

Acta Mythologica Apostolorum

The Preaching of St Andrew

Anthony Alcock

This is an English version of the first of the texts published by Mrs Agnes Smith Lewis in the volumes of the same name on pp.5-11 of the Arabic text) in 1904. The whole work belongs to a series called *Horae Semiticae*: part 3 (Arabic) and part 4 (English). Mrs Lewis provides a translation of the entire manuscript, but I have made my own and added one or two notes to it.

The texts were copied by Mrs Lewis and her sister, Mrs Gibson, from a manuscript in *Deir es Suriani* in the Wadi Natrun. An account of the other mss. is given on pp. vii ff. They contain various texts relating to Andrew and Bartholomew (together and individually) James son Zebedee, John son of Zebedee, Philip, Bartholomew, Thomas, Matthew, James son Halfai, Simon son Cleophas, Thaddeus, Matthias, James the Just, James the Lord's brother, Mark, Luke, the Apostle John, Peter and Paul (together and individually), with Syriac fragments of Thomas. All together 8 different manuscripts from Wadi Natrun, St Catherine's Monastery (Sinai) as well as those in the Vatican and Paris have been used to compile these texts, including a Syriac manuscript from Sinai. The colophon of the *Suriani* ms. (fol. 44b) contains a warning that anyone removing the book from the monastery for any reason whatever is like Judas, the 'betraye[r] of his Lord'.

The page nos. in brackets are the page numbers of the Arabic printed text. I was unable to use the folio numbers because but Mrs Lewis has not indicated the folio division in the line itself.

The group translated here contains three texts: the Preaching of Andrew, the Acts of Andrew and Bartholomew and the Martyrdom of Andrew. They are not related to the Greek texts concerning Andrew published by C. Tischendorf *Acta Apostolorum Apocrypha* (1852). If the Arabic text is a translation of the Coptic, it seems to indicate

that the latter was generated independently of the Greek.

I have anglicized all names, for the simple reason that I do not know how to systematically reproduce names that are either Greek or Hebrew in origin transmitted in Arabic form, except by using the forms standard in my own language.

In the name of God the Creator, the Living and the Speaking. The preaching of Andrew the blessed disciple, the disciple of Jesus Christ and his preaching which happened in the cities of the Kurds and Lydda in the peace of the Lord. Amen.

When the disciples went out into the world to preach the gospel of the kingdom of heaven, the Lord appeared to them and said to them: 'Peace to you, my brothers, my beloved and the heirs of the kingdom. Know that I will not leave you and that I will make you strong.' He turned to Matthew and told him to go to the land of the anthropophagi.¹ Andrew his brother travelled to Lydda² to preach, with his disciple Philemon son of Philip. 'I have many people there. I have chosen them.' The disciples replied: 'May you be with us everywhere we go.' The Lord gave them the kiss of peace and went up to heaven, they watching him. At that point Peter went where the Lord had told him to go. Matthew asked Andrew to allow his disciple Rufus and Alexander to go with him to Tintaran.³ As for Andrew and Philemon, they went to Lydda. Philemon had a musical voice like no other. He had become wise with the help of the Holy Spirit, which had descended upon him. None of the disciples was as advanced in knowledge as he, except Peter and John. The disciples had gathered to choose these two to stand up and recite the hymns⁴ that they might hear the sweetness of their voices. Andrew went to Lydda, he and Philemon, because half the city had already been converted by Peter, while the other half was still without faith. Andrew came to the church in Lydda that belonged to the Christians. They came out to meet him, joyfully bearing branches of trees. He went into the church and sat down with the bishops. Philemon told him to ascend the ambon. He recited the 'Allelouia', followed by the congregation who repeated it.

¹ Cannibals are mentioned as early as Herodotus *Histories* 4, 106, where he says that they were nomadic and lawless, speaking an unintelligible language, who 'dressed like Scythians'. Strabo *Geography* 4.6.4 states that Scythians in fact were cannibals and that Britons and Celts also practised cannibalism from time to time. According to the *Acta Apostolorum Apocrypha* (ed. C. Tischendorf) p. 135 Andrew was sent to rescue Matthew, who had been captive for 27 days, just three days before he was to be eaten. The incident is also treated, albeit in quite a different way, in the Old English poem *Andreas*, formerly attributed to the 9th cent. poet Cynewulf.

² In the plain of Sharon, near the Mediterranean coast

³ I can find no place with this name. In the Ethiopic text it is Tittaran.

⁴ The term تسبيحة is relatively unspecific

The pagan priests⁵ heard the voice and all said to each other: 'What is happening in this city today?' They were told: 'A disciple of Jesus Christ is in the Christian church, teaching them and telling them to reject the gods and not to attend the temple.⁶ They took their swords and went to the church to hear the Christians: if they insulted their gods, they would kill them. When they heard the sweet voice of Philemon saying: 'The god of the heathens are gold and silver made by human beings with eyes that do not see, ears that do not hear, noses that do not smell, feet that do not walk and mouths that do not talk. They are like those who worship them.'⁷ When the priests heard these and similar things from Philemon and his sweet mouth, they wept, went into the church and kissed the feet of Philemon. He looked at the congregation, and they said to Andrew: 'Father, these are some of the priests of the temple.' Andrew signalled to the gathering to remain silent until they had finished the hymns, for they were very afraid of them. When they saw that they had swords with them, they remained silent until the hymns were completed. Andrew rose and started to pray over them⁸. After finishing his prayer, he said to the priests of the temple: 'Sit.' They sat, and he said: 'My sons, whom I have embraced, to whom I will give birth, how is that you have come to this church today? Every day you meet Christians and withdraw your garments lest yours make contact with theirs.' The priests all said: 'Father Andrew, we will tell you the truth. When we heard that you had come to this city to teach and we heard all the voices, we asked what was happening in the Christian church today. For we knew that you had come to to it. We agreed among ourselves, fifty of of us. We came, as you saw, to hear if you would insult our gods and kill everyone in the church. This is why we came. When we heard the sweetness of the voice of this young man, our hearts inclined to him and we came to you. We ask you, disciple, to give us today what you gave this gathering that we may deserve to approach your god. We announce that we will not let this young man go.' When Andrew learned of this, he kissed the head of Philemon and said: 'In truth, you are the one about whom the Holy Spirit has always said: "The sweet voice is the one for

⁵ It is not clear to me what sort of priests there might be in this largely Jewish area. Since the text later mentions 'gods' the conclusion must be that they were polytheistic priests

⁶ A clear distinction is made in the terms used for the Christian place of worship *كنيسة / بيعة* and the non-Christian one *هيكل*. The latter term is also used of the part of the Christian church known as the sanctuary.

⁷ Sentiments of this sort can be found in Psalms 115,8 and 135, 18.

⁸ I wonder if the Arabic is an attempt to render the Coptic: *αϥϩιτοοτϩ αϥψληλ*

whom people gather. In truth, the one who deserves to be called the saviour of souls. as the Lord changed our names and gave us different ones, so too have you." When the congregation saw Andrew, they crowded around him. He told them to go to a spacious place. They went to the coast. Andrew then

5

said to the faithful: 'Who among you wants the Lord ? Let him come to me and be baptized⁹ by me.' The people came, and he baptized them all in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, the One God. The number of those baptized in the faith was 4400 souls. He also baptized fifty priests. After this the devil came to the city. He found two boys playing, one of them the son of John the priest of the city, the other the son of a local dignitary. While they were playing, John's son hit the other boy, who died instantly. His father seized John: 'Hand over your son to me that I may kill him, as he killed my boy. If not, I will hand you over to Rufus the governor that he may kill you in exchange for my son whom your son killed.' John wept bitterly before everyone. The crowd said to him: 'If you had been asked for money, we would pay it for you.¹⁰ But you are being asked for your life.' John said to them: 'I do not want gold or silver from you, but I want one of you to be a guarantee for me so that I might go to Andrew in Lydda that he might attend and raise the boy from the dead. The crowd agreed to act as guarantor to the dead boy's father for John to go to Lydda to Andrew, the apostle of Jesus Christ that he might come and revive his son for him. He replied to what they said. Then he sat down to grieve for his son. John then went to Andrew and found him baptizing the crowd. He prostrated himself before Andrew and said: 'Be kind to an old man and do not let me die. ' Andrew helped him to his feet and said: 'Trust God and do not be afraid. Tell me everything that has happened to you.' He told him his story. Andrew replied: 'I am not able to be with you at this moment because I am baptizing these people. But take Philemon with you, and he will resurrect the dead boy.' And Philemon set out with him to resurrect the boy. They went out in the direction of the city. While they were on the road, the devil disguised himself as an old man and went to the governor and called out to him:

⁹ The verb used means 'support' or 'strengthen' but can also mean 'moisten' cf. Edward Lane *Arabic-English Lexicon* 1863 p. 2153 and has been adopted by Christians, presumably as an extension of the latter, for use in this context. Baptism as a form of ritual purification by water is probably related to similar activities in Judaism.

¹⁰ Can one conclude from this that 'blood money' was paid in some circumstances ?

'Rufus, you are sitting idly and the city, there are dead bodies thrown in its streets. Rise and search for the killer. If not, then I am going¹¹ to the king and will let him know about this.' When Rufus heard this, he became very angry and ordered his horses to be prepared and rode off very angrily. When the people of the city heard, no-one remained in the city, except for the dead boy.¹² John and Philemon departed from Andrew and found most of the people outside the city. They said to John: 'You were not here, and we became afraid. The governor has taken the city.' John wept: 'Woe ! What can I do ? The dead boy is not buried ?' Philemon replied: 'Do not cry. I will go and raise him.' The people said to him: 'Do not enter the city lest the governor kill you.' Philemon

6

said to them: 'I cannot disagree with my teacher. I will go and raise him, as my teacher told me. Sit down where you are. If you hear that I have been killed, send to my teacher that he may attend and raise me from the dead.' Philemon went into the city and came to where the governor was and cried out: 'Rufus, you govern this city to ruin it. Where are the people of the city ? They did not meet you at your entrance.' The governor heard this and ordered his soldiers to seize him and lock him in the place of punishment. He said to them: 'Perhaps this is the one who killed the dead boy and for this reason his blood still clings to him.' The soldiers took him and incarcerated him. Philemon then said: 'Governor Rufus, do not punish me. I am young. I have done no wrong or been before any judge. I am like our father Adam when he was in Paradise before Eve came forth from his rib. Where is my teacher Andrew ? Let him see his disciple, what is happening to him. Is there is no mercy in your heart, governor, for you can see that I am a child ? Do you have no child that you may be kind to me ? As you love you your son, my father loves me.' He turned to the soldiers and said: 'What sort of pity do you have to be merciful to me that one might go to Lydda to my teacher Andrew to tell him that his disciple is being punished ?' When the soldiers heard this, they wept at the sweetness of his speech. He also said: 'Is not there a bird in this city ? Send it to Lydda to my teacher Andrew that he may

¹¹ The Arabic particle could be a direct translation of Coptic **ⲉⲓⲚⲏⲏⲏⲉ** followed by a Present Participle, which can be rendered quite literally as such in English, the form of the Future that indicates a plan or arrangement.

¹² Does this also contain elements of 'miasma', a form of contagious pollution ?

come to me and that I may see him before death.¹³ When he said this, many birds gathered and spoke to him, as they spoke to Noah of old and said: 'Here we are. Which of us do you want to send ? A small sparrow came forward and said: 'I am the lightest of these. I will go and bring your teacher to you.' Philemon said: 'You are an adulterer.¹⁴ You will not hurry back if you meet a female of your species. You will stay with her and not hurry back.' The raven stood up and said to him: 'I will go.' Philemon said to him: 'The first time you were sent out, you did not return with the news to Noah who sent you, so I will not send you.' He called on the dove and said to it: 'Noble creature, which God called more gentle than the other birds,¹⁵ you came bearing the news to Noah while he was in his ark at the time of the storm and the Righteous One blessed the dove. Go to Lydda to my teacher Andrew and tell him to come and see his disciple Philemon in prison.' The dove replied: 'Be strong. Andrew will come and hear what you have to say.' When Rufus heard this, he arose quickly and released Philemon with his own hands from prison. He said to him: 'Truly, if there were ten murders in this city, I would stop investigating them for your sake.'
When

7

the devil learned that Rufus had become a Christian, he called his¹⁶ soldiers and said to them: 'Rufus is a Christian, though he is our friend, and the entire city has lost faith in us. I order one of you to go to Rufus' house and seize his wife like a witless lunatic and provoke her to rise up against her children and kill them.' At that instant the devil did what Iblis¹⁷ had commanded. He went to the governor's house and made his wife mad and provoked her to kill her children. When her servants discovered what she had done, they assembled and seized her and incarcerated her. They sent to their lord to inform him of her condition and that she had killed her children. The governor said to those around him: 'If the house were to fall down on them and

¹³ The Arabic word can also mean 'place of death'. It is intriguing that this episode depicts Philemon as the prisoner of circumstances for which the Biblical story of Noah is thought to be a suitable parallel.

¹⁴ The *passer domesticus* was associated with erotic activity, and it is probably no accident that it is the subject of Catullus poem 2 addressed to Lesbia.

¹⁵ The Hebrew word for this bird is **רנן** which may have to do with warmth. The Arabic word may also be connected with warmth.

¹⁶ I take this to mean the devil's own troops.

¹⁷ The two Arabic names are Shaitan (Satan) and Iblis (the one who causes despair). According to some Islamic authorities, 'shaitan' is one of the spirits commanded by 'iblis'

everyone in it were to die, I would not leave this young man.' Rufus the governor returned to Philemon and said to him: 'My lord, do you not hear what this messenger says ? I ask you to come with me to my house. If you do not come, I will not go.' Philemon said: 'Let us be done with what we have to do here. Then let us go the house. Philemon called the dove and said to it: 'Go to the house of Governor Rufus and tell those in it not to do anything until I get there.' The dove went and took the message. When the crowd heard the dove speaking, they were astonished. Philemon asked the governor to send and bring the people of the city that he might raise the dead boy. The governor sent his soldiers and they came with the people of the city. When they arrived, they all went to the grave of the dead boy and found Andrew entering the city. Philemon said to him: 'Come, master, to raise the dead boy.' Andrew said to him: 'Truly, it is you who will raise him.' Philemon came to the burial place and knelt there. He asked: 'Lord, listen to me, Lord our God, the good shepherd, who has not left us in bondage with the enemy, but has saved us with His pure blood. Listen to me, Your servant. I ask from the abundance of Your mercy. Listen to my call that it may raise this dead boy by the power of Your name.' He then raised his head, stood and cried out in a loud voice: 'In the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene, rise from the dead.' The boy rose immediately. When the crowd saw him standing alive, their faith was much increased in the Lord Jesus Christ. Philemon told Andrew about the condition of the governor's wife and what she had done with his children. Everyone who was present with Andrew and Philemon went to the residence of the governor, followed by the widows and orphans hoping to receive charity. When Andrew went to the house of the governor, he found the governor's son, with a large crowd around him, weeping over him and standing at his head. Andrew said to the dove: ' How old are you ?' The dove

8

replied: 'Sixty.'¹⁸ Andrew replied: 'You heard what my disciple Philemon said, go to the desert and you will be released from the service of human beings. No-one will have authority over you. ' The dove went out to the desert as ordered. Andrew called the dead boy: 'In the name of Jesus Christ who sent us out to the world to preach in His holy name, arise and live.' At that moment the dead boy rose and prostrated

¹⁸ According to the American Dove Association some doves can live beyond 20 years of age.

himself before Andrew, who raised and said: 'Believe in God, my son.' The boy replied: 'I believe. I would like to know, my father Andrew, if you would allow me to say what I have seen.' Andrew told him to speak. 'My father,' said the boy, 'if you give half of what you own to the widows and orphans and poor, you will not convey half of what you owe to God for the gift He has invested in you. For what you give to those in need you give for yourself. Know, my father, at the moment when my mother rose against me and killed me, this was a great good for us, because people with wings like those of eagles came to us and took my soul to a place called Gehim¹⁹, where I saw a great house built of pitch and sulphur. There were 30 builders, with large burning torches. Orders were being shouted out about the building: 'Until when do we have to build this house? We are ordered to destroy it with these torches.' He said to them: 'Will you burn it before you have built it? At the time when its master dies, you can burn it.' The angel in charge of my soul said: 'Have you seen these things?' I said: 'Yes.' I asked him who the house was being built for and why²⁰ it was built of sulphur and pitch. He said: 'These are the sins of your father. It will be finished by the time he dies and he will be put in it.' When I heard this about you, I wept and wept. I said 'Woe is me. How will my father learn of this?' While I was weeping, he said to me, the one was walking with me: 'Do not weep.' He finished speaking and came forward with a white-haired man, followed by a hundred people, and following them a handsome boy of twelve. The master builder spoke in a language I did not know. He ordered them to demolish the house. He ordered the angel with me to escort me to the very wide place. Another man came with a staff of gold in three colours in his hand. He laid the foundation of a large house in your name: it had high walls of 100 *qasaba*²¹ and similar width and length. The angel said to him: 'The hundred *qasaba* is finished.' The master builder said: 'It is not finished, for the wheat is not in the storehouse. Once arrived, we will finish it.' Andrew said to Rufus: 'Listen

9

¹⁹ First mentioned in Joshua 15,8, it seems to have a valley into which garbage was thrown and incinerated to remove the smell. It also had a reputation as a place where the neighbouring Canaanites are said to have sacrificed children to their god Moloch e.g. Lev. 18, 21 (though the name Moloch is not mentioned in the LXX version). It became a cursed place and in the NT, where it occurs about a dozen times with various descriptions such as τὸ πῦρ τὸ ἄσβεστον.

²⁰ Looks like the negative particle, but the sense requires an interrogative.

²¹ Egyptian measurement unit of approx. 3.5 m.

to what your son says. If a stranger had said something like this, you would not believe it, but he is your son.' Rufus replied: 'Andrew, upright man, I ask you to take everything I have and distribute it to the poor and the needy.' He said: 'Arise, take my disciple to your house that he may cure your wife.' Philemon did as Andrew ordered. He arrived at his residence, he and Philemon, and found his wife standing motionless, like a statue, her hand grasping a black man²² by the hair. He was running from her hands, and she did not release him. He grasped her right hand. She brought him to where Andrew was, holding him with her left hand. When the crowd saw the black man, they became very disturbed. They cried out and became like sheep when the wolf enters their fold. Andrew said to them: 'Do not be afraid, but come forward and your hearts will be strengthened until we know who he is.' Andrew ordered her to be released, with a sign on her face, the sign of the Cross. He laid his hand on her head and he said: 'Jesus Christ the Nazarene, whose name I call that your feelings may be calmed and your senses return.' She became calm and prostrated herself before the disciple. He turned to the black man and said to him: 'What is your name and why does this woman depend on you?' He said: 'I will be honest. Look, a strong youth was living with a weak king and went to war with him. The strong youth was victorious in battle, but the victory went not to him but to the king. In this way too, I have great power with devils, and look, I have come to your house.' Andrew said: 'What can I say about you, who are unclean and have a bad character? The time for prayer has come. By tomorrow you will be hanging outside the city.' Andrew began the prayer and completed it and gave the Holy Mysteries to the congregation and dismissed them in peace. On the following day the congregation gathered, with Andrew present, who called out the black man: 'I will show you what an unclean and tyrannical spirit you are. I will reveal your condition to this congregation that they may see you.' The black man said: 'You are not the one who will judge me or the one who will do this to me. Indeed, my deeds are bad because I am inglorious and dishonoured.' Andrew said: 'Unclean tyrant, were you honourable?' He said to him: 'Do you say that I am a black tyrant? Do you not know my nature, where it is from? If you want to show this congregation who I am, woe is me. You will not save me from my plight.' And he began to invoke powerful names from on high. Andrew said to him:

²² Other apocryphal acts of the apostles portray black people as those who inspire fear or disgust, e.g. Acts of Thomas, where a resurrected woman reciting her experience of death says that the first person she met was ἀπέθχης τῆ εἰδέα μέλας ὄλος (repulsive to look at, completely black).

'Be silent. Do not say anything unless it is to tell the congregation who you are.' He said: 'I am one of the two hundred angels sent to look at the earth.'²³ After we had looked at it, we disturbed it and we disobeyed and did not return to the one who sent us. My name is Magana.' He replied: 'Your wound is great and your sadness, and your disgrace will return upon you. Your arrogance will destroy you in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ you will go to Gehim and you will not be seen ever again.' And from that moment nobody has seen him. Rufus the Governor said to Andrew: 'You tell me to distribute everything I have to the poor and the needy.' He brought everything he had to Andrew and distributed it as Andrew had said. The king received news that Rufus the Governor had distributed his property to the poor and needy and resigned the governorship and was no longer willing to decide or judge between, but rather wished that he was able to judge himself in respect of what he had unwittingly done. When Seleucus the vizier of the king saw that the king wished to ruin and kill Rufus, he asked him not to. He said to the king that he had accompanied this upright man, a servant of God and miracle-worker, from the country of the Hebrews. 'You have no power over him. Write to him that if he follows this belief, he should deliver everything he has that it may find its way into the royal treasury. A letter was written and sent to Rufus the governor. He was not in his residence, so the messengers were despatched to where he was with Andrew, who was teaching a new non-Roman teaching. They went out into the streets of the city and found Andrew and Rufus, and Andrew was driving a demon out from a man who had had it for seventy years. When the royal messengers saw the miracle, they believed in God. They delivered the letter to Rufus and read it aloud. When he heard that all his possessions were in the royal treasury, Andrew laughed and said to Rufus: 'Is your heart sad because the king has taken everything that belongs to you?' Rufus replied: 'You know how I feel and that I will not leave you. Everywhere you go I have no need of things that decay. The fate of such things is inherent in them by reason of decay.' Andrew said to him: 'All water returns to the sea, which is not filled. Everything of the appetite goes to dust.'²⁴ While Andrew was speaking to Rufus, a voice called out to him and told him to dismiss the

²³ 2 Enoch 18:3 mentions numbers of 'watchers' sent to earth cf. Orlov, Andrei A. *Dark mirrors : Azazel and Satanael in early Jewish demonology*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 2011. Of the various names attached to these creatures Magana, or anything like it, does not seem to be among them.

²⁴ Various biblical references: Eccl. i,7; Matt. 15, 17; Mark 7, 19. It is interesting to note how sparse scriptural references seem to be in this text and how little the text seems to feel the need of them.

crowd and go to the city that was ahead of him. He knew that he had a great public and noble service there. Afterwards he returned to this city and discovered that he would have much trouble there and be greatly persecuted by the king because of his messengers who had become Christians. 'May your hearts be strong in my name and know that I am with you. Andrew dismissed the crowd, saying: 'May the Lord strengthen you in the upright faith, you and your sons and daughters, to the end. Amen.' The crowd answered: 'Go in peace, and may your absence from us not be long. We have heard the voice calling you that a persecution will come upon on this city from the king because of his messengers who became believers.' Andrew strengthened their hearts and said: 'Do not be afraid. The Lord in Whom you believe is powerful. He can keep the persecution from you. ' After he had said this, he left them in peace.

Glory be to God forever.