

# Nature of the Divine and Types of Gnostic Systems

by  
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Since the very first occurrence of the word theology, (in Plato's *Republic*<sup>1</sup>), it has denoted a basic dimension of the relationship between the human and the divine, a "reasoning on the Deity" in its "truth and essence". Within the Platonic tradition, Plutarch bears witness to a still deeper understanding of the idea of theology, defining the knowledge of the Deity as "truth" in its strongest and most absolute meaning, a "truth" which implies an aspiration to the Deity, resulting in an ontological transformation of the person<sup>2</sup>.

As for Gnostic religious systems which have taken shape under the influence of this Platonic tradition, theology, i.e. what is said of the Divine World, will thus constitute a valid hermeneutic key and a point of departure for historico-comparative studies of such systems. As a matter of fact, the Gnostic systems explicitly deal with metaphysics as a human condition and a human potential.

A core idea of Gnostic theology is, as pointed out by Hans Jonas more than thirty years ago, divine tragedy: "A Gnosticism without a fallen god, without benighted creator and sinister creation, without alien soul, cosmic captivity and acosmic salvation, without the self-redeeming of the Deity – in short: a Gnosis without divine tragedy will not meet specifications"<sup>3</sup>.

Although these words focus mainly on important aspects of the Valentinian system, they undoubtedly characterize the roots of all ideologies which were the object of that particular knowledge, by means of which men and

women, living in certain periods and places, believed they would achieve salvation.

There is no doubt that research following the publication of the Nag Hammadi texts has added many specifications to Jonas' definition. Before this discovery, patristic sources had offered an overall picture of gnostic heretic sects arranged according to their developments in order to confute them. They were therefore not always trustworthy.

The Nag Hammadi Library has put before our eyes, as in a close-up on some details, new direct sources. But to integrate its many literary genres and its often heterogenous systems into a long historical perspective is no easy task, and the knowledge we had previously acquired does not always become clearer<sup>4</sup>.

Theology, which for the Gnostics means theosophy, will be the point of departure of the following attempt to construct an historical typology<sup>5</sup> of gnostic systems. The reasoning on God and the Divine World includes all sequences of Being and Becoming: Cosmology, Anthropology, Eschatology.

Every gnostic system gains its own specific features from the contents of this primary structure of the Divine world, which generates a specific alchemy of substances, determining the mechanism of knowledge and salvation. Indeed there is a specular, opposed relation between the superior level that originates the divine event and the inferior level that experiences actuality<sup>6</sup>.

In other words; the typological and functional differences between Gnostic systems always

derive from different theological concepts, ranging from remarkable discrepancies to subtle nuances, but surely generating different outputs and appearing as different cosmological and anthropological sequences. The different cosmological and anthropological sequences thus generated define experiences of life, and in this way they are linked to types of behaviour which the historian must take into account.

For a closer understanding of such typological differences, let us compare on the one hand Valentinian gnosis, the best attested and studied Gnostic group, and on the other hand Manichaean gnosis, the later and longer lasting community.

U. Bianchi<sup>7</sup> has studied the peculiar nature of the Power in Manichaeism: both Light and *Hyle* are compact and homogeneous, each impassible in its place and in its state. In contrast, the Valentinian *Pleroma* is non-homogeneous, ontologically degrading from a centre which is perfection to a periphery which is naturally weak: "in cui è da attendersi – as Bianchi writes – l'insorgere del male ed il principio della caduta". Both these forms of Power are thus structurally dependent on the opposite substance: a relationship which is radical dualism in the first case and mitigated dualism in the second case. In other words, this kind of devolution of the Divine Substance (with the following events) results directly from its nature, from its way of being. What marks out the Valentinian system is a crisis in the Divine World, a crisis which precedes and causes the fall to the lower level, and thereby produces the lower world and the human condition.

In Irenaeus<sup>8</sup>, *Sophia's* vicissitude and the structural relation we have spoken of above appear to be the moment of greatest tension of the aeons in the *Pleroma*, aeons which are all intent on knowing *Bythós*, the Father. The aeons are urged to attain this knowledge by the *Nous*, which is the only one that knows him. In

Hippolytus<sup>9</sup>, this vicissitude is presented as a metaphor of generation, a deviance from the way in which the aeons emanate (i.e. through pairs of *syzygoi*). This motif was widespread in many gnostic contexts. *Sophia* wanted to imitate the Father and generate alone without her *syzygos*. The same motif occurs in *Apoc. Joh.*<sup>10</sup>. Also here the weakness of *Sophia* is due to her peripheral position in the *Pleroma*. In *Trac. Trip.*<sup>11</sup> the *pleroma* consists of a triad (Father, Son and Church). The *pleromatic* tension which is described as "the free will caused by all", and the nature of Wisdom somehow justify the transgressing *aeon*, in this text the *Logos*: "the movement of the *Logos* is caused by the economy preordained to be fulfilled".

In the Manichaean gnosis, on the other hand, the compactness of the Divine Nature and the lack of ontological graduation cause a certain fixity in the Divine World, which is incapable of interior modifications, and a type of devolution, which, due to the chaotic and potentially aggressive nature of the *Hyle*, is a progressive evocation of the Father of Greatness (i.e. a simple deduction from his own substance) and an immediate and providential descent of particles of Light to the level of Darkness. The fragmentation of the substance of the Light and its intrusion into the Darkness, as a consequence of the mutual incompatibility of the two substances, will eventually be fatal to the *Hyle*<sup>12</sup>. But on the level of existence, this mixture will cause, in the Light dispersed in all cosmic realities, a tragic and continuous longing towards the world from which it came<sup>13</sup>.

The vicissitude undergone by Light is protologically represented in the descent of Primordial Man, and is reflected, on the level of existence, in the idea of *Jesus Patibilis*<sup>14</sup>. However, all the divine entities are perfectly consubstantial with each other and with the Father of Greatness from whom they originate. Their separate identities are therefore ultimately defined by their functions. This means that divine

figures become less personal, and the basic opposition turns into a cosmic mixture of substances, which must be separated. The process of salvation and elevation of the substance of Light requires a variety of divine actions on the mythological level in order to set the *machina mundi* in motion. The reprisal of Darkness, which creates the protoplasts for the purpose of imprisoning as much as possible of the Light substances, motivates the *Signaculum Sinus* and brings out the impurity of the body and of sexual intercourse and generation<sup>15</sup>. But, ultimately, after the coming of *Jesus Splendor* to Adam, there exists another possibility of purification and salvation of the Light in the body guided by the *Nous*.

Mani's body<sup>16</sup> is a paradigmatic example to his community of the providential value of the body. The descent and rise of Divine Substance, according to Manichaean gnosis, appear as a continuous line and illustrate clearly the concept of *Salvator Salvandus* or *Salvatus*. On the existential level every man is entrusted with elevation of Light. All Manichaean believers work for the separation of Light particles (*chorismos*) within the Manichaean Church, assuming different functions but with a common goal: salvation. This unity of the Manichaean church, where all members are dynamically engaged in the effort of salvation in accordance with the compactness of the Divine World, is in stark contrast to the variety of the destinies of the saved and damned in the Valentinian gnosis. They are *ab aeterno* ontologically predisposed to their situation as *pneumatikoi*, *psychikoi*, *hylikoi* in correspondence with the ontological differentiation of the *Pleroma*. The crisis in the Divine World, which is typical of the Valentinian gnosis, generates another substance different from the Divine, which assumes the shape of a psychical and ignorant demiurge, *Ialdabaoth*, on whom the Divine World will secretly operate in order to achieve partial and varied salvation. The Manichaean

demiurge, (the Living Spirit), on the other hand, is an evocation of the Father of Greatness, and although the material basis of his creation is an ontologically negative substance, the corpses of the dark archons, he works by himself for the salvation of the substance of Light, which is also his own substance.

One of the fundamental questions concerning the concordance between the heresiological sources and the Nag Hammadi texts is the consistency and typology of the so-called ophitic gnosis considered in the light of the new documentary material on Sethian gnosis. There is no doubt that the patristic tendency to frame as systems the various gnostic ideas and sometimes to establish relationships among the various gnostic groups does not always seem impartial since the very aim of the Fathers were to confute heretical ideologies and practices. However, we should neither altogether discredit their reports nor adhere literally to their schemes.

As for the Sethians, G. Casadio<sup>17</sup> seems to represent the best balanced attitude among many other authoritative positions<sup>18</sup>. He defines the gnostic group called Sethian as "a constellation of various gnostic circles basically connected by their awareness of belonging to the chosen race of *Seth*, entrusted with the *Sperma-Spinther*, which is consubstantial with the Supreme Deity and deposited in *Seth* by the Mother herself (*Sophia* or *Barbelo*)". Within this constellation different theological structures have been at work, generating the great variety of systems found in the texts. In particular, the Sethian theological structures in Pseudo-Tertullianus, *Adv. Omn. Haer.*, II,7 and of Epiphanius, *Panarion* 39 reveal a basic concordance with Saturninus' theology (Divine Mother fighting against angels bound to the Lower World). Hippolytus' report on the Sethians, however, is derived from another ideological background<sup>19</sup>. In the triadic assembly of the *ou-*

*siai* a radical opposition of two principles is perceived: Light and Darkness. The Spirit placed between them, even if unmixed (*akeraios*), is composed of a fragrance, an ontological *minimum*, making Light attractive to Darkness.

In this metaphysical opposition of Light and Dark Water the aggressiveness of the latter principle is very remarkable. It generates by itself a strong wind similar to the twisting of a snake and imprisons a ray of the Light coming from above. The unhappy mixture of Light and Darkness looks for salvation in *lysis*, the separation of substances, which in turn necessitates the descent of the Saviour. The *Logos*, in the form of snake, goes down into the Dark Water and penetrates the impure Womb to free the *Nous* and the Spirit. The radical dualism generates an idea of salvation above all concerned with the perception of the mixture, its modalities, and with the separation of Light from Darkness and the final purification of the Light<sup>20</sup>.

The Sethians of Hippolytus were interested precisely in these topics<sup>21</sup>, i.e. the same problems which Augustinus found so vain in the almost scientific discussions of the manichaeans<sup>22</sup>. It is a line of thought, certainly adopted along with the dualistic structures from the Iranian context of the doctrines of *gumezishn* and *frashkart*, which, with further elaborations, we find in other systems of the same historico-cultural area<sup>23</sup>. Thus in the report on Basilides in the *Acta Archelai*<sup>24</sup> the mixture of the two opposite substances, Light and Darkness, prepared by a "concupiscentia" of the Darkness towards the Light, is made possible by a reflection from the Light into the Darkness, a reflection which gives rise to generation at the lower level and to the spread of fragments of Light in the *Cosmos*.

But it is necessary at this point to consider the only Nag Hammadi text which is ideologically congruent with the patristic evidence: the

*Paraphrase of Shem*<sup>25</sup>. Undoubtedly, the *Paraphrase of Seth*, to which Hippolytus<sup>26</sup> refers, and the *Paraphrase of Shem* work within the same fundamental triadic structure: Light, Darkness, and Spirit as the central configuration of a radical dualism. The aquatic nature of Darkness generating a matrix and the action of a Saviour – in the Nag Hammadi text called *Derdekeas* – occur substantially in basically parallel ways, except for the lack of a baptismal purification. Instead a violent attack is launched against water, the begetter of Winds and Demons. The discrepancies between the two texts cannot, however, in any way overshadow the structural parallelism which shows them to be two variant expressions of the same doctrinal teaching. Another close parallel is the teaching of the Ophites reported by Irenaeus I, 30 concerning the fundamental principles (*Lumen Beatum, Spiritus Sanctus, Aqua, Tenebrae, Abyssus, Chaos*) and the chance fall of Light (*humectationem*) in the dark Waters. However, this text shows further Judaeo-Christian and Neo-platonic developments and elaborations, which link it to the cosmogonic writings of the Nag Hammadi texts: The creation of Adam (cf. Saturninus), the antropomorphism of the Principles, the progressive emission of Powers, the presence of the Lower Demiurge, the christianization of the figure of the Saviour.

The treatise from which Hippolytus draws his report on the Naassenes clearly shows the extraordinary ideological open-mindedness of these people who called themselves *γνωστικοί* "because only they knew *Bythós*"<sup>27</sup>. The Naassenes declare and show their interest in the continuous and total exegesis of the reality which surrounds them because they "alleged that all things become spiritual" (*πνευματικὰ φάσκοντες πάντα γίνεσθαι*)<sup>28</sup>.

Their theological system<sup>29</sup> is based on a triadic structure which turns into a clear dualism: *Adamas* the Perfect and Primordial Man, His

Son of the same nature, and the Material World in which the demiurge *Esaldaios* with his angels forms a man, *Adam*, who lies lifeless on the ground. The Son comes down to give life to him and, imprisoned at the lower level, brings life and order. The figure of the Son is comparable to the Manichaean *Anthropos* and *Spiritus Vivens*, but it also recalls the *Logos* of the Sethians in Hippolytus<sup>30</sup>. All these figures are divine Beings acting as demiurges on a *chaos* which must become *cosmos*, a *cosmos* designed to generate salvation for the divine substance<sup>31</sup>.

In the Gnostic ideology this is the situation which must be remedied by a cosmogonic vision which provides purification for the Divine Substance. This theme is found in various articulations in the Manichaean system. Also the theory of the pacification of the elements in the Basilidean gnosis offers essential parallels<sup>32</sup>.

The motif of the creation of the *Protoplast* by the Lower Powers and of the subsequent animation, already present in Saturninus<sup>33</sup>, here assumes a particular value. The soul given to man is the image of the Divine Element imprisoned in the body and the *cosmos*. This implies a “pananimatismus” of the reality, which recalls the conception of the Manichaean *anima mundi* and requires a continuous and total search for the soul, “blessed nature at the same time hidden and unveiled<sup>34</sup>”. This search makes Naassene gnosis rather unique among the various gnostic positions. This dialectic of the hidden and the unveiled also recalls the Potential and the Act of the *Megale Apophasis*<sup>35</sup>. The continuous exegesis on which the salvation of the gnostics is based is a rereading of Greek, Latin, Old and New testament texts, and a reexamination of mythico-ritual contexts or simply of everyday acts in which the *pneumatikon* reveals itself to those who are consubstantial with it.

Considering this, it is clear why the Naassenes called themselves *gnostikoi*. It is also clear why, in the Treatise on Man<sup>36</sup>, they used the myths and rites of the three Gods (*Adonis*, *Attis*, *Osiris*) to explain the universal presence of the Soul. These gods, coming from different religious contexts, were brought together by the gnostic author because of the substantial affinity between their divine qualities. The three gods are eventually evoked to signify the presence in the Matter of the Second Divine Principle (the Son) in its double functions of descent and demiurgy and also of imprisonment and ascent. Connected in their original religious contexts with the cosmic cycle, with *genesis*, they are all subject to an alternating ambiguous pattern, which is not only an expression of the cyclic flow of life but also of the necessary fall and death which form a fundamental part of that cycle. Their divine vicissitude, interpreted in a mysteriosophic key, was capable of being used for the purpose of communicating an original gnostic message.

By comparing typological and at the same time historical structures we have been able to account for their specific identities, their differences, overlapping trends, analogies and congruencies. We have seen that the main difference between a theology based on divine emanations and a metaphysical concept of opposite substances is that the latter theological theme generates a cosmology, an ontology, and a *gnosis* concerned less with the search for man’s true self and more with the perception of the mixture of Light and Darkness, its modalities, and the final purification of the Light. Thus the typology constructed has a bearing on our understanding of the contiguity of the Nag Hammadi Sethians and the Ophites/Naasenes of the Patristic evidence.

## Notes

1. Plat. *Rep.* II, 379a. Cf. V. Goldschmidt, *Théologia*, in R.E.G. 63, 1950, pp. 20-42. Important topics on the use of theology in historico-religious research in G. Sfameni Gasparro, "Religione" e "teologia". Due "quantità" della ricerca storico-religiosa in *The Notion of "Religion" in Comparative Research*. Selected Proceedings of the XVI IAHR Congress (ed. by U. Bianchi), Roma 1994, pp. 733-740.
2. De Iside et Osiride 2, 351e, 1-2. Cf. G. Casadio, *La nozione di religione nel De Iside et Osiride di Plutarco e lo studio scientifico della religione*, in *The Notion of "Religion"*, cit., pp. 349-354.
3. J. Ph. Hyatt (Ed.), *The Bible in Modern Scholarship*, Nashville-New York 1965, p.293.
4. For a restatement of the problems related to the Nag Hammadi texts and to the origins of Gnosticism, after the fundamental meeting of Messina (1966), cf. R. Van der Broek, *The present State of Gnostic Studies*, in VC, 37, 1983, pp.41-71; H.M. Schenke, *Gnosis-Forschung 1984-1988*, in M. Rassart Debergh - J. Ries (edd.), Actes du IVe Congrès Copte, Louvain-la-Neuve, 5-10 Septembre 1988, vol.II, Louvain-la-Neuve 1992, pp. 321-333; U. Bianchi, *Le origini dello Gnosticismo: nuovi studi e ricerche*, in "Augustinianum", 32, 1992, pp. 205-216; B.A. Pearson *Gnosticism 1988-1992*, in Actes of the Fifth International Congress of Coptic Studies, Washington, August 1992, vol. I, Reports on Recent Research (Ed. T. Orlandi), Roma 1993, pp. 151-178; besides cf. in "Cassiodorus" 1, 1995: U. Bianchi, *Il cristianesimo e le origini dello gnosticismo*, pp. 137-149; G. Sfameni Gasparro, *Plotino e gli gnostici: un contributo al problema "gnosticismo ed ellenismo"*, pp. 125-136 (with bibliography); T. Orlandi, *Brevi considerazioni sull'ambiente linguistico e culturale dei testi di Nag Hammadi*, pp. 167-170; A. Magris, *Riflessioni sul rapporto fra giudaismo e gnosticismo*, pp. 207-211; E. Lupieri, *Ancora sulla questione delle origini*, pp. 213-218; G. Filoramo, *Riflessioni in margine alla natura della mitologia gnostica*, pp. 219-222; C. Gianotto, *Le trasformazioni di un mito. Per una storia dello gnosticismo antico*, pp.223-228. Cf. also G. Sfameni Gasparro, *Chaos e dualismo: esempi della dialettica chaos-kosmos nello gnosticismo*, in "Cassiodorus" 2, 1996, pp.10-11.
5. A masterly example of historico-comparative research of this kind on Gnosticism is *Le Gnosticisme. Concept, Terminologie, Origines, Délimitation* by U. Bianchi in *Gnosis. Festschrift für Hans Jonas* (Hrsg. B. Aland), Göttingen, 1978, pp. 33-64. On the problem of classification of the Nag Hammadi texts cf. C. Barry, *Les textes de nag Hammadi et le problème de leur classification. Chronique d'un Colloque*, in "Laval Théologique et Philosophique" 1994, 50, 2, pp. 421-432.
6. On the various modalities of this connection, related to the coming out of the "kosmos" cf. G. Sfameni Gasparro *Chaos e dualismo: la dialettica chaos-kosmos nell'ermetismo e nel manicheismo*, in "Cassiodorus" 1, 1995, pp.11-28; Eadem, *Chaos e dualismo: esempi della dialettica chaos-kosmos nello gnosticismo*, cit., pp.9-40.
7. *Omogeneità della luce e dualismo radicale nel Manicheismo*, in M. Görg (Hrsg.), *Religion im Erbe Aegyptens*. Beiträge zur spätantiken Religionsgeschichte zu Ehren von A. Böhlig (Aegypten und Altes Testament Band 14), Wiesbaden 1988, pp. 54-64. ID., *Essenza ed Esistenza (o logos e mythos) nel pensiero gnostico manicheo*, in E. Romero-Pose et alii (edd.), *Pléroma. Salus Carnis*. Homenaje a Antonio Orbe S.J., Santiago de Compostela 1990, (Compostellanum 34,1-2), pp. 223-227. ID., *Sur le dualisme de Mani*, in A. van Tongerloo-S. Giversen (Edd.), *Manichaica Selecta*, Studies presented to Prof. J. Ries (Manichaean Studies I), Lovanii 1991, pp. 9-17. ID., *Sur la théologie et l'anthropologie de Mani*, in P. Bilde-H. K. Nielsen-J. Podemann Sørensen (Edd.), *Apocryphon Severini* presented to Søren Giversen, Aarhus 1993, pp. 19-28; ID., *Concerning the NOYΣ in Gnosticism*, in A. Van Tongerloo (Ed.), *The Manichaean NOYΣ*. Proceedings of the Int. Symposium organized in Louvain from 31 July to 3 August 1991, Lovanii 1995, pp. 11-21.
8. *Adv. Haer.* I, 1,2,1-4.
9. *Ref.* VI, 30, 6-9; 31, 1-8.
10. CG. II, 1, 9, 26-36; 10-14.
11. CG. I, 5, 74-80.
12. The Manichaean myth is related by Theod. bar. Khonai, *Liber Scholiorum*. Cf. H. Pognon, *Inscriptions mandaites des coupes de Khouabir*, I-III, Paris 1898-1899, 125-131; 181-193; cf. A Scher (Ed.) *Theodorus bar Koni. Liber Scholiorum*, voll.I-II, Louvain 1910-12 (CSCO 55; 69); R. Hespel- R. Draguet, (Edd.), *Théodore bar Koni. Livre des Scolies*, voll. I-VI, Louvain 1981-1984 (CSCO 431-432; 447-448; 464-465). M. Tardieu, *Le Manichéisme*, Paris 1981, pp. 55-57 recognizes in this report Mani's *Pragmateia*.
13. On the relationship between essence and existence in Manichaeism and on the specificity of the *principium individuationis* of the Manichaean soul cf. P. Nagel, *Anatomie des Menschen in gnostischer und manichäischer Sicht*, in *Menschenbild in Gnosis und Manichäismus*, Halle-Saale 1979, pp.67-94; cf. U. Bianchi, *Concerning the NOYΣ in Gnosticism*, cit., pp.17-21.
14. On Jesus in Manichaeism cf. E. Waldschmidt- W. Lentz,

- Die Stellung Jesu in Manichäismus*, APAW Phil. hist. Kl., N.4, Berlin 1926; W. Geerlings, *Der manichäische "Iesus Patibilis" in der Theologie Augustins*, in Th.Q. 152 (1972), pp. 124-131; A. Böhlig, *Zur Vorstellung vom Lichtkreuz in Gnostizismus und Manichäismus*, in B. Aland (Hrsg.), *Gnosis*, cit., pp.473-491; J. Ries, *Jésus la Splendeur, Jésus Patibilis, Jésus historique dans les textes manichéens occidentaux*, in *Gnosisforschung und Religionsgeschichte*, Festschrift für Kurt Rudolph zum 65. Geburtstag, Marburg 1994, pp. 235-245.
15. On these topics cf. G. Sfameni Gasparro, *Enkrateia e dualismo: alle radici della gnosi manichea*, in Αγοθή ἑλπίς, *Studi storico-religiosi in onore di U. Bianchi* (ed. G. Sfameni Gasparro), Roma 1994, pp. 505-534.
  16. The CMC emphasizes this value. Cf. U. Bianchi, *Osservazioni storico-religiose sul codice manicheo di Colonia*, in L. Cirillo (ed.), *Codex Manichaicus Coloniensis*. Atti del Simposio Int. (Rende-Amantea, 3-7 Settembre 1984), Cosenza 1986, pp. 17-35; C. Giuffrè Scibona, *Gnosi e salvezza nel Codex Manichaicus Coloniensis*, *ibid.* pp. 355-370.; U. Bianchi, *Sur le dualisme de Mani*, in *Manichaica Selecta*, cit., pp. 13-14.
  17. *Antropologia gnostica e antropologia orfica nella notizia di Ippolito sui Sethiani*, in *Sangue e Antropologia nella Teologia* (ed. F. Vattioni), Roma 1989, vol. III, pp. 1295-1350 (with bibliography).
  18. In addition to the authors quoted by G. Casadio (art.cit. in the foregoing note), cf. J.D. Turner, *Gnosticism and Platonism: The Platonizing Sethian Texts from Nag Hammadi in their Relation to the Later Platonic Literature*, in *Neoplatonism and Gnosticism* (Ed. R.T. Wallis), Studies in Neoplatonism 6, Albany 1992, pp.425-459.
  19. *Ref. V*, 19-22.
  20. On this subject cf. especially U. Bianchi, *Le gnosticisme*, cit., pp. 50-51. Idem, *Concerning the NOYΣ in Gnosticism*, cit., pp. 16 ff.
  21. *Hipp. Ref. V*, 21.
  22. *C. Epist. Fund.* XII, 182; *De Haer.* 46; *C. Faustum* XIII,6; *De util. cred.* XIV, 31. Cf. F. Decret, *L'Afrique Manichéenne (IV-V siècles) Étude historique et doctrinale*, I-II, Paris 1978; C. Giuffrè Scibona, *Gnosi e salvezza manichee nella polemica di Agostino*, in *Gnosticisme et Monde Hellénistique*. Actes du Coll. de Louvain-la-Neuve (11-14 Mars 1980), Louvain-la-Neuve 1982, pp. 164-188.
  23. Cf. U. Bianchi, *Le gnosticisme*, cit., pp. 47 ff.
  24. *Ref. V*, 4-12.
  25. *CG VII,1,1-49,9*. On the Paraphrase of Shem, cf. M. Roberge, *Chute et remotée du Pneuma dans la Paraphrase de Sem*, in "Coptic Studies: Acts of the Third Int. Congress of Coptic Studies", Warsaw 20-25 august 1984 (Ed. W. Godlewski), Warsaw 1990, PP.355-363; Idem, *La crucifixion du sauveur dans la paraphrase de Sem (NH VII, 1)*, in "Actes du IVe Congrès Copte: Louvain-la-Neuve, 5-10 septembre 1998, ed. M. Rassart-Debergh et J. Ries), Louvain-la-Neuve 1992, vol. II, pp.381-387.
  26. *Ref. V*, 22.
  27. *Ref. V,6,4,22*
  28. *Ref. V*, 9,7.
  29. *Hipp. Ref. V*, 6-11.
  30. Cf. C. Giuffrè Scibona, *Gnosi e salvezza nel CMC*, cit. p.365. We think that the study of these figures of demiurges, saviours and redeemers has offered and will offer many important results to the future research on Gnosticism. Cf. F. Wisse, *The Redeemer Figure in the Paraphrase of Sem*, in "Novum Testamentum",12,1970, pp. 130-140; M. Roberge, *Le rôle du Nous dans la Paraphrase de Sem*, in B. Barc (Ed.), *Colloque int. sur les textes de Nag Hammadi* (Québec, 22-25 Août 1978), Louvain 1981, pp. 328-339. U. Bianchi *Some Reflections on the Greek Origins of Gnostic Ontology and the Christian Origin of the Gnostic Saviour*, in A.H.B.Logan-A.J.M. Wedderburn (Edd.), *The New testament and Gnosis*. Essays in Honour of R.McL. Wilson, Edinburgh 1983, pp. 38-45; Idem., *Il cristianesimo e le origini dello gnosticismo*, in "Cassiodorus" I, cit., pp.145ff; For the nature and origin of the gnostic demiurge, see G. Sfameni Gasparro, *Chaos e dualismo: esempi della dialettica chaos-kosmos nello gnosticismo*, cit., p.26.
  31. Cf. U. Bianchi, *Le Gnosticisme*, cit, pp. 45ff.; G. Sfameni Gasparro, *Chaos e dualismo: la dialettica chaos-kosmos nell'ermetismo e nel manicheismo*, cit., pp.21-22, 27.
  32. *Hipp. Ref. VII*, 20-27.
  33. *Iren., Adv. Haer.*, I,24,1.
  34. *Hipp. Ref. V,7,20*. Cf. J. Bergman, *Kleine Beiträge zum Naassenertraktat*, in Proceedings of the Int. Colloquium on Gnosticism, (ed. G. Widengren), Stockholm August 20-25, 1973, Stockholm 1977, pp. 74-100.
  35. *Hipp. Ref. VI*, 17,1-7.
  36. *Ref. V,7,2-9,9*.