Recent interest in the "anti-feminist tendency" of the "Western" text of Acts has resurfaced an article by Walter Thiele. In this article, Thiele claims to have discovered an independent witness to Codex Bezae's addition of χαὶ τέκνοις at Acts 1:14 which verifies the importance of this reading for the history of the text. In particular, the reading now attests the tendency of the "Western" text to denigrate women and not the peculiarities of a single manuscript. With this so-called "antifeminist tendency" in the


2 The Latin side of Codex Bezae also contains the addition. It apparently reads et liberis, the codex being barely legible at this location.

3 Thiele, "Bemerkung," 110-111. Unlike many others (see works listed below), Thiele recognizes the precariousness of using singular readings to argue the existence of a tendency within a text-type.

“Western” text of Acts, Jeff Childers and I have dealt elsewhere.4 Thiele’s interpretation of the textual evidence remains to be challenged.

Thiele derives his independent testimony for the Bezan addition from chapter headings preserved in a number of Vulgate manuscripts.5 These chapter headings, however, are of much greater antiquity, having originally accompanied an Old Latin text.6 The heading for Acts 1:12-14 reads: De congregatione apostolorum et oratione quam cum altricibus suis mulieribus celebrabant.7 According to Thiele, cum altricibus suis mulieribus refers unequivocally to a text which includes “children” among the company in the upper room.8

This interpretation of the evidence is possible. One would certainly expect chapter headings to reflect the biblical text.9 On the other hand, scribes could hardly resist the temptation to offer interpretive guidance for the reader, especially when merely summarizing (rather than copying) the biblical text.10 Since cum altricibus suis mulieribus comments on “women” not “children,” and altricibus hardly elucidates the text preserved by Codex Bezae, this chapter heading probably reflects the exegesis of Acts 1:14 current at the time of its composition. In other words, the relationship between it and the Bezan reading is more likely interpretive than textual.


5 Thiele refers specifically to the three mss. used in the Oxford-Vulgate edition and notes that others exist, “Bemerkung,” 111. Donatien de Bruyne lists 24 Vulgate mss. which contain these chapter headings, Sommaires, Divisions, et Rubriques de la Bible Latine (Namur: Auguste Godenne, 1914) 416.

6 De Bruyne ascribes them to a circle of Donatists. He also gives their text in full, Sommaires, 370-380. See also J. Wordsworth and H.J. White, Novum Testamentum domini nostri Iesu Christi latine secundum editionem Sancti Hieronymi (3 vols.; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1905) 1:5.

7 De Bruyne, Sommaires, 370.

8 Thiele, “Bemerkung,” 111.

9 Most of these chapter headings do follow the biblical text. For example, heading XXIV for the passage beginning at Acts 9:32 reads: De aenean et thabita quos elemosinae causa apostolus et visitavit et suscitavit.

10 This phenomenon also occurs among these headings. Heading XII for Acts 4:32ff. reads: De substantia indiuisa credentium et de mendacio in anania et saphira perpetuo morte damnato. See also Acts 8:14 and heading XVIII: De eodem simone qui cum emere se posse a petro sanctum spiritum credidisset spirituali prouidentia praedamnatus est.