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A late witness to Valentinian devotion in Egypt?

Abstract: Among the spells with Christian elements published in *Papyri Graecae Magicae* is a charitesion or “good luck charm,” *Papyrus Wessely Pragensis Graecus no. 1*.¹ The spell concludes with an acclamation to Jesus Christ that is remarkable for its long series of epithets. These have thus far eluded satisfactory explanation. Several of the epithets recall language used in Valentinian writings to express the relationship between Father and Son in Valentinian protology and soteriology. This paper presents evidence to support reading the acclamation as an expression of Valentinian devotion, and discusses the significance of such an acclamation in a spell that may have been written in the fifth century, taking into account the scribal features of the papyrus.

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The evidence for teachers, communities, and writings referred to as Valentinian is abundant in the second century, scarcer in the third century, and limited to the eastern regions of the empire in the fourth century C.E.² This paper relates to the

¹ *Papyri Graecae Magicae* P 21 (ed. Karl Preisendanz, Ernst Heitsch, and Albert Henrichs, *Papyri Graecae Magicae: Die griechischen Zauberpapyri* [2 vols.; 2d ed.; Stuttgart: Teubner, 1974], vol. 2, 229–230); hereafter abbreviated as *PGM* and cited with papyrus number followed by volume and page in parentheses. (Accordingly, the supplement to these volumes, *Supplementum Magicum* [ed. Robert W. Daniel and Franco Maltomini; 2 vols.; Papyrologica Coloniensia 16; Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1991–1992], will be abbreviated as *Supplementum Magicum* referring to the number, adding volume and page in parentheses.) I wish to thank Professor Rosario Pintaudi for kindly providing a digital image of the papyrus. I am also grateful to the Professors Guglielmo Cavallo, Jacco Dieleman, Jitse H. S. Dijkstra, and Jacques van der Vliet for helpful comments on aspects of the papyrus’ text. What follows is, of course, my responsibility.

² Einar Thomassen, *The Spiritual Seed: The Church of the ‘Valentinians’* (NHMS 60; Leiden: Brill, 2006), 491–508. For Alexandria and Egypt in particular, see also Christoph Marksches, “Valentinianische Gnosis in Alexandrien und Ägypten,” in *Origen and the Alexandrian Tradition / Origene e la tradizione Alessandrina: Papers of the 8th International Origen Congress, Pisa, 27–31 August 2001* (ed. Lorenzo Perrone; Origeniana Octava; Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium 164; Leuven: University Press and Uitgeverij Peeters, 2003), 331–346. For Valentinus himself, see Thomassen, *Spiritual Seed* (see above), 417–490, and Christoph Marksches,

latter period. In the 370s Epiphanius reports that Valentinians are still present in Egypt in “the territory of Athribis, Prosopites, Arsinoe, and the Thebaid, and in the lower region of the seacoast and Alexandria.”³ His remark suggests that Valentinians were active in the major regions of Egypt: Alexandria and along the coast, the Delta and around Memphis, the Fayum and the Thebaid.⁴ The second half of the fourth century is also when the codices found at Nag Hammadi—ancient Chenoboskion, about 130 kilometres north of ancient Thebes—are believed to have been copied, several of which contain Valentinian works.⁵ The last mention of Valentinians in the east is in two well-known letters written by Ambrose, bishop of Milan, in 388 to the emperor Theodosius and his own sister about the destruction of the Jewish synagogue at Callinicum in Osrhoene. The group of monks who burnt down the synagogue also burnt down a Valentinian building in a nearby village.⁶ After that we do not hear of actual Valentinians. They live on only as a heresy censured in ecclesiastical writings and imperial legislation.⁷

However, among extant Greek spells with Christian elements we find tantalizing evidence of the continuing salience of Valentinian devotion.⁸ It comes in the form of an acclamation addressed to Jesus Christ at the end of a charitesion,

Valentinus Gnosticus? Untersuchungen zur valentinianischen Gnosis mit einem Kommentar zu den Fragmenten Valentins (WUNT 65; Tübingen: Mohr, 1992).

3 Epiphanius, *Panarion* 31,71 (GCS 25, 395,16–19 Holl): Ἐποιήσατο δὲ οὗτος τὸ κήρυγμα καὶ ἐν Αἰγύπτῳ, ὅθεν δὴ καὶ ὡς λείψανα ἐχίδνης ὁστέων ἔτι ἐν Αἰγύπτῳ περιλείπεται τούτου ἡ σπορά, ἐν τε τῷ Ἀθριβίτῃ καὶ Προσωπίτῃ καὶ Ἀρσινοίτῃ καὶ Θηβαΐδι καὶ τοῖς κάτω μέρεσι τῆς Παραλίας καὶ Ἀλεξανδρειοπολίτῃ; trans. Philip R. Amidon, *The Panarion of St. Epiphanius, Bishop of Salamis: Selected Passages* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 113. Epiphanius could have come by this knowledge during his own stay in Egypt; see Marksches, *Valentinus Gnosticus?* (see note 2), 316–317.

4 For the location of these place-names and regions, see John Baines and Jaromír Málek, *Atlas of Ancient Egypt* (New York: Facts on File Publications, 1980), 53; Roger S. Bagnall and Dominic W. Rathbone, eds., *Egypt from Alexander to the Early Christians: An Archaeological and Historical Guide* (Los Angeles: The J. Paul Getty Museum, 2004), 20. Prosopites refers to a nome north-east of Memphis.

5 See page 126 below.

6 Ambrosius, *Epistulae extra collectionem* 1a,16 (CSEL 82,3, 169,181–170,190 Zelzer) and 1,1 (145,6–11 Z.).

7 The evidence is collected in Klaus Koschorke, “Patristische Materialien zur Spätgeschichte der valentinianischen Gnosis,” in *Gnosis and Gnosticism: Papers Read at the Eighth International Conference on Patristic Studies (Oxford, September 3rd-8th 1979)* (ed. Martin Krause; NHS 17; Leiden: Brill, 1981), 120–139.

8 For a list of Greek spells from Egypt with Christian elements, see Theodore S. de Bruyn and Jitse H. F. Dijkstra, “Greek Amulets and Formularies from Egypt Containing Christian Elements: A Checklist of Papyri, Parchments, Ostraka, and Tablets,” *Bulletin of the American Society of*

an ancient “good-luck charm.” The charitesion had a long history in Egypt, with roots in ancient Egyptian letters and greetings.⁹ We have examples in all the religious idioms—Egyptian, Graeco-Roman, Jewish, and Christian—and forms of writing—Demotic, Greek, and Coptic—of Roman Egypt. Many of the spells are short, with a rubric giving the purpose of the spell, a brief text to be spoken or written, and instructions on how to activate the spell. Some of the spells are longer, with an extended invocation, petition, and narrative or argument. The petition typically asks for attractiveness, favour, glory, esteem, and success in all one’s affairs, and the narrative or argument explains why the power being invoked should grant the petition.

The spell with which we are concerned is the only extended Greek charitesion in a Christian idiom.¹⁰ It comes from the Fayum. It was found or acquired by the papyrologist Carl Wessely, who left it to the University Library in Prague upon his death. Wessely published only the first eight lines of the first column of the text in the first volume of his collection of Christian papyrological materials in 1907.¹¹ He nevertheless completed a transcription of the entire first column, and Seymour de Ricci, an Egyptologist better known for his later work on Medieval and Renaissance manuscripts and art, completed a transcription of both columns. These transcriptions were found with the papyrus by Theodor Hopfner, the scholar of Greco-Egyptian divinatory spells who published a complete annotated edition

Papyrologists 48 (2011): 163–216. The great majority of materials comes from Egypt because its climate is conducive to their preservation.

9 Joachim F. Quack, “From Ritual to Magic: Ancient Egyptian Precursors of the Charitesion and Their Social Setting,” in *Continuity and Innovation in the Magical Tradition* (ed. Gideon Bohak, Yuval Harari and Shaul Shaked; Jerusalem Studies in Religion and Culture 15; Leiden: Brill, 2011), 43–84.

10 The charitesion is written on a sheet of brown papyrus 24 cm wide by 28,3 cm high. There are two columns of text written along the fibres in brown ink, now faded. The text occupies the top two-thirds of the papyrus, leaving approximately 10,5 cm of unwritten surface at the bottom: top margin 1,5–1 cm; left 0,8–1,5 cm; right variable. There is one vertical crease in the middle of the sheet, three horizontal creases at intervals of 3,5, 4, and 4 cm respectively descending from the top edge, and three horizontal creases at intervals of 4, 4, and 3,5 cm respectively ascending from the bottom edge. Although it is difficult to be certain without examining the papyrus, it appears that the sheet was folded first from right to left and then several times from the top and the bottom. If this is correct, the resulting packet would have been about 6 cm wide by 2 cm high. There is some loss of papyrus along the folds. A piece 2 by 3,5 cm is missing at the top left corner, and a piece 5 by 5 cm is missing on the right side 3 cm down from the top edge.

11 Carl Wessely, *Les plus anciens monuments du christianisme écrits sur papyrus* 1 (PO 4,2; Paris: Firmin-Didot, 1907), (95–210) 191–192.

of the text in 1935.¹² Hopfner was able to correct readings and fill in lacunae in the prior transcriptions because he had the benefit of an infrared photograph of the papyrus. In fact, the plate in Hopfner's edition is still more legible at many points than the digital image of the papyrus, with its faint script obscured by the darkening of the papyrus. Hopfner's text was reprinted as P 21 with some changes by Karl Preisendanz in his collection of Greek magical texts, *Papyri Graecae Magicae*.¹³ Since then no further examination of the papyrus has been published.

The papyrus has a number of singular features, among them its *nomina sacra*, concluding acclamation, and Coptic postscript. I begin with the acclamation:

Diplomatic transcription:¹⁴

- 41 Ἰης Χρης'
 ὑ βασιλευς των διωνων παντ ..
 παντο'κρατωρ' αμυθητοις κτιστα
 τροφευ' δεσποτα παν[.]ο'
 45 κρατωρ συ παι' υιος ευνων'
 ασθεν'ακτον' μοι' **Κ** αμ
 μυθητον' ονομα' αλληθος'
 αλληθως' ειτος α[.]ατοϋ ε[.]
 ς αιωνας' εωνων[.]αμην

Normalized text:¹⁵

- 41 Ἰη(σου)ς Χρι(στό)ς,
 <σ>ὕ¹⁶ βασιλεὺς τῶν αἰώνων πάντ[ων],
 παντοκράτωρ, ἀμύθητος κτίστα,
 τροφεῦ, δέσποτα, παν[τ]ο-

12 Theodor Hopfner, "Ein neuer griechischer Zauberpapyrus (Pap. Wessely Pragense. Graec. no. 1)," *Archiv Orientalní* 7 (1935): (355–366) 355.

13 *PGM* P 21 (vol. 2, 229–230).

14 The scribe marked the ends of words, and occasionally parts of words, by an oblique stroke, as Wessely observed (Wessely, *Les plus anciens monuments* [see note 11], 191). I have noted those visible to me. The papyrus is darker and the writing less distinct in the second half of lines, making it difficult to be certain of these strokes, as well as some letters.

15 As Hopfner, "Ein neuer griechischer Zauberpapyrus" (see note 12), 365, observes, several of the epithets are in the nominative when they should be in the vocative.

16 The emendation is proposed by Preisendanz, *PGM* P 21,42 apparatus (vol. 2, 230).

45 κράτωρ, σὺ παῖ,¹⁷ υἱὸς εὐνοῶν,
 ἀστένακτόν μοι κ(αὶ) ἄμ-
 ὑθητον ὄνομα, ἀληθές
 ἀληθῶς εἶδος ἀ[όρ]ατον ε[ἰ]-
 ς αἰῶνας αἰῶνων, ἀμήν.

Translation:

Jesus Christ, you king of all the aeons, almighty, inexpressible creator, nourisher, master, almighty; you child, benevolent son, my unutterable and inexpressible name, truly true form, unseen forever and ever, amen.

In form and vocabulary the acclamation resembles invocations of divine names or epithets found in Greco-Egyptian spells. One of the epithets in our charitesion, “nourisher” (τροφεῦ), also appears in a litany at the end of a spell addressed to Sarapis,¹⁸ and the phrases “my unutterable and inexpressible name” and “truly true form” recall expressions used in Egyptian solar hymns.¹⁹ Moreover, individual

¹⁷ At line 45 σὺ παῖ should be read rather than Hopfner’s εὔπαις; the initial sigma is clearly visible, while the final sigma is not. The pronoun σὺ at line 45 accords with the editorially emended <σ>ὸ at line 41.

¹⁸ PGM P 13,637–639 (vol. 2, 116): ὅτι δοῦλός εἰμι σὸς καὶ ἰκέτης καὶ ὕμνησά σου | τὸ αὐθεντικὸν ὄνομα καὶ ἅγιον, κύριε, ἔνδοξε, κοσμοκρ- | άτωρ, μυριώτατε, μέγιστε, τροφεῦ, μερισ- | τά, Σάραπι; trans. Morton Smith, “PGM XIII. 343–646,” in *The Greek Magical Papyri in Translation: Including the Demotic Spells* (ed. Hans G. Betz; 2d ed.; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), (182–188) 187–188, modified: “because I am your slave and petitioner and have hymned your authentic and holy name, Lord, glorious one, ruler of the cosmos, wholly boundless, greatest, nourisher, apportioner, Sarapis.” For a diplomatic transcription, see Robert W. Daniel, *Two Greek Magical Papyri in the National Museum of Antiquities in Leiden: A Photographic Edition of J 384 and J 395* (= PGM XII and XIII) (Papyrologica Coloniensia 19; Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1991), 58.

¹⁹ PGM P 12,235–238 (vol. 2, 74): ἐγὼ εἰμι εἰδωλὸς τοῖς κατὰ ἀλήθειαν εἰδώλοις ὡμοιωμένος . . . ἔλθατέ μοι συνεργοί, ὅτι μέλλω ἐπικαλεῖσθαι τὸ κρυπτόν καὶ ἄρρητον ὄνομα, τὸν προπάτορα θεῶν, πάντων ἐπόπτην καὶ κύριον; trans. Morton Smith, “PGM XII. 201–69,” in *The Greek Magical Papyri in Translation: Including the Demotic Spells* (ed. Hans G. Betz; 2d ed.; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), (161–163) 161: “I am the image resembling the true images . . . Therefore, I beseech [you], come as my helpers, for I am about to call on the hidden and ineffable name, the forefather of gods, overseer and lord of all.” Cf. Daniel, *Two Greek Magical Papyri* (see above), 14; Reinhold Merkelbach and Maria Totti, “Weihung eines Abrasax-Ringes” [zu PGM P 12,201–269] in *Abrasax: Ausgewählte Papyri religiösen und magischen Inhalts 1: Gebete* (ed. iidem; Papyrologica Coloniensia 17,1; Cologne: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1990), (155–178) 175; Jacco Dieleman, *Priests, Tongues, and Rites: The London-Leiden Magical Manuscripts and Translation in Egyptian Ritual (100–300 CE)* (Religions in the Graeco-Roman World 153; Leiden: Brill, 2005), 153–157, 161.

words and phrases of this particular acclamation can be found elsewhere in literary sources. The epithets “king of the aeons” (βασιλεὺς τῶν αἰώνων), “almighty” (παντοκράτωρ), and “master” (δέσποτα) are widely attested. The phrase “king of all the aeons” (βασιλεὺς τῶν αἰώνων πάντων in varying word order) is less common,²⁰ but Origen and Athanasius—both originating, like our papyrus, in Egypt—each use it once.²¹ So too, “truly true form” (ἀληθὲς ἀληθῶς εἶδος) is found nowhere else, but Cyril of Alexandria and Ammonius of Alexandria each refer to Christ as the “true form” of the Father in their commentaries on John,²² and the idea that God’s “form” is “unseen” appears already in the verse that these two commentators are discussing, John 5:37.²³ Nevertheless, the particular series of epithets in this acclamation is unique among Greek spells with Christian elements, which more often echo or repeat more common Christian acclamations, doxologies, and invocations.²⁴

20 A search of Thesaurus Linguae Graecae, <http://www.tlg.uci.edu/> (last accessed 16.05.2014), with the lemmata βασιλεὺς, αἰώνων, and πάντων yielded several comparable instances.

21 Origenes, *Commentarium in evangelium Matthaei* 17,28 (GCS 40, 661,22–24 Klostermann): ὁ δὲ <πάντων> τῶν αἰώνων βασιλεὺς ἐν οὐδενὶ συμβόλῳ τυγχάνων θεὸς πανταχοῦ ὀνομάζεται—“But God is everywhere called ‘the king of all the aeons,’ a name that occurs in no emblem,” in a discussion of Matt 22,21: “Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s”; I take σύμβολον here to refer to an imperial token or warrant. Athanasius Alexandrinus, *Orationes tres adversus Arianos* 1,12,38 (PG 26:37B): πάντων τῶν αἰώνων βασιλεὺς ἐστὶ καὶ ποιητὴς ὁ λόγος—“the Word is king and maker of all the aeons,” in a discussion of Ps 144,13 LXX: ἡ βασιλεία σου βασιλεία πάντων τῶν αἰώνων—“your kingdom is a kingdom of all the aeons.”

22 Cyrillus Alexandrinus, *Commentarii in Joannem* 3,2 (ed. Philip E. Pusey, *Sancti patris nostri Cyrilli archiepiscopi Alexandrini in D. Joannis evangelium* 1 [3 vols.; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1872], 383,2–3): καὶ τὸ ἀληθέστατον ὡσπερ εἶδος αὐτοῦ, διὰ τῆς θεοπροποῦς ἐξουσίας τε καὶ δυνάμεως θεωρῆσαι παραιτησάμενοι—“and refusing to contemplate his most true form, as it were, through his divine authority and power.” Ammonius Alexandrinus, *Fragmenta in Joannem* 177 (ed. Joseph Reuss, *Johannes-Kommentare aus der griechischen Kirche* [TU 89; Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1966], 241,4–5): τῷ Χριστῷ, ὅς ἐστι λόγος τοῦ πατρὸς καὶ τὸ ἀληθὲς αὐτοῦ εἶδος—“in Christ, who is the Word of the Father and his true form.”

23 John 5:37: καὶ ὁ πέμψας με πατὴρ ἐκεῖνος μεμαρτύρηκεν περὶ ἐμοῦ. οὔτε φωνὴν αὐτοῦ ὡποτε ἀκηκόατε οὔτε εἶδος αὐτοῦ ἐωράκατε—“And the Father who sent me has himself borne witness to me. His voice you have never heard; his form you have never seen.”

24 The numbers in parentheses after the following examples refer to the number of the item in Tables 1 and 2 in De Bruyn and Dijkstra, “Greek Amulets and Formularies” (see note 8), 184–203, where full bibliography is provided; for the system of abbreviations, cf. *ibid.*, 165 (note 8); for discussion and additional examples, cf. 180–181. *Papyrus Bononiensis* 1 9,5–8 (104) (“Amuleto Cristiano,” in *Papyri Bononienses (P. Bon.)* 1: 1–50 [ed. Orsolina Montevocchi; Pubblicazioni della Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore 42; Milan: Società Editrice “Vita e Pensiero,” 1953], 31–32): εἰς | Πατῆ[ρ] ἅγιος εἰς Υἱὸς | ἅγιος ἐν Πνεύμ<α> ἅγιον | ἀμήν ἀμήν ἀμήν; *Supplementum Magicum*

The phraseology does recall, however, language used in certain Valentinian writings to express the relationship between the Father and the Son and those who have come to know who they are because of the Son. These writings, which belong to or are influenced by the eastern tradition of Valentinianism, are preserved in the codices found at Nag Hammadi.²⁵ The codices are believed to have been buried at the end of the fourth century or the beginning of the fifth. They contain copies of Coptic translations of works originally written in Greek. The Coptic translations date from the late third to the mid fourth century; the Greek originals, prior to that time.²⁶ Of particular interest for our purposes are the *Gospel of Truth* (NHC I,3) and the *Tripartite Tractate* (NHC I,5), which, despite their differences, describe the generation of aeons from within the divine unity in similar terms.²⁷ The *Gospel of Truth* is one of the earliest extant Valentinian works,²⁸ known to Irenaeus and

21,1–2 (vol. 1, 58) (62): [swastika] ἴς πατήρ [swastika] ἴς υἱός [swastika] ἐν ἡ πνεῦμα ἅγιον ἀμήν. *PGM P 5d,1–3* (vol. 2, 214) (23): [Δόξα] τῷ πατρὶ καὶ τῷ υἱῷ [κα] | ἰ τῷ ἁγίῳ πνεύματι | νῦν κα<ι> <ἀ>ει καὶ <εἰς> τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰῶνων; *PGM P 19,5–6* (vol. 2, 228) (38+): δόξα πατρὶ καὶ υἱῷ | καὶ ἁγίῳ πνεύματι νῦν καὶ ἀεὶ καὶ εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰῶνων. ἀμήν. *PGM P 18,1–3* (vol. 2, 227), cited according to Franco Maltomini, “Osservazioni al testo di alcuni papiri magici greci. (III.),” *Studi Classici e Orientali* 32 (1982): (235–241) 239 (37+): † ἅγιος ἄγι[ος] ἄγιος κύριος | Σαβαωθ πλήρης ὁ] οὐρα[νὸς κ]αὶ | ἡ γῆ τῆς δόξης [. *PGM P 12,1–5* (vol. 2, 219–220), cited according to Cornelia E. Römer, “Gebet und Bannzauber des Severus von Antiochia gegen den Biss giftiger Tiere, oder: Maltomini hatte Recht,” *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 168 (2009): (209–212) 211 (29+): ἐν ὀνόματι τῆς ἁγίας καὶ ὁμοουσίου Τριάδος, Πατρός | καὶ Υἱ[ο]ῦ καὶ ἁγί[ο]υ [Πνεύμα]τ[ος] καὶ | τῆς δεσποίνης ἡμῶν, | τῆς παναγίας Θεοτόκου καὶ ἀειπαρθένου Μαρίας καὶ ἁγιωτάτου | καὶ προδρόμου Ἰωάννου τοῦ βαπτισ[το]ῦ, καὶ τοῦ ἁγίου καὶ θεολόγ[ου] | Ἰωάννου τοῦ εὐαγγελιστοῦ, καὶ τῶν ἁγίων πατέρων ἡμῶν | ἀποστόλων καὶ πάντων τῶν ἁγίων; *Supplementum Magicum* 31,4 (vol. 1, 87) (72+): ἐν ὀνόματι π(α)τ(ρ)ὸς κ(αὶ) υ(ἱ)οῦ κ(αὶ) ἁγίου πνεύμα(τος) κ(αὶ); *Supplementum Magicum* 36,1 (vol. 1, 106–107) (77): † In nomine patris et filii et spir[it]us sa[nc]ti l..... amen.

25 *Gospel of Truth* (NHC I,3; 12,2), *Tripartite Tractate* (NHC I,5), *Treatise on the Resurrection* (NHC I,4), *Interpretation of Knowledge* (NHC XI,1), *The Gospel of Philip* (NHC II,3), *Valentinian Exposition* (NHC XI,2). The fundamental work of Jean-Pierre Mahé and Paul-Hubert Poirier, eds., *Écrits gnostiques: La bibliothèque de Nag Hammadi* (Bibliothèque de la Pléiade; Paris: Gallimard, 2007) provides scholarship on various relevant aspects of the writings. For an overview, see Einar Thomassen, “Les écrits valentiniens de Nag Hammadi,” in Mahé and Poirier, *Écrits gnostiques* (see above), xliii–li; Thomassen, *Spiritual Seed* (see note 2), 502 (with notes 43–44).

26 Paul-Hubert Poirier, “Écrits gnostiques et témoignages patristiques,” in Mahé and Poirier, *Écrits gnostiques* (see note 25), (xxix–xxxv) xxxiv.

27 Thomassen, *Spiritual Seed* (see note 2), 193–194.

28 On the Valentinian character of the work, see Einar Thomassen, “Notice,” in Mahé and Poirier, *Écrits gnostiques* (see note 25), (45–52) 51–52; Thomassen, *Spiritual Seed* (see note 2), 146–148.

the writer of the *Tripartite Tractate*.²⁹ The *Tripartite Tractate* is believed to have been written in the last half of the third century.³⁰

The idea that the Son is the “Name” (ΠΡΕΝ) of the Father figures prominently in the *Gospel of Truth*. For the writer of the *Gospel of Truth*, as for the writer of the *Tripartite Tractate*,³¹ the Father possesses a unitary essence that transcends reflexive understanding;³² he is known only in the Son. The Son, as the thought of the Father, is one with the Father, but also distinct from him. He is hidden in the Father, yet reveals the Father to the aeons that emanate from the Father. The Son thereby imparts to them knowledge of their true, authentic existence. The *Gospel of Truth* describes these ontological and soteriological relations by way of the linguistic metaphor of the “Name.”³³ The Son is the “Name” of the Father and bestows that “Name” on those who come to know themselves in the Father.

The Father’s saving self-revelation is described not only as the giving of a name,³⁴ but also as the giving of form. The process whereby the aeons come to know their true identity is likened to the process whereby an embryo takes form as a fetus, an infant is given a name, and a child recognizes its parents.³⁵ The writer of the *Gospel of Truth* says, “[The Father] manifests whomever he wishes by giving him form and giving him a name.”³⁶ The *Tripartite Tractate* uses similar language to describe the coming into existence of the aeons, who nevertheless have yet to come to know the source from which they derive.³⁷ It is the Son, the form of the Father,³⁸ who reveals this knowledge to them.³⁹ Thus, in the words of a Valentinian excerpt preserved by Clement of Alexandria, when the aeons are

²⁹ Thomassen, “Notice” (see note 28), 45, 51.

³⁰ Einar Thomassen, ed., and Louis Painchaud, trans., *Le Traité Tripartite (NH I,5): Texte établi, introduit et commenté* (BCNH Textes 19; Quebec: Les Presses de l’Université Laval, 1989), 18–20.

³¹ Cf. *Tripartite Tractate* (NHC I,5) 54,2–24 (BCNH Textes 19, 58 Thomassen/Painchaud).

³² *Gospel of Truth* (NHC I,3) 17,6–9 (ed. and trans. Harold W. Attridge and George W. MacRae, *Nag Hammadi Codex I [The Jung Codex]* 1 [NHS 22; Leiden: Brill, 1985], 82); cf. Thomassen, *Spiritual Seed* (see note 2), 159–160.

³³ *Gospel of Truth* (NHC I,3) 38,7–40,23 (110–114 A./MacR.). See Harold W. Attridge and George W. MacRae, *Nag Hammadi Codex I (The Jung Codex)* 2 (NHS 23; Leiden: Brill, 1985), 117–128.

³⁴ *Gospel of Truth* (NHC I,3) 21,25–22,13 (88–90 A./MacR.).

³⁵ *Gospel of Truth* (NHCI,3) 27,13–33 (96 A./MacR.); *Tripartite Tractate* (NHCI,5) 60,16–34; 61,1–62,5 (74–76 T./P.); see Thomassen, *Le Traité Tripartite* (see note 30), 296–299.

³⁶ *Gospel of Truth* (NHC I,3) 27,27–29 (96; trans. 97 A./MacR.): ΠΕΤ̄ΘΟΥ’ΑΨ̄Ϊ̄ ̄ϞΟΥΩΝ̄Ξ̄ ̄ΜΜΑϞ̄ ΕϞ̄† ΜΟΡϞΗ̄ ΝΕϞ̄ ΑΥΩ̄ ΕϞ̄† ΡΕΝ̄ ΝΕϞ̄.

³⁷ *Tripartite Tractate* (NHC I,5) 61,1–28 (74–76 T./P.).

³⁸ *Tripartite Tractate* (NHC I,5) 66,13–14; 67,19 (88; 90 T./P.).

³⁹ *Tripartite Tractate* (NHC I,5) 62,33–38; 64,28–66,29 (78–80; 84–88 T./P.); see Thomassen, *Le Traité Tripartite* (see note 30), 300, 304–310.

educated about their true identity, they come to understand that “what they are, they are by the grace of the Father: unnameable name, form, and knowledge.”⁴⁰

The acclamation in the charitesion appears to issue from such a Valentinian understanding of existence and salvation. The correspondence is not just at the conceptual or terminological level; it is also at the rhetorical or discursive level. The acclamation resorts to superlatives to express the idea that the name and the form which the initiated possesses transcend speech and sight: “my unutterable and inexpressible name, truly true form, unseen forever and ever.” This use of language recalls passages where the *Gospel of Truth* and the *Tripartite Tractate* strain to convey the transcendence of the Father and the generation of the Son in the Father.⁴¹

In the acclamation, these epithets are applied to Jesus Christ. This is consistent with Valentinian discourse, which combines several types of narratives. The same reality or process is described as the generation of children within the Father, their salvation through the incarnation of the Saviour, and their redemption through the ritual of baptism.⁴² The initiation rite of the Valentinians, in which the initiated received the “Name,”⁴³ was in fact either the same as the rite of the broader church or very similar to that rite.⁴⁴ Thus, the liturgical fragments appended to the *Valentinian Exposition* identify Jesus Christ with the Son of the Father.⁴⁵ Our charitesion makes the same equation.

The writing of the name “Jesus Christ” in the charitesion invites further examination. The *nomina sacra* are unusual. The scribe writes $\text{I}\text{H}\text{C}\text{H}\text{S}\text{U}\text{S}$ (l. 8) for

40 Clemens Alexandrinus, *Excerpta Theodoti* 31,3 (SC 23, 126 Sagnard): Τότε γὰρ ἐπέγνωσαν ὅτι <ὄ> εἶσιν, “χάριτι τοῦ Πατρὸς εἶσιν”· ὄνομα ἀνωνόμαστον, Μορφή καὶ Γνώσις; cf. 1 Cor 15,10. On the attribution of an excerpt such as this one, which follows upon an excerpt (31,2) loosely attributed to “them” (φασί), cf. François Sagnard, “Introduction,” in idem, ed., *Clément d’Alexandrie: Extraits de Théodote* (SC 23; Paris: Cerf, 1970), (5–50) 30–32; Marksches, “Valentinianische Gnosis” (see note 2), 335 note 25; Thomassen, *Spiritual Seed* (see note 2), 28–29. A precise attribution is not fundamental to my argument.

41 *Gospel of Truth* (NHC I,3) 38,14–32; 39,3–6; 40,2–24 (110–114 A./MacR.); see Attridge and MacRae, *Nag Hammadi Codex I 2* (see note 33), 120, 122–123. *Tripartite Tractate* (NHC I,5) 54,2–24; 66,13–39 (58; 88–90 T./P.); see Thomassen, *Le Traité Tripartite* (see note 30), 272–273, 309–310.

42 Thomassen, *Spiritual Seed* (see note 2), 146–187.

43 Thomassen, *Spiritual Seed* (see note 2), 403–404.

44 Thomassen, *Spiritual Seed* (see note 2), 386–394.

45 *Valentinian Expositions* (NHC XI,2) 40,11–29 (BCNH Concordances 6, 325 Funk); 43,20–38 (327 F.); trans. Jean-Pierre Mahé, “Exposé du mythe valentinien (NH XI, 2),” in Mahé and Poirier, *Écrits gnostiques* (see note 25), (1515–1533) 1530, 1532–1533. Cf. Thomassen, *Spiritual Seed* (see note 2), 355–360; Jean-Pierre Mahé, “Notice,” in Mahé and Poirier, *Écrits gnostiques* (see note 25), (1503–1512) 1503–1505.

the genitive, ἡς χρις (ll. 26–27) for the accusative, and ἡς χρις (l. 41) for the nominative, all with supralinear strokes. The abbreviations for Χριστός display several anomalies: the four-letter form, the substitution of *eta* for *iota*, and the irregular form for the accusative. In Greek papyri the more common and regular abbreviations for the nominative form of Χριστός are χς or χρς; for the genitive, χυ or χρυ; and for the accusative, χν or χρν.⁴⁶ Since *eta* and *iota* would have been indistinguishable when spoken, it is not surprising that *eta* is occasionally substituted for *iota* when Χριστός is spelled out in full,⁴⁷ though in fact the substitution is far less common for Χριστός than for χριστιανός.⁴⁸ Χρηστός is attested in a sixth-century adjuration seeking vengeance upon a certain Philadelphia and her children.⁴⁹ But *nomina sacra* with *eta* are rare. A search of Greek documentary papyri yielded no additional relevant instances.⁵⁰ In Coptic documents the uninflected forms $\overline{\chi\zeta}$ and $\overline{\pi\epsilon\chi\zeta}$ are used.⁵¹ This is also true of Coptic spells.⁵² However, $\overline{\chi\rho\eta\sigma\tau\omicron\varsigma}$ is frequently used in Valentinian works in the Nag Hammadi codices,⁵³ and the abbreviation $\overline{\pi\epsilon\chi\rho\eta\sigma}$ occurs once in the *Tripartite Tractate*,⁵⁴ along with the more common $\overline{\pi\epsilon\chi\rho\varsigma}$ and $\overline{\pi\epsilon\chi\varsigma}$. These forms do not occur in other Nag Hammadi treatises referring to Christ.⁵⁵ The unusual and rare presence of

46 Anton H. R. E. Paap, *Nomina Sacra in the Greek Papyri of the First Five Centuries A.D.: The Sources and Some Deductions* (Papyrologica Lugduno-Batava 8; Leiden: Brill, 1959), 94.

47 Paap, *Nomina Sacra* (see note 46), 94: nos. 69 (BKT 6 9794) and 149 (P.Lond. 6 1928); no. 104 (PGM P 4,1234 [vol. 1, 114]) is in fact Egyptian written in Greek characters.

48 See now Walter Shandruk, “The Interchange of ι and η in Spelling χριστ- in Documentary Papyri,” *Bulletin of the American Society of Papyrologists* 47 (2010): 205–219.

49 *Supplementum Magicum* 61 (vol. 2, 53–54).

50 Search of Papyrological Navigator, www.papyri.info (last accessed 30 April 2013), using the terms #χρις# and #χρην#.

51 See the indices in Monika R. M. Hasitzka, ed., *Koptisches Sammelbuch* (4 vols.; Mitteilungen aus der Papyrussammlung der Österreichischen Nationalbibliothek [Papyrus Erzherzog Rainer], Neue Serie 23; Vienna: Brüder Hollinek, 1993–2004; Munich: Saur, 2006; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2012). A few inflected forms are also attested.

52 Viktor Stegemann, *Die Gestalt Christi in den koptischen Zaubertexten* (Quellen und Studien zur Geschichte und Kultur des Altertums und des Mittelalters, Untersuchungen und Mitteilungen 1; Heidelberg: F. Bilabel, 1934), 34–37.

53 *Treatise on the Resurrection* (NHC I,5) 43,37; 48,19; 50,1 (148; 154; 156 A./MacR.); *Tripartite Tractate* 122,19 (222 T./P.); *Valentinian Exposition* (NHC XI,2) 26,23; 28,23; 33,17; 39,30; 40,13; 40,19; 40,33; 41,17; 42,32–33; 43,37–38 (321; 323; 325; 326; 327 F.).

54 *Tripartite Tractate* (NHC I,5) 136,1 (254 T./P.).

55 These data were obtained through a search of the concordances to NHC I, III, VI–XIII in BCNH Concordances 1–7, and a search of the indices of editions of the tractates in NHC II, IV, and V in NHMS 4, 11, 20, 21, 27, and 33. The usage at *Apocryphon of John* (NHC III,1) 9,24, 10,2–3 (ed. and

the abbreviated form with *eta* in both the charitesion and the *Tripartite Tractate* adds to the evidence for a Valentinian milieu for the charitesion.

This brings us to the Coptic postscript to the charitesion.⁵⁶ It is written in the same hand as the preceding text,⁵⁷ from which it is separated by a horizontal line. (A horizontal line also runs along the bottom of the text in column 1.) There are irregularities in the Coptic. The first phrase employs a Coptic preposition with an inflected Greek form, and there are further difficulties in what follows.⁵⁸ The solution proposed by Hopfner after consultation with the Egyptologist František Lexa and the Coptologist Walter Crum—“By the saints, remember me, pray for me; I, Besi(?) Dorai”⁵⁹—is preferable to the translation given by Preisendanz and followed by Marvin Meyer.⁶⁰ After the independent personal pronoun $\lambda\text{NO}\Gamma$ (i.e., $\lambda\text{NO}\text{K}$) one expects a proper name.⁶¹ Only the first two letters of the name, “Be . . .,” are clear; the third letter may be sigma, followed possibly by iota. The remainder of the name, if there were more letters, is no longer legible because of a hole in the papyrus. There are numerous possibilities among Egyptian names beginning with “Bes”⁶² The name proposed by Hopfner, $\text{BHC}\lambda$ or $\text{B}\eta\sigma\acute{\alpha}\varsigma$ in Greek, is quite common, with over three hundred attestations in the Hellenistic and Roman periods, extending into the sixth century.⁶³ There are ninety-two attestations of $\text{B}\eta\varsigma$, including many in the fourth century and two in the sixth century, and 219 attestations of $\text{B}\eta\sigma\iota\varsigma$, extending into the fourth century.⁶⁴ As regards $\Delta\text{O}\text{P}\lambda\iota$, Hopfner suggested that it was added to distinguish the appellatant from others

trans. Michael Waldstein and Frederik Wisse, *The Apocryphon of John: Synopsis of Nag Ham-madi Codices II,1; III,1; and IV,1 with BG 8502,2* [NHS 23; Leiden: Brill, 1995], 42) is ambiguous.

56 Lines 50–53: $\text{Z}\text{I}\text{P}\text{N}\ \text{TO}\text{I}\text{C}\ \text{Z}\text{A}\text{G}\text{I}\text{O}\text{I}\text{C}\ |\ \text{A}\text{P}\text{I}\text{T}\text{A}\text{M}\text{E}\text{Y}\ \text{Z}\omega\ \text{O}\text{H}\lambda\ |\ \text{E}\text{X}\omega\text{E}\text{I}\ \lambda\text{NO}\Gamma\ \text{B}\text{H}\text{C}\text{I}\ [] |\ \Delta\text{O}\text{P}\lambda\iota$; Hopfner, “Ein neuer griechischer Zauberpapyrus” (see note 12), 356 reads $\text{BHC}\text{I}[\lambda\text{C}]$.

57 Cf., e.g., the formation of $\acute{\omega}\rho\alpha\iota\varsigma$ (line 25) with $\Delta\text{O}\text{P}\lambda\iota$ (line 53).

58 See Hopfner, “Ein neuer griechischer Zauberpapyrus” (see note 12), 365–366.

59 Hopfner, “Ein neuer griechischer Zauberpapyrus” (see note 12), 365: $\text{Z}\text{I}\text{P}\text{N}\ \text{TO}\text{I}\text{C}\ \text{Z}\text{A}\text{G}\text{I}\text{O}\text{I}\text{C}\ ,\ \text{A}\text{P}\text{I}\text{T}\text{A}\text{M}\text{E}\text{Y}\langle\epsilon\rangle\text{°}\ ,\ \text{Z}\omega\ \text{O}\langle\lambda\rangle\text{H}\lambda\ \text{E}\text{X}\text{O}\text{I}\ ,\ \lambda\text{NO}\Gamma\ \text{B}\text{H}\text{C}\ \Delta\text{O}\text{P}\lambda\iota$.

60 *PGM* P 21 (vol. 2, 229–230), and Marvin Meyer and Richard Smith, eds., *Ancient Christian Magic: Coptic Texts of Ritual Power* (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1994), 55–56, no. 36.

61 Bentley Layton, *A Coptic Grammar, with Chrestomathy and Glossary, Sahidic Dialect* (2d ed.; Porta Linguarum Orientalium, Neue Serie 20; Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2004), 65, §77(d).

62 See Trismegistos People, www.trismegistos.org/ref/index.php (last accessed 14.04.2014), under “Bes . . .” and following.

63 See Trismegistos People, www.trismegistos.org/name/2490 (last accessed 14.04.2014). For $\text{BHC}\lambda$, cf. Monika R. M. Hasitzka, “Namen in koptischen dokumentarischen Texten,” www.onb.ac.at/files/kopt_namen.pdf (last accessed 14.04.2014).

64 See Trismegistos People, www.trismegistos.org/name/100 (last accessed 14.04.2014).

with the same name.⁶⁵ It could be read as a dative of place, with *iota* adscript: a village named Dora is attested in the Hermopolite nome.⁶⁶ In light of the above, the identification of our scribe must remain tentative. But it is clear that he wrote in Coptic as well as Greek. Thus he could have been influenced by Coptic usage in the writing of *nomina sacra*.

Finally we come to a crux in the argument for the relevance of this papyrus as evidence of the presence of Valentinians or Valentinian devotion after the fourth century. When was the papyrus written? Wessely assigned the papyrus to 300 C.E., without explanation.⁶⁷ His date was accepted by Hopfner, without discussion.⁶⁸ Recently Robert Daniel suggested that the writing should be assigned to the fifth or sixth centuries,⁶⁹ referring to plates 14 a-b, 19 c, 21 d 1–2, 26 c, and 34 a-b in Guglielmo Cavallo and Herwig Maehler's *Greek Bookhands of the Early Byzantine Period: A.D. 300–800*.⁷⁰ However, after examining a digital image of the papyrus, Cavallo would assign the hand to the fourth or fifth century and exclude the sixth century.⁷¹ Indeed, in certain respects the writing of the charitesion resembles hands assigned to the fourth or fifth centuries:⁷² *alpha* with a double loop and frequently ligatured to the following letter, *delta* with the right diagonal sometimes beginning in a curl, *eta* written in a continuous uncial form beginning with the left vertical, *kappa* with a curved lower diagonal, *lambda* written in two strokes with a right diagonal beginning in a curl, *mu* with a deep central curve, *nu* with a slightly curved left vertical, *rho* with a long vertical and a small loop,

⁶⁵ Hopfner, "Ein neuer griechischer Zauberpapyrus" (see note 12), 366.

⁶⁶ See Trismegistos Places, www.trismegistos.org/place/4121 (last accessed 14.04.2014).

⁶⁷ Wessely, *Les plus anciens monuments* (see note 11), 191.

⁶⁸ Hopfner, "Ein neuer griechischer Zauberpapyrus" (see note 12), 355.

⁶⁹ Robert W. Daniel, "Charm for Victory and Favor" in ". . . vor dem Papyrus sind alle gleich!": *Papyrologische Beiträge zu Ehren von Bärbel Kramer (P.Kramer)* (ed. Raimar Eberhard et al.; Archiv für Papyrusforschung 27; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2009), (22–31) 23.

⁷⁰ Guglielmo Cavallo and Herwig Maehler, *Greek Bookhands of the Early Byzantine Period: A.D. 300–800* (Bulletin Supplement 47; London: University of London, Institute of Classical Studies, 1987), 37, 47, 51, 61, 76–77.

⁷¹ Personal communication, 1 June 2013. Professor Cavallo offered this observation cautiously, noting that the writing is difficult to date and the digital image is not very clear. What follows are my own observations, which I offer with some trepidation, given my relative inexperience in the paleography of Greek papyri.

⁷² See, e.g., Hermann Harrauer, *Handbuch der griechischen Paläographie* (2 vols.; Bibliothek des Buchwesens 20; Stuttgart: Hiersemann, 2010), vol. 2, plate 203 (the third hand) and plate 204; text and discussion at vol. 1, 412–414. The correspondence is not exact. The writing in plate 203 is that of a beginner and thus less fluid, and the *epsilon* is formed differently. The writing in plate 204 is slightly irregular, and the *epsilon* and *eta* are formed differently.

sigma with a flat top, and a v-shaped *upsilon*. But some of these features can also be observed in papyri dated early in the fourth century.⁷³ Thus, while the fifth century is possible, the fourth century cannot be excluded.

This is not to say that the text itself, or expressions in the text, could not have been the product of an earlier time. In fact, the invocation of the charitesion recalls the language of prayers in the second and third centuries. It follows the pattern of early Christian prayers in calling upon God “through our Lord Jesus Christ.”⁷⁴ Even more telling is the epithet that immediately follows: “beloved child” (ἡγαπημένου παιδός).⁷⁵ In the second century this biblical expression emerged as a way to refer to Jesus as the Son of God in Christian writings and prayers.⁷⁶ It persisted in liturgical texts after “Son” (υἱός) became the dominant expression in theological and creedal discourse.⁷⁷ The late second and early third century is also the formative period of Valentinianism. Thus in both its invocation and its acclamation the charitesion may preserve the phraseology of an earlier time, as often happens in the transmission of Christian prayers and liturgies.

Nevertheless, if the papyrus was written in the fourth or even fifth century, it complements the evidence we have from Epiphanius and the Nag Hammadi codices of the activity and significance of Valentinian Christianity in Egypt at that time. As with other material finds related to texts preserved in the Nag Hammadi codices,⁷⁸ the charitesion expands and enriches our understanding of the use and reception of those texts or, more broadly, the traditions of which those texts are

⁷³ See, e.g., Harrauer, *Handbuch* (see note 72), vol. 2, plate 176, dated after 13 October 306; text and discussion at vol. 1, 383.

⁷⁴ Lines 7–8: διὰ τοῦ κυρίου (read κυρίου) ἡμῶν | Ἰη(σο)ῦ Χρη(στο)ῦ (read Χρη(στο)ῦ). On prayer addressed to God through Christ, see Josef A. Jungmann, *The Place of Christ in Liturgical Prayer* (trans. A. Peeler; Staten Island: Alba House, 1965), 144–171.

⁷⁵ Line 8: ἀγαπημένου (read ἡγαπημένου) παιτός (read παιδός).

⁷⁶ The evidence is collected and discussed in Adolf von Harnack, “Die Bezeichnung Jesu als ‘Knecht Gottes’ und ihre Geschichte in der alten Kirche,” in idem, *Kleine Schriften zur alten Kirche: Berliner Akademieschriften 1908–1930 2* (Leipzig: Zentralantiquariat der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik, 1980), 730–756, originally published in *Sitzungsberichte der Preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Berlin* 28 (1926): 212–238.

⁷⁷ E.g., *Traditio apostolica* 4,4 (SC 11bis, 48 Botte); *Constitutiones apostolorum* 8,39,4; 8,41,8 (SC 336, 252,11; 258,43 Metzger). Cf. Marcel Metzger, ed. and trans., *Les constitutions apostoliques 2* (SC 329; Paris: Cerf, 1986), 32–33, and von Harnack, “Die Bezeichnung Jesu” (see note 76), 236.

⁷⁸ See, e.g., AnneMarie Luijendijk, “Reading the *Gospel of Thomas* in the Third Century: Three Oxyrhynchus Papyri and Origen’s *Homilies*,” in *Reading New Testament Papyri in Context / Lire les papyrus du Nouveau Testament dans leur contexte* (ed. Claire Clivaz and Jean Zumstein; Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium 242; Leuven: Peeters, 2011), 241–267; eadem, “‘Jesus Says: ‘There Is Nothing Buried That Will Not Be Raised’’: A Late-Antique Shroud with Gospel of Thomas Logion 5 in Context,” *ZAC* 15 (2011): (389–410) 407–409.

an expression. It gives us a sense of how Valentinian protology and soteriology were expressed in prayer and doxology, and it confirms that such prayers and doxologies were still circulating or used in the Fayum, one of the districts where Epiphanius says Valentinians were present. We cannot say whether the writer of the charitesion, who added the appeal in Coptic at the end of the text, was Valentinian. We have other instances of writers availing themselves of spells from a prior era and a different milieu: a prayer copied by the sixth-century poet and lawyer Dioscorus of Aphrodito, incorporating vocabulary found in Nag Hammadi treatises and elsewhere,⁷⁹ and a spell copied by the scribe Vales, a Manichaean of undetermined provenance, in a letter written around 365 to Pshai, a scribe belonging to the Manichaean community at Kellis.⁸⁰ But we can say that the writer of the charitesion availed himself of the acclamation, as did Dioscorus his prayer against evil and unclean spirits, without any apparent awareness of or concern for the strictures of ecclesiastical authorities.

⁷⁹ Leslie S. B. MacCoull, "P. Cair. Masp. II 67188 Verso 1–5: The *Gnostica* of Dioscorus of Aphrodito," *Tyche* 2 (1987): 95–97; *Supplementum Magicum* 65,31–33 commentary (vol. 2, 74–75); David R. Jordan, "A Prayer Copied by Dioskoros of Kômê Aphroditês (PGM 13a)," *Tyche* 16 (2001): (87–90) 87–88.

⁸⁰ Paul A. Mirecki, Iain Gardner, and Anthony Alcock, "Magical Spell, Manichaean Letter," in *Emerging from Darkness: Studies in the Recovery of Manichaean Sources* (ed. Paul A. Mirecki and Jason D. BeDuhn; NHMS 43; Leiden: Brill, 1997), 1–32.