

***Logion 7 of the Gospel according to Thomas and the Notion of “Oneness”:
A Rhetorical / Structural Analysis.***

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Abstract

Logion 7 of the *Gospel according to Thomas* and the Notion of “Oneness”:
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The scholarly community, up to the present time, has struggled to find a solution for the enigma of *logion 7* in the *Gospel of Thomas*. Resolution has been met with difficulty due to the isolation of the leonine imagery to the *logion* itself, the significance of consumption and its relationship with either a blessed or cursed state and finally the untenable ending to the *logion* that defies the conventions of a balanced chiasmic structure. Speaking to the last point, many are convinced that what they are confronting is an apparent homoioteleuton and therefore opt to correct the error by amending the text. The remaining issues are examined diachronically and inter-textually decided by the influence of the Platonic school that informed the worldview of the period in which *Gos. Thom.* was written. In this thesis, I propose that a synchronic reading complimented with a rhetorical/structural analysis of *logia 7-11* offers an alternative perspective to the difficulties that may be resolved within the text itself and exposes “oneness” as its central theme.

KEYWORDS: Gospel of Thomas; Thomas; Jesus; Gnostic; Rhetorical/Structural Criticism; Synchronic; Philology; Homoioteleuton; Chiasm; Christology; State of Being; Lion; Man; Makarios; Blessed; Cursed; Death; Life; Unification; Oneness; Plato.

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Dedication

For my grandfather Constantine Gitrakas who I remember...

For Maria Gitrakas Babalis who I will never forget...

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Introduction

I. Statement of the Question

Since the discovery of the *Gos. Thom.* near Nag Hammadi in Egypt, scholars have struggled with its implication for the origins of Christianity and the search for the historical Jesus.¹ The Coptic *Gos. Thom.* is the 4th century document that reflects the earlier Greek fragments salvaged from the refuse at Oxyrhynchus (present day Behnesa) dated between 200 - 250 C.E.² that stirred the academic community to speculate on its significance. It was not until the 1945 find, however, that the unearthed Coptic version of the gospel sparked interest in the Thomasine community's³ worldview, when the question of its Gnostic relevance became a point of contention in academic circles. Scholars argued for and against its concordance with Gnostic thought. Further complicating the matter, the absence of scholarly consensus on the definition of Gnosticism and the structure of the *Gos. Thom.* hindered the study of the text, and the interpretation of its meaning remains ongoing to this day.

¹ Marvin W. Mayer, *The Gospel of Thomas: The Hidden Sayings of Jesus* (New York: Harper Collins, 1992), 1-2.

² Harold W. Attridge dates *P.Oxy.* 654 at 250 C.E. and no later than 300 C.E. Harold W. Attridge, "The Greek Fragments," in *Nag Hammadi Codex II, 2-7: Together with XIII.2*, Brit. Lib. OR. 4926 (I), and P.Oxy. I, 654, 655* (ed. Bentley Layton; vol. 1 of *Nag Hammadi Studies*, eds. Martin Krause et. al.; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1989), 97. Bertil Gärtner, *The Theology of the Gospel According to Thomas* (trans. E.J. Sharpe; New York: Harper & Brothers, 1961), 9.

³ Larry Hurtado, "The Greek fragments of the Gospel of Thomas as Artefacts: Papyrological Observations on Papyrus Oxyrhynchus 1, Papyrus Oxyrhynchus 654 and Papyrus Oxyrhynchus 655," in *Das Thomasevangelium: Entstehung, Rezeption, Theologie*. Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche 157 (ed. J. Frey, E. E. Popkes, and J. Schröter. Berlin/ New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2008), 19-32. The conclusions in this article suggest that we consider the individual "Thomasine reader" rather than a "demarcated community" (p.31). Hurtado argues that because of the poor transcription of the text, the fragments being derived from three different copies, and that P.Oxy. 655 is from a papyrus roll rather than a codex (the preferred way of transmitting written sacred texts), along with Thomas' proclivity in using the second-singular Greek verbal formation indicate that they were not intended to "promote corporate/congregational religious life" (p.31). Instead, Hurtado reasons that the *Gos. Thom.* was used by like minded individuals in loose associations "sharing texts such as *Gos. Thom.* with one another", and did not constitute a "community" (p.31).

The 114 *logia* have the appearance of an *ad hoc* assortment of sayings attributed to Jesus. There was no apparent desire of the author/compiler to commit to a story, leading some to speculate that the *logia* represent a document similar to the hypothetical Q Source (*Quelle*) that many scholars trust Matthew and Luke used in the writing of their respective gospels.⁴ At first blush, one may concur with the preposition. One must, however, be aware that the fourth century manuscript did not numerically distinguish the sayings from the other, as is the case of our present text. The numbering sequence of 114 sayings is an artificial configuration initiated by Guillamont, Quispel, Puech, et al., some of the earliest renowned scholars that worked with the text, and is widely accepted by most of the academic community.⁵ These scholars used a sequencing system that conferred a numeric designation to sentences that begin either with $\pi\epsilon\chi\epsilon \bar{\iota}\varsigma$ (Jesus said...), at times simply by $\chi\epsilon$, the Coptic indicator for direct speech,⁶ and others that begin with the disciples posing questions to Jesus. For the modern reader, this may suggest that the *Gos. Thom.* is a sayings document void of coherent meaning other than that found within the individual *logia* themselves. If such a rendering were true, one would have sufficient grounds in assessing the text as a source document of, perhaps, the likes of the elusive *Quelle*, and thus severing the community that revered the document as an authoritative text from the meaning transmitted within the entirety of the text.

⁴ For discussion on *Q* and interdependency with Synoptic Gospels, see: M. Eugene Boring, "The Historical-Critical Method's 'Criteria of Authenticity': The Beatitudes in Q and Thomas as a Test Case," *Semeia* 44 (1988): 25-26.

⁵ Although there is a general consensus in the academic community that accepts Guillamont's enumeration, some such as Leipolt (112 sayings), Jean Dorese (118 sayings), Rodolphe Kasser (250 sayings) offer alternative numbering: see F. T. Fallon and Ron Cameron, "The Gospel of Thomas: A Forschungsbericht and Analysis," in "*Aufstieg und Niedergang der Romischen Welt* (ed. W. Hasse and H. Temporini; vol. 2 of *Aufstieg und Niedergang der Romischen Welt (ANRW): Geschichte und Kultur Roms im Spiegel der Neueren Forschung* (ed. Wolfgang Haase; Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1988), 4197-4200. Joseph Fitzmyer, "The Oxyrhynchus *Logoi* of Jesus and the Coptic Gospel of Thomas," *Theological Studies* 20 (1959): 512 n.28.

⁶ W. E. Crum, *A Coptic Dictionary*. (Eugene: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 1939), 746b.

The scholarship of these academics furthered our understanding of the *Gos. Thom.*, their translation of the text and subsequent conclusions propose a simplistic scribal solution to at least one of the text's most enigmatic *logion*:

ΠΕΧΕ ΙϚ ΟΥΜΑΚΑΡΙΟΣ ΠΕ ΠΜΟΥΕΙ ΠΑΕΙ ΕΤΕ ΠΡΩΜΕ ΝΑΟΥΟΜΩ
ΑΥΩ ΝΤΕΠΜΟΥΕΙ ΨΩΠΕ ΡΡΩΜΕ ΑΥΩ ΦΒΗΤ' ΝΒΙ ΠΡΩΜΕ ΠΑΕΙ
ΕΤΕ ΠΜΟΥΕΙ ΝΑΟΥΟΜΩ ΑΥΩ ΠΜΟΥΕΙ ΝΑΨΩΠΕ ΡΡΩΜΕ

Jesus said, "Blessed is the lion whom the man shall eat and the lion becomes human; and cursed is the man whom the lion shall eat and the lion will become human."⁷

The option, in their opinion, was to declare the final clause ΠΜΟΥΕΙ ΝΑΨΩΠΕ ΡΡΩΜΕ to be a scribal error, which should have rather read ΡΡΩΜΕ ΝΑΨΩΠΕ ΠΜΟΥΕΙ. In this rendering, a blessing is bestowed upon the lion for having consumed the man and subsequently the man incurs the curse for having been consumed. The correction seems from this perspective to follow a logical deductive sequence and reasoning. The man is consumed and is cursed. The lion incorporates that which is inherent in the man, and shares in humankind's access to the divine. These eminent scholars began a tradition that has continued to this day, accepting *logion 7* in altered form to reflect logical fluidity in the saying. This was not the only way sayings were written in the Mediterranean world. As Robbins citing Hurley states: "Deductive reasoning proceeds according to a standard that 'an argument is good only if the conclusion follows necessarily from the premises.'"⁸

On the other hand, however, Mediterranean wisdom sayings are not always deductive but

⁷ Bentley Layton, "The Gospel According to Thomas," in *Nag Hammadi Codex, II, 2-7, Together with XIII, 2**, *Brit. Lib. Or. 4926(1), and P.Oxy. I, 654 655* (ed. Bentley Layton; vol.1 of *Nag Hammadi Studies*, eds. Martin Krause et. al.; Leiden: E J Brill, 1989), 57. Unless otherwise indicated the translations are my own.

⁸ "Thus, deduction does not generate any new information; it simply clarifies or helps one to find information accurately." See: Vernon K. Robbins, "Enthymeme and Picture in the *Gospel of Thomas*," in *Thomasine Traditions in Antiquity: The Social and Cultural World of the Gospel of Thomas*. (ed. J. Ma. Asgeirsson, A. DeConick and R. Uro; of *Nag Hammadi and Manichaean Studies 59*, ed. J. Ma. Asgeirsson; Leiden: Brill, 2006). 180.

also abductive, purposefully employing contra-wisdom for “creating an environment that takes people on a search for meaning that lie beyond conventional understanding into a realm that produces wonder and inducts people into a special kingdom of knowledge,”⁹ a scheme that works well in the chiasmic structure of *logion 7*. In a broad survey of the available literature on the *Gos. Thom.* the scholarly consensus concedes to the conclusions of their predecessors, which is dependent on a narrow and diachronic inter-textual reading of *logion 7*.

Logion 7, however, deserves reconsideration. The “scribal error” hypothesis becomes an oversimplified solution to the enigma of the saying when measured against a synchronic analysis of the text. The examination of *logion 7* within the parameters of the preceding and succeeding *logia* may shed light on the meaning of our perplexing saying. Accordingly, if thematic and lexical analysis can demonstrate connections between the *logia*, then a clearer understanding of *logion 7* is possible. This course of inquiry may result in the *logion* relinquishing its meaning, thus facilitating the compiler’s edict that “... ΠΕΤΑΖΕ ΕΘΕΡΜΗΝΕΙΑ ΝΗΘΕΙΩΔΕ ΦΝΑΧΙ †ΠΕ ΔΝ ΜΠΜΟΥ, which is translated “...whoever discovers the interpretation of these sayings will not taste death” (*Gos. Thom.* 1).

In my thesis, I propose to show how the idea of “Oneness” with the divine is embedded within *logion 7*. It is my contention that this motif is indeed the hermeneutical key to unravelling the ambiguity of the saying. There is in some early Christian literature a thematic interest of implicitly or explicitly expressing a reunification with the divine, and thus returning to the androgynous state from the beginning of time. In service to this belief, there is an interesting appeal of interpreting *logion 7* within Philo’s understanding

⁹ Robbins, “Enthymeme.” 183.

of “oneness” as opposed to “twoness”. “Oneness” refers to the “unmixed” state of man before the “fall”, and “twoness” is the state in which man finds himself in the created world. Subsequently, salvation depends on returning to the original primordial state,¹⁰ a restoration into an “existence beyond all the divisive features of human life.”¹¹ If “oneness” is the theme by which *logion 7* can be interpreted, the question that begs answering is how this union and ultimate state is achieved. I believe that the solution lies within the rhetorical unit¹² beginning with *logion 7* and culminating with *logion 11*, where “eating” or “consuming” is the analogy by which “oneness” surfaces. The lion becomes man when consumed by man; in other words, the lion becomes part of man through the incorporation of its flesh in the function of the man’s bodily functions. Likewise the man becomes lion when eaten and is in the same manner merged with the bodily functions of the lion. The theme of unity or “oneness” becomes a prevalent theme. The remaining question is why is the blessing bestowed upon the lion and replaced by a curse upon the man for performing the same function? What can we glean from the text’s structure that “...affects the reader’s reasoning or the reader’s imagination?”¹³

I will begin with translating the relevant Coptic *logia*. This effort will enable me to identify thematic and lexical links through a rhetorical analysis that will serve to identify the parameters by which the thesis is supported. I will undertake to explain the ambiguity of *logion 7* through a synchronic approach to assert with some measure of

¹⁰ A. F. J. Klijn, “The ‘Single One’ in the Gospel of Thomas,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 81 (1962): 271-78.

¹¹ Meyer, *The Gospel of Thomas*, 81.

¹² Wilhelm Wuellner, “Where is Rhetorical Criticism Taking Us?” *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 49 (1987): 455.

¹³ Wuellner, “Rhetorical,” 455.

confidence that this idea is in fact one of the underlying motifs that the author/compiler encouraged in the 4th century text.

The discourse concerning *logion 7* has mostly revolved around an inter-textual explanation of its relevance in the *Gos. Thom.* with the work of Plato¹⁴ and the allegory of the tripartite soul. This approach, however, does not resonate, as I intend to show, with the salvific ideas presented to the community that received the *Gos. Thom.* as their authoritative text.

II. Status Quaestionis

The study of *logion 7* of the *Gos. Thom.* has evolved little with respect to its meaning. Although many books and articles have been written on the *Gos. Thom.* the significant work specific to the *logion* in question comes in the form of the following contributions: (1) a published dissertation from Howard M. Jackson,¹⁵ arguing for a Platonic reading of the *logion*;¹⁶ (2) an article from Andrew Crislip¹⁷ supporting Christian discourse on the resurrection; (3) a commentary by Richard Valantasis¹⁸ who appeals for an ascetical

¹⁴ Patterson argues that *Thomas* is imbued with “so called’ *Gnosis*, Hermeticism and Tatian spheres of thought” which are held together by “their common interest in Plato.” Stephen J. Patterson, “Jesus meets Plato: The Theology of the *Gospel of Thomas* and Middle Platonism in *Das Thomasevangelium: Entstehung, Rezeption, Theologie*, (ed. J. Frey, Jörg Popkes, Enno E. Popkes, Jens Schröter: Berlin; New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2008). 183.

¹⁵ Howard M. Jackson, *The Lion Becomes Man: The Gnostic Leontomorphic Creator and the Platonic Tradition* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1985), 179-213.

¹⁶ Recent scholarship on *logion 7* and Platonic influence, see: Lanzillotta, L. R. “Gospel of Thomas Unravelling; An Inter-textual Approach to a Locus Vexatus in Between Text and Text,” in *The Hermeneutics of Inter-Textuality in Ancient Cultures and their Afterlife in Medieval and Modern Times* (eds. Michaela Bauks, Wayne Horowitz, Armin Lange; Göttingen, Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 2013). 116-132.

¹⁷ Andrew Crislip, “Lion and Human in Gospel of Thomas Logion,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 126 (2007): 595-613.

¹⁸ Richard Valantasis, “Is the Gospel of Thomas Ascetical? Revisiting an Old Problem with a new Theory,” 7.1 *Journal of Early Christian Studies* (1999): 55-81. Richard Valantasis, *The Gospel of Thomas* (London: Routledge, 1997), 65.

interpretation of the saying; (4) a cursory explanation by Bertil Gärtner in his work on the theology of the *Gos. Thom.*,¹⁹ where he echoes the idea of the “tripartite soul” in Plato’s *Republic*²⁰; (5) April DeConick’s commentary²¹ which treats the inclusion of *logion 7* within the parameters of Gentile and Greek infiltration into the Thomasine community; (6) Jacques-É. Ménard’s²² findings that are conducive with the theme expressed in *Gos. Phil.* 108:

L’homme saint est parfaitement saint jusque /dans son corps (σῶμα). Car (γάρ), s’il a reçu le pain, il le sanctifiera, ou (ἢ) la coupe (ποτήριον)/ ou (ἢ) toute autre chose qu’il reçoit, il / les purifie. Et comment (πῶς) ne purifiera-t-il pas aussi le corps (σῶμα) ?²³

The human can make all things “holy”. It is within the human capacity to refine elements of the material realm, thus consecrating them; and (7) Claudio Gianotto’s²⁴ interpretation of the saying that underwrites the human struggle against being absorbed into the material world represented by the image of the lion. Finally, Lautaro Roig Lanzillotta tries to resolve the problematic ending in *logion 7* by an inter-textual reading of the Platonic “hypotext” (*Republic*) and changing the terms by which metaphors are understood in the context of their respective texts “even if they (the metaphors) remain the same.”²⁵ Ultimately, the remaining scholarship opts either to remain silent on the subject or to adhere to the earliest and the simplest pronouncements of “scribal error”.

¹⁹ Gärtner, *The Theology of the Gospel of Thomas*, 162-64.

²⁰ Portions of *The Republic* (588A-589B) are found in Coptic translation in NH VI,5.

²¹ April D. DeConick, “The Original Gospel of Thomas,” *Vigiliae Christianae* 56 (2002): 167-99.

²² Jacques-É. Ménard, *L’Évangile selon Thomas* (Nag Hammadi Studies V; Leiden, Brill, 1975), 87-8.

²³ Jacques-É. Ménard, *L’Évangile selon Philippe : Introduction, Texte-Traduction, Commentaire* (Paris: Cariscript), 99.

²⁴ Claudio Gianotto, “Évangile selon Thomas,” in *Écrits apocryphes chrétiens* (ed. F. Bovon and P. Geoltrain: Bibliothèque de la Pléiade; Paris: Gallimard, 1997), 37.

²⁵ Lanzillotta, “Unravelling,” 131.

A. The “Scribal Error” Hypothesis

One can only speculate that by omission, in their learned work, scholars accept the hypothesis that the saying was transmitted erroneously. Some have concluded, however, that the hypothesis is indeed sound. Miroslav Marcovich,²⁶ uses a reconstituted retroversion of Papyrus Oxyrhynchus 654. 42: [καί ὁ ἄνθρωπος ἔσται λέων...].²⁷ Marcovich, however, is not clear as to how he came about this assertion. As best as one could conclude from his article, he translates the Coptic back into Greek and then seeing that line 3c makes no apparent sense, he claims the obvious judgement that an error has occurred, transposes the words, and corrects the phrase to read “and the man will become lion.” The assertion, it seems, is based on logical sequence and not upon any textually supported evidence in P.Oxy 654. One must conclude, as Marcovich concedes, that on the one hand “there is really no need to insist on the transmitted text,”²⁸ and on the other that, “possibly in such a short *logion* as this one *C* did not agree with *O*, but one cannot be sure.”²⁹ The P.Oxy fragment is too corrupt to say with certainty what it contained and a reconstitution of the *logion* is, therefore, speculative. Either way, the saying in P. Oxy 654 will not impact the present thesis, because the main focus will be a synchronic analysis of the Coptic version of the *logion*.

As far as a correction in *logion* 7 stands, the clearest and most obvious reason for altering the text is, as stated above, to present continuity in the saying that simplifies the meaning. The “man” becomes part of the “lion” when eaten or the “lion” becomes “man”

²⁶ Miroslav Marcovich, “Textual Criticism on the Gospel of Thomas.” *Journal of Theological Studies* 20 (1969): 67.

²⁷ Marcovich uses a reconstituted translation of Papyrus Oxyrhynchus 654 that reflects the 4th century Coptic text.

²⁸ Marcovich, “Textual,” 67.

²⁹ For the purposes of the article, Marcovich uses the designation ‘*O*’ for Grenfell and Hunt translations, and ‘*C*’ for the Coptic version; see “Textual,” 53.

when eaten. In either case the obvious incorporation of one state into another is apparent. The generalization does not reflect the author's intent to have the reader search for meaning (*log.* 1). Rather, it becomes an affair in explaining the logical sequence of digestion, and a "tautological" one at that, given the simple solution this interpretation offers in light of the "paradoxical *logia* faced throughout the text [...] and in this respect NHC II, 2 certainly preserves the *lectio difficilior*."³⁰

Jackson also suggests some text critical issues that could possibly explain the *logion* in the 4th century Coptic text. His contribution results in an extensive list of scholars that adhere to various opinions relating to either a transcriptional or translational error.³¹ Doresse, Ménard, and Haenchen, he suggests, support these prepositions. Whether, Doresse and Ménard adopt either the former or the latter of the two, Jackson is not clear. Haenchen, on the other the hand, does seem to position himself in accordance with a transcriptional error supported by his understanding that the Coptic *Gos. Thom.* "was not a translation directly from the Greek Vorlage, but the occasionally faulty copy of a Coptic manuscript."³² Jackson, however, dismisses the notion of scribal error based on a rhetorical device that the author/compiler uses in the text that conveys a "punch line effect"³³ similar to what is found in *logia* 18 and 68. Here, Jackson notices that these "macarisms" follow a grammatical structure that uses the conjunction $\alpha\gamma\omega$ followed by the 1st Future tense to indicate a "surprising climax".³⁴ As such, it seems that the *logion* 7 is not grammatically isolated, and that the author uses this rhetorical structure in several other *logia* to convey a statement. This, of course, does not prove one way or the other

³⁰ Crislip, "Lion," 598.

³¹ Jackson, *Leontomorphic*, 4-7.

³² Jackson, *Leontomorphic*, 5.

³³ Jackson, *Leontomorphic*, 6-7.

³⁴ Jackson, *Leontomorphic*, 6-7.

the existence of a scribal error, either in transcription or translation. Rather, it suggests a consistency of style used within the text and calls upon further study.

The indication here is that the scholarly community did not, and has not reached a consensus on the debate considering the presence of a scribal error in *logion 7*, and the silence in contemporary literature attests to this fact.

What is striking is that scholars seem to be involved with only the problems inherent in *logion 7* and hardly any consideration is offered on the *logion's* place within the text. Much meaning has gone wayward in satisfying a narrow interpretation. Can it be that *logion 7* expresses the lowly digestive processes in a text riddled with ambiguity? This question as well as the inclusion that “These are the *secret* sayings that the living Jesus spoke...”, are reduced to, in Andrew Crislip’s words “...a commonplace truism...”³⁵

One final point should be made regarding the scribe or scribes who actually worked on the *Gos. Thom.* According to Jackson, the precision of the scribal work and the correction of his own errors, of which there are many, reduces the possibility of a major mistake such as the one being discussed, given that there are relatively minor in comparison to the rest of the gospel.³⁶ I would tend to agree with this statement. In the remaining *logia* of the *Gos. Thom.* there has been no evidence of errors of this magnitude. Of course we cannot exclude it from the realm of possibility; however, the probability is diminished and causes to reflect upon the deeper meaning of the *logion* that otherwise could have been overlooked.

³⁵ Crislip, “Lion,” 598.

³⁶ Jackson, *Leontomorphic*, 7.

B. The “Platonic Influence”

Although many scholars adhere to the “scribal error” theory, some propose a possible key to understanding *logion 7* through a diachronic intertextual reading from Plato’s *Republic*. Gärtner’s examination of this *logion*, although not explicit, echoes with Platonic themes of the evil body symbolically depicted as “the lion”. He states:

Behind this saying on the lion in the *Gospel of Thomas* there would appear to be the thought that when man conquers the material side of existence – the body which is of matter – he is then saved; but if he is seduced by the material world, he is without knowledge and under the curse of oblivion.³⁷

Nowhere, however, does Gärtner refer to Platonic thought. It is more readily implied, if one reads it through the lens of Jackson’s thesis. One cannot deny its attraction to the idea of the struggle of the tripartite soul, consisting of the “many-headed beast, the lion, and man” in book ix (589a) of the *Republic*.³⁸ What is interesting here is that in *Rep.* 589a-b, Socrates refers to “the lion” and to “the man”, and that in some manner, either one at some point finds it “profitable” to control the other; at no point do they destroy the other. Rather, it becomes essential in Platonic thought of the tripartite soul that all three components of the soul are necessary and work in unison,

... to be just is to say that we ought to say and do all we can to strengthen the man within us, so he can look after the many-headed beast like a farmer nursing and cultivating its tamer elements...while he makes an ally of the lion and looks after the common interests of all by reconciling them with each other and himself (589b).

³⁷ Gärtner, *Theology*, 163.

³⁸ Plato, *The Republic* (trans. D. Lee; London, England: Penguin Group, 2007), 330.

Howard Jackson sees more than an affinity between *logion 7* and section 589a of the *Republic*. He finds plausibility of a Platonic connection within *Gos. Thom. 7* on the basis that, "... to find the translation of a passage from Plato among the sacred books of a fourth century monastic order is, to say the least, 'something of a surprise,' for Platonic influence is one thing, but a lengthy direct citation is another."³⁹ Indeed, Jackson finds it so exciting that it seems that the *crux* of his Platonic influence hypothesis is derived from this discovery. Inevitably, however, there are some issues that must be examined in order to see clearly through his thesis. Crislip makes some useful criticisms on this matter. First, the Coptic version of the *Republic*⁴⁰ is of such poor quality and the "product of inept translation."⁴¹ Notwithstanding the awkward translation, there are some fundamental differences between Plato's allegory of the soul and its counterpart in *logion 7*, the former is a tripartite entity and the latter is a bipartite entity. Second, in *logion 7*, the purposeful action is consumption or eating "the man", whereas in *the Republic* the theme requires that "the man" tame the lion and multi-headed beast. The difference between the two texts leads one to wonder if "it is a stretch to assume the reflection of the idea from the Republic in *Gos. Thom. 7*."⁴²

³⁹ Jackson, *Leontomorphic*, 204. The quote "something of a surprise" comes from, as Jackson footnotes, James Brashler. Jackson wants to make a strong case for the significance of the Platonic find; however, at this time, translation issues prevent a proper assessment.

⁴⁰ Louis Painchaud, *Les sentences de Sextus (NH XII, 1), Fragments (NH XII,3) et Fragment de la République de Platon (NH VI,5)* (eds. P.-H. Poirier and L. Painchaud; Bibliothèque copte de Nag Hammadi, Section « Textes » 11 ; Québec: Presses de l'Université Laval, 1993), 109-155.

⁴¹ Howard M. Jackson, "Plato, Republic 588A-589B (VI, 5)," in *The Nag Hammadi Library in English* (ed. D. M. Parrott; Leiden: HarperCollins, 1988), 316. R. Van Den Broek refers to *CG VI, 5*, as a "...bad translation of Plato's Republic. R. Van Den Broek, "Present State of Gnostic Studies," *Vigiliae Christianae* 37 (1983): 41-71.

⁴² Crislip, "Lion," 601.

C. The Idea of “Oneness”

Although there are many themes that can be extrapolated from the *logia* of the *Gos. Thom.*, the focus of my thesis will be on the notion of “oneness”. With the help of both ancient and contemporary authors, I hope to illustrate this idea as a function of salvific necessity for the *Thomasine* community, and in fact manifested in the *logia* of this present study.

Therefore, I will begin with Philo of Alexandria (20 B.C.E. – 50 C.E.), a contemporary of the apostle Paul (c. 5 C.E. – 67 C.E.), whose religious views were influenced by the eastern religions of Orpheus, Isis, Iran, and interpreted by Greek philosophers.⁴³ The significance of Philo in this thesis is his understanding of “oneness”, that although seemingly independent from Gnostic thought, nevertheless echoes the ideas of this community.

Baer’s work on Philo⁴⁴ as a case on point, illustrates the notion of “oneness” that reflects the Gnostic perspective. In particular, the male and female symbolism and analogy in Philo suggests his recognition of the religious influences exhibited in many texts of the Nag Hammadi corpus, dealing with the degradation of the physical world as it came into being through the machinations of the evil demiurge. In the Gnostic creation myth, the light the demiurge possesses through its creator Sophia is scattered in the created world. The demiurge is tricked into scattering the divine particles of light inherent within the Gnostic. Ultimately the saviour is dispatched to enlighten the Gnostic or the

⁴³ Kenneth Schenck, *A Brief Guide to Philo* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2005), 23 note1. Erwin R. Goodenough, *By Light, Light: The Mystic Gospel of Hellenistic Judaism* (Amsterdam: Philo Press, 1969), 263.

⁴⁴ Richard A. Baer, Jr., *Philo’s use of the Categories Male and Female* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1970).

“elect” and guide their return to the Pleroma (the divine realm) thus recuperating the scattered divine light to their origin.⁴⁵

It is within this cosmic myth that we find the idea of “oneness,” the desire to join with the divine, and as such, find reference to this idea in Philo. First, there is the notion of the male/female dichotomy. The male category relates to the rational soul, “...in the sphere of nous, the Logos, and ultimately God himself, whereas the female counterpart is the relative component of the sense-perceptible world, which one must forsake.”⁴⁶ Second; there is the notion of “becoming one as God ...who knows no mixture but is in his isolation a unity (μόνας).”⁴⁷

There are significant differences between Philo and Gnostic thought that must be acknowledged, the least of which on the surface, is Philo’s view that the female component should be “...forsaken...in terms of changing from duality to unity,”⁴⁸ as opposed to incorporating the female realm in Gnostic circles.

Klijn’s⁴⁹ view on “oneness” seemingly reflects Philo who understands the value of an inquiry into “oneness,” as “one of the main questions with regard to this gospel is about its contents and the meaning of its message – in other words: its theology [...] I am dealing with one very important term [...] the word ‘single one.’”⁵⁰ In his study Klijn compiles the list of sayings that reflect the idea of the “single one”, and identifies seven *logia* (4, 11, 16, 22, 23, 49, 75, and 106), where the Coptic word OYA or expression OYA OYOT are found. In these sayings, Klijn submits that the meaning of the “single one” is

⁴⁵ For a short synopsis of the creation myth see: Karen King, *The Secret Revelation of John* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006). 3-5.

⁴⁶ Baer, *Philo’s Use of Male and Female*, 45-6.

⁴⁷ Baer, *Philo’s Use of Male and Female*, 49.

⁴⁸ Baer, *Philo’s Use of Male and Female*, 49.

⁴⁹ Klijn, “The ‘Single One,’” 271-78.

⁵⁰ Klijn affirms the use of the term “gospel” in Thomas because “in the real sense of the word: [it is] the message of the good news.” 271.

tantamount to being the elect and thus be saved. The elect are aware that at one time they were a “single one” and then became two, “male and female”. Accordingly, salvation is determined by returning to “oneness” and the restoration of the original androgynous state of being that is underpinned by the Jewish Adamic tradition. These questions will be discussed below, but for the moment let us look at a Christian “Gnostic” perspective through Meeks.⁵¹

Meeks perspective revolves on the importance of attaining salvation through unification for the early Christian community. The “Gnostics,” being one of these communities, however, “thought themselves as... the restored original mankind.”⁵² The plight of humankind is defined through division, salvation is attained through unity, as reiterated in the *Gospel according to Philip* (68: 24-25): “When Eve was still in Adam death did not exist. When she was separated from him death came into being.”⁵³ It is this idea of returning to the original state of “man”, the androgynous being that was divided by the Lord God who, “caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man...then he took one of his ribs...And the rib that the Lord had taken from the man he made into a woman...” (Gen. 2: 21-22, NRSV). According to Meeks, reunification is expressed in the “Gnostic Christian” milieu through the ritual of baptism and ultimately, as in the *Gos. Phil.*, the sacrament of the Bridal Chamber.⁵⁴ The baptismal ritual signifies the removal of the “old man” and “the body of flesh”, as the initiate removes his/her clothing before immersion arising into a “new man who is renewed ... after the image of his creator” (Col 2:3:10,

⁵¹ Wayne A. Meeks, “The Image of the Androgyne: Some Uses of Symbol in Earliest Christianity,” *History of Religions* 13 (1974): 165-208

⁵² Meeks, “Image of the Androgyne,” 166.

⁵³ Bentley Layton, “The Gospel According to Philip,” in *Nag Hammadi Codex, II, 2-7, Together with XIII, 2**, *Brit. Lib. Or. 4926(1), and P.Oxy. I, 654 655* (ed. B. Layton; vol.1 of *Nag Hammadi Studies*, eds. Martin Krause et. al.; Leiden: E J Brill, 1989), 179.

⁵⁴ Meeks, “Image of the Androgyne,” 190.

NRSV).⁵⁵ Similarly, the mystery of the Bridal Chamber reflects the union as well. The initiates are joined to their heavenly counterpart – “angel” – and thus restore their “true self (eikon).”⁵⁶ Either perspective is valid, as all the scholars mentioned have made a strong case supporting their respective positions. The relevant question here is; does this help us in our understanding of *logion 7* as it sits in the *Gos. Thom.*? These insights into the idea of “oneness”, I believe, help further the importance of such an interpretation to help understand the meaning of *logion 7* in the *Gos. Thom.* In this thesis, however, my interest is not in finding support for one tradition from another. Scholars through their many approaches and methods have provided admirable and erudite reasoning in supporting their cases. I can only hope to provide an adequate contribution to the discourse.

III. Methodology

A diachronic study of the *Gos. Thom.* enlightens the historical understanding of the text and how it came to be in its final 4th century form. Many questions, however, concerning the community that sought religious profit from the text as it had come to be known are left unanswered. Resolution of the controversies over the Gnostic character of *Thomas*⁵⁷ can be addressed by the diachronic discourse that traces the interpolations of Christian and Gnostic editors from the *P. Oxy* texts to the 4th century Coptic document. In the present thesis, however, I suggest that these methods have a secondary role. The

⁵⁵ Meeks, “Image of the Androgyne,” 188.

⁵⁶ Meeks, “Image of the Androgyne,” 191.

⁵⁷ Antti Marjanen, “Is Thomas a Gnostic Gospel,” in *Thomas at the Crossroads: Essays on the Gospel of Thomas*, (ed. R. Uro; Edinburg: T&T Clark, 1989), 107-109. For further reading on the controversy that *Gos. Thom.* not a Gnostic text and the negative, alternate, and catholic reaction to this theory from Gilles Quispel’s point of view, see: Gilles Quispel, “The Gospel of Thomas Revisited,” in *Colloque international sur les textes de Nag Hammadi*, (ed. B. Barc. Québec: Presses de l’Université de Laval, 1981), 219, 231.

synchronic approach, studying the text in its final form, contributes to our understanding of *Gos. Thom.* in general and *logion 7* in particular.

A. Synchronic Approach

In my thesis, I will be approaching the *Gos. Thom.* through a synchronic perspective. This, I believe, will aid in my search for meaning of the text itself. Most research up to this point has engaged with this gospel from a diachronic perspective, and we are indebted to these scholars for their work on the possibilities of how the text, the community, and its theology evolved. The time has come, however, to study the text at hand. This is the end point where the meaning of the text is conveyed through its respective *logia*. And as such, we must, conscientiously and meticulously endeavour to find and draw out that meaning.

In particular, the meaning of this *logion* can be best brought out through a synchronic approach; it cannot in of itself render a complete picture of what the text wished to convey. The complete text must be considered.

One of the major downsides of a diachronic intertextual reading is that one runs the danger of transposing the symbolism of one text onto that of another. One example of this is Jackson's rendering of *logion 7* in comparison to Plato's *Republic*. Passion is expressed in the "leonine" symbolism and desires of the material world. To my knowledge, there is no other similar reference in any of the remaining *logia* of the *Gos. Thom.* subject to such an interpretation. Therefore, the *logion* is isolated from the remaining text. If one continues to import meaning on the various *logia* inter-textually without consideration of the inner-connectivity of the text, one runs the danger of finding

infinite interpretations according to one's own perceptions. Many scholars read intertextually without consideration of the motifs exhibited in the document. Although it must be said that their approach is not to find meaning, but rather trace the tradition of an evolved text and decipher from where that text originated. One needs to keep in mind, however, the meaning of these words within the believing community. What the "lion" symbolizes in Hellenic or Egyptian terms is not necessarily how it should be understood in the *Gos. Thom.* Moreover, the "leontomorphic" demiurge of "Gnostic" mythology may lead one astray when an examination of *logion 7* is isolated and does not consider understanding each character within the thematic overview of the text.

B. Philology

As stated above, my intention is to provide a translation of the pertinent *logia* that impact specifically on *logion 7*. As defined by Max Margolis and reiterated by Bentley Layton:

"Philology is that which has for its object a study of the origin and development of language in general, dealing, whether in a philosophical or historical manner, not so much with this or that particular language, but with all languages, exemplifying amidst the variety of types the universal laws governing articulate speech as a vehicle of thought, the phonetic decay of words, their semantic development, etc. [It has] for its aim the knowledge of human thought as far as it has been expressed."⁵⁸

Specific words and phrases will flesh out meaning within the context of the text. With the audience in mind, what is read or heard in *Gos. Thom.* resonates with specific ideas that the words reflect. Thus, for example, the Greco-Coptic word **μακαριος**: may express "blessedness", "happiness", or being "fortunate", when considered in the context of

⁵⁸ Max L. Margolis, "The Scope and Methodology of Biblical Philology," *Jewish Quarterly Review* 1 (1910): 6.

transcendent or non-transcendent circumstances.⁵⁹ However, even these translations of the term may be erroneous if one does not keep within the synchronic parameters of the text and forage into the biases of New Testament studies towards Christian “Gnostic” texts.⁶⁰ In this context, Layton is correct that Nag Hammadi philology is and should be independent of that in New Testament studies, because the latter’s imposition of undue discriminations on the former in order to elevate its own primacy and *vice versa*.⁶¹ Therefore, it remains crucial that when doing philology on the Nag Hammadi texts, agendas are set aside and the philological imperative is that “... it tries to approach every text as being *in potential* an equally valid expression of the human spirit.”⁶²

C. Rhetorical / Structural Criticism

In analyzing the text of *logion* 7, I will be using a rhetorical approach as defined by Marc Girard.⁶³ The utility of working with Girard’s method is that it is wholly conducive with a synchronic approach in analyzing any given text. Girard’s methodology is a two-pronged approach. First there is the heuristic perspective; the other a hermeneutical approach. The former,

d’un point de vue heuristique, elle vise à découvrir et à mettre en lumière l’architecture de surface d’un texte (...) c’est-à-dire l’articulation cohérente des mots et des idées. (...) Toutefois, la méthode structurelle ne se contente pas de radiographier et donc de mettre en lumière une mécanique purement formelle de composition. D’un point de vue herméneutique, elle vise à éclairer le sens du texte ; modestement, elle contribue à sa manière au processus d’interprétation.

⁵⁹ F. W. Danker, *A Greek-English Lexicon*. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2000), 610a - 611b.

⁶⁰ It is not within the purview of this thesis to enter into an ongoing discussion on the merits of Gnostic nature of *Gos. Thom.*, but that it was among the documents found at Nag Hammadi and deemed heretical.

⁶¹ Bentley Layton, “The Recovery of Gnosticism: The Philologist’s Task in the Investigation of Nag Hammadi,” *Second Century: A Journal of Early Christian Studies* 1 (1981): 86.

⁶² Layton, “Recovery,” 86.

⁶³ Marc Girard, *Les Psaumes: Analyse structurelle et interprétation* (3 vols, Montréal: Bellarmin, 1984-1994).

(...) On se rend compte, en fait, que, dans la grande majorité des cas, la structure supporte le sens. Autrement dit, elle permet au lecteur de capter le sens en sériant les éléments par ordre de gradation et d'importance : idée dominante, sous-dominante, et ainsi de suite. Elle imprime donc un mouvement particulier à la lecture même du texte : celui-ci ne se lit plus principalement de manière cursive, verset après verset, mais plutôt de façon globale en commençant par exemple par les extrémités (s'il s'agit d'un 'inclusion') ou par le milieu (s'il s'agit d'une 'pointe émergent.')

In the present case, concerning *logion 7*, my process will be to find the parameters by which I can confidently locate the saying according to common themes. *Logia 7-11* seem to form a coherent unit of meaning, where one can identify thematic and lexical parallels.

In the search for common themes, I will be using what Girard refers to as “les parallélismes synonymiques” and “antithétiques”⁶⁵ in order to explain the meaning of *logion 7* within the larger context of chosen sayings. This is a format used to sequester the various terms found within two or three passages by letters a, a', a'' etc., and in the regard to the antithetical an alphanumeric sequencing, a, a⁻¹, b, b⁻¹. Thus, the various themes and words may be delineated graphically according to their similarity or opposition; i.e. “consuming” (*log. 7*); “choosing” (*log. 8*); “one becoming two” (*log. 11*); “large and small” (*log. 8*); the “one and the many” (*log. 8*); “gathering” (*log. 8, 9*); “scattering” (*log. 9*); “casting” (*log. 10*), and so on. Within this scheme of words and themes a clearer picture of meaning evolves. A detailed structure emerges, and if the saying were explained solely on diachronic grounds the meaning could be overlooked in regards to the overall text. The diachronic method, however, is most useful in the works

⁶⁴ M. Girard, « L'analyse structurelle », dans J. Duhaime et O. Mainville [éds], *Entendre la voix du Dieu vivant : interprétations et pratiques actuelles de la Bible* [Collection Lectures biblique 41]. Montréal, Médiaspaul, 1994. 150-151.

⁶⁵ Girard, *Les Psaumes*, 36-7.

of DeConick and Jackson, who evaluate *logion 7* in terms of the historical evolution⁶⁶ of *Gos. Thom.* and the Gnostic synthesis of biblical and non-biblical texts.⁶⁷

To my knowledge, a synchronic approach in conjunction with the methodology of rhetorical / structural criticism has never yet been attempted. It is my hope that examining *logion 7* with these tools of inquiry the ambiguity surrounding the saying will be cleared away, and the intentions of its author/compiler will surface.

⁶⁶ DeConick is of the opinion that the fourth century text of the *Gos. Thom.* is the end result of a constant influx of different groups joining the *Thomasine* community at various historical stages. She, therefore, asserts that the *logia* reflect new and changing beliefs, and that the text is a “Rolling Corpus” of sayings as the community expanded and dealt with internal and external conflicts; see DeConick, “Original,” 167-99.

⁶⁷ Jackson traces “leonine” symbolism throughout the ancient word and synthesizes it with Gnostic belief. He states: “The task at hand is to identify the different cultural ingredients which went to produce the Gnostic mythological amalgam, and, so far as possible, to mark out the stages of their individual development and their entry into the Gnostic tradition,” (Jackson, *Leontomorphic*, 45).

Chapter One:

A Rhetorical / Analysis of Logion 7

1.1 The Enigma of the Seventh Logion

The seventh *logion* in the 4th century Coptic *Gospel of Thomas* is undoubtedly the most enigmatic saying encountered in the entire text:

1. ΠΕΧΕ ΙC̄
- 2a. ΟΥ ΜΑΚΑΡΙΟΣ ΠΕ ΠΜΟΥΕΙ
- 2b. ΠΔΕΙ ΕΤΕΠΡΩΜΕ ΝΑΟΥΟΜϞ
- 2c. ΑΥΩ Ν̄ΤΕΠΜΟΥΕΙ ΨΩΠΤΕ Ρ̄ΡΩΜΕ
- 3a. ΑΥΩ ϞΒΗΤ Ν̄ΒΙ ΠΡΩΜΕ
- 3b. ΠΔΕΙ ΕΤΕ ΠΜΟΥΕΙ ΝΑΟΥΟΜϞ
- 3c. ΑΥΩ ΠΜΟΥΕΙ ΝΑΨΩΠΤΕ Ρ̄ΡΩΜΕ

1. Jesus said
- 2a. Blessed is the lion
- 2b. whom the man shall eat
- 2c. and the lion becomes man
- 3a. and cursed is the man
- 3b. whom the lion will eat
- 3c. and the lion will become human

Many, if not all scholars having treated the saying inevitably arrive to similar conclusions, albeit with different reasons for attributing to it such a dubious distinction.

The range of commentary spans from the simplistic (and most commonly used) attribute of scribal error⁶⁸ solved by an apparent homoioteleuton⁶⁹ in line 3c that mirrors line 2c of

⁶⁸ The emendation according to Guillaumont should read ΠΡΩΜΕ ΝΑΨΩΠΤΕ ΜΜΟΥΕΙ. Antoine Guillaumont et al., *The Gospel According to Thomas: Coptic Text Established and Translated* (Leiden, E.J.Brill, 1959), Fallon and Cameron, *Forschungsbericht*, 4197. Also Stephen J. Patterson, Hans-Gebhard Bethge and James M. Robinson, *The Fifth Gospel: The Gospel of Thomas Comes of Age* (London: T&T Clark, 2011), 100 note 5. See also Ioannis D. Karabidopoulos, "To Gnostikon 'Kata Thoman Euaggelion.'" in *Theologikon Symposium*. Edited by G. I. Mantzarides: Saloniki, P.K Chretou, 1967: 18; «Ἡ ἔννοια τοῦ

logion 7: $\alpha\gamma\omega$ $\pi\mu\omicron\gamma\epsilon\iota$ $\bar{\nu}\alpha\zeta\omega\pi\epsilon$ $\bar{\rho}\rho\omega\mu\epsilon$,⁷⁰ and $\alpha\gamma\omega$ $\bar{\nu}\tau\epsilon\pi\mu\omicron\gamma\epsilon\iota$ $\zeta\omega\pi\epsilon$ $\bar{\rho}\rho\omega\mu\epsilon$. In either case the man ($\pi\rho\omega\mu\epsilon$) eats or is eaten and is subsequently deemed condemned. In the first place because he is not blessed, and second that he is explicitly denounced in lines 3a,b. This is the first problem encountered in the *logion*. Why is the man seemingly condemned either way? The man eats the lion and the lion is blessed: 2a. $\omicron\gamma\mu\alpha\kappa\alpha\rho\iota\omicron\varsigma$ $\pi\epsilon$ $\pi\mu\omicron\gamma\epsilon\iota$, – blessed is the lion 2b. $\pi\alpha\epsilon\iota$ $\epsilon\tau\epsilon$ $\pi\rho\omega\mu\epsilon$ $\bar{\nu}\alpha\omicron\gamma\omicron\mu\eta$ – whom the man shall eat. Line 3a articulates humankind’s demise due to consumption, and later confirmed by the blessing in line 3c that the lion is blessed when the lion consumes the man, and itself becomes human; $\alpha\gamma\omega$ $\pi\mu\omicron\gamma\epsilon\iota$ $\bar{\nu}\alpha\zeta\omega\pi\epsilon$ $\bar{\rho}\rho\omega\mu\epsilon$. The act of consumption, in this *logion* is an apparent condition of achieving blessedness. The corrective for the ambiguity is a simple exchange of the noun $\mu\pi\omicron\gamma\epsilon\iota$ and $\bar{\rho}\rho\omega\mu\epsilon$, so that line 3c reads $\alpha\gamma\omega$ $\bar{\rho}\rho\omega\mu\epsilon$ $\bar{\nu}\alpha\zeta\omega\pi\epsilon$ $\pi\mu\omicron\gamma\epsilon\iota$ – “and the man shall become the lion”. With this emendation, first suggested by Guillaumont⁷¹, and subsequently by Rudolphe Kasser⁷² and Jacques-É Ménéard⁷³, other scholars also tended to agree. Exceptions are Howard Jackson⁷⁴ and

λογίου εἶναι λίαν σκοτεινή». Gathercole is pessimistic of Nagel suggestion that the break in the parallelism (which should read) “the human will become the lion” is explained away “by an Aramaic *vorlage* in which the word order does not determine which word is the subject and which is the predicate. The syntax in the Coptic is clear, even if the resulting sense is mysterious.” Simon Gathercole, *The Composition of The Gospel of Thomas: Original Language and Influences* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 47-48. The enduring perspective that a scribal error and emendation of line 3c reads “...and the [man] becomes lion” persist.

⁶⁹ “(Gk: similar ending) is a technical term in textual criticism that denotes scribal error in copying manuscripts, in which words, parts of words, or lines are omitted because of the transcriber’s eye fell to a subsequent and similar ending, whether of a syllable, word or line.” Richard N. Soulen and R. Kendall Soulen, *Handbook of Biblical Criticism: 3rd Edition* (Louisville: Knox Press, 2001), 82.

⁷⁰ $\bar{\rho}\rho\omega\mu\epsilon$ = be human. A fixed expressions consisting of a zero article phrase suffixed to a prenominal state. Bentley Layton: *A Coptic Grammar: With Chrestomathy and Glossary: 2nd Edition*, Wiesbaden, Otto Harrassowitz KG, 2004. 141. §180b.

⁷¹ Guillaumont, *Thomas*, 5.

⁷² Rodolphe Kasser. *L'évangile selon Thomas: Présentation et commentaire théologique*. Neuchâtel : Delachaux & Niestlé, 1961, 38.

⁷³ Jacques-É Ménéard. *L'Évangile Selon Thomas*, (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1975), 56-57, 87-88.

⁷⁴ Jackson, *Leontomorphic*, 5-7.

Andrew Crislips⁷⁵ who suggest that *logion 7* should be upheld as presented in the text. And, still, most other scholars in their commentaries and discussions overlook *logion 7* altogether.

It seems most prudent then, before continuing with the analysis, to explore the ambiguity that many have struggled with, beginning with the obvious. If the corrective of inverting the last two nouns “lion” and “man” applies, then the saying in of itself follows a logical pattern. Once one thing, whether animal or human, consumes something else, digestion breaks the former down to its constituent parts and either incorporates the appropriate parts or eliminates the unnecessary parts altogether. The process, as observed and commented by ancient medical and philosophical writers, is wholly natural and evident in human and animal physiology.⁷⁶ There is nothing that this process of consumption can add to the text’s intention to communicate anything religious or spiritual of the world or the origins of mankind, and certainly does not correspond with the complexities of the remaining *logia* in *Gos. Thom.* What is discerned is that one thing becomes part of the other once consumed. What we cannot determine from isolating *logion 7* is its meaning in the context of the entire text.

The use of leonine imagery stands out in *logion 7* as the focus of contrast to “man” and the adjectival pronouncements of “blessed” and “cursed”. The enigma remains if the significance of the words is isolated from the larger thematic relevance of the text. It would seem unreasonable that the author/compiler of this text would insert a saying totally irrelevant or of such simplicity that is in striking contrast to the complexity of the remaining *logia*. On the other hand, if *logion 7* is maintained as transmitted in the fourth

⁷⁵ Crislip, “Lion,” 598.

⁷⁶ Crislip, “The Lion and Human,” 597-8.

century text, one can assuredly identify that the *lectio difficilior* is preserved.⁷⁷ The question is how the “harder reading” can shed some light on the intended meaning.

Why is the human blessed if he eats the lion? Why is he cursed when consumed by the lion, and why does the *lion* become *man*? One can only speculate on the blessed state of man. Consuming the lion or being consumed, however, appears as the transformative act that alters the human state of being. Gärtner’s work on humanity’s stature suggests that the concept of human duality is a composite of the worldly nature of the beast (in this case represented by the lion), and human divine nature. When treating *logion 7*, Gärtner posits that man must conquer his bestial nature, i.e., “...the material side of existence”⁷⁸ the very same nature that Jackson envisions as the “leontomorphic” manifestation of the demiurge in Gnostic literature.⁷⁹ The demiurge, the creator god, in the *Apocryphon of John* represented as a “lion-faced serpent”,⁸⁰ is hard to ignore when such a direct link is apparent. One may be lulled into making the connection between the two. The reader of *logion 7* may argue this very point, as Jackson’s thesis clearly demonstrates. The hazard of this reasoning is that the demiurge is not otherwise present in *Gos. Thom.* aside from a possible veiled reference to the creator god in *logion 100* who is distinguished from Jesus.⁸¹

⁷⁷ Crislip, “Lion,” 598. The term *lectio difficilior* denotes: “...when a choice is to be made between two or more renderings of a text ‘the more difficult reading is the most probable,’ i.e., more likely to be original the logic of the rule is based on the assumption that subsequent copyists would attempt to eliminate from the text grammatical, historical, or theological errors or ambiguities.” Soulen and Soulen, *Handbook*, 100.

⁷⁸ Gärtner, *Theology*. 163.

⁷⁹ Jackson, *Lion*, 176-7. In order to avoid the trappings and intricacies of the terms “*Gnostic* and *Gnosticism*”, I consider Perkins’ solution that the term is, “an indication of genus rather than species” sufficiently expresses its use in this thesis. PHEME PERKINS, “What is A Gnostic Gospel,” *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 71 (2009): 104.

⁸⁰ Stevan L. Davies, “The Lion Headed Yaldabaoth,” *Journal of Religious History* 4 (1981): 496.

⁸¹ “They showed Jesus a gold coin and said to him, “Caesar’s men demand taxes from us.” He said to them, “Give Caesar what belongs to Caesar, give god (ΤΙΝΟΥΤΕ) what belongs to god, and give me what is mine” (*log.* 100). See also: André Gagné, “The Gospel According to Thomas and the New Testament.” in *Ancient Christian Apocrypha: Reception of The New Testament in Christian Apocrypha* (ed. by T. Nicklas

In *logion* 100, there may be a reference to the demiurge, or at least the idea of a hierarchical system headed by Jesus, followed by god, and then Caesar. The rendering for the word ΠΝΟΥΤΕ, meaning God, implies the demiurge. Throughout the *Gos. Thom.*, however, the Coptic term for the Pleromic God is ΠΕΙΩΤ, the father (*logia* 97, 98, etc.), especially when referring to the “kingdom of the father...” Unfortunately, the demiurge is not as evident as some may suggest. One motive behind making the connection is that by accepting the associations with the demiurge, the tendency is to view *Gos. Thom.* as a Gnostic text, written by Gnostics for Gnostics; a debate that has not yet seen resolution in the academic community. The pressing question is; does the presence of the demiurge in some way aid in finding the meaning behind the words of *Logion* 7?

Gärtner and Jackson both agree that it does and for similar reasons tend to recognise the lion metaphor reflecting the presence of at least the idea of the demiurge’s machinations in the world. Their conclusions result however from dissimilar approaches to the problem. Jackson suggests an inter-textual diachronic reading solves the riddle of *log. 7* when interpreted through the lens of Plato’s *Republic*.⁸² The tri-partite human soul (beast, lion, and man) in the *Republic* is the agglomeration of the parts necessary for

and J.-M. Roesli; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2014), 27-39. J.-M. Sevrin, “Évangile selon Thomas,” in *Écrits gnostiques : La bibliothèque de Nag Hammadi* (ed. J.-P. Mahé and P.-Poirier; Paris: Gallimard (Bibliothèque de la Pléiade 53), (2007), 326. Risto Uro dissents on the grounds that “the Greek author of the *Gos. Thom.*, at least, does not use ‘god’ to denote a lower or evil deity subordinate to Jesus or the father.” The objection is based on the term ἄθεοι (without God) in *P. Oxy.* 1:23-30; *Gos. Thom.* 30, that suggests Jesus is against those without God are without the father. Uro suggest that ‘God’ and ‘father’ are used interchangeably: “The preference of the ‘father’ to ‘God’”, Uro writes, “as a designation of supreme deity does not necessarily mean that demiurgical beliefs have penetrated into the symbolic world of Thomas” the *kingdom of God* is attested to “with certainty” in the Greek fragment *P. Oxy.* 1.7-8; *Gos. Thom.* 27:1, and is the “most probable reconstruction on line *P. Oxy.* 654. 15 (*Gos. Thom.* 3:3).” His second objection is based, again using the Greek fragment (*P. Oxy.* 1:23-30; *Gos. Thom.* 30), on the contrast between ἄθεοι (without God) to μόνος (the one), suggesting Jesus is against those without God are without the father. Risto Uro, *Thomas: Seeking the Historical Context of the Gospel of Thomas* (London: T & T Clark, 2003), 42. However, the fourth century Coptic text, and in particular the *logia* Uro references are devoid of any mention of kingdom of god (which would otherwise be indicated in Coptic as ΤΜΝΤΕΡΟ ΜΠΝΟΥΤΕ).

⁸² Jackson, *Lion*, 175-213.

human existence. The lion and bestial manifestations demand taming so man (πρωμε/ ἄνθρωπος), in the author’s agricultural metaphor of the γεωργός:⁸³ ΜΠΓΕΩΡΓΟΣ: “ΝΘ ΕΝΩΩΓ ΜΠΓΕΩΡΓΟΣ ΕΨΑΦΣΑΑῆΩ ΜΠΕΓΓΕΝΗΜΑ ΜΜΗΝΕ” (NHC VI, 5: 51,20-23)⁸⁴: “just as the farmer, he too, is able to nourish his produce daily”, require him to suppress his un-tamed nature and see to the task at hand, which in Plato’s *Republic* revolves about the forces that influence the human propensity for injustice and justice.⁸⁵ Gärtner’s synchronic approach considers the less ambiguous *logion* 11: ΑΥΩ ΝΕΤΟΝΖ ΣΕΝΑΜΟΥ ΑΝ (and who is alive will not die) and *logion* 56: ΠΕΝΤΑΖΣΟΥΩΝ ΠΚΟΣΜΟΣ ΑΦΖΕ ΕΥΠΤΩΜΑ ΑΥΩ ΠΕΝΤΑΖΖΕΕ ΑΠΤΩΜΑ ΠΚΟΣΜΟΣῆΠΩΑ ῆΜΟΦ ΑΝ (... Whoever has come to understand the world has found a corpse, and whoever has found a corpse is superior to the world). The sayings convey what it is to be alive and dead is relative to one’s understanding of the material world. Gärtner identifies the oppositions and parallelisms between the two sayings in *Gos. Thom.* suggesting a Gnostic interpretation of deficient materiality, ruled by the ignorant malevolent demiurge and his archons.⁸⁶ The “living” and “the dead” are terms of opposition expressing ones relationship to the ephemeral world.⁸⁷ Thus, for Gärtner, the “living” partake of “gnosis” and identify the world’s transient nature, while the repercussions of ignorance of materiality are oblivious to the “dead.” In understanding the parallelism in *log.* 56, having “found” and finding is akin to being “superior”. Gärtner proposes that the two sayings taken together suggest that the world is a corpse, empty and hollow of any spiritual or pneumatic elements and

⁸³ Danker, *Lexicon*, 196(a).

⁸⁴ NH VI, 5. See also, Painchaud, « *République* ..» 132-3.

⁸⁵ NH VI, 5: 51:20-28.

⁸⁶ Archon (Gk. ἄρχων – ruler, lord, prince). See Danker, *Lexicon*, 140 (b). Also, Kurt Rudolph, *Gnosis: The Nature and History of Gnosticism* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1983), 67-68.

⁸⁷ “... *This heaven will pass away, and the one above it will pass away.*” *Log.* 11a.

subject to decay. Having knowledge of this for someone who “finds the interpretation of these sayings” (ΤΑΖΕ ΕΘΕΡΜΗΝΕΙΑ ΝΗΕΙΩΑΧΕ), declares superiority to things of this world and “will not experience death” (ΦΝΑΧΙΤΠΕ ΔΝ ΜΠΜΟΥ) (*log.* 1). The “lion” of *logion* 7 symbolises materiality imparted on humanity by its creator. Humankind’s higher nature, imbued with the light of the father, requires that it overcome the needs and desires associated with the “flesh”, lest the curse befall the man whom the lion eats, but is “blessed” if the leonine nature is consumed by “humankind”.

There are persistent problems with these interpretations, however. Gärtner does not treat line 3c with any consideration other than to echo Guillamont’s perspective that an obvious scribal error has occurred. Jackson fails to account for the differences in consumption and the union of two elements into a complete whole. The difference is important because it fundamentally alters the interpretation of *logion* 7. The act of eating/consuming in *logion* 7, suggests human assimilation of food that “becomes part of the human”, or as Crislip duly notes “ὁμοιοῦν (same nature, like, similar) ἐνοῦν (to make one, unite) ...”⁸⁸ Likewise, what the lion consumes (man) becomes the lion; an idea contrary to Jackson’s thesis that consuming the lion allegorically marks the destruction of Yaltabaoath and his archons influence upon humankind, especially when taken intertextually with Socrates’ dialogue with Glauson in the *Republic*. Consuming, in the first place, indicates the destruction and assimilation of one thing into another; a notion that is not at all evident in the *Republic*. Second, Jackson’s fourth chapter entitled “The

⁸⁸ Crislip, “Lion,” 598.

Platonic Tradition,” is wholly dependent on Paul Shorey’s⁸⁹ translation of the *Republic* which does not correspond to the rendition present in the Nag Hammadi corpus.⁹⁰

Gärtner’s approach maintains Jackson’s conclusions that consuming/destroying the demiurgic influence is implied without the use of Platonic tradition.⁹¹ Rather, passion is analogous to the lion’s nature which must be destroyed, so that the difference between the material and the spiritual is defined through what is eaten and in order for blessedness to be bestowed.

Richard Valantasis undertakes to explain the place and meaning of *logion 7* by the literal understanding of “diet and digestion” which points to ascetical fasting.⁹² Such a perspective may have very well been influenced by the find of the Coptic text near the residences of the Pachomian community.⁹³ Valantasis concludes that the monks habits, in relation to dietary intake, means that “this saying assumes a clearly articulated hierarchy of being: human beings live higher on the scale of existence than even the mighty lion.”⁹⁴ The lion’s status being beneath that of humankind determines that meat is an appropriate dietary staple and maintains the cycle of eating and being eaten. as nature dictates in sustaining the various lower species of existence. It is unnecessary for humankind, however, to participate in the cycle that perpetuates what is “...‘blessed’ for the lion, but polluted or fouled for the human...”⁹⁵

⁸⁹ Paul Shorey, *The Republic*, Cambridge, Harvard University Press 1970.

⁹⁰ See *Plato Rep. 588A-589B* (VI,5).

⁹¹ In fact there is no mention of Plato or Platonic thought throughout Gärtner’s book.

⁹² Crislip, “Lion,” 603.

⁹³ Richard Valantasis, *The Gospel of Thomas*, (London: Routledge, 1997), 24.

⁹⁴ Valantasis, *Gospel*, 64-65.

⁹⁵ Valantasis, *Gospel*, 64-65.

Valantasis' conclusions on the possible ascetical reading of *logion 7* suggest the preference of a vegetarian diet and discourages the consumption of meat.⁹⁶ The problem, as Crislip correctly critiques, is that if the "...obscure saying ultimately functions to discourage the eating of meat, why then the curious choice of the lion?"⁹⁷ Lion meat is not a normal food staple for human consumption; rather, eating lion meat is identified with the eating practices of the "most bizarre of the barbarians" or "eatalls, who devour everything."⁹⁸ We, therefore, need to consider the text's use of leonine imagery and its function.

One solution may be that the text uses paradox as a rhetorical strategy of exaggeration to emphasize the unlikely use of lion meat or anything for that matter which renders a cursed or blessed status. The implication is that humankind is in a normal expected blessed state until such time or circumstance that causes deterioration. It is an unlikely event that humans would eat lion meat. The exaggeration stresses the point of unlikeliness. A compelling reason for the use of the lion may be its capacity to eat or be eaten by human beings. *Logion 7* would not have the same effect if a bull, a goat or a chicken, for that matter was eaten. What the human can inflict upon the lion (to eat it), the lion can inflict upon the human, and thereby distinguishing their subsequent states of being. Here the interesting use of the Greco-Coptic word **μακαριος** may impact our understanding of *logion 7* in opposition to the Coptic verb **βωτε**, "to pollute; befoul; abominate..."⁹⁹

⁹⁶ Crislip, "Lion," 603-4.

⁹⁷ Crislip, "Lion," 604.

⁹⁸ Pliny, *Natural History*, Trans. H. Rackham, (LCL; Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1942). Book iv, xxxv. Full quotation in public domain. Online: <http://www.masseiana.org/pliny.htm>

⁹⁹ Crum, "Dictionary," 45(b).

In *logion* 7, “cursed” is rendered in its stative form **BHT**, indicating that the author/compiler intends to “...describe[s] the enduring state of a subject after the action or process or quality is achieved.”¹⁰⁰ Being cursed, then, in the syntax of line 4a, suggests the imposed state of being on humankind which becomes enduring only after the consequence of being eaten bestows blessedness. The lion is blessed when it has undergone the action of being eaten/consumed and therefore no longer alive in its former temporal state. Blessedness is attained when incorporated and transformed into the human state that results when the human eats the lion’s flesh. *Only after the lion is eaten is it blessed and not before*. The human natural state is, as mentioned above, blessed. Only when eaten/consumed does the human become cursed. The lion therefore “dies” to its former self and is blessed: the formerly blessed human (in his original state) is cursed because in fact the human does not die to his attachment to earthly things, but remains tethered to the world by being incorporated into the body of the lion. The question is not, as I see it, the representation of “the lion” but what is the *state of being* after the consequence of death acts on the respective subjects. According to the *logion*, when the human is consumed, he does not die, rather s/he is transmuted. The corporeal body and elements of the flesh are incorporated into whatever acts upon it, be it the digestive function of another terrestrial animal or the decaying process once entombed. The body is no longer animated by the soul; consumption has not taken the same toll on him/her as it has on the lion precisely because they are in different states of being. Rather, the opposite occurs, as may be interpreted by the enigmatic ending of *logion* 7, that is, “the lion becomes human” and the human in death (as a consequence of being eaten and does not know of the blessings bestowed to him) persists in the causalities of the mundane. If we

¹⁰⁰ Layton, *Grammar*. 168.

accept this perspective, the definition of the Greco-Coptic **ΜΑΚΑΡΙΟΣ** implies death; if not physical death, then spiritual death; a theme that may be gleaned from the internal structure of *log. 7*.

1.2 **ΜΑΚΑΡΙΟΣ**: “Dead or Alive”

Commentaries of the *Gos. Thom.*¹⁰¹ translate **ΜΑΚΑΡΙΟΣ** as “*blessed*” and/or “*fortunate*”.¹⁰² The common translations portray the lion as blessed. If the lion is blessed when he is eaten, then why is the man not blessed when eaten, but rather is cursed? What is the lion’s state before it is consumed? It is dead! Dead, as appropriate to its ontological condition, but transformed to life as a consequence on becoming part of the thing (human) into which it has been incorporated. The lion no longer participates in the mundane, whereas humankind’s curse is bestowed because of its continuing participation in mundane matters and oblivious to its primordial essence. Understanding **ΜΑΚΑΡΙΟΣ** as implying death (something or someone that has passed from one state of being to another)¹⁰³ may also contribute to the unusual or peculiar use of the “lion” in *log. 7*. As mentioned above, Valantasis’ treatment of the saying denotes an admonition against the eating of meat considering the odd choice of “lion”. Why then the use of **ΜΟΥΕΙ**¹⁰⁴? Alternatively, **ΜΟΥΕΙ** may have been used for its written form rather than the representative foodstuff for human consumption. The spelling of the Coptic word for

¹⁰¹ Lambdin translates **ΜΑΚΑΡΙΟΣ** as “Blessed”: see Bentley Layton (ed.), NHC II, 2-7 Together with XIII, 2*. Brit. Lib. OR. 4926(1), and P.Oxy. 1. 654, 655. Pg. 57.

¹⁰² Danker, *Lexicon*, 610(a)-611(b).

¹⁰³ Danker, *Lexicon*, 611(a).

¹⁰⁴ Crum, *Dictionary*, 160b.

“lion” **ΜΟΥΕΙ**¹⁰⁵ (**ΜΟΥΙ**) is significant because of its tantalizingly close spelling for death (**ΜΟΥ**), and the implication for the transcendent use of **ΜΑΚΑΡΙΟC**.

We can see the opposition of the two states in Lambdin’s interpretation in nine of the ten *logia* (7, 18, 19, 49, 54, 58, 68, 69 (x2), and 103).¹⁰⁶ The first four *logia* have in common the explicit notion of becoming through the blessing: “...the lion becomes man...” (*log.* 7), “...he who *will* take his place...” (*Log.* 18), “If you become my disciples...” (*log.* 19), “...for you will find...” (*log.* 49). The next four *logia* promise what the blessing is “...are the poor, for yours is...” (*log.* 54), “...who has suffered and found life” (*log.* 58), “...are you when hated and persecuted...they will find no place” (*log.* 68), “...they who have been persecuted...have truly come to know the father. ...the hungry, for the belly of him who desires will be filled” (*log.* 69 x 2). In each sequence the result is a blessed state. For example, Jesus in *logion* 18 says: “Blessed is he who will take his place in the beginning (condition); he will know the end and will not experience death (otherworldly occurrence). The otherworldly occurrence is a blessed state, but how does “...he who will take his place...” come to the place of blessedness? It happens when “he” attains the knowledge that life is synonymous with the eternal realm of the father. It is then that the trappings of this world become evident to him/her and are consequently deemed irrelevant. Then, only, is the term **ΜΑΚΑΡΙΟC**¹⁰⁷ appropriate to him, as it would be to the martyrs¹⁰⁸ who were persecuted and have come to know the spiritual dimension.

¹⁰⁵ Crum, *Dictionary*, 159a.

¹⁰⁶ Thomas O. Lambdin, “The Gospel According to Thomas”, in *Nag Hammadi Codex II, 2-7: Together with XIII 2**. *Brit. Lib. OR. 4926(1), and P. Oxy. I, 654, 655*. Vol. 1, (ed. Bentley Layton; vol. XX of *Nag Hammadi Studies*, ed. James M. Robinson; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1989), 52-93.

¹⁰⁷ Danker, *Lexicon*. 610b: 2a.

¹⁰⁸ Saelid Gilhus, citing Tertullian’s work *A Treatise on the Soul* and *To the Martyrs*, comments, “Tertullian ... writes about ‘the sharp pain of martyrdom’ but promises that the suffering of the martyrs will unlock paradise...and that their ultimate prize is life eternal... A similar perspective is found in the *Martyrdom of Perpetua and Felicitas* [where] Perpetua and her fellow martyrs returned to prison in high

Life and death are concepts. As concepts they require understanding. In *Thomas* and particularly in the macarisms, beginning with *logion* 7, life is a disembodied existence. Death on the other hand is the embodiment of existence. Is the insight that the “dead are not alive, and the living will not die” what the text intends to transmit to the reader in light of what Jesus says is the passing away of “...this heaven and the one above...” (*log.* 11)? And if so, what does it mean to have life? *Thomas*, if nothing else, certainly puts forth a series of riddles that the hearer/reader needs to unravel.

Logion 7 certainly ranks as a riddle that permeates a number of biblical texts. As Meyer, who is in agreement with Robinson, demonstrates its function in Mark’s Gospel, the riddle,

“...is well known in scholarly discussions, Robinson sees a similar concern for riddles or obscure sayings in the Gospel of Mark, where Jesus speaks to outsiders enigmatically, *ἐν παραβολαῖς* (“in parables,” Mark 4:11) that are resolved for the disciples by means of deeper and often allegorical interpretations. When Jesus is alone (*κατά μόνας*, Mark 4:10) with them, *τὸ μυστήριον τῆς βασιλείας τοῦ θεοῦ* (“the mystery of the kingdom of God,” Mark 4:11) is disclosed to the disciples. This process of disclosure may compare well, hermeneutically, with the interpretation of the riddle-like ‘secret’ or ‘hidden’ sayings of the Gospel of Thomas.”¹¹²

As such the reader is well advised to delve beyond the literal word. A salient description of “riddle” is: “a saying which is deliberately made obscure, as when Samson proposed the riddle of the lion and the honey (Judg. 14: 12–19). The word could also encompass messages difficult to interpret...”¹¹³ as is the case with the seventh *logion*. We can, then, only assess what the riddle is saying by what the words reflect in metaphor. For example, in 1 Corinthians the apostle speaks of “seeing” and “knowing” the father in the

¹¹² Marvin W. Meyer, “The Beginning of The Gospel of Thomas,” *Semeia* 52, (1990): 164.

¹¹³ W.R.F. Browning, *A Dictionary of the Bible*, 2nd ed., (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 1158.

present: “βλέπομεν γὰρ ἄρτι δι’ ἐσόπτρου ἐν αἰνίγματι, τότε δὲ πρόσωπον πρὸς πρόσωπον· ἄρτι γινώσκω ἐκ μέρους, τότε δὲ ἐπιγνώσομαι καθὼς καὶ ἐπεγνώσθην” (1 Cor.13: 12). The object of the two verbs, as Hollander suggests is “...God or the divine”, of which can be analogically understood in the present by the metaphor of “ ‘mirror and riddle’... but in the eschaton will be seen ‘face to face’”.¹¹⁴ The backdrop of Paul’s discourse is to correct the Corinthian congregation’s “enthusiasm for spiritual gifts”. The spiritual gifts that persist only in the present, and are “ἐκ μέρους...” (vv. 9-10), whereas, the eternal benefit granted to the Christian believer is the love that one exhibits towards one’s neighbor. The context for its solution must come from somewhere else. “Mirror” and “Riddle” indicate something that is not completely understood, rather, further explanation is required that associates the hearer’s understanding with the impression the speaker is trying to convey. If we accept what most noted scholars affirm in that the *Gos. Thom.* sayings are linked by either thematic or verbal ties, then perhaps, a valuable course of inquiry would be to seek out the hidden meaning, “...Let him who seeks continue seeking until he finds...” (*log.* 2). After all, the promise of *Gos. Thom.*, “Whoever finds the interpretation of these sayings will not experience death” (*log.* 1), challenges the reader to find the means for his own salvation.¹¹⁵ The challenge is for us readers to alter our understanding of the natural world and interpret it through a particular world-view. Every word and theme needs examination against conventional understanding. As shown above, **ΜΑΚΑΡΙΟΣ** plays a significant function as to what is blessed and under what

¹¹⁴ Harm W. Hollander, “Seeing God ‘In a Riddle’ or ‘Face to Face’: An Analysis of 1Corinthians 13:12,” *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 32.4 (2010): 397.

¹¹⁵ André Gagné has examined the function of the incipit in relation to the reader. See, “Connaissance, identité et androgynéité. Conditions du salut dans *l’Évangile selon Thomas.*” in *Pratiques et constructions du corps en christianisme. Actes du 42ième congrès de Société canadienne de théologie.* (Héritage et Projet 75. Edited by M. Allard, D. Couture and J.-G. Nadeau. Montreal: Fides, 2009), 134.

circumstances something is cursed. This is only a part of the solution. *Gos. Thom. 7* demands more from its reader. Blessedness, as suggested, is awareness fulfilled by death, not necessarily a physical death, rather consciousness of the divine realm. The examination must continue through its many levels. It cannot be accomplished by staying within the *logion* itself. As such, we will approach the *Gos. Thom.* synchronically, and through rhetorical analysis of the text perhaps significant meaning will surface regarding *logion 7*.

As with most scholars and readers, the temptation is to overlook *log. 7*. The scholarly commentaries suggest a polarity in reasoning: the Coptic text is correct as presented, or emendation is required to make it sensible. Regardless of either perspective the text requires interpretation. Undoubtedly, many more interpretations could and probably will appear than the ones mentioned above precisely because *logion 7* is enigmatic. Until this point, the attempt was to show the inherent difficulty of the seventh saying in the *Gos. Thom.* and to suggest a salient method of resolution. Thus, below is a condensed interpretation of *log. 7*;

Blessed is the transformation into life from death
Befouled is the one who is not transformed
And (untransformed) death is life.

The above may seem as enigmatic as the seventh *logion*. If, however, it is seen through a transformative lens, the adjectival use of blessedness suggests physical death plus knowledge equals man's post-mortem actuality in the heavenly realm. When s/he is befouled, knowledge of the heavenly realm is absent and death is the end of one's

existence, i.e. there is no transformation, it is forfeit and death is the end result of one's life and nothing more: dead is dead.

The interpretation solves two textual problems: first, the peculiar use of the “lion”, and second, the final phrase completes the opening sentence. The lion (ΜΟΥΕΙ) represents death (ΜΟΥ) and can be transformed into life. “Man”, representing life is the instrument by which the transformation occurs. The transformation is significant in the saying, not the actual characters. In this light the “cursed” is the one that has not undergone the transformation into life; the life resulting from transformative knowledge is the blessing. It further supports some basic cosmic understanding some early Christians had concerning death (the ephemeral material world), resurrection, and coming to understand the enduring state of the father.¹¹⁶

We can examine the state of the father even further in relation to “humankind”. What purpose does consciousness serve to “humankind”; what does one need to know, and to what end does this knowledge aid humankind? Beginning with the last question, in relation to our present study of *log. 7*, implications of resurrection become relevant, particularly concerning death.¹¹⁷ The resurrection, or “rising up”¹¹⁸ is not dependent on physical death, and second, it is a symbolic death from ignorance and erroneous beliefs that persistently penetrate human temporal existence. In many circumstances, as will be shown below, the exact translation, or rather word for word translation is deficient, especially when the Coptic text uses the Greco-Coptic word **ΜΑΚΑΡΙΟΣ** to express a

¹¹⁶ Elaine H. Pagels, “‘The Mystery of the Resurrection’: A Gnostic Reading of 1 Corinthians 15,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 93 (1974): 276-288.

¹¹⁷ Some insight, on the subject, may come from *Gos. Phil.*: “Those who say that the lord died first and (then) rose up are in error, for he rose up first and (then) died. If one does not first attain the resurrection (**ΤΑΝΑΚΤΑΚΙΟ**/ *ἀνάστασις*) he will not die” (56:15-20).

¹¹⁸ Danker, *Lexicon*, 71(b).

theme that is best articulated by the Greek rendition, and which has no sufficient Coptic equivalent. As such, much diligence is needed to incorporate not only the Coptic word's meaning, but also the implication of Greek thought¹¹⁹ in the text being examined. Adjectival oppositional word play is of significant importance. How are nouns described, and what is the consequence of a particular interpretation in the context of a prevailing theme throughout a text? Of course, as many readers can attest, the theme of a literary work, and a religious text in particular, is not always self-evident.

It is valuable to analyse the etymological structure as well as the euphemistic and idiomatic function of the individual words or phrases, and their development until they appear in the text we are considering. This philological approach will perhaps suggest a hermeneutic that in conjunction with rhetorical/structural (especially the chiasmic structure)¹²⁰ of *logia* 7-11 may give a better sense of the text's literary deployment. This method, as known in the French nomenclature "*analyse structurelle*", and by all intents and purposes considers the same features of the text with the ultimate goal being to aid interpretation.¹²¹

The examinations of the *logia* in the present thesis takes into account the function of the adjective **ΜΑΚΑΡΙΟΣ** in *logion* 7, describing **ΠΜΟΥΕΙ**¹²² (the lion). The Greco-Coptic word (**ΜΑΚΑΡΙΟΣ**) does not, as I argue, suggest divine blessings granted to humans

¹¹⁹ The designation 'μακάριος' is used to convey a transcendent reality and a state of being in accordance with Greek thought that will be discussed later in this chapter.

¹²⁰ Also known as *chiasm* derived from the Greek verb χιάζω indicating 'to mark with two lines crossing like a χ. Phillis Tribble, *Rhetorical Criticism: Context, Method, and the Book of Jonah* (Minneapolis: Gene M. Tucker, 1994), 25. Also, Ronald E. Man, "The Value of Chiasm for New Testament Interpretation," *Bibliotheca Sacra* (1984): 154, and John W. Welch, *Chiasmus in Antiquity; Structures, Analyses, Exegesis* (Hildesheim: Gerstenberg Verlag, 1981), 9.

¹²¹ Girard, M. "L'analyse structurelle." in *Entendre la voix du Dieu vivant : interprétations et pratiques actuelles de la Bible*. Edited by J. Duhaime et O. Mainville. Montreal: Médiaspaul, 1994.

¹²² Π before the Coptic noun expresses the short, masculine singular, definite article, form. Layton: *Chrestomathy*.44-45.

as commonly thought. And *πμογει*, rather than an implicit beast in line with the cryptic undergird of the *Thomas* text, suggests it functions as an idiom, metaphoric construct and mnemonic aid¹²³ implying death. As in idiomatic and metaphoric usage, the “lion” is a single noun replacing death and encapsulates the ferocity and terminal condition of one’s encounter with the beast. In ancient Israel the lion is a harbinger of death, as Schwartz’s discussion on animal metaphors¹²⁴ points out,

“the lion is a trope of threat and power. Upon meeting up with the lion one can expect to be torn [מרף], to be broken [שבך], to be devoured [אכל]. It is not surprising, therefore, to find the syntagma איִנְמַעִיל [‘there is no deliverer’] employed frequently with the lion image. There is simply no deliverance from the lion...”¹²⁵

¹²³ Martin DeBilius, *James: A Commentary on the Epistle of James* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1976), 6-7. See also, Risto Uro, “Thomas and Oral Gospel Traditions,” in *Thomas at the Crossroads: Essays on the Gospel of Thomas* (ed. Risto Uro; Edinburgh : T & T Clark, 1998), 16-17: “It is important to remember that in the ancient world writing tended to be used as an aid to memory rather than as an autonomous and independent mode of communication.” See also, Robbins, “Gospels were written and portions of them were performed either “by memory” or “by reading aloud” in various contexts in early Christianity.” Vernon K. Robbins “Rhetorical Composition and Sources in The Gospel of Thomas,” *Society of Biblical Literature Seminar Papers* 36 (1997): 93

¹²⁴ Howard E. Schwartz, “Israel in the Mirror of Nature: Animal Metaphors in the Ritual and Narratives of Ancient Israel,” *Journal of Ritual Studies* 2 (1988): 1-30.

¹²⁵ Brent A. Strawn, *What is Stronger than a Lion? Leonine Image and Metaphor in the Hebrew Bible and the Ancient Near East* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2005). 65. The leonine metaphor may seem duplicitous depending on its rhetorical function. When serving protagonist elements in narrative, leonine attributes are positive. In depicting antagonist elements in narrative, they are negative. However, in either circumstance the lion’s life ending ability is maintained. Strawn’s detailed remarks are worth reiterating: “In the main, lion imagery when used metaphorically in the HB is applied to four primary referents: the self or the righteous, the enemy, the monarchy/mighty one, and the Deity. In each of these cases, the lion is a trope of threat and power. The difference, then, lies not in the image’s connotations so much as how those are employed rhetorically. When it is used of the *self* or the *righteous*, the image is utilized positively (e.g. Gen. 49.9; Num. 23.24; 24.9; Deut. 33.20, 22; Mic. 5.7; Prov. 28.1; cf. Ps. 111.5); when it applies to the *enemy* or the *wicked*, negatively (e.g. Isa. 5.29-30; Jer. 2.15; 4.7; 51.38; Joel 1.6; Nah. 2.12-3.1; Pss. 7.3; 10.8-9; 17.12; 22.14, 17, 22; 34.11; 35.17; 57.5; 58.7; 74.4; 91.13; 124.6; Job 4.10-11; 29.17; cf. Job 18.4). Calling the first kind of usage ‘positive’ is something of a misnomer. In both types, the tone of the metaphor is quite violent and negative—it is always a matter of how the image is appropriated. If ‘we’ (the insider group) are lion-like, this is good for us and bad for our enemies; if ‘they’ (the outsider group) are lions, it is bad all the way around. Moreover, even the insider-group can be negatively portrayed by means of lion imagery (see Jer. 12.8; Ezek. 19.2-9). See also: Brent A. Strawn, “Why Does the Lion Disappear in Revelation 5? Leonine Imagery in Early Jewish and Christian Literatures,” *Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha* 17 (2007): 42.

In all there are nine instances of leonine symbolism in the New Testament that (with the exception of Revelation 4:6b-7)¹²⁶ is consistent in the explicit portrayal of the lion's power to devour. Of the nine, six leonine appearances occur in Revelation: 4:6b-7, 9:7-9, 9:17, 10:3, 13:2, 5:5. The three remaining are dispersed among 1Peter: 5:8, "Like a lion your adversary the devil prowls around looking for someone to devour"; 2 Timothy 4:17, "So I was rescued from the lion's mouth", and Heb. 11:32-33, "...Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah ...Samuel and the prophets who through faith shut the mouths of the lions".¹²⁷ It is then not unreasonable that when the lion is metaphorically employed in the service of rhetoric, the overwhelming evidence equates leonine imagery with death.

This leaves us questioning the purpose of this knowledge. In order to decipher this meaning, we will now look at *logion* 7 from the perspective that it is the beginning of the *inclusio* that ends with *logion* 11.

¹²⁶ David J. MacLeod, "The Adoration of God the Creator: An Exposition of Revelation 4," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 164 (2007): 213. The lion is one of the "...four living creatures" (Rev. 4: 6b), that are compared to cherubs in Ez. 1: 6, 10, 18, 22, 26 and to the "cherubs that prevented Adam and Eve from returning to the garden" (Gen. 3: 24).

¹²⁷ Strawn, "Disappear," 62.

Chapter Two:

Logion 7 in Context: Structure as a Means of Communication

2.1 Structure as a means of communication

It may seem odd at first glance that the structures of a text enhance the writer's ability to convey thoughts. The manner things were written ultimately carried within it the ability for the writer to impress, convince, and persuade. Thus, the art of rhetoric appeared on the political, judicial, and most importantly for the present work, the religious arena. In the words of Gene M. Tucker, "What originated as legal persuasion became the art of persuasive speech, and oratory became literature," and as such is a method with a literary approach that is "text-centered."¹²⁸ Davis S. Cunningham,¹²⁹ taking from Aristotle's definition of rhetoric as "the faculty of discovering, in the particular case, the available means of persuasion,"¹³⁰ contends that "because rhetoric deals with matters which 'could be otherwise,' it does not depend on formal validity." Cunningham quoting S. Toulmin continues by saying, "... whose cogency cannot be displayed in a purely formal way, even *validity* is something entirely out of reach and unobtainable."¹³¹ The emphasis, rather, is on the speaker (writer)¹³² audience relationship concerning shared assumptions, writer's delivery, and choice of examples.¹³³

¹²⁸ Gene M. Tucker, forward to *Rhetorical Criticism: Context, Method, and the Book of Jonah*, by Phyllis Tribble (Minneapolis, Minn.: Fortress Press, 1994), vii-viii.

¹²⁹ Davis S. Cunningham, "Theology as Rhetoric," *Theological Studies* 52 (1991): 415.

¹³⁰ Aristotle, *Rhetoric* (trans. W. Rhys Roberts; Mineola, NY.: Dover Publications, 2004), 1355b, 26

¹³¹ Stephen Toulmin, *The Uses of Argument* (New York: Cambridge Univ., 1958), 154.

¹³² "...discussion of spoken argument (and the speaker) is interchangeable with that of written argument (and writer)"; Cunningham, "Theology," 415 (n. 15)

¹³³ Cunningham, "Theology," 415-16.

Can we, therefore, in light of the discussion above, apply rhetorical/structural criticism to the *Gos. Thom.* given its genre as a saying document devoid of the “classical faculties of invention and arrangement?”¹³⁴ The answer to this question lays in individual *logia* within a group of sayings and delimiting the common themes within the text.¹³⁵ The sayings, in classical style, use opposition and parallelisms to give a balanced argument that appeal to the reader’s reason and judgement and confirm specific (in our study religious and theological) assumptions best illustrated by chiasms.¹³⁶ As David Noel Freedman’s remarks:

“...chiasm is not merely grammatical but structural or intentional; it systematically serves to concentrate the reader’s or hearer’s interest on the central expression [...] these structures may add novel perspectives and unexpected dimensions to the texts in which they appear. Even more difficult and controversial issues arise when chiasm is defined in terms of thought and theme, rather than the more visible words and patterns.”¹³⁷

The examples of chiasmic structure attest to its utility from Sumero-Akkadian texts to Ugaritic texts; from Hebrew Bible narratives and poetry¹³⁸ to Aramaic contracts and

¹³⁴ Tribble, “Jonah.” 25.

¹³⁵ “Chiasms ...involve passages of verse or prose ranging in length from a few sentences to hundreds of thousands of words.” David Noel forward to *Chiasmus in Antiquity: Structures, Analyses, Exegesis*, by John W. Welch; (Hildesheim: Gerstenburg, 1981), 7.

¹³⁶ A. Gagné has written several pieces on the *Gos. Thom.* using rhetorical/structural analysis and has been the first (to my knowledge) to apply this method to *Thomas*. See: André Gagné, “Structure and Meaning in Gos. Thom. 49-53. An Erotapokritic Teaching on Identity and Eschatology.” In *The Apocryphal Gospels within the Context of Early Christian Theology*. (Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium 260). Edited by J. Schröter. Leuven: Peeters, 529-37. “Jésus, la lumière et le Père Vivant. Principe de gémellité dans l’Évangile selon Thomas.” *Apocrypha* 23 (2013): 209-21. André Gagné, “*The Gospel according to Thomas and the New Testament.*” in *Ancient Christian Apocrypha*. (Novum Testamentum Patristicum). Edited by T. Nicklas and J.-M. Roessli. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht (forthcoming).

¹³⁷ Freedman, “Forward,” 7.

¹³⁸ See also Girard, M. *Les Psaumes: Analyse Structurelle et Interprétation*, 3 vols. Montreal: Bellarmin, 1984-1994.

letters; to the Talmudic-Aggadic narratives, New Testament, ancient Greek and Latin literature, and even the Book of Mormon.¹³⁹

Ronald E. Mann's short article supports the benefits of chiasm in the New Testament concluding that chiasmus for New Testament writers "was a means towards more effective communication of their messages."¹⁴⁰ John Welch, on the other hand, is somewhat more conservative on the efficacy of chiasm saying, "what is proved by the existence of chiasmus is ...difficult to say. "But", he continues, "wherever chiasmus demonstrably exists, its potential and impact on interpretation and textual analysis stand to be profound:"¹⁴¹ a stand that is echoed in the work of Marc Girard,¹⁴² and Angelico di Marco.¹⁴³

With the scholarly insight mentioned above, we may identify the chiastic structures of *logia* 7–11. Before discussing the individual *logia*, however, we will proceed by delimiting *logia* 7-11 and encounter the implications of the man/Jesus interface that culminate with the man/father reality. I will show that the text demarcates the temporal from the ethereal, unity from divisiveness and ultimate reunification that comes about through the process of "oneness" and thereby provide an interpretation on the meaning and its relationship to one of the overarching themes in *Gos. Thom.*

¹³⁹ Freedman, "Table of Contents," 6. Also Charles H. Talbert, *Literary Patterns, Theological Themes, and the Genres of Luke-Acts* (Missoula, MT.: Scholars Press, 1974), 67-70.

¹⁴⁰ Ronald Man, "The Value of Chiasm for New Testament Interpretation," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 141 (1984): 154.

¹⁴¹ Welch, *Chiasmus*, 15.

¹⁴² See: M. Girard, "Structurelle," 150-5. See note 72: "From a heuristic point of view, [the] aim [is] to discover and to highlight the architecture of the surface of a text (...) that is to say, the coherent articulation of words and ideas. (...) However, the structural method does not merely X-ray to highlight mechanically a purely formal composition. From a hermeneutic point of view, it aims to throw light on the meaning of the text; modestly, it contributes in its own way to the process of interpretation."

¹⁴³ Translation of Angelico di Marco, "Der Chiasmus in der Bibel," *Linguistica Biblica* 36 (1975): 56; in Man, "Chiasm," 152:156n. 29. "The architecture of a section is naturally bound up with its meaning, namely, through the correspondence of the individual parts: every element is the complement of its corresponding element; the form is closely tied to the meaning."

2.2 Common Themes Across Logia 7-11

I propose that *logion* 7-11 when delimited from the preceding *logia* 1-6 on one side, and *logion* 12 on the other,¹⁴⁴ expresses the theme of “oneness”. I will show this by highlighting the extant thematic, lexical, and formal associations of the *logia* between 1-5,¹⁴⁵ and end where the focus of the text abruptly turns in *logion* 6. This method will in effect isolate and further show the rubric under which the unit operates.

The first six sayings in *Gos. Thom.* are preceded by Jesus’ authority expressed in the *incipit*. What follows orients the reader/hearer to enter into the author/compiler’s worldview through the expression of Jesus’ “secret sayings” (ΝΥΑΧΕ ΕΘΗΠ), and whose proper “interpretation” assures the reader/hearer that they “will not experience death” (ΓΝΑ ΧΙ †ΠΕ ΔΝ ΜΠΜΟΥ) (*log.1*), and “will rule (ΝΑΡΡΟ) over the all (ΠΤΗΡΩ)” (*log.2*).¹⁴⁶ At the very least some unifying aspects in the five sayings, including the *incipit* and the position of *logion* 6 should stand out: first, the *incipit* and *logion* 1 are connected by

¹⁴⁴ For summation of *Gos. Thom.* delineations according to thematic units, see: R. Schippers, Y. Janssens, D.H., Tripp, S. Davies, H. Koester and H.Ch. Puech, in Fallon and Cameron, *Gospel*, 4206-4208.

¹⁴⁵ See Gärtner, *Theology*, 22-29. Also, Helmut Koester, “One Jesus and Four Primitive Gospels,” *Harvard Theological Review* 61 (1968): 166-87: Although Dibelius’ work is on the Letter of James, comparison with *Gos. Thom.* is significant when he states: “Although there is no continuity in thought in such a string of sayings, there are formal connections. The best-known device for an external connection in paraenetic literature is the one saying is attached to another simply because a word or cognate of the same stem appears in both sayings. Originally this was a mnemonic devise. The memory finds its way more easily from one statement to another when aided by these catchwords.” Dibelius. *Commentary*, 6-7. For the paraenetic function of the sayings in *Gos. Thom.*, see: H.-W. Bartsch, “Das Thomas-Evangelium und die Synoptischen Evangelien: Zu G. Quispels Bemerkungen zum Thomas-Evangelium,” *New Testament Studies* 6 (1959/6): 249-611.

¹⁴⁶ “the all” (ΠΤΗΡΩ = τὸ Ὄλον), is a Gnostic term indicating “Pleroma”. There is, however, some scholarly debate as to whether or not it is a Gnostic technical term. The 19th century scholar F.C. Baur was first to maintain that “Pleroma” is a Gnostic term appropriated by Paul to combat heresies in Ephesians and Colossians: F. C. Baur, *Paul the Apostle of Jesus Christ, His Life and Work, His Epistles and His Doctrine: A Contribution to a Critical History of Primitive Christianity* (trans. A. Menzies: London, Williams and Norgate, 1876), 7-13. H.A. Merklinger dissents, suggesting that Paul being a student of scripture would have appropriated the term from the Septuagint, which translates the Hebrew פִּלְרוֹמָא as πλήρωμα. Harold A. Merklinger, “Pleroma and Christology,” *Concordia Theological Monthly* 36 (1965): 739-743. For further discussion see: P. Derek Overfield, “Pleroma: A Study in Content and Context,” *New Testament Studies* 25 (1979): 384-396. Also, James M. Robinson, ed., *The Coptic Gnostic Library: A Complete Edition of the Nag Hammadi Codices, Volume 5* (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 40-41.

Jesus' words (ἄνωγει); second, to “rule” (*log.* 2) and the “kingdom” (*log.* 3) are cognates of the same Coptic word; third, the ironic structure of *logia* 3 and 4, and “the place (πτοπος) of life”; forth, *logion* 5 completes the thought of *logion* 6b, and finally, the question posed by the disciples in *logion* 6a is answered in *logion* 14. Montefiore and Turner suggest, that at a minimum, “a careful reading of the preamble and the first three sayings as a single unit strongly suggests that for the compiler the Kingdom, the All and the living Jesus are virtually identical”.¹⁴⁷ To this unit I would add *logion* 4 on the basis of the inversions in *logia* 3a and 4a, and also on the statements concerning the “the living father” (*log.* 3b), the place (πτοπος) and one's future existence in “life (ωνη)” (*log.* 4a).

The future of one's ruling stature is that s/he seeks (ωινε) until s/he finds (βινε), whereupon s/he will become “disturbed” and “astonished”, a condition that occurs when belief systems are challenged and previous authority no longer holds true. The leaders in *log.3a* situate the “kingdom (τμντερο)” in the “sky” or the “sea”, an appropriate location for “birds” and “fish,”¹⁴⁸ that “precede (ωορπ)” one to the kingdom, but not for the one that finds the correct interpretation of Jesus' words. The state of being for the uninitiated and therefore their kingdom, is the same as that of the birds and fish and is expressed by a merism¹⁴⁹ which encapsulates the polarities of “sky and sea” to represent the entirety of

¹⁴⁷ H. Montefiore and H.E.W. Turner, *Thomas and the Evangelists* (London: SCM Press, 1962), 112. This method of course distracts from a synchronic reading of *Gos. Thom.*, however it does show the linkages made among *logia*. This, they conclude, is achieved by comparing the “kingdom” in the fragmentary Greek version of the Oxyrhynchus saying: κα [ἰ βασιλεύσας ἀναπα] ἡσεται, with 2 Tim. 2: 11: συμβασιλεύσομεν, and that “we will reign with him.” The Greek text presented by Ménard, *L'Évangile Thomas*, 78.

¹⁴⁸ “Readers experience for the first time the irony and sarcasm possible in these collections of sayings”. Valantasis, *Gospel*, 58.

¹⁴⁹ Merismus: “A rhetorical device in which a subject or topic is divided into its various parts.” J.A. Cuddon, *Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory* (West Sussex: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013), 429. “Merismus reduces a complete series to two or its constituent elements, or it divides a whole into two halves...the two elements represent totality. A plurality is summed up in two elements which represent it, or a totality is divided and put together again from two parts.” Luis Alonso, *A Manual of Hebrew Poetics* (Rome: Editrice Pontificio Instituto Biblico, 2000), 83. Krašovec provides for four characteristics of merism: first, “it expresses totality by its parts, by usually mentioning the two extremes”. Second, performs

the sensible world. The key to the kingdom is *gnosis* in “know[ing] yourselves”, and “become[ing] known” (*log.* 3b). This is when the state of being changes, no longer necessitating one to “exist (ϣοοπ) in poverty”.¹⁵⁰ *Logion* 4 uses similar irony¹⁵¹ to invert the social functional status of the elder/child relationship, and culminates with the term “one and the same (ογα ογωτ).”¹⁵² The inversions in 3a and 4a are similarly presented: “fish” and “birds will precede” (*log.* 3), as the “last will be ‘first’” (*log.* 4). Both are determinates of position (*precede* and *first*), and the subsequent status to whom they apply are rendered by the same Coptic word ϣορπ̄, that regulates precedence in accessing the “kingdom”.¹⁵³

The term ογα ογωτ has been the subject of debate for those deliberating a Gnostic theology for *Gos. Thom.* Scholars that trend towards this designation for *Thomas* identify the term as a tell-tale sign of a Gnostic text,¹⁵⁴ while others deem it the unification of perception and understanding.¹⁵⁵ Regardless of one’s perspective the relevance of the term suggests unity, a theme that recurs throughout *Gos. Thom.*, and will

the function of a “substitution for abstract words”. Third, “the mentioned parts have figurative or metaphorical sense...” Fourth, “should not be [confused] with antithesis. Jože Krašovec, “Mermism: Polar Expression in Biblical Hebrew,” *Biblica* 64 (1983): 232. For further discussion see, A.M. Honeyman, “Merismus in Biblical Hebrew,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 71 (1952): 11-18.

¹⁵⁰ Most commentators follow Thomas O. Lambdin’s translation in *log.* 4 for ϣοοπ as *dwell*: Lambdin, *Gospel*, 55.

¹⁵¹ Valantasis, *Gospel*, 60.

¹⁵² Klijn suggests that in *Gos. Thom.* ογα, ογα ογωτ, μοναχος “are used to render the word ‘single one.’” See Klijn, “Single,” 271-272.

¹⁵³ ϣορπ̄ is also present in *logion* 64: Jesus said, “A man had received visitors. And when he had prepared the dinner, he sent his servant to invite the guests. He went to the first one (ϣορπ̄) and said to him, ‘My master invites you...’” By the end of the *logion* all the guests (Businessmen and Merchants are usually the first in the community) reject the invitation and Jesus declares them unfit to “enter the places of [his] father”. It seems a recurring theme that the “*first*” is not the best position to be in, in relation to the *kingdom* (*log.* 3,4,64).

¹⁵⁴ Ménard, *L’Évangile*, 83.

¹⁵⁵ “The ‘one and the same’ of the Greek version and the ‘single one’ of the Coptic refer simply to the unification of the status so as to imply that those who have knowledge understand the present, but relates simple truth that good perception and understanding begin with what appears to the senses, and therefore true knowledge begins in a clear perception and understanding of the present moment.” Valantasis, *Gospel*, 61.

be discussed in detail below. For the moment, the author presents the term in relation to the elder/younger setting of *logion* 4. The “small child’s” state of being is greater than that of the “elder” because “the sons” (ΝΩΥΕΡΕ) are recognised by the “father” and know “about the place of life” (ΕΤΒΕΠΤΟΠΟΣ ΜΠΩΝΖ), which will transform the elder’s lesser state to the greater one of the child and they will unite in “oneness”. This is further supported if “small child (ΟΥΚΟΥΕΙ ΝΩΥΕΡΕ ΩΗΜ)”¹⁵⁶ is rendered “small son” and was intended to prompt continuance with “the sons of the living father” in *logion* 3.

According to Asgeirsson, the question “may easily be seen as an opening up of a distinct rhetorical unit.”¹⁵⁷ This would indicate that *logion* 6 is the beginning of the rhetorical unit, however, the doublet in 6b thwarts this effort because it closes the rhetorical unit of *logia* 5 and 6:

Logion 5: Jesus said, “Know that which is before your sight, *and that which is hidden from you will become plain to you. For there is nothing hidden which will not become manifest*

Logion 6a: His disciples questioned him, and said to him, “Do you want us to fast? How shall we pray? Shall we give alms? What diet shall we observe?”

Logion 6b: Jesus said, “Do not tell lies and do not do what you hate, *for all things are plain in the sight of heaven. For nothing hidden will not become manifest, and nothing covered will remain without being uncovered*

In *logion* 6a, the disciples ask Jesus specific questions: “Do you want us to fast? How shall we pray? Shall we give alms? What diet shall we observe?” The answer is not

¹⁵⁶ ΩΗΡΕ could also be rendered “son”. W.E. Crum, *Dictionary*, 584a.

¹⁵⁷ Asgeirsson, taking from Robbins; “The key to the argumentative nature of the opening of the chapter is the rhetorical force of *interrogation* asking a question as an emphatic way of making an assertion.” Here Robbins is examining formula in the context of 1Cor. 9. See J. Ma. Asgeirsson, “Arguments and Audience(s) in The Gospel of Thomas (Part II),” *Society of Biblical Literature Seminar Papers* (1998), 329.

immediately forthcoming in *logion* 6b or 7, as would be expected. Rather, Jesus' response is delayed until *logion* 14: "If you fast you will give rise to sin...if you pray, you will be condemned; and if you give alms, you will do harm to your spirits." This break in the text could indicate a new thematic unit, with *logion* 7 functioning as the primary bracketing unit. The subsequent bracketing unit is *logion* 11, where the theme revolves about the status of "the dead (ΝΕΤΜΟΟΥΤ)", "the living (ΝΕΤΟΝΖ)", and the state of "one (ΝΟΥΑ)". The theme in *logia* 12 and 13 abruptly turn their focus to the pragmatic order of Jesus' successor, speculation as to his identity and becoming a teacher.¹⁵⁸

A question may then be raised as to why we have *logia* 12 and 13? *Logia* 7-11 digress from the texts' continuity, for which there is no clear and unobstructed reason. Examination of the preceding and following *logia* (6 and 12), as far as the research in the present thesis has found, do not reveal significant thematic or lexical association with *Logia* 7-11,¹⁵⁹ and no scholarly work has, to date, specifically identified any.¹⁶⁰ We can try to assess the structure of *Thomas*, perhaps, according to the observations of Pasquier and Vouga:

¹⁵⁸ The disciples said to Jesus, 'we know that you will depart from us. Who is to be our leader?' Jesus said to them, "Wherever you are, you are to go to James the righteous, for whose sake heaven and earth came into being" (*log.* 12). Jesus said to his disciples, "Compare me to someone and tell me whom I am like"... (*log.* 13). Wayment sees an editorial hand at work contrary to the Petrine idea of teacher in Matthew 16: "Sometime after the writing of Matthew 16, *Gos. Thom.* sought to establish its foothold in early Christianity by offering its own model of Christian teacher. In the context of *Gos. Thom.* this saying is clearly redactional and was added to the collection." See Thomas A. Wayment, "Christian Teachers in Matthew and Thomas: The possibility of Becoming a 'Master,'" *Journal of Early Christian Studies* (2004), 310.

¹⁵⁹ Common words in *logion* 13 with those in *logion* 9 and 10 are $\omega\upsilon\epsilon$ (*log.* 9) and $\kappa\omega\zeta\bar{\tau}$ (*log.* 10), however, in light of Wayman's compelling article (above), the respective *logia* are thematically disconnected.

¹⁶⁰ Janssens suggests that where there are no thematic connections, sayings are added "pêle-mêle". Her conclusions result from efforts to isolate sayings 1-9, 12-17, 18-38, and 39-53 along thematic lines. See: Y. Janssens, "L'Évangile selon Thomas et son caractère gnostique". *Muséon* (1962), 301-2. Crossan also suggests that "the identification of certain individuals, as well as questions of authority may be considered yet another criterion for strata." J.D. Crossan, *In Fragments: The Aphorisms of Jesus* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1983), 183-184.

« Il n'est pas question de proposer ici une hypothèse d'ensemble, mais plutôt d'observer qu'il en va dans le rangement des *logia* à l'intérieur de la collection comme des livres dans nos bibliothèques. L'ordre règne, mais les disparités ne cessent de le mettre en péril, de sorte que la question « pourquoi la ? » appelle souvent immanquablement sa complémentaire : « pourquoi pas ? »».

Thus, with a fair amount of confidence, we may assess the inclusion of *logia* 12-13 as a separate unit requiring its own analysis and exegetical treatment, and with the same confidence conclude that *logia* 7-11 can be treated as a literary unit that expresses “oneness” as a principal idea of the $\mu\bar{\nu}\tau\eta\lambda\alpha\iota\tau\acute{\omicron}$ (“blessedness”) of $\mu\bar{\nu}\tau\omicron\gamma\alpha$ (“unity”) in the context of the entire gospel text.

2.3 Thematic and Lexical Connections Among *Logia* 7-11

We begin the following section by first translating the five sayings, and then identify inherent common ideas in the context of the whole inclusion under study. This should appear in the framework of the chiasm. As such, the chiasmic structures of each *logion*, following the translations I propose (below), will be studied and the subsequent meaning will surface in support of the overall thesis that reunification with the divine is the focal point of the above *inclusio*.

Logion 7

$\pi\epsilon\chi\epsilon\ \bar{\iota}\varsigma$	Jesus said,
$\omicron\upsilon\mu\alpha\kappa\alpha\rho\iota\omicron\varsigma\ \pi\epsilon\ \pi\mu\omicron\upsilon\epsilon\iota$	Blessed is the lion
$\pi\alpha\epsilon\iota\ \epsilon\tau\epsilon\ \pi\bar{\rho}\omega\mu\epsilon\ \eta\lambda\omicron\upsilon\omicron\mu\omicron\mu\eta$	which the man will eat
$\lambda\gamma\omega\ \bar{\eta}\tau\epsilon\pi\mu\omicron\upsilon\epsilon\iota\ \psi\omega\pi\epsilon\ \bar{\rho}\bar{\rho}\omega\mu\epsilon$	and the lion becomes human
$\lambda\gamma\omega\ \kappa\upsilon\beta\eta\tau\ \bar{\eta}\beta\iota\ \pi\bar{\rho}\omega\mu\epsilon$	and cursed is the man
$\pi\alpha\epsilon\iota\ \epsilon\tau\epsilon\ \pi\mu\omicron\upsilon\epsilon\iota\ \eta\lambda\omicron\upsilon\omicron\mu\omicron\mu\eta$	whom the lion will eat
$\lambda\gamma\omega\ \pi\mu\omicron\upsilon\epsilon\iota\ \eta\lambda\psi\omega\pi\epsilon\ \bar{\rho}\bar{\rho}\omega\mu\epsilon$	and the lion will become human

Logion 8

αγω πεχαρ γε
επρωμε τῆτων αγουωζε
παει ἡταρνουχε ἡτεφαβω εθαλασσα
αφωκ ἡμοσ ερραι ἡθαλασσα
εσμερ ἡτβτ ἡκογει ἡρραι
ἡρητου αφρε αγνοβ ἡτβτ
ενανουγ ἡβι πογωζε
ῤρῡῡῡῡῡῡ
αφνουχε ἡἡκογει τηρου ἡτβτ
εβολ επεχτ εθαλασσα
αφωτπ ἡπνοβ ἡτβτ χωρις ρις

πετε οῡἡ μααχε ἡμοσ εσωτῡ
μαρεφωτῡ

And he said
man is like a wise fisherman
who cast his net into the sea
he drew it up from the sea
full of small fish below
Among them he found a
good large fish
the wise fisherman
cast all the little fish
down into the sea
he chose the large fish without
difficulty
He who has ear(s) let him hear

Logion 9

πεχε ἰς γε
ειςρηητε αφει εβολ ἡβι πετσιτε
αφμερ τοοτῡ αφνουχε

αροεινε μεν ρε εχἡ τερη
αφει ἡβι ἡραλατε αγκατφου

ῡἡκοογε αγρε εχἡ τπετρα
αγω ἡπου γε νουνε επεχτ επκαρ

αγω ἡπουτεγε ῡῡ ερραι εππε

αγω ῡἡκοογε αγρε εχἡ ἡψοντε
αγωβτ ἡπεβροβ
αγω απφἡτ ογομογ
αγω αρἡκοογε ρε εχἡ πκαρ ετνανουγ
αγω αφ† καρπος ερραι εππε ενανουγ

αφει ἡσε εσοτε
αγω ψεχογωτ εσοτε

Jesus said
Behold! The sower came out,
he took a handful and
scattered
Some fell upon the road
the birds came and they
gathered them
Some fell upon the rock
and they did not root down in
the earth
and they did not produce ears
up to heaven
and some fell upon thorns
they choked the seed
and the worm ate them
and some fell upon good soil
and it gave good fruit
upwards to heaven
it came to sixty per measure
and one hundred twenty per
measure

Logion 10

ΠΕΧΕ ΙϞ ΧΕ
ΛΕΙΝΟΥΧΕ ΝΟΥΚΩΖΤ ΕΧΝ ΠΚΟΣΜΟΣ

ΑΥΩ ΕΙΧΖΗΗΤΕ †ΑΡΕΖ ΕΡΟϞ
ΨΑΝΤΕϞΧΕΡΟ

Jesus said
I have cast a fire upon the
world
and behold, I am guarding it
until it blazes

Logion 11

ΠΕΧΕ ΙϞ ΧΕ
ΤΕΕΙΠΕ ΝΑΡΠΑΡΑΓΕ
ΑΥΩ ΤΕΤΝΤΠΕ ΜΜΟΣ ΝΑΡΠΑΡΓΕ

ΑΥΩ ΝΕΤΜΟΟΥΨΤ ΣΕΟΝΖ ΑΝ

ΑΥΩ ΝΕΤΟΝΖ ΣΕΝΑΜΟΥ ΑΝ

ΝΖΟΟΥ ΝΕΤΕΤΝΟΥΩΜ

ΜΠΕΤΜΟΟΥΤ
ΝΕΤΕΤΝΕΙΡΕ ΜΜΟϞ ΜΠΕΤΟΝΖ

ΖΟΤΑΝ ΕΤΕΤΝΨΑΨΩΠΕ ΖΜ

ΠΟΥΘΕΙΝ
ΟΥ ΠΕΤΕΤΝΑΑϞ
ΖΜ ΦΟΟΥ ΕΤΕΤΝ Ο ΝΟΥΑ ΑΤΕΤΝΕΙΡΕ
ΜΠΣΝΑΥ
ΖΟΤΑΝ ΔΕ ΕΤΕΤΝΨΑΨΩΠΕ ΝΣΝΑΥ
ΟΥ ΠΕ ΕΤΕΤΝΝΑΑϞ

Jesus said
This heaven will pass away
and the one above it will pass
away
and the ones who are dead
they are not alive
and the ones who are alive
will not die
The days when you
consumed
the one who is dead
you made him (the one who
is) alive
when you come into
existence through
the light.
What will you do
on the day you were one you
became two
But when you exist (as) two
what is it that you will do.

2.3.1 Structure of *Logion 7*

In this *logion* the antithetical parallelism appears once the phrases are separated and defined (*A, B, C, A', B', C*). This system is helpful and supportive in interpretation because in of itself the saying, at first, makes little or no sense. That the saying is unique within *Thomas* and with no equivalent in the Nag Hammadi corpus or other Christian

texts, subjects it to the peripheral determination attributed to scribal error. A closer look at the structure and the relationship with other themes and words in the remaining text provides the ground for deeper inquiry into the *logion* and the greater text.

Jesus said,

A Blessed is the lion
B which the man will eat
C and the *lion becomes human*

A' and [he is] cursed is the man
B' whom the lion will eat
C⁻¹ and the *lion will become human*

The lion in *logion 7* is defined as blessed (*A*) only when eaten by “the man” (*B*). As indicated by the definite article (ΠΡΩΜΕ), the human being initiates the lion’s transformation from one state of being to that of another and becomes “human” (ᾠΡΩΜΕ) (*C*). The obvious interpretation is that it becomes “the man.” But one must question what the form of the noun ᾠΡΩΜΕ indicates. “Human” suggests a state of being, whereby the potential for sanctification or elevation to the heavenly realm can be achieved. Otherwise, becoming “the man” has no real purpose other than to facilitate consumption which would be “... hard to imagine what [the] hidden meaning [of] such a commonplace truism about digestion would hold for readers of the *Gos.Thom*, faced throughout with paradoxical *logia* of the living Jesus.”¹⁶¹ The phrase opposite to the lion becoming human is the “befouled man”, where one may ask the question as to the circumstances of the degradation. The author again uses the definite article (Π) indicating the human being. The lion initiates the process of transforming him, but rather than transforming him into the state of blessedness he is condemned to the earthly realm. If we accept the premise that

¹⁶¹ Crislip, “Lion,” 598.

what we are dealing with in this *logion* are states of being then a reasonable assumption is that man's natural state belongs with the "father" in the heavenly realm. The "lion" does not share or cannot participate in the heavenly realm, because of its intrinsic nature. It is tethered to the material world. How can the lion, therefore, be blessed and the man befouled? We can make sense or perhaps shed some light on the problem if we recognize the inherent paradoxical nature in *logion 7* that to various degrees continues throughout the remaining text of the *Gos. Thom.*

When the lion is used as metaphor for death, as has been suggested above, the enigma of the *logion* loosens and the paradox seems comprehensible. *The state of death is blessed because it is in this state of being that man may approach the father.* The leonine peculiarity, as a death metaphor and its particular use in *logion 7*, may be due to the spelling and audibility of **ΜΟΥ** and **ΜΟΥΙΕ**. If it is not at all the lion and its common bestial imagery that we are contending with, then perhaps its mnemonic contribution is most significant. This course of enquiry is more so pertinent particularly if "**ΜΑΚΑΡΙΟΣ**" is not the earthly blessedness of the man, but rather the state of human blessedness when indicating transcendence of the temporal world. Seeing the father "face to face", as Paul remarks in 1Cor. 13, was "... a popular Greco-Roman and Jewish-Christian world-view."¹⁶²

Indeed, a philological analysis of "**ΜΑΚΑΡΙΟΣ**" bears this out. The Greek word in most of its uses relates a transcendent quality. Almost always, it applies to "persons" rather than things and never (as far as the sources show or have been uncovered) to

¹⁶² Hollander, "Seeing." 401. See also p. 397.

animals¹⁶³ and there is always an implication of death surrounding its use. It is a demise that changes someone from one state to another, which is not nothingness but the consummative union with the divine that is otherwise impossible to fully achieve temporally.

According to the *TDNT*, the first use of the word “μακάριος” was by Greek poet Pindar to denote references to the gods from the root “μάκαρ” as in “οἱ μάκαρες”. Later Homeric use implied “... the transcendent happiness of a life beyond care, labor and death.”¹⁶⁴ As such, μακάριος assumed the notion of human achievement of “god like blessedness in the isles of the blessed”¹⁶⁵ acquired by one’s conformity to divine edicts of morality, justice, or as in the case of the ancient Greek epics, heroism. The word is found on “epitaphs [...] evoked by the painful contrast of painful reality, [...] reflecting the sorrows and afflictions, the aspirations and ideals, of the Greeks”¹⁶⁶ when speaking of the earthly state of humankind. Therefore, it appears that a distinction of this worldly existence is set apart from the next that is described and has a distinct nomenclature of a macarism. A *prima facie* case can be made that the inclusion of the Greek word “μακάριος” in many early Christian texts indicates blessedness bestowed to a person who enjoys divine favor. The result is that s/he will benefit in terms of spiritual enlightenment (usually a conversion) and earthly riches. If the origins and structure of the word are investigated further we see that “μακάριος” often incorporates an underlying implication of otherworldliness achieved only after death, be it symbolic or actual. A person may become cognizant of blessedness in the temporal realm, for example, when s/he hears and

¹⁶³ Gerhard Kittel, *The Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (trans. G.W. Bromily; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1976), 367.

¹⁶⁴ Kittel, “Theological.” 362.

¹⁶⁵ Kittel, “Theological.” 362.

¹⁶⁶ Kittel, “Theological.” 363.

is convinced by the words of a sage, priest, wise man, or angel. The full enjoyment of blessedness occurs, however, only when they die and are elevated to the transcendent realm of the gods or God. Ancient Greek poets and writers used the term in conjunction with the status of the gods. Subsequently, as the term “μακάριος” came into more common everyday use, it lost its intrinsic transcendent meaning and was reduced to reflect “... the social stratum of the wealthy who in virtue of their riches are above the normal cares and worries of lesser folk.”¹⁶⁷ By the time of the ancient Christian writers, the “supra-terrestrial” meaning was rehabilitated. Early Christian writers were using “μακάριος” to suggest a state of being that surpasses the bonds of the corporeal realm. In all its meanings μακάριος or οἱ μάκαρες were the “blessed ones who lived in a higher plane....”¹⁶⁸ They were the people that transcended the mundane and had gone to the world of the gods. The macarisms in the gospels of Matthew and Luke indicate the status for the blessed or “μακάροι” using the future passive indicative or future active indicative form: “... the mourners *will be* comforted “, “...the meek...*will* inherit the earth” etc. (Matt. 5:4-10 NRSV). Even “... the poor in spirit ...”, “... they are blessed “... for theirs *is* the kingdom of heaven” (Matt. 5: 3) are thrust into the future by the expectation of the “... reward that is in heaven” (Matt. 5:11), and not on earth. It would seem that by using “μακάριος” the author of Matthew and similarly Luke render the meaning of the word to suggest a future event that transcends death and alters the state of one’s existence.

We can see the author’s appreciation of blessedness in the Gospel of Luke where his intention to relay the temporal context of a pericope is expressed by another Greek word “εὐλογία”, which in the strictest sense denotes praiseworthy or similarly to

¹⁶⁷ Kittel, *Theological*, 363.

¹⁶⁸ Kittel, *Theological*, 363.

μακάριος, blessedness although referring to the terrestrial realm.¹⁶⁹ In the opening chapter of Luke’s gospel we have both words appearing for three subsequent blessings in very close proximity to one another. The angel Gabriel was sent by God to tell Mary that she will conceive and bear a son (Lk1:26-35) and that her relative Elizabeth was also with child (Lk1:38). The story continues with Mary setting out to a Judean town, presumably to the house of Elizabeth’s father Zachariah. Mary greets Elizabeth, “...and the child leaped in her [Elizabeth’s] womb... [exclaiming] with a loud cry, ‘*Blessed* are you among women, and *blessed* is the fruit of your womb...’” (Lk 1:39-42). The blessing Elizabeth bestows on Mary and the fruit of her womb is rendered by the Greek word “εὐλογημένη” and “εὐλογημένος” respectively. In the third blessing the Greek word “μακαρία” is rendered: “And blessed (μακαρία) is she who believed (πιστεύσασα) that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her by the Lord” (Lk 1:45). The context of the first two blessings refers to a terrestrial event and is praiseworthy. That Mary *believed*, in the third blessing, suggests a change in state from the questioning, and thus still earthly tethered Mary: “How can this be, since I am still a virgin” (Lk 1:34), to the Mary that has “met the decisive revelation of God with genuine faith...” (368-9) and in effect transcended the constrictions of the world.

The idea, therefore, is that the “lion” changes status. The act of human consumption is transformative because “man”, being of the father, is life and cannot by nature be destroyed. The chiasmic structure of *A* and *A’* bears this out. The “lion” is blessed and “...will become human”. In *B* and *B’* the focus is on “eating”: The “human” will eat the lion and the lion will eat him (Coptic 3ms). *C* and *C’* says “the lion becomes human” and the “man” is “cursed”. The syntactical difference between “man” (πρωμε), and

¹⁶⁹ Danker. *Lexicon*, 408b.

“human” (ἄνθρωπος)¹⁷⁰ seem to facilitate the distinction of terrestrial (*man*) versus celestial (*human*) existence inferred by the saying’s introductory macarism. If man eats the lion, it becomes human. The lion is the metaphor for death and by consuming the lion death is overcome. As only humans can overcome and transcend death and thus approach the father, the lion may now as well be designated μακάριος. *The blessing is the transformative act from a physical death to celestial life.* The three terms: μακάριος, πμογει, πρωμε, and ἄνθρωπος suggest thematic coherence upon which the subsequent four *logia* elaborate, especially when *logion* 8 begins with the simile “the man is like a wise fisherman...”

2.3.2 Structure of Logion 8

Logion 8, unlike the preceding *logion*, has an affinity to the synoptic tradition. In Matthew 13:47-48, the parable speaks of the “kingdom of heaven” that “is like a net that was thrown into the sea” (47), whereas *log.* 8 states that the “the man is like a wise fisherman.” Tjitze Baarda suggests that,

“... redactional changes may have been the replacement of the ‘kingdom of heaven’ by the gnostic ‘ἄνθρωπος’ in the phrase ‘Man is like’. One might also suggest that the addition of ‘wise’ was the result of gnostic redaction. Finally, the favorite gnostic idea of the distinction between the many and the one may have prompted the reduction of the catch to only ‘one large fish’”.¹⁷¹

¹⁷⁰ ἄνθρωπος + zero article nouns are compound infinitives with fixed expressions; thus ἄνθρωπος (= do, make, act as) and πρωμε = act as man or human. Layton, *Grammar*, 139.

¹⁷¹ Tjitze Baarda, “‘Chose’ or ‘Collected’: Concerning an Aramaism in *Logion* 8 of the Gospel of Thomas,” *Harvard Theological Review* 84:4 (1991): 376.

On this assessment, we can perhaps agree on a “gnostic” influence in the text. The finer point when considering this saying is, however, if there is a thematic correlation with *logion 7* that advances our efforts to find meaning.

- A The man is like a wise fisherman
- B who casts his net down into the sea
- C he drew it up from the sea full of small fish below
- D Among them the **he found** a good large fish
- B' He cast all the small fish down into the sea
- D' **he chose** the large fish without difficulty
- A' Whoever has ears to hear let him hear.

In relation to the fourth century Coptic text, however, we can fairly assume that the text is continuing the thought with the previous *logion* and is concerned with the “man”. It is “the man”, who without difficulty disposes with the smaller fish, which are drawn “up” from the sea and subsequently are cast back “down” into the sea in lieu of “a fine large fish”.

The “sea” (ΘΑΛΑΣΣΑ)¹⁷² and the “fish” (ΤΒΤ) in *logion 3* are encapsulated by the merism (see page 59). In the Book of Revelation, θάλασσα, as part of creation, is “no

¹⁷² P.J. Williams critiques Nicholas Perrin’s thesis that Thomas was a Syriac composition based on retroversion from Syriac, dependence on Tatian’s Diatesseron suggests a late dating, and the number of catch words that surface supports such a thesis “cannot be established.” P.J. Williams, “Alleged Syriac Catchwords in the Gospel of Thomas,” *Vigiliae Christianae* 63 (2009), 71. On the other hand Nicholas Perrin suggests that because of the Syriac catchwords propensity to connect with either the Greek or Coptic *logia* “strongly” indicates that “...the whole collection was written not in Greek, as is widely supposed, nor in Coptic, but in Syriac.” “If” Wright adds, “the *Gospel of Thomas* was written in Syriac, then it was also very likely a compositional unity. Again, neither Coptic nor Greek *Thomas* approaches this thoroughgoing unity.” Nicholas Perrin, *Thomas, The Other Gospel* (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 2007), 87. Schnackenburg suggests *the Gospel of Thomas* as the Acts of Thomas are likely Syrian texts because of the veneration Thomas had in the area: The prominence of Thomas may derive from the fourth gospel’s connection with Syria...” Rudolph Schnackenburg *The Gospel according to St. John* (trans. by David Smith and G.A Kon; New York: Crossroads, 1987) 2.237. Interesting and perhaps relevant is the translation of ΘΑΛΑΣΣΑ in Syriac as “in the abyss”. P.J. Williams, *Alleged*, 74. Gathercole argues: “with some exceptions—there is a good deal of correspondence between the Greek and Coptic Versions, and therefore that it is quite possible that substantial portions of the Coptic version of *Thomas* go back to a Greek original. See Simon Gathercole, “A Proposed Rereading of P.Oxy. 645, Line 41 (*Gos. Thom. 7*).” *Harvard Theological Review* 99, (2006): 355.

more”, and “... suffers with the earth at the hands of the devil”.¹⁷³ The “fish” reflect the denizens of the world that are distinguished in *logion* 8 by size. Superficially the “larger” (νοβ) fish would have more worth than the smaller. This would indicate that the larger fish is of more value than the smaller and may be interpreted as “great”.¹⁷⁴ One could then possibly interpret its opposite κΟΥΙ (small) as “lesser”. The two phrases indicate, as does “lion” and “man”, states of being. But the question that comes to mind is: Why is the large fish of greater importance? And if the text did incorporate the Matthean parable of the kingdom of heaven, as Baarda suggests, could the harmonization of the two themes to explain *logion* 7?

In response to the first question the large fish became large for one apparent reason. It ate the smaller fish and became large. Being great is attaining blessedness of life with the father, while the lesser are cursed to earthly existence. The greater fish is “chosen”, “cast up from the sea” while the lesser fish are “cast down into the sea”. The sea (the created world) is not part of the heavenly realm.¹⁷⁵ When the fish are “drawn up” or “cast down”, the parallel to *logion* 7 is echoed, as the former is blessed and the latter cursed. The chiasmic structure above illustrates the paradigm that reflects the capacity of the “man” to choose wisely.

The *logion* is bracketed by introducing (A) “the wise fisherman” and concluded with the call for those with capacity and wisdom to understand the saying’s meaning beyond the metaphor (A’) the concern is with the “wise fisherman” where he “casts” his

¹⁷³ Jonathan Moo, “The Sea That is No More: Revelation 21:1 and the Function of Sea Imagery in The Apocalypse of John,” *Novum Testamentum* 51 (2009): 149-50.

¹⁷⁴ Crum, *Dictionary*, 250a.

¹⁷⁵ Most notably is Jonas’ reiteration of “the ‘depth’ or ‘abyss’ (Valentinians)”, contrasting the “transcendence of the supreme deity ...in his own realm entirely outside the physical universe, at immeasurable distance from man’s terrestrial abode.” Hans Jonas, “Delimitation of the Gnostic Phenomenon — Typological and Historical,” in *Le Origini Dello Gnosticismo: Colloquio di Messina* (ed. Ugo Bianchi; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1967), 95.

net into the sea (*B*). In *B'*, the catch is a net full of mostly small or lesser fish, but also a (*C*) large good fish (greater) is caught. In *B'* the lesser fish are discarded down into the sea and in *A'* the greater are “chosen” (COTΠ) “without difficulty” (ΧΩΡΙC ΓΙCΕ). *The smaller fish that are in the net are not “saved” because they are not yet dead, they are not consumed, and remain in the created world where they are cast. Just as the man in logion 7 is not “saved”, but rather “cursed”, so the lesser (small) fish are in a similar predicament.* The thematic continuation of the heavenly “up” as opposed to the worldly “down” persists with the vehicle of ascension being the transformative act of death, in *logion 9*.

2.3.3 Structure of *Logion 9*

Logion 9 is an agricultural paralleled saying subjecting the audience to common agrarian sense. Thematically, however, the difference in this saying stresses the good soil and the fruit going up into the sky, whereas, the road and rock destined seed was fated to fail. It is also possible to think of the “good soil” as a nurturing ground where the seed is buried or hidden and is in a proper relationship working in unison to provide good fruit. The seed is transformed and reaches to the sky. This is borne out in the structure below where exposure to earthly elements are improper and destructive but the soil that absorbs the seed gives it the means to reach its full potential.

Introduction: Behold! The sower came out, he took a handful and cast them

- A* some fell upon the road; the birds came and they gathered them up
B some fell upon the rock¹⁷⁶ and they did not root down in the earth and they did not produce ears up to the sky
A' and some fell upon thorns they choked the seed and the worm ate them
B' and some fell upon good soil and it gave good fruit upwards to the sky

Conclusion: it came to sixty per measure and one hundred twenty per measure.

As the structure above shows, the seed that did not produce (*B*) are the handful the sower cast in the introduction, the seeds that fell upon the “road” and the “rock” were “gathered” (presumably to be eaten) by birds (*A*) or choked by thorns and “eaten” (ΟΥΟΜ) by worms in (*A'*). Choked and eaten, on the surface, is a logical progression, but in keeping with the two former *logia*, may take on another meaning especially when eating or consumption “...is sometimes associated with ‘dying’ (*log.* 7, 60).¹⁷⁷ The parable continues with the seed incorporated into the “good soil” (*B'*), and their state of being changes into “good fruits”. Here, the soil is “good soil”. But what exactly is good soil if the saying suggests it to be the same as that of the rock or road? The seed “falls” (ΖΕ) on road or rock as it falls “onto” (ΕΧΝ) the “good soil”. The same preposition is used throughout the saying and implies that the seed falls on the surface. The “soil”, on the other hand has distinct functions. It is the place where seeds grow. “Falling onto the soil”, the seed may suffer the same consequences as those which fall on the rock or road. What distinguishes the “good soil” (ΠΚΑΖ ΕΤΝΑΝΟΥΦ) may be what is describes in *logion* 20 as “tilled (ΕΤΟΥΡ̄ΖΩΒ) soil” (literally: which they worked). Tilled soil or worked soil

¹⁷⁶ Perceptions of anti-orthodox sentiment may be appreciated in reference to the seeds that falls on the rock (implying those who follow Peter ΠΕΤΡΟΣ). “And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church...” Matt. 16:18). In *B* the seeds that fell on the rock ΠΠΕΤΡΑ, do not take root.

¹⁷⁷ John Horman, *A Common Greek Written Source for Mark and Thomas* (Waterloo: Wilfred Laurier University Press, 2010), 60.

equated with the “good soil” in *logion* 9, as any agrarian would know, is the proper and best soil for the seed to grow.

The sower’s action is similar to that of the “wise fisherman,” who also “casts” his net and was rewarded with a “large fish.” The following *logion* also speaks of Jesus “casting” a fire on the earth. The word “cast” serves as a structural element for these sayings.

Logion 7 opens with Jesus saying, “blessed is the lion which becomes man when consumed by man...” *logion* 8 continues with Jesus saying, “The man is like a wise¹⁷⁸ fisherman” followed by the “sower” (*log.* 9) who is taught that only in “good” soil good fruit is produced “upwards” (ΑΥΩ ΑΥΤ ΚΑΡΠΟΣ ΕΞΡΑΙ ΕΤΠΕ ΕΝΑΝΟΥΩ): a clear distinction to “some (seeds) that fell upon the rock and they did not root *down* in the earth and they *did not* produce ears *up* to heaven”. Again the recurring theme of transformation appears. *The “seed” is no longer a seed but rather transformed into another state of being: to its full potential as “fruit” when in the “good earth.”*

2.3.4 Structure of *Logion* 10

In this short saying Jesus speaks two simple maxims. The theme reflects the transcendence spoken in the previous *logia* and nuanced with the practice of alchemy. Alchemy, according to Charron,¹⁷⁹ was a “Hermetic science known by Egyptian and Jewish ‘lovers of wisdom’ in the first centuries of the Christian era as a sacred and

¹⁷⁸ Wise is an “epithet associated with Gnostic system of thought.” Montefiore and Turner, *Thomas*, 58.

¹⁷⁹ Régine Charron, “The Apocryphon of John (NHC II, 1) and the Graeco-Egyptian Alchemical Literature,” *Vigiliae Christianae* 59 (2005).

mystical art of transformation, regeneration and ultimately of salvation.”¹⁸⁰ In the transformative sense we cannot dismiss the echoes of alchemy in this saying altogether:

Jesus said:

I have come to cast a fire upon the world, and behold
I am guarding it until it is illuminated.

On this occasion Jesus is the one who has “come to cast a fire upon the world” (ΑΕΙΝΟΥΧΕ). The parallel in the synoptic tradition is Luke 12:49, “I have come to bring fire to the earth and how I wish it were already kindled”, and echoed in *logion* 16, “... I have come to cast (ΑΝΟΥΧΕ) upon the earth: fire, sword, and war”.¹⁸¹ Stevan Davies, as Wilson before him, see some interpretive value for *logion* 10 in *logion* 82,¹⁸² albeit approaching *logion* 10 from different perspectives. For Davies the “fire” in *logion* 10 parallels the idea of “kingdom” mentioned in *logion* 82: “he who is near me is near the fire, and he who is far from me is far from the kingdom.” The conclusion Davies draws between the two sayings suggests that the fire cast is, “the revealed knowledge of the Kingdom that [Jesus] has come to spread out upon the world.”¹⁸³ Hendrick, for the most part agrees with Davies, but adds parallels from the Hebrew Bible, Q, and the New Testament. Hendrick suggests that “casting fire upon the earth” is synonymous with “the fire of [Jesus’] words, which disturb (sayings 1, 2) divide, (saying 16a) and bring eternal life (saying 19c),”¹⁸⁴ His interpretation certainly supports the thematic connection

¹⁸⁰ Charron, “Alchemical.” 438.

¹⁸¹ Ménard, *L’Évangile Thomas*, 94. R. McL. Wilson, *Studies in the Gospel of Thomas* (London: Mobray, 1960), 37.

¹⁸² Wilson is indirectly concerned with interpretation. Rather, he suggests that a “conflation” of the Lukan and Matthean traditions may have occurred. Wilson, *Studies*, 110-111.

¹⁸³ Stevan Davies, *The Gospel of Thomas: Annotated and Explained* (Woodstock: SkyLight Paths, 2002), 10.

¹⁸⁴ Hendrick, *Unlocking*, 33. “In HB, fire symbolized both the presence and protection of God (Ex. 3: 2-4; 13: 21-22; Zech. 2: 5)...”

hypothesis on this occasion, but also adds that *logion* 10 distinguishes between a “small flame” and “a consuming fire.”¹⁸⁵ Although this is a helpful connection with *logion* 8, and the fisherman’s choice of the large over the small fish, textual support as to the size of the fire is absent. Aside that there is no mention of any sort of a “small fire”, we may derive from the text that a fire cast upon the world must, due to what it is covering, be large and in contrast a “small” fire exists. But then, every noun and verb, which would have a similarly contrasting counterpart, would result in unending and unsupported interpretation.¹⁸⁶

This notwithstanding, Hedrick’s “small”/“large” theory, and his previous interpretation likening fire to Jesus’ words seems plausible, not only because they could be understood in light of *logia* 1 and 2, but also in light of *logia* 7, 8, and 9.

As stated above the first instance of verbal repetition (other than “Jesus said”) is **νοϋχε**: Jesus casts a fire as the sower casts his seeds and the wise fisherman casts his net. This time it is the world Jesus is casting into. The world in *logion* 9 is the place where the seed dies; the sea, in *logion* 8, is where the smaller fish are cast, and the world in which the man is condemned in *logion* 7. The saying itself presents an interpretive problem because of the 3rd masculine suffix in the first line is attached to the preposition **εποϋ**¹⁸⁷ (to it), and **ϰαντεϋ**¹⁸⁸ (until it) in the second line. The question is what is he guarding? Is he guarding the fire? Or is he guarding the world? Stephen Patterson et al.,

¹⁸⁵ Hedrick, *Unlocking*, 33.

¹⁸⁶ Indeed some *logia* reflect a contrast between “large” and “small”, *logia* 20 (parable of the mustard seed), 26 (mote and beam in ones eye), 96 (little leaven made large loaves), as Hedrick duly notes. However he omits *log.* 8 altogether. Hedrick, *Unlocking*, 33.

¹⁸⁷ **εποϋ** (pre-personal state preposition: “to”) + **ϋ** (3rd masculine sing. ending: “he or it”) = “to it”. See Layton, *Grammar*, 30, 200

¹⁸⁸ **ϰαντεϋ** = **ϰαντε** (limitative subordinate clause base) + **ϋ** (3rd masc. sing. “he”-“it”) = “Until (such time as) it... See Layton, *Grammar*, 349.

render the identical English translation as Lambdin and Plisch.¹⁸⁹ Johannes Leipoldt, on the other hand, renders the translation to read (as Plisch “seriously considers”)¹⁹⁰ “...I am guarding it (the fire) until it (the world) is on fire.”¹⁹¹ One may also translate $\chi\epsilon\rho\omicron$, however, to express *illumination*.¹⁹² In the limitative case the translation would read, “...until it is *illuminated*.”¹⁹³ In this sense, Jesus is guarding the world until it is illuminated by the light of fire he cast – by his words – and is the purpose he has come. But a fitting idea is that fire is cast to set things ablaze and is a reasonable translation designating destruction, in this case, the world’s.¹⁹⁴

In *logion* 16, Jesus speaks of the dissention and division (*log.* 16) in so far as “that confessing him and following him leads to inner-worldly tensions which even affect the peace of family and household.”¹⁹⁵ Valantasis goes further by saying that the inevitability of conflict persists when transition between the “old ways and the new” are

¹⁸⁹ Lambdin, *Gospel*, 57 does not offer translation options, whereas Stephen J. Patterson and James M. Robinson, *The Fifth Gospel: The Gospel of Thomas Comes of Age* (New York: T&T Clark, 2011), 101n.6, suggest the alternative “I am protecting it (the world) until it blazes.” Plisch, *Thomas*, 57 suggests four translation possibilities of which only the first (...I am guarding it (the fire) until it blazes) and last (...I am guarding it (the world) until it is on fire) “...would be the most probable translation possibility” due to the antecedent ($\kappa\omega\zeta\tau$ (m.s), $\kappa\omicron\sigma\mu\omicron\zeta$ (m.s)) of the 3rd masculine pronouns in the second part of the *logion*.

¹⁹⁰ Plisch, *Thomas*, 58n.2.

¹⁹¹ Although Plisch footnotes (without page numbers) Leipoldt’s translation “...I am guarding it (the fire) until it (the world) is on fire”, this is not reflected in his German translation of the Coptic: Jesus sprach: Ich habe ein Feuer auf die Welt geworfen, und siehe, ich bewache es, bis es brennt”, which reads: “Jesus said, “I have a fire in the world cast, and, behold, I guard it until it burns.” In either Leipoldt’s translation or commentary I see no mention or indication of “...guarding “the fire” until world is on fire.” Johannes Leipoldt, *Das Evangelium nach Thomas* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1967), 28; 58.

¹⁹² Crum, *Dictionary*, 781b.

¹⁹³ Layton, *Grammar*, §252. “...the Coptic nominal sentence does not contain a verb...in translating a Coptic nominal sentence into English we always *add* the English copula verb.”

¹⁹⁴ *Logion* 71 may seem similar to *log* 10 in that it speaks of destruction that echoes the apocalyptic nature of Mk. 14: 58. Gärtner considers “destruction of the house” in *log* 71, synonymous with the destruction of the body. According to Gärtner, *Theology*, 173: “The meaning would then be that the Gnostic Jesus despised the body, since it was in any case only an apparent body, which shall be destroyed and has no value while it exists.” Gärtner, *Theology*, 173. For further comments and interpretations by other scholars, see Plisch, *Thomas*, 171-172.

¹⁹⁵ Plisch, *Gospel*, 70.

instigated by Jesus.¹⁹⁶ *Logion* 82 also mentions “fire”, however, it is not the fire that consumes the world by any means. Rather, it seems that the saying has more in common with *logion* 16 than *logion* 10, by emphasising that proximity to the kingdom is dependent on one’s nearness to Jesus and illustrated by the struggle this would entail. In contrast “casting a fire upon the world” suggests fire that illuminates, and once illuminated is transformed. A *double entendre* for “fire” seems to be working in *logion* 10 where destruction and illumination are the operative actions voicing transformation.

Fire is the means of illumination. One may argue that “fire” indeed is transformative and changes the state of things, however, equating fire with utterances, as Hendricks suggests, impresses upon the reader Jesus’ capacity to transmute states of being through words. The emphasis is on the hearer to take an active role.¹⁹⁷ In *logion* 10, Jesus is no longer passively speaking in enigma and parable; rather he interjects, **ΕΙΣΖΗΤΕ** (Behold!), I am guarding it until it (the world) is illuminated. Jesus has come to illuminate the world, which in Gärtner assessment is “a ‘house’ for man” as “the body is also a ‘house’ for the soul. To be unenlightened as man “in the body” is to be in a dark house,”¹⁹⁸ a notion that is echoed in the “abyss”¹⁹⁹ of **ΘΑΛΑΣΣΑ** (*log.* 8), the cursedness of the material world (*log.* 7), and the rock (**ΤΡΕΤΡΑ**)²⁰⁰ where the seeds fell upon and did not take root (*log.* 9).

¹⁹⁶ Valantasis, *Gospel*, 83. Worth quoting from the same page is the idea that once one becomes a seeker “...they must withdraw from family, from parents, precisely in order to create an alternative society, based no longer on standard social arrangements...but now upon those who have begun to enter the world constructed by conflict.”

¹⁹⁷ See *logion* 2, “Let him who seeks...”; *logion* 3, “Realize that it is you...”; *logion* 5, “Recognize what is in your sight...”

¹⁹⁸ Gärtner, *Theology*, 172.

¹⁹⁹ See note 81.

²⁰⁰ See note 94.

2.3.5 Structure of *Logion* 11

In the last saying (*log.* 11) the transformative theme continues and ends the inclusion 7-11 with the *provisio* concerning juxtaposed notions of life and death and their respective appropriate places. Temporality will, as death, pass away. The earthly dependent state of being will likewise fade, whereas the blessed state, which is (ΜΑΚΑΡΙΟΣ), transcends and perseveres in the eternal realm. The overwhelming scholarly consensus, as shown in Plisch's commentary,²⁰¹ and also with Gärtner,²⁰² Leipoldt,²⁰³ and Ménard²⁰⁴ is that assimilation and transformation are the overriding themes attached to *logion* 7. Leipoldt, however, includes sacramental elements to the discussion of *logion* 11 that are paralleled in *logion* 7, "So viel scheint klar: Thomas meint ein geistiges Sakrament, wie wir es eben in Spruch festzustellen suchten und aus Philon erläuterten."²⁰⁵ Although Leipoldt is not clear as to which sacrament the text refers to, Plisch suggests "it might refer [to]: eating food consecrated to an idol (cf. 1 Cor. 8 and 10: 14-22), for instance, or a certain practice of the Eucharist."²⁰⁶ Risto Uro perceives elements of salvation in 11:3, – "when you come to dwell in the light", when appreciated in terms of "that which you have will save you if you bring it fourth from yourselves" (*log.* 70). Here, Uro suggests, is an occurrence of "*process* in which the spirit is transformed according to the original image."²⁰⁷ This perspective is most interesting

²⁰¹ Plisch, *Thomas*, 59.

²⁰² Gärtner, *Theology*, 163-4. "...the "lion saying" gives us the key to the interpretation of ...part of *log* 11."

²⁰³ Leipoldt, *Evangelium*, 58.

²⁰⁴ Ménard, *L'Évangile Thomas*, 96.

²⁰⁵ Leipoldt, *Evangelium*, 58.

²⁰⁶ Plisch, *Thomas*, 59.

²⁰⁷ Risto Uro, *Thomas: Seeking the Historical Context of the Gospel of Thomas* (New York: T&T Clark, 2003), 65. Also, Uro considers a connection with *log.* 12 on the basis of the catchword in 11:1 ΤΕΙΠΕ

because Uro, as scholars before him, retrieve from *logion 7* a recurring attitude that points to transformation. What is unique about Uro, however, is that he sees the matter as a process that is difficult and dangerous if one considers the imagery that would be transmitted to the reader/hearer of the *logia* we have encountered so far.

Lions, curses, the sea, thorns, choking, being eaten by worms, and fire are all descriptors of conflict, danger, death, and fear, and all reflect the earthly human existence. *Logion 11* speaks in terms of the eschaton²⁰⁸ or end times, where the audience is expected to know of the forthcoming rewards, and culminates with the rhetorical question by which Jesus ends the discourse: “But when you exist (as) two what is it that you will do?”

Jesus said:

A This heaven will pass away and
A' the one above it will pass away.
B (and) the ones who are dead they are not alive
B' and the ones who are alive will not die.
C In the days when you consumed the one who is dead
C' you made him (the one who is) alive.
D When you come to exist in the light, what will you do?
E On the day you were one you became (the) two
D' But when you exist (as) two what is it that you will do?

In this sense *A* and *A'* compliment each other, in effect prophesying the end of the material world. *B* suggests the human earthly condition. That the “dead are not alive,”

ΝΑΡΠΑΠΑΓΕ (this heaven will pass away), and ΤΠΕ ([the] heaven) in *log. 12*, a notion that is entirely plausible and supports interconnectivity of sayings through catchwords. Uro, *Seeking*. 86.

²⁰⁸ According to Attridge, “eschatology is almost exclusively concerned with the *post-mortem* fate of the individual and *it is* based in ancient anthropological concepts which asserted the division of human beings into two, or occasionally three, substantially distinct components. In the appropriation of this anthropology and its implicit soteriology Gnostics differ but little, either from orthodox theologians of the second and third centuries, or from professional Platonists of the same period. Gnostic sources regularly expect that the individual soul will, after its escape from the prison of the body, ascend to its true heavenly home.” Harold W. Attridge, “Gnosticism and Eschatology,” *Perkins Journal* 33 (1980): 9-10.

suggests the condition of the people blinded by corporeal incumbencies. The living (*B'*) are those whose awareness of the material prison have the capacity to transform and transcend into a blessed state of being. When Jesus says: (*B'*) “the ones who are alive will not die”, the sense is that the hearer/reader is being made aware of the inverted spatial understanding of death. Consumption (*C*) facilitates the transformative act of being made alive that reflects the “blessed” state of death (that one becomes alive) in *logion* 7, and further continued in *D* and *D'*. With unambiguous clarity *D* defines the relationship of life and light, and that is the place of return (i.e. to the father) as one, from the present existence (*E*) as “two”. The future tense of the phrase “when you come to exist” (ετετηνωσθησθε) suggests the author is speaking to a state of being from where one will return to the light; (*D'*) the divided state of two.

In the foregoing chapter the attempt has been to delimit *logia* 7-11 along thematic references that are also connected by lexical associations. *Logia* 1-6, including the incipit, present what may be taken as an introduction to an esoteric worldview that is in conflict with the worldly powers. The overall premise is reliant on the need of awareness to uncover the meaning behind Jesus’ “secret sayings” (*log.1*), that will rectify the present earthly condition and restore the means of achieving salvation. Although the first six *logia* may hint at “oneness” through parts of *logion* 3 (“The kingdom is inside of you and outside of you”), and the term ογα ογωτ in *logion* 4, the state of being is initiated by the determination of the Greco-Coptic word μακαριος first used in *logion* 7.

The notion of transcendence is further made relevant by the act of “drawing fish up”, and “casting down” the unwanted lesser fish in *logion* 8. Casting is also the act whereby “seeds”, according to where they fall in appropriate or inappropriate places,

either do not “root down” or “produce good fruit up towards the sky” (*log.* 9), and is used in *logion* 10 as the means of transforming the earth through fire – itself a metaphor for transformation. Finally *logion* 11 continues the transformative theme of *logion* 7, with the associative word of “consumption” (ΟΥΩΜ) that makes things “alive”, and suggests that the purpose – the hidden meaning – of Jesus’ words reflect the idea of “oneness” with the divine primordial object of worship: the “father”, and thereby closing the thematic unit 7-11.

In the first chapter we dealt with the enigma of the seventh *logion* and its connection to the subsequent four *logia* by either lexical or thematic associations. We also saw that structure in the form of chiasmus played an integral role in fleshing out the text’s intention and how meaning is transmitted from text to audience. In the subsequent chapter we will delve into the text’s underlying ideas of “Reunification” and “Oneness”. Are these two terms interchangeable or do they imply specific hierarchical attachment necessary for salvation in the mindset of *Thomas’* text?

Chapter Three:

Considering the Theme of “Reunification and Oneness” in the *Gospel of*

Thomas

A consistent impression of unity prevails in *Gos. Thom.* In the Coptic text, ογα, ογα ογωτ or the equivalent term ΜΟΝΑΧΟΣ, as mentioned above, suggest a “single one”. The prodigious emphasis in the text is the man/Jesus relationship, which initiates ultimate reality. The question I am raising is whether “oneness” and “reunification” denote the same reality in *Gos. Thom.* and are conducive with the opinion put forth in the present thesis that “oneness” is embedded *logion* 7-11 as a process of reunification with the divine. The synchronic approach bears this out as the state of being with either Jesus or the father is two-pronged and hierarchical: first man must contend with Jesus before union with the father is possible.

It is then reasonable that “oneness” means integration with Jesus. Jesus possesses knowledge of the kingdom and the means by which it is achieved. His instructions to the disciples to join with him in “oneness” initiates the development of another hierarchically superior reality: reunification, and implies the return to the original state of being understood in context with the father’s primordial existence.

3.1 The Perspective of Reunification

Reunification is a salvific state that is distinguishable from the idea of “oneness” in *Gos. Thom.* For some “one and the same” (ΟΥΑ ΟΥΩΤ)²⁰⁹ may suggest the two terms share the same determination. Subtle differences, however, distinguish the condition of the future actuality for the term ΟΥΑ ΟΥΩΤ from the transformative progression leading to reunification. To this end the possibility of reunification empowers the present human condition to regain what was obfuscated through some comic drama. It also facilitates the return to the original standing while accounting for the current devolution of the human spiritual condition downwards and the quest for the natural transcendent state of being. In Gärtner’s words: “To have preceded from that which is the same, leads one to the thought that the heavenly world is that which is the same through and through, the ultimate unity.”²¹⁰ This process is implied and available in *Gos. Thom.* not through terms such as reunification or unification but rather “divided and undivided”(log. 61) as will be discussed below.

Reunification when considered as a process suggests the work or struggle that “becoming one” entails: a condition that the *Thomas* Christian aspires to regain as a matter of salvation.²¹¹ If this were so, then, when the primordial drama occurred creating the physical realm, the natural predisposition would be to return with the original state. *Logion 49* brings *Thomas’* reunification perspective to the forefront for the elect: “Blessed are the solitary and elect, for you will find the kingdom. For you are from it, and to it you will return”. The concern here becomes the awareness of the separation. For if

²⁰⁹ Klijn, “Single,” 272. “It is evident that the words ΟΥΑ ΟΥΩΤ and ΟΥΑ need not indicate any difference in meaning.”

²¹⁰ Gärtner, *Theology*, 135.

²¹¹ Klijn, “Single,” 273-5.

there were no separation there would be no need for reunification and Jesus is the manifestation of awareness. This process of realization initiates the process of return in which *gnosis* plays an integral part. When considering the meaning of unity, we must account for man's deficient knowledge of the heavenly world and his origins. The only possible relief is knowledge and unification with the divine;²¹² a perspective that Gärtner's early seminal work puts forth and has endured in the works of many contemporary scholars. That *gnosis* is provided with the articulation and interpretation Jesus's words: the code word, so to speak, directs seekers to escape the temporal realm. In *Thomas* separation from the father and the requirement for *gnosis* is implied in *logia* 3, 18, 19, 50,²¹³ however, doing so is a task in of itself, per *logion* 2; "Let him who seeks continue seeking until he finds", suggests the resolution to work laboriously at finding meaning through the interpretation of the sayings is tantamount to the ultimate reunification with the father. Passivity, on the other hand, is represented as the disciples' error when they question Jesus about the end times. In *logion* 18, "tell us in which way our end will occur", evokes Jesus' sarcastic retort, "Have you discovered, then, the beginning that you look for the end". In *logion* 51, "When will the repose of the dead come about, and when will the new world come?" Jesus orients them to the present, but unrecognised condition. Responding to *logion* 113, "On what day will the Kingdom come?" Jesus points out that the kingdom "will not come by waiting for it".²¹⁴ In the three examples unity with the father comes through the effort process and then transcendence²¹⁵ brought about by the edict to "seek" (*log.* 2).²¹⁶

²¹² Gärtner, *Theology*, 221.

²¹³ Klijn, "Single," 272.

²¹⁴ Davies, *Wisdom*, 83.

²¹⁵ Davies, *Wisdom*, 86.

Reunification as proposed above is the salvific worldview in *Gos. Thom.* implying active participation. The term itself may be perceived as determinative of “oneness”, however, a close reading of *logia* 18, 51, and 113, suggest the necessity for active involvement on the part of the “seeker”. As such, reunification is not expressed as a concept but rather the consequence of a process that moves one to transcendence and ultimate reality: to another state of being than that of temporal existence, a state that is reflected in *logia* 7-11. On the other hand “oneness” is a concept of existence achieved by the capitulation of one’s temporality and entering a state of “gnosis” provided by Jesus before ascending to the ultimate state.

“Reunification” and “oneness” may at first sight seem interchangeable. The possible argument that in the end *Thomas’* orientation to reunification ultimately results in “oneness” has merit. If we account for how the character of Jesus functions in the text, however, we see that the disciple’s orientation towards transcendent reality is “oneness” with Jesus. By putting the question to Simon Peter, Matthew and Thomas in *logion* 13: “Compare me to someone and tell me whom I am like” to which the former responds, “You are like a righteous angel” and Peter’s comparison is that of Jesus and “a wise philosopher”, only Thomas’ response is appropriate and reflecting his incapacity and understanding simultaneously, “My mouth is wholly incapable of saying whom you are like”. The climax of the saying recognises that Thomas’ understanding transcends that of the other *disciples’* and subsequently is equal with Jesus “I am not your master. Because you have drunk, you have become intoxicated from the bubbling spring which I dug

²¹⁶ *Logion* 24 seems to run contrary to the disciples passivity: “His disciples said, ‘Show us the place where you are, since it is necessary for us to seek it.’ Valantasis’ perspective that Jesus’ indirect response; “There is light within a person of light, and it shines on the whole world. If it does not shine, it is dark”, is an indication of the disciples being negatively portrayed and not understanding the intention of ‘seeking’. Valantasis, *Gospel*, 97, 129.

out.”²¹⁷ Here the “bubbling spring” is a euphemism for the secret sayings in the *Gos. Thom.* itself. The Jesus/disciple relationship emphasises the resulting condition of “intoxication”, which in this *logion* may elevate the disciple to “oneness” and is the positive result of proper interpretation.

“Intoxicated” (†ζε) appears twice in only one other *logion* and is not a positive condition. In *logion* 28 the term illustrates man’s “intoxication” which renders him “blind” (ζ̄ν̄ β̄λλεεγε), “empty” (εγωγειτ) and “[none of them] thirsty” (μπιζε ελλαγ̄ ν̄ζητου εγ εφοβε). Jesus’ appearance in the flesh (ζ̄ν̄ σαρξ) suggests the onset of knowledge resulting in repentance (μετανοει). Four features in the structure of *logion* 28 (below) bear this out: first, Jesus appears to man in the flesh and finds them (humankind) intoxicated, second, Jesus’ soul becomes “afflicted”, third, as “empty” as man “came into the world so will he leave” it and fourth, they will realise the predicament of the flesh (shake off their wine) and “will repent.” The positive and negative connotation for “intoxicated” perhaps is dependant on their blindness and lack of sight. Jesus appeared to them but they could not see, as the rhetoric supported by the structure (below) shows.

πεξε ῑς̄ χε:

λειωζε ερατ̄ ζ̄ν̄ τμητε̄ μ̄πκοσμοσ̄ αγω̄ λειογων̄ εβολ̄ ναγ̄ ζ̄ν̄ σαρξ̄
 λειζε̄ εροογ̄ τηρογ̄ εγταζε̄
 μπιζε̄ ελλαγ̄ ν̄ζητοῡ εφοβε̄
 αγω̄ αταψχη̄ †τκασ̄ εχ̄ν̄ ν̄ωηρε̄ ν̄ρωμε̄ χε̄ ζ̄ν̄ β̄λλεεγε̄ νε̄ ζ̄μ̄ πουζητ̄
 αγω̄ σεναγ̄ εβολ̄ αν̄
 χε̄ ν̄ταγ̄ ειεπεκοσμοσ̄ εγωγειτ̄ εγωwinē ον̄ ετρογεῑ εβολ̄ ζ̄ν̄
 πκοσμοσ̄ εγωγειτ̄
 πλην̄ τενογ̄ σετοζε̄ ζοταν̄ εγωαννεζ̄ πογηρπ̄ τοτε̄ σεναρ̄μετανοεῑ

²¹⁷ Plisch, *Thomas*, 65.

Jesus said:

- A* I took my place in the midst of the world and I appeared to them in the flesh.
B I found all of them *intoxicated*;
C I found none of them thirsty.
D And my soul became afflicted for the sons of men
because they are blind in their hearts and do not have sight;
A' for empty they came into the world and empty too they seek to leave
the world.
B' But for the moment they are *intoxicated*.
C' When they cast off their wine, then they will repent.

The pivotal point of the chiasm is *D*: man's blindness to his earthly predicament. The *logion* is balanced by contrasting the positive and negative condition of each successive phrase beginning with (*A*) Jesus' appearance and fullness: "I took my place in the flesh" and (*A'*) man's coming into the world "empty". Their inebriated earthly condition is in the present (*B*), while "But for the moment..." (*B'*), suggests a future alternative status. The present condition of man in *C*, "I found none of them thirsty" is contrasted with the future in *C'*, "When they shake of their wine."

Logion 28 comes into focus when we look at the syntax of *logion* 50 and its dealing with the origins of the "elect". The Coptic opening line in *Logion* 28, "I took my place", $\lambda\epsilon\iota\omega\zeta\epsilon\ \epsilon\rho\alpha\tau$ (literally: I stood to my feet) suggests the place from where the elect "came into being". Jesus' world of fullness and light is similarly depicted using the same euphemism in *logion* 50: $\alpha\varphi\omega\zeta\epsilon\ \epsilon\rho\alpha\tau\eta$ (literally: it stood to its feet). The two are distinguished solely by their respective pronouns.

Logion 28: $\underline{\lambda\epsilon\iota\omega\zeta\epsilon\ \epsilon\rho\alpha\tau}$ $\zeta\bar{\eta}\ \tau\mu\eta\tau\epsilon\ \bar{\mu}\pi\kappa\omicron\sigma\mu\omicron\varsigma\ \underline{\lambda\gamma\omega\ \lambda\epsilon\iota\omicron\gamma\omega\eta\zeta\ \epsilon\beta\omicron\lambda\ \eta\lambda\gamma}$
 $\zeta\bar{\eta}\ \sigma\alpha\rho\acute{\alpha}$

Logion 50: $\zeta\iota\tau\omicron\omicron\gamma\ \omicron\gamma\alpha\alpha\tau\eta\ \underline{\alpha\varphi\omega\zeta\epsilon\ \epsilon\rho\alpha\tau\eta}\ \underline{\lambda\gamma\omega\ \alpha\varphi\omicron\gamma\omega\eta\zeta\ \epsilon\beta\omicron\lambda}$

internalize the concept and thereby make it a living reality of existence. This is to say that the ultimate truth of Jesus' words point to a transcendent existence that is taught, and even lived temporally, but can only be actualized fully in the divine realm of the father. "Oneness," perhaps best illustrated in the works of Philo of Alexandria where, as per Baur, is presented as the perfection of the first man:

"The πρώτος ἄνθρωπος, the earth-born ἀρχηγέτης, of the entire race, was most excellent (ἄριστος) in each part of his being. He was created by God himself, and was thus truly καλός καὶ ἀγαθός, i.e. a perfect man, or man as he was meant to be."²²¹

The dividedness of man's wholeness was the result of the female element, or disposition, that served to initiate and perpetuate his (man's) demise, prompting "the beginning of the blameworthy life. For so long as he was one, he was like the world and God in his singleness..."²²² The demarcation consistent with perfection is equivalent to the "oneness" shared. Twoness is multiplicity and the deterioration of human initial state of being.

In the "Gnostic" creation myth, the cosmic drama occurs when Sophia takes it upon herself to create. The result is the demiurge (Yaldabaoth) that possesses the light of the father through its creator Sophia. He creates the material world and with the archons creates man. Subsequently he is tricked into scattering the divine particles by breathing life into man. Ultimately the savior is dispatched to enlighten the "elect" and guide their return to the Pleroma (the divine realm) thus recuperating the scattered divine light to its origin.

²²¹ Baur, *Philo*, 36.

²²² Baur, *Philo*, 36.

It is within this cosmic myth that we find the idea of “oneness,” the desire to join with the divine. We find echoes of this idea in Philo with the notion of the male/female dichotomy. The male category relates to the rational soul, “...in the sphere of nous, the Logos, and ultimately God himself, whereas the female counterpart is the relative component of the sense-perceptible world, which must be forsaken.” Second; there is the notion of “becoming one as God ...who knows no mixture but is in his isolation a unity (μὸνας).” No condition other than “oneness” can mirror God’s state and intention for man.

Klijn endorsement of Philo’s thought concerning “oneness” is warranted when assessing it as being in “striking agreement”²²³ with *Gos. Thom.* The relationship concerning “oneness” is reflected by the term **ΟΥΑ ΟΥΩΤ**, a term that is relevant to God’s state of being as well as the aspiration for man’s efforts towards unification: “That God is “one” does not mean that he is “unique,” but that he is a “oneness,” a μὸνας, thus being unmixed.”²²⁴ Man’s mixed condition, on the other hand, is detrimental to God’s “likeness” that Man once possessed and to which in his state of “twoness” can only aspire. We may further reflect on the notion of “oneness” with respect to Adam and the Genesis narratives.

Scholars Klijn and Charron,²²⁵ suggest the term **ΟΥΑ ΟΥΩΤ** references theological implications, and like Klijn, Charron suggests the term denotes, at times, transformative unity: “On peut s’attendre à trouver comme équivalent dans le contexte qui rend compte du processus de fusion, ou de transformation, de deux ou de plusieurs

²²³ Klijn, “Single,” 276.

²²⁴ Klijn, “Single,” 276.

²²⁵ Régine Charron, “À Propos des **ΟΥΑ ΟΥΩΤ** et de la solitude divine dans les textes de Nag Hammadi,” in *Coptica–Gnostica–Manichaica: Mélanges offerts à Wolf–Peter Funk* (ed. L. Painchaud and P.-H. Poirier; Québec Bibliothèque Copte de Nag Hammadi, 2006).

entités en une seule, et l'état d'unité qui en résulte."²²⁶ In either case the presence such as the reconstituting of the primordial Adamic unity²²⁷ of the term **ΟΥΑ ΟΥΩΤ**, whether a technical term or not,²²⁸ and if used or not to determine unification, affirms some state of being that the reader/hearer is encouraged to recognize.

The “one” (**ΟΥΑ**) or the derivations thereof (**ΟΥΑ ΟΥΩΤ**) “single one / one and the same” or “solitary” appear in eight of the 114 *logia* of *Gos. Thom.*, (4, 11, 16, 22, 23, 49, 75, 106). Of these the relevant indicator of “oneness” as a state of being is *logion* 11. The other *logia*, beginning with *logion* 4, suggest unification, after the work has been put into the transformation: as the elder and the younger will unite as a “single one”, they will be the same (*log.* 4). There does not, however, appear in this *logion* any understanding of a transcendent state, rather, the appeal is to recognise and commence a process of reunification, which as mentioned above begins with Jesus. *Logion* 16, trends towards divisive polemical injunctions in relation to family ties and elevation of discipleship. *Logion* 22 refers to a process (“When you make the two one”) by which attaining the “kingdom” is accomplished. In *Logion* 23 the meritorious are those who are chosen, and in light of the preceding *logion* are the ones who Jesus guides to the process (when you make, you fashion) of unification. Jesus never responds to disciples’ questions with answers that direct them to be in stasis. In *logion* 49, Jesus identifies the **ΜΟΝΑΧΟC** (the one and the same) in the same context accorded with the transcendence of the “blessed”

²²⁶ Charron, « À propos, » 112. “We can expect to find **ΟΥΑ ΟΥΩΤ** as the equivalent of **ΟΥΑ** in the context which reflects the process of merger or transformation, two or multiple entities in a single, and the State of oneness that results.”

²²⁷ Klijn, “Single,” 272-3

²²⁸ Klijn’s argument against the technical designation of **ΟΥΑ ΟΥΩΤ** is based on the Coptic rendering of the Greek word εἰς in Rom. 5:15. Klijn, “Single,” 272.

²²⁹ “The bridal chamber and the image must enter through the image into the truth: this is the restoration.” *Gospel of Philip* (II,3), 67:16-17.

(μακαριος), and the kingdom. *Logion 75* presents the idea of the Bridal Chamber where unity with ones heavenly counterpart is consummated and is (the Bridal Chamber) synonymous with and a reference to the “kingdom.”

Logion 11, in of itself directly refers to a time where Man was “one” with the father and suggests, rather unambiguously, that he “became two”. The division from Man’s original state is obvious here, however, unlike gender unification presented to the hearer/reader, the higher thematic conflation of the above *logia* suggest a concept of “oneness” as the underlying dominant condition of divine stature and ultimate reality that includes Man’s state of being. The state of being, on the other hand, is not understood by the obvious ογα ογωτ phrase. The phrase enables too many interpretative strategies, and for the audience, when used in conjunction with the male/female dichotomy of *logion 114* may resort to understanding the term along the lines presented by Philo and the reunification of the divisive elements that created “twoness”: man and woman. This interpretive strategy is especially relevant, if taken into account with the Adamic narrative and the creation of man and woman. As Klijn concludes:

“The doctrine of the *Gospel of Thomas* was influenced by Jewish ideas about the original Adam being “one.” This idea can be found in many writings and must have been a well-known theme throughout Hellenistic Judaism

The doctrine would then suggest that human beings, as Adam, were immortal within the realm of the father’s unity. Man’s existence in the spiritual sphere should be as it was before. In *Thomas* the text seems to relate little about Adam other than in *logia 46*

and 85 where the former depicts him inferior to John the Baptist,²²⁹ and in the latter his unworthiness, for he experienced death, whereas the seekers and interpreters of the sayings in this *logion* will not.²³⁰ Adam's relationship to the father, described as a "great power and a great wealth" in *logion* 85 is significant at its basic level when taken in tandem with *logion* 83 and 84 suggesting the image of the father is hidden/concealed in the light, and that if seen is equal to the attainment of union with the father.²³¹ The "image(s) is manifest in man, but the light in them remains concealed" (*log.* 83); "your image(s) which came into being before you," (*log.* 84); and "Adam came into being from a great power and great wealth," (*log.* 85): all three phrases nuance Adam's (one time) union with the father and echo creation myths at work in the three *logia*. "Oneness" is not identified in any of the three *logia*, but rather is implied by the coming together of the various themes (light, image, likeness) and their relationship to Adam and the father. A primordial relationship that was lost and is now needs to be reestablished. "Oneness" and "reunification" is nuanced by the place of the ultimate single primordial state of being that is "oneness." Since Man is in the mundane state he is in and in want of salvation, "oneness" with Jesus is the desired outcome when Jesus' words are appropriately discerned and becoming "one" or "oneness" with Jesus expedites transcendence and

²²⁹ The addition of Adam is nothing more than a figure of speech. "The introduction of Adam in the first sentence" says Gärtner "has really done nothing other than emphasize that the saying has in view the whole of mankind, from the first man up to and including the Baptist." Gärtner, *Theology*, 224. Similarly, Valantasis, *Gospel*, 122

²³⁰ Valantasis, *Gospel*, 165.

²³¹ "The sequence 83-85 indicates that attainment of the unitive state is equivalent to "seeing" the original Image (lost by Adam) which is hidden in the light." Davies, *Wisdom*, 69. *Logion* 85 has a close affinity with the previous one, 84, which speaks about the nature of man in connection with his creation." Gärtner, *Theology*, 196. "The close connection between the theme of light and the concept of the image is most clearly set out in saying 50, where the gnostic is taught to say 'We have come from the light where the light has originated through itself...'" Montefiore and Turner, *Thomas*, 95. Ménard also: "Si l'homme peut venir à s'identifier à sa *daena* lumineuse, c'est qu'il porte lui aussi en lui-même de la lumière et qu'il est d'origine lumineuse, à la manière d'Adam considéré non plus dans son être terrestre, mais avant sa chute, c'est-à-dire dans son état glorieux de puissance et de richesse." Ménard, *L'Évangile*, 186.

reaches “reunification.” If there is ambiguity between the two it is because it seems “oneness” can apply to both sides of the heavenly/earthly divide. It is on the mundane side, however, that Jesus intersects with humanity; it is on this side that the secret words illuminate what is inherent in humanity; and it is on this side that Jesus and man become one with the other: “master and disciple” (*log.* 13); and restated in *logion* 108: Jesus said, “He who will drink from my mouth will become like Me. I myself shall become he, and the things that are hidden will become revealed to him.”

If taken thematically, then, *logion* 7 is the beginning of a metaphorically presented group of saying articulating “oneness” as the constant eternal state of being of the father’s nature and man’s original condition. The transcendent reality of “oneness” in *logion* 7 works intuitively with the specific use, and meaning, of the Greco-Coptic word **ΜΑΚΑΡΙΟΣ**²³² and the hearer/reader would have the terms of reference with which to consider “oneness” as a concept specific to existence that is transcendental and leads to “reunification” with the celestial father. The most the reader/hearer can aspire to is reunification with the father by their “oneness” with Jesus and the secret sayings he provides.

²³² All macarisms in *Gos. Thom.* begin with **ΜΑΚΑΡΙΟΣ** except in *logion* 79 where the term is replaced by **ΕΙΑΤ** and defined as “Blessed” but equated to the Greek *εὐλογημένος*. Crum, *Dictionary*, 74a.

Conclusion

In dealing with a sayings text such as the Coptic *Gospel of Thomas* the tendency is to consider it an *ad hoc* collection of sayings that defies coherent strategy. Some would even entertain the possibility of reducing it to source material in order to affirm the chronology of other texts or as in the case of the search for the historical Jesus to authenticate the words of Jesus along the lines of most to least probability. For many this effort was and perhaps still is a fine and noble enterprise, as many scholars have been most industrious in this endeavor and were met with varying degrees of criticism. Some, as Aune have even suggested that the truncated or “less developed” versions of some sayings support an early dating of the Greek fragments (*P.Oxy. 1// logion 31* in the Coptic *Gos. Thom.*) that precedes the canonical Gospels themselves,²³³ and thus an excited academia waited in anticipation for the announcement confirming the text as the long lost “*Quelle*” source. In the end the academy waited in vain. What the *Thomas* Coptic text offered was an insight, ever so difficult to decipher, into an understanding of an idea through which Jesus’ words transformed the so inclined reader/hearer of the text.

The difficulty, however, needs to be overcome and the religious and salvific implications unraveled in order for the text to have any relevance. To this end many academic approaches have been applied to *Gos. Thom.* that run the gamut of methodologies in the arsenal of Biblical Studies, less one. With confidence we cannot say that any one method is superior to the other, rather, all are useful in piecing together an

²³³ David E. Aune, “Oral Tradition and the Aphorisms of Jesus.” in *Jesus and the Oral Gospel Tradition* (ed. by H. Wansbrough. Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1991). 222.

elusive greater narrative in the discourse of, perhaps, a competing form of Christianity at a time when conflicting perspectives whirled about its central figure, Jesus.

As for the present thesis the approach has been one of a Rhetorical/Structural Analysis in an attempt to show that the dominant theme embedded in *logion 7* is “Oneness”. As mentioned above the only scholar (as far as I know) who has brought this method to bear on the *Gos. Thom.* is Gagné who has consistently and convincingly used the method in his *Gos. Thom.* research.

Many scholarly works have systematically overlooked this enigmatic saying and any research into the saying, of which, until Lanzillotta’s²³⁴ recent work there were only two. Perhaps the reason was the simplicity of the saying once the conviction a scribal error took hold and the nouns, man/lion, were reversed in the *logion*’s last line. The other option for avoiding the saying is its difficulty. How do we make sense of man’s status being blessed or cursed if the man regardless of eating or being eaten is nevertheless cursed? The answer to this question, I believe, is established within the text itself and the *logion* in particular.

The same themes of “Oneness” and words are reiterated as the pericope closes with *logion 11*. The heavens will cease to exist. Those tethered to the heavens will never ascend to the blessed state of being beyond this world. Those who have internalized the words of Jesus know the transcendent realm where the light/father dwells and the “consuming of the dead” makes it “alive.” In the intermediate *logia 8, 9, 10* the sayings are committed to each other with the lexical connection νογχε (cast). The “wise man” in *logion 8* casts his net and upon bringing in his catch throws the “small fish” back into the sea and “chooses” to keep the “good large fish”. In *logion 9* the seed that “produced good

²³⁴ Lanzillotta, “Unravelling.” 116-132.

fruit” are the ones that landed on “good soil” the remainder that fell outside the “good soil” and were either “gathered by birds” “choked” or “eaten by worms” and none survived. They in effect died and did not “produce fruit upwards to heaven” but died “down in the earth” Both sayings 8 and 9 suggest the preference of one over the many and the few over the many and the “good soil” to grow over the places where the seeds could not root “down into the earth.” Finally, *logion* 10 returns to the theme of transformation by the two simple statements Jesus makes. In an alchemical sense the world is transformed as the alchemist’s fire burns off and transmutes the base element to precious metal. The base element is cast away and the precious element remains.

In chapter three I have attempted to show how unification and reunification applies to the general theme of “Oneness.” In this case, however, the suggestion is made that unification must first be achieved with Jesus in order to return to the ultimate **ΜΑΚΑΡΙΟC** state of being as one with the father. Even if there are *logia* suggesting that father and Jesus are one entity it is primarily necessary to work through the process of understanding Jesus’ words to bring about unification with the ultimate “Oneness.” As Pokorny comments on *logion* 59²³⁵ “Communication with the father is impeded by the spiritual death (the ‘not seeking’) of individual human beings.”²³⁶

This thesis is based on an interpretation of *logion* 7 that takes into account the use of the term **ΜΑΚΑΡΙΟC** to express a “blessed” otherworldly state of being. I have tried to demonstrate its pedigree and function in the New Testament and by ancient writers where the notion of blessedness is expressed by the Greek (root) term *εὐλογία* or the Coptic term

²³⁵ Jesus said, “Take heed of the living one while you are alive, lest you die and seek to seek him and be unable to do so.” (*log.* 59)

²³⁶ Petr Pokorny, *A Commentary on the Gospel of Thomas: From Interpretations to the Interpreted* (New York: Clark, 2009). 36.

ειατ. The blessing is not a terrestrial blessing whereto one is fortunate or is bestowed with the earthly favors of the gods. Rather, the philological assessment of the Greco-Coptic word μακαριος in tandem with the inverse understanding of states of being, life being death and death being life, applies according to the sphere of existence one finds him/herself. This works well within the *logion* itself. The act of consumption incorporates two states of being into one with the lion expressed not only as a metaphor but also with proximity to the spelling and audibility of the Coptic word for death and lion and, perhaps, serves concurrently as a mnemonic aid in the oral recitation of the saying.

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