The Spiritual Seed

Nag Hammadi and Manichaean Studies

Editors

Stephen Emmel & Johannes van Oort

Editorial Board

H.W. Attridge − R. Cameron − W.-P. Funk
I. Gardner − C.W. Hedrick − S.N.C. Lieu
P. Nagel − D.M. Parrott − B.A. Pearson
S.G. Richter − J.M. Robinson − K. Rudolph
W. Sundermann − G. Wurst

VOLUME 60

The Spiritual Seed

The Church of the "Valentinians"

by

Einar Thomassen

BRILL

LEIDEN · BOSTON

2006

This book is printed on acid-free paper.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

CONTENTS

PART II

THE THREE DIMENSIONS OF VALENTINIANISM

PART III

VALENTINIAN PROTOLOGY

PART IV

VALENTINIAN INITIATION

PART V

VALENTINUS AND THE "VALENTINIANS"

ABBREVIATIONS

ANRW. Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt
BCNH:C. Bibliothèque Copte de Nag Hammadi: Section «Concordances»
BCNH:E. Bibliothèque Copte de Nag Hammadi: Section «Études»
BCNH:T. Bibliothèque Copte de Nag Hammadi: Section «Textes»
BSAC. Bulletin de la Societé d'Archéologie Copte
CSCO. *Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium*
DCB. A Dictionary of Christian Biography, Literature, Sects, and Doctrines. Ed. William Smith and Henry Wace. 4 vols. London: Murray 1877–1887.
EPRO. Études préliminaires aux religions orientales dans l'empire romain.
FRLANT. Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments
GCS. Die Griechischen Christlichen Schriftsteller der ersten Jahrhunderte
HTR. Harvard Theological Review
JAC. Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum
JTS. Journal of Theological Studies
LACL. Lexikon der antiken christlichen Literatur. Ed. Siegmar Döpp and Wilhelm Geerlings. 3rd ed. Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder 2002.
MDAI(R). Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts, Römische Abteilung
NGG. Nachrichten von der königlichen Gesellschaft zu Göttingen: Philologisch-Historische Klasse
NHC. Nag Hammadi Codex
NHLE. *The Nag Hammadi Library in English.* General editor James M. Robinson. 3rd ed. Leiden: Brill 1988.
NHS. Nag Hammadi Studies
NHMS. Nag Hammadi and Manichaean Studies (continuation of NHS)
NTT. Norsk Teologisk Tidsskrift
RAC. Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum.
RD. Adelin Rousseau and Louis Doutreleau. Irénée de Lyon: Contre les hérésies, Livre I. 2 vols. (SC 263, 264.) Paris 1979.
RSR. Revue des sciences religieuses
SC. Sources chrétiennes
SCA. Studies in Christian Antiquity
SEÅ. Svensk Exegetisk Årsbok
SVF. H. von Arnim. *Stoicorum veterum fragmenta.* 3 vols. Leipzig 1903–5.
ThZ. Theologische Zeitschrift
TLZ. Theologische Literaturzeitung
TU. Texte und Untersuchungen
TWNT. Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament (Stuttgart 1933–79)
VC. Vigiliae Christianae
WUNT. Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament
ZAC. Zeitschrift für antikes Christentum
ZNW. Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde des Urchristentums

INTRODUCTION

This book is an attempt to give a coherent account of "Valentinianism" by making full use of all the sources now available for understanding this peculiar form of ancient Christianity. Such an account is in fact long overdue, considering that the Valentinian texts from Nag Hammadi have now been available for three decades, and no systematic attempt has yet been made to integrate them into an overall interpretation of the history and doctrines of Valentinianism. Much valuable work has indeed been done on the individual Nag Hammadi tractates during this time, and important Valentinian figures— Valentinus himself, Marcus "the Magician," Heracleon—have recently attracted new interest and been the subjects of detailed monographs. It is also necessary, however, to try to paint the larger picture. Indeed, such a wider context is needed not least in order that the individual Valentinian documents themselves may be properly understood, like the pieces of a jigsaw puzzle that become fully meaningful only when they are placed in relation to the depicted scene as a whole.

As a matter of fact, the feeling of laying a puzzle has presented itself many times during the writing of this book. Needless to say, this is a puzzle for which many of the pieces are irrecoverably lost, and which therefore can never be fully solved. One of the largest missing pieces is of course that of Valentinus himself, for whom the scantiness of our information is strangely disproportionate to his evident historical importance. But we also lack nearly all the concrete information about persons, and about the dates and provenance of the surviving texts, that would allow us to write a genuine history of Valentinianism.

Nevertheless, the discovery of the Nag Hammadi texts has provided pieces that allow the puzzle to become somewhat more coherent than was possible when there were only the heresiological reports to work with. In particular *The Tripartite Tractate*, that seriously understudied text, is able to serve as a key piece that creates a bridge between the heresiological reports on the Valentinian systems and the non-systematic Valentinian tractates in the Nag Hammadi library. It also, together with the materials associated with the eastern Valentinian Theodotus, allows us to outline the differences between

the eastern form of Valentinianism, with its more primitive Christology, soteriology, and protology, and the more elaborate theories characteristic of the western systems. On this basis, moreover, it becomes possible to construct a relative chronology of the various attested forms of Valentinian theology.

Part I surveys a series of Valentinian sources, chiefly from the point of view of their positions regarding the incarnation of the Saviour. A solution is here offered to the question of what was meant by the Saviour's body, and it is shown that significantly different positions on this issue are found in the texts. One group of sources affirm the passion of the Saviour, as well as his incarnation in a material body, and attribute decisive soteriological importance to these facts. They also claim that the Saviour brought with him a spiritual body and conceive of salvation as being effected through a mechanism of mutual participation and exchange. A different group of texts, on the other hand, deny both the passion of the Saviour and his having had a material body, and give him a psychic component (sometimes called "the psychic Christ") in addition to his spiritual body. These texts make the psychic humans the central target of salvation, and tend to see the incarnation more as a revelation of symbolic truths than as a salvific act effective in itself. The existence of these divergent interpretations of the incarnation in the texts confirms the basic correctness of the heresiologists' information about the two "schools" of Valentinianism. Hence, it becomes possible to identify a given source as belonging to either eastern or western Valentinianism, and to perceive the development that leads from the eastern form of soteriology to its western transformation.

Part II is a systematic investigation into the relationships of what I consider to be three basic dimensions of Valentinian theology: the historical appearance of the Saviour, protological speculation about the origin of plurality, and ritually enacted redemption. Since these dimensions are all governed by the even more fundamental opposition between spirit and matter, a homology or parallelism exists between them. Thus, the incarnation and the earthly acts of the Saviour (his descent, birth, baptism, and crucifixion) are, in a certain way, the same as the projection of the Pleroma into plurality and potential materiality, and its subsequent restoration within the Limit. Also, the baptismal ritual of redemption mirrors the generation and stabilisation of the Pleroma and is at the same time a re-enactment of the Saviour's own baptism in the Jordan. Part II explores the log-

ical complications that arise from this identification of historical events, protological processes, and ritual acts, when these three dimensions are at the same time distinguished as separate events occurring in a linear narrative.

In Parts III and IV, Valentinian protology and the initiation rituals are subjects of study on their own terms, in the form of broad surveys of the sources. (The various theories regarding the incarnation of the Saviour are discussed in Part I.) Although the 30 aeons system familiar from the heresiological accounts dominates our documentation of Valentinian protology, it is by no means the only one, as *The Tripartite Tractate* shows. In Part III it is argued that the 30 aeons system can in fact only be understood as a secondary modification of a protology similar to that of *Tri. Trac*, where the aeons are neither named nor numbered and the generation process takes place as an exteriorisation and a manifestation rather than as an arithmetical derivation. This version of the Pleroma appears, moreover, to agree with Tertullian's testimony about Valentinus' own ideas about the aeons. The distinction between the two types of protology thus tends to corroborate the conclusions reached in Part I regarding the internal relationships of the various Valentinian theologies. Finally, Part III also traces the sources of Valentinian protology in Neopythagoreanism and Jewish apocalyptic. Progress has been made, I think, particularly in our understanding of the Neopythagorean background of Valentinian metaphysics, though many questions in this area still remain unanswered.

Part IV assembles the evidence for Valentinian initiatory rituals. With regard to the acts performed—basically water baptism and anointing—Valentinian initiation is, on the whole, decidedly "orthodox" in comparison to rituals practiced by other "Gnostics," for instance the Sethian baptism of the "five seals." On the other hand, the words used seem to have been more original, as was the perceived purpose of the initiation: reunification with the Pleroma. Valentinian ritual practices undoubtedly have roots in a very early phase of Christian worship, and deserve for that reason to be studied by historians of the liturgy much more than has until now been the case, though here as well the unanswered questions are many.

In the last part of the book Valentinus himself finally enters into focus. As enigmatic a figure as he is, due to the very scant and fragmentary information that has been transmitted, I nevertheless think that we cannot rest content with an interpretation of him that almost

entirely separates him from the movement of which he was, after
all, the founder, as was the case in the recent, extensive study by
Christoph Markschies. It was, therefore, necessary also to take a fresh
look at the fragments, and it will be seen that by interpreting these
texts in the light of the full range of later Valentinian documents,
and, in some cases, other "gnostic" sources as well—which form,
after all the most natural hermeneutical context for their interpre-
tation—I have reached other conclusions than did Markschies.
Valentinus was certainly not a "Valentinian" in the same sense as
Ptolemy, or the author of *The Tripartite Tractate*, but there are surely
enough themes in the fragments that resonate with later Valentinianism
to make us perceive continuity between the nebulous founder and
his better-known disciples.

To close the book I have added a brief sketch of the history of
Valentinianism, recording the essential evidence about leading figures,
events, and possible developments. It is certainly no replacement for
a full-scale history of the movement; at most it serves as a reminder
that that history still needs to be written. It may be reasonably
doubted whether it will ever be possible to write such a history,
though I believe that new information can still be forthcoming, not
only by renewed study, in their Valentinian context, of such figures
as Heracleon and Marcus, who have not been exhaustively dealt
with in this book, but especially if one were to make a systematic
search for possible anti-Valentinian polemics in the texts of many
later, "orthodox" writers.

Finally, a word on the use of the term "Valentinian." There is
no doubt that this is a heresiological term. As far as we know, the
"Valentinians" never used that name for themselves. Justin Martyr,
who is first known to have used the term, and who remarks how
appropriate it is that the heretics are named after their human
founders, just like the philosophical αἱρέσεις of the pagans (*Dial.*
35:6), himself admits that they call themselves Christians.[1] *The Gospel
of Philip* repeatedly highlights the designation "Christians."[2] In addi-
tion, they identified themselves, in mythological terms, as "the spir-

---

[1] ὁμολογοῦντας ἑαυτοὺς εἶναι Χριστιανούς; καὶ Χριστιανοὺς ἑαυτοὺς λέγουσιν;
Dial. 35:2.6.

[2] "When we were Hebrews, we were orphans and had only our mother, but
when we became Christians we acquired both father and mother," 52:21–25. See
also 62:26–32, 64:22–31, 67:19–27, 74:13–15.27.

itual seed,"[3] and in more religious-sociological language as an, or, rather, *the ekklesia*.[4] "Valentinians" is thus an outsiders' label. It is remarkable that Valentinus himself is normally not referred to in "Valentinian" writings, though the one exception to this, the quotations from Valentinus' psalms in Alexander's *Syllogismi*, suggests that texts by Valentinus could be appealed to in internal debates among Valentinians.[5] It is clear that Valentinus as a person cannot have occupied the central place in the faith of his followers that Marcion did for the Marcionites, for instance, or Mani for the Manichaeans. Nonetheless the movement must have possessed enough continuity, coherence, and specificity, and enough of a historical relation with Valentinus, to make it possible to identify various groups as "Valentinians" over a span of at least 250 years. My suggestion is that it was primarily the continual use of Valentinus' psalm-book that maintained a link to the name of the founding figure. In the area of systematic exposition and mythological constructions, on the other hand, constant revision seems to have been the rule, and the degree of consistency with what Valentinus himself had once taught probably became gradually weaker, even if the different Valentinian systems and texts still display enough features of family resemblance to be recognisable as belonging to the same religious movement. Thus, the term "Valentinianism" refers to a distinctive historical reality, a particular branch of ancient Christianity with its own identity and history. It will, *faute de mieux*, be referred to by that name in this book, even if it was not the preferred self-designation of the ones who considered themselves to be "the spiritual seed."

Work on this book began during six months of research leave in 1995, which I had the good fortune to be able to spend as a fellow of Clare Hall, Cambridge (UK). Another substantial part of it was written in 1999–2000, during a stay at the National Humanities Center in North Carolina (USA). I am deeply grateful to those institutions for providing excellent working conditions and inspiring environments for intellectual exchange. I also wish to thank all those

---

[3] Cf., e.g., *Exc.* 1:1–2, 26:1; Iren. *Haer.* I 5:6–6:1; *Tri. Trac.* 115:23–116:5.

[4] Cf. *Tri. Trac.* 125:4–5: "we who make up the Saviour's *ekklesia* in the flesh"; "the spiritual church," Heracleon frg. 37, cf. frg. 25; *Exc.* 24, 40, 41:2, 42:3; Iren. *Haer.* I 5:6; etc. The characterisation of Valentinianism as a "school," which is still common in modern scholarship, also derives from the heresiologists, for whom there could exist no *ekklesia* other than their own.

[5] See below, 496–97.

who have supported this project over the years and have been stimulating conversation partners, especially Jean-Daniel Dubois, Stephen Emmel, Karen L. King, Louis Painchaud, Paul-Hubert Poirier, and John D. Turner. Many thanks are also due to my colleagues and students at the Department for Classics, Russian, and the History of Religions at the University of Bergen, who over several years have worked hard together to create a congenial environment for scholarly endeavour.

PART I

VALENTINIANISM EAST AND WEST

THE VALENTINIANS OF IRENAEUS

Save for a very brief mention in Justin's *Dialogue with Trypho* (35:6), Irenaeus' *Against the heresies*, written in the 180s, is the oldest surviving source about the Valentinians that can be dated with some degree of certainty.[1] Irenaeus' presentation has also been the most influential source of all for subsequent knowledge of Valentinianism, in modern scholarship as well as in ancient heresiology. For these reasons, it is useful to begin this study with some comments on the value of Irenaeus' work.

Several anti-heretical works had actually been written before Irenaeus, as he himself indicates in his introduction to Book IV of his work. In the same context he also says, however, that the refutation of Valentinianism attempted by these "eminent predecessors" had been ineffective, because they did not know "the doctrine" of their opponents.[2] Irenaeus does not name his predecessors, but Tertullian, a little later, mentions Justin, Miltiades, Irenaeus, and Proculus as earlier anti-Valentinian writers.[3] Justin himself affirms that he has composed a *Syntagma* against the various heresies (*1 Apol.* 26:8).

All these older anti-heretical works have been lost. If we are to believe the judgement of Irenaeus just cited, as well as the indirect testimony of Tertullian, who tells us about the existence of these earlier writers but relies almost exclusively on Irenaeus for his own

---

[1] For the date cf. Harnack, *Altchr. Lit.* II/1, 320.

[2] *hi qui ante nos fuerunt, et quidem multo nobis meliores, non satis potuerunt contradicere his qui sunt a Valentino, quia ignorabant regulam ipsorum*, IV Pref. 2. In other places Irenaeus also refers to a specific predecessor, one "better than himself," who fought against the heretics (I Pref. 2, I 13:3, I 15:6; III 17:4). The identity of this person has been much discussed, but the question remains unresolved (see Koschorke, *Polemik*, 242n1); in any case the way he is referred to makes it unlikely that this was a heresiological writer like Justin or Irenaeus himself.

[3] Tert. *Val.* 5:1 (also cf. Eus. *H. E.* V 17:1, 28:4). For the lost work of Miltiades a date around 170, in Asia Minor, has been suggested (Harnack, *Altchr. Lit.* II/1, 361–62; Bardenhewer, *Geschichte*, I 262–64). Proculus was probably contemporary with Tertullian and a fellow Montanist (cf. Labriolle, *La crise montaniste*, 277). Hegesippus, around 180, also considered the Valentinians a heretical sect (Eus. *H. E.* IV 22:6).

account of the heretics, the information about the Valentinians provided in the older works was not extensive (though as historical testimonies we should today no doubt have found them valuable). It is probable, however, that Irenaeus incorporated earlier heresiological accounts into his own work. In particular, this is likely to be the case with his genealogical catalogue of heresies in *Haer.* I 23–27, which gives the impression of having been derived from secondary sources, rather than from first-hand knowledge of the heretics' writings. An important source for this section may have been Justin's *Syntagma*, since the order in which the heresies are presented by Irenaeus agrees in the main with lists found in Justin's extant works.[4] The section I 11–12, which briefly summarises different variants of the Valentinian system, also gives the appearance of having been excerpted from earlier heresiological accounts.[5]

The Valentinians are the chief target of *Against the heresies*. In the Preface to Book I Irenaeus explains his intentions, and tells us a little about his sources:

. . . ἀναγκαῖον ἡγησάμην, ἐντυχὼν τοῖς ὑπομνήμασι τῶν ὡς αὐτοὶ λέγουσιν Οὐαλεντίνου μαθητῶν, ἐνίοις δ᾽ αὐτῶν καὶ συμβαλὼν καὶ καταλαβόμενος τὴν γνώμην αὐτῶν, μηνῦσαί σοι, ἀγαπητέ, τὰ τερατώδη καὶ βαθέα μυστήρια, ἃ οὐ πάντες χωροῦσιν, ἐπεὶ μὴ πάντες τὸν ἐγκέφαλον ἐξεπτύκασιν, ὅπως καὶ σὺ μαθὼν αὐτὰ . . . καὶ, καθὼς δύναμις ἡμῖς, τήν τε γνώμην αὐτῶν τῶν νῦν παραδιδασκόντων, λέγω δὴ τῶν περὶ Πτολεμαῖον, ἀπάνθισμα οὖσαν τῆς Οὐαλεντίνου σχολῆς, συντόμως καὶ σαφῶς ἀπαγγελοῦμεν, καὶ ἀφορμὰς δώσομεν κατὰ τὴν ἡμετέραν μετριότητα, πρὸς τὸ ἀνατρέπειν αὐτήν . . .

. . . we have considered it necessary, after having read the writings of Valentinus' "disciples" (as they call themselves), and having perceived their views, to show you, dear friend, their "marvellous and profound mysteries that cannot be comprehended by all" (since not all have let go of their brains), so that you too shall learn about them. . . . And as much as it is in our power we shall report concisely and clearly the views of those who are teaching error at the present time—I refer to the followers of Ptolemy, an offshoot of the school of Valentinus—and provide the means, so far as our mediocrity allows, to refute them . . . (I Pref. 2)

---

[4] This was investigated by Lipsius (*Epiphanius; Quellen*), Harnack (*Quellenkritik*; "Zur Quellenkritik"), and Hilgenfeld (*Ketzergeschichte*, esp. 46–58). See also, more recently, Thornton, *Zeuge*, 38–40; Le Boulluec, *Hérésie*, I 163–64. For a sceptical position, see Markschies, *Valentinus*, 380–83.

[5] See below, 19–20.

This passage shows that Irenaeus' specific target is the "disciples" of Valentinus (rather than Valentinus himself), and, more specifically still, the followers of Ptolemy, who represent the most immediate danger because they are "teaching error at the present time."[6] Furthermore, we learn that Irenaeus has used original Valentinian documents, and that he has personally interviewed some of the Valentinians.

In the execution of his work, Irenaeus devoted Book I to presenting his source materials, whereas the four following books aim at refuting his opponents' doctrines from the points of view of reason, scripture and the apostolic tradition. The plan is explicitly stated and repeated in the preface to each of the books.

The Structure of Book I

Book I has a reasonably clear structure.[7] It contains:

(1) A detailed presentation of one system (chapters 1–9)
(2) Exposure of the variability of the heretical doctrines (chapters 10–22)
(3) A survey of the "ancestors" of the Valentinian heretics (chapters 23–31).

The most exhaustive presentation of the contents of Book I given by Irenaeus himself is found in the preface to Book II:

> In the first book, which immediately precedes this one, we exposed the "knowledge falsely so-called," and disclosed to you, my very dear friend, all the falsehood which has been devised by the followers of Valentinus in so many various and contradictory ways.
>
> We also described the views of those who existed earlier, and demonstrated that they disagree among themselves, and still much more with truth itself.
>
> And we also described, with all diligence, the views of Marcus the Magician, since he too belongs to these people, as well as his activities.

---

[6] J. Holzhausen, "Irenäus und die valentinianische Schule," interprets this passage as indicating two "Arbeitsschritte": First, Irenaeus intends to deal with the disciples of Valentinus, then with "those who are teaching error at this time." The καί, however, in line 9 of the quotation, can hardly be other than epexegetical: "Those who are teaching error at this time," i.e., the Ptolemaeans, are the same as the "disciples of Valentinus." The correct interpretation of the layout of Book I can be seen from the prefaces to the other books, in particular that of Book II (see below).

[7] Cf. RD I/1, 113–15.

And I carefully reported all the things that they pick from the Scriptures and try to adapt to their fiction.

And we set forth minutely how they dare to consolidate the truth of what they affirm by means of numbers and the twenty-four letters of the alphabet.

And we reported how they say that the created world was formed in accordance with the image of an invisible "Fullness," and what they think and teach about the Demiurge.

And we revealed the doctrine of their progenitor, Simon Magus the Samaritan, and of all who succeeded him. We also mentioned the numerous Gnostics who are sprung from him, and we noted their differences, doctrines and filiations, and set forth all the heresies founded by them.

We showed, moreover, that all these heretics who have taken their rise from Simon have introduced impious and irreligious doctrines into this life; and we revealed their "redemption" and how they initiate those who are made "perfect," together with their invocations and their mysteries.

We also proved that there is one God, the Creator, and that He is not "the fruit of a defect," and that there is nothing either above or after Him. (II Pref. 1)

This passage offers virtually a table of contents for Book I and thus provides a valuable key to a more detailed and precise understanding of what Irenaeus thought he was doing in that book. The text can be correlated with the respective sections of Book I in the following way:[8]

(1)	*ostendimus . . . omne ab his qui sunt a Valentino per multos et contrarios modos adinuentum {esse}*[9] *falsiloquium;*	= ch. 1–9
(2)	*etiam sententias exposuimus eorum qui priores exstiterunt, discrepantes eos sibimetipsis ostendentes . . .;*	= ch. 10–12
(3)	*et Marci quoque magi sententiam, cum sit ex his, cum operibus eius omni diligentia exposuimus;*	= ch. 13–15
(4)	*et quanta ex Scripturis eligentes adaptare conantur fictioni suae diligenter retulimus;*	cf. 16:1; also ch. 8, 18–20[10]

---

[8] This approach is the same as the one taken by Tripp, "Original Sequence." As will become clear, however, our analysis differs in important respects from his.

[9] As RD point out (II/1, 200), the word *esse* probably constitutes a translation or scribal error, and should be ignored, since it is more accurate to say that Irenaeus in Book I has *reported* the (false) doctrine of the Valentinians than that he has *demonstrated* its falsehood (which is what he will proceed to do in the following books). Moreover, reading *falsiloquium* as the direct object of *ostendimus* makes the sentence agree in form with all the following sentences of the paragraph.

[10] This section does not refer to Marcus (thus Tripp, "Original Sequence," 158),

(5) *et quonam modo per numeros et per xxiiii elementa*   cf. 16:2; also
     alphabetae ueritatem affirmare conantur et audent minu-   ch. 14–15
     tatim perexiuimus;

(6) *et quemadmodum conditionem secundum imaginem invi-*   = ch. 17
     sibilis apud eos Pleromatis factam dicunt, et quanta
     de Demiurgo sentiunt ac docent, renuntiauimus;

(7) *et progenitoris ipsorum doctrinam, Simonis magi*   = ch. 23–31
     Samaritani et omnium eorum qui successerunt ei mani-
     festauimus . . .;
     et differentias ipsorum et doctrinas et successiones adno-
     tauimus, quaeque ab eis haereses institutae sunt omnes
     exposuimus,
     et quoniam omnes a Simone haeretici initia sumentes   cf. esp. 23:4, 24:5,
     impia et irreligiosa dogmata induxerunt in hanc uitam   25:3–5, 26:3, 28:2
     ostendimus;

(8) *et redemptionem ipsorum et quomodum initiant eos*   = ch. 21
     qui perficiuntur et adfationes ipsorum et mysteria mani-
     festauimus;

(9) *et quia unus Deus Conditor et quia non postremitatis*   = ch. 22
     fructus et quia neque super illum neque post eum est
     aliquid.

Irenaeus' recapitulation is, on the whole, precise and comprehensive. There are some incongruities: chapters 21–22 are mentioned after chapters 23–31, and the correspondences between items (4) and (5) on this list and the actual contents of Book I are a little weak. It is nevertheless clear that the enumeration of topics given here was written with the actual order of Book I in mind.

Inconsistencies in the Presentation of "the Valentinians"

The two meanings of "the Valentinians"

Irenaeus thus devotes the first part of Book I to a detailed presentation of one particular system. Evidently, this presentation must derive from one of those ὑπομνήματα written by the disciples of Valentinus that Irenaeus claims in the preface to Book I to have come across. The importance attributed by Irenaeus to this "writing"[11]

---

but to the Valentinians in general, as is shown by the plural form *conantur*. It is, however, not unlikely that in 16:1–2 Irenaeus used Marcosian sources as part of the general presentation of Valentinian doctrines in chapters 16–20. On the extent of the Marcosian materials in Book I see also Förster, *Marcus Magus*, 7–15.

[11] The term does not mean "commentary," as it is frequently mistranslated. For

consists in the fact that he conceives and presents it as containing the ὑπόθεσις, or *regula*, that is, the "doctrine," of the Valentinians. We can see this from the preface to Book IV, where he describes this system as *regulam ipsorum* [sc. *hi qui sunt a Valentino*] *quam nos cum omni diligentia in primo libro tradidimus*.[12] This also explains how he can claim in his preface to Book II that by extensively reporting this text he has exposed "all the falsehood" of the Valentinians: with this formulation Irenaeus does not have the contents of the whole of Book I in mind, but rather the exhaustiveness with which he has presented this particular document in chapters 1–9.[13]

But who are these "Valentinians"? Having exposed "all the falsehood of the Valentinians" in the first eight or nine chapters of Book I, he had then proceeded, Irenaeus says, to describe *sententias . . . eorum qui priores exstiterunt*. This must refer to chapters 11–12. The "predecessors" presented in these chapters include Valentinus himself, Secundus, "another prominent teacher among them," "the followers of Ptolemy," and still other variant teachings. These figures and systems do not, it seems, belong to "the Valentinians" in the same sense as those people whose *regula* was described in the first part of the book. In relation to them they primarily have historical interest. This perspective is, in fact, evident in the text itself of these chapters, which begins by introducing Valentinus as "the first" (ὁ μὲν γὰρ πρῶτος . . .) to elaborate his own peculiar doctrine.[14]

Thus we have "the Valentinians," and we have their "predecessors": Valentinus and the others. But at this point Irenaeus involves himself in a contradiction. For, according to his preface to Book II, a second purpose of chapters 11–12 was to demonstrate "that they

---

the general meaning of the word, cf. Smith, *Secret Gospel*, 28. As used by Irenaeus in this context it probably has derogatory connotations.

[12] Also cf. I 8:1 τοιαύτης δὲ τῆς ὑποθέσεως αὐτῶν οὔσης.

[13] This is also the view of RD: "Dans cette phrase, en effet, Irénée parait bien avoir en vue la 'Grande Notice' qui constituait la première partie du Livre I" (II/1, 200).

[14] Identifying the *qui priores exstiterunt* as the older Valentinians summarised in I 11–12 also relieves us of a major difficulty which Tripp, "Original Sequence," deserves credit for having pointed out. Tripp supposes that the "predecessors" must be the heretical "ancestors" of I 23–31, and therefore suggests (a) that that section must originally have immediately followed upon I 12, and (b) that the passage about this section in the preface to Book II (section (7) above) was interpolated by a "repairer" trying to make the preface consistent with the new arrangement of Book I. The interpretation offered here makes these rather complicated suggestions unnecessary.

disagree among themselves" (*discrepantes eos sibimetipsis*). This purpose
is clearly stated in I 11:1, too: "Let us now consider the inconsis-
tent teaching of these people (τὴν τούτων ἄστατον γνώμην). For as
soon as there are two or three of them they do not say the same
things on the same matters, but speak against one another both with
regard to the subject-matters and the words that they use." It is evi-
dent that "they," and "these people" can here no longer refer to
"the Valentinians" in the narrow sense of Irenaeus' contemporary
enemies, but must include the "predecessors" as well. So Irenaeus
conceives of "the Valentinians" in two different ways:

(1) "The Valentinians" = Irenaeus' actual opponents
(2) "The Valentinians" = the whole Valentinian "school"

He does not make this double usage clear, however, either to his
readers or, it seems, to himself. Thus his assertions about the incon-
sistency of the Valentinians appear to be directed as much against
his present opponents as against Valentinianism as a whole, in spite
of the fact that he bases these assertions on the evidence provided
by his survey of what he elsewhere calls the predecessors of those
opponents.[15]

Unity and diversity of "the Valentinians"

There is a further contradiction in Irenaeus' presentation. On the
one hand, he describes the system presented in I 1–9 as *the* doctrine
(ὑπόθεσις, *regula*) of "the Valentinians," as was shown above. On the
other hand, he ridicules, in I 11:1, "these people" for never agree-
ing among themselves in matters of doctrine. Thus we need to ask:
who precisely are, in Irenaeus' mind, *hi qui sunt a Valentino*, about
whom he says in the preface to Book IV that he reported *regulam
ipsorum* so minutely in his first book? Is he thinking of actual oppo-
nents, or of Valentinianism as a whole? I think we have to assume
the same almost systematic looseness of expression here as in the
first case: Irenaeus speaks about the Valentinians in an exclusive
sense as being distinct from their Valentinian predecessors, and in

---

[15] This looseness in Irenaeus' way of speaking about the Valentinians has a par-
allel in his double usage of the designation "Gnostic." The term refers, on the one
hand, to one particular group (the Gnostics of *Haer.* I 29:1–31:1), who are, more-
over, viewed as the predecessors of Valentinus (cf. the beginning of I 11:1). On the
other hand, it is used generically to cover all the heretics, including the Valentinians.

another sense as including these predecessors, and he never makes
a precise distinction between the two ways of speaking about them.
Just as he slides between the inclusive and the exclusive meanings
of "Valentinians" in using his description of the disagreements of the
predecessors of "the Valentinians" to claim inconsistency also on the
part of the latter, so he now correspondingly seems to imply that
the *regula* he attributes to the Valentinians in the exclusive sense of
the word is equally valid for all Valentinians. Evidently, Irenaeus
does not mean that "his" Valentinians (in the narrow sense) had one
common doctrine whereas only their predecessors disagreed among
themselves. The point is rather that he wishes to say two rather
incompatible things at once: first, that the doctrine of the Valentinians,
whatever group you are thinking of, is false; and secondly, that they
can never agree among themselves in matters of doctrine.

Irenaeus' contradictory presentation of the Valentinians as having
both a common (false) doctrine and as constantly disagreeing among
themselves is not due to the nature of Irenaeus' evidence, but to his
polemical construction of his enemies. In elevating one particular
text to the rank of "the" doctrine of the Valentinians, he seems, in
the first place, to be using a polemical shortcut. Just as Valentinianism
as such is the *recapitulatio omnium haeresium* (IV Pref. 2), so that by
overthrowing the Valentinians all heresy is subverted (II 31:1), sim-
ilarly a single systematic text may apparently in turn be claimed to
represent Valentinianism as a whole.[16] Secondly, the notion of a
Valentinian ὑπόθεσις/*regula* is clearly devised by Irenaeus as a coun-
terpart to his own idea of an orthodox κανὼν τῆς ἀληθείας (I 9:4;
regula ueritatis I 15:1). Thus the whole idea of a Valentinian *regula* is a
construction made by Irenaeus to serve his own polemical purposes.

The notion of the constant discord among the heretics is another
polemical construction. The section I 11–12 is preceded by a pas-
sage praising the orthodox faith of the church (9:5–10:2). The truth
of this faith is proven, according to Irenaeus, by the unanimity of
the believers and the unity of the tradition. Thus it is Irenaeus' own
ideal of doctrinal uniformity that causes him to portray the diversity
within Valentinianism as conflictual disagreement, or as confusion.

The preceding discussion has led to the conclusion that there exists
a double inconsistency in Irenaeus' portrayal of the Valentinians. On

---

[16] Cf. II 19:8: one does not need to drink the whole ocean in order to learn
that the water in it is salty.

the one hand, the term "the Valentinians" may refer to a very specific group of people existing in Irenaeus' own time, some of whom he has personally encountered and whom he perceives as an acute threat to his own episcopal authority. On the other hand, he also sees Valentinianism as a wider movement going back to and comprising Valentinus himself. Moreover, Irenaeus depicts the Valentinians as having a common doctrine, but at the same time ridicules them for never agreeing among themselves. Apparently these inconsistencies stem from Irenaeus' attempts to organise disparate data so as to make them all serve the single purpose of his polemical attack. He has a definite target, which is his actual Valentinian opponents, and he wishes to pin down their heresy as precisely as possible, which he does by appointing one of the writings circulating among them to be their "doctrine." But he also possesses other information on Valentinians—additional writings, and oral and written testimonies by non-Valentinian Christians. Rather than letting this diversity weaken the thrust of his polemic against the one "doctrine," he absorbs it into his polemical agenda, using several parallel strategies: *(a)* the variations are defined as representing earlier forms of Valentinianism than the present one; *(b)* the diversity is another proof of falsehood; *(c)* heresy is all basically the same anyway, so that by exposing one variety he is refuting all the others as well.

The "Valentinians" and the "Ptolemaeans"

There is yet another inconsistency in Irenaeus' presentation. The precise group that Irenaeus is concerned with is described in the Preface to Book I as followers of Ptolemy (see above). Thus Irenaeus' "Valentinians" in the narrow sense are followers of Ptolemy, and the model system of I 1–9 comes, as Irenaeus understands it, from this group:

(3) "The Valentinians" = the followers of Ptolemy

On the other hand, however, in I 12:1, in the section about the predecessors of these Ptolemaean Valentinians, Irenaeus reports the doctrine of οἱ δὲ περὶ τὸν Πτολεμαῖον ἐμπειρότεροι (*hi uero qui sunt circa Ptolemaeum scientiores*), and what he tells us here, especially about the Bythos having two "partners," is clearly different from the doctrine contained in the model system.

  It has been suggested that this inconsistency may be resolved if we attribute the model system to Ptolemy himself and that of I 12:1

to one or some of his followers.[17] However, this suggestion, even if it were to be factually true, does not relieve us of the impression of an incongruity *in Irenaeus' presentation*. The initial λέγουσι of I 1:1 can only refer back to the Ptolemaean Valentinians mentioned in the immediately preceding preface, and the plural form is maintained throughout the report on the model system. At the end of I 8:5, on the other hand, the Latin translation adds the words *et Ptolemaeus quidem ita*. Even if we were to accept these words as an authentic part of Irenaeus' text—a problem that does not need consideration for the present purpose—it is evident that Irenaeus is not concerned with making distinctions either between the doctrine of the Ptolemaeans and that of Ptolemy, or between various groups of Ptolemaeans. The model system is the doctrine of the followers of Ptolemy *alias* the currently dangerous Valentinians, and that is all.

It might perhaps be thought that the words οἱ δὲ περὶ τὸν Πτολεμαῖον ἐμπειρότεροι in I 12:1 contain a reference to the Ptolemaeans whose doctrine was set forth in I 1–9, in such a way that we should interpret the passage as speaking about "other Ptolemaeans, who pretend to be even more knowledgeable"—that is, than the Ptolemaeans we heard about before.[18] But it is much more likely that the formulation is intended to place the subsequent presentation of a Ptolemaean system in the context of the variable doctrines reported immediately before, in chapter 11, for the point of the whole catalogue in chapters 11–12 is precisely to demonstrate how each new Valentinian teacher attempts to outdo the others in Gnostic perception:[19]

> I 11:1: ὁ μὲν γὰρ πρῶτος ... Οὐαλεντῖνος ...
> I 11:2: Σεκοῦνδος δὲ ...
> I 11:3: ἄλλος δέ τις, <ὁ καὶ> ἐπιφανὴς διδάσκαλος αὐτῶν, ἐπὶ τὸ ὑψηλότερον καὶ γνωστικώτερον ἐπεκτεινόμενος ...
> I 11:5: ἄλλοι δὲ πάλιν αὐτῶν ... ἵνα τελείων τελειότεροι φανῶσιν ὄντες καὶ γνωστικῶν γνωστικώτεροι.
> I 12:1: οἱ δὲ περὶ τὸν Πτολεμαῖον ἐμπειρότεροι ...

---

[17] Sagnard, *Gnose valentinienne*, 220–24.

[18] This seems to be Hilgenfeld's interpretation: "noch weitere Fortbildner der Lehre des Ptolemäus" (*Ketzergeschichte*, 350). Sagnard too seems to be thinking along these lines, translating "les plus savants parmi les Ptoleméens" (*Gnose valentinienne*, 356, cf. 222, 224). But Sagnard does not distinguish properly between the disagreements between the systems themselves, and the inconsistencies in Irenaeus' presentation of them.

[19] Cf. also Sagnard, *Gnose valentinienne*, 223–24.

I 12:3: *Qui autem prudentiores putantur illorum esse . . .*
I 12:4: πολλὴ δὲ μάχη παρ᾽ αὐτοῖς καὶ περὶ τοῦ σωτῆρος . . .

Thus, Irenaeus is speaking in I 12:1 about "the people around Ptolemy, who pretend to be even more knowledgeable" than the other Valentinians who have just been presented in chapter 11. In so doing, he is apparently oblivious of the fact that he has previously said that the Valentinians whose doctrine is reported in great detail in chapters 1–9 are followers of Ptolemy.

The easiest way to explain this incongruity is by assuming that the designation "Ptolemaean" in I 12:1 does not originate with Irenaeus himself, but was found in a source used by him. In fact the summary way of presenting the different Valentinian systems in I 11–12 gives the impression that the presentation has been adapted from one or more heresiological or doxographic sources. The fact that Irenaeus describes this material as an account of the *predecessors* of his "own" Valentinians also suggests that he found most of it in a source or sources which he could date to the past, as would be the case with works written by known earlier writers. These two chapters, then, form a relatively autonomous section containing independent source materials that have been imperfectly integrated by Irenaeus into his general exposition.

As a matter of fact, the hypothesis has already been put forth long ago that chapters 11–12 are based on an earlier heresiological work, specifically Justin's *Syntagma*, which Irenaeus also seems to have utilised in his presentation of the older heresies in I 23–27.[20] The situation may be a bit more complicated than this. As was mentioned above, Irenaeus may well have had access to several older heresiological works, in addition to original Valentinian writings. Moreover, since Irenaeus presumably was interested in making the most out of his demonstration of the variability and inconsistency of Valentinianism in this section, it is reasonable to assume that he would have used at this point as many as possible of the sources at his disposal. For

---

[20] After Lipsius, *Epiphanius*, 159, had suggested that the section on Valentinus in I 11:1 might have been taken from Justin's work, Heinrici, *Valentinianische Gnosis*, 40–41, argued that the whole of I 11–12 came from that source. Hilgenfeld, *Ketzergeschichte*, 9, 51–56, thought that only I 11:1–3 could come from Justin's *Syntagma*, whereas the information contained in I 11:4–12:4 was more probably based on Irenaeus' own direct sources. Hilgenfeld's view was later accepted by Lipsius ("Valentinus," 1080–81).

these reasons it seems preferable to regard I 11–12 as based on a combination of sources rather than on just one.

The conflicting reports on the "Ptolemaeans"

One problem remains, however: how are we to explain in material terms the discrepancy between the Ptolemaeans of I 1–9 and those of I 12:1. How can both systems be "Ptolemaean"?

In order to solve this problem, the question must be asked on what basis these attributions have been made. One of the things that has been demonstrated by the Nag Hammadi library is that Gnostic systematic treatises were most frequently transmitted anonymously. This is the case not only with such pseudepigrapha as *The Apocryphon of John* but also with tractates that belong to the same genre as the documents used by the heresiologists: the Valentinian tractates NHC I,*5* (*Tri. Trac.*) and XI,*2* (*Val. Exp.*), as well as the untitled non-Valentinian treatise II,*5*. In fact, the heresiologists as well do not normally mention the names of authors in their reports; this is the case with the Valentinian treatise of Hippolytus, *Haer.* VI 29–36, the so-called *Lehrbrief* of Epiphanius, *Pan.* XXXI 5–6, and the variants reported by Irenaeus himself in *Haer.* I 2:3, 11:3.5, 12:3.4. Indeed, this situation can be clearly observed in the way in which Irenaeus reports these variants. After having been able to name the authors of the first two, Valentinus and Secundus, he is then forced to speak only about ἄλλος . . . ἐπιφανὴς διδάσκαλος αὐτῶν (11:3), ἄλλοι (11:5), and *qui autem prudentiores putantur illorum esse* (12:3).[21] In these instances Irenaeus obviously was at a loss to connect his materials with specific names. In view of all this, and because Irenaeus makes no explicit mention of authorship when introducing the system he is reporting in *Haer.* I 1–9, it is probable that, in that case as well, the document he had before him did not carry either a title or the name of its author. It is likely, therefore, that Irenaeus just assumed the system to be the doctrine of his Ptolemaean-Valentinian opponents, because it was from them that he had obtained the document.

Irenaeus says, however, that he had obtained *several* ὑπομνήματα from his opponents. Thus there were other documents circulating among them besides the one he used for I 1–9. And, as we have seen, there is no inherent reason to accept Irenaeus' notion of a sin-

---

[21] Also cf. ἔνιοι δὲ αὐτῶν in I 2:3.

gle authoritative Ptolemaean-Valentinian document or doctrine; this notion is his own polemical construction. Rather, it is reasonable to interpret his information about the several ὑπομνήματα, and about the great variability of Valentinian doctrine, as indications of a certain degree of non-fixity, maybe even liberality, of doctrine among the Valentinians. It is quite possible to imagine that distinct versions of the Valentinian system were tolerated, read with interest, and discussed within the individual communities. There never, in fact, existed a single, canonical version of the Valentinian system, similar, for instance, to that of Mani in Manichaeism. Thus all we can say with some degree of confidence is that the source of *Haer.* I 1–9 was a document circulating among a group of Valentinians who regarded themselves as followers of Ptolemy. But we know nothing for certain either about the author of the document or about the importance accorded to it by this group.

The same situation must have confronted the heresiologists before Irenaeus. The heresiologists in general appear to have had an interest in attaching specific documents of systematic theology to individual heretical leading figures and groups. In doing this they were faced, however, with three problems: first, that a large number of such writings must have been composed and were circulating within and among these groups; secondly, that these documents in most cases probably did not carry the names of their authors; and thirdly, that the Valentinians do not seem to have been very interested in canonising specific texts of this genre. Consequently we have to reckon with a great deal of arbitrariness in the heresiologists' attribution of individual systems and texts to authors and groups, as well as in their assertions about how representative these texts are for these groups.

How, then, can the discrepancy between I 1–9 and I 12:1 be explained? There is in fact more than one possibility. With I 1–9 we can be reasonably certain that this represents a document read within a Ptolemaean group, because of Irenaeus' indications in the Preface to Book I.[22] The piece in I 12:1 derives from an earlier heresiologist reporting what he thought was the doctrine of the Ptolemaeans,

---

[22] The further possibility does exist that the mention of the "followers of Ptolemy" in the Preface to Book I is a later interpolation in Irenaeus' text, as Holzhausen, "Irenäus und die valentinianische Schule," has suggested. But there seems to be no way to corroborate such a hypothesis, and Holzhausen's argument is, as was said above, based on a misunderstanding of the text of the Preface.

but here we have no additional evidence corroborating a link between
doctrine and group; the attribution to the Ptolemaeans may for all
that we know be pure guesswork. On the other hand, it is also quite
conceivable that the document containing this doctrine was indeed
composed within some Ptolemaean community, because of the lib-
eral attitude towards doctrinal variation that seems to have existed
among the Valentinians. Thus the doctrine both may and may not
have existed within one or more Ptolemaean communities in the
period before Irenaeus. A more positive conclusion than this cannot
be reached.

Conclusions

(1) Irenaeus' "Valentinians" are a very restricted group of people
who exist in his own environment and describe themselves as "fol-
lowers of Ptolemy." Valentinus is already a distant figure of the past,
conceived by Irenaeus as a predecessor of the actual "Valentinians."
The situation described by Tertullian seems to be equally valid for
Irenaeus: *ita nusquam iam Valentinus, et tamen Valentiniani, qui per Valentinum*
(*Val.* 4:3).

(2) When denouncing Valentinian variability, however, Irenaeus
speaks of the Valentinians in a wider sense, including the "prede-
cessors." In his presentation of this variability in *Haer.* I 11–12 he
relies, at least in part, on older heresiological writers.

(3) Valentinian treatises usually circulated anonymously, and vari-
ant versions of the system seem to have been tolerated. The here-
siologists' attributions of specific systems to individual authors and
groups are motivated by their polemical (and inconsistent) construc-
tion of heresy as both "a" false doctrine and as something essen-
tially multiform and inconsistent. For these reasons such attributions
are, as a general rule, not trustworthy.

CHAPTER TWO

"VALENTINUS" IN IREN. *HAER.* I 11:1

For the sake of exposition, it will be useful already now to clarify the position assumed in this study with regard to Irenaeus' report on Valentinus' own doctrine in *Haer.* I 11:1. This report appears at the beginning of a section (I 11–12) that aims to reveal the many internal disagreements among the Valentinians:

> (11:1) (*a*) Let us now consider the inconsistent teaching of these people. For as soon as there are two or three of them they do not say the same things on the same matters, but speak against one another both with regard to the subject-matters and the words that they use. The first one, Valentinus, who adapted the principles of the so-called "Gnostic" *hairesis* into his own particular brand of teaching, set forth the following:
>
> (*b*) There is an unnameable Dyad, one part of which is called Ineffable, the other Silence. Then from this first Dyad a second Dyad was projected, one part of which he names Father, the other Truth. From this Tetrad are brought forth Logos and Life, Man and Church, and this is the first Ogdoad. From Logos and Life he says that ten powers were projected, just as we have said before,[1] and from Man and Church twelve, one of which fell away, became deficient, and caused the rest of the affair to happen.
>
> (*c*) He also assumed that there are two Limits, one between Bythos and the rest of the Pleroma, separating the generated aeons from the ungenerated Father, and another cutting off the "Mother" from the Pleroma.
>
> Moreover, Christ was not projected from the aeons in the Pleroma, but once she had ended up on the outside, the Mother gave birth to him, together with a certain shadow, in accordance with her memory of the superior things. And he, being male, cut away the shadow from himself and hastened back into the Pleroma. But the Mother, left alone together with the shadow and emptied of spiritual substance, emitted another son, and this is the Demiurge, whom he also calls the supreme ruler over all those who are subject to him. Along with him, he declared, was projected a left-hand Ruler—just like those false "Gnostics" we shall speak about later on.

---

[1] The cross-reference is to the report on the model system in I 1–9.

(*d*) As for Jesus, he sometimes says that he was projected from the
one who had withdrawn from the "Mother" and had merged again
with the entireties—that is, from Theletos; sometimes from the one
who had hastened back into the Pleroma—that is Christ; and some-
times from Man and Church.

And the Holy Spirit was projected, he says, from Truth, in order
that the aeons might be scrutinised and bear fruit, the Spirit entering
invisibly into them. For this reason the aeons bring forth the plants
of truth.

As was argued in the preceding chapter, it is likely that Irenaeus'
report about the doctrine of Valentinus in this section was taken
over from an older heresiological work. It is also likely that the here-
siologist in question did not have before him a writing with the name
of the author—Valentinus—inscribed on it, and we are led to sus-
pect that the reason for his attribution of the system to Valentinus
was simply the fact that this particular document circulated among
the Valentinians known to that heresiologist. Just as Irenaeus him-
self appointed one particular system text to be "the" doctrine of the
Ptolemaeans, and even of the Valentinians *tout court*, in *Haer.* I 1–9,
we can easily imagine the unknown heresiologist believing (or want-
ing us to believe) that with this document he was in possession of
"the" doctrine of the Valentinians, and by implication of Valentinus
himself.

The passage has not simply been copied by Irenaeus from his
source. He has rewritten parts of it, in order to use it as an illus-
tration of his own point about the disagreements among the
Valentinians. Thus he first (*b*) gives a straightforward reproduction
of "Valentinus'" Pleroma as he found it in his source, but then (*c*)
he proceeds to highlight the differences between "Valentinus" him-
self and the Valentinians who had been presented in I 1–9—differences
as to whether there are one or two Limits, and regarding the birth
of Christ. Here Irenaeus apparently selects from and paraphrases his
source, comparing its teachings with his own presentation of Valentinian
doctrine made in the preceding chapters.[2]

After that he goes on to claim (*d*) that Valentinus himself said
different things (ποτὲ μὲν . . . φησί . . . ποτὲ δὲ . . . ποτὲ δὲ . . .) about

---

[2] Cf. Markschies, *Valentinus*, 369–70. Markschies seems to suggest that Irenaeus
used different sources for (*b*) and (*c*). I find it more likely, however, that in (*c*)
Irenaeus is using the same source, but is adapting it more freely for his own
purposes.

the origin of Jesus. These remarks are rather puzzling. For one thing, of the three variant theories described here, the first two must in fact be identical. "The one who had withdrawn from the 'Mother' and had merged again with the entireties" cannot be distinct from "the one who had hastened back into the Pleroma." These formulations refer to one and the same theory, which was reported by Irenaeus a few lines earlier, that Sophia gave birth to Christ, who abandoned her and returned to the Pleroma.[3] The words "that is, from Theletos" seem like an error, since Theletos never leaves the Pleroma in the systems which use this name for Sophia's aeon partner—on the contrary Sophia's passion implies that she is separated from her partner and from the Pleroma all at once. However, we cannot exclude the possibilities that the first two theories refer to variant Valentinian formulations of the same theory, and that the figure of Theletos may have been accorded a role in some system text or other which is different from what we are told elsewhere.

Another problem is how to explain the very fact that three variant theories are given in what we have in effect interpreted as a report on a report on the doctrine of Valentinus. In Markschies' view, it cannot be maintained that "Irenäus' Darstellung gebe eine einheitliche Quelle wieder, die Valentins Lehre beschrieb."[4] But, of course, the fact that Valentinus' *doctrine* is described as inconsistent does not imply that there must have been more than one source *describing* this inconsistency. It is quite conceivable that this description of variants was already contained in Irenaeus' heresiological source. In fact, it is probable that it did so, for it is difficult to see where else Irenaeus could have picked up these isolated items of information about the doctrine of Valentinus.[5]

---

[3] Cf. Markschies, *Valentinus*, 375n281. See further below, chapter 2.

[4] Markschies, *Valentinus*, 376.

[5] Irenaeus must have had special reasons for attributing these variants to Valentinus. If, however, he had access to manuscripts of texts (purportedly) written by Valentinus himself, it is inconceivable that he would have picked out only these comparatively minor details from them. If, on the other hand, his information came from other Valentinian texts, we would expect him to use it later, in his description of the disagreements among the various Valentinian leaders and groups, and not in a report on Valentinus himself. If it came from several heresiological sources, it is difficult to think of them as containing only this particular piece of information about Valentinus, and nothing else which Irenaeus might have found useful in his exposition. For these reasons it seems most likely that both the variants and their attribution to "Valentinus" were found in the same source as the rest of the report.

Assuming the presence of these variants already in Irenaeus' source
gives us another helpful clue to understanding how that heresiolo-
gist worked. It is clear that the word φησί in this paragraph cannot
easily be understood as referring to a single author, let alone a single
text. It is well known, moreover, that φησί is often used rather vaguely
with an impersonal meaning ("it is said"), or even with a subject in
the plural ("they say").[6] Thus, we do not have to presuppose that
the heresiologist was referring to Valentinus with any intention of
being precise. The Valentinus who is the subject of the φησί here
is rather an eponym for the *hairesis* of Valentinus. Since the φησί
refers back to ὁ . . . Οὐαλεντῖνος at the beginning of the report, we
may go on to assume that this conclusion is applicable to that ini-
tial "Valentinus" as well. "Valentinus" in this section is simply a
name for "the Valentinians" as they were known to the anonymous
heresiologist.

In consequence, Iren. *Haer.* I 11:1 cannot be trusted as a report
on the doctrine of Valentinus himself.[7] The argument that has led
to this conclusion does not, to be sure, prove positively that noth-
ing in the report *can* derive from Valentinus. The only way to prove
that would be through a comparison of the doctrines contained in
the report with other, reliable sources about his teachings. The source
material that can be used for such purposes is, however, very slight.
The few fragments preserved from Valentinus are inconclusive in
this regard.[8] More useful is the testimony of Tertullian, *Val.* 4:2, who
says that, unlike his pupil Ptolemy, who distinguished the aeons by
names and numbers making them personal substances existing out-
side of God, Valentinus had included the aeons in the totality of the
deity himself as thoughts, sentiments and emotions (*in ipsa summa*

---

[6] Cf. Bauer, *Wörterbuch*, s.v. φημί, 1.c.

[7] Previous scholarship has tended to read I 11:1 rather uncritically as a reliable
report on Valentinus' own teachings (for instance, Hilgenfeld, *Ketzergeschichte*, 30;
Foerster, *Von Valentin zu Herakleon*, 97–98; Sagnard, *Gnose valentinienne*, 222–32; Quispel,
"Original Doctrine"; Pétrement, *Separate God*, 368–69; Layton, *Gnostic Scriptures*,
223–27; McGuire, "Valentinus"; Strutwolf, *Gnosis als System*, 32, 33). On the other
hand, the attribution to Valentinus was rejected already by Heinrici, *Valentinianische
Gnosis*, 41–42, and is extensively discussed, with negative conclusions, by Markschies,
Valentinus, 364–79.

[8] Markschies attempts such a comparison (*Valentinus*, 376–79). But in my judge-
ment the fragments are too few and we know too little about their contexts to be
able to affirm on the basis of them what kind of doctrines it would have been
impossible for Valentinus to have taught.

diuinitatis ut sensus et affectus, motus).[9] The pleromatology of Iren. *Haer.* I 11:1 is clearly closer to that described by Tertullian for Ptolemy (*Val.* 7–32) than to what he attributes to Valentinus himself. The incompatibility between these two reports about the Pleroma of Valentinus makes the attribution of *Haer.* I 11:1 to Valentinus highly unlikely.

---

[9] See further below, chapter 3.

THE DOCTRINE OF THEODOTUS

Nothing is known about Theodotus the Valentinian save for[1] what Clement of Alexandria tells us in his work entitled "Excerpts from the [writings] of Theodotus and of the so-called eastern doctrine from the times of Valentinus" (Ἐκ τῶν Θεοδότου καὶ τῆς ἀνατολικῆς καλουμένης διδασκαλίας κατὰ τοὺς Οὐαλεντίνου χρόνους ἐπιτομαί).[2] From the title it can be inferred that Theodotus adhered to the eastern version of Valentinian doctrine,[3] and that he lived in the time of Valentinus himself (or at least whoever wrote the title thought so), that is, a generation or so before Clement. The *Excerpts* is a very important source for the history of Valentinianism, because it contains the only explicit information about eastern Valentinian doctrine offered in the heresiological sources, and allows us to see the outlines of a set of theories that are substantially different from the ones reported by Irenaeus and Hippolytus.

---

[1] The only other mention of him is in Theodoret, *Haer.* I 8, where he is listed among the followers of Valentinus.

[2] The document is included in the only existing manuscript of Clement's works, the *Laur. V 3* of the Biblioteca Laurenziana of Florence, an 11th cent. parchment. There are no particular reasons for doubting its authenticity.

[3] I take the use of kaiv to mean that the excerpts come from Theodotus and from other documents of the eastern school. In fact, this is not an accurate description, partly because section C represents western, not eastern Valentinianism (as we shall see in chapter 7), and partly because in the text itself Clement often attributes his sources to "the Valentinians" generally, indicating that he has no intention of limiting his collection of sources to the eastern form of Valentinianism as the title suggests. It is quite possible, even likely, that the title was not the work of Clement himself, but of some later editor or publisher of Clement's work—one of his friends, or a scholar of an even later generation (cf. Harnack, *Altchr. Lit*, II/2 17–18, following von Arnim; Markschies, "Valentinian Gnosticism," 434). The question of who is responsible for the title is of little significance, however, for assessing its trustworthiness. Whoever formulated it must have known that there were different schools of Valentinianism, and must have possessed information that allowed him to identify Theodotus and other materials in the text as representative of eastern Valentinianism.

Exc. gives the impression of a notebook;[4] it is a rather unsystematic compilation drawn from various sources, interspersed with Clement's own comments. It is clear that it contains excerpts from several Valentinian writings other than those of Theodotus. Theodotus himself is explicitly quoted five times.[5] Six times Clement employs the quotation formula φησί.[6] 10 times, on the other hand, Clement refers to "the Valentinians" in the plural (οἱ ἀπὸ Οὐαλεντίνου, οἱ Οὐαλεντινιανοί),[7] 13 times he uses φασί,[8] and five times λέγουσιν.[9]

Scholars have traditionally divided the whole of *Exc.* into four parts: 1–28 (A), 29–43:1 (B), 43:2–65 (C), and 66–86 (D).[10] Most importantly, section C stands out as an apparently continuous excerpt from a single source. This section also contains no quotation formulae. It has long been noted that section C is very similar to Iren. *Haer.* I 4:5–7:1.[11] Further attempts to establish source-critical distinctions are fraught with difficulties. To identify the passages deriving from Theodotus, the five explicit citations naturally serve as a guide, though it is often difficult to determine precisely the extent of the quotation. It is quite possible that other passages too may come from Theodotus, especially among those that are quoted with φησί, but this remains uncertain.[12] For the present purpose of reconstructing some of the main features of Theodotus' doctrine I shall therefore content myself with commenting on the five passages in question, with the addition of one of the φησί-passages for reasons that will become clear presently.

---

[4] Casey, *Excerpta*, 4.

[5] 22:7, 26:1, 30:1, 32:2, 35:1.

[6] 1:1, 22:1, 25:1, 38:2, 41:1, 67:1.

[7] 2:1, 6:1, 16, 17:1, 21:1, 23:1, 24, 25:1, 28, 37.

[8] 22:4, 29, 31:2, 32:1, 33:3, 33:4, 35:4, 36:1, 41:2, 75:1, 78:1, 79, 81:1.

[9] 6:2, 7:5, 22:5, 30:1, 43:1.

[10] This goes back to Heinrici, in 1871 (*Valentinianische Gnosis*, 92). Also cf. O. Dibelius, "Studien I," 240–42; Sagnard, *Gnose valentinienne*, 521–26; id. *Extraits*, 28–29.

[11] The first, to my knowledge, to point this out was Heinrici (*Valentinianische Gnosis*, 92; and then again by O. Dibelius, in 1908 ("Studien I"), who was apparently unaware that his discovery was common knowledge to the previous generation of specialists (cf. also Lipsius, "Valentinus," 1081).

[12] Casey's list of excerpts that may be assigned to Theodotus (*Excerpta*, 5), and his subsequent reconstruction of Theodotus' system (ibid. 16–22), are too optimistic, in my opinion.

The Spiritual Body of the Saviour

The very first excerpt in *Exc.* reads as follows:

Πάτερ, φησί, παρατίθεμαί σοι εἰς χεῖρας τὸ πνεῦμά μου. ὃ προέβαλε, φησί, σαρκίον τῷ λόγῳ ἡ Σοφία, τὸ πνευματικὸν σπέρμα, τοῦτο στολισάμενος κατῆλθεν ὁ σωτήρ. ὅθεν ἐν τῷ πάθει τὴν Σοφίαν παρατίθεται τῷ πατρί, ἵνα αὐτὴν ἀπολάβῃ παρὰ τοῦ πατρός, καὶ μὴ κατασχεθῇ ἐνταῦθα ὑπὸ τῶν στερίσκειν δυναμένων. οὕτως πᾶν πνευματικὸν σπέρμα, τοὺς ἐκλεκτούς, διὰ τῆς προειρημένης φωνῆς παρατίθεται.

(1:1) "Father," he quotes, "into thy hands I commit my spirit" [Luke 23:46]. What Sophia brought forth, he says, as flesh for the Logos, namely the spiritual seed, *that* the Saviour put on when he descended. (2) Therefore at his passion he commits Sophia to the Father in order that he may receive her back from the Father, and that she may not be held back here by those who have the power to plunder her. So he commits the entire spiritual seed, the elect, by means of the utterance quoted above.

This excerpt deals with the incarnation, the passion, and the spiritual seed. To understand what it says, a very important principle of Valentinian soteriology must be grasped: when the Saviour descended into the cosmos, he put on as his body, or flesh, the spiritual seed of Sophia. The mythological narrative that explains this can be found in all the systematic accounts of the Valentinian system. In condensed form it goes as follows:

When the Saviour was sent to the fallen Sophia, she produced spiritual offspring in joyful response to the vision she received of the Saviour and the Pleroma. This offspring is the spiritual seed. Its members are images of the aeons of the Pleroma, and they reside, together with Sophia herself, in a region below the Pleroma, but above the cosmos (which was created later). When the Saviour eventually descended into the cosmos, the spiritual seed constituted his body. Thus they were incarnated concorporeally with the Saviour.[13]

In the present passage, the final words of Jesus on the cross are interpreted in the light of this doctrine. On the cross, the Saviour gave up his spirit, committing it to the Father. That is to say, he left behind "Sophia"—metonymically identified here with her spiri-

---

[13] This theory must be stated here in the form of a postulate for the time being. It would be impractical to demonstrate it by means of other texts at this point, since those texts themselves require extensive commentary. I shall return to the theme of the body/flesh of the Saviour many times in the course of this study.

tual seed—while he himself returned to the Pleroma. In consequence, the spiritual seed remains (in the form of the church) for a while on earth, protected by the Father from the powers of the cosmos.

The excerpt is not explicitly attributed to Theodotus, but as it is the first excerpt, coming directly after the title, it is particularly likely that the φησί refers to him in this case.

A decisive argument in favour of this attribution, however,[14] is the fact that the same doctrine appears in 26:1:

τὸ ὁρατὸν τοῦ Ἰησοῦ ἡ Σοφία καὶ ἡ ἐκκλησία ἦν τῶν σπερμάτων τῶν διαφερόντων, ἣν ἐστολίσατο διὰ τοῦ σαρκίου, ὥς φησιν ὁ Θεόδοτος· τὸ δὲ ἀόρατον <τὸ> ὄνομα, ὅπερ ἐστὶν ὁ υἱὸς ὁ μονογενής.	The visible part of Jesus was Sophia and the church of the superior seed, which he put on through the flesh, as Theodotus says. But the invisible part was the Name, which is the only-begotten Son.

The perspective is slightly different: whereas 1:1–2 spoke about the Saviour's body in the context of the events on the cross, the present passage comments on the double nature of the Saviour. However, the description of the Saviour's body is the same. The Saviour's flesh is Sophia ≈ the church of the spiritual/superior seed, which he put on (στολίζειν) when he descended into the world. The second sentence refers to the Saviour inside the flesh as "the Name." This alludes to his divine nature as the bearer and personification of the Father's Name—an important theme in Valentinianism that need not be discussed in the present context.

The Saviour Himself Needed Redemption

Theodotus is also quoted in 22:7, which speaks about Jesus having himself needed redemption. This comes at the end of a section (21–22) that deals with the baptism of the angels for "our" sake (1 Cor 15:29). According to the theory expounded in this section, the seed of Sophia was divided into angels/males, who remained with her, and "us"/the superior seed/females, who are the earthly humans. When the Saviour came down to earth, he brought along with him the angels, and they were baptised together with him in the Jordan, receiving the Name just as he did. When we are baptised,

---

[14] Cf. Casey, *Excerpta*, 6; Festugière, "Notes," 193.

we are united with our respective angels and receive the Name as well, through them. The section ends as follows:

ἐβαπτίσαντο δὲ ἐν ἀρχῇ οἱ ἄγγελοι ἐν λυτρώσει τοῦ ὀνόματος τοῦ ἐπὶ τὸν Ἰησοῦν ἐν τῇ περιστερᾷ κατελθόντος καὶ λυτρωσαμένου αὐτόν. ἐδέησεν δὲ λυτρώσεως καὶ τῷ Ἰησοῦ, ἵνα μὴ κατασχεθῇ τῇ ἐννοίᾳ ᾗ ἐνετέθη τοῦ ὑστερήματος, προ{σ}ερχόμενος διὰ τῆς Σοφίας, ὥς φησιν ὁ Θεόδοτος.

(22:6) For the angels were baptised in the beginning, in the redemption of the Name that came down upon Jesus in the dove and redeemed him. (7) For redemption was necessary even for Jesus, in order that he should not be detained by the "thought of deficiency" in which he found himself when he came forth through Sophia, as Theodotus says.

In this case it is not clear how much of the text should be attributed to Theodotus. The section as a whole is introduced in 21:1 as a report on Valentinian doctrine in general (φασὶν οἱ Οὐαλεντινιανοί), and not specifically as a quotation from Theodotus. This is not decisive, however, since it is conceivable that Clement may be using Theodotus to describe what he believes to be common Valentinian doctrine and specifies the name of the author only when he wishes to highlight a direct quotation. More serious is the apparent incompatibility of the ideas in this section with those found in 1:1–2 and 26:1. In 21–22 "the superior seed" is a name for the incarnate human spirituals, who are distinct from the "angels" that the Saviour brought down with him to earth. In the two Theodotian passages, on the other hand, "the superior seed" is what the Saviour brings down, in the form of his body. These are therefore two different versions of the same general soteriological theme, coming, it would seem, from two distinct sources.

In the part quoted above, 22:6 appears to belong to the previous description of the baptism of the angels. The phrase "in the beginning" does not refer to a protological event,[15] but to the paradigmatic prefiguration of baptismal initiation represented by the angels when they shared in the baptism of Jesus and received the Name together with him. 22:7, on the other hand, gives the impression of an added comment that may well have been inserted from a different source, though it must remain somewhat unclear how much of it is actual quotation from Theodotus and how much is paraphrase or extrapolation formulated by Clement.

---

[15] Thus Orbe, *Cristología*, I 484n198.

From Theodotus comes in any case the idea that the Saviour "came forth through" Sophia when he descended into the cosmos—that is, he passed through the sphere of Sophia that lies between the Pleroma and the cosmos. (Here, as we have seen, he also put on his "flesh.") Sophia, as well as the sphere where she dwells, is still in a state of imperfection deriving from the "thought" that initially led to her separation from the Pleroma, that is, her passionate presumption when she acted all by herself, as is described in the various Valentinian systems.[16] The Saviour had to enter this realm of imperfection in order to accomplish his mission. The idea that he too was in need of redemption seems to follow as a logical inference, and it is therefore probable that this stood in Clement's Theodotian source as well, though perhaps not with the exact words used by Clement.

Exc. 21–22 are closely related, moreover, to 35–36. For present purposes it will suffice to comment on the first few lines:

ὁ Ἰησοῦς, τὸ φῶς ἡμῶν, ὡς λέγει ὁ ἀπόστολος, ἑαυτὸν κενώσας—τουτέστιν ἐκτὸς τοῦ ὅρου γενόμενος, κατὰ Θεόδοτον—ἐπεὶ ἄγγελος ἦν τοῦ πληρώματος τοὺς ἀγγέλους τοῦ διαφέροντος σπέρματος συνεξήγασεν ἑαυτῷ. καὶ αὐτὸς μὲν τὴν λύτρωσιν, ὡς ἀπὸ πληρώματος προελθών, εἶχεν· τοὺς δὲ ἀγγέλους εἰς διόρθωσιν τοῦ σπέρματος ἤγαγεν.	(35:1) Jesus, our light, as the apostle says, "emptied himself" [Phil 2:7]—that is, he went outside of the Limit, according to Theodotus—and, being an angel from the Pleroma, brought together with him the angels of the superior seed. (2) As for himself, he possessed the redemption, since he came forth from the Pleroma; the angels, however, he brought in order to set right the seed.

This is the same doctrine as in 21–22: Jesus brought with him the angels in order to save us, the superior seed. The quotation from Theodotus seems to be restricted to the gloss on the word κενώσας from Phil 2:7: that Jesus "emptied himself" means that he went outside the Pleroma, that is, beyond the Limit that encloses the transcendent realm. Notable, however, is the statement that Jesus possessed the redemption, which appears to contradict what was said in 22:7 about Jesus himself needing to be redeemed. The non-Theodotian source thus seems to take a different position than Theodotus on

---

[16] Cf. Sagnard, *Extraits*, 103n6. The "thought" is not personified here, as Foerster, *Gnosis*, I 225n3, asserts.

this issue, though this conclusion is not absolutely compelling.[17] Of source-critical interest is also the fact that Clement uses the quotation formula φασίν twice in this section (35:4, 36:1). This usage should be compared with the words φασὶν οἱ Οὐαλεντινιανοί in 22:1 and shows that Clement is reporting Valentinian doctrine, not Theodotus in particular.

The remark cited from Theodotus about Jesus going outside the Pleroma seems to belong in the same context as the statement in 22:7, also from Theodotus, about Jesus entering the deficient realm of Sophia. These ideas are linked in turn with the theory that Jesus himself was in need of redemption: having emptied himself of his pleromatic nature, and entered the realm of deficiency, Jesus needed to be redeemed. Although it cannot be ascertained that the remark in 22:6, about the Name that came down and redeemed Jesus at his baptism, came from Clement's Theodotian source, it is in any case a plausible assumption that it is in accordance with Theodotus' position, since "redemption" ([ἀπο]λύτρωσις) is generally associated with baptism in Valentinianism, and no other event in Jesus' life, including the crucifixion, is more likely to have been regarded as the event at which Jesus' redemption took place.

Jesus' need of redemption and his reception of it at baptism must therefore have been part of Theodotus' eastern Valentinian doctrine.

Christ as Sophia's Son

In the familiar versions of the Valentinian system reported by Irenaeus and Hippolytus, Sophia is split in two as a result of her passion. One part of her is saved by Christ, who has been collectively produced for this purpose by the remaining aeons, and is brought back into the Pleroma. Her other half is left on the outside. She is called "the lower Sophia," Achamoth, or Enthumesis. Theodotus, however, gives a different version of the myth of the separation:

---

[17] The theory could be, for instance, that Jesus, unlike the angels, already possessed the redemption in so far as he belonged to the Pleroma, but left it behind when he "emptied himself" and so needed to be redeemed once more. In fact, *Gos. Phil.* asserts that "he who had been redeemed was redeemed anew" (71:2–3).

ἐν πληρώματι οὖν, ἑνότητος οὔσης, ἕκαστος τῶν αἰώνων ἴδιον ἔχει πλήρωμα, τὴν συζυγίαν. ὅσα οὖν ἐκ συζυγίας, φασί, προέρχεται, πληρώματά ἐστιν· ὅσα δὲ ἀπὸ ἑνός, εἰκόνες. ὅθεν ὁ Θεόδοτος τὸν Χριστὸν, ἐξ ἐννοίας προελθόντα τῆς Σοφίας, εἰκόνα τοῦ πληρώματος ἐκάλεσεν. οὗτος δέ, καταλείψας τὴν μητέρα, ἀνελθὼν εἰς τὸ πλήρωμα, ἐκράθη, ὥσπερ τοῖς ὅλοις, οὕτω δὲ καὶ τῷ παρακλήτῳ. υἱόθετος μέντοι γέγονεν ὁ Χριστὸς, ὡς πρὸς τὰ πληρώματα ἐκλεκτὸς γενόμενος καὶ πρωτότοκος τῶν ἐνθάδε πραγμάτων.

(32:1) In the Pleroma, where there is unity, each of the aeons has its own pleroma, its syzygy. Whatever goes forth from a syzygy, they say, is a pleroma. But whatever goes forth from one single is an image. (2) That is why Theodotus called Christ, who issued from the thought of Sophia, an image of the Pleroma. (3) He, however, left behind his mother, entered the Pleroma, and mingled with the Entireties, and thus also with the Paraclete.[18] (33:1) Christ thus became an adopted son, because with respect to the pleromas he became "elect" and "first-born" of the things there.

The focus in these excerpts is not on the account of the separation as such, but on Theodotus' designation of Christ as an εἰκών of the Pleroma. That is why Clement begins with an explanation of the general distinction between "pleroma" and "image." This part of the text (32:1) probably does not come from Theodotus but from another Valentinian source (cf. φασί). Then follows the reference to Theodotus' account of the origin of Christ: Christ is Sophia's son, issued from her ἔννοια. This last term can only allude to her presumptuous desire to understand, or produce, on her own as a solitary aeon. (Cf. the "thought of deficiency" in 22:7.) Christ, however, returned to the Pleroma and was accepted as an adopted "son"—that is, although he originated as an "image," the status of "pleroma" was conferred on him through an act of adoption. In this way he became the prototypical redeemed.

The most important element for our purposes is the fact that Theodotus has a distinct version of the myth of the separation. Instead of a split producing two Sophias, the division takes place between Sophia herself, who remains outside the Pleroma, and Christ, her son, who was reabsorbed into it.[19]

---

[18] For "the Paraclete" cf. *Exc.* 23, quoted below.

[19] Contrary to what is asserted by Casey (*Excerpta*, 16n2), and Sagnard (*Gnose valentinienne*, 540), there are not two Sophias in *Exc.* 1–43:1, only one. The statements that Sophia is "persuaded" (31:2), and that the other aeons "show compassion" with her in order that she may be set right (30:2), do not imply (*pace* Sagnard) that

The same doctrine is found in another excerpt:

τὸν παράκλητον οἱ ἀπὸ Οὐαλεντίνου τὸν Ἰησοῦν λέγουσιν, ὅτι πλήρης τῶν αἰώνων ἐλήλυθεν, ὡς ἀπὸ τοῦ ὅλου προελθών. Χριστὸς γάρ, καταλείψας τὴν προβαλοῦσας αὐτὸν Σοφίαν, εἰσελθὼν εἰς τὸ πλήρωμα, ὑπὲρ τῆς ἔξω καταλειφθείσης Σοφίας ᾐτήσατο τὴν βοήθειαν, καὶ ἐξ εὐδοκίας τῶν αἰώνων Ἰησοῦς προβάλλεται παράκλητος τῷ παρελθόντι αἰῶνι.

(23:1) The Valentinians call Jesus the "Paraclete" because he came forth, full of the aeons, as one who proceeded from the Entirety. (2) For Christ, leaving behind Sophia who had brought him forth and entering the Pleroma, sought help on behalf of Sophia who had been left outside, and by the good pleasure of the aeons Jesus was brought forth, a Paraclete for the aeon who had transgressed.

This report is attributed to "the Valentinians," not to Theodotus. There is no discernible difference, however, from the doctrine presented in 32:3, and it is possible that Clement is here using Theodotus to represent the Valentinians in general.

The same applies to the subsequent portions of 33:

Χριστοῦ, φασί, τὸ ἀνοίκειον φυγόντος <καὶ> συσταλέντος εἰς τὸ πλήρωμα, ἐκ τῆς μητρῴας γενομένου ἐννοίας, ἡ μήτηρ αὖθις τὸν τῆς οἰκονομίας προηγάγετο ἄρχοντα, εἰς τύπον τοῦ φυγόντος αὐτήν, κατ᾽ ἐπιπόθησιν αὐτοῦ, κρείττονος ὑπάρχοντος, ὃς ἦν τύπος τοῦ πατρὸς τῶν ὅλων. διὸ καὶ ἥττων γίνεται, ὡς ἂν ἐκ πάθους τῆς ἐπιθυμίας συνεστώς. ἐμυσάχθη μέντοι ἐνιδοῦσα τὴν ἀποτομίαν αὐτοῦ, ὥς φασιν αὐτοί.

(33:3) When Christ, they say, left behind that which was foreign to him and was drawn back into the Pleroma, after he had come into being from the Mother's thought, the Mother again brought forth the Ruler of the *oikonomia*, in the likeness of the one who had left her and as a result of her longing for him—for he had a superior nature, since he was a likeness of the Father of the Entireties. (4) The Ruler came, in consequence, to be inferior, since he originated from the passion of desire. She was disgusted at him when she saw his roughness [*lit.* "his cut-off nature"], as they say.

---

she (i.e., the "upper Sophia") is restored to the Pleroma. (In addition, Sagnard's translation of πεῖσις in 31:2 as "persuasion," rather than "passion," is highly dubious.) Heinrici (*Valentinianische Gnosis*, 125) and C. Barth (*Interpretation*, 9–10) were right on this point, though Casey is correct in criticising Heinrici's further contention that the Sophia of *Exc.* did not fall. Cf. also Stead, "Sophia," 85.

Again, the first part of 33:3 displays the same doctrine, though it is not specifically attributed to Theodotus but to the Valentinians generally (φασί; ὥς φασιν αὐτοί). The section could come from Theodotus but then again it may also have been taken from an anonymous Valentinian document. (In consequence we also do not know if Theodotus is the author of the interesting remarks that follow about the origin of the Ruler of the *oikonomia*.)

The Suffering of the Deity (?)

The final quotation from Theodotus, in 30:1–2, is another whose precise extent is very difficult to determine. It comes in a section where Clement expresses his indignation over a Valentinian claim that the Father "suffered"[20] by allowing Silence to grasp a part of himself:

εἶτα, ἐκλαθόμενοι τῆς δόξης τοῦ θεοῦ, παθεῖν αὐτὸν λέγουσιν ἀθέως. ὃ γὰρ συνεπάθησεν ὁ Πατήρ, στερεὸς ὢν τῇ φύσει, φησὶν ὁ θεόδοτος, καὶ ἀνένδοτος, ἐνδόσιμον ἑαυτὸν παρασχών, ἵνα ἡ Σιγὴ τοῦτο καταλάβῃ, πάθος ἐστίν. ἡ γὰρ συμπάθεια, πάθος τινὸς διὰ πάθος ἑτέρου.

(30:1) Then, disregarding the glory of God, they impiously say that he suffered. For the fact that the Father showed compassion (although he is, Theodotus says, solid and immovable), when he handed himself over so that Silence could grasp this—that is passion. (2) For compassion is passion experienced through the passion of another.

The inference from compassion to passion is made by Clement himself and is polemical. λέγουσιν indicates that he intends to be reporting Valentinian doctrine generally. The quotation from Theodotus may be no more than the words στερεὸς (τῇ φύσει) καὶ ἀνένδοτος describing the Father. The possibility cannot be excluded, however, that more of the text derives from, or is based on, Theodotus, including the idea of the Father's compassion.

---

[20] Clement himself, of course, holds that God is ἀπαθής, cf. Lilla, *Clement*, 110–11.

CONCLUSIONS

According to Theodotus, a proponent of eastern Valentinian doctrine,
(1) the body, or flesh, of Jesus, the Saviour, was spiritual, composed
of the spiritual seed of Sophia, and co-extensive with Sophia herself.
(2) He also taught that the Saviour himself was in need of redemp-
tion, which he acquired through his baptism. (3) When Sophia was
divided, as a result of her passion, her perfect part that re-entered
the Pleroma was Christ, her son. (4) Theodotus may have taught
that the deity "suffered" in one way or another.

    These conclusions will have significance for the following investi-
gation into the various forms of Valentinianism.

THE TWO "SCHOOLS"

As we saw in chapter 3, the full title of *Exc.* describes Theodotus as a follower of the eastern school of Valentinianism. The fact that Valentinianism was divided into an eastern and a western "school" is attested by other ancient authors.

Tertullian's Testimony

Tertullian, *Val.* 11:2, states that the doctrine of Valentinus is split into two schools and two "chairs" (*duae scholae . . . duae cathedrae*).[1] He offers no information as to what the difference between the two "schools" consisted in,[2] but simply refers to the division as a matter of common knowledge.

This brief remark can be supplemented by the information given in another passage of the same work:

> (4:1) Thus we know very well their origin, and we know why we call them "Valentinians," although they do not seem to be so. For they have departed from their founder, but the origin is not the least wiped out even if it is heavily transformed—a transformation is in itself a proof. . . .
>
> (2) Having turned against the truth so as to fight it, Valentinus came across the seed of some ancient theory and charted the way for his snake to follow. Thereafter Ptolemy embarked on it, distinguishing the aeons by names and numbers into personal substances located outside God, whereas Valentinus had included them in the totality of the deity himself as thoughts, sentiments and emotions. From there Heracleon

---

[1] Tertullian makes this remark sarcastically after having recounted (from Iren. *Haer.* I 2:5) how the harmony of the Pleroma was restored by Christ and the Holy Spirit after the fall of Sophia: *et ab eius officii societate duae scholae protinus, duae cathedrae, inauguratio quaedam diuidendae doctrinae Valentini.*

[2] The point of the remark is the contrast between the harmony that Christ and the Holy Spirit are supposed to have accomplished together (*procurare concinnationem*), and the actual division of the Valentinians. It is hardly permissible to interpret the remark as an allusion to different views about the birth of Christ, or the identity of the Holy Spirit, as is suggested by Fredouille, *Tertullien: Contre les Valentiniens*, 259.

too traced certain paths, and Secundus and Marcus the magician. (3)
Theotimus concerned himself a great deal with the images in the Law.
Thus no more Valentinus, only Valentinians, caused by Valentinus.
These days only Axionicus in Antioch respects the memory of Valentinus
by observing the full range of his doctrines.

In this passage there is no mention of two schools. The emphasis
lies on how the pupils of Valentinus have deviated from the mas-
ter's original teaching. It is nevertheless suggested that a serious divi-
sion exists between Axionicus in Antioch, who is said to have remained
faithful to Valentinus, and the others, who did not.

Hippolytus' Testimony

More information about the two schools is provided by Hippolytus,
Haer. VI 35:5–7. After having presented the birth of Jesus and the
nature of Jesus' body in accordance with the document he is using as
his main source for Valentinian doctrine, Hippolytus then continues:

περὶ τούτου <οὖν> ζήτησις μεγάλη
ἐστὶν αὐτοῖς καὶ σχισμάτων καὶ
διαφορᾶς ἀφορμή· καὶ γέγονεν ἐντεῦθεν
ἡ διδασκαλία αὐτῶν διῃρημένη,
καὶ καλεῖται ἡ μὲν ἀνατολική τις
διδασκαλία κατ᾽ αὐτούς, ἡ δὲ
Ἰταλιωτική. οἱ μὲν <οὖν> ἀπὸ τῆς
Ἰταλίας, ὧν ἐστιν Ἡρακλέων καὶ
Πτολεμαῖος, ψυχικόν φασι τὸ σῶμα
τοῦ Ἰησοῦ γεγονέναι, καὶ διὰ τοῦτο
ἐπὶ τοῦ βαπτίσματος τὸ πνεῦμα ὡς
περιστερὰ κατελήλυθε, τουτέστιν ὁ
λόγος ὁ τῆς μητρὸς ἄνωθεν τῆς Σοφίας,
καὶ γέγωνε τῷ ψυχικῷ, καὶ ἐνήγερκεν
αὐτὸν ἐκ νεκρῶν. . . .

οἱ δ᾽ αὖ ἀπὸ τῆς ἀνατολῆς λέγουσιν,
ὧν ἐστιν Ἀξιόνι(κο)ς καὶ Ἀρδησιάνης,
ὅτι πνευματικὸν ἦν τὸ σῶμα τοῦ
σωτῆρος· πνεῦμα γὰρ ἅγιον ἦλθεν ἐπὶ
τὴν Μαρίαν, τουτέστιν ἡ Σοφία, καὶ
ἡ δύναμις τοῦ ὑψίστου, ἡ δημιουργικὴ
τέχνη, ἵνα διαπλασθῇ τὸ ὑπὸ τοῦ
πνεύματος τῇ Μαρίᾳ δοθέν.

(VI 35:5) Concerning this there is a
great dispute among them—a cause
of dissension and division. Conse-
quently, their teaching is divided and
the one is called among them the
eastern doctrine, the other the Italian.
(6) Those from Italy—and to this
group Heracleon and Ptolemy
belong—say that the body of Jesus
was psychic and that because of this
the Spirit came down at his baptism
as a dove—that is the Logos of
Sophia, the mother above. It joined
the psychic, and raised him from the
dead. . . .

(7) Those from the east—to whom
Axionicus and Ardesianes belong—
affirm that the body of the Saviour
was spiritual. For there came upon
Mary the Holy Spirit—that is
Sophia—and the power of the Most
High—the art of creation—in order
that that which was given to Mary
by the Spirit might be given shape.

In this passage we are told about two "teachings" (διδασκαλίαι): one "Italian," the other "eastern." It thus provides confirmation of the terminology used in the title to *Exc.* Moreover, Axionicus is mentioned as a proponent of eastern Valentinianism. This is consistent with Tertullian, who describes, as we saw, "Axionicus in Antioch" as the only pupil of Valentinus who remained faithful to his original teachings.

We are also informed about the doctrinal difference between the two schools on at least one point: according to Italian doctrine the body of Jesus was psychic, while the eastern school affirmed that it was spiritual. The significance of this issue will be dealt with presently. Before that, however, another piece in the jigsaw puzzle may be placed.

Valentinus on the Saviour's Body

In *De carne Christi* 10:1, Tertullian refers to the Valentinians as affirming that the flesh of Christ is of a psychic nature (*qui carnem Christi animalem affirmant*). Later in that work, however, he mentions that Valentinus taught that the flesh of Christ was spiritual (*carnem Christi spiritalem comminisci*, 15:1). In fact, this agrees with what Hippolytus reports as eastern Valentinian doctrine, as well as with Tertullian's statement in *Val.* 4:3 about the fidelity of Axionicus in Antioch to Valentinus' original teachings.[3]

This testimony suggests that the doctrine that the Saviour's body was spiritual is the older and more original one, and that the western position represents a later deviation. This is in fact the case, as will be confirmed, I believe, in the following discussion.

What is the Saviour's Body?

As we saw in chapter 3, Theodotus speaks about a spiritual body of the Saviour. Hippolytus' testimony about the difference between the eastern and the Italian schools is thus confirmed.[4] Once we start to analyse Hippolytus' text in the light of Theodotus, however, matters become more complicated.

---

[3] Cf. Mahé, *Tertullien: La chair du Christ*, 50–53, 389.
[4] Cf. already Heinrici, *Valentinianische Gnosis*, 106–7.

In Theodotus, the body, or the flesh, of the Saviour is the spir-
itual seed of Sophia which he "puts on" at his descent. That seed
is the same as the church, the elect. Thus the notion of the body
is *ecclesiological*:[5] when Theodotus, in *Exc.* 1:1, speaks about the flesh
of the Logos, he is combining Johannine Logos Christology with
Pauline ecclesiology. In Hippolytus, on the other hand, the ecclesi-
ological dimension is missing altogether. Instead, the doctrine is
explained as a theory about the conception of Jesus by Mary, with
reference to Luke 1:35.

The idea that the church, as the body of the Saviour, is pre-exis-
tent, and that it clothed the Saviour during his incarnation and
descent into the cosmos, is not an easy one to grasp. It is never-
theless a fundamental idea of Valentinian soteriology, as will be seen
repeatedly in this study.

Now for a brief look at a different version of the body of the
Saviour. In Iren. *Haer.* I 6:1 we find the following account:

ὧν γὰρ ἤμελλε σῴζειν, τὰς ἀπαρχὰς αὐτὸν εἰληφέναι φάσκουσιν, ἀπὸ μὲν τῆς Ἀχαμὼθ τὸ πνευματικὸν, ἀπὸ δὲ τοῦ δημιουργοῦ ἐνδεδύσεσθαι τὸν ψυχικὸν Χριστόν, ἀπὸ δὲ τῆς οἰκονομίας περιτεθεῖσθαι σῶμα, ψυχικὴν ἔχον οὐσίαν, κατεσκευασμένον δὲ ἀρρήτῳ τέχνῃ πρὸς τὸ καὶ ὁρατὸν καὶ ψηλαφητὸν καὶ παθητὸν γενέσθαι.	For they maintain that he received the first-fruits of those whom he intended to save; from Achamoth he acquired the spiritual, from the Demiurge he put on the psychic Christ, from the *oikonomia* he was endowed with a body which had psy-chic substance, but was so constructed by ineffable art that it was visible, tangible, and capable of suffering.

Here, the body is much more complex than in Theodotus. It has
three components—not only the spiritual one from Achamoth (cor-
responding to the spiritual seed of Sophia in Theodotus), but two
psychic components as well: the psychic Christ, son of the Demiurge,
and the psychic substance of the *oikonomia*, that is, a substance proper
to the cosmic realm. This version represents western Valentinianism.[6]
We observe that the text in Irenaeus contains a discrepancy with
regard to Hippolytus' report in so far as the body is not simply psy-
chic, but psychic *and* spiritual. Most important at the moment, how-
ever, is the principle that the body is composed of the "first-fruits"

---

[5] Cf. Pagels, "Views of Christ's Passion," 277; Thomassen and Painchaud, *Traité tripartite*, 13–16.

[6] See below, chapter 6.

of the ones he came to save. What exactly is meant by the first-
fruits is somewhat obscure, but the principle itself is clear: the com-
position of the body of the Saviour is a function of his salvific mission.
In Theodotus the object of salvation is the spiritual seed, the church
of the elect; in Irenaeus' system the Saviour came to save the psy-
chics *as well as* the spirituals.

The Inaccuracy of Hippolytus

We must now take a closer look at Hippolytus' report on the two
schools. Hippolytus tells us not only about the divergence between
the schools with regard to the *nature* of the Saviour's body. He also
offers an *explanation* of how they thought the body was put together:

The western view: "At his baptism the Spirit came down as a dove—
                    that is, the Logos of the Mother above, Sophia.
                    It joined the psychic, and raised him from the
                    dead."

The eastern view: "For there came upon Mary the Holy Spirit—
                    that is Sophia—and 'the power of the Most High'
                    [Luke 1:35]—the art of creation—in order that
                    what was given to Mary by the Spirit might be
                    given shape."

According to the western view, as Hippolytus portrays it, Jesus was
born with a psychic body, and a spiritual component came down
and joined with Jesus when he was baptised. According to the east-
ern view, on the other hand, the Saviour's body was spiritual even
in Mary's womb. But Hippolytus' testimony is inaccurate and shows
a lack of understanding. The inaccuracy is evident already in his
description of the eastern doctrine. From what Hippolytus says, it
would appear that, according to this doctrine, the body was not sim-
ply spiritual but had a psychic component too, namely the "shape"
(διαπλασθῇ) added by the Demiurge.[7]

---

[7] Orbe, *Cristología*, I 339–40, takes Hippolytus' description of the eastern doc-
trine to mean that either "the power of the Most High" (which Orbe, quite improb-
ably, understands as the Logos), or both parts of the body came down during Jesus'
baptism. But this is an extremely forced reading of the text. In consequence, his
interpretation of the difference between the two schools (340–42) fails to hit the
mark. Kaestli, "Valentinisme italien et valentinisme oriental," 402, suggests that

Another inconsistency in Hippolytus' text is the following. The description of the disagreement between the two schools comes as a digression just after Hippolytus has reported the theory about the Saviour's body contained in the document he is using as his main source for his account of Valentinianism. This theory is that,

> Jesus was born through Mary the virgin, according to that which is declared: "The Holy Spirit will come upon you"—the Spirit is Sophia— "and the power of the Most High will overshadow you"—the Most High is the Demiurge—"therefore that which is born from you shall be called holy" [Luke 1:35]. (4) For he has been born not from the Most High alone, as those created in the likeness of Adam were created by the Most High alone, that is, by the Demiurge. Rather, Jesus is the "new man," the one who is from the Holy Spirit <and the Most High>, that is, from the Demiurge, in such a way that the Demiurge completes the formation and the equipment of his body, but the Holy Spirit provides his essence (οὐσία), and a heavenly Logos comes into being from the Ogdoad, born through Mary. (VI 35:3–4)

According to this account, Jesus received a spiritual component from Sophia, the Holy Spirit,[8] and his body was completed by the Demiurge (ἵνα τὴν μὲν πλάσιν καὶ κατασκευὴν τοῦ σώματος αὐτοῦ ὁ δημιουργὸς καταρτίσῃ). This is precisely the doctrine which Hippolytus a few lines later attributes to the *eastern* Valentinians. In both cases, moreover, Luke 1:35 is used as a proof-text. Now, at the beginning, when Hippolytus introduced his report on the Valentinian system, he said that it represented the teachings of "Valentinus, Heracleon, Ptolemy and their whole school" (VI 29:1). In VI 35:6, however, he names Heracleon and Ptolemy as leading figures of *western* Valentinianism and then proceeds to describe as typically western a doctrine that disagrees with the one given in his main report on the Valentinian

---

what the Demiurge shapes may be the Saviour's *material* body. This is, in fact, a distinct possibility. It would, moreover, agree with what we find in *Gos. Phil.*, see below, chapter 13. (It may be added that διάπλασις is an embryological term referring to the formation of the embryo; see below, 309–10.) If this interpretation is correct, Hippolytus would be exonerated of the charge of incorrect reporting on this point. Kaestli's suggestion (402–3) that eastern Valentinians accorded a material body to the Saviour is in my opinion correct (as will be shown in the following chapters), though he fails to appreciate the soteriological function of the incarnation (cf. 400). He is also (398) aware of the soteriological-ecclesiological function of the Saviour's spiritual body (contrary to what I stated in Thomassen and Painchaud, *Traité tripartite*, 15n41).

   [8] For the identification of Sophia with the Holy Spirit see below, 484n139.

system, whereas the latter system itself agrees, as we have seen, with what he describes as the eastern version of the doctrine.[9]

In fact, Hippolytus' explanation does not describe the difference between the eastern and western schools, but, at most, an internal difference within the western school. For, as the comparison of Theodotus with Iren. *Haer.* I 6:1 suggests, the fundamental issue dividing the two schools was that in the east the body of the Saviour— i.e., the church—was seen as spiritual only, whereas for the western Valentinians it had a psychic as well as a spiritual component. The two theories distinguished by Hippolytus, however, both belong to the latter category. The difference between them lies not in the *composition* of the Saviour's body, since both theories accord to it a psychic as well as a spiritual part. The difference concerns the moment *when* the psychic and the spiritual were joined: according to the first theory the spiritual joined with the psychic only at Jesus' baptism, whereas the second lets the spiritual and the psychic come together already in Mary's womb.

For the moment it will suffice to point out the basic distinction between the two schools, which is a necessary prerequisite for classifying the sources. Further analysis of particular differences will be undertaken in connection with the study of the individual documents.

---

[9] We shall return to the position of Hippolytus' system below, in chapter 9.

THE SOTERIOLOGY OF *THE TRIPARTITE TRACTATE*

The two positions on the Saviour's body provide a criterion that should make it possible to divide the sources into two groups, by determining whether individual documents derive from eastern or western Valentinianism. We have already seen that the criterion works in the case of Theodotus: he did indeed teach that the body of the Saviour, which is also the flesh of the Logos, was spiritual, that is, the spiritual seed of Sophia, and the same as the church.

Until the discovery of the Nag Hammadi library, Theodotus was the only attested example of eastern Valentinianism. This situation has now changed.

The long treatise called (by modern scholars) *The Tripartite Tractate* (NHC I,*5*, 51:1–138:25), is a comprehensive and systematic work of Valentinian theology. It begins with the Father and the first emanation, and ends with the final consummation and the return to unity. It is unnecessary to recount the whole narrative in order to study the doctrine of the Saviour's body found in this treatise.[1] To provide context, the following may suffice. After a description of the genesis and the nature of the Pleroma, an account follows (75:17–77:36) of the fall of the "last and the youngest" of the aeons. The fallen aeon is not in this text called Sophia, but is referred to instead by the generic name "a logos," a designation which practically turns into a proper name in the course of the narrative.

Beginning with the fall, the Logos experiences three successive emotions: irrational passion, repentance, and joy. These emotions become the origins of the material, the psychic and the spiritual. The last emotion, joy, occurs after the Saviour has been sent out from the Pleroma to help the fallen Logos (85:33–90:13). The joy inspired by the vision of the Saviour is expressed by means of thanksgiving and praise, which in turn acquire separate existence in the

---

[1] In chapter 18 a more comprehensive study of the system of *Tri. Trac.* will be offered.

form of numerous spiritual children. Together, these offspring form a church, whose members are images of the aeons in the Pleroma (90:14–95:16). This sequence of events is essentially the same as can be found in other known Valentinian systems.[2]

The material and the psychic are then organised as the cosmos (95:17–104:3), while the spiritual offspring of the Logos remain, together with the Logos himself, in an intermediary region above the cosmos but below the Pleroma (92:22–95:16). Subsequently, the first human is created and placed within the cosmos. He is a composite of matter and soul, just as the cosmos itself, but in addition the Logos sows into him some of the spiritual seed (104:30–106:25).

The Incarnation

At a given moment in the history of the world the Saviour is sent out to redeem the spiritual seed. His incarnation is the subject of a long description. It begins as a discussion of the prophecies (113:5–114:30). The prophets were inspired by the Logos and the spiritual beings in the region above the cosmos. The Logos had in fact seen the Saviour, and its spiritual children were the result of that vision. For that reason there existed with them a hope and an assurance that the Saviour would return and unite them with himself and with the Pleroma. The prophets express this hope. Their understanding, however, was limited. They knew that the Saviour would come, but they did not comprehend his real nature or his origins:

> Instead, they were granted to say only this: he would be born and would suffer.[3] As for his pre-existent being, however, and that which he is eternally as unborn and impassible <. . .> not of the Logos that came to be in the flesh, that did not enter their thoughts.
>   And this is the word they were empowered to speak concerning his flesh that would appear. They say that it is something born from all of them, but above all that it derives from the spiritual Logos, which is the cause of the things that came into being. (113:31–114:9)[4]

The prophets did not know the Saviour as a transcendent being, but only the flesh in which he would be wrapped. This flesh comes

---

[2] Cf. Thomassen and Painchaud, *Traité tripartite*, 366–67.
[3] Probably an allusion to the prophecy about the suffering servant in Isa.
[4] The translations from *Tri. Trac.* are my own.

from the Logos and its spiritual offspring that dwell together with it
in its sphere above the cosmos. This is the same idea as is expressed
in *Exc.* 1:1 and 26:1 with reference to Sophia and her spiritual seed.
The body of the Saviour is thus spiritual, and constituted by the
spiritual church.

A remark then follows about the difference between the flesh of
the Saviour and the Saviour himself:

> The one from whom the Saviour received his flesh had, to be sure,
> conceived him, in a seminal form, at the moment when the light shone
> forth, as a word of promise about his manifestation. It <is>, in fact,
> <a> seed from the pre-existent ones, though it is the last that was
> produced. The one, however, whom the Father had appointed to reveal
> the salvation, he is the fulfilment of the promise, and was endowed
> with all the instruments (ⲟⲣⲅⲁⲛⲟⲛ) necessary for entering into life
> (ⲃⲓⲟⲥ) and with which he descended. (114:9–22)

The seed that makes up the flesh of the Saviour is imperfect in so
far as it represents only a hope and a promise of a future unification
with the Pleroma, whereas the Saviour who is inside that flesh rep-
resents the fulfilment of the promise. As a manifestation of the
Pleroma he is himself the perfection they still lack. In order to accom-
plish his task of fulfilment, however, he must be equipped with the
"instruments" necessary for sharing in physical life. What this means
is explained in the following:

> What our Saviour became out of willing compassion, is the same as
> that which the ones for whose sake he appeared had become because
> of an involuntary passion: they had become flesh and soul, and this
> holds them perpetually in its grip, and they perish and die. Those,
> however, who had co[me into being] as an invisible human being, and
> invisibly, them he instructed about himself in an equally invisible man-
> ner.[5] For he not only took upon himself the death of the ones he
> intended to save, but he ac[cept]ed as well the smallness into which
> they had descended when they were <born> with body and soul; for
> he let himself be conceived and he let himself be born as an infant
> with body and soul. And all the other (conditions) as well which these
> shared with the ones who had fallen—although they (themselves) pos-
> sessed the light—he entered into, although he was superior to them
> because he let himself be conceived without sin, pollution, or defilement.

---

[5] This sentence seems oddly out of place and looks as if it may be an interpo-
lation in the text.

> He was born into life (ⲃⲓⲟⲥ), and he was in life (ⲃⲓⲟⲥ) because it had been appointed that the former no less than the latter should become body and soul as a consequence of the passion and the erratic sentiment of the volatile *logos*. (114:30–115:23)

The ὄργανα mentioned in the previous passage are, thus, such as relate to existance with a body and a soul. The Saviour needs to share in the condition of the ones he has come to save. He must take their physical existence on himself in order to save them from it. His incarnation is soteriologically essential; by himself entering the human cycle of conception, birth, physical growth, and death, he is able to redeem those who are subject to it. He remains, to be sure, superhuman in so far as his birth is without sin and defilement, but the incarnation must be in some sense "real" as well in order to be meaningful as a soteriological idea.

Who exactly are the objects of the Saviour's mission is not made explicit. The identity of "the ones for whose sake he appeared," or "the ones he intended to save" is not spelled out. We are only told that they shared the condition of being in body and soul with "the ones who had fallen," that they had come to do so through an "involuntary passion," and that this was something that had been "appointed," that is, as a part of the economy of salvation. We leave this question pending until we have commented upon another important point.

The body and the soul of the Saviour that are described in this passage, the "instruments" of his descent and incarnation, must be different from the "flesh" that consists of the spiritual body given him by the Logos and its spiritual offspring. This is in fact explicitly stated in the immediately following passage:

> However, he also assumed, for the sake of the economy, that which had resulted from the events we told about earlier: that which originated from the radiant vision and the stable thought of the Logos after he had converted after his volatility. In this way those who came with him received stability, firmness and discrimination together with (their) body and soul. It had been envisaged that they too should come when this was envisaged for the Saviour, but they did not come until he had decided. And so they came too, but were superior in their carnal emission to the ones who had been produced in deficiency. For in [this] way they too were emitted in body, concorporeally with the Saviour, being manifested together with him and being united with him. (115:23–116:5)

What the Saviour assumes from the Logos as his body is something
that comes in addition to the body and soul of his physical incar-
nation. In fact his incarnation allows the spiritual beings who make
up that body to be physically incarnated too, and to be so in a way
that makes them superior to ordinary humans. Their descent and
their concorporeal incarnation with the Saviour takes place "for the
sake of the economy," that is, it forms part of a salvation project
that includes them as well.

The "body of the Saviour" therefore means two different things.
On the one hand, there is the body that is implied in his physical
incarnation; this body must be material, although it is without sin
and defilement. On the other hand, there is the body of the Logos
and its offspring, which the Saviour brings with him when he descends
into the world; this body is spiritual and co-extensive with the spir-
itual church.

The Heavenly and the Earthly Church

Understanding these soteriological ideas is not easy. How are we to
visualise the co-incarnation of the spirituals together with the Saviour?
What is the relationship between these spirituals from above and the
ones who were already in the world and whom the Saviour came
down to save?

The section on the anthropogony (104:18–106:25) explains that
the first human received the same components as the cosmos itself.
He received a material part and a psychic part, contributed by the
material and the psychic powers of the cosmos respectively, and put
together by the Demiurge. The Demiurge was invisibly moved, more-
over, by the Logos, who used him as an intermediary and a tool
for moulding the human creature (104:30–105:10). Into this crea-
ture, however, the Logos inserted a third component coming from
himself: the "breath of life," which is a soul of spiritual origin. Thus,
while he existed in sickness and deficiency because of his material
and psychic components, the first human also possessed a capacity
for understanding his predicament because of his spiritual soul
(105:10–35).

In addition, the Demiurge created humans of his own, who thus
have a psychic nature (105:35–106:2), while the material powers cre-
ated a third kind of humans who are simply material (106:2–5).

This division of humans into three kinds (ⲅⲉⲛⲟⲥ) becomes soteriologically significant in 118:14–122:12. There, the reactions of each kind to the Saviour are described, leading to an explanation of their different eschatological fates:

> The essences of the three kinds can each be known from its fruit. They were nevertheless not known at first, but only when the Saviour came to them, shedding light upon the saints and revealing what each was. The spiritual kind is like light from light and like spirit from spirit. Once its head appeared, it hastened to it at once. It became at once a body for its head. It received knowledge straight away from the revelation. (118:21–35)

The text goes on to describe how the psychic kind hesitated and only eventually came to recognise the Saviour, whereas the material kind is "alien in every respect" (119:9). What primarily interests us here, however, is the spiritual kind. The spiritual kind must be those who descended from the first human whom the Logos endowed with a spiritual soul. They greet him immediately because they have within them the spiritual element that was brought forth by the Logos when it first saw the Saviour and received the "hope and the promise" of ultimate unification. Further, they are here described as the "body," with the Saviour himself as their "head."

This last theme is repeated a few pages later:

> The Election is concorporeal (ⲟⲩϣⲃⲏⲣ ⲛ̄ⲥⲱⲙⲁ) and consubstantial (ⲟⲩϣⲃⲏⲣ ⲛ̄ⲛⲟⲩⲥⲓⲁ) with the Saviour. Because of its oneness and its union with him, it is like a bridal chamber. For more than anything else it was for its (*sc.* the Election) sake that Christ came. The Calling, on the other hand, occupies the place of those who rejoice at the bridal chamber, and who are happy and content on account of the union of the bridegroom and the bride. (122:12–24)

The "Election" (†ⲙⲛ̄ⲧ̄ⲥⲱⲧⲡ̄ < ἡ ἐκλογή) and the "Calling" (†ⲙⲛ̄ⲧ̄ⲱϩⲙⲉ < ἡ κλῆσις) are names for the spirituals and the psychics respectively. The spirituals are the body of the Saviour and it was primarily for their sake that the Saviour came.

In these texts, however, the spirituals who form the body of the Saviour are humans who already dwell in the cosmos and who possess the spiritual soul of the first man. The problem now is this: how is this soteriology to be reconciled with the idea that the spiritual church-body is something the Saviour puts on in the region of the Logos-Sophia and that comes down together with him during his incarnation?

To reconcile these apparently inconsistent notions about the spiritual church in terms of a straightforward sequential narrative will not work. The church that comes down with the Saviour and the church that is formed by humans who greet the Saviour on his arrival are not two distinct entities in the narrative sense. We must rather see the heavenly church as the mythologically hypostasised representation of the predestined status of the spirituals on earth. When the Saviour appears, he brings them that status, which they in a sense already have. Their spiritual nature is *revealed*, an event that is expressed not only by the notion that the Saviour shines from above and makes manifest what each person on earth is (118:21–28), but also by the idea that he reveals the heavenly church that already exists up above, as the hypostasised representation of their hidden collective identity.

The Dialectics of Mutual Participation

Underlying this double identity of the spirituals in the soteriological account lies, I believe, a mechanism which I shall call the principle of mutual participation. We have seen that the Saviour in his incarnation takes upon himself the condition of the ones he comes to save. This means that he is incarnated with a body and a soul. At the same time, however, he brings the spirituals their spiritual nature; thus there is a logic of reciprocity, or substitution, in his salvific work: corporeal existence is exchanged for spiritual being. A second point is this: the exchange is also one of unity and multiplicity. The Saviour is one while the spirituals are many. When he arrives, the spirituals on earth are united into his body. At the same time, however, he comes as a multiplicity—the heavenly church.

The logic here seems to be as follows. The Saviour identifies with the ones he comes to save. This means that he becomes flesh and soul, and that he becomes a multiplicity. For the ones he comes to save exist as separate individuals with bodies and souls. Thus he subjects himself to the condition from which he is going to save them. At the same time, however, he brings them what they already are and have, their spiritual nature. This is the spiritual church from above. An inversion of the identity-relationship takes place. While he identifies with them in his incarnation, the already incarnate spirituals are identified with him in his spiritual saving nature: he comes

as a multiple spiritual church. Being multiple, however, this spiritual church is necessarily imperfect, lacking the perfection of ultimate unity. At the same time as it brings salvation, coming down to earth in the Saviour, it also needs salvation itself. Moreover, even the Saviour himself, who subjects himself to multiplicity and corporeality in his identification with the ones he is going to save, ends up, as we shall see, in a situation from which he needs to be redeemed.

With this in mind we shall take a look at the text that follows the description of the co-incarnation of the spiritual church as the flesh of the Saviour quoted above (115:23–116:5):

> These are such as belong to the single essence, which is the spiritual one. The *oikonomia*, however, is variable: this being one thing, that another. Some (beings) have issued from passion and division; they need healing. Others originate from a prayer that the sick be healed; they have been appointed to care for the ones who have fallen. These are the apostles and the bringers of good tidings. They are, in fact, the disciples of the Saviour; these are teachers for those who need instruction.
>
> Why, then, did they too share in the sufferings which those who had been brought forth from passion were afflicted with, if, in accordance with the *oikonomia*, they were brought forth in one body together with <the> Saviour, who did *not* take part in these sufferings? Well, the Saviour, in fact, was a bodily image of something unitary, namely the Entirety. Therefore he retained the model of indivisibility, from which derives impassibility. But *they* are images of each of those who were revealed, and for that reason they received division from their model: they received form with a view to a planting down below, and this (planting) shares in the evil which exists in the regions where they arrived. For the Will kept all under sin, in order that by that Will he might show mercy on all and they might be saved. For a single one is appointed to bestow life, while all the rest need salvation. (116:5–117:8)

The text describes the work of the descended and incarnate church. It is performed through the apostles and the evangelists, and the disciples of the Saviour in general. The descended heavenly church has a salvific mission in the world together with the Saviour, but at the same time its members are themselves imperfect. They share the suffering in the world into which they have descended, which is the inevitable implication of their existence as distinct individuals. Only the Saviour himself personifies oneness and impassibility.

It is also explained that their imperfection was a design of the *oikonomia*. This word is used as a name for the cosmos, but it also refers to the divine plan of salvation; in fact, the cosmos is called

by this name because the temporary existence of the cosmos is a part of the divine plan. The cosmos characteristically exists in division and passion, and hence the spiritual church itself was designed as a multiplicity so that it could be accommodated here below.

This inherent imperfection of the heavenly church was described earlier in the treatise when the origin of the spirituals was related. As we recall, the spiritual offspring of the Logos came into being as his joyful response to the vision of the Saviour, after the latter had manifested the wholeness of the Pleroma and healed the Logos of his passions:

> Those, moreover, who had been formed together with the Logos after the image of the Pleroma, have as their parents the ones who had revealed themselves, each one of them being a small impress of one of the figures. They are male forms, for they are not issued from sickness, which is femininity, but from one who has left sickness behind, and they possess the name "church." In their mutual consent they in fact resemble that consent which reigns in the assembly of those who had manifested themselves. Indeed, what came into being after the image of the light is perfect itself, since it is an image of the single light that exists and is the Entirety.
>
> It was indeed smaller than its model, but it possessed its indivisibility for it was an image of the indivisible light. Having come into being after the image of each one of the aeons, they are in substance what we have said [i.e., perfect and unitary]. In their operation,[6] however, they are not equal (to them) because it [*sc.* the operation] takes place in each of them separately. Collectively they have the equality, but as individuals they have not discarded what is proper to each. For this reason they are passions (ϩⲛ̄ⲡⲁⲑⲟⲥ ⲛⲉ), and passion is sickness (ϣⲱⲛⲉ). For they are not offspring of the unity of the Pleroma, but of one who has not yet attained the Father, or the unity with the Entireties and his Will.
>
> It was (nevertheless) a good thing for the *oikonomia* that was to be, because it had been decided concerning them that they should pass through the lower stations, and the stations would not be able to accept them coming quickly through them unless (they came) one by one. And their coming was necessary because everything was to be fulfilled through them. (94:10–95:16)

---

[6] I assume that ⲧϭⲟⲙ here translates ἐνέργεια, and that a technical terminology contrasting οὐσία and ἐνέργεια is employed (cf. Lampe, *Lex.* s.v. ἐνέργεια A.1.a.). The translation in Thomassen and Painchaud, *Traité tripartite*, is not sufficiently precise.

Thus, the members of the spiritual church are images of the Pleroma that was manifested through the Saviour. Since they are still distinct individuals, however, they suffer from a "sickness."[7] This (temporary) imperfection was, however, part of the divine plan of salvation because it enabled them to descend into the world of corporeal division when the time came for them to be co-incarnated with the Saviour and enter into human individuals as the multiple manifestation of his salvific being.

The incarnation of the spiritual church is part of the mission of the Saviour undertaken to redeem the spirituals in the cosmos. However, the sojourn of the church here below also forms part of their own progress towards perfection:

> Once the redemption had been proclaimed, the perfect human received knowledge immediately, so as to return quickly to his unity, to the place from which he came. He joyfully returned back to the place from which he had originated, to the place from which he had flowed forth. His limbs (ⲙⲉⲗⲟⲥ), on the other hand, needed a school, such as exists in the regions (ⲧⲟⲡⲟⲥ) that have been so fashioned as to provide it with the likeness of the images and the archetypes, in the way of a mirror, until all the limbs of the body of the church <would be united> in a single place and attain the restoration (ⲁⲡⲟⲕⲁⲧⲁ-ⲥⲧⲁⲥⲓⲥ) together, by appearing as the sound body <...> the restoration to the Pleroma. (123:3–22).

"The perfect man" is, of course, the Saviour himself, who left the cosmos once his mission had been completed. The individual limbs of his body, that is, the spiritual church, needed, however, further education. Their "school" is the cosmos, conceived as a training ground for the spirituals.[8] In this way it is not only the spiritual souls already living in the cosmos that need redemption, but the heavenly church as well, which represents their hypostasised spiritual identities and comes down co-incarnated with the Saviour; both must still be perfected in order to be reintegrated with the Pleroma. Moreover, their temporary cosmic existence forms part of their salvation process.

---

[7] Cf. 106:6–9: "The spiritual substance is a [na]me and a single image, [and] its sickness is the condition [of being in man]y forms."

[8] Cf. in particular 104:18–25: "For the whole establishment and design of the images, likenesses and imitations has come into being for the sake of those who need nourishment and instruction and formation, in order that the smallness may gradually grow, as through the likeness of a mirror." Cf. also the commentary in Thomassen and Painchaud, *Traité tripartite*, 437.

   This situation apparently arises from the soteriological logic of
mutual participation. If salvation takes place by the saving agent's
sharing the condition from which salvation is envisaged, the ensu-
ing logic of identification entails the necessity that the saving agent
as well will need salvation. In fact, even the Saviour himself needs
salvation as a result of this logic:

> In fact, not only earthly humans (pⲘⲚⲕⲀϩ) need the redemption
> (ⲥⲉⲣ̄ ⲭⲣⲉⲓⲁ Ⲙⲡⲓⲥⲱⲧⲉ), but the angels need the redemption as well,
> and the image,[9] and even the fullnesses of the aeons and those mar-
> vellous luminous powers (needed it)—so as to leave no doubt with
> regard to anyone.
>   And even the Son, who constitutes the type of the redemption (ⲉⲧⲕⲏ
> Ⲛ̄ⲧⲩⲡⲟⲥ Ⲛ̄ⲥⲱⲧⲉ) of the Entirety, even he [need]ed the redemption,
> having become human and submitted himself to that was needed by
> us, who are his church in the flesh.[10] Once he, then, had received the
> redemption first, through the *logos* that came down upon him, all the
> others who had received him could then receive the redemption through
> him. In fact, those who have received the one who received, have also
> received that which is in him.
>   For the redemption began [to be] given among the humans who
> were in the flesh, with his first-born and his love, the Son,[11] coming
> in the flesh, and the angels who were in heaven having been found
> worthy of forming a community, a community in him upon earth—
> for this reason it is called the Father's angelic redemption—(and) with
> him comforting those who had suffered on behalf of the Entirety for
> the sake of (their) obtaining his knowledge, for he was given the grace
> before anyone else.[12] (124:25–125:24)

Because of the logic of soteriological identification, the Saviour-Son
himself needs to be redeemed after having subjected himself to
carnal existence: the identification works both ways. Consequently a
further divine initiative of redemption is required, represented by the

---

[9] "The image" makes no sense here. Read probably "the images," used here as
a name for the spiritual offspring of the Logos.
[10] Or: "his churches" (ⲀⲚⲀⲚ ϩⲚ̄ ⲥⲀⲣϫ ⲉⲧⲟⲉⲓ Ⲛ̄ⲛⲉⲕⲕⲗⲏⲥⲓⲀ Ⲛ̄ⲧⲉϥ); but ⲉⲕⲕⲗⲏⲥⲓⲀ
is not used in the plural elsewhere in the tractate (or in other Valentinian documents).
[11] The original Greek may have read "his beloved Son."
[12] The syntax of this complicated sentence has been reconstructed here on the
assumption that the Coptic translator has misconstrued a series of Greek partici-
ples by translating them as relative clauses instead of as subordinate clauses. Logic
dictates that the final clause must be dependent on the statement made at the begin-
ning of the long sentence. The idea is that the whole process of salvation began
with the redemption of earthly humans, after which followed the redemption of the
higher levels, including the Pleroma itself.

"logos" that came down—obviously an allusion to the baptism event at the Jordan. Without this further initiative, the logic of identification would have come to a standstill: the Saviour would have been lost in matter just as much as the ones he came to save.

Once the Saviour is redeemed, however, and becomes the *typos* of redemption, the subsequent redemption process unfolds as by a chain reaction. By "receiving the one who had received," earthly humans are united with their heavenly counterparts—the church that came down as the spiritual body of the Saviour and as the multiple manifestations of the Saviour. The spiritual church in turn is reunited with the Pleroma, and the Pleroma itself is thereby made complete.

What this also means is that the central and decisive salvation event is no longer the incarnation of the Saviour, but is deferred to his paradigmatic baptism. We must therefore assume that in the final analysis salvation is realised in the practice of baptismal initiation. It is in this ritual act that the Saviour is "received" and the soteriological "chain reaction" actually takes place. In fact, a lengthy section (127:25–129:34) extols the importance and virtues of baptism, "into which the Entireties will descend and through which they will come into being" (127:26–28).

Conclusion

Tri. Trac. exhibits the same type of doctrine as Theodotus with regard to the body, or flesh, of the Saviour in the sense of the heavenly church that the Saviour puts on when he descends into the cosmos. This is a spiritual body, composed of the spiritual offspring of the Logos, just as the flesh of the Saviour consists of the spiritual seed of Sophia in Theodotus. The "church," moreover, is co-extensive with the spirituals, or "the Election." There is, to be sure, a category of psychic humans; they are the offspring of the Demiurge and are named "the Calling" in a soteriological context. They are not, however, included in the body of the Saviour in the sense of "church." Rather, the good psychics are described as servants and helpers of the church (120:8–14, 121:30–37, 135:3–10.25–29), a description that presupposes that they are not themselves members of it. *Tri. Trac.* is thus another witness to eastern Valentinian doctrine.

Tri. Trac. teaches us more about this doctrine, however, than what was revealed by the excerpts from Theodotus. We find in *Tri. Trac.* a soteriology based on the idea of a symmetry between the Saviour

and the saved—what we have called a soteriology of mutual par-
ticipation. While the Saviour brings the spirituals their spiritual selves
in the form of his body, he also shares, through his incarnation,
their condition of existing with a body and a soul. Salvation has the
form of an exchange. In consequence, however, the Saviour himself
needs redemption (as is, indeed, the case in Theodotus as well). Focus
is thereby shifted to baptism as the place of redemption, paradig-
matically performed on Jesus at the Jordan event, and ritually re-
enacted in the practice of the church.

THE SOTERIOLOGY OF IRENAEUS' SYSTEM

We shall now compare the soteriology of *Tri. Trac.* with that of the Valentinian system reported by Irenaeus in *Haer.* I 1–8. That text gives the following account of the Saviour's salvific mission:

> There are, then, three kinds: the material—which they also call "left"— must of necessity, they say, perish, because it cannot receive any out-pouring of imperishability. The psychic—which they also term "right"—stands midway between the spiritual and the material, and consequently passes to whichever side it is inclined. The spiritual was sent forth in order that, being linked with the psychic, it might be formed and educated in company with it, and this is the salt and the light of the world. In fact, the psychic needed perceptible means of instruction as well.[1] For this reason too, they maintain, the world was created, and the Saviour is said to have come to the psychic, since it possessed free will, in order to save it.
>
> In fact, they maintain that he assumed the first-fruits of those whom he intended to save. From Achamoth he acquired the spiritual, from the Demiurge he put on the psychic Christ, from the *oikonomia* he was endowed with a body that had psychic substance, but was so con-structed by ineffable art that it was visible, tangible, and capable of suffering.
>
> He received nothing whatever material, they say, for matter is not capable of being saved. (Iren. *Haer.* I 6:1)

As was remarked in chapter 4, the Saviour's body has a complex composition in this text. By comparison with *Tri. Trac.*, two points of difference may be pointed out in particular. In the first place, the spiritual part of the Saviour, that which comes from Achamoth— the lower, fallen Sophia—is supplemented by a psychic component called "the psychic Christ" which is due to the Demiurge. Secondly, it is emphasised that the Saviour possessed no material component. This last assertion stands in direct contrast to the statements in *Tri. Trac.* about the incarnation of the Saviour with a body and a soul. Instead, the incarnation body of the Saviour is here described as

---

[1] Reading, with RD, ἔδει γὰρ τῷ ψυχικῷ καὶ αἰσθητῶν παιδευμάτων; cf. RD's note *in loc.*

having a *psychic* οὐσία, though it also possesses sensible properties accorded to it through "ineffable art" (ἀρρήτῳ τέχνῃ).

The principle of mutual participation characteristic of the soteriology of *Tri. Trac.* is to some extent paralleled. As in *Tri. Trac.*, the Saviour "assumes" that which he comes to save, by putting it on as the body of his descent (ὧν γὰρ ἤμελλε σῴζειν, τάς ἀπαρχὰς αὐτὸν εἰληφέναι); his body is consubstantial with the *salvandi*. Unlike *Tri. Trac.*, however, the body includes not only the spirituals but the psychics as well. Moreover, the logic of participation in this text does not imply that the Saviour also shares in the condition of material existence of the ones he saves. In fact, that idea seems to be deliberately rejected, with the argument that matter is incapable of salvation.

Closer scrutiny of this text reveals a peculiar inconsistency. On the one hand, it affirms the principle that the Saviour assumes the substance of the human categories he comes to save (ὧν γὰρ ἤμελλε σῴζειν), that is, *both* the spirituals and the psychics. On the other hand, however, the text also asserts that the Saviour's mission was essentially directed towards the psychics. The spirituals are in the world merely to be educated, and do not really need to be saved from it. This last set of notions is elaborated in the following:

> The psychic humans have been instructed in psychic matters; they are strengthened by works and mere faith, and do not have perfect knowledge; and these, they teach, are we who belong to the church. Therefore they affirm that, for us, good conduct is necessary—for otherwise it would not be possible to be saved—but they themselves, in their opinion, will be for ever and entirely saved, not by means of conduct, but because they are spiritual by nature (αὐτοὺς δὲ μὴ διὰ πράξεως ἀλλὰ διὰ τὸ φύσει πνευματικοὺς εἶναι πάντη τε καὶ πάντως σωθήσεσθαι δογματίζουσιν). For just as it is impossible that the choïc should partake of salvation—since, they say, it is incapable of receiving it—so again it is impossible that the spiritual—and by that they mean themselves—should succumb to decay, regardless of what kind of actions it performs. Just as gold, when placed in mud, does not lose its beauty but retains its own nature, since the mud is unable to harm the gold, so they say that they themselves cannot suffer any injury or lose their spiritual substance, whatever material actions they may engage in. (I 6:2)

Because the spirituals are saved by virtue of their innate nature, they are not affected by being in the world; therefore the mission of the Saviour cannot be principally concerned with them. The plausible explanation for this inconsistency is that the words ὧν γὰρ ἤμελλε σῴζειν reveal the traces of an earlier soteriology of the spirituals,

one in which the assumption of the spiritual element by the Saviour at his descent still had a soteriological significance. That is precisely the type of soteriology found in *Tri. Trac.* In contrast, Irenaeus' text retains the principle that the Saviour's body is composed of the substance of the ones who will be saved, but at the same time it expands the body so as to include the psychics, and, further, introduces a distinction in the anthropology and the salvific needs of the two groups that tears away the foundation underlying the original soteriological concept. As a result, the focus is transferred from the spirituals to the psychics as the object of the Saviour's mission and work of salvation.

This situation suggests that the soteriology of *Tri. Trac.* (notwithstanding the actual date of the tractate as a composition) represents an earlier stage in the relative chronology of Valentinian doctrinal ideas than Iren. *Haer.* I 6:1–2. As we have seen, *Tri. Trac.* represents, together with Theodotus, the eastern Valentinian position on this issue of the composition of the Saviour's body. Thus the information given by Tertullian (see above, chapter 4) that the eastern position was closer to the original one in Valentinianism is corroborated.

THE SOTERIOLOGY OF *EXC.* 43:2–65

The Advent of the Saviour and the Composition of his Body

As was noted in chapter 3, this part of *Exc.*—"section C"—exhibits so many similarities with the account in Irenaeus that the existence of a common source must be assumed at one point or another in the transmission history.[1] The advent of the Saviour and its soteriological significance are dealt with in *Exc.* 58–62:

> (58:1) After the kingdom of death, which had made a great and specious promise, but was none the less a ministry of death, the great combatant Jesus performed a saving work in that, whilst all authorities and divinities held back, he took upon himself, potentially, the church, that is, the chosen and the called—the spiritual from her who had borne it, but the psychic from the *oikonomia*—and bore aloft what he had assumed and thereby what was consubstantial with them (ἐν ἑαυτῷ δυνάμει τὴν ἐκκλησίαν ἀναλαβών, τὸ ἐκλεκτὸν καὶ τὸ κλητόν, τὸ μὲν παρὰ τῆς τεκούσης τὸ πνευματικόν, τὸ δὲ ἐκ τῆς οἰκονομίας τὸ ψυχικόν, [ὃ] ἀνέσωσεν καὶ ἀνήνεγκεν ἅπερ ἀνέλαβεν, καὶ δι᾽ αὐτῶν καὶ τὰ τούτοις ὁμοούσια). (2) "For if indeed the first-fruits are holy, so also is the lump of dough; and if the root is holy, then so are the branches" [Rom 11:16].
>
> (59:1) First of all he put on the seed from her who had given it (*sc.* the seed) birth, not in such a way that he was contained in it, but he contained it potentially, as it is gradually being formed through knowledge. (2) But when he came to the "Place,"[2] Jesus found, ready to be put on, the Christ who had been foretold, whom the prophets and the law had proclaimed, who was the image of the Saviour. (3) But this psychic Christ that he put on was invisible. Therefore it was necessary that he who was to come into the world, that he might be seen

---

[1] See above, 29. Dibelius' assumption ("Studien I") that Clement and Irenaeus were using the same Valentinian source is not borne out by a close comparison of the two texts. There are too many differences of detail for them to be based on exactly the same document. These differences are better explained, in my opinion, if we assume that the documents used by Clement and Irenaeus represent two distinct reworkings of a common source, rather than that source itself.

[2] This is a name for the Demiurge which recurs several times in *Exc.* (as well as in Hipp. *Haer.* VI 32:7–9).

and touched, and be active in affairs there, should also wear a body perceptible to the senses. (4) A body was therefore woven for him out of invisible, psychic substance, and, by the power of a divine preparation, it came into the world of sense.

(60) The saying (Luke 1:35) "Holy Spirit <will come> upon you" indicates the coming into being of the Lord's body; "the power of the Most High will overshadow you" refers to the formation by God[3] which he impressed upon (ἐνετύπωσεν) the body in the virgin.

The similarity with Irenaeus' account is evident. The Saviour, Jesus, assumes both the spiritual element (from Sophia) and the psychic (the psychic Christ, from the Demiurge). In addition he puts on a psychic body through which he is manifested to the senses. It may be noted that this text is more explicit than that of Irenaeus on a couple of points: first, that which the Saviour puts on is called "the church"—the concept of the church thus includes both the spiritual and the psychic; secondly it is made clear that the spiritual element is identical to the "seed" previously brought forth by Sophia.

The text continues:

(61:1) That he himself was other than that which he assumed (ἀνείληφεν) is made clear from what he confesses: "I am the life," "I am the truth" (John 14:6), "I and the Father are one" (John 10:30). (2) The spiritual which he assumed, and the psychic, he indicates like this: "The child which grew up and increased in wisdom" [Luke 2:52]. For the spiritual needs wisdom, the psychic to grow. (3) And by means of the things which flowed from his side [cf. John 19:34] he made clear how the substances become passionless and are saved through the outflowing of the passions from those who are affected by passion.

(4) And when he says, "The Son of Man must be rejected, insulted, crucified" (Mark 8:31, etc.) it is apparent that he speaks of another person, namely of him who experiences passion.

(5) And he says, "I will go before you on the third day into Galilee" (Matt 26:32): for he goes before all things and indicates that he will raise up the soul that is being invisibly saved and will restore it again to the place to which he is now leading the way.

(6) He died when the spirit that had come upon him at the Jordan departed; not by becoming separate, but by withdrawing, in order that death might operate. For how could his body die, if life was in him? In that case death would have prevailed over the Saviour himself, which is absurd. Rather, death was outwitted by craftiness. (7) For when the body died and death had taken hold of it, the Saviour sent

---

[3] I.e., the Demiurge.

forth the ray of power which had come upon him, and destroyed death, while he scattered the passions and raised the mortal body.

(8) The psychic (elements) are raised again in this way and are saved. But the spiritual (elements) who have believed obtain a higher salvation, receiving their souls as wedding garments.

(62:1) The psychic Christ therefore sits on the right hand of the Demiurge, as David says: "Sit thou on my right hand," and so on (Ps 109:1). (2) He sits there until the consummation "in order that they may see him whom they pierced" (Rev 1:7). Now, what they pierced was the visible, which was the flesh of the psychic one. "For a bone of him will not be broken," he says (John 19:36); just as in the case of Adam prophecy allegorically calls the soul bone [cf. Gen 2:23]. (3) For when the body suffered, Christ's soul put itself in the hands of the father.[4] But the spiritual within the bone is not handed over, but he himself saves (it).

This account of the Saviour is quite complicated. In the first place (61:1), a distinction is emphatically made between, on the one hand, the Saviour himself, and, on the other, the two components that he "assumed"—the spiritual and the psychic—and his sensible psychic body. In addition to all these components, however, there is also "the spirit that had come upon him at the Jordan" (τοῦ καταβάντος ἐπ᾽ αὐτῷ ἐπὶ τῷ Ἰορδάνῃ πνεύματος, 61:6). This refers to the same notion as in *Exc.* 22:6 (the Name that came down and redeemed the Saviour at the Jordan) and *Tri. Trac.* 125:6–7 (the *logos* that came down). In *Exc.* 16, moreover, the precise term "spirit" is used for the descending dove.[5]

INCONSISTENCIES IN THE SOTERIOLOGICAL STATUS OF THE SPIRITUALS

As in Iren. *Haer.* I 6:1–2, a certain degree of incoherence can be detected in this account, particularly with regard to the soteriological status of the spirituals. One instance of this is that, whereas in 61:1 the essential distinction is drawn between "the Saviour himself" and his "assumed" accretions, both the spiritual and the psychic, in 61:4 the important demarcation is between the Saviour and the psychic Christ, the latter being the one who experiences the passion.

---

[4] I.e., the Demiurge. The phrase is an allusion to Luke 23:46.

[5] The dove is τὸ πνεῦμα τῆς ἐνθυμήσεως τοῦ πατρὸς <τὸ> τὴν κατέλευσιν πεποιημένον ἐπὶ τὴν τοῦ λόγου σάρκα.

Moreover, 61:3 suggests that the piercing of the side and the outflowing (John 19:34) represent the liberation from passion of the spiritual *as well as* the psychic substances (οὐσίαι in the plural). 62:2, on the other hand, stresses that it was the flesh of the *psychic* Christ that was pierced. Are we therefore to assume that the passion of the psychic Christ effects the liberation of both the spiritual and the psychic? That does not seem to be the case, for in 62:3 a set of distinctions is made between the flesh, the bone (= the soul), and the spiritual that is within the bone. After the flesh has been pierced, the psychic element is handed over (παρακατατέθετο) to the Demiurge by the psychic Christ. What happens to the spiritual element is, according to the last sentence, something else: τὸ δ᾽ ἐν τῷ ὀστέῳ πνευματικὸν οὐκέτι παρακατατίθεται, ἀλλ᾽ αὐτὸς σῴζει. This sentence is problematic. In the immediate context, the most natural interpretation is to take the word αὐτός as referring to the psychic Christ. This would mean that, in handing over the psychics to the Demiurge, the psychic Christ leaves their salvation to him, whereas he himself remains in charge of the salvation of the spirituals. Such an interpretation is not very plausible, however, since the attribution of a saving role to the Demiurge would be an unparalleled and somewhat peculiar idea in a Valentinian context. In addition, it is of course odd that the spirituals should be saved by a psychic saviour. A more satisfactory solution from the theological point of view is to regard αὐτός here as referring back to αὐτός in 61:1, which refers to the Saviour "himself," as distinct from the psychic Christ who is described as ἄλλος vis-à-vis the Saviour in 61:4. It may also be noted that the expression "the Saviour himself" (αὐτοῦ τοῦ σωτῆρος) is emphatically used in 61:6. Therefore it is likely that we should understand the final sentence to mean that whereas the psychic Christ saves the psychics by handing them over to the Demiurge, the spiritual elements are not handed over in that way, but are saved by the Saviour himself.[6]

The following picture then emerges of the soteriological account as a whole. Initially, the text introduces the general notion of the consubstantiality of the Saviour with the ones he has come to save

---

[6] Sagnard, *Extraits*, 185n1, opts for a third solution, namely that αὐτός refers to τὸ πνευματικόν: the psychics are an object of salvation, whereas the spirituals act as saviours themselves. But this interpretation is implausible already on grammatical grounds.

(58). This notion rests, as we have seen previously, on a logic of mutual participation between the Saviour and the *salvandi*. The Saviour submits himself to the condition from which he saves—incarnation and passion. Through this act he mediates to the *salvandi* their discarnate and passion-free true selves. Now, with the inclusion of the psychics along with the spirituals in the body-church of the Saviour, the situation becomes more complex. A corresponding distinction is made in the person of the Saviour between the Saviour himself and "the psychic Christ," and it is emphatically affirmed that only the latter experienced passion. In this way, the soteriology of mutual participation changes its range of application and becomes primarily a relationship between the psychic Christ and the psychics.

The effect of this change, however, is that the birth into this world of the Saviour himself tends to lose its soteriological function and significance. It is no longer conceived as a participatory incarnation, but as an agonistic descent only (58:1). The Saviour himself does not suffer by being in the world. Nevertheless the account still preserves the theme of "the spirit which had come upon him at the Jordan" (61:6), and which suggests a redeemer who himself needs redemption. The context in which this theme is introduced, however, needs some scrutiny. The context is the crucifixion. The author rejects a view that what happened on the cross was that the Saviour, with his spirit, became *separate*. Rather, it was a matter of *withdrawal* (ἀπέθανεν δὲ ἀποστάντος τοῦ καταβάντος ἐπ᾽ αὐτῷ ἐπὶ τῷ Ἰορδάνῃ πνεύματος, οὐκ ἰδίᾳ γενομένου, ἀλλὰ συσταλέντος, ἵνα καὶ ἐνεργήσῃ ὁ θάνατος, 61:6). These are technical terms of Valentinian theory, being used to describe the relationship of spirit to matter. "Separation" means a disjoining of spirit from matter, and implies that the two were previously joined. "Withdrawal," on the other hand, implies a previous "extension" and "spreading out." Both concepts are used in protological contexts, but refer at the same time to the crucifixion.[7] The rejected view is one that assumes that the Saviour was incarnated in a material body and later extricated himself from it when he gave up his spirit on the cross. This view corresponds, I believe,

---

[7] Valentinian protology is basically concerned with the derivation of multiplicity and matter from oneness and spirit, and such terms as "separation" and "withdrawal" refer to the behaviour of the spiritual after its involvement with the material. Cf. Thomassen, "Derivation of Matter," 5–6, 11–12. The cross itself is, of course, theoreticised in the systems as signifying the Limit separating the spiritual realm from what is inferior.

to the eastern Valentinian position.[8] The present author rejects it because he does not accept that the Saviour was incarnated in a material body. Instead he prefers the terminology of extension and withdrawal/contraction.

It is difficult, however, to see that the distinction between "separation" and "withdrawal" really solves the author's problem. In the first place one might object that the spirit that came down on the Saviour on the Jordan is in a significant sense something different from the Saviour himself. The motif of the spirit coming down is hardly meaningful unless one presupposes that this spirit has some kind of salvific function vis-à-vis the descended Saviour, that is, that the Saviour as a result of his descent had been placed in a situation that made him need such an intervention from above. The two themes, (1) the descent and birth of the Saviour into the world and (2) the spirit coming down at his baptism, can each by itself be interpreted as expressing the notion of an agonistic salvific act, that is, of salvation as simply a battle against and a victory over the forces of matter. The combination of them, however, necessarily implies the notion of a redeemer who himself has been affected by these powers to the extent that he too needs redemption from them; otherwise one or the other of the two themes becomes soteriologically superfluous. Moreover, the terminology of extension and withdrawal is itself associated with the notions of passion and materiality, because that terminology is based on the correlation of the metaphysics of unity and plurality (the unitary unfolding into multiplicity and contracting again to unity) with the soteriology of the cross (the Saviour spreading out his limbs on the ὕλη of the cross to which he is attached in his passion).[9] It is clear that this vocabulary can easily be used in such a way as to imply a "real" passion on the part of the Saviour and an incarnation in a material body,[10] and it is a

---

[8] In *Tri. Trac.*, the word "separation" does not, in fact, occur in this context (closest is 123:3–11). Cf., however, *Exc.* 3:2 τὸν μέν χοῦν καθάπερ τέφραν ἀπέφυσα καὶ ἐχώριζεν (i.e., he expired and disjoined himself); *Gos. Phil.* 68:25–26: "'[My] God, my God, why, O lord, have you forsaken me?': He spoke these words on the cross; for he had separated himself (ⲁϥⲡⲱⲣϫ) from that place"; also cf. *Gos. Truth* 20:32: "he stripped himself."

[9] See below, 91, 99, 186–87, 276–77.

[10] Cf. *Tri. Trac.* 65:4–23, 114:30–37, 124:25–125:24; above, 56–57, and the commentary in Thomassen and Painchaud, *Traité tripartite*. The references to the crucifixion in *Gos. Phil.* (63:21–24, 68:26–29, 73:8–15) point in the same direction.

likely assumption that that is precisely what they did imply at the time when this correlation of protology and staurology was first devised in the Valentinian tradition. Thus the present author's use of the concept of withdrawal and contraction to define a passion-free and immaterial presence of the Saviour in the world rests on a particular interpretation of that concept, one which was not the only one possible in a Valentinian context, nor probably what was originally intended by it.[11]

In consequence, it would seem that the author has inherited the soteriological model of mutual participation between the Saviour and the ones he comes to save. However, by denying the association of the Saviour with matter, as well as his passion, and by transferring these notions instead to the psychic Christ, the theoretical justification for the Saviour's own descent into the world is lost from sight. As a further result, the salvation of the spirituals becomes a difficult idea. At one point, it seems that the function of participatory salvation is transferred to the psychic Christ even with regard to the spirituals (61:3). In another passage it is, on the contrary, asserted that it is the Saviour himself, rather than the psychic Christ, who effects the salvation of the spirituals (62:3). Finally, however, it is also claimed that the spiritual element is "saved by nature" (φύσει σῳζόμενον, 56:3). This is the same position as is taken in Irenaeus' main source (*Haer.* I 6:2), leading to the logical conclusion that the spirituals do not need to be saved by a Saviour at all.

Explanation of these Inconsistencies

These inconsistencies can be explained as a result of the complications that arise from the inclusion of the category of the psychics in a previously established model of salvation by mutual participation between the Saviour and the spirituals. Such an inclusion could only have the effect, however, of dissolving the logic of reciprocity on

---

[11] The same type of interpretation is found in Iren. *Haer.* I 4:1, which describes the mission of Christ to Achamoth: "Christ took pity on (οἰκτείραντα) her, extended himself through the cross (διὰ τοῦ σταυροῦ ἐπεκταθέντα) and, by his own power, imparted to her form, but only in respect of substance, not of knowledge. Having done this, he hastened back above and withdrew his power (ἀναδραμεῖν, συστείλαντα αὐτοῦ τὴν δύναμιν)." The passion associated with the extension and the withdrawal is here circumscribed as compassion, or pity.

which the model rests. The exchange of material and passible existence for spiritual being through the spiritual Saviour's incarnation and passion could not be made to apply to the psychics *as well as* to the spirituals, since a defining characteristic of the psychics is precisely that they are not spiritual. The spiritual Saviour cannot share in the passions of the psychics, nor can they partake of his spirituality. The figure of the psychic Christ is introduced to rectify this problem, but through the resulting transference of the passion motif to this figure, the soteriological mutuality of the Saviour and the spirituals is lost along the way, so that the rationale of the Saviour's incarnation is removed and the salvation of the spirituals becomes an ambiguous issue.

The logical problems contained in the text can be interpreted as the result of a desire to accord a place to the psychics in Valentinian soteriology generally, and in the concept of the church-body specifically. This desire would then reflect an interest in categorising the non-Valentinian Christians in ecclesiological and soteriological terms, an interest which, in turn, may be related to specific religious-social contexts in which the proponents of these theories found themselves. It is also possible, however, to interpret this text as a logical transformation of the soteriological model of mutual participation, and as an attempt to resolve tensions inherent in the model itself. As was shown in the study of the soteriology of *Tri. Trac.* above (chapter 5), that model presupposes that the Saviour both acts as the provider of salvation and serves as the type of its recipient. This situation entails a dialectic assuming the simultaneous identity and non-identity of giver and receiver, the active and the passive, the type-sign and the act-event, and even of the spiritual and the material. In the soteriologies of Irenaeus' treatise and the third section of *Exc.*, however, this identity of the agent and the personified type of salvation is split in two, so that the spiritual Saviour appears primarily in the active role of the agonistic provider of salvation (58:1, 61:6–7), whereas the psychic Christ assumes that of the suffering Saviour who himself needs to be saved. The paradoxical notion of the redeemed redeemer is thus resolved by a distinction between two different figures:

Redeemer	Redeemed
(the spiritual Saviour)	(the psychic Christ)

From this point of view, the distinction between spiritual and psy-
chic in this soteriological theory can be interpreted as an attempt to
resolve an inherent contradiction in the notion of the redeemed
redeemer.

On closer examination, however, the situation becomes less clear-
cut, because each of these separate figures in turn exhibits character-
istics of the original unified figure. The psychic Christ is consubstantial
with, and acts as Saviour for, psychic humans. At the same time he
is himself saved from passion and death on the cross by the action
of the spiritual Saviour. And the description of the spiritual Saviour
still contains the motif of the spirit coming down at the Jordan,
which belongs to the notion of the redeemed redeemer. Furthermore,
a combination of both roles is presupposed in the description of the
saving action of the spiritual Saviour vis-à-vis the psychic Christ: it
is precisely the power that descended on him at his baptism which
equips him to destroy death and thereby to redeem the psychic
Christ (61:6–7). All these elements taken together give the following
structure:

Redeemer (the descent)	Redeemed (the reception of the Spirit)		
Redeemer (the spiritual Saviour)		Redeemed (the psychic Christ)	
		Redeemer (delivering the souls to the father)	Redeemed (from passion and death by the Saviour)

In this way, the initial problem of the ambiguous unity of the sav-
iour figure is not really resolved, but is rather duplicated. Instead of
a clear-cut distinction between one figure who is the redeeming agent
and another who personifies the type of the redeemed, we end up
with two who are both, and whose mutual relationship too still retains
the traces of their original unity.[12]

---

[12] It may be remarked here that this reduplication has a structural analogy in
the protology of this group of systems, where the duality-in-unity of Father and
Son is transformed into a primal Tetrad: cf. below.

This complex double identity and non-identity of redeemer and redeemed produces added ambiguity with regard to the soteriological functions of the redeemer figure(s). From one point of view the spiritual Saviour is the saviour of spiritual humans, and the psychic Christ that of the psychics. However, in so far as the spiritual Saviour appears only in the role as redeemer, and not as type of the redeemed, he can no longer, in the logic of this system, serve directly as saviour of the spirituals. The object of his salvific act is instead the psychic Christ, and thus indirectly the psychics. The spirituals must then be defined either as not needing salvation ("saved by nature"), or as saved through the psychic Christ—and as we saw, both of these solutions are suggested by the texts, though the first seems to have become the one generally adopted in this branch of Valentinian soteriology.

Furthermore, the participation of the spiritual element in the descent of the Saviour can no longer be justified in terms of the symbolic parallelism between the Saviour and the ones who will be saved, and through the notion that the empirically existing spirituals receive their transcendent selves through the manifestation of the Saviour in this world. Since the rationale of this parallelism has been dissolved through the distinction of the redeeming spiritual Saviour and the redeemed psychic Christ, this participatory descent can no longer be seen as the mythological expression of a soteriology purporting to unite like with like, that is, a soteriology where the spiritual elements coming down are substantially identical with the spiritual individuals receiving them here on earth. Instead, the purpose of the descent tends to be seen as an educational and salvific mission of the spirituals directed towards the substantially distinct race of the psychics. In an alternative solution, which we have also encountered above, the earthly presence of the already saved spirituals is justified by a sort of purgatorial idea: they are here to grow in wisdom and maturity. In either case, however, the logic of the co-descent idea is undermined. Since the motive underlying that idea was that of a salvation of the spirituals on earth by transmitting to them their real identities, it no longer functions well together with a theory which assumes that the spirituals possess their identity already. Just as in the case of the spiritual Saviour, where the double notions of his birth *and* his baptism seem redundant and contradictory in so far as his function is restricted to that of being the redeemer who intervenes with salvific power from above, so the position of the spirituals becomes highly ambiguous: either they possess their spiritual identity

already before the advent of the Saviour, and the notion of his bring-
ing down to them their true selves becomes superfluous, or the spir-
itual kind never existed on earth in the first place, but only descended
together with the Saviour in order to perform its task. The tendency
in Irenaeus' main system and *Exc.* section C goes in the direction
of the first of these two solutions, together with the affirmation that
the primary purpose of the Saviour's advent was to save the psy-
chics; nevertheless the two texts have failed to adjust the theory of
the body of the Saviour and the mytho-biographical account of his
earthly manifestation in accordance with this tendency.

CHAPTER EIGHT

THE SOTERIOLOGY OF IREN. *HAER.* I 7:2

This text is introduced by Irenaeus as a variant in relation to the main system (εἰσὶ δὲ οἱ λέγοντες), and thus comes from a different source document:

> There are also some who say that the Demiurge too brought forth a Christ, his own son, as a psychic being like himself, and spoke concerning him through the prophets. This is the one who passed through Mary as water passes through a pipe;[1] and there descended upon him at baptism, in the form of a dove, the Saviour out of all (the aeons) from the Pleroma. In him there existed (γεγονέναι) also the spiritual seed from the Mother. They hold, therefore, that our Lord was compounded (σύνθετον) from these four (parts) and thus represented the type (ἀποσῴζοντα τὸν τύπον) of the original and primal Tetrad: from the spiritual, that which came from Achamoth; from the psychic, what came from the Demiurge; from the *oikonomia*, what was prepared with ineffable art; and from the Saviour, what the dove was which came upon him. And he is said to have remained free from suffering (ἀπαθῆ διαμεμενηκέναι)—for it was impossible that he should suffer, since he was unconquerable and invisible—and accordingly, when he was brought before Pilate, the spirit of Christ which had been placed in him was taken away (ἦρθαι . . . τὸ εἰς αὐτὸν κατατεθὲν πνεῦμα Χριστοῦ). Moreover, in their opinion, the seed which was from his mother also did not experience suffering, for it too was impassible, being spiritual and invisible even to the Demiurge himself. In the end, then, they hold that the psychic Christ, and the one who was prepared from the *oikonomia*, suffered in order to provide a symbolic representation, so that through him the Mother might show forth the type of the Christ above, who extended himself through the Cross and imparted the substantial form to Sophia (ἔπαθεν δὲ λοιπὸν ὁ κατ᾽ αὐτοὺς ψυχικὸς Χριστὸς καὶ ὁ ἐκ τῆς οἰκονομίας κατεσκευασμένος μυστηριωδῶς, ἵν᾽ ἐπιδείξῃ <δι᾽> αὐτοῦ ἡ μήτηρ τὸν τύπον τοῦ ἄνω Χριστοῦ, ἐκείνου τοῦ ἐπεκταθέντος τῷ σταυρῷ καὶ μορφώσαντος τὴν Ἀχαμὼθ μόρφωσιν τὴν κατ᾽ οὐσίαν).

---

[1] For this idea, see Tardieu, "Tuyau." It must be said, however, that, contrary to the impression created by Tardieu's article, the idea is not typical of Valentinian Christology in general. It is found in no other Valentinian source, and the many heresiological texts, collected by Tardieu, which attribute the idea to the Valentinians are probably all dependent on this one passage in Irenaeus.

According to this account, the Saviour is neither born, nor suffers, nor is baptised. Instead, there is a psychic Christ, the Demiurge's son, who experiences these things. The Saviour enters the world only in so far as he descends upon the psychic Christ at the latter's baptism. This is also the moment when the spiritual seed enters the world. None of these events has any soteriological effect or function as an act; instead, they are symbols to be appreciated through *gnosis*. Correspondingly, the spiritual seed itself is not subject to suffering, and does not need redemption through an act.

This version can be regarded as a simplification vis-à-vis the accumulated complexities offered by Irenaeus' main system and *Exc.* 43:2–65. In terms of tradition history it is closely related to Irenaeus' main system. This is evident from the presence of the name Achamoth, as well as from the description of the psychic body from the *oikonomia*, κατεσκευασμένον ἀρρήτῳ τέχνῃ, which is literally identical with the formula in Iren. *Haer.* I 6:1. Furthermore, the text distinguishes four parts of the body of the Saviour. This is the case as well in the parallel versions of Iren. *Haer.* I 6:1 and *Exc.* 58–62, although in the present text the number four is made more explicit and is emphasised, in order to establish a numerological homology with the primal Tetrad of the Pleroma. Particular attention should be paid, however, to the sequence in which the various components of the Saviour's body is presented: ἔκ τε τοῦ πνευματικοῦ, ὃ ἦν ἀπὸ τῆς Ἀχαμώθ, καὶ ἐκ τοῦ ψυχικοῦ, ὃ ἦν ἀπὸ τοῦ δημιουργοῦ, καὶ ἐκ τῆς οἰκονομίας, ὃ ἦν κατεσκευασμένον ἀρρήτῳ τέχνῃ, καὶ ἐκ τοῦ σωτῆρος, ὃ ἦν <ἡ> κατελθοῦσα εἰς αὐτὸν περιστερά. It will be seen that the sequence corresponds essentially to the account of the descent found in the two other versions:

  the spiritual seed
+ the psychic from the Demiurge
+ the *oikonomia*-body
+ the Saviour in the shape of the dove.

The order of the first three components appears to represent a fixed tradition, based on the notion that the Saviour successively put on these layers of his person during his descent and incarnation. The position of the Saviour himself at the end of the list breaks with this logical order of successive accretions, and thereby reveals itself as a secondary addition. The account of the salvific event given in the text itself, moreover, begins with the psychic Christ, says nothing

about the *oikonomia*-body, and thereafter has the Saviour descend, together with the spiritual seed, upon the psychic Christ at baptism. Thus there is incongruity between this account and the order in which the parts of the Saviour's body are enumerated,[2] which shows that the order of enumeration has been taken over from older sources, and thus that the version of the Saviour's descent found in Iren. *Haer.* I 7:2 represents a later stage in the tradition history than the versions of Iren. *Haer.* I 6:1 and *Exc.* 58–62, which are both consistent with that order.

This relative chronology of Iren. *Haer.* I 7:2 vis-à-vis Iren. *Haer.* I 6:1 and *Exc.* 58–62, which can thus be established on textual grounds, is consistent with an interpretation of these texts which sees them as expressing a successive development of Valentinian soteriological doctrine motivated by an internal logic. In such a perspective, the doctrine of Iren. *Haer.* I 7:2 represents the endpoint of a trajectory starting with the soteriology of mutual participation and the notion of the redeemed redeemer found in Theodotus and *Tri. Trac.* The paradoxes of this soteriology are engaged by Iren. *Haer.* I 6:1 and *Exc.* 58–62, which distinguish between the redeeming spiritual Saviour and a redeemed psychic Christ, and deny the passion of the Saviour. These texts, however, still let the spiritual Saviour be born into this world and be baptised, and they also produce contradictory statements about the spirituals' need for salvation. Finally, in Iren. *Haer.* I 7:2, these remnants of the soteriology of mutual participation have definitively disappeared. There, the Saviour does not share in the condition of humanity by being born, and he is not baptised. Instead, the descent of the Saviour is now identified with the spirit that came down on the psychic Christ in baptism. Correspondingly, the seed of Sophia that descends with the Saviour at baptism never suffers from contact with matter either; the spirituals are invulnerable to the worldly passions, and their salvation is a pre-established given. Finally, together with the last traces of a soteriology of incarnation, the salvific event has also lost any significance as an empirical occurrence in history. What remains is a purely symbolic manifestation: the psychic Christ suffered in order to represent,

---

[2] From the account in I 7:2 either of the following two enumeration orders might have been produced: (1) psychic Christ (+ *oikonomia*-body) + Saviour + spiritual seed, or (2) Saviour + spiritual seed + psychic Christ (+ *oikonomia*-body), but not the present order, which begins with the spiritual seed and ends with the Saviour.

as a *typos*, the metaphysical idea that the pleromatic Christ "extended himself"[3] outside the Limit in order to impart form to Sophia.

Similarly, the fourfold composition of the Saviour "represented the type of the original and primal Tetrad." In this way salvation is hardly conceivable any longer as an act. The descent of the Saviour served the purpose of illustrating spiritual truths, of symbolising realities in the hypercosmic realm, and salvation becomes equivalent to the possession of knowledge about these realities. The salvific importance of the descent lies not in what it did, but in what it signified, which is something other than the act-event of the descent itself, and for which this latter serves as nothing more than an arbitrary signifier. Thus, together with the abandonment of the soteriological theory of mutual participation, the unity of act-event and symbol in the representation of salvation has been dissolved.

---

[3] For this term cf. 91, 99, 186–87, 276–77.

THE SOTERIOLOGY OF HIPP. *HAER.* VI 29–36

It is generally recognised that Hippolytus' version of "the" Valentinian system resembles that of Irenaeus on several points. Hippolytus' source document distinguished, for example, between two Sophias. Nevertheless, there are also notable differences; for example, the designation ἡ ἔξω Σοφία is used instead of Achamoth, and the Saviour who is sent out to her from the Pleroma is named ὁ κοινὸς τοῦ πληρώματος καρπός. Peculiar as well is the interpretation of the historical appearance of Jesus. To see this peculiarity properly, however, we must place the account of this event within the context of the salvation process as a whole, as it is construed by this text.

"The Joint Fruit of the Pleroma," we are told, was sent forth as a σύζυγος for the external Sophia, to heal the passions she experienced while longing for Christ, who had abandoned her (32:4). After preparing the creation of the world and putting the Demiurge in place, the Joint Fruit brings forth together with Sophia seventy *logoi*, "which are heavenly angels who live in the Jerusalem above, which is in Heaven" (34:3).[1]

Next, we are told how the Demiurge created material bodies and breathed into them souls, the latter being what is known as "the inner man" (34:4–5). However, the situation of the soul is different in different types of human beings:

> This material man, in their view, is like an inn, or residence, either of the soul alone, or of the soul and demons, or even of the soul and *logoi*—which *logoi* have been sown from above, from the Joint Fruit of the Pleroma and from Sophia, into this world and they dwell in an earthly body if no demons reside with the soul. (34:6)

---

[1] The passage in full: προβεβλήκασιν ἡ Σοφία, ἥτις ἐστὶ μήτηρ πάντων τῶν ζώντων κατ᾽ αὐτούς, καὶ ὁ κοινὸς τοῦ πληρώματος καρπός, ἑβδομήκοντα λόγους, οἵτινές εἰσιν ἄγγελοι ἐπουράνιοι, πολιτευόμενοι ἐν Ἰερουσαλὴμ τῇ ἄνω, τῇ ἐν οὐρανοῖς. αὕτη γάρ ἐστι <ἡ> Ἰερουσαλὴμ ἡ ἔξω Σοφία, καὶ ὁ νυμφίος αὐτῆς ὁ κοινὸς τοῦ πληρώματος καρπός, 34:3–4.

The Demiurge executed the work of creation and inspired prophe-
cies, but was ignorant of the fact that everything he did was mas-
terminded by Sophia from a sphere above and hidden to him. This
ignorance on the part of the Demiurge, as well as of the souls he
had made, characterises the entire history of the world until the
advent of Jesus:

> When the creation came to an end, and when, finally, there was to
> take place "the revelation of the sons of God" [Rom 8:19]—that is,
> of the Demiurge—which was concealed and in which the psychic man
> was hidden and had "a veil upon his heart" [2 Cor 3:15]—when the
> veil was to be taken away and these mysteries revealed, then Jesus was
> born through Mary the virgin, according to that which is declared:
> "The Holy Spirit will come upon you"—the Spirit is Sophia—"and
> the power of the Most High will overshadow you"—the Most High
> is the Demiurge—"therefore that which is born through you will be
> called holy" [Luke 1:35]. For he has not been born from the Most
> High alone, as those created in the likeness of Adam were created by
> the Most High alone, that is, by the Demiurge. Rather, Jesus is the
> "New Man" [Eph 2:15, 4:24], coming from the Holy Spirit <and from
> the Most High,> that is, from Sophia and the Demiurge, in order
> that the Demiurge might complete the formation and equipment of
> his body, but the Holy Spirit provide his essence, and a heavenly Logos
> come into being from the Ogdoad, born through Mary. (35:2–4)

As in Iren. *Haer.* I 6:1, and *Exc.* 58–62, the Saviour is a composite
of spirit and soul, which derive from Sophia and the Demiurge
respectively. However, the soteriological function of this composition
is not made clear. The impression given is rather that this theory,
together with the use of Luke 1:35 as a proof-text, occurs here as
a fossilised rudiment of an older soteriology. In fact, "the sons of
God," who are to be revealed by the advent of Jesus, are the offspring
of the Demiurge; it is they who have been living under the veil of
ignorance throughout history; and it is they, the souls, who are "the
inner man" residing in the material body (34:5). The spirituals, on
the other hand, are not a target of the Saviour's mission. The rea-
son for this is that Hippolytus' treatise considers the salvation of the
spiritual to have taken place already in the Ogdoad:

> When the things above had been set right, it was necessary, as a con-
> sequence, that the things here below should be rectified as well (ἔδει
> οὖν διωρθωμένων τῶν ἄνω κατὰ τὴν ἀκολουθίαν καὶ τὰ ἐνθάδε τυχεῖν
> διορθώσεως). Therefore, Jesus the Saviour was born through Mary in
> order that he might set right the things here, just as Christ, who had

been produced as an addition (to the other aeons) by Mind and Truth, had rectified the passions of the external Sophia, the abortion. And so the Saviour who was born through Mary came to set right the passions of the soul.

There are thus, according to them, three Christs; the one brought forth by Mind and Truth along with the Holy Spirit; the Joint Fruit of the Pleroma, the partner (ἰσόζυγος) of the external Sophia, she who is also called Holy Spirit but is inferior to the first; and, thirdly, the one born through Mary for the purpose of rectifying this creation of ours. (36:3–4)

In accordance with the doctrine of the double Sophia, which Hippolytus' treatise shares with that of Irenaeus, Christ (together with the Holy Spirit) was first sent out to the external Sophia, formed her and made her into "a perfect aeon," the Ogdoad (31:7). Christ then withdrew, leaving Sophia to lament over her loss. It is in response to this bereavement that the "Joint Fruit of the Pleroma" is sent out to her as a second emission. Unlike Irenaeus' treatise, however (cf. Iren. *Haer.* I 7:1), the one used by Hippolytus seems to have regarded the union of Sophia and the Joint Fruit as having been consummated during this encounter. The seventy *logoi* in the heavenly Jerusalem are the offspring of this union, rather than images produced by Sophia alone after the likeness of the Saviour and his accompanying angels. The *logoi* who are sown into earthly bodies are consequently immune from passion: in such persons "no demons reside with the soul" (34:6).

A reason for the earthly presence of the spiritual *logoi* is not given. What is clear, at any rate, is that "the things above" have already been "set right," and that it is the διόρθωσις of "the things here below" which is the purpose of the advent of Jesus—that is, to set right the souls who are the offspring of the Demiurge, the psychics, who have had to share their bodily dwellings with demons and who have remained ignorant of the realities beyond the sphere of the Demiurge. This orientation towards the soteriology of the psychics places Hippolytus' treatise in the same group of texts as Iren. *Haer.* I 1–8 and *Exc.* 58–62. In fact, it is more consistent and exclusive in this orientation than those two texts, and in that respect has most in common with Iren. *Haer.* I 7:2.

Unlike the latter text, however, Hippolytus' Jesus is not a psychic Christ. The figure who is born through Mary is evidently a spiritual being with a psychic body. We are also told nothing about his baptism or his crucifixion. It seems that the soteriological function of

his advent is primarily that of revealing knowledge to the psychics.
As far as we are able to judge from Hippolytus' report (which may
of course be incomplete on this point), the incarnation, baptism and
death of Jesus are accorded no soteriological significance in them-
selves in his Valentinian source.

PROVISIONAL CONCLUSIONS

The texts studied in the preceding chapters fall into two groups from the point of view of their soteriology. Theodotus and *Tri. Trac.* display what we have called a soteriology of mutual participation: the Saviour shares the condition of the spirituals he comes to save, is incarnated in a body, suffers, and needs to be redeemed himself through being baptised. Through this process, the material existence of the spirituals is exchanged for spiritual being, represented by the church of the body of the Saviour which came down together with him. The other group of texts—Irenaeus' main system, *Exc.* section C, Iren. *Haer.* I 7:2, and Hippolytus' treatise—shifts the emphasis towards the salvation of the psychics. The spirituals do not need salvation, or are saved already by virtue of their inherent nature. In consequence, the soteriology of mutual participation, implying the Saviour's own suffering and need of redemption, is abandoned, though remnants of that theory can still be detected in *Exc.* section C and in Irenaeus' main system (*Haer.* I 6:1).

Organising these observations in the form of a historical hypothesis, we conclude that the first group not only represents eastern Valentinian doctrine but should also be given priority in terms of relative chronology vis-à-vis the second group. The latter group of texts—representing western Valentinianism—in fact presupposes the soteriology of mutual participation in so far as the soteriologies they profess can be explained as transformations of that doctrine. Within this group, moreover, the system of Hippolytus and Iren. *Haer.* I 7:2 have moved one step further than the main system of Irenaeus and *Exc.* section C in resolving the pre-saved nature of the spirituals.

These relationships may be visualised in the form of a stemma, in the following manner:

```
                        (?Valentinus)


   Eastern  Valentinianism          Western  Valentinianism

                                              X


                                                    Y


                                           Iren.        Exc. C


           Hipp.                        Iren. I 7:2
```
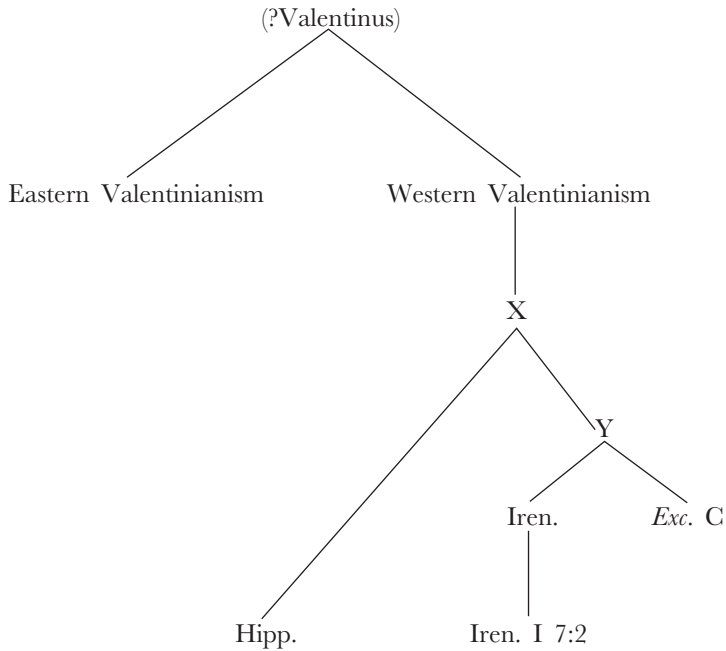
The stemma suggests that Irenaeus' main system and *Exc.* 43:2–65
have a common source, which in turn has shared roots with the
treatise used by Hippolytus. The agreements between Iren. and *Exc.*
C are quite close, whereas those between the latter two and Hippolytus
are much looser. They nevertheless have in common the doctrine
of the two Sophias, a fact that situates the treatise used by Hippolytus
within the same larger family of western Valentinian tradition.

   An attempt to identify the links in the tradition with personal
names is not made here. As was noted above (chapter 4), Heracleon
and Ptolemy are named by Hippolytus as prominent leaders of west-
ern Valentinianism, and Irenaeus attributes his main system to the
followers of Ptolemy (above, chapter 1). We shall come back to these
questions later. Before that, we need to take a closer look at east-
ern Valentinianism.

EASTERN SOTERIOLOGIES:
THE TREATISE ON RESURRECTION

Theodotus and *Tri. Trac.* are not the only texts that document the soteriology of mutual participation. It is in fact attested in several other Nag Hammadi tractates, which thus can be added to the corpus of eastern Valentinian texts and extend our knowledge of eastern Valentinian doctrine.

The Treatise on Resurrection (NHC I, *4*) is a good candidate for inclusion in this group. Like *Tri. Trac.*, *Treat. Res.* assumes an incarnation of the Saviour in the *flesh* (ⲉϥϣⲟⲟⲡ ϩⲛ̄ ⲥⲁⲣⲝ, 44:14–15). Moreover, he had a double nature, being both Son of God and Son of Man (44:21–33). This was necessary, "in order that, on the one hand, he might vanquish death through his being Son of God, and that, on the other, through the Son of Man the restoration to the Pleroma might come about" (44:26–33). The dual nature of the Saviour—a spiritual being with a material body—is characteristic of the soteriology of mutual participation.

The *suffering* of the Saviour is affirmed, with a free quotation from Paul: "We suffered with him, and we arose with him, and we went to heaven with him" (45:25–28).[1] He also *died* and rose from the dead: "We have believed that he rose from among the dead" (46:15–17). From these passages it is clear that the author not only affirms the suffering and death of the Saviour, but also uses a soteriological theory of mutual participation: the Saviour has shared in "our" sufferings (and, by implication, death); "we," therefore, are able to share in his resurrection. This mutual sharing, moreover, is an effect of the Saviour's double nature:

> The Saviour swallowed death. . . . For he put aside the perishable world and exchanged it for an imperishable aeon (ⲁϥⲕⲱⲉ ⲛ̄ⲅⲁⲣ ⲁϩⲣⲏ̈ⲓ ⲙ̄ⲡⲕⲟⲥⲙⲟⲥ ⲉϣⲁϥⲧⲉⲕⲟ ⲁϥϣⲱ̄ⲧ[ϥ̄] ⲁϩⲟⲩⲛ ⲁⲩⲁⲓⲱⲛ ⲛ̄ⲁⲧⲧⲉⲕⲟ). He

---

[1] The "quotation" is a mixture of Rom 8:17 and Eph 2:5–6, with echoes of other Pauline texts as well; cf. M.L. Peel's commentary in Attridge, *Nag Hammadi Codex I*, II 162.

raised himself up, having swallowed the visible by means of the invis-
ible, and gave us the way to our immortality. (45:14–23)

The notion of "swallowing"—a term from Paul[2]—also appears in
46:1, where the psychic and corporeal resurrection are said to be
swallowed by the spiritual one; and in 49:3–4, where darkness is
"swallowed" by light. The notion refers to an act and a mechanism
of substitution: the Saviour is, by virtue of being both a human of
flesh and a spiritual, divine being, able to eliminate corporeality and
substitute for it spiritual existence, and this takes place through his
resurrection.

Concomitant to this argument is the idea that the physical world
is unreal, a mere apparition; thus the substitution of spirit for matter
may also be described as the filling up of something which is a mere
void—a substitution of fullness for deficiency (48:14–15, 48:30–49:6).
More important for our purposes, however, is how this substitution
is effected by means of the double nature of the Saviour. If the
Saviour was able to "put aside" the world and exchange it for imper-
ishability, this must mean that, having first assumed flesh in order
to be like the ones he had come to restore to the Pleroma (44:30–32),
he subsequently, through being divine, eliminated corporeality and
replaced it with an imperishable form of being when he vanquished
death on the cross (44:27–29).[3] Through this act, the spirituals, too,
were liberated from the body and given access to imperishable
existence.[4]

---

[2] Cf. 1 Cor 15:54, 2 Cor 5:4.

[3] The act described by the terms "putting aside" and "exchange" implies both
a movement (an ascent) and a substitution of one thing for another. The "world"
which the Saviour leaves behind is in fact equivalent to the body which he aban-
dons on the cross, and the aeon to which he goes is not different from the imper-
ishable form of existence which replaces the abandoned body. This situation makes
the disagreements over the translation of these terms summarised by Peel (Attridge,
Nag Hammadi Codex I, II 161) rather inconsequential. From the linguistic point of
view, however, this means that the verb ϣⲓⲃⲉ in ⲁϥϣ︤ⲃ̄ⲧ̄[ϥ] may be translated
"exchange," but with the meaning of "replace," and that the object suffix may very
well refer back to ⲡⲕⲟⲥⲙⲟⲥ. The ideas are similar to *Gos. Truth* 20:28–34.

[4] Peel's commentary on *Treat. Res.* 45:17–23 (Attridge, *Nag Hammadi Codex I*, II
160) offers an interesting example of certain misconceptions (as we believe) of
Valentinian soteriology: "The author offers a summary of how the Savior conquered
death in four logical steps: (1) through casting off/withdrawing from the transitory
world; (2) through self-transformation into an imperishable, spiritual (= invisible)
aeon; (3) through ascent into the Pleroma from which he came as a pre-existent
'seed of Truth' (44:33–36); (4) thereby, opening to believers the way in which they
may achieve their own immortality. As Gaffron has pointed out (*Die Zeit Jesu*, 222),

The idea of the church, or the seed of Sophia, as the spiritual body of the Saviour is not explicitly attested in *Treat. Res.* However, we do find something similar. The revelation of truth brought about "the manifestation of the elect" (ⲡⲟⲩⲱⲛϩ̄ ⲁⲃⲁⲗ . . . ⲙ̄ⲡⲉⲧⲥⲁⲧⲛ̄, 45:10–11). This notion of "being manifested," recurs elsewhere in the text as well: "Now if we are manifest in this world wearing him, we are that one's beams, and we are embraced by him . . ." (45:28–34); "What, then, is the resurrection? It is always the disclosure of those who have arisen (ⲡϭⲱⲗⲛ̄ ⲁⲃⲁⲗ . . . ⲛ̄ⲛⲉⲧⲁϩⲧⲱⲟⲩⲛ)" (48:3–6). We have already encountered this notion in *Tri. Trac.*[5] It describes salvation as the disclosure of the pre-established identities of the saved. While *Treat. Res.* does not present this event as the manifestation of a pre-existent church, the text does suggest that it came about through the salvific work of the Saviour, that is, through his incarnation, suffering and resurrection. The elect are made manifest because they share in this work. Through his resurrection, they are manifested as having themselves been resurrected. That is to say that while from one point of view the resurrection of the Saviour is an act that effectively brings about *their* resurrection, from another point of view it simply reveals the identities of the elect as essentially spiritual, pre-existent beings—their pre-established resurrectedness, as it were. It is from this latter point of view that it may be possible to say that in his act of redemption, the Saviour brought down to earth together with him the true identities of the elect in the form of a spiritual church, consubstantial with the Saviour as his body. This further step, however, is not taken, or is at least not explicitly articulated, in *Treat. Res.*

---

in these steps our author shows no interest in any historical events of saving importance." What is missing in this summary is a recognition of the fact that the Saviour had to come into "the perishable world" before he could cast it off, and that this act—the incarnation, in fact—is no less significant as an indispensable step in the overall logic of salvation, than the Saviour's subsequent de-carnation. Furthermore, the incarnation is nothing if not a historical event: the Saviour could not become a human being without also entering history. The quoted remarks reveal a typical blind spot in the perception of Valentinian soteriology—one that is attributable, it may be presumed, to ingrained, but indefensible, preconceptions about Valentinian theology as "myth," and therefore essentially different from orthodox Christian salvation "history."

[5] Above, chapter 5, especially the section "The heavenly and the earthly church." Also cf. below, chapter 24.

EASTERN SOTERIOLOGIES:
THE INTERPRETATION OF KNOWLEDGE

Interp. Know. is a homily, or a letter,[1] whose main concern is to encourage its auditors or readers to endure adversity, and to behave in a manner worthy of members of the church. The theme of the sufferings and humiliations of the Saviour, including his debasement in death, is introduced from the point of view of their function as a model for the believers:

> He was crucified and he died—not his own death, for he did not deserve to die, [but for the sake of] the church of mort[als.] He [was na]iled, so that [they] might hold on to him in the church, [because he teac]hes it by means of humiliations, having [end]ured in his suffering. Jesus in fact is a mo[del] (ⲉⲓ[ⲛⲉ]) for us because of [. . .]. (5:30–38)[2]

The final phrase (which ends in a lacuna) does not imply that the Saviour's suffering and death are "merely" symbolic. Rather, the passage suggests that in addition to the instructive value of the death on the cross, it also has a direct redemptive effect as a vicarious death for the benefit of mortal men. That this is in fact the case is confirmed by other passages in the text. In 10:24–38, the soul is portrayed as the lost sheep and the Saviour as the Good Shepherd who brings it back:

> I made myself quite small (ⲁⲉⲓⲥⲃⲁⲕ), in order that through my humiliation (ⲑⲃ̄ⲃⲓⲟ) I might bring you (f.sg.; i.e., the soul) back to that high rank, the place from which you fell when you were brought down into this pit. If you (f.sg.) believe in me, I shall raise you up, by means of this shape that you see. I shall carry you on my shoulders. (10:27–34)

---

[1] Emmel, "Exploring the Pathway," argues that the tractate is a letter written to an individual, rather than a homily, as has been generally assumed. The question of the genre of *Inter. Know.* is not important for the present argument.

[2] Translations from *Interp. Know.* are my own, and are based on the text in the forthcoming BCNH edition by W.-P. Funk, Louis Painchaud, and Einar Thomassen.

The phrase "becoming small" refers to the incarnation of the Saviour in a human shape. He assumes the smallness and the humbleness of the human soul in order to elevate it to its original rank and greatness; thus the redemption is effected by an act of substitution.[3]

A little later in the text this theme is developed with reference to Phil 2:7–9:

> He] emptied [himself, and he] relinquished [his majesty], taking scorn [in exch]ange for the Name. [For] our [sakes he endured] the scorn. He ap[pea]red in flesh, and [he came] as a [prov]ider. He has [no] need of the glory [that] is [not his own]. He possesses his [own glory] with the [Father], which is (that of being) the Son. [He] came, more-over, so that *we* might be made glorious [through *his*] humiliation, [as he] dwelled in these humble [places]. Indeed, through him who was despised do we receive the re[mission] of sins. From the [one who] was scorned and redeemed do we receive grace. Who, then, saved the one who was scorned? It is the effluence of the Name. For just as flesh needs to have a name, so [this] flesh is an aeon that Sophia brought forth. [He] received the Greatness that came down that the aeon might enter the one who was scorned, so that we might shed the disgraceful skin (?) (we were wearing) and be born once more in the flesh [and] the blood of [. . .] (12:13–38)

Whereas the soteriology of participation and exchange is quite clear in this section, the last part of it presents some difficult problems. The notion that the Saviour himself needed to be saved from the condition to which he willingly submitted himself,[4] we have already encountered above (*Exc.* 22:6–7, *Tri. Trac.* 124:25–125:11). The question of who, then, was *his* saviour in turn, is given an answer that also accords with those texts: it is an ἀπόρροια—that is, an effluence from the Pleroma—of the "Name," also described as "the Greatness" in 12:34.[5]

---

[3] For "smallness" as a term used to describe the incarnation cf. *Tri. Trac.* 115:3–11, and above, 48–49.

[4] Pagels and Turner take the text to mean that "the one who was despised" and "the one who was redeemed" are two separate figures. This is untenable; cf. Plisch, *Auslegung*, 119–20; Franzmann, *Jesus*, 147.

[5] Franzmann, *Jesus*, 147, understands the Name to mean the Son, who is distinct from the Saviour and redeems him. However, the passage 12:19–22 clearly implies that "the Son" means the Saviour's transcendent status (his "glory with the Father") and is not a separate figure. Franzmann does not take into account that the text alludes to Phil 2:7–9, nor the technical significance of "the Name" in Valentinian soteriology.

The main difficulty of the text consists in understanding what is meant by the "flesh" (ⲥⲁⲣⲍ) that is "an aeon brought forth by Sophia" (12:32–33). Is this the same aeon as the one that in the next sentence is said to have entered into the one who was scorned (12:35–36)? If so, how is this to be reconciled with the statement that the flesh-aeon produced by Sophia needed a name, in the manner of all flesh (12:30–32),[6] and that the descending Name-Greatness is what filled this need?

The notion that the flesh of the Saviour is an aeon produced by Sophia can be understood on the basis of the soteriologies of Theodotus and *Tri. Trac.* studied above. It is the spiritual church and seed of Sophia that the Saviour puts on when he descends into the world. As we saw in the analysis of *Tri. Trac.*, however, this spiritual flesh-church-seed is itself imperfect and in need of redemption, at the same time as it also performs a salvific function vis-à-vis the potentially spiritual souls already dwelling in the cosmos. Redemption is thus a two-stage process: "The one who was scorned" receives the aeon-flesh, which in turn receives the Name-Greatness enabling it to be reintegrated into the Pleroma. This interpretation assumes that "the one who was scorned" here refers to the Saviour, who has been assimilated to the condition of the ones he has come to save after he relinquished his pre-existent Name, and that his aeon-body becomes soteriologically efficient only after it has received the Name. The governing perspective is apparently the situation of baptism, where the baptised are united with their heavenly-ecclesiastic counterparts, a process represented here as a rebirth in the flesh and the blood of the Saviour, and where also the Name is received that enables all the spiritual, after they have been thus united, to be reintegrated into the Pleroma.

---

[6] The argument seems to be a variant of an idea attested elsewhere in Valentinianism, that a name fills a deficiency and thus makes complete that which it names. Valentinus, frg. 5 Vö. (Clem. *Str.* IV 89:6–90:1), applied this idea to manufactured images, whose inferiority vis-à-vis their models is compensated for by the name attached to them (οὐ γὰρ αὐθεντικῶς εὑρέθη μορφή, ἀλλὰ τὸ ὄνομα ἐπλήρωσεν τὸ ὑστερῆσαν ἐν πλάσει, II 287:25–26 St.) (see below, 465–73); also cf. *Gos. Truth* 27:18.29, *Tri. Trac.* 61:14–18. The principle has also a sacramental dimension (the Name received in baptism), as well as a general metaphysical one (*Exc.* 31:3: name is fullness, absence of name is void). On the metaphorical level, the statement that "all flesh needs a name" is perhaps an allusion to Adam's naming of the animals in Gen 2:19–20.

The difficulty here, as in other texts, seems to arise from the para-doxes involved in the soteriology of mutual sharing, in which the Saviour acts both as the Saviour and the model of the saved at the same time, and is depicted as carrying a spiritual body while also debasing himself in a material one. He shares in the humiliation of the incarnated souls by assuming a material body, so that they may share in his spiritual body. In order to resolve the paradox—to pre-vent his spiritual body from being eliminated by his emptying him-self when he embraced the material—an additional saving agent is introduced: the Name. The Name not only redeems the Saviour, but also enables his spiritual body to retain its spirituality and thus its own redemptive capability. From this perspective, the one who is fully humiliated and emptied can only regain the fullness of his spirituality through this further agent that revalidates the spirit. In this chain of salvific agency the believers are saved through sharing in the Saviour's body, which in turn is saved by the Name.

EASTERN SOTERIOLOGIES: *THE GOSPEL OF PHILIP*

The Conception and the Composition of the Saviour

Gos. Phil. describes the conception of the Saviour in the following passage:

> Some have said that Mary conceived by the Holy Spirit. They are mistaken. They do not know what they say. When did a woman ever conceive by a woman? Mary is the virgin whom no power defiled. For the Hebrews—that is, the apostles and the followers of the apostles— this is a cause for condemnation. This virgin whom no power defiled [is] a [. . .]. The powers defil[ed] themselves. And the Lord [would] not have said "My [father who is] in heaven" unless [he] had another father (as well), but he would have said simply ["My father."] (55:23–36)

This passage is difficult, like many others in *Gos. Phil.* A key to its interpretation, however, may be found by taking into consideration that it alludes to Luke 1:35: Πνεῦμα ἅγιον ἐπελεύσεται ἐπὶ σέ, καὶ δύναμις ὑψίστου ἐπισκιάσει σοι—a verse frequently used by Valentinians to explain the birth of the Saviour.[1] In the present text, the author seems to be concerned with explaining the roles of "the Holy Spirit" and "the Power of the Most High" in the conception of the Saviour: Mary was neither made pregnant by the Holy Spirit, nor was she defiled by any kind of cosmic power. At first sight, the passage seems to deny, then, that either of them played any role in the conception and birth of the Saviour. This is not the case, however, as will soon become clear.

The last sentence of the passage states that the Lord had two fathers, the one in heaven and another one. Who is the other father? The answer is given in 73:8–19:

> Joseph the carpenter planted a garden because he needed wood for his trade. It is he who made the cross from the trees that he planted. And his seed hung on that which he planted. His seed was Jesus, and the plant was the cross.

---

[1] Cf. *Exc.* 60; Hipp. *Haer.* VI 35:3–4.7; Iren. *Haer.* I 15:3.

> But the tree of life is in the middle of the Garden. It is the olive tree. From it came the ointment, and through it the resurrection.

That Jesus is Joseph's seed can only mean that Joseph is Jesus' father.[2] A further question needs to be asked here, however: who is Joseph? In my judgement, there can hardly be any doubt that Joseph, the wood-worker and earthly father of Jesus, is interpreted by *Gos. Phil.* as a type of the Demiurge. The "wood" represents matter (ϣⲉ <*ὕλη), and the statement that Joseph's seed hung on the tree must therefore refer to the birth of Jesus in a material body.[3] The passage as such is extraordinarily rich in allusions. It refers not only to the material incarnation of Jesus, but to the crucifixion and to the story of the Garden of Eden as well. The final sentence, moreover, introduces yet another motif, the ointment of the initiation rite. This fusion of several motifs makes the interpretation very complex, and an attempt will be made to deal with this complexity shortly. For the moment, it may be concluded that the two fathers referred to in the passage quoted initially are the transcendent Father, on the one hand, and the Demiurge ("Joseph") on the other. The first is the origin of the Saviour's spiritual being, the second is the father of his material body.

What, then, of his mother? It is presupposed in the first passage quoted that the virgin Mary was the Saviour's mother. His conception was undefiled, and was not brought about by the Holy Spirit. The following passage tells us more about the conception:

> Jesus revealed [in the] Jordan the fullness [of the] kingdom of heaven. He who [was born] before the Entirety was born again; he [who] was already anointed was anointed again; he who was redeemed was once again redeemed.
>
> Truly, a mystery must be spoken. The Father of the Entirety joined with the virgin who had come down, and fire illuminated him on that day and revealed the great bridal chamber. Therefore, his body came into being on that day. It came forth from the bridal chamber as that which has come into being from the bridegroom and the bride. In this way Jesus restored the Entirety through it by means of these. And each of the disciples is to proceed to his rest.

---

[2] This has been well seen and argued by Schenke, *Philippus-Evangelium*, 211–12, 215.

[3] Cf. Thomassen, "How Valentinian," 268–69.

> Adam came into being from two virgins: from the Spirit and from the virgin earth. For this reason Christ was born from a virgin, so as to rectify the fall that happened in the beginning. (70:34–71:21)

Again, the text poses difficult problems.[4] The easiest part is perhaps the last paragraph. Here, a parallelism is established between the births of Adam and Christ. In order for this parallelism to be meaningful, however, it is logical to assume that the passage implies that not only Adam, but Christ as well had two virgin mothers.[5] The immediately preceding context makes this even more plausible. It describes how the body of the Saviour came into being from the union of the Father of the Entirety with a virgin. The virgin in this context is clearly Sophia. The two virgin mothers of the Saviour must be, therefore, Sophia and Mary. The analogy with Adam, moreover, suggests that Sophia represents a spiritual component in Christ, just as it was she who inserted the spiritual seed into Adam when he was created. Mary corresponds in turn to the virgin earth from which Adam was moulded, that is, she was the womb in which the undefiled conception of the Saviour's material body took place.

Thus all seems to hang together so far: Jesus Christ, the earthly Saviour, has two sets of parents. The Father of the Entirety and Sophia are the parents of his spiritual being, and the Demiurge-Joseph and Mary produced his material body.[6] At this point, however, we need to go back to the passage quoted at the beginning of this chapter, that is, 55:23–36. We now see that if that passage protests against Mary having been made pregnant by the Holy Spirit, this is not because the latter was not involved at all in the birth of Jesus, but because the Holy Spirit, that is, Sophia, is herself female and a virgin, and as such the mother of the Saviour's spiritual body. But how are we to understand the statement that no power defiled Mary? As was suggested above, that statement in all likelihood refers to Luke 1:35: δύναμις ὑψίστου ἐπισκιάσει σοι. The "power of the Most High" is usually interpreted as referring to the Demiurge in Valentinian exegesis,[7] and this is no doubt the case here as well—

---

[4] Cf. Schenke, *Philippus-Evangelium*, 419–21.

[5] Schenke, *Philippus-Evangelium*, 422.

[6] Trautmann ("Parenté," 274) and Franzmann (*Jesus*, 49–51) have both seen clearly that *Gos. Phil.* attributes two sets of parents to Jesus, though neither of them has appreciated that Joseph in reality means the Demiurge. Nor do they place the issue in the wider context of Valentinian doctrines about the Saviour's body.

[7] Cf. above, 90n1.

the Demiurge being the cosmic power *par excellence*. If, as we have argued, the Demiurge nevertheless is the father of the Saviour's material body, we are led to conclude that what that text claims is not that Mary was not made pregnant by the Demiurge, but that *in spite of* that she was not defiled. Or, in other words, the Saviour himself was not defiled by submitting himself to physical conception and assuming a human body.[8]

THE RITUAL CONTEXT OF THE GENERATION OF THE SAVIOUR'S BODY

By now it has been established that *Gos. Phil.* shows the same basic pattern as the other texts of the eastern group: the Saviour is a spiritual being in a material body.[9] The analysis might therefore end here. There are, however, several other passages in *Gos. Phil.* that are relevant in this context, and invite further discussion. For instance, the middle section of the last passage quoted above (70:34–71:21) describes the coming into being of the Saviour's "body." The Father of the Entirety united with Sophia and revealed the bridal chamber, and from the union of the bridegroom and the bride issued the Saviour's body. Obviously, this is not his material body, but another one, a spiritual body. Now, as has been shown, the spiritual body of the Saviour is the totality of the spiritual church, which the Saviour puts on as he descends into the world. The notion expresses, in terms of consubstantiality, the idea that those who will be saved share in the Saviour's redemptive act. This "sharing" is clearly formulated in the passage by the statement that, as a result of the union in the bridal chamber, each of the disciples may "proceed to his rest." The union has a redemptive function, opening up the bridal chamber for the "disciples" as well.

If this account is compared, however, with those of the systematic treatises, certain peculiarities become evident. The systematic treatises normally describe the following phases in the relationship of the Saviour and Sophia: (1) At the end of the pre-cosmic myth

---

[8] The theme of the Saviour's undefiled conception and birth is also found in *Tri. Trac.* 115:14–17.

[9] Without going into the details of exegesis, it may be observed that the following passage points in the same direction: "Christ has each one in himself: human being and angel, mystery and the Father" (56:13–15).

of Sophia, the Saviour shows himself to her, carrying inside him the forms of the entire Pleroma, or—what amounts to the same thing—being surrounded by angels. In response to this vision, Sophia emits the spiritual seed, or church. (2) At a later stage the Saviour assumes the spiritual seed as his body and descends into the world to be born there. (3) The ultimate unification of the Saviour and Sophia in the bridal chamber will take place in the future; then the spirituals too will be united with the angels and thus enter the Pleroma. The present text, however, seems to collapse all these phases into one; they all constitute aspects of a single event, which is the one redemptive act of the Saviour.

When, furthermore, did that act take place? The immediately most natural assumption would be that what is described in the passage relates to the birth and incarnation of the Saviour in this world. The preceding lines, however, refer to the baptism of Jesus in the Jordan. It may be that those lines are quite unrelated to what follows. But it is even more likely that "the kingdom of heavens" revealed by Jesus at his baptism, and which includes his rebirth and re-anointing, refers to the same set of ideas as those having to do with the generation of the body of the Saviour and the restoration of the Entirety in the bridal chamber. Correspondingly, the description of the generation of the body in the bridal chamber has sacramental connotations: not only is the notion of the bridal chamber itself a component of the initiation ritual, but the "fire" very likely alludes to the ointment used in that ritual. All of this is illustrated by 67:3–6: "The son of the bridal chamber came into being from water and fire and light. The fire is the chrism, the light is the fire." Consequently, the passage about the generation of the Saviour's body is linked to the preceding one about his baptism in the Jordan through their common reference to the baptismal initiatory ritual.

In commenting, above, on 73:8–19, the passage about "Joseph the carpenter," it was remarked that the theme of the incarnation was fused with that of the crucifixion, which in turn was combined with the story of the Garden and the sacramental ointment through the symbolism of the cross. That passage too, therefore, contains a reference to the initiation ritual.[10] Putting all the pieces together, one is therefore led to the conclusion that *Gos. Phil.* collapses the incar-

---

[10] The association of the anointing with the cross is also made in 67:23–24.

nation, baptism, and crucifixion of Jesus into one single act. This also means that these events are less significant as acts, properly speaking, in the sense of episodes that can be placed one after the other in a sequential narrative, than in their common and mutually illuminating symbolism. Moreover, this symbolism is governed, it would seem, by the initiation ritual, which serves as its *Sitz im Leben*.

A well-known passage in *Gos. Phil.* is the following:

> The Lord performed everything in the form of a mystery: baptism, anointing, eucharist, redemption, and a bridal chamber.
>
> The[refore] he said: I have come in order to make [the things bel]ow like the things ab[ove, and the things with]out like the things w[ithin, and in order to joi]n them in that place [I perform in th]ese places by means of ty[pes and images.] (67:27–35)

This passage explicitly links the Saviour's redemptive acts to the performance of the initiation ritual. Probably it is the symbolic quality of his acts that is intended by the phrase "in the form of a mystery" (<*μυστηριωδῶς),[11] a quality that empowers and transforms the things "below" and "without," that is, the ritual acts, so as to make them equivalent to the things "above" and "within," that is, the acts performed by the Saviour himself. There has to be, therefore, a correspondence between these ritual acts and the redemptive acts performed by the Saviour. The logic of this symbolic parallelism, however, will seem to carry with it the following implications. First, since the acts of the Saviour are, by virtue of their character as symbols, in reality one single act, each of the ritual acts will potentially reflect all of the individual components of the Saviour's acts. That is to say that baptism, anointing, eucharist, redemption and the bridal chamber may each be correlated with the Saviour's incarnation, as well as with his baptism and his crucifixion. Secondly, the symbolic correlation of Saviour and initiand leads to the assumption by the Saviour of the roles of both Saviour and *salvandus*, if attention is once again reverted to the Saviour's acts as a narrative.

This method of identifying the various events of the Saviour's work with one another, and these again with the various components of the ritual, creates a nearly inexhaustible source of symbolic multivalence. Consider, for instance, the following passages about *baptism*:

---

[11] Cf. the meaning of μυστηριωδῶς in Iren. *Haer.* I 7:2; and my forthcoming article, "Not 'in a Mystery.'"

> [. . .] went down into the water [. . .] in order to purify it. (72:30–31)

> Just as Jesus made full the water of baptism so he emptied it from death. Therefore we are going down into the water, but we are not going down into death. (77:7–11)

Connotations with the Saviour's incarnation/descent into the world as well as with his death are implied in this account of his baptism. Thus, the theme of emptying and making full is an instance of the same logic of substitution that we encountered in *Treat. Res.* (above, chapter 11), applied to the incarnation. Just as Jesus there "swallows up" the visible world and exchanges it for the invisible, he here goes down into the water, which is impure and a place of death, empties it of these qualities and substitutes for them fullness. This redemptive act of substitution is accompanied by a relation of inversion between that act itself and the one performed in the baptismal ritual. Because the Saviour has gone down into impurity and death, baptism becomes for the baptised a source of purification and life.

With the *anointing*, however, the situation is different. Unlike baptism, the anointing does not recapitulate the whole work of salvation; it represents only its triumphant outcome: the moment when the Saviour emerges from the waters of the Jordan, is restored to his former state and (re-)united with the Father, and also the moment of his resurrection:

> Jesus revealed [in the] Jordan the fullness [of the] kingdom of heaven. He who [was born] before the Entirety was born again; he [who] was already anointed was anointed again; he who was redeemed was once again redeemed. (70:34–71:3)

That passage should be read together with the following:

> The anointing is superior to baptism. For because of the anointing we are called "Christians"—not because of baptism. And Christ was named because of the anointing. For the Father anointed the Son. The Son anointed the apostles, and the apostles anointed us.
>
> Whoever has been anointed possesses everything: he has resurrection, light and the cross.
>
> The Father gave him in the bridal chamber the Holy Spirit, and he received it.
>
> The Father came to be in the Son, and the Son in the Father. That is the kingdom of heaven. (74:12–24)

There is a certain asymmetry in the relationship between baptism and anointing. On the one hand, the baptism in water may itself

stand for the whole work of salvation, as we saw above: by going down into the water, Jesus destroyed death. On the other hand, however, water baptism is also construed as being only the first phase of that work, and to be completed through the anointing that followed: it is the anointing that provides the resurrection. This asymmetry is related to an ambiguity in the notions about the Saviour himself. On the one hand, we are told that he destroyed death by going down into the water. On the other hand, we are told that he was himself redeemed, and it seems plausible to identify the moment of his redemption with his anointing by the Father upon emerging from the water, in which case his going down into the water comes to represent the condition from which he subsequently needed to be redeemed. Continuing along this line of reasoning, we may also see his reception of the Holy Spirit and the unification with her in the bridal chamber, as well as his unification with the Father himself (which seems to be the same thing), as a necessary redemptive intervention carried out on the Saviour by the Father at the moment of the Saviour's post-baptismal anointing.

Gos. Phil. seems to refuse, however, such a logical dissection of the mystery of redemption. If there is a sense in which baptism and anointing, as a sequence, can be said to represent the sequences of descent/birth/incarnation → de-carnation/ascent, and death → resurrection, it is even more appropriate to insist that the initiation ritual must be seen as a unity, which both as a whole and in each of its individual acts represents the entire work of salvation. This may explain, too, the peculiarities in the account of the generation of the Saviour's body (71:3–15), commented upon above. As we noted, that account collapses the generation of the body with the unification in the bridal chamber into one and the same act. The reason for this, we may now conclude, is that in that case too, the work of salvation is seen as a unity from the point of view of its ultimate results, rather than as a series of discrete acts. If one attempts to do the latter, logical incongruities are inevitable. From one point of view, the Saviour, as the outward manifestation of the Father of the Entirety and the bridegroom of the virgin Sophia, is the father of the "body," which is "the son of the bridal chamber." From another point of view, however, the body and the son of the bridal chamber are to be identified with the Saviour as well, in his role of being manifested in this world and encompassing within him the totality of the spirituals. Finally, from a third point of view, it is possible to interpret

the event at the Jordan as the unification of the Saviour with the Father, which means that the Saviour in that case is cast in the role of the female partner and bride in the marital union. In this way, the Saviour comes to play the roles of both father, mother, and child in the mystery of the bridal chamber.[12]

The reason for this puzzling situation is that the Saviour needs to be conceived as the divine agent of the salvific act as well as the model of its human patient, at the same time as his incarnation, baptism/anointing, and crucifixion/resurrection are treated as inseparable aspects of that same act, conceived as being simultaneously carried out as a narrative event and as a ritual performance. As a narrative, the process of salvation can be laid out as a string of events as follows:

(1) Union of the Father of the Entirety with Sophia, producing the body of the Saviour as the son of the bridal chamber;
(2) Descent of the Saviour, as the Body, into the world, and his incarnation and birth;
(3) Baptism of the Saviour in the Jordan;
(4) Anointing of the Saviour as he emerges from the water;
(5) Crucifixion;
(6) Separation from the cross (68:26–29), and resurrection;
(7) Unification in the bridal chamber.

What may be laid out thus as a series of successive events, however, is seen as a single, indissoluble event from the point of view of its redemptive significance, and an event in which it is possible to participate through the ritual of initiation. This has the further implication that each of the events is, in its symbolic significance, potentially identical with all the others. The same holds true, moreover, for each of the individual elements of the initiation ritual itself. We have seen how this works, though in an ambiguous way, for baptism and anointing; now, let us consider the third phase of the ritual, the eucharist.

---

[12] In this sense, I still subscribe to the analysis in "How Valentinian," 256–73. For the difficulty of identifying the "Father of the Entirety" with either only the Father or only the Saviour, and the different positions that have been take on the issue, see Franzmann, *Jesus*, 50.

The following passage speaks about the eucharist:

> The eucharist is Jesus. For in Syriac <it> is called *Pharisatha*, which means "that which is spread out." For Jesus became one who was crucified to the world. (63:21–24)[13]

Here, the eucharist is related to the crucifixion through the notion of "spreading out" as a *tertium comparationis*: the breaking of the bread is symbolised by the spreading out of the arms on the cross. The crucifixion itself, moreover, is associated with the incarnation, in the phrase "crucified to the world." It may be recalled that that association is also made in the passage about Joseph the carpenter, who hung his seed on the cross (73:8–19). In that passage, furthermore, the cross was associated with the tree of life producing the ointment for anointing, whereas here, the symbolism of the cross is exploited instead to describe the eucharist.

In 55:6–14, we hear that the world, like the garden of Adam, did not offer food fit for men, but "when Christ came, the perfect man, he brought bread from heaven, that man might be nourished by the nourishment of man." Here, the eucharist, as "bread from heaven," seems to be associated with the incarnation.[14] There is no explicit association with the crucifixion and the cross, though this is perhaps an underlying motif in the allusion to the theme of the garden.[15] The passage 56:26–57:19, on the other hand, speaks about eating the flesh and drinking the blood of Jesus in the context of the resurrection, while there is no explicit reference to the incarnation. 58:10–14 presents a eucharistic prayer: "You, who have joined the perfect Light with the Holy Spirit, join also the angels with us, the images." Here, in other words, the eucharist is associated with the unification in the bridal chamber that takes place after the resurrection.

While the *bridal chamber* is associated with the eucharist in this last passage, it can also be related to baptism and anointing. This already emerges from some of the passages quoted above, such as 71:3–13, and 74:21–22. It is clearly stated, however, in 67:2–6: "The soul and the spirit came into being from water and fire. The son of the

---

[13] For the translation of this passage, see the commentary in Schenke, *Philippus-Evangelium*, 327–30.
[14] Similarly 73:23–25.
[15] The food/trees of the garden motif also occurs in 71:22–34.

bridal chamber came into being from water and fire and light. The
fire is the ointment, the light is the fire." This passage describes the
rebirth effected by the initiation ritual in analogy with the genera-
tion of the person that takes place in ordinary birth; the difference
consists in the added element of light, a property of the bridal cham-
ber and associated with the anointing, as we have already seen. The
fact that the notion of the bridal chamber may be associated with
baptism and anointing as well as with the eucharist suggests that it
does not represent a separate ritual event, but that it is rather an
implied aspect in the process of initiation. The same is apparently
the case with the concept of *redemption* in this context: the Saviour
was both reborn, re-anointed and re-redeemed in the Jordan (70:37–
71:3). The passage 69:14–29, which arranges baptism, redemption
and the bridal chamber in ascending order—leaving out, notably,
anointing and eucharist—seems to describe successive levels of salvific
attainment already implicit in baptism, rather than a sequence of
discrete ritual acts.[16]

  Gos. Phil.'s tendency to collapse sequences of acts into synchronic
symbolic units seems to apply to the ritual sequence as well as to
the salvation historical narrative which forms its prefigurative model.
If each of the elements of the initiation ritual can be potentially asso-
ciated with each of the phases in the salvation narrative, they also
become systematically equal with one another: each ritual act poten-
tially contains all the others by virtue of its symbolic connotations.
We seem to be faced with a general conflation of symbol and act:
just as the Saviour's baptism, for instance, symbolically comprises his
birth, incarnation, crucifixion, redemption and the bridal chamber,
so the ritual of baptism also already connotes rebirth, resurrection,
redemption and the bridal chamber. If redemption and the bridal
chamber are added to the list of ritual acts in 67:28–30, this may
be explained, therefore, by the fact that the set of physically per-
formed ritual acts is there not distinguished from the number of
components in the redemptive process symbolically contained in
these acts.

---

[16] It may also be observed that *Gos. Phil.* nowhere describes specific components
of such ritual acts which might be exploited for symbolic interpretation, as is the
case with the water of baptism, the ointment of anointing, and the bread and wine
of the eucharist.

This conflation of symbol and act is not, however, total. A realism still adheres to the conception of the ritual acts, expressed in the hierarchical arrangement of anointing over water baptism, which implies the necessary performance of these acts in a progressive sequence. Moreover, while the initiation ritual is a symbolic re-enactment of the redemptive acts performed by the Saviour, it is not simply identical with those acts, but is described as "images" (67:9–35), through which it is possible to share in the redemption offered by the paradigm of the Saviour under the conditions of this world. While the ritual provides an assimilation to the Saviour by virtue of its symbolic significance, as a tangible image it is nevertheless hierarchically subordinate to the authenticity of the model itself. The sharing in the redemptive event provided by the ritual does not imply a simple identity between the Saviour and the *salvandus* acting in the ritual, but a relationship of model and image, and one where the Saviour is also conceived as agent and the *salvandus* as patient in the redemptive act. On the other hand, however, the relationship remains an ambiguous one of simultaneous identity and difference, with the Saviour acquiring properties of the *salvandus* in the model narrative itself, and the *salvandi* becoming "Christs" and fathers of spiritual offspring through the image of the initiation ritual (67:26–27, 61:20–35).[17]

The governing notion behind these ambiguities is that of the mutual sharing between the Saviour and the *salvandi*. The Saviour saves by submitting himself to the very condition from which he saves. He takes upon himself the corporeality from which he relieves his followers. In this redemptive act, the crucial moment may be conceived both from the substitutive point of view as the incarnation, the going down into the water, or the crucifixion, and from the paradigmatic point of view as his de-carnation, the ascent from the water with subsequent anointing, or the resurrection. These are just two perspectives on the same indissoluble act, however, with the result that the cross may be described both as the matter to which the Saviour is fixed in his incarnation, and as the tree of life which produces the saving ointment (73:8–19), just as he cleanses the water of death by going into it, but at the same time is redeemed from it by his subsequent anointing.

---

[17] Cf. my "How Valentinian," 271–72.

Conclusion

Thus, *Gos. Phil.* articulates the same type of soteriology by mutual sharing as the documents of the oriental form of Valentinianism studied above. This conclusion may be modified by the observation that the focus of interest in *Gos. Phil.* is to a very large extent synchronic typology and symbolism, at the expense of narrative salvation history. Further, it may also be remarked that, although the incarnation and the crucifixion are both clearly taken for granted and possess essential soteriological significance, there is no mention of suffering on the part of the Saviour in the whole of *Gos. Phil.*, a generally persistent theme in those other documents. In this sense, it may be argued that *Gos. Phil.* presents a somewhat more de-historicised Saviour than they do. Nevertheless, in its soteriology of mutual participation it agrees much more with the testimonies of oriental Valentinianism than with those representing its western variety.

THE SOTERIOLOGY OF HERACLEON

The survey in chapters 11–13 has established that the soteriology of mutual participation found in Theodotus and *Tri. Trac.* is also presupposed in *Treat. Res., Interp. Know.*, and *Gos. Phil.* It is a soteriology that lets the Saviour assume a material body and suffer the condition of humanity, while he at the same time brings down with him to earth a heavenly church as his spiritual body. The soteriology of this group of texts is distinct from that of the texts studied in chapters 6–9—the main system of Irenaeus, *Exc.* C, and Iren. *Haer.* I 7:2—where the spiritual Saviour never suffers, and the notion of a psychic Christ appears. This latter group of texts also elaborate a soteriology of the psychics by introducing a psychic body of the Saviour and by making the psychics the main object of the salvation economy, while the spirituals are considered to possess salvation already by virtue of their inherent nature.

We have identified the two groups as representing eastern and western Valentinianism respectively. The main proponents of western Valentinianism were, according to the heresiologists, Heracleon and Ptolemy. As we saw in chapter 1, the main system of Irenaeus is attributed to "the followers of Ptolemy." It is therefore reasonable to assume that that system at least resembles what Ptolemy himself taught.[1]

On the other hand, no system text is associated with Heracleon.[2] He is known exclusively as a commentator on the gospels; or, more precisely, on the sayings and acts of the Saviour reported by the gospels.[3] Of the 51 fragments edited by Völker,[4] 49 belong to

---

[1] For a discussion of the relationship between Ptolemy's *Letter to Flora* and Irenaeus' main system, see chapter 15 below.

[2] Irenaeus mentions him in *Haer.* II 4:1, but it is noteworthy that he has no system of Heracleon to report in his catalogue of Valentinians in *Haer.* I 11–12.

[3] His commentary is not primarily focused on the gospels as text, with one exception: the prologue of the Gospel of John.

[4] Völker, *Quellen*, 63–86. Völker's numbering of the fragments is the same as that of Brooke, *Fragments*. Brooke's collection, which gives more of the text surrounding each fragment and provides annotation, remains useful.

Heracleon's commentary on the Gospel of John, and are all except one preserved in Origen's commentary on the same gospel.[5] The remaining two fragments are remarks on Matt 3:11 and Luke 12:8 quoted by Clement of Alexandria.

HERACLEON'S COMMENTARY ON JOHN 2:12–22

Since by reason of their subject matter the focus in these fragments is on the earthly life of the Saviour, they are relevant for a study of Heracleon's views on the incarnation and its soteriological significance. The parts of Heracleon's commentary, moreover, that are ofgreatest interest in this respect are the ones that deal with the visit to Capernaum, the entry into Jerusalem and the cleansing of the temple (John 2:12–22). On the subject of this sequence of events Origen has preserved for us a string of fragments from Heracleon's commentary that need to be interpreted as a continuous whole, and with an eye on the full text of the Gospel narrative:

Gospel of John	Origen's report on Heracleon's commentary
(2:12) After this he went down to (κατέβη εἰς) Capernaum, with his mother and his brothers and his disciples; and there they stayed for a few days.	There again is revealed the beginning of a new dispensation, he says, for "he went down" is not said idly. And, says he, Capernaum means these uttermost ends of the world, these material parts into which he descended. And because this place was alien (to him), he says, there is no account of his having done or said anything in it. (Orig. *In Jo.* X 11:48 = frg. 11 Vö.)
(13) The Passover of the Jews was at hand,	This, he says, was the great feast. For it was a type of the passion of the Saviour, because the sheep was not only slain, but, on being eaten, provided rest as well. In being sacrificed, it signified the passion of the Saviour in the world, in being eaten, the rest that is in the marriage. (Ibid. X 19:117 = frg. 12 Vö.)

---

[5] Frg. 51 Vö., from Photius and relating to John 1:17, is vague and hardly a direct quotation from Heracleon's writings.

and Jesus went up to (ἀνέβη εἰς) Jerusalem.

The ascent to Jerusalem he takes to mean the ascent of the Lord from the material regions to the psychic place, which is an image of Jerusalem.[6] (Ibid. X 33:210 = frg. 13 Vö.)

(14) In the sanctuary he found (εὗρεν ἐν τῷ ἱερῷ)

The words "He found in the sanctuary," and not "in the <forecourt>"[7] are used, he thinks, so that it may not be thought that it is the Calling only, which lacks Spirit, which elicits help from the Lord. For he maintains that the sanctuary is the Holy of Holies, into which only the High Priest enters—into which, I think he means, the spirituals will go—but the forecourt area, where the Levites are as well, is a symbol of the psychics who will attain a salvation outside the Pleroma. (Ibid. X 33:211 = frg. 13 Vö.)

those who were selling oxen and sheep and pigeons, and the money-changers at their business.

Moreover, those who were found in the sanctuary selling oxen and sheep and doves, and the money-changers sitting there he has taken to represent those who give nothing for free,

---

[6] τὴν ⟨εἰς⟩ Ἱεροσόλυμα ἄνοδον σημαίνειν τὴν ἀπὸ τῶν ὑλικῶν εἰς τὸν ψυχικὸν τόπον, τυγχάνοντα εἰκόνα τῆς Ἱερουσαλήμ, ἀνάβασιν τοῦ κυρίου. I think there is no reason to assume any notion of a "heavenly Jerusalem" here, of which "the psychic place" should be an image (Orbe, *Cristología*, II 61; Simonetti, *Testi gnostici*, 235, 463n47; Wucherpfennig, *Heracleon*, 66–67). If that was intended, Heracleon would probably have used some such expression as ἡ ἄνω/ἐπουράνιος Ἱερουσαλήμ (cf. Hipp. *Haer.* VI 30:9, 32:9, 34:3; "Jerusalem" by itself will not work. The sense of εἰκών here is probably just that there is a symbolic correspondence between Jerusalem and "the psychic place."

[7] A much-discussed textual problem occurs here. The mss read τὸ δε ʼεὗρεν ἐν τῷ ἱερῷʼ καὶ οὐχὶ ʼτῶν ἄνωʼ. τῶν ἄνω is obviously an error. The most natural correction would be to τῷ νάῳ, with Neander *et al.*, cf. Wucherpfennig, *Heracleon*, 52n21, 68. However, ἱερόν for Heracleon clearly denotes a more restricted part of the temple than the term to which it is contrasted, since it is later identified with the Holy of Holies. If the contrasting term was ναός, therefore, ναός would have to mean the temple complex in its entirety, in contrast to the ἱερόν as the inner sanctuary, something which would be the reverse of normal usage (Brooke, *Fragments*, 68n5; Wucherpfennig, *locc. citt.* does not give justice to the problem). Unless one wishes to allow that Heracleon uses the words in this unusual way, the conjecture προνάῳ, "forecourt," a term that appears a few lines later, must be preferred (first suggested by Brooke, *loc. cit.*; see also Foerster, *Von Herakleon*, 11; Blanc, *Origène: Commentaire sur S. Jean*, II 508–9n4; Simonetti, *Testi gnostici*, 463n48).

but who rather consider the entry of strangers into the sanctuary as an occasion for trade and profit-making and who, for their own gain and love of money, provide the sacrifices for the worship of God. (Ibid. X 33:212 = frg. 13 Vö.)

(15) And making a whip of cords, he drove them all, with the sheep and the oxen, out of the temple; and he poured out the coins of the money-changers and overturned their tables. (16) And he told those who sold the pigeons, "Take these things away; you shall not make my Father's house a house of trade."

And the whip, which Jesus did not receive from another person, but was made from cords by Jesus himself, he explains in his own way, saying that the whip is an image of the power and energy of the Holy Spirit which blows away the wicked. And he adds that the whip, the linen cloth, and the winding-sheet, and all such things, form an image of the power and energy of the Holy Spirit.

Then, he adds on his own account something which is not written, that the whip was tied to a piece of wood, which he takes to be a type of the cross, saying that through this wood there were consumed and destroyed the dice-players, the merchants and all wickedness. And I do not know why, in seeking to understand what Jesus did, he says such nonsense as that a whip is made from those two things. For he did not make it from the skin of a dead (animal), he says, when he was going to build the church so as no longer to be a den of robbers and merchants, but a house of his Father's. (Ibid. X 33:213 = frg. 13 Vö.)

(17) His disciples remembered that it was written, "Zeal for thy house consumes me."

Heracleon very rashly believes that the words "Zeal for thy house consumes me" were spoken from the mouth of the powers which were cast out and destroyed by the Saviour. (Ibid. X 34:223 = frg. 14 Vö.)

(18) The Jews then said to him, "What sign have you to show us for doing this?" (19) Jesus answered them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up."

Heracleon says that "in three (days)" stand for "on the third (day)" but, having noted the expression, he did not expound how the resurrection is accomplished in three days. He also says that the third (day) is the spiritual day, on which it is believed that the resurrection of the church is indicated. It follows from this that the first day must be called the choïc, the second the psychic, and that the resurrection of the church did not take place on any of them. (Ibid. X 37:248–50 = frg. 15 Vö.)

(20) The Jews then said, "It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and will you raise it up in three days?" (21) But he spoke of the temple of his body. (22) When therefore he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this; and they believed the scripture and the word which Jesus had spoken.

Without paying attention to the historical facts,[8] Heracleon says that Solomon constructed the temple in forty-six years, this being an image of the Saviour; and the number six he takes to refer to matter, that is, to the fabrication, and the forty, which is the uninterwoven Tetrad, to the inbreathing, and the seed (contained) in the inbreathing. (Ibid. X 38:261 = frg. 16 Vö.)

The Gospel text itself contains three distinct elements that have been joined together (cf. 2:18 and 21) by the evangelist:

(1) Jesus' entrance into the temple, and its cleansing (2:12–17).
(2) The saying about the destruction and the reconstruction of the temple (2:19–20).
(3) The interpretation of this saying as referring to the body of Jesus, and to his death and resurrection (2:21–22).

As will become clear in the course of the following analysis, Heracleon (and quite possibly the evangelist himself) regards these three themes as having one and the same meaning: they all refer to the Saviour's redemptive work in the world. Heracleon begins his reading of the

---

[8] As the context shows, Origen is referring to the fact that the temple in the time of Jesus was the second temple, not the one built by King Solomon, and that it cannot be proven that it was built in 46 years.

text with the descent to Capernaum, which he interprets as an allu-
sion to the *katabasis* of the Saviour into matter. Capernaum is the
material world.[9] The descent to it refers, therefore, to the incarna-
tion of the Saviour. Matter, moreover, was alien (ἀνοίκειον) to him,
Heracleon adds. It may therefore be asked what Heracleon's views
are on the nature of this incarnation.

The Descent into Matter

To answer this question, we need to make comparison with some
of the other fragments. In John 1:27 the Baptist says: "I am not
worthy to untie the thong of his sandal." Heracleon interprets these
words as alluding to the Demiurge's reaction to the advent of the
Saviour. What the Demiurge means is this:

> I am not worthy that on my account he should come down from the
> Greatness and assume flesh (σάρκα λάβῃ), as a sandal, a flesh which
> I can give no account of, nor describe, nor explain its dispensation
> (ἢ ἐπιλῦσαι τὴν περὶ αὐτῆς οἰκονομίαν). (Orig. *In Jo.* VI 39:198 = frg.
> 8 Vö.)

Nothing is said here about the nature of the Saviour's flesh, except
that the Demiurge is at a loss to explain it. However, we may also
note the presence of the word οἰκονομία, which also appears in frg.
11, where it is said that the descent to Capernaum indicates the
beginning of a new οἰκονομία. The word must thus refer to the

---

[9] The precise meaning of τὰ ὑλικά in frg. 11 (translated here as "material parts"),
and at the beginning of frg. 13 ("the material regions") may be subject to debate.
Wucherpfennig's understanding of the expression as referring to matter as a flowing
stream (*Heracleon*, 62–64, 65) is probably an over-interpretation. Such a description
properly applies to matter in its unorganised, pre-cosmic state, whereas Heracleon
obviously refers to matter as a part of the ordered cosmos. In that sense, τὰ ὑλικά
may also be regarded as a "region" in the cosmos. Pagels commits an over-inter-
pretation of a different sort when she affirms that, "Capernaum, as he has explained
[where?], symbolizes the spiritual condition of total ignorance, the topos, or stand-
point, of the hylics" (*Johannine Gospel*, 56). Although it is true that all the steps of
the Saviour's descent into the world have a salvific purpose (as is also evident from
the remark that, "because this place was alien [to him] . . . there is no account of
his having done or said anything in it"), there is nothing in Heracleon's text to
warrant interpreting the various "places" in terms of subjective capacities for insight.
Rather, the perspective is objective and Christocentric: in the course of his incar-
nation, the Saviour must assume the cosmos in its totality by taking upon himself
all its constituent parts. For a critique of Pagels' interpretation, see also Wucherpfennig,
Heracleon, 71–72.

divine plan of salvation, and the assumption of flesh by the Saviour must form part of this plan.

The incarnation of the Saviour is also referred to in Heracleon's commentary on John the Baptist's words in John 1:29: "Behold the lamb of God, the one who takes away the sin of the world" (frg. 10).[10] Here, Heracleon wants to make a distinction between "the lamb" and "the one who takes away sin." For the former refers to the body, he says, whereas the latter concerns "the one who is *in* the body" (περὶ τοῦ ἐν τῷ σώματι). A lamb (ἀμνός), he argues, is an imperfect (ἀτελῆ) sheep (πρόβατον), and so this word must have been chosen, instead of "sheep," in order to signify the imperfection of the body compared to the one who dwelled in it (τοῦ ἐνοικοῦντος αὐτῷ).[11] Thus Heracleon emphasises the contrast between the Saviour himself and his bodily shell. This suggests that he regarded the incarnation of the Saviour as taking place in a material body,[12] similar to what we found to be the case in eastern Valentinianism. This also seems to explain the mystification of the Demiurge in frg. 8 cited above: he fails to understand why a being of such exalted origins as the Saviour should submit to incarnation in lowly matter.

Heracleon's contrasting of the Saviour himself with his body in frg. 10 agrees well with the description of matter in frg. 11 as being "alien" to the Saviour. The latter fragment says, then, that in accordance with the *oikonomia*, the divine plan of salvation, the Saviour descended into matter, assuming a body which was alien to his real nature. Moreover, this point is made again in Heracleon's explanation of the temple-body symbolism in John 2:18–22. The forty-six years it took to build the temple is explained by Heracleon in terms of number symbolism. The number is an image (εἰκών) of the Saviour, he says, because it is a combination of six and forty.[13] The number

---

[10] Orig. *In Jo.* VI 60:306–7.

[11] Cf. Wucherpfennig, *Heracleon*, 216–18

[12] Cf. Wucherpfennig, *Heracleon*, 218: "Im Unterschied zu doketischen Modellen hat Christus nach Herakleon einen Leib, und dieser wird auch getötet."

[13] Wucherpfennig, *Heracleon*, 82–88, interprets the symbolism as a "Bild (εἰκών) dafür . . ., wie der Erlöser den menschlichen Leib erschuf" (82). But there is nothing in the text that suggests that this is what is referred to, except for the allusion to Gen 2:7 at the end of the fragment, an allusion that most probably relates the theme of Gen 2:7 to the birth of the Saviour (see below). Besides, the notion that the Saviour should have created the human body is totally un-Valentinian. (In one passage, Wucherpfennig also speaks about "die Beziehung der 'Sechs' auf den stofflichen Bestandteil im Leib des Erlösers" [84], which appears inconsistent with his general interpretation of the fragment.)

six refers to matter, whereas forty is "an uninterwoven (ἀπρόσπλοκος) tetrad" (frg. 16). This enigmatic statement can be explained as follows. The tetrad is of course the numbers 1, 2, 3 and 4, which added together make 10. The number 40 can be produced as (1+2+3+4) × 4, and is thus the tetrad multiplied by itself—it contains no other number.[14] So the meaning of Heracleon's computational symbolism is that the element represented by the number forty is pure and unmixed with the element which is represented by the number six.

Furthermore, six is said to represent the "fabrication" (πλάσμα), and forty "the inbreathing and the seed contained in the inbreathing" (τὸ ἐμφύσημα καὶ τὸ ἐν τῷ ἐμφυσήματι σπέρμα). Since the number forty-six is said to be an "image" of the Saviour, we should interpret these expressions as referring to his earthly genesis: the πλάσμα must mean his (alien) bodily envelope, whereas the "inbreathing" seems to refer to the way the seed containing his spiritual nature was implanted into the material body. The language here is that of the anthropogony of Gen 2, which seems to be applied to the birth of the Saviour as the new Adam,[15] but there is probably also an allusion to the gospel accounts of the impregnation of the virgin by the Spirit (Luke 1:35, Matt 1:18).

It may be added that Heracleon's interpretation of the number six as matter reappears in another fragment, no. 18.[16] This fragment also provides some further information about Heracleon's views on matter. It is a commentary on Jesus' words to the Samaritan woman in John 4:18: "You have had five husbands, and he whom you have now is not your husband." Heracleon consistently interprets the Samaritan woman as the spiritual church, which the Saviour has come to redeem,[17] and when commenting on the previous verse he already pointed out that the woman's real husband is not of this world, but in the Pleroma. Thus she has in fact had six husbands, who were not her real husbands:

---

[14] Sagnard, *Gnose valentinienne*, 490; Wucherpfennig, *Heracleon*, 84.

[15] The typology is also used in Hipp. *Haer.* VI 35:4, though without attributing to the Saviour a πλάσμα.

[16] Orig. *In Jo.* XIII 11:67–72. The same interpretation appears in Marcus, Iren. *Haer.* 14:6; Wucherpfennig, *Heracleon*, 83–84.

[17] This is explicitly stated in the commentary on John 4:25 in Orig. *In Jo.* XIII 27:164 = frg. 25 Vö.

> But in Heracleon we find, "you have had *six* husbands," and he explains that by the six husbands there is indicated all the material evil (τὴν ὑλικὴν πᾶσαν κακίαν) with which she was interwoven (συνεπέπλεκτο) and with which she consorted when she debauched herself, contrary to reason, and when she was insulted, rejected, and abandoned by them.

Here again the number six symbolises matter. Heracleon is saying that the spirituals living in the world have been bullied and tormented by the forces of matter with which they have been joined. In particular, however, the word συνεπέπλεκτο should be noted, and compared with ἀπρόσπλοκος in frg. 16 above. There can hardly be any doubt that Heracleon is choosing his words here with careful attention to terminological consistency.[18] Thus, when Heracleon says that the forty-six years it took to build the temple is an εἰκών of the Saviour, he is indicating that, in contrast to the spiritual humans in the world whose spiritual nature is commingled with matter, the spiritual nature of the Saviour remained undefiled in spite of the fact that he put on a material body.[19]

Thus, for Heracleon the salvation work of the Saviour began with his descent into the cosmos and his assumption of a material body. This act, he finds, is represented in John's narrative by the first stage of the Saviour's journey to Jerusalem and the temple he will cleanse. Heracleon is also quite explicit that the salvation work to be carried out by the Saviour implies a passion, for he takes the words "the Passover of the Jews was at hand" (John 2:13) as a typological allusion to the salvation work as a whole, "the passion of the Saviour in the world" (τὸ πάθος τοῦ σωτῆρος τὸ ἐν κόσμῳ). This suggests that the cosmic incarnation of the Saviour is in itself a part of the passion. Moreover, his passion provides "the rest which is in marriage"

---

[18] For the term ἀπρόσπλοκος cf. Wucherpfennig, *Heracleon*, 85–85, with n206, who defines it, in an arithmological context, as "nicht kombinierbar." (Wucherpfennig does not refer to the parallel terminology in frg. 18, however.)

[19] Foerster, in *Gnosis*, I 168, accuses Heracleon of making "a forced interpretation" in his commentary on the number forty-six, "above all because he makes the six, the number of matter, signify the body of the Saviour, whereas it usually (for example, in Fragment 18) signifies the evil which the Saviour did not in any way put on. [The statement contained in the relative clause is Foerster's own assumption.] Consequently, Heracleon explains the 'matter' as being the 'structure,' by which is meant the psychic body which was prepared 'with ineffable art' so that it might be tangible [reference to Iren. *Haer.* I 6:1]." However, it is rather Foerster's interpretation of Heracleon which is "forced" here. There is nothing to indicate that Heracleon adopted the theory of the psychic body found in Irenaeus.

(τὴν ἀνάπαυσιν τὴν ἐν γάμῳ), just as the slaying and eating of the sacrificial sheep is a necessary ingredient in the great feast of the Jews. In this way, Heracleon clearly implies that the passion suffered by the Saviour through his own material incarnation effects the liberation of those who have themselves suffered by being linked with the forces of matter—just as the Samaritan woman was abused by her six illegitimate husbands—as well as their unification, as in a marriage feast, with their true, spiritual, partners in the Pleroma. It can be concluded, then, that Heracleon advocates a form of the soteriology of mutual participation that was established for eastern Valentinianism.

The Saviour came to Redeem the Spirituals

Next, the ascent from Capernaum to Jerusalem is interpreted by Heracleon as "the ascent of the Lord from the material regions to the psychic place" (τὴν ἀπὸ τῶν ὑλικῶν εἰς τὸν ψυχικὸν τόπον . . . ἀνάβασιν τοῦ κυρίου). It is in Jerusalem with its temple that he finds the spirituals, who are indicated in the Gospel text, Heracleon claims, by the word "the sanctuary" (ἱερόν), which he takes to refer to the Holy of Holies. "The psychic place" hardly refers to the anthropological class of the psychics,[20] but must mean the psychic level of the cosmos where souls in general are located, including the souls of the spirituals. Heracleon's insistence at this point that the Saviour did not come merely to save the psychics (μὴ τὴν κλῆσιν μόνην νοηθῆναι τὴν χωρὶς πνεύματος βοηθεῖσθαι ὑπὸ τοῦ κυρίου) should be contrasted with Iren. *Haer.* I 6:1, where precisely the opposite assertion is made (τὸν σωτῆρα . . . παραγεγονέναι τὸ ψυχικόν, ἐπεὶ καὶ αὐτεξούσιόν ἐστιν, ὅπως αὐτὸ σώσῃ). On the other hand, Heracleon agrees on this point with *Tri. Trac.*, which is similarly explicit in affirming that the Saviour came primarily for the sake of the Election (122:17–19). Heracleon is thus taking position here on an issue which divided the Valentinians. According to Heracleon, an essential purpose of the Saviour's descent was to redeem the spirituals who live

---

[20] Thus Pagels, *Johannine Gospel*, 56, 67–68, and above, 108n9. It is necessary to distinguish between the psychics as a class of humans, and the psychic as a region in the cosmos and in all humans. Spirituals have souls, too. See also the following note.

in the psycho-physical cosmos, and in order to accomplish this task he needed to put on a material body and subject himself to suffering.

In the context provided by the imagery of the temple cleansing narrative in the Gospel, Heracleon describes the redemptive act as a purification: in "the psychic place," symbolised by Jerusalem and the temple, and more specifically in the sanctuary itself, the Saviour finds the souls of the spirituals.[21] These are afflicted by passions, that is, demonic powers, which are represented by the traders and money-changers that have turned the house of God into a den of robbers and merchants. To Heracleon, therefore, the cleansing of the temple means the casting out and the destruction of the demons cleaving to the spirituals as passions by reason of their attachment to their bodies. It may be recalled here that the situation of the spirituals is also represented for Heracleon by the Samaritan woman, whose six false and abusive husbands symbolise the matter with which the souls of the spirituals are interwoven (frg. 18).

According to its underlying logic, the efficacy of the salvation work depends on two factors; first, on the Saviour's participation in the condition of the ones who will be saved, and, second, on the Saviour's own freedom from and power over the material; hence the necessity of his being "uninterwoven" with the body which envelops him. Both of these two necessary factors Heracleon reads into the symbol of the whip used by the Saviour to cleanse the temple. The whip represents that pure Spirit which constitutes the Saviour himself, that "which he did not receive from another" and is unmixed with matter (frg. 13).[22] The Spirit, introduced into the world by the Saviour, is thus the instrument by which the souls of the spirituals are purified. But Heracleon also needs to accommodate the saving function of the Saviour's incarnation and passion to the symbolism. Therefore

---

[21] The temple is divided into the (inner) sanctuary (the Holy of Holies) and the forecourt (see above, 105n7). The former symbolises the spirituals, the latter the psychics. This distinction between two classes of humans exists *within* the single *cosmological and general anthropological* category of the psychic, symbolised by Jerusalem and the temple as a whole. The distinction between the two areas of the temple is therefore of a different kind than that between Capernaum and Jerusalem. (The failure to recognise this difference is the basic flaw of the analysis in Pagels, *Johannine Gospel*, 52–57.)

[22] The statement "he did not make it out of dead leather" (οὐ . . . ἐκ δέρμα-τος . . . νεκροῦ) seems to be making the same point as the word ἀπρόσπλοκος in frg. 16, the distinction between the body and the one who is in the body, in frg. 10, and the assertion that matter is ἀνοικείον to the Saviour, in frg. 11.

he extrapolates the existence of a wooden handle for the whip, which
can serve as a type of the cross. Thus he indicates that it is by virtue
of the double act of salvific passion and spiritual purification that
the Saviour is able to transform the temple into his church, both of
these aspects of his salvific act being reflected in the Saviour's per-
sonal constitution.

Heracleon applies a temple-church typology in his exegesis, which
becomes explicit at the end of frg. 13: cleansing the temple means
building the church. But the reverse is also true: purifying the spir-
itual seed in order to form the church is the same as rebuilding the
temple. In his interpretation of John 2:19–22 (frg. 15), moreover,
Heracleon follows the evangelist in relating the three days of cleansing
and rebuilding the temple in to the resurrection. He does not, how-
ever, refer directly at this point to the resurrection of Jesus, as John
does, but rather speaks about the resurrection of the church. In doing
this, he remains consistent with the typological imagery, since it is
the cleansing and building of the *church* that is paralleled in the res-
urrection. For this reason it would not be justified to infer that
Heracleon attributes to the resurrection of Jesus only a symbolic
significance, with no redemptive effect in itself, as one might think
from the phrase "the third (day) is the spiritual day, on which it is
believed that the resurrection of the church is indicated" (τὴν τρίτην
φησὶ τὴν πνευματικὴν ἡμέραν, ἐν ᾗ οἴονται δηλοῦσθαι τὴν τῆς ἐκκλησίας
ἀνάστασιν). Heracleon does seem to assume that the fact that Jesus
was resurrected on the third day has a symbolic significance, prob-
ably as an allusion to the three human kinds, as Origen suggests,[23]
but this symbolism does not exhaust the soteriological significance of
Jesus' resurrection.

In fact, we have already seen how the incarnation, the passion
and the death of Jesus possess a salvific effect for Heracleon by virtue
of a logic of mutual participation. What is noteworthy in this regard,
however, is how Heracleon deals with—or, rather, how he does not
deal with—John 2:21 ἐκεῖνος δὲ ἔλεγεν περὶ τοῦ ναοῦ τοῦ σώματος
αὐτοῦ. Heracleon does not pick up on John's identification of the
temple with the body of Jesus. It would not have been untypical for
a Valentinian author to do so, since, as we have seen already, the

---

[23] For the symbolism of the fragment in general cf. Wucherpfennig, *Heracleon*,
77–81.

interpretation of the church as the body of the Saviour is a common Valentinian theme. Thus, the resurrection of the body of Jesus might easily have been construed as referring to the resurrection of the (spiritual) church. However, Heracleon does not make the connection temple-church-body of Jesus. Instead of the "body," he prefers at this point to speak about "the Saviour." The number forty-six, which characterises the temple, is taken as an allusion to the double, spiritual-material, constitution of the Saviour. By submitting himself to corporeality and passion, while at the same time remaining spiritually pure and superior, the Saviour destroys the old material order, symbolised by the existing temple, under which the spirituals were living. Thus he destroys matter by, as it were, taking it upon himself. Heracleon does not, however, give this a further dialectical twist by describing the spiritual element of the Saviour, by which he effects all this, in terms of a spiritual *body* that has been introduced as a replacement for the old material one.

The Absence of a Pre-existent Church as the Body of the Saviour

The absence of the church-body of the Saviour theme in Heracleon's exegesis of the temple cleansing scene indicates a significant difference between his soteriology and that of the eastern Valentinian texts discussed above. In fact, Heracleon does not seem to apply the notion of a hypercosmic spiritual church which is the seed of Sophia and clothes the Saviour as his body at his salvific descent into the world of matter. For Heracleon, the spiritual seed is always already in the world. His version of the salvation history is evident in his comments on the harvest theme in John 4:35–38 in particular.[24] Thus, referring to the saying, "One sows and another reaps" (4:37), he comments:

ὁ μὲν γὰρ ὑπὲρ τὸν τόπον υἱὸς ἀνθρώπου σπείρει· ὁ δὲ σωτήρ, ὢν καὶ αὐτὸς υἱὸς ἀνθρώρου, θερίζει καὶ θεριστὰς πέμπει τοὺς διὰ τῶν μαθητῶν νοουμένους ἀγγέλους, ἕκαστον ἐπὶ τὴν ἑαυτοῦ ψυχήν.

The Son of Man above the Place sows; the Saviour, himself also Son of Man, harvests and sends as reapers the angels represented by the disciples, each for his own soul. (Orig. *In Jo.* XIII 49:324 = frg. 35 Vö.)

---

[24] Orig. *In Jo.* XIII 41:271, 44:294, 46:299, 49:322–24, 50:336 = frgs. 32, 33, 34, 35, 36 Vö.

"The Son of Man above the Place" most probably refers to the com-
mon offspring of the Pleroma, corresponding to the Saviour who
manifests himself, and thus the Pleroma, to Sophia in the well-known
systematic accounts, and who thereby reveals the model for the spir-
itual human being who is sown into Adam.[25] The title "Son of Man"
for the Saviour is in fact attested by Iren. *Haer.* I 12:4. The "Place"
is probably the Demiurge, or the Hebdomad.[26] We do not know the
details of Heracleon's version of this part of Valentinian mythology,
and it is inadmissible to try to fill in the gaps by using other sources.
However, we can be reasonably certain of the general idea behind
the idea of the Son of Man as sower: he is the mediator who trans-
mits the image of the archetypal Man, the Pleroma, as a spiritual
component into the created human being.

The "reaper" is the Saviour who has appeared on earth, calling,
awakening and gathering in the seeds who have grown and become ripe
for harvesting. The sowing and the reaping are continuous processes:
"Some souls were already ready, . . . some were on the point of being
ready, some are near to being ready, and some are still being sown."[27]
"When the sower stops sowing, the reaper is still reaping. But at
present both fulfil their individual tasks."[28] Thus the Son of Man
not only sowed the seed once and for all into Adam, but does so
continually in the souls of little babies born into the world. The
reaping too took place not only once, during the Saviour's sojourn
on earth, but goes on as an activity carried out by the angels rep-
resented by the disciples—doubtlessly mediated by the ministry of
the spiritual church.

This last idea of the angels as the personalised forms of the
Saviour—one for each individual—is a familiar one in Valentinianism.

---

[25] For various interpretations of this figure ("Christ in the Pleroma" [Foerster,
Sagnard, Schenke, Aland], "the Father of Truth" [Janssens], "the psychic Christ"
[Collantes, Devoti, Simonetti]), see Simonetti, *Testi gnostici*, 469–70n87. They all
make the unwarranted assumption that the terminology of the systems of Irenaeus
and Hippolytus are valid for all Valentinian texts; in particular, the idea of a psy-
chic Christ is not attested for Heracleon. The first of the interpretations mentioned
("Christ in the Pleroma") best corresponds to the one adopted here.

[26] Hipp. *Haer.* VI 32:7–9; *Exc. passim; Tri. Trac.* 100:29. The term may also some-
times refer to the region of Sophia, i.e., the Ogdoad (*Tri. Trac.* 92:26, Iren. *Haer.*
I 5:3, 7:1 ὁ μεσότητος τόπος), but as will be shown below, Heracleon does not seem
to have used the idea of a separate region of Sophia.

[27] *In Jo.* XIII 41:271 = frg. 32 Vö.

[28] Ibid. XIII 49:323 = frg. 35 Vö.

Each spiritual person is reintegrated into the Pleroma by being united with a *syzygos*-angel. But Heracleon's notions about the salvation process as a whole seem to differ from what we read in the systematic accounts. In those accounts, the sequence is as follows:

(1) The Saviour and his angels show themselves to Sophia.
(2) She emits the spiritual seed = the spiritual church in their image.
(3) Some of the seed is sown into the first human.
(4) The Saviour descends into the world wearing the church as his body.
(5) The church members are trained on earth.
(6) In the ritual of redemption they are united with the angels.

Heracleon's notion about the "sowing" corresponds to the elements (1)–(3) in the sequence, whereas the "reaping" covers (4)–(6). Yet Heracleon never refers to the emission of the spiritual seed by Sophia in the first part of the sequence, nor to the assumption by the Saviour of the seed as his body in the second part. It may well be that Heracleon had a much simpler version of the process:

(1) The Son of Man sows the spiritual seed into the souls of human babies.
(2) The spiritual seed grows and ripens in the world.
(3) The Saviour reaps the seed which has become fruit, by descending together with the angels, who unite with the spirituals.

In Heracleon's version, the spiritual seed seems to be sown directly by the Son of Man into the first human and into subsequent generations, and the unification with the angels seems to take place as a direct consequence of the advent of the Saviour. In the longer version of the systems, on the other hand, the salvation process is accomplished by way of a detour, as it were: the spiritual seed is first produced in the Ogdoad, then descends as the body of the Saviour, and only subsequently, in the ritual of redemption, is the unification with the angels realised.

In conclusion, then, we find Heracleon agreeing with the type of soteriology which attributes a salvific significance to the material incarnation and passion of the Saviour—the soteriology of mutual participation. He also agrees with it in assuming that it is the spiritual seed which is the primary object of the work of salvation; as in *Tri. Trac.*, this point is specifically emphasised. As for the psychics,

Heracleon explicitly states that this group is saved only indirectly, through the spirituals as intermediaries: the Samaritan woman, who after having met Christ at the well returns to the city to tell others about it (John 4:28), is interpreted by Heracleon as referring to the announcement made by the spiritual church to the Calling about the arrival of Christ. Heracleon remarks: "For through the Spirit and by the Spirit the soul is drawn to the Saviour" (διὰ γὰρ τοῦ πνεύματος καὶ ὑπὸ τοῦ πνεύματος προσάγεται ἡ ψυχὴ τῷ σωτῆρι).[29]

On the other hand, we do not find in Heracleon the idea of a pre-cosmic spiritual church, incarnated concorporeally with the Saviour, nor does he indicate a place for the redemptive sacrament in the soteriological process. Thus, although his soteriology conforms with the decisive criteria of this first type, it also exhibits distinctive individual features.

THE POSITION OF HERACLEON

The affinities of Heracleon's soteriology with that of eastern Valentinianism raise the question how that conclusion may be reconciled with the fact that Hippolytus describes him as a *western* Valentinian leader. We have only Hippolytus' testimony in *Haer.* VI 35:6 to support that localisation.[30] On the other hand, Hippolytus offers this information with confidence as a piece of positive knowledge, so there is no reason to assume that he may be mistaken in this matter. However, since eastern Valentinianism not only differs from western Valentinianism, but also has preserved the characteristics of a more primitive form of Valentinian doctrine than is found in western documents (see above, chapters, 4, 6 end, and 6–9 passim), it may be reasonably concluded that Heracleon remained, at least in certain aspects, closer to that more primitive form than did other representatives of the western branch.

---

[29] Ibid. XIII 31:187 = frg. 27 Vö.
[30] Clement of Alexandria describes Heracleon simply as the most famous of all the Valentinians (ὁ τῆς Οὐαλεντίνου σχολῆς δοκιμώτατος, *Str.* IV 71:1); whereas Origen introduces him as a disciple of Valentinus (τὸν Οὐαλεντίνου λεγόμενον εἶναι γνώριμον Ἡρακλέωνα, *In Jo.* II 8:14 = frg. 1 Vö.) The mention in Tert. *Val.* 4:2 (*deduxit et Heracleon inde tramites quosdam*) is vague and betrays no first-hand knowledge; the word *inde* probably only means that Heracleon, like Ptolemy, developed his own version of Valentinus' doctrine, not that he was a disciple of Ptolemy.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

THE POSITION OF PTOLEMY

As was shown in chapter 1, Irenaeus was dealing in *Against the heresies* specifically with "the disciples of Ptolemy" (I Pref. 2). Ptolemy is probably the most frequently mentioned of all Valentinian leaders. As we saw in chapter 4, Tertullian mentions him in *Val.* 4:2 first among the successors of Valentinus, and Hippolytus names him, together with Heracleon, as a chief proponent of Italian Valentinianism.

The *Letter to Flora*

The most tangible piece of information about Ptolemy himself is his *Letter to Flora*, the only preserved writing that is definitely written by him, reproduced *in extenso* by Epiphanius (*Pan.* XXXIII 3–7). The letter is written as an introduction[1] to Valentinian Christianity for the uninitiated, and deliberately stops short of the particulars of Valentinian protology (7:8–9). Specifically, the letter discusses the status of the Law of Moses and is intended to present the true Christian understanding of the Law as a middle way between two equally erroneous extremes. On the one side is the error of those who assume that the God proclaimed by the Saviour is the same as the god who spoke in the Law of Moses and is the creator of the visible world. On the opposite side is the equally mistaken doctrine that the lawgiver and creator is none other than the Devil. The truth is much more complex than either of these positions, Ptolemy explains. To begin with, only a part of the law was spoken by God; other parts were ordained either by Moses or by the elders of the people. Secondly, the God speaking in the law is not the perfect God and Father of the Saviour, but a different figure, whose main characteristic is justice, and who also is the maker of the visible world. This figure, the lawgiver and Demiurge, is called the "Middle"

---

[1] The eisagogic genre of the text is discussed by Markschies, "New Research," esp. 229–32.

(ἡ μεσότης), because he stands midway between the perfect God and the Devil.[2]

It is not the purpose of this chapter to discuss Ptolemy' theory of the divine law or his methods of exegesis, which form the main content of the letter (and are interesting enough topics in themselves). Instead, our concern is to compare whatever information about Ptolemy' systematic theology can be gleaned from the *Letter*, with the system attributed by Irenaeus to the followers of Ptolemy in *Haer.* I 1–8.

THE POSITION OF THE DEMIURGE

A striking difference between the system in Irenaeus and the *Letter* is that in Irenaeus the term μεσότης is used for the region of the Mother Achamoth and not as a name of the Demiurge. According to the treatise used by Irenaeus, "the Middle" is the name of that supracelestial place which is also called the Ogdoad, and which is situated between the Pleroma and the cosmos, one level above the Demiurge, who reigns in the Hebdomad.[3] Moreover, in the *Letter*, the Demiurge is described as an image of the higher god (τοῦ κρείττονος . . . εἰκών 7:7), whereas Iren. *Haer.* I 5:1 makes Achamoth the image of the invisible Father and the Demiurge the image of the Son.[4]

"The Middle" is a term that appears elsewhere in Valentinian documents as well.[5] The system of Hippolytus (*Haer.* VI 32:7–9) applies it as Ptolemy does in his *Letter*, to the Demiurge and the

_____

[2] ἕτερος ὢν παρὰ τὰς τούτων [*sc.* ὁ τέλειος θεός and ὁ διάβολος] οὐσίας μέσος <τε> τούτων καθεστῶς, ἐνδίκως καὶ τὸ τῆς μεσότητος ὄνομα ἀποφέροιτο ἂν (7:4).

[3] Ταύτην δὲ τὴν μητέρα καὶ ὀγδοάδα καλοῦσι καὶ Σοφίαν καὶ γῆν καὶ Ἰερουσαλὴμ καὶ ἅγιον πνεῦμα καὶ κύριον ἀρσενικῶς· ἔχειν δὲ τὸν τῆς μεσότητος τόπον αὐτήν, καὶ εἶναι ὑπεράνω μὲν τοῦ δημιουργοῦ . . . (I 5:3); οἰκεῖν δὲ τὴν μητέρα αὐτῶν εἰς τὸν ὑπερουράνιον τόπον, τουτέστιν ἐν τῇ μεσότητι, τὸν δημιουργὸν δὲ εἰς τὸν ἐπουράνιον τόπον, τουτέστιν ἐν τῇ ἑβδομάδι . . . (I 5:4). At the moment of eschatological consummation the Demiurge, together with the souls of the righteous, will advance to the Middle, while Achamoth and her spiritual children will leave that place to be reintegrated into the Pleroma (I 7:1; cf. II 29). Also cf. I 8:4 (RD I/2:897); III 2:2.

[4] ἐν εἰκόνι τοῦ ἀοράτου πατρὸς τετηρηκέναι μὴ γινωσκομένην ὑπὸ τοῦ δημιουργοῦ· τοῦτον δὲ τοῦ μονογενοῦς υἱοῦ.

[5] Cf. Quispel, *Flora*, 100; Thomassen and Painchaud, *Traité tripartite*, 378–79; Thomassen, "How Valentinian," 278.

Hebdomad. This designation is based on the classification of the Demiurge as soul, and on the traditional Platonic understanding of the soul as holding an intermediate position between mind and matter.[6] This usage is also found in Heracleon (frg. 40 Vö. = Orig. *In Jo.* XIII 60:416).[7] In applying the term to the Ogdoad, Irenaeus' system seems to deviate from normal usage in Valentinianism and to reinterpret the term for its own purposes.[8] The fact that Ptolemy in his *Letter* does not use the term in the same way, but instead agrees with other Valentinian sources on this point, suggests therefore that he cannot be the author of Irenaeus' system.

Ptolemy's System

Of the two gods, the higher is "the Father," the perfect god (ὁ τέλειος θεός καὶ πατήρ 3:4; ὁ τέλειος θεός 7:3.5; ὁ θεὸς καὶ πατήρ 3:2; ὁ τῶν ὅλων πατήρ 3:7, 5:5). The lower god is called "the god of justice" (ὁ τῆς δικαιοσύνης θεός 3:7; δίκαιος 7:5; δίκαιος καὶ μισοπόνηρος 3:6) and Lawmaker (νομοθέτης 3:8), as well as Demiurge (δημιουργὸς καὶ ποιητὴς τοῦδε τοῦ παντός κόσμου καὶ τῶν ἐν αὐτῷ 7:4). The origin of this lower god is not explained. It is clear, however, that Ptolemy's systematic position is monistic: ultimately there is a single cause of the universe, he declares:

> For the present do not let this trouble you as you desire to learn how from *one* beginning of all things, which is <simple> and, as we acknowledge and believe, ungenerated, incorruptible, and good, there were constituted these natures (πῶς ἀπὸ μιᾶς ἀρχῆς τῶν ὅλων . . . συνέστησαν καὶ αὗται αἱ φύσεις), namely that of corruption and that of the Middle, which are of different substance (ἀνομοούσιοι), although it is the nature of the good to generate and produce (γεννᾶν τε καὶ προφέρειν) things which are like itself and of the same substance. If God permit, you will learn in the future about their origin and generation (ἀρχήν τε καὶ γέννησιν), when you are counted worthy of the apostolic tradition which we also have received by succession, because we can prove all our statements from the teaching of the Saviour. (7:8–9)

---

[6] Also cf. Clem. Alex. *Str.* IV 90:3 (commenting on a fragment from Valentinus): ἡ ἐκ μεσότητος ψυχή; Iren. *Haer* II 14:4; *Tri. Trac.* 98:17, and Thomassen and Painchaud, *Traité tripartite*, 390–91.

[7] For an extensive discussion of Heracleon's use of the term, see Wucherpfennig, *Heracleon*, 263–70.

[8] Quispel's indication "plus d'une foi dans les textes valentiniens" (*Flora*, 100) is inaccurate. Cf., however, below, 228n49.

From these remarks it may be assumed that the part of Ptolemy's theology that was reserved for esoteric instruction included notions of generation and projection (γεννᾶν τε καὶ προφέρειν), as well as of a fall or a break in the divine generative process, leading to the emergence of evil and corruption, and to the existence of the Demiurge. A version of the Sophia myth would certainly fit this description, but what exactly Ptolemy is withholding from us we cannot know.

The Saviour as demiurge

In the first pages of the *Letter* Ptolemy argues that the Law cannot derive from the perfect god who is the Father, (*a*) because it is an imperfect Law that needed the Saviour to complete it, and (*b*) because some of its commandments are unworthy of a perfect god. On the other hand, it cannot have been ordained by the evil power either, since it is a law that combats injustice. As proof Ptolemy cites the saying of Jesus that a house or a city divided against itself cannot stand (Matt 12:25): οἰκία γὰρ ἢ πόλις μερισθεῖσα ἐφ᾽ ἑαυτὴν ὅτι μὴ δύναται στῆναι ὁ σωτὴρ ἡμῶν ἀπεφήνατο (3:5) Ptolemy then goes on to say:

ἔτι τε τὴν τοῦ κόσμου δημιουργίαν ἰδίαν⁹ λέγει εἶναι τά τε πάντα δι᾽ αὐτοῦ γεγονέναι καὶ χωρὶς αὐτοῦ γεγονέναι οὐδὲν ὁ ἀπόστολος, προαποστερήσας τὴν τῶν ψευδηγορούντων ἀνυπόστατον σοφίαν, καὶ οὐ φθοροποιοῦ θεοῦ, ἀλλὰ δικαίου καὶ μισοπονήρου·	Moreover, the apostle, removing in advance the supports from under the baseless wisdom of the false accusers, says that the creation of the world belongs to him, all things having come into being through him and nothing having come into being without him, and it is not that of a god who brings corruption but of a righteous one who hates evil. (3:6)

The argument moves from the nature of the Law to the nature of the cosmos, and a parallelism is established between the two. Just as the Law cannot be attributed to an unjust power, so the cosmos was not created by the Adversary either. (The text then goes on to insist on the providence of the creator.) In addition, John 1:3 is adduced as proof of the divine origin of the created world.

---

⁹ Holl, followed by Quispel, reads <αὐτοῦ> ἰδίαν, but the addition of the pronoun is probably unnecessary, as Löhr, "Doctrine de Dieu," 181, notes, with reference to Bauer and Aland, *Wörterbuch*, s.v. ἴδιος 2; also cf. Blass and Debrunner, § 286.

Syntactically, the implicit agent of ἰδίαν and referent of αὐτοῦ in this passage can only be ὁ σωτήρ in the immediately preceding sentence.[10] The demiurgic agent must therefore be the Saviour. The Saviour cannot, however, be the Demiurge himself.[11] The figure of the Demiurge, the second god, is only introduced later in 3:7–8; he is identical with the Lawmaker, and the distinction between the Saviour and the Lawmaker is evident in chapters 5–6, which describe how the Saviour came to complete, abrogate, or change the Law by giving it a new and spiritual meaning. The Saviour comes from the Father and represents a level above the Demiurge (3:7, 5:7 [see below], 7:5).

That the Saviour has a demiurgic function is standard Valentinian doctrine. By giving Sophia rationality, and by separating and pre-forming the substances issued from her, he is in fact the primary demiurgic cause. He is the mind, or *logos*, that enables the creation of a cosmos with a measure of rationality. According to the various systems, Sophia in turn moves her son the Demiurge, without him realising it, to effectuate the cosmogony.[12] To what extent Ptolemy espoused such a theory of three demiurgic agents we cannot know for certain, since he nowhere in the *Letter* alludes to the myth of Sophia. But his use of John 1:3 in this context is in agreement with the exegesis of that verse found in *Exc.* 45:3,[13] and in Heracleon.[14]

---

[10] Cf. Quispel, *Flora*, 77. Löhr, "Doctrine de Dieu," 181–82 argues that the referent is the Demiurge. But the Demiurge has not been explicitly mentioned in the preceding text, nor has he been introduced yet at this point in the argument. (Only in 3:7–8 is "the god of justice" finally introduced as a second god.)

[11] As Markschies thinks ("New Research," 240–44).

[12] δυνάμει τὸν σωτῆρα δεδημιουργηκέναι, Iren. *Haer.* I 4:5; πρῶτος . . . δημιουργός . . . καθολικός, *Exc.* 47:1. See further Thomassen, "Demiurge," esp. 238–43; Thomassen and Painchaud, *Traité tripartite*, 395–96. For Heracleon (below, n14), the Saviour-Logos himself acts as the moving force within (ἐνεργεῖν) the Demiurge.

[13] "Thus, through the manifestation of the Saviour, Sophia was made passionless, and the external things were created (καὶ τὰ ἔξω κτίζεται). For all things were made through him, and without him was nothing made."

[14] Frg. 1 (Orig. *In Jo.* II 14:102–3): "The one who provided the Demiurge with the cause for creating the world, that is, the Logos, was not the one 'from whom,' or 'by whom,' but the one 'through whose agency'" (τὸν τὴν αἰτίαν παρασχόντα τῆς γενέσεως τοῦ κόσμου τῷ δημιουργῷ, τὸν λόγον ὄντα, εἶναι οὐ τὸν ἀφ' οὗ, ἢ ὑφ' οὗ, ἀλλὰ τὸν δι' οὗ); ". . . while he gave the power, another created" (αὐτοῦ ἐνεργοῦντος ἕτερος ἐποίει); frg. 22 (ibid., XIII 19:115): ". . . they worshipped the creation and not the true creator, who is Christ, since all things were made through him, and without him was nothing made" (ἐλάτρευον τῇ κτίσει, καὶ οὐ τῷ κατ' ἀλήθειαν κτίστῃ, ὅς ἐστιν Χριστός, εἴ γε πάντα δι' αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο, καὶ χωρὶς αὐτοῦ

Both those texts interpret the Logos of John 1:3 as referring to the Saviour in his role as the ultimate cause of creation that lies behind the work of the Demiurge himself. Since Ptolemy clearly distinguishes between the two figures of the Saviour and the Demiurge, a similar idea must operate in the present text.[15]

A psychic Christ?

Having established (in chapter 4) that the Law must be divided into three parts—one that comes from God, another having been laid down by Moses, and a third being precepts devised by the elders of the people—Ptolemy goes on (in chapters 5–6) to divide the first part of the Law further into three subdivisions. These divine sections of the Law contain (*a*) legislation that is pure and good, that is, the Ten Commandments, (*b*) legislation that mixes good with evil, that is, the laws of retribution, and (*c*) ritual laws, which are no longer to be interpreted and applied literally. The first set of laws the Saviour came to fulfil or complete (πληρόω 3:4, 5:1.3, 6:1), the second he abrogated (ἀναιρέω 5:1.7, 6:2), and the third he gave a new and spiritual meaning (5:2.8–15, 6:4–6).

Discussing the second category of law, that which requires an eye for an eye and a life for a life, Ptolemy comments that it represents justice mixed with injustice (5:4), and then goes on:

τοῦτο δὲ τὸ πρόσταγμα δίκαιον μὲν ἄλλως καὶ ἦν καὶ ἔστι, διὰ τὴν ἀσθένειαν τῶν νομοθετηθέντων ἐν παρεκβάσει τοῦ καθαροῦ νόμου τεθέν, ἀνοίκειον δὲ τῇ τοῦ πατρὸς τῶν ὅλων φύσει τε καὶ ἀγαθότητι.

(5:5) This commandment was, and is, just, in so far as it was given because the recipients of the law were weak and strayed from the law that is pure. But it is alien to the nature of the Father of the Entirety and his goodness.

ἐγένετο οὐδέν). See also Orbe, *Albores*, *passim*; and Wucherpfennig, *Heracleon*, 109–60. Two other exegeses of John 1:3 are found in Valentinian texts: (1) In *Tri. Trac.* 114:8–9 the verse is applied to "the Logos," who is the structural equivalent of Sophia, not of the Saviour. (2) In Iren. *Haer.* I 8:5, which is a commentary on the beginning of John in terms of the primal Ogdoad, the verse is taken to refer to the Logos that features as a member of the third pair.

[15] Quispel's interpretation in *Flora*, 77–79 is thus basically correct, as against his more recent critics Löhr ("Doctrine de Dieu") and Markschies ("New Research"). It may be added that the last part of 3:6, which speaks about the providence of the creator (ἀπρονοήτων . . . ἀνθρώπων, τῆς προνοίας τοῦ δημιουργοῦ μὴ αἰτίαν λαμβανομένων) probably alludes to the Saviour as being the ultimate demiurgic cause, with αἰτία possessing a technical sense; cf. Orbe, *Albores*, 253n63.

ἴσως δὲ τοῦτο κατάλληλον, ἐπάν-
αγκες δὲ μᾶλλον· ὁ γὰρ καὶ τὸν ἕνα
φόνον οὐ βουλόμενος ἔσεσθαι ἐν τῷ
λέγειν 'οὐ φονεύσεις', προστάξας τὸν
φονέα ἀντιφονεύεσθαι, δεύτερον νόμον
νομοθετῶν καὶ δυσὶ φόνοις βραβεύων
ὁ τὸν ἕνα ἀπαγορεύσας ἔλαθεν ἑαυτὸν
ὑπ' ἀνάγκης κλαπείς.

διὸ δὴ ὁ ἀπ' ἐκείνου παραγενόμενος
υἱὸς τοῦτο τὸ μέρος τοῦ νόμου
ἀνῄρηκεν, ὁμολογήσας καὶ αὐτὸ εἶναι
τοῦ θεοῦ· ἔν τε τοῖς ἄλλοις †καταριθ-
μεῖται <ἐν>¹⁶ τῇ παλαιᾷ αἱρέσει καὶ
ἐν οἷς ἔφη ὁ θεὸς εἰπών· ὁ κακολογῶν
πατέρα ἢ μητέρα θανάτῳ τελευτάτω'.

(5:6) Perhaps it was appropriate; rather, however, it was born of necessity. For whoever says "you shall not kill," thus wanting not a single killing to take place, and then introduces a second law decreeing that a killer is to be killed in retribution, distinguishing between two kinds of murder after first having forbidden even a single, has unwittingly become the victim of necessity.[17]

(5:7) That is why the son who came from him abrogated this part of the law, all the while admitting that it too was from God. Among other things it is considered as a part of the old religion in his words, "God said: 'Whoever curses father or mother shall indeed die'" [Matt 15:4/Ex 21:17].

The question to be resolved here is who the "son" is who is mentioned in 5:7. It has been suggested that this figure is the psychic Christ, the son of the Demiurge who occurs in Irenaeus and in *Exc.* section C (above, chapters 6–8).[18] It is not evident, however, that the Demiurge is the referent of ἐκείνου in 5:7. The Demiurge is not actually mentioned in the preceding text; the argument in 5:6 is of a general nature, with ὁ γὰρ etc. signifying "whoever" rather than the Demiurge as such. Moreover, in other passages the abrogation

---

[16] The text seems incorrect. Proposed emendations are discussed by Quispel, *Flora*, 94–95. The simplest solution is probably to add <ἐν>, as suggested by Löhr, "Doctrine de Dieu," 182.

[17] The meaning of this passage has been the subject of some discussion. Quispel translates the beginning as follows: "Sans doute était-il le résultat d'une adaptation aux circonstances, et plutôt d'une nécessité." Löhr, "Doctrine de Dieu," 182, thinks instead that "l'objet de κατάλληλον" is the Father and his goodness in the previous sentence. Since the overall sense of the passage, however, is to assert how alien the law of retribution is to the nature of the Father, this is unlikely. The argument is rather the following: Ptolemy has just stated that this law is just, and was motivated by the weakness of the people. Therefore, he argues, it may even be called appropriate. More to the point, however, this law is something the Lawmaker-Demiurge was forced to give, rather than the result of a rational decision (which the word κατάλληλον might be taken to imply), since his legislation thereby became inconsistent and contradictory.

[18] Quispel, *Flora*, 93–94.

of the law of retribution is explicitly attributed to the Saviour himself.[19] Finally, the quotation at the end that is used as a proof-text that the law of retribution was given by God, must, in order to possess the authority required by the argument, be attributed to the Saviour rather than to a psychic Christ. In the *Letter*, Ptolemy is using quotations from the Saviour regularly, and as a matter of principle, to support his argument (cf. 3:8, 7:9). Ptolemy is speaking from the position of the truth revealed by the Saviour, and it is from this position the statement is made that the law of retribution was given by "God"—that is, the god of ancient Israel. He is arguing against those who wish to attribute that law to the Adversary, at the same time as he is using the imperfection of that law to argue for his own position that there are two gods. Obviously the Demiurge's son cannot have this sort of knowledge, nor can he be an adequate authority to be cited for the truth Ptolemy is here expounding.

The "son" in 5:7 can thus only be the Saviour himself. This also means that ἐκείνου must refer back to the Father of the Entirety in 5:5. If the expression ὁ ἀπ᾽ ἐκείνου παραγενόμενος υἱὸς is selected here rather than simply ὁ σωτήρ, the term used everywhere else in the *Letter*, it is apparently because Ptolemy this time wishes to link the Saviour's abrogation of the law of retribution, already mentioned in 5:1, with what he has just said about the incompatibility of the law of retribution with the nature of the Father in 5:5. The Law of the ancient religion in all its aspects belongs to the Lawmaker-Demiurge, who is distinct from and inferior to the Father of the Entirety. In contrast to that "old time religion," however, the truth[20] of the Father has now been revealed through his own son, the Saviour.

In conclusion, there is no evidence of the notion of a psychic Christ in the *Letter*. The appearance of that notion in the system attributed by Irenaeus to the "Ptolemaeans" cannot therefore be confidently attributed to Ptolemy himself.

---

[19] ὃν ἀνεῖλεν ὁ σωτήρ 5:1; ἀνηρέθη ὑπὸ τοῦ σωτῆρος 6:2. Cf. Löhr, "Doctrine de Dieu," 183.

[20] The "truth," now revealed, is the technical expression used as a contrast to the Law of the old religion, cf. 5:9, 6:5. It is the same language as is found in, for example, *The Gospel of Truth*.

A soteriology of mutual participation?

The third part of the Law given by the Lawmaker-Demiurge is the ritual laws, which acquired symbolic meanings after the Saviour revealed the truth. Ptolemy deals with these symbolic meanings in 5:8–15 and 6:4–6, particularly those applying to the precepts concerning sacrifices, circumcision, the Sabbath, fasting, and the Passover. About the Passover he says:

καὶ τὸ πάσχα δὲ ὁμοίως καὶ τὰ ἄζυμα, ὅτι εἰκόνες ἦσαν, δηλοῖ καὶ Παῦλος ὁ ἀπόστολος τὸ δὲ πάσχα ἡμῶν, λέγων, ἐτύθη Χριστός, καὶ ἵνα ἦτε, φησίν, ἄζυμοι, μὴ μετέχοντες ζύμης—ζύμην δὲ νῦν τὴν κακίαν λέγει—ἀλλ᾽ ἦτε νέον φύραμα.

So also with the paschal lamb and the unleavened bread: that these were images Paul the apostle makes clear when he says: "Christ our paschal lamb has been sacrificed," and "in order that you may be unleavened"— by leaven he means evil—"but may be a new lump of dough" [1 Cor 5:7]. (5:15)

The passage seems to imply a passion suffered by the Saviour, through which passion "we" were saved from evil.[21] This suggests a soteriological notion of the same type as we have found in eastern Valentinian sources, and also in Heracleon: a soteriology of exchange, where the Saviour subjects himself to the sufferings of corporeal existence in order that those he has come to save may be liberated from it. In the western systems studied above in chapters 6–9, on the other hand, there is a growing tendency to reject the notion that the Saviour suffered, and to assert that the spirituals because of their inherent nature did not require redemption.

Iren. *Haer.* I 6:1 describes how the Saviour, in addition to the spiritual elements from Achamoth, also assumed the psychic Christ from the Demiurge and a psychic body from the *oikonomia*, a body that could be seen, touched and suffer (ὁρατὸν καὶ ψηλαφητὸν καὶ παθητόν). The variant in I 7:2, as well as *Exc.* 58–62, explicitly assign the passion to the psychic Christ. All these texts make the psychics the essential target of the salvific mission. The passage in the *Letter* quoted above can, it is true, be harmonised with these texts by

---

[21] Recapitulating, Ptolemy alludes to this theme again in 6:6: Paul indicated the symbolic interpretation of the Law when speaking about the paschal lamb and the unleavened bread (τὸ μὲν τῶν εἰκόνων . . . διὰ τοῦ πάσχα καὶ τῶν ἀζύμων δείξας δι᾽ ἡμᾶς. Quispel moves, plausibly, the words δι᾽ ἡμᾶς so that they come after πάσχα, and translates: "l'agneau pascal qui a été immolé pour nous." In any case a sacrifice "for our sakes" must be implied.

assuming that the Christ mentioned there is actually the psychic Christ, as distinct from the Saviour,[22] and that the terms denoting the beneficiaries of the salvific act[23] (the "sacrifice") refer to the psychics, as distinct from the spirituals. However, that would clearly be a forced interpretation and unsupported by anything that is written elsewhere in the *Letter*. It seems more likely that Ptolemy, with the expression τὸ πάσχα ἡμῶν, presupposes a form of the soteriology of mutual participation involving the self-sacrificing suffering of the Saviour for the benefit of all believers, himself included.

Conclusion

From the indications given in 7:8–9 (see above, 121) it can be reasonably inferred that Ptolemy esoterically taught a doctrine explaining how both the Demiurge, the physical cosmos and evil ultimately derived from the single cause of the Father of the All, in spite of their being alien to the Father's nature. It has also been established, on the basis of 3:6, that the Saviour-Logos is the true cause of the cosmos, although the creation was effectuated by the Demiurge. These are themes that are easily reconciled with Valentinian systematics in such a way as to corroborate, rather than invalidate, the assumption that Ptolemy, who was after all famous as a Valentinian teacher, did in fact propound a version of the system.

On the other hand, the *Letter* offers no evidence that specifically links the systematic thought of Ptolemy with the family of systems comprising Iren. *Haer.* I 1–8, *Exc.* section C, and the system of Hippolytus. On the contrary, the use of the term μεσότης in Iren. *Haer.* I 1–8 is different from the usage in the *Letter*. There is also some indication that Ptolemy in the *Letter* advocates a notion of vicarious suffering that brings him closer to the eastern soteriology of mutual participation than to the theories of the western family of systems, where the Saviour tends to be impassible while the role of a suffering Saviour is assumed by a psychic Christ.

In the heresiological tradition, Ptolemy is nevertheless associated with the theory of the psychic body of Christ found in the western systems, and Irenaeus attributes his main system to "the followers of

---

[22] "Christ" is nowhere else in the *Letter* used as a name for the Saviour.
[23] I.e., ἡμῶν, ἦτε, and also ἡμᾶς in 6:6.

Ptolemy." These facts suggest the conclusion that further doctrinal developments must have taken place within the school of Ptolemy, beyond what can be gleaned from the *Letter*. To what extent these developments are to be attributed to Ptolemy himself, at a later stage of his career than that represented by the *Letter*, and how much to his disciples, can hardly be determined with precision on the basis of the sources. Speculatively, a scenario may be envisioned in which the *Letter* represents an early Ptolemy, when his Christology, soteriology and ecclesiology were closer to their original form in the Valentinian movement than what they became later, when Ptolemy had developed the ideas that were to distinguish western Valentinianism from its eastern counterpart. Alternatively, these ideas were not developed by Ptolemy himself, but by his later followers.[24]

---

[24] Cf. further below, chapter 3.

PART II

THE THREE DIMENSIONS OF VALENTINIANISM

SALVATION IN HISTORY AND RITUAL

This part of the study will show that Valentinian religious discourse has three basic dimensions. The first of these is a reflection on the historical manifestation of the Saviour. It is concerned with the acts performed by the Saviour during his earthly presence, and it interprets these acts with reference to a notion of a divine plan of salvation. This I shall call the salvation-historical dimension of Valentinianism. The second dimension is ritual; on this issue the Valentinians were concerned with the significance of the specific acts that were performed for the purpose of their "redemption." The third dimension is protological philosophical myth, a characteristic feature of most Valentinian texts. This myth tells the story of how a spiritual realm of Fullness was produced from the primordial Father, how the passion of one of his spiritual offspring caused the inferior substances matter and soul to come into being, and how the cosmos, and mankind, were created from these substances.

The assumption of the present study is that these three dimensions of history, ritual, and protological philosophical myth are the basic building blocks of the Valentinian interpretation of Christianity. The structure of Valentinian religion, I shall try to show, is built from the relationships created among these three dimensions. Through the ways historical events, ritual acts and speculation on first principles are interpreted so as to illuminate one another mutually, the dynamics of a functioning religious system is created and maintained. To describe these systematic characteristics of Valentinianism is the purpose of what follows.

Valentinian texts do not always discuss all three dimensions. For the sake of exposition it will be convenient first to discuss a text that mainly focuses on the two dimensions of history and ritual, and explores their mutual relationship. The text chosen is found as chapters 66–86 of the *Excerpts from Theodotus*, also designated as section D in previous scholarship on *Exc.* (cf. above, 29). It may be noted that the attribution of this section to Theodotus is uncertain, since he is never mentioned in it. (However, nothing in the text, as far as I can

see, speaks against such an attribution either.) Unlike many of the other excerpts contained in the disparate collection of notes that make up *Exc.*, these particular chapters are interconnected and form an extended, continuous whole. At first sight it is an straightforward, didactic piece, which explains the advent of the Saviour, and also relates this event to an interpretation of baptism.

The Soteriological Contrast Pattern

The anonymous Valentinian author begins (*Exc.* 67) by picking up a theme from Pauline salvation history, alluding to and partly quoting Rom 7:5–6:

> While we were living in the flesh, our sinful passions, aroused by the law, were at work in our members to bear fruit for death. But now we are discharged from the law, dead to that which held us captive, so that we serve not under the old written code but in the new life of the Spirit.

This passage in Paul is an instance of what Bultmann and others have called the "Revelation-Schema," where a contrast is made between the age before the advent and the saving act of Christ, and the situation following and resulting from this event.[1] More specifically, the passage constitutes an instance of the "soteriological contrast pattern," which views the difference between the two ages from the point of view of the condition of humanity.[2] In commenting on this text, the Valentinian author interprets Paul quite literally: "'While we were living in the flesh,' the apostle says, speaking as if he were already outside the body. By 'flesh' he refers, he says, to that weakness which is the emission (προβολή) of the Woman above" (67:1). Thus, Paul characterised "the old age" as a situation where humankind lived in dependence on the body, being subjected to birth and dying. And the reason for this situation, the Valentinian knows, is the fatal passion of the female aeon, the passion which became matter and creation (67:2–4). After the Saviour arrived, however, we were liberated from this state of corporeal imperfection:

---

[1] Cf. Bultmann, *Theology*, I 105–6; Dahl, "Form-critical observations," esp. 33–34; Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians*, 58; Meeks, *First Urban Christians*, 95; and, most recently, Hellholm, "Revelation-Schema."

[2] For other instances of this pattern, cf. Rom 6:17–22, 11:30; Gal 3:23–25, 4:3–5. 8–9; Eph 2:1–8.11–22; Col 1:21–22, 2:13–15, etc.

> For as long as we were children of the Female only, as of a dishonourable union, we were incomplete, childish, without understanding, weak and without form, brought forth like abortions: we were children of the Woman. But once we were given form by the Saviour, we became children of a Man and of a bridal chamber. (68)

The author retains Paul's soteriological contrast pattern, and also appropriates its specific rhetorical signatures: "as long as" is contrasted by "but once." This means that he, just as much as Paul, is speaking about an event in salvation history, something that has happened in the collective experience of humankind. For both authors too, however, the contrast pattern refers not merely to a past historical event, but also to a current experience which Christians have, or which they are urged to recognise. The "before" and the "after" are a matter of world history, but apply also to the religious career of the individual.

The text in *Exc.* first proceeds, however, to develop the historical dimension of the contrast. It does so by describing cosmic events. Before, the cosmos was subject to the rule of the stars, which were the powers of Fate. A constant struggle for power went on among these astral powers. Whichever power happened to be on top at a particular moment ruled the events taking place in the cosmos, including the births of living creatures, who, consequently, came to be born "as if they were his children" (69:2). This rule of the stars came to an end, however, once the Saviour appeared from above, as a new star, and descended to earth (72–75). He "dissolved the old astral order, shone with a light not of this world, and traced new paths leading to salvation" (74:2). The description alludes to the nativity stories of Matthew and Luke, and thus constitutes an astrological interpretation of the birth of Jesus. This, too, contributes to the depiction of the arrival of the Saviour as an event that is firmly situated in time and history.

The Parallelism of Salvation History and Baptism

At this point, however, the text begins to discuss baptism, which remains the focus of interest for the rest of the excerpts. It now becomes clear that the historical redemptive work of the Saviour attains its effect through the baptismal ritual performed by the believing community. A close parallelism is established between the advent of the Saviour and what takes place in baptism:

(76:1) Thus just as the birth of the Saviour takes us away from birth and Fate, so his baptism removes us from the fire, and his passion from passion, so that we may follow him in all things. (2) For whoever has been baptised in God has advanced towards God and has received "the power to tread on scorpions and serpents" [Luke 10:19]. (3) And the Saviour enjoined the apostles, "Go and preach, and baptise the ones who believe in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit," (4) in which we are reborn and become superior to all the other powers.

(77:1) For this reason baptism is called "death," and "the end of the old life," as we renounce the evil powers, and "life in accordance with Christ," that of which he is the sole master. (2) The power which brings about the transformation of the baptised is not a matter of the body, for it is the same person who ascends (from the baptismal water), but of the soul. (3) No sooner has he come up from baptism, than he is called servant of God, and lord over the impure spirits, and the one whom they possessed until recently they now shudder before.

(78:1) Thus until baptism Fate is effective, but after it the astrologers no longer speak the truth. (2) It is not, however, the bath alone that makes free, but knowledge too: who we were, what we have become, where we were, where we have come to be placed,[3] where we are tending, what birth is, and what rebirth.

(79) As long, then, as the seed is still unformed, it is a child of the Female. But once it is formed, it is changed into a man and becomes a son of the bridegroom. No longer is it weak and subjected to the visible and invisible cosmic (powers), but having become a man, it becomes a male offspring.

In 79, the text returns to the theme dealt with in 68, the formation of the formless by the Man. It is likely, in fact, that sections 69–78 have been inserted from a separate source, because 79 reads as if it might have been intended to follow immediately upon 68. Even so, the text in its present form presents a coherent argument. The author began with the soteriological contrast pattern, pointing out the decisive change made by the Saviour's advent. In 68 it was still unclear, however, how the arrival of the Saviour might bring about a transformation of the Woman's miscarried offspring into a healthy child of the Man. How could the fact of his coming into this world

---

[3] This famous passage is often given a more dramatic translation at this point: "what we have been thrown into," etc. (cf. Jonas, *Gnosis* I 108, who lets the text have Heideggerian connotations). But the words ποῦ ἐνεβλήθημεν do not necessarily have this specific meaning, which in fact corresponds inadequately with Valentinian mythology in general: there is no adverse agent who "throws" the spiritual into the cosmos.

possibly effect a rebirth of humans? The following sections about the
rule of the stars serve to explain this. The old condition of being a
formless abortion produced by a female trying to give birth all by
herself is equivalent to being born under the fatalistic dominance of
the stars. These are just different ways of describing the same imper-
fect state of cosmic, corporeal existence, subject to decay and death.
If the Saviour shattered the power of the stars over bodily birth and
death, this means that he opened up the possibility of a new and
incorruptible form of life.

It is, however, in the ritual of baptism that this rebirth is actu-
ally effected. Baptism is the fundamental locus of rebirth. The asso-
ciation of the Saviour's conquest of the astral powers with rebirth,
therefore, forges a strong link between the historical event of the
descent of the Saviour and the ritual acts of baptism. This link is
so forceful that these two tend, as we can see in the text, to merge
into the one and the same event. If baptism is the place where the
believer is reborn as a child of the Man, it is also the place where
the destruction of the astral powers takes place.

The Saviour as Agent and Model of Salvation

It might be tempting to conclude that the notion of the Saviour's
advent into the world is not really conceived as a historical event
after all, but has been reduced to a metaphor for the event of sal-
vation that takes place in the baptismal ritual. Nevertheless, such a
conclusion would be too rash; a more careful analysis is called for.
A distinction should be made between two ways of looking at the
redemptive work of the Saviour, both of which are articulated in
our text. From one point of view, the Saviour may be described as
the agent of a salvific act performed through his descent into the
world. He "descended to establish peace" (κατῆλθεν εἰρήνην ποιήσων,
74:1); as a new star he "destroyed the old astral order" (καταλύων
τὴν παλαιὰν ἀστροθεσίαν, 74:2); he descended on earth in order to
transfer (κατελθὼν εἰς γῆν ἵνα μεταθῇ) from Fate to his Providence
the ones who had believed in Christ (ibid.); and he regenerates (ἀνα-
γεννᾷ) and transfers (μετατίθεται) the regenerated to life in the Ogdoad,
the region above the cosmos (80:1). In all these passages, the Saviour
is portrayed as the agent and a sufficient cause of salvation.

From a second point of view, however, the redemptive effect of
the Saviour's deeds emanates from the symbolism they contain: "Just

as the birth of the Saviour takes us away from birth and Fate, so also his baptism removes us from the fire, and his passion from passion, so that we may follow him in all things" (76:1).[4] Thus, the fact that the Saviour let himself be born is something that releases us from the domination of the powers of Fate over bodily birth; his baptism allows us to escape the all-consuming fire which encircles the cosmos;[5] his passion liberates us from our passions. The passage suggests that the relationship of symbolic parallelism between the Saviour and the believers is what is soteriologically significant. The essential function of his incarnation, baptism and passion is to provide an effective model for the redemption of those who "follow" him. Moreover, in this notion of salvation by symbolic parallelism, baptism occupies a central position, suggesting that the symbolism becomes effective in the baptismal ritual. Conversely, the Saviour's *own* baptism becomes a significant event in the narrative about his earthly life, because of the model-function it serves. As we shall see, however, this leads to the incongruous implication that in his capacity as model of the saved person, the Saviour is no longer cast in the role of the agent of salvation, but rather in that of its recipient.

It is clear that for the Valentinian author these two points of view form a unity. The birth, baptism, and passion of the Saviour do not make up a distinct set of events from what is described as his triumphant descent into the world. They merely indicate an alternative perspective on what is in reality one and the same redemptive act. On the other hand, however, those events acquire their soteriological significance by virtue of their symbolic model-function, whereas the notion of the Saviour's advent as a conquering attack on the cosmic powers portrays salvation as an effective act. We are therefore led to interpret the redemptive act of the Saviour as being simultaneously an act/event and a symbol/sign.

Event and symbol

This dual nature of the redemptive act entails a logical problem, of course. Acts and events are by definition empirical, singular, and

---

[4] ὡς οὖν ἡ γέννησις τοῦ σωτῆρος γενέσεως ἡμᾶς καὶ εἱμαρμένης ἐξέβαλεν, οὕτως καὶ τὸ βάπτισμα αὐτοῦ πυρὸς ἡμᾶς ἐξείλετο καὶ τὸ πάθος πάθους, ἵνα κατὰ πάντα ἀκολουθήσωμεν αὐτῷ.

[5] The meaning of the "fire" here may be inferred from *Exc.* 81, which describes the ἐπουράνιον πῦρ that attacks all material bodies and immaterial demons.

unique phenomena, whereas the property of a sign is that it is ideal
and repeatable. In the logic of the Valentinian theologian, however,
act-event and sign each possesses the properties of the other. Such
a logic is clearly required in order that the redemptive act of the
Saviour may be thought of as being more than a singular event in
history. By being assimilated to the sign, the redemptive act acquires
the repeatable property of the latter, while retaining its quality as a
singular and efficient act.

This logic allows the redemptive act to be re-instantiated: it can
be repeated, while still remaining, paradoxically, a one-time event.
The locus of this re-instantiation is the ritual of baptism. Baptism is
the re-enactment of the redemptive act carried out by the Saviour.
That is to say, because the redemptive act is a symbol as well as
an act, the ritual act of baptism can—by virtue of the symbolic
significance attributed to it, which joins it with the redemptive act
that serves as its model—be conceived and experienced as being vir-
tually identical with this model.

Now, this whole construction, functional as it may be in religious
practice, poses insoluble conceptual difficulties: it not only fuses sign
and act-event; it also simultaneously needs to distinguish between
them, since it is only by functioning as a symbol that the act-event
can be re-instantiated, and it is only by being conceived as an act-
event that the symbol can be imagined to effect anything. Moreover,
when the redemptive descent of the Saviour into the world is turned
into a symbol, or a "type"[6] of redemption to be "followed" in bap-
tism, the Saviour comes, as we have remarked already, to be por-
trayed ambiguously both as the receiver of redemption and its
bestowing agent at the same time.

Result 1: Ambiguity in the narrative

This ambiguity is discernible as well in the description of the birth,
baptism and passion of the Saviour. On the one hand, his being
born in the world destroys cosmic birth, and regenerates the believ-
ers, and his passion liberates from passion. On the other hand, the
fact that he was baptised suggests that he too was subjected to the
conditions imposed by cosmic birth and passion, from which baptism

---

[6] The term τύπος is used in *Exc.* 85:1 (cf. also *Tri. Trac.* 124:34).

represents the redemption. The inclusion of the Saviour's baptism
together with his birth and passion in the symbolic narrative appears
incongruous, but is nevertheless in accordance with the author's logic.
From one point of view, the Saviour's birth, baptism and passion
represent separate events, and baptism is the event that saved him
from the cosmic birth and passion he subjected himself to when he
descended into this world. From another point of view, however,
they are all one and the same event: the destruction of birth and
passion by the Saviour's birth-baptism-passion, seen as a unity, is
equivalent to the representation of the redemptive act as a con-
quering descent.

Result 2: Ambiguity in the ritual

The ambiguities in the account of the Saviour's redemptive act
have their counterparts in the notions about the ritual act of bap-
tism. In the ritual, the redemptive act is repeated as a symbol, and
re-empowered as an act. This process constitutes the symmetrical
reverse of the one that transforms the Saviour's historical act into a
symbol. By symbolically identifying with the paradigm provided by
the Saviour, the baptismal candidate turns the ritual act in which
he is the actor into one where the Saviour comes to be the liber-
ating and regenerating agent and the candidate himself, as the recip-
ient of redemption, the patient of the act. In this process, the
redemptive act of the Saviour comes to be effectively present in the
ritual act; they are, in an essential way, one and the same act.
However, as soon as the act of the candidate, by being ritualised,
becomes the bearer of a symbolic meaning that enables it to be
identified with the redemptive act-event of the Saviour, so that act
and symbol, as well as the two acts themselves, become identical—
then, as a result, the roles of agent and patient, Saviour and saved
necessarily become inverted. The agent of the baptismal act, the
baptismal candidate, is also *symbolically* represented as the recipient
of salvation in the notion of the baptised Saviour. Thus in so far as
the redemptive ritual of baptism is both an act and a symbol, the
candidate must be seen simultaneously as the agent in and the patient
of the ritual, just as the Saviour is portrayed both as the agent of
the redemptive act and as its patient in the salvation narrative.

   The baptismal act as such is described by the Valentinian author
as follows. It involves the use of water (ὕδωρ, 81:2), it is a "bath"

(λουτρόν, 78:2), one "descends" into it (καταβαίνειν, κατελθεῖν, 83), and "ascends" from it (ἀναβαίνειν, ἀνελθεῖν, 77:2–3).[7] These terms depict the ritual as a distinctly physical affair; it is accomplished through the performance of certain bodily movements, and its physicality is enhanced through the contact of the body with the water—presumably a full immersion. At the same time, these acts are symbols; they evoke the descent of the Saviour into the world, and his subsequent ascent and liberation from it. But this symbolism is in turn thought of as realising itself in the ritual as a real event; it becomes a presence in the ritual which possesses both the immateriality of the symbol and the efficacy of the concrete act: there is a "power" that *transforms*, not the body, but the "soul" of the baptismal candidate (ἡ δύναμις δὲ τῆς μεταβολῆς τοῦ βαπτισθέντος οὐ περὶ τὸ σῶμα (ὁ αὐτὸς γὰρ ἀναβαίνει), ἀλλὰ περὶ ψυχήν, 77:2; translated above).

Resolving the Ambiguities: The Power of the "Name"

What is this power? Previously we have heard that it was the Saviour who liberated and regenerated us by his act of descending into the cosmos. But it was also suggested that it was his birth, baptism, and passion that effected this by virtue of a symbolic parallelism. It is as if the equation does not work out. The redemptive act has to be turned into a symbol in order to be re-instantiated in ritual, and the agent of redemption himself has to be portrayed as receiving redemption in order for the symbolism to be transferable to the ritual act. In consequence, it seems that a second agent of redemption has to be introduced in order that the symbolic relationship may be transformed once more into an actual event, that the Saviour be saved, and that the actor in the ritual be turned into the patient, or beneficiary, of the baptismal act.

The δύναμις that transforms the baptised according to *Exc.* 77:2 is clearly the same as that which is described elsewhere in this section of the *Excerpts* as "the power of God's Name."[8] The power must, therefore, be equivalent to "the Name of the Father, the Son and

---

[7] Cf. Sagnard, *Extraits*, 234.

[8] 82:1. The ms. reading δυναμιστουονοματοσου should be corrected, following all the editors of the text, with reference to 86:2 τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ θεοῦ.

the Holy Spirit" in which (εἰς ὄνομα) baptism is performed, and "in which we are reborn and become superior to all the other powers" (εἰς οὒς ἀναγεννώμεθα, τῶν λοίπων δυνάμεων ἀπασῶν ὑπεράνω γινόμενοι) (76:3–4). Receiving the Name, the baptised person is "sealed" (σφραγισθείς, 80:3, cf. 83), and will henceforth, through Christ, carry the Name as an inscription, and the Holy Spirit as an image (ἐπιγραφὴν μὲν ἔχει διὰ Χριστοῦ τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ θεοῦ, τὸ δὲ πνεῦμα ὡς εἰκόνα, 86:2).

The power of the Name is what joins the empirical and physical reality of the ritual as an act-event with its ideal and symbolic significance. The transformation it effects is symbolic and real at the same time. This double character of the ritual is dwelt on more than once in the text. Thus, in 78:2 it is emphasised that "It is not, however, the bath alone that makes free, but knowledge too" (ἔστιν δὲ οὐκ τὸ λουτρὸν μόνον τὸ ἐλευθεροῦν, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἡ γνῶσις).[9] In another passage, the author attempts to explain the dual nature of ritual by referring to two types of "fire" from which baptism saves:

> (81:1) As far as fire is concerned, there is one part which is corporeal and attacks all bodies, and another one which is pure and incorporeal, and attacks what is incorporeal, such as demons, angels of wickedness, and the Adversary himself. Thus, the celestial fire has a double nature, being partly intelligible, partly sensible. (2) And baptism is double in a similar way, being partly sensible through the water, which extinguishes the sensible fire, and partly intelligible through the Spirit, which protects from the intelligible fire (καὶ τὸ βάπτισμα οὖν διπλοῦν ἀναλόγως· τὸ μὲν αἰσθητὸν δι' ὕδατος, τοῦ αἰσθητοῦ πυρὸς σβεστήριον· τὸ δὲ νοητὸν διὰ πνεύματος, τοῦ νοητοῦ πυρὸς ἀλεξητήριον). (3) And the corporeal spirit nourishes and inflames the sensible fire, as long as it is weak, but extinguishes it when it gets stronger. The Spirit which is given us from above, however, which is incorporeal, not only prevails over the elements, but the powers and the wicked rulers as well (τὸ δὲ ἄνωθεν δοθὲν ἡμῖν πνεῦμα, ἀσώματον ὄν, οὐ στοιχείων μόνων, ἀλλὰ καὶ δυνάμεως κρατεῖ καὶ ἀρχῶν πονηρῶν).
>
> (82:1) And the bread and the oil are consecrated (ἁγιάζεται) by the power of the Name of God. In their external appearance they are just as they have been taken; but with regard to their power they are trans-

---

[9] A precise interpretation of this statement is problematic. Neither of the words λουτρόν or γνῶσις is used elsewhere in this section of *Exc.* In fact, the whole famous passage *Exc.* 78:2, which clearly arrests the flow of the text, looks like a quotation from some authoritative source—quite possibly, one might speculate, from Valentinus himself.

formed into a spiritual power (τὰ αὐτὰ ὄντα κατὰ τὸ φαινόμενον οἷα ἐλήφθη, ἀλλὰ δυνάμει εἰς δύναμιν πνευματικὴν μεταβέβληται). (2) In the same way the water, both that which has been exorcised and that which has become baptism, not only separates what is inferior, but also acquires consecration.

The explanation about the two types of fire here looks like a secondary rationalisation of the necessity of physical ritual, which the author clearly perceives as a problem. The explanation does not really work, because the baptismal water's extinguishing effect on the cosmic fire that consumes bodies, is, of course, no less a symbolic notion than the "intelligible" protection by the Spirit from intelligible fire. In fact, once the physical element used in the ritual—bread, oil, or water—has been "sanctified" and "transformed into a spiritual power," it seems inconsistent to distinguish once again, in this spiritually empowered and active substance, between its sensible and its intelligible/spiritual components. The problem of the physicality of ritual is not ultimately solved. On the one hand, the bread, the oil, and the water are said to remain what they are, just as the body of the baptismal candidate was asserted to be unchanged, in 77:2. On the other hand, the baptismal water is able, in its "sensible" aspect, to extinguish the sensible cosmic fire. So the problem of ritual remains: why does the power of the Name, that is, the Spirit, need physical means to become effective? Could it not, one might ask, enter its recipient in another way, one that would be consistent with its non-sensible nature?

The Saved Saviour

The meaningfulness of the ritual acts and substances resides in their symbolic reference to the Saviour. They are conceived as constituting a re-enactment of the Saviour's own baptism. But while the ritual is being "saved," as it were, through this reference, a further consequence is that the Saviour himself needs salvation. The physicality of ritual can only be legitimised by making materiality part of the symbolism itself. The materiality of the ritual acts, which is redeemed by the spiritual power of the Name, has its correlate in the subjection to the condition of matter of the symbolic figure who provides the model of these acts. The implication of this is that that figure needs to be himself saved from this condition by undergoing baptism.

This is not explicitly said, it is true, anywhere in *Exc.* 66–86. It is only in a different section of the *Excerpts* that the statement is made that Jesus was redeemed through,

> the redemption of the Name that descended upon Jesus in the dove and redeemed him. For redemption was necessary even for Jesus, in order that he should not be detained by the "thought of deficiency" in which he found himself when he came forth through Sophia (22:6–7).[10]

The passage can nevertheless be used here as an illustration because it agrees perfectly with the underlying logic that has emerged through the preceding analysis. The "thought of deficiency" refers to the passion of Sophia, which is the source of matter. Sophia herself must here be understood as representing the sphere of the Ogdoad above the cosmic heavens, which the Saviour passes through during his descent. Having descended into the cosmos, the Saviour is, as it were, trapped by matter, and needs to be rescued from it by another "saviour": the Name.

The text itself, of course, does not speak about two Saviours. There is only one, who is Saviour and saved at the same time. Correspondingly, in the ritual re-enactment of salvation, the ideality of its symbolism cannot be sorted out from the empiricism of its acts. The acts acquire their redemptive efficacy from their symbolic significance, and the symbolism becomes effective through being embodied in performance. The performer of the redemptive acts, who "follows the Saviour in all things," thereby becomes, in his performance, simultaneously identical and non-identical with the Saviour, receiving salvation through his own acts, with the added invocation of the Name.

The soteriological conception developed by this Valentinian author is an unstable one, operating as it does with the simultaneous identity and non-identity of agents with patients of acts, and of signs with things, acts and events. But in so doing it exemplifies an instability that is characteristic of Valentinian thought in general, and productive of various transformations within Valentinian theology. Furthermore, this text demonstrates the close interrelationship in Valentinian thought between two basic dimensions of Valentinianism: the historical account of the mission of the Saviour into the world and the accomplishment of his work of salvation on the one hand,

---

[10] Cf. above, 32.

and ritual performances, specifically the redemptive ritual of baptism, on the other. While both dimensions are essential for Valentinian soteriology, it is especially true that in the intricate logic that joins them together, the account about the Saviour cannot be understood apart from its function vis-à-vis the ritual that actuates its meaning.

SALVATION IN HISTORY AND PROTOLOGICAL MYTH

The preceding chapter was concerned with the relationship between salvation history and ritual. The purpose of the present one is to study how salvation history relates to the third basic dimension of Valentinianism, that of protological myth. A text that lends itself well to such an analysis is the so-called *Gospel of Truth* from Nag Hammadi Codex I. Before embarking on the study of the ideas contained in that text, however, I need to comment briefly on the much debated question concerning the document itself, and its position in the history of Valentinianism.

THE GOSPEL OF TRUTH

As is well known, Irenaeus had information about a Valentinian document called "The Gospel of Truth":

Hi vero qui sunt a Valentino iterum exsistentes extra omnem timorem suas conscriptiones proferentes plura habere gloriantur quam sunt ipsa Evangelia. Siquidem in tantum processerunt audaciae uti quod ab his non olim conscriptum est "Veritatis Evangelium" titulent, in nihilo conveniens apostolorum evangeliis, ut nec Evangelium quidem sit apud eos sine blasphemia.

The Valentinians, who are devoid of any fear, produce their own compositions and take pride in having more gospels than there really are. For they have even advanced to such a degree of audacity that they entitle something which was written by themselves not long ago as the "Gospel of Truth," although it in no way agrees with the gospels of the apostles, so that not even the gospel may exist among them without blasphemy. (*Haer.* III 11:9)

As is well known, the third tractate of Nag Hammadi Codex I begins with the words, "The gospel of truth is joy for those who have received from the Father of truth the grace of knowing him. . . ." The discovery of this document naturally raised the question whether it could in fact be identical with the work mentioned by Irenaeus. The optimism of its first editors, who not only thought they could answer this question in the affirmative, but also suggested that the

work should be attributed to Valentinus himself,[1] was not shared by many subsequent commentators.[2] Regardless of the question of authorship, however, the probability that there existed two independent works, one entitled "The Gospel of Truth" and the other accidentally beginning with the same words, and both of them "gnostic," must be regarded as very slim indeed. The manuscript itself provides no title for the tractate, a situation that it not only shares with many other Nag Hammadi tractates, but which is also not unusual for works of the homiletic genre in general. (*Gos. Truth* may be described as a homily on the subject of the revelation of knowledge carried out by the Saviour.) The most likely interpretation of this set of facts is that NHC I,*3* is in fact the work alluded to by Irenaeus, and that it was habitually referred to in Valentinian circles by means of its poignant opening words.[3]

This being said, it must be admitted that there is no guarantee that the text now available to us, a Lycopolitan ("Subachmimic") Coptic version in a manuscript from the middle of the fourth century, is a faithful reproduction of the Greek text known to the Valentinians of the second century. Intriguing in this regard are the fragments of a Sahidic version of *Gos. Truth* found in NHC XII,[4] which seems to differ in several places from the text of NHC I. Unfortunately, the fragments are so small that a systematic study of the relationship between the two versions does not seem possible (and has, indeed, never been attempted). The fragments give the impression that the text transmitted in Codex XII was significantly inferior to that of Codex I, but comparison of the two manuscripts also creates the impression that the text of Codex I may have been reworked in places, and that the translator may not always have rendered the original accurately. Caution is due therefore in handling the details of this text. In substance, however, we are, on the basis

---

[1] Cf. Puech and Quispel, "Les écrits gnostiques," 22–39; Van Unnik, "The Recently Discovered," 90–101; Quispel, "The Jung Codex," 50; Malinine, Puech and Quispel, *Evangelium Veritatis*, xiv–xv.

[2] The most extensive, as well as the most recent, argument against the views of the first editors, is provided by Markschies, *Valentinus*, 339–56, which also surveys previous discussions.

[3] On the likelihood that the *incipit* may have been applied as a title, cf. Colpe, "Heidnische, jüdische und christliche Überlieferung, VII," esp. 144n77; Munck, "Evangelium Veritatis."

[4] The fragments have been edited by F. Wisse, in Hedrick (ed.), *Nag Hammadi Codices XI, XII, XII*, 329–47.

of our current knowledge, justified in treating NHC I,*3* as representing a Valentinian document dating from before the time of Irenaeus' work of the 180s.

HISTORY AND PROTOLOGY

The *Gospel of Truth* is a sermon exhorting its auditors to be grateful for the revelation of truth, that is, knowledge, a revelation which has occurred in recent history through Jesus Christ, who is also the Son and the Word. The message is succinctly stated in the introductory passage:

> The gospel of truth is joy for those who have received from the Father of truth the grace of knowing him, through the power of the Word that came forth from the Fullness, the one that was in the thought and the mind of the Father and who is called "the Saviour," because that was the name of the work he was to perform for the redemption of those who were ignorant of the Father. And the name "gospel" means the fulfilment of hope, because those who were searching for the Father have found him. (16:31–17:4)[5]

The text then takes its cue from the word "search" to unfold an account of the origin and nature of the situation of ignorance which the Saviour came to redress:

> Since the Entirety went about searching for the one from whom they had come forth, and the Entirety was inside him, the incomprehensible and inconceivable one who is above all thought, the ignorance of the Father brought about anguish and terror; and the anguish grew solid like a fog, so that no one was able to see. For this reason, error became powerful; it worked on its own matter vainly, not having known the truth. It set out on a creation,[6] preparing, as beautifully as was in its power,[7] the substitute for the truth. (17:4–20)

---

[5] Translations from *Gos. Truth* are my own. I have adopted a rather free—though not, I think, inaccurate—style of translation in an attempt to do some justice to the poetic quality of the text. My debts to previous translations, in particular the English version by Attridge and MacRae and the Italian one by Orlandi, will be evident.

[6] Or: "it turned into a creation" (ⲁⲥϣⲱⲡⲉ ϩⲛⲛ ⲟⲩⲡⲗⲁⲥⲙⲁ); cf. Orlandi, *Evangelium Veritatis*, 44: "si materializzò."

[7] This seems to be the meaning of ϩⲛ ⲧϭⲁⲙ ϩⲛ ⲟⲩⲙⲛ̄ⲧⲥⲁⲉⲓⲉ; cf. Kragerud, "Evangelium Veritatis," 178; Orlandi, *Evangelium Veritatis*, 44.

The account here takes the form of a protological myth. It tells about the primal offspring of the Father, the aeons,[8] who were ignorant about the source of their existence. This ignorance caused fear, which in turn gave rise to error, and finally resulted in the creation of the material cosmos. It is to be noted that although the Entirety is said to have "come forth from" the Father, it is also described as being "inside him"; this creates the impression that in one sense the aeons of the Entirety have still not come into independent and proper existence, and that the creation of the world has taken place at some point during this pre-generative stage, as a misguided premature substitute for the true coming into being of the aeons.

When the text moves on to describe the dissolution of ignorance and the revelation of knowledge, however, it seems to leave the realm of myth and protology, and we find ourselves once more, as in the opening sentences of the tractate, firmly within human history:

> This gospel about the one who was searched for was revealed to those who were perfect through the mercy of the Father: the hidden mystery, Jesus, the Christ. Through him he enlightened those who were in darkness because of oblivion. He enlightened them and showed them a way, and that way was the truth that he taught them.
>
> For this reason, error grew angry with him. It persecuted him, tormented him, and broke him.[9] He was nailed to a tree and became a fruit giving knowledge of the Father. That fruit did not, however, cause destruction by being eaten; rather, it made those who ate it rejoice in what they had found: in himself he found *them*, they found *him* in themselves. (18:11–31)

Like the text from *Exc.* studied in the preceding chapter,[10] *Gos. Truth* here makes use of the early Christian "Revelation-Schema," this time in the variant form of the "revelation pattern": Christ is God's mystery, hidden to previous generations, but revealed at the present moment in history.[11] Just as in *Exc.*, there is a strong emphasis on

---

[8] "The aeons," and "the Entirety" (ⲡⲧⲏⲣϥ, < τὸ πᾶν, or τὸ ὅλον) are synonymous terms in *Gos. Truth*, as will be clear from a comparison of the passages in which the two terms occur.

[9] ⲁⲥⲟⲩⲱⲥϥ̄ is to be read as ⲁⲥⲟⲩⲱⲥϥ̄ϥ̄; repetition of the ϥ is not required in this case, cf. Orlandi, *Evangelium Veritatis*, 46.

[10] See above, 134–35.

[11] Cf. in particular Rom 16:25; 1 Cor 2:7–10; Eph 3:9; Col 1:26. See Bultmann, *Theology*, I 106; Dahl, "Form-critical observations," 32; Hellholm, "Revelation-Schema."

the dramatic change in history brought about by the advent of the
Saviour. In that text, the contrast between "before" and "after" was
described in terms of female formlessness versus male form, and sub-
jugation to the astral powers as against liberation from them. *Gos.
Truth* instead puts the accent on the contrast between ignorance and
knowledge, but this difference is not essential as far as the common
underlying salvation historical model is concerned. The point to be
emphasised here is that the ones who are said in this passage to
have been ignorant no longer seem to be the aeons of the proto-
logical myth, but can only be human beings of history. "Those who
were in darkness because of oblivion" must refer to people who lived
in the world at the time when the mystery was still hidden.

The question that now needs to be clarified is what connection
there is between this account of the revelation of salvific knowledge
in history, on the one hand, and the myth about the ignorant aeons
inside the Father which opened the narrative, on the other. In order
to study this connection we shall first take a closer look at the way
Gos. Truth describes the revelation in history.

The Revelation of the Book of Names

In 19:10 an extensive description of the advent of the Saviour begins.
The account is based on the narratives about Jesus in the canoni-
cal gospels. He acted as a guide, teaching the word in schools. The
self-professed wise men put him to test, but he refuted them, and
they hated him for it. "The little children," however, who came to
him as well, received instruction, because "theirs is the knowledge
of the Father" (19:29–30). The instruction the Saviour gave them is
described as the revelation of a book:

> There was manifested in their heart the living book of the living, the
> one that was written in the thought and the mind [of the] Father, and
> which existed from before the foundation of the Entirety within his
> incomprehensibility. (19:34–20:3)

What are the contents of this book? Obviously, it is a vehicle for
conveying knowledge; it is, however, more than that. "The book of
the living," alternatively "the book of life," is a well-known concept
that appears several times in the Bible. It suggests a list of names,
and specifically the names of those who have been elected to receive

salvific "life."[12] In an elegant and inventive manner, *Gos. Truth* uses this traditional concept to express a set of interrelated ideas: knowledge is knowledge about oneself; receiving knowledge is therefore the same as actually acquiring one's true self, represented by the "name" written in the book.[13] Further, the revelation of the book, together with the names it contains, amounts to an awakening call, and those who answer to the names respond by turning towards it:

> Those who receive instruction are the living, the ones who are inscribed in the book of the living. They receive instruction about themselves, receiving themselves from the Father, and turning once more towards him. Because the perfection of the Entirety is in the Father, it is necessary that the Entirety ascends to him.[14] At that moment, when someone acquires knowledge, he receives the things that are his own and draws them to himself. For he who is ignorant is lacking, and what he lacks is great, since he lacks that which will make him perfect. Because the perfection of the Entirety is in the Father, it is necessary that the Entirety ascends to him and that each one receives the things that are his own, which he wrote down in advance, preparing them to be given to those who had come forth from him.
>
> Those whose name he knew in advance were called at the end. Thus, one who possesses knowledge is one whose name the Father has uttered. For he whose name has not been spoken is ignorant. Indeed, how is one to hear if his name has not been called? For he who is ignorant until the end is a creature of oblivion, and he will vanish along with it. If not, how is it that these miserable ones have no name, nor have (they heard) the call? One who possesses knowledge, therefore, is one who is from above. When he is called, he hears and answers, he turns toward the one who is calling him, and ascends to him. And he understands how he is being called; he knows and he does the will of the one who called him. He wishes to please him, he obtains rest, and each one receives his name. He who possesses knowledge in this way knows from whence he comes and where he is going. He knows in the manner of one who was drunk but has turned away from his drunken state, having returned to himself. (21:3–22:19)

---

[12] Cf. Ps 68:29; Phil 4.3; Rev 3:5, 13:8, 17:8, 20:12.15, 21:27; *1 En.* 47:3; *Jub.* 30:22, 36:10; *Apoc. Zeph.* 14:5 Steindorff; the *Shmone 'Esre* prayer, 12; Herm. *Vis.* I 3:2, *Mand.* VIII 6, *Sim.* II 9. The concept has been studied by Koep, *Das himmlische Buch*, cf. esp. 31–39. Also cf. Strack-Billerbeck, *Kommentar*, II 169–70 and *TWNT*, s.v. βιβλίον, I 618–19 (G. Schrenk).

[13] The symbolism of the book in *Gos. Truth* is discussed more fully in Thomassen, "Revelation as Book."

[14] This sentence is repeated word for word a few lines later. The possibility should be considered that this repetition is a scribal error, and that one or the other of the two sentences is to be deleted.

The called person's true self has been kept and prepared in the thought and the mind of the Father since the beginning. The revelation of the Saviour brings about unification with this true self, represented as the person's "name." This constitutes a creative reinterpretation of the concept of "the book of the living." Traditionally, the concept expresses an idea of divine prescience regarding the identities of those who will be blessed with salvation. *Gos. Truth* concretises this status of having already been elected, of having been "written down," into the notion that the "name" represents the elect person's true and higher self. Salvation can then be conceptualised as the unification of the empirical self with this ideal self.

This notion of a duplication and a subsequent reunification of the self, one part being ideal and real and the other empirical and unreal, is not unproblematic. The difficulty becomes evident when *Gos. Truth* tries to represent the unification as taking place by way of an encounter between the ideal and the empirical. How can the ideal and abstract reality which the name represents, the elect person's timelessly true identity, be revealed to the empirical person as an empirical event in history without itself being turned into an empirical "thing," while, in order to retain its salvific significance, it nevertheless needs at the same time to remain transcendently ideal? The logical difficulty is indicated in the text through the ambiguous way in which the unification is described. On the one hand, it is said that "each one's name comes to him." This suggests that there is a *descent* of the name into the realm of the empirical. On the other hand, however, it is also said that in order to receive that which is one's own, that which has been written down by the Father—that is, again, the name— one has to *ascend* to receive it from the Father. This ambiguity of the simultaneous descent and non-descent of the name into the empirical is also expressed quite poetically through the image of the "call." The name is manifested in the world, but in the most elusive manner possible—only just enough to provoke an awakening and a "return."

The Function of the Saviour

The problem of the mediation between the ideal and the empirical is nevertheless perceived to be serious enough to make the intervention of a Saviour necessary. It is he who brings the book of the living into the world. And he has to suffer and die for it:

No one could have been revealed (ⲟⲩⲁⲛⲍ̄ ⲁⲃⲁⲗ) among those who had been appointed for[15] salvation unless that book had appeared. For that reason the merciful and faithful Jesus patiently accepted his sufferings (ⲁϥⲣ̄ ϣⲁⲣϣ̄ϩⲏⲧ ⲉϥϣⲱⲡ ⲛ̄ⲛⲓ̈ϩⲓ̈ⲥⲉ) until he took that book;[16] for he knows that his death is life for many.

Just as the fortune of a deceased master of the house remains hidden as long as a will has not yet been opened, so was the Entirety hidden as long as the Father of the Entirety was invisible. . . . For that reason Jesus appeared. He put on (ⲁϥⲥⲁⲗⲉϥ) that book. He was nailed to a tree; he published the edict of the Father on the cross. O such great teaching! He draws himself down even unto death, though he was clothed in eternal life, and having stripped himself of the perishable rags, he put on imperishability, which no one can take away from him. (20:3–34)

Jesus represents the totality of the true identities of the saved, their shared status of being the Father's children. Thus, he "puts on" the book containing the names, and brings it to "those who had been appointed for salvation." By this act, they "are revealed," that is, their true identities are disclosed to them in such a way that they now *become* their ideal and timeless true selves. The paradox of this is obvious: while the empirical being of the believers is not their true being and their true being is brought to them by the Saviour, what they receive is nevertheless *their* true being, and the Saviour has to enter the empirical world in order to transmit it to *them*. The ideal identities of the believers have to come into this world to be received by the believers here, but the worldly existence of the believers who receive it will thereby be nullified. In simple logical terms, this is of course contradictory: the act of revelation presupposes what it purports to eliminate; it presupposes the empirical existence of the receivers of the revelation, while at the same time proposing to disclose this existence as unreal.[17]

---

[15] Most translators render the expression ⲛⲉⲉⲓ ⲛ̄ⲧⲁⲩⲛ̄ϩⲟⲩⲧⲟⲩ ⲁ- as "those who believed in . . ." The unusual reflexive form, however, which most probably renders a Greek passive, suggests that the verb has the meaning "entrust with," and hence, "appoint for."

[16] The idea of "taking" the book seems to come from a tradition about Wisdom: "Who has gone up into heaven, and taken her (ἔλαβεν αὐτήν), and brought her down from the clouds? . . . She is the book of the commandments of God, the law that endures forever" (Baruch 3:29–4:1); cf. Deut 30:11–14; Thomassen, "From Wisdom to Gnosis."

[17] The unreality of existence in the world is in fact underlined several times in the text. The cosmos is based on fear, oblivion and error, and therefore is "nothing" (17:23); it is a lack caused by ignorance, like darkness is the absence of light

The Saviour functions as the resolution of this *aporia*. It is he who is able to effect the transformation of the empirical person into that person's ideal self. In so doing, the Saviour must himself adopt the condition of empirical existence. This means that he has to die; but in dying, he also annuls the form of existence that is the cause of death. In the passage quoted above, *Gos. Truth* is quite precise in describing the paradoxical act by which the Saviour transmits eternal life through dying in the world. Jesus revealed the book, which contains the real, eternally living selves of the believers. But in order that these might be transmitted uncorrupted to their mortal and earthly recipients, he had to take their mortality on himself, and therefore also to put on the "perishable rags" of earthly existence.

Nevertheless, the nature of the suffering and death of the Saviour remains ambiguous. On the one hand, he is said to be clothed in eternal life even as he descends into death. Are we then to think that he did not entirely share in the condition of earthly human existence although he was putting on those "perishable rags"? The ambiguity is also found in a later passage: "He came by means of a carnal form (ⲛ̄ⲧⲁϥⲉⲓ ⲁⲃⲁⲗ ϩⲓ̈ⲧⲟⲟⲧⲥ̄ ⲛ̄ⲟⲩⲥⲁⲣⲝ ⲛ̄ⲥⲙⲁⲧ), while nothing blocked his course because imperishability (ϯⲙⲛ̄ⲧⲁⲧⲧⲉⲕⲟ) is irresistible" (31:4–9). This suggests that the Saviour only *appeared* to be incarnate in a human body, and that he remained all the time an imperishable, eternally living being. On the other hand, he is also said to have "been patient in accepting suffering," the ultimate of which is death itself. Moreover, according to one formulation that was quoted above, "having stripped himself of the perishable rags, he put on imperishability, which no one can possibly take away from him." Here imperishability is something the Saviour "puts on" only *after* his incarnation, suffering, and death. This seems to imply that the human incarnation of the Saviour was real and complete, and that he was himself subsequently redeemed from it.

Gos. Truth thus appears to presuppose a soteriology akin to the eastern type studied above in Part I, and in the previous chapter on *Exc.* 66–86. In this soteriology, the Saviour's own need for redemp-

---

(24:28–25:3). Existence in the world is like drunkenness (22:16–18), or like the illusory reality of a nightmarish dream (29:8–30:16). The person who receives knowledge realises this: "What, then, did he wish him to think of himself? This: "have come into being like the shadows and phantoms of the night." When the light shines on the terror which that person has experienced, he knows that it is nothing" (28:24–33).

tion is underlined and his baptism at the Jordan is identified as the occasion when his redemption took place. It is quite possible that *Gos. Truth*'s phrase "he put on imperishability" contains an allusion to Jesus' baptism.[18] In any case, the reference to baptism is not explicit, and the idea of the Saviour's own redemption is not emphasised here. This probably has to do with the ambiguity attached to the notion of the Saviour's redemptive incarnation, an ambiguity which can also be discerned in the other texts where that soteriology is propounded: the Saviour has to share in and subject himself to the condition of earthly human beings, while at the same time saving them from it. The Valentinians did not thematise the ambiguity inherent in this soteriological notion in the form of a doctrine of two natures, as Chalcedonian Christianity was to do later.[19]

From History to Protology

By submitting himself to cosmic existence and its consequence, death, the Saviour in effect annihilates this existence. "Having filled the deficiency, he abolished the frame (ⲁϥⲃⲱⲗ ⲁⲃⲁⲗ ⲙ̄ⲡⲓⲥⲭⲏⲙⲁ).[20] That frame of his is the world in which he served (ϣⲛ̄ϣⲉ)" (24:20–24). Those who were living in the world but have now received the Saviour, who brought them their true being, have by this event had their empirical existence annulled, together with the world itself. They find themselves, through paradoxical grace, to be nothing. From the same point of view, however, they may now also see themselves as having not yet come truly into existence:

---

[18] The metaphor of unclothing and putting on new clothes is common in baptismal contexts, as is emphasised by Segelberg, "Evangelium Veritatis," 7. But it is of course not confined to such contexts, as Attridge and MacRae point out (Attridge, *Nag Hammadi Codex I*, II 60). A. Kehl, in his comprehensive article "Gewand" in *RAC*, calls it "eine reine Redensart" in Christian literature (1023). The expression used by *Gos. Truth* seems to derive from 1 Cor 15:53–54 (ἐνδύσασθαι ἀθανασίαν); also cf. *OdSol* 15:8, where a baptismal context seems likely.

[19] Cf. Koschorke, *Polemik*, 44–48; Attridge and MacRae in Attridge, *Nag Hammadi Codex I*, II 88–89. It will be clear from the discussion above that the question of docetism versus a "real" incarnation in *Gos. Truth* is not one that can be answered in terms of either-or. Moreover, the paradoxes of the Catholic doctrine of the two natures of Christ, and the perennial problems of defining precisely its meaning, show that the question itself is not one that allows clear-cut answers. In any case, the difference is more a matter of emphasis than of absolute distinctions.

[20] The "frame" (σχῆμα) of course refers to the material body.

> They realised that they had come forth from him, like children who
> are from a perfect human being. They understood that they had not
> yet received form nor yet received a name.[21] At the moment the Father
> gives birth to them, each one receives form from his knowledge; if
> not, they remain inside him without knowing him. The Father him-
> self, however, is perfect and knows every space within him. When he
> wishes, he manifests the one he wishes, providing him with form and
> giving him a name. And he gives him a name and brings it about
> that those come into existence who, until they come into existence,
> are ignorant of the one who originated them.[22] I do not say, then,
> that the ones who have not yet come into existence are nothing, but
> they are in him who will wish that they come into existence when he
> wishes. Just as the time that is to come, *he* knows all things he will
> bring forth before they are made manifest. The fruit that has not yet
> been made manifest, however, knows nothing, nor does it do anything.
> In this way, every space that is in the Father is from the one who is,
> and who has brought it into being from what was not. (27:11–28:16)

Here, salvation history is being transposed into protology. Through
the incarnation, suffering and death of the Saviour in history, all
history is annulled as ontologically unreal. Thus, it is only now that
the Father's children really come into being, receiving form and
name. In this way, the salvation historical discourse is inscribed into
the larger discourse of the protological account, with which, in fact,
Gos. Truth opened. The humans who were living obliviously in the
world before the Saviour arrived, revealed the hidden book and
called out their names, are actually the same as the Entirety described
at the beginning of the homily, the ignorant aeons who were inside
the Father, searching for him, and who, in their ignorance, created
for themselves the cosmos as an erroneous substitute for truth and
a pseudo-being.

This *metabasis* from history to protology can be further illustrated
with regard to the notion of the divine Thought. As we have seen,
the living book of the living is described as being "written in the
thought and the mind [of the] Father, existing from before the foun-
dation of the Entirety within his incomprehensibility" (ⲉⲧⲥⲏϩ ϩⲣⲏⲉⲓ

---

[21] The Coptic is ambiguous, and may also be translated: "They knew him like
children who are inside a fully grown human being. For they had not yet received
form. . . ." Other interpretations are also possible.

[22] This sentence as well presents several problems, and Attridge's and MacRae's
translation of it, which we basically follow here, can only be considered hypothet-
ical. Orlandi, *Evangelium Veritatis*, 59, argues that the text is lacunate.

ϩⲙ ⲡⲓⲙⲉⲉⲩⲉ ⲟⲩⲁϩⲙ ⲡⲓⲛⲟⲩⲥ [ⲛ̄ⲧⲉ ⲡ]ⲓⲱⲧ ⲁⲩⲱ ϫⲓⲛϩⲁⲑⲏ
ⲛ̄ⲧⲕⲁ[ⲧⲁ]ⲃⲟⲗ<ⲏ> {ϩ}ⲙ̄ⲡⲧⲏⲣⲅ̄ ⲉϥⲛ̄ϩⲣⲏⲓ ϩⲛ̄ ⲛⲓⲁⲧⲧⲉϩⲁⲩ ⲛ̄ⲧⲟⲟⲧⲅ̄,
19:36–20:3). These formulations express an idea of pre-election famil-
iar from apocalyptic contexts; the passage recalls in particular Rev
13:8 and 17:8, where the believers are said to have their names writ-
ten in the book of life ἀπὸ καταβολῆς κόσμου. Thus, we are deal-
ing here with the appropriation of an apocalyptic view of history,
according to which what has been predetermined by God before the
beginning of time is revealed and made real at the end. These notions
of salvation historical pre-election and fulfilment are expressed sev-
eral times in *Gos. Truth*:

> Those whose name he knew in advance were called at the end.
> (21:25–27; cf. Rom 8:29–30)
>
> This is the knowledge of the living book that he revealed to the aeons,
> at the end. (22:28–23:1)
>
> For he knows the beginning of them all and their end. And at the
> end he will question them directly. In fact, the end means that what
> was hidden becomes known, and this is the Father, from whom the
> beginning came forth and to whom all will return who have come
> forth from him. (37:34–38:5)

In this apocalyptic perspective, the manifestation of that which was
contained in the Father's "thought and mind" refers to the historical
realisation of his salvation-historical design, including the revelation
of the elect whose identities he has known from the beginning.

In *Gos. Truth's* transposition of salvation history into protology,
however, the pre-existent salvation plan of the deity, being the Father's
Thought, becomes the source of being. The description of the book
as existing "within his incomprehensibility" alludes not only to the
theme of the hidden mystery now revealed, a familiar theme in Paul
and other early Christian writers, but also to the *leitmotif* that was
sounded at the beginning of the tractate in particular: "the Entirety
was inside him, the incomprehensible and inconceivable one who is
above all thought" (ⲛⲉⲣⲉⲡⲧⲏⲣⲅ̄ ϩⲓ ⲥⲁⲛϩⲟⲩⲛ ⲙ̄ⲙⲁϥ ⲡⲓⲁⲧϣⲁⲡⲅ̄
ⲛ̄ⲁⲧⲙⲉⲉⲩⲉ ⲁⲣⲁϥ ⲡⲉⲉⲓ ⲉⲧⲥⲁⲧⲛ̄ ⲁⲙⲉⲩ ⲛⲓⲙ, 17:6–9). The actualisa-
tion at the end of history of what was in the Father's Thought from
the beginning, the eschatological manifestation of the contents of the
book, thus becomes equivalent to the birth of the aeons from inside
the Father.

The latter idea, moreover, becomes a protological myth with sote-
riological significance in its own right:

This is the fulfilment from[23] the thought of the Father, and these are
the words of his reflection. Each one of his words is the work of his
one Will in the revelation of his Word. While they were still in the
depths of his thought,[24] the Word came forth and manifested them,
along with a mind that speaks the Word, through silent grace. He was
called "Thought," because they were in it before they were made man-
ifest. It came about then, that he went forth, at the time when the
Will of him who willed desired it. (36:39–37:18)

In this passage, the well-known metaphor mind-speech (λόγος ἐνδιάθετος
and λόγος προφορικός) is used to express the idea of the manifesta-
tion of the aeons from inside the Father.[25] This idea of a generative
manifestation was also found, as we saw, in the passage 27:11–28:16,
where the soteriological nature of the manifestation was highlighted:
being manifested from the depths of the Father's Thought, his chil-
dren come into real existence by receiving form and name. It may
also be noted that the notion of the "name" serves as an elegant
bridge between the historical and the protological soteriologies. The
names transmitted by the Saviour through the manifestation of the
book represent the true being of those who receive them, and it is
also the bestowal of a name that grants authentic existence to the
children of the Father at their birth.

The Protological Mediator

Like the historical salvation account, however, the protological myth
also makes use of a mediator figure. In the last passage quoted, this
figure is the Word, which, moreover, is the expression of the Will
of the Father. We also need to study the function of this figure, and
the process of generation in connection with this, more closely.
Another passage in the section on the "book" may be used here for
comparison. In 22:38–23:18, the book is described as a united ensem-
ble of letters that all reveal the Father. Then, in a hymn-like sequence
(23:18–33), the Word is portrayed as being united in various ways
with the properties of the Father: his wisdom, instruction, knowl-

---

[23] Possibly, ⲛ̄, "of" should be read instead of ϩⲛ̄, "from."
[24] In ⲉⲩⲟ ⲛ̄ⲃⲁⲑⲟⲥ, the article has probably been assimilated with the ⲃ in ⲃⲁⲑⲟⲥ;
cf. *Tri. Trac.* 60:18 ⲉⲩϣⲟⲟⲡ ϩⲛ̄ ⲡⲃⲁⲑⲟⲥ.
[25] Cf. Thomassen, "Λόγος," esp. 852–53, 855–57.

edge, honour,[26] joy, glory, image, rest, love and faith.[27] This enumeration forms the context for the following statement:

> This is how the Word of the Father goes forth into the Entirety, as
> the fruit [of] his heart and a face of his Will. He carries the Entirety
> and he elevates them, and in turn he himself takes on the face of the
> Entirety, as he purifies them and brings them back to the Father, back
> to the Mother, Jesus of the infinite sweetness.[28] For the Father reveals
> his bosom—and his bosom is the Holy Spirit—and he manifests his
> hiddenness—and his hiddenness is his Son—so that by (having revealed
> to them) the internal parts[29] of the Father the aeons can know him,
> cease labouring in their search of the Father, and find rest in him, in
> the knowledge that this is the (true) rest. (23:33–24:20)

This passage is curiously equivocal. On the one hand, it forms part of the account about the eschatological revelation of the book. On the other hand, it can be compared with the clearly protological myth about the manifestation of the words by the Word in the passage 36:39–37:18 quoted above. Apparently, the passage is meant to be interpreted on both levels simultaneously. On the protological level, moreover, the passage describes the manifestation of the Entirety; this manifestation, however, also has the soteriological significance of revealing the Father *to* the Entirety. The properties of the Father with which the Word–Son is united represent the revealed characteristics of the Father, as well as the Entirety itself. The Entirety is thus both the content and the receiver of the revelation. Finally, this ambiguity is also expressed by the notion that the exteriorising manifestation from inside the Father is at the same time a return to him.

A certain set of metaphysical ideas underlies this soteriological protology and can be reconstructed as follows. When at the beginning of the tractate it is stated that "the Entirety was inside of him, the

---

[26] The interpretation of ⲁⲥⲟ as being equivalent to Sahidic ⲁⲥⲟⲩ (Arai, *Christologie*, 74; Ménard, *L'Évangile de Vérité*, 115), and a translation of τιμή, is very probably correct; cf. *Tri. Trac.* 56:8 ⲁⲥⲱ.

[27] This description of the Father's Pleroma amounts, then, to ten elements. The number may not be accidental; the Decad is of course a form of the Tetrad (the sum of its members).

[28] The mention of "the Mother," a figure who does not appear elsewhere in *Gos. Truth*, and the phrase "Jesus of the infinite sweetness," are difficult to understand in this context. They may, as many commentators have suggested, derive from an interpolation, or some sort of textual corruption (e.g., dislocation).

[29] The meaning of ⲙⲉϩⲧ here, literally "entrails," is evident from the context; see Orlandi, *Evangelium Veritatis*, 55.

incomprehensible, inconceivable one who is superior to every thought"
(17:6–8), this is also to be read as a statement of an epistemologi-
cal and ontological problem. The notion that the Entirety exists in
ignorance inside the Father is closely connected with the idea that
the Father is inconceivably transcendent. To say that the aeons inside
him are ignorant of the Father must be the same as saying that they
themselves constitute the Father's inconceivable being. The process
of their manifestation and birth is therefore, at the same time, a rev-
elation of the Father. Their coming into distinct being means that
the Father becomes known. What this amounts to, is a philosophi-
cal notion of emanation, through which a transcendent oneness man-
ifests itself into a distinctly knowable plurality—as "words" or "names."
In this process of divine self-unfolding, the knower and the known
are the same, because the aeons who get to know the Father through
this process are nothing other than the Father's own manifested
essence. On the other hand, the knower and the known are not
identical in all respects, because the act of knowing of necessity
requires a knowing subject that is distinct from the object known.

It is with regard to this idea of emanation that the Son-Word
serves as a mediator on the protological level. He represents the idea
that the Father remains transcendently one at the same time as he
is knowable and a plurality; and also the idea that the knowing sub-
ject is not separate from the object of knowledge. It is for this rea-
son as well that he can be described as both manifesting what is
inside the Father, which from one point of view is nothing other
than the aeons themselves, *and* as making the aeons return to the
Father by knowing him. The going out and the return thus depict
complementary aspects of the relationship of the Entirety to the
Father as being simultaneously other than and united with him.[30]
The agent of both movements, and the one who synthesises them,
is the Son, while the cause of his agency is the Will of the Father,
of which he represents the "face" (ⲙⲟⲩⲛⲅ̄ ⲛ̄ϩⲟ)—evidently, the active
and gracious Will of the Father is a precondition for the process of
manifestation to be initiated in the first place.

---

[30] A structural affinity clearly exists between this idea and the Neo-Platonic model
of πρόοδος and ἐπιστροφή as complementary phases in the process of emanation.

The Unity and Difference of Father, Son, and Aeons

By being made manifest, the aeons become, as knowing subjects, independent beings:

> Thus, all the emanations[31] of the Father are pleromas, and all his emanations have their root in him who made them all grow up from himself and gave them their determination.[32] Each one then is made manifest, so that through their own thoughts <. . .>. For the place where they send their thoughts, that place, their root, is what lifts them up through all the heights to the Father. They possess his head, which provides them rest. (41:14–29)

The unfortunate lacuna hides from us exactly what the emanations do with their "thought,"[33] but there is certainly an explicit recognition in this passage that the manifestation process provides the aeons with autonomous mental activity. It is also clear that there exists a proper use of the thinking facility they have thus been granted: the emanations send their thoughts upward to the Father. These ideas seem to express once more the process of going out and return, only in slightly different terms; as they become manifest and think their own thoughts, the aeons immediately turn their attention on the Father from whom they have emanated, so as to retain their unity with him. In fact,

> they are not manifest in such a way that they have exalted themselves, or have diminished the glory of the Father,[34] or so that they should

---

[31] The precise meaning of the word ϯη, which most often has been translated as "emanation," remains uncertain. Apart from *Gos. Truth*, the word is only attested, once, in the Achmimic *Apoc. Elijah* 9:15 (p. 50:4 Steindorff), where it seems to mean "ray," or "gift" (cf. Attridge and MacRae, in Attridge, *Nag Hammadi Codex I*, II 67). In the present context, a vegetal metaphor, such as "seedling," seems possible.

[32] ⲧⲱϭ is a plurivalent term which can mean both "delimitation" and "purpose, destiny." The precise meaning here cannot be decided, but the difference is in any case not radical here, since the manifestation implies, as we have seen, a purposive formation of each of the Father's children.

[33] It is possible, however, that the continuation of the final clause "so that through their own thoughts . . ." is in fact the sentence "they possess his head, which provides them rest." ("His" would in that case refer to the individual "emanation.") The latter sentence may have been displaced, or the intervening sentence may be read as parenthetical. If this interpretation is correct, the sense would be that the emanations use their autonomous thought correctly when it is joined with the "head," the Father.

[34] ⲥⲉⲟⲩⲁⲛϩ ⲁⲉ ⲉⲛ ⲁⲃⲁⲗ ⲛϭⲓ ⲛⲉⲉⲓ ⲙ̄ⲡⲓⲣⲏⲧⲉ ϫⲉ ⲙ̄ⲡⲟⲩⲣ̄ ⲧⲡⲉ ⲙ̄ⲙⲓⲛ ⲙ̄ⲙⲁⲩ ⲟⲩⲧⲉ ⲙ̄ⲡⲟⲩϣⲱⲱⲧ ⲙ̄ⲡⲉⲁⲩ: There is a double negative at ⲙ̄ⲡⲟⲩⲣ̄ ⲧⲡⲉ, but assuming that

> think low thoughts about him—as being vindictive or wrathful—but
> rather (that) he is devoid of evil, imperturbable, mild, and knows all
> the spaces before they came into existence without needing to be
> instructed. (41:35–42:11)

The significance of this statement is not just moralistic. It expresses
an ontological concern: the emanation process does not in any way
imply that the Father is relativised; he retains his absolute nature
undiminished. The exteriorisation that takes place is not an alien-
ation; the offspring gains no power over its producer. On the con-
trary, what the aeons manifest is the perfection of the Father: "They
were made manifest for the glory and joy of his Name" (38:4–6).

   The notion of the Name synthesises, again, the basic structure of
ideas. A long, and famous, section (38:6–41:2) develops the theory
that the Son is the Name of the Father. The theory serves to under-
line the unity of Father and Son:

> In the beginning he gave a name to that which came forth from him,
> and which was himself, and he begot it as a Son. He gave him his
> Name which belonged to him. (38:7–12)

What came forth from the Father was thus not something distinct
from him, just as that which carries the Father's Name is not some-
thing different from the Father himself. This process of generation
without separation is also a revelation, which preserves the tran-
scendence of the revealed:

> He possesses his Name, he possesses his Son. *He* can be seen, but the
> Name is invisible, for it is the very mystery of the invisible, which
> comes to all ears that are filled with it through him. For, indeed, the
> Father's Name is not spoken, but it is made manifest by means of a
> Son. (38:14–24)

The generation of the Son as the Name is also what makes possi-
ble the generation of the aeons, because through him they all become
bearers of the Name:

> Since the Father has not come into being, he alone begot him for
> himself as a name,[35] before he brought forth the aeons, in order that

---

the ⲭⲉ is explicative, which seems to be the most natural interpretation in the con-
text, the phrase must be parallel with ⲛ̅ⲡⲟⲩϣⲱⲱⲧ. The double negative is proba-
bly to be explained as a confused rendering of modal expressions in the original.
   [35] Or, "it is himself that he begot as a name."

the Name of the Father should be on their heads, as a proper name,[36] that is, the true Name, which through his command stands firm with perfect power. (38:33–39:3)

Thus, the Name expresses the unity of the Father, the Son, and the aeons. The name that each of the Father's children receives when it is born (27:15–33) is also the Father's Name, which is the Son. In this way, the children are one with the Father, through the mediation of the Son/Name, at the very moment when they attain an existence of their own. And so the sermon concludes: "And his children are perfect and worthy of his Name; for it is children of this kind that he, the Father, wills" (43:19–24).

Concluding Remarks

We have seen how *Gos. Truth* transposes the historical account of salvation into a protological soteriology. The revelation of the names representing the true selves of the receivers, which takes place through the incarnation of the Saviour, is reinterpreted as the birth of the Father's children, whereby they receive form and name. In this latter process too a mediator operates, the Son (who certainly in *Gos. Truth* is not conceived of as a different figure from the Saviour). The two mediation functions thereby become systematically parallel. While the Saviour incarnated in history mediates between the ideal and the empirical, annulling the empirical world by subjecting himself to it in suffering and death, the Son, as the Name or the one Word, makes possible the transformation of the transcendent unity of the Father into a plurality of individual names, or words, which nevertheless remain united with their source.

In the preceding chapter it was demonstrated how a different Valentinian text, *Exc.* 66–86, synthesises the historical act of salvation with the redemption taking place in the baptism ritual. Thus there are altogether three potentially parallel dimensions which may be taken into account in our analysis: protology, history and ritual. The text from *Exc.* does not develop the protological dimension. *Gos. Truth* in turn makes no explicit mention of ritual. Nevertheless there

---

[36] I.e., κύριον ὄνομα; the double meaning of this expression is played on in the following explicative phrase.

are certain interesting parallels between the two texts. In *Exc.* 68 and 79 we heard that the Saviour's advent brought about a change in the condition of human beings living in the world: from being the formless offspring of the Female they were transformed into the formed children of the Man and of the Bridal Chamber (ὑπὸ δὲ τοῦ σωτῆρος μορφωθέντες ἀνδρὸς καὶ νυμφῶνος γεγόναμεν τέκνα, 68). We also saw that the reception of the Name was a central element in this process of formation and regeneration. Quite similarly, *Gos. Truth* states that, "they realised that they had come forth from him, like children who are from a perfect human being. They understood that they had not yet received form nor yet received a name" (28:11–18). A crucial difference is, of course, that in *Gos. Truth's* protologising of the soteriology, the lack of form and name is explained as the condition of being still unborn inside the Father, which is definitely not the same as being the miserable abortion of the Female. On the other hand, it is clearly the same redemptive process that is alluded to in both cases, in *Exc.* viewed from the perspective of empirical human beings, and in *Gos. Truth* from that of their ideal true selves.

In *Exc.* 66–86 it is evident that the proper context for the imagery of (re)birth, formation and name-giving is baptism. It is reasonable to assume that when this type of language appears in *Gos. Truth* too, it is derived from the context of a ritual of redemption, rather than having been created independently, purely to illustrate a protological mythology. There are also certain formulations in *Gos. Truth* which seem to allude directly to such a *Sitz im Leben*. Thus, the phrases "the sons of the Name, in whom rested the Name of the Father" (38:28–30), and "in order that the Name of the Father should be on their heads, as a proper name" (38:36–38), recall *Exc.* 86:2, where it is said that the believer carries the Name (acquired in baptism) as an inscription (ἐπιγραφήν). Comparison may here also be made with the liturgical formula quoted in Iren. *Haer.* I 21:3: εἰρήνη πᾶσιν εφ' οὓς τὸ ὄνομα τοῦτο ἐπανέπαυται.

Moreover, in 36:16–17 it is said that Christ "anoints with the ointment" (ⲛ̄ϥⲧⲁϩⲥⲟⲩ ⲙ̄ⲡⲓⲧⲱϩⲥ̄) the ones he "brings back." This obviously alludes, albeit metaphorically, to a chrism-ritual. The allusion is developed further when the anointed in the following passage are compared to full jars, on whom no seal (ⲧⲃ̄ⲃⲉ) is broken (36:31–32).[37]

---

[37] For these and some other possible allusions to ritual in *Gos. Truth*, cf. Segelberg, *Maṣbūtā*, 171n3; id. "Evangelium Veritatis,"; Säve-Söderbergh, "Det koptiska 'Evangelium Veritatis,'" 36–40; Jansen, "Spuren," 215–19.

Thus, the text associates the reception of the Name with a ritual of anointing and "sealing." In *Exc.*, the sealing with the Name is clearly an act that takes place in the context of a ritual of water baptism; the text probably contains an allusion to anointing as well,[38] but that anointing act can hardly be understood as a rite independent of the baptismal ritual sequence. In *Gos. Truth*, in contrast, there is no clear allusion to water baptism. This does not allow us to conclude that water baptism was not practised by the group for which *Gos. Truth* was written,[39] or that it distinguished between water baptism and anointing as two separate rituals. It is quite possible that the notions of birth, formation and bestowal of the Name are based on a continuous sequence of (water) baptism and anointing. In that case it must still be noted, however, that *Gos. Truth*, unlike *Exc.* 66–86, sees the redemptive climax of the rite as taking place in the anointing, rather than in the baptism by water.[40]

What still needs to be stressed is that *Gos. Truth* is able to make the imagery of birth, formation and naming function in its protological theory in such a way that the imagery does not really need the ritual context in order to be understandable; as metaphors for a process of emanation they acquire acceptable meanings of their own. While *Exc.* 66–86 thematises the redemptive ritual as such, *Gos. Truth* only alludes to it, without making the ritual acts an integral part of its discourse.

---

[38] For a discussion of ἔλαιον in *Exc.* 82:1 cf. below, 335–36.

[39] Iren. *Haer.* I 21:4 mentions in fact one group of Valentinians who considered water baptism to be superfluous. Instead they poured a mixture of oil and water over the head of the candidate, and then anointed with balsamic *myron.* Cf. below.

[40] The various forms of the Valentinian initiation ritual are discussed in part IV. below.

PROTOLOGY, SALVATION HISTORY, AND RITUAL

The Tripartite Tractate

Finally, in this chapter we shall try to show how all three dimensions of Valentinianism may interact with one another within a single text. For this purpose the so-called *Tripartite Tractate* from Nag Hammadi Codex I has been selected. This document has the advantage of being the only completely preserved Valentinian systematic treatise transmitted to us directly, albeit in a Coptic translation, and we can thus be confident that we get a full and accurate presentation of a system, which is not the case with the systems reported to us by the heresiologists. As a systematic treatise, *Tri. Trac.* follows a pattern which is familiar from the heresiological presentations of the Valentinian system, whose main generic features can be found in certain other Gnostic treatises as well, such as the *Apocryphon of John*. The system has the form of a narrative, which strings events one after another in a sequence containing the following main chapters.

Protology and the fall

First, there is only the Father, who exists in perfect unity with nothing at his side (51:1–54:35). Possessing Thought, however, the Father thinks himself, and thus produces the Son, who is his own reflection, distinguishable but not separate from the Father (54:35–57:23). From the self-thinking, self-glorifying and self-loving unity of the Father and the Son arise innumerable spiritual potencies, or aeons, which constitute the *ekklesia* of the Pleroma (57:23–59:38). Because of his abundant generosity, the Father wishes to transform these aeons from being attributes of himself contained in his self-thinking Thought, into independent, conscious beings endowed with free will (60:1–75:17). In the course of this process of generation and education, one of the aeons, which at this stage are also called *logoi*, overreaches himself and tries to grasp the totality of the Father while acting as a single individual (75:17–76:23). Overwhelmed by the "passion" implied

in this undertaking, this particular *logos* is split in two, and the inferior part falls downward from the Pleroma (77:11–78:28).

The origins of matter and soul

The *logos* outside the Pleroma (hereafter: "the Logos") becomes the cause of everything that exists in the world below. This is explained in an account of the successive emotions that the Logos experiences in his state of desolation. First, there is the presumptuousness of the original passion, which materialises into a host of violent and power-hungry demons. This is the nature of matter, which *Tri. Trac.* describes in terms of a terrifying chaos (78:28–80:11). Seeing the outcome of his presumption, however, the Logos is filled with a second sentiment, that is, repentance and conversion, and he remembers his brothers in the Pleroma. This sentiment expresses itself in a prayer for help, and the prayer takes the form of a new set of powers, which engage in a struggle with the forces of matter. This is the nature of the substance of the soul, which seeks to control matter but at the same time is inextricably locked with it in constant combat (80:11–85:15).

The origin of the spiritual church

In response to the prayer for help, the aeons in the Pleroma produce a common offspring, the Saviour. He represents the perfect unity of the Pleroma, while being at the same time the expression of its multiplicity. He manifests himself to the Logos, who in jubilant thanksgiving gives birth to a third set of offspring, a spiritual seed, which is also described as the church. This church constitutes an image of the Pleroma, which the Logos has seen in the shape of the Saviour (85:15–95:16). In this way, the three kinds of the material, the psychic, and the spiritual have been successively produced by the Logos.

Cosmogony

Through his revelation the Saviour bestowed formation on the Logos so that he became a spiritual being, was liberated from his passions, and became master over them. In consequence, the Logos is now able to set in order his three kinds of offspring. He forms a well-

structured cosmos out of the material and psychic powers and himself assumes, together with his spiritual seed, a position in an intermediate region between the cosmos and the Pleroma. In ordering the cosmos, the Logos in fact acts in the role of demiurge. In addition, the Logos appoints a cosmic Ruler from among the psychic powers; that Ruler also carries the name "the Demiurge," though he is in reality no more than a tool used by the invisible, higher Logos for the purpose of fashioning the psycho-physical cosmos into something that will be useful in the plan of salvation, the οἰκονομία (95:17–104:3).

Anthropogony and human history

After a rich description of the various material and psychic levels and spheres of the cosmos (99:19–104:3), *Tri. Trac.* proceeds to recount the creation of the first human. The Logos forms, using the Demiurge and his sub-archons as his tools, a material-psychic body, and sows in it a soul derived from his own spiritual substance. The Demiurge also sends down souls made from his own substance. Consequently, three kinds of human beings come to exist in the world: material, psychic, and spiritual (104:4–106:25).

Tri. Trac. then offers an interesting glimpse into Valentinian views on history and human civilisation. The Greeks and Barbarians represent the material kind, and consequently their sciences and philosophy do not advance beyond the sphere particular to them, that of matter (109:24–110:22). The Jews, who are the Demiurge's offspring, have a higher level of religious perception, but one that is nevertheless restricted because of the nature of the psychic powers that inspire them (110:22–113:5).[1] Among the Jews, however, there have also been some who possessed the spiritual soul of the Logos; they are the prophets, in whom the beings of the spiritual seed in the supracelestial region of the Logos work as their inspiring powers. For this reason, the prophets were able to foretell the coming of a Saviour (111:6–114:30).[2]

––––––––––

[1] The Coptic text of this section is in part corrupted and generally difficult to interpret, so that the precise nature of the inspiration that, according to *Tri. Trac.*, has produced the Jewish scriptures and their interpretations remains somewhat unclear.

[2] Cf. above, 47–48.

The incarnation

This observation forms the point of transition to the account of the Saviour's arrival to earth and his work of salvation.[3] The Saviour lets himself be born with a body and a soul, participating through compassion in the passible state of the ones he comes to save (114:30–115:23). However, in his descent he also puts on, as his flesh, the spiritual seed in the region of the Logos, that is, the spiritual church, which is described as being concorporeal with the Saviour (115:23–116:5). The church has a task to fulfil on earth: to work on its own unity, which is understood as the elimination of the passions which still afflict its individual members (116:5–118:14).

Eschatology

The final part of the treatise discusses the destiny of the three human kinds. Their respective natures were all revealed by the advent of the Saviour. The spirituals recognised the Saviour immediately and will be saved completely, whereas the material human beings have showed themselves incapable of receiving him and will be destroyed (118:14–119:20). The intermediate kind, the psychics, hesitated in accepting him, but can nevertheless hope for salvation (118:37–119:8), depending on the way they ultimately choose to behave vis-à-vis the Saviour and the church (119:20–122:12). The spirituals, or "the Election," will attain the perfect unity of the Pleroma, in the "bridal chamber" with the Son-Saviour, and this is effected through baptism (122:12–129:34). In the ultimate *apokatastasis,* this seems also to be the reward of the psychics, though the text is not entirely clear on this point (129:34–136:24).

We shall now study how the three dimensions of salvation history, ritual, and protology relate to one another in this text.

HISTORY AND RITUAL

The Saviour as agent and model of salvation

In some passages, *Tri. Trac.* describes the act of redemption as an event in history. After having stated that humankind is divided into

---

[3] Cf. above, 48–49.

three kinds, the text proceeds, as was already mentioned, to describe
the reactions of each of them to the appearance of the Saviour:

> . . . the essences of the three kinds . . . were not known at first, but only
> at the advent of the Saviour, who shed light upon the saints and
> revealed what each one was. The spiritual race is like light from light,
> and like spirit from spirit. Once its head appeared, it rushed to it
> immediately. It became at once a body for its head. It received knowl-
> edge straight away from the revelation (ⲁϥϫⲓ ⲙ̄ⲡⲥⲁⲩ̣ⲛⲉ ϩ̄ⲛ ⲟⲩϭⲉⲡⲏ
> ⲙ̄ⲡϭⲱⲗ̄ⲡ ⲁⲃⲁⲗ) (118:21–35).

Here, salvation is described as the immediate result of the appear-
ance of the Saviour . The spirituals on earth were revealed, and
they recognised who they really were as soon as the Saviour came
and gave them knowledge. The act of salvation is in this way described
as a historical event.

However, we also encounter in *Tri. Trac.* the idea of redemption
through symbolic parallelism, and this idea receives much greater
emphasis. In 124:25–125:24 we are told that the need for redemp-
tion is universal, and that even the Saviour himself needed it.[4] The
Saviour in fact provides the *typos* of redemption (124:33–34), and
"once he, then, had received the redemption first, through the *logos*
that came down upon him, all the others who had received him
could then receive the redemption through him. For those who have
received the one who received have also received that which is in
him" (125:5–11).

We here have a situation that is similar to the one studied in *Exc.*
66–86. In the first text cited (118:22–35), salvation is seen as being
effected through the act-event of the Saviour's appearance; through
the revelation he brings, the spirituals *immediately* receive knowledge
and realise (in both senses of the word) their true identity. According
to the second text, however, the salvific effect of the event lies in its
significance as a symbolic model (*typos*) to be copied. Finally, how-
ever, the two perspectives on the Saviour as agent of salvation and
as symbol of it coalesce in the notion of "receiving": "receiving the
one who received" implies that following the *model* of the Saviour is
equivalent to receiving the Saviour *himself*.

The Saviour received, the text says, his own redemption, "through
the *logos* that came down upon him." This obviously refers to his

---

⁴ See above, 56–57.

baptism in the Jordan. The word *logos* itself is, perhaps, a spiritualising paraphrase of the φωνή from heaven in the gospel narratives of the event (Matt 3:17 parr.); in any case this *logos* is comparable to the Name that came down upon the Saviour according to *Exc.* 22:6. We should therefore expect the "reception of the one who has received," which takes place through the re-enactment of the redemptive act typified by the Saviour to occur ritually in baptism. In fact, *Tri. Trac.* praises baptism as *the* ritual of redemption:

> As for the true baptism, the one into which the Entireties descend and where they come into being, there is no other baptism save that one only—and that is the redemption—(which takes place) in God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, after confession out of faith has been made in those names—[which] are the single Name of the good tidings—and after one has believed that the things one has been told are real. And on account of this, whoever believes in their reality will obtain salvation. (127:25–128:5)

In its description of baptism, *Tri. Trac.* makes no explicit reference to the paradigmatic baptism and redemption of the Saviour. In fact, the tractate's section on baptism (127:25–129:34) is not well integrated in the flow of the text; it gives the impression of an excursus, added at the end of an exposition about the salvation of the spiritual Election, and it has few cross-references to the rest of the text. It shows, at any rate, that baptism was essential for the author, and that he considered it the situation in which redemption takes place. Since the redemption, moreover, means receiving the one who received and thereby receiving *what* he received, it is reasonable to infer that the redemptive effect of baptism for the author lies in its being a re-enactment of the Saviour's own baptism: through this reenactment, the redemption given to the Saviour is appropriated by the baptismal candidate.

Thus, like *Exc.* 66–86, *Tri. Trac.* assumes the existence of a close interrelationship between the Saviour's historical act of redemption and its ritual realisation in baptism. As was shown in the analysis of the former text carried out in chapter 16, one implication of this interrelationship is that the Saviour, both agent and model of redemption, comes to be conceived of as redeemer and redeemed at the same time. Another implication is the idea that the Saviour must share in the condition of the ones who are to be saved. He must be born with a body and a soul, and he must suffer and die, through "compassion." These soteriological and Christological ideas follow

from the logic of ritual identification between the Saviour and the saved, and may be explained on the basis of this ritual conception, though there undoubtedly existed reasons of a more abstract theological nature as well that made them attractive.

As in *Gos. Truth*, the Saviour's incarnation and passion, however, is ambivalently dealt with. His manner of birth is undefiled, and the nature of his incarnation is superior to that of ordinary humans (115:14–17). Moreover, his passion is identified as compassion, and is not by nature the same as the passion of the fallen Logos, which produces matter and links the soul to a body.[5] Again, however, this Christology is not simply "docetism"; the ambivalence is grounded in the systematic necessity of presenting the Saviour as the divine bringer and as the human model of salvation at one and the same time. From the latter point of view it is essential that he participate in a real sense in the condition of bodily existence and passions afflicting the ones who shall be saved.

From the redeeming and redeemed Saviour, to the redeeming and redeemed church

As was shown in Part I above, the Saviour also brings down to earth with him another "body": the church of the spiritual seed. This pre-existing church, the offspring of the Logos and an image of the Pleroma, represents the mythologically hypostasised status of the spirituals on earth who are predestined for salvation. This status and identity is transmitted by the Saviour to the earthly spirituals, who until his descent were unrecognised and concealed. The same notion is expressed in *Gos. Truth* through the image of "the living book of the living," studied in the preceding chapter.

As was also shown, the relationship between the Saviour and the church is ruled by the logic of mutual participation. Through his descent the Saviour shares the condition of corporeality and passion with the ones who shall be saved. For their part they are liberated from this condition and have their spiritual being revealed to them through the church that came down with him. Since this theory, moreover, coalesces the redemptive act carried out through the Saviour's incarnation, and the symbolic model-function of the act, a

---

[5] 116:26–27 explicitly denies that the Saviour shared in those kinds of passions.

further logical step becomes possible, namely the idea that the ones who participate in the Saviour's incarnation through ritually re-enacted symbolic parallelism may also be imagined as participating in his incarnation conceived as a redemptive act. If the Saviour is inseparably redeemer and redeemed at one and the same time, then those who share in his role as redeemed can also share in his role as an agent of redemption.

This notion, however, gives rise to further conceptual complications. Taking this a further step still, the church that has come down from above as redeemers is considered to need redemption in turn (cf. above, 53–57). The dialectical contradictions involved in the notion of mutual participation with its postulated identity of symbol and act-event and of redeemer and redeemed, do not come to rest with the redeemed spirituals assuming the role of a redeeming church; rather, these contradictions are transferred to a new level. These double roles of the descended and incarnated church produce competing soteriological notions in *Tri. Trac.*, as we shall now see.

To begin with, there clearly exists a notion in the text that the purpose of the Saviour's advent was to save the spirituals already living in the world. This notion must be presupposed in the passage 118:21–35, quoted above, which states that the Saviour revealed the identities of the three human races, and that the spiritual race hastened to meet him. In fact, the spiritual human race has been present in the world since the creation of the first human being, as is evident from the anthropogony described earlier in the treatise (104:30–106:25). Here, we were told that the spiritual Logos created the first human by means of the Demiurge and all his subordinate psychic and material powers, so that the human became a mixed *plasma* (104:30–105:10, 106:18–25). Into the creature made by these two orders of powers, the Logos added his own contribution:

> Now the [form] that the Logos brought forth [was][6] deficient in such a way that he [*sc.* the human] was [afflicted] by sickness. It did not resemble him [*sc.* the Logos], for he brought him forth into ob[livion], ignorance, [. . .], and all the other sicknesses, since he gave (him) the first form (only). (105:10–17)

---

[6] I now read [ⲈⲚⲦⲀⲤ]Ⲣ̄ ⲰⲦⲀ in 105:11–12, and interpret the form as Second Perfect.

Next, *Tri. Trac.* describes the garden in which the first human was placed, how he was tricked by the serpent into transgressing (ⲡⲁⲣⲁⲃⲁ-ⲥⲓⲥ, 107:15, 108:5) the commandment given to him, and how he was then expelled from the garden. The expulsion served to empha-sise for him even more the imperfection of the world in which he had been placed:

> It is (however) a work of providence, in order that it should be realised that the enjoyment that the human being may have of such pleasures is a short one compared to the eternal existence of the place of rest. (It was a work) which the Spirit had ordained, because it had planned in advance that the human should <experience> that great evil which is death—which is the complete ignorance of everything—and also experience all the evils that arise from that, so that he (then), after the cravings and the anxieties that result from these, might partake of the greatest good, which is eternal life, and which is the complete knowledge of everything, and the partaking of all good things. (107:22–108:4)

This describes the condition of the humans who possess the spiri-tual soul and who have lived in the *oikonomia* until the time of the advent of the Saviour. Such people were the righteous and the prophets among the Hebrews, in whom had been sown a seed which made them sense the existence of something higher and greater than themselves so as to hope and long for it (111:23–112:9). It is from this perspective, of course, that it makes sense to say that the Saviour revealed the spirituals: he made manifest the nature which had been latent and receptive in certain human beings since creation.

The notion of a pre-existent church is not necessarily inconsistent with this salvation historical perspective. It can be regarded as sim-ply a way of conceptualising the pre-election of the spirituals. Thus, if the church is said to descend together with the Saviour, this means that the spirituals receive their true selves, that they become what they have been predetermined to be, what they already are and have been from the beginning. Saying that the Saviour makes manifest the true nature latently hidden in spiritual humans is in this sense equivalent to saying that he brings down from above the pre-existent church. This is the type of perspective that predominates in *Gos. Truth's* account of the manifestation of the book with the names as well.

This eschatological perspective of a fulfilment through revelation is, however, supplanted in *Tri. Trac.* to a large extent by a soteriol-ogy of mutual participation and the resulting notion of a redeemer

who must himself be redeemed. This in turn gives rise, as we have already noted, to the notion that the church that has come down with the Saviour to redeem the spirituals in the world is itself in need of redemption, in the same way as the Saviour himself does. This double situation of the church is described in 116:5–117:8, a section quoted and commented upon above (53–54).

The essence of the spiritual is unity. This is the ideal condition of the Entireties of the Pleroma. However, the Logos, who was separated from the Pleroma through passion, caused a disunity that manifested itself in matter and a soul linked with matter. Although this disunity was later brought under some measure of control and was given a kind of shape by divine providence so as to become the *oikonomia* which is the cosmos, the nature of the world remains in its essence separation and division. In between these two realms of unity and disunity is placed the aeon of the Logos, where his offspring, the spiritual church, resides as well. *Tri. Trac.* stresses that the spiritual church is an image (εἰκών) of the ἐκκλησία constituted by the Pleroma (97:5–9); it is of the same spiritual substance as its model, but it is nevertheless inferior to it because it does not possess its special kind of indivisibility:

> Having come into being after the image of each one of the aeons they are in substance what we have said [i.e., perfect and unitary]. In their operation, however, they are not equal (to them) because it [*sc.* the operation] takes place in each of them separately. Collectively they have the equality, but as individuals they have not discarded what is proper to each. For this reason they are passions, and passion is sickness. For they are not offspring from the unity of the Pleroma, but from one who has not yet received the Father, or the unity with the Entireties and his Will. (94:32–95:7)

The church of the seed of the Logos is "smaller" (94:27) than the Pleroma. The imperfection that consists in its being divisible is a form of passion and sickness. The general point is repeated in connection with the anthropogony, in 106:6–9: "The spiritual substance is one and a single image, [and] its sickness is the condition [of being in man]y forms."[7]

---

[7] ⲧⲟⲩⲥⲓⲁ ⲙ̄ⲡⲛ̄ⲁ̄ⲧⲓ̄ⲕⲟⲛ ⲟⲩⲉⲓⲉ ⲧⲉ ⲁⲩⲱ ⲟⲩⲉⲓⲛⲉ ⲛ̄ⲟⲩⲱⲧ ⲧⲉ [ⲁⲩⲱ ⲁⲛ ⲡⲓ]ϣⲱⲛⲉ ⲛ̄ⲧⲉⲥ ⲡⲉ ⲡⲧⲱϣⲉ [ϩⲛ̄ ϩⲁ]ϩ ⲛ̄ⲥⲙⲟⲧ. The restorations are somewhat uncertain (I now adopt Attridge's reading at the beginning of 106:7), but the general sense should be clear: there is a contrast between the oneness of the spiritual and the image on the one hand, and the multiplicity of the forms on the other.

Tri. Trac. then goes on to justify this imperfection of the spiritual church from the point of view of the *oikonomia*:

> It was (nevertheless) a good thing for the *oikonomia* that was to be, because it had been decided concerning them that they should pass through the lower stations, and the stations would not be able to accept them coming quickly through them unless (they came) one by one. And their coming was necessary because everything was to be fulfilled through them. (95:8–16)

The purpose of the incarnation of the church is twofold. On the one hand, the church represents "the seed of promise."[8] This means that its members carry within them the hope and expectation of a full manifestation of the Saviour, and the ultimate unification with him which will take place in the Pleroma; and that they have been appointed for the mission of proclaiming this promise to others (95:31–38, 114:9–13, 117:14–16). Therefore they have received a "form" that enables them to become incarnate in the world: "they received form with a view to a planting down below" (116:38–39). This notion relates to the redemptive function of the spiritual church, and provides one justification for its descent into the physical cosmos.

On the other hand, there is also a second reason for the descent, which relates to the spiritual church's own need for redemption. Whereas "the perfect man," the Saviour, was able to leave the cosmos again after his baptism, and return to the unity of the Pleroma, the individual members of the church needed a "school" before they could be redeemed, obviously because of the passions of divisibility inherent in them since their origin (cf. above, 54–55). Their sojourn in the world is what serves as a "school" in this sense.

Thus, from one point of view, the purpose of the descent of the spiritual church was to redeem the spirituals already in the world; from another point of view it came down to be trained to overcome its own inherent imperfection. This duality of viewpoints is united in the statement made in the passage 116:5–117:8, that the healers and instructors of the church, typified by the apostles and the evangelists, themselves share in the sufferings of the ones they have come to heal. At this point, however, it becomes clear that the two view-

---

[8] ⲡⲥⲡⲉⲣⲙⲁ ⲛ̄ϣ̄ⲡ ⲱⲡ, 95:31–32; ⟨ⲡⲓ⟩ⲥⲡⲉⲣⲙⲁ ⲛ̄ⲇⲉ ⲡⲥϣⲡ ⲱⲡ, 117:14–15. Also cf. 114:13, and 92:7, 93:32.

points are nevertheless not so easily harmonised. According to the first of them, an essential difference exists between the ones living in the world who need redemption and the church from on high which accords it. But if this church itself is to linger on in the world because of its own need for redemption, then the distinction between the two groups becomes blurred. Thus it is no longer possible to say precisely who is meant when the text refers to the ones who are "issued from passion and division," and who have "fallen" (116:10–13.16). Most of all, the expressions are similar to the ones used to describe the origin of the material powers and human beings, but that group is, of course, totally incapable of salvation. There is nothing that indicates that only the psychic race is meant either. It is not inconceivable that the text refers to the descendants of the first human, who, as we have seen, are described as having been exposed to the full evilness of the world after the first human's transgression and expulsion from Paradise. Nevertheless, the most adequate reading of the passage 116:5–117:8 is probably to see it as a general description of the condition of the spiritual seed under the *oikonomia*. All who live under the *oikonomia* are subject to the divisibility and the passion which characterise it, though some more than others, therefore some have been appointed to heal and instruct their more afflicted brothers, though they too suffer under it.

A shifted focus

This means that the conception of the process of redemption acquires another focus. The moment of redemption is no longer simply identified with the descent of the Saviour into the world, with his transmission of the true identities to the still unmanifested believers, as in *Gos. Truth*; or by the coalescence of the Saviour's advent with its re-enactment in baptism, as in *Exc.* 66–86. These notions are still present in *Tri. Trac.*, as we have seen. However, when the idea is added that the spiritual church not only participates in the descent of the Saviour, but is itself still in need of redemption, the unity of the moment of descent and the moment of redemption is broken up once more. The effect of this is twofold. In the first place, the redemption is no longer a matter of the relationship between the spirituals on earth and their pre-existent archetypal identities in the form of a heavenly church. Rather, the essential redemptive relationship is deferred to another level, so as to be that which exists

between the heavenly church itself and *its* model, the Pleroma, of which it is an imperfect and passible image, brought forth when the Saviour came down to the Logos manifesting the forms of the Pleroma. Redemption thus becomes a matter of unifying this pre- and hyper-cosmic church with the Pleroma above it. Secondly, the decisive, redemptive unification does not take place with the descent of the Saviour into the world, but in a further event: in the ritual of redemption, which has now once more become detached from the redemptive event in history. Only after having been left behind by the Saviour, and having been trained in the "school" here below, is the church redeemed.

Protology and Ritual

As was stated at the beginning of this chapter, *Tri. Trac.* speaks of a pre-existent church of aeons that inheres in the relationship of the Father and Son as a self-thinking, self-glorifying, self-naming and self-generating duality-in-unity. Initially, the aeons exist in the Thought of the Father, in the "hidden Depths." They are unconscious, and their existence is like that of a seed or an embryo (60:14–38). It is the Will of the Father, however, "that they should exist not only for him, but should exist for themselves also; that they should remain,[9] then, in his Thought as a thought-substance, but also exist for themselves" (61:3–7). The description here is very close to the protological notions in *Gos. Truth*, and one can assume a literary relationship between the two texts, though not necessarily direct dependence.[10]

The Father then sows in the aeons a "thought," said to be his Name, which produces in them an awareness that their existence has a cause, together with an urge to know the nature of this cause. This seminal state of consciousness is called in *Tri. Trac.* "the first form" (61:7–28). In order to satisfy this urge for knowledge, the

---

[9] ⲁⲧⲣⲟⲩϣⲱⲡⲉ ⲇⲉ ϩⲛ̄ⲡ[ⲉϥ]ⲙⲉⲩⲉ ϩⲱⲥ ⲟⲩⲥⲓⲁ ⲛ̄ⲙⲉⲩ[ⲉ]. Maybe a negation has dropped out here: "... that they should *not* remain ...," though it is conceivable that a situation is envisaged where the aeons can be simultaneously united with the Father and independent individuals.

[10] *Tri. Trac.* 60:16–17 ≈ *Gos. Truth* 37:7–8, *Tri. Trac.* 60:19–23 ≈ *Gos. Truth* 27:22–25, *Tri. Trac.* 60:26–37 ≈ *Gos. Truth* 27:34–28:4. Cf. Thomassen and Painchaud, *Traité tripartite*, 292.

Father reveals the Son (62:33–63:4). The Son is a representation of the Father, adapted to the varying capacities of the individual aeons to comprehend the greatness of their Father. Their comprehension, moreover, expresses itself in silent common acts of praise and hymns (63:5–28). This activity is described as a form of procreation, but without any separation between those who procreate and what is procreated (63:29–64:27). Thus in a sense the aeons beget themselves, though this act of generation is made possible only by the Father's letting himself be known through the Son. The process conceived by *Tri. Trac.* combines several aspects all at once: the first unitary principle exteriorises and unfolds himself, manifests himself so as to be known, and gives birth to the aeons as his children; yet through the same process, the latter can also be said to generate themselves as autonomous beings.

The outcome of the process is that the aeons find themselves to be united in the Son as a unity-in-multiplicity (64:28–67:34). This situation is accomplished through their common acts of glorification, by which they not only generate themselves as a united collective of individuals, but also manifest the glory of the Father as his image (68:29–36). It is clear that this takes place as a gradual and continuous process. The text speaks of three glorifications produced by the aeons (68:36–70:19), the last of which is characterised by autonomous will (ⲕⲁⲧⲁ ⲧⲏⲛⲧⲁⲩⲧⲉⲝⲟⲩⲥⲓⲟⲥ, 69:26), and results in a hierarchy within the Pleroma because of the differences in mental capacity that exist between the individual aeons. As a collective, the Pleroma is therefore constantly searching for the Father, but through mutual co-operation, and aided by the Spirit that unites them, they come ever closer to their goal (71:7–75:17).

It is evident that this protological vision has strong soteriological connotations, since it is conceived as a process through which the aeons are brought by divine grace from a state of ignorance and potential being, to knowledge and full existence. That these soteriological overtones, associated with the idea that the aeons are given birth, have their basis in rituals of regeneration, is a very likely assumption. The use of embryological metaphors to describe ritual regeneration is not uncommon in contemporary religious literature.[11]

---

[11] Cf. Festugière, *Révélation*, IV 220–24.

Tri. Trac. exploits these metaphors quite skilfully, speaking of a "first formation," and a further formation when the new-born child emerges into the "light" and sees its parents (61:11–62:5).[12] "Formation" and "illumination" are, of course, also stock terms in the vocabulary of rituals of initiation.

At this point it becomes interesting to take another look at the description of baptism in *Tri. Trac.* (127:25–129:34). In baptism, it is said, the Entireties come into being (ⲛ̄ⲥⲉϣⲱⲡⲉ ⲛ̄ϩⲏⲧ̄ϥ, 127:28), and this involves professing faith in the Name (127:32–128:5). They will be united with the Father in knowledge (128:15–19). A string of names for baptism is then commented on (128:19–129:8): "garment" (ϩⲃ̄ⲥⲟⲩ); "confirmation" (ⲡⲧⲁⲭⲣⲟ); "silence" (ⲙⲛ̄ⲧⲕⲁⲣⲱⲥ); "bridal chamber" (ⲙⲁ ⲛ̄ϣⲉⲗⲉⲉⲧ); "light" (ⲡⲟⲩⲁⲉⲓⲛ); "eternal life" (ⲡⲓⲱⲛ̄ϩ ϣⲁ ⲉⲛⲏϩⲉ). Rounding off the exposition, the author remarks:

> Thus, it is called after all the fair things it contains, including the (names) that have been <left out>, in a manner that is simple, authentic, indivisible, irreducible, complete, and unchangeable. For how else can it be named, save by referring to it as the Entireties? That is, even if it is called by innumerable names, they are spoken (only) as a way of expressing it in certain ways, although it transcends all words, transcends all voice, <transcends> all mind, transcends all things, transcends all silence. This is how it is <. . .> with the things that belong to what it is. This is what in fact it is, with an ineffable and inconceivable character, in order to be in those who have knowledge by means of what they have attained, which is that to which they have given glory. (129:8–34)

Several of the characteristics attributed to baptism in this passage are in fact also found in the description of the generation of the aeons:

- the Son represents the Name (65:9–11, 66:32–33), and the aeons are named after him (62:35–36);
- the Father makes the Son appear as a light for those who have come forth from him (62:33–35, 66:6.19–20);
- the Son is "the life of the living" (66:28);
- as they are being generated, the aeons perform hymns and give praise in silence (63:5–64:27);

---

[12] These notions are based on embryological theories about the gradual development of the foetus; cf. Thomassen and Painchaud, *Traité tripartite,* 296–99, and below, 309–13.

- the aeons and the Son are clothed in one another (63:12–13, 65:27, 66:31–32);
- the Son gives firmness (ⲧⲁϫⲣⲟ) to the aeons through his Name (65:7–11).

Finally, *Tri. Trac.*'s description of the indivisibility of the Son and the Entireties as they are united in the Name also recalls the description of baptism quoted above. In this context, the Son is said to be "truly all the names" (66:9). Moreover,

> While all the Entireties exist in the single one, so that he clothes himself completely, and in his single Name, he is never called by it.[13] And in the same unitary way *they* are simultaneously this single one and all of them. He is not divided as a body, nor is he split apart by the names in which he exists, (in the sense that) this is one thing and that something [else; nor] does he change by [. . .], nor does he alter through [the] names in which he is, being now like this and now something different, so that he would be one (person) now and someone else at another time. Rather, he is entirely himself forever; [he is] each and every one of the Entireties eternally at the same time. He is what all of them are, as Father of the Entireties, (and) the Entireties are him as well. (66:29–67:12)

It seems clear that *Tri. Trac.*'s account of the generation of the aeons is modelled upon ideas connected with baptism: the coming into being through the reception of the Name, the confirmation or "strengthening" taking place in it, the clothing metaphor, the illumination and the eternal life. The notion of silence as a precondition for the generation of the aeons also no doubt has its source in the ideology and practice of ritual regeneration, as is demonstrated by the Hermetic treatise *On Regeneration*, where "silence" is described as the womb from which the neophyte is reborn (*CH* XIII 2).[14]

Having noted these affinities between the protological ideas about generation and ritual conceptions of regeneration, our next question becomes how to interpret these affinities in the context of the system as a whole.

---

[13] The precise meaning of this sentence is not clear, and it is probable that it has been inaccurately transmitted in the Coptic manuscript.

[14] Cf. Thomassen and Painchaud, *Traité tripartite*, 280, 284, 444; and below, 196.

Protology, Salvation History, Ritual

Protology as salvation history

In the study of *Gos. Truth*, above, it was observed how, in the thinking of that text, salvation history was transposed into protology. Through the Saviour's appearance in the world, the believers acquired their true identities, while all previous, cosmic existence was revealed as phantasmagoric nothingness; thus, this event could be seen as being the equivalent of effecting the Entirety's real coming into being. This model is largely present in *Tri. Trac.* as well. According to one line of thought in *Tri. Trac.*, the protological generation of the aeons described at the beginning of the treatise is only preliminary; the fall of the Logos and the subsequent creation of the world take place while the aeons are still searching for the Father in an immature state of existence, and the ultimate generation of the Entireties is achieved only through the redemptive ritual carried out by the earthly church. In the protological section of the tractate, such an interpretation is suggested by the following passages:

> (The aeons receive the Father through the Son according to the capacity of each.) But this is not yet his greatness that they have received; rather, he exists (only) partially (with them) of the manner, the form, and the greatness which he is. (63:5–9)

> Now the Father, in so far as he is elevated over the Entireties, is unknowable and incomprehensible. His greatness is so immense that if he had revealed himself at once, and suddenly, then even the highest of the aeons that have gone forth from him would have perished. For that reason, he withheld his power and impassibility in that which he is, [remaining] ineffable [and] unnameable and transcending all mind and all speech. (64:28–65:4).

> He did not, however, reveal his multiplicity to the Entireties all at once, nor did he reveal his sameness to those who had issued forth from him. (67:34–37)

> The whole structure of aeons, then, is yearning and seeking to find the Father perfectly and completely, and this is their irreproachable union. Although the Father does reveal himself, he did not wish that they should know him from eternity, but he gave himself as something to be reflected on and sought after, while keeping for himself that by which he is inscrutably pre-existent. (71:12–18)

After the last quote, *Tri. Trac.* goes on to describe the aeons' continuous and joint search for the Father, the more advanced helping the less advanced ones, until 75:17, when the account of the fall of

the Logos begins. It is certainly a presupposition in the text that the process will not be completed until all the aeons have attained an equal perfection in knowledge. It is also clear that the fact that this process has still not been completed is a precondition for the fall of the "last" and "youngest" of the aeons, who, "before he had yet produced anything to the glory of the Will and in the union of the Entireties, acted presumptuously, out of an overflowing love, and rushed forwards towards that which surrounds (the realm of) perfect glory" (76:12–23).

Moreover, *Tri. Trac.* is explicit in affirming that the fall happened in accordance with the provident Will of the Father, for the sake of an *oikonomia* that had to be (76:23–77:11). It can therefore be concluded that the author conceives of the fall and its results as parts of the Father's design for perfecting the aeons. In so far as this educational process can be seen as one of generation, this means that the passion of the fall, the production of matter, and the creation of the world and its history, all take place before the aeons have come truly into being, in a way rather similar to the way the aeons of *Gos. Truth* are still groping about inside the Father when the cosmogonic fall occurs:

> In hidden and inscrutable wisdom he guarded the knowledge until the end, until the Entireties would have laboured in their search for God, the Father, whom no one has found by his own wisdom and power. (126:9–15)

Moreover, *Tri. Trac.* makes a distinction between a preliminary unification and an ultimate one:

> (The Pleroma) possesses a first mutual concord and union, which is the concord that exists for (the glory of) the Father, and through which the Entireties acquire a representation (ⲙⲟⲩⲛⲅ̄ ⲛ̄ϩⲟ) of him. The final restoration, however, <will take place> after the Entirety has been manifested in him who is the Son—he who is the redemption, the road towards the incomprehensible Father, the return to the preexistent—and after the Entireties have been manifested in him who truly (ϩⲛ̄ ⲟⲩⲙⲛ̄ⲧ̄ⲭⲁⲉⲓⲥ) is [the in]conceivable, the ineffable, the invisible, and the ungraspable one, so that the Entirety obtains its redemption. (123:23–124:3)

The first consent († ⲙⲉⲧⲉ <*εὐδοκία),[15] in which the Entireties produced a "representation" of the Father, refers to their generation of

---

[15] Cf. Thomassen and Painchaud, *Traité tripartite*, 358.

the Son as Saviour (86:23–88:8): When the youngest aeon fell, he
was split in two parts (77:11–36). A superior part of him detached
itself from his passionate part, and hastened back into the Pleroma,
which in a joint act then produced a "fruit," a common offspring
(77:37–78:28). This offspring, the Saviour-Son, contains within him-
self the Entireties; he is an expression of their unity, and he is a
representation of the Father. He thus plays a double role in the sys-
tem. On the one hand, he is sent out as the Saviour to manifest
the Entireties to the fallen Logos. On the other hand, he represents
a preliminary unity of the Entireties, and thus an intermediate stage
in the generative process of the Entireties themselves.

As we saw, the ultimate unification, that of the *apokatastasis*, is
described as taking place in the Son. Evidently, this must be the
Son under a different aspect from that of Son-Saviour. The dis-
tinction between them consists in their representation of different
degrees of unity. The Son-Saviour is an image of the Father, pro-
duced and constituted collectively by the aeons while they are still
searching for the Father; whereas the Son as redemption implies a
full unity with the Father himself. It should be noted that the restric-
tions regarding the Father's continued inaccessibility, which were
repeatedly emphasised in the protological part of the treatise, no
longer apply when the unity brought about by the redemption and
the *apokatastasis* are described: now they are manifested in him who
is "truly," or "authentically" (ϩⲛ ⲟⲩⲙⲛ̄ⲧⲭⲁⲉⲓⲥ) the inconceivable one.
Furthermore, this unification, which is also conceived as a real com-
ing into being, takes place in baptism, which is described as "the
redemption," a name that is also used of the Son. It is noteworthy
how baptism is described in exactly the same terms as the Father
himself: it is ineffable and transcends everything (129:17–34; cf. above,
180).

<div style="text-align:center">Protology and restoration: Conflicting soteriologies</div>

However, alongside this conception, which subsumes the entire sal-
vation history under a redemptive protology, there exists another line
of soteriological thought in *Tri. Trac.*, one which does not seem to
have been fully integrated with the first. This is the line of thought
that expresses itself in the idea that the *apokatastasis* takes place
when the church is restored to the Pleroma (†ⲁⲡⲟⲕⲁⲧⲁⲥⲧⲁⲥⲓⲥ
ⲁϩⲟⲩⲛ ⲁⲡⲓⲡⲗⲏⲣⲱⲙⲁ, presumably < ἡ ἀποκατάστασις εἰς τὸ πλήρωμα,

123:21–22).[16] Thus, instead of the story of salvation being one of the Entireties seeking knowledge of, and unity with, the Father, it is here rather a matter of the spiritual church entering and becoming united with the Pleroma. This soteriology is connected with the idea of the spiritual church as an imperfect, divisible and passible image of the Pleroma, and salvation in this context is equivalent to the unification of the church with its already perfect model.

The co-existence of these two soteriologies in *Tri. Trac.* creates some difficult logical problems. For how can the baptism performed by the incarnate, earthly church, which is only an image of the Entireties, effect the redemption of the Entireties themselves? This inconsistency can be explained genealogically as the result of a combination of different sources containing different versions of Valentinian soteriology. According to the first version, there would have been no intermediate level. The church descending with the Saviour would have been the pre-existent Pleroma itself, and an identification would have been made between that descent and the redemption taking place in baptism. Thus the reception by the believers here below of the church representing their true identities would have been ritually enacted as the true birth of the Entireties, by virtue of the Saviour's dissolution of empirical existence through his own empirical incarnation. This would be the type of soteriology found in *Gos. Truth*, and which lies, perhaps, behind *Exc.* 66–86. The second version would have posited an already perfect Pleroma, with the spiritual church as its image, desirous of being united with it, something which it accomplishes through the ritual of redemption.

Such a genealogical reconstruction is quite possible, but difficult to verify. From the point of view of *Tri. Trac.*'s author, the various apparently incompatible soteriological models found in his text are doubtless all valid expressions of his beliefs. Thus we have to accept that for this author, the redemptive descent of the Saviour is both the same as, and different from, the redemption event taking place in baptism; and the redemptive event constitutes in a real sense the fulfilment of the generation of the Entireties themselves, their attainment of complete being, but at the same time also means the unification of the spirituals *with* the Entireties. This fusion of

---

[16] The same idea is presupposed in 122:27, where reference is made to the future unification of the Logos with (ⲧⲱⲧ ⲛ̄-) the Pleroma.

soteriological perspectives also implies that the redemption carried out by the Saviour by means of his incarnation and through baptism is equivalent to the protological role of the Son as mediator of the generation of the aeons. There is certainly no absolute distinction between the Son and the Saviour; in *Tri. Trac.* the Saviour is also frequently referred to as "the Son" without further qualification.[17]

There must exist, then, a sense or a perspective, according which historical, ritual and protological redemption all express one and the same reality. The Saviour's historical work of salvation through his incarnation, passion, and baptism is re-presented and shared through ritual re-enactment in baptism. However, baptism is, as we saw, also a process with generative power, a process that brings into being, at the same time as it is thought of as effecting unity with the Father. And these things, generation and unification with the Father, are, after all, also what the Son is described as doing in the protological part of the treatise.

Protology and incarnation

The final connection to be made is the one between the historical work of the Saviour and protology. That means it should be possible to interpret the generation of the aeons as well in accordance with the model of the Saviour's incarnation, passion, and baptism. This is in fact the case. In the description of the generation process it is stated that the Father himself remains unknowable, inaccessible and impassible (ⲙⲛ̄ⲧⲁⲧϩⲓⲥⲉ, 64:38). The Son, on the other hand,

> extended himself and spread himself out (ⲡⲁⲉⲓ ⲇⲉ ⲁϥⲥⲁ[ⲩ]ϯ ⲛ̄ⲙⲁϥ ⲁⲃⲁⲗ ⲛ̄ⲙⲓⲛ ⲙ̄ⲙ[ⲁϥ] ⲁⲩⲱ ⲡⲉⲛⲧⲁϥⲡⲁⲣⲉⲟ̄ⲩ̄ⲅ̄ ⲁⲃ[ⲁⲗ]). It is he who gave firmness, location, and a dwelling-place (ⲟⲩⲧⲁϫⲣⲟ ⲙ[ⲛ̄] ⲟⲩⲧⲟⲡⲟⲥ ⲙ̄ⲛ ⲟⲩⲙⲁ ⲛ̄ϣⲱⲡⲉ) to the Entirety—according to one of his names he is in fact "Father of the Entirety"[18]—through his enduring suffering (ⲙ[ⲛ̄ⲧ]ϣⲟⲡ ϩⲓⲥⲉ) on their behalf, having sown in their minds (the idea) that they should seek what exceeds their [. . .], by making them perceive *that* he is and (so making them) seek *what* he might be. (65:4–17)

---

[17] The name "the Son" is used for the Saviour in 86:36, 87:1.14, 93:34, 120:36, 124:33, 125:14–15, 133:18. If the Saviour can always be referred to as the Son, the reverse is not the case. The Son is called Saviour only in his role as the joint offspring who manifests the provisional unity of the Entireties, and who is sent out to the repentant Logos and later into the cosmos itself.

[18] Alternatively: ". . . one of his names is in fact 'the one through whom,' since he is the Father of the Entirety . . ." (cf. Attridge and MacRae).

The notions of "extending himself" and "spreading himself out," associated, moreover, with suffering, clearly allude to the passion of Christ. They refer of course to the Saviour spreading out his limbs on the cross. At the same time, however. the words also suggest an emanation process, in which the primal unity extends and spreads itself out into plurality,[19] a process that is conceived of as suffering on the part of the unitary first principle, but also as a compassionate act of grace.[20]

There thus exists a clear analogy—which for the author amounts to a virtual identity—between the compassionate emanation from unity to plurality, and the incarnational descent of the Saviour into the world of multiplicity and suffering. Moreover, the outward extension and spreading out is accompanied and counteracted by the provision of "firmness, location, and a dwelling-place," made possible by the Son. This counter-force, which brings the emanation process to rest, is described in terms that clearly allude to the strengthening and confirmation given in baptism. It represents, on the protological level, the successful generation of the aeons as independent beings yet united with the Father, but it also corresponds structurally to the Saviour's own baptism, which redeems him from his incarnation and the world of suffering.

---

[19] The historical background for this terminology in theories of emanation is discussed below, in chapter 23.

[20] The word "compassion" occurs in 65:21.

CONCLUSION TO PART II

This part of the book has investigated the relations between the three basic dimensions of Valentinianism: salvation in history, ritual redemption, and protology. As a conclusion I shall try to distil my analyses of the three documents studied in the form of some general remarks both on a certain logic of salvation which is common to the three dimensions, as well as on the interrelations among the dimensions themselves.

In each case, the notions of redemption revolve around a logic of unity and multiplicity. In *ritual*, the foundation of this logic is the relationship between the singular act that serves as a model for the ritual and the multiple repeated re-enactments of this model in the initiations of an indeterminate number of individuals. The ritual annuls the difference between the model and its re-enactments, and thus effects the unification of the many initiated with the one Saviour. The notion of the spirituals constituting parts of the Saviour's "body" is an expression of this relationship. The ritual also transforms the agent performing the ritual's physical acts into assuming the role of the patient of these acts; ultimately, it liberates that person from physicality itself. In sum, by according redemption to the initiate, the ritual eliminates the corporeality, division and passion that are inherent in empirical existence as such.

The redemptive act of the Saviour in *history* constitutes a symmetrical inversion of these processes. He begins by being one, as the expression of the unity of the Entireties. By descending into empirical existence, however, he acquires a human body, and he also becomes divided through assuming, as his spiritual "body," the still divisible and suffering spiritual church.

The theory that underlies the correlation of these notions about redemption in history and ritual has been characterised as *a soteriology of mutual participation*: the humans to be saved participate ritually in the redemptive act of the Saviour, and he participates through his historical incarnation in the plight from which these are to be saved. Furthermore, the dialectics of this soteriology produces such

difficult logical paradoxes as the notions that the Saviour himself needs to be redeemed, and that the church of the redeemed participates even in the Saviour's redeeming descent and incarnation in the world—paradoxes entailing the potential implication of infinite series of redeemers in need of redemption.

The solution to these paradoxes—that is, the mediation of unity and multiplicity, and of ideal and empirical existence—is then transferred to an ontological problematic, expressed as a *protological* myth. The condition of corporeality and division/passion is here seen as a transitory stage in an uncompleted process of generation. The protological myth begins with absolute oneness, represented by the Father. In a second stage the Father produces a multiplicity of aeons, and in a final phase these will be united with him while simultaneously existing as autonomous individuals. The problems associated with the soteriology of participation are thus laid out as the stages in a process, which proceeds from oneness via plurality to unity: The Father stretches and spreads himself out into a plurality, which is the suffering and compassion of the Son; in the end, however, the aeons are all united in him, being "confirmed" and sharing in the Name. The aeons are conceived as being simultaneously objects and agents of this process; they are generated by the Father at the same time as the process is seen as one of self-generation. It is a process where individuation is ultimately the same as unification, where becoming independent of the Father is also a return to him.

The protological myth provides a more abstract formulation of the logical structures involved in the soteriology of mutual participation unfolding on the cosmic level. It does not make this soteriology more consistent; rather, in this regard it creates new problems, because it is never clear whether the account of the generation of the aeons is to be interpreted as an alternative way of looking at the whole cosmic history of salvation with its fulfilment in the advent of the Saviour and the institution of baptism, or whether it describes something which is thought to take place before and above the sphere of the *oikonomia*. Thus, as we saw, *Tri. Trac.* is notoriously ambiguous on the question of whether the redemption carried out by the earthly church implies the redemption of the Entireties themselves, or whether it signifies the unification of the spiritual church *with* the Entireties. But the protological myth does provide an alternative language for expressing in an abstract and theoretical form the central problems posed by the logic of salvation on the historical and

ritual levels. In this way protology, the work of the Saviour, and the ritual of redemption, although they are speculatively linked together in the sequence of a narrative system, must also be interpreted as relatively autonomous attempts to express the one and the same experienced reality of salvation.

The protological myth is thus an intellectual exercise, articulating basic ontological structures. Nonetheless it is still a myth, relating to religious practices. *Tri. Trac.* offers an attractive illustration of the dialectics of unity and multiplicity, of subject and object, and of alienation and return in the emanation process, through the image of the silent hymns and praise offered by the aeons to the Father as they are manifested from him.[1] In their communal songs of glory, each aeon is able to express his own individuality, while his individuality is at the same time enhanced by the harmony of the great choir in which he takes part. The song is an autonomous self-expression, but it is also directed towards the Father. It is an act where agent, act and the effect of the act are all merged into one; the aeons are the glory that they give, but they are also the glorious attributes of the Father himself. Finally, the song is one of common joy, which contrasts with the suffering afflicting the isolated individual.

There is hardly any doubt that *Tri. Trac.*'s enthusiastic description of the hymn-singing aeons corresponds to practices in the earthly church. Because this singing is the expression of the redemption of the Entireties, and the ritual of redemption is baptismal initiation, we are led to assume that communal singing of hymns must have played an essential part in the baptismal liturgy of that church (though there is no reason to think that such practices were restricted to the occasions when neophytes were initiated). We are certainly entitled to imagine that, in their singing, the author of *Tri. Trac.* and his community experienced themselves as partaking in the symphony of the Entireties themselves, and that in the assurance of the unifying and transcending reality of this experience, the problems and inconsistencies of soteriological theory assumed secondary importance.

---

[1] Cf. 63:5–64:27, 65:39–66:5, 67:37–68:36, etc.

PART III

VALENTINIAN PROTOLOGY

THE PLEROMATOLOGY

The Two Main Types

The Valentinian theories about the initial projection and the nature of the Pleroma can be divided into two main groups. The theories belonging to the first group (which shall here be called type A), characteristically do not specify the individual names of the aeons and the numerical constitution of the Pleroma. Moreover, the aeons are described as possessing an initial existence within the Father, or in his Thought, after which they are brought forth and manifested from him, so as to become independent beings. The theories in the second group (type B), on the other hand, detail the names and numbers of the aeons, and do not stress the idea of a generative exteriorisation of the aeons from within the Father. Most frequently, this second type of pleromatology takes the form of a theory about thirty aeons, coupled in syzygic pairs and subdivided into a primal Ogdoad, a Decad and a Duodecad—the doctrine familiar from Irenaeus and the other heresiologists.

The principal representatives of the type A are *Gos. Truth* and *Tri. Trac.* The protology of these tractates was studied in Part II of this book. It may here therefore be sufficient to recall that in those texts, the description of the projection of the Entireties from the Father carries strong connotations of a process of salvation. From a state of being "inside" the Father, in the "Depths," where they constitute the contents of his self-thinking Thought, but are not themselves thinking subjects, the Entireties are "born" and "given form" as conscious beings. Through this process they are able to become individuals endowed with free will, but at the same time to be harmoniously united in perfect awareness of their own nature and the Father's will. In this state of existence, the Entireties are said to be in, and one with, the Son.

As a protological theory, however, these ideas also serve a distinctly theoretical, or cognitive, purpose. From this point of view, they can be seen as attempts to explain how unity can generate plurality

without the presupposition of an arbitrary break. Three or four central concepts serve to make the explanation plausible. The first is the concept of the Thought. The Father possesses Thought, which means that he thinks himself. Thus there is already a duality in the oneness of the Father, that which thinks and that which is being thought; these are one and the same but nevertheless two distinct instances of the Father's mind. The second concept is that of the Son. As the Father duplicates himself in self-thinking thought, he generates the Son, who is distinct from the Father while remaining one with him. Thirdly, the concept of the "Name" is used to express the same relationship, but there in the form of the simultaneous identity and difference of the Name and that which it names. Thus the Son is the Name of the Father in the same way as he is the Father himself as the object of his self-thinking thought. The aeons of the Pleroma derive from this oneness-in-duality relationship between Father and Son, being the multiple contents of the Thought and bearers of the Name. In their manifested and multiple form they remain united with themselves and with the Father, in the Son. To these three concepts a fourth may be added, which also plays a prominent role in both *Gos. Truth* and *Tri. Trac.*: the Will of the Father, representing an active cause that serves to explain how the potential duality and multiplicity of the Father is not only possible, but in fact comes to be actualised.

The protology of type B is attested by a large number of sources. Here follows a list of them:

1. Iren. *Haer.* I 1–3
2. Hipp. *Haer.* VI 29:2–30:5
3. Epiph. *Pan.* XXXI 5–6
4. *Val. Exp.* (NHC XI,*2*) 22:19–31:34
5. Iren. *Haer.* I 14 (The *Sige* of Marcus)
6. Ibid. I 16–18
7. Ibid. I 8:5
8. Ibid. I 11:1 ("Valentinus")
9. Ibid. I 11:2 ("Secundus")
10. Ibid. I 11:3
11. Ibid. I 11:5
12. Ibid. I 12:1 (Ptolemaeans)
13. Ibid. I 12:3
14. *Exc.* 6–7:3

Val. Exp., unfortunately in a bad state of preservation, is the only

extant Valentinian treatise witnessing to this type of doctrine. Each of the heresiological reports listed above, however, clearly reflects (directly or indirectly) a distinct Valentinian document. However, the extent of the documentation on each underlying treatise varies greatly. In particular, we only get glimpses of the sources which ultimately lie behind Irenaeus' catalogue of various Valentinians in *Haer.* I 11–12, though enough is transmitted to let us perceive the substantial relatedness of those documents to the pleromatology of the more fully reported treatises of Irenaeus, Hippolytus and Epiphanius. The large number of attestations shows the considerable influence of the type B doctrine, though it must at the same time be noted that not two of the texts are exactly the same; they are all individual variations on a common theme.

Iren. *Haer.* I 1–3[1]

The account of first beginnings in this system shows considerably greater complexity than what we find in *Gos. Truth* and *Tri. Trac.* The ultimately transcendent deity is described as Προαρχή, Προπάτωρ and Βυθός. He forms a syzygy with Thought, Ἔννοια, who is also named Χάρις and Σιγή. This pair projects another syzygy, whose first member is called Mind, Νοῦς, alias Μονογενής, Πατήρ, or Ἀρχή, and the other Truth, Ἀλήθεια. Then, the rest of the Pleroma, consisting of 30 aeons altogether, is projected, so that the following structure results:

Βυθός + Σιγή
⇓
Μονογενής + Ἀλήθεια
⇓
Λόγος + Ζωή
⇓
Ἄνθρωπος + Ἐκκλησία

Βύθιος + Μῖξις
Ἀγήρατος + Ἕνωσις
Αὐτοφυής + Ἡδονή
Ἀκίνητος + Σύγκρασις
Μονογενής + Μακαρία

Παράκλητος + Πίστις
Πατρικός + Ἐλπίς
Μητρικός + Ἀγαπή
Ἀείνους + Σύνεσις
Ἐκκλησιαστικός + Μακαριότης
Θελητός + Σοφία

---
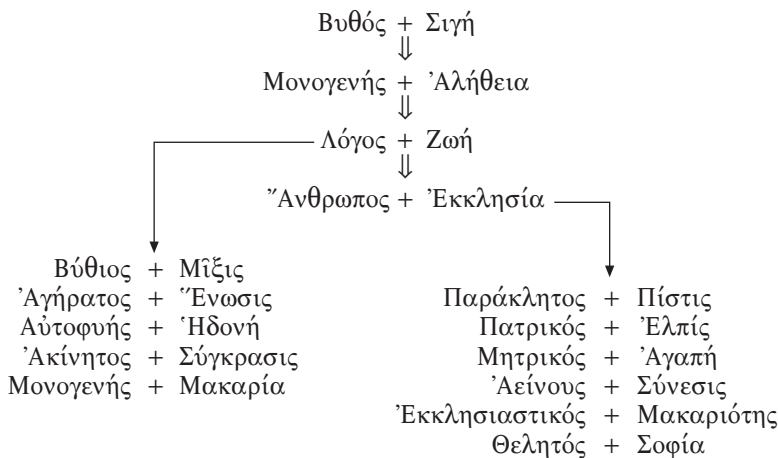
[1] Bibliography: Baur, *Christliche Gnosis*, 124–28; Hilgenfeld, *Ketzergeschichte*, 351–54;

The first two pairs are called collectively the Tetrad, and the first four pairs constitute the first Ogdoad. Logos and Life produce a Decad of aeons, after having first brought forth Man and Church; the latter pair then produces a Duodecad.

Comparison with the systems of type A shows that the terms "the Depths," Silence, and Monogenes/the Son are shared. As we have seen, "the Depths" (ⲃⲁⲑⲟⲥ) is used in *Gos. Truth* and *Tri. Trac.* to describe the Father as the unknown source of the aeons.[2] We have also noted the use of the notion of "silence" in the pleromatogony of *Tri. Trac.*, and explained its presence in a protological context through the general affinity in Valentinianism of protological theory with the doctrine of ritual redemption, and in particular the correspondence between generation and regeneration—"silence" in this context is the womb from which the aeons, as well as the initiated neophytes, are born.[3] The identification of Silence with Thought, and with Grace, is also made by *Tri. Trac.*: "(The Thought) is truly <the> Silence, and the Wisdom, and the Grace, which it is also called with justice" (*Tri. Trac.* 57:3–7). Finally, Monogenes is evidently related to the Son in *Gos. Truth* and *Tri. Trac.*[4]

From Father and Son to Tetrad

The difference between A and B with regard to these primary terms of the system can be described as follows. The dialectical dynamism of the Father/Son relationship found in the type A accounts is unfolded in the type B systems as a Tetrad. Since according to the former, Father and Son are simultaneously one and two, the inference may be drawn that each of the two terms in turn is equally a duality as well as a unity. In this way, the notion of an immanent derivation of duality from a primal oneness produces the idea of a

---

Lipsius, "Valentinus (1)," 1089; Müller, "Beiträge," 206–8, 217–24; Foerster, *Von Valentin*, 46, 48–49; Sagnard, *Gnose valentinienne*, 144–59, 296–306, 320–25, 326–29, 334–37; Jonas, *Gnosis*, I 363–66; id. *The Gnostic Religion*, 179–82; Orbe, *Procesión*, 307–11; Filoramo, *History*, 66–67; Simonetti, *Testi gnostici*, 285–99, 481–86; Strutwolf, *Gnosis als System*, 30–33.

[2] *Gos. Truth* 22:25, 35:15, 37:7–8, 40:27; *Tri. Trac.* 54:21, 60:18.20.22, 77:20; see above, 158, 178. Βυθός and Βάθος are synonymous; for βάθος see also *Exc.* 29; Hipp. *Haer.* VI 30:6.7 (βάθος καὶ βυθός); Iren. *Haer.* I 21:2. Also cf. Orbe, *Procesión*, 60n13.

[3] See above, 181.

[4] For the Son as the first-born and only son, see also *Tri. Trac.* 57:13–23.37.

Tetrad. The relationship Father/Son is thereby reinterpreted as a set of multiple relationships: (1) Bythos/Silence, (2) Bythos/Monogenes, and (3) Bythos/Silence : Monogenes/Truth. The ambiguous dual roles of the Son—who remains one with the transcendent Father at the same time as he is distinct from him, being the Father's manifestation as well the principle of generation from him—come to be distributed on Silence and Monogenes respectively. Silence is a duality in the still *unmanifested* depths of the paternal Thought, and is distinguished from the Monogenes, who is the *manifested* double of the Father, "like and equal (ὅμοιόν τε καὶ ἴσον) to the one who projected him, and who alone comprehended the greatness of the Father" (I 1:1). This functional distinction between Silence and Monogenes is expressed mythologically in the statement that the latter "proposed (διανοεῖτο) to communicate (ἀνακοινώσθαι) to the rest of the aeons as well the greatness of the Father," but Silence "held him back" (κατέσχεν . . . αὐτόν) because the Father desired that they should attain this knowledge only after first having searched for him (I 2:1).

In this way, the Tetrad translates the Father/Son relationship arithmologically, by deriving a total of four terms from the initial notion of oneness in duality, and it also makes a more refined and explicit distinction between the duality in the unmanifested and the duality of the manifested Father. In this protology, moreover, the notion of the Son as the Name of the Father does not appear. On the other hand, it may be observed that "Father" is here used instead (though not consistently) as a name of the Son: Monogenes receives the designations Πατήρ and Ἀρχή, while Προαρχή, Προπάτωρ and Βυθός are applied as basically negative designations serving to indicate the unnameable transcendence of the ultimate ground of existence. Thus it would seem that just as the Father/Son relationship in general has given way to the more complex structure of the Tetrad, so the linguistic metaphor of the Name, which is another expression of this relationship, has been reinterpreted. The simultaneous identity and difference between the Name (the Son) and the named (the Father) is translated by giving Monogenes quite literally the name "Father," while the entity to whom this name originally applied, and whose distinct existence still needs to be asserted, is now discernible only as an unnameable negativity.

The deferral of duality

In this pleromatology of the type B, elements of Pythagorean arith-mology have been introduced through the concept of the Tetrad, or Tetractys. The numbers one to four were accorded a privileged sta-tus by the Pythagoreans as the source of all further numbers.[5] But this Pythagorean concept has also been combined with the more specifically Valentinian notion of the unity of oneness and duality characterising the relationship of the Father and the Son, and the notion of the syzygy in general. Thus the Pythagorean Tetrad is interpreted as the unfolding of this unity-in-duality into a relation-ship between two pairs. This duplication does not, however, bring the problem of unity-in-duality to rest, and so the Tetrad is in turn reduplicated into an Ogdoad. This is a process where duality and unity continue to be simultaneously asserted, in such a way that, as soon as two terms distinguished as one pair are posited as a unity, their inherent duality immediately manifests itself once more in the production of an additional pair. The process takes the form of an arithmetical series, that is, a succession of pairs, as well as of a geo-metrical one: it moves from pair to Tetrad to Ogdoad. In the geo-metrical series, the structure of the syzygic pair still obtains, since the dual relationship of the first pair, Bythos/Silence, reappears, first in the relationship between the first and the second pair of the first Tetrad, and then in that between the first and the second Tetrad. In all the pairs, however, the second member is the weaker, "female," one, representing by itself the division of duality, and the unity of the pair is implicitly conceived of as the unification of the second member with the first, rather than as a union of two equal partners.

The rupture

As the production of successive pairs unfolds, the unresolved initial duality is successively relocated: from Silence to the second pair Monogenes/Truth, and thence to the second Tetrad. The second Tetrad also contains a dual relation within itself between its first and its second pair. The first pair, Logos/Life, gives birth to a Decad,

---

[5] Cf. Burkert, *Lore and Science*, 120, 186–87; Sagnard, *Gnose valentinienne*, 337–48. Irenaeus is aware of these traditions: καὶ εἶναι ταύτην πρώτην καὶ ἀρχέγονον πυθαγορικὴν τετρακτύν, ἣν καὶ ῥίζαν τῶν πάντων καλοῦσιν I 1:1.

which represents the perfect and unitary structure of the Tetrad in a different, derived form $(1 + 2 + 3 + 4 = 10)$. The second pair, Man/Church, instead produces a Duodecad, which, though this is not explicitly stated in Irenaeus' report, must represent a less perfect number.[6] Thus the relative imperfection of the second pair of the second Tetrad vis-à-vis its first pair is manifested in, but at the same time deferred to, the Duodecad it generates. It is in the second, female half of the sixth and last pair of the Duodecad that the inherent duality finally expresses itself as a rupture:

προήλατο δὲ πολὺ ὁ τελευταῖος καὶ νεώτατος τῆς δωδεκάδος τῆς ὑπὸ τοῦ Ἀνθρώπου καὶ τῆς Ἐκκλησίας προβεβλημένης αἰών, τουτέστιν ἡ Σοφία, καὶ ἔπαθε πάθος ἄνευ τῆς ἐπιπλοκῆς τοῦ <συ>ζύγου τοῦ Θελητοῦ· ὃ ἐνήρξατο μὲν ἐν τοῖς περὶ τὸν Νοῦν καὶ τὴν Ἀλήθειαν, ἀπέσκηψε δὲ εἰς τοῦτον τὸν παρατραπέντα.

The last and youngest aeon of that Duodecad which had been produced from Man and Church, the aeon Sophia, rushed violently forward and experienced a passion, apart from the conjunction with her partner Desired. This passion began in fact in the region of Mind and Truth, but burst forth in this erring aeon. (I 2:2)

Although the account is cast in a narrative and mythological form, containing personified agents whose actions are psychologically interpreted, it is clear that underlying it are ideas of a very abstract metaphysical nature. Thus the "passion" represents a psychological interpretation of the separation which is inherent as an unresolved threat from the very beginning in the notion of the unity of the Father and the Son. When it is said that the passion of Sophia began in the region of Mind (that is, Monogenes) and Truth, then this shows that whoever constructed the system intended the passion of Sophia to symbolise and personify the theoretical problematic which

---

[6] The arithmological justification for this remains obscure to me. Iren. *Haer.* I 16:1 says that the Valentinians call the Duodecad "passion," and that it is derived from the Dyad $(2 + 4 + 6)$. The association of passion with the Dyad is Pythagorean doctrine (cf. John Lydus, *Mens.* I 11; further, Thomassen and Painchaud, *Traité tripartite*, 306–7). It may be relevant to note here, too, that according to Heracleon, frgs. 16 and 18 Vö, the number six is the number of matter and of passion (cf. above, 109–11); this symbolism can also be found in Marcus, cf. especially Iren. *Haer.* I 14:6. There is no obvious connection with ancient theories (Euclid, and Neopythagorean authors such as Nicomachus of Gerasa) where 6 is considered a perfect number because it equals the sum of all its factors $(1 + 2 + 3)$, and 12 an "over-perfect" number because it is less than that sum $(1 + 2 + 3 + 4 + 6)$; cf. Heath, *History*, I 74–76.

the system as a whole is designed to express. The passion of Sophia is not an individual caprice, but describes a structural necessity arising from the lack of mediation between the initial terms of the system.

On this point, a basic agreement exists between the two types of protology. In both types of system, the "passion," error, and division are the unavoidable outcome of the theoretical impossibility of mediating oneness and plurality. The difference lies mainly in the conceptuality chosen to express this problematic. Type A uses a language of birth, interiority, exteriorisation and individualisation. Type B employs a more abstract form of presentation by means of arithmological constructions. In spite of this difference, however, it is clear that the ontological problem the two protologies seek to express is fundamentally one and the same.

It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that the protology of Irenaeus' system represents a secondary elaboration of a more primitive theory. It is also reasonable to assume that the protology of *Gos. Truth* and *Tri. Trac.*, regardless of the dates of the latter as documents, stands nearer to this primitive theory than does Irenaeus' system, though we are not in a position simply to identify the protology of those documents with that theory.

HIPP. *HAER.* VI 29:2–30:5[7]

The treatise used by Hippolytus to report the doctrine of the Valentinians differs from Irenaeus' version in that it posits the Father as a simple unity without a syzygic partner: ἦν μόνος, ἠρεμῶν, ὡς λέγουσι, καὶ ἀναπαυόμενος αὐτὸς ἐν ἑαυτῷ μόνος (29:5). This type of variant in the system is recorded by Irenaeus as well,[8] and Hippolytus tells us that strong disagreement existed among the Valentinians over the question of whether the Father has a partner called Silence or not (29:3–4). The rest of the Pleroma in Hippolytus, however, is similar to that of Irenaeus:

---

[7] Bibliography: Hilgenfeld, *Ketzergeschichte*, 465–66; Casey, "Two Notes," 279–80: Foerster, *Von Valentin*, 46–48; Sagnard, *Gnose valentinienne*, 146–48; Stead, "Sophia," 77–81; Koschorke, *Hippolyt's Ketzerbekämpfung*, 14–17; Simonetti, *Testi gnostici*, 206–7, 325–29, 496n245; Strutwolf, *Gnosis als System*, 36–37.

[8] Iren. *Haer.* I 2:4: τὸν γὰρ πατέρα ποτὲ μὲν μετὰ συζυγίας τῆς σιγῆς, ποτὲ δὲ καὶ ὑπὲρ ἄρρεν καὶ ὑπὲρ θῆλυ εἶναι θέλουσι. Also cf. ibid. I 11:5.

$$\text{ὁ Πατήρ}$$
$$\Downarrow$$
$$\text{Νοῦς} \; + \; \text{Ἀλήθεια}$$
$$\Downarrow$$
$$\text{Λόγος} \; + \; \text{Ζωή}$$
$$\Downarrow$$
$$\text{Ἄνθρωπος} \; + \; \text{Ἐκκλησία}$$

δέκα αἰῶνες   δώδεκα αἰῶνες

The Decad is here produced by Mind/Truth, and the Duodecad by Logos/Life, whereas in Irenaeus the Decad issues from Logos/Life, and the Duodecad from Man/Church. Familiar with Irenaeus' account, Hippolytus is aware of this variation (30:4–5). He also offers a list of the names of the aeons of the Decad and the Duodecad (ibid.); this list, which corresponds exactly with the one found in Irenaeus, may well have been copied by Hippolytus from his heresiological predecessor, and cannot be assumed to have formed part of his own Valentinian source.

Hippolytus says that this solitary Valentinian πατήρ is none other than the Pythagorean Monad. This claim accords with the general programme of his heresiology, which is to link the various heresies with pagan philosophical schools, and Hippolytus' text provides no certain indication that the term μονάς actually figured as a designation of the Father in his Valentinian treatise.[9] In any case, the treatise did insist on the solitariness of the Father. An ungenerated μόνος, he is distinct from that which he generates, the couple Mind/Truth, "a Dyad, which became mistress, origin, and mother of all the aeons which they number within the Pleroma" (29:6). The Father remains, in his ungenerated oneness, above and outside the Pleroma, whereas the Dyad of Mind/Truth constitutes the origin of the plurality of the Pleroma. As a result, the Pleroma as a whole

---

[9] In fact, Hippolytus says that the Valentinians call the Pythagorean Monad "Father" (καλεῖται δὲ ὑπ᾽ αὐτῶν ἡ προειρημένη μονὰς Πατήρ, 29:2). Marcovich's correction of the text from μόνος to μονάς three times in his edition of *Haer.* (238:24.29, 239:42) is dubious (with the possible exception of 238:29, which may well represent a gloss made by Hippolytus himself).

numbers only twenty-eight aeons (30:3.6, 31:3). Only with the pro-
duction of the pair Christ/Holy Spirit to rescue Sophia after her
abortion is the number thirty complete (31:3).

The variations between the versions of Irenaeus and Hippolytus
are not arbitrary. The main ontological issue they try to conceptu-
alise is the same: the derivation of plurality from oneness. However,
whereas Irenaeus' treatise assumes the existence of a tension between
oneness and duality even within the first principle, making the lat-
ter unfold into a Tetrad and an Ogdoad, and then into a Decad
and a Duodecad (which finally leads to the passion of the twelfth
aeon), Hippolytus' version distinguishes oneness and duality hierar-
chically, using the concepts of ungeneratedness versus generatedness,
and of the μίμησις of a higher level by the lower. The transition
from oneness to duality is explained by means of the concept of
love:

> Since he was a productive being, he decided once to generate and
> bring forth the fairest and most perfect that he had in himself, for he
> was not fond of solitariness. Indeed, he was all love, but love is not
> love if there is nothing beloved. Thus the Father himself, being alone,
> projected and generated Mind and Truth, a Dyad . . . (29:5–6)

The notion of a content within the first principle, and that of its
love, with the implication of a relation, do not, however, lead to the
supposition of a duality within the primal oneness itself. Duality only
comes into being with the Dyad Mind/Truth, which is generated
from the Father and which is hierarchically subordinate to him. This
Dyad is a unity in so far as it is turned towards the Father in
glorification, and imitates him: "Having been projected from the
Father as one productive being from another, Mind/Truth himself
brought forth Logos/Life, in imitation of the Father" (προβληθεὶς δὲ
ὁ Νοῦς καὶ ἡ Ἀλήθεια ἀπὸ τοῦ Πατρὸς, ἀπὸ γονίμου γόνιμος, προέβαλε
καὶ αὐτὸς Λόγον καὶ Ζωήν, τὸν Πατέρα μιμούμενος, 29:7). Thereafter
Mind/Truth gave proper thanks for this to the perfect Father by
producing the Decad,[10] which is a perfect number because it repre-
sents the first notion of plurality.[11] However, Mind/Truth is also a

---

[10] Here the verbs change to plural (ηὐχαρίστησαν, προσφέρουσιν), which seems
to be more than a coincidence.
[11] τέλειος δέ ἐστι ὁ δέκα, ὅτι πρῶτος τῶν κατὰ πλῆθος γενόμενων οὗτός ἐστι
τέλειος, 29:8.

duality insofar as it is generated, and itself generates in turn; and when the process repeats itself one level further down, this duality manifests itself in the generation of an imperfect number:

> But when Logos and Life saw that Mind and Truth celebrated the Father of all by a perfect number, then Logos, along with Life, desired to glorify their own father and mother, Mind and Truth. But since Mind and Truth were begotten and did not possess the paternal perfection of being uncreated, Logos and Life could not glorify their own father, Mind, by means of a perfect number, but only with an imperfect one. For Logos and Life produced twelve aeons for Mind and Truth. (30:1–2)

Thus it appears that if the treatise of Hippolytus allocates the Decad to Mind/Truth, and the Duodecad to Logos/Life, this is motivated by its distinctive way of constructing the transition from oneness to duality and multiplicity. The primal generator is absolute oneness, the first generated is simultaneously one and two, being turned both upwards to its own unitary origin and downwards as the origin of further generation; and on the next level again duality becomes irrevocable: Logos/Life no longer have access to the perfect oneness. In Irenaeus' treatise, on the other hand, the association of the Decad with Logos/Life, and of the Duodecad with Man/Church, is explained by the fact that the derivation of plurality departs from a duality-in-oneness within the first principle itself, which expands geometrically into a Tetrad and an Ogdoad, so that the Duodecad comes to be derived from the second syzygy of the second Tetrad.

Hippolytus' treatise has no use for the notions of Tetrad and Ogdoad in its pleromatology. It strikes the reader as odd, therefore, that it still includes Man/Church as the offspring of Logos/Life, an aeonic pair that has no apparent function in the system. The explanation can hardly be other than that the treatise has adopted an already existing model of the Pleroma in which Man/Church still had a function; in other words, the pleromatology in Hippolytus represents a secondary modification of the scheme found in Irenaeus. The fact that the Pleroma contains (at first) only twenty-eight aeons points in the same direction: the idea that the Father himself is situated outside and above the Pleroma appears as a revision of the original theory, where the Father was included in the number thirty.

As in Irenaeus' treatise, an immanent relationship exists between the error of Sophia and the initial ontological problem of reconciling oneness and duality. Sophia wishes to emulate the Father by

producing offspring without a partner (ἠθέλησε μιμήσασθαι τὸν Πατέρα καὶ γεννῆσαι καθ᾽ ἑαυτὴν δίχα τοῦ συζύγου, 30:7). In keeping with the general emphasis of Hippolytus' treatise, the accent in this version is on the generative activity of Sophia as an aeon, rather than on her hubristic intellectual ambitions, as in Irenaeus. In any case, the abortive attempt of Sophia to give birth all by herself is related to her position as a member of the arithmologically imperfect group of twelve aeons, whose imperfection in turn derives from the incapacity of Logos/Life to produce a perfect number, an incapacity which is ultimately due to the fact that Logos/Life themselves are not the offspring of a single and ungenerated parent. Thus, in the same way as in the system of Irenaeus, the pleromatogony as a whole articulates a successive deferral of a problem implicit from the very beginning—that is, the reconciliation of oneness and duality—until the problem manifests itself dramatically in the individualism of the last aeon.

Iren. *Haer.* I 11:1

In *Haer.* I 11–12, Irenaeus surveys a number of different Valentinian systems. The first of these, attributed by Irenaeus to Valentinus himself, was discussed above in chapter 2, from a source-critical and historical point of view. Here, we shall take another look at the structure of the pleromatology of that system.[12] (Cf. the translation of the text given in chapter 2.) The arrangement is very similar to that of Irenaeus' main system. Apart from some details of vocabulary (the word δυάς, Ἄρρητος instead of Βυθός, and δυνάμεις instead of αἰῶνες), the main structural difference is that the second Tetrad is derived from the whole of the first Tetrad:

---

[12] Bibliography: Hilgenfeld, *Ketzergeschichte*, 307–13, 314–15; Lipsius, "Valentinus (1)," 1090; Sagnard, *Gnose valentinienne*, 229–31, 355; Quispel, "Original Doctrine"; Stead, "Sophia," 84–85; McGuire, "Valentinus."

$$\begin{array}{ccc} \text{Ἄρρητος} & + & \text{Σιγή} \\ & \Downarrow & \\ \text{Πατήρ} & + & \text{Ἀλήθεια} \end{array}$$

$$\Downarrow$$

$$\begin{array}{ccc} \text{Λόγος} & + & \text{Ζωή} \\ & + & \\ \text{Ἄνθρωπος} & + & \text{Ἐκκλησία} \end{array}$$
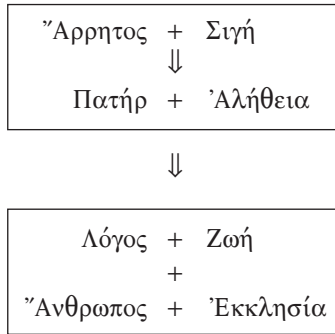
This system thus seems to have put the accent on the geometrical derivation of the Pleroma, from Dyad to Tetrad to Ogdoad, whereas Irenaeus' main system, in which Man/Church is produced by Logos/Life, represents this derivation as a succession of pairs as well.

The remark about the two Limits differs in vocabulary from the preceding account,[13] and therefore probably did not belong to it originally.

IREN. *HAER.* I 11:2[14]

> Secundus gives the following account of the primal Ogdoad: There is a right-hand and a left-hand Tetrad, light and darkness. And the power which fell away and became deficient did not come from the thirty aeons, but from their fruits.

This brief report attests to a system that emphasised the duality between the two Tetrads. As will be clear from our preceding discussion, the notion of the two Tetrads is just one of several ways in which the problematic of oneness and duality is articulated. In that sense the two Tetrads present the same relationship as that of the syzygy in general, that between the first and the second syzygy (the relationship between Silence and Monogenes), and that between the Decad and the Duodecad. Thus, locating the basic duality in the

---

[13] Βύθος instead of Ἄρρητος, the different referents for the name Πατήρ, αἰῶνες instead of δυνάμεις; cf. Markschies, *Valentinus*, 369–73.

[14] Bibliography: Hilgenfeld, *Ketzergeschichte*, 313; Sagnard, *Gnose valentinienne*, 356; Orbe, *Procesión*, 255–56.

relationship between the two Tetrads only represents one structural possibility within the system represented by Irenaeus' main source. The oppositions right/left and light/darkness in this context seem to have been chosen as formal symbols of duality in order to express this abstract metaphysical idea; they are certainly not to be interpreted in terms of a Manichaean type of dualism, since both Tetrads form part of the Pleroma.

IREN. *HAER.* I 11:3[15]

> Before all things, there is a certain inconceivable, unspeakable and unnameable Pre-beginning, which I call Oneness (μονότης). With this Oneness there coexists a power which I, again, designate Unity (ἑνότης). This Oneness and Unity, being one (ἅτε ἓν οὖσαι), sent forth, without sending forth, a beginning of everything, intelligible, ungenerated and invisible, which speech (λόγος) calls Monad. With this Monad there coexists a power which I, again, designate the One (τὸ ἕν). These powers, Oneness and Unity, Monad and the One, sent forth the rest of the aeonic emissions.

An extreme concern is displayed in this version with asserting the oneness of the first principle vis-à-vis its role as generator (though it all of course remains on the level of verbal ostentation). It may be noted, however, that the text presupposes the basic vocabulary and ideas of the system represented by Irenaeus' main source: the four terms constitute a form of the primal Tetrad. Moreover, the term Προαρχή is introduced at the beginning only to be deliberately replaced by Μονότης. In spite of all the language of oneness, a hierarchical relationship still exists between the first and the second pair of the Tetrad: the Μονότης transcends thought (προανεννόητος), whereas the

---

[15] On this text see, most recently, Förster, *Marcus Magus*, 295–312. The terminology and ideas are very similar to the account of the origins of the twenty-four letters in Marcus' treatise (Iren. *Haer.* I 15:1). Förster suggests that Irenaeus is using the same source in both places, so that the author behind the report in 11:3— described there only as "another shining teacher" (ἄλλος δέ τις <ὁ καὶ> ἐπιφανὴς διδάσκαλος)—is actually Marcus. That there is literary contact between the two texts is evident, but whereas 11:3 is a protological account of first principles, 15:1 describes only a logic of derivation, in which "Oneness," "Unity," etc. have more the character of abstract ideas than of divine beings. Moreover, the protology of Marcus' treatise (14:1) is different from 11:3 and 15:1 (cf. Förster, *Marcus Magus*, 302). A source-critical solution to this problem, in my opinion, remains to be found.

Monad is νοητή and transcends only speech. In the latter we can
thus discern a Νοῦς, an equivalent to the figure Mind/Monogenes
of Irenaeus' main source. It may be significant too, that the empha-
sis on the unity of the first pair is not reiterated with regard to the
second. Thus this Tetrad seeks to express, with other vocabulary,
exactly the same notion as the first Tetrad in Iren. *Haer.* I 1:1—the
controlled unfolding of an absolute unity into the duality and plu-
rality of number.

Iren. *Haer.* I 11:5[16]

> Others among them have called the first and original (ἀρχέγονον)
> Ogdoad by the following names: First, Pre-beginning, then Inconceivable,
> thirdly, Ineffable, and fourth, Invisible. From the first power,[17] Pre-
> beginning, was emitted, in the first and fifth place, Beginning; from
> Inconceivable, in the second and sixth place, Incomprehensible; from
> Ineffable, in the third and seventh place, Unnameable, and from
> Invisible, in the fourth and eighth place, Unbegotten: a Pleroma of
> the first Ogdoad. These powers (δυνάμεις) they assume to exist before
> Bythos and Silence, that they may appear to be more perfect than the
> perfect, and more gnostic than the Gnostics.

This source posits an Ogdoad even before Bythos/Silence, consist-
ing of two Tetrads:

$$
\begin{array}{lcl}
\text{Προαρχή} & \to & \text{Ἀρχή} \\
\text{Ἀνεννόητος} & \to & \text{Ἀκατάληπτος} \\
\text{Ἄρρητος} & \to & \text{Ἀνονόμαστος} \\
\text{Ἀόρατος} & \to & \text{Ἀγέννητος}
\end{array}
$$

The terminology shows that this variant depends upon and elabo-
rates the pleromatology of I 1:1. The Ogdoad is in fact a list of
attributes of Bythos, and the underlying idea may be to assert that
these attributes logically or ontologically precede the entity which
they qualify. It is notable that these terms are not presented in the

---

[16] Bibliography: Sagnard, *Gnose valentinienne*, 356.

[17] The feminine article here (ἐκ μὲν τῆς πρώτης Προαρχῆς), as well as with the
following members of the first Tetrad (τῆς Ἀνεννοήτου, etc.), can only refer to an
implicit δύναμις, which, as the last sentence of the quotation shows, is the generic
term for these entities used by the source.

form of syzygic pairs; this may mean that they are not to be inter-
preted as normal aeons of a Pleroma, but as entities that transcend
the duality of the syzygy.

<div align="center">IREN. <i>HAER.</i> I 12:1[18]</div>

> But the more expert followers of Ptolemy say that Bythos has two
> partners, which they also call "dispositions": Thought and Will. For
> first he thought about emitting something, then he willed it. Thus,
> when these two dispositions, or powers, Thought and Will, became
> mixed, as it were, with one another, the emission of the pair of
> Monogenes and Truth resulted. The latter went forth as types and
> images of the two dispositions of the Father, visible ones of those who
> are invisible: Mind of Will and Truth of Thought. And accordingly,
> the male is an image of Will, who was born afterwards, but the female
> of Thought, who is unborn, since Will came into being as the power
> of Thought. For Thought thought about the emission from eternity,
> but was unable to emit by herself what she thought; but when the
> power of Will was added, she emitted what she thought.

Irenaeus has just commented on the disagreement among the
Valentinians about whether Bythos has a *syzygos* or not, and intro-
duces the theory of the Ptolemaeans as still another opinion on the
same issue: those people are not even content with one, but attribute
two partners to Bythos. Irenaeus' perspective is thus determined by
his desire to demonstrate the variability and inconstancy of Valentinian
theology. It seems likely that the characterisation of Thought and
Will as "*syzygoi*" of "Bythos" has been invented by Irenaeus himself.
The terms used in the underlying source apparently were "proper-
ties" (διαθέσεις) and "Father."[19] The idea that the Father possesses
a Will in addition to his Thought is a theme in *Gos. Truth* and *Tri.
Trac.*, as was remarked above. In the type B protology, the concept
is not similarly hypostasised, though the idea of a voluntary act at
the origin of emission is not altogether absent.[20]

---

[18] Bibliography: Orbe, *Procesión*, 312–16; Sagnard, *Gnose valentinienne*, 221–22. Cf.
above, 17–19, 20–22.

[19] διάθεσις is used with a similar meaning in *Tri. Trac.* 59:2–5: ". . . the proper-
ties (ⲛⲓⲇⲓⲁⲑⲉⲥⲓⲥ) and qualities (ⲛⲓⲁⲣⲉⲧⲏ) in which the Father and Son exist."

[20] Cf. *Exc.* 7:1 and Iren. *Haer.* I 14:1 ἠθέλησε; Hipp. *Haer.* VI 29:5 ἔδοξε αὐτῷ.
Iren. *Haer.* I 1:1 has only ἐνενοήθη, assimilating the notion of will entirely, it seems,
to that of the ἔννοια.

Nonetheless, it seems that the system we get only a glimpse of here can be seen as a variant of the type B protology, since Thought and Will are followed by the familiar pair Monogenes/Truth:

$$\text{Πατήρ}$$
$$\swarrow \qquad \searrow$$
$$\text{Ἔννοια} + \text{Θέλησις}$$
$$\Downarrow$$
$$\text{Ἀλήθεια} + \text{Μονογενής}$$
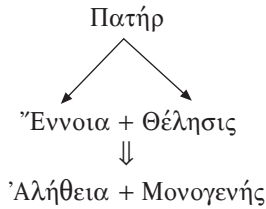
After the pair Monogenes/Truth, some form of the rest of the type B Pleroma presumably followed. The system gives the impression of being an attempt to combine two essentially independent theories, viz. that the theory of the two faculties of the Father has been grafted onto the theory of a Pleroma structured in syzygic pairs. Hence, the two faculties have been accorded gender, and are made into the parents of Monogenes and Truth. In addition, a derivational relation between the two pairs is established by the assertion that Monogenes/Truth are the visible images of the invisible Thought and Will. The imbalance which results from the fact that the order of the genders of the pairs becomes reversed through this derivation points to the arbitrariness of the combination of the two theories. The relationship of Thought and Will was undoubtedly not originally conceived as that of a syzygy, but as a theory of first beginnings: The contents of the eternal, divine Thought can be released in generation only with the help of Will as dynamic cause.[21] In such a theory, the Will is introduced as a logically secondary complement to the notion of the Thought.

IREN. *HAER.* I 12:3[22]

But those who pretend to be even wiser than these say that the first Ogdoad was not emitted gradually, one aeon by another (οὐ καθ᾽ ὑπόβασιν ἄλλον ὑπ᾽ ἄλλου αἰῶνα προβεβλῆσθαι); instead, they affirm . . . that

---

[21] Cf. *Tri. Trac.* 55:30–35, with the note in the commentary, Thomassen and Painchaud, *Traité tripartite*, 277–79.

[22] Bibliography: Sagnard, *Gnose valentinienne*, 357.

> it was together and all at once (ὁμοῦ καὶ εἰς ἅπαξ) that the emission of
> the six aeons from the Forefather and the Thought took place. And
> according to them, Man and Church were not produced from Logos
> and Life, but Logos and Life from Man and Church. This is what
> they say: That which the Forefather thought about emitting was called
> "Father";[23] moreover, since what was emitted was true, it was named
> "Truth." When he then desired to manifest (ἐπιδεῖξαι) himself, that
> was called "Man"; and when he emitted the ones he had contem-
> plated in advance (οὓς δὲ προελογίσατο), that was named "Church."
> Man spoke (ἐλάλησεν) the Word, who is the first-born Son, and Life
> followed upon the Word. And thus the first Ogdoad was completed.

This system starts with a Προπάτωρ and his Ἔννοια. The two cou-
ples Πατήρ/Ἀλήθεια and Ἄνθρωπος/Ἐκκλησία are both derived
directly from this initial pair. The derivation process is imagined
partly as the explicit articulation of the implicit contents of the pri-
mary Thought, and partly as a "manifestation" of the Forefather
himself. The system is concerned with presenting the προβολή as a
deduction made exclusively from the premises given by positing a
first principle endowed with thought. This concern with direct deriva-
tion is explicitly expressed in the formula that the emission took
place ὁμοῦ καὶ εἰς ἅπαξ. The two "when" (ὅτε) that introduce the
emission of Man and Church must consequently have a logical, not
a temporal significance. Nevertheless, the attempt at logical econ-
omy is not completely successful insofar as the last couple of the
Ogdoad is not derived directly from the Forefather/Thought, but
from Man/Church.

The system is obviously a modification of the Ogdoad found in
Iren. *Haer.* I 1:1, and represents a further reflection on it. The order
of the last two pairs has been reversed, because Man could be inter-
preted as the manifestation of the Forefather, and Church, the assem-
bly of the elect, as being contained in the primal Thought, whereas
Logos and Life, it appears, could not be similarly construed as direct
emanations from the Forefather/Thought.

---

[23] ὅπερ ἐνενοήθη προβαλεῖν ὁ προπάτωρ, the text of the passage in Epiphanius
(both the V and the M mss.). The Latin Irenaeus has *quando cogitauit aliquid emittere
Propator*, and RD reconstructs the passage as ὅτε ἐνενοήθη τι προβαλεῖν ὁ προπάτωρ,
which is possible, but not compelling.

Exc. 6–7:3[24]

The protology is here presented as an exegesis of the Prologue of John:

(6:1) The words "In the Beginning was the Logos, and the Logos was with God, and the Logos was God" are interpreted by the Valentinians as follows: (2) "Beginning" they say is the Only-begotten, whom they also call God, just as he is also explicitly said to be God in the following: "The only-begotten God, who is in the bosom of the Father, he has made him known." (3) The "Logos" who is "in the Beginning"—that is, in the Only-begotten: in Mind and Truth—is disclosed as the Christ, being Logos and Life. Therefore he too with just cause is called god, being in the god Mind. (4) "That which came into being in him"—in the Logos—"was Life"—his partner (σύζυγος). That is why the Lord also says: "I am Life."

(7:1) Now, being unknown, the Father desired to become known to the aeons. And through his own Thought, knowing himself as it were, a spirit of knowledge acting in knowledge (διὰ τῆς ἐνθυμήσεως τῆς ἑαυτοῦ, ὡς ἂν ἑαυτὸν ἐγνωκώς, πνεῦμα γνώσεως οὔσης ἐν γνώσει), he emitted the Only-begotten. Thus the one who came forth from knowledge (from the paternal Thought), that is, the Son, himself became knowledge, for "through the Son the Father has become known." (2) Moreover, the spirit of love mingled with that of knowledge, as the Father with the Son, and Thought with Truth, and it came forth from Truth, just as knowledge did from Thought.

(3) And the one who remained as "the Only-begotten Son in the bosom of the Father" expounds the Thought by means of knowledge to the aeons, having also been emitted *from* his bosom". The one who appeared here below, however, is no longer called "onlybegotten" by the apostle, but "as an only-begotten": "glory as of the only-begotten."

The underlying system, to which the Prologue is made to conform, is revealed in 7:1. We have a succession of three pairs:

$$\begin{array}{ccc} \text{Πατήρ} & + & \text{Ἐνθύμησις} \\ & \Downarrow & \\ \text{Μονογενής} & + & \text{Ἀλήθεια} \\ & \Downarrow & \\ \text{Λόγος} & + & \text{Ζωή} \end{array}$$

---

[24] Bibliography: Lipsius, "Valentinus (1)," 1090–91; Barth, *Interpretation*, 95; Casey, "Two Notes," 278–79; id., *Excerpta*, 44–45, 100–3; Sagnard, *Extraits*, 63–69; Simonetti, *Testi gnostici*, 357, 504–5.

It is the conventional scheme. The couple Man/Church is not mentioned, nor is the concept of the Ogdoad. It is reasonable to assume, however, that the lack of these elements of the system is simply due to the limitations imposed by the text to be expounded: the exegete could find no allusions to Ἄνθρωπος or Ἐκκλησία in John's Prologue.

Some distinctive features may be noted. The first principle is simply called "the Father"—the names Βυθός and Προπάτωρ are not used. The term Ἐνθύμησις instead of Ἔννοια occurs only here—Σιγή does not appear. On the other hand, the identification of Μονογενής with Νοῦς—and, more specifically, with Ἀρχή—is familiar from Iren. *Haer.* I 1:1. The main peculiarity of this text, however, concerns the mode of generation. The relationship of the Father and the Thought is not described with the metaphors of sexual union, but as the Father's thought of himself. Through the duplication implied in this self-knowledge, furthermore, the Son comes into being. This is in fact the same theory as is found in the type A protologies, in particular *Tri. Trac.*[25] Knowledge, with the unity-duality of subject and object, serves as the mechanism allowing the generation of, and the transition to, the Son.

This generative self-knowledge of the Father is also called a πνεῦμα γνώσεως. In addition, there is a πνεῦμα ἀγάπης, which plays a role in the subsequent process. The significance of the statement in 7:2 is somewhat obscure: τὸ δὲ τῆς ἀγάπης πνεῦμα κέκραται τῷ τῆς γνώσεως, ὡς πατὴρ υἱῷ καὶ ἐνθύμησις ἀληθείᾳ, ἀπ' ἀληθείας προελθὸν[26] ὡς ἀπὸ ἐνθυμήσεως ἡ γνῶσις. The structure of the emanation hierarchy as conceived in *Exc.* 6, suggests that this statement should be taken to refer to the generation of the Logos; just as the Son is generated from and still remains one with the Father through the spirit of knowledge, so the Logos seems to go forth from the Son through the spirit of love. At this second stage of emanation however, a unity needs to be assumed not simply of the Logos with his immediate generator, the Son, but the Logos must also be seen as united with all the previously posited terms, since the Son himself is one with the Father:

---

[25] Cf. *Tri. Trac.* 55:3–27, 56:23–57:8.
[26] προελθών mss; corr. Staehlin *et al.*

$$\boxed{\begin{array}{c} \underbrace{\text{Πατήρ } + \text{ Ἐνθύμησις}} \\ \text{πνεῦμα γνώσεως} \\ \Downarrow \\ \underbrace{\text{Μονογενής } + \text{ Ἀλήθεια}} \end{array}}$$

$$\Downarrow$$

$$\boxed{\text{Λογος } + \text{ Ζωή}}$$
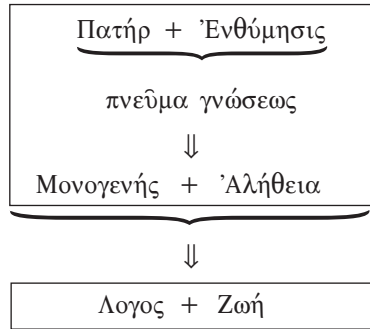
This union is conceived as the κρᾶσις of the two spirits. That which unites the Logos with the Son is itself united with the principle which unifies the Son and the Father. To complete the scheme, a κρᾶσις is also postulated to exist between Ἐνθύμησις and Ἀλήθεια. The same concern is evident here as in the other Valentinian protologies, to reconcile the inevitable plurality of generation with the continued unity of the divine source. In this text, the notion of κρᾶσις is invoked to make the equation work out, but the notion remains ambiguous, since it refers both to the union which is the source of generation, and to the union between the generated and its source.

Iren. *Haer.* I 8:5

Another application of Valentinian protology to the Prologue of John's gospel is given by Irenaeus, as an addition to his presentation of "the" Valentinian system.[27] The section is explicitly introduced by Irenaeus as a verbatim quotation (αὐταῖς λέξεσι λέγοντες οὕτως) from a Valentinian document:

> Wishing to set forth the origin of all things,[28] according to which the Father emitted everything, John, the disciple of the Lord, posited a certain Beginning as the first to have been born by God. This he also named "Son" and "Only-begotten god," and in him the Father emitted

---

[27] Bibliography: Lipsius, "Ptolemaeus," 516; Barth, *Interpretation*, 93–95; Foerster, *Von Valentin*, 45–46; Sagnard, *Gnose valentinienne*, 306–15; Simonetti, *Testi gnostici*, 281–85, 479–81.

[28] As usual, τὰ ὅλα is ambiguous, and may also be translated "the Entireties."

everything in seminal form (σπερματικῶς). By him the Logos was emit-
ted, and in him the entire substance (οὐσία) of the aeons, to which
the Logos himself subsequently gave form.

Since he was speaking about a first origin, he did well to make his
exposition from the Beginning, that is, the Son, and from the Logos.
This is what he said: *In Beginning was the Logos, and the Logos was turned
towards* (πρός) *God, and God was the Logos. He was in Beginning, turned towards
God*. First, he distinguishes the three terms God, Beginning and Logos.
Then, he combines them, so that he might also be able to show the
emission of each of them, the Son and the Logos, as well as their
unity with one another as well as with the Father. For the Beginning
is in the Father and from the Father, and the Logos is from the
Beginning.

Thus he did well to say,

In Beginning was the Logos: for he was in the Son;

And the Logos was turned towards God: for so was Beginning;

And the Logos was God: a logical inference, since what is born from
a god is a god;

He was in Beginning turned towards God: this shows the order of the
emission;

All things were made through him, and without him nothing was made: for
the Logos became the cause of the formation and the origin of all
aeons after him.

But, said he,

What came into being in him, was Life: Here, he also indicated a part-
nership (συζυγία). For "all things" (τὰ ὅλα), he said, came into being
"through" him (δι᾿ αὐτοῦ), Life, however, "in" him (ἐν αὐτῷ). Having
come into being *in* him, she has a closer relationship (οἰκειοτέρα ἐστίν)
than those who have come into being *through* him. For she is together
with him, and bears fruit through him (σύνεστι γὰρ αὐτῷ καὶ δι᾿ αὐτοῦ
καρποφορεῖ).

Then, adding,

And the Life was the light of men, he indicated, by saying "men," the
Church as well under the same name, so as to demonstrate the union
of a partnership by means of a single name. For from Logos and Life
spring Man and Church. Life he described as "the light of men"
because they are illuminated by it, that is, given form and made man-
ifest. This is what Paul too says: "For anything that becomes visible
is light" [Eph 5:13]. Since Life, then, manifested and generated Man
and Church, she is called their light.

Through these words, then, John has clearly disclosed, for one thing,
the second Tetrad, Logos and Life, Man and Church. But he also
indicated the first Tetrad. For when he deals with the subject of the
Saviour, stating that all things outside the Pleroma were given form
by him, he says that he is the fruit of the entire Pleroma. For he
called him *the light which shines in the darkness and is not comprehended by
it*, since while he gave shape to all the things which issued from the

passion, he remained unknown to them. Moreover, he calls him "Son" and "Truth" and "Life," and "Logos made flesh," whose "glory we have seen," he says, and his glory was "like that of the Only-begotten, given to him by the Father, full of grace and truth." He says in fact:[29] *And the Logos became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.* With precision he thus indicated the first Tetrad as well, mentioning the Father, Grace, the Only-begotten, and Truth. Thus John spoke about the first Ogdoad, mother of all the aeons: Father, Grace, Only-begotten, Truth, Logos, Life, Man and Church. [Thus, then, Ptolemy.][30]

This commentary on the Prologue seems to have constituted a different document from that used by Irenaeus as his main source in I 1–8:4. This is likely because there is no allusion to the specific vocabulary of that source, such as the terms Βυθός and Σιγή, and no sign of the transposition of the term πατήρ to Μονογενής-᾽Αρχή, with the resulting introduction of the designations Προπάτωρ and Προαρχή for the first principle, as we find in I 1:1.[31] The commentary therefore presupposes a somewhat more primitive version of the first Ogdoad than that of Irenaeus' main system:

$$
\begin{array}{ccc}
\text{Πατήρ} & + & \text{Χάρις} \\
& \Downarrow & \\
\text{Μονογενής} & + & \text{᾽Αλήθεια} \\
& \Downarrow & \\
\text{Λόγος} & + & \text{Ζωή} \\
& \Downarrow & \\
\text{῎Ανθρωπος} & + & \text{᾽Εκκλησία}
\end{array}
$$

---

[29] Sagnard, *Gnose valentinienne*, 311n1, assumes that it is Irenaeus himself who at this point inserts the exact words of the Gospel. RD I/1, 217, reject this suggestion, with the plausible argument that "on peut penser que, si Irénée avait voulu insérer une réflexion personnelle au milieu du texte de Ptolémée, il se serait exprimé de façon à écarter toute équivoque." The quotation does appear, however, as an unnecessary repetition, and may be due to a scribal gloss, in the early stages of transmission (the text is found in the Latin version as well).

[30] The lat words only occur in the Latin version (*et Ptolomaeus quidem ita*). Whether they were originally part of Irenaeus' text, and omitted, for some reason, by Epiphanius, or they were inserted into the Latin translation, at one point or another in its transmission, can only be a matter for speculation. In either case, the accuracy of the attribution would remain uncertain.

[31] *Pace* Sagnard, *Gnose valentinienne*, 307: "il y a accord complet entre les deux documents" (similarly ibid. 228).

The name Χάρις for the *syzygos* of the Father is well attested else-where;[32] the author must tacitly assume the equivalence Χάρις = Ἔννοια.

Together with *Exc.* 6–7:3, this text testifies to a Valentinian tra-dition of exegesis of John's Prologue as an illustration of the first Ogdoad.[33] Unlike the document behind *Exc.*, however, the present exegete also detected an allusion to the last pair of the Ogdoad in the Prologue, in the phrase καὶ ἡ ζωὴ ἦν τὸ φῶς τῶν ἀνθρώπων. He states that the words οἱ ἄνθρωποι are to be understood as referring to the syzygy Man/Church, and its generation from Logos/Life. Further, he explains that, "Life he described as 'the light of men' because they are illuminated by it, that is, given form and made manifest" (φῶς δὲ εἶπεν τῶν ἀνθρώπων τὴν ζωὴν διὰ τὸ πεφωτίσθαι αὐτοὺς ὑπ᾽ αὐτῆς, ὃ δή ἐστι μεμορφῶσθαι καὶ πεφανερῶσθαι). This exegesis needs to be understood as an instance of the interaction of soteriological and protological theories. The terms illumination, for-mation, and manifestation of Man/Church, which are here made to refer to a protological act of generation, have their original significance in a soteriological context. That context is the manifestation of the Saviour to the spiritual seed in the world, the seed which is the earthly incarnation of the offspring of Sophia, generated in response to her earlier vision of the Saviour. They are the collective repre-sentation of the Saviour as archetypal Man, and constitute the spir-itual church. As was shown in the first part of this study, the notion of the "illumination, formation, and manifestation" of the spiritual seed/man/church on earth is an important element in the account of the Saviour's redemptive mission in the world. It is that notion which is here transposed into a feature of protological theory. From the point of view of systematic Valentinian theology, however, it may also be said that this is an instance of the necessary correspondence between protology and soteriology: everything that takes place as a

---

[32] Iren. *Haer.* I 1:1, Epiph. *Pan.* XXXI 5:4 (see below), *Tri. Trac.* 57:6.

[33] Heracleon too, of course, comments on the Prologue in fragments 1 and 2 Vö. But there are no allusions to the first Ogdoad in the fragments of his exege-sis preserved by Origen. This absence is remarkable, especially since we might rea-sonably expect Origen to have commented on such an exegesis. This leads us to suspect that Heracleon did not adopt the Ogdoad-model of the Pleroma charac-teristic of the second main type of the protology.

soteriological event also has to be stated as a metaphysical principle at the protological level. Moreover, since the Saviour is the fruit of, and thus manifests the entire Pleroma, he also has to contain the principles of Man and Church, which are to be further reflected in the nature of the spiritual seed, whose archetypal model and father he is.

The use of John's Prologue as a proof-text for the first Ogdoad also raises the question of what role the Prologue may have played in the original construction of the Ogdoad itself. This is hardly a question to be answered in terms of a clear-cut either-or alternative. Presumably, we have to do (as in all hermeneutics) with a situation of a creative interaction of exegesis and eisegesis. The notions of Father, Thought and Only-begotten Son must be assumed to form basic components of the system independently of the text in John. This must also be the case with the concepts of Tetrad and Ogdoad as such. On the other hand, the equation of Monogenes with Ἀρχή seems best to be explained as a result of the application of John's Prologue to the system—the term Ἀρχή is probably derived from the text of the Prologue. Together with that equation, John's idea of the λόγος "in" the ἀρχή would also impose itself. Naturally, the term Logos as a name for the Saviour can be assumed to have been used generally by the Valentinians (as by other Christians), without direct dependence on John's text. Moreover, the notion that the Saviour–Logos contained in himself the fullness of divinity (that is, the Pleroma) was also a general presupposition of the system, so that by the logic of the system itself the divine Pleroma had to feature, among other things, a Logos. However, the specific postulate of a syzygy Logos/Life coming forth from the Son-Beginning can hardly be explained in any other way than as having been derived from the creative application of the text of the Prologue in the original construction of the Ogdoad.

The syzygy Man/Church, on the other hand, has a different origin. It too, as we have seen, had to be contained in the Pleroma manifested by the Saviour, but that idea obviously has as its source the ecclesiology and the soteriology of Paul. It is with some strain that the Valentinian exegete is able to read it into the text of the Prologue, though it may be acknowledged that he does manage in this way to effect a harmonious combination of Pauline and Johannine themes.

Finally, it may also be asked whether the alternative name Χάρις for the Thought, and the fixed name of Ἀλήθεια for the *syzygos* of Μονογενής are derived from John 1:14 (and 1:17). These questions can hardly be answered conclusively. Although the present exegete does indeed make this derivation, there is nothing that suggests, as far as I can see, that the original constructor of the Valentinian Ogdoad picked them from reading this particular passage in the Prologue.

EPIPH. *Pan.* XXXI 5–6

In addition to copying Irenaeus' report in his account of the Valentinians, Epiphanius also offers a unique verbatim extract[34] from one of their "books."[35] The piece presents several difficulties of interpretation, intertwined with problems of redaction history, difficulties that have not been sufficiently attended to in previous scholarship and therefore need to be discussed here in detail.

The epistolary introduction

The document introduces itself with a salutation formula as a *letter*:

παρὰ φρονιμοῖς, παρὰ δὲ ψυχικοῖς, παρὰ δε σαρκικοῖς, παρὰ δὲ κοσμικοῖς, παρὰ δὲ τῷ μεγέθει <. . .> νοῦς ἀκατάργητος τοῖς ἀκαταργήτοις χαίρειν.	(XXXI 5:1) In the presence of the wise, the psychics, the carnal, the worldly, the Greatness <. . .> incorruptible mind greets the incorruptible ones.

The epistolary form is of course to be understood as a metaphor, connoting the common idea of *gnosis* as a home-calling message sent to relatives in distant lands.[36] The next sentence appears to presuppose the introductory words:

---

[34] πρὸς ἔπος καὶ κατὰ λέξιν, XXXI 4:11.

[35] Bibliography: Dibelius, "Studien," 329–40; Casey, "Note"; Simonetti, *Testi gnostici*, 217–23, 455–58.

[36] Cf. Jonas, *The Gnostic Religion*, 74–75, 119–20; Thomassen, "Revelation as Book," 38–39. The precise significance of παρά is difficult to pin down. Does the preposition mean that the sender of the message is making his proclamation in the presence of, i.e. before, the categories of beings listed, or does it mean that the receivers of the message themselves live in the presence of, i.e., amongst, those various categories? In my judgement the second interpretation accords best with the Gnostic metaphor of the letter, but the question can hardly be settled conclusively.

ἀνονομάστων ἐγὼ καὶ ἀρρήτων καὶ
ὑπερουρανίων μνείαν ποιοῦμαι μυστη-
ρίων πρὸς ὑμᾶς, οὔτε ἀρχαῖς οὔτε
ἐχουσίαις οὔτε ὑποταγαῖς οὔτε πάσῃ
συγχύσει περινοηθῆναι δυναμένων,
μόνῃ δὲ τῇ τοῦ ἀτρέπτου ἐννοίᾳ πεφαν-
ερωμένων.

(5:2) I remind you of unnameable,
ineffable and supercelestial mysteries
which cannot be comprehended by
principalities or authorities or those
subordinate, or any combination (of
them), but are revealed only to the
thought of the Immutable one.[37]

The speaking ἐγώ and the ὑμεῖς addressed here must be understood
as referring back respectively to the νοῦς ἀκατάργητος and the
ἀκαταργήτοι of the previous sentence. In addition, the notion of μνεία
should be interpreted here in the context of the metaphor of the
letter as vehicle of the Gnostic call. The two sentences thus belong
together as complementary parts of the epistolary introduction.

It is to be noted, however, that no formal features in the text that
follows reflect its having been introduced as a letter. Moreover, the
vocabulary used in the epistolary introduction does not recur later,
with the exception of μέγεθος, which is a very common term. It is
likely, therefore, that the epistolary introduction is a later addition
to the text, which in its more primitive form constituted what may
be described as a tractate.

First principles: A redacted text

After the epistolary introduction, the body of the text begins as
follows:

ὅτε γὰρ <ἐπ᾽> ἀρχῆς ὁ αὐτοπάτωρ
αὐτὸς ἐν ἑαυτῷ περιεῖχε τὰ πάντα, ὄντα
ἐν ἑαυτῷ ἐν ἀγνωσίᾳ, ὃν καλοῦσί τινες
αἰῶνα ἀγήρατον, ἀεὶ νεάζοντα,
ἀρρενόθηλυν, ὃς πάντοτε περιέχει τὰ
πάντα καὶ οὐκ ἐνπεριέχεται, τότε ἡ ἐν
αὐτῷ ἔννοια ἠθέλησεν—ἐκείνη, ἥν
τινες ἔννοιαν ἔφασαν, ἕτεροι χάριν·
οἰκείως, διὰ τὸ ἐπικεχορηγηκέναι αὐτὴν

(5:3) For when in the beginning the
Self-father contained in himself the
Entireties, which were in him in a
state of ignorance—he whom some
call an unageing, eternally young and
male-female aeon, who contains
within him the Entireties and is him-
self not contained—(4) then the
Thought within him—she whom

---

[37] ὁ ἄτρεπτος probably designates the highest deity himself, and is not a refer-
ence to the spiritual person receiving the revelation, though this distinction becomes
less absolute if we recognise that the term "immutable" is selected here in order
to highlight an aspect of the divine which the spiritual person will participate in.
According to Williams, *Immovable Race*, 150, with n13, 154, the term is particularly
common in texts influenced by Platonism.

θησαυρίσματα τοῦ μεγέθους τοῖς ἐκ τοῦ μεγέθους, οἱ δὲ ἀληθεύσαντες σιγὴν προσηγόρευσαν, ὅτι δι᾽ ἐνθυμήσεως χωρὶς λόγου τὰ ἅπαντα τὸ μέγεθος ἐτελείωσεν—ὡς οὖν προεῖπον, ἡ ἄφθαρτος αἰώνια βουληθεῖσα δεσμὰ ῥῆξαι ἐθήλυνε τὸ μέγεθος ἐπ᾽ ὀρέξει ἀναπαύσεως αὐτοῦ. καὶ αὕτη αὐτῷ μιγεῖσα ἀνέδειξε τὸν πατέρα τῆς ἀληθείας, ὃν οἰκείως οἱ τέλειοι ἄνθρωπον ὠνόμασαν, ὅτι ἦν ἀντίτυπος τοῦ προόντος ἀγεννήτου.

some have called Thought, others Grace (and rightly so, because she has provided treasures from the Greatness to the ones who are issued from the Greatness), but whom those who spoke the truth have named Silence, because the Greatness completed everything by means of thinking and without the use of words—(5) when, as I was saying, the incorruptible one[38] decided to break the aeonic chains, she softened the Greatness into longing for his rest. And she was united with him and manifested the Father of truth, whom the perfect ones rightly name Man, because he was an antitype of the pre-existent unbegotten one.

The text gives the impression of having been glossed by a later redactor. At the base seems to lie the following scheme:

$$\text{Αὐτοπάτωρ} + \text{Ἔννοια}$$
$$\Downarrow$$
$$\text{Πατὴρ τῆς ἀληθείας}$$

Arriving at the name Ἔννοια, however, the redactor intervenes, and adds that she is also called Χάρις and Σιγή. This series of different names for the Thought is familiar from other sources.[39] However, the insistence that Silence is the *true* name reveals the hand of a redactor who is not only complementing, but is correcting his source as well, with reference to the higher level of insight possessed by "those who spoke the truth." The same type of gloss seems to occur with the name of the "Father of truth," which "the perfect" designate "Man."

---

[38] Holl's addition of ⟨ἔννοια⟩ to ἄφθαρτος (following a suggestion by O. Dibelius, who substituted ⟨ἔννοια⟩ for ἄφθαρτος) is unnecessary and unlikely, since it has just been said that σιγή, not ἔννοια, is the proper name. As we shall see, the author is adapting an older source, and is censoring its terminology.

[39] See above, 216, with n32.

A second scheme is thus superimposed upon the first:

$$(\text{τὸ Μέγεθος}) + \text{Σιγή}$$
$$\Downarrow$$
$$\text{Ἄνθρωπος}$$

The designation τὸ Μέγεθος is here probably not to be regarded as the redactor's preferred name for the first principle, but rather as a neutral paraphrase of it.

The expression "Father of truth" used in the basic document is familiar from other Valentinian sources.[40] In those sources, however, the expression always refers to the first Father himself. Consequently, the basic document here has demoted this traditional term to second place in the hierarchy, and added the "Self-father" as a further level of transcendence. This process of transcendentalisation is quite similar, it should be noted, to the one found in Iren. *Haer.* I 1:1 and I 11:1, for example, where the name "Father" is transferred to the Son.

A striking feature of the basic document is the notion that the Entireties were initially contained within the Self-father. This notion is characteristic of the type A protology,[41] and occurs among the systems belonging to type B only here and in *Val. Exp.* (see below). It plays no role, however, in the further unfolding of the present system.

The substitution suggested by the redactor of the term "Man" for that of "Father of truth" is somewhat odd. An Ἄνθρωπος at the second level is unusual. The notion can be compared to what we find in *Tri. Trac.*, where the Son, as encompassing the Pleroma, is called "the first man of the Father" (66:10–12). However, the term "Man" does not occur in this position in the systems belonging to the type B protology,[42] with which Epiphanius' tractate otherwise has the most in common.

---

[40] *Gos. Truth* 16:33; Heracleon frg. 20 Vö. = Orig. *In Jo.* XIII 16:95–97; Iren. *Haer.* I 15:2, 20:2.3.

[41] See above, 193–94.

[42] It may be noted that according to Iren. *Haer.* I 12:4 certain Valentinians attached the name "Man" to the first Father himself, the Προπάτωρ/Προαρχή.

The generation of the Ogdoad

The tractate continues:

μετὰ τοῦτο δὲ ἡ σιγή, φυσικὴν ἑνότητα φωτὸς προενεγκαμένη σὺν τῷ ἀνθρώπῳ (ἦν δὲ αὐτῶν συνέλευσις τὸ θέλειν), ἀναδείκνυσι τὴν ἀλήθειαν. ἀλήθεια δὲ ὑπὸ τῶν τελείων οἰκείως ὠνομάσθη, ὅτι ἀληθῶς ὁμοία ἦν τῇ ἑαυτῆς μητρὶ σιγῇ, τῆς σιγῆς τοῦτο βουληθείσης, ἀπομερισμὸν φώτων τοῦ τε ἄρρενος καὶ τῆς θηλείας ἴσον εἶναι, ὅπως δι᾽ ἑαυτῶν καὶ ἡ ἐν αὐτοῖς <. . .> φανερωθῇ τοῖς ἐξ αὐτῶν εἰς αἰσθητικὰ φῶτα μερισθεῖσι.

(5:6) Then Silence, having brought about a natural light-union together with Man (their coming together was an act of will), manifests Truth. Truth is the name appropriately given by the perfect, since she was truly like her mother Silence. What Silence wished was a division of lights into a male and a female part that should be equal, so that through them the <?unity> in them might also be manifest to those divided off from them to be perceptible lights.

In this passage the vocabulary of the redactor dominates: Σιγή, Ἄνθρωπος. An unusual feature is the idea that Truth is generated through a union of Silence with her own son, rather than the second pair being produced as a whole by the first. The reason for this anomaly can probably be inferred from the next passage:

μετὰ τοῦτο ἡ ἀλήθεια μητρικὴν προενεγκαμένη προυνικίαν ἐθήλυνε τὸν πατέρα ἑαυτῆς εἰς ἑαυτὴν καὶ συνῄεσαν ἑαυτοῖς, ἀφθάρτῳ μίξει καὶ ἀγηράτῳ συγκράσει καὶ ἀναδεικνύ<ου>σι τετράδα πνευματικὴν ἀρρενόθελυν, ἀντίτυπον τῆς προούσης τετράδος (ἥτις ἦν βυθὸς σιγὴ πατὴρ ἀλήθεια). αὕτη δὲ ἡ ἐκ τοῦ πατρὸς καὶ τῆς ἀληθείας τετράς· ἄνθρωπος ἐκκλησία λόγος ζωή.

(5:7) Then Truth, declaring her desire to be a mother, softened her own father towards her and they joined with one another in an incorruptible union and an unageing fusion, and <they> manifested a spiritual male-female Tetrad, a copy of the Tetrad existing beforehand (which was the Depths, Silence, Father, Truth). And this is the Tetrad from Father and Truth: Man, Church, Logos, Life.

The discrepancy of vocabulary here is evident. In this passage, Truth is no longer said to be joined with Man, but with her own father. The expression τὸν πατέρα ἑαυτῆς appears to allude to the previously mentioned name ὁ πατὴρ τῆς ἀληθείας. The name "Father of truth," then, seems to be what explains the extraordinary genealogy here. Undoubtedly, this term did not originally refer to a genealogical relationship, but was a name characterising the primal Father himself. Once the term was placed at the second level in an ogdoadic system of the Pleroma, however, where the notion that Truth was the female partner at this level was a standard feature, the "Father

of truth" could be conceived as being both the father and the male partner of Truth at one and the same time. That his own mother Silence acted as his partner in producing Truth was presumably introduced at the same time to account for his fatherhood.

In addition, however, this coalescence of the roles of parent and partner, which exists both between Silence and the Father and between the Father and Truth, serves to underline the unity of the first Tetrad: syzygic unity obtains vertically as well as horizontally between the terms. These incestuous relationships therefore also express the systematic concern about minimising the sense of separation in the process leading from unity to plurality.

It might be said that the generation process described in this tractate has more the character of a geometrical unfolding than of an arithmetic succession; the first Tetrad is produced less by the addition of a second pair to the first than by the multiplication of the first pair with itself.[43] This characteristic also applies to the second Tetrad, which is derived as a group from the Father and Truth, as a copy of the first Tetrad:

$$
\begin{array}{ccc}
\text{Βυθός} & + & \text{Σιγή} \\
& \Downarrow & \\
\text{Πατήρ} & + & \text{Ἀλήθεια} \\
& \Downarrow & \\
\hline
\text{Ἄνθρωπος} & + & \text{Ἐκκλησία} \\
& + & \\
\text{Λόγος} & + & \text{Ζωή} \\
\hline
\end{array}
$$
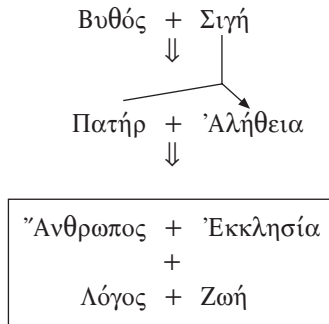
Compared with the other known models of the Ogdoad, this has most in common with that of Iren. *Haer.* I 11:1, where the second Tetrad is produced as a whole from the first. There too, incidentally, the term "Father" is used for the male member of the second pair.

The names of the members of the Ogdoad that are listed at the end of the paragraph present further problems. Above, it was concluded that in 5:3–6 a redactor is at work, who glosses Ἔννοια with

---

[43] Cf. above, 198, 204–5.

Σιγή, and Πατήρ with Ἄνθρωπος. The Ogdoad listed in 5:7, how-
ever, has Πατήρ in the second pair of the first Tetrad, and puts
Ἄνθρωπος in the second Tetrad, as is usual. This model of the
Ogdoad thus contradicts the notions that were identified above as
proper to the redactor. On the other hand, it also disagrees with
the vocabulary of the hypothetical basic document, since it employs
the terms Βυθός and Σιγή, as against Ἀυτοπάτωρ and Ἔννοια in 5:3.
The conclusion hardly seems avoidable that this list of the Ogdoad
represents a third source. In fact, the list constitutes a piece of stan-
dard Valentinian lore, which may have been introduced at one of
several stages in the history of the text. A puzzling detail, moreover,
is the fact that the pair Man/Church comes before that of Logos/Life.
No clear explanation can be found for this deviation from the nor-
mal sequence, though it might be observed that, since the second
Tetrad is here conceived as a unity, its internal structure is less
significant.

The Duodecad and the Decad

Next follow the generations of the Duodecad and the Decad:

τότε τοῦ πάντα περιέχοντος βυθοῦ
θελήματι ὁ ἄνθρωπος καὶ ἡ ἐκκλησία
πατρίκων μνησθέντες λόγων συνήεσαν
ἑαυτοῖς καὶ ἀναδεικνυουσι δωδεκάδα
προυνίκων ἀρρενοθηλύν<των>. οἱ οὖν
ἄρρενές εἰσι· παράκλητος πατρικὸς
μητρικὸς ἀείνους θελητός, ὅ ἐστι φῶς,
ἐκκλησιαστικός, αἱ δὲ θήλειαι· πίστις
ἐλπὶς ἀγάπη σύνεσις μακαρία σοφία.

μετέπειτα δὲ λόγος καὶ ζωή, καὶ
αὐτοὶ τὸ τῆς αἰνέσεως μεταπλάσαντες
δώρημα, ἑαυτοῖς ἐκοινώνησαν (ἦν δὲ
ἡ κοινωνία αὐτῶν τὸ θέλημα) καὶ
συνελθόντες ἀνεδείξαντο δεκάδα
προυνίκων καὶ αὐτῶν ἀρρενοθηλύντων.
οἱ μὲν ἄρρενές εἰσι· βύθιος ἀγήρατος
αὐτοφυὴς μονογενὴς ἀκίνητος (οὗτοι
τὴν προσωνυμίαν <εἰς> τὴν δόξαν τοῦ

(5:8) Then, by the will of the Depths,
who embraces everything, Man and
Church, paying heed to instructions
coming from their parents, joined
with one another and manifested a
Duodecad of male-female procreative
(powers). The males are: Paraclete,
Paternal, Maternal, Ever-Mind,
Willed, also called Light, and Eccle-
siastical. The females are Faith, Hope,
Love, Intelligence, Beatitude, and
Wisdom.

(9) Thereafter Logos and Life also
joined together to form a tribute of
praise[44] (their joining was an act of
will), and coming together they pro-
duced a Decad of procreative (pow-
ers), who were male-female as well.

---

[44] Cf. *Tri. Trac.* 69:1. There is no reason to emend αἰνέσεως to ἑνώσεως, as Holl
proposes.

πάντα περιέχοντος <περι>εποιήσαντο), αἱ δὲ θηλείαι· μῖξις ἕνωσις σύγκρασις ἑνότης ἡδονή, καὶ αὗται τὴν προσωνυμίαν εἰς δόξαν τῆς σιγῆς περιποιήσαντο.

The males are Deep, Unageing, Self-originate, Only-begotten, and Unmoved. They have acquired their names <for> the glory of the one who contains everything. The females are Union, Unity, Fusion, Oneness, Pleasure, and they have acquired their names for the glory of Silence.

This gives us the following lists:

Ἄνθρωπος + Ἐκκλησία ⇓
Παράκλητος + Πίστις
Πατρικός + Ἐλπίς
Μητρικός + Ἀγαπή
Ἀείνους + Σύνεσις
Θελητός = Φῶς + Μακαρία
Ἐκκλησιαστικός + Σοφία

Λόγος + Ζωή ⇓
Βύθιος + Μῖξις
Ἀγήρατος + Ἕνωσις
Αὐτοφυής + Σύγκρασις
Μονογενής + Ἑνότης
Ἀκίνητος + Ἡδονή

Although the order of the two pairs of the second Tetrad is turned around in comparison with the other known thirty aeons systems, the Decad is still derived from Logos/Life and the Duodecad from Man/Church. The author retains this order, in spite of the internal logic of the system, which obviously requires the Duodecad, with Sophia at the end, to come after the Decad.[45] Strange things are going on at the end of each of the two lists as well. If comparison is made with the lists in Irenaeus and Hippolytus, it will be seen that some of the aeons have swapped partners, and some have changed positions. Especially intriguing is the fact that Σοφία is here joined with Ἐκκλησιαστικός, and not with Θελητός. In her stead, Μακαρία is transferred from Μονογενής in the Decad to be the partner of Θελητός, and a new consort, Ἑνότης, is given to Μονογενής. The rationale behind this reorganisation of the Pleroma is quite obscure. It is not made easier to understand by the fact that Θελητός alone, of all the aeons, is given a second name, Φῶς, something which seems to accord a special significance to this aeon. It is

[45] Cf. above, 199.

reasonable to assume that this special significance has to do with the
function of this aeon vis-à-vis Sophia: the "light" probably refers to
the male spirituality and perfection which Sophia is deprived of
through her separation from the Pleroma.[46] Since there is no account
of the passion and separation of Sophia in this tractate, however, it
would seem that the function of the account of the Pleroma as lead-
ing up to that event has here receded into the background, so that
the lists remain here as more or less empty esoteric lore.

τετελειωμένης οὖν τῆς κατὰ πατέρα
ἀληθείας τριακάδος, ἣν οἱ ἐπίγειοι μὴ
ἐπιστάμενοι ἀριθμοῦσι καὶ ὁπόταν
ἔλθωσιν ἐπ᾽ αὐτήν, μηκέτι ἀριθμὸν
εὑρίσκοντες ἀνακυκλοῦσι, πάλιν
ἀριθμοῦντες αὐτήν—ἔστι δὲ βυθὸς σιγὴ
πατὴρ ἀλήθεια ἄνθρωπος ἐκκλησία
λόγος ζωή παράκλητος πατρικὸς
μητρικὸς ἀείνους θελητός ἐκκλησι-
αστικός πίστις ἐλπὶς ἀγάπη σύνεσις
μακαρία σοφία βύθιος ἀγήρατος
αὐτοφυὴς μονογενὴς ἀκίνητος μῖξις
ἕνωσις σύγκρασις ἑνότης ἡδονή—τότε
ὁ τὰ πάντα περιέχων συνέσει τῇ
ἀνυπερβλήτῳ δογματίσας τε κληθῆναι
ἑτέραν ὀγδοάδα ἀντὶ τῆς προούσης
αὐθεντικῆς ὀγδοάδος, ἥτις ἐν τῷ ἀριθμῷ
τῆς τριακάδος μείνῃ (οὐ γὰρ ἦν
μεγέθους φρόνημα εἰς ἀριθμὸν πίπτειν),
ἀντέστησεν ἀντὶ τῶν ἀρρένων τοὺς
ἄρρενας· μόνον τρίτον πέμπτον ἕβδομον
καὶ τὰς θηλείας· δυάδα τετράδα ἑξάδα
ὀγδοάδα.

αὕτη οὖν ἡ ὀγδοάς ἡ ἀντικληθεῖσα
ἀντὶ τῆς προούσης ὀγδοάδος (βυθοῦ
πατρὸς ἀνθρώπου λόγου καὶ σιγῆς
ἀληθείας ἐκκλησίας ζωῆς), ἠνώθη τοῖς
φωσὶ καὶ ἐγένετο τριακὰς ἀπηρτισμένη.

(6:1) Thus was completed the Tria-
contad in accordance with the Father
of Truth. This is the number which
is counted by earthly people without
understanding. And when they reach
it they find no further number, but
go back and count up to it again. It
is: the Depths, Silence, Father, Truth,
Man, Church, Logos, Life, Paraclete,
Paternal, Maternal, Ever-Mind, Willed,
Ecclesiastical, Faith, Hope, Love, In-
telligence, Beatitude, Wisdom, Deep,
Unageing, Self-originate, Only-begotten,
and Unmoved, Union, Unity, Fusion,
Oneness, Pleasure. (2) But then the
one who embraces all things in unsur-
passable intelligence decided to call
another Ogdoad as a counterpart of
the previously existing original Og-
doad, which was to remain in the
number thirty—for it was not the
intention of the Greatness to be deter-
mined in a number—and he placed
as counterparts of the males the fol-
lowing males: First, Third, Fifth, and
Seventh. And the females: Dyad, Te-
trad, Hexad, and Ogdoad.

(3) This Ogdoad, then, named as
a counterpart of the previously exist-
ing Ogdoad (the Depths, Father,
Man, Logos, and Silence, Truth,
Church, and Life), was united with
the lights and became a full number
thirty.

---

[46] Cf. Iren. *Haer.* I 4:1 ἔξω γὰρ φωτὸς ἐγένετο καὶ πληρώματος.

Here the redactor is critically revising the previous standard model of the Valentinian Pleroma. Quite remarkably, he brands those other Valentinians as ἐπίγειοι, which in a Valentinian context is the same as saying that they are not truly spiritual people—they do not belong to the spiritual seed. We have to do, then, with a Valentinian schismatic. In opposition to traditional Valentinianism he identifies himself as one of the τέλειοι (5:5.6), who know the truth (οἱ ἀληθεύσαντες, 5:4). This position of superior knowledge is mythologically expressed by adding a second Pleroma to the first, consisting of a new Ogdoad and a new group of thirty. It is to be noted that the Μέγεθος is here conceived as standing somehow above the Pleroma, and thus is distinct from the Βυθός of the first Ogdoad. Apparently he is now thought of as unfolding himself first into one Ogdoad, and then into a second.

A self-contained protology

Then the text reverts to the first Ogdoad:

καὶ <ἦν> ἡ προοῦσα ὀγδοὰς ἀνα-παυομένη. ὁ δὲ βυθὸς ἐξῆλθεν μεγέθους στηρίγματι ἑνωθῆναι τῇ τριακάδι· συνήει γὰρ τῇ ἀληθείᾳ καὶ ὁ πατὴρ τῆς ἀληθείας συνήρχετο τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ καὶ ὁ μητρικὸς εἶχε τὴν ζωὴν καὶ ὁ παράκλητος τὴν ἑνάδα καὶ ἡ ἑνὰς ἡνοῦτο τῷ πατρὶ τῆς ἀληθείας καὶ ὁ πατὴρ τῆς ἀληθείας ἦν μετὰ τῆς σιγῆς, ὁ λόγος δὲ ὁ πνευματικὸς ἐκοινώνει <. . .> πνευματικῇ μίξει καὶ ἀφθάρτῳ συγκράσει, ποιοῦντος τὸ τέλος τοῦ αὐτοπάτορος ἀδιχοτόμητον τὴν ἑαυτοῦ ἀνάπαυσιν.

(6:4) And the previously existing Ogdoad had rested. The Depths, however, went forth, strengthened by Greatness, to unite with the thirty. He joined with Truth, and the Father of Truth came together with Church, and Maternal had Life, Paraclete Henad, and Henad united with the Father of Truth, and the Father of Truth was with Silence. The spiritual Logos joined together with <. . .> in a spiritual union and incorruptible fusion, achieving the goal of the Self-father, his undivided repose.

The transmitted text is garbled, and poses more than one problem: Who are the Henad and "the spiritual Logos"? Do we not expect Ἄνθρωπος to appear where Μητρικός is mentioned?[47] Although the text cannot be safely reconstructed in detail,[48] it seems clear that it

---

[47] Cf. Dibelius, "Studien," 331–32n4.
[48] A bold, but thoughtful attempt at reconstruction was made by Dibelius, *loc. cit.*

speaks about a general and mutual union of all the members of the first Thirty. This union, moreover, produces the following outcome:

ἡ οὖν τριακὰς ἀπαρτίσασα βύθια μυστήρια, τελειώσασα γάμον ἐν ἀφθάρτοις ἀνέδειξε φῶτα ἄφθαρτα, ἅτινα ἑνότητος ὠνομάσθησαν τέκνα καὶ ἀχαρακτήριστα ἦσαν, τοῦ νοϊκοῦ μὴ παρακειμένου, ἐκτὸς φρονήσεως ἀναπαυόμενα χωρὶς ἐννοίας. περὶ γὰρ οὗ τις πράσσει, ἐὰν μὴ νοῇ καθωλικῶς, οὐ πράσσει.

(6:5) Having thus completed deep mysteries, and consummated marriage among the incorruptible ones, the Thirty manifested incorruptible lights that were called children of unity and had no distinctive features since they were not provided with intellectuality, staying outside understanding, without thought. For whatever one does, unless one understands it completely, one does not do it.

At this point, the tractate diverges considerably from other known Valentinian systems. The "children of unity"[49] seem to correspond to what other documents describe as the spiritual seed, the ultimate offspring of Sophia that was generated as images of a unitary Pleroma. The emphasis on the imperfection of these children, suggesting their need for subsequent redemption, also corresponds to a characteristic feature of the spiritual seed, as we have seen above.[50] On the other hand, there is no mention here of Sophia, or any trace of the story of her passion and separation from the Pleroma. This raises the question of the general structural relationship between the present account and those systems that explicitly include the story of Sophia. Does this account of the generation of the children of unity replace the story of the generation of the spiritual seed by Sophia? Or are we still at the intra-pleromatic stage, so that the story of Sophia still remains to be told?

As a matter of fact, the tractate does not offer a version of the Sophia story, and there is no indication in Epiphanius' report that

---

[49] Dibelius ("Studien," 331–32n4 e)) proposed to correct the text to μεσότητος . . . τέκνα, and this was adopted by Holl in his edition. But this emendation is quite unnecessary, as has been pointed out both by Casey ("Note," 37n1) and Simonetti (*Testi gnostici*, 457–58n26: "Sono chiamati figli dell'unità in riferimento alla loro origine pleromatica"). Moreover, a term such as "children of the Middle" is unattested in Valentinianism. In fact, the Middle (whether identified with the realm of the Demiurge, as Dibelius does, or with the region of Sophia) does not produce τέκνα; rather, that term is generally reserved for beings that have their origin in the Pleroma, even if they are actually brought forth by Sophia: cf. *Exc.* 41.

[50] See above, 53–57, 172–77.

it ever did include, or that it even presupposed, such a story.[51] We would therefore not be justified in extrapolating the existence of a Sophia story in the present system. Rather it must be assumed that the present text contains all that its author wished to express on the matter of the generation of the children of unity.

The purpose of the description of these "children," and of their imperfection, is not, in fact, to lay the foundation for an account of their subsequent redemption by the Saviour. This can be seen from the following sections of the text:

τότε γενομένων τῶν φώτων, ὧν τὴν πολυπληθίαν πρὸς ἀριθμὸν ἐξειπεῖν οὐκ ἀναγκαῖον, περινοεῖν δέ (ἕκαστον γὰρ τὸ ἴδιον ὄνομα κεκλήρωται δι᾽ ἐπίγνωσιν ἀρρήτων μυστηρίων), ἡ οὖν σιγὴ βουληθεῖσα εἰς ἐκλογὴν γνώσεως ἅπαντα σῶσαι συνῆγε τῇ δευτέρᾳ ἀντιτεθείσῃ ὀγδοάδι ἀφθάρτῳ μίξει, νοϊκῇ δὲ βουλήσει· ἦν δὲ αὐτῆς ἡ νοϊκὴ βούλησις πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον, τὸ ἐν μέσῳ τῶν ἁγίων ἐκκλησιῶν. τοῦτο οὖν εἰς τὴν δευτέραν ὀγδοάδα πέμψασα ἔπεισε καὶ αὐτὴν ἑνωθῆναι αὐτῇ.

γάμος οὖν ἐτελειοῦτο ἐν τοῖς τῆς ὀγδοάδος μέρεσιν, ἑνουμένου τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος τῷ μόνῳ καὶ τῆς δυάδος τῷ τρίτῳ καὶ τοῦ τρίτου τῇ ἑξάδι καὶ τῆς ὀγδοάδος τῷ ἑβδόμῳ καὶ τοῦ ἑβδόμου τῇ δυάδι καὶ τῆς ἑξάδος τῷ πέμπτῳ.

ὅλη δὲ ἡ ὀγδοὰς συνῆλθε μετὰ ἡδονῆς ἀγεράτου καὶ ἀφθάρτου μίξεως (οὐ γὰρ ἦν χωρισμὸς ἀλλήλων· ἦν δὲ σύγκρασις μεθ᾽ ἡδονῆς ἀμώμου) καὶ ἀνέδειξε πεντάδα προυνίκων ἀθηλύντων, ὧν τὰ ὀνόματά ἐστι ταῦτα· καρπιστὴς ὁροθέτης χαριστήριος ἄφετος μεταγωγεύς. οὗτοι τῆς μεσότητος ὠνομάσθησαν υἱοί.

(6:6) The lights having come into being, they whose great quantity does not have to be numbered explicitly, though it must be thought upon (for each was allotted its own name through knowledge of ineffable mysteries), (7) Silence then desired to save everything into a community elected for knowledge, joined by means of an incorruptible union and an intellectual desire with the second Ogdoad which was set as a counterpart of the first. Her intellectual desire was the Holy Spirit, which is in the midst of the holy churches. This, then, she sent into the second Ogdoad, and persuaded it too to be united with her.

(8) A marriage was thus consummated among the members of the Ogdoad; the Holy Spirit was united with the Single One, the Dyad with the Third, the Third with the Hexad, the Ogdoad with the Hebdomad, the Hebdomad with the Dyad, and the Hexad with the Fifth.

(9) The whole Ogdoad came together with unageing pleasure and incorruptible union (for there was no separation between them, and it was a fusion in blameless pleasure), and

---

[51] This is also the conclusion of Dibelius, "Studien," 334.

> it manifested a pentad of procreative
> all-male (powers), whose names are:
> Liberator, Limit-setter, Grateful,
> Released, Conveyor. These are called
> sons of the Middle.

The "lights" are identical with the children of unity, as is clear from the preceding passage (6:5). The present section describes how those children are brought from their previous state of imperfection into an ἐκλογὴ γνώσεως. The important feature of this account is that the process of perfection is described as the unification of the two Ogdoads. The message obviously is that both Ogdoads are required for this purpose. This idea must be seen in the light of the redactor's earlier statement in 6:1, that knowledge about the first Ogdoad only, and of the first Thirty, is insufficient. The truly perfect (τέλειοι) know that there is a second Ogdoad in addition to the first, and this knowledge is expressed as the spiritual union of the two Ogdoads.

This construction has a polemical edge. It is directed against those ἐπίγειοι μὴ ἐπιστάμενοι (6:1) who are satisfied with the ordinary Valentinian Ogdoad. The description of the children of unity in their imperfect state as ἀχαρακτήριστα..., τοῦ νοϊκοῦ μὴ παρακειμένου, ἐκτὸς φρονήσεως ἀναπαυόμενα χωρὶς ἐννοίας (6:5) can thus be seen as the mythological reflection of the redactor's views on the inferior level of knowledge of ordinary Valentinians. The redactor is here using the language traditional for describing the fallen aeon in its irrational state to depict this defective knowledge, which is mythologically represented as a phase in the protology. In this way, the protology is made to contain already the motifs connected with the myth of fall and restoration; salvation history is collapsed into protology, in the service of the polemical interests of the redactor.

The outcome of the protological account is a fully formed and united Pleroma, and there appears to be no need for a myth of Sophia and the advent of the Saviour as a soteriology of restoration. On the other hand, the system fails to provide a basis for explaining the origin of matter and of the world; the redactor gives us no clues to his cosmogony. However, since perfection is already protologically pre-established, salvation of the elect seems to be a *fait accompli*, so that the cosmic existence of the spirituals becomes a minor contingency not requiring further acts of redemption.

A Valentinian Exposition

This text, preserved in Coptic as NHC XI,*2*, 22:1–39:39, is the only specimen of an independently transmitted Valentinian treatise belonging to the same family as the ones reported by the heresiologists. Unfortunately the codex has suffered extensive damage, with the result that it is often no longer possible to follow the argument in detail.[52] After a few lines of introduction, of which only some isolated words remain, the tractate begins with a section about the Father, "the root of the All" (22:19–23:32). It then goes on to speak about his "manifestation" (23:33), which is the Son (23:36). The following pages discuss details of the projection of the Pleroma, until the story of the passion of Sophia starts somewhere on page 31.

The structure of the Pleroma

Pages 29–30 appear to contain a summary which may serve as a starting point for reconstructing the pleromatic system in this text. There are, to begin with, a first and a second Tetrad:

> The [first] Tet[rad, in fact,] prod[uced another Te]t[rad, which is that] of Lo[gos an]d L[if]e, [and Man and] Ch[urc]h. [. . .] produc[ed L]ogos a[nd L]ife: Logos [for] the glory of [the] Ineffable, Life for the glory of Sil[enc]e, Man for his own glory, and Life [for] the glory of Truth. This, then, is the Te[tr]ad that was brought forth after [the lik]eness of the unborn one. (29:25–37)

A lacuna of fifteen lines then follows, but the next phase of generation clearly involves a Decad and a Duodecad: "[. . . the Decad] from [Logos and Life] and the D[uodecad from Ma]n and C[hurch became a] Triac[ontad]" (30:16–20). After this, however, yet another generation of aeons is produced:

> However, the Decad from Logos and Life brought forth Decads, so that the Pleroma became a Hecaton[tad], and the Duodecad from Man and Church [brou]ght forth and produced thirty, so that three hundred and sixty came into being, as the fullness of the year. (30:29–38)

---

[52] The best text is currently that of W.-P. Funk, in *Concordance . . . X et XIA*, 320–25, with critical notes on pp. xxviii–xxxiii. Previous editions are by John D. Turner, in Hedrick (ed.), *Nag Hammadi Codices XI, XII, XIII* (106–51), and Jacques É. Ménard, *Exposé valentinien*.

Schematically, the structure of the protology appears to be as follows:

$$\text{Ἄρρητος} \; + \; \text{Σιγή}$$
$$\Downarrow$$
$$? \; + \; \text{Ἀλήθεια}$$
$$\Downarrow$$

Λόγος + Ζωή
+
Ἄνθρωπος + Ἐκκλησία

Decad

100

Duodecad

360
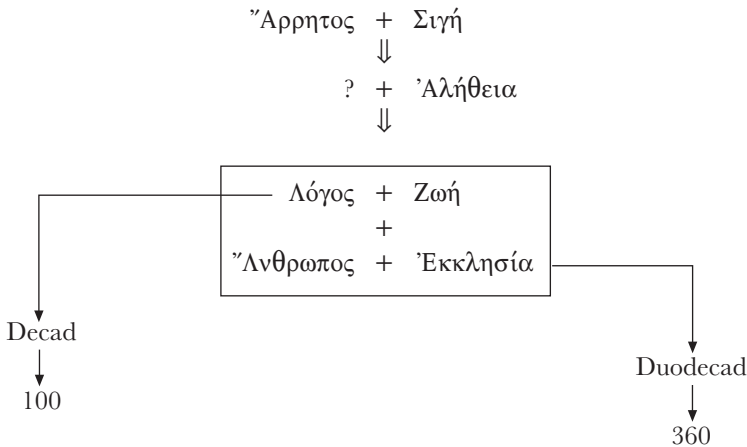
The name of the male member of the second couple is badly pre-
served on the papyrus. Turner, in his edition, restores ⲡⲁⲧ]ⲥⲱⲛⲧ,
"the Uncreated One," in 29:29, which is not, however, very likely
from the point of view of normal Valentinian vocabulary.[53] In any
case, other, more familiar names are used elsewhere in the tractate
("the Son, Mind of the All" [22:32–33], "the Son, Father of the All
and the Mind of the Spirit" [23:36–37], "the Monogenes" [24:33.37,
25:21, 28:25, 37:24, 39:24]).

   The second Tetrad is presented as a duplication of the first, each
of its members being produced "for the glory of" a corresponding
member of the first Tetrad. Of all the systems surveyed above, the
closest one at this point is Iren. *Haer.* I 11:1, which also has the sec-
ond Tetrad produced as a group from the first, rather than as a
series of successive syzygic generations.[54] There is also agreement in
vocabulary, since in both texts, Ἄρρητος is used as the name for
the first Father. A difference may exist in so far as in *Val. Exp.* the

---

[53] Ménard left a blank at this point. My own suggestion in "Valentinian Exposition,"
226n1, to read ⲡⲓⲙⲟⲛⲟⲅ]ⲉⲛⲏ[ⲥ in 29:29, is judged "paléogr. peu vraisemblable" by
Funk, *Concordance . . . X et XIA*, xxx, who retains Turner's reading. In fact, the visu-
ally most likely reading is [. . . . . .]ⲟⲛⲏ[. . .].
[54] A similar observation is made by Pagels and Turner in the commentary on
the text in Hedrick, *Nag Hammadi Codices XI, XII, XIII*, 160.

second male of the first Tetrad is presented as the generating agent of the second Tetrad. The absence of this feature in Iren. *Haer.* I 11:1 may, however, be due to incomplete reporting by Irenaeus (or his heresiological source). It may be noted in this connection that proximity between the two systems is also indicated by their versions of the myth of separation, where Christ is described as the son of Sophia.[55]

First principles

The account of first principles in this tractate is as follows:

> The Father, who [is the Roo]t of the Entirety, and the Un[utterable One,] exists in the Monad, [being alone] in stillness—"stillness" means tranquillity—since [he was] in fact Monad, and no [one] existed before him;
>
> he (also) exists [in the D]yad and in the pair (ⲡⲥⲁⲉⲓⲱ)—his "pair" refers to the Silence;
>
> he possessed the Entirety dwelling in[side] him, together with Will, Being, Love and Permanence. These are unborn. (22:19–31)

Uncertainty exists with regard to the co-ordination and interpretation of the individual phrases (as well as, to some extent, the restorations). The above translation suggests that the argument moves from Monad to Dyad to the Entirety, with emphasis on the oneness of the Father in spite of his being also a duality and the source of a multitude; the "silence" with which he forms a Dyad is none other than the tranquillity (ⲥ6ⲣⲁ2̄ⲧ, presumably <*ἡσυχία) that characterises him as a Monad. In this way, the text gives expression to the usual concern with explaining the origin of duality while safeguarding the oneness of the Father as first beginning. The notion of the initial indwelling of the Entirety in the Father (ⲛⲉⲩⲛ̄ⲧⲉϥ̄ ⲛ̄[ⲁ]ⲉ ⲙ̄ⲙⲉⲩ ⲙ̄ⲡⲧⲏ[ⲣ]ϥ̄ ⲉⲩϣⲟⲟⲡ ⲛ̄2[ⲣⲏⲓ̈ ⲛ̄]2ⲏⲧϥ̄, 22:27–29) is attested in the systems of type B only here and in the introductory words of the *Lehrbrief* of Epiphanius. It was remarked in the discussion of the *Lehrbrief* above that the notion seems to play no role in the subsequent development of the system. This suggests that while the notion is still a functional feature of the type A systems, its occasional appearance

---

[55] Cf. Ménard, *Exposé valentinien*, 74; Thomassen, "Valentinian Exposition," 231–32.

in the systems of type B is simply as a relic of an earlier phase of Valentinian pleromatogony. It will be seen to what extent this assumption holds true for *Val. Exp.* as well.

The phrase "together with Will, Being, Love and Permanence" (ⲁⲩⲱ ⲡⲟⲩⲱϣⲉ ⲙ̄ⲡ̄ϣⲱⲡⲉ ⲡⲙⲁⲉⲓⲉ ⲙ̄ⲡ̄ⳓⲱ, 22:29–30) gives the impression of an afterthought. A role for the Will in the pleromatogony is a familiar feature in many of the texts, as has been noted above.[56] It complements the notion of the Thought by adding a dynamic factor that explains how the emanation process got started. The other three terms are less familiar and not so easily accounted for. Most probably, however, they can be seen as the result of further reflection on the preconditions for emanation: "Being" (< ?*τὸ εἶναι; or, perhaps, γένεσις, "coming into being") may refer to the deity's ability to produce offspring out of nothing; "Love" (probably < ἀγάπη) looks like a further qualification of the Will; and "Permanence" (< ?*μονή) describes the nature of that which the Father brings into being. In this way, these terms represent a further elaboration and extension of the kind of speculation which the notion of the Will represents in the ontogony. It may be more than a coincidence that the number of terms is four, though the systematic role of this tetrad is not transparent.

The generation of the Son

The words "these are unborn" seem to conclude a first section of the protology, which names the eternal properties of the Father. The next section narrates the actual projection that took place from these preconditions, beginning with the generation of the Son:

> The god [came] forth, the Son, Mind of the Entirety. That means that from the root of the Entirety his Thought as well takes its existence. For he possessed him in (his) Mind. Indeed, for the sake of the Entirety, he entertained a thought of something other (than himself). For nothing else was in existence before him, (coming) out of that place. He was the one who moved [. . .]. (22:31–39)

The generation of the Son is explained by means of the notion of the Thought, identified with the Mind (ⲛⲟⲩⲥ), of the Father. The

---

reflective nature of thought is utilised to explain the origin of dual-
ity in the Father: the Thought is the Father's own thought, at the
same time as it is something other than him (ογΜεεγε Νϣⲙⲙⲟ).
This idea is familiar from the type A systems, in particular *Tri. Trac.*,
though the notion of "otherness" used of the Son is attested only in
this text.[57] A notion of grace is also present, in the idea that the
mental self-doubling of the Father takes place for the sake of the
Entirety: it is a precondition for the generation of the Entirety as
something other than the Father himself.

A second version of the protology

At this point there is a lacuna of about 18 lines. When the extant
text resumes, with εϲⲃⲉⲃⲉ at the beginning of 23:19, *Val. Exp.*
appears to be speaking about the Father as a gushing spring. The
rest of the page is then as follows:

ⲧⲉⲉⲓ ϭⲉ [ⲧⲉ ⲧⲛ]ⲟⲩⲛⲉ [ⲙ̄ⲡⲧⲏ]ⲣ̄ϥ ⲁⲩⲱ
ⲙⲟⲛⲁⲥ [ⲡⲉ ⲉ]ⲙⲛ̄ⲗ[ⲁⲩⲉ ⳉⲁ]ⲧⲉϥⲉⳉⲏ·
ⲧⲙⲁⳉⲥⲛ̄[ⲧ]ⲉ ⲛ̄ⲗⲉ [ⲁⲛ ⲡⲉ] ⲉϥϣⲟⲟⲡ
ⳉⲛ̄ⲧⲥⲓⲅⲏ ⲁⲩⲱ [ⲉϥϣⲉ]ϫⲉ ⲛ̄ⲙⲉϥ
ⲟⲩⲁⲉⲉⲧϥ̄ ⲧⲙ[ⲁⳉⲩⲧⲟⲉ] ⲛ̄ⲗⲉ ⲕⲁⲧⲁⲑⲉ
ⲛ̄ⲧⲁϥ ⲡⲉ ⲛ̄[ⲧⲁϥϣ]ⲱⲣ̄ϥ ⲁⲃⲁⲗ ⲙ̄ⲙⲁϥ
ⲟⲩⲁⲉ[ⲉⲧϥ] ⳉⲛ̄ ⲧⲙⲁⳉⲩⲧⲟⲉ ⲉϥϣⲟⲟⲡ
ⳉⲛ̄ⲧ[ⲙⲁⳉ]ϣⲛ̄ⲧϣⲉⲥⲉ

ⲁ[ϥ]ϣ̄ⲡⲛⲉⲓⲛ[ⲉ ⲙ̄ⲙⲁϥ] ⲟⲩⲁⲉⲉⲧϥ̄ ⲁⲩⲱ
ⳉⲛ̄ⲧⲙⲁⳉⲥⲛ̄[ⲧⲉ ⲁϥⲟⲩ]ⲱⲛ̄ⳉ ⲁⲃⲁⲗ
ⲛ̄ⲡⲉϥⲟⲩⲱϣⲉ [ⲁⲩⲱ] ⳉⲛ̄ⲧⲙⲁⳉⲩⲧⲟⲉ
ⲁϥⲡⲱⲣϣ [ⲁⲃⲁ]ⲗ̄ ⲙ̄ⲙⲁϥ ⲟⲩⲁⲉⲉⲧϥ̄

ⲛⲉⲉⲓ ⲛ̄ⲙⲉⲛ ⲉⲧϥⲉⲧⲛⲟⲩⲛⲉ ⲙ̄ⲡⲧⲏⲣ̄ϥ
ⲙⲁⲣⲛ̄[ⲉⲓ] ⲛ̄ⲗⲉ ⲁⳉⲟⲩⲛ ⲁⲡⲉϥⲟⲩⲱⲛ̄ⳉ
ⲁⲃ[ⲁⲗ] ⲁⲩⲱ ⲧⲉϥⲙⲛ̄ⲧⲭⲣⲏⲥⲧⲟⲥ
ⲙ̄ⲡⲉϥϭⲓ̈ⲛⲉⲓ ⲁⲡⲓⲧⲛ̄ ⲙ̄ⲡ̄ⲧⲏⲣ̄ϥ ⲉⲧⲉ-
ⲡⲉⲉⲓ ⲡⲉ ⲡ̄ϣⲏⲣⲉ ⲡⲓⲱⲧ ⲙ̄ⲡⲧⲏⲣ̄ϥ ⲁⲩⲱ
ⲡⲛⲟⲩⲥ ⲛ̄ⲡ̄ⲡ̄ⲛⲉⲩⲙⲁ ⲛⲉⲩⲛ̄[ⲧ]ⲉϥ ⲛ̄ⲅⲁⲣ
ⲛ̄ⲙⲉⲩ ⲙ̄ⲡⲉⲉⲓ ⟨ⳉ⟩ⲁⲧⲉⳉ̄ⲏ ⲙ̄[

This, then, [is the] Root [of] the
Entirety,[58] a Monad before whom
there is no one; [he is also][59] the Sec-
ond, dwelling in Silence and speak-
[ing] only with himself; (and) the
[Fourth], in so far as he kept himself
[in the] fourth while (also) dwelling
in the three hundred and sixtieth.[60]

He brought himself forth: In the
Second he revealed his Will, and in
the Fourth he spread himself out.

This much about the Root of the
Entirety. Now let us [move] on to
his revelation, his goodness, his com-
ing here below, and all (the rest).
This is the Son, the father of the
Entirety, the Mind of the Spirit. Him
he possessed before [. . .]. (23:19–38)

---

[57] Cf. below, 288.

[58] I take ⲁⲩⲱ to represent an epexegetical καί here.

[59] It may be preferable to restore the text without a copula here, in analogy with
the following parallel clause ⲧⲙ[ⲁⳉⲩⲧⲟⲉ] ⲛ̄ⲗⲉ . . .

[60] I take this to mean that 360 is regarded here as the total number of the
Pleroma (cf. Iren. *Haer.* I 17:1). The "three hundred and sixtieth" thus represents
the final edge of the Pleroma to which the Father has extended himself in his self-
manifestation. At the same time, however, the Father himself, in a distinct dimen-
sion of his transcendent essence, remains restricted to the primal Tetrad.

The text has apparently taken one step back to give a new description of the Father, the root of the Entirety. This time, however, arithmological notions are introduced. The concept of the Dyad, which the Father forms together with Silence, is supplemented by that of the Tetrad. A derivation from Monad to Dyad to Tetrad is envisaged, though it is proclaimed rather than explained. In particular, it remains unclear how this derivation process, by which the Father unfolds himself or "brings himself forth," is thought to relate to the manifestation of the Father through the Son. On the previous page, the text suggested that the primal duality came about through the mental self-reflection of the Father, with the Son as the Father's Thought. It looks as though the tractate is using more than one protological model, juxtaposing them rather than successfully combining them. One model is that of Monad, Dyad (Father + Silence), and Tetrad; another that of Father and Son (= Thought, or Mind). Further, the traditional notion of the Will is added as well, though it remains unclear what exactly is intended by the statement "in the Second he revealed his Will," and how the Will here relates to the Silence.

The protological manifestation of the Father in the Son in the last paragraph is here described on the model of the Saviour's revelation in history. The correspondence between these two areas of discourse is, as we have seen repeatedly, a normal and typical Valentinian idea.

Combination of the two versions

After another lacuna of some 17 lines, the subject is still the Son:

ογπη[ϩη πε] πεει [ετε]πογωνϩ̄
αβαλ πε [ϩ̄ντϲ]ιϲ̄ϩη αγ[ω ο]γνογϲ
ν̄πτηρϥ [πε εϥ]ϣοοπ ϩ̄νογμαϩϲ̄ν̄τε
ν̄ν[. . . .] . ϩ̄

[He is] a sp[ring,] being the revelation [from the] Silence, and a Mind of the Entirety, be[ing] the Second with [the Depths].[61]

---

[61] I consider the restoration [πωω]νϩ̄, used in all the editions with minor variations, improbable. In the first place, the horizontally shaped trace of a letter after the lacuna does not suggest ν, but rather π, τ, or κ; secondly, the Son is never paired with Life in other Valentinian protogonies. I suggest instead [πωι]κ̄ϩ̄, which would be a translation of βυθός, or βάθος. (As βυθός appears untranslated elsewhere in the text, βάθος seems preferable.)

ⲛ̅ⲧⲁϥ ⲛ̅ⲅⲁⲣ ⲡⲉ ⲡⲣⲉϥⲧⲉⲩ[ⲟ ⲁⲃⲁⲗ]
ⲙ̅ⲡⲧⲏⲣϥ̅ ⲁⲩⲱ ⲑ[ⲩ]ⲡⲟⲥⲧⲁⲥⲓ[ⲥ . . . . .]
ⲙ̅ⲡⲉⲓⲱⲧ ⲉⲧⲉ[ⲧ̅]ⲉⲉⲓ ⲧⲉ ⲧⲉⲛ[. . . . .] .
ⲁⲩⲱ ϭⲓⲛ̅ⲙ̅ⲧϥ̅ ⲁⲡⲓⲧⲛ̅ ⲙ̅[ⲙⲉⲩ ⲁ]ⲡⲥⲁⲛ-
ⲡⲓⲧⲛ̅ ⲛ̅ⲧⲁⲣⲉϥⲟⲩⲱϣⲉ [ⲛ̅ϭⲓ] ⲡϣⲣ̅ⲡ̅ⲛ̅ⲉⲓⲱⲧ
ⲁϥⲟⲩⲁ2ϥ̅ ⲁ̣[ⲃⲁⲗ ⲛ̅]2ⲣⲏⲓ̈ ⲛ̅]2ⲏⲧϥ̅

ⲉⲡⲉⲓ ⲟⲩⲛ ⲉⲧⲃ[ⲏⲧϥ̅] ⲉⲣⲉ]ⲡⲟⲩⲱⲛ2̅
ⲁⲃⲁⲗ ϣⲟⲟⲡ ⲙ̅ⲡⲧⲏⲣϥ̅ ⲉⲉⲓⲭⲟⲩ ⲇⲉ
ⲙ̅ⲙⲁϥ ⲁⲡⲧⲏⲣϥ̅ ⲭⲉⲡⲟⲩⲱϣⲉ ⲙ̅ⲡⲧⲏⲣϥ̅
ⲁϥⲭⲓ ⲇⲉ ⲙ̅[ⲡ]ⲓ̣ⲙⲉⲩⲉ ⲛ̅ⲧⲙⲓⲛⲉ
ⲉⲧⲃⲉⲡⲧⲏⲣϥ̅ ⲉⲉⲓ[ⲭ]ⲟⲩ ⲇⲉ ⲙ̅ⲙⲁⲥ ⲁⲡ-
ⲙⲉⲩⲉ ⲭⲉⲙⲟⲛⲟⲅⲉⲛⲏⲥ

For he is the projector of the Entirety and the realisation [of the Thought(?)][62] of the Father—which is the De[liberation(?)][63]—and the descent down below. When the first Father willed it, he revealed himself in him.

Since, therefore, [it is] through [him that] the revelation of the Entirety takes place, I call him, with reference to the Entirety, the Will of the Entirety, and (since) he[64] conceived this kind of Thought concerning the Entirety, I call him, with reference to the Thought, Monogenes. (24:18–39)

Here, the two protological models seem to have been combined. There is, first, the Father—here called Bythos, or Bathos, if our restoration is accurate—joined with Silence, and, secondly, the Son, who emerges from Silence and is the Mind. A fixed scheme is apparently being employed (though there is no mention of a syzygic partner for Mind).

The emergence of the Son-Mind also implies the projection of the Entirety as the realisation or actualisation (which presumably is the meaning of ὑπόστασις here) of the Father's Thought. In addition, the notion of the Will is introduced. Instead of being a separate entity, the Will is fitted in as a semantic implication[65] of the Thought.

It may be observed that there is not a perfect fit between the two models. The Son as the Mind of the Entirety is described as the outward manifestation of a Thought previously existing within the Father. Thus there is also a Thought at the level of Silence, before this Thought is manifested as the Son. What from one point of view, then, is described as the generation of Mind from Silence is, from

---

[62] [ⲙ̅ⲡⲙⲉⲩⲉ] Funk; other possibilities are [ⲙ̅ⲡⲛⲟⲩⲥ] and [ⲡⲉ ⲙ̅ⲫⲟ]. [ⲙ̅ⲡⲟⲩⲱϣⲉ] would probably be too long.

[63] A tentative restoration is ⲉⲛ[ⲑⲩⲙⲏⲥⲓ]ⲥ̣, a term used as a synonym for ἔννοια in *Exc.* 7:1.

[64] The subject seems to be the Father.

[65] This may well be the function of the parenthetic remark qualifying the Thought as an ἐνθύμησις.

another point of view, conceived of as the manifestation of the hidden Thought of the Father. In the first model, the Son emerges, as Mind, only at the second level, whereas in the second model, he exists, as Thought, on both levels, representing two distinct phases in the process of the Father's self-manifestation. For the author, this has presumably not been perceived as an inconsistency, but merely as different perspectives on the same reality. It clearly makes sense to say (albeit the text itself does not make this explicit) that the initial Thought takes place in Silence. It is nevertheless relatively transparent that he is working with two intrinsically distinct models.

The final part of the section qualifies the Son in two ways. First, in relation to the Entirety, he is called "Will of the Entirety." This remark must be read in conjunction with the immediately preceding statement that the Father revealed himself in the Son after having willed it. The Son, being the manifestation of the Father to the Entirety and his unfolding as the Entirety, is the expression of an act of Will in the Father. Secondly, in relation to the Thought the Son is called Monogenes. This may be understood in relation to 22:36–39, where it was stated that the Thought was the first "other" to come into being; therefore, the Son as the Thought can be called Monogenes, "Only-begotten." In any case, the most important concern seems to be to accommodate basic traditional terms of Valentinian protology: Will and Thought as parallel faculties of the Father in the first act of manifestation, and Monogenes as a term for the Son.

The Limit

Page 25 is very fragmentary. The terms Monad, Dyad and Tetrad are mentioned again, as well as the Monogenes and the Limit, and, probably, Truth. The main theme of the extant text is a typology of the temple, with Monogenes as the High Priest who alone has access to the Holy of Holies, where the Father dwells hidden behind a veil (ⲕⲁⲧⲁⲡⲉⲧⲁⲥⲙⲁ). The veil is, perhaps, a metaphor for the Limit. At any rate, the main point appears to be the distinction and the relationship between the hidden Father and the manifest Son.

Most of page 26 as well is too fragmentary for confident reconstruction. Towards the end, however, the text becomes sufficiently continuous to show that it is now speaking about the Limit:

ⲡϩⲟⲣⲟⲥ ⲁⲩⲱ ⲟⲩⲛ̄ⲧⲉϥ̄ ⲙ̄ⲙ[ⲉⲩ
ⲛ̄]ϥⲧⲟⲉ ⲛ̄ϭⲁⲙ ⲟⲩⲣⲉⲥⲡⲱⲣⲝ̄ ⲙ[ⲛ̄-
ⲟ]ⲩⲣⲉⲥ[ⲧ]ⲁⲭⲣ̄ⲟ ⲟⲩⲣⲉ`ⲥ´⟦ϥ⟧ϯⲙⲟⲣⲫⲏ
[ⲁ]ⲩⲱ ⲟⲩⲣ[ⲉⲥⲭⲡⲉⲟⲩⲥⲓⲁ· ⲛⲉⲉⲓ ϭⲉ
ⲛ̄ϭⲁⲙ] ⲙ̄ⲙⲏⲉ ⲛⲉ ⲉⲓϣⲡⲉⲛⲁⲣⲛⲟⲉⲓ
ⲛ̄ⲛⲉⲩⲡⲣⲟⲥⲱⲡⲟⲛ ⲙⲛ̄ⲡⲭⲣⲟⲛⲟⲥ ⲁⲩⲱ
ⲛ̄ⲧⲟⲡⲟⲥ ⲛⲉⲉⲓ ⲛ̄ⲧⲁϩⲁϩ[ⲁ]ⲉⲓⲛⲉ ⲁⲣⲭⲟⲩ
ⲁⲃⲁⲗ ⲭⲉⲁϩⲟⲩⲥ . [. . .]

[. . .] Limit. And it has four powers: a separating one, a strengthening one, a form-giving one, and a [substance-producing one.[66] These, then, are the] true [powers].[67] If we are going to understand their aspects, time span, and locations, which so[me people] have established—for they have [. . .]. (26:30–38)

The last part of this passage has not been well understood, I believe, in the available editions and translations. In particular, the interpretation of the small trace of a letter after ⲛ̄ⲧⲁϩⲁ at the end of 26:37 as an ⲛ has produced a text that makes little sense. The text seems in fact to begin here a discussion of the powers of the Limit. Four powers are ascribed to it, and the author justifies this view by referring to an older (presumably Valentinian) source, identified only as "some people," where the characteristics of these four powers have been set out. In the following lines of the text, the "aspects, time span, and locations" of the four powers presumably were described, though of this description only isolated words have been preserved. The word "time," which occurs twice (27:23.25), may relate to the "time span" mentioned in 26:36.[68]

The word ⲁⲡⲟⲗⲉⲓⲝⲓⲥ in 27:29 suggests that at this point the demonstration of the functions and characteristics of the four powers has been completed. Next, the text goes on to mention a different opinion on the matter:

ⲉⲧ]ⲃⲉⲉⲩ ⲛ̄ⲇⲉ ⲭⲉⲟⲩⲣⲉⲥ[ⲡⲱⲣ]ⲝ̄ ⲁⲃⲁⲗ
ⲙ̄ⲛ̄ⲟⲩⲣⲉⲥⲧⲁⲭⲣⲟ [ⲁⲩ]ⲱ ⲟⲩⲣⲉⲥ-
ⲭⲡⲉⲟⲩⲥⲓⲁ ⲙ̄ⲛ̄ⲟⲩⲣⲉⲥ[ϯⲙ]ⲟⲣⲫⲏ ⲛ̄ⲑⲉ
ⲛ̄ⲧⲁϩⲁϩ̄ⲛⲕⲁⲩⲉ [ⲭⲟⲟ]ⲥ̣ ⲥ̣[ⲉ]ⲭⲟⲩ ⲛ̄ⲅⲁⲣ
ⲙ̄ⲙⲁϥ ⲁⲡϩⲟ[ⲣⲟ]ⲥ̣ ⲭⲉ[ⲟⲩ]ⲛ̄ⲧⲉϥ̄ ⲙ̄ⲙⲉⲩ

But "why a [separa]ting power, a strengthening one, a substance-producing one and a form-giving one," as others have [objected]. For [they] maintain that the Limit has (only) two powers, a separating one and a

---

[66] The restoration, provided in all the editions, can be confidently made from 27:32.

[67] My restoration.

[68] The words ⲁⲅⲁⲡⲏ (27:19) and ϭⲱ (27:22) recall the four powers of the Father mentioned in 22:29–30: Will, Being, Love, and Permanence. It is conceivable that the four powers of the Limit have a relationship with those of the Father.

ⲛ̅ϭⲁⲙ [ⲥ]ⲛ̅ⲧⲉ ⲟ[ⲩⲣ]ⲉⲥⲡⲱⲣⲝ̅ ⲁⲃⲁⲗ ⲁⲩⲱ
[ⲟ]ⲩⲣⲉⲥ̇[ⲧⲁ]ⲭⲣⲟ ⲉⲡⲉⲓ ⲥⲡⲱⲣⲭ
ⲛ̅[ⲡ]ⲃⲩ[ⲑⲟⲥ] ⲁⲃⲁⲗ ϩⲛ̅ⲁⲓⲱⲛ ⲭⲉⲕⲁ-
[ⲥⲉ . . .]

strengthening one, in so far as it sep-
arates [the] By[thos] from the aeons
in order that [. . .]. (27:30–38)

The text is contrasting the view of "some people," in 26:36–37, that
the Limit has four powers, with that of "others" in 27:33, that it
has only two. The second view is in fact very similar to the one
reported in Iren. *Haer.* I 3:5, that the Limit has two ἐνεργείαι, one
of consolidation (ἑδραστική) and the other of separation (μεριστική).
Irenaeus' report not only gives us the Greek terminology that is being
used, but also shows that debates took place in Valentinian circles
about the "powers" of the Limit, formulated as lists of technical
adjectival epithets.

The idea that the Limit separates the aeons from the Bythos was
found already on p. 25, implied in the metaphor of the veil of the
Holy of Holies. This is a common idea in the Valentinian systems,[69]
although the most prominent function of the Limit is that of sepa-
rating the Pleroma and the spiritual from the inferior levels.

It is unclear to what extent *Val. Exp.* takes sides in this debate
over the number of functions of the Limit, or whether the tractate
contents itself with reporting and juxtaposing the different theories.
What is clear, however, is that the author has had access to at least
two Valentinian sources for his work, each of which, it may be con-
jectured, contained a different version of the protology.

A discrepancy in the protological account

This realisation places us in a position to explain an apparent incon-
sistency in *Val. Exp.*'s protology, that is, the discrepancy between the
system that is described on pp. 29–30, and the discussion of first
principles at the beginning of the tractate. The system on pp. 29–30,
with two Tetrads, a Decad and a Duodecad, and Bythos at the top,
must have been taken from a source different from that which under-

---

[69] Cf. Iren. *Haer.* I 2:2 ἐκτὸς τοῦ ἀρρήτου μεγέθους φυλασσούσῃ τὰ ὅλα; *Tri.
Trac.* 75:13–17. Iren. *Haer.* I 11:1 offers two Limits, one guarding the Father inside
the Pleroma, the other enclosing the Pleroma.

lies the discussion at the beginning. That source is perhaps the same as the one attributing two powers to the Limit, since the term Bythos occurs in both contexts. In fact, the fragmentary state of the papyrus does not allow us to perceive to what extent the author of *Val. Exp.* actually endorses that system. It is possible that it was reported as the opinion of "some people," as is the case with the discussion of the Limit, and that it was explicitly introduced, with or without approval, as an alternative way of describing the protology.

The system on pp. 29–30 obviously belongs to the same family as the main systems in Irenaeus and Hippolytus. The one that is presupposed at the beginning of the tractate, on the other hand, exhibits features common to the type A systems since it employs the terms Father, Son, Thought, and Will and conceives of the process of projection as an exteriorisation. An influence from the type B systems is discernible even here, however, represented by the figure of Silence, whose functions overlap those of the Son, and by the notion of a Dyad that expands into a Tetrad.

Iren. *Haer.* I 14 (The *Sige* of Marcus)

Being as text

In these chapters Irenaeus reports on a treatise that he ascribes to Marcus "the Magician," whose scandalous activities of seduction he has just described in chapter 13. We have no means of assessing the accuracy of this attribution, though the opening words of the treatise fit well the pretentious self-image of Marcus that comes across in the description of his liturgical practices. Irenaeus reports the introduction as follows:

οὗτος <οὖν ὁ> Μάρκος μήτρα καὶ ἐκδοχεῖον τῆς Κολαρβάσου σιγῆς αυτὸν μονώτατον γεγονέναι λέγων, ἅτε μονογενὴς ὑπάρχων, αὐτὸ τὸ σπέρμα τὸ κατατεθὲν εἰς αὐτὸν ὧδέ πως ἀπεκύησεν. αὐτὴν τὴν πανυπερτάτην	This Marcus, then, who claimed that he alone had become the womb and receptacle of the Sige of Colorbasus,[70] gave birth, as being the Onlybegotten, to the seed that had been placed in him, in the following manner: The

---

[70] The old problem of "Colorbasus" has been discussed afresh by Förster, *Marcus Magus*, 168–73. His conclusion, that it is the name of an author, unknown to us, but known in antiquity for his use of gematria, is probably the best hypothesis that can be made in the matter.

ἀπὸ τῶν ἀοράτων καὶ ἀκατονομάστων τόπων τετράδα κατεληλυέναι σχήματι γυναικείῳ πρὸς αὐτόν, ἐπειδή, φησί, τὸ ἄρρεν αὐτῆς ὁ κόσμος φέρειν οὐκ ἠδύνατο, καὶ μηνύσαι αὐτήν, τίς ἦν, καὶ τὴν τῶν πάντων γένεσιν, ἣν οὐδενὶ πώποτε οὔτε θεῶν οὔτε ἀνθρώπων ἀπεκάλυψε, τούτῳ μονοτάτῳ διηγήσασθαι, οὕτως εἰποῦσαν·

supreme Tetrad itself descended to him from the invisible and unnameable regions, in a female shape because, he says, the world was unable to support its male (aspect), and indicated to him who she was, and the origin of all things, that which she had never before revealed to either gods or humans, she explained to him alone, speaking as follows: (I 14:1)

The introduction presents the writer as someone who has received *gnosis* through a revelation. The act of revelation is imagined as a birth, in accordance with the model of the protology itself: the movement from oneness to duality—over Silence and the Monogenes, and thence to a Tetrad, which in turn is doubled in a male and a female aspect—is re-enacted in the revelatory experience of the speaker. The most important point here is therefore probably not the somewhat hubristic-sounding claim by Marcus that he himself is none other than the Onlybegotten Son,[71] but rather the fact that a systematic congruence is envisaged between the ontogony, which is itself a process of revelation, and the production of knowledge through the mouth of the speaker. In this way a claim is made that the knowledge offered as spoken words in the treatise possesses the same incontrovertible necessity and ontological reality as the ontogonic *Ur-*revelation itself.

ὅτε τὸ πρῶτον ὁ πατὴρ <οὗ πατὴρ> οὐδείς, ὁ ἀνεννόητος καὶ ἀνούσιος, ὁ μήτε ἄρρεν μήτε θῆλυ, ἠθέλησεν αὐτοῦ τὸ ἄρρητον ῥητὸν γενέσθαι καὶ τὸ ἀόρατον μορφωθῆναι, ἤνοιξε τὸ στόμα καὶ προήκατο λόγον ὅμοιον αὐτῷ· ὃς παραστὰς ἐπέδειξεν αὐτῷ ὃ ἦν, αὐτὸς τοῦ ἀοράτου μορφὴ φανείς. ἡ δὲ ἐκφώνησις τοῦ ὀνόματος ἐγένετο τοιαύτη· ἐλάλησε λόγον τὸν πρῶτον τοῦ ὀνόματος αὐτοῦ, ἥτις ἦν ἀρχή, καὶ ἦν ἡ συλλαβὴ αὐτοῦ στοιχείων τεσσάρων· ἐπισυνῆψεν τὴν δευτέραν, καὶ ἦν καὶ αὐτὴ στοιχείων τεσσάρων· ἑξῆς ἐλάλησε τὴν τρίτην, καὶ ἦν αὐτὴ στοιχείων δέκα· καὶ τὴν μετὰ ταῦτα

When to begin with the Father who is himself without a father—he who cannot be thought and has no essence, and who is neither male nor female—desired to speak his unspeakability, he opened his mouth and sent forth a word that was like himself. It came forward and showed him what he was, himself appearing as the form of the invisible. The enunciation of the name took place thus: He spoke the first word of his name, which was Beginning (*archè*), and as a syllable it comprised four letters. He added the second syllable, and it was also of four letters. Next he spoke the third, and it was of ten letters. And the one after that,

---

71 Cf. Förster, *Marcus Magus*, 173–74.

ἐλάλησε, καὶ ἦν [καὶ] αὐτὴ στοιχείων δεκαδύο. ἐγένετο οὖν ἡ ἐκφώνησις τοῦ ὅλου ὀνόματος στοιχείων μὲν τριάκοντα, συλλαβῶν δὲ τεσσάρων.

and this too comprised four letters. Then he spoke the third, and that was ten letters, and he spoke the following one, and it had twelve letters. Thus the enunciation of the entire name came to comprise thirty letters and four syllables. (14:1)

Obviously, the account is based on the familiar model of a Pleroma of thirty (4 + 4 + 10 + 12) aeons. It is modified, however, so as consistently to expound the protology in the terms of speech.[72] The underlying premise is the identity of being and truth—that is, truth in the form of true speech. Thus, what is spoken *is* at the same time that which it speaks about: the first spoken word is ἀρχή, "Beginning." The tractate aims at self-referential closure, with no loss of being, no lapse into the arbitrary, as it moves from the Father to his first projection and as it represents this movement in speech or writing.

The first word spoken by the Father, moreover, is his Name. This is, of course, a standard Valentinian notion, referring to the Son as the outward expression of the Father himself, with complete identity of signifier and signified. The implicit idea that the Name/the Son embraces or contains within itself all the individual aeons of the Pleroma is standard Valentinianism as well. The more original idea of the present tractate, however, is to elaborate on the pseudo-linguistic associations of this notion and to apply them self-consciously to the use of language in the writing of the tractate itself. In this way, the Father's self-manifestation and first projection is conceived of as the writing of a text, a text that consists of the Father's own Name and thereby both is and is not identical with the Father himself. Conversely, the tractate itself as a text not only mirrors this originary self-manifestation and projection, but also pretends to share in the plenitude of its being.

As might be expected, however, this scheme is not sustained in the execution of the tractate as a whole. If the very first word, ΑΡΧΗ, can be said to *be* what it denotes, and thus expresses the idea of the Father's Name as being both his first manifestation and identical with the Father himself, no explanation in terms of similar tautological inevitability is offered for the subsequent three words with their 4 + 10 + 12 letters. We are not even told what those words

---

[72] For the following, cf. also Thomassen, "Gnostic Semiotics," esp. 148–51.

are. Thus we are left with the impression that the scheme is, after all, intended as a metaphor: ΑΡΧΗ is not the actual Name of the Father, or a part of it, but rather a representation of it. The question remains ambiguous, however, and the most congenial way to handle it is probably by leaving the ambiguity unresolved. ΑΡΧΗ both is and is not the Name, in the same way that the Name itself both is and is not the Father. The issue of the relationship between representation and the represented is an aspect of the general ambiguity of unity and duality articulated in all the Valentinian protogonic accounts.

The plurality in the Name

The text continues:

ἕκαστον δὲ τῶν στοιχείων ἴδια γράμματα καὶ ἴδιον χαρακτῆρα καὶ ἰδίαν ἐκφώνησιν καὶ σχήματα καὶ εἰκόνας ἔχειν· καὶ μηδὲν αὐτῶν εἶναι ὃ τὴν ἐκείνου καθορᾷ μορφὴν οὗπερ αὐτὸ στοιχεῖόν ἐστιν, ἀλλὰ οὐδὲ γινώσκειν αὐτό· οὐδὲ μὴν τὴν τοῦ πλησίον αὐτοῦ ἕκαστον ἐκφώνησιν γινώσκειν, ἀλλὰ ὃ αὐτὸ ἐκφωνεῖ, ὡς τὸ πᾶν ἐκφωνοῦν, τὸ ὅλον ἡγεῖσθαι ὀνομάζειν.

ἕκαστον γὰρ αὐτῶν, μέρος ὂν τοῦ ὅλου, τὸν ἴδιον ἦχον ὡς τὸ πᾶν ὀνομάζειν, καὶ μὴ παύσασθαι ἠχοῦντα μέχρις ὅτου ἐπὶ τὸ ἔσχατον γράμμα τοῦ ἐσχάτου στοιχείου μονογλωσσήσαντα καταντῆσαι.

τότε δὲ καὶ τὴν ἀποκατάστασιν τῶν ὅλων ἔφη γενέσθαι, ὅταν τὰ πάντα κατελθόντα εἰς τὸ ἓν γράμμα μίαν καὶ τὴν αὐτὴν ἐκφώνησιν ἠχήσῃ· ἧς ἐκφωνήσεως εἰκόνα τὸ ἀμὴν ὁμοῦ λεγόντων ἡμῶν ὑπέθετο εἶναι.

Each of the letter-elements, however, has its own letters, its own shape, its own pronunciation, characteristics and images. And none of them is able to perceive the form of that of which it is an element, nor to know it. Nor does it know the pronunciation of its neighbour, rather it believes that what it itself pronounces, names the whole, as if it were pronouncing the Entirety.

For each of them, being a part of the whole names its own resonance as the Entirety. And it does not cease resounding until it reaches the final letter of the final element and voices it in its singularity.

As well, the restoration of the whole, he says, comes to take place when the Entirety descends into the one single letter and resounds the one and the same enunciation. An image of that enunciation is, he claims, the word "amen," when we say it in unison. (14:1)

Now the issue of difference is confronted. We are moving from the relationship between the Father and the Name, where the problem of identity and difference is implicit but not acknowledged, to the internal structure of the Name itself, where the problem now manifests itself on a lower level, and is acknowledged as being that of

the unity and plurality of the components of the Name. Developing his linguistic model and applying vocabulary taken from the grammarians,[73] Marcus expresses the plurality existing within the Name in terms of the graphic and phonemic distinctiveness of individual letters and their sounds.

Furthermore, the Name is no longer described as being spoken by the Father, but by the individual parts of the Name itself. These letter-elements produce themselves as sounds, each of them *is* the sound it emits. Thus not only numerical plurality has come about, but multiple subjectivities have also been generated; the members of the Name are beings with their own minds. Moreover, the letter-elements-beings not only themselves constitute, but also produce further division by being each of them divisible in turn; this statement probably alludes to the idea which is elaborated in 14:2, that each letter has a name (*alpha*, etc.) which itself is composed of other letters. In any case, the unfolding of the Name is a movement outward towards increased differentiation until the level of individual letter-sounds is reached and each sound resonates independently, oblivious of the others.

In a parenthetical remark (τότε δὲ καὶ), the text then leaps to make an allusion to the eschatological *apokatastasis*, when the unity will be restored. The passage has soteriological connotations; the implied sense seems to be that "the one single letter" is lost and is saved by the descent of the Entirety to it. The underlying theme here is apparently the fall of Sophia and her restoration to the Pleroma through the descent of the Saviour. The words κατελθόντα εἰς probably have baptismal connotations.

The linguistic metaphor thus serves to conceptualise the theme of unity and multiplicity that is the common concern of Valentinian protologies: division is inevitable, but can be overcome when the divided parts are brought into a new harmony, just as linguistic sense involves a unity that transcends the significance of the individual elements from which it is built. This metaphysical notion, moreover, has not only soteriological connotations, but even liturgical ones: the communal speaking of the word "amen" produces a unity that transcends the contributions of the individual voices that share in

---

[73] See Förster, *Marcus Magus*, 199, citing *scholia* to Dionysius Thrax.

the act of enunciation. This remark suggests that the process of the unfolding of the Pleroma as the Name, whereby its individual parts are constituted, is also conceived along the lines of a divine service. Comparison may here be made with the protogony of *Tri. Trac.*, where the aeons are described as constituting the doxological names of the Father which they themselves pronounce in acts of glorification; at the same time those individual names also form part of the Name itself, which is the Son.[74]

τοὺς δὲ φθόγγους ὑπάρχειν τοὺς μορ-
φοῦντας τὸν ἀνούσιον καὶ ἀγέννητον
αἰῶνα· καὶ εἶναι τούτους μορφὰς ἃς ὁ
κύριος ἀγγέλους εἴρηκε, τὰς διηνεκῶς
βλεπούσας τὸ πρόσωπον τοῦ πατρός.
   τὰ δὲ ὀνόματα τῶν στοιχείων τὰ
κοινὰ καὶ ῥητὰ αἰῶνας καὶ λόγους καὶ
ῥίζας καὶ σπέρματα καὶ πληρώματα
καὶ καρποὺς ὠνόμασε· τὰ δὲ καθ᾽ ἕνα
αὐτῶν καὶ ἑκάστου ἴδια ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι
τῆς ἐκκλησίας ἐμπεριεχόμενα νοεῖσθαι
ἔφη.

Now the sounds are what give form to the aeon that is without essence and unborn. These forms, moreover, are what the Lord called angels, who continually behold the face of the Father.
   (14:2) The common and usual names of the letter-elements, however, he gives as "aeons," "logoi," "roots," "seeds," "pleromas," and "fruits." That, moreover, which relates to their individualities and the properties of each one may be perceived as being contained in the name "ecclesia."

With these remarks, Marcus explains what he has written so far by relating it to terms and themes with which he apparently assumes that the reader is more familiar. The element-letters are the same as the angels of Matt 18:10; obviously this is because they are the manifest expression ("form") of the transcendent and hidden ("without essence") Father, and in that sense "behold" his face (that is, in themselves). Moreover, Marcus' στοιχεῖα are the same as what other Valentinian tractates call "aeons," etc.[75] All these terms are in fact attested in the sources.[76] However, the final remark is somewhat enigmatic. How can the name ἐκκλησία allude to the individual στοιχεῖα? The best answer is probably that the word as such, meaning "assembly," semantically refers to a congregation with individ-

---

[74] See above, 178–81.
   [75] The word ὠνόμασε, corresponding with ἔφη in the following sentence, indicates that this terminological survey is quoted from Marcus' text, and is not a compilation made by Irenaeus himself (thus Förster, *Marcus Magus*, 207–8).
   [76] Cf. Müller, "Beiträge," 179–83. They can also be found, all of them, in *Tri. Trac.*, as the indices to the editions of that tractate will confirm.

ual members, and provides an accurate description of the structure of the Name-Pleroma. That the latter constitutes the archetypal "church" is taken as a matter of fact.

This concludes Marcus' protology. Next follow the accounts of separation and restoration; these will be discussed in a comparative context below.

CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

THE MYTH OF SEPARATION AND RESTORATION

The unfolding of the Pleroma reaches a point where the tension between unity and multiplicity results in a split. This is invariably represented as the breaking away of the last projected aeon, named Sophia (except for *Tri. Trac.*, which prefers to call this aeon a, or the "Logos"). A distinction can be made between two forms of this account. The most conspicuous difference between them is that in the one version there is only one Sophia, whereas in the other there are two, a "higher" and a "lower" one. We shall deal with the simpler version first.

Systems with one Sophia

The Tripartite Tractate

Tri. Trac. narrates how "it came upon one of the aeons that he should undertake to grasp the inconceivability (of the Father) and give glory to it" (75:17–20). Failing to achieve this, however, the aeon produced himself as a solitary *logos*,[1] rather than as an integrated member of the Entirety. The discrepancy between individuality and totality is what causes the split. The previous pages (from 60:1) have explained how the Father can be grasped only through the concerted efforts of the aeons, as they reproduce his image— that is, the Son—by performing acts of praise collectively. For an individual aeon to try to do this means that he overreaches himself:

> . . . \<he\> undertook a task beyond his power, since he wished to bring
> forth something perfect without belonging to a union (in order to do

---

[1] The translation in Thomassen and Painchaud, *Traité tripartite*, "un *Logos* de l'Unité" (75:22) probably needs correction. The expression ογλογος ⲛ̄ⲧⲉ †ⲙⲛ̄ⲧⲟⲩⲉⲉⲓ seems to contrast with ⲡⲧⲱⲧ ⲛ̄ⲗⲉ ⲛⲓⲡⲧⲏⲣϥ̄ (77:24). I therefore propose the following translation in 75:22–24: ". . . it was a solitary *logos* (that he produced), one that did not originate in the union of the Entireties."

so), and with no one having told him to do it. This aeon was the last
to <have been>[2] brought forth through mutual assistance, and he was
the youngest of age. And before he had yet brought forth anything to
the glory of the Will and in the union of the Entireties, he acted pre-
sumptuously, out of an overflowing love, and rushed forward towards
that which surrounds (the realm of) perfect glory. (76:6–23)

It is further explained that this could happen, first, because the aeon
was endowed, like the others, with wisdom[3] and free will (75:27–76:2),
and, secondly, because the Father allowed it to happen, having recog-
nised its necessity and planned it (76:23–30). These remarks suggests
that the aeon's "rushing forth" is regarded as an unavoidable con-
sequence of plurality. Free will is in itself a mark of plurality, and
the exercise of individualism, even at the expense of unity, is a nec-
essary stage in a movement from undifferentiated oneness to the state
of unity-in-multiplicity, with harmony between the divine Will and
the individual wills, that is the ultimate aim of the emanation process:

> The Father and the Entirety now withdrew from him, so that the
> boundary which the Father had fixed should become firm—for the
> boundary does not exist (in order to prevent) the unreachable (from)
> being reached, but because of the Will of the Father—and also so that
> the things that happened should be for the sake of an economy that
> was to come about—and it was <not> possible that it should not come
> to pass—for the revelation of the Pleroma. For this reason, then, it is
> wrong to condemn the movement that is the Logos. Rather, we should
> speak of [the] movement of the Logos as the cause that made an
> ordained economy come to pass. (76:30–77:11)

The inevitable outcome of the rushing forth is nevertheless the iso-
lation of the singular aeon-Logos from the Pleroma: the Pleroma
"withdraws" from him and remains inside the boundary. Next, how-
ever, a split occurs within the separated aeon himself:

> Now, on the one hand, the Logos gave birth to himself as a perfect
> single one, to the glory of the Father, who had willed him and was
> pleased with him. On the other hand, the things that he had desired

---

[2] Emending to ⲉⲁⲩⲛ̄ⲧϥ̄ in 76:13–14, with Attridge, since "through mutual assis-
tance" suggests that the agent of the "bringing forth" must be the collective aeons,
and not the Father himself.

[3] *Tri. Trac.* thus affirms the Wisdom-character of the errant aeon, although it
prefers not to use Sophia as a proper name for it.

to grasp and attain he brought forth as shadows, simulacra, and imitations, for he could not bear to look at [the] light, but looked at [the] depths, and faltered. Because of this, he suffered a division and a turning away. (77:11–22)

The action of the Logos is deeply ambiguous since it, after all, epitomises the tension between oneness and plurality inherent in the emanation process itself. This ambiguity produces a separation between perfection and deficiency within the Logos, represented as two distinct mythological persons:

> That which he had produced as a unitary aeon hastened upwards to that which was his, and to his kin in the Pleroma. He abandoned that which had come into being from deficiency [and] what had issued from it in an illusion, since they did not belong to him. The one who had brought him forth, with superior perfection, from himself, however, became weak after he had brought him forth, like a female nature abandoned by her male element. For that which issued from his (presumptuous) thought originated from something that itself was deficient; therefore, what was perfect in him left him and [went] upwards to those who were his own. He remained in the Pleroma . . . (77:37–78:20)

The abandoned, weak, and "female" half of the Logos is left behind, together with his "presumptuous thought." This thought manifests itself as vain imitations of the Pleroma, possessing no real existence (78:28–79:16), and as a set of disobedient, vainglorious and divisive powers (79:16–80:11). Eventually, these will become the stuff of matter. The subsequent account in *Tri. Trac.* describes the repentance and conversion of the Logos (80:11–81:25), and his remembrance and supplication for help (81:26–82:9), which will become a new order of powers (82:10–83:33). These powers have the nature of soul, but are from the start locked in combat with the forces of (proto-)matter previously emitted (83:34–85:15). While the Logos hopes for assistance from above (85:15–32), the Pleroma unites in a prayer of intercession (85:33–86:23), and produces the Son as their common offspring (86:23–88:8). He proceeds to manifest himself to the Logos, and to her two kinds of offspring (88:8–90:13). In response to the vision of the Son, the Logos brings forth a third kind, which has a spiritual nature (90:14–91:6) and to which the two previous kinds, now somewhat tamed by the advent of the Son, are subordinated (91:7–92:22). In this way, the three kinds have been produced that will be the constituents of the cosmos now to be created.

The myth of separation in *Tri. Trac.* involves, as we have seen, only one Sophia figure. This characteristic is shared with a couple of other texts, to which we shall now turn.

Iren. Haer. *I 11:1*

This text, attributed by Irenaeus to Valentinus,[4] offers the following account:

καὶ τὸν Χριστὸν δὲ οὐκ ἀπὸ τῶν ἐν τῷ πληρώματι αἰώνων προβεβλῆσθαι, ἀλλὰ ὑπὸ τῆς μητρὸς ἔξω γενομένης κατὰ τὴν μνήμην τῶν κρειττόνων ἀποκεκυῆσθαι μετὰ σκιᾶς τινος. καὶ τοῦτον μὲν, ἅτε ἄρρενα ὑπάρχοντα, ἀποκόψαντα ἀφ᾽ ἑαυτοῦ τὴν σκίαν ἀναδραμεῖν εἰς τὸ πλήρωμα.

τὴν δὲ μητέρα ὑπολειφθεῖσαν μετὰ τῆς σκιᾶς κεκενωμένην τε τῆς πνευματικῆς ὑποστάσεως ἕτερον υἱὸν προενέγκασθαι, καὶ τοῦτον εἶναι τὸν δημιουργὸν, ὃν καὶ παντοκράτορα λέγει τῶν ὑποκειμένων. συμπροβεβλῆσθαι δὲ αὐτῷ καὶ ἀριστερὸν ἄρχοντα ἐδογμάτισεν . . .

καὶ τὸν Ἰησοῦν <δὲ> ποτὲ μὲν ἀπὸ τοῦ συσταλέντος ἀπὸ τῆς μητρὸς αὐτῶν συναναχυθέντος <τε> τοῖς ὅλοις προβεβλῆσθαί φησι, τουτέστιν τοῦ Θελητοῦ, ποτὲ δὲ ἀπὸ τοῦ ἀναδραμόντος εἰς τὸ πλήρωμα, τουτέστιν τοῦ Χριστοῦ, ποτὲ δὲ ἀπὸ τοῦ Ἀνθρώπου καὶ τῆς Ἐκκλησίας.

Christ also was not produced from the aeons in the Pleroma, but was born, together with a certain shadow, by the Mother after she had ended up outside, and in accordance with her remembrance of the higher things. And he, being male, cut away the shadow from himself and hastened back into the Pleroma.

But the mother, left alone with the shadow and emptied of her spiritual substance, brought forth another son, and this is the Demiurge, whom he also styles the supreme ruler of all that is subject to him. Along with him was brought forth a left-hand ruler as well, he claimed . . .

And Jesus is sometimes said to have been brought forth by him who withdrew from the Mother and was reunited with the Entireties, that is, by Theletos, sometimes, however, by the one who returned back into the Pleroma, that is, by Christ, and sometimes by Man and Church.

Irenaeus introduces this variant by noting its differences vis-à-vis the system he has previously (I 1–8) reported as the Valentinian model system (the words καὶ . . . προβεβλῆσθαι were evidently composed by Irenaeus himself): instead of being produced by the entire Pleroma (cf. I 2:5, 4:1) Christ is said to have issued from the Mother Sophia after her passion; he then abandoned her, returning to the Pleroma.

---

[4] See above, chapter 2, and 204–5.

This is the same theme as in *Tri. Trac.*: the "Christ" of this text equals the perfect male half of the errant aeon that hastens back into the Pleroma according to *Tri. Trac.* There is a slight difference between the two accounts in so far as in *Tri. Trac.* the perfect part of the aeon is produced in the course of the act of passion itself, whereas in the present text Christ comes into being only afterwards, during the subsequent phase of remembrance (which in *Tri. Trac.* instead produces the order of the psychic). It is nevertheless obvious that it is the split itself which is the constant theme, while the psychological reconstruction of how it occurred varies.

Deprived of spirit, Sophia then gives birth to the Demiurge, who is evidently psychic in nature, as well as to a left-hand ruler, who must be identical with the Devil, and material. The account is quite rudimentary, probably due to the abbreviated nature of Irenaeus' heresiological source (Justin?).[5] Thus we lack the usual passion account of Sophia, according to which her irrational passions (which will become matter) precede her sentiments of repentance and conversion (which will produce soul), but the structural characteristics of the myth (the separation of spirit from passions, the subsequent generation of both soul and matter from the latter) are nevertheless recognisable.

The last paragraph, which mainly reports different ideas about the origin of Jesus, offers, as well, another variant of the myth of separation. According to this variant, it is from her partner, Theletos,[6] that the Mother Sophia is separated. This idea presupposes a Pleroma consisting of syzygies. It may also be observed that while the Pleroma described in Iren. *Haer.* I 11:1 is a thirty aeons system of the standard type, the myth of separation appended to this system by Irenaeus (the first paragraph of the text quoted above) does not involve a notion of the separation of Sophia from her *syzygos*. Do these two sections of Irenaeus' account in 11:1 perhaps derive from different sources?[7]

---

[5] See above, 19–20.
[6] Are the words τουτέστιν τοῦ Θελητοῦ inserted by the heresiologist himself, on the basis of I 1:2?
[7] Cf. Markschies, *Valentinus*, 373–76.

Exc. *23:2, 32–33* (*Theodotus*)

> The Valentinians call Jesus the "Paraclete" because he came forth, full of the aeons, as one who proceeded from the Entirety. (2) For Christ, leaving behind Sophia who had brought him forth and entering the Pleroma, sought help on behalf of Sophia who had been left outside (Χριστὸς γάρ, καταλείψας τὴν προβαλοῦσας αὐτὸν Σοφίαν, εἰσελθὼν εἰς τὸ πλήρωμα, ὑπὲρ τῆς ἔξω καταλειφθείσης Σοφίας ἠτήσατο τὴν βοήθειαν), and by the good pleasure of the aeons Jesus was brought forth, a Paraclete for the aeon who had transgressed. (*Exc.* 23:1–2)

This variant of the separation myth closely resembles that found in Iren. *Haer.* I 11:1. Clement, however, introduces the theme in a different context. Irenaeus' focus is on the question of the origin of Christ, whereas the excerpt in Clement answers the question why Jesus is called "Paraclete." The name is explained by the action carried out by Christ after his return to the Pleroma: he asked the Pleroma for help, and Jesus is then brought forth as a result of the positive and unanimous response of the aeons to this request. This motif is found in *Tri. Trac.* as well (78:23–28, 81:26–82:9, 85:33–88:8).[8] It is not mentioned by Irenaeus in *Haer.* I 11:1, but his report is evidently selective.

It seems likely that the source of Clement's excerpt, where this doctrine is attributed to "the Valentinians," is the same as that of Iren. *Haer.* I 11:1, which claims to report the doctrine of "Valentinus." That is to say that both texts look as if they may derive from the same heresiological source, which in turn used the same document to represent "Valentinian" doctrine.

The same version of the separation is found in *Exc.* 32–33. There, the theme is introduced in the context of a distinction between fullness and image: "In the Pleroma, where unity reigns, each of the aeons has its own fullness (πλήρωμα), that is, the syzygy. Whatever proceeds from a syzygy, they say, is fullness, whereas whatever proceeds from one single, is image (εἰκόνες)" (32:1). This distinction between fullness and image is then used to introduce a theory about the origin of Christ:

---

[8] The term "Paraclete" occurs in *Tri. Trac.* 87:9.

ὅθεν ὁ Θεόδοτος τὸν Χριστὸν, ἐξ
ἐννοίας προελθόντα τῆς Σοφίας, εἰκόνα
τοῦ πληρώματος ἐκάλεσεν. οὗτος δέ,
καταλείψας τὴν μητέρα, ἀνελθὼν εἰς
τὸ πλήρωμα, ἐκράθη, ὥσπερ τοῖς ὅλοις,
οὕτω δὲ καὶ τῷ παρακλήτῳ. υἱόθετος
μέντοι γέγονεν ὁ Χριστὸς, ὡς πρὸς τὰ
πληρώματα ἐκλεκτὸς γενόμενος καὶ
πρωτότοκος τῶν ἐνθάδε πραγμάτων ...

Χριστοῦ, φασί, τὸ ἀνοίκειον φυγόντος
<καὶ> συσταλέντος εἰς τὸ πλήρωμα,
ἐκ τῆς μητρῴας γενομένου ἐννοίας, ἡ
μήτηρ αὖθις τὸν τῆς οἰκονομίας προ-
ηγάγετο ἄρχοντα, εἰς τύπον τοῦ
φυγόντος αὐτήν, κατ᾽ ἐπιπόθησιν αὐτοῦ,
κρείττονος ὑπάρχοντος, ὃς ἦν τύπος τοῦ
πατρὸς τῶν ὅλων. διὸ καὶ ἥττων γίνεται,
ὡς ἂν ἐκ πάθους τῆς ἐπιθυμίας
συνεστώς. ἐμυσάχθη μέντοι ἐνιδοῦσα
τὴν ἀποτομίαν αὐτοῦ, ὥς φασιν αὐτοί.

(32:2) That is why Theodotus called Christ, who issued from the thought of Sophia, an image of the Pleroma. (3) He, however, left behind his mother, entered into the Pleroma, and was mingled with the Entireties, and thus also with the Paraclete. (33:1) Christ thus became an adopted son, because with respect to the full-nesses he became "elect" and "first-born" of the things there ... [A comment by Clement follows.]

(3) When Christ, they say, left behind that which was foreign to him and was drawn back into the Plero-ma, after he had come into being from the Mother's thought, the Mother again brought forth the Ruler of the *oikonomia*, in the likeness of the one who had left her and as a result of her longing for him—for he had a superior nature, since he was a likeness of the Father of the Entireties. (4) The Ruler came, in consequence, to be inferior, since he originated from the passion of desire. She was disgusted at him when she saw his roughness [*lit.* "his cut-off nature"], as they say.

There are source-critical problems in this section. It begins with a reference to Theodotus, but later on the source is referred to as φασί, which suggests that Clement at that point is reporting the views of the Valentinians in general, using an anonymous document or a heresiological source. It is difficult to decide where the quotation or paraphrase from Theodotus ends and the second source takes over—whether at 32:3 or at 33:3. At any rate, no essential inconsistency can be detected among the theories reported here. The ἔννοια of Sophia is ambiguous in nature, just as in the versions discussed above, and results in a division. The superior component of Sophia's thought, representing her spiritual nature, is brought forth as Christ, who then leaves his mother and enters the Pleroma. Having been born only as an image of the Pleroma, since he had a single parent only, he becomes a "son" by an act of adoption by the Pleroma. This obvi-ously means that he thereby acquires a complete set of parents, a father as well as a mother, something that qualifies him for the sta-

tus of "son." Becoming a "son" is thus equivalent to being a "fullness," in the terminology of 32:1. He becomes a member of the Pleroma, and thus also takes part in its subsequent production of the Paraclete. This is consistent with 23:2.

The inferior outcome of Sophia's thought is the Ruler, who personifies the negative and deficient aspect of the passion, the desire. The word ἀποτομία is deliberately chosen in order to emphasise the notion of division as the main point of the account.[9]

A Valentinian Exposition

An account of the passion of Sophia apparently begins on p. 31 in this text, but the manuscript is so fragmentary at that point that the details of the narrative cannot be reconstructed. The account of the fall itself must in any case have been fairly brief, since the equally fragmentary p. 32 seems already to deal with the response of the Pleroma, that is, their communal action which results in their bringing forth a saviour figure. This account extends to p. 33, and ends with the words:

ⲉⲡⲉⲓ[ⲇ]ⲏ ⲧⲉⲥⲇⲓⲟⲣⲟⲱⲥⲓⲥ ⲛⲁϣⲱⲡⲉ ⲉⲛ ϩⲓⲧⲛ̄ⲗⲁⲩⲉ ⲉⲓⲙⲏⲧⲓ ϩⲓⲧⲛ̄ⲡⲉϥϣⲏⲣⲉ ⲙ̄ⲙⲓⲛ ⲙ̄ⲙⲁϥ ⲡⲉⲉⲓ ⲉⲧⲉⲡⲱϥ ⲧⲏⲣϥ ⲡⲉ ⲡⲡⲗⲏⲣⲱⲙⲁ ⲛ̄ⲧⲙ̄ⲛ̄ⲧⲛⲟⲩⲧⲉ ⲁϥⲣ̄ϩⲛⲉϥ ⲛ̄ϩⲣⲏⲓ̈ ⲛ̄ϩⲏⲧϥ ⲥⲱⲙⲁⲧⲓⲕⲱⲥ ⲁⲕⲱⲉ ⲙ̄ⲙ̄ϭⲁⲙ ⲁⲩⲱ ⲁϥⲉⲓ ⲁⲡⲓⲧⲛ̄ ⲛⲉ⟨ⲉ⟩ⲓ ⲛ̄ⲇⲉ ⲁϩⲁⲧⲥⲟⲫⲓⲁ ϣⲁⲡⲟⲩ ⲛ̄ⲧⲁⲣⲉϥⲡⲱⲧ ⲁⲧⲡⲉ ⲁⲃⲁⲗ ⲛ̄ϩⲏⲧⲥ̄ ⲛ̄ϭ[ⲓ]ⲡⲉⲥϣⲏⲣⲉ

For the correction could not come about save by means of his own son, to whom belongs the entire divine Pleroma. It pleased him to place within him the powers as his body, and (with which) he descended.

These things Sophia endured after her son had hastened upwards away from her. (33:28–37)

The last sentence makes it clear that the separation theme in this text is realised through the motif of Sophia's son, who leaves her and hastens back into the Pleroma. It is the same motif as was found in the texts studied above. The son is not named, but it is likely that he is the "Christ" whose generation is referred to in 33:16–17 (. . .]ⲧⲉⲩⲟ ⲁⲃⲁⲗ ⲙ̄ⲡⲉ[ⲭ]ⲣⲏⲥⲧⲟ̣[ⲥ . . .). (The subject of the verb would be Sophia.) It also seems that he must be the one who is alluded to in the passage preceding the one quoted above:

---

[9] Cf. below, 278.

... oⲩⲙ̄ⲛⲧⲧⲉⲗⲉⲓ[ⲟ]ⲥ [. . . . . .] oⲩ-
ⲙⲟⲣⲫⲏ ⲛ̄ⲧⲉⲗⲉ[ⲓⲁ ⲡⲉⲛⲧ]ⲁϩⲃⲱⲕ ⲁⲧⲡⲉ
ⲁϩⲟⲩⲛ [ⲁⲡⲡⲗⲏⲣ]ⲱⲙ[ⲁ] ⲙ̄ⲡⲉϥⲟⲩⲱϣ[ⲉ
ⲇⲉ ⲁ̄ⲣ̄ⲥⲩ]ⲛⲉⲩⲇⲟⲕⲉⲓ ⲙⲛ̄ⲡϩ̄ⲓⲥⲉ [ⲁⲗⲗⲁ
ⲁⲩ]ⲣ̄ⲕⲱⲗⲩⲉ ⲙ̄ⲙⲁϥ ⲁⲩⲉ[ⲓ]ⲛ̄ⲉ
ⲉⲩⲁⲙⲁϩⲧⲉ ⲙ̄ⲙⲁϥ ϩⲓⲧⲛ̄ [ⲡ]ϩⲟⲣⲟⲥ ⲉⲧⲉ-
ⲡⲉⲉⲓ ⲡⲉ ϩⲓⲧⲛ̄ ⲡ[ⲥ]ⲩⲍⲩⲅⲟⲥ

[. . .] perfection [. . .] a perfect form
[. . .]. He who had ascended[10] into
[the Pler]om[a] did not want [to]
consent to the suffering, [but] he [was]
prevented from pa[ssing through][11]
because he [was he]ld back by [the]
Limit—that is, by the *syzygos*. (33:
20–28)

The story is, then, that Sophia's son, probably called "Christ" and
described, as in *Tri. Trac.*, as perfect, ascended to the Pleroma, and
left behind his mother along with her passion. He was prevented by
the Limit from taking any action to rectify the passion, because the
διόρθωσις could take place only through "his own son."

The latter expression (33:30) must refer to the Father himself,[12]
or, perhaps, to the Pleroma ("its own son" in that case); the Saviour
who is subsequently produced to rectify the passion contains within
himself the divine Pleroma.[13]

The association of the Limit and the *syzygos*—the aeon partner of
Sophia—is peculiar. It is clear that they are separate entities in the
text, so the statement in 33:26–28 cannot be taken to mean that the
two are identical. Clearly both these figures are concerned with safe-
guarding the wholeness of the Pleroma, which is probably why they
are here associated; but the extant text does not allow us to distin-
guish their individual roles in that respect with precision.

After a very fragmentary first half page, at 34:23 Sophia has
reached the stage of repentance and supplication:

> She repented [and] prayed to the Father of Truth, [saying]: "Granted
> (ⲉⲥⲧⲱ) that I have ab[andoned] my *syzygos*. Because of [that, I] am
> without confirmation as well (†]ⲙⲡⲃⲁⲗ ⲙ̄ⲡⲕⲉⲧⲁϫⲣⲟ). I deserve what I
> am suffering. I dwelt in the Pleroma bringing forth aeons and bear-
> ing fruit together with my *syzygos*." She recognised what she used to
> be and what had become of her. And so she suffered on both accounts.
> It has been said that she laughs because she continued to be solitary
> and (thus) imitated the Incomprehensible One; it is said that she
> [weeps][14] because she had cut herself off from her *syzygos*. (34:25–38)

---

[10] ⲡⲉⲛⲧ]ⲁϩⲃⲱⲕ is my restoration.

[11] ⲁⲩⲉ[ⲓ]ⲛ̄[ⲉ ⲉⲩⲁⲙⲁϩⲧⲉ is my restoration. (ⲟⲩⲉⲓⲛⲉ 'pass by' Crum 483b.)

[12] Cf. Thomassen, "Valentinian Exposition," 232–33.

[13] As was noted in "Valentinian Exposition," 232n28, 33:31–34 alludes to Col
2:9 ὅτι ἐν αὐτῷ κατοικεῖ πᾶν τὸ πλήρωμα τῆς θεότητος σωματικῶς.

[14] The context clearly demands ⲣⲓⲙⲉ in 34:37. It must either be restored ([ⲣⲓⲙ]ⲉ),
or, if this appears materially difficult, emended from [ⲥⲱⲃ]ⲉ̣ (the reading of the

The passage describes Sophia's state of separation by means of pairs of opposite terms. The "suffering" caused by her being "outside" contrasts with the "confirmation" provided by being inside. This tension is then relocated to a conflict within Sophia herself (as was also the case with the logos in *Tri. Trac.*). She suffers doubly because of the discrepancy between her pleromatic origins and her present condition (and the inner tension implied in this double suffering is itself a suffering). Finally, the tension within her is expressed through the contradictory emotions of laughter and tears, a topos that can be found also in Iren. *Haer.* I 4:2.[15] The consistent language of 'division' is here once again notable.

<center>SYSTEMS WITH TWO SOPHIAS</center>

In the systems surveyed so far in this chapter, the rupture that takes place with the last aeon is described as a division whereby the more perfect part of the aeon is separated and is reintegrated in the Pleroma, while the aeon's deficient part is left outside, together with its passions, in a state of abandonment and deprivation. The ascended part is named Christ and is described as Sophia's son, whereas the part that is left behind is Sophia "herself." *Tri. Trac.*, to express the same set of ideas, respectively uses the terms "the perfect part" and "the Logos." However, another group of systems, to which we now turn, gives a more complex account of the separation myth.

<center>*The two Sophias*</center>

According to Iren. *Haer.* I 2:2, the division takes place between Sophia herself and her "desire" (ἐνθύμησις). Sophia herself is caught up by the Limit and is restored to the Pleroma, while her deficient emotion is removed and remains outside. This Enthumesis is then

---

editors), which in that case has to be regarded as an erroneous repetition of the same word in 34:35.

[15] ἀπὸ γὰρ τῶν δακρύων αὐτῆς γεγονέναι πᾶσαν ἔνυγρον οὐσίαν, ἀπὸ δὲ τοῦ γέλωτος τὴν φωτεινήν, ἀπὸ δὲ τῆς λύπης καὶ τῆς ἐκπλήξεως τὰ σωματικὰ τοῦ κόσμου στοιχεῖα· ποτὲ μὲν γὰρ ἔκλαιε καὶ ἐλυπεῖτο, ὡς λέγουσι, διὰ τὸ καταλελεῖφθαι μόνην ἐν τῷ σκότει καὶ τῷ κενώματι, ποτὲ δὲ εἰς ἔννοιαν ἥκουσα τοῦ καταλιπόντος αὐτὴν φωτός, διεχεῖτο καὶ ἐγέλα· ποτὲ δ' αὖ πάλιν ἐφοβεῖτο, ἄλλοτε δὲ διηπόρει καὶ ἐξίστατο. The theme is here used in the context of a system with two Sophias (see below). Also, the respective reasons for Sophia's emotions vary; this shows that "laughter and tears" existed as an independent *topos* in Valentinian sophiology.

(4:1) personified and given the name Achamoth, a Hebrew form of Sophia;[16] she comes to play the same role in the subsequent narrative as Sophia does in the systems commented upon above.

In Hippolytus' system, Sophia produces, without her partner, "an unformed and incomplete substance" (οὐσίαν ἄμορφον καὶ ἀκατασ-κεύαστον) (*Haer.* VI 30:6–9). The pair Christ-Holy Spirit is brought forth (by Mind and Truth) to remove this scandalous deficiency—the "abortion"—from the Pleroma (31:1–4). The abortion, kept out by the Limit, becomes "the Sophia outside the Pleroma" (ἡ ἐκτὸς πληρώματος Σοφία, 31:7).

Exc. section C begins (43:2) with the mission of the Saviour to Sophia and thus does not include an account of the separation of Sophia from the Pleroma. From 45:2 τῆς ἔνδον (*sc.* Σοφίας), it can nevertheless be observed that the document that was the source of Clement's excerpt operated with two Sophias.[17]

In the following an attempt will be made to explain the significance of this variation. Why are there two Sophias in these systems instead of just one?

Sophia and Christ

The clue to understanding the difference between the two versions lies in the realisation that the myth of separation in its primitive form is based on the motif of the crucifixion. As a protological idea, the myth visualises the generation of matter as a separation, a "cutting off," of matter from spirit. This idea, moreover, is symbolically fused with the theme of Christ's spirit abandoning his body on the cross. Hence the cross of the crucifixion is seen as the agent separating spirit and matter, which explains why it is identified with the Limit that safeguards the Pleroma from contact with the realm of matter.[18] Christ's abandonment of Sophia thus means that spirit and

---

[16] Köbert, "Achamoth."

[17] Cf. Sagnard, *Extraits*, 155n3; see also 155n2. It may be noted that *Exc.* section C does not employ the name Achamoth for the external Sophia, which is evidence that, although the source documents used by Irenaeus and Clement were very similar, they were not identical but rather two different rewritings of a shared archetype.

[18] Iren. *Haer.* I 2:4, 3:1.5, 4:1, 7:2; Hipp. *Haer.* VI 31:5, 34:7; *Exc.* 22:4, 42:1. Cf. also Thomassen, "How Valentinian," 269.

matter are detached from one another in the protogonic process, in the same way as Christ left his body behind on the cross after his salvific incarnation in the world was accomplished.

In the systems reported by Irenaeus and Hippolytus, however, it is no longer Christ who abandons Sophia, but Sophia herself who leaves behind her ἐνθύμησις (Irenaeus), or her aborted offspring (Hippolytus). That these versions are secondary revisions of the original idea[19] is obvious from the fact that the central features of the Christ-Sophia myth are retained in the account of this second Sophia through the insertion of a new episode in the narrative. According to Irenaeus' system, a new syzygy, Christ/the Holy Spirit, is emitted after Sophia's restoration, and given the task of instructing and cautioning the aeons (I 2:5). After that, Christ is sent out towards Achamoth. He gives her "the form with regard to substance only, not with regard to knowledge" (μόρφωσιν τὴν κατ᾽ οὐσίαν μόνον, ἀλλ᾽ οὐ τὴν κατὰ γνῶσιν), and then leaves her to lament her deprived state (4:1). This episode is clearly a reformulation of the original motif where Christ abandons Sophia immediately after her passion.[20] It brings the story via a detour to the same point as it was right after Sophia's separation in the older version: Sophia is left in a state of deprivation, mourning for and longing after Christ, the element of rationality, form, and light that has abandoned her: she has now become the negativity from which the cosmos will subsequently be fashioned.

Hippolytus' version is similar. Here, too, the syzygy Christ/the Holy Spirit is brought forth after Sophia's transgression, though their task is described a little differently: they are to give form to and to separate the abortion, as well as to console Sophia (*Haer.* VI 31:2). It is also said that Christ formed the external Sophia and prepared her to become a perfect aeon that would be equal to the ones inside the Pleroma.[21] Having accomplished these things, Christ (and the

---

[19] This point has been argued previously by Stead, "Sophia," 81–88, though with arguments that were not, in my opinion, sufficiently accurate.

[20] The motif of the cross is reformulated as well: Christ "extends himself" beyond the Cross/Limit in order to give form to Achamoth, and then withdraws (I 4:1, 7:2).

[21] ἣν . . . ἐμόρφωσε καὶ ἀπειργάσατο τέλειον αἰῶνα, οὐδενὶ τῶν ἐντὸς πληρώματος χείρονα δυν<άμεν>ον γενέσθαι 31:7. The meaning is not that she was made into a perfect aeon at this moment (which the translation in Foerster, *Gnosis* I 188, suggests), but that Christ enabled her ultimately to become one.

Holy Spirit) then withdrew from Sophia (31:7), and left her in a
state of loss and distress.

The addition of this episode to the original narrative has produced
some incongruities in the system. The new syzygy of Christ/the Holy
Spirit does not really serve a function in the narrative other than
that of providing the motif of Christ withdrawing from Sophia; the
other things they do, such as separating and strengthening, have in
fact already been performed by the Limit. In Irenaeus' system, more-
over, this additional syzygy produces the irregular number of 32
aeons for an otherwise tightly structured Pleroma. This last point
apparently disturbed the author of Hippolytus' system, who instead
chose to leave the Father-Monad out of the calculation of aeons, so
that the Pleroma eventually ends up with 30 aeons with the addi-
tion of Christ and the Holy Spirit (VI 31:3).

But what motivated the substitution of a redeemed, first Sophia
for Christ in these versions of the system? The likely answer is that
it has to do with the revised soteriology and Christology in these
western Valentinian texts. The earlier version, which lets Christ share
in the passion of Sophia, presupposes, it would seem, a soteriology
of participation. Just as the Saviour suffered by assuming a body of
flesh which he subsequently abandoned on the cross, he also par-
took of Sophia's passion before he was reintegrated into the Pleroma.
Since the systems of Irenaeus and Hippolytus, as we have seen, dis-
carded in their soteriologies the notions that the Saviour suffered
and was incarnated in a human body, they also had to revise the
idea that Christ shared in the passion of the fallen aeon in their ver-
sions of the protology.

Moreover, by allowing Sophia herself to be restored to the Pleroma,
these systems let the Pleroma itself be restored already at this point
in the unfolding of the salvation history. The Pleroma regains its
perfect number and has suffered no loss once Sophia is brought
back. In the original version of the system, on the other hand, the
apokatastasis of the Pleroma itself is pending the eschatological return
of Sophia and her seed.[22] There, the Pleroma remains deficient as
long as one of its members is still missing. The salvation history as
a whole is a crisis of the Pleroma itself, which is ultimately why the

---

[22] Cf. above, 53–57, 172–77.

Saviour himself must descend into matter and suffering in order for the crisis to be resolved.

In the systems of Irenaeus and Hippolytus, on the other hand, the harmony of the Pleroma is a pre-established fact with the return of Sophia. Achamoth, the external Sophia, is not and never was a member of the Pleroma, but is rather a by-product of the process that lead to its restoration already during the first phase of the protogony. The spiritual seed, the offspring of this second Sophia, are thus not so much lost particles of the Pleroma whose eschatological integration into it forms part of the restoration of the Pleroma itself, as they are spiritual beings (produced by their mother's contemplation of the Pleroma in the Saviour) who *know* about the mysteries of Achamoth (cf. Iren. *Haer.* I 6:1 end). Their knowledge of what is already an established given, an unchanging truth about a transcendent reality, assures their salvation, not their mutual participation with the Saviour in a continuing drama of suffering and incarnation.[23]

The Sige *of Marcus*

A version of the myth of separation also forms part of Marcus' treatise, whose peculiarly "linguistic" pleromatogony was commented upon above (241–47). Marcus explains how the Pleroma is composed of element-letters, which in turn are made up of other letters in such a way that the whole is lost from sight through the plenitude of individual elements who sound their own voices. What then happened, was this:

ὧν στοιχείων τοῦ ἐσχάτου στοιχείου τὸ ὕστερον γράμμα φωνὴν προήκατο τὴν ἑαυτοῦ, οὗ ὁ ἦχος ἐξελθὼν κατ᾽ εἰκόνα τῶν στοιχείων στοιχεῖα ἴδια ἐγέννησεν, ἐξ ὧν τά τε ἐνταῦθα διακεκοσμῆσθαί φησι καὶ τὰ πρὸ τούτων γεγενῆσθαι. τὸ μέντοι γράμμα αὐτό, οὗ ὁ ἦχος ἦν συνεπακολουθῶν τῷ ἤχῳ κάτω, ὑπὸ τῆς συλλαβῆς τῆς ἑαυτοῦ ἀνειλῆφθαι ἄνω λέγει εἰς ἀναπλήρωσιν

The last letter of the last of these elements lifted up its voice and its sound went forth and produced its own elements after the image of the (other) elements. From these the things here below were fashioned and what preceded them was brought into existence. While its sound followed its echo below, the letter itself

---

[23] Cf. above, chapters 6–9. Christ's "extending himself beyond the Cross" in Irenaeus (cf. above, 259n20) is now just a piece of symbolism to be perceived by the initiates and no longer implies that he suffered.

τοῦ ὅλου, μεμενηκέναι δὲ εἰς τὰ κάτω
τὸν ἦχον ὥσπερ ἔξω ῥιφέντα.

was received up again by its own
syllable, he says, so as to make the
whole complete again. But the sound
remained down below, as though cast
outside. (Iren. *Haer.* I 14:2)

"The last letter" obviously alludes to Sophia. A distinction is made
between the letter itself and the sound (ἦχος) it emits. The ἦχος cor-
responds to the *enthumesis* of Irenaeus' system, and the "abortion" in
Hippolytus—in other words to the external Sophia. The word ἦχος
is ambiguous in so far as it can refer both to the sound as such and
to the reverberation of the sound as an echo. It seems in fact that
the two different meanings of the word may both be intended in
the phrase ὁ ἦχος ἦν συνεπακολουθῶν τῷ ἤχῳ.[24] In any case, the word
suggests materiality as well as copy: as an acoustic representation,
the sound or the echo are both the material double of an immate-
rial reality. Either way, the ἦχος corresponds to the external Sophia
in her role as the origin of the material cosmos.

The phrase "the letter itself was received up again" means that
Sophia herself was restored to the Pleroma. With her restoration,
the Pleroma was made complete. Marcus' version of the myth of
separation thus stands in the same tradition as the systems of Irenaeus
and Hippolytus.[25] It presupposes this tradition and reformulates it by
means of the theory of the aeons as "letters."

---

[24] For attempts to emend the phrase cf. Förster, *Marcus Magus*, 213–14.
[25] This is also the conclusion of Förster, *Marcus Magus*, 214. For the discussion
as to whether Marcus taught one Sophia or two, see Hilgenfeld, *Ketzergeschichte*,
372–74; Stead, "Sophia," 86–87; Förster, *Marcus Magus*, 348–52.

CHRONOLOGY OF THE PROTOLOGIES

The Priority of Type A Over Type B

Questions regarding relative chronological relationships have arisen on several occasions in this part of our study. Thus, as was shown in the preceding chapter, the version of the myth where there are two Sophias, and where the first Sophia is restored to the Pleroma, is historically secondary to the version where there is only one Sophia, and where it is Christ, her son, who re-ascends to the Pleroma while Sophia herself is left outside the Limit. With regard to the plero-matogony, moreover, it was argued at the beginning of chapter 20 that the widespread model of the thirty aeons Pleroma (4 + 4 + 10 + 12) is built on the premises of the type of protology found in *Tri. Trac.* and *Gos. Truth*: The notion of the simultaneous unity and difference of the Father and the Son articulated in the latter texts is what is elaborated as a Tetrad in the thirty aeons model, and the unsettled relationship between the two first terms of the system is successively relocated to the primary Ogdoad, then to the division into a Decad and a Duodecad, and expressed through the idea of syzygic pairs, until it eventually manifests itself as a rupture with the passion of Sophia.

Characteristic of the protology found in *Tri. Trac.* and *Gos. Truth,* which was called type A above, is also the idea that the aeons initially exist inside the Father and that the unfolding of the Pleroma takes the form of an exteriorisation of the Father's essence, a process that is equivalent to the birth of the aeons, their coming into existence as individual beings possessing knowledge. In this conception of the system, moreover, protology coalesces with salvation history in such a way that the Pleroma is not fully unfolded until the return of the spiritual humans at the moment of eschatological consummation—as the final event in a protracted programme of education. The thirty aeons system, on the other hand (type B), describes the unfolding of the Pleroma as a hierarchical series of projections outwards from the first principle; the ontological issue here is how the

projected plurality can maintain continuity with its source. In this version of the system, the Pleroma is consummated already with the restoration of Sophia.

That the type B system represents a later development is also borne out by the fact that traces of the older idea of the initial existence of the aeons inside the Father still appear as residual *topoi* devoid of systematic function in a couple of texts that have adopted the thirty aeons architecture of the Pleroma, viz. the *Lehrbrief* of Epiphanius, and *Val. Exp.* (cf. above, 221 and 233–34). In addition, it seems likely that the striking term Βυθός as such, as a name for the Father, alludes to the idea that the aeons were at first inside the Father as the unfathomable ground of their being. In the context of the thirty aeons system the semantic connotations of the term are no longer transparent. It can only be an old, inherited piece of vocabulary—more likely than not introduced by Valentinus himself.[1]

At this point it is relevant to refer to the report on Valentinus' Pleroma in Tertullian, which states that,

Ptolemaeus intrauit, nominibus et numeris aeonum distinctis in personales substantias, sed extra deum determinatas, quas Valentinus in ipsa summa diuinitatis ut sensus et affectus, motus incluserat.	Ptolemy followed the same road (i.e., as Valentinus), distinguishing the aeons by names and numbers into personal substances located outside God, whereas Valentinus had included them in the totality of the deity himself as thoughts, sentiments and emotions. (*Val.* 4:2)

According to this report, Valentinus placed the aeons within the Father himself, whereas Ptolemy situated them outside the supreme deity, providing them with names and specifying their numbers. It is very tempting to see a connection between this report and the observation made above concerning the two versions of the pleromatogony. Thus the version found primarily in *Tri. Trac.* and *Gos. Truth*, where the aeons at first exist inside the Father and are then exteriorised and manifested, would be close to the original vision of Valentinus himself, while the invention of the thirty aeons system may be attributed to Ptolemy.

---

[1] It does in fact occur in Valentinus' hymn in Hipp. *Haer.* VI 37:7. The variant ⲃⲁⲑⲟⲥ occurs several times in *Gos. Truth* and *Tri. Trac.*

This may very well be the case. It must be admitted, to be sure, that Tertullian describes Valentinus' position here primarily as a theological doctrine: Valentinus conceived of the aeons as attributes of the deity, while Ptolemy interpreted them as separate beings. The theory found in *Tri. Trac.* and *Gos. Truth*, on the other hand, is a protology that at the same time is a soteriology: the aeons attain conscious existence and become knowing individuals through their generation *ad extra*. In the monistic vision of those texts, however, this difference can be said simply to represent different aspects of the same reality; the aeons *are* the attributes of the Father, at the same time as they are his children who need to be educated. The bringing forth of these "children," their formation and education, is also the self-exteriorisation of the deity himself.[2] We are not prevented, therefore, from regarding the remark in Tertullian as a testimony, albeit somewhat superficial, for the type of aeonology attested by *Tri. Trac.* and *Gos. Truth*. In fact, it is only in the form found in those texts that any doctrine "including" the aeons *in ipsa summa diuinitatis* is attested at all in a Valentinian context.[3]

From a source-critical point of view, Tertullian's report must be considered credible—much more so than Iren. *Haer.* I 11:1.[4] It is a piece of straightforward information; no polemical motive can be detected to suggest that it might be an invention (though Tertullian, of course, uses it to demonstrate Valentinian inconsistency). It is noteworthy that the report contradicts what Tertullian elsewhere presents as the doctrine of "Valentinus"—the theory of thirty aeons, etc.;[5] this shows that he is here using a specific source. The passage in which it occurs (*Val.* 4:2–3) offers, it should be noted, further

---

[2] Cf. in particular *Tri. Trac.* 59:2–64:27, with commentary in Thomassen and Painchaud, *Traité tripartite*; as well as Thomassen, "Structure." Markschies, who rejects any affinity between *Val.* 4:2 and the aeons of *Gos. Truth* (*Valentinus*, 350), fails to consider this double character of the aeons.

[3] Uncertainty must remain as to whether the exact words *sensus et affectus, motus* represent Valentinus' own vocabulary or should be written on Tertullian's account (or, more probably, that of his heresiological source). They may be authentic: *sensus* may reflect αἴσθησις, which is used as a term for the divine self-perception in *Tri. Trac.* 56:38–57:1. *Affectus* is probably διάθεσις, which means a divine "attribute" and also is that as which the aeons exist (*Tri. Trac.* 59:3.10, cf. 63:34–35). Even a "movement" exists in the Pleroma (*Tri. Trac.* 64:18) in so far as the aeons are continually attracted toward the Father as manifested in the Son.

[4] Cf. above, chapter 2.

[5] E.g., *Praescr.* 33:8; cf. Markschies, *Valentinus*, 385, with n358.

pieces of information on various Valentinians—Heracleon, Secundus, Marcus, Theotimus, Axionicus—which also give the impression of having been derived, at least in part,[6] from otherwise unknown and reliable sources.

Certainty cannot be achieved in this matter, but since the priority of the type A protology is likely on internal grounds, the scenario suggested by Tertullian appears plausible. This means that Ptolemy is the most likely figure behind the type B protology. That protology is a revision of Valentinus' earlier conception, which survives in *Tri. Trac.* and *Gos. Truth.* As was shown in chapter 15, Ptolemy's system cannot have been identical with that of Irenaeus' main source. Rather, a systematic treatise by Ptolemy may be hypothesised as the common ancestor of the various texts used by Irenaeus, Hippolytus, and Clement (*Exc.* section C)—and indeed of all the texts surveyed above in chapter 20, and which employ or presuppose the thirty aeons model.

In chapter 10, the genealogical relationship between the major texts was sketched in the form of a stemma (82). We now see that Ptolemy may be hypothetically placed on level with the "X" in that stemma—with the qualification that in historical reality there may well have been more links in the chains of transmission than are represented in the stemma.

Type B Systems With One Sophia

A further question can be asked: how does each of the two pleromatological types relate to the issue of whether there is one or two Sophias? It is immediately clear that the older version of the myth of separation with only one Sophia is found also in texts that propound the pleromatogony of type B, that is, the thirty aeons system. It was that version of the myth that was known to the heresiologist used by Irenaeus as his source for the doctrine of "Valentinus" in *Haer.* I 11:1, and the same source also ascribed the thirty aeons system to Valentinus. Moreover, the combination of the two themes is also found in *Val. Exp.*, as we have seen. This observation leads to the conclusion that Iren. *Haer.* I 11:1 and *Val. Exp.* must represent

---

[6] The names of Secundus and Marcus may have been taken from Irenaeus (*Haer.* I 11:2, 13–15), but not the others.

an earlier stage of the type B system than what is found in the family constituted by the main systems of Irenaeus, Hippolytus, and *Exc.* section C. At this earlier stage, the type B system still contained the version of the myth of separation where Christ is the son of Sophia and re-ascends to the Pleroma while Sophia is left on the outside—the same version as can be found in the eastern Valentinian systems of Theodotus and *Tri. Trac.*

This conclusion regarding the chronological priority of the systems in Iren. *Haer.* I 11:1 and *Val. Exp.* corroborates with certain features of shared terminology: those two systems are alone in assigning to the supreme being the name Ἄρρητος;[7] in addition, he forms a δυάς with Σιγή,[8] and the Son is called Πατήρ.[9]

Various interpretations of this situation are possible. For example, it may be hypothesised that *Val. Exp.* is dependent on the treatise documented in Iren. *Haer.* I 11:1,[10] or that the two treatises share a common source. Either of these—that is, the treatise of Iren. *Haer.* I 11:1 or its source—may also in turn be the predecessor of the common source of Irenaeus' and Hippolytus' main systems, and of *Exc.* section C. This means that the stemma may be modified in the following way:

---
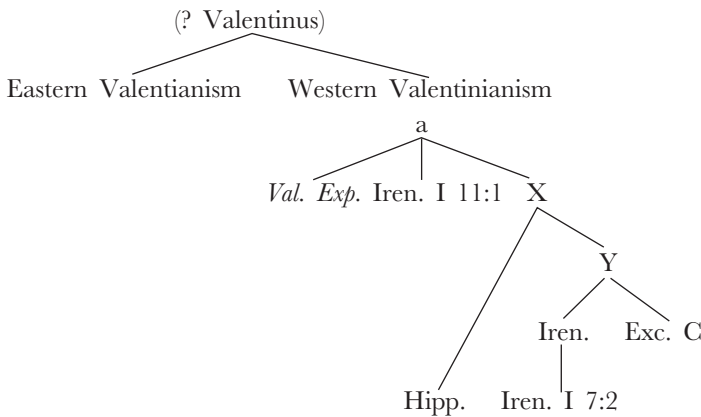
[7] ⲡⲁⲧⲱⲉϫⲉ ⲁⲣⲁϥ *Val. Exp.* 22:20–21, 24:39, 39:31–32.

[8] Cf. *Val. Exp.* 22:26, 25:20. The term δυάς in this context is distinctive as well.

[9] ⲡϣⲏⲣⲉ ⲡⲓⲱⲧ ⲙ̄ⲡⲧⲏⲣϥ̄ *Val. Exp.* 23:36; this feature is widespread, however.

[10] The opposite is hardly conceivable since *Val. Exp.* clearly presupposes more than one source (see above, 236–38, 240) and the manuscript itself is some two hundred years younger than the document used by the heresiologist who is the source of Irenaeus' text.

'a' here denotes the version of the type B system that has only one Sophia, while 'X' represents the modified system in which the reduplicated Sophia has been introduced, together with new versions of the Christology and the soteriology. Again, the question may be asked where Ptolemy is to be placed on the stemma—is he 'a' or 'X'? It is probably more consistent with his position as a major leader to see him as the innovator of the thirty aeons system as such—thus 'a'—than as someone who did nothing more than modify that system. Situating him at this early stage in the development of the western systems is also consistent with the discrepancies between the ideas of Ptolemy that can be gleaned from the *Letter to Flora* and the "Ptolemaean" system in Irenaeus. (Cf. above, chapter 15.) More than this cannot be said.

THE MEANING AND ORIGINS OF VALENTINIAN PROTOLOGY

The major concern of the Valentinian protologies is, as we have seen, to explain how plurality comes into being from oneness. The initial oneness of the Father becomes two with Father-and-Son, and this twoness in turn generates the plurality of the Pleroma of aeons. The tension between unity and diversity inherent in the Pleroma as it unfolds eventually produces a rupture, represented by the myth of Sophia. Sophia personifies the negative and uncontrolled aspect of the plurality that was first introduced when the Father decided to become more than himself alone.

In philosophical terms, the myth of Sophia accounts for the coming into being of matter (and soul). Being a personification of the negative aspect of plurality, she produces—or herself becomes—"passion," explained both as an irrational state of mind as such and as the desire of an illegitimate object: the ability to procreate all by oneself. With this πάθος, or ἐνθύμησις, the inherent plurality of the Pleroma manifests itself as division, its unifying motion of love is perverted as discordant desire. The effect of this divisive passion is to cause a split within Sophia herself: her spiritual nature is separated, and is reintegrated into the Pleroma, while her passionate part is left in a state of utter deficiency and is excluded from the Pleroma by the Limit. This part becomes the origin of matter.

The doctrine is, then, that plurality gave rise to passion, and from passion came matter through an act of separation. Attractive as this story may be on the general human level as a dramatic myth of creation and fall, it is essential to realise that it is also an allegory for a philosophical doctrine of considerable abstraction and technicality. The philosophical source of this doctrine can be determined with a fair degree of precision: it is the physical theory of monistic Neopythagoreanism.

VALENTINIAN PROTOLOGY AS NEOPYTHAGOREAN PHYSICS

It is a well-known fact that in the history of ancient philosophy, the Neopythagoreans of the late Hellenistic period were the first to develop theories that endeavoured to derive matter from a single first principle. In this endeavour they were important predecessors of the monism of Plotinus. They also influenced decisively, however, protological mythic thinking within Hermetism and Gnosticism.[1] The novelty of the Neopythagorean theories was that they no longer considered matter to be an unoriginated first principle, as did the classical philosophical schools, all of which taught some kind of dualism involving form and matter as two independent principles. In contrast to this, some Neopythagoreans had begun to speculate about ways to derive everything, even matter itself, from a single beginning—the Monad.

The testimonies for this monistic trend within the Pythagorean tradition are not extensive. They begin with the Pythagorean *Hypomnemata* quoted by Alexander Polyhistor around 80 BCE,[2] and further include Eudorus of Alexandria (first cent. BCE),[3] Moderatus of Gades (end of first cent. CE),[4] a report in Sextus Empiricus X 248–283, a fragment of Numenius where this kind of doctrine is criticised,[5] and other Neopythagoreans such as Nicomachus of Gerasa.[6] To illustrate the affinity of Valentinian protology with these theories we shall take a closer look at the fullest of the testimonies mentioned, that of Moderatus of Gades.[7]

---

[1] This was pointed out regarding the theory of Physis in *Poimandres* by Festugière in *Révélation*, IV, chapters 2–3. For Valentinianism, the connection was first established, I believe, in Thomassen and Painchaud, *Traité tripartite*, esp. 337–38; also cf. Thomassen, "Derivation of Matter."

[2] In Diogenes Laertius, VIII 24–36, at 25.

[3] In Simplicius, *In Phys.* 181:10–30 Diels. The One as cause of matter also figures in Eudorus' emended version of Aristotle's *Metaph.* A 6, 988a10–11, quoted by Alexander of Aphrodisias, *In Metaph. ad loc.*, 59:1 Hayduck.

[4] Simplicius, *In Phys.* 230:34–231:27 Diels.

[5] Frg. 52:15–19 Des Places = Calc. *In Tim.* 295.

[6] For a general introduction see Dillon, *Middle Platonists*, 341–61.

[7] For a general account of this shadowy figure see Dillon, *Middle Platonists*, 344–51.

Moderatus and Irenaeus' system on the origin of matter

The account of Moderatus' theory on matter is found in Simplicius *In Phys.*, who refers to the theory indirectly, through a quotation from Porphyry's lost work *On Matter*:[8]

Ταύτην δὲ περὶ τῆς ὕλης τὴν ὑπόνοιαν ἐοίκασιν ἐσχηκέναι πρῶτοι μὲν τῶν Ἑλλήνων οἱ Πυθαγόρειοι, μετὰ δ᾽ ἐκείνους ὁ Πλάτων, ὡς καὶ Μοδέρατος ἱστορεῖ. οὗτος γὰρ κατὰ τοὺς Πυθαγορείους τὸ μὲν πρῶτον ἓν ὑπὲρ τὸ εἶναι καὶ πᾶσαν οὐσίαν ἀποφαίνεται, τὸ δὲ δεύτερον ἕν, ὅπερ ἐστὶ τὸ ὄντως ὂν καὶ νοητὸν, τὰ εἴδη φησὶν εἶναι, τὸ δὲ τρίτον, ὅπερ ἐστὶ τὸ ψυχικόν, μετέχειν τοῦ ἑνὸς καὶ τῶν εἰδῶν, τὴν δὲ ἀπὸ τούτου τελευταίαν φύσιν τὴν τῶν αἰσθητῶν οὖσαν μηδὲ μετέχειν, ἀλλὰ κατ᾽ ἔμφασιν ἐκείνων κεκοσμῆσθαι, τῆς ἐν αὐτοῖς ὕλης τοῦ μὴ ὄντος πρώτως ἐν τῷ ποσῷ ὄντος οὔσης σκίασμα καὶ ἔτι μᾶλλον ὑποβεβηκυίας καὶ ἀπὸ τούτου.

καὶ ταῦτα δὲ ὁ Πορφύριος ἐν τῷ δευτέρῳ Περὶ ὕλης τὰ τοῦ Μοδεράτου παρατιθέμενος γέγραφεν ὅτι βουληθεὶς ὁ ἑνιαῖος λόγος, ὥς πού φησιν ὁ Πλάτων, τὴν γένεσιν ἀφ᾽ ἑαυτοῦ τῶν ὄντων συστήσασθαι, κατὰ στέρησιν αὐτοῦ ἐχώρησε τὴν ποσότητα πάντων αὐτὴν στερήσας τῶν αὐτοῦ λόγων καὶ εἰδῶν. τοῦτο δὲ ποσότητα ἐκάλεσεν ἄμορφον καὶ ἀδιαίρετον καὶ ἀσχημάτιστον, ἐπιδεχομένην μέντοι μορφὴν σχῆμα διαίρεσιν ποιότητα πᾶν τὸ τοιοῦτον.

It seems that this opinion concerning Matter was held first among Greeks by the Pythagoreans, and after them by Plato, as indeed Moderatus tells us. For he,[9] following the Pythagoreans, declares that the first One is above Being and all essence, while the second One—which is the "truly existent" and the object of intellection—he says is the Forms; the third—which is the soul-realm—participates in The One and the Forms, while the lowest nature which comes after it, that of the sense-realm, does not even participate, but receives order by reflection from those others, Matter in the sense-realm being a shadow cast by Not-Being as it manifests itself primally in Quantity, and which is of a degree inferior even to that.

And in the second book of *On Matter* Porphyry, citing from Moderatus, has also written that the Unitary Logos—as Plato somewhere says—wishing to produce from itself the origin of beings, by withdrawing itself left room for[10] Quantity, depriving it of all its *logoi* and Forms. This "Quantity" he described as shapeless,

---

[8] For this much-discussed passage, see especially Dodds, "The *Parmenides* of Plato," 136–39; Festugière, *Révélation* IV 22–23, 38–40; Krämer, *Geistmetaphysik*, 251–53; Merlan, "Greek Philosophy from Plato to Plotinus," 91–94; Dillon, *Middle Platonists*, 347–49.

[9] Whether οὗτος refers to Moderatus or to Plato (as interpreted by Moderatus) is uncertain, but not decisive.

[10] Festugière, *Révélation* IV 38–39 (following Zeller) proposes to correct ἐχώρησε to ἐχώρισε. However, the notions both of "withdrawal" and of "cutting off" are possible in this context.

ἐπὶ ταύτης ἔοικε, φησί, τῆς ποσότητος ὁ Πλάτων τὰ πλείω ὀνόματα κατηγορῆσαι πανδεχῆ καὶ ἀνείδεον λέγων καὶ ἀόρατον καὶ ἀπορώτατα τοῦ νοητοῦ μετειληφέναι αὐτὴν καὶ λογισμῷ νόθῳ μόλις ληπτήν καὶ πᾶν τὸ τούτοις ἐμφερές.

αὕτη δὲ ἡ ποσότης, φησί, καὶ τοῦτο τὸ εἶδος τὸ κατὰ στέρησιν τοῦ ἑνιαίου λόγου νοούμενον τοῦ πάντας τοὺς λόγους τῶν ὄντων ἐν ἑαυτῷ περιειληφότος παραδείγματά ἐστι τῆς τῶν σωμάτων ὕλης, ἣν καὶ αὐτὴν ποσὸν καὶ τοὺς Πυθαγορείους καὶ τὸν Πλάτωνα καλεῖν ἔλεγεν, οὐ τὸ ὡς εἶδος ποσόν, ἀλλὰ τὸ κατὰ στέρησιν καὶ παράλυσιν καὶ ἔκτασιν καὶ διασπασμὸν καὶ διὰ τὴν ἀπὸ τοῦ ὄντος παράλλαξιν.

δι᾽ ἃ καὶ κακὸν δοκεῖ ἡ ὕλη ὡς τὸ ἀγαθὸν ἀποφεύγουσα. καὶ καταλαμβάνεται ὑπ᾽ αὐτοῦ καὶ ἐξελθεῖν τῶν ὅρων οὐ συγχωρεῖται, τῆς μὲν ἐκτάσεως τὸν τοῦ εἰδητικοῦ μεγέθους λόγον ἐπιδεχομένης καὶ τούτῳ ὁριζομένης, τοῦ δὲ διασπασμοῦ τῇ ἀριθμητικῇ διακρίσει εἰδοποιουμένου.

ἔστιν οὖν ἡ ὕλη κατὰ τοῦτον τὸν λόγον οὐδὲν ἄλλο ἢ ἡ τῶν αἰσθητῶν εἰδῶν πρὸς τὰ νοητὰ παράλλαξις παρατραπέντων ἐκεῖθεν καὶ πρὸς τὸ μὴ ὂν ὑποφερομένων.

undifferentiated, and devoid of form, but nonetheless receptible of shape, form, differentiation, quality, and all such things. It is apparently this Quantity, he says, to which Plato applies various predicates, speaking of an "all-receiver," that which is devoid of form, invisible, "the least capable of participating in the intelligible," and "barely seizable by pseudo-reasoning," and everything similar to such predicates.

This Quantity, he says, and this "Form," which is thought of as the withdrawal from it by the Unitary Logos of all the *logoi* of existing things that the latter embraces within itself, provides the models for the matter of bodies. And both the Pythagoreans and Plato named it "Quantity," he says—not in the sense of quantity as a Form, but in the sense of its being deprived, broken loose, stretched out, torn off, and because of its deviation from Being.

That is also why Matter is considered evil, since it flees the Good. And it is kept in check by it and is not allowed to overstep its boundaries; (in its nature of) being stretched out it receives the *logos* of ideal magnitude and is bounded by it, and (in its nature of) being torn off it is given form through numerical distinction.

Thus, according to this account Matter is nothing other than the deviation of sensible forms from intelligible ones, as they turn away from that region and are borne down towards Not-Being.[11]

---

[11] Simpl. *In Phys.* 230:34–231:27 Diels. The translation of the first paragraph is borrowed from Dillon, *Middle Platonists*, 347; the rest is modified from the translation by Merlan, "Greek Philosophy from Plato to Plotinus," 91–92.

The hierarchy of three Ones derives, as Dodds pointed out,[12] from Plato's *Parmenides*. The first One is supranoetic, the second One embraces the Forms, and the third One is the soul. Below the three Ones is found Matter, which has a negative kind of existence, like the reflection cast as a shadow. The structure is evidently similar to what is found later in Plotinus. It also corresponds to the basic hierarchy of Valentinian protology in so far as the Valentinian ineffable Father, or the Bythos, occupies the same position as the first One, and the Son, who embraces the Pleroma, that of the second One, whereas Sophia, in one of her aspects at least, is the world soul.[13] Beyond this general correspondence of structure, however, more specific and more significant agreements reveal themselves once we look more closely at the theories about the generation of matter.

According to Moderatus, matter came into being when "the Unitary Logos" "withdrew" to make room for Quantity, "depriving it of all its *logoi* and Forms." If "Pleroma" is substituted for "Unitary Logos," and "Sophia" for "Quantity," the description of the generation of matter in this text can be read as a precise account of the separation of Sophia from the Pleroma. Just as Moderatus' Quantity is detached from the Logos (which evidently is identical with the second One, the realm of Forms) so as to become the origin of matter, so Sophia is cut off and excluded from the Pleroma, and stripped of all rationality.

In fact, many details in the various versions of the Sophia story acquire new significance once they are read as allegories of Neopythagorean physical theory. Consider the following account in Irenaeus:

... ἐκτεινόμενον ἀεὶ ἐπὶ τὸ πρόσθεν ... τελευταῖον ἂν καταπεπόσθαι καὶ ἀναλελύσθαι εἰς τὴν ὅλην οὐσίαν, εἰ μὴ τῇ στηριζούσῃ καὶ ἐκτὸς τοῦ ἀρρήτου μεγέθους φυλασσούσῃ τὰ ὅλα συνέτυχε δυνάμει. ταύτην δὲ τὴν δύναμιν καὶ ὅρον καλοῦσιν.... διὰ δὲ τοῦ ὅρου τούτου φασὶ κεκαθάρται καὶ ἐστηρίχθαι τὴν Σοφίαν καὶ ἀποκατα-

... she was ever extending herself further and further forwards and would have been finally absorbed ... and dissolved in the totality of being, had she not encountered the power that supports the Entireties and keeps them outside the ineffable Greatness. This power they also call the Limit.... By this Limit, they say,

---

[12] "The *Parmenides* of Plato," 137–39.
[13] This basic, though rather general, structural agreement was noted by Krämer, *Geistmetaphysik*, 253.

σταθῆναι τῇ συζυγίᾳ· χωρισθείσης γὰρ τῆς ἐνθυμήσεως ἀπ᾿ αὐτῆς σὺν τῷ ἐπιγενομένῳ πάθει, αὐτὴν μὲν ἐντὸς πληρώματος μεῖναι, τὴν δὲ ἐνθύμησιν αὐτῆς σὺν τῷ πάθει ὑπὸ τοῦ ὅρου ἀφορισθῆναι καὶ ἀποσταυρωθῆναι καὶ, ἐκτὸς αὐτοῦ γενομένην εἶναι μὲν πνευματικὴν οὐσίαν, φυσικήν τινα αἰῶνος ὁρμὴν τυγχάνουσαν, ἄμορφον δὲ καὶ ἀνείδεον διὰ το μηδὲν καταλαβεῖν.

Sophia was purified, strengthened, and restored to her syzygy. Her desire having been separated from her, together with her passion, she herself remained within the Pleroma, but her desire, as well as her passion, was excluded and fenced off[14] by the Limit. And having become outside of it, it was still a spiritual being, since it represented in fact the natural inclination of an aeon, but it was shapeless and without form since it understood nothing. (Iren. *Haer.* I 2:2–4)

Several instances of shared vocabulary are noteworthy. First, the term "extension" (ἐκτείνεσθαι, ἔκτασις) is employed to describe Sophia as well as Quantity. It refers to the unlimited extension characteristic of the proto-material principle, and which becomes the origin of corporeal extension once a delimiting, formal agent is introduced.[15] Second, the agent that arrests the unlimited extension of Sophia in Irenaeus' account is the Limit. In Moderatus as well, the extension of Quantity is restricted by "boundaries." Third, Sophia (in this case her *enthumesis*) is separated (χωρισθείσης) and excluded (ἀφορισθῆναι). In the same way, Moderatus' Quantity is characterised as being "broken loose" and "torn off" (παράλυσιν καὶ ἔκτασιν καὶ διασπασμόν). Fourth, the description of the formlessness of Quantity and Enthumesis are nearly identical: ἄμορφον καὶ ἀδιαίρετον καὶ ἀσχημάτιστον viz. ἄμορφον δὲ καὶ ἀνείδεον—these are, of course, traditional Platonist terms for matter, going back to *Tim.* 51a7, where the Receptacle is said to be ἀνόρατον εἶδός τι καὶ ἄμορφον.

Later in Irenaeus' text, the situation of Enthumesis-Achamoth is described as follows:

τὴν ἐνθύμησιν τῆς ἄνω Σοφίας, ἣν καὶ Ἀχαμὼθ καλοῦσιν, ἀφορισθεῖσαν τοῦ πληρώματος σὺν τῷ πάθει λέγουσιν ἐν

After the desire of the Sophia above— which desire they also call Achamoth—had been excluded from the

---

[14] An allusion to the other name of the Limit, σταυρός. Being separated from the Pleroma by the Limit/Cross, Enthumesis is "crucified out."

[15] The verbal similarity of the text in Irenaeus with Phil 3:13 ἔμπροσθεν ἐπεκτεινόμενος is probably fortuitous, *pace* Sagnard, *Gnose valentinienne*, 249. Sagnard did not know the Neopythagorean parallels.

σκιᾶς καὶ κενώματος τόποις ἐκβε-
βράσθαι κατὰ ἀνάγκην· ἔξω γὰρ φωτὸς
ἐγένετο καὶ πληρώματος, ἄμορφος καὶ
ἀνείδεος ὥσπερ ἔκτρωμα, διὰ τὸ μηδὲν
κατειληφέναι. οἰκτείραντα δὲ αὐτὴν
τὸν Χριστὸν καὶ διὰ τοῦ σταυροῦ ἐπεκ-
ταθέντα, τῇ ἰδίᾳ δυνάμει μορφῶσαι
μόρφωσιν τὴν κατ᾽ οὐσίαν μόνον, ἀλλ᾽
οὐ τὴν κατὰ γνῶσιν· καὶ πράξαντα
τοῦτο ἀναδραμεῖν, συστείλαντα αὐτοῦ
τὴν δύναμιν, καὶ καταλιπεῖν <αὐτὴν>
. . .

Pleroma together with the passion, she was of necessity cast out into shadow and regions of emptiness. For she had become outside of light and fullness, shapeless and devoid of form like an abortion since she comprehended nothing. But Christ took pity on her, and by extending himself forward beyond the "Cross" he imparted to her, through the power he had, form—form with regard to being, not, however, with regard to knowledge. And having done this, he hastened back above, withdrew his power, and left her . . . (Iren. *Haer.* I 4:1)

More affinities with Moderatus can be observed here. Achamoth, now the detached principle of matter, is associated with "shadow" (cf. σκίασμα in Moderatus). Furthermore, the important notion of "withdrawal" is remarkable. Representing the principle of form, Christ "extends himself" into the region of the formless, out of "compassion," and then "withdraws," leaving Achamoth receptive, as matter, of ulterior cosmogonic formation. The *topos* is the same—though a bit more complex in its ramifications in the Valentinian account—as that of the στέρησις of the Unitary Logos in Moderatus, which "by withdrawing itself left room for Quantity, depriving it of all its *logoi* and Forms."

"Extension," "spreading out," "withdrawal," and "division"

These are the basic terms that, in Neopythagoreanism as well as in Valentinian treatises, describe the process that allows materiality to come into being from a single first principle. According to the report on the Pythagoreans in Sextus Empiricus, the One is always delimiting, while the Indefinite Dyad becomes two and *extends* the numbers into an unlimited multitude (τοῦ μὲν ἑνὸς ἀεὶ περατοῦντος τῆς δὲ ἀορίστου δυάδος δύο γεννώσης καὶ εἰς ἄπειρον πλῆθος τοὺς ἀριθμοὺς ἐκτεινούσης, X 277). The Indefinite Dyad is the principle of infinite extension and plurality known from the oral teaching of Plato, as well as from the Pythagorean tradition itself. The Dyad is, in other words, the same as matter—or more precisely, the principle of matter. Moderatus' "Quantity," which is also characterised as ἔκτασις, may be regarded as another name for the Dyad.

The report in Sextus Empiricus does not explain the origin of the Dyad—whether it is an independent unoriginated principle always acting in opposition to the Monad, or is somehow derived from it. Other testimonies, however, indicate the existence of theories which make the Monad itself "extend" into plurality, as in the Pseudo-Clementine *Homilies* 224:34 Rehm: κατὰ γὰρ ἔκτασιν καὶ συστολὴν ἡ μονὰς δυὰς εἶναι νομίζεται; cf. ibid. 234:18 ἀπ' αὐτοῦ εἰς ἄπειρον ἔκτασιν. In Christian trinitarian theology the Sabellians and Marcellus of Ancyra later took up the term in order to explain how God, by extension and spreading out (πλατύνειν), is a Triad as well as a Monad.[16] The latter example shows how these originally geometrical terms—the extension of the line, the spreading out of the plane—found a place in theological theories of emanation.

As metaphysical terms describing the principle of plurality, "extension" and "spreading out" are intrinsically ambiguous. They carry negative connotations in so far as they represent the unlimitedness, indeterminateness, and formlessness of the principle of materiality. In this negative sense, ἐκτείνεσθαι is used of Sophia in Iren. *Haer.* I 2:2, as we saw above. However, there also exists a more positive usage of these terms, which appears when they denote the unfolding of the deity himself from oneness into a multiplicity. This is the way they are used in *Tri. Trac.* to describe the Son, who

> extended himself and spread himself out (ⲁϥⲥⲁ[ⲩ]ⲧⲛ̄ ⲙ̄ⲙⲁϥ ⲁⲃⲁⲗ ⲛ̄ⲙⲓⲛ ⲙ̄ⲙ̣[ⲁϥ] ⲁⲩⲱ ⲡⲉⲛⲧⲁϥⲡⲁⲣⲉϣ̄ϥ̄ ⲁⲃ[ⲁⲗ]). It is he who gave firmness, location, and a dwelling-place to the Entirety—according to one of his names he is in fact "Father of the Entirety"—through his enduring suffering (ⲙ̄[ⲛ̄ⲧ̄]ϣⲟⲡ ϩⲓⲥⲉ) on their behalf, having sown in their minds (the idea) that they should seek what exceeds their [. . .], by making them perceive *that* he exists and (thereby making them) seek *what* he might be. (65:4–17)

The Son represents the aspect of the Father that extends and spreads out (the underlying Greek terms are undoubtedly ἐκτείνειν and πλατύνειν) to plurality. As in the Sophia account, the process involves a "passion," though in this case not as an irrational emotion but as divine "compassion." It is evident also that the suffering of the Saviour

---

[16] Cf. Athanasius, *Adv. Ar.* IV 13; and Lampe, *Lex.* s.vv. ἐκτείνειν, πλατύνειν. πλατύνειν is found, for instance, in Nicomachus, *Introd. Ar.* II 7:3.

on the cross, where he spread out his limbs, is alluded to and serves as a type of the protological process.[17] The protology has soteriological connotations: the purpose of the spreading out is to enable the aeons to emerge from indistinct potentiality into cognisant individuals,[18] a process that at the same time also is the unfolding manifestation of the deity himself as a oneness-in-plurality.

In *Val. Exp.* as well, this language of "spreading out" is used: "In the Second he revealed his Will, and in the Fourth he spread himself out (ⲡⲱⲣ$\overline{\omega}$ ⲁⲃⲁⲗ)" (23:27–31)—in this case the term denotes the unfolding of the Father-Monad into a Tetrad. Here, too, it is used with positive connotations.

This double usage of the terminology of extension and spreading out—partly to describe the unfolding of the deity himself, and partly to account for the negative dimension of plurality in Sophia as a source of matter—undoubtedly reflects the ambiguities inherent in the Neopythagorean attempts to derive plurality from the oneness of the Monad. Whereas according to certain theories, such as the ones attested in the Pseudo-Clementine *Homilies*, the Monad itself extends and spreads itself into the nature of Dyad, others explain the production of the Dyad as taking place through an act of withdrawal, or as a division. Moderatus' account (κατὰ στέρησιν αὐτοῦ ἐχώρησε κτλ.) exemplifies this latter view.

Another example is found in Iamblichus' *Theologoumena Arithmeticae*, a work incorporating materials from the Neopythagorean Nicomachus of Gerasa. Here we are told that the Dyad was the first to "separate itself" from the Monad (πρώτη γὰρ ἡ δυὰς διεχώρισεν αὐτὴν ἐκ τῆς μονάδος).[19] Moreover, in Iamblichus' *De Mysteriis* this doctrine appears as well. According to the Egyptians, Iamblichus says, "God brought forth matter by cutting off materiality from substantiality" (ὕλην δὲ παρήγαγεν ὁ θεὸς ἀπὸ τῆς οὐσιότητος ὑποσχισθείσης ὑλότητος).[20] The "Egyptian" doctrine here is evidently Neopythagorean lore.[21]

---

[17] Cf. above, 99, 186–87.

[18] For the epistemological *topos* existence-essence, see Thomassen and Painchaud. *Traité tripartite*, 297–98.

[19] 9:5–6 de Falco. Cf. also Krämer, *Geistmetaphysik*, 320n479.

[20] *Myst.* VIII 3. On this text, cf. Festugière, *Révélation* IV 39.

[21] Festugière, ibid. The notion also appears in the *Poìmandres* (the ἐν μέρει in *Poim.* 4; cf. Festugière, *Révélation* IV 42); and in Numenius, frg. 11 (in a non-monistic context); cf. Thomassen, "Derivation of Matter," 11.

Finally, according to Numenius some Neopythagoreans who have not properly grasped the theory of the Dyad assert that, "this indeterminate and unlimited Dyad is itself brought forth from the single Monad, when the Monad withdraws from its nature and wanders into the condition of the Dyad" (*etiam illam indeterminatam et immensam duitatem ab unica singularitate institutam recedente a natura sua singularitate et in duitatis habitum migrante*).[22] The report is perhaps muddled—it would make better sense, and be more consistent with the other testimonies, if the Monad were to withdraw from the Dyad rather than having the Monad withdraw from itself and thus itself become the Dyad. In any case, the notion of a "withdrawal" as the act by which the Dyad is constituted is significant here.

In the Valentinian texts these terms occur frequently (see chapter 21 above). Sophia's rational self is reintegrated into the Pleroma once her passion—her *enthumesis*, or Achamoth, the lower Sophia—has been "cut off" from her (χωρισθείσης, ἀφορισθῆναι Iren. *Haer.* I 2:4, 4:1; διαίρεσις Hipp. *Haer.* VI 31:2, ἀποχωρίζειν 31:4). In *Val. Exp.* Sophia herself has been "cut off" (ⲁⲥϢⲁⲁⲧⲥ̄ ⲁⲃⲁⲗ) from her σύζυγος (34:38), and according to *Tri. Trac.* the Logos "suffered a division and a turning away" (ⲟⲩⲡⲱϢⲉ ⲡⲉ ⲛ̄ⲧⲁ ϥⲛ̄ⲕⲁ2 ⲙ̄[ⲙⲁ]ϥ ⲙ̄ⲡ̄ⲛⲟⲩⲣⲓⲕⲉ 77:21–22). The Logos' spiritual component hastened back to the Pleroma (77:37–78:28, cf. *Val. Exp.* 33:36), leaving the deficient part outside, emptied of masculinity (77:12–13), rationality (λόγος) and light (78:34–35). Similarly, in Iren. *Haer.* I 11:1, Christ cuts off the shadow together with which he was born, and, abandoning his mother, ascends on high (ἄτε ἄρρενα ὑπάρχοντα, ἀποκόψαντα ἀφ' ἑαυτοῦ τὴν σκίαν ἀναδραμεῖν εἰς τὸ πλήρωμα). Finally, it is only on this background that the word ἀποτομία, used with reference to the Ruler of the Economy in *Exc.* 33:4, becomes comprehensible: after Christ had left her, Sophia brings forth the Ruler as a substitute.[23] This vocabulary consistently portrays Sophia in the role of the Neopythagorean Dyad, cut off from the intelligible to become the origin of matter.

The same is the case with the notion of "withdrawal": "The Father and the Entirety withdrew from him (ⲁⲩⲥⲁⲕⲟⲩ ⲛⲉⲩ ⲥⲁⲃⲟⲗ ⲙ̄ⲙⲟϥ),

---

[22] Frg. 52:15–19 des Places = Calcidius *In Tim.* 295.
[23] Cf. above, 36–37, 254–55.

in order that the boundary which the Father had fixed should become firm" (*Tri. Trac.* 76:30–33). Similarly, Christ withdraws (συστέλλεσθαι) from Sophia (*Exc.* 33:1; Iren. *Haer.* I 11:1 συσταλέντος ἀπὸ τῆς μητρὸς; ibid. I 4:1).[24]

The Limit

The notion of the Limit, which separates the perfect realm of the spiritual from the defective nature of proto-matter, must have been taken over by the Valentinians from Neopythagorean theory as well. As is well known, the πέρας delimiting the ἄπειρον of the Dyad is a characteristic feature of traditional Pythagorean doctrine. For Moderatus as well, there are ὥροι keeping matter in check and away from the Good.[25] The Valentinian texts never use the term πέρας. The name for the Limit is always ὅρος. In addition, it is given a number of other epithets: Cross (σταυρός), Deliverer (λυτρωτής), Liberator (καρπίστης),[26] Limit-setter (ὁροθέτης), and Conveyor (μετα-γωγεύς), according to Iren. *Haer.* I 2:4, 3:1.[27]

ὅρος is a synonym (in this context) for πέρας,[28] and implies the same metaphysical and protological functions as the Pythagorean term: to delimit the infinite, eliminate formlessness, and prevent evil. Beyond that, however, the Valentinians endowed the term with strong soteriological connotations. The motive for this is evidently to be found in the fact that liberation from matter, and from the evilness

---

[24] Cf. above, 24–25, 251–55. Also cf. the discussion about "separation" and "with-drawal" in *Exc.* 61:6 (see above, 66–67). That discussion concerns the Saviour's abandonment of his body on the cross, which is thematically the same as the pro-tological separation of spirit and proto-matter.

[25] Similarly, Plotinus often says that the ἀόριστον of the Dyad is delimited by an ὁρισμός; cf. Krämer, *Geistmetaphysik*, 312–15.

[26] Probably not "Reaper" (Lampe, *Lex.* s.v.). In the context, the meaning of the word is more likely similar to that of λυτρωτής. The underlying semantic idea is the emancipation from slavery (i.e., to the forces of passion and matter).

[27] A similar series is found in Epiph. *Pan.* XXXI 6:9: καρπιστὴς ὁροθέτης χαριστήριος ἄφετος μεταγωγεύς (see above 229–30). These words are not given as epithets of the Limit, but are the names of aeons produced by, and characterising, the "sons" in their state of consummation. The literary relationship of the two texts is obscure, as is the precise significance of these terms in their context in Epiph.

[28] Cf. Plot. *Enn.* I 5:6:18 ὅρον τε καὶ πέρας, II 4:15:7, VI 6:3:14. Nothing sug-gests that the term has anything to do with the Egyptian god Horus, as was pro-posed in the 18th century by Massuet and still was thought possible by Orbe, *Espíritu Santo*, 599–600.

of passion, is the overriding soteriological value in Valentinianism. The protological act of separation, performed by the Limit, separating Sophia's passion from the pure spirituality of the Pleroma is therefore typologically equivalent to the soteriological event of the Saviour's incarnation, crucifixion, and re-ascent to the Pleroma.

This is, as has been pointed out already,[29] why the Limit is identified with the cross: The cross is where the Saviour gave up his spirit, where the spiritual Saviour was detached from the body in which he had been incarnated. In this way, the cross becomes a symbol for the separation of spirit and matter generally.[30] This symbolism, moreover, is further exploited by associating the outstretched limbs of the suffering Saviour on the cross with the philosophical notions of the extension and spreading out from the Monad to plurality and potential materiality.

The epithets given to the Limit-Cross in Iren. *Haer.* I 2:4, 3:1, quoted above, mainly underline its soteriological qualities, related to the fact that the Limit redeems and liberates from the forces of passion and matter, and conveys the former sufferer into the Pleroma. Sacramental (cf. λύτρωσις) and initiatory (μεταγωγεύς) functions for the Limit are suggested as well by these terms, but are not made explicit in the text.

---

[29] Above, 66–67, 258–59.

[30] The cross as a symbol of separation also appears in the vision of the Cross of Light in *The Acts of John* 97–102: The cross is a διορισμὸς πάντων (98), and διορίσας τὰ ἀπὸ γενέσεως καὶ κατωτέρω (99). It is also identified with the λόγος. In this text, the same association of the cross with the philosophical notions of the Limit and rationality is made as is found in Valentinianism. The text may be inspired by Valentinianism, but it is equally possible that such ideas had a wider currency. (See Lalleman, *Acts of John*, esp. 186–90; for "the Cross of Light" in general one may consult Böhlig, "Lichtkreutz," though he focuses rather one-sidedly on the identification of the cross with Plato's cosmic soul and fails to attend to the διορισμός-function of the cross, or to the Pythagorean background of this idea.)

Current ideas about the cross as a separator of believers and unbelievers may have contributed to the philosophical usage of it found in these texts. Thus, *Exc.* 42:1 says that ὁ σταυρὸς τοῦ ἐν πληρώματι ὅρου σημεῖόν ἐστιν· χωρίζει γὰρ τοὺς ἀπίστους τῶν πιστῶν ὡς ἐκεῖνος τὸν κόσμον τοῦ πληρώματος. In the non-Gnostic so-called *Gospel of the Saviour*, the cross similarly separates the saved on the right from the damned on the left: "[For] those on the [right will] take shelter [under you, apart from] those on the [left, O] cross . . ." (See Emmel, "*Gospel of the Savior*," p. 59 [verse 101], with p. 69; also, the commentary in Hedrick and Mirecki, *Gospel of the Savior*, 98–99.) This can be compared (with Hedrick and Mirecki, ibid., n55) to *Gos. Phil.* 67:24–25, which speaks about "the power of the cross," called by the apostles "the right and the left." In a gnosticising context, "left" and "right" are easily interpreted, of course, as "matter" and "spirit."

According to Iren. *Haer.* I 3:5, the Limit "has two methods of operation, namely, supporting and dividing. In so far as it supports and strengthens, it is the Cross; in so far as it divides and separates, it is the Limit" (δύο ἐνεργείας ἔχειν αὐτὸν ἀποφαίνονται, τήν τε ἑδραστικὴν καὶ τὴν μεριστικήν· καὶ καθὸ μὲν ἑδράζει καὶ στηρίζει, σταυρὸν εἶναι, καθὸ δὲ μερίζει καὶ διορίζει, ὅρον). The "supporting" and "strengthening" function of the Limit as the Cross adds further layers of symbolism to the theme. First, on the level of visual imagery, the supporting function of the cross evokes the image of a pillar upholding the Pleroma.[31] Secondly, on the philosophical level, this "strengthening" represents a formative act that takes place after the proliferation of the aeons into uncontrolled plurality has been arrested, and the aeons become oriented towards the unity of their source— a process similar to the procession and return in Neo-platonic models of emanation.[32]

Thirdly, the idea of strengthening has sacramental connotations.[33] The word στηρίζειν is also used to designate something that takes place in the λύτρωσις, the Valentinian ritual of initiation: "I have been strengthened and redeemed (ἐστήριγμαι καὶ λελύτρωμαι), and I redeem my soul from this aeon and from all that comes from it," the neophyte declares in Iren. *Haer.* I 21:3. In *Tri. Trac.* 128:24−30, "strengthening" (ⲧⲁϫⲣⲟ) is one of the names for baptism. In the light of this usage, the following description of the restoration of Sophia can easily be read as a ritual process of initiation: "By this Limit, they say, Sophia was purified, strengthened, and restored to her syzygy" (διὰ τοῦ ὅρου τούτου φασὶ κεκαθάρται καὶ ἐστηρίχθαι τὴν Σοφίαν καὶ ἀποκατασταθῆναι τῇ συζυγίᾳ, Iren. *Haer.* I 2:4). If a ritual interpretation is applied to this passage,[34] Sophia's purification

---

[31] The words ἑδράζει καὶ στηρίζει in themselves evoke the idea of a στῦλος. στύλου is in fact the Greek manuscript reading in the list of epithets in Iren. *Haer.* I 3:1 (ἡ τοῦ ὅρου καὶ στύλου καὶ λυτρωτοῦ κτλ.), but Holl and later editors are probably right to correct the text to σταυροῦ, above all since the Latin transmission has *crucis*. The association of the cross with a column seems not to be common among Christian writers generally; see, however, Edsman, *Baptême de feu*, 56, 166, 168; Williams, *Immovable Race*, 148–49.

[32] Cf. Iren. *Haer.* I 2:2 ἐπιστρέψαντα εἰς ἑαυτόν, which recalls the Neoplatonic ἐπιστροφή.

[33] Cf. Orbe, *Espíritu Santo*, 300−2; Thomassen and Painchaud, *Traité tripartite*, 305−6.

[34] Credit for having suggested a ritual interpretation of the passage is due to Lundhaug, "Fragments," 90−91, who offers, however, a different interpretation of

corresponds to the introductory, exorcistic phase of the initiation, whereas her strengthening is equivalent to what takes place in the central rite of baptism and/or anointing.[35] Finally, the ἀποκατάστασις of Sophia to the syzygic union with her partner parallels the union of the bridal chamber, the ultimate purpose of Valentinian initiation, when the initiate is joined with his or her angel so as to be reintegrated in the Pleroma as a whole person.[36]

The number of powers (ϭⲁⲙ) attributed to the Limit was expanded to four by some Valentinians, according to *Val. Exp.* 26:30–34,

---

the various elements. In my opinion, the "strengthening" (στηριγμός, ⲧⲁⲭⲣⲟ) is not apotropaic, as Lundhaug supposes, but represents a positive ritual act signifying incorporation, and probably is associated with the reception of the Spirit. Also, Lundhaug does not consider a ritual equivalent for the ἀποκατάστασις.

[35] The phases and the various forms of the Valentinian initiation ritual are discussed below, in Part IV.

[36] Such a ritual interpretation of the restoration of Sophia by the Limit raises the question of a rationale for the association of the Limit with ritual. How may the Limit be conceived of as an agent of redemption in a ritual context? The answer to this question is probably to be found in the identification of the Limit with the cross: whereas the Limit in itself has no apparent ritual connotations, this is evidently the case with the cross, which in early Christian initiation is performed as a sign at various points during the ritual. (This connection is suggested by Lundhaug, *Fragments*, 94.) Consignation, effected by tracing the figure of the cross on the forehead of the candidate, may be used both as a preparatory, apotropaic, purifying, and exorcistic rite (cf. Hipp. *Apost. Trad.* 20:8 *cum signaverit* (σφραγίζειν) *frontem, aures et nares*), *and* as an element of the central phase of the initiation associated with the post-baptismal anointing, the laying on of hands, and the reception of the Holy Spirit (Tert. *Res.* 8:3, *Praescr.* 40:3; Cypr. *Ep.* 73:9; Hipp. *Apost. Trad.* 21:23 *et consignabit* (σφραγίζειν) *in fronte eius*; Ambrose, *Sacr.* 3:8–10, *Myst.* 42 *spiritale signaculum*.

This is circumstantial evidence, and we do not possess Valentinian sources that explicitly mention that the initiates were signed with the cross. (At most, *Gos. Phil.* 73:17–19 might be cited, where the cross is identified with the tree of life, "the olive tree, from which came the chrism," a phrase that suggests that the application of the chrism may have taken the form of a consignation.) On the other hand, there is no reason to assume that the Valentinians did *not* follow this widespread custom, since Valentinian initiation rites in general largely conform with the pattern of the proto-Catholic ones. (See below, chapters 26–28.) Moreover, if the sign of the cross was in fact made during the initiation, it can be plausibly assumed that the association of the cross with the Limit may have been made in this context as well, so that the symbolism of the Limit-cross as the power that both separates and strengthens was brought to bear on the understanding of the consignations carried out both during the introductory, purifying part of the ritual, and during the subsequent sealing/confirmation. In this way, the initiation would become a ritual enactment of the general myth of restoration. In consequence, this would help to explain the sacramental connotations in the description of Limit's operation, as well as the overtones of initiation in the account of Sophia's restoration.

27:30–33,[37] by the addition of a "form-giving" (ⲟⲩⲣⲉⲥⲧⲙⲟⲣⲫⲏ < ?μορφωτική) and a "substance-producing" (ⲟⲩⲣⲉⲥⲭⲡⲉⲟⲩⲥⲓⲁ < ?οὐσιοποιός) power. Exactly what is intended with these terms is difficult to ascertain—especially since the text of *Val. Exp.* 27:1–15 has been lost, where the πρόσωπα, χρόνοι and τόποι of the Limit's four operating powers were apparently described. The same terms, "a form-giving and substance-producing power," also appear in *Soph. Jes. Chr.*,[38] in a description of the generative-manifesting power of the Spirit (= the Ineffable Father). The notions of giving form and producing substance seem in this context to be mainly protological.[39] The idea of a spiritual generator who provides both οὐσία and μορφή may have been developed in opposition to more traditional notions of creation where the creator merely imparts form to a pre-existing, material substance.[40] In the case of *Val. Exp.* it may be conjectured that the form-giving and substance-producing operations of the Limit signify that, in addition to guarding and strengthening the aeons collectively, it also produces them individually by creating and delineating their individual characteristics. This seems to presuppose that the Limit, in *Val. Exp.* at least, is conceived more as a power or an aspect of the Father himself than as a distinct entity.

"Audacity," "otherness," "movement," "independence"

According to Iren. *Haer.* I 2:2, the passion of Sophia was motivated by "audacity." Sophia's πάθος, it says,

. . . ἐνήρξατο μὲν ἐν τοῖς περὶ τὸν Νοῦν καὶ τὴν Ἀλήθεια, ἀπέσκηψε δὲ εἰς τοῦτον τον παρατραπέντα, προφάσει μὲν ἀγάπης, τόλμῃ δέ, διὰ μὴ κεκοινῶσθαι τῷ πατρὶ τῷ τελείῳ, καθὼς καὶ ὁ Νοῦς.	. . . began with Mind and Truth, but was concentrated in this aeon who went astray, on the pretext of love, but (in reality) out of temerity, since she was not united with the perfect Father the way that Mind is.

---

[37] Cf. above, 239–40.
[38] ⲟⲩⲋⲟⲙ ⲛ̄ⲣⲉⲥⲭⲡⲉⲟⲩⲥⲓⲁ ⲛ̄ⲣⲉⲥ†ⲙⲟⲣⲫⲏ BG 87:18–19; cf. NHC III 96:23–97:1.
[39] Rather than sacramental, as Lundhaug, *Fragments*, 91–94, suggests.
[40] Cf. Hipp. *Haer.* VI 30:8: ἐν μὲν γὰρ τῷ ἀγεννήτῳ, φησίν, ἐστὶ πάντα ὁμοῦ, ἐν δὲ τοῖς γεννητοῖς τὸ μὲν θῆλύ ἐστιν οὐσίας προβλητικόν, τὸ δὲ ἄρρεν μορφωτικὸν τῆς ὑπὸ θήλεως προβαλλομένης οὐσίας.

The same notion appears in *Tri. Trac.* 76:16–23:

> Before this aeon had yet brought forth anything to the glory of the
> Will and in the union of the Entireties, he acted presumptuously
> (ⲁϥⲉⲓⲣⲉ ϩ̅ⲛ̅ⲟⲩⲙⲛ̅ⲧⲛⲟϭ̱ ⲛ̅ⲙⲉⲉⲩⲉ), out of an overflowing love, and rushed
> towards that which surrounds (the realm of) perfect glory.

Audacity, τόλμη, is not an accidentally chosen word to describe the
motive of Sophia's passion. It is well-established Neopythagorean ter-
minology used to describe the Dyad's urge for otherness and sepa-
rate existence: "The Dyad was first to separate itself from the Monad,
which is also why it is called 'audacity'" (πρώτη γὰρ ἡ δυὰς διεχώρισεν
αὑτὴν ἐκ τῆς μονάδος, ὅθεν καὶ τόλμα καλεῖται).[41] As is well known,
the term was adopted by Plotinus to describe how a lower hyposta-
sis posits itself as distinct from a higher one.[42] It is obvious that the
Neopythagorean usage of the term was present to the mind of the
Valentinian author when he selected it to characterise the disunity
implied in Sophia's endeavour. It is also clear that Sophia's passion
and audacity are not conceived as an accident happening to her
alone, but are structurally connected with the generation of a mul-
tiple Pleroma as such: the passion begins in fact with[43] Mind and
Truth, and the reason for this can only be that this pair represents
the first appearance of articulated duality in the process of projec-
tion.[44] The passion implicit in this initial duality is then successively
deferred in the further process and eventually "concentrated"[45] in
the last and youngest of the aeons.[46]

---

[41] Iambl. *Theol. Ar.* 9:5–6 de Falco (cf. above, 277). For other attestations of
τόλμα as a Pythagorean designation of the Dyad, see Henry's and Schwyzer's note
on *Enn.* V 1:1:4, in *Plotini Opera*, II 185.

[42] Cf. Armstrong, "Plotinus," 242–45, and his note in the LCL edition of Plotinus,
vol. V 10–11. For a general bibliography, see K. Rudolph, in Jonas, *Gnosis* II
247n42.

[43] The expression ἐν τοῖς περί in Iren. *Haer.* I 2:2 cannot mean "those [pre-
sumably: 'aeons'] associated with" (translation in Foerster, *Gnosis*, I 129), which
makes no sense in the context of the system.

[44] Cf. above, 198–200. Note that Hipp. *Haer.* VI 29:6 says that the Father-Monad
projected Νοῦν καὶ Ἀλήθειαν, τουτέστι δυάδα. The system of Hippolytus does not
have the dialectics of unity and duality found in Irenaeus' system, where implicit
duality is unfolded as explicit duality in the form of the first Tetrad.

[45] "Le mot ἀπόσκηψις est un terme médical qui signifie la «concentration (des
humeurs) en quelque partie du corps» (cf. Hippocrate, *Aph.* 6,56, etc.)"; RD I/1
175.

[46] The following statement by A.H. Armstrong ("Plotinus," 243) is therefore incor-
rect: ". . . the Pleroma . . . was fully constituted before there was any question of

Sophia's τόλμη, therefore, defines her as the Valentinian interpretation of the Neopythagorean Dyad.[47] The narrative elaborating the application of the term to Sophia is not unlike the description of the fall of the souls in Plotinus, *Enn.* V 1:1:1–9:

τί ποτε ἄρα ἐστὶ τὸ πεποιηκὸς τὰς ψυχὰς πατρὸς θεοῦ ἐπιλαθέσθαι, καὶ μοίρας ἐκεῖθεν οὔσας καὶ ὅλως ἐκείνου ἀγνοῆσαι καὶ ἑαυτὰς καὶ ἐκεῖνον; ἀρχὴ μὲν οὖν αὐταῖς τοῦ κακοῦ ἡ τόλμα καὶ ἡ γένεσις καὶ ἡ πρώτη ἑτερότης καὶ τὸ βουληθῆναι δὲ ἑαυτῶν εἶναι. τῷ δὴ αὐτεξουσίῳ ἐπειδήπερ ἐφάνησαν ἡσθεῖσαι, πολλῷ τῷ κινεῖσθαι παρ᾽ αὐτῶν κεχρημέναι, τὴν ἐναντίαν δραμοῦσαι καὶ πλείστην ἀπόστασιν πεποιημέναι, ἠγνόησαν καὶ ἑαυτὰς ἐκεῖθεν εἶναι·

... What is it, then, which has made the souls forget their father, God, and be ignorant of themselves and him, even though they are parts which come from his higher world and altogether belong to it? The beginning of evil for them was audacity and coming to birth and the first otherness and the wishing to belong to themselves. Since they were clearly delighted with their own independence, and made great use of self-movement, running the opposite course and getting as far away as possible, they were ignorant even that they themselves came from that world ... (tr. Armstrong)

Plotinus' description here of the fall of the souls is based on terminology and notions that apply to the Dyad—that is, the fall of the souls is an instance of that urge for separate existence, which is a characteristic of the Dyad in general and which reasserts itself for each successive level that moves away from the One. The narrative of Sophia is similar, in so far as the story of her fall can be interpreted as an account of the origin of the cosmic soul and she also epitomises the transition from oneness to duality which is a basic motif in the system as a whole.

---

tolma." Armstrong is arguing that Plotinus was not influenced by Gnostics in his use of the term τόλμα. This may well be the case. It seems more likely, in fact, that Plotinus and the Valentinians were both, more or less independently, influenced on this point by Neopythagoreanism. At the same time it should be pointed out that, regardless of the differences, they shared some of the concerns that inevitably arise from the premises of a monistic theory where the imperfection of plurality must be derived from the perfection of oneness.

[47] A closely related term is ὁρμή (τόλμαν ἐκάλουν καὶ ὁρμήν Anatolius 30:1 Heiberg [in *Congrès d'histoire et des sciences Paris 1900*, Paris 1901]); cf. Iambl. *Theol. Ar.* 8:1 de Falco; John Lydus, *Mens.* II 7; Krämer, *Geistmetaphysik*, 322, with n487. This term also appears in the Valentinian texts: Iren. *Haer.* I 2:4 near the end, 4:1, 8:2; *Tri. Trac.* 76:5.21.27 † ⲡⲉϥⲟⲩⲁⲉⲓⲉ.

The main point of interest for us here is therefore not what similarity or dissimilarity there may be between the Valentinian myth of Sophia and Plotinus' views on the fall of the souls, but rather their underlying common theoretical assumptions, which derive from shared Neopythagorean sources. A common vocabulary, moreover, can be identified that relates to the Dyad: ἑτερότης, γένεσις, κίνησις, and the desire for independence.[48]

The notion of "otherness" appears in Iren. *Haer.* I 4:1, in a description of the passions of Achamoth: "The passions were not for her a matter of *alteration*, as they were for her mother, the first Sophia, who was an aeon, but of *contrariety*" (καὶ οὐ καθάπερ ἡ μήτηρ αὐτῆς, ἡ πρώτη Σοφία αἰών, ἑτεροίωσιν ἐν τοῖς πάθεσιν εἶχεν, ἀλλὰ ἐναντιότητα). The contrasting pair of concepts alteration/contrariety must be technical here. Plotinus, in the passage quoted, appears to allude to the same pair (cf. ἑτερότης/τὴν ἐναντίαν), and the context suggests that here as well he is adopting Neopythagorean vocabulary. As a matter of fact, the distinction recalls the system of categories reported by Hermodorus from the oral teaching of Plato, where a distinction was made between "the things that exist in themselves" (τὰ καθ᾽ αὑτά), and "those that exist in relation to something else" (τὰ πρὸς ἕτερα), and the latter was further subdivided into opposites (τὰ πρὸς ἐναντία) and ordinary relatives (τὰ πρός τι).[49] The same tradition appears in Sextus Empiricus X 263–275, where a division is made between "the things that exist separately" (τὰ κατὰ διαφοράν), "those that exist through opposition" (τὰ κατ᾽ ἐναντίωσιν), and "those that exist in relation" (τὰ πρός τι).[50]

The latter doctrine is attributed to the Pythagoreans, and appears immediately after Sextus has reported on a Pythagorean theory about the Monad and the Dyad (X 261) which says that the Monad "conceived in its self-identity is conceived as One, but when, in its oth-

---

[48] Cf. Krämer, *Geistmetaphysik*, 322.
[49] Simpl. *In Phys.* 248:2–4 Diels. Cf. Richard, *Enseignement oral*, 360–63, and for bibliography and discussion, ibid. 158–63. The Platonic system of categories seems to have escaped Orbe when he wrote, "Ni Aristóteles ni filosofía alguna de nota conoce oposición técnica entre 'alteración' y 'contrariedad'" (*Espíritu Santo*, 399).
[50] Cf. Richard, *Enseignement oral*, 370–75, and for bibliography and discussion, ibid. 163–70.

erness, it is added to itself it creates the 'Indefinite Dyad'" (καθ᾽ αὐτότητα μὲν ἑαυτῆς νοουμένην μονάδα νοεῖσθαι, ἐπισυντεθεῖσαν δ᾽ ἑαυτῇ καθ᾽ ἑτερότητα ἀποτελεῖν τὴν καλουμένην ἀόριστον δυάδὰ; trans. Bury, LCL). It is not unreasonable to read these two reports together,[51] and to interpret the distinction between the opposite and the relative in X 263 as subcategories of the "otherness" in X 261, in accordance with the scheme in Hermodorus. The crucial point, then, is that this system of categories is thereby put in relation to a monistic theory of the Monad and Dyad as first principles,[52] and that precisely such a theory must be presupposed as underlying the use of the categories otherness and contrariety in Irenaeus' system as well as in Plotinus *Enn.* V 1:1.[53]

In Irenaeus' system, the use of these categories does in fact amount to a system of division, in so far as Achamoth and her passions have been "cut off" from the upper Sophia and the ἐναντιότης characterising these passions is, in that sense, a subdivision of the ἑτεροίωσις of the passions of the upper Sophia. The underlying Neopythagorean-Platonist model of division taken over by the system in Irenaeus is thus:
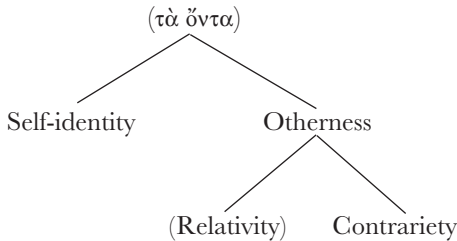
The distinction between the αὐτότης of the Monad and the ἑτερότης of the Dyad is first represented by the relationship between the Father

---

[51] Sext. Emp. X 248–83 as a whole may derive from a Neopythagorean source using a text by a member of the Old Academy (Xenocrates?) reporting Plato's oral teaching (Richard, *loc. cit.*, building on Konrad Gaiser).

[52] Cf. also Dillon, *Middle Platonists*, 342–44.

[53] Cf. Thomassen and Painchaud, *Traité tripartite*, 333, with n38; Thomassen, "Derivation of Matter," 9–10.

and the Son, and is then successively deferred through the unfolding of the Pleroma and ultimately to Sophia, whose "otherness" causes a division whereby "contrariety" is sorted out.

Another possible occurrence of the notion of "otherness" is *Val. Exp.* 22:36–39: "Indeed, for the sake of the Entirety, he entertained a thought of something other (than himself) (ογмеεγε ῆϣῆмο). For nothing else was in existence before him, (coming) out of that place. He was the one who moved [. . .]." In this case, it is the Son who seems to be cast in the role of the Dyad. Such an interpretation is supported by the words "he was the one who moved" (ῆταϥ πε εντα2ким), which may allude to the notion of κίνησις as a characteristic of the Dyad.[54] But the state of the text makes this interpretation uncertain.

In *Tri. Trac.*, "movement" (ким) appears regularly as a characteristic of the Logos, that tractate's equivalent to Sophia: "the movement that is the Logos" (77:7); "the movement of the Logos" (77:9); "the Logos who had moved" (85:15–16, 115:21; also 115:28).[55]

Finally, the delight in free will (τὸ αὐτεξούσιον), which is a feature of Plotinus' account of the fall of the souls in *Enn.* V 1:1 also appears in *Tri. Trac.*: "For the autonomous will (πιογωϣε ῆναγτεξογcιοc) that had been produced with the Entireties was a cause for this one to do what he wished with nothing restraining him" (75:35–76:2).[56] This idea also seems to be present in Iren. *Haer.* I 14:7 τῆς αὐτοβουλήτου βουλῆς . . . καρπός. With regard to this terminology as well, Plotinus and the Valentinian texts seem to be drawing on the same sources.

"Passion"

More than any other term, however, the problematics of dyadic extension and plurality is expressed in Valentinian texts by the word πάθος. The word appears in different, though interrelated contexts.[57] In the accounts of Sophia, it may be used, (1) as *a general name* for

---

[54] Cf. Krämer, *Geistmetaphysik*, 322, with n487.

[55] Cf. Thomassen and Painchaud, *Traité tripartite*, 335–36. As a technical term it also appears in Iren. *Haer.* I 5:4 τὴν τοῦ φόβου κίνησιν.

[56] Cf. Thomassen and Painchaud, *Traité tripartite*, 317, 329, 331–32.

[57] Cf. Thomassen and Painchaud, *Traité tripartite*, 341–42.

what happened to Sophia;[58] (2) to indicate the initial particularism of her *desire*;[59] (3) to describe her *afflictions* when she reacts to the consequences of her act;[60] (4) to characterise generally the *deficiency* of Sophia as she is deprived of a formative power.[61] In *Tri. Trac.* 77:27–35, "sicknesses" (ϣⲱⲛⲉ) result from the split experienced by the Logos when he is unable to carry through his intention, and will characterise his condition henceforth (cf. 81:2, 83:12, 93:18, 94:17.20, etc.)—the usage here is close to the meanings (3) and (4) above.

The idea of passion is not restricted to describing the individual psychology of Sophia, but possesses a wider metaphysical significance. As has been shown above, the passion bursting forth in Sophia began with the first duality and the beginnings of plurality represented initially by the positing of the Son as distinct from the Father. At the most general level, "passion" is synonymous with plurality as such. The passion of Sophia is just a special case of this general notion. Another application of the notion relates to the Son, whose "extension" and "spreading out" for the sake of the Pleroma in *Tri. Trac.* 65:11–12 is qualified as his "compassion" (ⲧⲉϥⲙ[ⲛ̄ⲧ]ϣⲟⲡϩ̅ⲓ̅ⲥ̅ⲉ ⲁⲣⲁⲩ; cf. also 65:20–21 †ⲧⲙ̄ⲛ̄ⲧϣⲃⲏⲣ'ϣⲱⲡϩ̅ⲓ̅ⲥ̅ⲉ).[62]

This idea of συμπάθεια appears elsewhere as well. In *Exc.* 30–31 Clement says:

> (30:1) Then, disregarding the glory of God, they impiously say that he suffered (παθεῖν). For the fact that the Father showed compassion (συνεπάθησεν)—although he is, Theodotus says, solid and immovable— when he handed himself over (ἐνδόσιμον ἑαυτόν) so that Silence could grasp this—(2) that is passion (πάθος). For compassion is passion experienced through the passion of another. Yes, indeed! And after the passion had taken place, the Entirety shared in suffering (συνεπάθησεν) as well, that the one who was suffering might be set right. (31:1) Moreover, if the one who came down was the good pleasure of the

---

[58] τοῦ πάθους γενομένου *Exc.* 30:2; τὸ πάθος τῆς Σοφίας Iren. *Haer.* I 2:3.

[59] ἔπαθε πάθος ἄνευ τῆς ἐπιπλοκῆς τοῦ συζύγου Iren. *Haer.* I 2:2—here, πάθος is more or less synonymous with ἐνθύμησις; πάθους τῆς ἐπιθυμίας *Exc.* 33:4.

[60] τὴν . . . ἐνθύμησιν σὺν τῷ ἐπιγενομένῳ πάθει Iren. *Haer.* I 2:2, similarly in 2:4. In the variant account ibid. 2:3, the ensuing afflictions of Sophia are specified as λύπη, φόβος, and ἀπορία, which also recur in 4:1. Cf. also Hipp. *Haer.* VI 31:2.

[61] Iren. *Haer.* I 4:1; in 2:4, the meaning of πάθος seems to slide from (3) to (4); τοῦ πάθους τοῦ ὑστερήματος ibid. 18:4; Hipp. *Haer.* VI 32:4, 36:3; *Exc.* 45:1–2, 67:4.

[62] Cf. Thomassen and Painchaud, *Traité tripartite*, 306–7, and above, 186–87.

Entirety—for in him was all the Pleroma in bodily form—and he
suffered (ἔπαθεν), then it is clear that the seed that was in him suffered
as well (συνέπαθεν) and consequently, through them the Entirety and
the Totality suffered (εὑρίσκεται πάσχον). (2) Moreover, being "edu-
cated," as they say, by the persuasion of the twelfth aeon, the Entireties
suffered (together with it) (συνεπάθησεν).

Although it is hardly possible source-critically to disentangle the var-
ious components of this piece,[63] it is clear that it attests to the exis-
tence of Valentinian ideas about the compassion of the divine as a
necessity caused by the very notion of emanation, or projection, as
such. Going beyond himself so as to exist for another (Silence), and
thereby producing duality, implies that the Father in a sense "suffers."
Moreover, the passion of Sophia as well is perceived as the inevitable
consequence of this outward movement toward plurality. Finally, the
passion of the Saviour represents the definitive resolution of the onto-
logical split in the divine that takes place at the very beginning.[64]

Thus, the "compassion" of the deity in spreading out into the
Pleroma and the passion of Sophia articulate the same ontological
theme of oneness and plurality. Another instance of the theme occurs
in the discussion of the spiritual church in *Tri. Trac.* 94:28–95:7
(quoted above, 175): the spiritual church is an image of the Pleroma,
and therefore possesses the indivisibility of the latter. Nevertheless,
although they are equal to the Pleroma collectively, "as individuals
they have not discarded what is proper to each. For this reason they
are passions (ϩⲛⲡⲁⲑⲟⲥ ⲛⲉ), and passion is sickness (ϣⲱⲛⲉ). For they
are not offspring from the unity of the Pleroma, but from one who
has not yet received the Father, or the unity with the Entireties and
his Will" (94:36–95:7). The "passions" refer to a particularism which
still characterises the spiritual church in the region above the cos-
mos but below the Pleroma. In the following text its is explained
that this imperfection enabled the spirituals to be cosmically incar-

---

[63] Cf. above, 37.
[64] That the Pleroma is also affected by the passion of Sophia is evident in Hipp.
Haer. VI 31:1: γενομένης οὖν ἐντὸς πληρώματος ἀγνοίας κατὰ τὴν Σοφίαν καὶ
ἀμορφίας κατὰ τὸ γέν⟨ν⟩ημα τῆς Σοφίας, θόρυβος ἐγένετο ἐν τῷ πληρώματι. The
theme of the "compassion" of the Pleroma with the single aeon's passion is found
in *Tri. Trac.* as well, though in a modified form: "For the aeons of the Father of
the Entirety, (they) who had not suffered, took upon themselves the fall that had
happened as if it were their own, with concern and goodness, and with great kind-
ness" (85:33–37).

nated together with the Saviour. The *apokatastasis* will take place when, through the oneness of the Saviour, the spiritual church unifies all its members, the cosmic and the hypercosmic, and itself merges with the Pleroma, so that the unity of the divine is ultimately restored. In this way, "passion" stands for everything that is other than the divine unity.

Although πάθος is thus a term possessing systematic, ontological significance in Valentinianism as a name for what the Platonist-Pythagorean tradition conceived as the Dyad, the term itself does not seem to be taken over from that tradition. Whereas semantically similar terms such as τόλμα, ὁρμή, κίνησις, and even τὸ ἐπιθυμικόν,[65] are established Neopythagorean vocabulary for describing the Dyad, πάθος apparently is not. This could simply be due to the scarcity of our information, and it is possible that the term was in fact employed in this context in the Neopythagorean sources used by the Valentinians but unknown to us. But it is also possible that the prominence given to the term in the Valentinian accounts is of their own invention, and that by qualifying the dyadic nature of Sophia as πάθος they wished not only to exploit the numerous additional philosophical connotations of that term,[66] but also to take the opportunity it offered of including an allusion to the specifically Christian terminology applied to the passion of the Saviour.[67] The word πάθος thus synthesises the physical theory of the Dyad with ethical theories of the irrational soul, as well as with the Christian notions of redemptive suffering.

THE ORIGINS OF THE TYPE A PROTOLOGY

As was shown in chapter 22, Valentinian protologies can be divided into two main groups. According to type A, represented above all

---

[65] John Lydus, *Mens.* I 11 τὸ μὲν γὰρ . . . λογικὸν ἐκ τῆς μονάδος . . . τὸ δὲ θυμικὸν καὶ ἐπιθυμικὸν ἐκ τῆς δυάδος.

[66] The use of the term πάθος in discussions of the irrational aspects of the soul is of course widespread in the philosophical tradition. The list of passions in Iren. *Haer.* I 2:3, 4:1, 8:2 (λύπη, φόβος, ἀπορία) is clearly indebted to such lists as are found in Stoic sources (cf. *SVF* III 386 ἐπιθυμίαν, φόβον, λύπην, ἡδονήν, etc.; Long and Sedley, *Hellenistic Philosophers*, ch. 65).

[67] Cf. Iren. *Haer.* I 8:2 καὶ τὰ πάθη δὲ αὐτῆς ἃ ἔπαθεν ἐπισεσημαιῶσθαι τὸν κυρίον φάσκουσιν κτλ.

by *Tri. Trac.* and *Gos. Truth*, the aeons are initially inside the Father in a hidden state and are subsequently exteriorised and formed as independent entities. In type B there is little trace of this dynamic model; the Pleroma is represented instead as a chain of successively derived projections.

Attestations of the model

Tri. Trac. and *Gos. Truth* describe the initial process using very similar words, suggesting some kind of literary contact (that is, direct or indirect dependence) between the two texts:

Tri. Trac.	*Gos. Truth*
As long as they were in the Father's Thought—that is, when they were in the hidden depths (ⲉⲩϣⲟⲟⲡ ϩⲛ̄ ⲡⲃⲁⲑⲟⲥ ⲉⲧϩⲏⲡ) the Depths certainly knew them, but they for their part could not know the depths in which they were. Nor could they know themselves, nor know anything else. That is, they existed with the Father, but they did not exist to themselves. The being they had was like a seed, so that in fact they existed like an embryo. He had brought them forth in the manner of *logos*: it exists in a seminal state before those things it will produce have yet come into being. (60:16–37)	While they were depths of his Thought (ⲉⲩⲟ ⲛ̄ⲃⲁⲑⲟⲥ ⲛ̄ⲧⲉ ⲡⲉϥⲙⲉⲩⲉ) . . . (37:7–8)[68] . . . although they are inside of him, they do not know him. But the Father is perfect, and knows every space within him . . . (27:22–25) I do not say, then, that they are nothing, the ones who have not yet come into existence, but they are in him who will want them to come into existence when he wills, like the time that is to come. (27:34–28:4)

Thus, the process is described as an initial hiddenness within the "depths" (βάθος) followed by an external manifestation, as a state of unconsciousness and ignorance before attaining consciousness and knowledge, and as a seminal or embryonic form of existence preceding actual and autonomous being.

Similar but much shorter formulations are found, it may be recalled, in Epiph. *Pan.* XXXI 5:3 ὁ αὐτοπάτωρ αὐτὸς ἐν ἑαυτῷ περιεῖχε τὰ πάντα, ὄντα ἐν ἑαυτῷ ἐν ἀγνωσίᾳ,[69] and in *Val. Exp.* 22:27–29 "he possessed the Entirety dwelling in[side] him."[70]

---

[68] Possibly, the text should be read as ⲉⲩⲟ ⲛ̄⟨ⲡ⟩ⲃⲁⲑⲟⲥ etc., "the were in the depths . . .," the article having disappeared either by omission or by assimilation.

[69] Cf. above, 221.

[70] Cf. above, 233.

A prominent feature of this theory is the insistence on the Will of the Father as an agent in the process: "And once it had been decided (ⲉⲁⲩⲧⲉϩⲟ), that they should be born, the one who possesses all power desired (ⲁϥⲟⲩⲱϣⲉ) to take and bring [what] was incomplete from the [..., to ...] those who [were with]in him" (*Tri. Trac.* 60:5–11). This Will is, moreover, qualified as "providence" (ⲣ̄ ϣⲁⲣⲡ̄ ⲛ̄ⲙⲉⲩⲉ, very probably <*προνοεῖν, 61:1–2). The role of Will is insisted upon also in *Gos. Truth*, as can be seen, for example, from the second half of 27:34–28:4 quoted above.[71]

A Neopythagorean source?

The question now presents itself whether, in addition to the other features of the system that have been discussed above, this idea of an exteriorising generation of the Pleroma can also be explained from a Neopythagorean background. Translated into Neopythagorean terms, this question means that we should look for theories that describe a pre-existence of the Numbers/Ideas in a state of potentiality within the Monad or the first One, followed by their subsequent actualisation, manifestation, and exteriorisation. In fact, such ideas are not at all alien to Neopythagoreanism. Texts such as Nicomachus' *Introduction to Arithmetic*, Iamblichus' *Introduction to Nicomachus' Arithmetic*, Pseudo-Iamblichus' *The Theology of Arithmetic*, and Theon of Smyrna's *Exposition of Mathematics* provide ample evidence for the idea that the Monad contains within itself potentially all numbers in the manner of a seed or a womb.[72] Some passages from *The Theology of Arithmetic* will illustrate this:

πάντα γὰρ ἐκ τῆς πάντα δυνάμει περιεχούσης μονάδος διακεκόσμηται· αὕτη γὰρ καὶ εἰ μήπω ἐνεργείᾳ ἀλλ᾽ οὖν σπερματικῶς πάντας τοὺς ἐν πᾶσιν ἀριθμοῖς καὶ δὴ καὶ τοὺς ἐν δυάδι λόγους ἔχει ... (1:8–12 de Falco)	Everything has been organized by the monad, because it contains everything potentially: for even if they are not yet actual, nevertheless the monad holds seminally the principles which are within all numbers, including those which are within the dyad ...

---

[71] Also cf. 27:26–27, 28:6, 37:5–6.17–18. Traces of this role of the divine Will may be detected in the βουληθεῖσα of Silence-Thought in Epiph. *Pan.* XXXI 5:5, and in the mention of the Will in *Val. Exp.* 22:29.

[72] See Krämer, *Geistmetaphysik*, 346–48; Thomassen and Painchaud, *Traité tripartite*, 295.

καὶ ὅτι τὸν θεόν φησιν ὁ Νικόμαχος τῇ μονάδι ἐφαρμόζειν, σπερματικῶς ὑπάρχοντα πάντα τὰ ἐν τῇ φύσει ὄντα ὡς αὐτὴν ἐν ἀριθμῷ . . . (3:1–4)

Nicomachus says that God coincides with the monad, since he is seminally everything which exists, just as the monad is in the case of number . . .

λέγουσιν οὖν ταύτην οὐ μόνον θεόν, ἀλλὰ καὶ νοῦν καὶ ἀρσενόθηλυν· . . . ὡς αὐτὴ πάντα περιειληφυῖα ἐν ἑαυτῇ κατ' ἐπίνοιαν . . . (3:21–4:5)

So they [i.e., the Pythagoreans] say that the monad is not only God, but also 'intellect' and 'androgyne.' . . . [it] has conceptually encompassed everything within itself . . .

ὡς δὲ σπέρμα συλλήβδην ἁπάντων ἄρσενά τε καὶ θήλειαν τὴν αὐτὴν τίθενται . . . ὅτι πατὴρ καὶ μήτηρ, ὕλης καὶ εἴδους λόγον ἔχουσα, ἐπενοεῖτο, τεχνίτου καὶ τεχνητοῦ· καὶ δυάδος γὰρ παρεκτικὴ διφορηθεῖσα· . . . τὸ δὲ σπέρμα καὶ θήλεων καὶ ἀρσένων ὅσον ἐπ' αὐτῷ παρεκτικὸν ἀποσπαρὲν ἀδιάκριτόν τε τὴν ἀμφοῖν φύσιν παρέχει κἂν τῇ μέχρι τινὸς κινήσει, βρεφοῦσθαι δὲ ἀρχόμενον ἢ φυτοῦσθαι διάλλαξιν λοιπὸν ἐπὶ θάτερον καὶ ἐνάλλαξιν ἐπιδέχεται, μετιὸν ἀπὸ δυνάμεως εἰς ἐνέργειαν. (4:17–5:11)

So, in short, they consider it to be the seed of all, and both male and female at once . . . because it is taken to be father and mother, since it contains the principles of both matter and form, of craftsman and what is crafted; that is to say, when it is divided, it gives rise to the dyad. . . . And the seed which is, as far as its own nature is concerned, capable of producing both females and males, when scattered not only produces the nature of both without distinction, but also does so during pregnancy up to a certain point; but when it begins to be formed into a foetus and to grow, it then admits distinction and variation one way or the other, as it passes from potentiality to actuality.[73]

These Neopythagorean ideas about the generation of numbers from the Monad, a generation conceived in biological, and even embryological terms, and involving the notions of potentiality and actuality, are, I suggest, probably an important factor in the background of the Valentinian protology of the type A. They seem to provide the basic model for the pleromatogonic process described in these Valentinian texts. On the other hand, there remain some features of this process that do not have their exact counterparts in the Neopythagorean sources.

---

[73] Translation by Robin Waterfield, in *The Theology of Arithmetic*, Grand Rapids, Mich. 1988.

Affinities with The Chaldean Oracles *and later Neoplatonism*

One such element is the idea that the aeons, in their potential existence inside the Father, are "hidden." Connected with this idea is evidently the Valentinian use of the term βάθος as a designation for the Father. The aeons existed within "the hidden depths" (ⲡⲓⲃⲁⲑⲟⲥ ⲉⲧϩⲏⲡ) *Tri. Trac.* 60:18–19. Similarly, *Gos. Truth* speaks about "the depths of the one who embraces all spaces while there is none that embraces him" (22:25–27),[74] and, "they were depth(s) of his Thought" (37:7–8).[75] βάθος and βυθός are, moreover, characteristic terms that occur frequently in Valentinian texts.[76] This terminology, which connotes the idea that the generation of the aeons has the nature of a revelation, and which is associated in the texts with notions that the process of generation is similar to the development of the embryo in the womb, leads in the direction of one particular area of late Hellenistic religious thought, namely that of the *Chaldean Oracles* and the Neoplatonic tradition related to them.

It is well known that the term βυθός appears as an epithet of the first god, also called the Father, and Monad, in the *Chaldean Oracles*: frg. 18 speaks about the πατρικὸς βυθός.[77] Moreover, the Father of the *Oracles* is called a "womb that contains the All" (μήτρα συνέχουσα τὰ πάντα, frg. 30; cf. frg. 28 κόλποις). This suggests that the generation of the intelligibles is conceived as a manifestation from a hidden pre-existence inside the Father-Monad, in a manner analogous to that of offspring emerging from a womb.[78]

---

[74] ⲡⲓⲃⲁⲑⲟⲥ ⲙ̄ⲡⲉⲧ{ⲁ}ⲕⲧⲁⲉⲓⲧ ⲁⲙⲁⲉⲓⲧ ⲛⲓⲙ· ⲉⲙⲛ̄ ⲡⲉⲧⲕⲧⲁⲉⲓⲧ ⲁⲣⲁϥ.

[75] See above, 292. The term ⲃⲁⲑⲟⲥ occurs in all seven times in *Tri. Trac.* (54:21, 55:26, 60:18.20.22, 74:32, 77:20), and four times in *Gos. Truth* (22:25, 35:15, 37:7–8, 40:27).

[76] ὁ μὲν ἀγέννητος, ὑπάρχων ἀρχὴ τῶν ὅλων καὶ ῥίζα καὶ βάθος καὶ βυθός, Hipp. *Haer.* VI 30:7; πάντων τῶν προβληθέντων ὑπὸ τοῦ βάθους, *Exc.* 29; τὸ μέγεθος τοῦ βάθους καὶ τὸ ἀνεξιχνίαστον τοῦ πατρός, Iren. *Haer.* I 2:2; cf. also Hipp. *Haer.* VI 30:6, 34:7; Iren. *Haer.* I 21:2. Βυθός is very common, of course (Iren. *Haer.* I 1:1, etc.), it is attested in Valentinus himself: ἐκ δὲ βυθοῦ καρποὺς φερομένους ἐκ μήτρας δὲ βρέφος φερόμενον, Hipp. *Haer.* VI 37:7 (see below, 479, 485–87).

[77] For comments on the similarity of the Valentinian βυθός and that of the *Oracles*, see Kroll, *De Oraculis Chaldaicis*, 18; Lewy, *Chaldaean Oracles*, 397–98, Des Places, *Oracles Chaldaïques*, 126–27; Majercik, *Chaldean Oracles*, 149.

[78] The process of generation is not explicitly described in the fragments, though the language is suggestive: ἐκγίγνομαι frgs. 10, 218:5; ἀποθρῴσκει γένεσις, 34. Cf. also frgs. 32, 35, 37, 56, 96, where the World Soul is represented as a womb pouring forth its offspring; the imagery may well be the same for the highest level.

Later Neoplatonists made use of this kind of language. βυθός appears in Proclus and Damascius,[79] as well as in Marius Victorinus[80] and Synesius,[81] Christian theologians heavily influenced by Neoplatonism, in particular, perhaps, by Porphyry.[82] Some further formulations in the hymns of Synesius are also remarkable in this regard: βύθιον κάλλος, κρύφιον σπέρμα, *Hymn* II (IV) 69–70; ἐξ ἀρρήτων κόλπων, κρυφίας μονάδος, ibid. 199–201; σὺ [*sc.* the Son] τὸ κρύπτον εἶ πατρὸς σπέρμα προλάμπον, IV (VI) 13; νοερῶν κρυφίαν τάξιν, I (III) 233.

The word "hidden" (κρύφιος) is used by later Neoplatonists to describe the pre-existence of the intelligibles inside their source. According to Proclus, "the 'hidden' order singly encloses the entire intelligible order" (ὁ 'κρύφιος' διάκοσμος ἐνοειδῶς περιέχει πᾶν τὸ νοητόν, *In Tim.* I 430:6–7 Diehl). Whether the word, and the use of it in this context, came from the *Oracles* is, however, a still unsettled question.[83] Correspondingly, the generation of the intelligibles is described as a manifestation (φαίνειν, etc.).[84]

Metaphors of biological generation are often used in this context. Such ideas can be found, for example, in Synesius, *Hymn* IV (VI) 6–9, where the Son is described as,

ὃν βουλᾶς πατρικᾶς ἄφραστος ὠδὶς
ἀγνώστων ἀνέδειξε παῖδα κόλπων,
ἃ πατρὸς λοχίους ἔφηνε καρπούς,
καὶ φήνασα φάνη μεσσοπαγὴς νοῦς·

the one whom the ineffable child-birth of the Father's will showed forth as the child of an inconceivable womb, a will revealing the birth-fruits of the Father, and revealing, was itself revealed as a median mind,

---

[79] Des Places, *Oracles Chaldaïques*, 70 (testimonia for frg. 18); Majercik, *Chaldean Oracles*, 149.

[80] *Hymn* I 72 *id profundum doctum idque arcanum*; cf. Henry and Hadot, *Marius Victorinus*, 1069–70.

[81] *Hymn* I (III) 132 ἀκάμαντι βυθῷ, 189 βυθὸν ἄρρητον, 411 βάθος αιώνων, V (II) 27 βυθὸς πατρῷος, IX (I) βυθὸν θεολαμπῆ.

[82] Hadot, *Porphyre et Victorinus*, I 461.

[83] Lewy, *Chaldaean Oracles*, 78n45, followed by Hadot, *Porphyre et Victorinus*, I 306n4, considered the word to come from Orphic sources, which does not, however, preclude its having been used in the *Oracles* as well. Cf. Majercik, *Chaldean Oracles*, 213. It should be noted that Victorinus often uses similar expressions: *absconditus, Ad Cand.* 14:11–12 *occultum*, 14:17, 16:25; *in occulto, Adv. Ar.* I 52:45, cf. 54:15, IV 15:24–25, 30:29.30.

[84] Syn. *Hymn* I (III) 239–40 διὰ δ᾽ ὠδῖνος αὐτὸς ἐφάνθης, cf. IV (VI) 9 φήνασα φάνη; for Victorinus, see Henry and Hadot, *Marius Victorinus*, II 1117 "(Génération) comme manifestation." For ἐκφαίνειν used in a similar context by Proclus and Damascius, see Hadot, *Porphyre et Victorinus*, I 306n3–5.

or in Victorinus, *Ad Cand.* 14:16–20: *Etenim grauida occultum habet quod paritura est. Non enim fetus non est ante partum, sed in occulto est et generatione prouenit in manifestationem* ὂν *operatione quod fuit* ὂν *potentia.*

As in the texts from *Gos. Truth* and *Tri. Trac.* quoted above, Victorinus' use of the embryological metaphor involves the concepts of potentiality and actuality. Victorinus has not invented this combination himself; it derives from his Platonist source(s).[85]

Another strong point of contact between the Valentinian type A protology and these Neoplatonic theories is the notion of the divine will as the agent of generation and exteriorisation. This is a regular feature in Victorinus[86] as well as in Synesius,[87] and forms part of the Neoplatonic theogony model on which both of these depend.[88]

Hadot sums up these doctrines, with reference to Victorinus, in the following words:

> . . . si la génération est extériorisation, elle suppose une préexistence; si elle est extériorisation d'une réalité préexistante, elle est autogénération; si elle est autogénération, elle est mouvement automoteur; si elle est mouvement automoteur, elle est vie; si elle est vie, elle est désir de vivifier et désir de se mouvoir; si, étant extériorisée, elle est désir, elle suppose une volonté préexistante, et cette volonté préexistante apparaît comme la puissance dont la vie sera l'actuation; cette actuation est manifestation de ce qui est caché dans l'état de puissance.[89]

Further, with regard to the Neoplatonic version found in Proclus and later authors, he notes:

> L'Un ou Père représente le moment de la concentration, de l'union, dans lequel préexistent, sous un mode caché, non déployé, séminal, toutes les déterminations ultérieures. La Puissance, originellement confondue avec le Père, représente, lorsqu'elle se manifeste elle-même, le moment de la manifestation, de la distinction, de l'altérité, de la féminité, de la volonté, de l'autogénération.[90]

These descriptions formulate a theory that is very similar to the one found in *Gos. Truth* and *Tri. Trac.* How can this similarity be explained?

---

[85] Hadot, *Porphyre et Victorinus*, II 19, includes this passage among the texts he has isolated as deriving from Porphyry.

[86] E.g., *Ad Cand.* 12:5–7 (*multa esse uoluit*), *Adv. Ar.* I 52:28–30 (*patrica uoluntas*); cf. Hadot, *Porphyre et Victorinus*, I 300–4.

[87] Cf. Lacombrade, *Synésios*, I *Hymnes*, 121 s.v. βουλά.

[88] Hadot, *Porphyre et Victorinus*, I 305–7.

[89] Hadot, *Porphyre et Victorinus*, I 304.

[90] Hadot, *Porphyre et Victorinus*, I 306–7.

According to Hadot, this theory comes from Porphyry, and more precisely from a now lost work in which Porphyry commented on the *Chaldean Oracles*.[91] It remains unclear, however, how much of the theory may actually have been derived from the *Oracles* themselves, and how much of it was worked out by Porphyry himself. Hadot suggested that Porphyry's interpretation was inspired by the kind of Neopythagorean ideas about the pre-existence of number within the Monad which we have described above.[92] However, in that regard as well, the extent of the contribution made already by Porphyry's sources is difficult to delineate.

Relations to the Neoplatonic system of triads

It is necessary, however, to consider these correspondences between Valentinian protology and the later Neoplatonism-Victorinus-Synesius materials in the context of the larger theories unfolded by Hadot's research in this area. In his groundbreaking study *Porphyre et Victorinus* (1968), Hadot attempted to identify the Greek philosophical sources underlying Victorinus' theory of the Trinity.[93] Victorinus defends the homoousian doctrine by explaining the relationship of Father and Son in terms of a distinction between the hidden and the manifest: the Son is the manifest form of the hidden reality of the Father. In order to describe the unfolding of the Trinity, moreover, Victorinus uses as his model a triad Being-Life-Thought known also from Neoplatonist authors. This triad articulates an idea of simultaneous identity and difference: each of the terms implies and is united with the two others, but is also distinct from them, in accordance with a principle of predominance. Life and Thought are co-united with Being in so far as they too are being, Being and Thought are co-united with Life in so far as they too are life, Being and Life are co-united with Thought in so far as they too are thought. In manifesting the Father, the Son, as Logos, and the Holy Spirit represent the Life and Thought of the Father; thus, the pure being of the Father manifests itself in an outward movement as Logos-Life and in a movement of return as Holy Spirit-Thought.

---

[91] Hadot, *Porphyre et Victorinus*, I 309−12, and, more generally, 79−143.

[92] Hadot, *Porphyre et Victorinus*, I 311−12.

[93] See also Hadot's more recent summary and defence of his position in "'Porphyre et Victorinus': Questions et hypothèses."

In an attempt to identify Victorinus' sources, Hadot isolated three groups of texts in Victorinus' corpus where different aspects of this doctrine were elaborated. In one of these groups, moreover, a literal quotation from Plotinus appears.[94] Since the doctrine as such is incompatible with Plotinus' own views, because it implies a pre-existence of Life and Thought within the first principle, Victorinus' source could not be Plotinus himself, but must be an author familiar with at least part of his works. Hadot went on to hypothesise that that author most probably was Plotinus' pupil Porphyry, and that the work in which Porphyry most likely could have developed such a doctrine was his lost commentary on the *Chaldean Oracles*. The *Oracles*, in fact, speak about a monad that unfolds itself as a triad (cf. especially frgs. 26, 27, 28), and later Neoplatonists, apparently following Porphyry, identified this triad with the Father-Power-Mind formula attested in frg. 4 (ἡ μὲν γὰρ δύναμις σὺν ἐκείνῳ, νοῦς δ' ἀπ' ἐκείνου). This triad was also rendered by these Neoplatonists as ὕπαρ-ξις-δύναμις/ζωή-νοῦς, and identified with a different triad that appears in Plotinus, namely τὸ ὄν-ζωή-νοῦς.[95] Thus, according to Hadot, Porphyry's synthesis of Plotinus with the teaching of the *Oracles*, carried out in his commentary, was the source of Victorinus' triadic model of the Trinity. Moreover, the same source, Hadot argued, lies behind the *Hymns* of Synesius. Finally, Hadot also detected a certain number of similarities between the doctrine contained in the three groups of sources in Victorinus and an anonymous commentary on the *Parmenides* found in a palimpsest once held in Turin, which Hadot ascribed to Porphyry as well.[96]

In recent years, however, the hypothesis that Porphyry was Victorinus' source has been challenged. Most spectacularly, it was discovered that certain passages of the texts attributed by Hadot to Porphyry are word for word identical with passages in the Sethian apocalypse *Zostrianos* from Nag Hammadi Codex VIII.[97] *Zostrianos* is

---

[94] *Enn.* V 2:1:1, quoted in *Adv. Ar.* IV 22:8.

[95] Cf. Majercik, *Chaldean Oracles*, 7–8, 142–43.

[96] The text was edited by Kroll in 1892 (*Rheinisches Museum* 47:599–627), and again by Hadot in vol. II of his *Porphyre et Victorinus*. Most recently it has been once more edited, and made the subject of an extensive study, by Bechtle, *Anonymous Commentary*. The manuscript itself perished in a fire in 1904.

[97] *Adv. Ar.* I 49:7–40 corresponds to *Zost.* 64:11–66:13, *Adv. Ar.* I 50:1–18 has close parallels in *Zost.* 66:7–68:26, 74:8–21, and 75:6–11, and *Adv. Ar.* I 50:18–21

the name of one of the gnostic writings known to have been read
and refuted in the circle of Plotinus,[98] and therefore necessarily ante-
dates not only Porphyry but Plotinus as well.[99] This means that
Porphyry cannot have been Victorinus' source for these passages.
The most likely explanation for their appearance in both Victorinus
and *Zost.* is that they must derive from a common, Middle Platonic
source. Moreover, the anonymous *Parmenides* commentary, it is now
being argued, is Middle Platonic as well.[100] Finally, triads similar to
the ones found in Victorinus and later Neoplatonists appear in *Zost.*
and the other platonising Sethian texts,[101] as well as in the anony-
mous *Parmenides* commentary.[102]

   The recent discussions about the historical relationships among
these texts have concentrated, as far as the gnostic connections are
concerned, on the Sethian texts. The Valentinian connection, on the
other hand, has hardly been considered. In fact, the affinities with
Valentinian protology that have been pointed out above complicate
the situation even further. Above all, the Valentinian texts offer no
triads of the type characteristic of the Sethian and the Neoplatonic
sources. On the other hand, those texts do display a model of the
primary generation process that involves the ideas of a manifesta-
tion, an exteriorisation, and an actualisation of what initially existed

---

corresponds to *Zost.* 75:12–24 and 84:18–22. Some of these parallels were noted
by Majercik, "The Existence-Life-Intellect Triad," 485–86; the discovery was pub-
lished in full by Tardieu, "Recherches." For the critical text of *Zost.* one should
consult Barry *et al.*, *Zostrien.*

   [98] Porph. *V. Plot.* 16: ". . . revelations by Zoroaster and Zostrianos and Nicotheos
and Allogenes Messos and many others of this kind." *Allogenes* as well is the name
of a Nag Hammadi tractate (NHC XI,*3*).

   [99] On the basis of the similarities between *Zost.* and Victorinus, and Hadot's
identification of Porphyry as Victorinus' source, Majercik, in "The Existence-Life-
Intellect Triad," argued that the Nag Hammadi *Zostrianus* must be a later rework-
ing of the writing known to Plotinus and his circle. The premises for this conclusion
have been argued against strongly, however, by Corrigan, "Platonism and Gnosticism";
also cf. J.D. Turner, in Barry *et al.*, *Zostrien*, 144–56; and Turner, *Sethian Gnosticism*,
400–5.

   [100] Corrigan, "Platonism and Gnosticism"; Bechtle, *Anonymous Commentary.*

   [101] For the "Triple Power" of Being-Life-Mind in these texts (*Allogenes*, *Marsanes*,
The Three Steles of Seth, and *Zostrianos*), see Turner, in Barry *et al.*, *Zostrien*, 81–94;
Turner, *Sethian Gnosticism*, 512–31.

   [102] ὕπαρξις, ζωή, νόησις appears on p. 14. The Chaldean notion of δύναμις and
νοῦς as co-united with the Father appears on p. 9:1–4. Bechtle, *Anonymous Commentary*,
209–10, insists, however, that these triads must be kept separate, since the ὕπαρ-
ξις-ζωή-νόησις triad in the Commentary applies to the level of the second One.

in a hidden and seminal state within the first principle—an idea closely connected with, and articulated by, the triadic model.

An intriguing point in this connection is the fact that, in the Sethian texts, a similar type of triadisation is often expressed by means of a set of figures called Kalyptos, Protophanes, and Autogenes, who "represent three phases in the unfolding of determinate being within the Barbelo Aeon: initial latency or potential existence, initial manifestation, and determinate, self-generated instantiation."[103] The names applied to these figures show that the notions of hiddenness and manifestation constitute an important theme in their own right in Sethian protology. The same tripartite scheme, moreover, seems to underlie certain texts in Victorinus, where it is expressed by the vocabulary *absconditum/occultum-manifestatio/apparentia-generatio/natalis*.[104] At this point as well, therefore, Victorinus and the platonising Sethians seem to draw on the same sources.

Whether the same tripartition can be detected in *Gos. Truth* and *Tri. Trac.* is a difficult question. Some passages in those texts are, however, suggestive in this regard:

ϨⲈⲚⲘⲈⲨⲈ Ⲛ[ⲦⲈ Ⲡ]ⲈϤⲘⲒⲤⲈ ⲚⲈ˙ ⲀⲨⲱ ϨⲈⲚⲚⲞⲨⲚⲈ ⲈⲨⲀⲚϨ̄ ⲀⲚⲎϨⲈ ⲦⲘⲈⲦ˙ ⲈⲨⲞⲨⲀⲚϨ̄ ϪⲈ ϨⲈⲚϪⲠⲞ ⲚⲈ ⲚⲦⲀϨⲒ ⲀⲂⲀⲖ Ⲙ̄ⲘⲀⲨ	. . . they are thoughts to which he[105] has given birth, eternally living roots that have been manifested. For they are births issued from them.[106] (*Tri. Trac.* 64:1–6)
ⲈϢⲰⲠⲈ ⲈϤϢⲀⲚⲞⲨⲰϢⲈ ⲠⲈⲦϤ̄ⲞⲨˋⲀˊ ϢϤ̄ Ϥ̄ⲞⲨⲰⲚϨ̄ Ⲙ̄ⲘⲀϤ ⲈϤϮⲘⲞⲢⲪⲎ ⲚⲈϤˑ	When he wishes, he manifests whomever he wishes, giving him form and

---

[103] Turner, in Barry *et al.*, *Zostrien*, 34; further, Turner, *Sethian Gnosticism*, 531–47. "Originally, these names seem to have referred, not so much to the ontological levels of the Barbelo Aeon, but rather to the process by which the Barbelo Aeon gradually unfolds from its source in the Invisible Spirit: it is first 'hidden' (καλυπτός) or latent as potential intellect in the Spirit, then 'first appearing' (πρωτοφανής) as the Father's separately existing (male) intelligence, finally, taking on the character of a 'self-generated' (αὐτογενής) demiurgical mind . . ." (Turner, *Sethian Gnosticism*, 535).

[104] *Ad Cand.* 14:10–12: *quod enim supra* ὄν *est, absconditum* ὄν *est. absconditi vero manifestatio generatio est*; *Adv. Ar.* IV 15:23–25: *at formatio apparentia est, apparentio vero ab occultis ortus est et ab occultis ortus et natalis est*; see Abramowski, "Marius Victorinus," 120–21.

[105] I.e., the Father; or, alternatively, "it," i.e., the *logos* mentioned just before, which in that case would mean the mental faculty of the Father.

[106] "Them" may refer to the thoughts of the Father in their unmanifested state, in accordance with the notion of the double *logos* referred to immediately before in the text. Alternatively, emendation of Ⲙ̄ⲘⲀⲨ to Ⲙ̄ⲘⲀϤ "him" (*sc.* the Father) is conceivable.

ⲁⲩⲱ ⲉϥϯⲣⲉⲛ ⲛⲉϥ ⲁⲩⲱ {ⲁⲩⲱ}
ϣⲁϥⲧⲣⲉⲛ ⲛⲉϥ ⲁⲩⲱ ⲉϥⲧⲣⲟ ⲙ̄ⲙⲁϥ
ⲁⲧⲣⲟⲩϣⲱⲡⲉ· ⲛ̄ⲛⲉⲉⲓ· ⲉⲧⲉⲙ̄ⲡⲁ-
ⲧⲟⲩϣⲱⲡⲉ· ⲥⲉⲟⲉⲓ ⲛ̄ⲁⲧⲥⲁⲩⲛⲉ·
ⲙ̄ⲡⲉⲛⲧⲁϩⲧⲥⲉⲛⲁⲩ

giving him a name, and he gives a
name to him and brings it about that
those come into existence who, until
they come into existence, are igno-
rant of the one who originated them.
(*Gos. Truth* 27:26–33)

ϩⲛ̄ⲛⲉⲩ ⲛⲓⲙ· ⲉⲙⲡⲁⲧⲟⲩⲱⲛϩ̄ ⲁⲃⲁⲗ
ϥⲥⲁⲩⲛⲉ· ⲛ̄ⲧⲁϥ ⲙ̄ⲡⲉⲧϥ̄ⲛⲁⲛ̄ⲧϥ̄· ⲁⲃⲁⲗ·
ⲡⲕⲁⲣⲡⲟⲥ ⲛ̄ⲧⲁϥ ⲉⲧⲉⲙ̄ⲡⲁⲧϥ̄ⲟⲩⲱⲛϩ̄
ⲁⲃⲁⲗ ϥⲥⲁⲩⲛⲉ ⲛ̄ⲗⲁⲩⲉ ⲉⲛ· ⲟⲩⲇⲉ
ϥⲣ̄ⲗⲁⲩⲉ· ⲛ̄ϩⲱϥ ⲉⲛ ⲁⲛ

Before all things appear, *he* knows
what he will produce. But the fruit
which is not yet manifest does not
know anything, nor does it do any-
thing. (*Gos. Truth* 28:4–10)

It is evident that notions about initial hiddenness and subsequent
manifestation and generation are all present in these passages, though
it is less clear to what extent they are conceived in a systematic
manner as a triadic set of terms.

The process referred to by these notions can, however, be easily
described in terms of three phases: an initial existence as hiddenness
and latency is followed by an exteriorising manifestation and com-
pleted as individuated generation. A closer look at the generative
process of *Tri. Trac.*, moreover, shows that it can be analysed as
involving three terms, namely the Father, the Son, and the "church"
of aeons, whose mutual relationships pass through three successive
stages. At a first stage the ineffable and unknowable Father (51:8–54:35)
is united with the Son in his own self-thinking activity (54:35–57:23),
and contains within him the church as the multiplicity of this Thought
(57:23–59:38). At a second stage the Son "spreads himself out and
extends himself" (65:4–6), the Father is made potentially accessible,
and the aeons are searching for him; here the three members all
co-exist in the modus of continuous exteriorisation, represented by
the self-extension of the Son (60:1–67:34). Finally, the third stage is
characterised by the coming into being of the Pleroma as a multi-
tude of individual, cognisant beings. This stage is, furthermore, itself
conceived under the scheme of a tripartition that seems to mirror
each of the three basic terms:[107]

> (1) Now, all those who had gone forth from him, \<that\> is, the aeons
> of the aeons, [being] emissions born from a procreative nature, also
> \<procreate\> through their own procreative nature, to the glory of the

---

[107] The translation is based on the text in Thomassen and Painchaud, *Traité
tripartite*.

Father, just as *he* had been the cause of *their* existence. This is what we said earlier: he makes the aeons into roots and springs and fathers. For that which they glorified, they begot.[108] For it possesses[109] knowledge and wisdom, and they have understood that they have gone forth from the knowledge and the understanding of the Entireties.

If the Entireties had risen to give glory according to the individual <powers(?)> of each aeon, they would have brought forth a glory that was (only) a semblance of the Father, he who himself is the Entireties. For that reason they were drawn, through the singing of praise and through the power of the oneness of him from whom they had come forth, into mutual intermingling, union, and oneness. From their assembled fullness they made a glorification worthy of the Father, an image that was one and, at the same time, many because it was brought forth for the glory of the One, and because they had come forward towards him who himself is the Entireties.

This, then, was a tribute from the [aeons] to the one who had brought forth the Entireties, a first-fruit offering of the immortals and eternal; for when it issued from the living aeons it left them perfect and full, caused by something [perfect] and full, since *they* were full and perfect, having given glory in a perfect manner in communion (κοινωνια).

(2) Now, inasmuch as the Father lacks nothing, *he* <returns> the glory they give to those who glorify [him, so as to make them manifest by that which he himself is. The cause that brought about for them the second glorification is in fact that which was returned unto them from the Father, when they understood the grace from the Father through which they had borne fruit with one another, so that just as *they* had been bringing forth by glorifying the Father, in the same way they might also themselves be made manifest in their act of giving glory, so as to be revealed as being perfect.

(3) They became fathers of the third glorification, (which was produced) in accordance with the free will and the power with which they had been born, (enabling them) to give glory in unison while (at the same time) independently of one another, according to the will of each. The first and the second (glorifications) are thus both of them perfect and full,[110] for they are manifestations of the perfect and full Father,

---

[108] ⲭⲉ ⲡⲉⲉⲓ ⲉⲧⲟⲩ†ⲉⲁⲩ ⲛⲉϥ ⲁⲩⲝⲡⲟ (68:10–11). The Coptic sentence is hardly correct. I think the original sense must have been "that with which they glorified, they begot," with ⲛⲉⲩ reflecting an instrumental dative in the Greek. This means that praise offered by the aeons to the Father is seen as a procreative act through which their praise becomes a new generation of aeonic "children."

[109] ⲟⲩⲛ̄ⲧⲉϥ (68:12) read perhaps ⲟⲩⲛ̄ⲧⲉⲩ "... they possess."

[110] The Coptic reads ⲭⲉ ⲡⲓϣⲁⲣⲡ̄ ϭⲉ ⲙ̄ⲛ̄ⲡⲓⲙⲁϩⲥⲛⲉⲩ ⲛⲉ· ⲁⲩⲱ ⲡⲓⲣⲏⲧⲛ̄· ⲥⲉϫⲏⲕ ⲙ̄ⲡⲥⲛⲉⲩ ⲁⲩⲱ ⲥⲉⲙⲏϩ (69:31–32). I now believe the text must be emended in order to yield any sense in the context, and propose to delete the words ⲛⲉ· ⲁⲩⲱ. ⲁⲩⲱ may be an intrusion from the following line (ⲙ̄ⲡⲥⲛⲉⲩ ⲁⲩⲱ), and ⲛⲉ secondarily added in order to produce a syntactically complete sentence.

and (of) the perfect (things) that issued from the glorification of him
who is perfect. The fruit of the third, however, is glorifications (pro-
duced) by the will of each individual aeon, and of each of the Father's
qualities and powers.[111] This fruit is a perfect Fullness to [the extent]
that what the aeons desire and are capable of in giving glory to the
Father comes from their union as well as from each of them individ-
ually. For this reason they exist as minds over minds, *logoi* over *logoi*,
superiors over superiors, degrees over degrees, being ranked one above
the other. Each of those who glorify has his own station, rank, dwelling-
place, and place of rest, which is the glorification he brings forth.
(67:37–70:19)

In this section, *Tri. Trac.* distinguishes three "glorifications." It seems,
moreover, that these different acts of giving glory represent three
distinct moments in the process by which the Pleroma constitutes
itself as a plurality of aeons. In the first act, the aeons bring forth
a "tribute" of glorification, making a representation of the Father
himself as a Single One and a Totality. The second glorification is
a glory that is "returned" from the Father to the glorifying aeons.
This reflected glory lets them share in the Father's perfection in turn,
and manifests them as being of his essence ([ⲁ]ⲟⲩⲁⲛϩⲟⲩ ⲁⲃⲁⲗ ⲙ̄ⲡⲉⲉⲓ
ⲉⲧⲉ ⲛ̄[ⲧ]ⲁϥ ⲡⲉ 69:13–14). It seems pertinent to associate this moment
in the self-constitution of the Pleroma with the outwardly manifest-
ing function represented by the Son in the basic triad of Father,
Son, and church, so that that function recurs here as a second
moment within the constitution of the third member of the triad,
the church-Pleroma, itself. Finally, the "third glorification" turns the
Pleroma into a set of individual aeons endowed with autonomy, or
free will (ⲧⲙⲛ̄ⲧⲁⲩⲧⲉⲝⲟⲩⲥⲓⲟⲥ), and their existence in this mode con-
sists in the glorification each of them brings forth according to indi-
vidual ability. This activity produces a hierarchy that distributes the
aeons in relative positions of superiority and inferiority according to
how advanced they are. At the same time, this hierarchy is charac-
terised by a mutual agreement (ⲧⲱⲧ) that exists between all its mem-
bers and makes them form a harmonious collective. (The text goes
on, in 70:19–71:12, to describe the mutual assistance and the lack

---

[111] The "qualities and powers" may here be just further ways to designate the
glorifying aeons. But it may also be that those terms refer to the objects of the acts
of glorification, with the implication that the individually produced glorification is
limited also in the sense that it can encompass only partial aspects of the Father
and not the Father in his totality.

of jealousy within the Pleroma.) It would perhaps be appropriate to visualise this structure of unity-in-diversity based on acts of glorification, as a choir produced by the union of individual voices.

This analysis suggests that the structure underlying the account of first principles in *Tri. Trac.* is a structure that can be described as enneadic: the three terms of Father, Son, and church/Pleroma are unfolded in three stages, with each stage being defined by one of the terms while the others are equally present. Now, this kind of structure resembles the enneads found in later Neoplatonism, and which go back to the Father-Power-Mind triad of the *Chaldean Oracles*, as interpreted (probably) by Porphyry. The latter appears to have read the Chaldean triad enneadically as follows:[112]

Father	:	*Father*	Power, or Life	(Paternal) Mind
Life	:	Father	*Power*, or *Life*	Mind
Mind	:	Father	Power, or Life	(*Demiurgic*) *Mind*

This theory lays out the Chaldean triad as a succession of three triads, in accordance with a principle of predominance in co-unification, a principle that also seems to underlie the structure of the pleromatogony in *Tri. Trac.* To what extent such an enneadic systematisation was present already in the *Oracles* cannot be ascertained.[113]

This theory of triadic unfolding also involves, it will be recalled, the notions of hiddenness and manifestation, sometimes systematised in triadic form as hiddenness-manifestation-autonomous existence.

We are here facing a rather complicated puzzle. Valentinian theologians seem ultimately to be drawing on some of the same sources as Porphyry and later Neoplatonists, Victorinus, Synesius, and the platonising Sethians. However, there is not an exact fit. Valentinian texts do not employ the scholastically systematised triad of Being-Life/Power-Thought, or its accompanying technical terminology. Nevertheless a triadic structure associated with hiddenness, manifestation, and autonomy/individuation can be detected in Valentinian

---

[112] Hadot, *Porphyre et Victorinus*, I 267, and, more generally about this structure, ibid. 260–72.

[113] "Il est difficile de dire si les *Oracles* eux-mêmes faisaient explicitement allusion à une ennéade suprême ou si Porphyre en a en quelque sorte déduit l'existence en considérant le caractère triadique inhérent à la monade, à la dyade et à la triade suprêmes" (Hadot, *Porphyre et Victorinus*, I 262n1).

pleromatogony, and most clearly in *Tri. Trac.* Moreover, the concept of the divine Will, though not systematised as a member of a triad, is a notable feature of the Valentinian theory of manifestation, and is closely related to the notion of the Father's "Power," to point of the two terms being synonymous.[114]

Furthermore, in order to describe the Father as the hidden source of the Pleroma, the Valentinian texts make use of the term βυθός/βάθος, which it shares with the *Chaldean Oracles* and which reappears in Synesius and occasionally in Victorinus,[115] though it is conspicuously absent in the triadic constructions of both the later Neoplatonists and the Sethian texts. On the other hand, the Sethian texts underscore the notions of hiddenness and manifestation by making use of a triad Kalyptos-Protophanes-Autogenes.[116] Moreover, this triad constitutes subdivisions of the Barbelo aeon, which means that it appears in a context that parallels the Valentinian idea of manifestation from the hiddenness in the Thought of the Father. This terminology has an Orphic ring to it.[117] That is also the case with the term κρύφιος, which Proclus uses to describe the initial hiddenness of the Totality within the One.[118]

Thus there exists an Orphic connection for this type of doctrine, in addition to the affinities with the *Chaldean Oracles* and Neopythagorean monistic physics. It seems difficult to pin down exactly the common source, or sources, of these apparently related protologies. As their common archetype, one is lead to postulate the existence of a theory where the Father-Monad is conceived as a Mind-Thought containing potentially within him the Totality, in the manner of a womb. In the description of this pre-existence, moreover, its "hiddenness" was underscored, and the generation of the

---

[114] Cf. Majercik, *Chaldean Oracles*, 157; Lewy, *Chaldaean Oracles*, 79–80; Hadot, *Porphyre et Victorinus*, I 307, with notes 3,6,7; Thomassen and Painchaud, *Traité tripartite*, 277–79.

[115] See above, 295–96.

[116] Cf. Turner, *Sethian Gnosticism*, 539–47.

[117] Cf. Turner, *Sethian Gnosticism*, 540–41n37. The basic term in this triad seems to be Protophanes, who is clearly the Orphic Phanes, the Protogonos. The term Kalyptos looks as if it may have been secondarily derived to complement Protophanes (Abramowski, "Marius Victorinus," 119). It would correspond, in Orphic terms, to the cosmic egg (cf. the following note).

[118] Cf. Hadot, *Porphyre et Victorinus*, I 306n4. As Hadot, remarks, this hidden state of the Totality is symbolised by the Orphic egg.

Totality was presented as a "manifestation." This led to the introduction of the terms βυθός and βάθος as names for the Father-Monad, and also invited an assimilation and a reinterpretation of the old Orphic theogony, where such notions could be found, particularly in the myth of Phanes emerging from the cosmic egg. (It is quite conceivable that older mythologies were reintroduced for purposes of illustration and legitimisation in the paradigm shift from a dualistic to a monistic theory of first principles that took place in Neopythagoreanism.) In addition, this theory must have included the concept of the Will, or Power, of the Father as the dynamic agent of the manifestation.

It does not seem possible at present to put together the pieces of this puzzle in a consistent fashion, or to locate the common source, or sources, used by the Valentinians, the *Chaldean Oracles*, the later Platonists, the platonising Sethians, and Victorinus and Synesius; one can only hope that future detailed research may be able to shed more light on this situation.[119]

The Embryological Model

The formation of the Totality in the Father's womb

A further dimension of the type A protology needs to be considered: the generation of the Entirety from a state of potentiality within the Father to actualisation and autonomous existence outside him is imagined in accordance with some kind of embryological theory. *Tri. Trac.* explains that,

> Once it had been decided that they should be born, he who possesses all power desired to take and bring what was incomplete out of [. . ., to bring] forth those who [were with]in him. . . . As long as they remained in the Father's Thought—that is, while they were in the

---

[119] Such an investigation might also be able to explain such passages as the following one in Plutarch, *De Iside* 376c: καθ᾽ ἑαυτὸν ὁ τοῦ θεοῦ νοῦς καὶ λόγος ἐν τῷ ἀοράτῳ καὶ ἀφανεῖ βεβηκὼς εἰς γένεσιν ὑπὸ κινήσεως προῆλθεν. Plutarch gives this as an explanation of an "Egyptian" myth which says that Zeus' feet were originally grown together, but Isis helped to separate them. The account has a triadic structure, with Isis representing the (female) element of movement enabling what was hidden inside the supreme deity to be manifested, i.e., his Mind to be actualised. Cf. Hadot's note in Henry and Hadot, *Marius Victorinus*, II 716; Abramowski, "Marius Victorinus," 121.

hidden depths—the Depths (himself) certainly knew them, but they for their part were incapable of knowing the depths in which they found themselves, nor could they know themselves or anything else. In other words, they existed with the Father but did not exist for themselves. Rather, the kind of existence they had was like that of a seed, or may be compared with that of an embryo. He had made them in the manner of the *logos*, which exists in a seminal state before the things it will bring forth have yet come into being.

For that reason the Father had also thought in advance that they should exist not only for himself, but should exist for themselves as well—that they should remain[120] in [his] thought as mental substance, but also exist for themselves. He sowed a thought as a seed of [. . .] in order that [they might] understand [what kind of father] they have. He showed grace, and [provided the fi]rst form, that they might per[ceive] whom [they have] for a father. The Name of the Father he granted them, by means of a voice that called out to them that whoever exists, exists through that Name, possessing which one comes into being. How exalted the Name was they did not realise, however. For as long as the infant is in the state of an embryo, it has what it needs without ever having seen the one who sowed it. For that reason, they had this only as an object to be sought after: they understood *that* he existed, and desired to find out *who* the existing one might be.

But the Father is good and perfect, and just as he did not <. . .>[121] that they should remain for ever in his Thought, but granted them to come into being for themselves also, thus would he also gracefully allow them to understand who the one who is, is—that is, the one who knows himself eternally. [. . .] receive form in order [to kn]ow who the one who is, is, in the same way as when one is brought forth here below: when one is born one finds oneself in the light and is able to see one's parents. (60:5–62:5)

This text combines several themes. One of them is an epistemological distinction widespread in ancient philosophy between knowing the existence of something and knowing its essence.[122] Another theme is the allusion to the divine name in the Biblical tradition.[123] Most striking, however, is the use of embryological theories to describe the process. At first the aeons exist within the Father's Thought as

---

[120] A negation has perhaps dropped out in 61:5: ". . . that they should *not* remain. . . ."

[121] The text of the codex here (61:30) is ⲙ̄ⲡⲉϥⲥⲱⲧⲙ̄ ⲁⲣⲁⲟⲩ ⲁⲧⲣⲟⲩ- "he did not listen to them that they should . . .," which evidently is meaningless.

[122] Cf. Kasser *et al.*, *Tractatus Tripartitus*, I 328; Theiler, *Vorbereitung*, 142–44; Festugière, *Révélation*, IV 6–17; Thomassen and Painchaud, *Traité tripartite*, 297–98.

[123] Cf. Thomassen and Painchaud, *Traité tripartite*, 297.

in a womb. At a second stage, the Father sows into them his Name, which gives them "a first form," enabling them to perceive the existence of the Father and to grow towards knowing his essence. Finally, they are born, and leaving the womb, are able to see the truth.

The background in ancient embryology

As was noted above, embryological ideas were used in Neopythagoreanism to describe the generation of number from the Monad (see especially 293–94). *Tri. Trac.* seems, however, to employ a more elaborate theory, involving a notion of a "first form." This recalls embryological theories developed in ancient medicine that describe the development of the foetus in the womb as a succession of stages. Thus Hippocrates, in his *On the nature of the child*, distinguished three stages: Existing first as seed (γονή), the foetus next acquires flesh (σάρξ), and finally the organs are developed, at which stage the foetus becomes a "child" (παιδίον). In the second century AD, Galen offered a more advanced theory of the formative development (διάπλασις) of the foetus. Building on Alexandrian experimental anatomy, Galen (especially in his *On the formation of embryos*) distinguished four stages: (1) Seed (γονή); (2) the first stage of the embryo (κύημα), when the flesh appears; (3) the stage where the essential organs emerge: first the liver, then the heart, and finally the brain. When the formation of these organs is completed, the foetus has attained the fourth stage, that of (4) the παιδίον.[124]

It seems as if *Tri. Trac.* may be alluding to such theories of the διάπλασις of the foetus when describing the generation of the Pleroma. As far as I am aware, Hippocrates does not use such expressions as "the first form," or "first formation" in his descriptions of the development of the foetus. Galen, on the other hand, does. He says that the foetus receives its "first fashioning" by being formed from blood, which acts in the role of matter: "For we are generated from it

---

[124] For these summaries I rely on Lesky, "Embryologie," 1237–38. Stages (2) and (3) are sometimes distinguished by the terms κύημα and ἔμβρυον, see Phillip de Lacy's notes in his edition of *On the Doctrines of Hippocrates and Plato* (Corpus Medicorum Graecorum V 4,1.2), 668 (on p. 400.33) and 686 (on p. 498.28–31). In the texts referred to here, however, no such distinction seems to be made, and ἔμβρυον is equivalent to κύημα. For a general study of Galen's embryology see Nickel, *Untersuchungen*.

[*sc.* the blood] when we are conceived in the uterus, and out of it we receive our first fashioning (πρώτη διάπλασις) and the subsequent articulation, growth and maturation of the parts thus fashioned."[125] The term πρώτη διάπλασις here apparently refers to the transition from stage one, the γονή-seed, to stage two, the κύημα-embryo. The term thus applies to a very early stage in the development of the foetus, before the latter acquires any kind of sensation, and is therefore not directly relevant as a possible source for the language used in the Valentinian pleromatology of *Tri. Trac.* It does, however, show that similar terminology was used in medical embryology and suggests that the Valentinian account alludes in a general way to such theories.

A more precise parallel for *Tri. Trac.*'s notion of a first form appears in the treatise *Ad Gaurum*, or *On the animation of the embryo*; this was probably not written by Galen, as is claimed in the manuscript, but by Porphyry.[126] The treatise deals with the question of when the soul enters the embryo—more precisely, the animal soul enabling movement and sensation. It is clear, Porphyry states, that the initial nature of the foetus is like that of a plant or a vegetable, possessing the capacity for growth. But at what point does the foetus acquire the soul of a living being capable of self-movement and sensation? Various opinions on this topic are then discussed. Some believe that the soul enters already at the moment of conception; being attracted by the ardour of passion unfolded in the sexual act, the soul enters the sperm of the male and enables it to stick to the womb of the female. This, Porphyry says, is the opinion of Numenius and certain Pythagoreans. Others, however, place the entrance of the soul into the foetus at the moment of its first formation, which they consider to take place after thirty days for male foetuses, and forty-two days for females (. . . τοῦ δ' ὅταν πλασθῇ πρῶτον [*sc.* τὸ ἔμβρυον] τὴν εἴσκρισιν τιθέντος τοῦ μὲν ἄρρενος ἐν λ̄ ἡμέραις τῆς δὲ θηλείας ἐν δύο καὶ μ̄ διαρθρουμένης, καθάπερ ἱστορεῖ ὁ Ἱπποκράτης, 35:3–5). Here,

---

[125] γεννώμεθα γὰρ ἐξ αὐτοῦ κατὰ τὰς μήτρας κυούμενοι καὶ τήν τε πρώτην διάπλασις ἐκ τούτου λαμβάνομεν, ἐφεξῆς δὲ ταύτη τῶν διαπλασθέντων μορίων τήν τε διάρθρωσιν καὶ τὴν αὔξησιν καὶ τὴν τελείωσιν *De plac. Hipp. et Plat.* VIII 4:5. Cf. ibid. VI 6:32 κατὰ τὴν πρώτην ἐν τῇ μήτρα τῶν ἐμβρύων διάπλασιν; *Adv. Lycum* 7:3 τὴν πρώτην τοῦ κυήματος ἰδέαν.

[126] Kalbfleisch, Πρὸς Γαῦρον. On this text see Festugière, *Révélation*, III 265–301; Tardieu, "Tuyau," 167–73.

Porphyry uses the expression "first formation." He refers to Hippocrates for this opinion. Indeed, in *De nat. pueri* (18), Hippocrates does say that the sperm has developed into a child (παιδίον)—that is, after 30 days for boys and 42 for girls. But, as was mentioned already, Hippocrates does not call this a "first formation," nor does he express any opinion about the moment when the foetus acquires its soul. It must be surmised, therefore, that Porphyry is here referring to interpretations of Hippocrates that were current in his time, rather than to Hippocrates himself.

In fact, the theory attributed by Porphyry to Hippocrates can be found in the Pythagorean tradition. The Pythagorean source quoted by Alexander Polyhistor in the early first century BCE[127] contains the following ideas about the development of the embryo: "First congealing in about forty days [the germ] receives form (μορφοῦσθαι δὲ τὸ μὲν πρῶτον παγὲν ἐν ἡμέραις τεσσαράκοντα) and, according to the ratios of 'harmony,' in seven, nine, or at the most ten, months, the mature child is brought forth" (D.L. VIII 29).[128] According to this source, the formative moment after forty days is also the moment when the soul is generated in the embryo.

Similar ideas derived from medical science about the formative development of the embryo seem to be presupposed by *Tri. Trac.*: First there is a seed, then a first formation, analogous to the stage of παιδίον in Hippocrates, and finally comes the moment of birth. There are other echoes of embryological theory in the text as well. Thus it is said, "For as long as the child is in the state of a foetus it has everything it needs, even though it has never seen the one who sowed it." This recalls how Porphyry describes the foetus as being self-sufficient (αὔταρκες) for its own growth in the womb of its mother (*Ad Gaurum* 52:1, 53:14).

Moreover, *Tri. Trac.* states that when the baby is finally born, it emerges into the light, and becomes aware of its parents (62:3–5). This also corresponds to ideas in Porphyry's text. Porphyry, in fact, places decisive importance on the moment of birth, which is when, in his opinion, the child at last acquires its soul. Here, Porphyry

---

[127] Diogenes Laertius, VIII 24–36. This document is also the earliest source for Neopythagorean monism; see above, 270.
[128] Trans. Hicks, LCL. Tardieu, "Tuyau," 168, has pointed out the similarity between these ideas and the second theory mentioned in *Ad Gaurum*.

invokes Plato, who in the *Timaeus* describes how children are con-
ceived, gradually mature in the womb, and are "finally brought out
into the light, and thus the generation of animals is completed" (καὶ
μετὰ τοῦτο εἰς φῶς ἀγαγόντες ζῴων ἀποτελέσωσι γένεσιν, *Tim.* 91d4–5).
This shows, Porphyry says, how "the animation by the self-moving
soul takes place when the foetus emerges into the light from the
maternal womb" (οὕτως τὴν ἐμψυχίαν τῆς αὐτοκινήτου ψυχῆς μετὰ τὸ
εἰς φῶς ἐκ τῆς μητρὸς προελθεῖν, *Ad Gaurum* 45:19–20). This final
stage is decisively different from that of the foetus in the womb,
whose shape is caused passively by its being affected and impressed,
but not by intelligence and knowledge (τὸ δὲ τοῦ πλαττομένου εἶδος
κατὰ τὸ πάθος καὶ τὸ τύπωμα, οὐ κατὰ τὴν σύνεσιν καὶ τὴν γνῶσιν,
Ad Gaurum 43:9–11). Thus Porphyry seems to presuppose two stages
of formation. The first takes place in the womb, and corresponds to
the "first formation" of Hippocrates' παιδίον; the second formation
must be acquired by the child when it receives soul at the moment
of birth, is liberated from the womb and becomes a rational being.

The theory of embryonic formation in other Valentinian documents

The expression "a first form" is used also by Heracleon in an exe-
gesis of John 1:4, "In him was life, and the life was the light of
men." Heracleon understands this to mean that the Logos provided
a first formation, that of coming into being, by bringing forth and
manifesting the seed sown by another by giving it form, illumina-
tion, and individual delineation: αὐτὸς [*sc.* ὁ λόγος] γὰρ τὴν πρώτην
μόρφωσιν τὴν κατὰ τὴν γένεσιν αὐτοῖς παρέσχε, τὰ ὑπ᾽ ἄλλου σπαρέντα
εἰς μορφὴν καὶ εἰς φωτισμὸν καὶ περιγραφὴν ἰδίαν ἀγαγὼν καὶ ἀναδείξας
(frg. 2 *ap.* Orig. *In Jo.* II 21:138). There are problems with the inter-
pretation of this fragment in so far as it is unclear what ontological
level or stage in the narrative it is discussing. What is reasonably
clear, however, is that Heracleon is informed in this text by a the-
ory of the development of the foetus, using in this context the expres-
sion ἡ πρώτη μόρφωσις as a technical term. Thus such a theory
appears to be a common feature of Valentinian ideology.

We also encounter these ideas in the main Valentinian system
reported by Irenaeus. Having been excised and expelled from the
Pleroma, Achamoth, the irrational passion of Sophia, is described as
an aborted foetus. In compassion, Christ is sent down to her, and
he provides her with a preliminary form. He extended himself on

the cross—that is, he went beyond the Limit—and gave her form
with regard to being (οὐσία), though not yet with regard to knowl-
edge (γνῶσις): οἰκτείραντα δὲ αὐτὴν τὸν Χριστὸν, καὶ διὰ τοῦ Σταυροῦ
ἐπεκταθέντα, τῇ ἰδίᾳ δυνάμει μορφῶσαι μόρφωσιν τὴν κατ᾽ οὐσίαν
μόνον, ἀλλ᾽ οὐ τὴν κατὰ γνῶσιν (Iren. *Haer.* I 4:1). Later, after she
has converted and prayed, the Saviour is sent to her to complete
her formation, giving her the form of knowledge as well: κἀκεῖνον
[*sc.* ὁ Σωτήρ] μορφῶσαι αὐτὴν μόρφωσιν τὴν κατὰ γνῶσιν, καὶ ἴασιν
τῶν παθῶν ποιήσασθαι αὐτῆς (I 4:5). Here again we find the theory
of successive formations. In all probability this is the same model
that is attested by *Tri. Trac.* and Heracleon, and is based on a the-
ory about the development of the foetus in the womb—from seed
to a first form, where the child exists but lacks cognitive ability, and
from there to the fully formed independent being with self-awareness.

The version of the model found in the system of Irenaeus is, by
comparison to that of *Tri. Trac.*, clearly secondary and derived.
Achamoth is an aborted foetus that has been rejected by the Pleroma.
Yet an aborted foetus is, strictly speaking, beyond redemption. It
cannot be put back into the uterus, or be artificially nurtured out-
side it (unless of course the miscarriage takes place very late in the
pregnancy, but Sophia Achamoth had not even reached the stage
of first formation in her foetal development). The theory of succes-
sive formations really presupposes that the embryo is still inside the
womb, continuing to grow there. The proper and original context
for the model of embryological formation in Valentinianism must
therefore be the type A protology, whose chronological primacy in
the development of Valentinian doctrine is thus once again confirmed.

Protology and soteriology

As was shown in the analyses of *Gos. Truth* and *Tri. Trac.* in Part II
above, the protology of these texts represents not simply a first and
already completed phase in the unfolding of the salvation historical
narrative. From one point of view, the salvation historical design as
a whole is encompassed within this model. It describes an ongoing
process of which we ourselves are a part. From this perspective, the
entire history of the fall from the divine realm, the creation of the
cosmos, and the sending of the Saviour forms nothing other than a
grand detour in the gestation of the Pleroma, to be consummated
eventually through the rebirth of the spirituals sown in the cosmos,

effected through the ritual of baptism. This is the underlying vision of *Tri. Trac.*, and also of *Gos. Truth*, which begins with the statement that the Totality was inside the Father and then goes on to describe the ignorance and confusion caused by this situation, which eventually led to the creation of the world as an unreal substitute for the truth. The deeper message of both these texts is, therefore, that as long as the world continues to exist, we remain within the womb of the Father, waiting to be born, and to receive form and Name when he wills.

THE TRANSFORMATION OF ESCHATOLOGY
TO PROTOLOGY

It is clear that neither the meaning nor the origins of Valentinian protology are exhaustively explained by the disclosure of its philosophical sources. The philosophical dimension of the protology is undoubtedly important in its own right, as an answer to intellectual issues regarding the derivation of duality—and hence multiplicity, suffering, and matter—from a single ontological principle. However, as we have seen already, another essential dimension of the protology is the soteriological one, which encompasses a vision of the salvation history as an entire process. This vision of a salvation process that unfolds in time and history does not derive from Greek philosophy, but from the heritage of Judaeo-Christian soteriology. In the following, an attempt will be made to reconstruct a trajectory that leads from the soteriology of Judaeo-Christian historical eschatology to its protological transformation in Valentinianism. This will be done by strategically highlighting what appears to be a key concept in this context, namely "manifestation."

The Manifestation of the Saints

As we have seen, the idea that the Entirety is "manifested" from within the Father, or from the Father's Thought, is an important feature of Valentinian protology in its original form. It has also been shown that the idea has parallels in later Greek philosophy and in philosophically interpreted theogony traditions. In this section an attempt will be made to demonstrate that the idea can also be said to have Judaeo-Christian antecedents, in a notion of the eschatological manifestation of the "saints"; and that it therefore illustrates the transformation of the temporally oriented vision of salvation in early Judaism and Christianity into the ultimately timeless ontology of Valentinian gnosticism, through a confluence of Greek and Judaeo-Christian thought.

The disclosure of the spirituals in the world

The idea that the spiritual is "manifested" is not only a protological theme, but also appears in eschatological contexts. In one of its eschatological forms, the idea is encountered in *Tri. Trac.* 118:14–28:

> Humanity was divided into three kinds of natures: spiritual, psychic and material. . . . Each of the three races is recognised by its fruit. However, they were not known at first, but only at the advent of the Saviour, who shed light upon the saints and revealed what each was.

This statement contains a salvation historical vision that relies on the "soteriological contrast pattern":[1] During the previous age all was hidden, but once the Saviour appeared, the true nature of each individual (their capacity for producing fruit) was revealed at last.

This pattern of thought is apocalyptic. In non-gnostic early Christian literature, the same general idea is found for instance in the *Shepherd of Hermas, Sim.* IV 2, where the traditional theme of the two aeons is expounded by means of the metaphor of winter and summer. As long as the winter lasts, the healthy trees cannot be distinguished from the barren ones; but when summer comes, their leaves will reveal them. In the same way, the *Shepherd* says, "When the grace of the Lord shines down, then all those serving God shall be revealed, and they will be made manifest for all" (ὅταν οὖν ἐπιλάμψῃ τὸ ἔλεος τοῦ κυρίου, τότε φανεροὶ ἔσονται οἱ δουλεύοντες τῷ θεῷ, καὶ πᾶσι φανεροποιηθήσονται).[2]

The pattern contrasts the hiddenness of the servants of God in the present age with their manifestation in the future aeon. The same pattern underlies the parable of the weeds among the wheat in Matt 13:24–30, 36–43: In this world the good seed grows together with the seed sown by the devil, but when it is reaped by the angels, the seed will shine (ἐκλάμψουσιν, 13:43) like the sun in the Kingdom. This set of ideas, moreover, may be compared with *1 En.* 104:2: "Be hopeful, because formerly you have pined away through evil and toil. But now you shall shine like the lights of heaven, and you shall be seen" (ὡσεὶ φωστῆρες τοῦ οὐρανοῦ ἀναλάμψετε καὶ φανεῖτε).

---

[1] Cf. above, 134–35, 149–50.
[2] Cf. also, for this idea in apocalyptic literature, *2 Bar.* 83:2–3; *1 En.* 49:4, 104:2; *2 En.* 46:4; and Aalen, *"Licht" und "Finsternis,"* 233–35, 321–24. For Christian examples, cf. *Diogn.* 6:1–4, *Ep. Apost.* 36, Basilides *ap.* Iren. *Haer.* I 24:6.

In this last text, the pattern of hidden-and-revealed is, by an exploitation of the light metaphor, further elaborated as a contrast between present humiliation and oppression, and future exaltation and triumph.

The text in *Tri. Trac.* 118:14–28 is evidently tributary to these inherited notions about the eschatological revelation of the true nature of every individual person, with the resulting illumination of the elect. The concept of "races" in the sense used by the Valentinian author represents of course a gnostic interpretation. On the other hand, the choice of the expression "the saints" (ⲛⲉⲧⲟⲩⲁⲁⲃ), which does not belong to the internal vocabulary of Valentinianism, links the passage directly with the traditional language of apocalypticism.

A similar dependence on apocalyptic tradition is evident in *Gos. Truth*, when it speaks about "the judgement (ⲕⲣⲓⲥⲓⲥ) that has come down from above and judged everyone, being a sword which cuts in two and separates one part from the other" (25:35–26:4). Here, the accent is on the separation aspect of the eschatological unveiling.[3] In another passage, *Gos. Truth* compares the children of the Father to a fragrance:

> The children of the Father are his fragrance, for they are of the grace of his countenance.[4] For this reason the Father loves his fragrance, and he makes it manifest in any place. And even if it is mixed with matter, he gives his fragrance over to the light, and he exalts it to his rest, above every form and every sound. (33:39–34:9)

The passage alludes in particular to 2 Cor 2:14 (τῷ δὲ θεῷ χάρις . . . τὴν ὀσμὴν τῆς γνώσεως αὐτοῦ φανεροῦντι δι᾽ ἡμῶν ἐν παντὶ τόπῳ). However, the emphasis in *Gos. Truth* is different from that of Paul. The fragrance refers to the hidden spiritual nature of the Father's children, which everywhere, including unsuspected places, is joined

---

[3] For the image, cf., with the commentators, in particular Heb. 4:12. See further Trompf, "The Conception of God," where also the relevant apocalyptic evidence is listed (124).

[4] ϩⲛⲁⲃⲁⲗ ⲛⲉ ϩⲛ̄ ⲧⲭⲁⲣⲓⲥ ⲛ̄ⲧⲉ ⲡⲉϥϩⲟ; this phrase alludes to the Biblical notion of the fragrant sacrifice, "pleasing in the sight of God"; cf. Ex 29:25 etc.; also cf. Phil 4:18. The Coptic ϩⲟ in this text, however, can hardly be derived from the normal Greek renderings of *lipnê YHWH* in the LXX or the NT, which are made by means of various prepositions, or simply by the dative (cf. Blass-Debrunner, § 214), so that the reference to, and the connotations of, the divine "face" are lost. *Gos. Truth* thus reflects an awareness of the original Hebrew expression, which, one might conjecture, has been transmitted through Jewish exegetical traditions.

with matter, and thus is not recognised until it is revealed. Expressed in apocalyptic terms, the spiritual seed is concealed during the present aeon. In addition, the idea of eschatological manifestation is combined in this text with the soteriological notion of illumination, or participation in the divine light. This combination also occurs, as we have seen, in some of the apocalyptic texts referred to above, and is implied in the text from *Tri. Trac.* as well (the Saviour "shed light upon [ⲣⲟⲩⲁⲉⲓⲛ ⲁ-] the saints and revealed what each was").

The Valentinians have thus adopted from the apocalyptic tradition a vision of history according to which the ones who will be saved—the saints, the servants of God, etc.—have remained hidden and unrecognised throughout the present age. In the Valentinian system texts, moreover, this notion also appears in descriptions of the anthropogony. According to them, the spiritual seed was introduced into the first human by Sophia and/or the Saviour, secretly and unknown to the Demiurge, after the latter had first produced the outward shell of the human creature.[5] The seed remained hidden, both in cosmological, social and individual terms: the persons carrying the spiritual seed of their Mother Sophia were indistinguishable from their psycho-physical environment, nor were they themselves able to recognise their own innate spirituality. *Exc.* 2–3 gives the following version of this theme:

> (2:1) The Valentinians say that after the animated body had been fashioned, a male seed was put into the chosen soul while it slept, an effluence from the angelic (nature), that there should be no deficiency. (2:2) And this operated like leaven, unifying what appeared to be separated, the soul and the flesh, which had in fact been produced separately by Sophia. Sleep was for Adam the oblivion of the soul, and the spiritual seed which was put into the soul by the Saviour kept the soul from being dissolved. The seed was an effluence from the male and angelic (nature). For this reason the Saviour says: "Save yourself and your soul" [cf. Gen 19:17]. (3:1) When the Saviour came, he awakened the soul and enflamed the spark. For the words of the Saviour are a power. For this reason he said: "Let your light shine before men!" [Matt 5:16] (3:2) And after his resurrection he infused his spirit into the apostles and blew out and separated the earth like ashes, while he enflamed the spark and vivified it.

---

[5] E.g., *Tri. Trac.* 105:10–35, Iren. *Haer.* I 5:6, *Exc.* 53:2–5, Hipp. *Haer.* VI 34:6, Valentinus frg. 1 *ap.* Clem. Alex. *Str.* II 36:2; cf. Thomassen and Painchaud, *Traité tripartite*, 404.

The Saviour thus revealed the spiritual seed hidden as a spark dormant in humanity since creation, and made it recognisable and alive.

The eschatological manifestation of the previously hidden spiritual seed is a particularly important idea in *Gos. Truth*. We encounter it, for instance, in connection with a central theme in that text, that of "the book of the living":

> No one could have been revealed among those who had been appointed for[6] salvation unless that book had appeared. For that reason the merciful and faithful Jesus patiently accepted his sufferings until he took that book; for he knows that his death is life for many.
>
> Just as the fortune of a deceased master of the house remains hidden as long as a will has not yet been opened, so was the Entirety hidden as long as the Father of the Entirety was invisible. . . . For that reason Jesus appeared; he revealed that book . . . (20:6–24)

The notion of the "book" in *Gos. Truth* is highly complex. Some of that complexity was discussed above, in chapter 17. For the purpose of the present discussion, the observation can be made that the text speaks about the disclosure of a certain group of people who had been appointed for salvation and were "written down" in advance. It is in this sense that *Gos. Truth* refers to "the living who are inscribed in the book of the living" (21:3–5), and asserts that the Father "enrolled them in advance" (21:33).

This is in itself not an unfamiliar theme in apocalyptic literature. The notion of books that are opened at the moment of eschatological fulfilment is of course a common one, whether it is the heavenly tablets containing God's plan for the world, or the book of good and evil deeds which is used to judge every human at the final tribunal.[7] The traditional idea of "the book of the living," or "the book of life," on the other hand, is not primarily eschatological. It basically expresses the assurance of an already established fact—the idea of pre-election for salvation—and descriptions of this type of book being dramatically opened at the *eschaton* are not common. They do exist, however, as *4 Ezra* 14:35 shows: *iustorum nomina parebunt et impiorum facta ostendentur.* Here, the revelation of the names written in the book is evidently thought to be part of the eschatological

---

[6] For the translation, cf. above, 153n15.

[7] Cf. Koep, *Das himmlische Buch*; Volz, *Eschatologie*, 291–92; Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch 1*, 478–80.

scenario. Another example is *1 Enoch* 47:3: "In those days, I saw him—the Antecedent of Time, while he was sitting upon the throne of his glory, and the books of the living ones were opened before him. . . . The hearts of the holy ones are filled with joy, because the number of the righteous has been offered . . ." The notion found in *Gos. Truth*, that the appearance of the book brings about the manifestation of those worthy of salvation, therefore, appears to be derived from Jewish apocalypticism.

The manifestation "from above"

This event of manifestation is, from one point of view, a manifestation "from below." It is a revelation of what has remained hidden on earth, the identities of the worthy ones who were not recognised before. At the same time, however, this is also a manifestation "from above," of the names written in the book. For *Gos. Truth*, these names existed in advance, in a book "written in the thought and mind of the Father" (19:35–36), and were used to "call" the ones to whom they belong at the end (21:25–27). These names are more than just letters (cf. 23:3–10), they are knowledge about oneself, and thus in an important sense, their owners' full selves: "Those who are to receive instruction are the living who are inscribed in the book of the living. It is about themselves that they receive instruction, receiving themselves from the Father (ⲉⲩϫⲓ ⲥⲃⲱ ⲁⲣⲁⲩ ⲟⲩⲁⲉⲉⲧⲟⲩ ⲉⲩϫⲓ ⲙⲙⲁⲩ ⲙ̄ⲡⲓⲱⲧ)" (21:3–7). In the vision of *Gos. Truth*, the nature of the world is deficiency, whereas the Father is the source of fullness. Thus what the book of the living brings, when the Father speaks the name of each one (21:28–30), is a knowledge which is equivalent to "receiving that which is one's own" (21:11–13) and "that which makes one complete" (21:17–18), without which one is "a *plasma* of delusion" (21:34–36). In this way, the disclosure of the book is more than a pronouncement, it is the manifestation of something substantial: the truly existing selves of the ones who receive it.

The mechanism behind this switch of perspective from a manifestation "from below" to one that takes place "from above" must, in all likelihood, be sought in the notions of divine prescience and predestination that operate in the text: The Father had "enrolled them in advance" (21:33) in the book that was "written in the thought and mind of the Father" (19:35–36). These notions are also derived from Jewish apocalypticism. According to *1 En.* 104:1, for instance,

"your names are written before the glory of the Great One" (cf. also 65:12; *2 Bar* 75:6). These "names," moreover, may be hypostasised into something possessing substantial existence:

> And I saw other lightnings and the stars of heaven. And I saw how he called them each by their (respective) names, and they obeyed him. . . . And I asked the angel who was going with me and who had shown me the secret things, "What are these things?" And he said to me, "The Lord of the Spirits has shown you the significance of each one of them: These are the names of the holy ones who dwell upon the earth and believe in the name of the Lord of the Spirits forever and ever. (*1 En.* 43; trans. E. Isaac, in Charlesworth, *Pseudepigrapha.*)

Here, the names of the saints are identified with the stars, the heavenly bodies that are the pre-eminent servants of God. In a sense they already have an independent existence, as part of the eternal divine secrets that are accessible to the visionary even now, but which will be revealed for all to see, it may be assumed, at the end of the age. The logic underlying this vision is, apparently, that that which will be revealed in the future exists already now in heaven.

Such a logic also seems to operate in the visions of the dwellings of the saints in other passages, particularly in the *Parables* of *1 En.* Thus *1 En.* 39:4:

> There I saw another vision: the dwelling places of the holy ones and the resting places of the righteous. So there my eyes saw their dwelling places with the righteous angels, and their resting places with the holy ones.[8]

The vision seems to be of realities that exist simultaneously in the future and in the present—seen from an earthly and temporal perspective these are things or situations that will be realised in the future, while from a heavenly and eternal perspective they already exist as realities in the other realm.[9]

Moreover, if the eschatological community of saints and angels exists in heaven already now, it can be "manifested" at the end of time: "When the congregation of the righteous shall appear, . . ."

---

[8] Translation according to the C manuscript.

[9] R.H. Charles was puzzled by the passage: "The unities of time and space are curiously neglected" (*Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha, in loc.*) Volz, *Eschatologie*, 21, on the other hand, perceived that present realities were being described.

(*1 En.* 38:1). Here, the future and eschatological situation of the righteous, after first having been hypostasised into a heavenly reality in the present, has been once more eschatologised into a future event. The congregation that will appear is the mythically hypostasised idea of the righteous as a community predetermined for salvation, this idea having been substantialised into an actual heavenly congregation. Thus the notion that the righteous on earth will be revealed at the end—the manifestation "from below"—has been transformed into an idea that the community they will then constitute, having been hypostasised into an independent reality existing in another dimension already now, will be manifested "from above."

This idea is attested elsewhere as well.[10] Consider the following passage in *1 Clem.* 50:3:

αἱ γενεαὶ πᾶσαι ἀπὸ Ἀδὰμ ἕως τῆσδε τῆς ἡμέρας παρῆλθον· ἀλλ᾽ οἱ ἐν ἀγάπῃ τελειωθέντες κατὰ τὴν τοῦ θεοῦ χάριν ἔχουσιν χῶρον εὐσεβῶν· οἳ φανερωθήσονται ἐν τῇ ἐπισκοπῇ τῆς βασιλείας τοῦ Χριστοῦ.	Every generation from Adam to the present day has passed away, but such of them as by God's grace were perfected in love have a place among the pious, and they will be revealed at the visitation of the kingdom of Christ.

It is not clear from this passage whether, in a sense, the pious themselves are already now with God, so that their eschatological manifestation is one "from above," or whether it is only their "place" (χῶρον)—their status as predetermined for salvation—that has been reserved for them until the day of universal resurrection. This vagueness, however, is in itself indicative of the mental processes leading to the idea of an already existing community of saints that will be revealed on the last day.

The same set of ideas appears at the end of *The Apocryphon of James* from Nag Hammadi Codex I:

> I went up to Jerusalem and prayed that I might acquire a portion with the beloved ones, they who will be revealed (ⲁⲧⲣⲓⲭⲡⲉ ⲟⲩⲙⲉⲣⲟⲥ ⲙⲛ̄ⲛ̄ⲙⲣ̄ⲣⲓⲧ ⲛⲉⲉⲓ ⲉⲧⲛⲁⲟⲩⲱⲛϩ̄ ⲁⲃⲁⲗ). (16:8–11)

The theme of "the ones who will be revealed," together with the desire to possess a "portion" with them, is thus a distinctive *topos* in the eschatological context.

---

[10] In *1 En.* itself, similar ideas are found in 53:6: "After this, the Righteous and Elect One will reveal the house of his congregation." The "house" is evidently not an empty shell, but must include the worshippers as well.

More illuminating still is the following passage in *2 Clem.*:

Ὥστε, ἀδελφοί, ποιοῦντες τὸ θέλημα τοῦ πατρὸς ἡμῶν θεοῦ ἐσόμεθα ἐκ τῆς ἐκκλησίας τῆς πρώτης, τῆς πνευματικῆς, τῆς πρὸ ἡλίου καὶ σελήνης ἐκτισμένης· ...

οὐκ οἴομαι δὲ ὑμᾶς ἀγνοεῖν, ὅτι ἐκκλησία ζῶσα σῶμά ἐστιν Χριστοῦ· λέγει γὰρ ἡ γραφή· ἐποίησεν ὁ θεὸς τὸν ἄνθρωπον ἄρσεν καὶ θῆλυ· τὸ ἄρσεν ἐστὶν ὁ Χριστός, τὸ θῆλυ ἡ ἐκκλησία· καὶ ὅτι τὰ βιβλία καὶ οἱ ἀπόστολοι τὴν ἐκκλησίαν οὐ νῦν εἶναι, ἀλλὰ ἄνωθεν. ἦν γὰρ πνευματική, ὡς καὶ ὁ Ἰησοῦς ἡμῶν, ἐφανερώθη δὲ ἐπ᾽ ἐσχάτων τῶν ἡμερῶν, ἵνα ἡμᾶς σώσῃ. ἡ ἐκκλησία δὲ πνευματικὴ οὖσα ἐφανερώθη ἐν τῇ σαρκὶ Χριστοῦ.

So, then, brothers, if we do the will of our Father God, we shall be of the first church, the spiritual, that which was created before sun and moon. . . .

I believe you are not ignorant of the fact that the body of Christ is a living church (for the Scripture says, "God created man male and female"—the male is Christ, the female the church), and that the books and the apostles teach that the church is not only of the present, but from the beginning. For it was spiritual, as was also our Jesus, and was made manifest at the end of the days in order to save us. Being spiritual, the church was made manifest in the flesh of Christ. (*2 Clem.* 14:1–3)

The most striking idea in this passage is that of the pre-existent, heavenly church, who is also the female partner of Christ. What should also be noted, however, is the *topos* which the passage shares with the two texts previously quoted: first, the hope of being a part of that pre-existing church (ἐσόμεθα ἐκ, which corresponds to ἔχουσιν χῶρον in *1 Clem.*, and ⲁⲧⲣⲓⲭⲡⲉ ⲟⲩⲙⲉⲣⲟⲥ in *Ap. Jas.*); and, secondly, the idea that this congregation of the elect is going to be made manifest (ἐφανερώθη) at the end of the days. The difference is, of course, that in this last text, the manifestation is described as having taken place already, with the incarnation of Christ. On the other hand, the formulation ἐφανερώθη δὲ ἐπ᾽ ἐσχάτων τῶν ἡμερῶν clearly shows that the *topos* as such is eschatological, and suggests, moreover, that its assimilation to the incarnation event constitutes a secondary reinterpretation.

The manifestation of the Valentinian ἐκκλησία

With the text from *2 Clem.* 14:1–3, we have arrived at something that is very similar to the Valentinian idea of the ἐκκλησία as the body of Christ descending together with him, an idea commented upon repeatedly in Part I above. The idea is found, for instance, in *Tri. Trac.* 116:1–5: "For in [this] way they too were emitted

concorporeally with the Saviour, by being manifested in union with him" (ⲛ̄ⲧⲁⲩ ϩⲱⲟⲩ . . . ⲛⲉⲩϫⲓ ⲡⲣⲟⲃⲟⲗⲏ ⲛ̄ⲥⲱⲙⲁ ⲙ̄ⲡ̄ⲛ̄ⲥⲱⲙⲁ· ⲙ̄ⲡⲥⲱⲧⲏⲣ· ⲁⲃⲁⲗ ϩⲓ̈ⲧ̄ⲛ̄ †ϭⲛⲟⲩⲱ̄ⲛ̄ϩ̄ ⲁⲃⲁⲗ ⲙ̄ⲛ̄ †ϭⲛⲙⲟⲩⲭ̄ϭ· ⲙ̄ⲙⲉϥ).

As we have seen, in Valentinian theology this idea forms part of a larger systematic construction: the church that is manifested as the body of the Saviour is the spiritual seed of Sophia, which she brought forth in response to her vision of the Saviour when he manifested the Pleroma in himself. The heavenly church that came down thus had a pre-existence in the intermediary realm of Sophia, the Ogdoad, and was itself an image of the Pleroma. The central apocalyptic notion is nevertheless the same as in *2 Clem.*: This heavenly church represents the hypostasised identities of the ones elected for salvation; its manifestation "from above" reveals the true nature of the elect ones living "below," who in a sense "receive" their own identities through this manifestation.

It seems likely that the background for this Valentinian idea should be sought in the concept attested in the texts cited above (*1 En.* 38:1, *1 Clem.* 50:3, *Ap. Jas.* 16:8–11, *2 Clem.* 14:1–3) about a heavenly and (relatively or absolutely) pre-existent community of saints that will be made manifest at the end of the days. It is a concept that is derived from Jewish and Christian ideas of divine prescience and election, and one which presupposes a dualistic spatialisation of the apocalyptic vision of the two ages whereby the expected future, post-eschatological situation is transposed into a reality existing already now in the heavenly realm. This hypostasised future reality has then been subsequently re-eschatologised as something that will itself be revealed at the end of time. As the text from *2 Clem.* shows, that revelation could, in a Christian context, be identified with the incarnation event of Christ—an event that had already taken place— whereby the congregation of the elect was assimilated with his body, or flesh. The latter interpretation presumably presupposes Pauline Christology and ecclesiology.[11]

---

[11] In the Pauline corpus itself similar ideas are found. The expression ἀποκάλυψις τῶν υἱῶν τοῦ θεοῦ in Rom 8:19 seems to take up the same apocalyptic idea, without any mention of Christ, and with a future reference, which suggests that Paul is alluding to a pre-Christian, Jewish theme. In Col 3:3–4, on the other hand, the interpretation is strongly christocentric, although it still refers to a future *parousia*: "For you have died, and your life is hid (κέκρυπται) with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, appears (φανερωθῇ), then you also will appear with him (καὶ ὑμεῖς σὺν αὐτῷ φανερωθήσεσθε) in glory."

Valentinian soteriology, however, has made this idea considerably more complex. The heavenly church that has been manifested through the incarnation of the Saviour is itself in need of being reintegrated with its own archetype, the Pleroma. Thus, an additional level has been interposed in the salvation process. This addition corresponds, moreover, with the importance accorded to baptism as a second soteriological moment *after* the incarnation event. In baptism the levels seem to be collapsed: re-enacting the paradoxical event of the Saviour's incarnation and subsequent redemption, the initiates receive themselves in the form of the spiritual church which descended with the Saviour, an event that at the same time signifies the integration of the church with the Pleroma. This is mythologically represented as the marriage of Sophia with the Saviour, and is individually realised by the initiates in ritual, as their own bridal unions with their "angels."[12]

The union with the angels

These "angels" are, in terms of the systematic and narrative accounts, the entourage of the Saviour in the scene where he shows himself to Sophia.[13] They represent the plurality of the Pleroma, and as such constitute the model according to which Sophia brings forth the spiritual seed, the church, as a number of individual images. In the initiation ritual, however, the triple relationship Pleroma/angels-heavenly church-spiritual souls on earth appears in a simplified version involving only two parties: the initiate is united directly with the angel as his/her heavenly counterpart.

The question of where this notion of "angels" comes from arises in this connection. An answer may be sought in the fact that the heavenly congregation as described in, for example, *1 En.* 39:4 is actually a union of the saints with the angels: ". . . there my eyes saw their dwelling places with the righteous angels, and their resting places with the holy ones." This union of righteous humans with the angels into one community is there perceived as an important prospect of salvation, and that unified community is what is

---

[12] Cf. below, 395–96.
[13] Iren. *Haer.* I 2:6, 4:5; *Exc.* 35–36; *Tri. Trac.* 87:22–26; cf. Thomassen and Painchaud, *Traité tripartite*, 362.

actualised in vision as an already existing heavenly reality. The idea
of a communion with the angels is also found in Qumran:

> To those whom God has chosen he has given them [i.e., wisdom,
> knowledge, etc.] as an everlasting possession, and he has caused them
> to inherit the lot of the holy ones and has joined their assembly with
> the sons of the heavens to be a common council, a foundation of the
> building of holiness, an eternal plantation throughout all ages to
> come . . . (*1QS* XI 7–9)[14]

In this text, the eschatological union of the chosen ones with the
angels appears to be anticipated in a ritual context. It is interesting
to observe the presence of the idea of the "lot of the holy ones"
(נורל קדושים),[15] which recalls the "place," or "portion" of *1 Clem.*
50:3 (χῶρον εὐσεβῶν) and *Ap. Jas.* 16:10 (ⲟⲩⲘⲉⲣⲟⲥ Ⲙⲡⲓⲙⲡⲣⲣⲉ†). It is
therefore possible to imagine that the idea found in some of these
texts, [16] of a heavenly congregation that will appear on the last day,
may involve a conflation of the vision of a congregation consisting
of the hypostasised elect selves of the earthly saints with the more
common notion of a heavenly congregation consisting of angels, with
the result that the *ekklesia* manifested from above may be conceived
interchangeably either as a host of angels or as the hypostasised
counterpart of the earthly congregation itself. Such a development
of the idea could account for the ambiguity, or duplication, of the
idea as it appears in Valentinianism, where the spiritual counterparts
with which earthly spiritual souls are reunited, either in the context
of salvation historical narrative or in that of ritual initiation, are con-
ceived variously as the angels surrounding the Saviour or as the
church constituting his body.

From Eschatological to Protological Manifestation, and their Ritual Actualisation

By focussing on the idea of the "manifestation" of the elect in *Gos.
Truth*, it is possible to discern an ideological development through

---

[14] Trans. Frennesson, *"In a common rejoicing,"* 65. Also cf. in particular *1QH^a* XI
21–23, XIX 11–12. See Kuhn, *Enderwartung*, esp. 66–73; Mach, *Entwicklungsstadien*,
esp. 159–63, 209–16; Frennesson, *"In a common rejoicing," passim*; Chazon, "Liturgical
Communion."

[15] Also cf. נורל in *1QH^a* XI 22; Frennesson, *"In a common rejoicing"*, 50n41.

[16] It must be said that this idea is not, to my knowledge, attested at Qumran.

which eschatology is transformed into protology. *Gos. Truth* 19:34–20:14 says that by "taking" the living book of the living—in other words, by revealing it—Jesus caused the ones who were "entrusted with"— that is, pre-ordained or appointed for—salvation to become manifest. As we have seen, this means that the names of the ones who are inscribed in the book are revealed through the incarnation of Jesus. The manifested "book" thus corresponds to the pre-existing spiritual church made manifest as the body of the Saviour.

This book, moreover, was "written in the thought and the mind [of the] Father, existing from before the foundation of the Entirety[17] within his incomprehensibility" (19:36–20:3). Thus there is a proto-logical dimension to the notion of the book. This becomes even clearer if that passage is put alongside 36:39–37:15:

> This is the perfection in the thought of the Father, and these are the words of his reflection (ⲛ̅ϣⲉϫⲉ ⲛ̅ⲧⲉ ⲡⲉϥⲙⲁⲕⲙⲉⲕ). Each one of his words is the work of his one Will in the revelation of his Word. While they were still in the depths of his thought, the Word that came forth manifested them along with a mind that speaks, the one Word in silent grace. He was called "thought," because they were in it before they were manifested.

The revelation of the book through the incarnation of Jesus is homologous to the procession of the Word from the thought of the Father. From a more fundamental perspective, these two events represent one and the same ontological process: the unfolding of oneness into multiplicity.[18] The book that "was within his incomprehensibility" (ⲉϥⲛ̅ϩⲣⲏⲓ̈ ϩⲛ̅ ⲛⲓⲁⲧⲧⲉϩⲁⲩ ⲛ̅ⲧⲟⲟⲧϥ̅) from the beginning should be understood in connection with the theme begun in 17:6, which describes the situation of the Totality inside the Father, "the inconceivable and unthinkable one" (ⲡⲓⲁⲧϣⲁⲡϥ̅ ⲛ̅ⲁⲧⲙⲉⲉⲩⲉ). Thus, what is implied in the historical appearance of the Saviour-Word in *Gos. Truth* is a resolution of the initial problem of the ignorance of the Entirety within the oneness of the Father.

In this connection, the term "manifestation" comes to play a double role, referring both to the historical, or eschatological, revelation

---

[17] ϫⲓⲛ ϩⲁⲑⲏ ⲛ̅ⲧⲕⲁⲧⲁⲃⲟⲗⲏ ⲙ̅ⲡⲧⲏⲣϥ̅ probably alludes to Apoc 13:8, 17:8 ἀπὸ καταβολῆς τοῦ κόσμου.

[18] Cf. above 156–58.

of the ones who are pre-ordained for salvation, and to the proto-
logical manifestation of the Entirety. The term thus serves as a bridge
between an eschatological and a protological account of the salva-
tion process, and transforms the eschatological-historical account into
the more basic ontological vision articulated by the protological myth.
In this process, the Jewish-Christian term φανεροῦσθαι, etc., as a
designation for the eschatological disclosure of the saints, merges with
the terminology used in certain strands of Neopythagoreanism and
philosophical theogonies (above, 296, 300–7) to describe first begin-
nings as an exteriorising φανεῖν of an initial κρυπτόν. This term,
therefore, enables Jewish and Greek ontologies to meet, and to be
fused into a soteriology that retains characteristics of both traditions,
but at the same time represents something distinctively new.

In this general perspective, the transformation of eschatological
disclosure into protological manifestation, witnessed in such a text
as *Gos. Truth*, may be regarded as the logical continuation of trends
that are observable within the apocalyptic world-view itself. If that
which is revealed at the end exists already now in another dimen-
sion (in "heaven"), and may by a further backward projection be
considered to have pre-existed even before the creation of the world—
for example, in the mind of the deity—then the conclusion that the
eschatological manifestation actually brings the only authentic reali-
sation of the divine creative intention becomes plausible. In this way,
apocalyptic notions of pre-existence may lead to the transformation
of eschatology into protology, since that which is pre-existent but
not yet revealed is what really matters; in contrast, the present world
does not represent the proper realisation of what was from the begin-
ning in God's mind. The eschatological actualisation of what was
hidden in God's salvation historical plan is thus reinterpreted as the
one and only true coming into being of the children who constitute
the substance of the divine mind.[19]

In addition to this merging of eschatology with protology, a third
dimension is introduced as well: that of the ritual enactment of this
process of salvation. This takes place in the initiation ritual of "redemp-
tion," which is conceived not only as the reception of, and nuptial
unification with, one's transcendent counterpart coming down from

---

[19] For further remarks on eschatology and protology in Valentinianism, see
Thomassen, Λόγος, esp. 856–65.

above, according to an eschatological model of the salvation event; but also as the acquisition of authentic being through a process of birth, which realises in ritual form the soteriological significance of the protological myth. This, too, can then be described as a "manifestation": "When he wishes, he manifests whomever he wishes, giving him form and giving him a name, and he gives a name to him and brings it about that those come into existence who were previously ignorant of the one who originated them" (*Gos. Truth* 27:26–33).[20] The allusion to "name-giving" suggests that the primary context for this statement is the redemption ritual, where the concept of the Name is of central importance. Moreover, the ritual is conceived as a birth, and has the protological generation of the aeons as its mythical model. Finally, the notion of "manifestation" resonates with eschatological as well as protological connotations: the initiate is manifested at the end as the one he truly is from the beginning, a child of the Father.[21]

---

[20] For the Coptic text, cf. above, 302.

[21] Shortly before the quoted text it is stated that, "They have come to know that they have come forth from him like children from a perfect human being" (27:11–15).

PART IV

VALENTINIAN INITIATION

THE EVIDENCE FOR VALENTINIAN INITIATION

Exc. 66–86

It was shown above (chapter 16) how a theology of baptism is closely related to a soteriology of history in *Exc.* 66–86. In this relationship, the dialectics between the physicality of the ritual acts and the immateriality of their symbolic significance play a crucial role. The text also offers some information on the actual practices, although they are alluded to rather than described in detail, apparently on the presupposition that the reader is already familiar with them. From these allusions, some features of the initiation ritual practised by this particular community may be gathered:

Immersion in water

The initiand "descends" (καταβαίνειν, κατελθεῖν, 83) into water (ὕδωρ, 81:2), and subsequently "ascends" (ἀναβαίνειν, ἀνελθεῖν, 77:2–3) from it. The act may be described as a "bath" (λουτρόν, 78:2).

"Sealing"

Baptism takes place εἰς ὄνομα πατρὸς καὶ υἱοῦ καὶ ἁγίου πνεύματος (76:3; reference to Matt 28:19). It is possible that these words accompanied the ritual as an invocation. Through the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit one is "sealed" (σφραγισθείς, 80:3). The seal (a) makes the initiate superior to, and invulnerable to the attacks of, the powers; (b) confers "the image of the celestial" (φορεῖ τὴν εἰκόνα τοῦ ἐπουρανίου) (ibid.).

The believer possesses "through Christ" the inscription of the Name of God, and the Spirit as an image (ἐπιγραφὴν μὲν ἔχει διὰ Χριστοῦ τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ θεοῦ, τὸ δὲ πνεῦμα ὡς εἰκόνα, 86:2). Thus, it is possible to speak of a singular Name which provides the seal, and confers the image. At the same time, however, the baptismal formula suggests three names, and in *Exc.* 80:3 it is said that these three

names save the initiate from "the triad of corruption."[1] The three names of the baptismal formula are thus at one and the same time the single Name of God, which is the seal and the image given to the baptizand. *Exc.* 86:2 makes an effort to harmonise these notions by describing Christ as the provider of the Name, and the Spirit as the conferrer of the image. Just as God, Christ and the Spirit form a triune entity, so the Name is apparently considered to be both one and three.

The sealing takes place during the immersion in water, as is clear from *Exc.* 83, where the problem is discussed that "impure spirits often descend together with (συγκαταβαίνει) the person, accompanying him and acquiring the seal together with him (παρακολουθοῦντα καὶ τυχόντα μετὰ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου τῆς σφραγῖδος)." Thus the σφραγίς does not refer to an act independent of, or different from, the descent into and the ascent out of the baptismal water. One might say that the immersion in water represents a physical, sensory aspect of the initiation ritual, an aspect which complements and contrasts with a symbolic (and "spiritual") one constituted by the notion of a sealing. Going into and rising from the water is the external act, "sealing" the inner significance of the act. The invocation of the baptismal formula accompanying the physical performance can be seen as providing an exegetical commentary on the performance (as the *legomena* accompanying the *dromena* if you like). It may further be noted that the two aspects of the ritual tend to relate grammatically to one another as active and passive. The baptizand, who enters and rises from the water, is the active agent of the ritual in so far as its physical aspect is concerned, but he is construed as the passive recipient of the seal/image that represents the interpreted significance of the acts. This relationship of active/passive: physical/interpretative conveys a notion of the transformative power of the ritual process: the power of ritualisation[2] translates the acts performed by the ritual agent into acts performed on him by a transcendent agent; through

---

[1] διὰ τριῶν ὀνομάτων πάσης τῆς ἐν φθορᾷ τριάδος ἀπηλλάγη. The expression "the triad of corruption" refers, perhaps, to an anti-trinity of the Devil, his son the Antichrist, and the spirit of iniquity; see Orbe, "La trinidad maléfica." It does not seem to be a particularly Valentinian notion.

[2] By "ritualisation" I refer to the mechanism, fundamental to all rituals and apparently an innate human propensity, whereby ordinary acts are turned into acts endowed with a peculiar significance. By this mechanism acts are self-consciously enacted as performance and become susceptible of receiving rich symbolic meanings.

this mechanism the initiand is also transformed from an empirical body into a non-empirical signified, a de-individualised type, expressed by the reception of the Name/seal/image as the substance of his new identity.

Anointing

The only indication that anointing formed part of the initiation ritual occurs in *Exc.* 82:

καὶ ὁ ἄρτος καὶ τὸ ἔλαιον ἁγιάζεται τῇ δυνάμει τοῦ ὀνόματος θεοῦ, τὰ αὐτὰ ὄντα κατὰ τὸ φαινόμενον οἷα ἐλήφθη· ἀλλὰ δυνάμει εἰς δύναμιν πνευματικὴν μεταβέβληται. οὕτως καὶ τὸ ὕδωρ, καὶ τὸ ἐξορκιζόμενον καὶ τὸ βάπτισμα γινόμενον, οὐ μόνον χωρ<ίζ>ει τὸ χεῖρον, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἁγιασμὸν προσλαμβάνει.

(82:1) And the bread and the oil are consecrated by the power of the Name of God. As far as their external aspect is concerned they are just as they have been taken, but through power they are transformed into a spiritual power. (2) In the same way the water, both when it has been exorcised and when it has become baptism, not only separates what is inferior, but also receives sanctification.

The reference to the bread and the oil is introduced as an added remark to a discussion about the baptismal water, where the chief idea is that baptism has a dual nature: it is sensible through the water, but intelligible through the spirit (81:2). The purpose of mentioning the bread and the oil here is obviously that these are two other material substances used in ritual: externally they are just that, material substances, but through the Name of God they are sanctified and transformed into spiritual power. Thus the bread and the oil are not here mentioned together because they are particularly related to one another as components of a single ritual (a meal), but because they, just like the water, are examples of matter used in ritual. ἔλαιον, therefore, probably has the same meaning as it most commonly has in early Christian ritual contexts in general,[3] namely the oil used in initiation.

Was the anointing carried out before or after the water baptism—or both? The present passage provides no indications on that matter.

---

[3] Cf. Lampe, *Lex.*, s.v., C. The possibility cannot be entirely excluded, though it is rather unlikely, that the word may here refer to anointing of the sick (cf. ibid., D.; and Lampe, *Seal of the Spirit*, 125).

However, since a pre-immersion anointing in all likelihood would be
a purifying and apotropaic rite, and anointing is not included in the
list of purifying and apotropaic acts later listed in *Exc.* 83–85 (see
below), it may be inferred that the anointing probably took place
after the immersion.[4]

Whereas the initiation ritual thus seems to have included anoint-
ing, it must be recognised that, for this author, the immersion in
water—which for him, in fact, is synonymous with "baptism"—con-
stituted the central act of the ritual, and the anointing played only
a subsidiary role.[5]

Sacred meal

The mention of bread in *Exc.* 82:1 suggests that the initiation ended
with a form of the eucharist, in accordance with normal Christian
practice. There is no mention of wine, or any other potion. Since
the text is primarily a discussion of the various material substances
used in the ritual, it is reasonable to assume that the list of sub-
stances is comprehensive. Thus there was probably no sacramental
use of wine. It may also be observed that there is no mention of
wine in any of the redemption rituals described in Iren. *Haer.* I 21.

Consecration of water, bread, and oil

Exc. 82:1 also states that the substances used in the ritual are conse-
crated by the power of the Name of God, and are thereby trans-
formed into spiritual power. In practical terms this probably refers
to an invocation, which possibly included the words εἰς ὄνομα πατρὸς
καὶ υἱοῦ καὶ ἁγίου πνεύματος, over the water, the oil, and the bread
before the ritual application of these substances.

The sentence οὕτως καὶ τὸ ὕδωρ, καὶ τὸ ἐξορκιζόμενον καὶ τὸ βάπ-
τισμα γινόμενον, οὐ μόνον χωρ<ίζ>ει τὸ χεῖρον, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἁγιασμὸν
προσλαμβάνει in 82:2 suggests a consecration with two stages: first
an exorcism of the water, then an act of sanctification that turns the
water into baptism. Certain evidence of such a practice is later found

---

[4] In those forms of the Christian initiation ritual where pre-baptismal anointing
was not apotropaic, notably in early Syria, the anointing constituted a much more
central part of the ritual than what is evidently the case in *Exc.* On the Syrian rite,
cf. esp. Winkler. "The Original Meaning."

[5] This stands in contrast to what is the case in *Gos. Phil.*, see below.

in Ambrose;[6] the present text, however, suggests that it may have existed already in the second century.

Renunciation

Having described how baptism effects rebirth and conquers the cosmic powers, *Exc.* continues as follows: "In this way, baptism is called death and the end of the old life—because we renounce the principalities—and life in accordance with Christ, over which he reigns solely" (θάνατος καὶ τέλος λέγεται τοῦ παλαιοῦ βίου τὸ βάπτισμα, ἀποτασσομένων ἡμῶν ταῖς πονηραῖς ἀρχαῖς, ζωὴ δὲ κατὰ Χριστόν, ἧς μόνος αὐτὸς κυριεύει, 77:1). The use of the word ἀποτασσομένων in this context suggests a formal rite of renunciation, though it cannot be excluded that the passage refers merely to the idea only, rather than to a specific act.[7]

Catechesis

The famous passage *Exc.* 78:2 suggests that dogmatic instruction was a part of the initiatory process:[8]

ἔστιν δὲ οὐ τὸ λουτρὸν μόνον τὸ ἐλευθεροῦν, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἡ γνῶσις, τίνες ἦμεν, τί γεγόναμεν· ποῦ ἦμεν, {ἢ} ποῦ ἐνεβλήθημεν· ποῦ σπεύδομεν, πόθεν λυτρούμεθα· τί γέννησις, τί ἀναγέννησις	It is not, however, the bath alone that makes free, but knowledge too: Who we were, what we have become; where we were, where we have been placed, where we are going; from what we are redeemed, what birth is, and what rebirth.

The baptizand needs to possess knowledge if the baptismal act is to be effective. As was already noted above,[9] this passage appears to have been inserted into the text from a separate source. The contents look like a list of standard topics to be expounded in the instruction of the candidates for initiation. They are the characteristic themes

---

[6] Ambr. *Sacr.* 1:18: *Nam ubi primum ingreditur sacerdos, exorcismum facit secundum creaturam aquae, invocationem postea et precem defert; ut sanctificetur fons.*

[7] The earliest certain reference to the act of renunciation before baptism is found in Tert. *Cor.* 3:2; *Spect.* 4:1, 24:2; cf. also Hipp. *Apost. Trad.* 21:12–15. Its existence in the second century, however, is suggested by such texts as Herm. *Mand.* VI 2:9 τῷ δὲ ἀγγέλῳ τῆς πονηρίας ἀποτάξασθαι; Just. *1 Apol.* 14:1, 49:5; cf. Kretschmar, *Geschichte*, 42–43, with n82.

[8] This is also the understanding of Sagnard, *Extraits*, 234.

[9] Cf. 142n9.

dealt with in the system texts: the Pleroma as the origin, home and
ultimate destination of the spiritual; what the world is, how it came
into existence, and why redemption from it is necessary and possible;
how there is a rebirth which liberates from the birth and corrup-
tion of the flesh. The highlighting of the theme of birth and rebirth
at the end suggests that the instruction is oriented towards the bap-
tismal rite. What we have here, then, are the headings of a Valentinian
baptismal catechism.[10]

Preparatory discipline

Exc. 83–84 deal with acts that have to be performed in order to
purify the soul of the candidate, and ward off evil spirits:

ἐπὶ τὸ βάπτισμα χαίροντας ἔρχεσθαι
προσῆκεν, ἀλλ᾽ ἐπεὶ πολλάκις συγ-
καταβαίνει{ν} τισὶ καὶ ἀκάθαρτα
πνεύματα, <ἃ> παρακολουθοῦντα καὶ
τυχόντα μετὰ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου τῆς
σφραγῖδος ἀνίατα τοῦ λοιποῦ γίνεται,
{ἃ} τῇ χαρᾷ συμπλέκεται φόβος, ἵνα τις
μόνος καθαρὸς αὐτὸς κατέλθῃ.

διὰ τοῦτο νηστεῖαι, δεήσεις, εὐχαί,
<θέσεις> χειρῶν, γονυκλισίαι, ὅτι ψυχὴ
ἐκ κόσμου καὶ ἐκ στόματος λεόντων
ἀνασῴζεται, διὸ καὶ πειρασμοὶ εὐθέως
ἀγανακτούντων τῶν ἀφ᾽ ὧν ἀφῃρέθη,
κἄν τις φέρῃ προειδώς, τά γε ἔξω
σαλεύουσιν.

(83) It is fitting to go to baptism with
joy. But because impure spirits often
go down together with the person
(into the water), and become forever
incurable by following him and
receiving the seal with him, the joy
is mixed with fear. Therefore only
one who is pure should go down.

(84) For this reason, there are fasts,
supplications, prayers, <impositions>[11]
of the hands, genuflexions, in order
that the soul may be saved from the
world and from the mouth of lions.[12]
That is also why there are immedi-
ately temptations, created by those
from whom the soul has been sepa-
rated, and who are angry; even if
one is averted and endures, they still
trouble the external parts.

---

[10] Whether a formal interrogation was part of the ritual, as Leeper assumes
("From Alexandria to Rome," 9), must remain uncertain for lack of evidence. No
Valentinian texts mention such a practice.

[11] <θέσεις> is Sagnard's conjecture. If it is correct, the laying on of hands here
cannot be the χειροθεσία mentioned in *Exc.* 22:5 (thus Sagnard), which must belong
to the core sequences of the ritual of initiation, but rather one of the preparatory
apotropaic acts, comparable to the laying on of hands described at this stage of the
ritual by Hipp. *Apost. Trad.* Whether this feature of the ritual amounted to a distinct
rite of exorcism, as is argued by Leeper ("From Alexandria to Rome"), must remain
uncertain. (Leeper does not distinguish clearly enough between exorcism as a rite
and other antidemonic measures such as acts with an apotropaic significance.)

[12] Allusion to Ps. 21:22 LXX.

This description of preparatory acts is similar to what may be found in other early Christian sources. Tertullian (*Bapt.* 20:1) says that those about to be baptised need to invoke God with frequent prayers, fasts, genuflexions and vigils (*ingressuros baptismum orationis crebris, ieiuniis et geniculationibus et peruigiliis orare oportet*), whereas Hippolytus (*Apost. Trad.* 20) describes a programme of daily handlayings, exorcisms, a bath, fasting, kneeling before the bishop and a vigil during the days preceding the baptismal rite.

The limitations of the evidence

The purpose of *Exc.* 76–86 is not to provide a comprehensive description of the initiation ritual in the form of a church order. Rather, the text pursues a particular argument, which can be summarised as follows:

1. Baptism (76–81)
   a. Baptism conquers the powers (76–78)
   b. Regeneration in baptism (79–80)
   c. The sensible and the intelligible aspects of baptism (81)
2. Bread and oil: Their sensible and intelligible aspects (82)
3. Fasts, supplications, prayers, <impositions> of the hands, genuflexions (83–85)

The presentation of the effects of baptism, in particular, leads to considerations about the nature of ritual in general, *viz.* the relationship between the sensible and the intelligible aspects of the ritual act, in order to justify the physical component of ritual. Having discussed baptism, the text then goes on to apply the same general considerations to other ritual acts which involve the material substances of bread and oil. In this perspective, the purpose of *Exc.* 83–84 is to discuss a further set of physical ritual acts, and to argue for their necessity: the purpose of the preparatory discipline is to detach the soul from the body on which the spirits operate and through which they instil fear in the soul.[13] The argument seems to be that such corporeal acts of discipline are necessary because the body is the

---

[13] Fear is that passion of Sophia's which gives rise to the irrationality of animal souls (Iren. *Haer.* I 5:4, *Exc.* 48:3, 50:1). In *Exc.* 85:1, consequently, Jesus' struggle with wild animals in the desert is interpreted as a struggle with the spirits causing irrational passions in the soul.

place where the spirits operate. Moreover, even after the soul has been purified—that is, detached from the body—the spirits may still affect the body itself, "the external parts." Therefore, such acts are necessary even after baptism, and *Exc.* 85 goes on to describe how even Jesus had to fight "wild beasts" in the desert after his baptism.

The account of ritual features given by *Exc.* is thus governed by the concern to explain and justify why material substances and physical acts are being used in it, a question which may be assumed to have arisen naturally from considerations about the fact that the very purpose of the ritual was to liberate the soul from the material. Consequently, the emphasis in the account lies on these substances and acts as such, rather than on the ritual programmes of which they form part. This observation allows us to infer that, while the account may be regarded as exhaustive with regard to those features of the ritual whose physical component the writer perceived as significant, other rites, whose corporeal nature were less obvious to him, may well have been passed over as irrelevant in the context of this particular discussion. This will have applied especially to verbal components of the ritual, such as exorcism formulae, professions of faith, epicleses and other prayers, hymns and homiletic address, whose absence from the account does not necessarily imply that they did not exist. Rites such as the χειροθεσία mentioned in *Exc.* 22:5,[14] and the kiss of peace may have been left out for the same reason.

Conclusions

Thus, the section *Exc.* 66–86 allows the following reconstruction of the process of a Valentinian *ritual of initiation*:

1. Preparations of the initiand:
   a) Catechesis: a form of the Valentinian system.
   b) Fasts, supplications and prayers.
2. Consecration of the baptismal water by a) exorcism, and b) sanctification, with invocation of the Name of God. Consecration of the oil.
3. Renunciation of evil spirits (?).
4. Immersion in water "in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit."

---

[14] Cf. above, 338n11.

5. Anointing.
6. Consecration of the bread, with invocation of the Name.
7. A meal, probably without wine.

THE GOSPEL OF PHILIP

Two patterns

Two sequential patterns can be detected in *Gos. Phil.* related to the
process of initiation. The first can be seen in 69:14–70:4, where the
layout of the temple in Jerusalem is used to illustrate salvation as a
sequence of stages. The building called "the holy" represents bap-
tism, "the holy of the holy one" is redemption, and "the Holy of
Holies" is the bridal chamber. In addition, there exists something
still more exalted, beyond even the bridal chamber. Thus we have:

> Baptism → redemption → the bridal chamber → something
> even higher.

This may be compared with the list in 67:28–30: baptism, anoint-
ing, eucharist, redemption, the bridal chamber. The following pas-
sage is also of interest here:

> Jesus revealed [in the] Jordan the fullness [of the] kingdom of heaven.
> He who [was born] before the All was born again; he [who] was
> already anointed was anointed again; he who was redeemed was once
> more redeemed. (70:34–71:3)

This last passage suggests the sequence rebirth, anointing, redemp-
tion. Immediately afterwards, moreover, the text goes on to speak
about how the great bridal chamber was revealed (71:3–10), appar-
ently in connection with the Jordan event. This suggests that the
sequence outlined in 70:34–71:3 may be completed by the bridal
chamber:

> Rebirth → anointing → redemption → the bridal chamber.

As was argued in chapter 13, the redemption and the bridal cham-
ber are not to be regarded as separate ritual events, but rather as
stages in a process of salvation symbolically contained in the per-
formance of the initiation ritual, whose basic elements are water bap-
tism and anointing, as well as in the closing eucharistic meal. In the
last of the three texts cited above, this situation is also illustrated by
the fact that both redemption and the bridal chamber are associated

with Jesus' baptism in the Jordan. Coming out of the water, Jesus is redeemed by being anointed, which is symbolically also interpreted as the rebirth taking place in the bridal chamber. Redemption and the bridal chamber are thus conceived as further stages on the way to salvation provided by and already implicit in the acts of baptism and anointing.

The second pattern found in *Gos. Phil.* consists of baptism followed by anointing with an emphasis on the complementarity of the two acts:

> None can see himself either in water or in a mirror without light. Nor again can you (sg.) see in light without water or mirror. For this reason it is fitting to baptise in the two, in the light and the water. Now the light is the chrism. (69:8–14)

> The soul and the spirit came into being from water and fire. The son of the bridal chamber came into being from water and fire and light. The fire is the chrism, the light is the fire. (67:2–6)[15]

The first passage speaks about the attainment of vision through the initiation ritual, the second about the rebirth taking place in it. In both cases, the combined effects of the water ritual and the anointing are accentuated. It may also be noted that in the first passage, the word "baptise" (ⲡ̄ⲃⲁⲡⲧⲓⲍⲉ) is used to refer to the ritual as a whole, including both of its two parts.[16]

Anointing is superior to water baptism

A hierarchical relationship can also be said to exist, however, between anointing and baptism:

> The chrism is superior to baptism, for it is from the word "chrism" that we have been called "Christians," certainly not because of the word "baptism." (74:12–15)

The superiority of the anointing seems to be referred to in the following passage:

> It is fitting for those who not only acquire the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, but who acquire these themselves.[17] If one does not acquire them, the name too will be taken away.

---

[15] Also cf. 57:22–28: "Through water and fire all is purified—the visible through the visible, the hidden through the hidden. There are things which are hidden through the visible. There is water in water, there is fire in chrism."

[16] In 69:14–70:4, referred to at the beginning of this section, "baptism" also seems to include both the immersion and the anointing.

[17] The phrase is elliptic; for the translation, cf. Schenke, *Philippus-Evangelium*, 377.

> One acquires them, however, in the anointing with the sap of the power of the cross. This power the apostles called "the right and the left." For this person is no longer a Christian, but a Christ. (67:19–27)

The distinction made here between acquiring the "Name" and acquiring the reality which the Name represents seems to relate to the distinction between baptism and anointing. A formula invoking or referring to the name of Father, Son and Holy Spirit probably was spoken over the candidate during the immersion. The anointing following the emergence from the water takes the initiation one step further, by bestowing upon the neophyte as his new identity the reality of the Name.[18]

The notion of achieving identity with the reality of the deity through the initiation ritual is also expressed in the following passage:

> God is a dyer. As the good dyes, which are called "true," dissolve with the things dyed in them, so it is with those whom God has dyed. Since his dyes are immortal, they become immortal by means of his colours. Now God dips (ⲡ̄ⲃⲁⲡⲧⲓ̄ⲍⲉ) what he dips in water.
>
> It is not possible for anyone to see anything of the things that actually exist unless he becomes like them. In the world man sees the sun without being a sun, and he sees the heaven and the earth and everything else without being these things: this is not how it is in (the realm of) the truth. Rather, having seen something of that place, you (sg.) became those things. You saw the spirit, you became spirit. You saw Christ, you became Christ. You saw [the Father, you] shall become a father.
>
> Therefore: [in this place] you see everything and [do] not [see] yourself, but [in that place] you do see yourself—and what you see you shall [become]. (61:12–35)

The first part of this quotation speaks about the transformation of the person that is brought about by his being dipped in the baptismal water. In the second part, a transformation into transcendent reality through vision is described. In the light of the passage 69:8–14, quoted above, which explicitly states that not only water baptism, but anointing too is required for the attainment of vision, the present passage should not be taken to mean that the dipping is capable by itself of producing the full transformation of the person; rather, the effect of the dipping depends on the subsequent anointing, which

---

[18] To understand the expression "the right and the left" it must be taken into account that the power of the cross here undoubtedly refers to the Valentinian notion of the Limit, which separates the spiritual from the non-spiritual; cf. above, 280n30.

must here be implicitly presupposed. It is strictly speaking the anointing that provides the "fire" and the "light" that produce rebirth as well as the faculty of vision. On the other hand, as we saw in chapter 13, the use of symbolism in *Gos. Phil.* often leads the author to view the entire initiation process as being represented in each of its parts.

Further, the transformation of the person can be described as "putting on light":

> Those who are clothed in the perfect light the powers cannot see and are unable to detain. One puts on this light, however, in the mystery of the joining. (70:5–9)

> The perfect man not only cannot be detained, but is invisible as well. For if he is seen, he will be detained. In no other way can one acquire this grace than if he puts on the perfect light [and] himself becomes perfect light. Whoever has put it on will go [. . .]. (76:22–30)

The new person—who has not only attained vision but whose very being has been assimilated to what he is now able to see, a luminous perfection—has thereby also been rendered invisible to the cosmic powers, who are incapable of such vision. Again, it seems clear that it is the anointing following baptism which provides this luminous form of being, and that this, furthermore, is also the moment when the "joining" (that is, the union of the bridal chamber) takes place; thus the existence of further and higher levels still of ritual initiation is hardly conceivable. In fact, "he who has been anointed possesses everything; he has resurrection, the light, and the cross" (74:18–20).[19]

Status of the eucharist

The eucharist is not presented as a part of the initiatory process. This is not to say that it lacks soteriological significance:

> The cup of prayer contains wine and water, being appointed as the type of the blood for which thanks is given.[20] It is filled with the Holy Spirit and it is that of the perfect man. When we drink it, we receive the perfect man. (75:14–21)

---

[19] The cross must refer, again, to the Limit, which sets the spiritual apart; cf. preceding note.

[20] Schenke (*Philippus-Evangelium*, 60) suggests, rather plausibly, that the words "for which thanks is given" have been misplaced and should come immediately after "the cup of prayer."

As we just saw, however, the assimilation of the initiate to the perfect man already took place in the anointing. The eucharist cannot therefore be understood to add anything that was not already given in anointing. That means that it is not primarily seen as the completion of the initiation. Rather, it unfolds a soteriological symbolism that is parallel to and overlaps with that of baptism-anointing. Other instances of this are the eucharistic prayer for the unification of the "images" with "the angels" in 58:10–14, which associates the eucharist with the union of the bridal chamber, and the link made between the eucharist and the crucifixion through the notion of "spreading out" in 63:21–24 (although the crucifixion is also linked to the anointing, in 73:17–19 and 74:18–20). In a passage such as 56:37–57:8, which speaks about eating the flesh of Jesus and drinking his blood—the flesh being the Logos and the blood the Holy Spirit—it remains uncertain whether it contains a reference to the eucharist, or whether the "food" and the "clothing" given by the flesh and the blood instead characterise the perfect man born through the anointing. The metaphors may even have been meant to be applicable to both of these ritual contexts.[21]

The fact that the eucharist has soteriological significance autonomously of the baptism-anointing sequence is probably related to the nature of the eucharist as a repeated maintenance ritual, which makes it functionally distinct from the initiation ritual performed only once for each candidate. This does not exclude the possibility that the initiation may in actual practice have ended with the participation of the initiate in a first communion. It is in fact quite likely that it did so, not only because this was normal practice in early Christian initiation generally, but also because of the list baptism, anointing, eucharist, in 67:28–29. Whereas the eucharist did not add anything to the acts of baptism and anointing in terms of the soteriological status of the individual, it presumably did so with regard to the sociological functionality of the ritual, by integrating the initiate empirically into the community of the perfect.

---

[21] A similar situation exists with other passages which speak about food for humans, and clothing: 55:6–14, 58:15–17.

Acts of preparation

We now turn to the various details of the initiation ritual that may be inferred from *Gos. Phil.* To begin with, it may be noted that neither catechesis nor preparatory discipline is explicitly mentioned. A main purpose of *Gos. Phil.* as a document, however, is to enlighten its audience regarding the significance of the rituals, and the text as such may thus be said to have a catechetical character, although it remains unclear exactly at which point such enlightenment may have been given—that is, whether it took place in the course of an extended catechumenate, during a limited period of proximate preparations, or as a post-baptismal homily. In any case, the existence of some form of pre-baptismal instruction conveying *gnosis* must be taken for granted. It may also be safely assumed that certain acts of purification and preparation must have preceded the initiation (prayers, fasting, exorcisms), as we saw to be the case in *Exc.*[22]

Baptism

Undressing is explicitly mentioned (75:23–25, cf. 56:26–57:22); this symbolises stripping off the body. One goes down into the water and comes out of it (64:22–23, 72:30–31, 75:23–24, 77:9–10). The metaphor of dyeing (61:12–18) suggests dipping, a full immersion, or submersion. A formula invoking or mentioning the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit is used (67:19–22).

An act of renunciation before the baptismal bath is not attested in *Gos. Phil.*; nor is there any trace of a pre-baptismal anointing.

Anointing

The word χρίσμα is most often used (57:28, 67:5.28–29, 69:14, 73:17, 74:12.13.16, 85:27–28). The oil is olive oil, according to 73:17–19,[23] and the word ⲛⲉϩ (very probably < ἔλαιον) appears twice (75:1, 78:9). On two occasions, however, the word ⲥⲟϭⲛ̄ is used (78:10,

---

[22] 77:2–7 speaks about "the holy man" who is pure also in his body and therefore sanctifies the bread, the cup, and other elements used in ritual by his touch. Schenke, *Philippus-Evangelium*, 473, takes this to mean that the initiate has been previously purified in his body by means of, for example, prayer and fasting.

[23] The cross is the tree of life, which is "the olive tree, from which came the chrism."

82:21), which most probably translates μύρον.[24] In both of these cases, the fragrance of the ointment is highlighted in the context. This indicates that the chrism was a μύρον, an oil that had been perfumed in some way or another.

In this context, a closer look needs to be taken at 77:35–78:10:

ⲧⲁⲅⲁⲡⲏ ⲙ̄ⲡⲛⲉⲩⲙ[ⲁⲧⲓⲕⲏ] ⲟⲩⲏⲣⲡ' ⲡⲉ ϩⲓ ⲥⲧⲟⲉⲓ ⲥⲉⲣ̄ⲁⲡⲟ[ⲗⲁⲩⲉ ⲙ̄]ⲙⲟⲥ ⲧⲏⲣⲟⲩ ⲛ̄ϭⲓ ⲛⲉⲧⲛⲁⲧⲟϩⲥⲟⲩ ⲙ̄ⲙⲟⲥ . . . ⲡⲥⲁⲙⲁⲣⲓⲧⲏⲥ ⲛ̄ⲧⲁϥ' † ⲗⲁⲁⲩ ⲁⲛ' ⲁⲡⲉⲧϣⲟⲟϭⲉ ⲉⲓⲙⲏ· ⲏⲣⲡ' ϩⲓ ⲛⲉϩ ⲕⲉⲗⲁⲁⲩ ⲁⲛ ⲡⲉ ⲉⲓⲙⲏⲧⲓ' ⲁ'ⲡⲥⲟϭⲛ̄	Spiritual love is wine and fragrance. All those who anoint themselves with it take pleasure in it. . . . The Samaritan gave nothing but wine and oil to the wounded man. It is nothing other than the ointment.

The scene is that of a eucharistic *agape*-meal shared by those who have been anointed. It has been suggested that the fragrant ointment is here described as a mixture of perfumed oil and wine.[25] In view of the fact that such a mixture is not elsewhere attested, this is unlikely. It seems more probable, therefore, that the antecedent of the subject of the final phrase is not ⲏⲣⲡ ϩⲓ ⲛⲉϩ, both the wine and the oil, but only the last word. The word ⲛⲉϩ is given by the allusion to Luke 10:34 (ἔλαιον), and the writer has added a gloss to explain that this "oil" in fact signifies the fragrant μύρον which he mentioned at the beginning of the passage (ⲥⲧⲟⲉⲓ) as one of the two components of "spiritual love." The wine and the ointment are thus two different things; the ointment is perfumed, but is not mixed with wine.

The association of the chrism with fire (57:22–28, 67:2–9) indicates, perhaps, that the oil was heated.[26] It was probably poured over the initiate (cf. ϩⲁⲧⲉ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ 85:26), rather than just applied by hand.

The anointing seems to be associated with the reception of the Spirit in particular.[27]

---

[24] Wilmet, *Concordance*, s.v., shows that ⲥⲟϭⲛ̄ in the Sahidic NT always translates μύρον (twelve occurrences, plus one of the verb μυρίζειν). Other Greek words, such as ἄλειμμα, cannot be entirely excluded, however, see Crum, 388b).

[25] Schenke, *Philippus-Evangelium*, 479–80.

[26] Thus Schenke, *Philippus-Evangelium*, 243.

[27] Cf. 64:25–27, 74:21–22, where the "bridal chamber" seems to be implicit in the anointing, 77:36–78:1.

Garment metaphor

As we have seen, the idea of putting on a new garment has central importance in *Gos. Phil.* (57:8.19–22, 58:15–17; "putting on perfect light" 70:5–9, 76:27–30; "putting on the living man" 75:21–25). The metaphor is not, however, explicitly connected with a specific act, such as either the anointing of the body or the subsequent donning of baptismal robes.

Carrying lamps

The following passage suggests that the initiate may have carried a lamp: "All those about to [enter] the bed chamber will light their [candle]" (ⲟⲩⲟⲛ ⲛⲓⲙ ⲉⲧⲛⲁⲃ[ⲱⲕ ⲉϩⲟⲩⲛ] ⲉⲡⲕⲟⲓⲧⲱⲛ ⲥⲉⲛⲁϫⲉⲣⲟ ⲙ̄ⲡⲟⲩ[ϩⲏⲃⲥ̄], 85:32–33). In fact, a ceremony where the neophytes are handed a torch after putting on the baptismal garments is attested occasionally in later baptismal liturgies.[28] Torches are also mentioned in the "Bridal chamber inscription" (see below). The passage in *Gos. Phil.* is not without ambiguity, however.[29]

Ritual kiss

A ritual kiss is mentioned in 59:2–6. It is described as a practice generally performed (presumably in connection with the eucharist) by the perfect, by which they are made spiritually pregnant. It is thus not introduced in the text as an element in the initiation sequence, although it is not unlikely that the neophyte was greeted in this manner after his initiation and when proceeding to his first communion. The initiatory "kiss of peace" is, moreover, a standard element in Christian initiation from a relatively early period.[30]

---

[28] Greg. Naz. *Or.* 45:2 (φωταγωγία); Proclus of Constantinople, *Hom. 27*, 8:51 (p. 193 Leroy), cf. Finn, *Liturgy of Baptism*, 189; Riley, *Christian Initiation*, 417n180. Both Finn (190–91) and Riley (351) argue that the custom probably existed at least as early as in John Chrysostom's Antioch.

[29] The word "candle" (ϩⲏⲃⲥ̄) is restored in its entirety and thus uncertain, although the restoration is probable. The passage may, moreover, be simply metaphorical, and it may not allude to a ritual act at all, but to profane nuptial practices; the use of the term κοιτών, rather than νυμφών or παστός, makes this latter possibility even stronger.

[30] Just. *1 Apol.* 65, Hipp. *Apost. Trad.* 21:23.26. The most thorough study of the topic is Thraede, "Ursprung," with a rather critical treatment of the baptismal kiss on 159–70; also Phillips, *Ritual Kiss*; Finn, *Liturgy of Baptism*, 197–99.

Form of the eucharist

The eucharistic meal consisted of bread and wine (75:1, 77:3–4).[31] The wine was mixed with water (75:14−16). The wine-and-water is also referred to as "the cup" (ⲡⲟⲧⲏⲣⲓⲟⲛ) (75:1.14−15, 77:4). It is the blood of the perfect human being, and is associated with the Holy Spirit in particular (75:16–21, 77:35–78:12, 57:6–7).

Conclusions

The preceding remarks may be summed up in the form of the following reconstruction of the initiation ritual in *Gos. Phil.*:

(1. Catechesis and preparatory discipline.)
2. Baptism: Undressing, descent into the water, dipping while invoking the threefold Name, ascent from the water.
3. Anointing, by pouring scented oil over the initiand. Dressing.
4. Carrying lamps (?).
5. A kiss (?).
6. Eucharist, with bread and wine mixed with water.

The list is clearly not complete. We are not informed about any rites that may have preceded the water baptism, nor about consecration of the elements used—water, oil, bread and wine—nor about the verbal components of the ritual, except for the invocation of the Name over the baptizand. Naturally, the fact that such features are not mentioned does not mean that they did not exist.

A striking difference between the two texts studied so far is that anointing is given a far more prominent position in *Gos. Phil.* than in *Exc.* In the latter text, the Name and the seal are received in the water, whereas no independent soteriological significance seems to be attached to the anointing. *Gos. Phil.*, on the other hand, sees the act of anointing after the emergence from the water as the crucial moment at which redemption becomes a reality. A second notable difference is that in *Gos. Phil.* the eucharist includes wine, whereas *Exc.* mentions only water. Finally, the idea of the bridal chamber is much more strongly emphasised in *Gos. Phil.* than in *Exc.*, though it is not entirely absent from the latter text either (cf. *Exc.* 68, 79), and its weak presence may to some extent be due to the difference in

---

[31] Cf. also the "bread from heaven" in 55:6–14.

focus between the two texts, since the predominant concern of *Exc.* is with the acts and substances used in the ritual, whereas that of *Gos. Phil.* is mainly baptismal theology. The fact that *Exc.* (as well as most of the sources of which it is composed) probably comes from Alexandria, while *Gos. Phil.* most likely has a Syrian background and may also be dated somewhat later, must be taken into consideration for explaining the differences between the two texts.

<div align="center">INSCRIPTIONS</div>

<div align="center">*"The Bridal chamber inscription"*</div>

Two inscriptions from Rome also contain references to the Valentinian initiation ritual. The first, now in the Capitoline Museum,[32] reads as follows:

λου]τρὰ δ᾽ἐμοὶ παστῶν δαδουχοῦσιν συ[νάδελφοι	Fellow brothers celebrate for me with torches the baths of bridal chambers.
εἰλ]απίνας πεινοῦσιν ἐν ἡμετέρο[ισι δόμοισι	They hunger for banquets in our rooms.
ὑμ]νοῦντες γενέτην καὶ υἱέα δοξάζον-[τες	Singing hymns to the Father and praising the Son.
πη]γῆς ἔνθα μόνης καὶ ἀληθείης ῥύ-[σις εἴη	May there in that place be flowing of a single spring, and of truth.

The inscription, finely executed on an expensive marble slab, has been dated by Guarducci to the Antonine period.[33] It was found on the Via Latina, and one can imagine that it hung on the wall of a dining room in a suburban villa.[34] The owner of the villa, it would seem, received fellow worshippers in his house to celebrate eucharistic and/or agape-meals, and set up the inscription to commemorate this. A scenario is suggested in which the initiates have first performed baptism, which presumably took place in a different location where there was a pool or a stream.[35] Thereafter the congregation pro-

---

[32] There is an extensive bibliography on this inscription. The most significant contributions are Guarducci, "Valentiniani," 169–82, and id. "Ancora sui Valentiniani," as well as the most recent study, Lampe, "Inscription," to which may be added Blomkvist, "Inscription." More bibliography may be found in the works mentioned. There is no need to repeat the arguments for the Valentinian character of the inscription. I find the case put forward by Lampe in particular convincing.

[33] Guarducci, "Valentiniani," 169–70.

[34] Lampe, *From Paul to Valentinus*, 309–10; id., "Inscription," 87–88, 89.

[35] It is difficult to envisage how the immersion act could have been performed in the same location as the banquet, as Lampe, "Inscription" 88, assumes.

ceeded, singing hymns and carrying torches, to the banquet that was to take place in the house. The carrying of torches at this point of the ritual may also be hinted at in *Gos. Phil.*, as we saw above.

The inscription draws upon nuptial imagery. The bath of the bride, the procession with torches, and the banquet, are all elements occurring in actual wedding ceremonies, though not in exactly the same manner as the inscription indicates.[36] The expression "baths of bridal chambers"[37] may suggest either that the baptismal ritual itself is compared to the consummation of a marriage, or that it is a preparation for it. A third possibility is that the semantic connection expressed by the genitive is a looser one, and that it is merely designed to qualify the type of bath mentioned here in a general way. In that case, the "bridal chambers" are not to be identified with a particular phase of the ritual, but should rather be taken to describe a quality of the ritual as a whole. A definite choice between these alternatives is hardly possible.

The last line alludes, it would seem, to the unity and harmony existing among those who are reborn in the bridal chamber and who possess knowledge of the truth. For comparison *Tri. Trac.* 128:33–36 may be cited here: "(Baptism) is also called 'bridal chamber' because of the harmony and the inseparability of those who have known, for they have known it."

The inscription of Flavia Sophe

The second inscription is *CIG* 9595a.[38] Like the first one, it was found on the Via Latina. The date is a little later—the end of the second century or the first half of the third. It is a funerary stele for a woman, Sophe, whose family name Flavia appears as an acrostic in the first letters of each line of the inscription on the front of the stele:[39]

---

[36] See Lampe, "Inscription," 82–83. As Lampe clearly shows, the inscription as a whole cannot be understood as referring to a profane wedding ceremony even if it employs nuptial imagery.

[37] It is possible that παστῶν in the first line should go with σύναδελφοι—"fellow brothers of the bridal chambers"—rather than with λουτρά (thus Lampe, "Inscription," who refers to the expression "sons of the bridal chamber" in *Gos. Phil.*). For reasons of style and prosody, however, it seems more satisfying to attach παστῶν to the first word of the line.

[38] Cf. in particular Quispel, "Flavia Sophe," who showed convincingly the Valentinian character of the inscription, and Guarducci, "Valentiniani," 182–85.

[39] The reverse also carries an inscription. It is not important for our purposes, however, and is not reproduced here.

φῶς πατρικὸν ποθέουσα,
   σύναιμε σύνευνε Σόφι μου,
λουτροῖς χρεισαμένι Χ(ριστο)ῦ
   μύρον ἄφθιτον ἁγνόν,
αἰώνων ἔσπευσας ἀθρῖ-
   σαι θεῖα πρόσωπα,
βουλῆς τῆς μεγάλης μέγαν
   ἄγγελον υἱὸν ἀληθῆ
[ἰ]ς νυμφῶνα μολοῦσα καὶ εἰς
   [κόλπ]ους ἀνοροῦσα
[ἀθάνατο]ς πατρικούς κα[

Yearning for the paternal light,
   you sister and spouse, my Sophe,
anointed in the baths of Christ
   with imperishable sacred *myron*,
you hastened to gaze
   at the divine faces of aeons,
the great angel of the great
   counsel, the true Son;
you entered the bridal chamber and into
   the [bosom]s of the Father
you leapt, immortal [. . .]

As may be expected in a funerary inscription, it is eschatological in content. The soul of the deceased Sophe has hastened to be united with its spiritual self, its aeonic counterpart, in the transcendent bridal chamber of the Pleroma. Ritual is alluded to only in line 2, which mentions baths, λουτρά, which are associated with an anointing with scented oil, μύρον. This is most likely the baptismal initiation rite,[40] which is invoked here as an assurance of the passage of the deceased into the realm of the aeons and the bridal chamber.

It is notable that anointing is explicitly mentioned and emphasised. In this it differs from the other inscription, although both were found in the same area. It is possible that the "bridal chamber inscription," which may be as much as half a century older, reflects a stage of Roman Valentinianism when anointing had not yet been introduced. But it is at least as plausible that the λουτρά mentioned in the older inscription did in fact comprise anointing, just as anointing evidently is implied in the meaning of the word in line 2 of the present inscription. Moreover, the explicit reference to anointing in the Flavia Sophe inscription and its absence from the other may also be explained by the differences in function and context between the

---

[40] Quispel, "Flavia Sophe," argues that the ritual is not baptism, but the *apolytrosis*, a sacrament of the dying. However, the idea that the term *apolytrosis* applies exclusively to the death ritual described by Irenaeus in *Haer.* I 21:5 is a misunderstanding; if one reads Iren. *Haer.* I 21 in its entirety, it is evident that *apolytrosis* is a designation used by Valentinians for their initiation rituals in general. (See further below, 360–62, 395, and chapter 29.) More importantly, as regards the particular ritual alluded to in the inscription, it must be pointed out that the word λουτρά is more naturally understood as referring to a baptismal immersion than to the mixture of water and oil poured over the head of the dying in *Haer.* I 21:5. This said, it should be added that it may be misleading to assume an absolute distinction between the initiation and the death ritual: the ritual for the dying described by Irenaeus may well have been intended as a baptismal anamnesis for the dying person.

two inscriptions: apparently the ointment was considered in a special way to confer imperishability, sanctification and protection for the deceased on the journey towards her spiritual home.

THE TRIPARTITE TRACTATE

Tri. Trac. contains a section on baptism (127:25–129:34), which begins as follows:

> As for the true baptism, that into which the Entireties descend and where they come into being, there is no other baptism save that one only—and that is the redemption—(which takes place) to God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, after a confession out of faith has been made of those names—[which] are the single name of the good tidings—and after one has believed that the things one has been told are real. And on account of this, whoever believes in their reality will obtain salvation . . . (127:25–128:5)

A certain logical sequence is indicated by this text: the baptism takes place in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit; it is preceded by the profession of faith in these names, and the faith of the baptizands relates to "the things one has been told," which seems to allude to a pre-baptismal catechesis. This provides us with the following elements:

1. Catechesis
2. Profession of faith
3. Baptism in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

There is no reason to assume that this baptism deviated significantly in form from normal Christian practice. Thus it is likely that the profession of faith was made in three successive steps (rather than in its entirety before the baptismal act), accompanied by an immersion for each of the three divine names. The text is also consistent with the usual practice of performing the profession of faith in the form of question ("Do you believe . . .") and answer ("I believe").

The text offers no evidence of anointing. On the other hand, there is no indication that anointing was not performed either; certainly the use of the word βάπτισμα does not exclude anointing as part of the ritual.

Baptism effects a real transformation of the person, an "attainment" of the divine reality:

> And on account of this, whoever believes in their reality [i.e., of "the things one has been told"] will obtain salvation, and that means to attain, in an invisible way, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, but only after one has borne witness to them in unfaltering faith and if one grasps them in a firm hope. In this way, it may happen that the fulfilment of what one has believed becomes a return to them, and that the Father becomes one with him—the Father, God, he whom he has confessed in faith, and who has granted him to be united with himself in knowledge. (128:5–19)

There is, on the one hand, the faith and the hope expressed by "bearing witness"—presumably, the profession of faith. On the other hand, there is the attainment, the fulfilment, the return to and the unity with the deity, which is associated with knowledge. Thus there seems to be an external part of the ritual which consists of its practical performance and the profession of faith, and an "invisible" part which is the entry into the reality of what is performed and professed. This type of distinction is familiar from *Exc.* and *Gos. Phil.*, for example in the statement in *Gos. Phil.* 67:19–27 about the difference between acquiring the "names" and acquiring the reality which the names represent. This reflection upon the relationship between the outward and symbolic aspect of ritual and the real transformation invisibly effected by it thus appears as a recurrent theme in Valentinian sacramental theology.

The text then goes on to comment on a series of names for baptism:

> The baptism we have spoken about is called "garment" <that> is not taken off by the ones who put it on, and which is worn by the ones who have received redemption. And it is called "the confirmation of truth," that which never fails in (its) constancy and stability and holds fast the ones who have obtained <restoration> while they hold on to it. It is called "silence" because of its tranquillity and unshakeability. It is also called "bridal chamber" because of the concord and the inseparability of the ones [whom] <he has> known <and who> have known him. It is also [called] "the unsinking and fireless light"; not because it sheds light, but, rather, those who wear it, and who are worn by it as well, turn into light. It is also called "the eternal life," which means immortality.
>
> Thus it is called after all the fair things it contains, including the (names) that have been <left out>, in a manner that is simple, authentic, indivisible, irreducible, complete, and unchangeable. For how else can it be named, save by referring to it as the Entireties? That is, even if it is called by innumerable names, they are spoken (only) as a way of expressing it in certain ways, although it transcends all words,

transcends all voice, transcends all mind, transcends all things, and transcends all silence. This is how it is <...> with the things that belong to what it is. This is what it in fact is, with an ineffable and inconceivable character in order to be in those who have knowledge by means of what they have attained, which is that to which they have given glory. (128:19–129:34)

It is possible that this text gives some hints about actual performance, such as the donning of baptismal garments, and the carrying of lamps. The point of the passage, however, concerns the inward, or "invisible," effects of baptism, as it transports the initiates into another mode of being, one that transcends speech and empirical division. In this way, baptism is hypostasised into a redemptive power in its own right, described with the very same words that were used in the protological section of the tractate to portray the Son as the manifestation of the Father in which the aeons are transcendentally united.[41] "Baptism" and "the Son" are, in a certain sense, identical and interchangeable terms.

It can also be noted that the term "bridal chamber" here certainly does not refer to a distinct ceremony, but to the "invisible" nature of baptism itself. The same is true for "redemption" in 127:30.

Liturgical Fragments (NHC XI,2a–e)

These brief statements on rituals are appended to *The Valentinian Exposition* (NHC XI,2). They comprise the following segments (with names given to them by modern scholars):

On anointing (40:1–29)
On baptism A (40:31–41:38)
On baptism B (42:1–43:19)
On the eucharist A (43:20–38)
On the eucharist B (44:1–37)

Large portions of these pages have unfortunately been lost.[42] The diples serving as division marks between the individual pieces can nevertheless still be recognised and allow the conclusion that the manuscript is divided into five distinct sections.

---

[41] For the Son as "garment," see 63:12–13, 87:2–5; as "confirmation," 65:7, 87:5; as the light that one wears, 63:12–13; as indivisible and comprising all the "Entireties," 66:37–67:12; see Thomassen and Painchaud, *Traité tripartite*, 443–46.

[42] The best reconstructed text is found in Funk, *Concordance . . . X et XIA*, 325–27.

Anointing

The first text is a prayer used in connection with anointing. I quote only the part that is well enough preserved to yield continuous sense:

> . . . it is fitting [for you] at this time (ⲧⲛ[ⲟ]ⲩ) to send your son Jesus Christ to anoint us (ⲛϥ[ⲧ]ⲱϩⲥ̄ [ⲙⲙ]ⲁⲛ), that we may be able to trample upon (ⲕⲁⲧⲁⲡⲁⲧⲉⲓ ⲛ̄ⲧⲡ[ⲉ]) the [snakes] and [destr]oy ([ⲕⲱ]ⲧⲉ) the scorpions and all the power of the devil, [through the chi]ef shepherd (ⲡⲁⲣ[ⲭⲓⲡ]ⲟⲓⲙⲏⲛ), Jesus Christ, through whom we have known you. And we give [glory] to you: Glory to you, the Father in the [aeon, the Father] in the Son, [the Father in the] holy church [and the] holy angels, he who abides forever [in the harm]ony of the aeons from the eternities to the untraceable aeons of aeons. Amen. (40:11–29)

The prayer is addressed to the Father. The expression "at this time" seems to refer to the immediate context of the ritual being performed.[43] Thus, the text may be described as an epiclesis for the sending of the Son to be present as the active divine power in the ritual. (In a more "orthodox" context, the Holy Spirit would be the normal agent in this role.)

The formula about trampling upon snakes, scorpions, and the power of the devil is based on Luke 10:19. Use of that text in a baptismal context is attested by *Exc.* 76:2, as well as by Cyril of Jerusalem[44] and John Chrysostom.[45] Baptism is portrayed in these texts either as a victorious struggle against demonic powers, or as an act equipping the baptised for the struggle.[46] In particular, the present text agrees with Chrysostom by relating Luke 10:19 to the anointing, as a preparation for the battle with the demons.

Is this a pre-baptismal or a post-baptismal anointing? And what is its function? One argument for a pre-baptismal interpretation is

---

[43] According to Funk, in *Nag Hammadi Deutsch*, II 760n45, the words "it is fitting for you at this time . . ." are equivalent to "Now we ask you. . . ."

[44] *Cat.* 3:11.

[45] *Cat.* 4:9 Papadopoulos-Kerameus (2/4 Kaczynski).

[46] There are some nuances between the texts: Cyril, *loc. cit.*, portrays Christ's, and subsequently the baptizand's, descent into the water as the victory over demonic forces, mythologically also represented by the dragon, or sea monster, in the book of Job. An allusion to this idea is also found in *T. Asher* 7:3. Cf. McDonnell, *Baptism of Jesus*, 160; Lampe, *Lex.* s.v. δράκων 2.b. In *Exc.* 76:2 the accent is rather on the idea that baptism enables the baptised to overcome the evil spirits. Chrysostom, *loc. cit.*, explicitly focuses on the (pre-baptismal) anointing, comparing it with the anointing of athletes before combat, without, however, necessarily implying that the baptismal font is the arena where the combat takes place.

the simple fact that the manuscript places the text before the texts
dealing with baptism and the eucharist. Secondly, the anointing seems
to be of an exorcistic character, which is in accordance with the
function of pre-baptismal anointing in most ancient Christian bap-
tismal liturgies. Against such an interpretation, however, it might be
argued that a pre-baptismal anointing is not attested in other known
sources of Valentinian initiation. There, the sequence is regularly
baptism-anointing-eucharist. Moreover, there is no trace of a second
anointing in any of the five liturgical pieces, which leaves the possibility
open that the text on the anointing may in fact refer to a post-
baptismal anointing. Finally, it should be added that the anointing
referred to in the text must not necessarily be interpreted as exorcis-
tic and preparatory; it may equally well refer to an empowering of
the initiate over evil spirits conceived as an important outcome of
the ritual as a whole.[47]

On balance, however, the position of the text in the manuscript
seems to give the strongest weight to a pre-baptismal interpretation.
Moreover, the evidence is insufficient to exclude the existence of a
second, post-baptismal anointing, especially since the pieces on bap-
tism are very fragmentary.

Baptism

Here is a fresh translation[48] of the pieces on baptism that follow next:

> [This] is the fullness of the summary of the knowledge that was revealed
> to us by our Lord Jesus Christ the Onlybegotten. These are the sure
> and necessary items, that we may walk in them. Now, they are those
> of the first baptism [*10 lines missing*] baptism [. . . remission] of sins
> [. . .] who has said that [. . .] you (pl.) for the [remission of] your sins
> the [. . .] is a type of the [. . .] of Christ [. . .] equal(?) the [. . .] within
> the(?) [. . .]. For the [work] of Jesus [. . .].
>
> The first b[aptism], then, is the remission [of sins.] [We] are brought(?)
> [by means of it] from those on [the left] to those on the right, from
> [corruption] to [incorruptibil]ity, [and this] is the Jo[rdan [. . .] that
> place is [. . . the] world. We were [brought] out, then, from [the] world

---

[47] The anointing Chrysostom speaks about is in fact not exorcistic. In Chrysostom's
liturgy there is no post-baptismal anointing, and the pre-baptismal anointing is the
highlight of the initiation ritual. Power over the forces of evil is but one of the qual-
ities bestowed by the anointing. On this, see in particular Varghese, *Onctions*, 84–88.

[48] Again, we follow, for the most part, the reconstructions made by Funk (see
above, 355n42).

into the aeon. For the interpretation of "John" is the aeon, whereas the interpretation of what is meant by "Jordan" is the descent (ⲕⲁⲧⲁⲃⲁⲥⲓⲥ), which is the upward progress (ⲃⲁⲑⲙⲟⲥ), that which [is the going] out of the world [in]to the aeon. (40:30–41:38)

[*9 lines missing* . . . from the] world in[to the Jord]an, from [the things] of the world in[to the truth] of God, from [the carnal] into the spi[ritual, from] the physical [into the] angelic, from [the crea]tion into the Ple[roma, from] of the world in[to the ae]on, from the [. . .] into sonship, [from] entanglements [into . . .], from [exile into] our hometown, from [. . .] into war[mth, from . . .] into a [. . .]. May we . . .] and [. . .] into the [. . .].

   [This] is how we have been brought [from the . . . of a] seed [. . .] to a perfect form (ⲙⲟⲣⲫⲏ). Now, [the] bath is the type (ⲧⲩⲡⲓⲕⲟⲛ) by which Christ [redee]med us through the [power(?)] of his spirit, and [brou]ght us forth who are [in him(?)],[49] and from now on, the souls [will be] perfect spirits. [The things which] have be granted us, then, [by the firs]t baptism [. . . . *14 lines missing*] invisible [. . . which is his, since [we have] become a[eonic . . .], for we have r[eceived the redemption of Chris]t. (42:10–43:19)

These texts belong to a genre different from the preceding liturgical prayer for the anointing. They are homiletic exposés, presented as revelations from Christ, on the significance of "the first baptism." That expression (40:39, 41:21, 42:39) necessarily implies that there must also exist a "second baptism." Although no such expression is actually attested in the extant text, the question must nevertheless be asked what these two baptisms might be. Modern editors have answered this by referring to Iren. *Haer.* I 21:2 where "the Valentinians" are said to make a distinction between a psychic "baptism," effected by "Jesus," and a spiritual "redemption," bestowed by "Christ." The redemption is, moreover, described there as "another baptism," with reference to Luke 12:50.[50] But it should not be assumed out of hand that this is what is meant here; it is necessary to look more closely at what the text itself says.

   In fact, the present text makes no distinction between "the first

---

[49] I propose the following reconstruction at this point: ⲧⲥⲓ]ⲉⲓⲁⲩⲛⲉ ⲛ̄ⲙⲉⲛ ⲡⲧⲩⲡⲓ[ⲕⲟⲛ ⳓ]ⲉ ⲡⲉ ⲡⲉⲉⲓ ⲛ̄ⲧⲁⲡⲉⲭⲣⲏ[ⲥⲧⲟⲥ ⲥⲱ]ⲧⲉ ⲛ̄ϩⲏⲧⲛ̄ ϩⲛ̄ ⲧ[ⲉⳏⲟⲩⲥⲓ]ⲁ ⲙ̄ⲡⲉϥⲡⲛⲉⲩⲙⲁ ⲁⲩ[ⲱ ⲁϥⲉⲓ]ⲛⲉ ⲙ̄ⲙⲁⲛ ⲁⲃⲁⲗ ⲉⲧⲛ̄[ϩⲏⲧⲛ̄. For the restoration ⲧⲥⲓ]ⲉⲓⲁⲩⲛⲉ (<*λουτρόν), cf. Ménard, *L'Exposé valentinien*, who read, however, less likely, ⲧⲥ]ⲉⲓⲁⲩⲛⲉ. ⳓ]ⲉ is suggested by W.-P. Funk (personal communication). The reading ⲧ[ⲉⳏⲟⲩⲥⲓ]ⲁ (my suggestion) seems semantically somewhat preferable to ⲧ[ⲗⲱⲣⲉ]ⲁ (Funk), although it may be a little long for the lacuna. ⲉⲧⲛ̄[ϩⲏⲧⲛ̄ derives from Turner's edition.

[50] Ménard, *L'Exposé valentinien*, 84; Pagels and Turner in Hedrick, *Nag Hammadi Codices XI, XII, XIII*, 170.

baptism" and redemption. Rather, the final sentences make it clear that it is the first baptism that provides the redemption. It is, moreover, a re-enactment of Jesus' baptism in the Jordan. This, the baptism of John, is represented as a transportation from the world into the aeon. The name Ἰωάννης is explained to mean αἰών, an explanation which appears to be motivated by the phonetic similarity of the two words. The "descent" into the Jordan is the "upward progress" into the aeon.[51] This movement from the world to the aeon is described in a series of contrasting pairs, which describe the state attained by the baptised as incorruptible, spiritual, angelic, and as the "hometown" in the Pleroma. Thus, there is nothing incomplete, inferior or "psychic" about this "first baptism."[52]

The statement in Iren. *Haer.* I 21:2 about the remission of sins as a characteristic of the first, psychic baptism does not seem to be applicable to the present text. Here, the remission of sins is regarded as simply another effect of a spiritual baptism. The idea that baptism provides the remission of sins is, of course, a traditional and widespread theme in baptismal theology, going back to the description of John the Baptist in Mark 1:4 and Luke 3:3.

What, then, can the second baptism be? The notion as such has scriptural authority (Luke 12:50, Matt 20:22, Mark 10:38), and occurs not infrequently in Christian writers, who use it to describe martyrdom, the baptism in blood.[53] Nothing indicates, however, that that is what is intended here. Since the first baptism already leads into the aeon, it is more likely that we should think of the second baptism as taking place after the redeemed spirit has attained its transcendent home in the Pleroma. Just as baptism may be described as a bridal chamber—prefiguring as an image the bridal chamber to be enjoyed in the Pleroma—it seems plausible that the first baptism in the present text is to be understood as the earthly representation of an initiatory fulfilment that will eventually take place in the hypercosmic spiritual sphere itself.

---

[51] The explanation of the name Ἰορδάνης as meaning κατάβασις (reflecting the Hebrew *yrd*, "descend") is fairly widespread and attested as early as Philo, *Leg. All.* II 89; cf. Rengstorf in *TWNT* VI 609; also Orig. *Hom. Luc.* 21:4; McDonnell, *Baptism of Jesus*, 203, 204–5.

[52] It may be added that *Val. Exp.*, to which these texts are appended, does not seem to use the notion of the psychic at all; cf. Thomassen, "Valentinian Exposition," 233–35.

[53] Tert. *Bapt.* 16:1, *Pud.* 22:9, *Scorp.* 6; Cypr. *Ep.* 73:22, *Ad Fort.* praef. 4; *Mart. Perp. Fel.* 21:2; Orig. *Exhort. Mart.* 30.

Eucharist

The final two texts have been thought to be related to the eucharist:

> [We] are grateful [to you and give than]ks (ⲉⲩⲭⲁⲣⲓ]ⲥⲧⲉⲓ) to the Father
> [. . .] your son [. . . and they come forth [. . . in]visible [. . .] your
> s[on . . .] his love [. . .] them [. . .] to kn[owledge [. . .] they do your
> will [through the] name of Jesus Christ [and they will] do your will
> [. . . at] all times, because they are full [of] every grace and [every]
> purity. Glory be to you through your son, [the fir]st-born Jesus Chri[st
> from] now and forever. Amen. (43:20–38)

> [*14 lines are missing*] we attain [. . .] the word (ⲗⲟⲅⲟⲥ) from a[bove(?) . . .]
> holy [. . .] food (ⲧⲣⲟⲫⲏ) [. . .] son, since you [. . .] food of the [. . .] to
> us [. . .] in the life [. . .] he is [. . .] which [is . . .] the church [. . .] you
> are(?) pure [. . .] you are the Lord. If you die, being pu[re, you] will
> be pure, that each one who receives [from] it(?) for food and [drink]
> may [live]. Glory be to you forever. Amen. (44:15–37)

The mention of food and drink (the latter must be restored) in the
second piece, together with the context provided by the previous
liturgical texts, makes it reasonably certain that a form of the eucharist
is referred to. Thus it is likely that ⲉⲩⲭⲁⲣⲓ]ⲥⲧⲉⲓ in the first piece
does not simply mean "give thanks," but alludes to the eucharistic
celebration. Otherwise, very little can be inferred about the practice
and theory of the eucharist from these heavily damaged fragments.

THE TESTIMONY OF IREN. *HAER.* I 21

General remarks

The preceding studies place us in a position to evaluate critically the
account of Valentinian rituals found in Iren. *Haer.* I 21. Irenaeus
here begins with a general description of the ideas about the
ἀπολύτρωσις:

> The tradition concerning their "redemption" happens to be invisible
> and incomprehensible, since it is the mother of ungraspable and invis-
> ible things. And therefore, being unstable, it cannot be explained sim-
> ply or in a word, since each one of them transmits it as he wishes.
> For there are as many different "redemptions" as there are mysta-
> gogues of this doctrine. (I 21:1)

That Valentinians generally referred to their initiation ritual by the
name ἀπολύτρωσις is no doubt correct. The qualification of it as

ἀόρατος and ἀκατάληπτος is also consonant with Valentinian language about baptism, as can be seen, for instance, from the testimony of *Tri. Trac.*, which was discussed above. We have seen, moreover, that the Valentinians were anxious to distinguish between the outward and the inward—invisible—dimensions of the ritual acts. In line with his general polemic against Valentinian diversity (chapters 10–13), Irenaeus exploits this Valentinian sacramental theological theme to mock the variability of their baptismal practices.

It is nevertheless clear that Irenaeus' information about Valentinian baptismal theology is limited:

> They affirm that the redemption is necessary for those who have received perfect knowledge, in order that they may be reborn into the power which is above all things. Otherwise it is impossible to enter inside the Fullness, for according to them, it is this redemption which leads them down into the profundities of the Abyss. Now the baptism of the visible Jesus is for the remission of sins, but the redemption of the Christ who came down into him is for perfection. They assert that the first is psychic, but the second spiritual. Baptism was proclaimed by John for repentance, but redemption was introduced by Christ for perfection. And it is about this that he says, "And I have another baptism to be baptised with, and I am strongly urged towards it" (cf. Luke 12:50). And the Lord is also said to have put this redemption before the sons of Zebedee, when their mother asked that they might sit on his right hand and his left in the kingdom, saying, "Can you be baptised with the baptism with which I am going to be baptised?" (Matt 20:22, Mark 10:38). And they say that Paul often referred to the redemption in Christ Jesus explicitly, and that this is what they transmit in various and discordant ways. (I 21:2)

Irenaeus claims that the Valentinians make a distinction between a psychic baptism and a spiritual redemption. The first is identified with the baptism proclaimed by John the Baptist for the remission of sins and is performed on the visible (φαινομένου) Jesus. The second is the ἀπολύτρωσις τοῦ ἐν αὐτῷ κατελθόντος Χριστοῦ εἰς τελείωσιν. The distinction is evidently linked to the classification of Christians into psychics and spirituals, and contrasts the baptism performed in the psychic church with the redemption ritual of Valentinian spirituals. Such a distinction is not confirmed, however, by any of the sources that have been surveyed above. Clearly, it cannot represent the view of more than a specific branch of Valentinianism, and one that distinguished between a psychic and a spiritual saviour figure. In Part I it has been shown that that type of doctrine can be found

in such texts as Iren. *Haer.* I 1–8, *Exc.* 43:2–65, Iren. *Haer.* I 7:2, and Hipp. *Haer.* VI 29–36. It should be noted, however, that the precise nomenclature of a spiritual Christ descending on a psychic Jesus is not found in any of those sources.[54] The only exact parallel in that respect is the treatise attributed to Marcus the Magician in Iren. *Haer.* 15:3, which speaks of "the Jesus who appeared on earth" (τὸν ἐπὶ γῆς φανέντα Ἰησοῦν), upon whom descended Christ in the form of the dove. It may hence be surmised that Irenaeus' statement is based on a document coming from the same group—and quite possibly from the very same text, since Irenaeus' report of that text in 15:3 ends rather abruptly after the description of the incarnation.

At any rate, a distinction between baptism and redemption as two distinct rituals is not supported by other sources. As the preceding studies have shown, *apolytrosis* is simply the Valentinian name for their version of the Christian initiation ritual, of which water baptism was an essential component.

Irenaeus then goes on to list the various forms of the *apolytrosis* performed by Valentinian groups. For easier reference the variants are given numbers in the following translation:

> (1) Some of them (οἱ μὲν γὰρ αὐτῶν) prepare a bridal chamber and perform a mystagogy, with certain invocations, for those who are being initiated, and they claim that what they are effecting is a spiritual marriage, after the image of the syzygies above.
>
> (2) Others (οἱ δὲ) bring to the water and baptise, saying, "Onto the Name of the unknown Father of the Entireties; onto Truth, the Mother of the Entireties; onto the one who descended on Jesus; onto union, redemption and communion of the powers."
>
> (3) Others (ἄλλοι δὲ) invoke Hebrew words in order to baffle even more those who are being initiated: "*Basema chamosse baaianoora mistadia rouada kousta babophor kalachthei.*" The interpretation of this is: "I call upon what above every power of the Father is named Light, and Good Spirit, and Life, for you have reigned in the body."
>
> (4) Others still (ἄλλοι δὲ πάλιν) invoke the redemption as follows: "The Name which is hidden from every deity, dominion and truth, which Jesus from Nazareth put on in the spheres of light, that of the living Christ—through the Holy Spirit, for the redemption of angels—the

---

[54] In *Exc.* 16, "the spirit of the Father's thought" is said to have descended on "the flesh of the Logos"; ibid. 61:6 the spirit descends upon the psychic Christ; in Iren. *Haer.* I 7:2 the spiritual Saviour comes down on the psychic Christ. According to Hipp. *Haer.* VI 35:6, the "western school" taught that the (spiritual) Logos came down upon the psychic Jesus. The psychic Christ appears also in Iren. *Haer.* I 6:1.

Name of the restoration: *Messia oupharegna mempsaimen chaldaian mosomedaea akfar nepseuoua Iesu Nazaria.*" And the interpretation of these words is: "I do not divide the spirit, the heart, and the super-celestial power that shows mercy. That I may enjoy your Name, Saviour of truth."

This is what they say who are performing the initiation. The initiate, however, answers: "I have been strengthened and I have been redeemed, and I redeem my soul from this aeon and from all that comes from it, in the Name of Iao, who redeemed his soul into the redemption in the living Christ." Then the ones present add: "Peace be with all on whom this Name rests." After that, they anoint the initiate with balsam oil (μυρίζουσι τὸν τετελεσμένον τῷ ὀπῷ τῷ ἀπὸ βαλσάμου). For this ointment is a type of the fragrance which is over the Entireties, they say. (I 21:3)

(5) But some of them (ἔνιοι δ' αὐτῶν) say that it is superfluous to bring people to the water; instead, they mix oil and water together and pour it on the heads of the ones to be initiated, with invocations like the ones we have mentioned previously, and this they pretend to be the redemption. They too anoint with balsam.

(6) But others (ἄλλοι δὲ) reject all of this, and say that one ought not to perform the mystery of the ineffable and invisible Power by means of visible and perishable created things, nor the inconceivable and incorporeal by means of what is sensible and corporeal. Rather, the perfect redemption is the very act of knowing (αὐτὴν τὴν ἐπίγνωσιν) the ineffable Greatness. For from ignorance derived deficiency and passion, and through knowledge will the entire structure derived from ignorance be dissolved. Therefore knowledge is the redemption of the inner man. And it is not corporeal, because the body perishes, nor psychic, because the soul as well derives from deficiency and is (only) the dwelling-place of the spirit. In fact, the inner, spiritual man is redeemed through knowledge, and for them it suffices to have knowledge of all things: this is the true redemption. (I 21:4)

(7) There are others who perform the redemption on the dying in their last hour, by pouring oil and water on their heads, or the aforementioned ointment, mixed with water (*mittentes eorum capitibus oleum et aquam, siue praedictum unguentum cum aqua*), together with the invocations we named above, in order that they may become unassailable by and invisible to the principalities and powers, and their inner man ascend above the realm of the invisible, while their body is left behind in the created world and their soul is delivered to the Demiurge.

And they instruct them to speak as follows when, after death, they come to the powers: "I am a son from the Father, of the pre-existent Father, a son in the pre-existent one. I have come to see all things, those who belong to me and those which are alien—though they are not altogether alien, but belong to Achamoth, who is female and made these things for herself, though she derives her race from the pre-existent—and I go again to that which is my own, whence I came forth." Saying these words, they affirm, he will escape from the powers.

Then he will come to the Demiurge and his companions, and will say to them: "I am a precious vessel, more precious than the female who made you. If your mother is ignorant of her root, I know myself and am aware whence I came forth, and I invoke the incorruptible Sophia who is in the Father, mother of your mother, who has neither a father nor a male partner. A female sprung from a female made you, ignorant even of her own mother and believing herself to be all alone. But I call upon her mother." When the Demiurge and his companions hear this, they become greatly confused and condemn their root and the race of their mother. But he goes forth to his own, casting away his chain, that is, his soul.

This is what has come down to us concerning their "redemption." (I 21:5)

The variant forms of the ritual presented by Irenaeus fall into two main categories; a ritual of initiation (nos. 1–5, with no. 6 representing an anti-ritual position), and a death ritual (no. 7). From Irenaeus' presentation of the latter (*alii sunt qui mortuos redimunt ad finem defunctionis*), we are given the impression that the death ritual was practised by certain Valentinians as an alternative to the redemption as an initiation ritual. This need by no means be the case, of course. It seems just as plausible to assume that the death ritual may have been practised by one or more communities[55] in addition to the initiatory *apolytrosis*. The mixture of water and oil/ointment poured over the head of the dying person suggests that the ritual may have been anamnetic in nature, performed as a recollection and a renewal of an initiation with water baptism and anointing that had been received previously. There is, moreover, nothing in Irenaeus' description of it which confirms that this death ritual was actually named "the redemption"; thus Irenaeus' presentation of it as such is most probably inaccurate.

We now turn to the variants of the initiation ritual itself, as presented by Irenaeus.

No. 1

Grave doubts must be raised concerning the accuracy of Irenaeus' presentation of the first ritual (νυμφῶνα κατασκευάζουσι καὶ μυσταγωγίαν ἐπιτελοῦσι μετ᾽ ἐπιρρήσεών τινων τοῖς τελουμένοις καὶ πνευματικὸν γάμον

---

[55] Two variants of the rite are in fact indicated, one with oil, and another using *myron*, which suggests that more than one group performed this kind of last anointing.

φάσκουσιν εἶναι τὸ ὑπ᾽ αὐτῶν γινόμενον κατὰ τὴν ὁμοιότητα τῶν ἄνω συζυγιῶν). As we have seen, the bridal chamber is an integral part of Valentinian initiation ideology, and not a speciality of only one or a few groups. Moreover, we have seen that the idea of the bridal chamber is generally related to the regular acts of Christian initiation—baptism, anointing, and eucharist—and that the other sources offer no confirmation that it ever existed as a distinct rite. Finally, Irenaeus is very vague in his description of the actual performance of the bridal chamber rite. It seems likely, therefore, that Irenaeus' ideas about this rite are his own construction, derived from his knowledge that the concept of the bridal chamber was somehow associated with Valentinian initiation. Probably no such ritual existed, either as a separate component in the initiatory programme (other than as part of the liturgical-rhetorical language), or, as Irenaeus seems to imply, as an initiation rite actually replacing baptismal initiation.

No. 2

The second variant consists of a water baptism (with no mention of anointing) accompanied by the formula εἰς ὄνομα ἀγνώστου πατρὸς τῶν ὅλων, εἰς ἀλήθειαν μητέρα τῶν πάντων, εἰς τὸν κατελθόντα εἰς τὸν Ἰησοῦν, εἰς ἕνωσιν καὶ ἀπολύτρωσιν καὶ κοινωνίαν τῶν δυνάμεων. Baptism is done with reference to the Name, to Truth,[56] to "the one who descended on Jesus"—whose precise identity is not given—to redemption, and to the unification with the aeons. All of these are familiar themes, and if the report may be taken at face value, both the redemption and the unification of the bridal chamber are here associated with water baptism.

Nos. 3 and 4: Irenaeus' presentation

The third and fourth variants also comprised a water baptism. Although water baptism is not mentioned explicitly in connection with them, it is clear that the difference Irenaeus wishes to highlight

---

[56] A reference to Truth in a baptismal context also occurs in *Exc.* 86:2, in *Tri. Trac.* 128:26, and in the "bridal chamber inscription." The precise systematic location of Truth is not given, whether she is conceived as the *syzygos* of the Father, or, as is more usual, of the Son. In the latter case, the Name may be interpreted as referring to the Son, so that we could here have a reference to the usual pair of Son-Truth.

vis-à-vis the preceding ritual primarily concerns the liturgical for-
mulas used and not the acts performed. (For the fourth variant he
adds, nevertheless, that it also featured an anointing with balsam.)
By contrast, the fifth ritual is distinguished by the absence of any
form of water baptism whatsoever.

Irenaeus' presentation of these two variants poses particular prob-
lems, and they are best discussed together:

(3) (Water baptism)
   Words spoken by the initiation minister:
   a. A "Hebrew" formula: Βασεμα χαμοσση βααιανοορα μισταδια
      ρουαδα κουστα βαβοφορ καλαχθει; Latin version: *Basyma cacabasa
      eanaa irraumista diarbada caeota bafobor camelanthi.*
   (b. Translation given by Irenaeus: ὑπὲρ πᾶσαν δύναμιν τοῦ πατρὸς
      ἐπικαλοῦμαι φῶς ὀνομαζόμενον καὶ πνεῦμα ἀγαθὸν καὶ ζωή, ὅτι
      ἐν σώματι ἐβασίλευσας.)
(4) (A. Water baptism)
   1. Spoken by the initiation minister:
   a. A Greek formula: τὸ ὄνομα τὸ ἀποκεκρυμμένον ἀπὸ πάσης θεότητος
      καὶ κυριότητος καὶ ἀληθείας,[57] ὃ ἐνεδύσατο Ἰησοῦς ὁ Ναζαρηνὸς
      ἐν ταῖς ζώ<ν>αις τοῦ φωτὸς τοῦ Χριστοῦ <τοῦ> ζῶντος διὰ
      πνεύματος ἁγίου εἰς λύτρωσιν ἀγγελικήν, ὄνομα τὸ τῆς ἀποκαταστά-
      σεως.[58]
   b. An Aramaic formula: Μεσσια ουφαρεγνα μεμψαι μεν χαλδαιαν
      μοσομη δαεα ακφαρ νεψευ ουα Ιησου Ναζαρια; Lat. *Messia ufar
      magno in seenchaldia mosomeda eaacha faronepseha Iesu Nazarene.*
   (c. Translation of the Aramaic given by Irenaeus: οὐ διαιρῶ τὸ
      πνεῦμα, τὴν καρδίαν καὶ τὴν ὑπερουράνιον δύναμιν τὴν οἰκτίρμονα·
      ὀναίμην τοῦ ὀνόματός σου, σωτὴρ ἀληθείας.)
   2. Spoken by the candidate: ἐστήριγμαι καὶ λελύτρωμαι καὶ
      λυτροῦμαι τὴν ψυχήν μου ἀπὸ τοῦ αἰῶνος τούτου καὶ πάντων τῶν
      παρ᾽ αὐτοῦ ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι τοῦ Ἰαώ, ὃς ἐλυτρώσατο τὴν ψυχὴν
      αὐτοῦ εἰς ἀπολύτρωσιν ἐν τῷ Χριστῷ τῷ ζῶντι.
   3. Spoken by all present: εἰρήνη πᾶσιν ἐφ᾽ οὕς τὸ ὄνομα τοῦτο
      ἐπαναπέπαυται.
   B. Anointing with fragrant balsam oil.

---

[57] Foerster, in Foerster-Wilson, *Gnosis*, I 219n30, makes the not unlikely sugges-
tion that ἀληθείας should be emended to ἐξουσίας.
[58] ζώ<ν>αις can be confidently restored on the basis of the Latin version. <τοῦ>:
Χριστοῦ mss., em. Holl; cf. (4) A.2. τῷ Χριστῷ τῷ ζῶντι; *Christus Dominus uiuentis* Lat.

The "Hebrew" formulae quoted by Irenaeus are too garbled to yield coherent sense. Certain sequences of letters nevertheless form recognisable Aramaic words. In (3) a. it is possible to discern the words *ba-šᵉmā* "in the name," *nūhrā*, "light," *rūḥā dᵉ-qūštā*, "the Holy Spirit," and, probably, *bᵉ-fūrqānā*, "in the redemption."[59] The Greek formula offered by Irenaeus as a translation of the Aramaic is obviously nothing of the sort; it must belong in a different context. Closer to the Aramaic is in fact the formula quoted under (4) A.1.a., where all the recognisable Aramaic words contained in (3) a. can be found, though that formula is considerably longer. It is possible that Irenaeus' notes were in disarray, and that the foreign words he quotes in (3) a. are in fact the truncated remains of an Aramaic phrase corresponding to (4) A.1.a., though the resemblance between the two texts is not extensive enough for this to be affirmed with assurance.[60]

Genuine Aramaic words can also be identified in the formula (4) A.1.b., such as *mᵉšiḥā*, "anointed," the root *prq*, "save," the preposition *men*, "from," and *nafšā*, "self, soul." A plausible reconstruction of the first words is *mᵉšiḥā wa-mᵉfareq enā men . . .* "I have been anointed and redeemed from . . ."[61] Again, Irenaeus' Greek text in no way fits the Aramaic.[62] On the other hand, it resembles somewhat the text in (4) A.2., and it has been suggested that (4) A.1.b is in fact the Aramaic version of that text, and attempts have been made to harmonise the two texts.[63] Aside from the linguistic and textual problems involved in such harmonisation, however,[64] two further difficulties

---

[59] For attempts—not entirely convincing—to reconstruct the entire passage, see Gressmann, "Jüdisch-Aramäisches," and the critical remarks in Müller, "Beiträge," 199n32; F. Graffin, in RD I/1, 270–71.

[60] Cf. RD I/1, 271.

[61] Graffin, in RD I/1, 270, reconstructs, rather more questionably, the whole formula as follows (as printed *loc. cit.*): *mᵉšiha wa-mᵉfareq ena men nafša wᵉ-men kul dayna ba-šᵉmeh dᵉ-yah; fᵉraq nafša o iēšuʿ nesraya*, "I have been anointed and redeemed from myself and from every judgment through the Name of Yahweh; redeem me, o Jesus of Nazareth!" For earlier attempts, cf. in particular Gressmann, "Jüdisch-Aramäisches," with the criticism in Müller, "Beiträge," 190–91.

[62] A possible exception are the final two words Ιησου Ναζαρια/*Iesu Nazarene*, which Irenaeus renders as σωτὴρ ἀληθείας. This has an intriguing parallel in *Gos Phil*. 62:13–15: "'Jesus in Hebrew is 'the redemption.' 'Nazara' is 'the truth.' 'The Nazarene,' then, is 'the truth.'" (The last phrase should probably be emended to ⲡⲓⲛⲁⲍⲁⲣⲉⲛⲟⲥ ϭⲉ ⲡⲉ ⲡⲁ ⲧⲁⲗⲏⲑⲉⲓⲁ "'The Nazarene,' then, is 'the one of truth'" [Schenke, *Philippus-Evangelium*, 313–14]). Thus, there existed an etymology that related Nazareth and Nazarene to "truth," and consequently interpreted "Jesus of Nazareth" as "the redeemer of truth." How this may be explained linguistically is obscure.

[63] See the literature cited in the preceding note.

[64] Cf. Müller, "Beiträge," 190–91.

posed by the Aramaic words must be pointed out. The first is that
the text seems to be spoken by the initiate *after* his anointing, not
before, as Irenaeus implies—unless one assumes (which is not entirely
inconceivable) the existence of two anointings, the first taking place
either before the immersion or immediately after, and the other at
the moment of transition between the baptismal rite and the first
communion. The second, and even more serious problem is that for-
eign and exotic formulae in a liturgical context are much more likely
to have been spoken by the ministering agent than by the patient
of the ritual. It is not very plausible that the candidate for initiation
should have been required to utter Aramaic words during the cer-
emonies, whereas the ritual use of foreign-sounding formulae by the
master of the ceremonies is a common enough religious phenomenon.

The formula (4) A.1.c., the ostensible translation of the Aramaic,
presents a further problem: these words too fit more naturally in the
mouth of the initiate than in that of the minister—especially the
concluding request to "enjoy"—ὀνινάναι—the Name.

The conclusion to be drawn from these observations is that no
reliable correspondence can be established between the various for-
mulae reported by Irenaeus and the liturgical contexts in which he
situates them. The possible sources of this error are of course many—
disorder in Irenaeus' notes, inaccurate reporting by his informants,
confusion in the transmission and interpretation of the Aramaic for-
mulae by the Valentinians themselves, etc. At this point it is appro-
priate to cite the following piece of information from Hippolytus:

> For the blessed presbyter Irenaeus also undertook a refutation in an
> outspoken way, and presented these kinds of washings and redemp-
> tions, describing their practices in a somewhat rough and summary
> fashion (ἁδρομερέστερον). When some of them happened to see what
> he had written, they denied having been taught such things (οἶ<ς>
> ἐντυχόντες τινὲς αὐτῶν ἤρνηνται οὕτως παρειληφέναι)—they are instructed
> always to make denials. (Hipp. *Haer.* VI 42:1)

Abstracting from the precise liturgical context which Irenaeus describes
for his material, we are left with the following facts: Valentinians
used special invocations of varying content in their initiation ritual.
In some communities, Aramaic formulae were used. Sometimes at
least, a dialogue between initiant and initiand took place. Some com-
munities practised a post-baptismal anointing with fragrant balsam.

The invocations

With regard to the invocations themselves, however, a further question must be asked: what can be inferred from them once they have been released from the context alleged for them by Irenaeus?

(3) a. is an Aramaic baptismal epiclesis "In the name . . .," which seems likely to have been invoked over the candidate in the water. The expression *bᵉ-fūrqānā*, which can be identified with probability, parallels εἰς ἀπολύτρωσιν and has a fairly distinctive Valentinian flavour.

(3) b. is an invocation of the Saviour, who is given the epithets "light," "good spirit" (a slightly odd expression), and "life." The formula alludes to the familiar theme of the Saviour being filled with the entire power of the Father, or the Pleroma, at the moment of his descent—either during his pre-cosmic descent to Sophia or at his later incarnation in the world of humans.[65] It seems that the formula may not have been completely preserved and that some words explicitly addressing the Saviour are missing at the beginning. The words ὅτι ἐν σώματι ἐβασίλευσας are a little obscure, but it seems clear that the royal status here attributed to the Saviour is related to the authority bestowed upon him ὑπὲρ πᾶσαν δύναμιν τοῦ πατρὸς. Messianic connotations are evident, something which fits well in a baptismal context. The formula thus invokes the Saviour and Son, who was invested with royal authority over the Pleroma by the Father and appeared in bodily form on earth. There is, moreover, undoubtedly an implicit allusion to the baptism in the Jordan as an event during which the incarnate Saviour's messianic status was manifested. The expression ἐν σώματι suggests that the theological context of the formula is one where the incarnation was soteriologically important, that is, a variant of the "Oriental" doctrine studied in Part I above. In accordance with the soteriological theory of mutual participation characteristic of that doctrine, the "body" may here have a double significance. On the one hand, it can refer to the material body in which the (spiritual) Saviour was incarnated by soteriological necessity and from which he was subsequently redeemed at baptism, where he was (re-)invested in his royal status by the spirit/name coming down upon him; on the other hand, it can also refer to the redeemed

---

[65] Müller, "Beiträge," 188–89.

spiritual body which is equivalent with the church, of which the members partake through their baptism, and where the Saviour reigns as its head.[66]

(4) A.1.a. is an invocation of, or at least refers to, the Name, which Jesus put on "in the zones of light," and which is that of the *apokatastasis*. The "Name" is a familiar Valentinian notion that is able to combine a wide range of meanings. One of them is that of the divine Name, which is given to the Son as the manifestation of the hidden Father. But the Name also has messianic and baptismal connotations, being the name received by the Son as the head of the Pleroma and which he regains, in his incarnation as the Saviour, at his baptism. Moreover, the Name also represents the unity of the Pleroma and constitutes the common denominator of the aeons. Finally, the spirituals receive the Name at baptism in a re-enactment of Jesus' baptism and as a means for reintegration into the Pleroma.

The present formula prays for the reception of the Name by the initiands and states that this is the same name that was bestowed on Jesus before his descent into the cosmos,[67] and which is the name of "the living Christ." The latter notion probably has messianic connotations, and possibly even alludes to a ritual anointing. The words διὰ πνεύματος ἁγίου are syntactically awkward; they do not fit in well with the preceding text. Some text, therefore, may be missing from the formula. Alternatively, it may be that these words, like the following εἰς λύτρωσιν ἀγγελικήν, represent an elliptical style proper to ritual speech acts, where syntactically incomplete phrases are complemented by the acts performed—in this case the baptismal act (immersion or infusion), or the anointing. In either case, the phrase "through the Holy Spirit for the redemption of angels" in all likelihood refers to, by commenting on, the immediate ritual context, where the initiands are given the Name that through the operation of the Holy Spirit reunites them with their respective angels and thereby effects the restoration of the Pleroma.

---

[66] Müller, "Beiträge," 189, considered the possibility that the "body" might mean the church here, but hesitated to adopt this interpretation because he did not fully grasp the underlying soteriological theory and failed to see that the notions of the incarnation body and the church-body are not mutually exclusive, but complementary.

[67] The possibility cannot be entirely excluded that Jesus' putting on of the Name is conceived here as a post-resurrectional, rather than a protological, event, though that seems less probable.

(4) As was noted above, A.1.b., the Aramaic phrase, looks as if it might be words spoken by the initiate. How it found its way into Irenaeus' presentation is difficult to explain.[68]

(4) A.1.c. is concerned with the idea of "division." The formula is clearly spoken by the initiand, who vows to safeguard the unity of his "spirit, heart, and the super-celestial power that shows mercy." These are qualities bestowed upon the initiand through the ritual: his spiritual nature has been reactivated, his "heart"—probably a periphrasis for "soul"[69]—has been cleansed, and he has received the "super-celestial power," the redemptive power invoked and operating in the ritual.[70] The vow probably has a moral aspect, but its chief purpose is no doubt soteriological: the aim of the initiation is to effect unification of the initiate with the Pleroma, and, as a result, to bring about the restoration of the Pleroma itself. The Name, which the initiate prays to "enjoy," represents the unity of the Pleroma (cf. above, in connection with (4) A.1.a.) It has already been invoked over the candidate and is no doubt intimately associated with the "super-celestial power" just mentioned.[71] The prayer is for the initiate to be worthy of enjoying the reality of unity that the Name represents.

(4) A.2. This formula, also spoken by the initiation candidate, contains characteristic Valentinian vocabulary. Not only does it employ the familiar term λυτροῦσθαι,[72] but also the word στηρίζειν, "strengthen," is technical : it alludes to the state of restoration from the fall into matter, passion and fragmentation.[73] The real crux of the formula, however, is the name Ἰαώ—its meaning as well as its

---

[68] One might entertain the possibility that this formula was delivered to the candidate during the initiation, as "magical" words of passage to be uttered when the time came to ascend through the gates of the spheres, but we are here entering the realm of speculation.

[69] For the use of καρδία as a reference to the soul of the spiritual, cf. Valentinus frg. 2 Vö, Clem. *Str.* II 114:3. The word ψυχή is probably avoided because of its "psychic" connotations.

[70] Cf. the δύναμις of *Exc.* 77:2, 82:1: above, 141–43.

[71] Cf. *Exc.* 82:1, "the power of the Name of God."

[72] Müller, "Beiträge," 193, makes the following perceptive comment: "Die Wiederholung des λυτροῦσθαι in Perfekt und Präsens mag auffallen, ist aber vielleicht doch wohl so zu erklären, daß die Erlösung, die in der Weihe eingetreten ist, als ein fortdauernder Stand gefaßt wird."

[73] For the "strengthening" of the aeons and/or Sophia by the Limit, or the Holy Spirit, see Iren. *Haer.* I 2:2.4.5.6, 3:5, Hipp. *Haer.* VI 32:2. The Coptic equivalent is ⲧⲁϫⲣⲟ (*Val. Exp.* 25:31, 26:33, 27:31.37, 34:27; *Tri. Trac.* 65:7, 76:33, 86:3, 87:5, 128:25, 133:13; cf. *Gos. Truth* 31:32, 33:1), or ⲧⲱⲕ (*Gos. Truth* 19:30, 33:10). Cf. Thomassen and Painchaud, *Traité tripartite,* 305–6.

syntactical position.[74] The name obviously derives from the Hebrew
Tetragrammaton, and is well known from magical contexts, and from
Sethian gnostic archon lists—for example, in the *Apocryphon of John*.
But Iao cannot be an archontic figure here, since the name clearly
has a soteriological importance. In Valentinian sources the name
occurs once, in an enigmatic passage in Iren. *Haer.* I 4:1, where
Limit stops Achamoth from re-entering the Pleroma by uttering
"Iao": ". . . and thus the name Iao is said to have originated." From
this it seems that the name may have to do with the passage from
the cosmos into the Pleroma, and it is probably not wide off the mark
to suggest, as has been done,[75] that possession of the name Iao, as
a protective formula or a key word, is here seen as a prerequisite
for entry into the Pleroma. I would like to suggest, however, though
this must be pure conjecture, a somewhat more sophisticated solu-
tion. Could it be that the name Ἰαώ actually conceals the name
Jesus, understood as Ἰησοῦς α᾽ καὶ ω᾽—that is, Jesus who encom-
passes all things? In that case, the name Ἰαώ would imply a refer-
ence to Jesus as the Saviour entrusted with the full power of the
Pleroma and encompassing within him the outward forms of the
aeons/the angels/the hypostasised spiritual church.[76] Moreover, he
would, in this capacity, also be the bearer of the divine Name, as
the personified manifestation of the Father and the unity of the
Pleroma. The name Ἰαώ would, then, express both these ideas, as
well as their combination, in a single word. This interpretation can
hardly be verified, though it is certainly consistent with modes of
thought in at least some forms of Valentinianism, as the example of
Marcus Magus makes abundantly clear.[77]

---

[74] Cf. Müller, "Beiträge," 193–94.

[75] Müller, "Beiträge," 194.

[76] This idea would be compatible with the statement in Marcus' treatise quoted
by Iren. *Haer.* I 14:6, where Jesus is said to have "contained in himself the entire
number of all the elements, which, on the occasion of his baptism was revealed by
the descent of the dove, which is alpha and omega, for its number is 801" (ἔχοντα
ἐν ἑαυτῷ τὸν ἅπαντα τῶν στοιχείων ἀριθμόν, ὃν ἐφανέρωσεν, ἐλθόντος αὐτοῦ ἐπὶ τὸ
βάπτισμα, ἡ τῆς περιστερᾶς κάθοδος, ἥτις ἐστὶν ω᾽ καὶ α᾽· ὁ γὰρ ἀριθμὸς αὐτῆς ἕν καὶ
ὀκτακόσια). For Marcus, moreover, the totality symbolised by alpha and omega is
the Name received by Jesus, the Saviour. However, he does not use the name ωΙαώ
to express this idea, but the sum of the numerical values of the letters making up
the word περιστερά, i.e., 801, which is the same as the values of ω (= 800) and α
(= 1). On this text, see esp. Förster, *Marcus Magus*, 254–56.

[77] The meaning of Ἰαώ in Iren. *Haer.* I 4:1 may also be interpreted along these
lines: by enouncing that name, the Limit is perhaps telling Achamoth that she can-

If it be accepted that Ἰαώ actually means Jesus, the statement that he redeemed his soul may be illuminated by *Gos. Phil.* 53:6–13: "Not only did he voluntarily lay down his soul when he appeared, but from the day the world existed he laid down his soul. At the moment he wished to do so, he came forward to take it back. Having been laid down as a deposit, it had fallen among brigands and was taken captive. But he saved it." The "soul" of Jesus is here not only that of his own life, which he laid down by entering the cosmos and suffering death, but symbolically encompasses the souls of the entire race of spirituals who have been caught in the world since creation. The baptismal act is, furthermore, a re-enactment of, and a partic-ipation in, Jesus' redemption of his soul—in other words, of the spir-itual race—which took place through his reception of the Name that re-confirmed him as "the living Christ." An interpretation of Ἰαώ along these lines enables us to make sense of the text as it stands, without the assumption of errors of transmission, but must, as was said already, remain hypothetical.

No. 5

The fifth variant is an interesting, and otherwise unattested, form of initiation without baptismal immersion. The phrasing (μίξαντες δὲ ἔλαιον καὶ ὕδωρ ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτὸ . . . ἐπιβάλλουσι τῇ κεφαλῇ τῶν τελουμένων) excludes the possibility that the ritual consisted of an affusion of water followed by anointing; water and oil were in fact mixed, and poured over the candidate in one act. Then followed an anointing with balsamic *myron*. We are not told why water baptism as a dis-tinct rite was deemed superfluous (περισσόν). Since the element water was retained after all, it would be unjustified to understand this prac-tice as implying a rejection of water baptism as such. The most that can be said in this regard is that the practice seems to represent a more stylised and less physical form of initiation, with actions con-centrated on the head of the candidate rather than on his whole body. Perhaps sentiments regarding the unimportance of the body motivated this practice. Another effect of this compression of the baptismal rite, however, might have been to accord greater promi-nence to the subsequent anointing with balsam, thus implying, per-

---

not enter the Pleroma until she has received Jesus, the Saviour who is the All (Iren. *Haer.* I 3:4).

haps, ascending levels of initiation. In that case, the addition of this second anointing may be seen as the ritual analogue of the tendency to add ever higher levels of transcendence in the systematic protologies which was noted above.[78]

This variant obviously presupposes the existence of an older practice consisting of water baptism and anointing with oil, a practice which has here been collapsed into a rite of affusion with oil-and-water. It is hardly possible to decide, however, whether the anointing in that older rite was pre-baptismal or post-baptismal; nor is it possible to tell whether the post-baptismal anointing with *myron* already existed in the older rite, or was added by the present group when they undertook to revise that rite.

No. 6

The final variant of the initiation is the anti-ritual position that, μὴ δεῖν τὸ τῆς ἀρρήτου καὶ ἀόρατου δυνάμεως μυστήριον δι᾽ ὁρατῶν καὶ φθαρτῶν ἐπιτελεῖσθαι κτισμάτων, καὶ τῶν ἀνεννοήτων καὶ ἀσωμάτων δι᾽ αἰσθητῶν καὶ σωματικῶν. It is not clear whether Irenaeus is quoting a source here, or is using his own words to describe this position. In either case his language is precise: the "ineffable and invisible power" is that power which according to other sources is invoked during the ritual, a power that is closely associated with the Name, and which, after the model of Jesus at the Jordan, comes down upon the initiation candidate to redeem him from the cosmos.[79]

It has already been noted that the physicality of ritual is conceived as a problematic issue in some texts. In *Exc.* 81–82 it is argued that the sensible substances used in ritual are rendered intelligible and spiritually efficient by the power of the Name by which they are consecrated.[80] *Gos. Phil.* is concerned to stress that redemption must necessarily take place through an "image" of the real thing, because the world cannot support anything else (67:9–18). These texts are concerned about the relationship between symbolism and physical reality in ritual, and are asking how physical and empirical acts that enact a symbolism, which is by nature immaterial, may nevertheless effect in reality what they symbolise. In commenting on the ambi-

---

[78] See especially chapter 20, with regard to Epiph. *Pan.* XXXI 5–6.
[79] See the comments on (4) A.1.c. above.
[80] See above, chapter 16.

guity of the discussion of this issue above (chapter 16), it was observed that only by invoking (literally as well as figuratively), an external agent operating in the ritual—namely, the "power"—could this equation be solved. An effect, however, of introducing an additional factor into the ritual in this way (a *deus ex machina* as it were), is that both the ritual acts themselves and the historical events that serve as their prefiguring types—that is, the historical birth, baptism and death/resurrection of the Saviour—risk being perceived as ultimately redundant or irrelevant. This is what seems to have happened in the case of the group described here, which claimed that the reception of knowledge in itself effects the redemption. This claim renders superfluous not only the performance of ritual acts but also the idea of a Saviour as a historical figure performing a work of redemption as a salvation-historical event and as a type of redemption in ritual.

We are not told, however, precisely how the acquisition of knowledge was thought to be achieved by this group. It may be that it took place simply by instruction, and that knowledge was considered to have been attained once the origin of ignorance had been explained to the candidates by means of a version of the Valentinian system. But, as the reference to the "power" suggests, it is more probable that some kind of ritualised reception of the power was in fact staged by this group—a ritual not involving water or ointment, nor sacramental food, but still containing verbal elements such as prayers and hymns. Whether any ceremony of individual initiation was performed by this group, in addition to what took place in ordinary communal gatherings, cannot be inferred.

Concluding remarks

As a conclusion, a new look may be taken at Irenaeus' presentation of the six variants. The structure of his argument is as follows:

- Some perform a "bridal chamber" (1).
- Others perform baptism in water:
  - Some of these use a specific Greek invocation (2).
  - Others use a "Hebrew" invocation (3).
  - Others use different formulae, Greek and "Hebrew," with a dialogue, communal greeting, and then anointing with balsam (4).
- Others pour a mixture of water and oil over the head instead of baptism, and then anoint with balsam (5).
- Others reject ritual involving material substances altogether (6).

It has been argued above that the "bridal chamber" is an idea that is inherent in Valentinian initiation generally, and that Irenaeus' notion of a bridal chamber rite, which he portrays not only as a separate rite, but also as one carried out instead of baptismal initiation, most probably is a product of his own imagination. Leaving aside the anti-ritualistic position of (6), what is offered by Irenaeus' report is a certain number of baptismal programmes. We have,

(a) water baptism (2 and 3);
(b) water baptism + a communal greeting (with kiss?) + anointing with *myron* (4);
(c) water baptism + anointing with oil (or *vice versa*) (the precursor of (5));
(d) affusion with oil-and-water + anointing with *myron* (5).

Irenaeus' presentation is selective, however, and his information undoubtedly incomplete for each of these programmes. Thus it is not possible to deny with assurance the presence of anointing in any of them, or the use of a communal greeting and the kiss of peace.

Special questions are raised by the various reports about anointings with *myron*. In (4) such an anointing is situated after the communal greeting, and, perhaps, after the declaration by the initiate that he has been anointed (though, as we saw, the position and origin of this Aramaic formula is highly problematic). In (5) it comes after the affusion with oil-and-water, which clearly is a condensation of an older water baptism *cum* anointing rite. These are indications that a practice of two anointings may have existed: one with oil, either immediately before, or—which is more likely, since that is the most clearly attested Valentinian practice—immediately after the baptismal bath; and the other, with *myron*, in connection with the communal greeting and acceptance into the community, and before proceeding to the eucharistic meal. A practice of two post-baptismal anointings would not be without parallel, as is shown by the *Apostolic Tradition* (though nothing suggests that the second anointing described there was made with *myron*),[81] and later Roman practice. Anointings

---

[81] *Apost. Trad.* 21:19.22. There is no indication that the composition of the ἔλαιον εὐχαριστίας used for both of the two post-baptismal anointings was different from that of the ἔλαιον ἐξορκισμοῦ used in the pre-baptismal one (21:7–8). Whether the description of two post-baptismal anointings in *Apost. Trad.* actually reflects liturgical practice in early third-century Rome, or, rather, is the result of a conflation of different textual sources, is still a matter for debate; cf. Bradshaw, Johnson, and

with *myron* are not conclusively documented for any other forms of Christianity at this early date. It is well attested for orthodox liturgies only in the latter half of the fourth century, after which time the post-baptismal anointing with *myron* became a fixed and essential component in the practice of the eastern churches.[82] Indications do exist, however, that *myron* may have been in use by non-gnostic Christians in some regions at a rather earlier date, though the evidence is not unambiguous.[83] In that case, the use of *myron* by these Valentinian communities, as well as by the group represented by *Gos. Phil.* (see above), would reflect a more widespread ritual practice among Christians. In fact, this is intrinsically more plausible than the assumption that the ritual use of *myron* should have been invented by the Valentinians and was subsequently copied, or accidentally reinvented, by "orthodox" Christians.

Exc. 21–22 and 35–36: The Union with Angels

The main interest of these passages of *Exc.* for our purposes is that they provide a mythological framework for baptismal initiation, and in particular an explanation of the theory of angels associated with it. The texts are difficult and need to be studied in some detail.

τῷ ῾κατ᾿ εἰκόνα θεοῦ ἐποίησεν αὐτούς, ἄρσεν καὶ θῆλυ ἐποίησεν αὐτούς᾿ τὴν προβολὴν τὴν ἀρίστην φασὶν οἱ Οὐαλεντινιανοὶ τῆς Σοφίας λέγεσθαι, ἀφ᾿ ἧς τὰ μὲν ἀρρενικὰ ἡ ἐκλογή, τὰ δὲ θηλυκὰ ἡ κλῆσις. καὶ τὰ μὲν ἀρρενικὰ ἀγγελικὰ καλοῦσι, τὰ θηλυκὰ δὲ ἑαυτούς, τὸ διαφέρον σπέρμα.

(21:1) The words "after the image of God he made them, male and female he made them" [Gen 1:27] the Valentinians say refer to the noblest emission of Sophia. The male parts of that emission are the elect, and the female the called. Moreover, the males are the angelic parts, while the females are themselves, the distinct seed.

Phillips, *Apostolic Tradition*, 132–33. Regarding *Apost. Trad.* 21:22 they write: "A second postbaptismal anointing such as this within liturgical texts of Christian initiation rites has no parallel prior to the eighth-century *Sacramentarium Gelasianum*" (133).

[82] Cf. Kretschmar, *Geschichte*, 192–98; Varghese, *Onctions baptismales*, 129–33. In the west, Ambrose (*Sacr.* 3:18) also attests the use of *myrum* at this date.

[83] Varghese, *Onctions baptismales*, 132, refers to Ign. *Eph.* 17:1, and Clem. Alex. *Paed.* II 65:2–3. There is also the question of the ointment prayer in *Did.*, whose authenticity is still being defended by some scholars. See Logan, "Post-baptismal chrismation," who presents an interesting argument for early use of post-baptismal *myron* in some areas of Syria, though some of his premises are debatable. (The early date of the letters of Ignatius has once more become doubtful after the work of Hübner, "Thesen," and Lechner, *Ignatius*.)

οὕτως καὶ ἐπὶ τοῦ Ἀδὰμ τὸ μὲν ἀρρενικὸν ἔμεινεν αὐτῷ, πᾶν δὲ τὸ θηλυκὸν σπέρμα ἀρθὲν ἀπ᾽ αὐτοῦ Εὕα γέγονεν, ἀφ᾽ ἧς αἱ θήλειαι, ὡς ἀπ᾽ ἐκείνου οἱ ἄρρενες.

τὰ οὖν ἀρρενικὰ μετὰ τοῦ λόγου συνεστάλη· τὰ θηλυκὰ δὲ ἀπανδρωθέντα ἑνοῦται τοῖς ἀγγέλοις καὶ εἰς πλήρωμα χωρεῖ. διὰ τοῦτο ἡ γυνὴ εἰς ἄνδρα μετατίθεσθαι λέγεται καὶ ἡ ἐνταῦθα ἐκκλησία εἰς ἀγγέλους.

(2) This is also how it was with Adam: The male part stayed with him, while all the female seed was taken from him and became Eve, from whom come all women just as the men come from him.

(3) Thus, the male parts were assumed together into the Logos. The female parts, on the other hand, will be turned into males, be united with the angels, and enter the Pleroma. For this reason it is said that the woman will be transformed into man, and the church here below into angels.

The mythological reference here is to Sophia's production of the spiritual seed in response to her vision of the Saviour: being a manifestation of the entire Pleroma of the Father, the Saviour presents the model after which Sophia conceives and emits her offspring. This emission is here described as the "noblest" because it is superior to the material and psychic substances that Sophia had produced previously. The statement that the spiritual seed emitted by Sophia consisted of two parts, the males/the angels/the elect on the one hand, and the females/the distinct seed/the called on the other, disagrees with what we read in Iren. *Haer.* I 2:6, 4:5, 5:6, 7:1; *Exc.* 44:1–2, where the angels are said to be produced by the Pleroma simultaneously with the Saviour to serve as his entourage. In those texts, they form, as the multiple aspects of the Saviour, the model of the seed, and not the seed itself. The present text, on the other hand, finds a parallel in *Tri. Trac.*, where the spiritual seed is divided into (at least) two groups: some of the seed remains in the hypercosmic region, later to accompany the Saviour in his cosmic descent (95:31–38), some isapparently sown into the first human (105:10–35). A similar idea seems to operate in *Exc.* 21: the angelic and elect "males" have remained in the region of Sophia, where they are assimilated into the body of the Logos-Saviour, whereas "we" are the female and human portions of the seed who have been placed on earth and who need to be "called" and reunited with our angelic counterparts.

The reference to the story of the creation of Eve in 21:2 is to be understood as a typological illustration: the extraction of Eve from Adam is symbolically homologous to the division of the spiritual seed that took place at the hypercosmic level and at the protological stage. The story is thus not to be interpreted here in its narrative mean-

ing, as a phase in the sequence of salvation history, since, as we have seen, all earth-born humans, whether males or females, belong to the female part of the seed.[84]

καὶ ὅταν εἴπῃ ὁ ἀπόστολος ᾽ἐπεὶ τί ποιήσουσιν οἱ βαπτιζόμενοι ὑπὲρ τῶν νεκρῶν;᾽ ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν γάρ, φησίν, οἱ ἀγγέλοι ἐβαπτίσαντο, ὧν ἐσμεν μέρη. νεκροὶ δὲ ἡμεῖς οἱ νεκρωθέντες τῇ συστάσει ταύτῃ· ζῶντες δὲ οἱ ἄρρενες οἱ μὴ μεταλαβόντες τῆς συστάσεως ταύτης.

᾽εἰ νεκροὶ οὐκ ἐγείρονται, τί καὶ βαπτιζόμεθα;᾽ ἐγειρόμεθα οὖν ἡμεῖς, ἰσάγγελοι τοῖς ἄρρεσιν ἀποκατασταθέντες, τοῖς μέλεσι τὰ μέλη, εἰς ἕνωσιν.

οἱ βαπτιζόμενοι δέ, φασίν, ὑπὲρ [ἡμῶν] τῶν νεκρῶν, οἱ ἄγγελοί εἰσιν οἱ ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν βαπτιζόμενοι, ἵνα ἔχοντες καὶ ἡμεῖς τὸ ὄνομα μὴ ἐπισχεθῶμεν κωλυθέντες εἰς τὸ πλήρωμα παρελθεῖν τῷ ὅρῳ καὶ τῷ σταυρῷ.

διὸ καὶ ἐν τῇ χειροθεσίᾳ λέγουσιν ἐπὶ τέλους ᾽εἰς λύτρωσιν ἀγγελικήν,᾽ τουτέστιν ἣν καὶ ἄγγελοι ἔχουσιν, ἵν᾽ ᾖ βεβαπτισμένος ὁ τὴν λύτρωσιν κομισάμενος τῷ αὐτῷ ὀνόματι ᾧ καὶ ὁ ἄγγελος αὐτοῦ προβεβάπτισθαι.

ἐβαπτίσαντο δὲ ἐν ἀρχῇ οἱ ἄγγελοι ἐν λυτρώσει τοῦ ὀνόματος τοῦ ἐπὶ τὸν Ἰησοῦν ἐν τῇ περιστερᾷ κατελθόντος καὶ λυτρωσαμένου αὐτόν. ἐδέησεν δὲ λυτρώσεως καὶ τῷ Ἰησοῦ, ἵνα μὴ κατασχεθῇ τῇ ἐννοίᾳ ᾗ ἐνετέθη τοῦ ὑστερήματος, προ{σ}ερχόμενος διὰ τῆς Σοφίας, ὥς φησιν ὁ Θεόδοτος.

(22:1) And when the apostle says, "Why do some people let themselves be baptised for the dead?" [1 Cor 15:29]—for us, in fact, were the angels baptised, we who are parts of themselves. (2) We are dead, having been put to death by the order down here; the males, however, are alive, since they have not partaken of the order here.

(3) "If the dead do not rise, why are we baptised?" [1 Cor 15:29] We rise, then, and becoming like angels are restored to the males, members to members, into unity.

(4) The ones who are baptised, then, they say, for the dead, are the angels. They are baptised for us that we too may possess the Name and not be held back and hindered from entering into the Pleroma by the Limit and the Cross.

(5) That is also why in the laying on of hands they say at the end, ". . . for the redemption of angels," that is the one that the angels possess as well, so that he who has received the redemption may have been baptised in the same Name as that in which his angel was baptised before him.

(6) For the angels were baptised in the beginning, in the redemption of the Name that descended upon Jesus in the dove and redeemed him. (7) Now, Jesus as well needed redemption, so that he would not be held back by the thought of deficiency in which he was placed as he came forth through Sophia, as Theodotus says.

---

[84] This interpretation of the passage as a typology should take care of the question asked by Sagnard, *Extraits*, 99n5.

The crucial piece of information here is given in 22:6, which explains that the angels were baptised together with Jesus in the Jordan. The underlying story is not told in full, but the missing elements can be supplied. In 21:3 we heard that the angels had been assumed into (συνεστάλη) the Logos. The Logos is, of course, the Saviour, Jesus, and the angels are here clearly represented as his body, with which he descends into the world. That is also how they come to be baptised together with Jesus, and receive the Name in the dove. From a more analytical point of view, it may be observed that the core of the whole conception apparently lies in the paradigmatic function of the Jordan event for the baptismal redemptive ritual. As has been repeatedly observed above, baptism is not only a symbolic re-enactment of the baptism of Jesus; it is an effective sharing in, and identification with, that event. The angels who are baptised together with Jesus represent the participation of each individual baptizand in the baptism of Jesus. Thus the notion of a re-enactment of, and identification with, the Saviour's baptism is translated into a re-enactment of, and identification with, the baptism of the baptizand's individual angel. Moreover, this relationship of baptizand and angel, based on ritual re-enactment, is transposed into a personal relationship of two partners, so that the identification enacted through the ritual comes to be conceived as the unification of the baptizand and the angels themselves. Thus it is possible to see the mythology of the generation of the seed and of its salvation unfolded in these paragraphs as having been created backward from the notions of ritual re-enactment and identification: the ideas of the split of the seed into male angels and female humans, and of the co-incarnation and co-baptism of the former with the Saviour, were motivated in the first place by the desire to conceptualise the real identification, and the attainment of a different and higher form of being, thought to take place in baptism.

The final sentence, which unlike the rest of these excerpts is explicitly attributed to Theodotus, reads like an afterthought. It also introduces some vocabulary and notions not used in the preceding text. The likelihood is, therefore, that it was added here by Clement from a source different from the preceding text.

An interesting detail is the mention of a χειροθεσία in 22:5. This ritual act is not mentioned in other Valentinian sources.[85] Hippolytus,

---

[85] Cf. above, 338n11.

however, speaks about a laying on of hands performed in connection with Valentinian invocations.[86] The present text, moreover, refers to the act as if it were a well-known practice. The imposition of hands on the candidate after the immersion was a widespread feature of Christian baptism, attested, it seems, already in the Book of Acts.[87] The words quoted are also encountered in Iren. *Haer.* 21:3, towards the end of formula (4) A.1.a. above. The present context makes it probable that the formula here alluded to included an invocation of the Name and thus was similar to, if not identical with, the one in Irenaeus.

The theory contained in these excerpts reappears in *Exc.* 35 and 36:

ὁ Ἰησοῦς, τὸ φῶς ἡμῶν, ὡς λέγει ὁ ἀπόστολος, ἑαυτὸν κενώσας—τουτέστιν ἐκτὸς τοῦ ὅρου γενόμενος, κατὰ Θεόδοτος—ἐπεὶ ἄγγελος ἦν τοῦ πληρώματος τοὺς ἀγγέλους τοῦ διαφέροντος σπέρματος συνεξήγασεν ἑαυτῷ. καὶ αὐτὸς μὲν τὴν λύτρωσιν, ὡς ἀπὸ πληρώματος προελθών, εἶχεν· τοὺς δὲ ἀγγέλους εἰς διόρθωσιν τοῦ σπέρματος ἤγαγεν. ὡς γὰρ ὑπὲρ μέρους δέονται καὶ παρακαλοῦσι, καὶ δι᾽ ἡμᾶς κατεχόμενοι, σπεύδοντες εἰσελθεῖν, ἄφεσιν ἡμῖν αἰτοῦνται, ἵνα συνεισέλθωμεν αὐτοῖς· σχεδὸν γὰρ ἡμῶν χρείαν ἔχοντες, ἵνα εἰσέλθωσιν, ἐπεὶ ἄνευ ἡμῶν οὐκ ἐπιτρέπεται αὐτοῖς—διὰ τοῦτο γὰρ οὐδὲ ἡ μήτηρ συνελήλυθεν ἄνευ ἡμῶν, φασίν—εἰκότως ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν δέονται.

(35:1) Jesus, our light, as the apostle says, "emptied himself" [Phil 2:7]—that is, he went outside of the Limit, according to Theodotus—and, being an angel from the Pleroma, brought together with him the angels of the distinct seed. (2) As for himself, he possessed the redemption, since he came forth from the Ple-roma; the angels, however, he brought in order to set right the seed. (3) For they pray and plead as for parts of themselves, and, being held back because of us while eager to enter [*sc.* the Pleroma], they ask forgiveness for us, that we may enter together with them. (4) For it is almost as if they need us in order to enter, since without us this is not allowed them—for that reason the Mother too has not entered without us, they say—thus they pray for us with good cause.

Going down into the world, Jesus first emptied himself of the fullness of aeons with which he had been invested when he was produced by the Pleroma; then he assumed the angels of the seed instead. The angels came down and were baptised together with him, but were not instantly redeemed through their baptism.

---

[86] λέγουσι γοῦν τι φωνῇ ἀρρήτῳ, ἐπιτιθέντες χεῖρα τῷ τὴν ἀπολύτρωσιν λαβόντι, Hipp. *Haer.* VI 41:4.

[87] Cf. Acts 19:6, 9:17, 8:18; Tert. *Bapt.* 8:1, *Res.* 8:3; Hipp. *Apost. Trad.* 21:21.

The statement that Jesus already possessed the redemption by virtue of his origin stands in contrast to 22:7, where it is asserted that Jesus himself needed redemption. This discrepancy confirms that the latter statement is an addition made by Clement from his Theodotus-source, which must be different from the main source used in *Exc.* 21–22 and 35–36. (We note that Clement has interjected another quotation from Theodotus in 35:1.)

The angels are thus considered either still to be present in the world, or to dwell in the hypercosmic, but sub-pleromatic, realm of Sophia. Exactly how the presence of the angels was envisaged we are not told. It is clear that the baptismal ritual was not considered in itself sufficient to effect the union with the angel; apparently baptism only prefigures and makes possible a union which will only be ultimately realised eschatologically—at the death of the individual, or at the end of the world. In any case baptism seems to have brought about a personal and intimate relationship between the individual initiate and his or her angel, a relationship where the angel acts as a helper and a paraclete for the individual vis-à-vis the Pleroma—a moral support in this world, no doubt, but above all a reliable companion on the journey to the beyond.

ἐν ἑνότητι μέντοι γε προεβλήθησαν οἱ ἄγγελοι ἡμῶν, φασίν, εἷς ὄντες, ὡς ἀπὸ ἑνὸς προελθόντες. ἐπεὶ δὲ ἡμεις ἦμεν οἱ μεμερισμένοι, διὰ τοῦτο ἐβαπτίσατο ὁ Ἰησοῦς, τὸ ἀμέριστον μερισθῆναι, μέχρις ἡμᾶς ἑνώσῃ αὐτοῖς εἰς τὸ πλήρωμα, ἵνα ἡμεῖς οἱ πολλοί ἓν γενόμενοι πάντες τῷ ἑνὶ τῷ δι᾽ ἡμᾶς μερισθέντι ἀνακραθῶμεν.

(36:1) It is, however, in unity that our angels were emitted, for they are one, having come forth from one single. (2) Since we, however, were divided, Jesus was baptised, so as to divide the undivided, until he unites us with them in the Pleroma, so that we who are many may become one and all be merged again with him who for our sake was divided.

This dialectic of the one and the many describes the logic of baptismal identification, that is, how the "many" who are baptised in the rituals performed repeatedly in the church can all be symbolically identified with the one Saviour who was baptised during a single event in the Jordan. The reciprocity of this relationship is expressed by the notion that the Saviour "divided himself" by *his* baptism, in order that the "many" who make up the spiritual seed may be united with him through theirs. This way of expressing ritual identification is correlated with the notions of incarnation and redemption: the division suffered by the Saviour at his baptism is the same as he

underwent by entering the cosmos and assuming flesh. Conversely, the unification of the baptizands with their baptismal paradigm that is enacted in the ritual represents their liberation from the fragmentation of bodily existence and prefigures their return to the unity of the realm beyond. It becomes clear, again, that the idea of angels is basically a way of conceptualising this relationship of reciprocity: the angels represent the mediating term between the singleness of the Saviour and the multiplicity of the spirituals who will be saved; they are the Saviour himself in his multiplicity and the spirituals themselves in their envisioned unity. In this double capacity, the position of the angels is notoriously ambiguous; they act as saviours, but, at the same time, themselves need to be saved. The conceptual device of the angels gives expression to the dialectic of unity and multiplicity in the logic of redemption, but it does not resolve it, any more than the angels themselves can fulfil their roles as saviours without the assistance of a higher and more powerful salvific agent. Ultimately therefore, the real saviour is the one Saviour, and unity with him is what is sought through baptism, beyond the unification with the angel that represents his personalised representation.

The Gospel of Truth

In *Gos. Truth* an explicit reference to anointing occurs in the following passage:

> That is why one spoke among them about "Christ," in order that those who were disturbed might return (ϣⲓⲛⲉ ⲛ̄ⲥⲉϫⲓ ⲛ̄ⲛⲟⲩⲥⲧⲟ), and that he might anoint them with the ointment (ⲛ̄ϥⲧⲁϩⲥⲟⲩ ⲙ̄ⲡⲓⲧⲱϩⲥ̄). (36:13–17)

As has been noted by several scholars,[88] this text makes a wordplay on Χριστός and χρίειν, χρίσμα. Another wordplay follows immediately afterwards:

> The ointment is the mercy of the Father, who will have mercy on them. (36:17–19)

---

[88] Segelberg, "Evangelium Veritatis," esp. 12–13; Jansen, "Spuren"; Ménard, *L'Évangile de Vérité*, 170.

Here, the play is on the words ἔλαιον and ἔλεος.[89] The play prob-
ably continues in the next sentence as well:

> But those whom he has anointed are the ones who have become per-
> fect. (36:19–20)

The phrase "the ones who have become perfect" (ⲛⲉⲉⲓ ⲛ̄ⲧⲁϩ̇ϫⲱⲕ
ⲁⲃⲁⲗ) seems here to be a translation of οἱ τετελεσμένοι—that is, the
ones who have been initiated. In the following, these persons are
portrayed as "jars" that are sealed (ⲧⲃ̄ⲃⲉ 36:31) with an ointment
once they have been filled (36:21–34).

These passages suggest the existence of an anointing rite associated
with the ideas of "returning," "making perfect," and "sealing." There
is no indication that the rite was preceded by an immersion in water;
Gos. Truth is silent on the subject of water baptism. The overwhelming
evidence given by other Valentinian sources, on the other hand,
opens for the assumption that *Gos. Truth*, more likely than not, pre-
supposes the sequence water baptism-anointing. The culminating
point of the initiation, however, appears to be the anointing, just as
in *Gos. Phil.* and some of the other sources, and this is also where
the "sealing" is located, in contrast to *Exc.,* which associates the seal
with the descent into the water.

In chapter 17 above, it was demonstrated how the notion of the
"Name" plays a very important role in *Gos. Truth*. The name is what
one receives when one is (re-)born; it also represents the true iden-
tity of the one who receives it, and his true being. However, this
personal name received by those who are saved is also the one Name
of the Father. This notion of the names/Name clearly cannot be
fully understood without attention to the role that the reception of
the Name plays in the initiation ritual. In the ritual, the initiand
receives the Name that has already been given to the Saviour, by
assimilating his own baptism to that received by the Saviour in the
Jordan. Thus, what is received is the Father's Name. The fact that
the reception of the Father's Name is also represented as the reception
of one's own personal name may be understood by comparing this
idea with the other central concept in Valentinian initiation, that of
a unification with one's angel. Just as the union with one's personal
angel is at the same time a unification with the one Saviour him-

---

[89] Segelberg, "Evangelium Veritatis," 13.

self, so the reception of one's own name in *Gos. Truth* is equivalent
to the reception of the one Name that was granted to the Saviour
when he was installed as the Father's Son.

At some point or other, the ritual alluded to in *Gos. Truth* must
have featured the reception of the Name. The most likely location
for this event is the anointing, which, as we saw above, is associated
with the "sealing." 38:28–30 speaks about "the sons of the Name in
whom rested the Name of the Father," and 38:36–38 says that the
aeons had been brought forth "in order that the Name of the Father
should be over their heads as Lord." It seems reasonable to assume
that these passages allude to the reception of the Name as a "seal-
ing," performed by anointing the head (at least) of the candidate.[90]

With regard to the composition of the ointment, which, as we
saw, is called both χρίσμα and ἔλαιον, it is interesting to note that
Gos. Truth devotes a paragraph to the "fragrance" as a symbol of
the Father's children (33:39–34:34). The fragrance was hidden, the
text says, because it was joined with matter, like frozen water that
has merged with earth. But when the Father's fragrance and hot
breath (obviously: the spirit) comes, the fragrance that constitutes his
children is released: it is "manifested" and "given to the light." It is
quite likely that this imagery alludes to anointing, performed with
perfumed oil,[91] and we may consequently conclude that the chrism
was a *myron*.

---

[90] Cf. above, 347.
[91] The suggestion was made already by Segelberg, "Evangelium Veritatis," 10.

INITIATION: A SYNOPSIS OF THE ACTS

In this chapter, the evidence surveyed in chapter 25 is organised and discussed with the help of a standard model of the early Christian initiation rites. The model contains the following elements: catechesis, preparatory discipline, pre-immersion acts, consecration of the elements used, immersion, post-immersion acts, baptismal eucharist. All our evidence suggests that Valentinian initiation practice conformed in its basic programme to this common Christian pattern, though the Valentinian interpretation of the ritual acts differed in certain respects from the proto-orthodox understanding of them. Within this pattern, however, considerable variation is not only possible, but, as we have seen, attested. The Valentinian version of the Christian initiation ritual was evidently not uniform. Different practices existed, for example, with regard to the use of anointing, or the words spoken during the ceremonies. On the other hand, the sources are not sufficiently detailed to admit a full reconstruction of each variant of the ritual; thus, the failure of a given text to mention a particular ritual act does not necessarily mean that that act was absent from the programme of initiation practiced by the group represented by that particular text. The following synopsis, therefore, provides a repertoire of the acts documented in the various sources; while based on the assumption that the general direction of the ritual (its syntactic rules) was shared among Valentinians, and between Valentinianism and proto-catholic Christianity, it also leaves room for as much variation as conformity in the local performance of the ritual.

Catechesis

Exc. 78:2 presupposes that the candidate has acquired a certain type of knowledge—"who we were, what we have become; where we were, where have been placed, where we are going; from what we are redeemed, what birth is, and what rebirth." This knowledge must have been imparted in pre-baptismal instruction. That the Valentinian *system* had its *Sitz im Leben* in this context is a likely assumption.

A programme of instruction involving knowledge about a system is suggested by Ptolemy's *Letter to Flora*. In that text, Ptolemy not only expounds the Valentinian view of the Jewish scriptures, but towards the end also briefly outlines the difference between the Father, the Demiurge, and the Adversary.[1] In his conclusion, Ptolemy promises Flora that she will learn about the nature and origins of the two inferior powers later, once she has become "worthy":

> For the present do not be troubled by your desire to learn how from *one* beginning of all things . . . these natures as well came into being. . . . If God permits, you will learn in the future about their origin and coming into being as well, when you have been deemed worthy of the apostolic tradition that we too have received by transmission, and as everything that will be taught is certified as well by the teaching of our Saviour (μαθήσῃ γάρ, θεοῦ διδόντες, ἑξῆς καὶ τὴν τούτων ἀρχήν τε καὶ γέννησιν, ἀξιουμένη τῆς ἀποστολικῆς παραδόσεως, ἣν ἐκ διαδοχῆς καὶ ἡμεῖς παρειλήφαμεν μετὰ καὶ τοῦ κανονίσαι πάντας τοὺς λόγους τῇ τοῦ σωτῆρος ἡμῶν διδασκαλίᾳ). (Epiph. *Pan.* XXXIII 7:8–9)

The text suggests (ἀξιουμένη) that a scrutiny of the candidates took place, and that those deemed worthy received instruction about the origins of soul and matter from the single spiritual first cause. Instruction on such topics can hardly have been given other than in the form of an exposition of a version of the Valentinian system. It may further be noted that the teaching professed to derive directly from the Saviour through the apostles, and was supported by an exegesis of the words of the Lord. In fact, the system of Irenaeus comes with an extensive collection of proof-texts, most of which are taken from the gospels (*Haer.* I 8:2–5).

Tri. Trac. 127:25–128:5 suggests instruction relating to the "names" of the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit; faith in these names is later to be professed during baptism.[2] This more catholic sounding phraseology, which seems to imply a catechesis based on or informed by some kind of trinitarian formula, certainly does not exclude the possibility that the substance of the instruction was actually the type of systematic teaching contained in *Tri. Trac.* itself.

The length and the secret nature of the instruction is highlighted by such writers as Tertullian (*Val.* 1) and Hippolytus (*Haer.* VI 41:4). Tertullian compares Valentinian initiation with that of the Eleusinian

---

[1] See above, 119–20.
[2] See above, 353.

mysteries, lasting for as long as five years.[3] Whether the number five years is meant by Tertullian to be accurate in the case of Valentinian initiation, or only to apply to the Eleusinian mysteries with which he compares it, is an open question; in any case, he describes the length of the catechumenate as being excessive compared to what for him is normal Christian practice. It may be recalled that for early third century Rome, the *Apostolic Tradition* (17) prescribes three years for the catechumenate, which is also probably considerably longer than what was usual in the first centuries.[4]

Preparatory Discipline

Exc. 84 mentions "fasts, supplications, prayers, <impositions> of the hands, genuflexions" (νηστεῖαι, δεήσεις, εὐχαί, <θέσεις> χειρῶν, γονυκ-λισίαι) as acts that must be performed in order to purify the candidate before baptism. Our other sources are silent about preparatory discipline, but that should not lead us to conclude that it was not a regular part of Valentinian initiation. Such discipline was, of course, normal Christian practice,[5] and also featured widely in other rites of initiation in antiquity. The fact that it is not usually mentioned, however, may reflect a lack of emphasis on physical discipline generally in Valentinianism. In this context it is interesting to see what Ptolemy has to say on the subject of fasting:

> As for fasting, [the Saviour] wants us to practise not bodily, but spiritual fasting, which is the abstinence from all that is evil. Fasting with regard to external things (ἡ κατὰ τὸ φαινόμενον νηστεία) is observed among us as well, for it can be of some profit to the soul if it is engaged in reasonably—whenever it is done neither for the sake of

---

[3] "Now, in the case of those Eleusinian mysteries, which are the very heresy of Athenian superstition, it is their secrecy that is their disgrace. Accordingly, they previously beset all access to their body with tormenting conditions; and they require a long initiation before they enrol (their members), even instruction during five years for their perfect disciples, in order that they may mould their opinions by this suspension of full knowledge, and apparently raise the dignity of their mysteries in proportion to the craving for them which they have previously created" (*Nam et illa Eleusinia (haeresis et ipsa Atticae superstitionis) quod tacent, pudor est. Idcirco et aditum prius cruciant. Diutius initiant, quam consignant, cum epoptas ante quinquennium instituunt; ut opinionem suspendio cognitionis aedificent: atque ita tantam majestatem exhibere videantur, quantam praestruxerunt cupiditatem*), *Val.* 1:1–2.

[4] Cf. Bradshaw, Johnson, and Phillips, *Apostolic Tradition*, 96–98.

[5] Cf. in perticular Tert. *Bapt.* 20:1: *ingressuros baptismum orationis crebris, ieiuniis et geniculationibus et peruigiliis orare oportet.*

> imitating others, nor out of habit, nor because of the day, in the belief that a certain day has been set off to do this. Moreover, it is done as a way of reminding one of the true fast, in order that those who are still unable to keep that fast may be reminded of it by means of the external fast. (Epiph. *Pan.* XXXIII 5:13–14)

Thus, no intrinsic value is attributed to physical discipline. There is certainly no ascetic "hatred of the body."[6] Rather, fasting involves the danger of distracting from the true values of unworldly spirituality and ethical conduct.

From this it may be inferred that a mild form of physical discipline, aimed at focussing attention on the initiatory process, most probably was the norm among Valentinians. We are not told if there was a period of intensified discipline for the catechumens immediately before their initiation, involving new scrutinies of the candidates, as is the case in the *Apostolic Tradition* (20). Whether the imposition of hands mentioned in *Exc.* 84 was of an exorcistic nature is also difficult to say.[7]

Pre-Immersion Acts

Undressing is explicitly referred to in *Gos. Phil.* 75:23–25, where taking off one's clothes symbolises the liberation from the body. *Tri. Trac.* 128:21 speaks of baptism as a garment, a metaphor which may easily have a basis in acts of undressing and dressing. There is no reason to believe that the usual Christian practice of undressing before the baptismal bath[8] was not adopted by the Valentinians as well, especially in so far as the Valentinians practiced full immersion. The variant reported by Iren. *Haer.* I 21:4 (no. 5), where a mixture of oil and water was poured over the head, however, may not have required the candidate to be naked.

An act of *renunciation* may be alluded to in *Exc.* 77:1;[9] certainly the idea that baptism involves an *apotaxis* of evil spirits is present in that text. Apart from this, the Valentinian sources offer no evidence of renunciation as a separate rite.

---

[6] Cf. Williams, *Rethinking "Gnosticism,"* 116–62, esp. 141.

[7] See above, 338n11.

[8] Whether undressing for baptism implied total nakedness remains debatable; for a recent discussion, see Guy, "'Naked' Baptism."

[9] θάνατος καὶ τέλος λέγεται τοῦ παλαιοῦ βίου τὸ βάπτισμα, ἀποτασσομένων ἡμῶν ταῖς πονηραῖς ἀρχαῖς.

The evidence for *pre-baptismal anointing* is not strong. It consists of the fact that in NHC XI the piece *On Anointing* is placed before the texts related to baptism and eucharist, and that the text speaks about vanquishing evil spirits, which invites an apotactic-apotropaic-kathartic interpretation that fits a pre-baptismal context. As was noted above, however,[10] this interpretation can be questioned.

CONSECRATION OF THE WATER AND THE OIL

Exc. 82:1 says that the water, as well as the bread and the oil, was consecrated by the power of the Name; most probably, this implies an invocation. The consecration is twofold: first the water is exorcised, then it is sanctified.[11] Consecration of the elements used in the ritual does not seem to be mentioned in other sources.

IMMERSION

Going into and emerging from the water is mentioned by *Exc.*,[12] *Gos. Phil.*,[13] and *On Bap. A* (ⲕⲁⲧⲁⲃⲁⲥⲓⲥ). The act is called a "bath" (λουτρόν).[14] Iren. *Haer.* I 21:3 says that "bringing to the water" is the most common way of effecting the "redemption" among the Valentinians. No special requirements are recorded about running water or the use of a font, nor are we told whether submersion, that is, a full plunge, was desirable.

Exc. indicates that the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit was spoken over the candidate in the water. This name is identified with the single Name, which is also called the "seal." The precise baptismal formula is not given. *Gos. Phil.* as well testifies to the use of a "trinitarian" formula. While these texts do not mention any active participation by the candidate in the liturgy, *Tri. Trac.* explicitly mentions a *profession of faith* in the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, whereupon the candidate is baptised in the name of

---

[10] Cf. 356–57.

[11] See above, 336–37.

[12] The initiand "descends" (καταβαίνειν, κατελθεῖν, 83) into water (ὕδωρ, 81:2), and subsequently "ascends" (ἀναβαίνειν, ἀνελθεῖν, 77:2–3) from it.

[13] 64:22–23, 72:30–31, 75:23–24, 77:9–10; cf. 61:12–18: the metaphor of dyeing.

[14] *Exc.* 78:2; Flavia Sophe inscription line 3: λουτροῖς . . . Χ(ριστο)ῦ; *On Bap. B* 42:31 ⲧⲥⲓ]ⲉⲓⲁⲩⲛⲉ.

these three. This may reflect a triple question-and-answer procedure, accompanied by a triple immersion—the same pattern as in proto-catholic Christianity—though this is not explicitly stated.

In general, no direct evidence confirms that Valentinians practised triple immersion. On the other hand, their use of "trinitarian" for-mulae, which appears somewhat awkward in combination with their notion of the single Name received in baptism, may be explained by their continued use of triple immersion. Nor did any heresiologist ever accuse the Valentinians of heresy with regard to the number of immersions.

A tendency toward a devaluation of water baptism is evident in some of the material. Whereas *Exc.*, *Tri. Trac.* and the liturgical frag-ments of NHC XI,*2* regard water baptism as the core of the initi-ation process, *Gos. Phil.* subordinates it in dignity to the anointing that follows (see below). Also the inscription of Flavia Sophe appears to stress anointing at the expense of water baptism. In a different form, this attitude is also represented by ritual no. 5 in Irenaeus, where the baptismal water is simply a component in the mixture poured over the candidate's head, before the anointing with *myron*. Finally, the reports of Irenaeus (*Haer.* I 21:2) and Hippolytus (*Haer.* VI 41:2–3) that (some) Valentinians devalue the "first" (psychic) bap-tism in comparison with a "second" (spiritual) one may reflect instances of the same attitude.[15] The motive underlying this attitude may be, as Irenaeus and Hippolytus imply, a desire to distinguish what is offered by the Valentinian "redemption" from the salvation acquired in the baptism of the catholic church; however, it may also reflect a discomfort with the too material and body-oriented character of immersion in water as a ritual act.

Post-Immersion Acts

Post-immersion *anointing* is attested by *Exc., Gos. Phil., Gos. Truth*, the Flavia Sophe inscription, and by at least two of the initiation rituals reported by Irenaeus. With regard to the type of ointment used, *Exc.* refers to oil, whereas the two rituals in Irenaeus involve *myron*, made with balsam. *Gos. Phil.* speaks variously of chrism, *myron* (probably),

---

[15] The notions of two baptisms does not necessarily imply a depreciation of ordi-nary water baptism, as is shown by the liturgical fragments of NHC XI,*2*. Cf. above, 358–59.

and oil, whereas the inscription describes Sophe as having been "chrismated" with *myron*. It would seem that, in the case of *Gos. Phil.*, "oil" is used as a synonym for *myron*. (*Myron* is of course simply scented olive oil.) Whether the oil mentioned in *Exc.* was scented or not is a different question. In *Exc.*, water baptism is the central act of the initiation, whereas the other texts that mention anointing are characterised by the importance placed on the anointing. The impulse to scent the oil conceivably arose together with the shift in emphasis from the immersion to the anointing that took place in certain Valentinian communities.

A practice involving *two* post-baptismal anointings, the first performed with oil and the second with *myron*, is suggested by Irenaeus' ritual no. 5, and, perhaps, no. 4.[16]

On the other hand, some texts make no explicit allusion at all to anointing: *Tri. Trac.*, "the bridal chamber inscription," and Irenaeus' rituals nos. 2 and 3. These texts cannot, however, be taken as evidence for initiations without anointing. It is quite possible that, in *Tri. Trac.*, "baptism" refers to the initiation ritual as a whole.[17] Similarly, the word λουτρά in the inscription may be intended as a metonym for the bath and the subsequent anointing seen as a single ritual.[18] Irenaeus' reports are obviously incomplete and cannot serve as evidence with regard to this issue.

As was observed already, the liturgical fragments of NHC XI,*2* are alone in suggesting the sequence anointing—baptism—eucharist instead of baptism—anointing—eucharist.

After having been anointed the baptized must have *clothed themselves.* The descriptions of baptism as a new garment (*Gos. Phil.* 57:8.19–22,

---

[16] No. 5—an affusion over the head with a mixture of oil and water, followed by an anointing with *myron*—must have originated by collapsing the acts of water baptism and anointing into one act. The second anointing with *myron* may have existed already at that earlier stage, but may also, of course, have been added by the present group when they undertook to revise the earlier rite. Cf. above, 374.

In no. 4, it is noteworthy that the anointing with balsam takes place after the formula of greeting, "Peace be with all on whom this Name rests." This suggests the possibility that there may have existed a first anointing performed immediately after the immersion. We would then have a practice analogous to the two post-baptismal anointings in the *Apostolic Tradition.*

[17] *Tri. Trac.* 72:5–11 uses the metaphor "fragrance" to describe the operation of the spirit in the Pleroma. This may contain an allusion to anointing (cf. Iren. *Haer.* I 21:3 end), but not necessarily; cf. Thomassen and Painchaud, *Traité tripartite*, 322 *in loc.*

[18] Note the wording in the Flavia Sophe inscription: λουτροῖς χρεισαμένι.

58:15–17, 70:5–9, 75:21–25, 76:27–30; *Tri. Trac.* 128:21) do not necessarily allude, however, to the use of special baptismal robes.

A *laying on of hands* is attested by *Exc.* 22:5, where the act is mentioned incidentally, as if it were a familiar rite, and by Hipp. *Haer.* VI 41:4. Both sources connect the rite with an epiclesis for the reception of *apolytrosis* by the candidate. According to Hippolytus, the handlaying was performed by an *episkopos*, though the value of this piece of information, as well as the significance of the title, are open to question.

The laying on of hands is fundamentally a rite signifying the transmission or mediation of qualities and power, and of inclusion in the group. It clearly was also a major occasion for a speech act performance on the part of the minister. Thus it is likely, as is also suggested by the two sources that explicitly mention the rite, that this was the point for some of the invocations cited by Irenaeus in *Haer.* I 21:3, which were intended to call down the Name upon the candidate in particular.

The rite of laying on hands after the baptismal bath, with an invocation, finds parallels in the proto-Catholic liturgies described by Tertullian,[19] Cyprian,[20] and the *Apostolic Tradition*.[21] To the invocation of the spirit in those liturgies corresponds that of the Name in Valentinianism.

Just as the notions with regard to the precise moment at which the spirit was conferred on the candidate varied in "orthodox" Christianity—whether in the baptismal bath, in the anointing, or in the laying on of hands—so the moment when the Name was invoked over and was given to the candidate seems to have been variously conceived and implemented by Valentinians. Whereas *Exc.* 76–86 associates this event with the baptismal bath—as does ritual no. 2 in Irenaeus—*Gos. Phil.* certainly,[22] and *Gos. Truth* probably,[23] locates

---

[19] *dehinc manus inponitur per benedictionem aduocans et inuitans spiritum sanctum*, *Bapt.* 8:1; *caro manus inpositione adumbratur, ut et anima spiritu inluminetur*, *Res.* 8:3.

[20] *. . . et per nostram orationem ac manus inpositionem spiritum sanctum consequantur*, Cypr. *Ep.* 73:2.

[21] *episcopus uero manu(m) illis inponens inuocet dicens: D(omine) D(eus), qui dignos fecisti eos remissionem mereri peccatorum per lauacrum regenerationis sp(irit)u<s> s(an)c(t)i, inmitte in eos tuam gratiam, ut tibi seruiant secundum uolentatem tuam; quoniam tibi est gloria . . .*, Hipp. *Apost. Trad.* 21:21.

[22] 64:25–27, 74:21–22, where the "bridal chamber" seems to be implicit in the anointing, 77:36–78:1.

[23] Se above, 385.

it in the anointing. A third variant is represented by *Exc.* 22:5, ritual no. 4 in Irenaeus, and Hipp. *Haer.* VI 41:4, all of which seem to relate the reception of the Name to the laying on of hands.

A *communal greeting* ("peace be with all on whom this Name rests") of the initiate is mentioned by Iren. *Haer.* I 21:4, and a *kiss* (though not explicitly in connection with initiation) in *Gos. Phil.* 59:2–6. These acts correspond to the communal prayer for the baptised and the kiss of peace that occur at this point in proto-Catholic baptismal orders.

A *carrying of lamps* or torches by the initiates, symbolising illumination, as they proceed from the place of baptism to the eucharistic feast, is suggested by *Gos. Phil.* 85:32–33, "the bridal chamber inscription," and, perhaps, *Tri. Trac.* 129:3.

Baptismal Eucharist

Normal practice in Christian antiquity was for the initiation to end with the admittance of the initiates for the first time to the eucharistic meal.[24] There is no reason to assume that the Valentinians did otherwise. In fact, the "bridal chamber inscription" offers a glimpse of initiates proceeding, torches in hands, to "banquets," in celebration of "the baths of bridal chambers." Moreover, the eucharist is mentioned after baptism and anointing in *Gos. Phil.* and in the liturgical fragments of NHC XI,*2*; and *Exc.* 82:1 mentions bread in the same context as oil and water.

There is no indication that the baptismal eucharist was celebrated differently from the regular one—for instance with a menu of milk and honey for the neophytes, as in the *Apostolic Tradition* (21:28) and Tertullian (*Cor.* 3:3, *Res.* 8:3). *Gos. Phil.* mentions (only) bread and wine mixed with water (75:1.14–16, 77:3–4); *Exc.* 82:1 makes reference to bread but not to wine—here the menu seems to have consisted of bread and water only.

According to *Exc.* 82:1, the bread was consecrated by "the power of the Name of God"—that is, most probably, by means of an invocation.

---

[24] First attested in Just. *1 Apol.* 61, 65:3.

THE IDEOLOGY OF THE INITIATION RITUAL

Much has already been said above about the ideas associated with the initiation ritual. In this chapter, the main points will be summarised.

Apolytrosis, or *lytrosis*, is a stable designation for the initiation ritual. The name "redemption" connotes both liberation and return. Initiation effects a liberation from the forces that operate in the cosmos, as well as in the human body and soul. These forces are associated with the planetary spheres, from where they rule over birth, life and death; they also created the human body and soul, in which they torment the spirit deposited there by its mother Sophia. The *apolytrosis* taking place in the ritual liberates the spirit by enabling it to conquer those forces. This redemption also implies a return of the spirit to where it came from before it was deposited in the body and soul.

The redemption is effected by the Saviour as well as by the ritual itself. The Saviour is the active agent of redemption, but at the same time also provides the model, *typos*, for it through his own baptism in the Jordan. In this latter capacity, however, he is no longer simply the Redeemer, but also the redeemed *par excellence*, to whom the initiand is assimilated in the ritual. Redemption therefore comes to be envisaged not simply as the initiand's "reception" of the Saviour, but also as a reception of that which he received and which redeemed him at the Jordan event. The primary designation for what it was that redeemed the Redeemer is "the Name," identified with the spirit that came down upon the Saviour in the shape of the dove. In this way, receiving the Name becomes a central object of, and motif in, the ritual of redemption.

The assimilation of the initiand with a redeemed redeemer also generates a split in the identities of the initiands themselves. Just as the Saviour is simultaneously envisioned in the roles of both the agent and the recipient of the redemptive act, so the initiands, once they have been assimilated with the Saviour as the redeemed, may also see themselves as being represented in the Saviour as redeemer. Out of this split come the notions that the Saviour, when he descended into the world to perform his work of redemption, brought with him the angels of the spiritual seed or the spiritual church as his body,

and that what is effected in the ritual of redemption is a unification with one's angel—the idea of the "bridal chamber."

Thus, the fundamental ideas of the Valentinian initiation sacrament are the following: the reception of the Name, in imitation of the Saviour himself, and the unification with one's angel, the higher spiritual part and true identity of the initiand, in the "bridal chamber." On this foundation, the various systems created more complicated ways of envisioning the redemption. The soteriology of *Exc.* 21–22 and 35–36 unfolds a unification process in two stages: Baptism effects the reunification of the two parts of Sophia's spiritual offspring, the "distinct seed" and the angels, but both need to be unified in turn, together, with the Pleroma, which, as manifested by the Saviour, formed the model of their initial coming into being. In this way, the ritual unification with one's angel here below may be thought of as a preliminary union, a prefiguration, or an image, of an eschatological union to be realised beyond this life and world, when the whole seed of Sophia will be united with the Pleroma, just as Sophia herself will then be united with the Saviour. It is quite likely that this was a common way of figuring the bridal chamber and the *apokatastasis* among Valentinians.

On the other hand, such texts as Iren. *Haer.* I 7:2 and *Exc.* 64–65 (also cf. Hipp. *Haer.* VI 34:4) speak of the unification with the angels only as an eschatological event. These angels are the ones that accompanied the Saviour when he was sent forth from the Pleroma to Sophia, and who served as models for the generation of the spirituals. The tendency in these texts, as we saw above, in chapters 7–9, is to deny the birth, the passion, and the redemptive baptism of the Saviour, and thus also the soteriology of mutual participation between the Saviour and the spirituals. The spirituals have been sent into the world in order to be trained, or to help save the psychics, but do not themselves need to be saved from the world. They need only to be integrated with the Pleroma. The ritual practice of the groups behind these texts can hardly therefore have been thought to effect a real redemption. Rather, the emphasis would have been on what awaits the individual spiritual in the beyond. It is not until he arrives there, and has gone past the cosmic archons, that he meets his angel; such a union does not take place in the ritual acts performed here below. It is among such groups that we will find, one may assume, the variant of the *apolytrosis* reported by Iren. *Haer.* I 21:4 (no. 6) that implied the complete elimination of physical ritual, to be replaced

simply by knowledge itself. This was no doubt an extreme position. Pointing in the same direction, however, is a discernible trend towards an eschatological orientation of the ritual. The existence of a specific ritual bearing some kind of relationship with the *apolytrosis*, and preparing the dying for the transcosmic passage (Iren. *Haer.* I 21:5; see below, chapter 29), suggests that at least some groups had a strong preoccupation with individual eschatology. It may also be surmised that the anointing and the invocation of the Name came to be seen by some of these groups more as a preparation of the initiate for the successful post-mortal journey of the spirit into the Pleroma, than as a rite of incorporation into the community of the elect and of transformation into the status of a spiritual person, a status that could be enjoyed already in this life.

THE HISTORICAL POSITION OF VALENTINIAN INITIATION

ELEMENTS AND SEQUENCE

The origins of the Valentinian initiation ritual go back to a period for which there are few other Christian sources that can be drawn upon for comparison. For the second century, the number of sources is basically only three: the *Didache* (ch. 7), Justin Martyr's *First Apology* (ch. 61), and Tertullian (*De baptismo*, and scattered remarks in his other works). The evidence offered by these three is summarised in the adjoining table.

Comparison of this evidence with the Valentinian rites shows a basic similarity of structure. All the elements above (with the exception of consignation, which may be due to an accidental lack of evidence)[1] are found in the Valentinian sources, and as far as can be ascertained, in the same order. The Valentinian rites clearly stand within the same liturgical tradition as those of non-Valentinian Christians. On the basis of this insight, a certain number of observations can be made.

Valentinian texts are the oldest witnesses to the practice of anointing. Both *Exc.* 82:1 and the rituals described in Iren. *Haer.* I 21 are certainly earlier than the evidence of Tertullian. *Gos. Truth*, which because it is mentioned by Irenaeus must have existed in some form before 180, also provides evidence of anointing. *Gos. Phil.* may possibly be added to the list as well, though a date as early as the second century for that text is by no means certain. There is no good reason to assume, however, that the Valentinians invented the practice. It is *a priori* improbable that the introduction of anointing into Christian initiation generally was due to the influence of the Valen-

---

[1] *Gos. Truth* 38:36–38, which speaks about the Name resting on the heads, may be interpreted as alluding to a signing (with oil) of the cross on the forehead.

[2] Implied in *Val.* 1:1–2, where Tertullian criticises the length of the Valentinian catechumenate.

[3] *Bapt.* 20:1.

Didache	Justin	Tertullian
	Pledge to live according to Christian teaching	
Instruction	Instruction	Catechesis[2]
Fasting (one or two days)	Prayer, fasting; asking forgiveness for past sins; communal fasting with the initiand	"frequent prayers, fasts, genuflections, and vigils"; confession of past sins[3]
		Prayer consecrating the water[4]
		Having entered the water the candidate renounces the devil before the bishop[5]
Water baptism (preferably by immersion in running, cold water) "in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit"	Water baptism, described as a λουτρόν, rebirth, and illumination, with invocation of the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit	Triple profession of faith and triple immersion[6]
		Anointing[7]
		Consignation (sign of the cross)[8]
		Laying on of hands, with a prayer summoning the Spirit[9]
	Prayers for the neophyte; mutual kisses	
(Eucharist)	Eucharist[10]	Eucharist[11]

---

[4] *Bapt.* 4:4.

[5] *Cor.* 3:2; *Spect.* 4:1, 24:2.

[6] *Cor.* 3:3, *Prax.* 26:9.

[7] *Bapt.* 7:1, *Res.* 8:3. It is not clear whether this was an anointing of the whole body or of the head only.

[8] Not in *Bapt.* 8, but cf. *Res.* 8:3 and *Praescr.* 40:3.

[9] *Bapt.* 8:1, *Res.* 8:3.

[10] *1 Apol.* 65.

[11] *Cor.* 3:3, *Res.* 8:3.

tinians, or from other "Gnostics." A far more likely assumption is
that the Valentinians were following a practice that was already
spreading among Christians in the latter half of the second century.
Anointing seems in fact to be alluded to by Theophilus of Antioch,
Ad Autol. I 12, around 170–185, though he is evidently more con-
cerned in that passage with anointing as a metaphor than as a prac-
tice.[12] The basic sequence is baptism-anointing-eucharist (*Gos. Phil.*,
Iren. *Haer.* I 21 nos. 4 and 5, *Exc.* 82:1 and the inscription of Flavia
Sophe). Only the liturgical fragments of NHC XI,*2* suggest the order
anointing-baptism-eucharist. In view of the prevalence of the latter
order in Syria in the third century (the *Didascalia apostolorum*, the *Acts
of Thomas*, the *Acts of John*), the question arises as to why *Gos. Phil.*,
which is usually assumed to come from the same region, puts anoint-
ing after baptism. Moreover, it is a chrismation with *myron*, and not
simply with oil, which seems to have been the normal practice in
Syria at the time.[13] There are several possible answers to this ques-
tion: The group behind *Gos. Phil.* may have followed an already
established Valentinian order rather than the practice of non-
Valentinian Christians in Syria. It is also possible, however, that
there existed more diversity of baptismal liturgy in Syria than is evi-
denced by the extant sources.[14] *Gos. Phil.* may also reflect an earlier
Syrian practice than those third century texts that attest the order
anointing-baptism.[15] And finally, it could be that *Gos. Phil.* is not in
fact of Syrian provenance at all.[16] Which of these explanations is
nearest the truth is hardly possible to decide.

---

[12] Cf. Kretschmar, *Geschichte*, 30; Munier, "Initiation chrétienne," 121–22. The
Testament of Levi, 8:4–5 also mentions anointing, in the Syrian order (anointing-bap-
tism), but the provenance and date of this passage, quite possibly a Christian inter-
polation, is an open question (Kretschmar, *Geschichte*, 29n38; Munier, "Initiation
chrétienne," 123–25.
[13] Cf. Winkler, "Original Meaning," 60–64.
[14] Cf. Logan, "Post-baptismal Chrismation."
[15] Tripp, "Sacramental System," 258.
[16] The arguments for a Syrian provenance for *Gos. Phil.* are summarised by Wesley
W. Isenberg: "Because of the interest in the meaning of certain Syriac words
(63,21–23; 56,7–9), its affinities to Eastern sacramental practices and catecheses, and
its ascetic ethics, an origin in Syria is probable" (*NHLE*, 141; see also Isenberg in
Layton, *Nag Hammadi Codex II,2–7*, 134, and his PhD dissertation, "The Coptic
Gospel According to Philip," 347–48). Of these three points, only the first carries
any weight, though discussions of the meaning of Semitic words do not in them-
selves necessarily indicate a Syrian-Palestinian geographical environment; on this
point, see also Turner, *Philip*, 158–66. The second point is wrong as far as the east-
ern sacramental practices are concerned: the distinctive characteristic of Syrian ini-

The presence of Aramaic formulae in some of the liturgies described in Iren. *Haer.* I 21 also suggests predecessors for these liturgies in a Syrian-Palestinian milieu. However, these texts offer no evidence of Syrian pre-baptismal anointing either; the anointing described in Irenaeus' rituals is always post-baptismal.

On the other hand, the pre-baptismal anointing, and the apparent absence of a post-baptismal anointing, in the liturgical fragments of NHC XI,*2*, may reflect conformity with local (non-Valentinian) custom, which would place this liturgy in Syria or Egypt.[17]

Whereas anointing after the baptismal bath seems to have been the rule in Valentinian initiation from an early date, the evidence does not suggest the existence of pre-baptismal exorcistic anointing. Thus, there is no support to be gained here for regarding this feature of the baptismal order, first attested in the *Apostolic Tradition*, as very ancient.[18]

APOLYTROSIS

While the acts performed in the Valentinian initiation ritual, as well as their sequence, do not significantly differ in their basic features from contemporary Christian practice, the terminology and the ideology associated with the ritual show somewhat greater originality. The frequent use of the term λύτρωσις, or ἀπολύτρωσις, in connection with baptismal initiation is an example of this. The word itself has a mainly Biblical background; while not a common word in Greek generally, (ἀπο)λυτρόω and derivatives are often used as a term

---

tiation practice was not the use of a single anointing instead of two, as Isenberg assumed in his dissertation (347), but its pre-immersion location. As Bradshaw, Johnson, and Phillips note (*Apostolic Tradition*, 131), "there is no early Western evidence of a pre-baptismal anointing at all prior to the witness of Ambrose (*De sacr.* 1.5)" (see also n. 17 below). As for the parallels with eastern catecheses it might be remarked that we possess no early western catechetical texts that can be turned to for comparison. The last point about ascetic ethics, based on the themes of virginity and continence in *Gos. Phil.* (Isenberg, diss., 347), is highly debatable.

[17] For the possible practice of pre-baptismal, and no post-baptismal, anointing in the early Egyptian liturgy, see G. Kretschmar, "Beiträge," 43–50; Bradshaw, "Baptismal Practice," 92–98. Cf. also the discussion in B.D. Spinks, "Sarapion of Thmuis," and Johnson, "The Baptismal Rite and Anaphora."

[18] Bradshaw, "Re-dating," sees this element of the *Apost. Trad.* as a later addition: "We have no other evidence for the use of oil for prebaptismal exorcism prior to the middle of the fourth century" (ibid. 12).

of salvation in the LXX, and are frequently found in the writings of the New Testament as well to describe the redemptive work of Christ.[19] The occurrence of the word in the gospels and the Pauline letters is no doubt an important source for the Valentinian usage. As a common and characteristic term in all forms of Valentinianism, it must have been selected at an early stage in the movement's history. Its connotations of "liberation" and "return" must have made it especially suitable for expressing the Valentinian idea of salvation as a restoration of the spirit lost in matter to its original home in the Pleroma.

The semantics and apostolic authority of the term, however, do not explain why the Valentinians came to use it as a name for baptism, or, more specifically, for the redemption that was "received" in baptism, after the model of the spirit that came down upon Jesus at the Jordan. The documents of the New Testament themselves offer no clear association of (ἀπο)λύτρωσις with baptism. On the other hand, the Valentinians are not alone in making this association. Clement of Alexandria once refers casually to baptism as "the seal and the redemption" (μετὰ τὴν σφραγῖδα καὶ τὴν λύτρωσιν, *Quis dives* 39), and later authors as well employ the term in a baptismal context.[20] Clement's expression suggests a relationship with Eph. 1:13–14, 4:30, where the two notions of "sealing" and "redemption" occur together. It is conceivable, though we lack further evidence, that these Pauline texts may have inspired a liturgical interpretation, in which the "sealing" was associated with the invocation of the Name or the spirit over the baptismal candidate, and also with the reception of "redemption." It is clear, at any rate, that the association of baptism with the term (ἀπο)λύτρωσις was not an exclusively Valentinian idea, and also that it was not generally discredited by the Valentinian use of it. This suggests that the idea of baptism as the locus of "redemption" existed outside and before the rise of Valentinianism, and that the Valentinians at this point took up an already existing term and adapted it to their own purposes.

---

[19] Cf. *TWNT* IV 352–59.

[20] Lampe, *Lex.* s.vv. ἀπολύτρωσις and λύτρωσις, 3., quotes occurrences in Athanasius (*Exp. Ps.* 50, proem., and 1), Cyr. Alex. (*In Is.* 5:6), Methodius (*Symp.* 9:3), and in F.C. Conybeare, *Rituale Armenorum* (Oxford 1905), 400. To these may be added Cyr. Jer. *Cat.* 3:7 ὅτι λύτρωσίς ἐστι τὸ βάπτισμα Ἰωάννου.

The Name

The study of the various liturgies above has shown the importance of the "Name," both in the invocations over the candidate and in other contexts. In fact, the Name appears in many cases as the central salvific agent. It is the reception of the Name that transforms the initiand, and the Name is also invoked to consecrate the substances used in the ritual (water, oil, bread). The role played by the "Name" is thus very similar to that of the "Spirit" in most ancient baptismal liturgies.

What is the origin of this idea of the Name, and of its role in the initiation ritual? It is clear that this idea as well is not exclusive to the Valentinians. In the *Shepherd of Hermas* we find the following passage:

πρὶν γάρ, φησί, φορέσαι τὸν ἄνθρωπον τὸ ὄνομα <τοῦ υἱοῦ> τοῦ θεοῦ, νεκρός ἐστιν· ὅταν δὲ λάβῃ τὴν σφραγῖδα, ἀποτίθεται τὴν νέκρωσιν καὶ ἀναλαμβάνει τὴν ζωήν. ἡ σφραγὶς οὖν τὸ ὕδωρ ἐστίν· εἰς τὸ ὕδωρ οὖν καταβαίνουσι νεκροὶ καὶ ἀναβαίνουσι ζῶντες. κἀκείνοις οὖν ἐκηρύχθη ἡ σφραγὶς αὕτη καὶ ἐχρήσαντο αὐτῇ, ἵνα εἰσέλθωσιν εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ θεοῦ.

For man is dead before he carries the Name of <the Son of> God, but when he receives the seal he puts off death and receives life. The seal, therefore, is the water. The dead go down into the water and come out of it living. Therefore, this seal is proclaimed to them and they put it to use to enter the kingdom of God. (*Sim.* IX 16:3–4)

Here, the Name is associated with the "seal," which in turn is identified with the baptismal water. The seal of the Name is conferred on the candidate on his immersion in the water. This is the same set of ideas that is found in *Exc.* 66–86.[21] The background for this association of the Name with the baptismal water is evidently the notion that baptism takes place "in the Name of" the redeeming divine agent. NT texts contain allusions to a baptism in the Name of Jesus (frequent in the book of Acts) as well as a commandment to baptise "in the Name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit" (Matt 28:19). It must be this notion that has given rise to the further ideas that baptism is a "sealing" that marks the initiate as the property of the deity, transforms his identity, and protects him against hostile forces, although the precise liturgical articulation of the notion during the early period is uncertain.[22]

---

[21] See above, 333–35.
[22] There is some indication that invocations of the form "In the name of x" were

There is some evidence that "the Name" acquired a hypostatic quality in certain areas of early Christianity, and that it was invoked in that capacity in baptismal contexts. In the *Acts of Thomas,* the apostle invokes the Name at the beginning of the baptismal act:

ἐλθὲ τὸ ἅγιον ὄνομα τοῦ Χριστοῦ τὸ ὑπὲρ πᾶν ὄνομα· ἐλθὲ ἡ δύναμις τοῦ ὑψίστου καὶ ἡ εὐσπλαγχνία ἡ τελεία· ἐλθὲ τὸ χάρισμα τὸ ὕψιστον . . .

(Syriac version:) Come, holy name of the Messiah; come, power of grace, which art from on high; come, perfect mercy; come exalted gift . . . (ch. 27; cf. ch. 132)

The Name is also invoked over the bread (ch. 133) and the oil (157). Similar ideas can be found scattered in other ancient sources.[23]

Several traditional ideas related to "name" and naming probably contributed to the currency of such baptismal theologies of the Name: speculations about the hidden divine Name in Jewish tradition; the bestowal of a royal name as a feature of ancient Near Eastern enthronement rites, and the Christian application of this idea to Christ and the event at the Jordan; the phrase "the Name above every name" in Phil 2:9. The Valentinians seem to have picked up these traditions and used them to develop their own theory of the Name in such a way that it became a central feature of their theology.[24]

---

used at an early stage in Syria at least (Kretschmar, *Geschichte,* 123–24); from the fourth century, however, an indicative passive baptismal formula 'NN is baptized in the Name of x' comes to be generally used in the east (John Chrys. *Cat.* 2:26 Wenger = 3/2:26 Kaczynski; Theod. Mops. *Hom. Cat.* 14:15; cf. Kretschmar, *Geschichte,* 188–89). In the west, the baptismal commandment of Matt 28:19 was realised by means of a triple creedal interrogation, according to *Apost. Trad.* 21:12–18 and Ambr. *Sacr.* 2:20. Earlier western practices—such as the one presupposed by *The Shepherd of Hermas* for instance, which predates the trend towards creedal conformity—may well have been different. The indicative active formula "I baptise you in the name of x" was used in Egypt at least from the fourth century (Kretschmar, "Beiträge," 39–43; id. *Geschichte,* 133–34, 189n147, 211–12), and in the west only from the eighth century (Stenzel, *Taufe,* 112).

Another murky question concerns the existence of a baptism "in the name of Jesus" in addition to that of the three persons of the Trinity; on this, see Kretschmar, *Geschichte,* 32–42.

[23] In Egypt, Serapion's *Sacramentary* 17 (Name invoked over the water and the oil); in Syria, Narsai, *Hom.* 22 (B) (Connolly, *Liturgical Homilies,* 8:40 ff.): The three-fold Name sanctifies the oil, is hidden in it and conferred to the anointed; it is also seal, branding and protection; further, *Apost. Const.* VII 42:3 (over the oil); Aug. *Bapt.* III 10:15 (water).

[24] An attempt to summarise this theory may be found in Thomassen, "Gnostic Semiotics."

The "Bridal Chamber"

Nuptial imagery in a baptismal context can also be found outside of Valentinianism. In Syriac liturgies it is fairly common,[25] but it is also attested in such authors as John Chrysostom,[26] Cyril of Jerusalem,[27] and Gregory of Nazianzus.[28] This imagery seems to be inspired by Eph 5:22–33 (with an allusion to baptism in 5:26), and its basic motif is that of the church as bride and Christ as the bridegroom, though individualised versions with the baptismal candidate in the role of the bride can also be found. No precise parallels seem to exist, however, to the Valentinian notion of angels as the bridegrooms of the individual elect.

On the other hand, the Valentinian marriage of the spiritual with his angel is to be regarded as an individualised form of the marriage of Sophia and the Saviour, which in turn is clearly a mythological representation of the theme of the church as the bride of Christ. The angels are in this sense the individualised and personalised manifestations of the Saviour as he is received by each spiritual person, conceived according to the peculiar Valentinian dialectic of unity and multiplicity. This nuptial angelology appears to be a Valentinian invention, derived from the more general theme found in Ephesians.

All three features that have been identified here as characteristic of Valentinian baptismal theology—the designation *apolytrosis*, the "Name," and the "bridal chamber"—thus seem to be the results of a process of creative interpretation and innovation occurring at the founding moment of Valentinian Christianity. It appears a well-nigh compelling assumption that the author of this original and creative act was Valentinus himself.

---

[25] Casel, "Brautbad"; Engberding, "Die Kirche als Braut"; Schmid, *RAC* II 528–64; Perler, *Hymnus*; Kretschmar, *Geschichte*, 31–32; Jacob of Serugh, *Hom.* 7:25–64, as well as the works of Narsai and Ephrem.

[26] Cf. Finn, *Liturgy*, 165–66; Riley, *Christian Initiation*, 165–66, 314–17, 424–25; Cattenoz, *Baptême*.

[27] Cf. Riley, *Christian Initiation*, 163–65.

[28] *Or.* 45:2.

CHAPTER TWENTY-NINE

A RITUAL FOR THE DYING

IREN. *HAER.* I 21:5 AND *1 APOC. JAS.*

In *Haer.* I 21:5, Irenaeus describes a ritual performed on the dying. He says that some Valentinians pour a mixture of oil and water, or *myron* and water, over the head of the dying person and speak invocations over him in order to make him immune to the cosmic powers. The dying person is also instructed about what to say to the powers he will meet on his journey through the spheres. These words of passage have also been preserved in a Coptic version in *1 Apoc. Jas.* (NHC V,*4*) and we here present a synopsis of the two versions, in translation.[1]

Irenaeus	*1 Apoc. Jas.*
	The Lord said to [him]: "[James] behold, I shall reveal to you your redemption. If they seize [you], and you suffer these afflictions, a multitude will arm themselves to seize you. Moreover, three of them will seize you. They are the ones who sit as toll collectors. They not only demand toll, but also confiscate the souls. If you come into their hands, one of their guards will ask you: "Who are you?" or, "Where do you come from?"
And they instruct them to speak as follows when, after death, they come to the powers:	You will tell him: "I am a son, and I am from the Father."
	He will ask you: "What sort of son are you, and to which father do you belong?"

---

[1] For a synopsis of the original texts see Veilleux, *Apocalypses de Jacques*, 87–88. The Greek text is given by Epiphanius, *Pan.* XXXVI 2–3. For obscure reasons Epiphanius has separated this section from the rest of his quotation from Iren. *Haer.* I 13–21 (which he assigns to the "Marcosians"), in *Pan.* XXXIV, and presents it as describing the "Heracleonites."

"I am a son from the Father, of the pre-existent Father, a son in the pre-existent.

I came that I might see all things, those that are my own as well as those that are alien.

They are not altogether alien, however, but belong to Achamoth, who is female and made those things for herself, although she derives her race from the pre-existent.

And I go again to the things that are my own, whence I came forth." Saying these words, they affirm, he will escape from the powers.

Then he will come to the Demiurge and his companions, and will say to them:

"I am a vessel more precious than the Female who made you. If your mother is ignorant of her own root, I know myself and am aware whence I came forth, and I invoke the incorruptible Sophia, she who is in the Father, mother of your mother, who has neither a father nor a male con-

You will tell him: "I am from the pre-[existent] Father, a son who is in the pre-existent."

[He will ask] you: "[. . .?]"

You will t[ell him]: "[. . .] in this [. . .], that I may [. . .] which [. . . .]

[He will ask you: ". . . of] the things that are alien?"

You will tell him: "They are not altogether alien, but are from Achamoth, who is the Female, and she made those things while she brought this race down below from out of that which is pre-existent.[2] Thus they are not alien, but belong to us. They belong to us because she who is their mistress comes from the pre-existent. But they are alien in so far as the pre-existent did not unite with her when she was about to make them."

Again he will ask you: "Where are you going?"

You will answer: "To the place whence I came, there I will go."

If you say these things, you will escape their assaults.

And if you come into the hands of those three detainers who confiscate the souls [and who are] in that place [. . .] these, you will [say to them: "I] am a ves[sel] more [. . .] than [. . .] of she whom you [. . .] her root, you as well will become sober. But I invoke the incorruptible knowledge that is Sophia, she who is in the Father and is the mother of Achamoth. Achamoth had no father, nor a male consort, but she

---

[2] The text has been misunderstood in the Coptic version. The Greek text of Epiphanius is faulty too, however: ταῦτα ἐαυτῇ ἐποίησεν, κατάγω δὲ τὸ γένος ἐκ τοῦ προόντος, must be corrected in accordance with the Latin translation of Irenaeus, *haec sibi fecit, deducit autem genus ex eo qui ante fuit*, as RD have observed. The original Greek was, therefore, κατάγει δὲ τὸ γένος, which the Coptic translator erroneously interpreted literally (ⲉⲥⲉⲓⲛⲉ ⲙ̄ⲡⲓⲅⲉⲛⲟⲥ ⲉⲡⲉⲥⲏⲧ), and not as an idiom designating genealogical descent: 'descend from' (*LSJ*, s.v. κατάγω, 8.).

sort. A female sprung from a female made you, ignorant even of her own mother and believing herself to be all alone. But I call upon her mother."

When the Demiurge and his companions hear this, they become greatly confused and condemn their root and the race of their mother. But he goes forth to his own, casting away his chain, that it, his soul.

is a female from a female. She made you without a male, alone and ignorant of the things that live [through] her mother, thinking that she alone existed. But I call upon her mother."

Then they will be confused and will blame their root and the race [of] their mother. [But] you will go up to [the things that are] yours [. . .]. (32:28–35:25; my translation)

The common document from which the two texts ultimately derive can be partly reconstructed. *1 Apoc. Jas.*, of course, has used it as material for a revelation dialogue between the Lord and James, turning the text as a whole into a teaching discourse pronounced by the Lord. Nor is there any sign in Irenaeus' version of the question-and-answer form between the archons and the soul in which the text of *1 Apoc. Jas.* is couched. Irenaeus probably did not know the text in this dramatised form, which means that it is the result of secondary reworking,[3] either by the author of *1 Apoc. Jas.* himself, or conceivably at an intermediary stage of transmission. Although the question-and-answer form is not original, comparison of the two texts makes it clear that not only the phrases to be spoken by the ascending soul, but also the narrative passages in Irenaeus describing the ascent and the reactions of the powers belonged to the original source, and are not to be attributed to Irenaeus' imagination. The coincidences in wording show that the heresiologist has reported his source accurately, changing only into the third person singular what presumably were second person forms in his *Vorlage*: the original document probably addressed itself to the reader, telling him what he would encounter after death and what he should say to the various powers.[4]

In Irenaeus' version, the words "they are not altogether alien, however, . . . pre-existent" give the impression of being an interpolation and not part of the original document. The interpolation is a

---

[3] Tardieu, "La Gnose valentinienne," 221 (also cf. Veilleux, *Apocalypses de Jacques*, 88) states that the dialogue form is the more original one, which I find implausible. The parallels he refers to from the Askew and Bruce codices are, of course, late.
[4] For a survey of these kinds of formulae see Tardieu, "La Gnose valentinienne," 220–21.

gloss on the term "alien," and also introduces the name Achamoth, which does not appear in the rest of Irenaeus' document. The version in *1 Apoc. Jas.* has expanded this gloss further, introducing the name Achamoth in the second part of the account as well, and adding there some additional text which has been lost in the holes of the papyrus.[5]

1 Apoc. Jas. has also significantly changed the identities of the powers encountered by the soul. In Irenaeus, the soul first meets certain ἐξουσίαι; having escaped these, it arrives at οἱ περὶ τὸν δημιουργόν. The first group requires the ascending soul to identify itself, and demands an explanation for why it has entered a region to which it claims to be "alien." These powers must be some sort of sentinels, situated, one may imagine, at the entrance to the lowest planetary sphere, that of the moon. The Demiurge and his companions must be the hebdomadic powers residing in the spheres themselves. When he comes to confront the latter, the deceased must assert his superior nature, display his more advanced knowledge, and invoke the Sophia above. The powers are confounded, and the deceased leaves his soul behind with them, before proceeding as a pure spirit into the Pleroma. In *1 Apoc. Jas.*, on the other hand, there are three "toll collectors" (τελῶναι), who are also called "detainers," or simply "powerful ones" (ⲣⲉϥⲁⲙⲁϩⲧⲉ, <?*κράτιστος). The first encounter is here between the soul and one of the guards serving the three toll collectors; the second encounter takes place with these three powers themselves. The sense of a gradual progression through the spheres from the first to the second encounter is hardly present in this version, nor does the encounter seem to be inevitable ("*If* you come into their hands . . ."). Thus, the precise cosmological notions underlying the version in Irenaeus have been replaced by a more vague demonology in *1 Apoc. Jas.* Another possibly significant difference consists in the fact that the three τελῶναι are said to "confiscate"[6] the souls, whereas in Irenaeus the soul is described as a "chain" that is happily left behind when the spirit leaves the sphere of the Demiurge.

---

[5] This interpretation is diametrically opposite that of Veilleux, *Apocalypses de Jacques*, 88, who regards the version in *1 Apoc. Jas.* as the original one and that of Irenaeus as an abbreviation.

[6] The rare word στερέσιμος (which the Coptic scribe has glossed ⲛ̄ⲕⲱⲗⲡ̄, "by theft" in the margin), I translate on the basis of the Latin equivalent *commissum* (*LSJ*, s.v.), and the context.

Finally, the identity of the three master powers that in *1 Apoc. Jas.*
have been substituted for the Demiurge and his companions, is an
open question. Are we to think in the direction of a polemical trav-
esty of the Catholic Trinity? Or perhaps of the triad of Yaldabaoth,
Saklas and Samael in the *Apocryphon of John* (NHC II 11:15–22)? It
is difficult to find a clue in Valentinian sources that might help to
identify the three powers, as well as to understand the considera-
tions that motivated the replacement by them of the familiar Valen-
tinian figure of the Demiurge.

The Underlying Doctrine

What can be said about the systematic presuppositions of the basic
document? A main motif in it is the contrast in nature between the
ascending spiritual soul, who is "a son of the pre-existent," and the
cosmic powers, who are the offspring of the lower Sophia. A look
at the various systematic accounts, however, informs us that the
underlying ideas must be somewhat more complicated. Sophia is reg-
ularly described as the mother not only of the psychic natures, but
also of the spirituals. In those systems that operate with two Sophia
figures (the main systems of Irenaeus and Hippolytus, *Exc.* 43:2–65,
the *Sige* of Marcus; see above, chapter 21), with which the present
document concurs, the lower Sophia—Achamoth in Irenaeus' main
system—fulfils the same role. The point of the contrast cannot be,
therefore, that the mother of the cosmic powers is different from
that of the spirituals. Rather, it must be that the generation of the
former took place without a male consort, whereas the spirituals have
the Saviour for a father and the lower Sophia as their mother. The
spirituals were brought forth by the lower Sophia after the Saviour
had manifested to her the forms of the Pleroma who served as mod-
els for her procreation.

   The words "I came that I might see all things, those that are my
own as well as those that are alien. . . . And I go again to the things
that are my own, whence I came forth" (ἦλθον πάντα ἰδεῖν, τα ἴδια
καὶ τὰ ἀλλότρια . . . καὶ πορεύομαι πάλιν εἰς τὰ ἴδια ὅθεν ἐλήλυθα)—
which, as was suggested above, seem to represent the original form
of the formula—are too concise to allow definite systematic inter-
pretation. They imply that the spiritual is not of this world, and that
he has come down here in order to acquire knowledge. In this way,

they also serve as a justification offered to the planetary guards as to why the spiritual has visited the lower realm of the physical cosmos that he now claims the right to leave. The notion that the sojourn of the spiritual in the world is fundamentally for pedagogical reasons, and that he is essentially alien to it, is common to various types of Valentinianism,[7] and does not point in the direction of one specific system.[8] The words τὰ ἴδια in particular are enigmatic: what precisely is "that which is my own" that the spiritual has descended into the world to "see"? That question is apparently what the interpolator tried to answer by adding the gloss explaining that some of the creations of Achamoth could be said to be ἴδια, because the creator herself had a spiritual origin. What is meant must be the psychic substances, which are not ἀλλότρια . . . παντελῶς, though they are not ἴδια either in the sense of the beings to whom the spiritual himself belongs.

This added parenthetical remark places the text definitely in the company of the systems of Irenaeus, Hippolytus, *Exc.* 43:2–65, and Marcus—not only because of the presence of the name Achamoth, but also because of the maximal dissociation with the psycho-physical cosmos that is articulated here. There is certainly no notion here of a spiritual substance that has been intertwined with matter and soul to the extent that it needs to be saved from it. It is in fact striking that no reference is made to the Saviour in this text; what qualifies the ascending spiritual to escape the cosmos is not a redemptive act that has been performed by the Saviour, nor the experience of having shared in that act through baptismal initiation,[9] but the mere fact of the spiritual's superior origin and essence. This is in line with the position taken by the systems mentioned, which maintain that the Saviour came to save the psychics in particular, while the spirituals are "saved by nature" (cf. chapters 6–10 above).

---

[7] E.g., *Tri. Trac.* 104:18–30, 107:18–108:4, with commentary in Thomassen and Painchaud, *Traité tripartite*, 402, 408–9, and Iren. *Haer.* I 6:1.

[8] The words πάντα ἰδεῖν are reminiscent of the hymn of Valentinus (frg. 8, Hipp. *Haer.* VI 37:7) πάντα κρεμάμενα πνεύματι βλέπω, etc. Valentinus also, of course, taught the transcendent origin of the spirituals (frg. 4, Clem, *Str*, IV 89:2). This suggests the possibility that the formula may be a piece of old tradition in Valentinianism.

[9] Cf., for contrast, the inscription of Flavia Sophe, which recommends the deceased by stating that she has been "anointed in the baths of Christ with imperishable sacred *myron*."

The Ritual

The ritual described, in which water and oil/*myron* are poured over the head of the dying, is obviously a derivative of baptism. As we have already suggested, it may be anamnetic in character, referring back to and reinforcing the initiation undergone by the person now facing death on the occasion of his admission into the community. On the other hand, however, the emphasis and significance of the ritual has shifted from participation in the Saviour's redemptive act, to a preparation for the ascent back to one's home in the Pleroma. The water and the oil no longer signify an identification with and an assimilation to Christ, but are protective devices for the ascent upwards, performed so that the dying person "may become unassailable by and invisible to the principalities and powers, and their inner man ascend above the realm of the invisible, while their body is left behind in the created world and their soul is delivered to the Demiurge."

Sophia as Paraclete and Psychopomp

The second encounter, that with the Demiurge and his companions, involves two motifs: (1) the exposure of the ignorance of the Demiurge and of his inferior origins, with the result that he is confused and distressed and leaves the ascending spiritual being alone; and (2) the invocation of Sophia. The latter motif is not explained in the text. There exists, however, another text that contains precisely such an invocation. It is preserved in the account given in Iren. *Haer.* I 13:6 regarding the "disciples" of Marcus the Magician. Possession of the *apolytrosis*, Irenaeus reports, should make the spirit "unassailable and invisible" to the "judge." If he is nevertheless seized and made to stand before the judge, he should speak the following words:

ὦ πάρεδρε θεοῦ καὶ μυστικῆς πρὸ αἰώνων σιγῆς, <δι᾽ ἧς> τὰ μεγέθη διὰ παντὸς βλέποντα τὸ πρόσωπον τοῦ πατρὸς, ὁδηγῷ σοι καὶ προσαγωγεῖ χρώμενα, ἀνασπῶσιν ἄνω τὰς αὐτῶν μορφάς, ἃς ἡ μεγαλότολμος ἐκείνη φαντασιασθεῖσα διὰ τὸ ἀγαθὸν τοῦ προπάτορος προεβάλετο ἡμᾶς τὰς εἰκόνας, τότε ἐνθύμιον τῶν ἄνω ὡς ἐνύπνιον ἔχουσα· ἰδοὺ ὁ κριτὴς ἐγγὺς, καὶ ὁ κῆρύξ με

O you partner of God and of mystical Silence that was before the aeons, you through whom the greatnesses, continually beholding the face of the Father and using you as guide and leader, draw upwards their own forms, which that over-audacious one saw in her mind and by the goodness of the Forefather brought forth as us, the images, when she received

κελεύει ἀπολογεῖσθαι· σὺ δέ, ὡς ἐπισ-
ταμένη τὰ ἀμφοτέρων, τὸν ὑπὲρ
ἀμφοτέρων ἡμῶν λόγον ὡς ἕνα ὄντα τῷ
κριτῇ παράστησον.

a notion of the things above as in a
dream! Now the judge is near, and
the herald bids me make my defence.
But you, who know what relates to
both, give account to the judge about
both, for the account is one and the
same.

The (female) addressee of this invocation is not named, but the affinity
with the scene described in Iren. *Haer.* I 21:5 makes it reasonable
to assume that she must be identical with "the mother of your mother"
invoked in that text, that is, the higher Sophia. Irenaeus also refers
to that figure in the immediately following text as "the mother":

> No sooner has the mother heard this than she puts upon them the
> Homeric helmet of Hades [*Il.* 5:844–45], so that they can escape from
> the judge without being seen, and immediately she carries them upwards,
> conducts them into the bridal chamber, and hands them over to their
> bridegrooms.

The invocation, moreover, presents the higher Sophia in the role of
advocate—a paraclete—for the spiritual. She has an unusually impor-
tant soteriological function here. Some of the mythological back-
ground can be reconstructed: Sophia herself was restored to the
Pleroma while her daughter—"that over-audacious one"—remained
outside, no doubt generating the substances of matter and soul. Later,
the lower Sophia brought forth "us" (the spirituals) as images of the
"greatnesses" (the aeons of the Pleroma), in a vision—presumably of
the Saviour being emitted by the Pleroma, though further details are
not offered. The goal of the spirituals is to be united with their mod-
els in the Pleroma, a goal that is attained through a power of attrac-
tion exerted by the latter, pulling the spirituals upwards to the source
of their being. This notion of an "attraction" upwards may be found
in other sources,[10] whereas the idea that Sophia is the medium that
makes this attraction possible is less familiar, and somewhat difficult
to explain.

Sophia actually has two functions here. On the one hand, she acts
as psychopomp guiding the ascending spirituals into the Pleroma; on
the other hand, she is a paraclete called upon by the spiritual to
speak for him before the judge. In the remarks by Irenaeus that

---

[10] Cf. *Tri. Trac.* 72:20, 78:24, 86:21–22; *Treat. Res.* 45:36.

follow, we hear only about the first function, however, and nothing about her speech before the celestial court. Irenaeus' report is clearly incomplete on this point.

CONCLUSION

In these reports on the ritual for the dying, a variety of motifs are associated with the ascending spiritual's encounter with the Demiurge-Judge: (1) The terminal *apolytrosis* ritual makes the spiritual unassailable and invisible to the Demiurge and his companions; (2) the dying person must learn certain formulae that display superior knowledge and confound the Demiurge; (3) confronted with the Demiurge, the spiritual is to invoke the higher Sophia to act as his paraclete before the Demiurge, revealing to him, probably, the existence of superior things that he did not know; (4) Sophia makes the spiritual invisible to the Demiurge, allowing him to escape his power. These motifs are not entirely compatible with one another, but seem to have accumulated in the course of time. They all seem to attest, moreover, to a tendency towards less focus on initiation and the Saviour, and increased emphasis on eschatology and on the higher Sophia, with the latter assuming the role of the most important saviour figure. These are not ideas that were universally adopted, but seem to represent the direction taken by one particular form of Valentinianism.

PART V

VALENTINUS
AND THE "VALENTINIANS"

VALENTINUS: BIOGRAPHY AND SOURCES

LIFE

In Rome around 155–160, Justin Martyr is able to identify a particular group of Christians he calls οἱ Οὐαλεντινιανοί, "the Valentinians" (*Dial.* 35:6). This mention, in a list of "heresies,"[1] is the earliest record of a group by that name.[2] Justin's testimony can be supplemented by those of later writers, no longer contemporary with the events they describe. Writing about 180–190, Irenaeus offers the information that "Valentinus came to Rome under Hyginus, reached his peak under Pius and remained until the time of Anicetus" (Οὐαλεντῖνος μὲν γὰρ ἦλθεν εἰς Ῥώμην ἐπὶ Ὑγίνου· ἤκμασε δὲ ἐπὶ Πίου, καὶ παρέμεινεν ἕως Ἀνικήτου, *Haer.* III 4:3). From what is known about the dates of these figures, who are listed by Irenaeus as successive bishops of Rome, Valentinus' activity in the imperial capital would fall between

---

[1] The other names on the list are "the Markians" (usually interpreted as the Marcionites), the Basilideans and the Satornilians.

[2] The date of *Dial.* can be inferred from the fact that it must be later than Justin's *1 Apol.*—which is quoted in *Dial.* 120:6, and on the basis of internal evidence can be dated to ca. 150–155; cf. e.g., Harnack, *Altchr. Lit.* II/1, 275–82, 289–90; Lampe, *From Paul to Valentinus,* 260. It is not unlikely, however, that Justin had occasion to deal with the Valentinians even earlier, in his now lost σύνταγμα κατὰ πασῶν τῶν γεγενημένων αἱρέσεων, mentioned in *1 Apol.* 26:8 and thus composed around 140–150—but this we do not positively know. At the time when he wrote *Dial.*, Justin certainly considered the Valentinians heretics. But did he do so some ten years earlier when he composed his anti-heretical compendium? In *1 Apol.* he mentions by name only Simon, Menander and Marcion (26, 56, 58) as enemies of the Christians. On the other hand, he also speaks about "all those who have originated from these" (πάντες οἱ ἀπὸ τούτων ὁρμωμένοι, 26:8), and it is at this point that he refers the reader to his *Syntagma,* as if for further details. This leaves it an open question whether the work included the Valentinians or not. Tertullian, *Val.* 5:1, mentions Justin in a list of heresiologists who have previously written about the Valentinians and whose materials he has used. This has often been used as evidence that Justin actually did deal with the Valentinians in his *Syntagma.* It is a fact, however, that Tertullian relies almost exclusively on Irenaeus in his reports on Valentinianism (cf. Harnack, *Quellenkritik,* 61–65; Lipsius, *Quellen,* 64–83), and we cannot therefore be certain that he had even seen all of the works of the heresiologists he is referring to, and consequently whether they featured the Valentinians or not.

136–160.[3] This means that Valentinus himself was probably still in Rome at the time when Justin made his reference to the Valentinians. It may be added that these dates also agree with a statement in Tertullian (*Praescr.* 30:2) that situates Valentinus in the principate of Antoninus Pius, 138–161.

Irenaeus' text suggests that Valentinus came to Rome from somewhere else; from precisely where he does not say. Two centuries after Irenaeus, Epiphanius remarks that the nationality and birth-place of Valentinus are by and large unknown, though he has heard a rumour that "he was born a Phrebonite, a native of Paralia in Egypt, but received the Greek education in Alexandria."[4] The names Paralia and Phrebonis point in the direction of the north-central Egyptian Delta.[5] Epiphanius' information must be taken for what he says it is, a rumour whose veracity cannot be ascertained, though there is nothing intrinsically implausible in either of these assumptions: that Valentinus was an Egyptian, or that he was educated in Alexandria.[6]

Clement of Alexandria says the Valentinians claimed apostolic suc-

---

[3] The more precise dates of the three "episcopacies" are generally estimated as 136–140, 140–155, and 155–166. Irenaeus probably had access to a written list of bishops, obtained through his contacts in the emerging episcopal institution in Rome. See, most recently, Thornton, *Zeuge*, 20–39. It should be added that Irenaeus does not present his information about Valentinus as a historian about the origins of Valentinianism, but uses it to point out that, like other heresies, Valentinianism is a recent innovation compared to the ancient apostolic authority transmitted through the bishops of Rome. Also cf. Markschies, *Valentinus*, 295–96.

[4] τὴν μὲν οὖν αὐτοῦ πατρίδα ἢ πόθεν οὗτος γεγέννηται, οἱ πολλοὶ ἀγνοοῦσιν· οὐ γάρ τινι ῥᾴδιον τῶν συγγραφέων μεμέληται τούτου δεῖξαι τὸν τόπον. εἰς ἡμᾶς δὲ ὡς ἐνηχήσει φήμη τις ἐλήλυθε· διὸ οὐ παρελευσόμεθα, καὶ τὸν τούτου τόπον μὴ ὑποδεικνύντες, ἐν ἀμφιλέκτῳ μέν (εἰ δεῖ τὰ ἀληθῆ λέγειν), ὅμως τὴν εἰς ἡμᾶς ἐλθοῦσαν φάσιν οὐ σιωπήσομεν. ἔφασαν γὰρ αὐτόν τινες γεγενῆσθαι Φρεβωνίτην, τῆς Αἰγύπτου Παραλιώτην, ἐν Ἀλεξανδρείᾳ δὲ πεπαιδεῦσθαι τὴν τῶν Ἑλλήνων παιδείαν, Epiph. *Pan.* XXXI 2:2–3.

[5] Paralia/Paralios is the name of a town, a region and a lake (today al-Burlus, Burullus). Phrebonis may be the same as the town Phragonis, which seems also to have been called Phlabonis, though Phlabonites may also have been used as the name of a lower Egyptian nome (the sixth?). Cf. *RE* s.v. "Phragonis" (H. Kees); Layton, *Scriptures*, 217n1. More geographical information regarding these names is referred to by Helderman, "Evangelium Veritatis" 4066–68. (Helderman's conclusions, however, are rather speculative; cf. Markschies, *Valentinus,* 314–18.) Further discussion of these names will not be undertaken here, since even if their precise geographical meaning could be determined, and Epiphanius' testimony were proved to be reliable, this would help us very little in understanding Valentinianism better.

[6] Cf. Fraser, *Ptolemaic Alexandria*, I 810: "From the time of Caesar onwards, and particularly after the Roman conquest, a steady stream of grammarians and literary scholars migrated and in due course opened schools in the Alexandrian tradition in Rome."

cession for Valentinus through a certain Theodas, supposedly a disciple of Paul (*Str.* VII 106:4). Chronologically this is marginally possible. However, Theodas is unknown from other sources, including Valentinian ones, and no concrete historical information can be derived from this piece of questionable information,[7] except that it confirms what we can infer from the Valentinian texts themselves: that Paul was an important source of inspiration for Valentinianism.

Epiphanius offers the further information that Valentinus "preached" in Egypt, and that he still had many followers in that country. He also came to Rome and preached there. After this, the Cypriote bishop says, he was "shipwrecked" in Cyprus, and it was there that he developed his heretical doctrine.[8] That Valentinus was active in Egypt may be no more than an inference made by Epiphanius from the fact that Valentinian communities existed there in his own time,[9] and the report about his visit to Cyprus must be considered no less spurious.[10]

What was Valentinus up to during his long stay in Rome? From the extremely meagre information that has come down to us we can only infer the following: He must have attracted to him a group of people that Justin saw fit to identify as "the Valentinians." He composed psalms to be used in the cultic life of this community, which evidently saw itself as representing a—or rather *the*—Christian *ekklesia*. He wrote, and presumably delivered, homilies for his community, and he wrote letters of instruction and edification. These things we know for certain, because the few fragments left of Valentinus' writings consist precisely of psalms, homilies and letters.

---

[7] The latest, inconclusive, discussion of this passage is Markschies, *Valentinus,* 294–302.

[8] ἐποιήσατο δὲ οὗτος τὸ κήρυγμα καὶ ἐν Αἰγύπτῳ, ὅθεν δὴ καὶ ὡς λείψανα ἐχίδνης ὀστέων ἔτι ἐν Αἰγύπτῳ περιλείπεται τούτου ἡ σπορά, ἔν τε τῷ Ἀθριβίτῃ καὶ Προσωπίτῃ καὶ Ἀρσινοΐτῃ καὶ Θηβαΐδι καὶ τοῖς κάτω μέρεσι τῆς Παραλίας καὶ Ἀλεξανδρειοπολίτῃ· ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐν Ῥώμῃ ἀνελθὼν κεκήρυχεν. εἰς Κύπρον δὲ ἐληλυθώς, †ὡς ναυάγιον ὑποστὰς [φύσει] σωματικῶς, τῆς πίστεως ἐξέστη καὶ τὸν νοῦν ἐξετράπη. ἐνομίζετο γὰρ πρὸ τούτου μέρος ἔχειν εὐσεβείας καὶ ὀρθῆς πίστεως ἐν τοῖς προειρημένοις τόποις. ἐν δὲ τῇ Κύπρῳ λοιπὸν εἰς ἔσχατον ἀσεβείας ἐλήλακεν καὶ ἐβάθυνεν ἑαυτὸν ἐν ταύτῃ τῇ καταγγελλομένῃ ὑπ᾽ αὐτοῦ μοχθηρίᾳ, *Pan.* XXXI 7:1–2.

[9] As is well known, Epiphanius visited Egypt in his youth, cf. Markschies, *Valentinus,* 316n156. The description of Valentinus' activities in Alexandria made in Layton, *Scriptures,* 217, is entirely speculative.

[10] This statement, too, should be read in light of the contemporary presence of Valentinians in Epiphanius' Cyprus; see Markschies, *Valentinus,* 332n284. It has frequently been asserted that the word παρέμεινεν in Iren. *Haer.* III 4:3 implies that Valentinus died in Rome (see, most recently, Lüdemann, "Zur Geschichte," 91n12), but this is not, as far as I can see, absolutely compelling.

Later accounts tell about conflicts and schisms that took place between the Valentinians and "the Roman church."[11] Irenaeus says that Polycarp converted many heretics, probably including Valentinians, during his visit to Rome (*Haer.* III 3:4). Tertullian asserts, around 200 (*Praescr.* 30:2), that Valentinus and Marcion were initially orthodox but were later "repeatedly thrown out" of the church in Rome because of their constant curiosity.[12] About ten years later, however, Tertullian tells a rather different story: Valentinus was a *condiscipulus et condesertor* with Marcion (*Carn.* 1:3), which suggests that Valentinus, like Marcion, left the church of his own accord. Moreover, in his work against the Valentinians, Tertullian tells the story that Valentinus, frustrated in his hopes of becoming bishop, went his own way and developed a doctrine of his own, becoming a heretic in an act of revenge as it were.[13] All these three accounts have been shown to be anachronistic and unreliable.[14] The first two seem to be no more than secondary associations of Valentinus with traditions that primarily refer to Marcion. The third story, too, obviously belongs in the realm of legend.[15]

It must be recalled that at the time when Valentinus formed his first community in Rome, a centralised church organisation did not yet exist. Until monarchic episcopacy began to be recognised and was able to assert itself towards the end of the second century, the Christian communities in Rome were largely independent of one another; a council of presbyters seems to have met from time to time to handle common affairs.[16] The only known example of a schism within the Christian movement in Rome in the mid-second century occurred in the summer of 144, when Marcion had such a council convened, which resulted in a split.[17] It is noteworthy that

---

[11] For the following discussion, see also Thomassen, "Orthodoxy and Heresy."

[12] . . . *in catholicae primo doctrinam credidisse* [*sc.* Marcion and Valentinus] *apud ecclesiam Romanensem sub episcopatu Eleutherii benedicti, donec ob inquietam semper eorum curiositatem qua fratres quoque uitabant, semel et iterum eiecti.*

[13] *Sperauerat episcopatum Valentinus, quia et ingenio poterat et eloquio, sed alium ex martyrii praerogatiua loci potitum indignatus de ecclesia authenticae regulae abrupit, ut solent animi pro prioratu exciti praesumptione ultionis accendi. ad expugnandam conversus ueritatem et cuiusdam ueteris opinionis semen nactus Colorbaso uiam delineauit, Val.* 4:1.

[14] Cf. Lüdemann, "Zur Geschichte," 89–94; Lampe, *From Paul to Valentinus*, 391–92n87(a).

[15] Beyschlag, "Kallist und Hippolyt," 106–8; Lüdemann, "Zur Geschichte," 92–93; Lampe, *From Paul to Valentinus*, 391–92n17(b).

[16] Cf. Lampe, *From Paul to Valentinus*, esp. part 5.

[17] Epiph. *Pan.* XLII 1–2; for the date, Tert. *Adv. Marc.* I 19, with Harnack's analysis in his *Altchr. Lit.* II/1, 297–99, 306–7, and his *Marcion*, 19*–20*.

the conflict was initiated by Marcion himself, not by his opponents.[18] Unlike Marcion, Valentinus and his followers do not seem to have sought confrontation, nor are there any records that disciplinary action was taken against them. In the case of the Valentinians, no schism or expulsion occurred—simply, it seems, because there existed no centrally directed body of Christians of which they would have been members in the first place.

This does not necessarily mean that the teachings and activities of Valentinus and his followers would have been acceptable to every Christian in Rome. Indeed, Justin's remarks about them and other heretics show that this was not the case. But Justin is himself a witness to the decentralised organisation of Rome's Christians. According to the account in *Acta Iustini* (3), Justin, when interrogated by the urban prefect, declared that "I have been living above the bath of Myrtinus(?) . . . and I have known no other meeting-place but here. Anyone who wished could come to my abode and I would impart to him the words of truth."[19] This gives the impression that Justin's own activities were restricted to one particular house-congregation and that he had little contact with other Christian groups.[20] His denunciation of the Valentinians can hardly be taken to represent the view of "the church," but is simply his personal opinion.[21]

It is the lack of any action against the Valentinians, or at least the lack of any reports about such action, that most of all seems to be reflected in Tertullian's various conflicting reports about Valentinus. Tertullian implies that Valentinus was at first an orthodox member of the church (*Praescr.* 30:2, *Carn.* 1:3); he reports a positive evaluation of Valentinus' intelligence and eloquence and says that he aspired to become bishop (*Val.* 4:1); and he also depicts Valentinus as having only sowed the seed of the heresy which Ptolemy and his followers later made manifest (ibid. 4:2).[22] In these varying reports it is possible to see Tertullian seeking to reconcile his opinion of the Valentinians as heretics with the fact that he had no definite information that

---

[18] Lüdemann, "Zur Geschichte," 95–96; Lampe, *From Paul to Valentinus*, 392–93.

[19] Musurillo, *Acts*, 44–45.

[20] Cf. Lampe, *From Paul to Valentinus*, 376, 390.

[21] Interestingly, there is no evidence to suggests that Justin was ever made use of in Rome to combat heresy—either the services of Justin himself, with his expertise and rhetorical skills, or of his writings, which included a *Syntagma* dealing with all known heresies.

[22] Cf. Markschies, *Valentinus*, 305–11.

Valentinus had ever been denounced by "the church." This apparent tolerance of the arch-heretic by the church presents Tertullian with a problem because he assumes that the church functioned in the same way in the mid-second century as it did at the beginning of the third. In order to explain why Valentinus was not explicitly expelled from the Roman church, as persons holding Valentinian views would certainly have been in Tertullian's own day, he is led to infer that Valentinus' heresy did not become manifest until a later period in his life, and/or that it most clearly revealed its true nature with his followers. Tertullian's presentation of Valentinus' development from orthodox to heretic thus seems to be more the result of his projection into past history of contemporary notions about the relationship between orthodoxy and heresy, and the methods for identifying and dealing with them, than a historically accurate report.[23]

In conclusion, Valentinus may be seen as the central figure of one particular Christian community in Rome within the decentralised configuration of various Christianities in the city. Apart from the apparent absence of organised mutual hostility, we do not know what the precise relations might have been between this community and the others in Valentinus' time. Nor do we know the kind of organisational strategies Valentinus himself may have envisaged—whether he sought, for instance, to create a network of his own ἐκκλησίαι in various parts of the empire. Nevertheless, it is certain that he did inspire enough followers for there to be, a generation after his death (in the 160s?), a diverse multitude of communities associated with his name both in the east and in the west, communities that were increasingly marginalised by the growing institutionalisation of the majority faction of Christianity.

The Sources for the Doctrine of Valentinus

Fragments

In order to learn something about what Valentinus may have taught, three kinds of sources are available. The first is a small number of

---

[23] The same anachronistic presuppositions may lie at the basis of Epiphanius' assertion that Valentinus became a heretic only in Cyprus (see above, 419n8). It follows from this that Tertullian's description of Valentinus cannot be used as evidence for a hypothesis about a distinction between a more or less orthodox Valentinus and his strongly heretical followers, as Markschies, *Valentinus*, 305–11, proposes.

rather short fragments of his writings.[24] We owe nearly all of them to Clement of Alexandria, who in his *Stromateis* cites six extracts from letters and homilies by Valentinus (frgs. 1–6 Vö.). In addition, a "psalm" (ψαλμός) has been preserved by Hippolytus (frg. 8).[25] Of these seven fragments we can be fairly certain.

Another "fragment" (frg. 7 Vö—which is not really a fragment at all, in the sense of an authentic piece of text, but rather a tradition—is reported by Hippolytus (*Haer.* VI 42:2): Valentinus is said to have "seen" (ἑωρακέναι—i.e., in a vision?) a small child, who, when Valentinus asked who it was answered that it was the Logos. It is difficult to assess the reliability of this report, which, in any case, is open to many different interpretations.

A spurious fragment (frg. 9 Vö.) is contained in a fourth century text that deals with the controversies over the Trinity (Ps.-Anthimius, *De Sancta Ecclesia* 9; the real author has been identified as Marcellus of Ancyra). It is claimed that Valentinus was the first to teach that the Father, Son and Holy Spirit were three hypostases, and that he did so in a book entitled Περὶ τῶν τριῶν φύσεων. It is not beyond the realm of the possible that Valentinus may have penned a work with this title (for instance, a homily), but in that case the title would certainly have referred to the three classes of mankind, not to theology. The tripartition of humans into three φύσεις is of course general Valentinian doctrine. But since there is no conclusive evidence that would lead us to assume that Marcellus possessed any special information about Valentinus or the Valentinians,[26] and the existence of such a work is not independently attested by other sources, this testimony must be regarded as untrustworthy and useless for practical purposes.[27]

---

[24] The first collection of the fragments was made by J.E. Grabe, in his *Spicilegium SS. Patrum ut et Haereticorum* (Oxford 1700), 50–54). After the complete text of Hipp. *Haer.* had become known (in 1851), A. Hilgenfeld added two more fragments from this source in 1880 ("Der Gnostiker Valentinus," 286–300; see also his *Ketzergeschichte,* 293–307). The most convenient collection is the one in Völker, *Quellen,* 57–60, here referred to as Vö. The most extensive study of the fragments is Markschies, *Valentinus.*

[25] That Valentinus composed psalms is confirmed by Tert. *Carn.* 17:1 (*cum psalmis Valentini*), cf. 20:3; by Orig., *Enarr. in Job* PG 17:80A (ψαλμοὺς Οὐαλεντίνου): and also by the final lines (81–85) of the Canon Muratori, though the text there is evidently muddled.

[26] The hypothesis of a Valentinian influence on the ecclesiology of Marcellus set forth by Hübner, *Einheit des Leibes Christi,* ch. 6, fails to persuade me.

[27] This is also the conclusion of Markschies, *Valentinus,* 264–70.

Another quotation from "Valentinus" (frg. 10 Markschies) is found in Photius, *Bibl.* Cod. 230. Here, Valentinus is made to scorn dyophysitism. This is of course anachronistic, and the quotation is certainly inauthentic.[28]

Markschies has suggested that the remark in Hipp. *Haer.* X 13:4, that Valentinus called the body "a leathery garment" and "the corrupt human being," may be added as another fragment from Valentinus (frg. 11 Markschies). It is, however, quite uncertain whether these words derive from Valentinus himself. It is at least as likely that Hippolytus' "Valentinus" here just means the Valentinians in general. Whether the report is a quotation from a specific text is uncertain as well.

It is possible, even likely, that further texts by Valentinus have been preserved. That *Gos. Truth* is a work of Valentinus remains, in my judgement, a distinct possibility. The quality of the text, and the authoritativeness of the voice that speaks in it, point in the direction of a Valentinian leader with a high degree of creative originality and charismatic power. Nor can the possibility be entirely rejected that a text such as *Treat. Res.* comes from the pen of Valentinus himself, although that text does not reach the same level of rhetorical refinement as *Gos. Truth*. On the other hand, there seems to be no way to demonstrate positively that Valentinus was actually the author of these texts, and they will for that reason not be considered in the present context. In general it is also quite likely that quotations from, and allusions to, texts by Valentinus are contained in the later Valentinian documents we possess, but we lack the means to identify them.

What we have, then, with near certainty, is one complete, but small text, the psalm, and six fragments from letters and homilies. The nature of this evidence is such that we cannot hope to reconstruct a coherent doctrine from it alone. It does not even allow us to assume that Valentinus had a coherent doctrine. Above all, the absence of the context in which the fragments originally stood makes their interpretation uncertain. A study of these fragments will nevertheless be undertaken in the following chapter. Before that, however, some words must be said about the other sources available for reconstructing the doctrine of Valentinus.

---

[28] Cf. Markschies, *Valentinus*, 270–75.

Doxographic reports

Of the various doxographic reports about Valentinus by the heresiologists, only the following three are of significance:

(1) Iren. *Haer.* I 11:1. Subject matter: Valentinus' system.
(2) Tert. *Val.* 4:2. Subject matter: Pleromatology.
(3) Tert. *Carn.* 15:1. Subject matter: Christology.[29]

These texts were already discussed above (chapters 2, 4, 22). As was observed in chapter 2, (1) and (2) are mutually incompatible. Irenaeus' report, it was suggested, is most probably adopted from an older heresiological work describing the doctrine of "Valentinus" on the basis of a Valentinian tractate of some kind, as well as other sources available to him. It is very unlikely that it represents the doctrine of Valentinus himself.

The two pieces of information offered by Tertullian are, however, of great interest. As was shown above (chapter 22), the statement in *Val.* 4:2, which contrasts two concepts of the Pleroma—one situating the aeons outside God, the other inside him—actually corresponds to two distinct types of protology attested in the sources, if allowance is made for some inaccuracy in Tertullian's account. It was also shown that the second of these (type A) appears to be the more primitive one, and that the first (type B) presupposes and may be understood as a further development of type A. This chronology is consistent with Tertullian's attribution to Valentinus himself of the view that the aeons were inside the deity, and his presentation of the contrasting opinion as an innovation introduced by Ptolemy.

With the note in *Carn.* 15:1, that Valentinus *carnem Christi spiritalem comminisci*, the situation is similar. As was shown in Part I of this study, the position that the body of Christ was spiritual has chronological priority over the theories envisaging a psychic body. As has also been demonstrated, this issue is connected with a specific soteriological doctrine of substitution: the Saviour brings down to earth a spiritual body while he himself is incarnated materially, in order that the those who are receptive of salvation may be liberated from their own material existence and share in the Saviour's spiritual

---

[29] In his survey of the doxographic evidence of the heresiologists (*Valentinus*, 363–87), Markschies deals extensively with the first of these reports, minimises the importance of the second, and does not consider the third at all.

nature. This soteriology of substitution, with the idea of a mutual sharing of bodies between the Saviour and the *salvandi*, lies at the very core of Valentinian theology, as a distinctive trait found in various modulations throughout the Valentinian corpus. Its centrality, distinctiveness, and pervasiveness in the sources strongly suggest that it is a legacy from Valentinus himself—it is in fact very difficult to conceive how this distinctive and common feature may be explained other than by assuming that it derives from a single common source. And what other source would be more likely to be common for *all* varieties of Valentinianism than Valentinus himself?

The common denominator

In principle, it should be possible to reconstruct the main features of Valentinus' teaching by defining them as the lowest common denominator of the various attested Valentinian systems and preserved texts. Naturally, such an approach can only attain approximate results, and must remain hypothetical. It is, however, an experiment justified by the actual family likeness of the Valentinian sources themselves, and which therefore both can and should be attempted.

The following elements may be considered in this regard:

(1) A soteriology of substitution that takes the form of a mutual participation and exchange of "bodies" between the Saviour and the *salvandi*. For Valentinus, this was a dialectic of spiritual and material bodies—the idea of a "psychic" body is a secondary development. The soteriological pattern of substitution as such is most probably indebted to Paul, with Valentinus interpreting Paul's language of "life" and "death" as referring to "spirit" and "body."

(2) The idea of a pre-existent *ekklesia* of the spirituals, which is at the same time the spiritual body of the Saviour. This pre-existent church-body came down and was incarnated together with the Saviour. It represents the hypostasised true selves of the spirituals. Acquiring these, the spirituals are integrated into the body of the Saviour and are redeemed from their material bodies.

(3) The act of substitution through which the spirituals are assimilated with the Saviour is ritually effected in baptism. This assimilation is closely connected with the idea that the baptismal ritual is a re-enactment of the Saviour's own baptism in the Jordan.

(4) The logic of mutual participation, expressed in the Valentinian ideology of salvation and ritually effected in baptism, required that the Saviour himself needed to be redeemed after his descent into matter. That which came down on the Saviour and redeemed him at his baptism is appropriated in turn by each baptismal candidate.

(5) Baptismal initiation is called "redemption" and "bridal chamber." Receiving the "Name" is an essential component of the initiation.

(6) The "Name" came down to redeem the Saviour himself at his paradigmatic baptism in the Jordan. It is also, however, identical with the pre-existent quality and status of the Saviour himself as the Son and Name of the Father.

(7) The "bridal chamber" refers to the union of the spiritual with his "angel." This union is thought to take place in the baptismal ritual, either actually or as a symbolic anticipation of an after-death reunion.

(8) Receiving the Saviour, receiving the "Name," becoming integrated into the body of the Saviour, and becoming united with one's angel all refer to one and the same redemptive event. (The angels accompanying the descending Saviour represent his multiple personifications directed at the spirituals as discrete individuals.) The various themes were probably not systematised into a coherent narrative by Valentinus himself; this would account for the difficulties and complications evident in the later systems, in particular with regard to the precise relationship between the Saviour's accompanying angels and the pre-existent *ekklesia*.

(9) The notion of *syzygoi*. The union that takes place in the redemptive event between the spiritual and his "angel," or "what belongs to him," has the form of a reunion of two separated parts that relate to one another as male and female. This syzygic relationship is the articulation, on the anthropological and soteriological levels, of an ontological principle that explains *both* the origins of the psycho-physical sphere of existence as a separated, "female" offshoot of a unitary, spiritual realm (the Pleroma, the Entirety) in which male and female originally existed in harmonious unity, *and* the possibility of a restoration of that original unity.

(10) Whether Valentinus named the separated, female entity responsible for the generation of matter "Wisdom" cannot be ascertained. The passion and fall of Sophia was an established mythological theme already before Valentinus, and was perhaps only implicitly alluded

to by him. The ideas found in the later Valentinian sources—about the separated, female aeon as the cosmogonic agent, as "mother" of the spirituals in the cosmos, and as the redeemed *syzygos* of the Saviour, paradigm for the syzygic relationships between her individual "children" and the Saviour' angels—seem in any case to be consistent with the ontology of unity and duality expressed by the notion of syzygies, which is one of the distinctive features of Valentinianism.

(11) The derivation of duality, and then plurality, from the oneness of the Father by means of one, two, or all three of the following processes: the Father duplicates himself as self-thinking thought, he gives birth to a Son from within himself, or he gives himself a Name. All three themes are elaborated in later Valentinianism. As Mind and Name, the Son mediates the generation of a multiple Pleroma.

(12) The Father is called Bythos, a designation that depicts him as the inconceivable Depths in which the entirety of his offspring already pre-exists in a hidden, potential state.

(13) The transition from unity to multiplicity takes place both as a manifestation and by a spreading out and an extension culminating in the "cutting off" of a proto-material entity—a Neopythagorean theory of derivation from monistic premises.

(14) The Neopythagorean theory of spreading out and extension that results in the separation of the intelligible and materiality, is homologised with the Christian narrative of the passion of the Saviour. Associated with this combination of ideas is the identification of the cross with the Limit.

(15) The generation, or manifestation, of the Father's offspring is a continuous process, and the only process that produces real, or actual, existence. In comparison, the events leading to the creation of the psycho-physical cosmos lack reality, as does the cosmos itself. The restoration of the spirituals to the transmundane realm of the Pleroma is, from this point of view, equivalent to the dissolution of the illusion of the cosmos and the consummation of the original generative process. The soteriology is thus in the last instance a protology, and baptismal regeneration not only mirrors but completes the generation of the Entirety.

Doubtless, additional elements could be considered as well, such as the internal structure of συμφωνία and εὐδοκία characteristic of the Pleroma, the cosmogonical narrative and the role of the Demiurge,

the anthropogony and the tripartite anthropology derived from Platonism, a demonology, epistemological theories associated with "naming," and certain views about Scripture and prophecy, and on the Jews and Greek science. Enough elements have nonetheless been listed above to give the outlines of a distinctive theological vision that can be hypothetically identified as that of Valentinus himself and constituting the shared source of all the later variants of "Valentinianism."

VALENTINUS: A STUDY OF THE FRAGMENTS

Building on the insights gained from the study of Valentinianism made in this book, this chapter takes a new look at the fragments preserved from Valentinus himself. As was said in the preceding chapter, there are seven fragments in all that have a reasonable claim to authenticity, six of them preserved by Clement of Alexandria and one by Hippolytus of Rome. Thematically, they deal with anthropogonical myth, anthropology, and ethics (frgs. 1, 2, 4), Christology (frg. 3), cosmology (frgs. 5, 8), and epistemology (frg. 6). They do not allow the reconstruction of a coherent body of teachings in the sense of the preserved Valentinian systems. It remains, indeed, doubtful whether Valentinus ever put such a system into writing,[1] though he may of course have expounded his ideas in a systematic form in his oral teaching. In interpreting these fragments it must, naturally, be taken into account that they belong to an early phase of Valentinianism; thus, they are not to be uncritically harmonised with the later Valentinian documents. At the same time, it must also be taken into account that Valentinus served as the point of departure and a source of inspiration for the following generations of Valentinians.

Fragment 1

καὶ ὡσπερεὶ φόβος ἐπ᾿ ἐκείνου τοῦ πλάσματος ὑπῆρξε τοῖς ἀγγέλοις, ὅτε μείζονα ἐφθέγξατο τῆς πλάσεως διὰ τὸν ἀοράτως ἐν αὐτῷ σπέρμα δεδωκότα τῆς ἄνωθεν οὐσίας καὶ παρρησιαζόμενον· οὕτω καὶ ἐν ταῖς γενεαῖς τῶν κοσμικῶν ἀνθρώπων φόβοι τὰ ἔργα τῶν ἀνθρώπων τοῖς ποιοῦσιν ἐγένετο, οἷον ἀνδριάντες καὶ

And just as in the presence of that modelled figure fear fell on the angels when it emitted sounds that surpassed its modelling because of the one who had invisibly deposited in it a seed of the substance above and openly spoke, thus also among the generations of cosmic humans the works of

---

[1] If he did, the disappearance of such a text would be something of a mystery. Also, one would have expected a systematic treatise by Valentinus to have put a check on the many variations of the system, especially the ones attested in Iren. *Haer.* I 11–12, which are hardly conceivable had there existed an authoritative version by Valentinus himself.

εἰκόνες καὶ πάνθ᾽ ἃ χεῖρες ἀνύουσιν εἰς ὄνομα θεοῦ· εἰς γὰρ ὄνομα ἀνθρώπου πλασθεὶς Ἀδὰμ φόβον παρέσχεν προόντος ἀνθρώπου ὡς δὴ αὐτοῦ ἐν αὐτῷ κατεστῶτος, καὶ κατεπλάγησαν καὶ ταχὺ τὸ ἔργον ἠφάνισαν.

humans become objects of fear for the ones who make them, as in the case of statues, images and everything that hands fashion in the name of a god. For having been modelled in the name of "Man," Adam caused fear of pre-existent Man, since he in fact was present in him. So they were terrified and quickly did away with their work. (Clem. Alex. *Str.* II 36:2–4)

According to Clement this is a direct quotation from a letter by Valentinus (Οὐαλεντῖνος ἔν τινι ἐπιστολῇ . . . αὐταῖς γράφειν ταῖς λέχεσι). The *topos* of the passage is the fear of their own creation that came over the angels after they had moulded Adam, which Valentinus compares to the fear displayed by human beings towards cult images they have made with their own hands. The analogy is not complete, however, especially since the final sentence, καὶ ταχὺ τὸ ἔργον ἠφάνισαν, obviously only applies to the work of the angels.[2] This shows that the centre of attention in the text is the anthropogonical story, not the attitude of humans towards idols.[3]

The elements of the story that can be gathered from the fragment are: (1) the first human, Adam, was modelled by angels; (2) somebody else deposited in that creation a seed from a "substance" above: Adam was in fact modelled "in the name of" pre-existent Man, who consequently was in him; (3) the one who provided the seed made himself known through Adam's speech; (4) the creating angels were frightened; (5) they consequently "did away" with Adam. One has the impression that Valentinus presupposes that his audience is familiar with the story, either because he is referring to an already existing, well-known narrative, or because he has expounded the story himself earlier in the letter (or both).

The creation of Adam by angels

The idea that angels were partly or wholly responsible for creating the first human (and/or the world) is of course widespread; it typically appears in many "gnostic" anthropogonies, but is also attested

---

[2] As observed by Holzhausen, *Mythos*, 83.
[3] On the contrary Markschies, *Valentinus*, 39, thinks that, in this text, man's fear of the idols made by his own hands is, "das, was sein Autor eigentlich erklären wollte" (similarly in his concluding "Gesamtinterpretation," 52).

in early Judaism.[4] Valentinian anthropogonies generally attribute the creation of the first human's choïc and psychic components to the Demiurge—though Sophia is the actual creator, using the Demiurge as an unwitting tool.[5] It is to be noted that two of the Valentinian accounts explicitly mention that angels subservient to the Demiurge also took part in the creation of the first human: *Exc.* 50:2 says that the Demiurge infused the psychic component into Adam with the help of his angels (δι᾽ ἀγγέλων).[6] According to *Tri. Trac.*, moreover, "the Demiurge and his subservient angels" performed the anthropogony, with the result that the first human is "[a] creation of them all, the right as well as the left, each of [the] orders giving form to [the human being according to] its own [manner] of being" (104:35–105:10).

Nevertheless, a certain discrepancy seems to exist between Valentinus' statement that "angels" created the first human, and the later Valentinian accounts that give the Demiurge the central role in the act of creation.[7] This discrepancy can be alleviated, however, in several ways. First, as we have seen, two of the versions of the anthropogony (*Tri. Trac.* and *Exc.* 50:2) involve "angels" in the creative work in addition to the Demiurge. It is not unlikely that in the other accounts as well, the existence of subordinate angels assisting the Demiurge may be presupposed, even if they are not explicitly mentioned. Secondly, Valentinus' reference to the angels in this passage does not exclude the possibility that he may also have entertained more specific notions about the agents involved in the creation, such as the idea that those angels had a leader or a ruler, for instance.[8] The mention of the "angels" may serve simply as a shorthand reference to the anthropogonic myth in a context that does not need further

---

[4] Cf. Michl, in *RAC* V 83 (Philo), 84 (early Judaism), 105–6 (Gnostics). The evidence is also surveyed by Markschies, *Valentinus*, 18–24. Also cf. van den Broek, "Creation of Adam's Psychic Body."

[5] Cf. Iren. *Haer.* I 5:3.5–6; Hipp. *Haer.* VI 34:4–6; *Exc.* 41:4 end, 50–53; *Val. Exp.* 37:32–36; *Tri. Trac.* 104:30–105:35.

[6] Cf. Kasser *et al.*, *Tractatus Tripartitus*, II 195–96; Thomassen and Painchaud, *Traité tripartite*, 403.

[7] Markschies, *Valentinus*, 23, 27, speaks at this point of an "Unterschied," and even a "Gegensatz" between Valentinus and his pupils.

[8] In *Tri. Trac.* 100:18–21, the Archon-Demiurge is described as the highest of all the cosmic archons (who are also called "angels," e.g., 99:36–100:1). The creation of the world, as well as of the first human, is a collective work, with the Archon-Demiurge as the leader.

details to be mentioned. Moreover, since Valentinus is here setting up a parallel between the behaviour of earthly humans, in the plural (κοσμικοὶ ἄνθρωποι),[9] and that of the celestial, superhuman creators, the use of a plural form to denote the latter is stylistically desirable.

Thirdly, even if it were assumed that Valentinus himself only named the "angels" as the agents of creation,[10] and that his followers in the next generation were the ones who introduced the figure of the Demiurge, this difference need by no means be seen as a dramatic deviation from the master's teachings on the part of his disciples. Rather, that situation would be an instance of a pattern of development that is widely attested in second century Gnosticism. In the oldest versions of the typically gnostic myth of creation, a collective of angels is in fact made responsible for the creation of the world and of the human protoplast.[11] Later, a distinct creator figure makes its appearance, like Yaldabaoth in the *Apocryphon of John* and other more or less "Sethian" texts.[12] It is possible that Valentinus' frame of reference was this more archaic version of the gnostic myth, and that later Valentinians elaborated the theory by introducing a chief creator figure, in accordance with the current theological fashion. The meagre evidence offered by the fragment, however, does not really allow us to draw a confident conclusion as to Valentinus' views about the relationship between the creating angels and a demiurgical figure.[13]

---

[9] κοσμικός is probably value-neutral here (*pace* Markschies, *Valentinus*, 40); the word seems to refer to humans, who live in the cosmos, as opposed to the angels who reside in a higher region (such as the Hebdomad) and existed before the cosmos was made.

[10] Naturally, there is always the possibility that Valentinus' own ideas may have changed or developed during his life.

[11] Simon, Menander, Saturnilus, Carpocrates (Iren. *Haer.* I 23:2.3.5, 24:1, 25:1). Only in the case of Saturnilus (ibid. 24:1) is the creation of the first human explicitly mentioned.

[12] Cf. Thomassen, "Demiurge," 228–29.

[13] The Demiurge is not an indispensable element of the Valentinian system, as can be seen from *Tri. Trac.* 100:18–101:5, where the Archon-Demiurge is introduced as the chief of the cosmic powers almost as an afterthought, after the system of those powers has been described at length. It should also be pointed out that the Valentinian Demiurge is called the Hebdomad (Iren. *Haer.* I 5:2, Hipp. *Haer.* VI 32:7), thus he can also be seen as a personification of the collective seven planetary powers. These powers are "angels," as is also the Demiurge himself (Iren. ibid.).

The seed from above

That a superior seed was introduced into the psychophysical proto-plast by a higher being is of course a familiar idea in later Valentinianism. According to Iren. *Haer.* I 5:6 and *Exc.* 53:2–5, Sophia/Achamoth deposited into the first human the spiritual element that she had brought forth after her vision of the Saviour and his angels.[14] In *Tri. Trac.* 105:10–35, similarly, "the spiritual Logos" per-forms this task. Hipp. *Haer.* VI 34:6 differs somewhat on this point, since the deposition of the spiritual seed seems not to form part of the anthropogonic account, and only certain individuals are said to possess the *logos*/seed,[15] which is sown into each of them separately by the "Joint Fruit" (i.e., the Saviour) together with Sophia.

In the Valentinus fragment, a male figure—thus obviously not Sophia—is the one who deposits the seed. The closest parallel for this is *Exc.* 2:1–2:[16]

οἱ δ᾽ ἀπὸ Οὐαλεντίνου, πλασθέντος φασὶ τοῦ ψυχικοῦ σώματος, τῇ ἐκλεκτῇ ψυχῇ οὔσῃ ἐν ὕπνῳ ἐντεθῆναι ὑπὸ τοῦ Λόγου σπέρμα ἀρρενικόν, ὅπερ ἐστὶν ἀπόρροια τοῦ ἀγγελικοῦ, ἵνα μὴ ὑστέρημα ᾖ. καὶ τοῦτο ἐζύμωσεν, τὰ δόξαντα καταδιῃρῆσθαι ἑνοποιοῦν, τὴν ψυχὴν καὶ τὴν σάρκα, ἃ καὶ ἐν μερισμῷ ὑπὸ τῆς Σοφίας προηνέχθη. ὕπνος δὲ ἦν Ἀδὰμ ἡ λήθη τῆς ψυχῆς, ἣν συνεῖχε μὴ διαλυθῆναι τὸ σπέρμα τὸ πνευματικόν,	(2:1) The Valentinians say that, when the psychic body had been formed, a male seed was implanted by the Logos in the elect soul while it slept, a seed that is an effluence of the angelic (substance), in order that there should be no deficiency. (2) And this operated like leaven, unifying what appeared to be separated, namely, the soul and the flesh, which had in fact been brought forth separately by

---

[14] *Val. Exp.* seems to have a similar version: After having told how the Demiurge fashioned the human being, the text goes on to say, "It was this sort of dwelling place that she used for the seeds, namely [. . . .]" (37:36–38), The subject lost in the lacuna must have been "Sophia," or some other term denoting her. The following ten lines are lost, and may have contained further details about the anthropogony.

[15] This is apparently the case according to *Tri. Trac.* 105:35–106:5 as well, where the creation of specific psychic and hylic humans is mentioned. The notion of three races is also found in Iren. *Haer.* I 6:1, 7:5; *Exc.* 54:1; cf. *Tri. Trac.* 118:14–17. It does not seem to be always, or fully, harmonised with the anthropogonical accounts, which suggest that Adam, who received the seed, is the ancestor of *all* humans.

[16] Cf. Hilgenfeld, *Ketzergeschichte*, 294–95 (though he erroneously calls the Saviour an "aeon"); Stead, "Search," 82. Markschies, *Valentinus*, 33, rejects this as a paral-lel, but only because he fails to take into account the fact that the angels from which the seed is derived are a different group from that of the terrified angels who had fashioned Adam's psychic body.

ὅπερ ἐνέθηκεν τῇ ψυχῇ ὁ σωτήρ. τὸ σπέρμα δ᾽ ἀπόρροια ἦν τοῦ ἄρρενος καὶ ἀγγελικοῦ.[17]

Sophia. Sleep was for Adam the oblivion of the soul, which the spiritual seed, implanted by the Saviour in the soul, held together in order that it might not be dissolved. The seed was an effluence of the male and angelic.

According to this text, the Logos-Saviour deposits the seed into Adam directly, without Sophia as an intermediary. This seed is an ἀπόρροια of the male and the angelic, that is, it derives from the Logos-Saviour himself and his angels.[18] In the fragment, the precise mythological explanation of the origins of the spiritual seed is not indicated; it is said simply to be a σπέρμα . . . τῆς ἄνωθεν οὐσίας. That expression is, however, fully compatible with the standard Valentinian mythology, according to which the spiritual seed originates in Sophia's vision of the Saviour and his angels, who are in turn a manifestation of the Pleroma. How much of that mythology should be presupposed in the fragment is hard to say, but it is fairly clear that the figure depositing the seed must be the Logos-Saviour, as the manifesting agent of the Father.[19]

Further information relevant to the issue of the identities of the sower and the seed is given towards the end of the fragment: Adam was modelled "in the name" of a pre-existent ἄνθρωπος, and this pre-existent

---

[17] I follow Sagnard's text. For our purposes we do not need to discuss the text-critical problems of the passage ὕπνος . . . πνευματικόν.

[18] The more precise systematic interpretation of this theme in the excerpt raises difficult questions. It is not unlikely that *Exc.* 2–3 comes from the same source as *Exc.* 21–22 (and 35–36), and should be interpreted in conjunction with those excerpts. *Exc.* 21 unfolds a theory according to which Sophia produced two classes of seeds, that is, male seeds, who are ἀρρενικά and ἀγγελικά, and female seeds, who are "we" (spiritual) humans. These "female" humans will be united with their "male" angelic counterparts. As is not infrequently the case in the Valentinian systems, however, it remains unclear to what extent the "angels" who were the Saviour's attendants, and who are the manifested forms of the aeons, remain distinct from the ἀγγελικά produced by Sophia as images of the former, and who participate in the descent and baptism of the Saviour-Logos; see above, 396). At any rate, if *Exc.* 2 is to be interpreted on the background of *Exc.* 21–22, we must assume that the Logos inserted an "effluence" from the male, angelic seed into Adam (whose soul already contained Sophia's female seed as well), which thus made humans latently receptive of the maleness later to be revealed in full by the Saviour and the angels.

[19] That the Father himself should perform this act without an intermediary, as suggested by Markschies, *Valentinus*, 36, I find very improbable. The very form of the expression—"the one who had invisibly deposited"—points in the direction of a specific figure in a larger narrative, rather than to God himself.

human being was "in" him as well. The formulation of the sentence
is not entirely transparent, especially as regards the actual meaning
in this context of the expression "in the name of." The difficulty is
that Valentinus' analogy between the angels' modelling of Adam and
the human fabrication of idols suggests that it is the angels who
attach a name to their πλάσμα in order to make it into an image
of a more exalted model, just as human artisans may indicate (by
means of an inscription) the names of the gods represented by the
idols they make. Moreover, the phrase εἰς . . . ὄνομα . . . πλασθείς
might seem to imply that the naming is associated with the act of
modelling as such. On the other hand, it is hard to avoid the impres-
sion that the relationship between the image and the model expressed
by the notion of the name actually refers to the same thing as the
seed deposited invisibly in Adam by the Logos-Saviour, which is also
the presence of the pre-existent ἄνθρωπος in him—that which causes
the angels' fear when it unexpectedly manifests itself. If that is the
case, however, the angels, unlike their human analogues, must be
ignorant of the identity and the name of the model of their artefact.

This difficulty highlights the fact that we are given very little exact
information in the fragment about the underlying anthropogonic nar-
rative. Did the angels fashion the first human after having had a
vision of a heavenly prototype? Had the model manifested itself for
a brief moment, or been reflected in the waters below, for instance?
Or were the angels perhaps moved by a higher power who knew
the model while they did not?[20] We are not told. It may well be
that we should not press the analogy between creating angels and
human artisans so far as to assume that the angels deliberately set
out to make a representation of a heavenly prototype. The empha-
sis in the account seems, at any rate, to lie elsewhere: on the fact
that, having been fashioned "in the name of" pre-existent Man,
Adam possessed that Man within him. This suggests that the phrase
εἰς . . . ὄνομα . . . πλασθείς should not be interpreted as referring to
the intention of the angels in creating Adam, but simply as a state-
ment of fact: when Adam was being modelled, the one who deposited
the seed causing pre-existent Man to dwell in him made Adam into

---

[20] For different versions in this regard, cf., for example, *Ap. John* NHC II
14:13–15:13, 19:31–32; *Hyp. Arch.* 87:11–33; *Gos. Eg.* NHC III 59:1–9; *Ep. Pet. Phil.*
136:7–15; Saturnilus, in Iren. *Haer.* I 24:1.

an image of that Man, a relationship that is expressed by the formula that Adam then came to be shaped "in the name of" that pre-existent model. The modelling of Adam by the angels, and the deposition of the seed are not separate events in time, but take place simultaneously.[21] Once modelled, Adam already possessed the seed and his quality as an image of Man.

The pre-existent Man

Who is this pre-existent Man?[22] The answer to this question should not, in the first instance, be sought in the fact that the supreme deity, the Father, is sometimes called "Man,"[23] or in the occurrence of Ἄνθρωπος as the name of an aeon belonging to the primal Ogdoad of the 30 aeons systems. Rather, attention should be focused on the general structure of Valentinian anthropogony. The spiritual seed that is deposited in the first human derives, as we know, from Sophia's vision of the Saviour and his accompanying angels. These, who represent the outward manifestation of the Pleroma, function as the model from which the spiritual seed is brought forth as an image:

τὴν δὲ Ἀχαμὼθ ἐκτὸς τοῦ πάθους γενομένην, [καὶ] συλλαβοῦσαν τῇ χαρᾷ τῶν σὺν αὐτῷ φώτων τὴν θεωρίαν, τουτέστιν τῶν ἀγγέλων τῶν μετ' αὐτοῦ, καὶ ἐγκισσήσασαν <εἰς> αὐτούς, κεκυηκέναι καρποὺς κατὰ τὴν <ἐκείνων> εἰκόνα διδάσκουσι, κύημα πνευματικὸν καθ' ὁμοίωσιν γεγονὸς τῶν δορυφόρων τοῦ σωτῆρος.	But Achamoth, freed from her passions, received with joy her vision of the lights coming with him, that is, the angels with him, became pregnant <in front of> them, and—so they teach—gave birth to progeny after <their> image, a spiritual offspring that came into being after the likeness of the Saviour's bodyguards. (Iren. *Haer.* I 4:5 end)

The passage evidently alludes to Gen 1:26 (κατ' εἰκόνα, καθ' ὁμοίωσιν).[24] This can only mean that the Saviour and his angels (who constitute one being with multiple forms) collectively represent the archetypal Man in whose image Sophia gave birth to the spiritual seed.

---

[21] This is well argued by Holzhausen, *Mythos*, 90–94.

[22] Cf. Quispel, "Conception de l'Homme," 45–46; Stead, "Search," 82; Markschies, *Valentinus*, 44–50; Holzhausen, *Mythos*, 88–96.

[23] Hilgenfeld, *Ketzergeschichte*, 294, who refers to the *gnostikoi* of Iren. *Haer.* I 30:6, and the Valentinian opinion briefly mentioned in Iren. *Haer.* I 12:4; cf. also Förster, *Von Valentin*, 92, and Stead, "Search," 82 (who supplies more evidence but rejects this interpretation).

[24] It is a little surprising that this allusion is not noted by the editors of Irenaeus.

The same motif appears in *Tri. Trac*. After the Son and Saviour—
with the whole Pleroma dwelling in him—has manifested himself to
the fallen Logos (86:23–88:27), the Logos is liberated from the pow-
ers of passion, and sings a song of praise:

> <He> rejoiced in the visitation of his brothers who had come to visit
> him. He gave glory and praise to them for having revealed themselves
> in order to help him, he gave thanks that he had been freed from
> those who had revolted against him, and he admired and praised the
> Greatness and those who had resolved to reveal themselves to him.
> He brought forth visible images of the living forms. They were beau-
> tiful and good since they derived from those who are, and they resem-
> ble them in beauty, though they are not truly equal with them because
> they did not issue from a union between him who brought them forth
> and the one who had revealed himself to him. (90:23–91:1)

This account parallels the one in Irenaeus, and here as well the nature
of the spiritual seed as an image of the Pleroma, manifested in the
Son, is underlined (although *Tri. Trac.*'s version has stronger Platonist
connotations, and less strong Biblical ones, than that of Irenaeus).[25]

Exc. 21:1 contains another variation on the same theme:[26]

> The words "after the image of God he made them, male and female
> he made them" the Valentinians say refer to the noblest emission of
> Sophia. The male parts of that emission are the elect, and the female
> the called. Moreover, the males are the angelic parts, while the females
> are themselves, the distinct seed.

This version makes a distinction between two parts of the spiritual
seed: the male angels and the female humans. The latter part of the
seed is the one that will enter into created humanity, whereas the
angelic parts will accompany the Saviour as his body at the time of
his incarnation so as to be reunited with their human counterparts
through baptismal initiation (*Exc*. 21:3–22:6, 35–36).[27] What went
before and caused Sophia's emission of the seed is not related in
this excerpt, but it can hardly be anything other than the vision of

---

In view of this reference to the text of Gen 1:26, it may be asked whether RD's
insertion of <ἐκείνων> is really necessary (cf. RD I/1 194). The Latin version, on
the other hand, has *secundum illius imaginem*. This could mean that the translator
added *illius* as a gloss, but also that the Greek text had κατὰ τὴν <ἐκείνου> εἰκόνα,
relating κατ' εἰκόνα to the Saviour and καθ' ὁμοίωσιν to the angels.

[25] Cf. Thomassen and Painchaud, *Traité tripartite*, 373.
[26] For this text, also see above, 377–78.
[27] For the particular theory of the angels here, cf. above, 378–80.

the Pleroma, personified by the Saviour, who in this way manifested "God"—that is, the Father—and thereby provided the model for the emitted seed.

The spiritual seed, or a part of it,[28] is subsequently inserted into the first human. Iren. *Haer.* I 5:6 at this point adds the interesting remark that the seed is also named "church," because it is an image of "the church above," though it is also the "human being" inside the spirituals (ὅ δὲ καὶ αὐτὸ ἐκκλησίαν εἶναι λέγουσιν, ἀντίτυπον τῆς ἄνω ἐκκλησίας· καὶ τόνδε εἶναι τὸν ἐν αὐτοῖς ἄνθρωπον ἀξιοῦσιν). It is not clear exactly with what this higher ἐκκλησία is to be identified. It may be a community of spiritual beings that remains behind in the intermediary realm together with their Mother, as in *Tri. Trac.*,[29] functioning in a way similar to the angels in *Exc.* 21; but it is also conceivable that the reference may be to the Pleroma itself.[30] What seems clear, at any rate, is the fact that the πνευματικός ἄνθρωπος (I 5:6 end), the "inner man," is an image of a heavenly model that is both a unitary archetypal Man and a multiple church.

From these texts a common pattern of ideas emerges, according to which the spiritual component of the human protoplast originated as an image of an archetypal model, a Primal Man who manifested himself as simultaneously one and many. This Primal Man is the Son— or the Saviour, the Logos, the "Fruit," or Jesus (the various names are basically just different modalities of the same mediating figure). He, together with his "angels," is in turn the outward representation of the Pleroma, which itself constitutes the unfolding of the Father into a multiple and unified totality. In this way the Son is the image of God, after which spiritual man is subsequently generated.

As a matter of fact, *Tri. Trac.* explicitly says of the Son that, "he is in truth the Father's only first man" (66:10–12). The text then goes on to explain that he is "the form of the formless, the body of the bodiless, the face of the invisible, the *logos* of the inscrutable, the

---

[28] Cf. above, 378–80.

[29] *Tri. Trac.* (94:20–21, 97:5–9) explicitly states that the spiritual seed forms an ἐκκλησία in the sub-pleromatic and hypercosmic region of the spiritual Logos (corresponding to the "Middle" of Irenaeus' main system); this church is itself, however, an image of the church formed by the aeons in the Pleroma.

[30] Cf. the preceding note. No clue seems to be given as to the identity of this "higher ἐκκλησία" in Irenaeus' previous report on the system, and the way Irenaeus makes this remark suggests that he may here be using another source (oral or written).

intellect of the incomprehensible . . ." (66:13–17). These expressions can only mean that the Son, in his quality as Primal Man, is the manifested image of the hidden Father.[31] Moreover, the Son is also co-extensive with the Pleroma, for he encompasses and dwells in the innumerable "entireties" that make up the divine Pleroma as so many qualities of the Father. In this way he is not only the one Name of the unnameable Father, but also incorporates all the individual "names" that the aeons carry as a multiple and indivisible totality (65:35–67:34).

The underlying idea therefore is that the Son, spreading out into the Pleroma and being co-extensive with it, is the manifested representation of the Father and as such the archetypal Man. An image of this transcendent Anthropos figure is in turn deposited as the spiritual seed, or the inner man, of the earthly human being. An interpretation along these lines is probably the best approach to the προὼν ἄνθρωπος in the Valentinus fragment as well: the "pre-existent Man" is identical with the Son-Pleroma as the manifested form of the hidden Father.

This idea, which is explicitly preserved in *Tri. Trac.*, and can be discerned as an underlying presupposition in the accounts given in the various systems of the generation of the spiritual seed, also seems to explain the other instances of the name Anthropos in Valentinian systems. The association of Man and Church as the third syzygy of the first Ogdoad in the thirty aeons system appears to reflect the idea that the spiritual seed is the image of a Primal Man who is also a multiple entity. The seed is not only the image of Man as an individual, but collectively constitutes a spiritual church as well, which is the image of a transcendent community; the "inner man" of Iren. *Haer.* I 5:6 (cf. above) is at the same time an ἀντίτυπον τῆς ἄνω ἐκκλησίας. The thirty aeons system lays out as individual aeons in a hierarchical system of derivation what was originally no doubt conceived as something more fluid, as a structure of the kind evidenced by *Tri. Trac.*, where the Son "is all the names" (66:9), and each of

---

[31] The text makes a clear link, indicated by the expression ⲉⲧⲉ ⲡⲁⲉⲓ ⲡⲉ, between the idea of the First Man as such and his role as the manifested form of the Father: ⲛⲧⲁϥ ⲡⲉ ⲡⲓϣⲁ[ⲣ]ⲡ̄ ⲟⲩⲁⲉⲉⲧⲅ̄ ϩⲛ̄ⲛ ⲟⲩⲙⲛ̄ⲧ̄ⲭⲁⲓ̈ⲥ [ⲛ̄]ⲣⲱⲙⲉ ⲛ̄ⲧⲉ ⲡⲓⲱⲧ ⲉⲧⲉ ⲡⲁⲉⲓ ⲡⲉ ⲉⲧ̇[ϫⲱ] ⲙ̄ⲙⲟϥ ⲧⲙⲟⲣⲫⲏ ⲛ̄ⲧⲉ ⲡⲓⲁⲧⲙⲟⲣⲫⲏ etc. (66:10–13). For a discussion of the symbolism of the Primal Man in *Tri. Trac.* 65:35–67:34 generally, cf. Thomassen and Painchaud, *Traité tripartite*, 307–10.

the aeons as well is potentially all the others (esp. 65:35–67:34).[32] From this point of view, "Man" may be seen as an aspect of the Pleroma as a whole rather than simply one separate member.

The significance of the Anthropos theme is also evident in the somewhat curious piece of information given by Iren. *Haer.* I 12:4 (end), that some Valentinians named the First Father himself "Man."[33] This position probably arose as an inference from the premise that a Primal Man figure is the manifested image of the Father: hence the Father must himself be the very first, archetypal Man.[34]

Both these versions of the Valentinian Primal Man motif can thus be explained as elaborations of the following primitive scheme (where the arrows stand for a relation of model and image):

$$\text{The Father}$$
$$\Downarrow$$
$$\text{His image} = \text{Primal Man} = \text{the Son} = \text{the Pleroma}$$
$$\Downarrow$$
$$\text{The spiritual seed} = \text{the inner man}$$
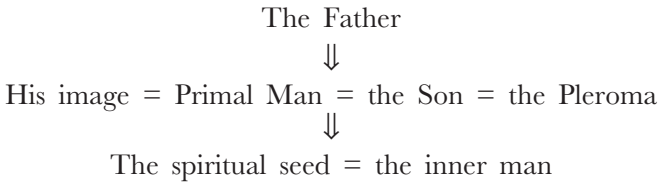
This elementary pattern, underlying all the Valentinian systems, was in all likelihood envisaged by Valentinus himself. Of course, simply on the basis of the fragment, it cannot be assumed that Valentinus was also responsible for elaborating the various intermediary features of the systems: the Saviour and his angels manifesting the Pleroma to a fallen aeon, the latter's emission of a spiritual seed as an image of what was manifested, and the insertion of that seed into the first human by the Saviour-Logos, or by Sophia/the fallen aeon. Nor

---

[32] This idea is still retained in Iren. *Haer.* I 2:6, where the Holy Spirit consolidates the Pleroma after the restoration of the upper Sophia, by making each aeon simultaneously all the others.

[33] "And there are others who assert that the Forefather of all things himself, the Pre-beginning and the Pre-unthinkable, is called 'Man,' and that this is the great and hidden mystery—namely, that the power which is above all and which embraces all is termed Man. And because of this the Saviour designates himself Son of Man."

[34] As further evidence for the idea that the Pleroma as such is conceived as Primal Man, one of Clement of Alexandria's comments on the Valentinus fragment may also be considered (cf. Thomassen and Painchaud, *Traité tripartite*, 309). According to an emendation suggested by Nautin, and accepted by Mondésert in the SC edition of *Str.* II (SC 38), Clement in *Str.* II 38:5 makes a reference to "the Man in the Pleroma" (τῷ ἐν πληρώματι ἀνθρώπῳ). This would suggest that Clement understands the Valentinian archetypal Man to be co-extensive with, or an aspect of, the Pleroma. The reading of the passage remains, however, uncertain.

can it be assumed, however, that these features do *not* go back to Valentinus, since they are fully compatible with the fragment. Indeed, in view of the fact that they recur in all known versions of the Valentinian system, the most economical hypothesis as to their origin would be to attribute them to Valentinus himself.

The Name

A further element that deserves attention is the expression εἰς ὄνομα, which is used in the fragment to describe the first human as an image of pre-existent Man—or, more precisely, to denote the spiritual component that makes the created human into more than a mere *plasma* and gives him a shared nature with his model. Considering the importance of the notion of the "Name" in Valentinian theology generally, it is difficult not to suspect that the expression may have a significance here that goes far beyond that of the common idiom "in the name of." Just as the Name comes down to impart the spirit in baptism, it is conceivable that the deposition of the seed in Adam, his reception of a spiritual component, may have been described as his endowment with the Name as well. It is, after all, the fact that he was created "in the name of" pre-existent Man that makes the latter dwell in him.[35] On the other hand, such a reception of the Name by Adam does not seem to be thematised in the known Valentinian accounts of the anthropogony,[36] a fact that makes this interpretation more hypothetical.[37]

The "open speech"

The next element in the fragmentary narrative is the statement that the one who had deposited the seed into Adam "openly spoke" (παρ-

---

[35] Cf., for example, *Exc.* 86:2 (commenting on Caesar's coin, in Matt 22:20): "Thus it is with the believer too: He possesses, through Christ, the name of God as an inscription and the spirit as an image" (ἐπιγραφὴν μὲν ἔχει διὰ Χριστοῦ τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ θεοῦ, τὸ δὲ πνεῦμα ὡς εἰκόνα). See also above, 333–34.

[36] *Tri. Trac.* 106:6–7, where the spiritual component of the first human is described, may provide the desired parallel, but the crucial word is damaged and uncertain on the papyrus. If ογ/[ρ]ε̄ⲛ̄ ⲧⲉ is restored, the following text emerges: "The spiritual substance is a [nam]e and a single image." (Cf. Kasser *et al.*, *Tractatus Tripartitus, in loc.*; Thomassen and Painchaud, *Traité tripartite*, with note p. 406.) The reading ογ/ⲉⲓⲉ ⲧⲉ ("... is singular") may be preferable, however (cf. Attridge and Pagels, in Attridge, *Nag Hammadi Codex I, in loc.*).

[37] See also, however, the discussion of fragment 5, below, 465–73.

ρησιαζόμενον). The translation and interpretation of that word call for several comments. As far as the subject of the verb is concerned, both τὸ πλάσμα, τὸν δεδωκότα, and τὸ σπέρμα are syntactically possible.[38] The choice between these alternatives depends in turn on the proper understanding of the meaning of παρρησιάζομαι, whose semantics are complex.[39] The general notion of "speaking freely, viz. boldly, in public" embraces both (1) the idea of speech as such, (2) a particular attitude of the speaker, and (3) the open, public nature of the act; the emphasis in a given context may lie on either of these elements. In the present context, the idea of speech is evidently present, given the reference to the fact that Adam ἐφθέγξατο, "emitted sounds." Further, the word παρρησιαζόμενον is clearly to be understood in contrast to the hidden manner (ἀοράτως) in which the seed was deposited: the angels had not observed the insertion of the seed into their πλάσμα, which is why they were amazed when it revealed itself through Adam's speech. In the present context, the emphasis of the word thus lies partly on the idea of a manifestation of something that had been hidden and unrecognised, and partly on the idea that this manifestation took place through an act of speaking. Adam's mental disposition, his "boldness," etc., does not, on the other hand, seem to be an issue in the narrative.

These considerations rule out the possibility that the πλάσμα should be taken as the subject of παρρησιαζόμενον; it was not the angels' own creation that revealed itself and caused them to be afraid, but rather the hidden seed, which they did not suspect was contained in it. On the other hand, the notion of a seed that speaks is difficult,[40] and the syntax (with καί) would be unusual as well if τὸ σπέρμα were to be read as the subject.[41] The most plausible candidate for the agent that reveals himself in the speaking Adam, therefore, seems to be the one who had deposited the seed in him.

Now as was argued above, that agent is most likely to be identified with the Saviour—that is, the Logos. We must therefore assume that a situation of consubstantiality exists between the Saviour-Logos and

---

[38] Cf. Markschies, *Valentinus*, 37–38.

[39] The semantics of παρρησία has often been studied; see, in particular, the studies of Scarpat, *Parrhesia*, and Bartelink, "Quelques observations," and the essays in Fitzgerald, *Friendship*.

[40] Markschies, *Valentinus*, 38.

[41] Cf. Stead, "Search," 81; Holzhausen, *Mythos*, 82n8.

the seed, as well as between the seed and the pre-existent Man who comes to be in Adam as a result of the seed having been deposited in him. None of this is logically inconsistent from a Valentinian point of view. The Logos-Saviour is the active manifestation of the Son-Pleroma-Primal Man, and the spiritual seed is both an image of this model and shares, as a σπέρμα . . . τῆς ἄνωθεν οὐσίας, its substance. In terms of this οὐσία, the seed, its model, and the depositor of the seed are all one.

Thus both the Logos and the pleromatic Primal Man can be said to be "in" the first created human, revealing themselves through his speech. It is not unlikely that the notion of speech in itself as the chosen form of this manifestation alludes to the presence of the Logos in Adam; it is in his φθέγγειν that the Logos dwelling in Adam reveals itself.

What exactly the motif of Adam's speech might refer to, if it is interpreted in terms of the Genesis narrative, is uncertain. Conceivably, it could be an allusion to Adam's naming of the animals (Gen 2:19–20),[42] but this is in any case not a decisive issue. The important implication of Adam's ἐφθέγξατο in the fragment is clearly his faculty of rational speech as such, imparted to him by the spiritual seed, rather than a specific application of this faculty.

An interesting parallel to this element in the text appears in the *Gospel of Philip* 70:22–30,[43] a passage that, unfortunately, is both imperfectly preserved in the manuscript and somewhat difficult to interpret:

ⲧⲯⲩⲭⲏ ⲛ̄ⲁⲇⲁⲙ ⲛ̄ⲧⲁⲥϣⲱⲡⲉ ⲉ̇[ⲃ]ⲟⲗ ⲉ̇ⲛ̇ⲟⲩⲛⲓϥⲉ ⲡⲉⲥϩⲱⲧⲣ̄ ⲡⲉ ⲡⲡ[ⲛ̄]ⲁ̄ ⲡ[ⲉ]ⲛⲧⲁⲩⲧⲁⲁϥ ⲛⲁϥ ⲧⲉ ⲧⲉϥⲙⲁⲁⲩ ⲁⲩ[ϥⲓ] ⲛ̄ⲧⲉϥⲯⲩⲭⲏ ⲁⲩⲧ̇ ⲛⲁϥ ⲛ̄ⲟⲩ [. . . ⲉ̇]ⲡⲉⲥⲙⲁ ⲉⲡⲉⲓ ⲛ̄ⲧⲁⲣⲉϥϩⲱⲧⲣ̄ [ⲁϥϫ]ⲱ ⲛ̄ϩⲛ̄ϣⲁϫⲉ ⲉⲩϫⲟⲥⲉ ⲁⲛⲁⲅⲛⲁ [ⲙⲓⲥ] ⲁⲩⲣ̄ⲃⲁⲥⲕⲁⲛⲉ ⲉⲣⲟϥ [ⲁⲩⲡⲱ]ⲣⲭ [ⲛ̄ⲧϭⲓⲛϩ]ⲱⲧⲣ̄ ⲛ̄ⲧⲡⲛⲉⲩⲙⲁ[ⲧⲓⲕⲏ . . .	Adam's soul came into being from a breath, (having) the spirit as her partner; his Mother had given it to him. They [took] his soul and gave him a [. . .] instead. Because when he was joined [he spo]ke words that were superior to the powers, they became envious of him [and took ap]art [the] spiritual join[ing . . .

The *topos* regarding Adam's speech is evidently the same as in the fragment from Valentinus. The fact that Adam's words are here said to

---

[42] Cf. Holzhausen, *Mythos*, 84n18.
[43] Noted by Schenke, "Evangelium nach Philippus," 53n8; Simonetti, *Testi gnostici*, 453n1; Schenke, *Philippus-Evangelium*, 414.

have been superior to the creating powers themselves, instead of to his own created nature as their *plasis,* clearly does not constitute a decisive difference between the two texts. The essential point is that Adam revealed, through his speech, that he possessed within him something that was ontologically superior to both the creative powers themselves and what they had been able to produce, and that this unexpected revelation provoked a reaction on the part of the creators. This shows that the *topos* continued to circulate in Valentinianism, although the dependence of *Gos. Phil.* on the precise text of the Valentinus fragment need not be assumed. Valentinus himself may of course have used it in other texts as well.

The *topos* as such is independent of the use to which it is put in the *Gos. Phil.* passage. *Gos. Phil.* is mainly interested in the syzygic joining of soul and spirit, and is claiming that the two were joined when the soul was breathed into Adam (Gen 2:7); that is why the soul was given through a "breath"—*Gos. Phil.* associates ⲛⲓϥⲉ (<*πνοή) with πνεῦμα. *Gos. Phil.* evidently assumes that the Mother, Sophia, provided the spirit-soul, although the phrase ⲡ[ⲉ]ⲛⲧⲁⲩⲧⲁⲁϥ . . . ⲧⲉϥⲙⲁⲁⲩ cannot be correct. Perhaps some words are missing, for example, ⲡⲉⲛⲧⲁⲩⲧⲁⲁϥ ⲛⲁϥ ⟨ⲉⲃⲟⲗ ϩⲓⲧⲛ̄ ⲧⲥⲟⲫⲓⲁ ⲉⲧⲉ ⲧⲁⲉⲓ⟩ ⲧⲉ ⲧⲉϥⲙⲁⲁⲩ.

What the creative powers in *Gos. Phil.* did when they perceived Adam's superiority is unclear, due in particular to the lacunae in the manuscript. But they must have succeeded in dissolving (ⲡⲱⲣⲝ̄) the spirit-soul syzygy of the first human, apparently by replacing his original soul with something of their own making—maybe another kind of "spirit," if ⲟⲩ[ⲡⲛ̄ⲁ̄ is restored in the lacuna.[44] How this "replacement" may be envisaged is another problem. Does ⲁⲩ[ϥⲓ] mean that the powers literally "removed" the spiritual soul, or just that they suppressed it so that it became forgotten until the Saviour reactivated it (an interpretation that would be more consistent with Valentinian anthropology and soteriology in general)?

---

[44] Cf. Schenke, *Philippus-Evangelium*, 415, who refers to the ἀντίμιμον πνεῦμα (*Ap. John*, etc.). ⲡⲛ̄ⲁ̄ in fact fits the lacuna exactly, but the restoration is hardly satisfactory from the point of view of normal Valentinian vocabulary.

The angels' fear

Hearing Adam's lofty speech, the angels who had created him became afraid. Valentinus refers to this theme as something his audience would be familiar with. For present-day readers, however, the motif is not so easy to identify. It is not found in the systematic Valentinian accounts of the anthropogony. In those accounts, it is the *ignorance* of the Demiurge concerning the spiritual component of the first human that forms the central theme, whereas fear, or any type of hostile reaction toward Adam, is not mentioned. In fact, the Demiurge and his subordinates remain unaware of the spiritual realm until the advent of the Saviour.

A hostile reaction is, on the other hand, indicated in the passage from *Gos. Phil.* discussed above (70:22–30). According to that text, the powers became *envious* (ⲁⲩⲣ̄ⲃⲁⲥⲕⲁⲛⲉ) of Adam because of his superior speech. This "envy" is paralleled in the anthropogony of non-Valentinian texts, in particular the *Apocryphon of John*. That text describes how Yaldabaoth was tricked into blowing the spirit he had from his Mother into the psychic protoplast he had created together with his archons. As a result, the creature moved, and,

> Immediately the rest of the authorities became jealous (ⲁⲩⲕⲱϩ) because he had come into being through all of them, and they had given their inner powers to the man. . . . His intelligence was greater than (that of) all of them, and greater than (that of) the Chief ruler. They recognised that he was free from wickedness, because he was wiser than they, and that he had entered into the light. They took him and brought him into the lowest regions of all matter. (BG 52:1–17)[45]

In a later episode in the narrative, the Epinoia of Light is sent down as a "helper," and dwells in Adam:

> And the man shone because of the shadow of the light that was in him. And his thinking was superior to those who had made him. And they bent down. They saw the man. He was superior to them. They took counsel . . . (BG 54:5–12)

There are important differences, of course, compared to the Valentinian accounts. The mythological frame is not the same, with Yaldabaoth first being tricked into giving away his spirit, and then the Epinoia

---

[45] The other versions are similar. The translation is based on that of Waldstein and Wisse, *Apocryphon of John*, 114–16.

of Light being sent down from the Father. Moreover, Adam's superiority is revealed, first by his ability to move, and then by the light emanating from him and by his superior intellect—Adam's speech is not referred to. Nevertheless, a structural similarity exists between the various accounts, which suggests that they can be seen as variants of a common theme. Valentinus, as well as the author of *Gos. Phil.*, was familiar with an anthropogonical motif akin to the one in *Ap. John*, and according to which the creating powers reacted with fear or jealousy when their human creature demonstrated a nature superior to their own.

A reaction of fear on the part of the creating archons is, indeed, attested in a comparable context in *Orig. World* (NHC II,5).[46] After describing how the first human was moulded (ⲡⲗⲁⲥⲥⲉ) as a soul-less body by the seven archons—in accordance with the shape of Light-Adam, the true Man, which had been reflected in the waters—the text goes on to narrate that,

> On the fortieth day, Sophia-Life sent her breath into Adam, who was without soul. He began to move upon the earth, but was not able to rise. Now when the seven rulers came and saw him, they were very much disturbed (ⲁⲩϣⲧⲟⲣⲧⲣ̄ ⲉⲙⲁⲧⲉ). They walked up to him and seized him, and he[47] said to the breath that was in him, "Who are you? And from whence have you come hither?" He answered and said, "I have come through the power of Man for the destruction of your work." Hearing this, they glorified him[48] because he had given them rest from the fear and concern (ϩⲣ̄ⲧⲉ ⲙⲛ̄ ⲡⲣⲟⲟⲩϣ) in which they were. Then they called that day "rest," because they rested themselves from their troubles. And when they saw that Adam was not able to rise, they rejoiced. They took him and left him in Paradise, and withdrew up to their heavens. (NHC II 115:11–30)

Then, Life-Eve is sent to Adam. Giving him life, she makes him rise up, which again provokes fear in his creators:

> Then the authorities were informed that their moulded body was alive, and had arisen. They were very much disturbed (ⲁⲩϣⲧⲟⲣⲧⲣ̄ ⲉⲙⲁⲧⲉ). (NHC II 116:8–10)

---

[46] A comparison with the Valentinus fragment has been suggested by Tardieu, *Trois mythes gnostiques*, 320, and Simonetti, *Testi gnostici*, 453n1.

[47] *Sc.* apparently the Archigenetor, the leader of the archons.

[48] This puzzling reaction is to be understood as ironical, according to Painchaud, *L'Écrit sans titre*, 409.

In these texts, the cause of the archons' fear and consternation is not Adam's speech, but his movement and his ability to stand up. The mythological context too, of course, is not exactly the same as in Valentinus. The *topos* is nevertheless clearly comparable: having received an inbreathing from a higher power, Adam behaves in a manner that exceeds the nature of his *plasis*, as well as the expectations of his makers, who therefore react with fear and/or hostility.[49]

Although the precise source of Valentinus' version of the myth can no longer be identified, texts such as these nonetheless indicate the general context to which it must have belonged.

The angels' "doing away" with Adam

Having been scared by the lofty sounds made by Adam, the angels swiftly "did away" with their work—τὸ ἔργον ἠφάνισαν. Here again we face a problem of translation and interpretation: what does ἀφανίζειν mean in this context?[50] Lexically, the word can mean "destroy" and "corrupt," as well as "make disappear." The first two meanings are, however, hardly applicable with a personal object.[51] We have to assume, therefore, that the angels instead made Adam disappear, or somehow got him out of sight. But what would that mean? If the Genesis narrative is taken as the point of departure, at least three possible solutions offer themselves. First, the reference could be to Gen 3:8 ἐκρύβησαν ὅ τε Ἀδὰμ καὶ ἡ γυνὴ αὐτοῦ.[52] In that

---

[49] This observation is not affected by the fact that L. Painchaud (*L'Écrit sans titre*, esp. 406–9) has shown that these texts are the result of a rewriting process that activated a complex web of intertextual allusions, including allusions to the reactions of the religious authorities to Jesus in the gospels and those of the archons to the ascending spirit in Iren. *Haer.* I 21:5 and *1 Apoc. Jas.* (cf. above, chapter 29). The fearful reactions of the archons towards Adam are thus also mirrored by the consternation of the authorities at the appearance of Jesus, and by that of the archons when they interrogate the ascending spirit (cf. σφόδρα ταραχθῆναι Iren. *Haer.* I 21:5; ⲉⲅⲉⲱⲧⲟⲣⲧⲣ̄ *1 Apoc. Jas.* 35:20). This shows that the *topos* of the creating powers' reaction to the spirit in Adam can be seen as a special instance of a wider theme: the general reaction of the cosmic powers to the manifestations of spirit.

[50] The most recent discussion is Holzhausen, *Mythos*, 99–101.

[51] See Holzhausen, *Mythos*, 100, who rejects the proposal of Markschies, *Valentinus*, 11, 51–52, to translate the verb as "corrupt" (*verderben*), in the sense of the fallen angels' corruption of mankind in *1 Enoch*. In fact, ἀφανίζειν can hardly refer to moral corruption, in the sense of διαφθείρειν. It could be taken to mean "destroy" or "annihilate," in a physical sense, which would go well with τὸ ἔργον as an object, but Adam was not of course physically annihilated.

[52] Thus Holzhausen, *Mythos*, 83, 100.

case, Valentinus (or his source) must be assumed to have changed the sense of the Biblical text so as to make the angels the agents of Adam's concealment instead of Adam himself. This suggestion must, however, be considered highly arbitrary, and there seem to exist no further arguments that would support it.

A second solution is to see here a reference to the expulsion from Paradise.[53] In considering this possibility, it should be noted that Paradise is situated in the heavens in certain Valentinian texts. According to Iren. *Haer.* I 5:2 (end), it is above the third heaven, and for *Exc.* 51:1 in the fourth heaven. Since the creating angels must be assumed to reside in the planetary spheres, the expulsion of Adam from Paradise implies that he is forced to leave the region where his creators dwell, to inhabit the earth below. In this way, ἠφάνισαν could mean that the angels got Adam "out of their sight" by expelling him to earth. There are, however, no parallel texts to support such an interpretation.[54]

The third possibility is that the expression refers to the creation of a material body, as an envelope covering Adam following his moulding as a psychic being only.[55] This interpretation has the merit of corresponding to anthropogonical accounts that can be found in other sources. Thus, in the *Apocryphon of John* the archons initially make Adam as a psychic body (BG 48:10–51:1, NHC II 15:1–19:15); however, when they discover Adam's superiority to themselves, due to his possession of spirit and the Epinoia of Light, they become jealous and cover him in matter. After Adam had received spirit and revealed his superior nature, "They took him and brought him into the lowest regions of all matter" (ⲁⲩϥⲓⲧϥ ⲁⲩⲛ̄ⲧϥ ⲉϩⲣⲁⲓ̈ ⲉⲙⲙⲉⲣⲟⲥ ⲙⲡⲉⲥⲏⲧ ⲛⲧⲉ ⲑⲩⲗⲏ ⲧⲏⲣⲥ, BG 52:15–17; cf. above, 446). Later on, after Adam had received the Epinoia of Light, the archons responded by further actions:

---

[53] Also suggested by Holzhausen, *Mythos*, 83–84. It is difficult to see how this interpretation may be combined with his first one.

[54] The only available Valentinian text that may be used for comparison regarding this phase of the anthropogony is *Tri. Trac.* 107:17–20, which refers to the expulsion (ⲡⲛⲟⲩϫⲉ ⲁⲃⲁⲗ) of the first human from Paradise. That text is not concerned with attributing the expulsion to hostile motives, but rather emphasises that it was designed by divine providence.

[55] This very interesting suggestion has been made by Simonetti, *Testi gnostici*, 453n2.

> They took counsel with the whole array of angels of the rulers and
> (with) the rest of their powers. Then fire and earth mixed with water
> and flame. They seized them, and the four winds, blowing with fire,
> were joined with each other and caused a great disturbance.[56] They
> brought him (Adam) into the shadow of death. They made a form
> (ⲡⲗⲁⲥⲓⲥ) once more, but from earth and water and fire and spirit—
> that is, from matter and darkness and desire and the contrary spirit.
> This is the fetter. This is the tomb of the form of the body with which
> they clothed the man as the fetter of matter. (BG 54:11–55:13)

That the archons brought Adam to "the lowest region of all matter"
presumably means that they sent him down from the heavenly spheres
to the region of earth and water, the basest of the elements. Having
been placed there, he is subsequently clothed in a material body
composed of all the four elements.

Valentinian texts as well sometimes affirm that Adam was first
created as a soul, possessing both hylic and psychic components, and
that the Demiurge subsequently dressed him in a "garment of skin,"
(Gen 3:21), that is, the flesh of sense-perception.[57] It is not unlikely
that Valentinus had similar ideas about the creation of Adam, namely,
that the first human was created as an immaterial soul (that is, made
from the same substance as the angel creators themselves), and was
subsequently clothed in flesh as a garment made from physical mat-
ter. Moreover, it is quite plausible that in the fragment he may be
referring to a myth similar to the one found in *Ap. John*, one that
explained that when the creators discovered that their creature pos-
sessed something that was superior to their own psychic nature, they
were afraid and covered Adam with flesh. Of the several possible
interpretations of the phrase ταχὺ τὸ ἔργον ἠφάνισαν, this is proba-
bly the best one.

Conclusions

In frg. 1 Valentinus refers to an anthropogonic myth that is related
to, but probably less elaborate than, the one found in *Ap. John* and

---

[56] NHC II 20:35–21:4 has a better text at this point: "They took fire and earth
and water and mixed them together with the four fiery winds. And they wrought
them together and caused a great disturbance."

[57] Iren. *Haer.* I 5:5 ὕστερον δὲ περιτεθεῖσθαι λέγουσιν αὐτῷ τὸν δερμάτινον χιτῶνα·
τοῦτο δὲ τὸ αἰσθητὸν σαρκίον εἶναι θέλουσι; cf. *Exc.* 55:1. The bodily garment per
se is described more neutrally in these texts than is the case in *Ap. John* (and, e.g.,
Corp. Herm. VII 2); the real enemy are the material *powers* operating in the soul. A
more negative attitude is expressed, however, in *Inter. Know.* 11:26–27.

Orig. World, and that is also attested in *Gos. Phil.* According to that myth, angels—that is, cosmic (planetary) powers, or archons—fashioned Adam as a psychic being like themselves, presumably composed of contributions made by each of the powers. Whether the angels were led by, or acted under, a chief archon is not stated, though the figure of the Demiurge may perhaps not have been as prominent in Valentinus' teaching as he was to become in some of the later systems (Iren., *Exc.* section C, Hipp., *Val. Exp.*). Into this creature, the Logos (that is, the Saviour) deposited a spiritual seed that was an image of a Primal Man (that is, the Son, co-extensive with the Pleroma as the manifested unfolding of the Father). How this seed was produced is not stated, though the later systems give answers to this question (Sophia's vision) that are consistent with the fragment. The spiritual seed was not only an image of the Son-Pleroma as Primal Man, but also consubstantial with the Logos that deposited it and made itself known through (intelligent) speech (παρρησία). This made the angels afraid, so that they concealed their creation, most probably by covering it with flesh. Valentinus thus appears to have formulated his own version of current gnostic anthropogonic mythology. Some of his followers may later have modified this scheme by giving more prominent roles to the Demiurge and to Sophia in the narrative, and also by weakening some of the dualism inherent in the idea of the angels as hostile creators.

Fragment 2

εἷς δέ ἐστιν ἀγαθός, οὗ παρρησία ἡ διὰ τοῦ υἱοῦ φανέρωσις, καὶ δι᾽ αὐτοῦ μόνου δύναιτο ἄν ἡ καρδία καθαρὰ γενέσθαι, παντὸς πονηροῦ πνεύματος ἐξωθουμένου τῆς καρδίας. πολλὰ γὰρ ἐνοικοῦντα αὐτῇ πνεύματα οὐκ ἐᾷ καθαρεύειν, ἕκαστον δὲ αὐτῶν τὰ ἴδια ἐκτελεῖ ἔργα πολλαχῶς ἐνυβριζόντων ἐπιθυμίαις οὐ προσηκούσαις.

One is good, who was openly spoken about[58] through the manifestation of the Son, and through him alone may the heart become pure, with every evil spirit expelled from the heart. For many spirits dwell in it and do not let it become pure; each of them performs its own works, abusing it in many ways with unseemly desires.

---

[58] As Holzhausen suggests (*Mythos*, 98n78), οὗ is best interpreted as objective genitive. παρρησία is not, I think, a concept that can be naturally applied to a supreme deity. (Stead, "Search," 82, thinks likewise.) It should be noted, however, that there is a textual problem in this passage: the codex actually has παρρησίαι, which may have been intended as a dative (cf. Markschies, *Valentinus,* 65n68), and which may indicate a more serious corruption of the text.

καί μοι δοκεῖ ὅμοιόν τι πάσχειν τῷ πανδοχείῳ ἡ καρδία· καὶ γὰρ ἐκεῖνο κατατιτρᾶταί τε καὶ ὀρύττεται καὶ πολλάκις κόπρου πίπλαται ἀνθρώπων ἀσελγῶς ἐμμενόντων καὶ μηδεμίαν πρόνοιαν ποιουμένων τοῦ χωρίου, καθάπερ ἀλλοτρίου καθεστῶτος.

τὸν τρόπον τοῦτον καὶ ἡ καρδία, μέχρι μὴ προνοίας τυγχάνει, ἀκάθαρτος [οὖσα], πολλῶν οὖσα δαιμόνων οἰκητήριον· ἐπειδὰν δὲ ἐπισκέψηται αὐτὴν ὁ μόνος ἀγαθὸς πατήρ, ἡγίασται καὶ φωτὶ διαλάμπει, καὶ οὕτω μακαρίζεται ὁ ἔχων τὴν τοιαύτην καρδίαν, ὅτι ὄψεται τὸν θεόν.

To me it seems that the heart suffers in much the same way as an inn. For an inn has holes and trenches dug in it and is often filled with filth, with men living there licentiously and having no care for the place since it belongs to someone else.

This is how it is with the heart, as well: as long as it is not cared for, it is unclean and the abode of many demons. But when the Father, who alone is good, attends to it, it is sanctified and becomes bright with light; and thus, whoever has such a heart will be proclaimed blessed, for he will see God. (Clem. Alex. *Str.* II 114:3–6)

Like frg. 1, this fragment is presented as a literal quotation from a letter by Valentinus (ἀλλὰ καὶ Οὐαλεντῖνος πρός τινας ἐπιστέλλων αὐταῖς λέξεσι γράφει). In introducing the quotation, Clement says that Valentinus is here speaking about the "appendages" (τὰ προσαρτήματα), that is, the things that attach themselves to the soul. This interpretation, however, may be Clement's own idea, since there is nothing in the fragment that suggests that Valentinus himself used that word.[59]

Thematically, the fragment joins two ideas. The first is the salvific manifestation of "the one good Father" in the Son. The second is the impurity of the human heart when it is plagued by bullying demons, an idea effectively illustrated by means of the metaphor of an inn that is vandalised and soiled by its alien residents. The two themes are joined together by the idea that the Son's revelation of the one good Father brings about the expulsion of the demons and the purification of the heart.

The passage as a whole may be an exegesis of Matt 5:8 μακάριοι οἱ καθαροὶ τῇ καρδίᾳ, ὅτι αὐτοὶ τὸν θεὸν ὄψονται,[60] a saying that is explicitly alluded to at the end, and which also seems to influence

---

[59] Immediately before (113:3–114:1), Clement has quoted Isidore, Basilides' son, who wrote about the προσαρτήματα. Using the same word to introduce the passage from Valentinus, he may be implying only that Valentinus dealt with the same topic there, not necessarily that he used the same terminology. Cf. Stead, "Search," 79–80; Markschies, *Valentinus*, 56–58.

[60] Markschies, *Valentinus*, 59.

the selection of vocabulary (καθαρός, καρδία). On the other hand, the term "heart" as such is not uncommon in Valentinian homiletics.[61]

The manifestation of the one good Father

There is nothing in the fragment that is distinctively Valentinian. But nothing in it is inconsistent with Valentinianism either.[62] Valentinus applies imagery and a soteriological pattern that are generally acceptable to a Christian audience, but which also resonate with Valentinian themes. The description of the Father as "the One who is good" quotes Matt 19:17, and is as applicable to the transcendent Valentinian Father as to the god of the Jewish scriptures.[63] Further, the manifestation of this deity through the Son is described in the form of two *topoi*. At the beginning of the fragment a revelation by means of words is in focus. The "open speech" presumably alludes to the teaching activity of Jesus, when he came forward to astound the audience with his message.[64] At the end, the revelation is described in visual terms. The Father "attends to," literally "looks down at" (ἐπισκοπέω), the human heart, and makes it shine. Light, according to a widespread optical theory in antiquity, emanates from the eyes;[65] thus, the look of the Father is what sends out the light that causes

---

[61] Cf. *Gos. Truth* 19:34–35 (the living book was revealed in their hearts), 26:6 (the Word is in the heart of those who speak it), 32:31 (speak from the heart); *Inter. Know.* 15:19 (with all his heart). καρδία is also used by Valentinus in frg. 6.

[62] Markschies (*Valentinus*, 66) says that Valentinus in this fragment differs from his "pupils" in asserting the universality of revelation, whereas they restricted it to a chosen few. This is a misunderstanding. The distinction between various groups of humans in Valentinianism does not mean that the Saviour reveals himself only to one group, but rather that all are not able to understand and accept the revelation. The spirituals understood at once, and the hylics rejected him, whereas the psychics either accepted the Saviour after hesitation or rejected him (see, e.g., the final parts of *Tri. Trac.*). Thus, the empirical distinction between the various groups can be made only on the basis of their reactions to the revelation, which in itself is a universal event. In frg. 2, Valentinus does not imply either that all human hearts will be cleansed from the demons (cf. the optative δύναιτο ἄν).

[63] The evidence pertaining to the use of this formula in early Christianity is collected in Markschies, *Valentinus*, 60–64. Valentinians applied it to the Father, to describe his pure goodness, as distinct from the mixed nature of the Demiurge-Judge (Ptolemy, *Flora* 7:5; Iren. *Haer.* I 20:2; there are echoes of this in *Tri. Trac.* 53:6, cf. Kasser *et al.*, *Tractatus Tripartitus*, I 314–15). It is also conceivable that the insistent use of the formula by Valentinus' contemporary Marcion (see Harnack, *Marcion*, 88, 121, 225*–226*, 261*), may form part of the immediate background on which Valentinus is writing.

[64] Cf. *Gos. Truth* 19:17–27: "In schools he appeared . . ."

[65] Cf. Plato, *Tim.* 45b–d, etc.; *Der Neue Pauly* IX 995–96.

the heart to shine. If at the beginning of the fragment the reveal-ing Son is imagined as the Logos, he is portrayed as the personified Light at the end.

The pattern of salvific revelation that is employed here is one that is applicable in various contexts and on several levels. There is undoubtedly a salvation historical dimension to this revelation of the Father through the Son. In that sense, the fragment refers to the general situation of humanity before the historical advent of the Son as Saviour. His arrival represents the ἐπισκοπή of the Father and is the instrument of his πρόνοια towards humanity,[66] which until then has been dominated by demonic powers. In this perspective, the soteriological thematics of the fragment can be interpreted in con-sonance with the salvation historical model of *Exc.* 67–75 (see above, chapter 16). It seems quite likely, too, that the παρρησία about the one good Father performed by the Son is to be understood as the revelation of a knowledge about the true deity that was previously unavailable. The description of this revelation as "open speech" sug-gests that this deity had not been openly spoken about before (or had been alluded to only in a veiled manner in the Scriptures), and that he is thus different from the one believed in before. This dra-matic revelation of the previously unknown god, who alone is good, is what makes the liberation from the demons possible.

On the other hand, there is evidently an individual dimension to the pattern as well. Whoever listens to what is spoken will be purified from the demons, and will become sanctified and luminous. These expressions describe a conversion and transformation experience, which, moreover, may be given a ritual interpretation. The pattern is consistent with the ideology of baptismal initiation: listening to the word, purification from evil spirits, sanctification and illumination. This congruity with initiation terminology may be just a coincidence caused by the generality of the pattern as such, though it cannot be excluded that Valentinus is actually alluding to baptism in the fragment.

Finally it may be noted that the same pattern underlies the var-ious Valentinian accounts of the encounter of Sophia with the Saviour,

---

[66] For the type of language employed, cf. *Tri. Trac.* 118:2–7: "They acquired that treasure which is freedom, from the abundant grace that looks to the children, but which overthrows passion and brings to naught the things that had been caused by the Logos." This passage makes use of the notions of divine ἐπισκοπή and πρόνοια in connection with the liberation from the demonic powers.

which in a sense forms the mythological prototype of salvation on the human level. The manifestation of the Saviour liberates and heals Sophia from the powers of passion and matter.[67] It is interesting that *Tri. Trac.* employs the word ἐπισκοπή to describe the "visitation" of the aeons in the figure of the Saviour and his angels (90:24, 91:10). Evidently the word is used in the same sense as in Valentinus' fragment, to express the providential concern of the Father for the one who has fallen victim to the demonic powers, a concern that expresses itself in the manifestation of the Son-Saviour and leads to liberation (*Tri. Trac.* 93:13), purification (*Tri. Trac.* 98:25), and illumination (*Tri. Trac.* 93:10).

The heart as an inn

The image of the heart, the soul, or the body as an inn—or, less specifically, as a house—taken over by rude lodgers, that is, demons, is found elsewhere in ancient literature,[68] and is not peculiar to Valentinianism. It is nevertheless notable that the image reappears in at least two later Valentinian texts.[69] Hipp. *Haer.* VI 34:4–6 describes how the Demiurge placed the human soul in a material body, and then goes on to say that,

ἔστι δὲ οὗτος ὁ ὑλικὸς ἄνθρωπος οἱονεὶ κατ᾽ αὐτοὺς πανδοχεῖον ἢ κατοικητήριον ποτὲ μὲν ψυχῆς μόνης, ποτὲ δὲ ψυχῆς καὶ δαινόνων, ποτὲ δε ψυχῆς καὶ λόγων, οἵτινές εἰσι λόγοι ἄνωθεν κατεσπαρμένοι ἀπὸ τοῦ κοινοῦ τοῦ πληρώματος Καρποῦ καὶ τῆς Σοφίας εἰς τοῦτον τὸν κόσμον, κατοικοῦντες ἐν <σῶμα>τι χωϊκῷ μετὰ ψυχῆς, ὅταν δαίμονες μὴ συνοικῶσι τῇ ψυχῇ.	This material man, in their view, is like an inn, or residence, either of the soul alone, or of the soul and demons, or of the soul and *logoi*— which *logoi* have been sown from above, from the Joint Fruit of the Pleroma and from Sophia, into this world and they dwell in an earthly body if no demons reside with the soul. (VI 34:6)

It is plausible, as has in fact often been suggested,[70] that Valentinus' use of the image is the direct source of this passage.[71] The image has, however, been reinterpreted in important ways. Instead of the

---

[67] Iren. *Haer.* I 4:5; *Exc.* 45; Hipp. *Haer.* VI 32:5; *Tri. Trac.* 88:8–25, 90:14–94:10.

[68] Whittaker, "Valentinus Fr. 2"; Markschies, *Valentinus*, 73–75.

[69] The phrase in Heracleon, frg. 20 (Orig. *In Jo.* XIII 16:95–97), ἔρημον οἰκητήριον θηρίων, has also been considered in this regard. A direct dependence is, however, unlikely; cf. Wucherpfennig, *Heracleon*, 225n221.

[70] Cf. Markschies, *Valentinus*, 74n124.

[71] Markschies, *Valentinus*, 74, doubts this, but seems to misunderstand the passage

"heart," the inn is now the material body, and the spirituals are never troubled by demons while they reside in it. The reinterpretation is, of course, in accordance with the general view of Hippolytus' tractate of the spirituals as being always exempt from passion.[72] In Valentinus, on the other hand, the spirituals are evidently afflicted by the demons as well; thus the fragment confirms that this typically "eastern" position was also the original Valentinian one, held by Valentinus himself.[73]

Another occurrence of the image is in the *Interpretation of Knowledge*:

ⲉⲣⲉⲡⲥⲱⲙⲁ ⲟⲉⲓ ⲛ̄[ⲟⲩ]ⲡⲁⲛⲇⲟⲕⲉⲓⲟ[ⲛ ⲉ]ⲩⲛ̄ⲧⲉⲟⲩϥ ⲙ̄ⲙⲉⲩ ⲛ̄[ⲟⲩ]ⲙ̄[ⲁ] ⲛ̄ϣⲱⲡ[ⲉ ⲛ̄ϭ[ⲓ] ⲛⲁⲣⲭⲏ ⲙ̄ⲛ̄[ⲛⲉ]ϩ̄[ⲟⲩⲥ]ⲓⲁ ⲡⲣⲱ[ⲙⲉ ⲉ]ⲧϩⲓϩⲟⲩⲛ ⲛ̄ⲧ[ⲁⲣⲟⲩ]ⲁⲧⲡ̄ϥ̄ ⲁϩⲟⲩⲛ [ⲁ]ⲧⲡⲗⲁⲥⲓⲥ ⲁ[ϥ]ϣ[ⲱⲡⲉ] ϩⲛ̄ϩⲓ̈[ⲥⲉ ⲛⲓⲙ ⲉ]ⲁⲩⲣ̄ⲁⲛⲁⲅⲅⲁ[ⲍ]ⲉ ⲙ̄ⲙⲁϥ ⲁⲣ̄ϩ̄ⲙ̄[ϩⲉ]ⲗ ⲛ̄[ⲉⲩ ⲁ]ⲩϭⲱϭⲧ̄ ⲙ̄ⲙⲁϥ ⲁⲣ̄ϩ̄[ⲩ]ⲡⲟⲩⲣⲕⲉⲓ ⲛ̄[ⲛⲟⲩ]ⲉ̣ⲛⲉⲣⲅⲉⲓⲁ

The body is [an] inn that the principalities and [the powers] have as a dwelling-place, the inner man, ha[ving been] locked up in the modelled form, [had to endure] [all sort of suf]fering, [because he] was forced to ser[ve them] and was coerced into obeying [their] workings (*Interp. Know.* 6:30–37)

In this text as well it is the body, rather than the heart, that is the inn and the dwelling-place. Another difference vis-à-vis Valentinus is that the stress is put on the enslavement of the inner man to the demons, rather than on the pollution and damage they cause. In spite of these variations, it nevertheless appears that the image of the embodied human as a πανδοχεῖον inhabited by demons continued to be used by Valentinians, and it is reasonable to assume that this was inspired by Valentinus' own use of the image.

As *Interp. Know.* uses it, it is clear that the image applies to all humans, with the emphasis on the suffering of the "inner man," the spiritual human being. In that sense, *Interp. Know.*'s use of the image is closer to Valentinus' than to that of Hippolytus' tractate.[74]

Without using the image of the inn, the idea that the soul cohab-

---

in Hippolytus. πανδοχεῖον does not refer to the body of "the hylic human" only, but to the (material) body in general, whether inhabited by hylics, psychics, or spirituals. The use of πανδοχεῖον, not an immediately natural word in the context, and one which the author subsequently felt the need to gloss with κατοικητήριον, suggests that he took it over from a source. (The image does not appear in the parallel anthropogonical texts of Irenaeus and *Exc.*, so it may have been introduced by the author of Hippolytus' tractate during his revision of the source common to all the three texts.)

[72] Cf. above, 79.

[73] Cf. also Thomassen, "How Valentinian," 260–61; Schenke, *Philippus-Evangelium*, 350.

[74] The passage in *Interp. Know.* also has interesting affinities with Valentinus' frg. 1.

its with evil spirits is also found in *Gos. Phil.* 65:1–26. In that text, the nuptial imagery characteristic of *Gos. Phil.* is used to express the idea: in this world, men are promiscuously conjoined with female spirits, and women with male spirits, as long as they have not yet received their angelic spouses in the bridal chamber. Similarly, in *Gos. Phil.* 53:11–12, the soul is said to have fallen into the hands of brigands. Like Valentinus and *Interp. Know.*, but unlike Hippolytus' treatise, *Gos. Phil.* holds that even the spirituals are subjected to the demons until they receive the Saviour.[75]

Fragment 3

Οὐαλεντῖνος δὲ ἐν τῇ πρὸς Ἀγαθόποδα ἐπιστολῇ πάντα, φησίν, ὑπομείνας ἐγκρατὴς ἦν· θεότητα Ἰησοῦς εἰργάζετο, ἤσθιεν καὶ ἔπινεν ἰδίως οὐκ ἀποδιδοὺς τὰ βρώματα. τοσαύτη ἦν αὐτῷ ἐγκρατείας δύναμις, ὥστε καὶ μὴ φθαρῆναι τὴν τροφὴν ἐν αὐτῷ, ἐπεὶ τὸ φθείρεσθαι αὐτὸς οὐκ εἶχεν.	And Valentinus says, in his letter to Agathopus: Enduring everything, he was continent. Jesus effected divinity, he ate and drank in a special way, without discharging the food-stuffs. So great was his power of continence that even the food in him was not corrupted, for he possessed no corruption. (Clem. Alex. *Str.* III 59:3)

This rather peculiar statement is usually understood in a literal sense as referring to Jesus' personal body. The point is then taken to be either that Jesus is here described as the ultimate encratite, or that he combined in his body both humanity and divinity.[76] I find it very unlikely, however, that "Jesus' digestive system"[77] as such is Valentinus' main focus in the passage. Since, on the one hand, symbolism and allegoric parallelism are the very life-blood of Valentinian discourse, and, on the other, the idea of the Saviour's body is a fundamental building block of Valentinian theology, the fragment invites an interpretation on a different level than simply that of physiology.

The "inner man" locked up in the *plasis* recalls the seed deposited in Adam, which is an image of pre-existent Man. The "locking up" (ⲱⲧⲡ) may correspond to the "concealment" of their work by the angels (see above, 448–50).

[75] Cf. Thomassen, *loc. cit.*
[76] See the discussion in Markschies, *Valentinus*, 83–117.
[77] Layton, *Gnostic Scriptures*, 238.

The symbolism of the fragment

"The Lord performed everything in the form of a mystery," *Gos. Phil.* says (67:27–28)—that is, his acts were performed μυστηριωδῶς: containing a symbolic meaning.[78] Jesus was working here below through "types and images" (*Gos. Phil.* 67:35).[79] Thus, in describing Jesus' digestion Valentinus may well have been referring to something he believed to be an empirical fact concerning the Saviour's incarnated existence, but the point of the reference was in all likelihood something rather more elegant.

As we have seen, the notion of the Saviour's body serves in Valentinianism to express a soteriological theory of mutual participation and exchange between the Saviour and the ones who will be saved. Eastern Valentinianism holds this theory in its simplest and original form: the Saviour came with a spiritual body and assumed material existence so as to liberate the spiritual seed from their materiality and to make them share in his spiritual body. This, I believe, is how this fragment should be understood as well. The "food" metonymically represents the condition of material incarnation, death and corruption that the Saviour took upon himself by descending into the world. Unlike ordinary humans, however, who are subject to the cycle of biological life, decay, and death, the Saviour absorbs the corruption inherent in cosmic existence and dissolves it through his divine, spiritual nature. The principle is succinctly stated in *Treat. Res.* 45:14–23: "The Saviour swallowed death. . . . For he put aside the perishable world, and exchanged it for an imperishable aeon. He raised himself up, having swallowed the visible by means of the invisible, and gave us the way to our immortality."[80]

Jesus' "endurance" (ὑπομείνας) alludes, in this interpretation, to the "passion" of the Saviour implied in his incarnation.[81] His being ἐγκρατής may well refer, on one level, to his extraordinary power of ascetic endurance, but, more importantly, the word also serves as a metaphor denoting, on a second level of signification, the fact that

---

[78] Cf. Thomassen, "Not 'in a Mystery.'"

[79] Also cf. Iren. *Haer.* I 3:1, 7:2, where the principle is stated that all the acts of the Saviour symbolically refer to spiritual truths—that is, features of Valentinian systematic doctrine.

[80] Cf. above, 83–84, and Part I generally.

[81] Passion as ὑπομονή appears above all in *Interp. Know.*: endurance hangs on the cross 1:29; (the Saviour) taught the church through the suffering he endured 5:35–37; he endured scorn and appeared in flesh 12:17–18; also cf. 3:33. The Greek term is in all instances used in the Coptic text.

the Saviour contained within him, by completely absorbing it, material corruption, for the benefit of those he had come to redeem from this corruption. The term ἐγκρατής thus carries soteriological implications.

Due to the lack of a context—that is, a larger excerpt from the letter to Agathopus—such an interpretation cannot be positively confirmed. However, it is evident from the other fragments that the invention of striking metaphors was an important characteristic of Valentinus' discursive style, and this fact makes it intrinsically plausible that there is more than one level of meaning to this consideration of Jesus' digestion.

In this way, the fragment can be taken to confirm the statement in Tert. *Carn.* 15:1, that Valentinus taught that the Saviour possessed a spiritual body.[82] It also agrees with the interpretation of the soteriological significance of this doctrine that has been developed in this book: the theory of mutual participation and the exchange of bodies between material and spiritual. Suffering cosmic incarnation, Jesus consumes matter by assuming it.[83] The fragment thus aligns Valentinus with the Christology and the soteriology of eastern Valentinianism.

"Effecting divinity"

The meaning of the phrase θεότητα Ἰησοῦς εἰργάζετο is not altogether transparent. Most probably, it is to be understood in the light of the dialectic of matter and spirit, passion and continence, and humanity and divinity, which is implied by the soteriology of the fragment: assuming the condition of humanity, Jesus wrought divinity. Again, a passage from *Treat. Res.* may help to understand the idea: "The Son of God, Rheginus, was a son of man. He embraced them both, possessing humanity as well as divinity, so that, on the one hand, he might vanquish death through his being Son of God, and on the other hand, the restoration to the Pleroma might take place through the son of man" (44:21–33). Interpreted in this way, the "divinity" effected by Jesus does not refer just to his own divine status, but to his role in the economy of salvation. By assuming

---

[82] See above, 41, 425.

[83] Something rather more sophisticated is involved here, of course, than simply a "docetic" Christology, which the fragment has usually been understood to express (Hilgenfeld, *Ketzergeschichte*, 297; Sagnard, *Gnose valentinienne*, 123; Simonetti, *Testi gnostici*, 453n5). More judicious in this respect, but without considering the soteriological and symbolic dimensions of the fragment, is Markschies, *Valentinus*, 109–17.

humanity, Jesus performs a work that conquers and destroys the corruption of material existence, liberating the spirit and reintegrating it into its divine origins. Because Jesus takes their human corruptibility upon himself, the spirituals are also given a share in the divinity he represents.[84]

FRAGMENT 4

Οὐαλεντῖνος δὲ ἔν τινι ὁμιλίᾳ κατὰ λέξιν γράφει· ἀπ᾽ ἀρχῆς ἀθάνατοί ἐστε καὶ τέκνα ζωῆς ἐστε αἰωνίας καὶ τὸν θάνατον ἠθέλετε μερίσασθαι εἰς ἑαυτούς, ἵνα δαπανήσητε αὐτὸν καὶ ἀναλώσητε, καὶ ἀποθάνῃ ὁ θάνατος ἐν ὑμῖν καὶ δι᾽ ὑμῶν. ὅταν γὰρ τὸν μὲν κόσμον λύητε, ὑμεῖς δὲ μὴ καταλύησθε, κυριεύετε τῆς κτίσεως καὶ τῆς φθορᾶς ἁπάσης.

And Valentinus writes in some homily, word for word: "From the beginning you are immortal, and children of eternal life, and you wished to divide death between you, that you might consume and dissolve it, and death might die in you and through you. For when you dissolve the world and yourselves are not dissolved, then you will rule over the creation and over all of corruption." (Clem. Alex. *Str.* IV 89:1–3)

In this fragment, the idea of consuming by assuming is again strikingly expressed: death and corruption are "used up" through an act of willing submission to them.[85] In this case, however, it is not the Saviour who is the agent of this act, but "you," the audience of the homily. This is somewhat puzzling, since one expects "us," the audience, to be understood as the beneficiaries of the Saviour's vicarious suffering and death, rather than as being ourselves the agents of our salvation. On the other hand, the principle of mutual participation characteristic of Valentinian soteriology often leads to paradoxical complexities in the assignment of the roles of saviour and saved, as has been demonstrated many times in the course of this study. Since the notion of mutual participation extends even to the saving descent of the Saviour, the beneficiaries of salvation can be conceived as having themselves also descended together with the Saviour, in the form of his pre-

---

[84] This interpretation also relieves, I think, the apparent difficulty of the anarthrous θεότητα (cf. Markschies, *Valentinus*, 86, 97).

[85] Neither this characteristic Valentinian soteriological theme, nor that of the dialectics of unity and division, which will be discussed below, have been considered in previous attempts to understand the fragment (most recently Markschies, *Valentinus*, 118–46; Holzhausen, "Gnosis und Martyrium").

existent church-body. It seems likely, therefore, that this typically Valentinian identification of saviour and saved must be taken into account in order to understand the fragment.

The fragments offer few clues as to Valentinus' own thoughts about a pre-existent church and its descent and incarnation as the body of the Saviour. It is not, however, inconsistent with what is said in this fragment to imagine that the τέκνα are the spiritual seed of Sophia, brought forth in a vision of the Pleroma as manifested by the Saviour and his angels. Being "children of eternal life" would then refer to the fact that Sophia's offspring were produced as images of the eternal pleromatic beings—the word αἰωνίας may even allude to "aeons." Nor does the fragment resist an interpretation of the "wish to divide death" as a reference to the descent of the spiritual seed through the incarnation of the Saviour. Interpreting the fragment along such lines is clearly possible, though admittedly not compelling either.

The theme of division

In addition to the paradoxical idea of consuming by assuming, the fragment contains another theme that resonates strongly with distinctive Valentinian ideas familiar from other sources. This is the theme of "division." Consider the following passage in *Exc.* 36:[86]

> It is, however, in unity that our angels were emitted, for they are one, having come forth from one single. Since we, however, were divided (ἦμεν οἱ μεμερισμένοι), Jesus was baptised, so as to divide the undivided (τὸ ἀμέριστον μερισθῆναι), until he unites us with them in the Pleroma, so that we who are many may become one and all be merged again with him who for our sake was divided (τῷ δι' ἡμᾶς μερισθέντι).

The analysis of *Exc.* 21–22 and 35–36 above (377–83), showed that, in these texts, the "angels" are the superior, male part of the seed of Sophia, conceived in terms of the male-female dichotomy of Gen 1:27. The female seeds are the ones that exist in earthly humans. The angels came down together with the Saviour and were baptised with him for the benefit of their earthly counterparts, who may consequently be united with them through their own, individual baptisms.

These texts from *Exc.* develop themes associated with a male-

---

[86] Cf. above, 382–83.

female, first man anthropology, and a theory of baptism. Such associations are not evident in Valentinus frg. 4. Nevertheless, a connection with baptism, as the place where death is overcome through an assimilation to Christ, in accordance with Rom 6:3–4, is not implausible.[87] In the fragment, just as in the *Exc.* texts, it may well be baptism that is envisioned as the place where not only death is destroyed, through a mimetic rite of death and resurrection, but also where the division implied in corporeal existence is eliminated and reunification is attained with "eternal life"—the unity and wholeness that are proper to the aeons of the Pleroma. In this conception, an ontological theory opposing unity (connoting eternity, life, and spirit) and division (connoting corruptibility, death, and body) is merged with a theory of sacramental participation according to which the multiple individual believers are assimilated to the singularity of the Saviour, and to his paradigmatic incarnation and subsequent liberation from corporeality, through the act of baptismal initiation. Baptism is a machine that turns each initiate, through symbolic identification, into a "Christ," and this identification allows him to share in the Saviour's consumption and destruction of death. In addition, however, the symbolic assimilation of all the initiates to a single paradigm—their becoming members of his "body"—is equivalent to an ontological transformation from corporeal division to spiritual unity.

What is expressed by the idea of angels in the *Exc.* texts are the multiple articulations of this paradigm as it is personalised with regard to each initiate—the angel is the individual initiate's "personal Saviour," as it were. At the same time, and for the same reason, the angel *also* represents the initiate himself, being his complementary higher self with which he is (re-)united in the act of redemption. Therefore, it is quite possible to interpret the lines from Valentinus in frg. 4 consistently with the angelology of *Exc.* 21–22, 35–36; Valentinus may, in addressing his audience, be referring to the angels that represent the complementary selves of the spirituals, with whom these have now been reunited after the angels descended in the body of the Saviour to redeem their earthly counterparts through baptismal initiation. It is unlikely that Valentinus' conception in the fragment was identical to that of the *Exc.* texts. What is likely, however, is that it

---

[87] Such a connection is assumed by Markschies, *Valentinus*, 131, 132, 141, 145, 149.

rested on a similar kind of logic—on a notion of higher, pre-existent selves that were divided through incarnation and subsequently re-deemed, through processes of assimilation with the Saviour.

Another instance of the idea of division is found in *Tri. Trac.* After describing the generation of spiritual offspring by "the Logos" (≈ Sophia) (90:14–92:22), the tractate goes on to describe the region, or "aeon," where this spiritual seed dwells. This region—placed below the Pleroma, but above the not-yet-created cosmos (thus corresponding to the Ogdoad in some other systems)—represents a mode of being as much as a location. Having been brought forth after the image of the Pleroma, the beings that dwell in this region collectively repro-duce the unity of their model, but individually they represent a lower level of ontological perfection than the aeons of the Pleroma:[88]

> Having come into being after the image of each one of the aeons, they are in substance what we have said [i.e., perfect and unitary]. In their operation, however, they are not equal (to them) because it [*sc.* the operation] takes place in each of them separately. Collectively they have the equality, but as individuals they have not discarded what is proper to each. For this reason they are passions, and passion is sick-ness. For they are not offspring from the unity of the Pleroma, but from one who has not yet attained the Father, or the unity with the Entireties and his Will.
>   (Nevertheless,) this was a good thing for the *oikonomia* that was to be, because it had been decided concerning them that they should pass through the lower stations, and the stations would not be able to accept them coming quickly through them unless (they came) one by one. And their coming was necessary because everything was to be fulfilled through them. (94:32–95:16)

The spiritual seed was brought forth in a state of division, as dis-crete individuals. This divisibility, however, is what will later make possible the descent of the seed into the cosmos, when it is co-incar-nated with the Saviour (115:23–117:8); cf. in particular 116:27–117:3:

> The Saviour, in fact, was a bodily image of something unitary, namely the Entirety. Therefore he preserved the model of indivisibility, from which is derived impassibility. *They*, however, are images of each of those who were revealed; for that reason they received the division (ⲡⲱⲱϣⲉ) from their model, having been given form for that planting which exists down below, and which also partakes of the evil that exists in the regions in which they have arrived.

---

[88] Cf. above, 54–55.

The descent of the spiritual seed together with the Saviour corresponds to that of the angels in *Exc.* 36.[89] Unlike that text, however, the focus in *Tri. Trac.* is not on baptism as the place where the processes of division and reunification, and incarnation and liberation from corporeality, are accomplished. Instead, the work of the descended spiritual church is described as consisting in healing and teaching (116:10–20). This difference between the texts is not dramatic since these are tasks that are also performed in the ritual context of initiation, and baptism, moreover, as the place where the redemption of the one Saviour is re-enacted, plays an important role in *Tri. Trac.* (127:25–129:34, cf. 124:25–125:24). Having come down to heal and teach, the individual members of the spiritual church nevertheless need instruction and suffer from passions themselves (116:19–24), and their presence in the world serves as a "school" that they have to go through before they can be united with the Pleroma (123:11–22). Moreover, the spiritual seed did not come down all at once, but continues to do so "until they all have entered (physical) life (ⲃⲓⲟⲥ) and leave it, their bodies [remaining] on earth" (135:10–12).

Such an expression as "using up" death does not appear in *Tri. Trac.* Nevertheless, the underlying soteriological scheme implies a seemingly related idea. The spiritual seed descends as individuals into the material world, the realm of division, and they must all go through this process of temporary incarnation before unity can be attained and re-established. Thus, when all the seed has experienced bodily existence and physical death, the "sickness," that is, the divisibility with which they were originally brought forth, will eventually be eliminated.

Differences vis-à-vis the Valentinus fragment should nonetheless be pointed out. Valentinus, by saying τὸν θάνατον ἠθέλετε μερίσασθαι, suggests that the incarnation of the spirituals took place through a deliberate decision made by themselves. *Tri. Trac.*, on the other hand, states that their descent was preordained by the Father as a feature of the economy of salvation (115:33–35, cf. 95:31–38). It seems prob-

---

[89] The terminology of "angels" in fact occurs in *Tri. Trac.* as well: ". . . the angels of heaven having been deemed worthy of sojourning and forming a community in him upon earth. Therefore he is called the Father's angelic redemption . . ." (125:15–20). *Tri. Trac.* appears to draw on various versions of the motif of the descending *ekklesia*. Several of the other instances of the word ⲁⲅⲅⲉⲗⲟⲥ in *Tri. Trac.* may represent this usage as well.

able, however, that the freedom of will suggested in the fragment should not be interpreted as excluding the notion of a divine plan and agency in salvation, and that ἠθέλετε in fact refers to a freely given consent rather than to a decision made by the spirituals entirely on their own accord.

Fragment 5

ὁπόσον ἐλάττων ἡ εἰκὼν τοῦ ζῶντος προσώπου, τοσοῦτον ἥσσων ὁ κόσμος τοῦ ζῶντος αἰῶνος. τίς οὖν αἰτία τῆς εἰκόνος; μεγαλωσύνη τοῦ προσώπου παρεσχημένου τῷ ζωγράφῳ τὸν τύπον, ἵνα τιμηθῇ δι᾽ ὀνόματος αὐτοῦ· οὐ γὰρ αὐθεντικῶς εὑρέθη μορφή, ἀλλὰ τὸ ὄνομα ἐπλήρωσεν τὸ ὑστερῆσαν ἐν πλάσει. συνεργεῖ δὲ καὶ τὸ τοῦ θεοῦ ἀόρατον εἰς πίστιν τοῦ πεπλασμένου.

As much as the image is inferior to the living person, so is the world inferior to the living aeon. What is the cause of the image? The greatness of the person who provided the model for the painter, so that he might be honoured through his name. For the form was not regarded as equal to the original, but the name filled out what was lacking in the artefact. For the invisibility of God as well contributes to faith in the created work (Clem. Alex. *Str.* IV 89:6–90:1)

This fragment has some striking similarities with frg. 1. In both fragments a relationship of model and copy is being thematised. In frg. 1 that relationship is anthropological: the first created human is an image of the pre-existent Anthropos. Here it is cosmological: the cosmos is an εἰκών of "the living aeon."[90] In both cases, moreover, the term πλάσις is employed for the copy. Finally, the idea that the "name" applied to the copy somehow compensates for the deficiency of the copy appears in both fragments as well, as does the "invisible" presence (τὸ τοῦ θεοῦ ἀόρατον; cf. τὸν ἀοράτως . . . σπέρμα δεδωκότα in frg. 1) of this transcendent element.[91]

---

[90] Clement, it is true, interprets the εἰκών as the Demiurge, being an image of the Father, and the painter as Sophia (IV 90:2). This cannot be accurate, since the fragment explicitly speaks about the κόσμος being an image of the Aeon (cf. Markschies, *Valentinus*, 171–73, 183–85; Holzhausen, *Mythos*, 135n226). On the other hand, Clement is not entirely wrong either, since the Demiurge from one perspective is co-extensive with the Hebdomad, and the Aeon is the unfolding of the divine Pleroma.

[91] For the anthropocosmic parallelism, see also Holzhausen, *Mythos*, 142–43.

The cosmos and the aeon

The idea of a parallelism between the cosmos and the transcendent world—obviously influenced by Platonism—is variously attested in Valentinian sources. Thus, *Tri. Trac.* explains that,

> Just as the present aeon (ⲡⲓⲁⲓⲱⲛ ⲧⲉⲛⲟⲩ) is single, yet divided into ages, the ages into years, the years into seasons, the seasons into months, the months into days, the days into hours, and the hours into moments, in the same way the true aeon (ⲡⲓⲁⲓⲱⲛ ⲛ̄ⲧⲉ ⲧⲙⲏⲉ) also is single yet multiple. (73:28–74:3)

This passage also offers a parallel for Valentinus' use in the fragment of "the aeon" in the singular as a designation for the transcendent world. This usage is not unusual in Valentinian documents, and is especially common in contexts where the transcendent world is contrasted with the cosmos.[92] The specific expression "the living aeon" is most easily understood in the same sense as "the true aeon" in the passage from *Tri. Trac.*, as indicating the original and authentic, in contrast to what is only a copy. The choice of the word "living" is probably also motivated by the analogy with painting, which implies a distinction between the painted image and its live model.[93]

---

[92] *Treat. Res.* 45:16–18: "Laying aside the perishable world, he exchanged it for an unperishing aeon"; 47:5–8: "You took on flesh when you entered this world. Why will you not take your flesh with you when you return to the aeon?"; *Gos. Phil.* 52:26–27: "The winter is the world; the summer is the other aeon"; 53:35–54:5: "The names that are heard belong to the world. . . . If they were in the aeon, they would never be named in the world, nor would they have ended up among the things of the world. They (only) have an end in [i.e., allude to(?)] the aeon"; 76:6–9: "In this world the joining consists of man and woman. . . . In the aeon the form of the joining is another"; 86:12–15: "He has received the truth already in the images: the world has become aeon. For the aeon has become for him fulfilment"; *On Bap. A* 41:29–31: "They have been brought from the world into the aeon. The interpretation of 'John' is the aeon; the interpretation of what 'Jordan' means is the descent that is advancement, that is. going from the world into the aeon"; cf. 42:18–19. Also cf. Heracleon frg. 1 Vö.: the aeon did not come into being through the Logos; frg. 18 Vö.: her husband was in the aeon; frg. 22 Vö.: the one who is in the aeon; *Tri. Trac.* 105:24: the exalted aeon; 136:24 the pre-existent aeon; *Interp. Know.* 11:32: there is no animal in the aeon.

[93] A deliberate allusion to Plat. *Tim.* 37d ζῷον αἰώνιον (thus Markschies, *Valentinus*, 158, 164–66) is therefore not likely. It follows from what has here been said that neither Valentinus' use of αἰών in the singular nor the expression "the living aeon" in particular can be used to establish a disagreement between Valentinus and later Valentinianism, as Markschies (*Valentinus*, 164–66) suggests.

The adorning name

The idea that the cosmos, being an image of the transcendent world, is adorned with the names that belong to its model, is a *topos* in Valentinian writings. This is what *Tri. Trac.* says about the *material* powers:

> In their own eyes <they> are great and powerful beings, more [beauti]ful than the names that adorn them—(although) they are (only) [their] shadows, being made beautiful by way of imitation. For the beauty [one sees] in an image (ⲁⲱⲗⲟⲛ, i.e., εἴδωλον) derives from that which the image (ⲁⲱⲗⲟⲛ) represents. (79:4–12; cf. 79:29–30)

The theme was introduced already in the description of the Pleroma:

> In that place rightfully belong all those good names that the angels and archons that have come into being in the cosmos share (ⲣ̄ⲕⲟⲓⲛⲱⲛⲓ) as well, although the latter have nothing in common with the eternal ones. (70:37–71:7)

On a higher level, the *psychic* powers are also images of the Pleroma, and share the names of their model:

> Those who belong to remembrance . . . reproduce even they the likeness of what belongs to the Pleroma, and especially because they share the names, with which they are adorned. (97:27–32)

In the ontological architecture of *Tri. Trac.*, the material, psychic, and spiritual levels of existence are all copies of the Pleroma one way or the other, distinguished by means of a consistent terminology: matter consists of imitations (ⲧⲁⲛⲧⲛ̄), the psychic realm of likenesses (ⲉⲓⲛⲉ), and the spiritual products of the Logos of images in the strict sense (ϩⲓⲕⲱⲛ) (98:23, 104:19–20). Together they make up the realms that spread out below the Pleroma, with the material "imitations" and the psychic "likenesses" ruling the cosmos, and the spiritual "images" dwelling in a supra-celestial region between the cosmos and the Pleroma.

Seen as a whole, this structure fulfils pedagogical and soteriological functions in the divine economy:

> For the whole establishment and design of the images, likenesses and imitations has come into being for the sake of those who need nourishment, instruction, and formation, so that their smallness may gradually grow, as through (the instruction provided by) the likeness of a mirror. (104:18–25)

The last phrase (clearly an allusion to 1 Cor 13:12) indicates that it is because the world displays images of the Pleroma in various ways that it can serve as a "school" for the spirituals.[94] Somewhat similar is the following passage:

> His [*sc.* the Saviour's] members . . . needed a school, such as exists in the regions that have been so fashioned as to give it the likeness of the images and the archetypes in the manner of a mirror. (123:11–16)

Here, it is probably not the character of the cosmos itself as an image that is referred to, but rather the ability of the church existing in the world to form an image of the Pleroma, an idea that nevertheless presupposes that corporeal and temporal existence possesses the capacity to reflect the structure of a transcendent model.

A double perspective thus seems to apply to the theme of images and names. On the one hand, the images are by nature inferior to their model, and the material "imitations" the most inferior of all. Also, there is a notion that the cosmic powers have unrightfully appropriated the "names" that properly belong to the transcendent world. On the other hand, even these imitations and misleading names serve a purpose in the economy of salvation in so far as they can provide an inkling of the true reality of which they are shadowy reflections.[95]

These themes also appear in *Gos. Phil.*, a text that is also very much concerned with the epistemology of names and images:[96]

> Names told to human beings in the world are very deceptive, for they divert their thoughts from what is permanent to the impermanent. Thus one who hears the name "God" does not perceive something permanent but something impermanent. So it is also with "father," "son," "the holy spirit," "life," "light," "resurrection," "church," and all the rest: one does not perceive permanent things, but impermanent ones. [Even] so they point to the things that are permanent.

---

[94] For this theme, see also Iren. *Haer.* I 6:1 ἔδει (*sc.* τὸ πνευματικόν) γὰρ τῶν ψυχικῶν καὶ αἰσθητῶν παιδευμάτων, διὸ καὶ κόσμον κατεσκευάσθαι λέγουσι; Thomassen and Painchaud, *Traité tripartite*, 402; Simonetti, *Testi gnostici*, 491–92n222.

[95] A statement that probably relates to this theme occurs in *Tri. Trac.* 134:17–23, where the immediate conversion of the spirituals from their old forms of worship to the revealed Saviour is described: "The names that those whom they used to worship, attend to, and serve had received on loan they now gave to the one who is rightfully called by them." This suggests that the unknown Father had temporarily allowed the cosmic powers to be endowed with his own divine attributes, and that the cult of these powers even served a preparatory, educational purpose.

[96] Cf. also Koschorke, "Namen."

The na[mes that are] heard belong to the world. [Let no one be de]ceived! If they] existed in the aeon, they would at no time be spoken in the world. Nor would they have ended up among worldly things. They (only *or* nevertheless) have an end in the aeon.

One single name is not spoken in the world: the name which the Father gave to the Son. It is exalted above all things: this is the name of the Father. For the Son would not have become father had he not put on the name of the Father. Those who have *that* name perceive it, but do not speak it. But those who do not have it, do not perceive it either.

Truth brought forth names in the world for our sakes, however. For without such names Truth cannot be comprehended. Truth is one single thing, but it became multiple, for our sakes, in order to teach about this one thing, as well as possible, by means of many.

The archons wanted to deceive man because they saw that he had a kinship with what is truly good. They took the name of what is good and gave it to what is not good. This was in order that they might deceive him by means of the names, and bind the humans to what is not good. And then, as if they were doing them a favour, they would make them keep away from "what is not good," and devote themselves to what *they* regarded as "good." For they wanted to take a free man and make him their slave forever. (53:23–54:31)

Truth did not come into the world naked, but it came in types and images. The world will not receive truth in any other way. (67:9–12; cf. 76:6–17, 84:20–21, 86:11–14)

The discussion in *Gos. Phil.* seems to revolve around the same sort of ambiguity that applies to the description of names and images in *Tri. Trac.* On the one hand, the divine names have been wrongfully and deceptively appropriated by the cosmic powers; names used in the world are, moreover, unable to represent Truth. On the other hand, such names, and also images created in the world, nonetheless "point towards" (ⲥⲉⲃⲟ 53:34–35; ⲟⲩⲛ̄ⲧⲁⲩ ⲙ̄ⲙⲁⲩ ⲛ̄ⲛⲟⲩϩⲁⲏ ϩⲛ̄ 54:4) the transcendent reality—they are the forms through which Truth manifests itself under the conditions of temporal relativity and corporeal division. Therefore they can even be instruments of salvation, as is the case, for example, with the rituals of initiation, whose symbolism effectively leads towards the reality it mirrors.

To what extent are these passages from *Tri. Trac.* and *Gos. Phil.* able to shed light upon the fragment from Valentinus? It seems clear that the distinctive point made in the fragment has to do with the idea of the name. The argument set forth in these lines—that the world is an image of a higher reality, an imperfect copy of its model in the same way as a painted likeness—is in itself a banality. Only the added

motif of the "name" that somehow is able to fill the gap between model and copy takes the argument and the metaphor beyond this banality, so as to produce a statement possessing a degree of originality. It is likely, therefore, that the real concern of Valentinus in this passage is his ideas about name and naming, and that the cosmology serves only as an illustration of these ideas. It is quite conceivable that the fragment has been taken out of a larger context in which Valentinus explored his ideas about naming in several directions, of which the theme of the name of God in creation was just one.

Speculations about "the Name," names, and naming are, as we have repeatedly seen in this study, a central theme in Valentinian thought and writing.[97] It can hardly be doubted that Valentinus himself must have given the initial inspiration for the development of such speculations—as we saw, the idea of the name appears in frg. 1 as well as in the present fragment. That does not mean, of course, that all the modulations of this theme found in later texts necessarily represent ideas harboured by the founder of the movement. With regard to the cosmological applications of this "onomatology," there seems in fact to be a difference between Valentinus frg. 5 and the texts from *Gos. Phil.* and *Tri. Trac.* in so far as the latter speak about "names" in the plural whereas the fragment refers to the (single) name of God attached to creation. It should be pointed out, however, that according to *Tri. Trac.*, all the names of the transcendent world belong to the Son (66:9–10) and the Entireties are all united in him (66:29–67:34), while the Son himself is clothed in the one single Name. In a sense, therefore, all the names of the aeons are aspects of the one Name. *Gos. Phil.* also refers to the one Name, that of the Son, which remains unspoken in the world and is distinct from all other names, which are said to be deceptive.

The crucial problematic underlying these discussions, however, is that of language as the producer of difference. Semiologically speaking, in the one Name of the Son there is no distinction of signifier and signified (the Son and the Father are one), and the law of paradigmatic difference does not apply (the aeons exist in unity: all terms have an identical meaning). With the spreading out of the Pleroma, however, difference is generated: the aeons come into being as distinct names of the Father by means of which they offer them-

---

[97] See also Thomassen, "Gnostic Semiotics."

selves up in acts of glorifying praise according to the various degrees of understanding they possess and represent (*Tri. Trac.* 65:39–66:5, 69:37–41, 70:5–18). This difference in turn makes possible the rupture that takes place with the last and youngest of the aeons: a linguistic fall into a world of division, matter, and relativity—in other words, the world of human language.

This process seems in fact to be what is described in *Exc.* 31. That text states that, through the passion of the twelfth aeon, the Entireties themselves were educated[98] and came to understand that "what they are, they are by the grace of the Father: unnameable Name (ὄνομα ἀνωνόμαστον), form and knowledge." Then the text goes on to explain:

ὁ δὲ βουληθεὶς αἰὼν τὸ ὑπὲρ τὴν γνῶσιν λαβεῖν ἐν ἀγνωσίᾳ καὶ ἀμορφίᾳ ἐγένετο. ὅθεν καὶ κένωμα γνώσεως εἰργάσατο, ὅπερ ἐστὶ σκιὰ τοῦ ὀνόματος· ὅπερ ἐστὶν υἱός, μορφὴ τῶν αἰώνων. οὕτως τὸ κατὰ μέρος ὄνομα τῶν αἰώνων ἀπώλεια ἐστὶ τοῦ ὀνόματος.	However, the aeon that wished to grasp what is beyond knowledge ended up in ignorance and lack of form. For that reason it produced a void of knowledge that is a shadow of the Name, that which is the Son, the form of the aeons. Thus the name of the aeons divided into parts is a loss of the Name. (31:3–4)

This passage has many problems.[99] What seems clear, at least, is that the Name has suffered a rupture, associated with the passion of Sophia and the resulting void. Just as her formlessness and ignorance are the kenomatic antitheses to the form and knowledge characterising the Pleroma, so the "shadow of the Name" is the negative counterpart of the Son-Name. At the same time, however, this theme of negativity and lack is combined with one of fragmentation: the defection of Sophia produces a μερισμός of the Name. What is not clear, however, is what this fragmentation refers to. Does it mean, perhaps, that, as long as Sophia is not reunited with the Pleroma, the Pleroma itself as collectively constituting the Name is not yet unified, but remains divided into individual names (of aeons)? Or, is the fragmented

---

[98] διὰ τῆς τοῦ δωδεκάτου αἰῶνος πείσεως τὰ ὅλα παιδευθέντα, ὥς φασι, συνεπάθη-σεν (31:2) The rest of the aeons suffered together with Sophia and learned the same lesson as her when she was persuaded of her error.

[99] ἀπώλεια is an emendation. The manuscripts read ἀμέλει, which is syntactically impossible. The emendation, which appears in all the editions, is not self-evident. Secondly, the second ὅπερ-phrase is awkward: is it out of place? Thirdly, the sense of οὕτως, which introduces the final phrase, is not clear.

Name something that appears as the shadowy images constituting the material world? Both interpretations are possible. They may also be combined in so far as the fragmented negative images produced by Sophia can be said to be a manifestation and reflection of the lack of unity existing in the Pleroma itself as long as Sophia has not yet been restored to it.

At any rate, *Exc.* 31 clearly has thematic affinities with the ideas about the Name and the names in *Gos. Phil.* discussed above, and in particular with the passage that states, "One single name is not spoken in the world: the name which the Father gave to the Son. . . . Truth is one single thing, but it became multiple, for our sakes, in order to teach about this one thing, as well as possible, by means of many" (54:6–18). In this text, positive implications of the multiplication of the Name are pointed out, in contrast to *Exc.* 31, which only refers to the loss of the Name and the resulting deficiency. The ontological *topos* is nevertheless the same in the two texts: with the rupture caused by Sophia's passion, and the coming into being of materiality, the Name of the Father was broken up. In this fragmented state, the Name exists in the multiplicity of the cosmos—as lack and inauthenticity, but also as a dim reflection of the one true Name.

In this perspective, the "names" existing in the cosmos are fragments of the one Name of the Father. These "names" may be understood, as in *Tri. Trac.*, specifically as divine names appropriated by cosmic powers, or, as in *Gos. Phil.*, as human language generally. But however it was interpreted and applied in individual texts, a theory existed in the Valentinian tradition about cosmic names and the divine Name that construed their relationship in accordance with an ontological scheme contrasting the fragmented world of sensible objects with its unitary, transcendent model. Obviously this Valentinian theory needs to be taken into account in an interpretation of Valentinus' statement about the name that provides a link between the aeon and the cosmos. This does not mean that Valentinus must have expressed theories that were exactly the same as the ones attested in *Exc., Gos. Phil.*, or *Tri. Trac.* Nevertheless, he must have entertained and taught some kind of theory about the name of God being present in creation, from which the ideas expressed in those texts presumably took their departure.

As we have seen, the Valentinian texts are ambivalent about the presence of the divine Name in the world. It is described as fragmentation, lack, and inauthenticity, but at the same time as a reflected image that can serve to provide insight. In the fragment, Valentinus

does not speak about any deficiency in the name. On the contrary, "the name filled out what was lacking (ἐπλήρωσεν τὸ ὑστερῆσαν) in the artefact." The perspective is thus decisively more optimistic than, for instance, that of *Exc.* 31. On the other hand, Valentinus can hardly have meant that its possession of the name makes the cosmos equal in perfection to "the living aeon." Undoubtedly the cosmos remains "inferior" to its model, even though the divine Name dwells in it. The "filling out" effected by the name can only be meant in a relative sense; the cosmos is still no more than a material image of an ontologically superior reality, just as the painted portrait remains but a likeness of its model, even if it has a name tag attached to it. In this way the fragment expresses no more than what is common doctrine in Valentinianism, namely the notion that the cosmos is an image of the Pleroma on a lower ontological level. The idea that the divine Name is present in creation is just a way of expressing the link between model and copy, and does not *per se* imply a positive view of the material cosmos. It does not exclude the possibility that Valentinus may have conceived of the cosmic immanence of the Name from a different point of view as well, namely as a fragmentation and a loss of the authentic Name in the way described in later Valentinian sources.[100]

Fragment 6

ἤδη δὲ καὶ τῶν τὴν κοινότητα πρεσβευόντων ὁ κορυφαῖος Οὐαλεντῖνος ἐν τῇ Περὶ φιλῶν ὁμιλίᾳ κατὰ λέξιν γράφει· πολλὰ τῶν γεγραμμένων ἐν ταῖς δημοσίαις βίβλοις εὑρίσκεται γεγραμμένα ἐν

But even the leader of those who extol fellowship, Valentinus, writes in his sermon "On friends" the following words: "Much of what is written in the publicly available books is

---

[100] Another variation on the theme occurs in a passage of *Tri. Trac.* that describes the Archon-Demiurge: "Over all these [rul]ers he [*sc.* the Logos] placed one ruler who is commanded by no one since he is the lord of them all. This is the representation that the Logos brought forth from his thought as a likeness of the Father of the Entireties. Because of that he is adorned with all the <names>, being a likeness of him possessing all the qualities and all the glories. For he too is called 'father,' 'god,' 'creator,' 'king,' 'judge,' 'place,' 'dwelling,' and 'law.' . . . For in every place where he worked he left his handsome figure by means of his name, while he worked and spoke the things he was thinking" (100:18–30, 102:7–11). Here, the Demiurge, on the one hand, assumes all the names of the Father himself and, on the other hand, leaves his own name as a mark in creation. This name is, then, indirectly the name of the Father of the All, transmitted through the Logos, who, using the Demiurge as an instrument, is the real active cause in creation. The Logos in turn is informed by the Saviour, who has manifested the Pleroma to him.

τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ τοῦ θεοῦ· τὰ γὰρ κοινὰ ταῦτά ἐστι τὰ ἀπὸ καρδίας ῥήματα, νόμος ὁ γραπτὸς ἐν καρδίᾳ· οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ λαὸς ὁ τοῦ ἠγαπημένου, ὁ φιλούμενος καὶ φιλῶν αὐτόν. δημοσίας γὰρ βίβλους εἴτε τὰς Ἰουδαϊκὰς λέγει γράφας εἴτε τὰς τῶν φιλοσόφων, κοινοποιεῖ τὴν ἀλήθειαν.

in fact also written in the church of God. What is shared are the words that come from the heart: the law written in the heart. This is the people of the Beloved One, the one that he loves and that loves him." Whether by "publicly available books" he means the Jewish scriptures or those of the philosophers, he regards the truth as a thing that is held in common. (Clem. Alex. *Str.* VI 52:3–53:1)

Clement's reference to Valentinus is made in this case approvingly. Clement is arguing in this part of the *Stromateis* that Greek philosophy contains a part of the truth, providentially revealed by God as a preparation for Christian faith, and quotes Valentinus in support of this view. Thus, he here speaks about Valentinus without any hint of reproach or sarcasm.[101]

The quotation comes from a homily called "On friends."[102] This suggests that the central point of the passage is not the universal dissemination of truth *per se*, but is rather to be located in the phrase οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ λαὸς ὁ τοῦ ἠγαπημένου, ὁ φιλούμενος καὶ φιλῶν αὐτόν, where the term φιλεῖν is thematised. Unfortunately, however, this sentence is also the most difficult one in the fragment from a textual point of view, since the immediately most natural reading of οὗτος is to understand it as referring back to νόμος; however, the resulting identification of the "people" with the "law" does not make good sense.[103] For this reason Grabe, already in 1700, suggested changing λαός to λόγος, a conjecture that has subsequently been accepted by some scholars.[104] οὗτος need not necessarily, however, refer to the nearest preceding noun; the reference may also be to

---

[101] Markschies, *Valentinus*, 188–90.

[102] The appearance of the notion of friendship is interesting here, as is also Clement's characterisation of Valentinus as a proponent of κοινότης. Friendship was a significant *topos* of discourse in all the ancient philosophical schools, and Valentinus clearly aligns himself with that *topos* in this homily. In view of the general Neopythagorean character of Valentinian thought, the importance of friendship in Neopythagoreanism is especially relevant; see Thom, "'Harmonious Equality.'" The *topos* of friendship in Valentinianism (φιλία/ⲘⲚⲦϢⲂⲎⲢ, ἀγάπη, εὐδοκία, κοινότης, κοινωνία, συμφωνία, etc.) in its philosophical context deserves a special study.

[103] Markschies, *Valentinus*, 187; Holzhausen, *Mythos*, 160–61.

[104] Most recently by Holzhausen, *Mythos*, 161.

somebody or something present to the speaker, physically or mentally,[105] or even to a following element in the sentence.[106] The last alternative, which implies reading οὗτος as referring forward to the noun phrase ὁ φιλούμενος καὶ φιλῶν αὐτόν, seems unlikely. Two other options are more probable: either that οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ λαός refers to an ideally conceived group of people consisting of all those who have "the law written in the heart," or that it refers back to a topic that was discussed earlier in the homily, before the preserved extract begins. In either case, Valentinus is speaking about a "people," in the Biblical sense of "the people of God." His argument appears to be that the "people," in the soteriologically charged sense of the word in Biblical vocabulary, is not to be understood as those who have been given the Law that has been written down in books—in other words the Jews—but as consisting of those who have the law written in their hearts, and who love, and are loved by, the Beloved One.[107] That would probably include Gentiles (and barbarians?) as well.[108]

The question arises, however, as to what the precise relationship can be between this "people" and "the *ekklesia* of God." The latter expression can only mean the Christians, as distinct from Jews and Gentiles.[109] Moreover, Valentinus clearly implies a distinction between the church of God and those who have the law written in their hearts: if books written outside the church have "much" in common with what is being written and read by Christians, there must also be

---

[105] Bauer, *Wörterbuch*, 1.a.α.; Kühner-Gerth, II/1, § 467.5 (p. 645).

[106] Bauer, *Wörterbuch*, 1.a.δ.; Kühner-Gerth, II/1, § 467.7 second half (p. 646).

[107] Cf. Hilgenfeld, *Ketzergeschichte*, 301–2. The notion of "the law written in the hearts" is taken from Rom 2:15 (Heinrici, *Valentinianische Gnosis*, 75; Markschies, *Valentinus*, 200–1).

[108] In Rom 2:15, which Valentinus alludes to, the notion of the law written in the hearts explicitly applies to the Gentiles. This conclusion also provides an answer to the question of what Valentinus means by the phrase "publicly available books," which Clement is uncertain about, wondering whether it refers to the Jewish scriptures or Greek philosophy. Scholars have been divided on this issue; cf. Markschies, *Valentinus*, 194–200. If these "publicly available books" contain "words that come from the heart: the law written in the heart," and the latter expression is in contrast to the written Law of the Jews, it logically follows that the "publicly available books" must be non-Jewish, that is, Gentile literary works. Markschies, *Valentinus*, 198–99, reaches the same conclusion, with other arguments.

[109] Cf. 1 Cor 10:32: ἀπρόσκοποι καὶ Ἰουδαίοις γίνεσθε καὶ Ἕλλησιν καὶ τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ τοῦ θεοῦ. Further: 1 Cor 1:2, 11:22, 15:9, Gal 1:13; *1 Clem* 1:1; Hermas, *Sim.* IX 18:3.4; etc. The precise extent of Valentinus' notion of "the church" in this context—whether it refers only to his own group of followers or to all who call themselves Christians—is uncertain, but not essential to his argument.

some things they do not share. In Valentinus' mind there thus seems
to exist (1) a larger group of human beings consisting of those who
speak words coming from the heart, who have the law written in their
hearts, and who make up the people of the Beloved One, and (2)
a smaller group that constitutes the church of God. (Evidently a third
category must exist as well, though not explicitly mentioned, namely
that consisting of all those who lack the law written in the hearts.)

   But does it make sense to include non-Christians in "the people
of the Beloved One"? Although the expression ὁ ἠγαπημένος is used
in the LXX for Israel, Abraham and others,[110] here, in a Christian
context, "the Beloved One" can hardly refer to any other figure than
Christ.[111] Can people who do not belong to the church of God, then,
nevertheless be said to love Christ and to be loved by him?[112] For
such an interpretation to be plausible, "the Beloved One" must be
understood not only as the Saviour known to the church of God,
but also as an entity associated with the idea of the law written in
the hearts of a larger number of human beings. This interpretation
leads in the direction of some form of Logos theology, comparable
to that of, for instance, Clement of Alexandria, who, indeed, himself
interprets the quotation from Valentinus in that way.[113] Thus, Valen-
tinus seems to suggest that people who do not (yet?) belong to the
church of God can nevertheless love Christ and be loved by him,
because they have an innate ability to perceive truth and follow the
law of their heart, even if they do not know the true identity of the
one they love, or the source of their innate ability.

   In fact, Valentinus in frg. 1 speaks about a seed that was deposited
in the first human, probably by the Logos-Saviour, who then spoke
through him and confounded the angels. The idea that a spiritual

---

[110] Israel: Deut 32:15, 33:5.26, Is 44:2; Abraham: 2 Chr 20:7, Dan 3:35; Moses:
Sir 45:1; Samuel: Sir 46:13; others: Ps 28:6.
[111] Cf. Eph 1:6; *Barn.* 3:6, 4:3.8, *1 Clem* 59:2–3, Ign. *Smyrn.* 1; Markschies, *Valentinus*,
193n47. The expression is not certainly attested in Valentinian texts; cf. *Tri. Trac.*
87:8 ⲡⲓⲙ̅ⲡ̅ⲣⲓⲧ, also *Gos. Truth* 30:31. It may be added that formulas resembling the
language used here by Valentinus are found in the *Odes of Solomon*: "I love the
Beloved and my soul loves Him" (3:5); ". . . you who are loved in the Beloved"
(8:21); also cf. 7:1, 38:11.
[112] Cf. Markschies, *Valentinus*, 202: "Von diesen, denen allen das Gesetz ins Herz
geschrieben ist, wird man nämlich kaum sagen können, daß sie Christus lieben,
weil sie ihn ja gar nicht kennen." For this reason Markschies argues that "the peo-
ple of the Beloved One" is co-extensive with "the church of God."
[113] Markschies, *Valentinus*, 199–200.

seed was sown into the first human is found in later Valentinian documents as well.[114] It seems likely that this sort of anthropogonic myth may form the basis of Valentinus' universalising statement about the law written in the human heart. On the other hand, it cannot be overlooked that Valentinian texts often give a more differentiated account of the origins and nature of the human race, in the form of the theory of the three human kinds.[115] For instance, *Tri. Trac.* states that, whereas the first human possessed a spiritual soul, the Creator also generated souls that had his own psychic nature, and the material powers in turn produced their kind of humans (105:29–106:5). Later in the text, the categories of the psychic and the material are correlated with the nations of the Jews and the Greeks, respectively (109:24–111:5).[116] The Greeks, with their philosophy and sciences, are hopelessly confined to the material realm—they are dominated by and inspired by the powers of matter.[117] In the eschatological part of the tractate, moreover, the spiritual kind is said to have immediately recognised and received the Saviour, and then constituted itself as his church (118:27–36); the psychics, on the other hand, hesitated to receive him, and only part of them eventually did so; the material humans, finally, are totally alien to him and beyond redemption altogether (118:37–119:16).[118] These ideas are not easily

---

[114] See above, 434–37.

[115] *Tri. Trac.* 105:35–106:25, 118:14–119:27; Iren. *Haer.* I 6:1, 7:5; *Exc.* 54:1; Hipp. *Haer.* VI 34:4–6.

[116] The construction of the Gentiles and the Jews as representing, respectively, the material and the psychic, is also evident in Heracleon, frgs. 20, 21 (Orig. *In Jo.* XIII 16:95–97, 17:194). Similar ideas underlie the categorisation of the Greeks/Romans/Gentiles in *Gos. Phil.* 52:15–17; 62:26–35, 75:30–76:4.

[117] "The ones who have become wise among the Greeks and the Barbarians have reached as far as the powers that came into being from illusion and vain thought, <as well as> those who issued from these (in turn) by way of strife and in the manner of rebellion, and (those powers) have worked in them. Thus, when they spoke about the things they held to be "wisdom," it was imitation, presumption, and illusory ideas, for the <imitation> had deceived them: they thought that they had reached the truth, though it was error they had reached. (This was) not only because the names (they were using) were small, but the powers themselves prevented them by giving the impression that they were the all.

From this it happened that this order was entangled in struggle against itself, because of the presumptuous quarrelsomeness of [. . .] of the ruler who is [. . .] who is before him. For this reason, nobody agreed with anybody else about anything, either in philosophy, medicine, rhetoric, music, or mechanics, but they are all opinions and theories. Consequently, <verbosity> ruled, and <they> were confused, since they were at a loss to explain <those> who ruled and gave them their ideas" (*Tri. Trac.* 109:24–110:22).

[118] See above, 51, 169.

reconciled with the apparently more inclusivist attitude expressed by
Valentinus in the fragment, especially as far as the attitude towards
the Gentiles is concerned. Valentinus seems to have included in the
broad category of "the people of the Beloved One, the one that he
loves and that loves him" people that later Valentinians could clas-
sify as being "alien" to the Saviour.

It is inappropriate to expect full consistency in this area of ideas.
The theoretical classification into spiritual, psychic, and material obvi-
ously works on a different level from the practical evaluation of
empirical categories such as Jews and Gentiles. A position main-
taining that Gentiles are by nature alien to the Saviour would make
proselytising among Gentiles pointless and exclude them from ever
joining the Valentinian spiritual church. It is difficult to believe that
such a position could ever have been practical policy among Valen-
tinians. If, on the other hand, Gentiles could become—that is, reveal
themselves as—spiritual, that would have to mean, in Valentinian
terms, that some of the original spiritual seed sown into the first
human had been transmitted among Gentiles as well as among Jews.
Thus, just as the spiritual seed sometimes manifested itself in the
laws and the prophecies of the Jewish scriptures (*Letter to Flora, Tri.
Trac.*), it might be expected to have manifested itself in Graeco-
Roman literature as well (even if *Tri. Trac.* denies this). This line of
reasoning is speculative on my part, since there are no Valentinian
sources that actually make this assertion, but the argument at least
serves to highlight an important ambiguity in Valentinian anthro-
pology: the question of whether all humans potentially possess the
spiritual seed, in so far as they descend from the first human, or
whether separate anthropogonies must be envisaged for the psychics
and the hylics. It does not seem unlikely that the latter idea could
represent a later addition to the anthropogonical account, and that
Valentinus himself only spoke about the anthropogony from the first,
universal point of view.[119]

---

[119] The theory of separate creations of psychic and hylic humans only appears
in *Tri. Trac.* 105:35–106:5, and Hipp. *Haer.* VI 34:4. Irenaeus' treatise does not
explain how there came to be three kinds (cf. *Haer.* I 6:1), though *Exc.* 54:2 (prob-
ably preserving the theory of the source common to *Exc.*, section C, and Irenaeus'
treatise) does so by distributing the three kinds on Adam's three sons, Cain, Abel,
and Seth. The underlying difficulty in all these theories is the fact that the story
of Adam as the first human and the ancestor of all humankind—where Adam's
descendents must logically all be thought to have inherited his basic genetic prop-
erties, including the spiritual seed—cannot easily be reconciled with the idea of the

Nevertheless, what seems to be the case is that Valentinus in this fragment expresses a respect for Gentiles and Graeco-Roman culture that is not paralleled in later Valentinian sources.[120] At this point, it is possible that Valentinus' attitude was more accommodating than that of his followers, though, we lack sufficient evidence to know it.

FRAGMENT 8

καὶ δεδήλωκεν αὐτὴν δι᾽ ἐλαχίστων Οὐαλεντῖνος ἐν ψαλμῷ, κάτωθεν ἀρξάμενος, οὐχ ὥσπερ ὁ Πλάτων ἄνωθεν, λέγων οὕτως·	And this (arrangement) Valentinus has set out in few words in a psalm, beginning from below, not like Plato from the top, as follows:

Θέρος	Summer
πάντα κρεμάμενα πνεύματι βλέπω,	I see how all depends on spirit,
πάντα δ᾽ ὀχούμενα πνεύματι νοῶ·	I perceive how all is borne by spirit:
σάρκα μὲν ἐκ ψυχῆς κρεμαμένην,	Flesh suspended on soul,
ψυχὴν δ᾽ ἀέρος ἐξεχομένην,	Soul clinging to air,
ἀέρα δ᾽ ἐξ αἴθρης κρεμάμενον·	Air suspended from ether;
ἐκ δὲ βυθοῦ καρποὺς φερομένους,	But from the depths, fruits being brought forth,
ἐκ μήτρας δὲ βρέφος φερόμενον.	From the womb, a child being brought forth.

It is to Hippolytus (*Haer.* VI 37:7) that we owe this only surviving specimen of Valentinus' psalms.[121] It was apparently entitled θέρος,[122] and seems to have been preserved *in extenso*.[123]

---

division of humankind into three races with distinct genetic characteristics. The theory of *Exc.* 54:2 is clearly unsatisfactory in this regard, whereas those of *Tri. Trac.* and Hippolytus' treatise represent new attempts to get around the problem. Valentinus himself may have expressed both these two anthropological notions, without trying to reconcile them, or the theory of the three human kinds may have been introduced only by his later followers.

[120] The irony of the Valentinian disparagement of Gentiles as hylics, or "dead" (*Gos. Phil.* 52:15–17), is that the Valentinian system itself is based on Greek philosophical (Neopythagorean-Platonist) ontology and anthropology—including the very tripartition into spiritual, psychic, and hylic that is used to label Gentiles as hylics. These philosophical sources are never acknowledged in Valentinian writings.

[121] ψαλμός seems to be the name used for these compositions by the Valentinians; cf. the testimonies on Valentinus' psalms cited above, 423n25. On these testimonies see also Herzhoff, *Psalmen*, 28–34.

[122] The first word in Hippolytus' quotation can only be understood as the title of the psalm. Attempts to integrate the word into the text fall short for metric reasons; see Völker, *Von Valentin*, 96–97n1; Markschies, *Valentinus*, 218.

[123] The psalm has often been discussed. The following are the most recent, and

In Hippolytus' presentation the psalm is followed by a commentary explaining that "flesh" means matter, "soul" refers to the Demiurge, "air" is "the spirit outside the Pleroma" (τοῦ πνεύματος <τοῦ> ἔξω πληρώματος)—that is, the external Sophia—and the "ether" is the same as the Sophia inside the Limit, together with the whole Pleroma. The "fruits" brought forth from the depths allude to the Father's προβολή of the aeons. This commentary is certainly not by Valentinus, and has very little value for the interpretation of the psalm; most probably it was put together by Hippolytus himself.[124]

Form and function

With regard to formal characteristics, the psalm is composed in consistent tetrameters. The lines all end, however, in an iamb, and may therefore be characterised as "miuric" ("mouse-tailed").[125] This deviation from standard prosody is rare, and the few surviving examples of miuric tetrameters that can be drawn in for comparison are all of a profane nature.[126] In any case, the psalm represents an informed use of Greek metre. The verses are composed as 2 + 3 + 2 isocola, with added repetitions of words and endings (anaphora and homoeoteleuton in the first pair of lines, homoeoteleuton in lines 3 and 4, epiphora in lines 3 and 5, symploke in the final pair); this creates a rounded structure, balancing repetition and variation in a way which will have been effective, one may imagine, in a liturgical context. The repetitive devices employed by Valentinus are rooted in classical rhetoric rather than in the *parallelismus membrorum* of Hebrew poetry, which tends to avoid the repetition of words.[127]

---

also the most detailed, studies: Wolbergs, *Gedichte*, 23–36; Herzhoff, *Psalmen*, 24–76; Markschies, *Valentinus*, 218–59; Holzhausen, "Ein gnostischer Psalm?"; McGowan, "Valentinus Poeta."

[124] It is difficult to believe that people really familiar with Valentinian ideas could seriously have thought that by "air" Valentinus meant the external Sophia, and "ether" the Pleroma. Both Sophia and the Pleroma are of course immaterial entities or spheres and hardly apt to be identified with physical elements, even metaphorically. On the status of the commentary, see also Markschies, *Valentinus*, 219–20.

[125] The first to comment on the metre was, to my knowledge, Wilamowitz-Moellendorf, "Lesefrüchte," 218–19. See further Herzhoff, *Psalmen*, 24–27, 41–44; Markschies, *Valentinus*, 221–25.

[126] Most recently surveyed by Markschies, *Valentinus*, 221–23; McGowan, "Valentinus Poeta," 159.

[127] Cf. Norden, *Kunstprosa*, 817–19. Herzhoff, *Psalmen*, 43, remains basically correct here, as against Markschies, *Valentinus*, 226–28, although lines 1–2 and 6–7 both use a form of synonymous parallelism reminiscent of Biblical poetic style.

As a psalm it must be assumed to have been used in communal worship, where it would be sung collectively by the congregation. From this functional point of view, the speaking—or, rather, singing—"I" of the psalm is not simply Valentinus himself as the author, but can be more properly said to represent the individual member of the community intoning the psalm: it expresses his or her identity as one who has "seen" and "understood" and who belongs in a group with others who share the same experience or perception.[128]

As for the ideas contained in the psalm, two issues in particular are essential for assessing their relationship to later Valentinianism, and will be discussed in the following. The first concerns the nature of the "cosmic chain" described in the psalm; the second has to do with the vocabulary used in the last two lines.

The "cosmic chain": Monism or dualism?

Lines 1–5 describe the visionary understanding of how "all" hangs together: flesh is hanging on soul, soul on air, and air on ether. All, moreover, depends on *pneuma*. This "spirit" is not itself presented as a link in the chain, but is rather the power that keeps the chain as such together.[129] Lines 1–2 state, as a general truth, that everything is dependent on and maintained by spirit,[130] while lines 3–5 explain in detail the interconnectedness of the various parts of the "all." This description of a "cosmic chain" is a variation on a cosmological *topos*

---

[128] From this perspective it seems unlikely that the psalm was "nicht speziell für eine esoterische Gemeinde, sondern ein breiteres Publikum geschaffen," as Herzhoff, *Psalmen*, 33, assumes.

[129] πνεύματι in lines 1–2, must be understood as an instrumental dative, and not as equivalent to the constructions of κρέμασθαι with ἐκ in lines 3 and 5, as Herzhoff has shown (*Psalmen*, 47, with n2; see also Holzhausen, "Ein gnostischer Psalm?" 68n12). Another possibility is to relate πνεύματι to the verbs βλέπω and νοῶ ("I see in spirit," etc.), as does McGowan, "Valentinus Poeta," 163, but this interpretation has already been rejected in earlier scholarship (Herzhoff, *Psalmen*, 45–46, with references to Leisegang and Kroll; Markschies, *Valentinus*, 238–39), with good reasons: such a meaning of πνεύματι would be clumsily pleonastic, since βλέπω and νοῶ already in themselves imply acts of a spiritual nature.

[130] McGowan, "Valentinus Poeta," 161–62, proposes a distinction between βλέπειν in line 1 and νοεῖν in line 2 as two different faculties, and suggests that κρεμά-μενα, " suspended," refers to what is seen, whereas ὀχούμενα, "borne, maintained," are things that are known. However, since synonymous parallelism seems to be a formal feature of the poem in both lines 1–2 and 6–7, βλέπειν very easily can mean spiritual seeing, and κρέμασθαι and ὀχεῖσθαι seem to be used basically as equivalents in *Corp. Herm.* III 3 (below, 482n132) and Philo, *Vita Mos.* II 121 (below, 482n133), I find this interpretation implausible.

that goes back to Homer (*Il.* 8:17–27) and appears widely in phi-
losophy.[131] There are also interesting parallels in Hermetic texts,[132]
and in Philo.[133] Valentinus' version poses some difficulties in so far
as his chain is composed of a mixture of anthropological terms (flesh,
soul) and physical ones (air, ether); this makes the precise sense of
the chain and its logical coherence unclear.[134] The most important
problem with this text, however, is how it relates to the view of the
cosmos found in later Valentinian texts. Does the vision of the inter-
connectedness of flesh, soul, air, and ether, and the dependence of
everything on spirit, express an optimistic view of the cosmos as the
All, celebrating it as a well-ordered system where everything hangs
providentially together?[135] Or are the ideas in the psalm compatible
with later Valentinianism, where there is a rupture in the flow of
generation between the transcendent world and the cosmos, and the
Limit guards the separation of two opposite ontological realms?

In my opinion, the description of the cosmic chain in the psalm
is not incompatible with Valentinian cosmology in general. First, it
should be noted that Valentinus' description does not imply a pos-
itive evaluation of the cosmos *per se*: the vision of how everything
hangs together is an act of understanding (νοεῖν), not necessarily one
of admiration.[136]

Second, it must be observed that the focal point of the description
is not the individual constituents of the chain, but the fact that they
all depend on *pneuma*. Thus, even if one were to consider that the
visionary description contains an element of positive evaluation, that

---

[131] Wolbergs, *Gedichte*, 27–30; Herzhoff, *Psalmen*, 48–51; Markschies, *Valentinus*, 234–38; Holzhausen, "Ein gnostischer Psalm?" 68–71.

[132] In particular *Corp. Herm.* III 2 πυρὶ τῶν ὅλων διορισθέντων καὶ ἀνακρεμασθέντων πνεύματι ὀχεῖσθαι; further, Holzhausen, "Ein gnostischer Psalm?" 68–69, with n13.

[133] *Vita Mos.* II 121 καὶ ἀπ᾽ ἀέρος τρόπον τινὰ γῆ καὶ ὕδωρ ἐκκρέμανται, τὸ γὰρ ὄχημα τούτων ἐστὶν ἀήρ; see Holzhausen, "Ein gnostischer Psalm?" 69–70 for this and other examples.

[134] See Markschies, *Valentinus*, 238–41; Holzhausen, "Ein gnostischer Psalm?" 71–72.

[135] Cf. Markschies, *Valentinus*, 239: ". . . steht in unserem Text nicht die Abwertung der Sarx im Vordergrund, sondern im Gegenteil eine recht positive Bewertung als Teil der kosmischen *ordo*, die durch das Bild der goldenen Kette angedeutet wird—das verblüfft angesichts des gewohnten Bildes valentinianischer Gnosis." Also cf. 259: "Der im Vergleich zum traditionellen Bild des 'Gnostikers Valentin' auffälligste und davon am meisten abweichende Charakterzug dieses Textes liegt in der außeror-dentlich positiven Wertung der konkreten Schöpfung."

[136] Similarly Holzhausen, "Ein gnostischer Psalm?" 78.

evaluation would be oriented towards the spirit and the fact that everything in the cosmos depends on it—even its material components.

Third, a view of the cosmos such as the one just described is not at all incompatible with the cosmology of the Valentinian systems. It will be recalled that in those systems, the creation of the world is the work of Sophia (or, in *Tri. Trac.*, the fallen Logos), who uses the Demiurge as a tool. More precisely, the creation consists in taking the material and psychic substances that had issued from her passion and repentance, and fashioning them into an ordered cosmos.[137] Thus, in *Tri. Trac.*, for instance, the Logos joins together the material and the psychic powers by means of the "presumptuous thought" that had caused his fall originally, but which now is useful in establishing a cosmic hierarchy. As a result, an unbroken chain of powers is installed in the cosmos.[138] Notwithstanding the differences with Valentinus' psalm, the basic ideas are comparable: through his demiurgic activity the Logos puts in place a coherent hierarchical

---

[137] For more details, see Thomassen, "Demiurge."

[138] This is the most relevant passage (*Tri. Trac.* 98:20−100:18): "After having established each one in his rank—the images, the likenesses, and the imitations— the Logos kept the aeon of the images pure from all its adversaries as a place of joy. To those who belong to the remembrance, however, he revealed the thought of which he had stripped himself, with the intention that it should draw them into a communion with the material. . . .

Over those who belong to the imitation, on the other hand, he placed the ordering *logos* to provide them with form. He also placed over them the law of judgement, and, further, he also placed over them [the] powers that had their roots [in] the lust for dominion. He [placed] them to rule over them, so that the order should be kept in check either by the firmness of the wise *logos*, by the threat of the [law], or by the power of the lust for dominion, which (all of them) reduced its evilness, until the Logos was content with them as being useful for the economy.

The Logos knows that the two orders share a common lust for dominion, and granted the desire of both these and all the others. To each he gave an appropriate rank for the exercise of command, so that each would become the ruler of one station and activity, and renounce the place of whoever is superior to himself in order to command by his activity the inferior stations, being in charge of the activity that it befell him to control on account of his mode of being. Consequently, there came to be commanders and subordinates in positions of dominion and servitude, angels and archangels, with various and different kinds of activities.

Each of the rulers, with the category and the grade which came to be his lot in accordance with the way they had appeared took up position, having been given his charge in the economy. And so none of them is without a command, and none is without a king (above him), from the ends of the heavens to the ends of the [earth], as far as to the inhabited regions of the [earth] and those who are below the earth. There are kings, there are masters, as well as those whom they command; some are there to punish, others to pass judgement, some to give relief and healing, others to instruct, and still others to keep watch."

structure in the cosmos, linking together the cosmic powers by means of forces imposed by his sovereign and rational authority, in a way that is similar to how, in the psalm, the all is chained together because of the spirit.

The demiurgic Logos/Sophia has of course a spiritual nature, which was imparted to her by the Saviour when he showed himself and healed her of the passions; it is this spiritual nature that enables her demiurgic activity. Sophia is, moreover, often identified with the (Holy) Spirit.[139] It is therefore entirely possible to identify the "spirit" in Valentinus' psalm with the demiurgic and world-sustaining figure of Sophia, who, residing in the Ogdoad, exerts her spiritual power on the orderly organisation of the lower world. Indeed, Valentinians who continued to use the psalm in their worship, most probably will have understood the words in that sense: the "spirit" refers to Sophia. However, whether Valentinus intended it to be understood in that way, is a different matter. We do not positively know that he used the name Sophia or taught any form of Sophia mythology (though we do not know that he did not, either). What seems quite likely, at any rate, is that Valentinus, by stating that the whole cosmos depends on "spirit," is combining commonplace Greek cosmological notions[140] with the widespread Jewish and Christian idea about the divine Spirit as a creative agent, in which role the Spirit is, moreover, frequently identified with Wisdom.[141] This means that Valentinus' notions about the cosmological function of the Spirit should be situated somewhere on the trajectory that leads from the early Jewish concept of the role of God's Spirit/Wisdom in creation, to the various gnostic mythologies of Sophia, but his precise location on that trajectory remains uncertain.

Fourth, the relationship between lines 1–5 and lines 6–7 must be considered. The final two lines differ in composition from the first part of the poem. The word order has changed, with ἐκ δέ at the beginning of the lines; this suggests a contrast rather than continuity with the preceding lines. Moreover, the perspective has changed

---

[139] καλεῖσθαι . . . καὶ πνεῦμα ἅγιον ἀπὸ τοῦ περὶ Χριστὸν πνεύματος Iren. *Haer.* I 4:1, ibid. 5:3; Hipp. *Haer.* VI 34:1, 35:3.4, 36:4, 37:8 (in the commentary on the psalm); *Exc.* 1:1–2; *Tri. Trac.* ⲡⲗⲟⲅⲟⲥ ⲙ̄ⲡⲛⲉⲩⲙⲁⲧⲓⲕⲟⲥ 103:15, 104:7.33, 105:31, 106:22; cf. 101:4.13.18, 102:32; *Gos. Phil.* 55:17.23–27, 58:11–13, 74:21–22, 85:23–24. Cf. also Orbe, *Espíritu santo*, 480–81.

[140] See above, 481–82.

[141] On this identification, see the dossier collected in Orbe, *Espíritu santo*, 687–706. Also Markschies comes close to this viewpoint in *Valentinus*, 243–44.

as well. So far we have been moving from the bottom up, survey-
ing how one thing "hangs on" another; now the movement is in an
opposite direction, and of a different kind: from a source, fruits and
offspring are being "brought forth." Thus, the impression is created
that what is described in lines 6–7 is not one more link in the unbro-
ken cosmic chain in lines 1–5, but a different and contrasting sphere
of reality with other kinds of processes. The contrast between the
two descriptions can be plausibly interpreted as corresponding to the
Valentinian dualist ontology of the Pleroma and the cosmos: beyond
the structures of the cosmos another reality exists, where the Bythos-
Father brings forth his aeonic emanations as his "fruits."[142] The
appropriateness of this interpretation will be further discussed in the
following section. Meanwhile, it can be concluded that the world-
view of the psalm is not incompatible with, but actually tends to
agree with, the basic Valentinian conception of the cosmos as an
ordered, hierarchical structure set up and kept in place by a spir-
itual force, but at the same time ontologically distinct from the higher
realm of the Pleroma from which that spiritual force had its origin.

"Depths," "fruits," "womb," and "child"

The vocabulary of lines 6–7 is characteristically Valentinian. The
most important terms (Bythos, womb) and their protological significance
have already been discussed above (in particular chapters 20, 21, 22)
and need not be dealt with again in full at this point. βυθός, or its
equivalent βάθος,[143] is a name for the Father as the hidden source
of the aeons, or Entireties. The term βυθός is shared with the *Chaldean
Oracles*, and also appears in Synesius, Marius Victorinus, and in later
Neoplatonist writers; its ultimate source is uncertain.[144] βυθός hardly

---

[142] This argument has already been made in previous scholarship. Wolbergs,
Gedichte, 33, notes "der neue Einsatz" in lines 6–7 and relates this break to the con-
trast between the cosmos and the Pleroma. Herzhoff, *Psalmen*, 43, 51, also remarks
that the form of lines 6–7 indicates a contrast with the preceding lines, but thinks
that this contrast indicates a climax in the poetic exposition, highlighting the Bythos
as the root of everything. Markschies, *Valentinus*, 247, also notes the formal dis-
tinctiveness of lines 6–7, but draws no implications from this observation for his
interpretation of the worldview of the poem (e.g., on 256).

[143] Though the terms βυθός and βάθος are evidently synonymous, it remains
unclear why one is selected instead of the other in a given context. Valentinus may
well have used both. Holzhausen ("Ein gnostischer Psalm?" 74) suggests that styl-
istic reasons induced Valentinus to choose βυθός rather than βάθος in the psalm.

[144] See above, 295–96.

ever appears in other "gnostic" systems.[145] It is *eo ipso* likely that the
widespread Valentinian usage of this term goes back to a common
source. The most likely candidate for that source is clearly Valentinus
himself, and the appearance of the word in the psalm confirms this
assumption. Apparently, therefore, Valentinus picked up the term
from the same type of sources (Pythagorean and/or Orphic) as
inspired the *Chaldean Oracles* and such authors as Synesius.

As we have seen, however, the term is used variously in Valentinian-
ism, in accordance with the two main versions of the protology. In
the type B protology, Bythos stands at the beginning of a series of
emanated aeons, whereas the type A protology expounds the idea
of a Bathos that initially encompasses the aeons and then brings them
forth, in a process of formation and manifestation. Above (chapter
22), it has been argued that this version of the protology is the orig-
inal one in Valentinianism, and this hypothesis fits well with what
the psalm suggests was Valentinus' own vision: a Bythos that brings
forth "fruits."

"Fruits," καρποί, is a usual designation for the Father's offspring,
or the aeons. See, for example, *Tri. Trac.* 57:23–35: "Moreover he
has his fruit (ⲕⲁⲣⲡⲟⲥ), though it remained unknown because of his
overwhelming greatness. And he wished to make it known, because
of his abundant sweetness. . . . For not only the Son, but the Church
as well exists from the beginning."[146] It is particularly interesting that
this terminology is also found in Synesius, in a protological context
(πατρὸς λοχίους . . . καρπούς, *Hymn* IV 8); this suggests that the notion
of καρποί derives from the vocabulary of the same sources as the
term βυθός—from the sources that influenced Valentinus, the *Chaldean
Oracles*, Synesius, etc.

The "womb" of line 8 stands in synonymous parallelism to the
"depths" of the preceding line; thus, the βυθός can be understood
as a kind of μήτρα. That idea, and the specific embryological model
of the generation of the Pleroma connected with it, are characteristic
of the type A protology. The model is elaborated especially in *Tri.
Trac.*, and was studied above (cf. 178–80). It, too, seems to derive from

---

[145] The only attestations are in the reports on the Ophites in Iren. *Haer.* I 30:1,
and Theodoret, *Haer.* I 14. They may be due to Valentinian influence.

[146] See also *Tri. Trac.* 74:13, 75:34; *Gos Truth* 28:7; Iren. *Haer.* I 14:2; further,
Sagnard, *Gnose valentinienne*, 432–35; Thomassen and Painchaud, *Traité tripartite*,
284–85.

the same type of sources as provided the term βυθός (cf. above, 291–98).

The word βρέφος must, in the immediate context, be understood as being conceptually dependent on the idea of a μήτρα: what comes forth from a womb is per definition a child. In more specifically theological terms, the "child," standing in a parallel to the "fruits" of the preceding line, probably refers to the Pleroma, viewed as a unitary offspring of the Father. This interpretation is supported by Tri. Trac. 62:6–11: "For the Father produced the Entirety like a little child (ογλιλογ ϣΗΜ), like a drop from a spring, like a blossom from a [vi]ne, like a [. . .], [li]ke a shoot [. . .]."[147] This does not exclude the possibility that the "child" may also allude to a more specific figure, conceived as incorporating the totality of the "fruits," in the same way that the Son encompasses all the aeons according to *Tri. Trac.*, or the Word manifests the Entirety in *Gos. Truth.* However, there are not sufficient clues in the text to support that interpretation; we can infer only that the "child" corresponds to the "fruits" in the preceding line.[148]

In conclusion, the last two lines express a vision of how (spiritual) offspring are born from the Father-Bythos, in contrast to the way things are strung together in the cosmos. The description of this generation process and the terminology used agree with the protological model of type A, which, as has been argued in this book, represents the most archaic layer of Valentinian protology. The final lines of the psalm thus confirm that a version of this protological model was taught by Valentinus himself.

Θέρος

The title of the psalm is somewhat enigmatic.[149] θέρος means "summer," and secondarily "harvest," "crop." The most natural approach is to understand the title as somehow related to the "fruits" in line 6 of the psalm, and various interpretations have been suggested along

---

[147] Cf. also 61:22 λιλογ.

[148] Several interpreters have identified the "child" with the Logos/Jesus, with reference to Valentinus' alleged vision of the Logos as a child in "frg. 7": Wolbergs, *Gedichte*, 34; Herzhoff, *Psalmen*, 65–66; Holzhausen, "Ein gnostischer Psalm?" 77; McGowan, "Valentinus Poeta," 166. I find this interpretation difficult to assess.

[149] See the discussions in Festugière, "Notes," 206–7; Wolbergs, *Gedichte*, 30–31; Herzhoff, *Psalmen*, 68–73; Markschies, *Valentinus*, 255–58; Holzhausen, "Ein gnostischer Psalm?" 78.

such lines.[150] The title would thus indicate that the psalm is above all a celebration of the fruits produced by the Bythos. On the other hand, the word θέρος probably has eschatological connotations,[151] referring either to the idea of harvesting as such,[152] or to the welcoming of summer as the end to a barren winter.[153] If the title is to be understood in relation to what is described in the last two lines, a connection between the protological content of those lines and the eschatological, or at least soteriological, connotations of the title must therefore be established. In fact, such a connection generally exists in Valentinianism, as has been shown above;[154] it is one of the characteristic modes of Valentinian thought. Protology has to do not just with past, primeval events, but is an ongoing process that reaches its fulfilment only in the eschatological consummation. It is therefore entirely possible to interpret the "fruit-bearing" described in the last two lines as a soteriological process that is thought to be effective in the present: with the advent of the Saviour and the activities of the spiritual church, the generation of the Pleroma is fully realised and happens here and now.

CONCLUSIONS

Much uncertainty necessarily remains with regard to the interpretation of the few remaining fragments from Valentinus. They are comparatively short and taken out of context, and we do not know how representative the ideas they contain are for the teaching of Valentinus in general. It is evidently inadmissible to interpret the fragments as

---

[150] Surveyed by Markschies, *Valentinus*, 255–56; also, Holzhausen, "Ein gnostischer Psalm?" 78–79.

[151] Cf. the formula ἐγγύς τὸ θέρος Matt 24:32 parr.

[152] Heracleon in particular speaks about an eschatological θερισμός in frgs. 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, and Herzhoff, *Psalmen*, 70–71, interprets the title of the psalm in this sense, as does Holzhausen, "Ein gnostischer Psalm?" 78. For the theme of the eschatological harvest more generally, see Hermann, "Ernte," esp. 294–96.

[153] Cf. *Gos. Phil.* 77:13–14 "When the holy spirit breathes, the summer comes." In *Gos. Philip* 52:25–28, summer and harvest are combined: "Those who sow in winter reap in summer. The winter is the world, the summer the other aeon. Let us sow in the world that we may reap in the summer." This is an apocalyptic theme that is also found in Hermas, *Sim.* IV 2.5 (the latter possible parallel was noted by Markschies, *Valentinus*, 258).

[154] See the analyses of *Gos. Truth* in chapter 17, of *Tri. Trac.*, 182–86; also, chapter 24.

if they presupposed one or the other of the systems elaborated by later Valentinian theologians. On the other hand, it is reasonable to assume that important themes in later Valentinianism were introduced or prefigured by the founder of the movement. The preceding study has shown that the latter is indeed the case. Frg. 1 affirms that the first human was created by inferior powers, and that a superior seed was inserted into him. This account seems to stand midway between early gnostic anthropogonies and the attested Valentinian ones. Frg. 2, while not distinctively Valentinian in content and language, employs the image of the human being as an inn, which is echoed in later Valentinian texts. Underlying frg. 3 seems to be the idea, so important in later Valentinian soteriology, that Jesus consumed corporeality through his own incarnation. In frg. 4, the characteristically Valentinian soteriological dialectics of consuming by assuming (as in frg. 3) and of unity and division are attested. Frg. 5 highlights the concepts of the Name and naming, also central in later Valentinianism. Frg. 8 shows that the typical designation βυθός for the first principle was used already by Valentinus, together with the conception of this *Urgrund* as a womb.

In the course of the discussion of the individual fragments, some minor variances with the ideas found in preserved Valentinian sources have also been observed. Disagreement of a more fundamental kind is perhaps evinced by frg. 6, where Valentinus seems to display a higher regard for Graeco-Roman culture than what is found in later Valentinianism. It is difficult to know what exactly may lie behind this apparent discrepancy.

The study of the fragments has also tended to confirm the general picture of the development of Valentinian doctrines that has been outlined in this book. First, Valentinus seems to have taught an inclusive doctrine of salvation: there is no distinction of soteriological status between spirituals and psychics, as there is in later, western Valentinianism. Rather, all humans are subject to passion and tormented by demons (frg. 2). The soteriology of exchange, according to which the Saviour consumed materiality by assuming it, thereby liberating humans from the body and making them partners in his own spiritual nature (suggested by frgs. 3 and 4), applies generally to all humans capable of salvation. This agrees with the eastern, and original, form of Valentinian soteriology that was described in Part I, above. Second, Valentinus' protological ideas (frg. 8) are consistent with the most archaic model (type A) found in *Gos. Truth* and *Tri.*

Trac., according to which the aeons are initially inside the Father, as in a womb, and are then brought forth through a process of divine parturition. Valentinus' soteriological position is also consistent with the statement in Tert. *Carn.* 15:1, that Valentinus held the body of Christ to be spiritual, and his protological notions accord with the statement in Tert. *Val.* 4:2, that Valentinus placed the aeons inside the deity.

VALENTINIANS: FRAGMENTS OF THE HISTORY OF VALENTINIANISM

The History of Valentinianism

As we have seen,[1] Justin Martyr and Irenaeus testify to the presence of Valentinus and "Valentinians" in Rome in the middle of the second century. These are the earliest testimonies relating to Valentinian Christianity. The last certain trace of the Valentinians can, as we shall see below, be dated to August 1, 388, on the eastern outskirts of the empire.

During the 250 years of its documented existence, Valentinianism had a history—an intellectual history as well as an institutional and a social history. Unfortunately, we lack the sources necessary to tell those histories. What we have are a certain number of Valentinian texts, mostly anonymous and undated, and some names of individual Valentinians mentioned in ancient literature. A few indications about the geographical and chronological distribution of Valentinianism can also be collected. Finally, the studies carried out in this book enable us to formulate a certain number of hypotheses about the relative chronology of the various forms of the Valentinian systems. On this basis, a sketch of the history of Valentinianism will be attempted in what follows.

Valentinus

Valentinus appeared in Rome shortly before 140, and was active there until about 160.[2] He organised a community that perceived itself as Christian and was based on the idea of a "spiritual seed" of transcendent origins. It was an *ekklesia*, not simply a "school" in the philosophical sense. Baptismal initiation was essential, as were other forms of ritual activity, and Valentinus wrote psalms and homilies

---

[1] Above, 417–18.
[2] See above, 417–18.

to be used in the cultic life of his community. The *ekklesia* as such is an instrument of salvation. Valentinus' soteriology was based on the dualism of spirit and matter and involved an identification of the *salvandi* with the Saviour, effecting an exchange of material and spiritual "bodies." He also taught a protology with aeons, or "Entireties" being born from a paternal Bythos.[3]

Valentinus seems not to have written a system; in any case later Valentinians never referred to a systematic treatise by him as a foundational document for their church.[4] Instead, the importance of the founder more probably lay in the continual use of his psalms in worship and in the inspiration derived from his homilies and letters. That Valentinus taught some form of systematic doctrine, orally at least, is nevertheless plausible, for otherwise the proliferation of various system treatises among the later followers of Valentinus would be difficult to explain.

Valentinianism in the Second Century

A large number of Valentinian texts are attested for the second century. In Iren. *Haer.* alone, at least twelve different texts are referred to.[5] Clement of Alexandria must have used about five distinct sources in *Exc.* In addition, Heracleon wrote his commentaries, and Ptolemy his *Letter to Flora*, in the latter half of the century. How many of the Valentinian tractates from Nag Hammadi were written during this period remains an open question.[6] The literary output of Valentinians in the first half century after the start of the movement was clearly extensive, though to a large extent anonymous.

It was during this period that the movement split into an eastern and a western branch. As has been shown above (Part I), the split

---

[3] For more details, see the discussion above, 485–87.

[4] It is significant that in the only recorded instance of a Valentinian referring to Valentinus (Alexander, in Tert. *Carn.* 17:1), it is his psalms that are referred to, and not some systematic treatise. Since Alexander is arguing points of doctrine (the nature of Christ's flesh), one might have expected him to appeal to a systematic work by Valentinus if there had existed such a thing.

[5] The main system of I 1–8:4, the variant in I 7:2, the commentary on John in I 8:5, I 11:1 ("Valentinus"), I 11:2 ("Secundus"), I 11:3, I 11:5, I 12:1 (Ptolemaeans), I 12:3, I 14 (The *Sige* of Marcus), I 16–18, *The Gospel of Truth* III 11:9.

[6] On the criteria for determining the Valentinian provenance of Nag Hammadi texts see Thomassen, "Notes."

was caused when western Valentinians changed the soteriological focus from the spirituals to the psychics, attributing to the Saviour a psychic body and claiming that the spiritual was by nature impassible and not needing redemption. In the extant sources, the eastern position is represented by the Theodotus of *Exc.*, and such texts as *Tri. Trac., Treat. Res., Interp. Know., Gos. Phil.* The western position can be found in the main systems of Irenaeus and Hippolytus, as well as in *Exc.*, section C.

At an early point in this period, a very influential systematic treatise was written among the western Valentinians, which was to serve as the source for a number of later works of the same kind. The main innovation of that treatise was the introduction of the thirty aeons model of the Pleroma. It was also, perhaps, at this stage that the theory of the incarnate body of the Saviour as a composite of several elements was first introduced, including a psychic element designed to accommodate the redemption of the psychics. The most direct descendent of that treatise is the system in Iren. *Haer.* I 11:1, which was attributed to Valentinus himself by Irenaeus, who probably took over that (inaccurate) attribution from one of his heresiological predecessors. The same treatise was one of the sources used in *Val. Exp.*, and it also served as a source for a third work, which rewrote it significantly, in particular by introducing the idea of the two Sophias and modifying some of the vocabulary of the highest aeons.[7] That third work is the treatise that was the common source of the two versions of the Valentinian system extensively reported by Irenaeus and Hippolytus respectively. Actually, that particular treatise must have been subject to a continuous process of rewriting, producing several other versions as well, including the ones attested in *Exc.*, section C, and Iren. *Haer.* I 7:2.[8] During that process, the western position regarding the impassibility of the Saviour and the spiritual, and the concomitant theory of the psychic Christ redeeming the psychics, were increasingly accentuated.

All of this happened in the course of a rather short period. There can hardly be more than two decades separating the first treatise of the western type and the youngest version of it attested in Iren. *Haer.* I 7:2, and during this time the original was rewritten several times.

---

[7] See above, 266–67.
[8] See the stemma of the various versions set out above, 267.

It seems clear that this course of events is not best understood as a linear development within a unified movement; rather it suggests a decentralised proliferation of groups and teachers, each of them producing their own version of the Valentinian system based on a common pattern.

WESTERN VALENTINIANS

Ptolemy

As proponents of western Valentinianism, Hipp. *Haer.* VI 35:6 mentions Heracleon and Ptolemy. Irenaeus uses, for his report on the Valentinian system in *Haer.* I 1–8:4, a document obtained from people who call themselves followers of Ptolemy, though in I 12:1 he attributes to the Ptolemaeans a different doctrine concerning the "partners" of the Father.[9] Tert. *Val.* 4:2 says that Ptolemy was the first to locate the aeons outside God, specifying their names and numbers.[10] Finally, Ptolemy is known to us directly from his *Letter to Flora*.[11]

Tertullian's testimony in *Val.* 4:2 suggests that Ptolemy was the originator of the 30 aeons model of the Pleroma widespread among western Valentinian systems. Its earliest attested form is the system reported in Iren. *Haer.* I 11:1. The system of Iren. *Haer.* I 1–8:4 represents a later, significantly modified form of Ptolemy's system, as is clear from a comparison of Irenaeus' system with the *Letter to Flora*.[12] The study of the *Letter* above (chapter 15) also suggested that Ptolemy, at least at the time when he wrote that text, may have been closer in his soteriology to that of Valentinus himself and the eastern school than what was to become the dominant western position.

Ptolemy was clearly a very influential figure in the development of western Valentinianism. However, nothing is known about his life and career. Attempts to identify him with the martyr Ptolemy (died ca. 152) mentioned by Justin in his *Second Apology* (2),[13] are, in my view, unpersuasive.

---

[9] See above, chapter 1.
[10] See above, 264–65.
[11] See above, chapter 15.
[12] See in particular above, 121–29.
[13] See especially Lüdemann, "Zur Geschichte," 100–11; Lampe, *From Paul to Valentinus*, 239–40; Wanke, "Irenäus und die Häretiker in Rom."

Heracleon

Clement of Alexandria describes Heracleon as the most celebrated of all the Valentinians (ὁ τῆς Οὐαλεντίνου σχολῆς δοκιμώτατος, *Str.* IV 71:1). Origen introduces him as a pupil (γνωριμός) of Valentinus (*In Jo.* II 14:100). Irenaeus mentions him once, briefly (*Haer.* II 4:1), Hippolytus three times (*Haer.* VI 4, 29:1, 35:6), and Tertullian once (*Val.* 4:2).[14] Only Clement and Origen offer any substantial information about Heracleon. Origen has preserved 48 fragments from his commentary on the Gospel of John, and Clement a fragment on Heracleon's interpretation of Luke 12:8, and another fragment. The fact that writings by Heracleon were known in Alexandria, while western heresiologists offer no precise information about Heracleon's doctrines, may be significant. It suggests that followers—or, perhaps more accurately, admirers—of Heracleon were to be found in Alexandria in the time of Clement and Origen. Origen may have acquired Heracleon's commentary on John through his contacts with Ambrose, a former Valentinian.[15] In contrast, Heracleon may not have had a large following in the west.

The analysis of Heracleon's soteriology above (chapter 14) led to the conclusion that he stood closer to eastern Valentinianism, and to Valentinus himself, than to western Valentinian views. These doctrinal differences may, in fact, have prevented him from making a great impact in the west. Heracleon is, of course, referred to as a western Valentinian, together with Ptolemy, in Hipp. *Haer.* VI 35:6, and it is noteworthy that the two names appear as a pair in Irenaeus and Tertullian as well.[16] This, however, need not be taken to mean anything more than that Ptolemy and Heracleon were both known to have been prominent Valentinian figures in Rome around 160. Whereas Ptolemy evidently had later followers, some of whom Irenaeus met personally, Heracleon seems to have left only a memory in the west—neither writings nor "Heracleonites" were known to Irenaeus. Ptolemy is evidently the important figure in western Valentinianism,

---

[14] On the sources for Heracleon's life, see Brooke, *Fragments*, 31–35; Wucherpfennig, *Heracleon*, 360–71.

[15] Cf. Wucherpfennig, *Heracleon*, 370.

[16] *aeonibus ipsius Ptolemaei et Heracleonis* Iren. *Haer.* II 4:1; *Ptolemaeus . . . et Heracleon* Tert. *Val.* 4:2; also cf. Οὐαλεντῖνος . . . καὶ Ἡρακλέων καὶ Πτολεμαῖος καὶ πᾶσα ἡ τούτων σχολή Hipp. *Haer.* VI 29:1. It is equally remarkable that the association of the two names never appears in Clement or Origen, who, indeed, never mention Ptolemy at all.

a community leader and a system builder; Heracleon, primarily an exegetical scholar, seems not to have left his mark in the same way.

It has been suggested that Heracleon taught for a while in Alexandria,[17] but this must remain conjecture. The story of his activities in Sicily told by Praedestinatus (*Haer.* 16) is distinctly spurious.[18]

Alexander

In *De carne Christi* 15–17:1, Tertullian polemicises against a certain Valentinian (*quemdam ex Valentini factiuncula* 15:3) named Alexander (16:1), who had argued that Christ did not possess human flesh. Alexander's argument was made in the form of "syllogisms," which was probably also the name of his book.[19] Tertullian assumes that Alexander is arguing against the "orthodox" (that is, his own) form of Christology, which he proceeds to defend by means of scriptural proofs. In my view, however, it is more likely that Alexander is involved in an internal Valentinian debate about the nature of the Saviour's flesh.[20] That the Saviour assumed a material body is, as we have seen, a characteristic of eastern Valentinian Christology, indissolubly linked with its soteriology of mutual participation. By opposing that view, Alexander is defending a western type of Christology, according to which the Saviour was impassible and assumed nothing material.

According to Tertullian, Alexander claims, "that we affirm that Christ's purpose in clothing himself with flesh of human origin was that in himself he might bring to nought the flesh of sin" (*quasi nos affirmemus idcirco Christum terreni census induisse carnem ut evacuaret in semetipso carnem peccati* 16:1).[21] Tertullian objects to this (16:2), on the grounds that this is an inaccurate description of the position defended by himself, which is "not that the flesh of sin, but that the sin of the

---

[17] Wucherpfennig, *Heracleon*, 370; already Neander, *Genetische Entwickelung*, 143, suggested this; cf. Salmon, "Heracleon," 900. Further, Markschies, "Valentinianische Gnosis," 336–37.

[18] Brooke, *Fragments*, 32. Salmon, "Heracleon," 900, and Hilgenfeld, *Ketzergeschichte*, 499, nevertheless think the story may contain a kernel of truth.

[19] *remisso Alexandro cum suis Syllogismis* 17:1. That *Syllogismi* was the title of Alexander's work is generally assumed by scholars; see Mahé, *Tertullien: La chair du Christ*, 59–61.

[20] Mahé, *Tertullien: La chair du Christ*, 65–67 also points out that Alexander's arguments were directed against other "Gnostics" rather than against "orthodox" Christian theology, though he hesitates to align Alexander with eastern Valentinianism.

[21] Cf. Rom 6:6 ὁ παλαιὸς ἡμῶν ἄνθρωπος συνεσταυρώθη, ἵνα καταργηθῇ τὸ σῶμα τῆς ἁμαρτίας.

flesh, was brought to nought in Christ, not the material but its quality, not the substance but its guilt."[22] In fact, Tertullian misunderstands: what Alexander is arguing against cannot be "orthodox" Christology, but rather the eastern Valentinian idea that the Saviour assumed human flesh in order to consume corporeality and liberate spiritual humans from it, through a mechanism of salvific substitution.[23] Thus, Tertullian's report on Alexander provides a precious glimpse of the debates that were going on between the two branches of Valentinianism during the second half of the second century.

A further indication that this is the case is that Alexander was quoting Valentinus in support of his views: ". . . those psalms of Valentinus which with supreme impudence he quotes from as though they were the work of some authoritative author" (. . . *psalmis Valentini, quos magna cum impudentia quasi idonei alicuius auctoris interserit*, 17:1).[24] The authority of Valentinus evidently does not impress Tertullian, but it makes very good sense that texts by Valentinus should be appealed to in an internal Valentinian debate. Incidentally, this is the sole recorded instance of a Valentinian referring to Valentinus himself.

The Valentinian Alexander is known from no other source, and Tertullian tells us nothing about his person.

Secundus

A brief note in Iren. *Haer.* I 11:2 mentions Secundus as one of the Valentinian teachers, and attributes to him variant doctrines: that there were two opposite first tetrads and that the fallen "power" did not originate from the thirty aeons but from their "fruits."[25] The latter piece of information suggests that Secundus may have taught a theory similar to that of the two Sophias in the main systems of Irenaeus and Hippolytus.[26]

Hippolytus says that Secundus was contemporary with Ptolemy (*Haer.* VI 38:1), and lists him together with Ptolemy in VI 4. Tertullian

---

[22] *defendimus autem non carnem peccati evacuatam esse in Christo sed peccatum carnis, non materiam sed naturam, nec substantiam sed culpam* (trans. E. Evans).

[23] Cf. especially *Tri. Trac.* 114:30–37, 115:3–23; *Treat. Res.* 45:14–23; *Interp. Know.* 5:30–38, 10:27–34, 12:13–38; *Gos. Truth* 20:28–34, 31:4–6.

[24] Evans' translation of *idoneus auctor* as "competent author" misses the point, though Mahé's "auteur canonique" is probably a little too strong.

[25] See above, 205–6.

[26] Cf. Hilgenfeld, *Ketzergeschichte*, 313, 367.

repeats Irenaeus (*Val.* 38), and includes him in the list of Valentinus'
successors in 4:2. Evidently, Hippolytus and Tertullian both depend
entirely on Irenaeus, who himself probably copied the note from an
earlier heresiologist. Later heresiologists (Pseudo-Tertullian, Epiphanius,
Theodoret, Philastrius, John of Damascus) mention Secundus and
"Secundians" together with the other disciples of Valentinus, but
offer no reliable new information about him.[27]

Marcus

Marcus "the Magician" and his followers are known almost exclusively
from Iren. *Haer.* I 13–16:2. Hippolytus, who generally depends on
Irenaeus' account, adds a few pieces of information apparently derived
from personal encounters with Marcosians, in *Haer.* VI 41–42. Later
heresiologists all seem to depend on Irenaeus, with one possible
exception.[28]

The system of Marcus, described in Iren. *Haer.* I 14–15, is a
rewriting, almost a translation, into the language of letter and num-
ber symbolism, of the modified western system with two Sophias that

---

[27] This also applies to the peculiar note in Philastrius, *Haer.* 40, that Secundus
taught an infinity of aeons and a docetic Christology (cf. Hilgenfeld, *Ketzergeschichte*,
463). Where did this come from?

[28] See the thorough source-critical examination in Förster, *Marcus Magus*, 7–53.
The possible exception is the note in Agapius, *Kitāb al-ʿUnwān* (ed. Vasiliev, *Patrologia
Orientalis* 7:4, p. 511). See Förster, *Marcus Magus*, 44–52, who argues that the note
derives from the Syriac translation of the letters of Irenaeus. In my opinion, the
concept of the 360 gods in Agapius' note rather suggests Muslim heresiography. At
any rate, the possible usefulness of this source for the understanding of Marcus is
not substantial.

A curious, now nearly forgotten archaeological piece of evidence is what was
once thought to be a Marcosian catacomb: the "Cava della Rossa" on the Via
Latina in Rome. The fresco showing, among other things, four smaller vessels and
a larger one, led O. Marucchi to think of the tricks performed by Marcus accord-
ing to Iren. *Haer.* I 13:2 (Marucchi, "Osservazioni"; Guarducci, "Valentiniani,"
187–88; Lampe, *From Paul to Valentinus*, 311). The argument is, to say the least,
unconvincing. (In March 1999 I tried to locate the site, supposed to be around
100 meters from the intersection of Via Latina and Via Appia Nuova [Kanzler,
"Di un nuovo cimitero," 174—thus around the third, and not the fifth mile of the
Via Latina, as is stated by Guarducci and Lampe], but the catacomb now seems
to have been closed and forgotten about, with no external signs left of its existence.)

Another forgotten possible source is an Aramaic lamella that has been claimed
to be of Marcosian provenance by Dupont-Sommer, *La doctrine gnostique de la lettre
«wâw»*. It is somewhat to be regretted that Förster, in his otherwise commendable
survey of the sources, in *Marcus Magus*, seems to have been unaware of both Dupont-
Sommer's study and the "Cava della Rossa."

also lies behind the main documents used by Irenaeus, Hippolytus, and Clement in *Exc.* C.[29] He thus enters the history of Valentinianism at a stage when that version of the system had already been developed. In his treatise, Marcus appears, however, not just as a teacher, but as a visionary and a revealer. This self-understanding is consistent with the description of his activities given by Irenaeus in *Haer.* I 13. There, Marcus stands forth as a charismatic figure who attracts female followers in particular, teaching them to prophesy by inviting them to partake of his "grace" and thereby become united with their own angels.

There is no doubt that Marcus' gematric speculations, as well as his ritual practices of syzygic unification, have a Valentinian ideological basis. Moreover, the practice of prophecy as such is not alien to Valentinianism and may well have been a more central feature of Valentinian worship than we normally think.[30] Somewhat more unusual in a Valentinian context is the phenomenon of religious ecstasy that seems to have been cultivated among the Marcosians. This phenomenon too is conceived, however, in Valentinian terms, since the ecstasy is accounted for as the experience of union with one's angel.[31]

It is not without interest to note in this regard that Marcus operated in Asia Minor,[32] an area already strongly associated with charismatic prophecy, and especially with female prophets, being the birth-place of Montanism.[33] This connection is further strengthened by the fact that Irenaeus reports (*Haer.* I 13:7) that followers of

---

[29] See above, 261–62.

[30] See *Exc.* 24: "The Spirit which each of the prophets received individually for his ministry is poured out upon all those who belong to the Church. That is why the signs of the Spirit—healings and prophesyings—are accomplished by the Church." *Interp. Know.* also acknowledges that "the prophetic gift" manifests itself within the community (15:35–38), though it is also said that this gift has not been granted equally to all the members. Also cf. *Tri. Trac.* 117:8–16.

[31] In a wider history of religions perspective, it might be said that the Marcosians turned Valentinianism into a kind of prophetic possession cult. For the similarities with Graeco-Roman oracular possession, as well as with Philo's ideas about intoxication by Wisdom, see Förster, *Marcus Magus*, esp. 80–83, 113–16. For the widespread interpretation of possession as a conjugal or sexual union with the possessing spirit, one may consult Lewis, *Ecstatic Religion*.

[32] Iren. *Haer.* I 13:5: Marcus seduced the wife of a deacon in Asia Minor. Whether he himself was from that region is unknown. Jerome, *In Isa.* 64:4 (Migne PL 24:623A), calls him an Egyptian.

[33] This association is made by Wünsche, *Ausgang*, esp. 207–8.

Marcus were also active in his own diocese, Lyons and the Rhône Valley, a region where the Montanist movement also had a strong impact. As is well known, close communication existed between these two regions in Antiquity. It may seem, therefore, that Marcosian prophetic Valentinianism was disseminated along the same lines of communication as Montanism, and, like it, was feeding on a receptivity to prophetic charisma and a proclivity for ecstatic expression that were particularly strong elements in the religious culture of those regions.

In addition to Asia Minor and the Rhône Valley, there were—at least in a later period—also Marcosians in Rome, some of whom talked to Hippolytus (and protested against the way they had been presented by Irenaeus).[34] They even had a "bishop"—whatever that may mean.[35]

Marcus appears to have been a rather independent figure, who used Valentinian ideas to form his own charismatic sect—though the sect seems to have been able to outlive his personal charisma. What other Valentinians may have thought about him we do not know.

Florinus

Eusebius says that Irenaeus composed a work called *On the Ogdoad* against Florinus, after the latter had been seduced by the error of Valentinus.[36] Florinus was a presbyter in Rome who was excommunicated towards the end of the second century (thus probably by bishop Victor) and who continued his career as a heretical leader (Eus. *H. E.* V 15). Though his identity as a Valentinian is usually taken for granted in secondary literature, there are really no sources that allow us to assess with any confidence the extent or nature of Florinus' alleged Valentinianism.[37]

---

[34] Hipp. *Haer.* VI 42:1; see Förster, *Marcus Magus*, 27, 29.

[35] Hipp. *Haer.* VI 41:4–5; see Förster, *Marcus Magus*, 156–58. In my opinion, caution is advised regarding a hypothesis of growing hierarchisation in the organisational structure of the Valentinians (as suggested by Förster, *Marcus Magus*, 157), though a development from charismatic to institutional, routinised authority is, naturally, to be expected within every religious organisation.

[36] ὑποσυρόμενον τῇ κατὰ Οὐαλεντῖνον πλάνῃ *H. E.* V 20:1.

[37] Eusebius also says that Irenaeus wrote a letter to Florinus (whom he had known as a fellow pupil of Polycarp in Asia Minor: Eus. *H. E.* V 20:5) entitled Περὶ μοναρχία, ἢ περὶ τοῦ μὴ εἶναι τὸν θεὸν ποιητὴν κακῶν. This title, however, indicates that Irenaeus was arguing against a Marcionite position rather than a Valentinian one; see Fliedner, "Agapius," 5–8. The doctrine of "Florinus" reported in Agapius, *Kitāb al-ʿUnwān* (ed. Vasiliev, *Patrologia Orientalis* 7:4, pp. 516–17), which Baumstark,

Cossianus/Julius Cassianus

Theodoret, *Haer. fab.* I 8 gives a list of Valentinian leaders: Κοσσιανός, θεόδοτος, Ἡρακλέων, Πτολεμαῖος, Μάρκος. "Cossianus" is not mentioned elsewhere, and it has been suggested that he is the same as Julius Cassianus, whom Clement of Alexandria says (perhaps) issued from the school of Valentinus.[38] But there is nothing in what we know about the encratite and docetist Cassianus that suggests that he taught Valentinian doctrines.[39]

Tatian

According to Iren. *Haer.* I 28:1, Tatian, after he had departed from the teachings of Justin and became an encratite, also adopted the Valentinian doctrine of aeons.[40] This shows, perhaps, that Valentinian aeonology during the latter half of the second century was fashionably attractive to non-Valentinians as well,[41] but it is very unlikely that Tatian was ever organisationally affiliated with a Valentinian community.

Theotimus

Multum circa imagines legis Theotimus operatus est (Tert. *Val.* 4:3). This is all we know about this Valentinian, whom Tertullian mentions after Ptolemy, Heracleon, Secundus, and Marcus. Theotimus specialised in finding allegorical interpretations of the Law, in accordance, it may be assumed, with the principles articulated by Ptolemy in his

---

"Lehre," tried to show was Valentinian, is nothing of the sort (see Fliedner, "Agapius," 171–77). The Syriac fragment of a letter by Irenaeus (Syr. frg. 28 = II 457 in Harvey's edition of Irenaeus), which according to its *inscriptio* was addressed to bishop Victor in Rome, warning him against the books and doctrines of Florinus, is of uncertain authenticity, to say nothing of the trustworthiness of the *inscriptio*.

[38] *Str.* III 93. The reference may also be to Tatian. See Mahé, *Témoignage Véritable*, 25n53; Wyrwa, "Julius Cassian."

[39] It is unnecessary to discuss here the question of whether *The Testimony of Truth* (NHC IX,*3*) may be a work by Cassianus or not, or the possible extent of Valentinian influence in that work (see the discussion in Mahé, *Témoignage Véritable*, 25–69). *Testim. Truth* explicitly repudiates the Valentinians (56:1–9), and for that reason alone cannot be of Valentinian provenance. Moreover, the affinities between the tractate and Valentinian doctrine suggested by Mahé are, in my opinion, superficial at best.

[40] See also Clem. Alex. *Str.* III 93, and the preceding note. Hipp. *Haer.* VIII 16 copies Irenaeus, as do various later heresiologists.

[41] Maybe Florinus (see above) is another example of this, since Irenaeus saw fit to write a treatise against him entitled *On the Ogdoad* and accused him of Valentinianism.

Letter to Flora, Epiph. *Pan.* XXXIII 5:8–15, 6:4–5 and exemplified in such texts as *Gos. Phil.* and *Exc.*[42] Whether Theotimus belonged to eastern or western Valentinianism cannot be decided.

Eastern Valentinians

For eastern Valentinianism in the second century we possess fewer names than for the western branch of the movement. On the other hand, we have several anonymous texts that display the characteristics of eastern soteriology and Christology: *Tri. Trac.*, *Treat. Res.*, *Interp. Know.*, *Gos. Philip.*[43] In fact, all the Valentinian tractates from Nag Hammadi seem to be of eastern Valentinian provenance,[44] a fact that is not in itself surprising. The precise dates of composition of those works are of course uncertain, and to assign them to any of the known names of eastern Valentinian teachers would be hazardous.

Axionicus

Axionicus is named by Hippolytus (*Haer.* VI 35:7) as a leading figure of eastern Valentinianism, and Tertullian (*Val.* 4:3) says that only he of all Valentinus' disciples remained faithful to the teachings of Valentinus. He also locates him in Antioch.[45] Otherwise nothing is known about him. If *Gos. Phil.* originated in Antioch, as has sometimes been suggested,[46] it would be natural to associate that document with Axionicus and his community.

---

[42] Cf. Fredouille, *Tertullien: Contre les Valentiniens*, 205.

[43] To this I would add *Gos. Truth*, which in my opinion also presupposes the theory of the saving passion of the Saviour and his incarnation into a material body, as well as the soteriological logic of mutual participation. However, the demonstration of this has not been undertaken in the present book. (See, however, above, 154–55.)

[44] Even *Val. Exp.*, which is obviously influenced by western Valentinian pleromatology, lacks the typically western notion of the psychic body of the Saviour. In fact, *Val. Exp.* never mentions the psychics at all; cf. Thomassen, "Valentinian Exposition," 233–35.

[45] *solus ad hodiernum Antiochiae Axionicus memoriam Valentini integra custodia regularum eius consolatur.*

[46] Cf. Segelberg, "Antiochene Background;" id. "The Antiochene Origin"; Gaffron, "Studien," 65–69; Sevrin, "Pratique et doctrine," 8. The question still remains, however, as to the relationship between the initiation in *Gos. Phil.* and early Syrian practice: see above, 400–1.

Ardesianes (?)

Together with Axionicus, Hipp. *Haer.* VI 35:7 mentions Ἀρδησιάνης as a representative of eastern Valentinianism. The name Ardesianes is not otherwise known, and it has often been conjectured that Hippolytus is really referring to Bardesanes, the multi-talented intellectual personality of Edessa (154–223). As a matter of fact, Bardesanes is sometimes said to have been influenced by Valentinianism.[47] In Bardesanes' only surviving work, however, *The Book of the Law of Countries,* there is nothing that is distinctly Valentinian.

Theodotus

The eastern Valentinian Theodotus is known only from the quotations from him in *Exc.*[48] These fragments are an extremely important source for our knowledge of eastern Valentinian doctrine, even if the precise extent of the Theodotian materials in *Exc.* cannot be determined.[49]

Concluding Remarks about Valentinianism in the Second Century

During the second half of the second century, various kinds of Valentinian communities are attested in the west for Rome and southern Gaul. It is more than likely that there were Valentinians elsewhere as well, in Italy and in North Africa, but positive evidence is lacking. The several named figures listed by the heresiologists and the number of different versions of the western Valentinian system indicate that there were many teachers of Valentinianism, and that literary creativity among them was extensive. After all, the Valentinians are the main target of Irenaeus' anti-heretical attacks, and Tertullian called them *frequentissmum . . . collegium inter haereticos* (*Val.* 1:1).

---

[47] Eus. *H. E.* IV 30:3 says that Bardesanes began as a Valentinian, but later condemned Valentinianism. Epiph. *Pan.* LVI 2:1 claims that he was influenced by Valentinianism.

[48] The only other mention of him, as far as I am aware, is in Theod. *Haer. fab.* I 8. Theodoret, who knew the writings of Clement, presumably picked up this name from *Exc.*

[49] See above, chapter 3.

In the east, Valentinianism is attested in the second century, strictly speaking, only for Antioch (Axionicus), though it can hardly be doubted that there were Valentinians in Alexandria as well.[50] Theodotus most likely was active here. Marcus taught in Asia Minor, though as we have seen, his system is a variant of the western Valentinian one.

The distinction between eastern and western Valentinianism is evidently not simply a geographical one. Western Valentinian documents circulated in the east as well, as is shown by *Exc.*, section C, as well as by *Val. Exp.*

Valentinianism was not a centralised organisation. On the other hand, there was enough concern about the coherence of the movement, and about loyalty to the founder, for a schism to occur, and for polemics to be written using the psalms of Valentinus as proof-texts (Alexander). While the liturgical use of Valentinus' psalms probably served as the strongest continual reminder of the communities' historical connection with Valentinus, individual communities seem to have identified themselves even more in terms of their position as followers of prominent teachers: Ptolemy, Marcus, Axionicus, etc. Thus, the charismatic, or personality-based phase of the movement continued during the generation following Valentinus himself.

VALENTINIANISM IN THE THIRD CENTURY

Whereas Hippolytus' anti-heretical work, written in the 220s, suggests that the flurry of Valentinian activity continued into the early third century, it is remarkable that we learn very little about the Valentinians during the rest of that century. No new, famous Valentinian teachers are mentioned, or revised versions of the Valentinian system attested. Of named Valentinians there are only two. The first is Ambrose, Origen's patron and sponsor of his *Commentary on John.* According to Eusebius (*H. E.* VI 18:1), the wealthy Ambrose had been a Valentinian but was converted by Origen to orthodoxy.[51] The accuracy of this statement is impossible to judge.

---

[50] For a survey of Valentinianism in Alexandria, see Markschies, "Valentinianische Gnosis."

[51] On the relationship between Origen and Ambrose, see now Castagno, "Origene e Ambrogio." Also, Markschies, "Valentinianische Gnosis," 338–39.

The second Valentinian is Candidus, with whom Origen once debated in Athens.[52] The issues disputed were, first, whether the Son was of the substance of the Father (which Candidus affirmed and Origen denied),[53] and second, whether the devil by nature is capable of being saved (which Origen accepted in principle, and Candidus denied). It is hardly possible to infer much about Candidus' form of Valentinianism from this short report.

The lack of substantial information about Valentinianism in the third century does not necessarily mean that Valentinianism as such was in decline. It may also be possible to explain it as a result of a growing separation between mainstream Christianity, which by this time was becoming more firmly organised, and "heretical" groups, which were now becoming increasingly marginalised and might be left to lead their own, independent existence. Gnostic heresies were apparently no longer perceived as the same acute threat as they were in the time of Irenaeus and Tertullian, and the need to write anti-heretical works against them was not so strongly felt. Thus, it is possible that the Valentinian communities in the third century were leading a parallel life clearly distinct from the main Church, and for that reason could be more easily ignored, which may explain why we hear so little about them. There may have been important Valentinian figures even if our sources are silent, and an extensive Valentinian literature, though nothing perhaps has been preserved. Some of the Valentinian Nag Hammadi tractates may in fact have been written in the third century; this seems in particular to be the case with *Tri. Trac.*[54]

---

[52] Jerome, *Apol. adv. Ruf.* II 18–19; Ruf. *De adult. libr. Orig.* 7; Markschies, "Valentinianische Gnosis," 339–40.

[53] Origen was concerned to avoid the idea that the Son was born, in the manner of a προβολή, since that would imply a division of the divine οὐσία; cf. Markschies, "Valentinianische Gnosis," 343–44, with n72. It is interesting here to note that *Tri. Trac.* (53:34–36) rejects the idea of an internal οὐσία of the Father, and thus seems to agree more with Origen than with Candidus; cf. Thomassen and Painchaud, *Traité tripartite*, 19.

[54] For a dating of this tractate to the second half of the third century, see Thomassen and Painchaud, *Traité tripartite*, 18–20. That dating has been recently challenged by Dubois, "Le *Traité Tripartite*," who suggests a date around 200, though to my mind not entirely persuasively. The question of dating becomes even more problematic if one takes into account the very real possibility that the fourth century copy of *Tri. Trac.* in NHC I may contain later interpolations and modifications.

Valentinianism in the Fourth Century

For Valentinianism did not yet die out. In the fourth century there is no longer any trace of Valentinians in the west, but their continued existence is well attested in the eastern regions of the empire.[55] The heresy of the Valentinians is regularly mentioned by Christian writers and in anti-heretical legislation, though it is often unclear whether these references can be taken as evidence that Valentinians were still perceived as an imminent danger, or the designation is merely an ossified heresiological category.[56]

Evidence for the existence of concrete Valentinian communities is at any rate given by Epiphanius, who, writing 374–77, says there are still Valentinians in a number of locations in Egypt (*Pan.* XXXI 7:1).[57]

Another, even firmer piece of evidence is the mention by emperor Julian, in one of his letters,[58] of an incident where Arians had attacked the Valentinians (ἐπεχείρησαν τοῖς ἀπὸ Οὐαλεντίνου) in Edessa, in 362. This shows that groups with a clear Valentinian identity existed in Edessa at that time, and also what situation they were facing in a society increasingly dominated by various orthodoxies.

The very last, incontrovertial evidence comes from the year 388. In two letters written in the autumn of that year, Ambrose of Milan refers to an incident that had happened recently in a small village in Upper Mesopotamia. The first letter is addressed to emperor Theodosius,[59] and deals mainly with another incident, the burning of the Jewish synagogue at Callinicum (in Osrhoene). The emperor

---

[55] The essential evidence is collected by Koschorke, "Spätgeschichte." Add Nilus of Ancyra, *Ep.* 243 (c. 400) against Carpion (PG 79:87–88). Carpion was certainly inspired by gnostic ideas, and probably in a Valentinian form, but was not, perhaps, member of a Valentinian community.

[56] This applies to much of the evidence collected by Koschorke, "Spätgeschichte," who is probably too optimistic in his assessment of these texts as evidence for the existence of real Valentinians.

[57] "[Valentinus] preached both in Egypt, so that what he sowed is still there in Egypt like the remains of a viper's bones, in the territory of Athribis, Prosopites, Arsinoe, and the Thebaid, and in the lower region of the seacoast and Alexandria . . ." (trans. P.R. Amidon). For the Greek text, see above, 419n8. Cf. Koschorke, "Spätgeschichte," 127.

[58] *Ep.* 40 Wright (Loeb ed.): ". . . the followers of the Arian church, in the insolence bred by their wealth, have attacked the followers of Valentinus and have committed in Edessa such rash acts as could never occur in a well-ordered city"; cf. Koschorke, "Spätgeschichte," 132–33.

[59] *Epp. extra coll.* 1 a = Maur. 40.

had ordered that the monks who had committed this act of arson, as well as the local bishop who had incited it, should be punished and the synagogue rebuilt. At the same time, however, Theodosius had also decided that a group of monks responsible for setting fire to a sanctuary belonging to the Valentinians should be punished. In his letter, Ambrose musters all his rhetorical skill to persuade the emperor to retract his decisions. This is the part of the letter that deals with the Valentinians:

> Is, then, the burning of the temple of the Valentinians to be punished as well? But what is it but a temple for the gathering of pagans? Whereas the pagans invoke twelve gods, the Valentinians worship thirty-two aeons whom they call gods. For I have learned concerning these as well that it is reported and ordered that some monks are to be punished, who, when the Valentinians were blocking the road on which, according to custom and ancient use, they were singing psalms as they went to celebrate the festival of the Maccabees, enraged by their insolence, burnt their hurriedly-built temple[60] in some country village.[61] (16)[62]

In a letter to his sister, Ambrose refers to the same events:[63]

> For when it was reported that a synagogue of the Jews and a congregation house of the Valentinians had been burnt by Christians at the instigation of the bishop, an order was made while I was at Aquileia, that the synagogue should be rebuilt by the bishop, and the monks punished who had burnt the Valentinian building. (1)[64]

---

[60] Ambrose's references to the building are evidently tendentious and phrased in order to defend the burning. By calling it a *fanum* he portrays it as a pagan temple, and by describing it as hastily constructed and located in some rural village, he minimises its importance. These rhetorical formulations are therefore not to be taken as accurate descriptions of what the Valentinian house of worship was like. In the letter to his sister, Ambrose describes the Valentinian edifice in more neutral and accurate terms as a *conventiculum* "congregation house."

[61] It is clear from the final words that the Valentinian building was not located in Callinicum, as is sometimes said, but in an unnamed village, though presumably in the same general area.

[62] *Vindicabitur etiam Valentinianorum fanum incensum? Quid est enim nisi fanum in quo est conventus gentilium? Licet gentiles duodecim deos appellent, isti triginta et duos Aeonas colant quos appellant deos. Nam et <de> ipsis comperi relatum et praeceptum, ut in monachos vindicaretur qui prohibentibus iter Valentinianis quo psalmos canentes ex consuetudine usuque veteri pergebant ad celebritatem Machabaeorum martyrum moti insolentia incenderunt fanum eorum in quodam rurali vico tumultuarie conditum.*

[63] *Epp. extra coll.* 1 = Maur. 41.

[64] *Nam cum relatum esset synagogam Iudaeorum incensam a Christianis auctore episcopo et Valentinianorum conventiculum, iussum erat me Aquileiae posito, ut synagoga ab episcopo reaedificatur, vidicaretur in monachos qui incendissent aedificium Valentinianorum.*

The sad events referred to by Ambrose probably took place on
August 1, the traditional date of the festival for the martyrs of the
Maccabees. They form the final tangible trace of Valentinianism as
an organised community.[65] What happened to the last of the
Valentinians after 388, when what was to become Christian ortho-
doxy was heading for its ultimate victory in the Roman empire, we
can only guess. Perhaps they finally gave in and converted to
Catholicism. Maybe they made it across the border, to continue a
relatively anonymous existence among the many other sects of vague
Christian origins that found an undisturbed haven in Sassanid
Mesopotamia. Perhaps they went under ground, to become a secret
society. Or maybe they just quickly died out.

---

[65] Later references to Valentinians can be found, but it is not possible to decide
whether these mentions indicate the continued existence of actual Valentinian groups
or only represent traditional heresiological jargon.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Aalen, Sverre. *Die Begriffe "Licht" und "Finsternis" im Alten Testament, im Spätjudentum und im Rabbinismus*. (Skrifter utgitt av Det norske vitenskapsakademi i Oslo: II. Historisk-filosofisk klasse 1951, no. 1.) Oslo: Dybwad 1951.

Abramowski, Luise. "Marius Victorinus, Porphyrius und die römischen Gnostiker." *ZNW* 74 (1983) 108–128.

Arai, Sasagu. *Die Christologie des Evangelium Veritatis: Eine religionsgeschichtliche Untersuchung*. Leiden: Brill 1964.

Armstrong, A.H. "Plotinus." In *The Cambridge History of Later Greek and Early Medieval Philosophy*, ed. A.H. Armstrong, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1967, 193–268.

——. *Plotinus*. (Loeb Classical Library.) 7 vols. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press 1966–88.

Attridge, Harold W. (ed.) *Nag Hammadi Codex I*. 2 vols. (NHS 22, 23.) Leiden: Brill 1985.

Barc, Bernard (ed.) *Colloque international sur les textes de Nag Hammadi*. (BCNH:E 1.) Québec: Les Presses de l'Université Laval and Louvain: Peeters 1981.

Bardenhewer, Otto. *Geschichte der altkirchlichen Literatur*. 4 vols. Freiburg: Herder 1912–1914.

Barry, Catherine, Wolf-Peter Funk, Paul-Hubert Poirier, and John D. Turner. *Zostrien (NHC VIII, 1)*. (BCNH:T 24.) Québec: Les Presses de l'Université Laval and Louvain: Peeters 2000.

Bartelink, G.J.M. "Quelques observations sur parrhesia dans la littérature paléo-chrétienne." In *Græcitas et Latinitas Christianorum primæva*: Suppl. 3. Nijmegen: Dekker & van de Vegt 1970.

Barth, Carola. *Die Interpretation des Neuen Testaments in der valentinianischen Gnosis*. (TU 37:3.) Leipzig: Hinrichs 1911.

Bauer, Walter. *Griechisch-deutsches Wörterbuch zu den Schriften des Neuen Testaments und der frühchristlichen Literatur*. 6th ed. by Kurt Aland and Barbara Aland. Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter 1988.

Baumstark, Anton. "Die Lehre des römischen Presbyters Florinus." *ZNW* 13 (1912) 306–319.

Baur, Ferdinand Christian. *Die christliche Gnosis oder die christliche Religions-Philosophie in ihrer geschichtlichen Entwicklung*. Tübingen: C.F. Osiander 1835.

Bechtle, Gerald. *The Anonymous Commentary on Plato's "Parmenides."* (Berner Reihe philosophischer Studien 22.) Bern-Stuttgart-Wien: Paul Haupt 1999.

Beyschlag, Karlmann. "Kallist und Hippolyt." *ThZ* 20 (1964) 103–124.

Blanc, Cécile. *Origène: Commentaire sur Saint Jean*. 5 vols.) (SC 120, 157, 222, 290, 385.) Paris: 1970–1992: Cerf.

Blass, F. and A. Debrunner. *A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*. A Translation and Revision of the ninth-tenth German edition incorporating supplementary notes of A. Debrunner, by Robert W. Funk. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press 1961.

Blomkvist, Vemund. "An Early Christian Inscription?" *ZNW* 88 (1997) 143–144.

Bradshaw, Paul F. "Baptismal Practice in the Alexandrian Tradition: Eastern or Western?" In Johnson (ed.), *Living Water, Sealing Spirit*, 82–100.

——. "Re-dating the *Apostolic Tradition:* Some Preliminary Steps." In N. Mitchell and J.F. Baldovin, *Rule of Prayer, Rule of Faith: Essays in Honor of Aidan Kavanagh, O.S.B.*, Collegeville, Minn.: The Liturgical Press 1996, 3–17.

Bradshaw, Paul F., Maxwell E. Johnson, and L. Edward Phillips. *The Apostolic Tradition: A Commentary*. (Hermeneia.) Minneapolis: Fortress 2002.

Broek, R. van den. "The Creation of Adam's Psychic Body in the Apocryphon of John." In *Studies in Gnosticism and Hellenistic Religions presented to Gilles Quispel on the Occasion of his 65th Birthday* (EPRO 91), ed. R. van den Broek and M.J. Vermaseren, Leiden: Brill 1981, 38–57.

Brooke, A.E. *The Fragments of Heracleon, Newly Edited from the Mss with an Introduction and Notes*. (Texts and Studies 1:4.) Cambridge 1891. Rpt. Piscataway NJ: Gorgias Press 2004.

Böhlig, Alexander. "Zur Vorstellung vom Lichtkreuz in Gnostizismus und Manichäismus." In *Gnosis: Festschrift für Hans Jonas*, ed. B. Aland *et al.*, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht 1978, 473–491. Rpt. in A. Böhlig, *Gnosis und Synkretismus* (WUNT 47, 48), Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck 1989, I 135–163.

Bultmann, Rudolf. *Theology of the New Testament*. 2 vols. London: SCM Press 1952–55.

Burkert, Walter. *Lore and Science in Ancient Pythagoreanism*. Trans. Edwin L. Minar jr. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press 1972.

Casel, Odo. "Die Taufe als Brautbad der Kirche." *Jahrbuch für Liturgiewissenschaft* 5 (1925) 144–147.

Casey, Robert P. "Note on Epiphanius *Panarion* XXXI 5–6." *JTS* 29 (1928) 34–40.

——. "Two Notes on Valentinian Theology." *HTR* 23 (1930) 275–298.

——. *The Excerpta ex Theodoto of Clement of Alexandria*. (Studies and Documents I.) London: Christophers 1934.

Castagno, A. Monaci. "Origene e Ambrogio: L'indipendenza dell'intellettuale e le pretese dell'patronato." In Perrone (ed.), *Origeniana octava*, I 165–193.

Cattenoz, Jean-Pierre. *Le Baptême, mystère nuptial: Théologie de Saint Jean Chrysostome*. (Collection Centre Notre-Dame de Vie: Série théologie 5.) Venasque: Éditions du Carmel 1993.

Charles, R.H. (ed.) *The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament in English*. 2 vols. Oxford: Clarendon 1913.

Charlesworth, James H. (ed.) *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*. 2 vols. Garden City, NY: Doubleday 1983–85.

Chazon, Esther G. "Liturgical Communion with the Angels at Qumran." In *Sapiential, Liturgical and Poetical Texts from Qumran: Proceedings of the Third Meeting of the International Organization for Qumran Studies, Oslo 1998, Published in Memory of Maurice Baillet* (Studies on the Texts of the Judean Desert 35), eds. Daniel K. Falk, Florentino García Martínez, and Eileen M. Schuller, Leiden: Brill 2000, 95–105.

Colpe, Carsten. "Heidnische, jüdische und christliche Überlieferung in den Schriften aus Nag Hammadi, VII," *JAC* 21 (1978) 125–146.

Connolly, R. Hugh. *The Liturgical Homilies of Narsai*. (Texts and Studies 8:1.) Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1909.

Conzelmann, Hans. *1 Corinthians*. (*Hermeneia*.) Philadelphia: Fortress 1975.

Corrigan, Kevin. "Platonism and Gnosticism. The Anonymous *Commentary* on the *Parmenides*: Middle or Neoplatonic?" In Turner and Majercik (eds.), *Gnosticism and Later Platonism*, 141–177.

Cross, F.L. (ed.) *The Jung Codex: A Newly Recovered Gnostic Papyrus*. Three studies by H.-Ch. Puech, G. Quispel and W.C. van Unnik. London: Mowbray 1955.

Dahl, Nils A. "Form-critical observations on early Christian preaching." In id., *Jesus in the Memory of the Early Church*, Minneapolis, Minn.: Augsburg 1976, 30–36.

Des Places, Édouard. *Oracles Chaldaïques*. Paris: Les Belles Lettres 1971.

Dibelius, Otto. "Studien zur Geschichte der Valentinianer." *ZNW* 9 (1908) 230–247, 329–340.

Dillon, John. *The Middle Platonists: A Study of Platonism 80 B.C. to A.D. 220*. London: Duckworth 1977.

Dodds, E.R. "The *Parmenides* of Plato and the Origin of the Neoplatonic One." *Classical Quarterly* 22 (1928) 129–142.

Dubois, Jean-Daniel. "Le *Traité Tripartite* (Nag Hammadi I, 5) est-il antérieure à Origène?" In Perrone (ed.), *Origeniana octava*, I 303–316.

Dupont-Sommer, A. *La doctrine gnostique de la lettre «wâw» d'après une lamelle araméenne inédite.* (Bibliothèque archéologique et historique 41.) Paris: Paul Geuthner 1946.

Edsman, Carl-Martin. *Le baptême de feu.* (Acta seminarii neotestamentici upsaliensis 9.) Leipzig and Uppsala: A.-B. Lundequistska 1940.

Emmel, Stephen. "The Recently Published *Gospel of the Savior* ('Unbekanntes Berliner Evangelium'): Righting the Order of Pages and Events." *HTR* 95 (2002) 45–72.

——. "Exploring the Pathway That Leads from Paul to Gnosticism: What is the Genre of The Interpretation of Knowledge (NHC XI,1)?" In *Die Weisheit—Ursprünge und Rezeption: Festschrift für Karl Löning zum 65. Geburtstag,* ed. M. Fassnacht *et al.,* Münster: Aschendorff 2003, 257–276.

Engberding, Hieronymus. "Die Kirche als Braut in der ostsyrischen Liturgie." *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* 3 (1937) 5–48.

Festugière, A.-J. *La Révélation d'Hermès Trismégiste.* 4 vols. Paris: Gabalda 1949–1954.

——. "Notes sur les Extraits de Théodote de Clément d'Alexandrie et sur les fragments de Valentin." *VC* 3 (1949) 193–207.

Filoramo, Giovanni. *A History of Gnosticism.* trans. Anthony Alcock. Oxford: Blackwell 1990.

Finn, Thomas M. *The Liturgy of Baptism in the Baptismal Instructions of St. John Chrysostom.* (SCA 15.) Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press 1967.

Fitzgerald, John T. (ed.) *Friendship, Flattery, and Frankness of Speech: Studies on Friendship in the New Testament World.* (Suppl. *Novum Testamentum* 82.) Leiden: Brill 1996.

Fliedner, Friedrich. "Die ketzergeschichtlichen Angaben des Agapius und das System des Presbyters Florinus." Diss. Münster 1942.

Förster, Niclas. *Marcus Magus: Kult, Lehre und Gemeindeleben einer valentinianischen Gnostikergruppe. Sammlung der Quellen und Kommentar.* (WUNT 114.) Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck 1999.

Foerster, Werner. *Gnosis: A Selection of Gnostic Texts.* Eng. trans. ed. R. McL. Wilson. 2 vols. Oxford: Clarendon 1972.

——. *Von Valentin zu Herakleon: Untersuchungen über die Quellen und die Entwicklung der valentinianischen Gnosis.* (Beihefte zur ZNW 7.) Giessen: Töpelmann 1928.

Franzmann, Majella. *Jesus in the Nag Hammadi Writings.* Edinburgh: T&T Clark 1996.

Fraser, P.M. *Ptolemaic Alexandria.* 3 vols. Oxford: Clarendon 1972.

Fredouille, Jean-Claude. *Tertullien: Contre les Valentiniens.* (SC 280, 281.) Paris: Cerf 1980–81.

Frennesson, Björn. *"In a common rejoicing": Liturgical communion with angels in Qumran.* (Studia Semitica Upsaliensia 14.) Diss., Uppsala University 1999.

Funk, Wolf-Peter. *Concordance des textes de Nag Hammadi: Les Codices XI et Xa* (BCNH:C 6). Sainte-Foy: Les Presses de l'Université Laval and Louvain: Peeters 2000.

Gaffron, Hans-Georg. "Studien zum koptischen Philippusevangelium unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Sakramente." Diss. Bonn 1969.

——. "Eine gnostische Apologie des Auferstehungsglaubens. Bemerkungen zur 'Epistula ad Rheginum.'" In *Die Zeit Jesu: Festschrift für Heinrich Schlier,* ed. G. Bornkamm and K. Rahner, Freiburg/Basel/Wien: Herder 1970, 218–227.

Gressmann, Hugo. "Jüdisch-Aramäisches bei Epiphanius." *ZNW* 16 (1915) 191–197.

Guarducci, Margherita. "Valentiniani a Roma: Ricerche epigrafiche ed archeologiche." *MDAI(R)* 80 (1973) 169–189. Also in id., *Scritti scelti sulla religione greca e romana e sul Cristianesimo* (Études préliminaires aux religions orientales dans l'empire Romain 98), Leiden: Brill 1983, 353–379.

——. "Ancora sui Valentiniani a Roma." *MDAI(R)* 81 (1974) 341–343. Also in id., *Scritti scelti,* 380–382.

Guy, Laurie. "'Naked' Baptism in the Early Church: The Rhetoric and the Reality." *Journal of Religious History* 27 (2003) 133–142.

Hadot, Pierre. *Porphyre et Victorinus.* 2 vols. (Études Augustiniennes 32, 33.) Paris: Institut d'Études Augustiniennes 1968.

——. "'Porphyre et Victorinus': Questions et hypothèses." *Res Orientales* IX, 117–125.

Harnack, Adolf von. *Zur Quellenkritik der Geschichte des Gnosticismus*. Leipzig: O. Leiner 1873.

——. "Zur Quellenkritik der Geschichte des Gnosticismus." *Zeitschrift für historische Theologie* 44 (1874) 143–226.

——. *Marcion: Das Evangelium vom fremden Gott*. 2nd ed. Leipzig: Hinrich 1924.

——. *Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur bis Eusebius*. 2 parts in 4 vols. Leipzig 1896–1904. Rpt. Leipzig: Hinrich 1958.

Heath, Thomas L. *A History of Greek Mathematics*. 2 vols. Oxford: Clarendon 1921.

Hedrick, Charles W. (ed.) *Nag Hammadi Codices XI, XII, XIII*. (NHS 28.) Leiden: Brill 1990.

Hedrick, Charles W., and Paul A. Mirecki. *Gospel of the Savior: A New Ancient Gospel*. (California Classical Library.) Santa Rosa, Cal.: Polebridge 1999.

Heinrici, Georg. *Die valentinianische Gnosis und Die heilige Schrift*. Berlin: Wiegandt und Grieben 1871.

Helderman, Jan. "Das Evangelium Veritatis in der neueren Forschung." *ANRW* II 25:5 (1988) 4054–4106.

Hellholm, David. "The 'Revelation-Schema' and its Adaptation in the Coptic Gnostic Apocalypse of Peter." *SEÅ* 63 (1998) 233–248.

Henry, Paul, and Pierre Hadot. *Marius Victorinus: Traités théologiques sur la Trinité*. 2 vols. (SC 68, 69.) Paris: Cerf 1960.

Henry, Paul, and Hans-Rudolf Schwyzer. *Plotini Opera*. 3 vols. Oxford: Clarendon 1964, 1977, 1982.

Hermann, A. "Ernte." *RAC* VI 275–306.

Herzhoff, Bernhard. "Zwei gnostische Psalmen." Diss. Bonn. 1973.

Hilgenfeld, Adolf. "Der Gnostiker Valentinus und seine Schriften." *ZWTh* 23 (1880), 280–300.

——. *Die Ketzergeschichte des Urchristentums urkundlich dargestellt*. Leipzig 1884. Rpt. Hildesheim: Georg Olms 1966.

Holzhausen, Jens. *Der «Mythos vom Menschen» im hellenistischen Ägypten: Eine Studie zum "Poimandres" (= CH I), zu Valentin und dem gnostischen Mythos*. (Theophaneia 33.) Bodenheim: Athenäum Hain Hanstein 1994.

——. "Ein gnostischer Psalm?" *JAC* 36 (1993) 68–80.

——. "Gnosis und Martyrium." *ZNW* 85 (1994) 116–131.

——. "Irenäus und die valentinianische Schule: Zur *Praefatio* von *Adv. Haer.* I." *VC* 55 (2001) 341–355.

Hübner, Reinhard M. *Die Einheit des Leibes Christi bei Gregor von Nyssa*. (Philosophia Patrum 2.) Leiden: Brill 1974,

——. "Thesen zur Echtheit und Datierung der sieben Briefe des Ignatius von Antiochien." *ZAC* 1 (1997) 44–72.

Isenberg, Wesley W. "The Coptic Gospel According to Philip." Ph.D. diss. University of Chicago 1968.

Jansen, Herman Ludin. "Spuren sakramentaler Handlungen im Evangelium Veritatis." *Acta Orientalia* 28 (1964/65) 215–219.

Johnson, Maxwell E. (ed.) *Living Water, Sealing Spirit: Readings on Christian Initiation*. Collegeville, Minn.: The Liturgical Press/Pueblo 1995.

——. "The Baptismal Rite and Anaphora in the Prayers of Sarapion of Thmuis: An Assessment of a Recent 'Judicious Reassessment,'" *Worship* 73 (1999) 140–168.

Jonas, Hans. *Gnosis und spätantiker Geist*. I *Die Mythologische Gnosis* (FRLANT 51 [= Neue Folge 33]), 3rd ed. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht 1964. II *Von der Mythologie zur mystischen Philosophie* ed. Kurt Rudolph (FRLANT 159), Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht 1993.

——. *The Gnostic Religion: The Message of the Alien God and the Beginnings of Christianity*. 2nd ed. Boston: Beacon Press 1963.

Kaestli, Jean-Daniel. "Valentinisme italien et valentinisme oriental: leurs divergences à propos de la nature du corps du Christ." In Layton, *Rediscovery*, I 391–403.

Kalbfleisch, Karl. *Die neuplatonische, fälschlich dem Galen zugeschriebene Schrift Πρὸς Γαῦρον περὶ τοῦ πῶς ἐμψυχοῦται τὰ ἔμβρυα aus der Pariser Handschrift zum ersten Male herausgeben.* (Akad. Berlin: Phil.-hist. Abh. 1895: 1). Berlin 1895.

Kanzler, Rodolfo. "Di un nuovo cimitero anonimo sulla via Latina." *Nuovo Bullettino di Archeologia Cristiana* 9 (1903) 173–186.

Kasser, Rodolphe, *et al. Tractatus Tripartitus.* 2 vols. Bern: Francke 1973–1975.

Kehl, Alois. "Gewand." *RAC* X 945–1025.

Köbert, R. "Achamoth." *Biblica* 45 (1964) 254–255.

Koep, Leo. *Das himmlische Buch in Antike und Christentum.* (Theophaneia 8.) Bonn: Peter Hanstein 1952.

Koschorke, Klaus. "Die 'Namen' im Philippusevangelium: Beobachtungen zur Auseinandersetzung zwischen gnostischem und kirchlichem Christentum." *ZNW* 64 (1973) 307–322.

——. *Hippolyt's Ketzerbekämpfung und Polemik gegen die Gnostiker.* (Göttinger Orientforschungen; VI. Hellenistica: 4.) Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz 1975.

——. "Patristische Materialien zur Spätgeschichte der valentinianischen Gnosis." In M. Krause (ed.), *Gnosis and Gnosticism: Papers read at the Eighth International Conference on Patristic Studies (Oxford, September 3rd-8th 1979)* (NHS 17), Leiden: Brill 1981, 120–139.

——. *Die Polemik der Gnostiker gegen das kirchliche Christentum unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Nag-Hammadi Traktate "Apokalypse des Petrus" (NHC VII,5) und "Testimonium Veritatis" (NHC IX,3).* (NHS 12.) Leiden: Brill 1978.

Krämer, Hans Joachim. *Der Ursprung der Geistmetaphysik: Untersuchungen zur Geschichte des Platonismus zwischen Platon und Plotin.* 2nd ed., Amsterdam: B. R. Grüner 1964.

Kragerud, Alv. "Evangelium Veritatis: En oversettelse." *NTT* 66 (1965) 177–193.

Kretschmar, Georg. "Beiträge zur Geschichte der Liturgie, insbesondere der Taufliturgie, in Ägypten." *Jahrbuch für Liturgik und Hymnologie* 8 (1963) 1–54.

——. *Die Geschichte des Taufgottesdienstes in der alten Kirche.* In K.F. Müller and W. Blankenburg (eds.), *Leiturgia: Handbuch des evangelischen Gottesdienstes,* V: *Der Taufgottesdienst,* Kassel: Johannes Stauda-Verlag 1970, 1–348.

Kroll, Wilhelm. *De Oraculis Chaldaicis.* Breslau 1894. Rpt. Hildesheim: Georg Olms 1986.

Labriolle, Pierre Champagne de. *La crise montaniste.* Paris: Ernest Leroux 1913.

Lacombrade, Christian. *Synésios de Cyrène.* I *Hymnes.* Paris: Les Belles Lettres 1978.

Lalleman, Pieter J. *The Acts of John: A Two-Stage Initiation into Johannine Gnosticism.* (Studies on the Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles 4.) Leuven: Peeters 1998.

Lampe, G.W.H. *A Patristic Greek Lexicon.* Oxford: Oxford University Press 1961.

——. *The Seal of the Spirit: A Study in the Doctrine of Baptism and Confirmation in the New Testament and the Fathers.* 2nd ed. London: SPCK 1967. (1st ed. 1951.)

Lampe, Peter. *From Paul to Valentinus: Christians at Rome in the First Two Centuries.* Minneapolis: Fortress 2003.

——. "An Early Christian Inscription in the Musei Capitolini." In D. Hellholm, H. Moxnes, and T.K. Seim (eds.), *Mighty Minorities: Minorities in Early Christianity— Positions and Strategies: Essays in Honour of Jacob Jervell on his 70th Birthday 21 May 1995,* Oslo: Scandinavian University Press 1995, 79–92.

Layton, Bentley (ed.). *The Rediscovery of Gnosticism: Proceedings of the International Conference on Gnosticism at Yale, New Haven, Connecticut, March 28–31, 1978.* (Studies in the History of Religions [Supplements to *Numen*] 41.) 2 vols. Leiden: Brill 1980.

—— (ed.) *Nag Hammadi Codex II,2–7 Together with XIII,2*, Brit. Lib. Or. 4926(1), and P. Oxy. 1, 654, 655.* 2 vols. (NHS 20, 21.), Leiden: Brill 1989.

——. *The Gnostic Scriptures: A New Translation with Annotations and Introductions.* Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday 1987.

Lechner, Thomas. *Ignatius adversus Valentinianos? Chronologische und theologiegeschichtliche Studien zu den Briefen des Ignatius von Antiochien.* (Suppl. *VC* 47.) Leiden: Brill 1999.

Leeper, Elizabeth A. "From Alexandria to Rome: The Valentinian Connection to the Incorporation of Exorcism as a Prebaptismal Rite." *VC* 44 (1990) 6–24.

Lesky, E. "Embryologie. A. Nichtchristlich. I. Griech.-röm." *RAC* IV 1228–1241.

Lewis, I.M. *Ecstatic Religion: An Anthropological Study of Spirit Possession and Shamanism.* Harmondsworth: Penguin 1971.

Lewy, Hans. *Chaldaean Oracles and Theurgy: Mysticism Magic and Platonism in the Later Roman Empire.* Nouvelle édition par Michel Tardieu. Paris: Études Augustiniennes 1978. (1st ed. Cairo 1956.)

Lilla, Salvatore R.C. *Clement of Alexandria: A Study in Christian Platonism and Gnosticism.* Oxford: Oxford University Press 1971.

Lipsius, Richard A. *Zur Quellenkritik des Epiphanios.* Wien: Wilhelm Braumüller 1865.

——. *Die Quellen der ältesten Ketzergeschichte, neu untersucht.* Leipzig: J.A. Barth 1875.

——. "Ptolemaeus (1)." *A Dictionary of Christian Biography, Literature, Sects and Doctrines during the First Eighth Centuries,* ed. W. Smith and H. Wace, London 1887, 4:515–517.

——. "Valentinus (1)." Ibid., 4:1076–1099.

Löhr, Winrich A. "La doctrine de Dieu dans la Lettre à Flora de Ptolémée." *Études Théologiques et Religieuses* 70 (1995) 177–191.

Logan, Alastair H.B. "Post-baptismal Chrismation in Syria: The Evidence of Ignatius, the *Didache* and the *Apostolic Constitutions.*" *JTS* n.s. 49 (1998) 92–108.

Long, A.A., and D.N. Sedley. *The Hellenistic philosophers.* 2 vols. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1987.

Lüdemann, Gerd. "Zur Geschichte des ältesten Christentums in Rom." *ZNW* 70 (1979) 86–114.

Lundhaug, Hugo. "Fragments of Early Christianity: An Analysis of *A Valentinian Exposition* (NHC XI,2) with the *Liturgical Fragments On the Anointing, On Baptism A, On Baptism B, On the Eucharist A, On the Eucharist B* (NHC XI,2a-e). Diss. IKS, University of Oslo 2000.

Mach, Michael. *Entwicklungsstadien des jüdischen Engelglaubens in vorrabbinischer Zeit.* (Texte und Studien zum Antiken Judentum 34.) Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck 1992.

Mahé, Jean-Pierre. *Tertullien: La chair du Christ.* (SC 216, 217.) Paris: Cerf 1975.

Mahé, Annie and Jean-Pierre. *Le Témoignage Véritable (NH IX, 3): Gnose et martyre.* (BCNH:T 23.) Québec: Les Presses de l'Université Laval and Louvain: Peeters 1996.

Majercik, Ruth. *The Chaldean Oracles: Text, Translation, and Commentary.* (Studies in Greek and Roman Religion 5.) Leiden: Brill 1989.

——. "The Existence-Life-Intellect Triad in Gnosticism and Neoplatonism." *Classical Quarterly* 42 (1992) 475–488.

Malinine, Michel, Henri-Charles Puech, and Gilles Quispel. *Evangelium Veritatis: Codex Jung f.VIIIv–XVIv (pp. 16–32) / f.XIXr–XXIIr (pp. 37–43).* Zurich and Stuttgart: Rascher 1956.

Marcovich, Miroslav. *Hippolytus Refutatio omnium haeresium.* (*Patristische Texte und Studien* 25.) Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter 1986.

Markschies, Christoph. *Valentinus Gnosticus? Untersuchungen zur valentinianischen Gnosis mit einem Kommentar zu den Fragmenten Valentins.* (WUNT 65.) Tübingen 1992.

——. "Valentinian Gnosticism: Toward the Anatomy of a School." In Turner and McGuire, *Nag Hammadi Library,* 401–438.

——. "New Research on Ptolemaeus Gnosticus." *ZAC* 4 (2000) 225–254.

——. "Valentinianische Gnosis in Alexandrien und Ägypten." In Perrone (ed.), *Origeniana octava,* I 331–346.

Marucchi, Orazio. "Osservazioni sopra il cimitero anonimo recentemente scoperto sulla via Latina." *Nuovo Bullettino di Archeologia Cristiana* 9 (1903) 301–314.

McDonnell, Kilian. *The Baptism of Jesus in the Jordan: The Trinitarian and the Cosmic Order of Salvation.* Collegeville, Minn.: The Liturgical Press 1996.

McGowan, Andrew. "Valentinus Poeta: Notes on Θέρος." *VC* 51 (1997) 158–178.

McGuire, Anne M. "Valentinus and the *Gnostike Hairesis:* An Investigation of Valentinus' Position in the History of Gnosticism." Diss. Yale 1983.

Meeks, Wayne A. *The First Urban Christians: The Social World of the Apostle Paul.* New Haven-London: Yale University Press 1983.

Ménard, Jacques-É. *L'Évangile de Vérité.* (NHS 2.) Leiden: Brill 1972.

———. *L'Exposé valentinien. Les Fragments sur le baptême et sur l'eucharistie (NH XI,2).* (BCNH:T 14.) Québec: Les Presses de l'Université Laval 1985.

Merlan, P. "Greek Philosophy from Plato to Plotinus." In *The Cambridge History of Later Greek and Early Medieval Philosophy*, ed. A.H. Armstrong, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1967, 11–132.

Michl, J. "Engel I–IX." *RAC* V 53–258.

Müller, Karl. "Beiträge zum Verständnis der Valentinianischen Gnosis." *NGG* 1920:179–242.

Munck, Johannes. "Evangelium Veritatis and Greek Usage as to Book Titles." *Studia Theologica* 17 (1963) 133–138.

Munier, Charles. "Initiation chrétienne et rites d'onction (IIe–IIIe siècles)." *RSR* 64 (1990) 115–125.

Musurillo, Herbert. *The Acts of the Christian Martyrs.* Oxford: Oxford University Press 1972.

Neander, August. *Genetische Entwickelung der vornehmsten gnostischen Systeme.* Berlin: F. Dümmler 1818.

Nickel, Diethard. *Untersuchungen zur Embryologie Galens.* (Schriften zur Geschichte und Kultur der Antike 27.) Berlin: Akademie-Verlag 1989.

Nickelsburg, George W.E. *1 Enoch 1: A Commentary on the Book of Enoch, Chapters 1–36; 81–108.* (Hermeneia.) Minneapolis: Fortress 2001.

Norden, Eduard. *Die antike Kunstprosa vom VI. Jahrhundert v. Chr. bis in die Zeit der Renaissance.* 2 vols. 3rd ed. Stuttgart: Teubner 1915.

Orbe, Antonio. *Hacia la primera teología de la procesión del verbo* (*Estudios Valentinianos* I). (Analecta Gregoriana 99–100.) Rome: Apud aedes Universitatis Gregorianae 1958.

———. *En los albores de la exegesis iohannea (Ioh. I, 3)* (*Estudios Valentinianos* II). (Analecta Gregoriana 65.) Rome: Apud aedes Universitatis Gregorianae 1955.

———. *La teología del Espíritu Santo* (*Estudios Valentinianos* IV). (Analecta Gregoriana 158.) Rome: Libreria editrice dell'Università Gregoriana 1966.

———. "La trinidad maléfica (A propósito de 'Excerpta ex Theodoto' 80,3)." *Gregorianum* 49 (1968) 726–761.

———. *Cristología gnóstica: Introducción a la soteriología de los siglos II y III.* 2 vols. (Biblioteca de autores cristianos 384, 385.) Madrid: Edica 1976.

Orlandi, Tito. *Evangelium Veritatis.* (Testi del Vicino Oriente antico 8:2.) Brescia: Paideia 1992.

Painchaud, Louis. *L'Écrit sans titre: Traité sur l'origine du monde (NH II, 5 et XIII, 2 et Brit. Lib. Or. 4926[1]).* (BCNH:T 21.) Québec: Les Presses de l'Université Laval and Louvain: Peeters 1995.

Pagels, Elaine H. "Gnostic and Orthodox Views of Christ's Passion: Paradigms for the Christian's Response to Persecution?" In Layton, *Rediscovery,* I 262–283.

———. *The Johannine Gospel in Gnostic Exegesis: Heracleon' Commentary on John.* (SBL Monograph Serie 17.) Atlanta, Ga.: Scholars Press 1989.

Perler, Othmar. *Ein Hymnus zur Ostervigil von Meliton? (Papyrus Bodmer XII).* (Paradosis 15.) Freiburg: Universitätsverlag 1960.

Perrone, L. (ed.) *Origeniana octava: Origen and the Alexandrian Tradition. Papers of the 8th International Origen Congress, Pisa, 27–31 August 2001.* (Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium 164.) 2 vols. Leuven: Peeters 2003.

Petrement, Simone. *A Separate God: The Origins and Teachings of Gnosticism.* Trans. Carol Harrison. San Francisco: HarperCollins 1990. (First published as *Le Dieu séparé: Les origines du gnosticisme.* Paris: Cerf 1984.)

Phillips, L. Edward. *The Ritual Kiss in Early Christian Worship*. (Alcuin/GROW Joint Liturgical Studies 36.) Cambridge: Grove Books 1996.

Plisch, Uwe-Karsten. *Die Auslegung der Erkenntnis (Nag Hammadi-Codex XI,1)*. (TU 142.) Berlin: Akademie Verlag 1996.

Puech, Heinri-Charles, and Gilles Quispel. "Les écrits gnostiques du Codex Jung," *VC* 8 (1954) 1–54.

Quispel, Gilles. "La conception de l'homme dans la Gnose valentinienne. In id., *Gnostic Studies*, I 37–57. (First published in *Eranos-Jahrbuch* 15 (1947) 249–286.)

——. *Gnostic Studies*. (Uitgaven van het Nederlands Historisch-Archaeologisch Instituut te Istanbul 34:1–2.) 2 vols. Istanbul: Nederlands Historisch-Archaeologisch Instituut in het Nabije Oosten 1974–75.

——. "L'inscription de Flavia Sophe." In id., *Gnostic Studies*, I 58–59. (First published in *Mélanges Joseph de Ghellinck, S.J.* (*Museum Lessianum: Section historique* 13, 14.) Gembloux: J. Duculot 1951, I 201–214.)

——. "The Jung Codex and its Significance." In Cross, *The Jung Codex*, 35–78.

——. "The Original Doctrine of Valentine." *VC* 1 (1947) 43–73. (Partly reprinted in id., *Gnostic Studies*, I 27–36.)

——. *Ptolémée: Lettre à Flora* (SC 24 *bis*.) 2nd ed. Paris: Cerf 1966.

Richard, Marie-Dominique. *L'enseignement oral de Platon: Une nouvelle interprétation du platonisme*. Paris: Cerf 1986.

Riley, Hugh M. *Christian Initiation: A Comparative Study of the Interpretation of the Baptismal Liturgy in the Mystagogical Writings of Cyril of Jerusalem, John Chrysostom, Theodore of Mopsuestia and Ambrose of Milan*. (SCA 17.) Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press 1974.

Säve-Söderbergh, Torgny. "Det koptiska 'Evangelium Veritatis'." *Religion och Bibel* 17 (1958) 28–40.

Sagnard, François. *La gnose valentinienne et le témoignage de saint Irénée*. (Études de philosophie médiévale 36.) Paris 1947.

——. *Clément d'Alexandrie: Extraits de Théodote*. (SC 23.) Paris 1970. (1st ed. 1948.)

S[almon], G. "Heracleon." *DCB* II 897–901.

Scarpat, Giuseppe. *Parrhesia greca, parrhesia cristiana*. 2nd ed. (Studi biblici 130.) Brescia: Paideia 2001.

Schenke, Hans-Martin. "Das Evangelium nach Philippus: Ein Evangelium der Valentinianer aus dem Funde von Nag-Hamadi." In J. Leipoldt and H.-M. Schenke, *Koptisch-gnostische Schriften aus dem Papyrus-Codices von Nag-Hamadi* (Theologische Forschung 20), Hamburg-Bergstedt: Herbert Reich-Evangelischer Verlag 1960, 31–65, 81–82. (First published in *TLZ* 84 (1959) 1–26.)

——. *Das Philippus-Evangelium* (*Nag Hammadi-Codex II,3*). (TU 143.) Berlin: Akademie Verlag 1997.

Schenke, Hans-Martin, Hans-Gebhard Bethge, and Ursula Ulrike Kaiser (ed.). *Nag Hammadi Deutsch*. 2 vols. (GCS, Neue Folge 8 and 12 = Koptisch-Gnostische Schriften II and III.) Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter 2001 and 2003.

Schmid, J. "Brautschaft, heilige." *RAC* II 528–64.

Segelberg, Erik. *Maṣbūtā: Studies in the Ritual of the Mandaean Baptism*. Uppsala 1958.

——. "Evangelium Veritatis: A Confirmation Homily and Its Relation to the Odes of Solomon." *Orientalia Suecana* 8 (1959) 1–40.

——. "The Antiochene Background of the Gospel of Philip." *BSAC* 18 (1966) 205–223. (Rpt. in id. *Gnostica—Mandaica—Liturgica*, 31–49.)

——. "The Antiochene Origin of the 'Gospel of Philip.'" *BSAC* 19 (1967–68) 207–210. (Rpt. in id. *Gnostica—Mandaica—Liturgica*, 51–54.)

——. *Gnostica—Mandaica—Liturgica*. (Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis: Historia Religionum 11.) Uppsala: Almqvist & Wiksell 1990.

Sevrin, Jean-Marie. "Pratique et doctrine des sacrements dans l'Évangile selon Philippe." Diss. Louvain 1972.

Simonetti, Manlio. *Testi gnostici in lingua greca e latina.* (Scrittori greci e latini.) Rome: Fondazione Lorenzo Valla/Mondadori 1993.

Smith, Morton. *Clement of Alexandria and a Secret Gospel of Mark.* Cambridge, Mass. 1973.

Spinks, Bryan D. 'Sarapion of Thmuis and Baptismal Practice in Early Christian Egypt: The Need for a Judicious Reassessment.' *Worship* 72 (1998) 255–270.

Stead, Christopher. "The Valentinian Myth of Sophia." *JTS* n.s. 20 (1969) 75–104.

——. "In Search of Valentinus." In Layton (ed.), *Rediscovery*, I 75–95.

Stenzel, Alois. *Die Taufe: Eine genetische Erklärung der Taufliturgie.* Innsbruck: Felizian Rauch 1958.

Strack, H.L. and P. Billerbeck. *Kommentar zum Neuen Testament aus Talmud und Midrasch.* 4 vols. (Munich 1922–28).

Strutwolf, Holger. *Gnosis als System: Zur Rezeption der valentinianischen Gnosis bei Origenes.* (Forschungen zur Kirchen- und Dogmengeschichte 56.) Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht 1993.

Tardieu, Michel. *Trois mythes gnostiques: Adam, Éros et les animaux d'Égypte dans un écrit de Nag Hammadi (II, 5).* Paris: Études augustiniennes 1974.

——. "'Comme à travers une tuyau': Quelques remarques sur le mythe valentinien de la chair céleste du Christ." In Barc (ed.), *Colloque*, 151–177.

——. "La gnose valentinienne et les Oracles chaldaïques." In Layton, *Rediscovery*, I 194–231.

——. "Recherches sur la formation de l'Apocalypse de Zostrien et les sources de Marius Victorinus." *Res Orientales* IX, 7–114.

Theiler, Willy. *Die Vorbereitung des Neuplatonismus.* (Problemata: Forschungen zur klassischen Philologie 1.) Berlin 1930.

Thom, Johan C. "'Harmonious Equality': The *Topos* of Friendship in Neopythagorean Writings." In John T. Fitzgerald (ed.), *Greco-Roman Perspectives on Friendship* (SBL Resources for Biblical Study 34), Atlanta, Ga.: Scholars Press 1997, 77–103.

Thomassen, Einar. "The Structure of the Transcendent World in the Tripartite Tractate (NHC I, 5)." *VC* 34 (1980) 358–375.

——. "The Valentinianism of the *Valentinian Exposition* (NHC XI,2)." *Le Muséon* 102 (1989) 225–236.

——. "The Platonic and the Gnostic 'Demiurge.'" In *Apocryphon Severini presented to Søren Giversen*, ed. P. Bilde, H. Kjær Nielsen, and J. Podemann Sørensen, Aarhus: Aarhus University Press 1993, 226–244.

——. "Gnostic Semiotics: The Valentinian Notion of the Name." *Temenos* 29 (1993) 141–156.

——. "Notes pour la délimitation d'un corpus valentinien à Nag Hammadi." In *Les textes de Nag Hammadi et le problème de leur classification: Actes du colloque tenu à Québec du 15 au 19 septembre 1993*, ed. L. Painchaud and A. Pasquier (BCNH:E 3), Québec: Les Presses de l'Université Laval and Louvain: Peeters 1995, 243–259.

——. "Λόγος ἀπὸ σιγῆς προελθών (Ignatius, *Mag.* 8:2)." In T. Fornberg and D. Hellholm (eds.), *Texts and Contexts: Biblical Texts in their Textual and Situational Contexts. Essays in Honor of Lars Hartman*, Oslo: Scandinavian University Press 1995, 847–867.

——. "How Valentinian is the *Gospel of Philip.*" In John D. Turner and Anne McGuire (eds.), *The Nag Hammadi Library After Fifty Years*, 251–279.

——. "The Derivation of Matter in Monistic Gnosticism." In Turner and Majercik (eds.), *Gnosticism and Later Platonism*, 1–17.

——. "Revelation as Book and Book as Revelation: Reflections on the *Gospel of Truth.*" In Søren Giversen, Tage Petersen, and Jørgen Podemann Sørensen (eds.), *The Nag Hammadi Texts in the History of Religions: Proceedings of the International Conference at the Royal Academy and Sciences and Letters in Copenhagen, September 19–24, 1995, On the Occasion of the 50th Anniversary of the Nag Hammadi Discovery* (Det Kongelige Danske Videnskabernes Selskab: Historisk-filosofiske Skrifter 26), Copenhagen: C.A. Reitzel, 35–45.

——. "Orthodoxy and Heresy in Second-Century Rome." *HTR* 97 (2004) 241–256.

——. "From Wisdom to Gnosis." Forthcoming.

——. "Not 'in a Mystery.'" Forthcoming.

Thomassen, Einar, and Louis Painchaud. *Le Traité tripartite (NH I, 5).* (BCNH:T 19.) Québec: Les Presses de l'Université Laval and Louvain: Peeters 1989.

Thornton, Claus-Jürgen. *Der Zeuge des Zeugen: Lukas als Historiker der Paulusreisen.* (WUNT 56.) Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck 1991.

Thraede, Klaus. "Ursprung und Formen des 'heiligen Kusses' im frühen Christentum." *JAC* 11/12 (1968/69) 124–180.

Trautmann, Catherine. "La parenté dans l'*Évangile selon Philippe*." In Barc (ed.), *Colloque,* 267–278.

Tripp, David H. "The "Sacramental System" of the Gospel of Philip." In *Studia Patristica* 17 (1982) 1:251–260.

——. "The Original Sequence of Irenaeus 'Adversus Haereses' I: A Suggestion." *Second Century* 8 (1991) 157–162.

Trompf, G.W. "The Conception of God in Hebrews 4:12–13." *Studia Theologica* 25 (1971) 123–132.

Turner, John D. *Sethian Gnosticism and the Platonic Tradition.* (BCNH:E 6) Québec: Les Presses de l'Université Laval; Louvain and Paris: Peeters 2001.

Turner, John D. and R. Majercik (eds.) *Gnosticism and Later Platonism: Themes, Figures, and Texts* (Society of Biblical Literature Symposium Series 12.) Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature 2000.

Turner, John D., and Anne McGuire (eds.) *The Nag Hammadi Library After Fifty Years: Proceedings of the 1995 Society of Biblical Literature Commemoration.* (NHMS 44.) Leiden: Brill 1997.

Turner, Martha L. *The Gospel According to Philip: The Sources and Coherence of an Early Christian Collection.* (NHMS 38.) Leiden: Brill 1996.

Van Unnik, W.C. "The Recently Discovered Gospel of Truth and the New Testament." In Cross, *The Jung Codex,* 81–129.

Varghese, Baby. *Les Onctions baptismales dans la tradition syrienne.* (CSCO 512 = *Subsidia* 82.) Louvain: Peeters 1989.

Veilleux, Armand. *La Première Apocalypse de Jacques (NH V,3); La Seconde Apocalypse de Jacques (NH V,4).* (BCNH:T 17.) Québec: Les Presses de l'Université Laval 1986.

Volz, Paul. *Die Eschatologie der jüdischen Gemeinde im neutestamentlichen Zeitalter nach den Quellen der rabbinischen, apokalyptischen und apokryphen Literatur.* Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck 1934; rpt. Hildesheim: Georg Olms 1966.

Völker, Walther. *Quellen zur Geschichte der christlichen Gnosis.* (Sammlung ausgewählter kirchen- und dogmengeschichtlicher Quellenschriften, Neue Folge 5.) Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck 1932.

Waldstein, Michael, and Frederik Wisse. *The Apocryphon of John: Synopsis of Nag Hammadi Codices II,1; III,1; and IV,1 with BG 8502,2.* (NHMS 33.) Leiden: Brill 1995.

Wanke, Daniel. "Irenäus und die Häretiker in Rom: Thesen zur geschichtlichen Situation von Adversus haereses." *ZAC* 3 (1999) 202–240.

Whittaker, John. "Valentinus Fr. 2." In *Kerygma und Logos: Beiträge zu den geistesgeschichtlichen Beziehungen zwischen Antike und Christentum. Festschrift für Carl Andresen zum 70. Geburtstag,* ed. A.M. Ritter, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht 1979, 455–460. Rpt. in John Whittaker, *Studies in Platonism and Patristic Thought,* London: Variorum Reprints 1984, no. XXVI.

Wilamowitz-Moellendorf, Ulrich von. "Lesefrüchte." *Hermes* 34 (1899) 203–230.

Williams, Michael A. *The Immovable Race: A Gnostic Designation and the Theme of Stability in Late Antiquity.* (NHS 29.) Leiden: Brill 1985.

——. *Rethinking "Gnosticism": An Argument for Dismantling a Dubious Category.* Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press 1996.

Wilmet, Michel. *Concordance du Nouveau Testament Sahidique. II. Les mots autochtones*. 3 vols. (CSCO 173, 183, 185 = *Subsidia* 11, 13, 15.) Louvain 1957, 1958, 1959.

Winkler, Gabriele. "The Original Meaning of the Prebaptismal Anointing and its Implications." In Johnson (ed.), *Living Water*, 58–81. (First published in *Worship* 52 (1978) 24–45.)

Wolbergs, Thielko. *Griechische religiöse Gedichte der ersten nachchristlichen Jahrhunderte*. I: *Psalmen und Hymnen der Gnosis und des frühen Christentums*. (Beiträge zur klassischen Philologie 40:1.) Meisenheim am Glan: A. Hain 1971.

Wucherpfennig, Ansgar. *Heracleon Philologus: Gnostische Johannesexegese im zweiten Jahrhundert*. (WUNT 142.) Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck 2002.

Wünsche, Matthias. *Der Ausgang der urchristlichen Prophetie in der frühkatholischen Kirche: Untersuchungen zu den Apostolischen Vätern, den Apologeten, Irenäus von Lyon und dem antimontanistischen Anonymus*. (Calwer theologische Monographien. Reihe B:14.) Stuttgart: Calwer Verlag 1997.

Wyrwa, D. "Julius Cassian." *LACL*, 409.

INDEX OF ANCIENT SOURCES

New Testament

Nag Hammadi Tractates

Other Ancient Authors and Texts

INDEX OF GREEK WORDS

INDEX OF NAMES AND SUBJECTS

NAG HAMMADI AND MANICHAEAN STUDIES

1. Scholer, D.M. *Nag Hammadi bibliography, 1948-1969.* 1971.
   ISBN 90 04 02603 7

2. Ménard, J.-E. *L'évangile de vérité.* Traduction française, introduction et commentaire par J.-É. Ménard. 1972. ISBN 90 04 03408 0

3. Krause, M. (ed.). *Essays on the Nag Hammadi texts in honour of Alexander Böhlig.* 1972.
   ISBN 90 04 03535 4

4. Böhlig, A. & F. Wisse, (eds.). *Nag Hammadi Codices III, 2 and IV, 2. The Gospel of the Egyptians.* (The Holy Book of the Great Invisible Spirit). Edited with translation and commentary, in cooperation with P. Labib. 1975.
   ISBN 90 04 04226 1

5. Ménard, J.-E. *L'Évangile selon Thomas.* Traduction française, introduction, et commentaire par J.-É. Ménard. 1975. ISBN 90 04 04210 5

6. Krause, M. (ed.). *Essays on the Nag Hammadi texts in honour of Pahor Labib.* 1975.
   ISBN 90 04 04363 2

7. Ménard, J.-E. *Les textes de Nag Hammadi.* Colloque du centre d'Histoire des Religions, Strasbourg, 23-25 octobre 1974. 1975. ISBN 90 04 04359 4

8. Krause, M. (ed.). *Gnosis and Gnosticism.* Papers read at the Seventh International Conference on Patristic Studies. Oxford, September 8th-13th, 1975. 1977.
   ISBN 90 04 05242 9

9. Schmidt, C. (ed.). *Pistis Sophia.* Translation and notes by V. MacDermot. 1978.
   ISBN 90 04 05635 1

10. Fallon, F.T. *The enthronement of Sabaoth.* Jewish elements in Gnostic creation myths. 1978. ISBN 90 04 05683 1

11. Parrott, D.M. *Nag Hammadi Codices V, 2-5 and VI with Papyrus Berolinensis 8502, 1 and 4.* 1979. ISBN 90 04 05798 6

12. Koschorke, K. *Die Polemik der Gnostiker gegen das kirchliche Christentum.* Unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Nag Hammadi-Traktate 'Apokalypse des Petrus' (NHC VII, 3) und 'Testimonium Veritatis' (NHC IX, 3). 1978.
    ISBN 90 04 05709 9

13. Schmidt, C. (ed.). *The Books of Jeu and the untitled text in the Bruce Codex.* Translation and notes by V. MacDermot. 1978. ISBN 90 04 05754 4

14. McL. Wilson, R. (ed.). *Nag Hammadi and Gnosis.* Papers read at the First International Congress of Coptology (Cairo, December 1976). 1978.
    ISBN 90 04 05760 9

15. Pearson, B.A. (ed.). *Nag Hammadi Codices IX and X.* 1981.
    ISBN 90 04 06377 3

16. Barns, J.W.B., G.M. Browne, & J.C. Shelton, (eds.). *Nag Hammadi Codices.* Greek and Coptic papyri from the cartonnage of the covers. 1981.
    ISBN 90 04 06277 7

17. Krause, M. (ed.). *Gnosis and Gnosticism.* Papers read at the Eighth International Conference on Patristic Studies. Oxford, September 3rd-8th, 1979. 1981. ISBN 90 04 06399 4

18. Helderman, J. *Die Anapausis im Evangelium Veritatis.* Eine vergleichende Untersuchung des valentinianisch-gnostischen Heilsgutes der Ruhe im Evangelium Veritatis und in anderen Schriften der Nag-Hammadi Bibliothek. 1984.
    ISBN 90 04 07260 8

19. Frickel, J. *Hellenistische Erlösung in christlicher Deutung*. Die gnostische Naassener-schrift. Quellen, kritische Studien, Strukturanalyse, Schichtenscheidung, Re-konstruktion der Anthropos-Lehrschrift. 1984. ISBN 90 04 07227 6

20-21. Layton, B. (ed.). *Nag Hammadi Codex II, 2-7, together with XIII, 2* Brit. Lib. Or. 4926(1) and P. Oxy. 1, 654, 655*. I. Gospel according to Thomas, Gospel according to Philip, Hypostasis of the Archons, Indexes. II. On the origin of the world, Expository treatise on the Soul, Book of Thomas the Contender. 1989. 2 volumes. ISBN 90 04 09019 3

22. Attridge, H.W. (ed.). *Nag Hammadi Codex I* (The Jung Codex). I. Introductions, texts, translations, indices. 1985. ISBN 90 04 07677 8

23. Attridge, H.W. (ed.). *Nag Hammadi Codex I* (The Jung Codex). II. Notes. 1985. ISBN 90 04 07678 6

24. Stroumsa, G.A.G. *Another seed. Studies in Gnostic mythology*. 1984. ISBN 90 04 07419 8

25. Scopello, M. *L'exégèse de l'âme*. Nag Hammadi Codex II, 6. Introduction, traduction et commentaire. 1985. ISBN 90 04 07469 4

26. Emmel, S. (ed.). *Nag Hammadi Codex III, 5*. The Dialogue of the Savior. 1984. ISBN 90 04 07558 5

27. Parrott, D.M. (ed.) *Nag Hammadi Codices III, 3-4 and V, 1 with Papyrus Berolinensis 8502,3 and Oxyrhynchus Papyrus 1081*. Eugnostos and the Sophia of Jesus Christ. 1991. ISBN 90 04 08366 9

28. Hedrick, C.W. (ed.). *Nag Hammadi Codices XI, XII, XIII*. 1990. ISBN 90 04 07825 8

29. Williams, M.A. *The immovable race*. A gnostic designation and the theme of stability in Late Antiquity. 1985. ISBN 90 04 07597 6

30. Pearson, B.A. (ed.). *Nag Hammadi Codex VII*. 1996. ISBN 90 04 10451 8

31. Sieber, J.H. (ed.). *Nag Hammadi Codex VIII*. 1991. ISBN 90 04 09477 6

32. Scholer, D.M. *Nag Hammadi Bibliography 1970-1994*. 1997. ISBN 90 04 09473 3

33. Wisse, FFF. & M. Waldstein, (eds.). *The Apocryphon of John*. Synopsis of Nag Hammadi Codices II,1; III,1; and IV,1 with BG 8502,2. 1995. ISBN 90 04 10395 3

34. Lelyveld, M. *Les logia de la vie dans l'Evangile selon Thomas*. A la recherche d'une tradition et d'une rédaction. 1988. ISBN 90 04 07610 7

35. Williams, F. (Tr.). *The Panarion of Epiphanius of Salamis*. Book I (Sects 1-46). 1987. Reprint 1997. ISBN 90 04 07926 2

36. Williams, F. (Tr.). *The Panarion of Epiphanius of Salamis*. Books II and III (Sects 47-80, De Fide). 1994. ISBN 90 04 09898 4

37. Gardner, I. *The Kephalaia of the Teacher*. The Edited Coptic Manichaean Texts in Translation with Commentary. 1995. ISBN 90 04 10248 5

38. Turner, M.L. *The Gospel according to Philip*. The Sources and Coherence of an Early Christian Collection. 1996. ISBN 90 04 10443 7

39. van den Broek, R. *Studies in Gnosticism and Alexandrian Christianity*. 1996. ISBN 90 04 10654 5

40. Marjanen, A. *The Woman Jesus Loved*. Mary Magdalene in the Nag Hammadi Library and Related Documents. 1996. ISBN 90 04 10658 8

41. Reeves, J.C. *Heralds of that Good Realm*. Syro-Mesopotamian Gnosis and Jewish Traditions. 1996. ISBN 90 04 10459 3

42. Rudolph, K. *Gnosis & spätantike Religionsgeschichte*. Gesammelte Aufsätze. 1996. ISBN 90 04 10625 1

43. Mirecki, P. & J. BeDuhn, (eds.). *Emerging from Darkness*. Studies in the Recovery of Manichaean Sources. 1997. ISBN 90 04 10760 6

44. Turner, J.D. & A. McGuire, (eds.). *The Nag Hammadi Library after Fifty Years*. Proceedings of the 1995 Society of Biblical Literature Commemoration. 1997. ISBN 90 04 10824 6

45. Lieu, S.N.C. *Manichaeism in Central Asia and China*. 1998. ISBN 90 04 10405 4

46. Heuser, M & H.-J. Klimkeit. *Studies in Manichaean Literature and Art*. 1998. ISBN 90 04 10716 9

47. Zöckler, T. *Jesu Lehren im Thomasevangelium*. 1999. ISBN 90 04 11445 9

48. Petersen, S. *"Zerstört die Werke der Weiblichkeit!"*. Maria Magdalena, Salome und andere Jüngerinnen Jesu in christlich-gnostischen Schriften. 1999. ISBN 90 04 11449 1

49. Van Oort, J. , O. Wermelinger & G. Wurst (eds.). *Augustine and Manichaeism in the Latin West*. Proceedings of the Fribourg-Utrecht International Symposium of the IAMS. 2001. ISBN 90 04 11423 8

50. Mirecki, P. & J. BeDuhn (eds.). *The Light and the Darkness*. Studies in Manichaeism and its World. 2001. ISBN 90 04 11673 7

51. Williams, F.E. *Mental Perception*. A Commentary on NHC, VI,4: The Concept of Our Great Power. 2001. ISBN 90 04 11692 3

52. Pleše, Z. *The Apocryphon of John*. Narrative, Cosmology, Composition (in preparation) ISBN 90 04 11674 5

53. Scopello, M. *Femme, Gnose et manichéisme*. De l'espace mythique au territoire du réel. 2005. ISBN 90 04 11452 1

54. Bethge, H., S. Emmel, K.L. King, & I. Schletterer (eds.). *For the Children, Perfect Instruction*. Studies in Honor of Hans-Martin Schenke on the Occasion of the Berliner Arbeitskreis für koptisch-gnostische Schriften's Thirtieth Year (in preparation) ISBN 90 04 12672 4

55. Quispel, G. *Gnostica, Judaica, Catholica* (in preparation) ISBN 90 04 13945 1

56. Pedersen, N., *Demonstrative Proof in Defence of God*. A Study of Titus of Bostra's *Contra Manichaeos* – The Work's Sources, Aims and Relation to its Contemporary Theology. 2004. ISBN 90 04 13883 8

57. Gulácsi, Z. *Mediaeval Manichaean Book Art*. A Codicological Study of Iranian and Turkic Illuminated Book Fragments from 8th-11th Century East Central Asia. 2005. ISBN 90 04 13994 X

58. Luttikhuizen, G.P. *Gnostic Revisions of Genesis Stories and Early Jesus Traditions*. 2005. ISBN 90 04 14510 9

59. Asgeirsson, J.M., A.D. DeConick & R. Uro (eds.). *Thomasine Traditions in Antiquity*. The Social and Cultural World of the Gospel of Thomas. 2006. ISBN 90 04 14779 9

60. Thomassen, E., *The Spiritual Seed – The Church of the 'Valentinians'*. 2006. ISBN 90 04 14802 7