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## THE FIRST DAY IN THE *WRITING WITHOUT TITLE* (*NHC II,5*)

*There is no need to argue that the Gnostic cosmology is a much debated topic among the modern researchers. In this area one of the most questioned texts is the Writing without Title on the Origin of the World from the Nag Hammadi Library. Relying on the generally accepted view one can say that the tractate drew upon heterogeneous Gnostic (Ophite, Sethian, Valentinian, and probably Manichean) and non-Gnostic (Jewish, Christian, Greek, and Egyptian) materials, according as the author wanted to fashion his theology. The motifs of the cosmogonical myth in this exegetically oriented style also seem to derive from heterogeneous traditions of religious and philosophical schools and probably from common and inherited Gnostic source material found in a variety of Gnostic texts. The purpose of my planned investigation is to look into the introductory sentences of the cosmogony. First I sum up the main interpretive questions which arise if we read the text as a commentary on the first day or day one of the biblical account of creation. Next, by analysing some elements and conceptions I will turn to the contemporary philosophical and religious literature and try to explain why the author chose these materials and how he used them in order to create his own narrative in the framework of the biblical Genesis. Viewed from this perspective, this variant of the myth bears witness to the polemical and revisionary rewriting of the mentioned traditions but it points to the context of the Christian faith.*

**Keywords:** ancient Gnosis; Gnosticism; Nag Hammadi; *Writing without Title on the Origin of the World*; Cosmology; Genesis; Valentinian; Sophia; Pistis; Jaldabaoth; Samael; Adam

### I.

There is no need to argue that the ancient mythical cosmologies, which we have labelled as Gnostic, are a much debated topic among modern researchers.

In the primary (and secondary) sources of this tradition, we meet mythical characters and abstract terms playing in a dramatic story, which leads

from the heavenly world to the material cosmos. Generally, there are two main characters, Sophia (the personified Wisdom) and Jaldabaoth, the first archon in these narratives.

There are several opinions about the origin and meaning of the mythological cosmology, not only in the contemporary polemical literature from the philosophical and theological schools, but in modern research as well. According to these views, the narratives of the main characters, the first archon and Sophia should be examined together. In the relevant hypotheses the building stones of these mythological narratives could come from the orphic myth of Phanes,<sup>1</sup> from the stories of the birth of Hera's wrath: the myths of Hephaestus and Typhon,<sup>2</sup> from the Platonic tradition as the figure of the Demiurge<sup>3</sup> and the world-soul,<sup>4</sup> and the conception of matter in the contemporary (middle) Platonic philosophy, from the story of Isis and her imperfect son (the older Horus)<sup>5</sup> as it is known from Plutarch. We should mention the myths of personified Wisdom in the Jewish and Christian traditions,<sup>6</sup> the myths of the fallen and demonic angel(s) in these traditions, and the angelological and demonological teachings in the canonical and apocryphal corpuses from both traditions<sup>7</sup> mentioned. Some research-

<sup>1</sup> QUISPÉL, G. 1978. "The Demiurge in the Apocryphon of John." In WILSON, R. MCL. [ED.] *Nag Hammadi and Gnosis*. (NHS XIV). Leiden: Brill, 1978, 1–33.

<sup>2</sup> For this: GOHRIG, J.E. 1981. A Classical Influence on the Gnostic Sophia Myth. *VC*, 35, 16–23.

<sup>3</sup> E.g. STEAD, G.C. 1969. The Valentinian Myth of Sophia. *JThS*, 20, 75–104. for the relationship between the two traditions: THOMASSEN, E. 1993. "The Platonic and Gnostic Demiurge." In *Apocryphon Severini*. Oslo, Aarchen Uni.Press, 1993, 226–244; and MANSFELD, J. 1981. "Bad World and Demiurge. A 'Gnostic' motif from Parmenides to Lucretius and Philo." In *Studies in Gnosticism and Hellenistic Religions*. Leiden: Brill, 1981, 261–314.

<sup>4</sup> For this: DILLON, J. 1977. *The Middle Platonists. A Study of Platonism 80 BC to AD 220*. Ithaca; Cornell Uni. Press; and THEILER, W. 1966. *Gott und Seele in kaiserzeitlichen Denken. Forschungen zum Neuplatonismus*. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter.

<sup>5</sup> *De Iside* 54–55.

<sup>6</sup> For this see e.g.: MACRAE, G.W. 1970. "The Jewish Background of the Gnostic Sophia Myth." *NT* 12, 86–101.

<sup>7</sup> Among the figures, we should note e.g. the Angel of the Lord, Metatron, but the seven archangel and the myths about the fall could play important roles. For this see e.g. SEGAL, A.F. 1977. *Two powers in heaven. Early Rabbinic Reports about Christianity, Gnosticism*. Leiden: Brill; FOSSUM, J.A. 1985. *The Name of God and the Angel of the Lord. Samaritan and Jewish Concept of Intermediation and Origin of Gnosticism*. *WUNT*, 36, Mohr Siebeck, Tübingen; DANIELOU, J. 1966. "Le mauvais gouvernement due Monde d'après le Gnosticisme." In BIANCHI, U. [ED.] *Le origine dello Gnosticismo*. Leiden: Brill, 1966, 448–456.

ers have derived the portrait of this first archon from a critique of the social order<sup>8</sup> or from the hierarchy of the early Christian church,<sup>9</sup> but others have tried to analyse it as a mythical trickster figure.<sup>10</sup>

In this area one of the most questioned texts is the *Writing without Title On the Origin of the World*<sup>11</sup> from the Nag Hammadi Library.

The motifs of the tractate's mythology in its exegetically oriented style seem to derive from heterogeneous traditions of religious and philosophical schools and probably from common and inherited Gnostic source material found in a variety of Gnostic texts (ApJohn, ApocAd, SJC, HypArch)<sup>12</sup> or other Gnostic material (Ophite, Sethian, Valentinian, and probably Manichean) or non-Gnostic (Jewish, Christian, Greek and Egyptian) sources. These heterogeneous materials served the author's goal of expressing his theology.<sup>13</sup> An outstanding characteristic and dominant element in the creation myth of the world and man is that the events of the myth in an ambiguous but more or

<sup>8</sup> SEGAL, A.F. 1981. "Ruler of this World. Attitudes about Mediator figures and the Importance of Sociology for Self-Definition." In SANDERS, E.P. (ET AL.). 1981. *Jewish and Christian Self Definition*. II. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 245–268.

<sup>9</sup> PAGELS, E. 1976. The Demiurge and his Archons. A Gnostic view of the bishop and presbyters? *HTR*, 63, 3–4.

<sup>10</sup> GILHUS, I.S. 1984 (14). "The Gnostic Demiurge. An Agnostic Trickster." *Religion*, 14, 301–311.

<sup>11</sup> In LAYTON, B. [ED.] 1989. *NHC II, 2–7 together with XIII, 2 Brit.Lib.Or.4926(1) and P.Oxy.1.654,655. II (NHS 21)*. BETHGE H. – G.-LAYTON B. [TRANSL.] Leiden – Kobenhaven – Köln – New York: E.J. Brill. Societas Coptica Hierosolymitana, with fragments from Codex XIII and from the British Library (Oeyen Fragments) (later BETHGE 1989). I also used the translation from BARNSTONE and MEYER's edition. 2003. *The Gnostic Bible. Shambala*. Boston and London; and BETHGE's German translation. 2001. „Vom Ursprung der Welt (NHC II,5).“ In SCHENKE, H.-M. – BETHGE, H.G. – KAISER, U. U. [EDS.] *Nag Hammadi Deutsch I* (GCS N.F. 8). Berlin – New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2001, 235–262.

<sup>12</sup> The most important commentators are: BÖHLIG, A. – LABIB, P. 1962. *Die koptisch-gnostische Schrift ohne Titel aus Codex II von Nag Hammadi im koptischen Museum zu Alt Kairo*. Deutsche Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Berlin, Institut für Orientforschung 58, Berlin, 1962. TARDIEAU, M. 1974. *Trois Mythes Gnostiques. Adam, Éros et les animaux d'Égypte dans un écrit de Nag Hammadi (II,5)*. Études Augustiniennes, Paris. BETHGE, H.-G. 1975. *Vom Ursprung der Welt. Die fünfte Schrift aus Nag Hammadi-Codex II neu herausgegeben und unter bevorzugter Auswertung anderer Nag Hammadi Texte erklärt*. Dissertation. Zur Erlangung des Akademischen Grades doctor theologiae an der Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, Berlin. PAINCHAUD, L. 1995. *L'écrit sans Titre. Traité sur l'origine du monde* (NHC II,5 et XIII,2 et Brit. LibOr.4926 [1]). Les Presses de l'Université Laval, Québec, Canada-Peeters, Louvain-Paris, – Later PAINCHAUD /1995/).

<sup>13</sup> See BETHGE, H.-G. (1975), and later in his introduction to the translation in the abovementioned work (ed. by LAYTON).

less clearly recognisable way follow the text and events of Genesis' creation story,<sup>14</sup> which has no parallel in the Nag Hammadi corpus.<sup>15</sup>

The tractate has been much debated in modern literature. Despite some different opinions that have appeared in the long and colourful history of research,<sup>16</sup> the recurrent opinion in the scholarly writings is that this mythical material does not have one identifiable link to the only one earlier Gnostic school identified by the Church Fathers<sup>17</sup> or to another tractate from Nag Hammadi. According to Painchaud's redactional hypothesis,<sup>18</sup> this heterogeneous content could be the result of a development with two successive remodellings of the first basic text.

On the basis of the parallels with *Genesis*' accounts, the tractate in its present form could be perceived as a commentary or interpretation in a mythical dress<sup>19</sup> and "in the text we get a good insight into the thought,

<sup>14</sup> E.g. BÖHLIG, A. 1968. „Der jüdische Hintergrund in gnostischen Schriften von Nag Hammadi“, and „Religionsgeschichtliche Probleme aus der Schrift ohne Titel des Codex II von Nag Hammadi.“ and “Urzeit und Endzeit in der titellosen Schrift.” In *Mysterium und Wahrheit. Gesammelte Beiträge zur spätantiken Religionsgeschichte*. Leiden: E.J. Brill, 80–101, 119–126 and 135–148.

<sup>15</sup> For the links to the Eug., see PAINCHAUD. 1995. “The literary contacts between the Writing without Title on the Origin of the Word (CG II, 5 and XIII, 2) and Eugnostos the Blessed (CG III, 3 and V,1).” *JBL*, 114/1, 81–101 and also PAINCHAUD (1995: 98–101).

<sup>16</sup> For the detailed analysis of the history of research, see PAINCHAUD (1995).

<sup>17</sup> See BETHGE and PAINCHAUD (1995). At this point, we should note that in the early history of research SCHENKE. 1959. „Vom Ursprung der Welt. Eine titellose gnostische Abhandlung aus der Funde von Nag Hammadi.“ *TLZ*, 84, 243–256, argued that it belonged to the sect of Barbelognostics (after him JONAS, H. 1954. *Gnosis und Spätantiker Geist*. I. Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, Göttingen, 360). Later, SCHENKE, H.-M. 1974. “Das Sethianische System nach Nag Hammadi Handschriften. *Studia Coptica*, ??, 165–174, modified his opinion and stated that it was a document of the Sethian tradition. BÖHLIG's opinion (“Gnostische Probleme in der Titellosen Schrift.“ In. *Mysterium und Wahrheit*, 137) was that the tractate is a compilation from two originally independent sources (one source used for the archons the term *exousiai* and the other the *archontes*) and understood it to be an example of the Gnostic Syncretism in his text-edition, and he wrote in his other essay that it was a combination of the Ophite and Barbelognostic elements. Tardieu tried to connect the text to the school of the Archontics analysing the mythological ideas and motifs in the text in his book. Fallon's conclusion in his analysis in respect to the account of Sabaoth was that the Jewish apocalyptic and Sapiential literature played the main role among the sources (FALLON. *The Enthronement of Sabaoth. Jewish Elements in Gnostic Creation myths*. *NHS* 10, Leiden, E. J. Brill, 1978).

<sup>18</sup> For this, see PAINCHAUD L'écrit, and his treatise 1991. „The Redactions of The Writing without Title (CG II 5).“ *SecCent*, 8, 217–234.

<sup>19</sup> As regards the interpretation of the cosmogony of OrigWorld, the most important text

method and argumentation of a Gnostic author presenting to the public at large his thought on the origin and the end of the world and of man”.<sup>20</sup>

## II.

In this paper, I do not attempt to present an elaborated and detailed examination of the whole process of the cosmology, because our task has to be more focused. That is why I will sum up the mythical events of the quotation as concisely as possible first, and I restrain myself to giving brief comments. After that, in the second part of this work, I will examine the main concepts of the text.

Before turning to the mythical story, it is worth noting that at the beginning of the tractate the author’s aim as an educated apologist<sup>21</sup> and/or good orator<sup>22</sup> was to demonstrate<sup>23</sup> the mistaken opinions of the men and of worldly gods in respect to the originality of primeval chaos. For the sake of refutation, he fits his own opinion into a semi-dualist mythical concept concerning two mythical beings that are in a causal, or in other words, in a derivative relationship (light and shadow), and this given condition, right from the beginning, leads to the two opposite and later conflicting beings (light and darkness/chaos). This theological basis serves as an explanation of the origin of the defended viewpoint on the one hand, and with this model the author lays the ground for the evaluation of the status of the physical world on the other hand, because the shadow has no independent and substantial state or condition in itself, but only a subordinate, dependent and secondary one in regard to the light.

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is the *Hypostasis of the Archons* (NHC II,4), because its cosmogonical material is very similar to the OrigWorld, and the authors probably used a common source. The idea of the common source (“Apocalypse of Norea”) was assumed by SCHENKE, H. M. 1981. “The Phenomenon and Significance of Gnostic Sethianism.” In LAYTON, B. [ED.] *The Rediscovery of Gnosticism*. II. Sethian Gnosticism. Leiden: Brill, 1981, 596. See FALLON (1978). For the most detailed discussion about the relation, see KAISER, U.U. 2006. *Die Hypostase der Archonten*. (NHC II,4). Neu herausgegeben, übersetzt und erklärt von... TU 156 Walter de Gruyter, Berlin – New York, esp. 311–315. According to PAINCHAUD (1995: Introduction), there are three common schemes: theological, anthropogonical, and the “Genèse véritable”.

<sup>20</sup> The quotation from BETHGE (1989: Introduction 17).

<sup>21</sup> See BETHGE (1989: 14).

<sup>22</sup> PAINCHAUD (1995: Redactions).

<sup>23</sup> The demonstration has a revelation status, because in order to fulfil it, the author invites the audience to see the truth.

After that, we receive a shortened description on the fulfilment of the Pleroma, the heavenly world and the existence of the shadow.<sup>24</sup> In this mythical narrative, the consequences of Pistis' acts seem to lead to the activity of the personified shadow. The description of the mythical process and the involved concept has no parallel in the tractates from Nag Hammadi or in the accounts of the polemical writings or in contemporary religious and philosophical literature.<sup>25</sup>

The mythical process that we are to examine starts with the reaction of the shadow and ends with the appearance of the elements. The place of the events is situated behind the cosmic veil; in this case Sophia plays the role of the border between the above and below.

The aim of this unit is to explain explicitly the origin of the main elements of the world. The viewpoint of the narration turns to shadow, and we can read in the text the following (99.2–22):

*ΤΟΤΕ ΔΘΖΔΪΒΕC ΠΔΙCΘΑΝΕ ΧΕ ΟΥΝ ΠΕΤΧΟΟΡ ΕΡΟC ΔCΚΩΖ  
ΔΥΩ ΝΤΑΡΕCΥΟΥ ΕΒΟΛ ΖΙΤΟΟΤC ΟΥΔΑΔΤC ΝΤΕΥΝΟΥ ΔCΧΠΟ  
ΜΠΚΩΖ ΧΙΝ ΜΦΟΥ ΕΤΜΜΔΥ ΔCΟΥΩΝΖ ΕΒΟΛ ΝΘΙ ΤΑΡΧΗ  
ΜΠΚΩΖ ΖΝ ΝΑΙΩΝ ΤΗΡΟΥ ΜΝ ΝΕΥΚΟCΜΟC ΠΚΩΖ ΔΕ  
ΕΤΜΜΔΥ ΔΥΖΕ ΕΡΟΦ ΕΦΟ ΝΟΥΖΕ ΕΜΝ ΠΝΑ ΝΖΗΤΦ ΔΦΩΠΕ  
ΝΘΕ ΝΝΙΖΔΕΙΒΕC ΖΝΝΟΥΝΟC ΝΟΥCΙΑ ΜΜΟΥ ΤΟΤΕ ΨΧΟΛΗ  
ΝΤΑΖΩΠΕ ΕΒΟΛ ΖΝ ΘΔΕΙΒΕC ΔΥΝΟΧC ΔΥΜΕΡΟC ΝΤΕ  
ΠΧΔΟC ΧΙΜ ΦΟΥ ΕΤΜΜΔΥ ΔΟΥCΙΑ ΜΜΟΥ ΟΥΩΝΖ ΕΒΟΛ  
ΔΥΩ ΠΕΝΤΑΖΩΤΕ ΖΡΔΙ ΝΖΗΤC ΔΦΖΤΕ ΕΒΟΛ ΕΦΟΥΟΝΖ ΕΒΟΛ  
ΖΜ ΠΧΔΟC ΝΘΕ ΝΤΕΤΜΙCΕ ΝΝΟΥΚΟΥΕΙ ΝΕCΠΕΡΙCΟΝ ΤΗΡΟΥ  
ΨΔΥΖΔΕΙΕ ΤΔΕΙ ΤΕ ΘΕ ΝΘΥΛΗ ΝΤΑCΩΠΕ ΕΒΟΛ ΖΝ ΘΔΕΙΒΕC  
ΔΥΝΟΧC ΕΥCΔ ΔΥΩ ΜΠΕCΕΙ ΕΒΟΛ ΖΜ ΠΧΔΟC ΔΛΛΑ ΝΕCΖΜ  
ΠΧΔΟC ΝΘΙ ΘΥΛΗ ΕCΖΝ ΟΥΜΕΡΟC ΜΜΟΥ*

“Then shadow perceived that there is something stronger than it and felt envy. And when it became self-impregnated, it immediately bore envy. Since that day, the principle of envy among all eons and their worlds has been apparent. But that envy was found to be an abortion without any spirit in it. It became like the shadow in a great watery substance. Then the wrath that came into being out of the shadow was thrown into a part of chaos.

<sup>24</sup> At first sight the target of the polemic seems to be a kind of Greek mythology, probably one version of Hesiod's work (it could be a pure text, a theological or philosophical commentary), but neither the exact opinion will be clear later, nor will any mentioned name help us to identify the source of the refuted opinion of the men and the gods of the world.

<sup>25</sup> We should note that the myth of Pistis (or Pistis Sophia) has some signs, from which we can presume an altered version of the widespread myth of Sophia. *In nuce*, it is not a fallen myth, but only used the terms of the myth of Sophia to create a new one from an altered theological point of view.

Since that day a watery substance has appeared, what was enclosed within it (the shadow) flowed out, being visible in the chaos: as with one who is shortly giving birth – all her superfluities falls, likewise the matter that came into being out of the shadow and was cast aside. And matter did not come out of chaos, but it was in chaos, being in a part of it.”<sup>26</sup>

### III.

At first sight it is clear that it is not a philosophical cosmogony with clear argumentation on the world’s formation and it is essentially different from the theology of biblical creation; nevertheless, its place is in the controversies over the creation of the world with its obvious mythical language and imagery and what is more, its position is closer to the biblical exegesis. In the following my task will partly be to demonstrate that the sources of this view could be placed in the biblical tradition.<sup>27</sup>

Focusing on the quoted text, one can say that the leading character is the personified shadow  $\text{ϩ}\dot{\Delta}\dot{\text{I}}\text{BEC}/$ . To perceive what it means in the tractate, we have to recall that this description is part of the demonstration in which the author contends that chaos, darkness and the shadow are to be one and the same.<sup>28</sup>

In the first part of the quotation two passions dominate, and in the second, we can read about the appearance of matter. The link between them is the motif of the water (or watery substance), but it is difficult to give any details how and from what it comes.

Reading the myth about the envy  $\text{K}\dot{\Omega}\text{ϩ}$  and the wrath  $\text{X}\dot{\text{O}}\dot{\Lambda}\text{H}$  of the shadow,<sup>29</sup> we can be amazed by the fact that two passions appear in this context, since usually both belong to the field of psychology or could have demonological connotation. Yet, at this point, these terms serve to show the transition in the cosmogonical process leading the story to the appearance

<sup>26</sup> The quotation with small alterations comes from the revised edition of BARNSTONE and MEYER (2003: 417).

<sup>27</sup> We should mention that in BÖHLIG’s and BETHGE’s and TARDIEU’s works –, there is a relative consensus, and all of them connect the appearance of the demiurgic figure’s thought and the event when Yaldabaoth creates the abode (the sky as his throne) and the below (the footstool, the earth) with the third day of the biblical text (combining with elements from the second).

<sup>28</sup> Probably, we could state that these three terms serve as three aspects of only one mythical being that plays different roles in the different stages of the myth.

<sup>29</sup> At this point, I try to reflect partly on the version of the myth of Samael suggested by BARC.1981. “Samael, Saclas, Yaldabaoth.” In BARC [ED.]. *Colloque international sur les Textes de Nag Hammadi*. Leuven: B. Peeters, 1981, 123–150, and partly to the Fallon’s analysis.



of water **ΟΥCΙΑ ΜΜΟΟΥ** and matter **ΘΥΛΗ**. I will leave the question of the object of envy open for now, but later I will suggest a possible solution.

Both passions express the reactions of the shadow to the events in the heavenly world.<sup>30</sup> The second part of the first sentence indicates that the forces (the archons) are present and the passions appear not only before the heavenly eons but their words **ΖΝ ΝΑΙΩΝ ΤΗΡΟΥ ΜΝ ΝΕΥΚΟCΜΟC**. The phrasing implies not only the author's approach to the question of the nature of the soul and the passion in it (that is why the spiritless state in both cases appears and similarly later in the description of the earthly Adam's creation), but in this case a physical concept is offered, because this process leads to the appearance of water and matter, and at the same time, it points out that before the intervention of the heavenly world, the whole shadowy region was spiritless with its elements and all beings.<sup>31</sup>

Returning to the second part, the text mentioning the terms of water, matter and chaos takes a new direction in the process and comes closer to the cosmogonical context. As a consequence of the formula (since that day), Bethge's opinion was that this whole part could be the result of a redactor's work.<sup>32</sup> The origin of water remains uncertain, because the author mentions only that in this substance the principle of envy came into being, and it became visible by this act. The next sentence establishes the relation between matter and water bringing into play the analogy of birth but it does not offer a clear explanation about the origin of the elements.

The last sentence demonstrates the theological position of the author. In this case, as I have mentioned earlier, it means that, according to the author, the shadow, the darkness and the chaos are all one and the same, and all of them come from the light declaring the successive order and a derivative relation. This given semi-dualist condition, directly from the beginning, leads to the two opposite and subsequently conflicting beings (light and darkness/chaos), and from this basis the cosmogonical concept receives its justification, because all steps in the mythological process fit into this causal

<sup>30</sup> These two passions appear among the offspring begot from death (106.30).

<sup>31</sup> The appearance of envy and then wrath allows us to propound that it could reflect on a contemporary fallen myth, and the text can be characterised as the result of a radical alteration in accordance with the theological thinking of the author. The two main arguments for this alleged affinity are the negative passions and the context of the biblical Genesis' account as it is well known in the contemporary accounts. In this mythical dress, the shadow represents the first archon Yaldabaoth (Samael), and the aeons and their worlds are the rest of the archons, the object of these two passions could be the first light Anthropos, but the arguments for this possibility would avert the focus of our examination.

<sup>32</sup> BETHGE (1975: 195).

and derivative relationship.<sup>33</sup> From this viewpoint, we should interpret the chaos as a place and personified mythical being, in and from which matter appeared, as well as the *meros* as the lowest part of the chaos.<sup>34</sup>

According to the opinions of the commentators, it is possible that the author creating this text could have used concepts and ideas from the Stoic and/or middle Platonic philosophical schools<sup>35</sup> and was influenced by them, and it may be postulated that the author worked on inherited knowledge from another “Gnostic” source, but in any case these were reshaped and adapted for constructing this text. Furthermore, the etymologies given in Greek and Coptic (shadow-envy,<sup>36</sup>-wrath,<sup>37</sup>-matter) may have played a role as well.<sup>38</sup>

If anyone reads the text as a whole they might raise the question paraphrasing Tertullian’s sentence: what does the biblical Genesis’ account have to do with this mythology?

Consequentially, I will try to give a short answer to this question and come closer to what this mythical narrative means in the cosmogonical context.

#### IV.

The first answer is a terminological one. Accepting the commentator’s common and widespread opinion<sup>39</sup> on the basis of the used terms in the quotation (the shadow, the watery substance, the matter and the chaos), it can be stated that these could be the allusions to the Genesis 1.1–2 text

<sup>33</sup> In other words, the shadow has no independent and no substantial state or condition in itself, but only a subordinate, dependent and secondary one in regard to the light, and the ground of the physical world rests on the shadow.

<sup>34</sup> For this BETHGE (1975: 195).

<sup>35</sup> For this see: PAINCHAUD (1995: 239–241) and KAISER, U.U. 2009. “Geburt in Chaos und Belebung im Wirbelwind. Zwei neue Deutungsvorschläge zu NHC II,5.“ *ZAC*, 13, 29–37.

<sup>36</sup> As regards the motive of envy in Gnostic texts, see e.g. VAN UNNIK, W.C. 1972. „Der Neid in der Paradiesgeschichte nach einigen gnostischen Texten.“ In KRAUSE, M. [ED.] *Essays on the Nag Hammadi Texts in Honour of Alexander Böhlig*. Leiden: Brill, 1972, 120–132; SCHULTZ, D.R. 1978. “The origin of Sin in Irenaeus and Jewish Pseudepigraphical Literature.” *VC*, 32, 161–190.

<sup>37</sup> BETHGE (1975: 195) mentioned the possible failure in the writing (instead of *hyle*, the author wrote *khole*).

<sup>38</sup> For this e.g. PAINCHAUD (1995).

<sup>39</sup> E.g. Painchaud, Schenke, Bethge.

from the LXX. At this point, we should note that according to Painchaud's redactional hypothesis, the first redactor who was probably a fellow of the Valentinian School, linked the terms of Gen 1.1–3 (darkness, light, abyss, beginning, water) to the text.<sup>40</sup>

If it is the case, and if we accept that the biblical text provided the frame, then it is worth asking what the myth means, and why the author chose this form to express his or her theology. In forming a possible answer to the following, I examine the main concept of the quotation, which is why I turn to the metaphor of birth.

At first I shall quote the text in question:

ΠΕΝΤΑΨΩΤΕ ΠΡΑΪ ΝῚΗΤῚ ΔΨῚΤΕ ΕΒΟΛ ΕΦΟΥΟΝῚ ΕΒΟΛ ῚΜ  
ΠΧΔΟῚ ΝΘΕ ΝΤΕΤΜΙῚΕ ΝΝΟΥΚΟΥΕΙ ΝΕῚΤΕΡΙῚῚΟΝ ΤΗΡΟΥ  
ΨΑΥῚΔΕΙΕ ΤΔΕΙ ΤΕ ΘΕ ΝΘΥΛΗ ΝΤΑῚΨΩΠΤΕ ΕΒΟΛ ῚΝ ΘΔΕΙΒΕῚ  
ΔΥΝΟῚῚ ΕΥῚΑ

“What was enclosed within it (in the shadow) flowed out, being visible/appearing in the chaos: as with one who is shortly (*en oligo*)<sup>41</sup> giving birth – all her superfluities (*perissa*) fall, likewise the matter that came into being out of the shadow and was cast aside”.

In this passage the maternal figure, who gives birth, is the water (or the watery substance), the matter is the superfluities (Greek *perissa*, alludes probably to, the afterbirth or the amniotic fluid), but since the author missed pointing out what the foetus represents, we should pose this question first, and after giving a possible solution, we shall deal with the problems of the interpretation.

As far as I know, the last interpretation was written by Kaiser in 2009<sup>42</sup> who connected this part to the birth of envy and considered envy to be the embodied archon. She argued that the superfluities (Greek *perissa*) concern the amniotic fluid and not the afterbirth (as understood it Layton<sup>43</sup> and Painchaud<sup>44</sup> before her). As Kaiser wrote: „indem die Materie mit dem Fruchtwasser bei einer Geburt gleichsetzt, wird die Materie zu einem Beiprodukt bei der Entstehung des Herrschers über die Materie, und dieser Kunstbegriff leistet ein Mehrfaches: Er erklärt die enge Verbindung zwischen dem Herrscher und der beherrschten Materie, schafft außerdem

<sup>40</sup> According to Painchaud, this redactor's hand is recognisable in the use of the term of the authorities (*exousia*) and the distinction between Pistis and Sophia.

<sup>41</sup> For the reconstruction see BETHGE (1975: 196) and KAISER (2009).

<sup>42</sup> KAISER (2009: 29–37).

<sup>43</sup> In footnote 33 with question mark.

<sup>44</sup> PAINCHAUD (1995: 248).

einen Anklang an die Urflut am Anfang der Schöpfung, wie sie aus Gen 1.2, aber auch aus anderen Schöpfungsmythen bekannt ist“.<sup>45</sup> However, this may be correct, and I agree with the main points of Kaiser’s argument, but I am inclined to suppose that our text offers another possibility in respect to the connection with the biblical account.

The first step is a terminological one. As we saw, the text focuses on the birth of *hyle*, and the process in the chaos on the cosmic side (99.16) is described in terms of the flowing out or away (Coptic ⲪⲁⲧⲈ ⲈⲐⲐⲗ). This term was used in connection with the emanation of the first product (Greek *ergon*) from Pistis in the heavenly world (98.13).<sup>46</sup> If we connect this short note to the beginning of our quoted text, it allows us to raise the assumption that the starting point of the process is linked to the heavenly world, and the reaction of the shadow is in close relation with the birth of the first likeness.<sup>47</sup>

As stated by the author in the first sentence of the quotation: “Then shadow perceived that there is something stronger than it and felt envy. And when it became self-impregnated, it immediately bore envy. Since that day, the principle of envy among all eons and their worlds has been apparent.”

The second point of our argument comes from Kaiser who called attention to the possible identity of the foetus that is hidden in the second part together with envy. Yet, there are two arguments that oppose Kaiser’s interpretation, of which I debate the possibility of identifying envy with the demiurgic figure. At first it is a fact that the shadow gives birth to envy, but the appearance refers not to envy itself but to the *arche*, the principle of envy. If we accept this apparently trivial change in the myth, it will have important theological consequences, because this small evidence can shed light on the function of both passions, namely that the shadow itself became visible and appeared<sup>48</sup> partly through them, and so did the watery substance and the matter in it by extension of the effect. In other words, these passions fill their roles in a process that starts with the passions but leads to the physical

<sup>45</sup> KAISER (2009: 34).

<sup>46</sup> The author used the verb later in the text. The context of also using the birth, but at that point in the description of the act of Sophia, the instructor creates from the drop of light fallen into the water (113.23).

<sup>47</sup> BETHGE (1975: 196) noted this possible analogie between the description and the Valentinian descriptions.

<sup>48</sup> In the phraseology of the translator it seems to waver, because he used the verbs to flow out (ⲪⲁⲧⲈ ⲈⲐⲐⲗ, to come into being (ϠⲱⲧⲈ ⲈⲐⲐⲗ), and to be apparent (ⲐⲮⲐⲛⲒ ⲈⲐⲐⲗ in trans. med) as equivalents. Probably, the last means “to become visible”, which stands the closest to my postulated interpretation.

element.<sup>49</sup> If it permits, we can recognise a particular interpretation at this point, which connects the incorporeal to the corporeal.

To demonstrate that this model was known by the author and he was able to use these motives, we shall turn to Painchaud's hypothesis, who pointed out that the first redactor of our writing might have been a fellow of the school of Valentinian. The concept concerning the origin of the world, which connects the passions that come from Sophia transformed by the Soter into the elements of the cosmos, was developed in these systems.<sup>50</sup> In comparing our text to these descriptions, the result is disappointing, because none of them mentioned the envy and the wrath, but I presume that the author was familiar with this lore and used it from an essentially different point of view.

In addition to this alleged relation, the second main argument for using such Valentinian sources is the metaphor of the birth. In system B<sup>51</sup> the embryological understanding of the matter in the cosmogonical context was widespread. In this model, Sophia, who wants to give birth without a partner, can only bring forth an unformed miscarriage, which is depicted as the formless and invisible earth. It is improbable as concerns our text, but if we replace Sophia with the shadow, the metaphor receives its meaning.

The third argument could be that in both descriptions the paternal figure is absent, and the fourth one is terminological, namely the usage of the term abortion (ἄβουτος in 99,9).<sup>52</sup>

In short if we accept Painchaud's (and Bethge's) suggested hypothesis, the connection between the Valentinian systems and our text is demonstrable not only in a terminological level, but in the case of the basic concept, and if we seek to find the position of this myth in the Valentinian tradition, our version will represent a basically modified theological viewpoint.<sup>53</sup>

Returning to the quoted text in the light of these notions, the whole gradationally completed process acquired its ultimate meaning in the cosmogony of the text in arriving to the condition of the biblical day one and, at this point it became clearer what the invisible and formless earth (which is

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49 The other side of passions, namely the differentiation of the psychic *hyle*, may be in connection with the birth of the archons.

50 For this see e.g. Painchaud.

51 E.g. in Hipp VI, 30 8. BETHGE (1975: 194) refers to Hipp Ref VI, 31, 2 ff.

52 For this see e.g. Bethge, Painchaud.

53 At this point, we should take other influences into account. One could be a modified fallen myth, as I tried to point out previously.

equated with the hyle) and the darkness over the abyss could mean in the theology of the author.<sup>54</sup>

If we should conclude the first part of this investigation, we can say that the whole passage is imbued with Valentinian influence, and the complicated description serves to show the transition from the passions to the elements. If the parallels are apt, and the author used these systems or at least was familiar with the sources of this exegetical tradition, then we can state that this concept in this writing represents a radically modified version.

### *Excuse Pistis Sophia and the appearance*

Before the appearance of Yaldabaoth there is a brief section about Pistis and Pistis Sophia, who are probably identical here. In the first sentences, the viewpoint is on the matter (99.23–28), and in the second it turns to Pistis' first reaction to her fault, the fearful product<sup>55</sup> (99.29–100.1a), and the third concerns her plan to solve her fault (100.1b–9). All sections follow the author's aim to present his own mythological system directed by the rule of the narration with its non-linear argumentation. In our case it means that there are three perspectives which focus on the same subject.

*Τ[ΠΙ]ΣΤΙΣ ΔΕ ΤΟΦΙΑ ΝΤΑΡΕΣΟΥΩΩ [Δ]ΤΡΕ ΠΗ ΕΤΕ ΜΝΤΕΦ  
ΠΝΑ ΧΙ ΤΥΠΟΣ ΝΝΟΥΕΙΝΕ ΝΦΡΑΡΧΕΙ ΕΞΝ ΘΥΛΗ ΔΥΩ ΕΞΝ  
ΝΕΣΔΥΝΑΜΙΣ ΤΗΡΟΥ ΔΦΟΥΩΝΩ ΕΒΟΛ ΝΩΟΡΤΙ ΝΩΙ ΟΥΔΑΡΧΩΝ  
ΕΒΟΛ ΕΝ ΜΜΟΟΥ.*

The third part offers the most important statements. In this part Pistis Sophia is the main character (100.1b–6).

She “wanted the spiritless thing to be formed into a likeness and to rule over the matter and all her forces, appeared at first a ruler, out of waters”.

The purpose of Pistis Sophia in the first part of the sentence is usually bound with the appearance of Yaldabaoth, and according to these readings

<sup>54</sup> Adding to this reference, the concept was probably inspired by the verse from the *Letter to the Hebrews* (11.3 *it is by faith that we understand that the ages were created by a word from God, so that from the invisible the visible world came to be*).

<sup>55</sup> According to PAINCHAUD (1995: 260) this account is about the animation of Sabaoth, but probably this being comes back and ruins the heavens among the archons in 102.27–34.

Yaldabaoth receives power, authority, and his own name<sup>56</sup> (in one word apart from spiritual nature) as in other systems (e.g. ApJohn).

Yet the text gives another possible reading, and this allows us to make a differentiation between the wish and the appearance, and between the purpose and the instrument. It is supported by the fact that there is no mention about the giving or receiving of any spiritual power from the heavenly world or Pistis (except Sabaoth) as in other tractates. Our text says only that the archons created according to the light and the likeness they saw and the creation narrative of man does not mention a spiritual part (the breath) which the earthly man receives.<sup>57</sup> This description of the wish and voice of Pistis Sophia is significantly altered in relation to the other accounts. The reasons behind these changes of the story could lay in the anthropological concept of the tractate. In accordance with this idea, Pistis Sophia reveals the existence of the enlightened man and shows it to the archons that started the creation later. The other link to this is in the description of the likeness of Pistis Sophia (108.28–32):

*ΔΠΜΟΥ ΤΟΥ ΒΟΘΙΤΗ ΠΕΙΝΕΝ ΠΙΣΤΙΣ ΤΟ ΦΙΛΑΤΑ ΕΙΝΤΑ ΖΟΥΩΝ  
ΕΒΟΛ ΜΠΑΡΧΙ ΓΕΝΕΤΩΡ ΖΗΝ ΜΜΟΥ ΖΗΝΟΥ ΕΥΛΟΓΟΝ ΣΕ ΔΥΧΟΟ  
ΧΕ ΖΙΤΗ ΜΜΟΥ*

“the water was purified through the likeness of Pistis Sophia, who had appeared to the archigenetor in the waters. Justly, then, it has been said: through the waters”.<sup>58</sup>

Among the tractates of the codices, we can find similar structures in Gospegypt (III 56,22–58,22, and the TrimProt (39,13–32) and in the Codex Tschacos in the GospJud (51,4–17) where the great angel Eleleth appears above the darkness to call into being a ruler of this world.<sup>59</sup> In these examples, the sentences clearly reflect on the appearing of the figure of the archon with emphasis on his rule. For this the sufficient condition is the authority from the heavenly world, but without any reference to the form of the likeness. Pistis Sophia does not say anything in our text, she only wants, and her command is in connection with the appearing of Yaldabaoth

<sup>56</sup> E.g. PAINCHAUD (1995: 250–251).

<sup>57</sup> The text wrote that the archons ceated the body according to theirs and their likeness. The work of the first archon was the brain and the nervous system (114.29–35).

<sup>58</sup> Probably it echoed the 2Pet 3.5 mentioned above.

<sup>59</sup> In the ParShem there are parallels also but without mention of the heavenly being who mediates between the shadow and the light. The tractate probaly used similar tradition, because in the original situation there the light, the pneuma and the shadow, which is parallel with the aeon of truth, Pistis and the shadow.

out of the water. It may be a consequence of the light and the voice (the imperative). At this point, I would like to suggest that Pistis does not create (or give birth to) Yaldabaoth here, but rather she calls him to herself out of the waters with a purpose that is not detailed (but probably related to the light Adam).

## V.

Using the Valentinian parallel, we could understand why the story took place in this way and why the author chose this form to describe the process. Since there is no real parallel for the mythical figures and their passions in this mentioned tradition, we should ask whether in this case one can talk of a Valentinian variant in a real sense at all. To be able to identify the main characters, I will introduce a twofold hypothesis which focuses on the conjunction of the terms of shadow, envy and wrath and takes other influences from the contemporary world into account and seeks similar narratives that involve these motives. The aim, which directs the investigation, is to identify not only the figures in the cosmogonical myth, but to cover the first likeness of Pistis as well.

To start our task, I shall return to the beginning of the quotation again. The key question in the text is the interpretation of the personified shadow and its identity with the darkness and the chaos. The cosmogonical context and its connection to Genesis' account raise the possibility of the influence of the contemporary Christian theology.

One similar motive can be found e.g. in the Alexandrian allegorical Genesis' interpretation (it is a significant part of Origen's first homily on Genesis) that interpreted the shadow as the substance and the place of the fallen angel.

"Darkness was upon the abyss." What is "the abyss? That place, of course, where "the devil and his angels" will be.<sup>60</sup> This indeed is most clearly designated also in the Gospel, when it is said of the Saviour: "And the demons which he was casting out were asking him that he not command them to go into the abyss."<sup>61</sup><sup>62</sup> Some lines later, he repeats his opinion in connection with the firmament, and says the following as regards the water: "that is, the water of the abyss in which darkness is said to be, in which "the

<sup>60</sup> Translation with references to the New Testament comes from HEINE, R. E. 1982. *Origen: Homilies on Genesis and Exodus*. Cath. Uni. Press. Rev 12,9; 20,3; Mt 41.

<sup>61</sup> Lk 8,31.

<sup>62</sup> Lk 47–48.



prince of this world” and the adversary, “the dragon and his angels” dwell<sup>63</sup> as was indicated above”.<sup>64</sup>

In the light of Origen’s allegorical exegesis, it can be surmised that the motives of the shadow and the aeons reflect on the myth of the fallen angels in our text, and the text can be characterised as the result of a radical alteration in accordance with the theological thinking of the author. The two main arguments for this alleged affinity are the negative passions and the context of the biblical Genesis’ account<sup>65</sup> until this point of the analysis.

If we follow the path describing the fallen angel, we can identify the continued motifs of wrath and envy. The conjunction of these passions leads into the Adam and Eve literature, where the motif of envy and wrath play the central role in some variants of the Jewish or Christian apocryphal material.

The motif of envy fills the well-known and widespread model and usage in the tractate as corresponds to another tractate from the Library.<sup>66</sup> The source of this motif is bound to the Jewish (Christian) tradition according to the researcher. The Samael tradition offers the closest parallel, because in these texts, he was the leader of the fallen angels, the angel of death, and he was identified with the envy against the first man, and our text knows this name (103.18).<sup>67</sup> This imagery may derive also from the Adam and Eve literature<sup>68</sup> in addition to other parallels, which seems to be based, at least in part, on traditions found in these books<sup>69</sup> or may come from a common source material.<sup>70</sup>

The wrath (**ΚΗΟΛΕ**) illustrates God’s passion in some texts, and it is directed against Satan and leads to his being cast down to the earth along with his followers, but on the other hand, the idea of Satan’s wrath occurs

<sup>63</sup> Cf. Jn 12.31; 1; Pt 5.8; Rev 12.7, 20.3

<sup>64</sup> Trans from HEINE (1982: 50).

<sup>65</sup> The text knows a fallen myth. I will return to this later.

<sup>66</sup> As regards the motive of envy, see e.g.: van UNNIK, W.C (1972: 120–132) and see SEGAL’s and FOSSUM’s books (in footnote 8).

<sup>67</sup> GRYPEOU, E. 2003. „Die Dämonologie der koptisch-gnostischen Literatur im Kontext jüdischer Apokalyptik.“ In LANGE, A. – LICHTENBERGER, H. – RÖMHELD, K.F.D. [EDS.] *Die Dämonen und die Demons*. Mohr Siebeck, 2003, 602.

<sup>68</sup> For this see FALLON (1978) and TRUMBOWER, J.A. 1994. “Traditions Common to the Primary of Adam and Eve Books and On the Origin of the World, NHC II,5.” *SBLSP*, 286–293.

<sup>69</sup> J. A. TRUMBOWER (1994: 293).

<sup>70</sup> In 118.2–5, the author probably mentioned a written source and produced (the progeny of the earthly Adam) all stories (gr. *historia*) of the psychical Adam within itself.

on more occasions.<sup>71</sup> The author of our text may have been familiar with this narrative<sup>72</sup> as it is proved through the terminological and narrative evidence found in the author's theological thoughts.

The third and most hypothetical step on this reconstruction is the identification of the first likeness of Pistis, the obvious figure of the first *ergon*. To find the answer to this question, we need to seek the occurrence of envy in the tractate.

If we examine the appearance of the motive of envy, we can state that envy appears on two occasions, and in both cases it reflects the created human being: at first, when the earthly Adam and Eve were damned by the archons, after the expulsion from Paradise (121.14): "since the rulers were envious of Adam they wanted to diminish their lifespan", while the second case refers to the blessed beings who are the members of the fourth race according to the anthropology of the tractate (124.21–25): "thus when the blessed beings appeared in the forms modelled by the authorities, they were envied. And out of envy the authorities mixed their seed with them,<sup>73</sup> in hopes of polluting them".

In both cases the motif appears in an anthropological context and reflects on created man. At first it is in connection with Adam and Eve, and second with the whole race. In the first case, the motivation of the archons is the alien state of knowledge of Adam (gnosis, 120.18). In the second case, not so clearly to wit, but the text offers the solution (125.19–23): "and these were sent to make known what is hidden and the seven authorities of chaos and their impiety. And thus they were condemned to death." The author, with this short explanation, gives the most important help for us to be able to understand the origin of the motive.

At this point, the story shows back to Pistis' revelation in the former part of the writing, although in that case the object of envy is Sabaoth and the light received from Pistis:<sup>74</sup> After proclaiming Yaldabaoth's vain wish, Pistis answers as follows (103,17–27):

*ΠΕΧΑΣ ΔΕ ΚΡΠΙΛΑΝΑ ΣΑΜΑΗΛ ΕΤΕ ΠΔΕΙ ΠΕ ΠΝΟΥΤΕ ΒΒΛΛΕ  
ΟΥΝ ΟΥΡΩΜΕ ΝΑΘΑΝΑΤΟΣ ΡΡΜΟΥΟΕΙΝ ΨΟΟΠ ΞΙ ΤΕΚΩΗ ΠΔΕΙ  
ΕΤΝΔΟΥΩΝΞ ΕΒΟΛ ΞΝ ΝΕΤΜΠΛΔΣΜΑ ΦΝΑΡΚΔΤΑΠΔΤΕΙ ΜΜΟΚ*

<sup>71</sup> E.g. Van Unnik, among others, suggested in the conclusion of his treatise that this idea was extended and used by the Gnostics.

<sup>72</sup> In addition to this remark, one of the writings of this tradition is the Apocalypse of Adam from the Nag Hammadi Library. In this writing, the wrath of the first archon Sakla works against Adam and Eve.

<sup>73</sup> The motive of the mixing of the seeds occurs many times in the tractate (c.f. AJ).

<sup>74</sup> As regards the Sabaoth's account, see F. T. FALLON (1978).

*ἮΘΕ ἸΝΙΟΜΕ ἸΚΕΡΑΜΕΥΣ ΨΑΥCOMΟΥ ΔΥΩ ΚΝΑΒΩΚ ΜἸΝΕΤΕ  
 ΝΟΥΚ ΝΕ ΔΠΙΤἸ ΨΑ ΤΕΚΜΑΔΥ ΠΠΟΥΝ ῶΝ ΤCΥΝΤΕΛΕΙΑ ΓΔΡ  
 ἸΝΕΤἸῶΒΗΥΕ CΕΝΑΡΚΑΤΑΛΥΕ ΜΠΩΤΑ ΤΗΡΥ ἸΤΑΦΟΥΩΝῶ  
 ΕΒΟΛ ῶΝ ΤΜΕ ΔΥΩ ΦΝΑΩΧἸΝ ΝΥΡ ΘΕ ΜΠΕΤΕ ΜΠΕΦΩΩΠΕ*

“She said: You are mistaken, Samael, that is, blind god. There is an immortal light man who has been before you and who will appear among your modelled forms, he will trample you and scorn you just as potter’s clay is pounded. And you will descend to your mother, the abyss, along with those that belong to you. For at the consummation of your works the entire defect that has become visible out of the truth will be abolished and it will cease to be and will be like what has never been.”

A significant change and difference is recognisable between the subjects: here the light man and in the former quotation it is the race, the change is the consequence of the anthropological and soteriological teaching of the text, but the important element is the notion of the light man from the viewpoint of the examination.

If my hypothesis is correct, we are dealing with a narrative that seems to involve a prophecy concerning the light man, and how his effect expands on creation and beyond, because the appearance of the light man leads to the creation of the earthly man, and this creation will cause the final condemnation of the archons. As a result of this threefold reason, I conjecture that the object of the archons’ envy was the light man as the likeness of Pistis, which the anthropogonical summary dating to the creation of the first man, the pneumatic Adam, on the first day affirms (117.28–30).

To sum up these short considerations, the principal conclusion is that envy tied the first Adam who appeared and the archons and the envy represents the main characteristic of the relationship. The parallels offered by the contemporary angelology seem to direct our attention to the apocryphal writing as concerning the fallen angels and Adam, where the motif of the envy and wrath play a central role.

### Summary

In this short paper, I made an attempt to shed light on two main questions. First, I focused on the question of why the story occurred in this way. The scope of the investigation extended over the reconstruction of the myth’s story, while the second step was addressed to the metaphor of birth and the relation between this mythical description and the biblical day one.

Based on the terminological examination and the central simile of the passage, the results can be recapitulated: the text shows Valentinian in-

fluence indeed. If the parallels are accurate, and if the author used these thinking patterns or at least those which would have been familiar with the sources of this exegetical tradition, then we can state that this concept in this writing represents a radically modified version.

In the second main part, the direction of the questions turned to the main characters. I made an attempt to find a possible answer to illuminate the personified shadow and the first likeness by reconstructing the structure of the cosmogonical myth by analysing it as an arbitrary modification of two contemporary traditions, which might have served as the sources of the author's theological purpose behind our mythological text.

If we attempt to reconstruct the process, we can distinguish two main steps as two strata of the myth. Nevertheless, the primary position between the reconstructed sources remains an open question, because the combination is reasonable and can be confirmed from both sides with similar probability. Although the questions of the direction of alteration and the chronological order are questionable by these hypotheses, we can reconstruct both main sources of the description and identify the origin of the materials.

As Painchaud pointed out, one stratum can be a Valentinian writing that involves a relatively widespread idea concerning the process from Sophia's passions to the "material" elements in a cosmogonical context.

The other one was a narrative about the myth of the fall that narrates about Adam's dignity and glory, as well as Satan's fall in the Adam and Eve literature.

After the combination of these two lines and an almost entirely reworking of the narratives, the third and last step was extending this concept to Genesis' story involving the concept of the identity between the first light of Genesis and the first Adam in the mythology of the tractate's theology.

Returning to the hypothetical process, the reason behind the possibility of both modifications can be interpreted in a theological sense. In the case of the Valentinian source, it has been recognized that the author takes the place of Sophia's passions with the shadow, and also personifies it as a real demonic being and further connects it in a semi-direct way to the shadow in Genesis by utilizing the description of the materialization's process in these systems.

On the other hand, if we turn to the second possibility, namely to the apocryphal narrative of Adam's dignity and glory, and of Satan's fall, the alterations come from another direction. In this viewpoint, the appearance of envy and then wrath reflects a fallen myth (as the reason of Satan's fall), whereas the shadow could be the fallen angel, and Pistis' or Pistis Sophia's original role as a mediator was to call the archon(s), probably to venerate Adam, who is the immortal light Adam in the theology of the tractate. In

this case, the Valentinian influence was the last step to direct the process from the passions to the elements in the context of Genesis' story.

In both cases the theological alterations lead to the cosmogonical context. The process maintaining the appearance of the matter may reflect the contemporary interpretations on Genesis, and based on this point of view, the author not only accepted the concept of creation from an invisible earth to a visible, but also constructed a process that tells how it came to be with an aim to explain the Scripture, and for this purpose, the author was willing to cross the boundaries of different exegetical traditions.

If my hypotheses are *comme il faut*, and we are concerned at this point with an idea drawn from the manifold exegetical traditions that were adopted and adapted into the examined cosmogony, then we can observe a philosophical and theological problem, engaged in a debate on the philosophical principles and the biblical Genesis' account on the one hand, and the creation or ordering of the world on the other hand in the ancient contemporary world. In the light of these traditions, we may be quite convinced that that, which we labelled as Gnostic cosmogony in this tractate took part in this debate on the Christian side with a strong philosophical reflexion on the interpretation of Genesis' text. If we attempt to locate the place of the writing in these controversies over the nature of the matter and the how of creation, we would suggest that it lies between the not firmly established fronts of orthodoxy and heterodoxy in the early developments of Christian theology.