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STYLISTICS AND SOURCES
OF THE *POSTOLA SÖGUR*
IN AM 645 4^{TO} AND AM 652/630 4^{TO}

1. INTRODUCTION

AM 645 4to and AM 652 4to (which is preserved in full in AM 630 4to, a seventeenth-century copy), are the two most complete collections of translated apostles' and saints' lives surviving from early medieval Iceland. AM 645 4to dates to the first half of the thirteenth century, and is therefore the oldest surviving Icelandic collection of saints' lives. The manuscript is defective, and consists of two separate codices, generally dated to the same period. Codex I contains the complete sagas of Clement, James the Greater, and Matthew, the partial sagas of Peter, Bartholomew, and Andrew, and the bulk of the miracle book of St. Þorlákr. Codex II contains a portion of Andrew's saga, the complete saga of Paul and the nearly-complete saga of Martin of Tours, and a version of the *Descensus Christi ad Inferos* (*Niðrstigningar saga*, concerning the descent of Christ into Hell before his resurrection).¹ AM 652 4to dates to the middle of the thirteenth century and contains fragments of the sagas of John the Evangelist, James the Greater, Bartholomew, Andrew, and Matthew, while AM 630 4to contains these same sagas as well as those of Thomas, Simon and Jude, Peter, Philip and James the Less, and Matthias.²

¹ Hreinn Benediktsson (1965:xxxvii) dates Codex I to around 1220, and Codex II to „the second quarter of the 13th century.“ For a discussion of other conjectures as to the date of the manuscript, ranging from 1200 to 1237, see Holtsmark 1938:7-10.

For further information on the textual history of AM 645 4to and its relationship to other Icelandic manuscripts, especially AM 652 4to, see Sverrir Tómasson 1992:424-425; Ólafur Halldórsson 1967:24-25 and 1994:lxixiii-cxvii; Collings 1969:3-5; Bekker-Nielsen 1965:122; Holtsmark 1938:7-12.

² Hreinn Benediktsson (1965:xlili) dates AM 652 4to to the second half of the thirteenth century. C. R. Unger (*Post.*:ix) dates it to the end of the thirteenth century, and Kristian Kålund (II:55), dates it to the last half of the thirteenth century. Ólafur Halldórsson (1994:xxxv

The majority of the texts in AM 645 4to and AM 652/630 4to are translations of Latin apostles' lives found in the so-called *Historia Apostolica* (*Apostolic History*) of Pseudo-Abdias. The *Passio Simonis et Judas*, found in the sixth book of Pseudo-Abdias, gives a spurious account of the work's origin: Abdias, who was ordained the first bishop of Babylon by the apostles Simon and Jude, wrote about the lives of all of the apostles in Hebrew; one of Abdias' disciples, Europius, translated the book into Greek, and later Julius Africanus translated it into Latin, in the form of ten books.³ The actual work

and cxxi-cxxii) suggests that the manuscript is no younger than from around 1270, but that it is probably not many decades older than that date.

AM 630 4to was written by Steindór Ormsson (b. 1626). Árni Magnússon purchased the manuscript in 1710 from Jörunn Jónsdóttir of Ytri-Hjarðardal in Önundarfjörður, the wife of Jón Steindórsson (the son of Steindór Ormsson). In a notice attached to the manuscript, Árni Magnússon mentions that a certain Halldór Bjarnason from Breiðadal in Önundarfjörður told him in 1710 that Steindór Ormsson copied the text from a book in folio owned by Sigmundur Guðmundsson from Seljaland in Skutulsfjörður, and that the book had been afterward torn apart and used for shoe leather. According to Ólafur Halldórsson (1994:xxxv-xxxvi), the appearance of the name Sigmundur in AM 652 4to indicates that it was the original from which Steindór Ormsson copied his text.

The texts of AM 645 4to and AM 652/630 4to have been transcribed in full in *Post.* and *HMS.* Unger's editions, although faulty at times, still remain the only complete transcriptions of most of the corpus of early Icelandic translated hagiographical literature. AM 652 4to and AM 630 4to exist in modern editions only in Unger, but two other editions of AM 645 4to have been published: Anne Holtsmark's facsimile edition (1938), and a diplomatic edition of Codex I, edited by Ludvig Larsson (1885).

Other editions of medieval Icelandic translations of apostles' lives are to be found in Ólafur Halldórsson 1967 and 1994; Slay, 1960; Foote 1962 and 1990; Þórður Ingi Guðjónsson 1996; Harty 1977; Hofmann 1997. For a listing of studies of Icelandic saints' lives and related literature, see Sverrir Tómasson 1992:593-598; Ólafur H. Torfason 1993:99-126; Cormack 2000:322-325.

³ The Icelandic version's account of the ordination of Abdias and the recording of the apostles' works (*Post.*:787.11-17) corresponds to Mombritius' Latin text of the *Passio Simonis et Judas* (II 538:43-49), mentioning the ten books written by the apostles' disciple Craton (although *Post.*:787.16 gives the amount of time that the apostles spent in Syria as fourteen rather than thirteen years). To this the Icelandic version adds material found in the Pseudo-Abdian epilogue concerning the recording „here“ of the first part of the first book and the last part of the tenth (*Post.*:787.27-28; *Mombritius* II: 539.57-58), although the text being cited refers not to Craton's work but to the work that was supposedly written by Abdias, translated into Greek by Europius (or Eutropius, see James 1924:439) and finally retranslated into Latin by Africanus, 'the historian' (*Mombritius* II:539.53-56; this information is also given in a preface to the *Apostolic History*, still to be found in the editions of Pseudo-Abdias, purportedly written by Africanus himself). Africanus is also mentioned in the Pseudo-Abdian account as the translator of Craton's works (*Mombritius* II:538. 49-50), but the Icelandic version omits any mention of him, Europius, or Abdias' *gesta apostolorum*.

attributed to Abdias (containing the lives of eleven apostles) is thought to have been produced in France in the sixth or seventh century, and it became the most widely-known collection of apostles' lives in the Middle Ages prior to the appearance of Jacobus de Voragine's late thirteenth-century *Legenda Aurea*.⁴

Saints' and apostles' lives were among the first types of material written in Icelandic. They were first brought to Iceland by foreign missionaries during the conversion period and the formative years of the Icelandic church (from

Julius Africanus (2nd-3rd centuries) is the author of arguably the most influential universal history for the medieval Christian world, the *Chronicle* (Greek *Chronographiai*); the attribution of the Pseudo-Abdias collection to him is spurious.

Concerning the sixth- or seventh-century *Apostolic History of Abdias*, James (1924:438) states that Abdias „has no right to figure as its author at all.“ Lipsius discusses the authorship of the work in *DAAA* I:117-121.

- ⁴ Editions of the Pseudo-Abdian collection exist in Nausea 1531; Lazius 1552; Faber 1560; Beauparis 1566 and 1571; Fabricius 1743; versions of the Pseudo-Abdian texts are also to be found in *Mombritius* and *AAA*.

The Pseudo-Abdian collection does not hold a highly regarded position in studies of Biblical apocrypha; in fact it has not been republished since Fabricius' third edition was published in 1743, and very few studies dealing with it exist (the most complete is *DAAA* I:117-178). Its relegated status is primarily due to its late date and its derivative nature, which render it of little critical interest to scholars who are interested in original apocryphal texts, in the relationships between these texts, and in the theology embedded in them. The preferred text of Pseudo-Abdias, when it is given a place in studies of Biblical apocrypha, is that of Fabricius, although this is due more to Fabricius' rather copious notes on the sources used for the narratives in the collection than to the quality of the texts themselves (variants between Fabricius' and earlier editions are minimal).

While Fabricius' edition was the only one to provide a scholarly critical apparatus designed to highlight the derivative nature of the texts (Fabricius' notes are used extensively by Lipsius in *DAAA*), scholarly opinion regarding the value of the texts for studies of Biblical apocrypha was not aided by the fact that his notes tend to repeat earlier patristic criticisms levelled against the narratives for their spurious content. Lazius' edition (which is also given somewhat extensive treatment by Lipsius) was in fact the first to publish the texts in their 'original' form in ten books.

For further information on the published editions of Pseudo-Abdias, as well as on the manuscripts used for them, see *DAAA* I:124-134. Other works that deal with Pseudo-Abdias include James 1924:462-469 (actually just summaries of books in Pseudo-Abdias that are not derived from established versions of the apocryphal Acts), and Elliott 1993:525-531 (a reworking of James' text). Brief mention of Pseudo-Abdias is made in Hennecke 1965 and 1992. Elliott lists no English translations of the *Apostolic History* of Pseudo-Abdias, except for the summaries given by James (thus the translations provided in the present author's doctoral thesis may represent the only complete translation of a 'version' of Pseudo-Abdias).

around 981 to the middle of the eleventh century), and later were collected by Icelandic bishops during their trips abroad for consecration and/or study. They were copied and read in Iceland's scriptoria and monasteries, and were certainly used in the celebration of saints' feast days: several of the lives contain homiletic introductions, in at least one case addressed to an audience of *goðir brøðr* (in the saga of James the Less, *Post.*:737.32).⁵ Unfortunately, as is the case with most of Iceland's medieval literature, we have no precise information concerning where or by whom collections of saints' lives such as AM 645 4to and AM 652 4to were written, and even now no exact Latin manuscript prototypes have been matched to surviving Icelandic hagiographical texts.

Concerning the literary value of the Icelandic apostles' lives, two of the most significant studies to date are those done by Jónas Kristjánsson and Lucy Grace Collings. Jónas published the results of his studies in two articles, 'Learned style or saga style?' (1981) and 'Sagas and Saints' Lives' (1985), and Collings, in her doctoral dissertation, *Codex Scardensis: Studies in Icelandic Hagiography* (1969), which, although still unpublished, is an essential work for anyone doing any sort of study of Icelandic hagiography. Jónas does a lexical study of passages from the earliest translated lives, including the lives found in AM 645 4to and AM 652 4to, comparing them with corresponding Latin texts in order to show how the Icelandic translators followed the Latin originals closely but, as he suggests, *reshaped* the Latin according to Icelandic grammatical rules. Collings compares versions of the lives as found in the fourteenth-century *Skarðsbók* manuscript (*Codex Scardensis*) with earlier versions of the lives and with Latin originals, and shows that whereas the younger texts in the collection display an elegance of expression and a heightening of rhetorical ornamentation, older texts pare down excessive Latin rhetoric and other features that detract from a 'plain and unpretentious narrative' (such as name etymologies, long theological passages, allegorical commentary, and specialized details that would have been unfamiliar to an Icelandic audience). These scholars' findings reveal that the earliest translated saints' lives in Iceland display a dramatic narrative style similar to that of the so-called 'popular

⁵ The lives of Bartholomew, James the Greater, and Philip and James the Less in the AM 652/630 4to collection contain homiletic introductions.

For an overview of the history of the Icelandic church and monastic activity in medieval Iceland, including the production of saints' lives, see, among others, Turville-Petre 1953:48-142 and Sverrir Tómasson 1992:421-479. For a study of saints' cults in Iceland, see Cormack 1994b.

style' of the family sagas, especially in terms of the weight the narratives give to dialogue and direct reporting of action.⁶

Most saga studies that attempt to bridge the gap between native storytelling sentiments and motifs and 'learned' hagiographical and/or historiographical texts tend to go no further than to find in the Icelandic sagas motifs derived from popular hagiographical legends, rather than to try to show how sagas of Icelanders and saints possibly shared certain rhetorical schemes. Unfortunately it is precisely the rhetoric of hagiography that has contributed to the longstanding and still prevalent scholarly attitude that translated foreign literature existed in a separate realm than the literary genius that gave the world the Icelandic family sagas: that is, that the sparse, dramatic, and masterful *Íslendingasögur* could scarcely have had anything to do with the sensationalistic, rhetoric-drenched hagiographical narratives that have often been considered by scholars as 'less-than-literary' or as 'machine-turned' monastic by-products.⁷ Latter-day statements made concerning the *postola sögur* tend at times to reinforce stereotypes, even when prompting further detailed or comparative studies: their sensationalistic qualities align them more with the *fornaldarsögur* and foreign romances, sharing with the other two genres their

⁶ Further work on the sources of Iceland's medieval hagiographical literature has been published in the 'Handlist' 1963 and Kirby 1980. These latter works are essential for anyone doing work on Icelandic ecclesiastical literature, although their information on sources has been expanded and in some cases revised by the findings of Collings 1969 and Roughton 2002; see the section on *Sources* below.

The present author's doctoral thesis (Roughton 2002), provides detailed study of the sources and literary and linguistic characteristics of the lives in the two manuscripts, in comparison with their Latin counterparts, seeking to show adaptations made by Icelandic translators to their sources and to establish a firmer basis for the comparative study of the genres of hagiography and family saga in medieval Iceland. This thesis also provides English translations of all of the lives in the two manuscripts.

An additional detailed study of early Icelandic religious literature, including several of the *postola sögur* in AM 645 4to, is to be found in Steinunn Le Breton-Filippusdóttir 1997.

⁷ See Collings 1969:139. The Icelandic scholar Stefán Einarsson is particularly critical of the literary merits of saints' lives; in a reference to the creative talent of Snorri Sturluson in his book *Icelandic Literature: An Introduction*, he writes: '[...] in Snorri's study in Borgarfjörður the gullibility and the hagiographic invention of the Þingeyrar monks were replaced by skepticism and aristocratic dignity, and true poetical creativeness' (1957:138).

For a discussion of earlier scholarly misconceptions regarding the earliest translated hagiographical literature in Iceland, among them the assumption made by Marius Nygaard that the earliest Icelandic saints' lives were written in a learned or „florid style“ (with rhetorical devices matching those of Latin models), see Jónas Kristjánsson 1981 and 1985 and Collings 1969:139-148.

'touch of the supernatural and larger than life: foreign countries and peoples, marvels of the East, evil spirits, dragons, dungeons, and fiery tyrants overcome by determined men and wise women' (Weber 1986:423); they focus on the 'violent ends met by the apostles after striving against the heathen and their deluding devils and the witchcraft of the pagan protagonists,' and are 'invariably overweighted by long speeches, sermons indeed' (Foote 1994:81); their influence can be seen in the royal biographies and bishops' lives, but 'none of them bears much resemblance to a family saga' (Cormack 1994a:41).⁸

Although such synoptical statements are reductive, they are not ungrounded. The lives of the saints are of course well known for their broad popular appeal, which was more often than not heightened through the employment of varying degrees of sensationalistic elements. A reader of the lives contained in AM 645 4to and AM 652/630 4to will recognize the sensational, 'larger than life' elements in the sorcerers Zaroës and Arfaxath, flying dragons, exotic foreign countries, and in particular, in the lives of Sts. Clement and Peter, the dispute with the sorcerer Simon Magus (or Simon the Evil as he is called), which became one of the most popular legends of the Middle Ages.⁹ However, in most of the Pseudo-Abdian lives found in AM 645 4to and AM 652/630 4to, as in other representatives of early medieval hagiography, the sensationalistic elements are never allowed to replace essential messages or to detract from the overall edificatory scheme. The martyrdom scenes in most of the sagas in these particular collections are brief and are hardly what could be

⁸ Both Cormack and William Schneemelcher (in Hennecke 1965:173) state that it must be remembered that the apocryphal acts are not strictly biographies, and Schneemelcher goes on to say that their focus is on displaying the 'powers' (or perhaps, the virtues or moral qualities) of the apostles as revealed in their travels and conflicts. In much the same way, it might be useful to recall that as far as the 'form' of the family sagas is concerned, very few of them are 'strict' biographies, and in fact in content and purpose (presenting common conflicts through which characters' virtues or lack thereof is revealed, leading toward an overall presentation or examination of idealistic or moral lessons) they are similar to the apocryphal acts, especially those derived from Pseudo-Abdias.

⁹ The Norse god Óðinn's shapeshifting abilities as described in chapters 6 and 7 of Snorri Sturluson's *Ynglinga saga* have some parallels with Simon's own, giving cause to speculate whether Simon may in fact have been a kind of prototype for literary representations of Óðinn (see also Roughton 2002:94-96 and 136-141). Jón Hnefill Aðalsteinsson (1997:68) has remarked that all of the arts ascribed to Óðinn by Snorri are connected with sorcery rather than religion, and that the portrayal of Óðinn in *Ynglinga saga* was influenced by the depictions of sorcerers and their arts in Iceland's imported Christian literature.

called graphically violent,¹⁰ and the sermons or long speeches that supposedly ‘overweigh’ the apostles’ lives are in fact their most vital element, as significant in their messages to the writer and audience of the *vitae* as any discussion of the moral consequences of a choice made or to be made by a saga character at a crucial moment. In addition, the fact that the apostles’ lives bear little surface resemblance to the *Íslendingasögur* should not deter us from taking into account and investigating further the correspondences that the two genres share on other levels: their overriding didacticism, as well as formulaic qualities, narrative schemes, and certain aspects of characterization.

One of the most important studies that remains to be done on the earliest Icelandic saints’ and apostles’ lives, before any further lines are stretched between them and the *Íslendingasögur* and other medieval Icelandic narrative genres, would be to locate and determine, to a fuller and more systematic extent than has been previously done, the precise ways in which the sagas in the collections AM 645 4to and AM 652/630 4to were adapted and transformed from the Latin by their Icelandic interpreters. Such a study could reveal much in terms of how Icelandic and Latin idiom were being reshaped by Icelandic translators, and would give us a far better understanding of the level of literary fluency that Icelandic men of letters possessed even at a very early stage. In many places the texts in AM 645 4to and AM 652/630 4to bear the marks of highly original thinking, not only in the ways that Latin rhetoric is often streamlined, but also in the ways that dictional choices give certain subtle nuances to the translations that the originals lack. In one brief example, Collings notes the ‘sensitivity’ in the ‘choice of suitable expression’ displayed by the Icelandic translator of the saga of the apostles Simon and Jude, as he pares down the exalted Latin paraphrastic rhetoric that is unsuited to a description of the apostles of God. The apostles compel the devils in an idol to foretell the outcome of the war that the earl Varardag is going to wage against the Indians,

¹⁰ In the saga of the apostle Philip, for example, the martyrdom scene reads as follows: „Segia sva helgar bœkr, at þa kœmi þar heiðnir menn með ofriði miklum ok höndluðu postolann ok dœmdu hann þegar til liflatz, ok var hann siðan krossfestur, ok gryttu þeir hann siðan a krossinum, ok for hann með þeim piningarsigri a þessum degi til almatteis guðs“ (*Post.*:737.20-24). In the saga of the apostles Simon and Jude, the martyrdom is even more concise: „Þa drifu blotmenn at postolum guðs ok vagu þa, ok foru þeir fagnandi til guðs“ (*Post.*:788.38-789.1). In the saga of the apostle James the Greater, the attention during the martyrdom is in fact focused on a secondary character, Josias, whom James converts just prior to their deaths: „En Josias var algerr i tru drottens vars Jesu Cristi oc þegar høggevinn með Jacobo postola, oc gerþesc saþr piningarvattr goþs, oc foru þeir baþer a einne stundo til drottens [...]“ (*Post.*:529. 22-24).

and when the devils predict great loss of life in both armies, the Latin version tells us that the apostles laughed hysterically: „Tunc apostoli ex abundanti lætitia in risum excitati sunt“ (*Mombritius* II:534.49-50). The Icelandic translator, however, as Collings points out, chooses to let his characters react more quietly and with more dignity, in keeping with their saga's thematic focus on humility and poverty, when he has them merely 'smile' at the devils' and idolaters' naïveté: „Þa toku postolar guðs at brosa [...]“ (*Post.*:780.7). The mockery that the Latin text would have us believe the apostles used against the devils is in fact transferred by the Icelandic translator to the sacrificial bishops, who do not subsequently merely laugh at the apostles („[...] pontifices risum leuauerunt“, *Mombritius* II:535.1-2), but instead, jeer at them („Þa hlogu blotmenn at þeim“, *Post.*:780.15-16).¹¹

Similar 'sensitivity' or care on the part of the Icelandic translators is found throughout the earliest translated hagiographical texts in Iceland, and as more examples are uncovered the more apparent become the translators' skills at reproducing or modifying Latin grammar and rhetoric, as well as their abilities in reshaping and streamlining narratives in order to accentuate themes: that is, they appear to have worked with a definite sense of purpose, going far beyond slavishly reproducing texts or even adapting them 'per sensum'.¹² An almost thoroughly uninvestigated question concerns to what extent the reproduction and/or modification of varying levels of rhetorical style in the Icelandic trans-

¹¹ See Collings 1969:192-193. Later in the the narrative, when Xerxes builds a church in the apostles' honor, the Pseudo-Abdias text spends some time giving precise architectural details, which the Icelandic version omits. This may have been done, as is done so often elsewhere in the Icelandic translations of Pseudo-Abdias, to avoid unnecessary technicalities (as for instance details of the sorcerers' Manichean doctrine are omitted), but it is also likely that the omission is the result of what Collings has called the translator's pronounced sensitivity to the saga's context and themes: overt attention to the grandiosity of the church would be directly counter to the apostles' lessons concerning poverty and the worthlessness of idols. Cp. *Post.*:789.11-13: „[...] ok let þar gora kirkiu til dyrðar þeim ok skrin or silfri at likomum þeira. En su kirkia var .iiii. vetr i giðrð, en er hon var algör, var hon vigð at iamlengðardegi pislar þeira,“ with *Mombritius* II:539.46-52: „[...] in qua instruxit basilicam in octogeno eiclo angulorum: ut octogenorum pedum numerus numeretur per gyrum: In altum antem pedum centum uiginti. Omnia ex quadratis marmoribus simmaticis extruxit [...]“ etc.

¹² As was suggested by Fredrik Paasche 1957:292. See Collings 1969:140 for further commentary on the earlier scholarly reception of Old Norse hagiographical literature.

Existing studies of Icelandic hagiography have taken pains to show how many Icelandic hagiographical texts are derived from a wide variety of sources, and this evidence alone (besides the oftentimes remarkable adaptations made by the translators/compilers) should be enough to refute any attitude that study of Icelandic hagiography inevitably results in conclusions that are more pertinent to the Icelandic texts' Latin sources. Such an attitude simply

lations of hagiographical texts owes itself to the formal study of rhetoric, taught in the church schools in Iceland using textbooks common to Europe in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, such as Donatus' *Ars Major*, Priscian's *Institutiones grammaticae*, and, in particular, Augustine's *De doctrina christiana*.¹³ The varying levels of style within the hagiographical texts should be considered in the light of Augustine's definitions of style and recommendations on their use, from the general simple style of *sermo humilis*, which made the texts accessible and clear to unlearned as well as learned audiences (reflecting in Icelandic vernacular texts, perhaps, what is called the 'popular' or 'saga style'), to more rhetorically charged passages that might reflect the intermediate or lofty styles.¹⁴

Adaptational practices varied of course from text to text, depending on the time period in which the texts were written and the rhetorical levels of source texts. Concerning the apostles' and saints' lives found in the AM 645 4to and AM 652/630 4to manuscripts, they do not possess the same stylistic homogeneity as found in later manuscripts, in particular, *Codex Scardensis*. The 645 and 652/630 texts can in fact be separated stylistically into three main groups, and in the following I give a summary of the main characteristics of

refuses to accept Latin literature as a vital element in the whole of Icelandic literary production or 'modes of thought' (and following this, we should more readily accept the idea that Icelandic literature owes a great deal to Latin narrative traditions), and it is highly at odds with the sentiments expressed by Ari Þorgilsson in his *Íslendingabók*, when he reiterates Iceland's dedication to church culture and quite emphatically declares Icelanders' excellence in upholding the finest values of that culture. Fortunately, however, most attitudes are not as drastic as those that hold that the translated apostles' lives are 'not Icelandic'.

¹³ A copy of Augustine's *De doctrina christiana* is listed in the inventory of the Viðey monastery in the late-fourteenth century; there are fragments of Donatus' *Ars minor* in the manuscript AM 921 4to, from around 1400, and the second part of the *Third Grammatical Treatise* by Ólafr Þórðarson *hvítaskáld*, written around 1250, is based on Book III of Donatus' *Ars major*; Priscian's *Institutiones* is named in the inventory of the Möðruvellir monastery for 1461. Evidence suggests that all of these texts existed and were in use in the schools in Iceland in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. See Sverrir Tómasson 1992:519-520 and Collings 1967:1-2.

¹⁴ The idea that the similarities in style between the earliest translated hagiographical texts in Iceland and the Icelandic family sagas resulted from a shared response by their writers to formal rhetorical training (as suggested by Sverrir Tómasson 1994:49-50) is perhaps more plausible than the notion of influence from one genre to the other conveyed in Gabriel Turville-Petre's famous dictum that the Icelanders learned from saints' lives how to put biographies and „wonder-tales“ in books (see Turville-Petre 1953:142). For further information on the study of rhetoric in the schools in medieval Iceland, see especially Sverrir Tómasson 1988, and Collings 1967.

each particular grouping, followed by an illustration of these characteristics using a saga within the group.

2. GROUP A

Bartholomew (AM 645 version only), James the Greater (AM 645 version only), Matthew (AM 645 and 652/630 versions), Simon and Jude, Thomas (Simon and Jude and Thomas exist only in AM 652/630)

All of the sagas in this group are translations of Pseudo-Abdian texts. In these sagas Latin rhetorical *ornatus* is for the most part pared down in favor of a more straightforward narrative style that allows for a sharper focus on dialogue and action.¹⁵ This ‘simplistic’ narrative style allows for a clearer reflection in these sagas of the didactic scheme particular to their Pseudo-Abdian originals, in which the edificatory effectiveness of the saint’s life is heightened by an interweaving of narrative action and thematic concerns, as well as by the marked emphasis on the effect of the apostle’s lessons, in deeds and words, on secondary characters (and the ways in which these characters help or hinder the strengthening of the Church Militant). The sagas in this group also mirror the ways in which the Pseudo-Abdian originals characteristically display only a moderate employment of sensationalistic elements (such as demons, sorcerers, magic items, etc.), and narrate the details of the saints’ martyrdoms in as brief a space as possible.

The Pseudo-Abdian accounts represent ‘Catholicized’ versions of an original ‘Christian-Gnostic variety of the Hellenistic-Oriental romance,’ which combined Biblical material with adventure stories of a hero’s travels into for-

¹⁵ For instance, Collings 1969:162-166 points out how the translator of the saga of the apostle Thomas omits or modifies the rhetorical devices that are used in abundance in the original (such as anadiplosis, polysyndeton, homeoteleuton, and alliterative couplets), and simplifies the original by omitting not only tag phrases (‘contiget autem,’ for instance) and repetitious elements such as participial phrases that summarize previous events, but also passages that repeat events from a different angle; also omitted is excessive doctrinal content from the sermons. The resulting ‘unencumbered’ Icelandic narrative thus displays the saga-like quality of the early Icelandic translated saints’ lives, comprised as they are mainly of dialogue and action and structured on characteristically saga-like tripartite scenes.

As mentioned above, younger Icelandic versions of apostles’ and saints’ lives tended toward more expansive, rhetorically enhanced, and even pedantic narratives. Collings discusses the differences in style between older and younger apostles’ lives in detail; for further discussion see Sverrir Tómasson 1992:440-448.

eign lands, causing scholars of Biblical apocrypha to tend to speak of the Pseudo-Abdian accounts as comprising an 'original cycle' of 'apostolic romances'.¹⁶ Although most overtly Gnostic sentiments, as well as much sensationalistic material, have been expunged (in the *Passio* of the apostle Thomas, for instance, overtly Gnostic material such as the famous *Hymn of the Pearl* is omitted), certain elements still reflect the accounts' original non-Catholic provenance, such as the characteristic dualistic tendencies in both the accounts' structural and didactic schemes.

As far as narrative structure is concerned, the Pseudo-Abdian accounts almost always employ a bipartite scheme: although each account is entitled a *Passio*, the narratives can be divided into a *vita* section and a *passio* section.¹⁷ The *vita* section usually describes the apostles' travels in foreign lands and their attempts to convert native inhabitants, generally focusing on a minor conflict involving an antagonist who is either defeated, in the case of demons or sorcerers, or converted, in the case of kings or earls. The *passio* section, as the title indicates, focuses primarily on a conflict with a belligerent and stubborn ruler who is angered to such a degree that he orders the apostle's death (and the ruler's vehemence usually incurs divine retribution).¹⁸ The antagonists as well as the outcome of each section can be seen as polar opposites

¹⁶ See Hennecke 1965:78-79,428; 1992:78. William Schneemelcher (in Hennecke 1992:78-9) gives a summary of scholarly theories on the second- and third-century apocryphal acts (many of which were used as the basis for the acts in Pseudo-Abdias) as Christianized forms of the hellenistic novel, citing especially the work of Rosa Söder, who delineates five main elements present in both: the travel motif, the aretalogical element (describing marvellous aspects of the hero's powers), the tetralogical element (sensationalistic places and characters), the tendentious element (in the speeches), the erotic element (love-motifs and ascetic and encratite features). Schneemelcher suggests that the idea of a conscious Christianization of the *Gattung* of the hellenistic novel is somewhat far-fetched; rather, he says, the apocryphal acts reflect a variety of elements of ancient popular narratives, 'now fixed in a literary form and in a Christian spirit.'

¹⁷ It is noted in Hennecke 1992:428-429 that the bipartite structure of the Pseudo-Abdian narratives is peculiar to that collection, as well as a Coptic collection called the *Certamen apostolorum* (what I call the *vita* section Hennecke calls the *virtutes*, the 'deeds' of the apostle). He also notes 'parallel regularities' in the Pseudo-Abdian and Coptic narratives, as well as the fact that these were the first collections to give each member of the apostolic college his own narrative.

¹⁸ It is suggested in Hennecke 1992:452 that in most apocryphal acts encratite traits (that is, emphasis on sexual continence) „provide the cause that triggers off the inevitable martyrdom.“ Encratism as the cause of despots' anger is seen in the Icelandic sagas of Andrew and Thomas (what Collings refers to as the motif of 'intrigue'), but it is otherwise absent in the Pseudo-Abdian lives.

(benign/despotic rulers, conversion and the strengthening of the Church/failure to convert and martyrdom), and thus the overall structural scheme may in fact be a reflection of the original Gnostic tendency to conceptualize in terms of universal 'syzygies'.¹⁹

This tendency may also explain the dualism reflected in the presentation of the narratives' thematic concerns: most often the apostles' lessons are expounded upon using a characteristic circular reasoning, in which ideas are explained almost 'typologically,' that is, as parts of a reflective whole: Christ is the son of the virgin who overcomes the one who overcame the son of the first virgin, the 'new Adam' who repairs on the cross the sin that was committed by the first man upon the tree of desire; rulers are told to reflect that since they think earthly torments are terrible, they should consider how terrible eternal torments are, especially when earthly torments are gone in the blink of an eye, etc. The AM 645 4to and AM 652/630 4to narratives do not modify their originals' dualistic tendencies, and in fact occasionally enhance parallels and contrasts through the employment of various rhetorical techniques (as discussed below).

In order to illustrate the main characteristics of the sagas in this particular group, the following is a discussion of the saga of the apostle Bartholomew, with special attention given in the discussion to the interweaving of narrative action and thematic concerns that marks these particular narratives and that their Icelandic translators seem to have been so skilled at reproducing and even accentuating in order to sustain and highlight themes.²⁰ The Icelandic translation in AM 645 4to follows the Pseudo-Abdian *Passio Sancti Bartholomaei Apostoli* (Book VIII) very closely, and is thus taken here as representative of a typical Pseudo-Abdian text.²¹ The AM 652/630 4to version is a nearly verbatim copy of the saga as found in AM 645 4to (although there is a

¹⁹ See Hennecke 1992:485.

²⁰ Collings 1969:182 notes the „unity superimposed by the continuity and interdependence of the episodes“ in these narratives, and comments on the difficulties inherent in breaking them down into structural divisions for analysis and discussion. She also notes how the translators' highlighting of the narratives' thematic unity allowed the „mode of expression and the content [to] function as closely interrelated units, the style reflecting and thereby enhancing the thought“ (1969:171).

²¹ According to Lipsius (*DAAA* I:147), the Pseudo-Abdian text exists in one recension. The Latin *passio* can be found reproduced, with little variation, in the standard editions of Pseudo-Abdias, as well as in the *Acta Sanctorum* (Aug. V:34-38), *Mombritius* I:140-144, and *AAA* II,1:128-50. The Icelandic version under discussion here is found in AM 645 4to, 33r-35v (defective), *Post.*:757-762; Larsson 1885:99-108; AM 652 4to, 6r-7v (defective), *Post.*:754-757; AM 630 4to:16v-20v, *Post.*:743-754.

lacuna in the 645 text), but due to the addition of a homiletic introduction and concluding material concerning the *translatio* of Bartholomew's relics, it properly belongs to Group B (see below).²²

Like the other sagas derived from Pseudo-Abdias, *Bartholomeus saga postola* has a characteristic bipartite structure (*vita* and *passio* sections), and displays an overt emphasis on a contextual 'dualism,' seen not only in its structure, which is built on separate conflicts between the apostle and a pair of rulers, but also in its presentation of thematic concerns. On the structural level, the central players in the *vita* and *passio* sections of Bartholomew's saga are the Indian kings Polimius (benign) and his brother Astriges (despotic), but the saga's characteristic dualism is also reflected in each of the two sections in the resolution of the conflict between the saint and a demon: in the *vita* section, the demon Astaroth is 'persuaded' by the apostle to leave, while in the *passio* section the apostle destroys the idol inhabited by the demon Balldath. The dualistic nature of the saga's structure is further enhanced by the paralleling of extended descriptions of first the apostle, just prior to his appearance in the *vita* section of the saga (*Post.*:57.32-758.17), and then the demon Astaroth, just prior to his departure and the shifting of the saga to the *passio* section (*Post.*:761.5-10).

Within the separate sections of the saga minor structural dualities are coupled with thematic concerns conveyed primarily through lessons founded upon 'typological' or 'circular' reasoning, and the two work together to establish and support the saga's doctrinal and didactic core. In the *vita* section, for instance, the devil Astaroth exercises control over the heathen worshippers by seeming to cure when in fact he only ceases to injure those whom he pretends to cure; this is juxtaposed with 1) Bartholomew's ability to exercise control over the demons themselves at will,²³ and 2) Bartholomew's true healing

²² In the following discussion, references to text that falls within the lacuna in AM 645 4to will be to AM 630 4to (the copy made of AM 652 4to when the latter manuscript was still complete), and marked with an asterix.

²³ The apostle's power is magnified at this point by the fact that his work is seemingly accomplished surreptitiously, that is, the sacrificers do not even know who has muted their idols, and must ask another demon in another town to describe the apostle to them; to his description of the apostle the demon (Berith) adds the request that the sacrificers beg the apostle not to come to his town so that he will not be subjected to such harsh treatment, thus further emphasizing the apostle's power. Berith's request is worded as follows: „En ef ér leitiþ hans, þa muno þér þviat eins finna hann, ef hann vill þat, en ella eigi. En ef ér finnit hann, þa biþit ér, at hann come eigi hingat, at eigi gere englar goþs sliet at mér, sem þeir gerþo ad Astaroþ vin minom,“ *Post.*:758.13-17.

powers, displayed first when he cures two demoniacs and later when through his prayers to God he cures those injured by Astaroth (*Post.*:758.17-36 and *755.21-34).

The second of the demoniacs cured by Bartholomew is the daughter of King Polimius, and the interactions between the apostle and the king following this miraculous cure are once again characterized by a typical 'dualism': as a reward for affecting the cure Polimius desires to heap worldly riches upon the apostle, who desires or needs no such things, and the apostle's 're-buke' against the king's misguidedness takes the form of a multifaceted sermon in which the various parts, all built on typological examples, are combined to expound ultimately upon the predominance of eternal power and truth over temporal 'diversions' or desires. The contents of the sermon are as follows: 1) God who is divine and eternal, who has no origin, takes upon himself humanity (and with it the promise of a temporal death) and an origin (in the womb of Mary); 2) Mary is the first mortal virgin, yet she is able to conceive (by the power of the Holy Spirit); 3) Christ overcomes Satan by fasting whereas Satan overcame Adam by tempting him to eat; 4) Christ overcomes Satan twice more by resisting Satan's temptations (first greed and then pride), whereas Adam had succumbed to Satan's temptations, thereby displaying the fact that the son of the virgin (Mary) overcomes the one (Satan) who first overcame the son of a virgin (the virgin being earth, and her son Adam), and thus, 5) Christ replaces Adam and repairs the sin that was brought into the world by Adam (*Post.*:758.36-760.30; *748.6-28).²⁴

Interestingly, the commonly-seen juxtaposition of Adam's tree of desire with Christ's cross is not included by the apostle in his sermon, and thus the preeminent Christian lesson on the redemption of mankind and overcoming of death through Christ's giving of himself to death and his subsequent resurrection is deemphasized; in fact it is only mentioned briefly in Bartholomew's second, abbreviated sermon, which is addressed to the citizens of Polimius' kingdom („[...] at hann leysti oss, með sinu bloði, þa er ver vorum þrælar synda,“ **Post.*:750.8-9), yet even here it seems of secondary importance to the fact that the 'one unchangeable God' („einn guð oskiptiligr,“ **Post.*: *750.12) gives to his apostles the power to cure in his name („[...] Drottin varr gaf oss þat velldi i nafni sinu, at ver grøðim siuka,“ **Post.*:750.12-13). The redemptive

²⁴ See *Post.*:760.21-25: „Enn var in þrþia freistni ofmetnaþar, su er andscotenn hóf hann upp a mustere oc baþ hann ofan stiga, ef hann väre goþs sonr. En sá er of sinn hafþi stigit ifer meýiar son, hann varþ nu þrefaldliga iferstiginn af meýiar sgni.“

power of God is thus shown here in the way in which Christ's apostles are his agents in the struggle against and defeat of Satan's subterfuges (Collings deems this conflict to comprise the saga's thematic core):²⁵ just as Christ through refusing to succumb to Satan's temptations defeated Satan thrice (Christ refuses to turn stones into bread, rejects Satan's offer of the wealth of the world, and refuses to step down from the temple), and then defeated him again through his death and resurrection, thereby rendering void the wiles that Satan successfully used against Adam and freeing mankind from the 'exile' of death, so also does Bartholomew defeat the agents of Satan²⁶ and heal and redeem the people, by first exposing the deceitfulness of the demons when they hurt people physically and consequently spiritually (when the people pray to the idols for delivery from physical harm), and then destroying the idol and banishing the demon.²⁷

The lessons given in Bartholomew's sermon, like those given in the other Pseudo-Abdian romances belonging to the same cycle,²⁸ are magnified by the way that they are mirrored in the saga's subsequent action. Bartholomew displays his power over the demon Astaroth by allowing the bound Astaroth to speak,²⁹ and Astaroth admits to using his wiles (a manifestation of Satan's temptations) to ensnare people into worshipping him and believing him to be a god, although he, or his idol in this case, is of the same nature as a 'stone or stump,' thereby echoing the lesson concerning Adam's succumbing to Satan's temptations, which caused mankind to lose its place in the eternal and to become ensnared by the mortal and the deathly (**Post.*:748.29-749.28). Fol-

²⁵ See Collings 1969:182.

²⁶ Astaroth clarifies his and the other demons' role when he names Satan as his 'chieftain' („Höfðingi varr," **Post.*:749.6), and, in an interesting passage revealing some of the saga's Scandinavian idiom, *Hel* as the demons' queen („[...] en hann heriaði a Hel drottning vara [...]," **Post.*:748.33-34). For a discussion of the unique appearance of this character here, see Bell 1983:263-8.

²⁷ Bartholomew draws specific analogies in his sermon between Christ's work and his and the other apostles' own: „[...] sva sem þu ser, at konungr stigr yfir ovin sinn ok sendir riddara sina ok liðsmenn i alla staði, þa er ovinr hans hafði velldi yfir ok leggr sitt mark og eigu a allt, sva gerði ok Jesus Krístr, þa er hann ste yfir fiandann, at hann sendi oss i oll lond, at ver rekim a braut alla þiona diðfuls, þa er byggia i hofum ok i skurðgoðum, en ver leysim menn or anauð þeira ok fra velldi þess, er yfir var stiginn," **Post.*:748.1-7.

²⁸ The narratives belonging to this cycle include the lives of Bartholomew, Matthew, Simon and Jude, Thomas, and Philip.

²⁹ The narrative here utilizes the common Pseudo-Abdian *topos* of allowing the enemy to indict himself.

lowing Astaroth's admission, the people turn against him, thus displaying the curative power of Christ's apostles (a theme that is reemphasized by Bartholomew in his second sermon), yet they are unable to remove the demon's idol by force and must rely upon the apostle's power to expel the demon from their presence, thus representing the ultimate redemptive power of Christ, through whom Bartholomew possesses his power, and of the necessity of the presence of Christ as mankind's deliverer (**Post.*:749.29-750.20). The lesson concerning the dire nature of false appearances and the worship of 'things' rather than their creator is emphasized when Astaroth's thoroughly false nature is ultimately exposed (*Post.*:760.35-761.20); that is, when his true form is made manifest to the worshippers through the agency of an angel of God (employed no doubt to emphasize one of the saint's 'miraculous' qualities given in the previous extended description of him, that angels serve him). The true nature of the monstrous demon, who had previously falsely 'shone' in a gold and silver shrine, is contrasted with the true appearance and power of the apostle, who when he was described previously was nowhere to be found and was little more than a 'rumor' come to do harm to the people of Farthest India.

The saga's major juxtapositions, of Christ's truth with Satan's wiles, of Bartholomew's healing power with Astaroth's injurious tricks, are reechoed and reemphasized by certain minor dualistic juxtapositions or parallels embodied in the narrative, such as the transformation, following the expulsion of Astaroth, of the heathen temple into a Christian temple through the power of the word of Christ, or the marking by the angel of the sign of the cross on the cornerstones of the temple with his fingertip, in order to purify it, followed by his urging of the people to make the same sign with their fingers upon their foreheads, to signify their conversion and cleansing/healing (*Post.*:*749.25-28; 760.35-761.5).³⁰ This echoing of major and minor dualistic elements is continued in the *passio* section of the saga, when both the despotic King

³⁰ Here the Icelandic translator actually makes a distinction not present in the Latin, using *hof* for the pre-sanctified pagan temple and *musteri* for its newly Christianized counterpart, as if to reflect the conversion in word as well as deed; the Latin uses *templum* for both. Cp. Latin: „Sed si uultis ut orem pro uobis et omnes hi sanitatem recipiant, deponite idolum hoc et confringite, et cum hoc feceritis *templum* hoc Christi nomini dedicabo et uos omnes in isto *templo* Christi baptismate consecrabo“ (A A A II, 1:143.5-9), and Icel.: „En ef þer vilit, at ek biðia fyrir yðr, ok þessir allir taki heilsu, er siukir eru, þa leggi þer niðr skurðgoð þetta ok briotið, en ek mun helga *hofit* i Kristz nafni ok skira yðr Kristz skirn i þessu *musteri*“ [my italics] (**Post.*:749.25-28).

Astriges' accusations against the apostle and the apostle's answers are given expression in typical Pseudo-Abdian circular form. For instance, when Bartholomew is accused by the heathen bishops of having led King Polimius astray through his sorcery, and when Astriges questions him concerning this accusation, Bartholomew's answer is semantically circular: „Eigi viltu ec hann, heldr leida ec hann fra villo,” *Post.*:761.29-30; he did not lead Polimius astray but rather led him from straying.

Similarly, the main conflict between the apostle and the king in this section is given as a common Pseudo-Abdian power struggle presented in terms of juxtapositions and parallels: just as Bartholomew made Polimius forsake his gods and believe in the apostle's God, Astriges threatens to make Bartholomew forsake his God and bow down to Astriges'; but conversely, if Astriges can do to Bartholomew's god what Bartholomew did to Polimius', it is then right that Astriges should worship Bartholomew's god. Bartholomew is of course martyred,³¹ but it is Astriges who loses the contest, through the immediate destruction of the idol of Astriges' god Balldath, which again emphasizes the almost omnipotent power accorded to the apostle in the first description of him: he is able to bind or destroy the heathen gods at will even if he is not in the vicinity of these gods (this surreptitiousness is alluded to once again in the *passio* section by the fact that Astriges' men are ordered to arrest the apostle *if they can find him*: „[...] þa reidesc Astriges oc sende þusund manna með alvępni með blótbyscopom, at þeir tōki postolann ok leide þangat bundenn, ef þeir mętti finna hann,” *Post.*:761.25-27).

The apostle's elusiveness is the reason why the extended description of him is given in the first place, and the fact that the description is given by a demon reflects not only a notion of the apostle's overwhelming presence in both the physical (whether he is actually present or not) and spiritual worlds (since the demon apparently has never actually encountered the saint before), but also the interesting use of secondary characters in this particular saga. It was noted above that in the Pseudo-Abdian apostolic romances the apostles' missions are often aided greatly through the agency of a secondary character close to the figure of the ruler with whom the apostle contends (with either positive or negative results for the ruler), and that often these narratives' strongest didactic effects are achieved through the presentation of either the

³¹ His martyrdom is characteristically brief: „Þa reidesc konongrenn oc reif af sér cleþi oc lét postolann beria, oc sþan flogo þeir scinn af honom kycom oc hioggio hann sþan,” *Post.*: 762.7-9.

development of sympathetic secondary characters as they learn by example and experience the lessons that the apostle is teaching, or the defeat of obstinate and unsympathetic secondary characters, whose refusal to learn usually earns them divine retribution.³² A case of the latter is definitely to be found in Bartholomew's saga in the character of King Astriges, whose destruction is as swift as that of the god/demon whom he worships (he and his bishops are seized by demons and fall down dead at Bartholomew's tomb, *Post.*:762.12-15), and something of a case of the former in the character of King Polimius himself, whose questions to Bartholomew made when the omnipresent, omniscient apostle appears to him behind the locked doors of the king's bedchamber (in a somewhat clumsy shift of scene), allow Bartholomew to give his sermon on Christ's triumph over Satan's wiles (*Post.*:758.39-760.30; **Post.*:748.6-28). Polimius thus plays the role of a foil, a role that is normally reserved for a character close to the king, whose conversion helps to eventually convert his ruler (in other words, Polimius essentially helps to set up his own conversion here).

Of particular interest in this saga is the fact that there are no other secondary characters of note besides the demons themselves. The devil Berith plays an important role in giving the description of the apostle, and, as noted above, Berith's description of the apostle's omnipresence comes into play throughout the saga's narrative, when a strangely disembodied Bartholomew cures the first demoniac (*Post.*:758.17-22), when the apostle appears to the king in his bedchamber (*Post.*:758.39-40), and when Astriges' god Balldath is smashed to smithereens although the apostle and the king are debating elsewhere (*Post.*:762.5-7; the description of Bartholomew's omnipresence or even omnipotence is contrasted well with the description of his negative counterpart, Astaroth, since the devil's hands are bound behind its back with fiery chains). Similarly, the apostle's main contender in the *vita* section of the saga would seem to be the demon Astaroth, but it is actually Satan himself, who

³² Other sympathetic secondary characters in the *postola sögur* include Mikdonia, Trepicia, and Abbanes in Thomas' saga, Ephigenia and Candacis in Matthew's saga, Maximilla and Stratocles in Andrew's saga, Candacis in Matthew's saga, Varardag in the saga of Simon and Jude, and Filetus in the saga of James the Greater. Unsympathetic secondary characters can include Pharisees, sacrificial priests, sorcerers, and demons, characters close to the despot such as Karicius in Thomas' saga, or even the despots themselves. A good example of a secondary character who simply fails to learn anything is Xerxes in the saga of Simon and Jude (even after hearing their lessons on the worthlessness of worldly wealth he builds a glorious church for the apostles).

exercises control through his demons over the deluded and sickened heathen worshippers. Astaroth is in fact a secondary character who is manipulated by the apostle into admitting his and his chieftain's wiles (in fact he is no real threat since he is already bound); by doing so, he plays the opposite role of most Pseudo-Abdian secondary characters (thus displaying another of the saga's characteristic juxtapositions) by not assisting in the benign conversion of the *passio*'s ruler, but in fact by betraying his own chieftain (as is right, since by nature these adversaries are deceptive) and granting to the apostle the victory.

As far as stylistics are concerned, Collings has pointed out that although the AM 645 4to and AM 652/630 4to versions of Bartholomew's saga are rendered in what she calls the 'popular style' of Old Norse prose (that is, Latin absolute and participial phrases are in general replaced with paratactic or simple hypotactic constructions), they tend occasionally toward idiomatic or stylistically motivated translations, especially in places where through their language they are able to more closely support or mirror the saga's dualistic or circular themes.³³ Parallels and contrasts are exaggerated by the translators' use of rhetorical devices such as anaphora or polyptoton (that may or may not occur in the Latin),³⁴ or by adapting the Latin text freely through additions,

³³ See Collings 1969:171.

³⁴ As an example of a passage in Bartholomew's saga in which Latin rhetoric is reproduced, Collings cites a passage from AM 652/630 4to parallel to the AM 645 4to passage quoted above in n. 24, concerning Christ's threefold victory over the devil's temptations: „En sa er um sinn hafði stigit yfir meýiar son, hann varð nu þrifalldliga yfirstiginn af meýiar syni“ (*Post.*:747.37-8), as well as a preceding clause on the same subject: „Þviat þat var rett, at meýiar sonr stigi yfir þann, er fyrr hafði stigit yfir meýiar son“ (*Post.*:747.5-6); both statements conclude parallel sections of Bartholomew's central sermon and summarize their content. The passages reproduce the polyptoton of the Latin (through repetition of forms of the verb *stiga* for the Latin's *uincō*) and reinforce the parallels between the sermon's sections: 1) „par enim erat ut qui filium uirginis uicerat a filio uirginis uinceretur“ (AAA I,2:136.14-15); 2) „[...] qui semel uicerat hominem terrae uirginis filium a sanctae uirginis filio homine tripliciter uinceretur“ (AAA II,1:138.12-139.2).

Collings also cites a passage here concerning the devil's temptation of Adam to eat, in order to show how the Icelandic translators reinforce verbal parallels through repetitions: „En nu sva sem fiandinn mællti við hinn fyrsta mann, at hann æti, ok at hann, ok var af því a braut rekinn or paradís og gorr utlægr i heim þenna,“ etc. (*Post.*:746.35-6). One of the most interesting things about this passage in Icelandic is not only its enhanced rhetorical style (see Collings 1969:173), but also the fact that the translator leaves out the woman's part in Adam's fall: „[...] ut sicut dixerat Adae, id est primo homini, *per mulierem*: Manduca, et manducauit, et sic de paradiso est proiectus et in isto mundo exiliatus [...] (AAA II,1:136.6-

although in general, as is the case with most of the translations of Pseudo-Abdian material done into the ‘popular’ style of Old Icelandic prose, the translator adheres to a policy of simplification: polysyndetic listing is streamlined, common Latinate two-fold repetitions are eliminated, approximation translations are given of stereotyped phrases, and elements unfamiliar to an Icelandic audience are reduced or omitted.³⁵

The best example of this second technique is to be found in the description of the way in which the demons harm and deceive humans, by first injuring their bodies and then doing violence to their souls. As Collings points out (1969:174), the translator plays on the difference, once again, between appearance and reality, thus refocusing attention on the saga’s major thematic concern of contrasting Christ’s truth with Satan’s wiles, and employs a balanced structure, emphasizing the demons’ two-part deception by contrasting repetitive words representing the seeming cure in the first half-lines of his long lines (*græpe/bergr/biarga*) with repetitive words representing the actual harm inflicted in the second half-lines of his long lines (*meiða/grandar/meiða*) (italics emphasize the pairings/contrasts):

1 En þa synesc heimskom monnom sem hann *græpe þa*
2 er hann lætr af at *meiða þa*

1 En hann *bergr* øngom
2 heldr *grandar* hann

1 ok synesc þa *biarga*
2 er hann lætr af at *meiða* (*Post.*:757.15-18).

The Icelandic translator achieves a prosaic balance that is far more pronounced than in the Latin, in which the rhythmic balance is limited to the pairing of the participles *sanando/cessando*: „[...] hoc uidetur stultis quod sanent:

9). The omission is made in AM 645 4to as well: „En sva sem fiandenn melte við enn fyrsta mann, at hann éte, oc át hann“ (*Post.*:759.25). Speculation as to why the medieval commonplace represented in the Latin’s *per mulierem* is omitted from the Icelandic text, if indeed it was in translators’ original, will not be made here, beyond asking whether it might have been more than just a case of omitting extraneous information, as is often done with passages dealing with women in the Icelandic version of the life of St. Paul (see below).

³⁵ See Collings 1969:178-180.

illi autem non sanando subueniunt sed a laesione cessando, et cum desinunt laedere curasse putantur“ (AAA II,1:129:7-9).³⁶ The balanced contrast is in fact heightened by the translator of the AM 645 4to text to a better degree than in later versions, since he makes a clear linguistic distinction between the verbs *meiða* and *granda*, with *meiða* strictly indicating the physical harm wrought by the demons, and *granda* the spiritual harm done to the people when they foolishly believe the false healing miracle performed by the demons and give their souls entirely to Satan in worship of these false gods (AM 652/630 4to has *granda* for the final *meiða*; see *Post.*:755.11 and 744.26).³⁷ This dynamic is stated explicitly by Bartholomew in his sermon later, when he says: „Fiandin sialfr gefr monnum sottir af velum sinum ok eggjar menn at trua a sik ok a skurðgoð, til þess at hann hafi forrað anda þeira“ (**Post.*:748.19-21), and Astaroth himself confesses to the scheme (as mentioned before), repeating the semantic distinction between *meiða* and *granda*, when he says: „Þa er ver meiðum likami þeira, þa latum ver halldaz mein þeira, meðan ver megum eigi granda öndunum“ (**Post.*:749.17-23).

Further study of such linguistic subtleties is warranted, not only with regard to the differences inherent in the various texts of the saga, but also to how these particularities work in each text to support the saga's somewhat intricate fabric of variation on the theme of the primacy of God's truth over Satan's wiles. The Icelandic translations seem to adapt the Latin source text carefully in order to make the most of the ways in which this central theme is bolstered by the narrative's concentration on appearances, both true and false, seeming and non-seeming: almost all of the action and dialogue in the saga is propelled by attempts to discover the truth of a particular situation or to convince others of a certain truth. The dichotomy between true natures and false appearances reaches its apex in the saga in the contrast of appearances between the apostle and the demon: the one, still only a rumor at the start of the saga, is described as concretely and powerfully as possible, and the other, who was previously

³⁶ See Collings 1969:175.

³⁷ The idea of the devil's control over people achieved through the people's idolatry is expressed in a similar fashion in the saga of Simon and Jude, when, in one of their sermons, the apostles say: „En sa hinn verstí engill gerði sva, at maðrinn hvarf fra skapara sinum guði almatkum ok truði a skurðgoð, ok kallaði þat guð sinn, er hann gerði sialfr. En er maðrinn hvarf fra guði grøðara sinum, þa varð hann i vellði ovinar sins, en öfundarengill fòddi af því þessa villu með monnum, at hann mætti hafa vellði yfir þeim, at gera við þa, sem hann villdi,“ *Post.*:783.35-784.5.

encased in a magnificent shrine, is shown to be as foul and terrifying as possible.³⁸

3. GROUP B

Andrew (AM 645 and AM 652/630), Bartholomew (AM 652/630 version only), James the Greater (AM 652/630 version only), John, Philip and James the Less (the latter two exist only in AM 652/630).

The Group B sagas are based primarily on Pseudo-Abdian texts, but are expanded through the addition of either material extraneous to Pseudo-Abdias or a homiletic introduction and/or conclusion. The sagas in this group display the characteristic Pseudo-Abdian elements as described above for the sagas of Group A, yet with modifications caused by the introduction of the extraneous material. In particular, the homiletic nature of the sagas tends to change their overall didactic scheme: whereas the Group A texts all seem designed to provide for maximum edification of audience members through the thematic and narrative exposition of doctrine, the overall narrative focus of the Group B texts is more on the power and sanctity or 'sublimity' of the saint himself. This heightened presentation of the figure of the apostle is often complemented and supported by a more elaborate use of rhetorical language and figures than is seen in the Group A sagas, perhaps distinguishing these sagas as later compositions (rhetorical elements in the Group B sagas foreshadow the much more elaborate use of rhetorical figures in the *Codex Scardensis* and later collections of Icelandic saints' lives).

The distinctions between the first two groups are of course somewhat blurred. As mentioned previously, the texts of the saga of the apostle Bartholomew in AM 645 4to and AM 652/630 4to are identical apart from the addition in the latter of a homiletic introduction and a concluding section describing the *translatio* of the apostle's relics to Benivento in Italy; therefore, the bulk of this saga is typically Pseudo-Abdian. Andrew's saga is derived primarily from Pseudo-Abdias, yet the Pseudo-Abdian text is itself a compilation of Gregory of Tours' account of Andrew's miracles and a modified version of Andrew's *passio*; the Icelandic translator in this case modifies the Pseudo-Abdian text by performing adaptations in an attempt to provide the

³⁸ See Collings 1969:176-178.

text with more thematic unity (and even more drama) than it originally possessed. The saga of James the Greater adds to the AM 645 account of the apostle's *passio* introductory and concluding material derived from the *Speculum Ecclesiae* of Honorius of Autun, while John's saga is a compilation of material derived from Pseudo-Abdias, Pseudo-Melito, the Gospels, and Eusebius (along with some original material). The sagas of Andrew and John display at various times the thematic unity of the Group A sagas as well as the focus on the saint's sublimity characteristic of the Group B sagas, and both sagas include extended accounts of the saints' martyrdoms (or in the case of John, his assumption), which is uncharacteristic of the Pseudo-Abdian accounts.³⁹ Philip's saga is an outstanding condensed version of a typical Pseudo-Abdian romance, yet it too incorporates material from other sources, whereas the saga of James the Less in its Pseudo-Abdian form is in fact derived from Hegesippus as quoted by Eusebius; both of these sagas deviate as

³⁹ The saga of the apostle John is distinguished from the others in Group A and Group B by its adherence to an excessively rhetorical style, most prominently seen in the consistent use of the demonstrative and hyperdemonstrative: „Dominicus keisari var sa hinn ovinælasti,“ *Post.*:417.18; „[...] hans hit haleitasta nafn,“ *Post.*:417.31; „[...] hans hit helgasta briost,“ *Post.*:413.31-32; „[...] þetta hit fyrsta sinn,“ *Post.*:414.29-30, etc.; superlatives: *óvinælasti*, *háleitasta*, *helgasta* (from the previous examples); „[...] hinna hæstu dyrd,“ *Post.*:417.39-40, etc.; pronounced use of adjectival and adverbial constructions: „[...] með grimmum varðholldum,“ *Post.*:417.35; „[...] með ounrððiligu litillæti,“ *Post.*:429.31; „[...] akafa haleitr,“ *Post.*: 420.32; „[...] riðr sysliga,“ *Post.*:429.12, etc., and an excessive predilection for the *sublimity* of the subject: „[...] þat hit haleita embætti,“ *Post.*:417.8; „[...] þessi hans haleiti astvinnr,“ *Post.*: 414.9-10; „[...] þessa hina haleitu guðs postola,“ *Post.*:416.29-30; „[...] haleitari dyrd,“ *Post.*: 414.16. The saga also displays more Latinate constructions than are normally found in the Icelandic translations of Pseudo-Abdian material; for instance, at *Post.*:426.18-20 (Stacteus' description of the afterlife), the Icelandic reproduces the anaphora of the Latin: „[...] en fengit ykk þa staði i moti, er fullir eru af myrkrum, fullir af drekum ok gnistondum logum, fullir af kvðum ok ollum ounrððiligum piningum, fullir af otta, fullir af óskurligri ogn“; cp. „[...] et acquisiuitis vobis loca tenebrarum, plena draconibus, plena stridentibus flammis, plena cruciatibus, et incomparabilibus poenis, plena doloribus, plena angustis, plena timore et tremore horrifico“ (*Faber*:65r26-65v1).

The sagas of the apostles Andrew and Matthias (Group C) display some of these heightened rhetorical characteristics, although the rhetorical tone in the latter two is not sustained to quite the same degree as in John's saga. The sagas of John and Andrew share combinations of edificatory and aretalogical moods, while the sagas of John and Matthias display an interest in allegorical exegesis (although to a lesser degree in the former). The qualities shared by all three sagas (especially by the sagas of John and Andrew) are enough to suggest that these sagas may have been composed by the same translator, or at least that they were composed at the same time and that their translators were perhaps of the same school.

well from their standard Pseudo-Abdian ‘romantic’ forms by their inclusion of homiletic introductions.

The adaptive techniques characteristic of this particular group can be illustrated briefly with examples from the saga of the apostle Andrew. AM 652/630 follows the Pseudo-Abdian text for the most part, although there are several quite noticeable adaptations in this particular miracle, seemingly designed to increase the text’s drama or even to accentuate a particular theme.

In Chapter 10 of the saga (*Post.*:326.7-328.:6), the apostle Andrew converts and protects a young nobleman named Exuus. Exuus goes to Andrew after hearing of the apostle’s virtues, and after Andrew preaches to him concerning the ‘path of truth’ (*sannleiks gata*), Exuus decides to follow the apostle, paying no further heed to his family or his wealth. Exuus’ parents are angered at the sudden change that has come over their son and exhort the inhabitants of the city of Philippi to violence against the apostle. The Icelandic text adds an alliterative ‘call to arms’ before the people set the house in which Exuus and Andrew are staying on fire, as if to increase the narrative’s dramatic effect: „Fyrirfariz illum dauða sveinn þessi, er hafnar ok hatar sin feðgin,“ *Post.*:326.29-30. The Latin’s „Ecce filius iam noster magus effectus est“ (*Faber*:27r9-10), spoken by the parents after Exuus prays to God to put out the fire, is expanded in the Icelandic to: „Se her undr ok fadðmi, hversu fiol-kunnigr okkarr son er orðinn,“ *Post.*:327.9-10), once again most likely to heighten the drama and magnify God and the apostle. To the end of this particular scene the Icelandic text adds statements not in the Latin that the people want to kill the apostles with swords („drepa postolann með sverðum,“ *Post.*:327.12; cp. Latin „[...] ut eos interficerent,“ *Faber*:27r12), and more interestingly in its symbolic overtones, that the people, who attempt to climb a ladder to the loft where the apostle and the boy are located, fall as hard down (after they are blinded by God) as they had dared to climb up („[...] ok fellu iafnfram ofan, sem þeir dirfðuz upp at stiga,“ *Post.*:327.13-14).

The Icelandic continues to emphasize the blindness of those who attacked the apostle and the boy, in both the physical and metaphorical senses, when it specifies that those who have their eyes opened by the bright light that shines over them were blind („[...] er aðr voru blindir vorðnir, sem fyrr segir,“ *Post.*:327.25),⁴⁰ and when the people themselves say that they were betrayed by

⁴⁰ The last narrative intrusion is curiously awkward since the blinding has just occurred, and it is repeated when the townsman Lisimakus is referred to again at *Post.*:328.2: „[...] at fyrr sagðr Lisimakus [...]“. The character of Lisimakus is an excellent example of the ways in which even minor secondary characters learn the apostles’ lessons by example, and thus

their heavy wills and ‘have not seen the truth’ („[...] hofum eigi set hit sanna,“ *Post.*:327.29-328.1; the first part is in the Latin, „[...] qui errore seducti sunt,“ *Faber*:27r.27, but the second is not). The Icelandic expands the Latin’s description of the reaction of Exuus’ parents to the entire situation, adding more tension and drama to the fact that Exuus loses his patrimony: whereas the Latin has only „[...] subdentes omnia quæ habebant publicis ditionibus“ (*Faber*: 27v4-5), the Icelandic, in a highly alliterative passage, reads: „[...] ok alla þa eign ok aura, er sveinninn atti eptir þeira dag, gafu þau upp oskylldum monnum með opinberum handsolum ok þeim skilmála, at þeira son skyldi þar alldri af fa hinn minnsta penning,“ *Post.*:328.9-12.

In parts of this miracle the translator seems to be focusing on and even creating a thematic dimension built on the idea of ‘reversals,’ as seen in Exuus’ prayer to God that the fire be put out: God moistens the dry and dries the moist, cools the hot and kindles the cool, etc.; this the translator expands through his addition of the commentary on how those who dared to climb up were thrown down and how they received their sight although they had been blinded by error and had not seen the truth. Obviously the overall success of the miracle, that is, in the perfect conversion of the rich and noble youth to a disciple of Christ who has abandoned his family and his wealth, as well as in the destruction of the parents who refuse to support their son (and indeed try to kill him) can be linked to the ideas of ‘reversal’ given in Exuus’ prayer, but the Icelandic translator’s adaptations give the text an overall quality of thematic unity, in which all of the parts contribute to the theme, that the Latin text does not have.

Interestingly, at the start of the miracle, Exuus’ respectful address to the apostle („[...] blezaðr guðs postoli,“ *Post.*:326.10) is not found in the Latin, although a similar phrase omitted in the Icelandic is used in the Latin a bit later when the apostle begins to preach („Sanctus vero Apostolus prædicabat ei,“ *Faber*:26v12). Such a direct address is rare in the early translated lives, and its stylistic peculiarity is matched throughout the remainder of this miracle by an exaggerated usage of the appositive present participle, which occurs eight

become edificatory examples themselves for the narratives’ audiences: after the people that have been collectively blinded plead to Andrew to pray for them, Lisimakus is so impressed by their ‘heartfelt confession and repentance’ („þeira hiartalig viðurkenning ok iðran“) that he says: „Sennilega er Jesus Krístr son guðs lífanda, þann er boðar heilagrar Andreas postoli guðs þionostumaðr,“ *Post.*:328.2-4. The prototype for such a change of heart is of course the Roman centurion moved by Christ’s crucifixion (Matthew 27:54, Mark 15:39, Luke 23-47).

times: *berandi*, *byrgiandi*, *segiandi*, *sva talandi*, *sva segiandi*, *kallandi ok segiandi*, *farandi* (*Post.*:326.18,26,29,33;327.16,27 respectively), corresponding to the Latin only twice (*accendentes* for *berandi*, *Faber*:26v.17-18, and *dicentes* for *segiandi*, in „*kallandi ok segiandi*,“ *Faber*:27r.26). The elevated rhetorical style seen here and in other places in this saga is akin to that found in the sagas of John and Matthias, although the pronounced use of the present participle here is much more extensive than in any of the other sagas in the AM 645 and AM 652/630 collections.

4. GROUP C

Clement (AM 645), *Martin* (AM 645), *Matthias* (AM 652/630), *Niðrstigningar saga* (AM 645), *Paul* (AM 645), *Peter* (AM 645 and AM 652/630), *Þorlákr's miracle book* (AM 645)

The sagas in this group (apart from Þorlákr's miracle book, which is original) are derived from sources other than Pseudo-Abdias.

Stylistically, the saga of St. Matthias is related to the Group B sagas, since it is written as a homily, focuses on the sublimity of the saint, and displays certain heightened rhetorical characteristics. It is derived, however, from a number of different sources on the saint, including the gospels and the local traditions of the saint's cult at Trier in Germany (giving it the distinction of being the only saga in either collection to be based on such a tradition). The saga of St. Peter shows characteristics of the Group A texts, in that it is written in a more straightforward, less rhetorical style, yet it is based on a wide variety of sources, including the gospels and Acts as well as material from the Clementine tradition, Pseudo-Marcellus, and Pseudo-Linus (as a compendium it is similar to the Pseudo-Abdian *passio* of Peter, although it is not directly derived from Pseudo-Abdias). *Niðrstigningar saga* is a translation of the *Descensus Christi ad Inferos*, which existed in many different manuscripts in the Middle Ages; it is the most paratactic of all the sagas in either of the collections, and it preserves more Latin words and phrases in its text than any of the others.

The saga of St. Martin is similar in many ways to the miracle book of St. Þorlákr, since it is primarily a collection of miracles; these two works are thus distinguished from any of the other sagas in the collections in their lack of narrative and thematic unity (except inasmuch as the miracles manifest the

sanctity of the saint and the power of the God whom he serves). The sagas of Sts. Paul and Clement are quite similar, even though they are derived from separate traditions: the *vita* section of the saga of St. Paul is adapted from the Acts of the Apostles, and that of St. Clement from the Clementine *Recognitions*; to each is attached a *passio* from a different source.

Of the Group C sagas, the sagas of Paul and Clement might prove most useful in delineating further stylistic links between Icelandic hagiography and the *Íslendingasögur*, and several remarks should be made concerning these particular lives here. In each of these sagas the translator has modified the accounts enough to give the narratives very saga-like qualities, focusing on dialogue and action, and on the travels and travails of the particular saint.

In Paul's saga, the number and type of adaptations made to the Bible account in 645 show clearly that the translator was not attempting to provide a strict translation of all of the material concerning Paul contained in Acts, but rather to give as streamlined an account as possible of the major episodes in Paul's travels and missionary work, perhaps to allow for a certain ease of identification of the Acts' major theme of the strengthening and expansion of the infant Church through the conversion of Jews and Gentiles, and to highlight Paul's persistence in his mission to preach the primary Christian truths of the resurrection of the dead and the sacrament of penance. Beyond the thematic and doctrinal elements, which would have been of importance for missionaries preaching to pagan Icelanders, the narrative is comprised of elements that would have had a broad popular appeal in Iceland, reflecting as they do certain motifs that are crucial to saga narrative: sea travel, criminal defense, intrigue and danger (the persistent attacks upon Paul and his oftentimes narrow escapes), and dreams and visions predicting the future.

The adaptational practices utilized by the translator of the 645 account not only allow for the showcasing of these particular features, but also help to highlight and enhance what might be called the Acts' saga-like narrative style: Paul's mission is narrated through a series of episodic conflicts in which he either converts or fails to convert particular characters or groups of people or fights off the accusations of his attackers; between each particular scene of conflict the narrative is punctuated by descriptions of Paul's travels from place to place. Where the intermediary travel-descriptions are given at length, or where there are extended introductions to particular scenes (for instance, naming details of locales or Paul's companions) the Icelandic translator pares them down or omits them entirely. He also consistently omits names of or details

concerning individuals who have no bearing on the plot (especially women), repetitious passages (summaries of previously narrated events), and technical details (such as certain passages that speak directly of finer points of Jewish law). In addition, he compacts verses, combining information given in separate verses into one or omitting information that complicates the narrative in any way.

Many of the scenes in the Acts of the Apostles reflect the basic tripartite scenic structure that is seen so prominently in the sagas of Icelanders, consisting of a brief preface, a dramatic encounter, and a conclusion.⁴¹ The Icelandic translator consistently allows these scenes to stand, with only minor variations in detail, and in other places he shapes episodes into self-contained scenes reflecting this structure.⁴² A typical example of a scene that already exists in ‘saga-like form’ in the Acts is found in chapter 13:6-12, concerning Paul’s rebuke of the sorcerer Elymas and the conversion of the proconsul Sergius Paulus: in the following I reproduce the scene in both its Vulgate and AM 645 4to forms, with scenic divisions indicated in the AM 645 4to text, which I have broken into separate lines in order to better reveal the correspondences between the two texts; italics indicate different wordings or omissions:

13:6. et cum perambulassent *universam*
insulam usque Paphum invenerunt quen-
dam virum magum pseudopropheta[m]
Iudaeum cui nomen erat *Bariesu*

7. qui erat cum proconsule Sergio Paulo
viro prudente hic accitis Barnaba et
Saulo desiderabat audire verbum Dei

8. resistebat autem illis Elymas magus
sic enim interpretatur nomen eius quae-
rens avertere proconsule[m] a fide

9. *Saulus* autem *qui et* Paulus *repletus*
Spiritu Sancto intuens in eum

[6.] [**Preface**] En (er) *þeir Paulus oc*
Barnabas comu i ey ða er *Paphus *heiter*,
þa fundo þeir þar villomann necqvern
fiolcungan, en sa hét *Elimas*,

[7.] *en* hann var með iarli *þeim*, *er*
Sergius Paulus *het*. [**Dramatic En-**
counter] *En iarl var vitr oc heimti til*
mals víþ sic Paulum oc Barnabam oc var
fúss at heyra orþ guþs.

[8.] En Elimas en fiolkunge melte i gegn
guþs vinom oc villde snua iarlínom fra
tru.

[9.] En Paulus leit við honom

⁴¹ For further discussion of the sagas’ tripartite scenic structure, see Clover 1974:59-83. For the appearance of this scenic structure in Icelandic hagiographical texts, see Roughton 1995:48-49; 106-108, and 2002:23-27.

⁴² See Roughton 2002:165-171.

10. dixit *o* plene omni dolo et omni fallacia fili diaboli inimice omnis iustitiae non desinis subvertere vias Domini rectas

11. et nunc *ecce manus* Domini super te et eris caecus *non videns solem* usque *ad tempus* et confestim cecidit in eum caligo et tenebrae et *circumiens quaerebat qui ei manum daret*

12. tunc proconsul cum vidisset factum credidit admirans *super doctrinam* Domini

[10.] oc melte: „*Þu* fianda sunr, fullr lygi oc væla, ovinr allz retlætis! Firer hvi lętr þu eigi af at villa rettar gętor guþs?

[11.] Nú þegar mun coma iver þic *reiþe* drottens, oc mundo verþa blindr heþan fra.“ Þa com iver hann þoca oc myrrer, *oc varþ þegar alblindr*.

[12.] [**Conclusion**] Jarl toc tru, er hann sa þetta, oc dyrcaði *namn* drottens (*Post.*:217.36-218.11).

As seen from the delineations above, the scene's preface is comprised of the description of Paul's arrival at Paphos and the introduction of the sorcerer and the proconsul; this the Icelandic reproduces almost exactly, omitting only the mention in Acts of Paul and his companions 'going through the whole isle,'⁴³ and the sorcerer's real name as Barjesus.⁴⁴ The dramatic encounter consists of the earl's calling of Paul and Barnabas to him so that he can hear the word of God, of Elymas' attempt to dissuade the earl, and of Paul's rebuke of the sorcerer.⁴⁵ The conclusion is reproduced almost exactly as well, with only a minor change on the part of the Icelandic translator: Sergius is „astonished at the doctrine of the Lord,” which is given in 645 as „he worshipped the name of the Lord,” perhaps resulting from a misunderstanding of the Latin. The precise repetition of this basic scenic form in the Vulgate Acts, in its Icelandic

⁴³ The island is Cyprus, and Paul goes from Salamis at the eastern end to Paphos at the western end, although the AM 645 translator has misread the source and given Paphos as an island.

⁴⁴ Thus also omitted from verse 8 is the explanation that the sorcerer's name is Elymas 'by interpretation'.

⁴⁵ Only four details here are changed in AM 645: Paul's being filled with the Holy Spirit before he speaks to Elymas (omitted in AM 645), Paul's threat that the 'hand' of God will come over Elymas (changed to the 'wrath' (*reiþe*) of God in AM 645) and that Elymas will not see the sun for a season (omitted in AM 645), and the description of Elymas, after being blinded, seeking someone to take him by the hand (AM 645 says that Elymas was now „alblindr,” entirely blind).

It is a suitable irony that Elymas should blindly seek for someone's hand when it is the 'hand of God' that blinds him; also symbolically appropriate is the fact that the proconsul converts after he witnesses, or 'sees,' the blinding of Elymas (the motif of blinding and 'eye-opening' in fact is carried on from Paul's initial blinding in Damascus).

translation, in other early Icelandic translations of hagiographical texts (especially the Pseudo-Abdian material), and in the family sagas, should give cause to wonder just how much Icelandic saga narrative owes to Bible narrative (which is renowned for its paratactic and parabolic tendencies) and to its closest descendants, the lives of the saints.⁴⁶

Jónas Kristjánsson points out that the earliest Icelandic translations of saints' lives display characteristics that are „pointedly reminiscent of the diction and story-telling methods of Icelandic saga-authors,“ (1992:137) and indeed, the saga of St. Clement seems to bear the closest resemblance of any other Icelandic saint's life to a family saga, especially in the tripartite structure of its scenes, its prominent use of direct speech (as Jónas (1992:137) summarizes: „[...] rapid dialogue exchange, charge and counter-charge“), and its techniques of narrative stranding (facilitated by the use of narrative tags). The following passage from ch. 2 of the saga quite obviously displays all three features, and I have marked the structural divisions (and the tags) to emphasize its saga-like scenic and narrative qualities:

[**Preface**] Mathidia fann þat bratt, at þa matte eki þar lengr vera við vanheilso þá es hon hafþe, þa for hon braut ór þorpe því oc gec til sevar. Þa sa hon hus litip þat riuca, þat lauc hon up oc hitte þar kono eina fatøkia, [**Dramatic encounter**] er sat við gløþr, oc qvade hon þa fyrre. Hon svaræþe oc melte: „Vel þu comen, drotning min! Alt mitt scal þitt vera. Ertu husfreyja en rumverska, su er comt ein a land, þa er alt forunayti þitt forsc. Micill harmr es þat, er þu ert sva aum orþen. Vestu meþ mér, sva lengi sem þu vill, oc scaldu ein aullo raþa því es ec á.“ Þeim orþom varþ Mathidia sva fegin, at hon feldi tór. Siþan melte hon við þa es firer bio: „Fir hvi es þu comen i cot þetta?“ Hon svaræþe: „Fir nøcqeriom vetrom mista ec buanda mins, svat við ottom engi erfingia. En ec vilda ein vera firer mér efter dag hans, fór ec af því a braut or borg oc baurluþumc her firer. Nu a ec akr necqern oc fá þá sauþe til atvinno mér. Ec hefi nu fengit licþra, oc ma ec nu eki at hafasc.“ Þa melte Mathidia: „Ec mun vera her oc hugga þic oc þiona þér, unz enn coma betri dagar ifer okr.“ [**Conclusion**] En fra þeim dege fór Mathidia of þorp oc borger oc baþ firer þer matar, oc burgosc þer þa við þat. I þeim staþ hqfþosc þer við litils vant .xx. vetr, unz þer fingo

⁴⁶ For further discussion of the similarities between saga narrative and Bible narrative, see Roughton 1995:82-90.

miscunn af fundi ens helga Petrs postola, sem siþar mun fra verþa sagt nacqvát [**stranding, tag**].

Nu skal þar til mals at taca [**tag**], es Faustinianus (er) faþer þeira brøþra Faustus oc Faustinus, þa er hann spyrð tífende þessi, at scip þat hafþe faritzc við Corpho, es kona hans var á oc søner [**preface to next dramatic encounter, which occurs between Faustinianus and his brother Bassus**] (*Post.*:129.20-130.5).

It remains to be determined how much of the resemblance is attributable to the narrative style of the saga's sources and how much to the adaptations made for the 645 version, as well as whether the adaptations resulted from a desire to reproduce a pre-existing, native 'saga style' or a particular 'imported' style learned from common European rhetorical traditions. In any case, detailed comparative studies of both Paul's saga and Clement's saga with the *Íslendingasögur* are certainly warranted. The account of Paul's travels in the Acts of the Apostles can be considered to be the precursor to almost all hagiographical *vitae*, whereas Clement's saga is considered stylistically closest of all the early apostles' and saints' lives to the sagas, and perhaps might be considered a precursor to the sagas in its own right.

5. Conclusion

Detailed study of the earliest Icelandic translations of foreign lives of apostles and saints reveals them to be truly innovative adaptations, undeserving of the common and at best lukewarm literary appraisal of medieval hagiographical narrative. Criticism of or disregard for hagiographical narratives due to their purportedly excessive sensational, pious, or rhetorical elements, or to the formulaic qualities that seemingly render one saint's life indistinguishable from another, should be reconsidered regarding the earliest Icelandic translations, represented by the texts collected in the manuscripts AM 645 4to and AM 652 4to. In the lives in these collections significant modifications are made to the original source texts in order to provide, as much as possible, clear and cohesive narratives that focus on the *virtutes*, the deeds, of the apostles and saints, rather than on the saints' 'violent ends,' never allowing rhetoric or sensationalism to obscure the edificatory aims of the narratives or the clear portrayal of the saint as a model for imitation. The formulaic nature of the narrative structures in many of these texts (in particular the Pseudo-Abdian

texts) ensures the maintenance of an edificatory scheme that not only reveals the saints' blessedness but also conveys thematic doctrinal lessons by degrees through characters surrounding the saint (and thence on to audience members); the texts are effective and even authoritative (i.e., show 'literary excellence') due to their adherence to a model (here the life and death of Christ).⁴⁷ In the cases of those sagas that apparently were read as parts of sermons, the unencumbered narratives (dialogue and action) are retained, yet are oftentimes coupled with fittingly encomiastic portrayals of their blessed subjects; even in these cases, however, the moralistic interplay between action and ideology that lies at the heart of the narrative is never overshadowed or blurred by rhetoric.

Further investigation of these apostles' and saints' lives, as well as versions of them in earlier or later manuscripts (the earlier AM 655 4to fragments, for instance), along with studies of the numerous other early Icelandic translations of lives of confessors and martyrs would undoubtedly reveal more of the type of findings delineated in previous critical studies: the use of sources not previously recognized (such as that of Bede for Matthias' saga, Pseudo-Abdias for Peter's saga, etc.), distinguishable stylistic groupings and linguistic or stylistic correspondences between sagas that point to their composition by particular schools or individuals (as, for instance, the sagas of Andrew, John, and Matthias seem to have been composed at the same time or place or by the same individual or individuals), sophisticated or sensitive modifications made by translators in order to increase drama, highlight a theme or other contextual issue, or to provide narrative or thematic unity, trends in adaptational practices (the omission of material extraneous to the subject or repetitious passages, for instance), and details of the structural or thematic schemes that may have been transposed into other medieval Icelandic literary genres (family sagas, bishops' sagas, kings' sagas, romances).

Such studies and findings would lead students and scholars to a far greater knowledge of the literary and cultural milieu of twelfth- and thirteenth-century

⁴⁷ Hagiographical rhetoric is impelled first and foremost, in the best examples, by an overriding concern for the good of the listener, for the salvation of the listener and thus its author, and for a working toward understanding and the providing of an example of truth. In keeping with the medieval notion that ultimate truth is derived from models, hagiographical conventions are ultimately derived from the perfect model of the life of Christ on earth; it becomes formulaic and repetitive simply because the model is in place, and the ultimate goal of the sober hagiographer is to imitate the model and thus provide a model of imitation for his reader or listener, for the good of all concerned.

Iceland, and could perhaps help to provide a better understanding of some topics concerning medieval Icelandic culture that warrant further investigation: the reception and dissemination of manuscript collections of foreign ecclesiastical literature in Iceland (one subcategory here would be the investigation of the presence and possible influence of Byzantine and other non-Latin hagiographical traditions, since in some places the early texts do show signs of being derived from such traditions), the methods of grammatical training of Icelandic clerics and the practices of the teaching, transmission, and production of literature in the Icelandic church schools,⁴⁸ the connections that Icelandic church schools had with their counterparts in Europe, and the theological concerns or trends that informed the medieval Icelandic church and presumably sifted into Icelandic culture through contacts between ecclesiastical and secular entities (for instance through the reading of saints' lives and homilies during church services).

A reminder of the transformation of Iceland from a pagan society that celebrated its cultural heritage in oral literature to what was essentially the most highly book-literate culture in medieval Scandinavia, dedicated (at least in word), as Ari Þorgilsson tells us, to law, peace, and Christianity, and preserving its own heritage and that of parts of Scandinavia in its written sagas, is ever present in the earliest translations of sagas of apostles and saints, in both their outright emphasis on conversion (addressed directly at times to the gods of pagan Scandinavia) and in their combination of Latin and native Icelandic grammar and narrative idiom. As is the case with medieval Iceland's imported cultural institutions (in particular the church), it is difficult to tell just how much the one entity reshaped the other, but the combination of both certainly helped to provide, in the medieval Icelandic saints' and apostles' lives, literary forms that are just as unique as early medieval Icelandic culture (that flourished „unbelievably“ without a king) and the medieval sagas of Icelanders.

⁴⁸ Again, the reader is directed to Sverrir Tómasson 1988 and Collings 1967 for detailed studies of the teaching and use of rhetoric in medieval Iceland.

Sources

The following is a summary listing of the most apparent sources for the narratives in the collections of apostles' and saints' lives in AM 645 4to and AM 652/630 4to, combining information given in the *Handlist*, Kirby 1980 and Collings 1969, and the findings given in the present author's doctoral thesis.⁴⁹ *BHL* entries marked in bold characters in the following text and footnotes are those that are not listed in the „Handlist“; entries that are not listed in Kirby are underlined>.

Group A

Bartholomew (AM 645 4to): Pseudo-Abdian *Passio Sancti Bartolomaei Apostoli* (Book VIII; *BHL* 1002).

James the Greater (AM 645 4to): Pseudo-Abdian *Passio Sancti Jacobi Apostoli* (Book IV; *BHL* 4057). The Pseudo-Abdian *passio* of James is most likely derived from a Greek original, but it is one of four texts in the *Historia Apostolica* that do not have direct correspondences to other traditional accounts.⁵⁰

Matthew (AM 645, 652, 630): Pseudo-Abdian *Passio Matthaei* (Book VII; *BHL* 5690).

Simon and Jude (AM 652, 630): Pseudo-Abdian *Passio Simonis et Judae* (Book VI; *BHL* 7749-51).

Thomas (AM 652, 630): Pseudo-Abdian *Passio Sancti Thomae Apostoli* (Book IX; *BHL* 8136, which is the second of two Pseudo-Abdian accounts, the first being the *De Miraculis Beati Thomae Apostoli*). Both of these versions are based on the original Acts of Thomas, although the latter version, as its title indicates, omits various miracles, as well as a great deal of material indicative of the Acts' presumed original Encratite or Gnostic character.

⁴⁹ This list should be regarded as an aid to study of the lives in AM 645 4to and AM 652/630 4to, representing as it does a compilatory, updated version of information on the sources of these lives. Further detail on questions regarding these sources, as well as on different sources and conjectures on sources for particular sections of the individual lives is given in Collings 1969 and Roughton 2005.

⁵⁰ The other 'independent' Pseudo-Abdian accounts are the passions of James the Less, Matthew, and Philip.

Group B

Andrew (AM 645, 652, 630): The two texts of the saga of the apostle Andrew found in AM 645 4to and AM 652/630 4to are independent versions of the same source: both depend for the *passio* section (the confrontation between the apostle and the earl Egeas) on the *Passio Sancti Andreae Apostoli* (BHL 428),⁵¹ which in itself is based on an old Gnostic Acts of Andrew, and which takes the form of a letter sent by the priests and deacons of Achaia to the Christian community there. The AM 645 4to text is defective; it contains only the *passio* and a small portion of the miracle involving Philopater and the drowned bodies, but the *passio* section breaks off where Codex I of the 645 manuscript ends, and the miracle, which actually precedes the *passio* in Andrew's acts, is given at the start of the manuscript's Codex II.⁵² AM 652/630 4to contains, along with the same *passio*, a partial translation of the Acts of Andrew as found in Pseudo-Abdias (Book III). The Pseudo-Abdian text is a compilation, combining Gregory of Tours' version of the Acts of Andrew, the *Miraculis Beati Andreae Apostoli*, otherwise known as the *Liber de Virtutibus* (BHL 430), and a version of the passion similar to a sixth-century Latin account called *Conversante et Docente* (BHL 429), which is an abbreviated version of the former, epistolary form of the *Passio*.⁵³

Bartholomew (AM 652, 630): 652/630 is a nearly verbatim copy of the saga as found in AM 645, with the addition of a homiletic introduction and a concluding chapter containing material concerning the translation of Bartholomew's relics. The introduction is original,⁵⁴ and the concluding chapter is an edited version of a separate account, the *Sermo S. Theodori Studitæ de S. Bartholomæo Apostolo* (BHL 1004).⁵⁵

⁵¹ The *Handlist* cites BHL 428 and 430 only for the AM 645 4to and AM 656 I 4to (14th century) texts, but the AM 652/630 texts should be included.

⁵² Elliott (1993:232) mentions that Andrew's Martyrdom often circulated in the manuscripts separately from accounts of his acts, and it may be that the translator of the *passio* found in Codex I of the AM 645 manuscript was working from a manuscript that did not include the acts. Anne Holtmark (1938:6) suggests that Codex II of the AM 645 4to manuscript may have been written as a supplement to Codex I, since the *passio* of Andrew generally follows directly after the miracle of Filopater and the drowned crewmen.

⁵³ See Elliott 1993:234-235 and 525, and DAAA I:135-142. The title *Conversante et Docente* is taken from the account's opening words.

Gregory of Tours' version is based on an original Acts, possibly Syriac or Egyptian, probably from the early third century, attested to and denounced by Eusebius for its heretical (Manichean or Gnostic) content; Gregory himself apparently altered and censored the original, preserving only the miracles and admittedly paring down 'excessive verbosity'. See Elliott 1993:234-6 and James 1924:337.

⁵⁴ See Collings 1969:18 and Sverrir Tómasson 1988:332.

⁵⁵ Theodoros Studites' (759-826) sermon is given in PL 129:730-738, in the Latin rendition of Anastasius Bibliothecarius (ca. 810-879); Anastasius added the episode concerning the Grecian monk and the translation of Bartholomew's relics from Liparis to Benivent, PL 736C-738A (BHL 1006). The concluding section begins with a short summary of Bart-

James the Greater (AM 652, 630): The AM 652/630 4to version of the *passio* repeats the AM 645 4to account, but to this text adds a homiletic introduction and a concluding chapter on the *translatio* of James' relics to Spain. Kirby (1980:30) suggests that the introduction and conclusion are derived directly from AM 655 4to fragment XII-XIII, since the introductions in both manuscripts are identical and refer to material derived from the *Speculum Ecclesiae* of Honorius Augustinodensis (Honorius of Autun, ca. 1075-1156), which contains sermons on various subjects, including one on St. James (*De Sancto Jacobo Apostolo*, PL 172:981-986). The *Speculum Ecclesiae* is used again as the source for the saga's concluding chapter, which contains an account of the *translatio* of James' relics to Spain and of the subsequent conflict with Lupa, a rich noblewoman (along with a brief account, translated nearly verbatim from Honorius, of the character and martyrdom of St. Christopher, whose day is celebrated along with James' on July 25).

James the Less (AM 630): A variant of the Pseudo-Abdian *Passio Sancti Jacobi* (Book VI; BHL 4089), which exists in five different recensions.⁵⁶ The Pseudo-Abdian *Passio* itself is derived for the most part (i.e. in almost all of the recensions) on the information concerning James and his martyrdom given by Hegesippus in his *Memoirs* (*Hypomnemata*) and quoted in full by Eusebius in his *Historia Ecclesiastica*. The AM 652/630 4to version of the *passio* departs from Hegesippus' account of James' martyrdom and instead follows the account as given in Lipsius' fourth recension (BHL 4094, beginning „Tempore illo suscepit ecclesiam Hierosolymorum“), excerpts of which have been reprinted in the *Cat. Brux.*:203-4.

John (AM 652, 630): A compilation of material derived from the *Virtutes Iohannis* of Pseudo-Abdias (BHL 4316), the *Passio Iohannis* of Pseudo-Melito (BHL 4320), the Gospels, the *Historia Ecclesiastica* of Eusebius (cf. BHL 4324), Gregory the Great's homilies (26 and 30), and original material.

Philip (AM 630): A version of Latin Recension I of the Pseudo-Abdian *Passio Philippi* (Book X; BHL 6814). The translator adds a homiletic introduction and material interpolated from the Bible and other sources, including an account of the apostle's crucifixion and stoning while upon the cross; this account is not found in

holomew's activities in India and his martyrdom (not given in Theodoros' sermon), suggesting, if this summary is not an original addition by the homilist, that it was more than likely copied from an original that already included an edited version of the concluding parts of Theodoros' sermon. The summary in fact resembles notices on the apostle Bartholomew given in various patristic sources, including Bede's *Martyrologium* and Ordericus Vitalis' *Historia Ecclesiae* (PL 188:15-984); most of the notices, except for Bede's, mention that the apostle was martyred in Armenia. See DAAA II,1:103-104; Bede's notice is worded as follows: „IX. Kal. Septemb. Natales S. Bartholomaei apostoli, qui apud Indiam Christi evangelium praedicans vivens a barbaris decoratus est atque iussu regis Astragris decollatus martyrium complevit“.

⁵⁶ See Collings 1969:70 and DAAA I:145-146.

many of the Latin manuscripts of the Pseudo-Abdian *Passio*, and is also not included in the later Icelandic versions of the saga, including *Codex Scardensis*. The *Legenda Aurea*, which gives an account of Philip's capture by the infidels and his subsequent crucifixion, states that this account is derived from Isidore's *De Ortu et Obitu Patrum* (PL 83:152); Isidore's version may in turn be derived from Jerome's translation of the *Chronicon* of Eusebius.⁵⁷

Group C

Clement (AM 645): A combination of material derived ultimately from the Pseudo-Clementine *Recognitiones* (chapters 1-5 in Unger, which describe Clement's travels with Peter, the reunions of members of Clement's family, and Peter's disputation with the heretic Simon Magus),⁵⁸ and a version of the *Passio* of St. Clement parallel to that given in *Mombritius* (I:341-344),⁵⁹ dealing with certain episodes involving miracles that occurred during Clement's episcopate, Clement's martyrdom, and the miracle that occurs yearly at his tomb (chapters 7-8 in Unger).⁶⁰ The saga is also based on material derived from the *Epistle of Clement to James* (*Epistula Clementis*), which was often attached to manuscript editions of the *Recognitiones*,⁶¹ the *Martyrium S. Clementis* of Simeon Metaphrastes, which came to be included in Greek epitomes of the Pseudo-Clementine *Recognitiones*, and the *Martyrium Clementis*, a 4th-century legend of St. Clement written by Bishop Ephraem of Cherson (d. 373).⁶² Dietrich Hofmann (1997:88, 103-5, and 155-6) suggests that the compiler of Clement's saga used the

⁵⁷ See Jacobus de Voragine 1969:292, and *Mombritius* II: 385.41-42 („Post haec Infideles ipsum tenuerunt: et cruci Instar magistri eius quem praedicabat affixerunt“). See also the appendix to *Mombritius*, II:714: „Be. Traditionem de crucifixione Philippi refert Hieronymus, Chron., an. 12 Claudii: ‘Philippus apostolus Christi apud Hierapolim Asiae civitatem, dum Evangelium populo nuntiaret, cruci affixus lapidibus opprimitur.’“

⁵⁸ Cf. *BHL* 6644, Rufinus of Aquileia's (ca. 345-410) Latin translation of the lost Greek *Recognitiones*, although the 645 text departs radically from this text.

⁵⁹ *Mombritius* I:341.21-344.47. AM 645 omits the second of the two appended miracles derived from Gregory of Tours' *Liber in Gloria martyrum* (see *BHL* 1854-1856).

⁶⁰ Cf. *BHL* 1848, the *Passio Sancti Clementis Papae et Martyris*, which itself is derived from the *Historia et Vita S. Clementis* given in the Beauparis edition of the Pseudo-Abdian *Historia certaminis apostolici*; *BHL* 1848 also cites the Lazius and Faber editions of the Pseudo-Abdian collection.

⁶¹ The letter (along with a Latin translation of it by Rufinus), is reprinted in *PG* 2:31-56.

⁶² Simeon's *Martyrium S. Clementis*, which narrates the events that occurred during Clement's papacy beginning with the Sisinnius episode and ending with Clement's martyrdom, is the basis for the *Historia et Vita S. Clementis* included in the Pseudo-Abdian editions. Simeon's *Martyrium* is reprinted in *PG* 2:617-632 (from the edition of Cotelier 1672). A portion of the *Martyrium* is given in Simeon's *Vita Sanctorum*, published in *PG* 116:179-190. Bishop Ephraem of Cherson's (d. 373) *Martyrium Clementis* is the *Grundschrift* for the Clement *vita*. His *De miraculo quod in puero factum est a S. Clemente Sacro Martyre* is published in *PG* 2:633-646 (and is also included in Simeon's *Martyrium*).

Pseudo-Abdian Peter legends (or texts based on them), as well as the late-ninth-century *Vita S. Clementis* of Johannes Diaconus and Bishop Gaudericus Veliternus (*BHL* 1851), especially for the account of the *translatio* of Clement's body (*Post.*:150-151), but deviated significantly from these sources.⁶³

Martin of Tours (AM 645): A compilation of parts of the works of Sulpicius Severus (c. 363-420?). Chapters 1-24 (Unger): *Vita S. Martini* (*BHL* 5610); Chapter 25: *Epistula ad Eusebium* (*BHL* 5611); Chapters 26-52: *Dialogi II and III* (*BHL* 5615 and 5616).⁶⁴

Matthias (AM 630): Kirby (1980:34) identifies the source of some of the material in the first part of the saga as a 9th-century sermon by Autpertus, abbot of Monte Cassino (*BHL* 5695), but the sermon and the saga share only minor similarities, possibly derived in both cases from common traditions concerning St. Matthias (Isidore, the *Actus Apostolorum*, the Gospel of Luke) known to medieval writers prior to the composition of several late-twelfth century works by Lambertus Parvus a Legia, monk of the monastery of St. Matthias at Trier (a metrical version of Matthias' *vita* and *miracula*, a prose *vita*, and a prose re-working of the *translatio*, *inventio*, and *miracula* included in his metrical work). The *Handlist* 325 suggests that Lambertus' work was the source of the saga, but according to Collings 1969:61, the Icelandic version is probably based on a manuscript source containing accounts similar to those found in MS. 98 of the monastic library at Trier (*BHL* 5698, which was erroneously ascribed to Lambertus by the Bollandists). The saga also show strong parallels at points with the *Legenda Aurea* account of Matthias' life, and it must be considered whether the Icelandic homilist and Jacobus Voragine (d.1298) were working from the same source (most likely Bede), or whether the Icelandic saga is a sufficiently late addition to the AM 652/630 4to collection to allow it to have had recourse to the *Legenda Aurea* (if it had indeed originally existed in AM 652 4to at all).⁶⁵

The epitomes have been published in Dressel 1859. The first of Dressel's epitomae has also been published under the title *Epitome de Gestis S. Petri* in PG 2:469-604 (from the edition in Cotelier 1672). In these epitomes, as in the AM 645 4to *Clemens saga*, the theological discussions that form such a significant part of the *Recognitions* are abridged in favor of strictly narrative elements, although apparently to a lesser degree than in the AM 645 4to *Clemens saga*.

⁶³ Anne Holtmark (1938) had suggested that the 645 text „must be a translation of a medieval adaptation“ of the *Recognitions*. Hofmann (1997:156) states that it is certain that the compiler of Clement's saga used Johannes/Gaudericus, but his findings that the compiler used that text and others very freely echoes both Holtmark and Unger (1874:xvi), suggesting that its sources still require reassessment.

⁶⁴ Foote 1962:20 gives a list of the sources of the different recensions of the Icelandic saga of St. Martin.

⁶⁵ Jacobus mentions the interpretations of Jerome, Bede, and Dionysus (Paul's disciple) concerning Matthias' election. To Bede (or variously, Augustine) is ascribed a *Sermo in Natale Sancti Matthiae*; this is referred to by Jacobus when he says that the „life of Saint Matthias,

Niðrstigningar saga (AM 645): A translation of the *Descensus Christi ad Inferos* (the second part of the so-called *Gospel of Nicodemus*), Latin recension A (of two Latin versions and one Greek).⁶⁶ The *Gesta Salvatoris* (*verk grøðerans*) mentioned by the translator of the saga (*HMS* II:1.10) is the common title for the *Gospel of Nicodemus* (*Acta Pilati* and *Descensus*) prior to the 11th century.

Paul (AM 645): The primary source is the Acts of the Apostles. The final section (ch. 23 Unger) is from the *Martyrium Pauli* (or *Passio Sancti Pauli Apostoli*, as it is called in some manuscripts) of Pseudo-Linus (*BHL* 6570).

Peter (AM 645, 630): The AM 645 4to text is a defective, „abridged version“ of the text as found in AM 652/630 4to (or is an abridgement of a source text shared by the compilers of the sagas in both manuscripts). The AM 652/630 saga is a compilation, deriving its material from the gospels (or a gospel harmony) and Acts, the Clementine *Recognitions* (most likely in adapted form), and various versions of the Acts and Passions of Peter and Paul (Pseudo-Hegesippus, Pseudo-Marcellus, Pseudo-Linus, etc.) thereby rendering it the most variedly derivative saga of all those contained in the AM 645 4to and AM 652/630 4to manuscripts (cf. *BHL* 6063, 6570, 6644, 6646, 6648, 6655, 6659, 6664, 6667, 6668(?)). In its arrangement of its source material it resembles the Pseudo-Abdian *Passio* of St. Peter (and in fact parts of it appear to have been derived directly from Pseudo-Abdias).⁶⁷

in the version which is read in the churches, is believed to have been written by the Venerable Bede“ (see Ryan 1991:172; see also *DAAA* II,2:263).

A passage in the Icelandic version concerning the appropriateness of Judas' 'eternal death' (see *Post.*:768.30-769.12) is parallel to Bede's commentary in chapter 1 of his *Expositio Super Acta Apostolorum* (*PL* 92:944C). See Roughton 2002:331-2.

⁶⁶ The *Descensus*, which was not originally attached to the first part of the Gospel, the *Acta Pilati*, but which may have been composed earlier, exists in three recensions, two Latin and one Greek; Elliott 1993:165 dates both parts to the 5th-6th century, and mentions that Latin A is older than the Greek, although the *Acta Pilati* was originally written in Greek.

The *Descensus* is published in Tischendorf 1876:210-434.

⁶⁷ The Pseudo-Abdian *Passio* (*BHL* 6663-4) is found in the standard editions, and a version of it is given in *Mombritius* II:357-366 (*Actus et Passiones eorumdem Apostolorum Petri et Pauli*). The Pseudo-Abdian account is distinguished from the Icelandic one primarily by its dependence for its *passio* section on the *Passio Petri et Pauli* of Pseudo-Hegesippus (*BHL* 6648; Book III, ch. 2 of the *De excidio urbis Hierosolymitanae* (a reworking of the *De bello judaico* of Flavius Josephus), published in *PL* IS:2062-2310 (2169-2171 for the *Passio*), where it is erroneously attributed to St. Ambrose rather than on the *Passio sanctorum apostolorum Petri et Pauli* of Pseudo-Marcellus.

For further discussion of the Clementine material in the Icelandic sagas of St. Peter, see Foote 1990:13.

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EFNISÁGRIP

Prettánda aldar safnritin, AM 645 4to og AM 652 4to, sem að hluta er aðeins til í eftirritinu AM 630 4to, eru elstu varðveittu handritin af íslenskum þýðingum úr latínu af lífssögum postula og annarra helgra manna. Því miður eru til fáar rannsóknir á sögum úr þessum safnritum en þær sem til eru, hafa leitt í ljós að þýðendur þeirra réðu yfir ágætri bókmenntalegri tækni og voru svo vel máli farnir að þeir gátu lagað latnesk stílbrögð og hugtök að íslensku máli og á þann veg sem hentaði textum er ætlaðir voru til eftirbreytni. Frásagnir safnritanna sýna mismunandi aðlögunartækni og í þessari ritgerð greinir höfundurinn á milli þriggja flokka í textum AM 645 4to og AM 652/ 630 4to. Sú aðgreining byggist á stíleinkennum og hversu náði er fylgt latnesku heimildunum, sérstaklega þó *Historia Apostolica* sem eignuð er Abdias (Pseudo-Abdias), verki sem er frá 6. eða 7. öld.

Í A-flokknum (Group A) eru sögur sem þýddar eru eftir Abdias. Í þeim er að mestu dregið úr retórísku skruði frumritsins en lögð áhersla á einfaldan frásagnarstíl og hnitmiðun samtala og frásagna af atburðum og skýra endurspeglun dæma til eftirbreytni sem eru einkennandi fyrir frumrit Abdias og ofin eru fimlega inn í lífssögu hins helga manns og hina þematisku atburðarás. Um sagnagerð af þessu tagi er Bartholomeus saga postula tekin sem dæmi og greind nákvæmlega.

Þær sögur sem heyra til B-flokknum (Group B) styðjast aðallega við texta Abdias en við þær hefur verið bætt efni úr öðrum heimildum eða aukið við hómilíum í upphafi frásagnarinnar eða við lok hennar. Einkennandi fyrir stíl sagna í þessum flokki er meiri notkun mælskubragða en í A-flokknum. Frásagnartækni þessarar sögugerðar er stuttlega lýst með dæmum úr Andreas sögu postula og sýnt hvernig latneskur texti jarsteinanna er sniðinn að þjóðtungunni í því skyni að auka leikræn áhrif eða til að leggja áherslu á sérstök efnisatriði.

Í C-flokk er skipað þeim sögum sem styðjast við margar aðrar heimildir en Abdias. Höfundur ætlar að sögur þessa flokks, sérstaklega Páls saga postula og Clemens saga, geti greint nánar skyldleika stíls helgisagna og Íslendingasagna, þar sem þessi gerð sagna er líkari Íslendingasögum en aðrar lífssögur helgra manna í safnritunum tveimur, sérstaklega að því er varðar þrífætta byggingu og það vægi sem samtöl og lýsingar atburða hafa í frásögninni. Allmargar athuganir höfundar lúta að því hvernig þýðendurnir hafa tekið þessa frásagnartækni upp úr frumheimildum sínum eða lagað þýðingar sínar að þeim sagnahætti sem tíðkast í Íslendingasögum.

Nákvæm rannsókn textanna í AM 645 4to og AM 652/630 hefur leitt í ljós frumlega hugsun ekki aðeins í því hvernig retórískum stílbrögðum er oft fimlega beitt heldur einnig hvernig val mælskubragðanna í þýðingunum sýnir ákveðin hárfín blæbrigði sem oft skortir í frumritunum. Höfundur þessarar greinar hvetur til að frekari rannsóknum á þessum fyrstu bókmenntum á þjóðtungunni verði haldið áfram því að slíkar rannsóknir myndu ýta til hliðar venjubundnum hugmyndum sem menn hafa um þær haft og leiða til aukins skilnings á mikilvægi þeirra og þýðendanna í þróun íslenskrar frásagnarlistar.

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