

THE CASE OF THE MISSING 'N'.  
CHRIST AND THOMAS IN INDIA (JOHN 4:44).  
(with a discussion of Rubens' *Martyrdom of Saint Thomas*)

Summary

According to legend, Christ spent part of his 'hidden years' in India. Another tradition states that southern India has been visited by the apostle Thomas. These narratives are not backed by direct historical or archeological evidence. Nevertheless, a closer look at Jh 4:44 suggests that at their core these tales are based on fact. John's 'second sign' (Jh 4:43-54) is concluded to concern an initiation of the apostle Thomas.

Introduction



Figure 1: John 4:43-44 from the Codex Sinaiticus (330-350 AD).

The interpretation of John 4:44 (“*For Jesus Himself testified that a prophet has no honor in his own homeland*”) constitutes a well-known problem<sup>1</sup>. Coming from Sichar in Samaria (Jh.4:5), Jesus travels towards his homeland

<sup>1</sup> “Ce passage a été de tout temps une croix pour les interprètes. Comment Jean peut-il motiver (car, v. 44) le retour de Jésus en Galilée par cette déclaration du Seigneur, que '*nul prophète n'est honoré dans sa patrie*'? Et comment peut-il rattacher à cet adage, comme conséquence (donc, v. 45), le fait que les Galiléens lui firent un accueil empressé?” (F. Godet “Commentaire sur l'évangile de Saint Jean”); “This is a well-known difficulty. As in John 20:17, we have a reason assigned which seems to be the very opposite of what we should expect. This witness of Jesus would account for His not going into Galilee: how does it account for his going thither?” (Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges). “In Joh.4,43-45 wird der Bericht von Jesu Aufbruch nach Galiläa von Joh.4,1-3 wieder aufgenommen und weitergeführt. Dies wird gemeinhin von den Auslegern gesehen. Liest man die Verse 43 und 45 zusammen, so ergeben sie einen verständlichen Sinn: Jesus sieht sich in Judäa bedroht, bricht nach Galiläa auf und kommt dort nach dem Zwischenspiel in Samaria auch an. In Galiläa wird Jesus mit offenen Armen aufgenommen aufgrund seines Rufes, der ihm wegen seiner in Jerusalem vollbrachten Zeichen vorausgeht. Von ihnen hatten die von dort zurückgekehrten Festpilger berichtet. Das Problem liegt in V.44. Jesus beruft sich für seine Reise auf ein Sprichwort: kein Prophet gilt etwas seiner Heimat. Als besonders schwierig erweist sich in diesem Zusammenhang die Konjunktion γὰρ 'denn'. Die klassische Literarkritik hat das Problem durch die Unterscheidung von Quellen und Schichten zu lösen versucht. Ein später Vertreter dieser Auslegung ist J. Becker. Nach ihm handelt es sich in Joh 4,44 um die späte Glosse eines Abschreibers, die erst nachträglich in den Text eingedrungen sei. Dieser Vorschlag ist jedoch kaum aufgegriffen worden, und die Mehrzahl der Ausleger liest den Text einheitlich. So stellt sich die Frage, welches die πατρίς 'Heimat' Jesu sein und welchen Sinn das γὰρ 'denn' haben könne (J. Beutler “Das Johannes-Evangelium” p.169).

Galilee and to the town of Cana (Jh.4:45-46). In which sense is this journey explained by Jesus saying that no prophet is honoured in his own country? And how do these words relate to the fact that the Galileans gave Him a warm welcome? Different explanations have been proposed. For instance, some commenters (among them Cyril and Calvin) have proposed that the expression “homeland” refers not to Galilee, but only to Nazareth and its close surroundings. Others (such as Origen) have identified Judea as the 'homeland'.

#### A second reading for John 4:44

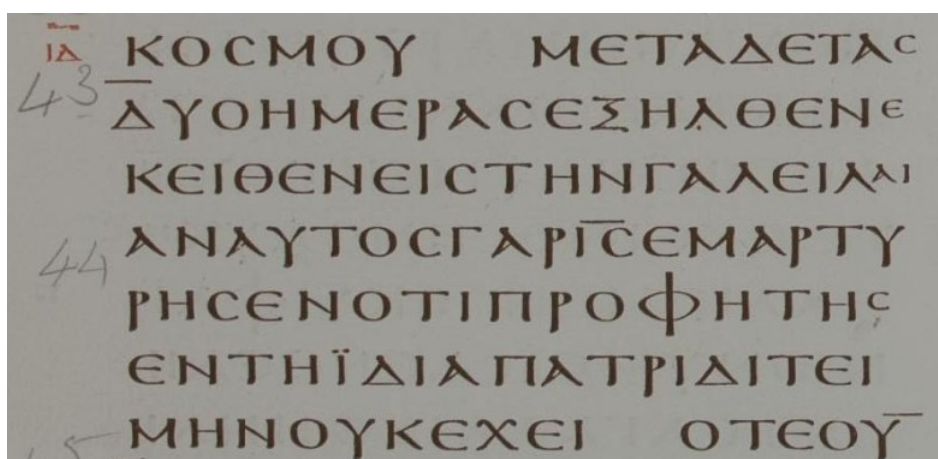


Figure 2: John 4:43-44 from the Codex Vaticanus (325-350 AD).

The usual translation of John 4:44

4:44 αὐτὸς γὰρ Ἰησοῦς ἐμαρτύρησεν ὅτι προφήτης ἐν τῇ ἰδίᾳ πατρίδι τιμὴν οὐκ ἔχει.

*For Jesus Himself testified that a prophet has no honor in his own homeland.*

can be considered as the exoteric reading of the verse. In an esoteric text such as the gospel of John, seemingly problematic verses such as 4:44 often point to a deeper semantic layer woven into the fabric of the text<sup>2</sup>.

Ancient Greek was written without much of word-boundaries or diacritics and without distinction between upper-case and lower-case. Therefore, esoteric meaning could be built into the text by carefully selecting the wording such that a different splitting of the train of characters produces different sets of words each forming valuable sentences. In the case of John 4:44, a parallel reading obtains by division of the word τιμὴν into three parts:

<sup>2</sup> For instance, see our discussion of Mt.1:17 in:

[https://www.academia.edu/9803898/Unbearable\\_beauty\\_unfathomable\\_depth\\_the\\_encodement\\_of\\_the\\_day\\_and\\_hour\\_of\\_birth\\_of\\_Jesus\\_descendant\\_of\\_Solomon\\_in\\_Matthew\\_1\\_1-17](https://www.academia.edu/9803898/Unbearable_beauty_unfathomable_depth_the_encodement_of_the_day_and_hour_of_birth_of_Jesus_descendant_of_Solomon_in_Matthew_1_1-17)

or the discussion (in Dutch) of John 1:12-13 in:

[https://www.academia.edu/19773779/De\\_twee\\_Jezuskinderen\\_in\\_het\\_Johannesevangelie](https://www.academia.edu/19773779/De_twee_Jezuskinderen_in_het_Johannesevangelie)

4:44 αὐτὸς γὰρ Ἰησοῦς ἐμαρτύρησεν ὅτι προφήτης ἐν τῇ ἰδίᾳ πατρίδι τι μὴ ἔχει.

*Indeed, Jesus Himself testified that a prophet has some 'n' lacking in his homeland 'Idia'.*

Here, the construction “μὴ (...) οὐκ” is translated in the sense of Strong's number G3378, as for instance in

1 Cor.11:22 μὴ γὰρ οἰκίας οὐκ ἔχετε εἰς τὸ ἐσθίειν καὶ πίνειν;

*Have you not houses to eat and to drink in?*

Rom.10:19 ἀλλὰ λέγω, μὴ Ἰσραὴλ οὐκ ἔγνω;

*But I say, Did not Israel know?<sup>3</sup>*

In this second reading, ἰδία\ἰδίᾳ is taken as an indeclinable proper noun indicating some geographical area (as for instance: Ἰσραήλ; of course, even when interpreted as a proper noun, the word is still suggestive of the concept of 'homeland'; compare to John 1:11). ἰδία is specified by πατρίδι taken as an adjective ('homelandic', so to say). The pronoun τι can be read as a singular neutre accusative form of the pronoun 'τις' (identifying 'v' which is neutre) or it can be taken as an adverb meaning 'in some way / somehow'.

Note that in the corresponding passages in other gospels (Mark 6:4; Matthew 13:57; Luke 4:24; Gospel of Thomas 31:1) the second reading is impossible, because of the different wording. Apparently, John 4:44 is unique in containing a subtle word play, with a second (hidden or esoteric) reading of the sentence that takes the form of a simple riddle (adding a 'n' to 'Idia' produces 'India') pointing to India as the homeland of prophets worldwide. In the usual (exoteric) reading, the expression 'ἐν τῇ ἰδίᾳ πατρίδι' refers to the *own* homeland of every particular prophet. In this sense, the ethnicity of the prophet is the criterion defining the homeland, so that different prophets can have different homelands. However, in the second (esoteric) reading, the same expression refers to India, which is presented as the homeland proper of prophets as such, regardless of their ethnic or religious background. Not ethnicity, but prophecy is the criterion. The wordplay based on the idea [Ἰνδία = ἰδία + v] is an extremely ingenious way by which the evangelist refers to India without actually writing out the name of that region.

Importantly, the second reading of John 4:44 produces a connection to the preceding verses. There is something of an anomaly in verse 4:44 that has not received much attention. Why did John not simply write: “*For Jesus testified that a prophet has no honor in his own homeland*”? The addition of αὐτὸς (*Himself*) seems slightly besides the point, as nobody else except Jesus seems to be quoted. In the esoteric reading, the specification 'αὐτὸς'

<sup>3</sup> In this second reading of John 4:44, “μὴ (...) οὐκ” is part of a clause introduced by the subordinating conjunction 'ὅτι'. We could leave out 'ὅτι', thereby transforming indirect into direct discourse and producing [αὐτὸς γὰρ Ἰησοῦς ἐμαρτύρησεν, προφήτης ἐν τῇ ἰδίᾳ πατρίδι τι μὴ ἔχει; / *For Jesus Himself testified: does not a prophet lack some 'n' in his homeland 'Idia'?*] which completely parallels the structure of Rom.10:19.

connects 4:44 to 4:42 where the Samaritians testify: “...we know that this man really is the Savior of the world”. The Samaritians, who were not Jews and who were said to have a difficult relationship to Jews (John 4:9) accepted Christ, not as a messiah or prophet for one particular people, but as the Saviour of the world. This statement is then confirmed by Jesus Himself, who states that in his quality as a 'prophet' (compare to John 9:17) nothing less than India was his homeland. According to our second reading, verses 4:42,44 declare India to be the homeland of all prophecy. The implication is that 'Christ himself', as Savior of the world, must have had deep connections to the spiritual sources of Indian civilization and that he must have lived in India for some time, before the beginning of his Ministry. It should be kept in mind that Jesus had also declared that “...salvation was from the Jews” (John 4:22). On the one hand, the coming of Christ is considered in John as the fulfillment of the Jewish tradition. On the other hand, Christ is also presented as a bearer of the wisdom and insights accumulated in the ancient mysteries, which had their homeland in India.

With respect to Christ's possible presence in India, an extensive literature exists which we will not try to evaluate<sup>4</sup>. A body of traditions and legends concerning Christ visiting India does indeed exist but these are not backed by historical evidence. The encoded reference to India in the fourth gospel is of considerable importance, not only because it points to these traditions having some factual foundation (at least with respect to Christ's journey in India before Golgotha), but also because it suggests that learnings and insights of Hinduism, Buddhism and esoteric Christianity go back (at least in part) to a common source.

#### A third reading for John 4:44

John 4:44 can be read in still another way:

4:44 αὐτὸς γὰρ Ἰησοῦς ἐμαρτύρησεν ὅτι προφήτης ἐν τῇ ἰδίᾳ πατρίδι τι μὴ ν οὐκ ἔχει.

*Indeed, Jesus Himself testified that in his own homeland, some prophet has a 'n' lacking.*

According to this third reading, the 'n' is not lacking in the name of the prophet's homeland, but in the name of the prophet himself. In this reading, '... ἐν τῇ ἰδίᾳ πατρίδι' just refers to the homeland in the exoteric sense, and not to India. According to this reading, the prophet is known in his particular homeland by a name lacking an 'n', implying that elsewhere his name does include an 'n'. Where is 'elsewhere'? Given the second reading of 4:44, this must be India, the homeland of the prophet, not in the trivial ethnic sense, but in an overarching religious-philosophical sense. So this reading of the verse refers to a prophet who in his own homeland has a name with an 'n' lacking, whereas that 'n' is not lacking in the prophet's Indian name.

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<sup>4</sup> As one representative example, we mention the book by Elizabeth Clare Prophet “**The lost years of Jesus**” Livingston (MT): Summit University Press; 1984.

Who is the 'prophet' in this third reading on John 4:44? It is not Jesus Christ, who (according to tradition) was called 'Issa' in India and Tibet. However, one of the twelve, namely Thomas Didymus, has legendary connections to India. This apostle was said to have brought the gospel to the Indian subcontinent, where he is presently called 'Thoman'. Therefore, Thomas Didymus can be said to have been a 'prophet' with an 'n' in his Indian name<sup>5</sup>, but not in his name as used in his own homeland.

In order to understand the riddle of John 4:44, all three semantic layers have to be considered together, as one integrated whole. The three readings elucidate each other and produce multiple parallel meanings. The second reading informs us of 'India' being the prophetic homeland of Jesus. Taken together with the first (exoteric) reading, we learn that Jesus was not much honored when in India. This confirms that Christ had been in India. Indeed,

<sup>5</sup> The Aramaic Taumā (from which the biblical 'Thomas' is derived) and the epithet Didymus/ Δίδυμος (Greek) both mean twin. 'Didymus' can also refer to the zodiacal sign of Gemini. The Aramaic form was transmitted to Malayalam, that was connected to Syriac through the use of the latter as liturgical language by Indian Christians. Malayalam is a so-called 'classical language' in India, implying that the language has early texts and recorded history over a period of 1500–2000 years. No sources exist clarifying on the pronunciation of Thomas' name during his alleged Indian journey. The Aramaic version of the name lacks the final 's' and acquired a final 'n' in Malayalam pronunciation. In an article 'Saint Thomas Christian names', the naming conventions of Kerala's Saint Thomas Christians are summarized. For 'Thomas', the variants *Thoma*, *Thommi*, *Thommen*, *Mammen*, *Oommen*, *Thampnan* are given. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saint\\_Thomas\\_Christian\\_names](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saint_Thomas_Christian_names)

A different source gives the variants *Thomma*, *Thoman*, *Mammen*, *Oommen*

<http://www.nasrani.net/2007/05/16/names-middle-names-and-last-names-among-the-syrian-christians/>

The variants *Thoma*, *Thomman*, *Mammen*, *Oommen*, *Thommy*, *Thomaachan* are given at [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thomas\\_\(name\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thomas_(name)). Here, one can also check that Malayalam is quite unique in having name variants for 'Thomas' that are ending mostly with -n. There exists also songs on 'MarThomman' (= 'Saint Thomas'): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6UXarrLgLf8> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l23ZMbMzwyY> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4r4EI3JrdQA> where the pronunciation with 'n' can be heard.

Although we do not know whether the 'n' was added to the name 'Thoman' already in the 1st century, the identification of Thomas as the 'prophet' who had a 'n' in his Indian name is supported by the following considerations: (a) among the early disciples of Christ, Thomas is uniquely associated to India, with a substantial group of Indian Christians ('Nasrani') tracing their history back to Thomas; at the same time, his name shows the peculiar ending '-n' in the language of these very same Christians; (b) the variants of 'Thomas' ending with 'n' are rare in other languages; (c) 'Thomas' is also related to Cana both in the tradition of the Nasrani and in the *esoteric* reading of John 4:43-54. Indeed, the traditions concerning the activities of Thomas Didymus in India show a duplication of kinds, as can perhaps be expected for a character named 'Thomas Dydimus' (i.e. 'Twin Twin'). Whereas Thomas the apostle is said to have been in India during the second half of the first century, his homonym *Thomas of Cana*, or *Knai Thomman*, is believed to have arrived somewhere between the 4th and the 9th century. This tradition of two distinct visitors named 'Thoman' is supplemented by other traditions that explain the distinctions between northist and southist factions that divide Thoman Christians. The meaning of the epithet 'of Cana' is generally said to be unknown. There is no historical proof that Thomas Didymus ever reached southern India. There is also no proof that there ever was a *Knai Thomman*, as distinct from *Mar Thomman*, the apostle. Of course, there are also no proofs to the contrary. However, in the gospel of John we have an esoteric reference to Thomas/Thoman in connection to both India and Cana. According to the esoteric reading of the fourth gospel Thomas was initiated by Christ when the latter was at Cana, and it is specified that in his own homeland his name lacked the 'n' that it had in India. Both very specific elements surface in the traditions concerning the activity of MarThomman/Knai Thomman (i.e. Thomas of Cana) in India.



the reading is also compatible with legends reporting that Christ, while in India, developed antagonistic relations to Brahmanic leadership. Because India and not Galilee is the homeland, the awkward problem posed by verse 4:44 (note 1) evaporates. The third reading, by secretly referring to Thomas Didymus, explains why the verse occurs at the start of pericope 4:43-54 . We will argue that the son of the royal officer (John 4:46) is none less than Thomas Didymus. The second and third interpretations of Jh 4:44 can also be combined, with Thomas instead of Christ being the prophet who was not honoured in India (thus concurring with the tradition that Thomas suffered martyrdom in India).

### The three-layered chiastic counterpart of Jh 4:44

In appendix I, the chiastic structure of pericope 4:43-54 is given. The structure is given as a set of 2 x 7 lines, with some of the reflecting text elements in corresponding colours. Verse 4:44 is part of line (1). In chiastically reflecting line (14), we note the seemingly pleonastic use of the adverb 'πάλιν' ('again')<sup>6</sup>:

54 Τοῦτο [δὲ] πάλιν δεύτερον σημεῖον ἐποίησεν ὁ Ἰησοῦς /  
This was again the second sign Jesus performed.

Upon closer examination, the expression 'πάλιν δεύτερον σημεῖον'/'again the second sign' seems to add three different clarifications to the text.

Firstly, it connects pericope 4:43-54 to the visit that Christ paid to Capernaum, immediately after the first sign (i.e. after the 'wedding at Cana'; Jh.2:12)<sup>7</sup>. Rather conspicuously, the two towns of Cana and Capernaum are mentioned in connection with both the first sign and the second sign. After the 'wedding at Cana' Christ goes to Capernaum for 'not many' days, with no motive given.

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<sup>6</sup> "Le mot δεύτερον ne peut être adverbe : pour la seconde fois; ce serait un synonyme oiseux de πάλιν, de nouveau. Il est donc adjectif, et, vu le manque d'article, adjectif prédicatif. « Il fit de nouveau (πάλιν) ce miracle, et cela comme second. » Il y a évidemment quelque chose d'étrange dans cette manière un peu surabondante de s'exprimer : de nouveau et comme second. C'est là un indice qui trahit l'une de ces intentions déguisées si fréquentes dans le quatrième évangile. La locution employée, ici ne s'explique qu'en liant étroitement le verbe fit, au participe arrivant qui suit. D'autres miracles en grand nombre avaient eu lieu entre le premier fait à Cana ( 2.11 ) et celui-ci ; ce ne fut donc pas le second absolument parlant. Deux idées sont réunies dans cette proposition : il fit un second miracle à Cana et il le fit de nouveau en arrivant de Judée en Galilée. En d'autres termes : Encore cette seconde fois Jésus signala son retour en Galilée, comme la première fois, par un miracle fait à Cana. On aura beau se refuser à reconnaître cette intention de l'évangéliste : c'est un fait, que Jean se montre préoccupé de distinguer ces deux premiers retours, que la tradition avait confondus. Il fait ressortir le miracle du ch. 2 et celui-ci comme les deux monuments durables de cette distinction" (F. Godet "Commentaire sur l'Evangile de Saint Jean" ThéoTex (1902, 2008) p.722).

<sup>7</sup> The pericope on the 'first sign', i.e. the wedding at Cana, is an esoteric rendering of the initiation of Nathanael, announced by Christ in Jh.1:51. Nathanael was already an initiate of the fifth degree (a 'true Israelite' cfr. Jh.1:47) and by this more advanced initiation becomes an initiate of the sixth degree able to understand the nature of Christ's ministry (as proclaimed in 1:51). See section 3 in:  
[https://www.academia.edu/11734939/The\\_esoteric\\_content\\_of\\_The\\_Descent\\_from\\_the\\_Cross\\_P.P.Rubens\\_1612\\_our\\_ladys\\_cathedral\\_Antwerp\\_.Part\\_II\\_relationships\\_with\\_Johns\\_gospel](https://www.academia.edu/11734939/The_esoteric_content_of_The_Descent_from_the_Cross_P.P.Rubens_1612_our_ladys_cathedral_Antwerp_.Part_II_relationships_with_Johns_gospel)

In the fourth chapter, Capernaum is mentioned again as the place where the son of the royal official lies ill (whereas Christ is in Cana). Then, on this son the second sign is performed *again*. The most parsimonious interpretation seems to be that the second sign was a phased event, with the subject being the 'son of the royal official'. In esoteric writing, no incidental details are ever given. The mentioning of Christ's short journey at Capernaum immediately after the first sign, combined with the word 'again' in Joh. 4:54, points to the first visit of Capernaum corresponding to a first phase of the second sign. Moreover, such a structuring of the text suggests that the first and the second signs are somehow interrelated.

Secondly, the expression '*again a second sign*' can also be understood as pointing to a threefold 'sign': a '*first sign*', a '*second sign*', and then '*again a second sign*'. When interpreted this way, we recognize the overall pattern of the triple-layered semiotics enclosed in the chiasmatically corresponding passage 4:44. There, we have indeed identified a 'first' (exoteric) reading, based upon the usual division of the train of characters (...τιμῆν ...), and moreover a 'second' and then 'again a second' reading both based upon another such division (...τι-μῆ-ν... ).

Thirdly, the formulation 'πάλιν δεύτερον', that could translate as '*a second time a second*', strikingly reminds us of the combination 'Θωμᾶς (ὁ λεγόμενος) Δίδυμος' / '*the twin (called) twin*'. As such, the formulation points to Thomas Didymus as the subject being involved in the 'second sign'.

We thus find esoteric three-layeredness in both chiasmatically connected passages Jh 4:44 and Jh.4:54, with the two passages elucidating each other, in an extraordinarily sophisticated way.

### The Twin's mystery

Although the apostle Thomas is mentioned in the apostle lists in the synoptics, it is only in the fourth gospel that he is called 'Thomas Didymus'. Only in the fourth gospel is the apostle Thomas quoted, and only the fourth gospel gives the scene where Thomas refuses to believe in Christ's Resurrection, changing his mind solely after observation of the Resurrected. Mostly, these elements of the text are considered as descriptions of contingent events. Thomas just happened to be nicknamed 'the twin'; he just happened to be absent at Christ's first appearance to the apostles; he just happened to be sceptically inclined.

However, strict absence of trivial and non-contingent details is a prerequisite for an esoteric text being decryptable. It is unthinkable that the evangelist would aimlessly mention Thomas' nickname, not once but thrice (John 11:16; 20:24; 21:2). It cannot be that Thomas is quoted (John 11:16; 14:1-6; 20:24-29) without these quotes having deep meaning.

The gospel of John stresses the twinness of Thomas to such a degree that this twinship must have been an essential datum. Within the context of the gospel's narrative, this twinship must have been a relationship to Christ. In some sense, Thomas must have been a lookalike or doppelgänger of Christ<sup>8</sup>.

The fourth gospel contains a remarkable hint at the special physical relationship connecting Christ and 'Thomas named the Twin'. When Jesus wants to return to Judea in order to join Lazarus, his disciples warned Him: "**Rabbi, the Jews were just now seeking to stone you, and are you going there again**"? (Jh.11:8). When Christ explained that He would go Thomas reportedly said to his codisciples: "**Let us also go, that we may die with him**" (John 11:16). Apparently, Thomas the Twin expected to die together with Christ. His particular relationship to Christ must have caused him to experience Christ's death at Golgotha in a particularly intensive way, as if he were to go through some kind of death or near-death experience together with Christ. Presumably, the absence of Thomas at the disciples' gathering at the first evening after Christ's Resurrection (Jh 20:24) was not accidental at all.

From its formal structure, it transpires that John's gospel presents itself as an official testimony. Formally, the fourth gospel is an affidavit (albeit with esoteric content) declarative of Christ's lifetime, death and Resurrection<sup>9</sup>. The pericope on doubting Thomas is meant as a report on an examination, executed by an observer with a sceptical and scientific mindset. Thomas' examined Christ and concluded that He was resurrected, in a truly physical sense. However, what according to John's testimony had resurrected was not a mortal physical body. It was the immortal second Adam (1 Cor.15:42-49), from which every human individual is invited to become a descendant, freely and for free. Because of his twinhood relationship to Christ, doubting Thomas was uniquely enabled to produce his Resurrection testimony that was based on physical contact, comparison and examination<sup>10</sup>. Thomas had access to a uniquely purified experience of the 'resurrectedness' of Christ's body: the set of differences showing up between his own physical body and that of Christ was identical to the fact of Christ's death and Resurrection.

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<sup>8</sup> Such a twinlike relationship is explicitly mentioned in the apocryphal *Acts of Thomas*. See also [appendix III](#) for Rubens' painting *The Martyrdom of Saint Thomas*, where Thomas is depicted as a lookalike of Christ. It is to be noted that the twinhood Thomas-Christ is not implied to be of biological nature. For instance, the mythological pair Castor and Pollux are associated with different fathers, with Castor and Pollux having respectively a divine and a human father, resulting in Castor being immortal and his twin Pollux being mortal. In some sense, the scene with mortal Thomas examining the Resurrected is evocative of the archetypal mortal/immortal pair Pollux-Castor.

<sup>9</sup> Alan Culpepper ("The Johannine Sphragis" p.349-364) in: Anderson e.a. eds. "John, Jesus and history. Vol.2. Aspects of historicity in the Fourth Gospel" Brill 2009); see p.15 in: [https://www.academia.edu/11734939/The\\_esoteric\\_content\\_of\\_The\\_Descent\\_from\\_the\\_Cross\\_P.P.Rubens\\_1612\\_our\\_ladys\\_cathedral\\_Antwerp\\_Part\\_II\\_relationships\\_with\\_Johns\\_gospel](https://www.academia.edu/11734939/The_esoteric_content_of_The_Descent_from_the_Cross_P.P.Rubens_1612_our_ladys_cathedral_Antwerp_Part_II_relationships_with_Johns_gospel)

<sup>10</sup> The epistemological importance of the identity between subject and object has been expressed by Goethe in his well-known distichon:

*Wär nicht das Auge sonnenhaft, \ die Sonne könnt es nie erblicken. \ Läg nicht in uns des Gottes eigne Kraft, \ wie könnt uns Göttliches entzücken?*

*Were not the eye sunlike \ It could never see the sun \ Were not within us God's own force \ How could we delight in anything divine?* (from *Zahme Xenien III*, 1796).



## The initiatory nature of the 'second sign'

Traditionally, seven 'signs' are identified in John's gospel. Only the rank of the first two signs is mentioned. Each 'sign' is characterized as such somewhere in the gospel:

Sign	Mention of 'sign'	Remarks
Wedding at Cana (Chapter 2).	2:11 This, <b>the first of his signs</b> , Jesus did at Cana in Galilee (...) Ταύτην ἐποίησεν <b>ἀρχὴν τῶν σημείων</b> ὁ Ἰησοῦς ἐν Κανὰ τῆς Γαλιλαίας	Explicitly identified as the first of the signs. Two days implicitly mentioned (2:1).
Healing of the son of the royal official (Chapter 4).	4:54 This was now <b>the second sign</b> that Jesus (...) Τοῦτο [δὲ] πάλιν <b>δεύτερον σημεῖον</b> ἐποίησεν ὁ Ἰησοῦς	Explicitly identified as the second among the signs. Time interval of two days explicitly mentioned (4:43).
Healing at the pool of Bethesda (Chapter 5).	7:31 "When the Christ appears, will he do more <b>signs</b> than this man has done?" (...) Ὁ Χριστὸς ὅταν ἔλθῃ μὴ πλείονα <b>σημεῖα</b> ποιήσει ὢν οὗτος ἐποίησεν;	The word 'signs' (plural) is used. Christ calls the sign a "...work (ἔργον)" (7:21).
Multiplication of the loaves (Chapter 6).	6:14 (...) when they had seen <b>the sign</b> that Jesus did (...) Οἱ οὖν ἄνθρωποι ἰδόντες <b>ὃ</b> ἐποίησεν <b>σημεῖον</b>	This is a vision that Christ shares with his disciples on the future of humanity and christianity.
Healing of the man born blind (Chapter 9).	9:16 (...) "How can a man who is a sinner do such <b>signs</b> ?" (...) Πῶς δύναται ἄνθρωπος ἁμαρτωλὸς τοιαῦτα <b>σημεῖα</b> ποιεῖν;	Just as for the third sign, 'signs' in plural form. Again Jesus speaks of a "...work (ἔργον)" (9:3-4).
Resurrection of Lazarus (Chapter 11).	12:18 (...) because they heard he had done this <b>sign</b> . (...) ὅτι ἤκουσαν τοῦτο αὐτὸν πεποικέναι τὸ <b>σημεῖον</b> .	Two days explicitly mentioned (11:6).
Resurrection of Christ (Chapter 20).	2:18 (...) "What <b>sign</b> do you show us for doing these things?" (...) Τί <b>σημεῖον</b> δεικνύεις ἡμῖν, ὅτι ταῦτα ποιεῖς;	Three days: 2:19. Also implicate indication of two days time interval (19:31 & 20:1).

The set of seven signs, when ordered according to their sequence in the gospel, has a chiasmic symmetry to it. The median sign i.e. the 'multiplication of the leaves' is not a 'miracle' in the sense of a magic or conjuring performance. It is a vision, expressed in symbolic imagery, on the future development of Christianity that Christ shares with his disciples <sup>11</sup>. The third

<sup>11</sup> On the multiplication of the loaves, see (in Dutch):

<http://www.vrijeesteven.be/Johannes/03-broodvermenigvuldiging.pdf>

The visionary nature of the event is made known right at the start, in Jh 6:5. On this point, see also comments by Rudolf Steiner (GA 139, Basel Sept 20, 1912; p.121). The nature of the event directly transpires in Mt.16:1-12 and Mk.8:11-21 where Christ rebukes his disciples for not having understood certain elements of the vision: "8:19 **When I broke the five loaves among five thousand, how many baskets full of fragments took you up? They say to him, Twelve.** 20 **And when the seven among four thousand, how many baskets full of**

and the fifth signs are part of the esoteric exposition on karma and reincarnation embedded in the middle part of the gospel<sup>12</sup>. The first, second, sixth and seventh signs have initiatory character indicated by the mentioning of the time interval of two or three days associated with temple sleep. From this viewpoint, the death and resurrection of Christ can be understood as a metamorphosis of the initiatory tradition as cultivated in ancient Mysteries and as the ultimate initiation of humanity as a whole. The first and sixth signs concern the two initiations of Nathanael-Lazarus-John at the onset and at the end of Christ's ministry, respectively.

Parallel text elements connect the 'first sign' (the 'wedding at Cana'; John 2:11) and the 'second sign' (the 'healing of the royal official's son'; John 4:54). Both pericopes point to a time lapse of two days preceding the 'sign' (John 2:1 'On the third day'; 4:43 'After the two days'). Both pericopes refer to Cana and Capernaum (2:1,11,12; 4:46; the mentioning of Capernaum in 2:12 is seemingly pointless), both refer to 'the hour' (2:4; 4:52-53) and both end with reference to 'believing' (2:11; 4:53). Moreover, the very mentioning of the rank of both the 'first sign' (2:11) and the 'second sign' (4:54) already suggests a connection.

We have proposed elsewhere, building on comments by Rudolf Steiner, that the 'wedding at Cana' is a rendering of the initiation of Nathanael by Jesus Christ<sup>13</sup>. This initiation is announced by Christ in John 1:51, and corresponds

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**fragments took you up'? And they said, 'Seven'. 21 And he said to them, 'How is it that you do not understand'?** ". Of course, this passage would be meaningless if the number of basketfulls was just an incidental factum.

<sup>12</sup> On this point, see (in Dutch): <http://vrijgeestesleven.be/Johannes/b86.pdf>

The paralytic healed at Bethesda is the reincarnated Joshua (Jh.5:14: "Later Jesus found him at the temple..." <=> "Later Joshua found Him at the temple...") and the blind man healed at the Siloam Pool was the reincarnated prophet Isaiah (Jh.9:17; cfr. Jh.1:23 & 12:39-40).

Clearly, the concepts of reincarnation and karma can be considered as reflecting the 'Indian heritage' of esoteric Christianity that is hinted at in Jh 4:44.

<sup>13</sup> Christ identifies Nathanael as an initiate by seeing him 'under the fig tree' (Jh. 1:47-49). The fig tree (genus *Ficus*) is an esoteric symbol representing the tradition of mystery schools and temple initiation worldwide. The fig 'fruit' has an exceptional structure: it is a cluster of fused *male and female* flowers enclosed upon itself, with the metamorphosized stalk at the outside and with only a very narrow opening (Mt.7:13-14) left for access of pollinators to the interior. This enclosedness of the fig seems to reflect the secretiveness of the initiation temple, with the fig tree as a whole reflecting the worldwide initiatory tradition having its roots in India and interconnecting the mystery temples. The Buddha attaining enlightenment 'under the bodhi tree' (traditionally a fig tree, *Ficus religiosa*) is the type example of this imagery that was also in use during Christ's lifetime. In the view of esoteric christianity as reflected in the fourth gospel, the tradition of temple initiation reached its endpoint and fulfillment with Golgotha. This is exemplified by the narrative of the withering fig tree (Mk. 11:12-25).

A close connection seems to exist between the feelings of shame experienced by Adam and Eve after the expulsion from Eden's Garden on the one hand ("**Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves**"; Gen. 3:7) and the secretness of ancient mysteries on the other hand, as if the 'tree of knowledge' and the 'Bodhi tree' representing the culture of mystic initiation are one and the same (note that in the Sistine Chapel, the 'tree of knowledge of good and evil' is depicted by Michelangelo as a fig tree). For more, see: Edward R.Smith "**The fig tree conundrum**", p. 69-81 in: "**The temple sleep of the rich young ruler**" Great Barrington (MA): SteinerBooks 2011).

to the transformation of Natanael as a second degree initiate (a 'bridegroom' in mithraic terminology) into a sixth degree initiate (a 'runner of the Sun')<sup>14</sup>. Nathanael was already an initiate of the fifth degree, a 'true Israelite' (John 1:47) who was able to speak on behalf of his people. As such, he declared Christ to be the 'king of Israel' ( βασιλεὺς τοῦ Ἰσραήλ'; John 1:49). This kingly element is paralleled by the 'royal official' ( βασιλικός; John 4:46). All these elements point to the healing of the royal official's son being also an initiation, presumably prepared during Christ's first stay at Capernaum (John 2:12) and with the 'royal official' acting as an assistant hierophant to Christ. The correspondences connecting both pericopes point to both events sharing the same nature. Just as the 'wedding at Cana', the 'healing of the son of the royal official' refers to an initiation to the sixth degree, enabling the initiate to recognize and to understand Christ's ministry, up to Golgotha. From the third reading of John 4:44, we deduce that the initiate was none other than Thomas Didymus. The 'father', who was a royal official, must have been an unnamed initiate of the seventh degree (this degree was named 'father' in Mithraic terminology) who assisted Christ with the initiation (Christ himself has been identified as 'king of Israel' in John 1:49; the 'father' acts as an official of the 'king'). Strikingly, the 'father' displays the absolute faith in the words of Christ (John 4:48-50) that was lacking with doubting Thomas. The latter, who through the 'second sign' became an initiate of the sixth degree, was able to understand the nature and mission of Christ up to Golgotha, but not beyond. This is expressed in John 14:5, with Thomas asking: **"Lord, we don't know where you are going, so how can we know the way"?**

The time period of two or three days mentioned in John's gospel with respect to the first, second, sixth and seventh signs point to the alleged practice of the initiatory 'temple sleep'. Such a three-day temple sleep as a secret initiatory practice (and not as a mere procedure of healing through spiritual means) is mentioned as the *'sleep of Siloam'* in Blavatsky's **"Secret Doctrine"** (1888). According to Rudolf Steiner **"...everywhere – in Greece, among the Chaldeans, among the Egyptians and the Indians – these Mysteries existed"**<sup>15</sup>; **"...this procedure has now become unnecessary through the appearance of Christ-Jesus. This three and a half day death-like sleep**

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<sup>14</sup> In order to understand the Resurrection, an initiation to the seventh degree was required. In Mithraic terminology, also used by the author of John's gospel, initiates of this degree are named 'Father'. Nathanael was an initiate of the fifth degree and became an initiate of the sixth degree at the beginning of Christ's ministry. As such, his new name became Lazarus. At the end of Christ's ministry, he went through a further initiation, becoming a 'father'. This second initiation is described in John 11, as the Resurrection of Lazarus. In his quality of 'father' (cfr. John 11:41), Lazarus became John, who was present at Christ's death, who understood the nature of the event and who wrote the gospel of John and Revelation. Thus was the mission of Natanael-Lazarus-John. See part 3 in:

[https://www.academia.edu/11734939/The\\_esoteric\\_content\\_of\\_The\\_Descent\\_from\\_the\\_Cross\\_P.P.Rubens\\_1612\\_our\\_ladys\\_cathedral\\_Antwerp\\_Part\\_II\\_relationships\\_with\\_Johns\\_gospel](https://www.academia.edu/11734939/The_esoteric_content_of_The_Descent_from_the_Cross_P.P.Rubens_1612_our_ladys_cathedral_Antwerp_Part_II_relationships_with_Johns_gospel)

<sup>15</sup> **"Überall - in Griechenland, bei den Chaldäern, bei den Ägyptern, bei den Indern - gab es solche Mystereien"** (R.Steiner GA 103, p. 64; Hamburg, May 22nd, 1908). For more on Steiners detailed interpretation of ancient initiatory principles, see for instance: Edward Reaugh Smith **"The Burning Bush"** (vol.1) Great Barrington: Anthroposophic Press (2001) p.312-327 (section on **"Three Days' Journey"**) and references therein.

can now be replaced by the force proceeding from the Christ”<sup>16</sup>. The concept of such an initiatory temple sleep seems crucial in order to make sense of certain parts of the gospels. In the New testament, several mentions of a transformatory or initiatory period of approximately three days can be found. The archetypical example is in the book of Jonah:

**“Jonah 1:17 Now the Lord provided a huge fish to swallow Jonah, and Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights. [...Jonah's prayer...] 2:10 And the Lord commanded the fish, and it vomited Jonah onto dry land”.**

Clearly, Jonah's story images a transformation performed through a three day initiation. Importantly, the synoptics mention that Christ compares his own death and resurrection to the 'sign of Jonah':

Mt.12:38-40 **“38 Then some of the scribes and Pharisees said to him: 'Teacher, we wish to see a sign from you'. 39 But He answered them: 'An evil and adulterous generation seeks for a sign; but no sign shall be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. 40 For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the whale, so will the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth' ”**; Lk.11:29 **When the crowds were increasing, he began to say: 'This generation is an evil generation; it seeks a sign, but no sign shall be given to it except the sign of Jonah' 30 For as Jonah was a sign to the Ninevites, so also will the Son of Man be to this generation' ”.** Steiner here comments: **“The great secret of Initiation was that the soul, prepared by long training, was led out of the body for three-and-a-half days into an entirely different world, was shut off from the environment and penetrated into the spiritual world. Men who could bear witness to the realities of the spiritual world were always to be found among the peoples; they were men who had undergone the experience referred to in the Bible in the story of Jonah's sojourn in the whale (Jonah 2:1). Such a man was made ready to undergo this experience and then, when he appeared before the people as an Initiate of the old order, he bore upon him the 'sign of Jonah' – the sign of those who were able themselves to testify of the spiritual world (...) Christ said, in effect: 'In the old sense there is no other sign save the sign of Jonah (Luke 11:29)’ ”**<sup>17</sup>.

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<sup>16</sup> **“Diese Prozedur ist eben durch die Erscheinung des Christus Jesus unnötig geworden. Dieser dreieinhalb Tage lange todähnliche Schlaf kann nunmehr durch die von Christus ausgehende Kraft ersetzt werden” (GA 103; p.66).**

<sup>17</sup> **“Das war das große Geheimnis der Initiation, daß die lange vorbereitete Seele durch dreieinhalb Tage aus ihrem Körper herausgeführt wurde in eine ganz andere Welt; da war sie abgeschlossen von der äußeren Welt und drang in die geistige Welt ein. Immer gingen unter den Völkern solche Menschen herum, die Verkünder der geistigen Welt sein konnten; sie waren es, die das durchgemacht hatten, was in der Bibel angedeutet wird als das Ruhen des Jonas im Walfisch (Jona 2,1). Dazu wurde ein solcher vorbereitet, und er trug dann als alter Initiierter, wenn er vor dem Volke erschien, das Zeichen an sich, das die an sich trugen, die selbst die geistige Welt erleben konnten, das Zeichen des Jonas. (...) Es gibt - so sagte der Christus - im alten Sinn kein anderes Zeichen denn das Zeichen des Jonas (Lukas 11, 29)” (GA 114; p.203).**

Generally, mentioning of a two/three day interval is indicative of an initiatory event. Importantly, Christ indicates that his own death and Resurrection can be considered as an apotheosis of this initiatory principle (Mt.12:40) for the benefit of humanity as a whole. The time interval is mentioned in Jh. 2:1, between Christ's announcement of Nathanael's further initiation and the event of that initiation (the wedding at Cana). Time intervals are mentioned twice with respect to the second sign. As said, this second sign was a phased event. The time interval is hinted at in Jh.2:12, where it is said that after the wedding, Christ went to Capernaum for "...not many days"<sup>18</sup>. Again, Christ waited two days before returning to Cana (Jh.4:42), just as He waited two days before going to Bethany (Jh.11:6).

One striking element in the mirroring structure of John 4:43-54 ([appendix I](#)) is the chiasmic reflection of the word ὥρα/hour in lines (11)-(12)-(13) on the one hand, and the names of the three towns Jerusalem, Cana and Capernaum in the lines (4)-(3)-(2) on the other hand. In line (12), the 'seventh hour' is mentioned. As shown in [appendix II](#), the Temple Mount is in the direction of the Sun at the 'seventh hour' (azimuth -165°), as seen from Capernaum. The line reaches the western shores of lake Galilea at a point south of Tiberias, where reed fields are present even today. We propose that Cana must have been located at this spot<sup>19</sup>.

A natural correspondence can be established between the hours of the day and the signs of the zodiac, with the twelve day hours pairwise corresponding to the six 'day signs' (Aries to Virgo; when the Sun is in such a sign, the length of daytime exceeds the length of the night) and the twelve night hours corresponding to the six 'night signs' (Libra to Pisces; when the Sun is in one of these signs, nighttime exceeds daytime). The 24 hours correspond to azimuth values 15° apart. The corresponding position of the zodiac (which is actualized each day at 6:00 stellar time) obtains when Virgo stands in the east upon the ascendant and Aries in the west upon the descendant. As shown in

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<sup>18</sup> Although in Koinè the dualis was no longer in use, this expression was perhaps meant as a veiled way to express the idea of 'two days' (cfr. Jh.4:43).

<sup>19</sup> 'Cana' means '(field of) reeds'. South of Tiberias, important fields of reed are present along the shores of the lake. There are also hot springs, to which already in antiquity were ascribed healing powers. In the pericope of the wedding at Cana, it is said that water was drawn from some source or well, using a pail ('ἀντλήω' Joh.2:8). Stone water jars, as used by the Jews for ceremonial washing ('λίθιναι ὑδρίαί ... κατὰ τὸν καθαρισμόν τῶν Ἰουδαίων Joh.2:6) are also mentioned. At this location, remains of unusual synagogues have been discovered, one of them with a mosaic floor showing the Sun God Helios in his chariot, suggestive of the sixth Mithraic initiation grade (the grade of 'Heliodromos'; see: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hamat\\_Tiberias](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hamat_Tiberias); note that this was also the grade of Natanael's initiation at Cana). After the destruction of Jerusalem's temple by the Romans, Tiberias became a spiritual headquarter of Judaism and we can suspect that the place has been an ancient Jewish initiation center. Flavius Josephus speaks of Cana in his autobiographical writing 'The Life of Josephus' ('Ἰωσήπου βίος'; 17:85-91). Interestingly, Cana is mentioned in connection with the healing sources south of Tiberias. Mostly, Josephus' story is understood to mean that he needed a whole night to travel from Cana to Tiberias. However, Josephus writes (17:90): "After having brought together 200 men we moved on during the whole night" ("διακοσίους ἀναλαβὼν ἄνδρας δι' ὅλης τῆς νυκτὸς τὴν πορείαν ἐποιούμην"). The spot where Josephus finally assembled his small army and started marching toward Tiberias is not mentioned.

appendix II, in this scheme the seventh hour corresponds to Gemini: the 'seventh hour' becomes the 'hour of the Twin'<sup>20</sup>.

## Conclusion

In the 'initiatory reading' of the fourth gospel as proposed by Rudolf Steiner, the life and times of Jesus Christ are considered as the continuation, the transformation and the fulfillment of the initiatory traditions cultivated in ancient mysteries worldwide. Steiner also identified Lazarus-John as the author of the fourth gospel and considered John 11:1-44 as an autobiographic report on a crucial initiatory event immediately preceding Golgotha. This initiatory reading of the gospel sheds vital light upon the relationship connecting Christianity to Indian, Persian, Egyptian and Mesopotamian mysteries (see also [figure AII.2](#)).

In a previous paper ([note 14](#)), building further upon Steiner's 'initiatory reading' of the fourth gospel, we have proposed that the author of that gospel identifies himself as the initiate Nathanael-Lazarus-John. The author of the fourth gospel is thus asserted to have been initiated twice, at both the beginning and at the end of Christ's ministry, with the first and the sixth 'signs' corresponding to these initiations. The first initiation enabled '*the disciple whom Jesus loved*' to fully understand the nature of Christ's ministry. The second initiation enabled John to witness Christ's death with encompassing consciousness and total commiseration and to produce his unique written testimony (Jh.19:35).

In the present paper, an initiatory reading of the second sign is proposed. By encrypting information in his gospel, Nathanael-Lazarus-John informs us that his codisciple '*Thomas who was called Didymus*' also went through an initiation with Christ acting as hierophant (the 'second sign') and that he went through some kind of death experience paralleling Christ's death (Jh.11:16) and possibly causing his absence at the gathering of the disciples on the evening of Sunday, April 5th, 33 AD (Jh.20:24). Uniquely, Thomas the Twin became an initiate of the seventh degree (Jh.20:28) one week later, when examining the Resurrected Christ, thereby delivering his own testimony that complements the testimony produced by John. Finally, we learn that Thomas went to India, the homeland of prophecy, as did Christ before him (Jh.4:44). There, Thomas died, if we are to believe Pieter Pauwel Rubens ([appendix III](#)) on Friday, July 3rd, 72 AD (Julian calendar), shortly after sunset.

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<sup>20</sup> The 'seventh hour' thus has geosophysical meaning. This also concords with the use of the expression 'It was about the sixth hour' (ὥρα ἦν ὡς ἕκτη) in Jh.4:6, with respect to the location of Jacob's well at 32°12'43"N, 35°16'40"E. Relative to that location, Jerusalem's Temple has an azimuth value of -175° (note that John specifies that the 'sixth hour' is approximative, as it is indeed about 5° off).



## APPENDIX I

### The second sign (John 4:43-54; chiastic reading).

- (1) 43 Μετὰ δὲ τὰς δύο ἡμέρας ἐξῆλθεν ἐκεῖθεν εἰς τὴν Γαλιλαίαν: 44 αὐτὸς γὰρ Ἰησοῦς ἐμαρτύρησεν ὅτι προφήτης ἐν τῇ ἰδίᾳ πατρίδι τιμὴν οὐκ ἔχει. 45 ὅτε οὖν ἦλθεν εἰς τὴν Γαλιλαίαν, ἐδέξαντο αὐτὸν οἱ Γαλιλαῖοι,  
(2) πάντα ἑωρακότες ὅσα ἐποίησεν ἐν Ἱεροσολύμοις ἐν τῇ ἑορτῇ, καὶ αὐτοὶ γὰρ ἦλθον εἰς τὴν ἑορτήν.  
(3) 46 ἦλθεν οὖν πάλιν εἰς τὴν Κανὰ τῆς Γαλιλαίας, ὅπου ἐποίησεν τὸ ὕδωρ οἶνον.  
(4) καὶ ἦν τις βασιλικὸς οὗ ὁ υἱὸς ἠσθένει ἐν Καφαρναούμ: 47 οὗτος ἀκούσας ὅτι Ἰησοῦς ἦκει ἐκ τῆς Ἰουδαίας  
(5) εἰς τὴν Γαλιλαίαν ἀπῆλθεν πρὸς αὐτὸν καὶ ἠρώτα ἵνα καταβῆ καὶ ἰάσῃται αὐτοῦ τὸν υἱόν, ἡμελλεν γὰρ ἀποθνήσκειν.  
(6) 48 εἶπεν οὖν ὁ Ἰησοῦς πρὸς αὐτόν, Ἐὰν μὴ σημεῖα καὶ τέρατα ἴδῃτε, οὐ μὴ πιστεύσητε.  
(7) 49 λέγει πρὸς αὐτὸν ὁ βασιλικός, Κύριε, κατάβηθι πρὶν ἀποθανεῖν τὸ παιδίον μου.  
  
(8) 50 λέγει αὐτῷ ὁ Ἰησοῦς, Πορεύου: ὁ υἱός σου ζῆ.  
(9) ἐπίστευσεν ὁ ἄνθρωπος τῷ λόγῳ ὃν εἶπεν αὐτῷ ὁ Ἰησοῦς καὶ ἐπορεύετο.  
(10) 51 ἥδη δὲ αὐτοῦ καταβαίνοντος οἱ δοῦλοι αὐτοῦ ὑπήντησαν αὐτῷ λέγοντες ὅτι ὁ παῖς αὐτοῦ ζῆ.  
(11) 52 ἐπύθετο οὖν τὴν ὥραν παρ' αὐτῶν ἐν ἣ κομψότερον ἔσχεν: εἶπαν οὖν αὐτῷ ὅτι  
(12) Ἐχθὲς ὥραν ἐβδόμην ἀφῆκεν αὐτὸν ὁ πυρετός.  
(13) 53 ἔγνω οὖν ὁ πατήρ ὅτι [ἐν] ἐκείνῃ τῇ ὥρᾳ ἐν ἣ εἶπεν αὐτῷ ὁ Ἰησοῦς, Ὁ υἱός σου ζῆ,  
(14) καὶ ἐπίστευσεν αὐτὸς καὶ ἡ οἰκία αὐτοῦ ὅλη. 54 Τοῦτο [δὲ] πάλιν δεύτερον σημεῖον ἐποίησεν ὁ Ἰησοῦς ἐλθὼν ἐκ τῆς Ἰουδαίας εἰς τὴν Γαλιλαίαν.

- (1) 43 After the two days he left for Galilee. 44 Now Jesus himself had pointed out that a prophet has no honor in his own country. 45 When he arrived in Galilee, the Galileans welcomed him.  
(2) They had seen all that he had done in Jerusalem at the Passover Festival, for they also had been there.  
(3) Once more he visited Cana in Galilee, where he had turned the water into wine.  
(4) And there was a certain royal official whose son lay sick at Capernaum. 47 When this man heard that Jesus had arrived from Judea  
(5) in Galilee he went to him and begged him to come and heal his son, who was close to death.  
(6) 48 "Unless you people see signs and wonders," Jesus told him, "you will never believe".  
(7) 49 The royal official said, "Sir, come down before my child dies".  
  
(8) 50 "Go," Jesus replied, "your son will live."  
(9) The man believed what Jesus told him and departed.  
(10) 51 While he was on the way, his servants came unto him with the news that his child was living.  
(11) 52 When he inquired as to the hour when his son got better, they said to him,  
(12) "Yesterday, at the seventh hour, the fever left him".  
(13) Then the father realized that this was the exact hour at which Jesus had said to him, "Your son will live".  
(14) So he and his whole household believed. 54 This was again the second sign that Jesus performed after coming from Judea to Galilee.

## APPENDIX II

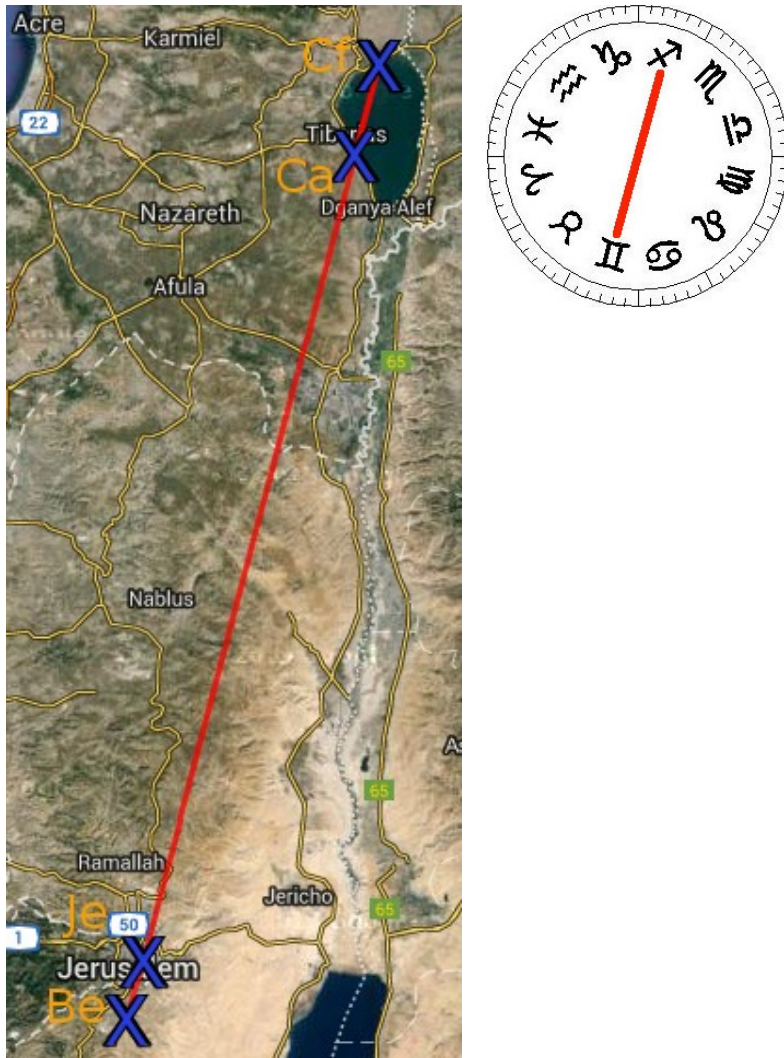
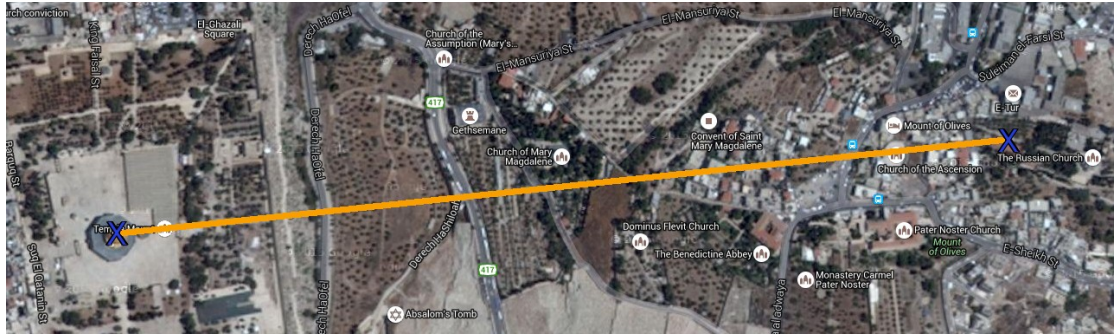


Figure All.1 (above): the seventh hour (azimuth:  $-165^\circ$ ) on the Palestinian map. Cf: Capernaum; Ca: proposed location of Cana, south of Tiberias; Je: Jerusalem (Temple Mount); Be: Bethlehem (east of the Church of nativity). Compare to appendix I, lines 2-3-4 (Jerusalem-Cana-Capernaum) and corresponding lines 14-13-12 (seventh hour). As seen from Cana or Capernaum, the sun stood in the direction of Jerusalem when the son of the royal official was healed at the seventh hour. When the zodiac is superposed upon the hour circle in the natural way (with the 'day signs' or spring & summer signs superposed upon the day hours and the 'night signs' or autumn & winter signs superposed upon the night hours), the seventh hour is also the direction of Gemini i.e. of the Twins.

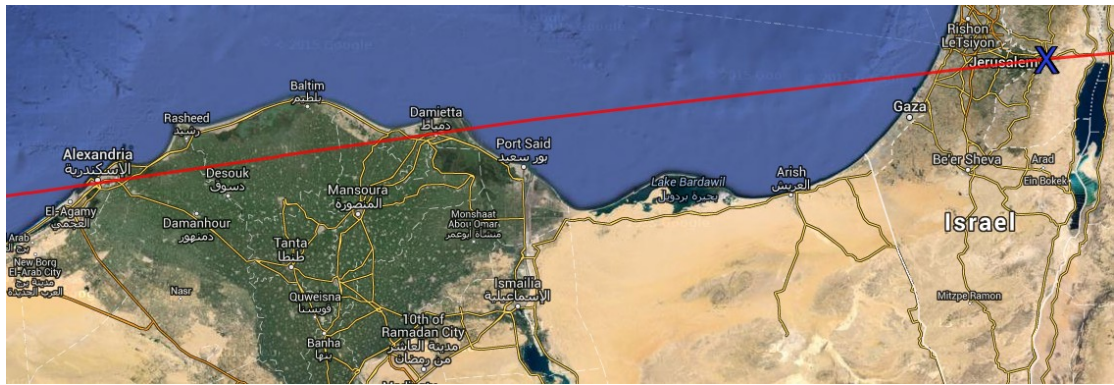
Figure All.2 (next page): extension of Jerusalem's Temple axis; compare to fig. 15-16 in [https://www.academia.edu/23475004/Time\\_and\\_location\\_of\\_the\\_Crucifixion\\_according\\_to\\_Hans\\_Holbein\\_1497-1543\\_.A\\_comment\\_on\\_The\\_Ambassadors\\_1533](https://www.academia.edu/23475004/Time_and_location_of_the_Crucifixion_according_to_Hans_Holbein_1497-1543_.A_comment_on_The_Ambassadors_1533)

A: line connecting the tops of the Temple Mount and Mount Olivet; B,C: extension of this line over the Nile delta (Alexandria) and India (Ganges valley); D: overview of the great circle.





A



B



C



D

The axis of Jerusalem's temple ran just north of the Dead Sea, where the baptism of Jesus took place, and far beyond that point also along the valley of the Ganges, the sacred river of Hindus who believe that bathing in its waters induces remission of sins.



### APPENDIX III

A comment on Rubens' *Martyrdom of Saint Thomas* (1639).



Figure All.1: *The Martyrdom of Saint Thomas* (Rubens).

Rubens' *Martyrdom of Saint Thomas* (382 cm x 254 cm; Nàrodní Galerie, Prague; 1639) is a late painting by the master, produced for the high altar of the Augsutinian church St. Thomas at Prague. An engraving shows that the painting has been cut off on all four sides, with the rightmost stoner completely eliminated.



**Figure AIII,2: Engraving by J.Neeffs (Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, Cabinet des Estampes).**

According to legend, Thomas died in 72 AD in the region of Madras, southern India. Apparently, Rubens has used the horoscope of Friday, July 3, 72 AD (around 18:36 local time; July 3rd is the feastday of Saint Thomas) as a source of inspiration for his painting. As in several others among his works, Rubens shows again to have had access to some type of knowledge of trans-Saturnian planets. The horoscope contains a large number of sharp aspects. There are two aspect triangles connecting Saturn-Uranus-Mars on the one hand and Jupiter-Neptune-Moon on the other hand (coloured yellow and blue in [figure AIII.3](#)). Both triangles are connected by the semi-squares Jupiter-Saturn and Mars-Neptune and by the sesquiquadrate Moon-Uranus. In the horoscope, one triangle has a side (Uranus-Mars) parallel to the horizon, and the other triangle has a side (Jupiter-Neptune) perpendicular to the horizon. The semi-quadrate Jupiter-Saturn is bisected by the axis MC-IC, forming a short-armed cross in the chart ([figure AIII.3](#), magenta). Very sharp aspects connect the Sun to the lunar nodes. Moreover, the Sun also stands precisely half-way Moon and Venus, and the median of Moon, Sun and the conjunction Venus-Mercury stands very close to the descendant.



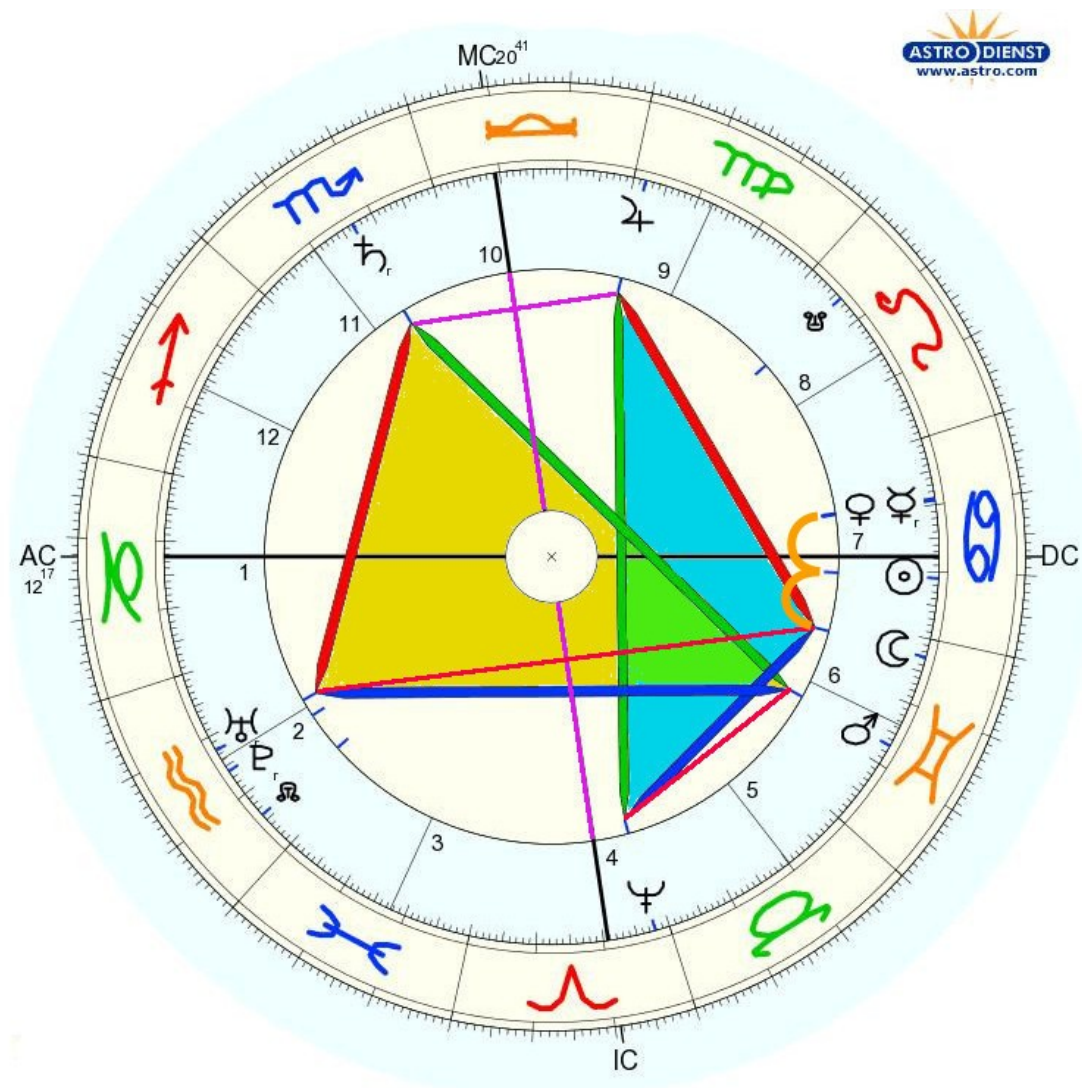


Figure AIII.3: The horoscope underlying Rubens' *Martyrdom of St. Thomas* (Madras, Friday, July 3rd, 72 AD; 18:36 local time; orb setting: 20%; calculated via Astrodienst). Sun: 9°4'39" Cancer; Moon: 27°13'26" Gemini; Mercury: 20°39'5"R Cancer; Venus: 20°56'26" Cancer; Mars: 13°5'31" Gemini; Jupiter: 28°12'3" Virgo; Saturn: 13°17'50"R Scorpio; Uranus: 12°17'30"R Aquarius; Neptune: 27°48'29" Aries; Pluto: 15°51'47"R Aquarius; rising lunar node: 24°1'29" Aquarius; Ascendant: 12°17' Capricorn; Midheaven: 20°41' Libra. The vertices of both aspect triangles Saturn-Uranus-Mars (yellow) and Jupiter-Neptune-Moon (blue) are pairwise connected by minor aspects. The Sun stands halfway Moon and Venus (orange bows) and is connected by sharp aspects to the lunar nodes (aspects not drawn here; see figure AIII.5). The semi-square Jupiter-Saturn is bisected by the axis MC-IC. Orb setting at 30% produces additional Saturn-Pluto and Mars-Pluto aspects.

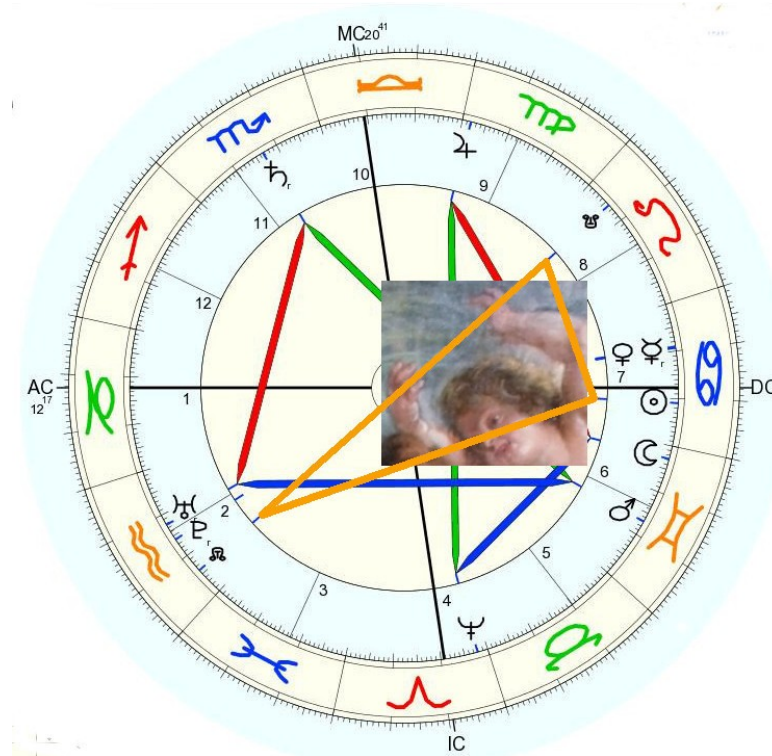




Figure AIII.4: Horoscological elements in Rubens' *Martyrdom of Saint Thomas*.

Rubens has represented the seven classical planets in both a 'heavenly' and an 'earthly' version.

The five setting planets correspond to the five cherubs. Four of these, representing Moon, Sun, Mercury and Venus, are directed to the left. The Mars cherub, recognizable by its red veil, is oriented toward the right. The Moon cherub hands a palm branch to dying Saint Thomas, symbolizing his martyrdom. As indicated in [figure AIII.4](#) (orange), this branch subtends an angle of about 60°, corresponding to the sextile connecting Moon and Neptune. Above the Moon cherub hovers the Sun cherub, who is holding his hands upwards in a peculiar and asymmetrical way. In the horoscope, the Sun forms very sharp aspects with the lunar nodes. As shown in [figure AIII.5](#), the hands of the cherub indicate the direction of the nodal axis.



**Figure AIII.5: The Sun cherub superposed upon the horoscope (cfr. [figure AIII.3](#)). The hands of the cherub indicate the orientation of the nodal axis, which is connected to the Sun by sharp semisquare and sesquiquare aspects (orange).**

Above the Sun cherub, the Mercury cherub turns his back to the onlooker, indicating the retrograde movement of the planet. The uppermost cherub, still condensing out of air and clouds, corresponds to Venus.

Saint Thomas embraces the short-armed stone cross which seems to represent the horoscopical cross formed by the Midheaven-Imum Coeli-axis and the semisquare Jupiter-Saturn (magenta in [figure AIII.3](#)). At the same time, the saint gazes upwards to the palm tree above. This tree, with its branches arching downwards, can be seen as a natural image for midheaven. At the left side of its stem, a cluster of three fruits seems to represent the aspect triangle Jupiter-Neptune-Moon. At the right, a cluster of two large and two smaller fruits corresponds to the aspect triangle formed by Mars, Saturn

and the conjunction Uranus-Pluto. The angle of about 8° formed by the cross and the palm tree (figure AIII.4; blue) corresponds to the angle of 8° separating midheaven and the highest point on the zodiac, halfway between ascendant and descendant. Thus, the cross and the tree constitute a twofold left-right inverted representation of the MC-IC-axis (figure AIII.3), with the inversion indicated by the saint's turned body position.

Saint Thomas is hit by both a spear and a sword. The directions of these two weapons correspond almost perfectly to the angles formed by the aspects Mars-Neptune and Saturn-Uranus with the horizontal. According to astrological tradition, Mars and Saturn are called the two 'malefics' and both aspects are 'disharmonic' (a semi-square and a square). Interestingly, in *The Massacre at Bethlehem*, another painting Rubens produced around the same time, the murderers also represent Mars and Saturn<sup>21</sup>. Probably, the stoners at the right side are meant as representations of the trine aspect Mars-Uranus. The executors around the cross represent Saturn and the executors on the right of Thomas represent Mars.

Of particular interest is the golden idol on the pillar at the center of the painting. The pillar itself represents the quincunx Jupiter-Neptune. The idol is a depiction of the planetary cluster Moon-Sun-Mercury-Venus which has its median point close to the descendant and opposite the quincunx. This four-planet cluster constitutes an astrological unit, because the Sun stands precisely halfway Moon and Venus (with Mercury connected to Venus by a very close conjunction; orange in figure AIII.3). Gold counts as the Sun metal. The unusual representation of the Sun as a demon reflects its close connection to the lunar nodes (which in astrological traditional have malific connotations). The arched body position of the idol reflects the horoscopic arc Moon-Sun-(Mercury/Venus). Thus, the demon is the earthly representation of the same four planets represented by the arch of four cherubs right above.

The seven classical planets are thus represented twice<sup>22</sup>. In the 'heavenly' version, they are represented by the five cherubs and the arms of the cross (see planet symbols in figure AIII.4). In the 'earthly' version, they correspond to the murderers (representing the malefics Saturn and Mars), the golden capital of the pillar (representing Jupiter; this planet stands on top of the aspect Jupiter-Neptune represented by the colonnade) and the golden demon (representing the planetary arc Moon-Sun-Mercury-Venus). In different ways, the heavenly and earthly representations are linked. Through the wreath, the Mars cherub looks down at the wound afflicted by the Mars murderer. In the plane of the painting, the Saturn arm of the cross points to the striking hand of the Saturn torturer. The trans-Saturnian planets Uranus and Neptune, at the 'receiving' end of the aspects Saturn-Uranus, Mars-Neptune and Moon-Neptune, are associated with the saint<sup>23</sup>.

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<sup>21</sup> See p.94-95 in: Jos Verhulst *De Rubens Code* Antwerp: Via Libra (2011) (in Dutch).

Rubens' *Massacre* is on display at the *Alte Pinakothek* in Munich and is dated 1636-38.

<sup>22</sup> We have seen that the MC-IC-axis also has a twofold representation. There can be little doubt that this doubling reflects Thomas' name and life theme.

<sup>23</sup> Cfr. R.Steiner, GA 317, p. 168.