Ulla Tervahauta

A Story of the Soul's Journey in the Nag Hammadi Library
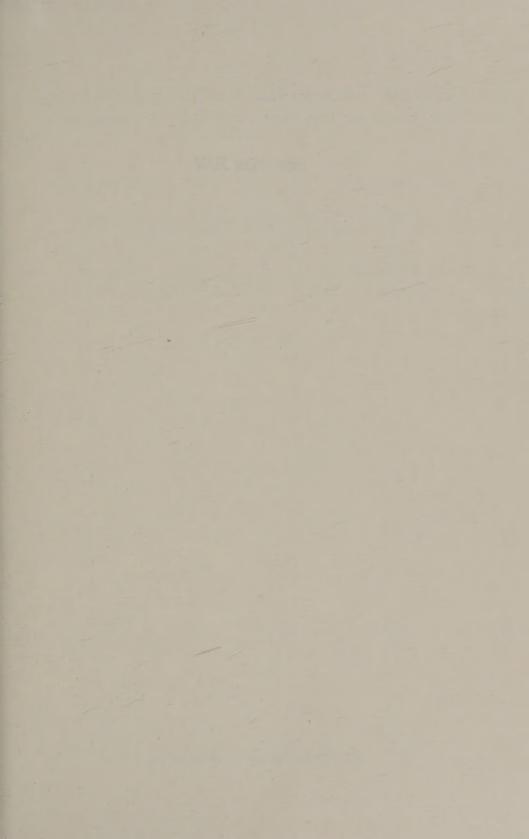
A Study of *Authentikos Logos* (NHC VI,3)

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Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht

Contents

Acknowledgements

I. Introduction

The *Authentikos Logos*, also known as *Authoritative Teaching* or *Authoritative Discourse*, the third tractate of the sixth codex of the Nag Hammadi Library, is a little studied text within the Nag Hammadi writings. The purpose of this study is to fill this gap by providing the first study that has *Authentikos Logos* as its primary focus. The key questions are to find a place and context for the writing within early Christianity, but also, the study of this individual text adds new insights to the scholarship of the Nag Hammadi Library and study of early Christianity, as it analyses and explains *Authentikos Logos* in relation to other Nag Hammadi texts and early Christian writings.

Much of the Nag Hammadi and Gnostic studies scholarship has focused on questions for which other writings are more central, such as how does the *Gospel of Thomas* or the *Gospel of Mary* portray Jesus and his teachings, or on themes central in Valentinian or Sethian writings.[1] For these discussions, *Authentikos Logos* has either proved of not the utmost priority, or difficult to grasp. Further, Nag Hammadi studies are closely intertwined with the question of what was "Gnosticism" or what is meant by the word "Gnostic". The category itself is vague and problematic, as discussed by several scholars,

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1 For the *Gospel of Thomas*, see e. g. Risto Uro, *Thomas. Seeking the Historical Context of the Gospel of Thomas* (London: T&T Clark, 2003); Risto Uro (ed.), *Thomas at the Crossroads. Essays on the Gospel of Thomas* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1998); Jon Ma. Asgeirsson/April D. DeConick/Risto Uro (ed.), *Thomasine Traditions in Antiquity. The Social and Cultural World of the Gospel of Thomas.* (NHMS 59; Leiden: Brill, 2006). For the *Gospel of Mary*, see Esther de Boer, *The Gospel of Mary. Listening to the Beloved Disciple* (London: Continuum, 2005); Karen L. King, *The Gospel of Mary of Magdala. Jesus and the First Woman Apostle* (Santa Rosa, Calif.: Polebridge Press, 2003), and Christopher Tuckett, *The Gospel of Mary* (OECGT; Oxford: University Press, 2007).
On Sethian texts, see e. g. Dylan Burns, *Apocalypse of the Alien God. Platonism and the Exile of Sethian Gnosticism* (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2014); Karen L. King, *The Secret Revelation of John* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2006); Tuomas Rasimus, *Paradise Reconsidered in Gnostic Mythmaking: Remaking Sethianism in Light of the Ophite Myth and Ritual* (NHMS 68; Leiden: Brill, 2009); John D. Turner, *Sethian Gnosticism and the Platonic Tradition* (BCNH Section "etudes" 6; Quebec: Presses de l'Universitae Laval, 2001); and Michael A. Williams, "Sethianism" in Antti Marjanen/Petri Luomanen (ed.), *A Companion to Second-Century Christian 'Heretics'* (VCSup 76; Leiden: Brill, 2005), 32–63.
On Valentinian writings and the school of Valentinus, see e. g. Christopher Markschies, *Valentinus Gnosticus. Untersuchungen zur valentinianischen Gnosis mit einem Kommentar zu den Fragmenten Valentins* (WUNT 65; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1992); Ismo Dunderberg, *Beyond Gnosticism. Myth, Lifestyle and Society in the School of Valentinus* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008); Ismo Dunderberg, "The School of Valentinus" in Antti Marjanen/Petri Luomanen (ed.), *A Companion to Second-Century Christian 'Heretics'*, 64–99; Ismo Dunderberg, "Valentinus and his School" in *Revista Catalana de Teologia* 37 (2012), 131–151; Einar Thomassen, *The Spiritual Seed. The Church of the 'Valentinians'* (NHMS 60; Leiden: Brill, 2006).

notably by Michael A. Williams and Karen L. King.[2] Importantly, and as noted by some of the scholars who have studied *Authentikos Logos*, the writing cannot easily be approached as a Gnostic text. It is a writing that has never quite easily fitted with any assumed category of what Gnostic is. There is nothing to connect it with heresiological descriptions and it does not suit for example Michael A. Williams' redefinition of "Gnostic" as "biblical demiurgical", since it does not focus on biblical creation myth and its reinterpretation.

Antti Marjanen has provided a fairly solid approach to the term, according to which a Gnostic text combines "a notion of (an) evil or ignorant world creator(s) separate from the highest divinity" with a presupposition "that the human soul or spirit originates from a transcendental world and . . . has the potential of returning there after life in this world".[3] The combination of these two prerequisites is not met in *Authentikos Logos* in a pronounced way. No concept of two gods emerges in the writing, and overall it is not concerned with the creation or the origin of humankind. The soul-story, with its emphasis on the pre-existence of the soul and its return to the divine worlds, is focal to the text, but such a view is not exclusively Gnostic. As will be discussed in chapters III and IV, the soul story rather connects with views of several Platonic and Christian writers. This means that "Gnostic" is not an analytical tool that could be used to better understand *Authentikos Logos*, and what "Gnostic" is, or is not, is a topic that does not concern *Authentikos Logos* directly. Even more importantly, not approaching or assessing the writing against a "Gnostic" background gives freedom for an approach that allows it to speak in its own right.[4]

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2 Michael A. Williams, *Rethinking Gnosticism. An Argument for Dismantling a Dubious Category* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1996). Karen L. King, "The Origins of Gnosticism" in Antti Marjanen (ed.), *Was There a Gnostic Religion?* (Publications of the Finnish Exegetical Society 87; Helsinki: The Finnish Exegetical Society, 2005), 103–120; Karen L. King, *What Is Gnosticism?* (Cambridge, Mass.: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2003). Also Antti Marjanen, "What Is Gnosticism? From the Pastorals to Rudolph" in Antti Marjanen (ed.), *Was There a Gnostic Religion?*, 1–53. The category has not, however, been discarded by all scholars, see e.g.: Alastair H.B. Logan, *The Gnostics. Identifying an Early Christian Cult* (London: T&T Clark, 2006), and David Brakke, *The Gnostics. Myth, Ritual, and Diversity in Early Christianity* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2010), 1–18, 31.
   Frederik Wisse in the 1970s and 1980s criticised taking Nag Hammadi texts as Gnostic, see Wisse, Frederik: "Prolegomena to the Study of the New Testament and Gnosis" in A.H.B. Logan/A.J.M. Wedderburn (ed.), *The New Testament and Gnosis: Essays in Honour of Robert McL. Wilson* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1983), 138–145, on p. 138. Wisse has argued for a monastic readership, see Wisse, Frederik: "Gnosticism and Early Monasticism in Egypt" in Barbara Aland (ed.), *Gnosis. Festschrift für Hans Jonas* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1978), 431–440.
3 Antti Marjanen, "Gnosticism" in David G. Hunter/Susan Ashbrook Harvey (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Early Christian Studies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 203–220, on p. 210. See also Williams, "Was There a Gnostic Religion? Strategies for a Clearer Analysis" in Antti Marjanen (ed.), *Was There a Gnostic Religion?*, 55–79, on p. 78.
4 See also Hugo Lundhaug, *Images of Rebirth. Cognitive Poetics and Transformational Soteriology*

Instead, the *Authentikos Logos* will be approached as a generally Christian text in this study. It may be asked what makes the writing Christian; that approach will unfold as the study proceeds, but it may be briefly noted here that there is some distinctly Christian terminology in the writing, such as an emphatic reference to following the evangelists (35:4–6),[5] a reference to a virgin ([Ο]ΥΡШΜЄ ̄ΜΠΑΡΘЄΝΟϹ), and the unfavourable comparison of criticised people with pagans in connection with apparently Christian polemics (33:4–34:32).[6] At the same time *Authentikos Logos* does not contain material that is word-for-word similar with earlier Christian writings, whether one thinks of the four gospels that became canonical, other scriptural materials, or even other Nag Hammadi texts. Yet careful scrutiny reveals allusions to, and reminiscences of, a number of early Christian writings, whether those that gained a canonical status (see II.3, V.2), or themes discussed in such texts as the *Apocryphon of John* and the *Gospel of Mary* (see V.2). However, one can go further than simply spot the common ground and allusions. This study seeks to understand and explain these coherences.

The focus of this study is to place *Authentikos Logos* in its context within early Christian traditions. This search for context adds to our understanding of early Christianity. As will be argued in this work, this context is not about the very beginnings, but the Christianity of the third and fourth centuries CE, and the ascetic and monastic currents that drew from the well of Christian Platonic, including Origenist heritage, but also, as this work aims to point out, from second to early third century sources, such as the *Gospel of Mary*, and the *Apocryphon of John*, and perhaps the Valentinian and Sethian traditions. The common denominator that brings these traditions together is Christianity in Egypt during that era. The aim, therefore, is to provide an analysis of *Authentikos Logos* that not only sheds light on the text itself, but – from its particular point of view – broadens our understanding of early Christianity and the Nag Hammadi collection.

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in the *Gospel of Philip* and the *Exegesis on the Soul* (NHMS 73. Leiden: Brill, 2010), 18; Williams, "Was There a Gnostic Religion?", 78–79.

5 εὐαγγελιστής is a Christian term that means "bringer of good tidings", "preacher of the gospel", "evangelist". G.W.H. Lampe (ed.), *A Patristic Greek Lexicon* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1961), 559. There are only a very few non-Christian usages, and the Christian meaning predominates, H.G. Liddell/R. Scott/H.S. Jones, *A Greek-English Lexicon With a Revised Supplement* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), 705. After Acts 21:8, Eph 4:11, and 2 Tim 4:5 and along with five other Christian texts (Ignatius, *Epist. interp.* 9.4.1; *Acts of John*, in the title; Papias, *Fragm.* 2.5, 7.1, 9.1; *Apocryphal Apocalypse of John* 31:4; Clement of Alexandria, *Stromata* 1.1.13; 3.12.83; 4.21.132), Origen uses it over 100 times (Origen, *Contra Celsum* 2.4.26; 2.69.28; 2.71.13; *Commentary on the Gospel of John* 1.3.18; 1.8.48; 1.12.75; 2.4.34; 2.5.45 etc.).

6 I have discussed the view on pagans in Ulla Tervahauta, "Ignorant people, the fool and pagans: intra-Christian polemic and portrayal of the other in *Authentikos Logos*" in Raimo Hakola/Nina Nikki/Ulla Tervahauta (ed.), *Others and the Construction of Early Christian Identities* (Publications of the Finnish Exegetical Society 106; Helsinki: Finnish Exegetical Society 2013), 195–216.

1. The Approach of This Study

The study of *Authentikos Logos* requires the scholar to ask questions concerning its dating, provenance, and literary character, and also to examine themes central to the writing. It requires reading it not only as a Nag Hammadi text, but as a text that shares perspectives not just with the Nag Hammadi writings, but with a wider selection of early Christian literature. Importantly, one should not ignore the time span over which the various Nag Hammadi texts were written. Much of the material is usually dated to the second or third centuries, whereas the copying and the final phase of circulation are dated to the late fourth century, if not later. There is no need to assume that all the Nag Hammadi material stems from the second century.

Several theses are argued for in this work. First, that *Authentikos Logos* fits best a third- or a fourth-century context and that it provides tangible evidence that there are also younger writings amidst the Nag Hammadi Library, which is a relatively heterogenous collection of texts. Second, that it is a Christian writing with ascetic emphasis that could originate within early Egyptian[7] Christianity. Not only does it align with ideas prevalent in the third and fourth centuries, but there are indicators within the text that suggest that whoever composed it, knew and even referred to traditions represented within other Nag Hammadi texts, such as the *Apocryphon of John*, or various ascent accounts of early Christianity. However, these references do not betray any close affiliation with Sethian or Valentinian schools of thought, but familiarity with them that allows different takes on shared subjects.

Several routes have been followed to reach these conclusions: close reading of the text, study of scriptural allusions and their functions, and comparative analysis of how the central themes and questions of the text were treated in other texts of various origins roughly from the period between the second to the fifth centuries CE. The most important method of this work is close reading of the text and an analysis of *Authentikos Logos* in comparison with other ancient texts, with the main focus on Christian authors and writings. Materials for comparison were sought from various sources: from the scriptures, to recognise and understand what particular texts are influential and how they are employed; from the other Nag Hammadi writings, to see how *Authentikos Logos* treats similar topics, and also, to see where it takes its own paths; and from philosophical and/or non-Christian authors, to better understand the writing's approach to philosophical themes. Most importantly,

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7 Here Egyptian Christianity is understood broadly, not only as Coptic, but Coptic and Greek-speaking Christianity that connects with ascetic traditions elsewhere: one needs to keep in mind the close connection of Egyptian Christians with Palestine, and other areas of the late Roman world. For example, Origen fled Alexandria in 231 to Caesarea, and Egyptian monks were influential in the development of Palestinian monasticism. For the latter, see e.g. Brouria Bitton-Ashkelony/Arieh Kofsky (ed.), *The Monastic School of Gaza* (VCSup 78; Leiden: Brill, 2006), 6–7.

Authentikos Logos is discussed in light of ancient Christian authors with the purpose of clarifying how to best understand the Christianity it represents. The aims and the method of the comparative analysis will be further discussed in Chapter III.

Recognition of scriptural allusions is of foremost importance for understanding the Christian character of the writing. Such work already exists.[8] Pointing out allusions can, however, only be the initial step, after which a more thorough analysis is needed. It is necessary to consider to what texts does *Authentikos Logos* allude, how is it done, and how do these allusions relate to other early Christians' approaches to these same texts. If one only seeks to identify scriptural passages without further inquiry into their interpretation, or if one only compares *Authentikos Logos* with other Nag Hammadi texts, much information of its position within the wider field of early Christianity remains hidden, and the results gained are in danger of being distorted or faulty.

When it comes to the other texts used in comparative analysis, this study takes a new approach as regards the material next to which *Authentikos Logos* is read. Often in Nag Hammadi scholarship the material for comparative analysis is taken from other Nag Hammadi texts and heresiologists' reports on what they called heretic teaching. This is often sensible, as there are coherences within texts that need explaining, and similarities that suggest some relationship between the texts. A good example are the Sethian and Valentinian writings. Comparison with other Nag Hammadi materials is conducted also in this study, but with a notion that there is a very serious danger in this approach. Reading Nag Hammadi texts primarily next to each other, or in light of heresiological reports, could provide circular evidence that at worst creates an illusion of typically Nag Hammadi or "Gnostic" themes and approaches, particularly if other, similar material elsewhere is ignored, or read as being fundamentally different from Nag Hammadi materials. That is why such approach can hinder accurate interpretation of these texts.

In this study the aim has been to keep the scope of comparative material relatively large. Yet the aim is not simply to find parallels, detect influences or trace background influences. Rather, the purpose is to see how a given motif is used in *Authentikos Logos* and why; the aim has been to render the text easier to understand. This also means that the present work is neither a commentary on *Authentikos Logos* that would go over its contents line by line, nor a systematic comparison with one or two works or authors. Rather, ancient texts are chosen without being restricted to any one type of text. The aim has been for a relatively wide perspective in this sense. On the other hand, the focus of

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8 Craig A. Evans/Robert L. Webb/Richard A. Wiebe (ed.), *Nag Hammadi Texts and the Bible. A Synopsis and Index* (NTTS XVIII. Leiden: Brill, 1993); Christopher Tuckett, *Nag Hammadi and the Gospel Tradition. Synoptic Tradition in the Nag Hammadi Library* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1986).

the study is on select thematic issues that are central to the writing: the gendered soul story and the precise terminology used of the soul, matter (ὕλη) and how it is discussed, the soul's ascetic progress and the passage describing its final ascent, and how this ascent relates to other early Christian ascent texts.

The starting point of this study is that *Authentikos Logos* may be approached as an early Christian homily that draws on Christian traditions – often such traditions that lived and went on living within eastern and ascetic Christian contexts. There clearly were many sources or traditions known to its author: the Septuagint texts, the Gospels of Matthew, Luke, and John, Pauline epistles and the Epistle of James, and also ideas expressed in Sethian and Valentinian literature, as well as Christian Platonism. However, when material similar with e. g. Valentinian writings is analysed, it emerges that common themes are used in different ways in *Authentikos Logos* and Valentinian writings. It will be suggested that the explanation for this is that Valentinian and other earlier texts were known to those who composed *Authentikos Logos*. This in fact is what one would expect of a homily: it is a text that has been composed by someone with knowledge of the scriptures and other literature, and models and themes derived from these are varied to suit its own situation. For instance, Valentinian texts lay much emphasis on therapy of emotions, discussion of cosmogony and the origin of the human being. Although desire and its effects are central in *Authentikos Logos*, other concerns of Valentinian texts are not of primary interest, and neither is there much in the way of rituals, often discussed and referred to in Valentinian writings. *Authentikos Logos* is more focused on a way of life that will take the soul to its goals, ascent and rest.

Antti Marjanen has summarised the need for the study of individual Nag Hammadi treatises as follows: "In order that the Nag Hammadi texts can really make a contribution to our overall understanding of early Christianity, detailed studies of both the text and symbolic world of all Nag Hammadi writings are needed."[9] The primary goal of this study is to understand this particular Nag Hammadi text that has often been bypassed in Nag Hammadi scholarship, perhaps because it did not fit the general view of the "Gnostic" collection of texts.

1.1 An Overview of the Contents of *Authentikos Logos*

Authentikos Logos is a short Coptic treatise of which only one copy from the fourth century has survived to our day. This copy is a part of the Nag Hammadi codex VI, in which it is the third of altogether eight treatises (plus a note written by the scribe). The major theme of the treatise is the journey of the soul from above to a life on earth and the soul's ascent after a life below. The writing tells the story of a feminine soul who descends from the "invisible worlds" and

9 Marjanen, "Gnosticism", 217.

incarnates into human life, lives in a body and experiences various sufferings or humiliations, gathers its strength, and finally ascends to its original home. In the course of this narrative several types of literary styles and motifs are applied. The story of the soul is interwoven with descriptions of dangers and temptations that threaten the soul in the world. The threats to the soul are also threats to the recipient, and the text often takes a tone of advising or urging: it is apparent that the audience is being instructed on how to live. The text is mostly written in the third person singular, occasionally in the first person plural: see below for the overall sketch of the contents.

Various rather common images are employed to enrich the message in the text.[10] The parable of the fisherman and his nets warns of the Devil's ruses that threaten to lead souls into deep waters of death (29:3 – 30:4), and the parable is followed by its interpretation (30:4 – 31:24). On three occasions the general third person narrative changes into first person plural: first in a comment in the text (25:26 – 27), then as the great contest in the world is explained and boundaries drawn between its two parties, "us" and the "adversaries" (26:20 – 27:25), and again in the fisherman parable and its interpretation that emphasise the necessity to be vigilant of the Devil's seductive baits (29:3 – 17; 30:4 – 28). Also, the section that criticises the ignorant people and the foolish person, and compares the two with pagans, serves the purpose of setting standards for the audience (33:4 – 34:32). The writing ends with the soul reaching her goal, and closes with a brief doxology.

The contents and structure of *Authentikos Logos*

22
(Beginning: lines 22:1 – 5 missing/impossible to read)
The hidden heavens, invisible worlds; the invisible soul of justice comes from them (22:6 – 22)
Bridegroom feeds the soul with the Word (22:22 – 34)

23
(Lines 23:1 – 3 missing)
Re-marriage metaphor, soul cast into body, step-siblings and their inheritance (23: 4 – 29)
Vice list/stepchildren's possessions (23:29 – 34)

24
(Lines 24:1 – 3 missing, 4 – 5 impossible to interpret)
A woman shut into a brothel (24:6 – 10)

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10 For example, λόγος is like medicine that cures the soul's blindness and the soul's nourishment (22:20 – 34). Inheritance and uneven family relations on p. 23 exemplify the relationship between the soul, body, and passions. Contest depicts the people's situation in the world (26:8 – 26).

Two-ways-saying, cf. Deut. 30:15, 19 (24:10 – 13)
The woman's debauched life, oblivion, bestiality
"Wine is the debaucher", an allusion to Eph. 5:18 (24:16 – 17)
A saying about a foolish person (24:22 – 26)
The gentle son and the father (24:26 – 33)
Step-children (24:33, continuation on the beginning of page 25 missing)

25
(Lines 25:1 – 4 missing)
A comment on the effects of desire and gluttony that cannot mix with moderation
(25:5 – 11)
Metaphor of the wheat and chaff (25:12 – 23)
Comment/explanation: "Pure seed is kept in secure storehouses" (25:24 – 26)
Comment: "So, all of this, then, we have spoken." (25:26 – 27)
Pre-existence of the Father (25:27 – 26:7)

26 – 28
(26:1 – 3 missing)
Great contest (26:8 – 20); adversaries/opponents mentioned (26:20 – 27:25)
"Our" conduct (27:5 – 25)
The soul's illness and medicine, the soul's healing and strength (27:25 – 29:3)

29 – 32
Nets that are set to catch "us" (29:3 – 17)
Man-eaters like a fisherman (29:17 – 30:4)
Explanation of the fishing image: "We too live in this world like the fishes."
(30:4 – 6)
Adversary's wiles that are the food of death (30:4 – 25)
Vice list (30:26 – 31:8)
Explanation of the temptations as the Adversary's wiles (31:8 – 17)
Deceived soul bears the fruit of evil/gives birth to vice (31:17 – 24)
The soul story continues with the soul's conversion (31:24 – 32:16)
Soul's ascent, slave traders (32:16 – 33:3)

33 – 34
Criticism of the foolish person (33:4 – 34:2)
Criticism of the ignorant people (34:3 – 32)

35
The rational soul attains her goal (34:32 – 35:18)
Doxology (34:19 – 22)
Title

2. Previous Studies of *Authentikos Logos*

This study does not tread on completely pristine ground, for *Authentikos Logos* has received some attention in scholarly work on the Nag Hammadi Library. Much of this consists of editions, translations, and introductions where the primary task has been to briefly recognise its genre and focus, and often to classify the treatise within frameworks of Gnosticism or early Christianity. Individual aspects of *Authentikos Logos* have been discussed in articles or, when it has been discussed in monographs, the discussion has been a part of some thematic question (martyrdom, polemics, paraenesis). In these studies *Authentikos Logos* is one of several objects of study, and usually not a central one. In the following survey studies that deal with *Authentikos Logos* are discussed. The approach is a fairly comprehensive one: since this is the first monograph focusing on the writing, most of the research history has been included.

2.1 Editions and Translations

Authentikos Logos has been available for academic audiences since the early 1970's, when the facsimile edition of the VI codex and the first scholarly editions and translations were published. The first edition, with a German translation, by Martin Krause and Pahor Labib, appeared in 1971 in *Gnostische und hermetische Schriften aus Codex II und Codex VI*. This edition does not comment on the contents of the text, but provides information on language and orthography.[11] The following year saw the publication of the facsimile edition of the Nag Hammadi codices, and two years later, in 1973, the Berlin Arbeitskreis led by Wolf-Peter Funk published a second German translation in *Theologische Literaturzeitung*. This translation contains a brief introduction to the writing that is characterised as "homiletisch-didactische Behandlung" on various themes that deal with the soul's possibilities of existing in the world. The introduction summarises the contents of the writings, makes a few notions concerning its contents, then discusses why it can be characterised as "Gnostic".[12] The Berlin scholars decided that *Authentikos Logos* may be considered Gnostic, but although some concepts were under Christian influence, it could not be seen as what is usually considered Christian Gnostic.[13] The other texts mentioned as possible objects of comparison were the *Exegesis on the Soul* (NHC II,6), and the *Teachings of Silvanus* (NHC VII,4),

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11 Martin Krause/Pahor Labib, "Die ursprüngliche Lehre" in Martin Krause/Pahor Labib (ed.), *Gnostische und hermetische Schriften aus Codex II und Codex VI* (ADAIK, Koptische Reihe, Band 2. Glückstadt: Verlag J.J. Augustin, 1971), 44–47.

12 Berliner Arbeitskreis, "'Authentikos Logos'. Die dritte Schrift aus Nag-Hammadi-Codex VI", *TLZ* 98 (1973), 251–259.

13 "Authentikos Logos", 254.

but no other materials were suggested. The conclusion reflects the atmosphere of the then still pristine stage of Nag Hammadi scholarship.

Jacques Ménard published his edition and French translation with a short commentary in 1977.[14] Although published over thirty years ago, Ménard's remains the only commentary on *Authentikos Logos*. Like his German colleagues, Ménard interpreted the *Authentikos Logos* as a Gnostic writing, and sought parallels with for example the *Gospel of Philip*, the *Exegesis on the Soul*, the *Book of Thomas the Contender* and the *Gospel of Truth*, i. e. with other Nag Hammadi texts, as well as Manichean materials. He opted for a wide approach, but did not proceed to further analyse similarities he detected.[15] The first English translation, with a very brief introduction of the text, was accomplished by George W. MacRae in 1979, two years after Ménard's work.[16] This is the edition that is mostly used in this work, although Ménard's edition has been frequently consulted. MacRae makes some general remarks on the text (the state of the manuscript, the position of the writing in the codex, the unity/breaks of the text etc.) in his introduction, and discusses its contents from the viewpoint of what in the writing is typically "Gnostic" and what is not ("no typical gnostic cosmogonic myth", "a generally gnostic, i. e. anticosmic dualist, understanding of the fate of the soul in the material world").

The third millennium has seen several new translations. A third German translation of *Authentikos Logos* was provided by Katharina Heyden and Cornelia Kulawik for *Nag Hammadi Deutsch* in 2003. Heyden and Kulawik date *Authentikos Logos* early, to the late second century, and they see it as a combination of Gnostic and Christian elements – the pursuit for knowledge with Christian belief in redemption.[17] The second English translation was made by Marvin Meyer, published in 2007. The introduction is written by Madeleine Scopello who underlines the Gnostic approach. Scopello sees the writing as a "Gnostic tale", a "tractate written with the goal of simplifying and proclaiming the Gnostic myth of the soul".[18] She focuses to some extent on the characterisation of the soul as a female figure. In her reading, the "most intense passages . . . concern the soul's prostitution", the soul is "a strong heroine", not "a naïve creature", and she is described first as a whore, then as a

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14 Ménard, Jacques E., *L'Authentikos Logos* (BCNH, Section: « Textes » 2; Québec: Les presses de l'Université Laval), 1977.

15 Ménard, *L'Authentikos Logos*, 4 – 5 and 45 – 62.

16 George W. MacRae, "Authoritative Teaching (NHC VI,3). Translation and introduction" in Douglas M. Parrott (ed.), *Nag Hammadi Codices V,2 – 5 and VI with Papyrus Berolinensis 8502,1 and 4* (NHS XI. Leiden: E.J. Brill), 1979.

17 Katharina Heyden/Cornelia Kulawik, "Einleitung: *Authentikos Logos* (NHC VI,3)" in Hans-Martin Schenke/Hans-Gebhard Bethge/Ursula Ulrike Kaiser (ed.), *Nag Hammadi Deutsch: Studienausgabe* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2007), 341 – 347, on p. 341 and 342.

18 Scopello, Madeleine, "Authoritative Discourse: Introduction" in Marvin Meyer (ed.), *The Nag Hammadi Scriptures: The International Edition* (New York: HarperCollins, 2007), 379 – 382, on p. 382.

bride.[19] Although it is true that the soul in *Authentikos Logos* is described as a female, the "Gnostic" interpretation is not followed in this study: as will be discussed in Chapter III of this work, the soul theme is employed widely in ancient literature, and particularly Origen's concept of the souls' fall should be seen as echoed in the soul story of *Authentikos Logos*.

2.2 From a Gnostic to a Christian Approach: Studies from the 1970s to the Present

The editions and translations provide a solid foundation that enables study of the text and its contents, yet the first study on *Authentikos Logos* was written before any editions had emerged. It is a scholarly article written by George W. MacRae in 1972, in which he introduces the writing, approaching it as a composite or collection. MacRae did not consider it possible to see *Authentikos Logos* as a Christian text, and concluded that it must be counted amongst the non-Christian literature of the soul that perhaps belongs to some popular form of Hermetic tradition. MacRae recognised the element of choice and its importance in the treatise, and acknowledged the difficulty of approaching the writing as a Gnostic text.[20] The closest Nag Hammadi texts recognised by MacRae as having themes in common with Authentikos Logos were *Exegesis on the Soul*, *Book of Thomas the Contender*, and *Teachings of Silvanus*, all three very much Christian texts. In a brief article published in 1978, "Gnose païenne et gnose chrétienne: L'«Authentikos Logos» et «Les Enseignements de Silvain» de Nag Hammadi", Jacques Ménard repeated his view that *Authentikos Logos* is a Gnostic text that cannot be Christian.[21] Time was not yet ripe for appreciating *Authentikos Logos* as an early Christian text, but the tide was going to turn in a few years' time.

   The first scholar to note Christian characteristics of *Authentikos Logos* (without discarding the Gnostic point of view) was Klaus Koschorke in his study of Gnostic Christian polemic against orthodox Christianity, in which he included it as one witness of assumed Christian Gnostic controversy against orthodox Christianity.[22] The starting point of his study is the notion of the

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19 Scopello, "Authoritative Discourse", 379–381.

20 See 2.1, and the difficulties evident e.g. in MacRae, "A Nag Hammadi Tractate on the Soul" in C.J. Bleeker et al. (ed.), *Ex Orbe Religionum. Studia Geo Widengren oblata I* (SHR 21. Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1972), 471–479.

21 Ménard, Jacques E., "Gnose païenne et gnose chrétienne: L'«Authentikos Logos» et «Les Enseignements de Silvain» de Nag Hammadi" in André Benoit/Marc Philonenko/Cyrille Vogel (ed.), *Paganisme, Judaïsme, Christianisme. Mélanges offerts à Marcel Simon* (Paris: Éditions E. de Boccart, 1978), 287–294.

22 Koschorke, Klaus, *Die Polemik der Gnostiker gegen das kirchliche Christentum unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Nag-Hammadi-Traktate "Apokalypse des Petrus" (NHC VII,3) und "Testimonium Veritatis"* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1978), 2, 3.

importance of such confrontation during the first centuries of Christianity: "Die Auseinandersetzung zwischen kirchlichem und gnostischem Christentum zählt zu den wichtigsten Vorgängen in der Geschichte des Christentums der ersten Jahrhunderte".[23] Although the main sources in Koschorke's work were *Apocalypse of Peter* (NHC VII,3) and *Testimony of Truth* (IX,3), he discussed several other Nag Hammadi texts, *Authentikos Logos* included, as witnesses of the Gnostic side of the polemic.[24] On grounds of the polemical passages and some other remarks, *Authentikos Logos* is taken as giving voice to the particular experience of a specific Gnostic Christian community.[25]

One of the merits of Koschorke's work is that he recognised the use of such terms as "salvation", "hope", "rest", "pagans", and "evangelists" as stemming from Christian ground. Koschorke suggested that comparison of the opposed types of people with pagans reveals that the borderline is drawn within a Christian community, or between those who know the Christian message.[26] The work approached *Authentikos Logos* from the assumption that it is a Gnostic Christian text that represents ascetic, vigorously truth-seeking Gnostic Christianity.[27] However, some of the conclusions as regards the identity of the author and those opposed are drawn quite freely.[28] When the text emphasises importance of seeking, draws a contrast between visible and invisible realities, or names ignorance and idleness as the greatest of vices, these are considered as indicators of a Gnostic worldview behind the text. The criticism on pages 33 and 34 of those who are ignorant – for not seeking God – and the foolish ones – for ignorance – are read as referring to the Gnostics' assumption that their catholic/orthodox opponents interpret basic Christian concepts, such as God, salvation, and hope, in a sense-perceptible way.[29] The remark in *Authentikos Logos* that compares "their work" with "our" hunger and thirst (27:12 – 15) is read as reflecting Gnostic anti-cosmic attitude.[30]

There are in particular two aspects about this reading of *Authentikos Logos* that need to be modified. As already suggested above, any interpretation of the text in "Gnostic" light needs to be reconsidered. Ascetic or spiritual contest, emphasis on the importance of seeking and knowledge, the threat of idleness to one's spiritual advancement or a contrast between the visible world and invisible reality are themes widely discussed by ancient Christians, not least

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23 Koschorke, *Die Polemik der Gnostiker*, 1.

24 Koschorke, *Die Polemik der Gnostiker*, 1 – 10.

25 Koschorke, *Die Polemik der Gnostiker*, 199.

26 Koschorke, *Die Polemik der Gnostiker*, 77 – 78, 198 – 200. ἀνάπαυσις: 33:8; ἔθνος: 33:11, 27; 34:12, 13; ἐλπίς: 34:10, 17, 32; εὐαγγελιστής: 35:6; ⲘⲦⲞⲚ: 28:34; as verb in 35: 9, 10, and 16; and ⲞⲨⲬⲀⲈⲓ: 33:17.

27 Koschorke, *Die Polemik der Gnostiker*, 1 – 4, 124, 198 – 200, 232 – 241.

28 "Nun ist deutlich, daß – anders als in sonstigen Traktaten über die Seele – hinter der allgemeinen Rede vom Geschick der Seele die *spezifische Erfahrung einer bestimmten Gruppe* steht" (Koschorke's italics). Koschorke, *Die Polemik der Gnostiker*, 199.

29 Koschorke, *Die Polemik der Gnostiker*, 77 – 78, 198 – 200.

30 Koschorke, *Die Polemik der Gnostiker*, 198 – 200, 123 – 124.

those who embraced asceticism in its different forms. From this perspective it appears that language of ascetically orientated Christianity was not recognised by Koschorke.[31] If, as suggested in his book, one difference between the Gnostic and the Orthodox Christianity is that the Orthodox would have taken the Gnostics to be from the Devil and the Gnostics would have viewed the Orthodox as the Demiurge's servants,[32] it then needs to be pointed out that in *Authentikos Logos* the Devil-Adversary is the ultimate evil that threatens souls[33] and the hard-hearted, ignorant people are said to be the Devil's children,[34] whereas the Demiurge is not once mentioned in the text.

Second, rather concrete conclusions are drawn from rhetorical expressions, taking them to indicate real-life parties of polemic. This approach has been re-evaluated in the scholarship since Koschorke's study, and, for instance, polemical language in Christian sources is now known to resemble polemical and rhetorical customs of wider Graeco-Roman literature.[35] Drawing concrete conclusions on basis of rhetorical expressions is often impossible. There is not much in *Authentikos Logos* that is tangible enough to draw clear or far-fetching conclusions as to the nature or identity of these opponents. The description of opponents could also focus on types of people, or function as responses to ethical exhortation rather than discuss some actual group of people.[36] Were one to nevertheless read the polemical passages as reflecting some historical situation, it is unclear who were the parties of that polemic.

If early approaches to *Authentikos Logos* were dominated by attempts to determine whether the writing is Gnostic or not, this approach was first challenged by Jan Zandee in his review of Ménard's edition and commentary in 1978, and by Roelof van den Broek in his seminal article that discussed Platonic and Christian characteristics of *Authentikos Logos* in 1979. Van den Broek took *Authentikos Logos* as representing Alexandrian Platonic Christianity that preceded Clement and Origen. Jan Zandee reviewed Ménard's commentary in *Bibliotheca Orientalis*, and he meticulously criticised Ménard's classification of *Authentikos Logos* as a Gnostic writing, and

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31 I find it difficult to agree with Koschorke that on the basis of meanings given to Matt 7:7 ("Ask, and it will be given to you; search, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened for you.") it were possible to indicate how close or far one is from orthodox Christian traditions ("Insofern könnte man – mit den notwendigen Einschränkungen natürlich – die jeweilige Deutung des Wortes Mt 7,7 als Indikator für Nähe und Ferne zur kirchlichen Rechtgäubigkeit werten"). Koschorke, *Die Polemik der Gnostiker*, 201 – 202.

32 Koschorke, *Die Polemik der Gnostiker*, 233 – 234.

33 In 30:27 the Devil (ⲆⲒⲀⲂⲞⲖⲞⲤ) is mentioned, and the Adversary (ⲀⲚⲦⲒⲔⲈⲒⲘⲈⲚⲞⲤ) in 30:6 and 31:9.

34 33:26, cf. John 8:44.

35 Hakola/Nikki/Tervahauta (ed.), *Others and the Construction of Early Christian Identities*, 15 – 16.

36 See also Scholten, Clemens, *Martyrium und Sophiamythos im Gnostizismus nach den Texten von Nag Hammadi* (JAC 14; Münster: Aschendorffsche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1987), 129 – 130, discussed presently.

provided counter-examples from Hellenistic Christianity and philosophical (chiefly Platonic, also Stoic) traditions, which make his meticulous review useful for early Christian and other parallels to *Authentikos Logos*. Zandee viewed the writing as stemming from Greek Christianity rather than Gnosticism. He considered the *Teaching of Silvanus* and the *Exegesis on the Soul* as closer parallels to *Authentikos Logos* than Ménard accepted, and like the two, he concluded, *Authentikos Logos* belongs to Hellenistic Christianity than Gnosticism.[37]

The most important early study of *Authentikos Logos* is Roelof van den Broek's article that was written in 1979, in which he makes a persuasive suggestion that the writing was written by a Christian Platonist to other Christian Platonists in second-century Alexandria.[38] Van den Broek pays careful attention to Christian terminology and biblical allusions of *Authentikos Logos*, and argues convincingly that they are not accidental or haphazard, but rather indicate that the author must have known several epistles and gospels.[39] Despite the correctness of this overall thesis, some of his conclusions need to be revised. For instance, in II.3 of this work two allusions of *Authentikos Logos* are discussed. The first of these, 28:23 – 26, suggests Matt 6:21 at the background. The allusion was noted also by van den Broek, but in this work comparative materials are added to discussion, and on that basis it is possible to make new suggestions, differentiating from van den Broek's.

On grounds of the subtleness of allusions as well as the philosophical ideas put forward in the writing, van den Broek suggested that *Authentikos Logos* could be earlier than such authors as Clement and Origen. He fixes the date of provenance to the last decades of the second century, or around 200.[40] The

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37 Jan Zandee, "L'Authentikos Logos" in *BO* 35 (1978), 3 – 21, on p. 4. The two, Hellenistic Christianity and Gnosticism, need, of course, not be seen as mutually exclusive, as Zandee noted at the end of his review: "Wir sollen der Tatsache Rechnung tragen, dass die Grenzen des Gnostizismus nicht immer scharf zu ziehen sind und dass zwischen Gnostizismus und rechtgläubigem kirchlichen Christentum eine breite Strecke hellenisierenden biblischen Denkens lag". Zandee, "L'Authentikos Logos", 21.

38 Roelof van den Broek, "The Authentikos Logos: A New Document of Christian Platonism" in R. van den Broek, *Studies in Gnosticism and Alexandrian Christianity* (NHMS 39; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1996), 206 – 234 [originally published in *VC* 33 (1979), 260 – 289].

39 For instance, one expression with origin in Pauline tradition that is discussed by van den Broek is ⲉϥⲟⲩⲱ[ϣⲉ] ⲉⲟⲩⲱⲛϩ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ ⲛⲧⲉϥⲙ[ⲛⲧⲣⲙ]ⲙⲁⲟ· ⲙⲛ ⲡⲉϥⲉⲟⲟⲩ in 26:8 – 10 (I translate: "his riches and glory", see appendix) that reflects Pauline expression τὸ πλοῦτος τῆς δόξης ("the riches of his glory"), e.g. in Rom 9:23 and in Col 1:27, where it is connected with contest motif in 1:29. The Sahidic text of Rom 9:23 begins with ϫⲉ ⲉϥⲉⲟⲩⲱⲛϩ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ ⲛⲧⲙⲧⲣⲙⲙⲁⲟ ⲙⲡⲉϥⲉⲟⲟⲩ, which comes very close to the wording in *Authentikos Logos*. Van den Broek rightly points out that in Colossians the riches of God's glory are revealed to Christians, and it is the apostle who toils and struggles to proclaim the gospel. In *Authentikos Logos* God the Father wants to reveal his wealth (riches) and glory to people, and for this purpose he has established a contest for souls in the world. Van den Broek, "The Authentikos Logos", 222 – 223.

40 Van den Broek, "The Authentikos Logos", 234. In the preface of his collection of articles van den

thesis in this work is that *Authentikos Logos* is later than that. This suggestion is made on the basis of the results of comparing the writing with other texts: the closest analogies come from the third and fourth centuries, whereas similarities with earlier texts are allusions or reminiscences rather than very close parallels. This result could have been suggested by van den Broek as well: he discusses such authors as Porphyry and Synesius, but still fixes the date to the last decades of the second century. Another suggestion made in this work is that any focus on Alexandria is unnecessarily narrow: the kind of Christianity represented in *Authentikos Logos* should not be considered an exclusively Alexandrian phenomenon, but a strand of Egyptian Christianity.

In a short article on *Authentikos Logos* and "Simonian Gnosticism" of 1981 Sasagu Arai addressed the question whether *Authentikos Logos* should, along with *Exegesis on the Soul* and *Thunder*, be considered as belonging to Simonian Gnosis.[41] Arai, like van den Broek and Scholten, called for appreciation of the writing's broader context. His notion that an attempt to fit the text into the category of Simonian Gnosticism is problematic provides yet another example of the need to approach *Authentikos Logos* without giving too much emphasis to what is, or is not, "Gnostic".

Wolf-Peter Funk offered a reconstruction of the missing beginning of the text in an article published in 1982.[42] Although some of the suggestions do not seem impossible to accept, ultimately it is only possible to rely on material that is preserved, while a reconstruction is always in danger of conforming to any preconceptions on its object. In case of the lost first lines and its reconstruction, the suggestion to read ΠΑϨΟ[ΡΑΤΟϹ] on line 22:4 appears sensible in that the adjective "invisible" is employed several times in *Authentikos Logos*, but after closer inspection it can be pointed out that as a noun and as referring to the Invisible one, or the highest God, it is not found in *Authentikos Logos*, whilst it is common in Sethian writings.[43]

In 1987 Clemens Scholten discussed *Authentikos Logos* as a non-Gnostic test case in his book on martyrdom and the Wisdom myth in Gnostic thought. When discussing *Authentikos Logos*, Scholten focused, according to the theme of his work, on the problematic of suffering, attitudes in the writing of or towards the world, vices and how suffering is conquered in the text. The merit of Scholten's work is the wide array of other ancient texts that he takes up when discussing *Authentikos Logos*.[44] He argued that the focus of the writing is not

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Broek has suggested dating the writing to the third century, but there is no further discussion to the matter, van den Broek, *Studies in Gnosticism and Alexandrian Christianity*, ix.

41 Sasagu Arai, "Zum 'Simonianischen' in AuthLog und Bronte" in Martin Krause (ed.), *Gnosis and Gnosticism. Papers Read at the Eight International Conference on Patristic Studies (Oxford, September 3rd–8th 1979)* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1981), 3–15. For Irenaeus' description of Simon Magus and his following, see Irenaeus, *Against the Heresies* I.23.1–4.

42 Funk, Wolf-Peter, "Der verlorene Anfang des Authentikos Logos" in *APF* 28 (1982), 59–65.

43 See 4.1.

44 Scholten, *Martyrium und Sophiamythos*, 120–133.

on mythological explanation or questions of existence, but that the story rather serves as an instrument that instructs the audience to lead a life that makes it possible to ascend.[45] Scholten pointed out that although the writing employs Stoic ethical terminology (ἡδονή, λύπη, ἐπιθυμία), these terms are approached differently, in a more negative and less systematic way when compared with Stoic authors, and should thus be approached as vices rather than emotions. Scholten used Clement of Alexandria as a point of comparison. Yet he considered *Authentikos Logos* and Clement very different in their philosophical positions, style, and expression.[46] Also in this work Clement of Alexandria is discussed as an important author who can and should be compared with *Authentikos Logos*.

Scholten noted that terms deriving from a philosophical background are at times used in a way atypical of philosophical authors, and combined with terminology that derives from Christian ethical exhortation.[47] This means that it would be fruitless to try and place the author of *Authentikos Logos* within any particular philosophical framework or school, but rather the writing is making good use of philosophical and ethical language to advance its message. Scholten further considered the nature and possible parties of the polemics in the writing. His conclusion is that one cannot identify the parties of the polemic from the text for lack of decisive evidence, and ultimately it does not matter who or what is meant, since the primary focus of the text in his view is on conquering suffering.[48]

Since the works of Koschorke, Scholten, van den Broek, and Zandee, much has changed in the scholarship. None of these earlier scholars underlined the fact that polemic in the text may serve its author's purposes, and from the viewpoint of real life, its parties and situations may have been imaginary. Also, although several early commentators on *Authentikos Logos* dedicated much space on the question of whether the polemic happens between Christians and Jews,[49] there is very little in the text that suggests such direction. Scholten notes that *Authentikos Logos* puts emphasis on seeking and knowledge, and points to the passages that mention hunger and thirst (27:14–15), and following the evangelists (34:3–6), but rather he concluded that one cannot speak of asceticism in the context of the writing.[50] This conclusion can be reconsidered.

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45 Scholten, *Martyrium und Sophiamythos*, 120–121.

46 "Aber abgesehn von der divergierenden Selbsterminologie zwishen Clemens und AuthLog ist mit philosophischen Positionen und den Spielarten und Feinheiten ihrer Begrifflichkeit auf diesem Sektor der Text nich zu messen." Scholten, *Martyrium und Sophiamythos*, 123.

47 Scholten, *Martyrium und Sophiamythos*, 122–124, 132.

48 Scholten, *Martyrium und Sophiamythos*, 127–130.

49 Scholten, *Martyrium und Sophiamythos*, 127–128; MacRae, "A Nag Hammadi Tractate", 476, MacRae, "Authoritative Teaching", 258.

50 "Die Bewertung von Hunger und Durst, Wundlaufen der Füße zu den »ЄΥΑΓΓЄΛΙСΤΗС« und aller anderen Anstrengungen, die zur Erreichung dieses Ziels unternommen werden, als Askese, ist in diesem Zusammenhang deshalb nicht richtig, weil sie nicht als notwendige, persönlich zu erbringende Leistungen gefordert sind, sondern sekundär als Modaliteten und

Further, Scholten recognised that the text discusses freedom of choice in a way coherent with Platonic and Christian thought.[51] Scholten approaches the text as Christian, like Koschorke and van den Broek did, yet without assuming or seeking signs of heterodoxy in it. He recognised the difficulty of separating "Christian" and "Platonic" elements or phases, but concluded that early monastic texts would offer numerous points of comparison.[52] Yet although Scholten pointed in his work to a very interesting direction – early Christian literature and particularly ascetic and monastic environments – he did not go into that direction with full force.

The soul in *Authentikos Logos* is discussed in grammatical feminine, but also at certain points is depicted as a woman. This aspect of the treatise was first approached by Madeleine Scopello. Her starting point was the acknowledgement that many of the Nag Hammadi and other "Gnostic" writings contain female figures who play important roles in these texts.[53] After this, Scopello narrowed her focus to two Nag Hammadi texts that she considered could be approached as novels, namely, *Exegesis on the Soul* and *Authentikos Logos*. According to Scopello, the two writings "tell the reader the Gnostic myth of the soul, from her fall to her salvation, in romanesque mode, leaving aside the complex philosophical and theological language otherwise typical of this kind of literature".[54] She is emphatic on the genre of the two texts: "These two short texts are not merely novels: they are in fact *Gnostic novels*".[55] Thus, the scope of the two novels would be to explain the Wisdom myth and doctrine in a simplified and attractive form. Scopello set several tasks for this comparison: to analyse how the Gnostic heroines are portrayed in comparison with Greek and Jewish literary heroines, and also, to consider whether something of the historical or social realities of Gnostic women of the second and third centuries may be discovered on the basis of this reading.[56]

The heroine in both stories is female, and Scopello discovers several romantic, sensual, and erotic elements in the two writings. She first sets to compare them with Greek novels – such as Chariton's *Chaereas and Callirhoe* and Longus' *Daphnis and Chloe* – and their heroines. Love, separation of lovers, journeys, misadventures, and happy endings are common motifs in

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Begleiterscheinungen des unermüdlichen Suchens auftreten und ohne Zögern in Kauf genommen werden." Scholten, *Martyrium und Sophiamythos*, 130 – 131. The view will be revised in VI.1.

51 Scholten, *Martyrium und Sophiamythos*, 131 – 132.

52 Scholten, *Martyrium und Sophiamythos*, 133.

53 Scopello, Madeleine, "Jewish and Greek Heroines in the Nag Hammadi Library" in Madeleine Scopello, *Femme, Gnose et Manichéisme. De l'espace mythique au territoire du réel* (NHMS LIII; Leiden: Brill, 2005), 155 – 177, on p. 155 [originally published in Karen L. King (ed.), *Images of the Feminine in Gnosticism* (SAC; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1988), 71 – 90].

54 Scopello, "Jewish and Greek Heroines", 156.

55 Scopello, "Jewish and Greek Heroines", 163. Italics are Scopello's.

56 Scopello, "Jewish and Greek Heroines", 156.

novels, and Scopello detects these in the two Nag Hammadi writings as well, and reads them in the light of the novel genre. However, she reads her "Gnostic novels" as emphasising the woman: whereas the Greek novels tell of lovers, a couple, in the two "Gnostic novels" the primary focus is on the heroine who overshadows her bridegroom; whereas in the Greek novels the heroines are "wise, virtuous girls", the Gnostic women lead at some point in their stories a life of prostitution. In the Greek novel the demure heroines are rescued by their true loves, whereas in the Gnostic stories the male has a secondary role to play. Scopello sums up the Greek heroine as an "object of desire", the Gnostic heroine as a "thinking woman".[57]

When Scopello turns to Jewish literature, she presents four characters, Tamar, Rahab, Ruth, and Bathsheba, all mentioned in the genealogy of Matthew (Matt 1:1–6). Actual novels with female characters such as Esther, Susanna or Judith are not analysed: the four examples discussed are found in shorter stories of Jewish literature. However, the reason why they are chosen is to do with the fact that actual novels in Scopello's estimation focus on "wise women", whereas Tamar, Rahab, Ruth, and Bathsheba are either seducers or prostitutes who nevertheless appear as prototypes of repentance or conversion, or persons redeemed through their faith. No actual connection is argued to exist between the "Gnostic novels" and the four Jewish heroines: Scopello assumes that the authors of *Exegesis on the Soul* and *Authentikos Logos* "probably knew" their stories.[58]

From these comparisons Scopello proceeds into discussing the historical and social background behind the "Gnostic novels": the lack of texts concerning the everyday life of the Gnostics justifies seeking this information in literary texts. She suggests that the important role of women in Gnostic texts, and the fact that these women are not portrayed as objects but as "thinking women", raises the question of whether such thinking, educated women may have belonged to Gnostic groups. To this question, Ptolemaeus' student Flora serves as an example, as do Marcus' female followers. Scopello next briefly charts the religions in late antiquity, and suggests that women were seeking a place to express their devotion. From this, she moves to conclude that "compared with Christianity, Gnosticism reserves a consistent place for women". Further, between the two ends – educated upper class women and uneducated commoners – Scopello finds a third group, hetairas, and she suggests that Simon's companion Helena may not have been a common prostitute at all, but a cultivated hetaira whom the heresiologists despised and slandered. Scopello concludes with a notion that the soul personifies every Gnostic, whether man or woman, although these stories would have appealed to women in particular.[59]

57 Scopello, "Jewish and Greek Heroines", 165–169.
58 Scopello, "Jewish and Greek Heroines", 169–174.
59 Scopello, "Jewish and Greek Heroines", 174–177.

Scopello's approach is inspiring and her comparison with Greek and Jewish texts a worthwhile task, but nevertheless several serious criticisms may be directed at her work.[60] First, Christian literature is entirely excluded from the comparisons, and there is no discussion of Christian stories of repentant harlots, nor of how womanhood and virginity are idealised in Christian discourse of the first centuries CE.[61] The metaphor of the feminine soul, or the metaphor of virgin/harlot in Jewish and early Christian literature, as well as e. g. Plotinus, refers often to the human soul.[62] These texts are not applicable to, or only addressed to women: on the contrary, they are often aimed at men. The concepts of "male" and "female" should not necessarily be read as implying simply men and women, for they may rather stand for abstract principles.[63]

Second, Scopello's approach of the two Nag Hammadi writings as "Gnostic", and as "novels", may be questioned. Taking into account the amount of scriptural allusions, a certain level of knowledge would have been assumed of at least some of the recipients, and, as will be argued in Chapter 3, the soul story possibly echoes views of other Christian writers, not just Valentinian myths, but Origen's views. These notions do not invite an impression of simpleness, even if the genre of homily differs from philosophical or theological writings. Further, it is almost needless to say that drawing conclusions that concern the historical or social background on basis of a metaphorical text is always a risky undertaking. Scopello's approach can be questioned, for instance, when the ending of *Authentikos Logos* and its wedding imagery is depicted as "erotic" and "painted in sensual and attractive strokes",[64] but ancient Christian wedding imagery of the Christ-bridegroom, and wedding feast as eschatological images is omitted. In this work the

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60 See also Douglas M. Parrott, "Response" in Karen L. King (ed.), *Images of the Feminine in Gnosticism*, 91 – 95.

61 For the stories of repentant harlots, a compact introduction is Benedicta Ward SLG, *Harlots of the Desert. A Study of Repentance in Early Monastic Sources* (Cistercian Studies Series 106; Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 1987). Stories of female martyrs undergo a shift in the fourth century: earlier martyrdoms like that of Perpetua and Felicitas, "frequently represented the possibility of a virilisation of the female", but in post-Constantinian Christianity female virginity serves as a male ideal. Daniel Boyarin, *Dying for God. Martyrdom and the Making of Christianity and Judaism* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1999), 67, 74 – 78; Virginia Burrus, "Reading Agnes. The Rhetoric of Gender in Ambrose and Prudentius" in *JECS* 3 (1995), 25 – 46, on p. 44 – 46.

62 They may also be directed at larger groups of people: so Hosea's marriage to his adulterous wife represents Israel's idolatry for example in Hos 1:2 – 3; 1:10 – 2:23; 4:12.

63 Deirdre J. Good, "Gender and Generation: Observations on Coptic Terminology, with Particular Attention to Valentinian Texts" in Karen L. King (ed.), *Images of the Feminine in Gnosticism*, 23 – 40, on p. 38 – 39, and more recently, Lundhaug, *Images of Rebirth*, 121, 151. Deirdre J. Good points out that the goal of certain texts, e. g. *Gos. Mary* 9:19 – 21, that speak of people becoming ἄνθρωπος is transformation into what is fully human (not transformation of females into males). Good, "Gender and Generation", 39.

64 Scopello, "Jewish and Greek Heroines", 162, 165.

assumption is that both *Authentikos Logos* or *Exegesis on the Soul* are bound with their Christian context.

The turn of the millennium has seen a new approach in the study of the Nag Hammadi writings in general, with Michael A. Williams' argument for dismantling the terms "Gnostic" or "Gnosticism", and Karen L. King's call for renewing not just terminology, but also the underlying discourse in its entirety. The focus has moved away from initial interest in dogmatic questions and mythological accounts, or attempts to classify and identify various Gnostic groups. This shift has meant an emergence of a more balanced picture of ethics represented by Nag Hammadi scriptures. Scholars are now fully aware that these texts are not simply otherworldly mystical speculation with either extremely ascetic or totally libertine views to ethical questions.[65]

Only a few studies have been published on *Authentikos Logos* in recent years. A close look at the writing's ascetic orientation was taken by Richard Valantasis in 2001 through comparison with Roman ascetical traditions. Although an insightful study, Valantasis bypassed Christian elements of the treatise and instead concentrated on Roman ascetical tradition, which he saw as developing from moralist traditions – represented by such authors as Musonius Rufus and Marcus Aurelius – to biographies and to Neo-Platonist philosophical and theological systems.[66] Musonius Rufus (c. 30 – 100) is a distant parallel. Although his teachings are preserved in Greek, he was a Roman Stoic.[67] Even in Valantasis' dating Musonius is an early example, for Valantasis dates *Authentikos Logos* to sometime between 150 to 250. It is therefore not straightforward to treat a first-century author as the first point of comparison for a text that circulated in fourth-century Egypt; Valantasis concluded his article by suggesting that the monks preserved the text, but "as part of their secular literature that furthered their ascetical agenda".[68] The merit of Valantasis' article is found in its recognition of the relationship between the *Authentikos Logos* and ascetical traditions of the first four centuries CE.[69] As this study argues, despite non-Christian parallels,

65 Michel R. Desjardins, *Sin in Valentinianism* (SBL Dissertation Series 108; Atlanta, Ga.: Scholars Press, 1990); Dunderberg, *Beyond Gnosticism*; Philip Tite, *Valentinian Ethics and Paraenetic Discourse. Determining the Social Function of Moral Exhortation in Valentinian Christianity* (NHMS 67; Leiden: Brill, 2009).

66 Valantasis, Richard, "Demons, Adversaries, Devils, Fishermen: The Asceticism of 'Authoritative Teaching' (NHL VI, 3) in the Context of Roman Asceticism" in *JR* 81 (2001), 549 – 565, on p. 564 – 565.

67 Brad Inwood, "Musonius" in H. Cancik/H. Schneider (ed.). *Der Neue Pauly. Enzyklopädie der Antike* 8 (Stuttgart: Verlag J.B. Metzler, 2000), 553.

68 Valantasis, "Demons, Adversaries, Devils, Fishermen", 565. See also Valantasis, Richard, "Nag Hammadi and Asceticism: Theory and Practice" in M.F. Wiles/E.J. Yarnold (ed.), *Studia Patristica vol. 35. Papers Presented at the Thirteenth International Conference on Patristic Studies held in Oxford 1999. Ascetica, Gnostica, Liturgica, Orientalia* (Leuven: Peeters, 2001), 172 – 190, on p. 184.

69 Valantasis, "Demons, Adversaries, Devils, Fishermen", 564 – 565.

Authentikos Logos is fully approachable only from the context of late ancient Christianity.

Authentikos Logos is outspoken in its ethical insistence. Close to ethical instruction comes the way in which the instruction is conveyed. Philip Tite has recently discussed *Authentikos Logos* in his study of paraenesis in Valentinian writings in which he pays attention to the ethical discourse and ethical genres applied, and "instead of focusing on the unanswerable historical questions of date, authorship, or location" he suggests that "we turn instead towards matters of social processes, the construction of historical memory, and rhetorical discourse as an attempt at forming or re-forming community ideology and identity".[70] The focus of Tite's work is on rhetorical analysis and genre, which are different issues altogether from the primary concerns of this work (to understand the contents of *Authentikos Logos* and find it the most probable intellectual, even historical context). This study is more optimistic about answering historical questions than Tite's work, which, however, provides several valuable discussions that shed light on rhetorical issues in *Authentikos Logos*. For example, Tite addresses moral exempla, virtue and vice lists, and the two-way schema.[71] In this work it will be asked whether or not *Authentikos Logos* can be considered a Valentinian writing.[72]

The above summary has shown that although several editions and translations render *Authentikos Logos* an accessible text, the still not too numerable discussions on it are far from conclusive. The first studies mainly dealt with the classification of the ideas it represents, but several approaches were either too brief to venture in-depth into the contents and character of *Authentikos Logos*, or, if larger works, they deal only with some aspect of the writing. Whereas the early phases of Nag Hammadi scholarship make such discussions understandable, it is more questionable that even fairly recent

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70 Tite, *Valentinian Ethics*, 34 – 35.

71 The moral exempla that are used in *Authentikos Logos* include the contest, negative portrayal of those worse than pagans, virtue and vice lists, etc. Tite, *Valentinian Ethics*, 161, 167 – 175.

72 Tite, *Valentinian Ethics*, 14 – 19, and on what constitutes Valentinian: Tite, *Valentinian Ethics*, 8 – 14. He includes altogether eleven texts within his corpus of Valentinian texts, also *Authentikos Logos*, but does not explain what would make the writing Valentinian (Tite, *Valentinian Ethics*, 111 n. 13 in). Tite follows Henry Green who also does not explain why *Authentikos Logos* is considered Valentinian. Henry Green, "Ritual in Valentinian Gnosticism: A Sociological Interpretation" in *JRH* 12 (1982), 109 – 124. Green wrote his article over thirty years ago; more recent studies do not consider *Authentikos Logos* a Valentinian text, e.g. Dunderberg, *Beyond Gnosticism*, 107 discusses *Authentikos Logos* as a text useful as comparative material; he takes it to be an earlier text than the Valentinian writings he discusses. Thomassen omits *Authentikos Logos* in *The Spiritual Seed*, and has previously taken a cautious view, even though he was not ready to deny the possibility of a Valentinian origin, or that *Authentikos Logos* were possibly Valentinian. Einar Thomassen, "Notes pour la delimitation d'un corpus valentinien à Nag Hammadi" in Louis Painchaud/Anne Pasquier (ed.), *Les Textes de Nag Hammadi et le problem de leur classification: Actes du colloque tenu à Québec du 15 au 19 Septembre 1993* (BCNH, Section "Études" 3; Quebec: Les Presses de l'Université Laval, 1995), 243 – 259, on p. 254, 258.

introductions generally classify the *Authentikos Logos* as a Gnostic[73] or "Christianised" Gnostic text.[74]

It is claimed in this study that the previous scholarly works on *Authentikos Logos* have missed something of its nature. It is not a story of a Gnostic heroine, braver than her demure Greek counterparts. Its polemics are so rhetorical that it is difficult to see behind the polemic. The point of the text may well be more on paraenesis than polemic, but would this paraenesis have to be Valentinian? Further questions include the time and place of the Platonic Christian character of the writing or the purpose of the soul story. To answer these questions, *Authentikos Logos* needs to be compared with a variety of early Christian, Platonic and Nag Hammadi writings.

Some of the studies discussed here raised questions that could be, and will here be further investigated. These include its relatedness to Valentinian writings and the use of the scriptures. This study challenges previous scholarship in one further aspect: even those scholars who recognise the Christianity of *Authentikos Logos* seek to date it to the second century, and consequentially prefer to discuss it with second-century materials. They have not taken later materials seriously enough, or have not brought together the notion of the type of its Christianity and other texts with which it coheres, and how that affects the dating.

3. The Contents of This Work

What has been missing thus far is an overall study that brings together different, if not all, aspects of the writing and makes an attempt at understanding *Authentikos Logos* as an early Christian text. This is what this book is about. The aim is to provide an analysis that not only sheds light on the treatise but broadens our understanding of the Nag Hammadi collection, its background and character from the point of view of this treatise.

In Chapter II a sketch will be made of the background for *Authentikos Logos*, starting with the manuscript, discussion of the original language and the genre (II.1). It will be asked whether it is possible to consider the option that the text could have been written in Coptic, and argued that in any case Greek should not be by default accepted as its first language. The language question is bound to the question of when the writing was written (II.2). This work approaches *Authentikos Logos* as a third- or fourth-century text. To understand this context, the broad lines of Egyptian Christianity in late antiquity are discussed. Finally, discussion of the allusive use of the scriptures in the writing will be opened through two case studies that connect with Isaiah

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73 Scopello "Authoritative Discourse", 379–382.
74 Heyden/Kulawik, "Einleitung: *Authentikos Logos*", 342.

60 and Fifth Ezra (2 Esdras) 2, and Matt 6:21/Luke 12:34 (II.3). The aim is not to list all possible allusions and reminiscences to the scriptures, but to select several cases for analysis: therefore, the two first discussions in II.3. will be followed by further analyses in chapters to follow (V.2, VI.2).

In Chapter III the soul story of *Authentikos Logos* is considered in relation to other soul stories in ancient literature. First, its closest parallel in the Nag Hammadi Library, the *Exegesis on the Soul* (NHC II,6) is discussed in III.1. Despite similarities, as a result of a comparison it will emerge that *Authentikos Logos* puts more emphasis on the soul's progress and its own initiative, whereas in the *Exegesis on the Soul* repentance and the aid received from the heavenly father or bridegroom are more emphatic. It has already been suggested that connections with Valentinian writings need to be brought under scrutiny, and a comparison of the writing with the Valentinian Wisdom myth is the topic in III.2. Third, the Platonic background of the soul views in Authentikos Logos is discussed by setting it next to some of the views held by Plato, Origen, and Plotinus.

In Chapter IV the more general scope of the third chapter is narrowed down. One very special trait in *Authentikos Logos*, the different epithets given to the soul that do not appear anywhere else so combined, is brought under discussion. These epithets, the invisible soul (IV.1), the pneumatic soul (IV.2), the material soul (IV.3), and the rational soul (IV.4) are intriguing, for they witness the bringing together of ideas from several directions: from Platonic (Christian and non-Christian), Christian, Alexandrian exegetical, Valentinian, and Sethian backgrounds.

In Chapter V the focus moves from the soul to the matter (ὕλη), which is mentioned several times in *Authentikos Logos.* This term has a philosophical background, and it was also debated by second-century Christians who sought to settle the question of whether matter was created or eternal (V.1). It is important to note that *Authentikos Logos* does not approach this question, not even in a brief way like the *Gospel of Mary* does. Rather, it perceives matter as evil, and as is shown in the analysis of the page 23 of the writing, appears to follow discussions on matter in the *Apocryphon of John,* the *Gospel of Mary* and Valentinian accounts on creation, but then takes its own turns on the subject, which suggests certain distance from these other discussions. Further, in other passages where matter is mentioned, allusions to Christian scriptures are more in the background than philosophical traditions or second-century Christian debates (V.2).

Chapter VI takes a look at the way the soul's life in the body is portrayed in *Authentikos Logos.* Unlike matter, the body is not evil, but is the soul's necessary place of timely imprisonment and contest. The writing emerges as an ascetic text that approaches several subjects discussed in other ascetic texts. In short, life in the body should be spent in toil towards progress (VI.1). The goal of this progress is the soul's ascent, which could be understood in different ways. As will be discussed, in *Authentikos Logos* the soul cannot

complete its progress before it leaves the world. In that sense, life on earth is preparation for death. The ascent is post-mortem ascent, a rise through heavenly spheres and past slave trader gatekeepers that aim to stop the soul's journey. Such description of the soul's ascent relates to several other early Christian views. Some of them focus on emotions and are more elaborate than the one in *Authentikos Logos*, such as ascents in the *Apocalypse of Paul*, the *First Apocalypse of James*, and the *Gospel of Mary*. Others, like the vision of Antony in Athanasius' *Life of Antony*, and a very similar vision in *Asclepius* (NHV VI,8), put the focus on the way of life. *Authentikos Logos* contains elements from both kinds of early Christian take on ascent (VI.2).

Chapter VII summarises the conclusions of this work. A translation of the *Authentikos Logos* appears in the appendix. The purpose of this translation is to emphasise readability of the text in a way that renders it understandable for a contemporary reader.

II. The Background of the Writing

This chapter deals with the origins of the *Authentikos Logos* with the purpose of laying the foundation on which the following chapters will be built. Questions concerning the manuscript, original language, likely date and historical context, and the genre and contents of the writing will be discussed. The general fluency and particular features of the Coptic text justify discussion concerning the original language of the writing, and the view of several previous scholars, that *Authentikos Logos* is an early Christian homily, will be considered in a more detailed manner. In connection to this question, the writing's use of the scriptures will be considered. Rather than giving an overall view of all the allusions to gospels and other texts, a thorough analysis is made of two select passages. The first, 28:23 – 26, mentions mind and treasure, and is treated as an allusion to the gospel saying "For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also" (Matt 6:21 par. Luke 12:34). Why has the mind replaced heart in *Authentikos Logos*, and what is the context of such a variant for the gospel saying? The second, the doxology that mentions the "light that does not set" (35:17 – 18) appears to reflect eschatological language of Isaiah 60 and possibly also Fifth Ezra (2 Esdras) 2:35. The discussion will focus on how is the image used in *Authentikos Logos* and how did some other early Christians employ similar imagery.

1. On the Manuscript, Language, and Genre

1.1 Manuscript

The only known copy of the *Authentikos Logos* is part of the Nag Hammadi collection and its Codex VI, which emerged in the mid-1940s in Cairo, with a claimed provenance in Upper Egypt near the hamlet of Hamrah Dum and the ancient city of Chenoboskion (Seneset). Additional leaves were tucked inside the front cover of the codex, known as Codex XIII.[1] *Authentikos Logos* is the

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[1] The complex, and to a considerable extent vague story of the discovery of the Nag Hammadi Library has been recounted many a time, but it remains unknown who found the codices, where and when. Jean Doresse was one of the first to inspect and study the manuscripts and attempt to find out the location from where they had emerged: Jean Doresse, *The Secret Books of the Egyptian Gnostics: An Introduction to the Gnostic Coptic Manuscripts Discovered at Chenoboskion* (London: Hollis & Carter, 1960), 117 – 119, 128 – 134. Kurt Rudolph emphasised the uncertainty of identifying the exact place where the codices were found; the evidence from the codices confirms

third of the eight treatises in the codex, and its nearly fourteen pages covered almost one fifth of the codex; only the excerpt of *Asclepius* 21 – 29 (NHC VI,8) is slightly longer. The text, copied to one column, runs on average to 32 – 35 lines.[2] This is the number of lines on the completely preserved pages, the only exception being the final page 35, where the body text runs to 22 lines. After this follows the title that is decorated with lines and diplai ($>$), and is written in letters larger than the main text, so that the title employs a space of some three lines. The pages were originally numbered on the outside corners of the upper part of the page, but no page numbers remain in the pages of *Authentikos Logos* due to the damage to the papyrus. The task of reading the manuscript is a pleasant one, for the text is clearly written in a neat hand and preserved in a fairly good condition which makes it easy to read, even with small lacunae on most pages. The most damaged pages are those at the beginning: the first lines of pages 22 – 28 have been destroyed. The condition of the text improves towards the end of the tractate. Pages 29 and 30 suffer from some lacunae in the top lines; pages 32 and 35 from slight damage only. Pages 31, 33, 34 and 35 are intact.

The transmission history of the Nag Hammadi writings is usually seen as a process that would have included translation of a given text from Greek into Coptic, its working from another Coptic dialect to Sahidic, and finally, its copying into the Nag Hammadi codices.[3] However, *Authentikos Logos* is not otherwise attested, which means that it is demanding as well as speculative to trace its hypothetical transmission history. Unlike, for example, the *Apocryphon of John*, the *Gospel of Mary*, and the *Gospel of Thomas*, evidence for any other or earlier version and circulation is not known.[4] That lack of textual and

the Thebaid origin. Kurt Rudolph, *Die Gnosis. Wesen und Geschichte einer spätantiker Religion* (Göttingen: Vandenhoek & Ruprecht, 1977), 39 – 48. A thorough history of the discovery has been provided by James M. Robinson on several occasions, first in Shafik Farid, James M. Robinson et al. (ed.), *The Nag Hammadi Codices. The Facsimile Edition. Introduction* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1984), 3 – 14, but see also note 1 of the work for a differing view! See further James M. Robinson, "From the Cliff to Cairo. The Story of the Discoverers and the Middlemen of the Nag Hammadi Codices" in Bernard Barc (ed.), *Colloque International sur les textes de Nag Hammadi (Québec, 22 – 25 août 1978)* (BCNH Section «études» 1; Quebec: Les Presses de l'Université Laval, 1981), 21 – 58 and James M. Robinson, "The Discovery of the Nag Hammadi Codices" in *The Journal of Coptic Studies* 11 (2009), 1 – 21.

2 The codex contains 78 pages on which text is written. For measurements and descriptions, see the facsimile edition and its introductory volume: Shafik Farid, James M. Robinson et al. (ed.), *The Facsimile Edition of the Nag Hammadi Codices. Codex VI.* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1972); Farid/Robinson (ed.), *The Facsimile Edition. Introduction.*

3 Emmel, Stephen, "The Coptic Gnostic Texts as Witnesses to the Production and Transmission of Gnostic (and Other) Traditions," in Jörg Frey/Enno Edzard Popkes/Jens Schröter (ed.), *Das Thomasevangelium. Entstehung – Rezeption – Theologie* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2008), 33 – 49; Wolf-Peter Funk, "The Linguistic Aspect of Classifying the Nag Hammadi Codices" in Painchaud/Pasquier (ed), *Les textes de Nag Hammadi*, 107 – 147.

4 For those Nag Hammadi texts where several copies or fragments exist, it is possible to compare differences between different versions, as is the case with *Apocryphon of John*. Irenaeus knew an

other evidence is the reason why this study will focus on the context, contents, and intellectual history of the existing text. The aim is not at text- or source-critical work. However, some considerations will be made below on language and genre, and whether or not they would suggest anything to enlighten the history or the historical context of the writing.

Codex VI, today kept in the Coptic Museum, Cairo, contained altogether eight treatises, a note from the copyist to the commissioner(s) of the codex, as well as added leaves from another book that contain *Trimorphic Protennoia* and an excerpt of *On the Origin of the World* that had been inserted inside its cover.[5] The other writings in the Codex VI are *Acts of Peter and the Twelve Apostles* (NHC VI,1), *Thunder* (NHC VI,2), *Concept of our Great Power* (NHC VI,4), a heavily modified excerpt from *Plato's Republic 588b–589b* (NHC VI,5), *Discourse on the Eighth and Ninth* (NHC VI,6), *Prayer of Thanksgiving* (NHC VI,7), and *Asclepius* (NHC VI,8), with a scribe's note note between the two last texts.

The *Acts of Peter and the Twelve Apostles* and the *Concept of our Great Power* are Christian texts. The former tells of a journey made by Peter and the other apostles to the city of Habitation with aid of endurance. The story also figures the Lord who has taught his disciples to forsake everything in order to reach their destination (10:13 – 18). The latter provides an overview of different eras of the world, with reference to Jesus' ministry and his victory over the death (40:24 – 42:19). Apostles' journey in the *Acts of Peter and the Twelve Apostles* and the journey of the soul in *Authentikos Logos* both refer to life as a journey, and endurance or way of life as the way to reach the goal.[6] *Thunder* and *Trimorphic Protennoia* are self-revelations of a female figure. Such a figure is portrayed also in *Authentikos Logos*, but the feminine soul in *Authentikos Logos* is more a paradigmatic human soul than a divine, goddess-like being. The three last writings in the codex are Hermetic, probably copied for Christian readership.[7] It is worth pointing out, in anticipation of further discussion in this work concerning the relationship of *Authentikos Logos* to Valentinian writings, that there are no distinctly Valentinian writings in Codex VI: the texts usually considered Valentinian are found in the Nag Hammadi

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earlier version of *Apocryphon of John* (*Against the Heresies* I.29), and the text itself provides evidence of traditions that are possible to date to the second century.

5 Based on the size of Codex VI (large enough to encompass the leaves of Codex XIII), the contours of deterioration, and other marks of damage in Codex XIII that cohere with those in Codex VI, Robinson has argued that this was done in antiquity already. Farid/Robinson, *The Facsimile Edition. Introduction*, 17 – 18. See also Rudolph, *Die Gnosis*, 44; Michael A. Williams/Lance Jenott, "Inside the Covers of Codex VI" in Louis Painchaud/Paul-Hubert Poirier (ed.), *Coptica-Gnostica-Manichaica: Mélanges offerts à Wolf-Peter Funk* (BCNH, Études 7; Québec: Les Presses de L'Université Laval, 2006), 1025 – 1052, on p. 1028 – 1029, 1043 – 1052.

6 See also *Thunder* 21:20 – 32, *Auth. Logos* 31:31 – 32:17; *Concept of our Great Power* 43:8 – 11; 47:22 – 34; *Discourse on the Eighth and Ninth* 63:9 – 14; *Asclepius* 76:6 – 77:30.

7 Garth Fowden, *The Egyptian Hermes. A Historical Approach to the Late Pagan Mind* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1993), 5 – 9.

Codices I, II, V, XI, and XII. Likewise Sethian evidence is dubious: the *Trimorphic Protennoia* is considered Sethian,[8] but it was originally part of another codex.

Scholars have been puzzled by the selection of the writings in the codex, and suggestions have been made as to what the thread is that binds the writings together. Michael Williams and Lance Jenott have recognised power and logos, medicine and healing, emphasis on revelation through books or writing, and the general tendency against worldliness as themes that repeat themselves in the codex and its added contents. They suggest this is an instance of transition and adaptation of late ancient Egyptian religion.[9] These notions are well kept in mind throughout the discussion in the chapters to follow. They could be discussed further in light of how do they apply to *Authentikos Logos*, and how far is it possible to trace common features in a reliable way, not dictated by scholars' expectations. Most of all, how Christian monastic readership fits into this picture would be worth a discussion. This study does not focus on Codex VI, but will add to the understanding of the codex through one of the writings it contains.

1.2 Language

The only extant version of *Authentikos Logos* is written in fluent Sahidic that was the influential dialect of Christianity and Egyptian monasticism and the standard literary dialect by the fourth century CE, largely understood along the Nile valley, and the leading dialect in pre-Islamic Egypt.[10] Nearly all native-speaking authors from the fourth to the eighth centuries wrote in Sahidic, so it was the universal Coptic dialect, understood all over Egypt.[11] The text contains some variant spellings that are Lycopolitan (Subachmimic).[12] In case of the Nag Hammadi codices this is usually taken to indicate that the copying was probably done somewhere in the Thebaid, but that the texts originated elsewhere.[13]

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8 Turner, *Sethian Gnosticism*, 61, 97 – 100.

9 Williams/Jenott, "Inside the Covers", 1043 – 1048.

10 Standard Sahidic was easy to understand across Egypt, as it had most in common with other Coptic dialects and had the least variation and fewer regional peculiarities. Bentley Layton, *A Coptic Grammar With Chrestomathy and Glossary. Sahidic Dialect* (Second Edition, Revised and Expanded With an Index of Citations. Porta Linguarum Orientalium 20; Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2004), 2.

11 Layton, *A Coptic Grammar*, 2 – 3. See also Iain Gardner (ed.), *Kellis Literary Texts 2* (Dakhleh Oasis Project: Monograph 15. Oxford: Oxbow Books, 2007), 5.

12 For example, the qualitative of ϬⲰⲰⲦ the Lycopolitan spelling ϬⲀⲰⲦ̄ is applied in 22:21, 27:11, 15, 18 and 28:22, whereas the Sahidic spelling ϬⲞⲰⲦ does not appear in *Authentikos Logos* at all (but ϬⲞⲰⲦ ⲈⲂⲞⲗ appears in *Thunder* 13:8). See Krause/Labib, *Gnostische und hermetische Schriften*, 26, 44 – 47.

13 Funk, "The Linguistic Aspect", 107 – 147. Wolf-Peter Funk, "Toward a Linguistic Classification of the "Sahidic" Nag Hammadi Texts" in David W. Johnson (ed.), *Acts of the Fifth International*

Scholars have usually suggested Greek as original language, but in fact they do not provide direct evidence from the *Authentikos Logos* itself, and often do not give explicit reasons for this conclusion.[14] The view rather depends on the general assumption for the Greek originals for all of the Nag Hammadi texts.[15] For some of the Nag Hammadi texts there indeed is tangible evidence for Greek provenance.[16] Three of the eight Codex VI texts are known to have existed in Greek: Plato's *Republic*, of which a strongly interpreted excerpt (from Book 9, 588A–589B) appears as the fifth text in the codex, Hermetic *Prayer of Thanksgiving*, known in both Greek and Latin, and *Asclepius* (chapters 21 – 29), of which a Greek original is attested but has been lost.[17] Five of the Codex VI treatises – the *Acts of Peter and the Twelve Apostles*, the *Thunder, Authentikos Logos*, the *Concept of our Great Power*, and the *Discourse on the Eight and Ninth* – are the only versions that exist or are known. None of these texts is attested elsewhere, which goes to point out that more is unknown than known when it comes to the origin of these rather varied writings. Wolf-Peter Funk has noted that the Coptic of *Authentikos Logos* is linguistically very close to that in the *Thunder*.[18]

Congress on Coptic Studies. Washington 12 – 15 August 1992. Vol. 2 Papers from the Sections, Part 1 (Roma: C.I.M. 1993), 163 – 177. Funk acknowledges that individual texts may have been composed closer or further from when they were copied into the Nag Hammadi codices, but he sees "no way of identifying them", Funk, "The Linguistic Aspect", 143.

14 MacRae for example does not comment on the language. MacRae, "Authoritative Teaching", 257 – 259; MacRae "A Nag Hammadi Tractate", 471 – 479. Krause and Labib in their edition analyse the Sahidic and its deviations as well as ortography, but do not comment on whether the language of the tractate appears idiomatic, and whether they deem it an original or translation. Krause/Labib, *Gnostische und hermetische Schriften*, 44 – 47, 63 – 67. Katharina Heyden and Cornelia Kulawik consider *Authentikos Logos* a relatively early text, which would require a Greek original, but they do not comment on language. Heyden/Kulawik, "Einleitung: *Authentikos Logos*", 342. Madeleine Scopello assumes the tractate to be based on an original Greek text, but she does not provide arguments to support her view. Scopello, "Authoritative Discourse", 379.

15 Meyer (ed.), *The Nag Hammadi Scriptures*, 1 – 2; Krause/Labib, *Gnostische und hermetische Schriften*, xv. As Funk has shown, the linguistic diversity between different Nag Hammadi writings, and not just between codices but within individual codices, means that no generalisations should be made (and vice versa, not too much should be assumed on basis of unique features). Funk, "The Linguistic Aspect", 125.

16 E.g. *Gospel of Thomas:* P. Oxy 1, P. Oxy. 654, P. Oxy. 655; *Sophia of Jesus Christ:* P. Oxy. 1081; *Sentences of Sextus:* manuscripts Π and Y.

17 Plato, *Republic* 588B–589B, James Brashler calied this a "disastrous failure" and a "hopelessly confused translation", but he failed to note that this is an interpretation rather than an attempt at literal translation, James Brashler, "Plato, Republic 588b–589b" in Parrott (ed.), *Nag Hammadi Codices V,2 – 5 and VI*, 325 – 326. *Prayer of Thanksgiving*, the Greek version: Papyrus Mimaut col. XVIII, 591 – 611 (Paris, Louvre, Papyrus 2391), the Latin: *Corp. Herm. Asclepius* 41B, see Peter Dirkse/James Brashler, "The Prayer of Thanksgiving" in Parrott (ed.), *Nag Hammadi Codices V,2 – 5 and VI*, 375 – 377. *Asclepius*, see Peter A. Dirkse/Douglas M. Parrott, "Asclepius 21 – 29" in in Parrott (ed.), *Nag Hammadi Codices V,2 – 5 and VI*, 395 – 398.

18 Funk, "The Linguistic Aspect" 126 – 128.

The question of language could have some consequences for the dating. An earlier date of origin would suggest Greek original language, and this is the suggestion most scholars to the writing have made. Obviously a Greek text could also have been written in later centuries as well as earlier ones. Contrariwise a Coptic original would indicate at the earliest a third-century provenance, but probably even a later one. Can anything be known of the original language and would there be reasons to swerve from the usual hypothesis of a lost Greek text?

As a background, the history of Greek and Coptic in Egypt needs to be taken into account. Roman Egypt was to a large extent bilingual: next to Egyptian, Greek was the other dominant language in the country that was at least understood by a substantial proportion of the population. It was the language of administration, education, and literary culture. This bilinguality is seen in the amount of Greek loan words in Coptic that consequentially cannot be used as evidence since they are part of the Coptic vocabulary.[19] The relationship between Greek and Egyptian languages in Egypt went back over five centuries by the time the Nag Hammadi texts were circulating. There had been contact before between Greek mercenaries serving in pharaonic armies, but on a larger scale, Greek arrived in Egypt with Alexander the Great's army in 332 BC. Whereas Greek influence was screened out from Demotic Egyptian for ideological reasons, the situation changed drastically with Coptic.[20]

After the disappearance of Demotic by the mid-first century CE, Greek was more or less the only language of writing for two centuries at the least. Attempts to develop written Egyptian with an easier alphabet had been made, and the development of Coptic was a conscious activity, first conducted to translate Biblical texts in the third century. This makes the development of the language very much a Christian activity. A variety of different dialects were used in the pre-Constantinian era, but eventually Sahidic became the Christian dialect.[21]

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19 The three official languages in Graeco-Roman Egypt were Greek, Egyptian, and Latin, Latin being used by the Roman magistrates, but holding a marginal position only. Roger S. Bagnall, *Egypt in Late Antiquity* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1993), 231 – 235, 245 – 246; Layton, *A Coptic Grammar*, 3.

20 Marja Vierros, *Bilingual Notaries in Hellenistic Egypt. A Study of Greek as a Second Language* (Collectanea Hellenistica 5; Brussels: Collectanea Hellenistica, 2012), 29 – 35. Also Fowden, *The Egyptian Hermes*, 16 – 18. In his discussion of the letters attributed to Antony the Great and their authenticity, Samuel Rubenson casts doubt on the traditional image of Antony as ignorant of Greek: Rubenson concludes that in bilingual Egypt it would have been more common to have a person with some knowledge of Greek than a person who knew no Greek whatsoever. Samuel Rubenson, *The Letters of St. Antony. Monasticism and the Making of a Saint* (SAC; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995), 38 – 42.

21 Bagnall, *Egypt in Late Antiquity*, 235 – 240. It is usually assumed that the New Testament was translated into Sahidic probably during the third century. Layton, *A Coptic Grammar*, 1 – 3. Alan Bowman, *Egypt after the Pharaohs. 332 BC–AD 642 from Alexander to the Arab Conquest* (London: British Museum Publications, 1986), 129, 198.

For this reason the Coptic text of *Authentikos Logos*, original or translation, could not, in light of current knowledge, derive from much earlier than the fourth century. Pachomius (c. 292 – 346) and Shenoute (d. c. 466) are the first known authors to write literary texts in Coptic. Coptic letters are known, for instance from a Melitian archive dated to the 330s.[22] Manichean texts from Kellis – hymns, prayers etc. – witness Coptic literary activity in the fourth century and exemplify the fact that devotional texts were composed originally in Coptic (in Kellis and in dialect L[9]). Kellis texts suggest a strong Coptic tradition in mid- to late fourth-century literature, first in writings dealing with faith and devotion[23] Iain Gardner has pointed out that although the Manichean Kellis texts are presumably translations of Syriac or Greek originals for the most part, "there must surely have been pressure to at least develop some of the literary tradition in a vibrant indigenous context".[24]

These considerations in view, it appears justified to ask whether *Authentikos Logos* could have been originally written in Coptic. It reveals no strong indicators deriving from the Coptic text itself to assume that it was originally a Greek one. The language of the treatise is idiomatic and does not convey any strong impression of being a translation. The text contains a Coptic pun in the metaphor of mixing of wheat and chaff: "If chaff (ⲦⲰϨ) is mixed (ⲦⲰϨ) with wheat, it is not the chaff (ⲦⲰϨ) but the wheat that is polluted" (25:12 – 13).[25] There is also an unusual Greek term that plays with the double meaning of the word σῶμα, namely Ⲙ̄ⲠⲢⲀⲅⲘⲀⲦⲉⲨⲦⲎⲤ Ⲛ̄Ⲛ̄ⲤⲰⲘⲀ, that can be translated as "slave traders" or "traders of bodies" (32:18). The compound itself is not a common one and I have not found it in Greek texts. For a Greek text, no Coptic pun can be assumed, whereas a Coptic text may contain a Greek pun, or a pun with originally Greek words that could have been produced by a person fluent in both languages for an audience with

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22 Emmel, "The Coptic Gnostic Texts", 39. For letters, see Bagnall, *Egypt in Late Antiquity*, 240 and Plate 7 after p. 180.

23 Iain Gardner has questioned the view that the development of the Coptic language was only gaining ground in the mid-fourth century. Kellis texts are both literary and documentary, witnessing life and faith of several generations of the Manichean community from the mid- until the late fourth century. They consist of psalms, prayers, and liturgical material, from Mani's writings to private letters, legal, and economic documentary material. The dating of Kellis' finds is based on ceramics and coins found on the site. Gardner suggests Manichean presence in Kellis beginning from 320s to 330s, but opts for a later date from c. 355 – 380 in the introduction to the second volume. The economic data indicates the early 350s as terminus post quem, and the site appears to have been deserted before the end of the century. Gardner (ed.), *Kellis 1*, x–xiii and Gardner (ed.), *Kellis 2*, 3 – 8.

24 Gardner (ed.), *Kellis 2*, 5.

25 Crum, Walter Ewing, *A Coptic Dictionary* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1939), 453 – 454. Already Jan Zandee noted the pun in his review of Ménard's commentary, and contemplated the option that if the pun is not a coincidence, it could point at a Coptic origin. Zandee, "L'Authentikos Logos", 5. Clemens Scholten criticised Zandee's suggestion of Coptic origins for being based on evidence that is too narrow. Scholten, *Martyrium und Sophiamythos*, 133 note 124. Contrary evidence appears to be even more scarce!

knowledge of both languages. Another possible instance of skilful Coptic is found on the final page of the writing (34:32 – 35:16) where an anaphora concludes the text: perfect tense clauses follow one another and illustrate the soul's reaching of her goal in a poem.[26] The anaphora structure is often used in Coptic sermons: an extensive can be found in a sermon attributed to Theophilus of Alexandria (c. 345 – 412) on the cross and the two thieves.[27]

These notions remain inconclusive as to settling any question of whether *Authentikos Logos* was written originally in Coptic. However, it remains that the Coptic text is a fluent one, and the only version of the writing that we have. Also, although Greek has been considered the original language, that presumption is likewise not certain in the sense that no particular piece of evidence supports it. The evidence stemming from the text – the fluency of the Coptic, the two puns and the anaphora – indicate that *Authentikos Logos* is either a very good translation, or could even be an originally Coptic text.

As already suggested above, there is one particular issue that comes close to the language question, and that concerns the time when the writing was first written. If, for instance, one were to accept Roelof van den Broek's thesis that the text stems from Alexandrian, Platonist-Christian circles around 180 – 200,[28] a Greek original would have to be assumed. However, as will be argued in this work, the dating has to be revised: in light of evidence discussed in chapters III to VI, *Authentikos Logos* is a later text, stemming from the late third or the fourth century. When the dating moves forward this much, a Greek original is no more the only option. However, before moving on to the question of the date of composition, another aspect that comes close to the reflection on the language is considered, and that is the genre of the writing.

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26 I owe Alin Suciu thanks for bringing this to my attention:
ⲦⲮⲨⲬⲎ ⲆⲈ ⲚⲦⲞⲤ ⲚⲖⲞⲄⲒⲔⲎ
ⲚⲦⲀⲤϨⲈⲤⲦ̄<Ꞓ> ⲈⲤϢⲒⲚⲈ
ⲀⲤⲬⲒ ⲤⲞⲞⲨⲚ ⲈⲠⲚⲞⲨⲦⲈ·
ⲀⲤⲘⲞⲔϨⲤ̄ ⲈⲤϨⲀⲦϨ̄Ⲧ ⲈⲤⲢ̄ⲦⲀⲖⲀⲒⲠⲰⲢⲒ ϨⲘ ⲠⲤⲰⲘⲀ·
ⲈⲤϨ̂ⲒⲦⲈ ⲚⲚⲈⲤⲞⲨⲈⲢⲎⲦⲈ ϨⲒⲢⲰⲞⲨ ⲚⲚⲈⲨⲀⲄⲄⲈⲖⲒⲤⲦⲎⲤ
ⲈⲤⲬⲒ ⲤⲞⲞⲨⲚ ⲈⲠⲒⲀⲦⲚ̄ⲠⲦϤ̄·
ⲀⲤϬⲒⲚⲈ ⲚⲦⲈⲤⲀⲚⲀⲦⲞⲖⲎ
ⲀⲤⲘⲞⲦⲚⲈⲤ ϨⲢⲀⲒ̈ ϨⲘ̄ ⲠⲈⲦⲘⲞⲦⲚ̄ ⲘⲘⲞϤ·
ⲀⲤⲚⲞⲬⲤ̄ ϨⲢⲀⲒ̈ ϨⲘ ⲠⲘⲀ Ⲛ̄ϢⲈⲖⲈⲈⲦ·
ⲀⲤⲞⲨⲰⲘ ⲈⲂⲞⲖ ϨⲘ̄ ⲠⲀⲒⲠⲚⲞⲚ ⲈⲦⲈⲚⲈⲤϨⲔⲀⲈⲒⲦ ⲘⲘⲞϤ·
ⲀⲤⲬⲒ ⲈⲂⲞⲖ ϨⲚ̄ ⲦⲢⲞⲪⲎ Ⲛ̄ⲚⲀⲦⲘⲞⲨ·
ⲀⲤϬⲒⲚⲈ Ⲙ̄ⲠⲈⲦⲤ̄ϢⲒⲚⲈ Ⲛ̄ⲤⲰϤ·
ⲀⲤⲬⲒ Ⲙ̄ⲦⲞⲚ ϨⲀ ⲚⲈⲤϨⲒⲤⲈ·

27 Alin Suciu, "Ps.-Theophili Alexandrini *Sermo de Cruce et Latrone* (GPG 2622): Edition of Pierpoint Morgan M595 with Parallels and Translation" in *ZAC* 16 (2012), 181 – 225. For anaphoras in two later Coptic sermons, see Mark Sheridan, "Coptic Sermons" in James E. Goehring/ Janet A. Timbie (ed.), *The World of Early Egyptian Christianity. Language, Literature, and Social Context. Essays in Honour of David W. Johnson* (Washington D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2007), 25 – 48, on p. 31 – 33, 36 – 37.

28 Van den Broek, "The Authentikos Logos", 230 – 234.

1.3 Genre

The practical purpose of *Authentikos Logos* is to provide, through the story of the soul, instruction for personal progress and ascent, in a way that would captivate the recipient's attention. The mythical soul story forms a narrative framework, into which are bound metaphors, scriptural allusions, sections told in first person plural, virtue and vice lists (23:29 – 34 and 30:26 – 31:7), and criticisms of the ignorant people and the fool (33:4 – 34:32). The story proceeds in the way a speech does: phases of the soul story follow one another, with advice and teaching introduced with catchwords or phrases at suitable places. The polemical passages complement one another, and the description of the beginning that starts the text is later recalled when a new topic is introduced that moves the story onwards. *Authentikos Logos* is usually taken as a homily, or "homiletic tract", which is a reasonable assumption,[29] although some typical characteristics of homilies are not evident in it. For instance, it does not explicitly refer to biblical passages or characters.[30] The title at the end of the treatise that labels it as a λόγος, which in the Christian context can be used as a technical term for a homily or sermon, is indecisive, since the word has a very broad range of meanings.[31]

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29 Characterised as "a richly metaphorical exposition of the origin, condition, and the ultimate destiny of the soul", with the λόγος in the title understood "in the sense of several Hermetic and other more or less contemporary treatises as 'teaching, doctrine, discourse' or even 'tractate'" by MacRae, "A Nag Hammadi Tractate", 471 – 472; MacRae, "Authoritative Teaching", 257. According to Berliner Arbeitskreis, *Authentikos Logos* is a "homiletisch-didaktische Behandlung": Berliner Arbeitskreis, "'Authentikos Logos'. Die dritte Schrift", 251; Ménard recognised both homiletic and didactic features, Ménard, *L'Authentikos Logos*, 2, and Ménard, "Gnose païenne", 288.
In Kurt Rudolph's list of the Nag Hammadi writings, *Authentikos Logos* is characterised as "eine Predigt über das Schicksal der Seele", Kurt Rudolph, *Die Gnosis*, 51. Clemens Scholten recognised the didactic and paedagogical take on the text, but did not express any opinion on its form or genre. Scholten, *Martyrium und Sophiamythos*, 121. Scopello has noted that it "recalls … homilies with a didactic goal", but she concludes that it is "a tractate written with the goal of simplifying and proclaiming the Gnostic myth of the soul", Scopello, "Authoritative Discourse", 380 – 382, but she has also approached *Authentikos Logos* as a novel. Scopello, "Jewish and Greek Heroines", 156. Heyden and Kulawik start with an approach similar to Funk's by viewing *Authentikos Logos* as "eine homiletisch-didaktische Abhandlung über die Herkunft die Seele, ihre irdische Existenz und ihre Heimkehr in das Lichtreich", but they note that whereas the first part (p. 22 – 25,27) is rather theoretical in character, the second part is more situation-bound and homiletically directed (25:27 – end). Heyden/Kulawik, "Einleitung: *Authentikos Logos*", 341 – 342.
30 For example the *Exegesis on the Soul* quotes and discusses several biblical texts (*Exeg. Soul* 129:7 – 131:13), and another Nag Hammadi homily, the *Second Treatise of the Great Seth*, mentions Christ (*Treat. Seth* 49:27, 59:26) and other figures (Adam: 53:9, Simon of Cyrene: 56:11 etc.) as well as crucifixion (55:30 – 56:13), and the text directly following *Authentikos Logos* in Codex VI, the *Concept of our Great Power*, refers to Noah and the flood in 38:21 – 39:2.
31 It has a particular meaning of speech, or oral delivery, and may indicate different kinds of

In Codex VI the Hermetic *Asclepius* has the word λόγος in its title.[32] However, since Hermetic *logoi* are written as dialogues between a teacher, usually Hermes, and a pupil, there are no grounds to compare *Authentikos Logos* primarily with Hermetic texts. Of the three other Nag Hammadi writings with *logos* in title, the *Second Treatise of the Great Seth* (NHC VII, 2) is usually considered a homily or a speech, whereas the *Treatise on Resurrection* and the *Trimorphic Protennoia* are not homilies.[33] Moreover, three other Nag Hammadi writings – the *Interpretation of Knowledge*,[34] the *Gospel of Truth*,[35]

narratives or speeches, but more generally it can mean many things that have to do with thought, expressing thoughts, or reasoning. Liddell/Scott/Jones, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 1057–1059. Lampe, *A Patristic Greek Lexicon*, 807–811. See also Sheridan, "Coptic Sermons", 28–29. Scholars have proposed different classifications of ancient oral deliveries. George A. Kennedy, "The Genres of Rhetoric" in Stanley E. Porter (ed.), *Handbook of Classical Rhetoric in the Hellenistic Period 330 B.C.–A.D. 400* (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 43–50; Folker Siegert, "Homily and Panegyrical Sermon" in Porter (ed.), *Handbook of Classical Rhetoric*, 421–443, on p. 421–422. For criticism of the homily genre, see Tite, *Valentinian Ethics*, 187–188.

32 The current title, *Discourse on the Eighth and Ninth,* is taken from the titles mentioned in the writing (53:24–26 and 61:21–22). Dirkse/Brashler/Parrott, "Discourse on the Eighth and Ninth" in Parrott (ed.), *Nag Hammadi Codices V,2–5 and VI*, 341–342.

33 The Coptic title is ⲆⲈⲨⲦⲈⲢⲞⲤ ⲖⲞⲄⲞⲤ ⲦⲞⲨ ⲘⲈⲄⲀⲗⲞⲨ ⲤⲎⲐ. Gregory Riley has characterised it as ▪ "Christian gnostic homily in the form of a speech of the ascended Christ to his followers", Gregory Riley, "Second Treatise of the Great Seth: Introduction" in Douglas Parrott (ed.), *Nag Hammadi Codex VII* (NHMS 30. Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1996), 129–144. Meyer takes it more broadly as a speech, Marvin Meyer, "The Second Discourse of Greath Seth" in Meyer (ed.), *The Nag Hammadi Scriptures*, 473–486, on p. 473–476. *Treatise on the Resurrection* (ⲡⲖⲞⲄⲞⲤ ⲈⲦⲂⲈ ⲦⲀⲚⲀⲤⲦⲀⲤⲓⲤ, NHC I,4), also known as *Letter to Rheginus*, which contains plenty of diatribe, is usually considered to belong to the letter genre, although that form may be a literary device. Malcolm L. Peel, "The Treatise on the Resurrection" in Harold W. Attridge (ed.), *The Nag Hammadi Codex I (The Jung Codex). Introduction, Texts, Translations, Indices* (NHS 22. Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1985), 123–146, on p. 128–130; Einar Thomassen, "The Treatise on Resurrection" in Meyer (ed.), *The Nag Hammadi Scriptures*, 49–51, on p. 49. The *Trimorphic Protennoia* (ⲡⲖⲞⲄⲞⲤ ⲚⲦⲈⲡⲓⲫⲀⲚⲓⲀ ⲅ ⲡⲢⲰⲦⲈⲚⲚⲞⲓⲀ ⲦⲢⲓⲘⲞⲢⲫⲞⲤ ⲅ ⲀⲡⲓⲀⲅⲢⲀⲫⲎ ⲡⲀⲦⲢⲞⲅⲢⲀⲫⲞⲤ ⲈⲚ ⲅⲚⲰⲤⲈⲓ ⲦⲈⲖⲈⲓⲀ, NHC XIII,1) is an aretalogy in three parts according to John D. Turner, "Introduction NHC XIII,1*: "Trimorphic Protennoia 35*,1–50*24" in Charles W. Hedrick (ed.), *Nag Hammadi Codices XI, XII, XIII* (NHS 28. Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1990), 371–401, on p. 375–376 and John D. Turner, "Three Forms of First Thought" in Meyer (ed.), *The Nag Hammadi Scriptures*, 715–735, on p. 715–719, and Turner, *Sethian Gnosticism*, 97–98.

34 Elaine Pagels, "Interpretation of Knowledge" in Charles Hedrick (ed.), *Nag Hammadi Codices XI, XII, XIII*, 21–30, on p. 22; Einar Thomassen, "The Interpretation of Knowledge" in Meyer (ed.), *The Nag Hammadi Scriptures*, 651–653; Uwe-Karsten Plisch (ed.), *Auslegung der Erkenntnis (Nag-Hammadi-Codex XI,1)* (TUGAL 142. Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1996), 146. There is no unanimity that the *Interpretation of Knowledge* indeed is a homily. Emmel is doubtful, and considers the writing instead as "something more akin to a philosophical epistle" and sees it best to group it with two Valentinian epistles, namely, *Treatise on Resurrection* (NHC I,4) and Ptolemy's *Letter to Flora*. Stephen Emmel, "Exploring the Pathway That Leads from Paul to Gnosticism" in Martin Fassnacht et al (ed.), *Die Weisheit – Ursprünge und Rezeption. Festschrift für Karl Löning zum 65. Geburtstag* (NTAbh 44. Münster: Aschendorff Verlag, 2003), 257–276, on p. 265. Ismo Dunderberg considers the *Interpretation of Knowledge* a representative of deliberative rhetoric, Dunderberg, *Beyond Gnosticism*, 153–154.

and the *Exegesis on the Soul*[36] – tend to be approached as homilies, but they are not labelled *logoi*.

Despite these complications, the flow and structure of the text create an impression even of orality and give ground to the assumption that *Authentikos Logos* is a speech of some kind, or intended as such. The text has a practical approach with focus on exhortation and paraenesis. It begins with a description of the soul's descent that alludes to the mythical beginning, perhaps referring to interpretations of cosmogony, but it soon moves into ethical instruction as the soul story proceeds. As noted in Chapter I, throughout the text third person singular or plural is used in narrative sections, but first person plural appears in 26:20 – 27:25; 29:3 – 17 and 30:5 – 6, which indicates an address and instruction directed at a certain audience: the first person plural creates an assumed connection between the author/speaker and audience. Second person is used in 30:28 – 31:5, but no in a way that could be considered belonging to a diatribe or discourse.

Several other details convey the impression that certain audience are being addressed. For instance, the metaphor of wheat and chaff ends in the comment: "So, we have spoken of all these matters" (25:26 – 27). The comment sums up the discussion thus far, after which the text returns to a description of the beginning of all and the pre-existence of the Father that it started with, and then proceeds to the contest in the world and its meaning for those striving for ascent (25:27 – 33). On two occasions, reference to "secure storages" is made in a way that suggests a catchword that is twice employed.[37] In the fishing parable the fishing tools change as with the flow of thought or even speech, from nets to dragnets to a hook (29:5, 11, 21).

Paraenetic conventions are employed in the text, and as such can be named for instance the reminder of the two ways between which everyone must choose or the comment that wine debauches (24:10 – 17). Several of the metaphors contain a paraenetic purpose and are used as *exempla*, like that of the wheat and chaff on page 25, or the fishing parable.[38] Lists of vices or

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35 H. Attridge/G.W. MacRae, "The Gospel of Truth: Introduction" in Attridge (ed.), *The Nag Hammadi Codex I*, 55 – 81, on p. 66 – 67. Thomassen characterises it as a "discourse on the gospel": Einar Thomassen, "The Gospel of Truth" in Meyer (ed.), *The Nag Hammadi Scriptures*, 31 – 35, on p. 31.

36 The *Exegesis on the Soul*: see discussion in III.1. ⲈⲜⲈⲅⲎⲤⲓⲤ does appear as the title in Coptic homiletic compositions that were intended "somehow for liturgical use". Sheridan, "Coptic Sermons", 28 – 29.

37 ⲠⲈⲚⲀⲠⲞⲐⲎⲔⲎ ⲈⲨⲞⲣⲈⲜ in 25:25 – 26 and ⲦⲈⲤⲀⲠⲞⲐⲎⲔⲎ ⲈⲦⲀⲣⲈⲜ in 28:26 – 27.

38 Philip Tite rightly finds on pages 23 – 25 "an interwoven series of ethical lists, *exempla*, and mythic discourse", but I disagree with his opinion that *Authentikos Logos* is a Valentinian work. Also, the paralleling of Zeno's/Stoic four passions and the vices in *Authentikos Logos* is not as straightforward as Tite suggests: would indeed the material soul, hatred, envy, and desire have reminded the ancient audiences of Zeno's sorrow, fear, greed, and lust? See Tite, *Valentinian Ethics*, 172 – 174, and Malherbe, Abraham J., *Moral Exhortation. A Greco-Roman Sourcebook* (LEC. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1986), 138 – 141, for examples.

temptations (23:30 and 30:26 – 31:7), and the image of athletic contest (p. 26) are employed, all being common motifs of paraenesis. The section on the third and second last pages of the text where the foolish person and ignorant people are criticised is exhortative, and could be read as a final exhortation before the closing of the homily.[39]

Authentikos Logos closes with a doxology, "To the one belongs the glory, might and revelation for ever and ever. Amen" (35:19 – 22).[40] Doxologies were used to conclude homilies, and this indicates that those who copied *Authentikos Logos* into Codex VI understood it as one.[41] It is uncertain whether the doxology is an original part of *Authentikos Logos*, if a prior version existed. Some other Nag Hammadi doxologies resemble it – *Prayer of the Apostle Paul* (NHC I,1) and the *Exegesis on the Soul* (NHC II,6), whilst the doxologies of the *Tripartite Tractate* (NHC I,5), the *Hypostasis of the Archons* (NHC II,4) and the *Book of Thomas the Contender* (NHC II,7) differ more – all suggesting perhaps that they were added when the codices were copied.[42] The doxology resembles the doxology that came to be attached to the Our Father prayer, of which one version is found in the Sahidic New Testament.[43]

As already noted, *Authentikos Logos* also lacks some characteristics of a homily. No direct references to Biblical texts are made, which makes it different from some early Christian as well as later Coptic homilies. The latter often focus on biblical texts but also considerably on angels, the Virgin Mary, and miracles performed by saints.[44] Yet ancient homilies were not always based

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39 Philip Tite considers the comparison with pagans as "negative exempla", Tite, *Valentinian Ethics*, 161.

40 ЄΡЄΠΟΥЄΙΝ ЄΤΠΡΡΙωΟΥ Є2ΡΑΪ ЄΧωϹ ЄΜΑϥϨωΤΠ· ΠΑΪ ЄΤЄ Πωϥ ΠЄ ΠЄΟΟΥ ΜΝ ΠΑΜΑ2ΤЄ ΜΝ ΠΟΥωΝ2 ЄΒΟλ ωΑ ЄΝЄ2 ΝΤЄ ΝΙЄΝЄ2 2ΑΜΗΝ.

41 Scholten, *Martyrium und Sophiamythos*, 133. Doxologies indicate a liturgical context. Kurt Niederwimmer thus interprets the doxology that is added to the Lord's prayer in the *Didache* 8:2 – 3. Kurt Niederwimmer, *The Didache: A Commentary* (Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1998), 134 – 135.

42 The *Prayer of Apostle Paul* (NHC I,1) ends in the words ΠωΚ [Π]Є ΠЄΜΑ2Τ[Є] Α[Υω] ΠЄΑΥ ΑΥω ΤЄΚϨΟΜ[Ο]λΟΓΗϹΙϹ ΜΝ ΤΜΝΤΝ[Α]6 ωΑ ЄΝΗ2Є ÑЄΝΗ2Є [2ΑΜΗΝ] ("For yours is the power and the glory and the praise and the greatness For ever and ever. Amen."), *Pr. Paul* B 3 – 6. After this follows the title and words "In peace. Christ is holy." The *Exegesis on the Soul* ends with a call to repentance combined with a doxology: ЄωωΠ[Є] ΤΝΑΡΜЄΤΑΝΟЄΙ ΝΑΜЄ ΠΝΟΥΤЄ ΝΑϹωΤΜ ЄΡΟΝ Π2ΑΡωϨΗΤ ΑΥω ΠΑ ΠΝΟ6 ÑΝΑ ΝΑЄΙ ЄΤЄ Πωϥ ΠЄ ΠЄΟΟΥ ωΑ ΝΙЄΝЄ2 ÑЄΝЄ2 2ΑΜΗΝ. Also in the *Exegesis on the Soul* a title follows. *Exeg. Soul* 137:22 – 26.

43 Several different versions of the doxology appear in later manuscripts to the Gospel of Matthew; in the Sahidic version of the Gospel of Matthew it runs ΧЄ ΤωΚ ΤЄ Τ6ΟΜ ΜΝ ΠЄΟΟΥ ωΑ ΝΙЄΝЄ2 2ΑΜΗΝ (Matt 6:13). The doxology in *Didache* 8:2 – 3 is similar (except that there is no "amen") to Coptic doxologies of the Gospel of Matthew. Niederwimmer, *The Didache*, 136 – 138.

44 Sheridan, "Coptic Sermons", 26, referring to Müller Caspar Detlef Gustav, *Die alte koptische Predigt. Versuch eines Überblicks* (Thesis. Heidelberg, 1954), 4 – 21. See e.g. Coptic homilies in David Brakke et al. (ed.), *Homiletica from the Pierpoint Morgan Library. Seven Coptic Homilies Attributed to Basil the Great, John Chrysostom, and Euodius of Rome* (CSCO Scriptores Coptici 43 & 44; Louvain: Peeters, 1991). For example "Second Homily on St. Michael Archangel" is

on a Biblical text, and it cannot always be determined whether a scriptural reading would have preceded, or were presupposed.[45] The text certainly contains several allusions to the scriptures.

Apart from a Christian setting that a homily indicates, it could be asked if some other context might be assumed for *Authentikos Logos*, such as a school setting. The writing clearly provides guidance for a way of life, and philosophy in the ancient world provided such guidance. Some popular philosophical terms and themes in the text (the soul, its descent and ascent, emotions ἐπιθυμία, λύπη, and ἡδονή) could be taken to suggest that direction.[46] The contents and themes will be analysed in the following chapters, but as was noted above, dialogue form is missing. In a school setting or in popular philosophical instruction, letters included, diatribe would often be employed, usually with the focus of influencing the way people act (moral choices) rather than think (reflection, theory). Although there is no typical structure to a diatribe, they frequently contain dialogues. Diatribe indicates interaction and connection between teacher and student, or speaker and recipient, wherefore the second person singular is often employed, and diatribes tend to be vivid and conversational.[47] *Authentikos Logos* does not easily fit that category. Its tones are not primarily conversational in the sense that they would expect a strong answer from the discourse partner, and there are no rhetorical questions. The soul story and the metaphors used (gentle son, wheat and chaff, family, etc.) are told in the more distant third person. Second person singular is used to exhort, and when the first person plural appears in connection with contest and fishing images, it is there more to exhort than to engage in the exchange of ideas. This is why the overall structure and various sub-genres employed within the writing most naturally direct at seeing the text as homily or other instruction, even an oral one.

attributed to Basil of Caesarea. However, these homilies are later, post-Basil and post-Chrysostom. See Greer, in Brakke et al (ed.), *Homiletica*, xxiii. For differences, see also Shenoute's discourses and sermons, and a fragment of a discourse on spiritual education in Alla I. Elenskaya (ed.), *The Literary Coptic Manuscripts in the A.S. Pushkin State Fine Arts Museum in Moscow* (VCSup 18. Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1994), 214 – 337.

45 Siegert, "Homily and Panegyrical Sermon", 424. Sheridan, "Coptic Sermons", 25 n. 1 refers to the distinction between text-based and thematic homilies in Christian antiquity.

46 Compare, on the other hand, with e.g. Maximus of Tyre, whose approach is clearly philosophical, e.g. Maximus, *Oration* 1.4 and 9.6.

47 Stanley K. Stowers, "The Diatribe" in David E. Aune (ed.), *Greco-Roman Literature and the New Testament. Selected Forms and Genres* (SBLSBS 21; Atlanta, Ga.: Scholars Press, 1988), 71 – 83; Malherbe, *Moral Exhortation*, 129 – 130; Tite, *Valentinian Ethics*, 191 recognises rhetorical questions as a literary aspect typical of paraenetic texts. See for example Rom 2, Epistle to James, and Epictetus *Diss.* 1.29.5, on the last, see Niko Huttunen, *Paul and Epictetus on Law. A Comparison* (Library of New Testament Studies 405; London: T&T Clark, 2009), 63. Paul may exclaim "μὴ γένοιτο!" (e.g. Rom 3:4, 6), use an imaginary interlocutor (e.g. Rom 2:17 – 29), apply second person singular (e.g. Rom 2:1 – 5; Rom 9:19 – 21), or ask rhetorical questions (Rom 2:21 – 23; 1 Cor 12:29 – 30). Christian homilies in antiquity could and would employ diatribe and its stylistic devices. Stowers, "The Diatribe", 82.

2. Date and Historical Background

How does one date a text that contains no obvious clues, dates, etc. that would indicate a time, even place of writing? *Authentikos Logos,* as countless other ancient texts, does not provide any direct information for when it was composed. However, we do have a rough estimate of when the manuscript was copied, and may read the text in the light of what was known of Christianity and/in Egypt in the third and fourth centuries, and use this information to better understand the writing, its meaning, and its position within its wider context.

2.1 The Question of the Date

The aim of this study is to re-evaluate and discard the previously suggested earlier date for *Authentikos Logos* and consider evidence that would point at a later date. While Roelof van den Broek provided specific arguments for a suggestion that the writing originates some time between 180 and the first decades of the third century, it is suggested here that the writing must be considerably later.[48] Several features within the text suit a late third- to fourth-century context better than an earlier one, and even the fifth century cannot be excluded. The strongest indication is the story of the soul itself and the soul's epithets, as well as the way the writing focuses on combat against vices and an ascetic way of life, discussed in chapters III – VI.

Other Codex VI texts contain clues that may point at a third rather than second century, or even later. This does not necessarily mean that *Authentikos Logos* needs a similar date of origin, but these notions should not be entirely ignored. The *Acts of Peter and the Twelve Apostles* has been suggested to stem from the middle of the third century.[49] Platonic influences in the *Thunder* (NHC VI, 2) may also indicate a third-century context.[50] Perhaps this also applies to the excerpt from Plato's *Republic* (NHC VI, 5), since this section of the *Republic* was apparently popular from the third to the fifth centuries CE,

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48 Although several scholars have suggested that *Authentikos Logos* was composed some time between the late second and the early third century, only Roelof van den Broek has provided extensive arguments to support his view. Van den Broek, "The Authentikos Logos", 206 – 234.

49 Andrea Lorenzo Molinari, *The Acts of Peter and the Twelve Apostles (NHC VI,1). Allegory, Ascent, and Ministry in the Wake of the Decian Persecution* (SBLDS 174; Atlanta, Ga.: Society of Biblical Literature, 2000), 204 sets the date to the years immediately after the Decian persecution (249 – 251).

50 *Thunder* is usually dated to the end of the second, beginning of the third century, but Poirier sees affinities to Platonism "known to us from Porphyry and Iamblichus", which seems to indicate that a somewhat later date should be considered (both Porphyry and Iamblichus were born mid-third century). Paul-Hubert Poirier, "Thunder" in Meyer (ed.), *The Nag Hammadi Scriptures*, 367 – 371, on p. 369.

and it has been suggested that it could come from handbook material.[51] The *Concept of our Great Power* (NHC VI, 4) is a composite, with the youngest parts possibly deriving from the fourth century.[52] The Hermetic treatises in Codex VI must have existed prior to their translation; the philosophical Hermetica of the *Corpus Hermeticum* are usually dated to the period from the late first to the late third centuries CE.[53] Mahé dates the view of the downfall of Egyptian religion in *Asclepius* to the late third century and sees there an allusion to the demise of Egyptian religion during that time, although he points out that the literary genre of the misfortune of Egypt under foreign rule is much older.[54]

The Nag Hammadi codices are usually taken to have been copied around the mid- to the latter half of the fourth century. This date points at the date of the codex as a compilation, not the origin of the writings: in between fall phases of transmission, redaction, and translation of their contents.[55] The dating is based on their covers, in which recycled material is used: some of the codex covers contain receipts and letter fragments, and two receipts contain dates, one from 339, the other, 342.[56] These dates provide the *terminus post*

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51 So Meyer, who follows Schenke (*Nag Hammadi Deutsch*) in noting that the section was also cited by Eusebius of Cesarea in *Prep. Ev.* 12.46.2 – 6, and was alluded to by Plotinus and Proclus. Meyer, "Excerpt from Plato's Republic" in Meyer (ed.), *The Nag Hammadi Scriptures*, 403 – 405. The Plato passage from *Rep.* 588a–589b illustrates the three different aspects of the soul – the many-headed beast, the lion, and the human being, all moulded into one and competing for domination.

52 The *Concept of our Great Power* is usually approached as a composite, e. g. Frederik Wisse/ Francis E. Williams, "The Concept of Our Great Power" in Parrott (ed.), *Nag Hammadi Codices V,2 – 5 and VI*, 292; Scopello "The Concept of Our Great Power" in Meyer (ed.), *The Nag Hammadi Scriptures*, 391 – 393, on p. 393. Francis E. Williams has suggested that the wicked "archon of the west" (*Great Pow.* 44:13 – 31) refers to Julian the Apostate (361 – 363), which would mean that the extant version derives from the time shortly after Julian's death in the 360s. Francis E. Williams, *Mental Perception. A Commentary on NHC VI,4 The Concept of Our Great Power* (NHMS 51; Leiden: Brill, 2001), 151 – 157. The perplexing expression ΝΙⲀΝϨΟΜΟΙΟΝ (*Great Pow.* 40:7) has been read possibly as a reference to Anomeans, which also would suggest a date in the fourth century. Wisse/Williams, "The Concept of Our Great Power", 292, 304 n. to line 7. Later Williams has disagreed: Williams, *Mental Perception*, 97 – 98.

53 Fowden, *The Egyptian Hermes*, 11.

54 Jean-Pierre Mahé, "Excerpt from the Perfect Discourse" in Meyer (ed.), *The Nag Hammadi Scriptures*, 425 – 429 on p. 425 – 426. Mahé dates *Disc 8 – 9* (NHC VI,6) to the second century CE: Jean-Pierre Mahé, "The Discourse on the Eight and the Ninth" in Meyer (ed.), *The Nag Hammadi Scriptures*, 409 – 412 on p. 410. He does not provide a date for the *Pr. Thanks.* (NHC VI,7): Jean-Pierre Mahé, "The Prayer of Thanksgiving" in Meyer (ed.), *The Nag Hammadi Scriptures*, 419 – 421.

55 Emmel, "The Coptic Gnostic Texts", 34 – 35. Krause and Labib suggested middle of the fourth century, Krause/Labib, *Gnostische und hermetische Schriften*, 26. Khosroyev argues for the second half of the fourth century, and not earlier: Alexandr Khosroyev, *Die Bibliothek von Nag Hammadi. Einige Probleme des Christentums in Ägypten während der ersten Jahrhunderte* (Arbeiten zum spätantiken und koptischen Ägypten; Altenberge: Oros Verlag, 1995), 23.

56 J.W.B. Barns/G.M. Browne/J.C. Shelton (ed.), *Nag Hammadi Codices. Greek and Coptic Papyri from the Cartonnage of the Covers* (NHS 16; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1981). The covers of Codex VI contain no dated materials.

quem for the production of the codices. Stephen Emmel has adopted a remarkably cautious view as regards the dating of the Nag Hammadi codices, and he has emphasised the uncertainty of knowing how long after the dates in these papyri it would have taken for the codices to be manufactured: "A year? Ten years? Fifty Years? A Century?" He is not averse to the idea of a fifth century dating for the codices. This is a justified view. Admittedly, as he says, there is no knowing how long it took for the recycled papyri to be reused, and how long it took for the blank codices to be copied.[57] A late date for the "Nag Hammadi Codices phase" is a possibility, but in all likelihood some version of *Authentikos Logos* existed before it was copied as one of the several texts in the codex. Despite Emmel's caution, it makes sense to begin from the late third- and fourth-century contexts and consider how *Authentikos Logos* would fit into ideas and views prevalent then.

One possible reason for why the Nag Hammadi codices were hidden has been sought – not entirely satisfactorily – in the ecclesiastical authorities' attempts to unify Christian faith and the church as an institution in Egypt, and more precisely, in attempts to bring monasteries and their members under episcopal authority. There are still many unanswered questions that concern the relationship between the authorities and monastics, the circulation of the Nag Hammadi writings, and the general topic of early Christianity in Egypt. This work, although focusing on one text, will approach it with a simultaneous interest in this wider context. Next, an overview of early Egyptian Christianity and its traditions are sketched in order to understand the context that should be kept in mind whilst studying the literary contents of the writing.

2.2 Christianity in Late Ancient Egypt

Eusebius attributes the arrival of Christianity in Egypt to Mark the evangelist: "It is said that this Mark was the first one sent to Egypt to proclaim the Gospel that he himself had composed, and the first one to establish churches in Alexandria herself".[58] Eusebius also mentions a characteristic for which Egyptian Christianity became famed, its ascetic men and women, whose "asceticism was most philosophical and vehement" – and suggests that Philo (d. 45 CE) already described their way of life.[59] Yet Eusebius is not very

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57 Emmel, "The Coptic Gnostic Texts", 38 – 39. See also Lundhaug, *Images of Rebirth*, 8, and Hugo Lundhaug, "Shenoute of Atripe and the Nag Hammadi Codex II" in Christoph Markschies/ Johannes van Oort (ed.), *Zugänge zur Gnosis: Akten zur Tagung der Patristischen Arbeits-gemeinschaft vom 02.–05.01.2011 in Berlin-Spandau* (Leuven: Peeters Publishers, 2013), 201 – 226.

58 Τοῦτον δὲ Μάρκον πρῶτόν φασιν ἐπὶ τῆς Αἰγύπτου στειλάμενον, τὸ εὐαγγέλιον, ὃ δὴ καὶ συνε-γράψατο, κηρῦξαι, ἐκκλησίας τε πρῶτον ἐπ' αὐτῆς Ἀλεξανδρείας συστήσασθαι. Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* 2.16.1.

59 Τοσαύτη δ' ἄρα τῶν αὐτόθι πεπιστευκότων πληθὺς ἀνδρῶν τε καὶ γυναικῶν ἐκ πρώτης ἐπιβολῆς

knowledgeable about Christianity in Egypt prior to Clement of Alexandria, although there is a kernel of truth in Eusebius' view: Christianity probably came to Egypt from Palestine. It is likely that the first Christians in the country were found amongst the Jewish population of Alexandria, which had links to Jews and the first followers of Jesus in Palestine.

The separation between Christians and Jews perhaps connects with the aftermath of the revolt of Egyptian Jews in 115–117 (and the Bar Kochba Revolt in Palestine in 132–135),[60] although it is necessary to understand that the process of formation of Christian and (Rabbinic) Jewish identities was a long and hazy one.[61] In the second half of the second century Christians become more visible in Egypt, famously in the figures of Basilides who taught under Hadrian and Antoninus Pius (117–161), Clement (c. 150–215), and Origen of Alexandria (185–254), who all were teachers and scholars, Origen the head of the catechetical school of Alexandria.[62] The list must also include Valentinus, who taught in Rome but was originally from Egypt and may have returned to the country at some point.[63]

Alexandria held a prominent position as the capital city of Graeco-Roman Egypt, and traditionally scholars considered it almost a separate island of Greek culture in Egypt that for a large extent stood apart from native countryside and other cities of Roman Egypt. Alexandria was also traditionally treated as the capital city of late ancient Egyptian Christianity, and particularly its scholarly traditions were seen as different from the more simple Coptic faith. Earlier scholarship was in the habit of drawing a stark contrast between the sophisticated and learned Alexandrian theological traditions, based on Greek philosophical heritage and exemplified in such persons as Clement of Alexandria and Origen, and unlearned, simple, Egyptian-speaking monastics. This picture of Alexandria in isolation from the rest of Egypt has been proved one-sided.[64] Also papyrus finds indicate that in the second and third centuries Christianity had spread all over Egypt, cities

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συνέστη δι' ἀσκήσεως φιλοσοφωτάτης τε καὶ σφοδροτάτης, ὡς καὶ γραφῆς αὐτῶν ἀξιῶσαι τὰς διατριβὰς καὶ τὰς συνηλύσεις τά τε συμπόσια καὶ πᾶσαν τὴν ἄλλην τοῦ βίου ἀγωγὴν τὸν Φίλωνα. Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* 2.16.2. Eusebius is thinking of Philo's *On Contemplative Life*, which of course does not describe *Christian* ascetics.

60 David Brakke, "The East (2): Egypt and Palestine" in Hunter/Harvey (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Early Christian Studies*, 344–363 on p. 347–348; Bagnall, *Egypt in Late Antiquity*, 278–279.

61 Cf. Boyarin, *Dying for God*.

62 Christopher Haas, *Alexandria in Late Antiquity. Topography and Social Conflict* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997), 99–106, 182–183. Brakke, "The East", 348–350.

63 Dunderberg, "The School of Valentinus", 72–73.

64 Rubenson, *The Letters*, 38. See also James E. Goehring, "The Provenance of the Nag Hammadi Codices once more" in Wiles/Yarnold (ed.), *Studia Patristica* 35, 234–253, on p. 250; Wilfred C. Griggs, *Early Egyptian Christianity from its Origins to 451 CE* (Leiden: Brill, 1991), 149–153. Bowman still assumed a stark divide between Greek-speaking pagans and Egyptian-speaking Christians. Bowman, *Egypt after Pharaohs*, 129.

and countryside alike, but much is murky due to the nature of evidence (mostly private letters that are difficult to date, no fixed terminology for identification of clergy, and paucity of distinctly Christian names).[65]

Yet no history of Egyptian Christians can be written without Alexandria. That is where the first known bishops resided, and the city is famous for its Christian catechetical school and its traditions of scriptural interpretation that were inherited from Jewish traditions, most formidably personified in Philo and his writings. The Alexandrian school was neither the sole inheritor of exegetical traditions nor the only place of Christian instruction in the city, rather, "the first Alexandrian Christians we can make out with any clarity are teachers and their students".[66] Christian teachers offered independently instruction in Christian scriptures and Christian way of life.[67] This second-century Christian school context is important for many early Christian traditions and writings, also amongst the Nag Hammadi writings. Such is the *Apocryphon of John* that discusses the Genesis creation myth, mixes the Jewish story with Platonic and Egyptian elements, and cannot be understood without assuming Christians as its circulators and readers. Its origins have been traced to a second-century urban setting, such as Alexandria would have provided.[68] In Karen King's view, Alexandria is particularly well suited as a hypothetical site for the school setting for several reasons: Christianity arrived in Alexandria relatively early, and a variety of Christianities existed in the city. Also, Christianity in Alexandria appears to have had close ties to Judaism, and after the Jewish community perished in 115–117, it was Christians who continued the tradition of scriptural interpretation. The *Apocryphon of John*

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65 Bagnall, *Egypt in Late Antiquity*, 279–281; also Philip Rousseau, *Pachomius. The Making of a Community in Fourth-Century Egypt* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), 7–8.

66 David Brakke, *Athanasius and Asceticism* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995), 59.

67 Brakke, *Athanasius and Asceticism*, 59–60. Schools were not, of course, specific to Alexandria. Peter Brown, *Body and Society. Men, Women, and Sexual Renunciation in Early Christianity* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), 103–108. Valentinus taught in Rome. See Ismo Dunderberg, "The School of Valentinus", 71–72; Christopher Markschies, "Valentinian Gnosticism: Toward the Anatomy of a School" in John D. Turner/Anne McGuire (ed.), *The Nag Hammadi Library after Fifty Years. Proceedings of the 1995 Society of Biblical Literature Commemoration* (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 401–438.

68 King, *The Secret Revelation*, 9–14. Fowden, *The Egyptian Hermes*, 159–160. Wisse and Waldstein date the longer version of Apocryphon of John to the third century, and note that an earlier version was known to Irenaeus around 180. Frederik Wisse/Michael Waldstein (ed.), *The Apocryphon of John. Synopsis of Nag Hammadi Codices II,1; III,1; and IV,1 with BG 8502,2* (NHMS 33; Leiden: E.J Brill, 1995), 1; Michael Waldstein, "Das Apokryphon des Johannes (NHC II,1; III,1; IV und BG 2)" in Schenke/Bethge/Kaiser (ed.), *Nag Hammadi Deutsch*, 74–123, on p. 74 does not name a place of origin. He suggests that the earliest parts of the text may stem from the first century. Logan suggests that the Nag Hammadi versions of the *Apocryphon of John* should be dated to the third century, and approached as "Sethianization" of a text that is compiled of earlier, Barbeloite sources, Alastair H.B. Logan, *The Gnostic Truth and Christian Heresy. A Study in the History of Gnosticism* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1996), 16–17.

also suggests knowledge of gentile and Egyptian literary materials.[69] In general, much of what is known of earliest Egyptian Christianity shows interaction of Jewish, Christian, Graeco-Roman and Egyptian traditions, for instance, when it comes to interpretations of Christian teachings and texts.[70]

The interaction between different religious traditions, and also the rapid spread of Christianity in Egypt has been partly explained by effects of the colonial rule of the country. First the Greeks, then the Romans brought about changes that transformed the nature of indigenous Egyptian religion for good. Fascination and admiration towards Egypt, "the temple of the world",[71] mingled with prejudice, and assimilation went hand in hand with resistance.[72] Egyptian deities were adapted in various degrees for those of Greek or Roman background. Names and identities may have been simply translated. Isis was a popular and versatile goddess in and out of Egypt: Herodotus identified her with Demeter, Plutarch suggests that Isis be identified with Athena, and when Apuleius has Isis appear to Lucius, she claims to be worshipped throughout the world in different manners, customs, and names.[73] Deities may be merged, so that Thoth and Hermes became Hermes Trismegistus, who appears also in Codex VI,[74] and completely new divinities were created, e.g. Serapis.

Despite this aspect of success of the Egyptian religion, the indigenous Egyptian religion and the culture of the land suffered under foreign rule. A particularly fateful development was the decline of Egyptian religious infrastructure – temples – under Roman economic pressure during the third and fourth centuries. Decay of temples had begun earlier, but it became manifest in the middle of the third century. When the temple cult died, the society lost an organising principle: with temples were lost festivals, administration, wealth, and centres of literary culture, which can be seen in the disappearance of Demotic, and in the fact that Greek was the language of literature until the rise of Coptic under Christian influence. The nature of native piety changed and moved to new loci, and David Frankfurter has

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69 King, *The Secret Revelation*, 14 – 17.

70 See also Haas, *Alexandria*, 229 – 230.

71 *Asclepius* (NHC VI,8) 70:8 – 10.

72 Fowden, *The Egyptian Hermes*, 13 – 19. Greeks and Roman despised Egyptians for their portrayal of deities in animal form. Cassius Dio reports that Caesar, when he was in Alexandria, "would not enter the presence of Apis, either, declaring that he was accustomed to worship gods, not cattle" Cassius Dio, *Roman History*, 51.16.

73 Herodotus, *Histories*, 2.59. Plutarch, *Isis and Osiris*, 354.9. In Apuleius' list Isis is associated for example with Cecropian Artemis, Paphian Aphrodite, Proserpina, Juno, Bellona and Hecate. Apuleius, *Metamorphoses (Golden Ass)*, 11.5. Note however that association of Isis with Graeco-Roman deities was not only a Graeco-Roman/foreign phenomenon, but in Roman Egypt local cults of Isis could be universalised by associating Isis with foreign goddesses (such as Astarte, Aphrodite and Demeter). David Frankfurter notes that this was rooted in priestly interests. Isis cults to a considerable extent remained local. David Frankfurter, *Religion in Roman Egypt. Assimilation and Resistance* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1998), 100 – 104.

74 *Disc. 8 – 9*, 59:15, 24. Fowden, *The Egyptian Hermes*, 22 – 31.

suggested that this resulted in more regional and local forms of piety in villages and households, such that continued in Egyptian Christianity, or perhaps better, Christianities.[75] Christianity appears in some ways to have filled the void created by these developments, and that is seen as an explanatory factor behind its relatively rapid spread in fourth-century Egypt.[76]

The Nag Hammadi writings form an important witness both for the traditions of creative interpretation of the scriptures and the interaction between traditions. Its writings bear witness to an open approach towards different traditions both within individual writings, as well as in the selections of writings within single codices. For instance, the Hermetic texts in Codex VI do not indicate that the codex would have been compiled or transmitted by Hermetists, but rather suggest that the Hermetic writings were included so that the audiences of the codex could get acquainted with Hermetic teaching. Garth Fowden has pointed out that the Hermetic treatises of Codex VI "are exactly what one would choose in order to convey a first impression of Hermetism to a Coptic audience if that audience were completely unfamiliar with it" – they are representative excerpts from well-known texts, and they contain an Egyptian element that would be appreciated by Upper Egyptian recipients. As he has noted, Christians from early on have held an interest towards Hermetic writings.[77] One of the earliest witnesses to Christian appreciation of Hermetic writings is Lactantius (c. 250 – 325) who refers to the *Teleios Logos*, that is, *Asclepius*, a Coptic excerpt of which is found in the Nag Hammadi codex VI, in *The Divine Institutes* 4.6.[78] It is thus more than plausible to assume that these Hermetic texts were indeed intended for Christian readership.

As important as creativity in scriptural interpretation and openness to other traditions are, they are not the only landmark of early Egyptian Christianity. The most consequential form of Christianity in late ancient Egypt was ascetic Christianity and the development of monasticism, most famously but not solely represented in the figures of Antony the Great (c. 251 – 356) and Pachomius (c. 292 – 346).[79] Ascetic Christianity built on late ancient

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75 Frankfurter, *Religion in Roman Egypt*, 27 – 30, Bagnall, *Egypt in Late Antiquity*, 261 – 268, covers archaeological evidence. For changes in temple festivals in light of papyrological evidence, and evolution of religious festivals: Frankfurter, *Religion in Roman Egypt*, 52 – 65, also Bagnall, *Egypt in Late Antiquity*, 287. For the colonial rule in Egypt and how it is reflected in Hermetic writings, see Fowden, *The Egyptian Hermes*, 38 – 44. For some of the ways in which early Egyptian Christians inherited from and continued pagan cultic practices, see e. g. Bagnall, *Egypt in Late Antiquity*, 270 – 275. See also Rubenson, *The Letters*, 89 – 91. Manichaeism spread to Egypt around 300, flourished, then survived until the sixth century. Rudolph, *Die Gnosis*, 353 – 354.

76 Bagnall, *Egypt in Late Antiquity*, 268.

77 Fowden, *The Egyptian Hermes*, 7 – 9.

78 Also *Div. Inst.* 4.9.

79 Antony and Pachomius were not the first ascetics in Egypt. There was, for example, Hieracas

approach to philosophy both as discourse and practice. In the first centuries CE, philosophical schools and new spiritual traditions were close to each other. Both philosophy and religious traditions, like Christianity, provided teaching on the way of life, usually combined with different steps and practices. In later chapters of this work, aspects of *Authentikos Logos* that appear to connect with ascetic Christianity are brought into inspection: connecting points can be found.

In early Christianity two currents are often recognised, even juxtaposed: clergy and worship communities on one hand, and the originally Greek-speaking Christian teachers and study groups on the other.[80] Philosophies in antiquity were neither purely intellectual education nor dogmatic systems. They were that, but more importantly, they provided their practitioners with a way of life and models for spiritual progress. Stoics made a distinction between philosophy, which meant practice of philosophical life, and "discourse according to philosophy" that referred to theoretical instruction in philosophy.[81] Christianity was perceived as the Way,[82] and Alexandrian exegesis was part of its discourse, but hand in hand with exegesis and theology went the way of life, and it is the latter that bore more weight than the former.[83]

By the third and fourth centuries there existed a variety of ways to practise ascetic Christianity in Egypt.[84] Hermits, who first lived inside and on the outskirts of cities, had started to move into the desert both near Alexandria and elsewhere. These anchorites lived on their own, or in small communities. Women virgins may have stayed at their parental homes, lived with other female ascetics, cohabited in a spiritual marriage with a male ascetic, or lived independently. In the third century the phenomenon was so widespread that first larger communities were formed, and Athanasius sought to bring virgins under his authority.[85] For the more individual, anchoritic type of asceticism,

who was attacked by Athanasius, and also Epiphanius describes his key teachings (or the points in Hieracas' teaching that he decided to focus on). According to Epiphanius, Hieracas was fluent in Greek and Coptic, well versed in the Christian scriptures, but he did not believe in the resurrection of the flesh, nor did he accept marriage. Sexual asceticism was an important part of his way of life, and Epiphanius claims that Hieracas taught that children who have not reached the age of puberty ("age of knowledge") have no part in the kingdom of heaven, since they have not engaged in the struggle (against sexual desires)." Epiphanius, *Panarion* 47.1.1 – 2.8. See also Brakke, *Athanasius and Asceticism*, 21 – 22; 44 – 51; 80; Rousseau, *Pachomius*, 72.

80 Brakke, *The Gnostics*, 114 – 119; Brown, *The Body and Society*, 151 – 152.
81 Pierre Hadot, *What Is Ancient Philosophy?* (Cambridge, Mass.: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2002), 147 – 149, 153 – 154, 172 – 175.
82 Already in the Acts of Apostles, e.g. Acts 18:25, 22:4, 24:14, 22.
83 Hadot, *What Is Ancient Philosophy*, 237 – 241; Cf. Fowden, *The Egyptian Hermes*, 97 – 104, 214 – 215 on different steps on the path of knowledge.
84 For different physical settings of coenobitic and anchoritic monasticism, see Bagnall, *Egypt in Late Antiquity*, 295 – 297. Elizabeth A. Clark, *Reading Renunciation. Asceticism and Scripture in Early Christianity* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1999), 33 – 38, discusses forms of ascetic living, as does Brakke, see the next note.
85 Brakke, *Athanasius and Asceticism*, 21. In *Life of Antony* 3 Athanasius mentions in passing that

the important figure is Antony the Great, whose *Life* by Athanasius (bishop 328–373) draws a hagiographical portrait of him. More shades to his person are provided in other existing sources, such as the Letter of Bishop Serapion of Thmuis, Antony's *Letters* and *Lives of Pachomius*. Also the *Apophthegmata Patrum* contains sayings attributed to Antony.[86] The other major figure in the birth of monastic Christianity is Upper-Egyptian Pachomius who is the founder of coenobitic monasticism. He created the first monastic rule and founded several monasteries that became prominent in the area by the middle of the fourth century.[87] Pachomius did not invent the concept out of nothing, but he organised some of the ascetics already living in the Thebaid into his Koinonia.[88]

Just as the two sides of Christianity as philosophy, discourse and practice, cannot be separated from one another, likewise the level of interaction between Alexandria, other cities along the Nile, and the country was higher than previously assumed. Also, tensions between Alexandria and the *chora* were political and not simply cultural.[89] Apart from Alexandria, other important cities along the Nile played a part in early Christianity in Egypt. These cities were connected by the river that made travel relatively easy, and their importance had grown in Roman times and after Septimius Severus allowed Alexandria along with some thirty-odd cities to have their own councils (βουλή) in 200: previously the power was considerably centralised, and the only cities to have their own councils were Antinoopolis and Ptolemais.[90] The major cities of Thebaid where the Nag Hammadi writings were found were Lycopolis and Panopolis. Relatively wealthy people lived in these cities: some of them were literate and educated their children in Greek classics.[91]

Antony left his sister to be raised in a community of known and faithful virgins (Τὴν δὲ ἀδελφὴν παραθέμενος γνωρίμοις καὶ πισταῖς παρθένοις δούς τε αὐτὴν εἰς παρθενίαν ἀνατρέφεσθαι); some manuscripts have παρθενία ("virginity"), others, πάρθενων ("convent"). See also Brakke, *Athanasius and Asceticism*, 24–28, 30–34, and Nathalie Henry, "A New Insight into the Growth of Ascetic Society in the Fourth Century AD: The Public Consecration of Virgins as Means of Integration and Promotion of the Female Ascetic Movement" in Wiles/Yarnold (ed.), *Studia Patristica* 35, 102–109.

86 Brakke, *Athanasius and Asceticism*, 201–204, 208–216; Rubenson, *The Letters*, 145–184, for sources of Antony.

87 Rousseau, *Pachomius*, 59–62, 73–76, 111–112. Brakke, *Athanasius and Asceticism*, 111–113.

88 For example, Pachomius' disciple and successor Theodore had lived in a non-Pachomian monastery in Latopolis before he joined the Pachomian koinonia. James E. Goehring, *The Letter of Ammon and Pachomian Monasticim* (Patristische Texte und Studien 27; Berlin: De Gruyter, 1986), 212–214. See discussion in Goehring, "The Provenance", 234–253.

89 Bagnall, *Egypt in Late Antiquity*, 99–105 on Greek education and culture in Egypt; Emmel, "The Coptic Gnostic Texts", 46 points out the same. For tensions between Athanasius and eremitical monks in the northern and Pachomian coenobitical communities in southern Egypt, and Athanasius' attempts at influencing them, see Brakke, *Athanasius and Asceticism*, 81–83.

90 Rubenson, *The Letters*, 91–93, Rousseau, *Pachomius*, 3–4.

91 An example of Christians combining Christian and Greek education is a papyrus containing a

It emerges from recent scholarly work that Alexandrian scholarship spread to different parts of the country, and not just so that Alexandrian learning was imported to the *chora:* the relationship was reciprocal, and those living outside Alexandria added to Alexandrian theological interpretations.[92] Monastic communities or individual anchorites were neither isolated nor unlearned, but interacted with and influenced Christianity in their local communities, and in many cases, with Christians in cities. There were learned Christians in the *chora* of Egypt, who read with learned interest the works of Alexandrian scholars, but more than that, gave their own contributions.[93]

Well into the fourth century, probably later, considerable diversity existed in Egyptian Christian traditions and teachings. This goes to all levels of Christianity in the country: cities and country, the emergent Egyptian church and Christians in other communities, monastics, and those who lived within the society. In Athanasius' time, three Christian organisations competed in Alexandria: the Athanasians, then Arians, with whom the orthodox differed doctrinally, and Melitians, who had provided a complementary hierarchy during the persecutions in the first years of the fourth century when Alexandrian bishops went into hiding.[94] Following Emperor Constantine's actions for uniting the church and the state, Athanasius attempted to bring unity to the diversity within different types of Christianity in Egypt.

Nag Hammadi writings fit the puzzling picture of diverse early Egyptian Christianity, which in many ways was connected with earlier philosophical and spiritual traditions. In many ways these writings come close to views and practices of monastic or ascetic Christianity, but the extent of closeness has been a more difficult question. The writings were found near ruins of Pachomian monasteries, but can they be associated with Pachomians precisely? The contents of the writings are Christian or appealing to Christians in one way or another, and many writings in this collection are to do with way of life, control of emotions, combat against vices, and a critical

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school text that has psalms on the recto, Isocrates' *Ad Demonicum* on the verso. The papyrus in question is *P. Lit. Lond,* 207. See Rubenson, *The Letters,* 95–98, 109–111. Bagnall takes a cautious view on literacy in late ancient Egypt. Bagnall, *Egypt in Late Antiquity,* 246–248.

92 Samuel Rubenson, "Evagrios Pontikos und die Theologie der Wüste" in Hans Christof Brennecke/Ernst Ludwig Grasmück/Christoph Markschies (ed.), *Logos. Festschrift für Luise Abramowski zum 8. Juli 1993* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1993), 384–401; Rubenson, "Origen in the Egyptian Monastic Tradition in the Fourth Century" in Wolfgang Bienert/Uwe Kühneweg (ed.), *Origeniana Septima* (Leuven: Peeters, 1999), 319–337. See also Bagnall, *Egypt in Late Antiquity,* 301–302, Haas, *Alexandria,* 267.

93 E.g. Bagnall, *Egypt in Late Antiquity,* 298–300. In older research the image of Antony was that of an unlearned ascete. In the words of Arthur Darby Nock: "Antony in the desert knew nothing of Greek philosophy". Arthur Darby Nock, "Christianity and Classical Culture" in Zeph Steward (ed.), *Arthur Darby Nock: Essays on Religion and the Ancient World.* Vol. II. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972), 676–681, on p. 677. Nock was wrong; see Rubenson, *The Letters,* Brakke, *Athanasius and Asceticism;* also Lundhaug, *Images of Rebirth,* 149.

94 Brakke, *Athanasius and Asceticism,* 3–8; Haas, *Alexandria,* 268–277.

attitude towards worldly life in general. If Christian monks owned and read them, are the demiurgical texts a problem or an anomaly?[95] The very form, the codex, of the Nag Hammadi writings, and the Sahidic dialect they are written in, suggest proximity with Christian and monastic communities.[96]

This apparent closeness to monastic traditions has been under much questioning. Doresse, who had noted the proximity to Pachomian monasteries on his 1950 journey to Upper Egypt, could not imagine monastic ownership and pronounced these texts too heterodox to have anything to do with monks.[97] Yet already in 1978 Frederik Wisse proposed that monastic communities be taken into serious account when the transmitters and readers of these texts are sought for. It is easy to agree with his notion that the main concern for monks reading these texts would have been orthopraxy rather than orthodoxy.[98] Like such ancient theologians as Irenaeus and Hippolytus, many twentieth-century scholars have focused on dogmatic issues, but studies on the codices, their production, and other studies on monastics' interaction with society suggest that these writings have a connection with monks, and certainly with Christianity.[99] Although Wisse's notion that the decline of "Gnosticism" coincides with the ascent of monastic asceticism points in the right direction, it is problematic to speak straightforwardly of Gnostics becoming ascetics; it is perhaps better to speak of the transfer of ideas, and shifts in emphasis and interpretation of recurrent themes.[100] Some earlier Christian themes continued their life in ascetic texts, perhaps being interpreted in a way different to previous interpretations.[101]

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95 This question was pointed out to me by Ismo Dunderberg.

96 Goehring, "The Provenance", 237; Bagnall, *Egypt in Late Antiquity*, 248 – 250. Whilst noting that "it is not unreasonable to suppose that the Christian Church was the motivating force in the creation of the adequate writing system for Coptic, in which case one can imagine the effort having begun at least as early as the beginning of the third century if not earlier", Stephen Emmel points out that "perhaps the impetus to give the Egyptian language a new, up-to-date written form came from the Manichean mission to Egypt, which began in the middle of the third century". Emmel, "The Coptic Gnostic Texts", 39 – 40. For a sceptical view, see Funk, "The Linguistic Aspect", 144 – 145.

97 "[W]hoever may have possessed them, they cannot have been monks". Doresse, *The Secret Books*, 135.

98 Wisse, "Gnosticism and Early Monasticism", 437.

99 Analysis of the cartonnage of the codices was conducted by Barns, Browne and Shelton. Some of the fragments mention monks, and, when something can be detected of the religion of the people mentioned, they are Christian. The scrap papyri of Codex VI consist of documentary material (name lists, in several cases dated in the third and fourth centuries) that does not reveal any particular information concerning Christians. Barns/Browne/Shelton (ed.), *Nag Hammadi Codices*, 2 – 11, 39 – 51. For a broader context, see Bagnall, *Egypt in Late Antiquity*, 239 – 240, 257, 308 – 309.

100 Wisse, "Gnosticism and Early Monasticism", 431 – 440.

101 The soul's ascent continues to be a common theme in ascetic instruction of the soul's progress. See 6.2.

It is true that in light of ancient ecclesiastical authors and their polemic against the "Gnostics" it was easy to focus on the unorthodox nature of many of these writings, and not recognise them for Christian texts. Alexandr Khosroyev is one of the scholars to have found Pachomian or monastic origin unlikely, and he has suggested instead that non-traditional, or "syncretistic" Christians living in the cities along the Nile would have circulated these texts.[102] Partly in response to Koshroyev's work, James Goehring, one of the advocates for Pachomian origin, has for his part concluded that ultimately it is not possible to know whether the codices have a Pachomian origin.[103] He rather points out that "[t]he strength of the ascetic movement in the Thebaid … helps to explain Pachomius' success". The number of ascetics, and diversity of ascetic communities suggests that Pachomians are not the only candidates for having been monastic owners of the codices.[104]

Of the ancient theologians, it is not just Irenaeus and Hippolytus who aimed at defining the borderlines of orthodoxy and heresy. Both the *Life of Antony*, written by Athanasius, and the *Life of Pachomius*, paint very bishop-obeying portraits of the two great Egyptian ascetics, Antony and Pachomius respectively. These fourth-century works must be approached with the notion that one motive of these biographies was to promote church-hierarchy and to attempt to bring monasteries and ascetic communities more closely under eccleciastical authorities in the late fourth and early fifth centuries.[105]

Were the Nag Hammadi writings hidden in the late fourth century, and did Athanasius succeed in bringing the monastics under his authority? The circulation of Athanasius' *Festal Letter 39* of 367 and his campaign against heretical books – "For even if a useful word is found in them, it is still not good to trust them." – appears to provide a tangible date and evidence for such pressure towards orthodoxy that may well have made it more difficult to circulate the codices.[106] There is evidence that points to the direction that

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102 Khosroyev, *Die Bibliothek von Nag Hammadi*, 98 – 102; His doubts have been shared by Emmel, "The Coptic Gnostic Texts", 36, 43; Funk, "The Linguistic Aspect", 145 – 146, Rousseau, *Pachomius* 26 – 28, and Rousseau, "The Successors of Pachomius and the Nag Hammadi Codices: Exegetical Themes and Literary Structures" in James E. Goehring/Janet A. Timbie (ed.), *The World of Early Egyptian Christianity. Language, Literature, and Social Context. Essays in Honor of David. W. Johnson* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2007), 140 – 157, on p. 157.

103 Goehring, "The Provenance", 241. For arguments in favour of the Pachomian hypothesis, see discussion in Goehring and works cited esp. 236 – 238.

104 Goehring, "The Provenance", 242 – 243, 251 – 253.

105 Brakke, *Athanasius and Asceticism*, 201 – 203; Haas, *Alexandria*, 258 – 267. Lance Jenott/Elaine Pagels, "Antony's Letters and Nag Hammadi Codex I: Sources of Religious Conflict in Fourth-Century Egypt" in *JECS* 18 (2010), 557 – 589.

106 For Brakke, the origin of the letter is "in the social conflict between episcopal and academic Christianities", Brakke, *Athanasius and Asceticism*, 67, 271; the citation above is from Brakke's translation of the *Festal Letter 39*; Rudolph, *Die Gnosis*, 48 considered the possibility that the codices, Pachomian monasteries, and Athanasius' activities somehow connect. See also Haas, *Alexandria*, 177 – 178.

Athanasius did not quite succeed, and a more or less open conflict continued for some time at least.[107] The late fourth century therefore cannot act as the limit after which the Nag Hammadi writings, *Authentikos Logos* included, were hidden: their monastic circulation may have continued until the fifth century at least. Recently, Hugo Lundhaug has argued for the monastic readership for the *Exegesis on the Soul* (NHC II,6).[108]

Authentikos Logos is, as will emerge in the course of this work, very much concerned with themes that were important in early Egyptian Christianity: the soul's progress and ascent in which ascetic contest and combat against vices and evil plays a major role. Whereas Roelof van den Broek suggested Alexandria as a place of origin in his seminal article of 1979, that conclusion appears overtly narrow.[109] Educated discussion and search for Christian illumination in bilingual Roman Egypt were not restricted to Alexandria. The ascetic tones and focus on contest that may be both spiritual and ascetic suggest that it is just as justified to look for the audience of *Authentikos Logos* within ascetic traditions and even communities, as within the learned theologies of ancient Alexandria.

3. The Scriptures in *Authentikos Logos*

A careful reader to *Authentikos Logos* notices that the text is peppered with allusions to and probably also reminiscences of scriptures that are made continuously and throughout the writing.[110] These allusions and reminiscences suggest knowledge of the gospels of Matthew and John, the Acts of the Apostles, several epistles (for instance Romans, 1 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, James), Revelation, some of the Septuagint books, deuterocanonical books included (for instance Wisdom, possibly the Fifth Ezra/2 Esdras, see below).

It is important to list possible allusions in *Authentikos Logos*, as has been done by several scholars. George W. MacRae provided some parallels "without implying any direct relationship" to Biblical literature.[111] Scriptural passages

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107 Haas deals with Athanasius' followers, their conflicts with monastics, and the controversies in the late fourth century that involved ascetics. Haas, *Alexandria*, 258 – 267. See also 268 – 277 for Arian controversy.

108 Lundhaug, *Images of Rebirth*, 140 – 149, 413 – 416.

109 Van den Broek, "The Authentikos Logos", 234.

110 Allusion is an indirect reference, intentional, and recognisable, although allusions "often draw on information not readily available to every member of a cultural and linguistic community". William Irwin, "What Is an Allusion?" in *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 59 (2001), 287 – 297, on p. 293 – 294. Like Irwin, Louis Painchaud emphasises their intentionality. Louis Painchaud, "The Use of Scripture in Gnostic Literature" in *JECS* 4 (1996), 129 – 146, on p. 135.

111 MacRae, "Authoritative Teaching", 257 – 259.

have been listed by Craig Evans, Robert Webb and Richard Wiebe,[112] and Christopher Tuckett has discussed synoptic material.[113] Clemens Scholten recognised the Gospels of Matthew, Luke and John, Acts, Romans, Colossians, 1 Corinthians and 1 – 2 Thessalonians as those New Testament text that can assumed to have been known by the author of *Authentikos Logos*.[114] Yet it is also necessary to go further than recognising passages. Identification of an allusion sheds light on the text, makes its meaning clearer and renders sense of obscure details understandable,[115] but to gain a deeper insight on the use and context of allusions, an analysis and comparison with other texts referring to or alluding to the same passages is of primary importance. Allusions are more difficult to recognise than direct references, but this is exactly why attention should be paid to them.[116] *Authentikos Logos* would not be fathomable without assuming knowledge of Christian writings at the background, as well as even an intention and expectation that (some of) the recipients would recognise these connections.

Not many of the previous scholars to *Authentikos Logos* have discussed what its allusions imply. Roelof van den Broek is one of the few; he took its allusive use of the scriptures as indicating the author's unwillingness to reveal his Christian identity too openly. He further assumed that such indirect use of the scriptures may be considered as preceding the more orthodox Alexandrian theology of authors such as Clement and Origen, and suggested that such haziness could have been considered in an unfavourable light by later audiences and in light of the "more Bible- and Church-orientated" theologies of Clement and Origen.[117] Yet although one cannot entirely deny the possibility that the soul story in *Authentikos Logos* could have appeared suspicious in the eyes of some readers, there is nothing directly problematic in the text. Also, there are no reasons why Christian use of the scriptures should develop from hazy to direct, or from vague to "Bible-orientated". Even in the third and the fourth centuries, the New Testament canon was not yet firmly established.[118]

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112 Evans/Webb/Wiebe (ed.), *Nag Hammadi Texts and the Bible*, 269 – 271.
113 Tuckett suggests dependence on the Gospel of Matthew. He adopts a cautious view, and considers the synoptic tradition to be reflected at a rather general level. Tuckett, *Nag Hammadi and the Gospel Tradition*, 47 – 51.
114 Scholten, *Martyrium und Sophiamythos*, 131 n. 108. See also Roelof van den Broek, "Authentikos Logos" and Klaus Koschorke, *Die Polemik der Gnostiker*.
115 Painchaud, "The Use of Scripture", 136.
116 Louis Painchaud emphasised that "because of the very fact that they raise more difficulties, they deserve a more rigid scrutiny". He rightly considers it a grave mistake to neglect attention to allusions as has sometimes been done in studies to Nag Hammadi texts, for the sake of "objectivity". Painchaud, "The Use of Scripture", 132.
117 Van den Broek, "The Authentikos Logos", 226, 233 – 234.
118 David Brakke, "Canon Formation and Social Conflict in Fourth-Century Egypt: Athanasius of Alexandria's Thirty-Ninth Festal Letter" in *HTR* 87 (1994), 395 – 419; Michael W. Holmes, "The Biblical Canon" in Hunter/Harvey (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Early Christian Studies*, 406 – 426.

In his article on the use of the Scripture in the Nag Hammadi writings, Louis Painchaud follows Devorah Dimant who has suggested that there are two distinct categories in the use of Scripture: one evincing a *compositional* and the other an *expositional* use of biblical elements. The former is characterised by being interwoven into the work without external formal markers, and it is commonly used in narratives and discourses. Louis Painchaud suggests it predominates the Nag Hammadi writings for the reason that they are mainly narratives and discourses.[119] It is clear that the allusive use of the scriptures in *Authentikos Logos* would fall into such compositional category. That kind of use is, of course, not restricted to the Nag Hammadi texts; ancient Christians played with the scriptures they knew by heart, and created new combinations and new discourses.[120]

An analysis of allusions in *Authentikos Logos* can help to understand some aspects of Christianity it represents. For this purpose, two allusions will next be discussed. The first, in 28:23 – 26, alludes to the saying "For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also" (Matt 6:21, Luke 12:34), and the second, the "Light that shines above her that does not set" in the doxology on page 35 is reminiscent of the imagery of the eschatological vision of Isaiah 60 or Fifth Ezra (2 Esdras) 2. The way scriptures are employed will be discussed next, by comparing the approach taken towards a given scriptural expression/ image in *Authentikos Logos* and some other ancient works. In addition to these, other allusions will be discussed in later chapters of this work: a possible reminiscence of James 1:12 – 13 in 31:16 – 18 is discussed in V.2, the gospel sayings on the wheat and chaff also in V.2.4, and the resemblance of slave traders in 32:18 to those in Revelation 18:9 in VI.2.

3.1 "The soul is fleeing upwards to her treasure, where her mind is"

On the page 28 *Authentikos Logos* describes the turn in the fate of the soul, and how the soul is victorious over its enemies. The soul is described as going upwards to her treasure, where its mind is:

ⲉⲣⲉⲛⲉⲥϫⲁϫⲉ ϭⲁⲱ̄ⲧ ⲛ̄ⲥⲱⲥ ⲉⲩϫⲓ ϣⲓⲡⲉ· ⲉⲥⲡⲏⲧ ⲉⲡⲥⲁⲛⲧⲡⲉ ⲉⲕⲟⲩⲛ ⲉⲡⲉⲥⲁ̄ϩⲟ· ⲡⲁⲓ̈ ⲉⲧⲉ ⲡⲉⲥ<u>ⲛⲟⲩⲥ</u> ϣⲟⲟⲡ ⲛ̄ϩⲣⲁⲓ̈ ⲛ̄ϩⲏⲧϥ̄· ⲁⲩⲱ ⲧⲉⲥⲁⲡⲟⲑⲏⲕⲏ ⲉⲧⲁⲣⲉ<u>ⲭ</u>·

When her enemies look at her, they are ashamed. She is fleeing upwards to her treasure,[121] that is where her <u>mind</u> is, and to her firm storehouse.

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119 Painchaud, "The Use of Scripture", 132 – 134.
120 Lundhaug, *Images of Rebirth*, 3 – 4.
121 The Coptic ⲁϩⲟ is an equivalent to the Greek θησαυρός ("store", "treasure"), and it perhaps parallels with ἀποθήκη just below. To render the allusions more transparent, I translate "treasure" contrary to MacRae and Meyer who have opted for "treasure-house".

This part of *Authentikos Logos* refers to the soul's ascent that cannot be thwarted by its humiliated enemies,[122] but it also alludes to a saying of Jesus in the gospel tradition: "For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also" (Matt 6:21, par. Luke 12:34)

ὅπου γάρ ἐστιν ὁ <u>θησαυρός</u> σου, ἐκεῖ ἔσται καὶ ἡ <u>καρδία</u> σου.[123]

ΠΜΑ ΓΑΡ ΕΤΕΡΕ ΠΕΚΑ2Ο ΝΑϢϢΠΕ Ñ2ΗΤϤ
ϤΝΑϢϢΠΕ ΜΜΑΥ Ñϭι ΠΕΚΚΕ2ΗΤ

The allusion may not seem obvious first, since the "heart" is replaced by "mind", but in several early Christian texts that quote or refer to this saying, a change from "heart" (καρδία) to "mind" (νοῦς) occurs. Sometimes also the order of the saying is changed so that the mind is mentioned first, and treasure after that. Already Roelof van den Broek discussed some of the evidence (Justin Martyr, Clement of Alexandria, Macarius, and the *Gospel of Mary*),[124] but more material is taken into account here, and hence my conclusions will differ from his.

In the earliest piece of evidence to this change, Justin Martyr in *Apology* 15.16.2 has replaced the heart of the gospel versions with the mind, but kept the original order:

ὅπου γὰρ ὁ <u>θησαυρός</u> ἐστιν, ἐκεῖ καὶ ὁ <u>νοῦς</u> τοῦ ἀνθρώπου.

After Justin the quote appears in several Christian authors who have replaced the "heart" with "mind", and sometimes changed the order.[125] Two of the inverted-order quotes appear in Clement of Alexandria's *On the Salvation of the Rich Man* (17.1.7) and *Stromata* (7.12.77):

ὅπου γὰρ ὁ <u>νοῦς</u> τοῦ ἀνθρώπου, ἐκεῖ καὶ ὁ <u>θησαυρὸς</u> αὐτοῦ.[126]

Another Coptic version is found in the *Gospel of Mary* (10:15 – 16) that uses the same words as *Authentikos Logos*, but follows the inverted order:

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122 Cf. *Authentikos Logos* 32 and see 6.2 on the soul's ascent.

123 σου in the Matt 6:21 is ὑμῶν in Luke 12:34.

124 See also van den Broek, "The Authentikos Logos", 225 – 226. It is unlikely that the allusion refers directly to a Q-saying, as the Gospel of Matthew would have been known in the third and fourth century Egypt. Tuckett is of the same opinion (of the allusion to the Matthew, not Q-text). Tuckett, *Nag Hammadi and the Gospel Tradition*, 49. The gospel saying is also referred to in *Teach. Silv.* 88:15 – 17 ("Live in Christ and you will acquire a treasure in heaven") and *Sent. Sextus* 316/27:17 – 20 ("Where your thought is, there is also your good"), also *Testim. Truth* 31:18 – 22.

125 See van den Broek, "The Authentikos Logos", 226 suggests that also *Authentikos Logos* has in mind the inverted-order version, since νοῦς is discussed already previously in 22:28, but this is not certain.

126 "ὅπου γὰρ ὁ νοῦς τινος", φησίν, "ἐκεῖ καὶ ὁ θησαυρὸς αὐτοῦ", Clement of Alexandria, *Strom.* 7.12.77.6. Van den Broek also lists *Strom.* 4.33.5. but this appears to be a mistake.

ΠΜΑ ΓΑΡ ΕΤΕΡΕΠ<u>ΝΟΥC</u> ΜΜΑΥ ΕϤΜΜΑΥ ΝϬΙ ΠⲈ2Ο.[127]

Other texts where this form of the saying are attested, are commentaries of Didymus the Blind and sermons and homilies of Pseudo-Macarius. Didymus, a fourth-century Alexandrian teacher who was the leader of the Alexandrian catechetical school in Athanasius' time, and follower of Origen in pre-existence of the soul and exegesis,[128] quotes this version three times. In his *Commentary to Psalms* Didymus first explains that heart and mind mean the same thing, and then gives the saying in the gospel order:

ἡ καρδία καὶ ὁ νοῦς ταὐτὸν σημαίνει·
ὅταν γὰρ λέγῃ· "ὅπου ὁ <u>θησαυρός</u>,
ἐκεῖ καὶ ἡ <u>καρδία</u> σου ἔσται", ἐκεῖ καὶ ὁ <u>νοῦς</u> σου.[129]

Further in the *Commentary to Psalms* Didymus again quotes the saying, this time with "mind", but an immediate explanation follows where he says that the "mind" is called "heart".

ἐπεὶ γὰρ ὅπου ὁ <u>θησαυρός</u>, ἐκεῖ καὶ ὁ <u>νοῦς</u> ἐστιν
"<u>καρδία</u>" ὀνο[μα]ζόμενος.[130]

The saying is quoted with some variation in the homilies and sermons of Pseudo-Macarius, both in the gospel form as well as with inverted order and mind instead of heart.[131] Further, in the letters of fifth-century Palestinian ascetics, Barsanuphius and John of Gaza, the version with original order but mind instead of heart is quoted twice, in *Ep.* 77.51 and *Ep.* 153.24.[132] The

127 Both *Authentikos Logos* and the *Gospel of Mary* use the Greek νοῦς, whereas the Sahidic version of Matthew has 2ΗΤ that translates as both καρδία and νοῦς. See Tuckett, *The Gospel of Mary*, 65 – 67, 171 – 173; he places Mary as a later phase of the tradition than Justin due to the inverted order.

128 F.L. Cross/E.A. Livingstone (ed.). *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church.* (Third, revised edition. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 483.

129 Didymus the Blind, *Commentary to Psalms 20 – 21*, codex page 53.18, see also *Commentary to Ecclesiasticus*, p. 44.16.

130 Didymus the Blind, *Commentary to Psalms 35 – 39* (276,27).

131 The gospel version is quoted in *Homiliae spirituals 50 (collection H)* 27.271. The inverted order and mind: ὅπου ὁ νοῦς σου ἐκεῖ καὶ ὁ θησαυρός. Pseudo-Macarius, *Sermones 64, Coll. B. Homilies* 14.4.1; λέγει γὰρ, ὅπου ὁ νοῦς σου ἐκεῖ καὶ ὁ θησαυρός σου. Macarius, *Hom.* 43.32 in Dörries, Klostermann and Kroeger, *Geistliche Homilien*, 286. Both readings are suggested in *Sermones 64 (coll. B)* 7.16.2 – 3.

132 Ὅπου ὁ θησαυρὸς αὐτῶν (*Ep.* 153.24: σου), ἐκεῖ καὶ ὁ νοῦς αὐτῶν ἐστι (*Ep.* 153.24: . . . ὁ νοῦς σου). Barsanuphius (d. 540) was born in Egypt but spent most of his life as a hermit in Gaza. Letters between him and John of Gaza influenced later ascetics in the east, such as Dorotheus and John Climacus. Cross/Livingstone (ed.). *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, 163. Many late fourth-century Egyptian monks from Scetis and elsewhere fled the controversy and persecution and found refuge in the Gaza area. Brouria Bitton-Ashkelony/Arieh Kofsky, "Monasticism in the Holy Land" in Ora Limor/Guy G. Stroumsa (ed.), *Christians and Christianity in the Holy Land. From the Origins to the Latin Kingdoms* (Cultural Encounters in Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages 5, Turnhout: Brepols, 2006), 257 – 291, on p. 267.

saying is attested in this form even in later Christian literature, and it is still known by Gregory of Palamas in the 14th century.[133] One should also note that the *Pistis Sophia* 90 and Mani's *Kephalaia* 89.3 – 4 and 91.8 – 10 have "heart" instead of "mind", which renders any suggestion that the replacement of "heart" with "mind" were a distinctly "Gnostic" version, an unlikely hypothesis.[134]

Van den Broek considered the replacement of heart with mind and the inverted order a deviant version of the saying that possibly stems from an independent translation of an original, Aramaic saying of Jesus, and suggested a fixed, literary tradition.[135] The evidence rather points at fluidity of this saying: heart or mind can be used, and the order varies. Unless the change stems from Justin, it seems possible that it could also have originated in an Egyptian-speaking context, since Coptic ϨΗΤ means both 'heart' (καρδία) and 'mind' (νοῦς).[136] It is certainly clear that such version circulated amongst Christian authors in the east from the second to the fifth centuries and much later on (with the exception of Justin who, although born in Palestine at Flavia Neapolis, modern-day Nablus, taught in Rome).

In *Authentikos Logos* the mind–treasure maxim is alluded to and not quoted, which suggests that the saying was already well known, perhaps in both versions (the Gospel-order and the inverted order, with νοῦς). It is unlikely that *Authentikos Logos* is the first instance of this change, as would be the case if van den Broek's thesis of pre-Clement and pre-Origen Alexandrian origin were accepted. Since *Authentikos Logos* uses the Greek νοῦς, it is not translating the Gospel version's καρδία with ϨΗΤ. The use of the Greek term could point at Greek-language tradition at the background. Although the context of this version of the saying cannot be fixed in Egypt, Clement, Didymus, and the *Gospel of Mary* show that is was widely known in the Egyptian environment, and perhaps also the monastics in Gaza indicate the same, for they had close ties to Egypt.

3.2 "The light that does not set"

In the very end of *Authentikos Logos* an image of a never-setting light is employed:

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133 Gregory Palamas, *Hom.* 44.9.29 and 62.1.22.
134 Cf. Tuckett, *The Gospel of Mary,* 172, who sees the saying as fitting ▪ Gnostic interpretation "very well"; however, this interpretation is somewhat complicated by the evidence discussed here. The case of the *Pistis Sophia* is not entirely clear because of ϨΗΤ.
135 Van den Broek, "The Authentikos Logos", 225.
136 Crum, *A Coptic Dictionary,* 714.

ⲠⲞⲨⲞⲈⲒⲚ ⲈⲦⲠ̅ⲢⲢⲒⲰⲞⲨ Ⲉ2ⲢⲀⲒ̈ ⲈⲬⲰⲤ ⲈⲘⲀⲨ2ⲰⲦ̅Ⲡ

The light that shines above her does not set.[137]

The never-setting, or perpetual light (φῶς ἀνέσπερον, or φῶς ἄδυτον) is a common scriptural image that symbolises different things in Christian texts: it can be an image of Christ or salvation.[138] In a sermon of Ephrem the Syrian it is promised, with rest (ἀνάπαυσις), to those who are weary.[139] ⲠⲞⲨⲞⲈⲒⲚ ⲈⲘⲀⲨ2ⲰⲦ̅Ⲡ appears in three Valentinian Nag Hammadi writings, which necessitates asking whether it indicates some connection between *Authentikos Logos* and Valentinian texts. It needs to be asked if the image is employed in the same way, and further, if the use of the image in *Authentikos Logos* and Valentinian writings somehow differ from other early Christian usage. As was argued in Chapter 1, to fully understand *Authentikos Logos* and grasp its context, it is necessary to look further than the Nag Hammadi evidence. That is also the case with the image of never-setting light that goes back to Isaiah 60, is attested in Revelation 21:22–25 and several early Christian authors and writings, the Fifth Ezra (2 Ezdras) 2:35 included.

Isaiah 60 celebrates the bright future of Jerusalem and the glory of the Lord upon her, the time when kings and nations shall walk by her brightness and gather in Jerusalem. Prosperity, peace, and righteousness (δικαιοσύνη, Isa 60:17) replace injustice, destruction, and hardship (ταλαιπωρία, Isa 60:18). In Isaiah 60:19–20 this time is described as bathing in the brightness of God:

καὶ οὐκ ἔσται σοι ὁ ἥλιος εἰς φῶς ἡμέρας, οὐδὲ ἀνατολὴ σελήνης φωτιεῖ σοι τὴν νύκτα, ἀλλ' ἔσται σοι κύριος φῶς αἰώνιον καὶ ὁ θεὸς δόξα σου. οὐ γὰρ δύσεται ὁ ἥλιός σοι, καὶ ἡ σελήνη σοι οὐκ ἐκλείψει· ἔσται γὰρ κύριός σοι φῶς αἰώνιον, καὶ ἀναπληρωθήσονται αἱ ἡμέραι τοῦ πένθους σου.

The Isaiah text speaks of collective salvation of the people of Israel and the nations, and it derives from a different context. Some of the vocabulary is similar with *Authentikos Logos*, but in the *Authentikos Logos* these shared words ('light', ταλαιπωρία, and ἀνατολή, as well as the αἰών and δόξα in the doxology) are employed to describe the aim of the soul's ascent. These verses are echoed in two books of Christian scriptures: Revelation of John and the deuterocanonical book of Fifth Ezra. In the Revelation, new, heavenly

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137 *Authentikos Logos* 35:17–18.
138 Light refers to Christ e.g. in Origen, *Contra Celsum* 6.66; Methodius, *Symposium* 1.5, to salvation in Epiphanius, "Homilia in divini corporis sepulturam" 43.440.44–50. See also Lampe, *A Patristic Greek Lexicon*, 1504–1505 and Hugo Lundhaug, "'These Are the Symbols and Likenesses of the Resurrection': Conceptualizations of Death and Transformation in the Treatise on the Resurrection (NHC I,4)" in Turid Karlsen Seim/Jorunn Økland (ed.), *Meta-morphoses. Resurrection, Body and Transformative Practices in Early Christianity* (Ekstasis. Religious Experience from Antiquity to the Middle Ages 1; Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2009), 187–205, on p. 198–199.
139 Ephrem the Syrian, *Sermo in secundum adventum domini nostri Iesu Christi* 43.13–44.1.

Jerusalem needs no sun or moon, because the glory of God will illuminate it (Rev 21:22 – 25, 22:5). Revelation attests the Christian way of employing the idea of the eternal day from eschatology, but it is not the only occasion where this concept appears. Similarly Fifth Ezra 2 depicts the prophet Ezra receiving a message from the Lord on Mount Horeb to proclaim his message to the nations after the people of Israel have rejected him.

In the manner of Isaiah 60, the Fifth Ezra 2 addresses the nations ("gentes" in the Vulgate) and exhorts them to receive the promises and rewards of the Lord:

Therefore I say to you, O nations that hear and understand: "Wait for your shepherd; he will give you everlasting rest, because he who will come at the end of the age is close at hand. Be ready for the rewards of the kingdom, because perpetual light will shine on you for evermore. Flee from the shadow of this age, receive the joy of your glory; I publicly call on my saviour to witness. Receive what the Lord has entrusted to you and be joyful, giving thanks to him who has called you to the celestial kingdoms. Rise, stand erect, and see the number of those who have been sealed at the feast of the Lord. Those who have departed from the shadow of this age have received glorious garments from the Lord."[140]

The Fifth Ezra is a Christian text, so the message, as noted above, is directed at Christians, the inheritors of Israel that has refused God's commandments. Again this collective form of address uses language that appears to be echoed in the more individualistic description of the destination of the soul and the rewards it received that precede the doxology on *Authentikos Logos* 35. The soul that has ascended (risen) and received rest, takes part in the δεῖπνον and is clothed in her wedding clothes, "glorious garments" (in Fifth Ezra). These are images of salvation in both texts. In addition to the collectiveness of Ezra's proclamation, it is preceded by exhortation to good works.[141]

It is, however, not certain whether *Authentikos Logos* could allude to the Fifth Ezra at all, for the provenance of the Fifth Ezra is viciously hazy: it is not certain whether the Fifth Ezra was known in Egypt at the time *Authentikos Logos* was circulating. The Fifth Ezra exists today as part of the deuterocanonical 2 Esdras, which is a composition of three texts. The oldest part of the book are chapters 3 – 14 (Fourth Ezra), to which were added chapters 15 – 16 (Sixth Ezra), and finally, 1 – 2 (Fifth Ezra).[142] The provenance of the Fifth Ezra

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140 *5 Ezra*/2 Esdras 2:34 – 39. This is NRSV translation that is based on the Latin text.
141 2 Esdras 2:15 – 32. Perhaps worth noting for the similar, albeit briefer exhortation in the *Gospel of Truth*. Perhaps the polemical section in 33:4 – 34:32 can in some ways be read as containing exhortation (it is said that even pagans give alms), but that is not the primary tone of the section.
142 Theodore A. Bergren, "Christian Influence on the Transmission History of 4, 5, and 6 Ezra" in James VanderKam/William Adler (ed.), *The Jewish Apocalyptic Heritage in Early Christianity* (Compendia Rerum Iudaicarum ad Novum Testamentum. Assen/Minneapolis: Van Gorcum/Fortress Press, 1996), 102 – 127; David A. deSilva, *Introducing the Apocrypha: Message, Context,*

is unknown. It is today extant only in Latin Vulgate manuscripts,[143] yet Latin was not the original language: on linguistic grounds it is assumed that both the Fifth and the Sixth Ezra were originally written in Greek, and there is evidence for this for the Sixth Ezra, of which a short Greek fragment has been found from Oxyrhynchos.[144] One of the first Christian authors to quote the Fourth Ezra (2 Esdras 5:35) is Clement of Alexandria in *Stromata* 3.16, as stemming from "Esdras the prophet".

Theodore Bergren has suggested that the association of the three Ezras was probably known in the mid-fifth century at the latest.[145] The Fifth Ezra may (or may not) have been circulating separately before it was textually connected with the 4/6 Ezra corpus.[146] Did Clement know only the Fourth Ezra, or more of the composite work? To what extent the Ezra-excerpts were known in late ancient Egypt? That is not known, but even the second century CE has been suggested on the basis of parallels with the *Gospel of Peter*, the *Acts of Perpetua and Felicitas*, and the *Shepherd of Hermas*.[147] Graham Stanton has suggested mid-second century.[148] Clement's knowledge of the Fourth Ezra, as well as the Oxyrhynchus fragment of the Sixth Ezra render it possible to assume that also the Fifth Ezra may have been known in Egypt in the first centuries CE. In this sense the possible Fifth Ezra allusion in *Authentikos Logos* even hints at the history of the Ezra/Esdras text along with shedding light on *Authentikos Logos*.

The image of unsetting light is also employed in three Nag Hammadi Valentinian writings: the *Gospel of Truth* (NHV I, 3), the *Tripartite Tractate* (NHC I, 5), and the *Gospel of Philip* (NHC II, 3). Only the *Gospel of Truth* occurrence appears to contain ideas similar to those in *Authentikos Logos*, whereas in the *Tripartite Tractate* and the *Gospel of Philip* the connection is tied to a discussion of rituals, baptism, and the bridal chamber respectively. Although the three other Nag Hammadi occurrences of the image attest to its popularity in Valentinian usage, that does not make the image itself

and Significance (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 2002), 323–324; H. Duensing/A. de Santos Otero, "Das fünfte und sechste Buch Esra" in Edgar Hennecke/Wilhelm Schnee-melcher (ed.), *Neutestamentliche Apokryphen in deutscher Übersetzung II. Apostolisches Apokalypsen und Verwandtes* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1989), 581–590, on p. 581–582; also Graham N. Stanton, "5 Ezra and Matthean Christianity in the Second Century" in *JTS* 28 (1977), 67–83.

143 Bergren, "Christian Influence", 102–103, 115; deSilva, *Introducing the Apocrypha*, 346; Myers, Jacob Martin, *I and II Esdras. Introduction, Translation and Commentary* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 107. The 5 Ezra is "quoted extensively in both the Roman and Mozarabic liturgies, many elements of which go back at least to the 5th century", Bergren, "Christian Influence", 115.

144 DeSilva, *Introducing the Apocrypha*, 347, Duensing/Otero, "Das fünfte und sechste Buch Esra", 581, Myers, *I and II Esdras*, 153, 115, 118.

145 Bergren, "Christian Influence", 126–127, also 117.

146 Bergren, "Christian Influence", 120.

147 Duensing/Otero, "Das fünfte und sechste Buch", 581.

148 Stanton, "5 Ezra and Matthean Christianity", 67–83.

Valentinian. As the above discussion shows, the same image appears in the scriptures read by Christians of various persuasions, and in other works of Christian authors.

The *Gospel of Truth* 31:35 – 32:37 explains the good shepherd and the one lost sheep of a flock of one hundred in Matt 18:12 – 14, and the shepherd who will rescue the sheep that has fallen into a pit in Matt 12:11 – 12. The shepherd is the Father, and the Sabbath is the day of salvation: it is the day that has no night and the light that does not set: this is in line with Isaiah 60 and 2 Esdras 2. The inner light is the salvation that the faithful have within themselves, and they are to proclaim the salvation to others.[149] This combination of salvific imagery and exhortation recalls 2 Esdras, and it continues in a way that aligns with the spirit of Matt 25:31 – 46: the *Gospel of Truth* makes it very clear that talk of salvation is not enough, but deeds of charity must accompany the message. The feet of those who stumble are to be strengthened, hands must be reached for those who are sick, the hungry fed, and the weary given rest.[150]

It is clear that this section of the *Gospel of Truth* relies very strongly on the gospel tradition. As in Isaiah 60, 2 Esdras 2, and *Authentikos Logos* the never-setting light is associated with salvation. Differing from it, *Authentikos Logos* 35 focuses on the soul's salvation, without suggesting that salvation is the Sabbath (or that the Sabbath should be explained as salvation), nor that salvation should be proclaimed to others, accompanied with deeds of charity. *Authentikos Logos* 33:27 – 28 briefly mentions almsgiving ("Even the pagans give alms") but does not proceed into further discussion on the subject. Otherwise the promoted lifestyle rather focuses on combat against vice (which does not, of course, exclude charity) as a crucial aspect of true Christian life.

The two other Valentinian references of the unsetting light are connected to a discussion of rituals. In *Tripartite Tractate* 128:25 – 129:10 the true meaning of baptism is "garment", "confirmation of truth", "silence", "bridal chamber", "flameless light that does not set", and "immortality". The final section of the *Gospel of Philip* (85 – 86) contains teaching on the mystery of the bridal chamber: the person who receives this mystery, receives the perfect light (ⲡⲟⲩⲟⲉⲓⲛ ⲛ̅ⲧⲉⲗⲉⲓⲟⲛ, *Gos. Phil.* 85:25 – 26). This is a marriage of the day: its mysteries are perfected in day and in light, and neither its day nor its light ever set (86:3 – 4).

The connecting point between *Authentikos Logos*, the *Tripartite Tractate* and the *Gospel of Philip* is the portrayal of salvation as eternal light, but what this salvation is, is perceived differently. In *Authentikos Logos* ascent is the soul's salvation, whereas in the *Tripartite Tractate* it is baptism, and in the *Gospel of Philip* the bridal chamber contains salvation. *Authentikos Logos* does not refer to baptism, anointment, eucharist, or other Christian rituals. The broader way of interpreting the images of rest, bridal chamber, immortal food,

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149 Tite, *Valentinian Ethics*, 239, 263 – 264.
150 *Gos. Truth* 33:1 – 11. See also Tite, *Valentinian Ethics*, 241.

and the shining light that does not set, as salvation and reaching of the goal, is more obvious. However, the image of the light that does not set does not settle the relationship between *Authentikos Logos* and Valentinian texts: the question will be approached again in Chapter III.

4. Summary

Authentikos Logos is preserved in one manuscript only, as part of Nag Hammadi Codex VI. The manuscript is well preserved and does not cause considerable obstacles to the study of the writing. The text is written in the Sahidic dialect of Coptic, probably somewhere in the Thebaid, as the Lycopolitan variations suggest. The Sahidic dialect connects the writing with ascetic, monastic Christianity, as it was the dialect used and promoted by the Christian church. Although the Nag Hammadi writings are taken to have undergone a long process of transmission, in many cases including their translation from Greek into Coptic, there is no direct evidence for that in *Authentikos Logos*. The language of the writing is idiomatic as one would expect in a largely bilingual milieu. It is usually assumed that *Authentikos Logos* was first written in Greek, and usually no Coptic origin has been assumed: however, this lack of evidence means that the question ultimately cannot be settled, and one is left with the Coptic version, and only that.

The question was raised as regards dating *Authentikos Logos*. The copying and compilation of the Nag Hammadi codices is usually dated to the latter part of the fourth century, and the contents of the several Codex VI writings have some indicators towards the third century. Scholars of *Authentikos Logos* so far have tended to place its provenance some time in the second to early third century. The question of date will be considered in the coming chapters of the work, but a later date than the previously suggested can already be tentatively proposed at this point.

After a brief introduction to the contents, the discussion focused on what kind of a writing *Authentikos Logos* is. In agreement with previous scholars, this work considers *Authentikos Logos* a homily, or some other oral delivery; some discussion was dedicated to why this approach is a sensible one. *Authentikos Logos* is not a philosophical treatise, and even less an ascension account or a novel, although it shares similar traits with these. Homily appears a likely category in light of the soul story that forms a narrative framework to exhortation and instruction, as well as the overall impression of oral – whether actually original or so intended – delivery. Several details in the text suggest a flow of speech, such as conclusive remark in 25:26 – 27, and changes in the details of the fishing parable in 29:5, 11, 21. Also the paraenetic focus could indicate a close connection with the recipients. Although also popular philosophical instruction, or educational context could appear as options, it

was noted that the general style of *Authentikos Logos* does not resemble diatribe. Some common features of sermons are missing in *Authentikos Logos*, like references to the scriptures, but instead of direct quotations, the writing employs allusions generously.

In order to understand the context from where *Authentikos Logos* most likely originates, a brief outline of Christianity in late ancient Egypt was provided. An ascetic or monastic setting could be a likely option as the focus of the writing on the way of life suggests shared concerns with ascetic way of life; the question will be further addressed in the chapters to come. A narrowly Alexandrian origin should be approached with caution, although an Egyptian provenance is possible: the strict distinction between the city and the *chora*, Greek and Coptic, learned theology and unlearned asceticism cannot be maintained in light of the picture gained from several recent studies, and in this vein, *Authentikos Logos* should not be thought of as reflecting any stark contrast between Alexandrian, Greek-speaking theology and unlearned native Copts. The writing rather bears witness to the learnedness of Coptic-speaking Christianity (whether as having been written in Coptic, or translated for a Coptic-speaking audience). Further, the monastic scene of the fourth century and afterwards was diverse, wherefore a Pachomian origin – as sometimes suggested for the Nag Hammadi writings – should not be considered the only option.

In *Authentikos Logos* biblical texts are not referred to in a direct way, nor are there allegories or explanations of the scriptures. These allusions to the scriptures in *Authentikos Logos* cannot be approached without assuming knowledge of the texts alluded to. The use of the scriptures provides guidelines for assessing the Christianity it represents. Two allusions were analysed in this context to highlight this view. First, the soul running to her treasure where her mind is in 28:23 – 26 alludes to Matt 6:21/Luke 12:34. The change of the term from "heart" to "mind" does not suggest "unorthodox" deviance from "proper" Biblical texts, but in light of other Christian evidence places *Authentikos Logos* somewhere in the following of Justin Martyr, and also the traditions of ascetic, eastern Christianity. Second, the reference to the light that does not set in 35:17 is a common Christian motif that goes back to Isaiah 60 and possibly 2 Esdras 2, as also other shared vocabulary indicates. Also Valentinian authors knew the image, and they, like Isaiah 60, 2 Esdras 2 and *Authentikos Logos* connect it with salvation. Whereas the *Gospel of Truth* 31:35 – 32:37 provides another biblical interpretation in the proximity of the image and connects the salvation with good works like 2 Esdras 2, *Authentikos Logos* is more focused on the soul's progress. Together the *Gospel of Truth* and *Authentikos Logos* suggest that 2 Esdras 2, the Fifth Ezra, may well have been known in late ancient Egypt, as were the other parts of the deuterocanonical composition of 2 Esdras. The two other Valentinian texts, the *Tripartite Tractate* and the *Gospel of Philip* bind the image of salvation as light that does not set with mysteries of baptism and the bridal chamber: this aspect is not

found in *Authentikos Logos*. Both *Authentikos Logos* and Valentinian texts employ Christian, scriptural imagery, but there are no grounds to connect *Authentikos Logos* and Valentinian writings on this basis.

This chapter provided several suggestions as to where *Authentikos Logos* fits within early Christianity, but also raised further questions. If, as suggested, it is a homily that circulated in late ancient Egypt, how do traditions of that era become apparent in the text? A more thorough analysis of the writing's contents will be conducted in the chapters that follow. The themes of the following chapters are the story of the soul, the soul's epithets, matter, body and life in a body, ascent and by what means to reach it.

III. The Journey of the Fallen Soul in *Authentikos Logos*

The story of the soul's journey is the thread that runs through *Authentikos Logos* and binds it together from the first page to the last. The text is intertwined with metaphors, parables, and exhortation, not unlike the way *Exegesis on the Soul* binds its soul story to scriptural exegesis. The central character of the writing is the feminine soul, whose journey through the cosmos and earthly life forms the backbone of the writing. On the first page the soul begins the descent towards the material world, and on the last passage it reaches its destination. The origin of the soul is in the invisible, indescribable worlds, from where it descends into the material world and is born into a human body. *Authentikos Logos* follows the soul's journey through earthly life, of which the very goal is the soul's final ascent to, knowledge of, and unity with the divine.

The soul, when incarnate, is deceived by pleasures and passions. Through its life in a body it is brought into connection with negative emotions, its inferior step-siblings. The soul forgets her origin, abandons knowledge, and sinks to the level of animal behaviour.[1] The soul suffers in the human body and in the material world in a way that is compared to drunkenness, imprisonment in a brothel, and poverty.[2] When it finally understands the real nature of worldly enticements, it renounces temptations and chooses a new conduct that leads into true, eternal life.[3] The soul seeks the Word as medicine that opens its eyes but blinds its enemies. It is now brave and speaks boldly. The soul takes the world off as if it were a garment, gives up the body, and clothes itself in the true garment.[4] It reaches its destination, knowledge of God, and receives peace and rest.[5]

An analysis of the soul story is the key to understanding *Authentikos Logos*. Questions to be asked include such as what is the purpose and aims of the story, and how does it relate to other ancient views on the soul. In this chapter the soul story will be discussed in relation to a selection of texts from the first centuries CE. This discussion will build a background to the discussion on the soul's epithets (Chapter IV), on the role of matter in the text (Chapter V), and finally on the soul's relationship to the body and its ascent (Chapter VI). The

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1 24:7 – 22.
2 27:25 – 29.
3 31:24 – 32:1.
4 32:2 – 8.
5 32:9 – 16; 34:32 – 35:16.

purpose is to explore what is common between *Authentikos Logos* and the selected texts, where these texts differ from one another, and what these differences reveal about the particular goals of *Authentikos Logos*.

Comparison in many ways is a common sense activity, but for conducting comparisons, several tasks need to be undertaken.[6] First, texts used as materials for comparison have to be selected. This is far from a straightforward task, as the discussions of the soul are abundant in late antiquity. The aim in this chapter is to discuss texts that can assumed to be close to *Authentikos Logos* in one way or another: the *Exegesis on the Soul* has a very similar storyline, and it moreover stems from the same collection of codices, albeit from the Nag Hammadi Codex II. There are some features in *Authentikos Logos* that appear to come close to Valentinian thought, and this assumption will be further tested as well. Plato, Origen and Plotinus enable one to place *Authentikos Logos* in the broad context of Platonic heritage, Origen and Plotinus further serving as test-cases of how closely the writing would fit a third-century Platonic context. Second, similarities and differences between the selected texts and *Authentikos Logos* are observed and brought into discussion, with an aim at understanding and explaining them as much as possible. Particular emphasis is laid on discussing the differences, yet both similarities and differences will be discussed in a balanced manner. Differences in particular often highlight aspects that enable a more nuanced understanding of the objects of comparison.[7]

In this chapter the comparisons focus both on the overall structure and contents of *Authentikos Logos* and the texts it is compared with, as well as particular motifs that are shared between these texts, such as the imagery of the soul as a daughter or woman (e.g. *Authentikos Logos, Exegesis on the Soul,* Plotinus), common terminology and how it is employed (e.g. *Authentikos Logos,* Valentinian writings), the concept of the soul's/Wisdom's descent and ascent (e.g. *Authentikos Logos,* Valentinian writings, Origen, Plotinus) and the motif of the soul's relation to the divine (*Authentikos Logos,* Plato, Origen, Plotinus). Some of these comparisons thus inspect broad lines, whereas others focus on more detailed issues: the aim has been to arrive at a balance between broad and narrow scopes. Textual genres on the other hand are also noted: the

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6 Michael Stausberg, "Comparison" in Michael Stausberg/Steven Engler (ed.), *The Routledge Handbook of Research Methods in the Study of Religion* (London: Routledge, 2011), 21–39, on p. 21; Brent A. Strawn, "Comparative Approaches: History, Theory, and the Image of God" in Joel M. LeMon/Kent Harold Richards (ed.), *Method Matters. Essays on the Interpretation of the Hebrew Bible in Honor of David L. Petersen* (Atlanta, Ga.: Society of Biblical Literature, 2009), 117–142, on p. 117–118; Luther H. Martin, "Comparison" in Willi Braun/Russell T. McCutcheon (ed.), *Guide to the Study of Religion* (London: Continuum, 2000), 45–56.

7 Comparison as a method has been criticised for problems created by "overemphasis on likeness rather than on difference" (Stausberg, "Comparison", 27–28); this issue has been kept in mind in this study. Strawn calls for balancing similarities and differences, as overemphasis on either is prone to creating problems. Strawn, "Comparative Approaches", 120.

texts discussed in this chapter represent different genres, and the common denominators are rather found on the soul being their common centre of attention.

Further, comparison can be invaluable when hypotheses need to be constructed and tested, and when interpretations are refined.[8] Various hypotheses concerning *Authentikos Logos* have been made in the previous studies that deal with it – such that it is or is not a Valentinian text, that it is similar to the *Exegesis on the Soul*, that it is a Platonic or a Christian writing. These hypotheses can be verified through comparison, discussion, and analysis bound to such comparison. Interpretation and explanation are thus part of the work done in this and the following chapters.

The first text to be discussed in many ways resembles *Authentikos Logos*: the *Exegesis on the Soul* (aka *The Expository Treatise on the Soul*, NHC II,6) that like *Authentikos Logos* is preserved in one of the Nag Hammadi codices. This allows assuming if not the same, then at least similar audiences to these two texts in late antiquity. As will be shown, whilst the *Exegesis on the Soul* in many ways is similar to *Authentikos Logos*, a closer comparison reveals that the overall story is more colourful and anthropomorphic in the *Exegesis on the Soul*. Further, *Authentikos Logos* puts more emphasis on the soul's own way of life and ascetic endeavour than the *Exegesis on the Soul*, which emphasises repentance, baptism, the expectation of the Father's mercy and the bridegroom/Saviour. In this sense *Authentikos Logos* represents a somewhat different orientation towards the soul.

The next authors to be discussed are two prominent third-century thinkers, Origen and Plotinus, who both discussed the soul in their works. Their views reveal that there is much in common between *Authentikos Logos* and the two Alexandrian-educated authors. Idea of the soul's pre-existence and descent is common to both *Authentikos Logos* and Origen, and although no direct connection can be established, there is much in *Authentikos Logos* that stands close to Origen's views.

The soul as such a paradigmatic figure as it is in *Authentikos Logos* almost resembles the divine figure of Wisdom, and Wisdom's portrayal in Valentinian writings. The main difference is that *Authentikos Logos* focuses on an individual soul who descends to live a human life, whereas Valentinian texts focus on divine Wisdom.[9] Valentinian writings form an important group in the Nag Hammadi collection and occasionally it has been asked whether *Authentikos Logos* could be included in that group of writings. Scholars have taken different stances on the question, but a thorough discussion from the viewpoint of *Authentikos Logos* has been lacking thus far. The latter part of this chapter considers this question. It will be suggested that there is not

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8 Stausberg, "Comparison", 33 – 34.

9 See also Ismo Dunderberg, "Moral Progress in Early Christian Stories of the Soul". *NTS* 59 (2013), 247 – 267.

enough evidence to include *Authentikos Logos* within the Valentinian corpus; similarities are too general and have other explanations than direct dependency of *Authentikos Logos* on, or belonging to, Valentinian literary traditions.

A particularly important text discussed in this chapter is Plotinus' *Ennead* VI.9.9. It proves that Plotinus, too, knew the motif of a fallen soul-woman. Plotinus' discussion resembles the soul story in the *Exegesis on the Soul*, and when Plotinus discusses two Aphrodites, there is resemblance with Valentinian concept of heavenly Wisdom and lower Achamoth. The *Enneads* pose several questions regarding the relationship between Plotinus, the two Nag Hammadi soul stories (*Exegesis on the Soul* and *Authentikos Logos*), and the Valentinian myth. *Enneads* in fact prove that the soul-story is not exclusively a Christian invention or topic of discussion, but enjoyed a wider circulation.

1. Two Nag Hammadi Stories of the Soul

The *Exegesis on the Soul* (NHC II,6) employs a similar storyline to that in *Authentikos Logos* and the two writings resemble each other in many ways, as has been noted by several scholars previously.[10] Both tell a story of a soul-woman's journey into and out of the material world, hardships experienced during the soul's earthly life, the soul's progress and how it may return to her original home or condition, and how this return can be achieved. Both writings assume knowledge of Christian scriptures in the background, and both, as part of the Coptic Nag Hammadi collection, would at some stage of their ancient circulation have been read by more or less similar audiences. Despite the similarities, there are also numerous differences between the two texts both in general and in details: the comparison that follows aims at taking both into account.

1.1 The *Exegesis on the Soul:* Storyline

The *Exegesis on the Soul* is a writing that concerns the soul's fall, disgrace, repentance, and salvation, which is described as a return to its original condition and an ascent to heaven.[11] The writing makes ample use of the idea of the soul as a fallen woman and employs metaphors of boundary-crossing or shameful sexual behaviour when it depicts the soul as a woman defiled in

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10 Ménard, *L'Authentikos Logos*, 4; Cornelia Kulawik, *Die Erzählung über die Seele (Nag-Hammadi-Codex II,6)*. Neu herausgegeben, übersetzt und erklärt von Cornelia Kulawik (TUGAL 155; Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2006), 291–296; Scopello, "Jewish and Greek Heroines", 155–177.

11 Kulawik dates the writing in the late second to the early third century. Kulawik, *Die Erzählung*, 6–9. Lundhaug dates it to some time between the mid-second century at the earliest and the mid-fifth century at the latest. Lundhaug, *Images of Rebirth*, 141, 151.

bodily life. An emphatic feature of the writing are scriptural quotations and paraphrases that make it most natural to approach the text as an exegetical homily that tells and interprets the soul story in the light of the scriptures.[12]

The *Exegesis on the Soul* begins with a definition of the femaleness of the soul that is stated by "the wise who lived before us", who named the soul as female. This femaleness is also evident in the nature of the soul, and in the notion that the soul has a womb.[13] Yet as long as the soul is with its father, it is a virgin and androgynous.[14] When it leaves the home of the father and falls into the body and this life, it ends up in the hands of robbers and violent men who abuse it either by force or by seduction, and so the soul is corrupted.[15] It prostitutes itself in body, yet also imagines the violators as its husbands. The soul sighs and repents of having given itself to these violent and faithless adulterers, but its repentance remains ineffective, and it runs again to others who make it serve them as if it were a slave girl.[16] Shame stops the soul from leaving them, and they deceive it by pretending to be its true husbands, but they all desert it in the end.[17] The soul ends up a poor and desolate widow, whose plight does not concern its lovers. Apart from defilement, it gained nothing of them.[18] The soul's children from these men are weak: deaf, blind, sickly, and disturbed.

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12 Lundhaug provides a useful discussion on the intertextuality and use of Scripture in he *Exegesis on the Soul* that is done through direct quotations, paraphrases, and allusions: Lundhaug, *Images of Rebirth*, 69–73. An earlier approach is Robert MacLaren Wilson, "Old Testament Exegesis in the Gnostic Exegesis on the Soul" in Martin Krause (ed.), *Essays on the Nag Hammadi Texts: In Honour of Pahor Labib* (NHS 6; Leiden: Brill, 1975), 217–224, on p. 223.
Lautaro Roig Lanzillotta has discussed the use of Gen 12:1 in the *Exegesis on the Soul*. The focus of the article is on a narrowly defined question on the interpretation of the biblical verse in question, and Roig Lanzillotta does not approach the question of a wider historical context of the *Exegesis on the Soul*. In his view the exegesis in the *Exegesis on the Soul* does not come very close to the complexity of Philo, but is rather comparable with the more simple manner of Origen and Didymus the Blind. Lautaro Roig Lanzillotta, "'Come Out of Your Country and Your Kinsfolk': Abraham's Command and Ascent of the Soul in the Exegesis on the Soul (NHC II,6)" in Martin Goodman/George H. van Kooten/Jacques T.A.G.M. van Ruiten (ed.), *Abraham, the Nations, and the Hagarites. Jewish, Christian, and Islamic Perspectives on Kinship with Abraham* (Themes in Biblical Narrative 13; Leiden: Brill, 2010), 401–420, 401–420.

13 *Exeg. Soul* 127:19–22.

14 ϨⲈⲰⲤ ⲘⲈⲚ ⲈⲤϢⲞⲞⲠ ⲞⲨⲀⲀⲦⲤ̄ ϨⲀϨⲦⲘ̄ ⲠⲈⲒⲰⲦ ⲞⲨⲠⲀⲢⲐⲈⲚⲞⲤ ⲦⲈ ⲀⲨⲰ ⲞⲨϨⲞⲨⲦⲤϨⲒⲘⲈ ⲦⲈ ϨⲘ̄ⲠⲈⲤⲈⲒⲚⲈ *Exeg. Soul* 127:22–24.

15 *Exeg. Soul* 127:19–128:1. I follow here C. Kulawik's edition.

16 A reference to sexual abuse of slaves, see e.g. Jennifer Glancy, *Slavery in Early Christianity* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2006), 21–24, 54–57; Roger Bagnall has argued that the majority of slaves were females: Bagnall, Roger S., "Missing Females in Roman Egypt" in Roger Bagnall, *Later Roman Egypt: Society, Religion, Economy and Administration* (Variorum Collected Studies Series. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003), 121–138, on p. 127.

17 *Exeg. Soul* 128:1–17.

18 The text on *Exeg. Soul* 128:19–20 is interpreted differently by Layton and Kulawik; the former reads "not even a measure of food was left her from the time of her affliction", the latter "Nicht einmal ein Ohr hat sie in ihrem Leid". Meyer's translation follows the same reading as Kulawik's: "No one even gave ear to her in her pain" (Marvin Meyer, "Exegesis on the Soul" in Meyer (ed.),

As in *Authentikos Logos*, the soul does not succeed in the change of direction straight away. In the *Exegesis on the Soul*, the soul's fate turns only when the heavenly Father sees it sighing with her passions and disgrace, repenting, and calling his name. It is then that he comes to the soul's aid.[19] Next follow the first scriptural quotes and allusions.[20] Importantly, the soul's prostitution is explained as its concern with fleshly, sensible, and earthly things (ⲀⲚⲤⲀⲢⲔⲒⲔⲞⲚ ⲀⲨⲰ ⲚⲀⲒⲤⲐⲎⲦⲞⲚ ⲘⲚ̄ Ⲛ̄ϨⲂⲎⲨⲈ Ⲙ̄ⲠⲔⲀϨ) that have defiled her.[21] It is explained that as long as the soul runs around and associates/sleeps (ⲈⲤⲔⲞⲒⲚⲰⲚⲒ) with whomever it meets, it defiles itself and suffers deservedly, but it will receive mercy when it understands its situation, weeps before the father and repents. The father's mercy is explained as the father turning the soul's womb from the outside to its right, inner place, and as this happens, the soul receives baptism. This purification means that the soul regains her original, youthful state, and turns back to itself. This is the soul's baptism.[22]

After this withdrawal the soul experiences labour pain, but as it cannot have a child alone, the father sends down a bridegroom. This bridegroom is the brother of the soul who descends from heaven; the soul discards its former life and renews and purifies itself. It sits inside, anticipating the arrival of the bridegroom, and dreams of he who finally arrives according to the will of the father. The bridegroom decorates the bridal chamber.[23] The soul's marriage is explained as being unlike carnal marriage where the spouses get satisfaction but also soon tire of it and turn away from each other. This marriage makes the spouses one life, as they originally were; again, scriptural quotes and paraphrases are provided as proof.[24] The soul recognises its bridegroom and rejoices, and beautifies itself for the bridegroom. The soul's intercourse with the true bridegroom gives it seed that is the living spirit, from which are born the soul's good children that it rears. The father's will perfects this marriage.[25]

The soul's rebirth is explained in parallel terms: "The soul must regenerate itself and become as she was originally. The soul moves by itself. It received the divine from the father to renew itself, so that it might be restored to where it

The Nag Hammadi Scriptures, 227). The interpretation depends on the word ⲘⲀⲀϪⲈ that as a feminine noun means a "measure" (of fruit, grain etc.), and as a masculine means "ear", and with ⲔⲀ, ϪⲀ + ⲘⲀⲀϪⲈ, "to listen". Layton's reading is less likely, and Kulawik's is supported by the word appearing in *Exeg. Soul* 133:17 in the meaning of "ear". Also, the theme of the father hearing the soul's calling supports the reading, e.g. *Exeg. Soul* 135:26 – 28.

19 *Exeg. Soul* 128:26 – 129:5.
20 From Jer 3:1 – 4, Hos 2:4 – 9 (*LXX*) and Ezek 16:23 – 26 (*LXX*),
21 *Exeg. Soul* 130:20 – 25; 130:31 f. Pages 130 and 131 also allude or refer to Acts 15:20, 29; 21:25; 1 Cor 5:9 – 10; 6:18; 2 Cor 7:1 and Eph 6:12.
22 *Exeg. Soul* 131:13 – 132:2.
23 *Exeg. Soul* 132:2 – 27.
24 *Exeg. Soul* 132:27 – 133:10. Cf. Gen 2:24; 3:16; 1 Cor 11:3; Eph 5:23.
25 *Exeg. Soul* 133:10 – 134:6. Cf. Ps 44:11 – 12; Gen 12:1, reference to the call to Abraham to leave her fatherland, which also builds a connection with abandoning of idolatry.

came from. This is the resurrection from the dead. This is the redemption from captivity. This is the ascent to heaven. This is the way to the father."[26] The comment sheds light on the view of salvation held by those who read and circulated the *Exegesis on the Soul*: resurrection, redemption, ascent, and the way to the Father all illustrate the same thing, the soul's return. Words from Ps 102:1 – 5 (LXX) are quoted to strengthen this, and the author further states that the soul is saved through rebirth, not ascesis, techniques, or learning alone.[27] Salvation is rather the grace of the fatherand the gift of God.[28]

In the final three pages of the *Exegesis on the Soul* scriptural quotations and paraphrases explain that the soul story concerns true Christians who need to pray truly, repent continuously, and perceive their true situation.[29] God examines depths of heart, and no-one can be saved if they still love the place of deception; this message is strengthened by the fourth, third, and second to last quotations of the text that come from Homer's *Odysseus*.[30] The *Exegesis on the Soul* concludes with Psalm 6:7 – 10 and the author's words: "If we repent truly, God, longsuffering and great of mercy, will hear us, to whom is the glory for ever and ever. Amen."

The message in the *Exegesis on the Soul* focuses on repentance and the expectation of the father's mercy. It has been suggested that a likely

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26 *Exeg. Soul* 134:6 – 15.

27 ⲚⲰⲀⲬⲈ ⲀⲚ ⲚⲀⲤⲔⲎⲤⲒⲤ . . . ⲚⲦⲈⲬⲚⲎ . . . ϨⲚⲤⲂⲰ ⲚⲤϨⲀⲒ. *Exeg. Soul* 134:29 – 32. It is possible to translate the expression ⲚⲰⲀⲬⲈ . . . ⲚⲀⲤⲔⲎⲤⲒⲤ simply as "ascesis" as Kulawik does, cf. Matt 19:9 in the Sahidic (and Bohairic) New Testament that translates πορνεία as ⲰⲀⲬⲈ ⲘⲠⲞⲢⲚⲒⲀ. Psalm allusion, see different interpretations by Kulawik, *Erzählung*, 224 (as a Platonic Christian image that refers to the ascent of the soul), and Lundhaug, *Images of Rebirth*, 114 – 116, 424, 426 (part of a blend of several scriptural images).

28 Kulawik translates here "Diese aber ist weder durch Askese zu erlangen, noch durch (bestimmte) Techniken, [auch nicht] durch schriftliche Lehren". Lundhaug translates: "But this comes not from ascetic words nor from skills nor from written teaching", Lundhaug, *Images of Rebirth*, 461. Both enlighten the ascetic meaning of the text, and take up Titus 3:5 as an important intertext. Kulawik, *Die Erzählung*, 50 – 51, 225 – 226; Lundhaug, *Images of Rebirth*, 115 – 117, 143.

The English translations of William C. Robinson and Marvin Meyer are not as precise as those of Kulawik and Lundhaug, and consequently do not shed light on the ascetic aspect of the text. Robinson translates: "And this is due not to rote phrases or to professional skills or to book learning" (William C. Robinson, "The Expository Treatise on the Soul" in Bentley Layton (ed.), *The Hammadi Codex II,2 – 7*. Vol. II (Leiden: E.J. Brill 1989). Marvin Meyer reads: "This is not because of practical lessons or technical skills or learned books" (Meyer, "The Exegesis on the Soul", 231). One should not exaggerate the contrast between repentance and mercy on one hand, and ascetic practice or learning on the other, or detect polemic between the two, cf. Madeleine Scopello, *L'exégèse de l'âme. Nag Hammadi codex II, Introduction, Traduction et commentaire* (NHS 25; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1985), 151.

29 John 6:44; Matt 5:4,6; Luke 6:21; Luke 14:26; Acts 13:24; 1 Clem. 8:3; Isa 30:15, 19 – 20. The recipients are called to pray day and night, to spread out hands, as do people caught in the stormy sea, without hypocrisy. *Exeg. Soul* 136:16 – 27.

30 Odysseus weeps of homesickness when he is on the island of Calypso (*Od.* 1.48 – 59; 4.558); Helen misses her home (*Od.* 4.260 – 261) and sighs, saying it was Aphrodite who deceived her (*Od.* 4.261 – 264).

environment for this kind of address would have been found in monastic communities, as suggested by Hugo Lundhaug and Eduard Irichichi.[31] Lundhaug has pointed out that the use of the scriptures in the *Exegesis on the Soul* finds connecting points with Pachomian approaches to the scriptures, and its view of the pre-existence of the soul agrees for example with Origenist thought.[32] The Homeric quotations alongside the scriptural ones suggest that the writer and readers were educated, and also familiar with the classical tradition. Jewish-Christian theological traditions can be suggested as well: the notion at the beginning of the text that the soul has a womb is also attested for example by Philo and Athanasius of Alexandria.[33] This bears not only witness of early Christianity that sought compatibility between Graeco-Roman and Judeo-Christian traditions, but suggests a high level and tradition of education for its readers in the late ancient world.

1.2 *Authentikos Logos* and the *Exegesis on the Soul* Compared

The story of the fallen soul-woman, as the summary above reveals, in many ways is more colourful in the *Exegesis on the Soul* than in *Authentikos Logos:* the soul's prostitution, its situation in the hands of violent men and images of the soul's labour pain are conveyed in imagery that is more anthropomorphic than the story in *Authentikos Logos.* There is more focus on the motif of the fallen woman in the *Exegesis on the Soul. Authentikos Logos* contains other maxims and themes[34] and longer discussions[35], whereas the soul story in the *Exegesis on the Soul* is combined with the scriptural passages that explain or illustrate the prostitution of the soul and the repentance that it needs in order to be rescued, and that way the focus is kept on the soul story.

The scriptures hold a prominent role in the *Exegesis on the Soul*, where quotes or paraphrases hold an emphatic position. *Authentikos Logos* alludes to the scriptures in a much more nebulous manner. Louis Painchaud has

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31 Lundhaug, *Images of Rebirth,* 141–149. Eduard Iricinschi, "The Scribes and Readers of Nag Hammadi Codex II: Book Production and Monastic Paideia in Fourth-Century Egypt" (Ph.D. diss., Princeton University, 2009), 201–202, 219 and Eduard Iricinschi, "The Teaching Hidden in Silence (NHC II,4): Questions, Answers, and Secrets in a Fourth-Century Egyptian Book" in Eduard Iricinschi/Lance Jenott/Nicola Denzey Lewis/Philippa Townsend (ed.), *Beyond the Gnostic Gospels. Studies Building on the Work of Elaine Pagels* (STAC 82; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck 2013), 297–319. Cornelia Kulawik considers a baptismal context: Kulawik, *Die Erzählung,* 169.

32 Lundhaug, *Images of Rebirth,* 140–149, 413–416.

33 Philo, *Alleg. Interp.* 3.180, Athanasius, *On Sickness and Health* 4 in Brakke, *Athanasius and Asceticism* 310–313.

34 The choice between two ways, 24:10–13; foolish person and gentle son, 24:23–33; mixture of wheat and chaff, p. 25.

35 Contest and persecution passage on pages 26–27, fisherman parable in 29:3–31:7; ignorant people and the foolish person in 33:4–34:32.

illustrated the difference between allusions and explicit quotations as having different goals: whilst the explicit quotations are more indicative, even authoritative, allusions leave more space for the recipient; not just in the sense of something shared between the author and the recipient, but in the sense of calling for wisdom.[36] This notion is strengthened in the other major difference between *Authentikos Logos* and the *Exegesis on the Soul*. The soul story in the *Exegesis on the Soul* emphasises the soul's repentance, weeping of sins, calling of the father, and expectation of the bridegroom, as preparation of the rebirth and salvation that are the gift of God. In *Authentikos Logos* free will and the soul's independent quest and aim at ascent are emphatic: the two ways' maxim (24:10 – 13) is given instead of any call for repentance or divine help, and the soul conquers her poor life on earth by pursuing the Word, casting out something (the lacuna has destroyed part of the text here), fighting her enemies, and hurrying upwards, towards her (heavenly) treasure (27:25 – 29:3).

Details differ as well. The reason(s) for the soul leaving or having to leave its heavenly home, the description of its state on earth, the degree to which the soul's femininity is employed and by what means the soul reaches its salvation, vary between the two texts. When *Authentikos Logos* and the *Exegesis on the Soul* refer to the soul's origin, it is clear in both writings that the soul comes from above, the heavenly world, but whereas *Authentikos Logos* refers to the soul appearing from the invisible, indescribable worlds and beginning a descent that keeps her connected with her origin, the *Exegesis on the Soul* mentions the soul descending from above in a decidedly anthropomorphic language: as long as the soul is alone with the father it is a virgin and androgynous.[37] Neither text does at first proffer any specific explanation as to why the soul descends, but a providential cause is suggested in *Authentikos Logos* when the will of the Father is mentioned as the cause behind the contest in the world (22:6 – 23 and 25:27 – 26:20).

The *Exegesis on the Soul* may suggest a wilful escape from the Father's house as the soul laments having run away from her maiden's chambers (128:34 – 129:1).[38] In this section the use of the word παρθενών, is worth consideration. The word can refer to maiden's rooms, and in this meaning it may suggest yet another piece of evidence for the importance of Greek classics in the *Exegesis on the Soul*. The term is a rare one in the first centuries CE as a reference to maidens' chambers or quarters, but it should not be discarded.[39] Rather,

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36 Louis Painchaud, "The Use of Scripture in Gnostic Literature" in *JECS* 4 (1996), 129 – 146, on p. 135.

37 *Exeg. Soul* 127:22 – 25.

38 The escape is not elaborated, and no precise conclusions should be drawn based on it.

39 The term can also refer to a cella in a goddess' temple (Athena's in Parthenon of Athens, Artemis' temple in Magnesia, or that of the Great Mother in Cyzicus), Liddell/Scott/Jones, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 1339. For reasons why Kulawik translates "Jungfrauengemach", see Kulawik,

παρθενών could have been used knowingly, to allude to Greek literary traditions in the way of the Homeric quotes. The term παρθενών appears in works of Aeschylus and Euripides.[40] In Aeschylus' *Prometheus Bound* Io tells Prometheus of the seductive visions she had in her maiden's chamber. This made her father seek an oracle, which then led Io to be driven away from her father's home and roam at large to the furthest corners of earth. In a distorted shape of both her body and mind she had to roam, and she was pursued by herdsman Argus until his death.[41]

The rare term παρθενών could thus hint at the use of classical literary traditions by late ancient Christians. Interestingly, the word does also have a specific Christian meaning that also suits the context very well: in Christian use, παρθενών can mean "convent", and if that meaning is connected with the term, a reference to Christian ideal of monastic virginity is combined with the soul's ideal virginal state.[42] Both allusions seem possible. It is not difficult to see how Io's fate could be used as an allegory of the soul's earthly life, and a specifically Christian connotation may suggest that a monastic dwelling is preferable for souls who wish to remain pure. It may be added that in *Prometheus Bound* Io is driven away from home against her own and against her father's wish.[43] If the *Exegesis on the Soul* alludes to Io's fate, it gives good reasons to doubt that the soul's descent could be simply thought of as some sort of a sinful act or fall into sin. Rather, the descent may be the soul-maiden's unavoidable fate, and the focus is not on why that happens, but that it does happen, and that being the case, the soul should aim at returning.

In *Authentikos Logos* the incarnate soul has forgotten its true origin and has to endure sufferings and humiliations during its life on earth. In the *Exegesis on the Soul* the soul ends up prostituted, mistreated, abandoned, humiliated, poor and desperate. The cause given for this is the same or similar one in the two writings: it is the soul's earthly life, the mixture of the soul with matter in *Authentikos Logos* and the soul's concern with earthly matters in the *Exegesis on the Soul.* Feminisation of the soul has opened up literary options for the authors of *Authentikos Logos* and the *Exegesis on the Soul* to illustrate the soul's fate using images from women's lives and sexuality. As was already pointed out, the *Exegesis on the Soul* is more explicit than *Authentikos Logos* on the connection of the soul-woman's fall as prostitution.[44] In *Authentikos*

Die Erzählung, 122, n. 157. Since Coptic ΠⲰⲦ ⲈⲂⲞⲖ refers to running out, fleeing, it is logical also in this sense to understand παρθενών as a part of a house/dwelling.

40 Euripides employes it for example in *Phoenician Women* 89 where Antigone is allowed to leave her maiden's chamber to go to the upper storey of her home to look at the Argive army.

41 Aeschylus, *Prometheus Bound*, 640–686 (παρθενών appears on line 646).

42 Lampe, *Patristic Greek Lexicon*, 1040, Epiphanius, *Pan.* 58.4.7. Cf. Brakke, *Athanasius and Asceticim*, 1, 24.

43 Aeschylus, *Prometheus Bound*, 670–671.

44 " . . . When she fell down into a body and came to this life, then she fell into the hands of many robbers . . . And in her body she prostituted herself and gave herself to one and all, considering

Logos sexual disgrace is only one of several ways to refer to the soul's condition on earth, but it is not brought into the limelight: degradation is mentioned in a general, not gendered way in 24:6 – 22 (e.g. drunkenness, ignorance).

Prostitution, or being shut into a brothel, is once mentioned in *Authentikos Logos* (24:7 – 8, perhaps also meant in 24:17 – 22). Conceptions of a culture where shame and honour were perceived as gender-bound are obvious in this connection. If the soul-woman is shut in a brothel, drunken, and has forgotten her true siblings and father, it is the gentle son who brings pride and joy to her father. It cannot be a coincidence that a son was chosen to symbolise honour and pride, as in antiquity these were usually associated with men's role expectations.[45] The "gentle son" may moreover allude to Jesus in Matt 11:27, 29, and both *Authentikos Logos* and the Sahidic gospel text use the same term ⲠⲘⲢⲁ ϣ for "gentle" that is Jesus' self-definition in Matt 11:29 (πραΰς in Greek). In *Authentikos Logos* being shut in a brothel refers to imprisonment in body and incarnate life, which is a variation of the body as the soul's prison/tomb theme, discussed in VI.1. The *Exegesis on the Soul* connects the theme of prostitution to scriptural traditions and passages that are connected to discussions of idolatry and unfaithfulness to God that suggest reading prostitution as deviance from Christian life.[46] There is thus a difference in how and into which context the prostitution theme in the two writings primarily appears to refer to. It is not necessary to exaggerate these differences: the soul theme was clearly a popular one for Christian (and non-Christian) audiences.

The soul as a fallen woman is not the only image chosen to illustrate the soul's condition in this life. Other glimpses of household context, or that of the society, appear in both writings: *Authentikos Logos* refers to emotions as house-born slaves/slave children, and step-children, as well as remarriage following divorce or widowhood, which in this context symbolises the soul's life in the body, i.e. a combination of two unequal elements.[47] The *Exegesis on the Soul* mentions orphans, sick children or children with deformities, and the soul's widowhood.[48] Various aspects of childhood, and various social statuses that affected children, are employed as metaphors in the two texts.

each one she was about to embrace to be her husband . . . She had given herself to wanton, unfaithful adulterers, so that they might make use of her", *Exeg. Soul* 127:25 – 128:6.

45 A woman could bring shame to her household, or be respectable, which role required her to remain unnamed and unknown, whereas it was males of the household who could bring it honour.

46 Lundhaug, *Images of Rebirth*, 82 – 90. See also Kulawik, *Die Erzählung*, 124.

47 Step-siblings are mentioned on pages 23 and 24, and "those born in the house" (reference to slave children born in their owner's household), ⲚⲈⳓⲘⲈⳓⲞⲚ̄ⲎⲈⳠ, in 28:31 – 32.

48 Note how Origen employs images of widows and orphans in a similar manner in *De princ.* 4.1.11 – 12 where he provides a reading on the *Shepherd of Hermas* 8.3. In this vision Hermas receives a command to write two books, one which is to be given to Grapte, the other, to Clement. Grapte is to proclaim the message of that book to orphans and widows, whereas Clement is to go to cities in other countries. Origen explains that Grapte means the word of the Scripture as such, and it is to be proclaimed to orphans, who are not yet children of God, and

Social realities of the world of *Authentikos Logos* and the *Exegesis on the Soul* form the backdrop against which these texts were written and found their poignancy: suffering and consequences of behaviour that were considered inappropriate or illegitimate provided useful illustrations. Slaves and prostitutes lived in some of the lowest levels of societal hierarchy, and a prostitute would have been a powerful symbol of utter and hopeless humiliation. Sexuality in itself was a possible source of death; pregnancy and childbirth were hazardous conditions, risky for both mothers and children. The fact that these images refer to real risks of desire and carnal life is why they are so powerful. Although this theme will not be elaborated on here, it is important to note that the use of these images need not be simply discussed in terms of theories, literary motifs, or attitudes towards women, but acknowledged as powerful examples taken from real life.

Yet it would be very naïve to assume that the metaphorical imagery employed in the two writings are only to be sought in the actual world. It has already been pointed out above that also Philo and Athanasius of Alexandria considered the soul as having a womb, connections can be made to such mythical women as Helen and Io, and comparisons with novel heroines such as Callirhoe. In Christian sources the image of the fallen woman is developed in various ways. For example, in his account of Simon Magus, Irenaeus claims that Simon had released his companion, a Helen, from a Tyrean brothel and Simon is said to have claimed that she was the First Thought, the Mother of All Things, and an incarnation of Helen of Troy who was imprisoned in prostitution.[49] In later Christian literature, stories of Mary of Egypt and other harlots who underwent a complete conversion from their previous, promiscuous life to sainthood became popular.[50] Whereas in Irenaeus' account Simon releases Helena from an actual brothel, in Sophronius' story of Mary Mary's repentance and her actions for releasing herself are emphatic. These diverse examples bear witness to how different versions of the fallen female appealed to ancient audiences.

How can the soul be saved from her earthly suffering? The process towards salvation takes different courses in these two writings. In *Authentikos Logos* the starting point is the great strength hidden within "us" (27:24–25). This, until 29:3 is the crucial section in the writing on the course towards salvation. The incarnate soul, despite its ill and poor condition, actively seeks the salvation from matter and its enemies. The soul pursues the λόγος ("word",

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widows, who have already separated from their unlawful husbands. Those in other cities to whom Clement proclaims are those who are already rising above bodily concerns and worldly worries.

49 Irenaeus, *Against the Heresies* I.23.2.

50 The story of St Mary of Egypt is told by Sophronius of Jerusalem, the Greek text can be found in Migne, *PG* 87 (3), cols. 3697–3726 and an English translation in Ward, *Harlots of the Desert*, 35–56. See also Carolyn L. Connor, *Women of Byzantium* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004), 78, 87–93.

"reason", "instruction") and applies it in its eyes like medicine (27:30 – 32; 28:10 – 13).[51] It fights against the enemies (ⲚⲠⲞⲖⲈⲘⲞⲤ, 28:14; ⲬⲀⲬⲈ, 28:22) or house-born slaves (ⲚⲈⲤⲘⲈⲤ2ⲚⲎⲈⲓ, 28:32) who are probably passions, perhaps demons.[52] The soul aims at blinding them in her light, imprisoning them in its presence (παρουσία), and bringing them down through lack of sleep.[53] The soul speaks in a bold manner (παρρησιάζεται), brings shame on the enemies, and flees towards its treasure above.[54] The soul's strength is emphatic, as is its purity; it has not let any of the worldly things catch it and has not let strangers into its house, yet – contrary to the soul's strength – the enemies, "house-born slaves", fight it and are tormented by their desire.[55]

This section on the soul's combat against its enemies is followed by a fishing allegory that parallels the soul's situation to that of humans as fish sought by the evil fisherman. After this, the soul story takes its final turn before ascent. In 31:24 – 32:3 the soul – again pictured as the subject of her own salvation – arrives at the understanding of the transient nature of passions (but only after tasting at them): the soul acquires knowledge of evil and withdraws from passions. It assumes a new way of life (πολιτεία), and afterwards despises this transient life (βίος) and searches for foods that will take it into true life (ⲰⲚ2). The soul leaves behind the false foods, gains knowledge of its light, and walks ahead before finally abandoning the world and the body.[56]

This description appears to differ considerably from the emphasis on the soul's understanding of its situation, remembrance of home, weeping of sins, prayer, and repentance in the *Exegesis on the Soul. Authentikos Logos* focuses on the soul's strength, but it also appears that a reference is made to ascetic techniques. Such, for instance, is the reference to bringing enemies down through lack of sleep.[57] In the *Exegesis on the Soul* the soul's perception, weeping, and repentance are emphasised, but also an action from the heavenly father is suggested: the father visits the soul and seeing her condition and repentance has mercy upon her. Repentance starts the process that takes the soul back to her original home.[58]

It is emphatically stated in the *Exegesis on the Soul* that despite prayer, techniques, and ascetic practice the final salvation is an act of mercy.[59] The

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51 Also in 22:23 – 34.
52 A similar image of senses gaining mastery over the mind that is likened to slaves conspiring against their master is employed by Philo in *Allegorical Interpretation* 3.224.
53 28:16 – 20.
54 28:23 – 27.
55 28:27 – 31.
56 31:24 – 32:4. The verb used is ⲘⲞⲞⲰⲈ.
57 Sleep deprivation is a central ascetic method. Athanasius criticised ascetics practising it: in his argumentation, sleep or sleeplessness of the ascetic is secondary to sleeplessness of the *soul*. Athanasius, *On Sickness and Health* 6, in Brakke, *Athanasius and Asceticism*, 87.
58 *Exeg. Soul* 128:26 – 129:5; 131:13 – 22, 137:5 – 11.
59 *Exeg. Soul* 134:28 – 33.

point is not that they have no use, but they do not suffice alone, wherefore it is possible to assume an ascetic or monastic context for both writings. Although *Authentikos Logos* focuses more on the soul's struggle and combat in its salvation, and the *Exegesis on the Soul* emphasises repentance and aid from above, neither text completely omits practices that guide the soul towards inner rest and salvation. Although in the *Exegesis on the Soul* the salvation comes from the father and the bridegroom, the soul, too, is active in its repentance and calls for mercy. Both *Authentikos Logos* and the *Exegesis on the Soul* mention the bridegroom of the soul, but the importance given to this character is different. He is a central figure in the *Exegesis on the Soul*, but only once mentioned in *Authentikos Logos:* on the first page of the writing the soul's bridegroom gives the descending soul the Word as nourishment and medicine.[60] The image of Word-medicine is again mentioned on pages 27 and 28, but it is the soul who applies the Word to her eyes to open them.[61] The shepherd that stands at the door of the sheep's fold, expecting the soul, alludes to John 10. The shepherd in *Authentikos Logos* is rather a guide and teacher of the right way than a saviour who ransoms sinners: he patiently waits for the soul at the door of the fold, and is mentioned as having taught the soul the right way for the ascent.[62]

Contrariwise in the *Exegesis on the Soul* the bridegroom-brother holds a prominent role: the soul's expectation of him is described, and it is emphatic that he perfects the soul's return to the father's home. The soul's bridegroom is the saviour of the soul and the originally androgynous soul's heavenly counterpart, her other, male half.[63] Marriage is a more central theme in the

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60 22:22–27. *Exeg. Soul* 132:9, 15, 25 etc.

61 27:30–28:13; several lines have been damaged, but the soul is first described as applying the logos to her eyes as medicine that helps to open them; lines 28:6–9 mention someone (in masculine) existing in ignorance, darkness, and materiality, and again the soul taking logos as medicine that opens her eyes (28:10–13).

62 32:10–11. The shepherd occurs occasionally in the Nag Hammadi writings. The Gospel parables on the shepherd are mentioned in the *Ap. Jas* 8:6 (Ⲛ̄ⲱ[Ⲟ]), *Gos. Truth* 31:35 (ⲠⲰⲰⲤ), and *Teach. Silv.* 106:28 (ⲠⲰⲰⲤ). Abel the shepherd, *Hyp. Arch.* 91:15. Greek ποιμήν, apart from *Auth. Logos* 32:11, 34 and 33:2, is used in *Val. Exp.* 40:18 where he is Jesus Christ. More commonly a Coptic term is used: *Great Pow.* 40:14 mentions the fire that burns everything, the shepherd (ⲘⲀⲚⲈ) of the soul included (Williams amends the text and reads "<that>on which she feeds", Williams, *Mental Perception*, 99, 102, 102 n. 138). If it suggests a false shepherd, those (false shepherds of the soul) are also mentioned in *Exeg. Soul* 129:13 and 18 that refers to Jer 3:1–4 (*LXX*).

Who is the shepherd in *Authentikos Logos*? Ménard, *L'Authentikos Logos*, 59 read the shepherd figure as an evil one on the page 32, but this reading is not convincing: the shepherd standing by the fold is more naturally read as guarding the fold, and perhaps guiding the sheep inside, in the manner of the shepherd on the next page who has taught the soul the true way (33:2; 32:34 mentions the slave trader gatekeepers faulty assumption of being able to direct the soul). Despite closeness to the *Concept of our Great Power* and the *Exegesis on the Soul*, nothing indicates a wicked shepherd. Perhaps the shepherd is Christ, but he could also be the (Christ-like) reason, or the guiding principle, cf. Gregory of Nyssa, *Life of Moses*, 2.17.

63 *Exeg. Soul* 133:4–9; 134:25–26.

Exegesis on the Soul where it is bound to the idea of Christian life, the soul's expectation and marriage to her bridegroom, their unity, and the soul's original androgyny. No heavenly marriage or androgyny is mentioned in *Authentikos Logos*; towards the end of the writing two instances of bridal imagery are employed: the ascending soul wears bridal clothes, and in the final hymn the bridal chamber serves as one of the images of salvation, but the theme is not elaborated on in the text.[64] It is rather that the author is referring to bridal images common in many kinds of Christian literature. Both texts conclude with doxologies that are similar in style: in *Authentikos Logos* 35:19 – 22 the ascended soul is celebrated, and the doxology is directed at the light that does not set; in the *Exegesis on the Soul* 137:25 – 26 there is a call for true repentance in order to receive mercy of the longsuffering God.

Despite the differences, the two writings share something of their storylines and their understanding of human life as a process and the soul's return that begins with a descent from above to life in a body that can be likened to prostitution, because in the body the soul is imprisoned, and because in the body the soul is overtly concerned with material things and strays from Christian life and its true self. Understanding that the true home is with God is the beginning of the soul's return and ascent. *Authentikos Logos* and the *Exegesis on the Soul* encourage their readers towards a certain way of life. In the former knowledge, remembering, and the way of life and endurance are ways that take the soul to salvation. The inevitable consequence of these steps is lost interest in material comforts and renouncing of the visible world.[65] In the latter, the importance of repentance is repeated over and over again.[66]

Authentikos Logos emphasises striving towards knowledge and avoidance of idleness,[67] and ascent is the soul's goal. Instead of scriptural quotations, it is parables, metaphors, and polemics that interrupt the story. The emphasis of the *Exegesis on the Soul* lies on repentance, prayer, and, by the mercy of the father and the help from the brother-bridegroom, "becoming young again". In the *Exegesis on the Soul* the soul's need for mercy (received from the father and the bridegroom) in order to be saved is emphatic, and ascetic techniques need to be perfected by the grace of God. In *Authentikos Logos* the soul's conversion is followed by her ascent.[68] The images of the final hymn on page 35 describe the bliss of the ascended soul. Whereas in *Authentikos Logos* ascent is the means to describe how the soul reaches the goal, the *Exegesis on the Soul* adds other views that are provided as parallel ways of explaining one and the same

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64 Bridal clothes: 32:6, bridal chamber, 35:11. Several images are employed as symbols of the soul's return home. In *Authentikos Logos* the soul's condition after ascent is described as rest after weariness, and rest in a bridal chamber, dinner the soul had hungered for, divine light; salvation is fulfilment, and reaching the destination: 34:32 – 35:16.

65 22:28 – 33; 26:14 – 26; 27:8 – 25; 31:24 – 35.

66 See e. g. *Exeg. Soul* 128:26 – 129:5; 131:13 – 19; 137:5 – 11, 22 – 26.

67 31:6 – 7.

68 32:24 – 33:3.

thing: the soul's return to the heavenly home is resurrection from the dead, redemption from captivity, a way upwards, and ascent to heaven.[69] It is almost as if the *Exegesis on the Soul* wants to say in an emphatic manner that these are parallel ways for picturing salvation. In neither of these writings is the resurrection the primary way of speaking of human salvation, and they are not alone with this view, whether we think of Nag Hammadi or ascetic authors.[70]

Authentikos Logos and the *Exegesis on the Soul:*
Comparison of storylines

Authentikos Logos	Exegesis on the Soul
The invisible worlds appear.	The feminine name and nature of the soul are stated.
The invisible soul of righteousness comes (into existence).	The soul dwells with the father.
The soul is cast into a body and the material world.	The soul falls down into a body and earthly life.
The soul lives in the material world in forgetfulness, bestiality, and ignorance.	Prostitution of the soul. The soul is treated badly by adulterous men who pretend to love it. Sickly children, "widowhood".
Contest in this world; struggles of the soul in the world. Adversary/ies as a fisherman/men.	
	The father visits the soul and sees its sufferings.
The soul understands the true, transitory nature of worldly passions and temptations.	The soul repents and prays for salvation.

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69 *Exeg. Soul* 134:12 – 14.

70 Claudia Setzer, *Resurrection of the Body in Early Judaism and Early Christianity. Doctrine, Community, and Self-Definition* (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 156; Samuel Rubenson, "'As Already Translated to the Kingdom While Still in the Body'. The Transformation of the Ascetic in Early Egyptian Monasticism" in Seim/Økland (ed.), *Metamorphoses*, 271 – 289.

(*Continued*)

Authentikos Logos	Exegesis on the Soul
The soul turns away from passions, learns about its light. Ascent: the soul leaves the body and this world. Defeat of the slave traders.	The father forgives the soul: the soul is cleansed, regains its former nature, and receives baptism. The soul gives up its former behaviour, and brother/bridegroom is sent to the soul who waits for him.
The ones who are ignorant and the senseless person.	
	Biblical and Homeric quotations in the text, especially towards the end.
The rational soul has wearied itself in seeking and attains rest.	Heavenly marriage takes place.
Ascent. Rest, banquet, light.	Joy of salvation, weeping because of former disgrace. (Ascent)
Doxology.	Doxology.

Recently the context and readership of the *Exegesis on the Soul* have been sought within early monastic traditions. Hugo Lundhaug notes that in the Pachomian monastic culture a thorough knowledge and use of scriptures held a prominent place, as did themes of repentance, weeping, and prayer. He points to fragments of Shenoute's *So Listen* XO 48 – 50 that refers to the prostitution of the soul in much the same way as the *Exegesis on the Soul* does, including the same reference to Ezek 16:26 that both texts read as meaning the prostitution of the soul.[71] Lundhaug is not the only one to have noted that parallelism can be found between exegetical methods and literary structure in Nag Hammadi texts and Pachomian biblical scholarship: Philip Rousseau has suggested that works of two of Pachomius' followers, Theodore and Horsiesios, and the Nag Hammadi codices show similar approaches despite different conclusions drawn: "there is a similar curve of logic, carrying an

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71 Lundhaug, *Images of Rebirth*, 141 – 149. Pachomius excerpt, see pages 147 – 148. See also Françoise Morard, "L'Évangile de Marie, un message ascétique?" in *Apocrypha* 12 (2001), 155 – 171. David Brakke's study of Athanasius and Athanasius' aim of bringing virgins under ecclesiastical authority reminds that women too could be targeted as audiences. One of Athanasius' strategies was to tame virgins by emphasising their role as submissive brides and wives of Christ: their lives should be lived as a "marriage" with Christ. Brakke, *Athanasius and Asceticism*, 17 – 79.

ascetic from the warnings and promises of the prophets into the trans-
formation of his own heart and body".[72]

A monastic context is a possible one also for *Authentikos Logos*. The story,
message, and ways of expression would appeal to ascetics, and as will be
discussed in VI.1, many of the themes appear in texts written by other ascetic
authors, such as the Adversary-Devil's cunning ploys and temptations that
lead to vices. Although *Authentikos Logos* would not be out of place in a
Platonic Christian environment of Alexandria,[73] that is not the only option.
However, there is yet another context that has been probed every so often.
Rather than surveying Christian Platonic, or ascetic literature, the relation-
ship of *Authentikos Logos* (and the *Exegesis on the Soul*) with the Valentinian
Wisdom myth has been considered sometimes. This is what is discussed next.

2. *Authentikos Logos*, Wisdom Myth and other Valentinian Themes

If the *Exegesis on the Soul* provides an intriguing parallel to *Authentikos Logos*,
another case that has puzzled scholars concerns the writing's relationship to
Valentinian writings. Thus far, no entirely satisfactory answer has been
provided to explain how the story of the fallen soul connects with the Wisdom
myth. A certain similarity exists between the soul story in *Authentikos Logos*
(and the *Exegesis on the Soul*) and the Valentinian Wisdom myth: both have a
female protagonist who leaves her true home, descends, aims at, and succeeds
in returning (although the last point does not happen so in every version of the
Valentinian myth). Also some of the terminology in *Authentikos Logos* recalls
Valentinian language, and words such as "Fullness" (22:19), "bridegroom"
(22:23), and "bridal chamber" (35:11) frequent Valentinian texts.

The first question to be asked is, are the soul story and the Valentinian
Wisdom myth somehow parallel to each other, and how close are they as
parallels, and further, if the connection is not close enough to include
Authentikos Logos within Valentinian writings, what explains the similarities.
No decisive evidence has been brought forth to answer these questions.
Recently Philip Tite has approached *Authentikos Logos* as a Valentinian text,[74]
but many scholars do not find enough similarities.[75] In this part of the work

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72 Philip Rousseau, "The Successors of Pachomius", 157.
73 Van den Broek, "The Authentikos Logos", 230–234.
74 Tite, *Valentinian Ethics*, 8–15; also Green, "Ritual in Valentinian Gnosticism", 111.
75 Dunderberg, *Beyond Gnosticism*, 107; Kulawik for the *Exegesis on the Soul*, Kulawik, *Erzählung*,
    3. Thomassen has previously considered *Authentikos Logos* as possibly Valentinian, but does not
    include it in his discussion in *The Spiritual Seed*. Thomassen, "Notes pour la delimitation", 254,
    258. Lundhaug is ready to deconstruct the entire category of "Valentinianism", and thus ex-
    cludes both the *Exegesis on the Soul* and the *Gospel of Philip* from the list of Valentinian texts and
    approaches them from the broadly Christian context. Lundhaug, *Images of Rebirth*, 19.

some discussion will be provided on why a Valentinian context is not the most plausible one to explain the soul story in *Authentikos Logos.* The discussion will continue throughout this work.

Valentinian writings form a prominent group of texts within the Nag Hammadi codices. No complete agreement prevails as to which Nag Hammadi writings may be considered Valentinian, but the *Prayer of the Apostle Paul* (NHC I,1); the *Gospel of Truth* (I,3; XII,2); the *Treatise on the Resurrection* (NHC I,4); the *Tripartite Tractate* (NHC I,5); the *Gospel of Philip* (NHC II,3); the *Interpretation of Knowledge* (NHC XI,1), and *A Valentinian Exposition* (NHC XI,2) are accepted as forming the core.[76] Ismo Dunderberg's list includes also the *First Apocalypse of James* (NHC V,3).[77] According to Michel R. Desjardins, the *Second Apocalypse of James* (NHC V,4), and the *Letter of Peter to Philip* (NHC VIII,2) are possibly Valentinian,[78] and Michael Kaler has furthermore suggested that the *Apocalypse of Paul* (NHV V,2) be counted as a Valentinian text.[79] It should be noted that the Valentinian Nag Hammadi texts are found in codices I, II, XI, and XII, and if the disputable texts are included, even in codices V and VIII. There are no Valentinian writings in Codex VI. This is an important notion.

Although *A Valentinian Exposition* and the *Tripartite Tractate* hint or refer to the Wisdom myth, as do e. g. the *Gospel of Philip* 60, the *First Apocalypse of James* 34 – 36, and the *Interpretation of Knowledge* 12:29 – 13:20,[80] the myth is more fully known through heresiologists' reports. Of these, the three principal ones are Irenaeus' in *Against the Heresies* I.1 – 2, Hippolytus' in *Refutation of All Heresies* 6.29 – 36, and Clement of Alexandria's *Excerpts from Theodotus.*[81] They mention Wisdom (σοφία) as the aeon that causes the creation of the material world; the *Tripartite Tractate* has Word (λόγος) instead of Wisdom.[82] Irenaeus', Hippolytus', and Clement's versions of the myth have two Wisdoms, a notion which has been used as a dividing factor between the different versions.[83] Irenaeus' and Clement's accounts will here be discussed in

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76 Desjardins, *Sin in Valentinianism*, 68 – 75, Thomassen, "Notes pour la delimitation", 243 – 263.

77 Dunderberg, *Beyond Gnosticism*, 10; Dunderberg, "The School of Valentinus", 84, 90 – 91.

78 Desjardins, *Sin in Valentinianism*, 68, 73 – 75.

79 Michael Kaler, Michael, *Flora Tells a Story. The Apocalypse of Paul and Its Contexts* (Ontario: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2008), 62 – 73.

80 The Wisdom myth does not play a prominent role in the *Gospel of Philip.* Dunderberg, "The School", 88 – 89. For the figure of Wisdom in the Valentinian Nag Hammadi texts, see Scholten, *Martyrium und Sophiamythos*, 157 – 190.

81 G.C. Stead, "The Valentinian Myth of Sophia" in *JTS* 20 (1969), 75 – 104, on p. 75 – 76. See also Dunderberg, *Beyond Gnosticism*, 97 – 98, Thomassen, *The Spiritual Seed*, 248 – 268; Turner, *Sethian Gnosticism*, 589 – 596.

82 *Tri. Trac.*, e. g. 74:18 – 78:13; 80:11 – 81:29; 85:15 – 32; 90:14 – 91:32. See also Dunderberg, "The School of Valentinus", 86.

83 Einar Thomassen divides Valentinian myth according to whether the myth has one or two Wisdoms. Thomassen, *The Spiritual Seed*, 248. He and Stead, "The Valentinian Myth", 88, plausibly assume that the earliest version would have only had one Wisdom.

chronological order, followed by references to the Wisdom myth in *A Valentinian Exposition* and the *Tripartite Tractate*. It should be noted that Valentinian Nag Hammadi texts differ notably from heresiological reports, no doubt because of different aims and approaches Valentinians had compared with their opponents who aimed at critical, systematic descriptions prone to perhaps deliberate misunderstandings.[84]

The earliest known versions of the Wisdom myth are the two versions told by Irenaeus in the second century. In the first chapters of *Against the Heresies* I, Wisdom is the youngest of thirty aeons in the Divine realm (πλήρωμα, "Fullness") (I.1.1 – 3; I.2.2). The aeons exist in silence and cannot know their invisible and incomprehensible first-father apart from Mind alone (I.2.1). Wisdom experiences a strong passion to know the father; this passion is connected to love and audacity, and it leads Wisdom to undertake an impossible and unnatural quest of which the consequence is birth of a formless substance, Wisdom's offspring. This imperfect, material birth causes Wisdom perplexity and grief: the beginning of material substance is thus connected with ignorance, grief, fear, and bewilderment (I.2.3). Wisdom repents, and is returned to her original place, but her passion and intention are separated from her and kept out of the Divine realm. When Wisdom is healed, her passions are removed from her (I.2.4 – 5; I.3.3). Passion/emotions, in this version, cause the birth of material substances (I.4.2): although Wisdom returns to the Divine realm, Achamoth, lower Wisdom, is left outside, immersed in passion and suffering grief, fear, and perplexity, all enveloped in ignorance (I.4.1). Achamoth's emotions cause the origin and material substance of this world (I.4.2). Achamoth, too, repents and wishes to return to the Divine realm; her emotions cannot be entirely annihilated, but they are removed from her (I.4.5).

In this version the possible parallels with *Authentikos Logos* are the descent and ascent of the female protagonist. Is it possible to consider that *Authentikos Logos* contains similar notion of cosmology, or cosmology that aligns with Valentinian thought, since the worlds above are called Fullness (22:18 – 20)? These connections are rather general, and for example πλήρωμα is not an exclusively Valentinian term.[85] Overall *Authentikos Logos* shows no interest in cosmogony, and unlike in some Valentinian texts, there is no emphasis on repentance while this issue looms large in the *Exegesis on the Soul*. Further, Irenaeus' second account in *Against the Heresies* I.11.1 is different from the first chapters of his work and does not resemble the soul story in *Authentikos Logos* at all. The focus is on the system of aeons, and Wisdom is left outside the Divine realm.[86] Again it is perhaps possible that the system of aeons and how

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84 This is emphasised in Dunderberg, "The School of Valentinus", 65 – 72. Irenaeus' use of his sources and his aim of discrediting Valentinians distorted his views.

85 Lampe, *A Patristic Greek Lexicon*, 1094 – 1095.

86 If there is resemblance, it is on the female protagonist's descent and ascent after her hardships

they emanate (and form pairs in Irenaeus) could be compared to the emergence of the invisible, unspeakable worlds on the first page of *Authentikos Logos,* but *Authentikos Logos* does not focus on the structure or system of these worlds. As such a notion of invisible worlds above the visible world is not a specifically Valentinian concept, but may also suggest common Platonic background.

Like Irenaeus, the *Excerpts from Theodotus* assume two Wisdoms. Clement refers to the lower Wisdom, who is left outside the Divine realm: in *Exc. Theod.* 32:3 he says that according to Valentinians, Christ goes into the Divine realm but leaves behind the mother who had brought him into being. He asks for help on her behalf and is sent back as the paraclete. In *Exc. Theod.* 32:3 – 33:4 Christ leaving his mother and his adoption into the Fullness explain why the Creator-God is created: the deserted mother yearns for another son and that is how the Demiurge is brought forth, "as if from the passion of desire". Emotions are emphatically present also here. Although the model is similar to Irenaeus' version, the focus is less on aeons, and more on the mother's position and the suffering this causes. Because her son deserts her, she produces the ruler out of her longing (ἐπιπόθησις) for the offspring. The emotions are described as emotions felt, or assumed to be felt, between family members.

Valentinians, according to Irenaeus, Clement and Hippolytus, were interested in the origin of the world and the creation of human beings: they separated between the highest God and the Creator-God, the Demiurge, identified as the God of Jewish scriptures.[87] This is an important characteristic in Valentinian thought. However, as noted, the Valentinian Nag Hammadi writings and their different approaches to the myth suggest that Irenaeus, Clement and Hippolytus do not provide a full picture. One difference worth pointing out is that the myth in the *Tripartite Tractate* replaces the feminine Wisdom with masculine Word. The mother-son relationship is called forth in a fragmentary passage of *A Valentinian Exposition* that refers to Wisdom's situation that can only be corrected by her son who ascends from her (*Val.*

below. Irenaeus focuses on the system of aeons, as well as on the relationship between Christ, his mother (Wisdom), and the Demiurge: Christ was brought forth by the mother outside the Fullness, but he, "being masculine", could enter the Pleroma, whereas the mother is left with the shadow and is devoid of pneumatic substance. She therefore brings forth another son, the Demiurge. Irenaeus also provides explanations as to how Valentinus positions Jesus and the Holy Spirit. At the beginning of this second account Irenaeus says that Valentinus has adapted these principles from the "so-called Gnostic heresy", usually taken to be Sethians. Dunderberg notes that Valentinians used earlier stories of the soul's fate and philosophical material, Sethian, and other. They share the myth with other early Christian groups (and Plotinus, discussed in 3.3.), but Valentinians put particular focus on emotions. Dunderberg, *Beyond Gnosticism*, 103 – 107.

See King, *The Secret Revelation,* 221 – 224 for how the *Apocryphon of John* reads the Genesis account in light of Plato's views, and 231 – 234 to seeing the Wisdom in the *Apocryphon of John* as a parody of the Jewish Wisdom.

87 Irenaeus, *Against the Heresies* I.5.1 – 3.

Exp. 33:28 – 37). On the following page Wisdom expresses her repentance (*Val. Exp.* 34:25 – 38), but again, the repentance theme and help from a male rather suits the soul story of the *Exegesis on the Soul* than the version in *Authentikos Logos*.[88]

Two prominent features of the Valentinian Wisdom myth are Wisdom's desire to know the father, which leads her to break her boundaries, and Wisdom's emotions and her portrayal as a deserted mother. Ismo Dunderberg has emphasised Valentinian Wisdom myth's concern with emotions and its focus on the therapy of emotions.[89] There is interest in emotions, or passions, particularly desire, in *Authentikos Logos*, but the theme is addressed in different ways, as will be discussed in V.2. *Authentikos Logos* focuses more on the soul's earthly life as contest, her attaining of knowledge and striving to reach her destination. No similar emphasis or approach to emotions can be detected in *Authentikos Logos*, and no direct explanation for the soul's descent is given.[90] Instead, the connection between the soul and the worlds above is unbroken during her descent. The way the soul's (or Christian's) quest for knowledge is advocated differs from the light in which Wisdom's fallacious desire for knowledge in the Valentinian myth is portrayed.

In light of the existing evidence, it emerges that *Authentikos Logos* is not so closely concerned with the issues that Valentinian texts and myth are that it could be counted into Valentinian sources. Rather than discussing divine, heavenly Wisdom, it is concerned with the (human) soul's journey from its pre-existence to earthly life and how it finally attains knowledge of God through correct way of life. The *Exegesis on the Soul* is to some extent closer to the Valentinian myth, chiefly in its emphasis on repentance and longing. Yet even if the primary context for *Authentikos Logos* is not Valentinian, a second question still remains, and that concerns the relation of the school of Valentinus or Valentinian writings to *Authentikos Logos*. Ismo Dunderberg has suggested that *Authentikos Logos* and the *Exegesis on the Soul* belong to "traditional lore of the soul's fall" that probably preceded the Valentinian Wisdom myth, but he remains doubtful as to whether Valentinians could actually have known these texts.[91] Madeleine Scopello on the other hand has

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88 Passions and their role in creation are referred to in *Val. Exp.* 35:30 – 38. A modified version of the Wisdom myth in *Tri. Trac.* 76 – 78 tells of the last aeon and his wish to create, and is not close enough to the story of the soul to be of interest here.

89 Dunderberg, *Beyond Gnosticism*, 102 – 103, 119 – 133.

90 Valentinian texts' focus on Wisdom's repentance and sorrow at the result of her deeds could be considered as something shared between the *Exegesis on the Soul* and Valentinian writings, but these themes are not limited to Valentinians among the Christians of the first centuries CE. Dunderberg, *Beyond Gnosticism*, 96 – 103.

Dunderberg connects repentance with philosophy schools' demand for conversion (Dunderberg, *Beyond Gnosticism*, 96) but μετάνοια is also a prominent theme of Christian tradition, inherited from the proclamation of John the Baptist (Mark 1:4, Matt 3:1 – 2, 11) and developed further for example in monastic contexts.

91 Dunderberg, *Beyond Gnosticism*, 106 – 107.

suggested that they were written with the Valentinian Wisdom myth in the background.[92]

This work suggests that *Authentikos Logos* and the *Exegesis on the Soul* are later texts than for instance Irenaeus' account of the Wisdom myth, and does not assume a direct application of the Wisdom myth in the background of *Authentikos Logos.* Wisdom's fall was not the only descent of a female entity in ancient literature, as discussions on souls' descents in Platonic and Christian circles witness. Valentinian ideas, if known, would have been considered valuable and useful when composing *Authentikos Logos*, and that is possible; Valentinian writings circulated amongst the people who produced and read the Nag Hammadi codices, and Valentinians are mentioned by Ambrose of Milan in the fourth century, and still in the late seventh century in the canons of the second synod of Trulla.[93] If, as suggested in this work, *Authentikos Logos* was written earliest in the late third century, or later, it would have been composed after the floruit of Valentinian Christianity in the second century.

As will be argued in the next chapter, the precise soul terminology in *Authentikos Logos* suggests parallel terminology that is encountered in the texts stemming from the third and fourth centuries, that is, the time around and after Plotinus and Origen, which further supports the later dating, and which would make *Authentikos Logos* later than Valentinian sources. Since *Authentikos Logos* is best approached as a homily, it is only probable that when the text was composed, familiar texts were employed. The writing circulated in third- and fourth-century Egypt and it is likely that its writer would have known and made use of earlier traditions popular in this environment. It is obviously possible that at some point *Authentikos Logos* could have been read next to Valentinian (and other) texts, perhaps even as a parallel story to Valentinian writings.[94] However, one must keep in mind that the Wisdom myth is most elaborate in heresiological texts, not in the Nag Hammadi Valentinian writings, and it is not certain how well these elaborate versions would have been known to those circulating the Nag Hammadi writings.

The different versions of the Wisdom myth show that it changed and was reinterpreted over the course of time and when recounted by different people. There were those who read Valentinian writings, but who were not Valentinians. It is not known who compiled and owned the Nag Hammadi codices, but there is not enough evidence to suggest that they were Valentinians. When it comes to *Authentikos Logos*, similarities that do not completely agree with Valentinian texts do not justify defining it narrowly as a Valentinian Christian writing, but more likely, as a more generally Christian text written by someone who knew of Valentinian ideas and views.

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92 Scopello, "Jewish and Greek Heroines", 163 – 164. Scopello refers to Irenaeus' version in *Against the Heresies* 1.1.2, 1.1.3, and 1.2.2.

93 See Dunderberg, "The School of Valentinus", 95 – 97; Brakke, *The Gnostics*, 119, 134 – 136.

94 Dunderberg, "Moral Progress", 247 – 267.

3. Fallen Souls: Platonic background, Origen and Plotinus

Platonic and Alexandrian traditions have been considered important for understanding *Authentikos Logos*, which is why general outlines and some significant details of Plato's teaching, Origen and Plotinus will next be discussed as relevant literary contexts for *Authentikos Logos*. Plato's soul myth forms the basis on which later Platonists built. In the Platonic Christian context, Origen's (185–254) thought in particular appears to have been consequential for the view of the soul's descent or fall and return or ascent. Also in Plotinus' (205–270) *Enneads* we find discussions of a soul, described for instance as a prodigal daughter, that connect with the vein of thought in *Authentikos Logos*.

3.1 Plato on the Immortality of the Soul

Phaedo is Plato's major work on the soul and its immortality. It is one of the dialogues where the characters discuss immortality and transmigration of souls, appropriately on the eve of Socrates' death.[95] Several ideas attached to the journey of the soul in *Authentikos Logos* agree with what is presented in *Phaedo*, which therefore, despite the distance of several centuries, can help to understand what is suggested in *Authentikos Logos*.

An essential feature of Plato's view on the soul in *Phaedo* concerns its immortality: a soul has existed prior to its embodiment, and it will exist after it leaves the body it now inhabits. At the event of death the soul separates from the body, its unequal partner (*Phaedo* 64C, 66D–67A; 80C–E). Apart from the souls of very few, a soul must be born into a new body and live again on earth. The way a person has led his or her life, how she contends during the lifetime, decides whether or not the soul may leave the material world behind. The soul's ultimate goal is to release itself from the cycle of rebirth and return to her true, immaterial, and invisible home in the realm of pure and eternal Forms.

Plato approaches the immortality of individual souls from several angles. Everything is born from its opposite, and life and death as each other's opposites create a cycle where life necessarily becomes death, and death leads to life (*Phaedo* 70C–72D). Also remembering closely connects to, and is difficult to separate from, the belief in the soul's immortality, pre-existence and metempsychosis (*Phaedo* 72E–73C; 76 A). All learning is remembering, and remembering requires that one has experienced the thing before. This

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95 Plato does not suggest immortality of the soul in all of his works. David Bostock, *Plato's Phaedo* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986), 1–5; Erwin Rohde, *Psyche. The Cult of Souls and Belief in Immortality among the Greeks* (New York: Books for Libraries Press, 1920), 468–469.

"before" must have been in a previous life: the soul must have existed prior to its present life as this particular person. Not only remembering, but also forgetting is associated with the idea of the transmigration of souls.[96]

Probably reflecting this Platonic notion, on page 24 in *Authentikos Logos* remembering is a necessity for a soul's salvation. The opposite to remembering, forgetting has much to do with the soul's sinking deeper into material life that is against her true nature. The motif is central and it emphasises the soul's recognition of her origin, and knowledge of this origin as a way to receive what truly is her good share. This knowledge and access to it are connected to contemplation through Word.[97] On the first page of the writing, page 22, the soul's need to perceive or understand her kin and know her root are mentioned.[98] The opposite to remembering, forgetting, is mentioned on page 24, where the soul's sinking to a bestial level is preceded by her not remembering her siblings and father.[99]

According to Plato, a soul who has dwelt before in the world of Forms has, upon its descent into a body, forgotten its true home and the invisible world. The soul may regain this forgotten knowledge during its earthly life, and as it recalls its origin, it can strive to re-reach it. Remembering stems from the soul's previous existence.[100] The soul should let remembering guide its existence: this would take it towards final redemption from the cycle of rebirth. Since this world is a world of becoming and constant change, no true realities are to be found within it. The soul must turn away, even flee from it, and search what is true. It has to recover its vision and turn its gaze to the immaterial world of forms. What beauty the soul sees in this world serves as a reminder of the true world. Nothing new is learned here: the soul only remembers things it already knew in the ideal world.

The soul's immortality in *Phaedo* is further based on the soul's relatedness to divine things.[101] Also in *Authentikos Logos* the soul comes from the invisible world.[102] Since it resembles ideas and the invisible, it is immortal like them. This resemblance does not, however, automatically guarantee the soul immortality after the death of its companion, the body: the soul must be pure to return to its true, invisible home. If the soul is dominated by bodily

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96 In the Myth of Er the souls, prior to their reincarnation, arrive at the Plain of Forgetting (λήθη) where runs river Careless (ἀμελής), from which souls must drink a certain amount; some drink too much. After drinking each soul forgets its previous life and experiences, falls asleep, and is reborn. Plato, *Republic* X, 621A–B.

97 22:18–34; 26:8–26; 31:24–32:8; 33:2–3; 35:2–7; Ignorance, the opposite of remembering and knowledge, see e.g.: 24:16–22; 28:6–9; 31:6–7; 31:22–24; 33:4–8.

98 22:28–34.

99 24:17–20.

100 *Phaedo* 72E–73C, 75A–77A, *Phaedrus* 249C–250C, *Meno* 81C–85D.

101 ἡ μὲν ψυχὴ τῷ θείῳ, τὸ δὲ σῶμα τῷ θνητῷ. *Phaedo* 80A.

102 Pages 22–23, see III.1 and III.2.

desires and pleasures, this inclination not only prevents it from its ascent, but causes it to be reborn into a body somehow suited to its particular flaws.[103]

Belief in or teaching of the soul's immortality and transmigration is closely bound to call for such a way of life that aims at letting go of what belongs to the world of change.[104] In *Phaedo* Socrates sees life as preparation for death: if one dedicates one's life to philosophy, there is nothing to fear as one's life advances towards its end. Good people can expect a good lot after death, and philosophers are most likely to be entirely released from the cycle of reincarnation. Moreover, those who lead a truly philosophical life have only their death and afterlife in mind: philosophy is practice of death.[105] The body with its needs tries to disturb and keep one from truth: it fills people's minds with passions, desires, fears, all kinds of phantasies, and foolishnesses.[106] If one wants to reach pure knowledge, it is necessary to keep oneself separate from the body and its passing fancies: during one's life one should only fulfil the minimum of bodily needs and keep oneself separate from it as far as is possible. Only after death is it possible to reach pure knowledge, so death leads the lover of wisdom to truth and pure knowledge, to look at beings purely through one's soul.[107]

Several aspects that stem from Plato's myths and views on the soul's immortality either are to be found in *Authentikos Logos*, or render the treatise more understandable. Its overall view of the soul's descent and forgetting, life in body, recollection, and ascent suggest a Platonic background. However, there are several centuries between Plato and *Authentikos Logos*: closer authors are Origen and Plotinus who were both born in Egypt, Origen in Alexandria, Plotinus in Lycopolis. They studied in Alexandria, and became figures of influence, but whereas Origen's context was Christian, Plotinus' was not.

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103 *Phaedo* 79A–84B. The soul of a true lover of wisdom keeps itself as far apart from pleasures, desires, sorrows, and fears as possible (ἡ τοῦ ὡς ἀληθῶς φιλοσόφου ψυχὴ οὕτως ἀπέχεται τῶν ἡδονῶν τε καὶ ἐπιθυμιῶν καὶ λυπῶν καὶ [φόβων] καθ' ὅσον δύναται), reasoning that it is an ultimately harmful thing, *Phaedo* 83B. In *Phaedo* 81E–82B Plato gives humorous examples of different characters and their likely reincarnations: for example those who have preferred injustice, tyranny, and robberies can await new life as wolves, hawks, and kites.

104 This is the message of the myths in *Gorgias* and that of Er in *Rep.* X. "'To be ready and fit to die' is the hall-mark of the complete philosopher". Bostock, *Plato's Phaedo*, 21; Rohde, *Psyche*, 472–473.

105 *Phaedo* 64A, 83A–B.

106 ἐρώτων δὲ καὶ ἐπιθυμιῶν καὶ φόβων καὶ εἰδώλων παντοδαπῶν καὶ φλυαρίας ἐμπίμπλησιν ἡμᾶς πολλῆς ὥστε τὸ λεγόμενον ὡς ἀληθῶς τῷ ὄντι ὑπ' αὐτοῦ οὐδὲ φρονῆσαι ἡμῖν ἐγγίγνεται οὐδέποτε οὐδέν. *Phaedo* 66C.

107 *Phaedo* 66B–67B.

3.2 Origen on the Minds Cooling into Souls

Plato's ideas influenced Christians from early on, and there were two Christian Platonists that were particularly prolific, Clement of Alexandria and Origen, head of the Alexandrian school, and author of an exhaustive amount of books and exegetical treatises. Origen is an important character for *Authentikos Logos* due to his influence and consequential following in Egypt and Palestine. That is why here certain points of Origen's thought are considered a possible background from which *Authentikos Logos* stems; this assumption will be tested also in Chapter IV. In *De principiis* 2.8.3 Origen provides an etymology to the word ψυχή that shows how he approaches the nature of the soul from a viewpoint that is shared with Plato, and also *Authentikos Logos*, namely that souls have fallen or descended from above.[108] Origen derives ψυχή from ψύχεσθαι, "to grow cold", that refers to the souls' descent or fall from God's world. He explains God as fire, angels as flames of fire, and suggests that those who have fallen away from the love of God must have cooled in their affection, hence the souls are called so, for being intellects that have fallen away from God. They have lost their original dignity and status, but there is an option of return for them.[109]

In what follows, Origen emphasises that this change from νοῦς to ψυχή is not to be regarded as a strictly dogmatic teaching that should be taken as literally true explanation of the souls' condition. Rather, he says, these are opinions treated in the style of investigation and discussion. Origen's view that the soul is something intermediate between the weak flesh and the willing spirit is a view that is at the same time both Platonic and Christian,[110] "flesh" (σάρξ) and "spirit" (πνεῦμα) being very much Christian terms. *Authentikos Logos* subscribes to a similar view when it describes the soul as descending from the invisible to the visible world. There is no suggestion of the soul as female on *De principiis*, and likewise according to Plato souls do not have

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108 There are methodological concerns connected to the extant text of *De Principiis:* most of it is only preserved in Tyrannius Rufinus' (d. 410) Latin translation. According to Jerome, Rufinus translated Origen freely, and in doing so Rufinus would have followed Jerome's principles (Jerome, *Apology Against Rufinus*, I). Both, it seems, changed passages considered heretical not to give offence, but Jerome's work is now lost.

109 Origen, *De princ.* 2.8.3. Similar idea is also expressed in the "Orphic" tablet B10 from Hipponion, 5th century BCE, where it is said that the descending souls of the dead are cooled (ἔνθα κατερχόμεναι ψυχαὶ νεκύων ψύχονται) in Hades. Radcliffe G. Edmonds III (ed.), *The "Orphic" Gold Tablets and Greek Religion. Further along the Path* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 30; Thomas M. Dousa, "Common motifs in the 'Orphic' B tablets and Egyptian funerary texts: Continuity or convergence?" in Edmonds (ed.), *The "Orphic" Gold Tablets*, 120–164, on p. 128.

110 Origen, *De princ.* 2.8.4.

gender, but incarnate according to their qualities, so that some become men, some women, others, animals.[111]

In the third book of *De principiis* Origen explains scriptural passages (e. g. Eph 1:4) that refer to the origin of the world with καταβολή as referring to the descent of souls, or rational beings, from the higher and invisible worlds into the visible world. A place was needed to where souls could descend, and since it was made for the purpose of receiving these descending souls, its beginning also is referred to as καταβολή. According to Origen, eternal souls were thrown down unwillingly (*De princ.* 3.5.4) and for varying reasons: due to deficiencies on the part of the soul (hence punishment or schooling), because of the soul's desire for visible things, or to render services to other fallen souls (*De princ.* 3.5.5). Life in the world is not necessarily a punishment, but it is slavery to souls and they eagerly wait to be released (*De princ.* 3.5.4).The soul's life on earth is thus not an ideal condition, and although it may be and often is described as imprisonment or slavery, it serves a purpose for the improvement of souls.[112] *Authentikos Logos* shares this outlook: souls are pre-existent, the soul's fall is not considered directly negative, it simply happens, and people's existence in the world is rather a test or competition (ἀγών). Discussion on page 32 also suggests that when the soul leaves its life in the body, it escapes slavery.

Based on these brief comparisons it must be noted that *Authentikos Logos* does not come into close proximity to Origen's discussion in all aspects. In Origen's works, scriptural exegesis holds a prominent position, whereas in *Authentikos Logos* scriptural discussion is freer and less literal than in Origen. The Christian Platonic outlook of things is certainly shared, most notably the soul's pre-existence and fall/descent. However, as will be elaborated in Chapter IV, there are points of connection in both terminology and view of the souls' progress to and from the world. The connection can therefore also be noted to be a general one, which suggests that either what both share is generally Christian Platonism, or that the influence in *Authentikos Logos* does not derive directly from Origen.

3.3 Plotinus: the Soul as God's daughter

In the *Enneads* Plotinus on several occasions discusses the soul's descent in ways that appear to be in agreement with views presented in *Authentikos*

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111 Plato, *Rep.* X 614–621; *Timaeus* 41–42, 90–91.

112 Platonists suggested various reasons for the souls' descent. John M. Dillon, "The Descent of the Soul" in Bentley Layton (ed.), *The Rediscovery of Gnosticism. Proceedings of the International Conference on Gnosticism at Yale, New Haven, Connecticut, March 28–31, 1978, vol. 1: The School of Valentinus* (SHR 41; Leiden: Brill, 1980), 357–364. Iamblichus says that the soul descends into the world "according to the Gnostics because of derangement and deviation." Iamblichus, *De Anima*, 23.22–23.

Logos. Such are the image of the soul as female,[113] even the daughter of God, the soul's origin and descent from above/the soul of all, God as the father, and the soul's unbroken connection with her origin. The soul has a dual nature that enables it either to strengthen the good in itself or to turn to bodily things, and although the soul's life in the body is imprisonment, it is not evil as such, and may serve different purposes.[114] Life in the body creates a connection with pleasure, desire and sorrow.[115]

All these resonate with *Authentikos Logos.* Much of this probably finds an explanation in the generally Platonic orientation that both Plotinus and *Authentikos Logos* share.[116] Yet when Plotinus describes the human soul as a prodigal daughter of God the father, he reveals that even if Jewish and Christian authors made ample use of the image in late antiquity, this motif appealed not only to Jewish or Christian audiences. Further, as will be discussed below, Plotinus' daughter–father metaphor is an important addition to the discussion not only of the relations between *Authentikos Logos,* the *Exegesis on the Soul* and the *Enneads,* but also to the question of how the two Nag Hammadi stories on the soul (and Plotinus) relate to Valentinian writings. The relationship between Plotinus and "Gnostics" has been discussed in several studies,[117] but Plotinus' views on the individual soul's descent and yet belonging with the soul of the all and his image of the soul as the daughter of the heavenly father merit discussion in the context of *Authentikos Logos* and the *Exegesis on the Soul.*

In the fourth Ennead Plotinus discusses the soul's descent into bodies. He begins *Ennead* IV.8.1 with his own mystical experience, of how he sometimes has felt out of his body, coming to identify with the divine, and settling in the realm of intellect. After such a stand-still he has felt puzzled at finding himself in the body. Plotinus goes through Heraclitus, Empedocles, and Pythagoras, but decides that only the "divine Plato" can explain the soul and its arrival in the world. Plotinus brings up Plato's disdain for the sense-perceptible world, his disapproval of the joining together of the body and the soul, and says the soul is in fetters and buried in the body, whilst the soul's journey to the noetic world is its "release from fetters" and "ascent from the cave". After adding references to *Phaedrus* (the soul loosing its wings, going through cycles of reincarnation that return ascended souls onto earth, judgements that send others down here, etc.), Plotinus is quick to bring in *Timaeus'* view of the

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113 In *Enn.* IV.8 the soul's femininity is conveyed through the feminine noun ψυχή and the participle structures. In *Enn.* VI.9.9 the soul is described as a daughter.

114 *Enn.* IV.8.5.

115 *Enn.* IV.8.2.44.

116 Such as the unequal connection of the body and soul, and the notion that body is the tomb or fetter of the soul.

117 For a recent discussion, see Burns, *Apocalypse of the Alien God,* 32–33.

world as a blessed god, and suggest that the perfection of the all is the reason for individual souls' descents into the world.[118]

There are several connecting points with the discussion in *Authentikos Logos* (the soul's descent, its κοινωνία with the body, the soul's ascent), but also crucial differences. *Authentikos Logos* does not refer to personal experiences but rather discusses the paradigmatic journey of an individual soul to its earthly life and incarnation (birth), and its departure from this life (death). Unlike in the *Enneads*, no direct references are made to Plato or other philosophical authors. Plotinus serves as an important reminder of the different levels and readings of the soul story: it may refer to human life from pre-existence and birth to earthly life and death, but the soul's descent and ascent may also refer to different stages during one's spiritual life.

In *Ennead* IV.8.2 Plotinus says that in order to learn about our own souls we must investigate generally about the soul; *Authentikos Logos* provides such a general soul story that is to be applied to one's own soul. Unlike the world soul, our souls are sunk deep because our bodies need constant thought and care and are assailed by alien forces and are in the grip of poverty; in *Authentikos Logos* the soul is attacked by hostile forces, passions, and it lives in "the house of poverty", which is the body itself.[119] According to Plotinus, there are two reasons why life in the body is displeasing: first, because the body becomes a hindrance to thought, and second, because it fills the soul with pleasures, desires, and sorrows.[120] Pleasure, desire, and sorrow all appear in *Authentikos Logos*, even though they are not combined in one sentence. Particularly desire and pleasure disturb the soul in *Authentikos Logos*.[121] Plotinus notes that the body disturbs the soul only if it controls the soul, not if the soul keeps itself focused on higher realities.

In the *Ennead* IV.8.4 Plotinus discusses the souls' position between higher and lower things. On one hand an individual soul would have an intelligent propensity to return to itself, on the other, it also has a power that is directed at the world below. When the soul's separateness or individuality strengthens and it focuses on things outside, it eventually sheds its feathers[122] and comes to live in a body. This is why Plotinus calls souls "amphibious" (ἀμφίβιοι), because they can be directed either to the life there or the life here. Turning

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118 Plato's passages quoted or alluded to by Plotinus in *Enn.* IV.8.1 are *Phaedo* 67D, 62B, *Cratylus* 400C, *Republic* 514A; 515C, 517B, 619D; *Phaedrus* 246C, 247D, 249A, *Timaeus* 34B. A.H. Armstrong, *Plotinus. Ennead IV* (LCL 443. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1984), 400 n.1. See also e.g. *Ennead* 8.3.

119 *Authentikos Logos* 23:12 – 34; 28:31 – 29:3.

120 Δύο γὰρ ὄντων δι' ἃ δυσχεραίνεται ἡ ψυχῆς πρὸς σῶμα κοινωνία ὅτι τε ἐ μ π ό δ ι ο ν πρὸς τὰς νοήσεις γίγνεται, καὶ ὅτι ἡδονῶν καὶ ἐ π ι θ υ μ ι ῶ ν καὶ λυπῶν π ί μ π λ η σ ι ν αὐτήν. *Enn.* IV.8.2. lines 43 – 45.

121 Pleasure: 23:31; 24:19; desire: 23:15, 18, 19; 25:5; 29:2; 30:34; 31:21; sorrow 30:29.

122 Cf. Plato, *Phaedrus* 248B–C.

towards intelligence releases the soul from its fetters and allows ascent when the soul begins to contemplate existing things ("reality") by recollection.

In the *Ennead* IV.8.7 Plotinus continues that because the nature is twofold, it is better for the soul to be with the intelligible, but the soul, who also has a twofold nature, is by necessity able to take part in the sense-perceptible, which should not cause it annoyance. Life in this world may provide the soul with an opportunity of learning, and even evil experiences can provide a clearer knowledge of Good. Further, in the *Ennead* IV.8.8.1 – 4 Plotinus explains that the soul is always connected with the intelligible; his view was not shared by all Neoplatonists.[123] *Authentikos Logos* holds the same conviction: "Whether in descent, or in the Fullness, she is not separate from them. They see her and she looks at them in the invisible Word" (22:18 – 22).

The soul has something that is from below, and something of above. The soul (here) is surrounded by alien things and drawn to many things: it has pleasures and pleasure deceives it. Yet there is a part that timely pleasures do not please, and its way of life is true to its nature.[124] This conclusion is also very much in line with *Authentikos Logos* that has the soul unequally joined to its step-siblings who remain outsiders.[125] Just as Plotinus says the soul is deceived by pleasure, καὶ ἥδεται δὲ καὶ ἡδονὴ ἠπάτησε (*Enn.* IV.8.22 – 23), pleasure and sweet gain deceive the soul in *Authentikos Logos*, ⲬⲈ ⲐⲎⲆⲞⲚⲎ ⲄⲀⲢ ⲘⲚ Ⲛ̄ⳤⲎⲞⲨ ⲈⲦ ⳦ⲞⲗⲈ⳦ ⲤⲈⲢⲀⲡⲀⲦⲀ ⲘⲘⲞⲤ (24:18 – 20), and cause it to fall deeper into bodily life.

For both Plotinus and *Authentikos Logos* the soul is from above, and is connected with the worlds above (the universal soul/the soul of all in Plotinus). In *Authentikos Logos* this is explicitly stated on the first page, where this connection is realised through seeing (e.g. 22:20 – 22, 28 – 29) and understanding or knowledge (22:30). Life on earth may be imprisonment, but it serves a purpose – perfection in Plotinus, contest in *Authentikos Logos* – wherefore the soul's life in body, although depicted as inferior, is never said to be an utter catastrophe. The way the soul's descent, conversion, and ascent are described in *Authentikos Logos* allows us to approach the descent as something inevitable that has to be lived through; changing the course of her life leads to ascent and this is on what the soul is focused. The moment when the conversion will take place appears almost to be a question of time.

There are at the same time obvious differences between the perspectives of Plotinus and *Authentikos Logos*: Plotinus begins with a reference to his mystical experience, whereas in *Authentikos Logos* the focus is on the soul's more abstract journey from above to human life in the body. *Authentikos*

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123 Gregory Shaw, "The Soul's Innate Gnosis of the Gods. Revelation in Iamblichean Theurgy" in Philippa Townsend/Moulie Vidas (ed.), *Revelation, Literature, and Community in Late Antiquity* (TSAJ 146; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011), 117 – 129.

124 πολλὰ ἔχοντος τὰ ἀλλότρια κύκλῳ, πολλὰ δὲ ὧν ἐφίεται· καὶ ἥδεται δὲ καὶ ἡδονὴ ἠπάτησε. Τὸ δέ ἐστι καὶ ἀνήδονον ὂν τὰς προσκαίρους ἡδονάς, ἡ δὲ διαγωγὴ ὁμοία. *Enn.* IV.8.21 – 24.

125 ⲰⲢ̄ ⲘⲡⲞⲗ, 23:23.

Logos does not provide direct clues as to whether it also has a mystical reading in mind, yet the way Plotinus starts from the personal and moves to the general is enlightening and suggests *Authentikos Logos* could also be read as a guide on one's personal soul-journey. Further, Plotinus connects his discussion to the wider question about the nature of the universe and the world-soul, but *Authentikos Logos* does not approach that topic: there is the father (25:29; 33:30), the invisible or heavenly worlds (22:11; 25:30), the soul's bridegroom (22:23) and her shepherd (32:11; 33:2), as well as the word-medicine (22:20 – 26; 27:30 – 32; 28:10 – 13), but what or who exactly there is/are in the invisible worlds is not entirely clear. Also, Plotinus keeps referring to Plato and other philosophers (Heraclitus, Empedocles, Pythagoras), whereas *Authentikos Logos* only alludes to Christian texts, without mentioning any names or titles of writings.

For scholars of *Authentikos Logos* and the *Exegesis on the Soul*, Plotinus' description of the God-soul-relationship in *Ennead* VI.9.9 emerges as a very interesting one, and worthy of attention.[126] Plotinus continues in *Ennead* VI.9.9 with the preceding discussion where he compares the soul's life to a choral dance: in this dance the soul sees and is connected with the spring of life, the spring of intellect, the principle of being, the cause of God, and the soul's root. Plotinus emphasises that we are never separated from that Good (ἐκεῖνος, referring to the source of all, the Good, τὸ ἀγαθόν), yet it is possible for humans to be nearer to, or further from, him. Being closer to him means for us a fuller existence, and rest for the soul. "There" the soul is itself and outside evils, and life "here" is falling away, flight, and shedding of wings. Some of the images and vocabulary employed in this first part are familiar when compared with *Authentikos Logos*,[127] yet it is the overall view of the soul's connection with God during this life that connects Plotinus and *Authentikos Logos*.

A particularly fascinating section starts with Plotinus' reference to Eros and Psyche in *Enn.* VI.9.9, and to the connection of the soul myth with romantic stories. The soul is other than God but she is from him, and therefore she is in love with him out of necessity. When she is "there" (in the intelligible/real world), her love is heavenly love, but "here" she becomes common: "there" she is heavenly Aphrodite (Ἀφροδίτη οὐρανία), "here" she turns common, a kind of a hetaira (ἐνταύθα δὲ γίγνεται πάνδημος οἷον ἑταιρισθεῖσα). Plotinus is

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126 Ménard does not bring Plotinus into serious discussion (Ménard refers to *Enneads* once, when discussing ΟΥΜÑΤϩΑΥΡЄΡⲰΜ[Є] in *Authentikos Logos* 31:5, Ménard, *L'Authentikos Logos*, 55 – 56. Kulawik mentions *Enn.* VI.9.9., but does not go into further discussion of the *Exegesis on the Soul* in relations to Plotinus' thought, Kulawik, *Die Erzählung*, 172, n. 452, 458; 216 n. 754; 264 n. 1068.

127 E.g. ῥίζα: *Enn.* VI.9.9.2; *Auth. Logos* 22; δικαιοσύνη: *Enn.* VI.9.9.19; *Auth. Logos* 22; also, the soul's ascent in *Authentikos Logos* contains the idea that the soul had exhausted herself (ταλαιπωρέω in 35:4; in Plotinus: *Ennead* IV.8.3.2), and that she receives rest, ἀνάπαυσις (*Enn.* VI.9.9.13; *Auth. Logos* 35:16 in Coptic).

discussing different kinds of love. However, what is interesting from the viewpoint of the two Nag Hammadi soul stories, is the idea of a divine and earthly version of a principle (the soul in the Nag Hammadi stories, love in Plotinus) that is portrayed as female. For Plotinus, "Every soul is Aphrodite".[128] Similarly in *Authentikos Logos* and the *Exegesis on the Soul*, the soul in these stories is a paradigmatic soul, the soul of any human being. Perhaps this can also be applied to Valentinian myth. Figures of the soul, Aphrodite, and Wisdom tell a similar kind of a story.

Plotinus next provides an allegory that resembles the allegory in the *Exegesis on the Soul*. He moves from the two Aphrodites to the soul as a virgin daughter of her noble father within this same text: in its natural state the soul is in love with God and wishes to be united with him, like a noble virgin loves her noble father, but when it has come into the world of becoming, it is deceived by the flatteries of her suitors and yields to mortal love, and is disgraced. Hating these shameful things, the soul purifies itself (of worldly things), and preparing itself for the father, does well.[129] Here a resemblance with the *Exegesis on the Soul* and its metaphor of a disgraced maiden and her repentance is striking.

In the sixth Ennead Plotinus employs both the Aphrodite metaphor that resembles the Valentinian concept of Sophia as heavenly Wisdom and Achamoth as the fallen Wisdom, as well as the image of the soul as the noble daughter, also employed in the *Exegesis on the Soul*. This is not only a witness to the popularity of the fallen woman metaphor, but the sixth Ennead shows that the soul-woman metaphor is not just a Christian motif. Although *Authentikos Logos* and the *Exegesis on the Soul* draw from scriptural traditions in their soul stories, the Plotinian metaphor of the soul as a maiden daughter turned fallen woman is closer to both texts rather than for instance similar examples from Jewish scriptures, such as the Book of Hosea, where the focus is not on individual souls but Israel collectively, and where idolatry is an issue rather than worldly life.

Several complex questions can be asked as regards the relationship between *Authentikos Logos* and Plotinus, or the *Exegesis on the Soul* and Plotinus. It is known that Plotinus knew "Gnostics" and their writings, but does the discussion in *Enn.* VI.9.9 also indicate that Plotinus was aware of Christian discussions of the soul, or did third- or fourth-century Christians know of Plotinus' views. What is at least clear is that in many ways Plotinus' thought comes close to *Authentikos Logos*. This could be taken to suggest that one source of influence behind *Authentikos Logos* was Plotinian thought. There

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128 See Plato's *Symposium* 180D–181C that Plotinus probably had in mind. Kulawik, *Die Erzählung*, 264 n. 1068 notes the Plotinus passage.

129 *Enn.* VI.9.9 lines 33 onwards. εὐπαθεῖν on line 39: "to enjoy/indulge oneself", "live comfortably", Liddell/Scott/Jones, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 725; "to be in good condition", "receive benefits", Lampe, *A Patristic Greek Lexicon*, 572.

are, however, differences, such as the Christian allusions in *Authentikos Logos* and Plotinus' references to earlier philosophers. Also, Plotinus' focus is not only on the exemplary soul story, and he also discusses his personal experiences. As also Origen witnesses, Christians were fond of the (Platonic) soul myth. In this sense it is more relevant to recognise the common ground. A further shared characteristic between Plotinus and *Authentikos Logos* is that the soul manages its change of course independently; no bridegroom or other such figure gains a central position.

4. Summary

In this chapter the story of the soul in *Authentikos Logos* was read next to several other Christian and non-Christian texts that discuss the descent and ascent of the soul or deal with topics relevant to *Authentikos Logos*. The focus was put on the outline of the story and points of coherence with the *Exegesis on the Soul*, the Valentinian myth, views of the soul in Plato's *Phaedo*, Origen, and finally, Plotinus.

The *Exegesis on the Soul* is an important parallel text, since it is also preserved as part of the Nag Hammadi library, and it was read in the same environment, that of ascetic/monastic Christianities of late ancient Egypt. Although both texts come close to each other, the *Exegesis on the Soul* provides a more anthropomorphic account that employs direct references to the scriptures, but makes use of Greek Classical literary traditions, Homer, and possibly also Aeschylus. It also builds on metaphorical images of Christian life as the soul's marriage to God and is more outspoken in its emphasis on repentance. Despite these differences, the texts are similar in that both may be approached as homilies, and they employ the scriptures, *Authentikos Logos* allusively, *Exegesis on the Soul* directly, and this is done to exhort their audiences towards ascetic life.

The Valentinian Wisdom myth is another possible parallel for the soul story in *Authentikos Logos*. *Authentikos Logos* does not, however, share the focus of the Valentinian myth, whether one emphasises cosmology or therapy of emotions. As was noted above in II.4, the use of the scriptural light imagery coheres with Valentinian writings only to the extent that a generally Christian framework would admit. It was also noted that the numerous Valentinian writings in the Nag Hammadi collection are all located in different codices to *Authentikos Logos*.

Plato's views on the soul and the immortality of the souls in *Phaedo* was also discussed: the overall view on the soul's life on earth and in forgetfulness, and remembering that awakens the soul, as well as the dualism between the material world and the world above connects *Authentikos Logos* to Platonic heritage. Despite the several hundred years' time span between *Phaedo* and

Authentikos Logos, the Platonic framework of this Nag Hammadi soul story is evident. The Christian Platonic tradition of such an Alexandrian scholar as Origen emerges as a tempting point of comparison. Yet the differences of style and method between Origen's scholarly work and the more practical approach of *Authentikos Logos* remain obvious. Also, unlike *Authentikos Logos*, Origen does not portray the soul as female. If Origen's works do not provide direct points of connection despite certain general agreement, similarly, Plotinus *Ennead* IV contains much that is generally similar as regards views on the soul, but also differences. Plotinus, for instance, does not only discuss mythical journeys of the soul but applies the soul-language to his own mystical experiences.

Ennead VI suggests that somehow Plotinus taps into the same ground with *Authentikos Logos* and the *Exegesis on the Soul*, for he, too, portrays the soul as female, and more precisely, as a young maiden separated from her home. Connecting points with the thought of Plotinus therefore bring further evidence for the intellectual context of the writing. Views prevalent in the late third century suggest that that era, or some time later, emerges as a likely timely context. It is possible that *Authentikos Logos* relies on preceding traditions, and could thus have been written well after the floruits of Plotinus or Origen. In light of connecting points with Origen and Plotinus it appears unlikely that it would precede them: *Authentikos Logos* presupposes certain developments in the Platonic tradition that Origen and Plotinus represent.

In this chapter several important notions concerning the relationship between *Authentikos Logos* and the *Exegesis on the Soul*, the Valentinian Wisdom myth, Plato, Origen, and Plotinus have emerged. In the next chapter, a more detailed analysis of the language and terminology applied to the soul in *Authentikos Logos* will be conducted in order to gain a better grasp of the intellectual and literary context of the writing.

IV. The Attributes of the Soul in *Authentikos Logos*

If the overall concept of the descending and ascending soul is known of in different texts, a more tangible point for comparison in the *Authentikos Logos* are the different attributes attached to the soul. Unlike for instance in the *Exegesis on the Soul*, *Authentikos Logos* applies precise terminology to discuss the soul: apart from simply using the word "soul", the soul is defined as "invisible" (ΨΥΧΗ ⲚⲀϨⲞⲢⲀⲦⲞⲤ in 22:13 and ΨΥΧΗ ⲚⲀϨⲞⲢⲀⲦⲞⲤ ⲚⲦⲈ ⲆⲒⲔⲀⲒⲞⲤΥⲚⲎ in 32:27), "pneumatic" (ΨΥΧⲎ ⲘⲡⲚⲀⲦⲒⲔⲎ in 23:12), "material" (ΨΥΧⲎ ⲚϨΥⲖⲒⲔⲎ in 23:16) and "rational" (ΨΥΧⲎ ⲚⲖⲞⲅⲒⲔⲎ in 34:32).

These attributes are a salient feature in the way *Authentikos Logos* discusses the soul, and rare ("material" and "rational" soul) or unique ("invisible" and "pneumatic" soul) within the Nag Hammadi codices. What is intriguing is that all four epithets do appear in other ancient sources, but they are not otherwise combined in this way in other texts, and also, they are used by very different kinds of authors: Sethian and Valentinian sources (material soul), Synesius of Cyrene and John Chrysostom (pneumatic soul), Philo, Clement of Alexandria, Valentinian sources and Origen (rational soul). The "invisible soul" is a unique term, but the idea is common in Platonic thought and for example Origen discusses the soul's invisibility.[1]

The purpose of this chapter is to focus on the soul terminology with the aim of understanding the treatise better by asking what is indicated by the use of such language, how it correlates with different stages of the soul's journey, and where else we find the same or similar terminology. The soul language of *Authentikos Logos* will here be read in comparison with Nag Hammadi and other early Christian writings, as well as Platonist philosophers to a certain extent. Careful selection from the vast amount of source material has been necessary, as for instance the rational soul is an exhaustingly used term. Priority has been given to early theologians and philosophical authors who use very similar formulations, e. g. Synesius of Cyrene (c. 370 – 413), a student of Hypatia and Neoplatonist who later became the bishop of Ptolemais in Libya, and to authors who are generally important in the background and development of Christian thought, e. g. Philo of Alexandria. Other Nag Hammadi texts are of direct use only in the case of the term "material soul". Christian authors from the third and fourth centuries provide more consequential illumination on *Authentikos Logos*, Origen in particular.

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1 For Origen, see below. Similarly Clemens Scholten has noted that the usage of this terminology is atypical of philosophical authors, Scholten, *Martyrium und Sophiamythos*, 132.

Three considerations arise from the epithets used of the soul in *Authentikos Logos*. First, when looking at the attributes of the soul in the writing, it emerges that they are employed at turning points in the story. This suggests that the invisible soul is the light, "pure" soul, connected with the invisible, heavenly worlds. The pneumatic soul is the soul about to incarnate that consists of or is enveloped in pneuma, whereas the material soul is the incarnate soul who displays a proclivity for harmful passions. The rational soul reaches its ultimate goal after comprehending its true state and not sparing itself in ascetic struggle. Does that mean that the epithets illustrate the soul during different stages of her journey of descent and ascent? Should these attributes be taken as names of the soul's parts or faculties, or should not too strict a line be drawn between them? Both the soul's attributes and the view that there are two or three faculties in the soul appear to explain the same idea, and that is what dominates the soul or where the soul is inclined.

Second, the attributes of the soul seem to indicate familiarity with learned, philosophical language of the soul, which in turn suggests an aim of being analytical in the description of the soul's progress. Yet it needs to be asked how is this language used, and does it actually derive from philosophical tradition. The soul's invisibility and the rational soul certainly denote a philosophical background, but the context from where they came into *Authentikos Logos* appears to be a Christian one, thus, the writing suggests knowledge of Christian Platonism. The soul is given different appellations in the course of the narrative, but the terminology applied for the soul's rational, passionate, and affective faculties in Plato's works, or the works of such Platonist as Alcinous, is not used.[2] Also, the "pneumatic soul" is a generally marginal term, otherwise only attested in Synesius' *On Dreams* 7 and John Chrysostom's homilies on Romans, 2 Corinthians and Ephesians. The "material soul" is

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2 In *Timaeus* 44D–45B the head is given as the seat of the immortal and rational part of the soul, and the rest of the body as its vehicle. *Tim.* 69C–72D describes the mortal part of the soul and its division into two parts that are located in the chest and around the midriff. *Tim.* 37C mentions the aspect of the soul that is concerned with the rational (περὶ τὸ λογιστικὸν ᾖ). See also Francis M. Cornford, *Plato's Cosmology. The Timaeus of Plato* (London: Routledge, 1937), 142–151, for a discussion on Plato's view of the creation of humans, the seat of their immortal souls, and 279–291 for the division of the mortal parts of the soul; a connection with physical passions/emotions is emphatic in Plato. In *Phaedrus* 246 A–B Plato presents the tripartite soul in the metaphor of the charioteer and two horses, one good, the other bad and unruly.

Alcinous, explains Plato's views in his *Handbook* as he introduces the division of the soul into an immortal and two mortal parts, the spirited (θυμικόν) and the appetitive (ἐπιθυμετικόν). The primary division is between the rational (λογιστικόν) and the passionate (παθητικόν) parts of the soul. When Alcinous characterises the soul as "tripartite" (ὅτι δὲ τριμερής ἐστιν ἡ ψυχὴ κατὰ τὰς δυνάμεις . . .), the term actually derives from Aristotle, *Topics* 133a.31. Alcinous, *Did.* 23–24. Dillon dates Alcinous into "a period bounded by the writings of Plutarch on the one hand, and Galen and Alexander of Aphrodisias on the other". John M. Dillon, *Alcinous. The Handbook of Platonism* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), xiii, 147–150. Also Philo mentions three parts of the soul e. g. in *Allegorical Interpretation I*, 72, *Allegorical Interpretation III*, 115, and refers to Plato's image of the charioteer in *Allegorical Interpretation III*, 223.

encountered in the *Apocryphon of John* (NHC II,1), the *Trimorphic Protennoia*, and Clement of Alexandria's *Excerpts from Theodotus*.[3]

Third, it will be argued that the soul language provides some broad lines for sketching the context for *Authentikos Logos*. In his article Roelof van den Broek suggested that the Alexandrian traditions *prior* to Clement and Origen provide the most likely context for *Authentikos Logos*.[4] Since Clement and Origen's works provide much for our understanding of the writing, it seems more logical to deduct that it were the traditions around or after them that offered inspiration and a likely environment for someone to compose *Authentikos Logos*. This notion is strengthened by the rare term pneumatic soul that is not attested prior to the fourth century.

The soul language in *Authentikos Logos* differs from other approaches in the Nag Hammadi and related writings. All the texts that mention the "material soul" (*Authentikos Logos, Apocryphon of John, Trimorphic Protennoia*, Clement's *Excerpts from Theodotus*) refer to passions in the same context, but also show consequential differences, in particular when it comes to Valentinian anthropological views and hierarchies. This is a considerable topic in itself; the focus of this chapter stays in the four attributes of the soul in *Authentikos Logos*.

1. The Invisible Soul

The soul's journey in *Authentikos Logos* begins on the first page of the tractate, as the soul comes forth from the invisible, unspeakable worlds. As this first appearance is recounted, the soul is called the *invisible soul of justice* (ⲮⲨⲬⲎ ⲚⲀϨⲞⲢⲀⲦⲞⲤ ⲚⲦⲈ ⲆⲒⲔⲀⲒⲞⲤⲨⲚⲎ), one about to appear from the invisible, ineffable worlds (22:13 – 14). Later on this designation appears again, without the attribute ⲚⲦⲈ ⲆⲒⲔⲀⲒⲞⲤⲨⲚⲎ, when the soul has left her earthly body and life (32:27). The attribute "invisible" stresses the soul's relationship to the divine worlds, and such an understanding of the soul belongs to a Platonic worldview.[5] In the New Testament epistles the invisibility as God's attribute is mentioned a few times, but invisibility is not associated with the soul.[6]

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3 *Ap. John* (NHC II) 18:34; *Trim. Prot.* 35:18; Clement, *Excerpts from Theodotus* 50. See below IV.3.

4 Certain modifications to van den Broek's approach are necessary. He takes as his first object of interest the "doctrine of the soul" in the treatise, which he states to be "coherent" and "thoroughly Platonic, in particular in its terminology". Van den Broek, "The Authentikos Logos", 206. In this study the discussion concerns the writing's *understanding*, or the *concept of* the soul, rather than "doctrine".

5 For Plato the soul is invisible, whereas the elements (air, water, fire, and earth) are visible bodies, *Tim.* 46D.

6 Rom 1:20; Col 1:15 – 16; 1 Tim 1:17; also Heb 11:27.

The concept of invisibility that connects the soul to unspeakable, heavenly worlds and the Word emphasises the soul's union with her origin, as well as the notion that this connection is maintained also as the soul moves downwards.[7] The invisible soul is the soul who emerges in the upper, heavenly regions of the cosmos, whereas the descending and incarnating souls of the following page 23 are called "pneumatic", and "material". Similarly, when the invisible soul reappears some ten pages later, this happens in a passage that describes the soul's ascent and the slave traders' defeat: slave traders, heavenly gatekeepers, attempt to block the soul's ascent but fail to cast down the invisible soul (32:27).

The "invisible soul" is an expression unique to *Authentikos Logos* in the Nag Hammadi collection, and nowhere else in the collection is the soul marked as being "invisible". The term ⲀϨⲞⲢⲀⲦⲞⲤ is encountered fairly frequently, but in the *Apocryphon of John*, the *Gospel of the Egyptians*, the *Zostrianos* and the *Allogenes* it most commonly appears in the designation "Invisible Spirit", ⲠⲀϨⲞⲢⲀⲦⲞⲤ ⲘⲠⲚⲈⲨⲘⲀ.[8] Another common use of the word amongst the Sethian Nag Hammadi texts is the noun form ⲠⲀϨⲞⲢⲀⲦⲞⲤ or ⲠⲒⲀϨⲞⲢⲀⲦⲞⲤ as a reference to the highest God. Some texts, e.g. *Apocryphon of John*, sometimes use the Coptic ⲀⲦⲚⲀⲨ for "invisible".[9] *Concept of our Great Power* 36:3 – 4 and *Gospel of Philip* 70:5 – 9 express a view that the soul must invisibly pass the hostile powers during its ascent.

The most notable difference between *Authentikos Logos* and these other, predominantly Sethian, uses of ⲀϨⲞⲢⲀⲦⲞⲤ is that in *Authentikos Logos* invisibility is not an attribute of God or the Spirit, but an attribute of the soul,

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7 On page 22 "invisible" is repeated three times: "invisible soul of justice" (ⲦⲮⲨⲬⲎ ⲚⲀϨⲞⲢⲀⲦⲞⲤ ⲚⲦⲈ ⲆⲒⲔⲀⲒⲞⲤⲨⲚⲎ 22:13 – 14), "invisible, ineffable worlds" (ⲚⲔⲞⲤⲘⲞⲤ ⲚⲀϨⲞⲢⲀⲦⲞⲤ ⲚⲚⲀⲦⲰⲀϪⲈ 22:11 – 12) and "invisible Word" (ⲠⲖⲞⲄⲞⲤ ⲚⲀϨⲞⲢⲀⲦⲞⲤ 22:22).

8 The term appears some six times in the codex II version of the *Apocryphon of John*, some 15 times in the codex III version; six and ten times in the two versions of the *Gospel of Egyptians*, twenty times in the *Zostrianos* and some seven times in the *Allogenes*, and this is excluding the Coptic expression ⲀⲦⲚⲀⲨ that is also used frequently. Also in the *Hypostasis of the Archons* and *Marsanes* the Invisible Spirit is used once in both. E.g. *Ap. John* II 2:33 par IV 4:2; II 5:28, 31, 33, 35; III 9:2; II 6:4,11; *Gos. Eg.* II 44:23, 26 par. IV 55:17 where ἀόρατος is replaced by Coptic ⲀⲦⲚⲀⲨ; III 49:23 (again Codex IV parallel uses the Coptic word); III 68:24; 69:16 and 19; *Zost.* 17:12; 20:18; 24:9, 13 etc. and *Allogenes* 49:10; 51:35; 58:25. The expression appears also in *Hyp. Arch.* 93:22 and *Marsanes* 10:19, and as ⲠⲚⲈⲨⲘⲀ ⲚⲚⲀⲦⲚ̄ⲚⲈⲨ in *Tri. Trac.* 102:32. In the different versions of the *Apocryphon of John* the Invisible spirit and the Invisible one sometimes appear in parallel, see e. g. *Ap. John* II 5: 25 and III 8:18.

9 The Invisible one, *Ap. John* II 2:29 par. IV 3:27; II 14:21 par. IV 22:28; III 7:18 par II 4:34 and BG 27:13 use the Coptic expression; III 9:5 par. BG 29:11 has Coptic and II 6:4 and IV 9:4 the Invisible Spirit; *Orig. World* (NHC II,5) 102:19; *Gos. Eg.* III 51:2 (ⲘⲠⲀϨⲞⲢⲀⲦⲞⲤ ⲚⲈⲒⲰⲦ). There is one reference to the invisible God in Codex VI: ⲠⲚⲞⲨⲦⲈ ⲚⲀϨⲞⲢⲀⲦⲞⲤ ⲈⲦⲞⲨϢⲀϪⲈ ⲈⲢⲞϤ ϨⲚ ⲞⲨⲔⲀⲢⲰϤ ("the invisible God to whom one speaks silently/in silence") in *Disc. 8 – 9*, 56:11. The *Trimorphic Protennoia* mentions both the Invisible one and the Invisible Spirit, with the Coptic wording ⲠⲀⲦⲚⲀⲨ and ⲠⲠⲚ̄Ⲁ̄ ⲚⲀⲦⲚⲀⲨ (*Trim. Prot.* XIII 38:10,11).

the heavenly worlds, and the Word. Also, "invisible" is used as the soul's attribute, not as a noun or an appellation.[10] This is why the discussions of God as the Invisible Spirit or the Invisible One do not provide the principal key for understanding the concept of the soul's invisibility in *Authentikos Logos*. The idea of the soul as an invisible being, related to the invisible world, frequents Platonist discussion, where the soul's invisibility stresses its relatedness to eternal ideas and its quintessential difference to the body: the soul is invisible and eternal whereas the body is visible and mortal. Although first expressed in *Phaedo*,[11] later Platonists subscribed to this view, as can be seen from Alcinous' *Handbook* and Plutarch, or works of Philo of Alexandria, crucial to Christian thought.[12]

Although Philo, Alcinous, and Plutarch witness that this idea was prevalent in Middle-Platonist thought, Christian traditions of the third and later centuries are necessary for our understanding of the reasoning in *Authentikos Logos*.[13] In *Against Celsus* 7.32 Origen claims that Celsus' attack on the resurrection doctrine is based on his ignorance and also on his hearing of it from ignorant people unable to argue it convincingly.[14] The connecting point between Origen and *Authentikos Logos* is the view that the soul has different forms during the different phases of its existence. Origen states how "we know" that the soul is bodiless and invisible by nature, wherefore, he continues, it needs different bodies successively to clothe itself. Yet contrary to

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10 ΠΑϨΟΡΑΤΟϹ with an article does not appear in *Authentikos Logos*, but Ménard and Funk reconstruct it in 22:4 (Funk, "Authentikos Logos", 255, Funk, "Der verlorene Anfang"; Ménard, *L'Authentikos Logos*, 8 and 37). The support for the reconstruction does not appear satisfactory, since the noun does not appear elsewhere in the treatise or the codex, and as noted above, it is a Sethian designation.

11 Τί οὖν περὶ ψυχῆς λέγομεν; ὁρατὸν ἢ ἀόρατον εἶναι; Οὐχ ὁρατόν. Ἀιδὲς ἄρα; Ναί. Ὁμοιότερον ἄρα ψυχὴ σώματός ἐστιν τῷ ἀιδεῖ, τὸ δὲ τῷ ὁρατῷ. Πᾶσα ἀνάγκη, ὦ Σώκρατες. Plato, *Phaedo* 79B–C. In *Timaeus* 46D and 36E–37A the invisible soul is the world soul.

12 Alcinous, *The Handbook*, 13.1; Plutarch, *On the Face*, 926C; Philo, *On Dreams,* I.135. Philo says that the invisible soul is the house of the invisible God (*On the Cherubim*, 101); and the invisible God imprinted his image on the invisible soul (*The Worse Attacks the Better,* 86); only two things in the universe are like God, the visible sun and the invisible soul, (*On Dreams I*, 73). That the soul is invisible occurs also in *On Joseph* 255, *On Moses II* 217, *On the Virtues* 57 and 172.

13 The discussion of Christian ideas concerns here the precise term "invisible soul". For the soul's invisibility during its ascent, see Chapter VI.

14 ὅτι οὐχ, ὡς οἴεται Κέλσος, τῆς μετενσωματώσεως παρακούσαντες τὰ περὶ ἀναστάσεώς φαμεν ἀλλ' εἰδότες ὅτι ἡ τῇ ἑαυτῆς φύσει ἀσώματος καὶ ἀόρατος ψυχὴ ἐν παντὶ σωματικῷ τόπῳ τυγχάνουσα δέεται σώματος οἰκείου τῇ φύσει τῷ τόπῳ ἐκείνῳ· ὅπερ ὅπου μὲν φορεῖ ἀπεκδυσαμένη ⟨τὸ⟩πρότερον ἀναγκαῖον μὲν περισσὸν δὲ ὡς πρὸς τὰ δεύτερα, ὅπου δὲ ἐπενδυσαμένη ᾧ πρότερον εἶχε, δεομένη κρείττονος ἐνδύματος εἰς τοὺς καθαρωτέρους καὶ αἰθερίους καὶ οὐρανίους τόπους. Καὶ ἀπεξεδύσατο μὲν ἐπὶ τὴν τῇδε γένεσιν ἐρχομένη τὸ χρήσιμον πρὸς τὴν ἐν τῇ ὑστέρᾳ τῆς κυούσης ⟨διάπλασιν⟩, ἕως ἦν ἐν αὐτῇ, χορίον· ἐνεδύσατο δὲ ὑπ' ἐκείνο ὃ ἦν ἀναγκαῖον τῷ ἐπὶ γῆς μέλλοντι διαζῆν. Εἶτα πάλιν ὄντος τινος "σκήνους" ἐπιγείου οἰκίας, ἀναγκαίας που τῷ σκήνει, καὶ καταλύεσθαι μέν φασιν οἱ λόγοι τὴν ἐπίγειον οἰκίαν "τοῦ σκήνους" τὸ δὲ σκῆνος ἐπενδύσασθαι "οἰκίαν ἀχειροποίητον αἰώνιον ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς". Origen, *Against Celsus* 7.32. There is a connection to the soul's vehicle, see discussion in VI.2.

many Platonists, Origen emphasises that this is not to be understood as teaching of transmigration or metempsychosis, but rather that souls have and need different bodies in different places, when in lower and higher regions of the cosmos, as foetuses in the womb, or as humans after their births. What is meant by the "invisible soul" is the soul's primal or pure state, the soul *per se*, without body and dwelling in the upper regions of the cosmos.[15] *Authentikos Logos* differs in style from Origen: one reason for that is that whereas Origen is justifying his views when arguing against Celsus, *Authentikos Logos* is not aiming to answer an opponent, but is addressed to a likeminded precipient.

Above it was suggested that *Authentikos Logos* may be dated too early, if seen to originate from the second or the very early third century. The concept of the soul's invisibility indicates that there are grounds for these doubts, if we assume that the idea reflects views common or familiar to Christians of its times. Origen refers to the soul's invisibility on several occasions, whereas Clement only mentions it once and prefers to speak of the invisible God instead.[16] Likewise other Christian authors prior to Origen do not approach the subject often.[17] On the other hand, post-Origen Christian authors refer to the soul's invisibility more often than those prior to Origen. Athanasius mentions the invisibility of the soul once, as does Eusebius, who once cites *Phaedo*.[18] Gregory of Nyssa, Pseudo-Macarius, and Ephrem the Syrian refer to the invisibility of the soul on several occasions.[19]

What may be deduced from this evidence? Origen is not the first Christian to note the soul's invisibility, and in any case he did not invent the topic but could have developed it with Platonist discussion of the soul's vehicles in sight. Still, Christian authors do not approach the subject much prior to Origen. One reason could be that this reflects a change of emphasis in philosophical school traditions – and Christian discussion – towards Platonism from the second century onwards.[20] A question then arises whether *Authentikos Logos* would represent an early, pioneering Christian usage of this concept, or would these

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15 A connection with the invisible world is important for the invisible soul. On page 22 the soul is just about to descend and be born into earthly life, yet "whether in descent or in the Fullness, she is not separated from them. They see her and she looks at them". That is, the soul maintains a connection to the invisible worlds (22:15 – 22).

16 Clement refers to the soul's invisibility in *Stromata* 6.18 where he states the need of the Greeks to abandon the worship of idols, the point being that no created thing can be a likeness of God, and all souls (not just rational ones) are invisible.

17 The soul's invisibility is stated once in *Epistle to Diognetus* (6.4) and once in Theophilus' *Ad Autolycum* (5).

18 Athanasius, *Quaestiones aliae* 780.17; Eusebius, *Praep. ev.* 15.9.10, and claiming that Plato does not so much differ from Moses in *Praep. ev.* 11.27.8.

19 Gregory of Nyssa, *On Song of Songs* (*Hom. 15*) 6.322.17; Ps.-Macarius *Hom.* 21.1; 25.4 (in *Sermones* 1 – 22, 24 – 27); *Hom.* 53.6 (in *Hom.* 7, collection HA), Ephrem the Syrian, *Sermo asceticus* 135.10; John Chrysostom, *In Ioannem* 59.137.60.

20 See e.g. Troels Engberg-Pedersen, "Setting the Scene: Stoicism and Platonism in the Transitional Period in Ancient Philosophy" in Tuomas Rasimus/Troels Engberg-Pedersen/Ismo Dunderberg (ed.), *Stoicism in Early Christianity* (Grand-Rapids, Mich.: BakerAcademic, 2010), 1 – 14.

formulations and concepts have been adapted because they were or were becoming relatively common? It would seem that the latter rather than the former could be the case, and other observations in this chapter will be provided in support of this view.

2. The Pneumatic Soul

Whereas the first page of *Authentikos Logos* focuses on the origin and appearance of the invisible worlds and the invisible soul's connection with them, on the next page 23 the focus shifts to the soul's earthly life. The metaphor of marriage of a man and woman who both have children from previous marriages is used as an illustration. The situation of the new family with his and her children, his more valued and privileged, hers less so, serves to symbolise the condition of a human being, composed of two unequal elements, soul and body. The soul is not just a soul, but a *pneumatic soul* (ΨΥΧΗ Μ̄ΠΝⳞ̄ΤΙΚΗ, 23:12) that after incarnation and connection to passion turns into a material soul (23:16).

When read so that the preceding page is taken into account, the pneumatic soul seems to denote that aspect of the soul that has descended to a closer proximity to the body, and is nearer to life in the material world compared with the invisible soul, yet still not quite the material soul.[21] Such a hierarchy where the pneumatic does *not* hold the most prominent position differs for instance from Valentinian thought, for Valentinians valued spirit over soul and body.[22] Yet it may not be possible to completely exclude the option that page 23 reflects or is reminiscent of Valentinian anthropological views. However, when the complete text of *Authentikos Logos* is considered, the invisible soul (22:13 and 32:27) and the rational soul (34:32) are superior compared with the pneumatic (and material) soul.

Both expressions, "pneumatic soul" and "material soul", are rather intriguing and neither is as widely attested as are the invisible soul or the rational soul. The pneumatic soul is a puzzling term. Although Π̄ΝⳞ̄ΤΙΚΗ frequently appears in the Nag Hammadi texts, the combination ΨΥΧΗ Μ̄ΠΝⳞ̄ΤΙΚΗ is not mentioned elsewhere in the collection. It is only Synesius and John Chrysostom (c. 347 – 407) who use the term ψυχὴ πνευματική.

Synesius mentions the spiritual soul once in his work *On Dreams* 7 where he explains the idea of the soul paying a penalty in the pneumatic soul that is the soul's vehicle (ὄχημα πνεῦμα), and that philosophy infers that our first lives are

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21 23:13, cf. "invisible pneumatic body" in 32:32. For material soul, see below.

22 See below. Also apostle Paul values what is of the spirit over what is of the soul (e.g. 1 Cor 2:14 – 15, also 1 Cor 15:44), and he often plays on the opposition of spirit and flesh (e.g. Rom 8:4 – 6, Gal 4:29, 6:8).

training (preparation) for our second lives. The souls' best conduct lightens them whereas the worst imparts a stain on them.[23] Synesius' view is not unintelligible when read next to *Authentikos Logos*, where the pneumatic soul is cast or put into the body where she lives in disgrace until she understands and remembers her origin, and finally chooses a conduct that enables her ascent.[24] The ideas of learning and education during the soul's earthly life are also part of the soul's story in *Authentikos Logos*. In light of these considerations the pneumatic soul could be seen to relate to the soul's pneumatic vehicle. So interprets also van den Broek who takes both the pneumatic (in his text: "spiritual") *soul* (23:12) and the soul's pneumatic (spiritual) *body* (32:32) to denote the soul's pneumatic (spiritual) vehicle.[25] It may be possible that both the spiritual soul and the spiritual body refer to the same concept, the soul's pneumatic form, but for the sake of exactness, the two terms are in this work discussed separately without identifying them (or assuming a mistake in the text).

When the pneumatic soul is read as being closer to earthly life than the invisible soul, that concept reflects Neoplatonists' theories of different (lighter and heavier) souls, or vehicles of the soul that all aimed at mitigating the stark contrast between the two extremes, body and soul. Something was needed as a go-between, wherefore during its descent the soul gains some form of being, a "vehicle" (ὄχημα) that is not yet its material body.[26] The view in *Authentikos Logos* indicates an understanding similar to these views of a soul's descent, and different kinds of souls, bodies, or "envelopes of the soul" that the soul "puts on". What should be noted are the implications of this notion for the dating of the writing.

23 τό γέ τοι πνεῦμα τοῦτο τὸ ψυχικόν, ὃ καὶ πνευματικὴν ψυχὴν προσηγόρευσαν οἱ εὐδαίμονες, καὶ θεὸς καὶ δαίμων παντοδαπὸς καὶ εἴδωλον γίνεται, καὶ τὰς ποινὰς ἐν τούτῳ τίνει ψυχή· χρησμοί τε γὰρ ὁμοφωνοῦσι περὶ αὐτοῦ, ταῖς ὄναρ φαντασίαις τὴν ἐκεῖ διεξαγωγὴν τῆς ψυχῆς προσεικάζοντες, καὶ φιλοσοφία συντίθεται παρασκευὰς εἶναι δευτέρων βίων τοὺς πρώτους, τῆς τε ἀρίστης ἕξεως ἐν ψυχαῖς ἐλαφριζούσης αὐτὸ καὶ ἐναπομοργνυμένης κηλῖδα τῆς χείρονος. Ὁλκαῖς οὖν φυσικαῖς ἢ μετέωρον αἴρεται διὰ θερμότητα καὶ ξηρότητα· Synesius, *On Dreams* (*ΠΕΡΙ ΕΝΥ-ΠΝΙΩΝ*) 7.2–3.

24 23:12–24:22; 31:24–30.

25 Van den Broek, "The Authentikos Logos", 208–211.

26 There are various interpretations of this idea of the souls' increasing materiality during its descent. John F. Finamore provides a concise introduction to Iamblichus' theory, which he considers a reaction against Porphyry. The decisive factor in his opinion is the importance given to theurgy (wherefore Plotinus does not show much interest in the idea of a soul's vehicle). John F. Finamore, *Iamblichus and the Theory of the Vehicle of the Soul* (American Classical Studies 14. Chico, Calif.: Scholars Press, 1985), 1–11. Proclus interprets *Timaeus* 41C-D) in *Tim.* 3.234.9 onwards, and reads Albinus/Alcinous' *Handbook* 25.5 as meaning the soul's "vehicle". That a vehicle is meant is not obvious from Alcinous' text and rather seems to be Proclus' view. John M. Dillon, *Alcinous*, 154–155; John M. Dillon, *The Middle Platonists. A Study of Platonism. 80 B.C. to A.D. 220* (Revised edition with a new afterword. London: Duckworth, 1996), 292; Heinrich Dörries, *Platonica Minora* (Studia et testimonia antiqua 8. München: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 1976), 428.

If Synesius and *Authentikos Logos* employ the same term, this raises certain questions, such as would Synesius have influenced *Authentikos Logos*, or did Synesius use a term originating from Porphyry or someone else,[27] in which case the link between *Authentikos Logos*, Synesius, and the pneumatic soul is somewhere else. It is probable that the exact answer will never be known. It is, however, important to consider the meaning of Synesius, even Porphyry, to the dating of *Authentikos Logos*. If the term goes back to Porphyry, that would indicate that it was perhaps known of in the latter half of the third century. If it goes to Synesius, the discussiion moves to the late fourth century. These are considerably later than the previously assumed date of *Authentikos Logos* (c. 180 – 200). This work argues for a later date, quite close to the copying of the Nag Hammadi texts and this is what the term "pneumatic soul" appears to indicate.

If Synesius' use of the "pneumatic soul" appears to come close to that in *Authentikos Logos*, the second author to use "pneumatic soul", John Chrysostom, uses it somewhat differently. Chrysostom mentions a pneumatic soul three times in his homilies on Romans, 2 Corinthians, and Ephesians. Chrysostom does not relate to the soul's pre-incarnate state or its vehicles as does Synesius. In the *Second Homily on the Romans* Chrysostom explains ἐν τῷ πνεύματί μου of Romans 1:9 and states that the right mode of Christian worship is to pray in the pneumatic soul, not through sacrifices; such prayer in the pneumatic soul is the highest form of worship and surpasses the incorrect ways of Jews (true but fleshly) and pagans (in error and fleshly, so doubly wrong).[28] There is no apparent relatedness between *Authentikos Logos* and Chrysostom, the former discussing the soul, the latter worship. Yet it is interesting to note how Chrysostom uses "pneumatic/spiritual soul" in the context of classifying worship and worshipping people. He appears to reason along the lines of Valentinians who categorised people's potential and perhaps also people themselves according to their conduct.[29] Chrysostom, like Valentinians, considers the pneumatic aspect the highest in people.

27 As suggested by van den Broek, "The Authentikos Logos", 206 – 234.
28 Οὐ γὰρ διὰ προβάτων καὶ μόσχων καὶ καπνοῦ καὶ κνίσσης ὁ τῆς ἡμετέρας λατρείας τρόπος, ἀλλὰ διὰ ψυχῆς πνευματικῆς· John Chrysostom, *In Epistulam ad Romanos*, Hom. 2, 403.23.
The two other Chrysostom passages are less relevant for discussion here. In the Homily 20 on 2 Corinthians John Chrysostom presents the spiritual soul as presenting her proper offering, which should not be sacrifices but rather all kinds of philanthropy (John Chrysostom, *In Epistulam ii ad Corinthios*, Hom. 20, 540.45), and Chrysostom is cited in a fifth century *Catena in Acta (catena Andreae) (e cod. Oxon. coll. nov. 58)*. A passing comment in Chrysostom's Homily 20 on Ephesians mentions the spiritual soul in the context of Chrysostom's advice on husbands on address and education of their wives. Εἰ γὰρ Παῦλος οὐ παρῃτήσατο εἰπεῖν, Μὴ ἀποστερεῖτε ἀλλήλους, καὶ νυμφευτρίας ἐφθέγξατο ῥήματα, μᾶλλον δὲ οὐ νυμφευτρίας, ἀλλὰ πνευματικῆς ψυχῆς· πολλῷ μᾶλλον ἡμεῖς οὐ παραιτησόμεθα εἰπεῖν. Τί τοίνυν αὐτῇ διαλέγεσθαι χρή; John Chrysostom, *In epistulam ad Ephesios*, Hom. 20, 146.23.
29 Irenaeus, *Against the Heresies* I.5.1, I.7.5; Clement, *Excerpts from Theodotus* 50 – 51; 54 – 57. Dunderberg does not take Irenaeus' claims of Valentinian arrogance and rigidity of classification at face value but argues that the classification would serve the purpose of education and motivation to improvement. Dunderberg, *Beyond Gnosticism*, 136 – 140, 145 – 146 and Ismo

3. The Material Soul

On the page 23 *Authentikos Logos* applies another attribute to the soul, namely, the material soul: when the pneumatic soul is cast into a body, it becomes a sibling to desire (ἐπιθυμία), hatred and envy, and a material soul (ΨΥΧΗ Ñ2ΥλΙΚΗ, 23:12 – 17). This page discusses the soul's incarnation into and relation with the body, and puts much of the focus on the yoking together of two opposites; the term "material soul" suggests the soul's proclivity to passions. The soul is attached to passions, and as a consequence she turns into a material soul. What makes this attribute particularly intriguing is that it is attested in two other Nag Hammadi texts: once in the *Apocryphon of John* (*Ap. John* 18) and once in the *Trimorphic Protennoia* (*Trim. Prot.* 35). In addition to these, it is mentioned in *Excerpts from Theodotus* 50.

The Nag Hammadi codices II and IV contain a longer version of the *Apocryphon of John* that includes a lengthy interpolation in the context of the creation of Adam's soul-body (ΨΥΧΙΚΟΝ ÑCШMλ).[30] The codex II text mentions a demon named Anaro who is the head of the material soul (2ΥλΙΚΗ ÑΨΥΧΗ).[31] The setting of this section is a detailed description of how different parts and elements of the soul-body of Adam, the first human being, were created: first, seven powers create seven layers to Adam's soul-body: bone-soul, sinew-soul, flesh-soul, marrow-soul, blood-soul, skin-soul and hair-soul.[32] After this, these seven substances are given to a multitude of angels who start creating harmonies of different parts of the body. Seven powers control these angels and the body parts, and five the senses, perception, imagination, assent and impulse.[33] Heat, cold, wetness, and dryness are the source of these demons, and their mother is matter. Further names of demons (who belong to different passions) are listed, and from the passions come demons, and further passions.[34] These passions resemble virtues and vices, and the insight into their true nature is Anaro, the head of

Dunderberg, "Valentinian Theories on Classes of Humankind" in Christoph Markschies/Johannes van Oort (ed.). *Zugänge zur Gnosis. Akten zur Tagung der Patristischen Arbeitsgemeinschaft vom 02.–05.01.2011 in Berlin-Spandau* (Leuven: Peeters, 2013), 113 – 128.

30 *Ap. John* II 19:5 – 6, 19:12.

31 *Ap. John* II 18:19 – 34. There are no parallels for the "material soul" in codices III and IV or the BG. The Codex II version of the *Apocryphon of John* lists in a detailed manner components of human being (not in other versions). Furthermore, in the three other manuscripts no difference is made between the soul-body and the material body. Simply the body is spoken of. Note also that the Coptic term used is not exactly the same in *Authentikos Logos* and the *Apocryphon of John*.

32 *Ap. John* II 15:11 – 23, and the parallels in the other three versions.

33 *Ap. John* II 15:23 – 18:2 par IV 24:22 – 29:5, but the Codex IV version is fragmentary in some parts. I follow Karen King in reading ΧШΝϤ in 15:27 as "harmony". King, *The Secret Revelation*, 53.

34 *Ap. John* II 18:2 – 32.

the material soul, which dwells with the seven senses.[35] The section closes with angels and demons labouring and completing their work, the result of which is Adam's soul-body, inactive and motionless.[36]

With this description the *Apocryphon of John II* provides a systematic description of the origin of humans that connects with several common notions of the late ancient world, both Alexandrian exegesis, Plato's creation myth in *Timaeus*, and planetary melothesia. Lower creators are mentioned in Plato's *Timaeus* (see *Tim.* 42D–43A, 44D, 69C–76E), whereas the concept of melothesia where parts of the human body have planetary counterparts has connections with ancient medicine and astrology, and appears for example in Manichean texts.[37] That the soul is imagined as having a body is a common notion that has its roots in Stoic monism.[38] The material soul in the *Apocryphon of John II* is this soul-body of the human being: it is not the material heavy body but the bodily form of the soul. In both the *Apocryphon of John* and *Authentikos Logos* the material soul is the lowest, incarnate, and lusting soul.[39]

Whereas the *Apocryphon of John II* provides a meticulous description connected with astrological and medical practices, inserted in the creation narrative, *Authentikos Logos* merely mentions the pneumatic soul's incarnation without dwelling on particularities. Even the obvious point of connection between these two texts, their association of bodily life with passions, reveals the same difference: the *Apocryphon of John* is systematic in its classification of the passions whereas *Authentikos Logos* is less so.[40] If many of these differences may be explained by the different literary approaches of the two writings, more consequential is the overall anthropology of the two texts. In *Authentikos Logos* the highest aspects of the human being are the rational and the invisible souls, whereas the pneumatic soul links the invisible and the material souls. In the *Apocryphon of John* the composite human being, soul-body of Adam, has both material and soul-elements to it and is motionless until it receives the breath/spirit (πνεῦμα) that is the power of the mother (Wisdom). Only that makes the human being alive, strong, and luminous.[41] The πνεῦμα, or pneumatic soul, does not hold the same importance in *Authentikos Logos* as it does in the *Apocryphon of John*.

35 *Ap. John* II 18:33 – 19:1.

36 *Ap. John* II 19:2 – 14.

37 Roelof van den Broek discusses Iranian and Manichean sources in Roelof van den Broek, "The Creation of Adam's Psychic Body in the Apocryphon of John" in Roelof van den Broek, *Studies in Gnosticism and Alexandrian Christianity* (NHMS 39; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1996), 67 – 85. King, *The Secret Revelation*, 110 – 113; Joachim Friedrich Quack, "Dekane und Gliedervergottung: Altägyptische Tradition im Apocryphon Johannis" in *JAC* 38 (1995), 97 – 122.

38 King, *The Secret Revelation*, 115 – 116.

39 Karen King points to the connection to senses and passions, and to the material and soul/psychic substances of the body. King, *The Secret Revelation*, 115.

40 See V.2.

41 *Ap. John* II 19:10 – 33.

Like the *Apocryphon of John*, the *Trimorphic Protennoia* is usually considered a representative of Sethian literature.[42] It mentions the material soul (ΨΥΧΗ . . . Ṇ2ῩΛΙΚΗ) in a hymnic passage on the first page, *Trimorphic Protennoia* 35:18, that states the Protennoia's omnipresence.[43] Here the material soul refers to human beings as incarnate souls living in Tartarus. If "Tartarus" is interpreted as "earth", this would suggest that "material soul" may, in some occasions, simply refer to incarnate souls, i.e. living people.

The third text aside from *Authentikos Logos* where a material soul is mentioned is Clement of Alexandria's *Excerpts from Theodotus*. As in the *Apocryphon of John*, the focus is on the Genesis exegesis. In the *Excerpts from Theodotus* 50 Clement explains "according to the image" and "according to the likeness", in Genesis 1:26 as the dual nature of the soul or human being.[44] The human being "according to the image" is the earthlike and the material soul (ψυχὴν γεώδη καὶ ὑλικήν), made of multi-form and diverse matter, irrational, and similar to animals.[45] Instead, the human being "according to the likeness" is like the Creator-God himself, and two aspects of this human being are further defined: in so far as it is invisible and bodiless, its essence is called the "breath of life" (πνοὴν ζωῆς), but what was given form is the "living soul" (ψυχὴ ζῶσα).[46] These souls are like layers upon one another, not parts but such that form a unity. Also, the material soul serves as a body for the divine soul (τὴν ὑλικὴν ψυχὴν σῶμα οὖσαν τῆς θείας ψυχῆς).[47]

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42 What texts scholars count as belonging into the Sethian corpus vary. Hans-Martin Schenke, "The Phenomenon and Significance of Gnostic Sethianism" in Bentley Layton (ed.), *The Rediscovery of Gnosticism. Proceedings of the Conference at Yale, March 1978, vol. 2: Sethian Gnosticism* (SHR 41. Leiden: Brill, 1981), 588 – 616 subscribes to the widest selection, the *Trimorphic Protennoia* included. He is followed by John D. Turner, "Sethian Gnosticism: A Literary History" in C.W. Hedrick/R. Hodgson (ed.), *Nag Hammadi, Gnosticism, and Early Christianity* (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1986), 55 – 86, on p. 56. Logan treats parts of the *Apocryphon of John* as Sethian, and (the long and short resensions of) the *Apocryphon of John* a third-century Sethianisation of earlier materials. Logan, *The Gnostic Truth*, 16 – 17, 20 – 21. Rasimus has brought clarity and subtlety to this wide approach by distinguishing between Barbeloite and Ophite traditions that became Sethianised, Rasimus, *Paradise Reconsidered*, 193 – 194, 198 – 202. In Rasimus' model, the *Trimorphic Protennoia* represents Sethianised Barbeloite mythology, Rasimus, *Paradise Reconsidered*, 31, 34, diagram on p. 62.

43 *Trim. Prot.* 35:12 – 18.

44 *Excerpts from Theodotus* 42 – 65 do not derive from Theodotus, but from another Valentinian source. Robert Pierre Casey, *The Excerpta ex Theodotou of Clement of Alexandria. Edited with Translation, Introduction and Notes* (London: Christophers, 1934), 7 – 8.

45 «Λαβὼν χοῦν ἀπὸ τῆς γῆς», οὐ τῆς ξηρᾶς, ἀλλὰ τῆς πολυμεροῦς καὶ ποικίλης ὕλης μέρος, ψυχὴν γεώδη καὶ ὑλικὴν ἐτεκτήνατο ἄλογον καὶ τῆς τῶν θηρίων ὁμοούσιον· οὗτος «κατ᾽ εἰκόνα» ἄνθρωπος (Clement, *Excerpts from Theodotus* 50.1).

46 Ὁ δὲ «καθ᾽ ὁμοίωσιν», τὴν αὐτοῦ τοῦ Δημιουργοῦ ἐκεῖνός ἐστιν, ὃν εἰς τοῦτον «ἐνεφύσησέν» τε καὶ ἐνέσπειρεν, ὁμοούσιόν τι αὐτῷ δι᾽ ἀγγέλων ἐνθείς· Καθὸ μὲν ἀόρατός ἐστι καὶ ἀσώματος, τὴν οὐσίαν αὐτοῦ «πνοὴν ζωῆς» προσεῖπεν· μορφωθὲν δέ «ψυχὴ ζῶσα» ἐγένετο... (Clement, *Excerpts from Theodotus* 50.2 – 3).

47 Clement, *Excerpts from Theodotus* 51.1 – 2.

Authentikos Logos is rather different from Clement's presentation of this exegesis, not only in style and perspective, but also in its context and terminology. Some similarities may be pointed out. In both texts – as in the *Apocryphon of John* – the "material soul" appears in discussion of anthropology, the human soul and its association with the body. Yet *Authentikos Logos* goes over the topic of the soul's descent and incarnation rather briefly and merely notes the change occurring to the soul: the focus is on the journey of the soul from its descent to its ascent. *Excerpts from Theodotus* and the *Apocryphon of John* instead re-interpret the Genesis account in detail. The focus is on different aspects of human beings and how they all form a unity, but *Authentikos Logos* rather discusses the change that happens to the soul when it is associated with passions. It keeps its focus on ethical aspects and struggle caused by the passions.[48] In the *Excerpts from Theodotus* this concern is expressed after the creation discussion.[49]

What emerges as similar trait between the exegesis in the *Excerpts from Theodotus* and *Authentikos Logos*, despite terminological differences, is the view of the soul's different aspects. The soul is invisible and bodiless when closest to the invisible worlds: the "invisible soul" in *Authentikos Logos*, the "breath of life", or the "divine soul" in *Excerpts from Theodotus*. *Authentikos Logos* calls the soul that is in close proximity to being incarnated – the soul in between the two ends of invisibility and materiality – the pneumatic soul. *Excerpts from Theodotus* are not quite that obvious, but it appears possible to read the "living soul" that is "given form" in the same vein as a pneumatic soul close to incarnation. For both texts the material soul is the incarnate soul: sibling to lust, envy and hatred in *Authentikos Logos*, irrational and like animals in *Excerpts from Theodotus*.

The question is not simply whether or how the texts discussed here are similar or different, but what the similarities and differences may indicate. No literary connection is easily traced between *Authentikos Logos* and the *Apocryphon of John*, or *Authentikos Logos* and the *Trimorphic Protennoia*. These three texts were found in the same place, although originally bound separately (Codex VI and the leaves containing the *Trimorphic Protennoia* had been put together in antiquity). Theodotus' excerpts and the added material, to which the discussed passages belong, were gathered by Clement of Alexandria.[50] These texts share similar themes (soul, anthropology), geographical location (Roman/late ancient Egypt), and some shared background of knowledge of the scriptures and their interpretation, as well as knowledge of Platonic philosophy. It is more plausible to assume that *Authentikos Logos* made use of familiar literary topics and texts in the same way that the gospels or Pauline and other epistles are alluded to, rather than that it should be

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48 Understandably thus read also by Tite, *Valentinian Ethics*, 173.
49 Clement, *Excerpts from Theodotus* 51.3 ff.
50 Casey, *The Excerpta ex Theodotou*, 5 – 15.

considered a Sethian or a Valentinian writing. The relationship of *Authentikos Logos* to Sethian and Valentinian texts requires further discussion, and the topic will be approached again in Chapter V.

4. The Rational Soul

The invisible soul escapes the slave traders and continues its ascent on page 32, but it is the *rational soul* (ΨΥΧΗ ⲚⲖⲞⲅⲒⲔⲎ), on the final page of *Authentikos Logos* that truly reaches its ultimate goal (34:32 – 35:18). The hymn on the final page describes how the rational soul arrives at its destination after its struggles during life on earth. "The rational soul" is again a rare expression amongst the Nag Hammadi texts: it only appears twice, both times in Codex VI, in *Authentikos Logos* 35:1 and *Asclepius* 78:42.[51] Otherwise it is not a particularly rare term, and is in fact widely used in works of Philo, several philosophical authors and early Christian writers. Clement and Origen employ the term recurrently, and it is they who shed light on its use in *Authentikos Logos*. It is also mentioned once in *Excerpts from Theodotus* (53:5).

The way Clement and Origen use the term "rational soul" can be traced back to Philo primarily, and it is the Alexandrian exegetical heritage that is meaningful for understanding the use of the "rational soul" in *Authentikos Logos*. Although Platonists valued reason as the highest aspect of the soul, "rational soul" does not derive from Plato, and does not often appear in non-Jewish or non-Christian Platonists' texts.[52] However, Stoics like Epictetus and Marcus Aurelius knew it,[53] and "rational soul" appears several times in the works of Aristotle's commentator Alexander of Aphrodisias (c. 210).[54]

Philo discusses the rational soul (ἡ λογικὴ ψυχή) on numerous occasions; in his usage the rational soul generally refers to the rational capacity of human beings that enables them to lead a virtuous life.[55] This ethical capacity requires

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51 The *Teach. Silv.* 108:17 refers to a rational person (ⲠⲖⲞⲅⲒⲔⲞⳞ ⲠⲢⲰⲘⲈ). In *Asclepius* 78:42 the divine and the rational souls are mentioned in a description of demons that will punish wicked souls; they are said to be "not from a divine soul, nor from a rational soul, but from the terrible evil". This is the end of the *Asclepius* fragment in Codex VI, and the end of the entire codex.

52 It is only occasionally that the rational soul is mentioned in works of such Middle Platonists as Plutarch, Alcinous, and Numenius: Plutarch, *Fragment* 216c; Alcinous mentions the ψυχή λογική in *The Handbook* 2.2; and Numenius, *Fragment* 46a.

53 Epictetus, *Diss.* 2.26; Marcus Aurelius, *Meditations*, 6.14, 11.1 and 11.3.

54 Alexander of Aphrodisias, *Commentary on Aristotle's Metaphysics*, 678.4; 724.34; *De anima*, 74.8 – 9; 81.8; 94.3; *De anima II (Mantissa)*, 155.15 – 18; 172.21.

55 For instance, the body of the first human being was prepared as a house or a temple to the rational soul, *On Creation*, 137. Living beings have different modes of being, or consciousness, such as habits, nature, soul, and the rational soul, *On the Unchangeableness* 35. The rational soul is an image of the divine and invisible being, *Noah's work* 18.

practice: for example in *Noah's Work* 36–37 Philo provides an allegorical explanation on the Garden of Eden and says that various trees of paradise cannot mean trees growing out of dry earth, but must have been plants of the rational soul that has a road leading to virtue, with life and immortality at its end. Another road leads to vice, with flight from life and immortality, and death at its end. In *On Husbandry* 56 Philo portrays Joseph as an example of a person who nourishes only his irrational nature, and moreover attempts to persuade lovers of virtue to his side, thus causing them to have no time for the pursuits of rational soul.

These views are not far from how the rational soul attains its goal in *Authentikos Logos:* the rational soul is connected with the capability to live an ethical life and this is the quality that can perfect human life. This potentiality is bound to choice: one may or may not reach virtue and immortality, and a failure can lead to vice and death. Although 34:32–35:18 celebrates the rational soul's final victory, it is emphatic that the soul has contended and gone through much hardship to reach this destination. Earlier, in 24:10–13, it is explicitly stated that death and life are set in front of everyone, and it is from these two that everyone must choose. This is reminiscent of Deuteronomium 30:15 and 19,[56] as is Philo in *Noah's Work* 37.[57] As will be seen, also Clement and Origen point to Deuteronomium 30.[58] The connection between Philo and *Authentikos Logos* appears on a thematic level and does not necessitate a direct dependency, but it suggests that *Authentikos Logos* does not stand far from the intellectual environment where Philo's heritage, teaching on the rational soul as human capacity for ethical conduct and choice between the two ways, of life and of death, was known and appreciated. This environment would be the Alexandrian Christian tradition, but "Alexandrian" understood widely, not as geographically limited to Alexandria, but to those places where Alexandrian authors were read and Christian education pursued.[59]

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56 See also Jer 21:8.

57 Non-Jewish and non-Christian examples must be omitted from discussion within this work.

58 In the Christian context, the two ways' maxim is employed also in *Didache* 1:1, which quotes the two ways' gnome before going into a more detailed list of advice and exhortation towards godly life. Ignatius, *Magn.* 5, refers to choosing between life and death, and *Barnabas* 18 refers to the two ways, one of light, the other, of darkness. Philip Tite has argued that the two-way schema is used in Valentinian texts that contain paraenetic material. However, the Valentinian two-ways texts that Tite discusses do not come very close to *Authentikos Logos* and do not, in fact, mention the two ways. They are *Interp. Knowl.* 1:31–2:28 (refers to the world as the place of death); *2 Apoc. Jas.* 54:24–55:14 (mentions entering and walking the way that is before the good door, but no other option is directly suggested); and *2 Apoc. Jas.* 59:1–11 (calls for renouncing the difficult way and to "walk in accordance with him who desires [that] you become free men"). As Tite notes, *Authentikos Logos* differs from these Valentinian examples, and it is the only one that connects the two ways directly with an ethical list. Tite, *Valentinian Ethics,* 175–184.

59 "Alexandria" is not an ideal term, for these views were not restricted geographically to Alexandria *ad Aegyptum,* but known in the wider Egyptian context. On the other hand, calling these views or characteristics "Egyptian" would be misleading. The Greek-speaking theological

In the following, some other occurrences of "the rational soul" in the works of several Christian authors will be discussed in order to see how they may (or may not) relate to how the rational soul is presented in *Authentikos Logos*. The argument here is that the Alexandrian discussions of the rational soul form the backdrop against which its use is best approached. Particularly fascinating is Origen's notion of the rational soul's progress that may include lapses before its final restoration, as this concurs with the overall story of the soul in *Authentikos Logos*. Yet, as Clement reveals in *Strom.* 2.20, these views are not peculiar only to Philo, Clement, and Origen. Also Basilides' followers and his son Isidore discussed the rational soul and its ethical standing, and as said, the rational soul is once mentioned by Clement of Alexandria in his *Excerpts from Theodotus* 53:5.

The rational soul is mentioned on various instances in the works of Clement of Alexandria. In *Excerpts from Theodotus* 53:5 Clement mentions a rational and heavenly soul (ἡ λογικὴ καὶ οὐρανία ψυχή) that is explained as the "spiritual seed" in people, a bone full of spiritual marrow.[60] This can be read as indicating a potential for good in people, but one that indicates standing at crossroads, inbetween good and bad, as the following discussion indicates.[61] In *Excerpts from Theodotus* 54:1–2, Adam's three sons are interpreted as representatives of three natures. The first one, Cain, is irrational (ἄλογος), the second, Abel, rational and just (λογικὴ καὶ ἡ δικαία), whereas the third, Seth, is pneumatic (spiritual) (πνευματική).[62] This hierarchy is decidedly different from *Authentikos Logos:* the pneumatic is valued over the rational, and the rational soul or nature is placed in the middle, below the pneumatic.[63] In *Authentikos Logos* it is the pneumatic (spiritual) soul that incarnates whereas the rational soul ascends.

Although the relationship of *Authentikos Logos* to the Valentinian views above is not direct, there are some connecting points, but rather than assuming that it represents the same school of thought, again similar motifs

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tradition is influential here, even if one is thinking of ■ Coptic text or (bilingual) Coptic background. See Chapter II above.

60 Πρῶτον οὖν σπέρμα πνευματικὸν τὸ ἐν τῷ Ἀδὰμ προέβαλεν ἡ Σοφία, ἵνα ᾖ τὸ ὀστοῦν, ἡ λογικὴ καὶ οὐρανία ψυχή, μὴ κενή, ἀλλὰ μυελοῦ γέμουσα πνευματικοῦ. Clement, *Excerpts from Theodotus* 53:5. This section supposedly stems from a Valentinian source, but not from Theodotus. The same source was used by Irenaeus (Casey, *The Excerpta ex Theodotou*, 7–8).

61 Valentinian ethical theories and the view that the human soul may be perceived as being either bi- or tri-partite provided different but not necessarily mutually exclusive approaches to the human psyche: the point of the bi-partite division may have been on direct exhortation, whereas the tripartite view may also be employed in the construction of identity. Dunderberg, "Valentinian Theories", 113–128.

62 Note that these are natures, not souls: Ἀπὸ δὲ τοῦ Ἀδὰμ τρεῖς φύσεις γεννῶνται· πρώτη μὲν ἡ ἄλογος, ἧς ἦν Κάϊν· δευτέρα δὲ ἡ λογικὴ καὶ ἡ δικαία, ἧς ἦν Ἄβελ· τρίτη δὲ ἡ πνευματική, ἧς ἦν Σήθ. Καὶ ὁ μὲν χοϊκός ἐστι «κατ' εἰκόνα»· ὁ δὲ ψυχικὸς «καθ' ὁμοίωσιν» Θεοῦ· ὁ δὲ πνευματικὸς κατ' ἰδίαν· Clement, *Excerpts from Theodotus* 54.1–2.

63 Van den Broek, "The Authentikos Logos", 212.

must be allowed to be employed in several works, perhaps at different eras in the same environment. Christian tradition in general explains many of the similarities. If, as has been suggested, *Authentikos Logos* indicates a third- or fourth-century provenance, Valentinian authors discussed here would be, like Clement who reports their views, predecessors to *Authentikos Logos*. In the works of Philo, as well as those of Clement and Origen, the rational soul denotes the moral part of a human being, or the human ability to lead a moral life. This, the Alexandrian tradition where the rational soul is the human capability for moral good, is the connecting point between *Excerpts from Theodotus* and *Authentikos Logos*. Different writers took different stances to the thematic of free will, the question of what is the decisive aspect of the soul, and how closely it is associated with other faculties. In the *Stromata* Clement presents two positions.

Clement discusses the perseverance and endurance that a true Gnostic must exercise in his combat against passions, and emphasises that the rational power (ἡ λογικὴ δύναμις), peculiar to human souls, should not have such impulses as irrational animals have, but instead be able to discriminate phantasies and not be carried away by them.[64] He advocates the rational power and ability to judge things rationally as the hallmark of human beings. Clement goes on to claim that "those around Basilides" (οἱ δ' ἀμφὶ τὸν Βασιλείδην) consider passions appendages that have been attached to the rational soul through some primal disturbance and confusion, and say that on these (i.e. passions) others grow on like wolves, apes, and such, that are in fact counterfeit and heterogenous natures of spirits. Their characteristics appear around the soul and cause the desires of the soul to be like those of animals.[65]

The problem for Clement is that if passions are claimed to be appendages of the rational soul, such a view in his opinion diminishes the soul's capability to master itself, which lowers the human to the level of irrational animals. Passions should not affect the rational and highest part of the soul: they may well affect lower parts of the soul, but the rational part must be kept apart from them and be the part that can gain control over passions when it so wills. In order to refute Basilides,[66] Clement marshals evidence from Basilides' son

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64 *Strom.* 2.20.112–114. ἡ λογικὴ δὲ δύναμις, ἰδία οὖσα τῆς ἀνθρωπείας ψυχῆς, οὐχ ὡσαύτως τοῖς ἀλόγοις ζῴοις ὁρμᾶν ὀφείλει, ἀλλὰ καὶ διακρίνειν τὰς φαντασίας καὶ μὴ συναποφέρεσθαι αὐταῖς. *Strom.* 2.20.111.

65 Οἱ δ' ἀμφὶ τὸν Βασιλείδην προσαρτήματα τὰ πάθη καλεῖν εἰώθασι, πνεύματά <τέ> τινα ταῦτα κατ' οὐσίαν ὑπάρχειν προσηρτημένα τῇ λογικῇ ψυχῇ κατά τινα τάραχον καὶ σύγχυσιν ἀρχικὴν ἄλλας τε αὖ πνευμάτων νόθους καὶ ἑτερογενεῖς φύσεις προσεπιφύεσθαι ταύτας οἷον λύκου, πιθήκου, λέοντος, τράγου, ὧν τὰ ἰδιώματα περὶ τὴν ψυχὴν φανταζόμενα τὰς ἐπιθυμίας τῆς ψυχῆς τοῖς ζῴοις ἐμφερῶς ἐξομοιοῦν λέγουσιν· ὧν γὰρ ἰδιώματα φέρουσι, τούτων τὰ ἔργα μιμοῦνται, καὶ οὐ μόνον ταῖς ὁρμαῖς καὶ φαντασίαις τῶν ἀλόγων ζῴων προσοικειοῦνται, ... Clement of Alexandria, *Strom.* 2.20.112.

66 Basilides was a Christian teacher in Alexandria during the first half of the second century according to Clement, *Strom.* 7.106.4–107.1. Hippolytus' says in *Refutation of All Heresies* 7.27.13 that Basilides studied in Egypt, i.e. outside Alexandria, which Pearson doubts, and he

Isidore and his criticism of those who claim one, undivided soul: were the soul one and undivided, the rational part would be lowered to the level of the desiring part, which in turn would enable morally inferior persons to claim not having been in control of themselves when committing some immoral action. Isidore emphasises that people must strengthen their rational faculty (λογιστικόν) and show themselves to be in command of their weaker parts.[67]

Whether or not Clement is treating Basilides' followers and Isidore correctly, it is clear that the difference of opinion revolves around the question of free will. Clement claims that Basilides' followers portray souls as victims to passions, whereas Clement and Isidore emphasise free will and the rational soul's superiority and mastery of passions. According to Clement, Basilides' followers consider passions to have some power over the highest part of the soul, which in effect would lessen the soul's capability to rule them. John Dillon has noted that it was Platonists who emphasised free will over Stoic determinism.[68] Even if or when one allows for shades between these two opposites, it is obvious that *Authentikos Logos* advocates a view that a soul can decide on the course it wants to embark.

This means that *Authentikos Logos* advocates a stance that agrees with Clement and Isidore. When it calls passions step-siblings of the soul (23:7 – 29) or house-born slaves who fight the soul (28:31 – 29:3), there is something similar to the view of passions being likened to animal-shaped appendages of the rational soul, but whether the illustrations used are fierce animals, lowly step-siblings or slave children, the crucial difference between Basilides' followers and *Authentikos Logos* is that the latter does not connect passions with the rational but the pneumatic soul. The rational soul is not mentioned in *Authentikos Logos* before the ascended soul attains her goal, so nothing indicates that the rational soul is directly involved with passions. In *Authentikos Logos* rationality is that capacity of the soul that gains, or has gained, mastery of passions and vice, so that ascent above this world is possible. The rational soul is that moral quality in human beings that leads them to salvation – as it is in Alexandrian traditions.

Two more examples from Clement's works illustrate aspects he attaches to the rational soul and how he employs it. The rational soul (again) is not quite a

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also rejects as unlikely Epiphanius' report in *Panarion* 24 that Basilides studied and taught in the chora (*Panarion* 24.1.4). Basilides' thought was influenced by Platonic and Stoic teaching. Birger A. Pearson, "Basilides the Gnostic" in Marjanen/Luomanen (ed.), *A Companion to Second-Century Christian "Heretics"*, 1 – 31. Winrich Alfried Löhr has pointed out that Basilides was no dogmatic Platonist but embraced Platonic tradition in an eclectic manner. Löhr emphasises Basilides as a Christian teacher and spiritual counsellor ("Basilides und Isidore waren keine Schulphilosophen sondern christliche, theologische Lehrer und Seelsorger"). Winrich Alfried Löhr, *Basilides und seine Schule. Eine Studie zur Theologie- und Kirchengeschichte des zweiten Jahrhunderts* (WUNT 83; Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1996), 327.

67 Clement of Alexandria, *Strom.* 2.20.113 – 114.
68 Dillon, *The Middle Platonists*, 166.

philosophical concept, but more so an ethical term that has a connection with the scriptures.

In *Stromata* 5.14.94 Clement compares Greek and Jewish views, or, as he puts it, he describes Greek plagiarism from the Hebrew scriptures.[69] Clement describes creation and says that the body that Plato calls the "earthly dwelling" is said by Moses to be formed of earth, and that God from above breathed the rational soul into its face, and that is where the ruling faculty (ἡγεμονικόν) is situated.[70] Both the rational soul and the ruling faculty denote the more god-like part in humans. The way Clement refers to Moses and Plato suggests that the rational soul can be approached as a term that connects with the interpretation of the scriptures, whereas the ruling faculty is its philosophical counterpart.[71]

In *Stromata* 6.6 Clement discusses Christ's descent to Hades and considers it would be unjust if only those who lived after the arrival of Christ would be given the benefit of divine justice: in Clement's view repentance was given to all rational souls. Therefore God who is just allowed an opportunity of repentance for the souls of those Jews and pagans in Hades who had lived prior to Christ's arrival.[72] Clement does not suggest that *all* souls in Hades would have been recipients of Christ's preaching, but it is only the souls of those righteous Greeks and Jews who lived according to the philosophy or the law, but departed from life without repenting and therefore without attaining perfection.[73] Vice versa, it is the rational souls who may reach perfection. This puts emphasis on ethics and an ethical way of life. For Clement, the rational soul is the highest part of the soul that separates humans from irrational

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69 This accusation is relatively common in early Christian writers of the second and third centuries. Clement's views on the Greek "theft" have been considered the most profound version on the theme. Winrich Löhr, "The Theft of the Greeks. Christian Self Definition in the Age of the Schools" in *Revue d'histoire ecclésiastique* 95 (2000), 403–426.

70 Cf. Gen 2:7. Plato does not in fact mention any earthly dwelling. The "ruling part" is Stoic terminology.

71 εἰκότως ἄρα ἐκ γῆς μὲν τὸ σῶμα διαπλάττεσθαι λέγει ὁ Μωυσῆς, ὃ γήινόν φησιν ὁ Πλάτων σκῆνος, ψυχὴν δὲ τὴν λογικὴν ἄνωθεν ἐμπνευσθῆναι ὑπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ εἰς πρόσωπον. ἐνταῦθα γὰρ τὸ ἡγεμονικὸν ἱδρῦσθαι λέγουσι, τὴν διὰ τῶν αἰσθητηρίων ἐπείσοδον τῆς ψυχῆς ἐπὶ τοῦ πρωτοπλάστου [εἴσοδον] ἑρμηνεύοντες, διὸ καὶ «κατ' εἰκόνα καὶ ὁμοίωσιν τὸν ἄνθρωπον» γεγονέναι. Clement, *Strom.* 5.14.94.

72 πάσαις δ' ἄνωθεν ταῖς ψυχαῖς εἴρηται ταῖς λογικαῖς· «ὅσα ἐν ἀγνοίᾳ τις ὑμῶν ἐποίησεν μὴ εἰδὼς σαφῶς τὸν θεόν, ἐὰν ἐπιγνοὺς μετανοήσῃ, πάντα αὐτῷ ἀφεθήσεται τὰ ἁμαρτήματα.» «ἰδοὺ γάρ·» φησί, «τέθεικα πρὸ προσώπου ὑμῶν τὸν θάνατον καὶ τὴν ζωήν, ἐκλέξασθαι τὴν ζωήν» (*Strom.* 6.6.48).

73 ἐπεὶ τίς ἂν εὖ φρονῶν ἐν μιᾷ καταδίκῃ καὶ τὰς τῶν δικαίων καὶ τὰς τῶν ἁμαρτωλῶν ὑπολάβοι εἶναι ψυχάς, ἀδικίαν τῆς προνοίας καταχέων; and some lines later: ἵν' ὃ μὲν τοὺς ἐξ Ἑβραίων, οἳ δὲ τὰ ἔθνη εἰς ἐπιστροφὴν ἀγάγωσι, τουτέστιν τοὺς ἐν δικαιοσύνῃ τῇ κατὰ νόμον καὶ κατὰ φιλοσοφίαν βεβιωκότας μέν, οὐ τελείως δέ, ἀλλ' ἁμαρτητικῶς διαπεραναμένους τὸν βίον· (*Strom.* 6.6.45). See also *Strom.* 6.6.68 where Clement says that knowledge is characteristic to the rational soul as it practises it so to be be entitled to immortality through knowledge. As in *Authentikos Logos*, knowledge and way of life/ascesis are emphasised.

animals and makes them capable of moral life, with an emphasis on freedom of will and moral actions.

As in Philo, the rational soul is not simply the highest or the ruling part of the soul,[74] but the moral part of a human being, and Clement, just like Philo and *Authentikos Logos*, alludes to Deuteronomium 30:15, 19 when he reminds his audience of the need of choosing one of the two ways, life or death (*Strom.* 6.6.48.6). When Clement's application of the rational soul is compared with *Authentikos Logos*, it not only emerges that they share the moral aspect that is connected with that which is the highest in human beings. There are also differences. Clement is concerned with the creation of the first human being (not unlike Valentinians), and for him the question of the salvation of Jews and pagans is important. *Authentikos Logos* does not comment on Jews at all, and its "worse than pagans" comparisons in *Authentikos Logos* 33:4–34:32 portrays pagans as relatively distant: the focus is rather on Christians and their way of life.[75]

Origen, like Philo and Clement, employs ψυχή λογική on numerous occasions. In *Contra Celsum* 4.18.30 Origen says that the essence of a soul does not change as it enters a body; the discussion concerns Christ but Origen says the same applies to any rational soul. Against Stoics Origen argues in *Contra Celsum* 6.71 that the rational soul is superior to all corporeal natures, of invisible essence and incorporeal (ἀσώματον).[76]

Although these passages attest Origen's dualistic, Platonic mindset, Origen, too, favours the term "rational soul" in theological contexts and in this he appears to follow in Philo's and Clement's footsteps. For instance, in *Contra Celsum* 3.69.3 the question is about free will and Origen argues against Celsus' claim that it is extremely hard to change one's nature. Origen says that "we" know that there is only one nature in all rational souls, and no one has been created evil, although many have become evil through upbringing, perversion and instruction, so much so that evil has become natural in them. Origen is certain that it not only is not impossible to change their natures, but it is not very hard to do so.[77] Elsewhere, too, he indicates that the rational soul is a soul

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74 Clement does mention the ἡγεμονικόν at the beginning of the *Strom.* 6.6.44.

75 Ulla Tervahauta, "Ignorant people, the fool and pagans", 195–216.

76 κατὰ δὲ ἡμᾶς καὶ τὴν λογικὴν ψυχὴν πειρωμένους ἀποδεικνύναι κρείττονα πάσης σωματικῆς φύσεως καὶ οὐσίαν ἀόρατον καὶ ἀσώματον οὐκ ἂν σῶμα εἴη ὁ θεὸς λόγος, Origen, *Contra Celsum* 6.71.

77 Καὶ ὁ μὲν Κέλσος φησὶ τὰ ἀκόλουθα ἑαυτῷ ἐπιφέρων ὅτι φύσιν ἀμεῖψαι τελέως παγχάλεπον. Ἡμεῖς δέ, μίαν φύσιν ἐπιστάμενοι πάσης λογικῆς ψυχῆς καὶ μηδεμίαν φάσκοντες πονηρὰν ὑπὸ τοῦ κτίσαντος τὰ ὅλα δεδημιουργῆσθαι, γεγονέναι <δὲ>πολλοὺς κακοὺς παρὰ τὰς ἀνατροφὰς καὶ τὰς διαστροφὰς καὶ τὰς περιηχήσεις, ὥστε καὶ φυσιωθῆναι ἔν τισι τὴν κακίαν, πειθόμεθα ὅτι τῷ θείῳ λόγῳ ἀμεῖψαι κακίαν φυσιώσασάν ἐστιν οὐ μόνον οὐκ ἀδύνατον ἀλλὰ καὶ οὐ πάνυ χαλεπόν, ἐὰν μόνον παραδέξηταί τις ὅτι πιστεύειν δεῖ ἑαυτὸν τῷ ἐπὶ πᾶσι θεῷ καὶ πάντα πράττειν κατ' ἀναφορὰν τοῦ ἀρέσκειν ἐκείνῳ· Origen, *Contra Celsum* 3.69, lines 1–11.

who is free to choose good.[78] Virtue preserves the "image of God" in rational souls.[79]

Origen's views of the rational soul's slow healing process, or restoration, are similar to the idea of the soul's slow progress towards her goal in *Authentikos Logos*. In *Authentikos Logos* the soul's descent is followed by a life where it "pursues many desires" and appears to attempt ascent on several occasions before the final success.[80] Healing is an important motif in several passages where the soul receives or takes medicine, or is ill, but regains its strength.[81]

In *De Principiis* 3.1.13 Origen explains God's patience with sinners: not all souls are brought quickly to salvation but God allows some souls to reach salvation more slowly, like a physician who knows that sometimes a slow cure is more effective than a rapid one. Origen ends his discussion at this point by stating that God does not have only souls' earthly life in view when it comes to salvation: he seems to indicate that salvation may be completed after this life. Since the thinking nature (the rational soul) is immortal, its cure may take place after this life.[82] Origen expresses a similar view of the gradual healing of souls, from lapses and progress that happens for different souls at different pace in *De Principiis* 3.6.6.[83]

After Origen, Athanasius, Evagrius, and many other Christians continued to use the term "rational soul". This means that although the term may, in Christian usage, originate in Philo's thought, or that of Clement and Origen, it is not limited to the third century, or only to Alexandria. In *Contra Gentes* 32 Athanasius associates two qualities with the rational soul, namely, that it is rational, and that it is immortal. The rational soul is what enables the human being to see what is eternal, not the mortal body.[84] This notion connects with *Authentikos Logos* where the rational soul is that part of the human being that reaches its ultimate goal: not only is it immortal, it ascends and goes past the slave traders.[85]

Evagrius discusses the rational soul in rather dissimilar tones in *Practicus* compared with *Authentikos Logos*. His language is much more analytical and, from a Platonist viewpoint, terminologically exact.[86] In the first half of *Thirty-*

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78 A rational soul will abandon idols and resume its natural love towards the Creator: Origen, *Contra Celsum* 3.40.15.

79 τὸ «κατ᾽ εἰκόνα θεοῦ» ἐν ψυχῇ λογικῇ, τῇ ποιᾷ κατ᾽ ἀρετήν, σῴζεσθαί φαμεν. Origen, *Contra Celsum* 7.66.

80 31:20 – 32:1.

81 22:27; 27:32; 28:12.

82 ἄφθαρτον γὰρ φύσιν πεποίηκε τὴν νοερὰν καὶ αὐτῷ συγγενῆ, καὶ οὐκ ἀποκλείεται ὥσπερ ἐπὶ τῆς ἐνταῦθα ζωῆς ἡ λογικὴ ψυχὴ τῆς θεραπείας. *De Princ.* 3.1.13

83 Origen, *De Princ.* 3.6.6. In Origen's view resurrection can only happen after all rational souls have been restored to their original unity.

84 E.P. Meijering, *Athanasius: Contra Gentes. Introduction, Translation, and a Commentary* (Philosophia partum 7. Leiden: Brill, 1984), 105 – 108.

85 See Chapter VI.

86 E.g. Κατὰ φύσιν ἐνεργεῖ ψυχὴ λογικὴ ὅταν τὸ μὲν ἐπιθυμητικὸν αὐτῆς μέρος τῆς ἀρετῆς ἐφίεται, τὸ

Three Chapters Evagrius analyses passions as illnesses of the rational soul.[87] These analyses in their exactness are not quite the same as in *Authentikos Logos*, but the general theme is shared: in *Authentikos Logos* too the soul is ill and seeks healing (27:25–33), but it is not indicated that this were the rational soul.

5. Summary

Above the invisible soul, the pneumatic soul, the material soul, and the rational soul in *Authentikos Logos* were considered in comparison to other ancient texts. In the Nag Hammadi writings, only the material soul and rational soul are mentioned on a few occasions in separate writings (the material soul in *Authentikos Logos*, the *Apocryphon of John* and the *Trimorphic Protennoia*, the rational soul in *Authentikos Logos* the *Asclepius*). The pneumatic soul is not mentioned in other Nag Hammadi texts, and although the idea that the soul should be invisible to ascend is occasionally suggested, nowhere else in the Nag Hammadi Library is an invisible soul mentioned. Invisibility rather is a quality of the highest God or the "Invisible spirit" in Sethian writings.

These attributes are therefore a feature unique to *Authentikos Logos* in the Nag Hammadi context: the use of the soul terminology takes a detailed approach at the soul. This is why material for comparison was sought in Alexandrian exegetical and Platonic, or Christian Platonic traditions that proved to be meaningful for charting the background of this terminology. Basilides' followers, his son Isidore, and Valentinian exegesis in the *Excerpts from Theodotus* were of some interest, albeit rather as co-heirs of Alexandrian theologians than closest parallels, as can be noted with different hierarchies between *Authentikos Logos* and *Excerpts from Theodotus* when the soul's capabilities are discussed.

The invisible soul is mentioned twice in *Authentikos Logos*. It is the descending or ascending soul, close to the invisible worlds, and one that does not yet, or anymore, live an incarnate life in human body. The notion of the soul's invisibility originates in Platonic thought, but the concept was used more widely in the environment where *Authentikos Logos* circulated, and is attested in some Nag Hammadi writings. Something similar to *Authentikos Logos* is expressed by Origen when he considers the soul's need of successive

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δὲ θυμικὸν ὑπὲρ αὐτῆς ἀγωνίζεται, τὸ δὲ λογιστικὸν ἐπιβάλλει τῇ θεωρίᾳ τῶν γεγονότων. Evagrius, *Practicus* (aka *The Monk: A Treatise on the Practical Life*) 86. Also: Τριμεροῦς δὲ τῆς λογικῆς ψυχῆς οὔσης κατὰ τὸν σοφὸν ἡμῶν διδάσκαλον, ὅταν μὲν ἐν τῷ λογιστικῷ μέρει γένηται ἡ ἀρετή, καλεῖται φρόνησις καὶ σύνεσις καὶ σοφία· ὅταν δὲ ἐν τῷ ἐπιθυμητικῷ, σωφροσύνη καὶ ἀγάπη καὶ ἐγκράτεια· ὅταν δὲ ἐν τῷ θυμικῷ, ἀνδρεία καὶ ὑπομονή· ἐν ὅλῃ δὲ τῇ ψυχῇ, δικαιοσύνη. Evagrius, *Practicus* 89.

87 Evagrius, *Thirty-Three Chapters (Capitula xxxiii)* 1264.46–1265.43.

bodies in its different phases, due to its invisibility. Origen's argument stems from his Platonism but is also directed against non-Christian Platonists as he denies the soul's reincarnation into different human or animal bodies during its lifetime. Importantly for the dating question, Christian authors do not seem to focus on the concept of the soul's invisibility much prior to Origen.

The pneumatic soul is an intriguing term, attested by *Authentikos Logos*, Synesius of Cyrene, and John Chrysostom. Chrysostom's context differs from *Authentikos Logos* more than Synesius, who refers to a pneumatic vehicle of the soul. It seems that something similar is intended in *Authentikos Logos*, where the pneumatic soul is the soul that incarnates into human life. The question of the soul's vehicle will be approached in VI.2, in the chapter that discusses the body in *Authentikos Logos* and the "invisible, pneumatic body" (32:32).

The material soul is the other one of the soul's attributes that is attested in two other Nag Hammadi writings, both Sethian. The *Trimorphic Protennoia* refers to living people as material souls and the *Apocryphon of John* mentions a material soul in its discussion of the creation of the human being, as do also the *Excerpts from Theodotus*. The *Apocryphon of John* and *Authentikos Logos* share a view that the material soul has to do with the soul's proclivity for passions or vices. Nor do the *Excerpts from Theodotus* exclude the ethical view, as the material soul is displayed as the soul most closely involved with earthly life. The evidence does not point at a direct link between *Authentikos Logos* and the Sethian or Valentinian traditions. The fact that *Authentikos Logos* resembles both Sethian and Valentinian thought is not best explained by it belonging to either school of thought, but indicates that it may have inherited motifs or traditions from Valentinian and Sethian texts.

The rational soul is a widely used term, but the evidence suggests that *Authentikos Logos* should primarily be approached in relation to Alexandrian theological traditions, as is attested by Origen and before him, Philo, Clement, and what Clement reports of Basilides' followers and Isidore, as well as the Valentinians in *Excerpts from Theodotus*. However, also other Christian authors after Origen should not be neglected. Although the overall view of the soul in *Authentikos Logos* is Platonic in the sense that there are different aspects of the soul (faculties or parts in Platonic thought), the soul in its true form is considered invisible, and the soul is the most important part of the human being, exact Platonic terminology for the soul is not used.

In this chapter the intention was to discuss how several ancient theological and philosophical traditions seem to connect with and be influential in *Authentikos Logos*. Its Christian background is perhaps best exemplified by Origen, as the invisible and the rational soul indicate, but also by other Alexandrian theologians. Valentinian traditions appear to be recalled in *Authentikos Logos*' views of the soul when the attributes "material" and "rational" are used of the soul, but this is an ambiguous connection. No pneumatic (spiritual) soul is mentioned by the texts we have from Valentinian

authors. The material soul relates to views of ethics (passions) and the creation of the first human being, and is attested in both Valentinian and Sethian texts. Clement in *Excerpts from Theodotus* 51 – 54 mentions a material and a rational soul. The passage does not derive from Theodotus and its appreciation of the rational in humans differs from *Authentikos Logos*.

Valentinian anthropology distinguished between material or earth-like, ensouled, rational, and pneumatic natures. The terminology is similar to *Authentikos Logos* but not the same. The hierarchy between differently named souls in *Authentikos Logos* and human natures or kinds in Valentinian texts vary notably. This can be taken to indicate that these texts may rather have been composed in the same environment, than within the same (Valentinian) school tradition. That environment would be early Egyptian Christianity that knew Greek theological and philosophical traditions, and perhaps more precisely, ascetic communities around the fourth century. Although the late third century probably cannot be excluded, at the other end one may extend to a fifth-century context, especially if weight is given to the term "pneumatic soul" that also appears in Synesius' *On Dreams.*

V. Matter in *Authentikos Logos*

In the previous chapter, the epithets of the soul in *Authentikos Logos* were considered from the viewpoint of how they connect with other ancient texts where such titles are attached to the soul. The emphasis was on the Christian literary context. In this chapter the approach to ὕλη, "matter", in *Authentikos Logos* will be brought under scrutiny.[1] Matter emerges several times in the writing as a force that is opposite, even hostile to the soul, and one that aims at harming it. Matter was a central concept of philosophical discussions in the first centuries CE, and Christian authors approached particularly the question of whether matter is created or eternal. To understand its connotations in *Authentikos Logos*, an overview of the views on matter in antiquity will be first given in V.1 in order to sketch the background to the concept of matter in the writing. Matter is a concept that first emerges in Stoic and Aristotelian thought, but from early on, Middle Platonists took part in the discussion, often conforming with Stoic views.

After this overview, passages where matter is mentioned in *Authentikos Logos* will be discussed in V.2. This discussion will suggest that matter is not merely a quality, or an inferior quality, but an actively evil force. Matter must be discarded, the mixed nature of human life is dangerous, matter is hostile and something that leads souls astray, and what is born out of matter is not good. The tones of all sections where ὕλη is mentioned contain an aspect of aggression: the soul should rid itself of matter (22:33 – 34); the soul who lives in a body is attacked by matter that aims at making it blind (27:28), if the soul allows itself to be deceived, it will conceive and give birth to the offspring of matter (31:18). Further, the parable of wheat and chaff tells how the wheat is spoiled if it gets mixed with worthless chaff, and will then be thrown in with all materials (25:23).

The particular interest of V.2 concerns the extent to which *Authentikos Logos* follows ancient Christian discussions on matter. Above, it was concluded that "material soul" provides a connection between *Authentikos Logos* and both Sethian and Valentinian texts. The *Apocryphon of John*, the

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1 Several scholars have emphasised that ὕλη is difficult, even misleading term to translate, as it may be taken as an opposite to immaterial things or substances. In ancient discussions the difference was often perceived as having to do with the density of substances, or a spectrum of densities, and ὕλη often connotes heavy matter, or "stuff" as opposed to something that was thin and light, yet still corporeal, like fire or ether, particularly in Stoic and Stoic-influenced discussions. See Dale B. Martin, *The Corinthian Body* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 3 – 15 and Dunderberg, *Beyond Gnosticism*, 124 – 128. These considerations in mind, in this work the Greek ὕλη is translated as "matter". See also Lampe, *A Patristic Greek Lexicon*, 1429 – 1430.

Trimorphic Protennoia, and the *Excerpts from Theodotus* all mention a "material soul", but unlike particularly the *Apocryphon of John* and the *Excerpts from Theodotus* section, *Authentikos Logos* does not focus on creation. "Matter" and "material" have strongly ethical connotations in *Authentikos Logos*. "Material substance", οὐσία ὑλική, is the origin of desire that in turn is the origin of bodies (23:20). Connecting points can be found with the *Gospel of Mary* and the *Apocryphon of John* as well as Valentinian authors who discuss matter and passions, but differences with these texts merit scrutiny. Compared with the *Gospel of Mary* and the *Apocryphon of John*, *Authentikos Logos* is uninterested in the explanation of the origin of the world or humans, but there also appears to be a subtle difference in the focus on desire in *Authentikos Logos*. It will be asked if this interest is not so much directed at the cure of this or other passions than to combat against them.

Authentikos Logos understands "material" in negative terms, both in the image of the matter attacking the soul who needs the Word as the medicine to cure the blindness caused by matter, and as a quality of a person who lives in ignorance and darkness (28:9). Such a person is called "material", but the writing does not go further into a discussion of the three classes of people as many Valentinian texts do.

The negative perception of matter is linked to gendered language, such that would suggest polarity between masculine and feminine and that was common in antiquity in this context. Images of conception and birth are used in connection with matter in *Authentikos Logos*: desire comes from material substance, and body/bodies come from desire (23:17 – 20), almost as if desire was the mother of the body, and material substance was the mother of desire. Yet the matter is not simply the passive female principle, mother and Receptacle of philosophical authors, pliable and formless. When the Adversary has deceived the soul she gives birth to the offspring of matter (31:8 – 24). Does this image give matter a male role as the Adversary and the opponent of the God, Father of all, does the image of the soul giving birth to the offspring of matter recall the birthgiving image of James 1:14 – 15? Further, does the wheat and chaff parable (25:12 – 26), apart from its allegory of the effect of the matter on the soul, build on the gospel images of wheat and chaff, and wheat and weed.

1. Background: ὕλη in Ancient Philosophical Discourse

In ancient philosophical discourse, matter (ὕλη) was the passive second (feminine) principle, often understood to be some formless mass that served as a starting-point to diverse things. It was the opposite and yet linked to the immaterial or incorporeal and active first (male) principle, God or the logos. That made matter a subject in which different philosophical traditions

influenced each other, and a subject where common ground is apparent.[2] Next, an outline is sketched of philosophical thought on ὕλη, with the focus on Platonism. The two particular reasons for this are the dualism to which the author of the text clearly subscribes to, and also the view that matter is evil, an opinion that was expressed by such Middle Platonists as Numenius but also some Christian Platonists.[3] The same view was also held by Plotinus.[4]

Plato is the self-evident starting point, not only because of the Christian Platonist outlook in *Authentikos Logos*, but also because of his influence on other philosophical schools. Yet Plato never used the word ὕλη when he discussed the two principles of the universe, the intelligible one that is, and the one that is undergoing a constant process of becoming and change.[5] Something is required on which the intelligible source can act,[6] and this something Plato termed the Receptacle (δεχόμενον, ὑποδοχή), which was like a mother and nurse to Becoming, born out of the conjunction between the Ideas and the Receptacle. Starting with *Timaeus* 48E, Plato outlines the characteristics and the relationship between the three and presents it as that of father, mother, and child in *Timaeus* 50C–D.[7] Here Reason is the active principle, the

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2 Clement of Alexandria refers to the similarity of opinions concerning matter in philosophical schools in *Strom.* 5.14.89–90. Clement refers to a verse that he claims comes from Wisdom and asserts that philosophers – the Stoics, Plato, Pythagoras, and also Aristotle the Peripatetic – suppose the existence of matter (and not Wisdom) amongst the first principles; and not one first principle but two, or more.

3 Numenius took matter to be "wholly bad" in Chalcidius, *In Timaeum* 296–297 (Waszink), and associated it with the evil world soul. Kevin Corrigan, "Positive and Negative Matter in Later Platonism: The Uncovering of Plotinus' Dialogue with the Gnostics" in John D. Turner/Ruth Majercik (ed.), *Gnosticism and Later Platonism. Themes, Figures and Texts* (SBLSymS12; Atlanta, Ga.: Society of Biblical Literature, 2000), 19–56, on p. 21–23; Gerhard May, *Creatio ex Nihilo. The Doctrine of 'Creation out of Nothing' in Early Christian Thought* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1994), 56–57.
   Evilness of matter was held by Valentinians according to Irenaeus, *Against the Heresies* 1.4.5 ("so there would be two substances, the one, coming from passions, evil; the other, coming from the amendment, liable to suffering"); Marcion according to Tertullian taught that the Demiurge formed the world out of evil matter (Tertullian, *Adv. Marc.* 1.15). According to Origen, Celsus explained evil as deriving not from God but from matter and mortal things (*Contra Celsum* 4.65).

4 Matter is evil because it lacks good, Plotinus, *Enn.* II.4.16.16; I.8.51; II.2.3.52. Corrigan "Positive and Negative Matter", 19–56; Prudence Allen R.S.M., *The Concept of Woman. The Aristotelian Revolution 750 BC–AD 1250* (Montréal: Eden Press, 1985), 203, but she is mistaken in taking Plotinus to be the first one to consider matter evil.

5 Ἔστιν οὖν δὴ κατ' ἐμὴν δόξαν πρῶτον διαιρετέον τάδε· τί τὸ ὂν ἀεί, γένεσιν δὲ οὐκ ἔχον, καὶ τί τὸ γιγνόμενον μὲν ἀεί, ὂν δὲ οὐδέποτε; Plato, *Tim.* 27D–28A, Cornford, *Plato's Cosmology*, 21. He does use the word but in a different sense: in *Politicus* 272A ὕλη refers to edible plants other than fruits that gave people their livelihoods in the times of Cronos, without agricultural activities.

6 Ἡ δ' οὖν αὖθις ἀρχὴ περὶ τοῦ παντὸς ἔστω μειζόνως τῆς πρόσθεν διῃρημένη· τότε μὲν γὰρ δύο εἴδη διειλόμεθα, νῦν δὲ τρίτον ἄλλο γένος ἡμῖν δηλωτέον. *Tim.* 48E.

7 ἐν δ' οὖν τῷ παρόντι χρὴ γένη διανοηθῆναι τριττά, τὸ μὲν γιγνόμενον, τὸ δ' ἐν ᾧ γίγνεται, τὸ δ' ὅθεν ἀφομοιούμενον φύεται τὸ γιγνόμενον. καὶ δὴ καὶ προσεικάσαι πρέπει τὸ μὲν δεχόμενον μητρί, τὸ δ' ὅθεν πατρί, τὴν δὲ μεταξὺ τούτων φύσιν ἐκγόνῳ. *Tim.* 50C–D. ὑποδοχή, *Tim.* 51A. Cornford explains Plato's thought: "If the perfectly real Forms are to have the objects of opinion as images,

source of wisdom, and father that is contrasted with the Receptacle, the passive and feminine principle, the source of ignorance, and mother.[8] This mother is the formless substance that God used when he created the world. It is invisible and without qualities so that it may receive all kinds in itself, and should not be associated with any particular element.[9]

As a technical, philosophical term ὕλη was first introduced by Aristotle,[10] which did not stop later Platonists from reading it into Plato's thought, particularly when it comes to *Timaeus*. Aristotle associated matter with passivity or potential and contrasted it with form or word that gave it structure or form. The opposite of matter was not immaterial substance.[11] For Aristotle, the soul was the "form" to the body's "content" or "matter", and although the soul did not consist of σῶμα or ὕλη, it was still composed of some kind of light, thin "stuff", like fire, as some others believed.[12] Aristotle employed Plato's framework of father–mother, but Aristotelian thought was more theoretical than Plato's: form was active and characterised actuality and the soul, whereas matter characterised potentiality and body.[13]

Similarly to Platonic and Aristotelian views, Stoic physical theory also starts from two principles, the active (τὸ ποιοῦν) and the passive (τὸ πάσχον), unqualified substance (ἄποιων οὐσία) that is matter. Matter is inactive and needs the active principle to move, shape, and direct it; things are made *from* something and *by* something.[14] The world is composite of these two principles,

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there must be something, not wholly unreal, to receive these images." Cornford, *Plato's Cosmology*, 178. The contents of the Receptacle are fire, air, and such changing things in *Tim.* 49A–50A, and in 50A–C the image of moulding figures of gold exemplifies the permanent nature of Receptacle and its changing qualities, but she is not any one element herself, *Tim.* 51A. See Cornford, *Plato's Cosmology*, 178–188.

8 The polarity between father and mother, wisdom and ignorance appears also e.g. in *Symposium* 204B: Ἔρωτα φιλόσοφον εἶναι, φιλόσοφον δὲ ὄντα μεταξὺ εἶναι σοφοῦ καὶ ἀμαθοῦς. αἰτία δὲ αὐτῷ καὶ τούτων ἡ γένεσις· πατρὸς μὲν γὰρ σοφοῦ ἐστι καὶ εὐπόρου, μητρὸς δὲ οὐ σοφῆς καὶ ἀπόρου. For Plato's duality between male and female, see Allen, *The Concept of Woman*, 57–82.

9 Plato, *Tim.* 50C–51B. διὸ δὴ τὴν τοῦ γεγονότος ὁρατοῦ καὶ πάντως αἰσθητοῦ μητέρα καὶ ὑποδοχὴν μήτε γῆν μήτε ἀέρα μήτε πῦρ μήτε ὕδωρ λέγωμεν, μήτε ὅσα ἐκ τούτων μήτε ἐξ ὧν ταῦτα γέγονεν· ἀλλ' ἀνόρατον εἶδός τι καὶ ἄμορφον, πανδεχές, μεταλαμβάνον δὲ ἀπορώτατά πῃ τοῦ νοητοῦ καὶ δυσαλωτότατον. Plato, *Tim.* 51 A, see also 51E and 52D–53B.

10 Aristotle defined matter as the "*substratum* which is receptive of coming-to-be and passing-away", τὸ ὑποκείμενον γενέσεως καὶ φθορᾶς δεκτικόν (*On Generation and Corruption*, 320A 3); as that "out of which things come", τὸ ἐξ οὗ γίγνεται (*Metaph.* 1032A 17). Matter is one thing, form another, and their compound a third one. *Metaph.* 1034B 34 etc.

11 τούτων δὲ ὁ μὲν τὴν ὕλην ἀποδίδωσιν, ὁ δὲ τὸ εἶδος καὶ τὸν λόγον. Aristotle, *On the Soul* I 1.403B; cf. II 12.424 A where matter is compared with wax that may receive impressions.

12 Aristotle, *On the Soul* I 2.405B; II 413 A.

13 Both Plato and Aristotle associate form to father, and matter to mother, but Plato's active/passive-dichotomy becomes an actuality/potentiality dichotomy in Aristotle, Allen, *The Concept of Woman*, 83–126, esp. 124–126.

14 Diogenes Laertius 7.134 in A.A. Long and D.N. Sedley (ed.), *Hellenistic Philosophers. Vol. 1: Translations of the Principal Sources with Philosophical Commentary* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987) and *Vol. 2: Greek and Latin Texts with Notes and Bibliography* (Cam-

which means that they need one another. The active principle (cause, god, or λόγος) is always present in matter, giving it some quality or another. It is not difficult to detect the mutual influences of philosophical traditions on one another; the active and passive aspects and interaction of cause and matter are rooted in Platonic and Aristotelian traditions, but Stoics insisted on strict materialism. God and souls had to be corporeal, and vice versa, bodies contain god as they are composites of it and matter. Everything in the cosmos consists of some sort of "stuff", heavier or lighter, even souls. Further, everything is destructible and nothing immortal, including souls.[15]

The Aristotelian and Stoic views had a strong influence on Middle Platonists. Many Platonists identified the mother-principle as ὕλη and considered it corporeal and fundamentally opposite to the incorporeal God, a major deviation from Plato's thought. Materialist influence appears early, starting at least with Antiochus of Ascalon (born c. 130 BCE) who read *Timaeus* in a way that came close to Stoic understanding of the physical world. Antiochus thought that all things were formed and produced out of matter, which could receive all things, transform and dissolve again, not into nothingness, but into its own parts. He took mind to be of some material substance, and he thought that souls consist of fire.[16] Likewise in the second century CE Alcinous considered matter to be the lowest principle and explained the concept of matter as nurse as deriving from the fact that matter sustains the whole realm of generation. The influence of Stoic and Aristotelian thought is obvious in Alcinous, who adds the word ὕλη into his reading of Timaeus and formulates matter as "potentially body".[17]

The *Timaeus*-based mother-matter image can be encountered in works of several Platonists who were active from the first centuries CE onwards.

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bridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 44B; Seneca, *Letters*, 65.2 in Long/Sedley (ed.), *Hellenistic Philosophers*, 55 E.

15 Long/Sedley, *Hellenistic Philosophers 1*, 270–274. Souls are bodies too: "Chrysippus says that death is the separation of soul from body. Now nothing incorporeal is separated from a body. For an incorporeal does not even make contact with a body. But the soul both makes contact with and is separated from the body. Therefore the soul is a body (σῶμα ἄρα ἡ ψυχή)." Long/Sedley, *Hellenistic Philosophers*, 45 D (Nemesius 81,6–10 = *SVF* 2.790, part). See also 45 A (Cicero, *Academica* I.39 = *SVF* I.90), 45 B (Sextus Empiricus, *Against the Professors* 8.263 = *SVF* 2.363), 45 C (Nemesius 78,7–79,2 = *SVF* I.518, part), 45 G (Aristocles in Euseb. *Praep. ev.* 15.14.1 = *SVF* I.98, part). On Stoic materialism, see also Martin, *The Corinthian Body*, 6–15.

16 Dillon, *The Middle Platonists*, 81–84. John Dillon doubts Antiochus would have been the first one to question the soul's transcendence and immateriality. Despite his Stoic views, deviating from them Antiochus did not postulate atoms, but considered dissolution and division to be infinite, "since there exists nothing whatever in the nature of things that is an absolute least, incapable of division", and he does not mention *ekpyrosis*. A. A. Long, *Hellenistic Philosophy: Stoics, Epicureans, Sceptics* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), 222–229.

17 Alcinous, *The Handbook*, 8.2; 9.1; 15. See Dillon's Introduction and Comments in *The Handbook*, xvii, 90–92, and also Dillon, *The Middle Platonists*, 280. For more Middle Platonists' readings of matter into *Timaeus*, see e. g. Dillon, *The Middle Platonists*, 204–206, 211 (Plutarch), 313–315 (Apuleius). Corrigan, "Positive and Negative Matter", 22.

Platonic tradition generally viewed the second principle as the more inferior of the two, but sometimes it was, even when its material aspects were emphasised, given positive aspects and evaluation. Such is Philo's portrait of Wisdom of God as nurse and foster-mother in *The Worse Attacks the Better* 115 – 117 where Wisdom is depicted as a breastfeeding mother or nurse to her suckling child, the soul, who receives nourishment from the fountain of Wisdom.[18] As the mother of generated things in the world Wisdom feeds those born of her. The food provided is food of wisdom, and the terms τροφός ("mother", "foster-mother") and τιθηνοκόμος ("nurse") connect the image with *Timaeus*, despite the fact that these exact words were not used by Plato.[19]

In Philo's nourishment-providing Wisdom-Mother John Dillon detects a resemblance to Plutarch's Isis, which leads him to presume that Philo found this concept already established, probably in contemporary Platonised Pythagoreanism.[20] Plutarch associates Isis, his female principle, with matter: she is the Receptacle and the mother. What is noteworthy for this study is that Plutarch did not presuppose complete polarity between the father and the mother principles. His mothering principle was also an active, generating mother.[21] Plutarch also wrote that the Moon/Isis is the mother of the world whose nature is both male and female (ἀρσενόθηλυς), because on one hand

18 ταῦτα δὲ ψυχῆς τροφαὶ κυρίως εἰσὶ τῆς θηλάζειν ἱκανῆς, ὡς ὁ νομοθέτης φησί, "μέλι ἐκ πέτρας καὶ ἔλαιον ἐκ στερεᾶς πέτρας", πέτραν τὴν στερεὰν καὶ ἀδιάκοπον ἐμφαίνων σοφίαν θεοῦ, τὴν τροφὸν καὶ τιθηνοκόμον καὶ κουροτρόφον τῶν ἀφθάρτου διαίτης ἐφιεμένων. αὕτη γὰρ οἷα μήτηρ τῶν ἐν κόσμῳ γενομένη τὰς τροφὰς ἐξ ἑαυτῆς εὐθὺς ἤνεγκε τοῖς ἀποκυηθεῖσιν· ἀλλ' οὐχ ἅπαντα τροφῆς θείας ἠξιώθη, τὰ δ' ὅσα τῶν ἐκγόνων ἐπάξια τῶν γεννησάντων εὑρίσκετο· πολλὰ γὰρ ἔσθ' ἃ λιμὸς ἀρετῆς, ὁ τοῦ περὶ τὰ σιτία καὶ ποτὰ σχετλιώτερος, διέφθειρε. φέρεται δ' ἡ τῆς θείας σοφίας πηγὴ τοτὲ μὲν ἠρεμαιοτέρῳ καὶ πραοτέρῳ ῥεύματι, τοτὲ δὲ αὖ μετ' ὀξυτέρου τοῦ τάχους καὶ πλείονος φορᾶς τε καὶ ῥύμης· ὅταν μὲν οὖν ἠρέμα κατέρχηται, μέλιτος γλυκαίνει τὸν τρόπον, ὅταν δὲ μετ' ὠκύτητος, ἀθρόα ὕλη καθάπερ ἔλαιον ψυχικοῦ γίνεται φωτός. Philo, *The Worse Attacks the Better*, 115 – 117.

19 John Dillon sees in the physical images of breastfeeding and flowing nourishment echoes to the Earth Mother in the sense that Wisdom of God is not just the assisting, abstract principle of creation but the Mother of all creation. Dillon, *The Middle Platonists*, 164.

20 Dillon, *The Middle Platonists*, 164. Philo postulated Monad and Dyad, i. e. God and his Wisdom, in a truly Platonic manner. It is uncertain, according to John Dillon, whether Philo thought of God as also the creator of matter – his texts seem to point either way. For instance, in *Who Is the Heir*, 160 Philo speaks of pre-existent matter in a thoroughly Platonic manner; in *Allegorical Interpretation II, 2*: "neither before creation was there anything with God, nor, when the universe had come into being, is anything ranked with him". Dillon, *The Middle Platonists*, 158. May, *Creatio ex Nihilo*, 9 – 21 notes that Philo shows connection to both Platonic and Stoic conceptions. He is, of course, always faithful to the Scripture. See also *On Creation* where pre-existent matter is postulated alongside God. May denies that this would be a principle equal to God. May, *Creatio ex Nihilo*, 15.

21 Plutarch, *Isis and Osiris*, 372E–37C, 373F–374 A. Plutarch's Isis is equated with Plato's Receptacle, matter, and wisdom, and Dillon observes that she "takes on very much the same character as Sophia in Philo's system, suggesting a tendency in Alexandrian Platonism to identify at least the positive aspect of Matter with the World Soul". Dillon, *The Middle Platonists*, 204. Allen on Plutarch and Plotinus: Allen, *The Concept of Woman*, 195 – 205.

she receives and is made pregnant, on the other, she sends forth and sows generative principles into the world.[22] These views on matter-mother are relevant for the step-family metaphor in *Authentikos Logos* 23 that reflects the consequences of the yoking together of male and female, immaterial and material. Changes to Plato's originally passive feminine principle, such as not total passivity of the mother (Plutarch), or the evilness of matter (Plutarch, Sethians, Plotinus) were developed. It will shortly be discussed that in *Authentikos Logos* matter is not simply passive and female, but that it contains active qualities when it is described as hostile and aggressive.

As significant as Stoic traditions and influences are on Middle Platonists, the basic outlook in *Authentikos Logos* is Platonic, and any Stoic influence comes out within a that outlook. Although Platonists from quite early on adopted, or absorbed Stoic views,[23] *Authentikos Logos* does not refer to monistic or materialist ideas but rather subscribes to dualism and some sort of immateriality of the soul. The text complies with the polarity between matter and immaterial, for instance, the invisible worlds and the soul as part of them are seen as different from the material world; the soul's different bodies rather serve as gradations between the two opposites rather than support a monist and materialist view of things. The soul can exist separately from its corporeal body, and discarding the body is not the end of the soul.

Engberg-Pedersen has outlined the situation of the philosophical schools and the influence they held in antiquity, and argued that after the first and second centuries CE and the period of Late Stoicism, the influence of the Stoic school diminished. By the time Marcus Aurelius installed four chairs for philosophy in Athens in 178, Engberg-Pedersen suggests, "both Epicureanism and Stoicism were for all intents and purposes basically extinct". The two leading forces from Plutarch onwards were Aristotelianism and new forms of Platonism – Christian Platonism and Neoplatonism – and Platonism was particularly influential in the third and fourth centuries.[24] Engberg-Pedersen detects two main reasons for the tide turning from Stoic to Platonic thought: first, Platonic dualism fitted better than Stoic monism the Christians' sense of God's transcendence, and second, although Stoics, despite being determinists, sought to retain enough freedom for humans to make (moral) choices, their monistic materialism lost to the dualist position of Platonism that was seen to

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22 Plutarch, *Isis and Osiris*, 368 C – D.

23 Engberg-Pedersen, "Setting the Scene", 1 – 14.

24 This change from a Stoic to a Platonic framework for Christian authors was obviously gradual, and the transitional period is characterised by a flexible relationship between the different schools, which allowed philosophers to have an identity of their own. It is therefore not realistic to expect purity of classic Platonic views, or to be surprised at occasional Stoic elements. Engberg-Pedersen, "Setting the Scene" 1 – 14. Similarly May emphasises the importance of Middle and Neoplatonist traditions for the development of Christian views on creation. May, *Creatio ex Nihilo*, 2 – 5.

better account for human freedom.[25] This theme is emphasised in the two ways maxim in *Authentikos Logos* 24:10 – 13. Both themes important to the takeover of Platonic traditions are represented in *Authentikos Logos*. Indeed it appears that late ancient Platonic traditions were influential to the views in the writing: ὕλη is the opposite of the invisible worlds and it is given a fairly negative evaluation.

Philosophical tradition considered matter as generally inferior, but Plotinus went further and connected matter with evil.[26] He formulated his views in response to Aristotle and "Gnostics", usually taken to refer to Sethians. Plotinus combined Plato's Receptacle and Aristotelian matter, and developed from this the concept of the negative and evil nature of matter.[27] It emerges that *Authentikos Logos* resonates with many of Plotinus' views. For instance, a soul in a body that has matter is mixed with qualities of matter and is hindered in seeing and darkened by matter, whereas the perfect soul directs itself to intellect and turns itself away from the matter (*Enn.* I.8.4.14 – 28): this all is similar to how *Authentikos Logos* exemplifies the soul's conditions (22:28 – 34; 28:23 – 26; 31:26 – 30). Wickedness in the soul and the species of wickedness (vices etc.) are specified by matter, and they stem from its nature (*Enn.* I.8.5). Vices arise from matter as species of evil, whereas virtue enables us to master matter (*Enn.* I.8.6; matter and vices: *Auth. Logos* 23), and people escape evils through virtue and separating themselves from body and matter, because life in a body brings one into close connection with matter (*Enn.* I.8.7.12 – 14; keeping apart is emphasised in *Authentikos Logos* (25:6 – 26; 26:30; 31:24 – 33). The descent of the soul connects it with matter, and matter is the cause of the soul's weakness and vice (*Enn.* 1.8.14.44 – 51; *Authentikos Logos* 23).

If Plotinus' discussion of matter connects with vices and virtues, several early Christians, such as Marcion, Valentinus and Basilides, had connected their discussion of matter to questions of the origin of the world – why and how did the world come about – and questions of evil and suffering were linked. Genesis exegesis was central to these authors who had an equally thorough command of philosophy, which enabled them to merge the two traditions, philosophical and biblical.[28] *Authentikos Logos*, on the other hand,

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25 Engberg-Pedersen, "Setting the Scene", 1 – 14.
26 That matter is evil, e. g. Σωμάτων δὲ φύσις, καθόσον μετέχει ὕλης, κακὸν ἂν οὐ πρῶτον εἴη· *Enn.* I.8.4; Ἀλλὰ πῶς οὖν ἐξ ἀνάγκης, εἰ τὸ ἀγαθόν, καὶ τὸ κακόν; Ἆρ' οὖν οὕτως ὅτι ἐν τῷ παντὶ δεῖ τὴν ὕλην εἶναι; Ἐξ ἐναντίων γὰρ ἐξ ἀνάγκης τόδε τὸ πᾶν· ἢ οὐδ' ἂν εἴη μὴ ὕλης οὔσης. Μ ε μ ι γ μ έ ν η γ ὰ ρ ο ὖ ν δ ὴ ἡ τ ο ῦ δ ε τ ο ῦ κ ό σ μ ο υ φύσις . . . *Enn.* I.8.7.
27 Corrigan, "Positive and Negative Matter", 19 – 56; Allen, *The Concept of Woman*, 201 – 205. A.H. Armstrong, *The Cambridge History of Later-Greek and Early Medieval Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969), 9, 82 – 83, 197. That Plotinus' Gnostics were Sethians, see Burns, *Apocalypse of the Alien God*, Corrigan, "Positive and Negative Matter", 43 – 44, Turner, *Sethian Gnosticism*, 709 – 711.
28 May, *Creatio ex Nihilo*, 2 – 5; 39 – 61. Dunderberg, *Beyond Gnosticism*, 119 – 133.

does not portray a profound interest in questions concerning the origin of the world or matter[29] and no allusions are made to Genesis. Its thinking runs more on Plotinus' lines in its focus on virtue and vice, and matter as the disturbing force on the soul's path towards virtue and ascent.[30]

2. References to Matter in *Authentikos Logos*

In this part the sections of the *Authentikos Logos* that mention matter or material substance are brought under scrutiny in order to discern how matter is discussed in the writing. It is compared with texts that in some ways come close to it: these will include alluded gospel parables and the Epistle of James, other Nag Hammadi and related writings that were read in the early Egyptian Christian context, and writings of Christian teachers from the second to the fourth centuries. What emerges is a view of matter as evil and harmful, and a connection of matter to passions[31] and vices.

2.1 Matter and Material Substance in *Authentikos Logos* 22 and 23

Authentikos Logos begins with the appearance of the invisible worlds and the invisible soul's gradual descent. The purpose of the soul's descent is to see with her mind, understand (who are) her (real) relatives, gain knowledge of her root and grasp the branch where she has originally come from, so that she would gain what is hers and give up matter.[32] The focus is not only on receiving the good things, but on giving up what is harmful.[33] Discarding matter is a prerequisite to full knowledge and gaining what belongs to oneself. The Word

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29 The closest connections are at the beginning of the writing. 22:6 – 15 states the origin of the soul, and some pages later 25:8 – 13 refers to the role of the Father as the originator of the world and the great contest in the world.

30 One does well to keep in mind, particularly during the discussion in this chapter, that as Engberg-Pedersen has pointed out, no early Christian writer was either a Platonist or a Stoic *per se*. They were Christians above all. Engberg-Pedersen, "Setting the Scene", 1 – 14.

31 In this work πάθος is mostly translated as "passion", not "emotion": Stoics wished to abolish not the emotion, but the passion. F.H. Sandbach, *The Stoics* (Bristol: Bristol Press, 1989), 59 – 60.

32 ⲈⲦⲢⲈⲤⲚⲀⲨ ⲈⲂⲞⲔ �église... ⲚⲈⲤⲚⲞⲨⲤ ⲚⲤⲢⲚⲞⲈⲒ ⲚⲚⲈⲤⲤⲨⲅⲅⲈⲚⲎⲤ· ⲚⲤⲬⲒ ⲤⲞⲞⲨⲚ ⲈⲦⲈⲤⲚⲞⲨⲚⲈ· ⲬⲈⲔⲀⲀⲤ ⲈⲤⲚⲀⲦⲰⲬⲈ ⲈⲠⲈⲤⲔⲀⲀⲆⲞⲤ ⲚⲦⲀⲤⲢ ⲰⲢⲠ ⲚⲈⲒ ⲈⲂⲞⲔ Ⲛ2ⲎⲦⲤ· ⲬⲈⲔⲀⲀⲤ ⲈⲤⲚⲀⲬⲒ ⲘⲠⲈⲦⲈ ⲠⲰⲤ ⲚⲤⲔⲰ ⲚⲤⲰⲤ ⲚⲐⲨ[ⲀⲎ] (22:33 – 23:1). This is a fragmentary section, for the first lines of p. 23 have been destroyed, and the word 2ⲨⲀⲎ must be reconstructed. The reconstruction is a plausible one.

33 Whether there is anything else that should be discarded is not certain because of the damage done on the upper lines of the page 23.

is the nourishment and medicine that strengthens the soul to both get rid of the matter and regain the connection to its true home.[34]

How the need to discard the matter, which concludes the page 22, connects with the re-marriage metaphor on page 23 is not entirely clear, as the first lines of page 23 have been destroyed, but the purpose of re-marriage, step-siblinghood and inheritance images on this page is to explain the soul's situation in her incarnate life. The soul's life in a body resembles a marriage of a man to a woman, both having children from previous marriages. The woman's children now start calling the man's children their siblings (23:4 – 14). This, that is, incarnation, makes likewise the soul a sister[35] of desire, hatred, and envy, and a material soul (23:14 – 17); "and so, then, the body came from desire, and desire came from material substance" (23:17 – 21).[36] This sentence is some sort of a result or conclusion concerning the relationship between material substance, desire, and the body. This – life in a material or heavy body – connects the soul with desire, hatred, and envy, and the birth of the body is connected with desire and material substance.

The metaphor continues with a discussion of siblinghood: life in a body that is connected with material substance is the reason why the soul became the passions' sibling. Yet these new siblings are not the soul's true or full siblings, but only outsiders who are not entitled to inherit from the male; they can only inherit their mother (23:21 – 26). The end of the page remains somewhat unclear as the text had continued to the damaged upper part of the next page, but it starts with a comment "If the soul wishes to inherit with stepsiblings", after which is given a list of their possessions: "proud passions, life's pleasures, hateful jealousies, boasting, foolish talk and accusations" (23:27 – 34). Perhaps further passions or vices were added, but page 24 where the list perhaps continued is damaged on its first five or six lines, so it is impossible to know what exactly was said.

Page 23 is important for the view of *Authentikos Logos* on the soul's incarnation, material life, and passions, and can be compared with similar views of the relationship between matter and passions that were made by other Christian authors from the second century onwards. For instance the *Apocryphon of John*, the *Gospel of Mary*, Valentinians in the reports of Irenaeus and Hippolytus, and in Clement of Alexandria's *Excerpts from Theodotus* connect discussion of matter or material substance to that of passions. This suggests something in common between *Authentikos Logos* and these texts, but what is shared and why? Next, *Authentikos Logos* and the *Gospel of Mary*, the *Apocryphon of John*, and Valentinian views, will be

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34 22:20 – 27.

35 The Coptic text uses the word ϹΟΝ, "brother", but since the soul is a female entity in the writing, and the word ⲮⲨⲬⲎ is feminine, it is read as "sister".

36 For reading of ϨⲰϹⲦⲈ as indicating a conclusion, see Layton, *A Coptic Grammar*, §503 and Liddell/Scott/Jones, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 2040.

discussed. It will be suggested that although its views resemble those expressed
in the other discussed texts, these resemblances do not suggest a close or
literary relationship, but rather indicate knowledge of such writings as the
Apocryphon of John and the *Gospel of Mary*, Valentinian texts.

The extant part of the *Gospel of Mary* begins with a discussion that concerns
the nature and destructibility of matter, sin of the world, the relationship of
matter with passion and what all of that means to the disciples. These issues
are approached on pages 7 and 8, the first preserved pages of the gospel. In the
Gospel of Mary 8:2 – 4 the Saviour comments on matter in a way that resembles
the view in *Authentikos Logos:* "The matter gave birth to passion that has no
image, coming from what is contrary to nature. Then follows confusion in all
body" (*Gos. Mary* 8:2 – 6).[37] Matter in the *Gospel of Mary* gives birth to passion,
and something contrary to nature plays a part in the origin of passion. The
birth of the passion causes confusion or disturbance (ταραχή) in the whole
body. The Saviour encourages his disciples, and the hearing formula "Who has
ears to hear, let them hear" shifts the discussion to a call for obedience and
warnings against not being led astray.

There is similarity in the line of thought between *Authentikos Logos* and the
Gospel of Mary, even when their respective contexts and choice of words differ
somewhat. In *Authentikos Logos* the body comes from desire (ἐπιθυμία) and
desire from material substance (οὐσία ὑλική), and in the *Gospel of Mary* matter
(ὕλη) gives birth to passion (πάθος). Both writings are concerned with the same
issue: emergence of passions from matter/material substance, and how this
leads to the birth of a body.[38] In both, matter or material substance is the mother
to passion (*Gospel of Mary*) or desire (*Authentikos Logos*). Whereas in
Authentikos Logos what is born is the body, that is, the incarnate soul who is a
step-sibling to various passions, in the *Gospel of Mary* a disturbance of the whole
body emerges. Both views suggest that human life is disturbed by passions.

The *Gospel of Mary* and also the *Apocryphon of John* use the term "matter"
(ὕλη), whereas the term employed in *Authentikos Logos* is "material substance"
(οὐσία ὑλική). This is not an insignificant detail: οὐσία ὑλική derives from
Aristotelian vocabulary, and for example Alexander of Aphrodisias in the early
third century CE, commentator of Aristotle's works, frequently uses the term.[39]
"Material substance" is also used in Valentinian creation accounts.

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37 [ⲀⲐ]ⲨⲀ̄Ⲏ Ⲭ[Ⲡ] ⲞⲨⲠⲀⲐⲞⲤ ⲈⲘⲚ̄ⲦⲀ Ⲙ̄ⲘⲀⲨ Ⲙ̄ⲠⲈIⲚⲈ ⲈⲀIⲈI ⲈⲂⲞⲖ Ⳇ̅Ⲛ
   ⲞⲨⲠⲀⲢⲀⲪⲨⲤⲒⲤ ⲦⲞⲦⲈ ⲰⲀⲢⲈⲞⲨⲦⲀⲢⲀⲬⲎ ⲰⲰⲠⲈ Ⳇ̅Ⲙ̄ⲠⲤⲰⲘⲀ ⲦⲎⲢ. Esther de
   Boer translates: "Matter [brought forth] passion that, since it proceeded from an opposite
   nature, has no form. From then on confusion exists in the whole body." Esther De Boer, *The
   Gospel of Mary*, 19.
38 E.g. The word "root" (ⲚⲞⲨⲚⲈ) in *Authentikos Logos* refers to the soul's origin, its divine home,
   to which the soul should return (22:30). In the *Gospel of Mary* the "root" refers to the original
   condition to which all must return, matter in particular, cf. also *Orig. World* 127:3 – 5. King, *The
   Gospel of Mary of Magdala*, 45.
39 Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, 1044 A, 1049 A, 1077 A. Cf. Dillon, *The Middle Platonists*, 178 discusses

Esther de Boer's analysis of the Stoic elements in the *Gospel of Mary* adds much to our understanding of what is meant in the *Gospel of Mary*, and that is, as will emerge, not entirely the same as in *Authentikos Logos*. De Boer argues that the most straightforward reading for the quoted sentence is that matter brings forth passion as a mother gives birth to a child, because it has been generated by "something contrary/opposite to Nature". The latter thus takes the role of the father in the same manner as Nature or God does in Stoic thought. Passion emerges from the combination of matter and "something contrary to Nature", which in turn leads to "confusion in the whole body".[40] Combined with the ΠⲀⲢⲀⲪⲨⲤⲒⲤ matter produces the disturbing passion and the confusion of the body that the disciples need to be aware of, and resist.

If material substance is the mother, *Authentikos Logos* in its comment does not elaborate whether something acts as the father. Perhaps material substance simply generates desire out of herself (as in the Valentinian myth Wisdom generates by herself), or perhaps there is another force to do that, but neither is hinted and it seems that this was of no interest to the author. Unlike the *Gospel of Mary*, which applies the verb ⲬⲠⲞ, which refers to begetting or birth-giving, *Authentikos Logos* uses ⲈⲒ ⲈⲂⲞⲖ ϨⲚ̄-, "to come forth from", which has no direct connection with birth-giving.

In De Boer's view the *Gospel of Mary* gives a variant to the Stoic concept of matter and Nature (or logos, or God) that created harmony into the cosmos. In the *Gospel of Mary* variant, matter and a power that is opposite to nature create confusion. The *Gospel of Mary* does not represent academic Stoic thought but provides a variant with a dualist tendency – in Stoic monism there is no other force than Nature. In De Boer's argumentation this finds its explanation in the notion that the *Gospel of Mary* merges various traditions, Jewish, Christian, Platonic, and Stoic.[41]

On the preceding page, *Gospel of Mary* 7, the disciples enquire about the destruction of matter and the question is followed by the Saviour's reply.[42] This displays interest in the topic that was widely discussed among early Christians, particularly during the late second century: matter and its perishability.[43] The

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Philo's mixing of Aristotelian and Stoic concepts in *The Decalogue*, 30 – 31, e.g. οὐσία and ὕλη. Cf. also *SVF* I, 87. Alexander of Aphrodisias, *Commentary on Aristotle's Metaphysics*, e.g. 444, 556, 584, 592.

The first Christian author whose writings attest the use of οὐσία ὑλική is Irenaeus in *Against the Heresies* I.1.9, where he refers to Valentinian teaching, and after him, Clement of Alexandria, *Strom.* 5.14.90; *Eclogae Propheticae* 2.3.1 (in plural).

40 De Boer, *The Gospel of Mary*, 19.

41 De Boer, *The Gospel of Mary*, 37 – 52. Esther De Boer, "A Stoic Reading of the Gospel of Mary: The Meaning of Matter and 'Nature' in Gospel of Mary 7.1 – 8.11" in Rasimus/Engberg-Pedersen/ Dunderberg (ed.), *Stoicism in Early Christianity*, 199 – 219. See also King, *The Gospel of Mary of Magdala*, 37 – 44.

42 *Gos. Mary* 7:1 – 8.

43 May, *Creatio ex Nihilo*. Einar Thomassen, "The Derivation of Matter in Monistic Gnosticism" in Turner/Majercik (ed.), *Gnosticism and Later Platonism*, 1 – 17. Ismo Dunderberg, "Johannine

Gospel of Mary thus dedicates more space to its discussion on matter and demonstrates knowledge of and an interest in questions that require philosophical and theological knowledge. At the same time, its interest in the perishability of matter does not go into detail. The Saviour's answer that everything will dissolve into their roots is not a detailed reply; as Karen King has pointed out, the *Gospel of Mary* does not spell out which of the two options it may adhere to, whether the matter is formed and pre-existent or created and destructible. The general message, to which the common Platonic and Stoic koine forms the background, is that everything is fleeting.[44]

Even less attention is given to matter or material substance as a philosophical topic in *Authentikos Logos*. It shows no concern with the perishability or origin of matter, and there is no interest in the future of matter as in *Gospel of Mary* 7. Rather the understanding of the soul's origin and mixed state connects with the need to avoid or control the "step-siblings" (passions). The inferiority of these disturbing passions is suggested in the step-sibling image: whatever emotions appear connected to the soul, they are inferior, have a lesser share and cannot conquer the soul. This suggests that *Authentikos Logos* and the *Gospel of Mary* share an ethical orientation, and similar views of human life: life is a mixed condition where passions disturb the life of the soul. However, the passions or ethical issues upon which these two writings focus are different: *Gospel of Mary* 8 shows concern for anxiety, fear, and false spiritual guidance, which have been approached as connecting with anxiety under persecution and fear of martyrdom that the rhetorical situation of the text suggests.[45] Desire is the most frequently mentioned passion in *Authentikos Logos*, whereas fear is not mentioned at all.[46] The similarity, thus, is not very strong, particularly if one notes that the idea of life as a mixed condition, and that of human life as disturbed by passions are very common notions in ancient literature, and views that are to be found already in Plato's works.

Passions that have matter as their mother are also encountered in the long, Codex II version of the *Apocryphon of John* 18:2 – 5, 10 – 14.[47] This section of the

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Traditions and Apocryphal Gospels" in Jens Schröter (ed.), *The Apocryphal Gospels within the Context of Early Christian Theology* (BETL 260; Leuven: Peeters, 2013), 67 – 93; Valentinians on ὕλη: Dunderberg, *Beyond Gnosticism*, 126 – 128.

44 So Karen King, who does not analyse *Gos. Mary* 8:2 – 4, but makes this comment regarding *Gos. Mary* 7:1 – 8. King, *The Gospel of Mary of Magdala*, 45 – 47, the background, 41 – 44.

45 This need not reflect the actual issues, and as Dunderberg notes different situations of the audiences have suggested different readings. Dunderberg, "Johannine traditions". See also King, *The Gospel of Mary of Magdala*, 57.

46 Note also that whereas in the *Gos. Mary* 7:12 the disciples ask the Saviour about the sin of the world, no concept of sin appears in *Authentikos Logos*.

47 See also *Ap. John* II 21:4 – 12 where Adam's heavy body and his tomb (lit. "tomb of the form of the body") is formed and originates in earth, water, fire, and spirit, that is, in matter that is ignorance of darkness, in desire (ἐπιθυμία), and their counterfeit Spirit. The *Apocryphon of John* originates most probably in some second-century urban school-setting, most likely in Alexandria, and is usually characterised as a Sethian writing, based on its contents and themes, and

Apocryphon of John, as discussed above in Chapter 4, is preceded by a systematic view of the creation of Adam's soul-body, and angels and demons that are in charge of its different parts. The origin of the four demons in the body are heat, cold, wetness, and dryness, and their mother is matter, the one who nourishes them. Thus matter not only gives birth to passions, but it also nourishes them: two aspects of motherhood are evoked. The concept of matter as mother was discussed by philosophical authors and employed by for example Plutarch in his views of Isis in *Osiris and Isis*. That passions are mixed or in connection with matter (*Ap. John* II 18:12 – 13) is not only similar with the Stoic concept of matter enlivened by nature, but also resembles the views in *Authentikos Logos* and the *Gospel of Mary*.

The discussion of matter and passions in the *Apocryphon of John* is the most elaborate and most precise of these three texts. Matter is the mother of the four chief demons and from them come passions: sorrow (ⲗⲨⲠⲎ), pleasure (Ⲟ̄ⲎⲆⲞⲚⲎ), desire (ⲈⲠⲒⲐⲨⲘⲒⲁ), and fear (ⲚⲰⲞ̄Ⲉ).[48] Demons are mentioned between the matter and passions, and the passions are the four principal passions in Stoic teaching.[49] These four were not, however, restricted to Stoic thought nor especially Stoic in character: the are already discussed in Plato's works.[50]

The Apocryphon of John, the Gospel of Mary,
and Authentikos Logos on matter/material substance

Apocryphon of John	ⲞⲨⲗⲎ	Four demons	ⲗⲨⲠⲎ, Ⲟ̄ⲎⲆⲞⲚⲎ, ⲈⲠⲒⲐⲨⲘⲒⲁ, ⲚⲰⲞ̄Ⲉ	More passions
Gospel of Mary	ⲞⲨⲗⲎ̄ + ⲠⲁⲢⲁⲪⲨⲤⲒⲤ		ⲠⲁⲐⲞⲤ	ⲦⲁⲢⲁⲬⲎ Ⲟ̄Ⲙ̄ ⲠⲤⲰⲘⲁ

is best approached as a Christian text that had many Christian readerships and is attested to have circulated widely in early Christian circles. King, *The Secret Revelation*, 9 – 21. See also Waldstein "Das Apokryphon des Johannes", 74 – 76, Turner, *Sethian Gnosticism*, 141. A later date is suggested e.g. by Logan, *Gnostic Truth*, 16.

48 *Ap. John* II 18:14 – 20.

49 τῶν παθῶν τὰ ἀνωτάτω (καθά φησιν . . . Ζήνων ἐν τῷ περὶ παθῶν) εἶναι γένη τέττατα, λύπην, φόβον, ἐπιθυμίαν, ἡδονήν (*SVF* I, 211). De Boer, *The Gospel of Mary*, 47; King, *The Secret Revelation*, 117. Takashi Onuki, *Gnosis und Stoa. Eine Untersuchung zum Apokryphon des Johannes* (NTOA 9; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1989), 30 – 46. See also Dunderberg, *Beyond Gnosticism*, 109. Onuki reads the list as a demonisation of Stoic passions and intentional criticism of "radical intellectualism", which he considers characteristic of the Stoic theory of passions. Takashi Onuki, "Critical Reception of the Stoic Theory of Passions in the Apocryphon of John" in Rasimus/Engberg-Pedersen/Dunderberg (ed.), *Stoicism in Early Christianity*, 239 – 256.

50 E.g. Plato, *Phaedo* 83B. In *Laws* 863E–864A he mentions these four as well as θυμός and φθόνος. Onuki, *Gnosis und Stoa*, 30 – 33.

(Continued)

Authentikos Logos	OYCIΔ 2ΥλΙΚΗ		ЄΠΙΘΥΜΙΔ	CWMΔ

As was noted above, *Authentikos Logos*, unlike the *Apocryphon of John* or the *Gospel of Mary*, uses the term "material substance", and whereas the *Apocryphon of John* names the four chief passions first, and derives further passions from them, the *Gospel of Mary* refers to passions in general, but does not specify which passions are meant. It is not certain if they are passions in general or the four passions. If the four principal emotions are meant, it is not explicitly said so and the subject is not elaborated on. In the narrative section of *Gospel of Mary* 7 – 10, sorrow, fear, and perplexity emerge.[51] In the ascent narrative of *Gospel of Mary* 15 – 17, desire is emphatic,[52] and other passions mentioned include ignorance.[53] *Authentikos Logos* in turn takes up specifically ἐπιθυμία, one of the four cardinal passions, but shows no particular interest in the four passions as a set group. The focus is on desire: whereas desire is mentioned seven times in the text, pleasure appears only twice, sorrow once, fear not at all, and passions in general twice.[54] Desire is in *Authentikos Logos* 23 first mentioned with hatred and jealousy, then as coming from the material substance and being the origin of the body.

Both the *Apocryphon of John* and *Authentikos Logos* go into listing (more) passions, but they do this in a decidedly different manner and with different goals in mind. In *Authentikos Logos* there is the list of the step-sibling's inheritance, in the *Apocryphon of John*, the four passions and passions deriving from them. The approach of the writings is considerably different, both in what and how they list. The *Apocryphon of John* is decidedly systematic when it classifies all passions under the four chief passions: from grief comes envy, jealousy, distress, trouble, pain, heartlessness, anxiety, mourning, and so forth; from pleasure much evil, empty pride, and such things; from desire, anger, wrath, bitterness, bitter yearning, insatiable greed, and such things; from fear, dread, flattery, agony, and shame. These can develop into virtues or vices, and Anaro, the head of the material soul is the insight into their true nature.[55] The similarity between the list in the *Apocryphon of John* and Pseudo-Andronicus' treatise *On passions* that lists subcategories of passions has been pointed out by Takashi Onuki.[56]

In *Authentikos Logos* the discussion of the desire and other passions happens within the re-marriage and inheritance metaphors where a list of the step-siblings'

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51 E.g. *Gos. Mary* 9:5 – 6 (sorrow); 9:10 – 12 (fear). *Gos. Mary* 7:20 – 21 sets out to explain sickness and death (to provide consolation?).

52 *Gos. Mary* 15:1; 16:7, 19.

53 *Gos. Mary* 15:12; 16:8.

54 ἐπιθυμία 23:15, 18, 19; 25:6; 29:2; 30:34 (here desire for clothes); 31:21 (pl.); ἡδονή 23:31, 24:19; λύπη 30:29; πάθος 23:30 (proud passions); 31:26.

55 *Ap. John* II 18:21 – 34.

56 Onuki, *Gnosis und Stoa*, 33 – 38.

belongings is given. The soul, too, will inherit these if it wishes to inherit with its step-siblings, that is, if it forms too close an association with them. These belongings are "proud passions, pleasures of life, hateful jealousies, boasting, foolish talk, accusations".[57]

Emotions and vices in the Apocryphon of John and Authentikos Logos

Apocryphon of John II 18:21 – 31	*Authentikos Logos* 23:29 – 34
ЄBOλ ΔЄ 2Ñ ТλΥΠΗ ОΥΦΘΟΝΟС ОΥΚW2 ОΥM̅Κλ2 ОΥΟΧλΗСΙС ОΥΝΙΚЄ ОΥM̅N̅ТλТР̅2ΗТϤ ОΥРΟΟΥW ОΥ2ΗBЄ λΥW ΠΚЄWWΧΠ ЄBOλ ΔЄ 2Ñ Т2ΗΔΟΝΗ WλΥWWΠЄ N̅6Ι 2λ2 Ñ ΚλΚΙλ λΥW ΠWΟΥWΟΥ ЄТWΟΥЄΙТ λΥW ΝЄТЄΙΝЄ ÑΝλЇ ЄBOλ ΔЄ 2Ñ ТЄΠΙΘΥΜΙλ ОΥΟΡΓΗ ОΥ6WΝТ MÑ ОΥΧΟ[λΗ] M[ΝΟ]ΥЄΡWС· ЄϤСλWЄ MÑ ОΥM̅N̅ТλТСЄΙ λΥW ΝЄТЄΙΝЄ ÑΝλЇ ЄBOλ ΔЄ 2Ñ ТΝW2Є ОΥЄΚΠλΗϾΙС ОΥΚWΡW ОΥλΓWΝΙλ ОΥWΙΠЄ	ΧΡΗΜλ Ñ ΝΙWP̄ Ñ ΠΟλ ΝΙΠλΘΟС Ñ λλ2λЄ2 Ñ 2ΗΔΟΝΗ Ñ ТЄΠBΙΟϾ Ñ ΚW2 MΜΟϾТЄ M̅ΠЄΡΠЄΡΟϾ M̅ΦλΟΙλΡΟϾ Ñ ΚλТΗΓΟΡΙλ

These differences illustrate the varying approaches between the two texts. The *Apocryphon of John* formulates "a comprehensive narrative of Christian theology, cosmology, and salvation" that connects powers, angels and demons,

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57 This combination of the three speech-related deeds seems to be unique. Scholten considers πέρπερος a relatively rare term on Christian authors, but his list is not conclusive. Scholten, *Martyrium und Sophiamythos*, 124, 124 n. 39 – 41. In Christian authors περπερεία, πέρπερος, περπερεύομαι appear e.g. in 1 Cor 13:4, Clement of Alexandria, *Paedagogus* 3.1.3.1 and 3.11.77, *Quis dives* 38.2.2; Origen *Fragments on the Comm. on 1 Cor* 51 n. 2 and 12; Gregory Thaumaturgus, *In Origenem oratio* 2.27; Gregory of Nyssa *De instituto Christiano* 8,1.60.4; Basil of Caesarea, *Epistulae* 22.2.16 and *Asceticon/Regulae fusius tractate* 31.977.40, in exegetical works often referring back to 1 Cor 13:4, but an ascetic or paraenetic tendency can be noted likewise. Also, although Scholten suggests in *Martyrium und Sophiamythos* (124 n. 41) that *Authentikos Logos* does not come close to Evagrius' systematising of the vices, the difference of genre should be taken into account: the wider context, that of asceticism and early monasticism, can still be considered as shared. For a thorough overview of φλυαρέω/φλύαρος, see Marianne Bjelland Kartzow, *Gossip and Gender. Othering of Speech in the Pastoral Epistles* (BZNW 164; Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2009), 50 – 66.

members of the human body, passions and their different classes, and the creation of the human being all together into a magnificent explanation of human origins, fate, and ways to salvation.[58] *Authentikos Logos* concentrates on the soul story and the soul's ascent.

The list in *Authentikos Logos* has a much more practical tone on passions, the three first passions being specified (*proud* passions, *life's* pleasures, *hateful* jealousies) in a way that does not suggest primary concern with any philosophical concept of passions or pleasure, but rather a rhetorical or paraenetic purpose. The three last items on the list relate to speech (and it must be emphasised that the list may have continued, but because the first lines of page 24 are damaged, this is uncertain), and they are deeds rather than emotions.[59] This is not a list of passions in the philosophical sense of the term, but a list of negative attitudes and behaviours that people may practise but, on the other hand, have the option to fight back.

In Chapters III and IV, *Authentikos Logos* was compared with other Christian texts and third-century authors, and it was suggested that the soul story and its tones could indicate an ascetic environment. The resemblance with texts that were known in early Egyptian Christianity and the focus on the soul's ascent point to a similar direction. In this connection it may be possible to assume that the six passions and vices in the *Authentikos Logos* list could indicate an ascetic, communal environment: those things that make life pleasant may be longed for in the ascetic life, and "hateful jealousies" could refer to communal life and its problems, as would, naturally, the speech-related vices as well. *Authentikos Logos* connects vices with the inferior position of the step-siblings: an interesting point of comparison is Antony's *Letter* 4 in which Antony connects virtuous life with being a full child. Referring to John 15:15 and Romans 8:15 – 17, Antony exclaims: "My dear brothers, joint heirs with the saints, no virtues are alien to you; they are all yours, for when you have become revealed to God, you have no obligations towards this bodily life".[60] Life as God's full child is a life lived in virtue, but life of an outsider is a life where vices prevail.

Another group of teachings that combine discussion of matter with passions are the Valentinian myth of Wisdom and cosmogony: in Clement's, Irenaeus' and Hippolytus' descriptions of Valentinian views, matter is derived from three (Irenaeus and Hippolytus) or four (*Excerpts from Theodotus*) passions. In Valentinian accounts the order of matter and passions is contrary to the *Apocryphon of John*, the *Gospel of Mary* and *Authentikos Logos:* passions do not derive from matter, but matter, or more precisely, material substance comes from Wisdom's passions that are gradually turned into matter and elements, from which the world is then created. Passions, therefore, are the source of

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58 King, *The Secret Revelation*, 2 – 3.

59 That the list contains deeds rather than passions makes it appropriate to approach them as vices. The view is shared by Clemens Scholten: Scholten, *Martyrium und Sophiamythos*, 122.

60 Rubenson, *The Letters*, 211.

matter, not matter the source of passions. These passions, or emotions, are sorrow, perplexity, and fear, with terror added by the *Excerpts from Theodotus*. As discussed by Ismo Dunderberg, in the Valentinian myth, origin and healing of emotions is emphatic.[61] However, Valentinian accounts do not mention desire (ἐπιθυμία) in this context, whereas that is the emphatic passion in *Authentikos Logos*.

Several versions of the Valentinian myth are known.[62] Here, that of Clement of Alexandria's is summarised. In *Excerpts from Theodotus* 44.1–48.2 Clement gives an account of the Valentinian view on the healing of Wisdom's passions and how they lead to the creation of the material world.[63] When the Saviour heals Wisdom's passions, he separates them and keeps them apart. The Saviour brings these into being, and also "the elements of the second rank".[64] Now Wisdom comes into being, and with her, the outer elements (τὰ ἔξω) are created, "drawn from incorporeal passions (ἀσωμάτου πάθους) and chance (συμβεβη-κότος), turned into (still) incorporeal matter, then into mixed compounds (σύγκριμα) and bodies. Clement adds that it was not possible to make passions into substance all at once, indicating that a longer or more complicated process was necessary. The Saviour is the first, and Wisdom the second universal creator. She puts forth a god, the image of the Father, who is the Demiurge, the Creator-God.[65]

Heaven and earth were made by the Creator-God.[66] The creation begins with two substances, the underlying heavy, material substance that is turbid and coarse,[67] and the refined one (τὰ καθαρά). The former lacked form, shape and design.[68] The two substances are separated and the Demiurge makes one of the material substances out of sorrow (λύπη), one, the wild beasts, out of fear (φόβος), another, the elements of the world, from terror (πλῆξις) and perplexity

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61 Dunderberg, *Beyond Gnosticism*, 96–103, 117–118.
62 Irenaeus' account in *Against the Heresies* I is earliest and best-known, from the late second century, preserved in Greek in Epiphanius, *Panarion* 31 and similar to Hippolytus' third-century one, Hippolytus, *Refutation of All Heresies* 6.29–36. Both Irenaeus' and Hippolytus' versions have two Wisdoms, the aeon who seeks to know the Father and who is restored to the Fullness, and her daughter, Lower Wisdom (Achamoth). Clement's account provides a different version that is usually taken to represent eastern Valentinianism. The *Tripartite Tractate* also provides a version, but in that, the youngest aeon is Logos, not Wisdom, but he has a similar role in the text. For a more detailed discussion, see Dunderberg, *Beyond Gnosticism*, 95–118, who, as said, focuses on healing of emotions in the myth; also Stead, "The Valentinian Myth", 75–104; Thomassen, *The Spiritual Seed*, 248–268.
63 This section does not derive from Clement but from another Valentinian source, used also by Irenaeus. Casey, *The Excerpta ex Theodotou*, 5–8.
64 Casey's reading of ἀλλ'εἰς οὐσίαν ἤγαγεν αὐτά τε καὶ τῆς δευτέρας διαθέσεως.
65 Clement, *Excerpts from Theodotus* 44.1–47.1.
66 Clement, *Excerpts from Theodotus* 47.2.
67 τὸ δὲ ἐμβριθὲς καὶ ὑλικὸν ὑποφέρεσθαι, τὸ θολερὸν καὶ παχυμερές; the word θολερός means "muddy", "turbid", but also something that is troubled by passion or madness, e. g. Aeschylus, *Prometheus Bound*, 885; Liddell/Scott/Jones, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 803.
68 Clement, *Excerpts from Theodotus* 47.3–4

(ἀπορία).[69] In Clement's version, only three elements (στοιχεία) are presupposed; rather than being one of the elements, fire drifts about the three elements.[70] Likewise Irenaeus reports in *Against the Heresies* I.1.10 that Valentinians explain the origin of material substance from Wisdom's three passions, fear, sorrow, and perplexity.[71] Hippolytos in *Refutation of All Heresies* 6.32–34 provides a more elaborate account on Wisdom's four passions, how Christ directs them from her to the world below, and how repentance is the path away from them. Souls in this account can be of two types, either mortal or immortal, depending on whether they have been fashioned in the image of things above, or in the image of matter. Material substance is devilish, and that is what bodies are made of.[72]

Valentinian terminology differs from the above-discussed writings. It has already been noted that the four chief passions in the *Apocryphon of John* and also those stemming from the four could suggest Stoic influence, but the passions mentioned in the Valentinian accounts differ from these four.[73] If Valentinians (or the heresiologists) knew of the Stoic or Platonic four primary passions, they had another focus. Ismo Dunderberg believes that Valentinians knew of the fourfold classification. The reason, in his view, why grief and fear are kept from the "Stoic" list, and desire and pleasure are left out, is that the two included are emotions based on judgement that there is something evil either present (sorrow) or to be expected (fear), whereas those left out are based on the belief that there is something good either present (pleasure) or to be expected (desire).[74] This emphasis is very different when compared with *Authentikos Logos*, which focuses on desire that is left out from the Valentinian accounts.

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69 Clement, *Excerpts from Theodotus* 48.1–3.

70 Clement, *Excerpts from Theodotus* 48.4.

71 Ἐπεὶ οὖν τὴν ὑλικὴν οὐσίαν ἐκ τριῶν παθῶν συστῆναι λέγουσι, φόβου τε, καὶ λύπης, καὶ ἀπορίας· ἐκ μὲν τοῦ φόβου καὶ τῆς ἐπιστροφῆς τὰ ψυχικὰ τὴν σύστασιν εἰληφέναι· ἐκ μὲν τῆς ἐπιστροφῆς τὸν Δημιουργὸν βούλονται τὴν γένεσιν ἐσχηκέναι, ἐκ δὲ τοῦ φόβου τὴν λοιπὴν πᾶσαν ψυχικὴν ὑπόστασιν, ὡς ψυχὰς ἀλόγων ζώων, καὶ θηρίων, καὶ ἀνθρώπων. Irenaeus, *Against the Heresies* I.1.10.1; Epiphanius, *Panarion* 31.19.1

72 Ὥσπερ οὖν τῆς ψυχικῆς οὐσίας ἡ πρώτη καὶ μεγίστη δύναμις γέγονεν <ὁ δημιουργός, ἡ>εἰκὼν <τοῦ Πατρός, οὕτως τῆς ὑλικῆς οὐσίας ὁ>διάβολος, «ὁ ἄρχων τοῦ κόσμου τούτου», τῆς δὲ τῶν δαιμόνων οὐσίας—ἥτις ἐστὶν ἐκ τῆς ἀπορίας—ὁ Βεελζεβούλ, <«ὁ ἄρχων τῶν δαιμόνων». ἔστι δ'>ἡ Σοφία ἄνωθεν ἀπὸ τῆς Ὀγδοάδος ἐνεργοῦσα ἕως τῆς Ἑβδομάδος. Hippolytos, *Refutation of All Heresies* 6.33.1.
Προέβαλε <δὲ>καὶ ὁ δημιουργὸς ψυχάς· αὕτη γάρ <ἐστιν ἡ δύναμις>οὐσία ψυχῶν. οὗτός ἐστι κατ' αὐτοὺς Ἀβρα<ὰ>μ καὶ ταῦτα<ς>τοῦ Ἀβραὰμ τὰ τέκνα. ἐκ τῆς ὑλικῆς οὐσίας οὖν καὶ διαβολικῆς ἐποίησεν ὁ δημιουργὸς ταῖς ψυχαῖς τὰ σώματα. τοῦτό ἐστι, <φησί,>τὸ εἰρημένον· «καὶ ἔπλασεν ὁ θεὸς τὸν ἄνθρωπον, χοῦν ἀπὸ τῆς γῆς λαβών, καὶ ἐνεφύσησεν εἰς τὸ πρόσωπον αὐτοῦ πνοὴν ζωῆς· καὶ ἐγένετο ὁ ἄνθρωπος εἰς ψυχὴν ζῶσαν». οὗτός ἐστι κατ' αὐτοὺς «ὁ ἔσω ἄνθρωπος», ὁ ψυχικός, ἐν τῷ σώματι κατοικῶν τῷ χοϊκῷ, ὅ ἐστιν <ἄνθρωπος>ὑλικός, φθαρτός, τελείως ἐκ τῆς διαβολικῆς οὐσίας πεπλασμένος. Hippolytos, *Refutation of All Heresies* 6.34.4–5.

73 See table in Dunderberg, *Beyond Gnosticism*, 112.

74 Dunderberg, *Beyond Gnosticism*, 110–111. He has noted: "Instead of desire and delight, we encounter in Valentinian sources a number of other mental states that Wisdom was subject to:

If this aspect suggests a different approach between *Authentikos Logos* and the Valentinians, there is also one shared terminological aspect. As noted above, whereas the *Apocryphon of John* and the *Gospel of Mary* speak of ὕλη, *Authentikos Logos* and Valentinians use the term "material substance" (οὐσία ὑλική) that in Valentinian accounts is the coarse and heavy substance in creation, of which bodies are made. In *Authentikos Logos* bodies come from desire that has its origin in material substance. The term "matter" is employed by Stoic or later Platonic writers (see above V.1), whereas "material substance" indicates Aristotelian background.

Matter and emotions in the Apocryphon of John, the Gospel of Mary, Authentikos Logos and Valentinian accounts

Apocryphon of John	Matter	Four demons	Sorrow, fear pleasure, desire	Further passions
Gospel of Mary	Matter + opposite nature		Passion	Confusion in the body
Authentikos Logos	Material substance		Desire	Body
Valentinians according to Irenaeus and Hippolytus		Sorrow, fear, perplexity	Material substance	Creation of the cosmos
Theodotus		Sorrow, fear, terror, perplexity	Material substance	Creation of the cosmos

All texts discussed above have a mother or female figure somehow combined into their views. In the *Apocryphon of John* matter is the mother, and as discussed above, some second century and earlier authors had similar concepts. The *Apocryphon of John* suggests that matter is the mother behind different passions, the soul-body, and its elements. The *Gospel of Mary* does not develop the mother-matter concept further than suggesting the origin of bodily confusion in the union between ϩΥΛΗ (fem.) and ΠⲀΡⲀΦΥⲤⲒⲤ (masc.); there is no reason to doubt that the idea looms in the background, but

'perplexity' (ἀπορία), 'ignorance' (ἄγνοια), 'consternation' (ἔκπληξις), 'entreaty' (δέησις, ἱκετεία), and 'to be distracted' (ἐκστῆναι)." Ismo Dunderberg, "Stoic Traditions in the School of Valentinus" in Rasimus/Engberg-Pedersen/Dunderberg (ed.), *Stoicism in Early Christianity*, 220–238, on p. 226–227.

it is not put into the limelight in the *Gospel of Mary*. In the Valentinian accounts the mother-figure mentioned is Wisdom, who is not directly the mother of the created world, but only the initiator of creation as the mother of the Creator-God. Neither is Wisdom the mother of material substance, although Wisdom's emotions are its cause. In Clement's version, Wisdom remains separated from the visible, material world (material substance derives from her emotions that were separated from her, and also underwent a long process of turning into material substance).[75]

A mother, or a woman, is mentioned in *Authentikos Logos* 23; the page begins with a reference to a marriage between a man and a woman, and how their respective children become step-siblings through this union. Also the conclusive remark, "body comes from desire and desire comes from material substance" (23:17–20) gives material substance the role of mother at least to a certain extent. Yet unlike the *Apocryphon of John* and the *Gospel of Mary*, *Authentikos Logos* does not use the verb ⲬⲠⲞ but ⲈⲒ ⲈⲂⲞⲖ ϨⲚ̄, which somewhat weakens the birth-giving image and makes the approach more theoretical. If the woman is matter, she is unlike the sinister mother-matter of the demons in the *Apocryphon of John* (and, as will be discussed, also unlike the passive Receptacle in philosophical texts). Also, it is never suggested in *Authentikos Logos* that this mother-figure is the Wisdom or Achamoth of Valentinian or Sethian myths. Perhaps this is because the purpose of the mother figure in *Authentikos Logos* is not to explain the origin of the material world. The woman may be an allusion to matter and its influence, but nothing suggests a fallen aeon, cosmogonical explanation, or direct identification with matter.

What the woman in the family metaphor represents is the inferior part of the mixture into which the soul ends up: the re-marriage metaphor in *Authentikos Logos* builds on a dualist idea of the mixture of two opposites, material/created or body (woman) and immaterial/existing things or soul (man). The mother or female figure functions as the opposite to the male concept of rationality.[76] Such image of mixture explains the opposing influences within a human being, but even if it alludes to matter as mother, the point that she is matter, or material, does not refer to creation but to the soul's quest and earthly life, and it is the soul who is the predominant female figure in *Authentikos Logos*. Many references or allusions are at play in *Authentikos Logos*, and – taking note of Plotinus' view that every soul is Aphrodite[77] – the imagery need not be accidentally hazy. The step-mother may mix with the descended soul, and she may be the matter or material substance.

75 Clement, *Excerpts from Theodotus* 46–47.
76 This view is particularly emphatic in Aristotle's thought. Allen, *The Concept of Woman*, 83–126 and V.1.
77 καὶ ἔστι πᾶσα ψυχὴ Ἀφροδίτη, Plot. *Enn.* VI.9.9.26–31. See III.3.

The question remains how to explain the relationship between *Authentikos Logos*, the *Apocryphon of John*, the *Gospel of Mary* and the Valentinian cosmologies. All of them presuppose a view that matter/material substance and emotions or passions somehow cause human, or earthly life, and they do connect this notion with a female being, the mother. The *Apocryphon of John* provides a detailed explanation on passions that was clearly influenced by Stoic thought, and draws a connection between the cosmos, demons, and the soul-body of the human being. *Authentikos Logos* betrays no reliance on Stoic thought, and provides a less systematised view. Compared with the *Gospel of Mary* that dedicates space to discussion on the nature of matter and also presents a Stoic-based view of matter – with the opposite nature a dualist angle has been added to the view – *Authentikos Logos* shows less interest in or knowledge of the Stoic discussion on matter: the focus is on the human condition during its earthly life (and in the soul's struggle for ascent). Whereas the *Apocryphon of John* and the *Gospel of Mary* refer to the four passions (in the case of the *Gospel of Mary*, perhaps, the four meant collectively), *Authentikos Logos* focuses on desire.

The *Apocryphon of John* reflects earlier discussions on matter, and *Apoc. John* II 18 belongs to a longer version that is a redaction composed well after the oldest parts of the text.[78] The *Gospel of Mary*, too, reflects second-century discussions concerning the perishability/eternality of matter. It seems likely that the *Apocryphon of John* or the *Gospel of Mary*, or both, were known about when *Authentikos Logos* was composed, just as familiarity with other Christian writings can be detected in its other allusions.

Valentinians took and adapted "Gnostic", or Sethian ideas.[79] Yet it is unproven if they knew the *Apocryphon of John*.[80] *Authentikos Logos* expresses similar views to those attested in the *Apocryphon of John* and the *Gospel of Mary*, writings that circulated in the fourth century Egypt. It seems to agree with the order, that matter causes passions, not passions matter. However, it is not certain how general or precise this agreement is. *Authentikos Logos* is not concerned with creation or cosmogony as the *Apocryphon of John*, or Valentinian texts. Futher, its focus is on desire, not on sorrow, fear, perplexity, or terror, and therefore its take on passions/emotions differs from Valentinian writings. Yet like Valentinian sources, *Authentikos Logos* has opted for Aristotelian-originating "material substance", not Stoic "matter" in this context, and it combines this with a dualist notion of the human condition:

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78 Waldstein/Wisse, *The Apocryphon of John*, 7–8; Turner, *Sethian Gnosticism*, 136–141.

79 This is Irenaeus' view, Irenaeus, *Against the Heresies* I.11.1. That Irenaeus knew the *Apocryphon of John*, e.g. Brakke, *The Gnostics*, 31–32. Scholten, *Martyrium und Sophiamythos*, 262–267 on the relationship between Sethianism and Valentinianism. Waldstein considers Irenaeus' view a more plausible one than the sometimes suggested idea that Sethians made use of Valentinian materials, Waldstein, "Das Apokryphon des Johannes", 76. That the *Apocryphon of John* is preceded by the Valentinian myth has been suggested by Logan, *Gnostic Truth*, 55.

80 Dunderberg, *Beyond Gnosticism*, 104, Dunderberg, "The School of Valentinus", 71, 75–76.

invisible, lasting things are associated with the father/male, the visible world, passions and vices with the mother/female.

2.2 Matter Attacks the Soul and Makes it Material

If the matter should be discarded, and earthly life brings the soul into close contact with matter, its hostile and dangerous nature is illustrated with an image of matter that blinds the soul: "Our soul is indeed ill because she lives in a house of poverty. Matter wounds her eyes, it wants to make her blind" (ЄΡЄΘΥλΗ †ω6λ ῆΝЄϹΒλλ ЄϹΟΥωωЄ ЄλλϹ ῆΒλλΗ·, 27:26– 29). Matter is a hostile and aggressive force that attacks the soul in an attempt to make her blind, and the soul seeks the Word to use it as medicine that heals her blindness. More discussion on opening eyes and blindness ensues; damage done on the first lines of page 28 renders the exact sequence unclear, but the result of the attacks of matter, and that of blindness, is ignorance: "Afterwards when that one is still in ignorance, it is completely dark and material" (ΜῆῆϹωϹ ΟΝ ЄωωΠЄ ΠЄ†ΜΜλΥ ωωωΠ 2ῆ ΟΥΜῆΤλΤϹΟΟΥΝ· ΟΥΚλ[ΚЄ Τ]ΗΡϥ ΠЄ· λΥω ΟΥ2ΥλΙΚΟ[Ϲ ΠЄ]·, 28:6–9). The soul should take the Word as medicine that enables her to conquer the opposing powers.

As in 22:26–34, the Word is the medicine and nourishment of the soul, whereas the matter is to be discarded. The Word brings form to formlessness, takes away the disorder of matter and blindness, but the image of matter and its blinding effect, opposite to the Word and its power to open the soul's eyes, is contrary to the Stoic view where matter and Word harmoniously intertwine with one another in a way that brings the otherwise passive matter to life. For instance, Diogenes Laertius explains the Stoic position: "They think that there are two principles in the universe, that which acts and that which is acted upon. That which is acted upon is unqualified substance, i.e. matter; that which acts is the reason in it, i.e. god. For this, since it is everlasting, constructs every single thing throughout all matter".[81] In *Authentikos Logos* matter is active in a hostile way, and it opposes the Word and its healing and saving power. No notion of any good harmony between matter and Word is suggested.

The effect of matter on people is characterised as darkness, blindness, and ignorance. That such a person is material, ὑλικός – the use of the masculine suggests that this does not refer to the soul – recalls the Valentinian division of three classes of humankind or three qualities within oneself: material, ensouled, and pneumatic.[82] In *Tripartite Tractate* 98:12–20 the Word gives

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81 Diogenes Laertius 7.134 (*SVF* 2.300, part, 2.299) in Long/Sedley, *The Hellenistic Philosophers 1*, 268 and *The Hellenistic Philosophers 2*, 265–266.

82 Dunderberg, "Valentinian Theories", 113–120; Dunderberg, *Beyond Gnosticism*, 145–146.

names to the two lower orders of people. Both groups, "psychics", and "hylics", are given several names: the material ones (the hylics) are also "those on the left", "the dark ones", and "the last". The middle ones (in the text "those of the thought") are drawn to a contact with what is material with the purpose of providing them with a place, but also leading them to understand their sickness, and getting them to seek healing.[83] The lowest order is placed under rulers.[84] This concept resembles the idea of the soul's need for healing in *Authentikos Logos*, and medicine that heals her blindness, but *Authentikos Logos* focuses on the soul and its quest without mentioning the spiritual/pneumatic, ensouled, or hylic classes of people. Only a "material" person is mentioned in this passage.[85] "Ensouled", or ψυχικός is completely absent in the writing, and pneumatic (πνευματικός in feminine and neuter forms) does not refer to a quality in or group of people but to the pneumatic soul (23:13) and pneumatic body (32:32) that are connected to the soul's descent and ascent, and at least in the latter case employ a Pauline term that suggests a vehicle of the soul.[86]

This indicates that in *Authentikos Logos* the three categories of people or their potentialities is not assumed in the way Valentinian texts, even when the task of the soul (to cast away darkness and matter, to fight the opposing powers) is described as similar and a material person is mentioned. If the "material" person refers to Valentinian "material people", the take on the subject is not systematic. It rather appears that "materiality" is a quality of a person who has lost his/her (in)sight, and thus, their connection with the invisible worlds. To maintain the vision, the soul must struggle and fight the opposing powers, and aim for her treasure, at which her mind is directed.

2.3 The Soul Gives Birth to the Offspring of Matter

Hostile matter re-emerges for the second time, again connected with ignorance, on page 31. This is the final part of the fishing parable where the

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83   *Tri. Trac.* 98:21 – 99:4.

84   *Tri. Trac.* 99:4 – 19.

85   As discussed in IV.3, otherwise "material" appears in "material soul" (23:17) and "material essence" (23:20).

86   See VI.2. If the "the ignorant people" and "the fool" on pages 33 and 34 are added to this discussion, as they suggest two lots of people who are in the wrong, it must be noted that they are rather described as opponents (the ignorant), and as spiritually lazy Christians (the foolish person), not as two of three classes of humankind. The fool is described in the singular, in the style of wisdom literature (so also the fool briefly mentioned in 24:23 – 26). Also, if pages 33 and 34 were taken as a discussion of several classes of people, then four classes would have to be assumed, because the two criticised groups are compared with pagans, in addition to which the ones in the right ("us") would also have to be presumed. Tervahauta, "Ignorant People, the fool and pagans", 195 – 216.

Adversary uses his bait to draw and submerge the soul into ignorance.[87] The Adversary deceives the soul who, in turn, conceives and gives birth to the offspring of matter. The soul leads a defiled life and pursues many kinds of desires and greeds, and the sweetness of carnal things entices it in ignorance: ЄϥΡⲀⲠⲀⲦⲀ ⲘⲘⲞⲤ ⲰⲀⲚⲦⳞⲰ ⲘⲠⲔⲀⲔⲞⲚ· ⲚⲤⲘⲓⳞЄ Ⲛ2ЄⲚⲔⲀΡⲠⲞⳞ ⲚⲐⲨⲖⲎ· ⲚⳞΡⲠⲞⲖⲓⲦЄⲨЄⳞⲐⲀⲓ 2Ⲙ ⲠⲬⲰ2Ⲙ ЄⳞⲠⲎⲦ ⲚⳞⲀ 2Ⲁ2 ⲚⲚЄⲠⲓⲐⲨⲘⲓⲀ· 2ЄⲚⲘⲚⲦⲘⲀЄⲓ ⲦⲞ Ⲛ2ⲞⲨⲞ· ЄΡЄⲠ2ⲖⲀϭ ⲚⳞⲀΡⲔⲓⲔⲞⲚ ⳞⲰⲔ ⲘⲘⲞⳞ 2Ⲛ ⲞⲨⲘⲚⲦⲀⲦⳞⲞⲞⲨⲚ· (31:16–24).

The matter disturbs the purity of the soul, which is illustrated with an image of (sexual) seduction. The soul's earthly life is depicted as a sexual fall, which, as was discussed above, is to a certain extent similar to the *Exegesis on the Soul*, which, however, employs the concepts of virginity, daughterhood, deception, sexual license and prostitution, and bridal imagery to a greater extent than *Authentikos Logos*. The image reverses the passive and feminine role of the matter that was dicussed above: when the soul gives birth to the offspring of matter, matter is given a male role. The matter is not the mother as in Philo or the *Apocryphon of John*, but it is portrayed as fathering the soul-woman's illegitimate offspring.

A similar process is suggested in James 1:14–15. In that text, the writer exhorts the recipients to be steadfast in temptations, and never to think that God would send temptations. Rather, "one is tempted by one's own desire that draws and entices him, and when the desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin, and when the sin is fully grown, it gives birth to death".[88] It is the concepts of desire, deception, pulling, conception, and birth-giving that form the common ground between *Authentikos Logos* and James. In James, everyone is tempted by their own desire, and that is what pulls and deceives them, whereas in *Authentikos Logos*, the Adversary deceives the soul. In James, the result of desire's conception is the birth of sin that in turn gives birth to death. In *Authentikos Logos*, the soul conceives and gives birth to the offspring of matter. Desire is connected to the image in that the soul pursues many desires in her earthly life. The most significant difference between the two texts is the lack of the words "sin" or "death" in *Authentikos Logos*, where, however, "evil", equal to the Adversary, and more connected with matter, is the father of the soul's children. Matter in *Authentikos Logos* is evil and the Adversary.

The employment of this image from the Epistle to James is attested by Athanasius of Alexandria who exhorts his audience in the *Life of Antony* 21 to struggle against being tyrannised by anger or be ruled by desire, since it is

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87 See also VI.1.

88 ἕκαστος δὲ πειράζεται ὑπὸ τῆς ἰδίας ἐπιθυμίας ἐξελκόμενος καὶ δελεαζόμενος εἶτα ἡ ἐπιθυμία συλλαβοῦσα τίκτει ἁμαρτίαν, ἡ δὲ ἁμαρτία ἀποτελεσθεῖσα ἀποκύει θάνατον. In the Sahidic New Testament: ⲠⲞⲨⲀ ⲆⲈ ⲠⲞⲨⲀ ⲈⲨⲠⲈⲓΡⲀⳞⲈ ⲘⲘⲞϥ 2ⲓⲦⲚ ⲦⲈϥⲈⲠⲓⲐⲨⲘⲓⲀ ⲘⲘⲓⲚ ⲘⲘⲞϥ· ЄⲨⳞⲰⲔ ⲘⲘⲞϥ· ЄⲨⲀⲠⲀⲦⲀ ⲘⲘⲞϥ· ЄⲓⲦⲀ ⲦЄⲠⲓⲐⲨⲘⲓⲀ ЄⲀⳞⲰ ⲰⲀⳞⲬⲠⲞ ⲘⲠⲚⲞⲃⲉ· ⲠⲚⲞⲃⲉ Ⲇⲉ ⲀϥⲬⲰⲔ ЄⲃⲞⲖ ⲰⲀϥⲘⲓⳞЄ ⲘⲠⲘⲞⲨ. Jas 1:14–15.

written that "the wrath of man does not produce God's justice, and desire, when it has conceived, gives birth to sin, and sin, when it is fully grown, gives birth to death". He also quotes James 1:15 and 1:20.[89] Athanasius combines with the images of conception and giving birth to sin advice on how the ascetics are to live: "Thus living (πολιτευόμενοι), let us be sober, without swerving, and, as it is written, 'Keep our heart with all vigilance.'" Moreover, Athanasius combines to this Ephesians 6:12 and its idea of evil forces that oppose people – "we have terrible and cunning enemies, evil demons. And against these 'is our struggle', as says the apostle, 'not against blood and flesh, but rulers, authorities, cosmic powers of the darkness of this age, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places'" and he goes on to discuss demons, their nature and activities.[90]

Authentikos Logos does not exhort directly in the manner of Athanasius, but rather describes the soul's final turning away from evil and how the soul chooses such a new way of life (πολιτεία) that enables her to leave this world and reach the real one (31:24 – 32:16). Both discuss evil forces: in *Authentikos Logos* Adversary is mentioned, also to be associated with the Devil in 30:27, whereas for Athanasius the opponents of the soul are demons, and both connect their discussion to the way of life.

2.4 The Wheat and the Chaff

The sections of *Authentikos Logos* discussed above are those that refer to matter as a hostile power or force that the soul must oppose. However, the word ₂ΥΛΗ also appears in the metaphor of wheat and chaff on 25:12 – 26. In that context the word does not directly refer to matter in the sense of the above-discussed sections, but the discussion nevertheless concerns the damaging effect of the mixing of two unequal elements. The two unequal opposites of the parable refer to matter and immaterial, or to the pure and defiled. The pure is the wheat, the damaging effect of matter is represented by chaff.

The image is part of a section that evolves around the soul's bodily life that starts with the family metaphor on page 23, continues to page 24 where the soul's life on earth is referred to as that of a woman imprisoned in a brothel and falling into drunkenness and forgetfulness. This preceding page advices its audience to live wisely and choose wisely: life and death are the two ways from which to choose (24:10 – 13), a fool lives like animals, not understanding how to speak, whereas the gentle son brings joy to his father (24:23 – 33).

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89 Athanasius, *Life of Antony*, 21.1. The citation in 21.1. is to Jas 1:20 and Jas 1:15, with minor changes: James' ἐργάζεται in verse 20 is κατεργάζεται in Athanasius.
90 Eph 6:12. Athanasius also cites Prov 4:23.

Lusting thoughts defile virgins (25:6 – 11) and gluttony cannot be mixed with moderation (25:9 – 11).

The message of the wheat and chaff parable (25:12 – 26) is much the same as what precedes, that a combination of two unequal partners, or essences, is harmful for the more valuable party. If wheat is mixed with chaff, not the chaff but the wheat is spoiled, and no-one is going to buy such wheat. In a slightly vague part of the metaphor unidentified characters in the third person plural see the wheat mixed with the chaff, approach the owner and try to persuade him to give them the chaff: "Give us this chaff!" What follows does not proceed in the way one might expect: the flatterers are not after the wheat in order to separate it from the chaff and so to get the wheat for free, but rather, if they get the mixture, they will just throw it in with all other materials (ϨⲈⲚⲔⲈϨⲨⲖⲎ), and the wheat will be even less valuable than before. The image ends with a gnomic statement: "But pure (or holy) seed is kept in secure storages."[91]

The wheat and the chaff metaphor can be seen as reminiscent of gospel texts: John the Baptist's witness of Jesus as the one who separates wheat and chaff (Matt 3:12 par. Luke 3:17), and perhaps also Jesus' parable of weeds secretly sown among the wheat (Matt 13:24 – 30). There are remarkable differences: no story context is provided or any person telling the parable is named, which puts the focus on the parable itself. The emphasis and the interpretation of the images differs from the gospel versions that also appear to have somewhat merged in *Authentikos Logos*.[92]

In John the Baptist's saying in Matt 3:12/Luke 3:17 Jesus emerges as the one with a winnowing-fork in his hand. He is the one who clears the threshing floor, gathers the wheat into the granary, and burns the chaff in unquenchable fire.[93] Both Matthew and Luke give this as John the Baptist's witness of Jesus in the context of discussion of John's baptismal activity, John and Jesus' relationship, and the baptism of Jesus.[94] The owner of the wheat in *Authentikos*

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91 ⲞⲨⲤⲠⲈⲢⲘⲀ Ⲛ̄ⲦⲞϤ ⲈϤⲞⲨⲀⲀⲂ ⲰⲀⲨⲢⲞⲈⲓⲤ ⲈⲢⲞϤ Ϩⲛ̄ Ϩⲉⲛⲁⲡⲟⲑⲏⲕⲏ ⲈⲨⲞⲢⲈⲬ (25:23 – 25); ἀποθήκη, storage or granary, is the place of the pure seed. The ἀποθήκη appears later when the soul hurries to her treasure house where her mind is, and to her secure storage (28:23 – 27).

92 There is not much evidence for other, similar agricultural images at the background, even when the act of separating the wheat and chaff would have been a common one in the context of every day life in the ancient world. Xenophon mentions wheat and chaff in a purely agricultural context, Xenophon, *Oeconomicus* 18. Apart from Matt, Luke and Jer 23:28 (LXX), it is not otherwise employed in the Jewish/Christian Scripture.

93 οὗ τὸ πτύον ἐν τῇ χειρὶ αὐτοῦ καὶ διακαθαριεῖ τὴν ἅλωνα αὐτοῦ καὶ συνάξει τὸν σῖτον αὐτοῦ εἰς τὴν ἀποθήκην, τὸ δὲ ἄχυρον κατακαύσει πυρὶ ἀσβέστῳ, Matt 3:12.

94 In Matthew the saying is preceded by John's warnings to Pharisees and Sadducees of the axe by the tree and exhortation to repentance. After John's words Jesus arrives from Galilee to be baptised, follows John and Jesus' dialogue on who should baptise whom, after which John accepts his task and baptises Jesus who ascending from the water, sees the heavens opening and the spirit descending as a dove, and hears the voice from heaven. Luke instead directs his words

Logos is unlike the judge-like Jesus of John the Baptist's saying who separates the good from the bad: the owner is not Christ but someone, a recipient of the text, and he or she is in danger of losing the wheat. The wheat will not end up in granaries if mixed, but the indication is that allowing some mixture will lead to worse mixture, and the mixed wheat will be as worthless as the chaff. The conclusion mentions no destroying or purifying fire as the fate of the mixture or chaff.

Early Christian writers employed the gospel saying of the wheat and chaff in various ways. In *Dialogue with Trypho* 49.3.13 Justin the Martyr simply quotes the words but does not otherwise elaborate nor explain them. A more interpreted version is provided by Irenaeus in *Against the Heresies* 1.3.5. When he names aeons of Valentinian teaching, he connects the wheat and chaff the saying in Matthew 3 to the aeon pair ὅρος/σταυρός. According to Irenaeus, Valentinians gave the Limit/Cross pair the role of sustaining and separating, and according to Irenaeus, Valentinians interpret John's words as referring to the faculty of the Cross that like fire consumes all that is material, but purifies that which is saved, like the winnowing fork purifies the wheat.[95] In this interpretation, the idea of separation is maintained and combined with the teaching on aeons.

When Clement of Alexandria interprets John the Baptist's words in *Eclogae propheticae* 25.1 – 4, he suggests that fire refers to the spirit, for it is the spirit/wind that separates wheat from the chaff and has the separating effect on material powers (ἐνεργειῶν ὑλικῶν). Although Clement, too, focuses on the idea of separation, and unlike *Authentikos Logos*, discusses the role of the spirit, there is something similar with *Authentikos Logos* in the sense that Clement refers to material powers, and plays with the double meaning of πνεῦμα ("wind", "spirit"), just like *Authentikos Logos* plays with the double meaning of ⲦⲰϨ as the noun "chaff" and the verb "mix".

Origen interprets John the Baptist's words in *Homily on Luke* 26, and he, too, focuses on the separating effect and Jesus' role as the one separating the wheat from the chaff. There is no winnowing in still weather: strong wind is needed to blow the chaff away and to allow the wheat fall to the ground. Origen emphasises any Christian's personal qualities that are decisive when

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of repentance at the people, who ask what they are to do; John exhorts them to sharing; tax-collectors, and soldiers are exhorted not to ask for more than their due. When people ponder if John may be the Messiah, John claims not to be worthy of loosening his sandals, and says Jesus will baptise in spirit and fire. After this follows the threshing-floor saying, followed by a brief mention of John's imprisonment.

95 καὶ διὰ τούτου τὴν ἐνέργειαν τοῦ Ὅρου μεμηνυκέναι· πτύον γὰρ ἐκεῖνον τὸν Σταυρὸν ἑρμηνεύουσιν εἶναι, ὃν δὴ [f. l. δεῖ] καὶ ἀναλίσκειν τὰ ὑλικὰ πάντα, ὡς ἄχυρα πῦρ· καθαίρειν δὲ τοὺς σωζομένους, ὡς τὸ πτύον τὸν σῖτον. Irenaeus, *Against the Heresies* 1.1.6. Epiphanius repeats this in *Panarion* 31.15.3. Einar Thomassen has traced similarities to Neopythagorean ideas in Valentinian concepts, also that of Limit. His conclusion is that Valentinian theologians have a legitimate place in the history of ancient philosophy. Thomassen, "Derivation of Matter", 13, 17.

temptations arrive. If your soul proves weak during temptation, it is not the temptation that makes you chaff, but *because* you are chaff, you are proved light and without faith. Likewise, if you are steadfast through the temptation, it is not the temptation that makes you faithful and steadfast, but only your ability (δύναμις) to be steadfast is revealed.[96] Although Origen maintains the idea of separation in his explanation, he also approaches the winnowing fork and the fire from the viewpoint of temptations, and emphasises the importance of endurance, which goes in the same direction as the image in *Authentikos Logos*.[97]

In *Refutation of All Heresies* 6.9 Hippolytus refers to a teaching of Simon Magus' where a connection is made with the wheat and chaff image. Hippolytus claims that Simon took the expression "God is a burning and consuming fire" (Deut 4:24) as affirming that fire is the originating principle of the universe. Hippolytus first describes and criticises Simon's theory, then provides Simon's way of illustrating his teaching, which makes use of the gospel image of wheat, chaff, fire, and the granary. According to Hippolytus, Simon was not only wrong but he plagiarised Heraclitus. According to Simon, fire, the principle of the universe, is twofold, partly secret and partly visible, in the same way that Aristotle speaks of potentiality and energy, and Plato of intelligible and sensible. Hippolytus says that Simon illustrated his views with a tree-image: the invisible or secret parts are the intellect, whereas the visible parts of the cosmic fire are likened to the root, branches, and leaves of the tree. These parts would be consumed in the all-devouring fire, whereas the fruit – and now the image of καρπός turns into one of grain rather than fruit and takes after the gospel saying – will be collected and taken into storage, not cast into the fire as is done to the chaff, or its stem.[98]

These examples illustrate the varying ways of employing the image of wheat and chaff by early Christian authors. All of them pay attention to the idea of separation that is not suggested in *Authentikos Logos*. As in Irenaeus', Clement's, and Hippolytus' accounts, *Authentikos Logos* metaphor refers to the general duality between material and the immaterial, but the reference is rather general. Compared with Valentinian or Simon's interpretations, no philosophical theory or system is apparent in the background. In some ways *Authentikos Logos* comes closest to Origen's emphasis on endurance and ascesis, as the focus is on moral purity and avoidance of mixture.

The idea of the useless wheat being thrown away with the chaff and the rest of the materials compares with Jesus' parable of tasteless salt that will be

96 Origen, *Homiliae in Lucam* 26.

97 Origen in *Scholia in Apocalypsem* and Irenaeus in *Against the Heresies* 5 frgm. 22:39 read the metaphor in light of martyrdom (the passages are partly word to word): the chaff is apostasy, wheat as the fruit-bearing faith will be put into granaries: affliction (θλῖψις) tests those who are saved. Irenaeus, *Against the Heresies* 5 Frgm. 22:39, Origen *Scholia in Apocalypsem*, 38. In *Sel. Psalmos* (*PG* 12, p. 1505.17) the just are the wheat, the unjust the chaff.

98 Hippolytos, *Refutation of All Heresies* 6.9.8 – 10.

thrown away (Matt 5:13). Yet another possible point of reference is Jesus' parable in Matthew 13 that likens the kingdom of heaven to a field where a man sowed wheat (σῖτος), but his enemy secretly planted weeds (ζιζάνια) among the wheat. When the slaves of the man ask whether they should clear the field, they are told to wait for the harvest so that the wheat shall not be damaged. Jesus' parable about wheat and weeds presents the mixture of the good and bad as caused by the man's enemy; the focus is on allowing the mixture to exist until the harvest so that the wheat would not be damaged if the weeds are removed. After the harvest the two are separated, wheat for storage (ἀποθήκη), weeds for fire.

According to Clement of Alexandria, in Valentinian teaching the weed that grows with the divine soul is the material soul or ensouled body (*Excerpts from Theodotus* 51.3, 53.1). The two, soul and body, must stick together until death. The view is similar with *Authentikos Logos*, but not quite the same. In *Authentikos Logos* the chaff (ΤⲰϨ) refers to life that is material, but no release is suggested. In *Excerpts from Theodotus*, the weed appears to be the body in which the soul has to live, not matter or material life.

The direction on how to interpret the wheat and chaff image in *Authentikos Logos* is clearly stated in two comments preceding the metaphor, first, how a desirous thought contaminates or defiles a person who is a virgin (ⲢⲰⲘⲈ ⲘⲠⲀⲢⲐⲈⲚⲞⲤ), and second, how gluttony cannot mix with moderation. Tone is that of exhortation in directing the recipients towards proper restraint in matters of sexuality (even in thoughts) and eating – central concerns of ascetic life. One should not so much as give room to the wrong type of thoughts.[99] The statement in the end can also be read as guiding the precipients to withdrawal: "The pure/holy seed is kept in secure granaries".[100] The "pure or holy seed" is an interesting expression: holy seed appears in the First and Second Esdras, and early Christian Isaiah commentaries and homilies,[101] and the granary or storage connects with the gospel image. Can indeed these paraenetical tones be heard as aimed at real virgins who should keep themselves in "secure storehouses" of ascetic seclusion?

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99 This strictness of morals here compares with Mark 9:43 – 49; Matt 5:28 – 30; Matt 18:8 – 9.
100 This saying is the last one in the section that ends with an authorial comment, "We have spoken all this" (25:26 – 27), and then continues to discuss the Father's pre-existence and his will that explains the purpose of life on earth. (25:27 – 26:20).
101 1 Esd 8:67; 2 Esd 2:2, but appears in several early Isaiah commentaries or homilies: Origen, *In Jeremiam* hom. 5.13.26 (in pl.), Eusebius, *Comm. in Isaiam*, 1.42.109, Basil of Cesarea, *Enarration in proph. Isaiam* 6.191, John Chrysostom, *In Isaiam* 6.6.53, etc.

3. Summary

Following suggestions can be made on the basis of the above discussion: first, the discussion of matter (ὕλη) in *Authentikos Logos* may to some extent reflect a philosophical background. Yet unlike philosophical views of first- and second-century authors, the writing does not consider matter a passive element that with logos or God brings the world to life, but assumes a dualist view where matter is the opposing, actively hostile force that threatens the soul. It is a Christian text, but there is no trace of a second-century Christian discussion on whether or not matter was created or not, and this lack of interest in the perishability of matter and the view of it as evil suggests a different, and later, context, as does the dualism that suggests a Platonic approach.

A comparison with *Authentikos Logos*, the *Gospel of Mary*, the *Apocryphon of John*, and Valentinian views shows that *Authentikos Logos* has its focus elsewhere than the writings it was compared to. Its discussion of passions and matter has the focus on matter as an active cause of evil. The image of matter that attacks the soul views matter and Word as opposite, not as interacting to create harmony of the world, and no Valentinian theory of three classes of humankind or three leanings within the soul is evident. It may or may not be known in *Authentikos Logos:* this and the preceding discussion of the material substance and passions suggest that although Valentinian views may have been known, *Authentikos Logos* cannot without doubt be approached as a Valentinian text. Yet it is possible that both *Authentikos Logos* 23 and 28 allude to Valentinian views.

The two last instances where matter is mentioned appeared as possibly alluding to, or being reminiscent of the Epistle of James and the two Gospels sayings on wheat or salt. Like the James comment, *Authentikos Logos* 31 warns of evil that may dominate a life where desire takes the lead. The parable of the wheat and the chaff provides an allegory of the effect of matter on the soul. Discussion of its gospel reminiscences and other early Christian interpretations of Matthew 3 reveal some notable differences: no idea of separation of the wheat and the chaff is mentioned in *Authentikos Logos*, but mixture spreads and destroys the good wheat; as in the image of birth-giving, no concept of sin is mentioned. But even when sin is not discussed, the focus is ethical: matter and desire take the role of sin in *Authentikos Logos*.

In the next chapter, the idea of the soul's contest and the role of the body in that contest will be discussed. If matter is the evil force that attempts to destroy the soul, the body is valued differently and not as negatively as the matter. It rather provides a place and means for the contest of the soul.

VI. The Body and the Soul's Contest

According to *Authentikos Logos*, the soul descends from above, but in earthly life it is bound to body (ⲤⲱⲘⲀ) and matter (ϨⲨⲖⲎ). Both are mentioned on the very first page of the writing, and then throughout the text in contexts that reveal their importance. As was discussed above, matter carries negative connotations in *Authentikos Logos*. Contrariwise, the body is not evaluated in quite that negative terms. It is an inevitable part of the soul's journey and its way to salvation. There are different kinds of bodies, and the soul's incarnate life, although imprisonment in a brothel and life of poverty, is only for a time and contains an option of return through knowledge and bodily ascesis. Temptations can be conquered and the final culmination of salvation is described as the soul's ascent in a pneumatic body.

This chapter inspects the body and salvation in *Authentikos Logos:* passages where they are discussed will be analysed in order to understand the soul's relation to the body and how the soul's ascent and salvation are approached. An analysis of views on the body in *Authentikos Logos* is conducted in light of other early Christian and late ancient philosophical views. *Authentikos Logos* is approached from several angles in this chapter. It will be first suggested that no clear dichotomy is to be assumed between the soul and the body. Despite the generally dualist outlook, exemplified for instance in the divide between existing things and those that have a beginning, there is no outright negative evaluation of the body. The text also pictures the soul that is not incorporeal: even prior to incarnation the soul has some sort of form and a body as is indicated on page 22 where it is said to be one with the invisible worlds through its members, body and pneuma, and later, when the soul leaves its body, it has an invisible pneumatic body (ⲤⲱⲘⲀ ⲘⲡⲚⲀⲦⲒⲔⲟⲛ) to enable its ascent (32:30 – 32). Whilst the "pneumatic (spiritual) body" is a Pauline term that appears to be deliberately employed here, the notion of the pneumatic body seems to come close to later Platonist views of the soul's pneumatic vehicle.[1] How is 1 Corinthians 15:44 applied and what is the pneumatic body in *Authentikos Logos?*

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1 Synesius, *On Dreams* 7, Iamblichus, *De Mysteriis* III.14.132.10; V.12.215.8, see Gregory Shaw, *Theurgy and the Soul. The Neoplatonism of Iamblichus* (Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1995), 51 – 53, 105. A.P. Bos, *The Soul and Its Instrumental Body. A Reinterpretation of Aristotle's Philosophy of Living Nature* (Brill's Studies in Intellectual History 112; Leiden: Brill, 2003), 281 – 290; Robert Christian Kissling, "The ὄχημα-πνεῦμα of the Neo-Platonists and the *De Insomniis* of Synesius of Cyrene" in *American Journal of Philology* 43 (1922), 318 – 330.

Second, a body necessarily belongs to the soul's life on earth, and can serve the purpose of contest and striving for better. What aspects of ascetic contest or lifestyle emerge in *Authentikos Logos*, and how do these relate to other ascetic, early Christian literature? It will be suggested that several aspects expressed in ascetic texts are encountered in *Authentikos Logos*, such as concern with right nourishment that feeds the soul, as opposed to the (metaphorical) foods of death and the Devil's baits, discussion of the effects of desire, vices and passions, and the idea of withdrawal, and vigilance or combat against evil. Temptations in the world and bodily ascesis are part of the soul's life and a key to the salvation. Passions disturb the soul through the body, and avoidance of bodily enticements is necessary for the soul's ascent. The ascended soul is lauded for having troubled its body. The body thus holds the key to the soul's progress and final ascent.

The second half of this chapter focuses on the final ascent that echoes ascent literature. A particularly interesting term is ⲘⲠⲢⲀⲄⲘⲀⲧⲉⲨⲧⲏⲤ Ⲛ̄ⲚⲤⲰⲘⲀ (32:18 – 19) that will be studied in order to understand what these characters are and how they direct the reading of that section of the text. The term contains a pun that plays with the double meaning of the term σῶμα as both "body" and "slave", and thus connects with the idea of earthly life as the soul's slavery in the body. The same passage where the "slave traders" appear, raises questions on how the writing views the post-mortem fate of the soul. *Authentikos Logos* is silent on resurrection, and hints towards the threat of reincarnation. What and how much can be concluded of this: would the text's transmitters and readers have completely rejected resurrection as a way to describe salvation, or is the ascent narrative a parallel way to discuss the soul's progress and salvation? Further, ascent narratives are known in a wide variety of forms. The ascent in *Authentikos Logos* differs from ascent visions, and the soul's ascent is closely bound to the theme of the soul's progress. As will be discussed, this resembles Athanasius' approach in *Life of Antony*, and Asclepius' approach.

1. The Descent, Life in Body, and the Contest of the Soul

If the different phases on the soul's journey are illustrated in different names/ epithets applied to the soul, as discussed in Chapter 4, the soul also has different kinds of bodies in the different stages of the journey. The soul is not assumed to be an incorporeal entity, but described as having some sort of body prior to and after her earthly life. This is a common notion in late antiquity. As will be discussed presently, both Platonic/Aristotelian thought as well as Paul's epistles would have provided models for these views.

1.1 The Soul's Descent to a Life in a Body

The first page of *Authentikos Logos* emphasises the harmonious connection of the invisible soul with the invisible worlds, but also the soul's bodily nature is noted. The invisible soul of justice comes from the invisible worlds and is one with them in members, body and spirit: ⲚⲀ̀Ⲓ Ⲛ̄ⲦⲀ ⲦⲨⲮⲎ Ⲛ̄Ⲁ ⲘⲘⲒ̄Ⲁ ⲦⲞⲤ Ⲛ̄Ⲧ ⲦⲀⲒⲔⲀⲒⲞ ⲤⲨ̅ⲚⲎ Ⲛ̄ⲦⲀⲤ Ⲉ ⲈⲂⲞⲖ Ⲛ̄ⲂⲎⲦⲞⲨ ⲈⲤⲰⲞⲞⲠ Ⲛ̄Ⲱ̄ⲂⲢ ⲘⲘⲈⲖⲞⲤ· ⲀⲨⲰ Ⲛ̄Ⲱ̄ⲂⲢ ⲚⲤⲰⲘⲀ· ⲀⲨⲰ Ⲛ̄Ⲱ̄ⲂⲢ ⲘⲠ̄Ⲛ̄Ⲁ̄·(22:16 – 17). The most likely reading to this is that the soul's body that is mentioned does not refer to its heavy, human body, but to a light, pre-incarnation body: it is only on the next page that the soul ends up in a body and earthly life. Particularly the words "member" (μέλος) and "body" (σῶμα) bring an aspect of corporeality to the idea of the soul, but so does the πνεῦμα that was considered to be a very thin substance that consists of ether, fire, or other very light stuff.[2]

This image emphasises cosmic harmony and the soul's part in it. Such images of harmony are also found in Valentinian and Pauline writings. A distantly similar image of cosmic harmony is pictured in Valentinus' poem *Harvest*. All is carried by the Spirit (πνεῦμα): flesh, soul, air, fruits of the depth, and babies as they are born.[3] *Harvest* concerns the universe as one living thing in a way that agrees with Stoic thought, and it discusses cosmology and is accompanied by a commentary on it (written by Hippolytus or Valentinus' followers).[4] However, *Authentikos Logos* rather uses the soul and its relationship with the divine world as the starting point for the soul's journey. Another Valentinian text, the *Tripartite Tractate*, uses similar vocabulary when it claims that the "election" († ⲘⲚ̄ⲦⲤⲰⲦⲠ̄), that is, the spiritual people, are of the same body and essence with the Saviour: "But the election is one body and one substance with the Saviour".[5] The discussion in the *Tripartite Tractate* does not concern the soul and the eternal world, but Christians and their Saviour.[6]

Similar expressions of connectedness and harmony are employed in Pauline epistles. A close combination of body, member, and spirit is used by

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2 According to Philo the soul consists of air and is part of "ethereal nature", which is the "breath of life" that God breathed on the face of Adam. Philo, *Allegorical Interpretation* III, 161. The soul is πνεῦμα in Philo, *The Worse Attacks the Better*, 84. Some thought that stars consisted of ether or πνεῦμα, which is the same substance that souls consist of. Martin, *The Corinthian Body*, 119 – 120.

3 Hippolytus, *Refutation of All Heresies* 6.31.

4 Dunderberg, *Beyond Gnosticism*, 60 – 66. For Stoic background, see Dunderberg, "Stoic Traditions", 220 – 238.

5 ⲬⲈ †ⲘⲚ̄ⲦⲤⲰⲦⲠ̄ Ⲛ̄ⲀⲈ ⲞⲨⲰ̄ⲂⲎⲢ· Ⲛ̄ⲤⲰⲘⲀ ⲀⲈ ⲀⲨⲰ ⲞⲨⲰ̄ⲂⲎⲢ Ⲛ̄ⲚⲞⲨⲤⲒⲀ ⲦⲈ ⲘⲚ̄ ⲠⲤⲰⲦⲎⲢ *Tri. Trac.* 122:12 – 15. Thomassen translates ⲞⲨⲰ̄ⲂⲎⲢ Ⲛ̄ⲤⲰⲘⲀ as "concorporeal", and ⲞⲨⲰ̄ⲂⲎⲢ Ⲛ̄ⲚⲞⲨⲤⲒⲀ as "consubstantial", *The Spiritual Seed*, 51. The section continues with bridal imagery when it describes the union of the Christ and his elect.

6 See Thomassen, *The Spiritual Seed*, 50 – 52.

Paul in 1 Corinthians 12:12 where he discusses the many members of one body and how they are held together by the spirit.[7] It has been pointed out that Paul employs here an image of society as a body, a popular figure in ancient rhetoric, and as he does so, the aim is to emphasise the necessity of social unity, even if that means accepting different statuses for different members.[8] However, whereas Paul's purpose is to encourage Corinthians to live in harmony and not compete for each other's position, thus, "to petrify a clear hierarchy in the community",[9] *Authentikos Logos* does not refer to discord between people but reminds its audiences of the harmony that exists or can exist between the soul and the invisible worlds. A notion of the "pneumatic union" between the body of a Christian and the body of Christ would have been assumed by Paul as well, but his focus in 1 Corinthians 12:12 is to argue for the stability of hierarchy in the community, and as he does so, he stands in the Graeco-Roman rhetorical tradition.[10]

In Paul's spirit, Ephesians 3:6 emphasises that Gentiles are part of the same body as Jews: they have become fellow-heirs, members of the same body and sharers in the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel.[11] The term σύσσωμα appears for the first time in Greek literature here, and this could suggest that ⲚϢⲂⲢ ⲚⲤⲰⲘⲀ in *Authentikos Logos* 22:16 recalls that, if the prefix ϢⲂⲢ- is taken as an equivalent to Greek συν-.[12] This is possible, since knowledge of Ephesians 5:18 can be suggested in *Authentikos Logos* 24:15–17. The key difference is that the focus of the two epistles is on communal life, whereas *Authentikos Logos* concentrates on the soul. Yet just as Corinthians, or Christ-believing Jews and Gentile Christians to whom the Epistle to Ephesians was written, should live in harmony in their communities, the soul in *Authentikos Logos* can maintain or aim at restoring the connection with the worlds above even in the κατάβασις, in its descent into the material world.

The tranquil image of page 22 does not yet contain any comment on what might disturb the soul's connection with the invisible worlds. Disturbance follows on the next page 23 where the pneumatic soul is "thrown into a body" and becomes a step-sibling of desire, hatred, and envy, that is, passions: ⲦⲀⲒ ϨⲰⲰⲤ ⲦⲈ ⲐⲈ ⲚⲦⲮⲨⲬⲎ ⲘⲠⲚⲀⲦⲒⲔⲎ ⲚⲦⲈⲢⲞⲨⲚⲞⲬⲤ ⲈϨⲢⲀⲒ

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7 Καθάπερ γὰρ τὸ σῶμα ἕν ἐστιν καὶ μέλη πολλὰ ἔχει, πάντα δὲ τὰ μέλη τοῦ σώματος πολλὰ ὄντα ἕν ἐστιν σῶμα, οὕτως καὶ ὁ Χριστός· καὶ γὰρ ἐν ἑνὶ πνεύματι ἡμεῖς πάντες εἰς ἓν σῶμα ἐβαπτίσθημεν, 1 Cor 12:12–13a.

8 See e.g. Philo, *The Special Laws* III, 131. Martin, *Corinthian Body*, 92–96. See also the *Interpretation of Knowledge* 17–18.

9 Dunderberg, "The School of Valentinus", 91–92.

10 Martin, *The Corinthian Body*, 92–96, see also 176 (discusses 1 Cor 6 and 15).

11 εἶναι τὰ ἔθνη συγκληρονόμα καὶ σύσσωμα καὶ συμμέτοχα τῆς ἐπαγγελίας ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ διὰ τοῦ εὐαγγελίου. Eph 3:6. For instance Irenaeus comments on this Ephesians' expression in *Against the Heresies* I.4.1.24, also Origen, *Comm. on the Gospel of John* 6.4.26; 6.5.27; 13.48.315.

12 The Sahidic New Testament does not provide an answer, as it does not have the prefix ϢⲂⲢ- but ⲞⲨⲤⲰⲘⲀ ⲚⲞⲨⲰⲦ. However, the Bohairic text has ϢⲪⲎⲢ ⲚⲤⲰⲘⲀ. Aristotle has συσσωματοποιέω in *De mundo* 396 ▪ 15.

ЄΠⲤⲰⲘⲀ· ⲀⲤⲱⲰΠЄ ⲚⲤⲞⲚ ⲚЄΠⲓⲐⲨⲘⲓⲀ ⲘⲚ ΠⲘⲞⲤⲦЄ ⲘⲚ ΠⲔⲰⲢ·
ⲀⲨⲰ ⲘⲮⲨⲭⲎ ⲚⲎⲨⲀⲓⲔⲎ· �hⲰⲤⲦЄ ⲆЄ ΠⲤⲰⲘⲀ ⲚⲦⲀϤЄⲓ ЄⲂⲞⲗ hⲚ
ⲦЄΠⲓⲐⲨⲘⲓⲀ· ⲀⲨⲰ ⲦЄΠⲓⲐⲨⲘⲓⲀ ⲚⲦⲀⲤЄⲓ ЄⲂⲞⲗ hⲚ ⲦⲞⲨⲤⲓⲀ
ⲚhⲨⲀⲓⲔⲎ·[13]

A similar notion of passions that disturb the harmony that connects with
Pauline language can be found in Antony's *Letter* 6, which refers to the
member imagery in 1 Corinthians 12. Antony connects one member's
detachment from its association with the passions of the flesh: "But if a
member is estranged from the body, having no contact with the head, but
delighting in the passions of the flesh, it has contracted an incurable wound
and has forgotten its beginning and its end."[14] In Antony's letter passions of
the flesh are forces that disturb the unity and health of the body and need to be
cured. This disconnection results in the member forgetting its beginning
(origin) and end (goal).[15] These themes connect well with *Authentikos Logos*
22 where healing through the Word should help the soul to recognise her true
relatives and know her root (origin).

In *Authentikos Logos* the soul's life in a body is described in negative terms:
when the pneumatic soul is "cast into body" (ⲚⲦЄⲢⲞⲨⲚⲞⲭⲤ̄ ЄhⲢⲀⲓ
ЄΠⲤⲰⲘⲀ), it becomes a sibling to passions or vices. The body comes from
desire, which in turn comes from material substance (23:12 – 20). Is life in a
body, into which the soul is thrown down, only imprisonment, and if so, what
sort of imprisonment? In addition to the pneumatic soul being "cast into
body", the soul-woman is shut into a brothel (ⲰⲀϤϢⲰⲞⲚЄ[Ⲥ ⲚϤⲚⲞ]ⲭⲤ̄
ЄΠΠⲞⲢⲚⲓⲞⲚ, 24:7 – 8), and yet later "our soul is ill because it lives in a house
of poverty" (ϢⲞⲞΠ hⲚ ⲞⲨⲎЄⲓ ⲘⲘⲚ̄ⲦhⲎⲔЄ, 27:25 – 27). No body is
mentioned in these passages, but a natural line of interpretation would be that
the soul's life in a human body is meant. Such idea of the soul's imprisonment
has its roots in Plato's works. In *Phaedo* 62B Plato's Socrates refers to secret
teachings,[16] which say that humans are in a sort of a prison (ὡς ἔν τινι φρουρᾷ)
where they are not allowed to escape before their time; like slaves belong to
their masters, people are property of gods, and it is gods who are to decide the
course of their lives. Somewhat later in *Phaedo* 82E Socrates calls the body
akin to a prison or a cage (εἱργμός), and in *Gorgias* 493A and in *Cratylus* 400
B–C the body is the tomb (σῆμα) of the soul.[17]

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13 23:12 – 21.
14 Antony, Letter 6:87 in Rubenson, *The Letters*, 222.
15 Antony continues to the unity of Christians in a way *Authentikos Logos* does not, and reminds
    his recipients of the teaching that "we are of one essence and members of one another".
    Rubenson, *The Letters*, 222. See also Letter 7 that gives the uncurable wound in the members of
    even the holy [among the] creatures as one of the reasons why Jesus was sent to suffer. Rubenson,
    The Letters, 227.
16 ἐν ἀπορρήτοις λεγόμενος, refers to esoteric Pythagorean teachings, so understood also in
    Liddell/Scott/Jones, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 216.
17 The saying σῶμα σῆμα most likely goes back to Orphic poets, or so Socrates says in *Cratylus*; this

In a section starting with *Phaedo* 82E Socrates explains how the soul must contemplate the realities (τὰ ὄντα) through the prison of the body, being unable to do it as itself, and it drifts in all sorts of ignorance (ἀμαθία). The soul's incarceration is caused by bodily desires (ἐπιθυμίας), and the prisoner is active in keeping herself imprisoned by submitting herself under the power of these desires. Socrates goes on to explain that those who love learning understand that philosophy encourages their souls and aims to release it. It persuades the soul to withdraw from these (πείθουσα δὲ ἐκ τούτων μὲν ἀνα-χωρεῖν), that is, sense-perceptible things, and to concentrate on itself. All of this is sense-perceptible and visible, but what it contemplates is reachable only through reason, and is invisible.

The soul of a true lover of wisdom detaches itself from pleasures, desires, pains, and fears (ἀπέχεται τῶν ἡδονῶν τε καὶ ἐπιθυμιῶν καὶ λυπῶν καὶ φόβων), because when a person is experiencing strong pleasure, fear, sorrow, or desire, it is in fact suffering the worst evil. That worst evil is the assumption that the cause of the strong pleasure, sorrow, or such, is most real, when in fact it is not. On the contrary, in such a situation the soul is most bound to the body. In each pleasure and sorrow there is a nail, as it were, that fixes the soul to the body. Such yielding to the body and its passions prevents the soul, after its separation from the body, from arriving at Hades in a pure state. If the soul is thus infected by the body, it will have to re-enter another body as if it was planted into it, and it cannot reach the divine, pure and uniform.[18]

The views expressed in *Phaedo* illustrate the viewpoint of *Authentikos Logos*. It is of course impossible to say whether *Phaedo* would have been in the mind of the person(s) composing *Authentikos Logos*, and if that would have been first-hand knowledge of the book, or through some more general instruction received in a study-group, monastic or other spiritual setting. But *Authentikos Logos* assumes the Platonic division between the existing (τὸ ὄν, eternal, real, intelligible) things and those that have a becoming (τὸ γιγνόμε-νον, not real, sensible) when it employs the terms "the One who exists", or "those who exist" (ΠΕΤϢΟΟΠ, ΝΕΤϢΟΟΠ in 26:19; 27:22) and 'the things that have become' (ΝΕΝΤΑΥϢϢΠΕ in 26:16; 27:19; 28:28).

As discussed, *Authentikos Logos* begins with images of the soul contem-plating the invisible worlds that can be approached from the viewpoint of Platonic tradition.[19] Ignorance is the other one of the two chief-evils in

is also what the "secret teachings" in *Phaedo* 62B are taken to indicate. In *Cratylus* Plato's Socrates explains that the body is called the soul's σῆμα because the soul is enclosed in the body, and it gives signs through the body – σῆμα originally means "sign", "omen", and came to mean a sign or a mark by which a grave was identifiable. The concept of the body as the soul's tomb or prison was widespread, see e. g. Cicero in the Dream of Scipio in *De Re Publica*, 6.14, where Scipio Africanus tells his grandson Scipio Aemilianus that those who have escaped the chains of the body as if from a prison are alive; but what is called life by people, is really death.

18 *Phaedo* 82E–84B.

19 22:6–22.

Authentikos Logos (31:6–7), and desire appears frequently as a disturbing force in the soul's incarnate life. The soul's aim at withdrawing itself from the disturbing influence of passions is an emphatic one.[20] Of the passions mentioned in *Phaedo* – that are the same as the four chief passions in Stoic thought – only three appear in *Authentikos Logos* (fear is not mentioned).[21] Neither are the three grouped in the same way as in *Phaedo*. The focus is not purely on passions and their control, but on passions and vices that threaten the soul's integrity.[22] The imprisonment image in both contains an ethical angle: the soul may be imprisoned, but it can and should aim at withdrawing from bodily influences and striving towards what is pure and divine.

Other Nag Hammadi writings, too, witness these ideas. *The Apocryphon of John*, for instance, combines Platonic and biblical ideas when it describes the creation of Adam, who is enclosed into a material, mortal body that is the tomb and the fetter binding him and all humankind.[23] In earlier scholarship such views – whether expressed by "Gnostics", or such ascetic Christians as Antony – were thought to represent ultimate contempt for the human condition in the world, or hatred of the body that "was a disease endemic in the entire culture of the period", and "its more extreme manifestation are mainly Christian or Gnostic".[24] Yet already Plato was emphatic on the need (and possibility) for such a way of life that will lead the soul away from this imprisonment.[25] That is the purpose of ascetic practices within early Christianity: to use the body in the correct way, as a central medium in the struggle for salvation, and aim at transforming the body "into a perfect vehicle for the spirit".[26] As Elizabeth A. Clark puts it, "[e]arly Christian ascetics assumed that humans were transformable: the human person could be

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20 22:34; 31:24–30.

21 ἐπιθυμία in 23:15, 18, 19; 25:5; 29:2; 30:34; 31:21; ἡδονή in 23:31; 24:19; λύπη 30:29.

22 See V.2 and VI.1.

23 *Ap. John* (NHC III,1) 26:13–23, par II 21:4–13, BG 55:2–13). The Codex III text has λήθη (26:23) that connects with the myth of Er (Plato, *Rep.* X 621 A–B) where the souls at the plain of Λήθη must drink from the spring of forgetting (Ἀμελής) before their reincarnation. Instead, BG has the fetter of ὕλη. The long version (II 21:12) has Coptic ⲦⲘⲠⲢⲈ ⲚⲦⲂⲱⲈ that has translated λήθη into Coptic. Cf. Williams, *Rethinking "Gnosticism"*, 121; Bentley Layton, *The Gnostic Scriptures: A New Translation with Annotations and Introductions* (New York: Doubleday, 1987), 45 n. 21b.

24 E.R. Dodds, *Pagan and Christian in an Age of Anxiety: Some Aspects of Religious Experience from Marcus Aurelius to Constantine* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1965), 35.

25 Plotinus notes that that the soul should avoid association with the body is not a "Gnostic" invention but already there in Plato. Plotinus, *Enn.* II.9.6.39–43.

26 So Rubenson, "As Already Translated to the Kingdom", 271 on Ammonius. Peter Brown has brought attention to the transformation and transfiguration theme in the Desert Fathers: the imagined transfiguration of the few great ascetics is a foretaste of how the "average" ascetics' bodies will undergo a transformation on the day of the resurrection. Body and soul are not mere opposites, they are yoked together, and the body guides the soul on their shared way to salvation. Brown, *The Body and Society*, 222, 235–237.

improved by ascetic practice".[27] The tones of such a view are not negative but optimistic.

The approach in *Authentikos Logos* to the human body is in line with Platonic and ascetic thoughts: the body can be used as a means of progress that will lead to ascent of the soul after the course of this life has been completed. The soul's descent and incarnation into bodily life connect the soul with passions and vices, and although the life in the body is imprisonment of sorts, at the same time earthly life has as its goal the improvement of the soul.[28] The body is not simply a prison, but in line with philosophical or ascetic traditions, it is the place and medium of the soul's advancement.

1.2 Asceticism in *Authentikos Logos*

The body is the vehicle or place of the soul's return, and the way of life it leads and the decisions it makes decide its progress, and finally, ascent. *Authentikos Logos* focuses on the return of the soul, its nourishment and medicine, effect and control of vices, desire particularly, suggests withdrawal and warns its audiences of temptations that are the Devil-Adversary's baits leading to death. The role of body in the soul's journey is in *Authentikos Logos* expressed quite directly. On the final page the soul who reaches her goal is lauded for having endured hardship in the body (ⲈⲤⲢ̄ⲦⲀⲖⲀⲓⲠⲰⲢⲒ Ϩ̄Ⲙ ⲠⲤⲰⲘⲀ).[29] Prior to that, "bodily beauty" (ⲞⲨⲤⲀⲈⲓⲈ Ⲛ̄ⲤⲰⲘⲀ) is one of the consequences of yearning for worldly things that are the Devil's foods for souls.[30] This list of temptations is followed by a warning of the Adversary's evil intentions, and again the body is mentioned in a way suggesting that it is the first to receive temptations that aim at capturing the soul: the Adversary spreads his snares "before the body" (Ⲙ̄ⲠⲘ̄ⲦⲞ ⲈⲂⲞⲖ Ⲙ̄ⲠⲤⲰⲘⲀ), wanting the "heart of the soul" to incline towards them and thus be caught and pulled into ignorance.[31]

Can and should *Authentikos Logos* be approached as an ascetic text? The term "ascetic" can be defined as "exercise", "practice", or "training", and it is particularly used of spiritual exercises and ascetic way of life. It can also be used for abstinence from certain pleasures. "Ascetic" not only refers to

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27 Clark, *Reading Renunciation*, 17.

28 Cf. Dillon, "Descent of the Soul", 357–364.

29 35:4. The Greek ταλαιπωρέω connected with σῶμα appears also e.g. in Xenophon's *Memor.* 2.1.25; Epict. *Diss.* 3.24.64 (ταλαιπωρίας τοῦ σώματος); also Plutarch *Brutus* 37, where the bodily weariness contrariwise distorts the intelligence (σοὶ δὲ καὶ τὸ σῶμα ταλαιπωρούμενον φύσει τὴν διάνοιαν αἰωρεῖ καὶ παρατρέπει) and in Plato, *Phaedo* 95D, although not directly combined with σῶμα, the soul's incarnate life is referred to as misery, but there is no indication that such suffering prepares the soul for immortality or ascent: ἀλλὰ καὶ αὐτὸ τὸ εἰς ἀνθρώπου σῶμα ἐλθεῖν ἀρχὴ ἦν αὐτῇ ὀλέθρου, ὥσπερ νόσος· καὶ ταλαιπωρουμένη τε δὴ τοῦτον τὸν βίον ζώη καὶ τελευτῶσά γε ἐν τῷ καλουμένῳ θανάτῳ ἀπολλύοιτο.

30 31:4, complete list: 30:28–31:8.

31 31:8–16.

Christian practice and life, but also to non-Christian religious and philo-sophical practices.[32] It has been suggested that early Christian asceticism differed from pagan practices on dietary and sexual moderation, and that from the third century onwards Christians were responsible for a considerable upsurge in ascetic devotion.[33] Although this difference should not be overemphasised, as Christians owe much to philosophical schools and their practices and ideals,[34] Christian asceticism took new, distinct forms, such as the emphasis on virginity.[35]

There are problems to using "asceticism" as a term. Like "Gnosticism", it can be too vague and too general, and yet ascetic behaviours and values are bound to specific cultural contexts.[36] Keeping these considerations in mind, this work proposes that *Authentikos Logos* is an ascetic Christian text. It is "ascetic" not because it describes actual, physical exercises or practices, but because it deals with several themes that are focal to early Christian asceticism, and can be seen to assume a set of beliefs on which such practices could be based, or which would justify such practices. This view thus follows Oliver Freiberger's definition of asceticism as a "certain combination of actual practices and a set of beliefs on which the practices are based and which justify them".[37]

The asceticism of *Authentikos Logos* has been previously discussed by Richard Valantasis, who treated it as part of the "Roman tradition of ascetical speculation" that falls in between the first century Roman ethical systems and third century Neoplatonist traditions.[38] Whereas Valantasis left the Christian

32 Lampe, *A Patristic Greek Lexicon*, 244; Oliver Freiberger, *Der Askesediskurs in der Religions-geschichte. Eine vergleichende Untersuchung brahmanischer und frühchristlicher Texte* (StOR 57; Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2009), 11–16; Pierre Hadot, *Philosophy as a Way of Life. Spiritual Exercises from Socrates to Foucault* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1995); Richard Finn OP, *Asceticism in the Graeco-Roman World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 9–33. Risto Uro, "Explaining Early Christian Asceticism: Methodological Considerations" in Antti Mustakallio/Heikki Leppä/Heikki Räisänen (ed.), *Lux Humana, Lux Aeterna: Essays on Biblical and Related Themes in Honour of Lars Aejmelaeus* (Publications of the Finnish Exegetical Society 89; Helsinki: Finnish Exegetical Society, 2005), 458–474.

33 Philip Rousseau, "Monasticism" in Averil Cameron/Bryan Ward-Perkins/Michael Whitby (ed.), *The Cambridge Ancient History 14. Late Antiquity: Empire and Successors, A.D. 425–600* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 745–780, on p. 745.

34 See Finn, *Asceticism*, 94, and his discussion of Clement of Alexandria.

35 Theresa M. Shaw, *The Burden of the Flesh. Fasting and Sexuality in Early Christianity* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1998), 79.

36 See Oliver Freiberger (ed.), *Asceticism and Its Critics. Historical Accounts and Comparative Perspectives* (AAR Cultural Criticism Series; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 4; William E. Deal, "Toward a Politics of Asceticism: Response to the Three Preceding Papers" in Vincent L. Wimbush/Richard Valantasis (ed.), *Asceticism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 424–442, on p. 424–429 and Wimbush/Valantasis (ed.), *Asceticism*, xix–xxxiii.

37 Freiberger, *Asceticism and Its Critics*, 7.

38 Valantasis concludes that the writing must reflect a transition from Roman asceticism to Neoplatonist traditions of the early third century: Valantasis, "Demons, Adversaries, Devils, Fishermen", 550–551, 565. Heyden and Kulawik on the other hand see the efforts of the soul as

context out of his discussion, this chapter approaches *Authentikos Logos* from the viewpoint of that very context. As was argued above, the writing can be approached as a homily or oral delivery that has the soul story as its theme, and is rich in its use of allusions to scriptures. Several themes focal in ascetic texts are also central in *Authentikos Logos*, and the writing offers guidance and advice on spiritual life, or, perhaps better, guidance on life that has its goal in the soul's ascent. Most notably its ascetic teaching is conveyed through the two most distinct parables tied to the soul story: the image of the wheat and chaff, and the fishing parable and its explanation that can both be seen as stemming from the Christian scriptural traditions. Themes and motifs that are common in ascetic texts and that emerge in *Authentikos Logos* are: control of desire; food and a distinction between what nourishes the soul on the one hand, and what damages it on the other; relations to others and the society; and combat against the Devil-Adversary.[39]

Desire, ἐπιθυμία, is the one passion that appears in *Authentikos Logos* more often than pleasure or sorrow (fear is not mentioned at all). During its bodily life the soul is bound to desire, hatred, and envy, and desire above other passions is the driving force in the process of generation and birth (23:15–20).[40] In 25:6–9 it is suggested that if (even one) desirous thought enters a person who is a virgin ([O]ΥΡШΜЄ Ｍ∏ΑΡΘЄΝΟС), this person becomes impure. The reference to a virgin should be seen as strongly indicative of a Christian ascetic context. The focus on virginity is a Christian ideal, advocated by a variety of Christian writers in texts of different genres.[41] Whereas care of the body was part of pagan asceticism, complete sexual renunciation was not

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indicative of the Gnostic side of *Authentikos Logos* ("das 'gnostische' Anliegen des aktiven Strebens der Seele nach Erkenntnis und Heil"). Heyden/Kulawik, "Einleitung: *Authentikos Logos*", 342. See above I.2.2.

39 These agree with Valantasis' summary of the "traditional topics of asceticism": sexual renunciation, fasting, social withdrawal, and fighting with the demons. Valantasis, "Nag Hammadi and Asceticism", 189. The ascetic themes of Freiberger's discussion of the *Apophthegmata Patrum* are a) withdrawal (Abgeschiedenheit), silence (Schweigen), obedience (Gehorsamkeit) and possessions (Besitz und Besitzlosigkeit), and b) food/nourishment (Ernährung), clothing (Kleidung) and sexuality (Sexualität), Freiberger, *Der Askesediskurs in der Religionsgeschichte*, 142, 197.

40 Envy (ΚШ2, φθόνος) and anger (ὀργή, but in *Authentikos Logos*, ΜΟСΤЄ, that is Coptic for μῖσος) are frequently connected in ancient literature, and associated with bringing about death. φθόνῳ δὲ διαβόλου θάνατος εἰσῆλθεν εἰς τὸν κόσμον, πειράζουσιν δὲ αὐτὸν οἱ τῆς ἐκείνου μερίδος ὄντες, Wis 2:24. In the Nag Hammadi library, see *Orig. World* 106:19–29; *Hyp. Arch.* 96:3–10. Envy and anger appear as the eighth and tenth on the list in *C.H.* XIII 7.10. The idea is reflected in the Genesis story of Cain and Abel, and mentioned by Antony in Letter 6.30. See Andrew Crislip, "Envy and Anger at the World's Creation and Destruction in the Treatise without Title 'On the Origin of the World' (NHC II,5)" in *VC* 65 (2011), 285–310.

41 A recent work by Anna Rebecca Solevåg discusses the nuances of ascetic exhortation in *The Acts of Andreas*. In that work asceticism is particularly promoted for its upper-class heroine, not men or slave-women. Anna Rebecca Solevåg, *Birthing Salvation. Gender and Class in Early Christian Childbearing Discourse* (Biblical Interpretation Series 121; Leiden: Brill 2013), 148–150.

expected. Porphyry in *Against the Christians* criticised the Christian ideal, particularly in the case of women, "[i]t being clear that a girl does not do well by remaining a virgin, or a married person by renouncing marriage".[42] Virginity in early Christian context usually denotes sexual virginity, but it can be understood in a broader sense than that of sexual abstinence. Andrew Crislip has pointed out that Basil of Caesarea's view of virginity contains quelling of all passions and emotions.[43] Such view can be reconciled with the reference to a virgin in *Authentikos Logos* that does not refer to an actual sexual transgression but to acceptance of corrupting thoughts.

The soul's mysterious enemies are described as house-born slaves that are tormented by desire (28:22 – 29:3). The metaphor carries with it an assumption of slaves as people living in the same household with their masters, but being ultimately unreliable, possibly dishonest, and not to be trusted.[44] This proximity, they are house-born, suggests they do not simply represent outside impulses, but dwell within one's self. Who are these enemies, demons or passions? Perhaps they are passions, but demons can also be imagined as employing passions in their attacks against Christian ascetics. This notion may contain an allusion to Matthew 10:36, where enemies of true followers of Jesus are found amongst the members of the same household.[45]

If some of the references to desire in *Authentikos Logos* suggest sexual desire, the writing also mentions other sorts of desires: desire of things of the world (30:12 – 13),[46] and a more specific desire for a tunic, or perhaps generally for clothes (30:34 – 31:1). Desire connects with a wish to taste a little (30:13 – 16), and tasting or eating is a prevalent theme in the fisherman parable (30:4–28; 31:8 – 14). In ascetic texts there can be more emphasis on the control of eating than on sexuality,[47] but contrary to texts where ascetics' lives are portrayed, in *Authentikos Logos* images of eating and foods do not indicate real foods, but nourishment of the soul.

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42 Porphyry, *Against the Christians*, frgm. 33 this translation in Brown, *The Body and Society*, 181. Brown suggests that in Clement's works ascetic ideals are not yet pronounced, nor different from non-Christians who did advocate control of the body. Brown, *The Body and Society*, 152 – 159, 178 – 181; also Dodds, *Pagan and Christian*, 32.

43 Andrew Crislip, "'I Have Chosen Sickness': The Controversial Function of Sickness in Early Christian Ascetic Practice" in Freiberger (ed.), *Asceticism and Its Critics*, 187.

44 See Glancy, *Slavery in Early Christianity* and J. Albert Harrill, *Slaves in the New Testament. Literary, Social and Moral Dimensions* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2006).

45 καὶ ἐχθροὶ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου οἱ οἰκιακοὶ αὐτοῦ. Matt 10:36.

46 Desire also in 23; 31:21.

47 For example Athanasius *Life of Antony* 7 mentions that Antony ate only once a day, after sunset, sometimes only every second day. His diet consisted of bread, salt, and water; fasting, vigils, and prayers are amongst the weapons against demons (*Life of Antony* 30); Antony was ashamed of eating and preferred to eat alone (*Life of Antony* 45). Evagrius of Pontus, see e. g. advice on diet in *Foundations* 3. In *Eight Thoughts* and *On the Vices Opposed to the Virtues* Evagrius treats gluttony ("the mother of fornication") first, fornication the second. See Brown, *The Body and Society*, 218 – 222.

The soul is to eat the Word like food and medicine to gain true perception and knowledge.[48] Food figures very much in the discussion of how to live: "Gluttony cannot mix with moderation" (25:10 – 11), which continues into the wheat and chaff parable.[49] The Coptic term for gluttony, [MⲚ]TOYⲀMϨⲀϨ, refers to γαστριμαργία,[50] which is a vice to which for instance Evagrius dedicates plenty of attention. It is not surprising that gluttony follows a desirous thought, as gluttony is a common vice or passion of the soul, and also, because control of sexuality and control of eating go hand in hand in ascetic literature. The view has its roots in such authors as Galen. Evagrius is one author to dedicate much space to the discussion of gluttony; for Evagrius, gluttony and lust are the two foremost passions of the soul.[51]

In the fishing parable that begins on page 29 the Devil-Adversary uses bait and food to seduce the soul.[52] The whole parable revolves around bait, food, eating, and temptation. The fisherman casts a variety of foods into the water, because each fish has its own taste. When the fish smells the food, it goes after the scent, swallows the food, but it will be too late then: the hook will have caught the fish. As in the parable, so also in the explanation of the parable food is emphatic: the Adversary places a variety of foods in front of us, and he wants us to desire one of them, and to taste just a little.[53] The soul's conversion includes giving up these deceitful foods and going in search of those that will take her to eternal life.[54] Although the fishing parable uses the bait/food metaphor to explain temptations and emotions that they evoke, and vices they connect with, eating and a desire to taste something is a central metaphor, as is the danger associated with taking a seemingly harmless bite of something.

These foods, as noted above, are not "real" foods, or dietary regulations of many ascetic texts, but food imagery.[55] However, the section that describes the contest and suffering in the world also mentions actual hunger: "We live (MOOϢⲈ) in hunger and thirst" (27:14). Although it is not evident in the text whether hunger and thirst are part of "our" practice, a consequence of a persecuted position suggested in the passage, or a rhetorical comment, the

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48 22:12 – 13; 24 – 30, medicine repeated in 27:30 – 32 and 28:10 – 12.

49 25:12 – 26 (see 5.2). Tite reads the healing activity in *Authentikos Logos* as directed at Wisdom, but it is the soul that is healed in *Authentikos Logos*. Tite, *Valentinian Ethics*, 280 and 281 n. 143.

50 Crum, *A Coptic Dictionary*, 479.

51 *Eulogios* 13.12 discusses the connection between lust and gluttony; *Eight Thoughts* begins with gluttony, followed by fornication (πορνεία), and also *Practicus* deals with the two as the two first two passions. Shaw, *The Burden of the Flesh*, 130 – 131, 139 – 160.

52 ἀντικείμενος in 30:6, 31:9; διάβολος in 30:27.

53 30:10 – 20; 31:8 – 14.

54 31:24 – 32:2.

55 For discussion of fasting in early Christianity, see Shaw, *The Burden*. Freiberger points out that the approach to food in the *Apophthegmata* is pragmatic, with focus on amounts of food to be consumed, the frequency of meals and the selection of what is/is not eaten. Freiberger, *Der Askesediskurs in der Religionsgeschichte*, 198 – 202, 212 – 213.

comment also says that it is better to focus on the true dwelling-place than on everyday concerns.

What is emphatic in *Life of Antony* is Antony's continuous combat against the demons of the desert; this combat, also, is a recurrent theme of ascetic texts in authors such as Evagrius, Pachomius, and Shenoute.[56] The devil and countless demons seek to disturb and deceive those who practise an ascetic way of life, but more than that, in David Brakke's view, the ascetic life of a monk in the late ancient Egypt culminated in struggle, resistance, and combat with the forces of evil that surrounded him or her.[57] As discussed above, in *Authentikos Logos* household and family imagery is employed to describe struggle against disturbing forces. "Step-siblings" who are outsiders in the family disturb the soul, and house-born slaves fight against the soul and are tormented by their desire.[58] Further, the soul has enemies and human adversaries, and is threatened by the "authority of the world" and the slave traders.[59] The Devil-Adversary and evil forces appear in *Authentikos Logos* as life-threatening forces, emphatically so in the parable of evil fishers. The fishing imagery continues for nearly three pages,[60] giving it a central position in the text.

Scholars have found no close scriptural parallels to the fishing imagery in *Authentikos Logos*, the main difference with the New Testament gospels being that whereas the gospel images of fishing are positive,[61] fishing is negative and threatening in *Authentikos Logos*. The parable rather reflects some of the Hebrew Bible images, Jeremiah 16:16, Ezekiel 12:13, Amos 4:2, and in particular Habakkuk 1:15 where the enemy uses a hook and a net to catch people.[62] Imagery like this also appears in several ascetic Christian authors' texts. Macarius employs very similar imagery: "For by means of a certain love for the things of the world and flesh by which he is held in bondage to his own will, evil entices him until it becomes an enslaving bond, a heavy chain and weight that sucks him down and stifles him in a world of evil that does not allow him to rise up and return to God".[63]

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56 See e.g. Athanasius, *Life of Antony*, 8–10 and 13 for particularly physical attacks of demons against Antony, as well as Shenoute's *In the Night* for physical battle, discussed in David Brakke, *Demons and the Making of a Monk. Spiritual Combat in Early Christianity* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2006), 3–4.

57 Brakke, *Demons and the Making of a Monk*, 240–241.

58 Slaves: 28:32. Note also the force of ignorance and the demon of error (34:26–28).

59 28:14, 22 (enemies); 26:21; 27:5–13 (adversaries); 26:28 (authority); 32:18 (slave traders).

60 29:3–31:24.

61 Mark 1:17, Matt 4:19.

62 Note also 2 Tim 2:26.

63 Homily 5.194–198: διὰ γὰρ ἀγάπην τινὰ γηΐνην καὶ σαρκικήν, εἰς ἣν δεσμεῖται ἄνθρωπος θελήματι ἰδίῳ, δελεάζεται ὑπὸ τῆς κακίας, ὅπερ γίνεται αὐτῷ ἄλυσις καὶ δεσμὸς καὶ φορτίον βαρὺ κατα-βυθίζον καὶ πνῖγον ἐν τῷ αἰῶνι τῆς πονηρίας, μὴ συγχωροῦν ἀνακύψαι καὶ πρὸς θεὸν ἀπελθεῖν. Greek text: H. Dörries, E. Klostermann, and M. Krüger, *Die 50 geistlichen Homilien des Makarios*

Sorrow in the heart, implanted there by the Devil, causes agony for small things of this life, and this seemingly harmless emotion can lead the Devil to seize the person with his poisons.[64] This is similar to, for example, Evagrius, who organised his ascetic theory into eight thoughts that trouble the soul of an ascetic. Evagrius presupposes that one thought or passion may lead to others, which emphasises the importance of vigilance. The eight thoughts on Evagrius' list, under which other thoughts are organised, are gluttony (γαστρι-μαργία), fornication (πορνεία), avarice (φιλαργυρία), sorrow (λύπη), anger (ὀργή), indifference or listlessness (ἀκηδία), vainglory (κενοδοξία), and pride (ὑπερηφανία).[65]

Most of these thoughts or vices are mentioned in *Authentikos Logos*, but the approach is not as systematic as in Evagrius. Gluttony, as discussed above, is mentioned prior to the wheat and chaff parable in a context that suggests a close connection with desire or lust: "If a thought of desire goes into a virgin, this person has already become impure, and their gluttony cannot mix with moderation" (25:6–11). Thoughts corrupt, and just like desire spoils true virginity, gluttony damages moderation. The second in Evagrius' list,

(PTS 4. Berlin: De Gruyter, 1964). Translated in George A. Maloney, S.J., *Pseudo-Macarius. The Fifty Spiritual Homilies and the Great Letter* (CWS; New York: The Paulist Press, 1992), 68. After discussing Christians, whether in cities, mountains, monasteries, wild places, or the desert, Macarius focuses on passions, so the combination is similar to *Authentikos Logos*, before returning to snares for human souls: "Through divine power he cuts through the world and through the powers of evil which lay snares for the human soul in the world and which use all sorts of desires as nets to ensnare the soul in the depths of the world" (Homily 5.235–239, Maloney, *Pseudo-Macarius*, 69). How may one be freed? Macarius' answer is: "by means of his own faith and great courage and through heavenly aid" (διὰ τῆς ἰδίας πίστεως καὶ σπουδῆς πολλῆς καὶ διὰ τῆς ἄνωθεν βοηθείας).

The brief comment – "Since he [brought] us down having bound [us] in the nets of flesh" – in the *Interp. Knowledge* 6:28–29 explains why human souls are living in heavy bodies (see *Interp. Knowl.* 6:30–35), wherefore I do not share the view of Philip Tite who assumes that the similarity between the fishing parable in *Authentikos Logos* and "nets of flesh" (ⲚⲀⲂⲎ Ⲛ̄ⲤⲀⲢ[Ⳅ]) in *Interp. Knowl.* 6:29 "might indicate some literary connection between the two parables, and perhaps even the two texts". Tite, *Valentinian Ethics*, 163, 164 and 205. This is not likely. The Devil's bait in *Authentikos Logos* mean vices and worldly temptations, whereas the "nets of flesh" in *Interp. Knowl.* refer to life in the body, as the following lines 6:30–35 make clear (note that σάρξ is not mentioned in *Authentikos Logos*). Tite reads the explanation of the fishing parable in connection with the Cynical tradition, but does not readily approach its wider Christian context.

64 30:29–33.

65 Ὀκτώ εἰσι πάντες οἱ γενικώτατοι λογισμοὶ ἐν οἷς περιέχεται πᾶς λογισμός. Πρῶτος ὁ τῆς γαστριμαργίας, καὶ μετ' αὐτὸν ὁ τῆς πορνείας· τρίτος ὁ τῆς φιλαργυρίας· τέταρτος ὁ τῆς λύπης· πέμπτος ὁ τῆς ὀργῆς· ἕκτος ὁ τῆς ἀκηδίας· ἕβδομος ὁ τῆς κενοδοξίας· ὄγδοος ὁ τῆς ὑπερηφανίας. Τούτους πάντας παρενοχλεῖν μὲν τῇ ψυχῇ ἢ μὴ παρενοχλεῖν, τῶν οὐκ ἐφ' ἡμῖν ἐστι· τὸ δὲ χρονίζειν αὐτοὺς ἢ μὴ χρονίζειν, ἢ πάθη κινεῖν ἢ μὴ κινεῖν, τῶν ἐφ' ἡμῖν. Evagrius, *Practicus*, 6, see also *Eight Thoughts*. Cf. to some extent similar list in *C.H.* XIII.7, which goes to show that such lists were widely common, and reveals one point of interest shared by Hermetic and Christian authors. Evagrius developed his theory in several works, aimed at ascetics at different stages of their ascetic life.

fornication, appears in a fragmented upper part of *Authentikos Logos* 24. The section is difficult to decipher, as the preceding page ends in a list of the step-siblings' possessions that mentions proud passions, life's pleasures, hateful jealousies, after which follow the speech-related boasting, foolish talk, and accusations (and something else: the list is interrupted by the missing or heavily damaged first five lines of the page 24). The next clearly legible words are ΝⲀⳞ, "for her", and a reconstruction of what could be ⲦⳘ[ⲞⲢⲚⲒ]Ⲁ, "fornication", on line 7. The text remains fragmentary, and continues with the vice theme: it is possible that fornication is the last one on an interrupted list of vices, and has inspired or connected with a change in the story of the soul's life on earth: "He shuts [her] out [and puts] her into a brothel . . . [intemperance]." The soul abandons "temperance".[66]

More of Evagrius' eight thoughts appear in *Authentikos Logos* in connection with the fishing imagery on pages 30 – 31. Here, like in Evagrius, it is evident that one thought or passion leads into another: first the Devil puts sorrow (λύπη) into one's heart, until it is troubled for some small thing of this life. This is when one is easily conquered, and what follows is desire for clothes ("tunic"), avarice,[67] vainglory or boasting,[68] and pride or vanity,[69] envy that envies another envy, bodily beauty and deceitfulness. From Evagrius' list, this section contains sorrow, avarice, pride, possibly vainglory. According to *Authentikos Logos*, "The greatest of them all is ignorance with indolence" (ⲚⲀⲒ̈ ⲦⲎⲢⲞⲨ ⲠⲞⲨⲚⲞⳞ ⲦⲈ ⲦⲘⲚ̄ⲦⲀⲦⳞⲞⲞⲨⲚ· ⲀⲨⲰ ⲦⲘⲚ̄ⲦⲀⲦ2̄ⲒⳞⲈ 31:6 – 7). Two thoughts on Evagrius' list are absent in *Authentikos Logos*, and these are the fifth, anger (ὀργή), and the sixth, indifference or listlessness (ἀκηδία). Perhaps one can see resemblance to ὀργή in hatred (ⳘⲞⳞⲦⲈ, 23:15 – 16, and in ⲦⲘⲚ̄ⲦⲀⲦ2̄ⲒⳞⲈ, indolence, lack of toil, the second worst of the two greatest evils, resemblance to Evagrius' listlessness. *Authentikos Logos* and the way vices are listed as well as what vices are included in the list in some ways recalls Evagrius' more developed theory of passions.

Withdrawal from everyday life is another recurrent theme in ascetic texts.[70] *Authentikos Logos* contains a lengthy section, 26:26 – 27:25, which follows the wheat and chaff parable and describes life on earth as a contest (ἀγών) that was set up by the pre-existent Father to reveal his riches and glory.[71] The goal of the

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66 Sexual vice may be indicated, and ⲦⲘⲚ̄ⲦⳆⲀⲨ usually reads as "modesty", but if it is read close to the meaning of Greek σωφροσύνη, it also refers, particularly when combined with virtues, to ἐγκράτεια, the opposite of πορνεία.

67 The Coptic ⳘⲚ̄ⲦⲘⲀⲈⲒ 2ⲞⲘⲚ̄Ⲧ has the meaning of the Greek φιλαργυρία (Crum, *A Coptic Dictionary*, 678) that appears in Evagrius' text.

68 The Coptic ⳆⲞⲨⳆⲞⲨ has the meaning of the Greek ὑπερηφανία but also κενοδοξία (Crum, *A Coptic Dictionary*, 604).

69 The Coptic ⲬⲒⳞⲈ Ⲛ̄2ⲎⲦ has the meaning of the Greek ὑπερηφανία (Crum, *A Coptic Dictionary*, 790).

70 Freiberger, *Der Askesediskurs in der Religionsgeschichte*, 142 – 143.

71 A Pauline allusion to Rom 9:23; Eph 1:18 and 3:16; Phil 4:19; Col 1:27 etc., see van den Broek, "The Authentikos Logos", 222.

contest is to abandon and despise the things that have come into being, despise them with the noble, unattainable knowledge, and take refuge in the One who exists. There are opponents in the contest, but their ignorance must be conquered through knowledge. In this section worldly contest and the contest against evil powers mingle, and at times the text recalls Nag Hammadi creation accounts, as also "rulers, authorities, and powers" are mentioned when the Father's pre-existence is stated,[72] and the authority of the world that would aim at detaining "us" in the worlds that are in heavens.[73] The text probably is reminiscent of such texts, but caution is needed in reading too much into it. The idea of heavenly rulers, authorities, and powers as ἀρχή, ἐξουσία, δυνάμις in the very same terms and order is assumed in 1 Corinthians 15:24 and Ephesians 1:21, and belief in evil spirits that dwell in the sublunar world is assumed in a wide array of ancient texts. A view that demons await ascending souls is a not an unusual theme in late ancient texts, and will be dealt with in more detail below in VI.2.

Even as the notion of contest is mixed with that of evil powers, the content of the section ends up focusing on the state of things in this world.[74] The section is not purely centred on withdrawal, but it makes suggestions of persecution through slander and humiliation whilst being emphatic that these are to be answered by silence and passivity. The opponents' daily activities are juxtaposed by "our" wandering in hunger and thirst. The focus of "us" is on the true dwelling place, "at which our way of life and conscience are directed".[75] Illness, weakness, and pain hide a great strength.[76]

The worldly worries in general are the Devil's bait: they start with a sorrow and anguish for some small thing of the world, but they lead to desire for clothes, pride, love of money, vanity, "envy that envied another envy", bodily beauty and deception.[77] The only way to avoid being trapped within them is to shun them and withdraw from worldly concerns. In addition to withdrawal, a conscious decision to understand, withdraw, and choose a new way of life are emphasised: the soul who has tasted sweet passions turns away from them, seeks knowledge, and abandons the world.[78] The fool fails because of his/her indolence and lack of initiative.[79]

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72 25:27 – 34.

73 26:26–beg. 27.

74 27:beginning–25.

75 27:16 – 18.

76 Koschorke read this as describing Gnostic polemic against mainstream Christians, but as suggested by others already, it is more or less impossible to draw such direct conclusions; see I.2.

77 30:26 – 31:7.

78 31:24 – 32:16.

79 34:3 – 32. See Tervahauta, "Ignorant people, the fool and pagans", 195 – 216.

2. The Soul's Ascent

In *Authentikos Logos* the soul's contest in the body is victorious, and the soul eventually defeats the Devil-Adversary who threatened it with its baits. After the soul acquires knowledge and assumes a new way of life (31:24 – 32:1), it begins the last stage of its ascent that is described on the second half of the page 32. The soul returns its body to those who had given it and so humiliates them. The separation of the soul from its body means that the slave traders must stay put and weep, for they cannot do any business with that body, nor do they find any other merchandise in its place. The slave traders had taken great deal of trouble to mould a body for this soul, with the intention of casting down the invisible soul. This failure humiliates them and they lose their work, because they fail to understand that the soul has an invisible pneumatic body. The slave traders faultily imagine themselves as the soul's shepherd, but do not realise that it knows another way that is hidden from them. The soul's true shepherd taught it this way in knowledge (32:16 – 33:3). The passage gives way to a two-page long polemical passage (33:4 – 34:32) after which the topic of the soul reaching its goal is resumed: the rational soul acquires knowledge about God, it endured in the body, followed the evangelists and then reaches the dawn of new life.[80] The soul rests in the One who is at rest, it receives the food, and attends the feast it had hungered for (34:32 – 35:16).

Althought the language on both pages 32 and 35 opens up options for different readings, and the ascent may refer to a mystical experience and something that can be reached in this life,[81] but it can also refer to the goal that is to be achieved after this life. There are several reasons why *Authentikos Logos* primarily refers to the soul's ascent after death. The first is that it is quite explicitly said that the soul returns its body.[82] Second, reference to the "slave traders", ⲘⲠⲢⲀⲅⲘⲀⲦⲈⲨⲦⲎⲤ Ⲛ̄Ⲛ̄ⲤⲰⲘⲀ,[83] connects the section with descriptions of post-mortem or heavenly ascents in other ancient literature. Third, the term "invisible pneumatic body", ⲞⲨⲤⲰⲘⲀ Ⲙ̄ⲠⲚ̄Ⲁ̄ⲦⲒⲔⲞⲚ Ⲛ̄Ⲁ₂ⲞⲢⲀⲦⲞⲚ,[84] shows that the discussion connects with early Christian considerations on the form of people after death. The term σῶμα πνευματικόν

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80 ⲀⲚⲀⲦⲞⲖⲎ; this can mean "east", "dawn", or "sunrise", and in Christian language it refers to the dawn of future life. E.g. Origen, *Commentary on the Gospel of John*, 10.18.108 writes: Ἕως γὰρ τῆς ἀνατολῆς τῆς ἡμέρας τῶν μετὰ τὸν βίον τοῦτον οὐδὲν καταλειπτέον ἔσται ἡμῖν τῆς ἐπὶ τοῦ παρόντος μόνου χρησίμου ἡμῖν οὕτω τροφῆς. Lampe, *A Patristic Greek Lexicon*, 125 – 126.

81 So for example Plotinus, *Enn.* IV.8.1, and *The Desert Fathers* 10.108 ("When we first used to meet each other . . . and talk of what was helpful to our souls . . . we ascended to heavenly places"). Benedicta Ward, *The Desert Fathers. Sayings of the Early Christian Monks* (London: Penguin Books, 2003). See also Karen L. King, *Revelation of the Unknowable God with Text, Translation, and Notes to NHC XI,3 Allogenes* (Santa Rosa, Calif.: Polebridge, 1995), 9 – 12.

82 32:16 – 17.

83 32:18 – 19.

84 32:32.

is Pauline,[85] and invisibility is a quality that souls must have to pass the evil powers that attempt to stop their ascents: souls should be invisible to be able to pass the powers unseen.[86]

The two terms, the "slave traders" and the "pneumatic body", will be discussed in what follows. After that, the soul's ascent in *Authentikos Logos* will be read in comparison with two other Nag Hammadi ascents (the *Apocalypse of Paul* and the *First Apocalypse of James*), the *Gospel of Mary*, and an excerpt of the *Asclepius* in Codex VI, and a very similar vision of Antony's in *Life of Antony*. *Authentikos Logos* will emerge as containing fewer details than the three first mentioned texts. Like *Life of Antony* 65 and 66 and *Asclepius* 76 – 77, it focuses more on the right way of life than the soul's ability to pass the powers by being able to give right answers to questions they pose. It will be suggested that *Authentikos Logos* aligns with literature where ascent is combined with ethical instruction.

2.1 The Slave Traders in *Authentikos Logos*

In the section where the soul begins the ascent, obscure characters named ⲘⲠⲢⲀⲄⲘⲀⲦⲈⲨⲦⲎⲤ Ⲛ̄Ⲛ̄ⲤⲱⲘⲀ appear (32:18 – 19). Previous translations render the two words very literally as referring to dealing in bodies, but this reading sounds somewhat odd and is not easily fathomable.[87] It is suggested here that this unique term be translated as "slave traders". The expression does contain a pun, since ⲤⲱⲘⲀ refers to bodies and slaves, but dealing in bodies remains unclear, despite suggesting that they are to do with the soul's embodiment. Calling these characters "slave traders" brings in several suggestions and allusions as to their nature.

Slave traders in this passage have sometimes been taken to refer to archons of the creation accounts,[88] but a careful reading reveals that they should be

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85 1 Cor 15:44.

86 Thus *Great Pow.* 36:3 – 6; *Acts of Thomas* 148. In the *Gospel of Philip*, the perfect light makes one invisible to the powers, *Gos. Phil.* 76:22 – 29; see also 70:5 – 7. *Gos. Mary* 15:19 – 20, although the *Gospel of Mary* puts emphasis on the answers the soul can give to the opposing powers. Perhaps this is ■ possible way to read *Acts Pet. 12 Apos.* 5:31 – 6:8. Note also the emphasised invisibility in *Tri. Prot.* 35:7 – 9; 24.

87 MacRae translates "the dealers in bodies" (MacRae, "Authoritative Teaching"), Meyer "those who deal in bodies" (Meyer (ed.), *The Nag Hammadi Scriptures*), Ménard "les négociants des corps" (Menard, *L'Authentikos Logos*), Heyden/Kulawik "die, dies mit den Leibern Handel trieben" (Heyden/Kulawik, *"Authentikos Logos"*), the Berliner Arbeitskreis "die mit den Leibern Handeltreibenden" (Berliner Arbeitskreis, "'Authentikos Logos'. Die dritte Schrift"), and Krause/Labib "die Handelsmänner der Körper" (Krause/Labib, "Die ursprüngliche Lehre"). Madeleine Scopello is the only previous commentator to *Authentikos Logos* thus far to consider an allusion to slave traders but she does not elaborate on it (Scopello, "Jewish and Greek Heroines", 165). The expression it is not found elsewhere. Note Valantasis, "Demons, Adversaries, Devils, Fishermen", 559.

88 Ménard, *L'Authentikos Logos*, 59.

seen to refer to gate-keeper figures, known in various ancient ascent narratives that threaten the soul's safe passage to the worlds above. Slavery language is used in many ascent accounts, and here it is applied to name these characters. The passage furthermore may conceal an allusion to Revelation 18. These connections become more transparent if the slavery aspects of the term are brought into view. The interpretation of this term is a key to approaching this passage: how the slave traders' role is read, directs interpretation. Despite the intriguing term, the slave traders are not unique figures, but appear under other names in other ascent narratives.

The ⲘⲠⲢⲀⲅⲘⲀⲦⲈⲨⲦⲎⲤ ⲚⲚⲤⲰⲘⲀ is usually translated with the odd-sounding "dealing in bodies" or "dealer in bodies", but the problem is not only with the oddness of the expression, but with the way it conceals an aspect of slavery and connotations associated with the term. The combination of πραγ-ματευτής and σῶμα can be taken to refer to trade in slaves, and "slave trader" may well have been the first meaning an ancient recipient of the text would have heard. In Greek texts slave traders are usually referred to as ἀνδραποδο-κάπηλος or ἀνδραποδιστής; the latter also refers to slave captors and kidnappers.[89] ⲘⲠⲢⲀⲅⲘⲀⲦⲈⲨⲦⲎⲤ ⲚⲚⲤⲰⲘⲀ is an unusual combination that perhaps stems from the bilingual context of late ancient Egypt. The Greek word πραγματευτής refers to people engaged in business.[90] In Christian texts and era πραγματευτής becomes "trader", "commercial traveller", "agent", often translatable as "merchant".[91] The other part of this expression, σῶμα,

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89 A related term is παιδαριοτρόφος, which refers to a person who keeps slave children, Liddell/Scott/Jones, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 1286.

90 πραγματευτής could be a business representative, agent, or attorney, and in a more specific use may refer to slave (or freedman) estate managers. The word derives from πραγματεύομαι, which usually refers to activities in business (to be engaged in business, spend one's time in business; transact business; make money by trade; generally, of officials: to be employed in public affairs), but also more generally being busy or active, taking trouble or worrying. Liddell/Scott/Jones, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 1458; the supplement, 257.

91 Lampe, *A Patristic Greek Lexicon*, 1126. The word appears e. g. in Palladius' *Lausiac History* 13 and it is translated as "businessman" by Robert T. Meyer in Palladius, *The Lausiac History* (ACW 34; Westminster, Maryland: The Newman Press, 1965). It also appears in John Moschos' *Spiritual Meadow* 75, 79, 115, 186, and 189, and is translated as "merchant" in 75, 186, and 189, and as "businessman" in 79 and 115 by John Wortley. in John Moschus, *The Spiritual Meadow (Pratum Spirituale)* (Cistercian Studies Series 139; Kalamazoo, Michigan: Cistercian Publications, 1992).
Trade and traders are mentioned in the Nag Hammadi Library, but these instances bear no allusions to slave trade. In Codex VII in the *Apoc. Pet.* 77:33 the Saviour criticises "others" of many things, and amongst this mentions that "they do business in my word" (ⲈⲨⲢⲈⲒⲈⲠⲰⲰⲦ Ⲛ� ϨⲢⲀⲒ ϨⲘ ⲠⲀϢⲀϪⲈ). Here the setting is one of polemics, and the passage is reminiscent of 2 Cor 2:17. The *Apocalypse of Peter* uses a Coptic verb, and the Greek text of the 2 Cor has καπηλεύειν, not πραγματεύομαι. The author of the *Teachings of Silvanus* seems also to have had the same Bible word in mind in his warning in *Teach. Silv.* 117:28 – 30: "And be not like the traders (ⲚⲈϢⲰⲦ) of God's word". Business people are mentioned again in *Teach. Silv.* 109:17, and that passage too refers to the New Testament: "Let him enter the temple within you so that he may throw out every trader (ⲚⲈϢⲰⲦ)".

generally refers to bodies, but it was frequently used of slaves, especially in later texts.[92]

Jennifer Glancy has argued that in antiquity the view of slaves as bodies begins with the vocabulary of slavery: σῶμα could be used as a synonym to refer to the person of a slave. Although the word is often translated as "body", which illustrates its euphemistic, or denigrating, character, Glancy argues that there is no way of knowing how ancients would have heard it. It is possible that it was not heard as a metaphor but used to refer to slaves and heard simply so, and many scholars routinely translate the word as "slave" rather than "body".[93] This choice is made here, too: the less euphemistic option increases the clarity of the text. Glancy illustrates her point of translating σῶμα as "slave" with an example that comes strikingly close to the slave traders' defeat in *Authentikos Logos*. Revelation 18 contains a vision of an angel proclaiming the fall of great Babylon, and the fall is lamented by merchants of the earth who will weep and mourn for the loss of their cargo, amongst which the two last items listed are slaves and human souls: . . . καὶ σωμάτων, καὶ ψυχὰς ἀνθρώπων (Rev 18:13).[94] Already the translators of the Sahidic New Testament understood this as a reference to slaves, as they translated the last part with one word, ⲞⲘϨⲀⲖ.[95] Both *Authentikos Logos* and Revelation have defeated, weeping merchants who had dealt in human bodies and souls. In both texts the image of slave traders involves an aspect of defeat: in the Revelation the merchants wail the great Babylon's fall, in *Authentikos Logos* they wail their failure to interfere with the soul's ascent. In Revelation the scene is that of collective eschatology, whereas in *Authentikos Logos* the focus is on individual soul's eschatology. Although the passage in *Authentikos Logos* does not follow either the Coptic or Greek text of the Revelation word-for-word, it appears reminiscent of the Revelation text.

Merchants are mentioned in two *Gospel of Thomas:* in logion 64 the merchants and men of business fail to grasp the importance of their host's invitation, refuse it, and are condemned for their lack of understanding of priorities. In logion 76 a merchant's shrewdness is portrayed as exemplary, and the audience are asked to seek for the (merchant's) lasting treasure. In the former logion the author uses both the Greek ϨⲈⲚⲈⲘⲠⲞⲢⲞⲤ (ἔμπορος, 64:16) and Coptic ⲚⲢⲈϤⲦⲞⲞⲨ, ⲚⲈϢⲞⲦⲈ (64:34 – 35), whereas in the latter he speaks of tradesperson, ⲢⲰⲘⲈ ⲚⲈϢϢⲰⲦ (76:14 – 15) and simply ϢⲰⲦ (76:16), and uses ⲦⲞⲞⲨ for buying (76:18). ⲠⲢⲀⲄⲘⲀⲦⲈⲓⲀ does not refer to trade in *Asclepius* 70:15 where Trismegistus prophesies how Egypt will seem to be abandoned by gods, all the Egyptians' religious efforts will appear to be in vain, and all their religious activities despised.

92 Liddell/Scott/Jones, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 1749. Related terms include τὸ σωμάτιον (of foundlings, e.g. exposed infants, often raised as slaves), τὰ σώματα, τὰ σώματα δουλικά (slave bodies, i.e. slaves). Glancy, *Slavery in Early Christianity*, 10, 11. Harrill, *Slaves in the New Testament*, 39.

93 Glancy, *Slavery in Early Christianity*, 11.

94 Glancy, *Slavery in Early Christianity*, 85 – 88.

95 David Aune translates σωμάτων, καὶ ψυχὰς ἀνθρώπων as "slaves, human beings"; he suggests that the latter is a Hebrew idiom, see Ezek 27:13; Gen 12:5. David E. Aune, *Revelation 17 – 22* (WBC 52c; Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1998), 1001 – 1003.

It is therefore possible that this expression was used in *Authentikos Logos* as an allusion to the Revelation and its images of the eschatological defeat of those who deal with people – just like the soul's ascent describes the end-time of an individual soul's earthly life. Real-life slave traders' qualities (fearsomeness, nastiness, cruelty) characterise these figures that the ascending soul succeeds in escaping.[96] David Frankfurter has pointed to the predominantly oral phenomenon of the use scriptures in early Christian Egypt, and how apocalyptic texts provided "stock phrases, images, oracles, traditions" that were combined in liturgical performance with little or imprecise regard to "original attribution".[97] Such fluid usage could explain the several allusions to apocalyptic and other texts in *Authentikos Logos*. What should be noted is the way how *Authentikos Logos* employs eschatological imagery. Both *Authentikos Logos* and Revelation (or 2 Esdras 2 that was discussed in Chapter 2) refer to what happens in the end: in Revelation, 2 Esdras 2, and Isaiah the end is a collective eschatological event, and in Revelation 18 destruction of the Babylon/Rome, whereas in *Authentikos Logos* the allusions refer to the end of the individual soul's captivity in the body and the end of the slave traders' power over the soul.

Although ⲘⲠⲢⲀⲄⲘⲀⲦⲈⲨⲦⲎⲤ Ⲛ̄Ⲛ̄ⲤⲰⲘⲀ is here read as "slave traders", that is not to say that the word σῶμα, even when understood as a reference to slaves, would not *also* refer to bodies, and this is precisely how the expression plays on words: these beings deal in slaves, the threat they pose to souls is enslavement and they enslave by trapping souls into bodies. Although the term "slave trader" does not appear in the other ascent narratives discussed presently, references to slaves' cruel treatment are made in other ancient ascent narratives that discuss souls' judgement at the gates of heavens.

Two aspects characterise the slave traders in the passage. First, they have fashioned or moulded (πλάσσω) a body for the soul. Second, they are thwarted in their attempt to cast down the invisible, ascending soul. The first feature brings in mind rulers and their creation activities in several of the Nag

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96 As Glancy notes in her discussion on slave sale, John of Patmos' "reference to those who dealt in bodies and souls sounds the climactic note . . . that would have resonated with those who had stood in the auction block or watched helplessly as prospective buyers undressed and jabbed their mothers, fathers, children, or lovers. Glancy, *Slavery in Early Christianity*, 88. On the other hand, slavery is a metaphor used in ancient literature not because slavery as such was seen as wrong, but because the horror was in the possibility of reduction from the status of a free person to that of a slave, and consequentially to loss of protection of boundaries of one's own body, and to "humiliations and violations of servitude". Glancy, *Slavery in Early Christianity,* 97–101. J. Albert Harrill discusses slave traders' perceived qualities and how they are portrayed in literature, and concludes that they are not only portrayed in negative terms, but in the vocabulary of vituperation. "Slave trader" (ἀνδραποδιστής) is a term of abuse, used in order to portray someone in dubious, morally inferior light, Harrill, *Slaves in the New Testament,* 119–136.

97 David Frankfurter, "The Legacy of Jewish Apocalypses in Early Christianity: Regional Trajectories" in James C. VanderKam/William Adler (ed.), *The Jewish Apocalyptic Heritage in Early Christianity* (CRINT 4; Assen: Van Gorcum, 1996), 129–200, on p. 166–167.

Hammadi or related texts.[98] Rulers under the Creator-God's authority appear fashioning human bodies from earth in such creation accounts as in the *Apocryphon of John*, the *Hypostasis of the Archons*, and *On the Origin of the World*. The different versions of the *Apocryphon of John* provide us with detailed accounts of the creation of the first human being, Adam. The versions in the Nag Hammadi codex III and Berlin Papyrus portray an array of rulers and authorities who create Adam and fashion his (bodily) form out of themselves.[99] Nag Hammadi Codex II does not use ΠⲖⲀⲤⲤⲰ in its parallel section (*Ap. John* II 15:1 – 6), but in this version, as the ruling powers realise Adam's superiority, they bring Adam to the shadow of death and plan to re-fashion[100] him of material elements that are connected to dark ignorance and desire. This new body is the tomb for the form of the body, and robbers clothe the man with it, so that he forgets and becomes mortal.[101]

The *Hypostasis of Archons* mentions rulers who decide to create a human being, and do so by fashioning him out of the soil from the earth, according to their body and image of God that they had seen reflected on water.[102] According to the *On the Origin of the World* seven rulers are responsible for the moulding of the human being. Later on in the text the rulers control humankind by keeping people in ignorance.[103] They appear countless times in other Nag Hammadi treatises: the *Second Treatise of the Great Seth* mentions that the rulers belong to Yaldabaoth.[104] In the *Epistle of Peter to Philip* they are under the authority of Authades.[105] The *Gospel of the Egyptians* speaks of the moulding of the first creature and its reasons, but does not mention the rulers. Its context, however, is similar to that of the above-mentioned accounts.[106]

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98 This is the direction Ménard suggests in *L'Authentikos Logos*, 59. There are not many instances in the Nag Hammadi Library where πλάσσω is used of other fashioning than that of the rulers shaping human beings in the beginning. *Gos. Phil.* 60:34 – 61:4 makes a distinction between two different kinds of origin, those who were moulded and those who were begotten, and the *Teachings of Silvanus* discusses the three γένοι of human beings, the earth, the moulded/formed, and the created, from which originate body, soul, and mind. *Teach. Silv.* 92:15 – 29. ⲦⲀⲘⲒⲞ is used of creation in Codex VI (*Thund.* 21:10; *Asclepius* 66:30; 67:2, 32; 68:26, 31, 34; 69:24, 26), but also elsewhere, e. g. *Ap. John* II 15:2 – 6 (par.); *Hyp. Arch.* 87:23 – 27. Likewise ΠⲖⲀⲤⲤⲰ appears frequently (e. g. *Ap. John* III 22:8 par BG 48:16; *Ap. John* II 21:5; *Gos. Phil.* 60:34 – 61:4; *Hyp. Arch.* 87:26, 30; *Orig. World* 114:30, 124:1; *Gos. Eg.* 59:8; *Treat. Seth* 53:19; *Ep. Pet. Phil.* 136:12), though in Codex VI the only occurrence is in *Authentikos Logos*. In *Teach. Silv.* 92:28 the reference is not to a creation account.

99 *Ap. John* III 22:1 – 9; BG 48:16 – 17.

100 ⲬⲈⲔⲀⲀⲤ ⲈⲨⲚⲀⲠⲖⲀⲤⲤⲈ ⲚⲔⲈⲤⲞⲠ.

101 *Ap. John* II 20:32 – 21:13; the parallels do not use ΠⲖⲀⲤⲤⲰ, but Adam's new form is called either ⲀⲚⲀⲠⲖⲀⲤⲒⲤ (III 26:15) or ΠⲖⲀⲤⲒⲤ (BG 55:3). This is a widely attested concept that goes back to Plato's myths and Orphic teaching.

102 *Hyp. Arch.* 87:23 – 33.

103 *Orig. World* 114:29 – 35; 123:34 – 124:4.

104 *Treat. Seth* 53:12 – 19.

105 *Ep. Pet. Phil.* 136:11 – 13.

106 *Gos. Eg.* 59:4 – 9.

Rulers of the Nag Hammadi creation accounts are hostile towards people they created. The *Gospel of Philip* mentions the rulers' aim to enslave humans: "They (the rulers) wished to take the free person and make him their slave for ever."[107]

These Nag Hammadi texts, with the exception of the *Gospel of Philip*, focus on creation, and portray the rulers as the Creator-God's minions who fashion people. Creation is not, however, the primary meaning indicated in *Authentikos Logos*, as it does not refer to slave traders as fashioning a body for the first human being(s). Rather, the implication is that the slave traders have made a new body for the ascending soul, and if the soul cannot ascend beyond the slave traders, it will have to enter a life in the body they have prepared. This role, of the rulers as malicious powers that try to thwart the ascent of the raising souls is evidenced in some texts that are often grouped under the label "Gnostic", but as will be discussed, this is a motif that is not restricted to "Gnostic" texts.

A double role of rulers is attested in Irenaeus' account in *Against the Heresies* I.24.3 – 6 on Basilides' teaching. Irenaeus refers to Basilides' view that those who confess the crucified Jesus, "is still a slave, and under the power of those who formed our bodies, but he who denies him has been freed from these beings, and is acquainted with the dispensation of the unborn father". "These beings" have a similar role with the slave traders in *Authentikos Logos*. Irenaeus tells how Christ ascended to the Father, and could not be caught because he was invisible. In the same way that Christ ascended, so can souls ascend. Also, salvation belongs to the soul alone: the body dies and is corrupted. Despite these similarities with *Authentikos Logos*, Irenaeus' description of Basilides' "doctrine" contains elaborate elements that do not appear in *Authentikos Logos:* there are the altogether 365 heavens, powers, and emanations from the Father, the chief of the creator-angels is the God of the Jews, and Christ-Nous was sent to earth to deliver his believers from those who made the world.

In *Authentikos Logos* the primary reference to, or concern with, is on the soul's success in its ascent, rather than the creation of the world and people. This concern is first portrayed in the struggle and (spiritual) progress of the soul in the world, and, as the soul leaves the body behind and passes the slave traders, to continue towards its final goal. The soul's ability to escape them is closely bound to the way of life it chooses prior to its ascent. This focus separates *Authentikos Logos* from those ancient Jewish and Christian ascent visions, where the focus is on revelatory ascent or creation.[108] Approached from this perspective, the slave traders can be identified as gatekeeper figures

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107 *Gos. Phil.* 54:29 – 31.

108 In the Nag Hammadi library, apocalyptic ascent texts include Sethian *Zostrianos* (e. g. *Zostrianos* 3:28 – 5:10), *Allogenes* (60:13 – 61:22) and *Marsanes*. For a recent discussion of Sethian apocalypses, see now Burns, *Apocalypse of the Alien God*.

that are mentioned in several early Christian texts.[109] Unique here is the naming of these threatening powers as slave traders, not the figures as such.

These terrifying figures are given various names in different writings. In the *Apocalypse of Paul* 20:16 and 22:20, and the *First Apocalypse of James* 33:8 they are called toll-collectors (τελῶνης), whereas in the *Gospel of Mary* they are collectively called powers (ἐξουσία), but also given individual names. The Hermetic *Asclepius* in the Nag Hammadi Codex VI mentions a demon (δαί-μων) between heaven and earth, appointed by God as the overseer or judge of human souls, and a very similar figure appears in a nightly vision of Antony.[110] One such figure in the *Apocalypse of Paul* is depicted with characteristics of the Creator-God.[111] These fearsome characters have similar roles in narratives where they appear: their aim is to prevent ascending souls from reaching any further.

Michael Kaler has suggested relatedness of the gatekeeper motif to Mandean and Manichean literature along with the *Acts of Thomas*.[112] However, gatekeepers are also very typical to Christian literature of Egyptian origin. David Frankfurter suggests that "[t]his ascent motif became particularly prominent in Gnostic and other Christian literature of Egyptian provenance, probably because of its origins in Egyptian mortuary literature."[113] Parallels between Christian and Hermetic texts (*Gospel of Mary* and *Corpus Hermeticum* 1.24 – 26, *Life of Antony* and *Asclepius*) support such view.[114]

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109 This is obviously not a concept that is limited to Christian writings, but the discussion here concerns Christian evidence. Karen L. King acknowledges common astrological beliefs – that planets control people's fates – at the background of ascent narratives. King, *The Gospel of Mary of Magdala*, 73.

110 *Asclepius* 76:22 – 33. Athanasius, *Life of Antony*, 65 – 66.

111 Judgement scenes with fearsome questioners are known elsewhere in ancient literature. For instance in the *Testament of Abraham* 10 angels bring souls to judgement at the gates of heaven; the judges are said to be Adam and Abel. The *Testament of Abraham* shares many features with such second-century ascent apocalypses as, for example, the *Book of the Watchers*, the *Testament of Levi*, *2 Enoch*, the *Similitudes of Enoch*, the *Apocalypse of Zephaniah* and the *Apocalypse of Abraham*, but it also differs from them notably; it is more "a didactic and entertaining story" than an apocalypse, concludes Martha Himmelfarb. Martha Himmelfarb, *Ascent to Heaven in Jewish and Christian Apocalypses* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 3 – 8.

112 Kaler, *Flora Tells a Story*, 30, n. 28 refers to the *Mandean Left Ginza* (Lidzbarski 1925, 433, line 11 onwards), and the *Manichean Psalm Book* (Allberry 1938, 97.10; 192.19; 218:4 f.; 234:18). See also Murdock/MacRae: Apocalypse of Paul" in Parrott (ed.), *Nag Hammadi codices V, 2 – 5 and VI*, 47 – 49, on p. 48.

113 Frankfurter, "The Legacy of Jewish Apocalypses", 161.

114 For the *Gospel of Mary* as a Christian writing that should not be approached as a specifically Gnostic text, see De Boer, *The Gospel of Mary*, 58 – 59 and King, *The Gospel of Mary of Magdala*, 5 – 7. King emphasises the influence of popular philosophy, King, *The Gospel of Mary of Magdala*, 41 – 44. A contradictory view is provided by Tuckett, *The Gospel of Mary*, 42 – 54. Marjanen in his earlier study approached the *Gospel of Mary* as a Gnostic Christian Gospel, but he has revised his view: Antti Marjanen, *The Woman Jesus Loved. Mary Magdalene in the Nag Hammadi Library and Related Documents* (NHMS 40; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1996), 94 (see also

Frankfurter notes that in contrast to visionary ascents that describe apocalyptic tour narratives, the toll-collectors in the *Apocalypse of Paul* and their demand for passwords emphasise restrictiveness of different heavens.[115]

The gatekeeper or toll-collector motif is, however, not restricted to "Gnostic" Christian literature, and not in fact to literature of Egyptian origin only. Toll-collectors are attested to for example in the *Acts of Thomas* 148 and 167. Macarius the Great compares demons to toll-collectors and says that just like toll-collectors who sit along narrow streets and snatch passers-by, so also demons in the air will stop ascending souls and not let them continue their ascent. The only means to get past them is to work hard and struggle whilst still in flesh.[116] The emphasis, thus, is on how to live in this life, and it is very much the same as the emphasis in *Authentikos Logos* that also mentions hard work as a merit of the ascended soul (35:3 – 6): the way of life and toil enable the soul to ascend. Likewise when Judas (Thomas) is about to be martyred in the *Acts of Thomas*, he prays a long prayer in which he mentions tax-collectors who are not going to see his soul as it is ascending.[117] Although several scholars consider this a "Gnostic" motif, it is too widely attested to be to be such. As Claudia Rapp has pointed out, after emerging in the literature of Late Roman Egypt, the concept becomes "very influential in the art and writings of Orthodox Christianity".[118] The purpose of these characters is to motivate

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94, n. 1); Antti Marjanen, "The Mother of Jesus or the Magdalene? The Identity of Mary in the So-Called Gnostic Christian Texts" in F. Stanley Jones (ed.), *Which Mary? The Marys of Early Christian Tradition* (SBLSymS 19; Atlanta, Ga.: Society of Biblical Literature, 2002), 31 – 41, on p. 32 n. 3. Françoise Morard pays attention to themes in the *Gospel of Mary* that are central in monastic literature (purity of heart, unification of the human being) and has suggested an ascetic reading. Morard, "L'Évangile de Marie", 155 – 171.

115 Frankfurter, "The Legacy of Jewish Apocalypses", 161.

116 Pseudo-Macarius, *Fifty Spiritual Homilies* (collection H) 43.9.

117 "Let no-one take my soul that I have delivered to you. Let not the toll-collectors see me, nor the tax-collectors accuse me falsely. May not the serpent see me" (*Acts of Thomas* 167, the Greek text). See also *Acts of Thomas* 148, Pseudo-Macarius, Homilies serm. 64 (coll B): hom 14.15 and serm 50 (coll. H) hom 43.134, and *History of Joseph the Carpenter* 21.1 – 8.

A.F.J. Klijn mentions toll-collectors in Ephrem the Syrian (*On Virginity* 83 and 175), and in a saying attributed to abba Isaiah in the thirteenth-century *Book of the Bee* 131 (LVI in the on-line translation of the text). Klijn, too, mentions Mandean parallels. A.F.J. Klijn (ed.), *Acts of Thomas. Introduction, Text, and Commentary* (Second, revised edition. NovTSup 108. Leiden: Brill, 2003), 232 – 234.

That the soul's passage to heaven is not certain is also suggested in Perpetua's vision in prison: she sees a ladder going up to heaven with sharp weapons on its sides, and a dragon underneath that threatens and frightens those about to ascend. *Acts of Perpetua and Felicitas*, 4.

118 Claudia Rapp, "Safe-Conducts to Heaven: Holy Men, Mediation and the Role of Writing" in Philip Rousseau and Manolis Papoutsakis (ed.), *Transformations of Late Antiquity. Essays for Peter Brown* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009), 187 – 203, on p. 196. See also Einar Thomassen, "The Valentinian Materials in *James* (NHC V,3 and CT,2) in Iricinschi/Jenott/Denzey Lewis/Townsend (ed.), *Beyond the Gnostic Gospels*, 79 – 90, on p. 83. Michael Kaler, *Flora Tells a Story*, 30, n. 28 who sees the motif to connect with "Eastern gnostic traditions".

people to struggle in this life and thus make the passage of their souls easier after death.

Both toll-collectors and slave dealers have been given a name taken from real-world characters, such that could possibly excite or evoke feelings of fear, aversion, or contempt. Fear of slavery appears in different forms in Christian texts. A Coptic encomium on St Mercurius the General[119] mentions barbarians who capture people with the intention of selling them to slavery, but the term slave-captor or slave trader is not used. Compared with the slave traders in *Authentikos Logos*, this later text is considerably more tangible as it pictures actual kidnappers in a miracle story set at the consecration feast of St Mercurius' chapel: barbarians attack the feast and capture those outside the chapel, leaving those left behind under distress – the sermon describes them as parents of those taken, who seem to have been children playing around the church during the feast. The captured are released when Mercurius himself intervenes, and a happy reunion ensues.[120] The slave-traders in *Authentikos Logos* are rather to be taken as evil spiritual powers, which underlines the difference to this later Coptic homily. Furthermore, slave traders are stock characters in ancient romances where they are portrayed as greedy and dishonest characters. In ancient literature they are portrayed in contemptible light because of their moral inferiority.[121] In this vein, reference to slave traders also suggests that gatekeepers are after all powerless figures. Despite their attempts to capture the ascending soul, they fail and are humiliated.

2.2 The Spiritual Body: A Resurrection Body or the Soul's Pneumatic Vehicle?

Along with the ⲘⲠⲢⲀⲅⲘⲀⲦⲈⲨⲦⲎⲤ ⲚⲚⲤⲰⲘⲀ, the soul's ascent passage in *Authentikos Logos* contains another term that is unique in the Nag Hammadi library, and again one that provides an insight into its intellectual context. This term is the "invisible pneumatic body", ⲞⲨⲤⲰⲘⲀ ⲘⲠⲚⲀⲦⲓⲔⲞⲚ ⲚⲀⲢⲞⲢⲀⲦⲞⲚ (32:32) that enables the soul's ascent. This is very much a Christian term that goes back to Paul's discussion on resurrection in 1 Corinthians 15:44 where he explains that what rises at resurrection is not a physical or earthly body, σῶμα ψυχικόν, but a body consisting of pneuma, σῶμα πνευματικόν. This means that *Authentikos Logos*

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119 The homily is attributed to Basil of Caesarea, most likely pseudonymously. See Brakke et al (ed.), *Homiletica*, x, xxiii.

120 "On Mercurius" 13–17 in Brakke et al (ed.), *Homiletica*.

121 Harrill, *Slaves in the New Testament*, 4, 121–129. See e.g. Chariton: *Callirhoe* 1.32–33 where Theron decides, out of greed, to sell Callirhoe rather than release or kill her; and 1.36–38 where Theron deceives Leonas into buying freeborn Callirhoe in a deserted place. Theron lies to Callirhoe, who doesn't believe his words, recognising him for the villain he is, 1.9. Scopello, too, notes that slave traders and pirates are common villains of Greek romances. Scopello "Jewish and Greek Heroines", 165–168; Scopello, "Authoritative Discourse", 381.

speaks of the soul's after-death form using distinctly Christian vocabulary, and yet it does not mention resurrection. As was noted above in IV.2, the "pneumatic soul" in 23:12–13 is a term shared with Neoplatonist Synesius (and John Chrysostom), and it refers to the soul's form when it is not in a heavy body. The "pneumatic body" in *Authentikos Logos* 32:32 comes very close to that.

Paul appears to have coined the term σῶμα πνευματικόν in 1 Corinthians 15:44 to explain resurrection and to argue that what arises in resurrection is a light body consisting of πνεῦμα. The term is not used in works before Paul, and after him it is Christian authors who employ it.[122] Such a notion of a pneumatic body is in line with assumptions prevalent in current popular philosophical thought, and Paul appears to be thinking of a corporeal soul, a concept common in the Graeco-Roman world.[123] How salvation or resurrection happens was a debated subject in the discussions of early Christians with each other and non-Christians.[124] Thus, Paul's pneumatic soul could be taken to mean different things. In *Authentikos Logos* no resurrection is mentioned despite the use of the Pauline term: rather, the soul after its death ascends in some sort of corporeal form through heavenly spheres. The impression is rather straightforward and Platonic. In order to reach the goal, the soul must shed its heavy, mortal body.

The idea of the soul's immortality and individual rather than collective eschatology are expressed in Christian texts from very early on, and this line runs in the Christian tradition next to the teaching of the bodily resurrection.[125] Different ways of understanding resurrection caused controversy that becomes evident in Christian texts between 200 and 400 – the opponents of the literal understanding not only included pagans like Celsus, but also

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122 The same notion is made in Troels Engberg-Pedersen, *Cosmology and Self in the Apostle Paul. The Material Spirit* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 27–28, 217 n. 76.

123 Martin, *The Corinthian Body*, 125–127 suggests a closeness to the "astral soul" theory. Gregory Riley, *Resurrection Reconsidered. Thomas and John in Controversy* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995), 63. Paul does not refer to the resurrection of earthly bodies. As for instance Riley, *Resurrection Reconsidered*, 8–9, notes, the development of the idea of the "physical resurrection of Christ" (or people) is relatively late in the history of Christian thought.

124 Setzer, *Resurrection of the Body*, 20. There were several reasons that made resurrection so important to Christians: for Justin Martyr, a belief in resurrection is a sign of a true Christian, i.e. it is used for defining Christian identity. Setzer, *Resurrection of the Body*, 76–77, 84–86.

125 The idea that after their departure from the body, souls ascend to heaven, is contained in Jesus' words to the thief on the cross, which probably is the evangelist's view (Luke 23:43), and that fits far from seamlessly with the other, more prominent doctrine of the resurrection of the dead and the collective judgement of souls at the end of times. For Luke's eschatological views, see Outi Lehtipuu, *The Afterlife Imagery in Luke's Story of the Rich Man and Lazarus* (NovTSup 123; Leiden: Brill, 2007), 250–264. Both the collective and individual views are encountered in ancient Mediterranean cultures, e.g. Lehtipuu, *The Afterlife Imagery*, 55–159; Riley, *Resurrection Reconsidered*, 7–68; Heikki Räisänen, *The Rise of Christian Beliefs. The Thought World of Early Christians* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2010), 114–133.

other Christians.[126] Notably several Nag Hammadi texts view salvation as the soul's ascent, and either they do not focus on resurrection, re-interpret it, or take a critical attitude towards it.[127]

Although bodily or physical resurrection was a view not advocated by all Christians, and one that emerges as shunned by many Nag Hammadi writings, it is somewhat surprising that the term pneumatic body does not appear elsewhere within the Nag Hammadi codices, nor anywhere in the Valentinian writings that are, after all, indebted to Pauline heritage. When for example Clement in the *Excerpts* from Theodotus 1:1 – 2 quotes Theodotus as holding the view that the Saviour, before and when he descended on earth had a spiritual body, the precise term used is τὸ πνευματικὸν σπέρμα, "spiritual seed".[128] Likewise the *Treatise on the Resurrection* (NHC 1,4) that proceeds from Paul's question in 1 Corinthians 15:35 on how the dead are resurrected and in what kind of bodies they will come, does not mention a σῶμα πνευματικόν even though the ensuing discussion circles around the subject.[129] The *Treatise on the Resurrection* argues that resurrection[130] is real, but discards the view that the earthly body would be risen. It is the invisible members that will receive a new flesh when the visible body is left behind. Yet even when the term is not used, the view that is advocated of an invisible resurrection body is very much in line with the idea of a pneumatic body in 1 Corinthians 15:44.

If the term "pneumatic body" does not appear in the Nag Hammadi library apart from in *Authentikos Logos* 32, it is not entirely absent from early Christian discussions. Both Clement and Origen refer to 1 Corinthians 15:44

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126 In *Dialogue with Trypho* 80.4 Justin Martyr claims that those who do not believe in resurrection are not true Christians, just as Sadducees are not true Jews. True Christians in Justin's view believe in the resurrection of the dead and a thousand years in Jerusalem. See Outi Lehtipuu's discussion of resurrection belief as a Christian identity marker: Outi Lehtipuu, "How to Expose a Deviant? Resurrection Belief and Boundary Creation in Early Christianity" in Hakola/Nikki/Tervahauta (ed.), *Others and the Construction of Early Christian Identities*, 165 – 194 and Outi Lehtipuu, *Debates over the Resurrection of the Dead. Constructing Early Christian Identity* (OECS; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015). Caroline Bynum has noted that around 200 Irenaeus and Tertullian "defended a literal, materialistic understanding of general resurrection against those who argued for a spiritual understanding of a risen body". Caroline Bynum, *The Resurrection of the Body in Western Christianity, 200 – 1336* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995), 59 – 61. Martin, *The Corinthian Body*, 124. Setzer, *Resurrection of the Body*, 125 – 143.

127 For an overview, see Setzer, *Resurrection of the Body*, 156 – 168; Riley focuses on Thomas traditions in Riley, *Resurrection Reconsidered*, 100 – 175.

128 See Thomassen, *The Spiritual Seed*, 30 – 31, 38 – 45.

129 In *Treatise on the Resurrection* ΠΝΕΥΜΑΤΙΚΟC, ΠΝΕΥΜΑΤΙΚΗ appears a few times. For instance, ΤΑΝΑCΤΑCΙC ΝΠΝΕΥΜΑΤΙΚΗ, "spiritual resurrection" (*Treat. Res.* 45:40). The term is also lacking in the *Tripartite Tractate* that mentions "spiritual places" (101:7), "spiritual words" (101:16), "spiritual rank" (103:18), and "spiritual race" (118:29) etc.; *Disc.* 8 – 9 refers to spiritual people or beings (53:17).

130 ΑΝΑCΤΑCΙC in *Treat. Res.* 44:6; 45:40; 47:3; 48:4, 10, 16, 31; 49:7, 16; 50:17 (this is the title of the text). On one occasion ΤⲰΟΥΝ (*Treat. Res.* 45:26).

and use the precise term σῶμα πνευματικόν.[131] In *Stromata* 7.14 Clement discusses the characteristics of the true Gnostic, his ability to suffer injustices with forgiveness, and connects this with the notion of the church as a pneumatic body.[132] One gets closer to Clement's views on souls' pneumatic-bodies in the *Excerpts from Theodotus* 14 where Clement discusses the nature of demons. He argues that although demons are said to be incorporeal, this does not mean that they have no bodies, only that their bodies are weaker than angels' bodies.[133] Not only demons and angels, but souls, too, are bodies. To prove this, Clement cites 1 Corinthians 15:44 (Ἀλλὰ καὶ ἡ ψυχὴ σῶμα· Ὁ γοῦν Ἀπόστολος· Σπείρεται μὲν γὰρ σῶμα ψυχικόν ἐγείρεται δὲ σῶμα πνευματικόν). Because souls are bodies, they can suffer punishment or be purified after death: bodies are dissolved into the earth but the visible parts are purified by fire. A proof of the souls' corporeal punishment is given in the story of the Rich man and Lazarus, where the heat of the fire, Rich man's thirst, and Lazarus' fingertip are mentioned (Luke 16:24).[134] As the earthly image – the body – is left behind, the heavenly image emerges and that is the spiritual body.[135]

If Clement's references to the pneumatic bodies do not connect directly with a discussion on resurrection or the soul's ascent, Origen does that in

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131 Gregory of Nyssa refers to the spiritual/pneumatic body in *On the Soul and Resurrection* 153 where he discusses the mystery of resurrection in the light of farming and how corn grows of a seed, and cites 1 Cor 15:44.

132 Clement connects the ability to forgive to sanctity, and this takes him to similar rhetoric on body parts as was discussed above (VI.1): those who do not live in accordance with the word are fleshy, and those who live according to pagan ways are committing adultery with reference to the church and his own body (this vein of thought is very similar to that in the *Exegesis on the Soul*, see III.1), whereas the person who lives according to the word has joined the Lord in spirit and becomes part of a spiritual body, the church. As can be seen, Clement is not in fact discussing the form of resurrection or any sort of invisible body, but aims at answering how one can be a perfect Gnostic in this life.

133 This section of *Excerpts from Theodotus* does not derive from Theodotus or Valentinian materials, but is one of the passages that probably come from Clement himself. Casey saw a contradiction between the materialism of *Excerpts from Theodotus* 10 – 17 and Clement's views in *Strom.* 5.71, but arrives at a conclusion that they must derive from Clement nevertheless, and that the different character of the *Excerpts* and *Stromata* should suffice to explain the differences. Casey, *The Excerpta ex Theodotou*, 9 – 10, 13 – 15. It is also to be noted that any second-century Platonist would have been a materialist to some extent, and this is very much what the discussion on pneumatic bodies is about. Although Casey was puzzled by Clement's materialism here, this is not the only instance of it: rather agreeing with common perceptions of his time, Clement notes in *Ecl. Proph.* 55.1 that stars are pneumatic bodies, i.e. they consist of pneuma.

134 Clement of Alexandria, *Excerpts from Theodotus* 14; Lehtipuu, *The Afterlife Imagery*, 212 – 220. Yet another instance of an early Christian image of the soul's bodily shape after death is Perpetua's vision of her late brother Dinocrates who had died of cancer at the age of seven. Perpetua sees Dinocrates suffering, and again, after she has prayed for him, given relief, so much so that after receiving a drink of fresh water he can go and play as children do. *Martyrdom of Perpetua and Felicitas* 7 – 8.

135 Clement of Alexandria, *Excerpts from Theodotus* 15. The image of the heavenly (τὴν εἰκόνα τοῦ ἐπουρανίου) in 1 Cor 15:49 is, according to Clement, the spiritual body.

Contra Celsum 4.57 where he answers Celsus' claim that the soul is the work of God, immortal and fundamentally different from mortal bodies.[136] Origen suggests that perhaps even Celsus could not ultimately maintain such a stark dualism but might have to find refuge in Aristotle's view that there is an immaterial element, "ether", that functions as a go-between for material bodies and the soul. Origen says that "we" (Christians), too, know that there are celestial and terrestrial bodies (1 Cor 15:40), and that expectation of the resurrection contains an understanding that the bodies that rise are not the crude earthly bodies, but changed ones that are of better kind. Soul-bodies are sown but pneumatic bodies are risen.[137] As Origen goes on to defend the resurrection of the flesh preached in churches, he twice more cites 1 Corinthians 15:44, which emphasises the difference between that which is sown and that which is risen, and thus refers to an understanding of the resurrection that is more subtle than the crude idea of dead bodies being resuscitated.[138]

As this discussion has aimed at showing, the term "invisible, pneumatic body" in *Authentikos Logos* stems from a Christian and Pauline background, but more than 1 Corinthians 15 looms in the background. The pneumatic body can be linked with the notion of the soul's pneumatic vehicle (ὄχημα) of later Platonists: such a vehicle was assumed by Porphyry, Synesius, Iamblichus, and others, and its function was to act as a go-between between the material body and the immaterial soul. This vehicle was thought to consist of pneuma, and it carried souls downwards and upwards to their salvation.[139] Although the concept in *Authentikos Logos* is in this sense Platonic, one should not stop at this notion, nor ignore the fact that the Pauline terminology used is not what one would expect of a Platonist.[140] One may further enquire at how *Authentikos Logos* perceives the soul's salvation, particularly in light of its use of Pauline terminology, and where it belongs within early Christian discussions of salvation and life after death.

The answer is to some extent simple: *Authentikos Logos* considers the ascent to be the soul's return and its way to salvation (provided it can get past the gatekeepers), a view that recurs in the Nag Hammadi texts, but also elsewhere in ancient Christian literature. The idea of the resurrection body in 1 Corinthians 15:44 resembles and easily mingles with the concept of ascent.

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136 Pneumatic bodies are also mentioned e. g. in Origen's *Commentary of the Gospel of John* 13.53.

137 Origen, *Contra Celsum* 4.54 – 57.

138 Origen, *Contra Celsum* 5.18, 19 and 22.

139 Finamore, *Iamblichus and the Theory*, 1 – 5; Shaw, *Theurgy and the Soul*, 51 – 52. Such an earlier author as Alcinous considers the soul to be ἀσώματος, e. g. *The Handbook* 25.1. See Dillon, *Alcinous*, 151.

140 Van den Broek "The Authentikos Logos" takes the ψυχὴ πνευματική and the σῶμα πνευματικόν to refer to the same, 208 – 211, 217. Although "pneumatic soul" and "pneumatic body" come close to one another *Authentikos Logos*, they also appear to reflect different aspects of the soul's descent and ascent.

Like Origen, *Authentikos Logos* assumes a go-between that enables the ascent of the immaterial soul after it discards its material body. Although Origen discusses resurrection, he indicates his knowledge and acceptance of the Aristotelian view of a go-between that is needed to join souls with bodies. In *Authentikos Logos* the invisible pneumatic body is not a resurrection body that will be raised at the end of days, but the soul's means to ascend directly after it discards the earthly body.

2.3 The Soul's Ascent in *Authentikos Logos* Compared with the *Apocalypse of Paul*, the *First Apocalypse of James* and the *Gospel of Mary*

Authentikos Logos is next compared with three writings that contain ascent accounts with gatekeeper figures. These texts are Christian, or, in the case of the Hermetic *Asclepius* from Codex VI, were read by Christians. The purpose of the comparison is to discuss the varying emphases and aims of the texts. It is not just the differences and comparisons that matter. It will be asked what kind of different emphases in early Christian ascent descriptions can be detected, and what these differences may indicate. It is further considered what is the position of *Authentikos Logos* amidst the perceived nuances and what may be learned of the way it employs the theme of the soul's ascent past malicious powers. The focus of this chapter is on charting third- to fifth-century Christian notions, with emphasis on Christian sources; non-Christian texts are occasionally discussed from the viewpoint of their Christian readerships.

Accounts of the soul's ascent can be approached from different perspectives, as telling of their authors' views on the afterlife, as focusing on mystical experiences in this life, or as instructing their recipients on hidden things.[141] Karen L. King has suggested a counter-cultural reading of the soul's ascent in

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141 W. Bousset's article covers Jewish, Christian, and Iranian evidence. He recognised that there are double meanings to ascent: there is the ecstatic ascent that anticipates the ascent to heaven after death: W. Bousset, "Die Himmelreise der Seele" in *AR* 4 (1901), 136 – 169, on p. 136. Joan Petru Culianu distinguished three categories of ascent stories: otherworldly revelatory journeys, descent or ascent of a supermundane entity, and ascent/descent of the soul: Joan Petru Culianu, *Psychanodia I. A Survey of the Evidence Concerning the Ascension of the Soul and its Relevance* (EPRO 99; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1983), 5 – 15. Carsten Colpe contrasted the "Gnostic" ascents with preceding Greek, Iranian, and Jewish accounts. He divided the Greek traditions into those that focus on the individual soul's release from the fetters of the body and return, after death, to the ideal world, and those that see the human being as microcosms that joins the macrocosm during ecstatic experience or death. For Colpe the landmark of "Gnostic" ascent was the motif of a redeemed redeemer (salvator salvandus). His article focuses on broad lines and theory: perhaps his recognition of two strands of the Greek tradition could be approached as those that are more theoretical, and those that have a more pragmatic tones. Carsten Colpe, "Die Himmelreise der Seele ausserhalb und innerhalb der Gnosis" in Ugo Bianchi (ed.), *Le origini dello gnosticismo, Colloquia di Messina 13 – 18 aprile 1966.* (SHR 12; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1967), 429 – 447.

the *Gospel of Mary*.[142] The first part of *Authentikos Logos* 32 could be read as describing conversion, but after line 16 the language used suggests that the soul leaves mortal life and ascends through the heavens. So although several directions were open for consideration, the focus is on conceptions of the afterlife. The texts brought into the discussion are two ascent narratives from Nag Hammadi Codex V, the *Apocalypse of Paul* (NHC V,2) and the *First Apocalypse of James* (NHC V,3), the soul's ascent in the *Gospel of Mary* (BG, I) , and in VI.2.4, *Aclepius* (NHC VI,8) and *Life of Antony* 65 and 66.[143]

The *Apocalypse of Paul*, the *First Apocalypse of James*, and the *Gospel of Mary* all contain a scene or instruction that deals with questioning of ascending souls, and they emphasise emotions and knowledge of correct answers in their accounts. In *Authentikos Logos*, *Asclepius*, and Antony's visions no questioning is mentioned, and rather than emotions and their healing, the emphasis is on the way of life as the way to get past the celestial gatekeepers or demon(s). These notions will be considered, as well as possible development concerning these ideas that may have taken place, perhaps as Christian belief in resurrection became established and stated during the fourth century.

Nag Hammadi Codex V contains four apocalypses, two of which contain ascent accounts that will be discussed here. First, in the *Apocalypse of Paul* (NHC V,2) the Holy Spirit appears to Paul the apostle in the form of a child and takes him on a heavenly journey. During this ascent Paul not only encounters different heavenly powers, but also witnesses the judgement of a hapless soul who cannot escape its destiny.[144] This judgement happens at the gate of the fourth heaven, where god-like angels bring a soul to judgement from the land of the dead.[145] It is the angels who lead souls to judgement, but they are also said to flog the soul.[146] This form of punishment was primarily reserved for slaves in antiquity,[147] and thus can be taken to suggest that humans are as slaves in front of otherworldly powers. This gives some indication as to why the gatekeepers are called slave traders in *Authentikos Logos:* the language of slavery is employed in some descriptions of souls who are brought to judgement.

Angels are not the only characters involved in the soul's judgement in the *Apocalypse of Paul:* a heated dialogue between the accused soul and a toll-collector (τελώνης) of the fourth heaven ensues. The toll-collector is described as dwelling in the fourth heaven: it is a gatekeeper who aims at stopping any

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142 King, *The Gospel of Mary of Magdala*, 76 – 81.

143 See also April DeConick, *Seek to See Him. Ascent and Vision Mysticism in the Gospel of Thomas* (VCSup 33; Leiden: Brill, 1996).

144 *Apoc. Paul* 18:3 – 20:10.

145 Perhaps the land of mortals, ⲠⲔⲀϨ ⲚⲦⲈ ⲚⲈⲦⲘⲞⲞⲨⲦ.

146 *Apoc. Paul* 20:10 – 12. The idea of angels as carrying out God's punishments is also maintained by Philo, *The Confusion of Tongues*, 182; Dunderberg, *Beyond Gnosticism*, 49.

147 Glancy, *Slavery in Early Christianity*, 122.

soul who attempts to get further. Later on, in the sixth heaven, another toll-collector is mentioned, one that guards the sixth heaven like the previously mentioned toll-collector guards the fourth.[148] The wretched soul fails the test and is condemned after three witnesses, which it demanded, testify against it. The sentence is reincarnation: to be cast down and enter a body prepared for it. The condemned soul's sins have to do with emotions: the first witness claims to have risen up against the soul until it fell into anger, rage, and envy. The second had desired the soul and now accuses the soul of the murders it committed. The third witness had provided darkness for the soul, in which it could commit its sins. Each witness provides a record of time when the soul had committed the sins, perhaps to provide accuracy to the judgment. Yet another emotion is mentioned when the soul hears its judgement: it gazes downwards and upwards in sorrow.[149]

After this scene Paul continues to the fifth heaven, where angels, again with whips in their hands, are herding more souls to judgement: there is a judgement and probably a toll-collector at each level.[150] Another toll-collector appears when Paul has ascended to the sixth heaven; here the toll-collector opens the gate on Paul's demand, and the apostle can proceed to the seventh heaven. Paul's ascent continues, and in the seventh heaven he encounters an old man on a throne seven times brighter than the sun. The man poses three questions to him: "Where are you going to? Where are you from? How will you be able to escape me?"[151] Paul answers the first two questions, and hands the old man a sign or a token (σημεῖον) as a reply to the third question: most likely this sign would be a gesture of some sort.[152] The man turns "his face down

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148 *Apoc. Paul* 20:10 – 20; 22:20 – 21. Marvin Meyer translates τελώνης in *Apoc. Paul.* 20:16; 22:20 as "gatekeeper": Meyer, "The Revelation of Paul" in Meyer (ed.), *The Nag Hammadi Scriptures*, 317 – 319.

149 *Apoc. Paul* 20:21 – 21:22. Perhaps the author wants to suggest that it is not wise to argue with angels and toll-collectors!

150 Michael Kaler reasons that the souls are being driven down from the fifth (and back) to the fourth heaven for their judgement, but it is also possible to think that the souls who had made it (past the fourth and) up to the fifth heaven are now being judged again in the fifth. There is the danger of being stopped at any level, and only the very worthy, like Paul, are able to ascend through all heavens. Kaler, *Flora Tells a Story*, 168 – 171.

151 *Apoc. Paul* 21:22 – 23:22.

152 Although a tempting explanation would be to think that this refers to so-called Charon's obol, a coin placed in a deceased person's mouth, it is not possible to prove this, since Charon's obol would have been called ὀβολός, δανάκη, ναῦλον, or πορθμεῖον. There is evidence that Charon's obol is not solely a pagan custom: a coin interpreted as a Charon's obol has been found inside a scull in a Jewish ossuary. Craig A. Evans, "Excavating Caiaphas, Pilate, and Simon of Cyrene: Assessing the Literary and Archaeological Evidence" in James H. Charlesworth (ed.), *Jesus and Archaeology* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2006), 323 – 340, on p. 329. Further, Kaler, *Flora Tells a Story*, 200 – 208 has suggested baptism or the anointment, but the anointment is usually referred to as a seal (σφραγίς). A gesture remains a probable option, but what kind of gesture that would be is not easy to decide. The "sign" is not defined as a "sign of the cross" (τὸ σημεῖον τοῦ σταυροῦ), as e.g. in Athanasius, *Life of Antony*, 13.5 and 23.4.

towards his creation and those that are his authorities", the seventh heaven opens and Paul ascends to the eighth, then up to the ninth, and finally to the tenth heaven, where he greets his fellow spirits.[153]

Paul's journey is not just inspired by the reference to Paul's ecstatic experience in 2 Corinthians 12:1 – 4, but also by Jewish apocalyptic texts[154] and Greek mythology. The old man on the throne appears inspired by the description of the Ancient One in Daniel 7:9 – 10, 13 – 14, and the idea of the heavenly judgement by that in *Testament of Abraham* 10; if not the texts directly, which is possible, then they at least reflect traditions close to Daniel and the *Testament of Abraham*. The old man in any case resembles the God of the Hebrew Bible, who is depicted as the opposite to the Holy Spirit. It seems plausible that the God of the Hebrew Bible is identified as the Creator-God, maker of the visible world. The questioning is widely attested in early Christian traditions,[155] but also in the Graeco-Roman non-Christian evidence, as it is known also in Greek and Egyptian religions.[156] In the Orphic lamellae those descending to Hades are asked: "Who are you? Where do you come from?"[157] As another Greek motif, the Erinyes have been seen as reflected in the image of the angels with whips in their hands: in ancient art, Erinyes are often depicted as carrying whips.[158]

What these widely attested allusions or motifs indicate is that many ancient Christians were familiar with afterlife beliefs of their own world. This suggests that the *Apocalypse of Paul* was written and read by Christians to whom these quite common images were possible ways for imagining afterlife, even so much so that the idea of the soul's post-mortem ascent and judgement seemed more self-evident, or intuitive, than resurrection from the dead or collective

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153 *Apoc. Paul* 22:25 – 24:8.

154 See also Eph 4:8. For apocalyptic approaches to Paul in ancient literature, Kaler, *Flora Tells a Story*, 103 – 117, and apocalyptic genre, 121 – 165. See also Frankfurter, "The Legacy of Jewish Apocalypses", 161 who notes the similarity of the *Apocalypse of Paul* with the *Ascension of Isaiah*, and points out that a ten-heaven cosmology is also known in 2 Enoch (J22).

155 *Gos. Thom.* 50; *Soph. Jes. Chr.* 114:8 – 12; Irenaeus, *Against the Heresies* 1.21.5; Clement of Alexandria, *Excerpts from Theodotus* 78.1 – 2; *Gos. Mary* 15 – 17 (see below); and *1 Apoc. Jas.* 33:11 – 35:25 (see below). For more sources, see Simon Gathercole, "Quis et unde? Heavenly obstacles in Gos. Thom. 50 and related literature" in Markus Bockmuehl/Guy G. Stroumsa (ed.), *Paradise in Antiquity. Jewish and Christian Views* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 82 – 99.

156 Culianu, *Psychanodia*, 12 – 14, Dousa, "Common Motifs in the 'Orphic' B tablets", 120 – 164, esp. 140 – 153.

157 Lamellae in group B, see Edmonds (ed.), *The "Orphic" Gold Tablets*, 1 – 50. In group B of the Orphic gold tablets, the latest found are dated to the second century CE. One of the main differences is that the Orphic tablets refer to the soul's descent to Hades, not to its ascent to the heavens.

158 So Murdock and MacRae "The Apocalypse of Paul" in Parrott (ed.), *Nag Hammadi Codices V,2 – 5 and VI*, 48. See also Sarah Iles Johnston, "Erinys" in Hubert Cancik/Helmuth Schneider (ed.), *Der Neue Pauly. Enzyklopädie der Antike. Altertum* 4 (Stuttgart: Verlag J.B. Metzler 1998), 72.

last judgement at the end of times. For a successful ascent it is necessary that the soul knows how to answer the powers (not arguing like the condemned soul, but knowing the right answers like Paul), that it has not committed heavy sins, and that the soul provides the (last) gatekeeper with the necessary sign. In the *Apocalypse of Paul* sin is also to do with emotions and their successful control.

The *First Apocalypse of James* (NHC V,3, par Codex Tchacos 2) does not provide an ascent narrative in the same genre of the heavenly journey as the *Apocalypse of Paul* does.[159] In this writing it is Jesus, and later on in the text, the resurrected Lord who discourses with James on several topics. These include the future suffering and martyr's death[160] that James will have to go through. Jesus predicts his own fate, consoles James, and tells him not to fear suffering and death.[161] Yet James is afraid, and as the text progresses, his fear becomes more intense: "What will they do? What will I be able to say? What word can I give to escape them?"[162] James' fear and distress are acute, and eventually he weeps.[163] The Lord tells James how he will suffer a martyr's death, and how after that he will be seized by three toll-collectors who not only demand a toll from souls, but snatch away souls who are liable to be stolen away.[164]

Two levels of James' fate are apparent: first, that he has to encounter a physical death, a martyr's fate in Jerusalem, after which he will encounter the toll-collectors who are after his soul.[165] Jesus tells what will happen to James' soul after death. Even when the physical death is inevitable, James may escape with his soul if he answers the toll-collectors as instructed.[166] His goal is to become one with Him-who-is (ΠΕΤϢΟΟΠ).[167] The questions and their

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159 The discussion here concerns the Nag Hammadi version. Its dating is uncertain, and it was edited probably on several occasions as both Valentinian and Syrian Christian motifs in the text indicate. Schoedel does not put forward an estimate on the date, but suggests Syrian, Jewish Christian origin. William R. Schoedel, "The (First) Apocalypse of James" in Parrott (ed.), *Nag Hammadi Codices V,2–5 and VI*, 65–103, on p. 66–67. Antti Marjanen estimates that the Coptic version of the text would derive from the third century, and he points out that the Valentinian section requires knowledge of similar Valentinian traditions as were known to Irenaeus around 180. Marjanen, *The Woman Jesus Loved*, 122–123; 125–129. For a recent discussion, see Einar Thomassen, "Valentinian Materials in James", 79–90.

160 *1 Apoc. Jas.* 25 and 31, also 36:16–19. The earliest reports of James the Just's martyrdom are Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities*, 20.200–203 and Hegesippus, in Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History*, 2.23.

161 *1 Apoc. Jas.* 25:6–14.

162 *1 Apoc. Jas.* 28:30–29:3.

163 *1 Apoc. Jas.* 28–29; 32:13–22 (James weeps). See also 30:13–15, and 31:2–8.

164 *1 Apoc. Jas.* 33:2–11. στερεσίμος, "liable to be taken away"; in 33:11 and partly fragmentary 34:23–24 Schoedel translates "take away souls by theft" due to a gloss in the margin of the 33:11 MS, ⲚⲔⲰⲗⲠ, "by theft".

165 Persecution in this world, events in Jerusalem: *1 Apoc. Jas.* 25 and 31, also 36:16–19. The toll-collectors during post-mortem ascent: *1 Apoc. Jas.* 33:2–11, see also *1 Apoc. Jas.* 26.

166 *1 Apoc. Jas.* 33:12–35:26.

167 *1 Apoc. Jas.* 27:6–10.

answers are longer than those in the *Apocalypse of Paul*, or the Orphic lamellae. Also, some of the answers contain the names of Achamoth and Wisdom. James may, for example, call heavenly Wisdom as his helper, which will disturb the toll-collectors, who are children of Achamot.[168] Names Achamoth and Wisdom indicate that parts of the writing stem from Valentinian tradition, but in all likelihood the writing is a composite: the name Addai suggests a connection with Syrian Christian traditions. Irenaeus in *Against the Heresies* I.21.5 also refers to Valentinian instruction that was combined with an anointment of a dying person in order to make the person invisible and able to pass the opposing powers. The *First Apocalypse of James* is another witness of Valentinian-influenced teaching that had as its goal the soul's successful ascent after death. Yet although the ascent teaching is known from Valentinian instruction, it is not confined to Valentinian texts.

As was noted above, in the *Apocalypse of Paul* emotions have a role to play in the soul's judgement: the soul's sins have to do with emotions that apparently had led to the wrong kind of actions, and its reaction after the judgement was emotional. In the *First Apocalypse of James* emotions are present, yet with different emphasis: the fear of death takes a central role in the discussion between James and the Lord.[169] The *Gospel of Mary* 15–17 (BG, I) contains another discourse on the soul's ascent and how the soul is to reply to the powers questioning it.[170] The setting of the soul's ascent is again different, and

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168 *1 Apoc. Jas.* 33–35.

169 Both motifs could be easily connected with Ismo Dunderberg's reading of the Valentinian Wisdom myth from the viewpoint of healing of passions. Dunderberg, *Beyond Gnosticism*, 113–118.

170 The passage covers pages 15–17, but was originally longer and began somewhere on lost pages 11–14; the discussion in the extant pages begins at the second questioning of the ascending soul. The gospel has been dated by various scholars. De Boer, *The Gospel of Mary*, 14 arrives at a late second-century date, based on manuscript evidence and suggests some decades before the date of the oldest papyrus fragment (P. Ryl. 463), hence some decades before the beginning of the third century (without excluding the possibility of an earlier date. A later second-century date is also suggested by Dunderberg on the basis of the interest shown towards the origin of matter and concern over emotions that reflect philosophical discussions of the mid- to late second century; Dunderberg, "Johannine traditions", 67–93.

Antti Marjanen dates the *Gospel of Mary* to the middle of the second century and before 200. He starts from the *terminus ad quem* in the first half of the third century that is provided by the paleographic analysis of the Greek fragments (P. Oxy 3525 and P. Ryl. 463); on the basis of other evidence (textual problems connected to copying of the text, unknown place of origin, and the time it would have taken for copies of the original to reach Oxyrhynchus; New Testament gospel quotations, and thus, knowledge of and dependence on the gospels). Marjanen points out that if the *Gospel of Mary* originated in Egypt, less time would have to be assumed between the composition and the copying of extant fragments, hence, the date of origin could be closer to the dating of the manuscript fragments. Marjanen, *The Woman Jesus Loved*, 97–99.

Karen L. King sets the date early in the second century, but provides no evidence for the conclusion. King, *The Gospel of Mary of Magdala*, 3–7. In an earlier article she bases the dating on "early second century debates over women's leadership and the role of the apostles". Karen L. King, "The Gospel of Mary Magdalene" in Elizabeth Schüssler Fiorenza (ed.), *Searching the*

this time it is recounted by Mary of Magdalene to other disciples.[171] In this version, the soul must get past or overcome the seven powers that question it. The questioners are not called toll-collectors but powers (ἐξουσία), who are also given individual names; there are altogether seven of them. Since pages 11 – 14 are missing from the *Gospel of Mary*, the extant part of the narrative begins with the second power, Desire (ἐπιθυμία), aggressively questioning the ascending soul. Desire not only questions the soul, but accuses it of lying, but the soul provides a successful answer and departs, rejoicing greatly.[172]

The soul next arrives at the third power, Ignorance (ⲦⲘⲚⲦⲀⲦⲤⲞⲞⲨⲚ), who also questions it and claims that the soul belongs to it. The soul answers Ignorance, and in its answer the soul states that it was bound, but has not bound, that it was not recognised, but it recognises how all is being dissolved. This is a successful answer and it grants the soul further ascent.[173] This takes it to the fourth and the most frightening power that takes on seven forms that are the seven powers of wrath: darkness, desire, ignorance, envy of death[174], reign of flesh, foolish wisdom of the flesh, and wrathful wisdom. "Where do you come from, slayer of people? Where are you going to, conqueror of space?" Again the soul is questioned, again it answers correctly. The soul declares that what detained it has been slain, what surrounded it has been overcome, its desire has ended, and its ignorance has died: the soul will attain "rest of the time, a period of time, and the eternity, in silence."[175]

After describing how the soul finds the rest, Mary falls silent, as this is as far as the Lord had discussed the matter with her.[176] An emotional scene follows: Andrew refuses to accept such teaching, and Peter expresses his doubts that the Saviour would have spoken to Mary, a woman, privately and without the male disciples' knowledge. Mary weeps at these words and Levi defends her to Peter. Levi exhorts all of them to be ashamed of their attitude, to put on the

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Scriptures. *Vol 2: A Feminist Commentary* (London: SCM Press, 1995), 601 – 634, on p. 628. Also Christopher Tuckett suggests a second century date, and is cautiously inclined towards the early second century; he bases his view on manuscript evidence that suggests relatively extensive circulation, a relationship to the New Testament gospels, and the still-existent dialogue situation between differently orientated Christian groups. Tuckett, *The Gospel of Mary*, 3 – 12.

171 Marjanen, *The Woman Jesus Loved*, 96 – 99, and Marjanen, "The Mother of Jesus", 31 – 41.

172 *Gos. Mary* 15:1 – 10.

173 *Gos. Mary* 15:10 – 16:1.

174 What is meant by ⲠⲔⲰϨ ⲘⲠⲘⲞⲨ? ⲔⲰϨ translates as "envy", also "zeal", Crum, *A Coptic Dictionary*, 132. See also Crislip, "Envy and Anger", 285 – 310. Wilson and MacRae translate "the excitement of death", which suggests agitation of (before) death, R. McL. Wilson/G. W. MacRae, "The Gospel According to Mary" in Parrott (ed.), *Nag Hammadi Codices V,2 – 5 and VI*. Karen L. King translates "zeal for death", which takes thoughts to zealousness towards death (perhaps such as martyrs might be considered to have). Karen L. King, "The Gospel of Mary with the Greek Gospel of Mary" in Meyer (ed.), *The Nag Hammadi Scriptures*, 737 – 745, on p. 744; King, *The Gospel of Mary of Magdala*, 16. Esther de Boer interprets this as "Jealousy of Death" (De Boer, *The Gospel of Mary*, 20), but ⲔⲰϨ is more "envy" than "jealousy".

175 *Gos. Mary* 16:1 – 17:7.

176 *Gos. Mary* 17:7 – 9.

perfect man, and preach the gospel without additional rules.[177] It can be discussed whether the ascent described in the *Gospel of Mary* deals with a post-mortem ascent or rather control of emotions.[178] Both readings are possible, which is suggested by two Hermetic parallels. First, *Corpus Hermeticum* I (*Poimandres*) 24 – 26 describes the post-mortem ascent of human beings: one of the first steps is to leave the mortal body behind. Different levels of the cosmos are reached before the human enters the Ogdoad. Although the ascent contains no evil gate-keepers, Mind acts as πυλώρος, 'gatekeeper', in *Poimandres* (*C.H.* I) 22. Second, *Corpus Hermeticum* XIII.8 – 9 is not about a post-mortem ascent, but a description of how the soul reaches the rebirth by conquering wicked emotions that disturb it.[179]

To bring together notions made from the above-discussed texts, the following may be pointed out. In the *Apocalypse of Paul* the soul who is brought to judgement demands witnesses in an almost arrogant way, but after the judgement it looks down in sorrow. The soul's failure has to do with emotions: its sins include desire, anger, rage and envy.[180] James in the *First Apocalypse of James* is gripped by the fear of death: he is timid, he weeps and is distressed. When the Saviour tells James not to be sad or fearful, he also consoles James that it will be the toll-collectors who will fall into confusion and blame their root.[181] In the *Gospel of Mary* not only the scene that follows Mary's words is full of emotions and exhortation at controlling them (thus it is not a coincidence that the scene is emotional), but the powers who threaten and attempt to hinder the soul's ascent personify emotions. Also, the ascending soul has no fear of these emotions or powers, but it rejoices greatly as it passes the first power, and without fear declares the rest it finally attains.[182]

Emotions are present in *Authentikos Logos*, too, but the view is so different that no direct connection with the *Apocalypse of Paul*, the *First Apocalypse of James*, or the *Gospel of Mary* can be suggested. The soul in *Authentikos Logos* 32 does not betray signs of emotional agitation or weakness. There is no suggestion of fear or timidity either. Rather, the soul is determined, it knows its way and is victorious.[183] Instead its is the slave traders, those who had equipped the soul with a body, that are twice said to be humiliated, and their failure and confusion are manifest in their weeping, their false assumptions (they think they are the soul's shepherd), and lack of understanding. This, as was suggested, recalls the merchants' defeat in Revelation 18:11 – 13. Prior to the soul's conversion in *Authentikos Logos* the parable of the evil fisherman and its explanation focus on temptations and personal weaknesses that are the

177 *Gos. Mary* 17:10 – 18:21.
178 De Boer, *The Gospel of Mary*, 81 – 82.
179 See discussion in De Boer, *The Gospel of Mary*, 83 – 84.
180 *Apoc. Paul* 20:13 – 21:17.
181 *1 Apoc. Jas.* 32:13 – 15; 18 – 22; 35:17 – 23.
182 *Gos. Mary* 15:9 – 10, 16:16 – 17:7.
183 Compare though with the soul who is able to answer back to the powers in *Gos. Mary* 15 – 17.

Devil's snares (30:17 – 31:24). This gives ground to the conclusion that *Authentikos Logos* does not focus on the control of emotions in quite the same way as the three other ascent accounts. The focus is on the soul's struggle against the temptations that threaten it, and on such a way of life that will take the soul to its goal.

There are other differences in details. A key theme in the *Apocalypse of Paul*, the *First Apocalypse of James*, and the *Gospel of Mary* are the gatekeepers' questions and the soul's ability to answer them correctly.[184] Different purposes or situations have been suggested for these questions with good reasons. Some texts emphasise a philosophical call to know oneself, others situate them in mystical, visionary, or post-mortem ascent, in which case they also alleviate anxiety of death.[185] As was noted, the question motif was a common one in the Graeco-Roman world, as the Orphic lamellae in group B suggest, and known also in the Jewish tradition.[186] In *Authentikos Logos* no questions are mentioned. The soul's free or bold speech is mentioned some pages previously as it conquers its enemies (παρρησιάζομαι, 28:20 – 24), but it not obvious from the text that it could be were considered to allude to answers given to the slave-trader-gatekeepers. Otherwise no questioning is explicitly mentioned.

Likewise absent in *Authentikos Logos* is any sign that should be given to the gatekeeper. Such is mentioned in *Apocalypse of Paul* 23:22 – 25, but not in the *First Apocalypse of James* or the *Gospel of Mary*. In *Authentikos Logos* the soul is able to ascend because it has withdrawn from timely passions, gained understanding, and chosen a new way of life (31:24 – 32:1). The soul's true shepherd has taught it the new way (33:1 – 3). In addition to this, in the ascent accounts of the *Apocalypse of Paul* and the *Gospel of Mary* some emphasis is put on time: the time of committing sins that the witnesses mention in the former, and in the latter, the precise moment of time from which on the soul receives peace.

To conclude, there are common features between *Authentikos Logos*, the *Gospel of Mary*, the *Apocalypse of Paul*, and the *First Apocalypse of James*, most of all the gate-keeper figures that are given different names. Yet the differences are perhaps more remarkable. Emotions and passions appear, but the view is different in *Authentikos Logos*. No answers or a sign appear in *Authentikos Logos*: the ascetic way of life and instruction received from the shepherd suffice. The term "spiritual soul" places the text in a Christian environment, but one that knew of the late Platonist concept of the soul's vehicle. The soul's

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184 *Apoc. Paul* 23:1 – 22; also 20:13 – 21:18; 22:19 – 23; *1 Apoc. Jas.* 33:5 – 34:20; *Gos. Mary* 15:1 – 17:7.

185 Baptism and knowledge of one's origin, current situation, and aim or destiny are needed for salvation in *Excerpts from Theodotus* 78.2. Irenaeus, *Against the Heresies* I.21.5 refers to anointing at the deathbed, which is connected with words of instruction.

186 DeConick, *Seek to See Him* provides references to Jewish texts, e. g. Philo, *On the Cherubim*, 114, also in Rabbinic traditions, e. g. *Mishna Aboth* 3.1.

ascent in *Authentikos Logos* is brief, more allusive, and lacks several themes of the longer ascents from Nag Hammadi codex V and the *Gospel of Mary.*

2.4 *Asclepius* and Antony's Vision

Next, a description of a great demon that judges ascending souls in the Codex VI *Asclepius* excerpt is discussed along with a vision with very similar demon in the *Life of Antony* 66, and *Life of Antony* 65 where Antony has a vision of malicious powers in the air that aim at stopping ascending souls. The aim is to understand the intellectual environment from which *Authentikos Logos* stems.

The Hermetic texts in the Nag Hammadi Codex VI can be considered as reading material of Christians,[187] and the very similar account in the *Life of Antony* demonstrates Christian interest in this kind of vision narrative. In these accounts the focus is on how the soul lived during its earthly life, and that is the key to whether or not it may pass the demon(s). There is no questioning, nor is there any sign to be given to the demon: like *Authentikos Logos*, these texts suggest that ascending souls must get past malicious gatekeepers in the air, and the way to do that is through moral purity, achieved during one's time on earth.

The section on Asclepius 76 – 78 begins with Hermes' instruction of what is death: it is dissolution of the body, its toils and sensations.[188] Hermes says that fear of death is unnecessary, but there is something one should fear, something that people either are ignorant of or do not to believe.[189] This fearsome thing is a great demon that God has appointed as an overseer and judge of people, it is placed in mid-air between earth and heaven and souls who leave their bodies must meet it. The demon will inspect any passing soul and see how it conducted its earthly life. If the soul has lived in a godly way, the demon allows it to continue its ascent, but if not, it will seize the soul and cast it down so that the soul will be suspended between heaven and earth, and punished severely.[190]

Trismegistus next describes aspects of the punishment: the soul will be deprived of all hope and suffer great sorrow (λύπη). It will be neither in heaven nor earth, but in a place of punishment where bodies (of souls) are tormented. This is not the death of the soul, because they have been freed from evil, but it is a death sentence, says Trismegistus.[191] It is necessary to fear this judgement, but not death itself. That is what Trismegistus says both before he tells Asclepius of the demon in the air and the soul's punishment, and afterwards,

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187 Fowden, *The Egyptian Hermes*, 5 – 7.
188 *Asclepius* 76:6 – 15. Cf. *C.H.* I.24.
189 *Asclepius* 76:16 – 19.
190 *Asclepius* 76:22 – 77:10. The text is fragmentary on the upper part of page 77, but it is possible to follow the overall account. The text differs in details from the Latin translation; unfortunately it is not possible to focus here on the differences between the two Asclepius versions.
191 *Asclepius* 77:10 – 27.

as he exhorts Asclepius to believe it and fear it.[192] It is emphatic that the punishment has to do with the way these souls had lived their lives, and it is the evil ones who will not ascend but will end up in places of demons, also called "stranglers" (ⲚⲢⲈϤⲰⳐⲦ) who torture them. The ensuing description of the evil ones mentions various tortures of these souls. Flogging (μαστιγόω) is mentioned as one of the punishments.[193] This provides yet another aspect to the ancient views of the judgement and fates of the soul, and as was discussed, flogging, punishment of slaves, also features in the *Apocalypse of Paul*.

In *Asclepius* the way the soul lived its earthly life decides its fate: the whole passage is given as a motivation for faith and abstinence from sin.[194] Fear of death is mentioned, but not so much as Asclepius' acute fear, but as reference to the fear towards the coming, post-mortem judgment that can be avoided if taken seriously. Although the soul is inspected in *Asclepius*, no questioning is mentioned. The purpose of the demon account is to inspire Asclepius to live in a way that makes fear unnecessary.

Two similar vision accounts are told by Athanasius in the *Life of Antony*. In *Life of Antony* 65 the vision happens during the daytime: Antony is taken into the air by unnamed beings, perhaps angels, and he sees terrible creatures who aim at stopping his ascent. Those taking him refer to the forgiveness of sins that was given to Antony by the Lord: he only has to account for his life from the time he became a monk and devoted himself to God. This vision is, like that in the *Apocalypse of Paul*, inspired by Paul's account in 2 Corinthians 12:1–4, and it is to this which Athanasius makes a reference. Compared with the vision in the *Apocalypse of Paul*, Antony's vision is shorter and much less elaborate. The focus is on Antony having become a Christian and having lived an ascetic life. Athanasius refers to Ephesians 2:2 and 6:13, which could have been one source of inspiration for these traditions, but also provided a link to the Christian interpretation of these themes.

Athanasius could have referred also to Hermetic texts; it is clear when one reads Life 66 that apart from Pauline epistles he had other literary models, such as the *Asclepius* text. This is what happens: one night, after having discussed the soul and its post-mortem place, Antony hears a voice telling him to rise, go out, and look. Antony does as the voice bids, and when he looks up, he has a vision of a large, obscure (or ugly) and frightening figure, so tall that it reaches the clouds, standing on the ground, and other figures ascending as if they had wings. The tall figure stretches its arms and attempts to catch the ascending figures that are souls departed from their bodies: some souls manage to continue their ascent, whereas others are stopped and fall back. The voice commands Antony to comprehend the vision, and Antony does: the upward flying figures are souls, and the large figure is the enemy. It is thus

192 *Asclepius* 76:16–19 and 77:28–30.
193 *Asclepius* 78:24–39.
194 *Asclepius* 77:28–78:13.

emphatic that the vision motivates Antony to struggle harder in his ascesis. What is vexing in the story is Antony's primary unwillingness to recount the vision to his disciples. Only after spending much time in prayer and after being urged by people around him, he finally agrees to tell others about it. This is done on the premises that his conscience is clear and the vision will be beneficial to his disciples, as it would teach them that a good reward follows discipline, and also, to provide solace when they are weary.

One explanation for the unwillingness, to which Athanasius dedicates much attention, is probably found in his doubts on the suitability of the story. The vision clearly was suspect in his eyes, and certainly he did not wish to include it in his story of Antony without explaining his reasons for inclusion. That is perhaps not so surprising, bearing in mind that overall Athanasius wishes to paint an orthodox picture of Antony, and one that would conform with the Christianity he worked to consolidate in Egypt. Athanasius had taken it as his task to unify diverse Christian traditions of Egypt, and his portrait of Antony has been noted to make a bishop-obedient orthodox monk of Antony, who probably was less docile in real life.[195] Visions and narratives of the soul's ascent, also in the light of Nag Hammadi Codices V and VI, belonged to those mystical and ascetic traditions of Christians in late ancient Egypt that Athanasius sought to bring under his authority.

Are questions of authority the only explanations for Athanasius' hesitations about Antony's visions? What might be the problem with the visions Antony had, or any other visions in circulation in the fourth century Egypt? Apart from questions of authority, a likely suggestion is that Athanasius' misgivings had to do with views on the afterlife. Antony's vision in *Life of Antony* 66 follows his discussion with "certain men" that concerned the state of the soul and the soul's place and state in the afterlife.[196] It would be interesting to know what they discussed, but Athanasius does not recount that; also, he does not suggest controversy concerning conceptions of the afterlife – despite the fact that the concept of a soul's immediate post-mortem ascent does not fit seamlessly with the belief in Jesus' resurrection, and in the collective resurrection of the dead at the end of times. This is what was written into the Christian creeds of the fourth century, the time when Athanasius was writing and Nag Hammadi Codex VI was in circulation.

One aspect that could make the views focusing on the soul's ascent problematic is that they might be taken to suggest a belief in the transmigration of souls. The concept of the soul's ascent could be associated with reincarnation as a punishment for failed souls.[197] This is very obviously the

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195 Brakke, *Athanasius and Asceticism*; Jenott/Pagels, "Antony's Letters and Nag Hammadi Codex I", 564 – 567; Rubenson, *The Letters*, 126 – 132.

196 Athanasius, *Life of Antony* 66.2.

197 Some early Christians who embraced this idea, see e. g. Irenaeus, *Against the Heresies* I.23.2. Also the idea of Jesus' several appearances in human life could be suggested: for discussion of

case with the *Apocalypse of Paul* where the soul who fails its test is cast down and must enter a body that has been prepared for it. The notion is strengthened by the soul's demand for witnesses to show "in what body" (ϨⲚ ⲀⲰ ⲚϹⲰⲘ[Ⲁ]) it committed its lawless deeds.[198]

Authentikos Logos can also be read to refer to reincarnation, though not in a very obvious manner, and such a view is not openly stated.[199] It describes what happens to the soul after it leaves its body and the world: "that body" (ⲠⲒϹⲰⲘⲀ ⲈⲦⲘ̄ⲘⲀⲨ, 32:21) is the earthly body that has been left below when the soul began its final ascent, and moreover, "that body" may be taken to be different from "the body" that was fashioned (32:25) for the soul in case it should fail the ascent. Yet, since the soul does not fail, it can continue the ascent. It has returned its mortal body, the slave traders have fashioned a new body in order to cast the soul down, but they fail and the soul continues the ascent. It is enveloped in the invisible pneumatic body that carries it upwards.[200]

This idea of the soul's ascent, during which its fate – either rebirth or release from the cycle of rebirth – is decided, was common in antiquity and there were different versions of it. In Plato's teaching metempsychosis is connected with ethics: how you live decides your future lives.[201] It seems likely that the threat that the slave traders pose to the soul in *Authentikos Logos* could have been interpreted by ancient recipients as carrying a threat of transmigration into another mortal body. The soul who separates from its mortal body ascends through the cosmos and its planetary spheres, its fate will be decided during this ascent and somewhere it will encounter powers, well known in other ancient texts, in *Authentikos Logos* named slave traders, who attempt to imprison and enslave ascending souls into new bodies they have prepared. If the soul has not lived as it should, it will be cast down and trapped into another body, but if it has lived right, it can escape reincarnation and ascend towards its final bliss, as does the soul in *Authentikos Logos*.

source-texts, see Dylan Burns, "Jesus' Reincarnations Revisited in Jewish Christianity, Sethian Gnosticism, and Mani" in Susan E. Myers (ed.), *Portraits of Jesus. Studies in Christology* (WUNT 321; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2012), 371 – 392. For reincarnation in the Nag Hammadi text *Zostrianos*, see Burns, *Apocalypse of the Alien God*, 96 – 101.

198 *Apoc. Paul* 20:22 – 23.

199 That is more openly so in *Apocalypse of Paul* and also Platonists' texts. Alcinous even suggests that it is possible to be reborn into an animal body, which later Platonists denied. Alcinous, *The Handbook*, 16.2. Dillon in *Alcinous*, xxi.

200 As was discussed above, it is impossible to conclude with certainty that "those who had given her the body" (32:16 – 17) are different from the slave traders. Is the body that the soul returns different from the one the slave traders fail to deal for the soul (32:20 – 22)? If the two groups mentioned are different, the passage may open to such a reading. The soul may well have received her mortal body from these other characters and it is to them she returns it. The slave traders' merchandise is a different body.

201 So, for example, in the Myth of Er: Plato, *Rep.* X 614B–621D.

The same suggestion could be read into *Asclepius* and even into Antony's visions. In *Asclepius* the demon casts failing souls to a place of severe punishment between heaven and earth. This description is indebted to Plato's myths in *Gorgias* 524D, *Phaedo* 107D and *Republic* X 614 A, but no threat of reincarnation is mentioned. Both *Asclepius* and *Life of Antony* are to some extent ambiguous as to what happens to souls caught by the demon(s). Although it is tempting to ask what would happen to those souls in Antony's visions who are stopped, the answer is not given and quite understandably no threat of reincarnation is suggested.

Lack of interest in the question of what happens to the failing souls in *Authentikos Logos*, *Asclepius*, and *Life of Antony* suggests that the emphasis is on ethical exhortation, combat against vice and control of passions. Whereas emotions and a questioning motif are distinctive in the *Apocalypse of Paul*, the *Gospel of Mary*, and the *First Apocalypse of James*, the focus in *Authentikos Logos*, *Asclepius*, and the *Life of Antony* is on the way of life. Although *Authentikos Logos* shares some general traits with the two Codex V ascents and the *Gospel of Mary* (most notably the gate-keepers and the soul's ascent), questionings and ritual connotations (knowledge of the right answers, sign to be given to the gatekeeper) are absent.[202] This is to do with genre, but it also indicates that the ethical aspect of ascent is emphasised.

The connection of the soul's ascent with Platonic and other contemporary non-Christian traditions could be problematic in the light of the Christian views of the resurrection of the dead, but the discussed examples show that the soul's ascent was one way how Christians could and would depict salvation. Conflicts between different views ensued, but no sharp dichotomy can always be assumed between those who believed in the resurrection of the flesh, and those who denied it.[203] *Authentikos Logos* focuses on the soul's ascent and has employed certain common features of ascent narratives. At the same time it is quiet on resurrection, and even interprets the "spiritual body" without referring to Paul's discussion on the subject. Its view on the soul's ascent could accommodate a notion on the soul's reincarnation. This does not need to mean that that is the only truth about the text, or the people reading it. The *Exegesis on the Soul*, its close parallel, accepts both the soul's ascent and resurrection as images of salvation: "This is the resurrection that is from the dead. This is the release from captivity. This is the ascent to heaven. This is the way of ascent to the Father" (*Exeg. Soul* 134:11 – 15).

Whether or not individual Christians maintained differing, even conflicting views on the afterlife, fourth-century bishops and other church officials

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202 Cf. Karen L. King, *The Gospel of Mary of Magdala*, 73 – 74.

203 Polemical attitudes and boundary drawing are not the full picture, as pointed out also by Claudia Setzer: "It would be wrong to think of ■ separate group of Christian heretics professing an anti-resurrection stance while orthodox Christians battled on behalf of bodily resurrection." Setzer, *Resurrection of the Body*, 157, also, p. 20.

aimed at unifying Christian beliefs. Resurrection doctrine came to be useful as a marker of Christian identity that would separate Christians as a distinct group, either from non-Christians or other Christians.[204] A belief in the soul's immortality, whether containing views on the soul's pre-existence or ascent, or even reincarnation, came to be considered wrong from the orthodox viewpoint. Yet it was never completely erased from the Christian discourse – although there were conflicts, even Athanasius himself recounts Antony's visions on the soul's ascent despite his initial hesitation. Different emphases are discernible in texts that discuss souls' ascent, so that next to descriptions of journeys into the otherworld or visions concerning afterlife, attention may be directed at ethics and ascetic contest. The texts discussed above reveal that there are different ways of telling ascent stories, or reading these narratives. Incidentally these ascent texts leave open their precise relationship to resurrection belief: it may or may not be included. Mystical ascents and gatekeeper figures went on to live in Christian texts, but they would be combined with exhortation towards ethical or ascetic life. Gatekeepers, or other evil powers that are after human souls, sometimes named toll-collectors, often appear in early Christian texts.

3. Summary

The soul's life in the body, different bodies, the progress made during earthly life and the soul's final ascent were discussed in this chapter. Just as there are differently named souls in *Authentikos Logos*, so different kinds of bodies, heavier and lighter, are assumed, and in this *Authentikos Logos* shares common notions of late ancient thought. The body is first mentioned when the invisible soul's emergence is described in *Authentikos Logos* 22. The text emphasises harmony between the soul, its companionship with the invisible worlds in "members, body, and spirit". The Coptic expression used recalls Valentinus' poem *Harvest* and its harmonious image of the cosmos, but echoes also Pauline epistles and the *Tripartite Tractate*, where the concord between different members of the body is used to exhort towards concord between people in Christian communities. What follows on *Authentikos Logos* 23 is a description of how connection with matter disturbs the harmony of the invisible soul, which further recalls Antony's reference to passions that disturb the tranquillity of the soul.

Life in the body is hardship for the soul as images employed suggest. The soul is "shut into a brothel" and it "lives in a house of poverty". The idea goes back to Platonic and Orphic imagery of human life as the soul's imprisonment,

204 Setzer, *Resurrection of the Body*, 84–89, 95–96; Outi Lehtipuu, "The Transformation of the Flesh in Early Christian Debates" in Seim/Økland (ed.), *Metamorphoses*, 147–168.

as does the overall view that life in a body brings the soul into contact with pleasures, desires, sorrows, and fears. This is how *Authentikos Logos* perceives human life, and this is how it is seen in for example *Phaedo*, but also in texts more contemporary to *Authentikos Logos*, such as the *Apocryphon of John*. What is emphatic in *Authentikos Logos* is ethics, the view of life as a place of contest and progress towards the final goal. This would be in line with views of Plato, and there indeed is common ground with Graeco-Roman views.

The common ground between *Authentikos Logos* and Christian ascetic texts was also charted, and it emerges that there are plenty of coherences. Four aspects of asceticism in *Authentikos Logos* were considered: desire, food imagery, vigilance against evil, withdrawal and contest. Desire is focal in *Authentikos Logos*, and it is the one passion that is mentioned most often, but also, sexual imagery of the soul story is bound to the effects of desire. Food does not occur in the way of stories of ascetics and their miraculously meagre eating habits. Rather, the soul is exhorted to look for true foods and avoid false foods, bait that turns into the food of death. A reference to gluttony in 25:10 – 11 connects more directly with such authors as Evagrius, and the way gluttony is connected to desirous thoughts that defile a virgin can only be approached from a Christian ascetic context. Although lacking descriptions of combat against evil in the manner of ascetic biographies, vigilance against evil and vices is emphatic in *Authentikos Logos*, most notably in the fishing imagery that takes up a considerable proportion of the writing, nearly three pages. Withdrawal from the world is mentioned, but in a way that suggests partly a chosen way of life, partly a marginal position compared with those who go about their daily business, and the image is strongly rhetorical (*Authentikos Logos* 27).

Although *Authentikos Logos* in many ways differs from such ascetic authors as Athanasius and Evagrius, it would be difficult to approach it outside the Christian ascetic context. The body as such is not something automatically negative in *Authentikos Logos*. That (evaluation of the body) depends on the context, and what kind of a body is discussed. The overall emphasis in *Authentikos Logos* is on the soul' journey, progress towards the ascent, and the view that the soul may take an active role in reaching this goal. Life in a body is preparation for the final ascent, and in line with philosophical and ascetic traditions of the ancient world, it is preparation for and practice of death.

Death, the soul's release from the body and its ascent are described in *Authentikos Logos* 32. Two discussions concerning the terminology on this page focused on ⲘⲠⲢⲀⲅⲘⲀⲧⲈⲨⲦⲎⲤ Ⲛ̄Ⲛ̄ⲤⲰⲘⲀ and ⲞⲨⲤⲰⲘⲀ ⲘⲠ̄Ⲛ̄ⲀⲦⲓⲔⲟⲚ. It was argued that the first mentioned may be translated as "slave traders", a term that contains a pun referring to the soul's slavery in the body. The slave traders and their defeat are reminiscent of Revelation 18, but the collective eschatological and apocalyptic view in Revelation is instead applied to the individual ascent of the soul. The slave traders in *Authentikos Logos* are not primarily archons of the Nag Hammadi creation accounts, but

gatekeepers widely known in ancient literature, for example in the *Asclepius*, the *Apocalypse of Paul*, the *First Apocalypse of James*, and the *Gospel of Mary*. The second term, "pneumatic body" is a Christian term first used by Paul in 1 Corinthians 15:44. However, in *Authentikos Logos* it is not employed to discuss resurrection of the body, but it refers to the soul's pneumatic vehicle that takes the soul invisibly past the gatekeepers. A similar idea of a pneumatic vehicle is suggested by Origen who admits his knowledge of the pneumatic vehicle of the soul (*Contra Celsum* 4.57). This vehicle has its roots in Aristotelian thought but appears in later Platonists' works. From the viewpoint of *Authentikos Logos* this suggests that the writing combines Christian and Platonic views in a unique manner.

The soul's ascent was read in comparison with several other ascents read by early Christians. The *Apocalypse of Paul*, the *First Apocalypse of James*, and the *Gospel of Mary* focus on emotions and emphasise knowledge of correct answers that are to be given to the gatekeepers. The soul in *Authentikos Logos* and the Codex V ascents is portrayed as a slave of these otherworldly powers. The ascent in the *Gospel of Mary* focuses on conquering emotions and could be read either as a post-mortem ascent or progress in this life. It has points of connection with Hermetic texts (*C.H.* I.24 – 26, *C.H.* XIII.8 – 9), and Christian interest in Hermetic thought. This same interest was shared by those Christians who copied *Authentikos Logos* into Nag Hammadi Codex VI, for they copied several Hermetic texts into the same codex and of these, *Asclepius* describes a demon who aims at stopping ascending souls. A similar demon appears in the *Life of Antony*, witnessing the close relationship of Hermetic and Christian thought in early Christian Egypt. Both *Asclepius* and Antony's vision emphasise, like *Authentikos Logos*, that it is the way of life that enables the soul to get past the demon(s) in the air.

Several aspects thus emerge from the ascent passage in *Authentikos Logos* that enlighten its context and Christian interests in late ancient Egypt. Eschatological and apocalyptic traditions, popular in Egyptian Christianity, can be detected in the background, but in *Authentikos Logos* they are employed for the individual soul's ascent. Ascent is what *Authentikos Logos* concentrates on: there is no expressed interest towards discussing, denying, or defending a belief in resurrection. The idea of the soul's ascent and the threat slave-traders pose could even be read as opposing teaching on the resurrection belief and accommodating Platonic views, even reincarnation. Yet *Authentikos Logos* is quiet on this. Its focus is on the victory of the soul after its successful ascent, and any debate on the precise form of the afterlife is left aside. This suggests openness to different interpretations on the afterlife.

VII. Conclusions

This study set out to understand *Authentikos Logos* in its context, and to provide the first book-length study of the writing. *Authentikos Logos* was approached through close reading, comparative analysis with other ancient Christian and non-Christian writings as well as analysis of its key concepts: soul, matter, body, ascent.

After a discussion of previous studies to the writing, brief notions were made on the manuscript, language, genre, and the general context. The only known manuscript of *Authentikos Logos* is part of the Nag Hammadi Codex VI, and it is, with the exception of some lacunae, readable and well preserved. The Sahidic dialect it is written in does not betray any strong impression of clumsiness or indicate it were a (bad) translation. Many concepts in the writing derive from Greek philosophical or theological traditions: they may suggests a Greek origin, but can also be seen as bearing witness of Egyptian Christian interest in educated Christian discussions. In its genre *Authentikos Logos* comes closest to a homily, or possibly a didactic treatise: it aims, through the soul story, parables and imagery bound to the story, to guide the reader towards a life of progress that reaches its ultimate goal in the soul's ascent.

One indicator of Christian traditions in the background of *Authentikos Logos* is the language echoing and alluding to Christian scriptures. Knowledge and application of Septuagint and New Testament texts, often in a way that suggests that the author knew these texts and employed this knowledge instinctively and by heart, is evident in the writing. No direct quotations are made, and the allusions are relatively general and also, do not easily align with any particular interpretative tradition. Two instances of Christian language were first given a closer scrutiny. An allusion to the gospel saying "For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also" (Matt 6:21, par. Luke 12:34) is reflected in the soul "fleeing upwards to her treasure; that is where her mind is" (28:23–26). That the "heart" is replaced by "mind" is a change made by several early Christian authors and texts, who occasionally also change the order of the saying. The reminiscence in *Authentikos Logos* to the variant of the gospel saying suggests familiarity with this somewhat fluid tradition that is also evidence by Justin Martyr, Clement of Alexandria, the *Gospel of Mary*, Didymus the Blind, Pseudo-Macarius as well as Barsanuphius and John of Gaza.

The second allusion that was studied was the application of the light imagery at the end of the writing. "The light that shines above her that does not set" echoes eschatological language, used also in Isaiah 60 and 2 Esdras (Fifth

Ezra) 2, but unlike these, *Authentikos Logos* does not refer to the collective, end-times eschatological events, but the individual soul's bliss. The light shines above the ascended soul, not above the multitude of saved people in heavenly Jerusalem. Similar use of an eschatological motif to describe the individual soul's fate is traceable in the allusion to the slave traders in *Authentikos Logos* 32. The light imagery is also used in three Nag Hammadi texts that are usually considered Valentinian, but unlike the *Tripartite Tractate* and the *Gospel of Philip*, *Authentikos Logos* does not connect the light imagery with ritual. Further, no direct exhortation to charity is explicit as it is in the *Gospel of Truth.*

A more precise analysis of the literary and intellectual context was conducted in chapters III – VI. First, the journey of the soul in *Authentikos Logos* was discussed in comparison with several writings and authors that come close to its contents. The nearest parallel to *Authentikos Logos* is the *Exegesis on the Soul*, another Nag Hammadi homily on the soul's fate that is preserved in Codex II. The two writings share many points, but they also differ notably: *Authentikos Logos* is less literal in its use of the scriptures, less graphic in its description of the soul's fate as a fallen woman, and more focused on the soul's role in its progress. The soul decides, changes its way, chooses its way of life, contends, and ascends. The role of the father and the bridegroom is less accentuated in *Authentikos Logos*. Why? The tones of the writings may differ, yet there is no reason to exaggerate the differences: the two writings have a similar message to tell, but whereas *Authentikos Logos* provides a stronger exhortation to ascetic life, the *Exegesis on the Soul* emphasises repentance. Both writings would have appealed to audiences in monastic and ascetic circles.

If *Authentikos Logos* shares the storyline with the *Exegesis on the Soul*, any obvious and clear connection with the Valentinian myth of Wisdom is less lucid. This is an intriguing question, for *Authentikos Logos* employs a storyline that resembles the Valentinian Wisdom myth, and also, often uses vocabulary shared with Valentinian Christian writings. Both *Authentikos Logos* and the Valentinian myth discuss the descent and re-ascent of a feminine entity, but whereas this entity in *Authentikos Logos* is a human soul that exemplifies human life on earth, the Valentinian myth focuses on Wisdom, the primal cause of creation who causes the birth of the Creator-God of the material world, and emphasises the wide divide between the highest God and the material world. Both Valentinian writings and *Authentikos Logos* often show concern for emotions, but these emotions are different. In *Authentikos Logos*, desire, hatred, envy, passions, temptations, and sorrow caused by worldly things disturb the soul, whereas Wisdom's passion is directed at the knowledge of the ultimate divinity, God, who is unknowable yet the source of all, or, in some versions of the myth, in Wisdom's wish to produce offspring.

What is known of the Valentinian myth stems from the evidence of dogmatically orientated Irenaeus of Lyons, from Clement of Alexandria's

Excerpts from Theodotus, and other descriptions of Christian writers who opposed what they deemed as heresies, and the Valentinian writings in the Nag Hammadi Library, notably the *Tripartite Tractate* and the *Interpretation of Knowledge*. The heresiological descriptions are not in close agreement with the Valentinian writings of the Nag Hammadi Library. However, from what is known of the Valentinian myth does not indicate direct closeness with *Authentikos Logos*. It is quite significant that cosmological and cosmogonical interest that is important in the Valentinian thought is absent in *Authentikos Logos* (and in the *Exegesis on the Soul*). The resemblance of the female figure's descent and ascent in Valentinian writings and *Authentikos Logos* (and the *Exegesis on the Soul*) is due to their writers employing the same general story.

These storylines are anything but unique. In order to motivate his audiences to philosophical way of life, Plato told them stories of souls, their descents, ascents, their cycles of rebirth, and how people's lives affected their next fates at reincarnation. Origen explained that souls are minds descended and cooled down from their fervent love of God. Souls in Origen's *De principiis* descend from heaven, live their lives, ascend, and complete their journeys of perfection, if not in this life then some time after. Plotinus, too, explained human life through metaphors – of the soul as a noble maiden away from her parents, and love through images of Aphrodite the divine and Aphrodite the common. *Authentikos Logos* is part of this line of teaching: souls must descend, their connection to their original homes may weaken (yet *Authentikos Logos* never suggests that the connection is entirely lost), they must steer their fates through choices made in life, and the course of a soul will eventually be perfected.

The soul's epithets – the "invisible soul", the "pneumatic soul", the "material soul", and the "rational soul" – are unique in the Nag Hammadi library and derive from diverse sources. The soul is invisible and able to act in a just manner, the soul is pneumatic and can move downwards and upwards, the soul may turn material (that is, direct itself at material concerns and connect with the passions of human life on earth) the soul is rational and can ascend. Nowhere are these aspects explained in the very manner of *Authentikos Logos*, and nowhere else is the precise terminology combined in the way it is combined in *Authentikos Logos*. Whereas two of these, that the soul is invisible and rational, are common stock in Platonic thought, as well as in Jewish-Christian Platonism, the other two are less wide-spread. "Pneumatic soul" is employed by Synesius of Cyrene (c. 370–c. 413), Neoplatonist who became bishop of Ptolemais and whose writings have nothing distinctly Christian in them, to refer to the soul's vehicle, and by John Chrysostom in reference to prayer in the Spirit. The "material soul" is a term employed in the *Apocryphon of John*, the *Trimorphic Protennoia*, and Clement's *Excerpts from Theodotus*. Thus, the soul terminology in *Authentikos Logos* does not go back to any one tradition or source, but to many traditions known and in circulation from the second to the fifth centuries.

When the soul in *Authentikos Logos* descends, it gets entangled with matter. The discussion on matter reveals how early Christian theological discussions are and are not reflected in the soul story of *Authentikos Logos*. The idea that the soul becomes material and is bound to desire, hatred, and envy, and that bodies are the result of desire, and desire a result of material substance are illuminating yet hazy. These ideas of *Authentikos Logos* 23 suggest some context shared with the *Gospel of Mary*, the *Apocryphon of John*, and Valentinian sources, but again, *Authentikos Logos* does not align with any of them closely. The *Gospel of Mary* reveals some closeness to Stoic thought in its way of connecting matter and the opposite nature as forces that generate passions that cause disturbance in the body. The long version of the *Apocryphon of John* (NHC II,1) describes matter as the mother that gives birth to four demons and the four passions, desire, fear, pleasure, and sorrow, which in turn generate more passions.

In *Authentikos Logos*, desire causes the birth of a body, and life in the body – the soul's step-siblinghood with passions – generates more passions, but these are not so much systematically classified passions than practical vices disturbing the soul's life. The order in *Authentikos Logos* on the one hand, the *Gospel of Mary* and the *Apocryphon of John* on the other, is different. In this resepct *Authentikos Logos* aligns with Valentinian creation stories, but again, there are considerable differences, First, Valentinian texts leave out desire and focus on sorrow, fear, and perplexity. In *Authentikos Logos*, the focus is on desire. Second, unlike *Authentikos Logos*, Valentinian texts focus on the origin and creation of the material world. What should one make of this hazy net of seeming points of connection? It can be suggested that *Authentikos Logos* employs, recalls, or is familiar with systematic explanations of the origin of the material world and what disturbs human life, but instead of joining this discussion, it uses familiar motifs for different purposes.

Matter in *Authentikos Logos* is not the second element of the living world as in Stoic thought. Rather, matter is an evil force that attacks the soul and aims at destroying it (27:26 – 28:22). Similar views were suggested by some Middle-Platonists, Plotinus and early Christians. Further, *Authentikos Logos* seemingly binds its views of evil matter with scriptural imagery. The soul, if deceived by the Adversary, gives birth to the offspring of matter (31:18): the take is different to the philosophically orientated view of matter as the mother of all. The connection to birth-giving imagery resembles the manner desire gives birth to sin and death in the Epistle of James (1:14 – 15). The focus in both is paraenetic. Further, the parable of wheat and chaff that depicts the dangers of mixing pure with impure (25:12 – 16), shows a strict concern with purity not just in deeds, but in thoughts. The way the John the Baptist's saying on Jesus as the one separating wheat and chaff (Matt 3:12, par. Luke 3:17), tasteless salt (Matt 5:13) and Jesus' words on weeds sown amongst wheat (Matt 13:24 – 30) can be seen as reflected on the background. They reveal, compared with how other Christian authors employ the imagery, a less precise focus on the idea of

separation in *Authentikos Logos*. No philosophical concerns of second-century authors is evident.

The soul in *Authentikos Logos* has a body through which it maintains its connection with the invisible worlds. In general, there is no notion of the body as something negative in the writing. The language used of the soul's body recalls 1 Corinthians 12:12 where apostle Paul employs body imagery, but whereas Paul does so to exhort his Corinthian audiences to concord, *Authentikos Logos* comes closer to Letters of Antony where 1 Corinthians 12 is recalled to urge the readers to shun passions that disturb the unity of the body. Passions, *Authentikos Logos* suggests, are stepsiblings that the soul is yoked to when it enters the earthly, heavy body in incarnation. Life in the body is likened to the soul being "shut into a brothel", or to "life in a house of poverty", and a trial to be endured for a time. *Authentikos Logos* can and should be recognised as referring to at least four aspects of ascetic contest. Desire and other passions are to be endured, bridled, and shunned; a saying on the effects of desire in *Authentikos Logos* 25:6 – 9 mentions a virgin, which can be seen as indicative of the Christian context of its asceticism. Food imagery is prevalent: the Devil-Adversary's baits should be avoided, and gluttony is one of the vices mentioned, whereas the soul should look for the Word as its true food and medicine. Vigilance against evil is needed, as humans are like fish that are in danger of being caught by fishermen and their hooks and nets. Withdrawal from ordinary life is not just recommended, it is stated as a fact.

The soul, at the end of its earthly journey, leaves its heavy body behind, and ascends in its invisible, pneumatic body. The Pauline term, σῶμα πνευματικόν, most likely a deliberate allusion, it is not connected with Paul's discussion about resurrection in 1 Corinthians 15. Rather, the Pauline term denotes the soul's pneumatic vehicle that carries the soul in its ascent. The language thus combines Pauline and Platonic concepts in a unique way.

The soul's final ascent is briefly yet intriguingly described. If "pneumatic body" reveals Pauline and Platonic notions, "slave traders", are reminiscent of Revelation 18 and recalls gatekeepers known from some ancient ascent narratives. A comparison and an analysis with several ascents – those in the *Apocalypse of Paul*, the *First Apocalypse of James*, and the *Gospel of Mary* – shows that in *Authentikos Logos* the concern is not that of visionary ascents or instruction on passwords and how to answer the gatekeepers. As in the *Asclepius* excerpt in codex VI and Athanasius' *Life of Antony* 66, the way of life decides the soul's unhindered ascent. Life should be preparation for a successful ascent; in this sense life is practice of death. There is no discussion of resurrection, the focus is entirely on the ascent. It is likewise not interested in eschatological scenes and apocalyptic visions.

Two currents prominent in early Egyptian Christianity explain the intellectual context of *Authentikos Logos*. These are educated theology, represented by such figures as Origen, Valentinus or Synesius who studied in Alexandria, and asceticism and the development of monasticism. It is obvious

that these should not be approached as separate traditions, but as such that strongly interacted with each other. *Authentikos Logos* shows educated approach in its symbolic description of ascetic way of life. The goal and perfection of human life can only be reached post-mortem, but that requires vigilance against the Devil and adversaries during this life, and determination on the chosen way of life.

Different early Christian traditions from or known in Egypt are traceable in *Authentikos Logos*. Scriptural traditions and what different forms interpretation of scriptures may have taken, and familiarity with eschatological and apocalyptic language is suggested in its images and allusions. Connecting points with Valentinian and Sethian texts, the *Gospel of Mary* and the *Apocryphon of John* suggest that one should not align the writing with any one school of thought that has been discerned within the Nag Hammadi Library, but approach *Authentikos Logos* as a text that comes from a context where these writings circulated – Egypt in the late third and the fourth century.

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Abbreviations: All abbreviations are according to the *SBL Manual of Style.*

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Appendix:
Translation of *Authentikos Logos* from Coptic into English

22

The descent of the invisible soul

1 – 5	[ ]
6	[ ]… in… heaven [ ]
7	… within him…
8	… [anything] appears…
9	the hidden heavens…
10	appear […] and [before]
11 – 12	the invisible, indescribable worlds
	appeared.
13 – 15	The invisible soul of justice came from them,
	and she is
16	one with them in the members,
17	one with them in the body,
	and one with them in the spirit.
18	Whether in the descent
19	or in the Fullness,
20	she is not disconnected from them. They see
21	her and she looks at them in
22	the invisible Word.

Word is the medicine of the soul

23	In secret her bridegroom
24	brought the Word and placed it on her mouth
25	so that she would eat it like
26	food. He put the Word
27	on her eyes as medicine,
28	so that she would see with her mind,
29	understand (who are) her relatives
30	and find knowledge of her root
31	so that she may hold fast to her branch
32	from which she first came,
33	receive what
34	belongs to her and renounce [matter].

23

The Stepfamily as a Metaphor

1–3	[ ]
4	[ ]… like…
5	… a man who [married]…
6	… having…
7	… children. The children…
8	… truly those who were
9	[conceived] of his seed.
10	They call the woman's children:
11	"Our brothers!"
12	In just the same way the pneumatic soul
13	was put

14   into a body. She became

15   a sister to desire, hatred,

16   and envy, and

17   a material soul. So the body

18   came from desire

19   and desire

20   came from material substance.

21   This is why the soul

22   became their sister.

Stepchildren's inheritance

22–33   Yet they are stepchildren who have no power to

24   inherit from the

25   male; they shall inherit

26   from their mother only.

27   But whenever the soul

28   wants to inherit

29   with the stepchildren – because the possessions

30   of these stepchildren are

31   proud passions,

32   life's pleasures, hateful envies,

33   boasting, foolish talk,

34   accusations,

24

The soul's life in the body

1–5   [   ]

6   [   ] for her [   ]

7   [the prostitution]. He shuts [her] out [and puts]

8   her into a brothel [

9   [debauchery] for her. [She abandoned]

10   modesty.

10 – 12 Death and life are placed before everyone.

12 – 13 From those two

        people will choose the one they want.

14   And so the soul will live

15   in drunkenness and

16 – 17 debauchery, for wine leads to debauchery.

        She does not remember

18   her siblings or her father, because

19 – 20 pleasure and sweet gain

20   deceive her. Having

21   abandoned knowledge she lives

22   like animals.

23   A foolish person lives like

24   animals, not understanding what is appropriate

25 – 26 to say and what is not.

The gentle son's inheritance

26   But as for the gentle son,

27   he inherits

28   his father with delight.

29   His father rejoices for him:

30   everyone respects the father because of the son,

31   who also aims at

32   doubling

33   his inheritance. The stepchildren

25
Opposites cannot mix

1 – 4   [   ]

5   [   ] mix with [   ].

6   If a [lusting] thought

7   goes [into]

8   a virgin,

9   he has [already] become impure. Their

10   gluttony cannot

11   mix with moderation.

The mixture of wheat and chaff

12   If chaff is mixed

13   with wheat, it is not the chaff

14   but the wheat that is polluted. As they

15   are mixed together,

16   no-one is going to buy the wheat

    because it is spoiled.

17   But they are going to persuade

18   him: "Give us this chaff",

19   as they see the wheat mixed

20   in it. Once they get the chaff they will

21   throw it together with all the other chaff,

22   and that chaff

23   gets mixed with all other matter.

24   But pure seed

25   is kept in storehouses

26   that are secure.

26 – 27 So, we have spoken of all these matters.

Pre-existence of the Father

27   Before

28   anything existed,

29   the Father alone existed,

30 – 31 before the worlds that are in heavens appeared,

32   or the world that is on

33   the earth, or rulers, or

34   authorities or the powers.

26

The contest in the world

1 – 3   [   ]

4   ... appear...

5   [command] and [   ]

6   [others]. Nothing [   ]

7   came into being without his will.

8   But he, the Father, [wanted]

9   to reveal his [riches]

10   and his glory. He established

11   this great contest in

12   this world, for he wanted

13   the contestants to

14 – 15 appear and all the contestants to abandon

16   the things that have come into being,

17   to despise them in

18   knowledge that is noble and unattainable,

19 – 20 and to take refuge in Him-who-exists.

20   Those who compete with us

21   are adversaries,

22   competing against us. We must conquer their

23   ignorance with our

24   knowledge. We have first known the

25 – 26 Inscrutable One from whom we have come.

The authority of the world

26   We have nothing in

27   this world, for fear that

28   the authority of the world

29   who has come into being could detain us

30   in the worlds that are in heavens,

31 – 32 in which the universal death dwells,

33   surrounded by partial

27

Our suffering and misery in the world

1 – 4   [   ]

5   [   ] worldly [   ]

6   [   ] ashamed [   ] world

7   We do not care of them when they

8   [speak] ill of us. We take no notice

9   of them when they curse

10   [us]. When they humiliate

11   us directly, we stare at them and

12   remain silent. They

13   busy themselves in their activities,

14   whereas we wander in hunger

15   and thirst. We are focused on

16   our dwelling-place, the place at which

17   our way of life and conscience

18   are directed. We

19   do not attach to

20   things that have come into being, but detach

21   ourselves from them, for our hearts

22   are set on existing things. We are

23   ill, we are weak, and we are in pain.

24   Yet a great strength is hidden

25   within us.

Illness of the soul, the word is the medicine

25   Our soul

26   is indeed ill because she lives

27   in a house of poverty.

28   Matter wounds her eyes,

29   it wants to make her blind.

30   This is why the soul pursues

31   the Word and applies it on her eyes

32   as if it were a medicine. She opens

33   them and casts out

28

1–3	[ ]
4	[ ] … thought of ▪ [ ]
5	[ ] blind[ness] in
6	[ ]. Afterwards,
7	when that one is still in
8–9	ignorance, it is completely dark and material.
10	Likewise the soul [takes]
11	the Word all the time and applies
12	it to her eyes like medicine
13	so that she will see,
14	and her light will cover the
15	enemies who fight with her.
16	She will make them blind with
17	her light, imprison them
18	in her arrival,
19–20	and bring them down in lack of sleep.

The soul's victory over its enemies

20	She will speak boldly
21	in her might, and with her
22	sceptre. When her enemies look
23	at her, they are ashamed. She is fleeing
24	upwards to her treasure;
25–26	that is where her mind is,
26–27	and to her strong storehouse. Not one

28   of the things that have a beginning

      has had power over

29   her, nor has she allowed a

30   stranger into her house.

31   There are many

32   slaves born in her house who fight against her

33   day and night.

34   They have no rest

29

1   [day or] night,

2   for their desire [torments]

3   them.

The fishing parable

3 – 4 This is why we do not sleep,

4   nor do we forget the

5   nets that are spread out in

6   secret. They are lying in wait to catch

7   us. For if we are caught

8   in just one net, it will draw us

9   [down] into its mouth, while the water flows

10   [above] us, striking us against our face. We will

11   be taken down into the dragnet and

12   we will not be able to come out of

13   it: the waters are high

14   above us, they flow from above

15   downwards sucking our hearts into

16   dirty mud. We

17   will not be able to escape them.

18   Man eaters, those who will catch

19   and swallow us take pleasure

20   like a fisherman who casts

21   a hook into the water. He casts

22   various kinds of foods

23   into water: every

24   fish has its own

25   food. When the fish smells the food

26   it goes after its scent,

27   but when it swallows it,

28 – 29   the hook hidden inside the food catches it

30   and brings the fish

31   up forcibly, out of deep waters.

32 – 33   Thus, no-one can catch that fish

34   from the deep waters,

30

1   except with the bait

2   that the fisherman uses.

3 – 4   Using food as a ruse he pulls the fish up in the hook.

The fishing parable explained

4 – 5   And such too is our existence in this world,

6   like that of the fishes. The Adversary

7   is keeping watch against us,

8   laying snares for us. Like a fisherman

9   who wants to catch us, he rejoices

10   in the prospect of swallowing us. For [he brings]

11   many foods in front of

12   our eyes: they are things of this

13   world. He wants us to

14   desire one of them,

15   and to taste just a

16   little, and to pull us in

17   with his hidden poison, to bring

18   us out of freedom

19   and to take us into

20   slavery. If he strikes us

21   down with just one food,

22   we must

23   desire the rest.

24   In the end, then, such things

25   become the food of death.

Worldly concerns are Devil's foods

26 – 28 With these foods the Devil hunts us:

28   First he

29   puts sorrow into your

30   heart, until you are troubled at heart

31   on account of some small thing of

32   this life, and he takes us

33   down with his poisons.

| 34 | After that follows the desire |
| 35 | for clothes in which you pride |

31

1	yourself, and
2	avarice, pride,
3	vanity, envy that
4	envies another envy,
5	bodily beauty and deceitfulness.
6	The greatest of them all is
7	ignorance with indolence.

The Adversary wants to draw the soul into ignorance

8–9	Then the Adversary prepares all these
10	beautifully and spreads them
11	before the body. He
12	wants the heart of the soul
13–14	to incline towards one of them,
14	and like a hook
15	that pulls her by force, submerge her
16	into ignorance. He deceives
17	her until she conceives by evil
18	and gives birth to offspring of the matter.
19	She leads
20	a tainted life and pursues many
21	desires
22	and greeds. The sweetness

23	of carnal things entices her
24	in ignorance.

The soul turns towards eternal life

24	But the soul
25	who tasted these things
26	understood that sweet passions
27	are temporary.
28	She acquired knowledge of evil.
29	She withdrew herself from them. She
30 – 31	assumes a new way of life.
31	Afterwards she
32 – 33	despises this transient life and
34	searches for the foods that will
35	take her into (eternal) life.

32

1	She leaves behind the false foods
2	and acquires knowledge of her light,
3	walking, stripping off this
4	world. But her true garment
5	is given to her her from within.
6	Her wedding clothes
7	cover her in beauty of heart,
8	not in fleshly pride.
9	She acquires knowledge of her depth, and she
10	runs into her fold, as
11	her shepherd is standing by the door.

12 – 14   In the return for all the shame and contempt

that she received in this world, she receives

15   ten thousand times grace and

16   glory.

The slave traders' defeat

16   She gave the body to those

17   who had given it to her and they were

18   humiliated, whereupon the slave traders

19   stayed down

20   weeping, for they could not

21   do their business with

22   that body. Neither did they find

23   any other merchandise to replace it.

24   They had toiled a great deal until

25   they had fashioned the body for

26   this soul, since they wanted to

27   cast down the invisible soul.

28   They were humiliated for their

29   work. They suffered loss for that which they had

30   toiled. For they did not understand

31   that she has

32   an invisible, pneumatic body.

33   They thought: "We are her

34   shepherd who looks after her."

35   Yet they did not understand that she knows

33

1	another way, hidden from them.
2	Her true shepherd
3	taught it to her in knowledge.

Ignorant people are worse than pagans

4	But those who are ignorant,
5	they do not seek God,
6	nor do they ask after
7	their dwelling-place that is
8	in rest, but rather they
9	they live like animals. They
10	are wicked, worse than the
11	pagans. Firstly, they
12	do not ask after God, for
13	the hardening of their hearts draws
14–15	them to practise their cruelty.
16	Further, if they discover
17	someone else seeking for his
18	salvation, the hardening of their
19	hearts works against
20	that person. If he does not
21	keep silent of his seeking, they
22	kill him in
23	their cruelty and
24–25	believe that it was a good thing
	that they did for themselves.

25	Indeed
26	they are children of the Devil!
27	Even the pagans give
28	alms and know
29	that the God who is in the heaven
30	exists, the Father of all,
31	high above the idols
32	they worship.
34, 1	But they have not heard the word
2	that they are to ask after his ways.

The foolish person fails to seek

3	The foolish person likewise
4	hears the calling,
5	but is ignorant of the place
6	where he has been called.
7	In the time of the preaching this person did not ask:
8	"Where is the temple,
9	the one into which I am to go and worship
10	my hope?"
11	Because of his foolishness
12	he, then, is wicked, worse than a pagan.
13	For the pagans know
14	the road to take to their stone temple
15	that will be ruined. They worship
16	their idol, relying
17	on it, it is their hope.

18 – 19   But to this foolish man the word has been preached

20   instructing him: "Seek and ask

21   after the ways upon which you are to go."

22   Nothing else

23   is as good a thing as this thing.

24   Because the essence of

25   the hardening of heart strikes at

26   his mind with the force

27   of ignorance, and

28   the demon of error.

29   They do not allow his mind

30   to rise, for he did not exhaust

31   himself seeking to understand his

32   hope.

The rational soul reaches her goal

32   The rational soul

35

1   exhausted herself seeking.

2   She acquired knowledge of God.

3   She suffered asking,

4   enduring bodily pain, straining

5   her feet following

6   the evangelists,

7   acquiring knowledge of the Inscrutable One.

8   She reached her rising.

9   She rested herself in the One

10   who is at rest. She laid herself down in the

11   bridal chamber. She

12   ate of the feast

13   for which she had hungered. She received

14   food of immortality.

15   She found what she had been seeking for.

16   She received rest from her sufferings.

17   The light that shines upon her does not set.

19   To the one belongs the glory,

20   might and revelation

21 – 22 for ever and ever. Amen.

Authentikos

Logos

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Authentikos Logos, also known as *Authoritative Teaching,* is
a little studied story of a souls's descent and ascent in the
Codex VI of the Nag Hammadi library. With her book, Ulla
Tervahauta fills the gap in the scholarship and provides the
first monograph-length study that has this writing as its
primary focus.
Contrary to the usual discussion of the Nag Hammadi
writings from the viewpoint of Gnostic studies, she argues
that *Authentikos Logos* is best approached from the context
of Christian traditions of late ancient Egypt between the
third and the fifth centuries.

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