9. The Acts of Titus

The *Acts of Titus* is similar to the *Acts of Barnabas* in several aspects: age, length, purpose, and compositional technique[1]. Written in Greek some time between the fifth and seventh centuries, the *Acts of Titus* is preserved in two epitomes[2]. It elaborates on ecclesiastical traditions from the canonical *Acts* and the *Acts of Paul*, and embellishes the figure of Titus, the saint of the island, with Cretan colours. The inscribed author of the *Acts of Titus*, 'Zenas the Lawyer', is a biblical person—just as John Mark in the *Acts of Barnabas*[3]. This time, however, the biographer remains in the background. There is no mention of him apart from the preface, and there are no 'we passages' in the text, either. The position of the protagonist is unchallenged in the narrative, and his commission is told in much detail.

According to his Acts, Titus stemmed from the lineage of Minos, the mythological king of Crete. At the age of twenty, while devoutly studying 'Homer and the other philosophers', he heard a voice: 'Titus, you must depart from here and save your soul, for this learning will be of no benefit for you'. He waited nine years for a confirmation of the voice, and finally he was commanded in a vision to read the book of the Hebrews. He took up Isaiah, and read the following verse: 'Return to me, many islands. The Lord saves Israel with everlasting

1. The text has been edited by Halkin, 'La légende crétoise de Saint Tite'. An English translation has been published by Pervo, 'Acts of Titus', 467–473.

2. We can only roughly date the text. On the one hand, it presupposes the metropolitan organisation of Crete in the early fifth century. On the other hand, it was used by Andrew of Crete in the seventh. Cf. Lipsius, 'Acten des Titus', 403; James, 'Acts of Titus', 555; Halkin, 'La légende crétoise', 242; Castelfranchi, 'Crete' 208; Pervo, 'Acts of Titus', 457. The extant texts are probably epitomes of a longer writing, cf. James, ibidem, Halkin, ibidem, Pervo, ibidem and 468, note 82.

3. Ζηνᾶς ὁ νομικός (Zenas the lawyer) is known from *Titus* 3.13, where Paul is told to have sent him to Titus, together with Luke.

salvation'[4]. The proconsul of Crete happened to be the uncle of Titus, and when he heard of 'Christ the Master' he sent Titus to Jerusalem. Titus witnessed the ministry and death of Jesus, and became a believer.

After some allusions to the Lucan *Acts* and the *Acts of Paul*, we learn that 'St Titus was ordained by the apostles and sent with Paul to teach and ordain whomever Paul might desire'[5]. Then we read about Titus' ministry, first on the side of Paul, and after the death of the latter with other Pauline disciples: Timothy and Luke. The book further contains details about the saint's diet, his marvellous deeds, and his correspondence. It reports his peaceful and wondrous death, and the miracles at his tomb. Finally it gives a chronology of his life.

The similarities with the commission of John Mark in the *Acts of Barnabas* are remarkable. In our typology we can classify both as 'institutional' commission stories. Like John Mark (who was a pagan temple-servant of Zeus before his conversion), Titus comes from a Greek background. Both of them receive heavenly revelations, and the apostles lay their hands on them[6]. They join the Pauline circle (in Antioch, although this is not explicit in the *Acts of Titus*), and spend years as the companions of Paul (and of Barnabas, in the case of John Mark). After the death of Barnabas and Paul, respectively they engage in missionary activity on their own. In both writings, much emphasis falls on the institutional organisation of Christianity. John Mark and Titus ordain bishops under the supervision of Barnabas and Paul[7], and Titus also ordains bishops on his own.

The differences between the two commission stories are also evident. In the *Acts of Barnabas* John Mark is a chronicler and companion, a figure similar to Baruch, Luke, or Damis[8], who receives an un-

4. A combination of *Isaiah* 41.1 and 45.17. The mention of the islands in *Isaiah* is understood in the text as a reference to Crete.

5. *Acts of Titus* 4, probably containing an allusion to the canonical *Titus* 1.5–9 where Paul (the inscribed author) instructs Titus about the ordination of elders and bishops.

6. We read about John Mark's baptism (*Acts of Barnabas* 1) and Titus' ordination (χειροτονεῖται, *Acts of Titus* 4).

7. *Acts of Barnabas* 17; *Acts of Titus* 4, 8.

8. In *Jeremiah*, the canonical *Acts*, and the *Life of Apollonius of Tyana*, respectively.

usual amount of attention—at least as compared to his function. Thus the narrative of the book becomes bipolar, a story of Barnabas *and* John Mark, the latter figure remaining subordinate, however, to the end. In contrast, the *Acts of Titus* is the most complete biography among the apostolic Acts examined in this study. It follows the life of its hero from his youth until his death, which is a common practice in Greco-Roman biographies[9]. The *Acts of Titus*, or at least the hypothetical longer text from which the epitomes were made, drew on a number of biographical topoi. Commission appears in an elaborated biographical framework in this writing, and yields the conclusion that the later form of the apostolic Acts assimilated the virtues of the genre of *bios*.

The *Acts of Titus* as Biography[10]

That the *Acts of Titus* was intended to be a biography is made clear by the preface:

> Zenas the Lawyer, whom the holy apostle Paul mentions, is the one who wrote his [Titus'] biography (τὸν βίον), the content of which is as follows.

Since the term *biographia* was coined by Damascius only in the late fifth or early sixth century, in antiquity *bios* (or the Latin *vita*) was the word which designated the genre of biography[11]. Other two keywords belonging to biographical literature are found soon after these lines towards the beginning of the text: 'descent' (γένος) and 'education' (παιδεία). This encourages us to compare our text to an example of the mature form of Greek biography, a text of approximately the same length and relatively close in date to the *Acts of Titus*. We will use for this purpose one of the *bioi* by Diogenes Laertius, namely, the *Life of*

9. Cf. the definition of Momigliano, *Greek Biography*, 11. This is not necessarily true of Jewish and Christian texts with a biographical character, where birth, or death, or both are often neglected.

10. On the relation between Christian and Greco-Roman biographies see Luck, 'Heiligenviten'; Bartelink, 'De vroeg-christelijke biographie'; Van Uytfanghe, 'Het "genre" hagiografie' and 'L'hagiographie'.

11. Momigliano, *Greek Biography*, 12; Görgemanns and Berschin, 'Biographie', 682.

Epimenides, another famous native of Crete. In the epistle to Titus, the Pauline author calls Epimenides a Cretan 'prophet', and cites his hexameter about the Cretan morals[12]. Since we have discussed the biography of Epimenides in some detail earlier, for the time being we restrict ourselves to pointing out the most important similarities with the *Acts of Titus*. If we look at the whole work of Diogenes Laertius, we can see that—apart from the two books dedicated to Plato (Book 3) and Epicurus (Book 10)—most of his biographies are of approximately the same length as the extant versions of the *Acts of Titus* (or the *Acts of Barnabas*). The technique applied to achieve this size was also basically the same: abridgement. Diogenes Laertius wrote mainly by combining excerpts from existing biographical works[13]. Similarly to Suetonius and other biographers, he made use of some recurring rubrics (topoi) when compiling his *vitae*[14]. The narratives on Epimenides (chs. 109–112 of Diogenes Laertius' Book 1) and Titus can be summarised under the following categories[15]:

(a) descent (γένος): Epimenides was the son of Phaestius or Dosiadas; he was a Cretan from Cnossus (109). Titus was a descendent of Minos, the king of Crete (ch. 1).

(b) appearance (εἶδος): Epimenides had long hair, which was not a typical Cretan style (109). Titus' resting on 'coarse cloths and sheepskin' perhaps belongs to this category (ch. 7)[16].

12. *Titus* 1.12, 'It was one of them, their very own prophet, who said, "Cretans are always liars, vicious brutes, lazy gluttons" (Κρῆτες ἀεὶ ψεῦσται, κακὰ θηρία, γαστέρες ἀργαί)'.

13. Leo, *Biographie*, 36–7; Wellman, 'Diogenes Laertios', 753–8; Lesky, *Greek Literature*, 854–5; Runia, 'Diogenes Laertios', 603.

14. Cf. Leo's Alexandrian biography, pp. 4f above. For Suetonius' use of categories cf. idem, *Biographie*, 11–6.

15. The Greek terms between parentheses are generally used in the scholarly tradition.

16. ἀνεπαύετο ἐπὶ κιλικίου καὶ κῳδίου. *Cilicium* occurs frequently in hagiography and ascetic literature (as A. Hilhorst suggests to me). The coarse fabric was originally made of Cilician goat's hair, and used for sails and mats (Liddell and Scott, *Lexicon*, 951; Sophocles, *Lexicon*, 664). Here, as well, it means some kind of mat, cf. ἐπὶ κιλίκου ἐξαπλῶν ἑαυτόν, Georgius Monachus, *Chronicon* 590.1.4. The monks produced *cilicium*, cf. Pachomius, *Epistles* 8 (Lefort, *Pachomiana Latina*, 96–7). Cf. Innocent III, *De miseria condicionis humane* 38.

(c) youth and education (παιδεία): Epimenides tended the sheep of his father and had a fifty-seven year long sleep in a cave (109–10). Titus read the classic authors in his youth but then was turned to the Hebrew Bible by two subsequent visions. He saw the ministry and death of Jesus (chs. 1–2).

(d) acts (πράξεις): Epimenides purified Athens from the pestilence (110–11). Titus first accompanied Paul, then himself wrought miracles and ordained bishops (chs. 3–9).

(e) writings and correspondence (συγγράμματα): Diogenes refers to a considerable bulk of literary work by Epimenides. He quotes Epimenides' letter to Solon (111–2). Titus 'constantly sang and gave praise to God', although he is not explicitly said to have written hymns. He wrote letters to Dionysius the Areopagite[17] and others (ch. 10).

(f) dietary habits: Epimenides received food from the Nymphs, kept it in a cow's hoof, ate small portions which were entirely absorbed in his body, and was never seen to eat (114)[18]. Titus ate only garden vegetables (ch. 7)[19].

(g) death: Epimenides died on returning from Athens at the age of 175 or 199 (111). Titus died at the age of 94 peacefully in his home (ch. 10).

(h) veneration of the hero: Cretans are said (114–5) to have sacrificed to Epimenides as to a god. The Spartans also claim to guard his

17. Dionysios Areopagites, converted by Paul in Athens according to *Acts* 17.34, is the fictive author of a collection of theological treatises written around the turn of the fifth and sixth centuries AD, containing a lengthy letter to Titus. Cf. Touwaide, 'Pseudo-Dionysios Areopagites', 647.

18. Theophrastus (*c.* 371–287 BC), *Opinions of Natural Philosophers* 7.12.1, warned that only those parts of squill are edible which Epimenides used to eat, and that are also named after him. This plant (σκίλλα or *urginea maritima*, a sort of onion) was known for its use in purification rituals (Liddell and Scott, *Lexicon*, 1610). Thus, Epimenides' assumed diet reflects his function as a cult reformer, cf. point *(d)* above.

19. Titus' diet ἐκ λαχάνων κηπίων (of garden vegetables) may reflect an influence of the Epimenides tradition, or an application of *Romans* 12.1,21. It is interesting to note that neither of the two strict diets described in the Bible, those of the Nazirites (*Numbers* 6.1–4) and John the Baptist (*Mark* 1.6), were vegetarian. One can readily attribute Titus' assumed eating habits to the practice of the monks, cf. pp. 160f. Porphyry, *Life of Plotinus* 2, also depicts his hero as a vegetarian.

body. Wondrous healings are reported (ch. 11) to have occurred on the tomb of Titus.

(i) chronology: Chronological data on Epimenides are distributed over the whole text of Diogenes. The *Acts of Titus* ends (ch. 12) with the chronology of the life of Titus.

(j) persons by the same name (ὁμώνυμοι): Diogenes lists two other well-known men called Epimenides.

Although Diogenes Laertius largely varied his rubrics, and did not use them as consistently as earlier Suetonius, the above mentioned categories can be called typical of his book[20]. We did not put commission into a separate rubric. Although the biographies by Diogenes Laertius contain several commission narratives, they are mostly integrated into the account of 'youth and education' (παιδεία)[21]. The foregoing comparison should be evaluated from two different—although interconnected—perspectives: (a) the literary form and structure of the book, and (b) the commission narratives themselves.

(a) The *Acts of Titus* assumed a Greco-Roman biographical form. The earlier Acts can be considered as biographical writings primarily in the sense of the 'prophetic' or 'ideal' biographies of Jewish and Near Eastern literature. They are lacking either the provenance and youth of the protagonist, or his death, concentrating basically on his 'acts' (πράξεις). The *Acts of Titus*, in contrast, gives a brief account of the whole career of their hero from his youth to his death. The idea of martyrdom, typical of all the previous Acts, is missing from the text. There are no flagellations, chains, stoning, lynching, tortures and spectacular execution, which were stock material in the earlier Acts. Here the hero comes from a high social stance, and remains there throughout his life. He receives a classical education (ch. 1), and he is a nephew and a delegate of the governor of Crete (ch. 2) and brother-in-law of another governor, Rustillus, whom he also converts to Christianity and foretells his consulship (ch. 5). He convinces a deputy of the emperor to build a Christian sanctuary instead of a pagan one, and supervises the works himself (ch. 9). What we have here is

20. The biography of Zeno (7.1), for example, begins with γένος, εἶδος, dietary habits, παιδεία, and σύγγραμμα. Cf. Leo, *Biographie*, 37–84, esp. 39–41, 49.

21. As in 2.48, 6.20–1, 7.2–3. For Greek *paideia* in hagiography, see pp. 204ff below.

the life of a notable person, a public career of a Roman *vir illustris* brought to completion.

The consideration of other details, however, will make the relation of our text to Greco-Roman biography appear as more complex. First of all, we have to be aware that it is basically the public activity of the apostle that is reported by his Acts. The remarks on diet and sleeping do not add up to a characterisation of private life (*vita domestica, interior ac familiaris vita*), as for example, in Paulinus' biography of Ambrose[22]. Although the appearance of the rubric of παιδεία is remarkable, it is basically told from the point of view of the conversion and commission of the hero. The *Acts of Titus* depicts personality in terms of its importance for the community, in which it complies with early Christian biographical tradition:

> [Suetonius or Plutarch] wants to show a given person as he actually was, no matter whether good or bad. The Christian biographer, in contrast, […] 'omits all the traits from the portrait of his hero that make out his being in its particularity. For him, these are accidental and unimportant'. He depicts an ideal life, an ideal development, as a model for others[23].

The *Acts of Titus*, even if it assimilates a Greco-Roman pattern, does not abandon the tradition of the ideal biography. One has to note that the portrait of Epimenides (together with other lives by Diogenes Laertius) also exhibits much resemblance to the ideal (prophetic) biographies. The two texts therefore witness to a stage of development where the life of a philosopher and the life of an apostle is seen in very similar terms by their biographers. In fact, there is even more realism in the figure of Titus, while Epimenides remains in a mythological distance.

(b) The commission narratives of the heroes are crucial in both stories. They give the impetus to the public career of both heroes and the driving force of the biographical narratives. After his miraculous dream, Epimenides is known as 'the most beloved by the gods', and it is for this reason that the Athenians call him to purify their city. Titus' revelations and visit to Jerusalem leads up to his ordination by the

22. Cf. Luck, 'Heiligenviten', 238.
23. Luck, 'Heiligenviten', 236, quoting Holl, 'Heiligenleben', 410.

apostles, and his missionary activity on the side of Paul. But the commission stories themselves are considerably different, which can be made clear by referring back to our basic threefold typology. On the one hand, Epimenides' commission is best called philosophical, being basically the affair of the individual and the gods. His activity in Athens might be called prophetic. Titus' commission, on the other hand, is clearly institutional. His belonging to the formations of Early Christianity is underscored by the narrative, and his legitimacy finally comes from the ordination by the apostles. This highlights another important difference between the philosophers' lives by Diogenes Laertius and the *Acts of Titus*. Diogenes Laertius (like the early Christian biographies) often strives to create ideal biographies of the Greek heroes, and (unlike Suetonius or Plutarch) occasionally neglects realistic traits of his figures in this process. His protagonists are nevertheless established as emancipated individuals in his narrative world. In the *Acts of Titus*, in contrast, the hero receives his personality through integration into the institutional framework of Christianity.

Tolle lege

There are other important literary parallels as well that help us to understand various aspects of Titus' commission. We will first focus on the hero's turning away from the classic authors and his turning to the Hebrew Scriptures as ordered by the subsequent heavenly revelations. Independently from each other, both motifs occur in early Christian literature.

Appropriately to his social rank, Titus is depicted as a young man widely read in the canon of Greco-Roman education. He studied 'the poems and dramas of Homer and other philosophers'. A heavenly voice, however, warned him that this education (παιδεία) does not serve his benefit and he has to depart from it in order to save his soul. A similar turning away from the Greek authors occurs in the autobiographical accounts attributed to Clement of Rome[24]. According to the *Pseudo-Clementines* (4th century AD), young Clement in his doubts begins to visit the schools of the philosophers, but he does not find

24. Cf. Pervo, 'Acts of Titus', 459, note 20.

there anything else than ‘the setting up and refutation of doctrines, and controversies, contests, and the art of syllogisms and the invention of premises’[25]. Then, similarly to Titus, he receives reports about Jesus and travels to Judea. But notwithstanding the *Acts of Titus*, he meets there only the apostles rather than Jesus[26]. On his listening to the preaching of Barnabas, he disapproves of the philosophers’ mocking Barnabas because of his uneducated style[27].

Augustine in his *Confessions* (*c.* 397 AD) also denies the use of the classics in education[28]. He criticises Homer for depicting Jupiter as ‘thunderer and adulterer’, transferring human traits to the gods rather than divine ones to humans and Terence for stimulating immoral conduct. In conclusion, he says:

> But what is this to me, o True Life, my God, that when I was reciting I was applauded above many of my contemporaries and fellow-students? Behold, is not all this smoke and wind? Your praises, Lord, your praises might have supported the offshoot of my heart through your Scriptures, and I would not have been dragged away by the vanity of the crooks as an ugly prey to the birds. There are namely more than one ways to sacrifice to the fallen angels.

Although the bitterest of these utterances about the ‘crooks’ and ‘sacrifice to the fallen angels’ might be references to the Manicheans to whom Augustine later attached himself, the tenor of the sentences—as in the *Acts of Titus*—is that the reading of Scriptures is useful for the youth, while the reading of the classics is seductive and dangerous. In sum, the same anti-intellectual tendency, a turning away from classical education is discernable in the *Pseudo-Clementines*, Augustine, and the *Acts of Titus*. We have to conclude that the readership of the *Acts of Titus* is to be sought among the educated of the time who had similar conflicts of whether or not they should read the classical authors. The social setting of the *Acts of Titus* is different from the

25. Pseudo-Clement, *Homilies* 1.3.1–2, cf. *Recognitions* 3.1.
26. *Homilies* 1.6ff, cf. *Recognitions* 6ff.
27. *Homilies* 1.10.1.
28. *Confessions* 1.16–7, cf. 13–4. In *Confessions* 3.4.8, Augustine quotes *Colossians* 2.8–9: *Videte, ne quis uos decipiat per philosophiam et inanem seductionem secundum traditionem hominum* [etc.].

one generally attributed to the earlier Acts[29]. The commission of Titus, as far as his departure from the classics if considered, could have been a paradigm for educated higher-class individuals who happened to hesitate between pagan philosophy and Christianity[30].

There is, however, an important difference between the accounts of Clement and Augustine, on the one hand, and the *Acts of Titus*, on the other hand. The former two texts present their heroes struggling for a solution among their spiritual conflicts, and then consciously deciding to depart from the classic authors. In the *Acts of Titus* this is commanded, in contrast, by the heavenly voice, in order that Titus might save his soul. Here the rejection of the Greek authors is not the result of spiritual seeking, but rather is demanded by divine authority. As for the motif of the heavenly voice, it is likely to have been invented on the analogy of the following episode, where Titus is told to read the book of the Hebrews.

The first revelation is followed by a period of nine years when Titus is waiting for the heavenly voice to speak again. His hesitance may imply that he continued his old way of education or that he retreated to meditate or pray. Frequently in the commission narratives, the hero has to wait for a subsequent revelation in order to receive a straightforward command from the divinity[31]. The narrative function of this interlude is also to give emphasis to the following episode.

The role that Jewish Scripture plays in Titus' commission is not without its parallels in late antiquity. Dio Chrysostom (*c.* 40–112 AD) quotes Homer, Euripides, and Herodotus in his autobiographical account of his commission to philosophy[32]. The relation between the ancient authors and divine oracle is rather complex in this story, but

29. Cf. pp. 253f below.

30. Cf. the context of conversion from Hellenism to Christianity in the *Acts of Barnabas*; pp. 193f above. For the problem of Greek *paideia* in hagiography, see Rubenson, 'Philosophy and Simplicity', who examines eight biographies (different from the ones discussed above) and identifies three types of dealing with *paideia* (133–6): (1) omission of the subject; (2) rejection and withdrawal from Greek *paideia* (as in our narratives); and (3) using *paideia* as the foundation upon which Christian knowledge and piety can build.

31. *1 Samuel* 3.2–15, *Acts* 9.1–19; Diogenes Laertius, *Lives* 6.20–1, 7.2–3. For a discussion of subsequent visions, see pp. 228f below.

32. *Discourses* 13, cf. pp. 49f above, trans. J.W. Cohoon in LCL, adapted.

still the basic pattern remains the same. After his banishment from Rome, Italy, and his native Bithynia, Dio contemplated the texts of the classics. 'Bearing in mind all these things' he decides to consult the god in his temple, and receives the order to continue the very thing he was doing (i.e. roaming) until he would go 'to the furthest part of the world'. Then Dio turns to Homer:

> I remembered that Odysseus, after so much straying, did not murmur at wandering again and carrying an oar—as advised by the dead Teiresias—until he would meet people who did not know the sea even by hearsay. And should I not do so if the god commands me?

This passage contains an indirect quotation of *Odyssey* 11.119–34, where Odysseus consults the spirit of Teiresias the Theban diviner. Dio does not actually open a book, but this would be also difficult in his situation—nevertheless, earlier in the narrative he directly quotes from Homer and other authors. In Greco-Roman antiquity, Homer was consulted for oracles in a similar way as was the Bible by Jews and Christians[33]. In the case of Dio, the god's behest corresponds to Teiresias' oracle, and this evokes the Homeric passage. Previously to the oracle, Dio is already engaged in meditating over the classics, as Augustine already read the Bible before he heard the famous *tolle lege*.

The pattern appears also in the biographies by Diogenes Laertius (3rd century AD). About Zeno of Citium (333–261 BC) we read[34]:

> When he consulted the oracle about what he should do in order to attain the best life, the god answered that he should be in contact with the dead[35]. When he understood what this meant, he read the ancient authors. […] While carrying purple from Phoenicia to Piraeus, he was shipwrecked. He went up to Athens—he was then thirty—and sat down in a bookstore. As he was reading the second book of Xenophon's *Memorabilia* and found pleasure in it, he asked where such men can be found. Just at the right moment Crates passed by, and the bookseller pointed to him and said, 'Follow that man'. From that time on he studied with Crates.

33. Examples are quoted by van der Horst, 'Sacred Books', 162–6. For the sacred status of Homeric literature in Neoplatonism, see Alexander, 'Homer', 141.

34. Diogenes Laertius, *Lives* 7.2.

35. εἰ συγχρωτίζοιτο τοῖς νεκροῖς. The verb expresses (defiling) contact with the dead and sexual contact (Liddell and Scott. *Lexicon*, 1669).

In this story the divine will to read the book is communicated in two ways. First, the oracle bids Zeno to read the ancient authors. Then the shipwreck—a most important tool of divine guidance in antiquity[36]—takes him to Athens, where he hits upon the *Memorabilia* by Xenophon. Although the passage he reads is not explicitly specified, it is clear that it was the teaching of Socrates, as expounded in the dialogues of the second book of the *Memorabilia*, that compelled Zeno to become a student of philosophy.

The reading or hearing of biblical passages plays a crucial role in some early Christian biographies[37]. In Athanasius' *Life of Antony*[38], the hero, while contemplating how the apostles followed Jesus in the gospels and sold their possessions in *Acts*, enters a church and hears the citation from *Matthew*: 'If you wish to be perfect, go, sell all your possessions, give [it] to the poor, come, follow me, and you will have treasure in heaven'[39]. In the *Life of Saint Martin* by Sulpicius Severus (end of the 4th century)[40], the hero's adversary is defeated when a member of the congregation randomly opens the Bible during a worship and reads out a verse from *Psalms*: 'Out of the mouths of infants and sucklings you have perfected your praise because of your enemies, so that you may destroy the enemy and the defender'[41]. The last word of the passage (*defensorem*[42]) agrees with the name of Martin's adversary, called Defensor, and this gives the clue to reject him, and to appoint Martin bishop. Similarly to these examples of biblio-

36. Cf. Pokorný, 'Romfahrt'; Robbins, 'Eye of the Storm'.

37. Van der Horst, 'Sacred Books', collects evidence for the Jewish, Christian, and Greco-Roman practice of divination from a book. In his recent article on 'Jewish Bibliomancy', 10, he suggests the term 'bibliomancy' to identify this technique.

38. Cf. p. 163, note 26 above; van der Horst, 'Sacred Books', 151.

39. *Life of Antony* 2.3, a quotation of *Matthew* 19.21.

40. Cf. Fontaine's introduction, *Vie de Saint Martin*, 1ff; van der Horst, 'Sacred Books', 155.

41. *Ex ore infantium et lactantium perfecisti laudem propter inimicos tuos, ut destruas inimicum et defensorem* (*Life of Saint Martin* 9.6, quoting *Psalm* 8.3 from the *Vetus Latina*).

42. The Septuagint translates the Hebrew נקם (avenge) with ἐκδικητής, coming from ἐκδικέω which can also mean 'defend'—thence the translation *defensor* in the Old Latin.

mancy[43], Titus reads a randomly selected Bible verse, which he understands as God's message.

The closest parallel to the heavenly command to read the 'Book of the Hebrews' is the well known *tolle lege* episode of Augustine's *Confessions*. Although the influence of bibliomantic practices[44] in our text is possible, it remains a peculiarity that both Augustine and Titus open the Scriptures on divine command. In the case of Augustine, the command itself comes from overhearing the children's play in the neighbouring garden. This particular pattern of commission consists of a divine command which directs the hero to the consultation of books. In other words, these stories legitimate bibliomancy by a preceding heavenly voice, vision, or oracle. Augustine in his distress contemplates biblical passages[45], as Dio meditated over Homer, Euripides and Herodotus: 'And you, Lord, how long? How long, Lord, will you be angry forever? Do not remember our iniquities of old'[46]. In this state of mind he hears the voice of a child: *Tolle lege, tolle lege.* Suddenly he remembers the case of Antony's hearing the quotation from Matthew, and this helps him interpret the voice as a command to open the Scriptures and read the first verse he finds there: 'Not in devouring and drunkenness, not in lechery and shamelessness, not in quarrelling and rivalry; but put on the Lord Jesus Christ and make no providence for the flesh in desires'[47].

It is difficult to say why this specific passage appealed in such a way to Augustine that 'all shadows of doubt disappeared from his heart'. In those years (in his early thirties[48]) he was in a stage of mental struggle rather than of carnal licentiousness, which—according to his perhaps exaggerating account—characterised his adolescence[49]. At this point we have to mention the helper-figure in the story, Augustine's friend Alypius, who was being introduced to Christianity

43. Cf. note 37 above.

44. For 'bibliomancy', see note 37 above. For *Confessions* in that context, see van der Horst, 'Sacred Books', 152–5.

45. The episode we are talking about is *Confessions* 8.12.

46. *Et tu, domine, usquequo* (*Psalm* 6.4)? *Usquequo, domine, irasceris in finem* (*Psalm* 79.5)? *Ne memor fueris iniquitatum nostrarum antiquarum* (*Psalm* 79.8).

47. *Romans* 13.13–4.

48. Cf. *Confessions* 8.7.17

49. Cf. *Confessions* 2.1–2.

at the same time. Together they studied the subject of conversion, meditating over models as Paul or Antony[50]. The soil was well prepared for Augustine's conversion, and almost any biblical passage would have had the same effect on him in the given situation. Bibliomancy occurs here in an institutionalised context, where the reaction of the individual is guaranteed by the socio-psychological framework. The best proof of this is that when Alypius hears of Augustine's experience, he reads one verse further and also 'converts', following his friend 'without any hesitant delay' (*sine ulla turbulenta cunctatione*).

Is the conversion of Titus in his Acts also the result of such a systematic preparation? The present form of the text does not provide us with any clue. The book that is used for bibliomancy must be, of course, that 'of the Hebrews', since Titus' conversion is projected back to Jesus' lifetime. The actual passage consists of two quotations from Deutero-Isaiah: 'Return to me, many islands: the Lord saves Israel with everlasting salvation'[51]. The particular verse sought out is to be interpreted similarly as the biblical passage in the *Life of Saint Martin* (see above). We can observe an important distinction here. On the one hand, Dio's Homeric quotation as well as Antony and Augustine's texts are more easily applicable to the hero's situation on a literal level, by drawing a parallel between their personal conflicts and Odysseus' obedience to the gods in continuing his wanderings, the command to the young man to give his riches to the poor, and Paul's warning against dissipating life, respectively. In the case of Martin and Titus, on the other hand, the oracle is interpreted with the help of formal coincidences, namely, that Martin's adversary is called Defensor and that Titus comes from an island.

In the *Acts of Titus*, bibliomancy also serves to legitimise the churches of Crete, proving that heavenly revelation urged for the Christianisation of the island from the earlier times. The sending of Titus as an envoy of the governor to Jerusalem demonstrates that the Roman administration of the island took official measures toward in-

50. Cf. *Confessions* 8.2ff

51. *Isaiah* 41.1 and 45.17. This was not necessarily intended in an earlier version as a 'frame' (implying the verses between) as Pervo, 'Acts of Titus', 466, note 61, suggests. The combination of clauses taken from different contexts is not unusual in ancient (biblical) interpretation.

troducing the new cult from the earliest times of its formation. The journey to Jerusalem and the observation (from a distance) of the life and death of 'Christ the Master'[52] might imply the spirituality of pilgrimage in the author's time. It is interesting that while neither the *Acts of Paul* nor the *Acts of Barnabas* took interest in representing Paul, Barnabas, or John Mark as eyewitnesses to Jesus' life and death, the *Acts of Titus* assumes its necessity in order to establish the hero's authority. Nevertheless, Titus the eyewitness is featured throughout the book as subordinate to Paul. Cretan tradition seems uninterested in challenging the positions of Paul in the narrative—as the Cypriote stories on Barnabas did.

Conclusions

We can call the commission of Titus institutional in more than one way: It integrates its hero into the institutional frameworks of the apostolic Church, the life of the higher classes, and Roman politics. And in this way it also establishes the official status of Christianity. The commission of Titus is a cult-narrative which tells the initiation of a cultic hero and thus explains the introduction of a new cult. The pattern is found in Hellenistic Egypt in the so called Zoilus-letter, where the hero writes that Sarapis had more than once ordered him in a dream to sail over to Apollonius [the minister of Ptolemy II] and tell him that a temple of Sarapis must be built and a priest established in the Greek quarter of the city[53]. Among the other apostolic Acts, the *Acts of Thomas* relates that the apostle converted kings to Christianity[54]. Sometimes it is the rulers themselves who are commanded by the divinity to introduce the new religion. A good example from dynastic Egypt is the cultic reform of Pharaoh Ikhnaton, who introduced the worship of Aton the new solar god and built the new capital Akhetaton (Tell el-Amarna)[55]. Among Christian biographies we can quote

52. *Acts of Titus* 2: τοῦ δεσπότου Χριστοῦ.
53. Cf. pp. 238f below.
54. *Acts of Thomas* 16, 26 (Gundaphoros), 170 (Misdaios).
55. Breasted, *Eighteenth Dynasty*, 390–1. An inscription in the tomb of the vizier Ramose (translation in Breasted, *Eighteenth Dynasty*, 389) suggests that the new faith was revealed to Ikhnaton by the god Re.

Eusebius' account of how the visions of Constantine the Great prepared his reforms introducing Christianity as an imperial cult[56], including the transfer of the capital to Constantinople, which marked his 'own transformation from a Western to an Eastern ruler'[57]. In this context we have to understand the 'renewal of the islands' in the *Acts of Titus* as a political program. This agenda is fulfilled when the apostle Titus, member of the local higher class, establishes Christianity on Crete in cooperation with proconsuls and relying on the permission and support of emperors.

To sum up, the commission of Titus in his Acts follows established literary patterns better than does any of the previously discussed texts. We can observe here (1) the structure of Greco-Roman biography, (2) the influence of Christian biographies, (3) an established tradition of conversion in hagiography, making use of bibliomancy (perfectly embodied by the *Confessions* of Augustine)[58], and (4) the pattern of introducing new cults, especially as formulated in Eastern traditions. The institutional form of commission is brought to perfection in this text, which projects the positive reception of Christianity by the Greco-Roman higher class back to the lifetime of Jesus, and presents the introduction of the new cult as the concern of the political establishment of that age. Commission becomes political fiction when a Roman proconsul sends an envoy to Palestine to learn from Jesus, or a Christian sanctuary is built from imperial money under Trajan.

56. Eusebius, *Life of Constantine* 1.28–9. For the visions, see recently Cameron, 'Vita Constantini', 158–63; idem, 'Form and Meaning'. Eusebius compares Constantine to Moses, and assigns to him a key role in salvation history.

57. Frend, *Rise of Christianity*, 501.

58. Possidius in his *Life of Augustine* 11.5, writing aroung 435, asserts that Augustine's books were translated into Greek. An imitation of the *tolle lege* episode probably occurs in Mark the Deacon's *Life of Porphyry of Gaza* 45. Although these witnesses are subject to criticism (cf. Courcelle, *Les Confession*, 202), the *Acts of Titus* may provide one more piece of evidence of Augustine's influence in the East. However, it is also possible that the author of the *Acts of Titus* elaborated on the same topos as the Latin authors did without having read them, using the *Life of Antony* or another Greek source as his model.