

# The Temple-Mystical Background to a Valentinian Saying of the Saviour *The Interpretation of Knowledge* (NHC XI, 1) 10.18–38

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## **Abstract**

*The Interpretation of Knowledge* (NHC XI, 1) is a Nag Hammadi text which appeals to a Christian congregation, apparently consisting of both Valentinians and non-Valentinians, for unity in the face of divisions in the church caused by the jealousy of some over the superior spiritual gifts possessed by others. The work makes use of several sayings of the Saviour, portrayed as “the living teacher,” one of which is an otherwise unattested Valentinian saying (10.18–38). This article investigates the Temple-mystical background of the saying, situating it within a current of thought that associated the flesh of the crucified Christ with the veil of the holy of holies, and considered his post-resurrection ascension to be an enthronement experience. The emphasis on imitating Christ in his humility and suffering reaches a crescendo in this saying, where the Valentinian soul is exhorted to enter into Christ, beyond the veil, and be enthroned therein as preparation for their pneumatic heavenly ascent.

## **Keywords**

*Interpretation of Knowledge*; Valentinianism; Temple; Veil; Crucifixion; Mysticism

## **Introduction**

*The Interpretation of Knowledge* (NHC XI, 1.1.1–21.35; henceforth *Interp. Know.*) is a highly fragmentary Valentinian text preserved amongst the Nag

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Hammadi codices.<sup>1</sup> In recent years it has drawn increased scholarly attention due to its employment of the Pauline imagery of the church as a Body with Christ as its Head.<sup>2</sup> Several recent studies have focused particularly on determining the literary genre of the work in light of this theme and how it is employed to address the situation of a divided Christian community in the latter pages of the text (15.10–21.34). Some time ago, Klaus Koschorke argued that it was a “gnostische Gemeindeordnung,”<sup>3</sup> but since there is very little evidence that *Interp. Know.* sets out to provide a set of rules for the community to follow, this suggestion has been largely discarded.<sup>4</sup> Elaine

<sup>1</sup> The text is now available in three critical editions with introductions, translations, and commentaries in English, German, and French; John Turner and Elaine Pagels, “NHC XI,1: The Interpretation of Knowledge,” in *Nag Hammadi Codices XI, XII, and XIII*, ed. Charles W. Hedrick (NHS 28; Leiden: Brill, 1990), 21–88; Uwe-Karsten Plisch, *Die Auslegung der Erkenntnis: (Nag Hammadi Codex XI, 1)* (TU 142; Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1996), 6–49; Wolf-Peter Funk, Louis Painchaud, and Einar Thomassen, *L'Interprétation de la gnose (NH XI, 1)* (BCNH 34; Québec: Presses de l'Université Laval, 2010). On the poor condition of the manuscript, see Stephen Emmel, “Exploring the Pathway That Leads from Paul to Gnosticism: What is the Genre of The Interpretation of Knowledge (NHC XI, 1)?,” in *Die Weisheit – Ursprünge und Rezeption: Festschrift für Karl Löning zum 65. Geburtstag*, ed. M. Fassnacht (Münster: Aschendorff, 2003), 265–66; Emmel estimates that of 800 lines in the original text, only 585 have at least one letter fragment remaining, and only around 60 lines are more or less complete, and none from pages 1–8, and mostly from pages 15–21.

<sup>2</sup> Paul uses this imagery in Romans 12:4–5, 1 Corinthians 12:14–26; Ephesians 4:15–16; and Colossians 1:18, 24, 2:10, 19. The idea of Christ as the Head of the Christian community is found particularly in Ephesians 4:15 and Colossians 2:19. On the relation of *Interp. Know.* to the Pauline epistles, see Ismo Dunderberg, “Body Metaphors in 1 Corinthians and in the Interpretation of Knowledge (NH XI, 1),” in *Actes de huitième congrès international des études coptes, Paris, 28 juin – 3 juillet 2004* Volume 2, eds. N. Bosson and A. Boud'hors (Louvain: Peeters, 2007), 833–47; largely reproduced in Dunderberg, *Beyond Gnosticism: Myth, Lifestyle, and Society in the School of Valentinus* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), 147–58; note however, Plisch, *Auslegung*, 4; Plisch urges caution in straightforwardly identifying *Interp. Know.* as Valentinian on the basis of certain Pauline terms and images, the employment of which is not uniquely Valentinian. Instead he suggests that in *Interp. Know.* “ein christlicher Gnostiker in bewusster Paulustradition ein aufregendes (weil) eigenständiges Stück Theologie vorgelegt hat” (“a Christian Gnostic has submitted, deliberately in the Pauline tradition, an exciting (because) independent piece of theology.”) (All translations from modern languages are my own.)

<sup>3</sup> “Gnostic Church Order.”

<sup>4</sup> Klaus Koschorke, “Gnostic Instructions on the Organization of the Congregation: The Tractate Interpretation of Knowledge from CG XI,” in *The Rediscovery of Gnosticism. Proceedings from the International Conference on Gnosticism at Yale, New Haven, Connecticut, March 28–31, 1978, Volume 2, Sethian Gnosticism*, ed. Bentley Layton (SHR 41; Leiden: Brill, 1981), 757–69; Koschorke, “Eine neugefundene gnostische Gemeindeordnung: Zum Thema Geist und Amt im frühen Christentum,” *ZThK* 76 (1979): 30–60; for the rejection of Koschorke’s characterisation of *Interp. Know.*, see for instance, Emmel, “Pathway,” 261–63; and Dunderberg, “Body Metaphors,” 839.

Pagels understood it as “a homily intended for delivery in a service of worship,” a judgement often repeated,<sup>5</sup> but which has now been rendered inadequate on formal<sup>6</sup> and generic grounds.<sup>7</sup> Stephen Emmel advanced the idea that *Interp. Know.* is a philosophical epistle after the style of the *Treatise on Resurrection* (NHC I, 4) and Ptolemy’s *Epistle to Flora*, but the lack of any clear epistolary markers and unwarranted speculation on the content of the missing opening lines of the text have led to this suggestion failing to gain widespread acceptance.<sup>8</sup> Philip Tite has argued convincingly for the paraenetic nature of *Interp. Know.*, a judgement which certainly holds true of the latter section of the text (15.10–21.34), but which Tite suggests runs throughout the work.<sup>9</sup> Ismo Dunderberg has recently challenged Tite’s view, instead suggesting that *Interp. Know.* is a case of “deliberative rhetoric.”<sup>10</sup> However, upon closer inspection, Dunderberg’s rejection of *Interp. Know.* as paraenesis in favour of deliberative rhetoric emerges as little more than semantics, since his definition of deliberative rhetoric shares several key features with Tite’s presentation of paraenesis.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Elaine Pagels, “The Interpretation of Knowledge: Introduction,” in *Nag Hammadi Codices XI, XII, and XIII*, ed. Charles Hedrick (NHC 28; Leiden: Brill, 1990), 22; Pagels, “The Interpretation of Knowledge (XI, I): Introduction,” in *The Nag Hammadi Library in English*, ed. James M. Robinson (New York: HarperCollins, 1988), 472; also Madeleine Scopello, “Interpretation of Knowledge,” in *The Coptic Encyclopedia* Volume 4, ed. A.S. Atiya (New York: Macmillan, 1991), 1301; John Turner, “Knowledge, Interpretation of,” in *The Anchor Bible Dictionary* Volume 4, ed. D.N. Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 93–95; Plisch, *Auslegung*, 3; Einar Thomassen, *The Spiritual Seed: The Church of the ‘Valentinians’* (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 86; and Thomassen, “The Interpretation of Knowledge,” in *The Nag Hammadi Scriptures*, ed. Marvin Meyer (New York: HarperCollins, 2007), 651.

<sup>6</sup> See especially, Emmel, “Pathway,” 263–65.

<sup>7</sup> Philip Tite, “An Exploration of Valentinian Paraenesis: Rethinking Gnostic Ethics in the *Interpretation of Knowledge* (NHC XI, 1),” *Harvard Theological Review* 97.3 (2004): 277–78; “The early Christian homily is a problematic literary category: as a designation of genre, it is not identified with a specific set of social and literary dimensions, and therefore fails to serve any analytical function. Indeed, to identify a text as a homily has tended to be a means of avoiding the problem of genre, and consequently the homily has become an ill-defined catch-all category.”; this judgement is repeated in Tite, *Valentinian Ethics and Paraenetic Discourse: Determining the Social Function of Moral Exhortation in Valentinian Christianity* (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 187–88; see also Dunderberg, “Body Metaphors,” 839.

<sup>8</sup> Emmel, “Pathway,” 264–65.

<sup>9</sup> Tite, “Exploration”; Tite, *Valentinian Ethics*, 184–216.

<sup>10</sup> Dunderberg, “Body Metaphors,” 839–42; Dunderberg, *Beyond Gnosticism*, 153–54.

<sup>11</sup> Dunderberg, “Body Metaphors,” 840–41 n. 26; Tite, “Exploration,” 280–83; Dunderberg bases his definition of deliberative rhetoric on observations from Margaret Mitchell, *Paul and the Rhetoric of Reconciliation: An Exegetical Investigation of the Language and Composition of 1 Corinthians* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1991); Dunderberg states that the main

In the introduction to the most recent critical edition of *Interp. Know.* (2010), Louis Painchaud, at first glance, rather hedges his bets regarding the literary genre of the work, showing great sympathy with Emmel’s notion of a single addressee, while also suggesting that it may have reached a wider audience, and taking account of both homiletic and paraenetic features. However, he rightly draws a sharp distinction between the two homiletic sections designed to instruct the recipients (3.25–8.38 and 9.17–14.38), and the paraenesis designed for practical application (15.10–19.37), before a closing exhortation (20.14–21.34).<sup>12</sup>

Thus far, the vast majority of research has focused on the paraenesis in 15.10–19.37, since these pages are better preserved, and are where the Pauline Head-Body image is mainly employed. On the other hand, comparatively little attention has been paid to the earlier pages of the text (1.1–8.38), probably because of extremely poor preservation. But nor has the fascinating, and slightly better preserved, section at 9.17–14.38 received the attention it deserves. These pages contain several sayings from a figure called either the “teacher of immortality”<sup>13</sup> or “the living teacher,”<sup>14</sup> representing the Saviour-Christ, in 9.28–10.38, followed by what Painchaud has described as a “complex Midrash” on these sayings in 11.15–14.38.<sup>15</sup> The first set of these sayings in 9.28–38 is a collage taken from the Gospel of Matthew:

Now this is his teaching: “Do not call to a father upon the earth. Your Father, who is in heaven, is one.<sup>16</sup> You are the light of the world.<sup>17</sup> They are my brothers and my fellow-companions who do the will of the Father.<sup>18</sup> For what use is it if you gain the world and you forfeit your soul?<sup>19</sup> For when we were in the darkness we used to call many ‘father’, since we were ignorant of the true Father. And this is the great conception of all sins ...”<sup>20</sup>

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distinction between paraenesis and deliberative rhetoric is that while the former offers general moral exhortation, the latter addresses a specific problem.

<sup>12</sup> Louis Painchaud, “Introduction,” in *L’Interprétation de la gnose (NH XI, 1)* (BCNH 34; Québec: Presses de l’Université Laval, 2010), 21–31.

<sup>13</sup> *Interp. Know.* 9.19; **ϣⲁⲗ ⲛ̅ⲧⲏⲛ̅[ⲧⲁ]ⲧⲏⲟⲩ**; all citations of the Coptic text of *Interp. Know.* are taken from Turner’s critical edition, unless otherwise stated. All English translations from *Interp. Know.* are my own unless otherwise stated.

<sup>14</sup> *Interp. Know.* 10.14; **ⲡϣⲁⲗ ⲉⲧⲁ[ⲛ̅ⲗ]**; this is Funk’s reconstruction.

<sup>15</sup> Painchaud, “Introduction,” 37.

<sup>16</sup> Matthew 23:9.

<sup>17</sup> Matthew 5:14.

<sup>18</sup> Matthew 12:50; cf. Mark 3:35; and Luke 8:21.

<sup>19</sup> Matthew 16:26; cf. Mark 8:36; and Luke 9:25.

<sup>20</sup> **ⲧⲉⲩϣⲉⲱ ⲛ̅ⲗⲉ ⲧⲉ ⲧⲉⲉⲓ ϣⲉ ⲙ̅ⲛⲙⲟⲩⲧⲉ ⲛ̅ⲏⲧ̅ⲛ̅ ⲗⲉⲓⲱⲧ ϩⲓϣ̅ⲛ̅ ⲡⲕⲁⲗ ⲟⲩⲉⲉⲓ ⲡ[ⲉ] ⲡⲉⲧ̅ⲛⲉⲓⲱⲧ ⲉ̅ⲟ̅ⲛ̅ ⲛ̅ⲛ̅ⲡⲏⲩⲩⲉ ⲛ̅ⲧⲱⲧ̅ⲛ̅ ⲡⲉ ⲡⲟⲩⲁⲉⲓⲛ̅ ⲙ̅ⲡⲕⲟⲥⲙⲟⲥ ⲛ̅ⲁⲥⲛⲏⲩⲩⲩ ⲗⲩⲱ**

However, this sequence is followed by a first-person saying from “the living teacher” which is otherwise unattested in ancient sources. It is the aim of this paper to draw out the mystical background of the saying and demonstrate its position in the broader context of ancient traditions concerning the crucified flesh of Christ as being consubstantial with the veil of the holy of holies, as well as the idea of the risen Christ’s enthronement at the Ascension. It is crucial that we properly understand the background to these sayings, and particularly this otherwise unattested Valentinian saying, since it is these sayings and the commentary on them in the pages following that form the doctrinal and theological backbone to the closing paraenesis.

### The Text: *The Interpretation of Knowledge* 10.17–38

The saying is as follows:<sup>21</sup>

<sup>17b</sup>παχερ̄ ν̄γαρ <sup>18</sup>[νεϛ ϛ]ε πκοσμ[οϛ] πωκ ν̄γαρ εν πε ν̄ <sup>19</sup>[νεκω]π  
 ν̄τ[μορ]φη ε̄τν̄[ζ]ητ̄ϛ̄ ϛεοῡζη̄ϛ̄ <sup>20</sup>[πε αλ]λα οῡ[αθη]ϛ̄ μ̄ν̄ [οῡκ]ολλας̄ιϛ̄

ΝΑΦ̄Β̄Ρ̄ΚΟΙΝΩΝΟϛ̄ ΝΕ†Ρ̄Ε Μ̄ΠΟΥΩΦ̄Ε Μ̄Π|ΕΙΩΤ̄ ΕῩ Ν̄ΓΑΡ ΠΕ Φ̄ΗῩ ΕΚΩΑΝ † Ζ̄ΗῩ  
 Μ̄ΠΚΟϛΜΟϛ̄ ΝΚ† Λ̄ϛ̄Ι Ν̄ΤΕΚΦΥΧ̄Η ΕΝΨΟΟΠ̄ Ν̄ΓΑΡ Ζ̄Ν Π̄ΚΕΚΕΙ ΝΕΝΜΟΥΤ̄Ε ᾹΖ̄ΑΖ̄ Χ̄Ε  
 ΕΙΩΤ̄ ΕΝΟΕΙ Ν̄ΑΤ̄ϛΑΥΝ̄Ε ΑΠ|Ε|ΙΩΤ̄ Μ̄ΗΕ ΑῩΩ Π̄ΕΕΙ Π̄Ε Π̄Ν[Α]ϛ̄ † Ν̄Ω Ν̄ΝΝΑΒ̄ΕΙ ΤΗ... ;  
 Turner’s translation. As with all but one (page 19) of the twenty-one pages of main text of *Interp. Know.* (excluding the flyleaf of Codex XI which may have contained a superscript title for *Interp. Know.*), the opening lines of page 10 are missing, making it impossible to know for certain precisely where this section of “teaching” finished. On these lines, see Michel Desjardins, *Sin in Valentinianism* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1990), 101–105; Tite, “Exploration,” 283–85; Tite demonstrates the chiasmic structure of these lines; and Einar Thomassen, “Commentaire,” in *L’interprétation de la gnose (NH XI, 1)* (Québec: Presses de l’Université Laval, 2010), 127–29; also Thomassen, “The Interpretation of Knowledge,” 653; Thomassen argues that these teachings come from either the same or a similar sayings source to that used by Clement of Alexandria, as opposed to coming directly from the gospels themselves. If one accepts Thomassen’s hypothesis, it certainly supersedes that of Plisch, who saw a connection with a sayings collection used by 2 *Clement*. For this, see Uwe-Karsten Plisch, “Die Rezeption Bekannter und Unbekannter Herrenwörter in NHC XI, 1,” in *Der Gottesspruch in der Kopt. Literatur: Hans Martin Schenke zum 65. Geburtstag*, (ed.) W. Beltz (Halle, 1994), 85–87; Plisch, *Auslegung*, 106 n. 87.

<sup>21</sup> All following citations of *Interp. Know.* 10.18–38 are from this translation. The Coptic text provided follows the critical edition of Turner, except on one important occasion (line 22) where it follows the more cautious edition of Funk. The reasons for this are stated below. In all citations of the Coptic text I have retained the square brackets from Turner’s edition indicating lacunae in the manuscript. In the English translations in the main text, I have removed them for readability (except above), but retained them for the Coptic in the footnotes. Shorter quotes from ancient sources appear in the main text, but longer ones are confined to footnotes.

ΧΙ Τ<sup>21</sup>[CΒΩ] ΝΑ[Ε ΜΠΕΕΙ ΝΤΑΖ]ΟΥΝΟΝΟΥ <sup>22</sup>[ἄ] ΟΥ]ΖΗΥ [ἴ]Ν[ΟΥ ... ΠΕ]  
 ΤΦΥΧΗ ΑΥ<sup>23</sup>[Ω Ν]ΤΕΧΙ ΜΠΕ[QCXHM Π]ICXHM <sup>24</sup>[ΠΕ]ΤΦΟΟΠ ΖΑΤ[ΕΖ]Η  
 [ΜΠ]ΩΤ ΠΛΟΓΟΣ <sup>25</sup>[Α]ΥΩ ΠΧΙΣΕ ΠΕΕΙ [Α]ΤΡΕ[С]ΑΥΝΕ ΜΜΑQ  
<sup>26</sup>[Ε]ΜΠΑΤΕΡΠΑΛΑΝ ΕΦΟΟΠ ΝCΑΡΖ <sup>27</sup>ΝΤΕ ΚΑΤΑΔΙΚΗ ΖΟΜΟΙΩC ΔΕΙCΒΑΚ Α  
<sup>28</sup>ΠΕΖΟΥΟ ΧΕΚΑΣΕ ΖΙΤΝ ΠΑΘΒΕΙΟ ΕΕΙ <sup>29</sup>ΝΑΧΙΤΕ ΑΖΡΗ ΑΠΙΝΑΘ ΝΧΙΣΕ ΠΜΑ  
<sup>30</sup>ΝΤΑΖΑΖΑΕΙ ΕΒΑΛ ΝΖΗΤῒ ΑΖΟΥΧΙ <sup>31</sup>ΜΜΟ ΑΠΕΕΙΖΙΕΙΤ ΕΡΕΦΑΝΠΙCΤΕΥ<sup>32</sup>Ε  
 ΟΕ ΑΡΑΕΙ ΑΝΑΚ ΠΕ ΕΤΑΧΙΤΕ ΑΠCΑΝ <sup>33</sup>ΤΠΕ ΖΙΤΝ ΠΙCΧΗΜΑ ΕΤΕΝΕΥ ΑΡΑQ  
<sup>34</sup>ΑΝΑΚ ΠΕ ΕΤΑΒΙΤΕ ΖΙ ΝΑΝΑΖΒΕ· ΒΩΚ <sup>35</sup>ΑΖΟΥΝ ΖΙΤΝ ΠΕCΠΕΙΡ ΠΜΑ  
 ΝΤΑΖΑΕΙ <sup>36</sup>ΑΒΑΛ ΜΜΕΥ ΑΥΩ ΖΩΠ ΜΜΟ ΑΝΕΘΗ<sup>37</sup>ΡΙΟΝ ΠΙΦΟΡΗΜΑ  
 [Ε]ΤΕΡΦΟΡΕΙ ΜΜΑQ <sup>38</sup>†ΝΟΥ ΜΠΩ ΕΝ [Π]Ε [ΕΡΕ]ΦΑΝΒΩΚ

17<sup>b</sup> For he said <sup>18</sup>[to him,] “Now the world is not yours. <sup>19</sup>[You should not est]eem the [fo]rm which is in it as a profit, <sup>20</sup>[but] as a [loss] and [a punishment. Receive instead the <sup>21</sup>[teaching of the one who was] reproached, <sup>22</sup>[it is] a profit and [a ...] O soul! And <sup>23</sup>receive [his shape.] [This] shape <sup>24</sup>is that [which] exists before [the] Father, the Logos, <sup>25</sup>and the height; this let you know him <sup>26</sup>before you were led astray while in the flesh <sup>27</sup>of condemnation. Likewise I became <sup>28</sup>very small so that through my humility I <sup>29</sup>might take you up to the great height, the place <sup>30</sup>from which you had fallen. You were taken <sup>31</sup>to this pit. If you still believe <sup>32</sup>in me, it is I who shall take you <sup>33</sup>above through this shape that you see. <sup>34</sup>It is I who shall bear you upon my shoulders. Enter <sup>35</sup>in through the rib, the place from which you came <sup>36</sup>forth and hide yourself from the beasts. <sup>37</sup>This burden which you bear <sup>38</sup>is no longer yours. If you enter ...”

There are several important textual observations to be made here before we begin to analyse the theological background to the saying. Firstly, are we dealing with one or two shorter sayings (lines 18–20 and 27b–38), or one longer saying (10.18–38)? The critical editions are divided on this point. Firstly, in the English critical edition, Turner considers 10.18–20 to be one short saying ending at “punishment” (ΚΟΛΑCΙC), with no further direct speech on the page. In the German critical edition, Plisch considers there to be two short sayings from 10.18–20, and then again at 10.27b–38. Finally in the BCNH critical edition, Painchaud believes that 10.18–38 consists of a shorter “logion” in 10.18–20a ending at “punishment” (ΚΟΛΑCΙC), and a longer address of the Saviour to the soul in 10.20b–38.<sup>22</sup> However, in the translation, he opens the quotation marks at 10.18 and leave them open for the remainder of the page, suggesting perhaps that the logion forms the opening of the Saviour’s address, and not a separate piece of direct speech.

Turner’s edition makes poor sense of the first-person address in 10.27b–38, where the words are clearly put into the mouth of the crucified Saviour

<sup>22</sup> Painchaud, “Introduction,” 31.

in the form of a direct speech. Painchaud’s rendering is plausible, although it is confused by the fact that in the introduction to the critical edition, 10.18–20 is considered as an independent logion of “the living teacher” which apparently forms a “coherent ensemble” with those of 9.27–38 quoted above, and is then followed in 10.20–38 by an address of the Saviour to the soul, but without any clear indication of how the two are grammatically separate.<sup>23</sup> Only Plisch’s German text edition of *Interp. Know.* 10 is entirely consistent with what he argues in his commentary.

According to Plisch, the two sayings in 10.18–20 and 10.27b–38 are linked by the use of **ΖΟΜΙΩΣ** (Gk. **ὁμοίως**; “likewise”) in line 27. He argues that this adverb functions to tie the two sayings together either side of the *author’s* address to the soul which has been inserted to give the text a smoother flow.<sup>24</sup> Furthermore, he states that, “Die (unmittelbare) Verknüpfung von Zitaten oder Textstücken desselben Autors mit **ὁμοίως** ist durchaus geläufig.”<sup>25</sup> However, the two examples adduced by Plisch to substantiate this assertion with regard to *Interp. Know.* are extremely poor.<sup>26</sup>

<sup>23</sup> Ibid. 31, 36–37.

<sup>24</sup> Plisch, *Auslegung*, 111 n. 100.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid. “The (direct) linking of quotations or pieces of text from the same author with **ὁμοίως** is entirely familiar.”

<sup>26</sup> Ibid. The first example is the Berlin Evagrius-Ostrakon (P. Berol. 14 700) published in Hans-Martin Schenke, “Das Berliner Evagrius-Ostrakon,” *Zeitschrift für Ägyptische Sprache und Altertumskunde* 116 (1989): 90–107. Plisch notes two such uses of **ὁμοίως** in this ostrakon at Recto 10 and Verso 2. In fact, the word that appears in these two cases is **ΟΜΟΙ**, which Schenke translates as “gleichermaßen” (“equally”). In his commentary (100), Schenke states that **ΟΜΟΙ** is indeed an abbreviated form of **ὁμοίως**, and that it can be written both with and without the *horeh* (**Ϸ**) for aspiration. Besides the different renderings of **ὁμοίως** in the Evagrius Ostrakon (**ΟΜΟΙ**) and *Interp. Know.* 10.27 (**ΖΟΜΙΩΣ**), the fact remains that **ΟΜΟΙ** is not used in the ostrakon to connect two instances of *quotations* from the same author. Rather, it is used firstly (R 10), to juxtapose the *cursing* of one who worships graven images and the *blessing* of the patient man with a gentle spirit; and secondly (V 2), to link the fleeing of both God and the good Christian from evil. Plisch’s second example is from a homily of Severian of Gabala published in Leo Depuydt and Paul Chapman, eds., *Encomiastica from the Pierpont Morgan Library Volume 1* (Lovanii: Peeters, 1993), 228. Besides the likelihood that this homily is a later, perhaps 8th century, pseudepigraph, **ΖΟΜΙΩΣ** (as it appears in Severian’s homily) is again *not* used to link quotations or pieces of text from the same author, as Plisch implies. Instead, **ΖΟΜΙΩΣ** is used to draw attention to the fact that Severian’s homily was delivered “in the shrine of Michael Archangel south of the city on the day of his commemoration, the 12th day of Hātōr,” *just like* the homily of Athanasius of Alexandria which was also delivered “on the 12th day of Hātōr in the shrine of Michael,” and is recorded immediately before Severian’s homily in the manuscript. Hence, neither of the examples adduced by Plisch offer a parallel to the use of **ΖΟΜΙΩΣ** in *Interp. Know.* 10.27 in support of his argument.

While it is not impossible that **ϩΟΜΟΙΩC** functions in 10.27 as an interjection to signal direct discourse,<sup>27</sup> there are at least two good reasons for thinking that this is not the case and that we are instead dealing with one long saying from 10.18 to somewhere in the lost opening lines of page 11. Firstly, while **ϩΟΜΟΙΩC** can be used to link ideas and themes, or as a signal for direct speech, the idea that it can be used to *re*-introduce direct speech seems uncertain, and we would expect some particle such as *je* to indicate a following piece of direct speech.<sup>28</sup> Hence, there is no clear grammatical indication in 10.27 to suggest that the first person singular address that follows is part of a new piece of direct speech, which would suggest that it is a continuation of an already existing speech. Secondly, if the address in 10.18–20 really is picked up again in 10.27, as Plisch suggests, how do we account for the shift from a second-person masculine singular addressee in 10.18–20,<sup>29</sup> to a second-person feminine singular addressee in 10.27–38? If Plisch is correct in suggesting that these are two parts of a single saying that originally went together in a non-extant sayings source,<sup>30</sup> then there would have been an unqualified shift from masculine to feminine grammatical forms which, while invisible in the Greek *Vorlage*, comes to the surface in the Coptic translation. The best explanation only appears once we take 10.18–38 as a single piece of direct speech. By taking the definite article phrase in 10.22 (**ⲧⲫϩⲭⲏ**) as a vocative (“O soul”), as Plisch and Painchaud do, we can identify the moment at which the address shifts from a masculine singular to feminine singular addressee.<sup>31</sup> If this is the case, the saying of the Saviour begins by addressing a male individual, possibly a Valentinian

<sup>27</sup> See Bentley Layton, *A Coptic Grammar* 3rd ed. Rev. (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2011), CG 523; cf. CG 240 and 245; **ϩΟΜΟΙΩC** is not listed by Layton as a “Non-Inflected Interjection,” but would seem to fit the pattern.

<sup>28</sup> The particle **ⲭⲉ** is used consistently in *Interp. Know.* as a marker of direct discourse alongside a verb of speaking; 1.28 (**ⲓⲡⲡⲣⲓⲭⲟⲟⲩ ⲭⲉ**); 10.17–18 (**ⲡⲉⲭⲁⲩ ⲛ̅ⲒⲀⲢ [ⲛⲉⲩ ⲭ]ⲉ**); and 16.33 (**ⲓⲡⲡⲣⲓⲭⲟⲟⲩ ⲭⲉ**); and compare also the reported discourse in 9.28–38 (**ⲧⲉⲩⲥⲬⲱ ⲛ̅ⲒⲘⲉ ⲧⲉ ⲧⲉⲉⲓ ⲭⲉ**). Note that in the case of 10.17–18, we are relying on Turner’s reconstruction; Plisch and Funk both reconstruct this lacuna as **ⲡⲁⲭⲉⲩ ⲛ̅ⲒⲀⲢ [ⲭⲡⲓ]ⲉⲡⲓⲕⲟⲥⲙⲟⲥ** (“For he said, ‘Reject the world!’”). In this case, there is no particle **ⲭⲉ**, but only the verb of speaking. Both reconstructions are perfectly plausible.

<sup>29</sup> 10.18 **ⲡⲓⲕⲟⲥⲙⲟⲥ ⲡⲱⲕ ⲛ̅ⲒⲀⲢ ⲉⲛ ⲡⲉ ⲛ̅**; 10.19 **ⲛⲉⲕⲱⲡ ⲛ̅ⲧⲙⲟⲣⲫⲏ ⲉⲧ̅ⲛ̅Ⲓⲫⲏⲧ̅ⲩ̅**.

<sup>30</sup> Plisch, *Auslegung*, 111 n. 100.

<sup>31</sup> In the text of 10.17b–38 provided above, I have indeed adopted the more cautious reconstructions of Plisch and Funk. At 10.22, Turner instead has reconstructed **ⲟⲩⲓⲒⲏⲩⲩⲛ̅ⲓⲛ̅ⲓⲟⲩⲛⲁⲩⲣⲉ ⲛ̅ⲓⲧⲫϩⲭⲏ** “an advantage and a profit for the soul.” As opposed to assuming a direct address function for the definite article phrase, Turner instead explains the second-person feminine singular forms as an address to the church (**ⲧⲉⲤⲕⲁⲛⲥⲓⲁ**), since 9.17–18 reports that the “teacher of immortality” did so address it.



catechumen (10.18–20a), then invokes his (female) soul to receive the teaching of “the one who was reproached” (10.20b–27a), that is, the crucified Christ, and proceeds to deliver the teaching of that figure to the soul (10.27b–38).

Two further textual points need to be addressed concerning 10.18–38: the problematic reconstruction of 10.22b–23, and the translation of 10.24–27a. In the first place, the extant manuscript of 10.22b–23 reads **αΥ[·]ΤΕΧΙ ΜΠΕ[·]ΙCΧΗΜΑ**. Turner reconstructs **αΥ[Ω Ν]ΤΕΧΙ ΜΠΕ[QCXΗΜΑ Π]ΙCΧΗΜΑ**, and translates, “And receive his shape. It is the shape ...”; Plisch reconstructs **αΥ[Ω Ν]ΤΕΧΙ ΜΠΕ[CΜΑΤ ΜΠ]ΙCΧΗΜΑ**, and translates, “Und empfang die Gestalt dieser Erscheinung ...”;<sup>32</sup> and Funk reconstructs **αΥ[Ω Ν]ΤΕΧΙ ΜΠΕ[CΜΑΤ ΜΠΠ]ΙCΧΗΜΑ**, and translates, “Et comprends la forme et la figure.”<sup>33</sup> While all of these are grammatically plausible reconstructions, the lacuna appears to be of seven letters at the very least, making Plisch’s suggestion less likely. On the other hand, Plisch is the only editor to translate the demonstrative article of **ΠΙCΧΗΜΑ** as “*this* shape.” If we take this demonstrative as anaphoric, then it most likely refers back to a previous use of **CXΗΜΑ** in the passage, as would be possible in Turner’s reconstruction, but not in Plisch’s or Funk’s, since they reconstruct **CΜΑΤ** in the lacuna.<sup>34</sup> If we accept Turner’s reconstruction, but emend his translation to make the demonstrative article more vivid, then we have: “And receive his shape. This shape ...” In doing so, the contrast between receiving the divine **CXΗΜΑ** of the crucified Christ (10.23), and rejecting the material **ΜΟΡΦΗ** of the world (10.19), is more forcefully brought out. Furthermore, Turner’s reconstruction of the possessive article **ΠΕQ** (“his, its”) in **ΠΕ[QCXΗΜΑ]** seems highly likely in light of the parallel it discerns between “Receive instead the teaching of the one who was reproached” (**ΧΙ ΤCΒΩ ΝΔΕ ΜΠΕΕΙ ΝΤΑΖΟΥΝΘΝΟΥQ**) (10.20–21) and “Receive his shape” (**ΧΙ ΜΠΕQCXΗΜΑ**) (10.23), thereby creating a close connection between epistemology (the teaching) and ontology (the “shape”) in relation to salvation.<sup>35</sup> Moreover, “his shape” (**ΠΕQCXΗΜΑ**) makes good sense in light

<sup>32</sup> “And receive the form of this shape ...”

<sup>33</sup> “And consider the form and the figure ...”

<sup>34</sup> See the comments on the demonstrative **ΠΙCΧΗΜΑ** at 10.33 in Louis Painchaud, “L’utilisation des paraboles dans l’Interprétation de la gnose (NH XI, 1),” *Vigiliae Christianae* 57 (2003): 428.

<sup>35</sup> Note also Thomassen’s observation that if we read **ΜΠΕ[CΜΑΤ]**, the **ΠΕ** could in fact be understood as the second person feminine singular possessive article, instead of the definite article; see Thomassen, “Commentaire,” 130–31; Thomassen in fact adopts this reading in his new English translation of *Interp. Know.* in Thomassen, “The Interpretation of Knowledge,” 657; where he translates, “And receive *your* form and that shape ...”

of 10.32–33, where the crucified Saviour states that he shall take the soul above “through this shape that you see” (ΖΗΤῆΝ ΠΙCΧΗΜΑ ΕΤΕΝΕΥ ΑΡΑC).

Finally then, there is the issue of the translation of 10.24–27a; the shape which the Valentinian soul is exhorted to receive is qualified as “that [which] exists before [the] Father, the Logos, and the height; this let you know him before you were led astray while in the flesh of condemnation.”<sup>36</sup> Like Turner, I understand the CΧΗΜΑ to be that which exists before the Father, and the Logos, and the height. Plisch and Painchaud view things differently. Plisch translates, “... die existiert angesichts des Vaters! Der Logos und die Höhe ist es, was du kanntest bevor du irregeleitet wurdest, als du als Fleisch der Verdammnis existiertest”;<sup>37</sup> while Painchaud translates, “... qui sont devant le Père. C’est le statut et le rang élevé, que tu connaissais avant que tu ne t’égares et ne sois condamnée à devenir chair.”<sup>38</sup> Again, all are perfectly grammatically plausible. However, against Painchaud’s translation, λόγος can of course be used as a technical term in Valentinianism, as is the case in *Interp. Know.*, denoting one of the Aeons of the Pleroma, which would speak against the notion that it here means “status.”<sup>39</sup> Furthermore, although ΠΙCICE is not a widely attested Valentinian technical term for denoting the spiritual realm, at 10.29–30 “the great height” (ΠΙΝΑC N̄ΙCICE) is identified as “the place from which you had fallen” (ΠΜΑ N̄ΤΑΖΑΖΑCΙΕ ΑΒΑΛ N̄ΖΗΤῆC). Likewise, in 13.33–34, Christ is depicted as looking down “from in the height” (ΑΒΑΛ ΖῆΝ ΠΙCICE) to the members of the church upon the earth. All these examples give a specifically spatial sense to ΠΙCICE, which is lost in Painchaud’s translation, “high rank.” This saying clearly refers to “the height” as the original home of the soul, and that to which it shall return through the redemptive power of Christ.

However, there is still the issue of whether “this shape” is that which exists before the Father, the Logos, and the height (Turner), or only before the Father (Plisch and Painchaud). The problem with Turner’s and my own translation of this passage is that there is no conjunction between “the Father” and “the Logos” (ΠΩΤ ΠΛΟΓΟC ΑΥΩ ΠΙCICE), perhaps suggesting

<sup>36</sup> [ΠΕ]ΤΨΟΟΠ ΖΑΤ[ΕΖ]Η [ΜΠ]ΩΤ ΠΛΟΓΟC [Α]ΥΩ ΠΙCICE ΠΕΕΙ [Α]ΤΡΕ[C]ΑΥΝΕ ΜΜΑC [Ε]ΜΠΑΤΕΡΠΛΑΝΑ ΕΨΟΟΠ N̄CΑΡΖ N̄ΤΕ ΚΑΤΑΔΙΚΗ. Plisch and Funk both reconstruct ΕΝΕΡΕ[C]ΑΥΝΕ at 10.25, resulting in slight variations in translation (see below).

<sup>37</sup> “... that exists in the face of the Father! The Logos and the height is what you knew before you were led astray, while you existed as flesh of the damnation.”

<sup>38</sup> “... which are before the Father. It is the status and the high rank that you knew before you were estranged and were condemned to become flesh.”

<sup>39</sup> Besides 10.24, logos appears seven times in *Interp. Know.*, three times to denote the divine hypostasis; 3.28; 17.35; and possibly at 4.36; and four times to denote some kind of spiritual gift or learning; 16.32, 37, 38; and 21.29.

therefore, a new sentence starting with “the Logos” (ΠΛΟΓΟΣ). However, while Plisch’s translation is certainly acceptable,<sup>40</sup> it is also possible that “the Father” (ΠΩΤ) and “the Logos” (ΠΛΟΓΟΣ) exist in an asyndetic relationship,<sup>41</sup> in which linked entity terms can be listed without a conjunction, thereby expressing a particularly close relationship. Unlike the closely related figures of the Father and the Logos, “the Logos” and “the height” are connected by ΑΥΩ on the grounds that they are not as conceptually close, with one being a *figure* and the other being a *place*. If this is accepted, the soul is indeed exhorted to receive the pneumatic shape which exists in the divine presence of the Father, *and* the Logos, *and* the height.

This covers the major philological issues of *Interp. Know.* 10.18–38 and their divergent renderings in the three most important critical editions. From line 26 onwards, page 10 of the manuscript is fairly well preserved with only a few small lacunae, the restoration of which the critical editions all agree upon. Therefore, having established that we are dealing with one long saying of the Saviour, or “the living teacher,” the crucified Christ, I now turn to the soteriological scheme underlying our saying, and how it compares to those of related Valentinian texts. By seeing how well the soteriology of *Interp. Know.* maps onto the soteriologies of related Valentinian texts, one can more accurately exegete certain otherwise mysterious elements of our saying.

### The Soteriological Landscape of *Interpretation of Knowledge* 10.18–38 and Related Texts

*Interp. Know.* 10.18–38 begins with an exhortation to the Christian not to esteem the flesh, but rather to reject it as some kind of “loss” (ΑΘΗΥ) and “punishment” (ΚΟΛΑCIC). Instead, the Christian ought to receive the teaching of the crucified Saviour, since this really is a “profit” (ΖΗΥ) for the soul. As such, the soul must receive the “shape” (CΧΗΜΑ) of Christ, which is that which it possessed primordially, before being imprisoned in the flesh by the beastly archons. Christ’s redemptive earthly mission was designed to reverse this state of affairs. This reversal is made possible by Christ’s self-sacrifice on the Cross; the crowning moment of his “humility” (ΘΒΕΙΟ), via which the soul can return to its original divine position in “the great height” (ΠΙΝΑC ΝΧΙCΕ). By a show of faith, the soul can re-enter the divine realm through the “rib” (CΠΕΙΡ) of the crucified Christ, hide itself from its

<sup>40</sup> See Plisch, *Auslegung*, 110–11.

<sup>41</sup> Layton, CG 145, 231, and 237.

adversaries, and have the burden of the flesh alleviated. This entry into the body of the crucified Christ is thought to facilitate a heavenly ascent. This soteriology is unpacked further in *Interp. Know.* 11–14, which as was mentioned above, has been called a “complex Midrash” on the sayings of 9.28–10.38.<sup>42</sup>

To begin with, *Interp. Know.* 11 states that when “the female” ([**TE**]CZIME), that is Sophia, brought forth “her seed” (ΠΕCCEΠΕPMA), she did not have “any other garment” (ΚΕΛΛΑΥΕ ΝΖΒCΟΥ) for them except the soul. As such, “the beasts” (Ν[Θ]ΗP[ΙΟΝ]) then entrapped the soul in a “garment of the condemnation” (ΩΤΗΝ ΝΤΕ ΤΚΑΤ[Α]ΔΙΚΗ), that is, the flesh.<sup>43</sup> So, the spiritual seed is encased in a soul by Sophia, before the soul is then imprisoned in the fleshly body by the evil cosmic powers. According to *Interp. Know.* 12, “the Son” (Π[ΩΗ]ΡΕ) therefore “appeared in flesh” (ΟΥΩ[ΝΖ] ΑΒΑ[Χ] ΝCΑPΞ) so that the imprisoned souls might “become glorious” ([Ω]ΩΠΕ ΕΝΖΑ ΕΛΥ) by means of “the humiliated one” (ΠΡΕCΦΩC), and receive grace through “the one who was reproached” (Π[ΕΝΤ]ΑΖΟΥΝΟΝΟΥCΩ).

*Interp. Know.* 13 then identifies this process of the souls’ glorification through Christ the Son as being achieved by means of Christ’s crucifixion, for “When he cried out, he was separated from the Church like portions of darkness from the Mother, while his feet provided him traces, and these scorched the way of the ascent to the Father.”<sup>44</sup> In other words, upon Jesus’s death-cry, the souls’ path back to the Father was illuminated. But furthermore, we read: “For the Head drew itself up from the pit; it was *bent* (ΡΕΚΤ) over the Cross and it looked down to Tartaros so that those below

<sup>42</sup> Note that the opening lines of each of these pages are entirely missing, lines 1–11 on page 11; 1–9 on page 12; 1–8 on page 13; and 1–7 on page 14; and still more lines are preserved so poorly that nothing can be made of them.

<sup>43</sup> 11.27–28; cf. 10.26–27: “flesh of condemnation”; CΑPΞ ΝΤΕ ΚΑΤΑΔΙΚΗ; and 6.29: “bound us in nets of flesh”; ΜΟΥP ΜΗ[Α]Ν ΝΖΝΑΒΗ ΝCΑP[Ξ].

<sup>44</sup> Ν[ΤΑΡ]Ε[ΦΑ]ΩΘΗ[Χ] ΜΗ[ΕΝ] ΑΥΠΩPΧ ΗΠ[Η] ΑΒΑΛ ΖΝ ΤΕΚΚΗ[ΣΙ]Α ΝΘΕ ΖΝΤΑΙ[Ε] ΗΠΚΕΚΕΙ ΑΒΑΛ ΖΝ ΤΜΕΕΥ ΝΕCΟΥPPI[ΤΕ] ΔΕ ΑΥΤ ΝΕC ΝΖΝΙΧΝΟC ΑΥΩ [ΑΝΕΕΙ]ΩPΩ ΝΤΕΖΗ ΝΤ[ΟΙ]ΝΒΩΚ Α[ΖPΗ] ΦΑ ΠΩΤ.; cf. *Tripartite Tractate* 118.28–119.16; On the soteriology of this passage, see particularly Wincenty Myszor, “Kreuz, Leib Christi und Kirche (Excerpta ex Theodoto 42 und ‘Die Auslegung der Erkenntnis’, NHC XI, 1),” in *Coptica, Gnostica, Manichaica: Mélanges offerts à Wolf-Peter Funk*, eds. Louis Painchaud and Paul-Hubert Poirier (Québec: Les Presses De L’Université Laval, 2006), 610–13; also see the relevant remarks on the mystical dimensions of the concept of “the way” (ΤΕΖΗ; Gk. ἡὸδός) in April DeConick, *Voices of the Mystics: Early Christian Discourse in the Gospels of John and Thomas and Other Ancient Christian Literature* (London: T&T Clark, 2004), 69–73.

might look above” (13.25–29).<sup>45</sup> This image is clearly borrowed from the Johannine crucifixion narrative, where upon his expiration in 19:30, Jesus “*bowed his head and gave up his spirit*” (κλίνας τὴν κεφαλὴν παρέδωκεν τὸ πνεῦμα).<sup>46</sup> Here then, Christ is depicted gazing down into the world, here designated as “Tartaros,” from the Cross.<sup>47</sup> The nuance of this passage is simple; Christ’s divine element, “having been separated from the Church” (i.e. his Body), has ascended up to the Limit of the Pleroma and now peers down into the cosmos below. In doing so, he allows the members below to gaze upwards into the divine world of their origin. This is explained further in 13.30–36: “For in the same way as, for example, when someone looks into a well, the face of the one who looks down looks up, this is also the way when the Head looked from in the height to his members; the members rushed above, (to) the place where the Head was.”<sup>48</sup> In other words, Christ the Head staring down at his Body the Church on earth is like someone seeing themselves in a reflection, and just as when we see ourselves in a reflective surface, our image is drawn back to us, so too the Church is drawn up to where Christ is.

Christ’s redemptive self-sacrifice takes on a different dimension in *Interp. Know.* 14, where we read in 14.28–38,

When the great Son was sent after his younger brothers, he spread out the edict of the Father and announced it, opposing the All. And he took away the old bond of condemnation. And this is what the edict was: “Those who have been made slaves and have been condemned by Adam, have been delivered from death, received the forgiveness of sins, and have been redeemed by ...”<sup>49</sup>

<sup>45</sup> [N̄T]A2[Α]ΤΑΠΕ ΓΑΡ ΣΩΚ [H̄]ΜΑΣ ΑΖΗΗ ΑΒΑΛ Z̄M ΠΖΙΕΙΤ N̄ΤΑΥΡΕΚΤC Z̄ΙΧM ΠΕΣΤΑΥΡΟC ΑΥΩ A[C]ΩΩΠΤ ΑΠ[Ι]ΤN ΑΠΤΑΡΤΑΡΟC ΧΕΚA[CE] ΝΕΤΗΠCΑΝΠΙΤN ΕΥΑΩΠΤ ΑΤΠΕ.

<sup>46</sup> Also see Turner, “NHC XI,1,” 83; Turner suggests that this image may also allude to the recognition scene of John 19:26–27.

<sup>47</sup> The “Cross” (Σταυρός) here is certainly the Valentinian technical term indicating the Limit or Boundary (Όρος) which separates the Pleroma from the realms beneath it; see for example, Irenaeus, *Adversus Haereses* I.2.4; 3.1; 3.5; and *Exc. Theod.* 42.1; on this concept, see Thomassen, *Spiritual Seed*, 279–83.

<sup>48</sup> N̄ΘΕ N̄ΓΑΡ N̄ΟΥCΜΑΤ ΕΡΕΨΑΝΟΥΕΙ ΩΩΠΤ ΑΥ[Ω]ΩΤΕ ΨΑΡΕ· ΠΖΟ M̄ΠΕΝΤΑΖΩΩΠ[Τ] ΑΠΙΤN ΩΩΠΤ ΑΤΠΕ ΤΕΕΙ ΤΕ ΘΕ N̄[Τ]ΑΡΕΤΑΠΕ ΩΩΠΤ ΑΒΑΛ Z̄NΠ[ΧΙ]CΕ ΨΑ ΝΕCΜΕΛΟC ΑΖΑΝ M̄MΕΛΟC ΠΩΤ ΑΤΠΕ ΠΜΑ ΝΕΡΕΤΑΠΕ ΨΟΟΠ [H̄]ΜΕΥ N̄ΤΑC; Funk’s and Plish’s reconstruction of ΑΥ[Ω]ΩΤΕ ΨΑΡΕ at 13.31 has been preferred here to that of Turner, who reconstructs ΑΥ[ΕΕ]Ι ΤΟΤΕ ΨΑΡΕ.

<sup>49</sup> N̄ΤΑΡΟΥΤNNAΥ ΘΕ M̄ΠN[Α]C N̄ΩHPE N̄CΑ ΝΕCΣNHY N̄ΚΟ[Υ]ΕΙ ΑCΠΩΡΩ ΑΒΑΛ M̄ΠΔΙΑΤΑΓΜΑ [H̄]ΠΩΤ ΑCΩΩ M̄MΑC̄ ΕCΤ ΑΖN ΠT[H]P̄C ΑΥΩ ΑCΩI M̄ΠΧΕΙΡΟΓΡΑΦΟΝ ΝΕC ΠΑΤΚΑΤΑΔΙΚΗ ΠΕΕΙ ΝΔΕ Π|Ε ΠΔΙΑΤΑΓΜΑ ΕΝΕCΨΟΟΠ ΠΕ ΝΕ[N]ΤΑΖΟΥΕΕΙΤΟΥ ΝCΑΟΥΑΝ ΑΖΟΥΩ[Ω]ΠΕ ΝΚΑΤΑΔΙΚΟC Z̄N ΑΔΑΜ ΑΖΟΥN[Τ]ΟΥ ΑΒΑΛ M̄ΠΜΟΥ ΑΖΟΥΧI M̄ΠΚΩ[Ε] ΑΒΑΛ N̄ΝΟΥΝΑΒI ΑΥΩ ΑΖΟΥCΩΤΕ M̄MΑΥ Z̄IΤN.

Although the words of the Father’s edict are cut short by a lacuna at the top of page 15, the meaning is clear. Firstly, in being crucified, Christ inaugurated a new covenant, or “edict,” to replace the old Adamic one, which is here described as a “bond of condemnation.”<sup>50</sup> That which was inaugurated by Adam brought about slavery, death, and sin. Christ came to reverse this by means of his self-sacrifice. It is clear from the imagery in 10.34–36 that the evil Adamic covenant was not the result of his transgression of God’s will, but rather the separation of Eve from Adam’s side, which apparently brought death into the world.<sup>51</sup> Hence we see in our saying, Christ, in his role as the Second Adam, exhorting the soul to return whence it came (his rib), and thereby restore the primal androgyne, overcome death, and receive redemption, being “reborn in the flesh and blood of (the Saviour)” (12.37–38; **Ν̄CΕΧΠΑΝ Ν̄ΚΕCΑΠ Ζ̄Ν ΤCΑΡ[Ξ ΑΥΩ Ζ̄Μ] ΠCΝΑC Ν̄ ...**).<sup>52</sup>

Thanks to *Interp. Know.* 11–14, the overall soteriological scheme of *Interp. Know.* 10.18–38 is therefore much clearer; the spiritual seed, having been clothed in a soul by Sophia, and then in a fleshly body by the beasts/archons, need to put off this “garment of condemnation” once more. This release from bodily imprisonment is achieved through Christ’s descent into the world and his glorification of the seed by means of his “humiliated” body on the Cross. By being crucified, Christ opens the way of ascent to the

<sup>50</sup> Although the crucifixion is not mentioned explicitly in this passage, it is clearly meant to be evoked not only by the immediate context, but also by the verb **ΠΩΡΩ ΑΒΑΛ** “stretch out,” alluding to the position of Christ on the Cross. This is corroborated to some degree by *Gospel of Truth* 20.23–27, “For this reason Jesus appeared; he put on that book; he was nailed to a tree; *he published the edict of the Father on the cross* (**ΑCΤΩCΕ Μ̄ΠΔΙΑΤΑΓΜΑ ΑΒΑΛ Ν̄ΤΕ ΠΩΤ Ζ̄ΠΕΘ̄ΡΟC**).” Here it is also on the Cross that the edict of the Father is proclaimed; see also *Gos. Phil.* 63.21–24, “The eucharist is Jesus. For he is called in Syriac ‘Pharisatha,’ which is ‘the one who is spread out,’ for Jesus came to crucify the world (**ΤΕΥΧΑΡΙCΤΕΙΑ ΠΕ ΙC ΕΥΜΟΥΤΕ ΓΑΡ ΕΡΟC Μ̄ΜΝΤCΥΡΟC ΧΕΦΑΡΙCΑΘΑ ΕΤΕΠΑΙ ΠΕ ΠΕΤΠΩΡΩ ΕΒΟΛ ΛΙC ΓΑΡ ΕΙ ΕCΤΑΥΡΟΥ Μ̄ΚΟCΜΟC**);” on this “pun,” see Hugo Lundhaug, *Images of Rebirth: Cognitive Poetics and Transformational Soteriology in the Gospel of Philip and the Exegesis on the Soul* (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 222.

<sup>51</sup> See also *Gos. Phil.* 68.22–26; 70.9–22; *Gospel of Thomas* §22; *Exegesis on the Soul* 133.6–15; on the passages from *Gos. Phil.* and the *Exegesis on the Soul*, see Lundhaug, *Images of Rebirth*, 101–103; 214–17.

<sup>52</sup> On the primal androgyne, see particularly, Wayne Meeks, “The Image of the Androgyne: Some Uses of a Symbol in Earliest Christianity,” *History of Religions* 13, no. 3 (1974): 165–208; Meeks especially recognises the prevalence of this image in “Gnostic” and Pauline ritual and thought. On the Adam-Christ typology and its importance for the restoration of the primal androgyne in Valentinianism, see Benjamin Dunning, *Specters of Paul: Sexual Difference in Early Christian Thought* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011), 31–50.

Father, and having himself ascended, he proceeds to draw up the spiritual souls towards him by means of his Body, the Church. In doing so, Christ reverses the effects of the division of the primal androgyne, principally, slavery to the fleshly body, death, and sin. Such an “Adam Christology” is a feature of Paul’s thought, most explicitly in Romans 5:12–21 and 1 Corinthians 15:21–22 and 45–49, such that salvation is conceived of as “a reversal of the cursedness of Adam,” and therefore “a recovery of the paradisiacal state.”<sup>53</sup>

In light of this soteriological scheme, we can make much better sense of the crucified Christ’s mysterious exhortation to the soul to “Enter in through the rib (σπειρ; Gk. πλευρά), the place from which you came forth and hide yourself from the beasts” (ΒΩΚ ΑΖΟΥΝ ΖΙΤῆ ΠΕΣΠΕΙΡ ΠΜΑ ΝΤΑΖΑΕΙ ΑΒΑΛ ΠΜΕΥ ΑΓΩ ΖΩΠ ΠΜΟ ΑΝΕΘΗΡΙΟΝ). In this command, two biblical scenes are clearly resonant. The first of these is the crucifixion narrative from the Gospel of John, specifically 19:34, where we read that although Christ’s legs were not broken, “Instead, one of the soldiers pierced his side (πλευρά) with a spear, and at once blood and water came out.”<sup>54</sup> Secondly, the imagery also clearly evokes the creation of Eve from Adam’s rib in LXX Genesis 2:21–22: “And God cast a trance upon Adam, and he slept, and he took one of his ribs (πλευρά) and filled up the flesh in its place. And the rib (πλευρά) that he had taken from Adam the Lord God fashioned into a woman and brought her to Adam.”<sup>55</sup> This double allusion is made possible in *Interp. Know.* by virtue of the fact that it is by means of Christ’s self-sacrifice on the Cross that the deficient Adamic covenant can be replaced with a new divine edict, for it is through the spear-wound in Christ’s side that the primal androgyne is restored when the soul enters into it. We find a strikingly similar soteriological scheme in the *Gospel of Philip*.

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<sup>53</sup> Grant Macaskill, “Paradise in the New Testament,” in *Paradise in Antiquity: Jewish and Christian Views*, eds. M. Bockmuehl and G. Stroumsa (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 64.

<sup>54</sup> ἀλλ’ εἰς τῶν στρατιωτῶν λόγῃ αὐτοῦ τὴν πλευρὰν ἐνυξεν, καὶ ἐξῆλθεν εὐθὺς αἷμα καὶ ὕδωρ.

<sup>55</sup> καὶ ἐπέβαλεν ὁ Θεὸς ἕκστασιν ἐπὶ τὸν Ἀδάμ, καὶ ὑπνωσε· καὶ ἔλαβε μίαν τῶν πλευρῶν αὐτοῦ καὶ ἀνεπλήρωσε σάρκα ἀντ’ αὐτῆς. καὶ ᾠκοδόμησεν ὁ Θεὸς τὴν πλευρὰν, ἣν ἔλαβεν ἀπὸ τοῦ Ἀδάμ, εἰς γυναῖκα καὶ ἤγαγεν αὐτὴν πρὸς τὸν Ἀδάμ.; The LXX edition used here is Albert Pietersma and Benjamin G. Wright, *A New English Translation of the Septuagint* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).

*The Gospel of Philip*<sup>56</sup>

According to *Gos. Phil.* 68.22–26, “When Eve was still in Adam death did not exist. When she was separated from him death came into being. If he enters again and attains his former self, death will be no more.”<sup>57</sup> Similarly in 70.9–12, “If the woman had not separated from the man, she should not die with the man. His separation became the beginning of death.”<sup>58</sup> However, “Because of this Christ came to repair the separation which was from the beginning and again unite the two, and to give life to those who died as a result of the separation and unite them.”<sup>59</sup> By separating the primal androgyne into male and female, Adam and Eve, death came into the world. The redemptive work of Christ is to restore this androgynous state and thereby give eternal life.

This union between male and female according to *Gos. Phil.* takes place in the “bridal chamber”: “But the woman is united to her husband in the bridal chamber. Indeed those who have united in the bridal chamber will no longer be separated. Thus Eve separated from Adam because it was not in the bridal chamber that she united with him.”<sup>60</sup> But *Gos. Phil.* 69.14–70.9 goes further, equating the Valentinian sacraments, including the bridal chamber, with the three rooms of the Jerusalem Temple:

Baptism is the holy building. Redemption is the holy of the holy. The holy of holies is the bridal chamber ... Because of this its veil was rent from top to bottom. For it was fitting for some from below to go upward. The powers do not see those who are clothed in perfect light, and consequently are not able to detain them. One will clothe himself in this light sacramentally in the union.<sup>61</sup>

<sup>56</sup> All references to *Gos. Phil.* are to Bentley Layton’s critical edition and Wesley Isenberg’s translation in *Nag Hammadi Codex II, 2–7. Together with XIII, 2\**, *Brit. Lib. Or. 4926(1)*, and *P. Oxy. 1*, 654, 655, ed. Bentley Layton, (NHS 20; Leiden: Brill, 1989), 142–215.

<sup>57</sup>  $\bar{\eta}\zeta\omicron\omicron\gamma \ \bar{\nu}\epsilon\rho\epsilon\epsilon\gamma\zeta\alpha \ [\zeta]\bar{\eta}\alpha[\Delta]\alpha\bar{\mu} \ \bar{\nu}\epsilon\bar{\mu}\bar{\eta}\bar{\mu}\omicron\gamma \ \omega\omicron\omicron\pi \ \bar{\eta}\tau\alpha\rho\epsilon\sigma\pi\omega\rho\chi \ [\epsilon\rho]\omicron\gamma \ \alpha\pi\mu\omicron\gamma \ \omega\omega\pi\epsilon \ \pi\alpha\lambda\iota\bar{\nu} \ \epsilon\gamma\omega\alpha\omega\omega[\kappa \ \epsilon\zeta]\omicron\gamma\bar{\nu} \ \bar{\eta}\gamma\chi\iota\tau\epsilon \ \epsilon\rho\omicron\gamma \ \bar{\mu}\bar{\eta}\bar{\mu}\omicron\gamma \ \bar{\nu}\alpha\omega\omega\pi\epsilon.$

<sup>58</sup>  $\bar{\nu}\epsilon\bar{\mu}\pi\epsilon\tau\zeta\iota\mu\epsilon \ \pi\omega\rho\chi \ \epsilon\phi\omicron\omicron\gamma\tau \ \bar{\nu}\epsilon\sigma\bar{\nu}\alpha\mu\omicron\gamma \ \alpha\bar{\nu} \ \pi\epsilon \ \bar{\mu}\bar{\eta}\bar{\phi}\omicron\omicron\gamma\tau \ \pi\epsilon\gamma\pi\omega\rho\chi \ \bar{\eta}\tau\alpha\gamma\omega\omega\pi\epsilon \ \bar{\eta}\alpha\rho\chi\bar{\eta} \ \bar{\eta}\pi\mu\omicron\gamma.$

<sup>59</sup> 70.12–17;  $\delta\iota\alpha\tau\omicron\gamma\tau\omicron \ \alpha\pi\epsilon\chi\bar{\rho}\varsigma \ \epsilon\iota \ \chi\epsilon\kappa\alpha\varsigma \ \pi\pi\omega\rho\chi \ \bar{\eta}\tau\alpha\zeta\omega\omega\pi\epsilon \ \chi\iota\bar{\nu}\omega\rho\rho\pi \ \epsilon\gamma\bar{\nu}\alpha\varsigma\epsilon\zeta\omega\gamma \ \epsilon\rho\alpha\tau\gamma \ \pi\alpha\lambda\iota\bar{\nu} \ \bar{\eta}\gamma\zeta\omicron\tau\rho\omicron\gamma \ \bar{\eta}\pi\varsigma\bar{\nu}\alpha\gamma \ \lambda\gamma\omega \ \bar{\nu}\epsilon\bar{\nu}\tau\alpha\zeta\mu\omicron\gamma \ \zeta\bar{\eta}\pi\pi\omega\rho\chi \ \epsilon\gamma\bar{\nu}\alpha\tau \ \bar{\nu}\alpha\gamma \ \bar{\eta}\bar{\nu}\omicron\gamma\omega\bar{\nu}\zeta \ \bar{\eta}\gamma\zeta\omicron\tau\rho\omicron\gamma;$  see Plisch, *Auslegung*, 113; Plisch rightly connects *Gos. Phil.* 70.9–17 to *Interp. Know.* 10.34–36; on this soteriology in *Gos. Phil.*, where Christ is the Second Adam who reunites the primal androgyne, see Lundhaug, *Images of Rebirth*, 214–17.

<sup>60</sup> 70.17–22;  $\omega\rho\epsilon\tau\zeta\iota\mu\epsilon \ \delta\epsilon \ \zeta\omega\tau\bar{\rho} \ \alpha\pi\epsilon\varsigma\zeta\alpha\epsilon\iota \ \zeta\rho\alpha\iota \ \zeta\bar{\eta}\pi\pi\alpha\sigma\tau\omicron\varsigma \ \bar{\nu}\epsilon\bar{\nu}\tau\alpha\zeta\zeta\omega\tau\bar{\rho} \ \delta\epsilon \ \zeta\bar{\eta}\pi\pi\alpha\sigma\tau\omicron\varsigma \ \omicron\gamma\kappa\epsilon\tau\iota \ \varsigma\epsilon\bar{\nu}\alpha\pi\omega\rho\chi \ \delta\iota\alpha\tau\omicron\gamma\tau\omicron \ \alpha\epsilon\gamma\zeta\alpha \ \pi\omega\rho\chi \ \alpha\lambda\delta\alpha\bar{\mu} \ \chi\epsilon\bar{\eta}\tau\alpha\varsigma\zeta\omega\tau\bar{\rho} \ \epsilon\rho\omicron\gamma \ \alpha\bar{\nu} \ \zeta\bar{\eta}\pi\pi\alpha\varsigma[\tau\omicron]\varsigma.$

<sup>61</sup> 69.22–25; 70.1–9;  $\pi\epsilon\alpha\pi\tau\iota\varsigma\mu\alpha \ \pi\epsilon \ \pi\bar{\eta}\epsilon\iota \ \epsilon\tau\omicron\gamma\alpha\alpha\bar{\nu} \ [\pi]\varsigma\omega[\tau]\epsilon \ \pi\epsilon\tau\omicron\gamma\alpha\alpha\bar{\nu} \ \bar{\eta}\pi\epsilon\tau\omicron\gamma\alpha\alpha\bar{\nu} \ \pi\epsilon\tau[\omicron\gamma\alpha]\alpha\bar{\nu} \ \bar{\eta}\bar{\nu}\epsilon\tau\omicron\gamma\alpha\alpha\bar{\nu} \ \pi\epsilon \ \pi\bar{\nu}\bar{\nu}\mu\bar{\phi}\omega\bar{\nu} \ \dots \ \epsilon\tau[\bar{\nu}]\epsilon \ [\pi]\lambda\epsilon\iota \ \alpha\pi\epsilon\gamma\kappa\alpha\tau\alpha\pi\epsilon\tau\alpha\varsigma\mu\alpha \ \pi\omega[\zeta] \ \chi\iota\bar{\mu} \ \pi\iota\varsigma\alpha \ \bar{\eta}\tau\tau\epsilon \ \omega\alpha\pi\iota\varsigma\alpha \ \bar{\mu}\bar{\eta}\pi\tau\bar{\eta} \ \bar{\nu}\epsilon\omega\omega\epsilon \ \gamma\alpha\rho \ \epsilon\zeta\omicron\epsilon\iota\bar{\nu}\epsilon \ \chi\iota\bar{\mu} \ \pi\iota\varsigma\alpha \ \bar{\eta}\pi\tau\bar{\eta} \ \bar{\nu}\varsigma\epsilon\omega\bar{\kappa} \ \epsilon\pi\iota\varsigma\alpha \ \bar{\eta}\tau\tau\epsilon \ \bar{\nu}\epsilon\bar{\nu}\tau\alpha\zeta\bar{\iota} \ \zeta\iota\omega\gamma \ \bar{\eta}\pi\tau\epsilon\lambda\epsilon\iota\omicron\bar{\nu} \ \bar{\nu}\omicron\gamma\omicron\epsilon\iota\bar{\nu} \ \bar{\mu}\alpha\rho\omicron\gamma\bar{\nu}\alpha\gamma$



Here, the bridal chamber is actually identified as the holy of holies of the temple, “the place where only the High Priest enters” (69.21–22; ΠΜΑ ΕΩΑΡΕΠΑΡΧΙΕΡΕΥ[Σ] ΒΩΚ ΕΖΟΥΝ ΕΜΑΥ ΟΥΑ[Α]Ϟ). According to *Gos. Phil.*, access to the bridal chamber *qua* holy of holies has been granted to the Valentinian by virtue of Christ’s self-sacrifice on the Cross. For in Matthew 27:46 and Mark 15:34, it was when Jesus screamed the words, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” and let out a final death-cry that the temple veil “was torn in two, from top to bottom” (Matthew 27:51; Mark 15:38). Similarly, *Gos. Phil.* 68.2–627 quotes Jesus’s death-cry and states that the veil of the holy of holies was “rent from top to bottom,” thereby facilitating a heavenly ascent for those who are below.<sup>62</sup> For when “the holies of the holies were revealed” (ΝΕΤΟΥΑΑΒ ΝΝΕΤΟΥΑΑΒ ΑΥΩΑΠ ΕΒΟΛ), the formerly enslaved spiritual seed “will be free and the captives ransomed” (ΝΑΡΕΛΕΥΘΕ[ΡΟΣ ΑΥΩ] ΝΣΕΩΤΕ ΝΑΙΧΜΑΛΩΤΟΣ).<sup>63</sup>

Even from this very brief snapshot of the complex soteriology of *Gos. Phil.*,<sup>64</sup> to which we will have cause to return, we can see that it lays out a strikingly similar scheme to that which we have outlined in *Interp. Know.* In both texts, death is understood to be the result of the separation of Eve from Adam, and the redemptive mission of Christ is to heal this division by facilitating a reunion of male and female. Furthermore, in both *Interp. Know.* and *Gos. Phil.* it is Christ’s self-sacrifice on the Cross that actually brings

ΕΡΟΥ ΝΒΙ ΝΑΥΝΑΜΙΣ ΑΥΩ ΜΑΨΘΕΜΑΖΤΕ ΗΜΟΥ ΟΥΑ ΔΕ ΝΑ† ΖΙΩΩϞ ΗΠΙΟΥΘΕΙΝ ΖΗ ΠΗΥΣΤΗΡΙΟΝ ΖΗ ΠΖΩΤΡ; There is a great deal of scholarly literature on ritual in *Gos. Phil.*, but for the role of the Temple specifically, see April DeConick, “The True Mysteries: Sacramentalism in the ‘Gospel of Philip,’” *Vigiliae Christianae* 55, no. 3 (2001): 225–61; DeConick, “Heavenly Temple Traditions and Valentinian Worship: A Case for First-Century Christology in the Second Century,” in *The Jewish Roots of Christological Monotheism: Papers from the St. Andrews Conference on the Historical Origins of the Worship of Jesus*, eds. Carey C. Newman, James R. Davila, and Gladys S. Lewis (Leiden: Brill, 1999), 308–41; for a general overview of ritual in Valentinianism, see Thomassen, *Spiritual Seed*, 333–414; see also his important critical study of the passage in *Gos. Phil.* which is principally responsible for the opinion of many scholars that the Valentinians practiced a fivefold sacramental system, Einar Thomassen, “*Gos. Philip* 67.27–30: not ‘in a mystery,’” in *Coptica, Gnostica, Manichaica: Mélanges offerts à Wolf-Peter Funk*, eds. Louis Painchaud and Paul-Hubert Poirier (Québec: Les Presses de l’Université Laval, 2006), 925–40; see also the classic essay, John D. Turner, “Ritual in Gnosticism,” in *Gnosticism and Later Platonism: Themes, Figures, and Texts* eds. John D. Turner and Ruth Majercik (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2000), 83–139.

<sup>62</sup> *Gos. Phil.* 70.1–4; 85.5–13; on the theme of the crucifixion and the tearing of Christ’s flesh-veil, see Lundhaug, *Images of Rebirth*, 220–28; 293.

<sup>63</sup> *Gos. Phil.* 85.19–29.

<sup>64</sup> For a much fuller account, see Lundhaug, *Images of Rebirth*, 143–399; also, Thomassen, *Spiritual Seed*, 90–102.

about this reunion. At this stage, the two schemes appear to diverge slightly, for although both state that Christ's crucifixion makes the reunion possible, in *Gos. Phil.* this is achieved by the tearing of the temple veil so that the Valentinians can enter the bridal chamber, or holy of holies, and restore the primal androgyne. On the other hand, in *Interp. Know.* the union is achieved by means of the soul-Eve's entry into Christ-Adam's spear-wound, thereby restoring the primal androgyne.

*The Excerpts of Theodotus*<sup>65</sup>

In *Exc. Theod.* 43.2–65, Clement of Alexandria preserves a detailed Valentinian soteriological scheme which shares several key themes with those outlined in *Interp. Know.* and *Gos. Phil.*<sup>66</sup> To begin with, in an allusion to the creation of Eve from Adam's rib in Genesis 2:21–23, *Exc. Theod.* 51.2 states that when Adam says of Eve, "This is now bone of my bones" (τοῦτο νῦν ὀστοῦν ἐκ τῶν ὀστέων μου), "he alluded to the divine soul which has been hidden in the flesh" (τὴν θεϊὰν ψυχὴν αἰνίσσεται τὴν ἐγκεκρυμμένην τῇ σαρκί). However, this is no ordinary soul, but rather one that is "full of spiritual marrow" (53.5; μυελοῦ γέμουσα πνευματικοῦ). Here then, Eve is portrayed as the spirit-imbued soul which was extracted from Adam's rib, and placed into a fleshly body.<sup>67</sup> Next, in 58–59, the Aeon Jesus descends to earth. He began by putting on "a seed from the Mother" (Σπέρμα ... παρὰ τῆς τεκούσης), then he put on "the psychic Christ" (ὁ ψυχικός Χριστός), who was an invisible "image of the Saviour" (εἰκόνα τοῦ Σωτῆρος), and finally "a sensible body" (αἰσθητοῦ σώματος) made from "the invisible psychic substance" (τῆς ἀφανοῦς ψυχικῆς οὐσίας). This psychic Christ then descended into "the kingdom of death" (τὴν τοῦ θανάτου βασιλείαν), that is, the cosmos, and "saved and bore aloft" (ἀνέσωσεν καὶ ἀνήνεγκεν) that which was "consubstantial" (ὁμοιοῦσα) to his psychic body. *Exc. Theod.* 61 states explicitly that this salvation and ascent was achieved via the crucifixion, for "through the outpourings from his side" (διὰ δὲ τῶν ἐκρυσθέντων ἐκ τῆς πλευρᾶς; cf. John 19:34) we know that Christ has

<sup>65</sup> All translations from *Exc. Theod.* are my own. The text edition is that in Robert Casey, ed., *The Excerpta ex Theodoto of Clement of Alexandria* (London: Christophers, 1934).

<sup>66</sup> For an analysis of the soteriology of *Exc. Theod.* 43.2–65, see Thomassen, *Spiritual Seed*, 62–72; Thomassen (29) also points out that *Exc. Theod.* 43.2–65 seems to be a continuous excerpt from a single source which is very similar to that used by Irenaeus in *Adversus Haereses* I.4.5–7.1.

<sup>67</sup> The same Eve-Soul allegory appears in *Gos. Phil.*, see Lundhaug, *Images of Rebirth*, 214–17.

become free from passion, and as such “the psychic elements are borne aloft and saved” (τὰ ψυχικά ... ἀνίσταται καὶ ἀνασῶζεται), since they are that which is consubstantial to him. On the other hand, the spiritual elements which have received their souls as “wedding garments” (ἐνδύματα γάμων), receive a higher type of salvation, since they will put off their souls at the eschaton. But in the meantime, they too are borne aloft within the psychic substance.

Much like in the soteriological scheme of *Interp. Know.*, *Exc. Theod.* 43.2–65 describes the threefold human (spiritual seed, soul, and flesh) being saved through the self-sacrifice of the crucified Christ, by whom they are saved and borne aloft by virtue of sharing in his spirit-imbued psychic substance, while the flesh is “dissolved in the fire.”<sup>68</sup> *Exc. Theod.* 62 takes the analogy between the creation of Eve from Adam’s rib and the body of the crucified Christ even further. It states that the psychic Christ is now enthroned at the right hand of the demiurge “so that they may see the one whom they have pierced” (62.1–2; ἵνα ἴδωσιν εἰς ὃν ἐξεκέντησαν; cf. John 19:34, 37). However, what they pierced was only “the appearance” (τὸ φαινόμενον), that is, his psychic body, while the psychic Christ himself remained unharmed, since “a bone of him shall not be broken” (62.2; ὅστοῦν γὰρ αὐτοῦ οὐ συντριβήσεται; cf. John 19:36). In other words, Christ’s “bones” are of psychic substance, “just as in the case of Adam, the prophecy allegorized the soul as a bone” (62.2; καθάπερ ἐπὶ τοῦ Ἀδάμ τὴν ψυχὴν ὅστοῦν ἠλληγόρησεν ἡ προφητεία). In this case, *Exc. Theod.* states that the psychic Christ, whose appearance suffered the spear-wound, is consubstantial with Eve as she was separated from Adam. Taking this to its logical conclusion, for *Exc. Theod.*, the participation of the spirit-imbued souls in the psychic body of Christ is typologically identical to the return of Eve to Adam’s rib. While it is going too far to suggest that the image in *Interp. Know.* 10.34–36 is directly dependent on this claim of *Exc. Theod.*, or vice versa, the same idea is clearly being expressed. The soul, being a type of Eve, is drawn to the consubstantial crucified Christ, the Second Adam, and borne aloft by him.<sup>69</sup>

Finally, in *Exc. Theod.* 63–65, the female spiritual seeds become the brides of the male angelic bridegrooms, and together pass into “the bridal chamber” (ὁ νυμφών), having put off their souls, which they received as garments, and enter the Pleroma. Again the union of male and female is the

<sup>68</sup> *Interp. Know.* 14.25–26 (βαλλ<α> ἄνθρωπον πῦρ); *Exc. Theod.* 52.2, “at its dissolution ... in its passage through fire” (ἐν τῇ διαλύσει ... ἐν τῇ διὰ πυρὸς διεξόδῳ).

<sup>69</sup> For the Adam-Christ typology in *Exc. Theod.*, see Dunning, *Specters of Paul*, 43–49.

soteriological key, thereby repairing what had been divided in Adam and Eve.<sup>70</sup>

### *The Soteriological Scheme*

Despite each having their own distinct features, the three Valentinian works surveyed here present a fairly consistent soteriological scheme. Each one emphasises the imprisonment of the spiritual seed, first being encased in a soul, and then thrust into a material body. All three emphasise the problems caused by the separation of the primal androgyne into Adam and Eve, with *Interp. Know.* and *Gos. Phil.* particularly stressing that “death” was the result of this division. All three depict Christ’s redemptive mission on earth as being centred on the restoration of this male-female unity, with the crucifixion being the decisive redemptive event. In *Gos. Phil.* the temple veil was rent at the moment of Christ’s death, thereby opening the way to the bridal chamber *qua* holy of holies where the male and female could reunite; in *Exc. Theod.* we saw that by his spear-wound the psychic Christ was purged of passion and drew the spirit-imbued souls towards him, carrying them upwards; while in *Interp. Know.* Christ’s spear-wound is understood as the gap left by Eve’s separation, which the soul can enter, re-fill, and similarly be borne aloft.

As was pointed out earlier, *Gos. Phil.* appears to be distinctive in that it expresses this soteriological scheme using imagery from temple mysticism, so that entering the bridal chamber is akin to entering the holy of holies, since the divine presence resides within. On the other hand, *Exc. Theod.* apparently employs the same sort of temple mysticism elsewhere. For example, *Exc. Theod.* 38 states that the Aeon Jesus was called out from “the holy of the holies” (τὰ ἅγια τῶν ἁγίων) to sit on “the throne of the Place” (τοῦ θρόνου τοῦ Τόπου),<sup>71</sup> so that he might “provide the seed with a passage into the Pleroma” (τῷ σπέρματι δίοδον εἰς πλήρωμα παράσχη). In other words, Jesus descends from the Pleroma, here understood as the holy of holies, but also as the bridal chamber in *Exc. Theod.* 64, and is enthroned in an intermediate position to usher the spiritual seed into the Pleroma.

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<sup>70</sup> See *Exc. Theod.* 21.

<sup>71</sup> “Place” (ὁ Τόπος) here is clearly the Valentinian technical term referring to the demiurge and/or his realm beneath the Pleroma; see also *Exc. Theod.* 34; 37; 38–39; 59.2; *Tripartite Tractate* 100.9; and Hippolytus, *Refutatio omnium haeresium* VI.32.7–9; This recalls *Exc. Theod.* 62.1, cited above, where “the psychic Christ sits on the right hand of the Demiurge” (κάθεται ... ὁ ψυχικός Χριστός ἐν δεξιᾷ τοῦ Δημιουργοῦ).

Hence, according to Theodotus in *Exc. Theod.* 26–27,<sup>72</sup> Jesus is also called “the door” (ἡ θύρα; cf. *John* 10:7)<sup>73</sup> because it is through him that the spiritual seed enter the Pleroma, having come up to “the Limit” (ὁ ὄρος), and having entered the Pleroma through “the second veil” (τὸ δεύτερον καταπέτασμα), and become “high-priestly” (ἀρχιερατικὴ). In other words, both *Gos. Phil.* and *Exc. Theod.* understand the Pleroma to be the true heavenly holy of holies, to which Jesus Christ grants access to the spiritual seed.

Given the overlapping soteriological landscapes of our three texts outlined above, one might suggest that we could expect *Interp. Know.* to have a similar temple mysticism underlying it, since it shares so much with other Valentinian texts which articulate such mystical ideas. The remainder of this article will assess this possibility by analysing the address of the crucified Christ to the soul in *Interp. Know.* 10.27–38. The words of these lines shall be studied in light of the early Christian tradition of associating the flesh of Christ with the veil of the Jerusalem temple’s holy of holies.

## The Flesh of Christ and the Temple Veil

In 10.34b–37a, Christ exhorts the soul: “Enter in through the rib, the place from which you came forth and hide yourself from the beasts.” It has been noted on several occasions above that this part of our saying of the Saviour alludes to both *John* 19:34 and *Genesis* 2:21–22. Plisch notes that here, the wound in the side of the crucified Christ is being depicted as the entrance to Paradise, the place where Adam and Eve coexisted in their primal androgynous state.<sup>74</sup> However, one might also suggest that Christ’s spear-

<sup>72</sup> 26.1; ὡς φησιν ὁ Θεόδοτος (“as Theodotus says ...”); this is one of five occasions that Clement explicitly quotes Theodotus; also in 22.7; 30.1; 32.2; 35.1; for more detail on how Clement cites Valentinian views, see Thomassen, *Spiritual Seed*, 29.

<sup>73</sup> Cf. *Shepherd of Hermas Similitudes* IX.12.1–8; here the Son of God is “the gate” (ἡ πύλη) through whom those who have received the divine Name shall pass into the kingdom of God.

<sup>74</sup> In arguing for the familiarity of the idea that Christ’s side-wound forms such a portal, Plisch cites the fourteenth-century Sahidic poem of “Triadon” §487: “<sup>1</sup>Let us psalm him with instruments and strings, <sup>2</sup>for it is he who had his side pierced with a spear, for it is <sup>3</sup>the tool which is the hand of the cherub in the place of a knife, <sup>4</sup>opened to us the way to the Tree of True Life”; **ΜΑΡΕΝΦΑΛΛΕΙ ΕΡΟΦ ΖΝ ΖΕΝΟΡΓΑΝΟΝ ΜΝ ΖΝΧΟΡΤΕ ΧΕ ΝΤΟΦ ΠΕΝΤΑΥΤΕΞ ΠΕΦΣΠΡ ΖΝ ΟΥΛΟΓΧΗ ΧΕ ΝΤΟΦ ΓΑΡ ΤΕ ΤΕΣΚΕΥΗ ΕΤΖΝ ΤΟΙΧ ΜΠΕΧΕΡΟΥΒ ΙΜ ΜΠΜΑ ΝΟΥΒΟΡΤΕ ΑΣΟΥΩΝ ΝΑΝ ΝΤΕΖΗ ΕΠΩΗΝ ΜΠΩΝΖ ΝΑΛΛΗΘΙΝΟΝ.** My translation; for the original Coptic text and a German translation, see Peter Nagel, ed., *Das Triadon: Ein Sabidisches Lehrgedicht des 14. Jahrhunderts* (Halle, 1983), 81; for Plisch’s

wound is *also* being understood here as the mystical portal to the heavenly holy of holies, and that *Interp. Know.* thereby participates in an ancient exegetical and apocryphal tradition concerning the flesh of the crucified Christ and its ontological connection with the veil of the Jerusalem Temple. I say “also” because the concepts of the Edenic Paradise and the holy of holies were by no means mutually exclusive in antiquity.<sup>75</sup>

This tradition of associating the flesh of Christ with the Temple veil goes back to the Synoptic Gospels, all of which can be understood to imply some kind of connection between the two in their crucifixion narratives. According to Mark 15:37–39: “Then Jesus gave a loud cry and breathed his last. And the curtain of the Temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. Now when the centurion, who stood facing him, saw that in this way he breathed his last, he said, ‘Truly this man was God’s Son.’”<sup>76</sup> The account in Matthew 27:45–54 is slightly different, with several other eschatological signs occurring upon his death, such as a great earthquake and the raising of the deceased saints, while the centurion is accompanied in his confession by others who are guarding Jesus. Luke 23:44–47’s account is still more varied, with the rending of the veil accompanying the daytime darkness which occurs before Jesus’s death, and the centurion merely exclaiming that Jesus was indeed “righteous” (δικαιος). Mark and Matthew particularly emphasise the contemporaneous nature of the two events of Jesus’s death and the tearing of the veil. Even more so, the structure of Mark 15:37–39 suggests

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German translation, see Plisch, *Auslegung*, 112–13; Plisch, “Rezeption,” 90; In this stanza, the Roman spearman is replaced with a cherub, thereby making the act of piercing Christ’s flesh part of the divine will for human salvation, since the gap in Christ’s flesh becomes the portal to Paradise and the Tree of True Life. However, by comparing *Interp. Know.* with a fourteenth-century poem, Plisch stretches our text beyond its interpretive field.

<sup>75</sup> E.g. *Jubilees* 8.19: “And [Noah] knew that the garden of Eden was the holy of holies and the dwelling of the Lord”; cf. 4.23–26; also, in the story of the Four Who Entered Paradise/the Garden (פרדס), Rabbi Akiva passes through “the curtain” (פרגוד), having been deemed worthy to behold God’s glory; see Rachel Elijor, *The Three Temples: On the Emergence of Jewish Mysticism* (The Littman Library of Jewish Civilization: Oxford, 2004), 246: “The Pardes or the Garden of Eden is a celestial model of the earthly Temple on the Day of Atonement.” Paradisiacal imagery (e.g. the Tree of Life) also appears alongside temple imagery (e.g. the throne of God) in John of Patmos’s vision of the New Jerusalem in Revelation 22:1–5; see Macaskill, “Paradise,” 74–81; Macaskill notes that of the three occurrences of “Paradise” (παράδεισος) in the New Testament (Luke 23:43; 2 Corinthians 12:4; Revelation 2:7), “all of the texts seem to reflect the equation of the heavenly paradise with the heavenly temple” (81).

<sup>76</sup> ὁ δὲ Ἰησοῦς ἄφεις φωνὴν μεγάλην ἐξέπνευσεν καὶ τὸ καταπέτασμα τοῦ ναοῦ ἐσχίσθη εἰς δύο ἀπ’ ἄνωθεν ἕως κάτω. ἰδὼν δὲ ὁ κεντυρίων ὁ παρεστηκὼς ἐξ ἐναντίας αὐτοῦ ὅτι οὕτως ἐξέπνευσεν εἶπεν· Ἀληθῶς οὗτος ὁ ἄνθρωπος υἱὸς θεοῦ ἦν.

some kind of conceptual proximity between the body of Christ and the Temple veil. Harry Chronis even goes so far as to suggest that Mark's description of the centurion as the one who "stood facing him (Jesus)" (ἐξ ἐναντίας αὐτοῦ), uses "one of the idiomatic expressions for entering the Temple, for standing 'in the presence' or 'before the face' of God."<sup>77</sup> Chronis suggests therefore, that for Mark, the torn veil represents the ultimate theophany, the presence of God being revealed to those outside the holy of holies. The confession elicited from the centurion was the result of him finding himself in the divine presence; the face of the dying Christ being identical to the face of God in the holy of holies.<sup>78</sup>

But it is not only the Synoptic authors that may be taken to imply such a connection. John 2:19–21 depicts Jesus telling the Jews in the Temple, "Destroy this Temple, and in three days I shall raise it up," and although the Jews doubted him, the Evangelist clarifies the situation: "But he was speaking of the Temple of his body."<sup>79</sup> This again draws a parallel between the Temple and Jesus's body, and specifically between the restored Temple and Jesus's resurrection body, which rises after three days in the tomb.

The connection between Christ's body and the Temple veil is finally made explicit in the Epistle to the Hebrews 10:19–20, where we read that, "we have confidence to enter the sanctuary (τὰ ἅγια) by the blood of Jesus, by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain (καταπέτασμα), that is, through his flesh."<sup>80</sup> It is difficult to demonstrate

<sup>77</sup> ἐναντιόν is used in this context at LXX Exodus 27:21; 28:12; 34:24; Leviticus 1:3; 4:7; Deuteronomy 12:18; 18:7; and Psalms 87:2; 94:6; 108:14, 15.

<sup>78</sup> Harry Chronis, "The Torn Veil: Cultus and Christology in Mark 15:37–39," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 101 (1982): 110–11.

<sup>79</sup> The same Jesus saying is implied in Matthew 26:61; 27:40; and Mark 14:58; 15:29; on the metaphorical uses of the saying in the Gospel of John and the *Gospel of Thomas*, where Jesus's resurrection body is the New Temple, see Gregory Riley, *Resurrection Reconsidered: Thomas and John in Controversy* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995), 146–53; but especially DeConick, *Voices of the Mystics*, 117–21.

<sup>80</sup> Just as in the Synoptic crucifixion accounts, scholars have debated whether the "curtain" in Hebrews 10:20 refers to the inner veil separating the holy of holies from the holy place, or the outer veil separating the sanctuary and the court. In the case of Hebrews 10:20, it seems clear that it is the inner veil; see Harold Attridge, *The Epistle to the Hebrews* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1989), 283–87; Attridge points out that the author of Hebrews uses τὰ ἅγια as a designation for the holy of holies, meaning that the curtain which gives access is certainly the inner veil. It is also worth noting that on the two other occasions that Hebrews speaks of the καταπέτασμα (6:19; 9:3), it refers to the inner veil which gives access to the divine within; on the term καταπέτασμα in the LXX and the rending of the veil in Mark, see Timothy Gray, *The Temple in the Gospel of Mark* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008); Gray states that of the thirty-nine occurrences of καταπέτασμα in the LXX, thirty-

any direct dependence on the Synoptic crucifixion accounts, but the fact that for Hebrews, it is through Jesus's blood sacrifice that he opened up access to the holy of holies for other Christians, suggests that the same theological and soteriological message is being conveyed: the torn flesh of the crucified Christ has thrown open the path to the face of God; a new, mystical path that obviates the necessity of the mundane cult.<sup>81</sup>

The association is taken further in the influential second-century apocryphal text known as, among other things, the *Protevangelium of James*, which in part tells the story of the Virgin Mary's childhood and the immaculate conception. Mary is depicted as having grown up in the Temple, danced for the high priest on the step of the altar (7.3), and been fed from the hands of angels (8.1). But at the age of twelve, shortly before her adolescence, Mary was forced to leave the Temple lest she defile it. As such, she was granted by divine favour to Joseph (9.1). The council of priests, needing a new veil for the holy of holies, commissioned a team of seven virgins, including Mary, to fashion the new veil. By lot, Mary received the duty of weaving the royal purple and scarlet segments. Crucially, it was at the exact moment that Mary "drew out the thread" to begin work on the new veil that an angel of the Lord announced that she would "conceive by [the Lord's] Word." Furthermore, as Mary brings the completed purple and scarlet veil to the priest, Elizabeth, the mother of John the Baptist, remarks

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five refer to the inner veil - Exodus 27:21; 26:34, 35; 26:33 (3 times); 26:31; 30:6; 35:12; 37:3; 39:4, 19, 40; 40:3, 5, 21, 22, 26; Leviticus 4:6, 17; 16:2, 12, 15; 21:23; 24:3; Numbers 3:10, 26; 4:5, 32; 18:7; 1 Kings 6:36; 2 Chronicles 3:14; 1 Maccabees 1:22; 4:51; Sirach 50:5; see also Larry Hurtado, *Mark* (New International Biblical Commentary) (Massachusetts: Hendrickson, 1995), 267–70; and in Matthew, see Daniel Gurtner, *The Torn Veil: Matthew's Exposition of the Death of Jesus* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 199–201; Gurtner also favours the interpretation that it is the inner veil which is torn; but see also Howard Jackson, "The Death of Jesus in Mark and the Miracle from the Cross," *New Testament Studies* 33 (1987): 28; Jackson argues that it must have been the outer veil which was torn, since only the outer veil would have been visible from the Mount of Olives, where he suggests Golgotha was located, thereby allowing the centurion to see the veil torn, inspiring his confession. Such historicizing interpretations of eschatological symbols and rhetorical images seems to me to be unhelpful in the extreme; Timothy Geddert, *Watchwords: Mark 13 in Markan Eschatology* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1989), 140–43; Geddert actually lists thirty-five different interpretations given by scholars for the rending of the veil at Christ's death in Mark, many of which pertain to the debate about which veil is torn. Of course, the thirty-five interpretations are not all mutually exclusive. In fact, many are mutually entailing.

<sup>81</sup> Hebrews 6:19–20; 9:11–25; 10:19–22; see especially, Scott Mackie, "Heavenly Sanctuary Mysticism in the Epistle to the Hebrews," *Journal of Theological Studies* 62 (2011): 77–117; also, Frederick Bruce, *The Epistle to the Hebrews* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1990), 250–251.



on the blessed conception (10.1–12.3).<sup>82</sup> This text develops the association found in the New Testament that the fate of the flesh of Christ is typologically and ontologically linked to the fate of the Temple veil; they are both created and destroyed contemporaneously. Might the saying of the Saviour in *Interp. Know.* 10.18–38 be drawing on, or participating in, this same mystical tradition?

### *The Interpretation of Knowledge 10.18–38 and the Christological Veil*

It was noted above that the image of Christ's pierced flesh from John 19:34 is alluded to in *Interp. Know.* 10.34.b–37a,<sup>83</sup> and that the Gospel of John 2:19–21 understands the body of Christ to itself represent a Temple. Already we can see how, via this exegesis of the Johannine crucifixion narrative, the Valentinian audience of *Interp. Know.* may have understood this command from the crucified Saviour to be an invitation to enter the Temple of his body, piercing the veil of his flesh and entering the holy of holies. But of course it was quite normal in apocryphal literature to find the Gospels' crucifixion narratives being synthesised to create an original picture. The *Gospel of Peter* 2–6, for example, appears to draw on each of the four canonical Gospels for its own crucifixion narrative.<sup>84</sup> *Interp. Know.* 10.18–38 is no different in this respect. For although John 19:34 is most explicitly alluded to in 10.34b–36a, the designation of the crucified Saviour as “the one who was reproached” (ΠΕΡΙ ΝΤΑΖΟΥΝΟΝΟΥΩ) at 10.21–22a clearly draws on the Synoptic crucifixion scenes as opposed to the Johannine

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<sup>82</sup> English translation in J.K. Elliott, *The Apocryphal New Testament* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), 48–67; as Elliott remarks in his introduction to the text, the *Protevangelium of James* was one of the most important early apocryphal gospels, with over one hundred Greek manuscript witnesses, in part or whole. Many Mariological traditions stem from it, not least the one described above, which is also taken up in the *Gospel of Pseudo-Matthew* 8–9; James of Kokkinobaphos *Homily* 4; and Cyril of Alexandria *De Adoratione* 9; and many others. On the latter two of these and other Late Antique and Byzantine authors use of this tradition, see Nicholas Conostas, “Symeon of Thessalonike and the Theology of the Icon Screen,” in *Thresholds of the Sacred*, ed. S.E.J. Gerstel (Washington: Harvard University Press, 2006), 163–83; Conostas notes that such patristic and Byzantine exegetes “understood the ‘veil of the flesh’ (Heb. 10:20) to be a type of the primordial ‘firmament’ (Gen. 1:6), the result was an exegetical tour de force in which they body, tabernacle, temple, and cosmos formed a single edifice, the keystone of which was the archetypal figure of the incarnate Logos” (182).

<sup>83</sup> *Interp. Know.* 10.34b–37a: “Enter in through the rib, the place from which you came forth and hide yourself from the beasts.”

<sup>84</sup> Also *Exc. Theod.* 61.

narrative.<sup>85</sup> Only in the Synoptic Gospels is the crucified Christ mocked in this way. More specifically, in Matthew and Mark, while the passersby “deride” him (**ΧΙΟΥΑ ΕΡΟΥ**; Gk. βλασφημέω), and the priests, scribes, and elders “mock” him (**ΩΒΕ ΝΩΩ**; Gk. ἐμπαίζω), it is the two “bandits” (**ΛΗΣΤΑΙ**) being crucified with him who “taunt” or “reproach” him (Matthew 27:44 **ΕΓΝΟΣΘ̄ ΝΗΟΥ**; Mark 15:32 **ΑΓΝΕΘΝΟΥΘ̄**; Gk. ὀνειδίζω). This corresponds well with the exegesis of the Parable of the Good Samaritan in *Interp. Know.* 6.17–38, where the “bandits” of Luke 10:30 (**ΛΗΣΤΗΣ**; Gk. λησταί; 6.19) are interpreted as the hostile archons who imprison the soul and are responsible for the division in the church.<sup>86</sup> In 10.18–38, it is these who mock and reproach the crucified Christ.

The same synthesis of New Testament crucifixion scenes is found in *Interp. Know.* 13.14–38’s depiction of the Saviour on the Cross. Firstly we read at 13.14–20: “When he cried out (**ΝΤΑΡΕΦΑΩΘΗ**), he was separated from the Church like portions of darkness from the Mother, while his feet provided him traces, and these scorched the way of the ascent to the Father.”<sup>87</sup> In the Synoptics, Jesus is said to “cry out” on the Cross (Matthew 27:46 **ΑΝΑΒΟΑΩ**; Mark 15:34 **ΒΟΑΩ**; Luke 23:46 **ΦΩΝΕΩ**), whereas in John 19:30 Jesus simply “says” (**ΛΕΓΩ**) his last words. The verb **ΑΩΘΗ** here is the Sub-Akhmimic form of the Sahidic **ΩΚΑΚ**, “to cry, shout”, and is used in the Sahidic versions of Matthew 27:46 and Luke 23:46. But on the other hand, in the same scene at *Interp. Know.* 13.25–29, we read: “For the Head drew itself up from the pit; it was bent (**ΡΕΚΤ̄**) over the Cross and it looked down to Tartaros so that those below might look above.”<sup>88</sup> As noted earlier, this image of the crucified Christ slumped on the Cross at the moment of death so that his head is “bowed” (**κλίνω**) is taken from John 19:30, and is a detail which is absent from the Synoptics.

Clearly, therefore, the Valentinian author of *Interp. Know.* readily combines both Synoptic and Johannine crucifixion themes, and more importantly, uses both to elucidate how Christ’s humility and humiliation on the Cross facilitated the ascent of the soul to the divine presence of the Father.

<sup>85</sup> Although the designation here is heavily reconstructed, it is almost certainly correct since in the following pages, which represent a “complex Midrash” on our saying and the other teachings of the “teacher of immortality,” similar designations occur on multiple occasions: 12.15–16; 12.25–26 (**ΠΕΝΤΑΧΧΙΝΑΘ̄Ν̄**; “the one who received reproach”); 12.27–28 (**ΠΕΝΤΑΧΧΟΥΘ̄ΝΟΥΘ̄**; “the one who was reproached”); 12.30 (**ΠΕΝΤΑΥΝΘ̄ΝΟΥΘ̄**; “the one who was reproached”); 12.36 (**ΠΕΝΤΑΥΝΘ̄ΝΟΥΘ̄**; “the one who was reproached”).

<sup>86</sup> See Painchaud, “L’utilisation,” 422–24; cf. *Exc. Theod.* 53.1.

<sup>87</sup> For text, see n. 44 above.

<sup>88</sup> For the text, see n. 45 above.

Furthermore, there are hints in *Interp. Know.* 10.18–38 that the Markan centurion’s mystical vision of the unveiled face of God in Mark 15:37–39 has been appropriated to a new Valentinian mystical understanding of Christ’s passion. For in Mark, it is “when the centurion, who stood facing him, saw in this way that he breathed his last” (ἰδὼν δὲ ὁ κεντυρίων ὁ παρεστηκώς ἐξ ἐναντίας αὐτοῦ ὅτι οὕτως ἐξέπνευσεν), that he confessed the divine Sonship of Jesus. Timothy Gray has recently noted that the word order of this verse emphasises the “seeing” of the centurion, since the participle ἰδὼν is placed as the first word of the sentence in order to contrast him with the mockers who demanded that they “see” (ἴδωμεν) him come down from the Cross to make them believe (15:32), as well as those who mistakenly thought that Jesus was crying out for Elijah and waited to “see” (ἴδωμεν) if the prophet would save him (15:36).<sup>89</sup> But of course, as we saw above, the positioning of the centurion in relation to the crucified Christ (ἐξ ἐναντίας αὐτοῦ) uses a phrase which is familiar from earlier Jewish theophanic entry formulae, suggesting that part of the reason that the centurion sees *and understands* Christ’s divinity, is the fact that the Temple veil of his flesh has been rent, revealing the hitherto hidden face of God.

In light of this, the language concerning the “shape” (ΣΧΗΜΑ) which is to be received by the Valentinian’s soul becomes quite significant. Firstly, “This shape is that which exists *before* (ΖΑΤΕΖΗ) the Father, the Logos, and the height” (10.23–25). The preposition ΖΑΤΕΖΗ, “in front of, before”, translates many Greek prepositions, including ἐναντία (e.g. Ezekiel 40:47). In *Interp. Know.* 10.23–25, the preposition takes on an explicitly mystical flavour, since it expresses the proximity between the form taken by the Valentinian soul and the transcendent Father. And secondly, in 10.31–33 we read: “If you still believe (ΠΙΣΤΕΥΕ) in me, it is I who shall take you above through this shape (ΠΙΣΧΗΜΑ) *that you see* (ΕΤΕΝΕΥ ΑΡΑΦ).” Much like in Mark 15:39, where the centurion’s confession is elicited on the basis of his “seeing” the divine form of Christ, our Valentinian saying suggests that on the basis of a confession of faith, the soul shall “see” and “receive” the divine shape, via which they shall achieve a spiritual ascent. While there is no reason to think that the author of *Interp. Know.* is directly drawing on Mark 15:37–39 for this vocabulary, the theological and soteriological message is strikingly similar. On the other hand, there is a clear reference to the Johannine resurrection body, where in John 20:27, the risen Jesus says to Thomas, “Reach out your hand and put it in my side. Do not doubt but believe” (φέρε τὴν χεῖρά σου καὶ βάλε εἰς τὴν πλευράν μου, καὶ μὴ γίνου

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<sup>89</sup> Gray, *Temple*, 194–96.

ἄπιστος ἀλλὰ πιστός).<sup>90</sup> Whereas John’s risen Christ invokes Thomas to enter his side so that he might believe, *Interp. Know.* 10.31–36 inverts the doctrine of faith so that belief in the resurrection body of Christ is the *prerequisite* for entering it: “If you still believe in me, it is I who shall take you above” (10.31–33).<sup>91</sup>

In this way, our saying of the Saviour in 10.18–38, and especially the command to enter through his pierced side need not only be an allusion to John 19:34 and the broader Johannine resurrection Christology, but may also have in view the typological identification between the flesh of Christ and the Temple veil found in the Synoptics, made explicit in Hebrews, and developed further in apocryphal literature.<sup>92</sup> We have already seen in *Gos. Phil.* and *Exc. Theod.* how some Valentinians understood Christ’s expiration on the Cross and the rending of the temple veil to be causally, and therefore typologically, connected, indicating that these two mystical objects were considered to be consubstantial, and how Christ’s self-sacrifice was thought to open the way of access to the holy of holies. Moreover, there are further terminological parallels between our saying of the Saviour and related Valentinian literature which suggest that a Temple-mystical context is being evoked in *Interp. Know.* 10.18–38.

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<sup>90</sup> For a critical exegesis of this scene and its doctrine of faith, see Riley, *Resurrection Reconsidered*, 119–23.

<sup>91</sup> Cf. *Interp. Know.* 1.23–38; “But it is a great thing for a man who has faith, since he is [not] in unbelief, which is the [world. Now] the world [is the place of] unbelief [and the place of death.]”; ΟΥΝΑΣ ΔΕ ΝΩΘΩ Π[Ε] ΝΝΟΥΡΩΜΕ ΕΥΝΤΕΦ ΜΜΕΥ [ΝΤ]ΠΙΣΤΙ[Σ Ε]Ι[ΦΩΝ ΤΗΝΤΑΤΝΑΖΤ[Ε ΕΝ] ΕΤΕ [ΠΚΟΣ]ΜΟΣ ΠΕ· ΠΚΟΣΜ[ΟΣ ΝΔΕ ΠΕ ΠΜΑ ΝΤ] ΜΝΤΑΤΝΑΖΤΕ Α[ΥΩ ΠΜΑ ΗΠΜΟΥ]; Turner’s translation.

<sup>92</sup> On how later tradition actually conflated the Johannine and Synoptic crucifixion accounts, even to the point of identifying the Johannine spearman and the Synoptic centurion as one figure named “Longinus” (e.g. *Acts of Pilate* Recension A 16.7; Recension B 11.1), see J. Ramsey Michaels, “The Centurion’s Confession and the Spear Thrust,” *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 29 (1967): 102–109; Patristic authors also developed the notion of the consubstantial nature of Christ’s flesh and the Temple veil in significant and relevant ways. For example, for Tertullian of Carthage (*On Baptism* 9 and 16), the blood and water which spilled forth from Christ’s wounded side are a symbol of the inauguration of the sacraments of baptism and eucharist, since those who believed in his blood were bathed in the water of baptism, and those who were bathed in such water also received his blood to drink; likewise John Chrysostom (Homily 85 on the Gospel of John) understands the piercing of Christ’s flesh to be the founding of the sacraments, and in Homilies 15 and 19 on the Epistle to the Hebrews he states that the holy of holies is indeed heaven, and by means of the veil of Christ’s flesh, one comes to enter heaven, for “it concealed his divinity” (κρύπτουσα τὴν θεότητα); and also Theodoret of Cyrus (*Dialogue of Orthodoxos and Eranistes* 1), who describes the flesh of Christ as a “screen” which covers the glory within.

When the crucified Christ instructs the Valentinian soul to enter his rib, he also tells her: “hide yourself from the beasts (**ΝΕΘΗΡΙΟΝ**).” According to *Gos. Phil.*, the living sacrifice of Christ upon the Cross obviated the earthly sacrificial cult that worshipped the beasts: “Indeed, the beasts (**ΖΝΘΗΡΙΟΝ**) were the ones to whom they sacrificed. They were indeed offering them up alive, but when they offered them up, they died. As for man, they offered him up to God dead, and he lived.”<sup>93</sup> Similarly, “God is a man-eater. For this reason, men are sacrificed to him. Before men were sacrificed, beasts (**ΖΝΘΗΡΙΟΝ**) were being sacrificed, since those to whom they were sacrificed were not gods.”<sup>94</sup> In these two passages, the beasts (**ΘΗΡΙΟΝ**; Gk. θήριον; pl. θηρία) are identified with both the things being sacrificed, and the things being sacrificed to, suggesting that the earthly Temple cult is performed in the service of the beasts, the demiurge and his archons, by those who come from them and are consubstantial with them. Hence, *Gos. Phil.* says of the true heavenly Temple cult, “A bridal chamber is not for the beasts (**ΝΘΗΡΙΟΝ**), nor is it for the slaves, nor for defiled women; but it is for free men and virgins.”<sup>95</sup> Again the bridal chamber is identified as one of the “buildings for sacrifice” (**ΝΗΕΙ ΜΑΜΑ ΝΉΠΡΟΣΦΟΡΑ**; *Gos. Phil.* 69.14–15) in the Temple, a place in which men and virgins can enter, but beasts cannot. This corresponds well with the present interpretation of the imagery in *Interp. Know.* 10.34b–37a, namely, that once the Valentinian soul has entered through the veil of Christ’s flesh, it can hide itself from the beasts in the temple of his body, having ceased to be a slave (14.34–38).

In the *Excerpts of Theodotus*, it is likewise clear that these “beasts” are to be identified with the hostile psychic powers of the demiurge. According to *Exc. Theod.*, “the demiurge ... made ... the beasts out of fear” (48.1–3; ὁ Δημιουργὸς ... ποιεῖ ... ἐκ τοῦ φόβου τὰ θηρία), and “he fashioned an

<sup>93</sup> *Gos. Phil.* 55.1–5; **ΝΕ [Ζ]Ν[Θ]ΗΡΙΟΝ ΓΑΡ ΝΕ ΝΕΤΟΥΤΕΛΟ ΕΖΡΑΙ ΝΑ[Υ] ΝΕΥΤΕΛΟ ΜΕΝ ΜΗΜΟΟΥ ΕΖΡΑΙ ΕΥΟΝΖ ΝΤΑΡΟΥΤΕΛΟΟΥ ΔΕ ΕΖΡΑΙ ΑΥΜΟΥ ΠΡΩΜΕ ΑΥΤΕΛΟΟΥ ΕΖΡΑΙ ΗΠΝΟΥΤΕ ΕΦΜΟΟΥΤ ΑΥΩ ΑΦΩΝΖ**; cf. 55.6–14; Notice here that Christ is identified as the man whom was sacrificed and lived. In *Gos. Phil.* 75.22–25, the living water of baptism is described as “a body” (**ΟΥΣΩΜΑ**), for, “It is necessary that we put on the living man (**ΠΡΩΜΕ ΕΤΟΝΖ**; lit. “the man who lives”). Therefore, when he is about to go down into the water, he unclothes himself, in order that he may put on the living man (**ΕΦΝΑΨ ΠΗ ΖΩΩΦ**; lit. “he shall receive that one on him”); **ΩΠΕ ΕΤΡΗΨ ΖΩΩΝ ΗΠΡΩΜΕ ΕΤΟΝΖ ΕΤΒΕ ΠΑΕΙ ΕΦΕΙ ΕΦΒΗΚ ΕΠΙΤΗ ΕΠΜΟΟΥ ΨΑΚΚΑΚ ΑΖΗΥ ΨΙΝΑ ΕΦΝΑΨ ΠΗ ΖΩΩΦ**; Here, the sacrificed Christ is the one who is “put on” in the baptismal waters.

<sup>94</sup> *Gos. Phil.* 62.35–63.4; **ΠΝΟΥΤΕ ΟΥΑΜΡΩΜΕ ΠΕ ΔΙΑ ΤΟΥΤΟ ΣΕ[ΨΩ]ΩΤ ΗΠΡΩΜ[Ε] ΝΑΦ ΖΑΤΕΖΗ ΕΜΠΑΤΟΥΨΩΤ ΗΠΡΩΜΕ ΝΕΨΩΨΩΤ ΝΖΝΘΗΡΙΟΝ ΝΕΖΝΝΟΥΤΕ ΓΑΡ ΑΝ ΝΕ ΝΑΕΙ ΕΤΟΥΨΩΨΩΤ ΝΑΥ**.

<sup>95</sup> *Gos. Phil.* 69.1–4; **ΜΑΡΕ ΠΑΣΤΟΣ ΩΠΠΕ ΝΝΘΗΡΙΟΝ ΟΥΤΕ ΜΑΦΩΠΠΕ ΝΝΖΗΖΑΛ ΟΥΤΕ ΝΣΖΙΜΕ ΕΦΧΟΖΗ ΑΛΛΑ ΨΑΦΩΠΠΕ ΝΖΝΡΩΜΕ ΝΕΛΕΥΘΕΡΟΣ ΜΗ ΖΝΠΑΡΘΕΝΟΣ**; for the same use of **ΘΗΡΙΟΝ** in *Gos. Phil.*, see 71.22–27; 79.5–10; 81.7–8.

earthly and material soul, irrational and of the same substance as the beasts” (50.1; ψυχὴν γεωδὴ καὶ ὑλικὴν ἐτεκτήνατο ἄλογον καὶ τῆς τῶν θηρίων ὁμοούσιον). Furthermore, in an exegesis of Mark 1:13, *Exc. Theod.* has it that Jesus prevailed over the “beasts” (θηρία) and their “ruler” (ἄρχων) in the wilderness after his baptism, and concludes, “Therefore, it is necessary to equip ourselves with the armour of the Lord and keep body and soul invulnerable” (85.1–3; δεῖ οὖν ὀπλισθαι τοῖς κυριακοῖς ὄπλοις ἔχοντας τὸ σῶμα καὶ τὴν ψυχὴν ἄτρωτον). In these passages, the “beasts” are unequivocally identified with the demiurge and his archons, the ones against whom the Valentinian must guard their soul by means of baptism and the “armour” of Christ that it provides for them to put on.<sup>96</sup> The same identification with the archons can be made in *Interp. Know.*, since it is the beasts that are said to imprison the soul in the flesh.<sup>97</sup> But by entering Christ’s Temple-Body, the soul can hide from these beasts and remain invulnerable during heavenly ascent.<sup>98</sup>

In other words, based on evidence both internal to *Interp. Know.*, and that drawn from related external sources, it seems quite plausible that our saying of the Saviour does indeed understand the flesh of the crucified Christ to be the equivalent of the inner veil of the heavenly temple. By entering Christ’s pierced side, the soul simultaneously finds itself in the divine presence and restores the Edenic androgyne, thereby overcoming death. One final piece of evidence must be marshalled in support of this Temple-mystical interpretation.

<sup>96</sup> Cf. *Gos. Phil.* 75.21–25 in n. 92 above.

<sup>97</sup> *Interp. Know.* 11.27; see n. 43 above; cf. *Interp. Know.* 6.29; *Exc. Theod.* 53.1.

<sup>98</sup> Cf. *Gos. Phil.* 70.5–9; see n. 61 above; It has been pointed out to me by an anonymous reviewer that this beast-imagery is also common in persecution and martyrdom texts, e.g. *Acts of Peter and the Twelve Apostles* 5.19–6.8; *Saint Blandina and the Martyrs of Lyons* 1.37–42; *Acts of Paul and Thecla* 27–42; *Acts of Andrew* 39; in the case of the *Acts of Peter and the Twelve Apostles* (NHC VI,1), Jesus Christ explains to Peter concerning the path to the heavenly city, “many are the robbers and wild beasts on that road (ΕΒΟΛ ΧΕ ΝΑΨΕ ΝΑΗΤΗΣ ΜΗ ΝΘΗΡΙΟΝ ΕΤΖΙ ΤΕΖΗ ΕΤΗΜΑΥ)” (5.26–28) who seek to “kill” and “devour” those making the journey. The “robbers” (6.19; ΛΗΤΗΣ; Gk. λησταί) and “beasts” (10.36–37; 11.22, 23, 24, 26, 31; ΘΗΡΙΟΝ; Gk. θήριον; pl. θηρία) are similarly related in *Interp. Know.*, where they stand for the demiurge and his archons. In the martyrdom of Blandina, she is hung “in the form of the cross” (διὰ τοῦ σταυροῦ σχήματι) as bait for the “beasts” (θηρία). But, having “put on Christ” (χριστὸν ἐνδεδυμένη), she overcame the evil powers, and “won the crown of immortality” (τὸν τῆς ἀφθαρσίας στεφανωμένη στέφανον); on the “crown” in *Interp. Know.*, see below.

## Borne on the Shoulders of Christ

In *Interp. Know.* 10.34, the crucified Saviour states that once they have entered through his wounded side; “It is I who shall bear you upon my shoulders” (ΑΝΑΚ ΠΕ ΕΤΑΒΙΤΕ ΖΙ ΝΑΝΑΖΒΕ). Commentators have correctly drawn attention to the imagery borrowed from the Lukan Parable of the Lost Sheep, where Jesus recalls how once the shepherd has found the lost sheep, “he lays it on his shoulders and rejoices” (ἐπιτίθησιν ἐπὶ τοὺς ὤμους αὐτοῦ χαίρων) (Luke 15:5). Similarly, *Interp. Know.* 10.26–27 describes the fate of the soul in the world, where it has been “led astray (ΠΑΛΑΝΑ) while in the flesh of condemnation” (ΠΑΛΑΝΑ ΕΨΟΟΠ Ν̄ΣΑΡΞ Ν̄ΤΕ ΚΑΤΑΔΙΚΗ), while the Matthean Parable of the Lost Sheep describes the sheep as “the one that went astray” (τὸ πλανώμενον) (Matthew 18:12). Furthermore, the material world of the flesh into which the soul has fallen is termed “this pit” (ΠΕΞΙΖΙΕΙΤ) in *Interp. Know.* 10.31, while in Matthew 12:11 the sheep falls into a “pit” (βόθρονος).

However, I am not convinced by the idea that *Interp. Know.* 10.18–38 contains an allusion to the Parable of the Good Shepherd from John 10. It has been suggested that the “rib” or “side” (σπειρ) of Christ in 10.35 may be an allusion to Jesus’s assertion, “I am the gate for the sheep ... Whoever enters by me will be saved” (ἐγὼ εἰμι ἡ θύρα τῶν προβάτων ... δι’ ἐμοῦ ἐάν τις εἰσέλθῃ σωθήσεται) (John 10:7–9). As Thomassen understands it, “le bon Pasteur ramène la brebis égarée jusqu’à la clôture, et lui dit d’entrer par cette ouverture alors qu’il guette les animaux sauvages.”<sup>99</sup> The problem with this interpretation is that σπειρ certainly translates πλευρά from John 19:34 and Genesis 2:21–22, and not θύρα from John 10:7–9.<sup>100</sup> Furthermore, in

<sup>99</sup> Thomassen, “Commentaire,” 132: “the good shepherd brings the lost sheep up to the fence, and tells it to enter through this opening as he watches out for the wild beasts”; see also Thomassen, *Spiritual Seed*, 86–87; Plisch, *Auslegung*, 112 n.104, also notes the connection, but does not develop the idea.

<sup>100</sup> See n. 73 above; also *Exc. Theod.* 26.2–3: “Wherefore whenever he would say, ‘I am the door’, he means that you, who are of the superior seed, shall come as far as the Limit where I am. And whenever he enters in, the superior seed also enters into the Pleroma with him, brought together and brought in through the door” (ὅθεν ὅταν εἴπῃ “ἐγὼ εἰμι ἡ θύρα”, τοῦτο λέγει, ὅτι μέχρι τοῦ ὅρου οὗ εἰμι ἐγὼ ἐλεύσεσθε οἱ τοῦ διαφέροντος σπέρματος· ὅταν δὲ καὶ αὐτὸς εἰσέρχῃται, καὶ τὸ σπέρμα συνεισέρχῃται αὐτῷ εἰς τὸ πλήρωμα διὰ τῆς θύρας συναχθὲν καὶ εἰσαχθὲν); the context is indeed very similar, and it seems likely that Christ’s role as the θύρα in *Exc. Theod.*, is played by his πλευρά in *Interp. Know.*, since both designate Christ’s soteriological function as the portal to the divine realm of the Pleroma. Nonetheless, the πλευρά of *Interp. Know.* 10.35 cannot be a straightforward

drawing this parallel, Thomassen straightforwardly equates the singular “wolf” (λύκος) of John 10:12 with the plural “beasts” (NEΘΗΡΙΟΝ) of *Interp. Know.* 10.36b–37a.<sup>101</sup> In this instance, the connection between Valentinian souls and New Testament sheep seems forced.

While the allusions to the Parable of the Lost Sheep are not to be denied, we need to bear in mind the important point that when *Interp. Know.* uses New Testament parables, it does not necessarily derive their meaning from their New Testament setting, but rather appropriates the elements of the parable to a new Valentinian context in which a new meaning is constructed.<sup>102</sup> If the Temple-mystical background suggested here is accepted, we might also advance a new interpretation of the Saviour’s promise to carry the Valentinian soul upon his shoulders and into the presence of the Father.

In *Exc. Theod.* 42.1–2 we already have the doctrine that “the Cross is a sign of the Limit in the Pleroma, for it divides ... the world from the Pleroma. Therefore, Jesus by that sign carries the Seed on his shoulders and leads them into the Pleroma.”<sup>103</sup> In other words, it is by means of his crucifixion and ascension that he carries the spiritual seeds of the Valentinians back into the Pleroma. This is of course identical to what we find in *Interp. Know.* 10.18–38. But the image of being carried up to heaven on the shoulders of divine figures also finds a strong parallel in apocryphal resurrection traditions, such as those found in the *Ascension of Isaiah* 3.16–17 and the *Gospel of Peter* 39. In the former, we read, “the angel of the Holy Spirit and Michael, the chief of the holy angels, will open his grave on the third day, and the Beloved, sitting on their shoulders, will come forth.”<sup>104</sup> Both Jean Daniélou and Jonathan Knight are surely correct when they

allusion to the θύρα of John 10:7–9; on *Exc. Theod.* 26 and its relation to *Interp. Know.*, see Myszor, “Kreuz,” 609–610.

<sup>101</sup> In Luke 10:3, Jesus describes his sending of the Seventy to proclaim the Kingdom of God as being like sending “lambs into the midst of wolves” (ὡς ἄρνας ἐν μέσῳ λύκων), but this is too far removed from the proposed context.

<sup>102</sup> See Painchaud, “L’utilisation,” 423.

<sup>103</sup> Ὁ Σταυρὸς τοῦ ἐν πληρώματι Ὁρου σημεῖόν ἐστιν, χωρίζει γὰρ ... τὸν κόσμον τοῦ πληρώματος. διὸ καὶ τὰ σπέρματα ὁ Ἰησοῦς διὰ τοῦ σημείου ἐπὶ τῶν ὤμων βαστασας εἰσάγει εἰς τὸ πλήρωμα.; The connection between *Exc. Theod.* 42 and *Interp. Know.* 10.34 is recognised in Turner, “NHC XI,1,” 81; and Thomassen, “Commentaire,” 132–33; On the general relation of *Exc. Theod.* 42 to *Interp. Know.*, see Myszor, “Kreuz.”

<sup>104</sup> Greek text in R.H. Charles, *The Ascension of Isaiah* (London, 1900), 93; ὁ ἄγγελος τοῦ Πνεύματος τοῦ ἁγίου καὶ Μιχαὴλ ἄρχων τῶν ἀγγέλων τῶν ἁγίων ὅτι τῇ τρίτῃ ἡμέρᾳ αὐτοῦ ἀνοίξουσιν τὸ μνημονεῖον, καὶ ὁ ἀγαπητὸς καθίσας ἐπὶ τοὺς ὤμους αὐτῶν ἐξελεύσεται.; Plisch, *Auslegung*, 112 n. 101, notes the parallel in passing.



understand *merkabab* mysticism to underlie this scene, whereby the angelomorphic Christ enthroned above the two angels recalls the typical position of God in Old Testament theophanies (e.g. 1 Kings 22:19; Isaiah 6:1–7; Ezekiel 1:26–27; cf. *1 Enoch* 14).<sup>105</sup> Similarly in the *Gospel of Peter* 39, which may be dependent on the *Ascension of Isaiah*, the soldiers guarding the tomb, having seen two angels descend from heaven, report that “they saw three men come out from the sepulchre, two of them supporting the other and a cross following them.”<sup>106</sup> Of course, if we are to understand the Saviour’s promise to bear the soul upwards upon his shoulders in *Interp. Know.* as enthronement imagery, it would seem to represent a major shift in Christological perspective. The *Ascension of Isaiah* and the *Gospel of Peter* both use enthronement imagery as a means of demonstrating Christ’s superiority over the angels and making him analogous to God,<sup>107</sup> whereas *Interp. Know.* would have the Valentinian soul being enthroned *on Christ*. On the other hand, given that *Interp. Know.*’s Christology is of Christ as Saviour, this may not be quite so shocking. In fact, given the following words concerning the Christ-Saviour, this reversal is to be entirely expected:

He has no need of the glory that is not his; he has his own glory with the Name, which is the Son. But he came that we might become glorious through the humiliated one who dwells in the places of humiliation. And through this one who was reproached we receive the forgiveness of sins ... But if we overcome (lit. “be above”) every sin, we shall receive the crown of victory, just like our Head was glorified by the Father.<sup>108</sup>

<sup>105</sup> Jonathan Knight, *Disciples of the Beloved One: The Christology, Social Setting and Theological Context of the Ascension of Isaiah* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996), 45, 80–81; Knight, *The Ascension of Isaiah* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995), 53–56; Jean Daniélou, *The Theology of Jewish Christianity*, trans. John Baker, (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1964), 254–55; Knight rightly argues that although this scene draws on the scene of the two angels attending the empty tomb in Luke 24:4 and John 20:12–13, it evidently also draws from extra-canonical oral tradition. But see also Jonathan Draper, “What did Isaiah See? Angelic Theophany in the Tomb in John 20:11–18,” *Neotestamentica* 36 (2002): 63–76; Draper argues that the author of the Gospel of John did in fact have the *merkabab* of Isaiah 6 in mind when constructing his scene of the empty tomb; note also Tertullian’s provocative idea that the Temple veil was rent at Jesus’s death by the escape of the two cherubim which formed the Divine Throne within (*Against Marcion* 4.42).

<sup>106</sup> ὁρῶσιν ἐξελθόντας ἀπὸ τοῦ τάφου τρεῖς ἄνδρας, καὶ τοὺς δύο τὸν ἕνα ὑπορθοῦντας καὶ σταυρὸν ἀκολουθοῦντα αὐτοῖς; Daniélou, *Theology*, 244 notes a further case of similar imagery in the *Shepherd of Hermas*. *Vis.* I.4.4; see also Jackson, “Death of Jesus,” 28; Jackson suggests that in Mark, Jesus’s crucifixion is in fact his enthronement at the right hand of God, fulfilling the messianic promise of Mark 14:62.

<sup>107</sup> See Knight, *Disciples*, 45, 80–81.

<sup>108</sup> *Interp. Know.* 12.19–26 and 21.30–34;  $\overline{\text{N}}\overline{\text{Q}}\overline{\text{P}} \text{XPEI}[\alpha \text{ EN}] \overline{\text{M}}\overline{\text{P}}\overline{\text{E}}\overline{\text{A}}[\gamma \text{ ETE P}\overline{\text{O}}\overline{\text{Q}} \text{ EN}] \overline{\text{P}}\overline{\text{E}} \overline{\text{O}}\overline{\text{G}}\overline{\text{N}}\overline{\text{T}}\overline{\text{E}}\overline{\text{Q}} [\overline{\text{M}}\overline{\text{M}}\overline{\text{E}}]\overline{\text{G}} \overline{\text{M}}\overline{\text{P}}\overline{\text{Q}}[\overline{\text{E}}\overline{\text{A}}\overline{\text{G}} \overline{\text{M}}\overline{\text{M}}\overline{\text{I}}\overline{\text{N}}] \overline{\text{M}}\overline{\text{I}}\overline{\text{M}}\overline{\text{A}}\overline{\text{Q}} \overline{\text{Z}}\overline{\text{A}}\overline{\text{T}}\overline{\text{N}} \overline{\text{P}}\overline{\text{I}}\overline{\text{R}}\overline{\text{E}}\overline{\text{N}} \overline{\text{E}}\overline{\text{T}}\overline{\text{E}} \overline{\text{P}}\overline{\text{I}}\overline{\text{Q}}\overline{\text{H}}\overline{\text{I}}\overline{\text{R}}\overline{\text{E}} \overline{\text{P}}\overline{\text{E}} [\overline{\text{N}}\overline{\text{T}}\overline{\text{A}}\overline{\text{Q}}]\overline{\text{E}}\overline{\text{I}}$

Christ has been enthroned in Glory with the Father by means of his possession of the divine Name. But by receiving the crown as Christ did,<sup>109</sup> the Valentinian can also become glorified, that is, enthroned. The crown that Christ received can hardly be other than that which was given to him before his crucifixion (Matthew 27:29; Mark 15:17; John 19:2, 5), which he now wears in heavenly glory (Hebrews 2:9) by virtue of winning victory over death (1 Corinthians 15:54–55), a victory we can now share in through Christ (1 Corinthians 15:57), thereby receiving enthronement in a similar manner (cf. Revelation 4:4). In our interpretation of the saying of the Saviour in *Interp. Know.* 10.18–38, the Valentinian soul can partake in Christ’s victory on the Cross by entering through the veil of his flesh, passing into the holy of holies of his body, being enthroned upon his “shoulders,” and being glorified via the “crown of victory.”<sup>110</sup> One might suggest therefore, that some kind of throne-mysticism forms the background for the Saviour’s promise to bear the soul upon his shoulders.

## Conclusion

By way of a conclusion, I would like to close with some observations on how the foregoing discussion illuminates some aspects of the broader hortatory purpose of *Interp. Know.*, particularly the paraenesis of pages 15–19 and the closing exhortation of pages 20–21.

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ΝΔΕ ΑΤΡΝ [Φ]ΩΠΕ ΕΝΖΑ ΕΑΥ [ΖΙΤῆ ΠΡΕ]ΨΩΨ [ΕΤ]ΨΩΟΠ ΝΝΙΜ[Α ΝΤΕ Π]ΨΩΨ ΑΒΑΑ  
 [Ν]ΔΕ ΖΙΤΟΟΤΙ Ν[ΟΙ] ΠΕΕΙ ΝΤΑΖΧΙ ΝΑΟΝΟ ΤΝΧΙ ΜΠΚ[ΩΣ] ΑΒΑΑ ΝΝΝΑΒΙ ...  
 [Ε]ΝΨΑΝΨΩΠΕ ΝΔΕ ΝΤΠΕ ΝΝΑΒΙ ΝΜ ΤΝΝΑΧΙ ΜΠ[ΑΑ]ΚΑΑΜ ΜΠΧΡΟ ΝΘΕ ΝΤΝΑΠΕ  
 ΝΤΑΖΧΙ] ΕΑΥ ΖΙΤῆ ΠΩΤ. Not all of these reconstructions are certain, although there is

almost total agreement across the three critical editions. The most significant disagreement in the critical editions exists for the reconstruction of ΠΙ[ΡΕΝ] (“the Name”) at 12.21–22. Both Plisch and Funk reconstruct ΠΙ[ΩΤ] so that the sentence reads, “Er hat seine eigene Herrlichkeit bei dem Vater, welche die Sohnschaft ist (“He has his own glory with the Father, which is the Sonship”) (Plisch); and “il possède sa propre gloire auprès du Père, en tant que Fils” (“he possessed his own glory with the Father, as the Son”) (Funk); on *Interp. Know.* 21.30–34, and the theme of sin more generally, see Desjardins, *Sin in Valentinianism*, 101–105.

<sup>109</sup> See Emmel, “Pathway,” 270 n. 48; Emmel notes that the ΝΘΕ (“in the manner”) in 21.33 signals the *type* of crowning they shall receive, i.e. that the Valentinian is crowned in the same way as Christ was.

<sup>110</sup> It might further be suggested that if *Interp. Know.* 10.34 is indeed combining imagery from apocryphal enthronement traditions on the one hand, and the Parable of the Lost “Sheep” (πρόβατον) on the other, then the enthronement of “the Lamb” (τὸ ἄρνιον) in Revelation 4–7 (e.g. 7:17) would have provided a useful proof-text, for although the terminological link is absent, the conceptual link is very strong.

To begin with, our saying of the Saviour clearly pertains to the use of the Pauline Head-Body imagery in pages 15–18. In these pages, the broader, non-Valentinian, Christian community is encouraged to identify both themselves and the Valentinian Christians as part of the same Church-Body with Christ as their mutual Head. For although the unequal “outpouring of (spiritual) gifts” (16.30; **ΑΠΟΖΡΟΙΑ ΝΗΕΖΜΑΤ**) from the Head upon the members of the church may seem unjust, it is important that the members do not become “jealous” of one another (15.21, 29, 30, 38; 17.28; 18.31; 21.22; **ΦΘΟΝΕΙ**; Gk. φθονεῖν), since in reality the source of these gifts is always the same; the Logos who is “rich, *not jealous*, and kind” (17.35–36; **ΟΥΡΗΜΑΟ ... ΝΑΤΡΦΘΟΝΕΙ ΑΥΩ ΟΥΧΡΗΣΤΟΣ**).<sup>111</sup> For, “in this place (i.e. the cosmos), he gives away gifts to his people without jealousy” (17.36–38; **Ϛ† ΑΒΑΛ ΖΝ ΝΕΙΜΑ ΝΝΔΩΡΕΑ ΝΝϚΡΩΜΕ ΑΧΝ ΡΦΘΟΝΕΙ**). Instead of being jealous, those with inferior spiritual gifts are instructed to “pray” (16.22; **Ϟ[Λ]ΗΑ**), or “ask” (17.32–33; **[ΑΙ]ΤΕΙ**; Gk. αἰτεῖν), for the “grace” (16.23; 17.34; **ΧΑΡΙΣ**; Gk. χάρις) which flows from the crucified Christ (12.27–29). On the other hand, one who is jealous blocks their own “path” (**ΖΗ**),<sup>112</sup> “since he excludes only himself from the gift, and he is ignorant before God” (15.31–33; **ΕϞΨΑΡΨΡ ΜΗΜΑϞ ΟΥΑΕΕΤϚ ΖΜ ΠΕΖΜΑΤ ΑΥΩ ΕϞΟΕΙ ΝΑΤΖΗ[Τ] ΜΠΝΟΥΤΕ ΣΨΕ ΑΡΑϞ**).

The Pauline imagery reaches its climax on pages 17–18, where the quality of spiritual gift received, and therefore one’s standing in the church, is equated to a more or less important body part. The community is exhorted not to be jealous over whether they have been put “in the class of a hand, or an eye, or a foot” (18.31–32; **ΖΝ ΟΥ[ΜΕ]ΡΟΣ ΝΒΕΛ Η ΟΥΒΙΧ Η ΟΥΡΙΤΕ**), but rather to be thankful that they exist as part of “the Body” (18.34; **ΠϞΩΜΑ**; Gk. σῶμα), since when such members exist apart from the Body, “they die” (17.22; **ΣΕΜΑΥΤ**).

We have seen how according to the present understanding of our saying of the Saviour, the soul is exhorted to enter the body of the crucified Christ, and in doing so restore the primal androgyne and overcome death on the one hand, but also be enthroned within the veil of Christ’s flesh, thereby receiving the glory of Christ’s victory over death. Much of the mystical background to this saying, which we saw was developed by the Valentinian author in *Interp. Know.* 11–14, is here subsumed to the needs of the

<sup>111</sup> It is clear that Christ and the Logos are identical in this imagery, both being the Head who is the source of the Body-Church’s spiritual gifts, since the Logos is here described as **ΟΥΧΡΗΣΤΟΣ** (lit. “a kind/good one”), whereas **ΧΡΗΣΤΟΣ** is used as a Christological title in 15.17 (also in 1.20, 23, but these are almost entirely restored by Turner).

<sup>112</sup> See *Interp. Know.* 13.19 in n. 44 above.

immediate, impending, or perceived social crisis, such that the saying is most powerfully employed for its graphic image of participation in the Body of Christ, now understood as the church, the new temple. Certain elements of the saying's underlying mysticism permeate the paraenesis nonetheless, such as the crown of glory in 21.31–34. But perhaps most vividly preserved from our saying is the notion that once one has entered the Body-Church of Christ, “the archons and authorities” (20.22–23;  $\text{ΝΑΡΧΗ ΜΗΝ [ΝΕΖΟΥΣ]ΙΑ}$ ), formerly “the beasts”, can no longer find the soul, and “when they cannot see them, since they (the members of the Body) are freemen in the spirit, they tear that which is manifest (the flesh),”<sup>113</sup> and “they are mindlessly mad” (20.37;  $\text{ΣΕΛΑΒΙ ΖΗΝ ΟΥΜΝΤΑΘΗΤ}$ ). Clearly the more mystical elements of *Interp. Know.* 10.18–38, as well as the inclusive nature of the idea that the psychic substance can partake in, and be glorified within, the Body of Christ, made our saying of the Saviour an appropriate sectarian foreword to the more ecumenical paraenesis which constituted the *raison d'être* of the work as a whole.

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<sup>113</sup> 20.31–34;  $\text{ΝΤΑΡΟΥΤΗ[Ω]ΘΗΒΑΜ ΑΝΕΥ ΑΡΑΥ ΕΥΡΠΟΛΙΤΕΥΕΣΘΑΙ ΖΗ ΠΠΝΕΥΜΑ ΦΑΡΟΥΣΛΑΠΗ ΜΠΕΤΟΥΑΝΖ ΑΒΑΛ}$ .

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