants which are very close to the pattern of the Coptic *GTh* 61. In the saying in Matthew 24.40 (in which the two are in a field), a number of manuscripts have ὁ εἶς παραλαμβάνεται καὶ ὁ εἶς ἀφίεται. Codex Washingtoniensis is the earliest of these.<sup>169</sup> Severianus, who is also roughly contemporaneous with our Coptic manuscript, cites the Lukan pair using definitive articles as our Coptic scribe does: ‘The Lord makes clear in his Gospel: “Two will be in a bed: one (ὁ εἶς) will be taken, and one (ὁ εἶς) will be left; and two will be grinding, one (ἡ μίᾱ) will be taken, and one (ἡ μίᾱ) will be left.”’<sup>170</sup> (This example from Severianus must be treated with caution, however, as it comes from a Catena.) In conclusion, then, *Thomas*’s πογα ... πογα ... is explicable in Greek terms, without the need for recourse to a Hebrew or Aramaic turn of phrase in the background.<sup>171</sup> Nor is it impossible Coptic.<sup>172</sup>

### Saying 61.2

Salome asks Jesus, ‘Who are you man, *that from one* (ζωε εβολ ρῆ ογα) you have come up on my couch?’ The Coptic phrase here has generally

<sup>167</sup> See e.g. Mark 10.37; 15.27; Matt. 20.21; 24.40–41; 27.38; Luke 18.10 D (which has εἶς ... εἶς ... where the great uncials have εἶς ... ἕτερος ...); John 20.12; Gal. 4.22.

<sup>168</sup> Guillaumont, ‘Les sémitismes dans l’Évangile selon Thomas’, 192 and 192 n. 2.

<sup>169</sup> See R. Swanson, *New Testament Manuscripts: Variant Readings Arranged in Horizontal Lines Against Codex Vaticanus: Matthew* (Sheffield Academic Press, 1995), 242.

<sup>170</sup> For the text, see K. Staab, *Pauluskommentar aus der griechischen Kirche aus Kettenhandschriften gesammelt* (NTA 15; Münster: Aschendorff, 1933), 330.

<sup>171</sup> Grobel, ‘How Gnostic is the Gospel of Thomas?’, 371, reads ‘taken’ as a Semitism, since it is, he says, a circumlocution for ‘die’. This is possible, but open to other interpretations: Bovon claims, for example, that it is an example of *Thomas*’s de-apocalypticising tendency. See F. Bovon, ‘Les sentences propres à Luc dans l’Évangile selon Thomas’, in L. Painchaud and P.-H. Poirier, eds. *Colloque internationale: L’Évangile selon Thomas et les textes de Nag Hammadi: Québec, 29–31 mai 2003* (Leuven: Peeters, 2007), 43–58 (50).

<sup>172</sup> DeConick, *Original Gospel of Thomas in Translation*, 200, and C.W. Hedrick, *Parables as Poetic Fictions: The Creative Voice of Jesus* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1994), 245, refer to the Sahidic translation of Luke 17.34 as not dissimilar from what appears in *GTh* 61: †χω μμος νητην χε ρη τειογρη ογснаγ ηαωρηπε ρη ογβλοσ πογωτ σενα.σιογα ησεκα.ογα.



been regarded as odd: indeed, it is marked as corrupt by Layton and left out of Lambdin's translation altogether.<sup>173</sup> As we saw in Chapter 2, however, this is an example of where there are equally ingenious proposals for both Aramaic and Greek *Vorlagen*. Some propose, through textual corruption at a Greek stage, Salome referring to Jesus 'as a stranger/guest' (ὥς ξένος → ὥς ἕξ ἑνός → ρωε εβολ ρῆ ογα),<sup>174</sup> others see a reference to Jesus coming onto Salome's couch 'suddenly' (*mn ḥd'*, *mḥd'* → εβολ ρῆ ογα).<sup>175</sup> There are a good many other proposed solutions, however. The *editio princeps* and DeConick see ρωε εβολ ρῆ ογα as a mistranslation from ὥς ἐκ τινός ('as from whom').<sup>176</sup> DeConick criticises the ὥς ξένος reconstruction on the grounds that 'the rendering does not make sense within the dialogue itself'.<sup>177</sup> Actually, it does work rather well: we would have Salome asking Jesus, 'Who are you, o man, that you have come up on my couch as a guest and eaten at my table?' Reclining on a couch and eating at table is exactly what a ξένος does. Plausible though it may be, however, as a reconstruction of the text it must remain at the level of speculation – just like all the other proposals. Indeed, it has also been suggested that the Coptic might make sense as it stands, given that according to *Excerpta Theodoti* 36.1, Theodotus's Valentinians say that our angels were put forth in unity and ὥς ἀπὸ ἑνὸς προελθόντες.<sup>178</sup> This might again serve to warn us, as per the caution in Chapter 2 above, before we dismiss something in *Thomas* as too peculiar.

### Saying 64.9

In the parable of the banquet, the list of guests who do not come to the dinner includes in Luke 14.18 one who has bought an ἀγρός and must

<sup>173</sup> Layton and Lambdin, 'The Gospel according to Thomas', 74–5.

<sup>174</sup> See e.g. U.-K. Plisch, 'Thomas in Babel: Verwirrung durch Sprache(n) im *Thomas-evangelium*', in J. Frey, J. Schröter and E.E. Popkes, eds. *Das Thomas-evangelium: Entstehung – Rezeption – Theologie* (BZNW 157; Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2007), 60–71 (62–3).

<sup>175</sup> See e.g. Perrin, 'Thomas: The Fifth Gospel?', *JETS* 49 (2006), 67–80 (71), and M. Wilcox, 'Semitisms in the New Testament', 1009, for discussion of the Aramaic idiom in question.

<sup>176</sup> A. Guillaumont, H.-C. Puech, G. Quispel, W. Till and Y. 'Abd al Masīh, *The Gospel according to Thomas: Coptic Text Established and Translated* (Leiden: Brill/London: Collins, New York: Harper, 1959), 34–5; DeConick, *Original Gospel of Thomas in Translation*, 202.

<sup>177</sup> DeConick, *Original Gospel of Thomas in Translation*, 202.

<sup>178</sup> I. Dunderberg, 'Thomas' I-Sayings and the Gospel of John', in R. Uro, ed. *Thomas at the Crossroads: Essays on the Gospel of Thomas* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1998), 33–64 (51–3).

Table 3.2

Luke 14.18, 19, 20	<i>GTh</i> 64.3, 5, 7, 9
bought a field → need to inspect it	debtors coming this evening → need to give them instructions
bought five yoke of oxen → need to inspect them	bought a house → am required for the day
married a wife → cannot come	friend getting married → need to prepare the banquet
	bought a farm → need to collect the rent

inspect it; in *Thomas*, one of those invited has bought a κωμη, and must go to collect the rent. These two nouns, Guillaumont has commented, could well go back to Syriac *qr*<sup>179</sup>, *qryr*<sup>180</sup>, which can mean ‘village’ (cf. κωμη) or ‘farm’ (cf. ἀγρός).<sup>179</sup> This seems like a very good case: two semantically different Greek/Graeco-Coptic nouns which both go back to an ambiguous Syriac original.<sup>180</sup> Despite the initial attractiveness of this suggestion, however, it is not really clear that ἀγρός and κωμη do go back to a common element in the parable. The main problem is that in the series of “refusals” in the parable, they are some distance apart, and the surrounding material is quite different in each case. This can be seen from a comparison of the reasons for refusal in Luke and *Thomas* (see Table 3.2).

This table suggests that, with the exception of the instance of the wedding in Luke 14.20 and *GTh* 64.7, it is actually very difficult to pair up the excuses and argue that they are true parallels. While the skeletal structure of both parables is the same, the individual elements within that outline are different. The whole parable has clearly been extensively reworked by at least one of the authors, or has simply developed into two distinct forms through oral tradition. It is, as a result, difficult to argue that Luke 14.18 and *GTh* 64.9 must really be the same element which has been translated independently by two translators: Luke 14.18 and *GTh* 64.9 appear at opposite ends of the parable in each version (first element

<sup>179</sup> Guillaumont, ‘Les sémitismes dans l’Évangile selon Thomas’, 198.

<sup>180</sup> According to LSJ 1017b, however, κωμάριον is a gloss on ἀγρίδιον in Hesychius’ *Lexicon*; cf. also the meaning of ‘garden’ for κωμάρην in Manichaean *Psalm-Book* 224, 17 and 20.

and fourth element respectively); “buying” features elsewhere in each version (oxen are also bought in Luke, and a house in *Thomas*), and the actions required from each excuse are quite different (the need to inspect the field in Luke; the need to collect rent from the village in *Thomas*). As such, this is quite an obvious case of retroversion being difficult to the point of impossibility.

### Saying 66

On the tacit allusion to Psalm 118’s rejected *capstone* in *GTh* 66, Quispel attached significance to the variation ‘cornerstone’ (rather than the ‘head of the corner’ in the Greek Psalm and its NT parallels). This ‘stone of the corner’ in *Thomas* is taken to be a Semitism.<sup>181</sup> The evidence for this, however, is that it is a Diatessaronic reading which goes back, like all Quispel’s *Diatessaron/Thomas* parallels, to the *Gospel of the Hebrews*. Baarda has shown, however, just how tenuous is the evidence for this as a Diatessaronic reading – it comes merely from a single medieval Dutch witness, the Liège Harmony.<sup>182</sup> This Liège Harmony can be seen to be dependent on the wider Western tradition and appears to add the gloss ‘cornerstone’ (an addition to, not a replacement of, ‘head of the corner’) to identify the stones of Psalm 118.22 and Isaiah 28.16.

### Saying 69.1

*Thomas*’s Jesus here pronounces a blessing on ‘those who have truly known the Father’ (ΝΕΝΤΑΡΧΟΥΩΝ ΠΙΕΩΤ Ζῆ ΟΥΜΕ), which for Guillaumont is another instance of *Thomas* reflecting a Hebrew perfect tense with a present sense (cf. on sayings 52 and 53 above).<sup>183</sup> This is far from clear, however: since the meaning of *COOYH* in *Thomas* often has the sense of ‘recognise’, the Coptic of saying 69 here makes perfectly good sense as it stands, and may well refer to ‘those who have truly recognised the Father’. In the second place, this usage of past tenses in connection with knowing God is paralleled in the NT in places both where there may well be an Aramaic background (John 8.55: οὐκ ἐγνώκατε αὐτόν), as well as where there clearly is not, e.g. in Paul (Gal. 4.9: νῦν δὲ γνόντες θεόν, μᾶλλον δὲ γνωσθέντες ὑπὸ θεοῦ, cf.

<sup>181</sup> G. Quispel, ‘L’Évangile selon Thomas et le Diatessaron’, *VigChr* 13 (1959), 87–117 (92).

<sup>182</sup> T. Baarda, “‘The Cornerstone’: An Aramaism in the Diatessaron and the Gospel of Thomas?’, *NovT* 37 (1995), 285–300.

<sup>183</sup> Guillaumont, ‘Les sémitismes dans l’Évangile selon Thomas’, 193.

Rom. 1.21) and in 1 John (2.13: ἐγνώκατε τὸν ἀπ' ἀρχῆς κτλ., and 2.14: ἐγνώκατε τὸν πατέρα ... ἐγνώκατε τὸν ἀπ' ἀρχῆς). The arguments here also apply in the case of *GTh* 91.2.

### Saying 69.2

*Thomas* has this version of the beatitude about hunger: 'Blessed are those who hunger so that [αἰμα = Gk ἵνα] the belly of him who desires will be filled.' Following Sieber, DeConick proposes a (Western) Aramaic origin, Perrin a Syriac original: both agree that the final clause is unusual here ('why would anyone go hungry *in order to* be filled?'), given that the Synoptic parallels have 'because' (ὅτι) instead of 'so that'.<sup>184</sup> This discrepancy can be explained by the fact that *d-ldy* or alternatively *w-* could be translated either with the Synoptics' causal ὅτι (Luke 6.21: μακάριοι οἱ πεινῶντες νῦν, ὅτι χορτασθήσεσθε, cf. Matt. 5.6) or as introducing a final clause (as per Coptic *Thomas*).

There is, however, another solution which also solves an additional problem in the saying. One of the awkward features of this beatitude is that, on the standard translation, there is a slightly quirky transition from plural in the main clause to singular in the subordinate clause: 'Blessed are *those* who hunger so that the belly of *him who desires* will be filled.'<sup>185</sup> This difficulty arises, however, from assuming that the beatitude must mean the same as it does in the Synoptic tradition (i.e. that those who hunger will *themselves* be filled). Plisch, however, does not fall into this trap, and provides an interpretative gloss on this as follows: 'Blessed are those who forego food (voluntarily) so that others who need it more desperately can have it.'<sup>186</sup> There are various parallels from the early church to this "social fasting".<sup>187</sup> This interpretation makes good sense of the transition from plural to singular in the saying. It also makes sense of *Thomas*'s otherwise puzzling final clause. Furthermore, it obviates

<sup>184</sup> Perrin, 'Aramaic Origins of the *Gospel of Thomas*', 54–5, considers the *Vorlage* to be Syriac *d-*; DeConick, *Original Gospel of Thomas in Translation*, 224, opts for *w-*.

<sup>185</sup> Cf. Lambdin (in Layton and Lambdin, 'The Gospel according to Thomas'): 'Blessed are the hungry, for the belly of him who desires will be filled.'

<sup>186</sup> U. K. Plisch, *The Gospel of Thomas: Original Text with Commentary* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2008), 168.

<sup>187</sup> Dr Stephan Witetschek has drawn my attention to Hermas, *Sim.* 5.3.7; Aristides, *Apol.* 15.7; and Origen, *Hom. in Lev.* 10.2, in which fasting is a mechanism for relieving the poor, by giving them the money one would have spent on food during the fast. The Origen parallel is particularly close: *inuenimus enim in quodam libello ab apostolis dictum: beatus est qui etiam ieiunat pro eo ut alat pauperem*. See further S. Witetschek, 'Going Hungry for a Purpose: On *Gos. Thom.* 69.2 and a Neglected Parallel in Origen', *JSNT* 32 (2010), 379–93.

the need for any recourse to a Semitic original.<sup>188</sup> The two versions of the saying, both in their wording and their meaning, are significantly different.

### Saying 72

Here we encounter the aggrieved brother, who appeals to Jesus because his brothers (plural in *Thomas*, unlike in Luke) have not allowed him a share in the inheritance. Jesus complains, as he does in the parallel in Luke 12.13–14, that his business is not ‘division’; he is not a μεριστής/ρεφιπώγε.

Gershenson and Quispel conclude that this section of *Thomas*, like a great deal of the Gospel, derives from the *Gospel of the Hebrews*, and so goes back to the latter’s Aramaic original.<sup>189</sup> This is supported, they argue, by looking behind μεριστής and ρεφιπώγε to the Hebrew or Aramaic, where one might suppose a word like *holeq* or its Aramaic equivalent. They go on to argue that this Hebrew or Aramaic original points to a pun: Jesus is not only refusing to take part in this arbitration, but also commenting that he is not a “divider” in the sense of a divisive person, ‘one who introduces dissenting opinions’.<sup>190</sup> This is an ingenious proposal, but one wonders what it is in the context that would make Jesus or the gospel writer comment on how ‘Christianity presents no break of any kind in historical Judaism’.<sup>191</sup> Since there is no reason, beyond Quispel’s reconstruction, to suppose that this is in view, it remains a mere speculation.

DeConick, on the other hand, presents a more likely scenario which does fit the context.<sup>192</sup> According to this view, *holeq/μεριστής/ρεφιπώγε* has a technical sense of ‘executor’. Lightfoot’s *Horae Hebraicae et*

<sup>188</sup> See J.H. Moulton and W.F. Howard (with C.L. Bedale), ‘Appendix: Semitisms in the New Testament’, in Moulton and Howard, *A Grammar of New Testament Greek*, vol. II, *Accidence and Word Formation* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1929), 411–85, for another explanation. After supplying abundant evidence for ὅτι and ἵνα both equally going back to Aramaic *dy* in a number of cases (‘Semitisms in the New Testament’, 435–6, 469–70), they go on to conclude that ‘the most impressive evidence which is offered for the confusion of the particles ὅτι and ἵνα with the relative loses much of its force when this same tendency is found to be increasingly prevalent in the later stages of the Greek language’ (483). Additionally, Sebastian Brock has noted that *dy* has proven to be a very unreliable indicator of mistranslation in one study. See Brock, ‘Review of Black, *Aramaic Approach*’, in *JTS* 20 (1969), 278.

<sup>189</sup> D. Gershenson and G. Quispel, “‘Meristae’”, *VigChr* 12 (1958), 19–26 (25).

<sup>190</sup> Gershenson and Quispel, ‘Meristae’, 24.

<sup>191</sup> Gershenson and Quispel, ‘Meristae’, 25.

<sup>192</sup> DeConick, *Original Gospel of Thomas in Translation*, 229.

*Talmudicae* comments that μερισταί are official ‘arbiters in the case’ of inheritance, ‘those that took care as to the equality of the division’.<sup>193</sup> Lightfoot’s comment is difficult to assess, however: it is odd that he talks of an allegedly Talmudic official role using the Greek term, and moreover he does not supply any evidence for his view. On the Hebrew side, *holeq* does not seem to be a technical legal term either. In the end, then, neither Quispel’s nor DeConick’s explanation is particularly convincing.

### Saying 75

On ΜΟΝΑΧΟΣ, see discussion of 16.4 above.<sup>194</sup>

### Saying 76.2

*Thomas*’s version of the parable of the “pearl of great price” ends the story with the statement that the merchant ‘purchased *for himself*’ (ἀγορεύσας ἑαυτῷ) that single pearl. Guillaumont has proposed that this reflexive is a Semitism, though the evidence he adduces is questionable.<sup>195</sup> He notes the potential kinsman redeemer saying to Boaz, ‘Buy it for yourself (*qnh-lk*)’ in Ruth 4.8. There is a problem with this parallel in that the reflexive is emphatic and not redundant: the potential rival cannot redeem the piece of property, and therefore tells Boaz to buy it *for himself*. As such, this is not the redundant use of the Hebrew reflexive (as for example in the famous *lek-lka* of Gen. 12.1).<sup>196</sup> Additionally, the syntax is perfectly possible in Greek.<sup>197</sup> There is a further reason, however, which makes positing a *Vorlage* with a redundant Semitic reflexive (or ‘centripetal *lamed*’<sup>198</sup> with pronominal suffix) not only an unnecessary

<sup>193</sup> J. Lightfoot, *Horae Hebraicae et Talmudicae: Hebrew and Talmudical Exercitations upon the Gospels, the Acts, Some Chapters of St. Paul’s Epistle to the Romans, and the First Epistle to the Corinthians* (Oxford University Press, 1859), 3.132–3.

<sup>194</sup> References to ΜΟΝΑΧΟΣ in *GTh* 75 are discussed by Guillaumont, ‘Les sémitismes dans l’Évangile selon Thomas’, 202–3; DeConick, *Original Gospel of Thomas in Translation*, 15, 233.

<sup>195</sup> Guillaumont, ‘Les sémitismes dans l’Évangile selon Thomas’, 197; DeConick, *Original Gospel of Thomas in Translation*, 234.

<sup>196</sup> Guillaumont, ‘Les sémitismes dans l’Évangile selon Thomas’, 197.

<sup>197</sup> See for example *Life of Aesop* 40, where Xanthus (Aesop’s slave-master) is so impressed by Aesop’s sagacity that he comments to his friends that he has not purchased a slave, but a tutor. See Perry, *Aesopica*, 49: δοῦλον οὐκ ἠγόρασα, ἀλλὰ καθηγητὴν ἑμαυτῷ ἐώνημαι (text G); and p. 88: μὴ γὰρ δοῦλον ἑαυτῷ ἠγόρασα; μάλλον δὲ καθηγητὴν (text W).

<sup>198</sup> P. Joüon and T. Muraoka, *A Grammar of Biblical Hebrew* (Rome: Editrice Pontificio Istituto Biblico, 1991), 488–9 (§133d).

hypothesis but actually unlikely: namely, that the redundant reflexive that we have noted almost always occurs with an *imperative*, and we have in *GTh* 76 here to do with straightforward indicative, third-person narration: ‘he purchased for himself the single pearl’.<sup>199</sup>

### Saying 78

We have already discussed the case in *GTh* 43 where Coptic ἀγω is assumed to go back to Aramaic *w-*, where the meaning in the original was ‘or’ rather than ‘and’. We have the same argument made here, in the question about John the Baptist: ‘... to see a reed shaken by the wind, *and* (ἀγω) to see a man clothed in fine garments ...?’ Some scholars would have preferred to see an ‘or’ here.<sup>200</sup> The same problem applies again, however: that of the particular unpredictability of conjunctions in translation. (See especially the discussion of *GTh* 3.3 above.) Indeed, in the transitions from Matt. 11.7–8 and Luke 7.24–5, Matthew and Luke have ἀλλά.<sup>201</sup>

### Saying 79.1

Saying 79 is taken by DeConick to be an Aramaic product and by Perrin originally to have been specifically Syriac.<sup>202</sup> The key point is that in Luke 11.27, the woman blesses Jesus with a macarism on ‘the breasts *which you sucked* (μαστοὶ οὐς ἐθήλασας)’, whereas Coptic *Thomas* has ‘the breasts *which nourished you* (ἡκί[β]ε ενταρσανογφκ)’. This is hardly a drastic difference, but appeal is made to Aramaic/Syriac *ynq* which can mean both ‘suck’ in the *pe’al* and ‘suckle’ in the *aph’el* (and the *pa’el* in Syriac).

It is difficult to see, however, how the same Aramaic or Syriac words could be translated without error into the two different versions which we have. The Aramaic *Vorlage* may solve the problem of the verb, but it raises two new problems: the subject and the object. It seems to me that (1) the different verb endings marking the subject, and (2) the different

<sup>199</sup> I am grateful to my colleague Prof. Graham Davies for this observation.

<sup>200</sup> Guillaumont, ‘Les sémitismes dans l’Évangile selon Thomas’, 193; DeConick, *Original Gospel of Thomas in Translation*, 240.

<sup>201</sup> Matt. 11.7b–8a: τί ἐξήλατε εἰς τὴν ἔρημον θεάσασθαι; κάλαμον ὑπὸ ἀνέμου σαλευόμενον; ἀλλὰ τί ἐξήλατε ἰδεῖν; ἄνθρωπον ἐν μαλακοῖς ἡμφιεσμένον.

<sup>202</sup> DeConick, *Original Gospel of Thomas in Translation*, 242; Perrin, ‘Aramaic Origins of the *Gospel of Thomas*’, 56–7; Guillaumont, ‘Les sémitismes dans l’Évangile selon Thomas’, 197, and allowing for Aramaic as a possibility in 197 n. 18.

pronominal suffixes in each case would make confusion almost impossible. *Thomas*'s formulation, 'the breasts *which suckled you*', would be, perhaps, *tdy' d'wnyqwk* or in Syriac (as in Luke 11.27 Syr<sup>s.c.pesh</sup>) *tdy' d'ynqwk*; conversely, 'the breasts *which you sucked*' in Luke is equivalent to *tdy' dynqthwn* or *tdy' dynqt'nwn*, or in Syriac (as in Luke 11.27 Syr<sup>hark</sup>) *tdy' hnwn dynqt*.<sup>203</sup> The difference is especially prominent in Syriac, which in the latter case requires the pronoun *hnwn*. We are probably dealing, then, with a paraphrase in one or other case (or indeed, in both cases).

The variation in the Coptic version could be explained by a number of factors: (1) it could be a result of influence from a Syrian variant; (2) it could be a smoothing out (cf. above on saying 9): making the breasts the antecedent/subject of the relative clause ('the breasts which nourished you') in *Thomas* might be an accommodation to the fact that all three other instances (in *GTh* 79.1 and 79.3) have the mother's body as the subject rather than the child. This explanation is similar to a third possibility, viz. that (3) the change from Luke 11's 'the breasts *which you sucked*' to *Thomas*'s 'the breasts *which nourished you*' could be the result of interference from Luke 23.29.<sup>204</sup> Perhaps the easiest solution, however, is to observe that  $\theta\eta\lambda\acute{\alpha}\zeta\epsilon\iota\nu$  is much more amenable than the Aramaic *ynq* to meaning both 'suckle' and 'suck': whereas the Aramaic verb varies its meaning according to whether it appears in the *pe'al* or *aph'el/pe'el*,  $\theta\eta\lambda\acute{\alpha}\zeta\epsilon\iota\nu$  clearly has both senses in the active voice.<sup>205</sup>

### Saying 80

See discussion above on the parallel saying 56.

### Saying 82

The famous couplet, 'He who is near me is near fire; he who is far from me is far from the kingdom', has probably received more attention than any other in considerations of new authentic sayings of Jesus in *Thomas*.<sup>206</sup> As such, presumably all those who consider it dominical also

<sup>203</sup> See Kiraz, *Comparative Edition of the Syriac Gospels*, 3.231.

<sup>204</sup> Luke 23.29b: μακάριαι αἱ στεῖραι καὶ αἱ κοιλίαι αἱ οὐκ ἐγέννησαν καὶ μαστοὶ οἱ οὐκ ἔθρεψαν.

<sup>205</sup> LSJ 797b.

<sup>206</sup> See most recently, E.K. Broadhead, 'An Authentic Saying of Jesus in the Gospel of Thomas?' *NTS* 46 (2000), 132–49, which argues that *GTh* 82.1 may well go back to John the Baptist (147–8); Jesus then took this up and added 82.2 (148).



consider it to go back to a Semitic original. Its authenticity has usually been argued on the basis of theological content, however, rather than on linguistic grounds. Some exceptions to this are Jeremias and Ménard.<sup>207</sup> They argue that when the saying is retroverted into Aramaic one finds four phrases (or two four-beat stichoi) with alliteration of *mem* and rhyme:

*man diq<sup>e</sup>rib ‘immi, q<sup>e</sup>rib ‘im nura,*  
*man dir<sup>e</sup>chiq minni, r<sup>e</sup>chiq mimalkuta.*<sup>208</sup>

Almost all the extant versions of saying 82, however, have a good deal of rhythmic balance and rhyme just by the very nature of the repetition intrinsic to the saying.<sup>209</sup> As such, it is difficult to see why a hypothetical reconstruction in Aramaic is particularly appealing as an original.

### Saying 85.1, 2

On the phrases ‘the world is not worthy of ...’ and ‘taste death’, see under *GTh* 56 and 1 respectively.<sup>210</sup>

### Saying 86

In his 2006 article, Perrin presents the Son of Man saying with the birds and the foxes as his prime example of Diatessaronic (and therefore clearly Syriac) influence on *Thomas*. The article identifies the variations in *Thomas*’s version as corresponding exactly to the version in Tatian’s *Diatessaron* as reconstructed by Strobel.<sup>211</sup> Strobel identifies seven variations on the canonical form introduced by *Thomas*: ‘Foxes have *their* (1) holes, and the birds (2: without ‘of the air’) *have* (3: not included in Matt. and Luke) *their nest* (singular: 4), but the Son of Man has no

<sup>207</sup> J. Jeremias, *The Unknown Sayings of Jesus* (London: SPCK, 1964 [3rd edn, 1963]), 71–2. ‘But the most important indication of authenticity is the purpose of the saying’ (72); Ménard, ‘Les Problèmes de l’Évangile selon Thomas’, 59–73.

<sup>208</sup> So Ménard, ‘Les Problèmes de l’Évangile selon Thomas’, 60.

<sup>209</sup> Compare: ὁ ἐγγύς μου ἐγγύς τοῦ πυρός· ὁ δὲ μακρὰν ἀπ’ ἐμοῦ, μακρὰν ἀπὸ τῆς βασιλείας (Didymus, *In Psalmos* 88.8 (PG 39.1488)); *Thomas*’s Coptic: πῆτρην ἐροῖ ἐφρην ἐτσατε πετοῖνη ἴμοει φορηγ ἴτμηῖτερο; Origen, in Latin translation: *qui iuxta me est, iuxta igne est; qui longe est a me, longe est a regno*. Perhaps the most rhyme is to be found in a different formulation of Origen in translation: *qui approximant mihi approximant igni* (*Hom. Josh.* 4.3).

<sup>210</sup> Claimed as Aramaisms by DeConick, *Original Gospel of Thomas in Translation*, 15, 250.

<sup>211</sup> Perrin, ‘Thomas: The Fifth Gospel?’, 69; F.A. Strobel, ‘Textgeschichtliches zum Thomas-Logion 86 (Mt 8, 20/ Luk 9, 56)’, *VigChr* 17 (1963), 211–24.

place (5) to lay his (6) head and rest (7)'. In fact, Perrin's and Strobel's arguments are quite different; while Perrin is insistent on Diatessaronic influence, Strobel argues merely for a Syriac *Vorlage* to the Coptic text here, and in fact seems to reject Diatessaronic influence.<sup>212</sup>

We can note briefly that some allegedly Syriac or Diatessaronic variants in *Thomas* are clearly spurious because they are merely Copticisms. In (1), Sahidic Matthew 8.20 and Luke 9.58 – like *Thomas* – have 'their holes' (ⲛⲉϥⲃⲏⲃ). (4) Their singular 'nest' is also quite understandable as a Copticism:<sup>213</sup> Sahidic examples of singular article with possessive pronouns which necessitate a plural sense are abundant, and indeed are found in *Thomas* itself.<sup>214</sup> The reference in (5) to 'no place' is even more readily understandable as a Copticism: a negative with ⲙⲁ is a quite standard way of saying 'nowhere', as indeed the Sahidic NT versions of this saying make clear: ⲡⲉⲛⲣⲉ ⲗⲉ ⲙⲡⲣⲟⲙⲉ (ⲙ)ⲙⲏⲧⲥⲙⲁ ⲛⲣⲉⲕⲧⲉϥⲁⲛⲉ. This clause also makes it clear that variant (6), the reference to *his* head, is – in a similar way to (1) – also spurious: Guillaumont notes that Coptic, like Syriac, often prefers to mark possession (here, -ⲉϥ-) whereas in Greek the article with body parts is sufficient.<sup>215</sup>

The omission (2) of 'of the air' Strobel attributes to free translation, and, he comments, can only 'schwerlich' be connected with Tatian.<sup>216</sup> The introduction (3) of the 'have' (ⲟϥⲛⲧⲁϥ ⲙⲏⲁϥ) in the second clause ('the birds *have* nests') is also quite trivial.

This leaves 'rest' (7) as the only potentially significant piece of evidence. However, there are three factors which considerably dilute the significance of this. First, the level of agreement has been exaggerated by scholarly suggestions that *Thomas* and the *Diatessaron* actually agree, which they do not: some of the harmonies have an equivalent of 'rest his head', but *GTh* 86 has 'lay his head and rest', which none of the harmonies has. Second, even the Tatianic credentials of the references

<sup>212</sup> Strobel, 'Textgeschichtliches zum Thomas-Logion 86', notes that the introduction of 'have' in the second clause of the saying is only supported by a minority of witnesses in the harmony tradition (215), and concludes that a direct literary connection between *Thomas* and Tatian is 'abseitig' (216). See the conclusion on p. 224 for the point about the Syriac *Vorlage*.

<sup>213</sup> Plisch, 'Thomas in Babel', 70–1, also suggests this as a possible Syriacism.

<sup>214</sup> Examples include John 10.3, where the good shepherd calls each of his sheep ⲕⲁⲗⲁ ⲛⲉϥⲣⲁⲛ, despite the assumed multiple names; compare also Acts 7.51, where Stephen condemns those with uncircumcised hearts (ⲛⲁⲧⲥⲃⲱⲉ ⲛⲡⲉϥⲗⲏⲧ; cf. Ⲙⲁ ⲁⲡⲉⲣⲓⲧⲟⲙⲏⲧⲟⲩ ⲕⲁⲣⲃⲓⲁⲓϥ). In *GTh* 53, if circumcision was beneficial for children, 'their fathers' (ⲛⲟϥⲉⲟⲩⲧ) would engender them from 'their mothers' (ⲧⲟϥⲙⲁⲗϥ) already circumcised. We have in all these cases clearly plural referents, but with singular nouns.

<sup>215</sup> Guillaumont, 'Les sémitismes dans l'Évangile selon Thomas', 192.

<sup>216</sup> Strobel, 'Textgeschichtliches zum Thomas-Logion 86', 215.

‘rest’ are not strong: only Ephrem’s commentary, the Dutch harmony and Pepys have it.<sup>217</sup> Third, even this needs qualifying, however: the connection between *Thomas* and the Syriac tradition (including Ephrem) more generally is also vulnerable. The verb usually rendered ‘rest’ in the Syriac versions of this Son of Man saying, that is, in Syr<sup>s</sup>, Syr<sup>c</sup> and Ephrem’s commentary on the *Diatessaron*, is *smk*. This verb, however, has the transitive meaning ‘support’ or ‘lay’ just as much as it means ‘rest’: Payne Smith gives the senses ‘lay’ and ‘lean’ as well as ‘rest’ *tout simple*.<sup>218</sup> As such, if Ephrem preserves the original Diatessaronic reading, Tatian could equally well be taken as simply agreeing with the Synoptic tradition after all: there is no difference between the Greek forms of the saying and the Syriac versions. *Thomas*’s addition of ‘and rest’ then is just a brief expansion. Since there are no distinctively Semitic features in Coptic *GTh* 86 here, then, it is difficult to argue either that the parallels to the *Diatessaron* are ‘remarkable’, or that the Coptic translator is indebted ‘zweifelsohne’ to a Syriac *Vorlage*.<sup>219</sup>

### Saying 90

DeConick has argued that *Thomas*’s version of the “easy yoke” saying, or ‘Heilandsruf’, goes back to an Aramaic original – indeed one which is more primitive than its Matthean counterpart (Matt. 11.28–30).<sup>220</sup> The earlier form is Jesus’ exhortation in *Thomas* that his ‘yoke and lordship’ are light, and this formulation goes back to ‘primitive Aramaic tendencies’.<sup>221</sup> The principal pieces of evidence for this are (1) passages in Targum Isaiah where ‘yoke’ and ‘lordship’ are interchangeable (Isa. 10.7; 14.25; 47.6), and (2) the evidence for the association of ‘yokes’ with dominion in the OT and the Ancient Near East more widely.<sup>222</sup> On the latter point, however, the association of yokes with dominion extends much more widely than the Ancient Near East – it is also well known as

<sup>217</sup> Pepys’s reading might also not be so relevant: several English translations, such as Tyndale, The Great Bible and the Geneva Bible had already had ‘reste’ instead of the KJV’s ‘lay’.

<sup>218</sup> Payne Smith, *Compendious Syriac Dictionary*, 380.

<sup>219</sup> The references are to Perrin, ‘Thomas: The Fifth Gospel?’, 69, and Strobel, ‘Textgeschichtliches zum Thomas-Logion 86’, 223.

<sup>220</sup> A.D. DeConick, ‘The Yoke Saying in the *Gospel of Thomas* 90’, *VigChr* 44 (1990), 280–94.

<sup>221</sup> DeConick, ‘Yoke Saying’, 291. There is a difficulty with DeConick’s claim that the novelty of Matthew’s version can be seen in ‘Matthew’s polemical emphasis on “burden”’ (‘Yoke Saying’, 291). This emphasis is not a particularly distinctively Matthean emphasis: the other saying on the subject – in Matt. 23.4 – is paralleled in Luke 11.46.

<sup>222</sup> DeConick, ‘Yoke Saying’, 287, and 286–7 respectively.

Roman, for example.<sup>223</sup> On the former point, (1), it is possible that *Thomas* is related specifically to an exegetical tradition around Isaiah, but it is by no means certain. In fact, the interchangeability of ‘yoke’ and ‘lordship’ is very unsurprising: in almost every case where a yoke is associated with people rather than animals in biblical tradition, it is a metaphor for a master–slave relationship, whether on an individual or national level. Hence the Pauline phrase ‘yoke of slavery’ (ζυγῶ δουλείας, Gal. 5.1; cf. 1 Tim. 6.1), and – from the other point of view – the ‘yoke of the Lord’ in the famous statement in the *Didache* about perfection: εἰ μὲν γὰρ δύνασαι βαστάσαι ὄλον τὸν ζυγὸν τοῦ κυρίου, τέλειος ἔσῃ ... (*Did.* 6.2). The metaphorical use of ‘yoke’ presupposes a relationship between a κύριος/δεσπότης/βασιλεύς or similar on the one hand, and a δούλος on the other: one can compare also the language of master and slave in *GTh* 47.2 (ϩⲓⲃⲗⲁⲗ and ⲕⲟⲓϥ). Hence, just as it is natural for Paul to gloss ‘yoke’ with δουλεία in Galatians, so also it is natural for *Thomas* or his source to do the same with its counterpart ⲙⲏⲡⲧⲕⲟⲓϥ. The phenomenon could be accounted for by a specifically Aramaic exegetical tradition, but this is by no means necessary.

### Saying 91.2 (a)

*Thomas* shares with Luke (and perhaps Matthew – the text is uncertain) the saying about Jesus’ opponents being able to examine the sky and the earth, but not to discern the present eschatological moment. The verb for examining or discerning is δοκιμάζειν in Luke 12.56 and ϩⲡⲓⲣⲁⲗⲉ (πειράζειν) in *Thomas*; in Matthew 16.3 it is διακρίνειν. Guillaumont proposes that this great variety can all be explained with reference to an underlying Syriac *nsy*.<sup>224</sup>

It is questionable, however, whether another entity is required to explain ‘cette divergence’, and whether the Coptic ‘does not make much sense here’.<sup>225</sup> In a number of other places, the three verbs in question are virtually interchangeable: LXX Psalm 25.2 (δοκιμασόν με κύριε καὶ πείρασόν με) and 2 Corinthians 13.5 (ἐαυτοὺς πειράζετε ... ἐαυτοὺς δοκιμάζετε) are instances where two of the three are almost equivalent

<sup>223</sup> See, for example, the discussion of the *sub iugum missio* in H. Versnel, *Triumphus: An Inquiry into the Origin, Development and Meaning of the Roman Triumph* (Leiden: Brill, 1970), 132–63.

<sup>224</sup> Guillaumont, ‘Les sémitismes dans l’Évangile selon Thomas’, 198; DeConick, *Original Gospel of Thomas in Translation*, 260.

<sup>225</sup> Guillaumont, ‘Les sémitismes dans l’Évangile selon Thomas’, 198; DeConick, *Original Gospel of Thomas in Translation*, 260.

(cf. Jas 1.12; Sir. 27.5). Again, the verb for ‘examining’ prophets in 1 Corinthians 14.29 is διακρίνειν, but in *Didache* 12.1 it is δοκιμάζειν. This overlap among the three verbs suggests the Coptic text of *Thomas* may not be so terribly difficult as it stands, and that the variation could equally be understood as having happened at a Greek or Coptic stage in the transmission process.

### Saying 91.2 (b)

Here Jesus rebukes those who have failed to recognise the season and who *have not known that which is before them* (πετῆπετῆῆτο εβολ ἡπετῆσογωνη). As in the case of saying 69.1, Guillaumont considers this a case of *Thomas*’s preservation of a Hebrew perfect tense with present sense.<sup>226</sup> The same criticisms as were made in connection with saying 69.1 above, however, also apply here. In all these examples concerning tenses adduced by Guillaumont, it should also be remembered that the shift from a present tense in the Greek New Testament to a perfect tense in Coptic is a well-known phenomenon.<sup>227</sup>

### Saying 97.2

The parable of the woman whose jar spills its contents while she is on a journey has been identified as having a number of potential Semitisms.<sup>228</sup> The most convincing is probably the reference to a woman being ‘on the long journey’ (ε[ι] τε]ρη εσογηου), which has been compared to the phrase *bdrk rhqh* (cf. Greek ἐν ὁδῷ μακρᾶν) in Numbers 9.10. This is as much a Septuagintalism as a Semitism, however, since the phrase is regularly translated literally into Greek (cf. also Prov. 7.19: πεπόρευται δὲ ὁδὸν μακρᾶν ← *hlk bdrk mṛḥwq*). Indeed, Sahidic Proverbs 7.19 has a phrase similar to *GTh* 97.2 here (αφωκ εγρη εσογηου),<sup>229</sup> and there are other similar cases.<sup>230</sup> As such, *Thomas*’s phraseology is only indirectly Semitic; it is rather a case of “biblical Coptic” which has been shaped, in turn, by Septuagintal phraseology.

<sup>226</sup> Guillaumont, ‘Les sémitismes dans l’Évangile selon Thomas’, 193.

<sup>227</sup> See the discussions in Mink, ‘Die koptischen Versionen’, 198–200, and P.J. Williams, ‘On the Representation of Sahidic within the Apparatus of the Nestle-Aland *Novum Testamentum Graece*’, *Journal of Coptic Studies* 8 (2006), 123–5 (123).

<sup>228</sup> Guillaumont, ‘Les sémitismes dans l’Évangile selon Thomas’, 201; DeConick, *Original Gospel of Thomas in Translation*, 271.

<sup>229</sup> For text, see P.A. Ciasca, *Sacrorum Bibliorum Fragmenta Copto-Sahidica Musei Borgiani*, vol. II (Rome: Sancta Congregatio de Propaganda Fide, 1889), 159.

<sup>230</sup> See Crum 470b–1a.

**Saying 97.3 (a)**

Two further examples in the same parable are less compelling. Guillaumont takes the phrase ‘she did not know and she did not understand’ (νεσσοῦν ἀν ... ἤπεσεῖμε) to go back to the pairing of *yd*’ and *r’h* which are found in combination in 1 Samuel 24.12, 25.17 and elsewhere.<sup>231</sup> This is hardly convincing, however, because *r’h* is not the most obvious equivalent for εἶμε. *Thomas* simply has here a repetition of two almost synonymous verbs for emphasis: Crum supplies examples of other places where σοῦν and εἶμε come together in close proximity.<sup>232</sup>

**Saying 97.3 (b)**

The object of these knowing verbs is γίϛε (‘she did not know and she did not recognise a *problem*’). The wording is certainly strange here: the usual sense of γίϛε is not an unfortunate occurrence but hard work and toil. On the other hand, DeConick provides an explanation by supposing that γίϛε goes back to Syriac *byṣ* via Greek κάκωσις (cf. κάκωσις/*byṣ*, Sir. 29.12). Here, however, one has to suppose not one mistranslation but two: in the first hypothetical stage, the translator has translated *byṣ* (which can mean ‘misfortune’) with κάκωσις, which seems inappropriate in this context (too strong, and suggesting that the woman has been ill-treated by another); in the second, the translator has rendered κάκωσις with γίϛε: one could sympathise with him for not understanding a reference to κάκωσις, but he has not sought to make any sense of the saying, but has just changed the sense to produce another incomprehensible version. Additionally as another Greek equivalent for γίϛε, Crum gives συμφορά (LSJ 1688a: ‘mishap’, ‘misfortune’), which fits the sense of the saying perfectly. This is not to enter into the business of trying to find a possible *Vorlage*: I am not suggesting that if we were to find a Greek fragment containing saying 97, we would encounter συμφορά. Rather it is to suggest that there are other possible hypotheses just as speculative, but more probable, and which do not resort to a version for which there is no evidence.

**Saying 98.2**

Another case is *Thomas*’s peculiar parable of the man who practises driving his sword into his own wall before attacking his enemy. In the sentence, ‘He drew his sword and *pierced it*, viz. *the wall* (αϛϛοῦτ̄

<sup>231</sup> Guillaumont, ‘Les sémitismes dans l’Évangile selon Thomas’, 201.

<sup>232</sup> See Crum 77b (one example from *Acts of the Martyrs* and one from Shenoute).

ἄταξο)', the second clause has been taken by some to be an Aramaism or Syriacism, on the basis of the anticipatory verbal suffix (-c); it was proposed as such already by Garitte in 1957.<sup>233</sup> However, as Guillaumont notes, there is another explanation, namely that the sentence means, 'he drew his sword and *drove it (the sword) into the wall*',<sup>234</sup> as indeed it is taken by a number of translators such as Lambdin.

### Saying 100.1

Guey suggested in 1960 that the Synoptics' 'denarius' (Mark 12.15 and parallels) became *Thomas's* 'gold coin' because both go back to Aramaic/Syriac *dynr*.<sup>235</sup> There are difficulties with this, however. The earliest evidence cited by Guey for this is a *bilingual* Aramaic-Greek inscription from 193 CE. Additionally, in this particular case, the inscription does not take it for granted that the denarii are gold, but rather needs to specify this by referring to 'three hundred old *gold denarii*' (χρυσᾶ παλαιὰ δηνάρια τριακόσια/*dnryn dy dhb'tyqyn tltm'h*).<sup>236</sup> As such, the argument that a gold dinar/denarius can only go back to a Semitic language is left somewhat exposed.<sup>237</sup>

On the Syriac side, it can be noted that the earliest references to denarii in the parchments are clearly not to gold denarii (in one case, a slave is sold for 700 denarii).<sup>238</sup> Similarly, in Aphrahat, 100 dinars is regarded as a small amount.<sup>239</sup> As such, Guillaumont in this context is surely incorrect to say that 'in the Aramaic domain, it served at the time

<sup>233</sup> Garitte, 'Le Premier Volume de l'édition photographique des manuscrits gnostiques coptes et l'Évangile de Thomas', 66; followed by DeConick, *Original Gospel of Thomas in Translation*, 272.

<sup>234</sup> Guillaumont, 'Les sémitismes dans l'Évangile selon Thomas', 196.

<sup>235</sup> J. Guey, 'Comment le "denier de César" de l'Évangile a-t-il pu devenir une pièce d'or?', *Bulletin de la Société française de Numismatique* 15 (1960), 478–9, followed by DeConick, *Original Gospel of Thomas in Translation*, 274.

<sup>236</sup> *CIS* II.3.1 3948 (pp. 121–2). It is not always the case that this is specified, however: see the discussions of the *Res Gestae Divi Saporis*, in which it is probably the case that the 500,000 denarii are gold (but this is a clearer case because we are dealing with a payment of a tribute, which is not in view in *GTh* 100): see J. Guey, 'Autour des *Res Gestae Divi Saporis*: 1. Deniers (d'or) et deniers d'or (de compte) anciens', *Syria* 38 (1961), 261–74; T. Pekáry, 'Autour des *Res Gestae Divi Saporis*: 2. Le "Tribut" aux perses et les finances de Philippe l'arabe', *Syria* 38 (1961), 275–83.

<sup>237</sup> For further, more detailed criticism, see S. Witetschek, 'Ein Goldstück für Caesar? Anmerkungen zu EvThom 100', *Apocrypha* 19 (2008), 103–22.

<sup>238</sup> See H.J.W. Drijvers and J.F. Healey, *The Old Syriac Inscriptions of Edessa and Osrhoene: Texts, Translations, and Commentary* (HO 42; Leiden: Brill, 1999), 30, and the texts on pp. 232–42 (P1 and P2).

<sup>239</sup> Aphrahat, *Demonstration* 6.1: 'Whoever does not demand back a hundred dinars, his Lord forgives him ten thousand talents.' The clear implication is of a contrast between a small and large amount. He notes in *Dem.* 22.25 that he wrote *Dem.* 6 in AD 337.

to designate the gold denarius, and that is the sense which, even when used on its own [i.e. without the ‘gold’ specification] it most often had in Syriac’.<sup>240</sup> This is certainly not true for the earliest Syriac evidence. Again, one must in this case be especially wary of assuming literal translation: it might be expected that references to coinage would quite naturally be changed according to the culture of the target language, hence for example, the KJV’s ‘penny’ (following some earlier English versions) in Mark 12.15.<sup>241</sup>

### Saying 102

Again, Garitte proposed in his first article on *Thomas* that Aramaic, or particularly Syriac, influence is evident in the phrase ‘Woe to them, the Pharisees’ ([ο]γροι ναυ φαρισαιος).<sup>242</sup> As on *GTh* 98, he proposed that the proleptic pronoun is evidence of Syriac influence. This is quite possible, as such a prolepsis may be as odd in idiomatic Greek as it is in Coptic. One can easily imagine, however, that Semitising Greek could produce – without a Semitic *Vorlage* – a phrase such as οὐαὶ αὐτοῖς τοῖς Φαρισαίοις, in the sense of ‘Woe to those Pharisees’, and this would account for the Coptic as much as the hypothetical Syriac original.<sup>243</sup> Another possibility is that, as Böhlig argues, φαρισαιος is simply in apposition, as in *Pistis Sophia* 100: ‘woe unto me’ (ογροι ναυ ανος).<sup>244</sup> Given this parallel, *GTh* 102 may be acceptable Coptic after all.

<sup>240</sup> Guillaumont, ‘Les sémitismes dans l’Évangile selon Thomas’, 202: ‘dans le domaine araméen, il a servi couramment à désigner le denier d’or, et c’est ce sens que, même employé seul, il a le plus souvent en syriaque’.

<sup>241</sup> It is a (distant) possibility that the Coptic ναυβ is influenced by the Graeco-Latin loanword *nummus*: this appears as a Graeco-Coptic word spelled ναυμνος/ναυμνς/ναυμνες in the Kellis letters. See H. Förster, *Wörterbuch der griechischen Wörter in den koptischen dokumentarischen Texten* (Berlin/New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2002), 551. Note also ναυμνες in Shenoute’s *God is Blessed*: see É. Chassinat, *Le Quatrième Livre des entretiens et épîtres de Shenouti* (Cairo: L’Institut Français d’Archéologie Orientale, 1911), 157 ll. 3–4.

<sup>242</sup> Garitte, ‘Le Premier Volume de l’édition photographique des manuscrits gnostiques coptes et l’Évangile de Thomas’, 66, followed by DeConick, *Original Gospel of Thomas in Translation*, 279; Guillaumont, ‘Les sémitismes dans l’Évangile selon Thomas’, 194: (‘araméen, v.g. syriaque’).

<sup>243</sup> This is a redundancy common in the NT, defined by Moulton and Howard as a ‘redundant use to strengthen definition of noun’. Matt. 12.45 D; Mark 5.16 D; 6.17; 6.18 D; 6.22 AC; etc. are cited as examples (Moulton and Howard, ‘Semitisms in the New Testament’, 431). See also Wilcox, ‘Semitisms in the New Testament’, 1018, adding Acts 7.52 D; 6.7 D; Matt. 3.4; Mark 12.36–7.

<sup>244</sup> Böhlig, ‘Das Problem aramäischer Elemente’, 444.



### Saying 104.2

*Thomas's* saying, 'What is the sin that I have committed, or *wherein have I been defeated* (נִרְטָאֲרָרֻּוּ עֲרֻּוּ עֲרֻּוּ)' has been taken by some to go back to an Aramaic background involving the verb *hwb*. Since *hwb* can mean either to be defeated or, more often, 'to be culpable', 'to sin', a strict parallelism would appear if one supposed a Semitic substratum.<sup>245</sup> Certainly, the context of the hypothetically possible defeat for Jesus is unclear, but unclarity is nothing new in *Thomas*. It is not difficult to supply some possible contexts, however. For example, in John's Gospel, Jesus asks the question of the Jews, τίς ἐξ ὑμῶν ἐλέγχει με περὶ ἁμαρτίας; (John 8.46). This instance in John nicely combines the two elements of Jesus' question in *Thomas*. First, Jesus' sinlessness (in *Thomas*, 'what is the sin that I have committed?') is also implied in John. Second, John's language of ἔλεγχος here, with its connotations of forensic or dialectical disproof or refutation, also implies the theoretical possibility of Jesus being defeated in argument. Plato's *Sophist*, for example, also combines defeat and ἔλεγχος in the instance where the "Eleatic Stranger" imagines that 'the refutation of that which is not (τὸν τοῦ μὴ ὄντος ἔλεγχον) has been defeating (ἡττημένον) me for a long time'.<sup>246</sup> So if one imagines a setting such as that of John 8, *Thomas's* saying makes very good sense.

### Saying 107.3

In the parable of the lost sheep (Matt. 18.12–13; Luke 15.3–7; *GTh* 107), *Thomas* has the shepherd saying to the previously lost sheep, 'I love you more than the ninety-nine (ἰσοῦσθαι παρὰ πεντηνὰ)', in comparison to Matthew's reference to the shepherd *rejoicing* over the sheep (χαίρει ἐπ' αὐτῷ). Guillaumont contends that both go back to Aramaic/Syriac *šb'*, which can mean 'wish', or 'take pleasure in', but also 'love'.<sup>247</sup> Hence, the phraseology of both Matthew and *Thomas* can be explained on the basis of the same Aramaic original.

There are, however, several factors in the *Thomasine* version of the parable which have helped shape the difference in phraseology from

<sup>245</sup> Guillaumont, 'Les sémitismes dans l'Évangile selon Thomas', 194, followed by DeConick, *Original Gospel of Thomas in Translation*, 281.

<sup>246</sup> *Soph.* 239B; tr. Nicholas White in J. Cooper, ed. *Plato: Complete Works* (Indianapolis/Cambridge: Hackett, 1997). Cf. also Plutarch, *Frat. Am.* 483C: ἡ τοιαύτη δίκη τοῖς ἐλεγχόμενοις ποιεῖ τὴν ἡτταν ἡδίω τῆς νίκης ('such justice makes defeat for those who are refuted more pleasant than victory').

<sup>247</sup> Guillaumont, 'Sémitismes dans les logia', 120; Guillaumont, 'Les sémitismes dans l'Évangile selon Thomas', 199–200.

the Synoptics' emphasis instead on rejoicing rather than loving. Most importantly, in *GTh* 107 the lost sheep is also the *largest* sheep, and so more naturally the greatest object of love for the shepherd: compare, for example, *GTh* 8, where the fisherman discovers the infinitely preferable *large* fish, and so is able then to discard all the rest. Second, in *GTh* 107, the shepherd addresses the sheep directly, which probably also shapes the shepherd's language. Again, then, as in the case of *GTh* 8, we have factors in the narrative which probably shape the selection of the language distinctive to *Thomas*. This must surely make us pause before accepting Guillaumont's reconstruction not just of one but of two stages of translation.<sup>248</sup>

### Saying 109.3

In *Thomas*'s parable of the hidden treasure, the buyer of the field did not know that the treasure was there (cf. Matt. 13.44). It was when '*he went ploughing* (ἀρει εἰσκαεῖ) in the field' that he discovered it. This phrase 'he went ploughing' has attracted some attention as a possible Semitism.<sup>249</sup> This is a poor example, however, as it is also very reasonable Greek. Consider the variety of places the periphrastic construction 'came' + present participle appears in the New Testament both in narrative sections of the Gospels (e.g. Mark 1.14: ἦλθεν ... κηρύσσων; cf. also 1.39), and in sayings of Jesus (e.g. Matt. 11.18–19//Luke 7.33–4) as well as in Paul (1 Cor. 2.1). So appeal to a Semitic substratum is superfluous here.<sup>250</sup>

### Saying 111.3

On the phrase, 'the world is not worthy of ...', see on saying 56 above.<sup>251</sup>

<sup>248</sup> Guillaumont considers that a form of the Greek verb εὐδοκεῖν was the intermediary between the Aramaic and Coptic *Thomas* here ('Sémitismes dans les logia', 120).

<sup>249</sup> Hedrick, *Parables as Poetic Fictions*, 138; DeConick, *Original Gospel of Thomas in Translation*, 288.

<sup>250</sup> Similarly DeConick notes briefly, following Hedrick, that the phrase, 'He took that field and sold it' (*GTh* 109.2) is a Semitic idiom (DeConick, *Original Gospel of Thomas in Translation*, 289; Hedrick, *Parables as Poetic Fictions*, 137. Again, however, Hedrick notes a large number of similar instances in the NT, as well as in the OT (where one finds this syntax in both the Hebrew and the LXX).

<sup>251</sup> For the claim that this is a significant Semitism, see DeConick, *Original Gospel of Thomas in Translation*, 15, 293.

### Saying 113.2

In *Thomas*, Jesus says that the kingdom of God will not come ‘with expectation’ (ζῆν οὐσῶντ εβωλ). According to Luke 17.20, however, it will not come ‘with observation’ (μετὰ παρατηρήσεως), and Guillaumont tries to account for the fact that these are ‘so clearly different in sense’.<sup>252</sup> His solution is that Luke’s ‘observation’ and *Thomas*’s ‘expectation’ go back to Aramaic *hwr* or *ntr* which might have both senses.<sup>253</sup> The question arises, however, of whether they really are ‘so clearly different’. Baarda points out that the two components of σῶντ εβωλ when taken separately (rather than as a compound meaning ‘wait for’) would give the sense ‘look out’, with the visual component.<sup>254</sup> DeConick objects, however, that this would be ‘an incredibly clumsy translation’.<sup>255</sup>

Nevertheless, parallels to Baarda’s suggestion can be found. For example, Hebrews 12.14–15 reads: ‘Pursue peace with all, as well as holiness – without which no one will see the Lord – and *watch out/see to it* (ἐπισκοποῦντες/εἰτετῆσῶντ εβωλ) that no one lacks the grace of God.’ Similarly, when John sees the angel and bows down before him in Revelation 19.10, the angel retorts with the untranslatable ὄρα μή – which the Sahidic version renders ἡρῶντ εβωλ. This really is a clumsy translation, but it is again evidence for σῶντ εβωλ meaning – like ὄρα – ‘watch out’ or ‘see to it’ as it does in Hebrews 12.15. These provide parallels, then, to *GTh* 113 which enable the phrases there and in Luke 17.20 to be seen as basically synonymous.

### Saying 114.2

As similarly in the case of saying 3.1, DeConick argues finally that a Semitic original lies behind a mistranslation in Jesus’ statement about Mary: ‘I will draw (ἀνοκ ἱναδωκ) her so that I might make her male.’ The clumsy reference to ‘drawing’ allegedly goes back to Aramaic/Syriac *ngd*, which can mean draw or – as was originally intended – ‘lead’

<sup>252</sup> Guillaumont, ‘Les sémitismes dans l’Évangile selon Thomas’, 200: ‘si nettement différentes de sens’.

<sup>253</sup> Quispel, ‘Some Remarks on the Gospel of Thomas’, 288; Guillaumont, ‘Les sémitismes dans l’Évangile selon Thomas’, 200. DeConick, *Original Gospel of Thomas in Translation*, 295.

<sup>254</sup> T. Baarda, ‘Luke 12:13–14: Text and Transmission from Marcion to Augustine’, in Baarda, *Early Transmission of the Words of Jesus: Thomas, Tatian and the Text of the New Testament* (Amsterdam: Free University Press, 1983), 117–72 (134–7).

<sup>255</sup> DeConick, *Original Gospel of Thomas in Translation*, 295.

or 'guide'.<sup>256</sup> As such, 'This translation error is evidence of a Semitic substratum.'<sup>257</sup> The Aramaic verb can certainly bear both these senses.

A need to resort to an Aramaic original, however, is removed by the fact that the saying does make sense as it stands: the reference to 'drawing' Mary is not 'a strange phrase'. The same verb  $\kappa\omega\kappa$  is used in John's Gospel, again in a first-person statement by Jesus in connection with his activity of salvation: 'But when I am lifted up from the earth, I will draw all people ( $\pi\acute{\alpha}\nu\tau\alpha\varsigma \acute{\epsilon}\lambda\kappa\acute{\upsilon}\sigma\omega/\tau\eta\lambda\alpha\sigma\epsilon\kappa \omicron\gamma\omicron\upsilon\eta\ \eta\mu\eta$ ) to myself.' (12.32). The verb is used again of the Father's saving action in John 6.44. A later instance refers to how Ezekiel 'draws' ( $\zeta\omega\kappa$ ) people to contemplation.<sup>258</sup> As such, one should not see in *Thomas*'s phraseology here any special oddity which requires explanation.

### Conclusion

It is possible, then, in the light of the evidence presented above to produce another attempt at a classification, albeit one rather more pessimistic than that of Guillaumont's 'essai de classement'. The assessments of the Semitisms above can be organised to correspond to the methodological difficulties discussed in Chapter 2 above. We have considered a number of elements which have been proposed as evidence for a Semitic *Vorlage*, and the conclusions can be categorised in summary form as follows.

First, we noted in Chapter 2 a need to establish a problem with the extant Greek or Coptic. We have seen, however, various cases of alleged Semitisms which are in fact explicable in Greek terms (e.g. *GTh* 52.2; 53.3; 61.1; 69.1; 72; 76.2; 91.2b) or can be taken as idiomatic Coptic (21.5; 55 bis; 86) or both (3.1; 42; 55). A large number of alleged mistranslations were similarly seen to be cases of exegesis which are in fact acceptable as they stand (12.2; 14.3; 19.3; 21.4; 61.2?; 69.2; 98.2; 104.2; 114). Where real problems stand in the text, one might hypothesise a Greek explanation just as easily as a Semitic (13.8; 60.1; 60.2; 61.2?), or perhaps textual corruption (60.1?; 61.2?).

The second issue raised at the outset was the need to establish a secure linguistic base for reconstructions. In discussion of various sayings, however, we have seen anachronistic linguistic data being employed (16.4; 19.3; 27.1?; 49.1; 75; 100.1?).

<sup>256</sup> DeConick, *Original Gospel of Thomas in Translation*, 297.

<sup>257</sup> DeConick, *Original Gospel of Thomas in Translation*, 297.

<sup>258</sup> *Acrostic Hymns* 1.14.

On the matter of the importance of careful classification and evaluation of different kinds of Semitisms, there has been some attention to this in the past,<sup>259</sup> but not enough in more recent scholarship. We have seen cases where too much importance is attributed to the presence of general biblical phrases which do not necessarily owe anything linguistically to Hebrew or Aramaic (33.3; 36; 44.3; 72; 97.3a). Often, again, significance is attached to Semitisms which have also become biblical Greek and Coptic (97.2) or to language very similar to Septuagintal Greek (27.2) or to phraseology common in the NT (109.3). Some allegedly wooden translations from a Semitic *Vorlage* in fact can be paralleled in contemporaneous Christian Greek literature and can thus be explained from Greek (25; 102). There are also various instances of phrases which are post-biblical which probably originated in a Semitic language but were used in various different languages (1; 18.3; 19.3; 56.2; 80; 85.1; 85.2; 111.3). Some allegedly Semitic themes can in fact be seen to be more widespread (16.2; 90). Or conversely, some sayings might display influence of a Jewish or Syrian milieu, but with no specifically Semitic linguistic component (30, 45).

Additionally, we have seen that in some cases the alleged Semitisms do not solve the problems which they purport to address (16.3; 42; 47.2; 56; 60.1). Indeed, one instance makes an already complicated situation even more difficult (7), and some are based on retroversions which cannot easily yield the proposed divergences (21.4; 28.3; 79.1).

On this matter of divergent translations, one problem at the outset lies with cases which are not truly divergent because of semantic overlap between extant versions (28.3; 33.2; 35.1; 91.2a; 113.2) or where the two extant cases are comprehensible as they stand and come to mean the same thing (9.2b; 39.1). A major difficulty has appeared with instances where the surrounding contexts of the two versions are not sufficiently close to have been literal translations from a common *Vorlage* (3.2; 6; 12.1; 40; 48; 64), in the case of two parables, with narrative factors shaping the different versions (8, 107). Some instances of divergence were not secure evidence for a Semitic *Vorlage* because they are purported to be translations of conjunctions (3.3; 43.3; 78), translations which are highly unpredictable; in a similar case, divergent prepositions can be explained easily on the basis of their instability in transmission (9.2a). In two cases where there is true divergence, a Greek explanation

<sup>259</sup> We have noted Guillaumont's introduction of some method in this discussion, and Nagel's concern to establish mistranslations as the only secure evidence ('Erwägungen zum Thomas-Evangelium', 379).

is just as readily available as a Semitic (56, 79). The problems with these alleged divergences also have implications for Part II, as they have a bearing on the case for the independence of *Thomas* and the Synoptics.

Finally, in connection with a matter which will be discussed in Chapter 4, some cases are problematic because they assume a direct translation from a Semitic language to Coptic (13.8; Nagel on 27.2).

These conclusions do not, of course, mean that it is impossible that various sayings in *Thomas* go back to Semitic originals: it remains, for example, a possibility that *GTh* 9.2 and *GTh* 27.1 have some Syriac link. The analysis in this chapter does emphasise, however, how difficult it is to conjure up evidence which can only be explained on the basis of a Western Aramaic or a Syriac *Vorlage*.

# 4

## POSITIVE EVIDENCE FOR A GREEK-LANGUAGE ORIGIN

### Introduction

Even if the evidence for a Semitic composition is not strong, is there any positive evidence that the original was Greek? Six points will be assembled here. First, we will consider the material evidence of the manuscripts. The second and third points highlight features of the Coptic text which show beyond reasonable doubt that its *Vorlage* was Greek, although this is not yet to establish a Greek *original composition*. Three further points (4–6), however, are suggestive of an original composition in Greek: (4) the overwhelming majority of “Gospels” were composed in Greek; (5) the *Gospel of Thomas* is extant in Nag Hammadi Codex II, which is essentially a (translation of a) Greek collection (as is probably the whole Nag Hammadi corpus): this is circumstantial evidence for a Greek original; (6) the closeness of our Greek *Thomas* to its parallels in the Synoptic Gospels and the *Gospel of the Hebrews* suggests that, like them, *Thomas* was composed of tradition formulated in Greek.

### 1 The material evidence

In the first case, we can merely argue from silence that there is no extant Semitic version of *Thomas*. It is difficult to assess the significance of this particular silence, as well as the weight of the countervailing evidence of the three Greek fragments (*P. Oxy.* 1; 654 and 655). In discussions of the popularity of *Thomas*, the count of three fragments is usually taken to represent a fairly large, rather than small number, although extreme caution must be exercised when we are dealing with such a small statistical sample.<sup>1</sup> The material evidence is sufficient, however, to indicate that a

<sup>1</sup> In favour of seeing three as a large number, Hurtado points out that although this score is much lower than the total number of second- or third-century fragments of Psalms, John and Matthew (sixteen, fifteen and twelve respectively), it is higher than, for example, 1 Corinthians (two fragments) and Mark (only one). L.W. Hurtado, ‘The Greek Fragments

Greek composition should perhaps be the default position in the absence of evidence to the contrary.

## 2 Level of correspondence between items of vocabulary in Greek and Coptic *Thomas*

We can proceed to assemble some of the evidence that is at least strongly suggestive of a Greek *Vorlage* to our Coptic text.

One point which is not sufficiently recognised is how close the match is between items of vocabulary in the Greek and Coptic texts. This is evident on examination of the 27 Greek loanwords in the Coptic text where the Coptic text of *Thomas* and the extant Greek overlap. The following is a list of all the Greek loanwords which occur in sayings in the Coptic text of *Thomas* which are paralleled by the Greek fragments:

*P. Oxy.* 654

<i>GTh</i> 1	ΘΕΡΜΗΝΕΙΑ:	cf. Gk [τὴν ἔρμηνείαν]
<i>GTh</i> 2.2	ῥΟΤΑΝ:	cf. Gk ὄταν
<i>GTh</i> 3.2	ϸῤῆ ἸΑΛΑϸϸΑ:	cf. Gk τῆς θαλά[σσης] <sup>2</sup>
<i>GTh</i> 3.3	ΑΛΛΑ:	cf. Gk καί

Thereafter, in *GTh* 3.4–5 (ῥΟΤΑΝ, ΤΟΤΕ, ΔΕ) the Greek is lacunose.

<i>GTh</i> 4.1	ΕΤΒΕ ΠΤΟΠΟΣ:	cf. Gk περὶ τοῦ τόπου
<i>GTh</i> 5.2	ΓΑΡ:	Greek lacunose at this point
<i>GTh</i> 6.1	-ἸῤῚΗΝϸΤΕΥΕ:	cf. Gk πῶς νηστεύ[σομεν]
<i>GTh</i> 6.1	ΕΛΕΗΜΟϸῤῚΗ:	Greek lacunose at this point
<i>GTh</i> 6.1	ΕΝΔῤῚΠΑΡΑΤΗΡΕΙ:	cf. Gk παρατηρή[σομεν]
<i>GTh</i> 7.1	ΜΑΚΑΡΙΟΣ:	cf. Gk [μα]κάρι[ος]

of the *Gospel of Thomas* as Artefacts: Papyrological Observations on Papyrus Oxyrhynchus 1, Papyrus Oxyrhynchus 654 and Papyrus Oxyrhynchus 655', in J. Frey, J. Schröter and E.E. Popkes, eds. *Das Thomasevangelium: Entstehung – Rezeption – Theologie* (BZNW 157; Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2007), 19–32 (29). See also, however, the appropriate caution in C.M. Tuckett, *The Gospel of Mary* (Oxford University Press, 2007), 9–10.

<sup>2</sup> Here, the reference to the sea is in a different place in the two versions of the saying: in the apodosis in the Greek ('... fish of the sea ...'), and in the protasis in the Coptic ('... it is in the sea ...').



*P. Oxy.* 655

*GTh* 24.1 (with νεφμαθητης, επιποπος and ταναγκη) is not extant.

*GTh* 24.3 επκοςμος: cf. Gk [ ... κ]όσμω

*P. Oxy.* 1

*GTh* 26.2 ροταν: Greek lacunose at this point

*GTh* 26.2 τοτε: cf. Gk τότε

*GTh* 27.1 ετετῃρηστηε: cf. Gk ἐὰν μὴ νηστεύσῃται

*GTh* 27.1 επκοςμος: cf. Gk τὸν κόσμον

*GTh* 27.2 ετετῆτῆερε ... cf. Gk ἐὰν μὴ σαββατίσητε

ἡσαβ̄ βατον:

*GTh* 27.2 ἡπσαμβατον: cf. Gk τὸ σάββατον

*GTh* 28.1 ἡπκοςμος: cf. Gk τοῦ κόσμου

*GTh* 28.1 ρῆ σαρξ: cf. ἐν σαρκί[[ε]]

*GTh* 28.3 -ταψχη: cf. Gk ἡ ψυχὴ μου

Thereafter, little of *GTh* 28 survives in Greek, and so what might have been parallel to επκοςμος, πκοςμος, πλην, ροταν, τοτε and σεναρμετανοει is not extant. Only the very end of *GTh* 29 survives in Greek, and so, similarly, what would have been parallel to τσαρξ, πῆα, πῆα, πσωμα and αλλα is not extant.

*GTh* 30.2 η: no Gk parallel

*GTh* 31.1 προφητης: cf. Gk προφήτης

*GTh* 31.2 ρθεραπεε: cf. Gk ποιεῖ θεραπείας

*GTh* 32 ογπολις: cf. Gk πόλις

*GTh* 32 ογδε: cf. Gk οὔτε ... οὔτε ...

*GTh* 33.2–3 (γαρ, ογδε, αλλα, τλχηια) not paralleled in extant Greek

*P. Oxy.* 655

*GTh* 37.1 νεφμαθητης: cf. Gk οἱ μαθηταὶ αὐτοῦ

*GTh* 37.2 ροταν: cf. Gk ὅταν

From *GTh* 37.3 to *GTh* 39.2 (τοτε, ατετῆρεπθῆμει, ἡφαρισαιος, ἡγραμματεε, ἡτνωσις, ογτε) the Greek is too lacunose to identify similarities or differences between Greek and Coptic texts.

<i>GTh</i> 39.3	ⲁⲉ:	cf. Gk δέ
<i>GTh</i> 39.3	ⲙⲫⲮⲠⲛⲓⲙⲟⲥ:	cf. Gk [φρόνι]μοι
<i>GTh</i> 39.3	ⲛⲁⲕⲉⲣⲁⲓⲟⲥ:	cf. Gk [ἀ]κέραι[οι]

It can be observed that, in almost every case, there is a correspondence between a borrowed Greek word in the Coptic where Greek text is extant. The only exceptions are a case of ἀλλὰ (← καί in *GTh* 3.3), an unparalleled use of η in *GTh* 30.2, and *GTh* 32's preference in Coptic for οϣⲁⲉ over the Greek's οὔτε ... οὔτε ... . In the latter two cases, the discrepancy arises from a different syntax in the surrounding context, and the variation between οϣⲁⲉ and οὔτε is insignificant when one considers that Coptic frequently does not distinguish between ⲁ and τ.<sup>3</sup> If one leaves the η and οϣⲁⲉ out of account, then one is left with only one exception out of 25. (We have seen, moreover, that particles are the elements least predictably rendered in other Greek-to-Coptic translations.) This is a fairly remarkable statistic, making a Greek *Vorlage* – and one which is fairly similar to our extant Greek fragments – almost certain.

### 3 Additional features of Greek loanwords in Coptic *Thomas*

What is evident immediately from reading the Coptic text is the high proportion of Greek loanwords. According to Stephen Emmel's index in the Coptic Gnostic Library edition, there are 372 instances of 'words borrowed from Greek', excluding proper names.<sup>4</sup> This is a proportion of over 3 cases per saying, and an average of almost 1 instance in every other line of the manuscript. On its own, this does not support a Greek original, or even a Greek *Vorlage*, since it was common for native Coptic works also to contain a high proportion of Greek vocabulary.<sup>5</sup> Perhaps most striking, however, are some of the particular instances of Greek, such as ⲁⲓⲁ ⲧⲟϣⲧⲟ (*GTh* 21) and ⲙⲎⲎ ... ⲁⲉ ... (*GTh* 73). Förster's

<sup>3</sup> J.M. Plumley, 'Limitations of Coptic (Sahidic) in Representing Greek', in B.M. Metzger, *The Early Versions of the New Testament: Their Origin, Transmission, and Limitations* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1977), 141–52 (147). Admittedly, however, Plumley notes that the shift is usually from δ to τ and not so much the other way round.

<sup>4</sup> See the list in S. Emmel, 'Indexes of Words/Catalogues of Grammatical Forms', in B. Layton, ed. *Nag Hammadi Codex II, 2–7, together with XIII, 2\**, *Brit. Lib. Or.4926(1), and P. Oxy. 1, 654, 655*, vol. I (Leiden: Brill, 1989), 261–336 ('Tractate II: The Gospel according to Thomas. II. Words Borrowed from Greek', 280–2). This is a maximal number, including restored instances, but excluding instances in the apparatus.

<sup>5</sup> See the discussion in W.A. Girgis, 'Greek Loan Words in Coptic (I)', *Bulletin de la Société d'Archéologie Copte* 17 (1964), 63–73 (esp. 64, 71).

*Lexicon* has no attestation of the latter in Coptic documents, and  $\Delta\iota\alpha\ \tau\omicron\gamma\tau\omicron$  is perhaps even more remarkable given Girgis's comment in his comprehensive survey of the subject: 'Though nouns and verbs naturally predominate, the Greek loan words may come from any other part of speech except pronouns.'<sup>6</sup> Admittedly  $\tau\omicron\gamma\tau\omicron$  appears here in a compound phrase, but Girgis's remark suggests that it would have nevertheless not been used as a natural Coptic form (nor probably therefore in a translation from a language other than Greek); as such, it is very likely to have been an import from a Greek *Vorlage*.

One factor most effectively deployed in the identification of a Greek original or *Vorlage* when Coptic is the target language is the survival of inflected Greek forms. This is apparent in Nag Hammadi works such as the *Apocalypse of Adam* mentioned below. We do not have in our manuscript of *Thomas* instances of vocatives, accusatives, genitives or datives, but we do have nominative *neuter* singular forms of adjectives:

- 14.3  $\epsilon\tau\epsilon\tau\eta\nu\alpha\epsilon\iota\rho\epsilon\ \bar{\eta}\gamma\kappa\alpha\kappa\omicron\nu\ \bar{\eta}\nu\epsilon\tau\bar{\eta}\pi\eta\bar{\nu}\alpha$   
 45.2  $\omicron\gamma\alpha\gamma\alpha\theta\omicron\varsigma\ \bar{\rho}\rho\omega\mu\epsilon\ \omega\alpha\varphi\epsilon\iota\eta\epsilon\ \bar{\eta}\gamma\alpha\gamma\alpha\theta\omicron\nu$   
 45.3  $\omicron\gamma\kappa\alpha\kappa[\omicron\varsigma]\ \bar{\rho}\rho\omega\mu\epsilon\ \omega\alpha\varphi\epsilon\iota\eta\epsilon\ \bar{\eta}\zeta\bar{\eta}\pi\omicron\nu\eta\rho\omicron\nu\ \dots$   
 $\lambda\gamma\omega\ \bar{\eta}\varphi\chi\omega\ \bar{\eta}\zeta\bar{\eta}\pi\omicron\nu\eta\rho\omicron\nu$   
 45.4  $\omega\alpha\varphi\epsilon\iota\eta\epsilon\ \epsilon\beta\omicron\lambda\ \bar{\eta}\zeta\bar{\eta}\pi\omicron\nu\eta\rho\omicron\nu$

It could be claimed that these examples indicate that the neuter forms of these very common adjectives are almost regarded as nouns and therefore lexical forms in their own right. More striking, however, is a later example:

- 87.1  $\omicron\gamma\tau\alpha\lambda\alpha\iota\pi\omega\rho\omicron\nu\ \pi\epsilon\ \pi\varsigma\omega\mu\alpha\ \epsilon\tau\alpha\omega\epsilon\ \bar{\eta}\gamma\omega\varsigma\omega\mu\alpha$

This inclusion of a neuter form of the adjective  $\tau\alpha\lambda\alpha\acute{\iota}\pi\omega\rho\omicron\varsigma$  is striking, and is certainly suggestive, at the very least, of a Greek *Vorlage*.<sup>7</sup> This makes the proposals discussed above such as Nagel on *GTh* 27.2 about a direct translation from Aramaic to Coptic hard to maintain.

<sup>6</sup> Girgis, 'Greek Loan Words in Coptic (I)', 63; cf. the comment on *Thomas* by H.P. Houghton, 'The Coptic Gospel of Thomas', *Aegyptus* 43 (1963), 107–40 (136): 'Pronouns appear to be the form most rarely borrowed.' In fact, the  $\tau\omicron\gamma\tau\omicron$  in this  $\Delta\iota\alpha\ \tau\omicron\gamma\tau\omicron$  is the only case.

<sup>7</sup> W.A. Girgis [Anba Gregorius], 'Greek Loan Words in Coptic (VI)', *Bulletin de la Société d'Archéologie Copte* 23 (1976–8), 199–222 (199–200) notes that inflexion does appear, but it is rare and almost all the examples he gives are from material translated from Greek.

#### 4 Greek Gospels

A further consideration is that the genre of literature with which the *Gospel of Thomas* is associated is overwhelmingly Greek. As it stands, the genre of *Thomas* is that of a “Gospel”: it is clearly identified as such in the title appended to the Coptic text, and – if they are dealing with essentially the same work – in the numerous patristic references to it, beginning with Hippolytus in the early third century.<sup>8</sup> Even if that designation were not original, however, it is clearly the case from the beginning that *Thomas* was intended as a collection of saying words. Even if it is not a Gospel in the canonical sense, it is probably a Gospel when considered on its own terms.

When one considers Gospels, one has in the four NT Gospels four Greek compositions; Papias’s report about a Hebrew Matthew may be correct, but has also been questioned. Though some scholarship now is more optimistic about an original Hebrew or Aramaic for Matthew,<sup>9</sup> one more frequently encounters very strong statements against it.<sup>10</sup> As far as Q is concerned, even leaving aside the question of its existence, there is considerable debate among Q specialists as to its original character. Ellis has summed up the diversity of scholarly opinion on topics including its genre and original language as follows:

Q is a single document, a composite document, several documents. It incorporates earlier sources; it is used in different redactions. Its original language is Greek; it is Aramaic; Q is used in different translations. It is the Matthean logia; it is not. It has shape and sequence; it is a collection of fragments. It is a Gospel; it is not. It consists wholly of sayings; it includes narrative. It is all preserved in Matthew and Luke; it is not. Matthew’s order of Q is correct; Luke’s is correct; neither is correct. It is used by Mark; it is not used by Mark.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>8</sup> On these patristic references, see S.J. Gathercole, ‘Named Testimonia to the *Gospel of Thomas*: An Expanded Inventory and Analysis’, *HTR* 104 (2012), forthcoming.

<sup>9</sup> W.D. Davies and D.C. Allison, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel according to Saint Matthew*, 3 vols. (ICC; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1988–97), I, 7–17.

<sup>10</sup> See e.g. A. F. Gregory, ‘Jewish-Christian Gospels’, in P. Foster, ed. *The Non-Canonical Gospels* (New York/London: T&T Clark, 2008), 54–67 (55): ‘the reasons for believing that Matthew was composed in Greek are so compelling that the quest for a Hebrew original is best regarded as a dead end, no matter how romantic its pursuit might seem’.

<sup>11</sup> E.E. Ellis, *The Making of the New Testament Documents* (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 17–18. For some of the disagreement over original language, see P.M. Casey’s argument for Aramaic against J.S. Kloppenborg’s argument for Greek in *An Aramaic Approach to Q: Sources for the Gospels of Matthew and Luke* (SNTSMS 122; Cambridge University Press, 2002). 22–3; cf. J.S. Kloppenborg, *The Formation of Q: Trajectories in Ancient Wisdom*

When one moves to extant works, the recently discovered *Gospel of Judas* is, as far as I am aware, taken *omnium consensu* to have been written in Greek;<sup>12</sup> the same is true of the *Gospel of Peter*.<sup>13</sup> The *Gospel of Philip* is almost always taken to have been written in Greek, despite its interest in Syrian themes and – as is generally accepted – Syrian provenance.<sup>14</sup> The same may well be true of *P. Oxy.* 840, for which Kruger assumes a Greek original but suggests a Syrian provenance.<sup>15</sup> Almost all commentators thus far on the *Gospel of the Saviour* propose a Greek original, with the exception of Peter Nagel, who considers the work a Coptic composition.<sup>16</sup> For the *Gospel of Mary*, Tuckett allows an original language other than Greek as a merely theoretical possibility, with no positive evidence in its favour.<sup>17</sup>

*Collections* (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 1999), 51–64; Kloppenborg, *Excavating Q: The History and Setting of the Sayings Gospel* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2000), 72–80. Interestingly, the original language of *Thomas* is not a factor in the discussion of the original language of Q here: presumably the former is assumed by Kloppenborg to be Greek.

<sup>12</sup> See e.g. R. Kasser, M. Meyer and G. Wurst, eds. *The Gospel of Judas* (Washington, DC: National Geographic, 2006), 11; E. Pagels and K. King, *Reading Judas* (London: Penguin/Allen Lane, 2007), xi.

<sup>13</sup> Greek composition seems to be assumed by all commentators. See, for example, the discussion of the style of *G. Pet.* in H.B. Swete, *The Gospel of St. Peter: The Text in Greek and English with Introduction, Notes and Indices* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2005 [1893]), xlv.

<sup>14</sup> J.É. Ménard, *L'Évangile selon Philippe: introduction, texte, traduction, commentaire* (Strasbourg: Faculté de Théologie Catholique, 1967), 33–5, suggests that the *Vorlage* of the Coptic text at least is Greek, and comments that the work originated in a 'milieu syriaque' (34) and an 'ambiance syriaque' (35), but makes no mention of a Syriac-language original; W. Isenberg, 'Tractate 3: The Gospel according to Philip: Introduction', in B. Layton, ed. *Nag Hammadi Codex II, 2–7, together with XIII, 2\**, *Brit. Lib. Or.4926(1), and P. Oxy. I, 654, 655*, vol. I, 131–9 (134). He is followed by P. Foster, 'The Gospel of Philip', in Foster, ed. *The Non-Canonical Gospels* (New York/London: T&T Clark, 2008), 68–83 (70 n. 24).

<sup>15</sup> T.J. Kraus, M.J. Kruger and T. Nicklas, eds. *Gospel Fragments* (OECGT; Oxford University Press, 2009), 167 (in reference to Syria), and 168 (in reference to the 'Greek original').

<sup>16</sup> C.W. Hedrick and P.A. Mirecki, *Gospel of the Savior: A New Ancient Gospel* (Santa Rosa, CA: Polebridge, 1999), 12–13; U.-K. Plisch, 'Zu einigen Einleitungsfragen des Unbekannten Berliner Evangeliums (UBE)', *ZAC* 9 (2005), 64–84 (72); S. Emmel, 'The Recently Published *Gospel of the Savior* ("Unbekanntes Berliner Evangelium")': Righting the Order of Pages and Events', *HTR* 95 (2002), 45–72 (47 n. 12); P. Nagel, "'Gespräche Jesu mit seinen Jüngern vor der Auferstehung': Zur Herkunft und Datierung des "Unbekannten Berliner Evangelium"', *ZNW* 94 (2003), 215–57. As Plisch comments, Nagel has rightly forced scholars to base such judgements on evidence, rather than assumption ('Zu einigen Einleitungsfragen', 71 n. 18).

<sup>17</sup> Tuckett, *Gospel of Mary*, 10–11. K.L. King, *The Gospel of Mary Magdala* (Santa Rosa, CA: Polebridge Press, 2003), 8, assumes a Greek original. Similarly A. Pasquier, *L'Évangile selon Marie (BG I)* (BCNH 10; Quebec City: Presses de l'Université Laval, 1983), 2.

The Infancy Gospels can also be noted, even though none were called “Gospels” in antiquity. As far as the *Infancy Gospel of Thomas* is concerned, Chartrand-Burke comments that in the early days of scholarship on the work, ‘some even suggested that IGT was composed in Syriac’.<sup>18</sup> Now, however, this has been discredited as idiosyncratic. The *Protevangeliium of James* is equally clearly a Greek composition.<sup>19</sup> The exception among the three usually considered in the category of Infancy Gospels is the *Gospel of Pseudo-Matthew*, which coming from much later was composed in Latin.<sup>20</sup> One intriguing possibility for a Syriac work is the recently published *Armenian Gospel of the Infancy*.<sup>21</sup> Terian considers this work ‘a sixth-century translation from a now lost Syriac original’, although the brief arguments which he offers are by no means secure and will require detailed analysis in the future.<sup>22</sup> This work is in any case probably, like the *Gospel of Pseudo-Matthew*, rather late for our purposes. The same is true of the *Gospel of Nicodemus/Acts of Pilate*, though recensions exist in both Greek and Latin.<sup>23</sup>

Even in the cases of the so-called “Jewish-Christian Gospels”, which according to some scholars are closely related to *Thomas*,<sup>24</sup> Semitic originals can by no means be assumed.<sup>25</sup> Several difficulties attend any of the introductory questions surrounding these Gospels. We do not even know how many such Gospels there are: scholars usually assign the standard “canon” of excerpts to the *Gospel of the Hebrews*, the *Gospel of the Nazoraeans* and the *Gospel of the Ebionites*, despite the fact that the second of these is a medieval title and the third a twentieth-century one.<sup>26</sup>

<sup>18</sup> A. Chartrand-Burke, ‘The *Infancy Gospel of Thomas*’, in P. Foster, ed. *The Non-Canonical Gospels*, (New York/London: T&T Clark, 2008), 126–38 (132 and n. 23). Assumed in R.F. Hock, *The Infancy Gospels of James and Thomas* (Santa Rosa, CA: Polebridge, 1995), 99, in his reference to texts ‘both Greek and versional’.

<sup>19</sup> Assumed in Hock, *Infancy Gospels of James and Thomas*, 10, and esp. 12.

<sup>20</sup> It is regarded by Gijssel as really a ‘remaniement’ of its ‘modèle grec’, i.e. of the *Protevangeliium of James*: see J. Gijssel and R. Beyers, *Libri de nativitate Mariae: Pseudo-Matthaei Evangelium: Textus et Commentarius* (CCSA 9; Turnhout: Brepols, 1997), 50. Gijssel concludes that it *certainly* dates from between the middle of the sixth and the last decades of the eighth centuries, and *probably* comes from the first quarter of the seventh (*Pseudo-Matthaei Evangelium*, 67).

<sup>21</sup> A. Terian, ed. *The Armenian Gospel of the Infancy: With Three Early Versions of the Protevangeliium of James* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).

<sup>22</sup> Terian, *Armenian Gospel of the Infancy*: xi, xxii–xxvi.

<sup>23</sup> H.-J. Klauck, *Apocryphal Gospels: An Introduction* (London/New York: T&T Clark, 2003 [2002]), 89.

<sup>24</sup> As already noted, discussed in G. Quispel, ‘The Gospel of Thomas and the New Testament’, *VigChr* 11 (1957), 189–207.

<sup>25</sup> Cf. Chartrand-Burke, ‘The *Infancy Gospel of Thomas*’, 132: ‘Of all first- and second-century Gospels only the *Gospel of the Hebrews* and the *Gospel of the Nazoraeans* are believed to have been written in a Semitic language.’

<sup>26</sup> Klauck, *Apocryphal Gospels*, 37.

The question of the original language of these excerpts is by no means as clear as one might assume from the works' "Jewish-Christian" character. Klauck simply comments, "The original language may have been Aramaic or Greek."<sup>27</sup>

First, we can examine the *Gospel of the Ebionites*, which gives us a taste of just how confusing is the field of Jewish-Christian Gospels. The seven testimonia for *G. Eb.* all come in Epiphanius, and there are strong suggestions in these extracts that their language is Greek: in *Panarion* 30.13.4–5, Epiphanius notes that the work twists the true diet of John the Baptist from ἀκρίδες ('locusts') to a honeyed ἔγκρις (a cake), a misprision that makes best sense in Greek;<sup>28</sup> Epiphanius also refers to an impious addition of a 'not' in the reference to Jesus desiring to eat meat with his disciples at the Passover, noting that the additional 'not' is an addition of *mu* and *ēta*; Klijn argues that the same passage also shows knowledge of the Septuagint.<sup>29</sup> At the same time, however, Epiphanius follows Irenaeus' observations (*AH* 1.26.2; 3.11.7) that the Ebionites used the Gospel of Matthew, which according to *Panarion* 30.13.2 they call a Hebrew Gospel of Matthew. It would be tempting for the present argument to conclude with Gregory that: "Two things seem clear. Not only are the excerpts written in Greek, but they appear to contain material that depends on at least Matthew and Luke."<sup>30</sup> This may only be part of the story, however, and the primary sources do not really let us come to a definite conclusion about which works are in view in Epiphanius' account: Skarsaune is probably correct that Epiphanius is collapsing two distinct works into one.<sup>31</sup>

Second, the *Gospel of the Hebrews* is known in the second and third centuries in Greek, and only later in a Semitic language. Clement and Origen seem to know it in Greek, and the language of the seeking-finding-reigning-resting saying (*Strom.* 2.45.5; 5.96.3) is very close to the Greek of *GTh* 2 (as we shall see below). Didymus also refers to it in his *Commentary on the Psalms*, meaning that the first three Fathers who know the *Gospel of the Hebrews* are Greek authors based in Alexandria. In part on this basis, Klijn is confident that the original language is

<sup>27</sup> Klauck, *Apocryphal Gospels*, 37.

<sup>28</sup> Klauck, *Apocryphal Gospels*, 51.

<sup>29</sup> A.F.J. Klijn, *Jewish-Christian Gospel Tradition* (VigChrSupps 17; Leiden/New York/Cologne: Brill, 1992), 67–8.

<sup>30</sup> Gregory, 'Jewish-Christian Gospels', 61; A.F. Gregory, 'Hindrances or Help: Does the Modern Category of "Jewish-Christian Gospel" Distort Our Understanding of the Texts to which It Refers?', *JSNT* 28 (2006), 387–413 (395).

<sup>31</sup> O. Skarsaune, 'The Ebionites', in O. Skarsaune and R. Hvalvik, eds. *Jewish Believers in Jesus: The Early Centuries* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2007), 419–62 (460–1).

Greek.<sup>32</sup> It is only in the fourth century, with Jerome, that we have reference to the work as written in Hebrew: Jerome apparently had to translate it himself into Greek and Latin (*Vir. Ill. 2*).

Finally, Jerome also refers to a Gospel read by the Nazoraeans, but he identifies it with the *Gospel of the Hebrews*.<sup>33</sup> Nevertheless, scholars have assembled a collection of passages under the heading of the *Gospel of the Nazoraeans*, many of which have close associations with Matthew's Gospel. Gregory raises the possibility that it is simply a Semitic translation of canonical Matthew.<sup>34</sup> Klijn takes a softer line, acknowledging merely its knowledge of Matthew, and claiming that it was composed in Aramaic.<sup>35</sup> Klijn everywhere exudes confidence in his assignment of all the extant fragments to respective Gospels and the groups behind them;<sup>36</sup> Klauck is a helpful corrective to this, especially where the *Gospel of the Nazoraeans* is concerned, and rightly talks of 'the precarious status of this text'.<sup>37</sup>

We cannot rule out the composition of one (or possibly more) of these Gospels in a Semitic language: the reference to the Holy Spirit as Jesus' mother in Origen's quotation of the *Gospel of the Hebrews*, for example, may well reflect Semitic influence of some kind.<sup>38</sup> Similarly, although the syntax is ambiguous, Eusebius' reference to Hegesippus having made extracts from τὸ Συριακόν (*EH 4.22.8*) may well refer to a Gospel, although the adjective may equally be either a geographical, ethnic or a linguistic label: one can compare the phrases attributed to τὸ Ἰουδαϊκόν, which are all in Greek.<sup>39</sup> The passages in Jerome which are grouped under the heading of the *Gospel of the Nazoraeans* may well have been composed originally in Hebrew or Aramaic.<sup>40</sup> The case for Semitic origins is by no means clear, however. The problem is not that the evidence for Greek originals versus Semitic originals for these Gospels is divided or finely balanced; it is more a matter of the whole situation being very messy and difficult to penetrate; we are, moreover,

<sup>32</sup> Klijn, *Jewish-Christian Gospel Tradition*, 33.

<sup>33</sup> Gregory, 'Hindrance or Help', 402.

<sup>34</sup> Gregory, 'Jewish-Christian Gospels', 61.

<sup>35</sup> Klijn, *Jewish-Christian Gospel Tradition*, 29–30.

<sup>36</sup> See Klijn, *Jewish-Christian Gospel Tradition*, 30: there are three Gospels (this is 'an established fact', p. 41), which reflect distinct Jewish-Christian circles; one group lived east of the Jordan; the Nazoraeans lived around Beroia, and the third was a group of Egyptian Jewish-Christians.

<sup>37</sup> Klauck, *Apocryphal Gospels*, 37.

<sup>38</sup> Gregory, 'Jewish-Christian Gospels', 60.

<sup>39</sup> Klijn, *Jewish-Christian Gospel Tradition*, 34 *et passim*.

<sup>40</sup> Gregory, 'Jewish-Christian Gospels', 60–1.



dealing with fragments which are very brief and which as a result do not yield up much evidence one way or the other from their content.

Overall, where we are dealing with known extant texts for which we have enough information on which to draw reasonably secure conclusions, the evidence points almost without exception to Greek originals. The Gospel genre is overwhelmingly a Greek-language genre.

## 5 Greek originals of Nag Hammadi tractates

Additionally, when one considers the overlapping body of Nag Hammadi literature, it is difficult to see any tractate as composed in a language other than Greek.

Among the editors of the Brill Coptic Gnostic Library edition, I find none who take any of the various works to have been composed in a language other than Greek. Indeed, one frequently encounters such comments as: ‘There is no reason to believe that any of the Nag Hammadi tractates were originally written in Coptic or that any were translated from a language other than Greek.’<sup>41</sup> Although there is not a routine discussion of original language in the Coptic Gnostic Library edition, explicit comments about Greek originals are made in a number of cases.<sup>42</sup> One of the few works to have generated some alternative views is the *Gospel of Truth*: H.-M. Schenke, although himself arguing for a Greek original, notes: ‘Its peculiarity is also evident in the fact that the question of what its original language might have been is not answered by the chorus of scholars *uni sono* with “Greek”.’<sup>43</sup> Ménard has pointed out problems with

<sup>41</sup> F. Wisse, ‘Introduction to Codex VII’, in B.A. Pearson, ed. *Nag Hammadi Codex VII* (NHS 30; Leiden/New York/Cologne, 1996), 1–13 (11 n. 37).

<sup>42</sup> On the *Prayer of the Apostle Paul*, Mueller begins his discussion of the book on the first page with the words, ‘Originally composed in Greek’ (D. Mueller, ‘Prayer of the Apostle Paul: Introduction’, in H.W. Attridge, ed. *Nag Hammadi Codex I (The Jung Codex)*, vol. I (NHS 22; Leiden: Brill, 1985), 5–7 (5). As for the *Apocryphon of James*, ‘the document’s original was Greek’: so F.E. Williams, ‘The Apocryphon of James: Introduction’, in H.W. Attridge, ed. *Nag Hammadi Codex I (The Jung Codex)*, vol. I (NHS 22; Leiden: Brill, 1985), 13–27 (27). D. Rouleau, *L’Épître apocryphe de Jacques (NH I, 2)* (BCNH 18; Quebec City: Presses de l’Université Laval, 1987), 2, points to the Greek Dative  $\text{ⲙⲏⲛⲓⲛⲓⲧⲉⲃⲣⲁⲓⲟⲩ}$  in *Ap. Jam.* 1.16 as one piece of evidence. On the *Treatise on the Resurrection*, see the comments in M.L. Peel, ‘Treatise on the Resurrection: Introduction’, in H.W. Attridge, ed. *Nag Hammadi Codex I (The Jung Codex)*, vol. I (NHS 22; Leiden: Brill, 1985), 123–46 (146). In the same volume again, see H.W. Attridge and E. Pagels, ‘The Tripartite Tractate: Introduction’, 172–3. On the *Dialogue of the Saviour*, see H. Koester and E. Pagels, ‘Introduction’, in S. Emmel, ed. *Nag Hammadi Codex III,5: Dialogue of the Saviour* (NHS 26; Leiden: Brill, 1984), 1–17 (15).

<sup>43</sup> H.-M. Schenke, ‘“Evangelium Veritatis” (NHC I,3/XII,2)’, in H.-M. Schenke, H.-G. Bethge and U.U. Kaiser, eds. *Nag Hammadi Deutsch*, vol. I, *NHC I,1-V,1*, vol. II,

the approaches of the alternative theories of Fecht (arguing for a Coptic original) and Nagel (arguing for Syriac), however, in particular in the latter case by indicating that the plays on words suggested as going back to a Syriac original work equally well in Greek.<sup>44</sup> As such, Attridge and MacRae conclude, ‘there is little reason to maintain that the *Gos. Truth* differs from all the other Nag Hammadi tractates in being a translation from a Greek source’.<sup>45</sup> Additionally, if it or some version of it is the same *Gospel of Truth* known to Irenaeus (*AH* 3.11.9), a Greek original increases in probability. Another work to have generated a different view is the *Sophia of Jesus Christ*, which was taken by Doresse initially to have been composed in Coptic. Later, however, Puech connected *SJC* with the Greek *P. Oxy.* 1081, and so the Coptic hypothesis crumbled.<sup>46</sup> There are some cases in the Nag Hammadi corpus where there is no doubt about the original language: most obviously, the section of Plato’s *Republic* translated into Coptic in Codex VI! The same can probably be said with similar confidence about the *Sentences of Sextus* and the *Teaching of Silvanus*. Additionally, *Zostrianus* was the subject of discussion in Plotinus’ school, obviously a Greek intellectual environment.<sup>47</sup>

Moving from the edition organised by J.M. Robinson, we can also note the two-volume *Nag Hammadi Deutsch* where Christoph Marksches takes the view that the whole Nag Hammadi corpus is of Greek composition – noting the point in his prefatory remarks in connection with the inclusion of the *NHD* volumes in the *Griechische Christliche Schriftsteller* series.<sup>48</sup> H.-M. Schenke notes the point again in the introduction to the

*NHC V,2-XIII,1, BG 1 und 4* (GCS; Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2001, 2003), I.27–44 (29): ‘Ihre Besonderheit zeigt sich nun auch darin, dass die Frage, welches ihre Ursprache gewesen sein mag, vom Chor der Forscher nicht *uni sono* mit: “Griechisch” beantwortet wird.’ He goes on to comment, however: ‘Dass Griechisch auch im Falle des EV die Sprache ist, in der das Original einst entworfen wurde, ist dennoch zwar die Meinung der Mehrzahl oder fast alle.’ Noting Fecht and Nagel, he adds: ‘Von diesen beiden Gegenthesen stellt die syrische Variante wohl die grössere “Versuchung” dar und kann noch heute als eine gewisse Bedrohung der “normalen” Sicht der Dinge wirken.’ (29).

<sup>44</sup> J.E. Ménard, *L’Évangile de vérité* (NHS 2; Leiden: Brill, 1972), 9–17 (12, on the point about the wordplays).

<sup>45</sup> H.W. Attridge and G. MacRae, ‘The Gospel of Truth: Introduction’, in Attridge, ed. *Nag Hammadi Codex I (The Jung Codex)*, vol. I (NHS 22; Leiden: Brill, 1985), 55–81 (64).

<sup>46</sup> D.M. Parrott, ‘Introduction’, in Parrott, ed. *Nag Hammadi Codices III,3–4 and V,1, with Papyrus Oxyrhynchus 8502,3 and Oxyrhynchus Papyrus 1081* (NHS 27; Leiden/New York/Cologne: Brill, 1991), 1–30(6–7).

<sup>47</sup> Sieber’s analysis of *Zostrianus* provides further evidence for the Greek *Vorlage*. See J.H. Sieber, ‘Introduction to *Zostrianus*’, in Sieber, ed. *Nag Hammadi Codex VIII* (NHS 31; Leiden/New York/Cologne: Brill, 1991), 7–28 (27).

<sup>48</sup> C. Marksches, ‘Geleitwort’, in H.-M. Schenke, H.-G. Bethge and U.U. Kaiser, eds. *Nag Hammadi Deutsch*, vol. I, *NHC I,1-V,1*, vol. II, *NHC V,2-XIII,1, BG 1 und 4* (GCS; Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2001, 2003) I.v–vii (vi).

volumes, pointing to the virtual scholarly unanimity on the point: ‘But in all cases we are dealing with translations, and, as is unanimously accepted for almost all works, translations from Greek.’<sup>49</sup> Occasionally, the editors of the individual tractates make similar comments, such as: ‘*The Second Treatise of the Great Seth* is – like all Nag Hammadi writings – the Coptic translation of a Greek original.’<sup>50</sup> Sometimes, the language is slightly more moderate, noting the analogy not of all, but of ‘almost all’ or ‘most’ of the other Nag Hammadi tractates.<sup>51</sup> A number of the editors refer to careless incorporation of Greek case endings in the Coptic translation as particularly suggestive of translation from Greek.

All but one of the *NHD* editor-translators identify the text for which they are responsible as translated from a Greek original. The exception is Beltz’s verdict on the *Apocalypse of Adam*, which he regards as an Aramaic work.<sup>52</sup> This is unlikely, however,<sup>53</sup> and MacRae’s opinion in the *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha* that the original is Greek is much more likely.<sup>54</sup> A Greek original (or at least a Greek *Vorlage*) is suggested in the cases of OT allusions, where there is a closeness to Greek versions.<sup>55</sup> This is confirmed by the survival of a Greek

<sup>49</sup> H.-M. Schenke, ‘Einführung’, in H.-G. Bethge and U.U. Kaiser, eds. *Nag Hammadi Deutsch*, vol. I, *NHC I,1-V,1*, vol. II, *NHC V,2-XIII,1, BG 1 and 4* (GCS; Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2001, 2003), 1.1–6 (2): ‘In allen Fällen aber handelt es sich um Übersetzungen, und zwar, wie für fast alle Schriften einmütig angenommen wird, (letztlich) aus dem Griechischen.’

<sup>50</sup> S. Pellegrini, ‘Der Zweite Logos des großen Seth (NHC VII,2)’, in H.-M. Schenke, H.-G. Bethge and U.U. Kaiser, eds. *Nag Hammadi Deutsch*, vol. I, *NHC I,1-V,1*, vol. II, *NHC V,2-XIII,1, BG 1 and 4* (GCS; Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2001, 2003), II.569–90 (571): ‘2LogSeth ist – wie alle NH-Schriften – die koptische Übersetzung eines griechischen Originals.’ Or again, ‘ApkPt ist, wie auch die anderen Nag-Hammadi-Schriften, aller Wahrscheinlichkeit nach aus der griechischen Sprache übersetzt worden.’ (H. Havelaar, ‘Die Apokalypse des Petrus’, in H.-M. Schenke, H.-G. Bethge and U.U. Kaiser, eds. *Nag Hammadi Deutsch*, vol. I, *NHC I,1-V,1*, vol. II, *NHC V,2-XIII,1, BG 1 and 4* (GCS; Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2001, 2003), II.591–600 (593)). These are not merely comments on Greek as the most immediate *Vorlage* of the Coptic versions; the discussions occur under the heading, featuring in almost all chapters in the *Nag Hammadi Deutsch* volumes, of ‘Ursprache’.

<sup>51</sup> The comments of U.U. Kaiser and U.-K. Plisch (H.-M. Schenke, H.-G. Bethge and U.U. Kaiser, eds. *Nag Hammadi Deutsch*, vol. I, *NHC I,1-V,1*, vol. II, *NHC V,2-XIII,1, BG 1 and 4* (GCS; Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2001, 2003), II.425, 456): ‘fast aller’, ‘meisten’.

<sup>52</sup> W. Beltz, ‘Die Apokalypse des Adam (NHC V,5)’, in H.-M. Schenke, H.-G. Bethge and U.U. Kaiser, eds. *Nag Hammadi Deutsch*, vol. I, *NHC I,1-V,1*, vol. II, *NHC V,2-XIII,1, BG 1 and 4* (GCS; Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2001, 2003), II.433–41 (434).

<sup>53</sup> Beltz argues that Aramaic is the *Vorlage* on the basis of this being the common language of Syrian Jews between 100 BCE and 200 CE. This does not do justice to the bilingualism of Syria discussed above, however.

<sup>54</sup> G. MacRae, ‘Apocalypse of Adam’, in J.H. Charlesworth, ed. *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, vol. I (New York: Doubleday, 1983), 707–19 (708).

<sup>55</sup> MacRae, ‘Apocalypse of Adam’, 708.

genitive: the translator has not recognized ἄνθεῶνος as the genitive singular of ἄνθεών (quite understandably, since it is a rare word) and so reproduces it *literatim* as ἀνωθενος (V 80.6).<sup>56</sup> Further evidence for a Greek original for the *Apocalypse of Adam* has been discussed in some detail by Françoise Morard.<sup>57</sup>

A similar sentiment can also be found in the French-language Bibliothèque copte de Nag Hammadi. Although the scope of her comment is not co-extensive with the NH corpus, Anne Pasquier judges the *Gospel of Mary*, 'like the other Gnostic writings, because of its origin, to have been composed in Greek'.<sup>58</sup>

There is not space here to examine the cases for the original language of each Nag Hammadi tractate; we will here merely outline current scholarship on the tractates in Codex II (with an extended note on Codex XIII). Leaving aside the *Gospel of Thomas* because it is the tractate under question here, there does not seem to have been much doubt that all the other tractates accompanying it in Codex II were composed in Greek. The copies of the *Apocryphon of John* from Nag Hammadi (and the same is true of the Berlin version) are taken in the Brill edition to represent two different Greek *Vorlagen*, a longer and a shorter, the translation of neither of which appears to have been a straightforward matter.<sup>59</sup> After *Thomas* comes the *Gospel of Philip*, which, as we have already noted, is taken to have been written in Greek, despite its interest in Syrian themes and – as is generally accepted – Syrian provenance.<sup>60</sup> In the case of the *Hypostasis of the Archons*, 'It is generally assumed by scholarship that *HypArch*, like all the Nag Hammadi texts, was translated from Greek.'<sup>61</sup> Indeed, Peter Nagel has produced a retroversion into

<sup>56</sup> G. MacRae, 'The Apocalypse of Adam', in D.M. Parrott, ed. *Nag Hammadi Codices V, 2–5 and VI with Papyrus Berolinensis 8502, 1 and 4* (NHS 11; Leiden: Brill 1979) 151–95 (183), notes that this is 'very unusual'.

<sup>57</sup> F. Morard, *L'Apocalypse d'Adam* (NH V, 5) (BCNH 15; Quebec City: Presses de L'Université Laval, 1985), 5–6.

<sup>58</sup> Pasquier, *L'Évangile selon Marie*, 2: 'comme les autres écrits gnostiques, doit à l'origine, avoir été composé en grec'.

<sup>59</sup> M. Waldstein and F. Wisse, eds. *The Apocryphon of John: Synopsis of the Nag Hammadi Codices II,1; III,1; and IV,1 with BG 8502,2* (NHS 33; Leiden/New York/Cologne: Brill, 1995), 1, and on the problems in the Coptic translations, 6–7.

<sup>60</sup> Isenberg, 'Gospel according to Philip', 134, followed by Foster, 'The Gospel of Philip', 70 n. 24. Also H.-M. Schenke, 'Das Evangelium nach Philippus (NHC II,3)', in H.-M. Schenke, H.-G. Bethge and U.U. Kaiser, eds. *Nag Hammadi Deutsch*, vol. I, *NHC I,1-V,1*, vol. II, *NHC V,2-XIII,1, BG 1 and 4* (GCS; Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2001, 2003), I.183–213 (186–7).

<sup>61</sup> R.A. Bullard, 'The Hypostasis of the Archons: Introduction', in B. Layton, ed. *Nag Hammadi Codex II,2–7, together with XIII,2\**, *Brit. Lib. Or.4926(1)*, and *P. Oxy. 1, 654, 655*, vol. I (NHS 20; Leiden: Brill, 1989), 220–6 (221); cf. the very similar comment by U.U. Kaiser, 'Die Hypostase der Archonten (NHC II,4)', in H.-M. Schenke, H.-G. Bethge

Greek.<sup>62</sup> Hans-Gebhard Bethge takes the untitled treatise ‘On the Origin of the World’ to have been composed in Greek in Alexandria.<sup>63</sup>

As for the *Exegesis on the Soul* (already mentioned above in the discussion of *GTh 21*), it is difficult to imagine how it could be other than a Greek composition. William C. Robinson comments in the opening paragraph of his introduction: ‘It must have been composed in Greek.’<sup>64</sup> It has been shown that the citations from the Old Testament are independent of extant versions of the Coptic OT, but are very close to Greek versions which we know.<sup>65</sup> The *Odyssey* is also cited. The introduction to some OT and Homeric quotations with ΔΙΑ ΤΟΥΤΟ is also suggestive.<sup>66</sup> Sevrin comments, similarly, as follows: ‘That the original language of the *Exegesis on the Soul* be Greek should not be in doubt.’<sup>67</sup>

Finally, the *Book of Thomas the Contender*, relevant to the discussion not only because of its collocation in the same codex as the *Gospel of Thomas*, is taken by Turner to have been ‘doubtless translated from Greek’, while at the same time suggesting a provenance of Edessa.<sup>68</sup>

and U.U. Kaiser, eds. *Nag Hammadi Deutsch*, vol. I, *NHC I,1-V,1*, vol. II, *NHC V,2-XIII,1, BG 1 and 4* (GCS; Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2001, 2003), I.215–33 (217).

<sup>62</sup> See P. Nagel, *Das Wesen der Archonten: Koptischer Text, Übersetzung und griechische Rückübersetzung, Konkordanz und Indizes* (Wiss. Beitr. Martin-Luther-Universität; Halle: Martin-Luther-Universität, 1970) (*non vidi*).

<sup>63</sup> H.-G. Bethge, ‘On the Origin of the World: Introduction’, in B. Layton, ed. *Nag Hammadi Codex II,2–7, together with XIII,2\**, *Brit. Lib. Or.4926(1), and P. Oxy. I, 654, 655*, vol. II (NHS 21; Leiden/New York/Cologne: Brill, 1989), 12–25 (13); cf. Bethge, ‘Vom Ursprung der Welt (NHC II,5)’, in H.-M. Schenke, H.-G. Bethge and U.U. Kaiser, eds. *Nag Hammadi Deutsch*, vol. I, *NHC I,1-V,1*, vol. II, *NHC V,2-XIII,1, BG 1 and 4* (GCS; Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2001, 2003), I.235–62 (237).

<sup>64</sup> W.C. Robinson, ‘The Expository Treatise on the Soul: Introduction’, in B. Layton ed. *Nag Hammadi Codex II,2–7, together with XIII,2\**, *Brit. Lib. Or.4926(1), and P. Oxy. I, 654, 655*, vol. II (NHS 21; Leiden/New York/Cologne: Brill, 1989), 136–41, also C.-M. Franke, ‘Die Erzählung über die Seele (NHC II,6)’, in H.-M. Schenke, H.-G. Bethge and U.U. Kaiser, eds. *Nag Hammadi Deutsch*, vol. I, *NHC I,1-V,1*, vol. II, *NHC V,2-XIII,1, BG 1 and 4* (GCS; Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2001, 2003), I.263–78 (265); M. Scopello, *L’Exégèse de L’Âme (Nag Hammadi Codex II, 6): introduction, traduction et commentaire* (NHS 25; Leiden: Brill, 1985), 13.

<sup>65</sup> P. Nagel, ‘Die Septuaginta-Zitate in der koptisch-gnostischen “Exegese über die Seele” (Nag Hammadi Codex II)’, *Archiv für Papyrusforschung* 22–3 (1974), 249–69.

<sup>66</sup> J.-M. Sevrin, *L’Exégèse de L’Âme (NH II, 6): texte établi et présenté* (BCNH 9; Quebec City: Presses de l’Université Laval, 1983), 7.

<sup>67</sup> Sevrin, *L’Exégèse de L’Âme*, 56: ‘Que la langue originale de l’ExAm soit le grec ne saurait faire de doute.’

<sup>68</sup> J.D. Turner, ‘The Book of Thomas: Introduction’, in B. Layton, ed. *Nag Hammadi Codex II,2–7, together with XIII,2\**, *Brit. Lib. Or.4926(1), and P. Oxy. I, 654, 655*, vol. II (NHS 21; Leiden/New York/Cologne, 1989): 173–8 (173). H.J.W. Drijvers, ‘Facts and Problems in Early Syriac-Speaking Christianity’, *SecCent* 2 (1982), 157–75 (170), argued that *Thom. Cont.* was written in Syriac, but bases his argument solely on reference to J.D. Turner, *The Book of Thomas the Contender: The Coptic Text, with Translation*,

Hans-Martin Schenke offers a more complex account of provenance, in which the traditions which make up *Thomas the Contender* are Alexandrian, even though the book came to its final form in Syria; on the question of the original language, however, he maintains it is clearly Greek.<sup>69</sup> Kuntzmann notes that Greek interference is continually evident throughout the Coptic version: although copied in Sahidic, the text is ‘constantly contaminated’ with various factors including ‘the original Greek turns of phrases which appear on the surface and which often have been clumsily translated’.<sup>70</sup>

Finally, we can consider the titles and the colophon marking the end of the codex as a whole:

- Π.1 (32.8–10)<sup>71</sup> κατὰ ἰωϋαννην ἡ αποκρυφον  
 Π.2 (51.27–8) πεγαγγελιον πκατα θωμας  
 Π.3 (86.18–19) πεγαγγελιον πκατα φιλιππος  
 Π.4 (97.22–3) τῆ ποστασις ἡ ἡραχων  
 Π.5: untitled  
 Π.6 (127.18; 137.27) τεζηγησις ετβε τγγχη  
 Π.7 (145.18–20) πχωμε ἡ θωμας παθητης εφσζαι ἡ ἡτελειος  
 Π (145.21–4) αρι παμειγε ζω πασνηη ζ[ῆ] μετῆπροσεχη  
 ε[ι]ρηνη τοις αριοις μη ἡπνεγματικος.<sup>72</sup>

These strongly indicate translation from Greek; indeed, the gist could probably be understood reasonably well by someone who knew little or no Coptic. A Greek *Vorlage* is particularly betrayed by the retention of Greek cases in the *Apocryphon of John*’s κατὰ ἰωϋαννην and in the final colophon’s τοις αριοις.<sup>73</sup>

*Introduction, and Commentary* (Missoula, MT: Society of Biblical Literature/Scholars Press, 1975), 144–5, and 233. In this book, however, Turner asserted that the work was composed in Greek (*Thomas the Contender*, 5). Drijvers perhaps confuses Turner’s endorsement of a Syrian provenance with an affirmation of composition in the Syriac language.

<sup>69</sup> H.-M. Schenke, ‘Das Buch des Thomas (NHC II,7)’, in H.-M. Schenke, H.-G. Bethge and U.U. Kaiser, eds. *Nag Hammadi Deutsch*, vol. I, *NHC I,1–V,1*, vol. II, *NHC V,2–XIII,1, BG 1 and 4* (GCS; Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2001, 2003), 1.279–91 (280–1).

<sup>70</sup> R. Kuntzmann, *Le Livre de Thomas (NH II, 7)* (BCNH 16; Quebec City: Presses de l’Université Laval, 1986), 2: ‘constamment contaminé ... les tournures grecques de l’originale, qui affleurent et qui, souvent, ont été malhabilement traduites’.

<sup>71</sup> See Waldstein and Wisse, eds. *Apocryphon of John*, 176–7 for the similar titles in the other codices.

<sup>72</sup> Layton, ed. *Nag Hammadi Codex II,2–7, together with XIII,2\**, *Brit. Lib. Or.4926(1), and P. Oxy. 1, 654, 655*, vol. II (NHS 21; Leiden/NewYork/Cologne, 1989), 204.

<sup>73</sup> Codex XIII is probably its closest neighbour because both codices may well have been copied by the same scribe. On this, see B. Layton, ‘Introduction’, in Layton, ed. *Nag Hammadi Codex II,2–7, together with XIII, 2\**, *Brit. Lib. Or.4926(1), and P. Oxy. 1, 654, 655*, vol. I (NHS 20; Leiden: Brill, 1989), 1–18 (47), referring also to Layton: ‘The

We do not know how far back the collection in Codex II goes, but it is likely that it was, at least in part, already a Greek collection before its Coptic translation.<sup>74</sup> This is strongly implied by these untranslated Greek elements in the colophon at the end of the Coptic codex. In all, then, if the scholarly consensus on the rest of Codex II is right, this is at least circumstantial evidence in favour of a Greek original for *Thomas*. It is strong evidence for a Greek *Vorlage* to the present Coptic translation, and the more evidence for Greek one finds in all this, the higher the burden of proof on Semitic theories.

## 6 Close similarity to early Greek parallels

A final point specifically in favour of a Greek composition, not merely for a Greek *Vorlage*, is the similarity between the Greek text of *Thomas*

Hypostasis of the Archons: Conclusion', *HTR* 69 (1976), 31–101 (84): 'Considerations of format and codex construction also support this identification.' See also S. Emmel, 'The Nag Hammadi Codices Editing Project: Final Report', *American Research Center in Egypt: Newsletter* 104 (1978), 10–32, where he comments that the scribes are 'probably to be identified' (27), and see 28 n. 3 on the history of the identification. J.D. Turner, 'Introduction to Codex XIII', in C.W. Hedrick, ed. *Nag Hammadi Codices XI, XII, XIII* (NHS 28; Leiden/New York/Cologne: Brill, 1990), 359–69 (362–3), allows the possibility 'that the two hands belong to a student and instructor', while still concluding that 'Codices II and XIII may be assumed to have been copied in the closest proximity to one another' (362). Turner's comments under the heading of 'The scribal hand' follow on from similar observations on 'Physical description' (359–61). Only one tractate survives from Codex XIII: after 34 lost pages, page 35 appears to begin the other extant work, the *Trimorphic Protennoia*, generally assumed to have been written in Greek ('Introduction to Codex XIII', 367, and 'Trimorphic Protennoia: Introduction', in C.W. Hedrick, ed. *Nag Hammadi Codices XI, XII, XIII* (NHS 28; Leiden/New York/Cologne: Brill, 1990), 371–401 (401). This is hardly surprising, given the colophon: πλορος ἡτεπφανα ἦ ἰ πρωτεννοια τριμορφος ἦ ἰ διαγραφη πατρογραφος ἰ εν γνωσει τελευα. (50.21–4). Strikingly, all the nouns here are Greek, with lines 22–4, and especially the last phrase (εν γνωσει τελευα), being straightforward Greek, without the standard modifications. After this, we have – in another link with Codex II – the first ten lines of *On the Origin of the World*, which take up the rest of the last page on which the *Trimorphic Protennoia* is copied. The editor here again refers to 'the assumed Greek original' of *Origin* (Turner, 'Introduction: NHC XIII, 2\*': *On the Origin of the World*', in C.W. Hedrick, ed. *Nag Hammadi Codices XI, XII, XIII* (NHS 28; Leiden/New York/Cologne: Brill, 1990), (455).

<sup>74</sup> There is also evidence to suggest that the Gospels of *Thomas* and *Philip* were coupled in antiquity. See esp. *Pistis Sophia* I.42–3 (c. 3rd cent.), where the disciples Matthew, Thomas and Philip are entrusted with Jesus' revelation. Cf. Pseudo-Leontius of Byzantium, *De sectis* 3.2 (mid-late 6th cent.): οὔτοι καὶ βιβλία τινὰ ἑαυτοῖς καινοτομοῦσι. λέγουσι γὰρ εὐαγγέλιον κατὰ Θωμᾶν καὶ Φίλιππον, ἅπερ ἡμεῖς οὐκ ἴσμεν (*PG* 86-I.1213C). Cf. also Timothy of Constantinople, *De reptione haereticorum* (late 6th cent.?), where *Thomas* and *Philip* come next to one another in a list of Manichaean works (*PG* 86-I.21C), and *Basilica* (*Scholia*) Book 21, Title 1: Chapter 45.3 (11th cent.). This tallies with their juxtaposition in Codex II, suggesting that Codex II is not innovative in connecting them.

Table 4.1

<i>G. Heb.</i> (Clem. Strom. 2.9.45)	<i>G. Heb.</i> (Clem. Strom. 5.14.96)	Greek <i>GTh</i> 2
ὁ θαυμάσας βασιλεύσει, καὶ ὁ βασιλεύσας ἀναπαίσεται.	οὐ παύσεται ὁ ζητῶν, ἕως ἂν εὕρῃ· εὐρὼν δὲ θαμβηθήσεται, θαμβηθεὶς δὲ βασιλεύσει, βασιλεύσας δὲ ἐπαναπαίσεται.	μὴ παυσάσθω ὁ ζη[τῶν τοῦ ζητεῖν ἕως ἂν] εὕρῃ καὶ ὅταν εὕρῃ [θαμβηθήσεται,] [καὶ θαμ]βηθεὶς βασιλεύσῃ κα[ὶ] βασιλεύσας ἀναπα[ί]σεται.

Table 4.2

Mark 10.31	Matthew 19.30	Greek <i>GTh</i> 4
πολλοὶ δὲ ἔσονται πρῶτοι ἔσχατοι καὶ [οἱ] ἔσχατοι πρῶτοι.	πολλοὶ δὲ ἔσονται πρῶτοι ἔσχατοι καὶ ἔσχατοι πρῶτοι.	ὅτι πολλοὶ ἔσονται π[ρῶτοι ἔσχατοι] [καὶ] οἱ ἔσχατοι πρῶτοι.

and the Greek texts of a number of other Gospels, both canonical and non-canonical. The aim here is not (or in some cases, not yet) to claim that *Thomas* is necessarily dependent upon these other Gospels. The point is merely that the evidence suggests that *Thomas* emerged in an environment in which many of its sayings had already been circulating in Greek forms, and that those sayings were incorporated into *Thomas* in those conventional Greek forms which have consequently also been found elsewhere. The evidence from the *Gospel of the Hebrews* can be seen in Table 4.1.

Moving to the Synoptic tradition, we first encounter a parallel in *GTh* 4 (see Table 4.2). Here we find a sequence of eight words identical with Matthew and Mark with the exception in *Thomas* of the omission of δέ, which is a consequence of the introduction of ὅτι. By contrast in the next case, in saying 5, the extant text corresponds more closely (indeed, exactly, as far as it survives) to Luke (see Table 4.3).



Table 4.3

Mark 4.22	Luke 8.17	Greek <i>GTh</i> 5
οὐ γάρ ἐστιν κρυπτὸν ἐὰν μὴ ἴνα φανερωθῆι.	οὐ γάρ ἐστιν κρυπτὸν ὁ οὐ φανερὸν γενήσεται.	[οὐ γάρ ἐς]τιν κρυπτὸν ὁ οὐ φανε[ρὸν γενήσεται].

Table 4.4

Luke 6.42 (P <sup>75</sup> +W=NA <sup>27</sup> )	Luke 6.42 (NAC go etc.)	Greek <i>GTh</i> 26
καὶ τότε διαβλέψεις τὸ κάρφος τὸ ἐν τῷ ὀφθαλμῷ τοῦ ἀδελφοῦ σου ἐκβαλεῖν.	καὶ τότε διαβλέψεις ἐκβαλεῖν τὸ κάρφος τοῦ ἀδελφοῦ σου.	καὶ τότε διαβλέψεις ἐκβαλεῖν τὸ κάρφος τὸ ἐν τῷ ὀφθαλμῷ τοῦ ἀδελφοῦ σου.

Table 4.5

Mark 6.4	Matthew 13.57	Luke 4.24	John 4.44	Greek <i>GTh</i> 31
οὐκ ἔστιν προφήτης ἄτιμος εἰ μὴ ἐν τῇ πατρίδι αὐτοῦ.	οὐκ ἔστιν προφήτης ἄτιμος εἰ μὴ ἐν τῇ πατρίδι ...	οὐδεὶς προφήτης δεκτός ἐστιν ἐν τῇ πατρίδι αὐτοῦ.	προφήτης ἐν τῇ ιδίᾳ πατρίδι τιμὴν οὐκ ἔχει.	οὐκ ἔστιν δεκτός προφήτης ἐν τῇ πατρίδι αὐτ[ο]ῦ.

In the first visible text in *P. Oxy.* 1, there are thirteen words in sequence identical to the text of Luke in Sinaiticus, Alexandrinus and some other versions (see Table 4.4).

We then have two sayings with parallels to the Synoptic tradition without so great a level of correspondence (see Table 4.5). There is no exact overlap here between *Thomas* and another Gospel, but in fact none of the versions agrees exactly with another, and the variations in *Thomas*'s version are of exactly the same kind as those found in the other versions. There are, however, some distinctive items of vocabulary shared in common: πατρίς appears in all four versions, and δεκτός in *Thomas* and Luke.

Table 4.6

Matthew 5.14	Greek <i>GTh</i> 32
οὐ δύναται πόλις κρυβῆναι ἐπάνω ὄρους κειμένη.	πόλις οἰκοδομημένη ἐπ' ἄκρον [ᾗ]ρους ὑψηλου[ς] καὶ ἐστηριγμένη οὔτε πε[σ]εῖν δύναται οὔτε κρυ[β]ῆναι.

Table 4.7

Matthew 10.16b	Greek <i>GTh</i> 39.3	Coptic <i>GTh</i> 39.3
γίνεσθε οὖν φρόνιμοι	[ύμεῖς] δὲ γεῖ[νεσθε]	ἡτωτῆ δε ωωπε
ὡς οἱ ὄφεις	ὡ[ς] ὄφεις]	ἡθε ἡηροϋ
καὶ ἀκέραιοι	[καὶ ἀ]κέραι[οι]	αγω ἡακεραιος
ὡς αἱ περιστεραὶ	[ὡς περιστε]ρα[ί]	ἡθε ἡἡ σρωπε

In saying 32, there is again loose correspondence between *Thomas* and its Synoptic parallel, but with the presence in both of some of the same Greek forms (δύναται, πόλις, κρυβῆναι, ὄρους) (see Table 4.6).

One might also note saying 39, although it is very fragmentary (see Table 4.7). In places in this saying where there is parallel material, it is strikingly close. In spite of the lacunae in Greek *Thomas*, the adjectives are almost certainly the same across all versions, and the variations very minor.

It is evident, then, that especially in the cases of sayings 2, 4, 5 and 26 we have striking correspondences not only in the vocabulary used but also in the inflections. In some cases, this extends to a number of words in sequence. It should be stressed again that the point here is not yet to argue for the secondary character of *Thomas* over against the *Gospel of the Hebrews* or the Synoptic Gospels. The point is rather that, whether *Thomas* is derivative or independent, the shared material may well suggest that *Thomas* incorporated traditionally known Greek forms of these sayings. It is of course not impossible that this happened at a second stage, viz. that of a translation from a Semitic *Vorlage*, but in that case one must suppose a very high degree of assimilation to pre-existing versions. It is difficult to believe that a clause such as καὶ τότε διαβλέψεις ἐκβαλεῖν τὸ κάρφος τὸ ἐν τῷ ὀφθαλμῷ τοῦ ἀδελφοῦ σου would appear

by coincidence as two independent Greek translations of a Semitic original. This is strengthened by the fact that the verb διαβλέπειν is quite rare: the *TLG* indicates only seven instances of it before the first century CE. Unless one regards a Greek *Thomas* as the ultimate source of the canonical versions, we are left with the strong likelihood that *Thomas* incorporated known Greek tradition.

### Conclusion

In sum, these six factors mean first that a Greek *Vorlage* to the Coptic version of *Thomas* is a virtual certainty, with proposals for a translation into Coptic from another language being highly speculative. It is more difficult to prove that the Greek is the original and that no Semitic text lies behind it: this would require proving a negative. We have noted, however, that (1) the existence of Greek witnesses and the absence of Semitic manuscripts at least lays the burden of proof strongly on proposals for Aramaic/Syriac originals, and that both (4) *Thomas*'s genre, and (5) the company which it keeps are strongly suggestive of a Greek original. Moreover, the close parallels in phraseology between the Greek texts of *Thomas* and other Gospels are perhaps the strongest evidence for the incorporation of Greek tradition at the stage of *Thomas*'s composition.

This last observation is an important factor for what now follows in Part II. It is not yet to suggest the dependence of *Thomas* upon other Gospels such as Matthew, Luke and the *Gospel of the Hebrews*. It merely concludes that the interactions among these works are very likely to have taken place in Greek. Part II will proceed to argue that it is not merely a matter of common Greek traditions circulating and influencing these works. It will be argued in the remaining part of this study that *Thomas* is likely to be dependent upon Matthew and Luke, as well as upon some other early Christian literature.



PART II

**The Synoptic Gospels and *Thomas***



# 5

## RESPONSES TO ARGUMENTS FOR INDEPENDENCE

### Introduction

We have considered the matter of *Thomas's* original language at some length. This is, of course, an interesting object of study in its own right, and so Part I can function as a free-standing argument. It also has three significant implications for the discussion of the relationship between *Thomas* and the Synoptics (as well as other potential sources), however.

First, a putative early Aramaic *Thomas* of the kind proposed by DeConick would make a relationship between *Thomas* and the Synoptics unlikely. If we have a Greek *Gospel of Thomas*, however, then the question of a relationship between it and Matthew, Mark and Luke arises more naturally. We have just noted, at the end of Chapter 4, some striking similarities between *Thomas* and other Greek literary Gospel traditions, and indeed we will have cause in the following four chapters to argue that at least Matthew and Luke can be seen to influence *Thomas*.

Second, if it had been possible to show that *Thomas* and the Synoptics contained what looked like divergent translations from an Aramaic original, then that would indeed lend some strong support to the theory of independence. Chapter 2, however, showed some difficulties in principle with the study of divergent translations, and Chapter 3 demonstrated that none of the particular alleged cases are compelling either.

Third, and on a more minor note, the discussion in Chapter 4 of the similarities between the Greek and Coptic texts of *Thomas* (in their shared Greek/Graeco-Coptic vocabulary in parallel passages) showed that the content of *Thomas* was reasonably stable across the century or two separating the Greek fragments and the Coptic version. The implications of this point for our discussion are traced further in ensuing chapters.

It is important to say at the outset that these chapters will not argue for anything like *total* dependence upon the Synoptics, as if all the author or

editor of *Thomas* knew was Mark, Matthew and Luke and nothing else. (I am not aware of any scholar who has argued for that position.) Clearly *Thomas* is – on any reckoning – at least partially independent of the Synoptics, as it is virtually incredible that the editor of *Thomas* invented all the material not paralleled with the Synoptics. The presence both of non-Synoptic but Synoptic-like material in *Thomas* and of the other quite different sayings clearly points towards partial independence, but neither of these can be regarded as indicating the independence of what *is* paralleled in the Synoptics.<sup>1</sup>

Before going on in subsequent chapters to make a constructive case for the influence of the Synoptics on *Thomas*, this chapter will highlight some of the weaknesses in the arguments which have been used in the service of the opposite side, for independence. These boil down to four main areas:<sup>2</sup>

- 1 the argument from *Thomas*'s order
- 2 the argument from *Thomas*'s (partial) form-critical priority
- 3 the argument from *Thomas*'s lack of close verbal similarity
- 4 the argument from the absence of redactional elements in *Thomas*

This chapter, then, has an essentially negative function, leading into the positive arguments of Chapter 6 and especially Chapters 7–8.

## 1 Do the differences in order imply the independence of *Thomas* and the Synoptics?

Wilson and a number of other scholars ask the question of why there is no similarity of order if *Thomas* is dependent upon the Synoptics.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Pace J.B. Bauer, 'The Synoptic Tradition and the Gospel of Thomas', in F.L. Cross, ed., vol. III *Studia Evangelica* (TU 88; Berlin: Akademie, 1964), 314–17 (314), on the Synoptic-like material, and S.J. Patterson, 'Wisdom in Q and Thomas', in L.G. Perdue, B.B. Scott and W.J. Wiseman, eds. *In Search of Wisdom: Essays in Memory of John G. Gammie* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1993), 187–221 (190), on the rest.

<sup>2</sup> There are others which are remarked upon by individual scholars. S.L. Davies, *The Gospel of Thomas and Christian Wisdom*, 2nd edn (Oregon House, CA: Bardic Press, 2005), xi, comments for example upon *Thomas*'s lack of a developed christology. For other examples, see C.L. Blomberg, 'Tradition and Redaction in the Parables of the Gospel of Thomas', in D. Wenham, ed. *Jesus Tradition outside the Gospels* (Sheffield: JSOT, 1984), 177–205 (177–8).

<sup>3</sup> R.McL. Wilson, "'Thomas' and the Synoptic Gospels', *ExpT* 72 (1960), 36–9 (37); R. McL. Wilson, "'Thomas' and the Growth of the Gospels', *HTR* 53 (1960), 231–50 (233); Bauer, 'The Synoptic Tradition and the Gospel of Thomas', 314; W.D. Stroker,



Why, for example, would *Thomas* break up and reorder Matthew 13?<sup>4</sup> Advocates of the hypothesis of dependence ought to be able to say *why* certain changes were made, but in many cases this is simply impossible.<sup>5</sup> Indeed, for some this lack of shared order with the Synoptics indicates not only independence, but actually means that *Thomas* reflects a ‘more primitive pre-Synoptic level of the tradition, such as is represented, for example, by Q’.<sup>6</sup> A number of counter-objections can be made here, however.

First, the objection is essentially a non-problem at the outset. It probably arose out of a highly *scribal* mentality which predominated in the beginnings of *Thomas* scholarship: given this mentality, it was of course strange to think that *Thomas* would take written Gospel sources and break them up in so inexplicable a manner. When this scribal mentality is abandoned, however, the objection ceases to have any force.

Second, Tuckett makes the point that ‘someone somewhere must have changed or created either the synoptic order or GTh’s order to produce the other (probably with a number of stages in between)’.<sup>7</sup>

Third, although the point is generally forgotten now, Wilson in fact acknowledged several cases where adjacent sayings in *Thomas* are also juxtaposed in the Synoptics, such as *GTh* 32–3 (par. Matt. 5.14–15),<sup>8</sup> and *GTh* 44–5 (par. Matt. 12.31–5). Wilson asks: ‘Is it purely by accident that in *Thomas* it [*sc.* *GTh* 45] follows immediately upon a saying [*sc.* *GTh* 44] with which part of it is associated in Matthew?’<sup>9</sup> One could add *GTh* 65–6 to this list (cf. also *GTh* 64 in Matt. 22.1–10), and *GTh* 92–4 (par. Matt. 7.7, 6, 7–8).<sup>10</sup>

‘Extracanonical Parables and the Historical Jesus’, *Semeia* 44 (1988), 95–120 (98–9); J.H. Sieber, ‘The Gospel of Thomas and the New Testament’, in J.E. Goehring, C.W. Hedrick and J.T. Sanders, eds. *Gospel Origins and Christian Beginnings: In Honor of James M. Robinson* (Sonoma, CA: Polebridge, 1990), 64–73 (67–8); S.J. Patterson, *The Gospel of Thomas and Jesus* (Sonoma, CA: Polebridge, 1993), 16; Patterson, ‘Wisdom in Q and Thomas’, 190; Davies, *The Gospel of Thomas and Christian Wisdom*, xi.

<sup>4</sup> Wilson, ‘“Thomas” and the Synoptic Gospels’, 38.

<sup>5</sup> Wilson, ‘“Thomas” and the Growth of the Gospels’, 233.

<sup>6</sup> C.W. Hedrick, ‘Thomas and the Synoptics: Aiming at a Consensus’, *SecCent* 7 (1990), 39–56 (53).

<sup>7</sup> C.M. Tuckett, ‘The Gospel of Thomas: Evidence for Jesus?’, *NTT* 52 (1998), 17–32 (23–4).

<sup>8</sup> Wilson, ‘“Thomas” and the Growth of the Gospels’, 245; H.K. McArthur, ‘Gospel according to Thomas’, in McArthur, ed. *New Testament Sidelights: Essays in Honor of Alexander Converse Purdy* (Hartford Seminary Foundation, 1960), 43–77 (63).

<sup>9</sup> Wilson, ‘“Thomas” and the Growth of the Gospels’, 243.

<sup>10</sup> McArthur, ‘Gospel according to Thomas’, 65, is right to comment that there are ‘a few minor groupings which parallel the Synoptics’.

Fourth, the objection does not do justice to the difference in genre between *Thomas* and the NT Gospels. A number of scholars have described *Thomas* as a “list”,<sup>11</sup> sentence-collection,<sup>12</sup> or anthology,<sup>13</sup> in which cases one would not expect order to be as important as it clearly is in a narrative. In sum, the argument from lack of shared order is deeply flawed.

## 2 Do form-critical factors suggest the priority of *Thomas*'s versions?

*Thomas* is commonly regarded as better off vis-à-vis the Synoptics, because of the former's preservation of older versions of sayings, judged by form-critical considerations.<sup>14</sup> (Such considerations are even applied to the whole of the *Gospel of Thomas*, on the grounds that the genre of *Thomas* does not presuppose the development of the narrative Gospel.<sup>15</sup>) This reasoning is most often employed in connection with the parables.

### 2.1 Parables

The form-critical criteria usually invoked in favour of *Thomas*'s parables include simplicity, relative brevity, realism and a lack of allegorising as most clearly indicating *Thomas*'s preservation of earlier forms. We can take these four in turn.

First, the appeal to simplicity is commonly made.<sup>16</sup> Crossan, for example, alleges that Mark's version of the parable of the sower – by comparison with that of *Thomas* (*GTh* 9) – is riddled with ‘conflicting images’, ‘anomalies’ and ‘redundancy’.<sup>17</sup> J.A.T. Robinson equates the simplicity of *Thomas*'s version of the parable of the tenants (*GTh* 65)

<sup>11</sup> Davies, *The Gospel of Thomas and Christian Wisdom*, 168. See discussion in J.D. Crossan, ‘Lists in Early Christianity’, *Semeia* 55 (1991), 235–43.

<sup>12</sup> M. Mees, ‘Einige Überlegungen zum Thomasevangelium’, *Vetera Christianorum* 2 (1965), 151–63 (152–3).

<sup>13</sup> G.C. Stead, ‘New Gospel Discoveries’, *Theology* 62 (1959), 321–7 (325).

<sup>14</sup> Stroker, ‘Extracanonical Parables and the Historical Jesus’, 99; Patterson, ‘Wisdom in Q and Thomas’, 190.

<sup>15</sup> Patterson, ‘Wisdom in Q and Thomas’, 190; Davies, *The Gospel of Thomas and Christian Wisdom*, xi. The first scholar to make this point appears to be C.-H. Hunzinger, ‘Außersynoptisches Traditionsgut im Thomas-Evangelium’, *TLZ* 85 (1960), 843–6 (843). See the discussion in S.J. Patterson, ‘The Gospel of Thomas and the Synoptic Tradition: A Forschungsbericht and Critique’, *Forum* 8 (1992), 45–97 (71).

<sup>16</sup> See e.g. Davies, *The Gospel of Thomas and Christian Wisdom*, xi.

<sup>17</sup> J.D. Crossan, ‘Seed Parables of Jesus’, *JBL* 92 (1973), 244–66 (245, 251).

with its originality.<sup>18</sup> It is hard to see the basis for these assumptions, however. It presupposes that texts start off simple and become more complex. Do texts begin simply and become more elaborate? Sometimes. At other times they start off complicated and are simplified. On Crossan's view of things, for example, we have both: a neat and tidy parable in *Thomas* which Mark makes a hash of, but then Luke sets this Markan mess in good order again. It looks like Crossan is trying to have his cake and eat it.

Second, and similarly, appeal to relative brevity as a sign of primitivity is clearly mistaken. One can no longer speak of 'sound form-critical presuppositions concerning the tendency for sayings to expand secondarily',<sup>19</sup> nor invoke 'a law of text-criticism, form-criticism and source criticism that short forms tend to become longer',<sup>20</sup> or other such 'laws of transformation'.<sup>21</sup> Tuckett refers, for example, to Matthew's tendency to abbreviate Markan miracles, as well as other material such as the divorce pericope as evidence that 'shorter versions of a tradition are not always more original than longer versions'.<sup>22</sup> Some readers at least may share Snodgrass's exasperation at the idea that shorter means earlier: 'Why do people continue to use criteria that have been shown to be invalid?'<sup>23</sup>

Third, some scholars claim originality for *Thomas*'s parables on the grounds of their relative realism. Kloppenborg claims that *Thomas*'s parable of the tenants is the most true to life and law.<sup>24</sup> Pokorný remarks that *Thomas*'s parable of the sower is more authentic, due to its more accurate description of seed growth.<sup>25</sup> Hunzinger states that, in contrast to *Thomas*'s version, Matthew's parable of the pearl is unconvincing: 'all sein Hab und Gut zu verkaufen, geht durchaus über des hinaus, was

<sup>18</sup> J.A.T. Robinson, 'Parable of the Wicked Husbandmen: A Test of Synoptic Relationships', *NTS* 21 (1975), 443–61 (449). Similarly, apparently independently, W.G. Morrice, 'The Parable of the Tenants and the Gospel of Thomas', *ExpT* 98 (1987), 104–7 (105–6).

<sup>19</sup> S.R. Johnson, 'The Hidden/Revealed Saying in the Greek and Coptic Versions of Gos. Thom. 5 & 6', *NovT* 44 (2002), 176–85 (178).

<sup>20</sup> G. Quispel, 'Gospel of Thomas and the Gospel of the Hebrews', *NTS* 12 (1966), 371–82 (378).

<sup>21</sup> J. Jeremias, *The Parables of Jesus*, rev. edn (London: SCM Press, 1963), 114.

<sup>22</sup> Tuckett, 'The Gospel of Thomas: Evidence for Jesus?', 24.

<sup>23</sup> K. Snodgrass, 'The Gospel of Thomas: A Secondary Gospel', *SecCent* 7 (1989–90), 19–38 (21).

<sup>24</sup> J. S. Kloppenborg, *The Tenants in the Vineyard: Ideology, Economics, and Agrarian Conflict in Jewish Palestine* (Tübingen: Mohr, 2006). See further in Chapter 8 below.

<sup>25</sup> P. Pokorný, *A Commentary on the Gospel of Thomas: From Interpretations to the Interpreted* (London/New York: T&T Clark, 2009), 18.

ein verständiger Kaufmann tut; der Zug wirkt übertrieben und dadurch gerade nicht überzeugend'.<sup>26</sup> Schippers rightly criticises this wooden lack of imagination on Hunzinger's part.<sup>27</sup> Some scholars argue that realism is evidence of originality, others argue for a tendency on *Thomas's* part to resolve tensions and dampen down hyperbole.<sup>28</sup> As in the other cases above, we do not know that parables are more likely to become more realistic or less realistic over time, unless there are obvious anachronisms.

Fourth, *Thomas's* relative lack of allegorical features in the parables is one of the most common arguments made in support of independence. Crossan's article on the seed parables has been influential in this regard.<sup>29</sup> Morrice takes the lack of allegorising in *GTh* 8 (the parable of the dragnet) as confirmation that the Matthean allegorising is a later addition.<sup>30</sup> Koester remarks on the parable of the tenants: 'The conclusion seems obvious: the Gospel of Thomas indeed preserves a more original and non-allegorical version of this parable.'<sup>31</sup> Aichele considers that there is an increasing tendency to allegorise from *Thomas* into the Synoptics in the parables of the sower, the great supper, the tenants and others.<sup>32</sup> The allegory question, however, is not so straightforwardly answered.

(1) Aichele himself notes that there is an exception to the increasing allegorisation, viz. the parable of the merchant and the treasure (*GTh* 76).<sup>33</sup> There may be others, however. Bauckham comments that *GTh* 21

<sup>26</sup> C.-H. Hunzinger, 'Unbekannte Gleichnisse Jesu aus dem Thomas-Evangelium', in W. Eltester, ed. *Judentum, Urchristentum, Kirche: Festschrift für Joachim Jeremias* (BZNW 26; Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1960), 209–20 (220).

<sup>27</sup> R. Schippers, 'The Mashal-character of the Parable of the Pearl', in F.L. Cross, ed. *Studia Evangelica*, vol. II (TU 87; Berlin: Akademie, 1964), 236–41 (239).

<sup>28</sup> F. Schneider, 'Das Gleichnis vom verlorenen Schaf und seine Redaktoren: Ein intertextueller Vergleich', *Kairos* 19 (1977), 146–54 (151), says that *Thomas* makes his parable of the lost sheep rational by adding the explanation that the sheep is not any lost sheep, but the best one. E.F. Osborn, 'Parable and Exposition', *Australian Biblical Review* 22 (1974), 11–22, comments similarly that *Thomas* resolves tensions in his parables, and Beardslee remarks that *Thomas* tends to introduce balanced parallelism, reducing hyperbole. W.A. Beardslee, 'Proverbs in the Gospel of Thomas', in D.E. Aune, ed. *Studies in New Testament and Early Christian Literature: Essays in Honor of Allen P. Wikgren* (Leiden: Brill, 1972), 92–103 (99). Cf. Perkins's judgement that paradox and hyperbole are reduced in *Thomas's* pronouncement stories. P. Perkins, 'Pronouncement Stories in the Gospel of Thomas', *Semeia* 20 (1981), 121–32 (121).

<sup>29</sup> Crossan, 'Seed Parables of Jesus', 250–1.

<sup>30</sup> W.G. Morrice, 'The Parable of the Dragnet and the Gospel of Thomas', *ExpT* 95 (1984), 269–73 (271–2).

<sup>31</sup> H. Koester, 'Three Thomas Parables', in A. Logan and A. Wedderburn, eds. *New Testament and Gnosis: Essays in Honour of Robert McLaughlan Wilson* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1983), 195–203 (199).

<sup>32</sup> G. Aichele, 'The Fantastic in the Parabolic Language of Jesus', *Neot* 24 (1990), 93–105 (100).

<sup>33</sup> Aichele, 'The Fantastic', 100.

is an example of a parable ‘which remains stubbornly non-allegorical until Thomas’.<sup>34</sup> Lindemann considers that there is no allegorisation in *Thomas*’s parables except in *GTh* 57!<sup>35</sup> One might add that the parable of the feast in *GTh* 64 clearly interprets the places in the banquet as ‘the places of my Father’, and thus the host is the Father. This raises the question of what makes a parable allegorical. In their present contexts, a good many of *Thomas*’s parables might be seen as allegorical. The appending of ‘whoever has ears to hear, let him hear’ to *GTh* 8, 65 and 96, seems to suggest that an interpretation is required. (The fondness for this formula may well call into question Koester’s assertion that ‘the author of this gospel [*sc.* Thomas] does not make any effort to exploit the concept of parable as mystery’.<sup>36</sup>) It may be, too, that one is not comparing like with like, for taken on its own, the classic example of a Synoptic allegory, Mark’s parable of the tenants, is not apparent as an allegory in itself. Only when read in its Markan context do the allegorical features become apparent. It may be because of *Thomas*’s literary form that its parables appear less allegorical than they are because of a lack of illumination from context.

(2) Some scholars have also pointed out that ‘the very essence of *GTh* is *not* to explain or clarify the meaning of the sayings recorded’, that is, as the incipit and *GTh* 1–2 specify, the aim is for the reader to discover the hidden sense.<sup>37</sup> Silke Petersen similarly remarks that *Thomas*’s reluctance to give interpretations of the parables is not a product of their primitivity, but rather part of *Thomas*’s ‘Gesamttenzendz’ in which the interpretation is not supplied but left to the reader to find.<sup>38</sup>

(3) A further reason why allegorising need not be secondary is that some OT and Jewish parables are allegories.<sup>39</sup> To take some OT cases, the oracle of Nathan to David in 2 Samuel 12.1–4 is clearly an allegory, even if not called a parable. The same is true of Ezekiel’s allegories of the eagles and the pot, both of which are called παραβολαί (Ezek. 17.2; 24.3). As

<sup>34</sup> R.J. Bauckham, ‘Synoptic Parousia Parables and the Apocalypse’, *NTS* 23 (1977), 162–76 (168; emphasis mine), noting that *GTh* 21 (cf. Luke 12.36) has ‘house of his kingdom’.

<sup>35</sup> A. Lindemann, ‘Zur Gleichnisinterpretation im Thomasevangelium’, *ZNW* 71 (1980), 214–43 (242).

<sup>36</sup> H. Koester, ‘Q and its Relatives’, in J.E. Goehring, C.W. Hedrick and J.T. Sanders, eds. *Gospel Origins and Christian Beginnings: In Honor of James M. Robinson* (Sonoma, CA: Polebridge, 1990), 49–63 (53–4).

<sup>37</sup> Tuckett, ‘The Gospel of Thomas: Evidence for Jesus?’, 24.

<sup>38</sup> S. Petersen, ‘Adolf Jülicher und die Parabeln des Thomasevangeliums’, in U. Mell, ed. *Gleichnisreden Jesu 1899–1999: Beiträge zum Dialog mit Adolf Jülicher* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1999), 179–207 (192).

<sup>39</sup> Snodgrass, ‘Secondary Gospel’, 22.

Tuckett has remarked, ‘the theory of a purely non-allegorical form of every parable, which allegedly originally contained one and only one point, is perhaps as arbitrary and unjustified a theory as the heavily allegorized interpretation of the parables it was intended to counter’.<sup>40</sup>

(4) Perhaps the most damaging evidence is that found in the Synoptic tradition. Michael Goulder has noted in the first place that parable and allegory are not neat separable categories.<sup>41</sup> Furthermore, after calculating quite precisely how allegorical Mark, Matthew and Luke respectively are, he concludes that Matthew’s parables are more allegorised than those of Mark, but Luke’s are less. The fact that the Synoptic tradition displays different tendencies explodes what Goulder calls the ‘allegory graph theory’, according to which allegory inexorably increases, so that less allegorical means more primitive.<sup>42</sup> As he concludes: ‘The graphs which have been proposed have been shown to be first subjective and second counter to the evidence.’<sup>43</sup>

## 2.2 Sayings

Similar form-critical considerations also come into play in discussions of sayings. Two illustrations here will suffice.

Saying 90 (the “easy yoke”) is often weighed against its Synoptic parallel in Matthew 11.28–30. It is virtually impossible to decide here, however: it is again a case of one person’s word against another which is earlier. DeConick states: ‘The Gospel of Thomas 90 has proven to have retained more primitive content and structure than that found in Matthew’s version of this saying’,<sup>44</sup> though this conclusion is not reached on a sound basis.<sup>45</sup> The uncertainty surrounding the issue is exemplified in Légasse, who changed his mind from his earlier view that *Thomas* preserved the earliest form of Matthew 11.28–30.<sup>46</sup> Bauer is similarly equivocal:

<sup>40</sup> Tuckett, ‘The Gospel of Thomas: Evidence for Jesus?’, 25.

<sup>41</sup> M. Goulder, ‘Characteristics of the Parables in the Several Gospels’, *JTS* 19 (1968), 51–69.

<sup>42</sup> Goulder, ‘Characteristics of the Parables’, 61.

<sup>43</sup> Goulder, ‘Characteristics of the Parables’, 66.

<sup>44</sup> A.D. DeConick, ‘The Yoke Saying in the *Gospel of Thomas* 90’, *VigChr* 44 (1990), 280–94 (291).

<sup>45</sup> In particular, it is questionable that Matt. 11.29ab should be regarded as ‘counter to wisdom theology’ (DeConick, ‘Yoke Saying’, 283), given Sir. 51.26–7: ‘Put your neck under the yoke, and let your souls receive instruction; it is to be found nearby. See with your eyes that I have laboured little, yet found for myself great rest.’

<sup>46</sup> S. Légasse, ‘L’“Antijudaïsme” dans l’évangile selon Matthieu’, in M. Didier, ed. *L’évangile selon Matthieu: rédaction et théologie* (Gembloux: Duculot, 1972), 417–28 (428 n. 24).

In a short article<sup>47</sup> I tried to show that this text [*sc.* *Thomas's* version] was nearer the original than the longer form in Matthew 11, 28–30. But a well-known scholar, in a letter about this article, replied that the Matthean form was more elaborate in style, and that from this it followed that the author of the Gospel of Thomas had simplified and debased the text. In such cases no judgment is free from subjectivity.<sup>48</sup>

In fact, one might rather say that in such cases, subjectivity is just about all there is. Koester says gnominically that *GTh* 90 'could be more original' than Matthew 11.28–30.<sup>49</sup> Then again, it might not be.

The same applies to the two versions of the pearls-before-swine saying (*GTh* 93/Matt. 7.6). Koester has characteristically pronounced that *Thomas's* purer form of the *marshal* is earlier than Matthew's ecclesiastical one.<sup>50</sup> Plisch has recently given a more reasoned justification for the relative priority of *Thomas's* version, rightly noting that the *Thomasine* saying is more satisfactorily balanced and orderly by comparison with its Matthean counterpart.<sup>51</sup> The question then arises: does order precede chaos or vice versa? Do sayings start off neat and tidy when first uttered, and become more disorderly? Or are they garbled at first, and then gradually tidied up by editors? As soon as the question is posed, the answer is obvious: either is almost equally probable.

In sum, whether we are talking about parables or sayings, there is no easy "law" which enables us to pronounce on the matter. Patterson remarks that 'it is usually relatively easy to tell which of two versions of a given saying is the more primitive'.<sup>52</sup> This is highly wishful thinking, however, based on the assumption of assured laws. On the other hand, examination of the actual data of the Synoptic tradition shows the opposite. As Sanders concluded his study of the Synoptics: 'There are no hard and fast laws of the development of the Synoptic tradition. On all counts the tradition developed in opposite directions. It became both longer and

<sup>47</sup> J.B. Bauer, 'Das milde Joch und die Ruhe, Matth. 11,28–30', *TZ* 17 (1961), 99–106.

<sup>48</sup> Bauer, 'The Synoptic Tradition and the Gospel of Thomas', 315.

<sup>49</sup> H. Koester, 'Gnostic Writings as Witnesses for the Development of the Sayings Tradition', in B. Layton, ed. *Rediscovery of Gnosticism*, vol. I (Leiden: Brill, 1980), 238–56 (246).

<sup>50</sup> H. Koester, 'One Jesus and Four Primitive Gospels', in J.M. Robinson and Koester, *Trajectories Through Early Christianity* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1971), 158–204 (182 n. 83).

<sup>51</sup> U.-K. Plisch, "'Perlen vor die Säue" – Mt 7,6 im Licht von EvThom 93', *ZAC* 13 (2009), 55–61.

<sup>52</sup> S.J. Patterson, 'Introduction', in J.S. Kloppenborg, M.W. Meyer, S.J. Patterson and M.G. Steinhauser, eds. *Q-Thomas Reader* (Sonoma, CA: Polebridge, 1990), 77–123 (87).

shorter, both more and less detailed.<sup>53</sup> The same may well apply when we include *Thomas* in this Synoptic mix.

### 3 **If *Thomas* is dependent on the Synoptics, why is there no extensive verbatim correspondence?**

Patterson and Davies comment that the verbal similarity between *Thomas* and the Synoptics is not sufficient to argue that there is a literary relationship between them.<sup>54</sup> The point is sometimes made by comparison to the situation among Matthew, Mark and Luke, where there clearly is a literary relationship of some kind. DeConick, for example, comments as follows: ‘The exact verbal agreement, lengthy sequences of words, and secondary features shared between the Triple Tradition versions and the *Quelle* versions far exceed anything we find in the *Gospel of Thomas*.’<sup>55</sup> She remarks in the particular case of the parable of the tenants that an oral relationship between *Thomas* and the Synoptics is much more plausible, ‘since we do not find sequences of words or phrases longer than five or six’ in common.<sup>56</sup>

The best evidence for a literary relationship between *Thomas* and the Synoptics will be found in the individual sayings discussed in Chapters 7 and 8 below. For now, however, without engaging in a systematic comparison here, some examples will nevertheless illustrate that there are some very extensive correspondences.

We have already seen in Part I that *GTh* 26 has particularly close parallels with the Synoptics:

Matthew 7.5: καὶ τότε διαβλέψεις ἐκβαλεῖν τὸ κάρφος ἐκ τοῦ ὀφθαλμοῦ τοῦ ἀδελφοῦ σου.

Luke 6.42 (NA<sup>27</sup>): καὶ τότε διαβλέψεις τὸ κάρφος τὸ ἐν τῷ ὀφθαλμῷ τοῦ ἀδελφοῦ σου ἐκβαλεῖν.

Luke 6.42 (var.): καὶ τότε διαβλέψεις ἐκβαλεῖν τὸ κάρφος τὸ ἐν τῷ ὀφθαλμῷ τοῦ ἀδελφοῦ σου.

*GTh* 26: καὶ τότε διαβλέψεις ἐκβαλεῖν τὸ κάρφος τὸ ἐν τῷ ὀφθαλμῷ τοῦ ἀδελφοῦ σου.

<sup>53</sup> E.P. Sanders, *The Tendencies of the Synoptic Tradition* (SNTSMS 9; Cambridge University Press, 1969), 272.

<sup>54</sup> Patterson, ‘Wisdom in Q and Thomas’, 190; Davies, *The Gospel of Thomas and Christian Wisdom*, xi.

<sup>55</sup> A.D. DeConick, *The Original Gospel of Thomas in Translation: With a Commentary and New English Translation of the Complete Gospel* (LNTS, 287; London/New York: T&T Clark International, 2006), 23.

<sup>56</sup> DeConick, *Original Gospel of Thomas in Translation*, 215, though she allows for the possibility of secondary orality.



For the great majority of sayings, of course, we do not have Greek texts of *Thomas*. Nevertheless, many scholars have observed how close some Coptic sayings are to their Greek Synoptic counterparts. Kosnetter remarks, for example, that there is ‘völlig wörtliche Übereinstimmung’ between *GTh* 34 and Matthew 15.14.<sup>57</sup> Grobel notes that ‘the seven words of 73a agree exactly with Sahidic Matt. ix. 37, “The harvest is great, but the workers are few” – even to the μέν and δέ’, and that ‘Logion 34 differs only in a tense, 39b only in a conjunction, 54 only in “Kingdom of the heavens” for “Kingdom of God”, and 62b only in the order of the clauses’.<sup>58</sup> *GTh* 86’s “Son of Man” saying is very close to its Synoptic counterparts, as to some extent is *GTh* 45. On the parable of the sower, Horman’s synopsis shows that ‘somewhat more than half of the parable as given in *Thomas* translates the Synoptic version of the parable as closely as can be imagined, even to the extent of following the precise word order of the Synoptics’.<sup>59</sup> One of the most interesting observations is that of Wilson, who comments on the need for a literary hypothesis to explain how Matthew 11.7–8/Luke 7.24–5/*GTh* 78 share very similar wording, but reflect different ways of punctuating.<sup>60</sup>

We have noted that some scholars are impressed by the level of agreement among the Synoptics and so adopt that level as a baseline of comparison. (As we have seen, DeConick is explicit on this point.) By this standard, however, a great many cases of influence in ancient literature would fail, such is the exceptional character of the Synoptics. Those accustomed to studying literary relationships frequently note the variations between sources and the works which appropriate them.<sup>61</sup> Adopting the situation of the Synoptic Gospels as a “norm”, however, perhaps leads to the burden of proof being placed artificially high, as in the case of the requirement for ‘sequences of words or phrases longer than five or six’ above. The similarities between *Thomas* and the Synoptics are extensive, and so a literary explanation is more probable.

<sup>57</sup> J. Kosnetter, ‘Das Thomasevangelium und die Synoptiker’, in J. Kisser, F. Krones and U. Schönöndorfer, eds. *Wissenschaft im Dienste des Glaubens: Festschrift für Abt. Dr. H. Hermann Peichl* (Wien: Katholische Akademie, 1965), 29–49 (38).

<sup>58</sup> K. Grobel, ‘How Gnostic is the Gospel of Thomas?’, *NTS* 8 (1962), 367–73 (368).

<sup>59</sup> J.F. Horman, ‘The Source of the Version of the Parable of the Sower in the Gospel of Thomas’, *NovT* 21 (1979), 326–43 (334).

<sup>60</sup> Wilson, ‘Thomas and the Synoptic Gospels’, 36.

<sup>61</sup> One of the most widely cited studies in this regard is J. Whittaker, ‘The Value of Indirect Tradition in the Establishment of Greek Philosophical Texts or the Art of Misquotation’, in J.N. Grant, ed. *Editing Greek and Latin Texts: Papers given at the Twenty-Third Annual Conference on Editorial Problems* (New York: AMS Press, 1989), 63–95, noting not only faulty memory and carelessness, but also the introduction of deliberate changes, a point which he notes a good number of classical authors freely admitting (64, 70).

(This of course only means that there is a literary relationship in one direction or another: this information on its own does not tell us anything about the direction of influence.) This will be better seen from the examples discussed in Chapters 7 and 8, however, rather than from this brief survey here.

#### **4 Does the absence or insignificance of *Thomas's* appropriation of redactional features in the Synoptics show that there is no literary relationship?**

While this matter is going to be the focus of attention in the following three chapters, some remarks can be made already at this stage. The influence upon *Thomas* of Matthean and Lukan redaction of Mark in particular is often taken by advocates of Thomasine dependence as proof beyond reasonable doubt of *Thomas's* secondary character. Evidence in favour of *Thomas's* reception of these redactional features was advanced very early on in *Thomas* scholarship,<sup>62</sup> and so there have been vociferous attempts to dispute that evidence. Koester, for example, objects that 'there is no evidence that Thomas knew any of the further redactions of the Markan passages by Matthew and/or Luke'.<sup>63</sup> For some this is the result of *Thomas* preserving independent oral tradition despite its relative lateness vis-à-vis the Synoptics, for others it is because *Thomas* pre-dates the Synoptics, making dependence a straight impossibility.<sup>64</sup>

Many advocates of independence run up against what do look like redactional features, however. For this reason, the objection becomes not that such apparent redactional features are simply absent, but rather that they are so insignificant both numerically and in their content that they cannot be regarded as sufficient evidence for the influence of the

<sup>62</sup> See e.g. H.K. McArthur, 'Dependence of the Gospel of Thomas on the Synoptics', *ExpT* 71 (1960), 286–7.

<sup>63</sup> H. Koester, *Ancient Christian Gospels: Their History and Development* (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 1990), 112, or again: 'Since no peculiarities of the editorial work of Matthew, Mark, or Luke are recognisable in these proverbial sayings of *Thomas*, there is no reason to assume that they were drawn from the Synoptic Gospels', in Koester, 'One Jesus and Four Primitive Gospels', 181–2.

<sup>64</sup> On the former point, D.E. Aune, 'Assessing the Historical Value of the Apocryphal Jesus Traditions: A Critique of Conflicting Methodologies', in J. Schröter and R. Brucker, eds. *Der historische Jesus: Tendenzen und Perspektiven der gegenwärtigen Forschung* (BZNW 114; Berlin/New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2002), 243–72 (254), insists on the vitality of oral tradition in the second century. On the other hand, for Koester, the form-critical priority of its sayings means that *Thomas* predates the Synoptics, making influence from the Synoptics an impossibility at the outset: Koester, *Ancient Christian Gospels*, 85–6.

Synoptics upon *Thomas*. Sieber remarks, for example, upon the ‘overwhelming lack of editorial evidence’ rather than its complete absence.<sup>65</sup> Davies equivocates, referring to ‘few, if any’ examples.<sup>66</sup> Sieber, Patterson and Hedrick concede the presence of some cases.<sup>67</sup> The question, then, is what is to be done with them if one wants to hang on to a theory of independence.

First, one strategy is to make the objection more specific: the problem with the dependence theory is not the absence of any dependence, but the absence of *consistent* dependence upon the Synoptics, either *à trois* or in part.<sup>68</sup> In other words, if there were influence, it would be apparent to a greater extent, or consist of similar pieces of evidence of the same kind, rather than merely in a few words here and there. Tuckett rightly replies, however, that ‘the author of GTh presumably did not write for a later audience of source critics, leaving a neat trail of clues in the form of redactional elements from the gospels in his own text. Hence the pattern of similarities with the texts of the gospels is in a sense bound to be rather random.’<sup>69</sup> The influence of one work on another can be considerable (as in the case of Mark upon Matthew), or it can be less obtrusive (as in – say – 1 John’s use of the OT).

Second, Sieber argues that a redactional feature can only be named as such if *Thomas* is influenced by something which is a *typical* piece of Matthean or Lukan redaction: ‘in order to call a reading a redactional trace, one must be able to attribute that reading to a particular evangelist’s theological intent’.<sup>70</sup> Or as he puts it elsewhere, rather more generously, a trait has to be attributable to ‘the literary style or to the special

<sup>65</sup> J.H. Sieber, ‘A Redactional Analysis of the Synoptic Gospels with Regard to the Question of the Sources of the Gospel according to Thomas’ (Dissertation, Claremont Graduate School, 1965), 262–3, quoted in Sieber, ‘The Gospel of Thomas and the New Testament’, 69.

<sup>66</sup> S.L. Davies, ‘The Use of the Gospel of Thomas in the Gospel of Mark’, *Neot* 30 (1996), 307–34 (308).

<sup>67</sup> Sieber, ‘Redactional Analysis’, 262; Patterson, *Gospel of Thomas and Jesus*, 92–3; C.W. Hedrick, ‘An Anecdotal Argument for the Independence of the *Gospel of Thomas* from the Synoptic Gospels’, in H.-G. Bethge, S. Emmel, K.L. King and I. Schletterer, eds. *For the Children, Perfect Instruction: Studies in Honor of Hans-Martin Schenke on the Occasion of the Berliner Arbeitskreis für koptisch-gnostische Schriften’s Thirtieth Year* (NHMS 54; Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2002), 113–26 (114, 118).

<sup>68</sup> Koester, *Ancient Christian Gospels*, 85 n. 4; cf. Patterson, *Gospel of Thomas and Jesus*, 93; Patterson, ‘Introduction’, in *Q-Thomas Reader*, 86.

<sup>69</sup> C.M. Tuckett, ‘Q and Thomas: Evidence of a Primitive “Wisdom Gospel”? A Response to H. Koester’, *ETL* 67 (1991), 346–60 (359).

<sup>70</sup> Sieber, ‘Redactional Analysis’, 17, quoted in F.T. Fallon and R. Cameron, ‘The Gospel of Thomas: A Forschungsbericht and Analysis’, *ANRW Principat* 2.25.6 (1988), 4195–251 (4220).

vocabulary of an evangelist, or most importantly to the theological concerns or intentions of one of the evangelists'.<sup>71</sup> But this is still to place the bar absurdly high. A redactional feature does not have to be a feature which is a *typical* Mattheanism or Lukanism.<sup>72</sup> Rather, any feature in which a Markan passage is rephrased by Matthew or Luke, explicity or not, is potentially fair game as a redactional trace. Dehandschutter rightly observes that Sieber's strictures here are simply indefensible.<sup>73</sup>

Third, in the face of apparent redactional features, other – especially text-critical – explanations are offered which avoid the conclusion of straightforward influence of Luke or Matthew upon *Thomas*. Davies conveniently summarises the alternative explanations of redactional features appealed to by independentists:

- 1 scribal harmonisation towards canonical versions in the process of copying;
- 2 assimilation to the Coptic NT in the process of translation into Coptic;
- 3 coincidence and chance;
- 4 redactional elements in Matthew and Luke 'may actually reflect the original text of Mark';
- 5 redactional elements may be the result of *GTh*→Matthew or *GTh*→Luke, not the other way around.<sup>74</sup>

Leaving (1) and (2) to last, explanation (3) here is something of a counsel of despair, and the main argument against it below will be the quantity of influence. The same is true of (4), for no text-critic would seriously propose an original reading solely on the basis of a Thomasine parallel. It is of course an easy speculation to advance, as it is completely unfalsifiable.<sup>75</sup> In the case of (5), our chapters on Matthew and Luke below will provide some test cases for this: Davies has argued for *GTh*→Matthew (via Mark), and Riley and Johnson have gone to some lengths to argue for *GTh*→Luke, but we will see what difficulties arise when these arguments are made.

<sup>71</sup> Sieber, 'Gospel of Thomas and the New Testament', 69.

<sup>72</sup> Contra Sieber, 'Gospel of Thomas and the New Testament', 69, who says, for example, that the use of *δεκτικός* is irrelevant because it is not special Lukan vocabulary.

<sup>73</sup> B. Dehandschutter, 'Recent Research on the Gospel of Thomas', in F. van Segbroeck and C.M. Tuckett, eds. *The Four Gospels 1992: Festschrift Frans Neirynck*, vol. III (Leuven: Peeters, 1992), 2257–62 (2261–2).

<sup>74</sup> This list comes from Davies, 'The Use of the Gospel of Thomas in the Gospel of Mark', 308.

<sup>75</sup> With the exception of the case of *GTh* 26 (parr. Matt. 7.3–5; Luke 6.41–2), where the extant text of *GTh* 26 is identical to that of Luke 6.42 *NA*C et al.

Points (1) and (2) are made more widely, but are still problematic.<sup>76</sup> They would gain considerable force if actual examples of harmonisation could be found in the Coptic text where the Greek is extant and more distant from a canonical reading, but I am not aware of any such cases. (Moreover, if there were harmonisation towards canonical forms, one would expect this to make *Thomas* look more Matthean than Lukan, but as we will see, the opposite is the case.) We will also see that this objection is rather neutered by the presence of redactional material in the Greek fragments of *Thomas* (see on *GTh* 5 and 31 in Chapter 7 below), but we will also pay attention to text-critical matters in Chapters 7–8.<sup>77</sup> In sum, it appears that these arguments for what Robinson calls ‘isolated secondary interpolations’<sup>78</sup> are in fact rather desperate examples of what Snodgrass has labelled ‘escape clauses’!<sup>79</sup> As Tuckett has noted on (1) and (2): ‘Such a theory is theoretically possible. But it has to be invoked an uncomfortably large number of times. Moreover, on many occasions, there are few, if any, other independent reasons for suggesting such a theory ... there is no direct evidence for such assimilations in the textual history of *GTh*.’<sup>80</sup> He rightly concludes that these objections are rather perilously circular: ‘*GTh*’s independence is meant to be shown from the text of *GTh*, and yet embarrassing counter-evidence is simply pushed aside with a claim that this is not part of the true text of *GTh*.’<sup>81</sup>

### Conclusion

In sum, there is not really a single argument for the thoroughgoing independence of *Thomas* which has any force. This is partly in the nature of the case: one of the general difficulties with trying to prove the independence of one work from another is that an independence theory can only ever be hypothetical and provisional: ‘it is virtually impossible to demonstrate non-use, never mind non-knowledge of a text’.<sup>82</sup> One can suspect that *Thomas* is independent, but it is difficult for that to rise

<sup>76</sup> See also Patterson, *Gospel of Thomas and Jesus*, 93.

<sup>77</sup> So already McArthur, ‘Dependence of the Gospel of Thomas’, 286.

<sup>78</sup> J.M. Robinson, ‘On Bridging the Gulf from Q to the Gospel of Thomas (or vice versa)’, in C.W. Hedrick and R. Hodgson, *Nag Hammadi, Gnosticism, and Early Christianity* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1986), 127–75 (151).

<sup>79</sup> Snodgrass, ‘Secondary Gospel’, 25.

<sup>80</sup> Tuckett, ‘The Gospel of Thomas: Evidence for Jesus?’, 26; Tuckett, ‘Q and Thomas’, 359.

<sup>81</sup> Tuckett, ‘The Gospel of Thomas: Evidence for Jesus?’, 26.

<sup>82</sup> A.F. Gregory, *The Reception of Luke and Acts in the Period before Irenaeus: Looking for Luke in the Second Century* (WUNT II/169; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003), 353.

above the level of tentative hypothesis. The best potential argument for independence, namely that the Synoptics and *Thomas* contain divergent translations from an Aramaic original, was seen in Chapters 2 and 3 to flounder. On the other hand, we will see in forthcoming chapters that there is actually good reason to suspect the opposite, namely that Matthew and Luke do influence *Thomas*.

# 6

## **THOMAS AND THE SYNOPTICS: A METHOD FOR ASSESSING INFLUENCE**

### **Introduction**

We have seen in the previous chapter some of the problems with arguments in favour of *Thomas's* independence. That chapter was almost entirely negative. The goal of the present chapter is to give a constructive account of the method to be adopted, prior to the analysis of the material proper in Chapters 7 and 8. The method to be elaborated here can be outlined as follows:

- 1 Influence from the Synoptics on *Thomas* will be evident where *Thomas* reproduces redactional material.
- 2 Where there is influence, taking the direction of that influence to be Synoptics→*Thomas* (rather than *Thomas*→Synoptics) can be justified on various grounds.
- 3 The influence from the Synoptics can only reliably be seen in *Thomas's* reception of Matthean and Lukan redaction of Mark.
- 4 The sample of *Thomas* sayings to be analysed is thus restricted to places where there are parallels with Mark and at least one of the other Synoptics.
- 5 Various options are discussed for how influence might take place, including combinations of oral and literary factors.
- 6 Finally, the question is raised of when in *Thomas's* compositional and transmission history any influence of the Synoptics might have been exerted.

These considerations of method in points 1–4 will prepare the way for examining the concrete instances of influence of Matthew (in Chapter 7) and Luke (in Chapter 8). We will then consider in Chapter 9 the results, which address the questions posed in points 5 and 6 here.

## 1 Definition of method: *Thomas's* reception of redactions of Mark

The method to be adopted here is in some respects a well-worn path, that of assessing the impact upon *Thomas* of Matthew's and Luke's redactional material. This approach to the influence of the Gospels is commonly seen as finding its foremost expositor in Helmut Koester (in his study of their influence on the Apostolic Fathers).<sup>1</sup> It has been applied to *Thomas* since the beginnings of *Thomas* scholarship, but with – as remarked upon in the previous chapter – notoriously divergent results.<sup>2</sup>

The method can be summed up as follows:

- Markan priority is assumed as a foundation;
- Matthean and Lukan redaction can be identified in those pericopae parallel to Mark;
- where *Thomas* displays elements of this Matthean or Lukan redaction, *Thomas* can be said to be influenced by the written forms of Matthew's or Luke's Gospels.

An important objection to this approach, lodged by Fallon and Cameron, should be dealt with here.<sup>3</sup> Against the idea that what look like redactional changes to Mark are best explained as influence from Matthew's and Luke's literary activity, they remark that this gives too narrow an account of the oral tradition, which is much less monolithic. There is some truth here, but it is also rather speculative to appeal to an unknown oral tradition as an influence where we actually have an extant literary source as a candidate for influence. Another point which tells against it is that – as we shall note again shortly – in some cases we can see *Thomas* expanding redactional features found in the Synoptics (see the discussions of *GTh* 33, 65 and 104 in Chapter 8).

Two further clarifications of this method are in order, both of which aim to make it more rigorous. One concerns the relative datings of the Synoptics and *Thomas*, and the other relates to appeals to alternative redactional evidence beyond Matthew's and Luke's redactions of Mark.

<sup>1</sup> H. Koester, *Synoptische Überlieferung bei den apostolischen Vätern* (TU 65; Berlin: Akademie, 1957).

<sup>2</sup> At the beginning, H.K. McArthur, 'Dependence of the Gospel of Thomas on the Synoptics', *ExpT* 71 (1960), 286–7 (pro dependence), and J.H. Sieber, 'A Redactional Analysis of the Synoptic Gospels with Regard to the Question of the Sources of the Gospel according to Thomas' (Dissertation, Claremont Graduate School, 1965) (contra).

<sup>3</sup> F.T. Fallon, and R. Cameron, 'The Gospel of Thomas: A Forschungsbericht and Analysis', *ANRW Principat* 2.25.6 (1988), 4195–251 (4214–15), in response to McArthur, 'Dependence'.



## 2 An unquestioned assumption: the relative dating of *Thomas* and the Synoptics

One important clarification concerns what has perhaps been an unquestioned assumption in the “redactional method” as practised by those such as Snodgrass and Tuckett who find evidence for the influence of the Synoptics upon *Thomas*. The potentially weak point in these applications of this method is that they take for granted the *direction* of influence: if *Thomas* shares a redactional feature with Matthew or Luke, then this is almost automatically taken as sign of Thomasine dependence. Strictly speaking, this is a logical non sequitur, however: there is no a priori reason why it should be *assumed* that the line of influence must be from Matthew→*GTh* or Luke→*GTh*. There is an unstated presupposition that the Synoptics pre-date *Thomas*. Is this because *Thomas*, as the most recent discovery, must prove itself? Or are the clearly later features of *Thomas* (such as *GTh* 83–4, or 114) taken to mean that a literary relationship between *Thomas* and a canonical work must inevitably amount to Thomasine dependence? Perhaps for some, if *Thomas* is “Gnostic”, then it is inevitably later. This assumption about the direction of influence has been maintained, however, even now that a number of scholars consider *Thomas* to be at least as early as Matthew or Luke,<sup>4</sup> and the Gnostic character of *Thomas* is widely rejected.<sup>5</sup>

While it is impossible here to consider in any comprehensive way the question of *Thomas*’s date, it will be helpful to reflect on concrete reasons why one might suppose that redactional features shared between *Thomas* and Luke are much more likely to mean Thomasine rather than Lukan dependence, that is to say, why Matthew→*GTh* and Luke→*GTh* are more likely than *GTh*→Matthew and *GTh*→Luke (The brief treatment

<sup>4</sup> See e.g. S. Davies and K. Johnson, in their argument that *Thomas* is the earliest of the Gospels: ‘The Use of the Gospel of Thomas in the Gospel of Mark’, *Neot* 30 (1996), 307–34; and ‘Mark’s Use of the Gospel of Thomas: Part Two’, *Neot* 31 (1997), 233–61; A.D. DeConick, *The Original Gospel of Thomas in Translation: With a Commentary and New English Translation of the Complete Gospel* (LNTS 287; London/New York: T&T Clark International, 2006), 8, has argued that the core of *Thomas* was composed prior to 50 CE. See also Riley and Johnson (to be discussed in Chapter 8 below), whose view of *Thomas*’s influence upon Luke clearly implies the priority of *Thomas*. H. Koester comments that it ‘may well date from the first century’: H. Koester, ‘The Gospel of Thomas: Introduction’, in J.M. Robinson, ed. *The Nag Hammadi Library*, 3rd edn (Leiden: Brill, 1993), 125.

<sup>5</sup> See e.g. DeConick’s strong resistance to a Gnostic characterisation, favouring instead that of ‘early Syrian religiosity’ (*Original Gospel of Thomas in Translation*, 4). The most recent substantial discussion of the question, by Marjanen, also gives a negative answer. See A. Marjanen, ‘Is Thomas a Gnostic Gospel?’, in R. Uro, ed. *Thomas at the Crossroads* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1998), 107–39.

of date here is merely concerned with relative rather than absolute datings.) There are four reasons which might be adduced, the last of which needs to be treated slightly more expansively.

First, the later features such as those mentioned above (*GTh* 83–4, 114, etc.) do play a legitimate role, even if now any idea of *Thomas* being “Gnostic” should almost certainly be abandoned.<sup>6</sup>

Second, the presence in *Thomas* of reference to Matthew’s Gospel surely makes the Matthew→*GTh* order much more likely than the reverse. Matthew’s influence upon *Thomas* is rather clearer in one respect than that of Luke, because – as will be argued in Chapter 7 – *Thomas* actually *names* Matthew in a context which implies a reference to the Gospel of Matthew (*GTh* 13.3), a context which moreover itself betrays signs of Matthean redaction (*GTh* 13.4–8). If a Matthew→*GTh* order is correct, then, similarly, a Luke→*GTh* order is likely as well: a chronology of Mark–Matthew–*GTh*–Luke would give a very tight window for dating *Thomas*, making a *GTh*→Luke relationship unlikely, even if not impossible.

Third, the assumption of Luke pre-dating *Thomas* is made very likely by the fact that a Lukan redactional feature is sometimes extended further by *Thomas*. As we shall see at greater length in Chapter 8, Luke’s version of the parable of the wicked tenants adds a “perhaps” into the narrative, and two instances of “perhaps” appear in *Thomas* (*GTh* 65); analogously, into the discussion about fasting Luke adds a reference to “prayer”, while *Thomas* shares this addition, and contributes another as well (*GTh* 104). Similarly, in the light-under-a-bushel saying, Luke adds the point that the illumination is ‘for those who come in’; *Thomas* says it is for ‘all who come in *and go out*’ (*GTh* 33). This expansionist tendency, if one can call it such, adds a further argument.

Finally, albeit negatively, we have concrete proposals from scholars, discussed below, for instances of the influence running *GTh*→Luke or *GTh*→Matthew or for the priority of *Thomas*’s version in a slightly different form. In these instances where such arguments have been made, the cases can be shown to be highly problematic. The analysis of *Thomas*’s relationship to Matthew and Luke in the following chapters also seeks to test existing theories advocating the priority of *Thomas*. The question of *Thomas* and the Synoptics is really just a variation on the Synoptic

<sup>6</sup> P. Pokorný, ‘Die Eschatologie des Thomasevangeliums’, *ZAC* 13 (2009), 48–54 (48), takes e.g. the Platonising tendency in *GTh* 50 as evidence of lateness and therefore secondary character. His commentary further develops the theme of ‘popular Platonism’ in *Thomas*. See P. Pokorný, *A Commentary on the Gospel of Thomas: From Interpretations to the Interpreted* (London/New York: T&T Clark, 2009), 10, 25.

problem, and so just as in that field the necessity of testing alternatives needs to be undertaken, so it is here. The following cases will be examined in the two subsequent chapters:

- *GTh*→Mark→Matthew:  
Davies argues that Mark redacts *Thomas* prior to Matthew's use of Mark (*GTh* 14).
- *GTh* (approx.)→Mark→Matthew+Luke:  
Kloppenborg proposes that something like *Thomas*'s version of the parable of the wicked tenants has influenced Mark, which then in turn influences Matthew and Luke (*GTh* 65, 66).
- *GTh*+Mark=Luke:  
Riley proposes that Luke conflates *Thomas* and Mark in one instance: this differs from the argument above on *GTh* 65–6 in that Kloppenborg does not suppose Luke has access to *Thomas*, whereas Riley does (*GTh* 47).
- *GTh*+Mark+Q=Luke:  
Johnson proposes another instance of conflation, with the additional element of Q (*GTh* 76).
- *GTh*→Luke:  
Riley argues that in a further instance there is influence from *Thomas* in a pericope unique to Luke (*GTh* 72).

These instances are examined because they are proposed by these scholars on the basis of concrete textual evidence, rather than merely on the rather shaky form-critical arguments which have been discussed in the previous chapter. We will see, however, that they are still problematic, and that the direction of influence where there is an apparent literary relationship is far more likely to run from the Synoptics to *Thomas*, rather than vice versa.

### 3 Restriction to Matthew's and Luke's redactions of Mark

The other point in need of clarification is that, as stated at the beginning, we will make use only of cases of Mark→Matthew→*GTh* and Mark→Luke→*GTh* and no other instances. With these two sets of examples we are to a greater extent on terra firma because we are dealing with three more or less known quantities. Other alleged possibilities, on the other hand, are simply too speculative.

The great many alternative sequences of influences are not here ruled out as historically impossible, but are set aside as extremely unlikely to be convincing to a broad majority of scholars. This includes (1) examples

of individual canonical Gospels simply being presumed to influence *Thomas* in cases where no redaction of an extant source is incorporated into *Thomas*:

Mark→*GTh*  
 Matthew→*GTh*  
 Luke→*GTh*  
 John→*GTh*.<sup>7</sup>

One reason for this is that, as Uro has noted in connection with the saying about the inside and outside of the cup in Luke 11 and *GTh* 89, one might suspect *Thomas*'s use of Luke, but 'on the other hand, one can always resort to a source (oral or written) used by Luke and *Thomas* which contained a saying parallel to Lk 11, 39b-40'.<sup>8</sup> It is also theoretically possible that the influence might go in the reverse direction as well (*GTh*→Mark, *GTh*→Matthew, etc.).<sup>9</sup> Analogously (2) we will not consider possibilities here of influence upon *Thomas* of harmonising readings, that is, Matthew+Luke=*GTh*: these are also open to the charge that the influence could theoretically go in the opposite direction, or that they again are the result of common sources.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>7</sup> R.E. Brown, 'The Gospel of Thomas and St John's Gospel', *NTS* 9 (1962-3), 155-77, proposed instances of John's influence upon *Thomas*, but this has more recently provoked a number of studies arguing for influence in the opposite direction, such as Riley's argument that the dispute was over bodily resurrection, Pagels's argument that the disagreement lay in anthropology and over the interpretation of the early chapters of Genesis and DeConick's view that the conflict concerned whether knowledge of God came through faith or through visionary experience. See G.J. Riley, *Resurrection Reconsidered: Thomas and John in Controversy* (Minneapolis: Augsburg/Fortress, 1995); A.D. DeConick, *Voices of the Mystics: Early Christian Discourse in the Gospels of John and Thomas and Other Ancient Christian Literature* (Sheffield Academic Press, 2001); E.H. Pagels, *Beyond Belief: The Secret Gospel of Thomas* (New York: Random House, 2003). Some searching criticisms have been made of both Brown and these others, however, especially in the various works of I. Dunderberg, including 'John and Thomas in Conflict', in J.D. Turner and A. McGuire, *The Nag Hammadi Library after Fifty Years: Proceedings of the 1995 Society of Biblical Literature Commemoration* (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 361-80; I. Dunderberg, 'Thomas' I-Sayings and the Gospel of John', in R. Uro, ed. *Thomas at the Crossroads: Essays on the Gospel of Thomas* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1998), 33-64, and I. Dunderberg, *The Beloved Disciple in Conflict? Revisiting the Gospels of John and Thomas* (Oxford University Press, 2006).

<sup>8</sup> R. Uro, "'Washing the Outside of the Cup": Gos. Thom. 89 and Synoptic Parallels', in J.Ma. Asgeirsson, K. De Troyer and M.W. Meyer, eds. *From Quest to Q: Festschrift James M. Robinson* (Leuven: Leuven University Press/Peeters, 2000), 303-22 (318).

<sup>9</sup> Thus, for example, Davies (on Mark), Riley and Johnson on Luke, and - in varying ways - Riley, DeConick and Pagels on John.

<sup>10</sup> B.D. Chilton, 'The Gospel according to Thomas as a Source of Jesus' Teaching', in D. Wenham, ed. *Jesus Tradition outside the Gospels* (Sheffield: JSOT, 1984), 155-75 (157-8), argues that *GTh* 54, *GTh* 96 and *GTh* 107 are harmonised versions of their combined Matthean and Lukan parallels.

For similar reasons, we also leave out of consideration here (3) alleged redactions by the evangelists of unknown sources, for example:

pre-Markan sources → Markan redaction → *GTh*  
 M → Matthean redaction → *GTh*  
 L → Lukan redaction → *GTh*

These examples are problematic in that we do not have detailed knowledge of the pre-Synoptic sources here, and so we cannot be confident that we have similarly detailed knowledge of the evangelists' redactional activity. Gregory and DeConick have also emphasised the fact that we cannot rule out the possibility of sources common to both *Thomas* and Matthean and Lukan special material.<sup>11</sup>

Although it is perhaps a more controversial point, we should nevertheless also treat Q as an unknown, at least as far as the detail of its putative content is concerned. Some, of course, have denied the existence of Q altogether. As was discussed in the Introduction above, however, even if the existence of Q is granted, arguments for the influence of redaction of Q upon *Thomas* depend on very detailed knowledge of Q's contents, or, to put it the other way round, detailed knowledge of precisely what redaction has taken place: this is extremely hard to identify. As a result, we will also omit here consideration of (4) any possible influence of Matthew's or Luke's redactions of Q upon *Thomas*:

Q→Luke→*GTh*  
 Q→Matthew→*GTh*.

In sum, arguments for (1) an individual canonical Gospel influencing *Thomas* where the canonical Gospel and *Thomas* are the only two documents in the case, (2) harmonisations in *Thomas*, (3) the influence of redaction of unknown sources (4) including Q – all these are problematic. Cases (1) and (2) discount the possibility of common sources, and (3) and (4) rely on our knowing the contents of hypothetical sources in detail, whether they be pre-Markan sources, L, M or Q. This is not to say that such theories are impossible or even unlikely, merely that they are very difficult to prove to the satisfaction of many. The self-denying ordinance imposed in the present study, in which only cases

<sup>11</sup> A.F. Gregory, *The Reception of Luke and Acts in the Period before Irenaeus: Looking for Luke in the Second Century* (WUNT II/169; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003), 14; DeConick, *Original Gospel of Thomas in Translation*, 190.

of Mark→Matthew→*GTh* or Mark→Luke→*GTh* are entertained, has a further consequence for the method.<sup>12</sup>

#### 4 Scope of inquiry: the sample to be tested

The knock-on effect of limiting our study to Mark→Matthew→*GTh* and Mark→Luke→*GTh* parallel passages lies in the identification of the sample of sayings in *Thomas* which will come under particular scrutiny here. The key point for our purposes is that if one limits the inquiry to the passages consisting of Mark/Matthew/*GTh* and Mark/Luke/*GTh*, this actually brings the scope of inquiry down to a small number of *Thomas*'s sayings. Once these passages have been isolated, we can proceed to identify how many examples of actual influence, that is Mark→Matthew→*GTh* or Mark→Luke→*GTh* there might be (if any).

We can identify the Mark/Matthew/*GTh* and Mark/Luke/*GTh* passages (i.e. those with parallel material, rather than presupposing the cause of the parallels) by a process of elimination. It is often said that roughly half of the sayings in *Thomas* are paralleled in the Synoptics. This kind of quantitative analysis is always a little inaccurate because of the disparity of length of the "logia", and the fact that some "sayings" contain a number of sayings.<sup>13</sup> Scholars vary in their exact counts of parallels, but in fact not by much; to take two examples:<sup>14</sup> for Aune, 63 of the 114 logia are paralleled in the Gospels;<sup>15</sup> for Koester, the number is 67.<sup>16</sup> My own count is also 67, though with some slight differences not only from Aune

<sup>12</sup> This is one area of difference from C.M. Tuckett, 'Thomas and the Synoptics', *NovT* 30 (1988), 132–57, which includes potential evidence of Matthean and Lukan redaction of Q. It will also be obvious, however, how indebted the present volume is to the work of Tuckett.

<sup>13</sup> D.E. Aune, 'Assessing the Historical Value of the Apocryphal Jesus Traditions: A Critique of Conflicting Methodologies', in J. Schröter and R. Brucker, eds. *Der historische Jesus. Tendenzen und Perspektiven der gegenwärtigen Forschung* (BZNW 114; Berlin/New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2002), 243–72 (266). For our purposes here, we keep the number at 114, including incipit/prologue as part of *GTh* 1.

<sup>14</sup> Other lists can be found in C.A. Evans, R.L. Webb and R. A. Wiebe, eds. *Nag Hammadi Texts and the Bible: A Synopsis and Index* (NTTS 18; Leiden/New York/Cologne: Brill, 1993), 88–144; A. Guillaumont, H.-C. Puech, G. Quispel, W. Till and Y. 'Abd al Masih, eds. *The Gospel according to Thomas: Coptic Text Established and Translated* (Leiden/Brill/London: Collins/New York: Harper, 1959), 59–62.

<sup>15</sup> Aune, 'Assessing', 256; in fact, he expresses the point negatively, saying that 51 of the 114 logia have 'no significant parallels' in the Gospels (see his list in n. 46).

<sup>16</sup> Again, expressing the point negatively, H. Koester, 'Introduction' (to the *Gospel of Thomas*), in B. Layton, ed. *Nag Hammadi Codex II, 2–7, together with XIII, 2\**, *Brit. Lib. Or. 4926(1)*, and *P. Oxy.* 1, 654, 655, vol. I (NHS 20; Leiden: Brill, 1989), 38–49 (46–7) has 47/114 sayings without substantial parallel.

but also from Koester.<sup>17</sup> Those reckoned in the present study as overlapping significantly with the Synoptics are as follows:

*GTh* 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 13, 14, 16, 20, 21, 22, 24, 25, 26, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 39, 40, 41, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 54, 55, 57, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 68, 69, 71, 72, 73, 76, 78, 79, 86, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 99, 100, 101, 102, 103, 104, 106, 107, 109, 113.

With sixty-seven sayings paralleled, then, forty-seven sayings are without substantial parallel.<sup>18</sup>

Of these sixty-seven, twenty-eight are sayings in which *Thomas* only has parallels with both Matthew and Luke, but with no Markan parallels to this Matthean-Lukan material.<sup>19</sup> (This equates to a bare minimum “Q/*Thomas* overlap”, which could – on the Q hypothesis – be expanded with passages of Mark/Q overlap and possibly Q sayings only appearing in either Matthew or Luke.)<sup>20</sup> Since these sayings cannot by definition yield instances of Matthean or Lukan redaction of Mark, they will be excluded. This means the exclusion of sayings 16, 21, 24, 26, 34, 36, 39, 45, 46, 54, 55, 61, 64, 68, 69, 73, 76, 78, 86, 89, 91, 92, 94, 96,<sup>21</sup> 101, 102, 103 and 107.

Of that original sixty-seven, a further seven consist only of Luke/*Thomas* and contain no Markan parallels: that is, *GTh* 3, 10, 63, 72, 79, 95, 113. Nine other sayings consist only of Matthew/*Thomas* parallels with no Markan parallel material:<sup>22</sup> *GTh* 8,<sup>23</sup> 30, 32, 40, 57, 62, 90, 93, 109. No saying among the sixty-seven has shared Mark/*Thomas* material and no Matthean or Lukan material in the saying.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>17</sup> The present list is, however, in substantial agreement with both. With Koester, I take there to be no parallel with the Synoptics in *GTh* 1 (Aune’s list relates to *all four* NT Gospels); ditto *GTh* 12. On the other hand, with Aune against Koester, I see no parallel in *GTh* 67, and none in *GTh* 70 (with Koester against Aune). There is some parallel in *GTh* 3 (with Aune against Koester), and some parallel material in *GTh* 13, 22, 24, 71, 95, 102, 106 (with Koester against Aune).

<sup>18</sup> Incipit + 1, 2, 7, 11, 12, 15, 17, 18, 19, 23, 27, 28, 29, 37, 38, 42, 43, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 56, 58, 59, 60, 67, 70, 74, 75, 77, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 87, 88, 97, 98, 105, 108, 110, 111, 112, 114.

<sup>19</sup> I say no Markan material *paralleled in Matthew and Luke* because *GTh* 21 also (separately from the Q material) has a parallel to Mark 4.29, perhaps the one “Mark-only” parallel in *Thomas*.

<sup>20</sup> Certainly the parallels with Matthew/Luke double tradition are more extensive than this; these 27 sayings are merely those in which the double tradition is the *only* parallel material with the Synoptics in the sayings.

<sup>21</sup> This leaves out of account the formula ‘let him who has ears’.

<sup>22</sup> Again, there are other sayings, e.g. *GTh* 76, which contain parallels with Matthew special material, but these have already been excised in a previous cut.

<sup>23</sup> This leaves out of account the formula ‘let him who has ears’.

<sup>24</sup> *GTh* 21 has already been discarded since there is also Q material in *GTh* 21.

This leaves a remnant of twenty-three sayings with Mark + (Matthew and/or Luke) parallels. Among these twenty-three, however, are three instances of Mark/Q (or Mark/M?)/*Thomas* overlap which make it too difficult to tell whether any influence in *Thomas* might be from the redaction of Mark (and thus an instance of dependence), or from a different source (and thus potentially a case of independence). These three are *GTh* 6, 48, 106.

This leaves a final shortlist of twenty:

*GTh* 4, 5, 9, 13, 14, 20, 22, 25, 31, 33, 35, 41, 44, 47, 65, 66, 71, 99, 100 and 104.<sup>25</sup>

The key point for our inquiry here is that these are the only sayings in which dependence could possibly be shown in a way which would be convincing to a majority of scholars. It is not saying either (1) that these *are* instances of dependence, or (2) that there cannot be dependence anywhere else in *Thomas*. With respect to (1), the task of showing dependence has not even begun: one has merely marked out the field of study. On (2), it is certainly not the case that one can deny dependence in any of the other sayings: it is just that, in those cases, it will be near impossible to show either dependence or independence. (That is, at least on the present method: perhaps with another more effective method, dependence or independence could be demonstrated in other kinds of material.)

Let us sum up this rather convoluted mathematical process. On the strictures here, only material where we have Mark/Matthew/*Thomas* or Mark/Luke/*Thomas* parallels can be included:

<sup>25</sup> This list is largely in agreement with Neiryneck's assessment of the Mark/*Thomas* overlap. Neiryneck's list includes all instances of the 'let him who has ears' formula, Mark/Q overlap, as well as two sayings judged here to be rather tenuous parallels: *GTh* 12.1/Mark 9.34 and *GTh* 21/Mark 3.27. The latter was excluded above as an instance of "Q/*Thomas*", although it does have a little overlap with Mark 3.27/Matt. 12.29 as well (τὰ σκεύη αὐτοῦ (δι)αρπάσαι/εἰσρεῖναι ἡνεῖ σκεῦος). Neiryneck's list omits *GTh* 13, 71 and 104, which are judged here to have real Markan parallels. For the list, see F. Neiryneck, 'The Apocryphal Gospels and the Gospel of Mark', in J.-M. Sevrin, ed. *New Testament in Early Christianity: la réception des écrits néotestamentaires dans le christianisme primitif* (Leuven University Press/Peeters, 1989), 123–75 (134). S.J. Patterson, 'The Gospel of (Judas) Thomas and the Synoptic Problem', in P. Foster, A. Gregory, J.S. Kloppenborg and J. Verheyden, eds. *New Studies in the Synoptic Problem: Oxford Conference, April 2008: Essays in Honour of Christopher M. Tuckett* (Leuven/Paris/Walpole, MA: Peeters, 2011), 783–808, comes to a figure of 25 (789 and n. 30), though this includes some instances of Mark/Q overlap, which as has been noted above are excluded from consideration here as too complex to be able to lead to any definite conclusions.



All sayings	114
– those unparalleled in Synoptics	– 47
– <i>Thomas</i> / Matthew + Luke (Q) only	– 28
– <i>Thomas</i> / Luke only	– 7
– <i>Thomas</i> / Matthew only	– 9
– <i>Thomas</i> / Mark only	– 0
– Mark/Q (or Mark/M) overlap	– 3
Total Mark + (Matthew and/or Luke)	= 20

It must be emphasised that the remaining sayings which are left out of account here are not necessarily thereby *independent*. Rather, we remain agnostic about them. It may be that *Thomas* is also, for example, influenced by Mark, or by material unique to Matthew or Luke; it is just that our method has no way of identifying this. Furthermore, it could be that *Thomas* is dependent in some sayings on double or triple tradition in the Synoptics, but where the various forms of the material are too similar for us to determine any particular source.

#### Conclusion to 4

Our findings from these twenty sayings will allow us to adjudicate between what were mentioned above as the notoriously contradictory results of this approach, namely Sieber's conclusion that there is an 'overwhelming lack of editorial evidence',<sup>26</sup> and Tuckett's suggestion that there is sufficient evidence to treat the dependence of *Thomas* as a working hypothesis.<sup>27</sup> Chapters 7–8 will investigate cases among those twenty sayings where Matthean or Lukan redaction is incorporated into *Thomas*. The results of this inquiry will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 9, and we will explore there where this puts us on the spectrum from Sieber to Tuckett.

### 5 The means of influence – oral or literary?

A further clarification of method is necessary at this stage. What kind of influence are we looking for? Are we looking for instances where

<sup>26</sup> Sieber, 'Redactional Analysis', 262–3, quoted in J.H. Sieber, 'The Gospel of Thomas and the New Testament', in J.E. Goehring, C.W. Hedrick and J.T. Sanders, eds. *Gospel Origins and Christian Beginnings: In Honor of James M. Robinson* (Sonoma, CA: Polebridge, 1990), 64–73 (69); cf. also S.J. Patterson, 'The Gospel of Thomas and the Synoptic Tradition: A Forschungsbericht and Critique', *Forum* 8 (1992), 45–97 (54).

<sup>27</sup> C.M. Tuckett, 'The Gospel of Thomas: Evidence for Jesus?', *NTT* 52 (1998), 17–32 (27): 'the fact that in so many instances GTh is shown to be dependent on the synoptics suggests that we should perhaps take the theory of dependence as a working hypothesis in more ambiguous places as well'.

*Thomas* has copied from Matthew or Luke? Is this the alternative to those explanations which propose the independent developments of Matthew, Luke and *Thomas* in an oral milieu?

### 5.1 The oral/literary antithesis

Often in *Thomas* research, these have been seen as the two main options. In 1979, Kaestli asked the questions:

From where did the author of the GTh take the words of Jesus which agree with the Synoptic Gospels? Has he drawn them directly from Mt, Mk and Lk? Or has he used a parallel tradition, independent of the canonical gospels? It is not surprising that this question of the sources of the GTh has held pride of place in the attention of NT exegetes.<sup>28</sup>

It is notable here that Kaestli does not allow a third option: he implies a choice between direct literary dependence or independence. A similar polarisation can sometimes come to the surface in scholarly arguments today. In her discussion of *GTh* 26, for example, DeConick comments that the variations between *Thomas* and the Synoptics are ‘the result of oral transmission rather than literary development’.<sup>29</sup> This focus on orality is in part an understandable reaction against an earlier generation of scholars such as Cullmann and Schürmann who probably make the mistake of construing the relations between *Thomas* and its sources in too mechanically scribal a manner. On the other hand, it is a mistake to go to the other extreme.

### 5.2 Questioning the antithesis

It is Kaestli’s and DeConick’s either/or here which is unnecessary. This antithesis has been widely recognised by scholars in other fields to be a false dichotomy, whether it is in Ruth Finnegan’s studies of Eskimo, Malay, South African and other oral poetry or, closer to home, in

<sup>28</sup> J.-D. Kaestli, ‘L’Évangile de Thomas: son importance pour l’étude des paroles de Jésus et du Gnosticisme chrétien’, *Études théologiques et religieuses* 54 (1979), 375–96 (381): ‘D’où l’auteur de l’*ETH* tient-il les paroles de Jésus qui concordent avec les Évangiles synoptiques? A-t-il puisé directement dans Mt, Mc et Luc? Ou bien a-t-il utilisé une tradition parallèle et indépendante des Évangiles canoniques? Il n’est pas étonnant que cette question des sources de l’*ETH* ait retenu au premier chef l’attention des exégètes du NT.’

<sup>29</sup> DeConick, *Original Gospel of Thomas in Translation*, 128.

Rosalind Thomas's treatment of ancient Greece.<sup>30</sup> The problems identified in wider scholarship with what Finnegan has called the 'radical divide' raise the question of whether similar problems also attend a one-sided treatment of *Thomas*.<sup>31</sup>

### 5.3 Alternatives to the antithesis

This matter will be discussed further in Chapter 9, but some observations can be made at this stage. One common way to avoid this polarity in the study of *Thomas* is by means of appeal to "secondary orality".<sup>32</sup> This refers to the way in which, after a first phase of oral transmission, a saying is then written down in (let us say) Luke's Gospel. After being written down, however, the Lukan formulation is then read out in a setting such as a Christian assembly, such that that Lukan formulation then shapes the way in which the particular saying is used thereafter (in a second oral phase).<sup>33</sup> Appeal to secondary orality can be usefully combined with the "redactional method", so that a saying shared between Mark and Luke does not come to the *Gospel of Thomas* in its earlier Markan form but arrives, albeit orally, having been shaped by Luke's formulation. John Barton has made a similar point in his discussion of patristic quotations of the Bible: he concludes that the best explanation of such references is found 'not in oral transmission in the strict sense, but in the oral *use* of texts which were already available in written form'.<sup>34</sup> In view of this, rather than being faced with an oral/literary antithesis, there is a third way.

<sup>30</sup> R. Finnegan, *Oral Poetry: Its Nature, Significance and Social Context* (Cambridge University Press, 1977); R. Thomas, *Literacy and Orality in Ancient Greece* (Key Themes in Ancient History; Cambridge University Press, 1992).

<sup>31</sup> The phrase appears in Finnegan, *Oral Poetry*, 258.

<sup>32</sup> Cf. K. Snodgrass, 'The Gospel of Thomas: A Secondary Gospel', *SecCent* 7 (1989–90), 19–38 (28). R. Uro, *Thomas: Seeking the Historical Context of the Gospel of Thomas* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2003), 88–9; R. Uro, 'Thomas and Oral Gospel Tradition', in Uro, ed. *Thomas at the Crossroads*, (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1998) 8–32 (10); J.H. Wood, 'The New Testament Gospels and the Gospel of Thomas: A New Direction', *NTS* 51 (2005), 579–95 (589). The term is seemingly first applied to gospels scholarship in W.H. Kelber, *The Oral and Written Gospel: The Hermeneutics of Speaking and Writing in the Synoptic Tradition, Mark, Paul, and Q* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983), 197.

<sup>33</sup> This is not to suggest the phases are merely sequential with the first finishing when the second begins. A "hard" version of secondary orality might suppose that the saying reaching the author or community responsible for *Thomas* simply *stems* (albeit indirectly) from the formulation in Luke's Gospel. On a softer version, one might more modestly suppose a partial influence, involving "interference" from the formulation in Luke's Gospel. In practice, however, it will never be possible to distinguish between the two.

<sup>34</sup> J. Barton, *Holy Writings, Sacred Text: The Canon in Early Christianity* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1997), 92.

Davies attacks secondary orality, but his objection is merely to a straw man. He remarks that the attitude of those espousing it runs something like this: ‘while there might not be any actual evidence of Thomas’ literary dependence on the scriptural gospels, we can nevertheless conclude that it is dependent on them anyway’.<sup>35</sup> He thus concludes that it is an unfalsifiable hypothesis.<sup>36</sup> This is wrong on both counts. All current advocates of secondary orality (at least as far as I have encountered) argue that there are redactional features present in *Thomas*, rather than ‘no actual evidence’. And it is falsifiable in that if someone can prove that these redactional features are imaginary, then there is at least no need for the hypothesis of secondary orality.

There is a sense in which “secondary orality” as an explanation is overly speculative, however. It is of course possible that the author or editor of *Thomas* may actually have read one or more of the Gospels, or extracts from them – or indeed that the author of one or more of *Thomas*’s sources had done so. It may be that memory is just as likely an explanation, as was thought by two of the patriarchs of *Thomas* scholarship. Already in 1960, Wilson concluded that in those places where *Thomas* was dependent on the written Synoptics, ‘free citation from memory would appear nearer the mark than an extensive use of scissors and paste’.<sup>37</sup> In the following year, Haenchen remarked:

Dem Verfasser war bereits die kanonische Erzählung bekannt, wenn er auch nicht notwendig ein Evangelienbuch vor sich liegen hatte ... er frei aus dem Gedächtnis zitierte, was vor ihm schon aus dem Gedächtnis – daher die vielen Stichwortverbindungen – weitergegeben war. Aber es sind unsere kanonischen Evangelien, die so weiterleben.<sup>38</sup>

It is perhaps thought by scholars who identify redactional features in *Thomas* that “secondary orality” is the more “cautious” standpoint, less a hostage to fortune than to talk of memory – however distant – of the actual text. It is not necessarily clear that this is so, however. It may be that we simply have to remain agnostic as to which of the two is more likely.

When we come to assess individual examples, we will see some instances of scholars reinforcing the black-and-white antithesis. After

<sup>35</sup> S.L. Davies, *The Gospel of Thomas and Christian Wisdom*, 2nd edn (Oregon House, CA: Bardic Press, 2005), xxix–xxx.

<sup>36</sup> Davies, *Gospel of Thomas and Christian Wisdom*, xxx.

<sup>37</sup> R. McL. Wilson, *Studies in the Gospel of Thomas* (London: Mowbray, 1960), 100.

<sup>38</sup> E. Haenchen, ‘Literatur zum Thomasevangelium’, *ThR* 27 (1961), 147–78 (175, 176, cf. 178).

examining the reception of Matthean and Lukan redactional material in *Thomas*, we will then address (in Chapter 9) what can and cannot be known in this matter.

## 6 At what stage does the influence happen?

### 6.1 The spectrum of opinion

The final question to be posed is: at what stage in *Thomas*'s compositional and textual history might any potential influence have been exerted? Here we may boil down the various opinions to four major positions.

First, there is the position that *Thomas* is essentially secondary to the Synoptics in most or even all of its parallel material, and that this influence was exerted at the very roots of *Thomas*'s composition in its original language. McArthur commented that once one has established some cases of dependence, the burden of proof is then on those who would seek to make the alternative case.<sup>39</sup> This position is suggested by the title of Snodgrass's article 'The Gospel of Thomas: A Secondary Gospel', and is proposed in Perrin's treatment of the Diatessaronic influence upon *Thomas*.<sup>40</sup>

Second, we can distinguish from this a view according to which a degree of dependence is combined with independence in the Synoptic parallels. This view is taken by, for example, Wilson, for whom *Thomas* is composed of a number of sources, and is also a snowball-like 'rolling corpus'.<sup>41</sup> As such, some of *Thomas*'s Synoptic parallels are influenced by the written Gospels, but others may be influenced by surviving oral tradition. Additionally, as a rolling corpus, *Thomas* may be independent of the Synoptics in its earlier drafts, but influence may occur later in *Thomas*'s literary development. A version of this view, albeit regarding the level of influence from the Synoptics as very small indeed, appears in DeConick's work: for her, the core must of course be independent since it originates in Aramaic in the mid first century. Since she dates the latest

<sup>39</sup> McArthur, 'Dependence of the Gospel of Thomas', 287.

<sup>40</sup> N. Perrin, *Thomas and Tatian: The Relationship between the Gospel of Thomas and the Diatessaron* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2002); N. Perrin, 'Thomas: The Fifth Gospel?', *JETS* 49 (2006), 67–80.

<sup>41</sup> R. McL. Wilson, 'Thomas and the Synoptic Gospels', *ExpT* 72 (1960), 36–9 (39); R. McL. Wilson, "'Thomas' and the Growth of the Gospels', *HTR* 53 (1960), 231–50 (231) borrowing from Chadwick on *Sent. Sext.* Cf. Fieger's view that we should assume 'einen längeren Wachstumsprozess'. M. Fieger, 'Die Frau im Thomasevangelium', in R. Schulz and M. Görg, eds. *Lingua Restituta Orientalis* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1990), 102–7 (103).

stratum of *Thomas* to 80–120 CE,<sup>42</sup> the presence of later Synoptic influence is quite possible, and she allows for the possibility of the influence by means of secondary orality in a few instances.<sup>43</sup>

Third, the insistence by some scholars that even this theory of composition is too linear and evolutionary means that each saying must be taken completely as an individual case. As Aune has remarked in response to J.P. Meier: ‘The complex origins and redactions of *Thomas* are such that the dependence of a single logion in the Gospel of Matthew proves only the dependence of that logion.’<sup>44</sup> As such the question is almost unanswerable. Or rather, there are potentially 114 different part-answers to the question.

Finally, there are some who suggest that there is never any instance of influence at all. Among the hundreds of pages of Koester’s work on *Thomas*, for example, it is difficult to find a single mention of the possible influence of the Synoptics. This applies also to Davies, and to any who like him date *Thomas* earlier than all the Synoptics.

## 6.2 The compositional and transmissional issues involved

As is implied by these various options, we can see that there are large disagreements over underlying questions about *Thomas*’s origins which influence the different views. These can be summed up as follows.

First, the question of original language is a factor. As has been noted in Part I, if the original language of *Thomas* is some form of Western Aramaic, at least in its core, then it is more likely to be regarded by scholars as immune to influence from the Greek Gospels. Alternatively, if it is a Syriac work, then it is very much more likely to be influenced by the canonical Gospels: indeed, most Syriac theories of composition are accompanied by theories of the influence of the *Diatessaron*. As has been argued at some length in Part I of this book, however, these Aramaic/Syriac theories are not supported by the evidence.

<sup>42</sup> See the sayings listed in DeConick, *Original Gospel of Thomas in Translation*, 10.

<sup>43</sup> See e.g. DeConick, *Original Gospel of Thomas in Translation*, 215, on *GTh* 65, and – more definitely – on 14.5 (p. 91). A perhaps more radical construal of *Thomas*’s composition appears in A.D. DeConick, ‘The Original Gospel of *Thomas*’, *VigChr* 56 (2002), 167–99 (180), according to which we should suspend traditional notions of an author, thinking instead of ‘multi-authors who layered the text with new source materials over a lengthy period of time’.

<sup>44</sup> Aune, ‘Assessing’, 256. Cf. Aune, ‘Assessing’, 270, noting that in a climate where scholars whose focus of attention is *Thomas* gravitate towards independence, it is essential that each saying be taken on its own merits.

Second, there is the matter of whether *Thomas* has undergone modification, after composition, in its translation into Coptic and (either before or after translation) in its textual transmission. This is very much more likely in principle, but the extent of this modification seems rather small. We have noted in the previous chapter Tuckett's observation that the evidence for interference from the NT is lacking in places where we have Greek and Coptic parallel material.<sup>45</sup> There is, however, other evidence for modification at the Coptic stage. In two cases, sayings seem to have been linked by catchword connection at the Coptic stage, but in the instance where we can compare this with the Greek, the change is one of order rather than of added content.<sup>46</sup> There are other small variations, such as the greater reticence on the part of the Coptic version about using the word 'god' (ⲛⲟⲩⲮⲧⲉ). Overall, however, it is notable that by and large, the Greek fragments and the Coptic versions are quite similar. One point which has not been taken sufficiently seriously is the observation in Chapter 4 that Greek loanwords in the Coptic almost invariably reflect the same Greek words in our Oxyrhynchus fragments: out of 27 loanwords in the Coptic which are paralleled in Greek, the only differences are three particles (and particles are the elements least predictably rendered in other Greek-to-Coptic translations). The translation is not literal, but neither is it a different recension or an 'Überarbeitung'.<sup>47</sup> The only major differences are in the order of sayings 30/77 and the considerable abbreviation in the Coptic of *GTh* 36.<sup>48</sup> Finally, it is noteworthy for our purposes that we might assume that, in the process of translation and transmission, sayings in *Thomas* might be conformed more to the forms

<sup>45</sup> C.M. Tuckett, 'Q and Thomas: Evidence of a Primitive "Wisdom Gospel"? A Response to H. Koester', *ETL* 67 (1991), 346–60 (359). Tuckett rightly notes that, since we have only one complete manuscript of *Thomas*, this is completely speculative.

<sup>46</sup> *GTh* 30 + 77.2–3 – together in *P. Oxy.* 1 – are separated in the Coptic, presumably because of the shared Coptic ⲛⲟⲩⲮⲧⲉ between 77.1 and 77.2–3. *GTh* 33 combines two sayings which have the Coptic word ⲛⲁⲗⲗⲁⲉ, in its two different senses ('ear' / 'bushel'). On these two instances, see Haenchen, 'Literatur zum Thomasevangelium', 161–2; Tuckett, 'The Gospel of Thomas: Evidence for Jesus?', 21 n. 17.

<sup>47</sup> On the Coptic as a different recension, see M. Marcovich, 'Textual Criticism on the Gospel of Thomas', *JTS* 20 (1969), 53–74 (64). This is certainly a considerable exaggeration, as is Fieger's view of the Coptic as an 'Überarbeitung' ('Die Frau im Thomasevangelium', 103). J.A. Fitzmyer, 'The Oxyrhynchus *Logoi* of Jesus and the Coptic Gospel according to Thomas', in Fitzmyer, *Essays on the Semitic Background of the New Testament* (Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1974), 355–433 (416) sees more continuity. For discussion, see J.M. Robinson, 'On Bridging the Gulf from Q to the Gospel of Thomas (or vice versa)', in C.W. Hedrick and R. Hodgson, eds. *Nag Hammadi, Gnosticism, and Early Christianity* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1986), 127–75 (162).

<sup>48</sup> For differences, see Fallon and Cameron, 'The Gospel of Thomas: A Forschungsbericht and Analysis', 4203.

they take in Matthew. It will be notable in the following two chapters, however, that *Thomas* displays more influence from *Lukan* redaction than from Matthean.

Third, even before one considers later transmission and translation, there is the matter of *Thomas*'s compositional unity in the first place. Some reckon (1) that *Thomas* is essentially a unity, or at least that the "torso" is substantial enough of a unity to speak of a unified composition.<sup>49</sup> Others take the view (2) that there are two main stages of composition: this sometimes comes out as an initial sapiential core which is supplemented by a "Gnostic" overlay. DeConick (3) has a more complex theory, though not as complex as those (4) who opine that *Thomas* is a higgledy-piggledy congeries of sayings which joined the collection at a potentially great number of different occasions.<sup>50</sup>

There is no room here to make a full-scale argument for position (1), that of a basically unified work.<sup>51</sup> Nevertheless, several questions may be raised over the views according to which there are multiple stages of composition:

- (1) Wilson's influential comment that *Thomas* is a 'rolling corpus' is influenced by the analogy he draws with Chadwick's assessment of the *Sentences of Sextus*. However, the situation with the latter is quite different: Chadwick's comment that the two principal texts 'differ profoundly in their order' could not be said of the manuscripts of *Thomas*.<sup>52</sup> Part of the difficulty with

<sup>49</sup> S.J. Patterson, *The Gospel of Thomas and Jesus* (Sonoma, CA: Polebridge, 1993), 116; his statement here is a little confusing, however, since (1) on the previous page he has referred to the content no doubt changing from generation to generation (115), and (2) he sees two primary layers in *Thomas*, an earlier itinerant core and a later Gnosticising layer. Davies, it appears, considers only *GTh* 114 to be a later addition.

<sup>50</sup> DeConick's view may be inconsistent here, however. Consider the following statements: 'it is most probable that new sayings did not dribble into the text, one here, one there. On the contrary, they entered the collection *en masse* at particular moments as answers to questions about ideology or responses to crises situations' (DeConick, 'The Original Gospel of Thomas', 189). Two pages later, however, DeConick gives examples of very specific crises leading to the incorporation of very specific, individual sayings: 'First, the leadership of James seems to have been threatened. The community responded by promoting the maintenance of that connection (L. 12). Also, the authority of the community's hero, Thomas, seems to have been challenged at some point in their history, so they responded by adding the introductory saying and Logion 13' (p. 191). This seems precisely to convey the impression of new sayings which 'dribble into the text, one here, one there'.

<sup>51</sup> There may be some differences from earlier drafts. E.g. S. Giversen, 'Questions and Answers in the Gospel according to Thomas: The Composition of pl. 81,14–18 and pl. 83,14–27', *Acta Orientalia* 25 (1960), 332–8, may be right that sayings 6 and 14 may well have been a single dialogue originally.

<sup>52</sup> H. Chadwick, *The Sentences of Sextus: A Contribution to the History of Christian Ethics* (Cambridge University Press, 1959), 3.



Wilson's assessment of *Thomas* lies in the fact that none of the putative previous "editions" appears to have survived: the Greek fragments match up quite closely with the Coptic, which is obviously the closest thing we have to the final published version. As Haenchen remarks, whatever snowballing may have taken place before c.200 CE (the earliest likely date for the Oxyrhynchus fragments), there is obviously not much between Greek and Coptic stages.<sup>53</sup> All the evidence we have displays considerable similarity. If different versions had previously existed, then it seems strange that none of them appears to have survived. Conversely, if *Thomas* is as permeable as some comment, why are no sayings added between the Greek fragments and the Coptic version?<sup>54</sup>

- (2) Theological inconsistency is often alleged as originating in multiple stages of composition. On this issue, however, it is worth noting that assessments of doctrinal diversity within *Thomas* do vary greatly from scholar to scholar. For some, the reference to James's leadership in *GTh* 12 and the criticism of physical circumcision in *GTh* 53 display quite incompatible stances toward Jewish Christianity.<sup>55</sup> Or again: 'The interpreter who tries to harmonize this particular content of log. 24 with other sayings in the collection will be disappointed ... The collection refers to light no fewer than six times, but all attempts to tie these sayings to a common underlying doctrine seem forced.'<sup>56</sup> On the other hand, other scholars seem quite capable of discussing particular themes in *Thomas* and giving accounts which hold together reasonably well. One thinks, for example, of Uro's nuanced treatments of authority in *Thomas* (which touches on the James question), and of the topic of asceticism.<sup>57</sup> In the latter, Uro

<sup>53</sup> E. Haenchen, 'Literatur zum Thomasevangelium (Fortsetzung)', *ThR* 27 (1961), 306–38 (314).

<sup>54</sup> P. Sellew, 'The Gospel of Thomas: Prospects for Future Research', in J.D. Turner and A. McGuire, eds. *The Nag Hammadi Library after Fifty Years: Proceedings of the 1995 Society of Biblical Literature Commemoration* (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 327–46 (335), remarks that the form of *Thomas* affords it little protection against interpolation.

<sup>55</sup> DeConick, 'The Original Gospel of Thomas', 167.

<sup>56</sup> T. Zöckler, 'Light within the Human Person: A Comparison of Matthew 6:22–23 and Gospel of Thomas 24', *JBL* 120 (2001), 487–99 (496).

<sup>57</sup> R. Uro, "'Who Will Be Our Leader?'" Authority and Autonomy in the Gospel of Thomas', in I. Dunderberg, C.M. Tuckett and K. Syreeni, eds. *Fair Play: Diversity and Conflicts in Early Christianity: Essays in Honour of Heikki Räisänen* (Leiden/Boston/Cologne: Brill, 2002), 457–85, and R. Uro, 'Asceticism and Anti-Familial Language in the Gospel of Thomas', in H. Moxnes, ed. *Constructing Early Christian Families: Family as Social Reality and Metaphor* (London: Routledge, 1997), 216–34.

identifies *tendencies* rather than necessarily hard *positions*.<sup>58</sup> The eschatology of *Thomas*, sometimes considered contradictory, is in my judgement not too difficult to fit together.<sup>59</sup> Neller and Davies are two other scholars who have talked of the integrity of *Thomas*.<sup>60</sup> E.P. Sanders remarked in connection with Paul's epistles that they do not display systematic thinking, but they do evince coherence. One might say the same about *Thomas*. On the other hand, Stead offers the heterogeneity of audience as an explanation of *Thomas*'s diversity of outlook.<sup>61</sup>

- (3) On doublets, the problem is not a problem with their presence per se, but with their extent. Matthew and Luke both have doublets, but just not as many as one finds in *Thomas*. Some, however, have identified particular literary reasons for the doublets: this is the conclusion of the most substantial study of them;<sup>62</sup> another scholar sees the later versions as the result of improvisation upon the earlier forms.<sup>63</sup> On the other hand, it may well be the case that the author of *Thomas* is simply not as skilled a writer. Arnal probably rightly characterises the author/editor as 'moderately educated', but with 'little literary sophistication'.<sup>64</sup>

<sup>58</sup> See Uro, 'Asceticism and Anti-Familial Language', 226.

<sup>59</sup> See S.J. Gathercole, "'The Heavens and the Earth Will Be Rolled up": The Eschatology of the *Gospel of Thomas*', in H.-J. Eckstein, C. Landmesser and H. Lichtenberger, eds. *Eschatologie – Eschatology: The Sixth Durham-Tübingen Research Symposium: Eschatology in Old Testament, Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity (Tübingen, September 2009)* (WUNT, Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011), 280–302.

<sup>60</sup> S.L. Davies, 'The Christology and Protology of the Gospel of Thomas', *JBL* 111 (1992), 663–82 (664).

<sup>61</sup> G.C. Stead, 'Some Reflections on the Gospel of Thomas', in F.L. Cross, ed. *Studia Evangelica*, vol. III (TU 88; Berlin: Akademie, 1964), 390–402 (399–400).

<sup>62</sup> J.Ma. Asgeirsson, 'Arguments and Audience(s) in the Gospel of Thomas (Part II)', *SBLSP* (1998), 325–42 (329), identifying the doublets as inner-Thomasine growth, rather than from assimilation of external sources. See also the first part in *SBLSP* (1997), 47–85, where the basic data is set out on pp. 49, 50 and 75. Cf. J.-M. Sevrin, 'Thomas, Q et le Jésus de l'histoire', in A. Lindemann, ed. *Sayings Source Q and the Historical Jesus* (Leuven University/Peeters, 2001), 461–76 (465), who takes the view that since a number of the doublets appear in the last twenty sayings, they collectively function as a kind of recapitulation. The point is also noted by Stead, who deduces a rather different conclusion from the facts, namely that the original conclusion was perhaps around *GTh* 100, but that it was rather repetitiously expanded later ('Some Reflections on the Gospel of Thomas', 401).

<sup>63</sup> A.J. Dewey, 'Keep Speaking until You Find ...: Thomas and the School of Oral Mimesis', in R. Cameron and M.P. Miller, eds. *Redescribing Christian Origins* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2004), 109–32 (117).

<sup>64</sup> W.E. Arnal, 'The Rhetoric of Marginality: Apocalypticism, Gnosticism, and Sayings Gospels', *HTR* 88 (1995), 471–94 (489); cf. Sellew, who notes that some scholars regard *Thomas* as 'a sub-literary product' ('The Gospel of Thomas: Prospects for Future Research', 328).

Horman notes, not without some understatement: ‘There is not, I think, a drive to literary excellence in Thomas.’<sup>65</sup> In a sense, the doublets are a problem for any theory, as – if one excludes the theory of subtle literary sophistication – they indicate carelessness on the part of the final editor however long the process of accretion has been:<sup>66</sup> whether in the course of over a century (so DeConick), or the short time it probably took the editor to combine the *Gospel of the Hebrews* and the *Gospel of the Egyptians* (thus early Quispel).<sup>67</sup> As Neller points out, some have taken doublets as evidence for *Thomas* being a growing collection, others for *Thomas* originating from a single editor using multiple sources.<sup>68</sup> On the other hand, it may be correct that the doublets are deliberate rather than the result of carelessness. Two of the doublets are introduced in a way that makes clear they are known by the author/editor to be doublets.<sup>69</sup> Thus Dewey’s view that the later versions are reworkings of the earlier versions may be right.

- (4) Finally, the view that the collection, because of its fissures and inconcinnities, could not come from a single author merely moves the problem. Given that *Thomas* is quite a short work, which ought to be manageable to edit, we are left instead with an eccentric and/or unintelligent final editor instead (which is of course perfectly possible).

As noted above, this is not intended as a real defence of the unity of *Thomas*; it merely seeks to raise some questions about the (probably) now-dominant “rolling corpus” view.

<sup>65</sup> J.F. Horman, ‘The Source of the Version of the Parable of the Sower in the Gospel of Thomas’, *NovT* 21 (1979), 326–43 (343). He has just noted aspects of the phrasology of *Thomas* as ‘surprisingly crude’, and reflecting ‘shockingly bad taste’ (342).

<sup>66</sup> DeConick, ‘The Original Gospel of Thomas’, 178, remarks that Arnal’s model of a kind of two-stage composition faces the same problems as does a unified composition by a single author.

<sup>67</sup> See e.g. G. Quispel, ‘Gospel of Thomas and the Gospel of the Hebrews’, *NTS* 12 (1966), 371–82 (373) for Quispel’s view of these two as only sources. In the same article he attributes *Thomas*’s doublets to the combining of these two sources (378). Quispel later added a Hermetic source: see discussion of the development of his views in Fallon and Cameron, ‘The Gospel of Thomas: A Forschungsbericht and Analysis’, 4217–18.

<sup>68</sup> K.V. Neller, ‘Diversity in the Gospel of Thomas: Clues for a New Direction?’, *SecCent* 7 (1989–90), 1–18 (3).

<sup>69</sup> (1) The statement in *GTh* 46 about knowing the kingdom by becoming a child is introduced with ‘I have said’, harking back perhaps to the similar thought in *GTh* 22. (2) Comparably, the comment in *GTh* 111 about the world not being worthy of the one who finds himself is prefaced with ‘Did not Jesus say?’, alerting the reader perhaps to the similar statements in *GTh* 56 and 80.

## 6.3 A test of the impact of the stratification and rolling-corpus hypotheses

In addition to these question marks which may be placed over the stratified or accretive views of *Thomas*, one can also assess how damaging they really are to arguments for the influence of the Synoptics upon *Thomas*. This evaluation will be undertaken in Chapter 9 as follows.

- First, the group of *Thomas* sayings judged in Chapters 7–8 to be influenced by Matthew and Luke is collected.
- Second, we take a representative sample of scholars who not only have attempted to argue for developmental views of *Thomas*'s composition, but also have assigned particular sayings of *Thomas* to particular strata. Specifically, Crossan, Arnal, DeConick and Puig are taken as examples.
- Third, after these two stages, we can then see whether, for each of these four scholars, the sayings judged (by me, not them) to be influenced by Matthew or Luke fall into their earlier or later strata. If the sayings identified in Chapters 7–8 as influenced by the Synoptics fall predominantly into their later strata/accretive layers, then this would be an interesting conclusion, indicating perhaps that the influence of the canonical Gospels was exerted only upon the later accretions rather than upon the core (and thus their models would perhaps be vindicated). On the other hand, if the sayings considered here to be influenced by Matthew and Luke cut across all the various strata, or predominate in the earlier strata, then this would indicate that – even on their hypotheses – the influence of the Synoptics is not confined merely to later redactions but is more integral to *Thomas*.

This “test” then accepts for the sake of argument the accretive or stratified views of *Thomas*. While I do not endorse the stratifications or stages of accretions proposed by these scholars, the results may at least remove one of the stumbling blocks. If a good number of *Thomas*'s sayings incorporating redactional material from Matthew or Luke appear in what are thought by these scholars to be earlier strata, then one could still on a stratified or accretive view of *Thomas*'s composition acknowledge the influence of the Synoptics at an early stage in that compositional process. We will see in Chapter 9 what the outcome is.

### **Conclusion**

The first four points of this chapter have examined aspects of the approach to be taken to the material common to *Thomas* and the Synoptics. We have defined the method and offered some further justifications for and clarifications of it, as well as delimiting the body of material – twenty sayings in all – from which the specific passages to be discussed will be drawn. On the other hand, points 5 and 6 (on *how* and *at what stage* influence might have taken place) have been concerned not so much with the method of approach, but rather with how the results will be analysed. The first four points, then, have a greater bearing on the subsequent two chapters, in which passages in Matthew and Luke will be compared with their parallels in *Thomas* to provide instances of influence. Points 5 and 6, however, will come into play more in Chapter 9, in which the results will be collectively evaluated.

## MATTHEW IN THE *GOSPEL OF THOMAS*

### Introduction

Some scholars, although not many, have considered *Thomas* to be more familiar with Matthew than with other early Christian literature.<sup>1</sup> If *Thomas* post-dates Matthew, this would hardly be surprising, given the latter's influence on a wide variety of Christian literature in the second century.<sup>2</sup> On the other hand, it is theoretically possible that Matthew and *Thomas* are independent, or even that Matthew is somehow influenced by *Thomas*. This chapter aims to explore the question of whether *Thomas* is acquainted with Matthean redaction of Mark, and indeed some examples of this will be found. As noted in the previous chapter, where unknowns are involved we will be more cautious than some have been, so for example eschewing possible instances of Matthean redaction of Q.<sup>3</sup> In addition to the theories of divergent translations already examined in Chapter 3, we will explore in the present chapter some further alternatives to Thomasine dependence, as a way of testing alternative hypotheses. In particular, Davies argues that Mark redacts *Thomas* prior to Matthew's use of Mark (*GTh* 14); we will examine this instance, as well as arguments by Koester and Quispel for the independence of *GTh* 44.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See e.g. G. Garitte, 'Les Paraboles du royaume dans l'Évangile de Thomas', in L. Cerfaux, *Recueil Lucien Cerfaux: études d'exégèse et d'histoire religieuse de Monseigneur Cerfaux* (Gembloux: Duculot, 1962), vol. III, 61–80 (75).

<sup>2</sup> On the Apostolic Fathers and the apologists, see E. Massaux, *The Influence of the Gospel of Saint Matthew on Christian Literature before Saint Irenaeus*, vol. III, *The Apologists and the Didache* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1993 (French original 1950)), 187. C.M. Tuckett, *Nag Hammadi and the Gospel Tradition: Synoptic Tradition in the Nag Hammadi Library* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1986), 149 draws the same conclusion for the Nag Hammadi library; cf. S.J. Gathercole, *The Gospel of Judas: Rewriting Early Christianity* (Oxford University Press, 2007), 134–8.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. the view that *GTh* 33 incorporates Matthean editing of Q in W.-D. Köhler, *Die Rezeption des Matthäusevangeliums in der Zeit vor Irenäus* (WUNT; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1987), 386. See pp. 385–94 for the complete discussion of Matthew and *Thomas*, which is much more optimistic than the present chapter.

<sup>4</sup> In the latter case, it is not so much "testing" as finding a better alternative.

Smith has also argued that, in *GTh* 99, we find Matthew conflating Mark and *Thomas* (*GTh*+Mark=Matthew), but we will reserve discussion of this to the next chapter where we explore more fully the relationship of *GTh* 99 to both Matthew and Luke. Before we come to these instances, however, we will explore the idea that *Thomas* actually refers to Matthew as the disciple associated with Matthew's Gospel.

## 1 *GTh* 13.3 and Matthew the disciple

As we will see in more detail below, *GTh* 13 is *Thomas*'s version of what in Matthew, Mark and Luke is the Caesarea Philippi episode. Just as in the canonical Synoptic Gospels, Jesus asks a question eliciting opinions about his identity, and receives a variety of answers:

Jesus said to his disciples, 'Compare me and tell me whom I resemble.'

Simon Peter said to him, 'You are like a righteous angel.'

Matthew said to him, 'You are like a wise philosopher.'

Thomas said to him, 'Master, my mouth is completely unable to say whom you are like.'  
(*GTh* 13.1–4)

The implication of this dialogue is, as scholars agree, that the first two answers are clearly wrong. The first answer, that of Simon Peter, has suggested to some that the *Gospel of Peter* or Mark's Gospel may be alluded to here, but it is difficult – or at least unnecessary – to see a special reference to Peter as representative of a Gospel here.<sup>5</sup> The choice of Peter as an interlocutor is an unsurprising one, because, as the most prominent disciple in early Christian tradition and as the figure embodying "establishment" Christianity, he is a natural target in any work where more mainstream ideas are being challenged (cf. also *GTh* 114).

Matthew, on the other hand, is a much more surprising choice as one of Jesus' interlocutors. In the NT he is merely one of the disciples with no special role, mentioned only in his call narrative in Matthew's Gospel (Matt. 9.9; cf. the reference to Levi in Mark 2.14; Luke 5.27), and in the lists of disciples (Mark 3.18; Matt. 10.3; Luke 6.15; Acts 1.13). Papias also mentions him as one in a list of disciples which refers to Andrew,

<sup>5</sup> A.F. Walls, 'References to Apostles in the Gospel of Thomas', *NTS* 7 (1961), 266–70 (269), takes Peter as symbolising Mark's Gospel, and H. Koester, 'Apocryphal and Canonical Gospels', *HTR* 73 (1980), 105–30 (118–19) sees a reference to the *Gospel of Peter*. In response to the latter see R.M. Trevijano Etcheverría, 'Santiago el Justo y Tomás el Mellizo (Evangelio de Tomás, Log 12 y 13)', *Salmanticensis* 39 (1992), 97–119 (110).

Peter, Philip, Thomas, James, John and Matthew.<sup>6</sup> Elsewhere in the corpus of the Apostolic Fathers, he receives no mention except in Papias' reference to him as an author of a Gospel.<sup>7</sup> Matthew does appear in Nag Hammadi texts such as the *Dialogue of the Saviour* and the *Sophia of Jesus Christ*, but only as a colourless interlocutor of no independent interest.<sup>8</sup> He is not referred to by Justin in any capacity at all.<sup>9</sup>

In short, Matthew is an undistinguished member of the apostolic college, except in one respect – namely in the role ascribed to him by Papias. As a result, some scholars have wondered whether the inclusion of reference to Matthew in *GTh* 13 implies knowledge of a written Gospel attributed to him.<sup>10</sup> In this instance, the case is much more likely than with Peter because of Matthew's lack of reputation in earliest Christianity outside of his role as an evangelist. As a result, by far the most probable explanation for Matthew's inclusion here is as a Gospel writer.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Papias, *apud* Eusebius, *HE* III.39.4.

<sup>7</sup> Papias, *apud* Eusebius, *HE* III.39.16: περὶ δὲ τοῦ Ματθαίου ταῦτ' εἴρηται· Ματθαῖος μὲν οὖν Ἑβραϊδὶ διαλέκτῳ τὰ λόγια συνετάξατο, ἡρμηνευσεν δ' αὐτά, ὡς ἦν δυνατὸς ἕκαστος.

<sup>8</sup> The name of the amanuensis in *Thom. Cont.* 138.2–3 is spelled μαθαιας, identifying him more closely perhaps with the Matthias of Acts 1 (or, of course, some other figure) than with Matthew.

<sup>9</sup> The only work perhaps from the second century in which he is in any sense distinguished from other disciples is Epiphanius' Hebrew Matthew which he regards as used by the Ebionites: 'There was a certain man named Jesus, and he was about thirty years of age, who chose us. And coming to Capernaum, he entered into the house of Simon surnamed Peter, and opened his mouth and said, "Passing beside the Sea of Tiberias I chose John and James, the sons of Zebedee, and Simon and Andrew and <Philip and Bartholomew, James the son of Alphaeus and Thomas>, Thaddaeus, Simon the Zealot, and Judas the Iscariot. Thee likewise, Matthew, seated at the receipt of custom, did I call, and thou didst follow me. I will, then, that ye be twelve apostles for a testimony to Israel.'" (Epiphanius, *Panarion* XXX.13.2–3; tr. F. Williams). The reference here seems to imply that Matthew was the only disciple who was not chosen by the Sea of Galilee.

<sup>10</sup> The connection with Matthew's Gospel is made tentatively in E.H. Pagels, *Beyond Belief: The Secret Gospel of Thomas* (New York: Random House, 2003), 47, and more forcefully in Walls, 'References to Apostles', 269; T.V. Smith, *Petrine Controversies in Early Christianity* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1985), 115–16, and R.J. Bauckham, *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses: The Gospels as Eyewitness Testimony* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006), 236–7. Koester, 'Apocryphal and Canonical Gospels', 118–19, argues that there is a reference here to Q, but this is highly speculative. Koester perhaps suggests Matthew or Q, but his discussion is rather unclear. Cf. also H. Koester, *Ancient Christian Gospels: Their History and Development* (Philadelphia: Trinity Press International, 1990), 166–7.

<sup>11</sup> It is difficult to see what evidence there might be for Matthew appearing here in *GTh* 13 as guarantor of the Jesus tradition specifically of a Petrine Christianity (with "Matthew" and "Peter" presumably as a hendiadys), as argued in E. Rau, 'Jenseits von Raum, Zeit und Gemeinschaft: "Christ-sein" nach dem Thomasevangelium', *NovT* 45 (2003), 138–59 (142, 156). It may be that Rau still envisages a written Gospel, however, rather than just an oral tradition associated with Matthew.



Indeed, one should probably go further still, if it is indeed right to see in this reference an allusion to the Gospel of Matthew. For this reference would then almost certainly not be simply to any Gospel which the author of *Thomas* had encountered, but to a Gospel regarded as possessing authority or at least possessing some kind of accepted rival portrait of Jesus. There is an implied analogy here between (the Gospel of) Matthew and Peter which makes Haenchen's remark in part apposite, namely that *GTh* 13 presupposes 'die weite Verbreitung und Hochschätzung des Mt-Evangeliums und die maßgebende Stellung des Petrus in der "Großkirche"'.<sup>12</sup> One might not here agree with the assumption of Matthew's 'weite Verbreitung': even if knowledge of Matthew has clearly extended to the milieu of our author, we cannot speculate very much about where else it had reached. On the other hand, it may well be that Matthew is singled out here as the one known, or best known, by our author. *Thomas* certainly does presuppose, on our interpretation of the reference to 'Matthew' in *GTh* 13, a 'Hochschätzung' by others of Matthew: it is obviously regarded as authoritative enough to require debunking. *GTh* 13 is evidence not just for *knowledge* of the Gospel of Matthew *tout simple*, but for knowledge of an authoritative Matthew.

#### Matthew's "wise philosopher" Christology in *GTh* 13.3

Peter compares Jesus with 'a righteous angel'. Matthew's response, 'You are like a wise philosopher', is presumably regarded similarly as a confession far too demeaning. Might the content of the Gospel of Matthew be the impulse for Matthew's characterisation of Jesus as 'wise philosopher'? This has been suggested by Elaine Pagels.<sup>13</sup> To explore the idea further, there are two reasons why this might be suggestive of a Matthean view of Jesus.

#### Matthew's Gospel and 'wisdom'/'Wisdom'

One linguistic oddity is the apparently tautologous 'wise philosopher': wisdom appears in both the adjective, and in the noun (in Coptic, the Greek loan word  $\phi\lambda\omega\sigma\phi\omega\varsigma$ ).<sup>14</sup> It can be noted in this connection that

<sup>12</sup> E. Haenchen, 'Literatur zum Thomasevangelium (Fortsetzung)', *ThR* 27 (1961), 306–38 (315).

<sup>13</sup> So Pagels, *Beyond Belief*, 47.

<sup>14</sup> It is possible, however, given the negative portrayals of philosophy especially in earliest Christianity (Acts 17.16–23; Col. 2.8; 1 Cor. 1–2; *Ep. Diog.* 8 *et passim*; *Tr. Res.* 46.8–9, only identifying one philosopher who believes), that this is not tautologous but rather a striking characterisation of Jesus as one who really does possess wisdom in contrast to all those savants who falsely lay claim to it. One might also compare the reference in the *Letter of*

the Gospel of Matthew has attracted an enormous amount of attention for its apparent interest in wisdom motifs and wisdom Christology. In Matthew 11, the connection between the deeds of the Christ (11.2) and the deeds of Wisdom (11.19), as well as the 'easy yoke' saying in Matthew 11.28–30 have been particularly suggestive (cf. also 11.25–7); the attribution to Jesus in Matthew 23.34–6 of what is spoken by Wisdom in Luke, and the feminine imagery applied to Jesus in the adjacent 23.37–9, have been similarly influential. These passages were the impulse for a wisdom Christology as long ago as 1863 in an article by D.F. Strauss,<sup>15</sup> and the work of scholars such as A. Feuillet in the twentieth century further promoted the theme.<sup>16</sup> The 1970s saw a particularly rapid growth in the industry, with two monographs exclusively devoted to wisdom Christology in Matthew,<sup>17</sup> and two others ranging more widely, but also with some focus on Matthew.<sup>18</sup> This movement elicited some criticisms,<sup>19</sup> though not enough to stop further literature (including another three monographs in the 1980s and 1990s) advocating the idea.<sup>20</sup> Others have argued for even more pervasive influence of wisdom themes, even to the point of one scholar arguing that Matthew is 'a sapiential work' *in toto*.<sup>21</sup>

*Mara bar Serapion* to Jesus as a wise king, as well as Lucian's reference to him as a sophist (*Peregrinus* 13).

<sup>15</sup> D.F. Strauss, 'Jesu Weheruf über Jerusalem und die σοφία τοῦ Θεοῦ. Matth. 23,34–39, Luc. 11,49–51, 13,34f. Ein Beitrag zur johanneischen Frage', *Zeitschrift für wissenschaftliche Theologie* 6 (1863) 84–93, arguing that Jesus is identified with Wisdom.

<sup>16</sup> A. Feuillet, 'Jésus et la Sagesse Divine d'après les Évangiles Synoptiques: le "logion johannique" et l' Ancien Testament', *RevB* 62 (1955), 161–96.

<sup>17</sup> M.J. Suggs, *Wisdom, Christology and Law in Matthew's Gospel* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1970); F.W. Burnett, *The Testament of Jesus-Sophia: A Redaction-Critical Study of the Eschatological Discourse in Matthew* (Washington, DC: University Press of America, 1979).

<sup>18</sup> F. Christ, *Jesus Sophia: Die Sophia-Christologie bei den Synoptikern* (ATANT 57; Zürich: Zwingli, 1970); R. Hamerton-Kelly, *Pre-Existence, Wisdom, and the Son of Man: A Study of the Idea of Pre-Existence in the New Testament* (SNTSMS 21; Cambridge University Press, 1973).

<sup>19</sup> M.D. Johnson, 'Reflections on a Wisdom Approach to Matthew's Christology', *CBQ* 36 (1974), 44–64; G.N. Stanton, 'Salvation Proclaimed: X. Matthew 11<sup>28–30</sup>: Comfortable Words?', *ExpT* 94 (1982–83), 3–9.

<sup>20</sup> See for example C. Deutsch, *Hidden Wisdom and the Easy Yoke: Wisdom, Torah and Discipleship in Matthew 11:25–30* (JSNTSS; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1987); C. Deutsch, *Lady Wisdom, Jesus, and the Sages: Metaphor and Social Context in Matthew's Gospel* (Valley Forge, PA: Trinity Press International, 1996), as well as her article, 'Wisdom in Matthew: Transformation of a Symbol', *NovT* 32 (1990), 13–47. See also F.T. Gench, *Wisdom in the Christology of Matthew* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1997), and R. Pregeant, 'The Wisdom Passages in Matthew's Story', *SBLSP* 29 (1990), 469–93.

<sup>21</sup> B. Witherington III, *Matthew* (Smyth & Helwys Bible Commentary; Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys, 2006), 16.

The point here is certainly not that all these interpretations are right (or indeed, that any of them are).<sup>22</sup> Rather, there are clearly elements in Matthew that might lend themselves to such an interpretation (however correct or misguided that interpretation may be). It is not that this modern scholarship shows that Matthew really was a wisdom Gospel with a Jesus who was wisdom incarnate, but rather that – rightly or wrongly – when viewed against a particular backdrop, Matthew can be associated with themes in the wisdom tradition, and Matthew’s Jesus can be pictured as a sage. It may well be that the author of the *Gospel of Thomas* thought this about Matthew (and perhaps disapproved of it). This would not prevent the *Gospel of Thomas* itself absorbing wisdom tradition,<sup>23</sup> though if (a real if) *GTh* 13 is implicitly criticising “sapiential” approaches to Jesus, that would mean that it is unlikely that such wisdom tradition was appropriated consciously *as* wisdom tradition.

#### Jesus as teacher in Matthew

There is a second aspect of Matthew’s ‘wise philosopher’ in *GTh* 13 which might link up with the Gospel of Matthew. This relates more to the reference to ‘philosopher’, often a figure considered to be engaged in instruction. It is common in scholarship to see Matthew’s Gospel described as a catechetical handbook,<sup>24</sup> and Jesus’ role as teacher emphasised strongly by Matthew.<sup>25</sup> One frequently encounters comments about ‘the Matthean portrait of the Jesus who once lived on earth as a Jewish teacher and prophet’,<sup>26</sup> or statements such as: ‘Jesus’ most prominent activity in Matthew’s Gospel is teaching.’<sup>27</sup> Again, I am not interested here in the rights or wrongs of the affair, but rather in the fact that Matthew’s Gospel and the Christology within it could

<sup>22</sup> For some critical remarks, see S.J. Gathercole, *The Preexistent Son: Recovering the Christologies of Matthew, Mark, and Luke* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006), 193–209.

<sup>23</sup> As perhaps in *GTh* 28, often considered to assume a kind of wisdom Christology. See also the championing of a sapiential or “sophiological” Jesus in S.L. Davies, *The Gospel of Thomas and Christian Wisdom*, 2nd edn (Oregon House, CA: Bardic Press, 2005).

<sup>24</sup> F.W. Beare, *The Gospel according to Matthew* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1981), 5, remarks that Matthew is ‘a manual of instruction in the Christian way of life’.

<sup>25</sup> See e.g. S. Byrskog, *Jesus the Only Teacher: Didactic Authority and Transmission in Ancient Israel, Ancient Judaism and the Matthean Community* (Coniectanea Biblica; New Testament Series 24; Stockholm: Almqvist and Wiksell International 1994), and J. Yueh-Han Yieh, *One Teacher: Jesus’ Teaching Role in Matthew’s Gospel* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2004).

<sup>26</sup> Beare, *Matthew*, 6.

<sup>27</sup> L.T. Johnson, *The Writings of the New Testament: An Interpretation* (London: SCM Press, 1999), 195.

be construed that way by some readers. It is notable that Matthew does highlight Jesus as a *καθηγητής* (Matt. 23.10), a term which generally means a ‘private tutor’, sometimes in particular contexts a teacher of philosophy.<sup>28</sup>

### Evaluation

It would be very interesting if we were able to conclude that *GTh* 13.3 was not only a reference to Matthew’s Gospel but also a characterisation of it. This is not a difficulty in principle: we do after all have some characterisations of Matthew from the beginning of the second century and later on into the century. Papias, for example, formed an opinion of Matthew as a *syntagma*, an ‘ordered arrangement’ of the oracles.<sup>29</sup> Irenaeus conceived of Matthew as a whole as aimed at a Jewish audience, publishing his book for an audience of ‘the Hebrews’.<sup>30</sup>

Even so, we should probably be cautious about claiming too much from “Matthew’s Christology” in *GTh* 13.3. A connection between that Christology and the contents of Matthew’s Gospel is a tantalising possibility, and perhaps suggestive, but to claim any more than that would be rash. On the other hand, given the rarity of reference to the disciple Matthew in the second century, and especially the rarity of any attribution of importance to him, it does seem very likely that the reference to the disciple in *GTh* 13 is an echo of his reputation as a Gospel writer. A view of *Thomas*’s knowledge (in whatever form) of Matthew is reinforced further by additional factors in *GTh* 13.

## 2 *GTh* 13 and Matthean redaction

In addition to an actual reference to Matthew in *GTh* 13, the saying also appears to be influenced by the *contents* of Matthew’s Gospel. This becomes evident when we consider the versions in Mark, Matthew and *Thomas* in parallel in Table 7.1.

Scholars have noted various ways in which Matthew adapts Mark here. The ‘I’ in “Who do people say I am?” becomes ‘the Son of Man’. In the response, Jeremiah is added as one of the possibilities. These, however,

<sup>28</sup> J. Glucker, *Antiochus and the Late Academy* (Hypomnemata 56; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1978), 127–34 (esp. 131), and cf. ‘Excursus 3: Jesus of Nazareth as *Kathegetes*’, 424–48, on Matt. 23.10. This is not to suggest that the term *in itself* means a teacher of philosophy.

<sup>29</sup> Eusebius, *HE* III.39.16 (see n. 7 above).

<sup>30</sup> *Apud* Eusebius, *HE* V.8.2.

Table 7.1

Mark 8.27–32	Matthew 16.13–22	G7th 13
<p>And Jesus and his disciples went out to the villages around Caesarea Philippi. On the way</p>	<p><sup>13</sup>When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi,</p>	
<p>he asked his disciples, ‘Who do people say I am?’</p>	<p>he asked his disciples, ‘Who do people say the Son of Man is?’</p>	<p>Jesus said to his disciples, ‘Compare me and tell me whom I resemble.’</p>
<p>They replied, ‘Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, one of the prophets.’</p>	<p><sup>14</sup>They said, ‘Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets.’</p>	<p>Simon Peter said to him, ‘You are like a righteous angel.’ Matthew said to him, ‘You are like a wise philosopher.’</p>
<p>‘But what about you?’ he asked. ‘Who do you say I am?’</p>	<p><sup>15</sup>He said to them, ‘But you – who do you say I am?’</p>	
<p>Peter said to him, ‘You are the Christ.’</p>	<p><sup>16</sup>Simon Peter answered, ‘You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.’</p>	<p>Thomas said to him, ‘Master, my mouth is wholly unable to say whom you are like.’</p>
	<p><sup>17</sup>Jesus replied, saying to him, ‘Blessed are you, Simon bar Jonah, because it was not flesh and blood but my Father in heaven that revealed this to you.’</p>	<p>Jesus said, ‘I am not your master. When you drank, you became drunk with the bubbling stream which I have dug.’ And he took him and withdrew, and spoke three words to him.</p>

Table 7.1 (*cont.*)

Mark 8.27–32	Matthew 16.13–22	GTh 13
<p>Jesus warned them not to tell anyone about him. He then began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and after three days rise again. He spoke plainly about this, and Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. etc.</p>	<p><sup>18</sup>And I tell you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it. <sup>19</sup>I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.'</p>	<p>When Thomas returned to his companions, they asked him, 'What did Jesus say to you?' Thomas said to them, 'If I tell you one of the words which he spoke to me, you would pick up stones and throw them at me. But fire would come forth from the stones, and burn you.'</p>
<p><sup>20</sup>Then he warned his disciples not to tell anyone that he was the Christ. <sup>21</sup>From that time, Jesus began to explain to his disciples that he must go off to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law, and be killed and on the third day be raised to life. <sup>22</sup>Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. 'Never, Lord!' he said, etc.</p>		

are relatively minor. Much more significant is Matthew's considerable plus in Matthew 16.17–19, where Jesus (1) rejoices at Peter's privilege in receiving the revelation from the Father (16.17) and (2) bestows upon Peter the special role as a foundation of the church, and the authority of the keys.

These two redactional features evident in Matthew then appear (*mutatis mutandis*) in *Thomas*, viz. (1) that Matthew and *Thomas* draw attention to the sources of, respectively, Peter's and Thomas's knowledge, and (2) that, as in Matthew, the incident in *Thomas* is the occasion for the consecration of a figure who is to be the foundation of Jesus' community. In Matthew 16.17, Jesus pronounces Peter blessed because of the revelation he has received, and declares him to be the rock upon which the church is to be built. Similarly, *GTh* 13.4–8 in combination with *Thomas*'s prologue<sup>31</sup> indicate the appointment of *Thomas* as the principal trustee of Jesus' revelation. As such, *Thomas*'s version is almost certainly dependent upon Matthew here.<sup>32</sup> As Uro is probably right to note, however, this may well not be a consequence of 'scribal reworking' but rather of 'the influence of Matthew's literary redaction on the oral tradition drawn upon by *Thomas*'.<sup>33</sup> There are certainly important differences between *Thomas* and the Synoptics here, but the similarities with Matthew are nonetheless striking.<sup>34</sup>

When we come to examine the relationship between Luke's Gospel and *Thomas* in the next chapter, we will have occasion to be very reticent about any kind of *direct* influence between the one and the other. Since we have actually seen a reference here to Matthew, however, it is possible that a more direct literary relationship is likely. This is probably not, as Uro rightly notes, a 'scribal reworking', but may perhaps be a result of an actual memory of reading the Gospel by the author of this saying of *Thomas*. This "perhaps" is all that can be said, however.

<sup>31</sup> 'These are the secret sayings which the living Jesus spoke and which (Didymus) Judas Thomas wrote down.'

<sup>32</sup> On these two points, see R. Uro, *Thomas: Seeking the Historical Context of the Gospel of Thomas* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2003), 88: 'Only in Matthew and *Thomas* does Jesus' response contain a reference to the divine source of the confession (cf. the blessing in Matt. 16:17 and *Thomas*' intoxication in *Gos. Thom.* 13:5) which is affirmed with the unique role that Jesus assigns to the disciple who has given the appropriate answer.' Cf. Smith, *Petrine Controversies*, 115–16.

<sup>33</sup> Uro, *Thomas*, 88–9.

<sup>34</sup> For example, in Matthew it is Jesus who takes Peter aside to speak to him, whereas in *Thomas*, it is Jesus who takes *Thomas* away to speak privately.

Table 7.2

Mark 7.15	Matthew 15.11	<i>GTh</i> 14.5
There is nothing which from outside of a person goes into him	That which goes into the mouth	For whatever goes into your mouth
which is able to defile him.	does not defile the person.	will not defile you.
Rather, the things which come out of the person are what defile the person.	Rather, that which comes out of the mouth – that defiles the person.	Rather, that which comes out of your mouth – that is what will defile.

### 3 *GTh* 14.5

Saying 14 has long been suggested as a candidate for Matthean dependence (see Table 7.2).<sup>35</sup>

There are some features here which are clearly distinctive to *Thomas*. *GTh* 14 is addressed to the disciples (14.1: ‘Jesus said to them’), and prior to this final part (14.5) the saying has been full of second-person plurals; as a result, it is not surprising that *Thomas* has second-person plurals throughout, and no references to people in general (cf. ἄνθρωπος x2 each in Mark and Matthew). A very minor suggestion of a literary relationship of some kind (which should not be taken as very significant) is the common presence of ἀλλά/ἄλλα (‘Rather’) introducing the second half of the saying.<sup>36</sup>

In favour of the influence of Matthew upon *Thomas*, however, are several factors. First, we have in both Matthew and *Thomas* (against Mark) reference to the mouth (στόμα/ταρτο) in both parts of the antithesis. Second, in the latter half of the antithesis, Mark makes the threats to purify plural, while Matthew and *Thomas* retain the singular. Third, Matthew and *Thomas* share an emphatic pronoun in the last clause of the saying: ‘That’. Furthermore, there are two omissions common to Matthew and

<sup>35</sup> Tuckett takes *GTh* 14 as a clear example of *Thomas*’s dependence on the Synoptics: C.M. Tuckett, ‘Thomas and the Synoptics’, *NovT* 30 (1988), 132–57 (143); cf. H.K. McArthur, ‘Dependence of the Gospel of Thomas on the Synoptics’, *ExpT* 71 (1960), 286–7, and J. Schröter, *Erinnerung an Jesu Worte: Studien zur Rezeption der Logienüberlieferung in Markus, Q und Thomas* (WMANT 76; Neukirchen: Neukirchener, 1997), 236.

<sup>36</sup> As noted above in Chapter 3, however, since conjunctions are translated in a very unpredictable manner, we cannot base much on this alone.



*Thomas*: Mark's 'from outside the person' (ἐξωθεν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου), and 'which is able' (ὁ δύναται). This combination of factors indicates fairly clearly the dependence of *Thomas* upon Matthew in this saying.

Stevan Davies has attacked one component of this approach to *GTh* 14.5, in his theory that Mark is influenced by *Thomas*: he is one of the few scholars who thinks that the direction of dependence is almost the opposite of that argued in the present book. Davies contends that one can easily imagine why Mark would take the saying in *Thomas* and remove the reference to 'mouth', because of his focus on thoughts.<sup>37</sup> Davies then is forced to state, however, that: 'Matthew, who is revising Mark, adds back "mouth" in writing "whatever goes into the mouth passes into the stomach..." (15:17), which returns the saying to what was probably its original form.'<sup>38</sup> (This resembles Crossan's view of the parable of the sower, according to which *Thomas*'s version, the earliest, was relatively short, Mark lengthened it, but 'Luke's literary instinct has pruned the story back to a more original length.')<sup>39</sup> Davies's view is of course theoretically possible, but many scholars will no doubt be sceptical of a theory which involves Mark removing a Thomasine element, and Matthew – unaware of *Thomas* – putting it back again. The more economical explanation by far is to suppose that *Thomas* has incorporated an element of Matthean redaction.

#### 4 *GTh* 44

The "unforgivable sin" saying in the Synoptic Gospels might also be said to have left traces of Matthean redaction in the version in *Thomas*. This is a complicated case, because it is sometimes said to be an instance of Mark-Q overlap.<sup>40</sup> It is reasonably clear, however, that at least one element of the saying in *Thomas* has come from Mark via Matthew, namely the reference to the eternal consequences of the blasphemy emphasised in Mark 3.29.

As can be seen from Table 7.3, *Thomas* has given the saying a kind of trinitarian structure. The reference to the Father is new. The reference to the Son is a modification of what Matthew and Luke have as a saying about the Son of Man. Finally, the "unforgivable sin" saying is common to all four.

<sup>37</sup> Davies, *Gospel of Thomas*, xix.

<sup>38</sup> Davies, *Gospel of Thomas*, xviii.

<sup>39</sup> J.D. Crossan, 'Seed Parables of Jesus', *JBL* 92 (1973), 244–66 (246).

<sup>40</sup> See e.g. J.D. Crossan, 'Mark and the Relatives of Jesus', *NovT* 15 (1973), 81–113 (92).

Table 7.3

Mark 3.28–9	Matthew 12.31–2	Luke 12.10	<i>GTh</i> 44
<p><sup>28</sup> Truly, I say to you that everything will be forgiven the sons of men – whatever sins and blasphemies they may blaspheme.</p> <p>[<sup>29</sup> But whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will never be forgiven; he is guilty of an everlasting sin.]</p>	<p>Therefore I say to you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven men, but blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven.</p>		
	<p>And whoever speaks a word against the Son of Man, it will be forgiven him.</p>	<p>And everyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man, it will be forgiven him;</p>	<p><i>Whoever blasphemes against the Father will be forgiven;</i></p> <p>and whoever blasphemes against <i>the Son</i> will be forgiven;</p>
<p><sup>29</sup> But whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will never be forgiven; he is guilty of an everlasting sin.</p>	<p>But whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven, either in this age or in the one to come.</p>	<p>but to whomever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit, it will not be forgiven.</p>	<p>but whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven, either on earth or in heaven.</p>

In Mark, the sin against the Holy Spirit is emphatically serious: the sinner ‘will never (οὐκ ... εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα) have forgiveness, but is guilty of an everlasting (αἰωνίου) transgression’. Luke’s version is a much more prosaic statement in keeping with the parallel to the Son of Man

immediately preceding. Since Matthew's version of the saying about the Holy Spirit, then, is rather closer to Mark than to Luke, it might be reckoned more probably a version of Mark's saying than of a Q saying.

Matthew bifurcates Mark's simple statement in terms resonant of the rabbinic contrast between *ha-olam ha-zeh* and *ha-olam ha-ba*: where Mark simply says there will 'never' be forgiveness for such a blasphemer, Matthew states that the person will not be forgiven either in this age or in the age to come. Thereafter, it is understandable that *Thomas* should rephrase Matthew's temporal pairing with a pairing perhaps more amenable to his own cosmology: this age and the age to come become earth and heaven.<sup>41</sup> *Thomas* shares Matthew's complementary parallelism here, and thus appears to be influenced by Matthew. The structural similarity appears in the division they share over against Mark: Mark's 'never' becomes in Matthew 'neither in (οὐτε ἐν) this age nor in (οὐτε ἐν) the age to come' and in *Thomas* 'neither on (οὔτε γῆ) earth nor in (οὔτε οὐρανός) heaven'.<sup>42</sup>

### Two objections

A first objection to this line of reasoning can be seen in Koester's argument that the saying 'circulated freely' and that the modifications to something like the Markan version in *Thomas* are 'best explained as an independent development'.<sup>43</sup> This is to suppose a remarkable coincidence, however. On Koester's interpretation, Matthew and *Thomas* would have independently bifurcated Mark's simple reference to never having forgiveness. It is much more straightforward to suppose a relationship between there being no forgiveness 'either in this age or the age to come' and 'either in earth or in heaven'.

A second objection arises from the fascinating parallel, adduced by Quispel, to the Tuscan *Diatessaron* (see Table 7.4):<sup>44</sup>

<sup>41</sup> Tuckett takes *Thomas* to be secondary here, though primarily (1) because it is 'very highly developed in its Christian trinitarian language' and (2) on the basis of its more developed reference to 'blasphemy' rather than merely 'speaking against'. C.M. Tuckett, 'Q and Thomas: Evidence of a Primitive "Wisdom Gospel"? A Response to H. Koester', *ETL* 67 (1991), 346–60 (355).

<sup>42</sup> Similarly, Baarda rightly notes that while *Thomas*'s version could derive from a Q saying, in view of the reference to the earth/this age and heaven/the age to come pairing, *GTh* 44 is much more likely to be derived from Matthew. T. Baarda, "'Vader – Zoon – Heilige Geest": Logion 44 van "Thomas"', *NTT* 51 (1997), 13–30 (30).

<sup>43</sup> H. Koester, 'One Jesus and Four Primitive Gospels', in Koester and J.M. Robinson, *Trajectories through Early Christianity* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1971), 158–204 (171 n. 36); H. Koester, *Ancient Christian Gospels*, 93.

<sup>44</sup> V. Todesco and A. Vaccari, *Il Diatessaron in volgare italiano: testi inediti dei secoli XIII–XIV* (Vatican City: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 1938), 244: 'Chiunque dirà

Table 7.4

Tuscan <i>Diatessaron</i>	<i>GTh</i> 44
<i>Whoever speaks a word against the Father, it shall be forgiven him;</i>	<i>Whoever blasphemes against the Father will be forgiven;</i>
and whoever speaks a word against <i>the Son</i> , it shall be forgiven him;	and whoever blasphemes against <i>the Son</i> will be forgiven;
but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit, to him it shall not be forgiven, neither in this age nor in the other.	but whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven, either on earth or in heaven.

For Quispel, this saying is another example of the *Gospel of the Hebrews* influencing *Thomas* and the *Diatessaron*, with the *Diatessaron* reading then surviving in the Tuscan text: ‘the Tuscan harmony has preserved here, through the intermediary of Tatian, a very old and archaic, though certainly not authentic reading’.<sup>45</sup> The fact that this reading only survives in a single Western harmony and with no Eastern attestation at all, however, surely makes rather tenuous the argument that this “trinitarian” structure was an original *Diatessaron* reading.

#### Matthew’s and *Thomas*’s shared order<sup>46</sup>

An additional factor in favour of Matthean influence here is the point noted by Wilson, that strikingly *Thomas* and Matthew alike follow the blasphemy sayings with sayings about the good and evil men and their respective storehouses.<sup>47</sup> (See Table 7.5.)

There are similarities here between *Thomas* and Luke as well, but the key point for our purposes is the strange shared order between Matthew and *Thomas* at this point. This may be mere coincidence, but in any case the point about Matthew’s influence remains.

parola contra 'l Padre, gli sarà perdonato; / e chi dirà parola contra 'l Figliuolo, gli sarà perdonato; / ma chiunque dirà contra lo Spirito santo, / non gli sarà perdonato in questo secolo nè nell'altro.’

<sup>45</sup> G. Quispel, *Tatian and the Gospel of Thomas* (Leiden: Brill, 1975), 55; cf. also G. Quispel, ‘The Latin Tatian or the Gospel of Thomas in Limburg’, *JBL* 88 (1969), 321–30 (329).

<sup>46</sup> Here and below, words of interest for the comparison of the different versions of the sayings in *Thomas* and the Synoptics are underlined.

<sup>47</sup> R.McL. Wilson, ‘“Thomas” and the Growth of the Gospels’, *HTR* 53 (1960), 231–50 (243): ‘Is it purely by accident that in *Thomas* it [i.e. *GTh* 45] follows immediately upon a saying [i.e. *GTh* 44] with which part of it is associated in Matthew?’

Table 7.5

Mark 3.28–9	Matthew 12.31–5	GTh 44–5
<p><sup>28</sup> Truly, I say to you that everything will be forgiven the sons of men – whatever sins and blasphemies they may blaspheme.</p>	<p><sup>31</sup> Therefore I say to you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven men, but blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven.</p>	<p><sup>44</sup> Jesus said, ‘Whoever blasphemes against the Father will be forgiven, and whoever blasphemes against the Son will be forgiven,</p>
<p><sup>29</sup> But whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will never be forgiven; he is guilty of an everlasting sin.</p>	<p><sup>32</sup> And whoever speaks a word against the Son of Man, it will be forgiven him.</p> <p>But whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven, either in this age or in the age to come.</p>	<p>but whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven either on earth or in heaven.’</p>
	<p><sup>33</sup> Make a tree good and its fruit will be good, or make a tree bad and its fruit will be bad, for a tree is recognized by its fruit.</p>	<p><sup>45</sup> Jesus said, ‘Grapes are not harvested from thorns, nor are figs gathered from thistles, for they do not produce fruit.</p>
	<p><sup>35</sup> <i>The good man brings good things out of the good stored up in him, and the evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in him.</i></p>	<p><i>A good man brings forth good from his storehouse; an evil man brings forth evil things from his evil storehouse, which is in his heart, and says evil things.</i></p>
	<p><sup>34</sup> You brood of vipers, how can you who are evil say anything good?</p> <p><i>For out of the overflow of the heart the mouth speaks.</i></p>	<p><i>For out of the abundance of the heart he brings forth evil things.’</i></p>

### Conclusion

In sum, the arguments in favour of Matthew’s influence upon *Thomas* are compelling. This is not to say that all of these instances are necessarily the result of direct literary dependence on the part of *Thomas* or its

sources, as the redactional features may well be the result of secondary orality. On the other hand, what is particularly notable about Matthew is that *Thomas* seems actually to contain a deliberate reference to the Gospel.

Negatively, we have seen that where alternative hypotheses to those argued for here have been advanced, they are not persuasive. Davies' explanation of *GTh* 14 is an expensive one, entailing as it does a "primitive" original, modified by Mark, and then unintentionally restored to its original state by Matthew. Similarly, Koester's explanation in the case of *GTh* 44 relies on a coincidence, namely that Matthew and *Thomas* independently make very similar changes to the original form of the saying.

We will next examine the influence of the Gospel of Luke, which is not referred to in the same way as is Matthew, but which on the other hand can be seen to have a greater quantity of demonstrable examples of influence upon *Thomas*.

LUKE AND THE *GOSPEL OF THOMAS*

## Introduction

There has been more focused attention to the relationship between *Thomas* and Luke than is the case with *Thomas* and Matthew.<sup>1</sup> At one end of the spectrum is Riley's argument for the influence of *Thomas* upon Luke, in accordance with the standard approach to identifying secondary features: 'where *Thomas* redaction is found in the text of Luke, then the text of Luke must post-date and be dependent on sayings formed in *Thomas* Christianity'.<sup>2</sup> Two articles have focused on *Thomas* and the Lukan special material, with varying results.<sup>3</sup> Other scholars have argued for the independence of *Thomas* from Luke, whether as a result of shared literary or oral sources.<sup>4</sup> Conversely, a number have emphasised the dependence of *Thomas* upon Luke.<sup>5</sup> Specifically in tune with the present study, Tuckett sets out powerful arguments for Mark→Luke→*GTh* in *GTh* 5 in particular.

<sup>1</sup> For more extensive discussion, see my 'Luke in the *Gospel of Thomas*', *NTS* 57 (2011), 114–44 (esp. 114–20).

<sup>2</sup> G.J. Riley, 'Influence of *Thomas* Christianity on Luke 12:14 and 5:39', *HTR* 88 (1995), 229–35 (229).

<sup>3</sup> H. Schürmann, 'Das Thomasevangelium und das lukanische Sondergut', *BZ* 7 (1963), 236–60; F. Bovon, 'Les sentences propres à Luc dans l'*Évangile selon Thomas*', in L. Painchaud and P.-H. Poirier, eds. *Colloque internationale: 'L'Évangile selon Thomas' et les textes de Nag Hammadi: Québec, 29–31 mai 2003* (Leuven: Peeters, 2007), 43–58; now also in English translation: 'Sayings Specific to Luke in the *Gospel of Thomas*', in Bovon, *New Testament and Christian Apocrypha: Collected Studies* (Tübingen: Mohr, 2009), 161–73.

<sup>4</sup> Literary: T. Schramm, *Der Markus-Stoff bei Lukas: Eine literarkritische und redaktionsgeschichtliche Untersuchung* (Cambridge University Press, 1971), esp. 10–21 (16, 20–1). Oral: e.g. S.J. Patterson, *The Gospel of Thomas and Jesus* (Sonoma, CA: Polebridge Press, 1993), though without a particular focus on Luke.

<sup>5</sup> This is emphasised in B. Dehandschutter, 'L'*Évangile selon Thomas*: témoin d'une tradition préluccanienne?' in F. Neiryck, ed. *L'Évangile selon Luc: problèmes littéraires et théologiques: memorial Lucien Cerfaux* (BETL 32; Gembloux: Duculot, 1973), 287–97, 324–6.

The present chapter, then, seeks to set out the case for influence from Luke to the *Gospel of Thomas*, attempting to adduce eight instances. It thus seeks to expand the number of instances identified by Tuckett.<sup>6</sup> In addition, as discussed in Chapter 6, it also seeks to test several alternatives, specifically:

- *GTh* (approx.)→Mark→Luke (thus Kloppenborg: see 1.3–4, on *GTh* 65–6)
- *GTh* (approx.)+Mark=Luke (thus Smith: see 1.6 on *GTh* 99)
- *GTh*→Mark→Luke (thus Riley: see 1.8 on *GTh* 47)
- *GTh*→Luke (Riley: see 2.1 on *GTh* 72)
- *GTh*+Mark+Q=Luke (Johnson: see 2.2 on *GTh* 76)

As we have remarked above, the theory of independence is usually untestable, but in those cases where it is testable – that is, in the alleged divergent translations from Aramaic in *Thomas* and the Synoptics – the theory has been found wanting. (This was evident in the treatments in Chapter 3 of, for example, DeConick’s view of *GTh* 33 and Quispel’s of *GTh* 66, to be discussed below.) It is argued here that the accumulation of instances of *Thomas*’s inclusion of Lukan redactional features also tells against independence and speaks instead in favour of the influence of Luke upon *Thomas*. What is particularly striking is that in three of the eight cases argued for below, we see *Thomas* – almost certainly unconsciously – expanding further upon a particular element of Lukan redaction.

## 1 Luke’s influence upon *Thomas*

### 1.1 *GTh* 5.2/Luke 8.17

Although the amount of text here is small, it is clear that *Thomas* agrees exactly with Luke, but not with Mark (see Table 8.1). As such, many have seen this as a near-certain example of influence.<sup>7</sup> We need, however, to recognise the lack of certainty available here. This may look to some like a smoking-gun proof, but the fragmentary nature of the Greek of *GTh* 5

<sup>6</sup> C.M. Tuckett, ‘Thomas and the Synoptics’, *NovT* 30 (1988), 132–57, refers to *GTh* 5 and 31 (145–6, 143), but not to the other passages discussed below: his article claims to deal with ‘some examples’ (145) across the whole Synoptic tradition.

<sup>7</sup> E.g. J. Schröter, *Erinnerung an Jesu Worte: Studien zur Rezeption der Logienüberlieferung in Markus, Q und Thomas* (WMANT 76; Neukirchen: Neukirchener, 1997), 370; C.M. Tuckett, ‘Sources and Methods’, in M.N.A. Bockmuehl, ed. *The Cambridge Companion to Jesus* (Cambridge University Press, 2001), 121–37 (129): ‘This seems to be clear evidence that, at this point at least, *Thomas* presupposes Luke’s finished Gospel.’



Table 8.1

Mark 4.22	Luke 8.17	<i>GTh</i> 5.2
οὐ γάρ ἐστιν κρυπτόν	οὐ γάρ ἐστιν κρυπτόν	[οὐ γάρ ἐστ]ιν κρυπτόν
ἐὰν μὴ ἴνα φανερωθῆ ...	ὁ οὐ φανερόν γενήσεται.	ὁ οὐ φανε[ρόν] γενήσεται]

must be considered: there may be other options for the reconstruction.<sup>8</sup> One reason why the argument for secondariness looks so plausible above is that *Thomas* has been restored not only on the basis of the Coptic, but also (almost certainly) on the basis of Luke 8.17. It remains possible, too, that DeConick's theory of different versions arising through oral performance also explains the text-form in *Thomas* here.<sup>9</sup> The closeness of Luke and *Thomas* should not merely be waved away, however.<sup>10</sup> In particular, if the number of parallels to Lukan redaction in other sayings begins to mount up, then the theory of shared Lukan variations emerging in oral performances will look more shaky.

## 1.2 *GTh* 31.1/Luke 4.24

The substance of *GTh* 31.1 is the same as the versions in the four canonical Gospels: this saying is noteworthy for appearing also in John (see Table 8.2). There are features in *Thomas*'s version, however, which are suspiciously Lukan.<sup>11</sup> First, *Thomas* shares with Luke (and John) a simple negative statement, rather than the Matthean and Markan 'not ... except ...'.<sup>12</sup> Second, *Thomas* shares with Luke the word δεκτός. This is

<sup>8</sup> E.g. ... ὁ οὐ φανε[ρωθήσεται], which is what Clement has in *Strom.* I.13.3. S.R. Johnson, 'The Hidden/Revealed Saying in the Greek and Coptic Versions of Gos. Thom. 5 & 6', *NovT* 44 (2002), 176–85 (184 n. 21), rightly reminds of the uncertainty of the reconstruction.

<sup>9</sup> A.D. DeConick, *The Original Gospel of Thomas in Translation: With a Commentary and New English Translation of the Complete Gospel* (LNTS 287; London/New York: T & T Clark International, 2006), 61.

<sup>10</sup> Nor is it likely that *GTh* 5 is derived from Matthew. See Johnson, 'The Hidden/Revealed Saying', 176–7.

<sup>11</sup> So e.g. W. Schrage, 'Evangelienzitate in den Oxyrhynchus-Logien und im koptischen Thomas-Evangelium', in W. Eltester, ed. *Apophoreta: Festschrift Ernst Haenchen* (Berlin: Töpelmann, 1964), 251–68 (264).

<sup>12</sup> As such, *pace* A.F. Gregory, *The Reception of Luke and Acts in the Period before Irenaeus: Looking for Luke in the Second Century* (WUNT II/169; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003), 155, it is not merely a matter of the shared word δεκτός.

Table 8.2

Mark 6.4	Matthew 13.57	Luke 4.24	John 4.44	<i>GTh</i> 31.1
οὐκ ἔστιν	οὐκ ἔστιν	οὐδεὶς	προφήτης	οὐκ ἔστιν
προφήτης	προφήτης	προφήτης	ἐν τῇ	δεκτὸς
ἄτιμος	ἄτιμος εἰ	δεκτὸς	ἰδίᾳ	προφήτης
εἰ μὴ ἐν τῇ	μὴ ἐν τῇ	ἐστιν	πατρίδι	ἐν τῇ
πατρίδι	πατρίδι καὶ	ἐν τῇ	τιμῆν	πατρίδι
αὐτοῦ.	ἐν τῇ οἰκίᾳ	πατρίδι	οὐκ ἔχει.	αὐτ[ο]ῦ.
	αὐτοῦ.	αὐτοῦ.		

not a particularly common word: it occurs only five times in the NT (3x in Luke–Acts, 2x in Paul). Third, excepting Luke’s opening οὐδεὶς and *Thomas*’s οὐκ, Luke and *Thomas* share all the same words, which differ only in their order. It is also possible that *Thomas* is dependent on Luke in pairing *GTh* 31.1 with 31.2.<sup>13</sup> DeConick here appeals to an exclusively oral source influencing both Luke and *Thomas*.<sup>14</sup> But again, if more agreement appears in different sayings, one is faced with the increasing likelihood of Luke’s written Gospel exerting an influence, even if that influence is indirect, and mediated by oral transmission as well.

### 1.3–4 *GTh* 65–6/Luke 20.9–17

This developing pattern is further evident in the parable of the wicked tenants in *Thomas*.<sup>15</sup> (See Table 8.3.)

<sup>13</sup> So e.g. F.F. Bruce, ‘The Gospel of Thomas’, in Bruce, *Jesus and Christian Origins outside the New Testament* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1974), 110–56 (127). The second part of the saying in *Thomas*, ‘no doctor heals those who know him’, is a very peculiar proverb, contradicted by the almost universal practice of doctors in antiquity. Prof. Sir Geoffrey Lloyd has remarked to me as follows: ‘Very curious. No parallels for that remark about doctors not treating those who know them come to mind, and plenty of texts that contradict the principle’ (email communication, 28/02/2008). The combination of the sayings in *Thomas* may, however, be indebted to the pairing of Luke 4.23–4 or Mark 6.4–5. Patterson, *Gospel of Thomas and Jesus*, 31–2, followed by S.R. Johnson, *Seeking the Imperishable Treasure: Wealth, Wisdom, and a Jesus Saying* (Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2008), 77 n. 50, argues that the Thomasine pairing is more original. This is little more than form-critical guesswork, however: assuming that Mark adopts a “softening tendency”, replacing the harsh *GTh* 31.2. Johnson’s additional argument for the priority of *Thomas* is particularly difficult to accept: ‘Note that Luke has Jesus himself stating that this is a common proverb and therefore probably not an original saying of Jesus.’

<sup>14</sup> DeConick, *Original Gospel of Thomas in Translation*, 141.

<sup>15</sup> There are no compelling reasons for questioning the priority of the Markan version of this parable.

Table 8.3

Mark 12.1–11	Luke 20.9–17	GTh 65
<p><sup>1</sup> <i>A man planted a vineyard, placed a fence around it, dug a vat, and built a tower;</i></p> <p>then he leased it to tenants and went away.</p>	<p><sup>9</sup> A man planted a vineyard, and leased it to tenants, and went away for a long time.</p>	<p><sup>1</sup> A [a usurer]<sup>i</sup> owned a vineyard.</p> <p>He leased it to tenant farmers so that they might work it and he might collect the produce from them.</p>
<p><sup>2</sup> When the season came, he sent a slave to the tenants to collect from them his share of the produce of the vineyard.</p>	<p><sup>10</sup> When the season came, he sent a slave to the tenants so <i>that they might give him</i> his share of the produce of the vineyard; but the</p>	<p><sup>2</sup> He sent his servant <i>so that</i> the tenants might give him the produce of the vineyard.</p>
<p><sup>3</sup> But they seized him, and beat him, and sent him away empty-handed.</p>	<p>tenants beat him and sent him away empty-handed.</p>	<p><sup>3</sup> They seized his servant and beat him, all but killing him. The servant went back and told his master.</p>
<p><sup>4</sup> And again he sent another slave to them; this one they beat over the head and insulted.</p>	<p><sup>11</sup> Next he sent another slave; that one also they beat and insulted and sent away empty-handed.</p>	<p><sup>4</sup> His master said, ‘<i>Perhaps he did not recognize them.</i>’<sup>ii</sup></p>
<p><sup>5</sup> He sent another; him they killed. He sent many others; some of them they beat, others they killed.</p>	<p><sup>12</sup> And he sent still a third; this one also they wounded and threw out.</p>	<p><sup>5</sup> He sent another servant. The tenants beat this one as well.</p>
<p><sup>6</sup> He had one left to send, a son, whom he loved. He sent him last of all, saying, ‘<i>They will respect my son.</i>’</p>	<p><sup>13</sup> Then the owner of the vineyard said, ‘What shall I do? I will send my son, whom I love; <i>perhaps they will respect him.</i>’</p>	<p><sup>6</sup> Then the owner sent his son and said, ‘<i>Perhaps they will respect my son.</i>’</p>

Table 8.3 (cont.)

Mark 12.1–11	Luke 20.9–17	GTh 65
<p><sup>7</sup> But the tenants said to one another, ‘This is the heir. Come, let’s kill him, and the inheritance will be ours.’</p>	<p><sup>14</sup> But when the tenants saw him, they talked the matter over. ‘This is the heir,’ they said. ‘Let’s kill him, so that the inheritance will be ours.’</p>	<p><sup>7</sup> When those tenants realised that it was he who was the heir to the vineyard, they seized him and killed him.</p>
<p><sup>8</sup> So they took him and killed him, and threw him out of the vineyard.</p>	<p><sup>15</sup> So they threw him out of the vineyard and killed him.</p>	<p><sup>8</sup> Let him who has ears hear.</p>
<p><sup>9</sup> What then will the owner of the vineyard do?</p>	<p>What then will the owner of the vineyard do to them?</p>	
<p>He will come and destroy the farmers and give the vineyard to others.</p>	<p><sup>16</sup> He will come and kill these farmers and give the vineyard to others. Those listening said, ‘May it never be!’</p>	
<p><sup>10</sup> Have you not read this scripture?</p>	<p><sup>17</sup> He looked at them and said, ‘What is the meaning of what is written,</p>	<p>GTh 66</p>
<p>‘The stone which the builders rejected has become the head of the corner.</p>	<p>“The stone which the builders rejected has become the head of the corner”?’</p>	<p>Jesus said, ‘Show me the stone which the builders rejected. It is the corner-stone.’</p>
<p><sup>11</sup> <i>This is from the Lord! And it is marvellous in our eyes!</i></p>		

<sup>i</sup> The reading ‘a good man’ (xpi[ctro]c, rather than xpi[ctru]c) is also possible.

<sup>ii</sup> This should perhaps be emended to: ‘Perhaps they did not recognise him.’

It is virtually certain that there is a literary relationship of some sort between the parable in the Synoptics and *GTh* 65–6, because of the way in which the parable is in all four (Matthew, Mark, Luke and *Thomas*) followed by a quotation of Psalm 118/117. Moreover, the use of the psalm in *GTh* 66 reflects a greater distance from the Psalter than do the Synoptic quotations, both in its initial statement (‘Show me ...’) and in its attribution of the statement straightforwardly to Jesus. Identifying the likelihood of a literary relationship between *Thomas* and the Synoptics in general is of course not yet to prove Lukan influence in particular. Several commonalities specifically between *Thomas*’s and Luke’s versions can be noted, however:

- (1) In the setting of the parable in *GTh* 65.1 and its parallels, *Thomas* shares in common with Luke a lack of reference to Isaiah 5 as a theological backdrop, in contrast to Mark and Matthew.<sup>16</sup>
- (2) In connection with *GTh* 65.2, Mark and Matthew have the owner sending the servants to collect the produce (ἵνα παρὰ τῶν γεωργῶν λάβῃ ἀπὸ τῶν καρπῶν τοῦ ἀμπελῶνος (Matt.: λαβεῖν τοὺς καρποὺς αὐτοῦ)), whereas Luke and *Thomas* have their final clause with the reverse syntax, ‘so that the tenants might give him the produce of the vineyard’: ἵνα ἀπὸ τοῦ καρποῦ τοῦ ἀμπελῶνος δώσουσιν αὐτῷ / χεκααα ενογοειε να† ναῖ ἠπκαρπιος ἠπιμα ἠελοολε.<sup>17</sup>
- (3) Mark and Matthew have the servants seized, beaten, insulted and killed. Luke and *Thomas*, however, have the servants beaten and sent back, but reserve the killing for the son alone.
- (4) In Luke 20.13, the owner of the vineyard says to himself, ‘Perhaps (ἴσως) they will respect my son.’ That Luke alone of the Synoptics has ‘perhaps’ is noteworthy because ἴσως is a hapax legomenon in the NT. Then *Thomas* actually has ‘perhaps’ (μεωαακ) twice.<sup>18</sup>
- (5) To return to the presence of Psalm 118/117 in all the versions, it is notable that Luke and *Thomas* end their appended references to the psalm with verse 22, omitting Mark’s and Matthew’s continuation into verse 23.

<sup>16</sup> Isaiah 5 also surfaces in Mark 12.9 and parallels, but *Thomas* has ended the parable by this time.

<sup>17</sup> K. Snodgrass, *The Parable of the Wicked Tenants* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1983), 52.

<sup>18</sup> M. Hubaut, *La Parabole des vigneronns homicides* (Paris: Gabalda, 1976), 134; Snodgrass, *Parable*, 52–3.

Finally, one might add two very minor points: (1) Luke's and *Thomas's* shared reference to *singular* 'fruit', in contrast to Mark's and Matthew's plurals,<sup>19</sup> and (2) Luke's and *Thomas's* beating of the second servant, rather than – as in Mark – the strange reference to beating over (?) the head.

### *Response to objections*

DeConick considers these common features as trifling, 'since we do not find sequences of words or phrases longer than five or six', and concludes in favour of oral factors.<sup>20</sup> The choice of 'five or six' as requisite seems rather arbitrary, however, and indeed five or six *phrases* might well be rather considerable. Again, as noted in Chapter 5, it is wrong to use the degree of similarity among the Synoptics as a baseline of comparison.

The most substantial attack on the theory of Thomasine dependence has come from John Kloppenborg.<sup>21</sup> There is not space here to discuss Kloppenborg's whole argument for the primacy of the basic structure and contents of *Thomas's* version, even though there are difficulties with his arguments for, for example, *Thomas's* more realistic reflections of viticulture and law.<sup>22</sup> On the matter of *Thomas's* connecting the parable

<sup>19</sup> This point loses most of the little force it has because the variation in *Thomas* may be the result of a slight preference of Coptic: Mark's plural in the Greek becomes a singular in Coptic. W. Schrage, *Das Verhältnis des Thomas-Evangeliums zur synoptischen Tradition und zu den koptischen Evangelienübersetzungen: Zugleich ein Beitrag zur gnostischen Synoptikerdeutung* (BZNW; Berlin: Töpelmann, 1964), 137, 142; B. Dehandschutter, 'La Parabole des vigneronns homicides (Mc 12:1–12) et l'Évangile selon Thomas', in M. Sabbe, ed. *L'Évangile selon Marc: tradition et rédaction* (BETL 34; Leuven University Press/Peeters, 1988), 203–20 (214).

<sup>20</sup> DeConick, *Original Gospel of Thomas in Translation*, 215, though she allows for the possibility of secondary orality.

<sup>21</sup> J. Kloppenborg, *The Tenants in the Vineyard: Ideology, Economics, and Agrarian Conflict in Jewish Palestine* (Tübingen: Mohr, 2006).

<sup>22</sup> An example of each can be mentioned. (1) The idea that Mark's φραγμός ('palisade', 'wall', 'fence') is a specifically Egyptian viticultural item (Kloppenborg, *Tenants*, 168, 172) is puzzling: 'The reference to the building of a palisade (καὶ περιέθηκεν φραγμόν) reflects a specifically Septuagintal addition to the MT and mirrors the Egyptian viticultural practice that had influenced the LXX translators' (168). But *m. Kil.* 4.2 discusses boundary fences, and the *gdr* (for which φραγμός is a good equivalent), and moreover, Kloppenborg's references to various Greek writers' uses of this noun (*Tenants*, 159 n. 25) prove that it is by no means specifically Egyptian. So both the item (the fence) and the terminology for it (φραγμός) are clearly unproblematic in a Palestinian context. (2) On the legal side, Kloppenborg argues (*Tenants*, 330–4) that *Thomas's* reference to the killing of the heir better reflects law in contrast to Mk 12.7's apparently ludicrous claim that the tenants would inherit. But the reasoning of *Thomas's* tenants is just as ludicrous: the heir is not the owner of the vineyard, so why should the tenants maintain their ownership by killing the heir? It hardly seems likely in the first place that Mark intended that legally the

with Psalm 117, Kloppenborg argues that the linking of parable and psalm pre-dated both Mark and *Thomas*.<sup>23</sup> Since Kloppenborg does not think this link original, however, the connection has been consigned to the no-man's-land of the tunnel period; the problem has been moved, rather than solved. It is tempting to quote Kloppenborg against himself here: 'Few critics nowadays focus much attention on the transformations and developments that doubtless occurred in the oral tradition prior to its inscription in written documents as a means of resolving the Synoptic Problem. This is not because such knowledge would not be quite useful, but because it is simply beyond our reach.'<sup>24</sup> Almost all scholars, including those who generally prefer Thomasine independence, see a literary relationship here.<sup>25</sup> On the specific issues pertaining to Lukan influence:<sup>26</sup>

- (1) On *Thomas*'s and Luke's shared lack of reference to Isaiah 5 as a theological backdrop in the introduction, Kloppenborg is surely right that this is unlikely to be a matter of a Gnostic tendency to de-Judaize the parable. Nevertheless, many will find it hard to accept Kloppenborg's proposal that (a) *Thomas*'s version reflects the earliest form of the parable without Isaiah, and (b) Mark inserts the Isaianic material into the introduction, and (c) Luke removes most of it again, leaving an introduction coincidentally similar to that of *Thomas*.
- (2) On the differences in the purpose clauses between Mark 12.2/ Matthew 21.34 and Luke 20.10/*GTh* 65.2, Kloppenborg argues that λαμβάνειν and δίδοναι are 'stereotypical verbs used in

tenants would become the heirs of the vineyard. Moreover, as noted above, *Thomas* gives less of an explanation than do the Synoptics.

<sup>23</sup> Kloppenborg, *Tenants*, 269–76. For various explanations of the link, see W.E. Arnal, 'The Parable of the Tenants and the Class Consciousness of the Peasantry', in M. Desjardins and S.G. Wilson, eds. *Text and Artifact in the Religions of Mediterranean Antiquity* (Waterloo, ON: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2000), 135–57 (144).

<sup>24</sup> J.S. Kloppenborg Verbin, *Excavating Q: The History and Setting of the Sayings Gospel* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2000), 51–2.

<sup>25</sup> Patterson, *Gospel of Thomas*, 51.

<sup>26</sup> It is sometimes remarked that C.H. Dodd almost 'predicted' the wording of *Thomas*'s parable through his application of form criticism. The principal commonality of Dodd's reconstruction with that of *Thomas*, however, is his view of the ascending tricolon in the three sendings. Dodd is actually quite conservative in his attitude to Mark's version of the parable, considering for example the Isaianic material in Mark 12.1 to be authentic: C.H. Dodd, *The Parables of the Kingdom*, 3rd edn (London: Nisbet, 1936), 124–32 (126). He questions 12.9b, and considers 12.4 and 12.10 to be more clearly accretions. The first reference to Dodd's prophecy which I have found is that in R.McL. Wilson, *Studies in the Gospel of Thomas* (London: Mowbray, 1960), 101.

the description of leasing arrangements' and so 'little can be made of the agreements between Thomas and the Synoptics' (258–9). It is important, however, that one does not say that *nothing* can be made of it, but that is what it amounts to in Kloppenborg's rhetoric. This is a minor agreement, to be sure, but it has a place in a cumulative case.

- (3) On the point of Luke's and *Thomas's* difference from Mark in reserving the killing for the son alone, I have not been able to discover a comment in Kloppenborg's monograph.
- (4) On the instances of 'perhaps' in Luke and *Thomas*, Kloppenborg argues that the 'perhaps' is 'fundamental to *Thomas's* redactional purpose and only incidental to Luke's'; as such, 'one might well conclude that Luke reflects knowledge of a parable such as *Thomas's*' (259). It is hard to know how seriously Kloppenborg is putting forward this option, given that he has previously insisted on Luke's redaction exclusively of Mark. He muddies the waters further by saying how difficult the situation is to assess given that Luke only uses ἴσως here (in fact, as noted above, it is a hapax in the NT) and that this is *Thomas's* only use of ἴσως. But this is surely the point: Luke's use of a relatively unusual word (and indeed *Thomas's* adding a further 'perhaps') is all the more reason to suspect that *Thomas* is here incorporating a Lukan redactional feature.
- (5) On the matter of Luke and *Thomas* ending their uses of the Psalm with verse 22, Kloppenborg notes the point, without further explanation (269).

In sum, Kloppenborg's monograph, for all its massive learning, does not explain away the evidence for Mark→Luke→*GTh*.<sup>27</sup>

### 1.5 *GTh* 33.2–3/Luke 11.33

*GTh* 33 has not been sufficiently probed for its potential links with this Lukan doublet. The nexus of relationships is certainly complex, but despite the complication arising from overlap with the double-tradition/Q

<sup>27</sup> It is also a potential problem that it is absolutely essential to Kloppenborg's thesis that the owner is a χριστῆς not a χριστός. Arnal's argument for χριστῆς, namely that *Thomas* has a tendency to describe the professions or social standing of his characters, is reasonable (Arnal, 'The Parable of the Tenants', 142–3). There are a couple of problems, however: *Thomas* also likes to describe his characters' attributes. Additionally, the more this is a feature specific to *Thomas*, the less it is *necessarily* a feature of the earliest recoverable oral version.



Table 8.4

Mark 4.21	Matthew 5.15	Luke 8.16	Luke 11.33	<i>GTh</i> 33.2–3
A lamp does not come in order to be put under the bushel or under the couch.	Nor do they light a lamp and put it under the bushel.	No one lights a lamp and hides it with a vessel or puts it under a couch.	No one lights a lamp and puts it in a hidden place. <sup>iii</sup>	For no one lights a lamp and puts it under a bushel, or puts it in a hidden place.
Is it not to be put on its lampstand?	No, on its lampstand, and it will give light to everyone in the household.	No, he puts it on a lampstand, so that <i>those who go in may see the light</i> .	No, on its lampstand, so that <i>those who go in may see the light</i> .	No, he puts it upon its lampstand, so that <i>all who go in and come out will see its light</i> .

<sup>iii</sup> ἄBCD et al. + ‘or under a bushel’.

saying (Matt. 5.15/Luke 11.33), a line of development can still be identified from Mark to Luke to *Thomas* (cf. the discussion above of Matt. 12.31–2/*GTh* 44).<sup>28</sup>

Luke’s recasting of Mark 4.21 in Luke 8.16 is quite significant. Mark’s quasi-personification of the lamp (‘a lamp does not come’) is removed, and Luke explicitly refers to ‘hiding’. The saying is not left hanging as a rhetorical question (as in Mark), but is resolved by description of what a person does do with a lamp: clearly Luke 8.16 is in part influenced by the double-tradition (or Q) saying in Matthew 5.15 and Luke 11.33 at this point. Luke 8.16 is still recognisably a version of the Markan saying, however, since in addition to the widely shared features, Luke here – like Mark – refers to the hypothetical possibility of putting the lamp under a couch.

Most interesting for our purposes is the specifically Lukan addition in Luke 8.16 to the lamp being put on the stand ‘so that those who go in may see the light’. This does look like a characteristically Lukan piece of redaction: as Davies and Allison remark, ‘the substantive plural participle, “those coming in”, appears in the NT only in Luke’s double work, in Luke 8.16; 11.33; Acts 3.2; 28.30.’<sup>29</sup> Matthew, by contrast, in

<sup>28</sup> I did not give sufficient attention to the difficulty in ‘Luke in the Gospel of Thomas’, 131–2.

<sup>29</sup> W.D. Davies and D.C. Allison, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel according to Saint Matthew*, 3 Vols. (ICC; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1988–97), I.477.

his parallel refers to those already in the house as the beneficiaries of the illumination.

The reason that this specifically Lukan addition of ‘those who go in’ is important is that it is incorporated into *GTh* 33. More than this, *GTh* 33 is an instance of *Thomas* including a Lukan feature and extending it further: Luke adds the reference to ‘those who go in’, and *Thomas* turns this into ‘all who go in *and come out*’. *Thomas* further shares with the two Lukan versions of the saying a reference to ‘hiding’, and specifically with Mark 4.21 and Luke 8.16 more than one reference to the verb ‘putting’/‘placing’ (2x Mark 4.21; 1x Matt. 5.15; 2x Luke. 8.16; 1x Luke 11.33; 3x *GTh* 33). Although *Thomas* has this in common with Luke 8.16, however, it seems almost certain that *GTh* 33 is also influenced by Luke 11.33 (itself apparently influenced by Luke’s phraseology in 8.16). As such, Davies and Allison are very probably correct here that *Thomas* is displaying influence from Lukan redaction in its reference to (and indeed extension of) ‘(all) those who go in’.<sup>30</sup> The complicating factor of the two versions of the saying interfering with one another means that *Thomas*’s knowledge of Lukan redaction is not certain, though it is very likely. It is thus interesting that here we can see *Thomas* (no doubt unconsciously) expanding upon Lukan redaction, just as we saw in *GTh* 65. We will see a further instance of this “expansionist tendency” in our treatment of *GTh* 104.

#### 1.6 *GTh* 99/Luke 8.20–1

The following Synoptic parallels also overlap with a dialogue attributed to the *Gospel of the Ebionites* (Epiphanius, *Pan.* XXX.14.5), as well as a much abbreviated version of less account in *2 Clement* 9.11.<sup>31</sup> (See Table 8.5.)

Smith has argued not only that *Thomas*’s version is independent of the Synoptic Gospels but also that Matthew and Luke (as well as knowing Mark) draw upon a version like that of *Thomas*.<sup>32</sup> This is primarily on the very speculative grounds that *Thomas*’s version is ‘simpler and logically more coherent’ than the canonical versions: for example, *Thomas* refers

<sup>30</sup> Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, I.478 n. 18.

<sup>31</sup> F.M. Strickert, ‘Jesus’ True Family: The Synoptic Tradition and Thomas’, in R.A. Argall, B. Bow and R. White, eds. *For a Later Generation: The Transformation of Tradition in Israel, Early Judaism and Early Christianity* (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 2000), 246–57 (253) takes the *2 Clement* version to be dependent upon Luke.

<sup>32</sup> M.H. Smith, ‘Kinship is Relative: Mark 3:31–35 and Parallels’, *Forum* 6 (1990), 80–94.

Table 8.5

Mark 3.32–5	Matthew 12.47–50	Luke 8.20–1	GTh 99	G. Eb.
<p>‘Behold, your mother and your brothers [and your sisters] are outside seeking you.’</p> <p>And he replied and said to them,</p> <p>‘Who are my mother and my brothers?’</p> <p>And looking around at those sitting in a circle around him, he said,</p> <p>‘Behold my mother and my brothers.</p>	<p>‘Behold, your mother and your brothers are <i>standing</i> outside, seeking to speak to you.’</p> <p>He replied and said to the one who had spoken to him,</p> <p>‘Who is my mother and who are my brothers?’</p> <p>And stretching out his hand to his disciples, he said,</p> <p>‘Behold my mother and my brothers.</p>	<p>‘Your mother and your brothers are <i>standing</i> outside, wanting to see you.’</p> <p>He replied and said to them,</p>	<p>‘Your brothers and your mother are <i>standing</i> outside.’</p> <p>He said to them,</p>	<p>‘Behold, your mother and your brothers are <i>standing</i> outside.’</p> <p>‘Who are my mother and [my] brothers?’</p> <p>And stretching out his hand to his disciples, he said,</p> <p>‘<i>These</i> are my brothers and mother, who do the will of God.’</p> <p>‘<i>Those</i> here who do the will of my Father, <i>these</i> are my brothers and my mother.’</p> <p><i>They</i> it is who will enter the kingdom of my Father.’</p>

to the Father ‘without Matthew’s celestial qualifier’ and defines the obedient ‘primarily as brothers’.<sup>33</sup> This latter point is rather odd, given that *Thomas* actually defines them as ‘my brothers and my mother’, but even so, we have seen in Chapter 5 that simplicity is quite an arbitrary canon of primitivity. Smith has himself noted earlier on in the very same article that after the ‘characteristic redundancy’ of Mark, ‘Matthew and Luke’s versions are, as usual, less clumsy and more economical.’<sup>34</sup> Moreover, we can see some small indications of Lukan redaction in *Thomas*.

First, there is a relatively insignificant point: *Thomas* shares with Matthew and Luke the plus, ‘standing outside’, but this is not particularly noteworthy because ‘standing’ is also mentioned in the scene-setting in Mark 3.31 and Matthew 12.46. Only marginally more significant is that *Thomas*, with Luke alone, lacks ‘behold’ at the beginning: this is perhaps interesting because *Thomas* likes using ‘behold’ (*GTh* 3, 9, 10, 113, 114), but in general shared *minuses* are probably less significant than shared *pluses*. However, Luke 8.21 and *Thomas* share a quite substantial *minus* in Jesus’ reply which is rather more noteworthy. Finally, again on a minor note, the end of the saying in *Thomas* shares Luke’s plurals (as opposed to indefinite singulars) in 8.21. It is possible that the Lukan and the Thomasine versions developed these features in parallel in oral tradition, but more probably the written form of Luke’s Gospel may have made an impact upon this oral tradition.<sup>35</sup>

### 1.7 *GTh* 104/Luke 5.33–5

Here we have a saying which even some who vigorously advocate *Thomas*’s independence concede has features of Lukan redaction (see Table 8.6).<sup>36</sup>

<sup>33</sup> Smith, ‘Kinship is Relative’, 84.

<sup>34</sup> Smith, ‘Kinship is Relative’, 81.

<sup>35</sup> G. Quispel, ‘The Gospel of Thomas and the New Testament’, *VigChr* 11 (1957), 189–207 (190–1), thinks that the version in *G. Eb.* is related to *Thomas* via the *Gospel of the Hebrews*, but the similarities between *Thomas* and *G. Eb.* here are unremarkable.

<sup>36</sup> Patterson, *Gospel of Thomas and Jesus*, 80–1, 92–3 (reasons on p. 81); C.W. Hedrick, ‘An Anecdotal Argument for the Independence of the *Gospel of Thomas* from the Synoptic Gospels’, in H.-G. Bethge, S. Emmel, K.L. King and I. Schletterer, eds., *For the Children, Perfect Instruction: Studies in Honor of Hans-Martin Schenke on the Occasion of the Berliner Arbeitskreis für koptisch-gnostische Schriften’s Thirtieth Year* (NHMS 54; Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2002), 113–26 (118–19).

Table 8.6

Mark 2.18–20	Luke 5.33–5	GTh 104
John's disciples and the Pharisees were fasting; and they came and said to him,	They said to him,	They said to Jesus,
'Why do John's disciples and the disciples of the Pharisees <i>fast</i> , but your disciples do not fast?'	'John's disciples often <i>fast and pray</i> , and so do the disciples of the Pharisees, but yours go on eating and drinking.'	'Come, <i>let us pray</i> today, <i>and let us fast</i> .'
And Jesus said to them, 'While the bridegroom is with them, the attendants of the bridegroom cannot fast, can they? So long as they have the bridegroom with them, they cannot fast.	Jesus answered, 'Can you make the guests of the bridegroom fast while he is with them?	Jesus said, 'What sin have I committed, or how have I been defeated?
'But the days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will <i>fast</i> in that day.'	'But the time will come when the bridegroom will be taken from them; in those days they will <i>fast</i> .'	'But when the bridegroom comes out of the bridal chamber, then let there be <i>fasting and prayer</i> .'

This saying has obviously been substantially altered in *Thomas*. Nevertheless, *Thomas* includes an element of Lukan redaction – the reference to *prayer* as well as fasting.<sup>37</sup> *Thomas* in fact includes two instances of this pairing, the first reversing the Lukan order, the second (no doubt quite unconsciously) restoring the Lukan order in Jesus' reply.<sup>38</sup> It is noteworthy that this is a third instance we have seen (after *GTh* 65 and 33) in which *Thomas* includes an element of Lukan redaction (viz. 'prayer') and expands upon it.

<sup>37</sup> Thus K. Snodgrass, 'The Gospel of Thomas: A Secondary Gospel', *SecCent* 7 (1989–90), 19–38 (37), and 37 n. 83 for other scholars taking this view.

<sup>38</sup> On a more minor note, *Thomas*'s version also contains an abbreviation of the Markan version similar to that of Luke.

1.8 *GTh 47.3–5/Luke 5.36–9*

This example has been left to last because it leads into the second section of this chapter, where we will consider the *GTh*→*Luke* position. *Thomas*'s versions of the brief “parables” of the old-and-new-wine, and the patch-on-the-garment, are of interest here because Riley claims that they supply evidence for the influence of *Thomas* on *Luke*. What attracts Riley's attention is *Luke*'s addition to the Markan (and Matthean) version, in which the Lukan Jesus says, ‘And no one after drinking old wine wants the new, for he says, “The old is better.”’ (*Luke* 5.39). This appears to contradict what Jesus has been saying. He has been stressing that the new cannot merely be sewn onto, or poured into, the old: rather, the new requires a whole new setting. On the other hand, the Lukan addition then, rather confusingly, praises the old. Riley understandably asks: ‘Why did *Luke* add this sentence to the Markan saying about the Patches and Wineskins?’<sup>39</sup> Examination of the saying in *Thomas* turns up an interesting fact, according to Riley: the version in *GTh* 47 ‘values the old over the new throughout’.<sup>40</sup> This is questionable,<sup>41</sup> but in any case, it leads Riley to give the following account of the Mark–*Thomas*–*Luke* relationship (see Table 8.7).

The complexity of Riley's theory is evident from the series of verbs in his summary of what happened: ‘Thomas Christianity inherited ... it redacted ... reversing ... emphasized ... introducing ... conflated ...’ (234): *Thomas* takes the Markan version, adds a new preface, and reverses the original order. *Luke* then takes both the Markan and the *Thomasine* version. He keeps the Markan order and overall sense, but takes *Thomas*'s preface and puts it at the end, introducing a contradictory saying.

Elegant this solution is not. There is a solution which is more economical, however, involving only two steps: supplementation and reversal. *Luke* supplements the Markan version with his postscript, and *Thomas* takes the Lukan version and reverses the order of the elements as in Table 8.8.

<sup>39</sup> Riley, ‘Influence of *Thomas* Christianity’, 233.

<sup>40</sup> Riley, ‘Influence of *Thomas* Christianity’, 234.

<sup>41</sup> Rather, following the theme of the first half of *GTh* 47, it seems that the overriding concern is the incompatibility of opposites. *GTh* 47.1–2 note the impossibility of riding two horses, drawing two bows and serving two masters. Similarly, *GTh* 47.3–4 simply refer to the incongruity of an old patch on a new garment, and of new wine in old skins and vice versa; the old is not valued over the new in these cases. It is quite possible that *GTh* 47.5 values the old wine over the new, but only if one already knows that old wine is preferable.

Table 8.7

Mark 2.21–2 →	GTh 47.3–5 →	Luke 5.36–9
[A] No one sews a patch of unshrunk cloth on an old garment. If he does, the new piece will pull away from the old, making the tear worse.	[C] No man drinks old wine and immediately desires to drink new wine.	[A] No one tears a patch from a new garment and sews it on an old one. If he does, he will have torn the new garment, and the patch from the new will not match the old.
[B] And no one pours new wine into old wineskins. If he does, the wine will burst the skins, and both the wine and the wineskins will be ruined. No, he pours new wine into new wineskins.	[B] And new wine is not put into old wineskins, lest they burst; nor is old wine put into a new wineskin, lest it (the wineskin) spoil it.	[B] And no one pours new wine into old wineskins. If he does, the new wine will burst the skins, the wine will run out and the wineskins will be ruined. No, new wine must be poured into new wineskins.
	[A] An old patch is not sewn onto a new garment, because a tear would result.	[C] And no one after drinking old wine wants the new, for he says, ‘The old is better.’

As such, the simple solution would be: AB→ABC→CBA. Of course a great many complexities attend the transmission of Synoptic sayings, but this is all the more reason not to multiply complexities unnecessarily.

The difficulty with the Lukan addition is not nearly so extreme as Riley suggests: probably a majority of commentators – who cannot merely be dismissed in a footnote – consider Luke 5.39 to be a comment on Jesus’ interlocutors being reluctant to change their ways and embrace the new.<sup>42</sup> This corresponds well to the question about fasting which has just been

<sup>42</sup> E.g. G.B. Caird, *Saint Luke* (Pelican NT Commentaries; Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1963), 98; H. Schürmann, *Das Lukasevangelium* (Herders Theologischer Kommentar; Freiburg: Herder, 1969), I.300; I.H. Marshall, *Commentary on Luke* (NIGTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978), 228; J.A. Fitzmyer, *The Gospel of Luke I-IX* (Anchor Bible; New York: Doubleday, 1982), 597; J. Nolland, *Luke 1–9.20* (WBC; Waco, TX: Word, 1989), 250; E. Schweizer, *Das Evangelium nach Lukas*, 3rd edn (NTD; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1993), 73–4.

Table 8.8

Mark 2.21–2 →	Luke 5.36–9 →	<i>GTh</i> 47.3–5
[A] No one sews a patch of unshrunk cloth on an old garment. If he does, the new piece will pull away from the old, making the tear worse.	[A] No one tears a patch from a new garment and sews it on an old one. If he does, he will have torn the new garment, and the patch from the new will not match the old.	[C] No man drinks old wine and immediately desires to drink new wine.
[B] And no one pours new wine into old wineskins. If he does, the wine will burst the skins, and both the wine and the wineskins will be ruined.	[B] And no one pours new wine into old wineskins. If he does, the new wine will burst the skins, the wine will run out and the wineskins will be ruined.	[B] And new wine is not put into old wineskins, lest they burst; nor is old wine put into a new wineskin, lest it (the wineskin) spoil it.
No, he pours new wine into new wineskins.	No, new wine must be poured into new wineskins.	[A] An old patch is not sewn onto a new garment, because a tear would result.
	[C] And no one after drinking old wine wants the new, for he says, 'The old is better.'	

addressed to Jesus, and especially with the two pericopae following at the beginning of Luke 6. As such, we have here a good case for *Thomas* incorporating Lukan redaction.<sup>43</sup>

## 2 The influence of *Thomas* upon Luke?

Finally, we can briefly consider two more examples of alleged *GTh*→Luke, which can both be shown to be problematic. The intention in the treatment of these two cases is not to argue positively for the influence of Luke upon *Thomas*, but rather simply to show that Thomasine influence on Luke cannot be sustained in either instance.

<sup>43</sup> DeConick again emphasises the process of oral transmission (*Original Gospel of Thomas in Translation*, 175), but this need not be pitted against literary influence.



Table 8.9

<i>GTh</i> 72	Luke 12.13–14
A m[a]n said to him, ‘Tell my brothers to divide my father’s property with me.’	Someone from the crowd said to him, ‘Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me.’
He (Jesus) said to him, ‘O man, who has made me a <i>divider</i> ?’ ...	He (Jesus) said to him, ‘Man, who appointed me a judge or <i>divider</i> (μεριστήν) over you?’ ...

2.1 *GTh* 72/Luke 12.13–14

A generation ago, the complex debate between Quispel and Baarda on whether *Thomas* was dependent here upon Luke reached something of a stalemate,<sup>44</sup> but Riley has reopened the case, arguing for Luke’s dependence upon *Thomas*.<sup>45</sup> He claims that Baarda’s Achilles heel is his lack of attention to Luke’s quirky word μεριστής (see Table 8.9). According to Riley, ‘the word itself is until the time of Luke a *hapax legomenon* [*sic*], occurring here for the first time in extant Greek literature’.<sup>46</sup> Riley continues, noting the ‘strange word’, and claiming that ‘there was no such office or title in any court or system of arbitration ... neither in Greco-Roman nor Jewish culture’.<sup>47</sup> Moreover, ‘the Lukan story certainly has no need of it; the text reads more naturally without the new and awkward expression’.<sup>48</sup> Hence Riley’s question: ‘Why was the term coined and why is it in the text of Luke?’<sup>49</sup>

Enter the *Gospel of Thomas*, where ‘divider’ (ρεριωραε) fits perfectly naturally in *GTh* 72, and more generally with *Thomas*’s Jesus, who ‘comes from the undivided’ (*GTh* 61.3). This anomalous word crept into Luke because the original saying had ‘judge’; *Thomas* replaced this with ‘divider’, and Luke conflated the two.<sup>50</sup>

<sup>44</sup> G. Quispel, ‘The Discussion of Judaic Christianity’, *VigChr* 22 (1968) 81–93 (85–6); T. Baarda, ‘Luke 12:13–14: Text and Transmission from Marcion to Augustine’, in Baarda, *Early Transmission of the Words of Jesus: Thomas, Tatian and the Text of the New Testament* (Amsterdam: Free University Press, 1983), 117–72; repr. from J. Neusner, ed. *Judaism, Christianity and Other Greco-Roman Cults: Studies for Morton Smith at Sixty*, vol. I (Leiden: Brill, 1975), 107–62.

<sup>45</sup> Riley, ‘Influence of Thomas Christianity’. Similarly DeConick, *Original Gospel of Thomas in Translation*, 230, taking account of a parallel in an Islamic text.

<sup>46</sup> Riley, ‘Influence of Thomas Christianity’, 230.

<sup>47</sup> Riley, ‘Influence of Thomas Christianity’, 230.

<sup>48</sup> Riley, ‘Influence of Thomas Christianity’, 230.

<sup>49</sup> Riley, ‘Influence of Thomas Christianity’, 231.

<sup>50</sup> Riley, ‘Influence of Thomas Christianity’, 232.

The fundamental problem with Riley's theory, however, is in the claim that μεριστής is a Lukan neologism. One might gain this impression from the main text of LSJ, though second-century references in Pollux Grammaticus and Vettius Valens might give pause for concluding that 'the word appears to be a coinage arising in this very saying'.<sup>51</sup>

However, the 1968 LSJ supplement includes a third-century BCE inscription mentioning μερισταί, glossed 'financial officials at Istria'.<sup>52</sup> After being noted in the *Bulletin épigraphique* for 1955 (to which the LSJ supplement refers), it was published in Pippidi's edition of the Istria inscriptions, which also contains another partially reconstructed, and two fully reconstructed, instances of μεριστής.<sup>53</sup> These appear in a formula assigning duties to the οἰκονόμος and the μεριστής respectively: 'The *oikonomos* is to pay out the cost, the *meristai* are to distribute it.'<sup>54</sup>

Another almost complete example comes in a second-century BCE Magnesian inscription: 'Three envoys from all the craftsmen are to be despatched both now and for all time, and the *meristai* (τοὺς μερι[σ]τά[ς]) are to give them whatever the assembly commands for the sacrifice ...' (*IMagn* 54.34–7).<sup>55</sup> Unfortunately the inscription breaks off shortly after this notice. Perhaps they were, as above, responsible for the distribution of funds, in this case for sacrifices.<sup>56</sup>

There are also two cases in technical writings from the first century CE. The first comes in Apion's glossary of Homeric terms, which appears to flout the golden rule of lexicography by explaining an obscure word by other words just as obscure: δαιτρός (*Od.* 1.141): ὁ μάγειρος καὶ ὁ μεριστής ('carver': 'butcher' and 'divider').<sup>57</sup> So μεριστής is acceptable

<sup>51</sup> Riley, 'Influence of Thomas Christianity', 230.

<sup>52</sup> LSJ Suppl., 98, citing 'Bull. épigr. 1955. 163 (p.57)'.  
<sup>53</sup> D.M. Pippidi, ed. *Inscriptiones Scythiae Minoris Graecae et Latinae*, vol. I *Inscriptiones Histriae et Vicinae* (Bucharest: Typis Academiae Scientiarum Dacoromanae, 1983).

<sup>54</sup> *IHistriae* 6.3–5: τὸ δὲ ἀνάλωμα δοῦναι τὸν οἰκονόμον, μερίσαι δὲ τοὺς μεριστάς; cf. *IHistriae* 19.3–5: ... [μερίσαι]τὶ δὲ τῶν μεριστάς]. Cf. the fully restored instances in *IHistriae* 21.5 and *IHistriae* 40.2.

<sup>55</sup> See O. Kern, *Die Inschriften von Magnesia am Maeander* (Berlin: W. Spemann, 1900), 45, and xxx–xxxii for the date.

<sup>56</sup> For more on the μερισταί, see M.W. Baldwin Bowsky, 'Epigrams to the Elder Statesman and a Young Noble from Lato Pros Kamara (Crete)', *Hesperia* 58 (1989), 115–29 (122); A.S. Henry, 'Provisions for the Payment of Athenian Decrees: A Study in Formulaic Language', *ZPE* 78 (1989), 247–95 for references to the μεριζόμενοι and the annual μερισμός in Athens (261, 263), and further references to the verb μερίσαι in contexts similar to those of the Istria and Magnesia inscriptions (268–9, 273–92).

<sup>57</sup> A. Ludwich, 'Ueber die Homerischen Glossen Apions', *Philologus* 74 (1917), 205–47 (228, ll. 22–3).

as an equivalent of two terms which are known to refer to meat-cutting, a rather different sense from that above.

Finally, the first-century CE astrologer Dorotheus of Sidon says that a son has an ill-starred destiny if there is a ‘divider of the periods’ (μεριστής τῶν χρόνων) in his horoscope.<sup>58</sup> Although the meaning of this designation is not obvious, it also occurs in LSJ’s example from Vettius Valens in the second century CE. There the μεριστής χρόνων ζωῆς is the lord of the horoscope,<sup>59</sup> and so the sense is probably the same in Dorotheus. Pollux Grammaticus provides the other example from the second century cited by LSJ.

In sum, then, the word is used in a variety of settings in the pre-Christian period and the first century CE. While it could not be claimed that μεριστής is a common word, it is certainly – *pace* Riley – no Lukan or Thomasine invention either.<sup>60</sup> This does not of course prove Lukan influence upon *Thomas*, but it does remove the basis for Riley’s argument that *Thomas* has contributed to the form of Luke 12.

## 2.2 *GTh* 76.3/Luke 12.33

A further instance of *GTh*→Luke has recently been proposed by Steven Johnson.<sup>61</sup> He begins by enthusiastically taking up Riley’s conclusions above: he considers Riley to have ‘demonstrated’ Lukan use of *GTh* 47, and comments that ‘Riley chose perhaps the clearest and strongest cases for Lukan dependence on the Thomas tradition’.<sup>62</sup> Be that as it may, Johnson suggests a further instance, in which *GTh* 76 is influential as one of a number of sources for Luke 12.33 (see Table 8.10).

In sum, according to Johnson, Luke ‘recomposed Q 12:33 with the aid of Mark 10:21 and *GTh* 76:3’.<sup>63</sup>

Leaving aside the questions of the influence of Mark and Q, the key point for our purposes is the theory of *GTh* 76.3 as a source, and here a number of problems surface. First, in Johnson’s main synopsis, the

<sup>58</sup> *Dor.* II.33.4. D. Pingree, ed. *Dorothei Sidonii Carmen Astrologicum* (Leipzig: Teubner, 1976), 359–60.

<sup>59</sup> LSJ, 1104a.

<sup>60</sup> Riley (‘Influence of Thomas Christianity’, 230–2) does not state whether he thinks that the actual term μεριστής was the word used in Greek *Thomas*. On the basis of his emphasis on Luke’s apparent coinage of the word, he might think some other wording was used; on the other hand, Riley may be speaking rhetorically of the situation for the analysis of the Lukan language when one leaves *Thomas* out of consideration.

<sup>61</sup> Johnson, *Seeking the Imperishable Treasure*, esp. 58–79.

<sup>62</sup> Johnson, *Seeking the Imperishable Treasure*, 77 n. 50; cf. 12.

<sup>63</sup> Johnson, *Seeking the Imperishable Treasure*, 76.

Table 8.10

Gospel sources:		Luke 12.33
Mark 10.21	Go, sell (sing.) what you have and give (sing.) to the poor.	Sell (pl.) your possessions and give (pl.) alms.
Q 12.33	Store up for yourselves	Make for yourselves purses which do not wear out,
GTh 76.3	<his> treasure which does not fail	unfailing treasure
GTh 76.3	which remains	in heaven,
Q 12.33	in heaven	
Q 12.33	where neither worm nor rust destroys, and where thieves neither break in nor steal.	where no thief approaches and no worm destroys.

word in *Thomas* for ‘which does not fail’ (εμαρωαχῆ) is retroverted into the very odd Greek phrase μὴ τὸν ἀπολλύμενον, surely a solecism.<sup>64</sup> Second, it is perhaps peculiar that Johnson posits a retroversion employing a form of ἀπολλύναι, when *Thomas*’s εμαρωαχῆ is closer to Luke’s ἀνέκλειπτον: Crum’s first equivalent for ωαῆ is ἐκλείπειν,<sup>65</sup> and conversely Luke’s ἀνέκλειπτον is translated in Sahidic Luke 12.53 as ατωαῆ. Third, more strange is the answer to the question, ‘What does *Thomas* contribute to the Lukan saying?’ In Johnson’s view, it is not what appears closest in the synopsis above, because of his purported Greek for *Thomas*’s ‘which does not fail’. Rather, it is ‘the idea for a qualifier of “treasure”’,<sup>66</sup> Luke did not get the actual qualifier itself: this Luke changes from μὴ τὸν ἀπολλύμενον to ἀνέκλειπτον. So what *Thomas* contributes to Luke, according to Johnson, is merely the *idea* of a second qualifier. This is clearly quite a paltry contribution.

Johnson’s puzzlement at those who argue for the canonical Gospels’ influence on *Thomas* is expressed as follows: ‘why would the composer of GTh 76:3 go to such trouble picking out individual words here and there from *three*, or even *all four* canonical Gospels?’<sup>67</sup> Irrespective of how many sources are needed (as we have seen, Johnson’s Luke requires three here: Mark, Q and *Thomas*), this question assumes that

<sup>64</sup> Johnson, *Seeking the Imperishable Treasure*, 63.

<sup>65</sup> Crum 539a. There are, however, a number of possible equivalents, including ἀπολλύναι (539b).

<sup>66</sup> Johnson, *Seeking the Imperishable Treasure*, 72–3.

<sup>67</sup> Johnson, *Seeking the Imperishable Treasure*, 69.

other scholars think of composition as taking place in the same woodenly scribal manner as does Johnson.<sup>68</sup> Much more likely is an oral tradition, or perhaps the vagaries of memory, combining numerous converging traditions. Johnson claims that other theories are more complicated than his view of Luke's use of three sources, and rejects a view positing 'secondary orality' because he considers that John 6.27 would have to be included in the oral tradition influencing *Thomas*.<sup>69</sup> This is spurious, however, as the connections between John and *Thomas* are thin here: Johnson generally overemphasises the commonality.<sup>70</sup>

In sum, there are so many difficulties with this theory that it is hard to see how it could find acceptance: the same goes for the other cases alleging *GTh*→Luke. As mentioned above, however, these two sayings discussed here are not proposed as evidence pointing in the other direction (Luke→*GTh*); the arguments here are simply negative.

### Conclusion

We have seen eight examples, then, of *Thomas*'s reception of Luke's redaction of Mark.<sup>71</sup> Despite *Thomas*'s actual reference to Matthew, Luke is almost certainly the closer to *Thomas* in many respects. A further difference from the comparison with Matthew is that in this chapter we have seen instances of Luke's apparent influence upon Greek sayings in *Thomas*. The influence also cuts across a wide array of different kinds of material, such as aphorisms (*GTh* 5, 31), a parable (*GTh* 65) and a pronouncement story (*GTh* 99).

Furthermore, we have also examined various arguments for the priority of *Thomas*'s versions (or versions like that in *Thomas*). Our examinations have covered allegations of straightforward influence from *Thomas*

<sup>68</sup> Johnson, in his inquiries as to why *Thomas* would use 'Matthew's order of adverbs ... but Luke's verbs' (*Seeking the Imperishable Treasure*, 70), etc. is too insistent upon theological reasons for small differences among versions. Such variation might easily be the result of the vagaries of oral transmission. Johnson, however, operates with a highly scribalised model of dependence, in which every variation needs to be justified.

<sup>69</sup> Johnson, *Seeking the Imperishable Treasure*, 71.

<sup>70</sup> Johnson's 'μή τὸν ἀπολλόμενον' is similar to John's language, but only because Johnson's retroversion has made it so. As noted, *Thomas*'s εἰσαφῶξις is just as close to Luke's ἀνέκλειπτον; on the other hand, *Thomas*'s ἐφθίη εἶβολ is a standard equivalent for a participle of μένω, as in Johnson's retroversion, and in John 6.27. The perishing/enduring contrast is conventional, however (e.g. Eccl. 7.15's righteous ἀπολλόμενος and wicked μένων).

<sup>71</sup> On the other hand, it is too strong to say with Gärtner that 'the school of thought which collected and shaped the Gospel of *Thomas* had a distinct preference for Luke'. B.E. Gärtner, *The Theology of the Gospel of Thomas* (London: Collins/New York: Harper, 1961), 67.

directly to Luke (Riley on *GTh* 72), as well as arguments for Luke being dependent upon something close to *Thomas* and upon Mark (Smith on *GTh* 99), and upon *Thomas*, Mark and Q (Johnson on *GTh* 76); we have also looked at cases made for the influence of *Thomas* (or a primitive version like it) upon the Markan sayings underlying the Lukan versions of *GTh* 47 (so Riley) and *GTh* 65–6 (so Kloppenborg). Since it is hard to see how any of these will prove persuasive to scholars, the instances of *Thomas*'s reception of Luke noted above need to be given greater prominence. As has been highlighted along the way, it is particularly notable that in three cases (*GTh* 65, 33 and 104) we have instances of a Lukan redactional feature not only being incorporated into *Thomas*, but actually expanded upon.

# 9

## THE SYNOPTICS AND *THOMAS*: SUMMARY AND EVALUATION

### Introduction: summary of results

In the past two chapters, we have proposed a number of instances of influence from the Synoptics to *Thomas*, and along the way some alternative hypotheses have been tested. These hypotheses covered a variety of ways in which scholars have proposed the priority of *Thomas* or something close to *Thomas*'s version of a saying:

- $GTh \rightarrow \text{Mark} \rightarrow \text{Matthew}$  (Davies, on *GTh* 14)
- $GTh \text{ (approx.)} + \text{Mark} = \text{Matthew}$  (Smith, on *GTh* 99)
- $GTh \rightarrow \text{Mark} \rightarrow \text{Luke}$  (Riley, on *GTh* 47)
- $GTh \text{ (approx.)} \rightarrow \text{Mark} \rightarrow \text{Luke}$  (Kloppenborg, on *GTh* 65–6)
- $GTh \rightarrow \text{Luke}$  (Riley, on *GTh* 72)
- $GTh + \text{Mark} + \text{Q} = \text{Luke}$  (Johnson, on *GTh* 76)
- $GTh \text{ (approx.)} + \text{Mark} = \text{Luke}$  (Smith, on *GTh* 99)

Additionally, numerous proposals for the independence of sayings in *Thomas* have been made which are virtually unfalsifiable,<sup>1</sup> although we also examined in Chapter 3 arguments in which *Thomas* and a Synoptic Gospel were thought to reflect divergent, and therefore independent translations from an Aramaic original:

Aramaic  $\rightarrow GTh$  8, 9, 12, 25, 33, 35, 39, 40, 47, 48, 55, 64, 69,  
79, 90, 91, 100, 107, 113  
↓  
Synoptics

<sup>1</sup> One recalls the observation in A.F. Gregory, *The Reception of Luke and Acts in the Period before Irenaeus: Looking for Luke in the Second Century* (WUNT II/169; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003), 353: 'it is virtually impossible to demonstrate non-use, never mind non-knowledge of a text'. Similarly, it is virtually impossible by the same token to *disprove* independence.

When subjected to close scrutiny, however, a number of difficulties appear in such proposed Semitic *Vorlagen*.

Positively, we have argued that the following are probably examples of *Thomas*'s reception of Matthean or Lukan redactions of Mark:

- Mark → Matthew → *GTh* 13, 14, 44 = 3 in total
- Mark → Luke → *GTh* 5, 31, 33, 47, 65, 66, 99, 104 = 8 in total

The yield, then, is eleven sayings out of a possible twenty sayings in which there is *GTh*/Mark/Matthew or *GTh*/Mark/Luke parallel material.<sup>2</sup>

The rest of this chapter will assess what this quantity of influence amounts to, by comparison with the assessments of other scholars: this will be done in section 1. After this, we will look at two further aspects of the influence of the Synoptics upon *Thomas*. In section 2, the “how” of the influence will be explored. Finally, in section 3, we will examine the “when” of the influence, that is, asking at what putative stage(s) in *Thomas*'s composition (accepting for the sake of argument the hypothetical stratifications proposed by some scholars) the influence of the Synoptic Gospels might have been exerted.

## 1 The extent of influence

In Chapter 5, we outlined a spectrum of opinion about the extent of Thomasine dependence upon the Synoptics. At one end, Sieber talked of the ‘overwhelming lack of editorial evidence’,<sup>3</sup> and at the opposite end, Tuckett refers to ‘the fact that in so many instances *GTh* is shown to be dependent on the synoptics’.<sup>4</sup> A number of scholars, moreover, sit somewhere between these two positions.

How much does our eleven out of twenty amount to? Does this roughly mean that *Thomas* is “half-dependent”? It will be helpful very briefly to survey the other nine sayings.<sup>5</sup> It is interesting that they do not offer very strong counter-evidence to the idea of Synoptic influence.

<sup>2</sup> The “shortlist” of possible cases with Markan material paralleled in Matthew or Luke (without possible Mark/Q overlap) was: *GTh* 4, 5, 9, 13, 14, 20, 22, 25, 31, 33, 35, 41, 44, 47, 65, 66, 71, 99, 100, and 104.

<sup>3</sup> J.H. Sieber, ‘A Redactional Analysis of the Synoptic Gospels with Regard to the Question of the Sources of the Gospel according to Thomas’ (Dissertation, Claremont Graduate School, 1965), 262–3, quoted in Sieber, ‘The Gospel of Thomas and the New Testament’, in J.E. Goehring, C.W. Hedrick and J.T. Sanders, eds. *Gospel Origins and Christian Beginnings: In Honor of James M. Robinson* (Sonoma, CA: Polebridge, 1990), 64–73 (69).

<sup>4</sup> C.M. Tuckett, ‘The Gospel of Thomas: Evidence for Jesus?’, *NTT* 52 (1998), 17–32 (27).

<sup>5</sup> *GTh* 4, 9, 20, 22, 25, 35, 41, 71, 100.



To begin with *GTh* 4, where we do have a Greek text, we are dealing with a very small amount of text (πολλοὶ ἔσονται πρῶτοι ἔσχατοι καὶ οἱ ἔσχατοι πρῶτοι), and the problem is not a lack of correspondence with the Synoptics, but rather too much: all four versions – Matthew, Mark, Luke and *Thomas* – are too similar for the redactional method to come into play. The problem of paucity of text again appears with *GTh* 71, where only the fragmentary beginning (‘I will dest[roy thi]s house’) is paralleled in the Synoptics. The similarly brief *GTh* 25.1’s version of ‘love your neighbour as yourself’ (‘love your brother like your soul’) is paralleled in all three Synoptic Gospels, but these latter are all too similar to yield much potential for redactional influence: all have ἀγαπήσεις τὸν πλησίον σου ὡς σεαυτὸν with occasional syntactic variations resulting from the context (and *Thomas*’s version is in any case quite different). Similar consistency among the Synoptic versions appears in the case of the parallels to *GTh* 41 (‘whoever has ... will receive more’, etc.). In the parable of the sower (*GTh* 9 and parallels), we have a larger portion of material, but the three canonical versions are again extremely similar, and Horman’s synopsis shows that ‘somewhat more than half of the parable as given in *Thomas* translates the Synoptic version of the parable as closely as can be imagined, even to the extent of following the precise word order of the Synoptics’.<sup>6</sup> The parable of the mustard seed (*GTh* 20) is not quite as close, although virtually every element can be paralleled in Mark and Matthew. The ‘render unto Caesar’ pericope in *GTh* 100 is reasonably close to all the Synoptics, and may indeed evince some Lukan features, though not prominently enough to have been highlighted in Chapter 8.<sup>7</sup> In some cases, sayings happen to be closer to Mark. The ‘binding of the strong man’ saying in *GTh* 35 is paralleled in two very similar versions in Matthew and Mark, but where these two canonical versions diverge, *Thomas* is closer to Mark. It is tempting to take *GTh* 22 as influenced by Matthew, for it may well incorporate Matthean redaction (Matt. 18.1–5) of Mark 9.36–7: Matthew’s redactional ‘unless you turn and become like little children, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven’ may well lie behind *Thomas*’s ‘these nursing children are like those who enter into the kingdom’, but there are complications.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>6</sup> J.F. Horman, ‘The Source of the Version of the Parable of the Sower in the Gospel of *Thomas*’, *NovT* 21 (1979), 326–43 (334).

<sup>7</sup> See, however, my ‘Luke in the *Gospel of Thomas*’, *NTS* 57 (2011), 114–44 (134–5).

<sup>8</sup> The situation with this episode with the child (Mark 9.36–7/Matt. 18.2–5/Luke 9.47–8) is made complicated by overlap with the similar pericope where Jesus blesses children (Mark 10.13–16/Matt. 19.13–15/Luke 18.15–17).

Overall, then, the absence of redactional features in these residual sayings is not because of their relative distance (by comparison with those who do exhibit such redaction) from the Synoptics. In many of the cases above, there is still very close similarity to the Synoptics. In some other cases, the absence of redactional features in *Thomas* is a foregone conclusion because of the absence of much redaction in Matthew or Luke in the first place. In some instances, the absence of redactional features in *Thomas* could be because of an enduring influence of Mark, but this is in the nature of the case unprovable. In sum, then, we have eleven out of twenty cases of sayings in which redactional features are identifiable. In the other nine out of twenty, there is close similarity between *Thomas* and the Synoptics but the overlap is often so brief, or the similarity among the Synoptics so close, that there is not so much chance for the influence of redactional features.

Our comments here on the extent of influence are clearly at variance with the remarks of Sieber and Patterson. We have noted above Sieber's scepticism, and even though Patterson does not rule out the presence of redactional features altogether, he remarks that a mere six instances of redactional influence (on his count) out of the fifty-odd sayings with Synoptic parallels does not amount to much.<sup>9</sup> (And it amounts to even less if these redactional features can be explained away as post-compositional interference from the New Testament.) Patterson does in a very recent article ask what happens if we confine the discussion, as we have above, to those sayings which have Mark *and* either Matthean or Lukan parallels.<sup>10</sup> Here again, he concludes that there is only 'occasional influence'.<sup>11</sup>

In contrast, on the basis of the results of Chapters 7–8 we can perhaps sum up the relationship between *Thomas* and the Synoptics as involving "significant influence". The influence of the Synoptics upon *Thomas* is not evident throughout, but nor is it as insignificant as some

<sup>9</sup> S.J. Patterson, 'The Gospel of Thomas and the Synoptic Tradition: A Forschungsbericht and Critique', *Forum* 8 (1992), 45–97 (54).

<sup>10</sup> S.J. Patterson, 'The Gospel of (Judas) Thomas and the Synoptic Problem', in P. Foster, A. Gregory, J.S. Kloppenborg and J. Verheyden, eds. *New Studies in the Synoptic Problem: Oxford Conference, April 2008: Essays in Honour of Christopher M. Tuckett* (Leuven/Paris/Walpole, MA: Peeters, 2011), 783–808 (788–90).

<sup>11</sup> Patterson, 'The Gospel of (Judas) Thomas and the Synoptic Problem', 790. Patterson's conclusions are obviously minimalist by comparison with the conclusions of Chapters 7–8 above. He sees only two to three instances of Matthean or Lukan redaction finding its way into *Thomas*. He considers the potential stock of sayings as slightly higher than twenty, counting twenty-five largely because he includes a number of cases of Mark/Q overlap. (See further Chapter 6 above.)

have claimed. The cumulative effect of the evidence in Chapters 7–8 is that any view of *Thomas* as thoroughly or essentially independent can be decisively ruled out.<sup>12</sup>

The question then becomes whether it is legitimate to take the step which Tuckett tentatively takes, namely to infer from the detectable instances of influence that perhaps dependence is also a reasonable working hypothesis in ambiguous cases:<sup>13</sup> for example, in places where *Thomas* only parallels Matthew, or only Mark, and so on. Further support for this line is the fact that the arguments for alternatives have been so weak: this applies both (1) to arguments for influence in the opposite direction, and (2) to cases made for independence, whether the weakness lay in form-critical guesswork, or – more substantively – in the arguments for divergent translations. In contrast to Tuckett here is the position of Hedrick, who states that we should when talking about *Thomas* as a whole ‘drop advocacy of dependence/independence ... and focus attention on individual logia’.<sup>14</sup> Hedrick’s position here, however, is probably one in which over-caution is in danger of distorting reality.<sup>15</sup> In the first place, it is not clear why, as he insists, one should assume independence unless there is evidence to the contrary: “burden of proof” is a complex matter, and should probably lie equally upon whoever wants to make either case.<sup>16</sup> Second, once one has encountered significant evidence of influence elsewhere in one group of *Thomas* sayings, it is likely – on the principle that a blood sample reflects the entire circulation – that a

<sup>12</sup> J.-M. Sevrin, ‘L’Interprétation de l’Évangile selon Thomas, entre tradition et rédaction’, in J.D. Turner and A. McGuire, eds. *The Nag Hammadi Library after Fifty Years: Proceedings of the 1995 Society of Biblical Literature Commemoration* (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 347–60 (348), comments that the individual cases may not amount to much, but in their totality they show the weakness of the independence theory.

<sup>13</sup> Tuckett, ‘The Gospel of Thomas’, 27.

<sup>14</sup> C.W. Hedrick, ‘Thomas and the Synoptics: Aiming at a Consensus’, *SecCent* 7 (1990), 39–56 (56).

<sup>15</sup> It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that insistences that one ‘focus attention on individual logia’ are sometimes rhetorical ploys from “independence” advocates aiming to rein in those advocating “dependence”. (Hedrick, for example, later wrote an article entitled ‘An Anecdotal Argument for the Independence of the *Gospel of Thomas* from the Synoptic Gospels’!) On the other hand, Aune also considers such individual focus a pragmatic necessity in the current climate of *Thomas* scholarship: see D.E. Aune, ‘Assessing the Historical Value of the Apocryphal Jesus Traditions: A Critique of Conflicting Methodologies’, in J. Schröter and R. Brucker, eds. *Der historische Jesus: Tendenzen und Perspektiven der gegenwärtigen Forschung* (BZNW 114; Berlin/New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2002), 243–72 (270), though cf. also 256.

<sup>16</sup> Hedrick, ‘Thomas and the Synoptics’, 56: ‘each saying must be treated as an independent tradition until each saying individually can be shown to be dependent on the Synoptic Gospels’.

significant influence may exist elsewhere. That influence is of course limited to those sayings which are paralleled in the Synoptics. Additionally, one must of course reckon with the possibility that some of the Synoptic sayings were derived by *Thomas* from other sources, although unfortunately this belongs in the domain of what Thucydides called ὄντα ἀνεξέλεγκτα – ‘things incapable of investigation’.<sup>17</sup>

## 2 The influence of the Synoptics upon *Thomas*: oral, literary or both?

In Chapter 6 we also surveyed the various possible explanations for the similarities between *Thomas* and the Synoptics, namely direct scribal copying from the Synoptics by *Thomas*, purely oral tradition shared among them, as well as “secondary orality” and memory of reading on the part of *Thomas* or his sources. We must come to the question of whether the results of Chapters 7–8 can help us opt for one of these possible solutions. Before that, however, we should examine four fallacies which have beset previous treatments of this question.<sup>18</sup>

### 2.1 The fallacy of our detailed knowledge of the “tunnel period”

In *Ancient Christian Gospels*, Koester lambasts Snodgrass for not having ‘a theory of the pre-canonical history of the tradition’.<sup>19</sup> Koester’s own theory is of course a very detailed one, replete with views on how transmission affects the materials. In response to this, however, it is not merely that one can conduct a study of the present sort without such claims to detailed theories. In fact, as some of the criticisms of form-critical approaches in Chapter 5 have shown, it is a perfectly sensible strategy not to rely too heavily on any such theory. Many scholars are sceptical not only about Koester’s particular view of transmission history but also about whether we have enough data to construct a useful theory at all. Among British scholars it is common to refer to the time of the transmission of tradition between Jesus and the Gospels as the

<sup>17</sup> Thuc. I.21.1.

<sup>18</sup> Overlapping (*mutatis mutandis*) to some extent with this section is the penetrating discussion of W. Kelber’s view of Mark and Q in J. Schröter, *Erinnerung an Jesu Worte: Studien zur Rezeption der Logienüberlieferung in Markus, Q und Thomas* (WMANT 76; Neukirchen: Neukirchener, 1997), 43–57.

<sup>19</sup> H. Koester, *Ancient Christian Gospels: Their History, and Development* (Philadelphia: Trinity Press International, 1990), 85 n. 4.

“tunnel period”,<sup>20</sup> precisely because it is a kind of “Dark Age” about which so little can be known.<sup>21</sup> For one kind of material, Aune has rightly commented, ‘most of the evidence for the transmission of aphorisms no longer exists’.<sup>22</sup> Moreover, we have already observed in Chapter 8 above Kloppenborg’s rightly sceptical view about the possibility of knowing what happened in this tunnel period.<sup>23</sup>

## 2.2 The fallacy of identifiably “oral” variations

In the study of *Thomas*, one often encounters statements such as ‘the variant is the result of oral transmission rather than literary development’. Dewey writes that the variations in the “seek and you shall find” saying are ‘understandable within an oral climate’.<sup>24</sup> Riley talks of ‘the normal developments of an independent tradition in an oral environment’.<sup>25</sup> In his discussion of the parables, Koester operates with a sharp bifurcation between oral and literary modes of transmission: ‘Parables are told, sometimes with suggestive alterations; or else parables are copied and allegorized ... In the first instance, the conscious use of written materials and their redaction is highly unlikely; in the latter case, written materials are probably always utilized and deliberately edited.’<sup>26</sup> Similarly, Patterson considers that the variation between the Pauline and Thomasine versions of ‘what eye has not seen, etc.’ (1 Cor. 2.9/*GTh* 17) ‘reflects the sort of differences one would expect to have resulted from oral transmission’.<sup>27</sup> It is wrong, however, to assume

<sup>20</sup> See e.g. J.A.T. Robinson, *Can We Trust the New Testament?* (London: Mowbray, 1977), 25.

<sup>21</sup> Luke and Paul refer to ‘handing on’ and ‘receiving’, but little more (Luke 1.1–4; 1 Cor. 15.1 and 11.2, 23).

<sup>22</sup> D.E. Aune, ‘Oral Tradition and the Aphorisms of Jesus’, in H. Wansborough, ed. *Jesus and the Oral Gospel Tradition* (Sheffield: JSOT, 1991), 211–65 (240).

<sup>23</sup> J.S. Kloppenborg Verbin, *Excavating Q: The History and Setting of the Sayings Gospel* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2000), 51–2.

<sup>24</sup> A.J. Dewey, ‘Keep Speaking until You Find ...: Thomas and the School of Oral Mimesis’, in R. Cameron and M.P. Miller, eds. *Redescribing Christian Origins* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2004), 109–32 (111).

<sup>25</sup> G.J. Riley, ‘The Gospel of Thomas in Recent Scholarship’, *Currents in Research 2* (1994), 227–52 (235).

<sup>26</sup> H. Koester, ‘Three Thomas Parables’, in A. Logan and A. Wedderburn, eds. *New Testament and Gnosis: Essays in Honour of Robert McLaughlan Wilson* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1983), 195–203 (195).

<sup>27</sup> S.J. Patterson, ‘Paul and the Jesus Tradition: It Is Time for Another Look’, *HTR* 84 (1991), 23–41 (37), criticised in C.M. Tuckett, ‘Paul and Jesus Tradition: The Evidence of 1 Corinthians 2:9 and Gospel of Thomas 17’, in T.J. Burke, ed. *Paul and the Corinthians: Studies on a Community in Conflict: Essays in Honour of Margaret Thrall* (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 55–73 (67 n. 40).

that we know what oral variation looks like in the ancient world in which *Thomas* was produced. We cannot simply transfer the results of field studies done today, which are in any case very diverse: it has been observed that the characteristics of oral transmission vary a great deal among different cultures, and even according to the character of material transmitted within a particular culture.<sup>28</sup>

The difficulty is not just with the great variety and unpredictability of features of oral transmission, but also with the fact that it is so difficult to distinguish such features from the features of literary influence. We have a rough sense of what literary and scribal developments can look like, from our knowledge of the ways in which earlier works are used by later ones, and from our knowledge of what happens when scribes copy texts. But these literary developments can include just about any kind of variety one could imagine.<sup>29</sup> DeConick, following McIver and Carroll, identifies the following as characteristic of oral tradition:

Characteristics of orally transmitted materials can produce a high percentage of common vocabulary, but [1] the words found in the same sequence are placed in short phrases of only a few words. These 'same' phrases are scattered throughout the text. Variant versions [2] need not be of the same length and it is quite common to observe [3] shifts in tenses and mood of the verbs. [4] Often synonyms as well as short phrases with similar meaning but different words are substituted.<sup>30</sup>

The problem here is not that the statement is false, but that such characteristics are equally applicable to literary tradition. It is interesting that in one discussion by John Whittaker of the literary transmission of Greek philosophy (though the essay ranges more widely), exactly the same four features highlighted by DeConick are topics of discussion (rather remarkably, in the same order!). On (1), inconsistency of word order, Whittaker remarks in the case of one particular text: 'Reversals of word-order are a dominant feature of the style of the *Didaskalos*, where they occur so thick and fast that they must be intentional and not the consequence of

<sup>28</sup> As shown especially in J. Vansina, *Oral Tradition as History* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985).

<sup>29</sup> One need only observe the great variety among the different kinds of use which Matthew and Luke make of Mark: see again E.P. Sanders, *The Tendencies of the Synoptic Tradition* (SNTSMS 9; Cambridge University Press, 1969).

<sup>30</sup> A.D. DeConick, *The Original Gospel of Thomas in Translation: with a Commentary and New English Translation of the Complete Gospel* (LNTS 287; London/New York: T&T Clark International, 2006), 21. I have added the numbering.

carelessness or defective memory.<sup>31</sup> He goes on to remark that such tendencies are not confined to philosophical literature either.<sup>32</sup> On (2), variation of length, Whittaker discusses both omissions<sup>33</sup> and additions.<sup>34</sup> Whittaker treats (3) and (4) together, so that singular/plural variation, or a tendency to make participles of non-participial verbs, are but two instances of substitution. On (4) in general, Whittaker happens to have a section on 'substitutions, in particular the substitution of cognate terms and synonyms'.<sup>35</sup> His article ends with the following purple passage:

the fact that the same passages were repeatedly quoted and misquoted does not mean that Alcinous, Plotinus, Proclus and whoever else were using *florilegia* rather than consulting directly Plato, Aristotle, or whatever other authority. Nor for the same reason should we raise against the scholars of the ancient world the indiscriminate charge of oscitant inattention and unretentive memory because their method of quotation does not satisfy the special interest and expectation of the modern editor of texts. Instead we must acknowledge that there is about the ancient manner of quotation something of the technique of theme and variation, as though one thought it constricting and impersonal, as well as boring, to repeat perpetually the same familiar words; as though it were expected of the epigone not that he deny himself by leaving well alone, but that he add to what he quotes the touch of his own or some commentating predecessor's presumptive individuality.<sup>36</sup>

The remarkable correlation between what are surmised by DeConick as features of orality and what are shown on the basis of concrete evidence by Whittaker to have been features of *literary* transmission in antiquity shows how dangerous it is to think of particular features as 'oral variations'. One might also note here Brookins's summary of the school exercise of *paraphrasis* in antiquity, which could involve paraphrase 'by addition (*per adiectionem*) [= 2], by subtraction (*per detractioem*)

<sup>31</sup> J. Whittaker, 'The Value of Indirect Tradition in the Establishment of Greek Philosophical Texts or the Art of Misquotation', in J.N. Grant, ed. *Editing Greek and Latin Texts: Papers Given at the Twenty-Third Annual Conference on Editorial Problems* (New York: AMS Press, 1989), 63–95 (72).

<sup>32</sup> Whittaker, 'The Value of Indirect Tradition', 74. Word order in general is discussed on pp. 72–5.

<sup>33</sup> Whittaker, 'The Value of Indirect Tradition', 76–8.

<sup>34</sup> Whittaker, 'The Value of Indirect Tradition', 80–3.

<sup>35</sup> Whittaker, 'The Value of Indirect Tradition', 83–6 (the phrase is quoted from p. 83).

<sup>36</sup> Whittaker, 'The Value of Indirect Tradition', 94–5.

[=2], by transposition (*per transmutationem*) [=1], or by substitution (*per immutationem*) [= 4]'.<sup>37</sup> This again might raise concerns about the tendency towards too much confidence about oral features. This problem is not confined to early Christian studies. Rosalind Thomas's remark in response to studies of Greek literacy and orality is pertinent here: 'Discussion of orality is still often too generalized, uncritical, and woolly, the alleged character of orality surprisingly often a matter of faith rather than evidence ... orality turns out to be as complex and variable in its manifestations as literacy.'<sup>38</sup> Relevant to the case of *Thomas*, because of its genre, is the observation of Vansina, that 'the dynamics of proverbs and sayings are not well known' with respect to the manner in which they evolve.<sup>39</sup> As such, when scholars such as Koester, Dewey, Riley and DeConick remark that particular variations are characteristic of oral transmission or performance rather than being comprehensible as scribal or literary variations, one cannot help asking: How do you know?

### 2.3 The fallacy that references to oral communication within *Thomas* imply *Thomas*'s oral origins

I have encountered two surprisingly clear expressions of this fallacy, but other scholars may also be assuming the point tacitly. The first illustration of this fallacy appears in Robbins, who notes that *Thomas* never appeals to a written text, in contrast to the canonical Gospels which 'contain an orientation toward "what is written"'.<sup>40</sup> Indeed, the implication is that *Thomas* retains a primitive orality: *GTh* 66 is 'free from "scribal" influence', whereas 'the Markan version both attributes to Jesus an interest in its "written" status and the performance of it shows influence of the scribal replication of written text'.<sup>41</sup> As a result of such considerations, Robbins concludes that 'the *Gos. Thom.* reveals a status of "orally transmitted resources"'.<sup>42</sup> But this is pure non sequitur. Oral concerns in *Thomas*'s contents say nothing about its oral origins. The character

<sup>37</sup> T.A. Brookins, 'Luke's Use of Mark as Paraphrase: Its Effects on Characterization in the "Healing of Blind Bartimaeus" Pericope (Mk. 10.46–52/Lk. 18.35–43)', *JSNT* 34 (2011), 70–89.

<sup>38</sup> R. Thomas, *Literacy and Orality in Ancient Greece* (Key Themes in Ancient History: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 30.

<sup>39</sup> Vansina, *Oral Tradition as History*, 27.

<sup>40</sup> V.K. Robbins, 'Rhetorical Composition and Sources in the Gospel of Thomas', *SBLSP* 36 (1997), 86–114 (88).

<sup>41</sup> Robbins, 'Rhetorical Composition and Sources', 89.

<sup>42</sup> Robbins, 'Rhetorical Composition and Sources', 102.



of the material in *Thomas* is irrelevant to the oral/literary question: as Vansina has remarked, ‘there is no special form belonging to oral literature alone’.<sup>43</sup> The same fallacy appears in Dewey, in his comment that the phrase ‘let him who has ears to hear’ emphasises the context of oral performance, and that the phrase ‘underscores the oral emphasis in which the tradition is moving’.<sup>44</sup> It need hardly be mentioned that Matthew and Luke reproduce instances of this formula from Mark, but this is scarcely because Matthew and Luke are cases of the tradition moving in an oral direction.

One final problem can be highlighted here. Even if one could be absolutely sure of what constituted oral features, there would be no way of distinguishing between “pure” orality and “secondary” orality. This is because if an oral tradition stems from a written source, it very quickly becomes subject to exactly the same vagaries of oral transmission as does an oral tradition which has not originated in something written.

#### 2.4 The fallacy of pure orality in the transmission of gospel materials

In this context of views of *Thomas* as often merely the transcription of a previously unalloyed oral tradition, Risto Uro rightly warns that ‘one should be cautious not to adopt too romantic a picture of a free “savage mind” living in a state of sheer orality’.<sup>45</sup> It is better to speak, as does David Aune for example of ‘the interplay between oral and written transmission of the Jesus tradition’.<sup>46</sup> Even Kelber, who in one sense strongly emphasises *Thomas*’s oral character, describes *Thomas* as at the ‘interface bordering both on orality and textuality, and seeking a rapprochement between both worlds’.<sup>47</sup> No doubt in early Christianity there was extensive oral transmission, but there was also a vibrant literary – or perhaps better, documentary – culture, involving early on writings such as Paul’s letters, the Jerusalem Council edict (Acts 15.23–31; 16.4), and the ‘many’ who had already by the time of Luke provided accounts of the ministry of Jesus, not to mention the *biblia* to

<sup>43</sup> J. Vansina, *Oral Tradition: A Study in Historical Methodology* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1973 (1965)), 55.

<sup>44</sup> Dewey, ‘Keep Speaking until You Find’, 113.

<sup>45</sup> R. Uro, ‘Thomas and Oral Gospel Tradition’, in Uro, ed. *Thomas at the Crossroads* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1998), 8–32 (14).

<sup>46</sup> Aune, ‘Aphorisms’, 240.

<sup>47</sup> W.H. Kelber, ‘In the Beginning Were the Words: The Apotheosis and Narrative Displacement of the Logos’, *JAAR* 58 (1990), 69–98 (78).

which Papias refers (*EH* III.39.4). The main evidence for literary factors in the case of *Thomas* consists of the concrete evidence identified in Chapters 7–8 (and see also Chapters 10–12 below).

## 2.5 Assessment

Beginning with Matthew, we observed in Chapter 7 that a reference to the Gospel of Matthew itself is implied in *GTh* 13. If this is right, then in the case of Matthew at least we have some *literary* knowledge by *Thomas* of the work. A distinction should be drawn here, however, between knowing the Gospel and its title on the one hand, and knowing its contents on the other. Given the verdict on the disciple Matthew in *GTh* 13, it may seem unlikely that the author/editor of *Thomas* extracted his material *consciously* from the very Gospel whose apostolic patron *Thomas* has denigrated.

As a result, it may well be that the instances which reflect Matthew's influence have become a part of the oral memory of the tradents of the material that went on to form the *Gospel of Thomas*. In other words, the influence is a function of "secondary orality". There are some problems with this terminology,<sup>48</sup> but as long as it is understood what is meant by the phrase, it is still useful. (A better term might be "feedback", which is used in discussions of the influence of writing upon oral tradition more widely in the humanities.)<sup>49</sup> As far as Luke is concerned, we have no reason to suspect that the process is any different. Although *Thomas* does not show knowledge of "Luke" as an evangelist, the influence of Luke upon the memory behind *Thomas* still seems fairly clear.

<sup>48</sup> The reason why it is perhaps an inappropriate phrase is that when it was originally coined by Walter Ong in 1971, it applied not to the relationship between two pieces of literature but rather referred to a whole cultural mentality: pre-modern "primary orality" in contrast with modern "secondary orality". W.J. Ong, *Rhetoric, Romance and Technology: Studies in the Interaction of Expression and Culture* (Ithaca, NY/London: Cornell University Press, 1971), 20. Between these two epochs came the interposition of 'the individualised introversion of the age of writing, print, and rationalism' (285, where Ong also refers to his belief that he coined the phrases). See further Ong's *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word* (London/New York: Methuen, 1982), 136–8 and *passim*. Although not strictly a pre-modern vs modern contrast, Ong gives an informative illustration by way of a contrast between the hour-long speeches of the presidential debate between Lincoln and Douglas and the 'domesticated' contemporary debates (*Orality and Literacy*, 137). Secondary orality is a very wide cultural phenomenon 'with which we are going to have to live through the foreseeable future' (Ong, *Rhetoric*, 303).

<sup>49</sup> See e.g. D. Henige, *Oral Historiography* (London: Longman, 1982), 80–7, remarking especially on the "interference" of the Bible and the Qur'an where they influence local tradition; cf. Vansina, *Oral Tradition as History*, 156.

Although it may be the case that secondary orality is a historically plausible scenario, as well as being attractive in the current scholarly climate as an “inclusive” option which incorporates both literary and oral factors, it needs to be remembered that it is hypothetical. There is here a danger that the scholarly *horror vacui* longs for some explanation where in fact the answer is no longer accessible to us. It remains possible that the author/editor of *Thomas*, or of one or more of *Thomas*’s sources, had actually once read portions of Matthew and Luke in some form. R.H. Lightfoot is reputed to have said that every New Testament scholar should have a placard on his desk inscribed with the words, ‘We do not know.’ The means by which the Synoptic Gospels came to influence *Thomas* are yet another thing of which we are ignorant, and we should not forget the fact.

### 3 When in *Thomas*’s development?

Chapter 6 also raised the question of the stage at which the Synoptic Gospels could have influenced *Thomas*. If, after all, *Thomas* as we have it is the product of a lengthy development, then it is theoretically possible that the influence from canonical Gospels only emerges at a relatively late stage – even after the finished composition, during the process of textual transmission and/or translation.

In the first place, then, we can ask whether we can know with a reasonable degree of certainty whether Synoptic influence is exerted at the Greek stage. The answer to this question is almost certainly positive. As has been noted by Tuckett and Gregory, the apparent influence of Lukan redaction upon the *Greek* fragments of *GTh* 5 and 31 point in this direction. Again, there are the items of Greek syntax or vocabulary which turn up in the Greek fragments of *Thomas*, such as δεκτός, and the remarkable near-identical sequences in Greek *GTh* 26 and its Synoptic parallels. As such, Matthew’s and Luke’s influence on *Thomas* ‘as we have it’ is on Greek *Thomas*, not only on the Coptic translation. As far as interference from the NT at the Coptic stage is concerned, it is again worth noting the lack of evidence for this where we have Greek and Coptic text of *Thomas*. Similarly, it is noteworthy that if there was a good deal of assimilation to the NT in the later stages of *Thomas*’s transmission, we might expect – given the relative influence of Matthew’s Gospel – to find a preponderance of instances of *Matthean* redaction.<sup>50</sup> In fact, we have

<sup>50</sup> See Chapter 7, n. 2 on Matthew as the most influential Gospel in both “orthodox” second-century literature as well as in the Nag Hammadi texts.

found few of these by comparison with the number of cases of Lukan redaction.

We noted in Chapter 6 a further level of complexity, however, namely that since various scholars consider *Thomas* to be a product of stratified or accretive composition, the influence from the Synoptics may only have been exerted at a relatively late stage in *Thomas*'s compositional history. It is not the purpose here to debunk such developmental views of *Thomas*'s growth, though we have in Chapter 6 noted a number of problems and false assumptions underlying these views. What can be seen, however, is that such views of *Thomas* are no obstacle to recognising the importance of the Synoptics' influence. This is evident from the fact that the sayings exhibiting influence from the Synoptics predominate in what scholars who take developmental views generally see as the first stage, or core, of *Thomas*. Four scholars are taken here as a sample. Crossan is well known to have delineated very precisely what he sees as having constituted "Thomas I" and "Thomas II".<sup>51</sup> Arnal is wisely more cautious in not trying to apply a scheme to all *Thomas*'s sayings, though he does consider some as fairly clearly belonging to the earlier sapiential stratum, and others to the later, more gnostic stratum.<sup>52</sup> In contrast to Crossan's and Arnal's binary division, DeConick envisages a rather longer process of four main layers,<sup>53</sup> and Puig reckons on three (see Table 9.1).<sup>54</sup>

Clearly, then, as mentioned above, these theories of different layers are in themselves no bar to seeing the influence of the Synoptics. Certainly the dates would need to be reconsidered – it is hard, for example, to see Matthew and Luke as having influenced *Thomas* as early as DeConick and Crossan date the sayings in question! But if any of these stratification theories is correct, then the influence of Matthew and Luke is upon sayings which are generally attributed to the earliest phase of composition. The exception to this is *GTh* 13, which, perhaps because it is rather elaborate, is dated later by three out of four of the scholars above. (If it were

<sup>51</sup> J.D. Crossan, *The Historical Jesus: The Life of a Mediterranean Jewish Peasant* (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1991), 427, on *Thomas* I, which he considers complete 'by the fifties', and 430 on *Thomas* II (60–80 CE).

<sup>52</sup> W.E. Arnal, 'The Rhetoric of Marginality: Apocalypticism, Gnosticism, and Sayings Gospels', *HTR* 88 (1995), 471–94, gives only a list of what can be ascribed with confidence to the sapiential stratum (478 n. 17), and to the secondary 'gnostic stratum' (479 n. 32). He dates *Thomas* as a whole to the latter half of the first century (489 n. 70).

<sup>53</sup> DeConick, *Original Gospel of Thomas in Translation*, 10 for chart of material in respective strata.

<sup>54</sup> A. Puig, *Un Jesús desconocido: las claves del evangelio gnóstico de Tomás* (Barcelona: Ariel, 2008), 133–78 to see what he assigns to different strata. See pp. 116 and 121 for the dates: 100–110 CE for Tomás<sup>1</sup>; c. 150 for Tomás<sup>2-a</sup>. and 200 for Tomás<sup>2-b</sup>. For the purposes of the table, I have called the three different strata 1, 2 and 3, rather than 1, 2a and 2b.

Table 9.1

Stratum in:	Crossan	Arnal	DeConick	Puig
Saying				
<i>GTh</i> 13	1/2 (30–60 CE)	2/2	4/4 (80–120 CE)	3/3 (c.200 CE)
<i>GTh</i> 14.5	1/2 (30–60 CE)	1/2	3/4 (60–100 CE)	1/3 (100–110 CE)
<i>GTh</i> 44.2–3	1/2 (30–60 CE)		1/4 (30–50 CE)	1/3 (100–110 CE)
<i>GTh</i> 5.2	1/2 (30–60 CE)	1/2	1/4 (30–50 CE)	1/3 (100–110 CE)
<i>GTh</i> 31.1	1/2 (30–60 CE)	1/2	1/4 (30–50 CE)	1/3 (100–110 CE)
<i>GTh</i> 33.2–3	1/2 (30–60 CE)		1/4 (30–50 CE)	1/3 (100–110 CE)
<i>GTh</i> 47	1/2 (30–60 CE)	1/2	1/4 (30–50 CE)	1/3 (100–110 CE)
<i>GTh</i> 65	1/2 (30–60 CE)	1/2	1/4 (30–50 CE)	1/3 (100–110 CE)
<i>GTh</i> 66	1/2 (30–60 CE)		1/4 (30–50 CE)	1/3 (100–110 CE)
<i>GTh</i> 99	1/2 (30–60 CE)		1/4 (30–50 CE)	1/3 (100–110 CE)
<i>GTh</i> 104	1/2 (30–60 CE)		1/4 (30–50 CE)	1/3 (100–110 CE)

Key: e.g. ‘3/4’ = saying assigned to third of four putative compositional stages

the case that *GTh* 13, with its reference to “Matthew”, belonged to a late compositional phase, then one of the arguments discussed in Chapter 6 for *Thomas* post-dating the Synoptics – though only one – might become shakier.) As was argued in Chapter 6, an evolutionary view of *Thomas* is not necessarily correct in any case. Even if it is, the influence of the Synoptics must be reckoned to be significant all the same: the discussion above removes this potential barrier to the theory of Synoptic influence.

### Conclusion

Our conclusion here is a fairly simple one, namely that attempts to exclude the influence of the Synoptics from the *Gospel of Thomas* are unsuccessful. There is in *Thomas* what one might term “significant” influence identifiable from Matthew and Luke. The influence is significant not because the redactional elements (Matthean or Lukan editorial work) which appear in *Thomas* are remarkably extensive in any particular places, but rather because these redactional traces appear in eleven out of twenty sayings in which they might be identified.

The second and third sections of our conclusion here noted two further objections (in addition to those discussed already in Chapters 5 and 6 in particular) to the influence of Matthew and Luke. The latter concerned the stratified or accretive models of *Thomas*’s compositional history, but we observed that – at least as they have been discussed – such models were by no means incompatible with a view of significant influence from

the Synoptics upon *Thomas*. The former objection was made on the basis of *Thomas*'s oral character, but it was noted there that while *Thomas* may very well have employed oral sources, this cannot be used to exclude literary factors as well.

“Secondary orality” may be one way to avoid the overly scribal models of Synoptic influence on *Thomas* which were made by some scholars especially in the 1960s and 1970s, as well as the correspondingly simplistic understanding of *Thomas* as tapping into a “pure orality” uncontaminated by any literary influence. It should be remembered, however, that secondary orality is no more than a hypothesis; it could be that the redactional features from Matthew and Luke are merely reminiscences in the mind of *Thomas*'s author or editor from having read the canonical Gospels or parts thereof in some form, or that these redactional features influenced some of *Thomas*'s source material. In the end, we need to recognise the limits of our knowledge. While we may be reasonably confident about the “that” of Matthew's and Luke's influence upon *Thomas*, and indeed that this influence is significant, the “how” is much less accessible to us.

PART III

***Thomas and other early Christian literature***





PAUL AND THE *GOSPEL OF THOMAS***Introduction**

By comparison with the mountain of discussion of the *Gospel of Thomas* and the Synoptics, treatments of the relationship between *Thomas* and Paul have been very thin on the ground. Peter Nagel has devoted a few pages to the subject, and Christopher Skinner has written on the theme.<sup>1</sup> Stephen Patterson's 'Paul and the Jesus Tradition: It Is Time for Another Look' touches repeatedly on the matter, but his focus is not on Paul and *Thomas* per se,<sup>2</sup> but on Paul and the wider tradition of Jesus-sayings, of which he argues the *Gospel of Thomas* was early on an important part. As Patterson puts it: 'Using the *Gospel of Thomas* to broaden our general knowledge of the early Christian sayings tradition may provide ways of imagining how Paul could have arrived at his socially radical interpretation of the gospel even through the sayings tradition.'<sup>3</sup> Considering the number of books and articles with 'The *Gospel of Thomas* and ...' in the title, it is interesting that there is so little on Paul. The easiest explanation

<sup>1</sup> P. Nagel, 'Erwägungen zum Thomas-Evangelium', in F. Altheim and R. Stiehl, eds. *Die Araber in der alten Welt*, vol. V, pt 2 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1969), 368–92 (368–76) – I was unfortunately not aware of this discussion when writing 'Influence of Paul on the Gospel of Thomas'; C.W. Skinner, 'The Gospel of Thomas's Rejection of Paul's Theological Ideas', in M.F. Bird and J. Willitts, eds. *Paul and the Gospels: Christologies, Conflicts, and Convergences* (LNTS; London: T&T Clark, 2011), 220–41. Nagel considers Paul indebted to *Thomas* ('Erwägungen zum Thomas-Evangelium', 375); whereas Skinner is in general agreement with 'Influence of Paul on the Gospel of Thomas', he goes further in suggesting a rejection of Pauline ideas by *Thomas*: 'The authors of the *Gospel of Thomas* were familiar with certain Pauline ideas but ultimately rejected them as having any legitimacy for explaining the ongoing significance of identifying with Jesus through confession.'

<sup>2</sup> S.J. Patterson, 'Paul and the Jesus Tradition: It Is Time for Another Look', *HTR* 84 (1991), 23–41; R. Uro, *Thomas: Seeking the Historical Context of the Gospel of Thomas* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2003), has a three-page discussion of Paul and *Thomas* on "clothing" and "unclothing" (74–7). There is a parallel often drawn between *GTh* 29 and 1 Tim. 3.16. Grant and Freedman note some similarity, but rightly do not press the point: R.M. Grant and D.N. Freedman, *The Secret Sayings of Jesus* (New York: Doubleday, 1960), 148.

<sup>3</sup> Patterson, 'Paul and the Jesus Tradition', 35.

for this is that it is just assumed that there is nothing to say. Dassmann, for example, felt no need to *argue* for his view that, ‘das Thomasevangelium aus der Mitte des 2. Jahrhunderts lässt dagegen [i.e. as opposed to *G. Phil.*] jeden paulinischen Einfluss vermissen.’<sup>4</sup> Nevertheless, as *Thomas* might say, for those who have ears to hear, let them hear. This chapter aims to address this lacuna and to argue that the *Gospel of Thomas* is aware of at least one Pauline epistle.

As in the previous examples in Part II, we are looking here for the influence of Pauline language; as far as the present study is concerned, it is hard to identify any influence (positively or negatively) of Pauline theology, let alone the influence of a particular *Paulusbild*.<sup>5</sup> Nor will we be concerned with identifying more general thematic or conceptual similarities.<sup>6</sup>

There is of course a different approach required in this chapter, because one cannot straightforwardly employ a “redactional” approach in the case of Paul. In fact, each of the three passages in Paul which we shall explore shall be treated in a different way, and two of those three will employ a version of the redactional method. Our first example is a case of literary influence based on linguistic similarities and chronological factors (Rom. 2–3/*GTh* 3). The second and third cases, however, are judged to be instances of *Thomas*’s reception of Paul’s “redaction”, respectively redaction of Scripture (in Rom. 10.6–8/*GTh* 3) and of a traditional Jewish formula (1 Cor. 2.9/*GTh* 17), though this last example is less secure.

At the end of the chapter we will turn to address the character of the influence, as others have done with respect to Pauline influence upon other literature.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>4</sup> E. Dassmann, *Stachel im Fleisch: Paulus in der frühchristlichen Literatur bis Irenäus* (Münster: Aschendorff, 1979), 198–9. A possible relationship is not discussed in A. Lindemann, *Paulus im ältesten Christentum: Das Bild des Apostels und die Rezeption der paulinischen Theologie in der frühchristlichen Literatur bis Marcion* (BHT 58; Tübingen: Mohr, 1979).

<sup>5</sup> As discussed in relation to other first- and second-century works in Lindemann, *Paulus im ältesten Christentum*, 36–113, as well as A. Lindemann, ‘Paul in the Writings of the Apostolic Fathers’, in W.S. Babcock, ed. *Paul and the Legacies of Paul* (Dallas: Southern Methodist University Press, 1990), 25–45, and the useful response in M.C. de Boer, ‘Comment: Which Paul’ (Response to A. Lindemann), in W.S. Babcock, ed. *Paul and the Legacies of Paul* (Dallas: Southern Methodist University Press, 1990), 45–54 (53).

<sup>6</sup> Attempts to show correspondence in a loose sense between *Thomas* and Paul in these terms have tended to look at general atmospherics. See e.g. S.L. Davies, ‘The Christology and Protology of the Gospel of Thomas’, *JBL* 111 (1992), 663–82, on transformation in *Thomas* (‘not terribly different from the Pauline view’, 668), and the references to similarities to Paul on pp. 669 and 677.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. J. Carleton Paget, ‘Paul and the Epistle of Barnabas’, *NovT* 38 (1996), 359–81: ‘we must ask what we mean by Pauline influence’ (363). Carleton Paget raises further questions

Table 10.1

Romans 2.25–3.2	GTh 53
<p>For circumcision is an advantage (περιτομή ... ὠφέλει) if you do the Law. But if you are a transgressor of the Law, your circumcision (περιτομή) has become uncircumcision. Therefore if an uncircumcised person keeps the requirements of the Law, will not his uncircumcision be reckoned as circumcision (εἰς περιτομήν)? Then the uncircumcised person who fulfils the Law will judge you the transgressor of the Law, despite your having the written code and circumcision (περιτομῆς). For the one whose praise comes not from people but from God is neither the outward Jew nor outward circumcision (περιτομή), but the Jew in secret, and circumcision of the heart in the Spirit (περιτομή καρδίας ἐν πνεύματι) not in the letter.</p>	<p>His disciples said to him, ‘Is circumcision an advantage (πεῖβε ῥωφελει) or (η) not?’ He said to them, ‘If it were an advantage (μεῖρωφελει), father(s) would beget (children) by their mother(s) (already) circumcised (εἰςπεῖβη). Rather, true circumcision in the Spirit (πεῖβε ἦμε ρῖ πῖα) is entirely (τηρῖ) profitable.’</p>
<p>What therefore is the benefit of being a Jew? Or (ἦ) what is the advantage of circumcision (ἡ ὠφέλεια τῆς περιτομῆς)? Much in every (πάντα) way...!</p>	

## 1 Romans 2–3 and GTh 53

The clearest sign of Pauline influence on *Thomas* is probably that of Romans 2.25–3.2 on *GTh* 53. (See Table 10.1.)

which are pertinent here: ‘Are we simply looking for a few concepts that we take to be Pauline, or for a general outlook? If we are looking for concepts, what should these be, i.e. what concepts are exclusively Pauline? If we are looking for a general outlook, what does this outlook constitute? Is there a Pauline outlook? Should we rather proceed on the basis of similarities in wording between a given text and a verse we find in Paul? But even when we do discern a similarity in wording, could this be nothing more than evidence of a piece of Paul which has been mediated by a source/tradition to the author we are examining, rather than evidence of a direct usage of Pauline epistles?’ (Carleton Paget, ‘Paul and the Epistle of Barnabas’, 363; cf. also 361.)

Paul in Romans 2.25–9 asserts that circumcision only has any value if one obeys the law; indeed an uncircumcised Christian Gentile who fulfils the law will be in a better position than the Jewish transgressor. On the other hand, he shrinks from the prospect that Jewish identity and circumcision are useless, and so in Romans 3.1–2 he affirms the value he indeed sees in these privileges. *Thomas*, on the other hand, is more straightforwardly negative about circumcision, in continuity with its dialogues about new creation and resurrection in *GTh* 51 and Scripture in *GTh* 52: this discussion of circumcision continues the pattern of disciples' questions about traditional themes being answered in radical ways by Jesus.

### 1.1 The case for influence

Antti Marjanen has very helpfully collated the most important parallels to *GTh* 53 in the closing essay in *Thomas at the Crossroads*.<sup>8</sup> He notes particularly the challenges issued to Jews by one king Rufus (in Midrash Tanhuma) and by Justin Martyr (in the *Dialogue with Trypho*), to the effect that circumcision cannot be necessary or pleasing to God: if it were, people would be created or born already circumcised.<sup>9</sup> Marjanen mentions Romans 2 and 3,<sup>10</sup> and is particularly interested in Colossians 1 and the discussion of Spirit-circumcision in the *Odes of Solomon*.<sup>11</sup>

But it is the resemblances to Romans 2–3 which are really the most striking (see Table 10.2).<sup>12</sup>

First, it is noteworthy that the question raised by the disciples at the beginning of *GTh* 53 (τις βῶε ῥωφελεῖ ...) echoes the language of

<sup>8</sup> A. Marjanen, 'Thomas and Jewish Religious Practices', in R. Uro, ed. *Thomas at the Crossroads: Essays on the Gospel of Thomas* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1998), 163–83 (on *GTh* 53, see 178–80).

<sup>9</sup> Midrash Tanhuma B 7 (18a), on Lev. 12.2; Justin, *Dial.* 19.

<sup>10</sup> Marjanen, 'Thomas and Jewish Religious Practices', 179; Davies, 'Christology and Protology', 675 n. 22, also mentions the connection, perhaps implying that Paul is in some sense making use of *Thomas* here. Patterson raises the same possibility in 'Paul and the Jesus Tradition', 32.

<sup>11</sup> Marjanen, 'Thomas and Jewish Religious Practices', 179: 'With regard to some of the most crucial themes of *Thomas*, the most interesting parallels may be Col 2.11, in which circumcision by Christ is seen as "putting off the body of flesh," and *Odes Sol.* 11.1-7'.

<sup>12</sup> The differences among the variant readings in Rom. 2.25–3.2 are insignificant as far as the argument here is concerned. In 2.25, all the Greek witnesses cited in Swanson include περιτομή ... ὠφελεῖ, though there is variation in the spelling of ὠφελεῖ. In 2.29, the witnesses cited in Swanson all have περιτομή καρδίας ἐν πνεύματι, except for G which omits the ἐν. The same is true of 3.1, with the following exceptions: 1242 and 1827 have καί instead of ἤ; 1243 has τις τομῆς for τις ἡ ὠφέλεια τῆς περιτομῆς, and there are frequently different spellings of ὠφέλεια. See R. Swanson, ed. *New Testament Greek Manuscripts: Variant Readings Arranged in Horizontal Lines against Codex Vaticanus: Romans* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2001), 31–4.

Table 10.2

Romans 2–3	<i>GTh</i> 53
2.25 περιτομή ... ὠφέλει	53.1 πεχαϳ ναϳ ἡ̅σι νεϳμαθη̅τῃς ϳε
3.1 ... ἢ τίς ἢ ὠφέλεια τῆς περιτομῆς;	πε̅ββε̅ ϱ̅ω̅φ̅ε̅λ̅ει̅ ἢ ἡ̅μον
(further instances of περιτομή in 2.26, 27, 28)	53.2 πεχαϳ̅ ναϳ ϳε νεϳϱ̅ω̅φ̅ε̅λ̅ει̅ νε ποϳειω̅τ̅ ναϳποοϳ εβολ ϳ̅ἡ̅ τοϳμαϳ εϳ̅ϳ̅β̅β̅η̅ϳ̅
2.29 περιτομή καρδίας ἐν πνεύματι	53.3 ἀλλὰ πε̅ββε̅ ἡ̅με ϳ̅ἡ̅π̅ἡ̅να̅
3.2 πολὺ κατὰ πάντα τρόπον.	αϳϳ̅ἡ̅ ϳ̅η̅ϳ̅ τη̅ρϳ̅

‘circumcision’ and ὠφέλεια (‘benefit’, ‘advantage’) at the beginning of Romans 3 and in Romans 2.25 (as does the νεϳϱ̅ω̅φ̅ε̅λ̅ει̅ ... εϳ̅ϳ̅β̅β̅η̅ϳ̅ in Jesus’ reply). The word ‘or’ (ἢ, ἡ̅) also features, with the Coptic using the Greek loanword. Second, it is again surprising that there is such a similarity in the language between *GTh* 53.3 and the verse which precedes Romans 3.1. Both *GTh* 53.3 and Romans 2.29 talk of ‘circumcision ... in the Spirit’. Each author inserts a further modifier in between these two elements: in Paul’s case, ‘circumcision *of the heart* in the Spirit’, and in that of *Thomas*, ‘the circumcision *of truth* in the Spirit’. The key point which again indicates a connection with Paul is the common language of ‘circumcision ... in the Spirit’. *Thomas* and Paul give rather different answers to this question about the value of circumcision. Nevertheless, the shared vocabulary between them here is a factor which leads one to suspect an influence in one direction or the other:

*Shared vocabulary:*

πε̅ββε̅ ( <i>GTh</i> 53.1)	... τῆς περιτομῆς (Rom. 3.1)
ϱ̅ω̅φ̅ε̅λ̅ει̅ (53.1)	ὠφέλεια ... (Rom. 3.1)
(cf. 53.2: νεϳϱ̅ω̅φ̅ε̅λ̅ει̅ ... εϳ̅ϳ̅β̅β̅η̅ϳ̅)	
ἢ (53.1)	ἡ̅ (Rom. 3.1)
πε̅ββε̅ (53.3)	περιτομή (Rom. 2.29; cf. 2.25–8)
ϳ̅ἡ̅ (53.3)	ἐν (Rom. 2.29)
π̅ἡ̅να̅ (53.3)	πνεύματι (Rom. 2.29)

Romans 2.29 and 3.1 are of course consecutive verses.

Thirdly, the *forms* of *GTh* 53 and Romans 3.1–2 are significant here. The shared question-and-answer format in each case is important because it means that we are not merely dealing with a common motif which is likely to be attributable to a shared tradition. Rather, *GTh* 53 appears

here to have been shaped by Paul's *rhetoric* (or – not to prejudge the issue at this stage – vice versa): in both places there is a *question-and-answer* on the subject of the value of circumcision.

Finally, a faint connection may exist between Paul's affirmation of the great value of circumcision in the phrase *πολὸν κατὰ πάντα τρόπον* and *Thomas's* affirmation of the great value of spiritual circumcision in the *ἄρσῃ γῆγ τῆρῆ* which concludes the logion. But this is not as significant as the question about circumcision's profit and circumcision in (the) Spirit. In sum, then, we have this shared vocabulary, as well as, second, the shared framing of the discussion in a question-and-answer format further suggesting an influence from one to the other.

## 1.2 Direction of influence

But what about the question of the direction of the influence? In short, there is a high degree of probability that Paul is influencing *Thomas* here. We can recall that in Paul, there is a criticism of reliance on circumcision, but that circumcision and being Jewish are regarded as advantageous “much in every way”. In *Thomas*, on the other hand, there is fairly unambiguous criticism of circumcision as useless. One reason, then, for seeing Paul as earlier and *Thomas* as later is that it is more likely that the outright rejection of circumcision is a later phenomenon than the more qualified position expressed by Paul. The view advocated in *Thomas* would be most likely to come to expression in a milieu which was strongly critical of Jewish practice, and which – more strikingly still – had constructed a portrait of Jesus on these lines. Although it is difficult to generalise about dates and times here, this would seem to be a post-Pauline phenomenon. The formulation of the circumcision discussion fits well with the “post-Jewish” Jesus on offer throughout *Thomas* (cf. *GTh* 6, 14, 52). On the basis of the evidence we have, such a portrait of Jesus is unlikely to have been constructed before 56–7 CE when *Romans* is written, a mere generation after Jesus' ministry.

Second, it is difficult to imagine the influence taking place in the opposite direction. If the conventional date of *Romans* to 56–7 CE is anywhere near correct, it is hard to find a scholar who takes the view that this saying in *Thomas* pre-dates *Romans*. Even those such as Crossan and DeConick who reckon on a very early composition of a core *Thomas* consider this saying to be a later addition.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>13</sup> See e.g. J.D. Crossan, *The Historical Jesus: The Life of a Mediterranean Jewish Peasant* (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1991), 446, assigning it to the second stratum of *Thomas*, dated to 60–80 CE; A.D. DeConick, *The Original Gospel of Thomas in*

### 1.3 Level of probability

What level of probability should we assign to the likelihood of influence here? The Oxford dons who in 1905 produced *The New Testament in the Apostolic Fathers* used the letters a, b, c and d to classify probability of use as follows:

- a: 'no reasonable doubt'
- b: 'a high degree of probability'
- c: 'a lower degree of probability'
- d: 'may possibly be referred to, but ... the evidence appeared too uncertain to allow any reliance to be placed upon it'.<sup>14</sup>

I would recommend that "b" is a reasonable classification of the probability of the influence of Romans here, perhaps even an "a"!

## 2 Romans 10.7 and *GTh* 3

As far as I am aware, it is also the case that no one has yet argued that Romans 10 is part of the inspiration for *Thomas*.<sup>15</sup> Or, to put it more precisely: that Paul's use of Deuteronomy 30 in Romans 10 lies behind *Thomas*'s use of Deuteronomy 30, such that the reception in *Thomas* is mediated through the reception in Paul. In this sense, the "redactional method" used in Part II is in play: we are looking at *Thomas*'s reception of Paul's redaction of Deuteronomy. The pattern Deuteronomy→Paul→*GTh* mirrors the previously examined patterns Mark→Matthew→*GTh* and Mark→Luke→*GTh*. (See Table 10.3.)

In the Greek text of *GTh* 3, Jesus prepares his disciples for a possible confrontation with enemies, who are imagined as enforcing two absurd views of the kingdom – that the kingdom is up in the heavens/sky, or that it is under the earth. A number of scholars have already suggested

*Translation: With a Commentary and New English Translation of the Complete Gospel* (LNTS 287; London/New York: T&T Clark International, 2006), 10, refers to the saying as an accretion from between 60–100 CE.

<sup>14</sup> A Committee of the Oxford Society of Historical Theology, *The New Testament in the Apostolic Fathers* (Oxford: Clarendon 1905), iii. See p. iv for the use of lower-case letters.

<sup>15</sup> T.F. Glasson, 'The Gospel of Thomas, Saying 3, and Deuteronomy xxx. 11-14', *ExpT* 78 (1967), 151–2, raises the question, but does not answer it: 'Has Paul's version any connexion with the words which appear in the Oxyrhynchus Greek fragment but are absent from the Coptic: "what under the earth"?' (152 n. 1). Nagel considers Paul to have known the *Thomas* saying here ('Erwägungen zum Thomas-Evangelium', 371), but his observations demonstrate the considerable similarities between *Thomas*'s and Paul's versions, rather than dependence in one direction or the other.

Table 10.3

Romans 10.6–8	<i>GTh</i> 3 <sup>i</sup>
But the righteousness of faith says, ‘Do not say (μὴ εἶπης) in your heart,	Je[sus] says, ‘[if] those who take us (or you?) away [say to you]:
“Who will ascend into heaven (εἰς τὸν οὐρανόν)?” (that is, to bring Christ down)	“[Behold,] the kingdom is in heav[en] (ἐν οὐρα[νῶ])”, then the birds of [hea]ven (τοῦ οὐρανοῦ) [will precede you.]
or	[But if they say th]at
“Who will descend into the abyss (εἰς τὴν ἄβυσσον)?” (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead). <sup>ii</sup>	it is under the earth (ὕπὸ τὴν γῆν), then the fish of the sea (οἱ ἰχθύες τῆς θαλάσσης) [will go first and enter it ahead] of you.
But what does it say? ‘The word is near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart (ἐγγύς σου ... ἐν τῷ στόματί σου καὶ ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ σου),’ that is, the word of faith we are proclaiming.	But the kin[gdom of God/heaven] is inside you (ἐντὸς ὑμῶν) [and outside of you].’

<sup>i</sup> The English translation is from the Greek, with restorations on the basis of the Coptic.

<sup>ii</sup> All the witnesses cited in Swanson have the phrase which is important for our purposes, εἰς τὴν ἄβυσσον, though with a variety of spellings of ἄβυσσον. See Swanson, *New Testament Greek Manuscripts: Romans*, 156.

reference to Deuteronomy 30 here, which is not to discount other influences.<sup>16</sup> The ‘not up in heaven, not in the sea under the earth, but within you’ triad here in *Thomas* is strikingly similar to the ‘not up in heaven, not across the sea, but very near you’ triad in Deuteronomy 30.

The question becomes: does *Thomas* employ Deuteronomy in a reasonably direct way, or is Deuteronomy 30 mediated to *Thomas* through a pre-existing interpretative tradition? The contention here is that the Pauline interpretation of Deuteronomy 30 shapes *Thomas*’s use of the passage.

<sup>16</sup> See Glasson, ‘The Gospel of Thomas, Saying 3’, 151–2; J.-É. Ménard, ‘La Sagesse et le logion 3 de l’Évangile selon Thomas’, in F.L. Cross, ed. *Studia Patristica*, vol. x, *Papers Presented to the Fifth International Conference on Patristic Studies Held in Oxford, 1967* (TU 107; Berlin: Akademie, 1970), 137–40. Chief among these ‘other influences’ is Luke 17.20–1, also linked with Deuteronomy 30 by Tertullian, in *Against Marcion* 4.35. The connection is noted in Glasson, ‘Gospel of Thomas, Saying 3’, 152.



## 2.1 The abyss under the earth in the sea

The reason for this is the way *Thomas* talks of the region ‘under the earth’ where the fish live. Deuteronomy has, and its pre-Pauline interpretations all retain, a contrast between ‘up in heaven’ and ‘across the sea’. Paul and *Thomas*, however, both incorporate a small change. Both contrast the heaven above with what is *below*.<sup>17</sup> Paul calls it the ‘abyss’, and presumes that it is the region where the dead reside: it is the place from which you might at least imagine ‘bringing Christ up from the dead’. *Thomas* calls it the region ‘under the earth’, where the fish are. These are the same place – not across the sea as in Deuteronomy, Baruch and Philo (see the synopsis below), but in the *tehom* under the earth, where people sleep with the fishes. As Richard Bauckham has argued, the dead in the sea in early Jewish and Christian traditions are not merely those who have died at sea: there is a close association of ‘the subterranean ocean with Sheol (e.g. 2 Sam 22:5-6; Job 26:5; Ps 69:15; Jon 2; Rev. 20.13)’.<sup>18</sup> In conclusion, then, Paul and *Thomas* alone share this idea of reinterpreting Deuteronomy’s contrast as between heaven and the abyss (see Table 10.4).

So the works prior to, and nearly contemporaneous with, Paul and *Thomas* (LXX Deuteronomy; Baruch; Philo) consistently take a different view from these two. One could speculate about a shared tradition on which Paul and *Thomas* are both drawing, but there is not enough evidence to support this.<sup>19</sup> It is of course also possible that Paul and *Thomas*

<sup>17</sup> For the commonplace of the abyss as the source of the seas, see e.g. *As. Mos.* 10.6.

<sup>18</sup> See R.J. Bauckham, ‘Resurrection as Giving Back the Dead: A Traditional Image of Resurrection in the Pseudepigrapha and the Apocalypse of John’, in J.H. Charlesworth and C.A. Evans, eds. *The Pseudepigrapha and Early Biblical Interpretation* (Studies in Scripture in Early Judaism and Christianity 2; JSPSS 14; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993), 269–91 (280–1 on this point), with reference also (pp. 272–3) to Tertullian’s citation of an apocryphon which links fish and the place of the dead (*On the Resurrection of the Flesh* 32).

<sup>19</sup> A number of commentators draw parallels between Paul and *Targum Neofiti* to Deuteronomy 30 (e.g. J.D.G. Dunn, *Romans* (WBC; Waco, TX: Word, 1988) II, 604): ‘Nor is the Law beyond the Great Sea, that one should say: “Would that we had one like Jonah the prophet who would descend into the depths of the Great Sea and bring it up for us, and make us hear the commandments that we may do them.”’ *Targum Neofiti* thus does refer to a going down into ‘the great sea’. McNamara thinks this is the Abyss, rather than the Mediterranean (M. McNamara, tr. *Targum Neofiti 1: Deuteronomy: Translated with Apparatus and Notes* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1997), 141). However, all references in the OT (with one possible exception) use ‘the great sea’ as a name for the Mediterranean: it is not a mythological, but a geographical entity. J. Goldingay, *Daniel* (WBC; Waco, TX: Word, 1991), 160: “‘the Great Sea’ elsewhere [*sc.* outside of Dan. 7.2] always denotes the Mediterranean; it is a standard title for it.’ It occurs in Numbers, Joshua and Ezekiel, almost always as the western boundary of the land. Only Daniel 7.2 has a visionary setting, and

Table 10.4

LXX Deuteronomy 30.13	Baruch 3.30	<i>Post.</i> 84–85	Romans 10.7	<i>GTh</i> 3
It is not <i>across the sea</i> , for one to say, ‘ <i>Who will cross for us to the end of the sea</i> and get it for us and make it audible for us so that we should do it?’	<i>Who has passed across the sea and found her</i> , and will get her with choice gold?	For it is not necessary, he says, to fly up to heaven <i>nor to arrive across the sea</i> for the pursuit of the good.	Or, <i>who will go down into the abyss?</i> – that is, to bring Christ up from the dead.	If they say that it is <i>under the earth, the fish of the sea will reach it</i> before you and enter.

independently came to the same interpretation of Deuteronomy 30, but coincidence is something of which scholars are conventionally suspicious. This leaves us with a reasonable probability of influence in one direction or another.

## 2.2 The direction of influence

So which is more likely to have developed this use of Deuteronomy 30 first, Romans or *Thomas*? The serious shortage of any independent use of the Old Testament in *Thomas* suggests that *Thomas* is probably secondary here. Paul’s letters, on the other hand, are positively dripping with references to the closing chapters of Deuteronomy, not least in the remainder of Romans 10 (Deut. 32.21 in Rom. 10.19), and into Romans 11 (Deut. 29.4 in Rom. 11.8). Then Romans 12 cites Deuteronomy 32 (Deut. 32.35 in Rom. 12.19), and Romans 15 cites Deuteronomy 32 (Deut. 32.43 in Rom. 15.10) — and these are only the actual quotations: there are several other allusions as well.<sup>20</sup> Paul, then, has first-hand, intimate knowledge

even here elements in the vision are often rather mundane (though of course their significance is not). As a result Goldingay and other commentators take the reference to be the Mediterranean here in Daniel 7.2 too. So in *Targum Neofiti* we almost certainly have Jonah going down to the depths of the Mediterranean. This may have a slightly mythological ring to it, but this is not certain, and there is no reference to ‘under the earth’. *Targum Neofiti* is moreover much too late to be assumed as current in the times of Paul and *Thomas*.

<sup>20</sup> See now G.P. Waters, *The End of Deuteronomy in the Epistles of Paul* (WUNT 2; Tübingen: Mohr, 2006), and further D. Lincicum, *Paul and the Early Jewish Encounter with Deuteronomy* (Tübingen: Mohr, 2010).

of Deuteronomy, but the same cannot be said for the author of *Thomas*. As such, there cannot be much doubt about the influence being that of Paul on *Thomas*, rather than the other way round.

Additionally, to suppose that *Thomas* influences Paul here would mean something like the following: Deuteronomy 30 made an impression on the author of *Thomas*; *Thomas* then thoroughly reworked Deuteronomy 30, changing much of the language and adapting the existing contrast to one which opposed heaven and the abyss, perhaps for cosmological reasons. Then Paul, coming across a sayings tradition which included something like *GTh* 3 adopted the saying, *but then reintroduced some of the Deuteronomic elements which the sayings tradition had dropped*. The economy of supposing Pauline influence on *Thomas* means that one need not resort to elements being dropped and then later reintroduced.

### 2.3 Level of probability

Going back to our classifications of probability, this example cannot be assigned an “a” grade, and perhaps not even a “b”, though “c” – a good sporting chance, though lesser probability than in the case of saying 53 – is probably reasonable.

## 3 1 Corinthians 2.9 and *GTh* 17

But as it is written: ‘What eye has not seen and ear has not heard and has not ascended into the heart of man, what God has prepared for those who love him — God has revealed to us by his Spirit.’ (1 Cor. 2.9–10)<sup>21</sup>

Jesus said, ‘I will give to you what eye has not seen and what ear has not heard and what no hand has touched, and what has not entered into the hearts of men.’ (*GTh* 17)

Paul’s statement in 1 Corinthians 2.9 is one of a series of “not X but Y” statements in the argument from 1 Corinthians 1.18 to 2.16: *previously*

<sup>21</sup> As might be expected, there are a number of variant readings in 1 Cor. 2.9. Differences of spelling can be found in P46 (οὐχ for οὐκ), for example. There are several different spellings of εἶδε(ν), ἠτοίμασεν and ἀγαπῶσιν. καί and οὐδέ appear for each other at various points in the manuscript tradition. For the first ἄ, a few manuscripts have ὄ or ἦν; the second ἄ is replaced by ὅσα in a number of very early texts. Again, however, in no case is there a substantive change of the sort which would affect the argument here. See R. Swanson, ed. *New Testament Greek Manuscripts: Variant Readings Arranged in Horizontal Lines against Codex Vaticanus: 1 Corinthians* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2003), 24–5.

no one could witness what God has *now* revealed and given out, and furthermore, the eyes, ears and minds of this sign-dependent, wisdom-obsessed, God-ignorant, rich, powerful, wise, rhetorically driven world and its rulers are constitutionally incapable of grasping what God has purposed to be grasped by the weak, foolish, believing elect when they are confronted by the gospel of Christ crucified, authenticated by the power of the Spirit.<sup>22</sup> *GTh* 17 on the other hand, which does not receive much illumination from neighbouring sayings, is focused primarily on asserting the uniqueness of Jesus' own revelation and the privileged status of its recipients (and not so much on the intangibility of revelation).<sup>23</sup>

These differences aside, there is also considerable common ground between Paul and *Thomas* at this point. Both use this formula to refer to what God/Jesus gives to those who have been chosen. The content of 'what eye has not seen' etc. is *saving revelation* in both cases. This saving revelation, not discernible by earthly means, is now made known by God.

### 3.1 A pre-Christian formula behind 1 Corinthians 2.9 and *GTh* 17

To come to the relation between 1 Corinthians 2.9 and *GTh* 17, there is already consensus that there is a relationship of some kind: the question is of what kind.<sup>24</sup> Already in 1889, obviously well before the discovery of the Coptic text in which *GTh* 17 first appears, Alfred Resch had

<sup>22</sup> Contrary to those who see Paul as quoting a Corinthian catchphrase, then, it is apparent that the statement is entirely in line with what Paul is arguing in 1 Cor. 2 (*pace* Patterson, 'Paul and the Jesus Tradition', 37).

<sup>23</sup> This is recognised by I. Dunderberg, 'Thomas' I-Sayings and the Gospel of John', in R. Uro, ed. *Thomas at the Crossroads: Essays on the Gospel of Thomas* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1998), 33–64 (45). The reason for this is twofold: (1) the reference to 'heart' does not fit very well into an argument for the intangibility of revelation, and (2) *GTh* 17 understood along these lines has a good parallel in *GTh* 38: 'Jesus said, "Many times have you desired to hear these words which I am saying to you, and you have no one else to hear them from."'

<sup>24</sup> We will ignore here the additional complication of the possible relation between 1 John 1.1–4 and *Thomas* 17. On this, see T. Onuki, 'Traditionsgeschichte von Thomas 17 und ihre christologische Relevanz', in Onuki, *Heil und Erlösung: Studien zum Neuen Testament und Gnosis* (WUNT 165; Tübingen: Mohr, 2004), 221–39 (233–6), and the response in I. Dunderberg, 'John and Thomas in Conflict', in J.D. Turner and A. McGuire, *The Nag Hammadi Library after Fifty Years: Proceedings of the 1995 Society of Biblical Literature Commemoration* (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 361–80 (365–70), which helpfully notes the possible connection with *Mur. Frag.* 29–31, though the latter is probably just indebted straightforwardly to 1 John.

proposed that 1 Corinthians 2.9 had good claim to be a dominical saying. The arrival of *GTh* 17 then prompted Helmut Koester to conclude that it 'belongs to the tradition of wisdom sayings of Jesus',<sup>25</sup> indeed, to 'a version of Q' which is 'very primitive'.<sup>26</sup> Patterson, without commenting on the authenticity of the saying, remarks that 'Paul quotes a saying from the *Gospel of Thomas*'.<sup>27</sup>

However, in 1900 Henry St John Thackeray had already observed that Pseudo-Philo preserves something very like 1 Corinthians 2.9, and this fact complicates the situation considerably. Both seem to contain the same combination of phrases from Isaiah 64 and 65. As a result, Pseudo-Philo's reference and Paul's quotation taken together strongly suggest that the Isaianic phrases in question had already been assembled as a pre-Christian scriptural formula, as Thackeray recognised.<sup>28</sup> Pre-Christian Judaism, then, rather than Jesus, should probably be seen as the ultimate source of the formula.<sup>29</sup> The earliest uses are set out in Table 10.5.

The strong impression from this evidence, then, is that already in the mid first century CE Isaiah 64.3 and 65.16 had coalesced together to form a scriptural formula. This is then picked up and used by Pseudo-Philo and Paul, presumably independently.

What happens next? The formula has relatively little impact on Rabbinic Judaism, but there is enormous enthusiasm for it in post-Pauline Christianity. But is this due to Paul's influence? Various scholars have assumed a positive answer to this question,<sup>30</sup> but while convincing arguments have certainly been made for the secondary character of *Thomas*'s version (in contrast to Paul's preservation of the scriptural formula fairly intact), this is not in itself sufficient to demonstrate influence.

<sup>25</sup> H. Koester, 'The Structure and Criteria of Early Christian Beliefs', in J.M. Robinson and Koester, *Trajectories through Early Christianity* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1971), 205–31 (227).

<sup>26</sup> H. Koester, 'One Jesus and Four Primitive Gospels', in J.M. Robinson and Koester, *Trajectories through Early Christianity* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1971), 158–204 (186).

<sup>27</sup> Patterson, 'Paul and the Jesus Tradition', 36.

<sup>28</sup> He was followed in this view by M.R. James. H.St.J. Thackeray, *The Relation of St Paul to Contemporary Jewish Thought* (London: Macmillan, 1900), 240–1, cited in M.R. James, *The Biblical Antiquities of Philo* (London: SPCK, 1917), 157 n. 13.

<sup>29</sup> This cannot be regarded as a knock-down certainty, since it is at least possible that the formula crept into the manuscript tradition some time after the original composition of *LAB*. This question does not seem to have been raised in regard to *LAB* 26.13, but it is noteworthy that the formula does find its way into *Asc. Isa.* 11.34 at a probably somewhat late stage, only appearing in the second Latin version and a Slavonic translation.

<sup>30</sup> It is implied in e.g. J.-É. Ménard, *L'Évangile selon Thomas: introduction, traduction, commentaire* (NHS 5; Leiden: Brill, 1975), 105.

Table 10.5

LXX Isaiah 64, 65	LAB 26.13	1 Corinthians 2.9	1 Clem. 34.8	GTh 17
		ἀλλὰ καθὼς γέγραπται·	λέγει γάρ·	πεχε ιϛ χε †ηα† ηητη̄
<sup>64.3b</sup> οὐδὲ οἱ ὀφθαλμοὶ ἡμῶν εἶδον θεὸν πλὴν σοῦ καὶ τὰ ἔργα σου	<i>quod oculus non uidit</i>	ἃ ὀφθαλμὸς οὐκ εἶδεν	ὀφθαλμὸς οὐκ εἶδεν	ἦπετε ἦπε βαλ ναγ εροῖ
<sup>64.3a</sup> οὐκ ἤκούσαμεν	<i>nec auris audiuit,</i>	καὶ οὐς οὐκ ἤκουσεν	καὶ οὐς οὐκ ἤκουσεν	αγω πετε ἦπε ηααχε σοτημεῖ  αγω πετε ἦπε σιχ σησωμηῖ
<sup>65.16</sup> [καὶ οὐκ ἀνάβησεται αὐτῶν ἐπὶ τὴν καρδίαν], cf. 65.17.	<i>et in cor hominis non ascendit ...</i>	καὶ ἐπὶ καρδίαν ἀνθρώπου οὐκ ἀνέβη,	καὶ ἐπὶ καρδίαν ἀνθρώπου οὐκ ἀνέβη,	αγω ἦπεῖει εηραῖ ρη φητ ῤρωμε
<sup>64.3c</sup> ἃ ποιήσεις τοῖς ὑπομένουσιν ἔλεον.		ἃ ἠτοίμασεν ὁ θεὸς τοῖς ἀγαπῶσιν αὐτόν ...	ὅσα ἠτοίμασεν τοῖς ὑπομένουσιν αὐτόν.	

Before constructing the case for influence, however, we will rehearse these secondary features in *Thomas*.<sup>31</sup>

### 3.2 Secondary features in *Thomas*

First, *Thomas*'s “plus” – the reference to ‘what no hand has touched’ has only survived in Manichaean texts. Turfan fragment M 789 preserves a version as follows: ‘I will give you what you have not seen with the eye, nor heard with the ears, nor grasped with the hand.’<sup>32</sup> But since we know

<sup>31</sup> For the best explanation of these features, see C.M. Tuckett, ‘Paul and Jesus Tradition: The Evidence of 1 Corinthians 2:9 and Gospel of Thomas 17’, in T.J. Burke, ed. *Paul and the Corinthians: Studies on a Community in Conflict: Essays in Honour of Margaret Thrall* (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 55–73.

<sup>32</sup> Turfan Fragment M 789, translated in W. Schneemelcher, *New Testament Apocrypha*, vol. I, *Gospels and Related Writings* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1991), 403. The text can be found in F.W.K. Müller, ‘Handschriften-Reste in Estrangelo-Schrift aus Turfan 2’, *Abhandlungen der Preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften* (1904), *Anhang*,

that *Thomas* was known to and used by the Manichaeans, this scarcely has any independent value.<sup>33</sup> On the other hand, if *Thomas*'s version had been original, we might have expected his version to have a wider distribution. But since it does not, it looks very much like *Thomas*'s version (with the hands) is secondary.

Second, *Thomas*'s attribution of the statement to Jesus is very likely to be a secondary modification. We have noted that the roughly Isaianic formula with which we are dealing has more or less solid scriptural credentials by the time Paul writes 1 Corinthians in the middle of the first century CE. The next stage, in which the statement is placed in the mouth of Jesus, becomes comprehensible when we observe a number of instances of scriptural quotations being subsequently attributed to him. Trevijano's little-known article contributes the important evidence of the Epistle to the Hebrews on this point.<sup>34</sup> Statements such as 'I will tell of your name to my brothers' (Ps. 22.22), 'I will put my trust in him' (Ps. 18.2), 'Sacrifices and offerings you have not desired, but a body you have prepared for me ... Behold I have come to do your will' (Ps. 40.6–8) are placed in Hebrews on the lips of Jesus. In the second century, Justin does the same with 'I have spread out my hands to a disobedient and obstinate people' (Isa. 65.2) and 'I gave my back to those

*Phil-Hist. Abh., Abh.* II, 68; cf. M 551 (II, pp. 67–8). The text is republished in the more accessible M.E. Stone and J. Strugnell, *The Books of Elijah: Parts 1–2* (Missoula, MT: Society of Biblical Literature, 1979), 42–73 (55, 57). See also discussions in the articles by Nagel and Funk mentioned in the next footnote.

<sup>33</sup> On the use of *Thomas* in Manichaean literature, see E. Hammerschmidt, 'Das Thomasevangelium und die Manichäer', *OrChr* 46 (1962), 120–3; P.A. Mirecki, 'Coptic Manichaean Psalm 278 and Gospel of Thomas 37', in A. van Tongerloo and S. Giversen, eds. *Manichaica Selecta: Studies Presented to Professor Julien Ries on the Occasion of His Seventieth Birthday* (Manichaean Studies 1; Leuven: International Association of Manichaean Studies and the Centre of the History of Religions, 1991) 243–62; H.-J. Klimkeit, 'Apocryphal Gospels in Central and East Asia', in Klimkeit and M. Heuser, eds. *Studies in Manichaean Literature and Art* (NHMS 46; Leiden: Brill, 1999), 189–211; W.-P. Funk, "'Einer aus tausend, zwei aus zehntausend": Zitate aus dem Thomasevangelium in den koptischen Manichaica', in H.-G. Bethge, S. Emmel, K.L. King and I. Schletterer, eds. *For the Children, Perfect Instruction: Studies in Honor of Hans-Martin Schenke: on the Occasion of the Berliner Arbeitskreis für koptisch-gnostische Schriften's Thirtieth Year* (NHMS 54; Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2002), 67–94; P. Nagel, 'Synoptische Evangelientraditionen im Thomasevangelium und im Manichäismus', in J. Frey, J. Schröter and E.E. Popkes, eds. *Das Thomasevangelium: Entstehung – Rezeption – Theologie* (BZNW 157; Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2008), 272–93. Also noteworthy is M. Grosso, 'Ἀόγοι Ἀπόκρυφοί: aspetti della ricezione del Vangelo secondo Tommaso nel cristianesimo antico' (PhD, University of Turin, 2007), 277–304, and NB Grosso's list on p. 303, which expands considerably the number of possible influences of *GTh* upon Manichaean literature.

<sup>34</sup> R. Trevijano Etcheverría, 'La valoración de los dichos no canónicos: el caso de 1 Cor. 2.9 y Ev.Tom log. 17', in E.A. Livingstone, ed. *Studia Patristica*, vol. XXIV, *Historica, theologica et philosophica, cnostica* (Leuven: Peeters, 1993), 406–14 (410).

who strike, and my cheeks to those who pull out the beard' (Isa. 50.6), along with several other passages in the same section.<sup>35</sup> In contrast, as Tuckett notes, Patterson offers no documentation for his assumption that the reverse process – a Jesus saying becoming scriptural – 'reflects the sort of differences one would expect to have resulted from oral transmission'.<sup>36</sup> So the likelihood is that 'what no eye has seen, no ear has heard' etc. is first a loosely scriptural formula, and then secondarily attributed to Jesus.<sup>37</sup>

### 3.3 Pauline influence on *Thomas*?

If the form of the saying in *Thomas* has secondary features when compared with the version of the statement in 1 Corinthians 2, does this mean that *Thomas* is influenced by Paul here? This is less certain.<sup>38</sup> *Thomas* could be drawing on the tradition independently of Paul — the formula is after all very widely attested in the second century.<sup>39</sup>

However, there is one neglected factor which is relevant here. Perhaps because most scholars are so familiar with the Pauline and Thomasine contexts of the formula in question, it has been assumed that the formula's natural home is in discussions of the hidden or inaccessible now being revealed or becoming available to be received, in a soteriological context. Nevertheless, in the pre-Pauline contexts of the formula this is actually not the case.

As we have seen, Isaiah 64 and 65 (especially the former) provide the raw materials for our formula. However, the context here has nothing to

<sup>35</sup> Justin, *I Apol.* 38.

<sup>36</sup> Patterson, 'Paul and the Jesus Tradition', 37, criticised in Tuckett, 'Paul and Jesus Tradition', 55–73 (67 n. 40).

<sup>37</sup> Onuki's conclusion that the christological nature of both *GTh* 17 and *Mart. Petr.* 19 (*Ac. Petr.* 39) points to the early existence of a pool of Jesus tradition does not follow: see Onuki, 'Traditionsgeschichte von Thomas 17', 227.

<sup>38</sup> Nevertheless, Nagel's argument for Paul's dependence upon *Thomas* is unlikely ('Erwägungen zum Thomas-Evangelium', 376). The view that the tricolon of eye-ear-heart is Paul's redaction of *Thomas*'s version with four (including 'hand') is rendered unlikely in the light of (1) the Jewish parallel in *LAB*, and (2) the relative lack of survival of the elements in *Thomas*'s formulation.

<sup>39</sup> Lists of references can be found above all in Stone and Strugnell, *The Books of Elijah*, 42–73. For further later instances and analysis, see K. Berger, 'Zur Diskussion über die Herkunft von I Kor. II.9', *NTS* 24 (1978), 270–83. J.-M. Sevrin, "'Ce que l'œil n'a pas vu ...': 1 Co 2,9 comme parole de Jésus", in J.-M. Auwers and A. Wénin, eds. *Lectures et relectures de la Bible* (Leuven University Press/Peeters, 1999), 307–24, contains a valuable collection of parallels, noting their connections with *Thomas*. To these references one must now add *G. Jud.* 47.10–13.



do with what is previously hidden but subsequently revealed. In Isaiah 64 what has not been seen or heard is any other god except Yahweh – the language is about the absence of any other power which has fought for the Israelites in their historical experience. In Isaiah 65, the probable source of our formula's statement 'nor has it ascended to a person's mind', the reference is to the fact that the people's earlier suffering will be completely forgotten: 'and it will not enter their minds' (καὶ οὐκ ἀναβήσεται αὐτῶν ἐπὶ τὴν καρδίαν, Isa. 65.16).

When it comes to Pseudo-Philo's *Biblical Antiquities*, the formula is mentioned in the narrative of Kenaz's examinations of the tribes. When Kenaz comes to the tribe of Asher, he discovers that they were in possession of Amorite idols with stones set on them, stones so wonderful that they provided illumination in the dark and could even cure blindness (*LAB* 25.10–12). However, when Kenaz prays about the stones, God undertakes to set them in the deep of the sea, which will swallow them up (26.4, 8). In their place, God will give the people twelve new stones, which are to be stored in the Ark of the Covenant (*LAB* 26.12, 15). But later, when God judges the world and rewards the righteous, he will restore all the stones, along with others which have been kept in a place 'which eye has not seen' etc. (*LAB* 26.13). So the formula here is a way of speaking of a secret realm known only to God: it is used in a general context of final salvation, but the unseen, unheard thing is not itself the content of that salvation.

In light of these two previous settings, it is then striking that Paul and *Thomas* use the formula in ways which are similar to each other, but not to their predecessors. Neither Isaiah nor *LAB* are obviously direct precursors to Paul's and *Thomas*'s quite specific meaning of 'what eye has not seen' etc. as *the content of saving revelation*. As a result, we might reasonably suppose that (given the secondary features evident in *Thomas*) Paul's interpretation of the formula has influenced *Thomas*'s usage in this respect. This remains a possibility, however: it cannot be said with much certainty.

In terms of other usage soon after Paul, in *1 Clement* 34.8 our formula is an explanation of the great and glorious promises which will come to their fulfilment in the heavenly destiny of the saints. So it is again soteriological through and through. In *Martyrdom of Polycarp* 2, the revelatory aspect comes to the fore: during their tortures, Christian martyrs of the past were 'absent from the flesh' (2.2) and 'no longer men but already angels' (2.3). In this state, they could gaze upon the things 'ear has not heard, and eye has not seen', etc. now shown (ὕπεδεῖκνυτο) to

them by God (2.3).<sup>40</sup> Subsequent to Paul, then, the soteriological sense and the revelatory context of the formula is well established.

### 3.4 Summary on 1 Corinthians 2.9/*GTh* 17

What we have seen, then, suggests first of all that Paul and *Thomas* are in an important respect closer to one another than they are to Isaiah or Pseudo-Philo. This probably points to the influence of one upon the other. Second, *Thomas* develops additional features not in Paul: this suggests that the former is dependent upon the latter. There are various kinds of influence which might be at work here. A hard version of the theory might posit that *Thomas* knew 1 Corinthians; this is possible, but not demonstrable. A more modest reading would be that *Thomas* is influenced by Paul *via* an intervening stage – a source which has also been shaped by Paul’s specific usage of the formula. This is far more likely.

Thus, the evidence can be summed up as follows:

- Isaiah provides the raw materials for the formula.
- The elements from Isaiah 64, 65 are combined into an Isaianic formula in early Judaism.
- Pseudo-Philo makes casual use of the formula.
- Paul exhibits two secondary features over against Pseudo-Philo:
  - he explicitly calls it scriptural;
  - he uses it to define saving revelation.
- *GTh* 17 draws from, and develops, a source shaped by Paul’s usage:
  - he incorporates Paul’s clearly soteriological-revelatory meaning;
  - he develops two secondary features not in Paul:
    - its attribution to Jesus;
    - the addition of the “hands” touching.

The influence of Paul on *Thomas* here is not as clear as was the case in *GTh* 53, despite the more substantial verbal correspondence between 1 Corinthians 2.9 and *GTh* 17. There is still a reasonable probability, however, so a “c” rating is suggested in this case. There are a great deal more unknowns here than in the other examples which we have examined. We

<sup>40</sup> Interestingly, while the same is true in *2 Clement* (which again refers specifically to promises) and in *Martyrdom of Polycarp*, these two authors reverse the order of ‘eyes’ and ‘ears’, which is to say that they reproduce the *original* order in Isaiah 64.3.

can say nothing with any confidence, for example, about the stage of *Thomas's* transmission at which this possible Pauline influence may have been exerted. There is perhaps room for more research on this question, but in the absence of new data the uncertainties may simply remain.

#### 4 The nature of the influence from Paul to *Thomas*

We have seen, then, that we have two fairly good candidates for examples of Paul's influence on *Thomas* in *GTh* 53 and *GTh* 3, as well as a slightly more shaky case in *GTh* 17. We can proceed to addressing to these cases some of the questions about the nature of influence which were discussed in connection with *Thomas* and the Synoptics.

##### 4.1 Direct or indirect use of Paul?

Carleton Paget asks of Paul's relationship to *Barnabas*: 'even when we do discern a similarity in wording, could this be nothing more than evidence of a piece of Paul which has been mediated by a source/tradition to the author we are examining, rather than evidence of a *direct* usage of Pauline epistles?'<sup>41</sup> It is possible that the author of *Thomas* had heard Romans read out, or had even read it himself. But he may alternatively have received snippets of Romans-influenced tradition from somewhere else. The Pauline elements preserved in *GTh* 3 and *GTh* 53 would have been quite memorable given that (1) in the case of the circumcision discussion, it is structured around a question-and-answer format, and (2) in the case of the Deuteronomy 30 interpretation, there is a memorable – and therefore easily preserved in transmission – tripartite structure: 'not up in heaven', 'not down in the abyss', but near you. So if we are to talk of *Thomas's* "use" of Pauline language, we cannot be certain whether it is direct or indirect use.

##### 4.2 Use of (tradition influenced by) Paul for un-Pauline ends

What is clear is that, as we have already mentioned, we have here use of Pauline language for somewhat *un-Pauline* (though not necessarily anti-Pauline) ends.<sup>42</sup> In the case of *GTh* 53, circumcision is rejected as

<sup>41</sup> Carleton Paget, 'Paul and the Epistle of Barnabas', 363. Emphasis mine.

<sup>42</sup> Alluding here to the question raised by J. Carleton Paget, 'The *Epistle of Barnabas* and the Writings that Later Formed the New Testament', in A.F. Gregory and C.M. Tuckett, eds. *The Reception of the New Testament in the Apostolic Fathers* (Oxford: Clarendon, 2005), 229–49 (241), who goes on to mention Werline (see n. 43 below). Carleton Paget's

unnatural and unprofitable – a position which Paul never takes. There are parallels in the second century to this kind of ‘Transformation of Pauline Arguments’ – the title of a recent article on the phenomenon in Justin Martyr.<sup>43</sup> Similarly, Carleton Paget talks of *Barnabas* being influenced by Romans 4.11, but then applying the language of Romans (in *Barn.* 13.7) in a way very different from Paul’s original purpose:<sup>44</sup> in Paul, ‘the key lies in developing the idea that belief, rather than circumcision, is central to Gentiles entering the messianic community ... But in *Barnabas* the passage is concerned to prove that the Christians, not the Jews, are the children of Abraham’.<sup>45</sup> All this is quite similar to what is going on in *GTh* 53, in which spiritual circumcision is advocated at the expense of a physical circumcision which is condemned outright.

#### 4.3 The availability of Romans

This brings us to the question of the *availability* of Romans at the stage of *Thomas*’s composition in Greek. Although we have little detailed information about the circulation of Pauline epistles in the late first and early second centuries, those epistles clearly were known beyond the particular churches to which they were addressed. *I Clement* is not straightforward evidence for knowledge of Romans beyond Rome, since *I Clement* was written from Rome; nevertheless, since Clement’s knowledge of Romans is ‘very likely indeed’,<sup>46</sup> this Pauline influence would then have passed to the recipients of *I Clement*. Moving further afield, Lindemann notes that ‘the study of Ignatius and Paul has a long tradition’,<sup>47</sup> much of which either argues for, or

conclusion about *Barnabas* probably applies to *Thomas* as well: ‘It seems, therefore, that we can find no conclusive evidence that *Barnabas* had read any of Paul’s extant letters, or that he was consciously developing or correcting a Pauline position’ (‘Paul and the Epistle of Barnabas’, 377).

<sup>43</sup> R. Werline, ‘The Transformation of Pauline Arguments in Justin Martyr’s *Dialogue with Trypho*’, *HTR* 92 (1999), 79–93. On Paul and Justin generally, see O. Skarsaune, *The Proof from Prophecy: A Study in Justin Martyr’s Proof-Text Tradition: Text-Type, Provenance, Theological Profile* (NovTSuppS; Leiden: Brill, 1987), 92–100, and the bibliography in 92 n. 144. The older study by Thoma is still valuable: A. Thoma, ‘Justins literarisches Verhältniss zu Paulus und zum Johannes-Evangelium’ (Part 1 on Paul), *Zeitschrift für wissenschaftliche Theologie* 18 (1875), 383–412.

<sup>44</sup> Carleton Paget, ‘The *Epistle of Barnabas* and the Writings that Later Formed the New Testament’, 241.

<sup>45</sup> Carleton Paget, ‘The *Epistle of Barnabas* and the Writings that Later Formed the New Testament’, 240.

<sup>46</sup> A.F. Gregory, ‘*I Clement* and the Writings that Later Formed the New Testament’, in Gregory and C.M. Tuckett, eds. *The Reception of the New Testament in the Apostolic Fathers* (Oxford University Press, 2005), 129–57 (157).

<sup>47</sup> Lindemann, ‘Paul in the Writings of the Apostolic Fathers’, 40.

assumes, Ignatius' knowledge of the apostle's letters:<sup>48</sup> I consider it particularly likely that the beginning of the letter to the Smyrnaeans is influenced by the beginning of Paul's Romans.<sup>49</sup> As far as 'Polycarp' is concerned, one recent monograph has commented that, 'Polycarp's use of 1 Corinthians, Romans, Galatians and Ephesians has been almost universally accepted'.<sup>50</sup> Of these three Apostolic Fathers, perhaps Ignatius is most important, given that his base was Antioch: if Romans was known there, this lends plausibility to the idea that Romans influenced the perhaps Syrian *Thomas*. If Egypt is the more likely provenance for *Thomas*, then the *Epistle of Barnabas* provides knowledge of at least Pauline-influenced tradition<sup>51</sup> – which may, after all, be all that we have in *GTh* 53 and *GTh* 3.

#### 4.4 Influence at what stage in *Thomas*'s transmission history?

The influence from Romans almost certainly goes back to the Greek stage of *Thomas*: in other words, Paul does not merely slip in at some

<sup>48</sup> Assumed in e.g. R.K. Bultmann, 'Ignatius and Paul' (1953), in Bultmann, *Existence and Faith: Shorter Writings of Rudolf Bultmann* (Cleveland/New York: Meridian Books, 1966), 267–77 (267); K.W. Niebuhr, 'Judentum und Christentum bei Paulus und Ignatius', *ZNW* 85 (1994), 218–33 (229); M.Y. Macdonald, 'The Ideal of the Christian Couple: Ign. *Pol.* 5.1–2 Looking Back to Paul', *NTS* 40 (1994), 105–25 (106).

<sup>49</sup> The links between Rom. 1.3–4 and Ign. *Smyrn.* 1.1 in their references to Jesus' descent from David and divine sonship are a good indication of the influence of Romans: compare τοῦ γενομένου ἐκ σπέρματος Δαυὶδ κατὰ σάρκα, τοῦ ὀρισθέντος υἱοῦ θεοῦ ἐν δυνάμει κατὰ πνεῦμα ἁγιωσύνης in Paul with ἐκ γένους Δαυὶδ κατὰ σάρκα, υἱὸν θεοῦ κατὰ θέλημα καὶ δυνάμιν θεοῦ in Ignatius. The Oxford committee only rate it "c" (C.M. Tuckett and A.F. Gregory, eds. *The Reception of the New Testament in the Apostolic Fathers* (Oxford University Press, 2005), 70), but the probability is stronger given not only the verbal links, but also the fact that in both cases the formula comes at the beginning of the letters.

<sup>50</sup> P. Hartog, *Polycarp and the New Testament* (WUNT; Tübingen: Mohr, 2002), 177. Polycarp's letter to the Philippians contains fairly clear references to Romans, especially to Romans 14. Rom. 14.10, 12 are alluded to in Polycarp, *Phil.* 6.2. Polycarp's reference to 'weapons of righteousness' in *Phil.* 4.1 may also refer to Rom. 6.13 (or alternatively 2 Cor. 6.7). For the discussion of individual passages, see above all K. Berding, *Polycarp and Paul: An Analysis of their Literary and Theological Relationship in Light of Polycarp's Use of Biblical and Extra-Biblical Literature* (VigChrSupps; Leiden: Brill, 2002). Cf. M.W. Holmes, 'Polycarp's Letter to the Philippians and the Writings that Later Formed the New Testament', in C.M. Tuckett and A.F. Gregory, eds. *The Reception of the New Testament in the Apostolic Fathers* (Oxford University Press, 2005), 187–227. The influence of Romans he describes as 'probable' (226).

<sup>51</sup> Again, see Carleton Paget, 'The *Epistle of Barnabas* and the Writings that Later Formed the New Testament', 240–1. The key phrase is τῶν πιστευόντων δι' ἀκροβυστίας, which leads the Oxford Committee to pronounce a "b" verdict – as Carleton Paget notes, their highest rating in the discussion of *Barnabas* (240 n. 39, in reference to Tuckett and Gregory, *New Testament in the Apostolic Fathers*, 304, and noting also that Windisch is 'similarly confident').

point in the Coptic translation or transmission process. This is particularly obvious in the case of *GTh* 3, where we have a Greek version which is perhaps closer than its Coptic equivalent to Romans 10.7.<sup>52</sup> Furthermore, *GTh* 53 seems to be influenced by a *Greek* Romans rather than – as far as we can tell in these matters – a Coptic version.<sup>53</sup> The – admittedly limited – evidence which we have, then, suggests that the influence of Romans seems to have been exerted on a Greek version of *Thomas*, rather than only on a later Coptic version.

### Conclusion

Despite the obvious differences inherent in analysing the influence of the Synoptics and the influence of Paul upon *Thomas*, we have noticed some similarities. In two cases above (on *GTh* 3 and 17), we have likely instances of *Thomas*'s reception of "Pauline redaction" – the redactions, respectively, of Deuteronomy 30 and the pre-Christian Jewish "what no eye has seen ..." formula. Probably the most convincing instance, however, is the influence of Romans 2–3 upon *GTh* 53. Here we have a number of striking correspondences of vocabulary between the two, as well as a shared dialogical structure, which together make a literary relationship highly probable, and one which in the light of chronological considerations can scarcely be regarded as an instance of *Thomas*'s influence upon Paul.

Dassmann's comment cited at the beginning of this chapter, to the effect that Paul shows no influence upon the *Gospel of Thomas*, is thus almost certainly wrong.<sup>54</sup> Treatments of the origins of *Thomas* need to take account of the evidence for this (and potentially additional) Pauline influence.<sup>55</sup> We move in the next chapter to look at what might have

<sup>52</sup> Greek *Thomas*'s ὑπὸ τὴν γῆν is perhaps slightly closer than the Coptic's εἰς ἄβυσσον to Paul's 'abyss' in Rom. 10.7.

<sup>53</sup> For example, where *GTh* 53 has the verb ῥωφελει, Rom. 2.25 5a has ῥινοφρε as a translation of ὠφελει and Rom. 3.1 πηγυ for ἡ ὠφελεισ. Given the other evidence we have seen, in Chapter 4, of the correlations between Graeco-Coptic vocabulary in the Coptic text and the words of the Greek fragments, it is probable that *Thomas*'s ῥωφελει is a translation of ὠφελει in its Greek *Vorlage* which would then reflect the influence of Romans in Greek, rather than Coptic. This is of course not certain, however.

<sup>54</sup> Dassmann, *Stachel im Fleisch*, 198–9.

<sup>55</sup> Other possible instances, where evidence is not sufficient to establish influence, include 1 Tim. 3.16 and *GTh* 28.1 taken in combination with 1 Tim. 6.7 and *GTh* 28.3. Skinner has tentatively suggested that *GTh* 29, 70 and 87 may be further instances: see Skinner, 'The Gospel of Thomas's Rejection of Paul's Theological Ideas'. Gal. 4.9 and 1 Cor. 13.12 are probably not related to *GTh* 3; cf. Nagel, 'Erwägungen zum Thomas-Evangelium', 375; U.-K. Plisch, *The Gospel of Thomas: Original Text with Commentary* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2008), 44.

been regarded in some quarters of the early church as another instance of “Pauline” influence.<sup>56</sup>

<sup>56</sup> A longer version of this chapter has appeared previously as ‘The Influence of Paul on the Gospel of Thomas (§§53. 3 and 17)’, in J. Frey, J. Schröter and E.E. Popkes, eds. *Das Thomasevangelium: Entstehung – Rezeption – Theologie* (BZNW 157; Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2008), 72–94.

# 11

## THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS AND *GTh* 56; 80; 111

### Introduction

With this chapter we come to the first of two more speculative observations. As above, we are in this chapter dealing again with a kind of application of the “redactional method”. The difference is that – as in the case of Paul above – the discussion does not concern the reception of Matthean or Lukan redaction of Mark. Rather, we are dealing with *Thomas*’s inclusion of modifications in Christian literature of pre-Christian Jewish idiom. In this respect, the closest parallel is to Paul’s reception of Jewish phraseology in 1 Corinthians 2.9 which is then, via Paul, taken up in *GTh* 17. The present chapter also argues for such influence upon *Thomas* of a rephrasing of such a Jewish idiom in Hebrews.

As far as the general relationship between *Thomas* and the Epistle to the Hebrews is concerned, there have been a few isolated comments on the matter, but apparently no study however brief. The isolated comments that have been made previously are concerned with the relationship between *GTh* 56 (paralleled in *GTh* 80 and 111) and Hebrews 11.38, in virtue of the shared statement that ‘the world is not worthy’ of certain distinguished individuals:

They were stoned to death, they were sawn in two, they were killed by the sword; they went about in skins of sheep and goats, destitute, persecuted, tormented – *of whom the world was not worthy* (ὧν οὐκ ἦν ἄξιός ὁ κόσμος). They wandered in deserts and mountains, and in caves and holes in the ground.

(Heb. 11.37–8)

Jesus said, ‘The one who has known the world has found a corpse. And *the one who has found that corpse, the world is not worthy of him* (πενταζρεε απτωμα πκοσμος ἴπρωδ ἴμοϋ δη).’

(*GTh* 56)



Jesus said, 'He who has recognized the world has found the body, but he who has found the body, the world is not worthy of him.' (ΠΕΝΤΑΡΧΕ ΔΕ ΕΠΣΩΝΑ ΠΚΟΣΜΟΣ ἸΠΡΑ ἸΜΟῦ ἈΝ)

(GTh 80)

Jesus said, 'The heavens and the earth will be rolled up in your presence. And the one who lives from the living one will not see death.' Does not Jesus say, 'Whoever finds himself, the world is not worthy of him'? (ΠΕΤΑΡΧΕ ΕΡΟῦ ΟΥΓΑΔΡ ΠΚΟΣΜΟΣ ἸΠΡΑ ἸΜΟῦ ἈΝ)

(GTh 111)

This parallel is often neglected, such that even Wilson and Montefiore, who wrote books on *Thomas*, do not mention the *Thomas* parallels in their Hebrews commentaries!<sup>1</sup> More recently, the similarity has perhaps been obscured by the influence of the most widely used translation, that of Lambdin, which renders the sayings in *Thomas* idiomatically as: 'whoever has found a corpse is superior to the world' (GTh 56), 'he who has found the body is superior to the world' (GTh 80), and 'whoever finds himself is superior to the world' (GTh 111).<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless, the wordings in *Thomas* and Hebrews are strikingly similar, but have done little more than prompt an outbreak of "cf."s, for example:

Knowing the world is equivalent to finding a corpse (or, in the parallel Saying 80, a body); this knowledge and this discovery are evidently regarded as good, for the world is not worthy of the discoverer (cf., Hebrews 11:38 ...).<sup>3</sup>

Der Spruch bedeutet dann ungefähr: Wer die Welt – und nicht Gott – erkannt hat, landet beim Tode; aber wer ... sich selbst aufopfert, die Welt kann über ihn spotten, daß er mit einer Leiche glücklich ist, aber die Welt ist seiner nicht wert, vgl. Hebr. 11, 38.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> H.W. Montefiore, *A Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews* (Black's NT Commentaries; London: A. & C. Black, 1964); R.McL. Wilson, *Hebrews* (New Century Bible Commentary; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987). In fairness, this omission may be in the interests of economy of space.

<sup>2</sup> B. Layton, ed. and T.O. Lambdin, tr. 'The Gospel according to Thomas', in Layton, ed. *Nag Hammadi Codex II, 2–7, together with XIII, 2\**, *Brit. Lib. Or.4926(1), and P. Oxy. I, 654, 655*, vol. I (NHS 20; Leiden: Brill, 1989), 52–93 (75, 83, 93).

<sup>3</sup> R.M. Grant and D.N. Freedman, *The Secret Sayings of Jesus* (New York: Doubleday, 1960), 164.

<sup>4</sup> E. Haenchen, 'Literatur zum Thomasevangelium (Fortsetzung)', *ThR* 27 (1961), 306–38 (319) quoting the view of R. Schippers.

To say that the world is not worthy of someone (cf. Hebrews 11.38) is to commend him ...<sup>5</sup>

The expression, ‘the world does not deserve the person who ...’ is Semitic ... (cf. Mekilta de-Rabbi Ishmael, Pisha 5; Heb. 11.37–38).<sup>6</sup>

To compare the formulations in Hebrews and *Thomas*, there is some difference of syntax between those in *Thomas* and that in Hebrews: in Hebrews, the phrase comes in a relative clause, while in *Thomas* it is a main clause. Nevertheless, there is obviously a striking similarity of language here which calls for explanation: some relationship between *GTh* 56 et al. and Hebrews 11 exists at this point. There may be more to be said about these statements in *Thomas* than merely ‘cf. Heb. 11.38’.

Ruling out pure coincidence, then, there are four ways in which one might account for the similarity of language here: (1) *Thomas* is influenced by Hebrews; (2) *Thomas* and Hebrews are both influenced independently by early Christian (Jesus-?) tradition; (3) *Thomas* and Hebrews both independently draw the phrase from idiom in Jewish tradition, (4) Hebrews is influenced by *Thomas*. It will be argued here that the first of these is the most probable: there are signs of influence, direct or indirect, and the line of influence is likely to be from Hebrews to *Thomas*.

This argument will proceed in four steps. First, an attempt will be made to show that this is a plausible option, given the influence of Hebrews in the second century, and even already in the first. Second, the evidence will be marshalled for this phrase as a “pre-Hebrews” idiom used by Jews in different languages. A third section will examine the use of the idiom in Hebrews, before proceeding to look at *Thomas*’s usage. This final part will make the case for the influence of Hebrews 11 upon *Thomas*.

## 1 Hebrews in the late first/early second century

It will first be useful to sketch the influence of Hebrews more widely in the late first century and on into the second. Evidence comes from a wide variety of places, as has been noted most recently by Rothschild.<sup>7</sup> Also

<sup>5</sup> F.F. Bruce, ‘The Gospel of Thomas’, in Bruce, *Jesus and Christian Origins outside the New Testament* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1974), 110–56 (135).

<sup>6</sup> A.D. DeConick, *The Original Gospel of Thomas in Translation: With a Commentary and New English Translation of the Complete Gospel* (LNTS 287; London/New York: T&T Clark International, 2006), 192.

<sup>7</sup> C. Rothschild, *Hebrews as Pseudepigraphon: The History and Significance of the Pauline Attribution of Hebrews* (WUNT 235; Tübingen: Mohr, 2009), 15–44 (NB the very

notable is the collection of 287 suspected allusions to Hebrews among the Fathers in the first volume of *Biblia Patristica* (up to Clement of Alexandria and Tertullian): even if this number is considerably inflated, it is at least indicative of a wide spread of possible influence.<sup>8</sup> There are a number of authors and works who quite clearly show the influence of Hebrews.<sup>9</sup>

The earliest very clear instance is *1 Clement*, regarded almost unanimously as making use of Hebrews, including a reference to Hebrews 11.37 (*1 Clem.* 17.1).<sup>10</sup> Cases can also be made for the influence of Hebrews upon Ignatius (esp. *Philad.* 9.1),<sup>11</sup> *2 Clement* (esp. 1.6; 11.6),<sup>12</sup> the *Epistle of Barnabas*,<sup>13</sup> the *Shepherd of Hermas*,<sup>14</sup> Polycarp's *Philippians*,<sup>15</sup> and Justin.<sup>16</sup> Pagels is quite forthright about the Valentinian school in this matter: 'Valentinian theologians give close attention to the treatise they knew as Paul's letter to the Hebrews.'<sup>17</sup> She goes on to mention Ptolemy,

useful chart on 19–20), and 139–44; cf. also C. Koester, *Hebrews: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB; New York: Doubleday, 2001), 19–27.

<sup>8</sup> J. Allenbach, A. Benoit, D.A. Bertrand, A. Hanriot-Coustet, P. Maraval et al., eds. *Biblia Patristica: index des citations et allusions bibliques dans la littérature patristique*, vol. I, *Des origines à Clément d'Alexandrie et Tertullien* (Paris: Éditions du Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, 1975), 519–24.

<sup>9</sup> Negatively, Hebrews is not mentioned in the Muratorian fragment. Marcion is usually regarded as either ignorant of or unfavourable to Hebrews. Löhr is suitably cautious about whether Basilides used the letter, saying that it is uncertain. W. Löhr, *Basilides und seine Schule. Eine Studie: zur Theologie- und Kirchengeschichte des zweiten Jahrhunderts* (WUNT 83; Tübingen: Mohr, 1996), 329.

<sup>10</sup> A Committee of the Oxford Society of Historical Theology, *The New Testament in the Apostolic Fathers* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1905), 44–8 and the table on 137; cf. also Rothschild, *Hebrews*, 29–30, and the literature noted in Koester, *Hebrews*, 22 n. 9.

<sup>11</sup> J.B. Lightfoot, *The Apostolic Fathers: Part II: S. Ignatius, S. Polycarp*, vol. II, pt 1 (London: Macmillan, 1885), 274–5, is certain of the influence of Hebrews, over against the Oxford Committee, which was not at all confident (Oxford Society, *The New Testament in the Apostolic Fathers*, 75).

<sup>12</sup> On *2 Clement*, Oxford Society, *The New Testament in the Apostolic Fathers*, 126, is clear on unconscious influence.

<sup>13</sup> Oxford Society, *The New Testament in the Apostolic Fathers*, 6–11 has a strongly positive conclusion; J. Carleton Paget, 'Paul and the Epistle of Barnabas', *NovT* 38 (1996), 359–81 is more circumspect, though noting the similar ambience in both Hebrews and *Barnabas*.

<sup>14</sup> See esp. the parallels Heb. 3.18/*Herm.* 7.2; 15.2 and Heb. 11.13; 13.14/*Herm.* 50.1–2 (Oxford Society, *The New Testament in the Apostolic Fathers*, 107; Koester, *Hebrews*, 23).

<sup>15</sup> Oxford Society, *The New Testament in the Apostolic Fathers*, 99–100.

<sup>16</sup> On Justin, see the comments in B.F. Westcott, *The Epistle to the Hebrews* (London: Macmillan, 1889), lxiii. On all these instances, see the summary in Rothschild, *Hebrews*, 29–32. The essays in C.M. Tuckett and A.F. Gregory, eds. *The Reception of the New Testament in the Apostolic Fathers* (Oxford University Press, 2005), are invariably more sceptical.

<sup>17</sup> E.H. Pagels, *The Gnostic Paul: Gnostic Exegesis of the Pauline Letters* (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 1975), 141.

Theodotus, the *Interpretation of Knowledge*, the *Gospel of Truth* and Heracleon, the *Treatise on the Resurrection*, and the *Gospel of Philip* as to lesser and greater degrees employing Hebrews.<sup>18</sup> Elsewhere in the Nag Hammadi literature, the *Testament of Truth* (like *I Clement*) might allude to Hebrews 11.37 (40.8–41.4).

Late in the second century and into the early third, Tertullian, Hippolytus and Irenaeus know of the letter, as do both Clement of Alexandria and also his senior ‘the blessed elder’ of Alexandria,<sup>19</sup> and perhaps Pinytus (*HE* 4.23) and Theophilus of Antioch (*Ad Autolyc.* 2.25).<sup>20</sup> The attestation of Hebrews in early manuscripts is reasonably good, being included in P46 and other early papyri.<sup>21</sup>

Hebrews 11.38 is first cited to my knowledge in Clement’s *Stromateis* and Origen’s *Contra Celsum*.<sup>22</sup> On the basis of all this evidence, there is certainly no problem in principle with the idea that Hebrews might influence *Thomas*. It is not a priori unlikely.

## 2 ‘... of whom the world is not worthy’ as a multilingual Jewish expression

The next stage of the argument here is that there existed prior to the composition of Hebrews and *Thomas* a formulaic phrase employed by Jews, certainly in “Jewish Greek”, but also in Aramaic and/or Hebrew.

### 2.1 *Mekhilta de-Rabbi Ishmael*

Previous commentators have only, to my knowledge, noted one real Jewish parallel to Hebrews 11.38, in the third-century *Mekhilta de-Rabbi Ishmael*:

<sup>18</sup> Pagels, *Gnostic Paul*, 141–2, 142–3, 143 (and see n. 153 n. 22), 144, 145, 148 (and 154 n. 71), 149 (and 155 n. 80) respectively. On the *Gospel of Truth*, see further S. Giversen, ‘Evangelium Veritatis and the Epistle to the Hebrews’, *Studia Theologica* 13 (1959), 87–96.

<sup>19</sup> Rothschild, *Hebrews*, 30–1 and nn. 64–5; 36–7 on Clement and the Alexandrian elder, often thought to be Pantaeus.

<sup>20</sup> Rothschild, *Hebrews*, 41, while noting scholarly disagreement on the point.

<sup>21</sup> P46 (c.200); P114 (third century); P12 (third to fourth century); P13 (third to fourth century). These dates are approximate and open to contestation. See further the tables in L.W. Hurtado, *The Earliest Christian Artifacts* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006), appendix: items §§159–62 in appendix 1 (pp. 222–3), and in D.C. Parker, *An Introduction to the New Testament Manuscripts and their Texts* (Cambridge University Press, 2008), 258–9.

<sup>22</sup> Clem. *Strom.* IV.16.102 and Origen, *c. Cels.* 7.7 (cf. also the more uncertain *Selecta in Psalmos*, ad Ps. 33.10, PG 12.1308).

R. Eliezer ha-Kappar says: Did not Israel possess four virtues of which the whole world is not worthy (*š'yn kl h'wlm kd'y bhn*), that they were above suspicion in regard to chastity and in regard to tale bearing, that they did not change their names and that they did not change their language.

(Mekh. Pisk 5a *ad* Exod. 12.6)<sup>23</sup>

Here, in Semitic form, we have an instance of the same phrase as that seen in Hebrews and *Thomas*. It may be that this statement of R. Eliezer ha-Kappar (*fl.* second half of the second century) goes back some time earlier than the compilation of the *Mekhilta*, but this cannot be certain.<sup>24</sup> In any case, it is striking that we have not only a close correspondence of words, but also the same syntax: a relative clause, with the *Mekhilta's* *š- ... -hn* corresponding to Hebrews' *ὅν*. Although the use of the expression here in the *Mekhilta* is rather later than the parallel in Hebrews 11, the combination of the two strongly suggests a pre-Christian idiom current in the first century: the main alternatives would be to suppose the unlikely scenario of Hebrews' influence upon the *Mekhilta* or that both works developed the phrase independently by pure coincidence.

## 2.2 Philo

The theory of a pre-Christian idiom is confirmed by Philo, who provides (in Greek) very early instances of variations on the phrase. *Det.* 62, for example, has a discussion of the Levites, 'of whom earth and water and air, yes, even heaven and the whole world, was considered an unworthy lot' (*ὧν ἀνάξιτος κληρος γῆ καὶ ὕδωρ καὶ ἀήρ ἔτι δὲ οὐρανὸς καὶ πᾶς ὁ κόσμος ἐνομίσθη*). Here we have a close parallel to what we have already seen. Philo here shares with Hebrews the opening of the saying with the relative pronoun *ὅν*, which suggests that the idiom already existed in Greek prior to its (presumably independent) use by Philo and the author of Hebrews. Philo shares with the *Mekhilta*, though not with Hebrews, a reference to the *whole* world. He also adds in a good deal of additional colour (earth, water, air, as well as heaven). He uses similar language elsewhere.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>23</sup> Text and translation from J.Z. Lauterbach, *Mekilta de-Rabbi Ishmael*, 3 vols. (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1976 (1933)), 1:34. The date of the second half of the third century is given by H.L. Strack and G. Stemberger, *Introduction to the Talmud and Midrash* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1991), 255.

<sup>24</sup> H. Danby, *The Mishnah* (Oxford University Press, 1933), 800, lists him as 'fifth generation (A.D. c. 165–200)'.

<sup>25</sup> Cf. two references by Philo to God. First, in *Leg. All.*, he states: 'for of God the whole world would not be a worthy estate or dwelling-place' (*θεοῦ γὰρ οὐδὲ ὁ σύμπας κόσμος*

## 2.3 Mishnah

Additionally, one can find almost exactly the same phrase as is present in the *Mekhilta* (*š'yn kl h'wlm kd'y bhn*) in the Mishnah as well. It occurs in Mishnah *Yadaim*, in R. Akiba's response to suggestions that there had been debate over whether the Song of Songs and Ecclesiastes render the hands unclean (i.e. whether they had canonical status):

Rabbi Akiba said, 'God forbid! No man in Israel ever disputed about the Song of Songs [that he should say] that it does not render the hands unclean, *for even the whole world is not worthy* (*š'yn kl h'wlm klw kd'y*) of the day on which the Song of Songs was given to Israel.'

(*m. Yad.* 3.5; tr. Danby (p. 782), adapted)

Here, the expression has a slightly different form and function. In this instance in the Mishnah, the conjunction *š-* has a causal sense, rather than introducing a relative clause. Again, *h'wlm* probably has the temporal sense of 'age', because it stands in comparison with the *day* of the inspiration of the Song of Songs. The whole phrase is also lengthened by the addition of the thing being compared ('... not worthy of the day on which the Song of Songs was given to Israel'). Despite these differences, there is still substantial verbatim overlap between the Mishnah and the *Mekhilta* here: both have the phrase *š'yn kl h'wlm ... kd'y ...* with the Mishnah merely having the emphatic plus of *klw* ('all of it') for emphasis.

2.4 Pseudo-Clementine *Recognitions*

Further evidence for the pre-Christian Jewish expression might be found in Pseudo-Clementine *Recognitions* 7.7. Peter's offer that Clement be his servant leads to an emotional outburst from the latter: 'But I trembled when I heard this, and my tears immediately gushed forth, because so great a man (Peter), *than whom the whole world is considered lesser* (*quo*

ἄξιον ἂν εἶη χωρίον καὶ ἐνδιαιτήμα, *Leg. All.* 1.62). This might suggest that the sense of the idiom in Hebrews has the same force, viz. that the world is not a worthy *dwelling place* for those who have lived by faith, in contrast to the other view that the heroes of faith are simply of *greater value* than the world. (This may be an over-precise distinction, however, not perceived by those who used the idiom in antiquity.) Again, Philo here opens with a genitive, and refers to the *whole* world. The world is described in the same way (σύμπας ὁ κόσμος) when Philo writes, 'for the whole world would not be a worthy/sufficient temple to honour him' (οὐδὲ γὰρ σύμπας ὁ κόσμος ἱερὸν ἀξιόχρεων ἂν γένοιτο πρὸς τὴν τούτου τιμὴν, *Plant.* 126).

*omnis mundus habetur inferior*), had addressed such a proposal to me.’ Again, it is striking that – as in the Rabbinic parallels and Hebrews – the phrase appears as a relative clause (*quo ...*; cf.  $\xi$ - and  $\omega\nu$ ). Furthermore, in common with the Rabbinic examples and Philo but against Hebrews, *Recognitions* has ‘the whole world’. *Recognitions* and Philo also share a reference to the worthiness being *considered*, instead of a simple use of the verb ‘to be’ (cf. *habetur* and Philo’s ἐνομίσθη).

## 2.5 Conclusions

We can draw some conclusions about the earliest form or forms of the phrase in pre-Christian Judaism.

First, it is surely not a coincidence that Hebrews, the Mishnah and the *Mekhilta* (as well as the Pseudo-Clementines) all use the phrase in a relative or subordinate clause, with  $\xi$ - introducing the Rabbinic examples, and  $\omega\nu$  introducing Hebrews 11.38 (cf. *quo* in *Recogn.*). The phrase is something regularly affixed as a subordinate clause. One might think of some English parallels: Donne’s phrase ‘for whom the bell tolls’ has become, via Hemingway’s novel, a relative clause well known in its own right. Other phrases such as ‘about which the less said the better’ or ‘on which more later’ constitute rather more prosaic examples.

Furthermore, all are negative. This remains the case in later versions, though there is a case of the positive use in Mishnah *Abot* 6 (a later, medieval section of *Abot*).<sup>26</sup> Otherwise, both the pre-Christian and Rabbinic usage are consistent here.

Next, among the earliest instances, Hebrews and *Thomas* differ from the non-Christian Jewish uses (and *Recognitions*) in that the latter refer to ‘the whole world’. The Mishnah, as we have seen, reinforces this in its phrase *kl h’wlm klw* (lit. ‘the whole world – all of it’). So it is likely that the original phrase contained ‘the whole world’.

So to summarise our initial findings:

- Philo and Hebrews provide evidence that the phrase attested in the *Mekhilta* goes back in this form to pre-Christian Judaism
- the Mishnah and the *Mekhilta* enable us to reconstruct the broad outline of the earliest forms of the phrase. The elements (whose order may vary) are:
  - introduction to relative clause
  - reference to ‘the whole world’

<sup>26</sup> On *m. Abot* 6 as a late gloss, see Danby, *Mishnah*, 458–9 n. 12. The section does not appear at all in J. Neusner, *The Mishnah: A New Translation* (New Haven: Yale, 1988).

- negation
- reference to worthiness

### 3 Hebrews' use and adaptation of the phrase

This phrase is picked up and used by Hebrews with slight modification. Hebrews preserves the syntax (the phrase still comes in as a relative clause). The most obvious difference is that Hebrews omits mention of the *whole* world, referring to 'the world' *tout simple*.

There is, however, another difference. In the other early instances, the reference to the world is more incidental and just brought in to emphasise the great value of Israel's virtues or God or the lot of the Levites, and so on. In Hebrews, however, the reference to the world is more significant, because it comes in a chapter in which various 'foreigners and strangers on earth' (11.13) are commended for transcending the visible world by their faith and seeking a better, unseen heavenly home: Noah is even said to have 'condemned the world' (κατέκρινεν τὸν κόσμον, 11.7). This would mean a slightly negative valuing of the κόσμος, in which it means the transitory or visible world, or perhaps human society.<sup>27</sup>

### 4 The use of the phrase in Thomas

The three parallels in *Thomas* refer to the true disciple, who has *found* something – the world-corpse (*GTh* 56), the world-body (*GTh* 80) or himself (*GTh* 111).<sup>28</sup> The figure about whom Jesus is talking here is extremely positive ('the world is not worthy of him'), and therefore the actions are as well. As such, knowing the world and finding a corpse appear to be references to realising what the world truly is, viz. something lifeless (see Chapter 3 above). The Thomasine disciple is of course the person to have made this discovery, and he or she is someone who does not belong in this world and is thereby of infinitely greater value than that world.

#### 4.1 Features shared by Hebrews and *Thomas*

In the use of the phrase, it seems that *Thomas* has two elements which it shares exclusively with Hebrews.

<sup>27</sup> The latter is taken to be the referent in Heb. 11.38 in W.L. Lane, *Hebrews 9–13* (Word Biblical Commentary; Waco, TX: Word, 1991), 392.

<sup>28</sup> Cf. also Adam being unworthy of the disciples in *GTh* 85, and Peter's comment on Mary's unworthiness of life in *GTh* 114.



First, *Thomas* shares with Hebrews the desire to transcend the present world. The reference to ‘the world’ in *Thomas* is by no means incidental, or merely about the quantitative value of the true disciple: the world is valued negatively, and the true disciple’s discovery of its character enables him to transcend that world. Hebrews is not negative about the world qua created order (though even that will be ‘rolled up’ – Heb. 1.10–12); in Hebrews 11, however, the κόσμος does take on a more negative cast, as noted above.

This is very much akin to the sense in *Thomas*, where there is perhaps a greater devaluation of the world. In *GTh* 56 the world is identified as a corpse, and elsewhere in *Thomas* the world or the body is identified as ‘poverty’ (*GTh* 29). In parabolic parlance, the children are living in a field which does not belong to them (*GTh* 21). In our three instances in *Thomas* of the “unworthy world” idiom, the reference to the world is not merely a casual one, but carries some force, as it does also in Hebrews.

Second, there is a point of commonality, albeit minor, in the use of the phrases in Hebrews and *Thomas*. This is the omission of the reference to the ‘whole’ world. This is a point related to the first observation. Given the view of creation among Philo and the Rabbis, there is not – except in the case of the reference to God – any real attempt to make the positive things superior to the world. The point is rather that this is a hyperbolic statement about the greatness of the thing under discussion: the virtues of Israel and so on are greater than the *whole* world. It is a kind of quantitative comparison. In the case of Hebrews and *Thomas*, on the other hand, it is more a *qualitative* comparison. As such, a reference to the ‘whole’ world would be redundant.

In the light of these factors, influence in one direction or another seems likely.

#### 4.2 Direction of influence

Thus far we have only established that there appears to be an influence either Hebrews→*GTh* or *GTh*→Hebrews. It is not yet clear in which direction the influence is likely to run. There is good reason, however, to suspect that Hebrews influences *Thomas* here.

In the first place, we can observe that Hebrews is a rather more influential work in the second century (and already in the late first) than is *Thomas*. There are possible instances of the influences of *Thomas* on second-century works, but they are neither certain nor numerous.<sup>29</sup> It

<sup>29</sup> Two of the strongest contenders for influence from *Thomas* are the *Gospel of Judas* and the *Gospel of Philip*. There are other commonalities between *Thomas* and probably

is more difficult to imagine the influence of *Thomas* upon the clearly first-century Epistle to the Hebrews. Such an influence from *Thomas* becomes even more improbable if Hebrews dates pre-70 CE, as is probably suggested by Hebrews 10.1–2.<sup>30</sup>

Second, and more materially, the idiom as it appears in Hebrews is closer to the Jewish “Vorlage” than *Thomas* is. The form of the saying in Hebrews is almost identical to that of the earliest Jewish usages, whereas the language in *Thomas* is by comparison more distant from the Jewish instances in Philo, the Mishnah and the *Mekhilta*. This is evident from Hebrews’ similar use of the phrase as a relative clause, as we also see in Philo, the Mishnah and the *Mekhilta*. It seems likely, then, that Hebrews contains the earliest extant use of the phrase in a Christian context, and that this is taken up secondarily and adapted by *Thomas*. The fact that the language in *Thomas* is at a greater distance from the pre-Christian phrase than is Hebrews does not, of course, necessarily mean that *Thomas* is influenced by Hebrews. It is, however, more likely than the opposite (see Table 11.1).

### Conclusion

We can summarise the steps of the argument here. (1) There is a pre-Christian Jewish usage, in the form of a relative/subordinate clause (*š̄yn* ...). The subject is something of paramount importance: the giving of the Song of Songs; Israel’s four cardinal virtues; God’s being. The meaning is not that the world is not worthy of containing them, but simply that they are of greater value than the world. (2) This usage is picked up by the Epistle to the Hebrews. The author, or his source, appends this idiomatic relative clause to the description of those who suffered martyrdom. (3) The language of Hebrews then exerts an influence (direct or indirect) upon *Thomas*, just as the epistle does on some other circles in

second-century works, such as 2 *Clement* and the *Dialogue of the Saviour*, though part of the difficulty lies in establishing the direction of influence, since we cannot be sure of the relative datings in each case.

<sup>30</sup> ‘Since the law has only a shadow of the good things to come and not the true form of these realities, it can never, by the same sacrifices that are continually offered year after year, make perfect those who approach. *Otherwise, would they not have ceased being offered*, since the worshippers, cleansed once for all, would no longer have any consciousness of sin?’ (Heb. 10.1–2, translation mine). As Koester puts it: ‘The question expects that listeners will agree with the author, instead of pointing out that sacrifices have in fact ceased being offered because of the Temple’s destruction.’ Koester, *Hebrews*, 53. He goes on to note that this is not entirely decisive, because of the author’s lack of reference to the Temple itself.

Table 11.1

Philo	<i>m. Yad.</i>	<i>Mekhila</i>	Hebrews 11	<i>GTh 56</i>	<i>GTh 80</i>	<i>GTh 111</i>	<i>Recogn.</i>
the Levites of whom earth and water and air, yes, even heaven and the whole world, was considered an unworthy lot	(day of Song of Songs' coming) for	Israel's four virtues of which	those (martyrs) acting by faith of whom	one who finds corpse	one who finds body	one who finds self	(Peter) than whom
	<i>the whole world – 'all of it'</i>	<i>the whole world</i>	<i>the world</i>	<i>the world</i>	<i>the world</i>	<i>the world</i>	<i>the whole world</i>
	<i>is not worthy</i>	<i>is not worthy</i>	<i>was not worthy</i>	<i>is not worthy</i>	<i>is not worthy</i>	<i>is not worthy</i>	<i>is considered lesser</i>
			<i>of him</i>	<i>of him</i>	<i>of him</i>	<i>of him</i>	

the late first and early second centuries (*I Clement* et al.). The argument pursued here is analogous to the method employed in the treatment of *Thomas*'s relation to the Synoptics: we are here tracing a kind of "base text" (cf. Mark), which is then redacted in Hebrews (cf. Matthew and Luke), some of whose redactional elements then appear in *Thomas*. As noted in the introduction, however, the closest analogy is with the argument in the previous chapter for Jewish tradition → 1 Corinthians 2.9 → *GTh* 17. In the present chapter we also have influence upon *Thomas* via an epistolary reception of pre-Christian Jewish idiom. If the above argument is correct, then the number of identifiable sources of *Thomas* can be expanded.

A NOTE ON THE “TWO WAYS”  
TRADITION AND *GTH* 25

The final instance of possible influence is one touched upon in Chapter 3, but which merits a brief further comment. *GTh* 25 has a version of the “love your neighbour as yourself” saying with the variation ‘as your *soul*’, and a further amplification: ‘guard him like the pupil of your eye’. This second half in particular does not correspond closely to anything in the Synoptic tradition. There is, however, a section of the *Epistle of Barnabas* which has a close parallel – not to my knowledge previously noted – to both halves of the *Thomas* saying here (see Table 12.1).

The parallel is not exact, nor are the two statements adjacent in *Barnabas*’s version. Nevertheless, there are remarkable similarities: as was discussed in Chapter 3, the love commandment in both cases makes use not of the simple reflexive (ὡς σεαυτόν), but – as is much less common – of a reference to the soul (ὕπερ τὴν ψυχὴν σου, and ἡεε ἡτεκῆγγη). Even more unusual is a nearby reference in both cases to loving or guarding ‘like the pupil of your eye’ (ὡς κόρην τοῦ ὀφθαλμοῦ, and ἡεε ἡτελογ ἡπεκ βαλ).

A factor which complicates the discussion considerably, however, is that this passage of *Barnabas* appears in the “Two Ways” section, which is closely paralleled in the *Didache*. The relevant parallels to *Barn.* 19.5, 9 are *Did.* 2.7 and 4.1: ‘You shall not hate anyone, but those whom you rebuke – pray for them, and *love them more than your soul* ... My son, remember day and night the one who speaks the word of God to you – honour him as the Lord.’ The results of this particular “Synoptic problem” are that these passages in *Didache* and *Barnabas* are, by almost unanimous consensus, considered to have been drawn independently from a pre-existing “Two Ways” source. Several other works have been identified as incorporating this source, most importantly, the Latin *Doctrina Apostolorum*,<sup>1</sup> and the Greek texts of the closely related *Apostolic*

<sup>1</sup> Text in W. Rordorf and A. Tuilier, eds. *La Doctrine des douze Apôtres* (SC 248; Paris: Cerf, 1978), Appendix (207–10).

Table 12.1

<i>Barn.</i> 19.5, 9	<i>GTh</i> 25
Love your neighbour more than your soul.	Love your brother as your soul,
Love like the pupil of your eye everyone who speaks the word of the Lord to you.	Guard him like the pupil of your eye.

*Church Order* and the *Epitome of the Canons of the Holy Apostles*.<sup>2</sup> Other less important parallels also exist.<sup>3</sup> These more significant parallels to *Barnabas* and *Thomas* can be placed alongside one another. (See Table 12.2.)

Two points are evident here. First, *GTh* 25.1 is closest to *Barnabas*, which also casts its version of the “love thy neighbour” saying as a generally applicable aphorism. Second, *Thomas* is also in some agreement – against the *Didache* – with *Barnabas* in appending a reference to loving or guarding ‘like the pupil of your eye’ – a strikingly distinctive phrase.<sup>4</sup>

The problem of the interrelationships among these different versions is extremely complex, though there is a consensus on the main issue. The *Doctrina* is usually thought to give the most primitive text, both by virtue of its proximity to Jewish forms of the “Two Ways” tradition, and because of the ways in which its readings are distributed through the rest of the tradition.<sup>5</sup> If this is correct, then the *Didache* is closer

<sup>2</sup> Texts in T. Schermann, *Die allgemeine Kirchenordnung, frühchristliche Liturgien und kirchliche Überlieferung*, vol. I, *Die allgemeine Kirchenordnung des zweiten Jahrhunderts* (Paderborn: Schöningh, 1914), 12–34 (*Apostolic Church Order*) and T. Schermann, *Eine Elfapostelmoral oder die X-Rezension der ‘beiden Wege’* (Munich: Lentner, 1903), 16–18 (*Epitome*).

<sup>3</sup> The Arabic *Life of Shenoute* is problematic for our purposes, being two stages removed from the Greek “Two Ways” (it is translated into Arabic from Coptic). It has a parallel to *GTh* 25.1/ *Barn.* 19.5 only: ‘O mon fils, ne hais personne, car (l’homme) est l’image et la ressemblance de Dieu; si quelqu’un glisse, fait un faux pas et tombe dans une faute, réprimande-le à l’écart, comme l’ont fait quelques-uns, aime-le comme toi-même (lit. ‘as your soul’).’ See the text and French tr. in É. Amélineau, *Monuments pour servir à l’histoire de l’Égypte chrétienne aux IV<sup>e</sup> et V<sup>e</sup> siècles* (Paris: Leroux, 1888), 291–6 (292 for the parallel just noted). The “Two Ways” material in the monastic codes of the *Syntagma Doctrinae* attributed to Athanasius (*PG* 28.835–45) and the *Fides CCCXVIII Patrum* (*PG* 28.1637–44) does not have any close parallels to the passages in which we are interested.

<sup>4</sup> Additionally, the two sayings are closer together in *Barnabas* than they are in the *Didache*.

<sup>5</sup> A. Milavec, *The Didache: Faith, Hope, and Life of the Earliest Christian Communities, 50–70 C.E.* (Mahwah, NJ: Newman, 2003), 696–7, following Goodspeed; and J. Carleton

Table 12.2

<i>Doctrina</i> 2.7; 4.1	<i>Did.</i> 2.7; 4.1	<i>ACO</i> 6.4; 12.1 / <i>Epitome</i> 3, 9	<i>Barn.</i> 19.5, 9	<i>GTh</i> 25.1, 2
Among men you shall not hate anyone, but	You shall not hate anyone, but those whom you rebuke – pray for them, and	You shall not hate anyone, but those whom you rebuke – have mercy on them, pray for them, and		
<i>you shall love them more than your soul.</i>	<i>love them more than your soul.</i>	<i>love them more than your soul.</i>	<i>Love your neighbour more than your soul.</i>	<i>Love your brother as your soul.</i>
Remember day and night the one who speaks to you the word of the Lord God, and you shall	My son, remember day and night the one who speaks to you the word of God –	Thomas said: My son, the one who speaks to you the word of God, and has become a means to your life and gives to you the seal in the Lord –	Everyone who speaks to you the word of the Lord,	
<i>honour him as the Lord.</i>	<i>honour him as the Lord.</i>	<i>love him as the pupil of your eye,</i> remember him day and night, <i>honour him as the Lord.</i>	<i>you shall love like the pupil of your eye.</i>	<i>Guard him like the pupil of your eye.</i>

(here as elsewhere) than *Barnabas* to the original “Two Ways” (most closely approximated in the *Doctrina*), but there must also have been an early recension of this “Two Ways” which incorporated – among other things – the reference to the ‘pupil of the eye’. This variant, after all,

Paget, *The Epistle of Barnabas: Outlook and Background* (WUNT; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1994), 80–2, following Audet; H. van de Sandt and D. Flusser, *The Didache: Its Jewish Sources and Its Place in Early Judaism and Christianity* (CRINT; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995), 70–80.

finds its way into not only *Barnabas* but also the *Apostolic Church Order* and the *Epitome*. (Remarkably, though almost certainly coincidentally, in their division of the “Two Ways” into separate mini-speeches by the apostles, the *Apostolic Church Order* and the *Epitome* include the “pupil of your eye” saying in a block attributed to the disciple Thomas.)

Again, if this is correct, then *Thomas* may well have been influenced by this early reworking (early enough to have influenced *Barnabas*) of the “Two Ways”, in which the “love your neighbour” saying has become a free-standing aphorism, and the reference to ‘loving like the pupil of your eye’ has been incorporated. Alternatively, it is possible that *Thomas* is influenced by *Barnabas* – though there may be chronological problems with such a view.<sup>6</sup>

### Conclusion

There are, to be sure, some uncertainties here. For one, the pre-existing “Two Ways” source is of course hypothetical, as are its precise contents. It is possible that later works such as the *Apostolic Church Order* are actually harmonies of *Didache* and *Barnabas* rather than independent. Nevertheless, this account of the relationships among these various texts is certainly in line with the scholarly consensus as far as the works excluding *Thomas* are concerned. In the light of the proximity of the parallels to *GTh* 25.1 and 25.2 both in *Barnabas* and – to a lesser extent – in the *Apostolic Church Order* and the *Epitome*, it seems sensible to include *GTh* 25 in the mix.

<sup>6</sup> *Barnabas* is usually thought to date either from the end of the first century, or from the second quarter of the second century. In the latter case, supposing that *Barnabas* influenced *Thomas* might be especially difficult.



## CONCLUSION

It merely remains to summarise the principal conclusions of the chapters above and draw out some final remarks.

In one respect, Part I can be treated on its own terms as a self-contained discussion of the original language of *Thomas*. This area of *Thomas* scholarship is curious in a way, since almost all the discussion of the question in past decades has been undertaken by those advancing a Semitic original for *Thomas*. Although a number of scholars have continued to hold to a Greek original, there has not to my knowledge ever been an extensive discussion arguing for the position. In addition to the difficulties with the particular cases of alleged Semitisms (discussed in Chapter 3), there are numerous methodological difficulties with the whole matter (touched upon in Chapter 2) which have not been treated with sufficient seriousness by those who have too quickly embarked on the quest for the original Aramaic or Syriac.

We noted in the Introduction and in Chapter 5 some of the implications of the discussion of original language in Part I for the treatment of sources in Part II. First, Aramaic theories of *Thomas* have in recent scholarship tended toward pushing the composition of the work to extreme dates, with DeConick's conclusion in favour of a Western Aramaic composition constituting part of the reason for her dating of the core of *Thomas* to before 50 CE, and Perrin's view of *Thomas* as a Syriac composition leading to his date at the end of the second century. On these dates, the question of New Testament sources becomes quite simple: on DeConick's theory, it is virtually impossible for *Thomas* – at least at its core – to be influenced by the canonical Gospels, whereas if Perrin is correct it is virtually impossible for *Thomas* not to be (at least indirectly), and indeed it is integral to his view the *Diatessaron* is the key formative influence. Additionally, Part I discusses a number of alleged Semitisms in *Thomas*, among which are those argued to have arisen as a result of translations, from Aramaic, diverging from the Greek versions of the same sayings in the Synoptics: since these arguments are found

wanting, an important potential indication of *Thomas*'s independence is removed.

Under the heading of 'Sources', in Parts II and III, there has of course been no attempt to delineate what *all* of *Thomas*'s sources may have been. There are certainly numerous works lost to us which fed into *Thomas*. Similarly there are, no doubt, others which are extant but which cannot clearly be identified as sources because we cannot be sure about the direction of the influence, or whether *Thomas* and the parallel work go back to a common source: the parallels between *GTh* 74 and the *Celestial Dialogue* are too close to be coincidental, as are the versions of the "two-one, outside-inside, male-female" saying in *GTh* 22, 2 *Clem.* 12.2 and the *Gospel of the Egyptians*, but we do not know about the dates of these other works relative to *Thomas*, nor can we be sure on literary grounds which form of the saying is the most primitive. So much of what we might like to know about *Thomas*'s sources is unknowable.

Nevertheless, we have seen good reasons for the relative dating of Matthew and Luke before *Thomas*, spelled out in Chapter 6. The discussion in Chapter 5 of the dangerous levels of subjectivity – and even straightforward error – involved in some of the form-critical assumptions about primitivity aimed to clear the ground for a fresh assessment of the possibility of influence from the Synoptic Gospels. The "redactional method" was spelled out in Chapter 6, with some further attempts to clarify its applicability (through identifying the relative sequences of Matthew–*Thomas* and Luke–*Thomas*) and to refine it (through excluding overly subjective assessments about, for example, the redactions of non-Markan material). Justification was offered for limiting the discussion to instances of Mark→Matthew→*GTh* and Mark→Luke→*GTh*, on the grounds that other possible lines of influence are too speculative and unlikely to be persuasive to other scholars. This meant that the body of material in *Thomas* to be examined would be limited to passages where there is Mark/Matthew/*GTh* or Mark/Luke/*GTh* parallel material (a corpus of twenty sayings in total).

Applied to Matthew and Luke, this chastened version of the redactional method identified eleven sayings among this twenty as exhibiting redactional traces, instances where Matthew's or Luke's redactions of Mark had found their ways into *Thomas*. In the case of *GTh* 13, there is even a reference to the apostle Matthew, which is best explained as an allusion to him as a Gospel-writer, given his relative insignificance in other ways.

The question then arises of how the Gospels of Matthew and Luke came to influence *Thomas*, but at this point we enter much murkier waters. It is possible, even likely, that “secondary orality” is a good explanation – that through, for example, the reading of Matthew’s and Luke’s Gospels in Christian assemblies, the Matthean and Lukan versions of sayings and pericopae entered the ether of early Christian discourse and so came to influence *Thomas*. This is speculative, however, and it could merely be that the author or editor of *Thomas* (or one or more of his sources) had read these Gospels, or portions of them, and remembered these particular pericopae with some of their redactional details. But on this particular matter we need to remain agnostic.

Finally, Part III, with its discussions of Paul, Hebrews and the early Christian “Two Ways” tradition, engaged in what is perhaps a slightly more speculative enterprise. There is, however, considerable overlap of method in Parts II and III: in the latter chapters, the “redactional method” still comes into play, albeit in the examination of redaction by Paul and others of early Jewish or (in the case of Chapter 12) early Christian traditions. Most attention previously has been focused on the matter of whether the Synoptic Gospels are sources for *Thomas*, but perhaps Part III of the present book may prompt further discussion of whether other sources can be identified with some degree of probability.

It may also be the case that, despite the very circumscribed method outlined in Chapter 6, other scholars are able to develop methods which are more flexible and can produce more extensive results for *Thomas* and the Synoptics. Mark Goodacre, for example, has aired some unpublished observations on *Thomas*’s tendency – assuming *Thomas*’s chronological posteriority – to abbreviate Synoptic pericopae *consistently in a particular way*, namely by omitting sections from the middle (what Goodacre has dubbed the “missing middle”). The present book certainly does not claim to be the last word on this subject. Similarly, Part I has only claimed that all previous attempts to argue for a Semitic substratum to *Thomas* have proven unsuccessful. Since it is by definition probably impossible to prove a negative, I do not claim to have shown that it is impossible that an Aramaic *Vorlage* underlies parts of our texts of *Thomas*. In consequence, it remains possible that others may in the future be able to advance arguments for the independence of some of *Thomas*’s sayings on the grounds of translational divergence between *Thomas* and the Synoptics. Perhaps I may be forgiven for being sceptical, however, given the methodological problems sketched in Chapter 2, and the fact that as able a Semitist as

Guillaumont was unable to adduce examples which have been found to be persuasive.

No doubt the author or editor of *Thomas* would be utterly bemused by this volume. Whether modern readers find it any more comprehensible remains to be seen.

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