

Short Abstract
Becoming Paul, Becoming Christ: The Nag Hammadi *Apocalypse of Paul*
(NHC V,2) in Its Valentinian Context

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This thesis seeks to demonstrate the *Apocalypse of Paul's* position within the broader Valentinian literary corpus from the Nag Hammadi codices. Previous scholars, notably William Murdock and Michael Kaler, have gestured in this direction, but no attempt has been made to systematically situate the *Apocalypse of Paul* in relation to other Valentinian sources. Quite possibly this desideratum exists because although the *Apocalypse of Paul's* debt to Jewish apocalypticism is self-evident, scholars of Valentinianism have generally neglected those ideas in Valentinian literature which are derived ultimately from Judaism, often received via Paul or other New Testament writers. These would include the notion of the Name of God as a saving power, even a soteriological agent, and the image of a surrogate heavenly temple through which favoured adepts may ascend in the present. These come to be combined in Valentinian thought through a high-priestly Christology in which it is by virtue of bearing the Divine Name that one may enter this ideal temple in the fashion of the old Jewish high priest, and now Christ. On the other hand, Valentinians downgrade the biblical creator-God to the level of an imperfect demiurge, placing him in an inferior heavenly temple while supplanting the Pleroma atop him as the true spiritual temple housing the Father of Christ.

The development of this constellation of ideas is traced principally from Valentinus himself, through the *Gospel of Truth* and the *Excerpts from Theodotus*, to the *Gospel of Philip*, where it receives its most extensive explication. It is argued that the *Apocalypse of Paul* consciously builds on this intellectual current using the apostle's image in order to construct an ideal authoritative account of how such ascent ought to appear among

Valentinian initiates and thereby contribute to the rhetorical and psychological construction of future experiences among the elect community.

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This thesis seeks to trace the development of certain themes in Valentinian literature which also appear in the Nag Hammadi *Apocalypse of Paul*, and to therefore establish the latter's place within the broader Valentinian literary corpus. The first such theme is that of the Divine Name as a soteriological power or agent. The theme is virtually ubiquitous across Valentinian sources and is rightly acknowledged as perhaps *the* central motif in Valentinian soteriology. It represents the mytheme through which Valentinians were able to connect matters of theology, Christology, salvation history, ritual, and eschatology. The second such theme is that of the surrogate heavenly temple through which favoured adepts may ascend already in the present. Unlike the Divine Name, this aspect of Valentinianism has been largely neglected in previous scholarship, albeit with some notable exceptions. Valentinians adopted the image from apocalyptic Judaism and adapted it in various ways to polemically distinguish the true God – the Father of Christ – from the inferior demiurge. These two images could be combined via a high-priestly Christology in which Christ reveals the path for his elect into the true heavenly temple by virtue of his endowment with the Divine Name (e.g. Phil 2:5-11; Heb 1:3-4).

Part I of the thesis analyses the development of this constellation of ideas from Valentinus himself, through the *Gospel of Truth* and the *Excerpts from Theodotus*, to the *Gospel of Philip*, where it receives its greatest articulation. Chapter 1 examines Valentinus's concept of the saving Divine Name in Fragments 1 and 5 of his surviving writings. Fragment 1 describes how Adam was capable of receiving the divine Glory on account of his being created "in the (Divine) Name", but had his glorious condition spoilt by the hostile creator

angels, while Fragment 5 describes how humans may now be assimilated to this Glory in the present by virtue of receiving the Name once more in the fashion of Jesus. Chapter 2 looks at the *Gospel of Truth*'s notion that "the Name of the Father is the Son", whereby the Divine Name is said to have been hypostatized in the person of Christ. Insofar as the *Gospel of Truth* regards the elect as having an innate share in the divine substance, this may be actualized through one's reception of the Divine Name at an anointment ceremony. The chapter outlines the ways in which the *Gospel of Truth* expresses this soteriological dynamic through the metaphor of "the Living Book of the Living", but also describes the mystical experiences of God's "rest" which are said to be available to those who have received their share of the Divine Name.

Chapter 3 then analyses the power of the Divine Name in the *Excerpts from Theodotus* preserved by Clement of Alexandria, where it is variously articulated via protology, Christology, ecclesiology, ritual, and eschatology. Particular attention is paid to the *Excerpts from Theodotus* 38, which appears to be the earliest Valentinian reference to an inferior demiurgic heavenly temple situated beneath and outside the Pleroma. The demiurge is depicted in the fashion of the enthroned YHWH, with angels serving him in the fashion of the Jerusalem priesthood. But this temple is excluded from the truly divine realm which is supplanted above it. Only Christ can provide access to the Pleroma, and only to those who have been endowed with γνῶσις through instruction, and the Divine Name through baptism-anointment. Chapter 4 comes to the *Gospel of Philip* in which these different elements receive their most developed exposition and are combined to devastating polemical effect. The Pleroma is itself now identified as a spiritual temple transcending the merely psychic heavenly temple of the demiurge beneath it; Christ is identified as the ideal high-priest who shall lead his "priestly tribe" within the veil of the Pleroma at the Eschaton; while candidates are said to "become Christs" via the initiation rites of baptism-anointment through which they

enter Christ's priesthood, receiving and bearing the Name in the manner of the new high-priest, Christ. But most importantly, just as at his election in the Jordan Christ became the spiritual high-priest who shall lead his seed into the temple of the Pleroma, so too do the rites of initiation in which the Divine Name is bestowed upon the neophyte now constitute a ritualized temple in the image of the Pleroma itself. To undergo Valentinian initiation is depicted as a transformative visionary experience of advancing through a ritualized temple – “the duplicate bridal chamber” – as a prefiguration of the eschatological restoration in the Pleroma. Conversely, those who fail to construct this ritualized temple correctly – by improperly performing the rites of initiation – also fail to become true Christians, and instead remain as “Hebrews” continuing to ignorantly serve the demiurge and his temple cult in the manner of the Jewish priesthood.

Part II of the thesis then seeks to locate the *Apocalypse of Paul* within the broader Valentinian tradition in light of these intermingled currents. Chapter 5 introduces the narrative itself, the text's use of the apocalyptic genre, and the author's use of both biblical and non-biblical sources. It then considers some of the objections which have previously been levelled against the text's Valentinian provenance. I am particularly critical of the judgement that “Valentinians did not write apocalypses”, since it rather uncritically imposes an *a priori* restriction upon an entire subgroup of early Christians who are known to have experimented with a range of literary methods. Such a position leaves no room to work should a Valentinian apocalypse come to light, or indeed if one has already been discovered but its ideological origins remain unknown.

Chapter 6 proceeds to an interpretation of the *Apocalypse of Paul* itself, demonstrating that many of its more inscrutable elements become more vivid, comprehensible, and internally coherent when understood in light of the Valentinian

doctrines outlined in Part I. In particular, I show that the rather distinctive soteriological dynamics of the Divine Name in Valentinianism shed great light on three hitherto poorly understood elements of the narrative: 1) the “sign” that Paul shows to the demiurge in the seventh heaven in order to gain access to the spiritual realm; 2) the enigmatic figures of the “toll-collectors” who are stationed at the gates of heaven to hinder the progress of ascending souls; and 3) the “Mountain of Jericho” upon which Paul is said to begin his ascent, but which does not in fact exist. In each case, these puzzling images are shown to be explicable against a Valentinian backdrop in which the Divine Name affects an ontological transformation and a new soteriological status in relation to the demiurge and his powers. The Valentinian character of multiple other elements of the *Apocalypse of Paul* is also recommended. Perhaps most notable is the demiurge, who sits enthroned in a psychic temple beneath a three-tiered spiritual realm as in the *Gospel of Philip*, or less so the *Excerpts from Theodotus*.

Finally, Chapter 7 looks at how the apostle Paul is presented as an ideal figure in the *Apocalypse of Paul*, specifically in his visionary and missionary roles. These roles are compared to those expected of ordinary Valentinians in cognate literature, thereby showing that the apocalypse’s portrait of Paul is carefully designed so as to present a model to which ordinary Valentinians may aspire and follow. Firstly, his visionary ascent may be construed as an ideal narrativization of the sort of experience of initiation laid out in the *Gospel of Philip* in which performance of the rites is said to prefigure an entry into the temple of the Pleroma above that of the enthroned demiurge. Secondly, in articulating Paul’s future mission to “those taken captive in the captivity of Babylon”, the *Apocalypse of Paul* alludes to Christ’s saving work in Ephesians 4:8 and thereby casts Paul in the mould of a second Christ. This not only fed into the Valentinian image of Paul as “a type of the Paraclete” from the *Excerpts from Theodotus* 23.2, but also reinforced the image of Paul as the ideal Valentinian,

since it was also their goal to “become Christs” through a combination of instruction and ritual. In other words, from a Valentinian perspective to become like Paul was to become like Christ. The apostle therefore represented the ideal pseudepigraphical foil for a Valentinian literary apocalypse in which the protagonist was to be understood as the archetypal believer. The chapter concludes by tentatively recommending a catechetical context for the reading of the *Apocalypse of Paul*, where it would have functioned as preparatory material for discussion and reflection in anticipation of the candidates’ own experiences of initiation.

It is hoped that the thesis advanced here, formulated in strong terms and defended systematically, will force scholars of Valentinianism, Gnosticism, and early Christianity more generally to critically engage the notion of the *Apocalypse of Paul* as a Valentinian text and incorporate it into broader considerations of this important current of early Christian heterodoxy. It also makes a significant contribution to the reception history of a) Paul – his theology and image – and b) ideas which were formative to early Jewish mysticism. How these two spheres were understood and appropriated in early Christianity, especially gnostic Christianity, is still poorly understood. The *Apocalypse of Paul* is therefore shown to stand out as an example of how different intellectual and religious currents could be interpreted, synthesised, and incorporated into new rhetorical and devotional contexts.

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A Thesis Presented to the Faculty of Theology and Religion
University of Oxford
In Candidacy for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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September 2015

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A Note on Translations

For the New Testament, I have used the NRSV except where noted. All references to the Old Testament are to the LXX – translations are my own unless otherwise noted. All translations of Coptic sources from Nag Hammadi are my own except where noted. Coptic text is based on the BCNH editions where available, or otherwise the CGL editions. Translations of Jewish apocrypha are derived from the *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha* (ed. Charlesworth), as noted. For patristic sources, translations are my own unless noted *ad loc.* Abbreviations are according to the *The SBL Handbook of Style*.

Acknowledgements

I first came across the concept of “Gnosticism” in 2009 when reading Morton Smith’s *The Secret Gospel* and quickly ordered a copy of *The Nag Hammadi Library*. Thumbing through the contents, I was delighted to find a “Gospel of Truth” – a promising title indeed. Having spent an entire afternoon struggling, I came to the conclusion that this title was something of a misnomer – and I’m not referring to the “gospel” part. This could easily have turned me off “Gnosticism” for good, but instead it stoked my curiosity for the apparently inscrutable and obscurantist world of these “Gnostics” and set me on the path to the present rather humble offering. But of course, one’s own curiosity alone is never enough to sustain this kind of project in the long-term. Rather, the collective resources of family, friends, and colleagues are also required throughout.

First of all, my sincere thanks go to my supervisor, Mark Edwards. He has been an accommodating and insightful force in this project since its inception. His erudition coupled with his unusual (for a Brit) familiarity with all things “Gnostic” has significantly aided my efforts. Secondly, to my friends and teachers at the University of Amsterdam, especially Wouter Hanegraaff and Peter Forshaw. It was for Wouter’s class in 2010 that I first discovered the *Apocalypse of Paul* – I hope he can still detect his influence in what follows. Between them, they epitomise what it is to be a professor and continue to devote a disproportionate amount of their time to their former students. And of course, to Dan Levene at Southampton, who so agreeably oversaw my first forays into the world of Valentinianism as an undergraduate. Thanks also to Tuomas Rasimus, Michael Kaler, André Gagné, Jörgen Magnusson, and many others for supplying stimulating conversation surrounding my thesis over the last few years, but particularly Dylan Burns, who has never failed to go beyond the call of duty in guiding me into the academic community. Further, a debt of gratitude is owed to Einar Thomassen, not just for his foundational work, but for kindly extending to me an invitation to the October 2013 conference on Valentinianism in Rome. The opportunity to rub shoulders and exchange ideas with so many of the field’s leading lights was immeasurably helpful – for a young graduate student, the final lunch spent in conversation with Einar, Louis Painchaud, and Harold Attridge is one I shall not soon forget. And finally, thanks go to my Coptic tutor Gesa Schenke and my classmates for their laughter and no small amount of patience.

But as important and enlivening as such encounters may be, the mind cannot survive on academic chat alone. In this vein, my debt to Ed Nemesanyi, Dan Box, and Stacey Blocksidge cannot be measured in books read, translations made, or chapters written, but only in what sanity I have left. Whether they like to consider themselves responsible for its preservation or its degradation, their company and humour have been more vital than they know.

Further, words cannot express the depth of my gratitude to my family, but most of all to my parents, Deborah and Graham. Without their support this project would never have been possible at any stage. Any shred of intellect or skill exhibited in this study is derived ultimately from them. Lastly, a nod of appreciation to Addeys everywhere, but above all to my partner Rebecca. I met her during our first week as undergraduates and she has shared the journey ever since. Suffice to say I couldn't have done it without her – it's amazing how the despairing drone of *Made in Chelsea* can impel one to pursue a proper career with renewed vigour. But all jokes aside, the following pages are the fruits of her labour as much as mine, and although she may not find them especially appetizing, I hope she recognises them as hers.

Introduction

Nag Hammadi, “Gnosticism”, and “Valentinianism”

Scholars remain divided regarding how to classify the heterogeneous contents of the Coptic codices discovered near Nag Hammadi in Upper Egypt in 1945.¹ Nonetheless, there has been widespread agreement that their contents radically improve our primary data for so-called “Gnosticism”. The category has traditionally been construed in one of two ways in scholarship: 1) onomatologically – that is, a person, group, or source which self-identifies as *γνωστικός* constitutes an example of “Gnosticism”; or 2) typologically – that is, a person, group, or source which satisfies certain criteria constitutes an example of “Gnosticism”.² In recent years however, the validity and utility of this category for historical analyses has been subjected to enormous scrutiny. In 1996, Michael Williams’s *Rethinking “Gnosticism”: An Argument for Dismantling a Dubious Category* presented a stinging deconstruction of the category in light of these two scholarly approaches.³ Concerning the onomatological approach, Williams demonstrated that the term *γνωστικός* is rarely used as a self-designation among those sources which are usually designated as “Gnostic”. Conversely, those sources which do use *γνωστικός* as a self-designation are rarely considered under the rubric of “Gnosticism”, with Clement of Alexandria representing the classic case.⁴ Concerning the typological approach, Williams argued that the nature and content of the sources traditionally

¹ E.g. Meyer (2007), 777-798 provides an epilogue entitled “Schools of Thought in the Nag Hammadi Scriptures” which is divided into sections on 1) “Thomas Christianity”, 2) “The Sethian School of Gnostic Thought”, 3) “The Valentinian School of Gnostic Thought”, and 4) “Hermetic Religion”. Of course, there is no pretence that these four labels adequately cover all fifty-two texts contained in the manuscripts.

² The precise features of this typological “Gnosticism” have been variously delineated; e.g. Jonas (1963), 34-37, 42-47; idem. (1967); Rudolph (1983), 53-59; Marksches (2003), 16-17; Pearson (2005); Marjanen (2008), 210-211; van den Broek (2013), 3. For a good overview of these approaches, see Marjanen (2008).

³ Of course, Williams was not the first to cast doubt on “Gnosticism” as a category. See e.g. Wisse (1983).

⁴ Williams (1996), 31-43; also Smith (1981).

identified as “Gnostic” are too various to be categorized together and that by interpreting them through the lens of a monolithic typological “Gnosticism”, certain features are projected onto sources which do not in fact exhibit them. The result has been to artificially homogenize a collection of quite diverse materials and thereby do damage to the texts themselves as discrete historical artefacts.⁵ Consequently, Williams advocates abandoning the category of “Gnosticism” altogether.⁶

More recently, Karen King’s *What is Gnosticism?* exposes how a good deal of modern scholarship on “Gnosticism” has mistakenly reified as historical reality a polemical construct designed by the ancient heresiologists as a means of defining themselves as “true” Christians over against a heretical “Other”. In mistaking a rhetorical device for historical reality, scholars have inadvertently reinforced the polemical agenda of hostile witnesses like Irenaeus, Tertullian, and Epiphanius.⁷

Although the results of this period of scholarly self-reflection are still unclear, what is clear is that nearly twenty years on from Williams’s critique, the term “Gnosticism” is far from discarded. Rather, the effect of all this theoretical wrangling seems to be that scholars now more clearly demarcate what they mean with the term “Gnosticism” and its cognates. On the other hand, even if such improvements in scholarly nuance and accuracy have only occurred as a result of an increasing awareness of the controversy and ambiguity of the category, it still represents a net gain.

For my part, I consider the distinction between the onomatological and typological approaches to be something of a false dichotomy that is simply in need of further nuance. Insofar as the onomatological approach seeks to identify and study those who designated

⁵ Williams (1996), 43-50.

⁶ See also Williams (2005); Desjardins (2005); Lundhaug (2010), 18-19.

⁷ See King (2003); eadem. (2005).

themselves using the substantive adjective γνωστικός or γνωστικοί (“Gnostic/Gnostics”), we are dealing with “Gnostic” as a noun referring to particular people and movements. On the other hand, insofar as the typological approach wishes to group certain sources together for further analysis and comparison on the basis of shared features, we are dealing with “gnostic” as an adjective which describes certain traits among people and their literary products. I see no reason why one ought to be preferred over the other, nor why either ought to be abandoned as opposed to constructed in a more heuristically useful manner. Therefore, in this thesis I use the noun “Gnostic” to refer to those people and groups that authors like Irenaeus⁸ and Porphyry⁹ would have us believe used it as a self-designation, that is, adherents of Layton’s “Classic Gnosticism”,¹⁰ or Schenke’s or Turner’s “Sethian Gnosticism”.¹¹ I also acknowledge the many virtues of Rasimus’s recent division of “Classic Gnosticism” into the subsections of “Barbeloite”, “Ophite”, and “Sethian” literature.¹² Indeed, Rasimus’s demarcation of these three distinct strands of Gnosticism obviates many of the objections regarding how the category “Gnosticism” incorrectly implies a monolithic system and instead stakes out a more sensitive method for appreciating and analysing the great historical diversity captured within a single scholarly construct. But on the other hand, this thesis also uses the adjective “gnostic” to describe those sources which bear a typological relation to Gnostic texts and thought. I prefer to construe this typological relationship in a quite minimalistic manner, consisting of 1) the belief that the world was created by an inferior demiurge, and 2) the belief that some or all humans contain a spark of divine substance and

⁸ Irenaeus, *Haer.* I 11.1; 25.6; 29.1.

⁹ Porphyry, *Vit. Plot.* 16; cf. Origen, *Cels.* V 61; Plotinus, *Enn.* 2.9 (33).

¹⁰ See Layton (1987), 5-22; idem. (1995); and see now Brakke (2010). Use of the term “Gnostic” to identify this tradition, or set of mythologoumena, has a strong precedent in addition to Layton and Brakke; e.g. Edwards (1989); Logan (1996).

¹¹ E.g. Schenke (1981); Turner (1986); idem. (2001).

¹² Rasimus (2009).

that if they become aware of this – through γνῶσις – they have the potential to return to the divine realm after death.¹³

According to this nomenclature, the principal subject of this thesis – Valentinianism – can be described as “gnostic”, while Valentinians should *not* be identified as “Gnostics”. In other words, I would describe Valentinianism as an example of “gnostic Christianity”, but not as an example of “Gnosticism”. Unlike the category “Gnosticism”, “Valentinianism” has not been a source of such controversy among scholars. Indeed, even Michael Williams states:

It still makes sense, for example, to speak of something called “Valentinianism”, as a subtradition within the broader early Christian tradition. There will be debates about the degree to which this or that document is really “Valentinian”. But that there was a Valentinus or a Ptolemy no one denies, and doctrinal continuities can be traced between figures such as Ptolemy and other Valentinian teachers, or between these teachers and certain Nag Hammadi tractates.¹⁴

The fact that scholars know the names and certain biographical details not only of Valentinus, but also a host of his alleged followers, lends a good deal of credence to the notion that Valentinians represent a distinctive group within early Christianity.¹⁵ According to Irenaeus writing c.180 CE, “Valentinus came to Rome under Hyginus, flourished under Pius, and remained until the time of Anicetus”,¹⁶ meaning that Valentinus was active in Rome between c.136-160.¹⁷ Indeed, already around 155, Justin Martyr was able to identify a particular group of Christians as οἱ Οὐαλεντιναιοὶ (“the Valentinians”).¹⁸ Justin is clear that the term is not a self-designation, but rather a pejorative label used to highlight the recent and human origins of their teachings, despite the fact that they prefer to “call themselves Christians”.¹⁹ Indeed, no “Valentinian” source identifies itself or its textual community using this epithet, but rather they prefer to speak of themselves in sectarian terms such as “the spiritual seed” (τὸ

¹³ This is essentially the typology of Marjanen (2008), 210-211.

¹⁴ Williams (1996), 51; cf. Tite (2009), 12-15.

¹⁵ On the various figures labelled “Valentinian” in early Christian literature, see Thomassen (2006a), 494-508.

¹⁶ Irenaeus, *Haer.* III 4.3.

¹⁷ On Valentinus’s biography more generally, see Thomassen (2006a), 417-429.

¹⁸ Justin Martyr, *Dial.* 35.6.

¹⁹ Justin Martyr, *Dial.* 35.6; cf. Irenaeus, *Haer.* I Pref.2; Tertullian, *Val.* 4.1.

πνευματικὸν σπέρμα), “the distinct seed” (τὸ διαφέρον σπέρμα), “the elect” (ἡ ἐκλογή or ὁ ἐκλεκτός), or most frequently, simply as ἡ ἐκκλησία. But although the term “Valentinian” is not used as a self-designation in the ancient sources, the use of such ethnic and sectarian titles suggests some kind of corporate identity for which the terms “Valentinian” and “Valentinianism” may legitimately be used by modern scholars. Indeed, we may even speak of a “Valentinian identity” or “Valentinian consciousness” during the second and third centuries, even if this self-consciousness was not articulated in the language of “Valentinianism”.²⁰

However, the fact that no Nag Hammadi text identifies itself explicitly as “Valentinian” is highly problematic, since their discovery has so often been heralded as that of “primary” evidence “straight from the horse’s mouth” which can now supplement the “secondary” reports of the heresiologists with which previous generations of scholars were forced to work. But as Desjardins points out, our picture of Valentinianism is entirely shaped by those heresiological reports, since they alone are explicit in identifying their portraits as those of Valentinians. It is only thanks to these heresiological portraits that we have some idea of what a Valentinian text ought to look like and can thereby make informed guesses as to which Nag Hammadi texts ought to be classified as “Valentinian”. In other words, “the ‘primary sources’ are only primary insofar as one accepts the claims made in the ‘secondary sources’.”²¹ This is no doubt a methodological problem. However, it is somewhat mitigated by the fact that despite his polemical flourishes, the substance of Irenaeus’s depictions of his opponents in *Haer.* I has been largely vindicated by the Nag Hammadi discovery, as opposed to being finally exposed as injurious misrepresentations. To this extent, the claims made in

²⁰ Marksches (1997a), 432 states that “one will hardly be able to deny the fact of a ... ‘Valentinian consciousness’” on the grounds that certain heresiologists ascribe their opponents membership in “the school of Valentinus”. Cf. Wisse (1971), 218.

²¹ Desjardins (1986), 343.

this “secondary source” ought to be treated as “acceptable” and a reasonably sound basis on which to proceed in identifying Valentinian texts among the Nag Hammadi codices.

That being said, Irenaeus does not provide any “smoking gun” with which to identify those texts which are the products of Valentinianism. Rather, in *Haer.* I 1-21, Irenaeus purports to catalogue the various systems promulgated by Valentinus’s followers: Ptolemy and his followers (1.1-8.5; 12.1-2);²² Valentinus himself (11.1); Secundus (11.2); Colorbasus and his followers (12.3-4); and Marcus and his followers (13.1-21.5). Taken collectively, these reports offer information on Valentinian theology, protology, cosmogony, cosmology, Christology, anthropology, ecclesiology, ritual, soteriology, and eschatology. In providing such a comprehensive overview, Irenaeus is at pains to stress the enormous variety – and therefore disagreement – which characterises the Valentinians, as opposed to the unity which characterises “true” faith. However, this same variety means that the use of such reports to identify Valentinian texts among the Nag Hammadi codices becomes an inexact science, since there is no archetypal system which can be used as a yardstick. Some cases are of course easier than others; the emanationist Pleromatology of Aeons in *Val. Exp.* (NHC XI,2) is sufficiently close to those of Irenaeus’s Valentinians – particularly that ascribed to Valentinus himself in *Haer.* I 11.1 – that the text’s Valentinianism is all but certain.²³ However, of all supposedly Valentinian texts from Nag Hammadi, it is only *Val. Exp.* which

²² On the question of whether Irenaeus, *Haer.* I 1.1-8.5 really reflects the views of “those around Ptolemy” (Pref.2; τῶν περὶ Πτολεμαῖον) on account of the words *et Ptolomaeus quidem ita* (“thus, then, Ptolemy”) only appearing in a fourth-century Latin version of *Haer.* I 8.5, but not in Epiphanius’s Greek copy (*Pan.* XXXI 9-32), see Marksches (2000), 249-252; Dunderberg (2008), 198; cf. Rasimus (2010), 166-169.

²³ See Thomassen (2006a), 231-241. Older scholarship tended to assume that Irenaeus, *Haer.* I 11.1 represents an accurate portrait of Valentinus’s thought; e.g. Foerster (1928), 97-98; Sagnard (1947), 222-232; Quispel (1947); Layton (1987), 223-227. However, this was already questioned by Heinrici (1871), 41-42, and has now been more extensively critiqued in Marksches (1992), 364-379; and Thomassen (2006a), 23-27. Thomassen particularly draws on Tertullian, *Val.* 4.2 to substantiate his position. Tertullian claims that unlike his pupil Ptolemy, Valentinus did not conceive of the Aeons as distinct hypostases in the Pleroma – as Irenaeus, *Haer.* I 11.1 suggests – but rather as cognitive faculties existing within the mind of God. Given that Tertullian is often inclined to follow Irenaeus quite slavishly, his digression on this point carries additional weight.

expounds this distinctive protology of a thirty-Aeon Pleroma described by Irenaeus and his heresiological successors.

In reality however, we are not solely reliant on such heresiological reports for determining which Nag Hammadi texts relate to Valentinianism. For among the heresiologists, Clement of Alexandria and Hippolytus reproduce fragments of Valentinus's writings, Clement of Alexandria claims to provide several excerpts from Theodotus and other Valentinians in his *Excerpta ex Theodoto*, Origen's commentary on the Gospel of John includes a host of passages from Heracleon's writings, and Epiphanius reproduces a letter from Ptolemy to a prospective student named Flora.²⁴ Although we are of course reliant once more on the heresiologists for the Valentinian identity of these figures, these scattered fragments of original writings can themselves be utilised in the classification of other literature as "Valentinian". Between these original works and the heresiological reports, scholars are furnished with a range of different literary products – systematic, exegetical, pedagogical, and liturgical. Again, although none of these represent an archetypal yardstick for measuring a text's Valentinianism, between them they facilitate scholarly attempts to discern a work's Valentinian connections on the basis of "family resemblance". Of course, this is still an inexact science because the Valentinian "family" did not emerge in a cultural vacuum, but rather as part of the broader Christian environment in the second and third centuries and therefore itself bears many resemblances to other contemporary groups between whom the intellectual and cultural boundaries are known to have been quite porous.

This situation no doubt explains the enduring disagreements among scholars as to which Nag Hammadi texts ought to be characterised as "Valentinian", with *Pr. Paul* (NHC

²⁴ Epiphanius, *Pan.* XXXI 5-6 also contains a Valentinian "Letter of Instruction", on which see Thomassen (2006a), 218-230.

I,1) and *I Apoc. Jas.* (NHC V,3) representing the most enduring boundary cases.²⁵ On the other hand, seventy years after their discovery, and after decades of scholarly effort using the above concept of “family resemblance” to detect ideological correspondences, a general consensus may now be said to exist regarding the Valentinian character of the following: *Gos. Truth* (NHC I,3/XII,2); *Treat. Res.* (NHC I,4); *Tri. Trac.* (NHC I,5); *Gos. Phil.* (NHC II,3); *Interp. Know.* (NHC XI,1); and *Val. Exp.* (NHC XI,2). Along with the various heresiological reports and original Valentinian writings preserved therein, it is these six Nag Hammadi tractates that form the basis for Einar Thomassen’s magisterial work of 2006, *The Spiritual Seed: The Church of the ‘Valentinians’*.

Einar Thomassen and the Valentinians

Although it is impossible to give a comprehensive appraisal of Thomassen’s *The Spiritual Seed* in all its exhaustive detail, it is worth trying to place it in the broader context of related research, since recent years have seen an upsurge in studies on Valentinianism on account of the Nag Hammadi discoveries. However, some of the most important research has in fact concerned those personalities and sources known long before 1945, particularly Christoph Marksches’s 1992 *Valentinus Gnostic?*, Niclas Förster’s 1999 *Marcus Magus*, and Ansgar Wucherpfennig’s 2002 *Heracleon Philologus*. Of course, these studies incorporate material from Nag Hammadi, but none can be said to amount to an exhaustive analysis of “Valentinianism” as a belief system. Indeed, prior to Thomassen’s *The Spiritual Seed*, it was not since François Sagnard’s 1947 *La gnose valentinienne* that any scholar had attempted to give a systematic analysis of all known Valentinian material. Of course, in 1947 the Nag

²⁵ See Desjardins (1986), 342 n.4 for an overview of some of these boundary cases. Green (1982), 111 provides perhaps the most optimistic of any list of Valentinian works from Nag Hammadi. In addition to these two boundary cases and the six others listed below, Green includes *Ap. Jas.* (NHC I,2); *Exeg. Soul* (NHC II,6); *Auth. Teach.* (NHC VI,3); *Treat. Seth* (NHC VII,2). If Green’s list was correct, then this would mean over a quarter of the tractates discovered at Nag Hammadi were Valentinian. However, as Green acknowledges, few would agree with this list in its entirety.

Hammadi codices had yet to reach the hands of scholars, and so Sagnard's still-indispensable study instead covered the heresiological evidence on Valentinianism, the surviving fragments of Valentinus's writings, Ptolemy's *Letter to Flora*, the *Excerpta ex Theodoto*, and the fragments of Heracleon's commentary on John. Thomassen therefore sought to provide an updated analysis of the Valentinian "system(s)" in light of the Nag Hammadi find.

Thomassen analyses the various Valentinian systems in terms of their common metaphysics of unity and plurality; that is, the protological division of the unified godhead which ultimately led to the creation of the world and humans, the archetypal restoration of this unity through the Saviour-Christ, and the realization of this unity among the Valentinians both individually and collectively through ritual initiation as a prefiguration of the eschatological ἀποκατάστασις. In discussing the different soteriological dynamics involved in these narratives, Thomassen adopts the language of "Eastern" and "Western" Valentinianism from Hippolytus's notion of a schism between two different Valentinian διδασκαλῖαι, the ἀνατολική and the Ἰταλιωτική.²⁶ According to Hippolytus, this divide is founded upon different Christologies; the Western or "Italian" branch – identified with Heracleon and Ptolemy – taught that Jesus had a psychic body which became endowed with Spirit at baptism when the dove descended upon him. In this manner, Jesus was raised from death to life. On the other hand, the Eastern branch – typified by Axionicus and "Ardesianes" (Ἀρδησιάνης)²⁷ in Antioch – is said to have taught that the Saviour had a spiritual body which was then "formed" (διαπλασθῆ) in Mary's womb. For Thomassen however, this disagreement is merely the Christological dimension of a more fundamental distinction between different Valentinian soteriologies of "mutual participation" – the idea that the

²⁶ Hippolytus, *Haer.* VI 35.5-7; cf. Tertullian, *Val.* 11.2 similarly reports a split between two Valentinian *scholae* or *cathedrae*, but does not identify these with "East" and "West", nor does he explain the cause of the schism (*per* Thomassen (2006a), 39 n.2; cf. Kalvesmaki (2008), 87-88). The title attached to *Exc.* also mentions "the so-called Eastern teaching" (τῆς ἀνατολικῆς καλουμένης διδασκαλίας).

²⁷ On this figure, see Thomassen (2006a), 503.

Saviour takes on the condition of those he came to save and in doing so provides the model for their salvation, for they can now exchange their material mode of existence for a spiritual mode of existence following the example of Christ.²⁸ According to “Eastern” Valentinianism, the Saviour had a pneumatic body – or rather, the pneumatic Saviour took on a fleshly body – because the spiritual substance which was dispersed in the cosmos was that which he came to save. Conversely according to “Western” Valentinianism, the Saviour had a psychic body – or rather, the psychic Saviour took on a fleshly body – because it was the “psychics” which he came to save. Hence in patristic reports on “Western” Valentinians like Ptolemy, the pneumatics are said to be “saved by nature” (φύσει σωζόμενον); they must obviously still have a share in salvation, but since they are no longer the objects of the Saviour’s redemptive work an alternative justification is required – their spiritual consubstantiality with God.²⁹ Significantly, Thomassen concludes that all six Valentinian texts from Nag Hammadi – or those he regards as Valentinian – represent “Eastern” Valentinianism.

Thomassen’s study has been foundational to subsequent scholarship on Valentinianism. But of course, not everything Thomassen proposes is without challenge. For example, Thomassen appears to have adopted the language of “Eastern” and “Western” Valentinianism from the heresiologists, who use it primarily to stress Valentinian division in contrast to the unity of the “true” church. While Thomassen demonstrates that there was indeed significant variety in Valentinian teachings, and even that this variety can be broadly categorised within two closely related systems of soteriology, I am unconvinced that these

²⁸ See *ibid.* 52-58. Thomassen (43-45) in fact argues that although Hippolytus is correct that this Christological schism existed in Valentinianism, his description of the “Eastern” teaching in *Haer.* VI 35.7 is in fact just another version of the “Western” teaching, since the spiritual Saviour’s “formation” in the womb of Mary most likely refers to the Saviour’s reception of a psychic component from the demiurge. Hence, according to Thomassen, Hippolytus merely describes “an internal difference within the western school ... 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.”

²⁹ E.g. Irenaeus, *Haer.* I 6.2; *Exc.* 56.3; *Tri. Trac.* NHC I,5 118.14-122.12. See now Thomassen (2013c); Dunderberg (2013).

distinctions can justifiably be labelled as “Eastern” and “Western”. Irenaeus mocks the Valentinians for their intellectual disagreements, but he never intimates that these differences manifested themselves geographically. Tertullian speaks of *duae scholae* of Valentinianism, but never suggests an East-West divide. This geographical language, plus Thomassen’s conviction that the Valentinian documents of Nag Hammadi all represent “Eastern” Valentinianism, may unduly imply that we know something of these texts’ geographical provenance, or that certain areas in the Christian world ought to be ruled out as possibilities. In fact, no authors, dates, or places are known for any of *Gos. Truth, Treat. Res., Tri. Trac., Gos. Phil., Interp. Know.,* or *Val. Exp.*, so to label them all as “Eastern” seems misleading.³⁰ Indeed, Thomassen argues that Heracleon’s soteriology of mutual participation is that of “Eastern” Valentinianism,³¹ yet he defers to Hippolytus’s identification of Heracleon as a teacher of “Western” Valentinian doctrine. He suggests that this is explicable because “Eastern” Valentinian doctrine is more primitive than its “Western” counterpart, and Heracleon may simply have remained “closer to that more primitive form than did other representatives of the western branch.”³² Of course, one can teach “Eastern” religious ideas in a “Western” locale, but given that we know so little of the biographies of these Valentinian leaders and the transmission histories of the literature they may have produced, we would perhaps be better served by abandoning the language of “Eastern” and “Western”.

Further, it seems just as likely that the different soteriological dynamics that Thomassen so clearly delineates are the result of considerations such as literary genre or audience, in which the notion of psychic salvation would have been useful in more public contexts in which some degree of rapprochement or ecumenism may have been sought with other Christians, for example. Indeed, the so-called “Western” Valentinian system described

³⁰ See the critical remarks in Kalvesmaki (2008), e.g. 89: “The geography of Valentinianism is too muddled to serve as the starting point for establishing the taxonomy of Valentinianism.” Cf. Tite (2009), 13-14.

³¹ Thomassen (2006a), 103-118.

³² *Ibid.* 118.

by Irenaeus in *Haer.* I 1-8 is – according to Irenaeus (I Pref.2) – that which he has derived from reading the ὑπομνήματα/*commentarii* which these “disciples of Valentinus” are said to have personally shared with him. It is plausible that in sharing some of their ideas and writings with Irenaeus, these Valentinians selected those that were less overtly hostile or elitist towards non-initiates, and hence the system Irenaeus describes does indeed hold out the hope of salvation to psychic Christians. In this case, the soteriological dynamics say nothing of geographical provenances, but may rather suggest a particular rhetorical context.

A second matter of controversy in *The Spiritual Seed* concerns the relationship between Valentinus and those who came to be labelled as “Valentinians” by their opponents. In his 1992 *Valentinus Gnostic?*, Markschies sought to situate Valentinus’s thought in the context of the Alexandrian theological tradition between Philo and Clement, and argued instead that the Pleromatic myth with which “Valentinians” came to be associated among the heresiologists was not the invention of the nominal heresiarch, but rather his followers, most likely Ptolemy. More recently, Markschies has argued that the mythological system reported in Irenaeus’s *Haer.* I 1-8 – a similar version of which is ascribed to Valentinus in *Haer.* I 11.1 – is not the innovation of Ptolemy and his followers either, but rather “the disciples of Valentinus” (Οὐαλεντίνου μαθητῶν).³³ Either way, such “Valentinianism” and its gnostic inclination did not belong to Valentinus’s own teaching, which was instead oriented towards the type of biblical Platonism witnessed by Philo and Clement.

Thomassen ripostes that “we cannot rest content with an interpretation of [Valentinus] that almost entirely separates him from the movement of which he was, after all, the founder.”³⁴ By interpreting the fragments of Valentinus’s writings in light of later Valentinian and gnostic literature – a methodology which Markschies eschews, but which Thomassen

³³ Markschies (2000), 249-252.

³⁴ Thomassen (2006a), 3-4.

regards as “the most natural hermeneutical context for their interpretation”³⁵ – Thomassen seeks to uncover multiple themes within the fragments which indicate significant continuity between Valentinus and his alleged followers.³⁶ As I hope to show in this thesis, especially Part 1, it is certainly the case that many of the ideas found in the fragments of Valentinus’s writings appear in later Valentinian texts, and that these ideas are sufficiently idiosyncratic to indicate some level of continuity or dependence. However, Thomassen’s – admittedly tentative – suggestion that Valentinus’s teachings ought to be discerned as “the lowest common denominator of the various attested Valentinian systems and preserved texts” surely goes too far in the other direction.³⁷ While I am reticent to disclose my own position on this spectrum between Marksches and Thomassen too precisely, I daresay that I am closer to that of Thomassen insofar as I do not see any fundamental incongruity between Valentinus and later Valentinians. However, it would be foolhardy to state this too boldly in light of both the very slim source base for Valentinus’s thought, and the apparent propensity for originality among later Valentinians teachers.

Finally, the element of Thomassen’s study (and his oeuvre generally) to which this thesis seeks to offer a corrective is his oversight of many of the Jewish themes – or Christian themes developed out of its Jewish origins – which are adopted and adapted in Valentinian literature. These would include especially the notion of a surrogate temple in the heavens, a high-priestly Christology, and the notion of mystical ascent through the heavens to gain some kind of visionary experience of God in his temple. The first and third of these concepts come together particularly in much of Jewish apocalypticism and the literary apocalypses which it produced. The notion of Christ as the ideal high priest of course lent a specifically Christian

³⁵ Ibid. 4.

³⁶ Ibid. 430-490; cf. Marksches (1992), 11-290.

³⁷ Thomassen (2006a), 426-429 outlines no less than fifteen doctrinal elements which, on the basis of their frequent attestation in later Valentinian literature, he hypothetically ascribes to Valentinus himself. In many cases however, the elements appear nowhere in the extant fragments of Valentinus’s writing; e.g. a soteriology of mutual participation; the concept of the “bridal chamber”; the notion of metaphysical σύζυγοι.

flavour to the enterprise, and it is this constellation of ideas adapted to a Valentinian context which has been largely neglected in previous scholarship and which will be addressed here.

Paul, Nag Hammadi, and the Valentinians

Considering the fairly extensive use of both Paul's writings and image among the Nag Hammadi documents,³⁸ there has been surprisingly little scholarly engagement with this aspect of the literature. Perhaps most notable is Elaine Pagels's 1975 *The Gnostic Paul: Gnostic Exegesis of the Pauline Letters*. However, Pagels largely ignored the Nag Hammadi evidence, preferring to rely on patristic sources pertaining to Valentinianism to provide the foundation for her own "Gnostic" (read "Valentinian") exegesis of Paul's letters.³⁹ On the other hand, Pagels notes that during the second century, competition existed over the "correct" interpretation of Paul's writings and character, one "gnostic" and one "anti-gnostic".⁴⁰ According to Pagels, the "anti-gnostic" Paulinists regarded him principally in light of the Pastorals as the opponent of "heterodox learning" (1 Tim 1:3; ἑτεροδιδασκαλεῖν) and "falsely so-called gnosis" (1 Tim 6:20; ψευδωνύμου γνώσεως), whereas the "gnostic" Paulinists understood him as he who "spoke wisdom among the perfect" (1 Cor 2:6), and identified themselves as "the perfect" who alone possessed the secret tools with which to correctly interpret Paul's writings.⁴¹

By pointing out the debates over the reception of Paul's image in the second century, Pagels's portrait goes some way to correcting Tertullian's notion of Paul as "the heretics' apostle" (*haereticorum apostolus*).⁴² This notion had coloured a good deal of earlier

³⁸ See the useful resources in Evans, Webb, and Wiebe (1993); and Perkins (2002).

³⁹ See the critical remarks in Grant (1977), 33.

⁴⁰ Pagels (1975), 5.

⁴¹ Eadem. 4-5; Irenaeus, *Haer.* III 2.1. Pagels suggests that the Valentinians "cite as Pauline" the following: Rom, 1-2 Cor, Gal, Eph, Phil, Col, 1 Thess, and Heb. While it is incorrect that all of these are "cited" in Valentinian texts, they appear to have been known to Valentinian authors; cf. Perkins (2002), 367-368.

⁴² Tertullian, *Marc.* 3.5.4. Tertullian's characterisation is derived primarily from Marcion's fondness for Paul, as opposed to that of the Valentinians.

scholarship on Pauline reception which considered the church fathers to have largely rejected Paul's thought and writings on the basis of his alleged popularity among "heretics".⁴³ This paradigm was overturned most profoundly in Lindemann's 1979 *Paulus im ältesten Christentum*, where he demonstrated the use of *both* Paul's writings *and* image among a wide range of early Christian authors from the deutero-Pauline literature of the New Testament, to the second-century apologists, the apocrypha, and Irenaeus. His conclusion regarding the "gnostic" use of Paul was that "die Haltung der Häretiker Paulus gegenüber hat die Kirche im Grunde gar nicht beeinflusst, schon gar nicht negativ."⁴⁴ While few would now deny the basic truth of this claim, Lindemann appears to have gone too far in arguing that "[d]ie Gnostiker sahen offenbar überhaupt keine spezifische Affinität zwischen ihrem eigenen Denken und der Theologie des Paulus."⁴⁵ Indeed, his assertion that "[v]on einer spezifischen Paulusbenutzung ist, ausgenommen allenfalls Rheg. [*Treat. Res.*], in den christlich-gnostischen Schriften kaum etwas zu kennen" strongly overstates the case.⁴⁶ That being said, Lindemann's conclusions have recently been repeated by Benjamin White, who argues that "the texts from Nag Hammadi show no real predilection for Paul over other Christian authorities."⁴⁷ In response, it is important to note that *use of Paul's letters* is not equal to *the exclusive use of Paul's writings at the expense of all other literature*. The latter should not be presented as a criterion of Paulinism. Secondly, such statements presuppose an undue degree of homogeneity among what is in reality an eclectic collection of literature with multiple backgrounds. The question is not whether "the texts from Nag Hammadi" collectively exhibit

⁴³ The thesis most famously espoused in Bauer (1972). For good overviews of this scholarly paradigm and its ultimate rejection, see White (2014), 20-69; Kaler (2004); idem. (2008a), 80-87; Weiss (2008), 399-401.

⁴⁴ Lindemann (1979), 402, cf. 312.

⁴⁵ Ibid. 342. On the Valentinians specifically, see *ibid.* 298-306. He argues, "die valentinianische Schule sich paulinischer Aussagen durchaus zu bedienen mußte. Daß die Theologie des Paulus für ihr Denken aber konstitutiv gewesen wäre, kann man nicht behaupten. Man hat nirgends den Eindruck, daß der paulinische Text die Grundlage für die gnostische Aussage gewesen sei. Noch weniger kann man sagen, daß die Valentinianer sich um die 'Auslegung' der Paulusbriefe bemüht hätten. Der Briefe werden vielmehr nur herangezogen, um bestimmte, schon vorgegebene gnostische-theologische Sätze zu bestätigen" (300).

⁴⁶ Ibid. 400. Lindemann overviews the use of the Pauline corpus in thirteen Nag Hammadi texts (315-341).

⁴⁷ White (2014), 42-69, quoted at 45; cf. Lindemann (1979), 306.

a use of Paul, but rather whether individual works, codices, or sub-collections do so. Yet even on the level of individual texts, White argues that *Gos. Truth* does not have any “special regard for Paul” because from its seventy-three potential allusions to the New Testament,⁴⁸ “only a third ... come from the Pauline letters.”⁴⁹ Another way of phrasing this is that the *circa* twenty-five allusions to Pauline writings in *Gos. Truth* demonstrate the author’s extensive use of the apostle’s thought!

As Koschorke argued as early as 1981, conclusions to the effect that the Nag Hammadi writings collectively exhibit only a superficial use of Paul “cannot be maintained”⁵⁰ in light of both patristic testimonies⁵¹ and the Nag Hammadi evidence.⁵² Indeed, in certain cases, Paul was evidently constitutive for Valentinianism. For example, the Valentinian soteriology of mutual participation which Thomassen has discovered to be basic to Valentinian thought is derived principally from Hebrews 2:14-18,⁵³ while Judith Kovacs particularly has demonstrated the extent of the Valentinians’ reliance on Paul’s theological language and concepts.⁵⁴ In other words, while Lindemann demonstrates that Paul was not rejected by “orthodox” Christians because of his use among “heterodox” opponents, he and White underestimate the extent to which some gnostic Christians – such as the Valentinians – found Paul’s thought to be fundamental to their own.

In his important 1981 article, Koschorke concluded that although Christian gnostic texts do not display a preference for Paul at the expense of all others, the fact that Paul is “die

⁴⁸ Enumerated in Williams (1988).

⁴⁹ White (2014), 47. White’s comments are curious in light of his obvious awareness of the extent to which Valentinians used Paul; see *ibid.* 36-40.

⁵⁰ Koschorke (1981), 179.

⁵¹ See *ibid.* 179 n.8.

⁵² *Ibid.* 180-200. Koschorke examines the reception of Paul’s thought in 1) *Testim. Truth* NHC IX,3, 2) *Interp. Know.* NHC XI,1, 3) *Pr. Paul* NHC I,1, 4) *Gos. Phil.* NHC II,3, and 5) *Treat. Res.* NHC 1,4, which he notes “die teils der valentinianischen Gnosis und teils anderen Gruppierungen zuzurechnen sind” (180).

⁵³ On how early Christians considered the Epistle to the Hebrews to be the work of Paul, see Attridge (1989), 1; Eisenbaum (2005).

⁵⁴ E.g. Kovacs (2003); eadem. (2012); eadem (2013).

am häufigsten angeführte neutestamentliche Autorität” suggests that there was indeed “eine spezifische Affinität zu Paulus.”⁵⁵ However, like others both before and since, he is at pains to stress that any gnostic interpretation of Paul first requires the exegete to unduly press the apostle’s thought into their service and therefore, “der gnostische Sinn muß also erst eigens erschlossen werden.”⁵⁶ Koschorke’s overview really ought to have put the lie to the conclusions of Lindemann and White regarding the use of Paul in gnostic Christianity. Of course, Koschorke’s analysis was hardly exhaustive, omitting a number of texts in which Paul is influential. For example, concerning *Apoc. Paul*, Koschorke simply notes that “[d]iese Schrift hat mit Paulus nur insofern etwas zu tun, als der Verfasser von der Entrückung des Apostels als Einstieg für die Schilderung einer Reise durch die zehn Himmel nutzt; ansonsten findet sich hier nichts Paulinisches.”⁵⁷ But besides Koschorke’s rather uninspiring appraisal of *Apoc. Paul* as drawing solely on 2 Corinthians 12:2-4 from Paul’s writings – see Chapter 5 below – Kaler has noted how in his efforts to respond to Lindemann’s somewhat negative assessment of Paul’s influence on gnostic thought, Koschorke has focused entirely too much on the reception of Paul’s *thought*, as opposed to the *Paulusbild* – or what Kaler calls “heroic Paulinism”.⁵⁸ By contrast, Kaler has sought to demonstrate the degree to which gnostic Christians can be described as “heroic Paulinists”, using the authoritative image of Paul for

⁵⁵ Koschorke (1981), 200-202.

⁵⁶ Ibid. 202-203; cf. Lindemann (1979), 300: “Die Briefe werden vielmehr nur herangezogen, um bestimmte, schon vorgegebene gnostisch-theologische Sätze zu bestätigen.” Ibid. 306: “Ausgangspunkt ist dabei stets die spezifisch gnostische Lehre ... die dann bei Paulus, aber auch in allen anderen zitierten Schriften ‘widergefunden’ wird.” Weiss (2008), 399-479 ultimately draws the same conclusion that Valentinians made no real effort to develop a Pauline theology, but rather took Paul’s original words out of context for their own ends.

⁵⁷ Koschorke (1981), 191. Lindemann (1979), 333-334 similarly argues that apart from the basic frame story taking its inspiration from 2 Cor 12:2-4 and the allusions to Gal 1:15 in *Apoc. Paul* NHC V,2 18.15-20 (cf. 23.2-4), “[d]ie weitere Erzählung ist für unsere Untersuchung zunächst ohne Bedeutung - der Text zeigt keinerlei Nähe zu paulinischen Gedanken oder Formulierungen und könnte im Grunde auch jede andere christliche Gestalt als ‘Helden’ haben.” Although he deems it an example of the esteem in which Paul could be held among gnostic Christians, Lindemann disregards it as an example of Paulinism because, “diese Wertschätzung stützt sich nicht auf konkrete Kenntnis der paulinischen Theologie und besteht schon gar nicht in einer inhaltlichen Übernahme paulinischen Denkens.”

⁵⁸ Kaler (2004); idem. (2005), 167 n.134; idem. (2008a), 89. Although, Koschorke (1981), 203 does at least recognise that different understandings of the *Paulusbild* were available to Christians in the second century, noting the different emphases of groups like the Montanists compared to the “Gnostiker”. Lindemann (1979), 36-113 was similarly sensitive to the development of different *Paulusbildern* in early Christianity, although he entirely neglects to mention gnostic literature in this capacity.

their own ends.⁵⁹ This insight has been most recently developed by Nicholas Perrin, who argues on the basis of *Gos. Truth, Exc., Pr. Paul*, and *Apoc. Paul* that the Valentinians considered Paul to be “first among equals” in relation to the apostles, even “‘the’ apostle” and “*the* ideal believer”.⁶⁰

Despite the significant advances in recent years, there is still much to do regarding Pauline reception among the Nag Hammadi codices, particularly that of the *Paulusbild*. It is perfectly clear that no consensus exists regarding the importance of Paul for Valentinian thought, particularly among those Pauline scholars with only a cursory knowledge of the Nag Hammadi sources. Particularly disconcerting is the notion that one discovers repeatedly in the scholarship, that Valentinians cannot be said to have truly made use of Paul because rather than reading Paul from some position of theological objectivity, they bastardized the apostle’s thought for their own ends. But of course, no exegete is entirely immune from eisegesis. At most, the difference between the Valentinians’ and anyone else’s use of Paul is one of degree, not of kind. Rather, this position would appear to be borne simply out of each scholar’s own ideological disagreement with the Valentinians over what Paul *really* meant in any given passage. This thesis therefore seeks to contribute to Kaler’s and Perrin’s research on the reception of *both* Paul’s ideas *and* image among the Valentinians, particularly in *Apoc. Paul*.

The Apocalypse of Paul and the Valentinians

In 1966, Hans-Martin Schenke described *Apoc. Paul* as a “kümmerliches Machwerk”, the product of a “gnostischen Hilfsschülers” which, despite some superficially Pauline

⁵⁹ Kaler (2004), 307-312; idem. (2008a), 90-103; idem. (2008b); idem. (2013b).

⁶⁰ Perrin (2011). In fact, Lindemann (1979), 334 reaches a very similar conclusion: “Apc P1 zeigt darüber hinaus, dass zumindest im Umkreis ihres Verfasser die Anerkennung des Paulus nicht mit einer prinzipiellen Abwertung der zwölf Apostel einherging.” He therefore notes (n.247) that, “[d]ie Erhebung des Paulus über seine Gefährten zeige das gnostische, speziell valentinianische Paulusbild.” For this “heroic Paulinism” in early Christianity generally, see the essays in Babcock (1990), especially de Boer (1990); and White (2014), 70-107.

decoration, was essentially an aimless attempt to expand upon Paul's account of rapture in 2 Corinthians 12:2-4.⁶¹ If subsequent scholarship has been somewhat kinder to *Apoc. Paul's* author, it has also substantiated Schenke's characterisation of the work as "gnostic". A notable recent exception is Jean-Marc Rosenstiehl, but even he finally concedes that "la personnalité de l'auteur laisse transparaître un judéo-chrétien tenté par certaines spéculations gnosticisantes."⁶² As a general rule however, *Apoc. Paul's* gnostic features – most obviously the denigration of the created world and its creator – have not been in doubt. Several scholars have suggested that in addition to a general classification as "gnostic Christian", *Apoc. Paul* can be more specifically tied to Valentinianism in particular.⁶³

In his 1968 Ph.D. thesis, William Murdock treated *Apoc. Paul* as an eclectic work which drew on the resources of biblical literature, Egyptian and Hellenistic religion, and most importantly, Jewish apocalypticism. However, Murdock also strove to articulate the numerous parallels with other gnostic sources, particularly those of Valentinianism.⁶⁴ He concluded that "the Apocalypse of Paul narrated the Apostle's vision of calling which could have served as the literary basis for the Valentinian claim that Paul was *the* Apostle of the Resurrection after the type of Jesus, the Perfect Fruit of the Pleroma."⁶⁵ Several years later, in their critical edition for the Coptic Gnostic Library project, Murdock and MacRae similarly observe that "[t]he portrayal of Paul as exalted even above the other apostles is at home in

⁶¹ Schenke (1966), 25.

⁶² Rosenstiehl (2005), 96. Cf. Berliner Arbeitskreis für koptisch-gnostische Schriften (1973), 43, where the "Berliner Arbeitskreis" states that *Apoc. Paul* NHC V,2 19.1-7 is "das einzige Stück deutlich gnostischen Gedankenguts (der überlieferten Teile) dieser Schrift." Daniélou (1966), 288 also argued that "il ne paraît avoir rien de commun avec le gnosticisme", and that any parallels with Valentinian thought were due to their common use of Judeo-Christian material. However, as Kaler (2008a), 64 observes, Daniélou's judgement was based on his unfounded conviction that "gnosticisme" and apocalypticism are somehow mutually exclusive. The sheer number of gnostic apocalypses – on which, see Fallon (1979) – demonstrates how unwarranted this assumption truly is.

⁶³ For a more general *Forschungsgeschichte*, see Kaler (2005), 117-128; cf. Rosenstiehl (2005), 10-11.

⁶⁴ Murdock (1968), 214-235.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.* 240-241.

second-century Gnosticism, especially Valentinianism.”⁶⁶ However, Murdock’s observations regarding the proximity of *Apoc. Paul* to Valentinianism were of a rather general sort, and later scholarship was reticent to endorse his rather tentative suggestions too strongly. Instead, most scholarship has been content to speak generally of its gnostic character,⁶⁷ while others have more explicitly denied any strong affinity between *Apoc. Paul* and Valentinian thought.⁶⁸ Indeed, among those overviews of the Nag Hammadi codices which seek to somehow systematize their contents,⁶⁹ as well as the many “lists” of Valentinian works from Nag Hammadi,⁷⁰ to my knowledge only April DeConick includes *Apoc. Paul* as Valentinian, but she does so without further remark.⁷¹

But in 2005, Michael Kaler published his line-by-line commentary on *Apoc. Paul* – the first of its kind – in the Bibliothèque copte de Nag Hammadi series in which he drew a significant number of parallels with Valentinian thought and noted the general similarity between *Apoc. Paul*’s narrative and Irenaeus’s remarks on Valentinian exegesis of 2 Corinthians 12:2-4 in *Haer.* II 30.7.⁷² He followed this up in 2008 with his monograph, *Flora Tells a Story: The Apocalypse of Paul and Its Contexts*, where he expounds the following hypothesis: “The *Apocalypse of Paul* is a text, written in the late second or early third century by a gnostic (possibly Valentinian) author, showing the apostle Paul as an apocalyptic hero, in order to authoritatively present a gnostic understanding of the cosmos and the Pauline

⁶⁶ Murdock and MacRae (1979), 49.

⁶⁷ E.g. Klauck (1985), 159-160; Scopello (1987), 332; Morard (1995); Harrison (2004); Roukema (2005), 269-271.

⁶⁸ E.g. Plisch (2003), 402; Pearson (2007a), 229. Van den Broek (2013), 78 argues that while it is possible that *Apoc. Paul* NHC V,2 “embroidered on Valentinian ideas about Paul’s heavenly journey ... this does not imply that the work as a whole should be regarded as Valentinian.”

⁶⁹ Most recently, van den Broek (2013).

⁷⁰ E.g. Desjardins (1986), 342; idem. (1990), 6; Thomassen (1995); Dunderberg (2008), 10; Tite (2009), 15-17.

⁷¹ DeConick (1999), 308-309 lists the following as Valentinian: *Pr. Paul* NHC I,1; *Gos. Truth* NHC I,3; *Treat. Res.* NHC I,4; *Tri. Trac.* NHC I,5; *Gos. Phil.* NHC II,3; *Exeg. Soul* NHC II,6; *Apoc. Paul* NHC V,2; *Auth. Teach.* NHC VI,3; *Interp. Know.* NHC XI,1; *Val. Exp.* NHC XI,2.

⁷² Kaler (2005), 128-143, 155-158, and *passim*; see also Kaler, Painchaud, and Bussièrès (2004).

writings.”⁷³ Kaler focuses on the so-called “exoteric” nature of the text, arguing that it must be understood in the context of second-century battles over Paul’s legacy. By presenting Paul in a visionary guise inspired by 2 Corinthians 12:2-4, the author of *Apoc. Paul* challenges the notion of Paul as a mere theologian, letter-writer, and community organizer, and instead presents a *Paulusbild* of an “apocalyptic hero” capable of authoritatively demonstrating the truth of “gnostic (possibly Valentinian)” theology, cosmology, ecclesiology, ritual, and soteriology. In presenting his case, Kaler draws out myriad parallels with Valentinian and other gnostic literature.⁷⁴ His endeavours have been influential on the small body of subsequent scholarship on the text, much of which now either endorses or assumes the Valentinianism of *Apoc. Paul* by virtue of Kaler’s efforts.⁷⁵ On the other hand, more general scholarship in “Gnostic studies” has not embraced Kaler’s findings to the same extent, and his studies of *Apoc. Paul* have yet to make a substantial impact on the study of Valentinianism specifically.

I would suggest that there are two reasons for this. Firstly, Kaler did not formulate his thesis in strong enough terms. It is perfectly obvious to a close reader that Kaler regards *Apoc. Paul* as Valentinian, yet he contents himself with merely gesturing in this direction – “gnostic (possibly Valentinian)”. In his final conclusions, Kaler does not mention Valentinianism at all, but rather states: “If the apocalyptic tradition provided the structure, and the Pauline tradition the hero for our tale, it was the desire to present a gnostic view of the cosmos that provided its *raison d’être*.”⁷⁶ By not formulating his hypothesis and conclusions in stronger terms, Kaler has to some extent excused scholars of Valentinianism from engaging more directly with his erudite, convincing, and important analysis. Secondly,

⁷³ Kaler (2008a), x and *passim*. Kaler frequently notes that a very similar hypothesis has been previously advanced independently in Spanish scholarship by Etcheverría (1981).

⁷⁴ Kaler (2008), esp. 62-75, 200-224.

⁷⁵ E.g. Scopello and Meyer (2007a), 316; Perrin (2011), 137-139; White (2014), 37.

⁷⁶ Kaler (2008a), 227.

Kaler's method of recommending the Valentinianism of *Apoc. Paul* is similar to that of Murdock before him, namely pointing out ideological, thematic, and terminological parallels. But of course, as a subdivision of early Christianity in general, Valentinianism displays such parallels with a host of non-Valentinian sources and traditions. Substantiating the Valentinianism of *Apoc. Paul* would require a more systematic analysis of the document and its contents in relation to other known Valentinian literature. Kaler makes steps in this direction with his comments on the narrative's underlying ritual framework,⁷⁷ but does not carry it through with regard to a wider appraisal of Valentinian sources. Hence there is the possibility for *Apoc. Paul's* Valentinianism to be regarded as cosmetic or secondary, as opposed to foundational to the entire story. This thesis therefore seeks to develop Kaler's landmark research by arguing systematically in favour of a Valentinian provenance and *Sitz im Leben* for *Apoc. Paul*.

Plan and Scope of the Present Study

It is the task of this thesis to systematically demonstrate both the Valentinian provenance of *Apoc. Paul* – that is, the author's Valentinian identity – and its function in Valentinian circles of the late second or third century. To accomplish this requires a fairly extensive overview of certain trajectories within Valentinianism which would appear to be fundamental to the logic of *Apoc. Paul*. The most important of these are the adoption and adaptation from Judaism – particularly apocalyptic Judaism – of the concepts of the Divine Name as a soteriological power and the notion of a surrogate temple in the heavens which could be accessed in the present by certain favoured adepts. The Divine Name is well known and widely recognised among scholars of Valentinianism as perhaps *the* central motif of Valentinian ritual and soteriology, while the heavenly temple represents one of the most understudied aspects of

⁷⁷ Ibid. 200-217.

Valentinian lore.⁷⁸ How the former comes to be combined with the latter through the Valentinian appropriation of a high-priestly Christology is the focus of Part 1 of this thesis.

Chapter 1 begins with Valentinus himself, specifically Fragments 1 and 5 which articulate the transformative soteriological power of the Divine Name through an Adam-Christ typology of Fall and Redemption. Chapter 2 examines how *Gos. Truth* develops this doctrine via its hypostatization of the Divine Name as the Son-Saviour himself such that Valentinus's transformative soteriology is now more closely tied to Christology and experiential proximity to the divine. Chapter 3 overviews the complex soteriological dynamics of the Divine Name in *Exc.*'s expression of the relationship between mythology, salvation history, and ritual. It describes how for the first time in any extant Valentinian document the image of the heavenly temple is incorporated into this design. Chapter 4 turns to *Gos. Phil.*, where the heavenly temple receives its most extensive Valentinian treatment and is explicitly combined with a high-priestly Christology. The chapter analyses how *Gos. Phil.* deploys the notion of an ideal Jerusalem temple in a ritual context in order to emphasise a) the transformative power of the rites of Christian initiation, and b) the polemical distinction between the soteriological efficacy of Valentinian initiation in contrast to the rites of Jews and imperfect Christians.

Part 2 of this study then seeks to demonstrate how *Apoc. Paul* is made increasingly explicable and vibrant in light of this Valentinian context. Chapter 5 deals with introductory issues surrounding the text, its use of both biblical and non-biblical sources, and the existing arguments against its Valentinianism. Chapter 6 presents an interpretation of *Apoc. Paul* in light of the developing constellation of ideas expounded in Part 1. It seeks to demonstrate that by understanding *Apoc. Paul* in light of these intellectual and religious currents, not only can

⁷⁸ DeConick's oeuvre is a notable exception; see e.g. DeConick (1995); eadem. (1999); eadem. (2001); and now Twigg (2015a).

multiple problematic aspects of the narrative be explained, but they can be explained in a consistent and holistic manner which illuminates an overarching soteriological logic for a text which otherwise appears somewhat laconic and disjointed. Finally, Chapter 7 attempts to pinpoint *Apoc. Paul*'s function, that is, how it was designed to be used by its readers/hearers. It will be argued that *Apoc. Paul* was designed as catechetical literature for prospective Valentinian initiates, to be read as preparation for a) the sorts of experiences which were to be cultivated during initiation, and b) the ethical and missionary duties which came with full initiation.

Such a project must no doubt tread carefully in order to avoid producing an overly deductive or circular analysis of *Apoc. Paul* which would only demonstrate that it is amenable to a Valentinian reading, or is capable of being subsumed to a Valentinian worldview. I have tried to keep my analyses as inductive as possible, but there are naturally moments in which the clarity of a particular image or passage is deemed to have been improved to such an extent by virtue of a Valentinian framework, that the presumption of Valentinianism is simply preferable for reasons of intelligibility. Of course, this makes the entire enterprise strictly hypothetical, but a hypothesis is all I intend to present. However, it is worth remembering the hypothetical nature of all ascriptions of Nag Hammadi treatises to Valentinian Christians. As was noted earlier, no Nag Hammadi text identifies itself in this manner, but rather scholars must work from the reports and sources contained in heresiological literature to determine which of these anonymous writings emerged from this or that context. Once certain works have been identified as Valentinian on the basis of their contiguity with such reports – as in the cases of *Tri. Trac.* and *Val. Exp.* – a broader literary corpus may be built on the basis of family resemblance. In this sense, to demonstrate that *Apoc. Paul* is not only amenable to a Valentinian reading, but is made exponentially more intelligible via a Valentinian reading, may be a good indication of such an underlying family

resemblance. As Thomassen points out, “l’identification de tels corpus a sans doute constitué un pas important pour la recherche, permettant des études sur le contexte idéologique propre de chaque traité.”⁷⁹ Only in attempting an initially hypothetical positioning of *Apoc. Paul* within the Valentinian corpus can we discover whether or not this represents its proper ideological context. I hope to show that it does.

⁷⁹ Thomassen (1995), 243.

**Part I: The Divine Name in Valentinian
Thought and Practice**

1. Valentinus and the Divine Name

Of the few extant fragments from Valentinus's original writings, Fragments 1 and 5 stand apart in their use of the concept of the Divine Name.¹ This concept was to become central to later Valentinian Christology, soteriology, and ritual practice. In analysing Fr.1 and 5, this chapter seeks to demonstrate two things concerning Valentinus's notion of the Divine Name: firstly, his use of concepts derived from Jewish apocalypticism via the Christology of Paul and John to articulate the nature of the Name; and secondly, his conviction that the reception of the Divine Name through baptism-anointment marked the key moment in each person's salvation. In Fr.1, Valentinus uses the concept of the Divine Name to express how Adam's original divine condition was deprived him by the inferior creator angels. Fr.5 describes how, having inherited Adam's deficiency, humans must once again receive the Divine Name in order to assume the pristine condition once enjoyed by Adam. In articulating the soteriological power of the Divine Name, Valentinus employs a range of technical language and imagery derived from both Platonic ontology and apocalyptic theophanies.

1.1. Valentinus Fragment 1

1.1.1. Text and Translation

<p>καὶ ὡσπερὶ φόβος ἐπ' ἐκείνου τοῦ πλάσματος ὑπῆρξε τοῖς ἀγγέλοις, ὅτε μείζονα ἐφθέγγετο 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 ποιούσιν ἐγένετο, οἷον ἀνδριάντες καὶ εἰκόνες καὶ πάνθ' ἃ χεῖρες ἀνύουσιν εἰς ὄνομα θεοῦ· εἰς γὰρ ὄνομα ἀνθρώπου πλασθεὶς Ἄδὰμ φόβον</p>	<p>And just as fear came upon the angels in the presence of that modelled figure when he uttered sounds greater than his modelling on account of the one who had invisibly placed within him a seed of the higher substance and spoke openly; so too among the generations of cosmic humans, the works of humans become objects of fear for those who produce them, for instance, statues, images, and everything which hands make</p>
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¹ For the fragments, see Völker (1932), 57-60; Layton (1987), 229-249; for comprehensive analyses of the fragments, see Markschies (1992); Thomassen (2006a), 430-490. I follow Völker's enumeration of the fragments.

παρέσχεν προόντος ἀνθρώπου ὡς δὴ αὐτοῦ ἐν αὐτῷ καθεστῶτος, καὶ κατεπλάγησαν καὶ ταχὺ τὸ ἔργον ἠφάνισαν.

for the name of a god. For Adam, having been modelled in the Name of “Anthropos”, caused fear of pre-existent Anthropos, since precisely that one stood within him. And they were struck with terror and quickly spoil their work.²

Valentinus compares the angels’ creation of Adam to those human artisans who manufacture statues and images of gods.³ Subsequent to Adam’s creation by these inferior angels, a divine being identified as the “pre-existent Anthropos” implants himself invisibly within Adam in the form of a “seed of higher substance”⁴ – an impregnation made possible by virtue of Adam’s formation “in the Name” of this Anthropos.⁵ This pre-existent Anthropos “speaks openly” through Adam causing the latter to “utter sounds” which are ontologically superior to those warranted by his angelic modelling. This *παρρησία* scares the angelic creators who remain ignorant of the presence of the pre-existent Anthropos within Adam. As a result of their fear, the angels “conceal” or “spoil” their creation.

1.1.2. Reinterpreting Genesis 1-3

In Fr.1, Valentinus offers a reinterpretation of the most important anthropological elements of Genesis 1-3; namely, the two anthropogonies of Genesis 1:26-27 and 2:7, Adam’s (and Eve’s) sin, and Adam’s (and Eve’s) reception of a fleshly garment.

² In Clement of Alexandria, *Strom.* II 36.2-4.

³ On the creative roles of angels in Platonism, ancient Judaism, early Christianity, see Marksches (1992), 17-24; Thomassen (1993a); Schäfer (2012), 174-178.

⁴ It is clear from the explanatory *γάρ* clause that this “seed of the higher substance” is identical to the “pre-existent Anthropos” himself, since both are said to be ἐν αὐτῷ (i.e. Adam). In this sense, there is an equation of “giver” and “given”; the pre-existent Anthropos gives himself to Adam. See Thomassen (2006a), 435-437; Holzhausen (1994), 90-94.

⁵ On the concept of a divine Ἄνθρωπος in gnostic literature, see Schenke (1962), 6-15, 94-107. The προὖν ἄνθρωπος of Fr.1 has been variously identified as the supreme God (e.g. Hilgenfeld (1884), 294; Foerster (1928), 92); the Anthropos Aeon of Ptolemy’s Ogdoad (see Irenaeus, *Haer.* I 1.1-2; e.g. Sagnard (1947), 560; Quispel (1974a), 45-46); Ptolemy’s Βυθός (see Irenaeus, *Haer.* I 1.1; e.g. Schenke (1962), 9); a Philonic Logos figure (e.g. Stead (1980), 82; Marksches (1992), 44-50; Holzhausen (1994), 88-96); or the Son as image of the Father and embodiment of the Pleroma (e.g. Thomassen (2006a), 437-442). The phrase προὖν ἄνθρωπος finds no precise parallel in the New Testament, although later Valentinian literature used designations such as προὖν, προοῦσα, and **ϠϠϠϠ** **ⲛⲱⲟⲟⲩ** to variously describe the Father (Irenaeus, *Haer.* I 1.1; 21.5; Epiphanius, *Pan.* XXXI 5.3; *I Apoc. Jas.* NHC V,3 33.22), Son (Irenaeus, *Haer.* I 21.5; *Pr. Paul* NHC I,1 A12; *Tri. Trac.* NHC I,5 65.38; *I Apoc. Jas.* NHC V,3 33.24; 34.7, 11, 13), Aeon (*Tri. Trac.* NHC I,5 136.24), or Aeons (Epiphanius, *Pan.* XXXI 6.2-4).

1.1.2.1. Synthesising Two Biblical Anthropogonies

Genesis 1:26-27 and 2:7 give separate accounts of Adam's creation. The former account presupposes a demiurgic plurality (ποιήσωμεν Gen 1:26), while the latter describes God alone creating Adam (ἔπλασεν Gen 2:7) and imbuing him with a "breath of life" through which he becomes "a living being". Valentinus exploits this ambiguity to postulate two stages to Adam's creation; the initial creation of the Adamic πλάσμα by multiple angels, followed by Adam's reception of a divine substance which elevates him to a new ontological status.⁶ Possibly Valentinus accomplished this by problematizing the sequence of Genesis 1:26-27, where God undertakes to "make humankind according to our image *and* likeness" (1:26), but is only said to do so "according to the *image* of God" (1:27). For Valentinus then, Genesis 2:7 may have described God's eventual communication of divine "likeness" to Adam.⁷ But the novelty of Valentinus's interpretation lies in the qualitative distinction between the divine beings which are active at each stage of Adam's creation, for on Valentinus's reading, the angelic creators derived from Genesis 1:26 are evidently inferior to the pre-existent Anthropos who is active in Genesis 2:7.

Around a century before Valentinus, also in Alexandria, Philo interpreted these two anthropogonies in a not dissimilar manner. However, for Philo, these two accounts refer to the creations of two different Adams; a purely "intellectual" (νοητός) Adam (Gen 1:26-27), and a "sense-perceptible" (αἰσθητός) Adam (Gen 2:7). The Adam of Genesis 2:7 was created after the "type" (τύπος) or "idea" (ιδέα) of the ideal man of Genesis 1:26-27, who was himself made in the image of God.⁸ For Philo in fact, this heavenly man created in the image

⁶ Note, however, that the description of Adam as a πλάσμα recalls the language of Gen 2:7-8 (πλάσσειν) more strongly than that of Gen 1:26-27 (ποιεῖν).

⁷ See Edwards (2009), 14-15; e.g. *Ps.-Clem. Hom.* 11.4-5.

⁸ *Opif.* 134-135; see also *Leg.* 1 31-32; *Plant.* 19; *Her.* 55-56; *QG* 1 4-5; *QG* 2 56; see Levison (1988), 63-88, esp. 69-75. *Conf.* 146 identifies this noetic Adam as the Logos.

of God (Gen 1:26-27), was precisely that which was breathed into the earthly Adam (Gen 2:7), conveying a spiritual element to him.⁹

However, the closest parallels to Valentinus's synthesis of Genesis 1:26-27 and 2:7 into a single two-stage process of creation in which qualitatively different divine agents are active are to be found among the Ophite literature. For example, *Ap. John* rewrites Genesis 1:26-27 so that Ialdabaoth and his archons create Adam according to the image of the invisible Father above which was projected down onto the celestial waters. They create Adam "according to the likeness of the first, perfect Man."¹⁰ However, "their product was completely inactive and motionless" until (rewriting Gen 2:7) Ialdabaoth is tricked into blowing his spiritual element into Adam, at which point "the body moved and gained strength, and it was luminous."¹¹ The same basic narrative appears in *Hyp. Arch.* NHC II,4 87.11-88.15 and Irenaeus's *Haer.* I 30.6-7,¹² whereby an originally defective archontic creation is made truly alive by the covert injection of a spiritual element into Adam. It seems very likely indeed that Valentinus's and the Ophite literature's anthropogonies emerged in some kind of conversation with one another.¹³

Further, certain elements of Valentinus's narrative are presupposed by the apostle Paul when he describes Christ as the pre-existent "image of God",¹⁴ "the heavenly man" who

⁹ *Opif.* 134-139; *Her.* 55-56; *Leg.* 2 4-5; *QG* 2 56.

¹⁰ *Ap. John* NHC II,1 14.24-15.13 (=NHC IV,1 23.3-24.2); cf. NHC III,1 22.1-18; BG 48.6-49.9.

¹¹ *Ap. John* NHC II,1 19.13-33 (= NHC IV,1 29.22-30.18); cf. NHC III,1 23.14-24.14; BG 50.15-52.1.

¹² Cf. *Orig. World* NHC II,5 112.25-116.8.

¹³ Most scholars assume that Valentinus was influenced by Ophite literature, e.g. Dawson (1992), 136-145; Williams (1996), 33-37; Dunderberg (2005a), 510-518; idem. (2008), 47-52; Brakke (2010), 101-102. Others consider the Ophite material to have been influenced by Valentinus, e.g. Pétrement (1990), 418-419; Holzhausen (1994), 188-228; idem. (2005), 1146-1147. For a good overview of the evidence, see Rasimus (2009), 292-293, who concludes that although it was Ophite ideas that influenced Valentinians, and not vice versa, there was also some degree of "secondary cross-fertilization and critical debate between these forms of Christianity." On the classification of Ophite texts, see Rasimus (2009), 54-62, and on their Paradise accounts, see *ibid.* 163-171. On the question of Valentinus's relationship to the Gnostics, see McGuire (1983), 219-233; Quispel (1980b); idem. (1996b); but cf. the retort in Marksches, (1997b).

¹⁴ 2 Cor 4:4; Col 1:15; Heb 1:3. On Christ's pre-existence, see e.g. Rom 8:3; 9:5; 1 Cor 8:6; 2 Cor 8:9; Gal 4:4; Phil 2:5-11; Col 1:15-20; Heb 1:2; John 3:13; 6:62; 8:14, 23, 38, 42, 58; 17:5; see Hurtado (2003), 118-126, 364-369; Hamerton-Kelly (1973); Dunn (1989), 113-125.

became “a life-giving spirit” (1 Cor 15:45-47). In exporting these Pauline concepts into a gnostic rewriting of biblical anthropogony, Valentinus depicts Christ both as the pre-existent Anthropos in whose image the inferior angels defectively create the earthly Adam, but also as the divine figure which imbues the Adamic πλάσμα with the spiritual spark through which he transcends his humble origins. For Valentinus, Adam is the archetypal “man of dust” who came to “bear the image of the man of heaven” (1 Cor 15:49). However, as we shall see later, Adam does not bear this image for long, since his creators panic at hearing his παρρησία. But first, it is in this παρρησία that the Christological identity of Valentinus’s “pre-existent Anthropos” is confirmed.

1.1.2.2. Fear of the Revealed God

The presence of this “pre-existent Anthropos” in Adam provokes a hostile response from his creator angels. They are described as being afraid on two counts; firstly, the παρρησία of the pre-existent Anthropos, using Adam as a channel; and secondly, the pre-existent Anthropos’s “standing within” Adam. These activities represent Valentinus’s development of two different elements of the Genesis anthropogony and demonstrate the diverse intellectual background on which Valentinus was capable of drawing.

1.1.2.2.1. Fear of the Divine Voice

According to Genesis 3:1-10, having transgressed God’s commandment not to eat from the Tree of Knowledge, Adam and Eve hide from God’s presence upon hearing his φωνή in the garden and becoming “afraid” (3:10; φοβοῦμαι). Valentinus subtly reorients this fear of the divine voice in accord with his anthropogonical myth, whereby it is now Adam who terrifies his creators by virtue of the divine Anthropos “speaking boldly” through him.¹⁵ For

¹⁵ Grammatically, παρρησιαζόμενον has three possible subjects in Fr.1: 1) the πλάσμα Adam; 2) τὸν δεδωκότα; and 3) the σπέρμα τῆς ἄνωθεν οὐσίας. Thomassen (2006a), 443 has demonstrated beyond reasonable doubt that

Valentinus, it is through such speech that Christ reveals the true God: “One is good, who was openly spoken about (οὐ̃ παρρησία) through the manifestation of the Son.”¹⁶ Holzhausen particularly has highlighted how well this accords with the New Testament’s revelatory connotations of παρρησία.¹⁷ Most notable is John 16:25-30, where Jesus promises his disciples that he shall stop talking in riddles and parables, “but will tell you *plainly* (παρρησία) of the Father”, after which his disciples exclaim, “now you are speaking *plainly* (παρρησία) ... by this we believe that you came from God.”¹⁸ There can be little doubt therefore regarding the Christological identity of Valentinus’s pre-existent Anthropos, for to “speak openly” is a revelatory capacity belonging to Christ.

The φόβος experienced by the angels as Christ speaks through Adam is perfectly familiar from theophanic contexts. Whether it is Enoch’s increasing terror as he approaches the enthroned Glory of Ezekiel 1:26-28 (*I En.* 14.8-15.1), or Daniel’s trembling before the anthropomorphic Kabod on the banks of the Tigris (Dan 10; cf. Ezek 1:1-3), φόβος, or a cognate emotional response, is the visionary’s default response to the divine presence¹⁹ and voice.²⁰ Where the mystic is worthy, they are often exhorted with the words, “Do not fear!”²¹

the subject is τὸν δεδωκότα, namely, the pre-existent Anthropos. This is also most likely on grammatical grounds, since the καί coming between τὸν δεδωκότα and the παρρησιαζόμενον speaks strongly in favour of the former as the subject of the latter.

¹⁶ Valentinus Fr.2 in Clement of Alexandria, *Strom.* II 114.3-6; see also Dawson (1992), 140. This is how most modern scholars interpret this problematic sentence, taking the οὐ̃ as an objective genitive (“who was openly spoken about”) as opposed to a subjective genitive (“whose open speech”). If we take it as a subjective genitive, we may translate something like: “One is good, whose open speech was for the sake of the revelation of the Son.” The main objection to such an interpretation is that παρρησία is not a concept which can straightforwardly be attributed to a supreme, transcendent deity; see Stead (1980), 82; Holzhausen (1994), 98 n. 78; Thomassen (2006a), 451 n. 58.

¹⁷ Holzhausen (1994), 98 n.78; cf. Dunderberg (2008), 50 who argues that Adam’s παρρησία is derived from Wis 5:1-2, where “the righteous will stand with great confidence (ἐν παρρησίᾳ)”, causing φόβος among the wicked.

¹⁸ In the New Testament generally, παρρησία has a revelatory sense and is often used in juxtaposition to notions of secrecy, e.g. John 7:4, 26; 11:14, 54; 18:20; Acts 4:13, 29-31; 9:27-28; Eph 6:19-20; 1 John 2:28; or in specifically mystical contexts; e.g. Eph 3:12; Heb 4:16; 10:19.

¹⁹ E.g. Exod 3:6; Dan 10:7, 11; Mark 9:6; Luke 9:34; *I En.* 14.10, 13-14, 24; *2 En.* 21.4; 22.1-4; *4 Ezra* 7.87; *Apoc. Ab.* 11.4; *2 Bar.* 53.12; *3 Bar.* 7.5; *T. Levi* 3.9; *L.A.E.* (Latin) 26.1; cf. Judg 13:6; LXX Ps 103:33; Ezek 1:28; Dan 7:15; *I En.* 89.30; 106.5; *2 En.* 1.7; *4 Ezra* 10.25-27; 12.3-5.

²⁰ E.g. Dan 10:9, 11, 15, 17, 19; Matt 17:6; *I En.* 14.24; 15.1; 102.1-2; *Apoc. Ab.* 10.1-8; 11.4; 17.1-3; *Lad. Jac.* 2.1-3; cf. Ezek 1:28. See the fascinating study in Charlesworth (1986). Charlesworth focuses on Rev 1:12 (Καὶ ἐπέστρεψα βλέπειν τὴν φωνὴν ἣτις ἐλάλει μετ’ ἐμοῦ), which he suggests is best translated literally as, “And I

Of course, many early Christian authors awarded Christ himself with the glorious anthropomorphic extent of God, including Paul and John.²² Indeed, John 12:41 states explicitly that the prophet's vision of the gloriously enthroned κύριος in Isaiah 6:1-3 was in fact a vision of the δόξα of Christ.²³ In light of this, Valentinus's use of this theophanic φόβος motif – most familiar from Jewish apocalypticism – in the context of a Christophany could be indicative of the author's appropriation of Pauline and Johannine Glory-Christologies.²⁴

However, Valentinus has not employed this motif in a straightforward manner, but instead has inverted its original sense to articulate the creator angels' ontological inferiority to their creation. It is no longer the reverential awe of the apocalyptic visionaries, but rather a hostile reaction to an alien presence. Such a reaction is again paralleled in Ophite anthropogony. According to *Orig. World* NHC II,5 115.3-116.25, having received the breath of life from Zoe-Eve, Adam becomes vivified and begins to squirm on the ground where he had earlier been entirely prone. This causes “fear and anxiety” (ἐρεῖτε μὴ προοῦω) among his archontic creators who are ignorant of the provenance of Adam's newfound spiritual

turned around to see the Voice who spoke with me.” He makes this recommendation in light of a range of Jewish apocalyptic texts in which the “voice” (φωνή) appears as a distinct divine hypostasis, even “a member of God's celestial court” (e.g. *Apoc. Sedr.* 2.3-5; *Ascen. Isa.* 9.2; “Apocalypse of Shem” in *CMC* 56-57; *Apoc. Ab.* 9 (cf. 18-19); *EnGiants*; *T. Job* 3.1; *3 Bar.* 11.5; *4 Ezra* 6.13-28; *2 Bar.* 13.1; *Hist. Rech.* 3.1; *Lad. Jac.* 3.1; *Apoc. Adam* NHC V,5 84.4; and *Dan* 7:11; see also Charlesworth (1986), 29-30 on the hypostatized Voice in the Targumic traditions on Genesis 3:8). According to Charlesworth, the Voice in *Rev* 1 is a hypostatization of the Christological Son of Man who is seen in person in 1:13. Orlov (2008) demonstrates that *Apoc. Ab.*'s Slavonic editors carefully avoided anthropomorphic descriptions of the Kabod, replacing them with reference to the divine Voice such that it became hypostatized as the perceptible manifestation of God (cf. *1 Kgs* 19:11-13). Indeed, *Apoc. Ab.* 18.12-19.1 replaces Ezek 1's “like the appearance of a man” with “like the voice of a man”; see Halperin (1988), 108; Orlov (2008), 66-67. Notably for us, *Apoc. Ab.* 9 clearly depicts the Voice as pre-existent, while the *CMC*'s “Apocalypse of Shem” states that the seer Shem is transformed in the divine throne room and reports concerning the Voice, “Blowing a breath of life into my face, he brought an increase in [my] power and glory” (cf. *Gen* 2:7; quoted from Charlesworth (1986), 33).

²¹ E.g. *Gen* 15:1; 28:13; *Isa* 41:10; *Lam* 3:57; *Ezek* 2:1; *Dan* 10:12, 19; *Matt* 17:7; *Rev* 1:17; *1 En.* 15.1; *2 En.* 1.7-8; 20.2; 21.3; 22.5; *Apoc. Ab.* 9.3; 11.4; 16.2; *3 Bar.* 7.6 (Greek); 8.5 (Slavonic); *T. Adam* 3.2; cf. *T. Ab.* 9.4.

²² For Paul's Glory-Christology, see Newman (1992), 157-247; Gieschen (1998), 295-303, 333-339; also, Hurtado (2003), 108-118; for John's Glory-Christology, see Gieschen (1998), 271-280; Hurtado (2003), 374-381. On the principal-angel traditions between Judaism and Christianity (e.g. *Ezek* 1, 8; *Dan* 7, 10; *Rev* 1:13-17; *Apoc. Ab.* 10; *1 En.* 37-71; *T. Ab.* 11-13; etc), the oeuvre of Christopher Rowland is especially helpful; see Rowland (1982), 100-111; idem. (1974), 102-140; idem. (1979); idem. (1980).

²³ Barrett (1978), 432; Hanson (1965), 104-108. See also *John* 1:14-18; 2:11; 8:54; 11:4, 40; 12:23; 13:31-32; 14:13; 16:14-15; 17:1, 5, 22, 24. *John* 1:18 also carries the implication that for John, the enthroned figure of Jewish theophanic tradition is in fact Christ; see Gieschen (1998), 273; Segal (1977), 213-214.

²⁴ On the possibility of Valentinus's debt to early Jewish mystical traditions of the Kabod, see Quispel (1974b); idem. (1980a), 7; idem. (1996a), 340.

component.²⁵ But although the archons' affections are actually assuaged once this spiritual breath identifies itself through the wriggling Adam's mouth, Painchaud is surely correct in detecting irony in their response, since the spirit's stated aim is "the destruction of their work".²⁶ Indeed, it is only when the archons see that Adam still cannot stand upright that they become "glad" and withdraw to their respective heavens, apparently satisfied that Adam's spiritual element is not nearly as powerful as it presumes. However, when Zoe-Eve herself descends to Adam for instruction, he is vivified further, finally standing upright. At this, the archons become "greatly troubled" (ὤτροπῆ ἑματε), for they recognise Zoe-Eve as the divine likeness upon which they modelled Adam.

Similarly in *Ap. John*, upon receiving a spiritual spark, Adam is empowered, enlightened, and is endowed with a superior intellect to that of his archontic creators. This causes "jealousy" (κῶζ) among Ialdabaoth's powers who therefore seek to corrupt and imprison him.²⁷ Thomassen notes a further parallel with the later Valentinian work, *Gos. Phil.* NHC II,3 70.22-30, where having received his spiritual component, Adam "[spoke] words incomprehensible to the powers", causing them to "envy" (ἔβασκανε) him.²⁸ To be sure, there are variations in detail. For example, *Ap. John* states that Adam received his spiritual element when Ialdabaoth was tricked into imbuing him with it, *Orig. World* states that Zoe-Eve delivers the breath of life to Adam directly, *Gos. Phil.* states that it is from "his mother" (probably also Zoe-Eve as "Mother of the Living"; Gen 3:20), while Valentinus implies that Adam receives this from the Christological pre-existent Anthropos. There is also disagreement regarding whether Adam's spiritual status is marked by his ability to stand upright, or speak/think in an exalted manner, as well as the emotions that such demonstrations of power prompt from his inferior creators, which usually centre on fear and

²⁵ See also the Ophite anthropogony in Epiphanius, *Pan.* XXXVII 4.1-4.

²⁶ Painchaud (1995), 409.

²⁷ *Ap. John* NHC II,1 19.15-20.9 (= NHC IV,1 29.24-31.3); cf. NHC III,1 23.19-24.24; BG 51.1-52.17.

²⁸ Thomassen (2006a), 446-448.

jealousy.²⁹ Nonetheless, all represent variations on a related mytheme in which having received a divine insufflation, Adam performs acts which transcend his lowly origins and therefore inspire hostility among his creators. In electing to have the angels experience φόβος at Christ's audible revelation, Valentinus uses a theophanic literary motif to develop this gnostic mythological *topos*. However, the angels are also said to become terrified at the realisation that this divine figure “stands within” Adam.

1.1.2.2.2. Adam as Cult-Statue

The modern distinction between representations and their referents does not apply to antiquity, particularly in devotional contexts, where a cult image could be understood to quite literally manifest the presence of its divine referent.³⁰ Valentinus draws on this idea to speculate still further on the angels' fear, comparing it to how human artisans come to fear the statues and images that they create in the names of gods. He accomplishes the analogy through his use of the verb καθίστημι to express how the angels became terrified at the pre-existent Anthropos's “standing within” (ἐν αὐτῷ καθεστῶτος) Adam. The verb καθίστημι more literally means “set down, place, erect” and was commonly used of devotional artefacts like statues and cult icons.³¹ The implication appears to be that Adam has been created like a cult statue through which its Christological model can be made present, thereby causing panic among the demiurgic angels. This notion has some precedent in biblical interpretation.

Fletcher-Louis notes that already in the Hebrew of Genesis 1:26, the notion of being created “in the *tselem* of God” employs a phrase usually reserved for cult images.³² Philo was

²⁹ Cf. Irenaeus, *Haer.* I 30.11; *Exc.* 77.3.

³⁰ See e.g. Herring (2008); Krulak (2011); Welz (2011); Fletcher-Louis (2015), 281-285.

³¹ E.g. Dan 2-3.

³² E.g. Num 33:52; 1 Sam 6:5, 11; 2 Kgs 11:18 = 2 Chr 23:17; Ezek 7:20; 16:17; 23:24; Amos 5:26; Dan 2:31, 32, 34; see Welz (2011), 76; Fletcher-Louis (2015), 281-291. On Adam as cult-statue, see Janowski (2004); Herring (2008); Fletcher-Louis (2015), 281-285. Similar semantic nuances exist for εικόν (LXX Gen 1:26) in this context; see Hultgren (2003), 369 who points out that in both Philo and Paul there is a conceptual overlap between being created “in the image of God” on the one hand, and being “the image of God” itself on the other.

apparently attuned to this nuance when he interpreted Adam's pneumatic insufflation from Genesis 2:7 in terms of the animation of a cult statue. In forming Adam – “this anthropomorphic statue” (τὸν ἀνθρωποειδῆ τοῦτον ἀνδριάντα) – God takes extra care on the grounds that “a sacred dwelling-place or temple (οἶκος γὰρ τις ἢ νεὼς ἱερὸς) was being fashioned for the rational soul, which he (Adam) was to carry as a holy image (ἀγαλματοφορήσειν), the most Godlike of all images (ἀγαλμάτων τὸ θεοειδέστατον).”³³ Philo seems to combine the metaphor of Adam's body as “statue”, “shrine”, and “temple” on account of their shared capacity for housing deities and thereby making them manifest to lesser creatures.³⁴ According to Philo, Genesis 2:7 therefore describes the moment when the Adamic cult-statue of Genesis 1:26 becomes animated with a soul, an image of God.

Philo provides an excellent precedent for what we have in Valentinus Fr.1, where Adam is compared to manmade ἀνδριάντες καὶ εἰκόνες. In being analogous to such cult images, Adam represents the vessel into which the Christological Anthropos can descend and “stand” (καθίστημι).³⁵ Hence, although it is unclear whether Valentinus would have been

In Philo, the Logos is “the man after the image” (*Conf.* 146), but also the image of God itself (*Leg.* 3 96; *Conf.* 62, 97, 147; *Fug.* 101; *Somn.* 1 239; *Somn.* 2 45; *Spec.* 1 81); likewise, “the first man” is “in the image of God” (*Opif.* 25), but also the image itself (*Virt.* 203). In Paul, both Christ (2 Cor 4:4; Col 1:15) and ordinary men (1 Cor 11:7) are “the image and glory of God”, while humans are also transformed into the image of Christ, who is himself the image of God (1 Cor 15:49; 2 Cor 3:18). Fletcher-Louis (2015), 263-266 also highlights the ambiguity in the use of *beth* in Gen 1:26: “[it] can be treated either as a *beth essentiae* (‘let us make man *as* our image’) or as a *beth pretii* (‘let us make man *in the place of, instead of*’ and, therefore, ‘*for* our image’).” Cf. Welz (2011), 76.

³³ *Opif.* 137; cf. *Opif.* 69 *QG* 1 5; *Somn.* 2 223; *Spec.* 4 238; *Legat.* 210-211; *Mos.* 1 27; *Mut.* 21; see van Kooten (2008a), 200-201; idem. (2008b). The same metaphor of the mind as a temple in which the intellect stood as a living statue, the true image of God, is found later among Neoplatonists; e.g. Porphyry, *Marc.* 11; *Abst.* 2.49.3; Plotinus, *Enn.* 1.6.9.13; see Krulak (2011), 360. Van Kooten (2008a); idem. (2008b) identifies similar ideas among pagans like Plutarch, as well as in Paul's thought, particularly in 1 and 2 Cor.

³⁴ Cf. *Opif.* 83 in which the newly-created Adam causes consternation among the animals, who are said to worship him.

³⁵ Cf. Dunderberg (2008), 48-49. In the Naassene Sermon, (Hippolytus *Haer.* V 7.6-7), it is said of Adam that he is “the man, whom the earth alone yielded; but he lay lifeless, motionless, like a statue (ὡς ἀνδριάντα), being an image (εἰκόνα) of that one above who is hymned as the Adamantine Man.” However, although this report contains the theme of Adam as an ἀνδριάντης καὶ εἰκόνος, the actual thought being expressed is slightly different to what we have in Fr.1. Adam is pictured as a “statue” by Hippolytus's “Chaldeans” in order to articulate his inanimate, lifeless nature prior to receiving a soul via the breath of life, whereas for Valentinus, Adam's similarity to a statue is precisely what makes it possible for him to receive the spiritual seed/breath of life. Cf. Dodd (1965), 110-111 actually suggests that the Naassene doctrine of the Ἀρχάνθρωπος, who is the model for

sensitive to such linguistic nuances in the Hebrew of Genesis 1:26, he may have known of the tradition of Adam as God’s cult statue, a receptacle for the divine presence, from sources such as Philo with whom he shared a common intellectual background.³⁶ Of course, John 1:14’s declaration that the Christological Logos “tabernacled among us” (ἐσκήνωσεν ἐν ἡμῖν) in the person of Jesus also uses cultic vocabulary to articulate the pre-existent Christ’s indwelling of a created human whose body functions as a “temple” (ναὸς; John 2:19-21). Likewise for Paul, Christ is the pre-existent “image of the invisible God” (Col 1:15) who – via the incarnation – transformed Jesus into the one in whom “the fullness of deity dwells bodily” (Col 2:9).

Unlike Philo however, Valentinus suggests that Adam is capable of manifesting the Christological Anthropos – the “seed of higher substance” – not on account of his being created κατ’ εἰκόνα αὐτοῦ, but rather εἰς ὄνομα αὐτοῦ. As Thomassen observes, this terminological shift from creation “according to the image” to “in the name” probably occurs for reasons related to baptism – to be discussed below – but more significantly denotes “the spiritual component that makes the created human into more than a mere *plasma* and gives him a shared nature with his model.”³⁷ It is this shared nature with his model, or rather his model’s presence within the *plasma*, that so terrifies the angels that they attack their creation.

1.1.2.3. The Corruption of Adam

Angelic hostility towards Adam is familiar from a range of Jewish apocrypha and rabbinic writings. Perhaps the earliest and most famous account is found in *LAE* 12-17 which describes how Satan refused the archangel Michael’s command to worship the created

the earthly Adam and provides the latter with a soul, is that from which Valentinus’s concept of the “pre-existent Anthropos” is derived.

³⁶ Similar notions of the pre-existent Christ’s indwelling of Adam appear in Jewish-Christian sources, e.g. Epiphanius, *Pan.* XXX 3.5 (on the Ebionites); LIII 1.8 (on the Elchasaites); *Acts Thom.* 10; see Fossum (1983), 267-271. On the concept of Adam as the legitimate bearer of divine εἰκόνας in later polemics against pagan idolatry, see Reed (2013), 372-376.

³⁷ Thomassen (2006a), 442.

(*plasma*) Adam – “the image of the Lord God” – on the grounds that as the younger creature, Adam ought to worship him.³⁸ Facing the prospect of God’s wrath, Satan threatens to enthrone himself in heaven in the manner of God (cf. Isa 14:13-14), but only succeeds in being ejected from heaven along with his angelic horde. From these primordial events derive all of Satan’s “enmity, envy, and anger” towards Adam, culminating in his deception of Eve in the Garden. At hearing this, Adam cries out, “O Lord, my God ... remove far from me this my opponent, who seeks to corrupt (*perdere*) my soul, and give me his glory which he himself has squandered (*perdidit*).”³⁹

The pericope bears witness to a widespread and influential tradition among Jews and Christians of the first centuries CE.⁴⁰ Indeed, the tradition can be glimpsed among New Testament authors, such as in the angels’ worship (προσκυνησάτωσαν) of the enthroned Christ in Hebrews 1:6, or in the Matthean Temptation narrative where Satan attempts to have Jesus – the Second Adam – do what he feels the first Adam ought to have done: worship him.⁴¹ Valentinus possibly draws on this tradition in having the angels react with hostility to Adam’s embodiment and manifestation of divine Glory.⁴² However, in light of Valentinus’s notion that the angels ἠφάνισαν Adam, stronger parallels may be located elsewhere.

³⁸ For dating, see Johnson in *OTP* 2:251-252. Johnson suggests a hypothetical Palestinian Hebrew original dating to the late first-century CE, while the Latin and Greek translations likely were likely made between c. 100 CE and 400 CE. For a concise account of the complex manuscript tradition for the “Primary Adam Book”, see Stone (1993).

³⁹ This *perdere* may translate ἀφανίζειν from a Greek *Vorlage*, although ἀπόλλυμι (“destroy”) is more likely (cf. *Apoc. Mos.* 19.1).

⁴⁰ See 2 *En.* 21-22; *Apoc. Sedr.* 5.2-3; *Quest. Barth.* 4.52-55; *Cav. Tr.*; *Discourse on Abbaton*; on the rabbinic polemics against the idea that Adam was to be worshipped, see Altmann (1945), 371-391; Ginzberg (1968), 62-64; Barc (1975); Segal (1977), 108-115; Fossum (1996); Anderson (2000), 83-110. On 2 *En.* 22.6, where God is said to “test” the angels regarding their feelings about the exaltation of Enoch to see if they have learnt their lesson from their rejection of Adam, see Stone (1993), 148; Anderson (2000), 99-102.

⁴¹ See Orlov (2011), 107-112; Marcus (2003), 55-56. The account in Mark 1:12-13 is much shorter, lacking key details, while Luke 4:1-13 does not have the angels wait on Jesus, and omits both the πεισῶν of Matt 4:9 as well as the scene with the devil and Jesus upon the “mountain”. This latter omission is crucial since the divine presence, the Kabod, was often imagined atop a mountain.

⁴² Dunderberg (2008), 52 notes the tradition in *LAE* 12-17 in relation to Fr.1, but rejects any possible connections on the grounds that in *LAE* 12-17, the angels worship Adam, while in Fr.1 there is an antagonistic relationship between them. This overlooks the point that in *LAE* 12-17 it is only the *righteous* angels that worship Adam, while the devil, an angel, and his cohort refuse to do so and become enemies of Adam. If the

The precise sense of ἀφανίζειν here is uncertain, and it has received a variety of interpretations.⁴³ As well as meaning “make disappear”, “hide”, “conceal”, and the like, it can also have the more sinister sense of “spoil”, “corrupt”, or even “destroy”.⁴⁴ Marksches translates it as “verderben” on the grounds that certain intertestamental literature, especially *I Enoch* 1-36 (“The Book of the Watchers”), describes the fallen angels’ corruption of God’s creation based on Genesis 6:1-6 using ἀφανίζειν (*I En.* 10.7). This corruption, inspired by fear, is Valentinus’s attempt at theodicy, which for Marksches is the principal subject of Fr.1.⁴⁵ Holzhausen has plausibly suggested that ἀφανίζειν is an allusion to the use of κρύπτειν in Genesis 3:8 and 10, and therefore is to be associated with the Sündenfall.⁴⁶ He translates it as “verstecken”, so that for Valentinus it is no longer Adam who hides from God, but the angels who hide Adam.⁴⁷ Most recently, Thomassen, translating it as “doing away”, has argued that ἀφανίζειν ought to be understood as a reference to the creation of the material body for Adam, who had previously been created as a purely psychic being. In this way, it functions as an allusion to the “garment of skin” placed upon Adam in Genesis 3:21.⁴⁸

angels of Fr.1 have been coloured by traditions such as are found in *LAE* 12-17, it is clearly the diabolical angels which have exerted the influence.

⁴³ For good overviews of previous interpretations, see Marksches (1992), 51; Holzhausen (1994), 99-101.

⁴⁴ It is unclear to me how Festugière (1949a), 204 interprets Fr.1’s ἀφανίζειν as “détruire”, but φόβος as the equivalent of θάμβος denoting “crainte révérentielle, terreur sacrée”. These seem to me to be mutually exclusive translations.

⁴⁵ Marksches (1992), 28, 51-52; indeed, for Marksches, the angelic creators in Fr.1 stand in the tradition of Platonizing Jewish theology in which the angels (Philo, *Conf.* 181; *Fug.* 70), or “young gods” (Plato, *Tim.* 41c-d; 42d-43a; 69c-92b), assist the supreme God in creation and account for the existence of evil in the world. On Philo’s creator-angels, see Fossum (1985), 197-204; cf. Schäfer (2012), 174-178. I am unconvinced that Valentinus is here concerned with theodicy. Dunderberg (2008), 47-48 rightly notes that Fr.1 shows no real interest in explaining the *origin* of fear and/or evil; also, Holzhausen (1994), 95 argues that the issue for Valentinus is not “*unde malum?*”, but rather, “*unde homo et quomodo?*”.

⁴⁶ Cf. *Gen. Rab.* 12.6; the fourth generation Amora, R. Berekiah, states that although Adam’s Glory and its accompanying features (“his lustre, his immortality, his height, the fruit of the earth, the fruit of trees, and the luminaries”) were created “in their fullness”, “when Adam sinned they were spoiled”, and will not return until the eschatological age of the Messiah; also *Gen. Rab.* 21.5; *Num. Rab.* 13.12; *Tg. Ps.-J.* on Gen 2:25. Also, according to a tradition ascribed to the first-century Tanna, Simeon b. Yohai, in *Num. Rab.* 11.3, prior to his sin, Adam could withstand the *bath qol*, but after his disobedience, he was forced to hide from it. See Scroggs (1966), 33-38. The same essential idea is found in Rom 3:23; see Dunn (1989), 101-103.

⁴⁷ Holzhausen (1994), 83-84, 100-101.

⁴⁸ Thomassen (2006a), 448-450.

I concur with Thomassen that ἀφανίζεῖν functions as an allusion to Adam’s reception of a “garment of skin” understood here to be the means of negating Adam’s “seed of higher substance”. Therefore, ἠφάνισαν could be translated as “they concealed” in the sense that Adam quite literally receives some kind of covering. On the other hand, the implication is that when the angels ἠφάνισαν Adam, they attempt to injure him somehow. Hence the translation “they spoil” seems preferable insofar as Adam’s reception of a “garment of skin” is perceived as a burden which causes his prior condition to deteriorate. According to Irenaeus, later followers of the Valentinian Ptolemy interpreted Genesis 3:21 in a similar manner, understanding the χιτῶνας δερματίνους as “the sensible flesh” (τὸ αἰσθητὸν σαρκίον) with which Adam was covered after having been created by the demiurge out of a mixture of ψυχή and ὕλη, and then having secretly received a spiritual seed from his mother, Sophia-Achamoth.⁴⁹ Closer still is *Ap. John*, where the archons construct a fleshly body for the psychic Adam in order to subdue the spiritual power with which he has been covertly endowed.⁵⁰ This material body is a “tomb”, a “bond of forgetfulness”, through which Adam becomes “a mortal man”.⁵¹

Although it is unclear to what extent one may extrapolate these texts’ tripartite anthropological ontologies for the interpretation of Valentinus Fr.1, such a framework certainly allows for a cogent reading of the text. For Valentinus, Adam was created psychic by the demiurgic angels (Gen 1:26-27), he then received a σπέρμα of spiritual substance (Gen 2:7) causing consternation among his creators (cf. Gen 3:8-10), who panic and attempt to negate this alien presence via a material body (Gen 3:21). Indeed for Valentinus (Fr.2), the angelic plot to ἀφανίζεῖν Adam’s glorious condition is only reversed through the φανέρωσις of Christ in which the Father is revealed anew.

⁴⁹ Irenaeus, *Haer.* I 5.5-6.

⁵⁰ *Ap. John* NHC II,1 20.32-21.14 (=NHC IV,1 32.5-26ff); cf. NHC II,1 26.3-27.1; BG 54.9-55.15.

⁵¹ For comparison of Fr.1 with Ophite texts, see Quispel (1980b); Thomassen (2006a), 449-450; Dunderberg (2005b), 75-76; idem. (2008), 47-52; Brakke (2010), 101-102.

1.1.3. Fragment 1: Conclusion

Fr.1 represents Valentinus's rewriting of Genesis 1-3 in which he reinterprets a) the two anthropogonies of 1:26-27 and 2:7, and b) Adam's reception of a "garment of skin" from 3:21. He interprets Genesis 1:26-27 as the creation of Adam's psychic body by inferior angels, Genesis 2:7 as Adam's reception of a spiritual element from a superior divine emissary, and Genesis 3:21 as the angels' attempt to stifle Adam's spiritual component through the burden of flesh. In doing so, Valentinus displays a level of acquaintance with Ophite anthropogony, especially that of *Ap. John*, possibly indicating his use of some version of that text, or more likely a shared source or tradition.⁵² However, one of the central themes of Fr.1 – the angels' fear at the divine presence being manifested through Adam – appears to be derived not from Ophite mythology, but rather from theophanic motifs familiar from Jewish apocalypticism. Such motifs were subsequently employed by New Testament authors, most notably Paul and John, in articulating the exalted nature of Jesus. Therefore, in addition to taking inspiration from certain Gnostic traditions, Valentinus has produced a more explicitly Christian anthropogony by drawing on Pauline and Johannine Glory-Christologies in light of their backgrounds in Jewish apocalyptic theophany.

1.2. Valentinus Fragment 5

1.2.1. Text and Translation

<p>ὅποσον ἐλάττων ἢ εἰκὼν τοῦ ζῶντος προσώπου, τοσοῦτον ἦσσαν ὁ κόσμος τοῦ ζῶντος αἰῶνος. τίς οὖν αἰτία τῆς εἰκόνο; μεγαλωσύνη τοῦ προσώπου παρεσχημένου τῷ ζωγράφῳ τὸν τύπον, ἵνα τιμηθῇ δι' ὀνόματος αὐτοῦ · οὐ γὰρ ἀθηντικῶς εὐρέθη μορφή, ἀλλὰ τὸ ὄνομα ἐπλήρωσεν τὸ ὑστερήσαν ἐν πλάσει. συνεργεῖ δὲ καὶ τὸ τοῦ θεοῦ ἀόρατον εἰς πίστιν τοῦ πεπλασμένου.</p>	<p>As much as the image is inferior to the living face, so too is the cosmos inferior to the living aeon. So, what is the cause of the image? It is the majesty of the face that provided the model for the painter, so that it (the image) might be honoured through his Name. For the form was not found authentically, but the Name filled up the deficiency in the modelled figure. But God's</p>
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⁵² For similar conclusions, see Thomassen (2006a), 450-451; Dunderberg (2008), 49-52; Quispel (1980b), 120-121.

invisibility also contributes to the faith of that which has been modelled.⁵³

In Fr.5, Valentinus draws on Platonic ontology to articulate the inferiority of “modelled figures” in relation to their ideal types. He uses two examples: 1) the relationship of the created world to the “living aeon”,⁵⁴ and 2) the relationship of the “image” to the “living face”, most likely referring to the created human shape compared to its divine model.⁵⁵ However, Valentinus is not primarily concerned with the relationship between model and image, but rather with how this ontological gap is obviated through the power of “the Name”. In other words, he is concerned not with abstract philosophy, but with soteriology. In expressing the saving transformative power of the Name, Valentinus relies on language shaped by Philippians 2:5-11 and 3:21.

1.2.2. Fragment 5 and Philippians 2:5-11, 3:21

According to Paul in Philippians 2:5-11,⁵⁶ Christ was once “in the form of God” (ἐν μορφῇ θεοῦ), but at his incarnation he “emptied (ἐκένωσεν) himself, taking the form of a slave

⁵³ In Clement of Alexandria, *Strom.* IV 89.6-90.1.

⁵⁴ There are several different scholarly interpretations of what this “living Aeon” refers to; the Platonic world of Ideas (e.g. Leisegang (1985), 285); God himself (e.g. Sagnard (1947), 124; Schüngel (1999), 373-374); both of these (e.g. Marksches (1992), 155-157); the transcendent world of later Valentinianism (e.g. Sagnard (1947), 561; Thomassen (2006a), 466). Marksches (1992), 155-166 is surely correct in identifying a Platonic background for the phrase (*Tim.* 37d; cf. *Tim.* 37c – created world as an ἄγαλμα of the gods); see also Dawson (1992), 134-135; Stead (1980), 83-86. However, Marksches (1992), 164-166 seems mistaken that this is evidence of disagreement between Valentinus and later Valentinians; cf. Thomassen (2006a), 466 n.93.

⁵⁵ *Contra* Sagnard (1947), 124, and Thomassen (2006a), 465-473, who understand the subject of Fr.5 to be the cosmos generally, as opposed to individual humans. Rather, the language of πλάσις suggests the human form in the manner of Fr.1, where it is applied to Adam’s imperfect moulding; see Dawson (1992), 143-144. Further, concerning the final sentence of Fr.5, it is unclear whether a quality like “faith” can be ascribed to an impersonal entity like the cosmos. Rather, the passage seems concerned with personal transformation, as opposed to a cosmic event.

⁵⁶ While most scholars still hold to a pre-Pauline origin for the hymn, in defence of Pauline authorship, see Bockmuehl (1997), 2-3; Justnes (2012). Hooker (1978), 152 notes that “even if the material is non-Pauline, we may expect Paul himself to have interpreted it and used it in a Pauline manner.” Similarly, Fee (1995), 43-46, 192-193 n.3. A common position in older scholarship is that Phil 2:5-11 has its conceptual background in the “Gnostic” *Urmensch* myth; e.g. Käsemann (1968), 45-88; Wengst (1972), 149-156; Schenke (1973), 218-220; Hamerton-Kelly (1973), 156-168. The rejection of a pre-Christian origin for any “Gnostic *Urmensch* myth” of course means that the direction of influence, if there is one, runs from Paul to these “Gnostics”, whoever they are, and not vice versa.

(μορφήν δούλου)⁵⁷, by which he means that Christ took on a human “likeness” (ὁμοιώματι) or “shape” (σχήματι).⁵⁸ Having obeyed God’s will to the point of crucifixion, God “highly exalted him” and “gave him the Name that is above every name” (ἔχαρίσατο αὐτῷ τὸ ὄνομα τὸ ὑπὲρ πᾶν ὄνομα). By virtue of this Name all things should recognise his authority and make the confession “Jesus Christ is Lord” (κύριος Ἰησοῦς Χριστός). Philippians 3:21 extends this to the salvation of all believers, for through the same “power” (ἐνέργειαν) that made Jesus “Lord”, all believers will be “transformed” so as to be “conformed to his body of glory” (σύμμορφον τῷ σώματι τῆς δόξης αὐτοῦ; cf. Rom 8:29). Since in Christ’s case this glorifying power was the gift of the Divine Name, it follows that the same goes for those who shall be conformed to his glory in the future.

Using the same logic as Ephesians 1:20-23, Valentinus speaks of how the gift of the Divine Name functions to “fill up the deficiency” (ἐπλήρωσεν τὸ ὑστερήσαν) in the human form, thereby reversing the process that Christ underwent when he “emptied (ἐκένωσεν) himself, taking the form of a slave.”⁵⁹ The implication is that through this process of “filling

⁵⁷ Most commentators understand vv.6-7a to refer to a time before Christ’s incarnation; e.g. Wanamaker (1987); Habermann (1990), 115; Bockmuehl (1997), 10; Hurtado (2003), 121; Lietaert Peerbolte (2006), 197-198; also Hamerton-Kelly (1973), 156-168; but cf. Dunn (1989), 113-125.

⁵⁸ On the Adam-Christology of vv. 6-7, whereby Adam was in the εἰκὼν of God (Gen 1:26) and *did* try to seize equality with God (Gen 3:5), while Christ was in the μορφή of God but refused to do so, see Hunter (1940), 46; Cullmann (1963), 177-181; Murphy-O’Connor (1976); Dunn (1989), 114-121; idem. (1998a); Steenburg (1990), 98-101; Edwards (2009), 28-29. However, Bockmuehl (1997), 8-11, argues that this interpretation relies on a naïve equation of μορφή in Phil 2:6 with εἰκὼν in Gen 1:26, on which see below. He also suggests that the parallels with Gen 3 are weak in general, since there it is Eve who is tempted by the prospect of becoming like God, not Adam. See also Wanamaker (1987), 179-180. Others treat μορφή and εἰκὼν as near-synonyms along with δόξα, e.g. Cullmann (1963), 174-181; Martin (1967), 102-120; Fossum (1983), 263-264; Kim (1984), 193-233; Fossum (1985), 284, 293-295; Wanamaker (1987), 186-187; Orlov (2007a), 275-277. Against such synonymity, see, Steenburg (1988); Bockmuehl (1997), 8; Hurtado (2003), 121-122. Nonetheless, their conceptual proximity is clear. Dunn (1998b), 284, notes that it is precisely because μορφή and εἰκὼν are “near synonyms” that Paul’s “allusion” to Gen 1:26 in Phil 2:6 is made possible: “What more could one look for in making an effective allusion?” Cf. Hurtado (2003), 122: “For allusions to work one must use, or at least adapt, at least a word or two from the alluded-to text so that readers can catch the allusion.”

⁵⁹ Cf. Stroumsa (1983), 282-284 suggests that the use of κένω in Phil 2:7 implies that Christ, before his incarnation, was identical to the πλήρωμα. While I disagree with Stroumsa’s suggestion that Christ’s πλήρωμα is derived from the cosmic proportions of the “Jewish pre-Christian *macranthropos*” familiar from Jewish *shi’ur qomah* mysticism, he is correct to note the implied juxtaposition between Christ’s κένωμα and πλήρωμα in Phil 2:5-11. Similarly, *Exc.* 31 contrasts the πλήρωμα and κένωμα wrought by knowledge and ignorance respectively with the κένωμα of ignorance being characterised as “a shadow of the Name, which is the Son, a form of the Aeons.” See Sagnard (1947), 561.

up”, the believer’s ontological deficiency – that which Christ took upon himself in surrendering the μορφή θεοῦ in favour of the μορφή δούλου – is obviated and they are transformed to a nature equal to that of their model, the divine Glory.⁶⁰ Indeed, Valentinus’s notion of an innate human ὑστέρημα – a term closely related to κένωμα – is likely derived from Romans 3:23, where all humans “lack the glory of God” (ὑστεροῦνται τῆς δόξης τοῦ θεοῦ) on account of sin. For Valentinus, to overcome this ὑστέρημα through the Name is to be conformed to this Glory.⁶¹ Valentinus gestures towards this glorious archetype via two technical terms, πρόσωπον and μεγαλωσύνη, that is, the divine μορφή which was not authentically reproduced in the act of creation.⁶²

Firstly, for Valentinus it is through the Divine Name that the deficient human product shall be conformed to ὁ ζῶων πρόσωπον (“the living face/countenance”), that is, the anthropomorphic archetype upon which the human form was based – the pre-existent Anthropos of Fr.1.⁶³ Such language is developed by *Tri. Trac.*, where not only is Christ “a manifestation of the Father’s face (ζο)” (91.33-34),⁶⁴ but the spiritual seed are emitted as “visible images of the living faces (ΝΙΖΟ ΕΤΑΝΖ)” (90.31-32), with the latter phrase designating the Aeons insofar as they collectively constitute Christ himself. This notion of the

⁶⁰ The process suggests that for Valentinus, the exalted status of the risen Christ is equal to that of his pre-incarnate condition (e.g. John 12:28; 16:26; 17:8-11). On the other hand, Bockmuehl (1997), 21-22 speaks of “the unequal beginning and ending of the divine ‘U-Turn’ in 2:6-11”, in the sense that the exalted Christ is superior even to his pre-incarnate self by virtue of his reception of the Divine Name; also Wanamaker (1987), 189-190; Dunn (1989), 118-119. However, the use of πληρόω in Fr.5 may imply that for Valentinus, the divine U-Turn began and ended at identical points. For the saving power of the Name in biblical literature, see Joel 2:32; quoted in Acts 2:21; 4:12; Rom 10:13; cf. *1 En.* 48.7; Gen 12:8; 13:4; 26:25; Pss 98:6; 104:1; Acts 2:38; 9:14; 22:16; 1 Cor 1:2; 6:11. See Daniélou (1964), 149; Hurtado (1998), 108-109.

⁶¹ Cf. *Exc.* 35.1 equates Christ’s act of “emptying himself” with his protological crossing of the Pleromatic Όρος when he descended to Sophia’s aid, whom *Exc.* 22.7 describes as struggling in a state of ὑστέρημα. Evidently the notions of an anthropological κένωμα or ὑστέρημα are closely related antonyms to the Christological πλήρωμα.

⁶² Phil 2:6 and 7 are the only uses of μορφή in the entire Pauline corpus, while Mark 16:12 furnishes the only other New Testament usage in denoting the “form” of Jesus’s post-resurrection appearance on the road to Emmaus; see Martin (1967), 99; Bockmuehl (1997), 6. However, Paul regularly uses cognate verbs; see van Kooten (2008b).

⁶³ Cf. *2 En.* 44.1: “The Lord with his own two hands created mankind; in a facsimile of his own face.”

⁶⁴ *Tri. Trac.* NHC I,5 66.14-14 calls Christ “the face of the invisibility” (ΠΖΟ ΗΠΙΑΤΝΕΥ ΑΡΑΦ). Thomassen and Painchaud (1989), 310 reconstruct the original Greek as τὸ πρόσωπον τοῦ ἀόρατου.

divine “face” was often employed as a technical term denoting God’s anthropomorphic extent or Glory, especially in theophanic settings.⁶⁵ In fact, in the mystical transformation of apocalyptic seers, it is very often their “face” which reflects the transformation, occasionally appropriating God’s Glory to such an extent that other humans must be shielded from the visionary’s newly acquired radiance.⁶⁶ For Paul (2 Cor 3:12-4:6), this protective veil – conceptually derived from the temple veil which concealed the enthroned *Kabod* of YHWH – has now been set aside thereby revealing “the glory of God in the face (ἐν προσώπῳ) of Jesus Christ” through which the believer is “transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another.” The believer is gradually conformed to Christ’s *πρόσωπον*, the divine Glory.⁶⁷ For Valentinus, this is accomplished via the Divine Name.

Secondly, for Valentinus it is the “majesty” (μεγαλωσύνη) of the archetypal “face” that functions as the “cause” (αἰτία) of the human image; that is, its ability to reflect, however dimly, its divine model.⁶⁸ The majestic face “causes” the human *plasma* in this respect by virtue of providing the ideal *τύπος* to the “painter”. As Markschiefs points out, according to the Septuagint, intertestamental literature, and the New Testament, *μεγαλωσύνη* is a quality frequently reserved for God alone, occasionally being conveyed to certain elect humans.⁶⁹ It

⁶⁵ E.g. Ex 33:18-23; LXX Ps 16:15; *1 En.* 14.21; *2 En.* 22.1-4; 39.3-6; *Lad. Jac.* 1.4-8; see Orlov (2007b); idem. (2007c). Clement of Alexandria, *Strom.* IV 89.4-5 actually claims that Valentinus composed Fr.4 and 5 as partial commentaries on Ex 33:20. However, Schüngel (1999), 371-373 suggests that this is the invention of Clement, and not original to Valentinus. See also the ministering angels in Matt 18:10; cf. *1 En.* 52.9; 89.22; *2 En.* 18.8; 21-22; [J] 39.5; [A] 55.1; 67.2; *Odes Sol.* 36.3. On the “angels of the face” (*mal’akhe panim*) at Qumran, see Schäfer (2006), 40-45. On the semantic connections between *πρόσωπον* and *δόξα* see Kim (1984), 223-233.

⁶⁶ E.g. Ex 34:29-35 (cf. Matt 17:1-8); *2 En.* [J] 37; *Ascen. Isa.* 7.25; cf. 9.33; see Orlov (2007a), 273-274.

⁶⁷ See Segal (2008), 25-30; Gieschen (1998), 333-337.

⁶⁸ *Tri. Trac.* NHC I,5 78.29-80.11 reworks the same logic to articulate the evil nature of the material powers. They are produced by the fallen Logos as imperfect copies of the perfect Aeons, thereby deriving their names and beauty as mere “shadows”, for “they are made beautiful through imitation (ΤΑΝ[ΤΗΝ]); for the face of the reflection (ΔΩΛΟΝ, Gk. εἰδωλον) derives its beauty from that of which it is a reflection.” However, being begotten through the Logos’s “arrogant thought” (ΠΜΕΕΥΕ ΨΗΝΧΑΙΖΗΤ), these material powers refuse to acknowledge those above them, and instead “lust for power” among themselves. Hence their end is destruction. See commentary in Thomassen and Painchaud (1989), 345; also Dunderberg (2006).

⁶⁹ E.g. 1 Chr 29:11; Job 37:22; Ps 103:1; Heb 1:3-4; 8:1. Markschiefs (1992), 174 cites *T. Levi* 18:8 and *1 Clem.* 36:2 as examples of where God’s *μεγαλωσύνη* comes to be borne by human beings, specifically priests. However, human kings were also known to claim it for themselves; e.g. 1 Esd 4:46; Dan (Old Greek) 4:34b; (Theodotion) 4:19(22), 33(36); 5:18, 19; 7:27.

often refers to God's Name specifically,⁷⁰ such that the high priest who bore the Divine Name upon his diadem could be described as exhibiting the μεγαλωσύνη of God himself.⁷¹ Indeed, the high-priestly Christ of Hebrews 1:3-4 is said to be enthroned beside God's μεγαλωσύνη in heaven by virtue of receiving the Divine Name and thereby coming to embody "the radiance of God's Glory" (ἀπαύγασμα τῆς δόξης αὐτοῦ).⁷² Similarly for Valentinus, it is through the Divine Name that ontologically deficient humans can be "filled up" so as to be conformed to the majestic countenance of their model, the divine Glory itself.⁷³

1.3. Valentinus Fragments 1 and 5: A Synthesis

The common concern of Fr.1 and 5 is the ontological gap between humans and God. Fr.1 diagnoses this divide as the result of Adam's original loss of divine Glory at the hands of his inferior angelic creators. Fr.5 then recommends that by receiving the Divine Name, humans can be conformed to God's Glory once more. Jesus thereby provides the soteriological model for all humans, since in being endowed with the Divine Name he became "Lord", κύριος-YHWH.⁷⁴

Notably, with the exception of the demiurgic angels, this would suffice as a statement of Pauline thought as much as it would for that of Valentinus.⁷⁵ Further, according to Paul it

⁷⁰ E.g. Deut 32:3; 2 Sam 7:23; Mic 5:4; Prov 18:10; Sir 39:15; *1 Clem.* 58.1.

⁷¹ Wis 18:24-25; also *LAE* (Latin) 27.1; see Fletcher-Louis (2007), 67-68.

⁷² *1 Clem.* 36.2 (quoting Heb 1:3-4) states that the high-priestly Christ is "the radiance of God's majesty" (ἀπαύγασμα τῆς μεγαλωσύνης αὐτοῦ), thereby interchanging μεγαλωσύνη and δόξα. See also *1 Clem.* 61.3.

⁷³ This glorification of the believer may be implied by Valentinus's claim that the Divine Name "honours" (τιμηθῆ) the human *plasma*, since τιμή ("honour") and δόξα ("glory") were closely related as properties of God and Christ, or as things due to them in devotional contexts; e.g. 1 Tim 1:17; Heb 2:9 (= Ps 8:6); 1 Pet 1:7; Rev 4:9, 11; 5:12-13; 7:12; 21:26; *Tri. Trac.* NHC I,5 54.2-12; 56.1-30; 58.10-11; 90.25-91.1; 91.32-92.4; cf. Ex 28:32-36; Rom 2:7, 10; 1 Cor 12:23-26; Heb 3:3; 5:4-5; *1 Clem.* 45.8; 59.2; 64; 65.

⁷⁴ For similar syntheses, see Dawson (1992), 136-145; Brakke (2010), 102-103.

⁷⁵ The Adam-Christ typology of 1 Cor 15 particularly seems to have exerted great influence on Valentinus's understanding of salvation history; e.g. "for as all die in Adam, so will all be made alive in Christ" (v.22); "the first man, Adam, became a living spirit; the last Adam became a life-giving spirit" (v.45); "just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we will also bear the image of the man of heaven" (v.49). Members of the Qumran community likewise expected to inherit "the Glory of Adam", e.g. 1QS 4.22-23; CD 3.18-20; 1QH 17.15; see Marcus (2003), 57-59; Fletcher-Louis (2002). The essential difference here between this community on the one hand, and Valentinus and Paul on the other, is the latter's identification of this Glory with Christ.

is in baptism specifically that one is “justified in the Name (ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι) of the Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Cor 6:11; cf. 1:15), “puts on Christ” (Gal 3:27), or is “raised with Christ” and “comes to fullness (πεπληρωμένοι) in him” (Col 2:9-12).⁷⁶ Such a baptismal setting is indicated in Valentinus’s substitution of κατ’ εἰκόνα for εἰς ὄνομα in Fr.1’s anthropogony since the latter was to become part of standard baptismal formulae.⁷⁷ The implication seems to be that for Valentinus, just as Adam was originally created “in the Name” of God and thereby came to manifest the divine Glory, and just as Christ was gloriously transformed through the Name of God, so too can contemporary believers be conformed to this Glory by being reborn “in the Name” in the baptismal waters. Through baptism, the Christian receives the Divine Name, at which point the ontological gap between God and human is annulled.⁷⁸

In the next chapter, we will see how Christ’s role in this salvation history is still more closely specified. Christ appears as the Son and hypostatized Divine Name of the Father, who in manifesting this Name on earth makes it possible for elect humans to receive their share in it once more.

⁷⁶ 2 Pet 1:16-29 similarly locates Jesus’s initial glorification in his naming ceremony in the Jordan; cf. Matt 3:16-17; Mark 1:9-11; Luke 3:21-22; John 1:32-34. Martin (1967), 292-294; and Lietaert Peerbolte (2006), 200-201 argue that Phil 2:5-11 was originally designed to be sung during baptisms. On Jesus’s reception of the Divine Name at baptism, see e.g. Irenaeus, *Haer.* I 21.3; *Exc.* 22.5-6; Fossum (1985), 95-106.

⁷⁷ E.g. Matt 28:19; Acts 8:16; 19:5; *Did.* 9.5; Herm. *Vis.* 3.7.3, or for the abbreviated form of εἰς Χριστόν, see e.g. Rom 6:3; Gal 3:27; cf. Acts 2:38; 10:48; 1 Cor 1:13, 15; 10:2; Jas 2:7. On these baptismal formulae, see Hartman (1974); idem. (1997); Hurtado (2003), 143-144, 200-203; Gieschen (2003); and for Valentinianism specifically, see Thomassen (2006a), 333-414, esp. 403-404. On this substitution, see also Dawson (1992), 139-140.

⁷⁸ The glorifying power of the Divine Name is most likely also the subject of Fr.5’s enigmatic final line, where it is God’s “invisibility” (ἀόρατον) that strengthens the faith of the believer. According to *Exc.* 26.1, “the invisibility” (τὸ ἀόρατον) of Jesus is the Divine Name through which one enters the Pleroma, while *Gos. Truth* NHC I,3 38.16-21 and 39.3-6 state that the Divine Name is “the mystery of the invisible” (ΠΝΥΣΤΗΡΙΟΝ ΜΠΙΑΤΝΕΥ ΑΡΑϚ) which comes to those who are “filled (ΜΗϚ) with it by the Son”.

2. The Divine Name in the *Gospel of Truth*

According to *Gos. Truth*, “the Name of the Father is the Son” (38.6-7; ΠΡΕΝ ΔΕ ἸΠΠΩΤ ΠΕ ΠΩΗΡΕ). It is by virtue of his manifestation of the Divine Name that the Son makes the Father known in the created world, for although “the Name is invisible” (38.16-17) “it is possible for him (the Son) to be seen” (38.15-16). Hence, although “the Father’s Name is not spoken, it is revealed through a Son” (38.22-24). This chapter examines how *Gos. Truth* develops the soteriology of the Name already observed in Valentinus’s thought by hypostatizing the Divine Name in the person of Christ. This will involve four main stages of analysis: 1) the hypostatization of the Name as the Son; 2) the incarnation of the Name in the person of Christ; 3) the reception of the Name by certain elect individuals; and 4) the direct mystical experience of God attained by virtue of this reception.

2.1. The *Gospel of Truth*: Preliminary Remarks

Since its rediscovery, many scholars have considered *Gos. Truth* to be the work of Valentinus himself,¹ while others naturally remain more sceptical.² As an anonymous text, to substantiate Valentinus’s authorship would require a thorough philological comparison of *Gos. Truth* with Valentinus’s other known works. However, given that *Gos. Truth* only survives in Coptic translations (NHC I,3 and XII,2), such comparison with Valentinus’s Greek fragments becomes methodologically dubious.³ Nonetheless, there is indubitably a level of continuity between Valentinus and *Gos. Truth* on an ideological level, such as in their shared vocabulary of “fullness/completion/perfection” (ΧΗΚ ΑΒΑΛ) and

¹ E.g. Quispel (1955); van Unnik (1955); Grobel (1960), 26; Standaert (1976); Layton (1987), 251; Williams (1988), 1-13; Dawson (1992), 145-169; Helderma (1998); Thomassen (2004), 254; idem. (2006a), 424; Magnusson (2006), 181-182; Edwards (2009), 28-29; Brakke (2010), 100-104.

² Schenke (1959a); Robison (1963), 240-241; Marksches (1992), 339-352; Klauck (2003), 135-136; Tite (2009), 217-221.

³ Ménard (1962a) provided a Greek retrojection of *Gos. Truth* NHC I,3 which Standaert (1976) used as the basis for his comparison with Valentinus’s fragments. But ultimately this is little more than well-informed guesswork; see Marksches (1992), 351-356; Magnusson (2006), 34-35.

“lack/deficiency” (Ϡτα) to express ontological, epistemological, and therefore soteriological states. However, in this instance, shared concepts, imagery, and terminology may only be indicative of influence, as opposed to authorship.

Secondly, although *Gos. Truth* is extant only in fourth-century manuscripts, most scholars agree that *Gos. Truth* was originally written in the second century, albeit allowing for some degree of later redaction and interpolation.⁴ This second-century dating is due in no small part to Irenaeus’s remark that Valentinus’s followers had composed their own work which they entitled the “Gospel of Truth” (*Veritatis Evangelium*).⁵ The earliest editors and commentators believed that our *Gos. Truth* was identical to that referred to by Irenaeus,⁶ while others have been far more sceptical once again.⁷ The former position assumes that the incipit of *Gos. Truth* did indeed function as its title, a view strongly critiqued by Marksches.⁸ On the other hand, Thomassen has counter-argued that homiletic works like *Gos. Truth* often lack a title, and that the text was most likely referred to within Valentinian circles by means of its opening words.⁹ As he concludes, “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”, and that as such, we are justified in treating *Gos. Truth* as “a Valentinian document dating from before the time of Irenaeus’ work of the 180’s.”¹⁰

⁴ Mortley (1992) especially proposes quite extensive levels of fourth-century redaction. On how *Gos. Truth* would have been read in a fourth-century setting, see Jenott and Pagels (2010).

⁵ Irenaeus, *Haer.* III 11.9.

⁶ Van Unnik (1955), 90-101; Quispel (1955), 50; Malinine, Puech, and Quispel (1956), xiv-xiv.

⁷ Marksches (1992), 343-346.

⁸ *Ibid.* 341-343. *Gos. Truth* NHC I,3 16.31-33; “The gospel of truth (ΠΕΥΑΓΓΕΛΙΟΝ ΝΤΗΗΕ) is joy for those who have received grace from the Father of truth ...”

⁹ Thomassen (2006a), 146-147.

¹⁰ Thomassen (2006a), 147-148; see also Mortley (1992), 240: “if there were several Gospels of Truth, someone would surely have said so”; *contra* Wilson (1980), 138 who notes that in the Nag Hammadi codices alone there exist two different texts bearing the title “The Apocalypse of James” (NHC V,3 and 4).

I am inclined to agree with Thomassen's conclusions while acknowledging Marksches's observation that if we wish to identify *Gos. Truth* with Irenaeus's *Veritatis Evangelium* (pre 180 CE) then we must dispense with the idea of Valentinus's authorship, since Irenaeus states that it was composed by "those who are from Valentinus" (*hi ... qui sunt a Valentino*), as opposed to Valentinus himself.¹¹

2.2. The Hypostatization of the Divine Name as the Son

Gos. Truth may be generally described as a homily on the revelation of knowledge brought about by the Saviour, and the salvation that this knowledge conveys. He is said to be called "the Saviour" (ΠΩΤΗΡ) because that is "the name of the task which he shall perform for the redemption of those who were ignorant of the Father" (16.38-17.1). But in addition to "the Saviour", this revealer figure is designated by a range of other appellations: "Jesus" (18.16; 20.11, 24; 24.8); "Christ" (18.16; 36.14); "Son" (24.14; 30.25, 31; 38.7, 10-11, 15, 24; 39.19, 23, 26; 40.25); and "Word" (ῥεχε; 16.34; 23.20, 33-34; 26.5; 31.12; 37.7; λόγος; 37.8, 11). Each of these appellations, in one way or another, designates the figure of Christ insofar as he reveals the Father to his rightful children, and thereby provides them with redemption and salvation.

However, none of these titles on their own explain *how* this figure is able to reveal the Father. Rather, it is by virtue of being identified as "the Name of the Father" that the Son is able to make manifest God's invisible, ineffable essence. As Attridge and MacRae argue, *Gos. Truth* 38.6-24 implies that the Son is the Name of the Father in two related senses: firstly, the Son *bears* the Name of the Father; and secondly, he *functions* as the Name of the Father, revealing the reality of the object to which the Name regularly refers, that is, God. Further, in this latter role, the Son *qua* Name is both *distinct* from the Father, since one thing

¹¹ Marksches (1992), 343-344; Klauck (2003), 135; Schenke (2001), 28-30; Tite (2009), 219.

names another, but is also *identical* to him, since the Name is the essence of the thing named.¹² They further observe that the roots of such speculation lie in Jewish reflections of the Hellenistic and early Roman periods on the ineffable Name of God, the *Shem hammephorash*, and those figures that bear the Name, thereby revealing its divine referent.¹³

The following passage testifies to this Jewish background: “Since the Father is unbegotten, he (the Father) alone conceived him (the Son) for himself as a Name (ΟΥΡΕΝ) before he arranged the Aeons, so that the Name of the Father might be upon their Head (ΑΧΝ̄ ΤΟΥΑΠΕ), since he is Lord (ΕΦΘΕῙ Ν̄ΧΛΕΙC)” (38.32-38). Using the Pauline image of Christ as the Head of the church-Body, *Gos. Truth* draws on Exodus 23:21 – where God places his Name “upon” (ἐπί) his principal angel – to depict Christ as Lord (ΧΛΕΙC, Gk. κύριος) over the assembly of Aeons, just as he is over the earthly church.¹⁴ However, unlike the Angel of the Lord in Exodus 23:21, or Jesus in Philippians 2:5-11, *Gos. Truth* depicts Christ as Lord not by virtue of his having *received* the Name, but rather by virtue of his *being* the Name, which he therefore bears: “Therefore, it is not the Name *from* the Father ... he (the Son) did not *receive* the Name on loan ... rather, this is the proper Name (ΠΧΛΕΙC Ν̄ΡΕΝ);¹⁵ there is no one else who gave it to him” (40.5-16).¹⁶

¹² Attridge and MacRae (1985), 2:118.

¹³ Ibid. 117, citing Philo, *Conf.* 146; *3 En.* 12; *Apoc. Ab.* 10; and *Pist. Soph.* 7. The same sort of Jewish background has been observed by a variety of other scholars, e.g. Quispel (1954); idem. (1955), 66-76; idem. (1972); Giversen (1959), 88-91; Daniélou (1964), 157-161; Arai (1964), 66-73, 120-122; Ménard (1962b); Dubois (1974); Thomassen (1993b), 141-143; Stroumsa (2003), 239-240; Wolfson (2007), 250-251.

¹⁴ For Valentinian use of this Pauline metaphor, see also *Gos. Truth* NHC I,3 18.40; *Interp. Know.* NHC XI,1 15-21; *Tri. Trac.* NHC I,5 74.15-16; 118.32, 35; 123.2, 11-17; discussed in Dunderberg (2007); idem. (2008), 147-158; Twigg (2013).

¹⁵ Probably translating an original κύριον ὄνομα, evidently designed as a play on κύριος as the Divine Name itself; see Grobel (1960), 188-189; Quispel (1955), 72-73; Arai (1964), 67-68; Attridge and MacRae (1985), 2:127.

¹⁶ Cf. *Gos. Truth* 38.11-12: “He (the Father) gave him (the Son) his Name which belonged to him” (ΑΦΤ ΠΕΦΡΕΝ ΑΡΑΧ ΕΤΕ ΝΕΟΥΝΤΕΦC̄). The pronominal ambiguity raises questions with regard to how the Son receives the Name. If we take ΕΤΕ ΝΕΟΥΝΤΕΦC̄ (“which belonged *to him*”) to refer to the Son, then the Divine Name is said to properly belong to him as the shared essence of Father and Son, as opposed to the Name being something external, or ontologically distinct, from the Son.

It is in hypostatizing God's Name *as the Son* that *Gos. Truth* makes a distinctive contribution to ancient Jewish theologies of the Name, as well as their appropriation in early Christology.¹⁷ For in the Old Testament the Divine Name could be given to a lesser creature such as the Angel of the Lord (e.g. Ex 23:21) or the high priest (e.g. Ex 28:32-34; Wis 18:24), or even hypostatized as a distinct manifestation of God (e.g. Deut 12:5; Ezra 6:12; Neh 1:9), while in apocalyptic literature certain principal angels could come to represent God by virtue of their possession of the Divine Name (e.g. Yahoel in *Apoc. Ab.* 10). Similarly, several New Testament authors developed these ideas by making Jesus the recipient and bearer of the Divine Name (e.g. Phil 2:5-11; John 17; Heb 1). However, none of these to my knowledge speak of the hypostatization of the Divine Name *as something else*.¹⁸ For *Gos. Truth*, the Divine Name and the Son are coextensive insofar as each constitutes the essence of the Father. It is via the Son's capacity to be made manifest that the invisible and ineffable Name of God, and by extension God himself, is revealed.

The elevation of onomatology to the level of ontology – the attribution of ontic status to names – can be found elsewhere in Valentinian sources, most notably in *Tri. Trac.*:

Each of the Aeons is a name, that of each of the qualities and powers of the Father. Since he exists in many names – in mingling and harmony with one another – it is possible for them to speak of him because of the wealth of the Logos. In this way, the Father is a single Name because he is a unity, but on the other hand he is innumerable through his qualities and names.¹⁹

In this passage, each of the Aeons is said to *be* a name – as opposed to merely *having* a name – insofar as they represent a quality of the Father, and thereby participate in his single Name.

The Father is depicted as both one and many, a plurality in unity, and hence the Divine Name

¹⁷ Dubois (1974), 211-215 is useful for appreciating the importance of the Divine Name at Qumran and in the Jewish apocalypses, particularly with regard to their influence on the ideas in *Gos. Truth* NHC I,3. He concludes, “Les spéculations de l’*Évangile de Vérité* sur le Nom donnent l’exemple d’une influence des milieux judaïques et apocalyptiques sur le gnosticisme du second siècle de notre ère” (215).

¹⁸ Odeberg (1929), 334 already suggested that John 17 may be taken to *imply* that Jesus *is* the Name, as opposed to merely bearing it; see also Fossum (1995). But as Arai (1964), 70-71 states, what was only *implicit* in the Gospel of John is made *explicit* in *Gos. Truth*.

¹⁹ *Tri. Trac.* NHC I,5 73.8-18.

is also both one and many simultaneously, being manifested in the intermingling of God's multiple distinct qualities, the Aeons.²⁰ In portraying Christ as the hypostatized Divine Name itself, *Gos. Truth* posits him as the Father's essence, the ultimate reality to which the Name ineffably refers.

2.3. The Incarnation of the Name and the Book of the Living

According to *Gos. Truth* 26.4-8, "When the Word appeared ... it was not only a sound, but it became a body (ἀλλὰ ἀφ' οὐκῶμα)." We may note the shift from John 1:14, where "the Logos became *flesh* (σὰρξ)", to the Logos becoming a *body* (κῶμα), although *Gos. Truth* 31.5-6 states further that Christ came by means of "a fleshly form" (οὐσαρξ ἵκματ), indicating that it was indeed a body of flesh.²¹ On the other hand, the Divine Name's entry into cosmic affairs is described somewhat more poetically, using the imagery of "the Book of the Living".

In *Gos. Truth* 16.35-36, the Word is identified as "the one who is in the thought (μεεγε) and the mind (νογς) of the Father" prior to the creation of the cosmos by Error (πλανη). This description of the pre-existent Word (cf. John 1:1-2) finds a striking parallel later in 19.36-20.6, where the widespread image of "the Living Book of the Living", that is, the Book of Life, is described in the following terms:

²⁰ See also, *Tri. Trac.* NHC I,5 57.33-59.1; 65.35-67.10; Irenaeus, *Haer.* I 14.4. These passages describe the many forms of the single Divine Name given to the Son. However, the Son is not divided by this multiplicity, but instead unites them all in a single figure. Christ's ability to unite the many Aeons in his person must be seen against the background of passages like *Tri. Trac.* NHC I,5 86.4-87.17 and Irenaeus, *Haer.* I 2.6, where Christ is portrayed as the joint fruit of the Pleroma, the product of the Aeons pooling their finest qualities into a new emanation. In this way, Christ is the epitome of the Aeons, or "the form (μορφή) of the Aeons" (*Exc.* 31.4), the "image (εἰκόνα) of the Pleroma" (*Exc.* 32.2).

²¹ Ménard (1972), 145-146 defends a docetist reading of *Gos. Truth* NHC I,3 31.1-9, which states that the material ones were strangers to Christ's revelation and did not see his "likeness" (εἶνε). Ménard links this to Christ's human ὁμοίωμα in Phil 2:7, suggesting that Christ did not truly take on a physical form in *Gos. Truth*. Attridge and MacRae (1985), 2:88 counter-argue that εἶνε more likely refers here to Christ's being in the μορφή of God in Phil 2:6, and hence the material ones simply cannot see his divine aspect. I am not convinced that εἶνε translates μορφή in an allusion to Phil 2:6, but it seems very likely indeed that Christ's "fleshly form" (σαρξ ἵκματ) is an allusion to one or both of Rom 8:3 and Phil 2:7, and refers to his authentic incarnation which therefore obscured his pneumatic essence from the hylics, who were incapable of seeing past his fleshly exterior. On *Gos. Truth* NHC I,3's use of the Johannine Prologue, see Smith (2013).

to the Aeons. In this passage, it is the Aeons themselves who make up its contents as “his living letters” (ΝΙCΖΕ[ΕΙ ΝΤΟ]ΟΤῪ):

they are not vowels, nor are they consonants, so that one might read them and think of something empty (ΨΟΥΕΙΤ); but rather they are letters of the truth; they speak and know themselves. Each of the letters is a full (ΧΗΚ) <thought> like a perfect (ΧΗΚ ΑΒΑΛ) book, since they are letters written through unity, the Father having written them for the Aeons so that by means of his letters they might know the Father.²⁴

These noetic letters are constituted by the Aeons themselves and function to make up the ineffable Divine Name in the same manner as the Aeons collectively constitute the Son-Christ. In this manner, the Living Book in *Gos. Truth* contains both the single Divine Name in the person of the Son, and the multiple forms of that Name manifested in the Aeons.²⁵ The protological theory underlying this passage can be observed in *Tri. Trac.*, where having been begotten from the Aeons’ pooling of their finest qualities, Christ “put himself on them as a garment”, thereby giving unity to their multiplicity.²⁶ Therefore, when the Son “puts on” the Living Book at his incarnation in *Gos. Truth*, both Christ and the Aeons become its contents – both the single Name and its many parts.

But moreover, as reflections of the Aeonic company, the earthly church is likewise contained in the Book of the Living: “those who shall receive instruction are the living ones who are inscribed in the Book of the Living” (21.3-5). Like the Name of God and the Aeonic letters which constitute it, the spiritual essences of elect humans are contained in the Book of the Living. Their redemption is conditional on their recognition of being thus inscribed and thereby participating in the Divine Name itself.

²⁴ *Gos. Truth* NHC I,3 23.8-18; cf. 39.3-6: “For the Name is not derived from everyday words (ΛΕΖΙC), nor is his Name derived from the bestowal of names, but rather it is invisible (ΟΥΑΤΝΕΥ).”

²⁵ Cf. Irenaeus, *Haer.* I 14.1-3. According to Irenaeus, the Valentinian Marcus taught that the body of Ἀλήθεια-Ἄνθρωπος is constituted by the thirty Aeons of the Pleroma each functioning as a letter. Collectively they manifest the ineffable Divine Name via this “body of Truth”. Parallels between *Gos. Truth* NHC I,3 and Marcus Magus’s alphabet mysticism (see Irenaeus, *Haer.* I 14-15) have often been adduced; e.g. Robison (1963), 234-243; McCree (2004); Wolfson (2007), 270-271.

²⁶ Cf. *Interp. Know.* NHC XI,1 11.35-38: “The Father possesses living rational letters (ΖῆΝCΤΟ[ΙΧ]ΕΙΟΝ ΝΛΟΓΙΚΟΝ ΕΥΑΛΛῪ) from which he clothes him (the Son) with the [Aeons] as a garment.”

2.4. The Revelation and Reception of the Divine Name

According to *Gos. Truth*, Christ appeared in the world as a “guide”, came to “schools” (ϩⲙⲁ ⲛⲁⲓ ⲥⲃⲱ), and “spoke the Word (ⲡⲱⲉⲗⲉ) as a teacher.”²⁷ It is these “little children to whom knowledge of the Father belongs” (19.28-30). In order to acquire this knowledge of God, these students must first “receive instruction about the ‘facial forms’ of the Father (ⲛⲓⲙⲟϥⲛ̅ ⲛ̅ⲓⲟ ⲛ̅ⲧⲉ ⲡⲱⲧⲧ)”, namely the Aeons,²⁸ and secondly “receive instruction about themselves” (21.5-6). In reality of course, instruction about 1) the Father-Son, 2) the Aeons, and 3) themselves, are simply three aspects of the same process of enlightenment, for to know oneself is to recognise one’s Aeonic archetypes, and to know these is to know God.²⁹ According to *Gos. Truth*, when these “little children” received such knowledge of God, the Aeons, and themselves, “the Living Book of the Living was revealed in their hearts” (19.34-36; cf. 2 Cor 3:3). There is a logic to this: the Book of the Living contains a) the Divine Name/Son; b) the ineffable letters/Aeons; and c) the spiritual essences of the human elect, where each is a reflection of the former. Therefore, in acquiring knowledge of these three elements as distinct ontological expressions of a single divine unity, the Book itself is manifested within the believer. And as in the case of Valentinus, to receive the Divine Name in this manner is to experience a degree of conformity to the divine Glory: “they knew, they were known; they received glory, they gave glory” (19.32-34). However, it is not by scholastic pursuits alone that the redemptive Divine Name is received by believers, but also through ritual acts.

²⁷ *Gos. Truth* NHC I,3 19.17-21. Thomassen (2002), 43 suggests that this refers as much to the ministry of Jesus as to the actual Valentinian community where the teaching was transmitted. Indeed, for Thomassen (2002), 41-43, the performance of *Gos. Truth* in a cultic setting itself constituted a *Lesemysterium*; cf. Leopold (2004).

²⁸ Cf. *Tri. Trac.* NHC I,5 90.31-32.

²⁹ On the deliberate blurring of the line between humans and Aeons in *Gos. Truth* NHC I,3, see McGuire (1986); Schenke (1959a), 17; Arai (1964), 57-58; Ringgren (1964), 55; Standaert (1976), 257-259; Schoedel (1980), 386-387; Perkins (1993), 154-156.

In this vein, *Gos. Truth* compares people to jars – they can be full/enlightened or empty/ignorant: “When the Word appeared, that which is within the heart of those who speak it, ... a great disturbance (ΟΥΝΑΘ ΝΨΤΑΡΤΡ̄)³⁰ occurred among the jars because some had been emptied (ΨΟΥΩ), others had been filled (ΜΑΖ)” (26.4-6). But Christ came for the sake of “those who were disturbed” (ΝΕΕΙ ΝΤΑΖΨΤΑΡΤΡ̄) so that he might “anoint them with the ointment” (ΝΨΤΑΖΟΥ ΝΠΙΤΩΖ̄), which functions as a “seal” (ΤΒΒΕ), thereby making them “perfect” (ΧΩΚ ΛΒΑΛ), like “full jars” (ΝΚΡΕΥΟΣ ... ΕΤΜΗΖ). This act of “sealing” with ointment no doubt refers to a ritual act of anointment in which the candidate received the seal (σφραγίς) of the Divine Name. One who has thus received the seal of the Divine Name is no longer “deficient” (ΨΑΛΤ) or “empty” (ΨΟΥΕΙΤ), but is rather “perfect” (ΧΗΚ ΛΒΑΛ) and “full” (ΜΗΖ).³¹ This is precisely what Valentinus had in mind with his conviction that the Divine Name “fills up the deficiency” inherent in the created human. However, unlike Valentinus, *Gos. Truth*’s language of “anointing with ointment” makes a ritual setting explicit, most likely referring to a post-baptismal chrismation.³²

Finally, *Gos. Truth* alludes to the Eucharist in describing Christ’s self-sacrifice upon the cross:

They nailed him to a tree; he became a fruit of the knowledge of the Father. However, it did not cause destruction because it was eaten, but rather, to those who ate it, it caused them to (truly) exist. They rejoiced in the discovery. He discovered them in himself, and they discovered him within themselves.³³

In addition to “publishing” the Book of the Living when he was crucified, Christ hung on the cross as a life-giving fruit thereby reversing the deadly effects of Adam’s eating from the

³⁰ Cf. *Orig. World* NHC II,4 116.10 and the Ophite anthropogonies discussed in Chapter 1.

³¹ *Gos. Truth* NHC I,3 36.13-35; cf. 24.28-25.3 where the same language is used of ignorance and enlightenment.

³² See Segelberg (1959); Thomassen (2006a), 164-165.

³³ *Gos. Truth* NHC I,3 18.24-31; cf. John 6:56.

Tree of Knowledge in Genesis 3.³⁴ When this crucified “fruit” is eaten – most likely a reference to the Eucharistic bread – a mutual indwelling of Saviour and saved is established.³⁵ Later in *Gos. Truth* this mutual indwelling is described in terms of “those in whom the Name of the Father rested, and who in turn rest themselves in his Name” (38.29-32). The Eucharist therefore renews and strengthens the unity between Saviour and saved first established through anointment in the Divine Name at baptism.

To sum up, according to *Gos. Truth* the human reception of the Divine Name is accomplished both scholastically and ritually. Its reception is therefore described in terms of both enlightenment from ignorance to knowledge, and transformation from deficiency to fullness. Its attainment brings genuine existence, as opposed to illusory cosmic existence which is like being “drunk” or in a “nightmare”. In this way, *Gos. Truth* subtly connects onomatology with both epistemology and ontology, such that to receive the Name is coextensive with the reception of both knowledge and form:

If he (the Father) so desires, that which he desires is manifested (ΟΥΩΝΩ) when he forms it (ΕΦΤΜΟΡΦΗ ΝΕΦ) and names it (ΕΦΤΡΕΝ ΝΕΦ). And when he names it (ΦΑΦΤΡΕΝ ΝΕΦ), he causes it to come into being (ΕΦΤΡΟ ΠΜΑΦ ΑΤΡΟΥΦΩΠΕ). Those who do not yet (truly) exist (ΦΩΠΕ) are ignorant (ΑΤΣΑΥΝΕ) of the one who fashioned them.³⁶

To be endowed with a name by the Father – one’s share of the Divine Name – is to be given knowledge and form. To have received these is to have been made truly alive. Moreover, *Gos. Truth* articulates how this process of enlightenment/filling up is concomitant with some variety of mystical experience in which the redeemed approaches God in the present.

³⁴ Cf. *Gos. Phil.* NHC II,3 74.1-12 which distinguishes between two Trees of Knowledge; the one which Adam ate from, which brought death, and the cross, which brings life. See Lundhaug (2010), 218-219.

³⁵ On the Eucharistic overtones of this passage, which have been largely overlooked, see King (2003), 155; Magnusson (2006), 138-139; Jenott and Pagels (2010), 579; Brakke (2010), 102.

³⁶ *Gos. Truth* NHC I,3 27.26-33. The same naming-knowing-being triad is found in *Exc.* 31.3-4, where the Father is described as “a nameless name, form, and knowledge” (ὄνομα ἀνωνόμαστον μορφή καὶ γνῶσις), while Sophia’s fall resulted in her “ignorance and formlessness” (ἀγνωσία καὶ ἀμορφία) and “a loss of the Name” (ἀμέλει τοῦ ὀνόματος). Conversely, according to *Exc.* 78-80, one who has received γνῶσις and has been baptized and sealed in the Name has thereby been “formed” (μορφωθὲν), “transferred to life” (εἰς ζωὴν μετατίθεται), and has become “a male fruit” (ἄρρην καρπός).

2.5. The Divine Name and Mystical Experience

According to the protological myth of *Gos. Truth*, when the Father first brought forth the Aeons as distinct beings, “he retained their perfection (ΧΩΚ) within himself, giving it to them as a return (CTO) to him with a single perfect knowledge (ΟΥΣΑΥΝΕ ΟΥΕΕΙ ΖΝ ΟΥΧΩΚ)” (19.3-7). On the parallel level of the human elect, it is through the aforementioned processes of instruction and perfection that “they return (CTO) to the Father” (21.6-8). This “return” of the elect to the Father is not merely imagined as an eschatological restoration, but rather as a present reality: “So, if one has knowledge, he is from above. If he is called, he hears, he answers, and he turns to the one who called him, and he ascends to him” (22.2-7). The immediacy of the language suggests an experience available to the elect in the present, as opposed to some eschatological future.

On the other hand, *Gos. Truth* states that “those whose names he knew in the beginning were called *at the end*” (21.25-27), perhaps indicating eschatology. However, for *Gos. Truth* “the end” does not refer to the cosmic Eschaton of woes and conflagrations, but rather a personal intellectual event in which the believer comes to recognise that Error’s creation (ΠΛΑΣΜΑ) is merely “a substitute for the truth” (ΤΧΒΒΙΩ ΝΪΤΜΝΤΜΗΕ).³⁷ Christ himself is responsible for the exposure and dissolution of Error’s illusion: “Having filled the deficiency (ΕΛΑΦΜΟΥΖ ΜΠΙΩΤΑ), he (the Son) dissolved the form (CΧΗΜΑ); its form is the cosmos; that in which he served” (24.20-24). Hence, “(when) each person’s Name comes to him ... (that person) knows where he comes from and where he is going. He knows in the manner of one who, having been drunk, has turned away from his drunkenness.”³⁸ Having had their own spiritual deficiency filled up through their share of the Divine Name, the elect cast aside the material world as an illusion and come to recognise their origin and destiny

³⁷ *Gos. Truth* NHC I,3 17.14-21.

³⁸ *Gos. Truth* NHC I,3 22.12-18.

with the Father. For *Gos. Truth* this is “the end” at which the elect are “called” back to God, at which point they “ascend to him”. Indeed, to receive knowledge of God is like “the dawn”, for it awakens the elect who “cast ignorance from themselves like sleep.”³⁹ Such enlightenment is described in quite explicitly mystical language:

And the Spirit ran after him, hastening to raise (ΤΟΥΝΑC) him. Having given his hand to the one lying upon the ground, he set him on his feet. And because he had not yet risen (ΤΩΟΥΝ), he gave them the means of understanding the knowledge of the Father and the revelation of his Son. For when they saw him and heard him, he allowed them to taste him and to smell him and to touch the beloved Son.⁴⁰

This passage strikingly expresses the powerful and intimate experience of unity with the Son that the elect expected to presently attain by virtue of their being “raised” or “awakened”.

The imagery of being prostrate upon the ground before being “raised” by the Spirit is highly allusive, although scholars have disagreed regarding the precise object of the allusion. Ménard suggests that it refers to the descent of the Spirit on Christ at his crucifixion,⁴¹ while Wilson considers it to be a reference to the resurrection.⁴² Both of these interpretations rather straightforwardly identify Christ as the one being raised, which is clearly problematic if we consider that “the revelation of the Son” is the means of awakening. More recently, Magnusson has argued that this passage is “a description of the manner in which the Spirit raises Jesus after the crucifixion”, *but also*, “an example of how the enlightened Gnostic should be after his resurrection.”⁴³ This interpretation not only makes the best sense of the resurrection-language (ΤΩΟΥΝ and ΤΟΥΝΟC), it also explains the shift from third person singular to third person plural as an expression of Christ as the archetype of redemption. However, Attridge and MacRae note a still more likely background to the passage.

³⁹ *Gos. Truth* NHC I,3 29.32-30.16.

⁴⁰ *Gos. Truth* NHC I,3 30.16-32.

⁴¹ Ménard (1972), 139.

⁴² Wilson (1958), 106; also Standaert (1976), 270.

⁴³ Magnusson (2006), 142.

Attridge and MacRae suggest that the imagery “ultimately derives from traditional Jewish speculation about the primal man, who lay inert upon the earth before being vivified by the insufflations of the divine breath.”⁴⁴ It is particularly familiar from Ophite anthropogony,⁴⁵ which as we saw in Chapter 1 also exerted significant influence on Valentinus’s thought. However, if *Gos. Truth* has ultimately derived this imagery from Ophite speculations on Adam’s creation and spiritual elevation, it has also democratized the imagery so as to apply to all recipients of redemption. The underlying soteriology is therefore somewhat similar to that of Valentinus Fr.1 and 5 insofar as the redeemed believer experiences the same proximity to God once enjoyed by Adam.

Such experiential proximity to God is explicitly stated as the culmination of the Aeons’/elect’s state of fullness:

For the place to which they send their thought (**ΜΕΕΥΕ**), that place, their root, is that which lifts them up through all the heights to the Father. They possess his Head, which is rest (**ἸΤΑΝ**) for them, and they possess themselves, approaching him in order to, as they say, participate in his face (**ΖΟ**) by means of kisses (**ΝΙΑΠΤΑΜΟC**).⁴⁶

Indeed, according to *Gos. Truth*, “Truth is the mouth of the Father (and) the Holy Spirit is his tongue; whoever is joined to Truth is joined to the mouth of the Father through his tongue when he receives the Holy Spirit” (26.34-27.4). Having been raised by the Spirit, they have been “joined” to the Father’s mouth and tongue, hence they can participate in his face through kisses. Despite the strikingly erotic imagery, the underlying point is close to that found in Valentinus Fr.5, where the power of the Divine Name perfects the believer to the point of conformity to their divine archetype, “the living face”. But moreover, the notion of ‘sending one’s thought through all the heights to God’ would seem to allude to some

⁴⁴ Attridge and MacRae (1985), 2:86; the connection was already noted by Standaert (1976), 270 n.1.

⁴⁵ See *Hyp. Arch.* NHC II,4 88.10-16; *Ap. John* NHC II,1 19.13-14 (= NHC IV,1 29.22-24; cf. NHC III,1 23.14-19; BG 50.15-51.1); Irenaeus, *Haer.* I 30.6; Hippolytus, *Haer.* V 7.6.

⁴⁶ *Gos. Truth* NHC I,3 41.23-35.

contemplative effort on the part of the redeemed. Significant in this regard is the climactic description of this ascent as an experience of “rest”.⁴⁷

First and foremost, *Gos. Truth* uses the notion of “rest” to describe the condition produced by the mutual indwelling of Saviour and saved: “the Father is in them and they are in the Father, since they are perfect (ΧΗΚ ΑΒΑΛ) and undivided in the truly good one, lacking nothing (ΨΤΑ ΛΑΥΕ ΕΝ ΖΝ ΛΑΥΕ); but rather they are at rest (ΜΤΑΝ), being refreshed in the spirit” (42.26-33). These are the elect “in whom the Name of the Father rested (ΜΑΤΝ ΜΜΑϞ), and who in turn rest themselves (ΜΑΤΝ ΜΜΑϞ) in his Name” (38.29-32). However, *Gos. Truth* also equates this divine “rest” with Paradise (ΠΑΡΑΔΙΣΣΟΣ) itself, and hence the divine realm in general.⁴⁸ The author/speaker of *Gos. Truth* even claims that, “since I have been in the place of rest (ΠΜΑ ΝΜΤΑΝ), there I shall dwell and devote myself at all times to the Father of the All and the true brothers, upon whom the love of the Father is poured, and in whose midst there is no deficiency (ΜΝ ΨΤΑ) of him” (43.2-8). The homilist thereby identifies himself as having received the necessary instruction and sealing in the Divine Name through which he was called to return to the Father in Paradise, the place of rest. He has been raised by the Spirit and experienced the contemplative ascent through the heights to the Father’s face, participating in his essence via “kisses”, before finally enjoying mutual rest in the Father and his Name-Son.⁴⁹

⁴⁷ On the theme of “rest” in *Gos. Truth*, see Helderman (1984), who meticulously examines the evidence for “rest” “als eine Bezeichnung *par excellence* des gnostischen Heils” (337); also, Wray (1998); Giversen (1959), 92-96; Wolfson (2007), 252-256.

⁴⁸ *Gos. Truth* NHC I,3 36.38-39.

⁴⁹ On the experiential nature of *Gos. Truth* NHC I,3, see Standaert (1976), 265, who argues that *Gos. Truth* presents itself “comme la communication d’une expérience spirituelle.” Also, Williams (1988), 173 notes that the author “speaks as one who has experienced a vision, and the GTr must be seen, in large part, as the interpretation of that vision.” Further, Kaler (2013a), 3 argues that “the author’s revelatory experiences are used as fundamental structuring principles for the *Gospel of Truth*”, and that *Gos. Truth* NHC I,3 can therefore be described as a “meditation on the author’s transcendent religious experience.” Finally, Grobel (1960), n.632 muses that the author’s claim to have entered “Paradise” may indicate an ascent experience like that reported by Paul in 2 Cor 12:2-4. However, Grobel ultimately suggests that *Gos. Truth* NHC I,3 understands “Paradise” as “the condition of the redeemed this side of death.”

Further, the baptismal connotations of God's love being 'poured upon the true brothers' also points towards the earthly community of the elect, the Father's children who are "perfect and worthy of his Name".⁵⁰ The implication is that having experienced divine rest first-hand, the homilist now wishes to manifest the Father's fullness among his fellow congregants on earth, that is, the fullness which is established through initiation into the Divine Name which fills up the "deficiency" (ϠΤΑ). This newfound devotion to establishing the Father's fullness among the community on earth can be observed in the numerous passages stressing the role of the elect as redeemers. These redeemed initiates are "the children of inner understanding" (32.38-39), and as such they are implored to

speak the truth with those who seek it and knowledge to those who have sinned through their error. Make firm the foot of those who stumble and stretch out your hands to those who are sick. Feed those who are hungry, and to those who toil, give them rest (ἸΤΑΝ). Raise (ΤΟΥΝΕC) those who wish to rise (ΤΩΩΝ), and awaken those who sleep.⁵¹

The familiar soteriological imagery of being "raised" and "awoken", or receiving "rest", is supplemented here with notions of healing and feeding, which no doubt also function as genuine ethical injunctions for the elect concerning how they are to go about their missionary work.⁵² Evidently the work of salvation did not end with the Saviour, but rather is continued among the saved who themselves become redeemers. In continuing the work of the Son, the elect strive to manifest the Divine Name in the cosmos through their own share in it and thereby ensure that there is no "deficiency" among the Father's chosen ones.

⁵⁰ *Gos. Truth* NHC I,3 43.19-21.

⁵¹ *Gos. Truth* NHC I,3 32.35-33.8. On the paraenesis in this passage, see Desjardins (1990), 76-83; Tite (2009), 233-257. On the future missionary work of the elect as a continuation of the Son's redemptive revelation in *Gos. Truth* NHC I,3, see McGuire (1986); Magnusson (2006), 143-146; Wolfson (2007), 241-242; Tite (2009), 255.

⁵² See Tite (2009), 240-242.

2.6. Conclusion

If *Gos. Truth* was not written by Valentinus himself then it was certainly influenced by his thinking, particularly regarding the soteriological nature of the Divine Name insofar as it actualizes a transformation from emptiness/deficiency to fullness/perfection among its recipients. However, *Gos. Truth* also significantly develops certain elements of Valentinus's rather laconic extant musings on the Divine Name. Firstly, the Divine Name is hypostatized as the Son, and this Name is made up of ineffable letters in the same manner that Christ is constituted by the finest qualities of the Aeons. Secondly, the ritual metaphors offer more concrete information for the context in which the Name would have been bestowed upon the candidate, that is, baptism-anointment. And thirdly, the combination of these first two developments allows *Gos. Truth* to speculate on what the mystical effects of receiving the Name are on the candidate, for to be endowed with the Name is to receive a share of the Father's divine essence, his Son. *Gos. Truth* articulates this striking ontological proximity between elect humans and God through the concept of "rest", which not only expresses the condition of mutual indwelling between Saviour and saved, but also the divine world itself to which the initiate has access via the pursuit of contemplative ascent. Indeed, the author of *Gos. Truth* explicitly claims to have attained such an exalted condition and to have experienced such a mystical ascent for themselves. In doing so, the author not only advertises such goals to prospective initiates, but also reminds his fellow-initiates of their missionary responsibilities in light of their superior spiritual condition and insight.

The next chapter will examine what the *Excerpts from Theodotus* tell us about the ritual setting for the reception of the Divine Name, but also how imagery derived from the Jerusalem temple began to be used by Valentinians to express issues of Christology, soteriology, and ritual practice.

3. The *Excerpts from Theodotus*: The Name and the Heavenly Temple

This chapter examines the concept of the Divine Name in Valentinian protology, soteriology, and ritual according to the *Excerpts from Theodotus*. In doing so, it also analyses how the Jewish concept of the heavenly temple has been polemically adapted to Valentinian soteriology and eschatology. We will see that *Exc.* systematically downgrades the heavenly temple of Jewish mystical tradition to the level of a psychic demiurgic temple with the Pleroma inserted above it. When the initiate comes to possess the Divine Name, it provides them with access beyond this demiurgic temple into the Pleroma itself, with Christ leading in his seed as the true high-priest. But before overviewing the mythological salvation history in which the Divine Name plays such a central role, it is necessary to introduce some of the source critical issues regarding *Exc.*

3.1. *Excerpts from Theodotus*: Preliminary Remarks

Exc. contains elements from numerous Valentinian sources, possibly both written and oral, which have been collected by Clement of Alexandria and recorded in the form of a “notebook”¹ along with occasional comments and reflections from Clement himself.² The full title of the collection is “Excerpts from the Works of Theodotus and the so-called Eastern Teaching at the Time of Valentinus” (Ἐκ τῶν Θεοδοῦτου καὶ τῆς ἀνατολικῆς καλουμένης διδασκαλίας κατὰ τοὺς Οὐαλεντίνου χρόνους ἐπιτομαί).³ Scholarly convention has been to

¹ Casey (1934), 4.

² Sagnard (1970), 8-21 attributes the following sections of *Exc.* to Clement: 1.3; 4-5; 7.3-4; 8-9; 10-15; 17.2-4; 18-20; 23.4-5; 27; 31.1b; 33.2. We may add *Exc.* 24.2 to this list, while noting that *Exc.* 27 is a disputed case which will be discussed later. For the most part, previous scholars have tended to either entirely ignore Sagnard’s insights in this regard, or to have adopted them wholesale.

³ On this title, see Kalvesmaki (2008), 80-83, who argues that the title is a later scribal addition. See also Marksches (1997a), 415; cf. Casey (1934), 5.

divide *Exc.* into four sections: 1-28 (A), 29-43.1 (B), 43.2-65 (C), and 66-86 (D),⁴ with Section C being widely considered to have been derived from the same source as Irenaeus's account in *Haer.* I 4.5-7.5.⁵ As such, Section C has generally been considered to represent a fragment of the "Western" school of Valentinianism in a collection of otherwise "Eastern" Valentinian sources.⁶ Given this composite nature of the text, there has been some scholarly variation regarding the extent to which it can be studied holistically.

For example, Thomassen very conservatively, but commendably, bases his portrait of "the doctrine of Theodotus" on six passages alone; the five passages in which Theodotus is quoted by name (*Exc.* 22.7; 26.1; 30.1; 32.2; 35.1), and *Exc.* 1.1-2, which uses the formula $\phi\eta\sigma\acute{\iota}$ ("he says"), and which as the opening passage of the work, ought to be attributed to the figure named in the title.⁷ In general, Thomassen demonstrates great sensitivity towards source critical issues with regard to *Exc.*, treating Section C entirely separately.⁸ Others have tended towards a more harmonizing approach, stressing the overall coherence of the source.⁹ More recently, Dubois has argued that although "on ne peut pas tout harmoniser", on the other hand,

Il nous semble que si l'on fait abstraction de ce rapprochement des Extraits du groupe C avec le témoignage d'Irénée ainsi que d'une interprétation partielle de la christologie valentinienne tirée de la notice de l'Elenchos, on peut concevoir que les relations des Extraits du groupe C avec le reste des Extraits sont plus fortes et explicites qu'on ne le reconnaît habituellement.¹⁰

⁴ This division goes back to Heinrici (1871), 92, but has been followed by much of the ensuing scholarship. On this division, see Sagnard (1970), 8-21; idem. (1947), 521-524.

⁵ See Heinrici (1871), 92; Dibelius (1908), 230-239.

⁶ On the two schools, see Hippolytus, *Haer.* VI 35.5-7; Tertullian, *Val.* 11.2; Thomassen (2006a), 39-45; Kalvesmaki (2008); Kaestli (1980), 391-403.

⁷ Thomassen (2006a), 28-38. Several other passages also use the $\phi\eta\sigma\acute{\iota}$ formula: *Exc.* 22.1; 25.1; 38.2; 41.1; 67.1. Thomassen (2006a), 29 suggests these may also come from Theodotus, but we cannot be certain. He is critical of Casey (1934), 16-22 whose reconstruction of Theodotus's system is somewhat more liberal. Sagnard (1947), 552-559 is also a little more optimistic than Thomassen in this regard.

⁸ Thomassen (2006a), 62-72.

⁹ E.g. Sagnard (1970), 48; idem. (1947), 525; Pagels (1974); McCue (1980).

¹⁰ Dubois (2013), 219.

For Dubois then, Section C of *Exc.* shares many doctrinal features with the other sections, despite some undeniable “roughness” between them. He recommends that with the Nag Hammadi material at our disposal, scholars should not read texts like *Exc.* through the lenses of the heresiologists, and should refrain from forcing an Irenaean perspective onto *Exc.* Section C.¹¹

While I concur with Dubois that we should not treat *Exc.* 43.2-65 and Irenaeus’s *Haer.* I 4.5-7.5 interchangeably, I disagree with the idea that the former has strong ideological connections to the remainder of *Exc.* This is largely due to the doctrine of the “psychic Christ”, which appears three times in Section C (47.2; 59.3; 62.1), but nowhere else in *Exc.* As Thomassen has demonstrated so clearly, the mechanism of salvation in Valentinianism is one of “mutual participation”, meaning that the Saviour experiences the conditions (e.g. embodiment, suffering, death) of those whom he seeks to save, and in thus experiencing these conditions, he effects their salvation, at least potentially.¹² In what Thomassen calls “Eastern” Valentinianism, it is the pneumatic Saviour-Christ who experiences such things, and hence it is the pneumatic humans who constitute the *salvandi*. In “Western” Valentinianism on the other hand, it is this “psychic Christ” who comes into the cosmos, is baptized, and who suffers on the cross, thereby making psychic humans the prime target for salvation.¹³ If we choose to adopt Thomassen’s terminology, Sections A, B, and D of *Exc.* clearly represent “Eastern” Valentinianism, while Section C’s “Western” Valentinian provenance is betrayed by this “psychic Christ”.¹⁴ Therefore, although Dubois is right to note the shared features between all four sections of *Exc.*, this should not obscure the important

¹¹ Ibid. 221. Although Dubois is correct to emphasise the importance of Nag Hammadi sources for interpreting Valentinian material, we must remember that the heresiologists are our only basis for determining what constitutes “Valentinianism” in the first place, since no Nag Hammadi text identifies itself in this manner.

¹² Cf. Heb 2:14-15.

¹³ Thomassen (2006a), 2 and *passim*.

¹⁴ Irenaeus, *Haer.* I 4.5-7.5 purports to describe the system of the followers of Ptolemy, himself said to be an adherent of the “Western” school of Valentinianism according to Hippolytus, *Haer.* VI 35.6.

differences in Section C. In light of this, the current chapter puts *Exc.* 43.2-65 aside, and focuses instead on Sections A, B, and D, which present a reasonably coherent and systematic, if not well-ordered, account.

3.2. The Divine Name in the *Excerpts from Theodotus*

As in many gnostic systems, *Exc.* is concerned with the primordial split in the unity of the godhead and how this unity is to be restored eschatologically. In *Exc.*, the concept of the Divine Name is central to this process insofar as it expresses God's essence and unity. In the primordial rupture of God's fullness, this Name becomes divided. Through Christ's reception of the Name at his baptism, he established the archetype for how the dispersed divine substance, "the spiritual seed", can likewise come to possess a share of the divided Name and thereby come to be "fruits" as opposed to mere seeds. In being gathered together with Christ, this spiritual seed can enter the Pleroma once more and restore it to its primordial unity.

3.2.1. The Divine Name and Protology

According to *Exc.* 31.3-4, it was Sophia's admirable, but ultimately hubristic, attempt to grasp the unknowable Father that led to the rupture of the divine fullness:

^{31.3}Τότε γὰρ ἐπέγνωσαν ὅτι <ὄ> εἰσιν, χάριτι τοῦ Πατρὸς εἰσιν · ὄνομα ἀωνόμαστον, μορφή καὶ γνῶσις. Ὁ δὲ βουληθεὶς αἰὼν τὸ ὑπὲρ τὴν γνῶσιν λαβεῖν, ἐν ἀγνωσίᾳ καὶ ἀμορφίᾳ ἐγένετο. ⁴Ὅθεν καὶ κένωμα γνώσεως εἰργάσατο, ὅπερ ἐστὶ σκία τοῦ ὀνόματος · ὅπερ ἐστὶν υἱός, μορφή τῶν αἰώνων. Οὕτως τὸ κατὰ μέρος ὄνομα τῶν αἰώνων ἀπόλεια¹⁵ ἐστὶ τοῦ ὀνόματος.

^{31.3}For then they recognized that <what> they are, they are by the grace of the Father: unnameable Name, form, and knowledge. But the Aeon which wished to seize that which is beyond knowledge fell into ignorance and formlessness. ⁴And due to this, a void of knowledge was accomplished, which is a shadow of the Name, that is, the Son, the form of the Aeons. Thus the Name, in being shared among the Aeons, is a loss of the Name.

¹⁵ MS ἀμέλει; on this emendation, see Thomassen (2006a), 471 n.99.

The Aeons are perfect on account of inheriting God's ineffable Name, his form, and knowledge. But through her actions, Sophia became ignorant and formless.¹⁶ Moreover, an epistemological κένωμα was wrought among the remaining Aeons too, and the Divine Name, in being divided amongst the multiple Aeons, became a mere "shadow" of its former unity. Therefore, as in *Gos. Truth*, possession of the Name, form, and knowledge are mutually entailing, standing or falling as one. The loss of these qualities must be reversed through the work of Christ and the spiritual seed in the cosmos through which the divine fullness may be eschatologically restored.

Clement presents two different Valentinian doctrines of how the spiritual seed came to reside in the cosmos and human bodies: 1) According to the version attributed to Theodotus by Clement, the fallen Sophia "emitted a fleshly element (σαρκίον) for the Logos, the spiritual seed (τὸ πνευματικὸν σπέρμα)", and "dressed in this seed, the Saviour descended" (*Exc.* 1.1). According to this version, the spiritual seed – the Valentinians' ideal selves – constitute Christ's body at his descent into the cosmos.¹⁷ Indeed, in another attribution to Theodotus, "the Church of the distinct seed" is said to constitute the "visible part of Jesus", since "he put it on through the flesh" (*Exc.* 26.1; cf. 42.3). 2) In a separate account attributed by Clement to οἱ ἀπὸ Οὐαλεντίνου, Adam's "psychic body" (τοῦ ψυχικοῦ σώματος) is said to have been endowed with "a male seed", "an emanation of the angelic element (ἀπόρροια τοῦ ἀγγελικοῦ)", which obviated the ὑστέρημα inherent in his creation. However, through Adam's "sleep" he forgot his spiritual component, a forgetting which was inherited by all of Adam's offspring. This forgetting is remedied through Christ, who "awakens the soul and kindles the spark", causing humans to remember their spiritual element (*Exc.* 2.1-3.1). According to this version – familiar from Valentinus *Frr.* 1 and 5 – the

¹⁶ For the remainder of the Sophia-narrative, see *Exc.* 32.1-35.1; Sagnard (1947), 537-546; Thomassen (2006a), 34-37, 253-255.

¹⁷ This is therefore similar to *Gos. Truth*'s notion of the Living Book of the Living which contains the spiritual essences of the elect, but is also "put on" by the Son at his incarnation.

spiritual seed has occupied the cosmos since the creation of Adam, but has only been recognised since Christ's advent. Rather than constituting Christ's body, the spiritual seed is produced as copies of Christ's angelic host, which in turn constitutes his body.¹⁸

In reality, these two different accounts are simply variations on a single Valentinian theme, namely that the elect are ontologically akin to the Saviour on account of Christ's body being formed from their ideal selves. Irrespective of whether these ideal selves are articulated as "angels" or "the spiritual seed" itself, the ramifications are that in being incarnated, baptized, and redeemed with Christ, the elect have both Christ and their ideal selves as their soteriological forerunners and models.

3.2.2. The Baptism of Christ and the Angels

Exc. 21-22 and 35-36 give two closely related accounts of how the angels, in being baptized along with Christ in the Jordan, provide the archetype for the Valentinians' own redemptions.

According to *Exc.* 21, Valentinians interpreted Genesis 1:27's description of a male and a female creation in terms of Sophia's "emanation" (προβολήν) of two different types of "seed": "The males from this [emanation] are the elect (ἡ ἐκλογή), while the females are the calling (ἡ κλήσις). And they call the males angelic (ἀγγελικὰ), while the females are themselves, the distinct seed (τὸ διαφέρον σπέρμα)."¹⁹ In other words, Sophia brought forth

¹⁸ According to other Valentinian sources, Sophia emits the spiritual seed in response to her joyous vision of Christ's angelic entourage, with each seed being a copy of a corresponding angel; see e.g. Irenaeus *Haer.* I 2.6; 4.5; 5.6; 7.1; *Exc.* 44. *Exc.* 2.1's notion of the seed as an ἀπόρροια τοῦ ἀγγελικοῦ surely alludes to this narrative.

¹⁹ The phrase τὸ διαφέρον σπέρμα has been the subject of some disagreement among scholars. Casey (1934) and Sagnard (1970) both translate it as "the superior seed", and many others have followed their example. This seems like a misnomer, since of the twofold seed produced by Sophia, τὸ διαφέρον σπέρμα is emphatically *not* the superior part in *Exc.* 21, but rather the inferior female part. Thomassen (2006a) is somewhat ambiguous, since he translates it as both "superior seed" (p. 32) and "distinct seed" (pp. 377-379; 438). Pagels (1974), 41-43 argues that τὸ διαφέρον σπέρμα ought to be translated as "the borne apart seed", referring to the psychics, while the angelic seed represents the pneumatic seed. The same judgement is made by Buckley (1986), 62-64. This is certainly incorrect and is the result of interpreting *Exc.* 21 through the lens of *Exc.* Section C, where the psychics are made the object of salvation. In *Exc.* Section A, the object of salvation is τὸ διαφέρον σπέρμα, which is never described as "psychic", but rather represents the counterpart to the angels, that is, the pneumatic humans or "spiritual seed".

both the angelic/male/elect seed and the distinct/female/called seed. The Valentinians, possessing the latter seed, have the angels as their masculine counterparts. *Exc.* 22.4-6 then describes how the angels are baptized with Jesus, thereby prefiguring the baptismal redemption of their corresponding Valentinians:

^{22.4}Οἱ βαπτίζομενοι δὲ, φασίν, ὑπὲρ [ἡμῶν] τῶν νεκρῶν, οἱ Ἄγγελοι εἰσιν οἱ ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν βαπτίζομενοι, ἵνα ἔχοντες καὶ ἡμεῖς τὸ Ὄνομα μὴ ἐπισχεθῶμεν κωλυθέντες εἰς τὸ Πλήρωμα παρελθεῖν τῷ Ὁρῷ καὶ τῷ Σταυρῷ. ⁵Διὸ καὶ ἐν τῇ χειροθεσίᾳ λέγουσιν ἐπὶ τέλους· εἰς λύτρωσιν ἀγγελικὴν, τουτέστιν ἣν καὶ Ἄγγελοι ἔχουσιν, ἵν' ἢ βεβαπτισμένος ὁ τὴν λύτρωσιν κομισάμενος τῷ αὐτῷ Ὄνόματι ᾧ καὶ ὁ Ἄγγελος αὐτοῦ προβεβάπτισται. ⁶ἐβαπτίσαντο δὲ ἐν ἀρχῇ οἱ Ἄγγελοι ἐν λύτρωσει τοῦ Ὄνόματος τοῦ ἐπὶ τὸν Ἰησοῦν ἐν τῇ περιστερᾷ κατελθόντος καὶ λυτρωσαμένου αὐτόν.

^{22.4}And, they say, those who are baptized on behalf of the dead are the angels, who are baptized on our behalf so that when we also possess the Name, we may not be held back, being prevented from entering the Pleroma by the Limit and the Cross. ⁵For this reason, in the laying on of hands, they say at the end, “for the angelic redemption”, that is, the one that the angels also possess, so that the one who has acquired the redemption has been baptized in the same Name as that in which his angel had been baptized before him. ⁶In the beginning, the angels were baptized in the redemption of the Name which came down upon Jesus in the dove and redeemed him.

The male angels – having been “drawn together with the Logos” (21.3) so as to constitute his body – are said to have been baptized along with Jesus on behalf of the spiritual seed so that in repeating the process for themselves, they too shall be raised from death to life. Central to this baptism and its redemptive power is the Divine Name in which it is performed and which is conveyed to the baptizand through the Spirit/dove at the “laying on of hands”,²⁰ most likely referring to the anointment in which the Name was conferred upon the candidate for their “redemption” (λύτρωσις).²¹

²⁰ Cf. Acts 8:18; 9:17; 19:6; Tertullian, *Bapt.* 8.1; *Res.* 8.3; Hippolytus, *Trad. ap.* 21.21; Cyprian, *Ep.* 73.2; see Thomassen (2006a), 380-381, 393-394.

²¹ Thomassen (2006a), 393-394 distinguishes more sharply between the various points at which the Name was received in Valentinian liturgy: 1) in the baptismal bath itself (*Exc.* 76-86; Irenaeus, *Haer.* I 21.3); 2) in the post-baptismal anointment (*Gos. Phil.* NHC II,3; *Gos. Truth* NHC I,3); and 3) in the laying on of hands (*Exc.* 22.5; Irenaeus, *Haer.* I 21.3; Hippolytus, *Haer.* VI 41.4).

According to *Exc.* 36, in addition to providing the archetype for the Valentinian's own redemption, the angels themselves undergo an important transformation in being baptized with Jesus:

^{36.1}Ἐν ἐνότητι μέντοι γε προεβλήθησαν οἱ Ἄγγελοι ἡμῶν, φασίν, εἷς ὄντες, ὡς ἀπὸ ἐνὸς προελθόντες. ²Ἐπεὶ δὲ ἡμεῖς ἤμεν οἱ μεμερισμένοι, διὰ τοῦτο ἐβαπτίσαστο ὁ Ἰησοῦς, τὸ ἀμέριστον μερισθῆναι, μέχρις ἡμᾶς ἐνώση αὐτοῖς εἰς τὸ Πλήρωμα · ἵνα ἡμεῖς, οἱ πολλοί, ἐν γενόμενοι, [οἱ] πάντες τῷ ἐνὶ τῷ δι' ἡμᾶς μερισθέντι ἀνακραθῶμεν.

^{36.1}They say, however, that our angels were brought forth in unity, being one, as they came forth from One. ²But since we are those who have been divided, for this reason Jesus was baptized, to divide the undivided, until he might unite us with them in the Pleroma, so that we, the many, having become one, might all be mixed with the One who was divided among us.

The angels were brought forth as a unity, while their human counterparts are divided. If the spiritual seeds are to be united with their corresponding angels, the angels need to be divided in the same manner. At his baptism, Jesus divided the previously undivided angels, thereby establishing this necessary symmetry between the Valentinians and their angelic counterparts. Once these two have been united, Christ will lead them all into the Pleroma. In this sense, 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.”²² Indeed, according to *Exc.* 35, neither the spiritual seed nor their angels may enter the Pleroma without one another: “it is almost as if they (the angels) need us in order to enter, since without us this is not entrusted to them” (35.3-4). Hence, when Christ took the angels into the baptismal waters with him, he did so not only “for the correction of the seed” (35.1-2), but also for his own and the angels’ redemption. For as Theodotus allegedly stated, “redemption (λυτρώσεως) was also necessary for Jesus” (*Exc.* 22.7) so that he could transcend the ὑστέρημα of bodily existence in which he had placed himself. It is in baptism that this unity between spiritual seed and angel is established.

²² Thomassen (2006a), 383.

3.2.3. Baptismal Union with the Angels: *Exc.* 66-86

Exc. Section D (66-86) stands out from Sections A and B in that it contains no comments from Clement, but instead represents a fairly coherent and continuous whole, presumably excerpted from a single source.²³ The source may be Theodotus himself, although we cannot be certain. Nonetheless, nothing of *Exc.* 66-86's theology or liturgy is fundamentally incongruous with the ideology or mythology of *Exc.* 1-43.2. However, *Exc.* 66-86 does contain some distinctive elements.

Most notable of these is the lengthy discourse on fate (Είμαρμένη) in *Exc.* 69-78.²⁴ The concept of Είμαρμένη is used to encapsulate “a conjunction of many adversarial powers” (69.1; σύνοδος πολλῶν καὶ ἐναντίων δυνάμεων) which are arrayed against the soul in an effort to keep it enslaved in the cosmos through their governance of the planets and stars. However, Christ's coming was like the rising of “a new and alien star which revolved on a new path of salvation” (74.2). His advent “abolished the old astral decree” and transferred believers from the powers of fate and “becoming” (γενέσεως) into his “providence” (Πρόνοια) (74.2-76.1). This transference is realised through a combination of baptism and instruction:

^{78.1} Μέχρι τοῦ βαπτίσματος οὖν ἡ Εἴμαρμένη, φασίν, ἀληθῆς· μετὰ δὲ τοῦτο οὐκέτι ἀληθεύουσιν οἱ ἀστρολόγοι. ² 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.

^{78.1} Therefore, they say that Fate is real until baptism, but that after it, the astrologers no longer speak the truth. ² But it is not only the bath that is liberating, but also knowledge: Who we were, what we have become; where we were, [or] where we have been placed; where we are hastening, from where we are redeemed; what birth is, and what rebirth is.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ For more detail on these passages, see the discussion in Chapter 6.

Thomassen is surely correct when he says that such knowledge must have been imparted as part of a pre-baptismal catechetical program consisting of, at least partially, the Valentinian “system”.²⁵

This would then have been supplemented by the rite of baptism, the effects of which are spelt out very clearly in *Exc.* 79-80:

⁷⁹Ἐως οὖν ἀμόρφωτον, φασίν, ἔτι τὸ σπέρμα, Θηλείας ἐστὶ τέκνον· μορφωθὲν δὲ μετετέθη εἰς ἄνδρα καὶ υἱὸς Νυμφίου γίνεται· οὐκέτι ἀσθενῆς καὶ τοῖς κοσμικοῖς ὑποκείμενος ὁρατοῖς τε καὶ ἀοράτοις, ἀλλ’ ἀνδρωθεὶς ἄρρην γίνεται καρπός.

^{80.1}Ὁν γεννᾷ ἡ Μήτηρ εἰς θάνατον ἄγεται καὶ εἰς κόσμον· ὃν δὲ ἀναγεννᾷ Χριστὸς εἰς ζωὴν μετατίθεται, εἰς Ὀγδόαδα. ²Καὶ ἀποθνήσκουσιν μὲν τῷ κόσμῳ, ζῶσι δὲ τῷ Θεῷ, ἵνα θάνατος θανάτῳ λυθῆ, ἀναστάσει δὲ ἡ φθορά. ³Διὰ γὰρ Πατρὸς καὶ Υἱοῦ καὶ ἁγίου Πνεύματος σφραγισθεὶς ἀνεπίληπτός ἐστι πάση τῇ ἄλλῃ δυνάμει, καὶ διὰ τριῶν Ὀνομάτων πάσης τῆς ἐν φθορᾷ τριάδος ἀπηλλάγη· φορέσας τὴν εἰκόνα τοῦ χοϊκοῦ, τότε φορεῖ τὴν εἰκόνα τοῦ ἐπουρανοῦ.

⁷⁹Therefore, they say that so long as the seed is formless, it is an offspring of the Female. But having been formed, it is changed into a man and becomes a son of the bridegroom. No longer is it weak and subject to both the visible and invisible cosmic (powers), but having become a man, it becomes a male fruit.

^{80.1}The one that the Mother generates is led into death and into the world; the one that Christ regenerates is transferred into life in the Ogdoad. ²And they die to the world, but they live to God, so that death might be destroyed by death, and corruption by resurrection. ³For, having been sealed through Father and Son and Holy Spirit, it is immune from attacks by every other power, and through the three Names it has been delivered from all of the triad of destruction. “Having borne the image of the earthly, it then bears the image of the heavenly” (1 Cor. 15:49).

These passages describe how the initiate overcomes the femininity and “formlessness” (ἄμορφος) in which they were initially produced by Sophia as “abortions” (ἐκτρώματα) on account of her begetting without a male consort (*Exc.* 67.4-68). Through instruction, baptism, and an anointment, the initiate receives γνῶσις, μορφή, and the Divine Name respectively, thereby becoming “a male fruit”, “a son of the bridegroom”, or “a child of the bridal chamber (νυμφῶνος)” (cf. *Exc.* 68). In sum, the process constitutes a rebirth from death in the cosmos to life in the Ogdoad in which they bear the image of the heavenly man, Christ. Indeed, in

²⁵ Thomassen (2006a), 386.

baptism-anointment the initiate “receives the Name of God as an inscription, and the Spirit as an image” (86.2), the supreme power of which is indicated in the exorcism of the baptismal waters to prevent “impure spirits” descending into them to receive the σφραγίς of the Name along with the candidate.²⁶ Through this seal of the Divine Name, the soul is marked as God’s property, that is, one of his children “who are already resting in the marriage-bed (ἤδη ἐν τῇ κοίτῃ συναναπαυόμενα)” (86.3).

Elsewhere in *Exc.* the process is described as one of angelification: “[through baptism] we are raised (ἐγειρόμεθα), becoming like angels (ισάγγελοι), restored with the males (τοῖς ἄρρεσιν ἀποκατασταθέντες), members with members, in unity” (22.3). Indeed, through baptism the feminine seed with which each Valentinian is endowed “becomes a man (ἀπανδρωθέντα), is united with the angels (ἐνοῦται τοῖς ἀγγέλοις), and advances into the Pleroma” (21.3). As a result, the Valentinian church is “said to be transformed into angels” (21.3; μετατίθεσθαι λέγεται ... εἰς ἀγγέλους).

The net result is identical: candidates undergo a period of catechesis and preparation culminating in the transformative rite of baptism-anointment in which, by virtue of their reception of the Divine Name, they become as angels bearing the divine image. Through endowment with knowledge, form, and the Name, the female seed has overcome the ὑστέρημα which it inherited from Sophia and has become a male fruit capable of joining its angelic partner in the Pleroma.²⁷ Furthermore, since the baptized “are reborn, becoming superior to all other powers” (76.4), they are consequently invulnerable to demonic attack here in the cosmos. In the waters of baptism, the candidate has “put on the Lord’s armour” in

²⁶ *Exc.* 82-84; see Denzey Lewis (2013a); Leeper (1990). For the full liturgical scheme of *Exc.* 66-86, see Thomassen (2006a), 333-341, who outlines the following: 1) Preparations of the initiand, including catechesis, fasts, supplications, and prayers; 2) consecration of the baptismal water and the oil through exorcism and sanctification by the Divine Name; 3) renunciation of evil spirits; 4) immersion in water in the triune Name; 5) Anointing; 6) Consecration of the bread using an invocation of the Name; and 7) a meal, probably without wine.

²⁷ On the gender dynamics of this soteriology, see Buckley (1986), 69-70.

order to “quench the arrows of the devil” (85.3; cf. Eph 6:11-16), and having been sealed in the Divine Name they are “released from the whole triad of corruption” and are “beyond every other power” (80.3). Hence baptism in the Divine Name has a strong apotropaic function, both liberating the soul from enslavement to fate, but also protecting it from future attacks.

3.3. Baptism, Eschatology, and the Heavenly Temple

According to *Exc.*, in addition to the transformative and apotropaic functions of the Divine Name, it also has a central role in personal eschatology. Indeed, by virtue of bearing the Name, one may enter the Pleroma: “The angels are baptized on our behalf so that when we also possess the Name, we may not be held back, being prevented from entering the Pleroma by the Limit and the Cross (τῷ Ὁρῷ καὶ τῷ Σταυρῷ)” (22.4). The Limit-Cross functions to divide the Pleroma from that which does not belong therein: “The Cross is a sign (σημεῖόν) of the Limit in the Pleroma, for it divides the unfaithful from the faithful, just as it does the cosmos from the Pleroma” (42.1). In being endowed with the Name at baptism, the initiate is marked as one of God’s faithful belonging within this Pleromatic barrier. They therefore remain unhindered by the Ὁρος, and instead are provided with access to the Pleroma.

The notion that the Name grants access beyond the celestial Σταυρός-Ὁρος most likely refers to the cruciform shape of the baptismal σφραγίς which conveys the Name to the candidate. This dynamic harks back to Ezekiel 9:4, where the elect receive a σημεῖον upon their foreheads, more specifically the Hebrew *Taw*. By the Book of Revelation this σημεῖον is equated with the σφραγίς of the Divine Name (Rev 7:3-8; 14:1; 22:4). With the Greek *Chi* (X) resembling both the Name of Χριστός and the cross itself, these two came to be bound

together in baptismal theology as the mark of one's redemption.²⁸ The implication in *Exc.* seems to be that by having received the *X-qua*-Name in baptism, the initiate is marked as belonging within the *X-qua*-Σταυρός-Όρος in the Pleroma; it functions as a stamp of membership.

According to *Exc.* 26.2-3, the ascended Jesus takes up a position at this Pleromatic border so as to function as a “door” (cf. John 10:7), thereby facilitating the spiritual seed's eschatological access to the Pleroma: “And when he enters, the seed also enters the Pleroma with him, having been gathered together and led in through the door.”²⁹ *Exc.* 37-38 develops this Christological role with reference to the motif of the heavenly temple.

3.3.1. *Exc.* 37-38 and the Psychic Temple of the Demiurge

³⁷Οἱ ἀπὸ Ἀδὰμ ἐξεληθόντες, οἱ μὲν Δίκαιοι, διὰ τῶν ἐκτισμένων τὴν ὁδὸν ποιούμενοι, παρὰ τῷ Τόπῳ κατείχοντο, κατὰ τοὺς Οὐαλεντιανούς · οἱ δὲ ἕτεροι, ἐν τῷ τοῦ σκότου ἐκτισμένῳ ἐν τοῖς ἀριστεροῖς, ἔχοντες συναίσθησιν τοῦ πυρός.

^{38.1}Ποταμὸς ἐκπορεύεται πυρὸς ὑποκάτω τοῦ θρόνου τοῦ Τόπου, καὶ ῥεῖ εἰς τὸ κενὸν τοῦ ἐκτισμένου, ὃ ἐστὶν ἡ Γέεννα, ἀπὸ κτίσεως τοῦ πυρὸς ῥέοντος μὴ πληρουμένη. Καὶ αὐτὸς δὲ ὁ Τόπος πύρινός ἐστι. ²Διὰ τοῦτο, φησί, καταπέτασμα ἔχει, ἵνα μὴ ἐκ τῆς προσόψεως ἀναλωθῇ τὰ πνεύματα. Μόνος δὲ ὁ Ἀρχάγγελος εἰσέρχεται πρὸς αὐτόν, οὗ κατ' εἰκόνα καὶ ὁ ἀρχιερεὺς ἅπαξ τοῦ ἐνιαυτοῦ εἰς τὰ ἅγια τῶν ἁγίων εἰσῆει.

³⁷Regarding those who came from Adam, according to the Valentinians the righteous were detained in Place while making their way through the created things; but the others were among those of the left, they went to the place which was created for the darkness, and they experience the sensation of fire.

^{38.1}A river of fire flows out from beneath the throne of Place, and it streams into the emptiness of creation, which is Gehenna; it is never filled, although the fire flows from the beginning of creation. And Place itself is fiery. ²For this reason, he says, it has a veil so that the spirits might not be destroyed by the appearance of it. And only the Archangel enters it, after whose image the high priest

²⁸ See Daniélou (1964), 147-163, esp. 154; Gieschen (2003), 133-134. Gieschen argues that the Hebrew *Taw* of Ezek 9:4 was often written as an X or + and was understood as shorthand for the Name of YHWH. Hence Rev adopts the notion of the saving X as a reference to the name Χριστός, now understood as a substitute for the Name of God.

²⁹ Cf. *Gos. Phil.* NHC II,3 58.10-17: “He (Jesus) said on that day in the Eucharist, ‘He who united the perfect, the light, to the Holy Spirit, unite the angels with us also, the images.’ Do not despise the Lamb, for without it, it is not possible to see the door (ϣ). No one shall be able to approach the King (ϣϣ) while naked.” Here also, Christ is the “door” which provides access to the “King” by means of his role as sacrificial “Lamb”. Lundhaug (2013a), 260 n.124 notes that many scholars have emended ϣ (“door”) in *Gos. Phil.* NHC II,3 58.15 to ϣϣ (“king”), so as to parallel the next line, thereby removing the Coptic wordplay based on the presumption of a Greek *Vorlage*. A notable exception is Layton (1987), 334; but cf. Layton (2004), 167, where he makes the emendation, suggesting an error by the ancient copyist.

³⁰ Ἐνθεν καὶ ὁ Ἰησοῦς παρακληθεὶς συνεκαθέσθη τῷ Τόπῳ, ἵνα μένη τὰ πνεύματα καὶ μὴ προαναστῆ αὐτοῦ, καὶ ἵνα τὸν Τόπον ἡμερώσῃ καὶ τῷ σπέρματι δίοδον εἰς Πλήρωμα παράσχη.

also enters the holy of holies once a year.
³¹ Thereupon Jesus was also summoned. He sat down with Place so that the spirits might remain and not rise up before him, and so that he might subdue Place and provide the seed with a passage into the Pleroma.

Exc. 37 distinguishes between the fates of the righteous and the unrighteous; the latter go to destruction, while the former are “detained in Place”. The designation Τόπος is a title for the demiurge himself, familiar from Philo as well as Valentinian sources.³⁰ *Exc.* 38 proceeds to describe the vicinity of the demiurge using a wealth of temple imagery (throne, fire, veil, high priest, holy of holies). In fact, the image of the fiery throne along with a stream of fire recalls that of the “Ancient of Days” of Daniel 7:9-10, although the fiery nature of the heavenly holy of holies is well-known from Jewish apocalypses generally.³¹ In this way, *Exc.* 38 downgrades the enthroned Kabod-YHWH of Jewish tradition to the level of the Valentinian demiurge.³² This downgrading of YHWH results in a subtle re-evaluation of the function of the veil which stood before the throne, concealing the divine Glory therein.

The notion that a direct vision of the fiery Kabod could be dangerous, even fatal, was familiar from earlier Jewish tradition.³³ However, *Exc.* 38 ascribes the danger of this vision not to the demiurge’s supreme holiness, but rather to his inferior fiery nature, for this fire produces a mere “emptiness” (κενὸν), and is incapable of producing a πλήρωμα. Hence Jesus is summoned to sit beside the enthroned demiurge-YHWH (cf. Ps 109:1) in order to provide

³⁰ E.g. Philo, *Somm.* 1 63; *Fug.* 75; *QE* 2 39; cf. *Tri. Trac.* NHC I,5 100.29; *Exc.* 34.1-2; 39; 59.2; Hippolytus, *Haer.* VI 32.7; Heracleon Fr.35 in Origen, *Comm. Jo.* XIII 324. See Scholem (1960), 34-35; DeConick (1995), 30-31; Wucherpfennig (2002), 66; Edwards (2009), 59-60. Edwards (2004), 57 and Wucherpfennig (2002), 66 note that Τόπος could also be used as a synonym for the Jerusalem temple; e.g. Deut 12:5; Jer 7:14; 2 Macc 5:19; Matt 24:15; John 4:20; 11:48; Acts 6:13-14; 21:28. On Rabbinic and Hekhalot speculations on the veil of *makom* (e.g. *3 Enoch* 45.1-6), see DeConick (1995), 30-31.

³¹ E.g. *1 En.* 14.8-25; cf. Heb 1:7 (=Ps 104:4), where the angelic ministers are fiery. Cf. *3 En.* 36, where the angels purify themselves in a river of fire as preparation for joining the heavenly liturgy. On the fiery ouranography in Hekhalot literature, see Schäfer (1992), 79-80.

³² Cf. *Orig. World* NHC II,5 104.35-105.19; *Hyp. Arch.* NHC II,4 95.26-31; *Ap. John* NHC II,1 10.7-19 (cf. NHC III,1 15.9-22; BG 37.18-38.14).

³³ E.g. Ex 24:17; 33:20; cf. Deut 4:24; Heb 12:29; *Ascen. Isa.* 9-10; *Hag.* 14b; as well as in later Hekhalot literature, e.g. *Hekh. Rab.* §§102-104, 159, 184, 189; cf. *Hekh. Zut.* §356; see Himmelfarb (1988), 82-86; Schäfer (1992), 15-21; Calaway (2013a).

the ascending spiritual seed with protection for as long as they remain there. Once the entire seed has been gathered to Jesus in the demiurge's holy of holies, they can pass through the Limit and into the Pleroma.

The position of the veil in the demiurge's temple has been a source of some debate, and indeed as we shall see in the next chapter, *Gos. Phil.* actually identifies the heavenly veil with the Pleromatic ὄρος itself. In this vein, Ernst Käsemann argued some time ago that the veil in *Exc.* 38.2 represents "die Scheidewand zwischen Pleroma und der gefahrdrohenden und den Seelenaufstieg hindernden Sphäre des Topos."³⁴ In other words, the veil is positioned above the demiurge, separating him from the Pleroma.³⁵ However, Otfried Hofius has counter-argued that "diese Deutung hat jedoch am Text keinen Anhalt. Das καταπέτασμα ist vielmehr der Vorhang vor dem Demiurgen und bildet somit die Scheidewand zwischen der Sphäre des Topos und den unterhalb dieser Sphäre gelegenen Bereichen."³⁶ Certainly Hofius's interpretation has superior precedent in biblical tradition, for although there are said to be multiple veils in the temple (e.g. Ex 26; 36), the καταπέτασμα is typically identified as the inner veil dividing the sanctuary into the holy of holies and the holy place.³⁷ Further, *Exc.* 38.2's description of the Archangel who enters within this demiurgic veil as the model for the Jewish high-priest's annual entry into the holy of holies on the Day of Atonement would also recommend Hofius's reading. In this manner, *Exc.* 38.2 intimates that the true object of the Jewish priesthood's sacrificial cult is merely the demiurge, as opposed to the true God.

³⁴ Käsemann (1939), 135 n.4.

³⁵ On similarly positioned veils, see Hofius (1972), 29-43.

³⁶ *Ibid.* 28 n.2.

³⁷ Gray (2008), 188-189 counts thirty-nine uses of καταπέτασμα in the LXX, of which thirty-five refer to the inner veil: Ex 27:21; 26:34, 35; 26:33 (3x); 26:31; 30:6; 35:12; 37:3; 39:4, 19, 40; 40:3, 5, 21, 22, 26; Lev 4:6, 17; 16:2, 12, 15; 21:23; 24:3; Num 3:10, 26; 4:5, 32; 18:7; 1 Kgs 6:36; 2 Chr 3:14; 1 Macc 1:22; 4:51; Sir 50:5. I would dispute Num 3:26, which seems to refer to the outer veil, along with the other four uses of καταπέτασμα in Ex 26:37; 37:5, 16; 38:18. In the NT also, the καταπέτασμα referred to the inner veil: Heb 6:19; 9:3; 10:20; cf. Matt 27:51; Mark 15:38; Luke 23:45. Conversely, the outer veil tended to be identified as the κάλυμμα, κατακάλυμμα, ἱστίον, or ἐπίσπαστρον.

In contrast to this Archangel, *Exc.* 38.2-3 depicts Jesus as entering this psychic *devir* on a single occasion for the sake of all the righteous. Jesus takes up a position beside the demiurge in order to “subdue” him – probably a reference to the demiurge’s spirit-emptying fire – and thereby provide the righteous with access to the truly divine realm. In juxtaposing Jesus and the priestly Archangel, *Exc.* 38 appears to draw on the high-priestly Christology of the Epistle to the Hebrews, where the high-priest’s annual sacrifices of atonement are deemed obsolete in light of Jesus’s eternally efficacious self-sacrifice (Heb 7:27; 9:11-12, 26; 10:10-14).³⁸ Christ is presented as “a priest arising according to the order of Melchizedek” (Heb 5:6, 10; 6:20; 7:11, 15; Ps 109:4) who has replaced the Aaronic priesthood which officiated in accordance with the now-obsolete Law (Heb 7:18; 8:4, 13; 10:9). Through his sacrifice, Christ has entered the heavenly temple (Heb 4:14; 6:19-20; 9:24), has been seated next to “the throne of the Majesty in the heavens” and become a “minister in the sanctuary and the true tent” (Heb 8:1-2). For the earthly sanctuary is merely a “copy” (ἀντίτυπος) or “shadow” (σκιά) of the heavenly τύπος initially revealed to Moses (Heb 8:5; 9:24; Ex 25:9, 40), whereas Christ has revealed “the greater and more perfect tent (σκηνης) not made with hands, that is, not of this creation (κτίσεως)” (Heb 9:11).³⁹ Through the blood offering of his self-sacrifice, Jesus has rent the veil (καταπέτασμα) of his flesh, thereby providing the faithful believer with an entry into this heavenly sanctuary (Heb 10:19-22). In this sense, Jesus is the “forerunner” (πρόδρομος; Heb 6:20) and “pioneer” (ἀρχηγός; Heb 2:10; 12:2) for all other believers, who are now able to “approach” (ἐγγίζω; Heb 7:19), “draw near” (προσέρχομαι;

³⁸ On this high-priestly Christology, see Attridge (1989), 97-103. Attridge locates its origins in Jewish traditions associating angels with priestly roles in the heavenly temple. However, he argues that the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews did not invent the Christology, but rather drew on an existing Christian liturgical or exegetical tradition, as is attested by other early Christian literature independently of Hebrews; e.g. Ign. *Phld.* 9.1; *Mart. Pol.* 14.3; *Pol. Phil.* 12.2; *I Clem.* 61.3; 64.1; and later, *Apos. Con.* 8.12.7; Tertullian, *Marc.* 3.7.6; Clement of Alexandria, *Protr.* 12; *Paed.* 2.8; cited in Attridge (1989), 102 n.263. See also, Attridge (2004); Mason (2008).

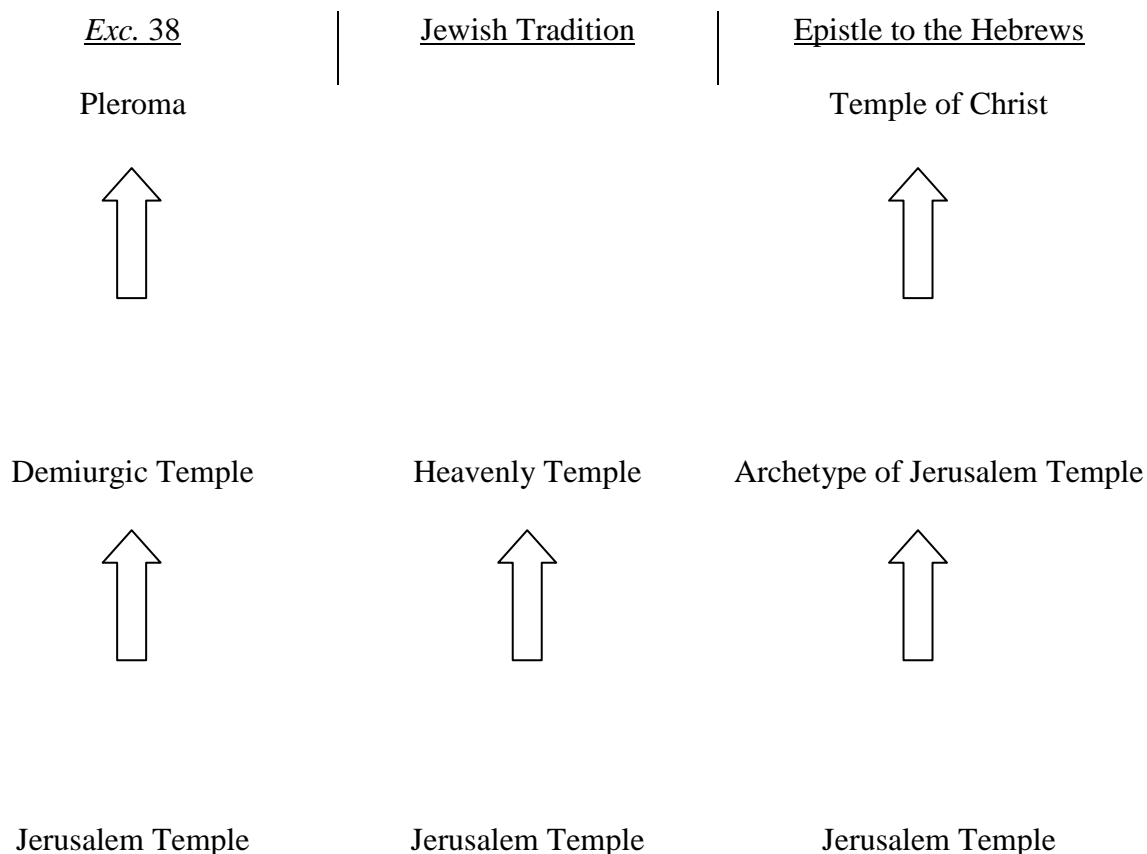
³⁹ On the temple in Hebrews and its background in Second Temple Judaism, see Mason (2008), 206-224; Attridge (2004), 320-323; Koester (1989), 26-40.

Heb 4:16; 7:25; 10:22; 11:6), and “enter” (εἰσερχομαι; Heb 6:19) the presence of God in the heavenly temple.⁴⁰

Exc. 38 reinterprets this Christology and temple cosmology in light of the Valentinian ontological distinction between Christ and the demiurge-YHWH. In Hebrews, the high-priestly Christ grants access to the heavenly temple which is the archetype of the earthly temple in Jerusalem. However, in *Exc.* 38 this heavenly archetype belongs to the demiurge and insofar as Christ enters it, it is merely to provide protection for the ascending spiritual seed. According to *Exc.* 38, “the new and living way (ὁδὸν)” (Heb 10:20) inaugurated through Christ’s crucifixion is instead a “passage” (διόδου) into the Pleroma beyond the demiurge’s psychic temple. In other words, *Exc.* 38 has taken the bipartite distinction of an earthly and heavenly temple found in Hebrews, and has expanded it into a tripartite distinction between the Jewish temple, the demiurgic temple, and the Pleroma. In bifurcating the heavenly temple of Hebrews into 1) the demiurgic temple and 2) the Pleroma, *Exc.* 38 allows Christ to retain his high-priestly character while stressing the alien nature of his revelation in a more overtly polemical fashion.⁴¹ From the perspective of *Exc.* 38, the following cosmological scheme therefore emerges:

⁴⁰ See Mackie (2011), 87-99; Calaway (2013b), 139-178.

⁴¹ The notion that through Jesus, the redeemed may “enter” (εἰσερχομαι; *Exc.* 26.3; 34.2; cf. 64) the Pleroma, being “led in” by him (εἰσάγω; *Exc.* 26.3; 42.2; προάγω; 61.5), testifies to his enduring high-priestly character.



In light of this, Scholem’s judgment that *Exc.* 37-38 are “soaked with Merkabah mysticism” is only correct in a qualified sense.⁴² *Exc.* 38 has indeed adopted much of its imagery from earlier Jewish texts and traditions centred around the mystic’s vision of the enthroned Kabod of YHWH in the heavenly temple. As was noted earlier, the description of the throne and its river of fire recalls Daniel 7:9-10 and *1 Enoch* 14.8-25. Indeed, Rowland has even suggested that *Exc.* 38 is directly dependent on *1 Enoch* 14,⁴³ while Stökl Ben Ezra has suggested *bHagigah* 13a-14a as a stronger alternative.⁴⁴ However, the polemical edge is perfectly clear: the Kabod of YHWH, the vision of which represented the climax of the visionary experience, has been downgraded to the figure of the demiurge residing outside the truly divine realm. *Exc.* 37 even goes so far as to count this psychic temple among “the things

⁴² Scholem (1960), 34 n.10; see also, DeConick (1995).

⁴³ Rowland and Morray-Jones (2009), 199.

⁴⁴ Stökl Ben Ezra (2003), 229-231 concludes that “the chapter appears to be the oldest source for some terms and conceptions attested only much later in Jewish literature; *Excerpts from Theodotus* 38 therefore manifests an intermediate state between apocalyptic texts and the mysticism of the Hekhalot literature.”

of creation” (τῶν ἐκτισμένων), a status explicitly denied to the true temple of Christ’s high-priesthood in Hebrews 9:11.⁴⁵ Hence this imagery is used in *Exc.* 37-38 not to advocate the sort of visionary experiences familiar from early Jewish mysticism, but rather to express the radical novelty of Christ’s revelation and the spiritual realm of the Pleroma to which he provides access. Further, we are evidently dealing with eschatology rather than mysticism in *Exc.* 37-38. Just as Christ assumed his position alongside the demiurge in the psychic temple after his death, so too do the spiritual seed ascend to Christ after their release from the body and the other “created things”. Bearing the Divine Name through baptism, they possess the sign which marks them as belonging with the Father in the Pleroma, and therefore they may enter with Christ beyond the Limit at the Eschaton, once all of the spiritual seeds have been so redeemed.

3.3.2. *Exc.* 27 and Clement’s Ideal Priest-Soul

Exc. 27 also engages temple imagery to describe the ascent of the soul into the spiritual realm where it is amalgamated to the body of the Lord. It is not clear whether the ascent is mystical or post-mortem, but the account appears to have been inserted at this point in light of the reference to Theodotus’s concept of the Divine Name as Jesus’s invisible essence in *Exc.* 26.1. *Exc.* 27 therefore represents an extended piece of speculation on the transformative soteriological power of this Name for those who receive it. The passage has proved more controversial than *Exc.* 38 on account of its uncertain provenance, with some scholars supporting a Clementine origin,⁴⁶ and others a Valentinian origin.⁴⁷

⁴⁵ The Jerusalem temple was itself frequently allegorized as a microcosm of creation; e.g. Philo, *Mos.* 2 81-108; *QE* 2 51-106; *Her.* 221-229; Josephus, *Ant.* 3.123, 181-183; cf. *J.W.* 5.213-218; Clement of Alexandria, *Strom.* V 6.32-40.

⁴⁶ Dibelius (1908), 245-246; Casey (1934), 9-10; Méhat (1966), 465; Sagnard (1970), 11; Le Boulluec (1981); Kovacs (1997), 432-437; Bucur (2006), 257-258; Recinová (2012), 108.

⁴⁷ Dodds (1965), 94-96; Lilla (1971), 173-181; Buckley (1986), 66-70; DeConick (1995), 32-33; eadem. (1998), 522-523; eadem. (1999), 339-340; eadem. (2001a), 260-261. For a development of Dodds’s claim that Valentinians, such as those supposedly witnessed in *Exc.* 27, were the intermediaries between Jewish and

^{27.1}Ὁ ἱερεὺς εἰσίων ἐντὸς τοῦ καταπετάσματος τοῦ δευτέρου, τό τε πέταλον ἀπετίθει παρὰ τῷ θυσιαστηρίῳ τοῦ θυμιάματος · αὐτὸς δὲ ἐν σιγῇ, τὸ ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ ἐγκεχαραγμένον Ὄνομα ἔχων, εἰσήει · δεικνὺς τὴν ἀπόθεσιν <τοῦ σώματος> τοῦ καθάπερ πετάλου χρυσοῦ καθαροῦ γενομένου καὶ κούφου διὰ τὴν κάθαρσιν [τοῦ ὡσπερ σώματος] τῆς ψυχῆς [ἀπόθεσιν], ἐν ᾧ ἐγκεχάρακτο τὸ γάνωμα τῆς θεοσεβείας δι' οὗ ταῖς Ἀρχαῖς καὶ ταῖς Ἐξουσίαις ἐγινώσκετο τὸ Ὄνομα περικείμενος.
²Ἀποτίθεται δὲ τοῦτο τὸ σῶμα, τὸ πέταλον τὸ ἀβαρὲς γενόμενον, ἐντὸς τοῦ καταπετάσματος τοῦ δευτέρου, ἐν τῷ νοητῷ κόσμῳ, ὃ ἐστὶ δεύτερον ὀλοσχερὲς καταπέτασμα τοῦ παντός, παρὰ τὸ θυσιαστήριον τοῦ θυμιάματος, παρὰ τοὺς λειτουργοὺς τῶν ἀναφερομένων εὐχῶν Ἀγγέλους.
³Γυμνὴ δὲ ἡ ψυχὴ ἐν δυνάμει τοῦ συνειδότης, οἷον σῶμα τῆς δυνάμεως γενομένη, μεταβαίνει εἰς τὰ πνευματικά, λογικὴ τῷ ὄντι καὶ ἀρχιερατικὴ γενομένη, ὡς ἂν ἐμψυχουμένη ὡς εἶπεῖν ὑπὸ τοῦ Λόγου προσεχῶς ἤδη, καθάπερ οἱ Ἀρχάγγελοι τῶν Ἀγγέλων ἀρχιερεῖς γενόμενοι, καὶ τούτων πάλιν οἱ Πρωτόκτιστοι.
⁴Ποῦ δὲ ἔτι γραφῆς καὶ μαθήσεως κατόρθωμα τῇ φυγῇ ἐκείνῃ τῇ καθαρᾷ γενομένη, ὅπου καὶ ἀξιοῦται πρόσωπον πρὸς πρόσωπον Θεὸν ὄραν;
⁵Τὴν γοῦν ἀγγελικὴν διδασκαλίαν ὑπερβᾶσα καὶ τὸ Ὄνομα τὸ διδασκόμενον ἐγγράφως, ἐπὶ τὴν γνῶσιν καὶ κατάληψιν τῶν πραγμάτων ἔρχεται, οὐκέτι νύμφη, ἀλλ' ἤδη Λόγος γενόμενος καὶ παρὰ τῷ νυμφίῳ καταλύων μετὰ τῶν Πρωτοκλήτων καὶ Πρωτοκτίστων, φίλων μὲν δι' ἀγάπην, υἱῶν δὲ διὰ τὴν διδασκαλίαν καὶ ὑπακοήν, ἀδελφῶν δὲ διὰ τὸ τῆς γενέσεως κοινόν.
⁶Ὡστε τὸ μὲν τῆς οἰκονομίας ἦν, τὸ πέταλον περικεῖσθαι καὶ μανθάνειν εἰς γνῶσιν · τὸ δὲ δυνάμεως, τὸ θεοφόρον γίνεσθαι τὸν ἄνθρωπον, προσεχῶς ἐνεργοῦμενον ὑπὸ τοῦ Κυρίου καὶ καθάπερ σῶμα αὐτοῦ γινόμενον.

^{27.1}When the high priest enters within the second veil, he discards the plate at the altar of incense, entering himself in silence, having the Name engraved in his heart; this represents the putting aside of the body which has become pure and light like the gold plate through the purification of the soul, the putting aside of the body, as it were, in which was engraved the brilliance of piety through which, having been invested in the Name, he was perceived by the rulers and the authorities.
²Now he discards this body, the plate which has become weightless, within the second veil, in the intelligible world, which is the second complete veil of the universe, beside the altar of incense, together with the angels, ministers of the prayers borne aloft.
³And the naked soul is in the power of the one who has consciousness, having become like a body of the power; it passes into the pneumatic things, having become truly Logos-like and high-priestly, as though being already animated, so to speak, directly by the Logos, just as the Archangels became the high priests of the Angels, and the First-Created became the high priests of the Archangels.
⁴But where still is the correct use of Scripture and instruction for that soul which has become pure, and where is it deemed worthy to see God face to face?
⁵Therefore, having transcended the angelic teaching and the name which is taught in writing, it comes to the knowledge and apprehension of the facts; it is no longer a bride, but rather, has already become a Logos and resides beside the bridegroom with the First-Called and the First-Created: friends through love; sons through teaching and obedience; and brothers through their shared origin.
⁶Inasmuch as it was the work of the dispensation to wear the plate and to teach for the purposes of knowledge, on the other hand, it was the work of power that man should become theophoric (“god-bearing”), being operated directly by the Lord and becoming just like his body.

Plotinian mysticism, see Mazur (2013). Others remain agnostic regarding the provenance of *Exc.* 27, e.g. Van den Hoek (1988), 143; Stökl Ben Ezra (2003), 240-242. Others have suggested an entirely different provenance, such as Clement's teacher, Pantaenus, e.g. Collomp (1913), Bousset (1915), 161, 191.

This lengthy passage presents a description of the soul, depicted as a priest, ascending through the heavenly temple, eventually reaching the holy of holies, or the intelligible world, where it is transformed into a high-priest, or a Logos, thereby becoming part of the Lord's body, or "theophoric". Central to this transformation is the discarding of the body, which is symbolized by the removal of the gold plate, which bore the Divine Name and was attached to the front of the high priest's turban (27.1-2).⁴⁸ This Name, insofar as it appears on a material object, was merely the visible Name taught in writing and human language (27.5), and therefore must be discarded in favour of the ineffable Name inscribed directly on the heart of the sanctified believer (27.1). As long as the soul-priest wears the former Name, he can be recognized by the rulers and authorities (27.1), but once the soul-priest has removed it, becoming naked, he has become high-priestly like the Logos himself, and has access to pneumatic reality (27.3), possessing the Divine Name as an interior power.

For the most part, scholars defending a Valentinian provenance have merely presupposed as much on the basis of *Exc.*'s otherwise broadly Valentinian content. On the other hand, some scholars have argued that the marital language of *Exc.* 27.5 must be understood in light of the Valentinian concept of the "bridal chamber".⁴⁹ However, this relies at least partially on the misconception that the "bridal chamber" was the unique theological and sacramental property of Valentinians, when in fact bridal imagery was a perfectly common way of expressing the soul's or the church's relationship to God and Christ (e.g. Eph 5:22-23; Rev 21:9-14). More forceful is Lilla's claim that *Exc.* 27 must be Valentinian, or at least "gnostic", on the basis that it contains certain themes which cannot be attributed to

⁴⁸ Kovacs (1997), 434-435 argues that this does not refer to the material body, but rather "to a further purification of the soul by shedding everything that is not essential to it. This divesting of its inferior part is necessary so that the soul can become the 'body' of the Logos." Lilla (1971), 178 argues a similar point on the grounds that the "body" is removed in the intelligible realm, indicating that it is not the material body. Cf. *Exc.* 51.2 refers to "the material soul which is a body of the divine soul" (τὴν ὑλικὴν ψυχὴν σῶμα οὖσαν τῆς θείας ψυχῆς).

⁴⁹ E.g. Lilla (1971), 177-179; DeConick (1998), 522-523; eadem. (2001a), 260-261.

Clement, and instead belong to “the way of thinking of a gnostic author.” He identifies two such themes: 1) the Name which transcends that which is taught in Scripture (27.5); and 2) the body, represented by the golden plate, which causes the ascending soul to be recognized by the “rulers and authorities” (27.1). For Lilla, neither idea can be ascribed to Clement.⁵⁰ However, Lilla’s objections become less persuasive once we compare *Exc. 27* with Clement’s own work, especially *Strom. V 6.39-40*.⁵¹

Strom. V 6.39-40 constitutes the conclusion to Clement’s extended allegorical reflections on different aspects of the priestly cult and temple theology: 1) the tabernacle and its furnishings, based on Exodus 25-27 (*Strom. V 6.32-36*); 2) the garments of the high priest, based on Exodus 28 (*Strom. V 6.37.1-39.2*); and 3) the entry of the high priest into the holy of holies, based on Leviticus 16 (*Strom. V 6.39.3-40.4*). In the first two cases, Clement is largely dependent on Philo’s cosmological exegesis in *Mos. 2 71-135*.⁵² In the latter case however, Clement does not use Philo, but rather makes use of the Christological reading of Leviticus 16 from Hebrews 9. In doing so, Clement parallels Christ, the high priest, and the perfected Gnostic Christian.⁵³

Moreover, Clement discusses “the Name written on the plate” of the high-priest’s headdress, describing it as having been “written on account of both the written commandments and the sensible presence (τὴν αἰσθητὴν παρουσίαν).”⁵⁴ The Name on the high-priest’s golden plate – since it is the *written* Name – therefore represents the Law and the presence of God in the sensible world. The implication is that there is an *unwritten* Name

⁵⁰ Lilla (1971), 176-177 particularly stresses parallels with the Ophite diagram in Origen, *Cels. VI 31*. However, the parallels are rather weak.

⁵¹ See also the comparisons in Sagnard (1970), 220-223; Kovacs (1997).

⁵² Kovacs (1997), 414. For comparisons between Clement of Alexandria, *Strom. V 6.32-40* and Philo, *Mos. 2 71-135*, see Mondésert (1944), 172-182; Sagnard (1970), 220-223; Lilla (1971), 173-181; van den Hoek (1988), 116-147.

⁵³ Clement of Alexandria, *Strom. V 6.40.3*; see Kovacs (1997), 427-430; Stökl Ben Ezra (2003), 238-239. The word “Gnostic” here refers to Clement’s concept of the perfect Christian. On Christ as high priest, see also *Strom. VII 3.13.2*.

⁵⁴ Clement of Alexandria, *Strom. V 6.38.3*; cf. *V 6.34.5*.

which represents God's intellectual or spiritual presence. This same basic distinction is found in *Exc. 27*, where the written Name represents the body, while the unwritten Name which transcends its visible counterpart is written in the heart of the believer. Hence Lilla's first objection falters. Regarding Lilla's second objection, concerning how the soul-priest's entry into the holy of holies is prefigured by his discarding of the body in the form of the gold plate and the written Name, *Strom. V 6.39.3-40.4* instead focuses on the different types of "robe" (στολή; Lev 16:23-24) or "tunic" (χιτών) which are put on or off by the high-priestly Gnostic depending on his position in the temple and which element of the priestly service is being performed.⁵⁵ Nonetheless, the idea is very similar in each case: the gold plate represents the "body" of the soul which must be shed before entering the divine presence; the inferior robe represents the sensible world which must be transcended before entering the divine presence. Therefore, *contra* Lilla, Clement in fact articulates ideas which are consonant with those of *Exc. 27* regarding the nature of the Divine Name and the necessity for the soul to put aside materiality in favour of spiritual reality.

Examined in its own light, *Exc. 27* contains much closer parallels to the ideas expressed by Clement in *Strom. V 6.32-40* than with any extant Valentinian source, including *Gos. Phil.* and *Exc. 38*. In fact, when compared with *Exc. 38* – which is certainly Valentinian – it is striking that *Exc. 27* ascribes no explicit or immediate soteriological role to Jesus, since in *Exc. 38* it is Jesus who provides the ascending spiritual seed with access to the divine realm. Hence *Exc. 27* and *38* can hardly be said to present parallel schemes of ascent through the heavenly temple, and the differences would appear too basic to be explained away by different Valentinian authors being excerpted by Clement. Rather, the terminological

⁵⁵ *Strom. V 6.39.3* makes a distinction between "the consecrated robe" (τὸν ἡγιασμένον χιτῶνα) of the high priest, which resembles the sensible world and which is taken off in the holy place, and "a holy of holies tunic, so to speak" (ἅγιον ἁγίου ὡς εἰπεῖν χιτῶνα), which is worn into the holy of holies. *Strom. V 6.40.2-3*, quoting Lev 16:23-24, instead distinguishes between "the linen robe" (τὴν στολὴν τὴν λινῆν) and "the consecrated robe" (τὴν ἡγιασμένην στολὴν).

parallels with other Clementine materials are more definitive, especially *Strom.* V 6.40.1 on the high-priest's entry into the holy of holies: the high priest, having been sanctified, "having put on the brilliance of glory" (ἐπενδυσάμενος τὸ γάνωμα τῆς δόξης; cf. *Exc.* 27.1), "having received the ineffable inheritance" (τὴν ἀπόρρητον κληρονομίαν ἀπολαβών; cf. *Exc.* 27.1-2), and "having become a son and a friend" (υἱὸς καὶ φίλος γενόμενος; cf. *Exc.* 27.5), "is already filled from unceasing contemplation face to face" (πρόσωπον ἤδη πρὸς πρόσωπον ἐμπίπλται τῆς ἀκορέστου θεωρίας; cf. *Exc.* 27.4). Similarly, the hierarchy of divine beings in *Exc.* 27.3 (Logos – First-Created – Archangels – Angels) is the same as that in *Exc.* 10-15 – a Clementine section – suggesting that the same provenance applies to *Exc.* 27.⁵⁶

This is not to deny certain affinities with Valentinian thought in *Exc.* 27. Indeed, the notion of the Name being inscribed upon the heart of the believer finds a striking parallel in *Gos. Truth* 19.34-20.6,⁵⁷ while the soteriological goal of entering the body of the Lord is a common trope in Valentinian thought.⁵⁸ Similarly, as we shall see in the next chapter, *Gos. Phil.* presents a sacramental theology that is by no means incongruous with *Exc.* 27. However, the theological proximity of *Exc.* 27 to various Valentinian ideas is *not* the result of a Valentinian provenance, but rather of the fact that Valentinians represent some of Clement's most provocative interlocutors, as can be seen in *Exc.* as well as elsewhere in Clement's writings.⁵⁹ In engaging Valentinian thinkers, Clement does not merely polemicize against them, but actually interacts with their ideas to the extent that they can positively influence his own thought. This much is indicated by the fact that *Exc.* 27 is not introduced adversarially. For example, Clement does not use a formula such as ἀλλὰ φαμὲν ("but we say") in order to present *Exc.* 27 as a correction of false doctrine held by Theodotus or the

⁵⁶ On this hierarchy, see Bucur (2006); Recinová (2012).

⁵⁷ Cf. *Did.* 10.2; Valentinus Fr.2.

⁵⁸ E.g. *Interp. Know.* NHC XI,1 10-21; Valentinus Fr.5; see DeConick (1995); Dunderberg (2007).

⁵⁹ See especially the work of Judith Kovacs: e.g. Kovacs (2004); eadem. (2006); eadem. (2013); see also, Davison (1983).

Valentinians. Rather, it appears to be the result of a theological exchange with at least some Valentinians who spoke of their post-mortem ascent into the heavens, and their eschatological restoration into the Pleroma, in terms of progress through a heavenly temple of the demiurge, and a final entry into the Pleroma facilitated by their possession of the Divine Name. Clement has not simply rejected everything his Valentinian interlocutors have to say, but has engaged their ideas in order to present his own understanding of such events. In this way, *Exc. 27* cannot be adduced as evidence of Valentinian thought on the heavenly temple or high-priestly Christology, but may be juxtaposed with *Exc. 37-38* as reflecting two sides of a conversation concerning how high-priestly Christology relates to, and maps onto, issues of cosmology, soteriology, and eschatology.⁶⁰

3.4. Conclusion

This chapter has overviewed the role of the Divine Name in *Exc.*'s salvation history. Through Sophia's fall, the united divine essence is dispersed and must be reunited through the spiritual seed's enlightenment, formation, and reception of the Name in the cosmos. This is accomplished through a course of pre-baptismal catechesis followed by baptism-anointment. At death, the spiritual seed proceeds from the body and the material world to the Pleromatic Limit, where Christ gathers them together before leading them all into the Pleroma at the Eschaton thereby restoring the primordial divine fullness. In describing the heavenly sphere outside the Pleroma in terms of the demiurge's psychic temple, *Exc.* implicitly identifies the Pleroma itself as the true spiritual temple into which the high-priestly Christ leads his elect. In the next chapter, we will see how *Gos. Phil.* makes this identification explicit and interprets the rites of initiation in terms of the priest's progress through the spiritual temple as an image of the Pleroma itself.

⁶⁰ Cf. Stökl Ben Ezra (2003), 241: "the ambivalence of [*Exc. 27*'s] attribution is in itself a good illustration of the proximity of Clement's thought to Valentinian theologians like Theodotus. In either case, the close relationship is obvious."

4. The Divine Name and the Temple in the *Gospel of Philip*

Gos. Phil. builds on *Exc.*'s logic of the earthly temple cult as a reflection of the demiurge's psychic temple by depicting the Christian sacraments as having been established by Christ as a reflection of the true spiritual temple of the Pleroma. *Gos. Phil.* established this juxtaposition via a similar type of Adam-Christ typology which has been observed in the preceding chapters. However, now Adam's error is portrayed as the origin of the inferior cult of Judaism, whereas Christ's reversal of Adam's fall is understood as the establishment of the truly divine cult on earth. By envisioning the rites of Christian initiation in terms of a progress through a pneumatic temple, the concept of the Divine Name takes on a more explicitly priestly flavour, now being understood as the means by which one is transformed into a high-priestly Christ and enters into Christ's priesthood. As a result of this transformation, the classic narrative of the high-priest's entry into the holy of holies to gain vision of the divine Glory is reworked into a tale of the initiate's vision of themselves transformed into Christ's Glory in the baptismal waters, the location of the Pleromatic temple on earth. *Gos. Phil.* culminates with an eschatological account of the Valentinians' collective advance into the Pleromatic holy of holies along with the high-priestly Christ. But before analysing this complex salvation history in more detail, it is necessary to overview some of the source-critical issues surrounding *Gos. Phil.*, for it is an extraordinarily complex document which has vexed many a scholar since its rediscovery.

4.1. *Gospel of Philip*: Preliminary Remarks

Gos. Phil. is one of the most widely discussed texts from Nag Hammadi, largely because of the information it provides on Valentinian ritual practice, and by extension early Christian practice more generally. However, numerous source-critical problems still surround the text.

For example, no scholarly consensus currently exists regarding its temporal¹ and geographical provenance.² Disagreements also remain over the text's unity and coherence. Some scholars see *Gos. Phil.* as a unified whole with a specific genre or function,³ while others view it as a florilegium of disparate notes and sayings with no discernible historical connections between them beyond having been collected together.⁴ Most, however, take an intermediate position whereby the text's ostensibly haphazard, even random, arrangement does not preclude the fact that certain themes, terms, and images are interwoven throughout the work to give it a general coherency overall. As such, Wilson's remark from over fifty years ago that *Gos. Phil.* "is more closely knit and less chaotic in its arrangement than is at first sight evident" still approximates the perspective of most commentators, and indeed that of the current author.⁵

Finally, although few, if any, scholars deny the Valentinian character of specific passages or themes in *Gos. Phil.*, the utility of the category "Valentinianism" for interpreting the text as a whole has occasionally been doubted.⁶ Lundhaug's analyses of the alleged redactional layers in *Gos. Phil.*, particularly the possibility that some redactional activity may

¹ Most scholars have dated *Gos. Phil.* NHC II,3 to the late second- or early third century, e.g. Wilson (1962), 3-5; Gaffron (1969), 70, 220; Koschorke (1977); Schmid (2007), 13-14; van Os (2007), 205. But others have dated it to as early as the mid-first century, e.g. Thiering (1995), 102-111; or as late as the early fourth century, e.g. Isenberg (1968), 349. For a critical overview of these dates, see Lundhaug (2010), 367-374, who argues that most of these estimates are the result of an uncritical preference for the earliest possible date, while himself suggesting that fourth- and fifth-century Egypt is the only secure context for studying *Gos. Phil.* NHC II,3, and that if an earlier Greek *Vorlage* ever existed, it is impossible to date with any accuracy, and likely underwent significant redaction during Coptic translation (357-394). But equally, Coptic cannot be ruled out as the original language of composition (357-367).

² Most scholars have suggested a Syrian provenance, more specifically Antioch, e.g. Segelberg (1966); Isenberg and Layton (1989), 134; Siker (1989), 288; Thomassen (2006a), 350; Schmid (2007), 14; Iricinschi (2008), 256-261; or Edessa, e.g. Layton (1986), 325; Schenke (1997), 5. Others have suggested Egypt, e.g. van Os (2007), 197-207; Lundhaug (2010), 357-362; Twigg (2015a), 72-74.

³ Van Os (2007), 7-15 and *passim*; idem. (2013). Van Os sees *Gos. Phil.* NHC II,3 as a well structured baptismal catechesis; cf. Painchaud (1996). Schmid (2007) sees *Gos. Phil.* NHC II,3 as a deliberately composed defence of sacramental practice written for a "pneumatic elite" within the broader "psychic" church.

⁴ Turner (1996), 255-256; cf. Schenke (1959b), 33; van Eijk (1971), 104.

⁵ Wilson (1962), 188; cf. Janssens (1968), 132; Ménard (1967), 6; Buckley (1988), 4168-4169; Thomassen (1997), 279. Lundhaug (2010), 161-162 also treats *Gos. Phil.* NHC II,3 as a unified and coherent text, but on the grounds that this is how its fourth- and fifth-century readers would have encountered it, as opposed to the assumption that a hypothetical earlier version would have exhibited such coherence.

⁶ Buckley (1988), 4168; Pagels (1997), 280-281; Lundhaug (2010), 349-356.

be post-Nicene, has brought this issue into stark relief.⁷ In his recent study, Lundhaug demonstrates that it is possible to understand the content and internal logic of the fourth- or fifth-century Nag Hammadi copy of *Gos. Phil.* entirely free from such interpretive categories as “Gnosticism” and “Valentinianism”.⁸ For other scholars, the assumption of a Valentinian background has merely been a convenient assumption which lends a useful hermeneutical framework to the text,⁹ as opposed to a conclusion derived from an inductive analysis of the source itself. Thomassen comes close to giving such a “Valentinian commentary” in his piece entitled, “How Valentinian is the *Gospel of Philip*?”¹⁰ However, while Thomassen’s study is essentially circular in its logic – that is, in giving *Gos. Phil.* a Valentinian reading, it appears Valentinian – one cannot help but be impressed by the many striking parallels with other Valentinian material that he adduces.¹¹ For Thomassen, we must distinguish between questions of textual (in)coherence on the one hand, and theological consistency and homogeneity on the other, since the former can be explained without denying the latter.¹² Indeed, “it might well be the case that all the rambling pieces of the text have their origin in

⁷ Lundhaug (2010), 374-394; Lundhaug (2013).

⁸ Lundhaug (2010), 153-399.

⁹ E.g. Ménard (1967); Sevrin (1974).

¹⁰ Thomassen (1997), 253.

¹¹ Thomassen (1997) argues that *Gos. Phil.* NHC II,3 presupposes an “Eastern Valentinian” soteriology of mutual participation, whereby the spiritual saviour took on a material body so that in being redeemed, he would provide the model for the pneumatic *salvandi*. In fact, all Thomassen shows is that *Gos. Phil.* NHC II,3 is amenable to such a soteriological framework. However, this is significant in itself, since the fascination with the “bridal chamber”, understood as the sacramental joining between an initiate and their angelic counterpart in anticipation of an eschatological union, is itself a peculiarly Valentinian doctrine. Other Valentinian themes that Thomassen adduces in *Gos. Phil.* NHC II,3 include its relatively positive cosmology in 55.14-19 (273); the lesser salvation of the “demiurge” in 84.29-85.1, who is not so named in *Gos. Phil.* NHC II,3 (274); its doctrine of the Eucharist as part of its soteriology of mutual participation (274); the identification of the Son with the Name of the Father in 54.5-13, reminiscent of *Gos. Truth* NHC I,3 38.6-41.3 (275); the metaphor of sowing in winter and reaping in summer in 52.25-32 is reminiscent of Heracleon fr. 32-36 (275); and finally, the following passages recall ideas from Valentinus’s fragments: 53.11-12 and 65.1-26 on demonic defilement of the soul recall Valentinus Fr.2, where the soul is compared to an “inn” (πανδοχεῖον) polluted by demons (cf. Hippolytus, *Haer.* VI 34.6); Adam’s speech in 70.26-28 is similar to that observed in Valentinus Fr.1; the notion that humans create their gods by hand in 72.1-3 is likewise similar to Fr.1; and finally, 77.2-7’s claim that the holy person makes holy his body and its nourishment weakly parallels Valentinus Fr.3, where food is incorruptible in Jesus’s body, not being excreted (275-276).

¹² Ibid. 252-253 presents three (not mutually exclusive) possibilities for *Gos. Phil.* NHC II,3’s textual incoherence: 1) It underwent a “process of excerpting and compilation from older written sources”; 2) it is a collection of personal notes made by an individual for sermonic or pedagogic purposes, or as material for a written work; and 3) passages have been rearranged by a later redactor.

the same sectarian milieu”, Thomassen suggests, before concluding that “although it appears to draw on older materials and traditions, it expresses a reasonably coherent system of thought, which can have represented the shared beliefs of a community.”¹³ For Thomassen, this was evidently a Valentinian community.

The present chapter seeks to carve a middle-way between Lundhaug and Thomassen insofar as it does not use “Valentinianism” as a hermeneutical lens for reading *Gos. Phil.*, but also stresses the many parallels with Valentinian sources. Specifically, I will emphasise how *Gos. Phil.*’s doctrine of the transformative Divine Name received during baptism-chrismation, its soteriological significance, and the articulation of its saving power using temple imagery, indicate both a connection to, and a development of, Valentinian ideas discussed in the preceding chapters. This requires an analysis of *Gos. Phil.*’s rather distinctive appropriation of the Adam-Christ typology observed elsewhere in Valentinian literature, more specifically the manner in which it is used to juxtapose the temple cult of Judaism with that of the Christian sacraments.

4.2. The Adam-Christ Typology

4.2.1. Adam’s Fault (1): Androgyny and the Bridal Chamber

According to *Gos. Phil.* 68.22-24, “when Eve was in Adam, death did not exist; when she separated from him, death came into being.” The division of this primal Adamic androgyne into two distinct sexes (cf. Gen 2:21-23) resulted in the inauguration of death. Further, it created the conditions for the enslavement of humans to the hostile forces of the cosmos, since it is by joining themselves to the souls of humans of the opposite sex that demonic powers are able to keep them imprisoned and enslaved (65.1-26). In Christ however, this division can be reversed:

¹³ Ibid. 253, 279.

Had the female not separated from the male, she would not have died with the male. His separation was the origin of death. Therefore, Christ came so that the separation which existed since the beginning might be corrected. He shall reunite the two and he shall give life to those who have died in the separation; he shall unite them. And the woman unites with her husband in the bridal chamber (ΠΑCΤOC). And those who have united in the bridal chamber (ΠΑCΤOC) shall no longer be separated. Therefore, Eve separated from Adam because she did not unite with him in the bridal chamber (ΠΑCΤOC).¹⁴

The male and female are said to be reunited in the “bridal chamber”, thereby overcoming death and cosmic slavery. It is Christ who first reveals this bridal chamber in the cosmos, thereby establishing the conditions for the reunion of the primal androgyne. For at his baptism in the Jordan, Jesus was united with the Holy Spirit and therefore manifested the archetypal union of male and female to be imitated in future baptisms:

ΑΙC̄ ΘΩΛΠ [ΕΒΟΛ ΠΕΙΟ]ΡΔΑΝΗΣ
 ΠΠΛΗ|ΡΩΜΑ ΝΤΜΝΤΕ]ΡΟ ΝΜΠΗΥΕ
 ΠΕ(Ν)[ΤΑΥΧΠΟQ Ζ]ΑΤΕΖΗ ΜΠΤΗΡQ ΠΑΛΙΝ
 ΑΥΧΠΟQ Π[ΕΝΤΑ]ΥΤ[Ο]ΖCQ̄ ΝΦΟΡ[Π] ΠΑΛΙΝ
 ΑΥΤΟΖCQ̄ Π[ΕΝ]ΤΑΥCΟΤQ̄ ΠΑΛΙΝ ΑΦCΩΤΕ
 ΕΦΧΕΦΩΕ ΕΧΩ ΝΟΥΜΥCΤΗΡΙΟΝ ΑΠΕΙΩΤ
 ΜΠΤΗΡQ ΖΩΤΡ ΑΤΠΑΡΘΕΝΟC ΝΤΑΖΕΙ ΑΠΙΤΝ
 ΑΥΩ ΑΥΚΩΤ ΡΟΥΘΕΙΝ ΕΡΟQ ΜΦΟΟΥ
 ΕΤΗΜΑΥ ΑΦΩΛΠ ΕΒΟΛ ΜΠΝΟΘ ΜΠΑCΤΟC
 ΕΤΒΕΠΑΕΙ ΠΕΦCΩΜΑ ΝΤΑΦΩΠΕ ΜΦΟΟΥ
 ΕΤΗΜΑΥ ΑΦΕΙ ΕΒΟΛ ΖΜΠΑCΤΟC ΝΘΕ
 ΜΠΕΝΤΑΖΩΠΕ ΕΒΟΛ ΖΜΠΝΥΜΦΙΟC
 ΜΝΤΝΥΜΦΗ

Jesus revealed ... [the Jo]rdan, the fulln[ess of the kingdom] of heaven. He who [was begotten] before everything was begotten again; He [who was anointed] first was anointed again; He who was redeemed, redeemed in turn. Indeed, it is appropriate to talk of a mystery. The Father of everything united with the Virgin who came down, and a fire illuminated him on that day. He revealed the great bridal chamber. Therefore, his body came into being on that day. He came out of the bridal chamber like one who came into being from the bridegroom and the bride.¹⁵

In the Jordan, Jesus was reborn, anointed, and redeemed, also receiving the power to redeem others. As a result, he came to manifest God’s fullness (ΠΛΗΡΩΜΑ; cf. Col 1:19; 2:9) on earth. He is also said to have revealed “the great bridal chamber” within the baptismal waters, and therefore his baptismal rebirth is described using nuptial imagery. However, the precise dynamics of this scene’s nuptial imagery has been much debated.

The union is said to occur between “the Father of everything” and “the Virgin”, although the identities of these two is uncertain. The fact that all four canonical gospels agree

¹⁴ *Gos. Phil.* NHC II,3 70.9-22.

¹⁵ *Gos. Phil.* NHC II,3 70.34-71.11.

that it was the (Holy) Spirit which descended upon Jesus in the Jordan leads me to believe that such must be the identity of “the Virgin who descended”.¹⁶ The Spirit’s descent upon Jesus apparently represents his anointment, for he is said to have been “illuminated by fire”, a power ascribed to the oil of chrismation in *Gos. Phil.*¹⁷ The “Father of everything” is still more puzzling.¹⁸ The title most naturally refers to God himself, although Lundhaug has recently pointed out the possibility of an allusion to John 1:3, which would identify this figure as the Christological Logos.¹⁹ The parallels with Colossians 1:15-19 similarly make a Christological identity likely, suggesting that the “Father of everything” is to be identified as the human Jesus’s pre-existent divine portion. Either way, by uniting with the Holy Spirit and descending upon Jesus in the Jordan, this ideal male-female power transforms the waters of baptism into a bridal chamber from which Jesus emerges reborn as a “child of the bridal chamber”.²⁰

This revelation of “the great bridal chamber” (ΠΝΟΒ ΜΠΑCΤΟC) at Jesus’s baptism-anointment represents the archetype of proper baptismal initiation. The phrase appears only here in *Gos. Phil.* and signifies how Jesus a) manifested the Pleroma *qua* bridal chamber (84.21-23; 85.19-21), and b) provided the model for Christian initiation, depicted as “the duplicate bridal chamber” (65.11-12; ΠΝΥΜΦΩΝ ΝΖΙΚΟΝΙΚΟC). Jesus’s “great bridal chamber” therefore mediates between its divine reality and its earthly instantiation in ritual practice. It is on account of Jesus’s mediation that the earthly bridal chamber can be

¹⁶ Matt3:16; Mark 1:10; Luke 3:22; John 1:32. *Gos. Phil.* NHC II,3 71.16-18 also identifies the Holy Spirit as one of Adam’s virginal mothers. Pagels (1997), 285; and Lundhaug (2010), 184 also identify this “Virgin” as the Holy Spirit. Other suggestions include Sophia (e.g. Kaestli (1980), 399; Strutwolf (1993), 177; Thomassen (2006a), 92); Sophia Achamoth (e.g. Schenke (1997), 419; Sevrin (1974), 160); Sophia-Mary Magdalene (e.g. Janssens (1968), 109); the Virgin Mary (e.g. Wilson (1962), 146; Ménard (1967), 202); and Jesus (e.g. Thomassen (1997), 257-258).

¹⁷ *Gos. Phil.* NHC II,3 57.27-28; 67.5.

¹⁸ Previous scholarship has suggested it refers to the Father himself (e.g. Franzmann (1996), 50; Thomassen (1997), 257); the highest Aeon (e.g. Wilson (1962), 146; Ménard (1967), 202); Christ (e.g. Franzmann (1996), 50); the Saviour (e.g. Janssens (1968), 109; Sevrin (1974), 160; Strutwolf (1993), 177; Franzmann (1996), 50; Schenke (1997), 419); the Logos-Saviour (e.g. Ménard (1967), 202; Kaestli (1980), 399); and Jesus (e.g. Thomassen (1997), 257-259).

¹⁹ Lundhaug (2010), 184-185.

²⁰ Cf. *Gos. Phil.* NHC II,3 67.4-5; 72.20-21, 22; 86.5.

described as **ΖΙΚΟΝΙΚΟΣ** (Gk. εἰκονικός), and the sacraments themselves said to represent “types and images” (67.11; **Ν̄ΤΥΠΟΣ Μ̄Ν̄ Ν̄ΖΙΚΩΝ**) of Pleromatic realities.²¹ Hence, just as Christ united with the virginal Holy Spirit during his baptism-chrismation, thereby restoring the primal androgyny, so too can Valentinians now aspire to such androgyny when “the image and the angel are united” (65.24; **ΘΙΚΩΝ Μ̄Ν̄ Π[Α]ΓΓΕΛΟΣ ΖΩΤΡ̄**) in “the duplicate bridal chamber”, so that “no unclean spirit shall be united to them” (66.3-4). Similarly, since Jesus was reborn in the Jordan, the candidate must experience a parallel rebirth in the bridal chamber of baptism-chrismation: “There is a rebirth and an image of rebirth; it is through the image that one must be reborn. What is (the image)? It is resurrection” (67.12-15).

As *Gos. Phil.* 74.12-22 explains, the ritual construction of this (duplicate) bridal chamber likewise takes place during baptism-anointment:

ΠΧΡΙΣΜΑ ΖΟ Ν̄ΧΟΕΙΣ ΕΠΒΑΠΤΙΣΜΑ ΕΒΟΛ
ΓΑΡ Ζ̄Μ̄ΠΧΡΙΣΜΑ ΑΥΜΟΥΤΕ ΕΡΟΝ
ΧΕΧΡΙΣΤΙΑΝΟΣ ΕΤΒΕ ΠΒΑΠΤΙΣΜΑ ΑΝ ΑΥΩ
Ν̄ΤΑΥΜΟΥΤΕ ΕΠΕΧ̄Σ ΕΤΒΕ ΠΧΡΙΣΜΑ
ΑΠΕΙΩΤ ΓΑΡ ΤΩΖΣ Μ̄ΠΩΗΡΕ ΑΠΩΗΡΕ ΔΕ
ΤΩΖΣ Ν̄ΑΠΟΣΤΟΛΟΣ ΑΝΑΠΟΣΤΟΛΟΣ ΔΕ
ΤΑΖΣΝ̄ ΠΕΝΤΑΥΤΟΖΣΩ ΟῩΝΤΕΩ ΠΤΗΡΩ
Μ̄ΜΑΥ ΟῩΝΤΑΩ ΤΑΝΑΣΤΑΣΙΣ ΠΟΥΟΕΙΝ
ΠΕΣ.ΡΟΣ ΠΠΝ̄Α ΕΤΟΥΑΑΒ ΑΠΕΙΩΤ † ΝΑΩ
Μ̄ΠΑΕΙ Ζ̄Μ̄ΠΠΝΥ[Μ]ΦΩΝ

The chrism is superior to baptism, for from the “chrism” we were called “Christians”, and not because of “baptism”. And it was because of “chrism” that Christ was (so) called. For the Father anointed the Son, and the Son anointed the apostles, and the apostles anointed us. He who has been anointed has everything; he has the resurrection, the light, the cross, the Holy Spirit. The Father gave him this in the bridal chamber.

The passage stresses the importance of chrismation, but not at the expense of baptism, since “it is necessary to baptize in both, in the light and the water, and the light is the chrism” (69.12-14; **ΩΩΕ ΑΡΒΑΠΤΙΖΕ Ζ̄Μ̄ΠΣΝΑΥ Ζ̄Μ̄ΠΟΥΟΕΙΝ Μ̄Ν̄ΠΜΟΥ ΠΟΥΟΕΙΝ ΔΕ ΠΕ ΠΧΡΙΣΜΑ**).

This is a post-baptismal anointment through which one is said to receive, or unite with, “the Holy Spirit”, just as Christ did in the Jordan; “the light”, just as Christ was illuminated by “fire”; “the resurrection”, an image of Christ’s baptismal rebirth; and the “cross”, understood

²¹ The language appeals to Platonic ontology and epistemology, where an εἰκὼν refers faithfully to its model, in contrast to an εἶδωλον, which is an imperfect and deceptive representation of its model; see Steiner (2001), 5, 63-70; Krulak (2011), 356.

as both a symbol of the olive tree from which the oil of chrismation is derived (67.23-24; 73.8-19), and the Divine Name for which it is a cipher, since it is through “chrism” that “Christ” is endowed with his title.

Through the duplicate bridal chamber of baptism-anointment, the Christian has experienced union with their spiritual partner, thereby repairing the division between male and female first perpetrated through Adam. Indeed, Adam is no doubt used as a foil for humankind generally when we read regarding this bridal chamber, “If he (Adam) in turn enters and attains his former self, death will cease to exist” (68.24-26). Such initiates are no longer vulnerable to demonic attacks upon their soul: “the powers (ἸΔΥΝΑΜΙC) cannot see those who have put on the perfect light, and they are unable to detain them. And one shall put on this light in the mystery (ἸΜ ΠΜΥCΤΗΡΙΟΝ), in the union.”²² Christ thus provided the model, and therefore the conditions, for the reversal of the first effect of Adam’s transgression.

4.2.1.1. The Divine Name and Cosmic Enslavement

With regard to overcoming enslavement to cosmic powers, Christ’s baptism-anointment proves to be crucial in a second respect; namely, his act of “putting on” the Divine Name in the Jordan and thereby revealing it within the cosmos. For although there are many words that are used to refer to divine realities – such as “God”, “the Father”, “the Son”, “the Holy Spirit”, “life”, “light”, “resurrection”, and “the church” – *Gos. Phil.* describes how the Archons have corrupted such language, altering the referents of such “names” in order to deceive humans and keep them enslaved.²³ Hence, while such words were originally used as instruments of divine Truth “to teach this one (Name) alone in love through many (names)”,²⁴

²² *Gos. Phil.* NHC II,3 70.5-9; cf. 76.22-29; 86.7-8.

²³ *Gos. Phil.* NHC II,3 53.23-54.31; cf. *Tri. Trac.* NHC I,5 70.37-71.7; 79.7-9, 29-30; 97.30-32.

²⁴ *Gos. Phil.* NHC II,3 54.16-18; cf. *Tri. Trac.* NHC I,5 57.33-59.1; 65.35-67.10; 73.8-18.

when the Archons corrupted human language, these words became instruments of ignorance, since now “the one who hears ‘God’ does not understand what is correct, but rather he understands what is incorrect” (53.27-29). In receiving the Divine Name at his anointment (74.15-16), Christ reveals the divine reality to which such language previously sought to refer, for by “putting on” the Name, the Son is transformed into the Father:

ΟΥΡΑΝ ΟΥΩΤ ΜΑΥΤΕΥΟΥΑΔ Ζ̄ΜΠΚΟΣΜΟΣ
ΠΡΑΝ Ν̄ΤΑΠΕΙΩΤ ΤΑΑΔ Μ̄ΠΩΗΡΕ Φ̄ΧΟΣΕ
ΕΟΥΟΝ ΝΙΜ ΕΤΕΠΑΕΙ ΠΕ ΠΡΑΝ Μ̄ΠΕΙΩΤ
ΝΕΡΕΠΩΗΡΕ ΓΑΡ ΝΑΩΩΠΕ ΑΝ ΕΙΩΤ ΣΑΒΗΛ
ΧΕΛΑΦ̄ Ζ̄ΙΩΩΔ Μ̄ΠΡΑΝ Μ̄ΠΕΙΩΤ

One Name alone is not uttered in the world, the Name which the Father gave to the Son. It is above all things, that is, the Name of the Father. For the Son would not have become Father unless he had put on the Name of the Father.²⁵

By virtue of its ineffability, the Divine Name cannot be spoken in the cosmos, and therefore it is not subject to Archontic defilement on account of their ignorance of it: “Those who have this Name know it, but they do not utter it. But those who do not have it do not know it” (54.10-13). Unlike worldly names, it refers directly to its divine object, and in doing so transforms its recipient into that object.

Of course, since Christ provides the model for the redemption of all believers, *Gos. Phil.* claims that this same Name is received by initiates during baptism-anointment, who are similarly transformed as a result:

ΩΩΕ ΑΝΕΤΧΠΟ ΑΝ Μ̄ΜΑΤΕ Μ̄ΠΡΑΝ Μ̄ΠΕΙΩΤ
Μ̄ΠΩΗΡΕ Μ̄ΠΠΙΝΑ ΕΤΟΥΑΑΒ ΑΛΛΑ
ΑΥΧΠΟΥ ΝΑΚ Ζ̄ΩΟΥ ΕΤ̄ΗΟΥΑ ΧΠΟΥ ΝΑΔ
ΠΚΕΡΑΝ ΣΕΝΑΦΙΤ̄ Ν̄ΤΟΥΤ̄ ΟΥΑ ΔΕ ΧΙ
Μ̄ΜΟΥ Ζ̄Μ̄ΠΧΡΙΣΜΑ Μ̄ΠΣΟ[ΝΤΕ] Ν̄ΤΑΥΝΑΜΙΣ
Μ̄ΠΣ.Ρ[Ο]Σ ΤΑ[Ε]Ι ΝΕΝΑΠΟΣΤΟΛΟΣ ΜΟΥΤΕ
ΕΡΟΣ ΧΕ [ΤΟ]ΥΝΑΜ Μ̄ΝΤΕΖΒΟΥΡ ΠΑΕΙ ΓΑΡ
ΟΥΚΕΤΙ ΟΥ[ΧΡΗ]ΣΤ[Ι]ΑΝΟΣ ΠΕ ΑΛΛΑ ΟΥΧΡ̄Σ
ΠΕ

It is not only necessary for those who acquire the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (to do so). But they have themselves been produced for you. If one does not acquire them for himself, the other Name shall be taken from him. But one receives them in the chrim of the [balsam] of the power of the cross. The apostles called this ‘the right and the left’. For this person is no longer a Christian, but is a Christ.²⁶

According to this puzzling passage, it is not enough to receive the names of “Father”, “Son”, and “Holy Spirit”, one must also receive the actual realities behind these worldly names.

²⁵ *Gos. Phil.* NHC II,3 54.5-10; cf. Phil 2:5-11; Eph 1:21; John 17:6-8; Rev 19:12-13.

²⁶ *Gos. Phil.* NHC II,3 67.19-27.

Such spiritual realities are instead conveyed through “the *other* Name (πικεραν)” which is bestowed through the oil of chrismation and which transforms the candidate from a mere Christian into “a Christ”. Thomassen plausibly suggests that this juxtaposition corresponds to a liturgical sequence of baptism and anointment:

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.²⁷

So, just as Christ the Son was transformed into the Father through his reception of the Divine Name in baptism-anointment, so too are initiates transformed into “a Christ” through their reception of this same Name.

Such is the transformative power of the Name received through this post-baptismal anointment that *Gos. Phil.* declares that those who baptize without anointing are not true Christians:

ΕΡΨΑΟΥΑ ΒΩΚ ΕΠΕΣΗΤ ΕΠΜΟΟΥ ΝΨΕΙ
ΕΖΡΑΪ ΕΜΠΕΔΧΙ ΛΑΛΥ ΝΨΧΟΟΣ ΧΕΑΝΟΚ
ΟΥΧΡΗΣΤΙΑΝΟΣ ΝΤΑΔΧΙ ΜΠΡΑΝ ΕΤΜΗΣΕ
ΕΔΨΑΧΙ ΔΕ ΜΠΠΝΑ ΕΤΟΥΑΑΒ ΟΥΝΤΑΔ
ΜΜΑΥ ΝΤΑΩΡΕΑ ΜΠΡΑΝ ΠΕΝΤΑΖΧΙ
ΝΟΥΔΩΡΕΑ ΜΑΥΦΙΤΣ ΝΤΟΟΤΔ ΠΕΝΤΑΖΧΙ
ΔΕ ΕΧΩΔ ΕΤΜΗΣΕ ΨΑΥΨΑΤΔ ΤΑΕΙ ΤΕ ΘΕ
ΕΤΨΟ[Ο]Π ΝΑΝ ΕΡΨΑΟΥΑ ΨΩΠΕ
ΖΝΟΥΜΥΣΤΗΡΙΟ[Ν]

If one goes down into the water and comes up having not received anything, and says “I am a Christian”, he has borrowed the Name at interest. But if he receives the Holy Spirit, he has the gift of the Name. One who has received a gift does not have it taken away from him, whereas one who has borrowed it at interest has it (the Name) extorted from him. This is the way it happens to us if one comes to be through a mystery.²⁸

Such Christians have not received the gift of the Name from the Holy Spirit, and so their claims to being “Christians” shall be exposed eschatologically.

Therefore, in addition to attacking those souls which have not been joined androgynously to their spiritual partner, cosmic powers enslave humankind through the very

²⁷ Thomassen (2006a), 343.

²⁸ *Gos. Phil.* NHC II,3 64.22-31. The use of the phrase ΖΝΟΥΜΥΣΤΗΡΙΟΝ to express the true initiate’s rebirth anticipates its use in 67.27-30, on which see below.

language with which they attempt to worship God. Where once such devotional speech referred to the true God, it now refers to inferior reality. But through Christ's example, Christians may now be endowed with the one Name which has no worldly form and is therefore incorruptible in the hands of cosmic powers. In possessing it, they become "Christs", just as the Son became the Father.

4.2.2. Adam's Fault (2): Types of Food and the Eucharist

According to *Gos. Phil.* 74.1-10, the Tree of Knowledge from which Adam ate "created death for those who ate from it", as opposed to the cross upon which Christ was hung, the fruit of which "makes people alive". Alternatively, Adam's Tree of Knowledge is described as "the tree that produced animals" (71.24-25), and which therefore turned Adam from human to animal (**ΘΗΡΙΟΝ**). Adam's kin have inherited his animal nature and "therefore, the children of Adam worship animals" (71.26-28; cf. Ex 32:4). On the other hand, although "humans used to feed like the animals, when Christ came, the perfect man, he brought bread from heaven so that humans might be nourished by the food of man" (55.10-14). The allusion to John 6:58 confirms that the bread from heaven is identified with the flesh of the crucified Jesus which is now to be ritually consumed in the Eucharist. Indeed, according to *Gos. Phil.* 57.4-7, the resurrection body consists not of physical flesh and blood, but rather the spiritual flesh and blood of Christ (cf. John 6:53), and it is this spiritual body which is now consumed in the Eucharist, where "his flesh is the Logos, and his blood is the Holy Spirit" (57.6-7).

The typological connection between the crucifixion and the Eucharist is brought out more forcefully in *Gos. Phil.* 63.21-24: "The Eucharist is Jesus, for he is called 'Pharisatha' (**ΦΑΡΙΣΑΘΑ**) in Syriac, which is, 'the one who is spread out' (**ΠΕΤΠΟΡΩ ΕΒΟΛ**). For Jesus came to crucify the world." The parallel between Eucharist and crucifixion is made via the Syriac term "Pharisatha" (sg. *prista*), which can mean both "spread" and "break", and hence

simultaneously refers to the bodily position of Jesus on the cross and the breaking or distribution of the Eucharistic bread.²⁹ In consuming this bread, the Christian consumes Christ's spiritual flesh and is therefore quite literally "nourished by the food of man". Conversely, the Eucharistic cup contains a combination of wine and water (cf. John 19:34; 1 John 5:8); "and it fills with the Holy Spirit, and it is (the blood of) the completely perfect man. Whenever we drink this, we shall receive the perfect man for ourselves" (75.14-21). In imbibing the spiritual blood of Christ, the Christian is "filled" with the Spirit and "the perfect man".

In fact, these spiritual powers were first received during baptismal initiation, for while the Spirit is received through anointment with chrism, the candidate is said to strip naked before entering the water "so that he might put on the living man" (75.23-25). Their reception in the Eucharist indicates that this ritual meal constituted a renewal, or replenishing, of the union first established during the one-off rites of initiation.³⁰ Hence, as Thomassen argues, "the Valentinians do not seem to have attributed an independent soteriological function to the Eucharist; rather, it served as a further occasion for the symbolic instantiation of the general soteriological themes propounded by Valentinianism and for invoking once more the presence of pleromatic powers."³¹

²⁹ See van Unnik (1964), 469; Segelberg (1966), 218-219; Thomassen (1997), 274-275; van Os (2007), 104-105, 200-201; Lundhaug (2010), 222-224. Lundhaug points out the Coptic pun employed in *Gos. Phil. NHC II,3* 63.21-24 and 68.26-29 between **πῶρψ** ("spread out") and **πῶρχ** ("divide") to describe Christ's crucified body in connection with the Eucharist: "Not only is Jesus 'spread out' on the cross and in the eucharistic ritual, but he is also divided in both places, on the cross and in the ritual." Van Os (2007), 200 argues that the translation of the plural "Pharisatha" (*perisata*) as "the one who is ..." is mistaken, and indicates the author's poor command of Syriac; see also *idem.* (2006).

³⁰ Cf. Thomassen (2006a), 345. The epiclesis prayer of *Gos. Phil. NHC II,3* 58.10-14 is also best understood in this manner: "He said on that day in the Eucharist, 'You who united the perfect, the light, with the Holy Spirit, unite the angels with us also, the images.'" Alternatively, Sevrin (1974), 192 suggests that "chacun des rites que l'on peut dégager de notre évangile anticipe, de quelque manière, la réalisation de l'union au Plérôme ... Il n'y a qu'un salut pour les pneumatiques: et si l'union exprime le salut, il est normal que toute anticipation du salut soit aussi anticipation de l'union."

³¹ Thomassen (2013a), 195.

But as well as offering regular occasion for interaction with spiritual powers, the Eucharist was also considered to be central to the ongoing correction of humankind's animalistic eating habits inherited from Adam. For while the Eucharist leads to life, the latter leads only to death:

ΠΕΡΙΚΟΣΜΟΣ ΟΥΑΜΚΩΩΣ ΠΕ Ν̄ΚΕ ΝΙΜ
 ΕΤΟΥΩΜ Μ̄ΜΟΥ ΖΡΑΪ Ν̄ΖΗΤΩ ΣΕΜΟ[Υ]
 ΖΩΟΥ ΟΝ ΤΑΛΗΘΕΙΑ ΟΥΑΜΩΝΖ ΤΕ
 ΕΤΒΕΠΑΕΙ Μ̄ΝΑΛΛΑΥ Ζ̄ΝΝΕΤΣΟΝΩ Ζ̄ΝΤ[ΜΕ]
 ΝΑΜΟΥ Ν̄ΤΑΪΣ ΕΙ ΕΒΟΛ Ζ̄ΜΠΜΑ Ε[ΤΜ]ΜΑΥ
 ΑΥΩ ΑΦΕΙΝΕ Ν̄Ζ̄ΝΤΡΟΦΗ ΕΒΟΛ Μ̄ΜΑΥ ΑΥΩ
 ΝΕΤΟΥΩΩ ΑΦ† ΝΑΥ [ΕΟΥ]Ω[Μ] ΧΕ[ΚΑΛΑΣ]
 Ν̄ΝΟΥΜΟΥ

This world is a corpse-eater. All the things which are eaten in it also die themselves. Truth is a life-eater. Therefore, nobody among those nourished by the truth shall die. It was from that place that Jesus came and brought food. And to those who so wished, he gave [to eat]³² so that they might not die.³³

Humans have been nourished by worldly things in the manner of Adam eating from the Tree of Knowledge – identified with the Law in *Gos. Phil.* 74.5 – and are therefore subject to death. But through his incarnation and crucifixion, Christ has provided the model and the conditions for humans to feed on the fruit of the spiritual Tree of Knowledge, that is, from Jesus's crucified body. Through this they are nourished by “Truth” and endowed with eternal life. Christ thereby provided the means to reverse the second effect of Adam's transgression; the reduction of human nature to animal nature.

4.2.3. Christ and the Sacraments

Christ managed to reverse the effects of Adam's transgression through the establishment of the Christian sacraments: firstly, the initiation rites of baptism-chrisation together form the “(duplicate) bridal chamber” through which the primal androgyne is restored via the union of the initiate with their angelic partner in anticipation of a final eschatological union; and secondly, through his incarnation and crucifixion, Christ has provided the conditions and elements for the institution of the Eucharist, through which Christians can continue to be

³² I follow Schenke (1997), 56, 441-442, and Lundhaug (2010), 271, 512, in reconstructing [ΕΟΥ]Ω[Μ] (“to eat”) here, as opposed to Isenberg and Layton (1989), 188, who follow Schenke (1959b), 18, in reconstructing [Ν̄ΟΥ]Ω[ΝΖ] (“life”). While both are plausible in light of the allusion to John 6:31-58, only the former fits the lacuna.

³³ *Gos. Phil.* NHC II,3 73.19-27.

nourished by divine truth on a weekly basis. Collectively then, it was by providing the model of baptism-chrismation and by manifesting the archetypal bread and wine of the Eucharist that Christ was able to “save” (ΝΑΖΜ), “redeem” (CΩΤΕ), and “purchase” (ΤΟΟΥ) those who were held captive in Archontic enslavement.³⁴

It is precisely this saving work which is in view in the famous words of *Gos. Phil.* 67.27-30: “The Lord [did] everything in a mystery ([P]ΖΩΒ ΝΙΜ ΖΝΝΟΥΜΥCΤΗΡΙΟΝ), a baptism, and a chrim, and a Eucharist, and a redemption, and a bridal chamber.” The key phrase here is ΖΝΝΟΥΜΥCΤΗΡΙΟΝ, which has generally been understood as a translation of μυστηριωδῶς adverbially modifying ΕΙΡΕ from PΖΩΒ ΝΙΜ, which itself likely comes from an original πάντα ποιεῖν.³⁵ Whatever its form in a supposed Greek *Vorlage*, scholars broadly agree that the phrase carries the sense of *with a hidden meaning*, or something of the like.³⁶ As for what is meant by ΖΩΒ ΝΙΜ (“everything”), scholars disagree somewhat.³⁷ I consider the phrase to designate the major events of Jesus’s life – incarnation, baptism, anointment, crucifixion, resurrection – insofar as they provided the model and foundation for the Christian sacraments of baptism, chrismation, and the Eucharist, where the former two constitute a “bridal chamber” and their redemptive effects are renewed each week in the Eucharist. The *hidden meaning* of these acts is embodied in the fact that, unbeknownst to the hostile cosmic powers, they functioned as the redemptive model for future Christians.

³⁴ *Gos. Phil.* NHC II,3 52.35-53.3. The use of ΤΟΟΥ to articulate the saving work of Christ possibly translates an original πρίασθαι, which was occasionally used specifically for the purchase of slaves.

³⁵ Schenke (1997), 382; Thomassen (2006b). Cf. Lundhaug (2010), 311-316 prefers ἐν μυστηρίῳ on the grounds that it is translated as ΖΝΟΥΜΥCΤΗΡΙΟΝ in the Sahidic of 1 Cor 2:7, while μυστηριωδῶς does not appear in the New Testament. However, there is no reason to assume that the New Testament determines the linguistic limits of *Gos. Phil.* NHC II,3.

³⁶ See overview in Lundhaug (2010), 311-316.

³⁷ Interpretations include the following: “everything” refers to the list of baptism, chrim, Eucharist, redemption, and bridal chamber, understood as five distinct sacraments (e.g. Schenke (1997), 381-382); “everything” the human Jesus did, of which the fivefold list of acts are only a small selection (e.g. Sevrin (1972), 289; Lundhaug (2010), 315); “everything” that was revealed in the five “sacraments” (e.g. Gaffron (1969), 109); “everything” Christ did on earth for the salvation of humans, particularly his baptism in the Jordan, which provides the ritual model for the redemption of Valentinians (e.g. Thomassen (2006b), 934-935).

Gos. Phil. evidently places great emphasis on Christ as the model for Christian redemption, even to the point that in being redeemed, Christians are said to become “Christ”. Nowhere is this striking doctrine of *imitatio Christi* more clearly developed than in *Gos. Phil.*’s high-priestly Christology. For if Christ is the ideal high-priest, one must also become high-priestly in order to become like Christ. In articulating this principle, *Gos. Phil.* employs the concept of a spiritualized Jerusalem temple to describe Christian initiation, soteriology, and eschatology.

4.3. The Jerusalem Temple and Valentinian Initiation

4.3.1. The Adam-Christ Typology and Supersessionist Polemic

According to *Gos. Phil.* the effects of Adam’s fall became the origins of the traditional Jewish temple cult of animal sacrifice:

There are two trees growing in Paradise; one produces [animals] (Θ[ΗΡΙΑ]), the other produces humans (ΠΩΜΕ). Adam [ate] from the tree which produced animals, and [he] became an animal and he brought forth animals. Therefore, the children of Adam worship [animals] (cf. Ex 32:4).³⁸

However, Christ’s self-sacrifice made such animal sacrifice obsolete:

If humankind is [saved], sacrifices [would not] happen [...] And animals ([Ζ]Ν[Θ]ΗΡΙΑ) were offered up to the powers (ΝΑΥΝΑΜΙC), for animals were those to whom offerings were made. They were offered up alive, but when they were offered up, they died. Man was offered up to God dead, and he lived.³⁹

The use of the Epistle to the Hebrews is clear insofar as Christ’s human sacrifice replaces the animal sacrifices of the temple cult. As Hebrews states, “it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins” (10:4),⁴⁰ while “[Christ] has appeared once for all at the end of the age to remove sin by the sacrifice of himself” (9:26), and “by a single offering he has

³⁸ *Gos. Phil.* NHC II,3 71.22-28.

³⁹ *Gos. Phil.* NHC II,3 54.34-55.5.

⁴⁰ On this sacrifice, see Lev 16:5-22. On the Day of Atonement more generally, see Lev 16; 23:27-32; 25:9-10; Ex 30:10; Num 29:7-11; cf. *mYoma* 5-6. For an excellent overview, see Stökl Ben Ezra (2003), 18-77.

perfected for all time those who are sanctified” (10:14). However, *Gos. Phil.* formulates its supersessionist polemic still more forcefully by claiming that Christ made his self-sacrifice to an entirely different God to that which was served in Jewish cult. In fact, the objects of Jewish devotion and sacrifice are downgraded to the level of **Ζῆθῆριον** (“animals”). Conversely, “God is a man-eater (**πῖνοῦτε οὐρανῶμε πῆ**). Therefore, man is sacrificed to him. Before man (**ρῶμε**) was sacrificed, animals (**Ζῆθῆριον**) were sacrificed, for those to whom they sacrificed were not gods” (62.35-63.4; cf. Gal 4:8-10). Perhaps most importantly, in developing the supersessionism of Hebrews, *Gos. Phil.* likewise develops the epistle’s high-priestly Christology.⁴¹

In reality, it was not uncommon for Valentinians to depict Christ as the true high-priest. *Val. Exp.* identifies the Son-Monogenes explicitly as such:

And (he is) the confirmation (**τᾶχρ[ο]**)⁴² and the hypostasis of the All, the veil of silence (**πκ[α]τᾶπ[ε]τᾶς[μα] ἡσι[γῆ]**), the true high priest (**παρχιερεῦ[ς] ἡμῆς**); the one who has the authority to enter the Holies of the Holies (**νετοῦλαα[ρ] ἡνετοῦλαα[ρ]**), revealing the glory of the Aeons, and bringing the abundance to fragrance.⁴³

Hippolytus also reports that Valentinians give Jesus the title of “the great high priest” (ὁ ἀρχιερεὺς ὁ μέγας),⁴⁴ while according to *Gos. Phil.* 85.1-5, it is in his role as “high priest” (**αρχιερεῦς**) that Christ shall lead “the priestly tribe ... within the veil” at the Eschaton.⁴⁵ For *Gos. Phil.* this high-priestly status is the result of his being anointed with the Name of God at baptism. Therefore, by virtue of being anointed in the same Name, Christians come to belong

⁴¹ On the supersessionism of *Gos. Phil.* NHC II,3, see Lundhaug (2010), 385-394; Wolfson (2013), 116-120; Twigg (2015a). On the supersessionism of Heb, see Gelardini (2012).

⁴² Cf. *Tri. Trac.* NHC I,5 128.24-26, where baptism is called “the confirmation (**τᾶχρο**) of truth”, and 65.7-11, where the Son’s Name provides **τᾶχρο** to the Aeons; see Thomassen (2006a), 178-187. In another context, **τᾶχρο** (or the Greek equivalent **στηρίζειν**) can express the function of the Limit or Holy Spirit with regard to Sophia or the Aeons; see Thomassen (2006a), 371 n.73, who provides the following examples: Irenaeus, *Haer.* I 2.2-6; I 3.5; Hippolytus, *Haer.* VI 32.2; *Val. Exp.* NHC XI,2 26.33; 27.31, 37; 34.27; *Tri. Trac.* NHC I,5 76.33; 86.3; 87.5; 128.25; 133.13; *Gos. Truth* NHC I,3 31.32; 33.1; and **τωκ** in *Gos. Truth* NHC I,3 19.30; 33.10.

⁴³ *Val. Exp.* NHC XI,2 25.31-39.

⁴⁴ Hippolytus, *Haer.* VI 32.1.

⁴⁵ Cf. *Exc.* 26.2-3; 38.3; 42.2.

to his priesthood.⁴⁶ However, Christ's high-priesthood does not merely replace the Aaronic priesthood of the Jerusalem temple, but rather it transcends it altogether, serving an entirely alien God. Indeed, through his service, Christ has provided access to a superior spiritual temple, the Pleroma itself. It is in this vein that *Gos. Phil.* depicts the rites of Christian initiation as an advance through an idealized, perfect, Jerusalem temple, since such rites are themselves “types and images” of Pleromatic reality.

4.3.2. Ritually Constructing the Ideal Temple

The following passage elaborates on how ritual initiation constitutes a journey through a sacramental temple:

ΝΕΥΝΩΜΤ ΝΗΕΙ ΜΜΑ ΝΨΠΡΟΣΦΟΡΑ
 ΖΝΘΙΕΡΟΣΟΛΥΜΑ ΠΟΥΑ ΕΦΟΥΕΝ ΕΠΑΜΝΤΕ
 ΕΥΜΟΥΤΕ ΕΡΟΦ ΧΕΠΕΤΟΥΑΑΒ ΠΚΕΟΥΑ
 ΕΦΟΥΗΝ ΕΠΣΑΡΗΣ ΕΥΜΟΥΤΕ ΕΡΟΦ
 ΧΕΠΕΤΟΥΑΑΒ ΜΠΕΤΟΥΑΑΒ ΠΜΑΖΩΜΤ
 ΕΦΟΥΗΝ ΑΠΑΕΙΒΤΕ ΕΥΜΟΥΤΕ ΕΡΟΦ
 ΧΕΠΕΤΟΥΑΑΒ ΝΝΕΤΟΥΑΑΒ ΠΜΑ
 ΕΩΑΡΕΠΑΡΧΙΕΡΕΥ[Σ] ΒΩΚ ΕΖΟΥΝ ΕΜΑΥ
 ΟΥΑ[Α]Φ ΠΒΑΠΤΙΣΜΑ ΠΕ ΠΗΕΙ ΕΤΟΥΑΑΒ
 [Π]ΣΩ[Τ]Ε ΠΕΤΟΥΑΑΒ ΜΠΕΤΟΥΑΑΒ
 ΠΕΤ[ΟΥΑ]ΑΒ ΝΝΕΤΟΥΑΑΒ ΠΕ ΠΝΥΜΦΩΝ
 Π[ΒΑΠΤΙ]ΣΜΑ ΟΥΝΤΑΦ ΜΜΑΥ
 ΝΤΑΝΑΣΤΑΣ[ΙΣ ΖΜΠ]ΣΩΤΕ ΕΠΣΩΤΕ
 ΖΜΠΝΥΜΦΩΝ [ΕΠΝ]ΥΜΦΩΝ ΔΕ ΖΜΠΕΤΧΟΣΕ
 ΕΡΟ[.....] Ν[.....]ΟΟ... ΚΝΑΖΕ ΑΝ ΕΤΕΦ[.....]
 ΤΩΝ[.....] ΝΕ ΝΕΤΩΛΗΑ [.....]
 ΘΙΕΡΟΣΟΛΥΜΑ [.....ΘΙΕΡΟ]ΣΟΛΥΜΑ
 ΕΥΩ[.....] ΘΙΕΡΟΣΟ[ΛΥΜΑ] ΕΥΩΩ[Τ.....]
 ΝΑΕΙ ΕΤΟΥΜΟΥ[ΤΕ ΕΡΟΟΥ ΧΕΝΕΤΟΥ]ΑΑΒ
 ΝΝΕΤΟΥΑΑΒ [..... ΠΚΑ]ΤΑΠΕΤΑΣΜΑ ΠΩΖ
 ΚΕ[.....] ΠΑΣΤΟΣ ΕΙ ΜΗ ΘΙΚΩΝ
 [.....ΕΤΜΠ]ΣΑ ΝΤΠ[Ε] ΕΤ[Β]Ε[Π]ΛΑΕΙ
 ΑΠΕΦΚΑΤΑΠΕΤΑΣΜΑ ΠΩ[Ζ] ΧΙΜΠΣΑ ΝΤΠΕ
 ΦΑΠΣΑ ΜΠΙΤΝ ΝΕΩΦΕ ΓΑΡ ΕΖΟΕΙΝΕ
 ΧΙΜΠΣΑ ΜΠΙΤΝ ΝΣΕΒΩΚ ΕΠΣΑ ΝΤΠΕ

There were three houses of sacrifice in Jerusalem. The one opening to the west is called the Holy. The other one, opening to the south, is called the Holy of the Holy. The third, opening to the east, is called the Holy of the Holies, the place where only the high priest enters. Baptism is the Holy house; [redemption] is the Holy of the Holy; the Holy of the Holies is the bridal chamber. Baptism entails resurrection [in] redemption, while redemption is in the bridal chamber. But the bridal chamber is in that which is higher than [...], you will not find [...] are those who pray [...] Jerusalem [...Jeru]salem [...Jerusa]lem, as they behold [...], those which are called the Holies of the Holies [...] the veil was rent [...] bridal chamber except the image [... which] is above. Therefore, its veil was rent from top to bottom. For it was fitting for some from below to go above.⁴⁷

⁴⁶ Cf. Tertullian, *Bapt.* 7: “After that we come up from the washing and are anointed with the blessed unction, following that ancient practice by which, ever since Aaron was anointed by Moses, there was a custom of anointing them for priesthood with oil out of a horn. That is why [the high priest] is called a christ, from “chrisim” which is [the Greek for] “anointing”: and from this also our Lord obtained his title, though it had become a spiritual anointing, in that he was anointed with the Spirit by God the Father.” The original reads “Aaron”, rather than “high priest”, but the point is clear; in being anointed, the priests become “chrisms”, and hence Christ’s title, derived from the same anointment, designates him as a priest. See Lev 4:5 and 16 (ὁ ἱερεὺς ὁ χριστός); cf. Lev 4:3 (ὁ ἀρχιερεὺς ὁ κεχρισμένος).

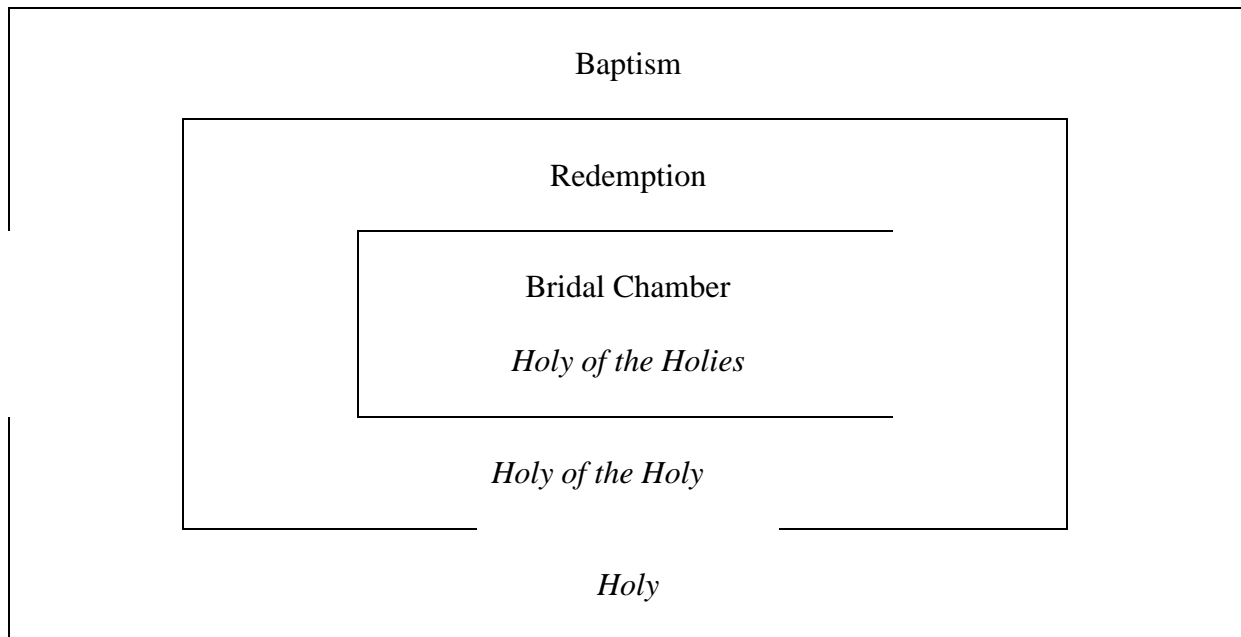
⁴⁷ *Gos. Phil.* NHC II,3 69.14-70.4.

Before examining this ritualized Jerusalem temple itself, it is worth noting the language of the veil in the final lines. The notion that the veil was rent “from top to bottom” (ΧΙΜΠΣΑ ΝΠΠΕ ΦΑΠΣΑ ΜΠΠΤ̄) alludes to the Synoptic tradition of the veil being rent ἀπ’ ἄνωθεν ἕως κάτω at Jesus’s expiration (Matt 27:51; Mark 15:38; cf. Luke 23:45). However, *Gos. Phil.*’s claim that this veil was rent in order “for some from below to go above” also builds on Hebrews 10:19-22, where through the tearing of “the veil, that is, through his flesh”, Christ opened the path to the heavenly sanctuary for the baptized faithful. The extent of the damage to the preceding lines makes it difficult to be certain what this “above” refers to precisely. Nonetheless, Schenke plausibly reconstructs κε[ΟΥΑ ΑΝ ΠΕ Π̄Ν]ΠΑΣΤΟΣ ΕΙ ΜΗ ΘΙΚΩΝ [ΜΠΠΝΥΜΦΩΝ ΕΤ̄ΠΠ]ΣΑ ΝΠΠ[Ε] (“[Our] bridal chamber [is none other] than the image [of the bridal chamber] above”),⁴⁸ which coheres well with *Gos. Phil.*’s doctrine of the Christian sacraments as “types and images” of heavenly mysteries. In this case, we can say that *Gos. Phil.* portrays Christ’s saving work as not only consisting of his establishment of the Christian sacraments, but that through his death, he imbued the rites of the duplicate bridal chamber with the power to provide access to its heavenly archetype, the Pleroma.

Regarding the temple itself, if we take *Gos. Phil.* at face value then the following spatial schema emerges:⁴⁹

⁴⁸ Schenke (1997), 48: “Nichts anderes ist unser Brautgemach als das Abbild das Brautgemach, das oben ist.”

⁴⁹ See also, Schenke (1997), 404; van Os (2007), 189; for an alternative schematic, see Schmid (2007), 119. However, Schmid also suggests that, “[v]ermutlich hat der Philippusevangelist keine konkrete Architektur von Augen.”



This hardly corresponds to any biblical description of the temples which stood in Jerusalem. Schenke has suggested the following: “Es mag sein, daß der springende Punkt einfach eine ‘Kontamination’ der (drei oder) *zwei* Teile des Tempelhauses [(Vorhalle,) ‘das Heilige’ und das ‘Allerheiligste’ (alle in einer Achse gelegen und nach Osten geöffnet)] mit den *drei* Höfen des ganzen Tempelbezirks ist.”⁵⁰ However, while the directions of each building are somewhat problematic for any historicizing interpretation,⁵¹ some scholars see the tripartite structure of *Gos. Phil.*’s Jerusalem temple corresponding to the *ulam* or vestibule, the *hekhhal* or outer sanctum, and the *devir* or inner sanctum of the historical temple. The most rigorous advocate of this idea is DeConick, who argues that *Gos. Phil.*’s “sacramental theology” and use of temple imagery is best understood as “reflective of similar traditions developing simultaneously in early Jewish mystical circles, circles which were advocating mystical ascent through the heavenly Temple and a transforming vision of God.”⁵²

⁵⁰ Schenke (1997), 404. Cf. Schmid (2007), 119 suggests that, “[d]ie Tempelanlage könnte aus dem Hebräerbrief übernommen worden sein (Hebr 9,2f), wobei, ‘das Heilige *des* Heiligen’, also wohl ‘das Allerheiligste’ durch einen dritten Raum ‘das Heilige *der* Heiligen ergänzt und überboten wird.” However, as we shall see, since tripartite depictions of the Jerusalem temple already existed in Jewish tradition, there is no need to postulate such a revision of the imagery in Heb 9.

⁵¹ On the significance of these directions, see Lundhaug (2010), 320-321; Schmid (2007), 119-120.

⁵² DeConick (2001a), 226-227.

DeConick draws out the parallels between the three “sacraments” (baptism-redemption-bridal chamber) which constitute *Gos. Phil.*’s temple and the priestly activities which took place in each of the three areas of the historical temple. Firstly according to DeConick, *Gos. Phil.*’s Holy, or *ulam*, could be connected with baptism-chrisation because just outside the *ulam* of the temple stood a large bronze basin in which the priests had to immerse themselves before they were permitted to enter the temple.⁵³ Further, Exodus 29:4-9 describes how in consecrating priests, they were washed at the entrance to the tent, before being invested with their priestly attire, and then anointed with oil.⁵⁴ Secondly, *Gos. Phil.*’s Holy of the Holy, or *hekhal*, could be connected with redemption – which DeConick equates with the Eucharist – because within the *hekhal* of the temple stood, among other things, the Table of the Presence upon which the Bread of the Presence was offered before being consumed by the priests each week.⁵⁵ The possibility that the priests consumed this bread with wine leads DeConick to suggest at least a typological connection to *Gos. Phil.*’s redemption *qua* Eucharist.⁵⁶ Finally, *Gos. Phil.*’s Holies of the Holies, or *devir*, could be connected with the bridal chamber – which DeConick identifies as earthly marriage anticipating an eschatological angelic union – because numerous early Jewish sources associated the *devir* with marital, sexual, and reproductive imagery.⁵⁷

A not dissimilar approach is that of Schmid insofar as he understands the temple houses that *Gos. Phil.* entitles the “Holy of the Holy” (or, “redemption”) and the “Holies of

⁵³ Ibid. 231. Cf. *mTamid* 1.2, 4; 2.1; *mYoma* 3.3.

⁵⁴ DeConick (2001a), 235.

⁵⁵ See Ex 25:22-29; 37:9-12; Num 4:7; 1 Sam 21:7; 1 Kgs 7:34-35; 2 Chr 4:19.

⁵⁶ DeConick (2001a), 239-240, 244-245. However, DeConick (2001a), 258-260 also understands “redemption” in *Gos. Phil.* NHC II,3 in a broader sense, as being connected with each ritual event as part of a redemptive process of entering the heavenly temple. How these two understandings of “redemption” in *Gos. Phil.* NHC II,3 are reconciled by DeConick remains unclear to me.

⁵⁷ DeConick (2001a), 249-256; e.g. a “couch” or “bed” in *Tanhuma Numbers* fol. 17; the womb of YHWH’s wife in Ezek 16 and 23; the cherubim as lovers in *bYoma* 54a; see DeConick (2001a), 249; Patai (1967), 88-95; 226-233. The characterisation of the *devir* as God’s bridal chamber is also found in later Jewish mysticism, such as *Hekh. Rab.* §94, on which see DeConick (2001a), 253. DeConick (2001a), 246 also notes the overlapping semantic fields of “marriage” (*kidushin*), “temple” (*mikdash*), and “Holy of Holies” (*kodesh kodashim*). However, Schmid (2007), 121 n.456 casts doubt on the idea that the “author” of *Gos. Phil.* NHC II,3 knew Hebrew.

the Holies” (or, “bridal chamber”) to be ciphers for more concrete ritual acts. He states: “‘Salbung’ und ‘Eucharistie’, die im EvPhil andernorts eindeutig als sakramentale Riten belegt sind, müssen also verschlüsselt in der Aufzählung des Abschnitts #76 [69.14-70.4] enthalten sein.”⁵⁸ Therefore, Schmid identifies the second house of *Gos. Phil.*’s temple with the performance of chrismation on the grounds that heresiological sources claim that Valentinians performed a rite they called ἀπολύτρωσις (“redemption”) as a second baptism, consisting of an anointment.⁵⁹ He then identifies the third house with the Eucharist by interpreting the present passage in light of a) *Gos. Phil.* 58.10-14’s epiclesis prayer in which the angels are invoked for union with the celebrants, and b) *Gos. Phil.* 65.1-26’s declaration that this union occurs in “the duplicate bridal chamber”.⁶⁰ Indeed, for Schmid, “redemption” and “bridal chamber” here are simply to be understood “als andere Namen” for chrismation and the Eucharist respectively.

While I genuinely believe there is merit to both DeConick’s and Schmid’s interpretations, I am inclined to think that the former’s is a little too historicizing, and relies too much on parallels with rabbinic literature and later Jewish mystical tradition, neither of which represent the most obvious conversation partners in understanding *Gos. Phil.* In Schmid’s case, his interpretation of *Gos. Phil.* 69.14-70.4 perhaps suffers from a pre-determined agenda of making its threefold ritualized temple coincide entirely with the fivefold list of items in 67.27-30 (baptism-chrismation-Eucharist-redemption-bridal chamber), when there is no obvious reason to do so without such a homogenizing approach. However, the insights of both scholars are worth developing.

⁵⁸ Schmid (2007), 91.

⁵⁹ E.g. Irenaeus, *Haer.* I 21.1-5; Hippolytus, *Haer.* VI 41.2.

⁶⁰ Schmid (2007), 95-109, 124.

4.3.3. Baptism-Chrismation and the Ritualized Temple

No doubt there is a spatial element involved in *Gos. Phil.*'s ritual temple, but it is thoroughly subsumed to a more *conceptual* understanding of the temple in 69.25-27: "Baptism entails resurrection [in] redemption, while redemption is in the bridal chamber." Redemption and bridal chamber are not only spatially located within baptism, as the above schema indicates, but they are also conceptually located within baptism in a causal sense. Baptism *causes* resurrection and redemption, and these result in the bridal chamber, just as Christ's baptism in the Jordan resulted in his spiritual rebirth, redemption, and the manifestation of "the great bridal chamber". As we have seen, Christ's own baptism also involved an anointment, while *Gos. Phil.* understands post-baptismal anointment as being the more important and transformative part of the whole process of baptism-chrismation. The two acts are inseparable in *Gos. Phil.*'s understanding of perfect initiation. For this reason, I understand the second house, labelled "redemption", to indicate chrismation, insofar as this anointment was considered to convey redemption and "resurrection" (74.20) through the Divine Name. The reception of the Divine Name in the "second house" represents the moment of the initiate's priestly consecration in preparation for their advance into the "third house", the holy of holies, and union with their angelic bridegroom. Indeed *Gos. Phil.* 85.24-29 explicitly connects redemption with chrismation: "But when it (the Holies of the Holies) is revealed, then the perfect light shall pour out upon everyone, and all those who are in it shall receive chrism ([$\chi\rho\iota$]σμα). Then the slaves shall be free and the captives redeemed (σωτε)."

Furthermore, concerning DeConick's historicizing reading of *Gos. Phil.*'s temple, in addition to the Bread of the Presence, the *hekhhal* of the historical Jerusalem temple also contained ten golden lampstands, as well as the various utensils and firepans used for burning

incense which was then carried into the *devir*.⁶¹ Given that *Gos. Phil.* repeatedly associates chrismation with light,⁶² fire,⁶³ and an aromatic fragrance,⁶⁴ there are perhaps even better reasons for believing that the author(s) of *Gos. Phil.* saw a typological connection between the *hekhal* of the Jerusalem temple and Christian anointment, as opposed to the Eucharist, as DeConick suggests.

One aspect of this temple passage which DeConick correctly hits upon is the connection between journeys through the temple and transformative visionary experiences. However, the precise dynamic of this experience, its relation to the Jerusalem temple in *Gos. Phil.*, biblical history, and allegorical interpretations of the temple among Jewish exegetes, has yet to be fully recognised.

4.3.3.1. Baptism-Anointment and Visionary Transformation

Several passages from *Gos. Phil.* describe a connection between visionary experiences and transformation. However, they are somewhat ambivalent regarding how the two are related to one another. For example, *Gos. Phil.* 61.20-35:

ΜΝ̄ΒΟΜ Ν̄ΤΕΛΛΑΥ ΝΑΥ ΑΛΛΑΥ
 Ζ̄Ν̄ΝΕΤΣΜΟΝΤ ΕΙΜΗΤΙ Ν̄ΤΕΠΕΤ̄ΜΑΥ ΨΩΠΕ
 Ν̄ΘΕ Ν̄ΝΕΤ̄ΜΑΥ Ν̄ΘΕ Μ̄ΠΡΩΜΕ ΑΝ
 Ε̄Φ̄Ζ̄Ν̄ΠΚΟΣΜΟΣ Φ̄ΝΑΥ Ε̄ΠΡΗ Ε̄Φ̄Ο Ρ̄ΡΗ ΑΝ
 ΑΥΩ Φ̄ΝΑΥ Ε̄ΤΠΕ Μ̄Ν̄ΠΚΑΖ Μ̄Ν̄ΚΕΖΒΗΥΕ
 ΤΗΡΟΥ Ε̄ΝΤΟΦ ΑΝ ΠΕ ΝΕΤ̄ΜΑΥ ΤΑΕΙ ΤΕ
 ΘΕ Ζ̄ΡΑΙ Ζ̄Ν̄ΤΜΕ ΑΛΛΑ ΑΚΝΑΥ ΕΛΛΑΥ
 Ν̄ΤΕΠΜΑ Ε̄Τ̄ΜΑΥ ΑΚΩΠΕ Ν̄ΝΕΤ̄ΜΑΥ
 ΑΚΝΑΥ ΑΠ̄Π̄ΝΑ ΑΚΩΠΕ Μ̄Π̄ΝΑ ΑΚΝΑΥ
 Α]Π̄Χ̄Σ ΑΚΩΠΕ Ν̄Χ̄Σ ΑΚΝΑΥ ΑΠ̄[ΕΙΩΤ
 Κ]ΝΑΩΠΕ Ν̄ΕΙΩΤ ΔΙΑ ΤΟΥΤΟ [Ν̄ΝΕΕΙΜΑ]

It is impossible for anyone to see anything among what is correct⁶⁵ unless he becomes like them. Not so for the human in the world; he sees the sun without being the sun, and he sees the sky and the earth and all other things while not being those things. This is how it is in truth. But you saw something of that place, and you became those things: You saw the

⁶¹ E.g. 1 Kgs 7:34-36; cf. Heb 9:2.

⁶² *Gos. Phil.* NHC II,3 67.3-6; 69.12-14; 74.18-21; 85.24-27.

⁶³ *Gos. Phil.* NHC II,3 57.27-28; 67.67.3-9; 71.6.

⁶⁴ *Gos. Phil.* NHC II,3 77.35-78.7. Cf. the parallel between God's Name and fragrance in Song 1:3, "the fragrance of your ointment is beyond all spices; your Name is ointment poured out (μῦρον ἐκκενωθὲν ὀνομάσου).")"

⁶⁵ The phrase *NETCMONT* has been variously translated as "those that are established" (Wilson (1962), 37); "quelque chose des réalités stables" (Ménard (1967), 67); "the things that actually exist" (Isenberg and Layton (1989), 163); "etwas von dem Feststehenden" (Schenke (1997), 33); and "the ordained (things)" (Lundhaug (2010), 489). I have chosen "what is correct" simply because this is how I translated the same phrase in *Gos. Phil.* NHC II,3 53.28-29 (see above). However, as Wilson (1962), 107 suggests, *NETCMONT* more accurately refers in each case to "the things (or beings) of the spiritual world."

ΜΕΝ ΚΝΑΥ ΑΖΩΒ ΝΙΜ ΑΥΩ Κ[ΝΑΥ ΕΡΟ]Κ ΑΝ
 ΟΥΑΑΚ ΚΝΑΥ ΔΕ ΕΡΟΚ ΗΠ[ΜΑ ΕΤΗ]ΜΑΥ
 ΠΕΤΚΝΑΥ ΓΑΡ ΕΡΟΦ ΕΚΝΑΦ[ΩΠΤΕ ΗΜ]ΟΦ

Spirit, you became spirit; you saw Christ, you became Christ; you saw the Father, you shall become father. Therefore, [in this place] you see everything and you do not [see] yourself. But you see yourself in [that place], for what you see, you shall become.

The opening lines state that transformation must precede vision; in order to see X, one must first become X. On the other hand, the remainder of the passage implies that vision precedes transformation; by seeing X, one becomes X. Other passages in *Gos. Phil.* rule in favour of the former relationship. For example, concerning Jesus's transfiguration we are told, "when he appeared to his disciples in Glory (ΕΘΟΥ) on the mountain, he was not small; he became great. But he made the disciples great (ΝΟΘ) so that they might be able to see him while he was great (ΝΟΘ)" (58.7-10). In this case, transformation clearly precedes and facilitates the vision. The same goes for *Gos. Phil.* 82.23-26: "Bridegrooms and brides belong to the bridal chamber (ΝΥΜΦΩΝ). No one shall be able to see the bridegroom with the bride unless [he] becomes this."⁶⁶ Again, "becoming" precedes and facilitates "seeing". In all likelihood, *Gos. Phil.* 61.20-35's ambivalence simply derives from the conviction that the two processes, seeing and becoming, are somehow reflexive, or mutually reinforcing. The prevailing attitude in *Gos. Phil.* is that one must first experience transformation into one's visionary object in order to facilitate that vision.

As was observed earlier, *Gos. Phil.* 67.19-27 describes how through post-baptismal anointment with the Divine Name, the candidate is transformed from being "a Christian" into "a Christ". Following the experiential logic of the text, the initiate ought now to qualify for a vision of Christ. Such a visionary context may underlie and explain the otherwise rather opaque passage:

⁶⁶ On the problem of what the final ΠΑΕΙ ("this") refers to, see the ingenious analysis in Lundhaug (2010), 257-263. Lundhaug suggests ΠΑΕΙ refers back to "the bridal chamber" in the previous sentence, indicating that one is actually transformed into a bridal chamber by virtue of receiving "a male and a female power" from "the duplicate bridal chamber" (*Gos. Phil.* NHC II,3 65.1-26), such that one houses the bride and bridegroom in a manner analogous to an actual bridal chamber.

Μ̄Ν̄Λ̄Λ̄ΑῩ Ν̄ΑΨ̄Ν̄ΑῩ Ε̄ΡΟϞ̄ ΟῩΤΕ̄ Ζ̄Μ̄ Μ̄ΟΟῩ
 ΟῩΤΕ̄ Ζ̄Ν̄ Ε̄ΙΛ̄Λ̄ Χ̄ΩΡΙϞ̄ ΟῩΘΕ̄ΙΝ̄ ΟῩΤΕ̄ Π̄ΑΛΙΝ̄
 Κ̄Ν̄ΑΨ̄Ν̄ΑῩ ΑΝ̄ Ζ̄Ν̄ ΟῩΘΕ̄ΙΝ̄ Χ̄ΩΡΙϞ̄ Μ̄ΟΟῩ Ζ̄ΙΛ̄Λ̄
 ΔΙᾹ ΤΟῩΤΟ̄ Ψ̄Ψ̄Ε̄ ᾹΡ̄Β̄ΑΠ̄ΤΙΖ̄Ε̄ Ζ̄Μ̄ Π̄Σ̄Ν̄ΑῩ Ζ̄Μ̄
 ΠΟῩΘΕ̄ΙΝ̄ Μ̄Ν̄ Π̄Μ̄ΟΟῩ ΠΟῩΘΕ̄ΙΝ̄ ΔΕ̄ Π̄Ε̄
 Π̄Χ̄ΡΙϞ̄Μ̄Α

No one shall be able to see himself either in water or in a mirror without light. Nor again shall you be able to see in light without water (or) mirror. Therefore, it is necessary to baptize in both, in the light and the water. And the light is the chrism.⁶⁷

This passage locates a visionary act within the baptismal waters which are treated as being analogous to a mirror (εἰλα). In the same way as one cannot see oneself in a mirror with no light, so too one cannot behold oneself in the baptismal waters without having first received chrism. The problem here is that it is not strictly true. In mundane terms, being anointed with oil is no aid to beholding one's own reflection in the surface of water. Similarly, in reality one does not require water to see in light. The interpretive key to this passage therefore lies in identifying what constitutes a vision of "oneself" in this context. As *Gos. Phil.* 61.20-35 made clear, to see and become a Spirit and a Christ is tantamount to seeing and becoming one's true self. Hence the present passage's claim that one cannot see in either water or light without the other is in fact a declaration that one cannot see oneself transformed into a Spirit and a Christ without being *both* baptized *and* anointed. Furthermore, such an interpretation lends a degree of verisimilitude to the metaphor, since as well as baptism being deemed necessary in addition to anointment, it is indeed easier to see one's reflection in light *qua* oil when it is mixed with water.

The process that emerges is as follows: Arising from the baptismal waters, the candidate receives the chrism and the Divine Name, is transformed into a Christ, and can then behold themselves in their transformed condition in the surface of the water, as in a mirror. This dynamic was no doubt inspired in part by passages such as 2 Corinthians 3:18 ("And all of us, with unveiled faces, seeing the Glory of the Lord as though reflected in a mirror (τὴν δόξαν κυρίου κατοπτριζόμενοι), are being transformed (μεταμορφούμεθα) into the same

⁶⁷ *Gos. Phil.* NHC II,3 69.8-14.

image from one degree of glory to another (ἀπὸ δόξης εἰς δόξαν); for this comes from the Lord, the Spirit.”) and 1 Corinthians 13:12 (“For now we see by means of a mirror (δι’ ἐσόπτρου), in a riddle, but then (we will see) face to face (πρόσωπον πρὸς πρόσωπον).”), both of which use the metaphor of a mirror to describe how people may presently behold the Glory of God, but also the transformative power of this vision.⁶⁸ By comparison, the Valentinians of *Gos. Phil.* 69.8-14 see themselves now fully transformed into a glorified Christ in the mirror of the baptismal waters. So how does this relate to the immediately following passage in *Gos. Phil.* 69.14-70.4, that which describes the ritualized temple?

4.3.3.2. Baptismal Visions (69.8-14) and the Jerusalem Temple (69.14-70.4)

According to *Gos. Phil.* 69.8-14, Christians could attain visions of themselves transformed into “a Christ” in the surface of the baptismal waters, while in *Gos. Phil.* 69.14-70.4, baptism is said to both spatially contain and causally effect a bridal chamber, that is, a holy of holies. Taken to its logical conclusion, *Gos. Phil.* appears to have situated this “holy of holies” within baptism on the grounds that the vision of Christ gained therein is conceptually parallel to those visions of the Kabod of YHWH sought by Jewish visionaries and mystics. Of course, as we have seen in *Gos. Phil.*, this baptismal temple and its Christological Glory are judged to be ontologically superior to their Jewish counterparts. Further, the vision in *Gos. Phil.* is not of a separate divine figure, but rather of oneself transformed into that divine figure. Nonetheless, in articulating this temple vision, *Gos. Phil.* draws heavily from biblical and early Jewish traditions to support not only a typological connection between the outer

⁶⁸ Cf. *Tri. Trac.* NHC I,5 104.18-25, where it is through “nourishment” (καθεω), “instruction” (εβω), and “formation” (μορφη) that “the smallness might grow, little by little, as through a mirror image (πεινε νῆνογειεα).” Also, *Tri. Trac.* NHC I,5 123.11-22, which describes the cosmos as a “school” (ογμα νῆνικεω) for the instruction of Valentinians. As each Valentinian “member” (μελος) is gathered together in this “school”, it comes to resemble “the images and archetypes” – that is, the Pleroma – “like a mirror” (μῆματα νῆνογειεα). The metaphorical “mirror” also appears in Platonic ontology and epistemology with a range of different values; 1) to symbolise clarity and accurate reflection; 2) to represent self-knowledge; and 3) to stress the falsity of the image as a mere reflection of its object. On its Platonic usage, see Ferwerda (1965), 9-23.

courtyard of the temple with baptism, but also a connection between the two as locations for visionary experiences.

The bronze basin which stood in the courtyard of the Jerusalem temple was often described in biblical literature as “the bronze sea” (τὴν θάλασσαν τὴν χαλκῆν).⁶⁹ As was noted above, it was in this basin that priests would perform their lustrational washings prior to entering the temple proper. The characterisation of the basin as a “sea” fed into later allegorical interpretations on the Jerusalem temple’s structure, where it was understood as a microcosm of all reality, both mundane and heavenly.⁷⁰ Josephus divided the temple and its courtyard into three areas: the holy of holies, the holy place, and the courtyard, which he claimed corresponded to heaven, earth, and sea respectively. Insofar as the high priest would enter the holy of holies once a year, he was able to cross from earth into heaven, passing the celestial barrier of the veil. The holy place, just outside the *devir*, was accessible to the wider priesthood, while the courtyard, or sea, was likewise available to the priests.⁷¹ The association of the bronze basin with the “sea” also appears in rabbinic literature, such as *Numbers Rabbah* 13.19, which speaks of “the court which encompassed the Tabernacle as the sea encompasses the world.”⁷² It is without question the presence of this basin in the temple courtyard, and the defining role it played in the Jewish imagination regarding this section of the temple, that leads *Gos. Phil.* to associate the outer house of a tripartite Jerusalem temple with baptism, even if the title of “the Holy” is a little unusual.

Of course, in the historical Jewish cult, these priestly lustrations in the courtyard did not themselves constitute an entry into the heart of the temple, but rather were preparation for

⁶⁹ 2 Kgs 25:13; 1 Chr 18:8; Jer 52:17; cf. 2 Chr 4:2 (“the molten sea”; τὴν θάλασσαν χρυτῆν); cf. 1 Kgs 7:10-13; 2 Kgs 16:17 (“the sea”; τὴν θάλασσαν).

⁷⁰ E.g. Philo, *Mos.* 2 81-108; *QE* 2 51-106; *Her.* 221-229; Josephus, *Ant.* 3.123, 181-183; cf. *J.W.* 5.213-218; Clement of Alexandria, *Strom.* V 6.32-40. For comparison, see van den Hoek (1988), 116-147.

⁷¹ Josephus, *Ant.* 3.121-123, 180-181; cf. *T. Levi* 2.7-3.4.

⁷² Cf. *bSukkah* 51b.

such an entry. In *Gos. Phil.* on the other hand, baptism is said to *entail* redemption, via chrismation, and to therefore constitute the bridal chamber, or holy of holies. Such an important visionary role for baptism, combined with a temple setting, in fact also has roots in early Jewish temple-speculations, and can still be glimpsed in *Gos. Phil.* 69.8-14, which associates the baptismal waters with a “mirror”.

According to LXX Exodus 38:26, which describes Bezalel’s construction of the basin for the desert tabernacle, “[he] made the bronze basin and its bronze base *from the mirrors* (ἐκ τῶν κατόπτρων) of the women who fasted, who fasted by the doors of the tent of witness on the day he pitched it.” In commenting on this passage, Philo makes an extraordinary remark:

Let him ... who shall be purified with water, bethink him that mirrors (κάτοπτρα) were the material of this vessel, to the end that he himself may behold his own mind (τὸν ἴδιον νοῦν) as in a mirror (κάτοπτρον); and, if some ugly spot appear of unreasoning passion, either of pleasure, uplifting and raising him to heights which nature forbids, or of its converse pain, making him shrink and pulling him down, or of fear, diverting and distorting the straight course to which his face was set, or of desire, pulling and dragging him perforce to what he has not got, then he may salve and heal the sore and hope to gain the beauty which is genuine and unalloyed.⁷³

In other words, according to Philo, the fact that the basin was constructed out of mirrors facilitated an act of contemplative introspection by each priest who washed themselves within it. It allowed them to gaze within themselves and assess their spiritual purity, and therefore whether it was right for them to enter the temple. The notion that such acts of vision took place within the mirrored basin of the temple courtyard offers a striking parallel to *Gos. Phil.* 69.8-23, which characterises the baptismal waters as a mirror, and conceptually locates the act in the outer part of the temple. A key difference, of course, is that the Valentinian does not gaze into this mirror in order to determine the quality of their own soul, and therefore the possibility of their further advance toward the holy of holies, but rather to see their own self

⁷³ Philo, *Mos.* 2 139 (Colson, LCL); cf. *Migr.* 98.

gloriously transformed into a Christ, with the baptismal waters therefore containing the holy of holies.

The connection between water and visionary experience is extremely widespread in Christian, Jewish, and Graeco-Roman sources. To begin with, several biblical visions occur in the immediate vicinity of bodies of water, perhaps most notably the Synoptic Gospels' accounts of Jesus's vision of the open heaven and the descending Spirit during his baptism in the Jordan. Ezekiel's vision of the merkabah similarly takes place beside the river Chebar,⁷⁴ leading several scholars to speculate on whether water was the medium by which Ezekiel gained his vision, as is often the case in later Hekhalot literature.⁷⁵ Others note that this recalls the divinatory practice of "lecanomancy", an apparently widespread technique among pagans described in a number of the Greek and Demotic Magical Papyri, which involved filling a bowl with water, and sometimes oil also, before exercising sustained concentration upon the surface of the water, which was itself often illuminated by lamplight. In doing so, alterations in consciousness could be induced for the purpose of visionary experiences.⁷⁶

It strikes me as eminently plausible that Valentinians could have been engaged in a similar type of practice within the context of baptism, such that by gazing into the rippling water for long enough and with sustained concentration, some alteration in consciousness would be induced, and a vision of themselves as Christ, for which they had been culturally and doctrinally primed, could occur. Perhaps curiously therefore, *Gos. Phil.* 70.1-4 characterises the foregoing visionary experience as a heavenly ascent. The path of ascent was

⁷⁴ Ezek 1:3; cf. Dan 8:2, 10:4; Gen 32:23-33. The late Hebrew "Visions of Ezekiel" makes the association even clearer: "Thus Ezekiel stood by the river Chebar and *was looking at the water*, and the seven heavens were opened to him, and he beheld the holy Glory." See Fossum (1985), 179.

⁷⁵ Stone (1980), 82-85; Segal (1990), 60-61; Segal (2008), 26-27; cf. Gruenwald (1988), 74-77. On the use of water in Hekhalot visions, see Dennis (2008).

⁷⁶ E.g. PGM IV 154-285; PDM 14.1-92; 295-308; 395-427; 528-553; 627-635; 805-840; 841-850; 851-850; in Betz (1992). Cf. Thessalos of Tralles, *Virt. Herb.* 14; Strabo, *Geogr.* 16.2.39; Pliny the Elder, *Nat.* 30.5; Apuleius, *Apol.* 42; Pausanias, *Graec.* 7.21.12; Iamblichus, *Myst.* II 10; III 11; Augustine, *Civ.* VII 35; see Festugiere (1949b), 60-61; Segal (1990), 60-61; idem. (2008), 26-27; Turner (1998), 99-110. Stone (2011), 107 n.44 has also identified a depiction of the practice in a Dionysiac fresco from Pompeii's Villa of Mysteries.

opened by the rending of the veil at Christ's death, and by "receiving", "putting on", and "himself becoming perfect light (ΤΕΛΕΙΟΝ ΟΥΟ[ΕΙΝ])" (76.28-29) through chrismation, the initiate can no longer be "detained" (ΕΜΑΖΤΕ) by hostile powers who would seek to block their ascent.⁷⁷ In practice however, beyond the neophyte's physical ascent from the baptismal waters, there was presumably no guarantee that they would have such a radical experience. On the other hand, if the candidate had been doctrinally and psychologically prepared for such an experience in this context, their expectations may have been heightened and the chances of attaining such an experience improved. Job 38:17 actually compares the skies to a mirror: "Can you, like him (God), spread out the skies, hard as a molten mirror?" If an initiate was familiar with this association of the sky as a mirror, then the characterization of the baptismal waters as a mirror may have contributed to the idea that bursting through the surface of the waters was akin to entering heaven.⁷⁸

More significantly in a Valentinian context, *Interp. Know.* 13.14-36 contains a strikingly similar constellation of ideas associating water, vision, and ascent. The passage begins by describing how when Jesus was crucified, he became separated from the Church *qua* his body,⁷⁹ and withdrew up to heaven. In doing so, he "scorched the path of ascent to the Father" ([ΛΝΕΕΙ]ΩΡΩ ΝΤΕΖΗ ΝΤ[ΟΙ]ΝΒΩΚ Α[ΖΡΗΙ] ΨΑ ΠΩΤ). This ascent is accomplished in terms familiar from *Gos. Phil.*'s mirrored baptismal waters:

[ΝΤ]ΑΖ[Α]ΤΑΠΕ ΓΑΡ ΣΩΚ ΗΜΑΣ ΑΖΡΗΙ ΑΒΑΛ
 ΖΗ ΠΖΙΕΙΤ ΝΤΑΥΡΕΚΤΣ ΖΙΧΗ ΠΕΣΤΑΥΡΟΣ
 ΑΥΩ Α[Σ]ΩΩΤ ΑΠ[Ι]ΤΗ ΑΠΤΑΡΤΑΡΟΣ
 ΧΕΚΑ[ΣΕ] ΝΕΤΗΠΣΑΝΠΙΤΗ ΕΥΑΩΩΤ ΑΤΠΕ
 ΝΘΕ ΝΓΑΡ ΝΟΥΣΜΑΤ ΕΡΕΨΑΝΟΥΕΕΙ ΩΩΤ
 ΑΥ[Ω]ΩΤΕ ΨΑΡΕ ΠΖΟ ΗΠΕΝΤΑΖΩΩ[Τ]
 ΑΠΙΤΗ ΩΩΤ ΑΤΠΕ ΤΕΕΙ ΤΕ ΘΕ
 Ν[Τ]ΑΡΕΤΑΠΕ ΩΩΤ ΑΒΑΛ ΖΗΠ[ΧΙ]ΣΕ ΨΑ
 ΝΕΦΜΕΛΟΣ ΑΖΑΝ ΗΜΕΛΟΣ ΠΩΤ ΑΤΠΕ ΠΜΑ
 ΝΕΡΕΤΑΠΕ ΨΟΟΠ [Η]ΜΕΥ ΝΤΑΔ

For the Head (i.e. Christ) drew itself up from the pit; it was bent over the Cross and it looked down to Tartaros so that those below might look above. For in the same way as, for example, when someone looks into a well, the face of the one who looks down looks up, this is also the way when the Head looked from in the height to his members; the

⁷⁷ *Gos. Phil.* NHC II,3 70.1-4; 76.22-29; 86.7-13. On baptism in the Name of God as illumination, see e.g. Justin Martyr, *1 Apol.* 61; Clement of Alexandria, *Paed.* I 26; 30.1-2.

⁷⁸ The line from Job 38:17 does not appear in the LXX, although this does not rule out Greek-speaking Valentinians' familiarity with the image. Cf. LXX Ps 103:2-3.

⁷⁹ Cf. *Gos. Phil.* NHC II,3 68.26-29.

members rushed above, (to) the place where the Head was.

The “Cross” here is of course the Valentinian technical term for the “Limit” (Ὁρος) dividing the Pleroma from the regions beneath it.⁸⁰ Having returned to the Pleroma, Christ gazes down over this barrier into the cosmos, or “Tartaros”, and in meeting the gaze of his “members”, they are able to see into the divine realm. The accompanying analogy of a “well” or “cistern” ([Ϟ]ωτε), in which we can observe our own reflections just as the Church is a reflection of Christ himself, strongly points towards baptism.⁸¹ Further, according to the present passage, when Christ looked down at his reflection – the Church of his “members” – the members not only looked back up, but actually “rushed” or “went” upwards, indicating a heavenly ascent. This is remarkably similar to what we find in *Gos. Phil.* 69.8-70.4 and speaks in favour of the notion that such “hydromantic” practices had some currency among Valentinians.

Excursus: “Set and Setting”

Candidates would have been primed for the alterations in consciousness required for such visionary episodes through a combination of their “set and setting”. Their “set” – the mindset of the subject at the time – was produced firstly via lengthy pre-baptismal catechesis perhaps lasting as long as five years,⁸² during which they received

⁸⁰ See Irenaeus, *Haer.* I 2.4; 3.1; 3.5; *Exc.* 22.4-5; 26.2-3; 35.1; 42.1; 64; *Val. Exp.* NHC XI,2 25.20-24; 27.30-37; cf. *Gos. Phil.* NHC II,3 67.24-25. On the Valentinian Ὁρος and its background in Neopythagorean metaphysics, see Thomassen (2006a), 279-283; cf. 238-240; on its connections to the heavenly temple of Jewish mysticism, see DeConick, (1999), 330-332; on its role in *Interp. Know.* NHC XI,1, see Myszor (2006); and in *Gos. Phil.* NHC II,3, see Trautmann, (1986). However, Trautmann’s analysis suffers from the fact that she uses Irenaeus’s testimony on the Valentinian Ὁρος to interpret multiple passages in *Gos. Phil.* NHC II,3 which are only tenuously connected.

⁸¹ Turner (CGL) reconstructs *Interp. Know.* NHC XI,1 13.30-32 as **ἄρα ἵναρ ἵουσματ ερεψανουσει σωπτ λυ[εε]ι τότε ψαρε πζο ἵπενταζσωπτ λιπτιν σωπτ λιπτε** (“Hence, for example, when someone looks at [someone], then the face of the one who looked down looks up”). Turner’s reconstruction falters insofar as it does not correspond to empirical reality; if we look down at someone we do not see our own face staring back at us.

⁸² Tertullian, *Val.* 1.1-2; cf. Hippolytus, *Haer.* VI 41.4. In claiming that the Valentinians practice a five-year catechumenate, Tertullian compares them to the Eleusinian mysteries, perhaps indicating that it is an exaggeration for polemical effect. See Thomassen (2006a), 387-388; Kaler (2007). *Trad. ap.* 17 describes a three year catechumenate, although Johnson (2007), 102 suggests this is a later interpolation, perhaps dating to the fourth century.

knowledge of Valentinian doctrines concerning, among other things, “who we were, what we have become; where we were, [or] where we have been placed; where we are hastening, from where we are redeemed; what birth is, and what rebirth is.”⁸³ Other preparatory acts immediately preceding baptism, such as fasts, prayers, supplications, renunciation of the devil, laying on of hands, and so on, are not mentioned in *Gos. Phil.* However, this does not preclude the possibility that such acts were practiced nonetheless.⁸⁴ On the other hand, *Gos. Phil.* 75.21-25 states the necessity of undressing before baptism in order to receive a new garment-body: “The living water is a body (ΠΜΟΟΥ ΕΤΟΝΖ ΟΥΓΩΜΑ ΠΕ). It is necessary that we put on the living man (ΠΡΩΜΕ ΕΤΟΝΖ). Therefore, when he goes down to the water, he strips naked so that he might put on that one (i.e. the living man).”⁸⁵ Such preparatory acts, some lasting years, some occurring in the immediate context of baptismal initiation, would have raised the candidate’s expectations regarding the experience they were about to undergo. Further, the immersion itself, taking place in cold water, possibly following a Trinitarian invocation⁸⁶ and a profession of faith,⁸⁷ may well have contributed to the psycho-somatic dimensions of the experience of transformation.

Regarding the candidate’s “setting” – the physical, social, and cultural environment of the act – little is known of Valentinian baptism, such as, whether they used running water or a font. Although, the reference to “living water” in *Gos. Phil.* 75.21 may indicate the former as the recommendation of that particular author. Again, it is unclear who else was present at the moment of baptism besides the candidate and

⁸³ *Exc.* 78.2; cf. *Flor.* in Epiphanius, *Pan.* XXXIII 7.8-9.

⁸⁴ Cf. *Exc.* 77.1; 84; *Flor.* in Epiphanius, *Pan.* XXXIII 5.13-14.

⁸⁵ Cf. *Gos. Phil.* NHC II,3 56.26-57.22; *Tri. Trac.* NHC I,5 128.21. On the reality of “naked” baptism in early Christianity, see Guy (2003), who argues that, with a few minor exceptions, the “nakedness” of candidates was not total, but rather the notion of unclothing and re-clothing was a convenient metaphor articulating the transformation effected through baptism.

⁸⁶ *Gos. Phil.* NHC II,3 67.19-21; *Exc.* 80.3.

⁸⁷ *Tri. Trac.* NHC I,5 127.25-128.19.

the minister, such as other neophytes.⁸⁸ One tantalizing possibility in relation to the cultivation of an altered state of consciousness through the practice of gazing at the surface of the baptismal waters, is that *Gos. Phil.*'s baptism occurred at night, with light being provided by lamps or torches:

<p>ΟΥΟΝ ΝΙΜ ΕΤΝΑΒ[ΩΚ ΕΖΟΥΝ] ΕΠΚΟΙΤΩΝ ΣΕΝΑΧΕΡΟ ΗΠΟΥ[ΖΗΒΣ̄ ΕΦ]Ο ΓΑΡ ΝΘΕ ΝΗΓΑΜΟΣ ΕΤΗΝΕ[ΘΗΠ ΨΑΥ] ΨΩΠΕ ΝΤΟΥΨΗ ΠΚΩΖΤ Ψ[ΑΦΡΟΥΘΕΙΝ] ΝΤΟΥΨΗ ΨΑΧΕΝΕ ΗΜΥΣΤΗΡΙΟΝ ΔΕ ΗΠΙΓΑΜΟΣ ΝΤΟΦ ΨΑΧΩΚ ΕΒΟΛ ΖΜ ΠΕΖΟΥ ΜΗ ΠΟΥΘΕΙΝ ΜΑΡΕΦΟΥ ΕΤΗΜΑΥ Η ΠΕΦΟΥΘΕΙΝ ΖΩΤΠ</p>	<p>Everyone who is about to [enter] the bridal chamber shall kindle their [lamp]. For it is like the weddings which happen in [secret], occurring at night. The fire [shines] at night and is quenched. But the mysteries of that wedding are perfected in the day and the light. Neither that day nor its light set.⁸⁹</p>
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The passage appears to juxtapose the earthly bridal chamber, constituted through baptism-chrismation, with the heavenly bridal chamber. The former takes place at night, in the darkness of the cosmos, illuminated only by the finite lamplight, whereas the latter takes place during the “day”, constituted by the eternal light of the Pleroma.⁹⁰ The use of torches in a Valentinian baptismal context is also suggested by “the Bridal Chamber inscription” discovered on the Via Latina in Rome, and usually dated to the Antonine period (138-193 CE).⁹¹ The inscription reads as follows:

<p>[λου]τρά δ'έμοι παστῶν δαδουχοῦσιν συ[νάδελφοι εἰλ]απίνας πεινοῦσιν ἐν ἡμετέρο[ισι δόμοισι ὕμ]νοῦντες γενέτην καὶ υἱέα δοξάζον[τες πη]γῆς ἔνθα μόνης καὶ ἀληθείης ρύ[σις εἴη]⁹²</p>	<p>[Fellow brothers] of bridal chambers celebrate [ba]ths for me with torches. They hunger after [ba]nquets in our [rooms], [Hym]ning the Father and glorifying the Son. [May there be a flow] of a single [spring] and truth in that place.</p>
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Lampe suggests that “the epigraph was displayed in the room where the baptisms took place”, while the Eucharistic meals took place “in this room and/or in adjacent

⁸⁸ It was not uncommon to have multiple candidates in the water simultaneously, e.g. *Trad. ap.* 21.9-18.

⁸⁹ *Gos. Phil.* NHC II,3 85.32-86.4; following Schenke (1997), 78.

⁹⁰ The passage likely builds on the parable of the wise and foolish *παρθένοι* from Matt 25:1-11, which describes entry into the Kingdom of God by combining marital imagery (*νυμφίος, γάμος*) with the theme of the carrying of lamps (*λαμπάδες*). Only those who use sufficient oil (*ἔλαιον*) may enter the wedding/Kingdom.

⁹¹ For the inscription's Valentinian character, see Lampe (1995); *idem.* (2003), 298-311.

⁹² Following the reconstruction in Lampe (2003), 299. The translation is mine.

accommodations of the same house”.⁹³ On the other hand, Thomassen rightly doubts that baptism and the Eucharistic meal would take place in the same room. Instead, he suggests that “one can imagine that it hung on the wall of a dining room in a suburban villa”, in which the owner regularly welcomed fellow worshippers into his house for the celebration of the Eucharistic meal. For Thomassen, the inscription commemorates this by imagining a scenario in which the initiates have first performed baptism in a different location, before proceeding to the banquet while singing hymns and carrying torches.⁹⁴

In fact, the inscription states that torches were used in the context of baptism itself, in “celebrating” the “bath”, as opposed to as part of a post-baptismal procession of the congregation. Of course, these are not mutually exclusive possibilities, but the notion that torches were included in the physical environment of baptism corresponds well to *Gos. Phil.* 85.32-86.4, where the candidates kindle their lamps as they are about to enter the bridal chamber *qua* the baptismal waters.⁹⁵ As was noted above, the dishes of water mixed with oil used in the divinatory art of lecanomancy were often illuminated by lamplight as an aid to visualization and the cultivation of altered states of consciousness. If Valentinians did indeed practice baptism at night, with the baptismal waters both glimmering from the oil of chrismation and illuminated by lamplight,⁹⁶ the sense of theatre would only have been enhanced, and the likelihood of

⁹³ *Idem.* 306.

⁹⁴ Thomassen (2006a), 350-351. Cf. Snyder (2011) suggests that it is a Christian inscription with “Valentinian tendencies”, but argues, unconvincingly in my opinion, that it is a funeral epigram rather than a baptismal inscription. However, Snyder (2015) has recently strengthened his case by arguing that the opening word of the inscription ought to be reconstructed as λέκτρα (“beds”), as opposed to λουτρά (“baths”). This recommendation obviates the only obvious reference to baptism.

⁹⁵ C.f. *Tri. Trac.* NHC I,5 128.36-129.4. On the carrying of lamps in the Valentinian liturgy, see Thomassen (2006a), 348-350, 394.

⁹⁶ Irenaeus, *Haer.* I 21.4 reports that some Valentinians, instead of baptizing in water, simply pour a combination of oil and water over the heads of the candidates, followed by an additional anointment with balsam. While *Gos. Phil.* NHC II,3 certainly recommends baptism in water, it is certainly possible that the

such visionary experiences increased as the candidate contemplated their surface in the hope, expectation, or even knowledge, that they were about to see Christ.

Therefore, in addition to the liturgical-doctrinal principles underlying *Gos. Phil.*'s identification of the rites of initiation with an ideal version of the Jerusalem temple, this visionary aspect to baptismal initiation lends a ritual-mystical dimension to the use of temple imagery, since by beholding oneself as Christ in Glory upon the mirrored surface of the waters, they can be said to contain the true holy of holies. The reception of the Divine Name is central in each respect, both for its transformational power and its role in the office of high priest. The initiate has entered Christ's priesthood and has attained the authority to enter "the Holies of the Holies", both in the present and in the eschatological future.

4.4. The Heavenly Temple(s) and Eschatology

Gos. Phil.'s distinction between two earthly temple cults – those of the Christian sacraments and the Jewish temple – has eschatological ramifications, for each is in image of a different heavenly reality: a) the Pleroma, and b) the realm of the inferior deity. Those who participate in either cult are said to ultimately reside in their respective heavenly counterparts after death. However, according to *Gos. Phil.* it is not only Jews who participate in this inferior cult and therefore receive an inferior salvation, since "when we were Hebrews (Ἰβραῖοι), we were orphans, having (only) our mother. But when we became Christians (Χριστιανός), we had (both) father and mother";⁹⁷ therefore, "he who has not received the Lord (κύριος) is still a Hebrew."⁹⁸ The notion of "receiving the Lord" is quite possibly a euphemism for receiving the Divine Name (κύριος/κύριος) and therefore gestures towards baptism-anointment as the

chrism would have been poured over the candidate's head, with the excess floating upon the surface of the water.

⁹⁷ *Gos. Phil.* NHC II,3 52.21-24. Lundhaug (2010), 338-341, 385-386 observes that this is likely an allusion to Jewish matrilineage.

⁹⁸ *Gos. Phil.* NHC II,3 62.5-6.

means by which one receives the Father and transcends one's Hebrew past. Failing to receive the Name, and therefore the Father, is not only the fate of Jews, but also those Christians described in *Gos. Phil.* 64.22-31 (see above) who do not practice a post-baptismal anointment. These so-called Christians in fact remain as "Hebrews" and therefore fall short of the true spiritual temple revealed by Christ, but continue to serve the inferior powers in the manner of the Jewish cult.⁹⁹ Therefore, as we shall see, they shall not ascend to the Pleroma at the Eschaton, but remain outside and beneath it.

These distinctions between perfect Christians, imperfect Christians, and Jews are also evident in the types of instruction that each person receives. *Gos. Phil.* articulates this using the metaphor of food, for the disciple of the true God is said to distribute teachings as a householder distributes food:

There are many animals (**ΘΗΡΙΟΝ**) in the world that have human form (**ἄμορφῃ ἄρωμε**). If he recognises them as pigs, he shall throw acorns to them. But to the cattle, he shall throw barley and chaff and grass. To the dogs, he shall throw bones. To the slaves (**ἄζηζῶν**), he shall give what is preliminary (**ἄψορπ**). To the children (**ἄψηρε**), he shall give what is complete (**ἄτελειον**).¹⁰⁰

Once again, Jews are compared to animals, while Christians are identified as "children". However, there is now the intermediary category of "slaves", most likely referring to those imperfect Christians who have failed to become "children of the bridal chamber" and therefore remain enslaved to cosmic powers. Consequently, "A bridal chamber (**παστος**) is not for the animals (**ἄθηριον**), nor is it for the slaves (**ἄζηζῶν**), nor for defiled women

⁹⁹ Even with the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 CE, it remained an enduring anchor for Jewish identity, along with the hope of its being rebuilt; see Levenson (1986), 57-58. Indeed, as Stökl Ben Ezra (2003a), 213-218, 261-289 observes, Yom Kippur continued to be celebrated among both Jews and Christians for centuries to come, occasionally drawing the ire of their Christian contemporaries; e.g. Origen, *Hom. Lev.* X 2.1; John Chrysostom, *Adv. Jud.* I 1.4-7; see also Stökl Ben Ezra (2003b).

¹⁰⁰ *Gos. Phil.* NHC II,3 81.7-14. The phrases **ἄψορπ** and **ἄτελειον** have been variously translated, largely depending on whether translators have preferred to remain within the feeding metaphor, or preferred to unpack it. E.g. Wilson (1962), 57 ("the first ... the perfect"); Ménard (1967), 107 ("les prémices ... ce qui est parfait"); Layton (1987), 350 ("a first course ... a complete meal"); Isenberg and Layton (1989), 205 ("the elementary lessons ... the complete instruction"); Schenke (1997), 71 ("das Vorläufige ... das Vollkommene"); Meyer (2007), 183 ("what is preliminary ... what is complete"); Lundhaug (2010), 529 ("the first (course) ... the complete (banquet)").

($\bar{\nu}\bar{\sigma}\bar{\zeta}\bar{\iota}\bar{\mu}\bar{\epsilon}$ $\bar{\epsilon}\bar{\rho}\bar{\chi}\bar{o}\bar{\zeta}\bar{\mu}$); but rather it is for free men and virgins ($\bar{\zeta}\bar{\nu}\bar{\rho}\bar{\omega}\bar{\mu}\bar{\epsilon}$ $\bar{\nu}\bar{\epsilon}\bar{\lambda}\bar{\epsilon}\bar{\gamma}\bar{\theta}\bar{\epsilon}\bar{\rho}\bar{o}\bar{\varsigma}$ $\bar{\mu}\bar{\nu}$ $\bar{\zeta}\bar{\nu}\bar{\pi}\bar{\alpha}\bar{\rho}\bar{\theta}\bar{\epsilon}\bar{\nu}\bar{o}\bar{\varsigma}$)” (69.1-4). These “free men and virgins” become “the child of the bridal chamber” ($\bar{\pi}\bar{\omega}\bar{\eta}\bar{\rho}\bar{\epsilon}$ $\bar{\mu}\bar{\pi}\bar{\iota}\bar{\nu}\bar{\mu}\bar{\phi}\bar{\omega}\bar{\nu}$)¹⁰¹ and may “enter the bridal chamber ($\bar{\nu}\bar{\gamma}\bar{\mu}\bar{\phi}\bar{\omega}\bar{\nu}$) daily.”¹⁰² Furthermore, “if one becomes a child of the bridal chamber, he shall receive the light. If one does not receive it while he is here, he shall not be able to receive it in the other place” (86.4-7). Hence to remain as an animal or a slave – that is, a “Hebrew” – while in the cosmos is to condemn oneself to an afterlife in which one is barred from the bridal chamber of the Pleroma. These eschatological ramifications are depicted using the imagery of heavenly temples.

4.4.1. Two Heavenly Temples

According to *Gos. Phil.*, perfect Christian initiates have become like Christ and joined his high-priesthood. These people may enter the true spiritual temple of the Pleroma. Others continue to worship the inferior god of Judaism. These ones will instead remain in the lower temple of this deity. These eschatologies are described in the following lines:

$\bar{\sigma}\bar{\epsilon}\bar{o}\bar{\gamma}\bar{o}\bar{\nu}\bar{\zeta}$ $\bar{\Delta}\bar{\epsilon}$ $\bar{\epsilon}\bar{\nu}\bar{o}\bar{\lambda}$ $\bar{\nu}\bar{\beta}\bar{i}$ $\bar{\mu}\bar{\nu}\bar{\mu}\bar{\varsigma}\bar{\tau}\bar{\eta}\bar{\rho}\bar{i}\bar{o}(\bar{\nu})$
 $\bar{\nu}\bar{\tau}\bar{\alpha}\bar{\lambda}\bar{\eta}\bar{\theta}\bar{\epsilon}\bar{i}\bar{\alpha}$ $\bar{\epsilon}\bar{\gamma}\bar{o}$ $\bar{\nu}\bar{\tau}\bar{\gamma}\bar{\iota}\bar{\rho}\bar{o}\bar{\varsigma}$ $\bar{\zeta}\bar{i}$ $\bar{\zeta}\bar{i}\bar{k}\bar{\omega}\bar{\nu}$
 $\bar{\pi}\bar{k}\bar{o}\bar{i}\bar{\tau}\bar{\omega}\bar{\nu}$ $\bar{\Delta}\bar{\epsilon}$ $\bar{q}\bar{\zeta}\bar{\eta}\bar{\eta}\bar{\rho}$ $\bar{\nu}\bar{\tau}\bar{o}\bar{q}$ $\bar{\pi}\bar{\epsilon}$ $\bar{\pi}\bar{\epsilon}\bar{\tau}\bar{o}\bar{\gamma}\bar{\alpha}\bar{\alpha}\bar{\nu}$
 $\bar{\zeta}\bar{\mu}$ $\bar{\pi}\bar{\epsilon}\bar{\tau}\bar{o}\bar{\gamma}\bar{\alpha}\bar{\alpha}\bar{\nu}$ $\bar{\nu}\bar{\epsilon}\bar{\rho}\bar{\epsilon}\bar{\pi}\bar{k}\bar{\alpha}\bar{\tau}\bar{\alpha}\bar{\pi}\bar{\epsilon}\bar{\tau}\bar{\alpha}\bar{\varsigma}\bar{\mu}\bar{\alpha}$ $\bar{\mu}\bar{\epsilon}\bar{\nu}$
 $\bar{\zeta}\bar{o}\bar{\nu}\bar{\varsigma}$ $\bar{\nu}\bar{\omega}\bar{\rho}\bar{\iota}\bar{\tau}$ $\bar{\pi}\bar{\omega}\bar{\varsigma}$ $\bar{\epsilon}\bar{\rho}\bar{\epsilon}\bar{\pi}\bar{\nu}\bar{o}\bar{\upsilon}\bar{\tau}\bar{\epsilon}$ $\bar{\rho}\bar{\delta}\bar{i}\bar{o}\bar{i}\bar{k}\bar{\epsilon}\bar{i}$
 $\bar{\nu}\bar{\tau}\bar{k}\bar{\tau}\bar{i}\bar{c}\bar{i}\bar{c}$ $\bar{\epsilon}\bar{q}\bar{\omega}\bar{\alpha}\bar{\pi}\bar{\omega}\bar{\zeta}$ $\bar{\Delta}\bar{\epsilon}$ $\bar{\nu}\bar{\beta}\bar{i}$
 $\bar{\pi}\bar{k}\bar{\alpha}\bar{\tau}\bar{\alpha}\bar{\pi}\bar{\epsilon}\bar{\tau}\bar{\alpha}\bar{\varsigma}[\bar{\mu}]$ $\bar{\alpha}$ $\bar{\lambda}\bar{\gamma}\bar{\omega}$ $\bar{\nu}\bar{\tau}\bar{\epsilon}\bar{\nu}\bar{\alpha}\bar{\pi}\bar{\varsigma}\bar{\alpha}$ $\bar{\nu}\bar{\zeta}\bar{o}\bar{\upsilon}\bar{\nu}$
 $\bar{o}\bar{\gamma}\bar{\omega}\bar{\nu}\bar{\zeta}$ $[\bar{\epsilon}\bar{\nu}\bar{o}\bar{\lambda}]$ $\bar{\varsigma}\bar{\epsilon}\bar{\nu}\bar{\alpha}\bar{k}\bar{\omega}$ $\bar{\Delta}\bar{\epsilon}$ $\bar{\mu}\bar{\pi}\bar{\epsilon}\bar{\epsilon}\bar{i}\bar{\eta}\bar{\epsilon}\bar{i}$
 $\bar{\nu}\bar{\varsigma}\bar{\omega}\bar{\gamma}$ $[\bar{\epsilon}\bar{q}\bar{o}]$ $\bar{\nu}\bar{\epsilon}\bar{\rho}\bar{\eta}\bar{\mu}\bar{o}\bar{\varsigma}$ $\bar{\mu}\bar{\alpha}\bar{\lambda}\bar{\lambda}\bar{o}\bar{\nu}$ $\bar{\Delta}\bar{\epsilon}$
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The mysteries of Truth are revealed as types and images. But the bridal chamber is hidden; it is the Holy in the Holy. At first, the veil concealed how God controlled creation, but when the veil is rent and the things inside are revealed, this house shall be left behind [as] a desert, or rather, it shall be [destroyed]. But the whole deity will flee [from] these places, not into the Holies [of the] Holies, for it shall not be able to mix with the unmixed [light] and the [flawless] Pleroma; but rather it shall remain beneath the wings of the cross [and under] its arms. This ark shall be [their] salvation when the flood of water prevails over them. If some belong in the priestly tribe, these shall be able to enter inside the

¹⁰¹ *Gos. Phil.* NHC II,3 67.4-5; 72.20-21, 22; 86.5.

¹⁰² *Gos. Phil.* NHC II,3 82.18. The notion of entering “daily” into the bridal chamber may be an allusion to “the Lord’s Day”, on which the union of the bridal chamber was renewed each week in the Valentinian Eucharist; cf. *Exc.* 63. On the development of “the Lord’s Day”, see Vinzent (2011), 193-226.

ἸΠΚΑΤΑΠΕΤΑΣΜΑ Μῆ ΠΑΡΧΙΕΡΕΥΣ

veil with the high priest.¹⁰³

The “mysteries of Truth” – the divine archetypes of *Gos. Phil.* sacraments – were revealed by means of the rending of the veil, namely Christ’s flesh at his crucifixion. This was the moment that the contents of the Pleromatic Holy of Holies – the true God – and the ritual means of accessing those contents – the Christian sacraments – were revealed in the cosmos, if only as “types and images”.¹⁰⁴ In the act of rending the veil of the Pleroma, Christ revealed how God in fact “administered” (διοικέω) the created world. Such divine providence is already hinted at in *Gos. Phil.* 55.14-19, which indicates that Christ’s death – ostensibly carried out by the Archons – was in fact the will of God: “The Archons thought that they were doing what they did through their own power and will, but the Holy Spirit was accomplishing everything through them in secret (ὧν οὐπτεοηπ) as it wished.”¹⁰⁵ Indeed, Christ’s death with its many revelatory and soteriological consequences was the result of secret divine providence.

The second effect of this revelation of the Pleroma is the “desolation” of “this house”. In the context of the present passage, “this house” refers to the heavenly region outside the Pleroma, while the allusion to Matthew 23:37-38 identifies this space more specifically as the heavenly model of the traditional Jerusalem temple.¹⁰⁶ According to Matthew 23:37, Jesus desires to gather “the children of Jerusalem” together beneath his “wings” (πτέρυγας) just as

¹⁰³ *Gos. Phil.* NHC II,3 84.20-85.5.

¹⁰⁴ The use of different titles for the *devir* seems to be of little consequence in *Gos. Phil.* NHC II,3. The “Holy in the Holy” (84.22-23), the “Holies of the Holies” (85.19-20), and the “Holy of the Holies” (69.20-21, 24) all seem to refer to the same place, whether in earthly ritual or divine reality. The various terms translated here as “bridal chamber”, **ΝΥΜΦΩΝ** (65.11-12; 67.5, 16, 30; 69.25, 27 (x2); 72.21, 23; 74.22; 76.5-6; 82.18, 24; 86.5), **ΠΑΣΤΟΣ** (69.1, 37; 70.18, 19, 33; 71.7, 9-10), and **ΚΟΙΤΩΝ** (84.21-22; 85.21, 33) are similarly interchangeable in *Gos. Phil.* NHC II,3. Possibly **ΚΟΙΤΩΝ** is used exclusively for the heavenly/eschatological bridal chamber due to its occasional use in referring to the “grave”. On the use of nuptial imagery in funerary contexts, see Snyder (2015).

¹⁰⁵ This corresponds with those Valentinian cosmogonies in which the demiurge was invisibly controlled by a higher divine power; e.g. Irenaeus, *Haer.* I 5.1-6; Hippolytus, *Haer.* VI 33.1; VI 34.4-6; *Exc.* 53.4-5; *Tri. Trac.* NHC I,5 100.30-36; 101.3-5; 104.30-105.35; see Thomassen (1997), 273. Janssens (1968), 128 therefore oversimplifies matters in *Gos. Phil.* NHC II,3 when she states that “le Dieu qui organisait la création est évidemment le Demiurge.”

¹⁰⁶ Cf. Luke 13:34-35 (= 2 Esd 1:30); *contra* Ménard (1967), 243.

YHWH promised Israel salvation beneath his wings.¹⁰⁷ *Gos. Phil.* subtly plays with the concept of these “wings”, reworking the image in order to polemically demarcate two levels of eschatological salvation. These wings now belong to the cross (or its horizontal beam), which once again functions as a technical term for the celestial Ὀροϛ separating the Pleroma from that which is beneath it.¹⁰⁸ In fleeing from the revealed perfect light of the Pleroma, the inferior deity and his “Hebrew” kin take up refuge beneath the wings of the cross, that is to say, outside the Pleroma.

Beneath the wings of the cross, the inferior god and his kin are said to find sanctuary in “the Ark” (αἰβάριον), which protects them from “the flood of water”. With regard to its function, this Ark alludes to the Ark of Noah, which saved the animals from the deluge. However, with regard to its position “beneath the wings of the cross”, this Ark alludes to the Ark of the Covenant which was positioned beneath the outstretched wings of the two cherubim in the Jerusalem temple.¹⁰⁹ The underlying logic of this depiction of the cross in place of the cherubim is twofold: 1) The wings of the cherubim formed the mercy-seat upon which the blood of the atoning animal sacrifices was sprinkled (e.g. Lev 16:14-15) just as Christ’s atoning blood was spilt upon the cross; and 2) the cross was manufactured from the wood of an olive tree according to *Gos. Phil.* 73.8-19, while biblical tradition has the cherubim manufactured from the same material (e.g. 1 Kgs 6:23, 31-32).

According to Hebrews 9:4, the Ark of the Covenant housed 1) the tablets of the Law, identified in *Gos. Phil.* 74.5-12 as “the beginning of death”; 2) the rod of Aaron symbolizing

¹⁰⁷ Deut 32:10-12; Ruth 2:12; Pss 16:8; 35:8-10; 56:2; 60:5; 62:8; 90:4.

¹⁰⁸ The cross is interchangeable with the temple veil in this passage, both as barriers to the Pleroma/Holy of Holies, and in relation to Christ’s death – as symbols of the instrument of death and its victim’s flesh respectively.

¹⁰⁹ 1 Kgs 8:6; Ex 25:9-21; 38.1-8; 1 Kgs 8:7; 1 Chr 28:18; 2 Chr 5:7-8; Heb 9:4-5; cf. 1 Sam 4:4; 2 Sam 6:2; 2 Kgs 19:15; Pss 79:2; 98:1; Sir 49:8; Isa 37:16; see Haran (1959); cf. de Tarragon (1981). Schenke (1997), 506-507 is therefore entirely mistaken when he identifies the cross itself with the Ark in *Gos. Phil.* NHC II,3, suggesting that those outside the Pleroma are drowned “sofern sie nicht das Holz des Kreuzes als rettende Arche benutzen können.” It is perfectly clear that the cross and the Ark are separate images here, with the Ark located beneath the cross, and therefore distinct from it.

the authority of his priesthood, a priesthood rejected in *Gos. Phil.*; and 3) the manna, which both John 6 and *Gos. Phil.* reject as death in contrast to the life-giving bread from heaven that is Jesus. In *Gos. Phil.*, this distinction appears as the food of animals, which the “Hebrews” consume, and the food of humans, which the perfect initiates consume.¹¹⁰ For *Gos. Phil.*, all such symbols of the Jerusalem high priesthood remain outside the Pleromatic temple.

The identification of this celestial Ark with that of Noah also resonates strongly with *Gos. Phil.*’s identification of the Jews and their objects of worship as “animals”, while also pointing towards the typological connection between the floodwaters and the baptismal waters, such as we find in 1 Peter 3:20. The image therefore gestures towards both the Jews as the animals on the Ark, but also the imperfect Christians who have been baptized but have failed to receive the Divine Name through anointment.¹¹¹ These cannot go within the veil of the Pleromatic Holy of Holies as members of Christ’s high-priesthood, but must instead remain outside and beneath it.

On the other hand, those belonging to Christ’s “priestly tribe” may “enter inside the veil” of this Holy of Holies.¹¹² These are those who have been properly initiated on earth through baptism-anointment, have received the light of the Pleroma and the gifts of the

¹¹⁰ On the contents of the Ark of the Covenant, see also, Ex 16:33-34; 25:15, 20; Deut 10:1-5; 1 Kgs 8:9. Although the Ark of the Covenant was not housed in the Second temple, having been lost during the destruction of Solomon’s temple, it was considered to be symbolically present; see Haran (1959), 32-35.

¹¹¹ Several patristic authors typologically connect Noah’s Ark with the Christian church, outside of which there is no salvation; e.g. Tertullian, *Bapt.* 8.4, 17-25; *Idol.* 24.4; Hippolytus, *Haer.* IX 12.23; Origen, *Hom. Gen.* 2.3-5; Cyprian of Carthage, *Unit. eccl.* 6; *Ep.* 69.2; 74.11; 75.15; Augustine, *Serm.* 264.5; *Catech.* 20.32, 34; cf. Justin Martyr, *Dial.* 138.2-3; see Jensen (2011), 267-269; Ferguson (2014), 12-14. *Ap. John* BG 72.14-73.12 (= NHC III,1 37.16-38.5; NHC II,1 28.34-29.12; NHC IV,1 44.22-45.9) also equates Noah’s Ark with the Ark of the Covenant, making it the place of salvation for “the immoveable race” (ΤΤΕΝΕΑ ΕΤΕΜΑΚΚΗ), where the Flood is the work of the chief Archon.

¹¹² As in the ritualized temple of the duplicate bridal chamber, *Gos. Phil.* NHC II,3 85.10 (cf. 70.2-3) states that the veil of the Pleromatic temple is likewise torn “from top to bottom”. In its ritual-mystical setting, this occurred because “it was fitting for some from below to go above” (70.3-4), while in its eschatological context, it occurred “so that we might enter the secret of Truth (ΠΠΕΘΗΠ ΝΤΑΛΗΘΕΙΑ)” (85.12-13). The juxtaposition is that of ritual *ascent* (ΒΩΚ ΕΠΣΑ ΝΤΠΕ) and eschatological *entry* (ΒΩΚ ΕΖΟΥΝ), where the former is constituted through “the humble types and weaknesses” (85.15) of ritual practice, while the latter constitutes a path to the divine archetype itself, when “the Holies of the Holies were revealed and the bridal chamber invited us in” (85.20-21).

duplicate bridal chamber, and have thereby become “Christ’s” through their reception of the Name. For in baptism, the initiate has “put on the living man”, thereby moving from the theriomorphism of Judaism to the anthropomorphism of Christianity. Subsequently, through the light poured out over the initiate during chrismation, “the slaves will be made free and the captives ransomed” (85.28-29; $\bar{\nu}\bar{\zeta}\bar{\mu}\bar{\zeta}\bar{\alpha}\bar{\lambda}$ $\bar{\nu}\bar{\alpha}\bar{\rho}\bar{\epsilon}\bar{\lambda}\bar{\epsilon}\bar{\gamma}\bar{\theta}\bar{\epsilon}$ [$\rho\omicron\varsigma$ $\lambda\gamma\omega$] $\bar{\nu}\bar{\sigma}\bar{\epsilon}\bar{\sigma}\bar{\omega}\bar{\tau}\bar{\epsilon}$ $\bar{\nu}\bar{\alpha}\bar{\iota}\bar{\chi}\bar{\mu}\bar{\alpha}\bar{\lambda}\bar{\omega}\bar{\tau}\bar{\omicron}\bar{\varsigma}$). This completes the transition from the slavery of ordinary Christianity to the freedom and sonship of true (Valentinian) Christianity. Adherents of the former remain “slaves of wickedness” (85.24) to whom the truly spiritual Holy of Holies stays hidden. Conversely, adherents of the latter “shall not be seen, nor can he be detained, and no one shall be able to trouble one of this sort, even while he dwells in the cosmos” (86.8-11). Recalling *Gos. Truth*, where having experienced the Father’s “rest” in the present the initiate must strive to manifest the Pleroma among the Valentinian community, so too does *Gos. Phil.* declare of the transformed Christian that having “entered the Father’s rest ($\alpha\bar{\nu}\alpha\bar{\pi}\alpha\bar{\gamma}\bar{\varsigma}\bar{\iota}\bar{\varsigma}$)” (71.15), “the cosmos has become the Aeon, for the Aeon is fullness for him” (86.13-15; $\pi\bar{\kappa}\bar{\omicron}\bar{\sigma}\bar{\mu}\bar{\omicron}\bar{\varsigma}$ $\lambda\bar{\rho}\bar{\omega}\bar{\nu}\bar{\tau}\bar{\epsilon}$ $\bar{\nu}\bar{\nu}\bar{\alpha}\bar{\iota}\bar{\omega}$ ($\bar{\nu}$) $\bar{\pi}\bar{\alpha}\bar{\iota}\bar{\omega}\bar{\nu}$ $\bar{\gamma}\bar{\alpha}\bar{\rho}$ $\bar{\epsilon}\bar{\rho}\bar{\omega}\bar{\sigma}\bar{\tau}\bar{\iota}$ $\bar{\nu}\bar{\alpha}\bar{\rho}$ $\bar{\nu}\bar{\pi}\bar{\alpha}\bar{\lambda}\bar{\eta}\bar{\rho}\bar{\omega}\bar{\mu}\bar{\alpha}$). As in *Gos. Truth*, the perfect Christian in *Gos. Phil.* must follow Christ’s example as redeemed redeemer: “He who was redeemed, redeemed (others) in turn” (71.2-3). Having experienced a mystical foretaste of the spiritual Holy of Holies during their own redemptive manifestation of the bridal chamber in baptism-chrismation, it was henceforth the duty of these Valentinians to redeem others in the same fashion.

4.5. Conclusion

Gos. Phil. therefore represents a development of the ideas encountered among those Valentinians known to Clement of Alexandria, described in *Exc.* In addition to the broad parallels between the rituals of baptism in *Gos. Phil.* and *Exc.* 66-86, both texts present

similarly supersessionist high-priestly Christologies and exhibit similar temple cosmologies which supplant the Pleroma atop the demiurge's psychic temple. However, *Gos. Phil.* develops and expands on several of these ideas from *Exc.* Firstly, *Gos. Phil.* is explicit in identifying the Pleroma as a distinct spiritual temple beyond that of the demiurge, with Christ now identified clearly as the true high-priest. *Exc.* may only be taken to imply that the Pleroma is a spiritual temple on the basis of the demiurge's psychic temple beneath it. In his commentary on John 2:13-14, Heracleon offers a third variation on the theme: Jerusalem is an image (εἰκόνα) of "the psychic place" (τὸν ψυχικὸν τόπον); the temple is divided into the ναός or πρόναος¹¹³ – understood as the forecourt where the Levites are based – and the ἱερόν – understood as the Holies of Holies (τὰ ἅγια τῶν ἁγίων) where only the high priest goes; the former is "a symbol of the psychics (τῶν ψυχικῶν) who attain salvation outside the Pleroma (ἔξω τοῦ πληρώματος)", while the latter is the place into which "the pneumatics advance" (τοὺς πνευματικούς χωρεῖν).¹¹⁴ For Heracleon then, the Pleroma does not constitute a distinct temple, but rather the Holy of Holies of a single heavenly temple. Therefore, *Gos. Phil.* presents perhaps the most overtly polemical of the Valentinian temple cosmologies because by postulating two separate heavenly temples, the division becomes one of kind rather than merely of degree.

Secondly, *Gos. Phil.* connects this cosmology of two temples to two qualitatively distinct earthly cults – the rites of initiation and the Eucharist of the Valentinians, and Jewish practices of atonement. These earthly practices are aetiologically derived from Christ and Adam respectively as reflections of the activities in the two heavenly temples. On the other

¹¹³ The manuscripts read τῶν ἄνω, but should be corrected to τῷ νάω. Wucherpfennig (2002), 68-69 and Thomassen (2006a), 105 n.7 observe that Heracleon's use of ἱερόν to identify the Holy of Holies, and ναός to refer to the temple generally, is a reversal of normal convention. Therefore, Thomassen suggests emending τῶν ἄνω not to τῷ νάω, but to τῷ προνάω since the latter term appears a few lines later and better captures Heracleon's apparent meaning. Cf. Wucherpfennig (2002), 52 n.21, 68. For commentary, see Pagels (1973), 52-53; Wucherpfennig (2002), 64-73; Thomassen (2010), 183-185.

¹¹⁴ Heracleon Fr. 13 in Origen, *Comm. Jo.* X 210-211.

hand, *Exc.* 38 only states that the high-priestly activities on the Day of Atonement mirror those in the demiurge's inferior temple. Thirdly, rather like *Gos. Truth*, *Gos. Phil.* makes (post-baptismal) anointment the central rite of initiation insofar as it conveys the Divine Name and affects the transformation of the baptized, whereas *Exc.* (80.3; 83; 86.1-3) states that the σφραγίς of the Name is received in the baptismal waters themselves.¹¹⁵

Finally, *Gos. Phil.* contains more elaborate speculations on the mystical dimensions of its rituals than do *Exc.* or *Gos. Truth*. Of course, both of those texts discuss the possibility of entering the Father's "rest" in the present, with *Gos. Truth* particularly stressing the contemplative effort on the practitioner's part. *Exc.* is also fairly explicit regarding the angelification of initiates. However, *Gos. Phil.*'s initiates do not merely become as angels, but as Christ himself. *Gos. Phil.* also hints at the use of hydromantic techniques for achieving visions of oneself in this transformed Christological condition. Insofar as this vision is deemed to be a superior version of those gained by Jewish beholders of the heavenly Kabod of YHWH, *Gos. Phil.* also appears to speak of the baptismal vision in terms of heavenly ascent. In these ways, *Gos. Phil.* displays a good deal of continuity with the other Valentinian sources examined in previous chapters, but develops their ritual-mystical frameworks according to a temple cosmology and soteriology which, despite being found in a weaker form in *Exc.*, is only brought to full expression in the present text.

In light of the foregoing analysis and comparison, I would like to conclude with some tentative contributions to the hitherto inscrutable problems of *Gos. Phil.*'s origins introduced at the beginning of this chapter. As was mentioned at that point, most scholars have argued for a Syrian provenance – usually Antioch – largely on the basis that *Gos. Phil.* discusses the

¹¹⁵ An act of anointment cannot be ruled out in *Exc.* 66-86. *Exc.* 82.1 states that the Eucharistic bread and oil are sanctified by "the power of the Name" (τῆ δυνάμει τοῦ ὀνόματος).

meaning of several Syriac words,¹¹⁶ thereby apparently indicating a Greek-Syriac bilingual milieu. Further, as Siker argues, second-century Antioch is a likely setting for the interaction between “Jewish, Christian, and Gnostic Christian communities”, as evidenced in *Gos. Phil.*¹¹⁷ However, more recently, this view has been strongly critiqued. Lundhaug notes that the need to explain the meaning of such Syriac words indicates an audience not familiar with the language,¹¹⁸ while van Os suggests that $\overline{\text{ܡܢܛܥܘܪܘܫ}}$ in fact denotes Aramaic as opposed to Syriac, and stresses that the etymologies themselves are hardly accurate: “They are ‘second-hand’, and neither speaker nor audience had enough knowledge of Aramaic and Hebrew to correct minor mistakes.”¹¹⁹ Further, Isenberg’s claim that *Gos. Phil.* contains ascetic ethics, thereby adding weight to the case for a Syrian provenance,¹²⁰ has been rejected on the basis of its positive attitude to marriage and its use of wine in the Eucharist.¹²¹

Another argument often brought against a Syrian provenance for *Gos. Phil.* is its recommendation of post-baptismal, as opposed to pre-baptismal, anointment. Pre-Nicene Syrian Christianity practised only pre-baptismal anointment,¹²² with post-baptismal anointment only entering the West Syrian liturgy during the fourth and fifth centuries. This same trend has been observed in the liturgy of Egyptian Christianity,¹²³ as opposed to pre-Nicene North African and Roman Christianity, which already practiced post-baptismal anointment. Hence - or so the argument goes - if *Gos. Phil.* is pre-Nicene, it cannot have its origin in Syria or Egypt, but if it is post-Nicene, it could have a Syrian or Egyptian provenance. Thomassen tentatively prefers the former option,¹²⁴ while Lundhaug opts for the latter on the grounds that numerous elements of *Gos. Phil.*’s baptismal theology are much

¹¹⁶ See *Gos. Phil.* NHC II,3 56.3-15; 62.7-18; 63.21-24.

¹¹⁷ Siker (1989), 288.

¹¹⁸ Lundhaug (2010), 357-358.

¹¹⁹ van Os (2006), 93; cf. Turner (1996), 158-166.

¹²⁰ Isenberg and Layton (1989), 134.

¹²¹ Van Os (2006), 88; Lundhaug (2010), 361-362.

¹²² E.g. *Didascalia* 16; *Acts Thom.* 25-27; see Thomassen (2006a), 398-401; Lundhaug (2010), 359-361.

¹²³ Bradshaw (1995), 92-98; Johnson (1995), 15.

¹²⁴ Thomassen (2006a), 400-401.

closer to those of Syrian and Egyptian Christianity than those of North African or Roman Christianity – the importance attached to Jesus’s own baptism in the Jordan; the reception of the Holy Spirit at anointment; and baptism being understood in terms of birth and begetting (John 3) as opposed to death and resurrection (Rom 6).¹²⁵

However, these arguments based on *Gos. Phil.*’s recommendation of *post*-baptismal chrismation fail to recognise that it does so as part of a polemic against imperfect Christian initiation which did not practice it. This *presupposes* a setting in which post-baptismal anointment was *not* normative, and where those who practiced it were in a minority, thereby giving force to the polemic. This puts pre-Nicene Egypt, particularly Alexandria, firmly back on the table, not only because post-baptismal anointment was not the norm there, but also as one of many locations in the Roman Empire where Christian and Jewish communities would have interacted and potentially competed with one another,¹²⁶ as well as the fact that any local audience would have probably required an explanation of the meaning of Syriac (or Aramaic) words. But in that case, whence the preference for post-baptismal anointment? Scholars have often observed that *Gos. Phil.* broadly agrees, in terms of the structure of the rituals, with the few other sources we have for Christian liturgy in the second century, specifically the *Didache* 7 (Syria/Palestine); Justin Martyr’s *First Apology* 61 and 65 (Rome); and Tertullian’s *De Baptismo* (Carthage).¹²⁷ Although of these, only Tertullian describes a

¹²⁵ Lundhaug (2010), 360-361; cf. Johnson (2007), 112-114. Such distinctions between the liturgies of “East” and “West” are not concrete, however. Justin Martyr, writing in mid-second century Rome, understands baptism in terms of rebirth, even quoting John 3:5 (*I Apol.* 61). Conversely, Justin may have brought this idea with him from Syria-Palestine, *per* Johnson (2007), 50, 96. Baptism as rebirth also appears in *Trad. ap.* 21.21, commonly believed to derive from early third-century Rome on the basis of Hippolytus’s alleged authorship. Although, both this provenance and authorship are now strongly doubted; see Bradshaw, Johnson, and Phillips (2002), 2-6, 13-15; Johnson (2007), 101-110.

¹²⁶ See van den Broek (1996), 181-196.

¹²⁷ E.g. Thomassen (2006a), 398-401; Pagels (1997), 282-283. This is not to equate “pre-Nicene” with “second century”, of course, but the sources for Roman and North African liturgies of the third-century are only marginally more numerous, and it is in these areas that post-baptismal anointment was commonly practiced in the pre-Nicene period; see Johnson (2007), 83-114.

post-baptismal anointment.¹²⁸ More significantly in relation to *Gos. Phil.* is the testimony of Irenaeus's *Haer.* I 21, which describes the variety of rites of ἀπολύτρωσις (“redemption”) performed among the Valentinians known to him in Rome and the “West” in the mid to late second-century.¹²⁹ *Haer.* I 21.3 purports to describe a range of Valentinian baptismal practices, with Irenaeus stressing the absurd variety of liturgical formulae being used. However, Irenaeus is clear that after baptism in water, such Valentinians “anoint the initiate with balsam oil” (μυρίζουσι τὸν τετελεσμένον τῷ ὀπῶ τῷ ἀπὸ βαλσάμου).¹³⁰

In light of *Gos. Phil.*'s polemical advocacy of post-baptismal anointment in combination with its quite distinctive temple imagery, I would tentatively propose the following outline of the origin, development, and crystallization of the text's sacramental theology: Valentinians based in Rome sought to advocate their version of Christian initiation, especially a post-baptismal anointment, to their fellows in Egypt, particularly Alexandria, where the rite was not normally practiced. This advocacy took the form of a supersessionist polemic in which those Christians, including Valentinian Christians, who did not perform the rite were said to thereby remain mired in their Jewish, or “Hebrew”, past. The distinction between the Pleroma and an inferior temple belonging to the demiurge was already current among Valentinians in Egypt known to Clement of Alexandria; *Gos. Phil.* merely develops the distinction on the basis of the perceived parallels between post-baptismal and priestly anointments such that the former must therefore give access to a superior temple. In acquiring its present form, *Gos. Phil.* has absorbed numerous other features of Egyptian Christianity (see above), and therefore what began as a Roman Valentinian attempt to spread its liturgy to

¹²⁸ Tertullian, *Bapt.* 7.1; *Res.* 8.3; cf. Cyprian of Carthage, *Ep.* 70; Hippolytus, *Comm. Dan.* 13:15; *Trad. ap.* 21.19. However, Bradshaw, Johnson, and Phillips (2002), 14-15, 108 suggest that *Trad. ap.* 21.19 is a later addition to the surrounding “core” passages on the initiation of new converts, which they date to the mid-second century.

¹²⁹ On which see Thomassen (2006a), 360-377.

¹³⁰ Irenaeus, *Haer.* I 21.4 describes Valentinians who view water baptism as superfluous, instead pouring a mixture of oil and water over the initiate's head, but who still follow this with an anointment with balsam oil; see Thomassen (2006a), 373-374.

Alexandrian Valentinians now bears several stamps of Egyptian Christianity and Valentinianism.

Conclusion to Part I

Part 1 of this thesis has sought to track the development of the soteriological understanding of the Divine Name in Valentinianism from Valentinus himself to the *Gospel of Philip*, where it receives its most developed explication. Beginning with the little evidence we have from Valentinus, the Divine Name is principally a Christological concept capable of performing a soteriological role for those fortunate enough to receive a share of it. However, it is unclear how one might receive such a share. In *Gos. Truth*, the Name of the Father is more explicitly equated with the Son himself in his capacity to make known the transcendent and ineffable Father. In his role as Logos, Christ reveals this Name for those willing to listen, and insofar as one is redeemed through the hearing/receiving of the Name, he is the Saviour also. To receive the Divine Name, most likely through an anointment, is to be endowed with one's rightful share of God's fullness for which one was predestined via the Book of the Living. *Exc.* articulates the soteriological power of the Divine Name through its description of both ritual practice and the mythological elements which undergird and give meaning to those ritual actions. Moreover, for the first time in Valentinian literature, this saving Name is connected with motifs derived from Jewish priestly lore, for having borne the Name through baptism the initiate may eschatologically transcend the demiurge's psychic heavenly temple and be led into the Pleroma by Christ the high priest. Such connections are made more explicit still in *Gos. Phil.* where they are further developed along mystical-ritual lines. Christ is now clearly identified as the ideal high priest whose priesthood one joins by virtue of receiving the Name in baptism-anointment. To join Christ's priesthood is articulated as becoming "a Christ", a priestly identity which is realized in the acts of initiation which are themselves understood to constitute a procession through a tripartite sacramental temple in the image of the pneumatic temple of the Pleroma above the demiurge's psychic counterpart.

Gos. Phil.'s use of temple imagery to portray the advance of the candidate from the status of an imperfect neophyte to that of a perfect initiate is evidently predicated on the adoption of a high-priestly Christology, the beginnings of which can already be seen in *Exc.* This Christology subsequently had a major impact on how the soteriological and transformative power of the Divine Name was understood. Being endowed with the Name no longer meant simply being "completed" or "perfected" on account of receiving one's share of divine reality, thereby being gradually conformed to Christ as the visible manifestation of God, as it does for Valentinus and *Gos. Truth*. Rather, according to *Gos. Phil.*, to receive the Name from the Holy Spirit was to be anointed as priest after the model of Christ himself, the consequences of which are somewhat more dramatic than those expressed by earlier Valentinian literature. We are now faced with Valentinian initiates identifying themselves as "Christs" by virtue of visionary experiences of their transformed selves in the baptismal waters, who having experienced union with their angelic partners in the bridal chamber come holy of holies, a type of the Pleroma itself, can now ascend unseen and undetained to the Father in the here and now. To be sure, such extraordinary experiences were not alien to earlier Valentinian authors. The author of *Gos. Truth* already claimed to have ascended to the Father and partaken of his nature through "kisses", through which he is now able to work to manifest God's fullness in the earthly congregation. But no Valentinian text can match *Gos. Phil.* for its dramatic and vivid depiction of ritual life and its benefits. Or at least, such would received wisdom on Valentinianism have us believe.

Given the high drama of *Gos. Phil.*'s sacramentalism, as well as the promise of ritualized proximity to the divine in many other Valentinian texts, it is somewhat surprising that no Valentinian author attempted to narrativize such experiences for the sake of Valentinian culture as a means of imbuing both initiates and candidates with the pneumatic

lore necessary for a full religious life. Part 2 of this thesis will attempt to demonstrate that the *Apocalypse of Paul* (NHC V,2) represents one such attempt by a Valentinian author.

**Part II: The *Apocalypse of Paul* in Its
Valentinian Context**

5. The *Apocalypse of Paul*: Introductory Issues

5.1. The Story

Following approximately twelve lines which are either missing or badly damaged,¹ the extant text of *Apoc. Paul* resumes with Paul conversing with a “little child” (ΚΟΥΕΙ ΨΗΜ) concerning the path he ought to take to “Jerusalem” (ΘΗ[Μ]).² The child commands Paul to say his (Paul’s) name before the route is shown to him (18.7-8). The child then reveals two things; firstly, that he already knows Paul (18.14-17); and secondly, that he is in fact “the Spirit” (18.21; 21.24; 22.1, 11; 23.5, 22-23; cf. 20.4), or “the Holy Spirit” (19.20-21, 26; 22.15-16, 22), who has come to show Paul the way, and to accompany him en route to his “fellow-apostles” (ΨΗ[ΡΑΠΟΣΤΟΛΟΣ]) in “Jerusalem” (18.17-22). In *Apoc. Paul* 18.22 there remains the imperative prefix **μα-** followed by the first three letters of a verb, probably **ΤΟΥ[ΝΟΣ]** (“arise, awaken”).³ With the imperative, the opening dialogue between Paul and the child-Spirit comes to an end, and Paul’s preparations for his heavenly journey commence.

The final lines of page 18 are missing and page 19 begins with a badly damaged list of celestial beings: “the principalities [and] these authorities [and] archangels and powers and the entire [mass] of demons” (Ν[Ι]Α[Ρ]Χ[Η ΜΝ Ν]ΕΕΙΕΞΟΥΣΙΑ [ΜΝ] ΖΕΝΑΡΧΑ[ΓΓ]ΕΛΟΣ ΜΝ ΖΕΝΔΟ[Μ] ΜΝ ΠΜ[Η]ΨΕ ΤΗΡ[Ψ] ΝΤΕΝΙΔΑΙΜΩΝ),⁴ who are identified as those “[who belong] to the one who creates bodies for a psychic seed” ([ΕΤΗΠ] ΕΠΗ ΕΤΩΩΛΨ ΝΖΕΝΣΩΜΑ ΕΥΒΡΑΣ

¹ *Apoc. Paul* NHC V,2 17.19-18.2. *Apoc. Paul* NHC V,2 17.19, which contains the letters **λοσ** and a scribal mark designating the title, can be reconstructed to read [ΤΑΠΟΚΑΛΥΨΙΣ ΨΠΑΥ]λοσ, since the same appears at the end of the text (24.10). See Rosenstiehl (2005), 12-14.

² The *Iota* and *Eta* are barely visible, but the supralinear stroke marks it as *nomen sacrum* for which “Jerusalem” is the most likely candidate based on what follows, albeit the heavenly Jerusalem. On the identity of the “little child” as Christ, see Murdock (1968), 125-138; Murdock and MacRae (1979), 48; Lindemann (1979), 332; Stroumsa (1984), 79; Klauck (1985), 177; or as Metatron, see Böhlig (1963), 16. Cf. Rosenstiehl (2005), 70-76; Kaler (2005), 177-181.

³ Kasser (1969); MacRae and Murdock (1979); the verb is attested with the imperative in *Apoc. Paul* NHC V,2 19.10, although the latter’s reconstruction **ΜΑΤΟΥ[ΝΟΣ ΠΕΚΝΟΥΣ ΠΑΥΛΟΣ]** (“Let [your mind awaken, Paul]”) is conjectural, being based on the exact phrase appearing in 19.10-11.

⁴ The reconstruction of **ΜΗΨΕ** follows Rosenstiehl (2005), 102. The word **ΜΗΨΕ** (“mass, multitude, crowd”) is badly faded in the manuscript and has been variously reconstructed as **ΚΟΣΜΟΣ** (e.g. Böhlig (1963); Kasser (1965); Murdock (1968)) or **ΓΕΝΟΣ** (e.g. Schenke (1966); MacRae and Murdock (1979)), while Rosenstiehl (2005), 102 notes that **ΠΑΛΘΟΣ** (Gk. *πλήθος*) is also a possibility.

ἄφύχη).⁵ Another command from the Spirit to Paul follows: “Awaken your mind Paul, and see that this mountain upon which you tread is the Mountain of Jericho, so that you may know those things which are hidden in those which are manifest” (19.10-14; **ΜΑΤΟΥΝΟΣ ΠΕΚΝΟΥΣ ΠΑ[ΥΛ]ΟΣ ΑΥΩ ΕΝΑΥ ΧΕ ΠΠΤΟΥ ΕΤΕΚΖΩΜ ΕΧΩΩ ΝΤΟΩ ΠΕ ΠΠΤΟΥ ΝΖΙΕΡΙΧΩ ΧΕ ΕΚΕΟΟΥΩΝ ΝΕΤΖΗΠ ΕΖΡΑΪ ΖΝ ΝΕΤΟΥΟΝΖ ΕΒΟΛ**). The Spirit states that Paul shall journey to the twelve apostles, who will “greet” (**ῤΑCΠΑΖΕ; ἀσπάζομαι**) him as “elect spirits” (**ΖΕΝΠΝΑ ΕΥCΟΤΠ**). Paul then “raised his eyes” (**ΑΓΤΩΟΥΝ ΝΝΕΩΒΑΛ**), thereby fulfilling the Spirit’s command, and sees the apostles greeting him.

Paul’s ascent then begins in earnest, as the Spirit “snatched him up on high to the third heaven” (**[ΑΩ]ΤΩΡΠ ἸΜΟΩ ΕΖΡΑΪ ΕΠΧΙCΕ ΩΑΖΡΑΪ ΕΤΜΕ[ΖΩΟΜ]ΤΕ ἸΠΕ**), before advancing immediately into the fourth heaven, where he looks down to the “earth” (**ΚΑΖ**) and sees his “likeness” (**ΕΙΝ[Ε]**), “those [who were upon] the earth” (**ΝΗ Ε[ΤΖΙΧΜ] ΠΚΑ[Ζ]**), and the twelve apostles “at his right [and] left in the creation” (**[ΖΑ] ΤΕΦΟΥΝΑΜ [ΑΥΩ] ΖΑ ΤΕΦΟΛΑΧ ἸΝ ἸΚΤΙCΙC**) with the Spirit leading them (19.20-20.5). Also in the fourth heaven, Paul witnesses the trial of a sinful soul, which has been brought from “the land of the dead” (**ΠΚΑΖ ΝΤΕ ΝΕΤΜΟΟΥΤ**) in order to stand accused of a multitude of sins. The trial, as will be discussed later, is a sham, and the soul is cast back down into a body as punishment. The trial is apparently presided over by a “toll-collector” (**ΤΕΛΩΝΗC; Gk. τελώνης**), who therefore plays a slightly unorthodox role given his title (20.5-21.22). Paul then advances through a

⁵ The reconstruction of **ΗΠ** (stative of **ΩΠ**, with following **Ε** = “belong to” (Crum 526a)) follows Kaler (2005), 190-191, who is following an insight from Wolf-Peter Funk. For **ΩΩΠ** as “create, model” (Crum 812b), as opposed to “reveal” (Crum 812a), see Rosenstiehl (2006a); Kaler (2005), 191; idem. (2008a), 8-9, who suggest it is a “Bohairicism” remaining in the “Sahidicized” text. Kaler (2005), 192; idem. (2008a), 9, following a suggestion by Funk, suggests that **ΩΡΑC** (here translated “seed”; Crum 831b) may be a metathetical misspelling of **ΩΑΡC**, a stative of **ΩΩΡC** (“to prepare, provide”; Crum 831a), with the following **ΕΥ** being taken as a circumstantial present, giving the translation, “the one who created bodies which are provided with soul” (Kaler (2008a), 1). Kaler argues that one would expect such demons to create bodies for “seeds” of spirit, not soul, since although the presupposed anthropogony parallels Irenaeus’s account of Ptolomaeian-Valentinian doctrine from *Haer.* I 5, it is always spiritual substance which comes in “seeds”. Hence, the present passage likely identifies the various celestial beings as those belonging to the figure who prepared and created material bodies as prisons for the soul. Against this, it should be noted that *Apoc. Paul* NHC V,2 21.20 uses the verb **CΩΡΤΕ** (“to prepare”; Crum 323a) to describe the body into which the soul is cast. But of course, we ought not insist on such a narrow vocabulary for the author or translator.

“gate” (ΠΥΛΗ) to the fifth heaven, where he sees a “great angel ... holding an iron staff” (ΝΟΘ $\bar{\nu}$ ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ ... ΕΦΑΜΑΖΤΕ $\bar{\nu}$ ΝΟΥΘΕΡΩΒ $\bar{\mu}$ ΠΕΝΙΠΕ) along with three other angels carrying “whips” (ΖΕΝΜΑΣΤΙΚΟΣ; μάστιξ) which they use to herd wayward souls back towards judgement while “quarrelling” ($\bar{\rho}$ ΕΡΙΣΕ; ἐρίζω) with each other (21.22-22.10). But Paul advances through another gate into the sixth heaven, at which point he gazes upward to see “a great light” (ΟΥΝΟΣ $\bar{\nu}$ ΟΥΘΕΙΝ) shining down from above. He then commands the local toll-collector to open the gate to the seventh heaven, to which the latter obliges (22.11-23).

When Paul, along with the Spirit, enters the seventh heaven, he sees “an old man” (ΟΥΖΛΛΟ $\bar{\nu}$ ΡΩ[ΜΕ]). The description of the old man is badly damaged; something in his environment is “light” (ΟΥΘΕΙΝ), something else is “white” (ΟΥΘΕΩ), and something else “shines seven times more than the sun” ($\bar{\nu}$ ΟΥΘΕΙΝ $\bar{\nu}$ ΖΟΥΟ ΕΠΡΗ $\bar{\nu}$ [ΣΑΦ] $\bar{\nu}$ ΚΩΒ $\bar{\nu}$ ΣΟΠ). As we shall see, such qualities are frequently ascribed to YHWH’s enthroned Glory in Jewish and Christian apocalypses and theophanies. The old man interrogates Paul concerning where he is going, to which he replies, “I am going to the place from which I came” (ΕΪΝΑΒΩΚ ΕΠΤΟΠΟΣ $\bar{\nu}$ ΤΑΪΕΙ ΕΒΟΛ $\bar{\nu}$ ΖΗΤ $\bar{\nu}$); then where he is from, to which Paul unexpectedly responds by announcing his attention to return to “the world of the dead” (ΠΚΟΣΜΟΣ $\bar{\nu}$ ΤΕ ΝΕΤΜΟΟΥΤ) on a mission to liberate those held captive therein. The old man challenges Paul that he shall not be able to escape his “rulers and authorities” (ΝΙΑΡΧΗ $\bar{\mu}$ Ν ΝΙΕΖΟΥΓΙΑ). But Paul, encouraged by his Spirit guide, shows the old man a “sign” (ΣΗΜΙΟΝ; σημεῖον), compelling him to grant them passage beyond the seventh heaven (22.23-24.1).

In the final lines, Paul and the Spirit enter the “Ogdoad” (ΖΟΥΔΟΑΣ), where Paul is “embraced/kissed” ($\bar{\rho}$ ΑΣΠΑΖΕ; ἀσπάζομαι) by the twelve apostles, followed by the ninth

heaven, where Paul embraces/kisses the locals, and finally the tenth heaven, where he embraces/kisses his “fellow spirits” (ϞΒΗΡ ΜΠΠΝΑ).⁶

5.2. The *Apocalypse of Paul* and the Apocalyptic Genre

Scholarship on *Apoc. Paul* is virtually unanimous in agreeing that as well as being an “apocalypse” by title, it belongs to the apocalyptic genre by virtue of its form and content.⁷ Of course, there is little agreement on what constitutes the “apocalyptic genre”,⁸ but in recent years two dominant schools of thought have emerged. The first is typified by Christopher Rowland’s *The Open Heaven* (1982), which sought to offer a corrective to earlier scholarship which privileged the “horizontal” dimensions of apocalyptic literature, that is, the historical reviews culminating in a cosmic eschatology, which could be interpreted in historical, social, and political terms.⁹ Already Michael Stone had taken issue with Paul Hanson’s exclusive focus on “apocalyptic eschatology”, arguing that apocalyptic literature stood in the legacy of the Israelite Wisdom tradition as well as that of biblical prophecy, while stressing the centrality of revealed knowledge and generally more speculative cosmological concerns.¹⁰ Building on this, Rowland characterised “apocalyptic” as “a type of religion whose distinguishing feature is a belief in direct revelation of the things of God which was mediated

⁶ Scholars disagree on whether or not the twelve apostles remain in the Ogdoad or ascend with Paul to the tenth heaven. For them remaining in the Ogdoad, see the decisive arguments in Kaler (2005), 272-273; idem. (2008a), 11 n.37; Perrin (2011), 137-139; Murdock and MacRae (1979), 49; for them ascending with Paul to the tenth heaven, see Murdock (1968), 175-176, 219-225; Pagels (1978), 421-422; Krause (1983), 626; Klauck (1985), 174-175; Young (1988), 98-99; Morard (1995), 345; Harrison (2004), 29; Scopello and Meyer (2007a), 314.

⁷ E.g. Murdock (1968), *passim*; Janssens (1980), 69-70; Kaler (2005), 169-171; idem. (2008a), 155-156; 171-184. Cf. Rudolph (1968), 99 characterised it as a “gnostischen Dialog”; see the response in Krause (1983), 627, who describes this description as “nicht gerechtfertigt” on the grounds that *Apoc. Paul* NHC V,2 does not contain an extended pedagogical dialogue between a master and disciple. Krause concludes, “Ich möchte daher die Schrift nicht zu den gnostischen Dialogen, sondern zur Gattung der Apokalypsen zählen.” Krause’s characterisation of *Apoc. Paul* NHC V,2 as an “apocalypse” is based on Vielhauer’s three criteria for an apocalyptic work: 1) Pseudonymity; 2) a vision-report; and 3) use of smaller literary units; see Vielhauer (1975), 487.

⁸ For overviews of the history of the field, see Kaler (2008a), 121-151; Fletcher-Louis (2008), 126-134. For various approaches to “the apocalyptic genre”, see Collins (1979); idem. (1991); idem. (2014); Hartman (1983); Sanders (1983); Hellholm (1986); Aune (1986); idem. (2006), 1-12; Linton (1991); Reynolds (2013).

⁹ E.g. Koch (1972), 18, 28-33; Vielhauer and Strecker (2003); Hanson (1975).

¹⁰ Stone (1976); cf. Smith (1993).

through dream, vision, or divine intermediary.”¹¹ Moreover, much of this revealed knowledge is not of an eschatological nature, and even where it does concern eschatology, it is not uniform in nature or content.¹² However, to say that certain divine secrets revealed to the apocalyptic seer concern eschatology, “is not the same as saying that eschatology is a constitutive feature of apocalyptic.”¹³ Rather, for Rowland, it is the revelation of knowledge of divine mysteries which constitutes the essence of “apocalyptic”.¹⁴

The second trajectory in the study of apocalyptic literature is typified by John Collins’s *The Apocalyptic Imagination* (1984), which devotes a lengthy opening chapter to “The Apocalyptic Genre”.¹⁵ In doing so, Collins builds on the definition of the apocalyptic genre which he developed in *Semeia* 14 (1979):

‘Apocalypse’ is a genre of revelatory literature with a narrative framework, in which a revelation is mediated by an otherworldly being to a human recipient, disclosing a transcendent reality which is both temporal, insofar as it envisages eschatological salvation, and spatial insofar as it involves another, supernatural world.¹⁶

Such a definition takes account of the revelatory content of the texts traditionally regarded as “apocalypses”, while simultaneously focusing on their literary nature. It also brings together the revelatory and eschatological elements insofar as the transcendent origin of the revelation already demonstrates the reality of another world with which any given apocalypse’s eschatology will also be concerned.¹⁷ In other words, “[b]oth the manner of revelation and the eschatological content point beyond this world to another, which is at once the source of

¹¹ Rowland (1982), 21; idem. (1999).

¹² Rowland (1982), 23-48.

¹³ Ibid. 48.

¹⁴ Ibid. 9-22; 73-189. For Rowland, these divine mysteries pertain to the list of prohibited speculative material in *mHag.* 2.1: “Whosoever gives his mind to four things it were better for him if he had not come into the world – what is above, what is beneath, what was beforetime, and what will be hereafter.” The “apocalypticists” were apparently among those who disregarded such prohibitions, according to Rowland (1982), 76.

¹⁵ Collins (1984), 1-42.

¹⁶ Collins (1979), 9; the definition was intended to “mark the boundaries of the genre”, as opposed to describe the works picked out by the definition (ibid. 10); see also Collins (1984), 41-42; Burns (2014a), 51-52.

¹⁷ Collins (2014), 5 criticises the understanding of “eschatology” found in Rowland’s school of thought (e.g. Fletcher-Louis (2011), 1578-1579): “Eschatology is not only concerned with the end of the world or history in the manner of the historical apocalypses, but also with the fate of the dead. The pervasive importance of the latter concern is sometimes missed by critics who think of ‘eschatology’ only in historical terms.” In other words, we must distinguish between “cosmic” and “personal” eschatology.

revealed knowledge and of future salvation.”¹⁸ Collins distinguished between apocalypses which do not describe heavenly journeys (Type I) and those that do (Type II), and further divided these into three subcategories: a) the “historical” apocalypse, containing a review of history and cosmic eschatology; b) apocalypses lacking any historical review, but which include cosmic eschatology; and c) apocalypses lacking both historical review and cosmic eschatology, but which include personal eschatology.¹⁹

Collins’s definition has become extremely influential, and *Apoc. Paul* conforms very well to it.²⁰ It is revelatory insofar as a divine being manifests itself to Paul on earth before guiding him through the levels of heaven. It takes place within the narrative framework of Paul’s journey to “Jerusalem” to meet the twelve apostles. The transcendent reality which is disclosed has both a spatial aspect via its ten-heaven cosmology, and a temporal aspect insofar as the judgement scene in the fourth heaven and the aggressive angels in the fifth heaven contain personal eschatology in depicting the post-mortem fates of sinful, or unfortunate, souls. We might also suggest that Paul’s own ecstatic ascent partially functions as an anticipation of the post-mortem ascent of the righteous soul.²¹ As Collins states, this would make *Apoc. Paul* an example of a Type IIc apocalypse; that is, an ascent apocalypse containing personal eschatology but lacking cosmic eschatology and historical review.²²

¹⁸ Collins (1979), 10-11.

¹⁹ *Ibid.* 13.

²⁰ On “gnostic” apocalypses, see Fallon (1979); Janssens (1980); Krause (1983); Kippenberg (1983); Scopello (1987); Morard (1995); Frankfurter (1996), 150-162; Attridge (2000); Pearson (2002); Kaler (2008a), 121-165; Burns (2014a), 48-76; *idem.* (2014b).

²¹ See Bousset (1960), 5: “Die Ekstase, vermöge deren man sich durch den Himmel zum höchsten Gott erhebt, ist ja nichts anderes als eine Anticipation der Himmelsreise der Seele nach dem Tode des Menschen.” Also, Segal (1980), 1341; Klauck (1985), 151; Tabor (1986), 122-125. Cf. Rosenstiehl (2005), 95 seems to intimate that Paul’s ascent is already post-mortem, arguing that the lack of detail in the eighth, ninth, and tenth heavens indicates that Paul is not being presented in the role of visionary, but rather “celui de l’âme juste montant vers le repos”. This interpretation rests on the unfounded claim that Paul’s declaration of his future mission in the cosmos (*Apoc. Paul* NHC V,2 23.13-17) is misplaced (Rosenstiehl (2005), 62-64). Further, nothing in *Apoc. Paul* NHC V,2’s frame story suggests that Paul has died, nor is it testamentary in character.

²² Collins (1979), 15; Fallon (1979), 138.

Apoc. Paul is also pseudepigraphical.²³ This device, almost ubiquitous in apocalyptic literature,²⁴ is used primarily “to bolster the authority of an apocalypse, authorizing the claims made by the text while creating a sense of self-definition.”²⁵ The child-Spirit is also recognizable as an *angelus interpres*, another near-universal feature of apocalyptic literature.²⁶ However, the comparison ends here since the Spirit does no interpretive work other than explaining its own role to Paul, otherwise functioning as “a mute guide”²⁷ who merely leads and encourages Paul. Nonetheless, in addition to conforming to Collins’s definition of “the apocalyptic genre”, *Apoc. Paul*’s title, pseudepigraphy, and frame narrative, as well as its report of a visionary ascent and heavenly tour guided by a divine envoy, the judging of souls (personal eschatology), and the future mission of the hero, place it firmly within this literary genre. Determining the precise sources for this apocalypse is, however, a trickier task.

5.3. Use of Sources

This section is not exhaustive, but rather attempts to highlight those sources which we can be almost certain that the author(s) of *Apoc. Paul* used, or was inspired by, directly. I begin with the Pauline sources, followed by some other New Testament sources, before moving onto some more general observations on the background of the judgement scene in the fourth heaven, and the meeting with the old man in the seventh heaven. Of course, every detail in this short text has parallels in other ancient Christian and Jewish literature, and many of these

²³ On pseudepigraphy in ancient Judaism and Christianity, see Aland (1961); Speyer (1971); Metzger (1972); Brox (1977); Collins (1977); Rowland (1982), 240-247; Meade (1986); Stone (1974); idem. (2006); idem. (2011), 90-121; Reed (2008); Dobroruka (2014).

²⁴ Collins (1979), 11-12: “Pseudonymity ... is universal in Jewish and Gnostic apocalypses and very common in the Christian ones”; Burns (2014a), 197 n.27, notes *Rev* and *Herm.* as exceptions, although Paul’s account in 2 Cor 12:2-4 is another example; see Tabor (1986), 1, 97; Segal (1990), 51-52; Kaler (2005), 170 n.141. On the other hand, Paul’s “person in Christ” (2 Cor 12:2) may function as a pseudonym; e.g. Segal (1990), 58-59; Furnish (1984), 543; Garland (1999), 510; Thrall (2000), 781.

²⁵ Burns (2014a), 52; on pseudepigraphy in *Apoc. Paul* NHC V,2, see Kaler (2013b), 337-340.

²⁶ E.g. *Bel*; *1 En.*; *2 En.*; *T. Levi* 2-5; *T. Ab.*; *T. Isaac*; *T. Jac.*; *LAE* 37; *Apoc. Zeph.*; *3 Bar.*; *4 Ezra*; *Gk. Apoc. Ezra*; *Ascen. Isa.*; *Vis. Ezra*; *Herm.*; *Vis. Paul*; cited by Rosenstiehl (2005), 76 n.493; also, Janssens (1980), 69-70.

²⁷ Rosenstiehl (2005), 76.

are noted in the next chapter. Here, I am concerned with *Apoc. Paul*'s sources, as opposed to allusive parallels in contemporary literature.

5.3.1. Pauline Sources

5.3.1.1. 2 Corinthians 12:2-4

²*I know a person in Christ who fourteen years ago was caught up (ἀρπαγέντα) to the third heaven – whether in the body or out of the body I do not know; God knows.* ³*And I know that such a person – whether in the body or out of the body I do not know; God knows –* ⁴*was caught up (ἠρπάγη) into Paradise and heard things that are not to be told (ἄρρητα ῥήματα), that no mortal is permitted (οὐκ ἐξὸν ἀνθρώπῳ) to repeat.*
(NRSV)

Without fail, scholars have noted *Apoc. Paul*'s use of this passage. Firstly, the hero of our apocalypse is similarly “caught up” (τῶρπι; Gk. ἀρπάζω) to the third heaven.²⁸ Not only do we have a terminological parallel here, but also an explanation as to why *Apoc. Paul* makes no mention of the first two heavens.²⁹ Secondly, *Apoc. Paul* clearly exploits the ambiguity in Paul's own report concerning precisely where his ascent terminated. Is “Paradise” identical to the third heaven? Within it? Or somewhere above it?³⁰ *Apoc. Paul* appears aware of the latter

²⁸ On ἀρπάζω in visionary contexts, see Rowland and Morray-Jones (2009), 141; Rosenstiehl (2005), 34-35; cf. Acts 8:39; 1 Thess 4:17; Rev 12:5; Wis 4:11; Gk. *Apoc. Ezra* 5.7; *Apoc. Mos.* 37.3; *Acts Pet. Andr.* 1; *Gos. Nic.* 25; *CMC* 48.14-15; 52.3; 55.3-4; 60.15-16; 62.1,7; 63.14; 70.15-16; 71.9,10,22 *Trim. Prot.* NHC XIII,1 48.27; *Chaldean Oracles* Fr.3. On the significance of the term for implying an unexpected and involuntary rapture, see Lincoln (1978-79), 215; Rowland (1982), 385-386; Klauck (1985), 153-154; Himmelfarb (1993), 109-110; eadem. (1995), 128-129; cf. Tabor (1986), 115-116.

²⁹ Böhlig (1963), 16; Rosenstiehl (2005), 36; Kaler (2005), 144, 208; idem. (2008a), 60-61.

³⁰ Most scholars interpret Paul's “Paradise” as being within, or equal to, the third heaven, e.g. Lincoln (1978-79), 211-213; idem. (1981), 77-81; Schäfer (1984), 22; Young (1988), 82; Barnett (1997), 562 n.28; Garland (1999), 514-515; Thrall (2000), 791-793; Harris (2005), 841-842; Buchanan Wallace (2011), 255; DeConick (2011), 301. Cf. Rowland (1982), 381-382; Tabor (1986), 115-121, who argue that for Paul, Paradise is here located in the seventh heaven, and therefore represents a second-leg of the ascent. Some texts do indeed locate Paradise in the third heaven (e.g. *2 En.* [A] 8; *Apoc. Mos.* 37.5; 40.1; cf. *3 Bar.* 4), while others locate it in the seventh heaven (e.g. *Ques. Ezra* [A] 21), or at some remote point of the earth (e.g. *2 En.* [J] 42.3). According to Irenaeus, *Haer.* I 5.2, Tertullian *Val.* 20, and *Exc.* 51.1, Valentinians located Paradise in the fourth heaven. *Gos. Truth* NHC I,3 36.35-39 equates “Paradise” and the place of divine “rest”, but without a clearer cosmology it is difficult to determine precisely where this was located. *Tri. Trac.* NHC I,5 96.26-29 states that the Logos established Paradise just outside the Pleroma as an image of the Pleroma itself (which in Valentinian cosmology would be the Ogdoad), while 101.29-102.3 describes how the demiurge established his own Paradise as an image of the Logos's version.

possibility and employs poetic licence to extend the ascent far beyond the third heaven.³¹ Thirdly – and this is more conjectural – the lack of detail regarding the highest three heavens, beyond the hostile old man, may reflect the ἄρρητα ῥήματα (“unutterable words”) that are forbidden or impossible (οὐκ ἐξὸν) for a human being to speak.³² These unutterable words, the heart of Paul’s revelation, are similarly absent from *Apoc. Paul*, perhaps showing faith to the proof-text.³³ Fourthly, and conversely, Paul’s ambiguity in 2 Corinthians 12:2-4 regarding his bodily status during his heavenly journey is explicitly clarified in *Apoc. Paul* when Paul gazes down from the fourth heaven and sees his “likeness upon the earth”. For *Apoc. Paul* there is no question; it is an out-of-body ascent.³⁴

There are myriad other issues requiring interpretation in 2 Corinthians 12:2-4, such as how the account fits into the wider context of Paul’s championing of human weakness over against the extraordinary claims of the “super-apostles” in 2 Corinthians 10-13,³⁵ whether the report recounts a “successful” or “failed” heavenly ascent in light of the fact that it does not culminate in a vision of God;³⁶ or if the words Paul heard are unutterable on the grounds that they are ineffable or prohibited.³⁷ However, it is undeniable that *Apoc. Paul* uses it as a

³¹ Young (1988), 97 suggests instead that *Apoc. Paul* NHC V,2 only starts counting the heavens from the Ogdoad onwards, since they constitute the superior realm. In other words, the tenth heaven of *Apoc. Paul* NHC V,2 is equivalent to the third heaven of 2 Cor 12:2. This is possible, but ignores the terminological parallel of Paul being “caught up” to the *third* heaven in both texts.

³² The ambiguity of οὐκ ἐξὸν has resulted in a range of translations of 2 Cor 12:4, see Shantz (2009), 91-92.

³³ Cf. Kaler (2005), 279.

³⁴ See Klauck (1985), 176; Young (1988), 98; Kaler (2005), 130; idem. (2008a), 49-50.

³⁵ Is Paul polemically downplaying the experience, or using it to bolster his claim to apostolic status? For the former, e.g. Käsemann (1942), 64-67; Lincoln (1978-79), 209-210; Schäfer (1984), 20-21; Furnish (1984), 544; Martin (1986), 398, 403; Best (1987), 118; Garland (1999), 509; for the latter, e.g. Rowland (1982), 379-385; Young (1988), 83-84; Shantz (2009), 176-183. Or is Paul merely telling the Corinthians what they want to hear, e.g. Barrett (1973), 312. Cf. Buchanan Wallace (2011), 263-266, who concludes, “[t]he primary issue is not whether revelations *per se* are good or bad, but the problems of boasting in them”, and the very similar conclusion of Loubser (2000), 198.

³⁶ On the notion that Paul reports a failed ascent, see Gooder (2006), 190-211; Rowland and Morray-Jones (2009), 139; cf. Betz (1972), 84-92, who argues that Paul sarcastically parodies accounts of ecstatic rapture and healing; Harrison (2004), 51-55, presents a similar view of Paul as a “visionless visionary”.

³⁷ For prohibited, see Barrett (1973), 305; Lincoln (1978-79), 216; Rowland (1982), 383; Schäfer (1984), 23; Martin (1986), 405-406; Barnett (1997), 560-561 n.23-24; Thrall (2000), 793-798; for ineffable, see Marrow (1986), 36; Shantz (2009), 101-108; Poirier (2010), 59-63. Buchanan Wallace (2011), 259-263 thinks the two are not mutually exclusive: “what Paul heard in Paradise may be forbidden to be spoken precisely because it cannot be put into human language without risk of blasphemy or misunderstanding, due to the transcendent

proof-text for the apostle's ascent while exploiting the ambivalence of certain details in the autobiographical account for its own ends, most obviously to have Paul ascend far beyond the third heaven, even beyond the hostile creator-god, into the Ogdoad, and up to the tenth heaven.

5.3.1.2. Galatians 1:11-2:2

In these verses, Paul declares that the gospel he preaches is not a human fabrication, but rather has been “received through a revelation (ἀποκαλύψεως) of Jesus Christ” (1:12). He claims that despite his earlier persecution of Jesus's followers, God had “set me apart (ἀφορίσας με) from my mother's womb” (1:15) and decided “to reveal his Son in me” (1:16; ἀποκαλύψαι τὸν υἱὸν αὐτοῦ ἐν ἐμοί) so that he would preach the gospel among the Gentiles. Paul then reports two journeys “up to Jerusalem” (ἀνῆλθον/ἀνέβην εἰς Ἱεροσόλυμα); firstly, three years after his revelation, he went to visit Peter (1:18); and secondly, a further fourteen years later, he ascended to Jerusalem “in response to a revelation (κατὰ ἀποκάλυψιν)” (2:1-2) to meet with the apostles.

Apoc. Paul draws on these lines for their revelatory appeal, but also adopts specific details for its own narrative. Firstly, Paul “ascends” (ΒΩΚ ΕΖΡΑΪ) to Jerusalem, now understood as the heavenly Jerusalem, to meet his “fellow apostles” in response to the Spirit-child's revelation. Secondly, Paul is recognised by the Spirit as one “blessed from his mother's womb” (18.16-17; ΝΤΑΥΣΜΟΥ ΕΡΟΚ ΧΙΝ ΖΝ ΘΗ ΝΤΕΦΜΑΛΥ), and by the old man as “one who was set apart from within his mother” (23.3-4; ΠΕΝΤΑ[Υ] ΠΟΡΧῪ ΕΒΟΛ ΧΙΝ ΝΖΗΤῸ ΝΤΕΦΜΑΛΥ), both imprecisely recalling Galatians 1:15.³⁸ The combination with 2

nature of the highest heavens and of the direct encounter with the deity. Paul did indeed experience direct revelation, which he could grasp at some level, but it nonetheless evaded formulation in human language” (261).

³⁸ Although, the wording in the latter formula almost exactly parallels the Sahidic translation of Gal 1:15 – ΝΤΑΥ ΠΟΡΧῪ ΕΒΟΛ ΧΙΝ ΕΕΙΝΖΗΤῸ ΝΤΑΜΑΛΥ, which similarly lacks a literal Coptic parallel for the Greek κοιλία. Murdock (1968), 204-209 argues that the Spirit-child's declaration in *Apoc. Paul* NHC V,2 18.16-17

Corinthians 12:1-4 is a natural one in light of the shared language of “apocalypses/revelations” (ἀποκαλύψεις) and the notion of “fourteen years” (2 Cor 12:2; Gal 2:1) having passed.

5.3.1.3. Acts 9:3-19; 22:6-16; 26:12-18

It is normally assumed that *Apoc. Paul* does not make use of the accounts of Paul’s conversion on the road to Damascus, which may indicate that the author either did not know these accounts, or rejected them.³⁹ In the Acts accounts, Paul’s revelation is provided by a “great light” (22:6; φῶς ἰκανόν; cf. 9:3; 26:13) from heaven, shining “brighter than the sun” (26:13; ὑπὲρ τὴν λαμπρότητα τοῦ ἡλίου), which temporarily blinds him (9:8-9; 22:11). Conversely, *Apoc. Paul* begins Paul’s heavenly journey with acts of “awakening” (19.10) and “seeing” (19.18-19). For Kaler, this contrast between blindness and sight in Acts and *Apoc. Paul* respectively makes it “tempting to see in it a definite response to, or correction of, the Acts accounts by the author of the *Apocalypse of Paul*.”⁴⁰ I would go further. When Paul is in the sixth heaven, he sees a “great light” (22.18; ΝΟΒ ΝΟΥΘΕΙΝ) shining down from above. Given the (badly damaged) description of the old man in the seventh heaven, which includes the terms “light” and “shining seven times more than the sun”, it is clear that he is the source of the “great light”. Of course, such “light” is a banality in theophanies,⁴¹ but since it is used here of the inferior demiurge in the context of a Pauline apocalypse, it is likely that this description represents an outright rejection of the Acts accounts of Paul’s conversion. For

identifies Paul as one predestined to be an apostle (cf. Jer 1:5; Isa 49:1), whereas the old man’s use of ΠΟΡΧ ΕΒΟΛ (“to separate”) in *Apoc. Paul* NHC V,2 23.3-4, but omitted in 18.16-17, designates Paul’s physical birth as opposed to the spiritual rebirth achieved via his heavenly ascent. He argues that the old man alludes to the concept of the material world as a “womb” from which souls are expelled (cf. Hippolytus, *Haer.* V 19.11, 20; 2 *Apoc. Jas.* NHC V,4 57.6-8). However, Murdock fails to notice that the word “womb” (ΖΗ) does not appear in the old man’s declaration, but only in the Spirit-child’s.

³⁹ Murdock (1968), 150-151; Kaler (2005), 165-166; 195-196.

⁴⁰ Kaler (2005), 196.

⁴¹ For the formula “seven times brighter than the sun”, see *Apoc. Zeph.* Fr.A in Clement of Alexandria, *Strom.* V 11.77; *Apoc. Pet.* 1; *Acts Phil.* 20; *T. Ab.* [A] 7.3; *Ep. Apos.* 16; cf. Isa 30:26; *1 En.* 91.16; *2 En.* [J] 66.7-8; *Vis. Paul* 21, 22; see Rosenstiehl (2005), 59-60.

Apoc. Paul, truly divine light does not blind the seer, but rather enlightens them; hence the Acts accounts must be of Paul's brush with an inferior god.

It is plausible that Acts 22:12-16 has influenced our author's interpretation. Ananias, described as "a devout man according to the Law" who was praised by the Jews, restores Paul's sight and tells him that "the God of our ancestors (ὁ θεὸς τῶν πατέρων ἡμῶν) has chosen you". This would explicitly identify the source of Paul's revelatory conversion as the Jewish Creator God, identified as the hostile old man in the seventh of ten heavens in *Apoc. Paul*, in contrast to Galatians 1:12 and 16, where it was a revelation of "Jesus Christ" and the "Son" respectively. Indeed, Paul contrasts these latter revelations with "the traditions of my ancestors" (Gal 1:14; τῶν πατρικῶν μου παραδόσεων) which caused him to persecute Jesus's followers. The Paul of Galatians 1 and the Paul of Acts 22 apparently evaluate their ancestry a little differently. Clearly, the author of *Apoc. Paul* prefers the apocalyptic reports of 2 Corinthians 12:2-4 and Galatians 1:11-2:2, with the latter showing regret for Paul's "earlier life in Judaism" (1:13), to those of Paul's conversion in Acts.

5.3.1.4. Other Pauline Sources

In 1 Corinthians 2:6-16, Paul declares that "we speak God's wisdom, secret and hidden", that is, "what no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the human heart conceived." This wisdom is unknown to "the rulers of this age", and instead is revealed to "the perfect" (τοῖς τελείοις) "through the Spirit" (διὰ τοῦ πνεύματος); not "the spirit of the world" (τὸ πνεῦμα τοῦ κόσμου), but "the Spirit that is from God" (τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ). Such wisdom is spoken not in human words, but words "taught by the Spirit" (ἐν διδακτοῖς πνεύματος), so that such "spiritual things" (πνευματικὰ) can be interpreted "for/by spiritual people"

(πνευματικοίς). Such pneumatics are “subject to nobody’s interrogation” (ὕπ’ οὐδενὸς ἀνακρίνεται),⁴² for they have “the mind of Christ” (νοῦν Χριστοῦ).

It was noted earlier that the *angelus interpretes* in *Apoc. Paul* is not in fact an angel at all, but rather a spirit. Of course, the concepts of “angel” and “spirit” were extremely close in ancient Judaism and Christianity, at times becoming almost interchangeable, even merged in single figures.⁴³ But 1 Corinthians 2:6-16 offers a solid background against which to understand *Apoc. Paul*’s depiction of the *angelus interpretes* as the (Holy) Spirit, even to the extent that the Spirit wishes to speak with Paul through “his words” (18.11; **νεφωλαε**), just as 1 Corinthians 2:13 states that spiritual things are communicated through spiritual words.⁴⁴ Also corresponding to 1 Corinthians 2:6-16 is the general distinction between “psychic” and “pneumatic”, as reflected by the demiurge’s governance of the lower seven heavens where souls are collected, judged, and cast back into material bodies, as opposed to the upper three heavens, which are occupied by spiritual beings.⁴⁵ Finally, the notion that spiritually endowed individuals shall be “subject to nobody’s interrogation” coheres well with what we find in *Apoc. Paul*, where Paul ascends unhindered past the toll-collectors in the fourth and sixth heavens, while the demiurge’s interrogation of Paul is cut short when Paul refuses to answer even his second question and instead announces his future redemptive work on earth.

Despite the Spirit’s background in 1 Corinthians 2:6-16, many have seen the Spirit’s childlike form as being indicative of its Christological character, since Christ often appears as a child.⁴⁶ As will be suggested below, the Spirit’s form is more likely an attempt to place Paul

⁴² My trans.

⁴³ E.g. Ps 103:4; Acts 23:8-9; cf. “the angel of the (holy) spirit” in *Ascen. Isa.* 3.15; 4.21; 7.23; 8.14; 9.36, 39-40; 10.4; 11.4, 33; cf. “the angel of the prophetic spirit” in *Herm. Man.* 11.9; and Hippolytus *Haer.* IX 13.2-3, citing a fragment of Elchasai. See Rosenstiehl (2005), 76-77; Gieschen (1998), 114-119.

⁴⁴ Cf. Hippolytus, *Haer.* V 8.26, where the Naassenes are said to connect the “unutterable words” of 2 Cor 12:2-4 with the “words taught by the Spirit” of 1 Cor 2:6-16; see Poirier (2010), 62.

⁴⁵ On 1 Cor 2:6-16 in Valentinian distinctions between “psychics” and “pneumatics”, see Kovacs (2013).

⁴⁶ E.g. *Ap. John* NHC II,1 2.1-5; *Gos. Jud.* TC 33.18-23; *Acts John* 88; *Acts Andr. Mth.* 18, 33; *Acts Pet.* 21; see Murdock (1968), 130-138; Rosenstiehl (2005), 70-77; Kaler (2005), 179-180. King (2009), 73-80, would

in the Valentinian tradition by connecting Paul's revelation with that of Valentinus's vision of the Logos in the form of a newborn child. However, it is also possible that the author's depiction of the Spirit as a child functions as an allusion to Matthew 18:1-6, where Jesus explains to his disciples: "Truly I tell you, unless you change (στραφῆτε) and become like children (παιδία), you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Whoever becomes humble like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven" (18:3-4). The significance of the allusion would be unveiled in the course of the narrative, where Paul is transformed into a spirit, and therefore becomes like the child, and thereby ascends to the highest level of heaven.

Next, Paul's response to the old man's question, "where are you from?", is to announce the mission he will undertake upon returning to earth: "I am going down to the world of the dead in order to make captive the captivity which was made captive in the captivity of Babylon" (Εἰναεωκ εζραι̅ επκοσμοc̅ ν̅τε̅ νετμοογτ̅ κεραac̅ εἰνα̅ρα̅ιχμαλωτιζε̅ ν̅τα̅ιχμαλωc̅ια̅ τη̅ εταγ̅ρα̅ιχμαλωτιζε̅ ἡμοc̅ ρ̅ν̅ τα̅ιχμαλωc̅ια̅ ν̅τε̅ τβαβγλω̅ν).⁴⁷ This clearly evokes Paul's use of LXX Psalms 67:19 to articulate the saving work of Christ in Ephesians 4:8: "When he ascended on high he made captivity itself a captive." As Kaler notes, the notion of ἡχμαλώτευσεν αἰχμαλωσίαν seems to have been understood rather like a double negative by the author of *Apoc. Paul* such that to take captivity captive results in liberation.⁴⁸ As has been noted before, in applying these words to

include *Gos. Sav.* 107.57-60 ("I am [in] your midst li[ke] a child (ν̅[θε̅] ν̅ν̅ιω̅η̅ρ̅ε̅ ρ̅[η̅μ̅])") from the "Hymn of the Cross". But see the critical response in Suciu (2013), 204-205, who argues that ν̅θε̅ here means "in the manner of", as opposed to "in the form of", suggesting that this is not an instance of divine polymorphy, but rather Christ's dancing around the cross symbolizes his purity and innocence because he is *like* a child playing.

⁴⁷ See esp. Kaler (2005), 262-265.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.* 263-264. See also *Odes Sol.* 10.3-4; cf. Luke 4:18-19 (= Isa 61:1). Klauck (1985), 177-178 notes that among the Nag Hammadi codices, "captivity" usually refers to that of the soul in the fleshly body, or the condition of being subject to archontic oppression: *Tri. Trac.* NHC I,5 117.24-25; *Gos. Phil.* NHC II,3 53.12; 83.26; *Exeg. Soul* NHC II,6 134.13; *Thom. Cont.* NHC II,7 140.23; 143.23; *Apoc. Pet.* NHC VII,3 79.20; *Teach. Silv.* NHC VII,4 108.7; 2 *Apoc. Jas.* NHC V,4 54.10; 60.5; cf. Kaler (2005), 262 n.352. Denzey Lewis (2013), 76-77 observes that Paul often shuns the language of "freedom" in favour of being a "slave to God", and the like (e.g. Rom 6:18,22).

the saving work of Paul, *Apoc. Paul* makes Paul a second-Christ, a second-redeemer.⁴⁹ But the equation of Christ and Paul is even more emphatic than this. In having Paul *descend* to take captivity captive, while Christ *ascended* to do so, the reader may well recall Ephesians 4:10's assertion that "he who descended is the same one who ascended far above all the heavens", thereby logically reinforcing the identification of Paul as a second-Christ. Of course, this ignores the broader logic underlying Ephesians 4:9, that if Christ ascended, he must also have previously descended into "the lower parts of the earth", but even this recalls our Paul's declaration that his descent shall be to "the world of the dead" (23.13-14). We will revisit this identification later along with the notion of the captivity as the "Babylonian captivity".

Finally, the list of demonic powers in *Apoc. Paul* 19.3-6 (principalities, authorities, archangels, powers), some of which the old man explicitly invokes in the seventh heaven (principalities, authorities), strongly recall various lists of heavenly powers in Paul's letters.⁵⁰ Of all these lists, Ephesians 6:12 is perhaps the most damning: "For our struggle is not against enemies of blood and flesh, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers of this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places." However, it is unlikely that any one of these lists alone inspired *Apoc. Paul's* list, but rather the Pauline tradition of hostile cosmic rulers and forces more generally.

5.3.1.5. Pauline Sources: Conclusion

Commentators have generally acknowledged that *Apoc. Paul* represents a synthesis of multiple Pauline passages in an attempt to produce a new interpretation of those passages. Murdock argued that the opening "epiphany" of the Spirit-child – whom he understands as "the Risen Christ" – to Paul represents a reinterpretation of Paul's "vision of calling" from

⁴⁹ Murdock (1968), 209-213; Lindemann (1979), 333; Kaler (2005), 264-265.

⁵⁰ Rom 8:38; 1 Cor 15:24; Eph 1:21; 3:10; 6:12; Col 1:16; 2:15; see Klauck (1985), 178; Kaler (2005), 189; idem. (2008a), 195-196. For a survey of such Pauline figures in the Nag Hammadi Codices, see Kaler (2007-2008).

Galatians 1:11-17. In this way, readers of *Apoc. Paul*'s opening scene would recognise this as the moment that Paul first discovered that he had been “blessed from his mother’s womb” (cf. Gal 1:15), which in light of Jeremiah 5:1 and Isaiah 49:1 indicates his prophetic calling. That is to say, in *Apoc. Paul* we see Christ revealing to Paul that which Paul would subsequently report in Galatians 1:15.⁵¹ The problem with this claim is that the verb is different in each case; in *Apoc. Paul*, Paul is “blessed” (CΜΟΥ), while in Galatians 1:15, he is “separated” (ἀφορίζω).⁵² More generally however, Murdock recognised that *Apoc. Paul* has combined 2 Corinthians 12:2-4 with Galatians 2:1-2, and then again with the call-vision of Galatians 1:11-17, so that the author “produced a single unified revelation experience.”⁵³

Kaler also recognises the “pivotal importance” of 2 Corinthians 12:2-4 but argues instead that Galatians 1:13-17 has “inspired our text” over against Galatians 2:1-2. He argues this on four counts: 1) the use of Galatians 1:15 in *Apoc. Paul* 18.16-17 and 23.3-4; 2) Galatians 1:16-17 implies that Paul was initially going up to Jerusalem but the revelation caused him to change his mind; 3) Galatians 2:2 states that Paul ascended to Jerusalem “in response to a revelation”, whereas in *Apoc. Paul*, Paul is already on the road to Jerusalem when the revelation occurs; 4) in Galatians 2:1, Paul takes Barnabas and Titus with him to Jerusalem, while neither Galatians 1:13-17 nor *Apoc. Paul* mention any (human) companions.⁵⁴ The third point is mistaken; in the opening lines of the extant text of *Apoc. Paul*, Paul asks the Spirit-child which road he should take to Jerusalem, implying he is not

⁵¹ Murdock (1968), 141-158.

⁵² Ibid. 11 translates the passage as “you are he who was blessed from his mother’s womb because (CΠΙΔΗ) I have [come] to you that you may [go up above] to your fellow [apostles].” Murdock substantiates this causal reading through a comparison with Matt 16:17, where Simon is said to be “blessed ... because (ὅτι)” the heavenly Father revealed Christ’s messianic character to him (ibid. 149). However, the causal reading simply makes poor sense in *Apoc. Paul* 18.16-19; how would Paul be blessed *from his mother’s womb* by virtue of the Spirit providing him with a revelation *now*? Perhaps I am being too literal, but note the change in Murdock and MacRae (1979), 51. Also, Rosenstiehl (2005), 74 notes that the Coptic CΠΙΔΗ is not always as stable as the Greek ἐπειδή. Since the causal connection seems to run in the opposite direction to that proposed by Murdock, perhaps we should take CΠΙΔΗ here to mean something like “as such [I have come to you]”.

⁵³ Murdock (1968), 166-167.

⁵⁴ Kaler (2005), 165-166.

currently on that road, and is only shown the road via the Spirit's revelation. The fourth point is also tenuous; Paul may not have any human companions in *Apoc. Paul*, but nor does he visit Jerusalem in order to see Peter specifically, as he does in Galatians 1:13-17. Galatians 1:19 even states explicitly that Paul saw no other apostles besides "James the Lord's brother", whereas in *Apoc. Paul*, Paul ascends to Jerusalem to see his "fellow-apostles" (18.17-19), which he accomplishes in the Ogdoad when he is greeted by "the twelve apostles" (24.1-3). Put simply, *Apoc. Paul* does not square perfectly with either Galatians 1:13-17 or 2:1-2. Finally, on the use of Galatians 1:15 we must note again that neither of *Apoc. Paul*'s allusions constitute a word for word citation. Indeed, the allusions to Galatians 1:15 do not seem to constitute part of the revelation to Paul, but rather they are the means by which the Spirit-child and the demiurge recognise Paul, identifying him via a circumlocution familiar to Paul and his readers alike. Further, nowhere in *Apoc. Paul* is Paul commissioned to perform apostolic work. Instead, he already knows his mission, and declares it boldly to the demiurge. This would also speak against any straightforward identification of Galatians 1:13-17 as the key proof-text for *Apoc. Paul*.

In contrast, I would argue that the inspiration behind *Apoc. Paul* is 2 Corinthians 12:1 and Paul's claim to have experienced multiple "visions and revelations of the Lord" (ὄπτασίας καὶ ἀποκαλύψεις κυρίου) about which he refuses to boast. In drawing on some of Paul's most striking autobiographical reports of such visions and revelations, namely 2 Corinthians 12:2-4, Galatians 1:11-17, and Galatians 2:1-2, the author has composed an *epitome* of such Pauline experiences while also drawing on familiar motifs from Jewish and Christian apocalypses (see below), all of which is refracted through the lens of Valentinian doctrine (see following chapter). The purpose of such an epitome, as I shall argue in a later chapter, is not to reinterpret any specific account of Paul's visionary experience, but rather to exploit the unspecified multiplicity of such experiences in order to construct an ideal

Valentinian-Pauline ascent which aspiring seers could hope to imitate and even use as preparation for such heavenly ascents of their own.

5.3.2. Luke 10:29-35

Paul's ascent to "Jerusalem" begins from "the Mountain of Jericho" (19.12-13; ΠΤΟΟΥ ΝΖΙΕΡΙΧΩ). We will deal with this image in more detail in the following chapter, but for now it is noteworthy that an ascent from Jericho to Jerusalem reverses the journey taken by the traveller in Luke's Parable of the Good Samaritan, which is itself described as a descent (10:30). Early Christian readers, including Valentinians, tended to interpret this story as an allegory for the descent of the soul from heaven to the material world. In such allegorical interpretations, the man descending from Jerusalem to Jericho represents the human soul, the robbers are the worldly powers, and the Samaritan is Christ.⁵⁵ Furthermore, Jerusalem represents the heavenly world, and Jericho the material world where the soul is oppressed by hostile cosmic powers.⁵⁶ According to *Interp. Know.* 6.29-35, these cosmic powers (in "Jericho") are specifically the "principalities and authorities" (ΝΑΡΧΗ ΜΗΝ [ΝΕ]Ξ[ΟΥ]CΙ[Α]) which have "bound us in nets of flesh" (ΜΟΥΡ ΜΗ[Α]Ν ΝΖΝΑΒΗ ΝCΑΡ[Ξ]) from which the soul must escape. These are the same "principalities and authorities" (Ν[Ι]Α[Ρ]Χ[Η] ΜΗ Ν]ΕΙΕΞΟΥCΙΑ) which *Apoc. Paul* places under the jurisdiction of the one who creates bodies for souls (19.6-7), such as the unfortunate soul in the fourth heaven which has had a body "prepared" for it, and from whom Paul intends to liberate the captives in "the world of the dead", that is, Jericho. Interestingly, no New Testament text has Paul in Jericho, but the *Acts*

⁵⁵ E.g. Irenaeus, *Haer.* III 17.3; Clement of Alexandria, *Quis div.* 28-29; Origen, *Hom. Luc.* 34; *Interp. Know.* NHC XI,1 6.19-29; cf. *Gos. Phil.* NHC II,3 78.7-9; see Roukema (2004); Twigg (2015b); Painchaud (2003), 422-424; cf. Kaler (2005), 198-199, who acknowledges this exegetical tradition, but suggests that *Apoc. Paul* NHC V,2's Jericho is inspired by the Synoptic tradition of Jesus healing one (Luke 18:35-43; Mark 10:46-52) or two (Matt 20:29-34) blind men on the road to Jericho, thereby paralleling Paul "raising his eyes" in *Apoc. Paul* NHC V,2 19.18-19. Of course, only in the Lukan version is Jesus approaching Jericho, while Mark and Matt have him leaving Jericho, therefore providing a stronger link to *Apoc. Paul* NHC V,2.

⁵⁶ Such pejorative depictions of Jericho are not uncommon in biblical literature and early Christianity; e.g. Josh 6 (esp. 6:26); Origen, *Hom. Josh.* 6.4; 7.1,3,4,7; *Acts Paul* 9.7. On the "heavenly Jerusalem", see e.g. Gal 4:26; Rev 3:12; 21:2,10; 2 *En.* 55.2; 4 *Ezra* 8.52-54; 2 *Bar.* 4.2-7; Lincoln (1981), 9-32; Verman (2011).

of *Paul* 9.7 has the apostle journeying towards Jericho when a lion “came out of the valley of the field of bones” in order to be baptized by Paul. The notion of a “valley” points towards Jericho itself, while its description as a “field of bones” resonates with *Apoc. Paul*’s designation, “the world/land of the dead”.

By having Paul’s heavenly journey span the distance from Jericho to Jerusalem, *Apoc. Paul* subtly alludes to this exegetical tradition regarding Luke 10:29-35 as describing the descent of the soul, such that its reversal implies the ascent of the soul.

5.3.3. The Judgement Scene and the *Testament of Abraham*

Apoc. Paul’s debt to the *Testament of Abraham*, or a shared source, for its judgement scene in the fourth heaven is widely acknowledged, as is that of *Vis. Paul* 17-18.⁵⁷ Many scholars have suggested that this scene is a later addition to *Apoc. Paul* on the grounds that it is a standalone narrative in which Paul does not participate directly.⁵⁸ On the other hand, we might see the scene as an element of paraenesis deliberately contrasting the fate of this soul with that of Paul, who, as one of the righteous elect, proleptically ascends beyond such corrupt judgement. The lesson would be to remain steadfast, not being tempted into sin by such deceptive cosmic forces.⁵⁹ In fact, the parallels to the scene in *T. Ab.* [B] 10 are of a rather general sort (murder; heavenly book(s); three witnesses), and are hardly identical. In *Apoc. Paul*, murder is apparently among a host of sins committed by the soul, while in *T. Ab.*

⁵⁷ Murdock (1968), 100-108; MacRae (1976); Young (1988), 97-98; Rosenstiehl (2005), 77-88; idem. (2007); Kaler (2005), 222-223; Pesthy (2007); cf. Etcheverria (1981), 233, who argued that the Bohairic recension of *T. Ab.* has been influenced by *Apoc. Paul* NHC V,2. The Coptic version of the short recension (B) of *T. Ab.* 10 provides the strongest parallel to the scene in *Apoc. Paul* NHC V,2; cf. *T. Ab.* [A] 12-13. However, the two angels driving souls onto judgement by whipping them with “fiery lashes” (*T. Ab.* [A] 12.1) are closer to those of *Apoc. Paul* NHC V,2 22.5-10 than *T. Ab.* [B] 9.5’s “angel of the Lord” who merely “drives” the souls. On the dating of *T. Ab.* to c.100 CE, see Sanders in *OTP* I: 874-875; Munoa (1998), 17-18.

⁵⁸ Murdock and MacRae (1979), 48; Krause (1983), 626; Klauck (1985), 175; Rosenstiehl (2007), 560; cf. Kasser (1965), 76, who argues that *Apoc. Paul* NHC V,2 is an abbreviated version of a longer original text in which all the heavens were described in such detail. See the critical remarks in Kaler (2005), 210-211.

⁵⁹ Cf. *Gos. Phil.* NHC II,3 65.1-26; *1 En.* 6.2. The second witness in *Apoc. Paul* NHC V,2 21.4-9 claims to have “desired” (ϣεπιθυμι; Gk. ἐπιθυμέω) the soul, paralleling the “evil spirits” who “wish to defile [the soul]” (εγγορω εχορμεε) in *Gos. Phil.* NHC II,3 and the Enochic Watchers who “saw and desired (ἐπεθύμησαν)” human women.

it is the only sin mentioned; in *T. Ab.* the judge, identified as Abel (11.2), demands two books to be brought, which contain the deeds of the soul, while *Apoc. Paul* has only one book, and it is unclear who asks for it to be brought,⁶⁰ which it never is;⁶¹ *Apoc. Paul*'s three witnesses are distinct figures apparently representing deceptive cosmic forces tempting souls into sin,⁶² whereas *T. Ab.*'s tripartite witness is Enoch alone (11.3), who bears three "crowns of witness".

For the most part, however, such details are quite familiar from judgement scenes in apocalyptic literature, especially the heavenly book,⁶³ while the three witnesses for the prosecution are derived from Deuteronomic law, where it is explicitly for the crime of murder that two or three witnesses may pass a death sentence.⁶⁴ Quite logically for *Apoc. Paul*, being placed back into a body in "the world of the dead" constitutes such a death sentence. To speak of *Apoc. Paul*'s direct dependence on *T. Ab.* for this scene is overstating the case somewhat. Rather, the scene employs motifs which were widespread in both biblical and apocryphal apocalypses, as well as in Jewish and Christian eschatological speculation more generally. That the scenes in *Apoc. Paul* and *T. Ab.* bear some superficial resemblance to one another is the result of drawing upon this common stock of eschatological imagery. The former has evidently put a gnostic spin on the motif by having the judge under the control of

⁶⁰ Murdock and MacRae (1979), 54-55 reconstruct [ΚΟΥ]ΩΩ ΕΙΝΕ ΝΝΟΥΧΩΜΕ [ΕΩΩ ΖΙ]ΩΩΩ ("[Do you wish] to bring a book [to read from]?"), placing it in the mouth of the soul on trial; Rosenstiehl (2005), 104-105 reconstructs [†ΟΥ]ΩΩ ΕΙΝΕ ΝΝΟΥΧΩΜΕ [ΕΩΩ ΖΙ]ΩΩΩ ("[Je veux] apporter un livre [pour y lire]") and leaves it open as to who says the words.

⁶¹ Although, Kaler (2008a), 10 n.23 suggests that the three witnesses themselves may constitute a metaphorical book.

⁶² Murdock (1968), 107-110 suggests the witnesses are "supernatural beings" after the type of the Watchers from Enochic tradition (e.g. *1 En.* 9.10; 15.8-12; cf. *Jub.* 10.8-11; Gen 6:1-4). Rosenstiehl (2007), 564-571 disagrees and argues that they are the souls of those humans who witnessed the defendant's crimes on the grounds that the first two witnesses' claims to have been "in the body" and "in the world" are simply euphemisms for "being alive". On the other hand, the third witness's claim to have "given darkness" to the defendant in order to accomplish its sins would indicate superhuman powers of some sort.

⁶³ Dan 7:10; Rev 20:12-15; *1 En.* 81.4; 89.61-77; 90.17-20; 97.6; 98.7-8; 104.7; 108.7; *2 En.* 50.1; 52.15; 53.2; *2 Bar.* 24.1; *4 Ezra* 6.20; see Murdock (1968), 66-67.

⁶⁴ Deut 17:6; Num 35:30; cf. Matt 18:16; Heb 10:28.

the imperfect demiurge in the seventh heaven, while the witnesses are those who have facilitated the soul's sins in the first place.

5.3.4. The Old Man in the Seventh Heaven

The old man in the seventh heaven is evidently the demiurge since his reaction to Paul's "sign" is to look down to "his creation" (ΠΕΡΑΩΝ[Τ]) and to "those who are his own authorities" (ΝΕΤΕ ΝΩϞ ἸΝΕΞΟΥΧ[ΙΑ ΝΕ]), thereby recalling the cosmos as "the creation" (ἸΚΤΙΟΙΟ) in 20.4 and the "authorities" as part of the "mass of demons" under the control of the creator in 19.3-7. Rosenstiehl's suggestion that the singular ΠΕΡΑΩΝΤ ("his creation") could be used for a plural object meaning "his creatures" and that the figure is therefore not the demiurge, is largely an attempt to muddy the waters against a gnostic understanding of the text as a whole.⁶⁵ We can also dismiss Paula Gooder's claim that "the climax of this text is most definitely the seventh heaven, where the Old Man sits on his throne", but that Paul is depicted ascending higher still in order to meet the twelve apostles.⁶⁶ If this was the case, why not just have Paul meet the twelve apostles prior to the "climax" in the seventh heaven, or have the old man in the tenth heaven? It is unthinkable that our author would depict the true God in only the fourth highest heaven. As such, the interpretation of this figure as the demiurge is secure.

The demiurge's environment strongly recalls the throne-room visions from well-known apocalypses including Daniel 7:9-13, *1 En.* 14.20, 46-47, 71.10, *2 En.* 20.1, 22.1-2, Revelation 1:12-16, and so on. However, it is perfectly clear even from the damaged text in *Apoc. Paul* that no single source was used to create the scene, but rather the author drew on a common stock of theophanic imagery centred around visions of YHWH upon his throne in

⁶⁵ Rosenstiehl (2005), 90-92.

⁶⁶ Gooder (2006), 126-129.

the heavenly temple.⁶⁷ It is impossible to be certain about which qualities (light/white/seven times brighter than the sun) apply to which parts of the demiurge's person or surroundings, although it is extremely likely that at least one of them applies to his throne.⁶⁸ Therefore, it is clear that *Apoc. Paul* has adopted the figure of YHWH from early Jewish and Christian apocalyptic and biblical literature, but downgraded him to the status of an inferior demiurge enthroned in a heavenly temple beneath the truly divine realm to which Paul has access.

5.3.5. Ten-Heaven Cosmology

Apoc. Paul's ten-heaven cosmology is somewhat unusual, but not unattested in comparative literature.⁶⁹ In the long recension of *2 En.* 21.6-22.1, Enoch sees the eighth, ninth, and tenth heavens, where he finally beholds "the face of the Lord". This is most likely a later gloss on the seventh-heaven theophany described in the shorter recension, since the longer recension calls the tenth heaven *Aravoth*, which according to *bHag.* 12b is the name of the seventh heaven, as it is in many later passages from the Hekhalot literature.⁷⁰ Kaler discusses a range of other texts which may imply ten-heaven cosmologies but which bear little or no relation to that presented in *Apoc. Paul*.⁷¹ Interestingly, *mKelim* 1.6-9 speaks of ten concentric areas of holiness in the land of Israel; three outside the Jerusalem temple, and seven making up the

⁶⁷ See Murdock (1968), 178-181; Rosenstiehl (2005), 55-61.

⁶⁸ See Kaler (2005), 254-255. Murdock (1968), 18 conjectures "face" (צו), "garments" (צוֹרֵרֶ), and "place" (טוֹפּוֹס) respectively. Murdock and MacRae (1979), 58 omit "face", retain "garment", and change "place" to "throne" (עֲרֹסוֹס), as does Klauck (1985), 165. Scopello and Meyer (2007a), 319, following Funk (2003), 699, translate, "[In the middle] of the light [I saw] an old man [in] white [clothing. His throne], which is in the seventh heaven, was [seven] times brighter than the sun." On the phrase, "seven times brighter than the sun" in early Jewish and Christian theophany, see Rosenstiehl (2005), 59-60.

⁶⁹ For an overview of differently numbered cosmologies in early Jewish and Christian literature, see Lincoln (1981), 77-81; Rosenstiehl, (2005), 38-41; also Yarbrow Collins (1995).

⁷⁰ E.g. §§ 10; 15; 17; 26 (*3 Enoch*); and §§81; 180; 182; 189; 244 (*Hekhalot Rabbati*); see Schäfer (2004), 272; idem. (2009), 79 n.101. On *2 En.* [J] 21.6-22.1 as a later gloss, see Bietenhard (1951), 6; Rowland (1982), 82; Andersen in *OTP* 1:134 n.20a. However, *2 En.* [J] 21.6 calls the eighth and ninth heavens *Muzaloth* and *Kukhavim* respectively, whereas *bHag.* 12b calls the fifth and sixth heavens *Ma'on* and *Makon* respectively. Perhaps *Aravoth* could simply refer to the highest heaven, as opposed to the seventh specifically; see Rosenstiehl (2005), 38.

⁷¹ Kaler (2005), 275-277; Hermetic sources: *Asclepius* 19; *CH I*, 26; *CH XIII*, 10; Manichaean sources: *Bema-Psalm* 223; cf. Rosenstiehl (2005), 38-41; *Lives of Pachomius*; Eznik of Kolb, *On God* §377; Manichaean *Xuastvanift* IIIB.

Jerusalem temple itself, right up to the Holy of Holies.⁷² This no doubt reflects the seven-tiered temple cosmology of much Jewish apocalypticism and mysticism, but also may have made the notion of a ten-tiered cosmology intuitive to some.

However, in *Apoc. Paul* we find the traditional seven-heaven cosmology with YHWH enthroned in the seventh heaven, only with an entirely separate ontological region situated above it in three heavens. In other words, *Apoc. Paul* has not adopted a ten-heaven cosmology from Jewish thought, but rather has adopted a seven-heaven cosmology and polemically adapted it to a new gnostic setting. Nonetheless, this three-tiered spiritual realm beyond the demiurge still calls for some explanation.⁷³ Thomassen regarded *Apoc. Paul*'s cosmology as *the* reason why it ought not to be considered as Valentinian: "l'ascension de Paul aux neuvième et dixième ciels ne correspond pas à la terminologie eschatologique valentinienne, où c'est le Plérôme qui se trouve au-dessus de l'Ogdoade."⁷⁴ This is certainly true, but Kaler has argued that the upper three heavens may be explained in light of Valentinian ecclesiology, as opposed to cosmology or eschatology. He argues that the apostles in the Ogdoad represent the church authorities who provide access and legitimacy to those who enter, who are respectively the "ordinary Christians" in the ninth heaven, and "the elect" in the tenth heaven.⁷⁵ Kaler is quite right that this would correspond to the Valentinian bipartition of the church into "psychics" and "pneumatics".⁷⁶ However, the depiction of this ecclesiological bipartition via a cosmological tripartition would be rather inelegant, not to

⁷² See Morray-Jones (1998), 422-423; Barker (1991), 25; cf. Clement of Alexandria, *Strom.* V 6.33.3.

⁷³ In a non-gnostic context, see 3 *Bar.* 11. The text contains a seven-heaven cosmology, but the seer is unable to enter the fifth heaven because the gates are locked, thereby marking off the upper three heavens as a particularly special region.

⁷⁴ Thomassen (1995), 247.

⁷⁵ Kaler (2008a), 219-220. Cf. *idem.* (2005), 275, where Kaler makes the less impressive argument that the ninth heaven has merely been inserted to stress Paul's superiority over his fellow apostles; that is, he is not just one heaven above them, but two heavens.

⁷⁶ E.g. *Tri. Trac.* NHC I,5 121.29-38; 135.4-18; 135.26-28; *Gos. Phil.* NHC II,3 81.12-14; *Interp. Know.* NHC XI,1 15-21; *Exc.* 56.3-4; 63; Irenaeus, *Haer.* I 6.2; *Flor.* in Epiphanius, *Pan.* XXXIII 3.1-7.10. On Valentinian anthropology and its relation to ecclesiology, see especially Dunderberg (2013); but also, Thomassen (2013c); *idem.* (2013a), 187-188, 195-196; Dunderberg (2005b), 94-95; *idem.* (2008), 134-158; Strutwolf (1993), 104-154; Brakke (2010), 116-117; Twigg (2013), 69-70; Pagels (1974), 44-53.

mention the unusual positioning of the psychics above the demiurge already before the Eschaton. In place of Thomassen's eschatological interpretation, and Kaler's ecclesiological interpretation, I propose that *Apoc. Paul's* upper three heavens are best understood through the lens of Valentinian sacramentalism.

In the previous chapter, we observed that *Gos. Phil.* describes the Valentinian ritual construction of a threefold temple corresponding to their rites of initiation. This ritual temple was understood as a "type and image" of the temple of the Pleroma into which they would enter eschatologically along with the high-priestly Christ, having themselves become like him through such ritual performance. While *Gos. Phil.* does not state it outright, the implication is that the Pleroma *qua* pneumatic temple is also tripartite, and that it is this perfect heavenly archetype that the Valentinian initiate enters mystically during initiation. It seems highly plausible that *Apoc. Paul's* ten-heaven cosmology, divided between an inferior seven-tiered demiurgic temple (cf. *Exc.* 38) and a superior three-tiered spiritual realm, has been inspired by not only the cosmology and soteriology witnessed by *Exc.*, but also a sacramental theology akin to that of *Gos. Phil.* To this extent at least, *Apoc. Paul* may be regarded as deriving some of its core elements from Valentinian thought.

Substantiating this initial suggestion is the aim of the two following chapters which seek to analyse *Apoc. Paul* against such a Valentinian background. But first, we must briefly consider an objection frequently lodged against a Valentinian provenance, and in the process consider the evidence external to *Apoc. Paul* for the proposed provenance.

5.4. An Objection to Valentinian Provenance: Valentinians Did Not Write Apocalypses

Two main arguments have been adduced against a Valentinian provenance for *Apoc. Paul*. The first is a matter internal to the text – the number of heavens – and has been dealt with above. The second argument is that Valentinians "eschewed the literary trappings of Jewish

and early Christian apocalyptic literature”, and were even “allerg[ic] to apocalyptic forms and beliefs.”⁷⁷

5.4.1. Harold Attridge (2000)

Harold Attridge concedes that Valentinians may have incorporated certain “horizontal” elements – those concerned with cosmic eschatology – from Jewish apocalypticism into their sermons and doctrinal treatises,⁷⁸ but that these have been received indirectly, since they already belonged to “orthodox” Christian eschatology prior to these Valentinian works which also bear the marks of the Stoic notion of the world’s fiery conflagration.⁷⁹ However, Attridge finds the “vertical” dimension of Jewish apocalypticism to be absent from Valentinian literature: “Valentinian sources generally lack accounts of ascents to heaven to receive a vision. Both in literary form and in their concern with revelatory experience, the Valentinians stand at some distance from apocalyptic traditions.”⁸⁰

This notion of a Valentinian eschewal of heavenly ascents in the present, as opposed to the post-mortem ascent of the soul, ignores several important testimonies to Valentinian mystical ascent. We have already seen in *Gos. Truth* that the author claims to have experienced a contemplative ascent through “the heights” to the Father’s divine “rest” or “Paradise”, where he “kissed” the face of God. Also, the sacramental theology of *Gos. Phil.* depicts the rites of initiation as constituting a ritually-constructed temple which was a “type and image” of the Pleromatic temple, such that by participating in the former, one could mystically advance through the latter. *Tri. Trac.* describes a similar process: baptism is “the redemption into God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, when confession is made through faith in

⁷⁷ Attridge (2000), 178, 204.

⁷⁸ E.g. Irenaeus, *Haer.* I 7.1; *Gos. Truth* NHC I,3 24.9-25.19; *Gos. Phil.* NHC II,3 53.20-22; *Tri. Trac.* NHC I,5 137.9-13; 138.8-27.

⁷⁹ Attridge (2000), 184-189.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.* 184.

those names, which are a single name of the gospel” (127.30-36); it provides the initiate with a garment of light, and “those who have worn it are made into light” and “have received redemption” (128.19-129.4); and finally, it affects a mystical experience:

The redemption (ϸΩΤΕ) is also an ascent <to> the degrees which are in the Pleroma. And among all those who have received names and understand themselves in relation to the power of each of the Aeons, it is also an entrance to that which is silent – the place where there is no need of voice, nor understanding, nor cognition, nor illumination – but rather all things are light, having no need of illumination.⁸¹

We might also consider the liturgical fragments appended to *Val. Exp.*, particularly those concerning baptism, which cohere well with Valentinian thought even if their Valentinian origin is uncertain and their nature as “living literature” means that they have likely been redacted during transmission.⁸² The two fragments concerning baptism, known as *On Baptism A* and *B*, have been recently described as works of “mystagogical commentary”, that is, commentaries on “the mystery hidden in the Scriptures and celebrated in the liturgy.”⁸³ The fragments describe the transformative effects of “the first baptism” (ΠΩΛΑΡΠ̄ ΝΒΑΠΤΙΣΜΑ; 40.38; cf. 41.10-11; 41.21), that is, baptism in water following the example of Christ in the Jordan.⁸⁴ This baptism is for the forgiveness of sins, but it is also “the descent which is the [ascent] (ΤΚΑΤΑΒΑΣΙΣ ΕΤ[ΕΠΑΝΑΒΑΣ]ΜΟΣ ΠΕ), that is, the departure from the world [into] the Aeon” (41.35-38). *On Baptism B*, despite being badly damaged, clearly expands on the transformative nature of the baptism; it is a movement “from the [fleshly] into the spiritual (ΑΒΑΛ [ῶ̄ ΠΣΑΡΚΙΚΟΝ] ΑΖΟΥΝ ΑΠΠΝΕΥ[ΜΑΤΙΚΟΝ]); from the physical [to the] angelic ([ΑΒΑ]Λ ῶ̄Ν ΦΥ[ΣΙ]ΚΟΝ [ΑΖΟΥΝ ΑΤ]ΗΝΤΑΓΓΕΛΟ[Σ]); from the [creation] to the Pleroma (ΑΒΑΛ [ῶ̄ ΠΙΣΩΩ]ΝΤ ΑΖΟΥΝ Α[ΠΙ]ΠΛΗ[ΡΩΜΑ]); from the world [to the] Aeon ([ΑΒΑ]Λ ῶ̄Ν ΠΚΟΣΜ[ΟΣ] Α[ΖΟΥΝ ΑΠΑΙ]ΩΝ)” (42.13-19). Irrespective of the highly poetic

⁸¹ *Tri. Trac.* NHC I,5 124.12-25.

⁸² Lundhaug (2013b).

⁸³ *Ibid.* 229 n.23, quoting Mazza (1989), 2.

⁸⁴ Regarding how these two fragments both concern the same baptism, see Desjardins (1990), 107; Lundhaug (2013b), 234. On the notion of “first baptism” and the implied “second baptism”, see Lundhaug (2013b), 232-234.

nature of these reflections, they clearly speak to the quite real mystical ambitions of Christians such as those behind *Gos. Truth*, *Gos. Phil.*, and *Tri. Trac.*, and therefore cast significant doubt on Attridge's assertion that Valentinian texts are largely unconcerned with the attainment of mystical experiences of ascent and vision.

Furthermore, regarding the "vertical dimension" of apocalypticism, it is noteworthy that *Apoc. Paul* does not describe any heavenly knowledge being revealed to Paul in the course of his ascent. In this sense, "the Apocalypse of Paul" is something of a misnomer in terms of the text's content, albeit not with regard to its literary form. As will be discussed in Chapter 7, this coheres well with Valentinian approaches to $\gamma\upsilon\omega\sigma\iota\varsigma$ as something received from earthly teachers during catechetical instruction, as opposed to something which is attained experientially. Rather, heavenly ascent appears to have been pursued among Valentinians with a view to gaining ontological proximity to God for its own sake and that of the community, as opposed to the acquisition of revealed knowledge. *Apoc. Paul* therefore demonstrates that the "vertical dimension" of apocalypticism need not be limited to concerns of epistemology and personal enlightenment.

We may conclude, against Attridge, that Valentinians were deeply concerned with experiences of ascent, vision, and transformation, even if they do not appear to have made great use of the literary form reflected in many apocalypses. However, *1 Apoc. Jas.* may represent an exception.

5.4.2. Einar Thomassen (2013b)

The *First Apocalypse of James* (NHC V,3; TC,2) is a "revelation dialogue" concerned with the post-mortem ascent of the soul in which Jesus speaks both before and after his crucifixion with the apostle James. As Burns notes, "revelation dialogues are essentially apocalypses without an otherworldly journey, not dissimilar in genre to Dan. 11-12, and thus 'type I'

apocalypses (in the parlance of Collins 1979).”⁸⁵ *I Apoc. Jas.* was once labelled by Thomassen as “certainly or very probably” a Valentinian text on the grounds that it incorporates, almost word for word, a series of liturgical formulae ascribed to a group of Valentinians by Irenaeus.⁸⁶ He also noted the concern for “redemption” (σωτη; ἀπολύτρωσις; 24.12; 25.9, 20; 29.8, 13; 33.1; 36.9), the Divine Name (27.8-12), and the ignorant – but not malevolent – archon (39.10-23), as all being consonant with Valentinian thought.⁸⁷ Thomassen concluded that, “*I Apoc. Jas.* est donc le seul témoin des dialogues du Sauveur pseudépigraphes produits par les valentiniens (dont Irénée, *Adv. Haer.* I, 20, 1 affirme d’ailleurs l’existence).”⁸⁸ In his seminal 2006 study, *The Spiritual Seed*, Thomassen only discussed *I Apoc. Jas.* 33.11-35.25 (the passages paralleling Irenaeus, *Haer.* I 21.5) and refused to speculate on the Valentinianism of the document as a whole. By 2013, Thomassen had come to reject his former characterization of *I Apoc. Jas.* as Valentinian, arguing instead that Valentinian materials had found their way into the text via itinerant ritual specialists like Marcus Magus,⁸⁹ “who peddled initiation ceremonies based on Valentinian doctrine ... [and were] religious entrepreneurs offering secret knowledge, ritual experiences and redemption in the afterlife to a more ephemeral type of clientele.”⁹⁰ For Thomassen, the incorporation of Valentinian materials into *I Apoc. Jas.* via this sort of religious advertising and trading is insufficient grounds for labelling the entire apocalypse as Valentinian.

According to Thomassen, with *I Apoc. Jas.* off the table, no Valentinian apocalypses are extant, and Kaler reports that it is indeed Thomassen’s position that Valentinians

⁸⁵ Burns (2014b), 361.

⁸⁶ Thomassen (1995), 248, 258; cf. Irenaeus, *Haer.* I 21.5; *I Apoc. Jas.* NHC V,3 33.11-35.25; *James* TC,2 19.21-22.23. For the idea that Irenaeus’s version is earlier than the dialogue form found in *I Apoc. Jas.* and *James*, see Thomassen (2006a), 408; idem. (2013b), 82-84; *contra* Tardieu (1980), 221; Veilleux (1986), 88.

⁸⁷ Thomassen (1995), 248; cf. idem. (2013b), 89, where Thomassen notes that *I Apoc. Jas.* NHC V,3 24.12 (= *James* TC,2 10.1) and 25.8’s (= *James* TC,2 11.14-15) depiction of Jesus as requiring redemption is a uniquely Valentinian idea; see *Tri. Trac.* NHC I,5 124.32-125.9; *Exc.* 22.7; *Interp. Know.* NHC XI,1 12.22-31; *Gos. Phil.* NHC II,3 71.2-3.

⁸⁸ Thomassen (1995), 248.

⁸⁹ Irenaeus, *Haer.* I 13-16.

⁹⁰ Thomassen (2013b), 88-90.

eschewed the composition of such literature in general.⁹¹ Nonetheless, whether we agree with Thomassen's 1995 position that *I Apoc. Jas.* is most likely a Valentinian work, or whether we accept his 2013 notion of Valentinian ritual entrepreneurs as the explanation for the presence of Valentinian ideas in an otherwise non-Valentinian text, it is clear that Valentinian ideas on matters of personal eschatology, soteriology, and heavenly ascent were amenable to being used in literary apocalypses.⁹² Additionally, with the numerous Valentinian elements that Thomassen observed throughout *I Apoc. Jas.* in his 1995 study, one wonders whether the text's Valentinianism runs deeper than Thomassen would presently admit.

5.4.3. Dylan Burns (2014b)

Most recently, Dylan Burns has argued that Valentinians did not write apocalypses on the grounds that “the sect's exegetes preferred to see the primeval biblical figures of hoary antiquity not as raw materials for pseudepigraphical industry – as did the Sethian writers, attributing their apocalypses to figures like Adam, Seth, and ‘Allogenes’ – but, like Philo, for anthropological and moral allegories.”⁹³ While Sethians appealed to the pseudepigraphical authority of antediluvian seers, Burns suggests that Valentinians were not interested in pseudepigraphy, preferring to compose anonymous texts (e.g. *Tri. Trac.*) or “assert their authority as living teachers” (e.g. Ptolemy's *Letter to Flora*).⁹⁴ As Burns puts it, “Sethian and Valentinian authors esteemed different authorities”, and the Valentinian notion of religious authority was not conducive to the production of pseudepigraphical apocalypses.⁹⁵

⁹¹ Kaler (2008a), 66-67, cites a “personal communication” with Thomassen from 2003.

⁹² Burns (2014b), 364-365 argues that in addition to *I Apoc. Jas.* NHC V,3, the personal eschatology described in *Paraph. Shem* NHC VII,1 35.17-36.1 has been influenced by the tripartite anthropology of Valentinianism.

⁹³ Burns (2014b), 365.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

In response, we must note that not all apocalypses are pseudepigraphical,⁹⁶ and therefore any apparent lack of esteem for the latter does not preclude the composition of the former. Also, although Burns notes that we do not find literary apocalypses attributed to Valentinian teachers like Valentinus, Ptolemy, or Theodotus, he overlooks the fact that both Valentinus and Marcus Magus are said to have derived their respective teachings through revelatory visions. In Valentinus's case, Hippolytus reports that Valentinus founded his "sect" (αἵρεσις) on the basis of a vision of the Word (λόγος), which appeared to Valentinus in the form of "a young newborn child" (παῖδα νήπιον ἀρτιγέννητον). On the basis of this visionary experience, Valentinus is said to have developed "a certain pompous fiction" (τραγικόν τινα μῦθον), which we are no doubt supposed to identify with the Valentinian myth.⁹⁷ In Marcus's case, Irenaeus states that he claimed to have surpassed even Valentinus in his mystical prowess.⁹⁸ Marcus is said to have claimed that the primary Tetrad descended upon him in the form of a woman and revealed the Marcosian protological myth of the thirty-Aeon Pleroma, where each Aeon corresponds to one letter of the thirty-lettered Divine Name. The Tetrad reveals this protology via "Truth", whose body is made up of the twenty-four letters of the Greek alphabet, and who then utters a "word" (λόγος), the name "Jesus" (Ἰησοῦς), consisting of the six further letters.⁹⁹ In manifesting the entire Divine Name on earth, Jesus provided the means of return to the Father.¹⁰⁰ Therefore, Valentinus and Marcus are striking examples of Valentinian leaders who are reported to have asserted their religious authority on revelatory grounds. The fact that these authoritative claims were not articulated pseudepigraphically via literary apocalypses does not detract from their apocalyptic nature.

⁹⁶ As Burns himself recognizes in *idem.* (2014a), 197 n.27.

⁹⁷ Hippolytus, *Haer.* VI 42.2; see Kaler (2005), 177-181. Hippolytus's claim that Valentinus derived a mere μῦθος from his encounter with the λόγος relies on the relatively low estimation of the former compared to the latter familiar from Platonic philosophy; e.g. *Resp.* II 376c-377c; *Phaed.* 61b; *Prot.* 320c; 324d; see Lincoln (1999), 19-43; Burns (2014a), 61-64.

⁹⁸ Irenaeus, *Haer.* I 13.1.

⁹⁹ Irenaeus, *Haer.* I 14.1-4.

¹⁰⁰ Irenaeus, *Haer.* I 15.1-2.

Secondly, Burns's claim that Valentinians and Sethians "esteemed different authorities" is somewhat misleading. The notion that Sethians regularly appealed to the religious and philosophical authority of ancient heroes is not in question, but nor did Valentinians lack figures from the past to whose authority they could appeal to substantiate their own claims, even if these appeals did not normally take the form of pseudepigraphical apocalypses, as was the case for the Sethians. First and foremost is Jesus, who was of course the archetypal saviour-figure in Valentinian doctrine. But secondly there is Paul, who according to *Exc.* 23.2 was both "the apostle of the resurrection" and "the type of the Paraclete", that is, Jesus. Irenaeus similarly attests to the peculiar reverence for Paul among Valentinians when he laments how they champion Paul's visionary prowess in order to depict him as superior to the other apostles.¹⁰¹ He counts the Valentinians among those who "allege that Paul alone knew the truth" on the grounds that "to him the mystery was manifested by revelation".¹⁰² Clement of Alexandria even goes so far as to assert that Valentinians claim an apostolic lineage from Paul: "They allege that Valentinus was a hearer of Theudas (Θεοδῶ διακηκοέναι), and he was the pupil of Paul."¹⁰³ As Pagels rightly notes, "[i]n this way the Valentinians identify Paul himself as the source of their own esoteric tradition."¹⁰⁴ Moreover, *Apoc. Paul's* depiction of the apostle's guiding Spirit as appearing on earth in the form of a "little child" (ΚΟΥΕΙ ΨΗΜ) begins to look suspiciously like a Valentinian attempt to connect Paul's and Valentinus's visionary experiences and thereby substantiate the succession alluded to by Clement. In sum, it is clear that Valentinians did esteem religious authorities of the past

¹⁰¹ See Pagels (1978), 422-423.

¹⁰² Irenaeus, *Haer.* III 13.1; cf. Tertullian, *Praescr.* 24.

¹⁰³ Clement of Alexandria, *Strom.* VII 17.106.4; see Marksches (1992), 298-302; Löhr (1996), 19-23; Brakke (2010), 103-104, 118. On Valentinian claims to apostolic succession, see also *Gos. Phil.* NHC II,3 74.16-18; Ptolemy, *Flor.* in Epiphanius, *Pan.* XXXIII 7.9. Acts 5:36 alludes to a false prophet named "Theudas" also mentioned in Josephus, *Ant.* 20.97-98, where he is a "sorcerer" who convinced many that he was able to part the waters of the Jordan. He is said to have deceived many before being decapitated by the forces of Fadus, the governor of Judea. *Acts Paul* 6.6 also describes a "Theudes" who begs Paul for the seal of baptism, only to be refused. Clement appears to be alluding to this figure, thereby mocking the Valentinian claim to Pauline succession.

¹⁰⁴ Pagels (1975), 5-6.

– even if not the antediluvian past – and that they did appeal to their authoritative status to bolster their own truth claims, even if the tendency to express these appeals via pseudepigraphy was not common.

However, the plausibility of Valentinian pseudepigrapha composed under the aegis of the apostle Paul is strengthened further by the presence of the *Prayer of the Apostle Paul* in the flyleaf of NHC I, a codex containing mostly Valentinian material (*Gos. Truth; Treat. Res.; Tri. Trac.*). The short prayer has Paul praying to his “Redeemer” ([**ΡΕΥΣ**]ΩΤΕ) for “redemption” (CΩΤ[Ε]), “rest” (ΑΝΑΠΑΥΣΙΣ), spiritual “gifts” (†), “authority” (ΕΚΖΟΥΣΙΑ), health (ΤΑΛΘΟ), and the revelation ([**ΘΑΛ**]Π) of “the First-born of the Pleroma of grace” (ΠΩ[ΡΠ ΜΜ]ΙΣΕ ΜΠΠΛΗΡΩΜΑ ΝΤΧΑΡΙ[Σ]) and “that which the eyes of angels have not [seen] and the ears of archons have not heard and that which has not entered into the human heart” (A.26-29; cf. 1 Cor 2:9). He does so by invoking “the one who is and who pre-existed in the Name [which is] exalted above every name, through Jesus Christ, [the Lord] of Lords, and the King of the ages (ΝΑΙΩΝ)” (A.11-14; cf. Phil 2:9). In doing so, Paul’s prayer introduces many of the key themes and technical terms which are encountered in the subsequent treatises of NHC I.¹⁰⁵ The general affinity of *Pr. Paul* to Valentinian thought has long been recognised,¹⁰⁶ although its introductory role in NHC I suggests that it may have been composed, or at least adapted, for that purpose.¹⁰⁷ If that is the case, *Pr. Paul*’s Valentinianism may merely be functional, or cosmetic, as opposed to genetic. As Painchaud and Kaler suggest, the insertion of this pseudepigraphical prayer was “a gesture intended to recommend the contents of the codex to the uninitiated readers by putting it under the patronage of the great apostle.”¹⁰⁸ To put things another way, the figure of Paul has been

¹⁰⁵ Kaler (2008b); Perrin (2011), 135-136.

¹⁰⁶ Mueller (1985), 6-7; Attridge (1995); Good (1997), 292-294; Scopello and Meyer (2007b), 15-16; Painchaud and Kaler (2007), 456-457; Kaler (2008b), 323-324; Perrin (2011), 135-136.

¹⁰⁷ Kaler (2008b), 335-336; idem. (2013), 345.

¹⁰⁸ Painchaud and Kaler (2007), 456; also Kaler (2008b).

invoked through pseudepigraphy in order to bolster the claims of (mostly) Valentinian texts. Perrin goes even further, suggesting that by placing the entire codex under Paul's authority, readers of NHC I come to see Paul as "the porter to the door of true knowledge, the mystagogue, the ideal mystic, and the source of the most fundamental terms of Valentinian discourse and thought."¹⁰⁹ Whether we see *Pr. Paul* as a Valentinian pseudepigraph or as an occasional composition designed to introduce and legitimate much of the Valentinian material in the remainder of the codex, it is clear that the invocation of Paul's reputation was an intuitive and effective means of imbuing Valentinian ideas with religious authority.

Finally, before turning to *Apoc. Paul* itself, we must note the report of Irenaeus in *Haer.* II 30.7, since this may indicate that as well as producing Pauline pseudepigrapha generally, Valentinians were specifically engaged in exegetical speculations on 2 Corinthians 12:2-4 of the variety we find in *Apoc. Paul*. In *Haer.* II 30.7, Irenaeus presents an interpretation of 2 Corinthians 12:2-4 using the hermeneutical lens of Valentinian theology as he knew it. In doing so, Irenaeus's rhetorical goal is to show the incongruity of the historical Paul with Valentinian understandings of him.¹¹⁰ The crux of Irenaeus's *reductio ad absurdum* is cosmological; Paul states he ascended to the third heaven and Paradise, but according to Valentinian cosmology, this wouldn't even get him as far as the demiurge in the seventh heaven, let alone the Mother who dwells in the Ogdoad.¹¹¹ Yet these Valentinians claim that Paul had become "acquainted with that order of things which is above the Demiurge", meaning that he must have ascended beyond the seventh heaven, where he could have received instruction about the Pleroma. For Irenaeus, such a notion flatly contradicts Paul's

¹⁰⁹ Perrin (2011), 136; also Kaler (2008b), 329-334.

¹¹⁰ For full discussions of the relationship between *Haer.* II 30.7 and *Apoc. Paul* NHC V,2, see Kaler, Painchaud, and Bussièrès (2004); Kaler (2005), 128-143; idem. (2008a), 49-59. On Irenaeus's use of Paul in his anti-Valentinian polemic, see Norris, Jr (1990).

¹¹¹ Irenaeus does not expound on the precise location of Paradise, but given his comments on the contrasting cosmologies of Paul and the Valentinians, it is unlikely to lie beyond the third heaven. See Kaler (2005), 129-130 n.55.

own words in 2 Corinthians 12:2-4. Hence the Valentinians' own claims to have ascended past the demiurge in the seventh heaven must also be false, since they can hardly be superior to the apostle Paul!

Irenaeus's parody of a Valentinian interpretation of 2 Corinthians 12:2-4 bears a striking resemblance to *Apoc. Paul*. The demiurge is indeed located in the seventh heaven, and Paul does in fact ascend beyond him, even progressing past the Ogdoad into the tenth heaven. Irenaeus also suggests that Paul's ambivalence regarding his bodily status during his heavenly journey means that his experience is not amenable to Valentinian interpretation, since the latter would find the notion of a bodily ascent into heaven unpalatable. But as we have seen, *Apoc. Paul* amends precisely this detail by explicitly depicting an out-of-body experience, thereby correlating well with Irenaeus's expectations of a Valentinian interpretation of 2 Corinthians 12:2-4. Concerning the relationship of *Apoc. Paul* and Irenaeus's parody, Kaler has convincingly demonstrated that they are not related to the extent that one is directly dependent upon the other, but rather both seek to give a Valentinian interpretation of Paul's own account; the former does so in order to demonstrate that Paul's ascension complements Valentinian beliefs, while the latter does so to show that it contradicts them.¹¹² However, Kaler goes further, arguing that Irenaeus's parody is an entirely independent extrapolation of Valentinian thought; Irenaeus's account "revolves around a hypothetical situation which he has created based on his own knowledge of Valentinian beliefs."¹¹³ According to Kaler, Irenaeus knew of no Valentinian tradition of interpreting Paul's ascent in 2 Corinthians 12:2-4. Such a view requires us to understand Irenaeus's rebuttal of Valentinian interpretation as a straw-man argument. Yet Kaler himself states that the broad similarity between *Apoc. Paul* and *Haer. II 30.7* "suggests that at the time these texts were written there was still interaction between [both sides] – that is, they were on civil

¹¹² Kaler, Painchaud, Bussi eres (2004), 189-190; Kaler (2005), 140; idem. (2008a), 58-59.

¹¹³ Kaler (2005), 138-139.

enough terms to have the sort of nuanced interchanges that would allow each to know the other's point of view down to the specifics."¹¹⁴ Granting this as the case, the general similarities are better explained by the notion that Irenaeus was aware of, and loosely familiar with, Valentinian exegetical and visionary traditions based on 2 Corinthians 12:2-4 of the sort we find in *Apoc. Paul*.

We may therefore conclude that Burns's claim that Valentinians did not esteem religious authorities of the past, at least not to the extent that they invoked their character via pseudepigraphy as a means of imbuing their writings with authority, overstates the case considerably. It can hardly be doubted that Valentinians revered different, and more recent, religious authorities than the Sethians, nor that the Sethian proclivity for composing literary apocalypses far outstripped that of the Valentinians. But it would be misguided to declare that the latter were unable to produce such literature as a matter of principle since this could lead to *a priori* judgements being imposed upon texts which are still not fully understood. Hence, while Burns is correct when he says, "Valentinian authors appear to have been less interested [than Sethian authors] in the apocalyptic genre and its literary trappings",¹¹⁵ it would be a mistake to state outright that Valentinians did not write apocalypses.

5.5. Conclusion

In *Haer.* II 30.7, Irenaeus reports that Valentinians believed that Paul had ascended above the demiurge in the seventh heaven, and he implies that Valentinians used Paul as a model for their own ecstatic ambitions. In light of the above rebuttals of the notion that Valentinians did not write apocalypses, it seems a distinct possibility on external grounds alone that the Valentinian understanding of Paul as a model-mystic may have manifested itself in the form of a literary apocalypse like *Apoc. Paul* in which 2 Corinthians 12:2-4 is expanded and

¹¹⁴ Ibid. 141.

¹¹⁵ Burns (2014b), 365.

developed in a manner already familiar to Irenaeus. The external evidence which collectively supports the notion of a Valentinian provenance for *Apoc. Paul* may therefore be summarized as follows: 1) Valentinians were deeply engaged in the pursuit of divinely revealed knowledge and visionary ascents to heaven; 2) some of the most famous Valentinian thinkers are reported to have derived their teachings from such revelations; 3) they especially revered the figure of Paul, regarding him as a “type” of Christ and first among the apostles by virtue of his apocalyptic experiences,¹¹⁶ and may even have claimed apostolic succession from him; 4) possible Valentinian apocalypses (*I Apoc. Jas.*) and other pseudepigrapha (*Pr. Paul*) are found among the Nag Hammadi codices; and 5) Irenaeus knew of a Valentinian exegetical tradition which interpreted 2 Corinthians 12:2-4 in light of Valentinian doctrine.

Having overviewed various introductory issues regarding *Apoc. Paul*, discussed the main objections to Valentinian provenance, and presented the external evidence for such a provenance, I now turn to an analysis of the text itself. I hope to demonstrate that *Apoc. Paul* is best understood against the development of Valentinian thought outlined in Part One of this thesis.

¹¹⁶ See Klauck (1985), 188-189; Young (1988), 95, 98; Kaler (2005), 273; idem. (2008a), 217-220.

6. The Divine Name in the *Apocalypse of Paul*

In the previous chapter, the key arguments against *Apoc. Paul's* Valentinian provenance were critiqued and ultimately rejected. In this chapter, I will adduce the positive evidence from the text itself in favour of such a provenance. In a nutshell, I will show that a) the concept of the Divine Name is the key to understanding much of the imagery in *Apoc. Paul*, and b) this particular understanding of the Divine Name is that of Valentinianism. Central to both of these goals will be a demonstration of the ritual-initiatory framework of the text as a whole. In demonstrating this, I will be building on Kaler's arguments in favour of a baptismal framework for *Apoc. Paul*. However, I will develop his arguments in order to elucidate several other somewhat inscrutable elements of the text's narrative, and thereby strengthen Kaler's hypothesis that *Apoc. Paul* is a Valentinian work with ritual underpinnings in baptismal initiation.

6.1. Baptism-Anointment in the *Apocalypse of Paul*

6.1.1. Michael Kaler on Paul's "Sign"

As we have seen in the preceding chapters, the Valentinian soteriology of the Divine Name centres around ritual initiation, specifically baptism-anointment, when the Name is conveyed to the initiate as a spiritual gift resulting in an ontological transformation which facilitates a visionary experience of Christ and/or the Father. No rituals are explicitly described in the extant lines of *Apoc. Paul*, although previous scholars have suggested that the "sign" that Paul shows to the demiurge in the seventh heaven as a means of gaining access to the Ogdoad ought to be understood as a ritual motif. For example, Morard argued that the "sign" symbolises "le baptême de la connaissance qui donne accès à la plénitude de l'Ogdoade."¹

¹ Morard (1995), 347 n.7.

She substantiated her characterisation of *Apoc. Paul's* “sign” on the basis of similar signs and passwords appearing in narratives of the ascent of the soul in the Mandaean *Left Ginza* I,4 and Origen’s account of the Ophites in *Cels.* VI 31, as well as the Nag Hammadi treatises *Apoc. Adam* and *Zost.* which replace these “signs” with some kind of spiritual baptism(s).² Further, Morard noted that the Syriac *Acts Thom.* 26.2 and 49.1 use the term “sign” (*rūsmā*) as a designation for water baptism.³ Kaler adduced multiple other sources attesting to the same concept of signs, seals, and passwords which provide the soul with access beyond celestial guardians.⁴ But more importantly, Kaler developed Morard’s suggestion of a baptismal background for Paul’s “sign”, basing his interpretation on the broader context of the scene in the seventh heaven.

Kaler observed that when Paul shows the demiurge the “sign”, the demiurge “turned his face downwards to his creation ($\pi\epsilon\upsilon\sigma\omega\bar{\nu}\bar{\nu}[\bar{\tau}]$) and those who are his authorities ($\mathbf{N\epsilon\tau\epsilon\ n\omega\sigma\ \bar{n}\bar{n}\epsilon\zeta\omicron\upsilon\sigma\epsilon[\iota\alpha]}$)”, indicating that the sign functioned to inform the demiurge that Paul did not belong to him. This corresponds rather well with some early Christians’ understandings of the soteriological dynamics of baptism, where the baptismal sign/seal was thought to mark the initiate as God’s property.⁵ Kaler rightly observes that the notion of the elect being given a sign by God to identify them as his property has its roots in Ezekiel 9:4-6, where it is those

² *Apoc. Adam* NHC V,5 85.22-25; *Zost.* NHC VIII,1 5.14-24.

³ It is unclear whether these passages in *Acts Thom.* refer to baptism, or to some kind of anointment. On “sign” (*rūsmā*), as opposed to “seal” (*hatmā*), as the designation for pre-baptismal anointment in *Acts Thom.* and the early Syriac liturgy, see Winkler (1995), 61-62. However, in the Greek *Acts Thom.*, *rūsmā* becomes σφραγίς. The Greek *Acts Thom.* 28 reads, “Come to him who is truly good so that you may receive grace from him and place his sign (σημεῖον) in your soul.” My trans. cf. Klijn (2003), 85, 87 translates σημεῖον simply as “cross”, commenting, “the sign of the cross is probably meant.” However, the setting is not obviously baptismal.

⁴ Kaler (2005), 266-267 cites the Naassene psalm in Hippolytus, *Haer.* V 10.2; *Acts Andr.* 11; Clement of Alexandria, *Strom.* IV 2; the Mithras Liturgy (PGM IV); Plotinus, *Enn.* 2.9.14; *Hekh. Rab.* §§204-251; *Hekh. Zut.* §§413-416.

⁵ E.g. *Acts Thom.* 26.2; *Exc.* 86.2; Theodore of Mopsuestia, *Bapt. Hom.* 2.17-19. Kaler (2008a), 205 also cites 2 *Clem.* 6.9, 7.6, 8.6, and Tertullian, *Marc.* 1.28, but these hardly express such an understanding of baptism. On this view of baptism, see Benoît (1953), 97ff; Kretschmar (1964), 36-42; Johnson, (2007), 38; Ferguson (2009), *passim*. On the *rūsmā* of the Syrian liturgy as “the mark of ownership”, see Brock (1979), 99. On the phrase “into the Name” (εἰς τὸ ὄνομα) in baptismal formulae as implying “into the ownership of”, see Ferguson (2009), 135-136, who notes that the phrase occurs mainly in commercial and legal documents; also, Hartman (1997), 37-50.

who are given a σημεῖον upon their foreheads that are saved.⁶ This σημεῖον became the Divine Name itself in the Book of Revelation (e.g. 14:1) and, as we saw in Chapter 3, it exerted significant influence on Valentinian ritual and soteriology. It should also be noted that Paul introduces explicitly fiscal language into the equation when he states that the “seal” (σφραγίς) of the Holy Spirit functions as a “deposit” (ἀρραβών) placed upon the individual by God “for the redemption of the acquisition” (εἰς ἀπολύτρωσιν τῆς περιποιήσεως) – the “acquisition” being the individual themselves.⁷ Therefore, the baptismal seal functions like a down-payment on a piece of God’s property, namely, the human soul. Such an understanding tallies extremely well with Paul’s “sign” in *Apoc. Paul*, since it apparently marks him off as belonging to a figure or community above the demiurge, that is, God and the Pleroma.

Kaler notes a particularly strong connection with *Exc.*, where the cross is the σημεῖον borne by Jesus to divide the faithful from the unfaithful as a symbol of the Pleromatic Ὅρος. Indeed, it is “by the sign” (διὰ τοῦ σημείου) that Jesus conveys the elect into the Pleroma, while the hostile heavenly authorities are said to be ignorant of “the power of the sign” (τοῦ σημείου ... τὴν δύναμιν).⁸ This sign (of the cross) is received through baptism, which, following Matthew 28:19, involves being “sealed” in the “three Names” of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and liberates the initiate from demonic threat.⁹ In addition to the liberating effects of the baptismal sign/seal/cross, of which the hostile powers are apparently ignorant, *Exc.* shares with *Apoc. Paul* the notion of divine ownership being established through baptism. In *Exc.*, this baptismal logic is epitomised by 86.1-2’s exegesis of Matthew 22:20, to be discussed in detail below.¹⁰

⁶ Kaler (2008), 205; also, Ferguson (2009), 196; Gieschen (2003), 132-134.

⁷ 2 Cor 1:21-22; Eph 1:13-14; 4:30.

⁸ *Exc.* 42-43.

⁹ *Exc.* 80.3; see Thomassen (2006a), 333-335.

¹⁰ Kaler (2008a), 206-207.

The ostensibly similar concept of the “sign” in *Exc.* and *Apoc. Paul* leads Kaler to suspect a shared background in Valentinian baptismal theology. Moreover, Kaler argues that the presence of the baptismal sign in *Apoc. Paul*, standing alongside the demiurge’s interrogation of Paul in 23.1-22, is best explained against the background of contemporary Valentinian debates regarding the necessity of ritual performance in addition to “gnosis” for salvation. This debate is best witnessed in Irenaeus’s description of various Valentinian ἀπολύτρωσις rituals, in which he attests that some Valentinians believe that “the very knowledge of the unspeakable Greatness is perfect redemption”, such that physical rituals are deemed inadequate for spiritual mysteries, and that therefore, “knowledge (alone) is the redemption of the inner man.”¹¹ According to Kaler, since Paul’s answers to the demiurge’s questions demonstrate his possession of γνῶσις but are insufficient to grant him access to the Ogdoad – which is only accomplished via the baptismal sign – *Apoc. Paul* is here stressing the necessity of both γνῶσις and ritual for salvation, much like *Exc.* 78.2.¹²

An alternative interpretation of Paul’s sign may be proffered in light of the biblical use of σημεῖα as a technical term for the miraculous deeds performed by God, Jesus, and even false prophets as demonstrations of their power. As a general rule, such miraculous σημεῖα are depicted positively, as legitimate shows of divine power. However, in John 4:48 (“Unless you (pl.) see signs and wonders (σημεῖα καὶ τέρατα) you (pl.) will not believe”), Jesus seems somewhat critical of those like the royal official who refuse to believe in him without witnessing such acts of power. Similarly, 1 Corinthians 1:22-23 states that “Jews demand signs” (Ἰουδαῖοι σημεῖα αἰτοῦσιν) before they will believe, whereas the true believers “proclaim Christ crucified” on the basis of faith alone. It is possible that *Apoc. Paul*’s depiction of the demiurge being convinced by a σημεῖον is a consequence of his status

¹¹ Irenaeus, *Haer.* I 21.4.

¹² Kaler (2008a), 208-214. Thomassen (2006a), 142 n.9 suggests that this emphasis on both γνῶσις and ritual for salvation may even have come from Valentinus himself. See also, Dunderberg (2008), 29-30.

as the Jewish creator-god, who therefore requires such demonstrations in order to believe. Heracleon, the Valentinian commentator on the Gospel of John,¹³ actually interprets the royal official in John 4:46-54 as a symbol of the demiurge, arguing that his demand for signs and wonders reflects his psychic nature, since such people are “persuaded by sense-perception”, as opposed to “the word”.¹⁴ In a Valentinian context therefore, *Apoc. Paul’s* “sign” may function as an allusion to the demiurge’s psychic status by intimating that he requires visible shows of power in order to believe that Paul belongs in the truly divine realm.

Nonetheless, the fact remains that Kaler makes an extremely strong case for the “sign” as a baptismal motif. It may be noted however, that Origen interprets the descent of the Spirit upon Jesus in the Jordan as the σημεῖον which proves that he is the Son of God.¹⁵ Hence, these two interpretations of Paul’s σημεῖον are not mutually exclusive; *Apoc. Paul’s* “sign” is most likely a reference to the seal received through baptism, but may also refer to the means by which psychics come to believe in Jesus.

6.1.2. The Name and the Sign

Kaler grounds his conviction that *Apoc. Paul* has a catechetical and ritual framework on his interpretation of Paul’s “sign” and its accompanying baptismal logic of divine ownership of the human soul. He also notes the general move from death to life in the course of the narrative, symbolised by the cosmos as “the land of the dead” and the use of the verb **ΤΟΥΝΟC** (“to awaken, raise”) to describe Paul’s enlightenment, which suggests a baptismal

¹³ Beatrice (2012), 191-197 has recently cast doubt on the notion of Heracleon as a “commentator” largely on the basis of Origen’s use of the polyvalent term ὑπομνήματα to characterise Heracleon’s musings on the Gospel. However, see the remarks in Marksches (1997a), 431; Smith (2015), 135 n.10.

¹⁴ Heracleon Fr. 40 in Origen, *Comm. Jo.* XIII 416-419; see Pagels (1973), 83-85; Thomassen (2010), 189-190; cf. Dunderberg (2008), 141-144. Wucherpfennig (2002), 252-256, 350-353 thinks that this depiction of the royal official is not original to Heracleon’s commentary, but has been designed by Origen to project the supposedly deterministic tripartite anthropology of Valentinianism onto his opponent.

¹⁵ Origen, *Comm. Jo.* XIII 405.

framework informed by Romans 6.¹⁶ However, Kaler does not make any connection between this baptismal logic and the opening extant scene of *Apoc. Paul*, which contains a rather oblique reference to a “name” which is never actually disclosed to the reader. Given the central place of the Divine Name – whether of “Jesus”, “Lord”, or the triune Name of “Father, Son, and Holy Spirit” – in early Christian baptism, one might ask whether *Apoc. Paul*’s reference to an unspoken “name” is an additional baptismal element in the text.

The relevant scene runs as follows:

And he (Paul) [replied to him] (the child-Spirit), saying, “[By which] road [shall I go] up to Je[rusalem]?” The little child [replied, saying], “Speak your name so that [I might show] you the road.” [The little child] knew [who] Pa[ul] was]. He wanted to [converse] with him through his words [so that] he might find an excuse to speak with him.¹⁷

We first meet Paul apparently searching for a route up to “Jerusalem” when he meets the child-Spirit. Paul’s request for directions is eventually met when he is raptured into the third heaven. However, the Spirit’s initial response to Paul’s request is to ask for his name, despite the fact that he apparently knows Paul’s identity perfectly well. So why ask for Paul’s name? The text states that it was the Spirit’s attempt to speak with Paul “through his words” (ἐν τῶν ἑαυτοῦ λόγων). At first glance, the phrase is enigmatic, since the possessive pronoun could refer either to Paul or the Spirit. However, there are two reasons to think that they are the Spirit’s words: 1) it is unclear what “Paul’s words” would mean, whereas the notion of spiritual or angelic languages is familiar from a range of early Christian literature,¹⁸ not least 1 Corinthians 2:6-16 which informs the scene as a whole (see Chapter 5); and 2) Paul’s presumed response (i.e. “(my name is) Paul”) does not appear in the text, which would be odd under normal circumstances, but would be appropriate for something spoken in an ineffable spiritual language. The notion of a name which cannot be uttered in rational

¹⁶ Kaler (2008a), 217.

¹⁷ *Apoc. Paul* NHC V,2 18.3-13.

¹⁸ See Poirier (2010); Martin (1991).

discourse points in the direction of the ineffable Divine Name, which as *Gos. Truth* 23.3-10 states, is made up of letters which “are not vowels, nor are they consonants, so that one might read them and think of something empty; but rather they are letters of the truth; they speak and know themselves.” But on the other hand, despite *Gos. Truth* 40.16-23 stating that God is “unnameable” (ΑΤΤΡΕΝ), thanks to Christ’s revelation of the Father, “the perfect person” (ΠΕΕΙ ΕΤΧΗΚ ΑΒΑΛ) is able to “speak and see his Name” (ΑΧΟΥ ἸΠΕΩΡΕΝ ΑΥΩ ΑΝΕΥ ΑΡΑΩ).¹⁹ Hence, the ineffable Name may be spoken by those who have been “perfected”.

The course of the scene compels the reader to acknowledge that Paul has, at the very least, replied to the Spirit’s question, since the Spirit states that Paul *must* speak his name *so that* (ΧΕΚΑΛΑΚ) he can show Paul the road to Jerusalem. The fact that the Spirit does indeed then show Paul the road indicates that Paul has supplied this name, and in the Spirit’s words no less. This fact attests to the importance of the name, since until the Spirit has heard it from Paul, he refuses to show him the route to “Jerusalem”. In other words, Paul’s demonstration of this name is essential to his being taken to “Jerusalem”, that is, the Ogdoad.

The name “Paul” hardly satisfies these criteria. It would be odd indeed if the Spirit, who already knew Paul, demanded him to say the word “Paul” as fulfilment of the criteria for being raptured into the heavens and taken to the very heights of the divine realm. The only plausible candidate for this “name”, possession of which qualifies the individual for a heavenly ascent, which must be uttered in spiritual words, and which cannot be written in rational language, is the ineffable Divine Name.

The Divine Name is in many respects a more obvious baptismal motif than the “sign”, since early Christian baptism typically involved some formula or another involving the Name, although few invested it with as much soteriological power as did the Valentinians.

¹⁹ Cf. *Tri. Trac.* NHC I,5 133.16-21.

However, it is likely that the Name and the “sign” are identical in *Apoc. Paul* as audible and visual representations of baptismal redemption respectively. This view is recommended by the scene in the seventh heaven, where the Spirit commands Paul to “give him the sign that you have and [he will] open for you.” The “sign” has not been mentioned explicitly prior to this occasion, yet the Spirit knows that Paul possesses it. The Spirit’s awareness of Paul’s “sign” is explained if it is identified with the Name which Paul has already uttered to the Spirit at their initial meeting on earth. Furthermore, the Name and the sign function in parallel ways; the Name demonstrates to the Spirit that Paul belongs in the spiritual realm, while the sign demonstrates the same thing to the demiurge. Finally, the Divine Name corresponds very well with the baptismal logic of divine ownership which Kaler identified for the “sign”, particularly in Valentinian thought.

Kaler noted *Exc.* 86.1-2’s exegesis of Matthew 22:20-21, where Jesus resolves the issue of paying tax to the Roman empire on the grounds that if something bears “the image and the superscription” (ἡ εἰκὼν καὶ ἡ ἐπιγραφή) of the emperor, then it rightfully belongs to him, but so too with that which belongs to God. *Exc.* 86.2 takes this to what is perhaps its logical conclusion:

Οὕτως καὶ ὁ πιστός · ἐπιγραφὴν μὲν ἔχει διὰ Χριστοῦ τὸ Ὄνομα τοῦ Θεοῦ, τὸ δὲ Πνεῦμα ὡς εἰκόνα. Καὶ τὰ ἄλογα ζῶα διὰ σφραγίδος δείκνυσι τίνος ἐστὶν ἕκαστον · καὶ ἐκ τῆς σφραγίδος ἐκδικεῖται. Οὕτως καὶ ἡ ψυχὴ ἢ πιστὴ, τὸ τῆς ἀληθείας λαβοῦσα σφράγισμα, τὰ στίγματα τοῦ Χριστοῦ περιφέρει.

So also the faithful person; through Christ, he has the Name of God as a superscription and the Spirit as an image. And through a seal irrational animals make known the person to whom each one of them belongs and are claimed from the seal. So also the faithful soul which has received the seal of truth bears about it the marks of Christ.

There is no question whatsoever that such qualities are received at baptism, since *Exc.* 80.3 states that the initiate receives the seal of the Name through baptism and therefore “he bears the image of the heavenly” (φορεῖ τὴν εἰκόνα τοῦ ἐπουρανίου). According to *Exc.* 86.2, in the same way as the Roman emperor’s property is marked as such by virtue of bearing his image

and “superscription”, so too are redeemed souls marked as God’s property through the baptismal seal, which conveys to them the Spirit as an image and the Divine Name as a “superscription”.²⁰ Although Paul’s guiding Spirit cannot be straightforwardly identified as his image, the parallel with *Apoc. Paul* is striking nonetheless, since there also the Name functions as a visible sign which marks Paul as belonging to God, as opposed to the demiurge.

These observations not only strengthen Kaler’s arguments regarding *Apoc. Paul*’s baptismal framework and its significant connections with *Exc.*’s baptismal theology, they also demonstrate that the reference to the “name” in Paul’s initial encounter with the Spirit is a subtle allusion to that which is received in baptismal initiation and which marks Paul as God’s property, functioning as a σημεῖον or ἐπιγραφή such as were used in matters of ownership and taxation. Of course, it would be methodologically unsound to read *Apoc. Paul* too much in the light of *Exc.* However, *Apoc. Paul*’s connections to *Exc.* and a range of other Valentinian literature are highlighted further when we consider the hitherto poorly understood celestial gatekeepers in *Apoc. Paul*, who are designated as τελῶναι, that is, “toll-collectors”.²¹ These figures, who attempt to halt the progress of ascending souls but fail to obstruct Paul, resonate extremely strongly with Valentinian soteriologies of the Divine Name.

6.2. The Toll-Collectors and the Divine Name

6.2.1. The Toll-Collectors in Antiquity

The word τελώνης is a combination of τέλος (“toll, indirect tax”) and ὠνέομαι (“I buy, bid for”) and could refer to any of three related figures: 1) one who purchased the right to collect

²⁰ An ἐπιγραφή is an inscription which designated the object as belonging to its owner. In the case of Roman coins, they typically contained the emperor’s name and titles in addition to their image. It was especially important for matters of taxation. For the soul being stamped with the divine image as a coin bears the seal of its owner, see Philo, *Leg.* 3 31.95; *mSanhedrin* 4.5; Altmann (1968), 241-243.

²¹ On the translation of τελώνης as “toll-collector”, as opposed to “tax-collector” or “publican”, see Donahue (1971), 54; Fitzmyer (1981), 469.

specific taxes; 2) a supervisory official like Zacchaeus, called an ἀρχιτελώνης²² in Luke 19:2; or 3) their employees who collected such taxes at toll-booths or tax-offices (τελώνιον).²³ The office was especially susceptible to corruption since the tax-farmer had to pay the total sum in advance to the state and then work to recoup their expenditure, meaning that in order to make a profit for themselves they had to collect more tax than was due. Of course, the precise dynamics of the office and the reputation of those who held it vary from case to case and from region to region.²⁴ But as a general rule, they were reviled as greedy, dishonest, and often violent extortionists.²⁵

Of all biblical literature, only the Synoptic Gospels mention τελῶναι, where they are regularly paired with “sinners” (ἁμαρτωλοὶ),²⁶ Gentiles (ἔθνικοι),²⁷ and “prostitutes” (πόρναι)²⁸ without being considered beyond Jesus’s redemption, even sharing table-fellowship with him much to the disgust of the Pharisees with whom they are often juxtaposed.²⁹ Indeed, the Pharisee of Luke 18:9-14 groups τελῶναι with “thieves, rogues, (and) adulterers” (v. 11 NRSV; ἄρπαγες, ἄδικοι, μοιχοί), but neglects to repent for his own sins, unlike the toll-collector.³⁰ The τελῶναι only appear in the pre-Jerusalem phase of Jesus’s ministry, that is, in and around Galilee, where they would not have been in the direct employ of Rome, but rather would have worked under the supervision of Herod Antipas.³¹ These Synoptic τελῶναι correspond to the third category enumerated above,³² being employed by figures like Zacchaeus to collect indirect taxes such as tolls and customs at

²² The term is a *hapax legomenon*. The chief toll-collector was usually called an ἀρχώνης (ἀρχή + ὠνέομαι).

²³ E.g. Matt 10:3; Mark 2:14; Luke 5:27; see Donahue (1992), 337-338.

²⁴ See Michel (1972), 89-93; Herrenbrück (1981).

²⁵ See Donahue (1971), 55-61; idem. (1992); Michel (1972), 99-102; Green (1997), 179, 246.

²⁶ Matt 9:10-11; 11:19; Mark 2:15-16; Luke 5:30; 7:34; 15:1.

²⁷ Matt 5:46-47; 18:17.

²⁸ Matt 21:31-32.

²⁹ On this juxtaposition, see Wills (2008), 107-110. On the questionable historicity of such table-fellowship, see Walker (1978); Perkins (1984), 187; Horsley (1987), 212-217; Smith (1994).

³⁰ Cf. Matt 9:12-13; Mark 2:17; Luke 5:31-32.

³¹ See Donahue (1971), 45-49, 55; Horsley (1987), 212-213; *contra* Perrin (1967), 93-103; Wills (2008), 107-108.

³² See Donahue (1971); idem. (1992), 337-338; Fitzmyer (1981), 469; Perkins (1984), 187.

travel points like Capernaum and Jericho, which is where we meet Levi/Matthew the τελώνης (Luke 5:27; cf. Matt 9:9-12; Mark 2:15-16) and Zacchaeus the ἀρχιτελώνης respectively in the New Testament.³³ They would sit at the τελώνιον, stationed at borders or at crossover points like bridges and ports, and collect tolls on the goods being transported.

Around the turn of the third century, we begin to find these τελῶναι being projected heavenwards to play the role of celestial gatekeepers who seek to regulate the traffic of souls through the heavens.³⁴ For example, the Montanist Tertullian interpreted the New Testament τελῶναι as “pagan” foreigners who “sell the pathways of the heavens, earth, and sea” (*Uendentium ipsius caeli et terrae et maris transitus*).³⁵ Clement of Alexandria develops the idea much further. According to Clement, one who has been anointed with chrism and thereby received the Holy Spirit has been made glorious like Moses at his Sinai theophany; as such, this one can show the “holy symbol” (σύμβολον ἅγιον), or “the shining impress of righteousness” (τὸν χαρακτῆρα τῆς δικαιοσύνης τὸν φωτεινὸν), to “the angels who interrupt the ascent” and thereby continue their journey.³⁶ However,

those who demand toll (οἱ τὸ τέλος ἀπαιτοῦντες) detain those who bring in anything of the world, those who are burdened with their own passions. But the one who is stripped (τὸν γυμνὸν) of those things which are subject to duty (τῷ τέλει), and is full of knowledge (γνώσεως) and the works of righteousness, they (the toll-collectors) send them on with prayers, blessing the man and his work.³⁷

³³ Michel (1972), 98 usefully provides the following list of places where customs were collected in Palestine: Gaza, Ascalon, Joppa, and Caesarea (on the coast); and Jerusalem, Jericho, and Capernaum (inland). On Jericho, Michel notes, “[i]f Jericho was not directly at the border it could hardly be avoided by those travelling from Perea to Jerusalem, to Bethel, or to the North.” Hence, one travelling from Jericho to Jerusalem could expect to run into τελῶναι on the way (see below).

³⁴ See esp. Bartelink (1984); but also, Herrenbrück (1981), 181-182. As the following examples show, Rapp (2009), 195 is simply incorrect when she says that this phenomenon appears only in the fourth century, while Thomassen (2013b), 83-84 n.22, overstates the case when he says that “the use of this metaphor is mainly attested in the Syrian-Palestinian-Mesopotamian region.”

³⁵ Tertullian, *Pud.* 9.6.

³⁶ Clement’s baptismal χαρακτήρ parallels *Exc.* 86.1’s baptismal ἐπιγραφή, since a χαρακτήρ was also used of engravings or marks on coins, seals, and property in order to designate the owner; cf. Heb 1:3.

³⁷ Clement of Alexandria, *Strom.* IV 18.116.2-117.2. Text in van den Hoek (2001), 248-250.

In this case, successful ascent depends on having transcended worldly passions, which are “subject to duty”, and having lived an enlightened moral life. Origen tells a very similar story:

When we depart from the world and this life of ours has been transformed, some beings will be seated at the boundary of the world (ἐπὶ τοῖς τέρμασι τοῦ κόσμου καθεζόμενοι), as if they were exercising the office of toll-collectors (τελωνοῦσι), very carefully searching to find something in us that is theirs.³⁸

Again, the toll-collectors seek to exact what belongs to them from ascending souls, namely that which is of the material world. The third-century *Acts Thom.* 148 similarly describes these celestial τελῶναι as hostile figures, since Thomas prays concerning the ascent of his soul: “May the toll-collectors (τελῶναι) not see me, nor the tax-gatherers (ἀπαιτηταὶ) oppress me.” And again, *Acts Thom.* 167 reads: “May the toll-collectors (τελῶναι) not see me, nor the tax-gatherers extort me through false accusation (καὶ οἱ ἀπαιτηταὶ μὴ συκοφαντείτωσάν με).” Finally, the Macarian Homilies of late fourth-century Edessa witness this tradition when they compare oppressive demons to τελῶναι:

Like toll-collectors (τελῶναι) sitting in the narrow streets, detaining and extorting passers-by, so too do demons spy upon and detain souls; and when souls exit the body, if they are not completely purified, they are not entrusted to ascend to the dwellings of heaven and to meet their Lord, and they are driven down by the demons of the air.³⁹

6.2.2. The Toll-Collector in the Fourth Heaven

It is perfectly obvious then that *Apoc. Paul*’s celestial toll-collectors are a widespread motif connected with the ascent of the soul in early Christianity. They “sit” (𐤒𐤌𐤐𐤐) at the borders between heavens and attempt to detain ascending souls. The demiurge’s forces, like the demonic τελῶναι of pseudo-Macarius, “drive” (𐤕𐤎𐤁𐤚𐤚) souls downwards away from God and towards “the land of the dead”. The toll-collector in the fourth heaven, who conducts the

³⁸ Origen, *Hom. Luc.* 23.5. Trans. (adjusted) in Lienhard (1996), 99.

³⁹ Text in Dörries, Klostermann, and Kroeger (1964), 290-291. Other examples include Ephrem, *On Virginity* 175; Mandaean *Right Ginza* 21.17-18; *Left Ginza* 509.18-19; see Klijn (2003), 233-234.

sham trial of the unfortunate soul, is particularly resonant with this tradition. He accuses the soul of “lawlessness” and “sin”, while his witnesses accuse the soul of passions like “anger” and “envy”. Although the toll-collector’s charges against the soul are not false as such, they are certainly unfair; the result of duplicity on the part of its accusers. Through their guiles, the corrupt witnesses have deceived the soul into leaving the world still burdened with things that are “of the world”, and which are therefore “subject to duty”, in Clement’s words. Still owing a debt to the material world, the soul is therefore cast back into a fleshly body in “the land of the dead”. In relation to the charges themselves, we recall that Luke 19:8 depicts the ἀρχιτελώνης Zacchaeus promising to repay anyone that he has “defrauded” (NRSV), or whose property he has “taken by false accusation” (KJV). The verb in this instance is συκοφαντεῖν (“to extort by false charges or threats”), which as we have seen, is used in the *Acts Thom.* 167 to describe the activity of the celestial τελῶναι and ἀπαιτηταί.⁴⁰ It is highly likely therefore, that this notion of toll-collectors as those who extort payment through false legal charges has informed *Apoc. Paul’s* judgement scene, where the toll-collector is shown not only extorting the soul, but even leading the trial.

In other words, *Apoc. Paul’s* fourth heaven scene affords us a glimpse of a celestial toll-collector in action: his agents plant evidence on the soul so that when it leaves the material world, it is unwittingly still in possession of worldly things; the toll-collector can therefore detain the soul on the grounds that it is in possession of taxable goods; once these taxable goods – sins and passions – have been exposed by the very agents who contrived them in the first place, the soul helplessly acknowledges its debt and is cast back into the prison of the material world.

⁴⁰ *Acts Thom.* 167 connects these two via an exegetical καὶ such that the ἀπαιτηταί are understood as a more general class of rip-off merchants to which the τελῶναι belong.

It is with regard to precisely these celestial τελῶναι that Origen interprets Romans 13:7 on the importance of paying “tribute” (φόρος) and “toll” (τέλος) to whom they are due:

Otherwise, when we do not have the means to pay the tax, we ourselves might be dragged off on account of the debt. This is what normally happens to those subject to worldly taxes, when someone is imprisoned for his debt and made a slave of the state. How many more of us are destined to be held by toll-collectors of that (celestial) sort!⁴¹

Similarly, *Apoc. Paul*'s unfortunate soul is “dragged off” into slavery in the prison of the material world for its debts. It is this slavery which Paul aspires to obviate through his liberating missionary work when he returns to earth.

Significantly, the τελῶναι were so reviled in rabbinic Judaism – where they are called *môkhesîn* – that they were forbidden from providing witness testimony in legal trials.⁴² In light of this rabbinic ban on toll-collectors acting as legal witnesses, the scene in *Apoc. Paul* takes on a radically polemical flavour, since there the toll-collector is depicted in a judicial role. The prohibition itself is reflected in the soul's response to the toll-collector's initial accusation that it has committed “lawless deeds”: the soul responds, “Produce witnesses!” (20.21-22). This demand reflects the rabbinic ban on him providing his own testimony. The fact that one who cannot even provide witness testimony is seemingly placed in charge of the entire trial is a damning critique of the demiurge's judicial integrity; he has toll-collectors sitting as judges! The witnesses themselves, specifically their number, are in accordance with Deuteronomic law (see Chapter 5), but the fact that they are summoned by a τελώνης makes a mockery of the justice system.

⁴¹ Origen, *Hom. Luc.* 23.6 (trans. adjusted).

⁴² E.g. *mSanhedrin* 3.3; *bSanhedrin* 25b; see Donahue (1971), 49-51. Although these bodies of rabbinic literature did not reach their present form until sometime later, there is no reason to think that this particular prohibition does not reflect an earlier tradition since the revulsion towards the toll-collectors is based on the same perception of them as greedy and dishonest extortionists that we find in the New Testament and classical literature. Although cf. Horsley (1987), 219-220. On the “toll-collectors” in rabbinic literature, see Donahue (1971), 49-53; Michel (1972), 101-102; Wills (2008), 109-110.

So more than simply adopting a popular celestial figure from contemporary narratives of the ascent of the soul, *Apoc. Paul* draws on some quite well established details associated with them both as historical figures with specific social roles, and as heavenly gatekeepers responsible for managing psychic traffic. But might we pin-down more precisely which trajectory of Christian thought has informed the use of these toll-collectors in *Apoc. Paul*? After all, many a gnostic text describes similarly oppressive powers which seek to halt the soul's ascent, but they are rarely identified as *τελῶναι*. Of course, as we have seen, the contrasting fates of Paul and the convicted soul depend, at least to some degree, on the individual's possession of the Divine Name. Paul possesses the Name/sign and therefore ascends untroubled past the toll-collectors and can advance beyond the demiurge; the soul apparently does not possess the Name/sign, and therefore cannot make a successful ascent. In the next section, I will demonstrate that the Valentinian concept of the Divine Name provides a cogent background for *Apoc. Paul*'s choice of the *τελῶναι* and their role in the broader narrative of the text. It will be shown that the peculiarly Valentinian proclivity for describing the nature and power of the Divine Name using fiscal and economic imagery explains the different fates of Paul and the soul in relation to the toll-collectors.

6.2.3. Fiscal Language in the Valentinian Soteriology of the Name

No Valentinian texts, with the possible exception of *I Apoc. Jas.*, mention "toll-collectors". According to *I Apoc. Jas.* 33.2-34.20, three celestial "detainers" (*ρεγαμαζτε*) "sit like toll-collectors" (*ζμοοο εντελωνηο*) and "extort toll" (*ψετ τελοο*) while abducting souls "by theft" (*οτερεοιμοο*). "Redemption" (*οωτε*; Gk. *ἀπολύτρωσις*) consists of learning the correct formulae with which to respond to their interrogations and thereby escape their clutches.⁴³ This term *ἀπολύτρωσις* came to mean "redemption" in Christian tradition, while

⁴³ See Veilleux (1986), 85-90.

Valentinians commonly used it as a technical term to designate their rites of initiation.⁴⁴ However, it more literally means “ransoming” in the sense of gaining the release of a prisoner through payment, thereby implying that humans are like slaves or prisoners until they receive liberation through Christ. In Valentinianism, reception of the Divine Name was central to ἀπολύτρωσις because of its transformative soteriological power; receiving the Name was like being freed through a divine payment for one’s soul. Such a background may explain Paul’s declaration to return to earth to liberate “the captives” in *Apoc. Paul*; as one who has himself been ransomed through the Name, he intends to return and liberate others through the Name via the rites of ἀπολύτρωσις.

This Valentinian connection to *Apoc. Paul* is seen still more clearly in light of several passages concerning the Divine Name itself. Three passages are of particular interest:

1) *Gos. Truth* 40.9-14:

Therefore, he (the Father) did not receive the Name *on loan* (οὐδὲν) like other (names) which are invented according to the form of each thing. Rather, this is the proper Name (πλαισις ἵπρεν).

This passage distinguishes between names which are devised by humans for particular transient objects on the one hand, and names which encapsulate the essence of the object itself and are therefore indistinguishable from that object. The Name of the Father falls into the latter category; nobody gave the Father his Name, and therefore it cannot be taken away from him, as though it were merely a loan. So, the Father does not possess his Name on loan, but rather as his own property.

2) *Tri. Trac.* 134.2-23:

⁴⁴ See Thomassen (2006a), 360-377, 401-402; cf. Denzey Lewis (2009); Förster (1999), 27-31, 140-156.

And their many ancient services and wonders (**ΜΑΖΕΙΕ**)⁴⁵ which they performed in the temple,⁴⁶ they (now) dedicated to another (**ἄλλοῦ**).⁴⁷ The confession is what enabled them to do it through their hastening towards him. That institution, which they did not accept, they renounced on account of the one who was not <worshipped> (**οὐκ ἔστειλε**) there;⁴⁸ but instead they received Christ, who they understood was from on high, the place from which they had come forth with him, a divine and supreme place. The names that they – the ones who they had been worshipping, serving, and ministering to – had received on loan (**οὐκ ἔστειλε**), they (now) gave to the one who is designated by them properly (**ἵπταλεις**).

This passage refers to those people whom *Tri. Trac.* designates variously as “Hebrews”, “those of the right”, and “psychics”, who are hesitant to accept Christ upon his initial appearance in the world, but a portion of whom eventually come to recognise him and therefore receive salvation.⁴⁹ When they eventually accepted Christ at their baptism, when “confession is made through faith in those names of God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit”, they redirected their worship away from the temple and towards Christ.⁵⁰ In doing so, the various names they used in their worship of the demiurge and his archons, whom they falsely believed was the true God, were now given to Christ, who is properly designated by them. As in *Gos. Truth*, those transient beings (now the demiurge and his archons) who are assigned names in an accidental or temporary manner are said to possess those names “on loan”, whereas Christ possesses these names necessarily and essentially as his property, and therefore will claim them back in the fullness of time.

These “names” are presumably of the kind listed in *Tri. Trac.* 66.13-29, which expounds nineteen names which the Aeons use to glorify the Son. God is properly

⁴⁵ Thomassen and Painchaud (1989), 249, 450 suggest that **ΜΑΖΕΙΕ** ought to read **ΜΑΕΙΝ** (“sign” from σημεῖον), and translate “gestes symboliques”, that is to say, “les rituels”.

⁴⁶ I follow Thomassen and Painchaud (1989), 249, 450 in ignoring **ΝΑΥΟΥΑΦΟΥ** in *Tri. Trac.* NHC I,5 134.2 since it corrupts the meaning of the sentence. Thomassen suggests, “l’on peut considérer comme une contamination à partir de **ΕΤΝΑΦΟΥ** à la ligne suivante.” Cf. Attridge (1985), 490.

⁴⁷ The phrase **ἄλλοῦ**, translated here as “to another” (**ἄλλοῦ**), following Thomassen and Painchaud (1989), 249, is problematic, since **οὐκ ἔστειλε** is an unattested form of **οὐκ ἔστειλε**. Attridge (1985), 491 suggests “continuously” (**ὄντως**), although this makes less sense in the actual passage.

⁴⁸ I follow Thomassen and Painchaud (1989), 248, 451 in emending **οὐκ ἔστειλε** to **οὐκ ἔστειλε**; cf. Attridge (1985), 492 thinks **οὐκ ἔστειλε** is an impersonal form of **οὐκ ἔστειλε** (“to send”).

⁴⁹ *Tri. Trac.* NHC I,5 118.36-119.8.

⁵⁰ *Tri. Trac.* NHC I,5 127.25-128.19; see also, Ptolemy, *Flor.* in Epiphanius, *Pan.* XXXIII 5.8-9.

“unnameable” (65.2), and insofar as the Son is his manifestation he too is ineffable (65.28-34) and is never called by “his single Name” (66.30-33), but rather by this multitude of glorious terms which participate in the single Divine Name without diminishing it.

We must note therefore, the relationship between these two passages from *Gos. Truth* and *Tri. Trac.* The first passage distinguished God’s unique Name from all other names given to transient objects; the former alone is not possessed “on loan” because it is essential to the Father, whereas names for transient earthly objects can be changed, taken away, and given to different objects. The second passage concerned God’s and Christ’s single Name appearing in multiple forms in human worship and distinguished between those psychic worshippers who loan the names to their inferior gods and those pneumatic worshippers who assign them to Christ, who owns them outright. So, *Gos. Truth* uses the concept of “loaned names” in a metaphysical context to articulate the uniqueness of the Father, whereas *Tri. Trac.* uses the concept of “loaned names” in a liturgical context to articulate Christ’s advent as the revelation of the previously unknown Father. However, the same logic underlies both passages: names have an ontological relationship to their referents, and this relationship can be either essential or accidental; where the ontological relationship is essential, the name is possessed outright; where the ontological relationship is accidental, the name is possessed “on loan”, and will therefore have to be repaid, so to speak. The Father and the Son possess the Name essentially, and therefore not “on loan”, whereas to assign the Name and its multiple forms to the demiurge and his powers is merely to “loan” it out to them. Our third passage crucially incorporates this idea into Valentinian ritual and soteriology.

3. *Gos. Phil.* 64.22-31:

If one goes down into the water and comes up having not received anything, and says “I am a Christian”, *he has borrowed the Name at interest*. But if he receives the Holy Spirit, he has the gift of the Name. One who has received a gift does not have it taken

away from him, whereas *one who has borrowed it at interest has it (i.e. the Name) extorted from him*. This is the way it happens to us if one comes to be through a mystery.

Gos. Phil. uses the concept of “loaned names” to distinguish between proper and improper baptism. No initiates possess the Name as an essential quality as do the Father and Christ, but they may receive it as a baptismal gift of the Spirit and therefore possess it outright. Those who do not receive the Spirit through the proper baptism-anointment rituals cannot receive the Name either, and therefore their claim to the title of “Christian” is temporary, being bestowed on them by humans alone. As such, it shall be “extorted” (ϣΑΤ) from them like an unpaid debt, whereas perfect Christians cannot have it extorted from them since it is truly their property.

In these lines, *Gos. Phil.* appears to presuppose celestial figures rather like the τελῶναι. The cognate verb of ἀπολύτρωσις is ἀπολύω, which could mean “to set free by payment of ransom”, as well as “to pay a debt”. For *Gos. Phil.*, to be redeemed was to receive the Divine Name as a ransom payment through baptism-anointment in such a way that the initiate had no debt to their former cosmic masters and was therefore set free. Similarly, the Coptic ϣΑΤ (“to extort”) most likely translates an original Greek ἀπαιτεῖν (Crum 594a), which is precisely the term used by Clement to describe “those who demand toll” (οἱ τὸ τέλος ἀπαιτοῦντες) from ascending souls and detain them on the basis of possessing “worldly things” like passions. Likewise, *Acts Thom.* 167 pairs the τελῶναι with the ἀπαιτηταί, which I have translated as “tax-gatherers”, but which may simply mean “extortionists” in light of its cognate verb ἀπαιτεῖν (“to demand something in payment”). Also, the Coptic ϣΑΤ is used in *I Apoc. Jas.* 33.9 explicitly to describe the activity of the celestial τελῶναι. In other words, this passage from *Gos. Phil.* appears to presuppose these τελῶναι even if the text prefers to use more generic terms like “powers” (ΔΥΝΑΜΙΣ) and “rulers” (ΑΡΧΩΝ) for these hostile figures. To receive the Name via ἀπολύτρωσις (CΩΤΕ), that is, as a ransom payment, is to

receive it without any debt attached to it, and therefore when the toll-collectors seek to detain the ascending soul, they shall find no debt to extort.

These three passages – in addition to *Exc.* 86.1-2 – testify to a widespread use of economic and fiscal imagery in Valentinian reflections on the nature and power of the Divine Name with regard to theology, Christology, soteriology, and ritual. As we have seen, Valentinians were far from the only Christians to employ such language in their religious thought. However, the use of this language exclusively in connection with the Divine Name is, as far as I can tell, peculiarly Valentinian.⁵¹ Between them, these texts provide an illuminative background for the contrasting careers of Paul and the convicted soul in *Apoc. Paul*, specifically their different fates in relation to the toll-collectors. Paul has received the Name through baptismal anointment and therefore “cannot be detained” by those who would attempt to extort him. He can show the Name as a sign to the demiurge to indicate his divine ownership; Paul’s soul bears the “superscription” of God’s Name and is therefore owed to God in the manner of tax or a debt repayment. On the other hand, the soul on trial in the fourth heaven has lived a wicked life because it has been led astray by cosmic forces. These forces “prepare bodies” as prisons for souls so that once they have deceived them to sin, they can charge them with possession of worldly things, extort the debt, and cast them back into their bodily prison. In this way, the demiurge and his powers function not only as judge, jury, and executioner, but as the architects of the very crimes themselves! Such an enslaved soul has never received ἀπολύτρωσις *qua* a ransom payment, but instead has been duped into racking up an enormous cosmic debt. Hence, when it attempts to travel between the borders of the cosmos and heaven, the toll-collectors are able to detain the soul, extort it, and imprison it once more.

⁵¹ Attridge (1985), 493 notes that similar language appears in Irenaeus, *Haer.* I 6.4 in relation to the reception of “grace”. However, the distinctively fiscal dimension is lacking, with no mention of grace being received “on loan”.

According to *Apoc. Paul* therefore, for the soul to make a successful ascent, it must 1) live a life free from earthly passions and “lawless deeds”; 2) attain γνῶσις; and 3) receive the Divine Name through baptismal anointment. The first condition relates to the soul becoming free from worldly debt so that the celestial toll-collectors have nothing to extort. The second condition relates to the soul knowing its divine origin, nature, and destiny in order to properly respond to the demiurge’s interrogation. The third condition relates to God marking the soul as his own property to which no other may lay claim. Of course, fulfilment of the first condition relies on fulfilment of the third condition; until one receives the Name as a sign that one has been ransomed, and therefore purchased, by God, one may never become free from the cosmic slaveholders who compel the soul to sin. Further, if one is not initiated properly, the initiate can be fooled into believing that they have indeed been ransomed through the payment of the Name, when in fact the Name was merely a loan. The soul still properly belongs to the cosmic slaveholders, and the debt shall be exacted from the soul after death. It is this Valentinian ἀπολύτρωσις *qua* “ransom payment for a slave” which underlies Paul’s future mission to return to the cosmos to liberate “the captives”.

Overall, the similarities between *Apoc. Paul*’s toll-collectors and *Gos. Phil.*’s celestial extortionists is striking. Although such figures are widespread in early Christian literature, the underlying logic that it is outright ownership of the Divine Name which liberates one from these figures seems to be that of these texts alone and can be traced across a range of other Valentinian sources. Further, the Valentinian concept of initiatory ἀπολύτρωσις through the Name provides a strikingly cogent framework for understanding Paul’s future mission; just as the Name removed Paul’s bond of debt to the demiurge’s cosmic powers and released him into divine ownership, so too shall Paul perform this liberating work for others enslaved in the material world. Failure to do so results in the kind of unfortunate fate experienced by the soul in the fourth heaven.

6.2.4. Other Observations on the Toll-Collectors

Before moving on, several other observations on *Apoc. Paul's* toll-collectors are germane. Firstly, there seems to have existed a Greek pun on the words τελώνης and ἄρχων which may have made the former a particularly intuitive representative of hostile cosmic powers among gnostic Christians. The pun is made possible by the term ἀρχώνης (ἀρχή + ὠνέομαι) which was the designation given to the person who bid for the right to farm the taxes and who employed the τελῶναι to collect them. Perhaps the most obvious example of this pun is in Origen's interpretation of John 14:30, where he characterises "the ruler of this world" (ὁ τοῦ κόσμου ἄρχων) as a τελώνης and argues that Jesus's declaration that this ἄρχων-τελώνης "has nothing in me" (ἐν ἐμοὶ οὐκ ἔχει οὐδέν) indicates that Jesus has no cosmic debt thanks to his purity from carnal corruption.⁵² Although, an earlier example is perhaps found in the second-century Greek rhetorician Julius Pollux's *Onomasticon*, a ten-volume thesaurus of Greek terms. In addition to providing a lengthy list of insults appropriate to the profession of τελώνης (9.32), Pollux includes τελώνης on his list of eighteen "names of shameful professions" (Βίων ἐπονιδίστων ὀνόματα), which collectively have money as their common denominator, but six of which are varieties of tax-collector (6.128).⁵³ However, his description of the bosses of the τελῶναι reads as follows: "the ἄρχοντας farm-out, sell, publicly announce, and let for hire the indirect taxes" (9.34; τοὺς ἄρχοντας, ἐκδιδόναι τὰ τέλη, πιπράσκειν, καὶ κηρύττειν, καὶ ἀπομισθοῦν). The term ἄρχοντας is the accusative plural of ἄρχων ("ruler"), as opposed to ἀρχώνης, which as a masculine first-declension noun would read τοὺς ἀρχώνας in the accusative plural. It is possible that Pollux has simply made a mistake, but given his propensity for wordplay in his *Onomasticon*, it is more likely that such is the case here.

⁵² Origen, *Hom. Luc.* 23.6.

⁵³ See Michel (1972), 99 n.116.

If Pollux can use this apparently well-known wordplay to make the chief toll-collector into an ἄρχων, it is plausible that *Apoc. Paul* used the same wordplay to make the chief ruler (the demiurge) into an ἀρχώνης (the chief toll-collector). If so, the author would be making the same pun that we find in Origen.

Secondly, the dire reputation of the τελῶναι led them to be frequently compared to thieves (ληστής), as in Pollux’s description of them as ληστεύων (“thieving”) and ληϊζόμενος (“plundering”).⁵⁴ This may have subtly reinforced *Apoc. Paul*’s allusion to the Lukan parable of the Good Samaritan, where the “thieves” (λησταί) were often allegorised as hostile cosmic forces in early Christian exegesis (see Chapter 5).

Finally, the apostle Matthew-Levi is identified as a τελώνης in Luke 5:27 (cf. Matt 9:9; Mark 2:14), and is explicitly designated as “Matthew the toll-collector” (Μαθθαῖος ὁ τελώνης) in Matthew’s list of the twelve disciples (Matt 10:3; cf. Mark 3:18; Luke 6:15; Acts 1:13). It follows from *Apoc. Paul*’s location of the twelve apostles in the Ogdoad that there is in fact a τελώνης who has advanced into the spiritual realm! This may represent a moment of ecumenism in *Apoc. Paul* whereby the author extends the possibility of salvation to those who currently belong to the demiurge, who functions as the chief toll-collector.⁵⁵

Overall, the toll-collectors of *Apoc. Paul* reflect the widespread tradition in early Christianity of projecting these earthly extortionists heavenwards as celestial gatekeepers who detain souls in order to discover whether they are transporting any worldly goods into heaven. More specifically, they reflect Valentinian speculations on different ways of

⁵⁴ Pollux, *Onom.* 9.32. Donahue (1992) cites a range of sources which align “toll-collectors” with robbers, including New Testament (e.g. Luke 18:11), Roman and Hellenistic (e.g. Cicero, *Off.* 15-51; Diogenes Cynicus, *Ep.* 36.2; Lucian, *Pseudol.* 30; Dio Chrysostom, *Or.* 14.14), and rabbinic literature (e.g. *mTohar.* 7.6; *mB. Qam.* 10.1-2; *mNed.* 3.4). See also Herrenbrück (1981), 178-180, who notes that when Theophilus of Antioch quotes Matt 5:46 in *Autol.* 3.14, he writes “robbers (ληστής) and toll-collectors”, where the gospel has only the latter.

⁵⁵ Cf. Origen, *Hom. Gen.* I 13: “Matthew was a publican (*publicanus*) and undoubtedly his image was like the devil, but when he comes to the image of God, our Lord and Savior, and follows that image he is transformed to the likeness of the image of God.” Trans. Heine (1982), 66. According to Irenaeus, *Haer.* I 8.3, the followers of Ptolemy interpret Zacchaeus the ἀρχτελώνης of Luke 19 as a type of the pneumatic.

receiving the Divine Name in baptismal initiation: it can be given as a spiritual gift which functions like a ransom payment for the human soul; or it can be given as a loan, giving the illusion of liberation from cosmic enslavement, but which in fact levies a debt upon the soul which must eventually be repaid. These celestial toll-collectors may have been particularly resonant with those gnostic Christians who were aware of the wordplay which associated a *τελώνης* with an *ἄρχων*. *Apoc. Paul* also uses them to bring life to other aspects of its narrative, such as its use of the parable of the Good Samaritan for its frame story, and to extend the hope of salvation to psychics.

6.3. The “Mountain of Jericho” and the Divine Name

A further example of the Valentinian understanding of the Divine Name in *Apoc. Paul* may be glimpsed in the idea that Paul’s heavenly ascent begins with him “trampling upon the Mountain of Jericho”.⁵⁶ The image of “the Mountain of Jericho” has baffled previous commentators because no such mountain actually exists. It has therefore been understood as a metaphor or cipher for something else.

6.3.1. Rosenstiehl on the “Mountain of Jericho”

Rosenstiehl was the first to provide an extended treatment of the image, arguing that “the Mountain of Jericho” in fact represents Mount Nebo on the grounds that such is the case in a Coptic Jeremiah apocryphon known as “The History of the Babylonian Captivity”, where chapter 25 states that Nebuchadnezzar was unable to find the Ark of the Covenant because it had been hidden on “the Mountain of Jericho” (*ΠΤΟΟΥ ΝΝΙΖΕΡΙΧΩ*).⁵⁷ As Rosenstiehl notes, this is a narrative allusion to 2 Maccabees 2:4-5, where Jeremiah is described hiding the furniture and utensils of the Temple on “the mountain where Moses had gone up and seen the

⁵⁶ See Twigg (2015b).

⁵⁷ Rosenstiehl (2006b); idem. (2005), 26-34.

inheritance of God”, which is in turn identified as Mount Nebo in Deuteronomy 32:49 and 34:1, where it is described as being “opposite Jericho” (ἐπὶ προσώπου Ἰεριχώ). Rosenstiehl then concluded that, “[s]i la ‘montagne de Jéricho’ désigne le mont Nebo dans l’apocryphe copte de Jérémie, il faudrait une certaine dose d’inconséquence pour s’obstiner à donner à la même expression un sens différent dans l’Apocalypse copte de Paul.”⁵⁸ Rosenstiehl’s assumption that the Mountain of Jericho represents Mount Nebo leads him to suggest that Paul is actually being cast in the model of Moses, where the latter’s terrestrial life ended on Mount Nebo, while the former departs from Mount Nebo for the heavenly Jerusalem.⁵⁹

Rosenstiehl’s striking conclusion is unwarranted for a number of reasons: 1) *Apoc. Paul* makes no mention of Moses or Mount Nebo; 2) Paul’s ascent is not a post-mortem ascent of the soul, but is rather an ecstatic out-of-body ascent which will end when he returns to “the land of the dead”, that is, the earth; 3) *Apoc. Paul* is extremely disparaging towards earthly law, where it is presented as reinforcing the demiurge’s injustice, and so for Paul to represent Moses, the paragon of the Law, would be counter-intuitive; and 4) there is no evidence that *Apoc. Paul* and the Jeremiah apocryphon are historically or genetically related, such that the meaning of an image in one text could be imposed onto the other.⁶⁰ Indeed, the image of “the Mountain of Jericho” is not a widespread motif with an agreed upon field of reference, so unless a strong connection between the two texts can be demonstrated, we are safer to presume that these are simply two isolated instances of a single phrase.

⁵⁸ Rosenstiehl (2006b), 890.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ See Kuhn (1970), 103-104. The work is extant only in Coptic and Arabic, but Kuhn postulates a Greek original. The earliest manuscript evidence dates to the seventh century CE. However, Kuhn suggests that *if* the work is dependent on the *Paralipomena Ieremiae*, which is usually assigned to the second century CE, then the Jeremiah apocryphon can be dated to anywhere between the second and seventh centuries.

6.3.2. Murdock and Kaler on the “Mountain of Jericho”

Long before Rosenstiehl’s hypothesis, Murdock interpreted “the Mountain of Jericho” in light of the broader narrative of Paul’s ascent to Jerusalem to meet the apostles. He understood it as a composite image inspired by 1) the fact that mountains were widely considered “appropriate sites for epiphanies”, and 2) a combination of Luke 10:29-37’s descent to Jericho with Galatians 2:1-2’s ascent to Jerusalem.⁶¹ Kaler agrees with Murdock that Paul’s location on a mountain is due to mountains being common locations for revelatory experiences.⁶² However, Kaler argues that the author has selected “Jericho” because of its connections with Jesus’s healing of blindness in the Synoptic Gospels (Matt 20:29-34; Mark 10:46-52; Luke 18:35-43). Indeed, the reference to “the Mountain of Jericho” immediately follows the Spirit’s command for Paul to “awaken” his mind and “see” where he is standing, indicating that Paul’s ability to perceive his location is the result of his spiritual enlightenment.

Murdock’s and Kaler’s interpretations are both perfectly coherent insofar as they can explain the image of “the Mountain of Jericho”. However, problems arise once we observe what Paul is actually doing on this mountain; he is “treading” or “trampling” (ⲉⲱⲙ) upon it. At first glance, this might appear a fairly innocuous detail; Paul is simply *walking* on the mountain.⁶³ However, the Coptic ⲉⲱⲙ (“to tread, trample, beat”) and its Greek equivalent πατεῖν (and its compounds) frequently have a far more aggressive sense in early Christian literature. According to Kaler, the verb πατεῖν has two principal uses in the New Testament; one eschatological, the other soteriological. The eschatological usage describes the wicked being trampled underfoot (e.g. Matt 5:13; Luke 8:5; Rev 11:2; 14:20; 19:15; cf. Luke 21:24;

⁶¹ Murdock (1968), 159-162.

⁶² Kaler (2005), 199-201.

⁶³ This more neutral interpretation is reflected in the translations of MacRae and Murdock (1979); Plisch (2003); Funk (2003); Rosenstiehl (2005); and Kaler (2008a). Cf. Murdock (1968), 12, who translates ⲉⲱⲙ as “tread”.

Heb 10:29), while the soteriological usage describes the disciple's power to trample hostile forces underfoot (Luke 10:19; cf. Ps 90:13). The underlying logic is the same in both cases; *πατεῖν* refers to the overcoming or defeat of an enemy, as it does in the LXX.⁶⁴ Kaler further notes that this same meaning prevails for *ⲗⲟⲙ* in the Nag Hammadi codices and the *Manichaean Psalm-Book*, concluding that "the subject is trampling something corrupt, or malicious underfoot so as to liberate him- or herself from it."⁶⁵

This presents a problem for Kaler's (and Murdock's) interpretation of "the Mountain of Jericho" as a positive image symbolizing revelatory enlightenment. Why would one wish to overcome or defeat such a thing? Kaler attempts to resolve this issue by suggesting that *ⲗⲟⲙ* is a Bohairicism translating an original *ἐμβατεύειν* ("to step in/on, frequent, haunt") in an allusion to Colossians 2:18's polemic against angel veneration, thereby paralleling *Apoc. Paul* 19.3-5. Since *ἐμβατεύειν* is usually translated into Sahidic as the more neutral *ⲙⲟⲟⲩⲉ* ("to walk"), by understanding *ⲗⲟⲙ* as a Bohairicism, the negative connotations of *ⲗⲟⲙ-πατεῖν* disappear, and the positive interpretation of "the Mountain of Jericho" can be retained. However, the notion that *ⲗⲟⲙ* translates *ἐμβατεύειν* in an allusion to Colossians 2:18 is unlikely for two reasons: 1) It is unlikely that our author would depict Paul behaving in a manner that the historical Paul (or the author of Colossians) polemicized against; and 2) the verb *ἐμβατεύειν* was strongly connected with the Mystery religions,⁶⁶ which is not a connection that *Apoc. Paul* is concerned to draw or promote elsewhere.

⁶⁴ See Kaler (2005), 196.

⁶⁵ Ibid. 196-197, citing *Soph. Jes. Chr.* NHC III,4 108.15; 119.1, 7; *Plato Rep.* NHC VI,5 50.27; *Treat. Seth* NHC VII,2 56.35; *Manichaean Psalm-Book* 2.12, 18; 64.23; 76.15; 97.18; 99.29; 175.11. In addition to these, we might include *Gos. Thom.* NHC II,2 39.27-40.2, where the garments of shame are "trampled" (*ⲗⲟⲙⲗⲟⲙ*; from *ⲗⲟⲙⲗⲟⲙ*) underfoot as a metaphor of ascetic renunciation; cf. *Hyp. Arch.* NHC II,4 97.2-10; *Manichean Psalm-Book* 278.26-27; Josephus, *Ant.* 2.9.7; Clement of Alexandria, "Gospel of the Egyptians" in *Strom.* III 13.92; Irenaeus, *Haer.* V 12.2; see DeConick (2001b), 99-104.

⁶⁶ Denzey Lewis (2013), 66 n.47. Kaler (2005), 198 recognizes this and suggests that the potential link with the ecstatic states, dreams, and visions of Bacchic or Dionysiac ritual fit *Apoc. Paul* NHC V,2 well. Cf. Irenaeus, *Haer.* I 13.4 polemically described the Marcosians as a *θίασος* ("cult society"), a term with connections to Bacchic cult; cf. Dunderberg (2005b), 83; Förster (1999), 129.

Further, in the previous chapter it was shown that “Jericho” is employed in *Apoc. Paul*’s broader narrative of Paul’s ascent to Jerusalem in order to recall Luke’s parable of the Good Samaritan. According to early Christian interpretation of the parable, “Jericho” symbolized the material world where the soul was oppressed by hostile cosmic forces, nicely paralleling the negative view of the cosmos in *Apoc. Paul* as well as the pejorative view of Jericho among many biblical readers. Hence, Jericho is used by *Apoc. Paul* precisely for its negative worldly connotations. Furthermore, in the Synoptic tale of Jesus’s healing of blindness, only Luke 18:35 has Jesus travelling *towards* Jericho, while Matthew 20:29 and Mark 10:46 actually have Jesus *leaving* Jericho when he heals the blind. In other words, the association of Jericho with the healing of blindness is rather circumstantial, and may even be interpreted as an association with blindness, since it is in leaving Jericho that sight is restored. This pejorative understanding of Jericho places the common-sense interpretation of **ζΩΜ** – that it translates *πατεῖν* with the sense of overcoming a hostile adversary or force – back in our purview, since the seer would need to overcome materiality in order to ascend into the heavens. But then, what of the “mountain”?

6.3.3. A New Hypothesis on the “Mountain of Jericho”

There is no denying the popularity of mountains as locations for revelations, and this undoubtedly informed our author’s decision to locate Paul upon a mountain. Indeed, other Nag Hammadi texts frequently invent or misplace mountains for the sake of revelatory imagery.⁶⁷ Moreover, Jericho was strongly associated with Mount Gerizim and Mount Ebal, for although they were located in Shechem, numerous biblical passages blur the line between

⁶⁷ E.g. “the mountain which is called Gaugelan” (ΠΤΟΟΥ ΕΤΕ ΦΑΓΜΟΥΤΕ ΕΡΟΦ ΧΕ ΓΑΥΓΗΛΑΝ; *I Apoc. Jas.* NHC V,3 30.19-21); “the mountain which is called Charaxio” (ΠΤΟΟΥ ΕΦΑΓΜΟΥΤΕ ΕΡΟΦ ΧΕ ΧΑΡΑΞΙΩ; *Gos. Eg.* NHC III,2 69.12-14); “the mountain which is called divination and joy” (ΠΤΟΟΥ ΕΦΑΓΜΟΥΤΕ ΕΡΟΦ ΧΕ ΜΑΝΤΗ ΖΙ ΡΑΦΕ; *Soph. Jes. Chr.* NHC III,4 90.19-91.2; BG,3 77.16-78.2); “the mountain which is called ‘of olives’ in Galilee” (ΠΤΟΟΥ ΕΦΑΓΜΟΥΤΕ ΕΡΟΦ ΧΕ ΠΑ ΝΧΟΕΙΤ ΖΝ ΠΤΑΛΙΑΙΑ; *Soph. Jes. Chr.* NHC III,4 91.18-20; BG,3 79.7-9).

Shechem in Samaria and Gilgal near Jericho.⁶⁸ As can be seen from Eusebius's *Onomasticon*, written in the early fourth century, this incredibly led to Gerizim and Ebal actually moving from Shechem to Jericho in the imagination of some early Christians. His entry on Gilgal reads: "Scripture teaches that this place (Gilgal) is near Mounts Gerizim and Ebal (Deut 11:29-30); but Gilgal is a place near (Lat. *iuxta*) Jericho (Josh 4:19)" (ταύτης εἶναι πλησίον ἢ γραφή διδάσκει τὸ Γαριζεῖν καὶ τὸ Γαιβὰλ ὄρος. ἢ δὲ Γάλγαλα τόπος ἐστὶ τῆς Ἰεριχοῦς). Jerome, who translated Eusebius's *Onomasticon* into Latin in the late fourth-century, therefore concludes that the Samaritans are "in error" when they say that Gerizim and Ebal are near Shechem; rather, they are near Jericho! The entry on Mount Ebal is explicit: "And it is said that lying beside Jericho are two mountains facing one another in close proximity, one of which is Gerizim, the other Ebal" (καὶ λέγεται παρακεῖσθαι τῇ Ἰεριχῶ ὄρη δύο κατὰ πρόσωπον ἀλλήλων καὶ πλησίον, ὧν τὸ μὲν εἶναι Γαριζεῖν, τὸ δὲ Γαιβὰλ). For Eusebius, the Gilgal mentioned in Deuteronomy 11:30 is the one immediately east of Jericho, and he shifts Mount Gerizim and Mount Ebal accordingly. The ambiguity is similarly reflected in the sixth-century floor mosaic in Saint George's church in Jordan, known as the Madaba Map, which depicts two of each Mount, one pair near Shechem, and another near Jericho.⁶⁹

But while it was evidently possible to associate Jericho with mountains despite its fairly flat landscape and location within a valley, no "Mountain of Jericho" is to be found, as such. Further, in light of the pejorative understanding of "Jericho" in *Apoc. Paul*, it would be somewhat counter-intuitive if the additional detail of "the *Mountain* of Jericho" was designed to evoke the idea of revelations bestowed out of divine favour, grace, or election.⁷⁰ Instead, to be consistent with our understanding of a) **ζωμ-πατεῖν** as "to trample upon (in order to

⁶⁸ E.g. Deut 11:29-32; 27:1-8; 27:11-13; Josh 8:30-35; see Eissfeldt (1970). Richter (2007), 353 suggests that the biblical text "names as many as five different Gilgals", with three within fifteen miles of Mount Ebal.

⁶⁹ See Beazley (1901), 519.

⁷⁰ Although, see Klauck (1985), 168: "Jericho kann als Chiffre für die diesseitige Welt verstanden werden. Der Terminus 'Berg' hingegen dürfte an sich schon eine besondere Offenbarungsqualität beinhalten." Klauck apparently does not see the tension here.

overcome an adversary)”, and b) Jericho as the maligned material world, the term “mountain” must also be understood in a pejorative manner. Fortunately, there is good precedent for this assessment of mountains.

In a comparative study of the eschatological image of the flattening out of the earth’s landscape, Bruce Lincoln argued that cross-culturally speaking, peaks and troughs in the landscape are often imagined as representing some kind of social reality, such as the distribution of wealth, or religious hierarchy.⁷¹ The notion that the mountains would be made flat became a popular image in early Jewish and Christian eschatology as a manifestation of the imminent arrival of the kingdom of God on earth,⁷² perhaps as a symbol of the equality of all believers (e.g. Gal 3:26-28). In this regard, we might say that the presence of mountains was contrary to the expected perfection of the future age. A similar idea is found in some early Christian exegeses of Psalms 67:2-3, where the psalmist asks that God’s enemies, the sinners, vanish from his presence “as wax melts from the presence of fire” (ὡς τήκεται κηρὸς ἀπὸ προσώπου πυρός). According to Justin Martyr and Tertullian, it is not the sinners who shall melt like wax, but rather the “mountains” of the earth, which represent “the adversaries” (οἱ ὑπεναντίοι)⁷³ and “the flesh of the wicked” (*caro ... profanorum*).⁷⁴ In these instances, the destruction of God’s enemies has come to be symbolized by the flattening of mountains. Such a notion may well have informed *Apoc. Paul*’s choice of words.

But we can perhaps be still more precise. John 4:7-26 describes a meeting between Jesus and a Samaritan woman. The woman states that her ancestors worshipped “on this mountain” – which in this instance is Mount Gerizim, the Samaritan holy site – but that “you (pl.) say that the place where it is necessary to worship is in Jerusalem” (v.20). Jesus replies

⁷¹ Lincoln (1983).

⁷² E.g. Ps 96:5; Mic 1:4; Jdt 16:15; Bar 5:7; Luke 3:5 (= Isa 40:4); Rev 6:12-17; *Pss. Sol.* 11.4; *1 En.* 1.6; 53.7; *Sib. Or.* 8.236; *T. Mos.* 10.4; *Herm. Vis.* 1.3.4; Justin Martyr, *Dial.* 50.3; Irenaeus, *Haer.* III 20.10.

⁷³ Justin Martyr, *Dial.* 25.3-4.

⁷⁴ Tertullian, *Res.* 26.5.

that, “the hour is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem”, but rather, “the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth” (vv.21-23). Jesus therefore makes a threefold distinction between 1) worship on Mount Gerizim, 2) worship at the Jerusalem temple, and 3) worship in spirit and truth. Origen particularly distinguished the third of these from the others, arguing that the first two types of worship occur “in particular places”,⁷⁵ and are “fleshly forms of worship”,⁷⁶ whereas the third type is a “contemplative” form of worship reserved for those who have already become like angels.⁷⁷ But Heracleon interprets this threefold distinction slightly differently:

The mountain means the devil or his world, since . . . the devil was one part of the whole material order. The world, however, is the whole mountain of evil, a deserted dwelling of beasts, which the Gentiles and all who preceded the law used to worship. Jerusalem . . . is the creation or the creator, which the Jews used to worship.⁷⁸

On the other hand, according to Heracleon, the pneumatics “will worship neither the creation nor the creator, but the Father of truth”.⁷⁹ Heracleon therefore interprets Jesus’s threefold distinction as follows: 1) material worship connected to the mountain/devil; 2) psychic worship connected to Jerusalem/the demiurge;⁸⁰ and 3) pneumatic worship connected to the Father of truth, the authentic God.⁸¹

Heracleon’s tripartite division of human worship corresponds perfectly to *Apoc. Paul’s* cosmology which, despite consisting of ten heavens, is clearly divided into three ontological spaces: 1) the material world, or “the world of the dead”, containing “the

⁷⁵ Origen, *Princ.* I 1.4.

⁷⁶ Origen, *Cels.* VI 70.

⁷⁷ Origen, *Comm. Jo.* XIII 98-99.

⁷⁸ Heracleon Fr. 20 in Origen, *Comm. Jo.* XIII 95. In XIII 96, Origen reports that Heracleon also interpreted the “mountain” as a symbol of “the creation which the Gentiles used to worship”. In XIII 104 and 114, commenting in John 4:22-23, Heracleon similarly distinguishes between Gentile worship, which serves “wood and stones”, Jewish worship, which serves “angels, the month, and the moon”, and the pneumatic “worship in truth”.

⁷⁹ Heracleon Fr. 20 in Origen, *Comm. Jo.* XIII 97.

⁸⁰ See also Heracleon Fr. 13 in Origen, *Comm. Jo.* X 210 on John 2:13: “[Heracleon] says the ascent to Jerusalem indicates the Lord’s ascension from material things to the psychic region which is an image of Jerusalem.” See Thomassen (2006a), 112-115.

⁸¹ See Pagels (1973), 88-90; Poffet (1985), 41-48; Thomassen (2010), 187; Wucherpennig (2002), 299-300; Pettipiece (2007).

Mountain of Jericho”; 2) the psychic realm of the lower seven heavens, governed by the demiurge enthroned in the seventh heaven like YHWH’s Kabod in the Jerusalem temple; and 3) the pneumatic realm of the upper three heavens where Paul declares, “I embraced my fellow spirits”. Without postulating any direct dependence on Heracleon himself, there are several reasons to suspect that “the Mountain of Jericho” was inspired by the unnamed Mount Gerizim of John 4: 1) Mount Gerizim came to be loosely associated with Jericho in the imagination of some early Christians; 2) both Mount Gerizim and Jericho are associated with materiality, hostile cosmic forces, and even the devil by both Valentinian and non-Valentinian exegetes;⁸² and 3) John 4 and Luke 10:29-37 are natural inter-texts because of their shared Samaritan themes. The meaning behind “the Mountain of Jericho” therefore is something like “the forces/devil of the material world”, which also explains why Paul is said to “trample” (ζωμ-πατεῖν) upon it, that is, overcome or defeat it. Most importantly, this understanding of “the Mountain of Jericho” reveals another moment in *Apoc. Paul* where the Divine Name is of central importance.

6.3.4. The Divine Name and Paul’s “Trampling”

In Luke 10:17-19, the disciples proclaim, “Lord, in your Name (ἐν τῷ ὀνόματί σου), even the demons submit (ὑποτάσσεται) to us”, to which Jesus responds, “Behold, I have given you the authority to trample (πατεῖν) on top of snakes and scorpions, and on all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall hurt you.” Through the power of the Name, the disciples have become impervious to demonic attack; they are able to “subdue” (ὑποτάσσεσθαι) or “trample” (πατεῖν/ζωμ/calco) them by invoking the Name. The same idea underlies Ephesians 1:20-23, where it is combined with the image of Jesus’s enthronement echoing Psalms 109:1; God has enthroned Christ “above every name that is named” and has “subdued

⁸² Heracleon Fr. 31 and 37 in Origen, *Comm. Jo.* XIII 248 and 341 both describe Samaria as a symbol of the material world.

(ὕπεταξεν) everything under his feet.” Similarly, Philippians 3:21 states that our bodies shall be “conformed to his body of Glory through the operation which enables him also to make all things subject (ὕποτάξαι) to him.” Of course, this “operation” (ἐνέργεια) is the giving of the Divine Name according to Philippians 2:9-11.

This formula of trampling on the adversary, signifying the defeat or overcoming of Satan, became quite widespread in early Christian literature, particularly in association with the possession or invocation of the Divine Name. For example, according to the second-sixth century *Questions of Bartholomew* 4.15-29, Jesus instructed Bartholomew to “trample (πατήσαι) on the neck of Beliar” (4.17), who is also known as Satanael and Satanas. At first Bartholomew struggled to subdue the enemy, but when Jesus instructed him to “go in my Name (ἐν τῷ ὀνόματί μου) and ask him what you wish” (4.21), Bartholomew again trampled (ἐπάτησεν) on the devil’s neck, this time subduing him.⁸³ Similarly, in the *Martyrdom of Perpetua* (c. 200 CE), as Perpetua has her visionary episode, in which she ascends a ladder to paradise, there is a serpent lying in wait beneath the ladder ready for careless climbers to fall. But when Perpetua invokes the Divine Name, the serpent emerges, allowing Perpetua to “trample” (*calco*) upon his head and continue her ascent.⁸⁴

The connections between Luke 10:17-19, the Divine Name, and the renunciation of Satan made the words of Luke 10:19 appropriate for incorporation into Valentinian rites of baptism-anointment. According to *On the Anointing* NHC XI,2a 40.11-17, the Valentinian would beseech God in the following terms: “It is fitting for you now to send your Son Jesus Christ and for him to anoint us so that we might be able to trample (καταπατεῖ) on top of snakes and on the heads of scorpions and all the power of the devil.” Similarly, according to *Exc.* 76, one who has been baptized “into the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the

⁸³ My trans. from Wilmart and Tisserant (1913). On the dating of the text, see Elliott (1993), 652.

⁸⁴ Cf. Justin Martyr, *Dial.* 76.6; Irenaeus, *Haer.* III 23.7; V 21.1; *Odes Sol.* 22.5-6; *Mart. Fruct.* 7.2; Minucius Felix, *Oct.* 37; Melito of Sardis, Fr.2.

Holy Spirit ... has received authority to trample (περιπατεῖν) on top of scorpions and snakes, the powers of evil.” So, through their possession of the Divine Name, the Valentinian has the power to trample upon, and therefore overcome or defeat, the forces of evil and Satan.

If “the Mountain of Jericho” symbolises the material world and its powers, then the notion that Paul “tramples” upon it most likely refers to this tradition stemming from Luke 10:19. Paul’s possession of the Divine Name in *Apoc. Paul* makes the connection almost certain; through possession of the Name, Paul can overcome the cosmic forces which would thwart his ambitions for heavenly ascent. Further, since *Apoc. Paul*’s Name-sign has been identified as that received in baptism-anointment, the strongest parallels are with those Valentinian texts cited above which used Luke 10:19 in their rites of initiation.

6.3.5. Conclusion

The Old Testament figure Joshua (LXX: Ἰησοῦς) was often understood Christologically because of the Greek form of his name, as is suggested by those early Christian Greek manuscripts of the Old Testament where it is written as a *nomen sacrum*.⁸⁵ Indeed, Justin Martyr understood Joshua-Ἰησοῦς to be a forerunner of Christ, given his name by Moses (Num 13:16) as fulfilment of God’s promise that one bearing his Name would lead Israel into Canaan (Ex 23:20-21).⁸⁶ The notion that a figure bearing the Divine Name would defeat Jericho therefore had some precedent in early Christian thought and may have informed the author of *Apoc. Paul*. However, the image of Paul “trampling upon the Mountain of Jericho” seems to have a series of quite specific exegetical backgrounds, all of which converge in Valentinianism: 1) “Jericho” is derived from Luke 10:29-37, with early Christian exegetes, including Valentinians, interpreting it as the material world into which the soul had fallen; 2) the “mountain” is derived from John 4:20-24 where it represents a carnal form of worship,

⁸⁵ E.g. P. Chester Beatty VI; see Hurtado (2007), 132.

⁸⁶ Justin Martyr, *Dial.* 75; cf. 73-76; 90-91; 111-113; 115; 128.1; 131.4-5; 132; see Hurtado (2007), 129-131.

but came to represent Satan and his forces in Heracleon's commentary; and 3) Paul's "trampling" is derived from Luke 10:17-19 where it expresses the ability to defeat Satan and his forces through the power of the Divine Name, and was later used in Valentinian baptismal formulae. Therefore, we may conclude that this image in *Apoc. Paul*'s broader narrative of Paul's successful heavenly ascent not only bears witness to exegetical traditions found across a range of Valentinian literature, but that a Valentinian exegete and author is most likely responsible for the image.

6.4. Other Valentinian Elements in the *Apocalypse of Paul*

There are several other noteworthy elements in *Apoc. Paul* which resonate strongly with a Valentinian context. Firstly, the depiction of the demiurge corresponds well with how he is presented in other Valentinian sources. Secondly, the idea that the witnesses in the fourth heaven appear at specific times of the day indicates an astrological background which has a strong parallel with *Exc.*'s ideas on fate and rebirth. And finally, Paul's exchange of greetings, or kisses, with his fellows in the Pleroma recalls ideas encountered in multiple Valentinian texts.

6.4.1. The Demiurge

While the demiurge's powers are often portrayed as unequivocally evil in Valentinianism, the demiurge is rarely depicted so negatively.⁸⁷ Rather than evil, the demiurge's defining characteristic is ignorance; specifically, ignorance of the Father above him prior to the revelation of Christ,⁸⁸ ignorance of the creative agency of a superior divine being operating through him,⁸⁹ and ignorance of his role in the divine plan of salvation.⁹⁰ Indeed, Ptolemy

⁸⁷ On the Valentinian demiurge generally, see Thomassen (1993a); Dunderberg (2008), 119-133.

⁸⁸ E.g. Irenaeus, *Haer.* I 5.4; *Tri. Trac.* NHC I,5 101.29-102.3; Hippolytus, *Haer.* VI 33; 36.1-2.

⁸⁹ E.g. Irenaeus, *Haer.* I 5.1; Hippolytus, *Haer.* VI 33; 34.8; *Exc.* 45-47; 53.4; *Tri. Trac.* NHC I,5 100.31-101.5; 104.31-105.3; *Val. Exp.* NHC XI,2 35-37; Heracleon Fr.1 in Origen, *Comm. Jo.* II 100-103. See Sagnard (1947),

tells his prospective student Flora that although the demiurge is “inferior to the perfect God and inferior to that one’s righteousness” (ἔσται μὲν καταδέεστερος τοῦ τελείου Θεοῦ, καὶ τῆς ἐκείνου δικαιοσύνης ἐλάττων), he is also “an image of the superior God” (αὐτὸς δὲ τοῦ κρείττονός ἐστιν εἰκών).⁹¹ Ptolemy’s followers similarly regard him as “the King of the Universe”, since he created the seven heavens and rules over them as the “Hebdomad”.⁹² In fact, the demiurge is said to have rejoiced at the Saviour’s revelation and wanted to draw near to him; therefore, he continues to administer the psychic church in order to receive the Ogdoad as his eschatological reward.⁹³

Ptolemy’s *Epistle to Flora* depicts the demiurge as the one who established the Law set out in the Pentateuch, while Moses and the “elders” (πρεσβύτεροι) supplemented it with their own insights.⁹⁴ The demiurge’s Law has three subdivisions which Christ came to either fulfil (the Ten Commandments), abolish (the *lex talionis*), or redirect from the demiurge to God (ritual law).⁹⁵ Ptolemy concludes that the demiurge, “being neither good nor evil nor unrighteous, might well be called ‘righteous’ by his own standards (ἰδίως), being an arbiter of what is righteous according to him (κατ’ αὐτὸν).”⁹⁶ For Ptolemy, the demiurge is just insofar as he arbitrates in accordance with his own law. However, this law is itself not truly just because it is derived from the demiurge, who is inferior to God in righteousness. In other words, the demiurge’s righteousness must be sharply qualified in light of the inferior legal system he has established and in which he arbitrates.

636; Thomassen and Painchaud (1989), 395-396; Thomassen (1993a), 242; idem. (2006a), 122-124; idem. (2010), 177-178; *contra* Wucherpfennig (2002), 127.

⁹⁰ E.g. *Tri. Trac.* NHC I,5 101.23-25; Hippolytus, *Haer.* VI 33.

⁹¹ Ptolemy, *Flor.* in Epiphanius, *Pan.* XXXIII 7.6-7.

⁹² Irenaeus, *Haer.* I 5.1-2; cf. I 14.6; Hippolytus, *Haer.* VI 32.7; *Val. Exp.* NHC XI,2 37.12-15.

⁹³ Irenaeus, *Haer.* I 7.4; *Exc.* 63-65.

⁹⁴ Ptolemy, *Flor.* in Epiphanius, *Pan.* XXXIII 4.1-14. On the demiurge in *Flor.*, see Thomassen (2006a), 119-129; Dunderberg (2005b), 78-79.

⁹⁵ Ptolemy, *Flor.* in Epiphanius, *Pan.* XXXIII 5.1-6.5.

⁹⁶ Ptolemy, *Flor.* in Epiphanius, *Pan.* XXXIII 7.5.

Although *Apoc. Paul* appears more critical than Ptolemy of the demiurge's Law, its overall depiction of him is quite similar: he resides in the seventh heaven; the material world and the seven heavens constitute "his creation"; and he administers the psychic realm and the fate of souls. He is also presumably in charge of the justice system in the lower seven heavens, even if he appears to have outsourced the role of judge to one of his toll-collectors. Further, the image of the demiurge as "the King of the Universe" resonates with *Apoc. Paul*'s depiction of him enthroned in the seventh heaven, as he is in *Exc. 38* and *Gos. Phil. 84.29-85.1*. *Apoc. Paul* also depicts him in the kind of administrative role that Ptolemy's followers apparently envisioned for him. As Kaler concludes, "the Demiurge in the *Apocalypse of Paul* is more like an obstructionist bureaucrat. He greets Paul respectfully, engages him in conversation, and allows him to depart when the proper sign is shown. This irenic, conciliatory image of the Demiurge is quite characteristic of Valentinian writings."⁹⁷

To be sure, certain details vary across these sources. For example, unlike *Apoc. Paul*, *Exc. 38.3* has Jesus enthroned beside the demiurge in order to collect the spiritual seed and guide them into the Pleroma at the Eschaton. Of course, it is possible that the Spirit-child represents Christ and therefore plays a similar role in *Apoc. Paul*. But more generally, a certain degree of variety is inevitable within a literary tradition, especially where there are multiple authors with different audiences and goals. Overall, the portrayal of the demiurge in *Apoc. Paul* is strikingly similar to those of recognized Valentinian sources, and conversely, is strikingly dissimilar to the lion-headed Ialdabaoth found in Ophite, Sethian, and other gnostic texts.

But nowhere in Valentinianism is the demiurge more positively portrayed than in *Tri. Trac.*, where the Logos uses the demiurge to beautify creation, and speaks through him to the prophets (100-31-35). The Logos appoints him as the chief Archon over the two orders of

⁹⁷ Kaler (2008a), 65.

“the Psychic” and “the Hylic”, and gives him the names of “father, god, demiurge (ΠΕΦΡΩΒ), king, judge, place, dwelling, and law” (100.19-30). *Tri. Trac.* thereby identifies this figure with the biblical creator, as does *Apoc. Paul*. As for the psychic powers under the demiurge’s governance, it is said that “each one of the archons ... kept guard (ΑΡΗΖ), having been entrusted with the administration (ΤΟΙΚΟΝΟΜΙΑ)” (100.3-7). They play various roles in the demiurge’s οἰκονομία: “There are kings, there are lords and those who give commands, some for administering punishment, others for administering justice, still others for giving rest and healing, others for teaching, others for guarding” (100.12-18).⁹⁸ Several of these roles correspond to those of the heavenly powers in *Apoc. Paul*: the demiurge in the seventh heaven is enthroned as *Lord and king*; the toll-collector in the sixth heaven functions purely as a *guard* or gatekeeper; the “great angel” and his three subordinates in the fifth heaven administer *punishment* by “whipping” souls; and the toll-collector in the fourth heaven administers *justice* on behalf of the demiurge. Much like the psychic powers in *Tri. Trac.*, the demiurge’s powers in *Apoc. Paul* appear deeply engaged in administering his οἰκονομία, making sure that the psychic books are balanced.

In *Apoc. Paul* then, the demiurge himself not only looks and sounds like the Valentinian demiurge, but the manner in which he governs and appoints his administrators strongly recalls what we read in *Tri. Trac.* We will see in the following chapter that *Apoc. Paul*’s rather more negative opinion of the demiurge’s οἰκονομία, stressing its inherent dangers and corruption as opposed to its hidden role in salvation history, is to be explained in light of the text’s social and catechetical function.

⁹⁸ Trans. Attridge (1985), 275. On the concept of οἰκονομία in Valentinianism, see Thomassen (2006a), 53-54: “This word [οἰκονομία] 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.”

6.4.2. Astrology and Fate

The witnesses in the fourth heaven function to reinforce the corrupt cosmic law of the demiurge. They seduce souls into sin so that they can be extorted by celestial toll-collectors and can be punished for their worldly debt by being thrown into a bodily prison which has been prepared in advance; the soul is reincarnated by force. According to *Apoc. Paul*, these duplicitous witnesses not only lead the soul astray, but do so at specific times of the day. In *Apoc. Paul*, the three witnesses are said to have operated on the soul at the second, fifth, and twelfth hours of the day. The significance of these hours remains a mystery.⁹⁹ The most plausible suggestion so far has come from Murdock, who connected them with the δωδεκάωρος of Graeco-Egyptian astrology, in which “stellar deities” were appointed over each double hour, that of the day and the night.¹⁰⁰ Although Murdock’s interpretation has not been accepted by subsequent commentators,¹⁰¹ I am convinced that he was on the right track when he understood the witnesses astrologically.

In her 2013 book, *Fate and Cosmology in Gnosticism and Graeco-Roman Antiquity*, Nicola Denzey Lewis surveys a wide range of principally Christian and Hermetic materials which employ the notion of εἰμαρμένη (“fate”) as “part of a discourse of alterity, distinguishing one group, community, or individual from another.”¹⁰² Such discourses depicted εἰμαρμένη as an oppressive cosmic force through which astral, planetary, or zodiacal powers kept humans enslaved in a cycle of birth and death so as to keep them separate from the divine. The idea was that one’s own group offered freedom from εἰμαρμένη, while others remained enslaved. As Denzey Lewis demonstrates, freedom from

⁹⁹ Kasser (1965), 78 suggested that *Apoc. Paul* NHC V,2 is paraphrasing the Parable of the Workers in the Vineyard (Matt 20:1-6). However, the hours are different in each case. Even if Kasser is correct, it is far from clear what such an allusion would mean in the present context.

¹⁰⁰ Murdock (1968), 115-116.

¹⁰¹ Kaler (2005), 228-229 considers it too speculative; Rosenstiehl (2005), 86-87 interprets the witnesses as the souls of the people that the defendant has wronged, and not celestial powers at all.

¹⁰² Denzey Lewis (2013), 8.

cosmic εἰμαρμένη could be attained via the intervention of a saviour figure, instruction, ritual praxis, asceticism, or some combination of these. But in a Christian context, baptism became a popular locus for liberation from cosmic forces. Viewed as facilitating a resurrection (e.g. Romans 6) or rebirth (e.g. John 3), baptism could quite literally change one's relationship to fate which had been initially established at biological birth.¹⁰³

Significantly, Denzey Lewis suggests that Paul provides “what may be the earliest rhetoric of escape from fate.”¹⁰⁴ Her assertion rests on passages such as Galatians 4:1-11, where Paul claims that “when we were children, we were enslaved by the elements of the cosmos (τὰ στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου)” (v.3); passages which, in accord with many modern translations, Denzey Lewis considers “difficult to understand *apart* from the rhetoric of escape from fate.”¹⁰⁵ Her connection of τὰ στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου with the oppressive forces of εἰμαρμένη is supported by Paul's words in the following verses: Christ came to “redeem (ἐξαγοράσῃ lit. ‘buy out’) those under the law” (v.5) so that they are “no longer a slave, but a child” (v.7); Paul is incredulous with the Galatians: “how can you turn back once more to the weak and beggarly elements (τὰ ἀσθενῆ καὶ πτωχὰ στοιχεῖα) to which you wish to be enslaved all over again? You observe days and months and seasons and years” (vv. 9-10). Paul thereby connects τὰ στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου with both enslavement to the law, and certain calendrical or astrological observances. This indicates that even if Paul did not have εἰμαρμένη specifically in mind, he certainly subscribed to the notion that certain zodiacal powers held humans in sway through imposition of the law, but that Christ could release them from such enslavement. For Paul, such release was achieved at baptism, where one becomes free from sin (e.g. Rom 6:6-7), the law (e.g. Rom 7:4), and τὰ στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου (Col 2:20).

¹⁰³ Ibid. 145-163.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid. 83.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid. 64 (original emphasis); e.g. NRSV “the elemental spirits of the world”; NIV “the elemental spiritual forces of the world”.

Denzey Lewis cites several Valentinian sources which interpret these Pauline στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου not as spiritual beings, but rather as the basic elements of matter.¹⁰⁶ Irenaeus reports that according to Ptolemy, Achamoth created τὰ στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου from her grief and terror,¹⁰⁷ while *Treat. Res.* 49.30-37 uses στοιχεῖον as a synonym for either the cosmos or the body: “It is necessary for each person to practice asceticism (ῤασκευεῖ; Gk. ἀσκεῖν) in a number of ways and to be released from this element (στοιχεῖον) so as not to wander astray (ῤπιπλανα; Gk. πλανᾶσθαι), but instead receive again that which existed at first.” The material στοιχεῖον is therefore associated with “going astray” (πλανᾶσθαι), possibly alluding to the planetary role in cosmic εἰμαρμένη from which humans may escape through ascetic or ritual practice.¹⁰⁸ Further, *Exc.* 81 delimits the sensible and spiritual aspects of baptism as the water and the Spirit respectively; and just as water extinguishes sensible fire, so too “the Spirit given to us from above, being immaterial, prevails not only over the elements (στοιχείων), but also the powers (δυνάμεων) and the evil archons (ἀρχῶν πονηρῶν).” Again, baptism conveys the spiritual means to overcoming the cosmic στοιχεῖα and their demonic controllers. We may add to Denzey Lewis’s list, Heracleon Fr. 21, where he recalls Galatians 4:10 when he states that the pneumatics must not worship in ignorance like the Jews, who “serve angels, the month, and the moon.”¹⁰⁹ Heracleon thereby connects enslavement to fate with Jewish worship specifically.

Although *Apoc. Paul* does not use technical terms like εἰμαρμένη and τὰ στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου in describing the broader character of the three witnesses in the fourth heaven, their underlying roles correspond extremely well with Pauline passages like Romans 7:22-23, which contrasts the “law of God” with the “law of sin” which keeps people “captive” (αἰχμαλωτίζοντά), where the latter is administered by hostile cosmic forces (e.g. Gal 4:1-11).

¹⁰⁶ Ibid. 65-66.

¹⁰⁷ Irenaeus, *Haer.* I 4.2; see Thomassen (1993a), 241; Kalvesmaki (2013), 58-59.

¹⁰⁸ Cf. Tatian, *Oratio* 9.

¹⁰⁹ Heracleon Fr.21 in Origen, *Comm. Jo.* XIII 104.

Similarly, *Apoc. Paul*'s witnesses lead souls to sin against the demiurge's law and thereby keep them captive in the prison of the cosmos. Unless people are baptized, they cannot be freed from their cosmic enslavement. In contrast, *Apoc. Paul*'s ideal is to follow the principle of Galatians 5:18: "But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law." Having been baptized, Paul is led unhindered by the Spirit through the heavens, since he is no longer subject to the demiurge's law. His promise to return to "take captive the captivity of Babylon" recalls the historical Paul's distinction between the unbaptized as "slaves to sin" (Rom 6:16, 20) and the baptized as "slaves to God/righteousness" (Rom 6:18, 22; cf. 7:25). The hero of *Apoc. Paul* shall turn the slaves of sin into slaves of God through baptism-anointment.

The notion that each of the three witnesses led the soul astray at specific hours may suggest that the author of *Apoc. Paul* was working from a "vice list" in which each of the twelve zodiacal powers was assigned dominion over a particular sin.¹¹⁰ But more generally, if the interpretation of the witnesses as zodiacal powers who corrupt and enslave unbaptized souls is correct, then *Exc. 67-81* provides a very strong parallel indeed. This lengthy section concerns the saving work of Christ in relation to εἰμαρμένη and its zodiacal, astral, and planetary powers.

Εἰμαρμένη is said to "govern through the stars" (τῶν ἄστρον ... δι' ἐκείνων πολιτευόμεναι) and, by means of them, "to obtain possession over those who were born at that given moment, as though they were its children" (*Exc. 69.1-2*). The stars themselves are causally inert, but merely "display the activity of the supreme powers", who in turn, "manage and watch over births" (*70.1-2*). These powers move "the twelve signs of the zodiac (τὰ

¹¹⁰ *CH XIII* 7-12 describes "twelve tormentors", corresponding to the twelvefold "zodiacal circle", who are each assigned one torment to exercise over humans by using "the prison of the body to torture the inward person with the sufferings of sense" (trans. Copenhaver (1992), 51-52). For New Testament vice lists, see Matt 15:19; Mark 7:21-22; Rom 1:29-31; 1 Cor 6:9-10; Gal 5:19-21; Col 3:5; 1 Tim 1:9-10; 6:4-5; 2 Tim 3:2-4.

δεκαδύω ζῳδια) and the seven stars which follow them”, and in doing so, “they indicate a movement of substance (οὐσίας) for the birth of living beings, and the change of circumstances (περιστάσεων)” (71.1). Certain stars and powers are good, others are evil, and each person’s disposition depends on the astrological conditions at the moment of birth (71.2). Christ delivers us from this cosmic battle of good and evil, providing “peace from the marshalling of powers and angels”, and especially from “those who usurp the soul through the body and external things, and pledge the soul into slavery” (72.1-73.1). Christ’s coming is heralded as the “rising of a new and alien star which abolished the old astral decree”, transferring those who believed in him “from fate into his providence (ἀπὸ τῆς Εἰμαρμένης εἰς τὴν ἐκείνου Πρόνοιαν)” (74.2); it “released us from becoming/nativity (γενέσεως) and fate (Εἰμαρμένης)” (76.1).¹¹¹ But while Christ’s advent made freedom from εἰμαρμένη possible, it required baptism to be made a reality, since it is through baptism that “we are reborn (ἀναγεννώμεθα)”, we receive the power “to trample (περιπατεῖν) upon the evil powers”, and we “come to be above all the rest of the powers” (76.2-4). Hence, “baptism is called ‘death’ and ‘the end of the old life’, since we renounce the evil principalities; but also ‘life with Christ’”, because through baptism, the soul is transformed, and the person becomes “a slave of God” (δοῦλος θεοῦ) (77.1-3).

According to *Exc.* then, “until baptism, fate is unerring, but after it, the astrologers no longer arrive at the truth” (78.1). In combination with γνῶσις, baptism is “liberating” (ἐλευθεροῦν);¹¹² it forms the spiritual seed so that “it is no longer weak and subject to cosmic forces”; and by being “sealed by the three Names”, the initiate has been “released from the entire triad of corruption (πάσης τῆς ἐν φθορᾷ τριάδος)”, and made “invulnerable to every other power”, for it “bears the image of the heavenly” (τὴν εἰκόνα τοῦ ἐπουρανίου) (78.2-80.3). So according to *Exc.*, before Christ came, human beings were in the thrall of evil

¹¹¹ Cf. Ignatius, *Eph.* 19; see Edwards (2014), 36-37.

¹¹² See Dunderberg (2008), 30, 120.

cosmic powers who manipulated the zodiac and the stars to control them through fate. Christ's coming introduced the means of escape from cosmic enslavement by establishing an alternative astral order into which one could be (re)born through baptism, which, along with γνῶσις, made liberation a reality.

Apoc. Paul's juxtaposition of Paul and the soul in the fourth heaven corresponds well with how *Exc.* contrasts those who have been baptized and escaped enslavement to fate with those who have not: "The one whom the Mother generates is led into death and the cosmos; but the one whom Christ regenerates is transferred into life and the Ogdoad" (*Exc.* 80.1). In *Apoc. Paul*, the soul has not undergone baptismal rebirth, and therefore is born once more into "the cosmos of the dead", whereas Paul has been "raised" into the Ogdoad and higher still. *Apoc. Paul's* zodiacal witnesses may even shed light on "the triad of corruption" from whom the baptized soul escapes in *Exc.* 80.3. It is a curious phrase which led Sagnard to conclude that, "on ne voit pas bien ce que peut être cette 'triade de corruption'."¹¹³ It is possible that *Apoc. Paul* has adopted the notion from *Exc.*, or some other Valentinian source, of three zodiacal or astral oppressors who seek to corrupt and imprison the soul through sin. Whatever the case, if the three witnesses in *Apoc. Paul* do indeed reflect the widespread notion of enslavement to fate, then *Exc.* presents an excellent parallel with many terminological and doctrinal similarities. This would again support a Valentinian provenance for *Apoc. Paul*.

6.4.3. Paul's "Kisses/Greetings"

As Paul ascends, he exchanges ἀσπασμοὶ ("greetings, embraces, kisses"; ῥασπιαζε) with various beings that he encounters, specifically the apostles in the Ogdoad, the inhabitants of the ninth heaven, and his fellow-spirits in the tenth heaven. We are probably not meant to

¹¹³ Sagnard (1948), 205 n.4; cf. Thomassen (2006a), 334 n.1 follows Orbe in suggesting that this "triad" might refer to "an anti-trinity of the Devil, his son the Antichrist, and the spirit of iniquity."

envisage a literal, physical embrace, since Paul is also “greeted” by the apostles in heaven while he is still on earth (19.18-20). Rather, the act must be understood as a symbolic display of community, as it is in many New Testament passages, particularly in Paul, who occasionally associates it with an actual “holy kiss” (φίλημα ἁγιον).¹¹⁴ The Graeco-Coptic verb **αCΠΑΖΕ** was occasionally used in narratives of ascent to express the exchanges between the seer and those figures with whom they share some sort of identity.¹¹⁵ Similarly, in the debatably Valentinian *I Apoc. Jas.* 30.13-31.6, a distressed James is “walking (**ΜΟΟΨΕ**) upon the mountain called Gaugelan” when “the Lord appeared to him”, and in response, James “embraces” (**ΜΟΛΖ**) and “kisses” (**†ΠΠ**) him, declaring, “Rabbi, I have found you!”¹¹⁶ Further, Kaler observes that among the Nag Hammadi codices (excluding *Apoc. Paul*), **αCΠΑΖΕ** and its cognate noun are attested ten times, “always in contexts having to do with recognition of or unity with the divine element”, where “the exchange of greetings marks one as belonging to a community of those who have gnosis.”¹¹⁷ This would certainly apply to *Apoc. Paul*’s use of the term.

As Kaler notes, *Melch.* 26.1 provides a very strong parallel to *Apoc. Paul*’s use of **ῤαCΠαζε**, since there the seer is “greeted” by beings who praise him for prevailing over the archons.¹¹⁸ But by far the most compelling parallels are those from *Gos. Truth*:

¹¹⁴ E.g. Matt 10:12; Luke 1:28-29, 40; Acts 18:22; 21:7; Rom 16:3-23; 1 Cor 16:19-21; 2 Cor 13:12; Phil 4:21-22; Col 4:10-18; 1 Thess 5:26; 2 Tim 4:19, 21; Titus 3:15; Phlm 1:23; Heb 13:24; 1 Pet 5:13-14; 2 John 1:13; 3 John 1:15. For the φίλημα ἁγιον, see Rom 16:16; 1 Cor 16:20; 2 Cor 13:12; 1 Thess 5:26; cf. 1 Pet 5:14 (φίλημα ἀγάπης). On the kiss generally, see Klassen (1992), 89-92; Kreider (1987); Phillips (1996); on the ritual kiss as an identity marker distinguishing “insiders” from “outsiders”, see Penn (2002); idem. (2003); idem. (2005).

¹¹⁵ E.g. *T. Isaac* 10.1-2; *Vis. Paul* 25, 26, 27, 47, 48, 49, 50; cf. 20 and 51 (**†ΠΠ ΕΡΟΙ**); cited in Rosenstiehl (2005), 20.

¹¹⁶ Cf. *I Apoc. Jas.* NHC V,3 32.8; *2 Apoc. Jas.* NHC V,4 56.14.

¹¹⁷ Kaler (2005), 204-205 cites *Eugnostos* NHC III,3 81.7, 8; *Eugnostos* NHC V,1 9.19; *Tri. Trac.* NHC I,5 89.15; *Gos. Truth* NHC I,3 26.30; 41.34; *Pr. Thanks.* NHC VI,7 65.4; *Ep. Pet. Phil.* NHC VIII,2 140.14; *Disc. 8-9* NHC VI,6 57.26; *Melch.* NHC IX,1 26.1. Cf. Justin Martyr, *I Apol.* 45.5 where Christians are said to both “embrace (ἀσπαζόμεθα) and teach” the “Name of Christ”.

¹¹⁸ Kaler (2005), 205 also suggests that *Disc. 8-9* NHC VI,6 57.26 offers a particularly close parallel to *Apoc. Paul* NHC V,2 on the grounds that “the embrace is exchanged between Hermes and a disciple immediately after they have, in a vision, left the seventh heaven.” In fact, however, the visionary ascent has not yet begun for Hermes and his student, since Hermes’s statement that, “we have already advanced to the seventh” (56.27),

Truth (i.e. Christ) appeared, (and) all his emanations knew him. They kissed (ῤΑCΠΑΖΕ) the Father through Truth with a perfect power which unites them with the Father ... because Truth is the mouth of the Father (and) the Holy Spirit is his tongue; whoever is joined to Truth is joined to the mouth of the Father through his tongue when he receives the Holy Spirit.¹¹⁹

By “kissing” the Son and the Spirit, the initiate kisses the Father. The language of “mouth” and “tongue” emphasises the deep intimacy between initiate and God in this act of ῤΑCΠΑΖΕ. Indeed, according to *Gos. Truth* 41.33-34, the initiates “participate in his (the Father’s) face (ΠΕΡΩ) by means of the kisses (ΝΙΑCΠΑCΜΟC).” So, Christ provides the initiate with the means to participate in the Father’s being, an action which is accomplished through the unifying power of the Holy Spirit.¹²⁰ For *Gos. Truth* this entire process is expressed as a “kiss” (ΑCΠΑCΜΟC), with the Father as the face, the Son as the mouth, and the Holy Spirit as the tongue.

The notion that kissing/embracing (ῤΑCΠΑΖΕ) the Son/Spirit joins the initiate to God is precisely what we find in *Apoc. Paul*, where as Murdock argued, Paul’s exchange of kisses/greetings with his “fellow-spirits” in the tenth heaven indicates that he has “become one with that generation ... [and] entered the godhead.”¹²¹ On a more mundane level, *Gos. Phil.* 59.2-4 states that, “the perfect conceive and beget through a kiss (ΠΕΙ); therefore, we also kiss (†Π) one another.”¹²² Of course, this does not refer to a biological conception, but rather the begetting of new Christian “brothers” through initiation into the community of the perfect, transforming them into “children of the bridal chamber”. Again, the kiss is a symbol

refers to a previous occasion such as that described in *CH XIII*; see Hanegraaff (2008). However, the conclusion of Hanegraaff (2008), 159 that “the decisive ‘alteration of consciousness’ seems to be triggered by a ritual kiss or embrace” is most likely incorrect, since the preceding prayer and ecstatic speech (56.17-22) would be much more likely to induce an ASC than an act of “embracing” (ῤΑCΠΑΖΕ), however understood. Instead, the embrace seems to mark the moment of divine revelation.

¹¹⁹ *Gos. Truth* NHC I,3 26.28-27.4.

¹²⁰ On the holy kiss transmitting the power of the Holy Spirit, see Benko (1984), 81-88; Kreider (1987), 30-31.

¹²¹ Murdock (1968), 177-178.

¹²² See Schenke (1997), 264-269; Lundhaug (2010), 207-208, 339-340. In this case, Π (“kiss”) more likely translates φίλημα than ἀσπασμός, being the initiatory “kiss of peace”; e.g. *Trad. ap.* 21.23.

of unity and kinship through which one draws closer to the divine. Once more therefore, *Apoc. Paul* shows itself to be especially amenable to a Valentinian setting.

6.5. Conclusion

In the previous chapter, I presented the external evidence for *Apoc. Paul*'s Valentinian provenance and refuted the existing arguments against this understanding of the text. In the present chapter, I have discussed the internal evidence for a Valentinian provenance. To do so has required us to look beyond the surface of the text, which, being so short and laconic, is not especially forthcoming in displaying its theological background, nor in revealing the significance of its many curious scenes, figures, and turns of phrase. But by examining the underlying logic of various themes in the text, its Valentinian background has come into increasingly stark relief. The contrasting fates of Paul and the soul in the fourth heaven (the two central stories in *Apoc. Paul*) depend on the reception of a) γνῶσις, received through instruction or catechesis, and b) the Name-sign, received through baptism-anointment. Without receiving these, the soul remains the rightful property of the demiurge, whose powers deceive the soul into sin and thereby cause it to accrue a sort of "cosmic debt" which can be extorted by toll-collectors who are stationed at strategic celestial boundaries to accost, try, and imprison those souls which have not been ransomed from cosmic captivity. Conversely, Paul has received the Name-sign as a spiritual gift at baptism-anointment and has thereby been marked as God's property and therefore not subject to cosmic or psychic taxation. Instead, he can "trample upon" hostile powers, overcoming them in order to make a successful ascent to the tenth heaven. Such a contrast is strikingly reminiscent of the baptismal theologies of *Gos. Phil.* and *Exc.* particularly, with their use of fiscal language to express the power of the Name in salvation and escape from worldly captivity, but also Valentinian speculations on the ontological and soteriological nature of the Name.

Besides this distinctively Valentinian logic of ritual and salvation underlying the narrative as a whole, several specific images were identified as reflecting a Valentinian provenance and setting; namely, the depiction of the demiurge, the allusion to “enslavement to fate” paralleling that in *Exc.*, and the notion of participating in divine reality through “kisses”. Of course, none of these arguments on their own is decisive, but collectively they make a strong case for the text’s Valentinian provenance, since they demonstrate that the Valentinian themes are not merely occasional, cosmetic, or the result of interpolation, but instead constitute the very fabric of the work, giving vibrancy to an otherwise all too brief and banal story.

But of course the story does not end with Paul reaching the tenth heaven, since he is still to return to the cosmos in order to liberate those remaining in bodily/worldly captivity, presumably by distributing $\gamma\omega\tilde{\omega}\sigma\iota\varsigma$ and administering the rites of initiation. The fact that we never learn how this plays out gives *Apoc. Paul* an air of incompleteness, as if Paul’s mission is somehow ongoing, even if the historical figure has long vanished from view. What effect might this open-endedness have had on readers of *Apoc. Paul*? The final chapter will examine this and other questions relating to *Apoc. Paul*’s function and goals. It will be argued that it was used in a Valentinian catechetical setting in which readers were encouraged to identify with Paul as preparation for their own experiences of vision and ascent in initiation, but also to prepare them for their future roles as missionaries, teachers, and ministers in the mould of Paul, the ideal Valentinian.

7. Paul as the Ideal Valentinian

The fact that Paul was so revered among Valentinians as to be considered “a type of the Paraclete” – in addition to Paul’s consolidation of his own apostolic status and religious authority through visionary credentials – made him the perfect pseudepigraphical foil for a Valentinian ascent apocalypse. But more than this, by depicting Paul in a Christological role,¹ *Apoc. Paul* turns the apostle into a figure with whom all Valentinians could identify themselves in light of their own transformation into “a Christ” via baptismal initiation.² Indeed, *Apoc. Paul* itself may be described as a narrativized version of the kind of initiation experience described in *Gos. Phil.*, where the Valentinian, having become “a Christ”, ceases to struggle under the yoke of the demiurge, enthroned in the seventh heaven as the God of Judaism, and instead enters the three-tiered spiritual temple of the Pleroma, where one is greeted into the pneumatic community through the exchange of kisses.³ To be sure, the correlation is not absolute; *Gos. Phil.*’s description of temple ascent is located in the context of initiation itself, while *Apoc. Paul*’s description of ascent beyond the demiurge into the pneumatic temple appears to be in the context of one already initiated.⁴ Another discrepancy is that *Apoc. Paul* portrays the human capacity to ascend beyond the demiurge into the Pleroma in the here and now, whereas a text like *Exc. 26* depicts the ascending soul residing alongside Christ at the demiurge’s right hand until the Eschaton, when they will finally enter the Pleroma, being led in by the high-priestly Christ. Evidently, *Apoc. Paul* is closer to *Gos. Phil.* than *Exc.* in its use of the motif of the heavenly temple insofar as it is principally concerned with mystical-ritual praxis as opposed to eschatology. Nonetheless, broadly

¹ I.e. the use of Eph 4:8-10 to articulate Paul’s future mission at *Apoc. Paul* NHC V,2 23.13-17.

² Esp. *Gos. Phil.* NHC II,3 67.23-27; *Gos. Truth* NHC I,3 42.27-28.

³ On the kisses, see esp. *Gos. Truth* NHC I,3 41.24-34; also *Gos. Phil.* NHC II,3 59.2-6; *Tri. Trac.* NHC I,5 59.21-29.

⁴ Cf. *Gos. Phil.* NHC II,3 81.34-82.26, where entry into the bridal chamber/Pleroma is an experience available to initiates (“the bridegroom and bride”) “every day”, possibly alluding to the weekly Eucharist. Hence the concept of Pleromatic ascent may be understood as a repeatable experience in *Gos. Phil.*

conceived, *Apoc. Paul* appears to present its reader with an ideal experience of heavenly ascent with which Valentinians in particular would have identified.

7.1. Paul the Valentinian Missionary

Another way in which *Apoc. Paul* presents an ideal Valentinian narrative of ascent is in its depiction of Paul's future mission on earth. It is standard in revelatory traditions that one who has received enlightenment also receives some community obligation as a result,⁵ while in Gnostic and related traditions this often involved assuming an explicitly soteriological role. For example, in the Sethian ascent apocalypses *Zostrianos* NHC VIII,1 and *Marsanes* NHC X,1, the returned visionaries each embark on efforts to enlighten those who remain ignorant. Both *Zostrianos* and *Allogenes* write books for the edification of those who are to follow in their footsteps. *Allogenes* leaves his book with an angelic guard upon a mountain "for those who will be worthy after you",⁶ before passing on his revelations to his disciple "Messos", whose name (μέσσος "intermediary") indicates his role in spreading the revelations further.⁷ During his descent back to his body, *Zostrianos* becomes a revealer for the souls of the elect in heaven, "the perfect individuals".⁸ He then proceeds to write three wooden tablets "and left them as knowledge for those who would come after me, the living elect", depositing them in a lower region of heaven as instructions for future visionaries.⁹ Finally, *Zostrianos* returns to his body and begins "preaching the truth to everyone", instructing them to awaken their divine component, to embrace asceticism and celibacy, and to reject water baptism, even apparently identifying himself as "Saviour".¹⁰

⁵ E.g. Plato, *Resp.* VII 519c-520a; *1 En.* 81.5-6; 93.2; *2 Bar.* 77; *4 Ezra* 14.27-36; *Zost.* NHC VIII,1 130.14-132.5; *Allogenes* NHC XI,3 68.15-69.16.

⁶ *Allogenes* NHC XI,3 68.18-20; cf. *Ap. John* NHC II,1 31.28-31; *Gos. Eg.* NHC III,2 68.1-69.5; *Disc.* 8-9 NHC VI,6 61.18-63.32; *Jub.* 1.5-6; *4 Ezra* 14.42-48; Josephus, *Ant.* 1.70.

⁷ Turner (2007), 680.

⁸ *Zost.* NHC VIII,1 129.16-22.

⁹ *Zost.* NHC VIII,1 130.1-4; cf. *1 En.* 81.1-82.3.

¹⁰ *Zost.* NHC VIII,1 130.5-131.16.

The same is true in Valentinianism as principally witnessed by *Gos. Truth, Tri. Trac.*, and Heracleon's commentary on the Gospel of John. As we saw in *Gos. Truth* 32.20-33.9 (see Chapter 2), having become "a child of inner understanding" through their experience of Pleromatic "rest" in which they partook of the Father's "face" through "kisses", the Valentinian initiate is able to "speak from the day which is above, which has no night, and from the light which does not set because it is perfect." They are to use this newfound power to enlighten others by speaking "knowledge" and "truth" with them, thereby healing them of the epistemological malady of ignorance. In doing so, the initiate "raises" (ΤΟΥΝΕC) and "awakens" the ignorant, and replaces their nightmarish sleep with the true spiritual "rest" which they themselves have already enjoyed alongside the Father in "Paradise".

Similarly, *Tri. Trac.* 116.10-39 explains how and why it behoves the redeemed person to themselves become a redeemer:

Some have come forth from passion and division, needing healing. Others came from a prayer in order to heal (ΤΑΘΩ) the sick, and they have been appointed to treat (ΡΘΕΡΑΠΕΥΕ) those who have fallen. These are the apostles and evangelists (ΡΗΤΩΝΟΥΧΕ; lit. "good news givers"). They are the disciples of the Saviour, and they are teachers for those who need instruction.¹¹

The "apostles and evangelists" represent the spiritual church generally, being derived from the pneumatic substance which emanated from the fallen Logos's prayer at the moment of his repentance (ΜΕΤΑΝΟΙΑ) and conversion.¹² The psychic substance was produced before this moment and therefore the psychic human is in need of healing, which is to say, teaching, since they have been diagnosed with ignorance. The pneumatic Christians formerly suffered from sickness too, but for a different reason: as images of the multiple Aeons of which Christ was the unified manifestation, they suffered from multiplicity and division (116.20-39), until at Christ's advent they "ran towards" him and "immediately became a body of its head", that

¹¹ *Tri. Trac.* NHC I,5 116.10-20.

¹² *Tri. Trac.* NHC I,5 81.24-82.14; 91.33-38. On ΜΕΤΑΝΟΙΑ in gnostic texts, see Brankaer (2009); Scopello (2013).

is, until they were united in the Church-Body with Christ as its Head (118.28-35). But having been so unified, the redeemed turns redeemer, working in the manner of the apostles to enlighten and redeem the ignorant psychics; these pneumatics are “the promised seed (ΠΣΠΕΡΜΑ ΝΨΨΩΠ) ... who have been appointed for a mission through the coming of the Saviour.”¹³

Heracleon articulates this pneumatic duty in his exegesis of John 4’s story of Jesus’s conversion of the Samaritan woman.¹⁴ The Samaritan woman is depicted as the ideal pneumatic on two grounds: a) her “unhesitating” acceptance of Jesus which was “appropriate to her nature”,¹⁵ in contrast to the hesitant acceptance which is typical of the psychics;¹⁶ and b) by returning to Samaria to announce Jesus as the Messiah (John 4:28-29), she is understood to have “returned to the world to announce to the Calling (κλήσις)¹⁷ the good tidings of Christ’s coming. For it is through the spirit and by the spirit that the soul is drawn towards the Saviour.”¹⁸ The Samaritan woman, the ideal pneumatic convert, is here depicted as missionary to the psychics, whose city is depicted as the cosmos itself to which she must return to fulfil her newly acquired duty of leading the psychic to salvation. Indeed, according to Origen, Heracleon interprets John 4:39 (“Many Samaritans from that city believed in him because of the woman’s testimony”) as follows: “many” = “the psychics”; “from that city” = “from the world”; and “the woman’s testimony” = “the pneumatic church”; hence, John 4:39 becomes, *the psychics from the world believed in the Saviour because of the pneumatic*

¹³ *Tri. Trac.* NHC I,5 94.31-35. The term “mission” (ΧΑΥ ΑΒΑΛ) likely translates an original Greek ἀποστολή, thereby prefiguring the more explicit comparison of the pneumatic initiates with the apostles later in the text.

¹⁴ See esp. Thomassen (2010), 185-188; also, Pagels (1973), 83-97. Cf. Wucherpfennig (2002), 333-357; and Dunderberg (2008), 141-144; idem. (2013), 120-123, who express doubts that the Samaritan woman has a pneumatic nature at all.

¹⁵ Heracleon Fr.17 in Origen, *Comm. Jo.* XIII 63.

¹⁶ *Tri. Trac.* NHC I,5 118.37-119.8.

¹⁷ A Valentinian technical term for the psychics, as opposed to the Election (ἐκλογή) for the pneumatics, based on Matt 22:14; see Heracleon Fr.13 in Origen, *Comm. Jo.* X 211; Irenaeus, *Haer.* I 6.4; 14.4; *Exc.* 58.1; *Tri. Trac.* NHC I,5 122.12-27.

¹⁸ Heracleon Fr.27 in Origen, *Comm. Jo.* XIII 187.

church.¹⁹ Evidently then, missionary work was a central aspect of Valentinian life and involved leading candidates towards salvation in Christ through a process of transcending one's former mode of living in the material world.

Paul's promise to return to earth in order to "make captive the captivity (αἰχμαλωσία) which was made captive in the captivity of Babylon" resonates strongly with this Valentinian missionary program in a number of respects, especially with regard to the language of captivity-ransom-freedom. According to *Tri. Trac.* 117.14-36, "the promised seed of Jesus Christ" works through "instruction" to "redeem/ransom" (σωτε) the ignorant, thereby affecting "the return to that which they were at the beginning." This "redemption" or "ransoming" is described as "the release from captivity (αἰχμαλωσία) and the acquisition of freedom; the captivity of those who were slaves of ignorance, which reigned in its places. But freedom is knowledge of the truth which existed before ignorance came into being." Elsewhere, *Tri. Trac.* equates this "redemption" explicitly with the initiatory rite of baptism (127.25-128.2), indicating that as in *Gos. Phil.*, it is in fact baptismal initiation that "frees the slaves and ransoms/redeems the captives (σωτε ἡαἰχμαλωτος)" (85.28-29). This baptismal language of "redemption/ransoming" (σωτε/ἀπολύτρωσις) in relation to ignorant bodily "captivity" (αἰχμαλωσία/αἰχμαλωσία) may indicate that Paul's mission in *Apoc. Paul* is centred around the institution of baptism, presumably entailing a period of catechesis and preparation which was its prerequisite. This conjecture is supported in a Valentinian context once we examine precisely who the target of Paul's redemptive missionary work is – those taken captive in the Babylonian exile, ostensibly, the Jews.

Of course, this is a slightly odd target for Paul's missionary efforts, since he is known as the apostle to the Gentiles. However, as Thomassen has persuasively argued,²⁰ the so-

¹⁹ Heracleon Fr.37 in Origen, *Comm. Jo.* XIII 341.

²⁰ Thomassen (2013c), 147-148; also Dunderberg (2013), 127.

called “psychics” were most likely the prime targets of Valentinian evangelism since they were considered to be midway between salvation and perdition with their eschatological fate depending on their present conduct.²¹ These psychics were often identified with the Jews.²² Of course, Irenaeus says differently, reporting instead that the followers of Ptolemy regard supposedly imperfect Christians like Irenaeus and his church as psychics.²³ Furthermore, as we saw in Chapter 4, rather than “psychic”, *Gos. Phil.* prefers to use the term “Hebrew” in its supersessionist polemic to refer to both Jews and their obsolete temple cult on the one hand, and imperfect Christians and their improper baptismal practice on the other hand. The aim was to group these two together as having equally failed to acknowledge the superior God revealed by Christ, and to chastise the latter particularly for thereby continuing to languish in their Jewish past, whereas Valentinians are said to have transcended this heritage and become true Christians by virtue of their method of baptism-anointment.²⁴ Nonetheless, it is surely these “Hebrews” that *Gos. Phil.* deems capable of being redeemed/ransomed from their present state of worldly captivity and who were therefore the subjects of any missionary zeal.²⁵

The Valentinian use of epithets connected to Judaism to characterise the “psychics” as their evangelical targets is strikingly present in *Exc.* 56.4-57.1 too, which uses Romans 11’s

²¹ E.g. Irenaeus, *Haer.* I 6.1-4; *Exc.* 56.3. The notion of the psychic’s soteriologically ambivalent constitution is derived from Greek philosophy, where the soul was often described as being pulled in two opposing directions; e.g. Plato, *Phaedr.* 246a-254e; Plutarch, *Gen. Socr.* 591 d-f; see Dunderberg (2013), 124-125.

²² E.g. *Tri. Trac.* NHC I,5 110.22-114.30; Heracleon *Frr.* 13, 20-22 in Origen, *Comm. Jo.* X 210-211, XIII 95-96, 104, 114-118; *Tri. Trac.* NHC I,5 apparently uses “Jews” and “Hebrews” as synonyms. See Dunderberg (2013), 118-123.

²³ Irenaeus, *Haer.* I 6.2; see Dunderberg (2013), 114-118. See also Dunderberg (2008), 147-158 on the division of Christians into two classes in *Interp. Know.* NHC XI,1; also, Buell (2005), 116-137. For a wide ranging analysis of the use of the term ψυχικός in early Christian identity construction, see Reis (2009).

²⁴ Pagels (1972) detects something similar in Heracleon’s commentary on John.

²⁵ See Buell (2005), 129-131: “the Gospel [of Philip] might refute the right of some to call themselves ‘Christian’ by labelling them ‘Hebrews’ instead. While this might seem to confirm Clement’s accusation that ‘Valentinians’ divide Christians into different levels (those who have faith [i.e. psychics] and those who have knowledge [i.e. pneumatics]), the Gospel nonetheless depicts the boundary between ‘Hebrew’ and ‘Christian’ as porous.” See also Thomassen (2004), 254.

notion of the salvation of all Israel to articulate the how the pneumatic and psychic shall be saved together:

^{56.4}Ὅταν οὖν τὰ ψυχικὰ ἐγκεντρισθῇ τῇ καλλιελαίῳ εἰς πίστιν καὶ ἀφθαρσίαν, καὶ μετὰσχη τῆς πιότητος τῆς ἐλαίας, καὶ ὅταν εἰσέλθῃ τὰ ἔθνη, τότε οὕτω πᾶς Ἰσραὴλ <σωθήσεται>. ^{56.5}Ἰσραὴλ δὲ ἀλληγορεῖται ὁ πνευματικός, ὁ ὁψόμενος τὸν Θεόν, ὁ τοῦ πιστοῦ Ἀβραάμ υἱὸς γνήσιος ὁ ἐκ τῆς ἐλευθέρως, οὐχ ὁ κατὰ σάρκα, ὁ ἐκ τῆς δούλης τῆς Αἰγυπτίας. ^{57.1}Γίνεται οὖν, ἐκ τῶν γενῶν τῶν τριῶν, τοῦ μὲν μόρφωσις τοῦ πνευματικοῦ, τοῦ δὲ μετάθεσις τοῦ ψυχικοῦ ἐκ δουλείας εἰς ἐλευθερίαν.

^{56.4}Therefore, when the psychics²⁶ are grafted onto the olive tree into faith and incorruptibility, and they partake of the wealth of the olive tree, and when the Gentiles enter, then all Israel shall be saved. ^{56.5}But “Israel” is to be interpreted allegorically [as] “the pneumatic who shall see God”,²⁷ the legitimate son of the faithful Abraham, born from the free woman, not the son according to the flesh, born from the Egyptian slave. ^{57.1}Out of the three races therefore, the formation of the pneumatic race occurs on the one hand, while on the other, the transformation of the psychic race from slavery to freedom occurs.

In this passage, “Israel” refers to the totality of all the saved, which apparently consists of pneumatics and psychics, with both Jews and Gentiles apparently being included in the latter category.²⁸ On the other hand, *Exc.* 56.3 states that “the hylic is lost by nature”, having no part in salvation. Significantly, the passage blends the Valentinian tripartite anthropology of hylic-psychic-pneumatic with the early Christian notion of the “three races”, which usually referred to Greeks, Jews, and Christians (“the third race”) respectively.²⁹ This configuration of the “three races” discourse is reflected in Valentinian sources too, where “Gentiles” and

²⁶ The neuter plural can be translated literally as “psychic things”. Casey (1934) – “the psychic” – and Sagnard (1970) – “le psychique” – take it to refer to the psychic substance generally. However, since τὰ ψυχικὰ are evidently personified in the remainder of the passage, I take them to be synonymous with οἱ ψυχικοί. On this distinction, see Pagels (1974).

²⁷ Following an erroneous Philonic etymology of “Israel” as “seeing God” (ὁρῶν Θεόν); see *Abr.* 57; *Ebr.* 82; *Congr.* 51; cf. *Legat.* 4.

²⁸ On Justin Martyr’s similar depiction of Christians as the true Israel and the descendants of Abraham in *Dial.*, see Buell (2005), 98-106.

²⁹ E.g. Aelius Aristides *Apol.* 2; *Preaching of Peter* in Clement of Alexandria *Strom.* VI 39.4; 41.2; 41.6; *Diogn.*; see McGowan (2001); Valantasis (2006). The issue, alive since von Harnack (1908), of whether Christians considered themselves to constitute a “third race” on account of a new and distinct form of religious worship, as opposed to ethnicity, is now acknowledged to be a false dichotomy. As Buell (2005), 42 notes, “the gods of a people were one of its attributes”, and therefore, distinct forms of worship can be understood as constitutive of distinct ethnicities. Indeed, Buell demonstrates that a range of early Christian authors “portray religiosity as constitutive of ethnicity” (156).

“Greeks” are synonymous as the first race.³⁰ However, *Exc.* appears to absorb Gentiles into the “second race” of psychics, begging the question as to who now belongs to the “first race” of hylics. Possibly, like Tertullian, the Valentinian author regarded the Romans as the “first race”,³¹ albeit without Tertullian’s repudiation of the label “third race” for Christians, which he saw as a pagan slander against Christians.³² Alternatively, the slight asymmetry between Valentinian tripartite anthropological-soteriological categories and early Christian ethnography of the “three races” in *Exc.* 56-57 may reflect the practical dynamics of Valentinian evangelism in the cosmopolitan context of Alexandria, where Christians, Jews, and Gentiles may all have been perceived as viable Valentinian candidates. Hence the passage may be subverting such identity boundaries by subtly suggesting the possibility of movement between the different γένη.³³

Whatever the case, it is clear that when Valentinians used terms related to Judaism (e.g. “Jew”, “Hebrew”, “Israel”) for the psychics,³⁴ their ethnic field of reference was not

³⁰ Heracleon Fr.21 in Origen, *Comm. Jo.* XIII 104; *Tri. Trac.* NHC I,5 108.13-114.30; *Gos. Phil.* NHC II,3 52.15-24.

³¹ Tertullian, *Nat.* 8. As McGowan (2001) stresses – Buell’s observations above notwithstanding – “Romans” here does not refer to a specific group, but rather to all those under the Empire who “mutually recognized each other’s gods or honoured foreign gods as well as their own, and had sacrifices and images” (quoting von Harnack (1908), 273). McGowan further argues that in identifying the “first race” as the Romans, Tertullian implicitly draws both Jews and Greeks together into the “second race”; “[they are] more or less equal in original status and relevance, but both superseded by the arrival of the new people, the Christians.” *Exc.* is quite possibly reconfiguring the concept of “three races” in a similar fashion.

³² Esp. Tertullian, *Scorp.* 10; see McGowan (2001); Buell (2005), 154-156.

³³ Such fluidity probably also underlies *Tri. Trac.* NHC I,5 118-119’s claim that one’s nature is disclosed via one’s reaction to the coming of the Saviour, suggesting that it is religious behaviour which dictates “ethnicity”; see Thomassen and Painchaud (1989), 428-429. As Buell (2005), 84 puts it, “for the *Tripartite Tractate*, ‘genetic’ composition is the *result* of the ‘religious’ qualities one acts upon – they are inextricably linked. Ethnic membership is defined in terms of religiosity.” Of Clement of Alexandria’s “three races” discourse, Buell notes: “Members of the first two peoples remain distinct because of their religious practices but are eligible through ‘training’ in a different covenant to become members of the third people, ‘the one *genos*’ saved by faith. Thus what we might conceive of as a religious process, conversion, could be simultaneously imagined as a process of ethnic transformation” (139). Hence she is correct to conclude that *Tri. Trac.* NHC I,5’s anthropology and soteriology “closely resembles the views of both Clement and Origen, who envision a hierarchy of spiritual development that allows them to account for differences among believers but also to model ongoing transformation for the believer” (127). I think the same dynamic of “ethnic” fluidity through spiritual training underlies the Valentinian anthropology and soteriology reflected in *Exc.* 56-57, which like *Tri. Trac.* NHC I,5 132.16-28 speaks of the eventual unification of all the saved in Christ; see Pagels (1974), 44-53; Desjardins (1990), 124-126.

³⁴ On the variety of terms used to refer to Jews in antiquity, see Goodman (2011).

restricted to Jews, but could also refer to other Christians (e.g. *Gos. Phil.*)³⁵ and Gentiles (e.g. *Exc.*), or any configuration of these as circumstances demanded. Hence, although *Exc.* 56.4-57.1 states that the vision of God belongs to “Israel”, what it means is that salvation belongs to the pneumatics and a subsection of psychics, and these may come from among the Christians, Jews, or Gentiles.³⁶

The foregoing survey of Valentinian approaches to the category of “psychics” shows that 1) Valentinians often used Judeo-centric language to characterise the psychic class; and 2) that as bearers of free-will, being capable of salvation or perdition, psychics were the most likely subjects of Valentinian missionary efforts. Therefore, Paul’s missionary declaration to liberate the captives of the Babylonian exile – so unnatural in a traditional Pauline context – makes enormous sense in the context of Valentinian proselytization, where Judeo-centric language was used simultaneously to articulate *both* the spiritual imperfection of the psychics *and* their capacity for salvation. Whether or not *Apoc. Paul* had Jews specifically in mind with its use of the motif of the Babylonian exile is unclear, since as we have seen, such ethnic vocabulary was not so limited in Valentinian anthropological and soteriological discourse. It may simply have been used on the basis of its great currency among Valentinians, who would have been at liberty to understand it as a generic reference to humans exiled in an alien land, longing for return to their spiritual home. In practice of course, the targets of Valentinian proselytization would have depended upon the social context at any given time or place, and

³⁵ Pagels (1973), 68 argues that Heracleon’s use of ethnic language, including “Jews”, allegorically refers to debates and differences “among Christians”, and that he was unconcerned with the relationship between the Jewish community and his own. See the refutation of this position in Pettipiece (2007), 390-393, who concludes that “it is hard to imagine that a religious teacher such as Heracleon, who in all likelihood spent at least part of his life in a cosmopolitan centre such as second-century Alexandria or Rome, would live and think in this kind of religious vacuum.” On Heracleon in Alexandria, see Marksches (2007), 160-162. More generally, for a critique of the view that the early Christian *Adversus Judaeos* tradition merely reflected inner-Christian polemics, as opposed to actual Jewish-Christian relations, see Paget (1997).

³⁶ Hence, the conclusion of Pettipiece (2007), 392 that “[t]he ambivalent attitude towards the psychics is, in my view, a reflection of an active and ongoing mission to the Jewish communities during the second century C.E.”, only tells part of the story. But certainly phrases like, “the Jews ... are images of those who are in the Pleroma” (Heracleon Fr.22 in Origen, *Comm. Jo.* XIII 115), point in this direction; see Pettipiece (2007), 383-384.

hence the flexibility afforded by the image of an exiled people would have been useful in a diverse range of evangelizing contexts.³⁷

Finally, the ability of Valentinian readers to identify themselves with Paul and his mission as articulated in *Apoc. Paul* is enhanced by the fact that the narrative is incomplete. Paul is left greeting his spiritual fellows in the Pleroma, with the mission itself not described. This evokes the sense of an ongoing drama into which the reader can place themselves. This has been duly noted by Kaler, who observes that *Apoc. Paul* is

not a tale of events that happened and then ended once and for all, but rather a record of the sorts of events that could happen to anyone at any time. It is an evocative work that draws the reader in, not least through the absence of explicit barriers (for instance, historically specific details about the time and place of the events) to the reader's identification with Paul.³⁸

Hence Valentinian readers would have been inspired to identify themselves with Paul not only because of what the text *does* contain – recipient of the Divine Name ascending through the demiurge's psychic temple, passing the enthroned demiurge, entering the three-tiered pneumatic temple of the Pleroma, and exchanging kisses with its inhabitants – but also what the text *does not* contain – the fulfilment of Paul's liberating mission to the "Jews" *qua* psychics and the restoration of the truly spiritual Israel *qua* the Pleroma.

³⁷ *Contra Lampe* (2003), 317: "The gnostic, according to Valentinian self-understanding, first needed the same upbringing through faith and works as the 'psychic' orthodox Christian. According to Valentinian understanding, only in the orthodox church and nowhere else could the future gnostic be prepared." Lampe bases this on the cases of Flora (Ptolemy's addressee) and Florinus, the latter of whom apparently sought to belong to Polycarp's circle before becoming a Valentinian. However, while other Christians may have been the most natural targets of Valentinian proselytization, there is no reason to think that they were the exclusive targets. After all, if a Jew or Gentile could convert to Christianity, they could convert to Valentinianism, since Valentinianism is simply a form of Christianity!

³⁸ Kaler (2013b), 344. This stands in stark contrast to Kaler (2005), 265's earlier conclusion: "While it is the case in many gnostic texts that the protagonist seems to be intended to be a sort of Everygnostic, so that the reader can see him- or herself in the portrayal of James, Thomas, or whoever it may be, this is not the case here. Paul is quite definitely different from the reader of this text: he is the great liberator." Suffice to say that I concur with Kaler's more recent remarks.

7.2. Ideal Visionaries: Comparative Material

Of course, any pseudepigraphon purporting to contain accounts of the adventures of a revered hero could have been used by readers as inspiration for their own activities. Indeed, the notion that accounts of the lives of patriarchs, prophets, apostles, and so on, served as pedagogical material for readers in their own conduct and worship is almost a banality. However, while some mystical texts seek to actively dissuade readers from identifying with their protagonists,³⁹ others are far more inviting in this respect.

Each of the protagonists in the Sethian ascent apocalypses *Zost.*, *Allogenes*, and *Marsanes* represent the archetypal Sethian visionary in their pursuit of revelatory experiences involving the type of angelification and *unio liturgica* familiar from the Dead Sea Scrolls and a range of Jewish apocalypses.⁴⁰ Similarly, the use of the first-person plural in the ecstatic liturgy of *Steles Seth* attests to the reality of such pursuits among the community as a whole, much like in the Qumran *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice*.⁴¹ Along with *Trim. Prot.* 48.15-34,⁴² *Zost.* – named after the legendary grandfather of Zoroaster⁴³ – explicitly describes a series of five celestial baptisms in the Autogenes aeon in which Zostrianos becomes an angel

³⁹ E.g. *1 En.* 19.3: “I, Enoch, I saw the vision of the end of everything alone; and none among humans will see as I have seen.” On how certain Jewish apocalypses are reticent about inviting readers to imitate the visionary’s journey, see Boustani and McCullough (2014), 95; Reed (2004), 66; eadem. (2005), 24-57, esp. 49: “Far from presenting the antediluvian patriarch as a model for any contemporary practice of ‘ascent mysticism’, the *Book of the Watchers* stresses that its pseudonymous author was uniquely worthy to be brought up to heaven. Enoch may be a paradigm for ethical action, but it is his exalted status that accounts for his reception of heavenly secrets. Together with the juxtaposition between Enoch’s special wisdom and the forbidden secrets revealed by the fallen angels, this assertion helps to attenuate the potentially radical epistemological ramifications of this one man’s access to knowledge through heavenly ascent, by contextualising his reception of that knowledge within a broader consideration of the proper relationship between heavenly and human wisdom.”

⁴⁰ E.g. *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice* (4Q400 II,5-8; 1QSb III,2-6; IV,24-26); *Self-Glorification Hymn* (4Q491c; 4Q427 7; 4Q471b); *Hodayot* (1QHa XI,19-23; XII,25-26; XIX,10-17); also 1QS XI,7-8; 1QSa II,3-9 (*Rule of the Congregation*); *1 En.* 62.15-16; 71; *2 En.* 22.8-10; *T. Levi* 2.5-5.7; 8.1-9; *Apoc. Ab.* 13.14; *Ascens. Isa.* 8.13-15; 9.6-18, 27-42; *2 Bar.* 51.10-13; *Odes Sol.* 36.2; *T. Job* 48.2-3; *Rev* 7:9-17. See Scopello (1980); Newsom (1985); eadem. (1990); eadem. (2012); Himmelfarb (1991); eadem. (1993), 29-71; Morray-Jones (1992), 22-23; Attridge (1994); Frennesson (1999); Fletcher-Louis (2002); Elijor (2004); DeConick (2006), 18-23; Sanders (2006); Alexander (2006), 13-61, 115-116; Brooke (2008), 85-87; Collins (2009); Schäfer (2006); idem. (2009), 70-72, 112-153; Dimant (2014); Burns (2014a), 130-132.

⁴¹ See Burns (2014a), 131; Turner (2013), 210-211. For studies on the angelic liturgy in the Qumran *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice*, see previous note.

⁴² Cf. *Trim. Prot.* NHC XIII,1 45.12-20.

⁴³ See Edwards (1988); Turner (2000), 483-484; idem. (2001), 294-295 n.29; Burns (2014a), 29 n.240.

of increasingly higher rank, from “a God-seeing angel”,⁴⁴ to “a male angel”, to “a holy angel”, to “a perfect [angel]” (6.7-7.22), before finally becoming “divine” (53.14-24). Later, Zostrianos is anointed (63.22) and subsequently crowned, thereby becoming a revelatory angel for the souls of the elect in heaven (129.1-22). The fact that Zostrianos leaves written instructions *in heaven* “for those who would come after me, the living elect”, demonstrates that this is not an experience unique to Zostrianos, but rather that the figure of Zostrianos was to be understood as a model for future Sethian visionaries in their pursuit of the angelic life.⁴⁵ More generally, these texts are replete with ecstatic doxologies,⁴⁶ paraenesis,⁴⁷ and descriptions of cultic practices,⁴⁸ in addition to the communal hymnody of *Steles Seth*, thereby demonstrating that these were not merely rhetorical texts composed for the sake of Sethian culture, but rather presented ideal models for the kinds of revelatory and transformative experiences which were to be cultivated among Sethian readers either through private contemplative effort (*Zost.*; *Allogenes*) or ecstatic communal worship (*Marsanes*; *Steles Seth*). Indeed, even the title of *Allogenes* (ἄλλος + γένος “another race”) establishes the protagonist as an ideal figure by employing the sort of ethnic language with which Sethians self-identified.⁴⁹

The same may be said in a more qualified sense of the ancient Jewish ascent apocalypses. The protagonists in these texts are often depicted as being special in some sense, since presumably not all Jews and Christians could legitimately aspire to the sorts of exalted

⁴⁴ Following the reconstruction $\bar{\eta}\rho\epsilon\sigma\iota\eta\lambda\gamma \epsilon\pi\omicron\upsilon\gamma[\tau\epsilon]$ (“un ange contemplateur de Di[eu]”) from the BCNH edition.

⁴⁵ Burns (2014a), 132 notes that “[f]rom a practical perspective, angelic status most likely manifested in ascetic practices and participation in earthly liturgies that involved ecstatic speech and vision, as seen in the *Three Steles of Seth*.” See also Dimant (2014), 471; Collins (2009).

⁴⁶ E.g. *Zost.* NHC VIII,1 51.24-53.14; 64.13-68.13; 75.12-21; 88.8-22; 114.1-19; *Allogenes* NHC XI,3 53.35-55.12.

⁴⁷ E.g. *Zost.* NHC VIII,1 130.16-132.5; *Marsanes* NHC X,1 26.12-17; 27.21-23; 39.18-41.7.

⁴⁸ E.g. Alphabet mysticism (*Marsanes* NHC X,1 25.21-39.17), astrology (*Marsanes* NHC X,1 41-42), and the use of carved wax objects (*Marsanes* NHC X,1 35.1-6). See Burns (2014a), 112-139.

⁴⁹ On the use of ethnic terminology in Sethian discourses of identity, see Burns (2014a), 86-89.

transformations described in the Enochic literature, for example.⁵⁰ Further, the lack of liturgical elements may have dissuaded, or at least not actively encouraged, readers from pursuing practical means of attaining such experiences for themselves.⁵¹ Nonetheless, similar practices of (supra-)angelification, self-glorification, and *unio liturgica*, both at Qumran and among the Sethian Gnostics, suggest that in many of their more mystical moments, the heroes of Jewish apocalypticism could also have been interpreted as ideal figures to be emulated.⁵²

It is far from obvious that it was these goals precisely that were being pursued by Valentinians, although numerous texts hint in this direction. Certainly Valentinians considered themselves to be united with their angelic counterparts in the bridal chamber during baptismal ἀπολύτρωσις as a prefiguration of the eschatological restoration of the Pleroma.⁵³ *Exc.* 21-22 even states that the members of the spiritual church on earth are “transformed into angels” (μετατίθεσθαι ... εἰς ἀγγέλους) through baptism when they are “awoken, being restored to angelic equality (ισάγγελοι) with the males”⁵⁴ on account of their reception of “the same Name with which their angel was baptised previously.” Whether these pursuits of angelic union and ritual angelification were thought to culminate in *unio liturgica* – in which humans participated in the angelic liturgy, singing hymns of glory to God – is uncertain because no Valentinian source explicitly describes this practice, either for the individual visionary or the congregation as a whole. However, *Tri. Trac.* 68.22-70.20 describes the Aeonic liturgy in which the Aeons are themselves glorified through their glorification of the Father:

⁵⁰ E.g. *1 En.* 62.15; *2 En.* 22.8-10; *3 En.* 3-16.

⁵¹ That is not to say that liturgical elements are entirely lacking; e.g. *2 En.* 22 (anointing, investiture).

⁵² Recently argued in Burns (2015).

⁵³ E.g. Irenaeus, *Haer.* I 8.4-5; 13.3, 6; 21.3; *Exc.* 21-22, 35-36; *Gos. Phil.* NHC II,3 65.1-26; *Tri. Trac.* NHC I,5 122.12-17; cf. *Exeg. Soul* NHC II,6 132.23-26. See also the eschatological unions in Irenaeus, *Haer.* I 7.1-2, 5; Hippolytus, *Haer.* VI 34.4; Tertullian, *Val.* 30-32; Heracleon Fr. 12 and 38 in Origen, *Comm. Jo.* X 117 and XIII 349; *Exc.* 63-65. See Thomassen (2006a), 325-326, 395-397, 427; also Sevrin (1974).

⁵⁴ An allusion to the resurrection of Luke 20:36; cf. Matt 22:30; Mark 12:25. See Attridge (1994), 489-490.

Therefore, through the hymn (ἦμος) of glorification and the power of the unity of the one from whom they (the Aeons) had come forth, they were drawn into a mixture (μοῦχος), a mingling (τῶν), and a union (ἑνωσις) with one another. From the Pleroma of the congregation they offered a glorification that was worthy of the Father, since the congregation was both a single and a multiple image because it was brought forth as a glorification of the single one, and because they approached the one who is himself the Totalities. ... Having come forth from the living Aeons – it (the glorification) being perfect and full with regard to the one who is perfect and full – it left full and perfect those who perfectly gave glory from the communion (κοινωνία). For in the manner of the Father who lacks nothing (ἀτῶντα), when he is glorified he <returns>⁵⁵ the glory to those who glorify [him] in order to reveal them as that which he is.⁵⁶

Since the Father is a perfect unity and fullness, lacking nothing, he does not need glorifying. Therefore, the surplus glory received from the Aeons' hymns of glorification can be given straight back to them resulting in their own glorification. In being glorified, they are shown forth as manifestations of the Father himself with their univocal singing reflecting his perfect unity.

This Aeonic congregation and its liturgy was understood as archetypal of the Valentinian church on earth such that they were reflections of one another, the ideal worship of the Aeons being a projection of the activities performed in Valentinian services. As Thomassen puts it, “[t]he unity into which the aeons are said to be ‘drawn’ by their singing evidently reflects an experience the Valentinian community members themselves might share as they lifted up their individual voices to join in the communal choir of the congregation.”⁵⁷ He further notes that according to Irenaeus’s account of Ptolemy’s system, the heavenly Jesus is brought forth when the Aeons sing hymns of praise to the first principle and pool their finest qualities into “the perfect fruit”, the Saviour.⁵⁸ Similarly in *Tri. Trac.*, the hymn of the

⁵⁵ The MS reads εὐτῆλας μετὰ ᾠδῶν καὶ ᾠδῶν πάλιν ἀνετίθεσθαι μετὰ [αὐτῶν] (“when they glorify him, he hears the glory which glorifies him”). However, as Thomassen and Painchaud (1989), 315-316 demonstrate, and as is evident from the manuscript, the scribe has mistakenly corrected an original ᾠδῶν [τῶν] (“he returns”) to ᾠδῶν καὶ ᾠδῶν (“he hears”). Thomassen suggests that an irregular τῶν may account for the confusion. The emendation is certain on the basis of both the use of τῶν in *Tri. Trac.* NHC I,5 69.16, and the overall context, in which the Aeons are glorified through their glorification of the Father.

⁵⁶ *Tri. Trac.* NHC I,5 68.22-69.14.

⁵⁷ Thomassen (2013a), 186.

⁵⁸ Irenaeus, *Haer.* I 2.6; cf. Irenaeus, *Haer.* II 21.2; Hippolytus *Haer.* VI 32.1.

united Aeons produces an “image” of the Father and the “first fruit”, both of which are references to Christ. For the Valentinians who considered themselves to constitute the Body-Church of Jesus, their communal singing was not only a means of producing the unity of the Pleroma on earth, but also the means by which Christ’s presence was manifested among the earthly congregation. As Thomassen concludes, “[e]vidently, the idea that the Pleroma generates the Savior by singing a hymn is a mythological projection of this particular ritual practice and experience.”⁵⁹ It is highly plausible therefore that Valentinian congregations – with their collective angelic identity – understood their corporate worship to be closely connected to that of the angels/Aeons. Possibly this took the form of the kind of *unio liturgica* found at Qumran in the *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice* and the *Hodayot*, where the emphasis is not so much on a union with angels through ecstatic ascent, but rather through liturgical imitation and angelic identity.⁶⁰

But regardless of the apparent parallels between Valentinianism, Sethianism, and early Jewish mysticism in terms of their pursuits of angelification and *unio liturgica*, it is clear that like Zostrianos, Allogenes, and the heroes of Jewish apocalypticism, Paul functions as an ideal figure in *Apoc. Paul*, serving to provide its Valentinian readers and users with a model for their own ambitions of heavenly ascent and participation in divine reality.⁶¹

⁵⁹ Thomassen (2013a), 187.

⁶⁰ See Schäfer (2006); idem. (2009), 112-153; Fletcher-Louis (2002).

⁶¹ The same is true of a handful of Hermetic tractates, such as *CH I*, *CH XIII*, and *Disc8-9* NHC VI,6. See Hanegraaff (2008), 161: “Among the members of such [Hermetic] circles or networks, various kinds of texts must have circulated: not only those that answered all kinds of questions of a doctrinal, theological or philosophical nature (the ‘General Discourses’ and perhaps ‘Further Discourses’), but also *Lesemysterien* that provided an idealized description of the successful attainment of gnōsis. Even as ‘fictions’ read by individuals, *such texts would have functioned as ideal models and sources of inspiration for their readers*, who must have hoped that what had happened to Hermes and Tat might happen to them one day – if only they persisted in their spiritual practice of diligent study and steeling themselves against ‘the deceit of the cosmos’” (my emphasis). Burns (2010); idem. (2014a), 135 argues that *Allogenes* NHC XI,3 is a *Lesemysterium* in a similar respect to the Hekhalot literature, on which, see Boustani and McCullough (2014), 94: “Hekhalot texts underscore proper ritual recitation as a means by which prospective seers might navigate the dangerous journey of heavenly ascent or, at times, highlight textual recitation of the journey as a ritual practice in itself.” I do not think that *Apoc. Paul* NHC V,2 can be described as a *Lesemysterium* in the sense that the act of reading the text would induce the experience being described. Cf. DeConick (2006), 24 seems to suggest that all ascent narratives could be used as *Lesemysterien*: “Through verbal recitation of the narrative or mental recall of the memorized text, the devotee

7.3. The Apocalypse of Paul's Function and Setting

All “experiences deemed religious” are culturally constructed,⁶² and all the more so when it comes to their verbal or textual articulation through which the subject/author hopes to make their private subjective experience intelligible in the public sphere. It is unclear whether a genuine experience of ecstatic ascent underlies *Apoc. Paul* – although the clarification of Paul’s ambivalence regarding his bodily status from 2 Corinthians 12:2-4 may point in this direction, as well as its points of contact with *Gos. Phil.*’s temple narrative of initiation and *Gos. Truth*’s experience of ascent to Paradise – but it is certain that in designing the text’s narrative, our author has been strongly influenced by Pauline and Valentinian dogma, as well as many of the literary conventions of the apocalyptic genre. In attempting to demonstrate the connection between texts which purport to describe experiences and the experiences themselves, previous scholarship has been largely concerned with attempting to work backwards from the text to the experience which is presumed to underlie it and to have inspired it. The problem with this approach with regard to the sort of ancient literary pseudepigrapha that are the subject of this thesis is that its claims are empirically unverifiable, and so as unlikely as it may be that all such accounts are merely literary fictions,⁶³ scholars need to find different ways of formulating their questions regarding the relationship between text and experience.⁶⁴

One promising way forward is suggested by April DeConick, who notes that:

It makes no difference to me whether or not we describe these narratives of the heroes as literary or experiential literature, because this distinction misses the point. The

too would have journeyed into the heavenly spheres and the presence of God, embracing this present experience through its likeness to that which was past.”

⁶² On the concept of “experiences deemed religious” – the notion that it is human subjects that ascribe religious meaning and significance to experiences, as opposed to the experiences themselves having a religious/sacred object – see Taves (2009). On the “constructivist” approach to religious experience, see Katz (1983); Proudfoot (1985).

⁶³ Cf. Himmelfarb (1995), 132-133.

⁶⁴ See Shantz (2012) and the other essays in that volume.

point we need to recognize is that the early Jews and Christians who were reading these texts believed that the stories were reports of actual encounters with God. *The images and descriptions in these texts deeply affected the way that the early Jews and first Christians described and interpreted their own perceived experiences and the way that they framed their hopes for future experiences.*⁶⁵

This observation is important because it recommends reorienting our perspective on the relationship between text and experience so that rather than looking backwards from the text towards an unverifiable private experience presumed to have preceded it, we are now looking at how experiential narratives function to influence, shape, and even elicit such experiences among their audiences. This approach can shed great light on how *Apoc. Paul* was constructed by its author and used by its audience.

It is clear at this point that Valentinian readers of *Apoc. Paul* could easily have seen themselves in the person of Paul, either because of the text's ritual framework and baptismal logic, his visionary transcendence of the demiurge's psychic temple and entry into the Pleroma where he exchanged kisses with his spiritual kin, or his missionary declaration to liberate those exiled souls held captive in the material world of the dead. But still other features of the text indicate that in addition to Paul being constructed as the ideal Valentinian initiate, visionary, and missionary, and therefore as an archetype to which the Valentinian candidate ought to aspire, the author actually designed *Apoc. Paul* to be used as a more immediate tool in constructing and eliciting such experiences among its readers.

Firstly, *Apoc. Paul's* ascent narrative has an almost singular emphasis on the ascent itself, as opposed to other subjects of interest commonly addressed in ancient Jewish and Christian apocalypses, such as the design of history, cosmic eschatology, divine justice, theodicy, metaphysics, protology and cosmogony, and the revelation of divine secrets. Instead, *Apoc. Paul* presents an extremely laconic narrative in which, of the ten heavens, only three heavens are described in any great detail. These are the fourth, fifth, and seventh

⁶⁵ DeConick (2006), 7 (my emphasis).

heavens, the descriptions of which focus on the dangers posed to the ascending soul and the means by which one can overcome them.⁶⁶ As for the other heavens, the first two are omitted entirely, the third receives no description, the sixth merely contains a passive toll-collector, and the eighth, ninth, and tenth are passed over with surprising brevity as the places where Paul unites with the inhabitants of the spiritual realm. In other words, a substantial portion of the ascent narrative is devoted to imparting practical advice to the reader and prospective visionary regarding ontology – the ecstatic metamorphosis from matter to soul to spirit; cosmography – the route of ascent; and demonology – the potential obstacles to be encountered and overcome.

This experiential focus would have made *Apoc. Paul* useful reading for any Valentinian catechumen who was nearing the point of full baptismal initiation in which such experiences appear to be located. Such periods of dogmatic instruction for Valentinian candidates are familiar from both heresiological reports⁶⁷ and Valentinian sources, of which *Gos. Phil.* is perhaps the most obvious witness. Another example is the famous passage from *Exc. 78.2*, which, according to Thomassen, appears to present “a list of standard topics to be expounded in the instruction of the candidates for initiation.”⁶⁸ Such topics – questions of personal origins and eschatology, ontology, salvation, and spiritual rebirth – are typically those discussed in more systematic treatises like *Tri. Trac.*, *Val. Exp.*, or the Valentinian document apparently known to both Irenaeus and Clement. They are the subjects to which Ptolemy refers when he promises to convey further knowledge to Flora once she has advanced further and has “been deemed worthy of the apostolic tradition that we too have

⁶⁶ The disproportionate focus on the fourth heaven’s judgement scene has led some to understand it as a later addition; see Krause (1983), 625-626; Klauck (1985) 175; Rosenstiehl (2007), 559-560. Others have suggested that *Apoc. Paul* represents an abbreviation of a longer original text; see Kasser (1965), 76-77; idem. (1969), 259; van den Broek (2013), 78; and the critical response in Kaler (2005), 144, 161.

⁶⁷ See Tertullian, *Val.* 1.1-2; Hippolytus, *Haer.* VI 41.4. Also, see Chapter 4.

⁶⁸ Thomassen (2006a), 337.

received by transmission.”⁶⁹ Also, the claim in *Tri. Trac.* 127.25-128.5 that the ἀπολύτρωσις baptism takes place after the candidate has assented to “the things that they have been told” suggests a period of pre-baptismal instruction.⁷⁰ Indeed, as Thomassen concludes, “[t]hat the Valentinian *system* had its *Sitz im Leben* in this context is a likely assumption.”⁷¹ Therefore, insofar as Paul emerges triumphant from his stand-off with the demiurge, where he is quizzed on his origins, destiny, and ability to transcend the psychic sphere, *Apoc. Paul* presents him as one well-schooled in the γνῶσις of Valentinian mythology and systematic theology.

As catechetical reading, it is far from clear precisely in what setting *Apoc. Paul* would have been read, digested, and discussed by Valentinian candidates, since so little is known about the social setting of Valentinian meetings, instruction, and worship.⁷² There has been much discussion on how best to describe Valentinian social organization, whether in terms of a Valentinian “church” or “school”. For the most part, Valentinians seem to have identified themselves as members of an ἐκκλησία,⁷³ while their opponents preferred to speak of them as αἵρεσις, διδασκαλεῖον or σχολή, presumably to stress the perceived parallels between Valentinianism and “paganism”.⁷⁴ However, the numerous points at which Valentinians also used such school-terminology in positive self-descriptions highlights the anachronistic nature of distinguishing too sharply between “church” and “school”, as though academic and

⁶⁹ Ptolemy, *Flor.* in Epiphanius, *Pan.* XXXIII 7.8-9.

⁷⁰ Thomassen (2006a), 353.

⁷¹ *Ibid.* 386 (original emphasis); *idem.* (2013a), 192-193.

⁷² For some preliminary hypotheses, see Dunderberg (2005b), 94-95; Thomassen (2004); *idem.* (2013a); also, Lampe (2003), 292-318.

⁷³ E.g. *Exc.* 1.1-2; 26.1; *Tri. Trac.* NHC I,5 68.29-36; 115.23-116.5; 125.4-5; *Interp. Know.* NHC XI,1 9.18; 13.20-24; 21.21-23; Irenaeus, *Haer.* I 5.6-6.1.

⁷⁴ E.g. Irenaeus, *Haer.* I Pref.2; I.11.1; Tertullian, *Apol.* 46; *Val.* 1.1; 8.3; 11.2; 33.1; Clement of Alexandria, *Strom.* IV 71.1; VII 105.5; Hippolytus, *Haer.* VI 29.1; 42.2; 55.1; X 13.1; Epiphanius, *Pan.* XXXI 1.6; XXXI 36.7; XXXV 23; see Marksches (1997a), 412-19 and *passim*, who cautions that “the importance of the category ‘school’ for the heresiological conceptual grid of Irenaeus, for example, raises doubts whether ‘the people who stem from Valentinus’ really constitute a ‘school’ or whether we are not rather dealing with an anti-heretical topos.” For this heresiological strategy, see e.g. Irenaeus, *Haer.* I 10.2-3; Justin, *Dial.* 35.6; Origen, *Cels.* 3.12; Hippolytus, *Haer.* VII 36; Tertullian, *Praescr.* 7; Le Boulluec (1985), 1:162-167. See also Smith (2015), 132-170, who demonstrates that Irenaeus’s use of scholastic terminology to describe his opponents is merely a polemical device designed to depict certain of his fellow churchmen as pagan philosophers outside the church who were using, and therefore polluting, the church’s scriptures.

religious life were somehow necessarily separate.⁷⁵ For example, *Tri. Trac.* describes the Aeons simultaneously as a Pleromatic “Church” (97.5-9) and a “school of civil conduct” (71.22-23; *ANCHBE* *ἸΠΟ[Λ]ΙΤΙΑ*)⁷⁶ through which one may advance to the Father. Hence, while Marksches and Dunderberg are surely correct to note the numerous points of contact between Valentinian group dynamics and those of contemporary philosophical schools,⁷⁷ the Valentinian collective self-identification as an *ἐκκλησία* is not to be dismissed lightly. Indeed, the Sunday meetings of the congregation in one of a network of private house churches offer the most obvious – albeit not the only – setting for any activity of communal learning, discussion, and worship.

In a recent article, Thomassen has attempted to tentatively reconstruct what a Valentinian church meeting may have looked like in its second- or third-century heyday:

The community would meet on Sundays (whether before sunrise or in the evening – or both – we do not know). Spirituals and psychics worshipped together for the first part of the service, which comprised a confession, a collection and the singing of a “hymn of the humble”, and praying for redemption. Perhaps both groups listened together to a sermon. Baptism of new members may have taken place at this point. The second part of the service was for spirituals only, i.e., the baptized. It included the singing of psalms from Valentinus’ psalm-book. The congregation sang in an enthusiastic mode, seeking communion with the transcendent aeons. After that, a senior member of the congregation delivered a sermon. Then followed a Eucharistic meal, with bread and wine mixed with water, or just water. The elements were consecrated by means of an invocation for the presence of spiritual power and eaten as a prefiguration of the eschatological wedding feast of the bridal chamber. During the meal, individual church members stood up to prophesy, conveying messages from the aeonic world, perhaps speaking in tongues.⁷⁸

⁷⁵ E.g. *Gos. Truth* NHC I,3 19.19-20; *Gos. Phil.* NHC II,3 81.1-14; *Interp. Know.* NHC XI,1 9.21-27; *Val. Exp.* NHC XI,2 37.28-31. On the combination of scholastic and religious pursuits in Alexandria, see Brakke (1994), 399-410; von Campenhausen (1969), 194-212; for Clement of Alexandria, see van den Hoek (1990); eadem. (1997), 71-79; Marksches (1997a), 414-415; and for Origen, see Watts (2006), 161-168.

⁷⁶ Thomassen and Painchaud (1989), 320 suggest an original *διδασκαλεῖον πολιτείας*, but also recommend that this was itself a corruption of *διδασκαλεῖον παιδείας*.

⁷⁷ Marksches (1997a); Dunderberg (2004); idem. (2005b), 71-72, 93-94; idem. (2008), 4-5; see also Edwards (1995) on the enduring importance of contemporary Platonism, as well as contact with philosophical schools, among Valentinians into the fourth-century. Other suggestions along this line include Lüdemann (1995), 129; McGuire (1983), 20-22.

⁷⁸ Thomassen (2013a), 195-196.

The hypothetical nature of this account notwithstanding, the question arises as to what the psychics would do once the pneumatics broke off for their more specialised service of communion with the Pleroma. It is possible that it was at this point that the psychic catechumens departed for periods of instruction, listening to lectures from a more senior initiate, reading and discussing literature, and generally acquiring pneumatic lore. It is this type of setting that would have offered Valentinian candidates the opportunity for engaging literature like *Apoc. Paul*, heightening and colouring their expectations for what would happen when their baptisms arrived, and preparing them for the duties that came with full initiation.

7.4. Conclusion

In addition to presenting Paul as the ideal Valentinian initiate capable of experiencing the Pleroma in the here and now, *Apoc. Paul* is a work with a strong future orientation. Firstly, its presentation of Paul's ecstatic ascent through the demiurge's psychic temple, entry into the spiritual realm, and participation in spiritual reality would have functioned to culturally and psychologically shape the experiential ambitions and expectations of Valentinian candidates. Secondly, its strong missionary message would have indoctrinated candidates regarding their future responsibilities to those still trapped in the cosmos and the flesh. This missionary message would have found enormous currency among circles of Valentinian catechumens, who would therefore have been encouraged to listen to their instructor as one who stood in the evangelizing and teaching tradition of Paul himself, speaking to them as exiles in a foreign land (the material world) and longing to return to their true home of the spiritual Jerusalem and the Pleroma.

Conclusion

This thesis has sought to situate the Nag Hammadi *Apocalypse of Paul* in the context of Valentinian Christianity. More than simply arguing how Valentinian readers may have understood the text, I have tried to demonstrate that the apocalypse was written by a Valentinian, for Valentinians. In doing so, I have attempted to do more than merely point out broad parallels between *Apoc. Paul* and other Valentinian literature, but rather to expose the distinctly Valentinian logic and framework of the text's narrative and thereby shed light on how it was used in practical religious settings. To do this required a lengthy exposition on the Valentinian intellectual landscape in which *Apoc. Paul* finds its home, namely that which is characterized by the adoption and adaptation of Jewish temple and priestly lore to a context which systematically downgraded the deity to which the former was oriented. This appropriation of Jewish material reaches its Valentinian zenith in *Gos. Phil.*, which articulates the mystical and soteriological efficacy of ritual initiation in thoroughly priestly terms. But *Gos. Phil.*'s use of temple imagery is far from unheralded in Valentinian literature, for it represents one logical outcome of Valentinianism's fascination with the Divine Name as a soteriological agent in combination with the high-priestly Christology touched upon already in *Exc.* and Heracleon's commentary on John 2:13-16. *Apoc. Paul* develops this Valentinian usage of temple imagery by employing it within a literary setting with which such imagery was already well-acquainted; the pseudepigraphical apocalypse.

Via the Valentinians' favoured apostle, *Apoc. Paul* presents an ideal narrativization of the sort of visionary experience found in *Gos. Phil.* and perhaps presupposed in *Exc.*'s temple cosmology. Complete with a three-tiered spiritual temple in the Pleroma elevated above the psychic realm of the demiurge – who is enthroned in the fashion of YHWH in Solomon's temple and subsequently its heavenly surrogate – *Apoc. Paul* brings life to a trajectory of

Valentinian thought which was previously confined to the somewhat drier contexts of liturgy, systematic theology, and commentary. For one who had received the Divine Name in baptism-anointment, or was expecting to do so in the near future, *Apoc. Paul* offers a vivid depiction of their ongoing or imminent connection with the spiritual community and therefore the Father also, since the former is merely a multifarious manifestation of God's perfect unity. Moreover, its narrative contains stark reminders of the enduring threats posed by cosmic powers and therefore warns against the kinds of behaviour which may result in moral backsliding through which one may fall once more into the clutches of the old legalistic astral order of which *Exc.* among others cautions. Finally, on a more positive note, the reader is encouraged to now see themselves not only as having transcended the old cosmic order and the authority of the demiurge, but also as now participating in a longstanding and ongoing Pauline mission to those who remain captive under such powers. In doing so, they not only become as Paul, but by framing Paul's own mission in Christological terms, they also become as "a Christ".

If the intellectual provenance of *Apoc. Paul* is to be located among Valentinian Christians, then what of its geographical and temporal provenance? The fact that the other Valentinian sources to engage Jewish material on the heavenly temple in this manner all have some relationship to Alexandria makes the Egyptian metropolis a likely location for the composition and use of *Apoc. Paul*. As I argued in Chapter 4, *Gos. Phil.* is likely to have been composed, or at least collected and used, in Alexandria; at least some of Theodotus's thought and exegetical work was evidently known to Clement in Alexandria even if we cannot be certain that Theodotus himself lived in Alexandria;¹ and finally, Heracleon may have spent time living in Alexandria despite being mainly connected with the so-called

¹ See Markschies (2007), 159-160.

“Western” or “Italian” school of Valentinianism according to the heresiologists.² Heracleon’s allegorical exegesis of John, as well as Origen’s transmission of Heracleon’s commentary, both point to an Alexandrian connection.³ Of course, according to a rumour conveyed by Epiphanius, Valentinus himself was born in Egypt – “a Phrebonite from the Egyptian coast” (Φρεβωνίτην τῆς Αἰγύπτου παραλιώτην) – and was educated in “the παιδεία of the Greeks” in Alexandria, where he first began preaching.⁴ Therefore, although it is far from certain, Alexandria, with its well-attested connection to Valentinian thought and Valentinian engagement with Jewish temple motifs, is a plausible location for the original composition and use of *Apoc. Paul*.

Regarding dating, matters are hardly much clearer. The fact that Irenaeus discusses the flaws of Valentinian exegetical work on 2 Corinthians 12:2-4, the substance of which is strongly paralleled in *Apoc. Paul*, suggests that the conditions for the latter were already in place by roughly the 170s CE. However, *Apoc. Paul*’s use of the τελῶναι as celestial gatekeepers may force us to recommend c.200 CE as a *terminus post quem*, since such figures only appear at the earliest with Clement of Alexandria around the turn of the third century. After this, *Apoc. Paul* could have been written at just about any point up to its incorporation into Nag Hammadi Codex V. Although, if I am correct that *Gos. Phil.* was first developed during the third-century then this may indicate a similar date for *Apoc. Paul*. Ultimately, neither the time nor place of *Apoc. Paul*’s original authorship can be determined with any degree of certainty, but based on certain doctrinal and conceptual similarities with *Exc.* and *Gos. Phil.*, my best guess is third-century Alexandria.

² Hippolytus, *Haer.* VI 35.5-7; on Heracleon’s biography, see Wucherpfennig (2002), 360-371.

³ Marksches (2007), 160-162; Pagels (1973), 29; Pettipiece (2007), 379.

⁴ Epiphanius, *Pan.* XXXI 2.2-3; 7.1. On Valentinus’s biography and prosopography more generally, see Marksches (1992), 314-331; idem. (2007), 157-159; Thomassen (2006a), 417-422.

This setting is further supported by *Apoc. Paul*'s literary genre, since it was in the scriptoria of Egypt that pseudepigraphical apocalypses were most assiduously copied and circulated.⁵ Further, Epiphanius writing in the 370s reports that Valentinians were still active in "Athribitis, Prosopites, Arsinoe, the Thebaid, and in the lower parts of the coast and Alexandria." Although Epiphanius is rarely the most trustworthy of historical guides,⁶ his report is an indication of an enduring Valentinian tradition in Egypt stretching from Alexandria along the Nile as far south as the Thebaid. *Apoc. Paul* could plausibly have been utilised by any number of Valentinian (and non-Valentinian) congregations along this route, being translated as it was transmitted southwards, from an Alexandrian Greek original, to a Bohairic version in Lower Egypt, and finally the Sahidicized version of Nag Hammadi Codex V in Upper Egypt. Indeed, away from the eyes and authority of the monarchical episcopate which had been developing in Alexandria since Demetrius (r. 189-232), third-century Egypt would have offered a suitably various religious environment to allow the continued use and transmission of *Apoc. Paul* until it was finally copied into Codex V sometime in the fourth century.⁷

The impact of this thesis will be greatest among Nag Hammadi specialists and scholars in Valentinian studies. It is hoped that in light of this thesis, such specialists will be encouraged to engage *Apoc. Paul* in discussions of Valentinianism and that this curious and laconic apocalypse will forthwith be adequately scrutinised in discussions of Valentinian doctrine, practice, writing, and identity. However, since Valentinianism did not exist in isolation from its broader religious and intellectual contexts, but rather in a two-way conversation with

⁵ See Frankfurter (1996).

⁶ He provides a suspiciously similar list of places for Basilides's activity in *Pan.* XXIV 1.1, including Athribitis, Prosopites, and Alexandria.

⁷ On the development of the Alexandrian episcopate and its impact on Egyptian Christianity, see Griggs (1990), 45-116; Brakke (1994); Pearson (1986); idem. (1990), 194-213; idem. (2007b).

them, this thesis ought to indirectly inform multiple other topics in early Christian studies. For example, studies on the reception of Paul in early Christianity usually focus on the reception and use of Paul's *thought*, as opposed to his *person*. *Apoc. Paul* represents a striking example of how early Christians were able to draw on the authority of Paul, specifically his visionary authority, for their own purposes, as opposed to merely borrowing certain ideas. Secondly, scholars have long suspected some kind of relationship – whether genetic or merely typological – between Gnosticism and apocalypticism largely because of the proliferation of literary apocalypses among Gnostics. Given the enduring scholarly conviction that Valentinianism is to some extent approximate to Gnosticism, it is odd that no Valentinian apocalypses have hitherto been identified. If *Apoc. Paul* is accepted into the Valentinian literary corpus, then specialists of Gnosticism, Valentinianism, and apocalypticism will have to throw-out the notion that *Valentinians did not write apocalypses* and address how this changes our view of Valentinianism. Furthermore, if *Apoc. Paul* is Valentinian, it must be acknowledged that literary ascent apocalypses were not the unique intellectual property of those who sought revealed knowledge through visions, but rather that as a diachronic phenomenon, the literary genre of “apocalypse” could be employed for diverse reasons by different people in varying contexts. *Apoc. Paul*, like Valentinian literature generally, shows no interest in revealed knowledge being acquired through heavenly ascent, but rather the act of ecstatic vision facilitates an approach to God, the ontological and soteriological effects of which benefit both the seer and their earthly community. In this sense, the ‘*Apocalypse*’ of Paul is something of a misnomer, but by the third-century the genre had evidently taken on a life of its own and was capable of being employed in a diverse range of rhetorical settings.

But ultimately, if the essence of my hypothesis is accepted – that the Nag Hammadi *Apocalypse of Paul* is a Valentinian text written by a Valentinian for Valentinians – the chief

upshot of this thesis is that our apocalypse will surely cease to languish in the obscurity to which it has largely been confined since its first discovery seventy years ago, and instead will emerge as an innovative and vivid piece of literature designed to play a crucial role in the ritual lives and religious experiences of those associated with what came to be regarded as one of early Christianity's most important so-called "heresies".

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