

# The *Acts of Andrew*. A New Perspective on the Primitive Text

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## RESUMEN

El presente artículo ofrece una síntesis de las principales conclusiones a que llega el autor en su monografía (2007) sobre los *Hechos apócrifos de Andrés (HA)*, escrito apócrifo cristiano-primitivo acerca del cual los especialistas no se ponen de acuerdo ni en torno al carácter del texto primitivo ni acerca de cuáles testimonios textuales pueden conservarlo de forma más fiel. No sólo autor, lugar y fecha de composición de los *HA* son desconocidos, sino que incluso su género literario, contenido, extensión, pensamiento e intención siguen siendo objeto de discusión en la crítica especializada. En opinión del autor, más importante que la dudosa reconstrucción de la carrera apostólica de Andrés es el análisis del pensamiento e intención de los *HA* a partir de aquellos documentos que pueden conservarlo en su forma más primitiva. El artículo se organiza en cinco apartados: 1. Situación textual de los *HA* y posible reconstrucción del texto primitivo; 2. El fragmento de los *HA* en el ms Vaticanus graecus 808 (V); 3. Mensaje e intención de los *HA* según V; 4. Exposición de las principales líneas del pensamiento de los *HA*; 5. Posible fecha de composición de los *HA*.

**Palabras clave:** Hechos apócrifos de Andrés; cristianismo primitivo.

## ABSTRACT

The present paper summarises the main conclusions drawn by the author in his monography (2007) on the *Acts of Andrew (AA)*, an Early Christian apocryphal text about which the scholarly literature did not reach so far a consensus regarding basic issues such as how the primitive text looked like and which textual witnesses are likely to preserve it in a better form. Not only author, place and time of composition of the *Acts of Andrew* are unknown, its literary genre, contents, length, thought and intention are still a matter of conjecture. The author contends that instead of focussing on the questionable reconstruction of Andrew's apostolic career, one should rather pay head to the message and intention of the primitive text as presented by those textual witnesses that are likely to preserve in their most original state. The paper is organised into five sections: 1. *AA*'s textual situation and possible reconstruction of the primitive Acts; 2. *AA*'s fragment in ms Vaticanus graecus 808 (V); 3. Message and intention of *AA* as presented by V; 4. Exposition of *AA*'s main lines of thought; 5. *AA*'s plausible time of composition.

**Key words:** Apocryphal Acts of Andrew; Early Christianity.

Recent years have seen a renewed interest in the Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles. The *Acts of Andrew* (*AA*) has greatly profited from this development, as witnessed by numerous new editions, translations, congresses and articles<sup>1</sup>. Due to its especially complex textual situation, however, the abundance of studies on *Acta Andreae*, instead of helping to clear up its genesis, has frequently enhanced this complexity. The uncertainty concerning what the primitive text looked like and the profusion of second-hand versions has produced a wide range of hypotheses on the original *Acts* as well as a plethora of interpretations concerning its mentality.

In point of fact, *AA* survives in a large number of texts of various kinds which allegedly transmit the primitive text, although their relationship with it is not always easy to establish. Many of these versions are also imperfect since the majority are fragmentary, and the few cases that are completely preserved reveal traces of editorial activity. The most important problem posed by the sources, however, is the highly divergent nature of their accounts. According to some testimonies *AA* included both the peregrinations and the martyrdom of the apostle; according to others it included the martyrdom with a couple of preliminary events only. As a result of this textual situation, not only the author, place and time of composition of the *Acts of Andrew* are unknown, its literary genre, contents, length, thought and intention are still a matter of conjecture.

The present paper intends to offer an answer, if not for all these issues at least for some of them. It is my contention that instead of focusing on a doubtful reconstruction of the itinerary of Andrew's apostolic career, one should concentrate on the message and intention of the primitive text by examining the textual witnesses that are likely to preserve it in its most original state. Within this purpose I give an overview of this approach in my dealing with the subject matter in my monography on the *Acts of Andrew*. Within this purpose my exposition is organised into five sections. The first one tackles the issue of *AA*'s textual situation and the possible reconstruction of the primitive Acts. The second contends that *AA*'s fragment in ms Vaticanus graecus 808 is our most reliable in order to get a glimpse into the primitive Acts. Section three focuses on the message and intention of *AA* as presented by this ms. Section number four intends to delineate the main lines of *AA*'s thought. On the basis of this previous study, the fifth section elaborates on the text's plausible time of composition.

## 1. TEXTUAL SITUATION AND RECONSTRUCTION OF THE PRIMITIVE ACTS OF ANDREW

On the basis of the textual testimonies available today, it seems impossible to elucidate what the primitive Acts actually looked like. A large number of texts have been preserved by textual transmission which truly or falsely claim to be accounts based

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<sup>1</sup> Editions: PRIEUR (1989); MACDONALD (1990); PIÑERO and DEL CERRO (2004: 107-235); ROIG LANZILLOTTA (2007b); Volumes on the Apocryphal Acts or on the *Acts of Andrew*: BOVON *et al.* (1981) and BOVON (1999); BREMMER (2000). For the numerous specific articles on the *Acts of Andrew*, ROIG LANZILLOTTA (2007b: 28-40).

on original material or which are interpreted as such by the scholarly literature. The most important of these witnesses are sixteen versions, not only written in indifferent periods and languages, namely Greek<sup>2</sup>, Latin<sup>3</sup>, Coptic<sup>4</sup> and Armenian<sup>5</sup>, but also with diverse contents.

The scholarly efforts to determine how the original Acts actually looked like have produced two different positions among scholars. On the one hand, some tend to believe that the primitive text consisted of two differentiated parts, the peregrinations and the martyrdom<sup>6</sup>. Some texts among the textual witnesses —*Epitome*, *Vita*, *VitaEsc*, *VitaParis*, *Narratio* and *Laudatio*— seem indeed to allow such a hypothesis, but their testimony is not unequivocal. As far as Andrew's travels are concerned, these texts present three different versions of the itinerary: that of *Epitome*, that of the different *Vita* versions and *Laudatio*, and that of *Narratio*, with only sporadic contacts among them. As to the martyrdom, *Epitome*, *Vita*, *VitaEsc* and *VitaParis* actually lack a so-called martyrdom and include, at the most, a couple of quick notes about Andrew's end<sup>7</sup>.

<sup>2</sup> *Martyrium prius (Mpr)*, in BONNET (1898: 46-57). Re-edited by PRIEUR (1989: 672-703); *Martyrdom of Saint Andrew* preserved in two mss, namely Sinaiticus gr. 526 (S) and Hierosolymitanus Sabbaiticus 103 (H), first identified by EHRHARD (1912: 516-18) and edited in an inferior edition by DETORAKIS (1981-82: 325-52). Collated together with other testimonies by PRIEUR (1989: 441-549); *Martyrdom of St. Andrew* in ms Ann Arbor 36 (C), collated by PRIEUR (1989: 507-49); *Martyrium alterum A and B*, edited by BONNET (1898: 58-64); the so-called *Greek Epistle*, two independent Greek translations of a Latin original known as *Passio sancti Andreae apostoli* (see next note), in BONNET (1898: 1-37); the so-called *Narratio*, in BONNET (1894: 353-72); the so-called *Laudatio*, in BONNET (1894: 309-52); *Vita Andreae* by the monk Epiphanius (three different versions, the first of them in DRESSSEL [1843: 45-82], based on an inferior ms [Vat. gr. 824] and two other unpublished versions, namely Paris BN gr. 1510 [*VitaParis*] and Escorial y II 6 [gr. 314] [*VitaEsc*]); Fragment «ex actis Andreae» in ms Vaticanus graecus 808, in BONNET (1898: 38-45); *Acta Andreae et Matthiae apud anthropophagos*, edited by BONNET (1898: 65-127).

<sup>3</sup> *Passio sancti Andreae apostoli* (= *Latin Epistle*), in BONNET (1898: 1-37); *Passio altera sancti Andreae apostoli*, better known as *Conversante*, BONNET (1894: 373-78); Gregory of Tours' *Liber de miraculis Beati Andreae apostoli (Epitome)*, edited by BONNET (1969[1885]: 371-96).

<sup>4</sup> Coptic fragment in Papyrus Copt. Utrecht 1 (PCU 1), *Editio princeps* by VAN DEN BROEK and French translation by PRIEUR, «Édition du texte copte», in PRIEUR (1989: 652-671).

<sup>5</sup> *Armenian passion*, first edited by TCHÉKARIAN (1904: 146-67). French translation, in LELOIR (1986: 232-57). V. Calzolari is currently working on a new edition of *Arm* that will be based on the testimony of fourteen new manuscripts.

<sup>6</sup> It is possible to distinguish two groups according to their work-method. The first includes those scholars who attempt at a general reconstruction by a selective used of the testimonies: includes Hennecke, Blumenthal, Quispel, Hornschuh, Plümacher. The second group includes those scholars who eclectically combine the sources in order to attain Andrew's itinerary as complete as possible: Deeleman, Söder, Erbetta, MacDonald.

<sup>7</sup> *Vita's* version of the martyrdom is problematic. Ms Vat. gr. 824 has lost its original end and includes *Narratio's* account of the martyrdom. *VitaParis* has a very brief conclusion and *VitaEsc*, in its turn, contains a very summarising version with a few echoes of original elements in order to ensure textual continuity. This summary version of the martyrdom in *VitaEsc* only mentions an open speech to the brethren, Stratocles' attempt to release the apostle on the second day of Andrew's crucifixion, the people's reaction on the third day, and Aegeates' fear and intention to free Andrew (*VitaEsc*, f. 245<sup>v</sup>, col. 2). The text closes with a reference to the destiny of the main characters, namely Aegeates, Maximilla and Andrew.

True, *Laudatio*'s and *Narratio*'s close contacts with the testimonies for the martyrdom seem to imply their dependence upon a common source that included Andrew's martyrdom, but horizontal contamination of sources cannot be excluded<sup>8</sup>.

On the other hand, we have the group of scholars who consider that *AA* mainly consisted of the martyrdom<sup>9</sup>. Admittedly, the textual witnesses for the martyrdom are more numerous and their testimony somewhat more homogeneous. However, the new production of martyrdom texts and their widespread development as a literary genre can be dated with precision to the fourth to fifth centuries and the numerous texts preserving Andrew's passion may also have appeared in this same period to suit the new literary taste. As for their allegedly homogeneous character, the cohesion of the testimonies should not be overstated. The different texts present rather divergent accounts of Andrew's passion and the differences concern both general and particular issues. In addition, these texts are so reworked and transformed that they can hardly offer anything more than a general idea of the last section of *AA*.

Did our text really consist of two differentiated parts, or is this impression only due to later editorial activity? And if it did, which text, if any, reliably reflects the primitive text? Which of the three preserved versions transmits the allegedly primitive itinerary of Andrew's peregrinations? And concerning the second part or passion, was the martyrdom originally as short as in *Epitome* and *VitaParis*, or was it more developed as in *Laudatio*, *Narratio* and the testimonies for the martyrdom? Did the primitive text at all include the martyrdom in the developed form we know today? The texts simply do not provide conclusive evidence to help us to answer these questions in a proper way.

Given the peculiar textual situation of the *AA*, i.e. the highly transformed character of our sources and the diverging accounts they provide, a textual reconstruction on the basis of their testimony appears to be, at the very least, questionable. Until new texts come to light and provide us with new clues, the only reasonable solution appears to be retaining as potentially primitive those episodes that are preserved by a representative number of textual testimonies. As far as Andrew's itinerary before his arrival in Patras is concerned, these events are the following:

1. Andrew's rescue of Matthias (below)<sup>10</sup>;
2. The episode of the demons of Nicaea<sup>11</sup>;
3. The section that begins with Andrew's arrival at Patras and includes the abundant additional information provided by texts other than H and S<sup>12</sup>;
4. The references to Sosios<sup>13</sup>;
5. The Lesbios episode<sup>14</sup>;
6. The healing of Maximilla and the sequence of a paralysed man, a blind man and a leper

<sup>8</sup> On the issue MAAS (1957: 31) and WEST (1973: 12-13).

<sup>9</sup> Implicitly in Prieur's edition of the martyrdom under the title of *Acta Andreae*.

<sup>10</sup> *Epitome* 1, *Laudatio* 317.13-318.27; *Vita* 220A 1-221B 8; *Narratio* 5-7 (356.19-358.6).

<sup>11</sup> *Epitome* 6, *Laudatio* 323.14-326.5; *Vita* 229B 8-240B 14; *Narratio* 356.6-18.

<sup>12</sup> *Laudatio* 335.1; *Vita* 244C 9; *Narratio* 358.9.

<sup>13</sup> *Epitome* (Sosia) 30.4; *Laudatio* 335.15; 338.13; *Vita* 244D 5, 245A 3.

<sup>14</sup> *Epitome* (Lysbios/Lisbios) 22.7; 23.11,58; 24.52; 25.12; 26.4,20; 30.2; *Laudatio* 335.21-338.8; *Mpr* 47.16-50.22. Omitted by *Vita* and *VitaEsc*.

being healed are attested by a representative number of witnesses. In this sense, there is no reason to begin after Stratocles' and Aegeates' return to Patras, as H and S do<sup>15</sup>.

In what regards the story of Andrew's and Matthias' adventures among the cannibals, Flamion may well be right in asserting that *AAM* is a later text composed in Egypt<sup>16</sup>. Hilhorst and Lalleman, moreover, have recently clearly demonstrated, on the basis of a philological analysis, the different character of *AAM* when compared with *AA*<sup>17</sup>. As it is today, the account of *AAM* does not seem to belong to the primitive textual core. However, this does not necessarily exclude the possibility that the story in a simpler form appeared in the primitive *Acts*. In point of fact, the five versions of the story (in *Epitome*<sup>18</sup>, *Laudatio*<sup>19</sup> and *Vita, Narratio*<sup>20</sup>, and *AAM*<sup>21</sup>) are so different from one another that they cannot be explained as mutually interdependent. As I concluded elsewhere<sup>22</sup>:

... our study has also shown that the numerous divergences between the accounts indicate, as M. Blumenthal already suggested, that it is rather unlikely that any of them could serve as a source for the other versions. Rather, their dissimilar accounts seem to prove that all five texts are versions of a common source that they rework and adapt to their own textual framework (...) The original version of the story in a simpler and shorter form might very well have been one of *AA*'s numerous episodes<sup>23</sup>.

As far as the martyrdom is concerned caution is necessary when evaluating the apparent homogeneity of our sources. I already noticed the important differences that arise when comparing the last section of *Laudatio*, *Vita* and *Narratio*. Besides, the textual comparison of the testimonies for the martyrdom proper indicates that they regularly eliminate or revise all substantial discourses by the apostle Andrew.

Consequently, even though we can get a general picture of Andrew's itinerary and martyrdom on the basis of these numerous testimonies, the texts do not seem to provide anything more than a textual skeleton of the primitive text.

## 2. *AA*'S FRAGMENT IN CODEX VATICANUS GRAECUS 808 AND THE PRIMITIVE ACTS

With a view to fulfilling our goal of focusing on *AA*'s message and intention we need to reach a better textual basis. But how to do that? There is a textual witness that,

<sup>15</sup> *Epitome* 30.5,31; 32; 33; *Laudatio* 338.16-341.8; *Vita* 245A 8-D 11.

<sup>16</sup> FLAMION (1911: 302ff).

<sup>17</sup> HILHORST and LALLEMAN (2000: 1-14).

<sup>18</sup> *Epitome* 377.21-378.24.

<sup>19</sup> BONNET, *Laudatio* 317.13-20 and 330.20-331.25.

<sup>20</sup> *Narratio* 5-7 (356.19-358.6).

<sup>21</sup> *AAM*, *passim*.

<sup>22</sup> See ROIG LANZILLOTTA (2006: 221-43).

<sup>23</sup> ROIG LANZILLOTTA (2006: 242-43).

according to wide consensus, is likely to preserve *AA* in a more original tenor<sup>24</sup>. More importantly, textual comparison reveals that there are six other testimonies that include a version of the text contained in this textual witness.

We are referring to *AA*'s fragment in codex Vaticanus graecus 808<sup>25</sup>. As we showed elsewhere, the comparison of all the documents that include a version of the section preserved by codex Vaticanus graecus 808 (*Laudatio, Narratio, S/H, Arm and Conversante*) shows that V retains the most primitive account of all of them<sup>26</sup>. Its testimony is precious, not only for preserving the ground text for the section it covers, but also because its account can be checked against six other textual witnesses of different provenance, time and character<sup>27</sup>.

As a matter of fact, on the basis of the texts at our disposal and taking V as a touchstone, we can hypothetically suggest the historical development that could have led to *AA*'s textual diversification. A comparison of V with the six texts that include a version of its contents shows that the latter always present a revised version of this section. Given that these versions always eliminate and preserve the same sections, we can state that all six versions depend upon a source which was already revised. This revised version did not include the following sections: V<sup>r</sup> 1-19<sup>28</sup> (V<sup>b</sup> 38.21-20), V<sup>r</sup> 71-103 (V<sup>b</sup> 40.10-41.8) and V<sup>r</sup> 130-162 (V<sup>b</sup> 41.36-42.31), that is, the three sections that contain the essentials of *AA*'s thought as presented by V<sup>29</sup>.

### 3. *AA*'S MESSAGE AND INTENTION ACCORDING TO THE VATICANUS 808 FRAGMENT

In my view, the prominent position of *AA*'s fragment in V in the large amount of reworked and revised texts indicates that it must be the starting point for an analysis of the mentality, character, style, message and intention of the primitive *Acts of Andrew*<sup>30</sup>. At the same time, given its more primitive character, V may serve as a precious touchstone to test the reliability of other witnesses and to evaluate other potentially primitive sections preserved in them. In this way we may proceed to widen

<sup>24</sup> Ever since its discovery and publication, there has been wide consensus among scholars in considering *AA*'s fragment in V as the text closest to, or even a genuine fragment of the primitive Acts: see BONNET, *AAA* II/1, XIV; LIECHTENHAN (1902: 222-37, 286-99 at 295); HENNECKE (1904: 544); Id. (1924<sup>2</sup>: 249); FLAMION (1911: 177); JAMES (1924: 337, 350); BLUMENTHAL (1933: 38); HORNSCHUH (1964: 271); JUNOD and KAESTLI (1982: 65); PRIEUR and SCHNEEMELCHER (1989: 97); PRIEUR (1989: 2-3; 425).

<sup>25</sup> See a complete analysis of the ms in ROIG LANZILLOTTA (2002).

<sup>26</sup> For a complete assessment of the issue, see ROIG LANZILLOTTA (2007b: 53-106).

<sup>27</sup> This may not necessarily mean that V is untouched; it is possible that it underwent revision as well and future new textual discoveries may demonstrate that this was indeed the case. For the time being, however, V's testimony appears to be our only reliable witness to elucidate the character of the primitive *AA*.

<sup>28</sup> References to *AA*'s fragment in the Vaticanus graecus 808 follow my re-edition of the text (V<sup>r</sup>) in ROIG LANZILLOTTA (2007b), but include within parentheses Bonnet's numeration as well (V<sup>b</sup>).

<sup>29</sup> On the issue see ROIG LANZILLOTTA (2007b: 90-92).

<sup>30</sup> An analysis of *AA*'s anthropological views in the wider context of Early Christian views on man in ROIG LANZILLOTTA (2007a).

our knowledge and get a better picture of what the text originally looked like, without creating anachronisms or falsifications due to an indiscriminate use of texts<sup>31</sup>.

*AA*'s fragment in V mainly consists of four speeches by Andrew: the first speech to the brethren (V<sup>r</sup> 1-24), the speech to Maximilla (V<sup>r</sup> 54-140), the speech to Stratocles (V<sup>r</sup> 140-80) and the second speech to the brethren (V<sup>r</sup> 205-71). All four speeches present an intentional distribution of their subject matter in order to provide a complete description of man's current imprisonment in the flux of tangible reality as well as the means to liberate himself from the material constrictions of his existence.

In spite of being frequently neglected by commentators<sup>32</sup>, Andrew's first speech in V is essential in many respects. The first speech to the brethren states that transcendence (τὸ ὑπερουράνιον) is the origin and final destination of the blessed race (τὸ σωζόμενον γένος)<sup>33</sup>. The very first lines already state the clear dualistic conception of reality that will govern the exposition of the whole fragment. Transcendent and immanent realms are distinctly described and are contrasted with one another in many ways. Whereas the former is the changeless and immutable super-celestial realm, the latter partakes in time, movement, generation and extension<sup>34</sup>. In a way the first speech provides the conceptual framework for the remaining speeches.

The following three speeches, in turn, describe both man's devolution from his source as well as the possible return to his transcendent origin<sup>35</sup>. On the basis of a trichotomic conception of man consisting of intellect, soul and body, the speeches to Maximilla, to Stratocles and the second speech to the brethren illustrate, respectively, the involvement of each of these spheres in perpetuating man's exile in immanence<sup>36</sup>. Discursive thinking, with its concomitant judgement and persuasion, immoderate affections and a

<sup>31</sup> Our re-edition of *AA*'s fragment in V in ROIG LANZILLOTTA (2007b: 111-35) intended to restate its essential value in order to return its testimony to the relevant position that it occupied among *AA*'s textual witnesses until the 1980s.

<sup>32</sup> With the only exception of LIECHTENHAN (1901: 50; 112 and 1902: 295), commentators usually neglect this first speech in order to focus on the lengthier parts of *AA*. BOVON (1994: 81-95), for example, analyses the other three speeches in V, but omits any reference to Andrew's first speech. The same holds true for the articles collected by BREMMER (2000): If we exclude a passing reference, the first chapter of *AA*'s fragment in V (= PRIEUR, *AAgr* 33) is completely ignored (cf. the index of names, subjects and passages [ibid. 190-200]).

<sup>33</sup> V<sup>r</sup> 5-17, «We are not those cast to the ground, since we have been recognised by such a height! We do not belong to time and then are dissolved by time; we are not a product of movement that disappears again by itself, nor a cause of generation [so as] to come to a similar end. Rather, we are akin to the unextended and are hostile to extension. We certainly belong to the one who shows mercy. We belong to the better, therefore we shun the worse. We belong to the beautiful, by means of which we separate ourselves from the ugly. We belong to the righteous, through which we reject the unrighteous. We belong to the merciful one, through whom we distance ourselves from the unmerciful one. We belong to the saviour, through whom we recognised the destroyer; to the light, by means of which we rejected the darkness. We belong to the One, through whom we turned away from multiplicity; to the supercelestial, through which we understood earthly matters; we belong to the immutable, through whom we perceived the immutable».

<sup>34</sup> V<sup>r</sup> 7-9 and 15-17.

<sup>35</sup> See on the issue ROIG LANZILLOTTA (2005).

<sup>36</sup> See a detailed analysis in ROIG LANZILLOTTA (2007a: 425-43).

combination of sensorial perception and representation (φαντασία) keep man attached to the lower world. But the spheres of nature, soul and reason are not only dealt with negatively, they are also presented as gradual steps in man's quest for his liberation. The rational reorganisation of the three spheres enacted by a combination of Andrew's words and self-knowledge allows us to control impending distortions and retrace backwards the successive steps of devolution in order to recover man's pristine intellective nature.

In spite of its strong dualistic conception of reality, AA's thought is, in a last analysis, clearly monistic, since it explains the appearance of the lower world as a process of devolution from an original unity. As far as we can judge on the basis of our fragmentary evidence, however, AA's interest is not so much cosmological as anthropological. In this sense, it focuses mainly on the explanation of how transcendent man came to be imprisoned in the physical world.

Consequently, the three speeches to Maximilla, Stratocles and the second to the brethren, depict the gradual stages of degradation that account for man's current condition. The main intention of this description, however, is not expository but clearly soteriological. By describing the successive stages of this gradual devolution that ends up with the dispersion of the intellect in the realm of nature, AA actually intends to show the way to deconstruct this process and facilitate the recollection of what used to be a unity, in sum, to achieve salvation.

Oblivious of its origin and real condition, the intellect remains unaware of its degradation until Andrew's intervention<sup>37</sup>. Owing to the effect of the apostle's words, it awakes from its lethargy and man, for the first time, consciously rejects the flux of externals (τὰ ῥευστά). This is the starting point of a long and laborious process of self-mastery that will lead him, first, to know his current condition and proceed to gradually deconstruct the accretions gained during his degradation<sup>38</sup>. Once sensorial perception, affections and discursive thinking have been superseded, direct apprehension is again possible and the transcendent man or intellect regains his inherent condition. At this point subject and object of knowledge disappear and at this moment of plenitude they fuse in the primal unity<sup>39</sup>.

<sup>37</sup> V<sup>o</sup> 205-09, «Brethren, I have been sent by the Lord as an apostle to these regions, of which my Lord considered me worthy, not to teach anyone, but to remind each man akin to the words that they live among temporal evils, enjoying their [own] deluding representations».

<sup>38</sup> V<sup>o</sup> 211-17, «For you can see that nothing of yours stands firm, but everything, even man's moral character, is subject to change. All this happens because the uninstructed soul went astray in the physical realm and [still] keeps the ties (ἐνέχυρα) related to it going astray. Therefore I consider blessed those that have become obedient to the proclaimed words and through their mysteries gain insight concerning their own true nature, for the sake of which everything has been built».

<sup>39</sup> V<sup>o</sup> 91-101, «Having recognised all these in yourself, Anthropos, that you are immaterial, holy, light, that you are akin to the unbegotten, [that you are] intellectual, heavenly, radiant, [and] pure and that you are above flesh, above the world, above the powers, above the authorities, beyond which you really are; having recollected and recovered yourself in your [true] condition, think that in what you excel. And since you have seen your face in your essence, breaking all the shackles (I do not mean those shackles of generation, but also those belonging to the realm beyond generation, of which we gave you outstanding appellatives), desire now to see that one who has not yet been seen by you, who has not been generated, whom you alone, if you have the nerve, will soon perceive».



#### 4. ORIENTATION OF AA'S THOUGHT

The systematic analysis of AA's thought and its comparison with contemporary authors reveal conspicuous parallels between AA and religious and philosophical texts of Late Antiquity<sup>40</sup>. AA's cosmology, theology, anthropology, ethics and epistemology show a marked influence from Middle Platonism, notably from those Middle Platonists who incorporated Aristotelian thought into the common Platonic heritage.

In my view, the Platonic-Peripatetic background is clear in our text. As far as its idea of God is concerned, AA shows the combination of the One beyond time, place, generation and corruption of Plato's *Parmenides* and the Aristotelian Unmoved Mover<sup>41</sup>. When we come to cosmology, however, its views are more distinctly Aristotelian, since AA's view of the universe is clearly tripartite and distinguishes super-celestial, celestial, and earthly regions (τὰ ἐπίγεια)<sup>42</sup>. This is also the case with AA's anthropological views, since, as usually in Antiquity, these reflect the cosmological ones. The tripartite conception of man consisting of intellect, soul and body, not only reflects the cosmological views of the text, but are also distinctively Aristotelian, since it tends to elevate the status of the intellect, the only immortal element in man, and to oppose it to the complex soul-body<sup>43</sup>.

The same can be said about AA's epistemology: in our text distortion proceeds not from sense perception, which is always true, but from perceptual representation, viz. a kind of automatic picture based on the sensorial information but without a share in thought. The Aristotelian character of AA's epistemology, moreover, can clearly be seen in the epistemic tripartition that distinguishes the immediate apprehension of the intellect both from discursive thinking and from sensorial perception. As far as ethics are concerned, the Platonic-Peripatetic background is also evident, as the emphasis on virtue (which is conceived as a mean between excess and deficiency) seems to imply<sup>44</sup>.

However, AA is not a philosophical text and has no philosophical intentions. The text does not even show a conscious use or adaptation of philosophical categories in order to suit its expository needs. One might rightly wonder whether we are really

<sup>40</sup> A complete analysis of AA's views in comparison with contemporary philosophical and religious thought of Late Antiquity can be found in ROIG LANZILLOTTA (2007b: 191-265), Chapter 5, «AA's Thought in the Wider Context of the Religious and Philosophical World of the First Centuries of the Christian Era».

<sup>41</sup> See V<sup>r</sup> 1-20.

<sup>42</sup> See V<sup>r</sup> 16.

<sup>43</sup> Plato's conception of an internal dichotomy in man opposing his soul to his body is redefined by Aristotle when he opposes the νοῦς or 'intellect' to the ψυχή or 'soul'. On the issue: BARBOTIN (1954: 200); ARMSTRONG (1991: 117-18). This differentiation is also stressed by Atticus, fr. 7 Des Places (*ap.* Eusebius, *PE* XV.9.14). See MERLAN (1967: 73-74) and BOS (2002: 227 note 16 and 2003: 216-29). Aristotle not only denies immortality to the human soul, but repeatedly states that the intellect is man's most divine and only eternal element. See Aristotle, *EN* 1177b 26-1178a 2; *EN* 1178a 2-7 (the intellect is man's true self); *EE* 1248a 24-29; *De an.* 430a 23-25; *Metaph.* Λ, 1072b 23-26; *PA* 656a 8; 10; 686a 27-28; *GA* 736b 28; 737a 8-11; *Protr.* fr. 108 Düring.

<sup>44</sup> Ethics is the focus of Andrew's Speech to Stratocles in V<sup>r</sup> 139-189. See, on the issue ROIG LANZILLOTTA (2007b: 168-74).

dealing with direct philosophical influence. True, the distinctive philosophical background of our text may be explained as due to the author's acquaintance with Middle Platonic ideas, but it is also possible that these views had already been incorporated into the thought of the religious community he belonged to. Given *AA*'s close proximity to Hermetic and Gnostic thought (below), the second possibility seems more plausible.

Our analysis has indeed revealed conspicuous general similarities with the Hermetic and in particular with the Gnostic world of ideas. Gnosis is a central idea in our text: whereas lack of knowledge or ignorance accounts for man's current degraded state, knowledge allows the restoration of his primal condition. The explanation of man's exile in immanence as resulting from a process of devolution that follows three causally related stages, namely intellect, soul and physis, presents obvious similarities with Gnostic cosmogonical myths. *AA* even seems to derive matter from a substantialisation of affections<sup>45</sup>, as was customary in Valentinianism and as the *Gospel of Truth* clearly transmits<sup>46</sup>. Also Gnostic are the ideas of dispersion of the primal unity of the intellect and need to recollect the divine elements that appear scattered in the world of nature: man's intellect is his most divine part, but appears to be numb under the influence of the soul and the body and is, consequently, in need of actualisation. Owing to Andrew's intervention, the intellect awakes from its lethargy and, after becoming aware, man consciously begins his process of recollection.

The recovery of man's pristine intellectual condition is only fulfilled after a long process of self-knowledge, which will lead him, first, to control the lower aspects of his immanent being and, finally, to transcend their influence altogether. To these clear Gnostic motifs we could add still others, such as Andrew's function as a redeemer who comes to remind the blessed race of its true origin or the strong dualistic view of reality opposing the transcendent world of light to that of the lower, material darkness (τὰ κλίματα ταῦτα)<sup>47</sup>.

## 5. CONCLUSIONS

It is now time to draw to a close and offer some conclusions on the text's tenor and time of composition. *AA* is usually dated either to the second or to the third century. The conceptual analysis of *AA*'s thought, however, incline us to prefer the earlier dating<sup>48</sup>. On the one hand, most of the philosophical parallels to *AA*'s views can be dated

<sup>45</sup> Our fragmentary text does not allow a conclusive answer to this question, but the hypothesis is plausible, since after mentioning the intellect's dispersion and loss of knowledge, *AA* describes affections, namely the intellect's and Eve's suffering, as the beginning of a new stage in the downward movement that will lead intellect and soul to the realm of phenomena. See V<sup>r</sup> 71-82.

<sup>46</sup> *GosTruth* (NHC I, 3) 17.10ff. See also Irenaeus, *Adv. haer.* 1.2.3; see also Pseudo-Tertullian, *Adv. omnes haer.* 4.4 (CCSL 2, 1406.24-1407.4), on which MARKSCHIES (1992: 408-09); JONAS (1970 [1958]: 183-84).

<sup>47</sup> V<sup>r</sup> 205-09, see the text in note 37.

<sup>48</sup> Support for the early chronology comes exclusively from the internal arguments. See the analysis by PIÑERO-DEL CERRO (2004: 65-66), who establish their early dating on the basis of *AA*'s thought.

to the second century, and then to the second rather than the first half. Admittedly, Philo and Plutarch in some cases provide earlier parallels to *AA*'s thought, but given the fact that their views belong to the Middle Platonic conglomerate as represented by authors of the second half of the second century, such as Alcinous, Apuleius, Celsus and Galen, an earlier dating appears to be unnecessary. Besides, the type of Platonism that influences *AA* presents distinctive Aristotelian issues, notably Aristotle's theory on the intellect and ethics. As the influence of the *Corpus Aristotelicum* on Middle Platonism is especially perceptible from the second half of the second century onwards, this seems to be a more proper date for *AA*. In favour of this dating is also the testimony of Clement of Alexandria, which on occasion also presents views similar to *AA*<sup>49</sup>.

The same might be concluded from the Hermetic and Gnostic parallels to our text. Whereas the dating of the Hermetic tractates is not a simple matter, the Valentinian traces in our text imply the second half of the second century. *AA*'s close contacts with *The Gospel of Truth* appear to support this dating further. Finally, additional proof comes from the parallels to *AA*'s views provided by the *Chaldaean Oracles* and the *Odes of Salomon*<sup>50</sup>.

Nevertheless, most of parallels and echoes to *AA*'s thought referred to in the preceding lines do not allow us to do anything other than roughly date our text between 150 and 200 AD. There is, however, a literary echo that may permit a more precise *terminus a quo*. We are referring to *AA*'s almost literal echo of Achilles Tatius' *Leucippe and Cleitophon* (5.27.1) in V<sup>r</sup> 55-56. *AA* not only recreates Melitte's visit to Cleitophon in prison, but also her lover's gesture of kissing his hands and bringing them to her eyes. For obvious reasons, *AA* alters the last part of Melitte's gesture: Maximilla does not take Andrew's hands to her bosom but to her mouth. The closeness between both texts and *AA*'s deliberate adaptation of this passage to suit the relationship between Maximilla and Andrew implies the author's knowledge of this text, the composition of which is customarily dated to c. 170.

A *terminus ante*, in turn, appears more difficult to elucidate. As far as the external evidence is concerned, Origen's alleged reference appears to be too vague to be taken into account. Our first evidence, consequently, is Eusebius' *History*, which was written in the first years of the fourth century. This date might perhaps be pushed back some decades if the alleged references in the *Manichaean Psalm-book* could be substantiated, but their testimony is problematic. As to the internal evidence, the philosophical influences on our text are clearly Middle Platonic. Since there is nothing in *AA* that might imply the Plotinian system and many issues seem even to exclude it, we may take Plotinus as a *terminus ante*. Unfortunately, this evidence does not seem to improve our dating, since we cannot rely on Plotinus's life span, but only on the publication of his work by Porphyry (beginning of the fourth century).

<sup>49</sup> PIÑERO-DEL CERRO rightly claim that *AA* might in fact be the oldest of the major *AAA*. To begin with, in their view there is the already mentioned «primitive» character *AA*'s thought and views. Additional support for this early dating might come from the fact that *AA* has not been influenced by *AP*. See in general, PIÑERO-DEL CERRO (2004: 58-68).

<sup>50</sup> ROIG LANZILLOTTA (2007b: 191-265).

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