Reconsidering the 'Prophecy of Zardūšt'[1]

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One intriguing aspect of late antique speculation about the character and significance of the biblical forefather Seth b. Adam is the notion that he is simply the initial material manifestation of a pre-existent heavenly entity who periodically descends to the physical realm and "clothes" itself in human flesh in order to impart authoritative instruction regarding the supernal realm. This concept of the cyclical return of a discrete heavenly entity in diverse human forms is structurally congruous with the Manichaean doctrine of the recurrent incarnation of the Apostle of Light within select antediluvian forefathers and "national" religious teachers like the Buddha, Zoroaster, and Jesus. Most scholars agree that the Manichaean version of this teaching appears to be a variant formulation of the so-called "true prophet" doctrine of the Pseudo-Clementines and Ebionite Christianity.[2] Given the close concord of the Sethian

[1]The following study is an extensively revised and expanded version of material previously published in my *Heralds of That Good Realm: Syro-Mesopotamian Gnosis and Jewish Traditions* (NHMS 41; Leiden: Brill, 1996) 126–29 and the pertinent notes. I thank E. J. Brill for graciously granting me permission to re-employ and expand that copyrighted material in this new context. Please note the following supplemental abbreviations: *BHM* = *Bet ha-Midrasch* (6 vols.; ed. A. Jellinek; reprinted, Jerusalem: Bamberger & Wahrmann, 1938); *CMC* = *Cologne Mani Codex* (L. Koenen and C. Römer, *Der Kölner Mani-Kodex: Kritische Edition* [Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1988]); *Ginzā* = M. Lidzbarski, *Ginzā: Der Schatz oder das grosse Buch der Mandäer* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1925); *Homilies*=H. J. Polotsky, *Manichäische Handschriften der Sammlung A. Chester Beatty, Band I: Manichäische Homilien* (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1934); *EI*^{2}=*The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, new edition (Leiden: Brill, 1960–); *Kephalaia*=*Manichäische Handschriften der Staatlichen Museen, Berlin, Band I: Kephalaia, 1. Hälfte* (ed. H. J. Polotsky and A. Böhlig; Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1934–40); *2. Hälfte* (Lfg. 11/12) (Stuttgart, 1966); NHC=Nag Hammadi Codex.

[2]For the continued repercussions of this mytheme in sectarian Islam, see H. Corbin, *History of Islamic Philosophy* (London: Kegan Paul International, 1993) 61–68.

apostolic scheme with these attested analogues, one should probably link this latter expression of the concept to the same ideological environment.

This notion of the repeated incarnation upon earth of a "heavenly Seth" is arguably one of the constituent features of so-called "Sethian" gnosticism. B. A. Pearson (among others) has provided a concise survey of the most important places where this doctrine finds expression, calling attention to its occurrence in patristic testimonies and certain Nag Hammadi works.[3] These instances invariably stress an essential identity between the figures of Seth and Jesus, sometimes by means of genealogy (Epiphanius, *Panarion* 39.3.5), but more often via assimilation (*Panarion* 39.1.3; *Gos. Eg.* 64.1–3; 65.16–18). Obviously this specific correlation requires a Christian context for its construction. However, it is possible, as Pearson argues, that the Christian identification of Seth with Jesus may be presaged in certain Jewish traditions which apparently attach a "messianic" significance to the figure of Seth. For example, Pearson notes that the so-called "Animal Apocalypse" (*1 Enoch* 85–90), a symbolic narrative composed no later than the mid-second century BCE, portrays both Seth and the future eschatological deliverer in the form of a white bull. Moreover, an early midrash (*Gen. Rab.* 23.5) pregnantly connects Gen 4:25, the verse relating the birth and naming of Seth, with the appearance of the "messianic king" at the End of Days.[4]

Mirroring a practice attested by the Pseudo-Clementines, Mani, and Muhammad, some gnostic circles apparently constructed official rosters of Sethian "prophets" or "teachers" who served as fleshly vehicles for the temporal sojourn of the "heavenly Seth." This is presumably the import of the tradition reported by Epiphanius regarding the Archontic sect's esteem for the "seven sons (of Seth) termed 'strangers'" (*Panarion* 40.7.5); it is doubtful whether Seth's biological progeny are intended by this phrase. The enumeration of "seven" sons is suggestive in this context, given its demonstrable popularity as an ordering principle governing the arrangement of several other heterodox lists of authoritative spiritual instructors. Unfortunately Epiphanius does not provide the corporeal identities of these "sons." Anonymity also marks the thirteen separate manifestations of the "illuminator" (φωστήρ) recounted in a cryptic hymn contained within the Coptic *Apocalypse of Adam* (NHC V.5),[5] a series which is probably connected with the analogous appearance of an

[3]B. A. Pearson, "The Figure of Seth in Gnostic Literature," *Gnosticism, Judaism, and Egyptian Christianity* (B. A. Pearson; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1990) 76–79.

[4]*Gen. Rab.* 23.5 (J. Theodor and C. Albeck, *Midrasch Bereschit Rabbah* [Berlin, 1936] 1.226). "She named him Seth, because 'God has granted me another seed etc. (Gen 4:25).' R. Tanhuma in the name of Samuel Kuzit (said, She alludes to) that seed who arises from another place. Who is he? He is the King Messiah." The ostensible allusion is to David's ancestry through Ruth the Moabitess; see Theodor's notes *ad loc.* and *Gen. Rab.* 51.8.

[5]*Apoc. Adam* 77.27–82.19.

"illuminator" (φωστήρ) among "thirteen aeons" in the Coptic *Gospel of the Egyptians* (NHC III.2). Significantly, this latter text goes on to identify the φωστήρ as "Seth" *and* "the living Jesus" (64.1–9).

The term φωστήρ thus functions as a *terminus technicus* for an avatar of the "heavenly Seth." Interestingly, the same Greek designation is employed by the Coptic Manichaean texts as a title for the Apostle of Light,[6] the supernal entity who periodically descends to earth in human guise in order to proclaim Manichaean gnosis. This can hardly be coincidental. The use of the term φωστήρ by both the Sethian and Manichaean communities to signify human incarnations of their respective heavenly alter-egos (heavenly Seth/Apostle of Light) suggests an intellectual nexus, probably literary in nature, between these two groups. Their mutual recognition of both Seth and Jesus as authentic emissaries further cements this posited bond. And finally, even though Sethian texts and testimonia display some reticence in revealing the human identities of that system's salvific agents, one is able to discern an additional common φωστήρ which Sethian and Manichaean communities share. The *Apocryphon of John* cites a "book of Zoroaster" as an authority for its correlation of bodily passions with archonic angels.[7] Moreover, the Coptic tractate *Zostrianos* seems to regard the Iranian sage Zoroaster as one of the corporeal manifestations of the heavenly Seth.[8] Interestingly, Mani also identifies Zoroaster as an avatar of the Apostle of Light.[9]

[6]*Kephalaia* 7.27–30 (Zoroaster); 23.17 (Mani); 25.11 (Mani); 30.17 (Mani); *Homilies* 33.23 (Mani); 85.33 (Mani). Compare Middle Iranian *rwcyn'g*, *rwšnygr* (e.g., F. C. Andreas and W. B. Henning, "Mitteliranische Manichaica aus Chinesisch-Turkestan, III," *Sitzungsberichte der preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften* [phil.-hist. Kl. 27; Berlin, 1934] 874.193). For discussion of the concept of φωστήρ, see A. Böhlig, "Jüdisches und Iranisches in der Adamapokalypse des Codex V von Nag Hammadi," *Mysterion und Wahrheit* (Leiden: Brill, 1968) 154–61.

[7]*Apoc. John* 19.6–10. See the Addendum below for a fuller discussion.

[8]The colophon explicitly identifies the seer Zostrianos as Zoroaster.

[9]*Kephalaia* 7.27–33: "[The apostle of] light, the splendrous enlightener (φωστήρ), [...he came to] Persia, up to Hystaspes the king [...he chose d]isciples, righteous men of trut[h...he proclaimed hi]s hope in Persia; but [...] Zarathustra (did not) write books. Rather, hi[s disciples who came a]fter him, they remembered; they wrote [...] that they read today [...]." Translation cited from I. Gardner, *The Kephalaia of the Teacher: The Edited Coptic Manichaean Texts in Translation with Commentary* (NHMS 37; Leiden: Brill, 1995) 13. See also A. J. Welburn, "Iranian Prophetology and the Birth of the Messiah: The Apocalypse of Adam," *ANRW* II.25.6 (ed. W. Haase; Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1988) 4764. For a stimulating study of the figure of Zoroaster in Manichaeism, see P. O. Skjaervø, "Zarathustra in the Avesta and in Manicheism: Irano-Manichaica IV," *La Persia e l'Asia centrale: Da Alessandro al X secolo* (Atti del Convegni Lincei 127; Roma: Accademia nazionale dei Lincei, 1996) 597–628.

The resultant truncated apostolic chain (Seth-Zoroaster-Jesus) generated by this gnostic assimilation raises some intriguing questions about a curious text preserved within Syriac Christian literature known as the "Prophecy of Zardūšt." Two versions of this interesting oracle, differing only with regard to minor details, are currently extant. One is found in the *Scholion* of the eighth-century bishop Theodore bar Konai, attached to his explication of the gospel story of the Visit of the Magi in Matthew 2.[10] Theodore provides us with no indication of his source for this "prophecy." Portions of the "prophecy" are quoted in the ninth-century commentary to Matt 2:2 by Isho'dad of Merv.[11] The other version is contained in the thirteenth-century compilation of Christian aggadic lore by Solomon of Basra known as *The Book of the Bee*,[12] where once again no source is given for the "Prophecy." This text's potential importance for the present topic requires its full citation at this point.

The Prophecy of Zardūšt regarding Christ

When Zardūšt was sitting by the spring of waters named Gloša of Hōrin, the place where the ancient royal bath stood, he opened his mouth and spoke to his disciples Gūštasp, Sasan, and Mahman, (saying) 'I tell you, my beloved ones and sons whom I have educated in my teachings. Hearken, (for) I shall reveal to you a marvelous secret concerning the great king who is going to come in the world. In the fullness of time and at the end of the final age an infant will be conceived and its members shaped within the womb of a virgin, without a man approaching her. He will be like a tree with lovely foliage and copious fruit that stands in a parched place. The inhabitants of that place will obstruct his growth, and struggle to uproot him from the ground, but they will not succeed. Then they shall seize him and put him to death upon a tree, and heaven and earth will sit in mourning due to his murder, and the generations of the peoples will mourn him. He will begin (by) descending to the abyss of the earth, and from the abyss he will be exalted to the height. Then he will reappear when he comes with an army of light, riding upon bright clouds, for he is the child conceived by the word which established the natural order.'[13]

Gūštasp said to Zardūšt: 'This one of whom you speak all these things—from where does his power come? Is he greater than you, or are you greater than he?' Zardūšt replied to him: 'He shall arise from my lineage and family. I am he, and he is me; he is in me, and I in him. When the advent of his coming is made manifest, great signs will appear in heaven, and a bright star will appear in the midst of heaven, whose light will surpass the light of the sun.[14] Now, my sons, you (who) are the seed of life which came forth from the treasuries [of life and][15] of light[16] and of spirit, and (who) were sown in a place of fire[17] and water,[18] it is necessary for you to watch and guard these things which I have told you so that you can look for his appointed time. For you will be the first to perceive the arrival of that great king, the one whom the prisoners await so that they can be released.[19] And now, my sons, preserve the secret which I have revealed to you, and let it be inscribed upon your hearts, and may it be preserved in the treasuries of your souls. When that star which I told you about rises, you shall dispatch messengers bearing gifts, and they shall offer worship to him and present the gifts to him. Do not be neglectful, so that you not perish by the sword, for he is the king of kings, and all (kings) receive their crowns from him. I and he are one.'

These (things) were uttered by that second Balaam. As is customary, (either) God forced him to expound them; or he derived from a people who were conversant with the symbolic prophecies about Christ, (and) he predicted them.[20]

In its present form, the "Prophecy of Zardūšt" is clearly a Christian tract, one that cleverly exploits the mantic fame of a renowned pagan sage to underscore the authoritative status of the Christian messiah. However, in spite of its orthodox veneer, the "Prophecy of Zardūšt" displays certain arresting features which indicate that its conceptual core may be rooted in Syro-Mesopotamian gnostic circles like those mentioned above. One should note the following suggestive things:

1. Long ago (1929) Windisch pointed out that "Zarathustra-apocalypses" were used in western Christendom only among gnostic communities.[21] The

[10]Theodore bar Konai, *Liber Scholiorum* (ed. A. Scher; 2 vols.; CSCO vols. 55, 69; Paris: Carolus Poussielgue, 1910–12) 2.74–75, henceforth cited as *Scholion*.

[11]See *The Commentaries of Isho'dad of Merv, Bishop of Hadatha (c. 850 A.D.) in Syriac and English* (Horae Semiticae 5–6; ed. M. D. Gibson; Cambridge: University Press, 1911) 1.19; 2.32–33 (text).

[12]*The Book of the Bee* (ed. E. A. W. Budge; Anecdota Oxoniensia, Semitic Series 1.2; Oxford: Clarendon, 1886) 89–90 (text).

[13]Cf. Ps 33:6.

[14]Although he does not specifically address the present text in his remarks, I have nevertheless been influenced by the persuasive arguments of D. H. Aaron on analogous locutions in his "Shedding Light on God's Body in Rabbinic Midrashim: Reflections on the Theory of a Luminous Adam," *HTR* 90 (1997) 299–314, esp. 303–307.

[15]Added from the text of Solomon of Basra, since its omission may be due to dittography.

[16]Compare *Gos. Thom. logion* 50: "Jesus said, If they say to you, 'Where have you come from?' say to them, 'We have come from the light....'" Translation cited from *The Complete Gospels: Annotated Scholars Version* (HarperSanFrancisco: Polebridge Press, 1994) 313.

[17]Read with Solomon of Basra here.

[18]Does the phrase "place of fire and water" encode a reference to the "heavens" (שמים), based on the popular midrash of their fabrication from fire (אש) and water (מים)? See *b. Hag.* 12a; *Gen. Rab.* 4.7; *Midrash Konen* (Jellinek, *BHM* 2.24): ותכל אש ומים וערבן ועשה מהם שמים אש ומים "and He took fire and water and mixed them together and made from them the heavens; i.e., fire and water."

[19]Note the address of the disembodied souls to the so-called "Son of Light" in the course of Theodore bar Konai's exposition of the teachings of what are apparently the Mazdakites (*Scholion* 2.344.22–25). "Son of Light, *go ask our Father when the prisoners will be freed*, and (when) solace (will come) to the grieving ones who are distressed, and (when) solace (will come) to those souls who suffer calamity upon earth."

[20]Theodore bar Konai, *Scholion* (ed. Scher) 2.74–75 (text).

[21]"Es ist jedenfalls bezeichnend, dass im Bereich der christlich-griechischen Ueberlieferung Zarathustra-apokalypsen *nur im Besitz von häretisch-gnostischen Kreisen sich finden* (my emphasis)." Quotation from H. Windisch, *Die Orakel des Hystaspes* (Amsterdam: Koninklijke Akademie van Wetenschappen te Amsterdam, 1929) 18.

Occidental image of Zoroaster, unlike that of the Sibyls, was so intricately connected in the popular imagination with sorcery, astrology, and idol-worship that he was effectively precluded as a viable candidate for delivering pre-Christian testimony to the advent of the Messiah. Syriac Christianity, although nominally better informed, retains and accentuates this negative appraisal by blatantly equating the figure of Zoroaster with such biblical villains as Nimrod, Balaam, or Azazel, and ascribing his alleged prophetic gifts to the willful or unwitting inspiration of Satan.[22] In providing the "prophecy," Theodore bar Konai thus departs from the general trend of disparagement exhibited by his Christian predecessors and peers. Lingering suspicion of Zoroaster's novel guise as pre-advent witness seems to survive in at least one work roughly contemporaneous with the literary activity of Theodore. The ninth-century gospel commentary of Isho'dad of Merv cites certain lines from Theodore's version of our "prophecy" in his remarks on Matt 2:2, but only after uttering the disclaimer that the "prophecy" was excerpted from "that vomit of Satan, their scripture which is called Avesta."[23] No such text of course is found within any authentic Zoroastrian writing. Could Isho'dad have been so confused about the actual provenance of the "prophecy?" It seems rather that he exhibits here some honest misgivings about this particular pseudepigraphon. In view of Windisch's observation about the heritage of Christian pseudo-Zoroastrian writings, coupled with the known Sethian and Manichaean esteem for Zoroaster as teacher, his skepticism appears well founded. Any text claiming that Zoroaster predicted the coming of Christ is automatically of suspect parentage.

2. Twice in the course of the "prophecy" the phrase "great king" (ܡܠܟܐ ܪܒܐ) is used in reference to the anticipated eschatological deliverer. While this specific locution is not unknown in biblical literature, it serves there primarily as an attribute of God Himself with no indication that the designation bears any special nuance.[24] For such a usage, one must turn to Near Eastern sectarian currents, particularly those which apparently nurture the gestation of Syro-Mesopotamian gnosis. Both Hippolytus (*Refutatio* 9.15.1) and Epiphanius (*Panarion* 19.3.4) report that the Elchasaite sect, the group among whom Mani

[22]See R. J. H. Gottheil, "References to Zoroaster in Syriac and Arabic Literature," *Classical Studies in Honour of Henry Drisler* (New York: Macmillan and Co., 1894) 24–51, esp. 25–32.

[23]ܗܘ ܕܐܡܪ ܕܙܪܕܘܫܬ ܗܘ ܕܐܬܝ ܡܢ ܒܪܘܟ ܬܠܡܝܕܗ ܕܐܪܡܝܐ. Isho'dad avers that Zoroaster was actually Baruch, the disciple of Jeremiah. Denied the gift of prophecy after the destruction of Jerusalem and the demise of his master, Baruch sullenly left Eretz Israel to sojourn among the pagan nations, during which time he learned twelve different languages, "and in these (languages) wrote that vomit of Satan, their scripture which is called Avesta. *There it is written* (ܗܟܝ ܟܬܝܒ ܗܘ) that when Zardūšt was sitting etc." Text cited from edition of Gibson, 2.32.11–12.

[24]Mal 1:14; Pss 47:3; 95:3; Qoh 9:14. See also Tob 13:16; Matt 5:35.

was raised, term Christ (and not God!) ὁ μέγας βασιλεύς "the great king." Moreover, the pseudo-Iranian *Oracles of Hystaspes*, a late Hellenistic apocalyptic work that was known and used by Mani, and which possesses abundant connections with Irano-Judaic syncretic efforts,[25] refers to the final deliverer as "the great king" (*rex magnus*).[26] It should thus occasion no surprise to discover this same phrase within Manichaean eschatological literature (*Homilies* 32.20). Therefore the prominent use of this locution suggestively parallels the terminology employed in proto- and mature Manichaean apocalyptic speculation.[27]

3. Portraying the authoritative teacher with arboreal imagery is a favorite trope of Manichaean parabolic discourse. Widengren, Arnold-Döben, Klimkeit, and the present author have previously discussed the Manichaean predilection for this type of metaphor,[28] which is exploited not only as a literary image but also as an iconographic figure in Central Asian illuminations and wall-paintings. An excellent example is contained within Ibn al-Nadim's report regarding the ordinance of prayer laid upon the Manichaean *electi*, wherein he provides the actual verbiage which the faithful are enjoined to repeat. One *berakhah* addressed to Mani reads as follows: "Praise be to you, O Shining One, Mani our guide, *root of light and branch of life, great tree* which is entirely (for) healing."[29] The application of this image, however, is not limited to Mani; other authentic teachers of Manichaean gnosis are described similarly

[25]See my "An Enochic Citation in *Barnabas* 4.3 and the *Oracles of Hystaspes*," *Pursuing the Text: Studies in Honor of Ben Zion Wacholder on the Occasion of his Seventieth Birthday* (ed. J. C. Reeves and J. Kampen; JSOTSup 184; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994) 260–77.

[26]Lactantius, *Div. Inst.* 7.17.11.

[27]See G. Widengren, ed., *Der Manichäismus* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1977) xix–xx; L. Koenen, "Manichaean Apocalypticism at the Crossroads of Iranian, Egyptian, Jewish and Christian Thought," *Codex Manichaicus Coloniensis: Atti del Simposio Internazionale (Rende-Amantea 3–7 settembre 1984)* (ed. L. Cirillo and A. Roselli; Cosenza: Marra Editore, 1986) 313. G. G. Stroumsa is skeptical of this phrase's alleged Iranian origin; see his "Aspects de l'eschatologie manichéenne," *RHR* 198 (1981) 167 n. 17.

[28]See G. Widengren, *Mesopotamian Elements in Manichaeism: Studies in Manichaean, Mandaean, and Syrian-Gnostic Religion* (Uppsala: A.-B. Lundequistska Bokhandeln, 1946) 123–57; V. Arnold-Döben, *Die Bildersprache des Manichäismus* (Köln: Brill, 1978) 7–44; H.-J. Klimkeit, *Manichäische Kunst an der Seidenstrasse: Alte und neue Funde* (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1996) 15–20; J. C. Reeves, *Jewish Lore in Manichaean Cosmogony: Studies in the Book of Giants Traditions* (Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College Press, 1992) 102, 149–51.

[29]Ibn al-Nadim, *Fihrist* (*apud* G. Flügel, *Mani: seine Lehre und seine Schriften* [Leipzig, 1862; repr. Osnabrück: Biblio Verlag, 1969] 65.1–2).

in the extant sources,[30] including most importantly Jesus. The seemingly gratuitous employment of the same imagery in the "Prophecy of Zardūšt" with respect to Jesus is reminiscent of Manichaean discourse.[31]

4. The redeemer's triumphant return "riding upon bright clouds (ܒܥܢܢܐ ܢܗܝܪܐ ܥܠ ܥܢܢܐ ܕܫܡܝܐ) at first glance seems dependent upon the description of Daniel's visionary experience of God's enthronement found in Daniel 7, a passage wherein the seer beholds "one like a human being who came with the clouds of heaven and reached the Ancient of Days" (Dan 7:13).[32] However, this biblical image of a cloud-swathed advent lacks the crucial element of luminosity[33] which distinguishes the arrival of the pseudo-Zoroastrian redeemer.[34] A better analogue may be the "bright cloud" (νεφέλη φωτεινή) accompanying the theophany found in Matt 17:5, although Jesus is not portrayed as traveling with the cloud. According to the apocryphal *Protoevangelium of James*, a "bright cloud" marks the cave outside Bethlehem when the infant Jesus is born—Joseph and the midwife are able to return to Mary upon espying its light.[35] But the most relevant comparative material for this particular narrative motif stems from Syro-Mesopotamian gnostic

[30]In later Zoroastrian sources, the advent of Zoroaster was also expressed using tree-imagery, and one wonders whether this trope was borrowed from Manichaean discourse. For a discussion of this symbolism, see W. R. Darrow, "Zoroaster Amalgamated: Notes on Iranian Prophetology," *HR* 27 (1987–88) 109–32, esp. 117–19.

[31]One could speculate that the tree-imagery as applied to the Apostle of Light has generated in this particular instance the Christian interpolation to Christ's crucifixion on the "tree," affording the adapter a smooth transition from "life *as* a tree" to "death *on* a tree."

[32]ואורו עם ענני שמיא כבר אנש אתה הוא ועד עתיק יומיא מטה. Note also the re-employment of this imagery in Matt 24:30, 26:64; Mark 13:26; *Did.* 16:8.

[33]Compare תגלית עליהם בערפלי עדר "You revealed Yourself to them in bright clouds," a line from the *musaf* liturgy for Rosh ha-Shanah, quoted from *Seder 'Avodat Yisrael* (Tel Aviv: [s.n.], 1957) 403. The expression ערפלי טוהר "bright clouds" is also cited in *Ma'aseh Merkavah* §590 (P. Schäfer, ed., *Synopse zur Hekhalot-Literatur* [Tübingen: J. C .B. Mohr, 1981]); see E. R. Wolfson, *Through a Speculum That Shines: Vision and Imagination in Medieval Jewish Mysticism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994) 273 n. 9.

[34]It is however present in the parousia prediction contained in the Ethiopic version of *Apoc. Peter* 1: "shining seven times brighter than the sun will I (i.e., Jesus) come in my majesty." Translation cited from J. K. Elliott, ed., *The Apocryphal New Testament* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1993) 600.

[35]*Prot. Jas.* 19:2: ܥܢܢܐ ܕܢܗܝܪܐ ܛܠ ܥܠ ܟܗܦܐ ܗܘܐ ܡܛܠܠ ܒܗ ܡܥܪܬܐ. "A cloud of light was overshadowing (!) the cave." Text cited from A. S. Lewis, ed., *Apocrypha Syriaca: The Protoevangelium Jacobi and Transitus Mariae* (Studia Sinaitica 11; London: C. J. Clay and Sons, 1902) 16 (text). The Greek text of this work published by K. Aland (*Synopsis Quattuor Evangeliorum* [11th ed.; Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelstiftung, 1978] 4–6, 11–12, 14, 16–17), a conflation of several witnesses, terms the sight a "dark cloud" (νεφέλη σκοτεινή), a quality better suited to its "overshadowing" function.

literature; the redeemer's "riding upon bright clouds" evokes the image of a Mandaean *'uthra* ensconced in a "cloud of light."[36]

5. Phrases like "sons of the seed of life,"[37] "treasuries of life,"[38] and "treasuries of light"[39] pepper the lexicon of Syro-Mesopotamian gnosis. "Treasure/y of Life" was in fact the title of one of the canonical compositions of Mani.[40]

6. But perhaps the clearest indication of this text's sectarian provenance emerges in Zardūšt's response to his disciple's question about the source of the future king's "power" (ܚܝܠܐ):[41] "He is a descendant of my lineage. I am he and he is me; he is in me, and I in him." Similarly, at the conclusion of the oracle,

[36]See *Ginzā* (ed. Lidzbarski) 610 *s.v.* Lichtwolke; *Ginzā* 616 *s.v.* Wolke des Glanzes. Compare *Apoc. Adam* 71.9–10: "cloud of the great light" (cf. *Gos. Eg.* 49.1–2); 75.17–21: "And great clouds of light will descend, and other clouds of light will come down upon them from the great aeons." Note A. H. B. Logan, *Gnostic Truth and Christian Heresy: A Study in the History of Gnosticism* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1996) 292 n. 95. "The idea of a light cloud as place of concealment is a common Gnostic topos."

[37]Compare "seed of great aeons" (*Apoc. Adam* 65.4–5); "seed of the great generation" (65.8); "seed of that man to whom life has come" (66.4–6); "seed [of] the men to whom passed the life of the knowledge" (69.12–15); "imperishable seed" (76.7); "the imperishable illuminators, who came from the holy seed" (85.28–29); "seed of the eternal life" (*Gos. Eg.* 60.32). Zardūšt's characterization of his disciples as those who "have been sown in a place of fire and water" should be compared with the account of the "sowing" of the seed of the great Seth in *Gos. Eg.* 60.9ff., where reference to the twin ordeals of Sodom-Gomorrah and the Deluge occurs.

[38]*Ginzā* (ed. Lidzbarski) 601 *s.v.* Qsar-Hai; *Ginzā* 602 *s.v.* Sīmath-Haijē; *Ginzā* 613 *s.v.* Schatz des Lebens.

[39]Note the language of a recently published Manichaean personal letter (P. Kell. Copt. 32 = P 92.18). "She who has generated for herself riches, which are stored in the treasuries that are in the heights...which (storehouses) are the sun and the moon." Translation cited from I. Gardner, ed., *Kellis Literary Texts, Volume I* (DOP 4; Oxford: Oxbow Books, 1996) xvii. See *Right Ginzā* (ed. Lidzbarski) 202.26, as well as passim in the Coptic *Pistis Sophia*, a text which displays great affinity with Syro-Mesopotamian systems. Regarding this last nexus note W. Bousset, *Hauptprobleme der Gnosis* (Göttingen, 1907; repr. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1973) 180 n. 1; I. P. Couliano, *The Tree of Gnosis: Gnostic Mythology from Early Christianity to Modern Nihilism* (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1992) 31, 103, 167.

[40]See Reeves, *Jewish Lore*, 10–19, 36 nn. 24–25.

[41]The employment of this particular term is significant. According to Epiphanius (*Panarion* 19.2.2), the name *'Elxai* (i.e., Elchasai) signified "hidden power, for *ēl* (=ܚܝܠ !) means 'power' and *xai* 'hidden'" (δύναμιν ἀποκεκαλυμμένην, διὰ τὸ ἦλ καλεῖσθαι δύναμιν, ξαὶ δὲ κεκαλυμμένον). Compare also Acts 8:9–10, where Simon Magus is termed ἡ δύναμις τοῦ θεοῦ ἡ καλουμένη Μεγάλη. Cf. *CMC* 13.5–6, 11. For discussion of the phrase "Great Power" as a gnostic *terminus technicus*, see S. Wasserstrom, "The Moving Finger Writes: Mughīra b. Sa'īd's Islamic Gnosis and the Myths of its Rejection," *HR* 25 (1985–86) 12–13; also J. Fossum, "Sects and Movements," *The Samaritans* (ed. A. D. Crown; Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1989) 363–71.

Zardūšt reiterates "I and he are one." This is an extraordinary claim. The author of these quasi-Johannine exclamations asserts the essential identity of Zoroaster and Jesus, an assimilation nowhere affirmed in classical Christian sources and which is consonant only with those attested within both Sethian and Manichaean apostolic ideology, as we saw above. It stands to reason that this text, inasmuch as it makes the same assimilation, emanates from an analogous gnostic milieu.[42]

Previous studies of this oracle have largely viewed it as an opportunistic combination of Zoroastrian and Christian eschatological teachings. According to this widely accepted interpretation, Zardūšt's declaration of his biological connection with Christ represents a conscious adaptation of the Zoroastrian doctrine of the advent of the Saošyant, or World Savior, who was "to be born of the prophet's seed from a virgin mother."[43] This presumes that the "prophecy" was produced by representatives of orthodox Christianity in an apologetic attempt to win converts from Zoroastrianism, encouraging them to see in Jesus the realization of their native eschatological hopes. This is certainly the intention of its orthodox promulgators—figures like Theodore bar Konai or Solomon of Basra or even (despite his reservations) Isho'dad of Merv. I

[42]Compare *Pistis Sophia*: "That man is me, and I am that man" (NHS 9; ed. C. Schmidt and V. MacDermot; Leiden: Brill, 1978) 231. An excellent comparative discussion of the heterodox doctrine of "successive incarnation," which has been in no way superseded, is that of I. Friedlaender, "Jewish-Arabic Studies," *JQR* n.s. 3 (1912–13) 246–54. Note especially the hadith cited in the Ismā'īli *Kitab al-Kashf* of Ja'far b. Manṣūr al-Yaman (10th cent.), according to which 'Alī once proclaimed in Kūfa: "I am the Christ...*I am he, and he is me*... 'Isā b. Maryam is part of me and I am part of him" (!), cited and discussed with similar examples by E. F. Tijdens, "Der mythologisch-gnostische Hintergrund des »Umm al-Kitāb«," *Varia 1977* (Acta Iranica 16; Leiden: Brill, 1977) 286–91. Tijdens suggests (p. 291) that the "Prophecy of Zardūšt" and this portion of *Kitāb al-Kashf* share a "judenchristliche (gnostische)" background. See also H. Corbin, "From the Gnosis of Antiquity to Ismaili Gnosis," in H. Corbin, *Cyclical Time and Ismaili Gnosis* (London: Kegan Paul International, 1983) 151–93, esp. 186. One must be careful to distinguish between assertions about the identity of certain "messengers" (as above) and cognate assertions about a *unio mystica* between an individual and the Godhead. The latter conceptually expresses mystical *communio* between the human soul and God. For examples, see *Ma'aseh Merkavah* §588 (*Synopse* [ed. Schäfer] 224): הוא הוא ושמו שמו "He is His Name and His Name is He," with the discussion of Wolfson, *Through a Speculum* 181–87; also Abraham Abulafia as cited and discussed by M. Idel, *The Mystical Experience in Abraham Abulafia* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1988) 124–34; E. R. Wolfson, "Jewish Mysticism: A Philosophical Overview," *History of Jewish Philosophy* (ed. D. H. Frank and O. Leaman; Routledge History of World Philosophies 2; London & New York: Routledge, 1997) 480–81; also al-Ḥallāj and his exclamation *anā al-ḥaqq*, for which see Corbin, *History of Islamic Philosophy*. 103.

[43]Windisch, *Orakel* 23 (but contrast p. 25!); M. Boyce and F. Grenet, *A History of Zoroastrianism, Volume Three: Zoroastrianism Under Macedonian and Roman Rule* (Leiden: Brill, 1991) 451.

seriously doubt, however, that the "prophecy" owes its existence to the creative imagination of Nestorian evangelism.[44]

The conceptual and linguistic affinities which we have isolated above link this text firmly with the thought-world of Syro-Mesopotamian gnosis. The "Prophecy of Zardūšt" is apparently a valuable survival, with only cosmetic adaptation, of an original gnostic source.

Addendum

An intriguing feature of Isho'dad's citation of the pseudo-Avestan "Prophecy of Zardūšt" within his commentary to Matthew 2 is its contextual literary juxtaposition at the conclusion of a lengthy rehearsal of the so-called "Chaldean art."[45] This physical proximity of supposedly "Chaldean" teachings to the alleged oracle from Zoroaster is not on the face of it surprising—ancient writers frequently confuse and conflate so-called "Magian" and "Chaldean" lore, treating these formally distinct labels as essentially identical.[46] Isho'dad in fact reflects this popular assimilation in his exegetical linkage of "Chaldean" teachings to the scriptural visit of the Magi in Matthew 2. Moreover, a popular tradition attributed the discovery of the astrological arts—the Chaldean science *par excellence*—to Zoroaster.[47]

Among Isho'dad's collection of purported Chaldean materials are a number of lines expounding the occult relationship of the seven visible planets and twelve zodiacal signs to certain constituent elements of the human body.[48] Therein we find the following anthropogonic passage: "And moreover these

[44]One might compare the analogous case of the later Christian adaptation of the Sabian "Revelation (ܓܠܝܬܐ) of Baba." See F. Rosenthal, "The Prophecies of Bâbâ the Ḥarrânian," *A Locust's Leg: Studies in honour of S. H. Taqizadeh* (London: Percy Lund, Humphries & Co. Ltd., 1962) 220–32.

[45]ܟܬܒ̈ܐ ܕܡܠܦܢܘܬܐ ܘܟܠܕ̈ܝܐ. See Gibson 1.16–20, esp. 16–17; 2.27–34, esp. 28–29 (text).

[46]While some writers are careful to make a clear distinction between Magi and Chaldeans (see G. Messina, *Der Ursprung der Magier und die zarathuštrische Religion* [Roma: Pontificio Istituto Biblico, 1930] 17–20), most in fact do not. See R. Beck, "Thus Spake Not Zarathuštra: Zoroastrian Pseudepigrapha of the Greco-Roman World," in Boyce-Grenet, *History of Zoroastrianism*, 523–25; and especially P. Kingsley, "Meetings with Magi: Iranian Themes among the Greeks, from Xanthus of Lydia to Plato's Academy," *JRAS* Series 3,5,2 (1995) 199–207.

[47]See Beck, "Thus Spake Not Zarathuštra" 522 n.79; Reeves, "An Enochic Citation" 274–75 n. 50.

[48]A linkage termed "melothesia" (μελοθεσία); the relevant lines are Gibson 2.28.18–29.9. For brief discussions of this concept, see A.-J. Festugière, *La révélation d'Hermès Trismégiste, 1: L'astrologie et les sciences occultes* (2nd ed.; Paris: Société d'Édition Les Belles Lettres, 1983) 127–31; Wasserstrom, "Moving Finger," 10–11; H. J. W. Drijvers, "Bardaisan of Edessa and the Hermetica: The Aramaic Philosopher and the Philosophy of his Time," *JEOL* 21 (1970) 199–200.

(planets) created the parts of the human (body): the Sun the marrow,[49] the Moon the skin, Mars the blood, Mercury the sinew[50] and vein(s), Jupiter the bones, Venus the flesh, and Saturn the hair."[51] According to this tradition, each planet is responsible for the fabrication of a specific bodily component. The order in which these components are listed is governed in the present instance by the planetary week—the sequence in which the planets are listed follows that of the days of the week, beginning on Sunday and ending on Saturday. As we shall see, this is not the typical way in which similar lists of planet/body homologies are sequentially structured.

An "authentically Zoroastrian"[52] melothesia is present in *Zātspram*, a ninth-century Pahlavi anthology of selections culled from various lost Avestan books, and a work whose compilation would be roughly contemporary with the literary activity of Theodore bar Konai and Isho'dad. Therein we find the following list of correlations of planets to corporeal constituents, presented as follows (30.5–11): moon to marrow, Mercury to bone, Venus to flesh, sun to sinew,[53] Mars to veins, Jupiter to skin, and Saturn to hair.[54] Three of the *Zātspram* correlations overlap with those of Isho'dad: Venus/flesh, Saturn/hair, and Mars/blood (= veins). The remaining corporeal substances are identical with those listed by Isho'dad. This verbal similarity suggests that the two lists are genealogically related. Furthermore, it is quite apparent that the *Zātspram* roster exhibits an internal logical consistency that is absent from Isho'dad's list. The planets are listed in an ascending series from the moon to Saturn, with the sun inserted between Venus and Mars, a sequence which follows the usual order in which Hellenistic astronomers presented them from a geocentric perspective.[55] Moreover, their correlated body components move progressively

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[49] Actually "brain" or "marrow" are possibilities here, given the ambiguity of Hebrew מח; Syriac ܡܘܚܐ; and Pahlavi *mazg*. See B. Lincoln, "Embryological Speculation and Gender Politics in a Pahlavi Text," in his *Death, War, and Sacrifice: Studies in Ideology and Practice* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991) 222; also *Orig. World* 114.33–35. According to Plato, *Timaeus* 73C–D, the "brain" is formed from "marrow;" it is hence likely that the aforementioned semantic ambiguity is grounded in ancient physiological speculations. Note also the Coptic analogues discussed below.

[50] Read ܓܝܕܐ in place of ܓܝܪܐ.

[51] Gibson 2.28.18–20: ܘܐܦ ܡܢܘܬܐ ܠܗ ܕܒܪܢܫܐ ܗܢܘܢ ܒܪܘ. ܫܡܫܐ ܡܘܚܐ. ܣܗܪܐ ܡܫܟܐ. ܐܪܝܣ ܕܡܐ. ܗܪܡܝܣ ܓܝܪܐ ܘܥܪܩܐ. ܒܝܠ ܓܪܡܐ. ܒܠܬܝ ܒܣܪܐ. ܟܐܘܢ ܣܥܪܐ.

[52] "Authentic" only in the sense that *Zātspram* is a Zoroastrian text—the actual sources of the teachings found within it, such as in the present case, may be more eclectic.

[53] Pahlavi *pīh*. For this rendering, see M. Boyce, *A Word-List of Manichaean Middle Persian and Parthian* (Leiden: Brill, 1977) 75.

[54] See H. W. Bailey, *Zoroastrian Problems in the Ninth-Century Books* (new ed.; Oxford: Clarendon, 1971) 104–105, 210–211 (text); R. C. Zaehner, *Zurvan: A Zoroastrian Dilemma* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1955) 162 and his n.2.

[55] See O. Neugebauer, *The Exact Sciences in Antiquity* (2d ed.; reprinted, New York: Dover, 1969) 168–70.

from the innermost to the outermost section of the human body. In other words, both the human body and the planetary spheres of the physical cosmos are envisioned as consisting of seven concentric "layers (*tōf*), of which the innermost is *mazg*, 'marrow,' and around this in successive layers lie bone, flesh, fat, veins, skin, and hair."[56] The architecture of body and cosmos thus mirror one another. However, the planets in *Zātspram* are not depicted as anthropogonic entities; they simply schematize the cosmos as a corporeal form. Nor are oracles of Zoroaster or mention of "Chaldean" teachings found in the immediate proximity of the *Zātspram* melothesia. It is this contextual connection, exhibited in Isho'dad, between the two specific motifs of an anthropogonic melothesia and an invocation of either Zoroaster or "Chaldeans" that warrants closer scrutiny. Where else in the extant literary traditions do we find this particular nexus?

One place is in the twelfth-century universal chronicle of Michael Syrus, a work heavily dependent upon much earlier traditions and sources.[57] A series of planet/body homologies occurs there in the context of Michael's presentation of the life and doctrines of Bardaisan,[58] the renowned second-century Edessene heresiarch whom Ephrem branded "the teacher of Mani"[59] and whose adherents, the Daysanites, flourished as a distinct dualist sect in the East well into the 'Abbasid era.[60] Although garbled and lacunose in its present form, enough remains to conclude that the reported correlations of planets to bodily substances were identical with those in the melothesia quoted by Isho'dad: "As for the relation of the 'rulers' (i.e., heavenly powers) to humankind (in the teaching of Bardaisan): the upper powers give one a soul; the lower powers the members of (one's) body. The sun gives marrow, Jupiter bones, [Mercury

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[56] Bailey, *Zoroastrian Problems* 105, with reference to *Zātspram* 30.4. The most important and insightful discussion of this facet of the Pahlavi text is R. van den Broek, "The Creation of Adam's Psychic Body in the Apocryphon of John," *Studies in Gnosticism and Hellenistic Religions presented to Gilles Quispel on the Occasion of his 65th Birthday* (ed. R. van den Broek and M. J. Vermaseren; Leiden: Brill, 1981) 38–57, esp. 48–53.

[57] See Chabot's introduction to *Chronique de Michel le Syrien, patriarche jacobite d'Antioche, 1166–1199* (4 vols.; ed. J.-B. Chabot; reprinted, Bruxelles: Culture et Civilisation, 1963); also W. Adler, *Time Immemorial: Archaic History and its Sources in Christian Chronography from Julius Africanus to George Syncellus* (Washington, DC: Dumbarton Oaks Center for Byzantine Studies, 1989) 118–25.

[58] The Syriac text is conveniently quoted by F. Nau, "Bardesanes: Liber Legum Regionum," *Patrologia Syriaca* (3 vols.; ed. R. Graffin; Paris: Firmin-Didot, 1894–1926) 2.522–23.

[59] C. W. Mitchell, ed., *S. Ephraem's Prose Refutations of Mani, Marcion, and Bardaisan* (2 vols.; London: Williams and Norgate, 1912–21) 1.8.4–5 (text).

[60] See A. Abel, "Dayṣâniyya," *EI²* 2.199; W. Ivanow, *Ibn al-Qaddah (The Alleged Founder of Ismailism)* (2nd rev. ed.; Bombay: Ismaili Society, 1957) 75–91.

sinew], Mars blood, Venus flesh, the moon [skin, and Saturn] hair."[61] Controversy has raged over whether Bardaisan can be accurately labeled as "gnostic;"[62] we cannot resolve that intriguing issue here. Of greater pertinence though is a persistent castigation of Bardaisan and his school as devotees of "Chaldeanism,"[63] particularly astrology, by Christian and Muslim critics.[64] Michael's biographical snippet, from which the melothesia was quoted above, also preserves an example of the Daysanite amalgamation of astrological and Christian lore. "He (Bardaisan) also says that Christ the son of God was born at (the time of) Jupiter, crucified at the hour of Mars, buried at the hour of Mercury, and resurrected from the grave at the time of the planet Jupiter."[65]

Another significant occurrence of this imagery appears within the description of yet another quasi-gnostic Edessene religious sect supplied by the eighth-century Nestorian heresiologist Theodore bar Konai, our source for the earliest version of the "Prophecy of Zardūšt." In his exposition of the teachings promulgated by one 'Audi,[66] Theodore provides us with the following valuable quotation from an 'Audian scripture. "In an apocalypse attributed to John...it lists the names of the holy creators, when it says, 'My wisdom created flesh, understanding created skin, Elohim created bones, my kingdom created blood, Adonai created sinews, anger created hair, and thought created marrow.'"[67] Theodore then informs us, "This material was taken from Chaldean

[61] ... Another version of this same text, although faultily transmitted, is in Agapius of Mabbug, *Kitāb al-'Unvān* (ed. A. Vasiliev; *Patrologia Orientalis* 7.4 [1911] 518–21); see H. J. W. Drijvers, *Bardaisan of Edessa* (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1966) 189.

[62] See the thorough survey of scholarly argument provided by Drijvers, *Bardaisan* 1–59.

[63] Ephrem Syrus, *Hymns Against Heresies* 22.22 line 22, cited according to the edition of E. Beck, *Des heiligen Ephraem des Syrers Hymnen contra Haereses* (CSCO 169, scriptores syri 76; Louvain: L. Durbecq, 1957) 85. According to Beck (and Drijvers, *Bardaisan* 157–58), the unnamed devotee is Bardaisan.

[64] See Drijvers, *Bardaisan passim* for numerous ancient references and testimonia, and also the excellent study of F. S. Jones, "The Astrological Trajectory in Ancient Syriac-Speaking Christianity (Elchasai, Bardaisan, and Mani)," *Atti del Terzo Congresso Internazionale di Studi "Manicheismo e Oriente Cristiano Antico": Arcavacata di Rende-Amantea 31 agosto – 5 settembre 1993* (ed. L. Cirillo and A. van Tongerloo; Lovanii and Neapoli: Brepols, 1997) 183–200, esp. 188–94.

[65] Nau, "Bardesanes," *PS* 2.523.

[66] For a translation of this passage, see Reeves, *Heralds*, 115–16.

[67] ... (Theodore bar Konai, *Scholion* [ed. Scher] 2.320.6–12). I have incorporated the suggested textual emendations of Puech and Chabot (see Reeves, *Heralds* 132 nn. 26–27 for details); the translation is adapted from that of Reeves, *Heralds* 116.

doctrines."[68] Here it is important to notice that Theodore verbalizes the same nexus previously beheld in Isho'dad's recitation, although instead of the planet/body homologies provided by Isho'dad and Michael Syrus, we are here given a mixture of Jewish divine names and hypostasized attributes of human mental and emotional life. Nevertheless, this list is correlated with the same roster of body constituents seen above—flesh, skin, bones, blood, sinews, hair, and marrow—recognizable despite its thoroughly skewed sequence.

A third instance figures in the long version of the Coptic *Apocryphon of John*, at the point when the archons fashion the psychic form of the first human being Adam: "kindness made...bone; forethought made...connective tissue (i.e., sinews); divinity made...flesh; lordship made...marrow; kingship made...blood; zeal made...skin; intelligence made...hair."[69] As in the 'Audian quotation taken from the "apocalypse attributed to John," a series of mental and emotional attributes stand in the stead of the planetary designations in the correlations. In spite of this difference, R. van den Broek has conclusively demonstrated that this form of the melothesia is intimately linked with the (earlier?) versions which supply only planetary correspondences.[70] A comparative examination of the Syriac and Coptic lists, performed by H.-C. Puech long ago,[71] demonstrates conclusively that Theodore was in fact quoting from a Syriac version of what we now know as the *Apocryphon of John*. Yet what is of paramount importance in this latter source is the internal bibliographic reference that appears at the conclusion of what is, in its long version, a prolix roster of homologies. "Now others whom I have not mentioned to you preside over the rest of the passions; and if you want to know about them, *the matter is written in the Book of Zoroaster*."[72]

[68] (Theodore bar Konai, *Scholion* [ed. Scher] 2.320.12–13).

[69] *Ap. John* 15.14–23. For the most useful textual edition, see M. Waldstein and F. Wisse, eds., *The Apocryphon of John: Synopsis of Nag Hammadi Codices II,1; III,1; and IV,1 with BG 8502,2* (NHMS 33; Leiden: Brill, 1995) 88–91. Translation adapted from that of B. Layton, *The Gnostic Scriptures* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1987) 39–40.

[70] van den Broek, "Adam's Psychic Body." See also M. Tardieu, *Écrits gnostiques: Codex de Berlin* (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1984) 300–308, where further bibliography and parallels are given.

[71] H.-C. Puech, "Fragments retrouvés de l'«Apocalypse d'Allogène»," *Annuaire de l'institut de philologie et d'histoire orientales et slaves (Bruxelles)* 4 (1936) 935–62, reprinted with his post-Nag Hammadi observations in Puech, *En quête de la gnose* (2 vols.; Paris: Gallimard, 1978) 1.271–300. For a synoptic presentation of the quotation, see Waldstein-Wisse, *Apocryphon of John*, 194.

[72] *Ap. John* 19.6–10. Text in Waldstein-Wisse, *Apocryphon of John*, 111; translation is Layton, *Gnostic Scriptures*. This reference is absent from the short version of the *Apocryphon of John*.

It is exceedingly curious that planet/body homologies followed by invocations of the authority of Chaldeans, and in at least two cases, Zoroaster, recur with such frequency in Oriental gnostic and Christian literature. Isho'dad's juxtapositioning of this material, with which we initiated this short excursus, is therefore probably neither arbitrary nor accidental. *It suggests in* fact the existence at one time of a gnostic literary source which featured both the planet/body correspondences and allusions to or even quotations from Zoroastrian pseudepigrapha, among which may have been a pre-orthodox version of the "Prophecy of Zardūšt," isolated portions of which survive in truncated and adapted forms in several literary settings. At the very least this discernible structural feature provides some additional support for the possible gnostic origin of the "Prophecy of Zardūšt."

Jewish Arguments against Christianity in the *Dialogue of Timothy and Aquila*[1]

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It is a great pleasure to contribute to this celebratory volume in honor o Bob Kraft. Bob suggested Timothy and Aquila as a dissertation topic and guide my exploration of the broad corpus of *adversus Judaeos* dialogues, an interes that continues to drive my work. Bob was a tireless dissertation advisor and h remains a cherished teacher, colleague, and friend.

The *Dialogue of Timothy and Aquila* (TA) is an anonymous, Jewish an Christian disputation which, in its final form, was situated in Alexandria durin the episcopacy of Cyril.[2] There is no scholarly consensus concerning date provenance, or transmission history of this text. Earlier I argued that TA wa composed in the third century CE to which an elaborate narrative setting (TA 1–2) and conclusion (57.10–20), proper names for interlocutors, and reference to the ὁμοούσιος trinity (25.1–3, 25.7, 30.2) were appended in the fifth.[3] Thi paper will focus on the narrator's summary of Aquila's argument in TA 1 and a key argument from the earlier dialogue (TA 5) which represents the longes monologue permitted to Aquila, and one which differs markedly in tone an content from the narrator's summary. Apologetic arguments (e.g., the Jews ar not rejected by God), incidental counter-arguments, and exegetical arguments

[1]An earlier form of this paper was presented at the AAR/SBL annual meetings in San Francisco, 1992, in the Early Jewish/Christian Relations Section. The present paper is a revise version of material from Chap. 5 of my dissertation, "Representations of Jews and Judaism i the 'Dialogue of Timothy and Aquila': Construct or Social Reality?" (Ph.D. diss., Universit of Pennsylvania, 1994).

[2]For the critical edition see Robert G. Robertson, "The Dialogue of Timothy an Aquila: A Critical Text, Introduction to the Manuscript Evidence, and an Inquiry into th Sources and Literary Relationships" (Th.D. diss., Harvard University, 1986). Versificatio follows his edition.

[3]"Representations," Chap. 2. I will hereafter refer to the Jewish and Christian speaker respectively as Aquila and Timothy.

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