

The Infancy Gospel of Thomas: Greek B

The Greek B form of IGT was discovered by C. von Tischendorf on his famous trip to St. Catherine’s Monastery on Mount Sinai. He published the text in *Evangelia Apocrypha* from a single manuscript: *Cod. Sinai Gr 453* (fols. 109v-113r) of the 14/15th century. Greek B is often referred to as the “shorter form” of IGT for it lacks several chapters found in Greek A and D—missing are chs. 8, 12, 14-19 and chs. 5-7 are drastically shortened.

The following translation is from my critical edition (*De infantia Iesu euangelium Thomae graece*. CCSA 17. Turnhout: Brepols, 2010), based on Tischendorf’s manuscript plus a second, closely-related Sinai manuscript: *Cod. Sinai Gr 532* (fols. 39v-42r) of the 15/16th century (first noted by P. Géhin, “Heuristique des manuscrits grecs,” *Bulletin de l’AELAC* 3 [1993], p. 11-17). The value of this second manuscript lies principally in its inclusion of a line missing from the letter speculation section in Tischendorf’s manuscript. The chapter divisions follow the standard established by Tischendorf.

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A Writing of the Holy Apostle Thomas on the Childhood Conduct of the Lord.

1 I, Thomas the Israelite, thought it necessary to make known to all the Gentile brethren all the great childhood deeds our Lord Jesus Christ did while he lived in human form in the city of Nazareth when he was five years old.

2 1 One day, after a rain, he came out of the house where his mother was and played on the ground where water flowed down.

And having made pools, the water came down and the pools were filled with water. Then he said, "I wish that you become pure and virtuous waters". And immediately it happened.

2 And the child of Annas the scribe came and, picking up a stick of willow, he destroyed the pools with the stick, and the waters drained away. And Jesus turned around and said to him, "Impious and lawless! What harm did the pools do to you? And why did you empty them? You shall no longer go your way, and you shall dry up like the stick you are holding"

3 And he went a little way, fell to the ground, and breathed his last. The children playing with him saw and were amazed, and went away to inform the father of the dead boy. He ran there and found the boy dead. And he went away making charges to Joseph.

3 1 Jesus made twelve sparrows from that clay. It was the Sabbath. And one child ran and told Joseph, saying, "Look! Your boy is playing by the stream making birds from the clay, which is not lawful".

2 And having heard he went and said to the boy, "Why are you doing these things, profaning the Sabbath?" Jesus did not answer him, but looking at the sparrows, he said, "Go, take flight and remember me, living ones". And with this word they took flight and went away into the air. Joseph saw and was amazed.

4 1 After some days, while Jesus was going through the middle of the city, a certain child threw a stone at him and struck his shoulder. And Jesus said to him, "You shall not go your way". And instantly he too fell down and died. Those who happened to be there were astonished, saying, "Where is this child from that every word he says becomes a deed accomplished?"

2 They too went away accusing Joseph saying, "You cannot live

with us in this city. But if you intend to do so, teach your boy to bless and not to curse, for he is killing our children and everything that he says becomes a deed accomplished”.

5 Joseph sat down on his chair and stood the boy before him. And taking hold of him by the ear, he pinched very hard. But Jesus looked intently at him and said, “It is enough for you”.

6 1 On the following day, he took hold of his hand and went to a certain teacher named Zacchaeus and said to him, “Take this child, teacher, and teach him letters”. And he said, “Hand him over to me, brother, and I shall teach him the scripture and I shall persuade him to bless everyone and not to curse”.

2 And hearing, Jesus laughed and said to them, “You say what you know, but I understand more than you. For I am before the ages. And I know when your fathers’ fathers were born, and I know how many are the years of your lives”. They heard and were astonished.

3 And again Jesus said to them, “You are amazed because I said to you that I know how old you are. Truly, I know when the world was created. Behold, you do not believe me now. When you see my cross, then you will believe that I spoke the truth”. And those who heard these things were astonished.

7 1 Zacchaeus wrote the alphabet in Hebrew and said to him, “Alpha”. And the boy said, “Alpha”. And the schoolmaster again said, “Alpha”. And the boy likewise. Then again the master a third time said the alpha. Thereupon Jesus looked straight at the schoolmaster and said, “You, not knowing the alpha, how can you teach another the beta?” And beginning from the alpha the boy

said by himself the 22 letters.

2 Then also he said again, “Listen, master, to the order of the first letter, and discover how many approaches and lines it has and common strokes crossing over, meeting, pointing, dancing in chorus, being made equal”. And after Zacchaeus heard such descriptions of the one letter he was astonished and could not answer him. Turning, he said to Joseph, “Brother, truly this boy is not of this earth. So, take him away from me”.

8 1 After these things, one day Jesus was playing with other children on the upper room of a house. And one child, pushed by another, was thrown down upon the ground and died. Those children playing with him saw and fled. And Jesus alone was left standing upon the roof from which the child was thrown down.

2 The parents of the dead child learned and ran weeping. Finding the boy lying dead upon the ground and Jesus standing above, they thought that this boy had been thrown down by him. They stared at Jesus and rebuked him.

3 Seeing, Jesus instantly leaped down from the upper room, stood at the head of the dead one, and said to him, “Zeno, if I knocked you down, rise and say” (for so the boy was called). And at the word the boy rose and, worshipping Jesus, he said, “Lord, you did not knock me down; rather, being dead, you raised me to life”.

9 1 And after a few days one of the neighbours was splitting wood and cut off the bottom of his foot with an axe. Having become drained of blood, he was about to die.

2 A great crowd rushed together and Jesus came there with them.

3 He touched the stricken foot of the young man and instantly healed him. And he said to him, “Rise, split your wood”. And he rose and worshipped him, giving thanks and splitting the wood.

Likewise also all who were there were amazed and gave him thanks.

10 When he became six years old, his mother Mary sent him to bring back water from the fountain. And as he was going, his pitcher broke into pieces. He went to the fountain and spread out his robe and, drawing water from the fountain, he filled it, took it up, and brought the water to his mother. And seeing this, she was astonished and she embraced him and kissed him.

11 1 And when he had come to the age of eight Joseph was ordered by a certain rich man to build a bed for him. For he was a carpenter. He went out to the fallow land with a bundle of wood and Jesus went with him also. He cut two pieces of wood and, cutting the end off one with an axe, he placed it near the other. He measured it and found it shorter. Seeing this, he was distressed and tried to find another.

2 Seeing, Jesus said to him, “Put these two together and make both front ends even”. Joseph wondered about this (what was the boy planning?) and did what was commanded. And again he said to him, “Take a firm hold of the short piece of wood”. Joseph was amazed and took hold of it. Then Jesus, taking hold also of the other end, drew toward himself the other front end, and made it equal with the other piece. And he said to Joseph, “Be distressed no longer but do your work unhindered”. And seeing this he was greatly amazed and said to himself, “Blessed am I, for God has given me such a boy”.

3 When they came back to the city, Joseph informed Mary. Hearing and seeing her son’s great wonders, she rejoiced, glorifying him with the Father and the Holy Spirit now and forever and ever, amen.