

Rethinking the Gospel of Truth:  
A study of its eastern Valentinian setting

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August 15, 2006

Dissertation at Uppsala University To be publically examined in Geijersalen, Engelska Parken, Friday, September 29, 2006 at 09:15 for the degree of Doctor of Theology. The examination will be conducted in English.

## **Abstract**

Magnusson, J. 2006. RETHINKING THE GOSPEL OF TRUTH: A study of its eastern Valentinian setting. Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis. Uppsala Dissertations from the Faculty of Theology. 191 pp. Uppsala.

Already in the second century, the Church Father Irenaeus warned against reading the Gospel of Truth that was used among the so-called Valentinians. For more than one and a half millennium GospTruth was lost until in the 1950s a Coptic text was discovered that could be a translation of that work both loved and hated. Since the discovery scholars have tried to determine whether the Coptic text represents the one mentioned by Irenaeus, and whether its author might even be the famous Gnostic teacher Valentinus of Alexandria.

The text is very complex and the present study the first attempt to use text linguistic tools for analysing GospTruth. A new and sometimes radically different translation is presented, and an hypothesis of date of redaction and authorship is put forward. Previously Gnostic texts have usually been read in light of the reports of the Church Fathers. In this study an attempt is made to detect topics that were interesting for the Valentinians and that have so far been neglected. The analysis presents a new ethical debate among early Christians regarding the Biblical law, and a hypothesis of how the author of GospTruth wanted his or her community to act towards the neighbouring communities is elaborated. In addition my investigation draws attention to an interpretation of the crucifixion that seems to have distinguished Valentinians from others.

For a long time scholars depicted the Gnostics as evil opponents to the church. During the last decades this view has been criticized, and today many scholars abandon the term Gnostic altogether, and instead only use the term Christian. In my opinion such an approach risks to conceal the unique features of Valentinianism, and the results of the present study will hopefully shed new light on a branch of Christianity which still is relatively unexplored.

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*To King Che*



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## **Abbreviations**

- ExcTheod** Excerpta ex Theodoto  
**GospTruth** Gospel of Truth  
**HippHaer** Hippolytus refutation of all Haeresis  
**IrenHaer** Irenaeus Adversus Haeresis  
**NHC** Nag Hammadi Codex  
**NHS** Nag Hammadi Studies  
**TertullianVal** Tertullian against the Valentinians  
**TripTrac** Tripartite Tractate

## Preface

To write a thesis about the Gospel of Truth has been a tough job that I many times have thought would be impossible for me. Because I am blind I have encountered many difficulties when I tried to learn enough Coptic to analyse the text, but maybe the challenge has provoked me to carry through my work in the most challenging text-centred direction. But all efforts of will would have been fruitless, if it were not for all good friends who have supported me and come up with creative technical solutions that has made it possible for me to read and write Coptic and Greek. To mention names is difficult as so many have contributed in this respect, but some stand out. Without the aid of Johan Alwall, Fredrik Larsson and Patrik Granholm it would have been much harder to handle these problems.

However, there still remain many typographical problems that will be solved if this book will be published. Fortunately, Magnus Holm and my wife King Che has helped me to correct many scribal errors, and hopefully the scholarly results in this manner have become possible to decipher for the readers.

This work is a product of the long tradition in Uppsala. For centuries scholars have devoted their skills in order to study what we now call history of religions in general, and to a large extent to Gnosticism in particular. Scholars as, for instance, Geo Wiedengren, Torgny Säve-Söderbergh and Eric Segelberg are all well known. At the seminar for late antiquity studies I have found many friends who embody this long tradition. I would especially like to thank Carl-Martin Edsman who has encouraged me and supported me with creative and well-founded suggestions. Without Lars Hartman the text linguistic tools still would have been an unknown resource for me. The scholar who introduced me to Gnosticism was Jan Bergman who is not among us any longer. He always stimulated free and creative thinking and combined it with his broad knowledge. And of course, I thank my supervisors Anders Hultgård and Gabriella Gustafsson who have had the somewhat nerv straining work to wait for my drafts and in the last minute have had to comment on them for the impatient student.

But in order to carry through this work I had to go to other universities. To begin with I received a grant from Stiegler's foundation that made some travels possible, but without the long lasting generosity from Axel och Margaret AX:SON Johnson's Foundation this work would have been absolutely impossible.

During the years that I to a large extent have spent in Helsinki, Bergen and Münster, I received help that never can be accounted for in the notes. Antti Marjanen, Stephen Emmel and Einar Thomassen generously granted me of their time, even though their schedules already were very tight.

In this way the present study is an interdisciplinary work that is based on

a generosity that always has exceeded my expectations.



# Chapter 1

## A challenge in a bewildering discourse

### A discovery that changed the scholarly landscape

In December 1945 two brothers, Muhammad and Khalfah Ali of the al-Samman clan,<sup>1</sup> happened to come across some documents that changed the landscape of scholarship in early Christianity, Judaism and Hermeticism. In the desert they found a jar that contained Coptic codices with texts that are dated to the middle of the fourth century C.E. or somewhat later. The discovery was made near the small town Nag Hammadi in Upper Egypt. The documents are therefore usually referred to as ‘the Nag Hammadi Library.’

First, however, Muhammad Ali hesitated to open the jar, as the breaking of its seal could bring either evil or good, a jinn or gold. But the curiosity succeeded and he smashed it with his mattock. Small golden-like particles swirled out. Probably, it was no jinn but particles of papyrus as the jar contained what we now know as Codex III.

Even though it was not gold in the vainly sense, the jar contained a far more precious treasure: since long lost voices of religious communities that we until this discovery almost merely knew through the reports of their opponents.

As the fragments of papyrus were spread over the world, so were also some of the codices from Nag Hammadi scattered. One of them, which is now called Codex I or ‘The Jung codex,’ early disappeared on the black market. Rumours, saying that this codex contained texts of the Gnostic leader Valentinus of Alexandria, caused scholars to struggle to buy it. Especially the third tractate seemed to be important. Perhaps it would be the ‘Gospel

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<sup>1</sup>For more details concerning the discovery, see Robinson 1997, especially pp. 3-6.

of Truth,<sup>2</sup> which Irenaeus of Lyon ca 180 spoke of as one of the most important texts among the Valentinians.

When the existence of the Jung codex became known, the tendency to see the texts as related to Valentinus of Alexandria became very strong. The following quotation from Gilles Quispel who tells us in what manner the Jung codex became accessible to scholarship is striking.

In the meantime it had become known that the MS. contained a collection of four writings, one of them with the title: The Gospel of Truth. More than the title however, was hardly known. And yet all our passionate exertions rested on the supposition that this Gospel of Truth was identical with the 'Evangelium Veritatis' about which the Church Father Irenaeus, writing c. 180 A.D., tells us that it was in use among the disciples of the Gnostic Valentinus.<sup>3</sup>

When Quispel eventually had the opportunity to scrutinize one page of the codex so that the Jung Institute could know if it was worth buying it, he tells us: '... the reading of a single page convinced me that it was Valentinian.'<sup>4</sup> In the same context we read: 'It appeared that the Gospel of Truth beyond doubt came from the school of Valentinus and was identical with the writing which was referred to by Irenaeus of Lyons c. 180.'<sup>5</sup> This illustrates how the enthusiasm of a talented scholar resulted in very categorical statements. But we should be grateful to Quispel whose enthusiasm was important for the Jung Institute when one decided to buy these texts. Soon however, doubts were expressed concerning the origin of the GospTruth. Schenke<sup>6</sup> claimed that the GospTruth could be spoken of as Gnostic in a broad sense only. It could for instance be connected with the group that produced the Odes of Salomon.<sup>7</sup> A more general Gnostic background was also favoured by Arai.<sup>8</sup> However, many scholars tended to see the GospTruth as a Valentinian text, more or less closely related to Valentinus himself.<sup>9</sup>

Apart from the difference in opinion that scholars had regarding the origin of the GospTruth, many investigations had in common that one analyzed different concepts in it and compared them with the manner that similar concepts were spoken of in the heresiological material. The consequence was that even though the GospTruth from the beginning of the Nag Ham-

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<sup>2</sup>In what follows referred to as the GospTruth.

<sup>3</sup>Quispel 1974, p. 5.

<sup>4</sup>Quispel 1974, p. 6.

<sup>5</sup>Quispel 1974, p. 6.

<sup>6</sup>Schenke 1959.

<sup>7</sup>Schenke 1959.

<sup>8</sup>Arai 1964.

<sup>9</sup>For instance, Grobel 1960, Jonas 1963, pp. 175-194.

hamadi studies was one of the most discussed texts, many important aspects of it were overlooked due to the scholarly discourse. As scholars usually discussed the GospTruth in relation to the heresiological material, the topics that the heresiologists focused upon continued to dominate the study of the GospTruth. Rarely if ever, the GospTruth was read in light of for instance the Tripartite Tractate<sup>10</sup> which, after all, is included in the same codex. In the early days however, this weakness was almost inescapable. Still, many important texts from Nag Hammadi were unpublished, and moreover, the study of the published Nag Hammadi texts was in its infancy. It is more surprising that the conference on Valentinianism at Yale in 1978,<sup>11</sup> even though all the texts of the Nag Hammadi library were published, paid much attention to the GospTruth, but still, more or less, without relating it to the TripTrac. Evidently, writing a thesis about the GospTruth is much easier today than 25 years ago. The study of the TripTrac has advanced considerably,<sup>12</sup> and the fragments of codex XI from Nag Hammadi have been scrutinized as well. As frequently will be demonstrated, reading the GospTruth in the light of other Valentinian Nag Hammadi texts will open new perspectives on Valentinianism. No longer are we excused to delimit ourselves to the heresiological discourse. In my thesis therefore, I aim at highlighting topics that I assert were important for the early Valentinians themselves, and that so far have been seriously neglected. By reading the GospTruth in the light of Valentinian intertexts it will be possible to put forward some hypotheses regarding the social setting of the GospTruth, and in a new manner to approach the long debated question of the authorship and the original setting of it.

Since the precise formulation of the issue is related to the sometimes confusing scholarly discourse, to formulate it here would be of limited value for the reader. Thus, it will be left pending until the subsequent survey is carried through. Presently, the following general points may serve as a guide for the reader:

- As the survey of the scholarly discourse will prove, new perspectives on the development of Valentinianism have emerged. My analyses of central features of the GospTruth will provide us with more precise means to evaluate the recently opened perspectives on the text. In the final chapters of this study, I will relate my analyses to hypotheses regarding authorship, date and original setting of the GospTruth and make my own claim regarding these subject-matters.
- The view of the literary quality of the GospTruth has varied, and so

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<sup>10</sup>In what follows the TripTrac.

<sup>11</sup>Layton 1980.

<sup>12</sup>Primarily through the studies undertaken by Thomassen, most recently in Thomassen 2006.

has the hypotheses regarding the original language as well. Moreover, the style of the *GospTruth* has also been important for the debate concerning the authorship. I will repeatedly discuss the periodization of the Coptic text, which will have an impact on many of the questions just mentioned. I will also present a new attempt to translate the text. In this respect, the present study raises questions that today are debated in the so-called ‘translation theory.’ In this way my study hopefully will open doors between disciplines that so far have had little contact with each other.

## The *GospTruth* and Valentinianism

The *GospTruth*, Valentinianism and Gnosticism have attracted much scholarly attention. Long ago the time has passed when a survey could set about with a complete coverage of these subject-matters. Consequently, in what follows, I have to synthesize arguments that are especially important for the subsequent discussion.

### The argument of title

As mentioned above, one of the reasons that from the beginning made scholars assume that NHC 1.3 was the text that Irenaeus mentioned was the supposition that it was entitled ‘The Gospel of Truth.’ Ca 180 Irenaeus wrote:

The Valentinians, who are devoid of any fear, produce their own compositions and take pride in having more gospels than there really are. For they have even advanced to such a degree of audacity that they entitle something which was written by themselves not long ago as the Gospel of Truth, although it in no way agrees with the gospels of the apostles, so that not even the gospel may exist among them without blasphemy.<sup>13</sup>

The initial line of the third tractate of codex one runs as follows: ‘The good news (or gospel) of the truth is a joy for those who have received the grace from the Father of the truth...’<sup>14</sup> Thus, with the argument of title, I refer to

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<sup>13</sup>Irenaeus’ *Adversus Haeresis*, in what follows *IrenHaer*, III 11:9. Translation from Thomassen 2006, p. 146. *Hi vero qui sunt a Valentino iterum existentes extra omnem timorem suas conscriptiones proferentes plura habere gloriantur quam sunt ipsa Evangelia. Siquidem in tantum processerunt audaciae uti quod ab his non olim conscriptum est ‘Veritatis Evangelium’ titulent, in nihilo conveniens apostolorum evangeliiis, ut nec Evangelium sit apud eos sine blasphemia.*

<sup>14</sup>If nothing else is indicated the translations of Coptic texts are my own.

the claim that the incipit line of NHC I.3 identifies the text with the work that was spoken of by Irenaeus.

Among the Nag Hammadi texts, 37 of 53 have a formal title.<sup>15</sup> 21 times the titles appear at the end of the text, 8 times at the beginning and 8 times both at the beginning and at the end.<sup>16</sup> As NHC 1.3 is one of those texts that lack a formal title, scholars already from the beginning doubted that the initial line was intended as the title.<sup>17</sup> However, even a text without title sooner or later has to be called something. As Munck notes<sup>18</sup> texts without a formal title were often identified by their incipit line. Granting that our tractate was referred to in accordance with its incipit line, do we have to reckon with the possibility of many different ‘Gospels of Truth?’ According to Wilson the answer is ‘yes.’

We know of two Gospels of the Egyptians, two Gospels of Philip, two Gospels of Thomas, while Codex V of the Nag Hammadi library itself contains two different Apocalypses of James. It is therefore possible that our document is the one mentioned by Irenaeus, but the evidence is by no means conclusive.<sup>19</sup>

Thomassen<sup>20</sup> is less uncertain than Wilson:

Regardless of the question of authorship, however, the probability that there existed two independent works, one entitled ‘The Gospel of Truth’ and the other accidentally beginning with the same words, and both of them ‘gnostic,’ must be regarded as very slim indeed.<sup>21</sup>

Moreover, Thomassen remarks that the GospTruth is a homily, and it is common that texts of that genre lack title.<sup>22</sup> Thus, Thomassen does not claim that NHC I.3 has a formal title, but that it was referred to by its incipit line.

However, few if any date the GospTruth exclusively from the title mentioned by Irenaeus and the incipit line of our tractate. Those who claim that the GospTruth is the text mentioned by Irenaeus also have other arguments for placing it in the early stages of the Valentinian theological development.

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<sup>15</sup>Standaert 1976b, p. 138.

<sup>16</sup>Standaert 1976b p. 138.

<sup>17</sup>For instance, Schenke 1959.

<sup>18</sup>Munck 1963.

<sup>19</sup>Wilson 1980, p. 138.

<sup>20</sup>Thomassen 2006, pp. 146-147.

<sup>21</sup>Thomassen 2006, p. 147.

<sup>22</sup>Thomassen 2006, p. 147.

For instance, Thomassen also referred to the ‘Gnostic’<sup>23</sup> character of the document, and it is his overall interpretation of the *GospTruth* that makes him locate it to an early date within the Valentinian tradition:

In substance, however, we are, on the basis of our current knowledge, justified in treating NHC 1,3 as representing a Valentinian document dating from before the time of Irenaeus’ work of the 180s.<sup>24</sup>

It seems that the argument of title gains strength if we date the *GospTruth* early in the development of the Valentinian tradition.

### **The argument of authorship**

As follows from the preceding discussion, in order to detect a well-founded hypothesis regarding the authorship, date and original setting of the *GospTruth*, scholars do not use the presupposed title alone, but include the general character of the *GospTruth* as well. Therefore, we have to discuss in what way the *GospTruth* has been connected to various other texts. To begin with we will recall some attempts that have in common that they propose that Valentinus was the author of our tractate.

### **Building on IrenHaer 1.11**

During the second world war, Quispel studied the available information about Valentinus. When the *GospTruth* appeared, Quispel concluded that its theology was in agreement with the fragments of Valentinus and the system described in IrenHaer 1.11.1. Even after half a century of investigations Quispel maintained this position.<sup>25</sup>

In Pseudo Tertullian Quispel found support for the assumption that Valentinus had a gospel of his own besides other gospels, . As proof he referred to the following passage: ‘Evangelium habet etiam suum praeter haec nostra.’<sup>26</sup> ‘...it would seem that Pseudo-Tertullian and his source Hippolytus are transmitting a very old and trustworthy tradition which may go back to Justin Martyr.’<sup>27</sup> In accordance with this reasoning, Quispel concluded that by far the most likely author of the *GospTruth* is Valentinus.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>23</sup>Thomassen’s quotation marks.

<sup>24</sup>Thomassen 2006, pp. 147-148.

<sup>25</sup>Quispel 2000, pp. 239-240.

<sup>26</sup>Pseudo Tertullian *Adversus Omnes Haereses*.

<sup>27</sup>Quispel 2000, p. 239.

<sup>28</sup>Quispel 2000, p. 240.

One example of the relationship between the GospTruth and the Fragments of Valentinus is that they have in common a much more hostile attitude to the demiurge than later Valentinian texts. For instance, in 18.21-25 of the GospTruth, Error who is the demiurge murders Jesus. This fits well with the Valentinian Fragment that is preserved in Clement of Alexandria's *Strommateis* 4.89.4: 'the cause of death is the work of the creator of the world.'<sup>29</sup>

There are points of similarity between the argumentation of Quispel and that of Thomassen. Both have their point of departure in a general study of Valentinianism, and they both ascribe the GospTruth to Valentinus.<sup>30</sup> Despite these similarities however, they differ on many crucial points regarding the development of Valentinianism.

A major difference between Thomassen and Quispel is their different viewpoints concerning the text of *Iren. Haer* 1.11. As mentioned above, Quispel builds upon the information in that chapter when he detects the original doctrine of Valentinus. Thomassen for his part, is unwilling to do so.

This deserves some consideration as we read the following in the beginning of *IrenHaer* 1.11:

Let us now consider the inconsistent teaching of these people. For as soon as there are two or three of them they do not say the same things on the same matters, but speak against one another both with regard to the subject-matters and the words that they use. The first one, Valentinus, who adapted the principles of the so-called 'Gnostic' hairesis into his own particular brand of teaching, set forth the following:<sup>31</sup>

The information provided by Irenaeus in the first nine chapters of *IrenHaer* 1 seems to come from Valentinians, primarily followers of Ptolemy who were located in the same area as Irenaeus himself. In chapter 11 and 12 however, Irenaeus seems to use an earlier heresiological source.<sup>32</sup> According to Thomassen, Irenaeus rewrites this older source in order to stress the disagreements and inconsistencies among the Valentinians.<sup>33</sup> Furthermore, Thomassen raises doubts whether the author of the heresiological work that Irenaeus used actually knew the doctrine of Valentinus:

...we can easily imagine the unknown heresiologist believing

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<sup>29</sup>Quispel 2000, p. 240.

<sup>30</sup>Thomassen 2004, p. 254.

<sup>31</sup>*IrenHaer* 1.11.1. Transl. Thomassen 2006, p. 23.

<sup>32</sup>For a detailed discussion regarding the source critical considerations, see Thomassen 2006, pp. 9-22.

<sup>33</sup>Thomassen 2006, p. 24.

(or wanting us to believe) that with this document he was in possession of ‘the’ doctrine of the Valentinians, and by implication of Valentinus himself.<sup>34</sup>

Even though Thomassen does not exclude the possibility that IrenHaer 1.11 contains information about Valentinus, the available sources do not help us to determine which parts of the information that are correct. One topic that is discussed in IrenHaer 1.11 is the pleromatology of Valentinus. This report however, seems to differ from the reports on the same subject-matter that are provided by Tertullian. It makes Thomassen conclude as follows:

The pleromatology of IrenHaer I 11:1 is clearly closer to that described by Tertullian for Ptolemy (Val. 7–32) than to what he attributes to Valentinus himself. The incompatibility between these two reports about the Pleroma of Valentinus makes the attribution of Haer. I 11:1 to Valentinus highly unlikely.<sup>35</sup>

### Valentinian schools and protological myths

Thomassen doubts that IrenHaer 1.11 provides reliable information about Valentinus, and that the information of Valentinus’ fragments is too meagre to build upon when we reconstrue the earliest Valentinian theology.<sup>36</sup> He therefore has to look in other directions in order to obtain more information. By doing so, Thomassen has opened up new perspectives that will be carefully analysed and evaluated in this thesis. Consequently, the following summary has to be quite extensive in order to provide us with the necessary background of the critical questions that will be raised.

Tertullian mentions that the Valentinian doctrine was split into two schools, *duae scholae*, and two chairs, *duae cathedrae*,<sup>37</sup> but fails to provide us with more information about them. For him it was important to stress the split within Valentinianism and he remarks as follows: ‘These days only Axionicus in Antioch respects the memory of Valentinus by observing the full range of his doctrines.’<sup>38</sup>

Hippolytus speaks about the two schools as well.

Concerning this there is a great dispute among them - a cause of dissension and division. Consequently, their teaching is divided and the one is called among them the eastern doctrine the

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<sup>34</sup>Thomassen 2006, p. 24.

<sup>35</sup>Thomassen 2006, p. 27.

<sup>36</sup>Thomassen 2006, p. 26.

<sup>37</sup>Tertullian against the Valentinians, TertullianVal, 11.2.

<sup>38</sup>TertullianVal 4.3, Thomassen 2006, p. 40.

other the Italian. Those from Italy - and to this group Heracleon and Ptolemy belong - say that the body of Jesus was psychic and that because of this the Spirit came down at his baptism as a dove - that is the Logos of Sophia, the mother above. It joined the psychic, and raised him from the dead. Those from the east - to whom Axionicus and Ardesianes belong - affirm that the body of the Saviour was spiritual. For there came upon Mary the Holy Spirit - that is Sophia - and the power of the Most High - the art of creation - in order that that which was given to Mary by the Spirit might be given shape.<sup>39</sup>

Relying on the information from Tertullian, Axionicus was a faithful follower of Valentinus' teaching, and moreover, Thomassen asserts, the quotation from Hippolytus lets us deduce that Axionicus was an adherent of the eastern school. Consequently, we are justified to assume that Valentinus' theology most of all resembled the eastern brand of Valentinianism.

This hypothesis is also supported by Tertullian's *De carne Christi*. In 10.1, Tertullian reports that the Valentinians say that Christ's body was psychic *qui carnem Christi animale[m] affirmant*. In 15.1 of the same work however, Tertullian reports that Valentinus claimed that Christ's body was spiritual *carnem Christi spirituale[m] comminisci*.<sup>40</sup>

On this basis, Thomassen sets out with the assumptions that Valentinus taught that Christ's body was spiritual, and that this view characterized the eastern school, which consequently represents the original Valentinian doctrine.<sup>41</sup> In order to understand what eastern Valentinians could have referred to with 'the spiritual body of the Saviour' we now turn our attention to an early Valentinian who traditionally has been classified as a proponent of the eastern school.

### The Saviour according to the eastern school

Clement of Alexandria tells us about a Valentinian called Theodotus. The title of Clement's report runs as follows: 'Excerpts from the [writings] of Theodotus and of the so-called eastern doctrine from the times of Valentinus.' This is the only heresiological source that extensively deals with the

<sup>39</sup>Hippolytus refutation of all haeresis, HippHaer, 6.35.5-7. Transl. Thomassen 2006, p. 40.

<sup>40</sup>This contradiction has led Dubois to doubt that there really were two schools in Valentinianism. (Dubois 1995). After all, the heresiologists had an interest in emphasizing the split within Valentinianism. In this thesis however, Thomassen's arguments will be evaluated and if they cannot stand the test, Dubois' doubts will gain in strength. We therefore leave this issue for the moment and come back to it in chapter seven.

<sup>41</sup>Thomassen 2006, p. 41.

eastern school. Furthermore, it is easy to date Theodotus' work to approximately a generation before Clement. However, not all material that Clement includes stems from Theodotus. Clement uses different sources, and it is often hard to determine where a quotation ends and where Clement's own comments begin. Normally the work is divided into four parts, 1-28 (A), 29-43:1 (B), 43:2-65 (C) and 66-86 (D). Part C stands out and many scholars have noted that it resembles *IrenHaer* 1.4.5-7 and will therefore not be taken as relevant for the discussion regarding the eastern school.<sup>42</sup> For the present purpose, it suffices to discuss some passages that are of importance for Thomassen's argumentation regarding the spiritual body of the Saviour. The first quotation in *Excerpta ex Theodoto*<sup>43</sup> runs as follows:

'Father,' he quotes, 'into thy hands I commit my spirit' [Luke 23:46]. What Sophia brought forth, he says, as flesh for the Logos, namely the spiritual seed, that the Saviour put on when he descended. Therefore at his passion he commits Sophia to the Father in order that he may receive her back from the Father, and that she may not be held back here by those who have the power to plunder her. So he commits the entire spiritual seed, the elect, by means of the utterance quoted above.<sup>44</sup>

According to Thomassen, in order to understand this passage one has to be acquainted with a certain characteristic of the Valentinian soteriology.

When the Saviour was sent to the fallen Sophia, she produced spiritual offspring in joyful response to the vision she received of the Saviour and the Pleroma. This offspring is the spiritual seed. Its members are images of the aeons of the Pleroma, and they reside, together with Sophia herself, in a region below the Pleroma, but above the cosmos (which was created later). When the Saviour eventually descended into the cosmos, the spiritual seed constituted his body. Thus they were incarnated concorporeally with the Saviour.<sup>45</sup>

In light of this the above given quotation from *ExcTheod* is interpreted as saying that Jesus returned to the Father after the crucifixion. For a while after Jesus' resurrection however, the spiritual body that is the heavenly church that descended with Jesus remains on earth. As the church risks to become attacked by the hostile cosmic powers the Father has to protect it.<sup>46</sup>

<sup>42</sup>Most recently, Thomassen 2006, pp. 29, 62-72.

<sup>43</sup>Hence forward *ExcTheod*.

<sup>44</sup>*ExcTheod* 1.1-2, Transl. Thomassen 2006, p. 30.

<sup>45</sup>Thomassen 2006, p. 30.

<sup>46</sup>Thomassen 2006, pp. 30-31.

In the following quotation, the ecclesiology appears more clearly:

The visible part of Jesus was Sophia and the church of the superior seed, which he put on through the flesh, as Theodotus says. But the invisible part was the Name, which is the only-begotten Son.<sup>47</sup>

In this manner eastern Valentinian soteriology is closely related to the ecclesiology. But how does the heavenly church that forms the spiritual body of the Saviour relate to the earthly church? In order to obtain more information on this subject-matter, Thomassen has to look at other texts.

The Tripartite Tractate, hence forward the TripTract, is one of the most useful texts when we want to understand the eastern Valentinian doctrine. It is an extensive and systematic treatise that provides a lot of the information that was inferred in the interpretations of the above given passages from the ExcTheod. So is the case, even when it comes to the ecclesiology.

As the Saviour's body comprises the heavenly church, the Saviour's descent to earth means the revelation and actualization of the true being of the spiritual beings in the cosmic realm. Thomassen formulates it as follows:

We must rather see the heavenly church as the mythologically hypostasised representation of the predestined status of the spirituals on earth. When the Saviour appears, he brings them that status, which they in a sense already have. Their spiritual nature is revealed, an event that is expressed not only by the notion that the Saviour shines from above and makes manifest what each person on earth is (118:21-28),<sup>48</sup> but also by the idea that he reveals the heavenly church that already exists up above, as the hypostasised representation of their hidden collective identity.<sup>49</sup>

Thus, from the anthropological point of view, the spiritual person is a member of the church, while in the soteriological process, the Saviour brings corporeal existence to the heavenly church. The Saviour's body becomes manifested in many individuals who together form a unity. It means that the Saviour participates in the multiplicity that belongs to the realm of suffering, and accordingly needs salvation as well.<sup>50</sup> According to Thomassen, this logic is the key to the following passage from TripTrac:

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<sup>47</sup>ExcTheod 26.1. transl. Thomassen 2006, p. 31.

<sup>48</sup>Refers to the TripTrac

<sup>49</sup>Thomassen 2006, p. 52.

<sup>50</sup>Thomassen 2006, pp. 52-53.

These are such as belong to the single essence, which is the spiritual one. The *oikonomia*, however, is variable: this being one thing, that another. Some (beings) have issued from passion and division; they need healing. Others originate from a prayer that the sick be healed; they have been appointed to care for the ones who have fallen. These are the apostles and the bringers of good tidings. They are, in fact, the disciples of the Saviour; these are teachers for those who need instruction. Why, then, did they too share in the sufferings which those who had been brought forth from passion were afflicted with, if, in accordance with the *oikonomia*, they were brought forth in one body together with the Saviour, who did not take part in these sufferings? Well, the Saviour, in fact, was a bodily image of something unitary, namely the Entirety. Therefore he retained the model of indivisibility, from which derives impassibility. But they are images of each of those who were revealed, and for that reason they received division from their model: they received form with a view to a planting down below, and this (planting) shares in the evil which exists in the regions where they arrived. For the Will kept all under sin, in order that by that Will he might show mercy on all and they might be saved. For a single one is appointed to bestow life, while all the rest need salvation.<sup>51</sup>

As the cosmic sphere is marked by multiplicity, passion, death and strife, for the sake of those who have gone astray in the cosmos the Saviour takes upon himself this state of passion, which in his case sometimes is called compassion. The passage just quoted from the *TripTrac* provides enough information to understand a somewhat obscure remark from the *ExcTheod*:

Then, disregarding the glory of God, they impiously say that he suffered. For the fact that the Father showed compassion (although he is, *Theodotus* says, solid and immovable), when he handed himself over so that Silence could grasp this - that is passion. For compassion is passion experienced through the passion of another.<sup>52</sup>

It seems that passion that someone willingly takes upon him or herself, is called compassion. It is important to know that passion in the Valentinian sources is something negative and synonymous to suffering.

In the eastern Valentinian doctrine the Saviour not only has a spiritual body, but a physical body as well. This sharing in all the conditions of the biological life is clearly stated in the following passage:

<sup>51</sup>The *TripTrac* 116.5-117.8, transl. Thomassen 2006, p. 53.

<sup>52</sup>*ExcTheod* 30.1-2. Transl. Thomassen 2006, p. 37.

What our Saviour became out of willing compassion, is the same as that which the ones for whose sake he appeared had become because of an involuntary passion: they had become flesh and soul, and this holds them perpetually in its grip, and they perish and die. Those, however, who had co[me into being] as an invisible human being, and invisibly, them he instructed about himself in an equally invisible manner. For he not only took upon himself the death of the ones he intended to save, but he ac[cept]ed as well the smallness into which they had descended when they were ;born; with body and soul; for he let himself be conceived and he let himself be born as an infant with body and soul. And all the other (conditions) as well which these shared with the ones who had fallen - although they (themselves) possessed the light - he entered into, although he was superior to them because he let himself be conceived without sin, pollution, or defilement. He was born into life (**βίος**), and he was in life (**βίος**) because it had been appointed that the former no less than the latter should become body and soul as a consequence of the passion and the erratic sentiment of the volatile logos.<sup>53</sup>

To sum up the discussion regarding the eastern doctrine, the body of the descending Saviour is spiritual and co-extensive with the heavenly church. Furthermore, the deity has to suffer by sharing the conditions that mark the cosmic existence. Consequently, the Saviour has a spiritual as well as a physical body. The result of the predicament that afflicts all cosmic life, is that the Saviour has to be saved as well. In order to see the difference between the eastern and western, Italian, school, we will now take a brief look at that branch of Valentinianism.

### **The Saviour according to the western school**

In this section, we will only point out some of the differences that Thomassen observes between the eastern and western schools. The following passage from IrenHaer will be sufficient for our purpose:

There are, then, three kinds: the material - which they also call 'left' - must of necessity, they say, perish, because it cannot receive any outpouring of imperishability. The psychic - which they also term 'right' - stands midway between the spiritual and the material, and consequently passes to whichever side it is inclined. The spiritual was sent forth in order that, being linked with the psychic, it might be formed and educated in company

<sup>53</sup>the TripTrac 114.30-115.23. Transl. Thomassen 2006, pp. 48-49.

with it, and this is the salt and the light of the world. In fact, the psychic needed perceptible means of instruction as well. For this reason too, they maintain, the world was created, and the Saviour is said to have come to the psychic, since it possessed free will, in order to save it. In fact, they maintain that he assumed the first-fruits of those whom he intended to save. From Achaomoth he acquired the spiritual, from the Demiurge he put on the psychic Christ, from the *oikonomia* he was endowed with a body that had psychic substance, but was so constructed by ineffable art that it was visible, tangible, and capable of suffering. He received nothing whatever material, they say, for matter is not capable of being saved.<sup>54</sup>

At the end of the quotation, we can distinguish a difference compared to what we learned about the Saviour's body according to the eastern view. The Saviour does not have a material body and thus cannot participate in the biological life. According to the western view, the material substance is of no use for the Saviour, since the material persons have no capacity to be saved. This logic resembles that of the eastern school, in so far as the Saviour resembles those that he intends to redeem. Drawing upon this logic, the Saviour has come for the sake of the salvation of the spirituals as well. After all, the Saviour has a spiritual body.

But simultaneously, it seems that the spirituals are in the world to learn something, without really needing salvation. This disagrees with the eastern view as it was presented above.

That there is a difference regarding the need of salvation of the spirituals becomes even clearer as we continue the reading from Irenaeus:

The psychic humans have been instructed in psychic matters; they are strengthened by works and mere faith, and do not have perfect knowledge; and these, they teach, are we who belong to the church. Therefore they affirm that, for us, good conduct is necessary - for otherwise it would not be possible to be saved - but they themselves, in their opinion, will be for ever and entirely saved, not by means of conduct, but because they are spiritual by nature. For just as it is impossible that the choic should partake of salvation - since, they say, it is incapable of receiving it - so again it is impossible that the spiritual - and by that they mean themselves - should succumb to decay, regardless of what kind of actions it performs. Just as gold, when placed in mud, does not lose its beauty but retains its own nature, since the mud is unable

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<sup>54</sup>IrenHaer 1.6.1, transl. Thomassen 2006, p. 59.

to harm the gold, so they say that they themselves cannot suffer any injury or lose their spiritual substance, whatever material actions they may engage in.<sup>55</sup>

According to this passage, the spirituals do not need to be saved, neither are they influenced by the conditions of the cosmic sphere. In *Iren. Haer* 1.6.1-2 Thomassen finds an underlying eastern soteriology that has become mixed with a later developed soteriology, in which the Saviour's mission primarily is due to the salvation of the psychics only.<sup>56</sup> This supports the validity of the reports from the heresiologists that the eastern school was closest related to Valentinus.

Somewhat surprisingly, Thomassen has not written much about the Saviour's body in the *GospTruth*. It is from his general understanding of Valentinianism he infers the above described soteriology and ecclesiology into the *GospTruth*. From the following quotation however, we may deduce that he himself asks for a deeper analysis of the *GospTruth* from this perspective:

This leads us to ask and try to answer the following question: What is the real meaning of the book of the living in the *GospTruth*? I believe this to be a legitimate question, inasmuch as it can be answered in terms of an underlying Valentinian soteriology for the *GospTruth*. A clue to the right answer can be found in the formulation 'he put on that book' in connection with Jesus' appearance and incarnation. Now what the Saviour Jesus 'puts on' in Valentinianism, at the moment of his descent to earth, is usually his body, and this body contains the Church.<sup>57</sup>

However, Thomassen does not provide us with more than this hint. As far as I know the present study is the first in which the above described perspective is implied on the soteriology of the *GospTruth*. Thus, the outcome of my analyses will have an immediate significance for the evaluation of Thomassen's thesis on this subject-matter. For a more precise formulation of the issue, see page 44.

We now turn to a discussion regarding what other characteristics that are of importance for Thomassen's location of the *GospTruth* early in the development of Valentinianism.

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<sup>55</sup>*IrenHaer* 1.6.2, transl. Thomassen 2006, p. 60.

<sup>56</sup>Thomassen 2006, pp. 60-61.

<sup>57</sup>Thomassen 2002b, p. 41.

### Eastern and western protological myths

As we saw in the end of the previous paragraph, on the basis of his general understanding of the G<sup>osp</sup>T<sup>ruth</sup> as Valentinian, Thomassen interprets a central concept in the G<sup>osp</sup>T<sup>ruth</sup>, ‘the living book of the living,’ in accordance with the Saviour’s body of the Valentinian tradition. Hence, now our concern has to be the way in which Thomassen justifies his claim that the G<sup>osp</sup>T<sup>ruth</sup> is Valentinian, and in what manner he relates the G<sup>osp</sup>T<sup>ruth</sup> to the two Valentinian schools.

In the G<sup>osp</sup>T<sup>ruth</sup> and the T<sup>rip</sup>T<sup>r</sup>a<sup>c</sup>, the protologies are plainer than in many other Valentinian texts. Thomassen calls this simple kind of protology ‘type A.’<sup>58</sup> As this kind of protology occurs in the prominent texts of the eastern school, I will refer to it as ‘the eastern type.’ Typical for eastern protology is that the protological project remains uncompleted until the spiritual beings have gone through a process of education, and thereby restored the stability of the Fullness.

In the G<sup>osp</sup>T<sup>ruth</sup> and the T<sup>rip</sup>T<sup>r</sup>a<sup>c</sup>, the protological process coincides with the development of the Aeons from their initial ignorant state within the godhead that usually is called ‘the Father,’ through the self-recognition as his offspring, to the resulting return to him and the restoration of the Fullness. In this manner, protology and soteriology are interdependent. The link between protology and historical processes is typical for eastern Valentinianism, and particularly obvious in the G<sup>osp</sup>T<sup>ruth</sup>.<sup>59</sup>

In the eastern type of protology, all the aeons initially dwell within the Father. However, despite the aeons are inside of him, they fail to comprehend him due to the Father’s ungraspable nature. This magnificent nature often is referred to as ‘the depth’ βυθός of the Father. As all the aeons originate from the innermost part of the Father, their birth as individual beings outside of him is the unfolding of the Father as well.

In contrast to these features of the eastern protology, the western one is marked by a complex constellation of 30 aeons. In this system, as in the eastern as well, the initial development originates from within the godhead, but in distinction from the eastern version, it continues in a hierarchical serie of emanations outside of it.<sup>60</sup> Thus, according to the western protology, the generations of aeons only to a limited extent can be spoken of as the unfolding of the deity itself. Moreover, in the eastern type the term ‘depth’ has a specific explanatory function, as it denotes the cause of the generative process of the aeons, whereas in the western protology the adequacy of the

<sup>58</sup>For instance, Thomassen 2006, p. 263.

<sup>59</sup>Thomassen devotes one chapter to this theme with the G<sup>osp</sup>T<sup>ruth</sup> as the proof text, Thomassen 2006, pp. 146-165.

<sup>60</sup>Thomassen 2006, p. 263.

term ‘depth’ is diminished, being applicable for the aeons inside of the god-head only.<sup>61</sup> Thus, in the western protology the depth remains as a concept that is more or less devoid of its initial, eastern, systematic significance.

Thomassen remarks that what has been described as the eastern and western types resembles a report of Tertullian, in which Valentinus represents the former and Ptolemy the latter protology.

Ptolemy followed the same road (i.e., as Valentinus), distinguishing the aeons by names and numbers into personal substances located outside God, whereas Valentinus had included them in the totality of the deity himself as thoughts, sentiments and emotions.<sup>62</sup>

It goes beyond the purpose of this survey to discuss the protologies in their respective texts. However, the details that I have pointed out above are those that seems most relevant for the discussions regarding the GospTruth in subsequent parts of this thesis.

To sum up, Thomassen claims that the eastern protology, to which the GospTruth belongs, is prior to the western type, which builds upon the eastern one. Furthermore, there are indications that Valentinus’ view on the protology closely resembled the eastern version.<sup>63</sup> In addition to the above described argumentation we conclude the section about Thomassen’s reasoning with an attempt to place the GospTruth in the setting of second century Rome.

### **The argument of non-expulsion**

Even though Valentinus came to Rome in the late 130s and stayed for 15-30 years, we have few reports about condemnations of the Roman Valentinians, and, according to Thomassen, no reliable report at all of an expulsion of the Valentinians from the Roman church.<sup>64</sup>

According to later heresiologists, Valentinus and Marcion were the two most prominent heretical leaders in the middle of the second century in Rome. Epiphanius<sup>65</sup> tells that Marcion gathered Roman churchleaders in order to convince them that his faith was the only true one. However, he did not manage, and in July 144 he abandoned the Roman communities and founded

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<sup>61</sup>Thomassen 2006, p. 264.

<sup>62</sup>TertullianVal 4.2, transl. Thomassen 2006, p. 264. Ptolemaeus intrauit, nominibus et numeris aeonum distinctis in personales substantias, sed extra deum determinatas, quas Valentinus in ipsa summa diuinitatis ut sensus et affectus, motus incluserat.

<sup>63</sup>For a detailed discussion see Thomassen 2006, pp. 146-268.

<sup>64</sup>In this passage I refer to Thomassen 2004, pp. 243-256.

<sup>65</sup>Epiphanius’ Panarion 42.1-2.

his own church. Thus, relying on Epiphanius report, which probably is based upon Hippolytus' lost Syntagma, it was Marcion who expelled the other congregations, and not the opposite.

However, Irenaeus reports<sup>66</sup> that Polycarp of Smyrna, some time between 155 and 166, refuted and converted Marcionites, Valentinians, and other Gnostics. Thomassen notes that an outsider was needed in order to combat these groups, and that Irenaeus provides no information regarding 'anti-heretical' actions on behalf of the local church authorities. Thus, for Thomassen Irenaeus' report rather indicates that exclusion of 'heretics' was nonexistent in Rome in the middle of the second century.

Tertullian puts forward conflicting reports regarding the exclusion of Valentinus. In *De Praescriptione Haereticorum*, ca. 200, he tells that Valentinus and Marcion repeatedly were thrown out of the church, *semel et iterum eiecti*.<sup>67</sup> This not only contradicts Epiphanius' report about Marcion, but other versions of Tertullian as well.

Some years later<sup>68</sup> Tertullian refers to Valentinus as 'condiscipulus et condesertor', which Thomassen interprets as if Valentinus as Marcion left the church on his own accord.<sup>69</sup>

In TertullianVal 4, Tertullian asserts that Valentinus, as an act of revenge, left the Roman church when his aspirations to become the bishop of Rome had failed, and that Valentinus' theology was quite different from that of his disciples.

All these contradictory reports, Thomassen asserts, can be explained by the absence of traditions telling of the expulsion of Valentinus, or even of a condemnation of him.<sup>70</sup> In light of this, Tertullian's different reports should be seen as his conjectures and efforts to understand why Valentinus never was excluded or condemned. Thomassen concludes:

If the Roman church failed to expel Valentinus, Tertullian would have reasoned, then either Valentinus himself left the Christian community, or his heresy became apparent only at a later point in time.<sup>71</sup>

However, in the *Dialogue with Trypho* 35.6 from about 155-160, Justin Martyr refers to the Marcionites, Basilideans, Saturnilians and Valentinians as 'heretical' groups. According to Thomassen, this stands against Tertullian's

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<sup>66</sup>IrenHaer 3.3.4.

<sup>67</sup>Tertullian *De Praescriptione Haereticorum*, 30.2.

<sup>68</sup>Tertullian *De carne Christi* 1.3.

<sup>69</sup>Thomassen 2004, p. 244.

<sup>70</sup>Thomassen 2004, p. 244.

<sup>71</sup>Thomassen 2004, p. 244.

hypothesis, which nowadays is supported by Marksches,<sup>72</sup> that Valentinus was no Valentinian himself.<sup>73</sup> Furthermore, if Valentinus was no Valentinian it remains to be explained why the Valentinians never were expelled as a group.<sup>74</sup>

Thomassen suggests the following solution to the enigma of the non-expulsion of the Valentinians in Rome. To begin with, Roman Christianity consisted of fractionated house congregations until the last decades of the second century.<sup>75</sup> Indeed the congregations cooperated, and sometimes the leaders of the congregations were assembled, but at that time there was no ecclesiastical office with the authority to exclude or condemn persons or groups. With regard to theology and practice plurality prevailed.

Nevertheless, there was also a uniting force in the idea of the united Christian ekklesia. The ideal of a united, pure and harmonious church brought about cooperation, but as it effected fairly autonomous congregations the cooperation also brought about strife. In second century Rome the lack of agreement between the communities challenged the ideal of the ekklesia and reforms were called for. According to Thomassen three of the reformers were Hermas the Shepherd, Marcion and Valentinus.

Hermas called for unity and better moral. By strengthening the sinners who made penance and by rejecting immoral persons he wanted to unite the church, as for Hermas good moral meant Christian unity.

Marcion's program was more precise than Hermas'. The church should establish its own non-Jewish canon, do away with the Jewish god and replace it with a more elevated deity, and abstain from sex and other desires that chained persons to the material world.<sup>76</sup> Compared with Hermas, Marcion stressed the doctrinal importance. Marcion, Thomassen asserts, was the first who tried to establish an orthodox church.<sup>77</sup>

For Valentinians the unity was all the more important, as the entire purpose of their church was to realize the unity of its heavenly counterpart. The harmony of the heavenly church is what every spiritual being tries to be a part of. Consequently, for the Valentinians the unity is a soteriological and metaphysical principle. On this ground Thomassen reads the *GospTruth* 24.25-26.15 as a text that reflects the situation when Valentinus and his followers withdrew from the state of division and confusion that plagued the Roman church.

Even though, according to Thomassen, the Valentinians withdrew from the

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<sup>72</sup>Marksches 1992.

<sup>73</sup>Thomassen 2004, p. 245.

<sup>74</sup>Thomassen 2004, p. 245.

<sup>75</sup>Thomassen 2004, p. 246 expounds upon parts from Lampe 2003.

<sup>76</sup>Thomassen 2004, p. 252.

<sup>77</sup>Thomassen 2004, p. 253.

other congregations, they did not reject the outsiders. Rather, their attitude towards them was that of patient teachers and missionaries. Those who had not yet come to knowledge were on an uneducated level, but they might be saved.

The hypothetical withdrawal that the *GospTruth* might reflect must have taken place before the end of the second century. The Valentinians withdrew in a time when exclusion was impossible due to the lack of central ecclesiastical authority. When such an authority developed at the end of the second century, the Valentinians had withdrawn already, and consequently they could not be excluded.

Thomassen's social argument has not been thoroughly scrutinized, and I will therefore devote one part of this thesis to an investigation of the social and religious setting of the *GospTruth*. For the precise formulation of this issue, see page 44.

### The argument of style

What I refer to with 'the argument of style' is that the style of the *GospTruth* to such an extent resembles that of the Valentinian fragments that we may conclude that they have a common author.

Standaert<sup>78</sup> devoted an extensive article to a comparison between the *GospTruth* and the Valentinian Fragments, ending up with the above given proposal. His contribution has had a large impact. Layton who makes the following remark with regard to the *GospTruth* may serve as an example:

The author's name does not appear in the manuscripts, and thus the attribution of GTR to Valentinus remains hypothetical. Nevertheless, it is extremely likely for several reasons: the work's stylistic resemblance to the Fragments (whose attribution is explicit) and the uniqueness of that style; the alleged genius and eloquence of Valentinus and the lack of a likely candidate for the authorship among later Valentinian writers; and the absence of a developed system in the work, perhaps suggesting that it belongs early in the history of the Valentinian church.<sup>79</sup>

The argument of style could be combined with for instance Quispel's and Thomassen's positions. However, as Quispel and Thomassen seems to favour at least a fairly developed Valentinianism in the *GospTruth*, they can hardly support the last part of Layton's argumentation.

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<sup>78</sup>Standaert 1976a.

<sup>79</sup>Layton, 1987, p. 150.

### The argument of the implicit developed system

Layton's above cited remark introduces another line of thought that from early on was central for those who classified the *GospTruth* as a Valentinian text. Since the *GospTruth* did not present the complex kind of system that we above referred to as the western type, scholars who maintained that the *GospTruth* was Valentinian, either interpreted the plain character of the *GospTruth* as an example of an early, yet undeveloped, stage of Valentinianism, or of a later stage when the fully developed system was well-known already, and accordingly could be presupposed. As already demonstrated, the former position is maintained by Layton while Jonas may serve as an example of the latter one.<sup>80</sup> In the succeeding discussion of Wilson's survey from 1978,<sup>81</sup> Jonas articulated his view in the following condensed manner :

Professor Wilson refers to arguments I made in a Gnomon review of the *editio princeps* and in a paper at Oxford. I have contended that the Gospel of Truth presupposes something more articulate than itself, that its cryptic, allusive language points the initiate to a more explicit statement like what we know, e.g. of the Ptolemaean system. I still believe that this is more plausible than the view that the Gospel of Truth is an embryonic stage of Valentinian development. My case centers around **ΠΛ&ΠΗ** which in the *GospTruth* bears strong characteristics of the demiurge figure. I think that this makes little sense in the Gospel of Truth unless one endows it with personal, hypostatized powers of agency and makes it a figure like the demiurge or Sophia Achamoth. It is however, not part of my position to argue that the system presupposed actually is that of Ptolemy or of the Excerpts from Theodotus. Similarly, on my view the hypothesis that the Apocryphon of John was used by the author for his amalgam is possible but not necessary.<sup>82</sup>

Thus, Jonas' position can be maintained even of those who place the *GospTruth* relatively early in the development of Valentinianism, and consequently the argument of the implicit Valentinian system does not necessarily oppose the attribution of Valentinus as the author of the *GospTruth*.

### The arguments of language

Under this heading we will discuss in what way different opinions regarding the original language of the *GospTruth* affect the above outlined arguments

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<sup>80</sup>Jonas 1963, pp. 175-197.

<sup>81</sup>Wilson 1980, pp. 133-145.

<sup>82</sup>Layton 1980, p. 142.

regarding the original setting, theology and authorship of it.

Today it is widely accepted that the *GospTruth* originally was written in Greek. However, two other suggestions have been put forward. Fecht<sup>83</sup> argued for a Coptic origin. He claimed that the *GospTruth* is built upon an Egyptian metric tradition, and that all readings have to take this into consideration.<sup>84</sup> For Fecht the position that Coptic was the original language of the *GospTruth* did not exclude the possibility that Valentinus was the author of it. However, as will be demonstrated below, as the study of the Coptic language has advanced, Fecht's assertion has become highly unlikely, and would exclude that Valentinus was the author of the *GospTruth*.

A style on the level of sophistication that we encounter in the *GospTruth* is not known in Coptic until the late fourth, or early fifth centuries.<sup>85</sup> As the copies of the *GospTruth* from Nag Hammadi may have been written as late as the first quarter of the fifth century, but hardly later,<sup>86</sup> even that late dating of the Codexes implies that a Coptic origin would presuppose that the *GospTruth* was one of the very early sophisticated Coptic works, and that it immediately was preserved in Lycopolitan, (L6),<sup>87</sup> which is the dialect of Codex I.3, and in Sahidic, which is the dialect of the *GospTruth* of Codex XII.2. Nowadays we also have to reckon with a certain period of transformation of the Coptic texts until they were copied into Codex I.3 and XII.2. The dialects of NHC I.3 and NHC XII.2, both bear traces of a Northern dialect,<sup>88</sup> which indicates that the *GospTruth* existed in versions from Northern Egypt before it was included in Codex I and XII respectively.<sup>89</sup> Thus, to reckon with a Coptic origin of the *GospTruth* is far more problematic today than in Fecht's time. From the perspective of stylistic development, it presupposes a stage of the Coptic language that began at the beginning of the fifth century, the time of Shenoute. But as we also have to reckon with a certain time of transformation from Northern Coptic before the Southern versions of the *GospTruth* appeared in Codex I and XII, respectively, the support for a Coptic origin is slim indeed. Consequently,

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<sup>83</sup>Fecht 1961, 1962 and 1963.

<sup>84</sup>Fecht 1961, p. 373.

<sup>85</sup>Oral information from Stephen Emmel.

<sup>86</sup>Oral information by Stephen Emmel.

<sup>87</sup>Lycopolitan is a problematic category. According to Funk, 1985, pp. 124-139, Lycopolitan, or as it also has been called: Subakhmimic, rather should be treated as three groups of Southern Coptic, than one. Moreover, the treatment of these groups as a dialect can also be questioned, (Funk 1985). Technically speaking the language of the *GospTruth* of Codex I should be referred to as L6, where L should not be confused with Lycopolitan in the sense of dialect. The difficulty with the category 'dialect' was also stressed by Bently Layton (oral information). For convenience however, I will use the terms 'Lycopolitan' and 'dialect' bearing in mind the just mentioned reservations.

<sup>88</sup>Some of the Bohairic traces in NHC I.3 will be pointed out in subsequent parts of this study.

<sup>89</sup>Funk 1995, pp. 129-130.

the argument of Coptic as the original language of the GospTruth has lost most or all of its significance.

Nagel<sup>90</sup> has argued for a Syriac origin of the GospTruth, but without repeating his claim or gaining any adherents for it. As Valentinus never was heard of as a writer in Syriac, Nagel's claim, if it was proven to be correct, would diminish the strength of the claim that Valentinus was the author of the GospTruth to something close to zero.

Today the vast majority of scholars reckon with a Greek origin that through stages of transformation, maybe already in Greek, and certainly in Coptic, has undergone more or less drastic changes. On the one hand, Layton, Standaert and other proponents of the argument of style must subscribe to the claim that the translation from Greek, and the transformations through Coptic, has been carried through in such a way that we still are able to detect the style of the Greek original. The same view must have been shared by Menard who in 1962 published a retroversion from Coptic to Greek.<sup>91</sup> Till, on the other hand, probably was of a different opinion. The translator, Till asserts, was not prepared to translate the Greek text into intelligible Coptic.<sup>92</sup>

Till's claim is important not only for the validity of the argument of style, but for the major part of the present thesis as well. As many of the analyses pursued in this study deal with nuances of the Coptic text, they would be less relevant, if the translation from Greek to Coptic was bad.

### The counter-arguments

In one way or another, the above given arguments have been used in order to support a Valentinian origin of the GospTruth, and frequently, as well of the attribution of it to Valentinus. Therefore, the counter-arguments to these claims now insist on being raised. In a monograph from 1992, Markschies challenged the arguments that favour the attribution of Valentinus as the author of the GospTruth. As he only aims at describing theology of Valentinus, and not that of his followers, Markschies' analyses concerning the GospTruth regards the attribution to Valentinus only. Therefore, when we in the following discussion use a term as for instance 'the Valentinian theology' it only refers to Valentinus' theology, and not to that of his followers.

In order to depict the Valentinian theology from the methodologically most solid foundation possible, Markschies sets out with a thorough investigation

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<sup>90</sup>Nagel 1966.

<sup>91</sup>Menard 1962.

<sup>92</sup>Till 1958, p. 271.

of the Valentinian fragments.<sup>93</sup> Next, he heads to discuss whether there are other texts that could be added to the Valentinian corpus. At this point the *GospTruth* of course occupies a predominant role in Markschie's analysis.<sup>94</sup> Markschie's argumentation can be divided into external and internal criteria, and we begin with a recapitulation of the former category.

The questions that are dealt with as external criteria are summed up in the following way:

- Was NHC. 1.3 originally entitled, or later referred to as the gospel of truth?
- Do the patristic reports indicate that Valentinus had an own gospel?

Markschie asserts that every attribution of NHC 1.3 to Valentinus presupposes that the incipit line coincides with the title.<sup>95</sup> But in his argumentation, Markschie sides with scholars who claim that the 'gospel (or good news) of the truth' on the incipit line is an expression similar to for instance 'the Father of the truth' in 16.33. These scholars<sup>96</sup> do not regard 'the gospel of the truth' to be a concept that is more central than many others, and consequently, doubt that the initial line would function as a heading for the entire tractate.<sup>97</sup>

Moreover, Markschie remarks that in the Nag Hammadi library only three texts have a formal title that exactly correspond with their respective incipit lines. Even when relevant texts outside the Nag Hammadi corpus are considered, exact correspondences between the incipit line and the formal title are rare as well. All in all, Markschie finds it highly unlikely that the incipit line of NHC. 1.3 was used as the title.<sup>98</sup>

In the second external argument we consider the reports that support, or conflict with, the notion that Valentinus had his own gospel. In the argumentation however, no distinction is made between the two possibilities that it implies. It could either mean that Valentinus had a gospel that was written by someone else, but which was rarely used by others than Valentinus and his followers, or it could mean that he was the author of it. Keeping this vagueness in mind, it seems that the issue at stake primarily is whether Valentinus also was the author of the *GospTruth*. For convenience we do not each time state these two possibilities, but refer to them as one and the same issue.

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<sup>93</sup>Markschie 1992, pp. 11-292.

<sup>94</sup>Markschie 1992, pp. 339-356.

<sup>95</sup>Markschie 1992, p. 341.

<sup>96</sup>For instance Schenke 1959.

<sup>97</sup>Markschie 1992, p. 342.

<sup>98</sup>Markschie 1992, p. 343.

Noting that IrenHaer 3.11.9, see page 16, mentions that the Valentinians used many different gospels, Markschies concludes that this passage provides no support of the attribution of a gospel to Valentinus. More interesting, however, is a passage from Pseudo Tertullian, see page 18. But on a source critical basis Markschies asserts that Pseudo Tertullian is a paraphrase of Irenaeus information regarding the Valentinians.<sup>99</sup> Thus, Markschies concludes that no sources support the hypothesis that Valentinus wrote his own gospel.<sup>100</sup> On the contrary Markschies position is that there are strong arguments against the attribution of a gospel to Valentinus. For instance, Valentinus was known of using the same texts as the main stream church, and never wrote down his doctrine.<sup>101</sup> Moreover, the conventional way in which Valentinus of the fragments used Biblical texts differs from the manner in which they are used in the GospTruth.<sup>102</sup> To sum up, Markschies rejects both external arguments.

As internal arguments Markschies refers to arguments that focus on the contents of the GospTruth and its hypothetical relation to Valentinus.

Regarding the discussion about the Aeons, which was referred to on page 29, Markschies rejects the assertion that the Aeons in the GospTruth are thoughts within the Father, and in this respect resembles the pleromatology that Tertullian ascribed to Valentinus.<sup>103</sup> In contrast to for instance Thomassen Markschies holds that the Aeons within the Father are nothing but potentialities, but become individual Aeons outside of him, which is more in accordance with the later Valentinians.<sup>104</sup>

Further, comparisons of the style of the GospTruth and that of the Valentinian fragments cannot successfully be carried through due to the scanty material that the fragments provide.<sup>105</sup> Thus, Markschies rejects the arguments of Layton and Standaert, see page 32, but also other arguments that draw upon similarities between the Fragments and the GospTruth.<sup>106</sup> There are similarities but also differences between the GospTruth and the Fragments, and even though the GospTruth no doubt is Valentinian, there is no basis for the attribution of it to Valentinus.<sup>107</sup> A radically different counter-argumentation is put forward by Mortley who does not label the GospTruth as particularly Valentinian.<sup>108</sup> But on the other hand Mortley supports what we have called the argument of title, claiming that if there

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<sup>99</sup>Markschies 1992, p. 344.

<sup>100</sup>Markschies 1992, p. 345.

<sup>101</sup>Markschies 1992, pp. 345-346.

<sup>102</sup>Markschies 1992, p. 346.

<sup>103</sup>Markschies 1992, p. 349.

<sup>104</sup>Markschies 1992, pp. 349-350.

<sup>105</sup>Markschies 1992, p. 351.

<sup>106</sup>Markschies 1992, pp. 351-356.

<sup>107</sup>Markschies 1992, p. 356.

<sup>108</sup>Mortely 1992, p. 240.

had been more than one GospTruth, someone would have mentioned it.<sup>109</sup> In this way he ends up with a somewhat paradoxical situation. NHC. 1.3 is really entitled as the GospTruth, and it is the work known by Irenaeus, but it is non-Valentinian. Mortley therefore suggests that the GospTruth from the second century underwent drastical alterations, and turned out in the versions that we find in Nag Hammadi.<sup>110</sup> Such drastic evolution would be a result of the spirit of Gnosticism, in contrast to the spirit of orthodoxy.

That Gnostic documents should evolve would seem to be consistent with the Gnostic taste for innovation, and with the Gnostic depreciation of authority and historical authentication. Orthodoxy, on the other hand, very quickly acquired a belief that the exact texts should be preserved for posterity.<sup>111</sup>

According to Mortley this is a principle that often is neglected by those who seek information about the earliest Christian texts.<sup>112</sup> In Nag Hammadi, we find pieces of texts from the second to the sixth century, which are interwoven with interpolations from later Platonic and Arian traditions.<sup>113</sup>

Mortley claims that parts of the GospTruth are a product of the debates provoked by Arius, and consequently must be dated well ahead in the fourth century.<sup>114</sup>

In this way Mortley's argumentation partly supports the notion of the GospTruth as an early Valentinian text, but partly as well as a late non-Valentinian work.

### Contradictory arguments

With the survey concerning the GospTruth in relation to Valentinianism in mind, it is obvious that many scholars claim that the GospTruth was written by Valentinus, or at least, that it is a Valentinian text. However, the different arguments in favour of these assertions often contradict each other. Quispel to a large extent relies on IrenHaer 1.11 when he deduces the original doctrine of Valentinus. Thomassen for his part, evaluates Irenaeus reports differently, and instead embarks on a new road in the search. The protology of the eastern type, and the Saviour's body according to the same brand, are crucial features when Thomassen pinpoints the earliest stage of Valentinianism. As already mentioned the Saviour's body has not been

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<sup>109</sup>Mortley 1992, pp. 240-241.

<sup>110</sup>Mortley 1992, pp. 240-241.

<sup>111</sup>Mortley 1992, p. 241.

<sup>112</sup>Mortley 1992, p. 241.

<sup>113</sup>Mortley 1992, p. 241.

<sup>114</sup>Mortley 1992, p. 241.

thoroughly discussed in relation to the GospTruth but will be examined in this thesis.

Other scholars assert that the GospTruth is an early Valentinian text, because of the undeveloped mythology, whereas others claim that the thin mythology indicates a later stage of the development, in which the system was well-known already, and thus could be presupposed.

At the same time Marksches has put new fuel on the debate regarding Valentinus' theology in particular, but of the GospTruth as well.

## The discourse of Valentinian Gnosticism

As became evident from Mortly's argumentation page 37, the general view of Gnosticism coloured Mortley's view of the GospTruth, and in this respect he is typical. Even those who did not attribute the GospTruth to Valentinus or to any other known or unknown Valentinian, doubted that the GospTruth was firmly rooted in a Gnostic tradition. Today however, what we mean with Gnosticism, and whether the term is adequate at all, are vividly debated issues. For the present thesis it is particularly important to touch upon these subject-matters, since we will discuss the aspects of the social life of the community that first listened to the GospTruth.

When scholars began to read the Nag Hammadi texts they did not always find what they expected. Since most of the Nag Hammadi texts were supposed to be Gnostic, this became a challenge to the definition of Gnosticism. In 1966 a conference in Messina focused on the definition of Gnosticism.<sup>115</sup> However, the conference members who were leading scholars of its time did not settle the problem of defining Gnosticism.<sup>116</sup> Instead one began to focus on smaller categories of which Sethianism and Valentinianism became the most important. In 1978 scholars gathered at Yale in order to discuss these two Gnostic branches.<sup>117</sup> The conference at Yale was held just months after facsimiles of the entire Nag Hammadi library had become available. Anyhow, the diversity among the Nag Hammadi writings long had been noticed. The following quotation from the preface of the volume concerning Valentinianism is representative for the scholarly discourse at the end of the 1970s:

Although the diversity of Gnosticism was perhaps as great as that of its non-Gnostic counterpart, the evidence of Nag Hammadi strongly suggests that early Gnosticism appeared in two

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<sup>115</sup>Bianchi 1967.

<sup>116</sup>For a recent survey of the scholarly efforts of defining Gnosticism, see Marjanen 2005, pp. 1-53.

<sup>117</sup>For Valentinian gnosticism see Layton 1980, and for Sethian Gnosticism see Layton 1981.

radically different species: one a parody or ‘inversion’ of elements from Judaism, essentially non-Christian in character; the other an allegorical trope upon Catholicism. These two, Sethianism and Valentinianism, may have met in the historical figure of Valentinus who, according to an ancient source, was influenced by one and founded the other. The exact historical relationship of these two varieties of Gnosticism, and the dialectic of Gnosticism, Catholicism, the Marcionites, Middle Platonism, and the religion of Mani, are questions that now lie before us.<sup>118</sup>

Even though the diversity among the Gnostic texts was a central topic, to the participants of the conference it was fairly clear that Sethianism preceded Valentinianism, the former influencing the other. Despite the awareness of the complexity of relations between different religious brands in late Antiquity, there was little doubt that the labels Gnostic and Gnosticism were adequate. Moreover, the Valentinian tradition was deeply rooted in the Gnostic traditions, and thus, the way in which scholars perceived Gnosticism in general strongly coloured their view of Valentinianism.

As we, in chapter six of this book, will analyse social dimensions of the Gospels, it is interesting to see in what manner the views on Gnosticism have coloured the view on these themes. When scholars have tried to pinpoint the characteristics of Gnosticism ethics has been a central theme. Gnostics, who were assumed to be saved by their spiritual nature, were not expected to be concerned with ethics, and would have paid little if any attention to such a concept as sin. Commenting on a paraenetic passage, pages 32-33 of the Gospels, which will be extensively dealt with later in this study, Grobel makes the following remark:

This whole page is dominated by the imperative (second person plural), continuing the sermonic tone of the previous page. Moreover on the face of it 33:1-8 is full of ethical imperatives, astonishing in a Gnostic work, for the Gnostics are generally held to have been devoid of ethical concern.<sup>119</sup>

Grobel tries to overcome this problem by reading the paraenesis in a metaphorical way.<sup>120</sup> Thus, for Grobel the nature of Valentinian Gnosticism was quite alien to that of Christianity.

In 1990 Desjardins highlighted the concern that Valentinians had regarding ethics in general, and, as was the main subject-matter of his monograph, regarding sin in particular.<sup>121</sup>

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<sup>118</sup>Layton 1980 p. XII.

<sup>119</sup>Grobel 1960, pp. 139 & 141.

<sup>120</sup>Grobel 1960, p. 141.

<sup>121</sup>Desjardins 1990.

In a way Desjardins study narrowed the gap between Gnosticism and Christianity, although he still worked with a dichotomy between the two. His comment on the same paraenetic passage of the *GospTruth*, previously discussed by Grobel, is enlightening:

We have seen how the author's remarks reflect not only a knowledge of Matthew's Gospel, but also an appreciation of the major tenets of the Sermon on the Mount. The argument in 32,31-33,32 is far more 'Christian' than 'gnostic.'<sup>122</sup>

Unfortunately, it is not obvious what Desjardins means with 'Christian' and 'Gnostic,' and the quotation-marks does not make the interpretation easier.

Meeks emphasizes the impact that the attitude towards the world has for the Christian ethics. As for the adherents of the Valentinian branch of Gnosticism the world is nothing to reform, but to escape.

It is evident from the myths and commentaries written by the Gnostics and the Valentinians that the goal of a life lived in accord with the truth they proclaimed would not be the salvation of the world but escape from it.<sup>123</sup>

It is worth noting that Meeks treats different groups that often have been referred to as Gnostics along with other Christian groups, and does not work with an alienating dichotomy. However, what influence that the rejection of the world would have in each specific case is hard to deduce, he remarks in connection with the paraenesis on pages 32-33 of the *GospTruth*.<sup>124</sup> Nevertheless, according to Meeks the attitude towards the world and the body has significance for many aspects of the social life.

In 1996, Williams published a very influential book in which he proposed that the category Gnosticism should be abandoned altogether.<sup>125</sup> He claims that the typologies that often have been ascribed to Gnosticism rather hinders the scholars from perceiving the different sources than provide help to understanding them.

However, even as an ideal construct, 'gnosticism' has failed. For the purpose of an ideal construct would be to illuminate the data in question by pointing us in the right direction. But 'gnosticism' as customarily constructed has turned out too often to be

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<sup>122</sup>Desjardins 1990, p. 80.

<sup>123</sup>Meeks 1993, p. 57.

<sup>124</sup>Meeks 1993, pp. 185-186.

<sup>125</sup>Williams 1996.

doing just the opposite: obscuring from our view the true dynamics in our sources by setting us up to expect what is not there, a Procrustean paradigm distorting newly available evidence into its own image, while screening out the very information that actually tends to suggest that the typological construct itself is outdated.<sup>126</sup>

According to Williams we need a new typological definition, and in fact, he brings forth the following:

...I would suggest the category ‘biblical demiurgical traditions’ as one useful alternative. By ‘demiurgical’ traditions I mean all those that ascribe the creation and management of the cosmos to some lower entity or entities, distinct from the highest God. This would include most of ancient Platonism, of course. But if we add the adjective ‘biblical,’ to denote ‘demiurgical’ traditions that also incorporate or adapt traditions from Jewish or Christian Scripture, the category is narrowed significantly.<sup>127</sup>

Williams underlines the advantage of having a modern definition. The risk of attributing clichés to the category would diminish, and we would not be tempted to speak about a ‘biblical demiurgical’ religion.<sup>128</sup>

In 2003, King, in an extensive overview of scholarship on Gnosticism during the 20th century, to a large extent sides with Williams. The typologies that often are attributed to Gnosticism do not stand the test. To King, Gnosticism is a category that for a pejorative purpose was invented by the heresiologists. They wanted to describe their view of Christianity as the original pure Christian faith. In this manner they aimed at building up a contrast to other Christians, Jews and pagans.<sup>129</sup> This discourse has continued to direct the views on many texts. In a discussion regarding whether texts that often have been classified as Gnostic also qualify as such according to the typological categories, King discusses the *Gospel of Truth*.

*Gospel of Truth*, a writing from the mid-second century thought by many scholars to have been written by ‘the arch-heretic’ Valentinus himself, is an excellent example of a work that defies classification as a ‘Gnostic’ text. This remarkable work exhibits none of the typological traits of Gnosticism. That is, it draws no distinction between the true God and the creator, for the Father of

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<sup>126</sup>Williams 1996, p. 49.

<sup>127</sup>Williams 1996, p. 51.

<sup>128</sup>Williams 1996, p. 52.

<sup>129</sup>King 2003, pp. 20-54.

Truth is the source of all that exists. It avows only one ultimate principle of existence, the Father of Truth, who encompasses everything that exists. The Christology is not docetic; Jesus appears as a historical figure who taught, suffered, and died. Nor do we find either a strictly ascetic or a strictly libertine ethic; rather, the text reveals a pragmatic morality of compassion and justice...<sup>130</sup>

After having quoted parts of the paraenesis from the *GospTruth* 32-33,<sup>131</sup> King concludes:

Whatever we may think of these sentiments, they do not express a hatred of the world and the body, which can lead only to either libertine or ascetic ethics. Neither do they reveal an elitist view that only some are saved by nature. It may very well be the case that the basis for salvation is the fundamentally spiritual nature of humanity, but if so, such salvation requires enlightenment and moral practice. Moreover, it can be argued that, according to *GospTruth*, all of humanity will be saved.<sup>132</sup>

In the end King is not certain of whether the category Gnosticism will continue to be used or not.

... I think the term 'Gnosticism' will most likely be abandoned, at least in its present usage. Perhaps scholars will continue to use it to designate a much more delimited group of materials, such as 'Sethian Gnosticism' or 'Classical Gnosticism.' Perhaps not. It is important not so much to eliminate the term *per se*, but to recognize and correct the ways in which reinscribing the discourses of orthodoxy and heresy distort our reading and reconstruction of ancient religion.<sup>133</sup>

From the passages just cited it seems certain that the *GospTruth*, since it is a Valentinian text, according to King, would not be labeled as Gnostic. First of all, it does not fulfil the typological criteria that King listed above. Second, it seems that Gnosticism could be appropriate to designate Sethianism, but hardly Valentinianism.

Even though Williams and King have been very influential their views are far from unchallenged. Besides those who still find it justified to use the

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<sup>130</sup>King 2003, p. 192.

<sup>131</sup>King seems to use the translation of Attridge & MacRae 1985a.

<sup>132</sup>King 2003, p. 193.

<sup>133</sup>King 2003, p. 218.

category Gnosticism for branches of for instance Christianity, there are others who also claim that Gnosticism can be treated as a religion in its own right. Aside from Jonas<sup>134</sup> and Rudolph,<sup>135</sup> today, Pearson, far from being alone, is the most prominent scholars of this opinion.<sup>136</sup> For our purpose however, it is not necessary to engage in this debate. The *GospTruth* is clearly Christian. What is at stake for us is whether it should be referred to as Valentinian, and/or Christian Gnostic as well.

### The impact of the Gnostic discourse

From the brief survey of the scholarly discourse concerning Gnosticism, we have learned that the *GospTruth* has been put forward as an ample example of ethics within Valentinian Gnosticism, whereas others have used the same passages to demonstrate that the ethics and other features of the *GospTruth* do not allow us to categorize it as a Gnostic text. For this reason the analysis of different social dimensions of the *GospTruth* will be important, not only for our understanding of the community behind the text, but also for the general debate regarding Gnosticism.

### The purpose reformulated

After these surveys we are in a better position to formulate the purpose of this thesis that provisionally was formulated on page 15. Evidently the *GospTruth* has been interpreted in many ways, and used for different purposes. To begin with I will take up the challenge of translating the text. This is a laborious, but unfortunately necessary outset since many translations differ on crucial points. Strictly, it would not be necessary to present my translation of the entire text, but as the translation has been very important for the analyses of such large portions of the *GospTruth* I present my interpretation of the entire work.

In the process of translating I will apply text linguistic procedures that have been little used on the Nag Hammadi texts. Moreover, as the field of translation theory has developed the last 30 years, it has become more obvious that translation is a purposeful activity. No longer we can speak of a 'plain' translation. All translation serves an aim, and today we are obliged to account for it. Many of the constructions in the Coptic text are hard to render in English. On the one hand I want to show the extensions of the periods. This provides the reader with information of the style in the Coptic text. Such a translation is also necessary when I demonstrate in

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<sup>134</sup>Jonas 1963.

<sup>135</sup>Rudolph 1987.

<sup>136</sup>Most recently see Pearson 2005.

what way I have analysed the syntax. But on the other hand the often long periods, with their multiple subordinated clauses, are not easily rendered in long English sentences. The functional relations between the clauses are better rendered when the periods are broken up into shorter sentences.

- In the second chapter, I will therefore discuss and explain some methodological tools and theoretical considerations that are essential for the translation. I use this opportunity in order to open doors between disciplines within linguistics, translation theory and the history of religions that often have remained shut and even unknown.
- As I do not strictly follow one theory or method, it is important to explain how I use them. In the third chapter, this pedagogical task will be undertaken.
- In the fourth chapter, my two English translations will be put forward.
- In chapter five, our concern will be the protology and soteriology of the *GospTruth*. By reading the *GospTruth* in light of other Valentinian texts, a new Valentinian discourse emerges. This will help us to determine in what theological setting the *GospTruth* originally came forth. The choice of analysing the protology and soteriology is understandable in light of the discussions regarding the different Valentinian schools that was dealt with above.
- In chapter six, I will make an attempt to analyse the social and religious setting of the *GospTruth*. This undertaking is very difficult and few attempts to carry through such an analysis have been made. As was discussed in the survey, ethical and other social relations have bearing for the location of the *GospTruth* inside or outside a Gnostic framework. In a new manner, I will contribute to the discussion regarding the Gnostic discourse.
- In the seventh chapter, we will sum up the results, and see in what way they are of significance for the state of scholarship on the *GospTruth*.



## Chapter 2

# Communication centred approaches

As stated in the prior chapter, the main purpose of the present study is to pinpoint the original setting of the GospTruth, and at the same time to translate the text in a way that is readable for the English reading audience, without all the time forcing them to use a commentary. Both these aims gain by an analysis of the way in which the GospTruth is organized. For this reason I will use tools that are common in text linguistics. Why such an undertaking is useful for these purposes will be discussed below.

Another key to understanding the context of the GospTruth is the manner in which the author uses intertexts. Therefore, we will make some considerations regarding this subject-matter.

At the end of the day, however, we have to consider some parts of the discussions that today are lumped together under the name ‘Translation theory.’ Although I do not strictly follow any particular school in that field, I am influenced by different theoreticians. Consequently, we will end this chapter with some reflections regarding the process of translating an ancient text.

### Text linguistics

#### The usefulness of text linguistics

Everyone who sets out reading the Coptic text that we refer to as the GospTruth begins with using the semantic and syntactic knowledge without which the reading would be impossible. To state it very simply, we work on a level that regards the text-internal relations between signs i.e. the syntactic level, and the relations between signifiers and the signified i.e. the semantic level.

Our knowledge of semantics and syntactics will provide us with a good starting point, but hardly with enough tools to grasp the broader meaning of the text, since a text is more than series of sentences. As the clauses within sentences are related to each other, so are the different sentences related as well, even though these relations usually are more difficult to determine than those between clauses. The author or speaker has to organize the message in a manner according to which the audience may orientate themselves in the flow of information. Without helping the receivers of the message to understand what the subject-matter is, the reception of the message risks to be lost in the noise of unorganized sentences. Granting that the *GospTruth* is a fairly well organized text, we may assume that it should be possible to detect linguistic signals that help the reader to comprehend the message in the way that the author intended it to be received. When we look for signals that relate to the sender of the message and to the receiver of it, we have moved from the semantic and syntactic levels to the pragmatic one that concerns the relation between signs and sign users. Every gifted author tries to present the message in the way that would suit the audience best. Indirectly therefore, the plan according to which the author presents the message often yields information about the author's view of the audience.

Thus, text linguistics is a branch of linguistics in which the focus is on delimiting texts on levels over the sentence level. If we speak of sentence grammar when we focus on segments not larger than a sentence, we speak of text grammar or text linguistics when we analyse larger units of text. From this perspective we set out perceiving the entire text as a macro sign that is built up of hierarchically organised subtexts. By observing markers that indicate on which level a subtext is located, we will know more about the plan according to which the author wrote the text. As for the *GospTruth*, which original setting is difficult to determine, the aid that text linguistics furnishes us with concerning the author's strategy of communication is particularly important. By an analysis of the way that the *GospTruth* is organised we gain some knowledge regarding the author's view of the community, and as the *GospTruth* played a role for at least a number of communities, it seems as the manner in which the author presented the message really appealed to them. With this vague description of text linguistics and its usefulness in relation to the present study, we now turn to a description of the central tools that will be used in the analyses of the present book.

### **Text linguistic tools**

In the following discussion regarding the use of methods that are related to text linguistics, our focus will be on the methodological rather than on the theoretical level. The starting point will be analytical tools that in practice have proven to be successfully employed at the department of New Testa-

ment exegesis at Uppsala University,<sup>1</sup> although I differ from my predecessors concerning the exact application of the method.

In order to discover in what manner the GospTruth is organised, we will search for linguistic markers that indicate that a passage belongs to one or the other level in the text. This means that we both have to find criteria according to which the level of a marker belongs and also to determine the extension of passages.

As my Uppsala predecessors I am influenced by Gülich & Raible<sup>2</sup> who have presented a list of types of markers that should be possible to place on different levels. Although it seems that their ranking is too exact to stand the test of actual texts, indeed, they are good indicators of the level on which a marker functions.<sup>3</sup>

### **The metacommunicative sentence or clause**

The metacommunicative sentence or the metacommunicative clause (MC) is an expression of the kind 'John said to Mary: I expect you to be here at twelve.' MC:s involve the identification of the speaker and listener, and a metacommunicative verb as for instance, saying or writing, which is the coding of the message, and hearing or reading, which is the decoding of it. It provides information about the sender, receiver, the topic or the mode of presentation.<sup>4</sup> Text linguists say that such clauses thematize the act of communication. Even though an MC normally occurs in the beginning of the passage it subordinates, it can sometimes as well function retrospectively and occur in the end of the passage. The MC is a marker that operates on the pragmatic level, and consequently it often functions on the highest one.

Sometimes the MC is repeated or expressed in other ways. In these cases we speak of iterations of the MC (MCit) which functions on the same level as the primary MC.<sup>5</sup> However, MC:s may also be embedded in the text on lower levels. Then, whether they may be treated as markers of shift in the hierarchy or as sequential markers must be judged from case to case. For this reason it is important to detect the highest levels of a text in order to avoid misplacing low MC:s.

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<sup>1</sup>The primary inspirator and advocate for the use of text linguistics in exegesis for at least three decades has been Hartman, see for instance Hartman 1997. Among others he inspired Hellholm, see Hellholm 1980, Johanson, see Johanson 1987, and Holmstrand, see Holmstrand 1997. For a general introduction to text linguistics see de Beaugrande & Dressler 1983.

<sup>2</sup>See especially, Gülich & Raible 1977 and Gülich et al. 1979.

<sup>3</sup>See for instance the remark by Johanson 1987, pp. 24-25.

<sup>4</sup>Gülich & Raible 1977, pp. 27-28, Gülich et al. 1979, pp. 81-84 87, Hellholm 1980, pp. 80-84, Johanson 1987, p. 26, Holmstrand 1997, p. 25.

<sup>5</sup>Johanson 1987, p. 26.

But in many cases the sender and receiver of a message, as well as the situation of the communication are known already. If we take for granted that the GospTruth is a homily that was preached in a community, the stepping forward of the preacher in front of the community in itself could function as the identification of the sender and receiver, as well as of the communicative situation i.e. a homily. In the GospTruth I presuppose that those who are described as the Father's children, those who know, those who are redeemed and those who rejoice, all are the receivers of the message i.e. the community. Consequently, in the GospTruth we have to reckon with a frequent usage of surrogates for MC:s. Thus, in this respect, in compliance with Güllich's & Raible's model, I modify the method in order to make it work in a homily.

We have already touched upon the importance of different levels in the text, and stressed that the MC:s often function on the highest level. But which is the practical importance of these observations? If we find a marker that we know functions on level X, we first determine what this marker delimits. Usually the MC is an opening marker and heads the unit it subordinates. All the paragraphs that follow an such opening marker will be located on a lower level than X and consequently belong to the unit that our opening marker headed. The unit that opened on level X continues until we find another marker on the same level or higher. With this in mind, it is easy to understand the need for discussing other markers and levels in a text.

### **Substitution on abstraction-level**

In the GospTruth it sometimes happens that after an episode is told, the narration stops and is expounded upon in terms of 'It happened because .' In this manner the marker **ἀσφωπε** 'it happened', in 17.18 from an abstract level refers to what was told in 17.4-18. Such markers refer to units of text and are text-internal. The substitution on abstraction-level (SA) is subordinated to the pragmatic level, which involves the sender and receivers, which was discussed above in connection to the MC. The SA may oscillate on different levels below the metacommunicatively highest rank, but in the GospTruth they occur on higher rather than on lower levels.<sup>6</sup>

### **Episode and iteration**

In the preceding section the notion episode was introduced but not explained. Episodes are a chain of actions that takes place in real- or fictive

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<sup>6</sup>For the present study it is not necessary to discuss the relation between SA and the meta-level. In the practice in Uppsala the SA has been detected on various levels, whereas Güllich et al. (1979, p. 90) fixes the SA between text-level and metatext-level.

time and space. In this respect episode markers regarding syntax are text-internal, whereas when it comes to semantics they may refer to objects in the real world and thus are text-external.<sup>7</sup>

If the event is repeated as an ongoing process in certain conditions of time and space it is called an iteration,<sup>8</sup> and when the event takes place only once it is an episode.<sup>9</sup> If for instance an episode begins with 'When he came' the iteration sets out with 'if he came' or 'as often as he came.' 'When', 'if' and 'as often as' function as episode markers and iteration markers respectively.<sup>10</sup>

In the GospTruth episode and iteration markers normally appear on a lower level than the SA. But of course, there are different levels within episodes and iterations as well. If an actor is presented first with her name 'Mary' and then with 'she' a digression from a higher level to a lower one has occurred. Güllich & Raible gives the following example of digression within an episode: A man (level 1), this man (level 2), the man (level 3) Mr. X (level 4) and he (level 5).<sup>11</sup> If for instance a shift occurs from level 3 to level 1 in the list just presented, this is called a renominalization and indicates a minor break, and a new start.<sup>12</sup>

Even though I will not use this ranking dogmatically, it is a useful approach when we delimit units as episodes and iterations as well as minor units within them. In the GospTruth however, on the first level in episodes we often encounter a 'he' that we would expect on the fifth level. Only from the context the reader knows which actor that is referred to, as for instance in 19.16 when the pronoun syntactically should refer backwards to the Father, although the context indicates that the actor is Jesus.

### Instructive and thematic markers

As was seen above, many of the text linguistic analytical tools that have been employed by my Uppsala predecessors and that will be used in this study as well, have been examined by Güllich & Raible. But in addition, for the Uppsala scholars the metapositional base, which was investigated by Grosse, has been fruitful in studies regarding the way in which an author instructs the readers about how the message is intended to be perceived.<sup>13</sup> In the sentence 'I promise that I will be there at noon' includes the proposition (P) 'I will be there at noon.' The additional information that it is a promise contains instruction regarding the way in which the receiver should

<sup>7</sup>Güllich et al. 1979, pp. 90-91.

<sup>8</sup>Güllich et al 1979, p. 91.

<sup>9</sup>Güllich et al. 1979, p. 91.

<sup>10</sup>Güllich et al. 1979, p. 92 use 'Als er kam' and 'Wenn er kam.'

<sup>11</sup>Güllich et al. 1979, p. 95.

<sup>12</sup>Güllich et al. 1979, p. 97.

<sup>13</sup>Grosse 1976.

understand the proposition, end ‘I promise’ is what we call a metapositional base (MB).<sup>14</sup> MC:s often occur in the form of a MB, but this is not always the case. MB:s express whether the P should be perceived as real, realizable, perhaps possible, necessary, wanted, or good or bad.<sup>15</sup>

A MB, however, does not always occur as a whole clause. It may for instance consist of an adverb or imperative. In 17.28-29 the imperative form in ‘disregard Error’ can be paraphrased into the MB ‘I want you (to disregard Error).’ As MC:s, MB:s can occur on different levels in the text, although they often appear on high levels, and in the beginning of a new section. Therefore, we can classify a MB as an instructive opening marker to the P that is the theme that the marker instructs about.

But a new theme may also be indicated more independently. In the GospTruth a shift to a new theme may be introduced through a long list of attributes to a new central actor as for instance in 18.31-34. This causes a stop to what has been said before, and in this manner it functions as an opening marker.

Another phenomenon that appears in the break between passages is the recurrence. After a long digression with a lot of information, notions that were used earlier recur. In 16.31-17.4, the passage ends by repetitions of central concepts that were used in the beginning of the section. In this way, we know that the passage has ended, and as the GospTruth continues also after 17.4, we know that a new section has begun.

In the GospTruth 19.14-17, a rhetorical question (RQ) functions as a closing marker as it summarizes and stresses the main theme in the preceding section. In this manner it functions as an instructive marker.

### **Resistance in the information flow**

Another tool that I want to introduce is the shift in the resistance in the information flow (R). If someone tells us ‘because I am hungry,’ we know that we have to add some information. This information could be picked up from what was said earlier: ‘Why are you so unconcentrated? Because I am hungry.’ But if we lack such preceding information, ‘Because I am hungry,’ requires a continuation. If the needed information follows smoothly: ‘Because I am hungry I will eat,’ The flow of information runs easily and the term I use for such smooth communication is ‘low resistance in the information flow.’ When the communication ends, and if all subject-matters are cleared up, the level of resistance is on zero.

High R, for instance, occurs when someone says: ‘Because a, b, c, d and e,

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<sup>14</sup>Grosse 1976, p. 15-16.

<sup>15</sup>Grosse 1976, p. 35.

and because f, g, h, i, j, k and l, I want to ask you.’ Too many units of information have to be stored in the memory before we know what they will lead to. Finally we at least know that we will be asked something, but we still do not know about what. It means that the R has fallen from a high level to a lower, but we still need the actual question to reach zero. If a speaker overloads us with unstructured information we say: ‘It is difficult to understand what you mean.’ This is our way to react to a high level of R.

A skilled speaker, however, can use the fall in R in a rhetorically elegant manner. According to my analysis, 17.4-18 of the *GospTruth*, constitutes one period in a long and complex sentence. It is of the type: ‘Because a and because of b and c, therefore d and e.’ the ‘therefore’ in 17.14 helps the receiver by making obvious the structural connection to the two preceding ‘because.’ The R falls sharply with ‘therefore,’ and because of the elegant language and the elaborated end, the effect becomes that R falls to zero in a way that is challenging and attractive for the receiver, without being too difficult. Such constructions indicate rhetorical skill, and when we reach zero after such a long digression, we have good reasons to suspect that the passage has ended and that another will begin, which means that this functions as a closing marker.

Of course, many more remarks could be made about opening and closing markers. However, all authors according to their individual style use markers differently. Nevertheless, the above described text linguistic tools will hopefully serve us sufficiently when we in the next chapter begin the analysis. Before this, however, we have to discuss intertextuality and translation theory.

## Intertextuality

Already from the beginning efforts were made to detect to what other texts the author of the *GospTruth* alludes.<sup>16</sup> In 1983, a monograph was devoted to the connection between the *GospTruth* and the Bible.<sup>17</sup> However, few if any attempts have been published that deal with the communicative function that allusions may perform. This is understandable due to the speculative character of such undertaking. But when we rely on the results from carefully carried out analyses we will not go astray into mere subjectivity. In the intratextual analyses, the following procedure will be adopted: First, we must detect if any likely allusion is at hand. If an allusion to a specific

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<sup>16</sup>For Biblically centred early investigations see for instance, Van Unnik 1955, Cerfaux 1958-59, Barrett 1962 and Giversen 1963. For an early attempt to relate the *GospTruth* to other Gnosticising systems, see for instance Schenke 1959.

<sup>17</sup>Williams 1983.

text seems probable, we will then reflect upon why just that allusion may have come to the mind of the author at that special occasion. Therefore, we will look at the alluded text, and see if there are plausible contextual similarities between the two related texts.<sup>18</sup> If the text that hypothetically is alluded to, describes a situation that could resemble the topic in the actual passage of the *GospTruth*, and if that text was familiar for the receivers, it could explain why the allusion was made. Such analyses can thus enlighten us when we try to understand what the author of the *GospTruth* wanted to tell to the community.

## Reflections regarding the translation

Everyone who sets out translating a text takes a position on a number of methodological and theoretical questions, with or without being aware of it. Some of these questions are

- For what purpose do I translate?
- Which is the intended audience?
- How similar is the source language i.e. Coptic to the target language i.e. English?

We will discuss these questions starting with the last one.

## Translation as transferring or explaining a message

The relationship between late antique Coptic and Greek texts is obvious. Not only are many early Coptic writings translations from Greek with frequent usage of Greek loan words for nouns, they even include many Greek conjunctions. The *GospTruth*, which probably originally was composed in Greek, is characterised by many long sentences with many subordinated clauses. In this manner it is an example of an ideal of elegant writing that was strong in Antiquity, and which has lived on to our time. Thus, the ideal with elegant long constructions has been important for modern western literature as well. Even though the classical ideal came from Greek rhetoric and literature, it survived through the Roman empire and prevailed through Latin as the language for the church, trade, science and culture. Despite of this occidental common literary heritage, the constructions that were held as elegant in Greek and Latin, still function fairly well in Spanish and French,

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<sup>18</sup>I am thankful for many ideas from the Summer seminar in Bergen 2003, and especially for some thoughts about intertextuality from Lundhaug.

less in modern English, and in modern Swedish they even risk making a clumsy impression.

Such problems have long evoked different strategies from translators, but usually these strategies have been held as rules of thumb rather than a theoretically based scientific method. During the 1950s to 1980s however, Nida published a number of books in which he expressed a far more ambitious claim, as he spoke of his approach in terms of 'science.'<sup>19</sup> Although Nida primarily worked with problems related to Bible translating, his influence on translation theory was wide ranging and his works became a Bible for translators.

In the 1960s Nida drew upon works by Chomsky and his so-called 'generative-transformation grammar.'<sup>20</sup> To put it very plainly, Nida went from the surface of the source text to a postulated deeper structure of the language. There the complex structures were transformed into simpler units. In these simpler forms they should be transferred to the deeper structure of the target language and then actualized in speech or text.

Instead of attempting to set up transfers from one language to another by working out long series of equivalent formal structures which are presumably adequate to 'translate' from one language into another, it is both scientifically and practically more efficient (1) to reduce the source text to its structurally simplest and most semantically evident kernels, (2) to transfer the meaning from source language to receptor language on a structurally simple level, and (3) to generate the stylistically and semantically equivalent expression in the receptor language.<sup>21</sup>

Such a view of translation seems over optimistic with regard to the direct relation between the surface structure and the assumed deeper and simpler structures. For instance, one could ask whether the same surface structure could arise from different deeper structures. If so, to which of them should we then transform the surface structure? Moreover, does not also a part of the impact that the source text once had, change when we transform it into smaller pieces of simpler constructions? If Nida's theory should work, it should be fairly easy to translate a book by a computer, as the range for subjectivity would be reduced, and the procedure of transforming would be possible to formalise. However, when Nida describes the characteristics of a good translator we do not see much of the transformative translator that uses a strictly scientific method. On the contrary, we rather find a traditional one who also has to use his or her empathy:

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<sup>19</sup>Nida 1964.

<sup>20</sup>For instance, Chomsky 1965.

<sup>21</sup>Nida 1964, p. 68.

.in addition to a knowledge of the two or more languages involved in the translational process, the translator must have thorough acquaintance with the subject matter concerned. Even if the translator possesses all the necessary technical knowledge, he is not really competent unless he has also a truly empathetic spirit.<sup>22</sup>

Reading Nida is fruitful for the translator as he provides us with many practical suggestions and examples. But the scientific basis for his theory remains questionable to me. Here it is worth mentioning that Chomsky never supported an approach of the kind that Nida put forward, and his theoretical building is far more complex than the one of Nida.<sup>23</sup>

Fortunately, I am in the privileged position of being able to put forward two translations that to a large extent also demonstrate my working method. The first one, which I call the basic translation, is more of the kind that Nida called formal and others call literal. I do not see it as more 'true' than the second translation, but it responds to other needs. First, in the basic translation the long periods in the Coptic text are preserved. Hopefully this will give the reader an impression of the rhetorical skills that the author of the *GospTruth* demonstrated. Thus, in the basic translation I do not handle the problems of transferring an elaborated elegant Greek or Coptic text to modern English. Second, it gives more correct information about how passages open and ends in the *GospTruth*. Third, in the basic translation I often preserved the uncertainties with regard to what pronouns refer to.

I assume that the basic translation is more interesting for those who are interested in text linguistics, or are so familiar with Greek, Coptic or Latin rhetoric that they can appreciate it even in the form of an English rendering.

In the second translation, which I call the analytic one, I often break up long sentences into shorter ones. In this way I want to show in what manner the clauses are related to each other, something that in many cases is impossible in the basic translation. Of course, some of the characteristics of the classical rhetoric then go lost, but this problem is overcome by a look at the basic translation. As the rearrangements of clauses depend on my analysis of the text I call it an analytical translation. I also want to present the results of my analysis as I take a position to what the pronouns refer to.

The analytical translation is maybe more interesting for a broader audience who cannot carry through the analyses themselves due to lack of time or knowledge in Coptic. However, I assume that the *GospTruth* is such a complex text that even those with advanced knowledge in Coptic could find the analytical translation worth reading.

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<sup>22</sup>Nida 1964, pp. 150-151.

<sup>23</sup>For a critique of Nida that I generally support see Gentzler 2001, pp. 44-76.

To sum up, sometimes the basic translation will be more elegant but also more vague than the analytical one. In other occasions, the analytical translation is clearer and less clumsy than the basic one, and in this way more true to the Coptic text. A drawback with the analytical translation may sometimes be that it risks becoming too clear.

In 1979 Layton<sup>24</sup> presented two translations of ‘The Treatise on the Resurrection,’ and Emmel has also advocated the usefulness of more than one translation as an analytical tool.<sup>25</sup> But as far as I know, this way of translating that just has been described, and that I will demonstrate in the next chapter, has not been used before. Probably the influences from the translation theory will evoke more ideas regarding the manner of translating the Nag Hammadi texts.

## **Edition**

If nothing else is indicated I use the edition of the *GospTruth* published by Layton.<sup>26</sup> However, for the parts of the *GospTruth* that are most important for the present study the edition of Attridge & MacRae works fine as well.<sup>27</sup>

The tragically fragmentary state of the *GospTruth* in NHC XII has made it hard to include it in the present study. Only once I emend the text from codex I with the help of codex XII, and this will be indicated in the translations.

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<sup>24</sup>Layton 1979.

<sup>25</sup>Emmel 1997.

<sup>26</sup>Layton 2004.

<sup>27</sup>Attridge & MacRae 1985a.



## Chapter 3

# Applying the method on the GospTruth

In the first chapter the issues of the study were presented and related to the scholarly discussion. The second chapter concerned methods aimed at solving these problems. Thus, inasmuch as we now commence to apply the methods on the GospTruth, the present chapter forms the beginning of the main body of the inquiry.

In order to demonstrate in what way the methods are applied I will analyse what I call the first chapter of the GospTruth. To comment all pages of the GospTruth would make it necessary to restrict the investigation to purely text linguistic matters, and we would not have enough space to deal with the religious and social setting of the GospTruth. However, in the next chapter I will put forward my translations and thereby indirectly account for the complete analysis that was necessary to carry through in order to write the present thesis.

The first chapter of the GospTruth is a good choice for my purpose of demonstrating the method, first, as it is fairly complicated, and second, since the central actors in the text are introduced there. However, other important passages will also be thoroughly scrutinised in chapters five and six, which makes that all in all a fourth of the GospTruth will be carefully analysed. Parts of the following analyses will perhaps be difficult to follow for those who do not master Coptic. For them it is maybe advisable to begin the reading with the last part of this chapter at page 87 and then go back to the parts of the analyses that seem most interesting to them.

In the analyses I will discuss the macro-structural relations of each passage. Thereby I want to determine in what way the passages are related to each other. Hopefully, it will be possible to say when we begin a new major section, or when we are on a lower level in the text. But probably it is

most interesting to see in what light the author wanted the audience to understand the GospTruth.

In the micro-structural analyses the focus is on the relations within the actual passage. Of course, one cannot always determine whether a certain question belongs to the macro-structural analysis rather than to the micro-structural one. Such choices always include a certain degree of subjectivity.

In the semantic analyses I will focus more on how one should translate particularly important or difficult words. As the reader soon will notice however, the macro-structural analyses often are of major significance for the semantic analyses as well.

### 16.31-17.4a

#### Macro-structural analysis

Granting that the GospTruth is a homily from a concrete communal situation, the sender and receiver already knew each other. The preacher sets out describing the characteristics of those who are redeemed. They rejoice in the good news, and by grace they know the Father. The Word that mediated the knowledge they call 'Redeemer,' and additionally, they have discovered the one for whom they searched. Thus, the initial passage is packed with attributes of those who are redeemed. But who are those persons?

In 17.28-29 the community is exhorted to disregard Error, and in 25.19-25 we learn that the community has left darkness, lack and ignorance for light, completion and knowledge. On these grounds we may assume that those who are described in 16.31-17.4a more or less coincide with the members of the community. After all, they are already aware of the state of ignorance and Error, something which implies that they know.

However, there is a tension between the characteristics of those who are described in 16.31-17.4a and those in 17.28-29 and 25.19-25. In the first passage the author probably describes how the ideal community would be, and in the two latter cases we are on the road towards this ideal state. In narratological terms we say that 16.31-17.4a describes the ideal receivers whereas in the other cases the real receivers are addressed.

On this basis I assert that 16.31-17.4a is full of surrogates for metapropositional bases or metacommunicative clauses. We could paraphrase the first one as follows: 'I tell you to rejoice in the good news because you know the Father of the truth, From the text linguistic perspective we are on the pragmatic level. Hence, the following sections are subordinated to the initial one, until a marker appears on a level that is at least as high. As the passage that follows 16.31-17.4a is on a lower level, it is subordinated to 16.31-17.4a.

On this basis I challenge the established convention of calling 16.31-17.4a a prologue.

### Micro-structural analysis

16.31-17.4a consists of one well construed sentence.<sup>1</sup> Although the passage is one period in one sentence it can preferably be analysed from a division in three segments. The first one runs from 16.31-33, in which the focus is on the good news. In the second segment which runs from 16.34-38a, the Word is predominant and in the end called ‘the Redeemer.’ In the final section, which runs from 16.38b-17.4a, the basis for the designation of the Word as the Redeemer is touched upon. I will now turn to a somewhat more detailed discussion of this analysis.

In the first segment two components are central. We are told that the good news is joy, and we are informed about some characteristics that belong to those who rejoice in it. The climax is reached when those who rejoice in the good news obtain knowledge of the Father of the truth.

In the second segment the protagonist is the Word. Through a chain of relative clauses it is loaded with attributes. The increasing amount of information we receive about the Word makes the central concepts that occupied the foreground in 16.31-33 to decrease in significance and sink into the background.

In 16.36-37 **ε̄τε̄ πε̄ρῑ νε̄** ‘that is’ functions as an intensity-heightening marker that stresses the importance of the following relative clause ‘what they call ‘the Redeemer.’ As this is a renominalization of the Word we are back on the same level as in 16.34. Through this we have a minor break in the information flow and an end of the second segment.

The third segment runs from 16.38b-17.4a. Here we learn why the Word is called the Redeemer. Grammatically we have two units. The first begins with the circumstantial construction **ε̄πεῑρᾱ** ‘since that is the name.’ The circumstantial is subordinated to **ε̄πο̄τᾱρᾱνε̄ς̄ ᾱρᾱ ῡνε̄ς̄ κ̄ᾱτ̄ᾱρ̄ᾱς̄** ‘what they call ‘the Redeemer,’ in 16.37-38a. In 17.1 a parallel circumstantial occurs **ε̄πεῑρᾱ** ‘since the name.’ This circumstantial is co-ordinated with the preceding circumstantial by the conjunction **κᾱῑ** ‘and’. Consequently, these circumstantial constructions are co-ordinated and modify the same clause. The third circumstantial **ε̄πεῑδ̄ῑᾱ** ‘since it is the discovery’ in 17.3 lacks such coordinating conjunction, and thus it is subordinated to the second circumstantial. That we approach the end of the entire passage is indicated by the recurrence of ‘the good news’ in 17.1. Further, the three circumstantial constructions belong to nominal clauses and have a repetitive

<sup>1</sup>For a discussion of the question where the passage ends, I refer to the commentary in the next section.

impact. Together with the recurrence of the good news these repetitions, in an elegant way, form the end of the first period of the GospTruth.

### Semantic analysis

A frequently recurring difficulty in the GospTruth is to determine to what antecedent suffixes refer to. In 16.33, it is far from obvious whether **ἀποῦσων** means ‘that they might know him,’ ‘that they might know it’ or that it might be a consciously used ambiguity. As almost all translators I have chosen ‘him,’ thereby letting the suffix refer to the Father of truth.’ Grobel<sup>2</sup> deviates and connects the suffix with ‘good news,’ and thus translates the suffix with ‘it.’ To connect the suffix with the Father of the truth can be supported by at least two arguments. First, it addresses an object close to the suffix. Second, to know the Father is the basic need for those who rejoice because of the good news. The former argument perhaps seems stronger than it really is. However, **ἀποῦσων** can be treated as a qualifier to **πνεύμα** the grace, in 16.32. The grace to know in its turn is what those who rejoice in the good news have received. This objection counterbalances the first argument. The second argument is based on an analysis of the whole passage, but also on a broader analysis of the GospTruth. From a structural basis, this argument can be challenged as follows: That the good news plays a major role in 16.31-17.4a is stressed by its prominent position in the final section. As recurring marker it redirects the reader’s attention to a predominant topic. This argumentation emphasizes the importance of ‘the good news’ in the end of the first segment as well. This favours the translation ‘that they might know it (the good news’ in 16.33, and ‘for those who are searching for it (the good news’ in 17.4a. It is likely that an author of a work with such a sophisticated style as the GospTruth emphasizes the same object in the end as in the beginning of the period. Probably, the author of the GospTruth not only had beauty and harmony as a theological ideal, but as a stylistic one as well. Such argumentation may at first seem weak, but as we go on and read more of the text I am certain that the reader will be more and more convinced of that hypothesis.

However, the argument of harmony can also be used in favour of ‘that they might know him’ and ‘those who are searching for him.’ It follows from the assertion that we should stick to the same pronoun in both cases. In support of ‘him’ the following can be said: In the GospTruth we are often faced with a temporary uncertainty regarding the specific meaning of a suffix, but through catchwords more information is obtained. It means that a word that appeared in the end of the preceding passage is caught and placed in the foreground of the following one. The resistance in the information flow

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<sup>2</sup>Grobel 1960, p. 34.

gradually decreases as we know more about to what a suffix refers, and when we retrospectively pinpoint our understanding of a preceding suffix, the resistance has fallen to zero. Since 16.31-17.4a is followed by a passage that begins with a telling of the manner in which the All searched for the Father,<sup>3</sup> the Father is the most probable reference to the suffix in 17.4a as well. Consequently we render the suffixes in 16.33 and 17.4a with ‘him.’

The observations regarding the repetitive character of the three circumstantial clauses in the third segment support that we should begin all these clauses with the same word, and ‘since’ fits well in both 16.38, 17.2 and 17.3. In this respect I deviate from the majority of translators. The second circumstantial, 17.1, in recent translations, is usually rendered with ‘while,’ or its equivalence in respective language.<sup>4</sup>

In the basic translation it is hard to reproduce the coordination of the above mentioned circumstantial clauses. In the analytical translation however, by repeating the clause that the coordinated circumstantial are subordinated to, it is possible to reproduce the hierarchical relations that easily are expressed in Coptic and Greek. Of course, the drawback of such a procedure is that long sentences become even longer. Therefore, in the analytical translation a new sentence begins when the superordinated clause is repeated.

We are now prepared for the discussion regarding the way in which **ετορωεχε αρδϥ χε πωτηρ** in 16,37-38 should be rendered. Normally **ετορωεχε αρδϥ** is translated passively: ‘what is called.’ However, there are good reasons to translate it actively: ‘they call him,’ as in Coptic the third person plural has the same form as the passive construction.

The Word, which in 16.34 played a minor role, through the renominalization as ‘the Redeemer,’ and through the intensity-heightening marker ‘that is’ in 16.36-37, now plays the central role of 16.31-17.4a. From 16.38a-17.4a the reasons for denoting ‘the Word’ as ‘the Redeemer’ is focused upon. If we translate **ετορωεχε αρδϥ χε πωτηρ** with ‘what is called ‘the Redeemer,’” the emphatic and central function is almost lost, and further, the active translation refers to those who rejoiced in the good news in 16.31-33 and those who had discovered what they searched for in the final segment. Consequently, it is far more likely that the highlighted clause in 16.37-38 should be translated actively ‘what they call ‘the Redeemer.’” In this manner those who rejoiced in the good news recur. Through the Word, they have come to know the Father, and in this way they are redeemed from the ignorance. Obviously, 16,36-38a becomes the centre of the passage.

Standaert<sup>5</sup> also divides 16.31-17.4a in three parts of a concentric pattern. But he asserts that ‘the Father’ is the centre. His only argument for this is

<sup>3</sup>17.4b-5.

<sup>4</sup>Attridge & MacRae 1985a, p. 83, Layton 1987, p. 253 and Schenke 2001, p. 33.

<sup>5</sup>Standaert 1976, p. 246.

that the Father appears in all three parts of the passage.

On y distingue aisement trois paragraphes: le premier et le dernier se correspondent symetriquement, tandis que celui du centre, avec sa triple proposition relative est lui-meme articule de façon a contenir en son milieu celui qui est l'objet central de tout le developpement: le Pere. En realite celui-ci est designe trois fois et chaque fois au centre de chaque unite.<sup>6</sup>

However, such procedure neglects the structure of the text and relies too much on semantics.

An early attempt to analyse the style in the GospTruth was made by Fecht.<sup>7</sup> He claimed that the GospTruth was written according to an ancient Egyptian metric tradition, and that the GospTruth originally was composed in Coptic. According to Fecht,<sup>8</sup> the refinements in the text could be understood from a Coptic original only. Fecht divides 16.31-17.4a which he calls the first 'Strophe,' in eight lines 'Versen.'<sup>9</sup> However, his translation does not differ much from others. In Fecht's commentary<sup>10</sup> he calls the initial three lines 'Erste Aussage.' These lines run:

1 Das Evangelium der Wahrheit ist Freude  
 2 für die, welche empfangen haben die Gnade vom Vater der  
 Wahrheit,  
 3 ihn zu erkennen durch die Kraft des Wortes, das gekommen ist  
 aus dem Plaroma...

I am not competent to discuss the Egyptian metric in relation to the GospTruth. Nevertheless it seems questionable to end the first statement in the middle of what I call the second segment. Even though Fecht's analysis is close to the text when he takes the metric into account, his comments usually are on the semantic level rather than on the structural one. He observes that the good news recurs in the end of the third segment, and that it might be the centre in the first one. Still, it remains unclear how he reaches the conclusion that the good news is the main theme of 16.31-17.4a. 'Das "Evangelium der Wahrheit ist zweifellos das eigentliche Thema dieser ersten Strophe.'<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>6</sup>Standaert 1976a, p. 246.

<sup>7</sup>Fecht 1961, 1962, 1963.

<sup>8</sup>Fecht 1961, p. 373.

<sup>9</sup>Fecht 1961, p. 379.

<sup>10</sup>Fecht (1961, p. 379.

<sup>11</sup>Fecht 1961, p. 381.

### The analyses applied on the analytical translation

With the structural and semantic analyses in mind, I will point out the effects for the analytical translation.

The first sentence in the analytical translation comprises the first segment. In order to obtain a main clause in the second sentence I have transformed the final clause of the first one into a main clause that I reuse in the second sentence. The second sentence runs through the second segment until we reach the centre in 16.36-38a. In order to emphasize the centre with its intensity-heightening marker I let it begin a new sentence. As I also want to decrease the resistance in the information flow, I insert ‘the Word.’ It means that we read ‘This Word is what,’ instead of ‘this is what.’ The repetition of the Word also functions as a recurring marker and signals the end of the second segment. As the two initial circumstantial clauses in the final segment are subordinated to ‘they call him ‘the Redeemer,’ We have to repeat this superordinated clause. We begin therefore new sentences at each time this subordination occurs. Since the last circumstantial clause is subordinated to the second last in 17.1 we cannot begin a new sentence in 17.4a since it would coordinate this clause with the two preceding circumstantial clauses.

## 17.4b-18a

### Macro-structural analysis

From the text linguistic perspective this section is an episode, and accordingly it is not significant on the pragmatic level.<sup>12</sup> Thus, the unit is subordinated to the preceding one.

### Micro-structural analysis

It has been suggested that the passage that began in 16.31 should be extended to 17.9 instead of to 17.4a. In what follows I will argue for a periodisation from 17.4b-18a, and accordingly I cannot follow that suggestion. My choice of delimitation agrees with the majority in so far as the previous passage runs from 16.31-17.4a, but the delimitation of 17.4b-18a is new, and I hope that it can solve some of the many problems that are related to this passage.

Now, we have to respond to the following interrelated questions. First, **επιζη**, which I render with ‘because,’ is a conjunction that heads a new sentence in 17.4b. With what does this conjunction tie the clause that it

<sup>12</sup>For a discussion regarding the function of episodes see page 50.

heads? Second, **ε** that heads **ε̅τ̅μ̅π̅τ̅α̅τ̅σ̅π̅ο̅υ̅ω̅η̅** in 17.9-10 is placed in a strange way. Which is the function of it, and in what way should we construe the syntax?

We will set out focusing on **ε̅π̅ι̅ζ̅η̅** in 17.4b, although the two addressed problems are related to each other.

**ε̅π̅ι̅ζ̅η̅** has been taken either as causal or temporal. For instance, Layton<sup>13</sup> translates it with ‘inasmuch as,’ whereas Attridge & MacRae<sup>14</sup> prefer ‘when.’ In Addition we have to determine whether **ε̅π̅ι̅ζ̅η̅** functions retrospectively, i.e. anaphorically, or whether it points ahead, i.e. cataphorically.

Attridge & MacRae translate as follows:

When the totality went about searching for the one from whom they had come forth and the totality was inside of him, the incomprehensible, inconceivable one who is superior to every thought ignorance of the Father brought about anguish and terror; and the anguish grew solid like a fog, so that no one was able to see.<sup>15</sup>

Obviously, according to Attridge & MacRae ‘when’ functions cataphorically. However, Attridge & MacRae treat the initial **ε** in **ε̅τ̅μ̅π̅τ̅α̅τ̅σ̅π̅ο̅υ̅ω̅η̅** as the preposition ‘about,’ which makes that ‘ignorance’ in 17.9-10 belongs to a main clause. Although it is an interesting solution, it seems like an odd position for the preposition **ε**. This would need further support. With this attempt the difference between the temporal and causal interpretation of **ε̅π̅ι̅ζ̅η̅** decreases in importance. The event that is described in 17.4b-9a occurs simultaneously with what is told in 17.9b-14a, but it is natural to assume that there should be more than a temporal relation between these two events. Therefore, in this case one should not stress the difference between the temporal and causal interpretation of **ε̅π̅ι̅ζ̅η̅**.

However, the difference between the temporal and causal treatment becomes more significant if **ε̅π̅ι̅ζ̅η̅** would function anaphorically, still granting that 17.9b begins a main clause. With the temporal anaphoric interpretation we have to extend the sentence that begins in 16.31, not to 17.4a but to 17.9a. But even with this delimitation we would have an unexpected shift from the present tense in 17.3b-4a to the perfect in 17.5, and moreover, the sense would be fairly obscure.

We now turn to discuss **ε̅π̅ι̅ζ̅η̅** with a causal and anaphoric function.

<sup>13</sup>Layton 1987, p. 253. It is worth noting that Layton in his Sahidic grammar (Layton 2000, for instance 493) only treats **ε̅π̅ι̅ζ̅η̅** as a causal conjunction.

<sup>14</sup>Attridge & MacRae 1985a, p. 83.

<sup>15</sup>Attridge & MacRae 1985a, p. 83, GospTruth 17.4b-14a.

Probably Orlandi in his Italian translation interprets **ἐπιζῆ** in this manner when he translates:

Poiche il tutto e stato cercato da coloro che erano venuti da esso, ed il tutto era all'interno dell'incontenibile impensabile, colui che e superiore ad ogni pensiero.<sup>16</sup>

Unfortunately, however, it is not entirely clear in what way Orlandi construes the syntax. He probably aims at a very reader friendly translation in which he cuts long sentences into shorter ones, though without accounting for the criteria for the delimitations. But as he puts a full stop before 17.9b it is hard to treat **ἐπιζῆ** cataphorically.

Therefore the Italian conjunction 'poiche' should be rendered in a weak causal sense similar to the English 'for.' Then 17.4b-9a would function as an explanation to the end of 17.3b-4a, in which the searching for the Father was touched upon.

If 16.31-17.4a should be treated as a prologue Orlandi's construal of the syntax would be problematic, as it would imply that the main body of the GospTruth begins with a subordinated unit that expounds on the last clause of the prologue. But if we refrain from calling 16.31-17.4a a prologue the situation becomes easier, though not yet unproblematic. The anaphoric causal interpretation of **ἐπιζῆ** in 17.4b implies that 17.4b-9a, on a low level, is tied to 'for those who searched for him' in 17.4a. Although I do not follow Güllich & Raible in a strict way, it is worth noting that they place such subordination by conjunctions on the very low sixth level. It means that the elegantly construed period from 16.31-17.4a that was characterized by closing markers in the form of recurrences from 17.1 and forward would continue with a lengthy parenthetical explanation of something that was not at all central in the preceding text. Thus, with the anaphoric causal interpretation of **ἐπιζῆ** 17.4b-9a takes on the impression of an interpolation rather than of a part of a skilfully composed work. Since 16.31-17.4a is well-construed, and as many other parts of the GospTruth also unmasks a gifted author, we have reasons to look for other ways to solve the syntactical problems.<sup>17</sup>

The common attempt to solve the syntactical problems has been to treat **ἐπιζῆ** causally with a cataphoric function. This will now guide us when we look for a plausible clause that 17.4b-9a could be related to.

Till<sup>18</sup> interprets **εἰς αὐτὰς τὰς ἑορτὰς** in 17.9b-10a as an introductory

<sup>16</sup>Orlandi 1992, p. 43, GospTruth 17.4b-9a.

<sup>17</sup>Orlandi does not himself seem to be fully satisfied with the construal of the syntax, as he characterizes it as artificial 'una sintassi stentata.' (Orlandi 1992, p. 43.).

<sup>18</sup>Till 1958, p. 270.



That 17.4b-9a is one unit is fairly obvious. It begins with the focus on the All, and ends with a list of attributes that glorifies the Father. Such a peak that is caused by glorification signals that we have come to a point where at least a minor break is needed. Moreover, as with 17.9b new actors are introduced, we are certain that a new unit has begun. But which is the relation between these two units?

According to my analysis both units are headed by a causal cataphoric modifier, in the first case the conjunction ‘because,’ and in the latter one the circumstantial, which I render with ‘since.’ With this construal of the syntax we have to look for fitting main clauses that could belong to units that are superordinated to the subordinated causal ones.

In 17.11b-14a we find the first candidate for such unit: ‘and the anguish grew solid like a fog, so that no one could see.’ **ππορυπ̄ δε δγωρ̄δ̄ ᾱπρητε̄ π̄ορ̄γλαδ̄στ̄π̄ κ̄αδ̄σε̄ χ̄ε̄ πε̄ψλαδ̄τε̄ πε̄τ̄ δ̄β̄δ̄λ̄**

However, it seems that we face problems if we superordinate 17.11b-14a to 17.4b-9a and 17.9b-11a. The conjunction ‘and’ **δε** in 17.11b appears as an odd choice when it comes to connect relatively large units of text. Furthermore, it does not function well as a signal that we now are going to see the consequences to what was expressed in the causal units. We would have a construction as: ‘because ... (17.4b-9a) since ...’ (17.9b-11a) ending with a conclusion beginning with an inappropriate ‘and’ (17.11b-14a) instead of the more fitting ‘therefore.’ On the other hand, 17.11b-14a functions well as supplementary information to what was said about ‘anguish’ **πορυπ̄** in 17.9b-11a.

On the basis of this analysis we end up with two units that both are headed by a causal clause, and ended by supplementary information regarding a central topic in the respective causal units. Consequently, we have to continue our hunting for the appropriate main clause. In 17.14b-16 two asyndetic clauses that are headed by **ε̄τ̄δ̄ε̄ π̄ε̄εῑ** ‘therefore.’ These asyndetic clauses are complemented by the following circumstantial clause in 17.17-18a, which also functions as a spring-board to the next section.

In this way we end up with the following syntactical relations:

Because the All searched for the one from whom they had come forth,’ –(supplementary information), ‘since the ignorance of the Father had brought anguish and terror,’ –(supplementary information) ‘therefore, Error found strength, worked on its own matter, foolishly,’ –(supplementary information).

Already now, I assert, we have reached a solution that is no worse than the options that were presented above. But in order to strengthen my claim I will discuss the following two questions: First, how can the philological prob-

lems that are connected to 17.9b-11a be handled? Second, is the proposed construction attested in other Coptic texts?

The initial **ε** in **ε†ⲙⲡⲧⲁⲧⲥⲡⲟⲩⲱⲛ** deserves consideration. In Sahidic and Lycopolitan (Subachmimic) the word order in 17.9b-11a would be different from the one that we have in the GospTruth.<sup>25</sup> Normally the extraposed entity term,<sup>26</sup> in this case ‘the ignorance of the Father’ **†ⲙⲡⲧⲁⲧⲥⲡⲟⲩⲱⲛ ⲡⲱⲧ** should be followed by converter **ε**, conjugation base **ⲁ** and personal morph **ⲥ** followed by infinitive. Slightly less common but still very usual would have been converter + conjugation base + extraposed entity term + converter + conjugation base + personal morph + infinitive. In our case however, we have the converter in front of the extraposed entity term. To be more down to earth, in Sahidic and Lycopolitan we would rather expect **†ⲙⲡⲧⲁⲧⲥⲡⲟⲩⲱⲛ ⲡⲱⲧ εⲁⲥⲑ ⲟⲩⲛⲟⲩⲱⲡⲓ ⲙⲡ ⲟⲩⲓⲣⲧⲉ**.

In what way can we explain that the converter i.e. the circumstantial is placed before the extraposed entity term?

According to Layton’s grammar<sup>27</sup> there are four types of converters in Coptic: relative, circumstantial, preterit and focalizing converters. Because of this the following discussion is significant for 17.9b-11a of the GospTruth, even though it concerns the relative converter instead of what we most of all had wanted, the circumstantial one. Browne<sup>28</sup> notes that the Sahidic Gospel of the Egyptians NHC III includes two constructions with the conversion preceding the extraposed entity term. **ⲧⲱⲟ (ⲣⲡ) ε ⲡⲓⲟⲩⲁⲟⲁⲥ εⲧⲉ εⲧⲃ [ⲕ] ⲕⲧ [ⲉ] ⲁⲡⲱⲟⲙⲡⲧ ⲡⲓⲟⲩⲟⲩⲧ ⲡⲁⲗⲟⲩ ⲡ [ⲣⲟ] εⲗⲑⲉ εⲃⲟⲗ** ‘The first ogdoad *which of because* the thrice-male child came forth...’<sup>29</sup>

The other example<sup>30</sup> runs as follows: **εⲧⲉ ⲁⲗⲁⲡⲧⲧⲩ ⲙⲡⲉⲗⲁⲁⲧ ⲱⲱⲡⲉ**. In the translations I have italicized the for the discussion most important words, and preserved the Coptic word order, even though it results in a very bad English.

Quecke<sup>31</sup> remarked that constructions with the converter placed before the extraposed entity term is rare in Sahidic, but can occur through import

<sup>25</sup>In what follows I draw upon oral information from Stephen Emmel who, in connection with our many discussions regarding the GospTruth in general and of the actual passage in particular, drew my attention to the differences between these dialects.

<sup>26</sup>Layton 2000, 141, defines entity term as follows: ‘Semantically an entity term presents or refers to an object of thought (as distinct from predicating a process or action, or relationship).’ Somewhat simplified one can say that the entity terms, though comprising many word classes, are syntactically interchangeable with each other.

<sup>27</sup>Layton 2000, 395 ff.

<sup>28</sup>Browne 1975, pp. 103-104.

<sup>29</sup>The Gospel of the Egyptians NHC III.42.5-7.

<sup>30</sup>The Gospel of the Egyptians NHC III.2 49.12.

<sup>31</sup>Quoted in Browne 1975.

from the Northern Egyptian dialects, Bohairic and Fayumic:

‘Mit dem Bohairischen und Faijumischen kennt das Oxyrhynchitische eine dem Saidischen fremde Konstruktion, nach der zwischen Relativpartikel und Subjekt des Relativsatzes eine adverbelle Bestimmung treten kann, wodurch sich die Wortstellung der griechischen Vorlage beibehalten lässt’<sup>32</sup>

Quecke could only find one example in Sahidic: **ⲧⲉⲧⲉ ⲙⲙⲏⲥⲁ ⲧⲣⲉⲥⲙⲓⲥⲉ ⲁⲥⲃⲱ ⲟⲛ ⲉⲥⲟ ⲛⲡⲁⲣⲑⲉⲛⲟⲥ**.<sup>33</sup> Of course, all the above given examples are with relative and not circumstantial converters. Nevertheless, as the GospTruth in other places also shows traces of an earlier Bohairic or Fayumic version of the Lycopollitan text, the phenomenon of a converter in front of the extraposed entity term in 17.9b could be explained by a somewhat careless transfer of the text from one dialect to another. This provides us with some kind of explanation for the position of **ⲉ** in 17.9b; that is more satisfactory than just noting that it is misplaced. To sum up: On the basis of this hypothesis, I assert that 17.9b-11a is headed by a circumstantial converter, which means that the text makes sense without emending it.

Let us now focus upon the question whether such long constructions with a cataphoric causal ‘because’ that is caught up by a later ‘therefore’ are attested elsewhere in the Coptic literature.

Without searching very much, it was possible to find examples in which ‘because’ **ⲉⲡⲓⲁⲎ** beyond doubt functions cataphorically, and in which it is combined with a ‘therefore’ **ⲉⲧⲃⲉ ⲛⲁⲓ** in the same manner as I have argued for above.<sup>34</sup> Maybe this is not common in Nag Hammadi texts, but in literature that originally was written in sophisticated Greek it is fairly common. I will put forward two examples from Athanasius’s Paschal letters.

**ⲉⲡⲓⲁⲎ ⲧⲥⲁⲗⲛⲓⲣⲭ ⲙⲟⲩⲧⲉ ⲁⲩⲱ ⲥⲧⲟⲩⲛⲟⲥ ⲛⲡⲣⲱⲙⲉ ⲉⲓⲟⲩⲉⲥⲙⲏ  
ⲛⲓⲙ ⲉⲩⲛⲟⲧⲙ ⲓⲧⲛⲡⲟⲣⲥⲁⲛⲟⲛ ⲧⲏⲣⲟⲩ ⲉⲧⲃⲉⲛⲁⲓ ⲓⲙⲡⲧⲣⲉⲩⲣⲉ  
ⲉⲡⲓⲏⲗ ⲓⲙⲡⲉⲟⲩⲟⲩⲱ ⲉⲧⲙⲙⲁⲩ ⲉⲩⲟ ⲛⲕⲟⲩⲧⲓⲙⲡⲉⲩⲛⲧ ⲁⲩⲥⲩⲙⲁⲛⲉ  
ⲛⲁⲩⲓⲧⲛⲡⲧⲥⲁⲗⲛⲓⲣⲭ ⲭⲉⲕⲁⲥ ⲛⲡⲉⲩⲙⲉⲉⲩⲧⲉ ⲭⲉⲩⲩⲙⲁⲛⲉ ⲛⲁⲩⲓⲧⲛⲡⲣⲱⲙⲉ**

Because the trumpet sounds and wakes all mankind more effectively than any sweet sound from all instruments, therefore, when at that time Israel was found being small in its heart, he signaled himself by means of the trumpet so that Israel would not think that it was being signaled by men.<sup>35</sup>

<sup>32</sup>Quecke, quoted in Browne 1975.

<sup>33</sup>Morgan MS 574.147, 30 quoted by Browne 1975.

<sup>34</sup>In the searching and in the evaluation of the examples I was guided by Stephen Emmel.

<sup>35</sup>Athanasius’s Paschal letters 2.22-28, in Lefort L.-Th. 1955, *S. Athanase: Lettres Festales et Pastorales en copte*, Imprimerie Orientaliste, Louvain.



they resemble each other in so far as he also treats 17.9b as the beginning of a circumstantial clause, but according to Fecht with a temporal function.<sup>37</sup> Moreover, for Fecht 17.4b-21a is one stanza in seven lines, whereas I end the passage already in 17.18a.

### Semantic analysis

The adverbial phrase **ⲉⲛ ⲟⲩⲛⲉⲧⲱⲟⲩⲉⲓⲧ** in 17.16 could be translated with good reasons in a number of ways. ‘In emptiness,’ would emphasise the contrast to the Fullness, which is a characteristic of the sphere that adheres to the Father. Another possibility could be ‘fruitlessly,’ which would emphasise meaningless and transitory nature of Error. However, as the notion denotes those who lack wisdom in 19.25, and as the lack of knowledge is important in 17.17-18a, I have chosen to render it with ‘foolishly.’

We now have the necessary means to discuss the analytical translation. It is often difficult to determine how much of resistance in the information flow that should be kept. In order to preserve some resistance I let 17.7b-9a precede 17.4b-7a. On the other hand I decrease it by leaving out ‘because’ in 17.4b, which transforms 17.4b-9a into a sentence. According to the same line of thought I have made one relatively long sentence out of 17.9b-14a. Consequently, **ⲉⲧⲗⲉ ⲛⲉⲉⲓ** in 17.14b has to be rendered with ‘for these reasons’ instead of ‘therefore’ or ‘for this reason.’ In this way I have created a surrogate for the complicated causal relation between 17.4b, 17.9b and 17.14b. Admittedly some of the original elegance has been lost, but by comparing the basic and analytical translations the reader has a good chance to grasp both the meaning and character of the Coptic text.

## 17.18b-27

### Macro-structural analysis

The interpretation of **ⲁⲥⲱⲱⲛⲉ** in 17.18b is of major importance not only for the semantic analysis, but for the macro-structural one as well. For the basis of the translation of it with ‘it happened’ I refer to the semantic analysis on page 74.

‘It happened’ is an opening marker that substitutes on the level of abstraction.<sup>38</sup> By ‘it happened’ the preacher now starts to reflect upon what was said in the preceding episode. In this respect we have an instruction to the receiver regarding the way in which the episode should be comprehended,

<sup>37</sup>Fecht 1961, p. 384.

<sup>38</sup>For a discussion regarding this concept see page 50.

i.e. we are on the pragmatic level, but at the same time it refers to a level below the pragmatic one. Thus, we are between the pragmatic level and the text level. For this reason I assert that we have reached a section that is above the episode, and consequently we have to begin a new passage here.

### Micro-structural analysis

17.18b-27 can be divided in two parts. The first runs from 17.18b-21a, and the second one from 17.21b-27.

In the first unit two themes from the preceding passage are developed. First we learn that Error's preparation of its matter occurred 'in a deluding way,' and then that the consequence of Error's ignorance of the truth resulted in a beautiful substitute for it. If 17.4b-18a described the ignorance, anguish and terror that belong to Error, we now get to know its beguiling and attractive nature.

In the second part, the shift from the narrative mode, i.e. the first perfect, to modes of reflection, nominal and preterit constructions, indicate that we have a break in 17.21b. Furthermore, the initial **πει** 'this,' in 17.21b will soon be a familiar marker for us. It frequently marks the opening of a new section, and here it is followed by **δε** 'now' that also signals a break. However, to determine the level on which these markers function is far from easy. Themes from 17.4b-18a, but also from 17.18b-21a are touched upon, but as the difference of the substitute for truth and the real truth seems to be the main point I treat it as a subsection to 17.18b-21a. On this basis it is natural to end the passage with the recurrence of truth in 17.25-26.

### Semantic analysis

'It happened in a deluding way' **δσψωπε ρηπ οηπλδσεεε .**

In order to translate this phrase we have to decide on some fairly complicated and interrelated problems. The Coptic text has a repetitive character, as **δσψωπε ρηπ οηπλδσεεε** in 17.18b resembles **δσψωπε ρπ οηρλδστπ** in 17.30b-31a. The repetitive impact is further strengthened by the close connection to **εσσδβε** in 17.19 and 17.32 respectively. Moreover, **ρηπ οηπλδσεεε** and **ρπ οηρλδστπ** echoes **ρηπ οηπετωοτειτ** in 17.16b. Thus, when I translate these phrases I aim at reproducing the repetitive character of the Coptic text. First we have to determine to what the feminine infix **с** in **δσψωπε** in 17.18b and 17.30b refers. There are three options that all have their drawbacks and advantages. To make the following discussion somewhat less obscure for the reader who does not know Coptic we can say that **ψωπε** means that something comes into existence. The feminine infix **с** in **δσψωπε** tells us who the subject to

the verb is.

To begin with, the nearest feminine noun that could function as a subject in 17.18b is ‘matter’ **ζῆλον** in 17.15b. With regard to **ἄστυαπε**, the translation would be: ‘Matter came into existence.’ As far as I know, however, all translators have chosen to connect the infixes to ‘Error’ in 17.15a and 17.28b-29a respectively. The straightforward translation would then be ‘Error came into existence.’ The third possibility is to translate the infixes with the impersonal ‘it’ resulting in ‘it happened,’ which is particularly common in the opening of a section.<sup>39</sup>

As Error is the preferred choice among scholars we begin with discussing this possibility. **ἄστυαπε** in 17.18b is followed by the difficult phrase **ζῆλον ὀπιλάσσεια**. This basically means ‘in a modelled form.’ But such a straightforward translation has not been adopted. For instance, Layton among many others renders it with ‘she (Error) took up residence in a modelled form...’,<sup>40</sup> while Attridge & MacRae prefer ‘It (Error) set about with a creation.’<sup>41</sup> In order to understand why these ways of translating have been preferred, yet some other problems have to be considered.

The feminine infix **σ** in 17.19 clearly refers to Error. It means that if we also let the infix in 17.18b refer to the same noun we risk ending up with a somewhat problematic translation: ‘Error came into existence in a modelled form, as Error by the power, beautifully prepared the substitute for the truth.’ It would mean that Error itself prepares its own entering into being, which would contradict what we read in 17.4b-18a that the basis for Error is the ignorance and not Error itself. To solve this problem Attridge & MacRae render **στυαπε** with ‘set about’ while Layton prefers ‘took up residence,’ which both seem to be fairly strained solutions. A way to keep the straightforward translation with Error as the subject could be to render **στυαπε** with develop: ‘Error developed in a modelled form.’ Besides the small problem that ‘develop’ is a somewhat less common rendering of **στυαπε**, although not less common than ‘dwell’, there is also another problem involved. **στυαπε** in 17.30b is combined with the stative form of the same verb **στυοσι** in 17.31b. The stative, also called the qualitative, describes ‘being-in-a-state.’<sup>42</sup> The stative form of **στυαπε** should be rendered as ‘exists,’ ‘developed’ or ‘happens.’ Using forms of ‘develop’ as translation of **στυαπε** in 17.30b-36 would result in the following translation:

Error developed in a fog regarding the Father. Error is developed since Error prepares works, and oblivion, and terrors in order to, by them, seduce those of the middle and capture them.

<sup>39</sup>Layton 2000, 185.

<sup>40</sup>Layton 1987, p. 253.

<sup>41</sup>Attridge & MacRae 1985a, p. 83.

<sup>42</sup>Layton 2000, 162.

The focus on Error as developed, in combination with an ongoing process of deception in order to catch those of the middle seems out of place, as a main point in the beginning of the GospTruth is to disregard Error, and not to focus upon it. We will return to this discussion on page ??.

It is also a bit unclear what the meaning of ‘in a modelled form’ in 17.18b would mean. Layton suggests that it is a Jewish jargon for the creation of the human being.<sup>43</sup> Another possibility is that it refers to the material world, which would function well together with ‘matter’ in 17.15b. However, both these possibilities seem to be too specific. The first explanation implies that mankind is a beautiful substitute for the Truth, while the other interpretation implies that Error came into being in the world because it prepared a beautiful substitute for the Truth. Rather, the world is Error as Error’s substance is matter **ἡ γὰρ** in 17.15b. Although the interpretation of **ἡ γὰρ οὐρανὸς καὶ ἡ γῆ** as the world is reasonable, I hold that there is a better solution.

Most translators aim at preserving the repetitive character of 17.18b-21a and 17.30b-36. It means that the problems that are related to the interpretation of 17.18b also effect the translation of 17.30b-36. Layton’s translation is consequent and of course grammatically correct, but it is hard to understand the focus on the dwelling-place of Error:

She (Error) dwelt in a fog as regards the father, preparing, while she dwelt there, products and forgetfulness and fears, - so that by them she might beguile those of the middle and take them captive.<sup>44</sup>

Attridge’s & MacRae’s starting point in 17.18b causes problems as they translate:

It (Error) fell into a fog regarding the Father, while it was involved in preparing works and oblivions and terrors, in order to entice those of the middle and capture them.<sup>45</sup>

In this case they translate **ἡ γὰρ** in a different way than in 17.18b. Their rendering, however, causes them problems when it comes to the interpretation of **ἡ γὰρ** in 17.31b, and I am not certain of how they render it.

To sum up, the translation of **ἡ γὰρ οὐρανὸς καὶ ἡ γῆ** with ‘creation’ causes many problems, both when it comes to the rendering of **ἡ γὰρ** and with regard to the interpretation of the text. However, the difficulties decrease if

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<sup>43</sup>Layton 1987, p. 253.

<sup>44</sup>Layton 1987, pp. 253-254.

<sup>45</sup>Attridge & MacRae 1985a p. 83.

we follow a suggestion by Attridge & MacRae, which for some reason they did not apply in their translation. Normally **πλασσει** means ‘creation’ or ‘creature,’ but it also means ‘fiction,’ ‘pretence’ and ‘delusion.’<sup>46</sup> On this basis the translation: ‘Matter developed in a deluding way’ is natural. However, a serious drawback with ‘matter’ as the subject in 17.18b is that it hardly can be the personal morph in 17.30b as well. Matter is only mentioned once in the text, and in order to use it in 17.30b as well would require some indication of the connection to 17.15b, and obviously we lack such linguistic signals.

Before we make up our mind on the translation of **ζηπ οπλασει** some further aspects have to be taken into account.

The repetitive character of 17.18b and 17.30b-31 that a good translation should reproduce were mentioned above. Now we also have to consider the repetitive impact of **ζηπ οπετωοιτ** in 17.16b, which resembles that of **ζηπ οπλασει** in 17.18b and **ζηπ οτπλαστπ** in 17.30b-31a. The ambition is to translate all of them either in a locative, or in a pejorative way. As 17.18b-27 shows a contrast between the truth and the substitute for it, it makes good sense to translate **πιπλασει πτε πβδλ** in 17.24b-25a with ‘the delusion of deceit.’ I therefore assume that **πλασει** is pejoratively intended in 17.18b as well. Consequently, ‘foolishly,’ ‘in a deluding way’ and ‘in a fog’ are my choices. In this manner I try to reproduce the pejorative tendency in the text, although indeed it is hard to find a distinctly pejorative rendering of the last expression.

Regarding the interpretation, ‘in a deluding way’ in 17.18b very well fits together with the beautiful substitute for the truth that Error prepares in 17.19-21a. If Error is rooted in the ignorance of the Father and the anguish and terror that it causes, its deceitful delusions take on an attractive and beguiling form, which in contrast to the stable character of the truth, is transitory nothingness.

With this interpretation of **ζηπ οπλασει** in mind we are prepared to take a position regarding the meaning of **δσωπε** in 17.18b and 17.30b.

The third way of translating **δσωπε** with ‘it happened’ has never been adopted. Nevertheless, it solves many of the problems that the alternative translations suffered from. To begin with, it is a normal translation of the verb **ωωπε**, and it perfectly well fits in with both 17.18b and 17.30b. It also works with the stative **εσωοπ** in 17.31b. When it comes to the meaning it does not cause the problems that were discussed above in connection with the translation ‘Error came into existence.’ Finally, the translation with ‘it happened’ does not contradict the general view in the GospTruth that Error does not actually exist. Error is a delusion, which

<sup>46</sup> Attridge & MacRae 1985b, pp. 44-45.

vanishes when knowledge replaces ignorance. To say that it came into being would contradict this view, as Error in a deeper sense is nothingness and non-being. This is particularly evident in the passage about the end of Error: 26.18-27.

## 17.28-30a

### Macro-structural analysis

The previous passage ended in a climactic exclamation in which the stability and beauty of the Truth was praised. Now, the preacher addresses the community. The imperative of ‘disregard Error!’ is a surrogate for a metapropositional base, and consequently we are on the pragmatic level. The imperative is preceded by the anaphoric ‘therefore’ **ετδε πει**, which refers to the main concern in the previous section. Although Error used all its efforts in the preparation of a substitute for the truth, the result was pathetic in comparison with the truth that outshines the substitute not only with regard to the stability and firmness, but also with regard to its all exceeding beauty.

The exclamation is followed by ‘since it (Error) thus has no root,’ where ‘thus’ refers to the same thoughts as ‘therefore.’ As in the previous passage the stability of the Truth was focused upon, here the contrast is developed by the focus on the rootless nature of Error.

These observations help us to determine on which level the passage is placed. Although we are on the pragmatic level, 17.28 hardly begins a new chapter as it stands in such close connection to what has preceded, nor do we need to determine whether 16.31-17.27 is superordinated to or subordinated to 17.28-18.31a or the other way around. We will return to this discussion in connection with 18.25b-31a. At this point, however, it is sufficient to note that we have a break on the pragmatic level, and that the subsequent passage stands in close relation to the first main passage i.e. 16.31-17.27. The metapropositional base functions as an instructive marker. The audience has received the knowledge from the Father of the truth. This truth is eternal and firm, whereas Error is transitory and a delusion. It is in this light that the following passage should be perceived.

### Semantic analysis

‘Disregard Error’ **καταφρονι πτπλανη** .

The vast majority of scholars have translated the Coptic expression with ‘despise’ or similar expressions in respective languages. However, there are

drawbacks with such a way of translating. To despise Error means that one should look down upon it. In the context of pages 17 and 18 of the GospTruth, but also in view of the entire work, it is not likely that the preacher intended that the community should pay attention to Error. As we will deal with this theme with regard to the GospTruth in general on page 87, for the moment we restrict the discussion to the narrow context of pages 16-17.

We already know that Error is said to be the result of ignorance, anguish and terror. Thus, focusing on Error, even if it is with an attitude of despise, then seems to be a bad way of keeping the joy in the Father. Neither is the beauty that Error causes comparable with the beauty that the one who knows finds in the Truth. Basically this is the message in 17.4b-27, and as was discussed in the macro-structural analysis of 17.28-30a, this is the reason to disregard Error. Turning to 17.30b-36a, Error exists as long as it can beguile those of the middle. Although 'those of the middle' is a term that is not clearly defined, it probably refers to people who have not yet come to knowledge, but who have the capacity for it. As long as they are blinded by delusions they see Error instead of the Father. Consequently, to focus on Error, even if it is with despise, would mean to take part of the conditions that belongs to those of ignorance, anguish and terror.

As already from 16.31 and onwards we have come across instructions to the audience that they should rejoice in the good news that provides knowledge of the Father, and that they are redeemed from ignorance, paying attention to Error is hardly appropriate for them. For these reasons 'despise Error' is a problematic rendering.

It seems that Grant who translated with 'Do not take Error too seriously!'<sup>47</sup> was on the right track. Still, however, it keeps the field too open to focus on Error, but it probably builds on an analysis that is fairly similar to that of mine. For the community, there are no reasons to focus on the delusion that anyhow will vanish, on the contrary, they better disregard it.

'Since it thus has no root!' **ΤΕΙ ΤΕ ΘΕ ΜΠΤΕC ΚΟΥΝΕ ΜΜΕΥ** , The translation of **ΤΕΙ ΤΕ ΘΕ** is a bit problematic. I am influenced by Layton,<sup>48</sup> and Orlandi who treat it causally with both an anaphoric and cataphoric function:

**ΤΕΙ ΤΕ ΘΕ** (così) a una pura formula di passaggio, ma come tale e usate in modo scorretto. Infatti il senso richiede qui piuttosto una formula del tipo (perche), se riferita alla frase precedente, o 'dunque,' se riferita alla frase seguente.<sup>49</sup>

<sup>47</sup>Grant 1961.

<sup>48</sup>Layton 1987, p. 253.

<sup>49</sup>Orlandi 1992 p. 45.

## 17.30b-36a

### Macro-structural analysis

The passage opens with ‘it happened,’ which functions in the same way as in 17.18b that was discussed above. It marks a substitution on the abstraction level and most directly refers to the rootless nature of Error in 17.28-30a. But this time the abstraction not only concerns the mythological past, but also the present state of affairs. The close connection of ‘it happened’ and ‘it happens’ ties them to the rootless nature of Error that was described in 17.28-30a. Thus, in 17.30b-36a past and present is reflected upon from the perspective that was introduced in 17.28-30a.

### Micro-structural analysis

There is wide agreement that the passage ends in 17.36a. The period begins in the first perfect, ‘it happened’ **ἄσφωπε** in 17.30b, and shifts to the second present stative ‘it happens’ **εσφωοπ** in 17.31b. At the end of the passage a new group ‘those of the middle’ is introduced, and as the tense shifts from present to preterit in 17.36b it is reasonable to end the passage in 17.36a.

### Semantic analysis

The semantic analysis of ‘it happened’ **ἄσφωπε** and ‘it happens’ **εσφωοπ** have already been thoroughly discussed above.<sup>50</sup>

‘Those of the middle’ **ἡττωκτε** was discussed on page 79.

## 17.36b-18.4a

### Macro-structural analysis

This passage is characterised by modes of reflection rather than of narration. The outset is in the preterit. It is followed by a brief note in the first present, but the dominating mode is the focalizing second perfect. From this we may deduce that we are above the level in which episodes occur so, and as there are no signals that belong to the pragmatic level we have good reasons to place 17.36b-18.4a on a similar level as that of the preceding passage.

The theme from 17.30b-31a about the delusions that are shrouded in a fog with regard to the Father is elaborated in 17.36b-18.4a. In this manner the

<sup>50</sup>See the discussion beginning on page 74.

actual passage is subordinated to the preceding one.

### Micro-structural analysis

It is not at all easy to determine where this passage ends. My way of delimiting seems to be new and I therefore turn to discuss the reasons for it.

The initial focus is on the oblivion, which has not come into being in the Father. It is contrasted by the knowledge, which is what really comes from the Father. In my interpretation the knowledge appears in the end of an exclamation that ends the passage. Other scholars continue the passage with a relative clause in 18.4b, whereas I begin a new passage with a main clause on this point. As both possibilities are perfectly correct from the grammatical point of view, other criteria have to be used in order to decide on this.

With my delimitation we begin the new passage in 18.4b with an anaphoric ‘this,’ **π̄ει** It is the same opening as that of for instance 17.21b, 18.11b and 18.16b. As these anaphoric ‘this’ occur that regularly, it is tempting to say that it reveals something of the personal style of the author of the GospTruth.

### Semantic analysis

‘It is not a [thought] from the Father.’ **ο̄εῑ π̄νο̄υ[μ̄ε̄τε] ἐπ̄ ζ̄ᾱτ̄μ̄ π̄ιω̄τ̄.**

In the GospTruth the stative of **ειρε** which means ‘is,’ occurs as **ο̄εῑ** instead of **ο̄**. A peculiarity of the GospTruth is that it is followed by the predicative **π̄ο̄ῡ** instead of what we would expect i.e. **π̄** only.<sup>51</sup> Besides in 17.37 it also occurs in 19.20, 20.38, 23.23 and 29.2. this observation is of some help when we try to restore the small lacuna on the top of page 18. **ο̄ῡ** in the end of page 17 is not the beginning of a noun, but the expanded form of the predicative **π̄**. I have chosen to restore the lacuna with ‘thought’ **μ̄ε̄τε** as we have a resembling expression in 35.15-16: ‘and it is not with him that the thought of Error resides,’ **ᾱτω̄ πε̄ψω̄ο̄π̄ ζ̄ᾱζ̄τη̄ε̄ ἐπ̄ }π̄β̄ῑ πῑμ̄ε̄τε π̄τε̄ †π̄λ̄ᾱνη̄.**<sup>52</sup>

<sup>51</sup>Layton 2000, 179.

<sup>52</sup>This was suggested already by Kragerud 1961, p. 149.

**18.4b-11a****Macro-structural analysis**

The passage opens with an anaphoric ‘this,’ **πεει** . It refers to the preceding ‘knowledge’ in 18.3b-4a. But so far we know very little about what the knowledge contains. In 18.4b-11a, however, we know that the knowledge not only comes from the Father, it also is about him. But generally the GospTruth tells more about what the Father is not than what he is. It is typical that the most direct descriptions of the Father on page 17 regard his incomprehensibility. ‘This’ in 18.4b then refers to knowledge, but also to a more unspecific mass of information that is developed all through 16.31-18.4a. Consequently, the knowledge in 18.3b-4a has to be deduced from large portions of the preceding text. The Father is the opposite of Error. I therefore locate the passage on the same level of abstraction as that of 17.30b-36a.

**Micro-structural analysis**

Although one can discuss whether the passage really begins in 18.4b, there is hardly any doubt that it ends in 18.11a. We could argue for the delimitation in several ways, but the easiest one is perhaps to note that 18.11b is the opening of a new passage, and that the vanishing of oblivion is a fitting end.

**Semantic analysis**

‘This became revealed’ **πεει πταγοτωπζαβδλ** .

‘This’ **πεει** is both a demonstrative pronoun with an anaphoric function, and an extraposed subject that is taken up on the personal morph **ϣ** in **πταγοτωπζαβδλ** . As the transitive infinitive ‘reveal’ **οτωπζαβδλ** lacks a direct object it is an ingressive infinitive. It means that it describes a process of becoming.<sup>53</sup> When the knowledge has entered into a state of revelation, then the oblivion vanishes. In this manner 18.4b-11a sums up what has been told earlier in the text and simultaneously is a preparation for the more concrete description of the revealing knowledge in the subsequent passages.

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<sup>53</sup>Layton 2000, 174.

## 18.11b-16a

### Macro-structural analysis

This passage resembles the previous one to a large extent. The second perfect indicates that we are on a level in which we rather expect reflections than narration. As the previous passage, 18.11b-16a also opens with ‘this’ **ταυτα**, which anaphorically refers to what was said about the knowledge of the Father in the previous passage. I locate this passage, therefore, on the abstract level, but it is subordinated to the previous one.

From now on notions from the beginning of the GospTruth recur. The most obvious recurrence is ‘the good news’ but we also encounter familiar notions as the searching for the Father. In 18.11b-16a the medium of the revelation is the mercies of the Father i.e. the hidden mystery Jesus the Christ, while in 16.31-17.4a it is the grace through the Word. In this way the preacher gradually prepares the community for the climax and closing of the first major section of the GospTruth.

### Micro-structural analysis

This period contains many difficulties, and many different solutions have been put forward as well. As my analysis of the period differs from the others I will focus on my analysis, rather than burdening my text by accounting for the many other proposals.

‘This’ **ταυτα** in 18.11b is at the same time a demonstrative pronoun with an anaphoric function, and an antecedent object of the verb ‘reveal.’

In the first function it is a counterpart to ‘this’ in 18.4b. It refers to the knowledge, which earlier was a concept with a fairly vague meaning, but which gradually becomes more and more concrete.

As it also is the object to the verb ‘reveal,’ this analysis shows that the contents of the revelation is the knowledge about the Father. In the preceding passage the knowledge was transformed into the state of being revealed, and we learned that the knowledge, which is about the Father, is the end of oblivion. In 18.11b-16a the mediation of the knowledge is expounded upon, which shows the close connection between these two passages.

The rhythmical character of the GospTruth is intensified as both 18.4b-11a and 18.11b-16a commence with the anaphoric ‘this,’ and the second perfect form of ‘reveal.’

The passage ends with a loading of attributes to ‘the mercies of the Father,’ in which a fairly general designation ‘the hidden mystery,’ at the end is replaced by a personal name and title: ‘Jesus the Christ.’ this renomi-

nalization indicates a break in the text, but maybe the strongest indication that the passage ends in 18.16a is that the now familiar anaphoric ‘this’-construction recurs in 18.16b.

### Semantic analysis

‘Those who were complete’ **πετχηκ αβδλ** .

Probably this is a designation of those who were ready to receive the enlightening. The fact that not all persons had the capacity to welcome the redeemer is discussed in 25.35-27.4. Those who loved the truth greeted him, whereas those who belonged to Error became disturbed and vanished with it.<sup>54</sup>

## 18.16b-21a

### Macro-structural analysis

For the third time in succession the passage opens with an anaphoric ‘this’ **πεει** . Here, however, there are reasons to take this passage as an episode. In the two preceding passages the main tense was the second perfect. By contrast, we now have the first perfect, which is the common narrative tense. Although time and place are very vague, the characteristic of the text is no longer the reflecting mode but the narrating one.

### Micro-structural analysis

In this passage much of what is said in the semantic analysis could be said here or the other way around. After three asyndetons in the first perfect, the text slows down by means of a shift to the more reflective nominal construction and the conjunction ‘and’ **και** in 18.20. This shift functions as a closing marker.

### Semantic analysis

‘This through it’ **πεει αβδλ ζιτοοτφ** .

In the basic translation I have tried to preserve the uncertainty regarding the references. In the analytical translation however, I have sacrificed the uncertainty on the altar of readability and decided to what the pronoun and the suffix refer. Therefore, the anaphoric ‘this’ is left out in the analytical

<sup>54</sup>For a detailed discussion of that passage see page 168-174.

translation. I assume that ‘this’ **πῆει** anaphorically refers to the good news, and at the same time is taken up by the suffix in **ἀλλὰ βίπτουτῶ**.

## 18.21b-26a

### Macro-structural analysis

Although there was a minor break in 18.21a, we are still in the episode. The whole passage is in the first perfect and consists of six asyndetons. The passage sets out with Error as the subject, and when it shifts to Jesus, who was the agent in the preceding passage we have a natural closing of the period. Moreover, there is also put a stop to the passage as the following one begins with the second perfect.

### Semantic analysis

‘was defeated by him’ **ἀκοῦωσῶ** .

In an ironic way, which resembles the Gospel of John, Error’s attack on Jesus results in its own defeat, as by means of the crucifixion Jesus becomes a fruit of knowledge. ‘they nailed him to a tree’ **ἔκρυψῶ ἔκρυψε** .

This construction can either be translated in a passive way, or actively in the third person plural. After all it is through people that Error persecutes Jesus and nails him to a tree. It means that on the one hand Error is a collective designation in singular, but on the other hand it consists of a multitude of actors. In this manner it is a negative counterpart to the All. The relation between the All and Error will be discussed on page 87-92.

## 18.26b-31a

### Macro-structural analysis

After the episode that began in 18.16b there now is a shift from the first to the second perfect, and again the level is abstract.

The recurrence of notions from 16.31-17.4a reaches its climax, and I take this as an indication of that the first chapter of the GospTruth has come to its end. This assumption is further strengthened when we consider which the recurrences are. In 16.31-17.4a attributes of the community were lined up. they rejoiced in the good news, and they had discovered what they had searched for. The same attributes are used in 18.26b-31a, although it is in the past tense. However, the gap between past and present is overcome as

the basis for the rejoice in 18.26b-31a is the eating of the fruit of knowledge. This alludes to a sacramental situation, and in this respect the condition that was valid for those in the past is valid for the actual community as well. In this manner the recurrences are not only repetitions of words, but a similar forming of the identity of the community that appeared in 16.31-17.4a. The allusion to sacraments becomes particularly effective in a situation of community preaching. What they did, you and I do as well.

That there is a break in the text is also indicated through the introduction of a new theme from 18.31b. A lengthy description of the Father's magnificent and perfect nature is combined with the declaration that he kept the completion of the All within himself. How one should comprehend this message is summed up in a rhetorical question in 18.38-39. Although the Father kept the completion of the All within himself, he is not grudging, and the All is his own members. This rhetorical question functions on the pragmatic level and instructs the audience about the new theme.

### Micro-structural analysis

After the climactic end of the previous passage, the character of which was intense due to the long series of asyndetons, we now take a step back by means of the second perfect and reflect upon what the knowledge of the Father caused. Besides the use of the second perfect, this change of perspective is further stressed by the particle 'now' **ἄρτι**, which also could be rendered with 'indeed.'

But with the second sentence, from 18.27b, we are back in the first perfect that casts us back to the time of the first community that ate the fruit of knowledge of the Father.

The syntax of 18.27b-31a is complex and has caused scholars many difficulties of interpretation. My solution is based on what I have deduced from Layton's translation,<sup>55</sup> although I have made minor modifications of it.

The crucial question is how to interpret **οἱ τρώγοντες** in 18.29b-30a. I treat it as **οἱ τρώγοντες** and it functions of course cataphorically, but also anaphorically to 'those who ate' in 18.27 and 28. It means that those who ate are those who Jesus discovered in him and whom discovered Jesus in themselves. Admittedly the syntax is a bit clumsy, but with this construal of it, there are few problems.

### Semantic analysis

'Now, it did not bring perishability because it was eaten.' **ἄρτι οὐκ ἔφερε φθορὰν ὅτι ἐφάγετο.**

<sup>55</sup>Layton 1987, p. 254.

This is an instance in which a transitive infinitive lacks a direct object. Strictly, it should therefore be translated ingressively as in 18.4b which produce the translation: ‘Now, it did not perish because it was eaten.’ Although this would make sense as an isolated sentence, it comes a bit surprisingly in the context. It means that, as the vast majority of scholars, I emend the text to  $\text{NTAYTEKOV}$ . With this emendation we have a contrast between the fruit of the tree of knowledge of the Old Testament, and the one of knowledge of the Father in the GospTruth. The former brought perishability, whereas the latter brought joy and probably imperishability as well.

‘its’  $\text{NTAY}$ .

Normally this corresponds to the Sahidic  $\text{NTOY}$ , but here it seems to make more sense to treat it as the Sahidic  $\text{NTey}$  and in this way reaching the meaning of ‘his’ or ‘its.’

## Evaluating the analysis

After the long analysis regarding how the text of 16.31-18.31a is construed and ought to be translated, it is appropriate to discuss some results from the analyses. In what follows I will focus upon a couple of central concepts in the analysed text, and pay special attention to issues that are important for other parts of the present study. Hopefully it is possible to prove that the manner of analysing the GospTruth that I have demonstrated above, not only helps us to interpret and translate the text, but also is fruitful for the historians of religions who are eager to know something about the people who used this text.

### What is Error?

It is obvious that Error occupies a central role not only in 16.31-18.31a, but also in the entire GospTruth. Few if any would oppose the view that the notion of a demiurge figure has coloured the way in which Error is depicted. Error produces works, and the substance that belongs to it is matter, 17.4b-36a. Moreover, it is a creature with consciousness that both gets angry and laments when the Saviour enters cosmos, 18.21a-26a and 26.18-27. Although it is repeatedly said about Error that it does not know the truth, 17.16-18a 26.18.27, it is not a stupid but just ruler of the cosmic sphere. We rather have a malevolent monster with far more aggression than is common in Valentinianism. Moreover, this monster seems to have an offspring. Much in the same way as the Father has his members, which collectively is called the All, 18.38-39, so has Error its children as well, 26.18-27. It is natural to think of a particularly evil demiurge with its army of archons.

However, when Error and its children are on stage in the GospTruth, it is not in a mythological past, as for instance in the Apocryphon of John, but in the time of Jesus' earthly mission and in the present time of the community.

### **Gardeners, archons and fruits of knowledge**

In 18.21b-26a Error persecutes and crucifies Jesus. It results in the defeat of Error as Jesus becomes the fruit of knowledge of the Father. This clearly refers to the historical Jesus at the time of his crucifixion. We can state this as the GospTruth refers to another tree of knowledge that had a fruit that brought perishability. The fruit that caused destruction grew in the paradise, whereas the fruit that brought joy is the crucified Jesus.

In this way Error, which from the beginning took on a personal demiurgical form, only appears as the characteristic of a group of people. On this basis it is more appropriate to use the active translation: 'They nailed him to a tree' than the commonly used passive rendering: 'he was nailed to a tree.' Now the questions emerges: what is Error in 18.21a-26a?

Probably, Error is simultaneously a symbolic designation for the group of people that persecuted Jesus and a description of their mental state. The role of this group and their mental state could be affected by a mythological figure that you may or may not see as a real being. However, independently of how strongly one should emphasise the mythological, psychological and social aspects of Error in 18.21a-26a, it is clear that an implied tree of knowledge that brought destruction is compared with the fruit of knowledge of the Father that Jesus became. Thus, it seems as we have to reckon with two trees, one with the fruit that was Jesus and another fruit that caused destruction.

The imagery with two trees also brings to mind the thought of two gardeners. As the Father is described as the good and perfect gardener who takes care of the paradise with all its plants,<sup>36.34-37.14</sup> it is a likely reading to apply the opposite characteristics on Error as an evil and imperfect gardener. If we draw the consequences of this reasoning, those who crucified Jesus are stamped by the characteristics of the archons.

In 25-35-27.4 a story that echoes the one of 18.21b-31a is told, however, from a more mythological perspective. Error has a number of beings that belongs to it. When the truth appears this means the end for Error and for them, since Error is nothing and knows nothing. Simultaneously there is another group that belongs to the truth. They greet the Truth and are joined to the Father. As I demonstrate in chapter six, this passage does not only refer to a mythological time but to the time of Jesus' earthly mission as well. At the same time, however, it is used to describe the conditions for

the actual community as it forms its identity.<sup>56</sup>

Thus, the parallelism that exists between the two fruits, perhaps one of falsehood and one of true knowledge, can be extended to the two gardeners and to two groups of people as well, one that belongs to Error and in a way are the archons on earth, but also to the members of the community in past and present time. This last parallelism is reinforced in 18.26b-31a, when those who eat the fruit that Jesus became are filled with joy. This corresponds to those who greeted the truth on page 26.

To sum up: 18.21b-26a shows clear traces of a demiurge figure who has produced one fruit that may appear as knowledge, but as at its best is a substitute for the truth, which in fact brings perishability. The demiurge persecutes Jesus, but since this persecution takes place not in an undefined mythological past but in the time of the historical Jesus, the characteristics of the demiurge spreads to the group who carried out the actual crucifixion. Since the demiurge is depicted in such a sharply antagonistic way, the spilling over to those who are associated with Error is reinforced.

In 18.26b-31a the focus shifts to those who ate the true fruit of knowledge. As I discussed in the macro-structural analysis to 18.26b-31a, the retelling of what happened in the time of Jesus has a pragmatic function. As the community takes part in the same eating of the fruit their identity is formed by the description of the first community. This forming, however, is not only expressed in positive terms about how 'we are' but maybe even more in terms about how 'they are.' Therefore, it makes sense to assume that if the community identified itself with those who ate the fruit and rejoiced in the discovery of what they had searched for, those who opposed the community may easily have been associated with those who opposed the enlightenment of Jesus as well. This line of thought will be followed up in the subsequent discussions in this chapter, but it will be evaluated through the analyses of the fifth and sixth chapters as well.

### **Error as a state of mind of those of the middle**

In 17.30b-36a we find an example of Error's acting in the actual time of the community. Error happens, or exists, by terrifying and beguiling a group of people that is called 'those of the middle.' According to this passage, Error was, and still is, the cause and result of a false knowledge of the Father. It is the result of the ignorance inasmuch as Error happened or came into existence in a fog that shrouded him, 17.4b-18a and 17.30b-31a, and it also causes Error as it seduces those of the middle, 17.31b-36a. Presumably, 'those of the middle' denotes those who have the capacity to know the Father but who have not come to enlightenment yet. It means that they are

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<sup>56</sup>See the discussion on 132-139.

ignorant and full of anguish and terror, 17.4a-18a. But when they know, the anguish and the terror will cease, and with them Error ceases as well. In this respect Error rather is a process or a psychological phenomenon than a mythological being. Besides the arguments that I have put forward above in connection to 17.18b and 17.30b and 17.31b, the gradual shift from a mythological framework in 17.4b-18a to a more psychological perspective is better reproduced by translating that Error ‘happens’ or ‘happened’ rather than with it ‘came into being’. In other words, the tendency of page 17 in the GospTruth is a demythologizing one.

### Why should Error be disregarded?

As already mentioned, Error appears on the one hand as a frightening monster, and on the other as nothing, 17.21b-27, 26.18-27. As Error vanishes through knowledge, 18.4b-11a, the right focus of the community would be to focus on what the Father is, and not on all deluding works that Error prepares. This is a strong argument in favour of my translation of 17.28-30a.

Now, in order to know more about what Error is, I shall point out some further characteristics of how it is described, and in what way the offspring of Error is depicted. As a parallel, moreover, I shall apply the same procedure on how the Father and his children are described. This will provide us with more knowledge about what kind of false knowledge that the preacher in the GospTruth wanted the community to be on its guard against.

Drawing upon the hypothesis that Error both is a cause and a result we can make the following list of characteristics of it:

- Error is ignorant, 17.17-18 and 26.22-23.
- It causes ignorance, 17.32-36.
- It is angry with knowledge, 18.21-26.
- It is anxious, 26.18-19
- It is the cause of anguish and terror, 17.9-14.
- It is empty and it is nothing, 17.23-24 and 26.26-27.
- It is defeated and destroyed by knowledge, suffers and mourns, 18.21-26 26.18-27.

And from this list we can see that Error is no threat to the one who knows. The seemingly strong and dangerous demiurge figure takes on a rather pathetic form, and, after all, it is nothing and it has been destroyed by the knowledge.

If we compare this list with the way in which the one who knows sees the Father, we indirectly receive more information of what Error is.

- The Father is incomprehensible, inconceivable and superior to every thought, 17.7-9.
- He is not effected by the works of Error, 17.21-24.
- He is not jealous, 18.38-39.
- He is the opposite of harshness, wrathfulness and evil, 41.35-42.9.
- He is imperturbable, sweet, and knows everything in advance, 41.35-42.9.

It is tempting to add jealousy to the list of characteristics of Error, since it is typical for the demiurge.<sup>57</sup>

When we compare these lists, the importance of anguish and terror becomes evident. As I will demonstrate in chapter six, the *GospTruth* shows a strongly negative attitude towards the law of retaliation. To know the Father means that one does not have to be afraid, and by this Error disappears. On the other hand, if one focuses on Error there is a risk that one is snared by its delusions and thinks of the Father in terms of the characteristics of Error. Consequently, disregarding Error is the appropriate position for the one who knows. On page 42 of the *gospTruth* this is concretised. The Father's children will not listen to anything else than to the Father. Through this, they will always be fresh in spirit and they will not damage their souls.<sup>58</sup>

Although I have demonstrated that the view of Error is strongly influenced by the idea of a very aggressive demiurge figure, the demythologising tendency is strong as well. In this way Error becomes a process that is driven by fear and results in more fear. The fear is caused by a false knowledge regarding the nature of the Father, and when the truth appears, those who receive it will find a fearless rest.

If we apply this reasoning on persons who belong to Error, they are characterised by fear, as they hold that the Father is wrathful, evil and harsh. The Father's children, on the contrary, are characterised by joy, and they call Jesus their redeemer, 16.31-17.4 and 18.26-31.

To sum up, Error is strongly coloured by an unusually evil demiurge figure. The characteristics of the demiurge spread over to a group of people who carries out deeds that are driven by false knowledge, fear and anger. In a deeper sense, however, Error does not really exist. It is nothing, and

<sup>57</sup>See for instance the Apocryphon of John NHC II.13.8.

<sup>58</sup>42.30-37.

focusing on it only helps it to prevail. The Father's children are therefore much better off if they only pay attention to the Father.

The method of analysis that I have used often results in a translation that opens perspectives that have previously been overlooked, or at least not clearly expressed. In this way the text linguistic method becomes fruitful for the translator but also for the historian of religions.

## Chapter 4

# Translations

In this chapter I will present my two translations of the GospTruth. On the left side we find the basic translation, and on the right side the corresponding part of the analytical one. The line numbers are not always exact, since exactness would result in an almost unreadable English, but I hope the numbering will be of enough help for the reader who rather goes to the line number in the translation than in the Coptic text.

In the Basic translation, I include optional renderings of for instance pronouns within (). If a word is completely, or almost completely destroyed and is restored or represented by ... I show this by [].

¡¿ embrace words or letters that seem to have been included by mistake.

## Translations

(16.31) The good news of the truth is a joy <sup>32</sup> for those who have received the grace <sup>33</sup> from the Father of the truth, that they might know him (it) <sup>34</sup> through the power of the Word that came forth from <sup>35</sup> that Fullness that is in the Father's thought <sup>36</sup> and mind, that <sup>37</sup> is what they call <sup>38</sup> 'the Redeemer' since that is the name of the work that <sup>39</sup> he was to accomplish for the redemption of those who (17) were ignorant of the Father, and since <sup>2</sup> the name of the good news is the revelation <sup>3</sup> of the hope, since it is the discovery <sup>4</sup> for those who are searching for him (it).

Because <sup>5</sup> the All searched for the <sup>6</sup> one from whom they had come forth, and the <sup>7</sup> All was inside of him, the <sup>8</sup> incomprehensible, inconceivable one <sup>9</sup> who is superior to every thought, since <sup>10</sup> ignorance of the Father brought anguish <sup>11</sup> and terror, and the anguish grew <sup>12</sup> dense like a fog, <sup>13</sup> so that no one could see, <sup>14</sup> For this reason, Error found strength, <sup>15</sup> worked on its own <sup>16</sup> matter, foolishly <sup>17</sup> since it had not known the <sup>18</sup> truth.

It happened in a deluding way, <sup>19</sup> as Error by the power, beautifully prepared <sup>20</sup> the substitute for the <sup>21</sup> truth. Now, this was not a humiliation for <sup>22</sup> him, the incomprehensible, inconceivable one. <sup>23</sup> For they were nothing, the anguish, <sup>24</sup> and the oblivion and the delusion <sup>25</sup> of deceit, whereas the established <sup>26</sup> truth is immutable, <sup>27</sup> imperturbable and the complete beauty. <sup>28</sup> For this reason, disregard <sup>29</sup> Error since it thus has no <sup>30</sup> root!

It happened in <sup>31</sup> a fog regarding the Father. It happens <sup>32</sup> since Error (it) prepares works, and <sup>33</sup> oblivion, and terrors in order to, <sup>34</sup> by them, seduce those of <sup>35</sup> the middle and capture <sup>36</sup> them.

The oblivion that belonged to Error <sup>37</sup> was not revealed. It is not a (18) [thought] from the Father. It <sup>2</sup> was not from the Father that oblivion came into being. <sup>3</sup> Now indeed, it was concerning the Father that it came into being. But <sup>4</sup> what comes into being in the Father is the knowledge!

<sup>5</sup> This became revealed in <sup>6</sup> order that oblivion might vanish <sup>7</sup> and the Father be known. Since <sup>8</sup> oblivion came into being because the <sup>9</sup> Father was not known, then, when the Father <sup>10</sup> is known, oblivion will <sup>11</sup> not occur again.

The good news of the truth means joy for those who from the Father of truth have received the grace of knowing him. They know him through the power of the Word that came forth from the Fullness that is in the Father's thought and mind. That Word is what they call 'the Redeemer.' They call him so, since it refers to the work that he was to accomplish, namely the redemption of those who were (17) ignorant of the Father. They also call him 'the Redeemer' since the good news refers to the revelation of the hope since the good news is the discovery for those who are searching for the Father.

Although it was inside of the incomprehensible, inconceivable one, who is superior to every thought, the All went about searching for him, the Father, from whom it had come forth. And the ignorance of the Father brought anguish and terror, and the anguish grew dense like a fog so that no one could see. For these reasons, Error gained dominion and worked with its own matter, foolishly, since it had not known the truth.

It happened in a deluding way, since Error by all the beauty it was mighty prepared the substitute for the truth. Now, this was not a humiliation for the incomprehensible, inconceivable one. For the anguish, the oblivion and the delusion of deceit were nothing, whereas the established truth is immutable, imperturbable, and all exceeding beauty.

For this reason, disregard Error since it thus has no root! It happened in a fog that shrouded the Father. And it happens now, since Error prepares works, oblivion and terrors, in order to seduce and capture those of the middle.

The oblivion that belongs to Error was not revealed. It is no (18) thought from the Father, and it was not with him that oblivion came into being. Now indeed, it was concerning the Father that oblivion came into being. But what comes into being in the Father is the knowledge.

The knowledge became revealed in order that oblivion might vanish and the Father be known. Since oblivion came into being because they did not know the Father, consequently, when they know him, oblivion will not occur again.

This <sup>12</sup> the good news of the one for <sup>13</sup> whom they searched revealed to <sup>14</sup> those who were complete through the mercies <sup>15</sup> of the Father, the hidden mystery, <sup>16</sup> Jesus Christ.

This (he), through it (him), he <sup>17</sup> enlightened those who <sup>18</sup> through oblivion were in darkness. He <sup>19</sup> enlightened them he provided a way, and the <sup>20</sup> way is the truth, which he <sup>21</sup> taught them.

for this reason, Error <sup>22</sup> grew angry with him, <sup>23</sup> persecuted him, became distressed by him, <sup>24</sup> was defeated by him, they nailed him to a tree, <sup>25</sup> he became a fruit of the knowledge of <sup>26</sup> the Father.

Now, it (he) did not bring perishability<sup>1</sup> because it (he) was eaten. On the contrary, to <sup>27</sup> those who ate it, it <sup>28</sup> caused them to rejoice <sup>29</sup> in its discovery, those <sup>30</sup> whom he discovered in himself <sup>31</sup> and who discovered him in themselves!

The <sup>32</sup> incomprehensible, inconceivable one, the <sup>33</sup> Father, the one who is complete, the one who <sup>34</sup> made the All, within him is the All, <sup>35</sup> and the All needs him. <sup>36</sup> Even though he kept their<sup>2</sup> completion <sup>37</sup> within himself, this which he had not given to <sup>38</sup> the All, the <sup>39</sup> Father was not grudging, indeed, what grudge could there be between <sup>40</sup> him and his members? **(19)** For if this realm<sup>3</sup> had received <sup>2</sup> their<sup>4</sup> [completion], they would not have been able to come ...<sup>5</sup> <sup>3</sup> the Father. Even if he keeps <sup>4</sup> their<sup>6</sup> completion deep within himself, he <sup>5</sup> gives it to them in the form of a return to him <sup>6</sup> with knowledge and<sup>7</sup> <sup>7</sup> completion. He is the one who brought <sup>8</sup> the All into being and <sup>9</sup> in whom the All is, and of whom the All was in need.

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<sup>1</sup>See the commentary on page 86.

<sup>2</sup>Sometimes the All is referred to in terms of a collective entity, but frequently as well it is referred to in terms of its plurality of members.

<sup>3</sup>The notion could refer to the All, but from the context it is likely that it rather refers to the cosmic sphere. In the analytical translation therefore, I have reproduced the term with 'this world.'

<sup>4</sup>Sometimes the All is referred to in terms of a collective entity, but frequently as well it is referred to in terms of its plurality of members. It is also possible that it here refers to the Father's members in 18.40.

<sup>5</sup>A lacuna of four or five letters that is hard to restore. **εζρπαι** Would be a natural choice, but it does not fit with the traces of the letters. Oral information from Stephen Emmel.

<sup>6</sup>Sometimes the All is referred to in terms of collective entity, but frequently as well it is referred to in terms of its plurality of members.

<sup>7</sup>That this is the northern Egyptian conjunction 'and' has often been overlooked at this and other places in the GospTruth.

The good news of the one for whom they searched revealed this knowledge to those who were complete. It was revealed through the Father's mercies, the hidden mystery, Jesus Christ.

Through the good news Jesus enlightened those who through oblivion were in darkness. He enlightened them, provided a way and the way is the truth, which he taught them.

For this reason, Error grew angry with him, persecuted him, was distressed by him, was defeated by him, because when they nailed him to a tree, he became a fruit of the knowledge of the Father.

Now, the fruit did not bring perishability because it was eaten. On the contrary, to those whom he discovered in himself and who discovered him in themselves, that is those who ate the fruit, it caused them to rejoice in its discovery.

The incomprehensible, inconceivable one, the Father, the one who is complete, the one who made the All, within him is the All, and the All needs him. Even though he had kept their completion within himself, the part which he had not given to the All, the Father was not grudging. Indeed, what grudge could there be between him and his members?

**(19)** For if this world had received their completion, they would not have been able to come to the Father. Although the Father keeps their completion deep within himself, he gives the completion to them as a return to him with knowledge and completion. The Father is the one who brought the All into being and in whom the All is, and of whom the All was in need.

<sup>10</sup> Just as in the case <sup>11</sup> of a person of whom <sup>12</sup> others are ignorant, he <sup>13</sup> wishes to be known <sup>14</sup> and thus loved. <sup>15</sup> For what did the All need <sup>16</sup> if not such knowledge of the <sup>17</sup> Father?

He became a mild <sup>18</sup> easy tutor,<sup>8</sup> appeared and <sup>19</sup> spoke <sup>20</sup> the word as teacher. They <sup>21</sup> came to him,<sup>9</sup> those who <sup>22</sup> considered themselves wise, <sup>23</sup> putting him to the test, <sup>24</sup> but he refuted them because <sup>25</sup> they were foolish. They hated him <sup>26</sup> because they were not truly <sup>27</sup> wise. After all these, <sup>28</sup> the little children came to him<sup>10</sup> As well, <sup>29</sup> those to whom <sup>30</sup> the knowledge of the father belongs. Having become strong, <sup>31</sup> they had learned about the Father's <sup>32</sup> face,<sup>11</sup> they knew, <sup>33</sup> they were known, they were glorified, <sup>34</sup> they glorified, it appeared in their <sup>35</sup> intellect, the living book <sup>36</sup> of the living, this that is written <sup>37</sup> in the Father[']s thought and <sup>38</sup> mind, (20) and that from before the <sup>2</sup> foundation of all things has been among his <sup>3</sup> incomprehensible possessions, this <sup>4</sup> that noone has authority to take, <sup>5</sup> since it is ordained for the one who would take it up <sup>6</sup> in order to be slain.

No one <sup>7</sup> among those who had been entrusted<sup>12</sup> <sup>9</sup> with the salvation could have been revealed if that <sup>9</sup> book had not come forward, <sup>10</sup> for this reason, the merciful, faithful <sup>11</sup> Jesus became compassionate accepting the sufferings <sup>12</sup> even unto taking up that book. <sup>13</sup> Because he knew that <sup>14</sup> his death is life for many, <sup>15</sup> just as in the case of a will before it is <sup>16</sup> opened, the fortune of the deceased <sup>17</sup> master of the house is concealed; <sup>18</sup> and just as in the case of the All that was <sup>19</sup> concealed, as the Father of the All was <sup>20</sup> invisible, even though the All had come forth from <sup>21</sup> him, the one from whom <sup>22</sup> everything<sup>13</sup> comes forth, <sup>23</sup> for this reason, Jesus appeared, <sup>24</sup> clothed himself in that <sup>25</sup> book, was nailed to a tree, and <sup>26</sup> published the edict of <sup>27</sup> the Father on the cross.

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<sup>8</sup>As many others have noted, there seems to be an underlying Greek pun on 'guide' hodogogos, and a pedagog, pedagogos.

<sup>9</sup>Emend to **ⲱⲁⲣⲁⲩ** .

<sup>10</sup>Emend to **ⲱⲁⲣⲁⲩ** .

<sup>11</sup>The expression is a bit obscure, but it probably refers to the outward manifestation of the Father, or in terms of knowledge, to the knowledge that belongs to the beginner.

<sup>12</sup>The common rendering of **ⲛⲧⲁⲗⲏⲗⲟⲩⲧⲟⲩ ⲁⲛⲓⲟⲩⲭⲉⲉⲓ** has been 'those who believed in the salvation,' but as will be extensively discussed on page ?? there are strong arguments in favour of my translation.

<sup>13</sup>All other translations render the Coptic **ⲙⲙⲉⲓⲧ ⲛⲓⲙ** with 'every way,' or 'all ways.' My translation is based on an oral suggestion of Louis Painchaud.

Just as in the case of a person of whom others are ignorant, the Father wishes to be known and thus loved. For what did the All need if not such knowledge about the Father?

Jesus became a mild easy tutor. As teacher he appeared and spoke the word. Those who considered themselves wise came to him in order to put him to the test. But he refuted them, because they were foolish. They hated him, because they were not truly wise. After all this had happened, the little children came to him as well. It is to them that the knowledge about the Father belongs. They had learned about the superficial part of the Father, and through this became strong. They knew and were known, they were glorified and they glorified, and finally, the living book of the living appeared in their intellect. This book is written in **(20)** the Father's thought and mind, and that from before the foundation of all things has been among the Father's incomprehensible possessions, the book that no one has authority to up take since it laid upon Jesus to take it and be slain.

If this book had remained concealed, no one among those who had been entrusted with salvation could have been revealed. For this reason, the merciful, faithful Jesus was compassionate and endured the sufferings even onto taking up that book. Because he knew that his death is life for many, - just as before a will is opened, the fortune of the deceased master of the house is concealed, so it is with the All. It was concealed since the Father was invisible, even though the All had come forth from him, the one from whom everything comes forth. For this reason, Jesus appeared, clothed himself in that book, was nailed to a tree, and published the edict of the Father on the cross.

O with <sup>28</sup> such great teaching he draws <sup>29</sup> himself down to death, <sup>30</sup> although life eternal clothes him!

Having <sup>31</sup> stripped himself of his perishable rags, <sup>32</sup> he put on imperishability <sup>33</sup> that which no one <sup>34</sup> can take away from him. <sup>35</sup> Having entered the empty spaces of <sup>36</sup> terror, he escaped <sup>37</sup> from those that are stripped naked by <sup>38</sup> oblivion, for he is knowledge <sup>39</sup> and completion, proclaiming what is in the intellect **(21)**..... When — <sup>5</sup> instructed those who will receive teaching. <sup>3</sup> And those who will receive teaching are the <sup>4</sup> living who are written in the book <sup>5</sup> of the living.

Receiving instruction about <sup>6</sup> themselves, they recover themselves <sup>7</sup> from the Father. They return to <sup>8</sup> him, because the <sup>9</sup> completion of the All is in the Father. <sup>10</sup> It is necessary for the All to go <sup>11</sup> to him. Then, as anyone <sup>12</sup> comes to know, he receives what <sup>13</sup> belongs to him, and he draws them to <sup>14</sup> himself. For the one who is <sup>15</sup> ignorant is in need, and what he lacks is <sup>16</sup> great, since <sup>17</sup> he lacks what would make him <sup>18</sup> complete.

Because the completion <sup>19</sup> of the All is in the Father, and it is necessary <sup>20</sup> for the All to go <sup>21</sup> to him, and each <sup>22</sup> one has to receive what belongs to him, <sup>23</sup> which he had inscribed in advance, <sup>24</sup> having prepared it to give to those <sup>25</sup> who had come forth from him, those whose names <sup>26</sup> he already knew from the beginning, <sup>27</sup> in the end they were called.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>28</sup> Because it is ‘one who knows’ <sup>29</sup> whose name the Father has called.<sup>15</sup> <sup>30</sup> For the one whose name has not been <sup>31</sup> spoken is ‘an ignorant,’ <sup>32</sup> how else would <sup>33</sup> someone listen unless <sup>34</sup> his name has been called? For the one who is ignorant <sup>35</sup> to the end is a delusion <sup>36</sup> of oblivion, and he <sup>37</sup> will vanish with it, if it were otherwise, <sup>38</sup> why do such miserable

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<sup>14</sup>21.18-27 is one long and quite complicated sentence. The first three clauses are coordinated on the same level and headed by the cataphoric ‘because.’ Together these clauses constitute the causal background to the final clause. Between the initial causal block and the final clause there is a lengthy description of what it is that each one has to receive. In the analytical translation the just mentioned relations are clear, but the rhythmical character of the text, which appears by the initial ‘because’ in 21.18 and 21.28 is lost in the analytical translation, but preserved in the basic one.

<sup>15</sup>The combination of **ꝥꝰꝿ** with circumstantial has been a problem for translators. It is solved, however, when treating 21-28-29 as a cleft sentence with **ꝥꝰꝿ** as a causal conjunction. The focus on the ones who know is interrupted by a parenthetical part concerning those who belong to Error. This part is carefully construed with two initial ‘for’ and two rhetorical questions. In 22.2 the thread from 21.28 is taken up again and continues in the habitual until a series of asyndetons indicates a new passage.

O, with such great doctrine he draws himself down to death, although life eternal clothes him! When Jesus had stripped himself of his perishable rags, he put on imperishability that which no one can take away from him. And when he had entered the empty spaces of terror, he escaped from the clutches of those that are stripped naked by oblivion, for he is knowledge and completion, proclaiming what is in the intellect **(21)** ..... When—  
— instructed those who will receive teaching. And those who will receive teaching are the living who are written in the book of the living.

Because it is about themselves that they are instructed, they recover themselves from the Father. They return to him, because the completion of the All is in the Father. It is necessary for the All to go to him. Then, as anyone comes to know, he receives what belongs to him, and he draws it to himself. For the one who is ignorant is in need, and what he lacks is great, since he lacks what would make him complete.

In advance, the Father inscribed what belongs to each one. He prepared it in order to give to those who had come forth from him, those whose names he knew from the beginning. This is the completion of the All that is inside of the Father, and it is necessary for the All to go to him, and for each one to receive what belongs to him. Because of all this, at the end the Father called them.

Because it is ‘the one who knows’ whose name the Father has called. For the one whose name has not been spoken is ‘an ignorant.’ How else, in what way will someone listen unless his name has been called? For the one who is ignorant to the end is a delusion of oblivion, and he will vanish with oblivion. If it were otherwise, why do such miserable people

(22) not have [voiceless]<sup>16</sup> <sup>2</sup> names? Consequently, a <sup>3</sup> person, when he knows, is from above. <sup>4</sup> When called, he hears, <sup>5</sup> responds, <sup>6</sup> and turns to the <sup>7</sup> one who is calling him, goes to him, and <sup>8</sup> understands why he is being called. <sup>9</sup> Knowing he does the <sup>10</sup> will of the one who called <sup>11</sup> him, he wants to please him, he receives <sup>12</sup> rest, and the name of such a person <sup>13</sup> becomes his own. The one who will know <sup>14</sup> in such a way understands from where he has come and <sup>15</sup> where he will go. <sup>16</sup> He understands just as someone who, <sup>17</sup> after having become drunk, has shaken off <sup>18</sup> his drunkenness.

<sup>19</sup> When he had returned to himself, he <sup>20</sup> set right those things that belong to him, reclaimed many <sup>21</sup> from Error, went <sup>22</sup> before them to the ways from <sup>23</sup> which they had swerved when they <sup>24</sup> accepted Error <sup>25</sup> because of the depth of him who surrounds <sup>26</sup> everything, while nothing <sup>27</sup> surrounds him.

It was a great <sup>28</sup> wonder that they were in the Father, <sup>29</sup> though not knowing him, and that they were <sup>30</sup> able to come forth alone, <sup>31</sup> since they were not able to <sup>32</sup> comprehend themselves, nor could they know the one in whom they <sup>33</sup> were. For if his will <sup>34</sup> had come forth from him —<sup>17</sup> For he <sup>35</sup> revealed it, and <sup>36</sup> they knew in harmony <sup>37</sup> with all its gifts,<sup>18</sup> <sup>38</sup> this is the knowledge of the living <sup>39</sup> book that he (it) at the end <sup>40</sup> revealed to the Eternal ones.<sup>19</sup> (23) in the form of its (his) texts.<sup>20</sup> <sup>2</sup> When it (knowledge or book) becomes revealed, they speak, <sup>3</sup> not as if they were passages<sup>21</sup> for <sup>4</sup> voices, nor as if they were texts <sup>5</sup> needing sound,<sup>22</sup> and <sup>6</sup> so for someone to read them out and <sup>7</sup> think of foolishness,

<sup>16</sup>There is a small lacuna before **ⲙⲙⲏⲣⲧⲉⲣ**. I restore to **ⲉⲙⲙⲏⲣⲧⲉⲣ** reaching my translation. In this way, the difference between a normal name and the name that comes from above is emphasized.

<sup>17</sup>Missing text..

<sup>18</sup>The Coptic **ⲧⲏ** has often been translated with ‘way.’ However, it is equally probable that it comes from the verb **ⲧ** ‘give’ as was suggested by Schenke 2001, and I adopt his suggestion, although the field is wide open for speculations.

<sup>19</sup>The common translation is ‘aeons,’ but to me, this seems to be like a translation to Greek rather than to English.

<sup>20</sup>The noun can mean letters or texts. As in 23.12-15 it is used about a book that consists of texts in harmony, rather than of letters in harmony it directs my choice of translating here as well.

<sup>21</sup>The Coptic/Greek word **ⲧⲟⲡⲟⲥ**, which normally means places, can also be used in the meaning of a passage of text. In the context the contrast between the kind of texts that the living book of the living consists of, and texts that are written in normal books and can be read by normal voices is emphasised and guide my way of translating.

<sup>22</sup>In the analytical translation I use ‘tones’ in order to stress that these texts neither need music or speech.

(22) not have voiceless names? Now, as it is ‘the one who knows’ that the Father calls, consequently, a person, when he knows, is from above. When called, he hears, responds, and turns to the one who is calling him. He goes to him, and understands why he is being called. When he knows, he does the will of the one who called him. He wants to please him, and he receives rest, such a person receives the name that belongs to him. The one who will know in such a way understands from where he has come and where he will go. He understands just as someone who, after having become drunk, has shaken off his drunkenness. When that person had recovered himself, he set right what belongs to him. He reclaimed many from Error and went before them to the ways from which they had swerved. For they had gone astray because of the depth of him who surrounds everything, and who himself is unsurrounded.

It was a great wonder that they were in the Father without knowing him, and that they were able to come forth on their own accord. It was a wonder since they were not able to comprehend themselves, nor could they know the one in whom they were. For if his will had come forth from him—<sup>23</sup>

For he revealed the book, and the eternal ones knew in harmony with all its gifts, this is the knowledge of the living book that he at the end revealed to the Eternal ones (23) in the form of its texts. When the book becomes revealed, the texts speak, not as if they were chapters intended to be read by voices, nor as if they were texts in need of tones. They are not texts that someone should read out loud and think of foolishness.

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<sup>23</sup>Probably one line missing.

but <sup>8</sup> rather they are texts of <sup>9</sup> truth, they themselves speak <sup>10</sup> they know themselves. Each text <sup>11</sup> being a perfect thought<sup>24</sup> <sup>12</sup> just as a book <sup>13</sup> that is perfect consists of texts <sup>14</sup> written through <sup>15</sup> the unity, as the Father had <sup>16</sup> written them <sup>17</sup> [for] the Eternal ones that through these, his texts, <sup>18</sup> they would know the Father.

As his <sup>19</sup> wisdom meditates upon <sup>20</sup> the Word,  
 his teaching <sup>21</sup> utters it,  
 his <sup>22</sup> knowledge has become revealed.<sup>25</sup>  
<sup>23</sup> His forbearance is a <sup>24</sup> crown upon him (it),  
 as his (its) <sup>25</sup> joy is in harmony <sup>26</sup> with it (him).  
 His (its) glory has <sup>27</sup> exalted him (it),  
 his (its) image <sup>28</sup> has revealed him (it),  
 his (its) <sup>29</sup> repose has <sup>30</sup> embraced him (it),  
 his (its) <sup>31</sup> love has embodied him,  
<sup>32</sup> his faith has guarded <sup>33</sup> him.

In this way<sup>26</sup> the Word <sup>34</sup> of the Father goes forth <sup>35</sup> in the All, as it is the fruit **(24)** [of] his intellect and <sup>2</sup> an outward manifestation of his will.<sup>3</sup> Indeed, it helps the All, <sup>4</sup> choosing them and also taking on <sup>5</sup> the outward manifestation of the All. <sup>6</sup> It (he) restores them by bringing them back into <sup>7</sup> the Father, into the Mother, <sup>8</sup> Jesus of the infinity of <sup>9</sup> sweetness!

<sup>24</sup>In the manuscript the word is **ⲙⲉ**. As ‘truth’ is spelled **ⲙⲏⲉ** in the GospTruth, we need an emendation even if we choose the alternative translation with ‘truth.’ As I restored the lacuna on page 18.1 with ‘thought,’ and since it is attested in Valentinianism that the ‘aeons’ or as I have translated ‘the eternal ones’ in the Father are called ‘thoughts’ I emend to **ⲙⲉⲉⲣⲉ**.

<sup>25</sup>Attridge & MacRae 1985a emend to **ⲁⲩⲟⲩⲁⲛⲓⲛⲓ**, but this is not necessary. On the contrary the absence of a direct object to the verb is ingressive and means that the knowledge enters into a state of being revealed, see 18.4-31. This is also indicated as the Word gradually takes on personal characteristics, and in 23-30-31 he is embodied, which in Valentinian terms refers to the becoming of the church. Thus, the hymn begins in pre-historic time, turns to the revelation of Jesus that is in compliance with the prophecies about him and ends with the actualization of the Valentinian church.

<sup>26</sup>This passage expounds upon the preceding hymn, and especially the part from 23.22 ff in which the revelation of the Word as a reality was touched upon.

On the contrary, they are texts of the truth. They speak by themselves and know themselves. Each text is a perfect thought in the same manner as a book that is perfect consists of texts that are written in unity. So the Father had written them for the Eternal ones in order that they would know the Father through his texts.

Because the Father's wisdom meditates upon the Word, his teaching utters it, his knowledge has become revealed.

His forbearance is a crown upon him,

as his joy is in harmony with it.

His glory has exalted him,

his image has revealed him,

his repose has embraced him, his love has embodied him, his faith has guarded him.

In this way, the Father's Word goes forth in the All, as it is the fruit of **(24)** his intellect and the visible manifestation of the Father's will. Indeed, the Word helps the All, by choosing them, and also by taking on their own outward form. The Word restores them by bringing them back into the Father, into the Mother, Jesus of the infinity of sweetness!

When the Father uncovers his bosom,<sup>27</sup> <sup>10</sup> and his bosom is <sup>11</sup> the Holy Spirit,<sup>28</sup> he <sup>12</sup> reveals his <sup>13</sup> secret, his secret is <sup>14</sup> his Son,<sup>29</sup> so that <sup>15</sup> through the inner parts of the Father the Eternal ones <sup>16</sup> might know him, and <sup>17</sup> stop labouring by searching for the <sup>18</sup> Father, resting <sup>19</sup> deep within him, knowing that <sup>20</sup> this is the rest.

When he had <sup>21</sup> filled the lack, he loosened up the <sup>22</sup> form, his form <sup>23</sup> is the world,<sup>30</sup> this <sup>24</sup> in which he served. <sup>25</sup> For where there is envy and strife <sup>26</sup> there is lack, <sup>27</sup> but where there is unity there is <sup>28</sup> completion. Since the lack came into <sup>29</sup> being because the Father was <sup>30</sup> unknown, when <sup>31</sup> the Father is known the lack <sup>32</sup> will not occur again.

Just <sup>33</sup> as in the manner of <sup>34</sup> someone's ignorance, then when he <sup>35</sup> knows, in this manner <sup>36</sup> his ignorance ceases, <sup>37</sup> just as the darkness <sup>38</sup> ceases when **(25)** the light appears. Just so also <sup>2</sup> the lack ceases <sup>3</sup> through completion. Indeed, <sup>4</sup> from that moment the form does not appear, <sup>5</sup> but will be loosened up through <sup>6</sup> the harmony of unity.

<sup>7</sup> For now their <sup>8</sup> affairs are scattered, but <sup>9</sup> when Unity will complete <sup>10</sup> the ways into Unity, <sup>11</sup> each one <sup>12</sup> will receive the way into <sup>13</sup> Knowledge. He will purify himself <sup>14</sup> from Multiplicity into <sup>15</sup> Unity, by consuming <sup>16</sup> matter within himself <sup>17</sup> as fire, <sup>18</sup> darkness by light and death by life.

<sup>19</sup> Now indeed, these things have happened <sup>20</sup> to all of us! <sup>21</sup> Thus it is fitting for us to<sup>31</sup> <sup>22</sup> be mindful of the All, so that <sup>23</sup> the house will be holy <sup>24</sup> and peaceful for the Unity.

<sup>25</sup> Just like when people <sup>26</sup> have moved out of some places <sup>27</sup> where there were <sup>28</sup> jars that were not good <sup>29</sup> in spots, <sup>30</sup> they would break them, and the owner of the house <sup>31</sup> suffered no loss when the jars were broken,

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<sup>27</sup>In the same manner as in 19.27-20.6 the enlightenment is described by a gradual knowledge, beginning in the superficial knowledge, which was described in the previous passage, and ending with the knowledge of the deepest secrets of the Father.

<sup>28</sup>This clause is maybe an interpolation.

<sup>29</sup>This clause is maybe an interpolation.

<sup>30</sup>This clause is maybe an interpolation.

<sup>31</sup>I emend **Ϟε** into **ϛε** .

When the Father uncovers his bosom, which is the Holy Spirit, and he reveals his secret, which is his Son, so that through the Father's inner most, the Eternal ones might know him and stop labouring by searching for the Father. Instead, the Eternal ones may rest deep within the Father, knowing that this is the rest.

When Jesus had filled the lack, he loosened up its form, this form is the world in which he served. For where there is envy and strife there is lack, but where there is unity there is completion. Since the lack came into being because the Father was unknown, when the Father is known the lack will not occur again. This is just as in the manner of someone's ignorance. When someone knows in this manner, his ignorance ceases, just as the darkness ceases when (25) the light appears, just so the lack ceases through completion as well. Indeed, from that moment the form does not appear, rather it will be loosened up through the harmony of unity.

For now the others affairs are scattered, but when Unity will complete the ways into Unity, each one will receive his way into Knowledge. Everyone will purify himself from Multiplicity into Unity. Each one purifies himself by consuming matter within himself just as fire, darkness by light and death by life.

Now indeed, these things have already happened to all of us. Thus it is fitting for us to be mindful of the All, so that the house will be holy and peaceful for the Unity.

Just like when people have moved out of some places where there were jars that were partly broken, they would break them, and the owner of the house would suffer no loss.

on the <sup>32</sup> contrary, it made him glad, for <sup>33</sup> instead of such bad <sup>34</sup> jars, those when they are filled are <sup>35</sup> completed.<sup>32</sup>

Because this is the judgement<sup>33</sup> <sup>36</sup> that has come **(26)** from above, as it has judged <sup>2</sup> everyone, being a drawn <sup>3</sup> two-edged sword that cuts in <sup>4</sup> either side, since the Word <sup>5</sup> came forth in the <sup>6</sup> minds of those who spoke it, <sup>7</sup> it was not only a sound, <sup>8</sup> but it became a body, <sup>9</sup> a great disturbance took place among <sup>10</sup> the jars.

Because some were <sup>11</sup> emptied and some were <sup>12</sup> full, one half<sup>34</sup> had been supplied <sup>13</sup> the other had leaked out, <sup>14</sup> some had been purified and <sup>15</sup> others had been broken, <sup>16</sup> everything moved.

And they were disturbed,<sup>35</sup> <sup>17</sup> because they neither have basis <sup>18</sup> nor stability, <sup>19</sup> as Error is anxious, <sup>20</sup> not knowing what to do, <sup>21</sup> suffering inside, mourning, <sup>22</sup> crying that it understands <sup>23</sup> nothing because the knowledge <sup>24</sup> has drawn near it, and this <sup>25</sup> is the destruction of Error and of <sup>26</sup> all its gifts. Error is empty, because it has <sup>27</sup> nothing inside!

The Truth <sup>28</sup> appeared, all its gifts <sup>29</sup> recognised it, <sup>30</sup> they greeted the Father in truth and <sup>31</sup> power, which is complete and <sup>32</sup> unites them with the Father.

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<sup>32</sup>The text appears to be corrupted. **ⲙⲟⲩⲗ** according to Crum 1939 208b has a number of adequate meanings. The most common is ‘full,’ but it can also characterise a valuable coin, meaning ‘sterling.’ Yet another possibility is ‘wide open’ as for instance about sleeves of a garment. Consequently, **ⲙⲏⲗ** can mean ‘filled,’ ‘valid’ or open.’ As we on page 26 have a contrast between full and emptied jars I prefer the first interpretation with an underlying Gnostic pun, those who belong to the fullness are complete. It also resembles page 36 where the full jars are completed by the ointment. Therefore, I emend the text to **ⲛⲉⲧⲉⲱⲁⲧⲙⲏⲗⲱⲁⲧⲭⲁⲕⲟⲩ** .

<sup>33</sup>The imagery of the good and bad jars from the previous passage is elaborated on. The sword divides two groups, one of them belongs to the church and constitutes the body of Christ.

<sup>34</sup>**ⲭⲉⲥ** Has confused many. I follow Layton’s suggestion (2004, p. 144), and treat it as a form of the Sahidic **ⲃⲟⲥ** , which means half. This is yet another example of Bohairisms in the GospTruth, (Crum 1939, §832a). But in contrast to Layton (1987) I do not treat it as complementary information to the preceding word ‘full,’ but to the following one. In this way one half of the jars are full, supplied and purified, whereas the other half is emptied, has leaked out and is broken. This makes good sense with the good and bad jars on page 25, the description of the judgement in terms of the two-edged sword in the previous passage and the destruction of Error’s gifts and the rejoice of the gifts of the Truth in the following passages.

<sup>35</sup>It would have been natural to omit ‘and’ and continue the line of thought with an asyndeton. However, ‘and’ signals a break in the text. Moreover, the focus shifts to Error and its gifts only. The past tense is replaced by the present one that makes it probable that ‘Error’ and ‘they’ refer to people outside of the community, and who still are anxious because of the knowledge that has undermined Error.

On the contrary, it made him glad, for instead of such bad jars, those good ones, when they are filled they also become completed.

This is the judgement that has come **(26)** from above as a drawn two-edged sword that cuts in either side. It has judged everyone. Because when the Word that was in the minds of those who spoke it, when it appeared, it was not only a sound but a body as well. Because of this judgement the jars trembled greatly.

Some were emptied and some were full, half of them had been supplied and the other half had leaked out, some had been purified and the others had been broken, therefore, the jars moved.

And they trembled, because they neither have basis nor stability, since Error is anxious, does not know what to do, suffers inside, mourns, and cries that it understands nothing, because the knowledge has already approached it, and indeed, this is the destruction of Error and of all its gifts. Error is empty because it has nothing inside!

The Truth appeared, all its gifts recognised it. They greeted the Father in complete truth and power, which unites them with the Father.

<sup>33</sup> For everyone who loves the <sup>34</sup> Truth, because the Truth is the Father's mouth, his <sup>35</sup> tongue is the <sup>36</sup> Holy Spirit that joins itself to **(27)** the Truth, he joins <sup>2</sup> himself to the Father's mouth <sup>3</sup> through his tongue, he will <sup>4</sup> receive the Holy Spirit.

<sup>5</sup> Since he (this) is the revelation of the Father, <sup>6</sup> and the uncovering of him <sup>7</sup> to his Eternal ones, he revealed <sup>8</sup> his secret, and unloosened himself. <sup>9</sup> For who is the one who contains, <sup>10</sup> if not the Father himself? <sup>11</sup> All are his gifts. <sup>12</sup> They have known him, because they have come forth from <sup>13</sup> him, just as <sup>14</sup> children from an <sup>15</sup> adult.

They knew that they <sup>16</sup> not yet had <sup>17</sup> received form, nor been <sup>18</sup> given name. When the Father begets <sup>19</sup> each person, <sup>20</sup> then, they receive form by his <sup>21</sup> knowledge. Otherwise, they would be <sup>23</sup> in him <sup>20</sup> without knowing him.

<sup>24</sup> But the Father is adult, he knows <sup>25</sup> everything that is in him. <sup>26</sup> When he wishes, <sup>27</sup> he reveals what he wishes, <sup>28</sup> as he gives it form and <sup>29</sup> as he gives it name. And he gives it name <sup>30</sup> and he <sup>31</sup> causes it to make them come into being.

<sup>32</sup> Those who not yet have come into being <sup>33</sup> are ignorant of the one who has fashioned them. <sup>34</sup> Now, I do not say that they are <sup>35</sup> nothing, those who not yet have <sup>36</sup> come into being, rather, they exist **(28)** in him who will wish so that they <sup>2</sup> come into being <sup>3</sup> when he wishes.

Just as in <sup>4</sup> the time that is to come, <sup>5</sup> before everything that yet not has appeared, <sup>6</sup> he knows what he will bring <sup>7</sup> forth. But the fruit that has <sup>8</sup> not yet appeared <sup>9</sup> knows nothing, nor does it <sup>10</sup> do anything.

In this way <sup>11</sup> everything that exists <sup>12</sup> also is in the Father, but on the other hand, <sup>13</sup> they derive from the Existent, <sup>14</sup> the one who has <sup>15</sup> established it from the nonexistent. <sup>16</sup> Because he who has no <sup>17</sup> root, also has no <sup>18</sup> fruit.<sup>36</sup> <sup>19</sup> On the contrary, even though he thinks <sup>20</sup> 'I exist' yet he <sup>21</sup> will be loosened up by himself. <sup>22</sup> Therefore, <sup>23</sup> everything that has not existed at all also will not <sup>24</sup> exist.

Now, what does he wish <sup>25</sup> him to think of himself? 'I <sup>26</sup> am like <sup>27</sup> the shadows and phantoms of <sup>28</sup> the night.' When the light <sup>29</sup> shines on the fear <sup>30</sup> that lays upon such person, <sup>31</sup> he understands that it (he) is <sup>32</sup> nothing.

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<sup>36</sup>Some letters of 'fruit' are uncertain but putting them in square brackets would overemphasise the uncertainty.

The Truth is the Father's mouth and his tongue is the Holy Spirit. Accordingly, each one who loves the Truth has joined himself to **(27)** the Father's mouth. In this way will each one receive the Holy Spirit through the Father's tongue.

Since Jesus is the revelation of the Father, and the uncovering of him to his Eternal ones, the Father revealed his secret, and unloosened himself. For who is the one who contains, if not the Father himself? All are his gifts. They have known him, because they have come forth from him, just as children from an adult.

They knew that they not yet had received their form or name, since when the Father begets them, they receive form by his knowledge. If it was in another way they would be in the Father without knowing him. But the Father is adult and knows everything that is in him. When he wishes, he reveals what he wishes by giving it form and name. And by naming them he causes them come into being.

Those who not yet have come into being are ignorant of the one who has fashioned them. Now, I do not say that those who not yet have come into being are nothing. But I say that they exist **(28)** in the Father who will wish so that they come into being when he wishes. The Father knows in advance everything that he will bring forth. But the fruit that has not yet appeared knows nothing and is fruitless. So on the one hand, everything that exists also is in the Father, but on the other hand, they derive from the Existent one who has established them from what does not exist. Because he who has no root, also has no fruit. On the contrary, even though he thinks 'I exist' yet he will be loosened up by himself. Therefore, everything that has not existed at all also will not exist.

Now, what does the Father wish a person who has not yet come into being to think of himself? This: 'I am like the shadows and phantoms of the night.' When the light shines on the fear that covers such person, he understands that the fear is nothing.

Because<sup>37</sup> in this way they were <sup>33</sup> ignorant of the Father, as it was him whom they **(29)** did not see, because there was <sup>2</sup> fear, disturbance, <sup>3</sup> instability, <sup>4</sup> doubt and <sup>5</sup> division, there were many <sup>6</sup> illusions at work by means <sup>7</sup> of these and uninstructed <sup>8</sup> foolishness, just as when <sup>9</sup> one falls sound asleep <sup>10</sup> and finds oneself in <sup>11</sup> disturbing dreams, either <sup>12</sup> fleeing to anywhere or <sup>13</sup> without strength coming from having persecuted <sup>14</sup> others, or being involved in striking blows or <sup>15</sup> receiving blows, falling from <sup>16</sup> heights or <sup>17</sup> being drawn up by the <sup>18</sup> wind without even having <sup>19</sup> wings, <sup>20</sup> sometimes it is also as if someone is <sup>21</sup> murdered without even being <sup>22</sup> persecuted, or <sup>23</sup> killing one's neighbours <sup>24</sup> because one is smeared with <sup>25</sup> blood, until the <sup>26</sup> time when those <sup>27</sup> who have gone through <sup>28</sup> all these things wake up, <sup>29</sup> those who are in <sup>30</sup> these disturbances, they can see nothing, <sup>31</sup> since thus these things are nothing. <sup>32</sup> In this way are these persons (things)! <sup>33</sup> This is the way of those who have cast <sup>34</sup> off ignorance <sup>35</sup> as sleep, <sup>36</sup> as they do not <sup>37</sup> esteem it because it is nothing, nor do they esteem its **(30)** other works as <sup>2</sup> real works, rather <sup>3</sup> they put them aside as a <sup>4</sup> dream of the night, and the knowledge <sup>5</sup> of the Father they deem as the <sup>6</sup> dawn!

This is the way <sup>7</sup> each person has acted, <sup>8</sup> as though asleep at the time <sup>9</sup> when he was ignorant. <sup>10</sup> And this is the way he will <sup>11</sup> come to stand up, as if <sup>12</sup> he had awakened, and good for <sup>13</sup> the man who will return and <sup>14</sup> awaken and <sup>15</sup> blessed is the one who opened the eyes of the <sup>16</sup> blind!

<sup>17</sup> And the quick spirit ran after him <sup>18</sup> in order to raise him <sup>19</sup> up. It gave the hand to him who lay <sup>20</sup> upon the <sup>21</sup> ground so that he became strong enough to stand on <sup>22</sup> his feet, for indeed, he had <sup>23</sup> not yet risen!

The knowledge <sup>24</sup> from the Father and the <sup>25</sup> revelation of his Son gave them <sup>26</sup> means to understand. <sup>27</sup> For when they saw him (it) and <sup>28</sup> heard him (it), he (it) gave them so that they <sup>29</sup> could taste him (it), and <sup>30</sup> smell him (it), and touch the beloved Son. <sup>31</sup> When he (it) had become revealed, it is about <sup>32</sup> the Father, the incomprehensible, that he (it) <sup>33</sup> teaches them. When he (it) had breathed in them <sup>34</sup> what is in the Father's thought, it is his <sup>35</sup> will that he (it) does. When <sup>36</sup> many had become enlightened, they turned to him.

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<sup>37</sup>It is always difficult to make a precise numbering of the lines and at the same time produce a readable translation, but here it is especially difficult. Thus, the line numbers should be taken as indications and nothing else.

(29) Those persons were ignorant of the Father, as the Father was shrouded. Because of fear, disturbance, instability, doubt, division and uninstructed foolishness there were many illusions at work. It is just as when one falls sound asleep and finds oneself in disturbing dreams, either fleeing to anywhere, or exhausted returning after having persecuted others in hand-to-hand combat, falling from heights or being drawn up by the wind without even having wings. And sometimes it also is as if someone is murdered without even being persecuted or killing one's neighbours as one is smeared with blood. Because these persons were ignorant of the Father until they have gone through all these things and woken up, and as the Father was shrouded by fear, those who are in these disturbances can see nothing because these things are nothing. Such are these persons! This is the way of those who have cast off ignorance as it was sleep. They do not esteem it because it is nothing, nor do they esteem its (30) other works as real works. But they put these works aside as a dream of the night, and the knowledge of the Father they deem as the dawn!

This is the way each person has acted. When he was ignorant, he was as sleeping, and he will come to stand up, as if he had awakened. Good for the man who will return and awaken! And blessed is the one who opened the eyes of the blind! The Spirit hastened to him in order to raise him up. It stretched out its hand to him who lay upon the ground so that he became strong enough to stand on his feet, for indeed, he had not yet risen!

The knowledge from the Father and the revelation of his Son gave them means to understand. For when they saw and heard him, he granted them so that they could taste, and smell and touch the beloved Son. When he had become revealed, he instructs them about the incomprehensible Father. And when he had breathed in to them what is in the Father's thought, he made the Father's will. When many had become enlightened, they turned to him.

Because the material ones **(31)** are foreign, <sup>2</sup> and they did not see his image, <sup>3</sup> they had not even recognized him (it), <sup>4</sup> because it was <sup>5</sup> by means of a fleshly <sup>6</sup> form he had come forth, no one had been able to block <sup>7</sup> his way, because <sup>8</sup> incorruptibility means <sup>9</sup> unseizability.<sup>38</sup>

Again <sup>10</sup> in a new way he tells <sup>11</sup> what he already had told about what is in the Father's intellect. As he <sup>12</sup> had brought forth the <sup>13</sup> flawless Word, since the <sup>14</sup> light and <sup>15</sup> his voice that <sup>16</sup> gave birth to life had spoken through his mouth, he gave them <sup>17</sup> thought and intelligence <sup>18</sup> and mercy and salvation and the <sup>19</sup> powerful spirit from <sup>20</sup> the Father's infinity and sweetness.

<sup>21</sup> By having made punishments <sup>22</sup> and tortures cease, because <sup>23</sup> they led certain others who were <sup>24</sup> short of mercy astray from his face into <sup>25</sup> Error and bondage, with <sup>26</sup> power he unchained them <sup>27</sup> and reproved them by knowledge.

<sup>28</sup> He became a <sup>29</sup> way for those that had gone astray, <sup>30</sup> and knowledge for those who were <sup>31</sup> ignorant, a <sup>32</sup> discovery for those who had searched, and <sup>33</sup> stability for those who had trembled, <sup>34</sup> purity for those who were <sup>35</sup> defiled, since it is he who is the shepherd <sup>36</sup> who left behind the **(32)** ninety-nine sheep that had not gone astray. <sup>2</sup> He came and searched for the one who had gone <sup>3</sup> astray and rejoiced when he <sup>4</sup> found it, for ninety-nine is <sup>5</sup> a number that <sup>6</sup> remains in the left hand. <sup>7</sup> But the time when the one will be found, the <sup>8</sup> entire number <sup>9</sup> passes to the right. In this way, <sup>10</sup> what such one needs, this is <sup>11</sup> what the entire right needs, <sup>12</sup> which it draws from what has become deficient, and the right <sup>13</sup> receives it from <sup>14</sup> the left side, <sup>15</sup> in this way, the <sup>16</sup> number becomes hundred.

The symbol of their <sup>17</sup> sound is the Father. <sup>18</sup> Even on the Sabbath, when he had <sup>19</sup> found the sheep that had fallen into <sup>20</sup> a pit, he worked over <sup>21</sup> the sheep, kept it alive when he had carried it up from <sup>22</sup> the pit, in order that you <sup>23</sup> intellectually will understand what the <sup>24</sup> Sabbath is, when it is not fitting for <sup>25</sup> the salvation to be idle, <sup>26</sup> in order that you will speak out <sup>27</sup> of the day, which is from above, this <sup>28</sup> that has no night, <sup>29</sup> and out of the light that does not <sup>30</sup> set because it is perfect!

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<sup>38</sup>Other translations have rendered the initial 'because' **ⲗⲉ** in an unspecific manner. In my translation it is taken up in 31.6. The two **ⲗⲏⲣⲱ** in 31.2 and 31.3 makes sense if they are treated as a Greek **καὶ καὶ** 'and— even.'

(31) Because the material ones were not able to see his image, nor could they even recognise him, as he appeared in a fleshly form. Consequently, the material ones were foreign to Jesus no one could block his way, because incorruptibility is unseizability!

In a new way, Jesus again told what he already had told about what is in the Father's intellect. As he <sup>12</sup> had brought forth the <sup>13</sup> flawless Word, since the <sup>14</sup> light and <sup>15</sup> his voice that <sup>16</sup> gave birth to life had spoken through his mouth, he gave them <sup>17</sup> thought and intelligence <sup>18</sup> and mercy and salvation and the <sup>19</sup> powerful spirit from <sup>20</sup> the Father's infinity and sweetness.

Punishments and tortures led astray certain persons who were short of mercy, so that they went from the Father's face into error and bondage. Therefore, the Father made punishments and tortures cease, and with power he unchained these persons and reproved them by knowledge.

He became a way for those that had gone astray, and knowledge for those who were ignorant, a discovery for those who had searched, and stability for those who had trembled, purity for those who were defiled, since it is he who is the shepherd who left behind the (32) 99 sheep and searched for the one who had gone astray. He rejoiced when he found it, for 99 is a number expressed with a gesture of the left hand. But when the one is found, the sum total transfers to the right hand. In this way the thing that is in need of 1, namely the whole right hand, draws what is missing, and takes it from the left-hand so that it transfers to the right hand. And thus the number becomes 100.

Their cry means 'Father.' He found the sheep that had fallen into a pit. Even on the Sabbath he worked over it and lifted it. When he had carried it up from the pit, he kept it alive. This was in order that you interiorly will understand what the Sabbath is. It is the day when it is not fitting for the salvation to be idle. And the Father made this in order that you might speak out of the day, which is from above and has no night. And that you might speak out of the light that does not set because it is perfect!

<sup>31</sup> Now, speak out of intellect because <sup>32</sup> you are the day that is <sup>33</sup> perfect, and the light <sup>34</sup> that does not set dwells in you. <sup>35</sup> Speak about the truth together with those who search <sup>36</sup> for it, and the knowledge for those who <sup>37</sup> have sinned in their error. <sup>38</sup> You are the children of the intellectual <sup>39</sup> understanding. **(33)** Make steady the feet of <sup>2</sup> those who have stumbled, and stretch out your <sup>3</sup> hands to those who are sick, feed those <sup>4</sup> who are hungry, and to those who are <sup>5</sup> weary give repose, to those who are <sup>6</sup> awake, and so wish, <sup>7</sup> raise them up, awaken those who are <sup>8</sup> asleep, for it is you who are the <sup>9</sup> unsheathed intelligence. If the strength becomes like this, it <sup>10</sup> truly strengthens!

<sup>11</sup> Pay attention to <sup>12</sup> yourselves. Do not pay attention to <sup>13</sup> others (other things), that is, those you have <sup>14</sup> discarded. To what you <sup>15</sup> have vomited forth do not return in order to <sup>16</sup> eat it. Do not be <sup>17</sup> moth-eaten. Do not be worm-eaten, for you have already <sup>18</sup> cast it off. <sup>19</sup> Do not become <sup>20</sup> a place for the Devil, for you have <sup>21</sup> already defeated him. <sup>22</sup> Do not add strength to your impediments ;for; those <sup>23</sup> who fall, because it is a support. <sup>24</sup> For the <sup>25</sup> lawless person will do no more wrong than the lawful person. For the <sup>26</sup> former <sup>27</sup> does his works because he is <sup>28</sup> lawless. But the latter, because he is <sup>29</sup> ‘lawful,’ does <sup>30</sup> his works among others. <sup>31</sup> Now, do the Father’s will <sup>32</sup> because you are from him! <sup>33</sup> For the Father is sweet and <sup>34</sup> in his will is goodness <sup>35</sup> he has known what belongs to <sup>36</sup> you in order that you might receive <sup>37</sup> rest. For from the <sup>38</sup> fruits they know to whom you <sup>39</sup> belong.

Because the Father’s children **(34)** are his fragrance, because they come forth <sup>2</sup> from the grace of his <sup>3</sup> face, therefore, the Father loves his <sup>4</sup> fragrance and he reveals it <sup>5</sup> everywhere And when it mingles <sup>6</sup> with matter, he gives his fragrance <sup>7</sup> to the light, and through his silence he causes <sup>8</sup> it to exceed every form ;and; every <sup>9</sup> sound. For it is not the ears that <sup>10</sup> smell the fragrance, rather it is <sup>11</sup> the Spirit that smells the <sup>12</sup> fragrance, and it draws it to itself for <sup>13</sup> itself, and it sinks <sup>14</sup> into the Father’s fragrance and thus shelters <sup>15</sup> it ;and; takes it to the place from <sup>16</sup> which it has come forth, <sup>17</sup> out from the first fragrance, which <sup>18</sup> has grown cold, and<sup>39</sup> it is a <sup>19</sup> soul-endowed delusion, being is <sup>20</sup> just as water <sup>21</sup> that has frozen. Having sunk, it is like earth that <sup>22</sup> is not solid, that when those who <sup>23</sup> see it suppose that it is <sup>24</sup> earth.

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<sup>39</sup>Normally the text has been interpreted as **ⲟⲩⲣⲉⲓ ⲉⲛⲏ** but it makes more sense to treat it as the northern Egyptian conjunction **ⲟⲩⲣⲉⲓⲉⲛⲏ**.

Now, speak out of intellect because you are the day that is perfect, and the light that does not set dwells in you. Speak about the truth together with those who search for it and the knowledge for those who have sinned in their error. You are the children of the interior understanding. **(33)** Make steady the feet of those who have stumbled, and stretch out your hands to those who are sick, feed those who are hungry, and to those who are weary give repose, to those who are awake, and so wish, raise them up, awaken those who are asleep, for it is you who are the unsheathed intelligence. If the strength becomes like this, it truly strengthens!

Pay attention to yourselves. Do not pay attention to 'those others' that you have discarded. Do not return in order to eat what you have vomited forth. Do not be corrupted and worm-eaten, for you have already cast it off. Do not become a dwelling-place for the Devil for you have already defeated him. Remove your stumbling-block! Because for those who fall, the removal would be a support. For the lawless person will do no more wrong than the lawful person. For the former does his works because he is lawless. But the latter, because he is 'lawful,' does his works among 'the others.'

Now, because you are from the Father, do the Father's will. For the Father is sweet and in his will is goodness. He has had knowledge of what belongs to you in order that you might receive rest. For from your fruits people will know to whom you belong.

The Father's children **(34)** are his fragrance, and they come forth from the grace of his face. For these reasons, the Father loves his fragrance and he reveals it everywhere.

When the fragrance mingles with matter, the Father enlightens the fragrance. And through his silence he causes it to exceed every form and every sound. For it is not the ears that smell, but the Spirit that smells the fragrance and draws it to itself. And the Spirit sinks into the Father's fragrance. In this way the Spirit shelters the fragrance and takes it to the place from which it came forth. And the Spirit takes it out from the fragrance that first had grown cold, and is a soul-endowed delusion. It is just as frozen water. When the fragrance has sunk, it becomes as porous earth. Those who see it suppose that it is earth.

Afterwards, it loosens up <sup>25</sup> again when it is breathed in and <sup>26</sup> warmed up. Now, cold fragrances <sup>27</sup> are from division. <sup>28</sup> Therefore, Faith <sup>29</sup> came, loosened up the division, <sup>30</sup> and brought the Fullness that <sup>31</sup> is warm of love, in order that <sup>32</sup> the coldness should not return, <sup>33</sup> but the Unity of the <sup>34</sup> complete thought.

This *jisj* the word of the good news<sup>40</sup> <sup>36</sup> of the coming<sup>41</sup> of the Fullness <sup>37</sup> for those who await the **(35)** salvation, this<sup>42</sup> which will come <sup>2</sup> from above. <sup>3</sup> As their hope, <sup>4</sup> which they await, which is their image, the <sup>5</sup> light that has no shadow <sup>6</sup> in it, awaits.

Indeed, at that time <sup>7</sup> the <sup>8</sup> Fullness was on its way while <sup>9</sup> the lack that belongs to matter had not come into being. <sup>10</sup> Through the infinity of the Father <sup>11</sup> who was coming, he<sup>43</sup> bestowed time upon the <sup>12</sup> lack. Of course, no person <sup>13</sup> could say in what <sup>14</sup> way the incorruptible would come. On the contrary, the <sup>15</sup> Father's depth <sup>16</sup> is immense and it is <sup>17</sup> not with him that the thought <sup>18</sup> of Error resides. <sup>19</sup> It is a fallen thing. It is a thing that can easily be made <sup>20</sup> upright through the discovery of him <sup>21</sup> who came to that which he would <sup>22</sup> bring back, for the return is <sup>23</sup> called repentance.

<sup>24</sup> Therefore, incorruptibility <sup>25</sup> breathed forth, followed <sup>26</sup> the one that had sinned, in order to <sup>27</sup> bring him to repose. For the forgiveness is <sup>28</sup> the remainder to the light in the lack, <sup>29</sup> the Word of Fullness!

<sup>30</sup> For the physician hurries to the place <sup>31</sup> in which sickness is, since <sup>32</sup> that is the will that is in him. <sup>33</sup> Now, the deficient person does not hide <sup>34</sup> it (himself) since he<sup>44</sup> has what <sup>35</sup> he<sup>45</sup> needs. Thus the <sup>36</sup> Fullness, which has no lack, <sup>37</sup> but which through itself fills the lack *withj* what **(36)** it bestowed of itself to <sup>2</sup> the one in order that he, <sup>3</sup> indeed might receive grace, because <sup>4</sup> when he was deficient, he did not have <sup>5</sup> the grace.

Therefore, <sup>6</sup> there was diminution, which exists <sup>7</sup> where there is no grace.

<sup>40</sup>On pages 16-18 the Greek word *πεταρτελιον* was used, while here it is translated to Coptic.

<sup>41</sup>I emend to 'the coming' *ⲡⲧⲃⲓⲛⲉⲓ*, while others have preferred 'the discovery' that would imply the emendation *ⲁⲛⲃⲓⲛⲉ*.

<sup>42</sup>Refers to coming.

<sup>43</sup>On basis of the fragment in NHC XII.2 I emend from *ⲁⲧⲠ ⲟⲩⲁⲉⲓⲱ* to *ⲁⲑⲧ Ⲡⲟⲩⲁⲉⲓⲱ*.

<sup>44</sup>The physician.

<sup>45</sup>The deficient person.

But when the Spirit breaths it in and warms it up, it loosens up again. Now, cold fragrances are from division. Therefore, Faith came and brought the Fullness that is warm of love in order that the coldness never should return but the Unity of the complete thought should rule.

This is the account of the good news about the coming of the fullness. It is **(35)** the salvation that will come from above for those who await it. Their hope is their image and the shadowless light. They await the hope as it awaits them. Indeed, while the lack that belongs to matter yet had not come into being, the fullness was already on its way. Through the infinity of the coming Father, the Father bestowed time upon the lack. Of course, no person could say in what way the incorruptible would come. On the contrary, the Father's depth is immense and it is not with him that the thought of Error resides. It is a fall, but a fall that can easily be made upright through the discovery of him who came to that which he would bring back, for the return is called repentance!

Therefore, incorruptibility breathed forth and followed the sinner in order to bring him to repose. For the forgiveness is the Word of Fullness that the light in the lack still needed.

Now, the wish of the physician is to hurry to the place in which there is sickness in order to provide the deficient person with what is needed, and the deficient person does not hide the deficiency for the physician. Thus the fullness, which has no lack, through its fullness **(36)** bestowed the deficient one with grace, because it was this he really needed!

Therefore, there was diminution, it occurs where there is no grace,

<sup>8</sup> When the diminished part was received, <sup>9</sup> he who needed it (him) <sup>10</sup> appeared as Fullness <sup>11</sup> that is the discovery of the light <sup>12</sup> of the truth that has risen upon him since it is <sup>13</sup> immutable.

Therefore,<sup>46</sup> The Christ, <sup>14</sup> publically <sup>15</sup> they spoke about him in order that<sup>47</sup> <sup>16</sup> those who were disturbed might return to him and that he might anoint <sup>17</sup> them with the ointment. This ointment is <sup>18</sup> the mercy of the Father who will have mercy <sup>19</sup> on them. And those whom he anointed are those who <sup>20</sup> have become completed. <sup>21</sup> For full jars are <sup>22</sup> ointed. And whenever <sup>23</sup> the ointment of one<sup>48</sup> is ruined <sup>24</sup> it leaks open, and <sup>25</sup> the cause of the deficiency is the thing <sup>26</sup> by which the ointment goes, <sup>27</sup> for at that time, <sup>28</sup> a breath and<sup>49</sup> <sup>29</sup> the power that belongs to it draws it out.<sup>50</sup> <sup>30</sup> But from that which is <sup>31</sup> not deficient no seal is <sup>32</sup> removed nor is anything emptied, <sup>33</sup> but what he lacks, the <sup>34</sup> perfect Father fills again.

<sup>35</sup> He is good. He knows his <sup>36</sup> plantings because it is he who <sup>37</sup> planted them in his paradise, <sup>38</sup> and the paradise <sup>39</sup> is his place of repose. This **(37)** is the completion in <sup>2</sup> the Father's thought, <sup>3</sup> and they are the words of his meditation. <sup>4</sup> Each of his words <sup>5</sup> is the work of <sup>6</sup> his will and the revelation of <sup>7</sup> his speaking. Since when they constituted the <sup>8</sup> depth of his thought, the Word, <sup>9</sup> which first came forth, revealed them and a <sup>10</sup> mind that <sup>11</sup> speaks the word and<sup>51</sup> <sup>12</sup> a silent grace. They called it (him) <sup>13</sup> 'the thought,' since they <sup>14</sup> dwelled in it without becoming revealed.

<sup>15</sup> Now, it happened that <sup>16</sup> it first came forth, when it <sup>17</sup> pleased the will of <sup>18</sup> him who willed. <sup>19</sup> And the will is what the Father <sup>20</sup> rests in, and <sup>21</sup> is pleased with. Nothing happens <sup>22</sup> without it (him) nor does <sup>23</sup> anything happen without the will of <sup>24</sup> the Father. But his will is incomprehensible. <sup>25</sup> His will is his <sup>26</sup> imprint, and no one <sup>27</sup> will comprehend it nor does he <sup>28</sup> exist in a way that he might be observed in order to be <sup>29</sup> grasped. But <sup>30</sup> when he wills, what he willed <sup>31</sup> that is, even if <sup>32</sup> the sight is not pleasing, some are nothing <sup>33</sup> in the presence of God's divine <sup>34</sup> will.

<sup>46</sup>A possible reading is 'About the coming,' referring to the coming of Christ.

<sup>47</sup>As Thomassen 2002 p. 116 seems to do, I emend **ϣινηε** that means 'seek' to **ϣιηα** that means 'in order that.'

<sup>48</sup>Jar.

<sup>49</sup>I read it as **ορειζορν** 'and.'

<sup>50</sup>The contents of the jar.

<sup>51</sup>I read **ορειζορν** 'and.'

and when the one who lacked received the diminished part he appeared as fullness. This manifestation of the fullness is the discovery of the light of the truth that has risen upon such person since it is immutable.

Therefore, they publicly spoke about Christ in order that those who are disturbed might return to him and be anointed. This ointment is the mercy of the merciful Father.' And Christ anointed those who had become completed. For one usually anoints full jars. Otherwise a jar would leak open when the ointment is loosened up. The deficiency is caused by the damaged spot through which the ointment pours out. Because when the ointment is damaged a strong wind draws out the contents of the jar. But from the jar which is not deficient no seal is removed nor is anything emptied. But if anything anyway should be missing, the perfect Father fills it again.

The Father is good. He knows his plantings because it is he who planted them in his paradise that is the Father's place of repose. This **(37)** is the completion in the Father's thought and the plantings are the expressions of his meditation. Each expression is the work of his will and the revelation of his speaking. The expressions constitute the depth of the Father's thought. First at that time, the Word came forth. It revealed the expressions, and it revealed a mind that pronounced the Word, and it revealed a silent grace. The depth they called 'the thought,' since before they became revealed, the expressions dwelled in the silent grace. Now, the Word was the first to come forth from the silent grace. It was when it pleased the one who willed it. And the will is the Father's resting-place and what he is pleased with. Nothing comes to pass without what pleases the Father, nor does anything happen without the father's will. But his will is incomprehensible and his imprint. No one will comprehend his will nor is the Father someone who can be observed and grasped. But when the Father wills, what he wills becomes real even if this reality is not pleasing for some who are nothing in the presence of God's divine will.

For he knows the <sup>35</sup> beginning and the end of them all, <sup>36</sup> for at their end he will question them <sup>37</sup> directly. And the end is the reception of knowledge <sup>38</sup> about the hidden, and that is the Father, **(38)** the one from whom the beginning came <sup>2</sup> forth, the one to whom all who have come forth from him will <sup>3</sup> return. <sup>4</sup> And they appeared, <sup>5</sup> glorified and <sup>6</sup> rejoiced in his name <sup>7</sup> and the Father's name is the Son!

<sup>8</sup> It is he who in the beginning named <sup>9</sup> the one who came forth from him who indeed was, and <sup>10</sup> he begot him (it) as a Son. <sup>11</sup> He gave him his name that <sup>12</sup> belonged to him. It is what belongs to <sup>13</sup> him as all things that are surrounded <sup>14</sup> by the Father. <sup>16</sup> The Son it is possible to see, but <sup>17</sup> his name is invisible, because <sup>18</sup> it (he) itself (himself) is <sup>19</sup> the invisible mystery <sup>20</sup> that comes to the ears that are <sup>21</sup> entirely filled with it. For <sup>22</sup> the Father's name is not spoken, <sup>23</sup> but it IS manifest as a <sup>24</sup> Son. Indeed, thus great is the name!

<sup>25</sup> Now, who is able to utter a name for him, <sup>26</sup> the great name, <sup>27</sup> unless he himself to whom the name belongs? <sup>28</sup> and the children of the name, <sup>29</sup> those in whom the Father's name <sup>30</sup> rested, in <sup>31</sup> their turn themselves rested <sup>32</sup> in his name?

Because the Father is <sup>33</sup> unengendered, he alone was <sup>34</sup> the one who himself bore him as his name.

<sup>35</sup> Before he had put the eternal <sup>36</sup> ones in order so that the Father's name might be <sup>37</sup> over their head as Lord, that is **(39)** the true name, which is confirmed by <sup>2</sup> his command through perfect <sup>3</sup> power.

Because this name does not <sup>4</sup> result from words, nor does his name consist of <sup>5</sup> acts of naming, <sup>6</sup> but his name is invisible. <sup>7</sup> He alone named him, <sup>8</sup> since he alone sees him <sup>9</sup> who himself <sup>10</sup> is the one who is able to name him.

<sup>11</sup> Because what does not <sup>12</sup> exist has no name, <sup>13</sup> for what name would be given to him, <sup>14</sup> 'the one who is nonexistent?' <sup>15</sup> but the one who exists, <sup>16</sup> exists together with his name as well, <sup>17</sup> he alone knows <sup>18</sup> him, and he alone is able to name <sup>19</sup> him, and his name is the <sup>20</sup> Son! Now, he did not hide <sup>22</sup> it in this event, <sup>23</sup> but it (he) existed, <sup>24</sup> the Son named himself. Indeed, the name belongs to the Father, <sup>25</sup> just as the <sup>26</sup> Father's name is the Son, the innermost part of him.

For the Father knows the beginning and the end of them all. For at their end the Father will question them directly. And the end is the reception of knowledge about the hidden that is the Father, **(38)** the one from whom the beginning came forth. Everyone who came forth from him will return to him. And those who came forth from him appeared, glorified and rejoiced in his name. And the Father's name is the Son!

In the beginning the Father named the one that came forth from him, and who indeed already was, the Father begot him as a Son. He gave him his name that belonged to him. It is what belongs to him as all things that are surrounded by the Father. To him belongs the name. To him belongs the Son. The Son can be seen, but the name is invisible because it itself is the invisible mystery that comes to the ears that are entirely filled with it. For the Father's name is not spoken, but it manifests itself as a Son. Indeed, thus great is the name!

Now, who is able to utter a name for him, the great name, unless he himself to whom the name belongs? And who are able to utter it unless the children of the name in whom the Father's name rested, and who in turn themselves rested in his name? Because the Father is unengendered, he alone was the one who himself bore him as his name. Before he had put the Eternal ones in order so that the Father's name might be over their head as Lord, that is **(39)** the true name, which is confirmed by his command through perfect power.

Because this name is no result of mere words, nor does it consist of acts of naming, but his name is invisible. He alone named him, since he alone sees him who himself is the one who is able to name him.

What does not exist has no name, for what name would be given to him, 'the one who is nonexistent?' but the one who exists does it together with his name as well.

Now, the Son did not hide his name in this event, but it existed in him, and the Son named himself. Indeed, the name belongs to the Father just as the Father's name is the Son, the innermost part of him.

<sup>27</sup> For where would he find a name <sup>28</sup> except from the Father? But no <sup>29</sup> doubt someone will say <sup>30</sup> to his neighbour: <sup>31</sup> ‘Who is it that will give a name to him who <sup>32</sup> existed before him, <sup>33</sup> as if offspring do not receive the name (40) from those who begot them?’

Now, <sup>2</sup> it is fitting for us <sup>3</sup> to consider what <sup>4</sup> thing the name <sup>5</sup> is. It is the <sup>6</sup> true name. Indeed, it is not the <sup>7</sup> name from the <sup>8</sup> parent because <sup>9</sup> it is what exists as the proper name. Indeed, he did <sup>10</sup> not receive the name on loan as <sup>11</sup> other *names*<sub>i</sub> according to the form in which <sup>12</sup> each one is <sup>13</sup> created. <sup>14</sup> But this is the proper name, and there is no one <sup>15</sup> else who gave it to <sup>16</sup> him. Rather, he is <sup>17</sup> unnameable, ineffable<sup>52</sup> <sup>18</sup> until the time when he who <sup>19</sup> is complete spoke of him <sup>20</sup> himself. And it is he who <sup>21</sup> has the power to utter <sup>22</sup> his name and to see <sup>23</sup> him.

Now, when it pleased <sup>24</sup> him that his name <sup>25</sup> that he loved should be his Son. And <sup>26</sup> he gave the name to him, that is he <sup>27</sup> who came forth from the depth. He <sup>28</sup> spoke about his secret things, <sup>29</sup> knowing that the Father is without evil. <sup>30</sup> For that very reason, he brought him <sup>31</sup> forth in order to speak <sup>32</sup> about the place, and his <sup>32</sup> resting-place, from which he had come <sup>33</sup> forth, (41) and to glorify the Fullness, <sup>2</sup> the greatness of his name and <sup>3</sup> the Father’s sweetness!

The place <sup>4</sup> that each one <sup>5</sup> has come forth <sup>6</sup> from, he will speak about it, and the <sup>7</sup> region through which each one received their establishment, <sup>8</sup> each one will hasten to return <sup>9</sup> to it, and to take from that place, the place <sup>10</sup> where each one <sup>11</sup> stood, each one receiving a taste from <sup>12</sup> that place, and receiving <sup>13</sup> nourishment, receiving growth and their own <sup>14</sup> resting-place is his Fullness.

Indeed, <sup>15</sup> all the Father’s gifts are <sup>16</sup> Fullnesses, and all his <sup>17</sup> gifts are rooted in the <sup>18</sup> one who caused them <sup>19</sup> all to sprout out of him. He has set their <sup>20</sup> limits.<sup>53</sup>

Now, each one is <sup>21</sup> revealed <sup>22</sup> in order that through their <sup>23</sup> own thought *i—i* <sup>24</sup> For the place to which they send their <sup>25</sup> thought that place *isi* <sup>26</sup> their root that takes them <sup>27</sup> up in all the heights <sup>28</sup> to the Father, having his <sup>29</sup> head as rest for them, <sup>30</sup> and they hold themselves <sup>31</sup> close to <sup>32</sup> him, as if they <sup>33</sup> received kisses from his face.

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<sup>52</sup>Emend to **πe** .

<sup>53</sup>the word can also be translated with ‘destiny.’ Limit is a technical term that is common in Valentinianism.

For where would he find a name except from the Father?

But no doubt someone will say to his neighbour: ‘Who is it that will give a name to him who existed before him, as if offspring do not receive the name (40) from those who begot them?’

Now, it is fitting for us to consider what thing the name is. It is the true name. Indeed, it is not the kind of name that one receives from the parent because it is what exists as the proper name. Indeed, he did not receive the name on loan as other names one receives according to the form in which each one is created. But this is the proper name and there is no one <sup>15</sup> else who gave it to him. Rather he is unnameable, ineffable until the time when he who is complete spoke of him himself. And it is he who has the power to utter his name and to see him.

Now, when it pleased him that his name that he loved should be his Son. And he gave the name to him that came forth from the depth. He spoke about his secret things, knowing that the Father is without evil. For that very reason, he brought him forth in order to speak about his resting-place, from which he had come forth, (41) and to glorify the Fullness, the greatness of his name and the Father’s sweetness!

He will speak about the place from which each one has come forth, and about the region through which they all received their establishment, and to which each one will hasten to return, the place where they stood, receiving a taste from it and nourishment and growth. This is their own resting-place, his Fullness.

Indeed, all the Father’s gifts are Fullnesses that are rooted in the one who caused them to sprout. He has set their limits.

Now, each one is revealed in order that through their own thought  $j—j$  For the place to which they send their thought that place is their root that takes them up in all the heights to the Father, having his head as rest for them, they hold themselves close to him, as if they received kisses from his face.

But they are not manifested **(42)** in such manner <sup>2</sup> because they have exalted themselves, <sup>3</sup> nor have they diminished the glory of the <sup>4</sup> Father, nor did they think of him <sup>5</sup> as small, nor that he is harsh <sup>6</sup> nor that he is wrathful, rather that he is without <sup>7</sup> evil, imperturbable, <sup>8</sup> sweet, knowing <sup>8</sup> everything before it has come into being, and <sup>10</sup> he does not need to be <sup>11</sup> instructed.

This is the manner of <sup>12</sup> those to whom the <sup>13</sup> heavenly things of the <sup>14</sup> immeasurable greatness belong, as they <sup>15</sup> strain towards the unity itself, <sup>16</sup> and the complete one who is <sup>17</sup> there for them.

And they do not go down <sup>18</sup> to Hades, nor have they <sup>19</sup> envy nor <sup>20</sup> groaning nor death within <sup>21</sup> them, on the contrary, they rest <sup>22</sup> in him who is at <sup>23</sup> rest, not striving nor being <sup>24</sup> entangled in the <sup>25 26</sup> search for truth, rather it is what they themselves are, the truth! And the Father <sup>27</sup> is within them, and <sup>28</sup> they are in the Father, being <sup>29</sup> completed, undivided <sup>30</sup> in the truly good one, imparting no <sup>31</sup> defect to anything, but rather <sup>32</sup> imparting repose and being fresh in <sup>33</sup> spirit. And it is to their <sup>34</sup> root that they will listen, concerned with <sup>35</sup> things in which he might find his root, <sup>36</sup> and not damage his <sup>37</sup> soul. This is the place of the <sup>38</sup> blessed. This is <sup>39</sup> their place.

Now, may the rest **(43)** understand in their own places that <sup>2</sup> it is not fitting for me <sup>3</sup> for I have been in the place of repose, <sup>4</sup> to speak about other things, but it<sup>54</sup> that I <sup>5</sup> shall be in, <sup>6</sup> continually being concerned with the Father of the <sup>7</sup> All and of the <sup>8</sup> true brothers, upon whom the <sup>9</sup> Father's love is poured out, and in whose midst there is no <sup>10</sup> lack of him, <sup>11</sup> those who <sup>12</sup> truly and obviously are in <sup>13</sup> the true and eternal life.

And <sup>14</sup> they speak of the light that is <sup>15</sup> perfect and filled of <sup>16</sup> the Father's seed and of <sup>17</sup> what is in his intellect and <sup>18</sup> Fullness.

His spirit rejoices <sup>19</sup> in it,<sup>55</sup> and it glorifies <sup>20</sup> him in what it is. <sup>21</sup> For he is good,<sup>56</sup> and his children are <sup>22</sup> complete and <sup>23</sup> worthy of his name. For indeed, such are the <sup>24</sup> children that the Father loves.

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<sup>54</sup>The place.

<sup>55</sup>The place of repose or the Fullness.

<sup>56</sup>A **πε** has to be added in order to construe a nominal clause.

But they are not manifested **(42)** in such manner because they have exalted themselves, nor because they have diminished the glory of the Father, or thought of him as small, harsh or wrathful. On the contrary, they think that he is without evil, imperturbable, sweet, knowing everything before it has come into being and without need to be instructed.

This is the manner of those to whom the heavenly things of the immeasurable greatness belong, as they strain towards the unity itself, and towards the complete one who is there for them.

And they do not go down to Hades, nor have they envy, or groaning or death within themselves. On the contrary, they rest in him who is at rest, not striving nor being entangled in the search for truth, it is they themselves who are the truth! And the Father is within them, and they are in the Father, being completed, undivided in the truly good one, they impart no defect to anything. On the contrary, they impart repose as they are fresh in spirit. And it is to their root that they will listen, concerned with things in which he might find his root not damaging his soul. This is the place of the blessed. This is their place.

Now, may the rest **(43)** understand in their own places that it is not fitting for me who has been in the place of repose to speak about other things. I will only speak about the place in which I shall be, continually being concerned with the Father of the All and of the true brothers, upon whom the Father's love is poured out, and in whose midst there is no lack of him, those who truly and obviously are in the true and eternal life.

And they speak of the light that is perfect, filled of the Father's seed and of what is in his intellect and Fullness.

His spirit rejoices in the Fullness, and it glorifies him in what it is. For he is good, and his children are complete and worthy of his name. For indeed, such are the children that the Father loves.



## Chapter 5

# The Gospel of Truth and Valentinian discourse

As was stated in the first chapter, an investigation of the nature of the Saviour's body and of the soteriology of the GospTruth are important issues when we want to make clear whether the GospTruth should be placed in the eastern Valentinian framework. In order to carry out such an investigation on relatively few pages, I have chosen to analyse one central concept: 'The All.' Of importance is whether 'the All' is the Saviour's body according to the Valentinian theology described in chapter one, and whether it includes more than one group of beings, which would make it more likely to adhere to the eastern school. As a bonus the investigation probably will provide us with additional information that will deepen our general understanding of the GospTruth.

### The All and earlier definitions

ⲡⲧⲏⲣⲉ *pterf* is one of the most central concepts in the GospTruth. It has been rendered with 'the totality,'<sup>1</sup> 'the entirety'<sup>2</sup> and with 'the All'<sup>3</sup>. In German and French the translations have been 'das All,' and 'le Tout' respectively. All these translations in a good way render the Coptic *pterf* and the choice primarily is a matter of taste. Even though the translation is fairly straightforward, and although 'everything' ought to be included in 'the All,' scholars have proposed different definitions of it. Thus, it is fitting to begin with a discussion of this problem.

Literally *pterf* means 'the everything.' Even though it in the GospTruth

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<sup>1</sup>Attridge & Macrae 1985a.

<sup>2</sup>Layton 1987.

<sup>3</sup>Grant 1961.

always occurs in the singular with the masculine definite article and suffix, **πτηρῃ** *terfp* it is frequently combined with verb forms in plural. It probably reproduces the Greek το παν in singular, but also τα παντα and οι παντες in plural. Thus, we have to reckon with that it both refers to a group as a collective unity, but also to its plurality of individual members. Anyhow it is far from clear what the concept includes. In what follows we will first discuss some suggested definitions of ‘the All,’ and then turn to an analysis of this problematic concept.

### The maximalistic view

Grobel<sup>4</sup> translates with ‘the totality of creatures.’ He comments as follows:

‘Totality of creatures’ is chosen so as to include all men but exclude neither supernatural beings nor all created things, though clearly persons are primarily intended, probably human. The totality of the Eons conceivably might sometimes be meant.  
5

The reason to include all created things in the definition depends on the interpretation of **χιῖ ἑαθεν πτηρῃ κατὰβολη ἑαπτηρῃ** in 20.1-2. I render it with ‘From before the foundation of all things.’ Even though *pterf* occurs in 20.2, there are reasons to assume that it refers to something else than the same expression in 17.5 does. In the Sahidic New Testament the combination of **χιῖ** and **κατὰβολη** occurs in Mathew 25:34, Luke 11:50, Hebrews 4:3, 9:26 and Revelations 13:8 17:8.<sup>6</sup> The combination of **ἑαθεν** and **κατὰβολη** occurs in John 17:24, Ephesians 1:4, 1 Peter 1:20. In all these examples **κατὰβολη** is followed by **κοσμος** ‘world.’ Consequently, it is unlikely that the author of the GospTruth would have used these expressions if simply the creation of the spiritual beings was intended. On the other hand it would not be surprising if the users of the GospTruth hesitated to utilize a word as **κοσμος**. If, *kosmos* had been used it would probably have led the thoughts solely to the material world. Due to the antic cosmic tendency that is stronger in the GospTruth than for instance in the TripTrac<sup>7</sup> the use of **κοσμος** is avoided. On 21.1-2 both the spiritual and material universe might be included. Normally however, *pterf* refers to an actor with consciousness and ability to act<sup>8</sup> that has need of the Father.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>4</sup>Grobel 1960.

<sup>5</sup>Grobel 1960, p. 39.

<sup>6</sup>The electronic Sahidic New Testament from Packhard Humanities Institute.

<sup>7</sup>See the discussion regarding Error on pages 87-92.

<sup>8</sup>For instance 17.5.

<sup>9</sup>For instance 18.35, 19.9 and 21.10.

*ptarf* is made by the Father<sup>10</sup> and it has been fashioned by him.<sup>11</sup> Even though *ptarf* is inside of the Father<sup>12</sup> it has come forth from him.<sup>13</sup> In the GospTruth The Father and his offspring are contrasted with the material sphere that belongs to Error.<sup>14</sup> It is therefore unlikely that the All that belongs to the spiritual sphere of the Father also would include material things. Accordingly, the *ptarf* in 20.2 with regard to the form is equivalent to the term in for instance 17.5, but the terms refer to different entities. On this ground I translate them differently, and 20.2 will not be included in the analysis of the All.

Therefore we have to determine when *ptarf* denotes an actor with needs and consciousness, and when other uses of the same term are applied.

*ptarf* in 25.22 is a difficult case. I have rendered it with ‘the All’ although ‘everything’ also would be a good choice. In 28.23 the reference is very general and is thus translated with ‘everything.’

To sum up, Grobel’s maximalistic definition of *ptarf* seems to be too wide, as I in a few cases when the concept seems to refer to something without consciousness have to use other translations than ‘the All.’

### The minimalistic view

Ludin Jansen<sup>15</sup> puts forward what will be referred to as the minimalistic view. He suggests that ‘the All’ refers to the spiritual spark in human beings.<sup>16</sup> His argumentation runs as follows: 1. The Father created the all. 2. The completion of the All is inside of the Father.<sup>17</sup> From this Ludin Jansen concludes that the All is an imperfect creation<sup>18</sup> with its perfection inside of the Father. In a ‘fall’ one part became alienated from the Father, whereas another part remained in the Father’s harmony. In this way ‘the All’ simultaneously exists inside and outside of the Father.<sup>19</sup> Ludin Jansen’s suggestion raises a crucial problem. What is the difference of ‘the All’ inside of the Father compared with ‘the all’ outside of him? For the moment we leave this question pending in order to return to it later in this chapter.

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<sup>10</sup>18.34.

<sup>11</sup>19.8.

<sup>12</sup>17.6, 18.34, 19.8.

<sup>13</sup>17.5.

<sup>14</sup>17.15-16, 31.1-4.

<sup>15</sup>Ludin Jansen 1968, pp. 115-118.

<sup>16</sup>Ludin Jansen 1968, p. 118.

<sup>17</sup>18.34-38.

<sup>18</sup>Ludin Jansen 1968, p. 116.

<sup>19</sup>17.5-7 and 22.24-26.

### The intermediate view

What I call the ‘intermediate view’ was put forward by Layton who defines ‘the All’ in the following way: ‘it refers especially to spiritual reality as alienated from its source.’<sup>20</sup> With this definition ‘the All’ is not restricted to mankind. In this manner it is closer to ‘the maximalistic view.’ However, as the ‘minimalistic view’ it stresses the alienation, although Ludin Jansen in his attempt expressed it as imperfection. We now leave the survey of earlier definitions and turn to an analysis of ‘the All’ in order to find a more precise understanding of this concept.

### The birth of the All in two steps

In 17.4 a protological myth begins in which ‘the All’ appears for the first time.<sup>21</sup> From 17.4-18 we can draw the following conclusions:

- The All had come forth from the Father and it went about searching for him.
- The state of ignorance of the Father brought anguish and fear that blinded everyone.
- As a result Error gained dominion and in futility produced a substitute for the Truth.
- But in addition we are told that the All was inside of the Father.
- The Father’s magnificent nature made it impossible for the All to comprehend him.

Of the five above given items, the first three relates to the All in an alienated state. The All is able to understand that there is someone for whom it is worth searching. This presupposes individuation on the part of the All, and simultaneously a longing for and need of unification with the Father. The individuation occurs when the all comes forth from its source. Item four and five, probably describes a condition of symbiosis and/or potential existence. The symbiotic state is described as being ‘inside’ of the Father, which is contrasted with the condition of having come forth from him. In addition to the contrast between being inside versus being outside of the Father, another pattern has to be taken into consideration.

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<sup>20</sup>Layton 1987, p. 253.

<sup>21</sup>For a detailed discussion of the philological problems that are related to this passage see pages 65-73.

In the GospTruth two ways of obtaining knowledge about the Father are described. The Father's children get to know him when they are born by him.<sup>22</sup> Before they are born, they lack 'form' **μορφή** and 'name' **ὄνομα**. When the Father wishes he begets his children and thereby brings knowledge to them.<sup>23</sup> In the same context this birth is also called revelation. As being in a womb those who are unborn are hidden in the Father. Thus, the unbegotten are in a formless and nameless state that is characterised by ignorance. If we apply these ideas on the All we can deduce that while it is inside of the Father, it is ignorant, nameless and formless. In this state the Father knows the All that yet only has potential existence.<sup>24</sup> Those with potential existence are distinguished from those who are excluded from the All since they do not exist, and in other words are products of illusions.<sup>25</sup> This depends on that it is the Father who is the source of all kinds of existence.<sup>26</sup> Therefore, the All that has come forth from the Father without obtaining knowledge is described in another way than those who do not exist at all. Since the All is rooted in the Father it exists, but its existence is like a nightmare. The Father wants those who live in this terrifying condition to wake up and see the unreality of the illusions.<sup>27</sup>

From these observations we draw the following conclusions:

- Those who are born in accordance with the Father's will know him and receive form and name by him.
- But those who still dwell within the Father<sup>28</sup> are ignorant until they are begotten.
- But before the All came forth, however, it was equipped with enough intellect that it could know that it needed to search for the Father.

In 18.31-19.16 one part of the All that is called the completion **πλήρωμα** is kept within the Father, while the All has already come forth. The All seems to be like a child that not yet fully has come out of the womb. The process of giving birth is delayed because the Father wants the All to return to him with knowledge and completion. Probably, the All first has to know itself as a separate entity before it knows its root. Thus, the birth is completed according to the Father's will when the whole process of gradually increased knowledge has taken place.

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<sup>22</sup>27.11-15.

<sup>23</sup>27.15-33.

<sup>24</sup>27.30-28.3.

<sup>25</sup>28.16-24.

<sup>26</sup>28.10-24.

<sup>27</sup>28.24-30.14.

<sup>28</sup>17.6b-9.

With this in mind we have an opportunity to understand a passage that long has puzzled scholars.

Since he (Jesus) knew<sup>29</sup> that his death is life for many<sup>30</sup> just as in the case of a will before it is opened, the fortune of the deceased master of the house is concealed, and just as in the case of the All that was concealed, as the Father of the All was invisible, even though the All had come forth from him, the one from whom everything comes forth, therefore Jesus appeared, clothed himself in that book, was nailed to a tree, and published the edict of the Father on the cross.<sup>32</sup>

ΕΠΙΔΗ ΓΑΡ ΠΕ ΧΕ ΠΙΛΟΥ ΠΤΟΟΤΨ ΟΥΩΠΩΠΩΔΩΠΕ ΕΠΡΗΤΕ  
ΠΠΟΥΔΙΔΘΗΚΗ ΕΠΠΑΤΟΥΗΚΗ ΔΡΑΔ ΕΣΩΗΠ ΠΒΙ ΓΟΥΣΙΑ ΕΠΠΕΠ  
ΕΠΠΗΕΙΕΠΤΑΩΜΟΥ ΕΠΡΗΤΕ ΔΕ ΕΠΠΤΗΡΨ ΕΤΕ ΠΕΥΩΗΠ ΕΡΕΠΩΤ  
ΕΠΠΤΗΡΨ Ο ΠΔΩΟΡΑΤΟΣ ΕΟΥΕΕΙ ΔΒΔΛ ΠΩΗΤΨ ΠΕ ΠΕΕΙ ΕΤΕ-  
ΨΑΡΕΜΔΕΙΤ ΠΙΛ ΕΪ ΔΒΔΛ ΩΙΤΟΟΤΨ ΕΤΒΕ ΠΕΕΙ ΔΥΟΥΔΠΩΔΒΔΛ  
ΠΒΙ ΙΗΣ ΔΥΒΔΛΕΥ ΕΠΠΙΧΩΜΕ ΕΤΕΜΕΕΤ ΔΥΔΥΤΨ ΔΥΨΕ ΔΥΤΩΒΕ  
ΕΠΠΔΙΔΤΑΥΜΔ ΔΒΔΛ ΠΤΕ ΠΩΤ ΩΙ ΠΕΣΤΡΟΣ

Thus Jesus' death on the cross uncovers 'the All that was concealed.' I assume that this All is the unbegotten All that was inside of the Father in 17.6-7. In the actual passage, the main problem is in what way we understand ΕΡΕΠΩΤ ΕΠΠΤΗΡΨ Ο ΠΔΩΟΡΑΤΟΣ ΕΟΥΕΕΙ ΔΒΔΛ ΠΩΗΤΨ ΠΕ ΠΕΕΙ ΕΤΕΨΑΡΕΜΔΕΙΤ ΠΙΛ ΕΪ ΔΒΔΛ ΩΙΤΟΟΤΨ. The first clause is either causal or temporal. In order to keep this ambiguity I render it with 'as the Father of the All was invisible.' But the following clause ΕΟΥΕΕΙ ΔΒΔΛ ΠΩΗΤΨ represents the main difficulty in our passage. As Layton<sup>33</sup> I let ΟΥΕΕΙ refer to the concealed All. But the converter in ΕΟΥΕΕΙ Layton probably takes as causal, while Schenke and I treat it as conditional, 'even though.'

... so war auch das All verborgen, solange der Vater des Alls

<sup>29</sup>ΓΑΡ ΠΕ ΧΕ ΠΙΛΟΥ ΠΤΟΟΤΨ ΟΥΩΠΩΠΩΔΩΠΕ is in the present tense. I treat it as a historical present.

<sup>30</sup>This clause has always been subordinated to the preceding text, and that is a perfectly reasonable construal of the syntax. But if we in accordance with my translation subordinate the initial clause to the final part of the actual passage, we obtain the following connection: 'Since he (Jesus) knew that his death is life for many ... therefore Jesus appeared, clothed himself in that book, was nailed to a tree, and published the edict of the Father on the cross.' Then, in a parenthetical manner the intermediate text expounds on the initial clause, and simultaneously prepares the audience for the final part of the paragraph. This construal resembles the one in 17.4-18.<sup>31</sup>

<sup>32</sup>20.13-27.

<sup>33</sup>1987, p. 255.

unsichtbar blieb, obgleich es doch etwas ist, das aus ihm stammt,  
(aus) ihm, durch den jeder Weg kommt.<sup>34</sup>

With my construal of the syntax we reach a similar contrast as in 17.5-7, in which we had the All that had come forth from the Father, and the All that dwelt within him. The logic would be that the Father was invisible for the All as long as the All within him is hidden. When the hidden All has emanated from the Father, it may see the Father and know him. At the same time the Father of the All was invisible for the All that already had come forth from him. Of course this All that errs in the fog of fear and anguish cannot see the Father. With this understanding, I let ‘...as the Father of the All was invisible, the All had come forth from him’ get its tense from the preterit in **ετε περζην** ‘that was concealed.’<sup>35</sup> Schenke and Attridge & MacRae also extend the tense from the preterit, but only to the first of these two clauses. ‘solange der Vater des Alls unsichtbar blieb.’<sup>36</sup> But why the two clauses should differ in tense remains unclear. With the preterit use the following habitual: **πει ετεωδρεμλειτ πιε ει δδδλ ζιτοοτφ** ‘the one from whom everything comes forth’<sup>37</sup> becomes meaningful. It describes an ongoing process of emanation. The appearance of the All is not restricted to a past time. This function of the habitual is clear when contrast it with the preceding preterit constructions.

With Layton’s translation the meaning of the text becomes obscure:

- Since the father of the entirety is invisible - and the entirety derives from him, from whom every way emanated - Jesus appeared, wrapped himself in that document, was nailed to a piece of wood, and published the father’s edict upon the cross. -<sup>38</sup>

With this translation it is hard to see the point that is made of that the All derives from the Father.

Attridge & MacRae treat **ορει** as an indefinite pronoun,<sup>39</sup> which they reproduce with ‘something.’ But from the context it is obvious that they anyway let it refer to the hidden All.

... so (it is) with the totality, which lay hidden while the Father of the totality was invisible, being something which is from him, from whom every space comes forth. For this reason

<sup>34</sup>Schenke 2001, p. 35.

<sup>35</sup>20.18-19.

<sup>36</sup>‘As long as the Father of the All remained invisible.’ For Attridge’s & MacRae’s translation see below.

<sup>37</sup>20.21-22.

<sup>38</sup>Layton 1987, p. 255.

<sup>39</sup>Attridge & MacRae 1985b, p. 59.

Jesus appeared; he put on that book; he was nailed to a tree; he published the edict of the Father on the cross.<sup>40</sup>

An interesting attempt is put forward by Thomassen in his fairly free Norwegian translation:

...slik var Altet skjult sa lenge Altets Far var usynlig - for han som alle rom utgar fra, stammer bare fra seg selv.<sup>41</sup>

In English the translation would be:

...Just as the All was hidden, as long as the Father of the all was invisible - since he, from whom all spaces come forth, derives from himself alone.

Thomassen lets  $\epsilon\omicron\tau\epsilon\epsilon\iota \ \alpha\beta\alpha\lambda \ \nu\zeta\eta\tau\bar{\eta}$  refer to the invisible Father and thereby achieves a three member nominal construal. It has the advantage of that  $\omicron\tau\epsilon\epsilon\iota$  refers to the nearest preceding noun. But nonetheless, it remains unclear why the Father's emanation out of himself should be the reason for his invisibility, and nowadays Thomassen sides with my construal of the syntax.<sup>42</sup>

To sum up, 20.13-27 concerns the birth of the All that was inside of the Father. When the concealed All has appeared the Father no longer is invisible. It makes it likely that the concealed All within the Father is a part of the All that already has come forth from him. This also fits well with what was told in 18.31-19.16. In that context the part that was inside of the Father was not called the concealed All, but the completion of it.

The disclosure of the All, and of the Father as well, takes place when Jesus wraps himself in the edict in which the All was hidden. In the GospTruth this edict normally is called 'the living book of the living,' and in order to understand the constitution of the All we now turn to an investigation of that book.

## The living book of the living

The first time that 'The living book of the living' appears is in 19.34-35. It was disclosed in the intellect of the 'little children.'<sup>43</sup> To these children belonged the knowledge of the Father, and they knew and glorified him

<sup>40</sup> Attridge & MacRae 1985a, p. 87.

<sup>41</sup> Thomassen 2002, p. 106.

<sup>42</sup> Oral information from Thomassen.

<sup>43</sup> 19.27.

when they were taught about the Father's outward manifestation.<sup>44</sup> But the revelation was not merely an intellectual understanding of a message. From the beginning the book dwelt in the Father's thought and mind,<sup>45</sup> but it had to enter the empirical world for the sake of the revelation. But who are those who come forth through the book?

The reason for the need of the manifestation of the book is expressed in a passage that requires some philological remarks.

If that book had not come forward, no one could have appeared through those who had been entrusted with the salvation.  
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**εμπελατε ψοταπ̄δβαλ ρ̄π̄ κ̄ει π̄τατ̄π̄ροττοϋ ᾱπιοϋχεει  
επεμ̄πεχει ετ̄μ̄κτε π̄β̄ι π̄ιχωωμ̄ε ετ̄μ̄μ̄εϋ.**

Even if there are some minor problems in this passage, it is sufficient to focus on the crucial ones. Does **εμπελατε** mean 'no one' or 'nothing?' and what does **π̄τατ̄π̄ροττοϋ** mean?

**π̄ροττοϋ** comes from **παρτε** which according to Crum<sup>47</sup> means 'trust' or 'believe.' 'Believe' has been the normal way of translating the verb in the GospTruth as well.<sup>48</sup> However, this manner of translating fails to render the suffix in **π̄ροττοϋ** that we have in the GospTruth.

In Thomassen's translation he treats **παρτε** as 'entrust,' even if he is more free in his Norwegian translation: 'dem som var utsett til frelse.'<sup>49</sup>

As Crum notes the suffixal form of **παρτε** is attested in the Achmimic translation of 1 Clement 43:1: **ᾱοϋ δ̄ πε π̄μ̄ᾱτ̄ε̄χε πετατ̄π̄ροττοϋ  
αρ̄ζωβ̄ π̄τ̄μ̄ικε ρ̄π̄ κ̄κ̄ ᾱβαλ ρ̄ιτ̄π̄ π̄ποϋητε ᾱτ̄ρ̄ηᾱτ̄ζ̄ικ̄τα  
π̄ πετατ̄ρ̄ζ̄αρ̄π̄ π̄χοοσε.**<sup>50</sup> I translate it as follows: 'What wonder is it that those who by god were entrusted with such work in Christ appointed those before mentioned...?'

When the GospTruth combines **π̄τατ̄π̄ροττοϋ** 'who were entrusted' with **ᾱπιοϋχεει** 'with the salvation,' first Clement combines **πετατ̄π̄ροττοϋ** 'those who were entrusted' with **αρ̄ζωβ̄ π̄τ̄μ̄ικε ρ̄π̄ κ̄κ̄** 'such work

<sup>44</sup>19.27-34.

<sup>45</sup>19.36-20.3.

<sup>46</sup>20.6-9.

<sup>47</sup>Crum 1939, 246a.

<sup>48</sup>For instance, Attridge & MacRae 1985a, p. 87, Layton 1987, p. 255 and Schenke 2001, p. 35 'glauben.'

<sup>49</sup>Thomassen 2002, p. 106.

<sup>50</sup>The first Epistle of clement in Achmimic, 43:1., in Schmidt Carl 1908, *Der Erste Clemensbrief in Altkoptischer Übersetzung: untersucht und herausgegeben von Carl Schmidt*, J.C. Hinrich'sche Buchhandlung, Leipzig.

in Christ.’ Thus, in the GospTruth ‘the salvation’ replaces ‘the work in Christ’ from first Clement. Nevertheless, it is likely that the GospTruth refers to the epistle of Clement. For this assumption there are at least two reasons: First of all, the combination of ‘entrust’ and ‘work’ or ‘entrust’ and ‘salvation’ is rare. During the first three centuries of the Christian era, first Clement clearly constitutes the best parallel. The second reason is based on the context in the GospTruth and on what precedes first Clement 43.

First Clement 42 describes how Jesus appointed the apostles. In their turn the apostles appointed their ‘firstfruits’ that became the first bishops and deacons.<sup>51</sup> Consequently, first Clement 42-43 concerns the transfer of the work of redemption from Jesus to the apostles and later to many members of the church. In first Clement 43, the apostles are those who through god were entrusted with the work in Christ. In the GospTruth this corresponds to ‘those who were entrusted with the salvation.’ It makes it likely that ‘those who were entrusted with the salvation’ refers to Jesus’ apostles. Along this line of thought ‘no one’ in 20.6 refers to a group of people upon whom the work of salvation depends. Consequently **οὐδεὶς** in 20.6 is translated with ‘no one’ rather than ‘nothing,’ as it rather refers to persons than to things.

The raising of the living book of the living means that the work of salvation passes from few persons to many.<sup>52</sup> Moreover, in 20-13-27 the raising of the book was spoken of in terms of that Jesus wrapped himself in the book. The revelation was also described as the contents of a will that was unknown until Jesus died for the sake of many. This was compared with the All that was concealed as long as the Father was invisible. Thus, what we read on page 20 of the GospTruth in a striking way resembles what was spoken of in terms of the Saviour’s body on page 20-29. It is especially interesting to compare the TripTrac 16.5-17.8 that was quoted on page 23. There the apostles and disciples are described as parts of the Saviour’s body that is an image of the All. In this manner the Saviour’s body is an image of a unity, the church, but at the same time it comes forth in the form of a plurality. This corresponds to 22.36-23.18 of the GospTruth in which the living book is described as many texts. These texts, although being a multitude are written in unity and accordingly together they constitute a perfect book.

On this ground it is likely that we on page 20 of the GospTruth have come across a discourse that without a Valentinian reading becomes fairly obscure. Furthermore, it seems as the GospTruth may draw upon first Clement, and that the expression from first Clement 43.1 came to the mind of the author of the GospTruth. That the discourse on page 20 could evoke the recalling of

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<sup>51</sup>First Clement 42:4.

<sup>52</sup>As will be demonstrated below the theme of spreading out is closely related to the crucifixion.

first Clement 43 probably depends on the Valentinian discourse according to which the apostles and disciples descend with Jesus, constituting his spiritual body that is the church. By this analysis we both reach an intelligible reading of page 20 of the *GospTruth*, and also explain to what those who are entrusted with salvation refer to. Granting this we have to figure out whether the spiritual body of the Saviour consists of one or many groups of beings.

In 25.19-27.4 we have a key to understanding how the Saviour's body is constituted. In the extensive discussion on pages 168-172 it is made probable, although not certain, that we have to reckon with two groups. One of them is characterized by its completed beings that are anointed, while the other group belongs to Error and is signified by emptiness. This favours the assumption that the *GospTruth* belongs to eastern Valentinianism as the Saviour's body rather consists of Pneumatics than of Psychics and Pneumatics. Another indication of that we have to do with an eastern Valentinian text is that the Saviour suffers. On page 20 it is obvious that Jesus suffers and dies, and consequently also is in need of redemption in order to resurrect.

So far we can propose that the All consisted of two parts that both were the All. One part existed in the cosmic sphere. It had a limited capacity to know the Father, but enough knowledge to search for him. However, what it lacked came with the completion that dwelt within the Father and descended in the form of the Saviour's body. Although still in the world the individuals became the embodiment of the unity that was called the church. This state of simultaneous plurality and unity was touched upon in the *TripTrac* 16.5-17.8 on page 23. In order to deepen our understanding of the process of spreading out and the process of uniting in the *GospTruth*, we will discuss some themes that so far either has been little discussed or completely neglected.

### **The enlightenment, the crucifixion and the Eucharist in 18.5-31**

In 18.5-31 those who became enlightened are called 'complete'  $\chi\eta\kappa \alpha\beta\alpha\lambda$ .<sup>53</sup> In 18.16-21 the complete ones are instructed by Jesus and thereby receive the way that is the truth. Then the persecution of Jesus begins. The climax is reached when Jesus is nailed to a tree.<sup>54</sup> He becomes the fruit of the knowledge about the Father. But this fruit does not bring destruction because it is eaten. On the contrary, those who eat it rejoice in it.<sup>55</sup> The

<sup>53</sup>There are many philological difficulties in this passage, but none of them are crucial for the present purpose. For a detailed discussion see 81-87.

<sup>54</sup>18.21b-25a.

<sup>55</sup>18.25b-29.

passage ends with a scene of mutual discovery. Those who rejoice discovered him in themselves, and he discovered them in himself.<sup>56</sup> this mystical union is far from unexpected since the eating of Jesus, who after all is the fruit of knowledge of the Father, alludes to the eucharist.

But as the enlightenment took place before the crucifixion, it is important to consider what the crucifixion means as it does not seem to be the crucial event of redeeming knowledge.

### 30.14-31.1 as post-crucifixal revelation

In 30.14-31.1 we are faced with many hermeneutical problems. The passage is preceded by a description of how a person who has been ignorant wakes up and becomes illuminated. In 30.14-31.1, it is often very hard to determine who the subject is. Our passage begins with the enigmatic exclamation ‘And blessed (μακάριος) is the one who opened the eyes of the blind!’<sup>57</sup> In this sentence two diverging reference fields appear. On the one hand we think about the lauding from Mathew 5:3-11. this part fits well together with the persons who have turned from ignorance to knowledge. This would be a natural continuation of the preceding description of the ignorant who turns into someone who knows. On the other hand the one who opens the eyes of the blind leads our thoughts to Messianic sayings from the Old Testament that in the New Testament are ascribed to Jesus.

Then a blind and dumb demoniac was brought to him (Jesus), and he healed him, so that the dumb man spoke and saw. And all the people were amazed, and said, ‘Can this be the Son of David?’<sup>58</sup>

If this would be the superordinated field of reference, the subject would be Jesus. No other combinations of these two kinds of allusions are known to me, and as we will see, many scholars join me in the state of bewilderment.

The narration continues with a description of this blessed person who lays prostrated on the ground. The Spirit hurries to him in order to give him a hand and raise him up. As many scholars have observed this resembles Jewish myths about the primal man. This is a common theme in other Nag Hammadi texts and we pick up the following example:

Now all these things came to pass by the will of the father of the entirety. Afterwards, the spirit saw the soul-endowed man

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<sup>56</sup> 18.30-31.

<sup>57</sup> 30.14-16.

<sup>58</sup> Mathew 12:22-23, all quotations from the Bible are taken from the Revised Standard Version at the Electronic Text Center, University of Virginia.

upon the ground. And the spirit came forth from the Adaman-tine Land; it descended and came to dwell within him, and that man became a living soul. It called his name Adam, since he was found moving upon the ground.<sup>59</sup>

This is the field of allusions that Attridge & MacRae asserts is most relevant, and they stress that there is no direct reference to Jesus in our passage.<sup>60</sup> Thus, with this interpretation the theme of the ignorant who rises and becomes a Gnostic is extended. On the other hand Menard suggests that the passage refers to the descent of the Spirit on Jesus at his crucifixion,<sup>61</sup> while Wilson alludes to the resurrection of Christ,<sup>62</sup> Both Menard and Wilson also put forward Jesus' baptism in Jordan as a possible reference.<sup>63</sup> From these examples it is obvious that scholars have chosen one of the two fields: 'the one who is blessed,' or 'the one who opened the eyes of the blind.' The former field of reference would then continue the story of the illumination of the ignorant person, whereas the latter one concerns Jesus. But as we will see this kind of ambiguity is a consciously chosen rhetorical strategy in the *GospTruth*. Consequently, we better keep both these fields in mind. The enlightened Gnostic goes on the same path as the redeemer. The focus changes when the prostrated person rises. It is no longer centred on the Spirit that provides help to the prostrated person. Instead, it is in what manner the many receive knowledge that is important. The knowledge of the Father, and the revelation of the Father's Son give the many means to understand. But still it is not clear who provides them with this knowledge and revelation. It might be the Spirit, Jesus or the enlightened person. When the many had seen and heard the Son, the Spirit gave them so that they could taste, smell and touch the Son. If we presume that the prostrated person is Jesus, he is raised by the Spirit, the many may touch him and taste him. This use of language alludes to the post-resurrection story from John's gospel:

On the evening of that day, the first day of the week, the doors being shut where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said to them, 'Peace be with you.' When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, 'Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I send you.' And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and said to them, 'Receive the Holy Spirit.

<sup>59</sup>The Hypostasis of the Archons NHC II.88.10-16 translated by Layton.

<sup>60</sup>Attridge & MacRae 1985b, p. 86.

<sup>61</sup>Ménard 1972, p. 139.

<sup>62</sup>Wilson 1958, p. 106.

<sup>63</sup>ExcTheod 61:6-8.

If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.' Now Thomas, one of the twelve, called the Twin, was not with them when Jesus came. So the other disciples told him, 'We have seen the Lord.' But he said to them, 'Unless I see in his hands the print of the nails, and place my finger in the mark of the nails, and place my hand in his side, I will not believe.' Eight days later, his disciples were again in the house, and Thomas was with them. The doors were shut, but Jesus came and stood among them, and said, 'Peace be with you.' Then he said to Thomas, 'Put your finger here, and see my hands; and put out your hand, and place it in my side; do not be faithless, but believing.' Thomas answered him, 'My Lord and my God!'<sup>64</sup>

The tasting resembles what we read in 18.26-27 about the fruit of Knowledge that could be eaten. Obviously the Eucharist is referred to. In the above quoted passage from John as in the *GospTruth* as well, Jesus breathes on the disciples who receive the Spirit, as they listen to him, see him and touch him.

The smelling in the *GospTruth* resembles Second Corinthians:

But thanks be to God, who in Christ always leads us in triumph, and through us spreads the fragrance of the knowledge of him everywhere. For we are the aroma of Christ to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing, to one a fragrance from death to death, to the other a fragrance from life to life. Who is sufficient for these things?<sup>65</sup>

In 34.1-34, a warm fragrance comes from the Father. It warms up the fragrance that had grown cold in the world. The fragrance is the Father's children. The scheme resembles the pattern that we have seen above concerning the spiritual body of the redeemer, as the smell from above descends in order to make the smell from below ascend to where it originally came from.

With these observations in mind, we interpret 30.14-31.1 as a description of the manner in which the Spirit raises Jesus after the crucifixion. Simultaneously, however, it is equally true that page 30 of the *GospTruth* also is an example of how the enlightened Gnostic should be after his resurrection. The first interpretation clings well together with 20.13-14 where Jesus dies for many. If we instead focus on the ignorant who is raised and enlightens

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<sup>64</sup> John 20:19-28.

<sup>65</sup> 2 Cor. 2:14-16.

many, the redeeming scheme that was ascribed to Jesus has spread to the enlightened Gnostic.

### The Gnostic as redeemer

In 22.2-20 a person who has turned from ignorance to knowledge is described. Such a person is 'from above' and knows his origin, where he is and to which place he will go. When the Father calls him, he responds and wishes to fulfil the Father's will. To reach this illuminated state is as turning away from drunkenness into soberness. At this point the narration clearly reflects the earthly existence of the enlightened Gnostic. The knowledge about from where the enlightened person has come and to what place he will go, also reflects the baptismal instructions from the following passage from ExcTheod:

It is not, however, the bath alone that makes free, but knowledge too: Who we were, what we have become; where we were, where we have been placed, where we are going; from what we are redeemed, what birth is, and what rebirth.<sup>66</sup>

But in 22.20-24 the interpretation becomes more difficult. Even though no change of subject is explicitly made, and the primary tense still is the narrative first perfect, it is nevertheless unclear whether the acting person is the enlightened Gnostic or Jesus. This obscurity depends on the use of a vocabulary that resembles the one by which the Saviour used to be depicted. He has reclaimed many from Error and he goes before them to the realm from which they have roved about. This had led scholars to interpret the text as referring to Jesus.<sup>67</sup> If we imagine that it primarily is Jesus that is intended in 22.20-24, the text relates Jesus' ascending from the Cosmos to the Fullness from which he came, and the many are those who once fell from the Fullness, but now are being prepared for the reunion with the Father. But if we instead recall the same kind of ambiguity that we discussed in 30.14-31.1, we better refrain from excluding one of the possible perspectives. After all 22-20 is preceded by a passage in which a vocabulary that usually is used for the enlightened Gnostic is used.

The person who goes before the many to the place from which they have come probably does so in a post-resurrectial state. This may happen in an eschatological future, or it might be a case of realised eschatology. 22.20-24 shares similarities with 20.13-39 inasmuch as we in both texts encounter the

<sup>66</sup>ExcTheod 78:2, Thomassen 2006.

<sup>67</sup>For instance, Attridge & MacRae 1985b, p. 65 who refers to Acts 3:26, Layton 1987, p. 56 who suggests an allusion to John 10:4, although he clearly marks the uncertainty, and Schenke 2001, p. 36, who explicitly mentions Jesus in his translation.

many as objects for the redemption, and as this is the case in 30.34-35 as well it is hardly a coincidence. The idea behind the ambiguous manner of expressing the subject is probably caused by the same line of thought as in the following quotation from the Gospel of Philip:

God is a dyer. As the good dyes, which are called ‘true,’ dissolve with the things dyed in them, so it is with those whom God has dyed. Since his dyes are immortal, they become immortal by means of his colours. Now God dips what he dips in water. It is not possible for anyone to see anything of the things that actually exist unless he becomes like them. In the world man sees the sun without being a sun, and he sees the heaven and the earth and everything else without being these things: this is not how it is in (the realm of) the truth. Rather, having seen something of that place, you (sg.) became those things. You saw the spirit, you became spirit. You saw Christ, you became Christ. You saw [the Father, you] shall become a father. Therefore: [in this place] you see everything and [do] not [see] yourself, but [in that place] you do see yourself and what you see you shall [become].<sup>68</sup>

As the Saviour took upon himself the sufferings of this world so does the enlightened Gnostic as well.

In order to redeem the spiritual ones the Saviour passed from the realm of unity and peace to the realm of plurality and strife.<sup>69</sup> In the following manner this is expressed in the Gospel of Philip:

The Eucharist is Jesus. For in Syriac it is called *Pharisatha*, which means ‘that which is spread out.’ For Jesus became one who was crucified to the world.<sup>70</sup>

But what does the spreading out mean? From the just cited passage from the Gospel of Philip it seems likely that Jesus in the Eucharist is divided in order to spread to everyone who takes part of the mystery. What the Saviour is, he gives to those he redeems. As we have seen that every Gnostic becomes a Saviour as well the following passage would not surprise us:

It is, however, in unity that our angels were emitted, for they are one, having come forth from one single. Since we, however,

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<sup>68</sup>The Gospel of Philip 61.12-35, Thomassen 2006.

<sup>69</sup>The contrast between the realm of unity and the one of strife and division is amply described on pages 24-25 of the *GospTruth*.

<sup>70</sup>The Gospel of Philip 63.21-24, Thomassen 2006.

were divided, Jesus was baptised, so as to divide the undivided, until he unites us with them in the Fullness, so that we who are many may become one and all be merged again with him who for our sake was divided.<sup>71</sup>

In the GospTruth there are no angels that spread out in order to redeem those who have gone astray. What we have is the living book of the living that I have claimed consists of the apostles, evangelists and later disciples. When the book is published on the cross its many texts are revealed.<sup>72</sup> The result is that Jesus strips himself of his carnal existence and ascends to the Fullness. The spreading out is symbolised by the horizontal cross bar, while the ascension is symbolised by the vertical one. A similar imagery is found in the Interpretation of Knowledge:

so that the Church [might] be seen when it proceeds upwards. For the Head pulled it up (and) out of the pit, as [it] bent over from up on the cross and looked down to Tartaros, in order that those who were below should look upwards. For in the same way as when someone looks into a well, and the face of him who had been looking downwards (then) looks upwards, thus, when the Head had looked (down) from on high to its limbs, the limbs [hastened] upwards to where the Head was. The cross, on its part, served to nail fast the limbs, and only so that they should be able ...<sup>73</sup>

Unfortunately the quotation ends in a lacuna, but it is clear that a Pauline ecclesiology with Jesus as the head of the church fits perfectly both with the discussion regarding the Saviour's body, as well as with the imagery of the cross. When the living book of the living is published, everyone who is from above receives what belongs to him. In the GospTruth, this is described in terms of being called and receiving ones name.<sup>74</sup> But as long as the members of the spiritual body are in the material sphere, they still suffer from the earthly conditions. They have to ascend to the Father in order to receive their completion.<sup>75</sup> Consequently, the restoration of the All goes in two steps. The first is to unite the hidden All with the All that already had come forth. The next step is for each individual to pass from division into unity. That means to pass from the material existence into the Fullness.<sup>76</sup> To prevent premature ascending, the cross also functions as a limit between

<sup>71</sup>ExcTheod 36:1-2, Thomassen 2006.

<sup>72</sup>20.14-27.

<sup>73</sup>The Interpretation of Knowledge NHC XI 13.24-38, Transl. Thomassen.

<sup>74</sup>21.3-22.2.

<sup>75</sup>21.8-30.

<sup>76</sup>19.5-7.

the cosmic and the spiritual realm. Here, it is worth noting that this theme frequently occurs in the heresiologists reports about the Valentinians, and I quote one of the examples:

They term this Limit both Cross and Deliver, and Liberator, and Limit-setter, and Conveyors. And by this Limit they declare that Sophia was purified and established, while she was also restored to her proper conjunction.<sup>77</sup>

Accordingly the cross has a protecting function. It is when the Father wishes it that the Gnostic is born as we saw on page 27-28 of the *GospTruth*. At the same time it unites the body of Christ with the head. Seeing Christ also makes it possible to ascend to the spiritual realm. To a large extent the *GospTruth* resembles the just quoted passage from Irenaeus. Those who ascend to the Father will be filled, supplied and purified when the Father wants it.

From these observations we may conclude that the baptism is the crucial event for the enlightenment. This is often emphasised in the *Gospel of Philip* and in the *ExcTheod*. After the baptism a further education takes place in order to develop the neophyte. At this stage the Gnostic takes on the role of the redeemer and suffers in the world of plurality. This was expressed about Jesus as the Eucharist in the *Gospel of Philip* 63.21-24 quoted above, and the spreading out for the sake of the redemption of those who had gone astray was described in *ExcTheod* 36:1-2. In the Valentinian interpretation of the crucifixion we see a process that is enlightenment and purification for the Gnostic, combined with a mission of spreading out of the knowledge to many others. With this in mind the context from first Clement 42-43 that has been discussed above fits well. Those who were entrusted with salvation are the apostles and other disciples who continue Jesus' mission. In this they share in his crucifixion, and on the cross they constitute the body to which Jesus is the head, as we have already seen in the *Interpretation of knowledge* 13.24-38. In this manner the gnostic by the unification with his or her heavenly counterpart that came down as the Saviour's body is embodied with Jesus in the crucifixion. A difference between the *GospTruth* and the *TripTrac* can be the spiritual body that in the *GospTruth* comes directly from within the Father, whereas in the *TripTrac* it comes from the *Ogdoad*. This may depend on a real difference on this aspect of the theology, but can also depend on the difference in genre. The *GospTruth* is a homily and does not express all details, while the *TripTrac* is an extensive systematic work. If I would guess, however, I would say that the *GospTruth* represents an early stage within eastern Valentinianism that preceded the *TripTrac*.

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<sup>77</sup>IrenHaer I 2:4.

## Conclusion

The GospTruth clearly shows the characteristics of what we could expect of an eastern Valentinian text. The All consists of a part that is in the world and has to be saved. The liberation takes place through the unification with the part of it that dwelt in the Father and that comes down in the form of the Saviour's body. As was seen from the analysis of page 26 of the GospTruth the body only consists of spiritual beings. There are no indications of three groups of beings as we would expect from a western Valentinian text.

The cross and the crucifixion may also be related to plurality and suffering in a way that well fits with what other Valentinian texts say about these themes. Every gnostic has to follow Christ in a mission in which they all become redeemers. From this perspective the strong emphasis on missionary activity that will be discussed in the next chapter is logical.



## Chapter 6

# The socio-religious context of the Gospel of Truth

Among the Nag Hammadi texts the Gospel of Truth has attracted relatively much attention. As discussed elsewhere in this book scholars from the beginning connected the Gospel of Truth to Valentinianism, and in 1959 Schenke claimed that the Gospel of Truth could have a connection to the circle around the Odes of Solomon. But these attempts did not shed much light on the social setting of the Gospel of Truth. In the end of the 1950:s and in the beginning of the 1960:s Scandinavian scholars tried to pinpoint the rituals that could have been performed by the community of the Gospel of Truth. Save-Soderbergh<sup>1</sup> proposed that the Gospel of Truth was a baptismal homily. Somewhat later Segelberg<sup>2</sup> instead claimed that the Gospel of Truth was a confirmation homily. He also objected to Schenke's opinion<sup>3</sup> that the Gospel of Truth was related to the group that used the Odes of Solomon. In 1965 Ludin Jansen devoted a short article to the traces of sacramental rituals in the Gospel of Truth.<sup>4</sup>

Apart from these early Scandinavian and German attempts for almost 40 years little attention was paid to the social setting of the Gospel of Truth. This is understandable due to the scanty material that is provided by the text. But in 2004 Thomassen<sup>5</sup> took up the challenge and claimed that the Gospel of Truth was written by Valentinus at a time when the Valentinian church withdrew from the endless quarrels among other Christian groups in Rome.

In all the above mentioned endeavours many things by necessity have to be hypothetical. Among other things we neither know authorship, date of composition and purpose of the writing or location of the receivers. Con-

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<sup>1</sup>Save-Soderbergh 1959.

<sup>2</sup>Segelberg 1959.

<sup>3</sup>Schenke 1959.

<sup>4</sup>Ludin Jansen 1964-1965.

<sup>5</sup>Thomassen 2004.

sequently to describe the milieu of the GospTruth involves a great deal of speculation. This is a problem, but it should not stop us from carefully working out hypothesis concerning the setting for the author and receivers of the GospTruth.

Thus, in this chapter the aim is to analyse passages that may help us to stipulate the original setting of the GospTruth. When the analyses have been carried through, we will discuss in what manner the results can be linked to proposals concerning the socio-religious context. Further, we will also discuss passages that may shed light on the use of rituals in the community.

## Presuppositions

Already from the beginning some assumptions are necessary. We assume that the GospTruth in a broad sense is a homily. Therefore, we assert that we have a preacher who talks in first person. Further, the speaker directs himself or herself to a congregation. In this genre, the preacher normally deals with matters that are especially important for the congregation. Extensive and complete dogmatic expositions are rare. Thus, what the preacher wants to highlight may lead us to the setting for the composition.

## The Procedure

With the above given presuppositions in mind, we will scrutinize passages in which the congregation is directly addressed. It means that we have to look for passages with second plural, (you) and with first plural, (we). Further, we will discuss texts in which the author speaks in first person singular, (I).

Besides the above mentioned passages, there are other passages in which the author of the GospTruth might indirectly tell how the congregation ought to be. These passages are harder to define, but we will discuss some of the probable texts. We will also touch upon texts that may provide information about the rituals that were performed in the community.

## The paraenesis

For our purpose it is natural to begin with a discussion of the paraenetic section of the GospTruth. Strictly speaking the paraenesis begins with 32.31. Where it ends is harder to determine, but I have chosen to end it in 33.39. But in order to understand the paraenesis we have to discuss some difficulties in the text that immediately precedes the paraenesis. Thus, the analysis will begin with 31.17b. Moreover, the latter part of the paraenesis is one of the

philologically most difficult parts of the GospTruth. It is therefore fitting to divide the passage in two parts. We will first discuss them separately, and then deal with the whole paraenesis.

## Critique of immorality and legalism

### Structural analysis

This section will be divided in three units. The first unit runs from 33.11-23, the second from 33.24-30a and the third from 33.30b-39. Unit one is easily distinguished by the chain of prohibitive imperatives. The second unit is an explanatory paragraph which opens with **Ⲛⲁⲣ** ‘for’ in 33.24,<sup>6</sup> and ends with a recurring marker in 33.30a. **Ⲓⲛⲕⲉⲕⲁⲩⲉ** ‘others’ connects the end of the explanations to **Ⲓⲛⲕⲁⲩⲉ** ‘others’ in 33.12-13. From a text linguistic perspective the recurring marker indicates that ‘others’ is of vital importance in the sections from 33.11-30a. The hypothesis that ‘others’, aside from being a recurring marker also is a closing marker is confirmed by the new imperative in 33.30b. This imperative indicates that the explanatory unit has ended. The imperative that heads the third unit is the only positive imperative. In this manner it contrasts with the prohibitive imperatives in unit one.

In the third unit (33.31) we also find the particle **ⲃⲉ** ‘now’ that sums up the information of the two preceding units and proceeds to concluding statements. Granting these three units, we have to determine their hierarchical relations. The two first units constitute a block. Unit one is superordinated to the second unit inasmuch as the second unit explains the first one. The third unit with its positive imperative obviously contrasts with the first unit. Thus, they are on the same level. Less obvious, but still fairly certain, we also have a contrast between what the ‘unjust’ and ‘just’ persons do in the second unit and what ‘you’ should do in the third unit. When we now turn to a more semantically oriented discussion we rely on these structural observations.

### Semantic analysis

The first question is in what manner ‘others’ in 33.12-13 should be understood. The notion can refer to persons or to things. But if things would be intended the normal Coptic construal would include **ⲕⲉ Ⲓⲛⲕⲁⲩⲉ**.<sup>7</sup> The context is centred on persons, which also indicates that ‘others’ in 33.12-13

<sup>6</sup>The first clause of what I call the second unit has often been included in the prior unit. The reason for my delimitation will be discussed below.

<sup>7</sup>Orlandi, 1992, p. 67.

rather refers to persons than to things. These two arguments are equally valid for ‘others’  $\zeta\bar{\eta}\kappa\epsilon\kappa\alpha\tau\epsilon$  in 33.30a.

Next we must decide in what way  $\mu\mu\mu\alpha\psi$  in 33.18 should be treated. There is no masculine antecedent to the suffix. This could be explained by an unfortunate rendering of a Greek noun. Orthographically however, the suffixes  $\psi$  and  $\tau$  are easily confused. Therefore, I emend the text to  $\mu\mu\mu\alpha\tau$ .<sup>8</sup>

In 33.22-23 we encounter many difficulties.  $\mu\epsilon$  ‘it’ in 33.23 is not in congruence with ‘those who fall’  $\mu\epsilon\epsilon\iota\epsilon\tau\zeta\alpha\epsilon\iota\epsilon$  in 33.22-23. By emending  $\mu\epsilon\epsilon\iota$  to  $\bar{\eta}\mu\epsilon\epsilon\iota$  ‘for those.’ It thus becomes the indirect object of the preceding clause instead of the beginning of a new one. As Orlandi notes<sup>9</sup> this would fit well with an allusion to 1 Corinthians 8:9 where we also have the impediments or obstacles that can cause weak persons to fall. As the entire eighth chapter is important as a key for our passage, I quote it here:

Now concerning food offered to idols: we know that ‘all of us possess knowledge.’ Knowledge’ puffs up, but love builds up. If any one imagines that he knows something, he does not yet know as he ought to know. But if one loves God, one is known by him. Hence, as to the eating of food offered to idols, we know that ‘an idol has no real existence,’ and that ‘there is no God but one.’ For although there may be so-called gods in heaven or on earth as indeed there are many ‘gods’ and many ‘lords’ yet for us there is one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and through whom we exist. However, not all possess this knowledge. But some, through being hitherto accustomed to idols, eat food as really offered to an idol; and their conscience, being weak, is defiled. Food will not commend us to God. We are no worse off if we do not eat, and no better off if we do. Only take care lest this liberty of yours somehow become a stumbling block to the weak. For if any one sees you, a man of knowledge, at table in an idol’s temple, might he not be encouraged, if his conscience is weak, to eat food offered to idols? And so by your knowledge this weak man is destroyed, the brother for whom Christ died. Thus, sinning against your brethren and wounding their conscience when it is weak, you sin against Christ. Therefore, if food is a cause of my brother’s falling, I will never eat meat, lest I cause my brother to fall.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>8</sup>This possibility was put forward by Orlandi, 1992, p. 67.

<sup>9</sup>Orlandi 1992, p. 67.

<sup>10</sup>1 Corinthians 8:1-13.

**κοζε** has caused many problems. It is a part of a nominal clause that is headed by **ζωα**. All translations that I have seen render **ζωα** with ‘as if,’ or similar. This would maybe be the most natural choice if the clause had been circumstantial. In our case however, it is more likely that **ζωα** should be understood in a causal sense ‘because’ **ζωα** with an anaphoric causal function. It explains why the impediments should get no more strength. Most translators assume that **κοζε** is a variant of **κοοζε**.<sup>11</sup> Granting this, **κοζε** means ‘correction’ ‘reproval’ ‘set upright’ and similar. It is along these lines of thought Attridge & MacRae<sup>12</sup> came up with ‘support’ in their translation. Even though we construe the syntax differently I adopt their idea. To avoid adding strength to the stumbling blocks is a support for those who risk falling. This understanding may seem far-fetched but to me it is a less problematic solution than others at hand.

The section from 33.24-30a has puzzled me for a long time. First of all we have to determine whether the clause **οτλατε ναρ πε** ‘for it (or he) is nothing’ should begin a new sentence or form the end of the preceding one. Earlier<sup>13</sup> I chose to include this clause as the end of the prior sentence. This was an unfortunate attempt since it provides little new information to what previously have been said in the text. Schenke<sup>14</sup> treated **οτλατε ναρ πε** as a whole sentence.<sup>15</sup> This is probably better than my earlier attempt but it still suffers from the same drawbacks. Layton<sup>16</sup> extended the clause so that it also included **πιατζει** ‘the unjust’ and translated ‘For the lawless is nothing.’ Both these attempts are probably influenced by the need of finding a reasonable understanding of **αχιτφ** in 33.24-25. Layton treats it as an imperative and renders it with ‘Treat such a one more forceably than the just, since the lawless acts on the supposition of being lawless, while the just acts toward others on the supposition of being just.’<sup>17</sup> With this rendering it is hard to make this passage fit into the context. Schenke<sup>18</sup> treated **α** in **αχιτφ** as a Lycopopolitan (Subachmimic) future. this made it possible to treat **αχιτφ** reflexively, which resulted in ‘The lawless person will suffer more violence from himself than from the law.’<sup>19</sup> I would have expected ‘the lawful person’<sup>20</sup> rather than ‘the law’<sup>21</sup> as the end of the sentence. However,

<sup>11</sup>For a discussion about the different attempts to translate this term, see Attridge & MacRae 1985b, p. 97.

<sup>12</sup>Attridge & MacRae 1985a, p. 105.

<sup>13</sup>In the seminar paper in Helsinki 2004, *Can Text Linguistic Theories Contribute to the study of the Gospel of Truth?* Unpublished..

<sup>14</sup>Schenke 2001, p. 40.

<sup>15</sup>‘Denn es ist nichts.’

<sup>16</sup>Layton 1987, p.260.

<sup>17</sup>Layton 1987, p. 260.

<sup>18</sup>Schenke 2001, p. 40.

<sup>19</sup>‘Der Ungesetzliche wird sich mehr Gewalt antun als dem Gesetz.’

<sup>20</sup>‘Gesetzliche.’

<sup>21</sup>‘Gesetz.’

this translation is close to my translation from 2004 ‘The lawless person has done worse to himself than to the lawful person, for the former does his works because he is lawless. But the latter, because he is just, does his works in the midst of others (just persons).’ Although I emended **ⲁⲭⲓⲧⲉ** to **ⲁⲡⲭⲓⲧⲉ** and thereby reached a perfect tense. However, both Schenke’s and my translations suffer from the same problem as Layton’s. It is hard to get much sense out of these attempts.

Attridge & MacRae<sup>22</sup> also let **ⲟⲩⲗⲁⲧⲉ ⲡⲁⲣ ⲡⲉ** head a new sentence but construe the syntax differently: ‘For the lawless one is someone to treat ill, rather than the just one.’ They translate **ⲟⲩⲗⲁⲧⲉ** with ‘someone’ instead of the normal ‘no one’ or ‘nothing.’<sup>23</sup> This is possible, but nevertheless their solution suffers from the drawback that it does not provide much sense to the text. A radically different attempt was put forward by Thomassen.<sup>24</sup> In Thomassen’s Norwegian translation he aims at reproducing the elegance in the GospTruth, which inevitably goes lost in literal translations. We have to keep this in mind when we compare it with the more literal translations that I quoted above. My English rendering of Thomassen’s Norwegian translation runs as follows: ‘For the violence one suffers from the lawful person is no less than the violence one suffers from the lawless person. The latter acts on his own behalf, while the lawful person makes others to act on his behalf.’<sup>25</sup> Thomassen assumed that the text is corrupt, and as I also emend it I agree with him, although my emendation is different.<sup>26</sup> His translation is an attempt to make sense out of the text in compliance with his general understanding of Valentinianism in general and the GospTruth in particular.

Turning to my translation I let the suffix in **ⲁⲭⲓⲧⲉ** refer to **ⲟⲩⲗⲁⲧⲉ** ‘nothing’ or ‘no.’ In the Sahidic New Testament we find a similar construction: **ⲙⲡⲉⲧⲡⲓⲭⲓⲧⲗⲁⲁⲧⲡ ⲡⲃⲟⲛⲥ** ‘You did [me] no wrong.’<sup>27</sup> consequently I have to delete **ⲡⲉ** in 33.24 and treat **ⲁ** in **ⲁⲭⲓⲧⲉ** on the same line as a future tense.

**ⲡⲓⲁⲧⲗⲉⲡ** in 33.24 and **ⲡⲓⲗⲉⲡ** in 33.25 are not easy to translate. Normally **ⲗⲉⲡ** is translated with ‘judgement’ or ‘inquest.’<sup>28</sup> Most often it renders the Greek **κρίσις**. With my translation however, we rather expect **ⲁⲧⲗⲉⲡ** and **ⲗⲉⲡ** **ἄνομος** and **νόμος** in the Greek original. My choice of translation

<sup>22</sup> Attridge & MacRae 1985a, p. 105.

<sup>23</sup> Attridge & MacRae 1985b, p. 98.

<sup>24</sup> Thomassen 2002a, p. 115.

<sup>25</sup> Thomassen 2002a, p. 115: ‘For den tvang man utsettes for av den som handler etter loven, er ikke mindre enn den man lider av den som handler lovlost. Den siste handler på egne vegne, mens den som holder seg til lov og rett, far andre til å utføre handlingene for seg.’

<sup>26</sup> Oral information from Thomassen.

<sup>27</sup> Galathians4:12, in the electronic Sahidic New Testament from Packhard Humanities Institute.

<sup>28</sup> Crum 693b.

is based on the context in the GospTruth, but also on the fact that the TripTrac 109.14 provides us with a clear instance in which **ⲧⲙⲛⲁⲧⲉⲛ** probably has reproduced an original *ανομοιᾶ* lawlessness.

In the above presented translations **ⲃⲁⲛⲧ** has been translated with ‘violence.’ **ⲃⲁⲛⲧ** as the Sahidic **ⲃⲟⲛⲧ** is often used in order to translate forms of the Greek βιάζω, which means to violate and use force, as for instance in Mathew 11:12, Luke 16:16 and Acts 2:22. But **ⲃⲁⲛⲧ** at least as often renders forms of the Greek ἄδικεω. All the following examples are from the Sahidic New Testament.<sup>29</sup> **ⲛⲧⲓ ⲙⲙⲟⲕ ⲁⲛ ⲛⲃⲟⲛⲧ** ‘I am doing you no wrong.’<sup>30</sup> **ⲛⲧⲉⲣⲉⲓⲛⲁⲧ ⲉⲟⲩⲁ ⲉⲧⲭⲓ ⲙⲙⲟⲩ ⲛⲃⲟⲛⲧ** ‘when he saw one (of them) being wronged.’<sup>31</sup> **ⲉⲧⲃⲉⲟⲧ ⲧⲉⲧⲛⲭⲓ ⲛⲛⲉⲧⲛⲉⲣⲛⲧ ⲛⲃⲟⲛⲧ** ‘why do you wrong each other?’<sup>32</sup>

On this ground we reach the translation ‘For the lawless person will do no more wrong than the lawful person.’

For **ⲉⲓⲱⲥ** in 33.27 and 33.28, as well as for 33.23, a causal treatment is preferable.

**ⲉⲓⲛ** in 33.30 usually has been understood locative ‘among.’ Thomassen<sup>33</sup> treats it instrumentally and so do I as well. We will return to the basis for this choice below.

**ⲉⲓⲛⲕⲉⲕⲁⲧⲉ** in 33.30 is a bit problematic. As Orlandi notes<sup>34</sup> it is a form that we would have expected in a Bohairic text. I suspect that the GospTruth in codex I has been transformed from a north Egyptian dialect as Bohairic to the more southern Lycopolitan dialect. Occasionally in this process traces of the northern version remain. Thus, I treat **ⲉⲓⲛⲕⲉⲕⲁⲧⲉ** as **ⲉⲓⲛⲕⲁⲧⲉ** in 33.12-13.

**ⲟⲩⲛⲉⲧⲛⲁⲛⲟⲩⲧⲩ ⲛⲉ** in 33.34-35 is a bit strange. Orlandi<sup>35</sup> emends to **ⲟⲩⲛⲉⲧⲛⲁⲛⲟⲩⲧⲩ**, and even though he does not seem to be entirely satisfied with this solution I follow his suggestion.

### Intertextual analysis

The first allusion might be found in 33.14-16: ‘To what you have vomited forth do not return in order to eat it.’ **ⲛⲉⲛⲧⲁⲧⲉⲧⲛⲕⲁⲃⲁⲗ ⲙⲙⲁⲧ ⲙⲛⲛⲣⲥⲱⲧⲉ ⲁⲣⲁⲧ ⲁⲟⲩⲁⲙⲟⲩ**. Although the dog is not mentioned I

<sup>29</sup>Electronic edition from Packhard Humanities Institute.

<sup>30</sup>Mathew 20:13.

<sup>31</sup>Acts 7:24.

<sup>32</sup>Acts 7:26.

<sup>33</sup>Thomassen 2002a, p. 115.

<sup>34</sup>Orlandi 1992, p. 68.

<sup>35</sup>Orlandi 1992, p. 68.

agree with Attridge & MacRae<sup>36</sup> that this alludes to either Proverbs 26:11, ‘Like a dog that returns to his vomit is a fool that repeats his folly,’ or to second Peter 2:22, ‘It has happened to them according to the true proverb, The dog turns back to his own vomit...’ Despite of many methodological difficulties it is worth some effort investigating whether it is to Proverbs or to 2. Peter that the GospTruth alludes. In order to approach this problem I have to discuss some Greek texts. The word for vomit that is used in the Septuagint of Proverbs 26:11 is ἐμετον, and in second Peter it is ἐξέραμα. After a check in the database ‘Thesaurus Linguae Graecae’ (TLG), it is evident that these two words are interchangeable when they are used in texts that are relevant for the actual proverb. Besides the saying in proverbs 26:11 and second Peter 2:22, the earliest use of the saying I have found is in Origen’s fragments on Psalms 1-150 77. ὡς κύων ἐπιστρέψας ἐπὶ τον ἴδιον ἐμετον Although Origen uses ἐμετον instead of ἐξέραμα, a comparison with the passage from Origen, second Peter and Proverbs makes it probable that Origen had second Peter in mind rather than Proverbs. In second Peter 2:22 we read Κύων ἐπιστρέψας ἐπὶ τῷ ἴδιον ἐξέραμα, and in Proverbs from the Septuagint ὡς περ κύων ὅταν ἐπέλθῃ ἐπὶ τὸν ἑαυτοῦ ἐμετον. Similar evidence for ἐμετον in what seems to be an allusions to second Peter are for instance: Athanasius of Alexandria, Doctrina ad Antiochum ducem 2.12.23, Epiphanius, Panarion 1.268.3 and John Chrysostomus, De beato Philogonio 48.755.29.<sup>37</sup> In the texts that I assert refers to second Peter 2:22 we find forms of the Greek ἐπιστρέφω, which means to turn about, turn round, while in the texts that may refer to Proverbs 26:11 we find forms of the Greek ἐπέρχομαι, which means to come upon, come near, come suddenly upon. With this in mind we have to discuss the meaning of the Coptic **ϣⲧⲉ**.

Grobel<sup>38</sup> employed the normal meaning ‘redeem.’ However, in the actual context it provides little sense. Attridge & MacRae<sup>39</sup> notes that it might stand for **ϣⲧ** in 34.32 and 38.2. The meaning could be return.<sup>40</sup>

Without claiming that I have carried through any complete investigation of **ϣⲧ**, the only evidence of **ϣⲧ** that refers to Greek words of interest for us seems to be in Job 10:21, in which ἀναστρέφειν is used. On the other hand I have found no evidence for **ϣⲧ** rendering ἐπέρχομαι or related words. Despite the insufficient evidence the respective semantic fields of ἐπέρχομαι and ἐπιστρέφω makes it more likely that **ϣⲧⲉ** in 33.15 comes from ἐπιστρέφω. If my above presented presuppositions are tenable we have an indication that the GospTruth alludes to second Peter. However, cautiousness is advisable

<sup>36</sup> Attridge & MacRae 1985b, p. 97.

<sup>37</sup> All from TLG.

<sup>38</sup> Grobel 1960, p. 141.

<sup>39</sup> Attridge & MacRae 1985b, p. 97.

<sup>40</sup> Crum 1939, p. 360.

due to the scanty evidence.

From my observations it is clear that the frequency with which Proverbs 26:11 is quoted is very low, not only in Greek literature, but also in Hebrew. Even though commentators on 2 Peter sometimes assert that the use of the saying is widespread, they fail to provide us with evidence.

An argument that favours that we in the GospTruth have an allusion to Proverbs 26:11 rather than to second Peter is that in the GospTruth we also lack the saying ‘...the sow is washed only to wallow in the mire.’<sup>41</sup> Only the part that is common to both Proverbs and second Peter appears in the GospTruth. This would favour the connection to Proverbs. To conclude, the semantically based analysis favours that the allusion in the GospTruth is to second Peter. But the semantically founded analysis provides too little information to be decisive. We therefore have to approach the problem from another perspective.

In Proverbs 26 the fool is described as a person that always repeats its mistakes. It is his nature, just as it is the nature for a dog to return to its vomit. Second Peter provides more information. In second Peter 2:18 the focus is on false prophets who betray recently converted Christians. These Christians are drawn back into their old life of ‘licentious passions.’ The victims are described as persons who have escaped from error. In Coptic this is **ⲉⲡⲟⲩⲡⲓⲗⲁⲛⲏ**. The seducers are ‘slaves of corruption,’<sup>42</sup> something that reminds us of the language in 33.16-17. In second Peter members of the community who have once lived in the defilements of the world leaves the purity in the community and return to the earlier state. When we again look at the saying about the dog that returns to eat its vomit, it is clear that second Peter applies this proverb, not only on fools in general, but on persons who have given themselves back to vices in particular. Accordingly, second Peter is a good example of the way in which the saying in Proverbs 26:11 could be used to depict people who engaged themselves in vicious living. Thus, I assert that there is a connection between second Peter and the GospTruth. It is unlikely that the connection had gone in the opposite direction since the dog is not explicitly mentioned in the GospTruth. If the GospTruth alludes to an intertext, this text must have had the explicit mentioning of the dog.

‘Do not be moth-eaten. Do not be worm-eaten for you have already cast it off.’<sup>43</sup> Often scholars have seen an allusion to Mathew 6:19-20: ‘19: ‘Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal,’ But the combination of moth and worm does not appear in Mathew with NT parallels, but in Logion 76 of

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<sup>41</sup>2 Peter 2:22b.

<sup>42</sup>Second Peter 2:19.

<sup>43</sup>33.16-18.

the Gospel of Thomas it does:

Jesus said, ‘What the kingdom of the father resembles is a merchant who owned some merchandise, and then learned about the existence of a certain pearl. - That merchant was shrewd, sold the merchandise, and bought the single pearl. - You (plur.), too, seek the ceaseless and enduring treasure, where moth does not approach to eat nor worm to destroy.’<sup>44</sup>

It seems that the *GospTruth* draws upon a saying that resembles that which became included in the Gospel of Thomas. It is worth noting that ‘Do not be moth-eaten’ equally well could be translated with ‘Do not be rotten.’ Attridge & MacRae<sup>45</sup> notes that the exhortation is intended to prevent people from returning to the material world of ignorance. As will be demonstrated below I would rather stress that it is a warning from living an immoral life.

‘Do not become a place for the Devil, for you have already defeated him.’<sup>46</sup> It is not clear to what the first part of this sentence refers. The latter part, however, might refer to 1 John 2:13: ‘because you have overcome the evil.’ This command functions as a bridge between the two parts of the chain of imperatives. It sums up: Do not act like the immoral persons that you once were, because you have passed that state.

‘Do not add strength to your impediments (for) those who fall...’<sup>47</sup> As noted in the semantic analysis I have emended the text. As Orlandi observes, with this emendation the text resembles 1 Corinthians 8:8-9: ‘Food will not commend us to God. We are no worse off if we do not eat, and no better off if we do. Only take care lest this liberty of yours somehow become a stumbling block to the weak.’ The members of the community should not use their knowledge and freedom, in a way that they cause the fall of others. To support the weak is the important thing, and not to excel in demonstrating one’s freedom. It is in this manner I interpret the final clause ‘because it is a support.’<sup>48</sup> That no punishments are referred to is typical for the attitude in the *GospTruth*. As we see in 33.30b-39, the basic motif for the care of the weak is to do the will of the Father, and in this will is goodness. ‘For the lawless person will do no more wrong than the lawful person.’<sup>49</sup> Since the translation of this passage is very difficult, it is risky to suggest allusions

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<sup>44</sup>The Gospel of Thomas Logion 76 NHC. II 46.14-23, (Layton 1987, p. 393). Thomassen drew my attention to this passage but also notes that the hypothetical relation between the *GospTruth* and the Gospel of Thomas can be indirect.

<sup>45</sup>Attridge & macRae 1985b, p. 97.

<sup>46</sup>33.19-21.

<sup>47</sup>33.22-23.

<sup>48</sup>33.23.

<sup>49</sup>33.24-25.

to other texts. With this reservation in mind, I will anyway suggest that Romans 2 fits as a very good intertext.<sup>50</sup>

There will be tribulation and distress for every human being who does evil, the Jew first and also the Greek, but glory and honor and peace for every one who does good, the Jew first and also the Greek. For God shows no partiality. All who have sinned without the law will also perish without the law, and all who have sinned under the law will be judged by the law.<sup>51</sup>

We can also keep in mind the beginning of the same chapter in Romans:

Therefore you have no excuse, O man, whoever you are, when you judge another; for in passing judgment upon him you condemn yourself, because you, the judge, are doing the very same things. We know that the judgment of God rightly falls upon those who do such things. Do you suppose, O man, that when you judge those who do such things and yet do them yourself, you will escape the judgment of God?<sup>52</sup>

In the above quoted passages from Romans we rather speak of similarities of thought than of direct allusions. However, as many scholars have observed, Pauline theology was very important for the Valentinians and of course Romans was an inspiration for the author of the *GospTruth*. As in Romans we face a situation in which the congregation is warned against judging others. Instead, all should focus on themselves instead of on others.

### **The benefit of the analysis**

With the results from the structural, semantic and intertextual analyses in mind, we are better off when we try to interpret the difficult passage from 33.11-39. 33.11-23 deals with those who want to continue their life with a moral that they may have had before they joined the church. Alternatively, overenthusiastically as the persons in 1 cor. 8 might have been because they now possessed knowledge, they wanted to abandon the rules that they had followed as members of other Christian, but non-Valentinian groups. In this way, they now risked becoming a danger for those who were weaker. Avoiding provoking the weak persons, which in our case means delimiting the freedom of the stronger, is a support for the weak persons. Although I admit that 33.22-23 is problematic to construe satisfactory, it seems that

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<sup>50</sup>Oral suggestion by Ismo Dunderberg.

<sup>51</sup>Romans 2:9-12.

<sup>52</sup>Romans 2:1-3.

the suggested intertexts provide sufficient support for this interpretation. In this manner 33.11-23 describes a problem that a Gnostic<sup>53</sup> could have faced.

In 33.24-30, the perspective is different. The author of the *GospTruth* wants to make clear that the preceding exhortations were no inflammatory speech for the Jewish law. The lawless person is set on the same level as the righteous person. The lawful person depends on others to fulfil the law. A legal system is never a matter of one person, as it requires institutions for judgment and punishment. Consequently, the righteous does his works through others.

Thus, lawlessness and lawfulness both belong to the cosmic sphere. By paying attention to themselves the members of the community will focus on the order from the sphere that transcends legalism as well as immorality. The basis for the moral of the children is the will of the Father. Much of the basis for this interpretation will be discussed in the analysis of the incipit part of the *paraenesis*. That the Jewish law is contrary to the mode of the *GospTruth* is clearly expressed by the following quotation: ‘...he (Jesus) had made punishments and tortures cease, for they led certain others who were short of mercy astray from his face into error and bondage, with power he unchained them and reproved them by knowledge.’<sup>54</sup> Retaliation and immorality is far from the goodness that is the will of the Father. We now turn to discuss parallel views of the law.

### **In search of a parallel view of the law**

So far we only possess meagre information concerning the view of the law in the *GospTruth*. Nevertheless, we have enough information to begin searching for conceivable parallels. If we assume that ‘the law’ we are talking about is that of the Old Testament it is natural to have a look at the letter from Ptolemy to Flora.<sup>55</sup> In this letter the law of the Old Testament is divided in three categories. The law from the god of righteousness, the law from Moses and the law from the elders.<sup>56</sup> Ptolemy makes a distinction between the ‘god of righteousness’ and the ‘perfect Father of the All.’<sup>57</sup> The law of the Old Testament that comes from god is from the ‘god of righteousness’ and not from the ‘perfect Father of the all.’ The law from god is divided in three parts: The first is pure but imperfect. This is the Ten Commandments.

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<sup>53</sup>In this case I prefer the term Gnostic rather than Valentinian, as similar problems could have occurred in, for instance, a Jewish Gnostic group, and not in exclusively in Christian Gnostic groups. Thus, Gnostic serves as a better analytical category.

<sup>54</sup>31.21-27.

<sup>55</sup>The quotations are from Layton 1987 who at some points has modified Quispel’s edition.

<sup>56</sup>Ptolemy to Flora, 33.4.1-2.

<sup>57</sup>Ptolemy to Flora, 33.3.7.

The Saviour had to fulfil it because the commandments were pure but not perfect.<sup>58</sup> The second part is mixed with injustice. What signifies this part is its connection with retaliation and repayment of those that had sinned.<sup>59</sup> The one who murders as retaliation makes the same act as the murder that is retaliated. The only difference is the order. Therefore, the Son abolished this law, even though it also included many good things.<sup>60</sup> The third part deals with 'offerings, circumcision, the Sabbath, fasting, Passover, The Feast of Unleavened Bread and the like.'<sup>61</sup> Their significance in the visible realm was abolished by the Saviour. However, since they were images of the spiritual realm, the Saviour exalted their function to the symbolic sphere.

And he wishes us to perform circumcision, but not circumcision of the bodily foreskin, rather of the spiritual heart; and to keep the Sabbath, for he wants us to be inactive in wicked acts; and to fast, though he does not wish us to perform physical fasts, rather spiritual ones, which consist of abstinence from all bad deeds.<sup>62</sup>

But how similar are the views of the law in the *GospTruth* and Ptolemy's letter to Flora? Due to the scarcity of information this is hard to say. The critique of legalism could be a consequence of the critique against the principle of retaliation. This fits well with Ptolemy's view on the two first parts of the law from the righteous god. However, from the analysis of the next passage in this investigation, it is obvious that the view of the Sabbath in Ptolemy's letter to Flora sharply differs from the view of the *GospTruth*. The hypothetical connection between the ideas of the *GospTruth* and the thoughts that we meet in Ptolemy's letter to flora remain uncertain but likely.

### **The exhortation to rescue the lost sheep from the Cosmos: an analysis of 32.17b-33.11a**

So far we have dealt with the latter section of the paraenesis, but now we will concentrate on its former part.

Starting in 32.31 we have seven positive imperatives. With the seven imperatives from 33.11 in mind we can see that the paraenesis is a consciously and well composed passage.<sup>63</sup> These seven incipient imperatives are of the kind

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<sup>58</sup>Ptolemy to Flora, 33.5.3.

<sup>59</sup>Ptolemy to Flora, 33.5.4.

<sup>60</sup>Ptolemy to Flora, 33.5.4-7.

<sup>61</sup>Ptolemy to Flora, 33.5.8.

<sup>62</sup>Ptolemy to Flora, 33.5.11-12.

<sup>63</sup>This was observed by Desjardins 1990, p. 78.

that we could see in many Christian texts. The care for the weak persons fits well with what we said about the perspective of 33.11b-39. The support of the weak is of vital importance in the GospTruth. But the former and the latter part of the paraenesis have different perspectives. In the latter part the focus primarily was internal, whereas in the former one the main stress is on how the congregation should act towards people outside the community. The strength with which the congregation provides the outsiders is rooted in the identity of the community members. they are 'the unsheathed intelligence,'<sup>64</sup> 'the children of the intellectual understanding'<sup>65</sup> and 'the day that is perfect.'<sup>66</sup> But which is the prerequisite for an identity that is expressed in these terms? The key to the answer is hidden in the following enigmatic sentence:

Even on the Sabbath, when he (the Father) had found the sheep that had fallen into a pit, he worked over it, kept it alive when he had carried it up from the pit, in order that you intellectually will understand what the Sabbath is, the (day) when it is not fitting for the salvation to be idle, in order that you will speak out of the day, which is from above, this that has no night, and out of the light that does not set because it is perfect.<sup>67</sup>

Thus, it is necessary to understand what the Sabbath is in order to speak out of the day from above. Consequently it is time for us as well to make an effort to understand what the Sabbath means.

### **The Sabbath**

The passage about the Sabbath is preceded by a description of how the Redeemer unchained those who were in bondage:

When he had made punishments and tortures cease, for they led certain others who were short of mercy astray from his face into error and bondage, with power he unchained them and re-proved them by knowledge.<sup>68</sup>

This is followed by the parable about the lost sheep.<sup>69</sup> A sheep goes astray from its ninety-nine companions. The Father leaves the ninety-nine sheep in order to rescue the lost one that had fallen into a pit. As we saw above the

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<sup>64</sup>33.8-9.

<sup>65</sup>32.38-39.

<sup>66</sup>32.32.

<sup>67</sup>32.17b-30.

<sup>68</sup>31.21-27.

<sup>69</sup>31.35-32.17.

Father has detected the pit and labours in order to lift up the sheep and save its life, and so he does on the Sabbath as well. But what help to understand the Sabbath do we get from this imagery? In order to understand what the Sabbath is we have to consider the texts to which we find allusions in this puzzling passage.

### Intertextual analysis

The Father works on the Sabbath. This is contrary to the god of the Old Testament who rested on that day:

And on the seventh day God finished his work which he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had done. So God blessed the seventh day and hallowed it, because on it God rested from all his work which he had done in creation.<sup>70</sup>

Thus, the Father in the GospTruth acts contrary to the one in the Old Testament. But could Genesis 2:2-3 also explain the passage about the ‘day from above?’ That day has no night, and the light never sets. In Genesis 1:1-2:4a, every day except the seventh day ends with the formula ‘And there was evening and there was morning.’ The drawback with this explanation is that the Sabbath is a reality in ordinary life. It does not only belong to the textual world. In reality the Sabbath has both morning and evening. Consequently, the day that has no night, rather is a contrast to the Sabbath than a description of it.

Aside from the influence between Genesis 2:2-3 and the working Father in the GospTruth, we also have to consider Mathew 12:11 ‘He (Jesus) said to them, ‘What man of you, if he has one sheep and it falls into a pit on the Sabbath, will not lay hold of it and lift it out?’,’ But as Baarda notes,<sup>71</sup> the GospTruth blends the motif from Mathew with John 5:15-17 and 21:

The man went away and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had healed him. And this was why the Jews persecuted Jesus, because he did this on the Sabbath. But Jesus answered them, ‘My Father is working still, and I am working.’ For as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, so also the Son gives life to whom he will.<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>70</sup>Genesis 2:2-3.

<sup>71</sup>Baarda 1987, p. 24-25.

<sup>72</sup>John 5:15-21.

The Coptic verb for working **ⲉⲓⲣⲉ ϩⲱⲛ** occurs both in John 5:17<sup>73</sup> and in the GospTruth 32.20. The verb for giving life **ⲧⲁⲛϩⲟ** occurs in John 5:21 and in the GospTruth 32.20. Moreover, Baarda<sup>74</sup> observes that the combination of the work of salvation together with the Sabbath and the pit also occurs in the Interpretation of Knowledge.<sup>75</sup> However, the Interpretation of Knowledge is a deplorably damaged text. Therefore, it is hard to determine how closely the GospTruth and the Interpretation of Knowledge are related. I will give some examples that have relevance for our discussion and are from passage that are relatively well preserved:

In the same way I made myself quite small, in order that by humbling myself I might bring you back to that high rank, the place from which you had fallen when you were brought down into this pit. So if you believe in me, I am the one who will bring you up above, by means of this shape that you see. I am the one who shall carry you on my shoulders.<sup>76</sup>

From [his uni]on with the woman sleep [came into being], and the Sa[bbath]. And th[is is the] world. For as a result of the [oblivion about] the Father [through] sleep, [the Sabba]th [was observed]. Af[ter that,] [the] bea[sts issued] from the . . . . . . . . For the wo[rld] is [oblivion] and [sleep]. Therefore, [he] who has gone astray [is not an] enemy. And from [the be]asts that had issued [a] tunic was put on [him] as his sentence. For [the] woman [had] no other garment [to put] on her seed except [that] which she had brought forth on the Sabbath. Nothing beastly exists in fact in [the] Aeon. For the Father does not observe the Sabbath. Rather, he works in the Son, and through the Son. Moreover, he gave him the aeons: The Father possesses living rational elements by which he clothes him with the a[eons] as garments.<sup>77</sup>

The Interpretation of Knowledge does not furnish us with such connections to the GospTruth that we may speak about interdependence or allusions. Nevertheless, the two text show such similarities that we may speak of a common view on the Sabbath. Thus, the Sabbath is a notion for the cosmic sphere, and in this respect the GospTruth differs from Ptolemy's letter to Flora,<sup>78</sup> in which the Sabbath is an image for not committing sins.

<sup>73</sup>The electronic Coptic New Testament from Packhard Humanities Institute.

<sup>74</sup>Baarda 1987, pp. 24-25.

<sup>75</sup>NHC XI.

<sup>76</sup>The Interpretation of Knowledge NHC XI 10.27-34, translated by Thomassen.

<sup>77</sup>the Interpretation of Knowledge NHC XI 11.17-38, translated by Thomassen.

<sup>78</sup>Ptolemy to Flora, 33.5.8.

In the GospTruth the sheep symbolise the members of the community. The Father has lifted them up from the pit, and now they know from what place the Father has saved them. In John 5:17 that we cited above, The Father works and Jesus acts like his Father. In the Interpretation of Knowledge and in the GospTruth as well the Father does not observe the Sabbath. On the contrary, he works on that day as well. In the Interpretation of Knowledge the Sabbath results from the ignorance of the Father and the sleep that is caused by it. Even though the Interpretation of Knowledge is partly destroyed, it is probable that the view on the Sabbath in the Interpretation of Knowledge is the same as in the GospTruth. If we combine the scenario from the Interpretation of Knowledge with the lost sheep of the GospTruth, this sheep wanders about in a scaring world that is filled with beasts. This imagery resembles the view of the cosmos that is the Sabbath in the Apocryphon of John as well:

Now the Ruler who is weak has three names. The first name is Yaltabaoth, the second is Saklas, and the third is Samael. And he is impious in his arrogance which is in him. For he said, 'I am God and there is no other God beside me,' for he is ignorant of his strength, the place from which he had come. And the Rulers created seven powers for themselves, and the powers created for themselves six angels for each one until they became 365 angels. And these are the bodies belonging with the names: the first is Athoth, a he has a sheep's face; the second is Eloaiou, he has a donkey's face; the third is Astaphaios, he has a hyena's face; the fourth is Yao, he has a serpent's face with seven heads; the fifth is Sabaoth, he has a dragon's face; the sixth is Adonin, he had a monkey's face; the seventh is Sabbede, he has a shining fire-face. This is the hebdoad of the Sabbath.<sup>79</sup>

The Sabbath clearly denotes the cosmic sphere with its tyrannical powers.<sup>80</sup>

### **The benefit of the analysis**

From the evidence that was put forward in the previous section, we have good reasons to say that 'the day from above' is the opposite of the 'Sabbath.' The Sabbath is the pit from which the Father lifted the sheep. If the Sabbath denotes the Hebdoad, the day from above is the Ogdoad. This perspective explains why the community is called 'the elevated intelligence.'<sup>81</sup>

<sup>79</sup>NHC II.11.15-35. With minor alteration I use Wisse's translation.

<sup>80</sup>The Origin of the World NHC II 101.27 might have a slightly altered parallel, but the similarities are striking.

<sup>81</sup>33.8-9.

As the Father came and searched for the lost sheep, the duty of the congregation is to steady and lift up others that have fallen into the world. That 'the Sabbath' is used as the term for the pit is a critique of the order of this world and the creator god of the Old Testament. With this anticomic background, it is far from surprising that the latter part of the paraenesis comprises a critique of the moral that belongs to the Hebdoad. Neither a vicious life or a legalistic law that is based on retaliation belongs to the Ogdoad.

The Father is the prototype for the community, which members have the same duty as the Father: to save the lost sheep from the cosmic pit of death and fear.

### The paraenesis as a whole

In order to carry through the analysis of the paraenesis, we divided it in two parts. Now, we have to make clear in what way the results from the parts work together.

The general understanding of the paraenesis as an anticomic text supports the interpretation that I suggested above. This anticomic tendency is obvious when we keep in mind the meaning of the Sabbath. It is from the understanding of the Sabbath that we find the key to the paraenesis. This is the reason why I have to oppose some other possible interpretations of the paraenesis.

Grammatically 33.24-25, could be understood as a passage that expresses a need of punishing the lawless persons. In light of this the first part of the paraenesis should be a missionary exhortation in which the congregation is exhorted to rescue those who actually belong to the community, but yet are left in the cosmic pit. The second part of the paraenesis, 33.11-30, with such interpretation would be a fairly harsh warning to those who leave the community, they should be punished, and some of those who live a vicious life inside of the community should be expelled.

Against this interpretation speaks the interpretation of the Sabbath, but also the difficulties this interpretation leads to when we try to interpret 33.26-30. I can not see in what way these lines could be intelligible from the just described interpretation of retaliation.

Another problem is in what way the exhortation to pay attention to oneself and not to others would fit in. According to my interpretation, to pay attention to oneself means to pay attention to someone who belongs to a sphere that transcends the cosmic realm. With this presupposition in mind, it is clear that the perspective of the Ogdoad demands another life than that of retaliation and depravity, as such things belong to the Hebdoad.

With the interpretation that asks for excommunication and retaliation however, it seems more likely that the members of the community should pay more attention to others than to themselves.

We began with a narrow perspective in which grammatical problems was in the foreground. Then we used intertexts as an aid in the analysis. Now, we end up with a key to interpret the paraenesis. Moreover, the proposed interpretation solves most philological problems.

Even though the paraenesis could be used in a broader Christian framework, many parts of the text would remain obscure and even contradictory without an anticosmic Valentinian reading.

### The paraenesis in its context

The paraenesis of the *GospTruth* has been important when scholars have tried to relate the *GospTruth* to a ritual setting. Säve-Söderbergh<sup>82</sup> claimed that the paraenesis would fit well in a baptismal context. I agree that the first part of the paraenesis could do so, even though the language is very general. But the latter part rather indicates that the preacher aims at some more specific matters in the community. 33.24-30 hardly fits in a general baptismal context.

Tite<sup>83</sup> devotes a major portion of his dissertation to the paraenesis. He highlights the problems with the view that Gnostics were uninterested in ethical matters.<sup>84</sup> I find his examples of this view enlightening. Tite highlights the problem of a twofold trajectory of 'Christian' and 'Gnostic.'<sup>85</sup> However, there still seems to be an advantage of using the category 'Gnostic.' Of course, the *GospTruth* is a Christian text, but it is also Gnostic. In a good way Tite's work serves to demonstrate the use of paraenesis in Gnostic texts, and he also raises an important issue when he criticizes the stereotyped view of Gnostics that for many years was predominant. But I side with Meeks, when he claims that the worldview and the attitude to the body has an important impact on ethics.<sup>86</sup> In the *GospTruth*, the paraenesis is framed by the passage dealing with the Sabbath. The order of this world and of the creator god is contrasted with the order of the perfect realm. The paraenesis is followed by a passage in which the Gnostics, in the form of the Father's fragrance, are liberated from the material world and ascends. This perspective is based in the anti-cosmic view that marks the *GospTruth*. This world cannot be reformed, and thus has to be transcended. In the *GospTruth* we have a strong anti-cosmic tendency, one creator god that is different from

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<sup>82</sup>Säve-Söderbergh 1959.

<sup>83</sup>Tite 2005.

<sup>84</sup>Tite 2005, pp. 192-195.

<sup>85</sup>Tite 2005, p.195.

<sup>86</sup>See 41meeks.

the highest deity, and the knowledge as means of achieving redemption could be a mini-definition of Gnosticism. Solely using the Christian category risks to conceal relations between Christian and non-Christian texts. We could use Gnostic in the same way as we, for instance, can use ‘apocalyptic.’ On the basis of my analysis of the Sabbath and the paraenesis, as well as on the ground of the analysis in the prior chapter, I cannot follow King when she seems to overlook the anti-cosmic basis for the ethics in the GospTruth.<sup>87</sup> Moreover, there is a strong critique of the creator god of the Old Testament who observes the Sabbath and the whole of humanity is not saved. King and Tite justly criticize many stereotypes concerning Gnosticism, but they go too far in the other direction when they overlook the features that come from the anti-cosmic tendency in the GospTruth.

Tite asserts that the latter part of the paraenesis exhorts the community to avoid outsiders.<sup>88</sup> According to Tite, the outsiders are the obstacles **τὰ χρο** that occur in 33.22. They are in a chaotic state and are depicted as falling.<sup>89</sup> But the use of **χροπ** in this way would be odd. It probably reproduces the Greek *σκανδαλον* or *πρόσκωμα*. As I argued for above, I propose an understanding of this term that resembles Paul’s usage. Tite further claims that the outsiders should be treated poorly, something that would contrast with the treatment of the insiders.<sup>90</sup> The reason for this, according to Tite, is that the lawless acts lawlessly and the righteous person acts among others.<sup>91</sup>

Tite obviously represents the view that I criticized above when I discussed alternatives to the Valentinian reading of the paraenesis. He never discusses the many philological problems that make the paraenesis so difficult, and his understanding of the Sabbath remains unclear. It makes it hard for me to understand in what manner he reaches his conclusions.

## An appeal to discard strife and division

In 25.19-25, the preacher refers to what has happened to the community. This experience of the congregation and the preacher is the basis for the exhortation: ‘Thus it is fitting for us to be mindful of the All so that the house will be holy and peaceful for the Unity.’<sup>92</sup> In order to understand the situation for the community, we thus have to look for these earlier events.

From the preceding analysis, we already know that the congregation has

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<sup>87</sup>See pages 42-43.

<sup>88</sup>Tite 2005, p. 188.

<sup>89</sup>Tite 2005, p. 188.

<sup>90</sup>Tite 2005, p. 207.

<sup>91</sup>Tite 2005, p. 207.

<sup>92</sup>25.21-25.

been elevated from the cosmic pit to the higher realm that is called 'the perfect day.' That is the same as to pass from ignorance to knowledge. But as we saw in the previous chapter, knowledge is not the only important thing. The perfect day is a condition that contrasts with the cosmic existence. This existence is marked by egocentrism and strife. In the text that precedes 25.19-25, the earlier state is depicted as division, envy, strife and lack, whereas the congregation is in completion, unity and harmony.<sup>93</sup> It is worth observing that obtaining knowledge is an irreversible state. The lack is caused by the ignorance. When this is replaced by the knowledge about the Father, the ignorance will not recur.<sup>94</sup> But why does the preacher remind the community to be mindful of the All and keep the house peaceful? There are two possible interpretations. The first is that the strife in the community worries the preacher. The second interpretation is that the community should be certain that those who belong to the All will come to the church. Then, it would only be a matter of time. The first interpretation must be rejected. Immediately before 25.19-25,<sup>95</sup> we read that there are people who at the moment are in the state of division. However, they will purify themselves and turn from multiplicity into unity. But there are also others who never will join the community. When the judgement comes it is clear that they are broken.<sup>96</sup> The broken jars are of a completely different kind than those who could join the community. The consequence of this situation is that the members of the community could be certain that those who belong to them sooner or later will join. Those who do not come are of a different origin and could never come to the peaceful house. It is therefore advisable to refrain from fruitless missionary activities. As a support for his or her attitude, the preacher continues with a description of the conditions at the time when Jesus came to Earth.<sup>97</sup> As we saw in the preceding chapter, his spiritual flesh was the church that appeared with him. Since 25.35-27.4 has an important function for 25.15-21 we will now examine this passage before we return to 25.19-25.

### Structural analysis of 25.35-27.4

I divide the section in five units. The first runs from 25.35-26.10a, the second from 26.10b-26.16a, the third from 26.16b-26.23a, the fourth from 26.23b-32a and the fifth from 26.32b-27.4.

The first unit is headed by the causal 'Because this is the judgement that has come from above' **ΤΕΕΙ ΤΕ ΤΕΚΡΙCΙC ΠΤΑΖΕΙ ΔΒΔΛ ΞΠCΔ**. This

<sup>93</sup>24.25-28.

<sup>94</sup>24.28-32.

<sup>95</sup>25.7-19a.

<sup>96</sup>25.25-35.

<sup>97</sup>25.35-27.4.

causal clause is superordinated to another causal construction: ‘since it judged everyone, being a drawn two-edged sword that cuts in either side’ **εδς † ζεπ δοταν πιε ετκηγε τε εσωδαλμ̄ μ̄χο σπετ εσω-ωωτ π̄ςδ π̄ςδ μ̄π̄ π̄ει**. The construction explains why ‘this is the judgement.’ It is a process of dividing. In its turn the second causal construction is superordinated to a third causal construction ‘since the Word came forth in the minds of those who spoke it, it was not only a sound but it became a body’ **εδχι δτμ̄κτε π̄β̄ πιωεχε ετ̄π̄ζρηει ζ̄π̄ π̄ζκτ̄ π̄πετωεχε μ̄μ̄δγ̄ οτ̄ζρατ̄ οτ̄δεετ̄ε̄ εν̄ πε δλδδ δγ̄ρ̄ οτ̄σωμ̄δδ**. When the Word became a body it was the cause of the dividing process that on its part was the cause for the judgement that is the cause for the superordinated main clause, ‘a great disturbance took place among the jars’ **οτ̄π̄δβ̄ π̄ωτ̄αρ̄τ̄ρ̄ δγ̄ωωπε π̄ζρηι ζ̄π̄ π̄κετοσ**.

In the second unit the movement among the jars is a consequence of their different conditions. The differences have become obvious due to the dividing process that was described in the prior unit.

The third unit contains additional information about the disturbance that was the climax in the first unit. The anxiety of Error is the cause of the instability of its offspring. We also turn from the perfect to present tense. The destruction of Error is an ongoing process that is caused by the revelation of the Word that is described in the perfect tense. When the Word became manifest in the church, it was evident that some beings did not belong to it.

In the fourth unit the Truth appears. It means the destruction of Error, but the focus is laid upon the group that welcomes the knowledge. The gifts of the Truth become united with the Father, which is contrasted to the gifts of Error that became annihilated.

The fifth unit opens with the summarising ‘for’ **τ̄αρ̄** and expounds on the theme from the preceding unit. Those who love the Father become united with him. This is expressed by a somewhat peculiar imagery. The Truth is the Father’s mouth and his tongue is the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the connection between the one who loves the Truth and the Father’s mouth that is the Truth. What in the first unit was described as the judgement and a process of separation, in the fifth unit becomes the way into unity with the Father through the Holy Spirit.

#### Semantic analysis of 25.35-27.4

**χec** in 26.12 has puzzled scholars. I follow Layton’s suggestion<sup>98</sup> and treat it as a form of the Sahidic **ḫoc**. According to Crum<sup>99</sup> **χec** is attested in Bohairic. This is one of many occasions of Bohairisms in this Lycopitan

<sup>98</sup>Layton 2004, p. 144.

<sup>99</sup>Crum 1939, 832a.

document. However, I treat it differently than Layton. He lets ‘half’ refer to the preceding ‘full’ that results in the translation ‘half full,’ whereas I let it refer to the following word. In this way my translation results in two groups of jars: one half of them are full, supplied and purified, whereas the other half is emptied, has leaked out and is broken.

**𐌆𐌆𐌳𐌹𐌲 𐌒𐌺𐌺** in 26.15-16 is usually rendered with ‘all ways.’ However, this translation often seems to be out of place. In 25.35-27.4 it is fitting to render it synonymously with **𐌲𐌴𐌳𐌺 𐌒𐌺𐌺** in 26.1-2 and 26.32-33. Possibly **𐌆𐌆𐌳𐌹𐌲 𐌒𐌺𐌺** reproduces the Greek *τόπος*, which Crum gives as a Bohairic usage.<sup>100</sup> Therefore, I frequently render **𐌆𐌆𐌳𐌹𐌲 𐌒𐌺𐌺** with ‘everything’ or ‘everyone.’

### Intertextual analysis of 25.35-27.4

‘...a drawn two-edged sword that cuts in either side’<sup>101</sup> might be influenced by Hebrews 4:12: ‘For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and spirit, of joints and marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.’ The sword sorts out different groups of people from one another, and as was discussed in the semantic analysis we have to reckon with two groups, one that belongs to fullness and another that belongs to emptiness. In 25.19-35 this division is expressed by the good and the bad jars. In 36.19-20 we learned that full jars are ointed. As the ointment probably refers to the baptism it fits well together with the imagery of moving into the house of peace and unity that is described in 25.19-35. A completed jar is anointed, and the ointment is the Father’s mercy by which Jesus oints the full jars.<sup>102</sup> Probably a pun on Christ as ‘the anointed’ underlies the text on page 36. The ointment functions as a seal and protects the jar from leaking out its contents, whereas from a deficient jar the contents easily leaks out.<sup>103</sup>

In the fifth unit<sup>104</sup> it is through the Holy Spirit that those who love the Truth are linked to the Father’s mouth that is the Truth. Thus, the Spirit unites the enlightened person with the Father’s mouth. Again, the baptism is a probable reference. We also have an imagery that stresses that the illuminated person is the active word from the Father. This resembles the pattern that we recall from the previous chapter. There, the redeemed person becomes a redeemer.

‘...it was not only a sound but it became a body.’<sup>105</sup> In a context in which

<sup>100</sup>Crum 1939, 188b.

<sup>101</sup>26.2-4.

<sup>102</sup>36.15-19.

<sup>103</sup>36.22-35.

<sup>104</sup>26.32b-27.4.

<sup>105</sup>26.7-8.

the Word comes forth as a Saviour it is natural to search in the Johannine literature for Biblical parallels. Maybe 'it was not only a sound' refers to John 1:15: 'John bore witness to him, and cried, 'This was he of whom I said, 'He who comes after me ranks before me, for he was before me.'" John 1:15 would easily have popped up in the mind of the author of the *GospTruth* if 'it became a body' is influenced by John 1:14: 'And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth; we have beheld his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father.' Granting that these Johannine passages have influenced the actual quotation of the *GospTruth*, then, the jars symbolise the reaction of different persons at the time of Jesus' appearance. The body would not refer to carnal flesh, but rather to the spiritual body of the Saviour. That it was not any longer only a sound would mean that what the prophets had predicted now became reality. This is a kind of argument that Origen ascribes to Heracleon:

The words, however, 'I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness,' etc., may be taken as equivalent to 'I am He of whom the 'voice in the wilderness' is written.' Then John would be the person crying, and his voice would be that crying in the wilderness, 'Make straight the way of the Lord.' Heracleon, discussing John and the prophets, says, somewhat slanderously, that 'the Word is the Saviour; the voice, that in the wilderness which John interpreted; the sound is the whole prophetic order.'<sup>106</sup>

What earlier was prophecy becomes the Saviour's body, which we recognise as the Valentinian jargon for the spiritual church.

### **The function of 25.35-27.4 with regard to 25.19-25**

In 25.35-27.4 the time for Jesus earthly mission is mixed with the time in which the preacher lives. Since some persons still are ignorant, Error has not yet disappeared. The perspective on time is 'Already now, and not yet.' We are in the framework of realised eschatology. Not even when Jesus came, everyone greeted him. Some others responded to the redeemer and they were baptised and joined with the Word. The appearance of the Word made it clear that there were different kinds of people. Those who join with the Father's tongue and mouth speak with one voice. They obviously contrast with the multitude of quarrels in other groups. The addressing of the time for the Saviour's appearance, probably consoles the congregation. They should continue the mission, but not even the Saviour himself could save those who belonged to Error.

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<sup>106</sup>Origen's commentary on the Gospel of John VI.12.

### The importance of 25.25-35 with regard to 25.19-25

In 25.25-35, we are told about a man who moves from his old house to a new one. Before he takes pains to carry all the jars to the new home, he checks if any jars are broken. The broken jars he throws away. This is the imagery of this parable. In our context the house may symbolise the community. But how did this parable come up into the mind of the preacher at this occasion? An intertextual observation will provide us with a deeper understanding of this:

Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth. Avoid such godless chatter, for it will lead people into more and more ungodliness, and their talk will eat its way like gangrene. Among them are Hymenae'us and Phile'tus, who have swerved from the truth by holding that the resurrection is past already. They are upsetting the faith of some. But God's firm foundation stands, bearing this seal: 'The Lord knows those who are his,' and, 'Let every one who names the name of the Lord depart from iniquity.' In a great house there are not only vessels of gold and silver but also of wood and earthenware, and some for noble use, some for ignoble. If any one purifies himself from what is ignoble, then he will be a vessel for noble use, consecrated and useful to the master of the house, ready for any good work. So shun youthful passions and aim at righteousness, faith, love, and peace, along with those who call upon the Lord from a pure heart. Have nothing to do with stupid, senseless controversies; you know that they breed quarrels. And the Lord's servant must not be quarrelsome but kindly to every one, an apt teacher, forbearing, correcting his opponents with gentleness. God may perhaps grant that they will repent and come to know the truth, and they may escape from the snare of the devil, after being captured by him to do his will.<sup>107</sup>

With this passage as background it is easy to understand in what way the preacher of the GospTruth came up with this parable.<sup>108</sup> Without reading in too much of second Timothy into the GospTruth, an influence from it is very likely. The imagery of the jars and the house are not common in other Biblical texts. The advice to withdraw from squabbles with others is explicit in second Timothy and a probable understanding of the GospTruth

<sup>107</sup>The second epistle to Timothy 2:15-26.

<sup>108</sup>Orlandi 1992, p. 57, gave Romans 9:20-24 and Second Timothy 2:20-21 as references to this passage. Even though the terminology in Romans also resembles that of the GospTruth, it hardly fits in this context.

as well. To keep peace is common to both sources as well as the terminology of the Jars and the house. ‘The pure heart’ in second Timothy resembles the stress on purification in the GospTruth. In the context of the GospTruth the associations that would have become evoked by the proposed intertext fits well with the exhortation that the community should desist from fruitless chatters.

### Conclusion to 25.19-25

In 25.19-20 the preacher directs him/or herself to the community. ‘If this has happened to all of us.’ the congregation must probably agree: ‘yes, this has really happened to all of us!’ They thereby confirm that they have left the realm of envy and strife. Through purification they have discarded division and entered the realm of completion and unity. Some persons are scattered, but they will sooner or later join with the church. Others will never join, but that depends on that they belong to error, and consequently do not really exist. Through the peace and unity the outsiders will be attracted and come to the congregation.<sup>109</sup> It is because of this, the community should be mindful of the All and keep the house holy and peaceful.

### What happens with the rest? an analysis of 42.39-43.16

After having described the unity and peace that those who ascend to the Father will enjoy, the preacher for a moment asks what will happen to another group. This group is called ‘the rest’ **πρεσβυχοι**. The rest will remain in their own places. The preacher does not want to focus upon them. Instead, he or she says that it only is fitting for the one who has been at the place of repose to speak about that place, the Father of the All and the Father’s children. This scanty information does not provide us with much information when we want to understand who those are who are described as the rest. However, we will anyway try to draw some conclusions. To which category of people does the rest belong? According to Grobel,<sup>110</sup> the rest simply might refer to non-Christians. Menard<sup>111</sup> suggested that the GospTruth, without employing the terms Pneumatics, Psychics and Hylics, reckons with similar categories.

However, in the analysis of 25.35-27.4 on pages 168-172 we stated that the GospTruth only reckons with two groups of beings. One belongs to Error

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<sup>109</sup>25.8-19a.

<sup>110</sup>Grobel 1960, p.191.

<sup>111</sup>Menard 1972, p. 191.

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and the other to the Father. Consequently, the Rest cannot constitute a third group that would correspond to Psychics. But how do we understand the Rest? From 40.30 and to the end of the *GospTruth* the focus is on the Father and on how the Father should be viewed. In 40.30 it is the Saviour who is brought forth in order to speak about the place of repose and in 42.39 it is the preacher who tells us that it is what someone who has been in that place should speak about. As we stated in the discussion regarding *Error* on pages 87-92 it is clear that focusing on *Error*, which is all things that does not belong to the Father, only causes anxiety. On the basis of these discussions I propose that 42.39 to the end of the *GospTruth* is an extension of the discussion that runs from 40.30 and onwards. The community does not have to worry about other things than the Father as he is good and knows everything in advance 42.7-8. On the contrary, all who think of the Father will be lifted up to him, 42.24-33.

In this manner the pattern that was described in the previous chapter is repeated. The Redeemer spoke about the Father and of the place from which he has come, 40.30, and the Gnostic should act in the same manner. To worry about the others is the same thing as thinking small thoughts about the Father, and in the *GospTruth* such thinking is *Error*.



## Chapter 7

# Rethinking The Gospel of Truth

In chapter one I discussed different viewpoints on the GospTruth. Although many scholars have favoured the position that the GospTruth is a Valentinian work, the basis for their claim often is constituted by proposals that contradict what other scholars with the same standpoint assert. It has therefore been interesting to scrutinise a recent and different way of approaching the problem of placing the GospTruth in its original setting.<sup>1</sup>

Thomassen's work<sup>2</sup> has the advantage that it takes its point of departure in primary sources, especially the TripTrac. In this manner we escape many of the source critical problems that inevitably burden the positions that to a large extent build upon the heresiological reports. According to Thomassen the eastern Valentinian school was most faithful to the original doctrine of Valentinus, and all the more important for this study, the GospTruth belongs to that brand as well.<sup>3</sup> A distinct feature of the eastern school should be the idea of the spiritual body of the Saviour. However, Thomassen has not demonstrated in what way the Saviour's body of the GospTruth is constituted. If the Saviour's body would consist of Pneumatics and Psychics alike, the GospTruth would belong to the western school. If we fail to determine the way in which the Saviour's body is built, the location of the GospTruth in the eastern school would heavily depend on its hypothetical adherence to the protology that Thomassen calls type A and which I have denoted as the eastern type. From this perspective the analyses that have been carried through on page 132-139 and 168-172 not only provides us with

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<sup>1</sup>As one purpose of this chapter is to help the reader to see in what way I have related my analyses to the different topics that were discussed in chapter one, I will account for the pages on which the different analyses were carried out.

<sup>2</sup>Thomassen 2006.

<sup>3</sup>See page 20-29.

new information about the GospTruth, but is important when we determine whether it is possible to make a relatively exact proposal regarding the relation between Valentinus, eastern Valentinianism and the GospTruth. From my analyses I draw the following conclusions with regard to the constitution of the Saviour's body in the GospTruth:

- In the GospTruth we only encounter two groups of beings: one that belongs to the Father and another that belongs to Error. On this basis we can exclude the possibility that the GospTruth would include a group of the kind that in Valentinianism would be called Psychics.<sup>4</sup>
- It is also likely that those who are entrusted with the salvation in 20.6-9 are the apostles and the other disciples. In the same manner as in the TripTrac 116.5-17.8<sup>5</sup> they constitute the heavenly church that in the GospTruth descends with Jesus and is called the living book of the living.
- Although certainty hardly can be obtained in these matters, the above proposed interpretation is coherent with regard to the GospTruth, and provides an intelligible reading of many passages that otherwise would be obscure.
- Drawing upon the intertextual analysis of first Clement,<sup>6</sup> the pattern from first Clement regarding the spreading of the duty of the work of God resembles that of the GospTruth.
- But there seems to be differences between the spiritual body of the TripTrac and that of the GospTruth. In the GospTruth the 'living book of the living,' which I presume is the Saviour's body, comes from within the Father, whereas in the TripTrac it comes from the Ogdoad. Perhaps this difference simply depends on the different genres. The GospTruth is a homily, while the TripTrac is a systematic treatise. However, I would say that it really depends on a difference in theology on this point. The GospTruth seems to have a simpler system than that of the TripTrac and might reflect an earlier stage in the development within Valentinianism.

In my analyses on page 150-168 I have tried to solve some very difficult philological problems, and simultaneously to deepen our understanding of the attitude that the author of the GospTruth had in some ethical questions. I would like to stress the following points:

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<sup>4</sup>See especially the analysis of the two groups of jars on page 168-172.

<sup>5</sup>See page 23.

<sup>6</sup>See page ??-147.

- As already discussed by for instance Desjardins<sup>7</sup> ethics was an important field of debate for Gnostics as well as for others, and in the *GospTruth* a paraenesis on page 32-33 of the *GospTruth* is an example of this ethical concern.
- In the *GospTruth* an ethic is advocated for that is based on something that transcends the worldly laws of retaliation as well as egocentric living that could hurt others. The conduct that belongs to the Father's children is based in their kinship with the Father who is without evil and harshness.
- Although the critique of the law of retaliation probably resembles the one that is put forward in Ptolemy's letter to Flora, there also are differences between the position in the *GospTruth* and the one that was held by Ptolemy. In contrast to Ptolemy the *GospTruth* shows no appreciation of the law as a metaphor for good conduct. The law of the Old testament belongs to the Sabbath that in the *GospTruth* is a designation for the cosmic world. When the Father rescues the lost sheep on the Sabbath, he is an example for the community members. The children should continually encourage those who want to know the truth, and help them to ascend from the cosmic pit. In this manner the *GospTruth* probably has a lot in common with the Interpretation of Knowledge.
- The ethics of the *GospTruth* is intelligible from an anti-cosmic perspective. I therefore side with Meekson page 41 who stresses the important link between the worldview and ethics. As is evident from the discussion regarding the law and the Sabbath but also from the discussion about Error on page 87-92 the demiurge figure is depicted as an evil and aggressive being. From this perspective it would be surprising if something good could be found in the law of the Old Testament, since after all it has its origin in Error. But other worldly attitudes towards ethics are rooted in the cosmic sphere as well. It is in this light I interpret page 33 of the *GospTruth*. The one who hurts people because of lawless living causes fear and pain, but so does the one who punishes through the legal system as well.
- If Grobel on page 40 represents a traditional position according to which Gnostics would be uninterested in ethics, the paraenesis of the *GospTruth* undermines such attitude. But King seems to go too far in the other direction when she overlooks that the anti-cosmicity both is strong and has importance for the ethics in the *GospTruth*.<sup>8</sup> The *GospTruth* concerns ethics and it is Christian, but the world view that

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<sup>7</sup>See page 40.

<sup>8</sup>See page 42-43.

is more anti-cosmic than the one of for instance the TripTrac is a good example of what we could call Gnosticism.

On page 14-15 I discussed the scholarly discourse in which too much focus has been laid upon the heresiological material. For quite a long time we have had access to many Valentinian texts, but still, many of the topics that the Valentinians discussed has drowned in the heresiologically influenced discourse. On page 139-147 I have tried to give a voice to the Valentinian interpretation of the crucifixion, plurality and unity. When the heavenly church descended in order to join with the part that was stuck in the cosmic sphere, it had to suffer from the cosmic conditions as well. In valentinian terms such suffering often is called division, as it is a break with the unity that is the ideal state. In the GospTruth all enlightened persons will suffer and resurrect in the same manner as Jesus. They will become redeemers for others, and thus they are entrusted with the work of salvation.<sup>9</sup> In this way the salvation spreads to many. The horizontal cross bar represents the spreading in the world, while the vertical bar unites those who are in the world with the path to the spiritual realm. In the Valentinian discourse the cross is related to purification and restriction as well as to the ascending to the Father. On the cross the members of the church are subordinated to the head that is Jesus. In this manner the cross is a path from egocentrism to unity when the individuals are incorporated in the body of Christ. At the same time it is the way out of the cosmos, and when the Father wants it, each one will ascend to him. This discourse is known from for instance the Gospel of Philip and the Interpretation of Knowledge that often are held to be Valentinian texts, but has never been used as a perspective for the reading of the GospTruth. In the GospTruth the spreading of the work of salvation from Jesus to the apostles and to other disciples according to the same pattern as in first Clement, naturally is combined with the strong emphasis on mission that we encounter in the GospTruth. All who have been enlightened become a redeemer and will joyfully follow the Father's will to speak about the Father's sweetness and goodness and thereby do away with Error. With this reading new perspectives are opened, and we gain new insights to the world of the community of the GospTruth.

According to the scheme in which everyone becomes a redeemer, the missionary zeal that is expressed in the paraenesis of the GospTruth 32-33 is natural. But I would also say that we have a tendency to temper the involvement with outsiders. On page 168-174 I have used intertexts in order to detect how 25.19-27.4 functions in the process of communication. Although we admittedly are on the field of fairly wild speculations, it is not at all unlikely that the GospTruth reflects a situation in which the preacher exhorts the community to refrain from the quarrels that might have plagued

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<sup>9</sup>The GospTruth 20.6-9.

the neighbouring communities, and instead encourage them to focus on their own peace and purification. Therefore, the proposal by Thomassen<sup>10</sup> that the *GospTruth* reflects the situation in which the Valentinian congregation in Rome withdrew from the quarrels among the other communities is attractive. This explains why the Valentinians in Rome never could be thrown out of the church, as they had already left it on their own accord.

In chapter three I have presented an analysis of 16.31-18.31 that both serves to demonstrate the benefit of using text linguistic tools, and also to highlight some aspects regarding Error that so far scarcely have been discussed. The *GospTruth* implicitly elaborates on a strongly aggressive demiurge figure. But step by step this figure is transformed into a psychological condition. To view God as evil, harsh and jealous causes the anguish and fear that will snare people in Error. Instead one should focus on the Father whose sweetness and goodness will make anguish and terror cease. I have also suggested that Error often is best understood as a group of people rather than as a mythological figure. Many times translators have chosen to translate the third person plural with a passive construction when the active translation would work equally well, or perhaps would be preferable. In this way they risk to conceal some of the social aspects of the *GospTruth*. The text linguistic tools often help to reveal in what way the line of thought is carried out, and often is of help in the work as translator as well.

The *GospTruth* is a text that is a challenge for the translator. The discussions that are going on in the field of translation theory has increased my awareness of problems and possibilities in the process of translating, and I hope that my work can influence others and open doors to other disciplines that are important for the historian of religions. On page 33-35 many issues regarding the original language and the style of the *GospTruth* were addressed. The work with the *GospTruth* has convinced me that it is a well-composed text that probably originally was written in Greek and translated to different Coptic dialects. Sometimes in NHC 1.3 we encounter traces of a northern Egyptian version from which the Lycopolitan version was transferred. The elegance of the text that after all has survived through all the stages of transfer both in Greek and Coptic favours the standpoint that the Greek original showed great elegance and rhetorical skill.

But who was the author of this elegant Gnostic work? Probably we will never know that. But my analyses have made me believe that we have in the *GospTruth* an original work of Valentinus of Alexandria. The results in chapter five and six has filled some gaps in Thomassen's recent work. If we build on the model with the two Valentinian schools the *GospTruth* belongs to the eastern one. This is the results from the discussion regarding the Saviour's body. Moreover, the argument of non-expulsion that was described

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<sup>10</sup>See page 29-32.

on page 29-32 is supported by the analysis on page 168-174. Ptolemy had the rhetorical skill to be the author of the *GospTruth* but the view on the Sabbath that he expresses in the letter to Flora is different from the one that I have detected in the *GospTruth*. If we have to look for a Valentinian in the eastern school with great imagination and rhetorical skill, Valentinus is the best choice at the present stage of scholarship.

## Chapter 8

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