

A Glimpse of Gender Egalitarianism:

The Salome Tradition in the Nag Hammadi Thomas*

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If one regards the context of the Christian canonical texts, each author simply delivers “the names of some early Christian women, providing insignificant information about them”.¹⁾ The first Gospel (Matthew) presents the female followers of “Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and Joses, and the mother of Zebedee’s sons” (27: 55). The Markan text lists three female disciples: “Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James the younger and of Joses, and Salome” (15: 40, 47, and 16: 1), as well as “many other women” (16: 4). The female characters are briefly seen as eyewitnesses to the death, the burial and the empty tomb of Jesus.²⁾ The

* 이 논문의 게재료는 2013년 서울대학교 인문학연구원 간접비 재원에서 지원 받은 것임.

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1) Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, “Word, Spirit and Power: Women in Early Christian Communities”, *Women of Spirit: Female Leadership in the Jewish and Christian Traditions*, (eds. Rosemary Ruether and Eleanor McLaughlin) (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1979), 30.

2) See Mary Rose D’Angelo, “(Re)Presentations of Women in the Gospels”, *Women &*

third Gospel (Luke) likewise describes a female group of “Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the others” (24: 10).³⁾ The similar female names, such as Mary the mother of Jesus (2: 1–11, 19: 25–27), Mary and Martha in Bethany (11: 1–44, 12: 1–8), Mary Magdalene (19: 25, 20: 1–18), Mary the wife of Clopas (19: 25), and the unknown Samaritan woman (4: 1–42), are also mentioned in the Johannine text.

The synoptic women of Matthew, Mark, and Luke are mainly addressed as ‘the Galilean women’⁴⁾, who followed Jesus from their hometown, while the writers of Matthew and Mark add the practical role of the women, as the personal carers of Jesus. The scriptures of Luke and John deny the discipleship of the female followers in the context that females were only part of “a large number of people (who) followed Him (Jesus)” (*Lk.* 23: 27). Thus, the position of the women in the passion and resurrection narratives of the Christian texts is demonstrated from a non- or anti-feminist perspective, in that none of the women were qualified as official or public disciples of Jesus.⁵⁾ The narrators of the canonical tradition do not show any favour over the status or action of the female characters as if the texts were written for the androcentric communities of the era. What about the literal tendency of the *Gospel of Thomas*? Is the masculine contextualism continued in the non-canonical text?

Christian Origins, (eds. Rose Shepard Kraemer and Mary Rose D’Angelo) (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999) 129–149. Ibid., “(Re)Presentations of Women in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke-Acts”, in *op. cit.*, 171–195.

3) One might be interested to suggest the synoptic theory that Matthew and Luke used the text of Mark, but the canonical perspective over the socio-religious status of women is not different to each other.

4) Stegemann, from a textual analysis of the canonical texts, argues that the three women called ‘Mary Magdalene’, ‘Mary the mother of James and Joses’, and ‘Salome’ were the definite followers of Jesus from Galilee. Ekkehard W. Stegemann, and Wolfgang Stegemann, *The Jesus Movement: A Social History of Its First Century*. (Tran. by O. C. Dean, Jr.) (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1989) 381–388. Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her: A Feminist Theological Reconstruction of Christian Origins*. (London: SCM Press, 1983) 138–140.

5) Ben Witherington III, *Women in the Earliest Churches*. (Cambridge, New York, New Rochelle, Melbourne, and Sydney: Cambridge University Press, 1988) 130–182.

I. Male Characters in the Coptic Thomas

In this regard, the external status of the male disciples in the Coptic Thomas (Nag Hammadi Codex (NHC) II, 2. 32-51) is similar to the marginalised view of women in the synoptic narratives. The text of Thomas includes three male followers of Jesus. The way they are rendered is not so significant as all of them appear in an illustration of the same *Logion*.⁶⁾ Each character obtains an opportunity to communicate with his Master, but their understandings or personal confessions were not good enough to satisfy the expectation of their Master. The Jesus of *Logion* 13⁷⁾ interrogated his disciples about how He was perceived among them.⁸⁾ Simon Peter was the first one who shared his faith, but there is no comment as to whether Peter's answer, "ΕΚΕΙΝΕ ΝΟΥΑΓ'ΓΕΛΟΣ ΝΑΙΚΑΙΟΣ (You are like a righteous angel)" was right, wrong, or inappropriate. Since he was the first character mentioned, readers can assume that Peter would be one of the leading disciples among the male disciples. The leadership of Peter is reflected in the last *Logion* of Thomas (*Logion* 114) where Peter, on behalf of the disciples, led a group meeting with Jesus, but his critical opinion of anti-feminism over Mary was

6) The meaning of *Logion* in the *Gospel of Thomas* is a saying of Jesus, while the term *Logia* is used for plural sayings tradition of Jesus.

7) "Jesus said to his disciples, "Compare me to someone and tell me whom I am like." Simon Peter said to him, "You are like a righteous angel." Matthew said to him, "You are like a wise philosopher." Thomas said to him, "Master, my mouth is wholly incapable of saying whom you are like." Jesus said, "I am not your (sg.) Master. Because you (sg.) have drunk, you (sg.) have become intoxicated from the bubbling spring which I have measured out." And he took him and withdrew and told him three things. When Thomas returned to his companions, they asked him, "What did Jesus say to you?" Thomas said to them, "If I tell you one of the things which he told me, you will pick up stones and throw them at me; a fire will come out of the stones and burn you up"" (*Logion* 13). Thomas A. Wayment, "Christian Teachers in Matthew and Thomas: the Possibility of Becoming a "Master", *Journey of Early Christain Studies* Vol. 12, Num. 3 (Fall, 2004) 295-311.

8) "Jesus said to his disciples, compare me to someone and tell me whom I am like" (part of *Logion* 13).

not respected as the final decision of the disciple group.⁹⁾

The second male disciple is Matthew, who also offered his understanding: "You are like a wise philosopher", but *Logion* 13 draws no further indication from Jesus. The Thomasine character of Matthew is simply seen as an extra male whom the *Logiographer* of the text used to exaggerate the influence of the following third character. Matthew is clearly included in the circle of Jesus' disciples, but the text is uncertain if Jesus liked the sound of being "οὐρῶμε ἡφιλοσοφος ἡρῆνην" (a wise philosopher)" to his followers. In the same way, the *Logiographer*, in a slightly different way, confirms Thomas as the third male disciple of Jesus. Thomas of the narrative, unlike the previous two characters of Simon Peter and Matthew, does not try to suppose the theosophical nature of Jesus.¹⁰⁾ The fact can be surmised from two different angles: 1) the male disciple did not express his internal belief, since the personal understanding of the two previous followers was not the perfect answer for his Master; 2) Thomas himself had decided to become a humble man because of the unworthy concept of his own knowledge of his Master: "Master, my mouth is wholly incapable of saying whom you are like (*Logion* 13)".¹¹⁾ Although Thomas eventually became the only figure with whom Jesus personally shared a special revelation, the whole NHC text does not inform any more than his name ΔΙΔΥΜΟΣ ΙΟΥΔΑΣ ΘΩΜΑΣ (Didymos Judas Thomas)¹²⁾ through the passage of the *Prologue* (NHC II,

9) "Simon Peter said to them, 'Mary should leave us, for females are not worthy of life'. Jesus said, 'Look, I shall guide her to make her male, so that she too may become a living spirit resembling you males. For every female who makes herself male will enter heaven's kingdom'." (*Logion* 114)

10) For more details, see Ismo Dunderberg, "Thomas and the Beloved Disciple", *Thomas at the Crossroads: Essays on the Gospel of Thomas*, (eds. Risto Uro) (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1998) 65-88, Patrick J. Hartin, "The Role and Significance of the Character of Thomas in the Acts of Thomas", *Thomasine Traditions in Antiquity: The Social and Cultural World of the Gospel of Thomas*, (eds. Jon Ma. Asgeirsson, April D. DeConick, and Risto Uro) (Leiden and Boston: E. J. Brill, 2006) 239-253.

11) *Logion* 13: ΠΕΧΛΑ•Q ΝΑ•Q ἡΒΙ ΘΩΜΑΣ ΧΕ Π•CΑ2 ΖΟΛΩC ΤΑ•ΤΑΠΡΟ ΝΑ•ΨΑΠ•Q' ΔΝ ΕΤΡΑ ΧΟΟ•C ΧΕ ΕΚ•ΕΙΝΕ ἡ•ΝΙΜ' (NHC II, 2. 35:02-04).

12) The phrase of the Oxyrhynchus Papyrus 654, 2-3 is like Ἰουδᾶ ὁ καὶ Θωμᾶ (Judas

2. 32 10–12).¹³⁾ Thus, the scenes of the three male disciples communicating with their Master do not quite support the notion of a masculine characteristic of Thomas, like the major masculine stream of the canonical tradition. If so, how is the religious position of the Thomasine women different? Was the Thomasine community of Late Antiquity familiar with the spirituality of 'gender egalitarianism'? The questions regarding the role of the Thomasine women (especially Salome) still remain ambiguous¹⁴⁾, but can one evaluate the textual value of Thomas in using the feminine ideology of the ancient Christian community?

II. The Salome Tradition in the Coptic Thomas

Regarding the character of Salome, no canonical texts, except the second Gospel, provide details about the existence of the female follower. The Markan narrator, as well, includes the name only as the third woman who followed the Founder of the anti-Jewish movement (*Mk.* 15:40¹⁵⁾). The Salome of Mark appeared at the death of Jesus: She brought spices, but, amazingly, discovered the empty tomb without the body of Jesus (*Mk.* 16: 1).¹⁶⁾ The storyteller does not introduce Salome on a personal level, rather

who is also Thomas).

13) "These are the secret sayings which the living Jesus spoke and which Didymos Judas Thomas wrote down". The passage of P. Oxy. 654. 1–3 is less clear without the Greek name (Didymos): "καὶ ἔγραψεν τοῦδα ὁ καὶ Θωμᾶ (Judas who is also Thomas recorded)". Harold W. Attridge, "Appendix: The Greek Fragments", *The Coptic Gnostic Library: Nag Hammadi Codex II, 2–7 (with XII,2, BRIT. LIB. OR. 4926(1), and P.OXY. I, 654, 655)*, (eds. Bentley Layton, Volume One: Gospel According to Thomas, Gospel According to Philip Hypostasis of the Archons, and Indexes) (Leiden, New York, København, and Köln: E. J. Brill, 1989) 96–128.

14) There are two female characters in the Gospel of Thomas. They are Mary and Salome. For the character of Mary, see David W. Kim, "Who Authorised You?: Mary and Her Public Actions in Thomas", *Perspectives on Power: An Interdisciplinary Approach*, (Newcastle, UK: Cambridge Scholars' Publishing, 2010) 189–202.

15) "Some women were watching from a distance. Among them were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James the younger and of Joses, and Salome" (*Mk.* 15: 40).

the female character seems to be illustrated as an insignificant figure, only supporting the existence of a female group in the crowd following Jesus. The Salome of the *(First) Apocalypse of James* is also seen as a junior figure of James. The author of the Coptic text in the narrative between the Lord and James briefly mentions her name with other names of Mariam, Martha, and Arsinoe: "When you (James) speak these words of this perception, encourage these four: Salome and Mariam and Martha and Arsinoe ..." (NHC V, 3).¹⁶⁾ But there is no evidence that the female character was present for the dialogue. Such belittled view of Salome contrasts with the picture of the Thomasine Salome. None of the Thomasine sayings has such a descriptive form, listing the names of women around Jesus, but the text of Thomas contains a single *Logion* that represents a personal dialogue between the Master and Salome. The *Logiographer* of Thomas is not interested in her background, but remarks on her relationship with the Master. *Logion* 61 is an occasional conversation from an ordinary 'dinner table fellowship', (maybe in the house of Salome, when Jesus was initially undertaking his Galilee ministry and evangelical outreaches). None of the canonical texts includes such a friendly scene (NHC 2, II. 43: 23-34) in which Salome is a fair 'interlocutor' in the context of a master and a disciple:

16) "When the Sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome brought spices so that they might go to anoint Jesus' body" (Mk. 16:1).

17) See Marvin Meyer, and James M. Robinson, *Nag Hammadi Scriptures, The International Edition*. (New York: HarperOne, 2007), 327.

Th.61-a.) πεχε ιϛ (χε) ογν̄ σναγ̄ νᾱ μ̄τον̄ μ̄ μαγ̄ ρῑ ογ̄ βλοβ̄ π̄ ογᾱ νᾱ μογ̄ π̄
ογᾱ νᾱ ων̄2

Th.61-b.) πεχε̄ σαλωμη̄ (χε)̄ ν̄τᾱ κ̄̄ nim̄ π̄ ρωμε̄ ρω̄ς εβολ̄ ρ̄ν̄ ογᾱ ᾱ κ̄ τελο̄
εχ̄μ̄ πᾱ βλοβ̄ αγω̄ ακ̄̄ ογ̄ων̄ εβολ̄ ρ̄ν̄ τᾱ τραπεζᾱ

Th.61-c.) πεχε̄ ιϛ̄ νᾱ σ̄ χε̄ ανο̄ κ̄̄ πε̄ πετ̄ ωοοπ̄̄ εβολ̄ ρ̄ν̄ πετ̄̄ ωηω̄ ᾱ γ̄ †̄
νᾱ εῑ εβολ̄ ρ̄ν̄ νᾱ πᾱ ειωτ̄̄

Th.61-d.) < ... > ανο̄ κ̄̄ τεκ̄̄ μαθη̄της̄

Th.61-e.) < ... > ετβε̄ πᾱεῑ †̄ χω̄ μ̄ μο̄ς χε̄ ροταν̄ ε̄ q̄ ωᾱ ωωπε̄ ε̄ q̄
ωηq̄̄ q̄ νᾱ μογ̄2̄ ογ̄οειν̄ ροταν̄ δε̄ ε̄ q̄ ωαν̄ ωωπε̄ ε̄ q̄ πηω̄ q̄ νᾱ̄
μογ̄2̄ ν̄ κακε̄

GTh1: NHC 2, II, 43: 23–34¹⁸⁾

Even if the Greek fragments of the Oxyrhynchus Papyrus (P. Oxy. 654, 1, and 655) do not include the *Logion*, the NHC 2, II, 43: 23–34 clearly discloses the inspirational moment in which two characters, Jesus and Salome, had an intimate dialogue including Salome's status among Jesus' circle. The *Logion* 61 does not mention whether there were other male disciples in the place, but it is clear that the Master delivers three unique statements beginning with the subject of death and life (Th. 61-a). The origin of the Master comes from 'ρ̄ν̄ πετ̄̄ ωηω̄ (the undivided)' with some of Father's abilities (Th. 61-c).¹⁹⁾ Jesus then offers the mystical teaching on the secret principle of light and darkness (Th. 61-e). Such teachings of *Logion* 61 are highly sophisticated to evaluate its meanings, but the *Logion*

18) Th. 61-a.) Jesus said, "Two will rest on a couch: the one will die, and the other will live." Th. 61-b.) Salome said, "Who are you, man, that you have come up on my couch and eaten from my table?" Th. 61-c.) Jesus said to her, "I am he who exists from the undivided. I was given some of the things of my father." Th. 61-d.) < ... > "I am your μαθη̄της̄. Th. 61-e.) < ... > "Therefore I say, if he is destroyed he will be filled with light, but if he is divided, he will be filled with darkness."

19) One could consider the saying of Jesus that 'He have come from the undivided', in relation to the issue of 'gender egalitarianism'. The term 'ρ̄ν̄ πετ̄̄ ωηω̄ (the undivided)' could be comprehended as the ultimate ideology of 'gender egalitarianism', even though this paper would not explore the relation any deeper.

scene definitely implies the close relationship of Salome with her Master since the saying of Jesus was delivered to Salome or at least in front of Salome. On the contrast, none of the canonical tradition shows such a view that a feminine character is distinctively respected in the narratives where the Master has intimate dialogues with His followers.

Although contemporary readers, like Bjorndahl²⁰⁾, interpreted the *Logion* 61 of Thomas in the way that Jesus might have taken advantage of a weak female, by using his authority, for the momentary pleasure of sexual intercourse or a relationship, the entire context of the message is genuinely based on a personal teaching, to encourage the rest of the unknown female followers, potentially becoming part of Jesus' discipleship, through a heart-felt acknowledgement and lifetime commitment. The communication that began with an admonitory teaching (*Th.* 61-a), was continued by Salome who was not surprised, but rather asked a personal question on the origin of Jesus: "Who are you, man? (*Th.* 61-b)". It literally sounds like, 'Master! You have visited my place and have eaten meals with me, but I still do not know who You really are. I would like to understand who really You are'.²¹⁾ The response of Jesus was about the connection with his heavenly Father, if one concerns about the phrases: "ἄΝΟΚ' ΠΕ ΠΕΤΨΟΟΠ' ΕΒΟΛ ΖῆΠΕΤ'ΨΗΨ (I am He who exists from the undivided)" and "ἄΥ† ΝΑΕΙ ΕΒΟΛ ΖῆΝΝΑΠΑΕΙΩΤ' (I was given some of the things of My Father)".

The next phrase is a private confession that Salome sincerely professed to Jesus. Despite the text having omitted the identity of the speaker, such as "Salome said" of NHC 2, II, 43: 30 or "Jesus additionally said" of NHC 2, II, 43: 31²²⁾, it is obvious that the phrase "I am ΤΕΚ' ΜΑΘΗΤΗΣ" in the

20) See Sterling Bjorndahl, "Thomas 61-78: A Chreia Elaboration." Major Paper, the Claremont Graduate School, quoted from Kathleen E. Corley, "Salome and Jesus at Table in the Gospel of Thomas." *Semeia* Issue 86 (1999) 86.

21) The sudden appearance of Jesus at the 'dinner party' or 'symposium', for Funk, was seen as his being 'an intruder' into the social fellowship meeting. Robert W. Funk, *The Five Gospels: The Search for the Authentic Words of Jesus*. (Tran. and com. Robert W. Funk, Roy W. Hoover, and the Jesus Seminar) (New York: Macmillan, 1993) 507.

Th. 61-d, was spoken by Salome. Likewise, the character who spoke in the last phrase (*Th.* 61-e.) is unknown, but, if one takes the whole context into account, it is quite possible that it is another saying of Jesus, not particularly addressed to Salome alone, but more to those who wanted to become the true followers, including Salome. The Thomasine Salome, according to Marjanen, is not “depicted as the one who misunderstands, but as the one who at least does not yet understand enough”.²³⁾ She is seen as an appropriate **ΜΑΘΗΤΗΣ**, even if she is additionally “challenged to reach the highest level of discipleship and become ‘equal (ὡς)’ (with other leadership disciples) ... (as being) ‘filled with **ὀφθαλμοὶ** (Light)’”.²⁴⁾

Then, where does the Salome tradition come from? how can one interpret it? According to the data of Ilan, there are two hundred and forty-seven Jewish women whose names were recorded in the period 330 B.C.E.–200 C.E. of Palestine.²⁵⁾ Among them, sixty-one people were called Salome, which indicates that one in four women was named Salome. The view that there were only two Jewish women named Salome outside Palestine, living in the diaspora of Rome and Beirut²⁶⁾, supports the fact

22) This is not the only place in which the *Logiographer* of Thomas has missed the initial words. There are many instances in the Coptic text of *Logia* 27, 60, 93 and 101. These literal phenomena can be viewed in two ways: that the copywriter of the Coptic text made a mistake, or that it was purposely omitted because the phrase still made sense without the usual terms or use of grammatical conjunctions. In the case of *Logion* 61, it is uncertain, because the Greek Oxyrhynchus Papyrus does not support this part, but it seems that the copywriter of the Coptic text intentionally skipped the initial words, such as “Salome said” and “Jesus additionally said”, since without those imagined quotations of the speakers, the phrases still delivered the context of the entire *Logion*.

23) Antti Marjanen, *The Woman Jesus Loved: Mary Magdalene in the Nag Hammadi Library and Related Documents*. (Leiden, New York and Köln: E. J. Brill, 1996) 41.

24) Ibid., “Women Disciples in the Gospel of Thomas”, *Thomas at the Crossroads: Essays on the Gospel of Thomas*. (eds. Risto Uro) (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1998) 92.

25) T. Ilan, ‘Notes on the Distribution of Jewish Women’s Names in Palestine in the Second Temple and Mishnaic Periods’, *Journal of Jewish Studies* Vol. 40 (1989) 186–200, quoted from Richard Bauckham, “Salome the Sister of Jesus, Salome the Disciple of Jesus, and the Secret Gospel of Mark.” *Novum Testamentum*, Vol. 33 Fasc. 3 (July, 1991) 253.

that the Thomasine Salome must have come from a Palestinian (Galilee) Jewish-Christian circle. Smith (in the 1970s and 80s) did not include the Thomasine Salome in his studies, but initially explored the Salomes of the early Christian literature.²⁷⁾ The Salome of the *Secret Gospel of Mark* and Clement's *Letter to Theodorus*, for Smith, was seen as being the 'sister of Jesus', but not a 'ΜΑΘΗΤΗΣ of Jesus'.²⁸⁾ From the beginning of the 1990s, the figure of Salome in *Logion* 61 of the *Gos. Thom.* has often been analysed as supporting various aspects of the post-canonical tradition. In this process, Bauckham initially mentioned Thomas' Salome. For him, the Salome tradition was of East Syrian origin and a completely independent source from the *Gospel of Mark* (15: 40 and 16: 1)²⁹⁾, because the Markan Salome is understood as being derived "from an early date more popular in Egypt (rather) than elsewhere".³⁰⁾ The Manichaean Salome, who was sent as one of female missionaries (*Manichaean Psalm-Book* Ch.16)³¹⁾, is interpreted as a transformed version from the East Syrian tradition of Salome.

Thereafter, Corley developed the meal scene of the Thomasine Salome and Jesus in the context of a Syrian Christian ascetic group. While she

26) See, G. Mayer, *Die jüdische Frau in der hellenistisch-römischen Antike*. (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1989), 104-106, quoted from *Ibid.*, 254.

27) Morton Smith, "Clement of Alexandria and Secret Mark: The Score at the End of the First Decade." *Harvard Theological Review* Vol. 75 (1982) 449-461.

28) *Ibid.* *Clement of Alexandria and a Secret Gospel of Mark*. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1973) 166, 189 and 270.

29) Bauckham, (1991) 254-275.

30) Bauckham assumes that the "two expanded forms of Mark's Gospel (the *Secret Gospel* as used by the orthodox and by the Carpocratians) were known, in both of which at least one other reference to Salome was added to canonical Mark's two". *Ibid.*, 263.

31) "Salome built a tower upon the rock of truth and mercy ... Salome gave a parapet to the tower, she took an anesh of storax to purify it ... She went into it (maybe the tower), she called my Lord Jesus, saying ... mayest thou answer me, Jesus, mayest thou hear me, for I am not double-minded, one is my heart and one my intention, there is no thought in my heart that is split or divided." C. R. C. Allberry, *A Manichaean Psalm-Book Part II*. (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1938) 222-223.

denies the gnostic influence of the *Logion*, the appearance of Salome on the couch with Jesus in the *Gos. Thom.* was, in a Hellenistic perspective, interpreted as "the participation of women in Syrian Christian groups which practiced (a radical) asceticism".³²⁾ The view of the "gender inclusive meals"³³⁾ was not emphasised as a Christian phenomenon, but as a social characteristic of the Graco-Roman era. The references to Salome, in particular in the *I Apoc. Jas.*³⁴⁾ and the *Syriac Testament of Our Lord*³⁵⁾ are also categorised as parts of the Syrian roots. However, Corley's argument that the men and women of Thomas' Syrian Christian groups themselves "renounced their sexuality and practiced an ascetic lifestyle"³⁶⁾, is not clearly shown or described in *Logion* 61 of Thomas. Despite the fact that the condition of eating food together can symbolise the closeness of people's fellowship, Reinhartz suggested the existence of the anti-femininity figure in *Logion* 61, in that the woman should give up their sexual gender to gain a higher status.³⁷⁾ The possibility of the inclusion of women in the table fellowship of the Thomasine community was portrayed through the ritual of baptism. Reinhartz did not specify the kind of baptism, but generally inferred the connection between the condition of discipleship and the baptism ritual. It is probable that the third saying of Jesus (*Th.61-e*)³⁸⁾ requires a kind of transformation for those who want to be a disciple of Jesus, including Salome. Nevertheless, the phrase, "if he

32) Corley, (1999) 88.

33) *Ibid.*, 86.

34) "When you speak these words of this [perception], encourage these [four]: Salome and Mariam [and Martha and Arsinoe ...]" (40: 22-27). William R. Schoedel, and Douglas M. Parrott, "The (First) Apocalypse of James", *The Nag Hammadi Library in English*, (fourth revised eds. James M. Robinson) (Leiden, New York, and Köln: E. J. Brill, 1996) 267.

35) James Cooper, and Arthur John Maclean, *The Testament of Our Lord: Translated into English from the Syriac*. (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1902).

36) Corley, (1999) 93.

37) Adele Reinhartz, "Reflections on Table Fellowship and Community Identity." *Semeia* 86 (1999) 227-233.

38) "< ... > "Therefore I say, if he is destroyed he will be filled with light, but if he is divided, he will be filled with darkness.""

is destroyed he will be filled with Light", does not indicate that it must be a type of baptism.³⁹⁾

While the Syrian tradition of Salome was geographically and culturally building up a case for the existence of the women disciples in the Thomasine community, the textual value of Thomas is also considered with the Johannine tradition. In this regard, Sell compared *Logion* 61, particularly the *Th.61-c*⁴⁰⁾, with the passage of *Jn. 5: 18-23*⁴¹⁾, in which the Jews persecuted Jesus who was instructing a new way of keeping the meaning of the heavenly Sabbath. Sell, like Brown⁴²⁾, presumed that Thomas is a dependent text of John, in demonstrating that *Th.61-c.*, like 'the prologue, *Logia* 8, 13, 28, 38, 43, 91 and 92, "display(s) the sort of echoes of Johannine ideas and vocabulary".⁴³⁾ The correlation between Thomas and John is supported by a personal survey of Sell, that the fifty-three separate verses from seventeen different chapters of John are reflected in those eight *Logia* of Thomas. Further, Sell tried to establish the similarity between *Th.61-c.*⁴⁴⁾ and *Jn. 5: 18b.*⁴⁵⁾ The first 'I am' statement of Jesus: "I am he who exists from *the undivided (equal)*", was seen as a reconstruction of the Johannine *ego eimi* tradition: "Making himself *equal* with God", since the part "he who exists from *the undivided*

39) *Logion* 61 (Ͼⲟⲧⲁⲛ ⲉ ⲓⲁⲩⲁ ⲩⲱⲡⲉ ⲉ ⲓⲁⲩⲁⲓ ⲓⲁⲩⲁⲓ ⲙⲟⲩⲗ ⲟⲩⲟⲥⲓⲛ).

40) "Jesus said to her, "I am he who exists from the undivided. I was given some of the things of my father.""

41) "... the Jews tried all the harder to kill him; not only was he breaking the Sabbath, but he was even calling God his own Father, making himself equal with God. Jesus gave them this answer: "...the Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does... the Father judges no one, but has entrusted all judgment to the Son, that all may honor the Son just as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father, who sent him"".

42) Raymond Brown, "The Gospel of Thomas and St. John's Gospel." *New Testament Studies* Vol. 9 (Jan., 1963) 155-177.

43) Jesse Sell, "Johannine Traditions in Logion 61 of the Gospel of Thomas", *Perspectives in Religious Studies*. Vol 7 (1980) 25.

44) "Jesus said to her, "I am he who exists from *the undivided (equal)*. I was given some of the things of my father"".

45) "... but He was even calling God his own Father, making himself *equal* with God."

(*equal*)” was interpreted as “the one who is (existing) from the One who is equal”.⁴⁶⁾

However, the post-Johannine perspective of Sell contains certain discrepancies that make his view less than probable. Firstly, the story of John, which generally relates to a Sabbath debate between Jesus and the Jews, does not match with *Logion* 61, which is a non-sabbatical dialogue between the Master (Jesus) and a female disciple (Salome). There is no clear reason in his theory on why Sell chose the passage of John for the Thomasine Salome. Secondly, while *Jn.* 5: 18b⁴⁷⁾ is composed as part of a narrative form, *Th.* 61-c.⁴⁸⁾ is a saying’s statement (about Jesus’ origin and authority), spoken by Jesus himself, without any descriptive annotation, except the regular heading word “ⲡⲉⲗⲉ ⲓⲥ ⲛⲁ ⲥ (Jesus said to her)”. Lastly, the fact that Sells’ argument is based on the Coptic Gospel of John and the (Sahidic) Coptic text of Thomas, in a way, means that the reader, without considering the existence and textual value of the original Greek Oxyrhynchus papyrus fragments (P. Oxy. 654, 1, and 655), only assessed the secondary texts to conclude such a literary dependence of Thomas on the Fourth Gospel. This reflects that the Salome tradition of Thomas was cheaply sold out as part of ‘the Coptic deal (post-canonical tradition)’⁴⁹⁾, regardless of whether it reflected the proper position of the female disciples in the original Greek-speaking Jewish society of the Thomasine community.

46) Sell also insists that Jesus’ statements of *Jn.* 5: 19–23 are closely related to those words of *Jn.* 5: 17. Sell, (1980) 30–32.

47) “... but He was even calling God his own Father, making himself *equal* with God” (*Jn.* 5: 18b).

48) “Jesus said to her, “I am he who exists from *the undivided (equal)*. I was given some of the things of my father”” (*Th.* 61-c).

49) The ‘Coptic deal’ is a pre-conceptual mentality of contemporary readers, meaning that when one reads a Coptic text s/he naturally recognises it as a post-canonical or Gnostic.

III. The Logion 61 within the Thomasine-Q Tradition

On the other hand, if one peruses *Logion* 61 again in the context of a Q tradition⁵⁰⁾, the pre-canonical view of Thomas would be more than plausible. The first saying of Jesus in *Logion* 61 can be viewed as an excellent example in comparing it with *Lk.* 17: 34-35 and *Mt.* 24: 40-41:

NHC 2, II. 43:23-25	Th. 61-a: Two will rest on a couch; the one will die, and the other will live.
Luke 17: 34-35	L1: I tell you, on that night two people will be in one bed; one will be taken and the other left. L2: Two women will be grinding grain together; one will be taken and the other left.
Matthew 24: 40-41	M1: Two men will be in the field; one will be taken and the other left. M2: Two women will be grinding with a hand mill; one will be taken and the other left.

GTh2: A Comparison of GTh. 61-a with the Passages of Luke and Matthew

The Thomasine *aphorism* of Jesus (*Th.* 61-a) is similarly mentioned in L1, but L1 added the introductory phrase of “λέγω ὑμῖν, ταύτη τῇ νυκτὶ (I tell you, on that night)”. L1 also in an unlikely way explains *Th.* 61-a’s matters of death and life in the way of ‘being taken’ and ‘being left’. L2 of “one will be taken and the other left” is the same as M1, M2 and L1, but the beginning part (“two women will be grinding grain together”) of L2 presents a picture of co-operative work, while the two women of M2 are using “a hand mill (ἐν τῷ μύλῳ)”. The two men of M1 (like farmers working in a field) cannot be viewed in relation to any of the above sayings of *Th.* 61-a, L1 and L2. Further, the characters of L2 and M2

50) Meaning that the Thomas text itself is a Q (a new collection of (oral or written) sayings of Jesus). The Q theory is a hypothesis confirmed by modern scholars that there is a written collection of sayings of Jesus defined as the ‘common’ material found in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke.

appear as "two women" figures, while M1 introduces "two men" figures. *Th.* 61-a is less clear about them, in order that they are a group of neither women nor men, for the "two" people whose sexes are unknown. The tendency of the structural parallelism can be summarised, as that the proto-source of Luke was similar to Thomas, that Thomas and the proto-source of Matthew were different, and that Luke and Matthew, however, were individually using a similar source with additional description.

Such an exegetical analysis sustains the origin of Thomas on 'a level of Q tradition'⁵¹⁾, getting close to an oral tradition or an immediate written (note) source of Jesus. Jefford, likewise, concluded that the three parables of Jesus may have originated at a different level of the formation of the Q tradition.⁵²⁾ Meyer in *the Gospel of Thomas: The Hidden Sayings of Jesus* did not emphasise it, but suggested these two canonical references are an unknown Q source.⁵³⁾ In this regard, Funk argues that the two verbs 'live (ὠνῆ)' and 'die (μοῦ)' in the *aphoristic* saying of Jesus represent pieces of common *sophia*.⁵⁴⁾ The source of the Thomasine-Q tradition is related to the Jewish *sophia* tradition of *Ecc.* 4: 9–12⁵⁵⁾, where the 'presence of a certain companionship' is revealed: "If one falls down, his friend can help him up ... also, if two lie down together, they will keep warm. But how can one keep warm alone? Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves".⁵⁶⁾

Furthermore, the word, **ῥαοῖ** which can be interpreted in various ways

51) Corley confesses the value of T1 in the category of a *sophia* saying. Corley, (1999) 87.

52) Clayton N. Jefford, "The Dangers of Lying in Bed: Luke 17: 34–35 and Parallels." *FFF.* (Mar., 1989), 106–110.

53) See Meyer, (1992) 93–94.

54) Funk, (1993) 507.

55) "Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their work: If one falls down, his friend can help him up ... Also, if two lie down together, they will keep warm. But how can one keep warm alone? Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken" (*Ecc.* 4: 9–12).

56) The brief collection of aphorisms insinuates that "one co-worker assists another in their toil ... united defenders repel an attacker." Jefford, (1989) 110.

including “bed”, “couch”, or “dinner couch”, are quoted in two different places of *Th.* 61-a and the following saying (*Th.* 61-b). If the **βλῶβ** of *Th.* 61-a simply means ‘bed’, the saying of Jesus illustrates a couple sleeping in a bed together, but the destiny of each person during the night is as different as death and life. Then, the context of the first saying of Jesus (*Th.* 61-a) does not quite correspond with the second saying of Salome, who in *Th.* 61-b., complains about the identity of the Man having dinner with her on her **τραπεζα** (‘table’). Although readers of the text can rearrange the meaning of the **βλῶβ** of *Th.* 61-a as ‘bed’ as well as ‘couch’, for the contextual accord of the first two sayings of Jesus and Salome, it is wise to interpret the **βλῶβ** of *Th.* 61-a as ‘couch’ or ‘dinner couch’, instead of ‘bed’, because the verb **ἔμτον** of the sentence (“two will rest on”) does not seem to straightforwardly represent a ‘sleeping’ condition, but a ‘stable’ or ‘relaxed’ position for a moment after experiencing a physically or mentally difficult time. Likewise, if the **βλῶβ**, at the following part of *Th.* 61-b, means ‘couch’, it makes better sense than ‘bed’, in that “you have come up on my couch (‘bench’ or ‘sofa’) and eaten from my table”. The interpretation of “you have come up on my ‘bed’ and eaten from my table” contextually does not make sense for the readers of Thomas. If the second option of ‘the bed scene’ is right, the intention of the Thomasine *Logiographer* should be suspected for the case of using the same word, but expecting two different meanings (‘bed’ and ‘couch’) without any supplementary exposition. The figure of *Th.* 61-b⁵⁷⁾ as well as *Th.* 61-d⁵⁸⁾ that did not appear in the canonical texts would be difficult to identify, unless these two parts of the Salome tradition are recognised as the (oral) source of the Thomasine-Q tradition.

The independent combination of *Logion* 61 as an authoritative witness to the words of the historical Jesus can also be highlighted, if one does not ignore the value of the last part of *Logion* 61. The theme of ‘**ὀϋοειν** (Light)’ and ‘the concept of unity’ in *Th.* 61-e (“Therefore I say, if he is

57) *Th.* 61-b.) Salome said, “Who are you, man, that you have come up on my couch and eaten from my table?”

58) *Th.* 61-d.) < ... > “I am your **τεκ' μαθητης** (your disciple).”

destroyed he will be filled with Light, but if he is divided, he will be filled with darkness"⁵⁹⁾ is quite relevant to the scenes of *Logia* 11, 24, 50 and 83, in which there is Light within a person of light and the light of the people originally comes from the Light of the Father. The teaching of Jesus on **ΟΥΘΕΙΝ** (Light: *Th.* 61-e), which has no parallels with any canonical texts⁶⁰⁾, also maintains the *sapiential* Salome tradition of Thomas.

IV. Conclusion

As a result, the character of Salome in Thomas is completely contrasted with the picture of the canonical Salome. This Thomasine figure is not seen as one of the extra followers of Jesus. She has personal contact with Jesus as a female **ΜΑΘΗΤΗΣ**. Even if the text of Thomas does not indicate the exact role of Salome, the members of the Thomasine community, according to *Logion* 61, would have been taught the position of the female **ΜΑΘΗΤΗΣ** in the circle of Jesus' people. Unlike the canonical Salome, there is no textual evidence that the *Logiographer* of the text disregards the equality of Salome's reputation with the male disciples, rather *Logion* 61, showing a close relationship between Jesus and Salome, reflects the notion that the text of Thomas was written in the environment of gender egalitarianism which is an anti-canonical perspective.

The terminology of phrases used, such as "Jesus said to His disciples" or "the disciples asked Jesus" and the content of the instructive dialogues, does not externally classify the range of the female disciples in Thomas. Additionally, the preconception that the female character was more popular among the Syrian Christian groups, and that the Thomasine Salome

59) < ... > ΕΤΒΕ ΠΛΕΙ Ψ·ΧΩ Ή·ΜΟC ΧΕ ΖΟΤΑΝ Ε·Q·ΥΔ·ΥΩΠΕ Ε·Q·ΥΗQ' Q·ΝΑ·ΜΟΥΖ ΟΥΘΕΙΝ ΖΟΤΑΝ ΔΕ Ε·Q·ΥΔ·ΥΩΠΕ Ε·Q·ΠΗΥ Q·ΝΑ·ΜΟΥΖ Ή·ΚΑΚΕ.

60) There are the Salome traditions of *Pis. Soph.* (I. 54, 58 and 3. 132), *Excerpta ex Theodoti* 67, *I Apoc. Jas.* 40, 9-26, but these are not part of the pre-Thomasine traditions, rather were the post-Thomasine gnostic scenes of Salome. See G. R. S. Mead, *Pistis Sophia: A Gnostic Miscellany*. (eds. Richard K. Russell) (Blauvelt: Spiritual Science Library, 1984) 84-89 and 282-289.

tradition depends on the last canonical Gospel, discourages the authenticity and credibility of Thomas. However, the marginalised image of the male disciples (Peter, Matthew and Thomas) in Thomas, a comparative study of *Th.* 61-a with the passages of *Lk.* 17: 34-35, *Mt.* 24: 40-41, and the contextual exegesis of **ἄλοῦς**, moderately uphold not only the inclusion of Salome in the discipleship of Jesus, but also the coherent viewpoint that the feminine figure of Thomas cannot be denied in the context of a Q tradition which is not the same with 'the traditional Q', but Thomas as a Q of Qs.

Key Words: Nag Hammadi Codex, Salome, gender, The Gospel of Thomas, Gnostic, tradition

원고접수일: 2013년 10월 28일

심사완료일: 2013년 11월 29일

게재확정일: 2013년 12월 12일

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〈국문초록〉

양성평등의 일면:

나그함마디 도마문서에 나타난 살로메 전승

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이 논문은 고대 이집트 콥트 영지주의 기독교사에 나타난 도마 공동체의 살로메라는 인물의 종교사회적인 위상을 해석한 것이다. 성서 저자들은 다수의 여성 인물들을 거론하지만 그들의 정체에 대해서는 남성 중심적 시각에서 폄하하는 경향이 있다. 이런 부정적인 시나리오에 따르면, 여성들은 기독교 창시자를 추종하는 무리의 일부에 불과할 뿐 아니라 성서 이야기에서도 주요 인물이 아니었기 때문에 여성의 사도성이나 지도자적 성격이 인정받지 못한다. 살로메에 대한 기존의 평가 역시 이런 반여성적인 경향과 무관하지 않다. 그렇다면 이런 불평등한 성차(gender)의 맥락이 다섯 번째 복음서라고 불리는 도마문서에서도 변함없이 전승되고 있을까? 만약 도마문서 내의 살로메(Thomasine Salome)가 단순히 구경꾼 무리에 속한 것이 아니었다면 도마 공동체 구성원들에게 이 인물은 어떻게 알려져 있었을까? 초기 유대기독교의 반여성적 이데올로기가 사히딕 콥트(Sahidic Coptic) 문서의 역사적 가치를 재조명할 때 어떤 종교적 함의를 가질 수 있을까? 이 논문은 「나그함마디 문서」(Nag Hammadi Codex) 2, II, 43: 23-34와 「비밀 마가복음」(*Secret Gospel of Mark*), 「마니교 시편서」(*Manichaean Psalm-Book*), 「야고보 외경 일서」(*1 Apocryphon of James*), 그리고 「우리 주 시리아 성서」(*Syriac Testament of Our Lord*)를 기초로 하여, 고대 종교 공동체 내부의 살로메 전승에 대한 새로운 이론을 제시 할 뿐 아니라, 그 문학적 장르(genre)를 도마복음-큐 가설(the Thomasine-Q hypothesis)과 연관해서 규명할 것이다.

주제어: 나그함마디, 살로메, 젠더, 도마복음, 영지주의, 전승