

ON THE ORIGIN OF THE WORLD (II,5 AND XIII,2)

Introduced by

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The text of this tractate is quite well preserved. It is a compendium of central gnostic ideas, especially on cosmogony, anthropogony, and eschatology. Based on various sources and traditions, the treatise is in part presented in a semi-scholarly style, with numerous etiologies and etymologies. It is in the form of an apologetic tract designed for public effectiveness in attracting adherents. Earthly history, but also the presentation of the world above, including its development, are largely ignored. On the basis of the unnamed and unknown author's intention, stated at the beginning and then carried through in the text itself, scholarship has assigned the document the hypothetical title *On the Origin of the World*.

There are good reasons to assume that we have to do with a conscious, well-planned literary composition without extensive secondary alterations, rather than with the product of a rather long process in the transmission of tradition. The early fourth century could possibly be the time of composition. The remarkable mixture of various kinds of Jewish views, Manichaean elements, Christian ideas, Greek philosophical conceptions, and figures of Greek or Hellenistic mythology, magic, and astrology, as well as a clear emphasis on Egyptian thought, all point to Alexandria as the probable place of origin for the Greek original of *On the Origin of the World*. The process of translating into Coptic may have involved several stages. The seemingly corrupt condition of many passages that invite emendation, along with other difficult, often barely intelligible, parts could be explained by assuming that the text as it lies before us still represents a provisional stage in the process of translation. *On the Origin of the World* would thus be an "opus imperfectum" (B. Layton).

The author uses various sources and traditions, some not, that are difficult to define more closely in terms of literary criticism, much less to reconstruct. In the process there are on occasion tensions, unevenness, and contradictions, since at least a few of these traditions or works presuppose a very special system all their own, or contain other tendencies, e.g., Sethian, or Valentinian, or even Manichaean. *On the Origin of the World* itself offers no closed system of its own, nor does it represent one of the known gnostic systems. The author works with direct or indirect quotations, references, summaries, explanations, and etymologies, which stand in sharp contrast to the otherwise dominant narrative style. This way of working, defending one's own view by appeal or reference to other works, is intended as a demonstration of a substantive and convincing

argumentation. *On the Origin of the World* has many parallels with *The Hypothesis of the Archons*, indicating a close relation between the two texts. Yet the dissimilar nature of both documents, the diverging world views, and numerous differences in details, indicate that direct literary relationships are rather improbable. The parallelism probably results from the use of the same source material.

The cosmogony and anthropogony that follow upon the semi-philosophical beginning are in part oriented to Genesis 1-2, but beyond that to concepts such as those known from Jubilees or the Enoch literature. In general, characteristically Jewish influences dominate, e.g., in the angelology, demonology, and eschatology, as well as in etymologies. The gnostic reinterpretation of the received material varies considerably. It extends from complete reevaluation, e.g., in the case of the demiurge's presumption (making use of Is 45:5; 46:9 LXX), and what took place in Genesis 3, on to relatively unbroken appropriation of Jewish ideas and motifs, such as the presentation of paradise.

The primordial history emphasizes the creation of the earthly man by the Archons, in connection with the doctrine of the primal man, which to be sure is hard to understand, due to varying motifs and heterogeneous concepts. On the other hand, the primordial history initiates already the story of redemption on the part of Pistis Sophia or Sophia Zoe, who are encountered or act in various ways. In this complex soteriology, however, Jesus Christ has no central function, but rather a marginal role. For these reasons *On the Origin of the World* belongs to the gnostic Nag Hammadi texts that are essentially non-Christian.

On the Origin of the World is oriented towards universal eschatology. This is shown by the many allusions to the end, as well as by the broad presentation of the final events with a massive appropriation of thoughts, terms, and motifs from apocalypticism. The final state, brought about by the higher world, distinguishing the redemption of the gnostics from the destruction of the creation together with its creator, surpasses the primal condition, and renders impossible a repetition of events such as these presented in *On the Origin of the World*.

On the Origin of the World is a significant gnostic work. We attain through this relatively long document a good insight into an educated author's thinking, work habits, and argumentation on fundamental themes. Furthermore, *On the Origin of the World* shows to what a high degree and with what freedom and authority a gnostic author makes use of foreign, even non-gnostic and heterogeneous thoughts. It thus attests the greater importance ascribed to the gnostic stance toward the world and existence than to its mythological formulation. *On the Origin of the World* can help us understand how the gnostic world view, in debate with other intellectual currents, but also making use of them, could maintain itself or perhaps at times even win the field.

ON THE ORIGIN OF THE WORLD

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Seeing that everybody, gods of the world ²⁵ and mankind, says that nothing ¹ existed prior to chaos, I ¹ in distinction to them shall demon-

strate that they are ¹ all mistaken, because they are not acquainted with the origin ¹ of chaos, nor with its root. Here is the demonstration. ³⁰ How well it suits **98** all men, on the subject of chaos, to say that ¹ it is a kind of darkness! But in fact it comes from a shadow, ¹ which has been called by the name darkness. And the shadow ¹ comes from a product that has existed ⁵ since the beginning. It is, moreover, clear that it (viz., the product) ¹ existed before chaos came into being, and that the latter ¹ is posterior to the first product.

Let us therefore concern ourselves ¹ with the facts of the matter; and furthermore, with the first ¹ product, from which chaos was projected. ¹⁰ And in this way the truth will be clearly demonstrated. ¹

After the natural structure of the immortal beings ¹ had completely developed out of the infinite, ¹ a likeness then emanated from Pistis (Faith); ¹ it is called Sophia (Wisdom). It exercised volition ¹⁵ and became a product resembling ¹ the primeval light. And ¹ immediately her will manifested itself ¹ as a likeness of heaven, having ¹ an unimaginable magnitude; ²⁰ it was between the immortal beings and those things that ¹ came into being after them, like . . . : she (Sophia) ¹ functioned as a veil dividing ¹ mankind from the things above.

Now the eternal realm (aeon) ¹ of truth has no shadow outside it, ²⁵ for the limitless light is everywhere ¹ within it. But its exterior is shadow, ¹ which has been called by the name darkness. From ¹ it there appeared a force, presiding over ¹ the darkness. And the forces ³⁰ that came into being subsequent to them called the shadow ¹ "the limitless chaos." From it, ¹ every [kind] of divinity sprouted up ¹ . . . together with the entire place, [so that] ¹ also, [shadow] is posterior to the first **99** product. It was (in) the abyss that [it] (shadow) appeared, ¹ deriving from the aforementioned Pistis.

Then ¹ shadow perceived that there was something ¹ mightier than it, and felt envy; and when it had become pregnant ¹⁵ of its own accord, suddenly it ¹ engendered jealousy. Since that day, ¹ the principle of jealousy amongst ¹ all the eternal realms and their worlds has been apparent. Now as for that jealousy, ¹ it was found to be an abortion without ¹⁰ any spirit in it. Like a shadow it came into existence ¹ in a vast watery substance. Then ¹ the bile that had come into being out of the shadow ¹ was thrown into a part of chaos. ¹ Since that day, a watery substance ¹⁵ has been apparent. And what sank within ¹ it flowed away, being visible ¹ in chaos: as with a woman giving birth to a child ¹ — all her superfluities flow out; ¹ just so, matter came into being out of ²⁰ shadow and was projected apart. And it (viz., matter) did not ¹ depart from chaos; rather, matter was in chaos, ¹ being in a part of it. ¹

And when these things had come to pass, then Pistis came ¹ and appeared over the matter of ²⁵ chaos, which had been expelled like an ¹ aborted fetus — since there was no spirit in it. For all of it (viz., chaos) ¹ was limitless darkness ¹ and bottomless water. ¹ Now when Pistis saw what had resulted ³⁰ from her defect, she became disturbed. ¹ And the disturbance appeared, as a ¹ fearful product; it rushed [to] her in ¹ the chaos. She turned to it and [blew] into ¹ its face in the abyss, which is below **100** all the heavens.

And when Pistis ¹ Sophia desired to cause the thing ¹ that had no spirit to be formed into a likeness ¹ and to rule over matter and over all her ⁵ forces, there appeared for the first time ¹ a ruler, out of the waters, ¹ lionlike in appearance, androgynous, ¹ having great authority within ¹ him, and ignorant of whence he had come into being. ¹⁰ Now when Pistis Sophia ¹ saw him moving about in the depth of the waters ¹ she said to him, “Child, ¹ pass through to here,” whose equivalent is “*yalda baōth*.”

Since that day there appeared the principle ¹⁵ of verbal expression, which reached ¹ the gods and the angels and mankind. ¹ And what came into being as a result of verbal expression, ¹ the gods and the angels and mankind finished. ¹ Now as for the ruler Yaltabaoth, ²⁰ he is ignorant of the force of Pistis: ¹ he did not see her face, rather he saw ¹ in the water the likeness that spoke with him. ¹ And because of that voice, he called ¹ himself Yaldabaoth. But ²⁵ Arael is what the perfect call him, for he was like ¹ a lion. Now when he had come to have authority over matter, ¹ Pistis Sophia withdrew up ¹ to her light.

When the ruler saw ³⁰ his magnitude — and it was only himself ¹ that he saw: he saw nothing else, ¹ except for water and darkness — then he supposed ¹ that it was he alone who existed. His ¹ [...] was completed by verbal expression: it **101** appeared as a spirit moving to and fro ¹ upon the waters. And when that spirit ¹ appeared, the ruler set apart the watery substance. ¹ And what was dry ⁵ was divided into another place. And from matter ¹ he made for himself an abode, and he called ¹ it heaven. And from matter, ¹ the ruler made a footstool, ¹ and he called it earth.

Next, ¹⁰ the ruler had a thought — consistent with his nature — and ¹ by means of verbal expression he created an androgyne. ¹ He opened his mouth and cooed to ¹ him. When his eyes had been opened, he looked ¹ at his father, and he said to him, “Eee!” Then his ¹⁵ father called him Eee-a-o (Yao). Next he ¹ created the second son. He cooed ¹ to him. And he opened his eyes and said ¹ to his father, “Eh!” His

father called ¹ him Eloai. Next he created ²⁰ the third son. He cooed to him. And he opened his ¹ eyes and said to his father, "Asss!" His ¹ father called him Astaphaios. These ¹ are the three sons of their father. ¹

Seven appeared in chaos, androgynous. ²⁵ They have their masculine names ¹ and their feminine names. The feminine name ¹ is Pronoia (Forethought) Sambathas, which ¹ is "week." And his son is called ¹ Yao: his feminine name is Lordship. ³⁰

Sabaoth: his feminine name is Deity. ¹

Adonaios: his feminine name is Kingship. ¹

Eloaios: his feminine name is Jealousy. ¹

Oraios: his feminine name is Wealth. ¹

And Astaphaios: his feminine name **102** is Sophia (Wisdom).

These are the [seven] forces ¹ of the seven heavens of [chaos]. And they were born ¹ androgynous, consistent with the immortal pattern ¹ that existed before them, according to the wish ⁵ of Pistis: so that the likeness of what had ¹ existed since the beginning might reign to ¹ the end.

You (sg.) will find the effect of these names ¹ and the force of the male entities in the *Archangelic (Book) ¹ of the Prophet Moses*, and the ¹⁰ names of the female entities in the first *Book (biblos) ¹ of Noraia*.

Now the prime parent Yaldabaoth, ¹ since he possessed great authorities, ¹ created heavens for each of his ¹ offspring through verbal expression — created them beautiful, as dwelling places ¹⁵ — and in each heaven he created great glories, ¹ seven times excellent. Thrones and ¹ mansions and temples, and also ¹ chariots and virgin spirits up ¹ to an invisible one and their glories, each one ²⁰ has these in his heaven; mighty ¹ armies of gods and lords and angels ¹ and archangels — countless myriads ¹ — so that they might serve.

The account of these matters you (sg.) will find ¹ in a precise manner in the first *Account ²⁵ of Oraia*.

And they were completed from this heaven to as far up as ¹ the sixth heaven, namely that of Sophia. ¹ The heaven and his earth were destroyed by ¹ the troublemaker that was below them all. ¹ And the six heavens shook violently; ³⁰ for the forces of chaos knew who it was ¹ that had destroyed the heaven that was below them. ¹ And when Pistis knew about the breakage ¹ resulting from the disturbance, she sent forth her breath and ¹ bound him and cast him down into Tartaros. ³⁵ Since that day, the heaven, along with **103** its earth, has consolidated itself through Sophia the daughter of Yaldabaoth, ¹ she who is below them all. ¹

Now when the heavens had consolidated themselves along with their

forces ¹ and all their administration, the prime parent ⁵ became insolent. And he was honored by ¹ all the army of angels. And ¹ all the gods and their angels ¹ gave blessing and honor to him. And for his part he ¹ was delighted and continually boasted, ¹⁰ saying to them, ¹ "I have no need of anyone." He said, ¹ "It is I who am God, and there is no other one that exists ¹ apart from me." And when he said this, he sinned against ¹ all the immortal beings who give answer. And they laid it ¹⁵ to his charge.

Then when Pistis saw the impiety ¹ of the chief ruler she was filled with anger. ¹ She was invisible. She said, "You are mistaken, ¹ Samael," that is, "blind god." ¹ "There is an immortal man of light who ²⁰ has been in existence before you and who will appear ¹ among your modelled forms; he will trample you to scorn ¹ just as potter's clay is pounded. And you will descend ¹ to your mother, the abyss, along with those that belong to you. ²⁵ For at the consummation of your (pl.) works ¹ the entire defect that has become visible ¹ out of the truth will be abolished, and it will cease to be and will be ¹ like what has never been." ¹ Saying this, Pistis revealed ³⁰ her likeness of her greatness in the waters. And ¹ so doing she withdrew up ¹ to her light.

Now when Sabaoth the son ¹ of Yaldabaoth heard the ¹ voice of Pistis, he sang praises to her, and [he] ³⁵ condemned the father . . . **104** at the word of Pistis; and he praised her ¹ because she had instructed them about the immortal man ¹ and his light. Then Pistis Sophia ¹ stretched out her finger and poured upon him ⁵ some light from her light, to be a condemnation ¹ of his father. Then when Sabaoth ¹ was illumined, he received great authority ¹ against all the forces of chaos. ¹ Since that day he has been called ¹⁰ "Lord of the Forces."

He hated his father, the darkness, ¹ and his mother, the abyss, and loathed ¹ his sister, the thought of the prime parent, ¹ which moved to and fro upon the waters. And because of ¹ his light all the authorities of chaos were jealous ¹⁵ of him. And when they had become disturbed, ¹ they made a great war in the seven ¹ heavens. Then when Pistis Sophia ¹ had seen the war, she dispatched ¹ seven archangels to Sabaoth from her light. ²⁰ They snatched him up to the seventh ¹ heaven. They stood before him as attendants. ¹ Furthermore she sent him three more ¹ archangels and established the kingdom for him ¹ over everyone so that he might dwell ²⁵ above the twelve gods ¹ of chaos.

Now when Sabaoth had taken up the place ¹ of repose in return for his repentance, ¹ Pistis also gave him her daughter Zoe (Life) ¹ together with great authority so that she might ³⁰ instruct him about all things that

exist in the eighth heaven. ¹ And as he had authority, ¹ he made himself first of all a mansion. ¹ It is huge, magnificent, ¹ seven times as great as all those that exist ³⁵ in the seven heavens.

And before **105** his mansion he created a throne, ¹ which was huge and was upon a ¹ four-faced chariot called ¹ "Cherubin." Now the Cherubin has ⁵ eight shapes per each of ¹ the four corners, lion forms and ¹ calf forms and human forms ¹ and eagle forms, so that all the forms ¹ amount to sixty-four forms ¹⁰ — and (he created) seven archangels that stand ¹ before it; he is the eighth, and has ¹ authority. All the forms amount to ¹ seventy-two. Furthermore, from this chariot ¹ the seventy-two gods took shape; ¹⁵ they took shape so that they might rule over the seventy-two ¹ languages of the peoples. And by that throne ¹ he created other, ¹ serpent-like angels, called ¹ "Saraphin," which praise him at all times. ²⁰

Thereafter he created a congregation (*ekklesia*) of angels, thousands and myriads, numberless, ¹ which resembled the congregation in ¹ the eighth heaven; and a firstborn ¹ called Israel — which ²⁵ is, "the man that sees God"; and another being, ¹ called Jesus Christ, who resembles the savior ¹ above in the eighth heaven and who ¹ sits at his right upon a ¹ revered throne, and at his left, there ³⁰ sits the virgin of the holy spirit, ¹ upon a throne and glorifying him. ¹ And the seven virgins stand before her, ¹ ... possessing thirty harps, ¹ and psalteries and **106** trumpets, glorifying him. And ¹ all the armies of the angels glorify him, ¹ and they bless him. Now where he sits is upon a ¹ throne of light <within a> great cloud that covers ⁵ him. And there was no one with him ¹ in the cloud except Sophia <the daughter of> Pistis, ¹ instructing him about all the things that exist in the eighth heaven, ¹ so that the likenesses of those things might be created, ¹ in order that his reign might endure ¹⁰ until the consummation of the heavens of chaos ¹ and their forces.

Now Pistis Sophia ¹ set him apart from the darkness and summoned him to her right, ¹ and the prime parent she put at her left. ¹ Since that day, right has been called ¹⁵ justice, and left called ¹ wickedness. Now because of this they all received ¹ a realm (*kosmos*) in the congregation of justice ¹ and wickedness, ... stand ... upon a creature ... ¹ all.

Thus when the prime parent of chaos ²⁰ saw his son Sabaoth and the glory ¹ that he was in, and perceived that he was greatest of all the authorities ¹ of chaos, he envied him. And ¹ having become wrathful he engendered Death out of his ¹ death: and he (viz., Death) was established over the sixth ²⁵ heaven, <for> Sabaoth had been snatched up from

there. ¹ And thus the number ¹ of the six authorities of chaos was achieved. Then Death, ¹ being androgynous, mingled with his (own) nature ¹ and begot seven androgynous offspring. ³⁰ These are the names of the male ones: Jealousy, Wrath, ¹ Tears, Sighing, Suffering, Lamentation, ¹ Bitter Weeping. And these are the names ¹ of the female ones: Wrath, Pain, Lust, ¹ Sighing, Curse, Bitterness, Quarrelsomeness. ³⁵ They had intercourse with one another, and each ¹ one begot seven, so that they amount to **107** forty-nine androgynous demons. ¹

Their names and their effects you will find ¹ in the *Book of Solomon*. ¹

And in the presence of these, Zoe, who ¹⁵ was with Sabaoth, created seven ¹ good androgynous forces. ¹ These are the names of the male ones: the Unenvious, ¹ the Blessed, the Joyful, the True, ¹ the Unbegudging, the Beloved, ¹⁰ the Trustworthy. Also, as regards the female ones, these are their ¹ names: Peace, Gladness, Rejoicing, Blessedness, ¹ Truth, Love, Faith (Pistis). And ¹ from these there are many good ¹ and innocent spirits.

Their influences ¹⁵ and their effects you will find in ¹ the *Configurations of the Fate of Heaven That Is ¹ Beneath the Twelve*. ¹

And having seen the likeness ¹ of Pistis in the waters, the prime parent grieved very much, ²⁰ especially when he heard her voice, ¹ like the first voice that had ¹ called to him out of the waters. And ¹ when he knew that it was she who had given a name ¹ to him, he sighed. He was ashamed on account of his ²⁵ transgression. And when he had come to know in truth ¹ that an immortal man ¹ of light had been existing before him, he was greatly disturbed; ¹ for he had previously said ¹ to all the gods and their angels, ³⁰ "It is I who am god. No other one ¹ exists apart from me." For he had been afraid ¹ they might know that another ¹ had been in existence before him, and might condemn him. But he, being devoid of understanding, ³⁵ scoffed at the condemnation ¹ and acted recklessly. He said, "If **108** anything has existed before me, let it appear, ¹ so that we may see its light."

And ¹ immediately, behold! Light came out of the eighth heaven ¹ above and passed through all of the heavens ⁵ of the earth. When the prime parent saw that the light was beautiful as it radiated, ¹ he was amazed. And he was greatly ashamed. As ¹ that light appeared, a human likeness ¹ appeared within it, very wonderful. ¹⁰ And no one saw it except for ¹ the prime parent and Pronoia, ¹ who was with him. Yet its light appeared ¹ to all the forces of the heavens. Because of this ¹ they were all troubled by it.

Then ¹⁵ when Pronoia saw that emissary, she became enamored of

him. ¹ But he hated her because she was on the darkness. ¹ But she desired to embrace him, and she was not ¹ able to. When she was unable to assuage her love, ¹ she poured out her light upon the earth. Since ²⁰ that day, that emissary has been called ¹ "Adam of Light," whose rendering ¹ is "the luminous man of blood," and the earth spread over him, holy Adaman, ¹ whose rendering is "the Holy Land of Adamantine." ²⁵ Since that day, ¹ all the authorities have honored the blood of the virgin. ¹ And the earth was purified on account of ¹ the blood of the virgin. But most of all, ¹ the water was purified through the likeness of Pistis ³⁰ Sophia, who had appeared to ¹ the prime parent in the waters. ¹ Justly, then, it has been said: "through the waters." ¹ The holy water, since it vivifies the all, **109** purifies it.

Out of that first blood ¹ Eros appeared, being androgynous. ¹ His masculinity is Himireris (i.e., Himeros), being ¹ fire from the light. His femininity, ⁵ that is with him – a soul of blood – is from ¹ the stuff of Pronoia. He is very lovely ¹ in his beauty, having a charm beyond ¹ all the creatures of chaos. Then all the gods ¹ and their angels, when they beheld ¹⁰ Eros, became enamored of him. And appearing ¹ in all of them he set them afire: just as ¹ from a single lamp many lamps ¹ are lit, and one and the same light is there, but the lamp ¹ is not diminished. And in this way Eros ¹⁵ became dispersed in all the created beings of chaos, ¹ and was not diminished. Just as from ¹ the midpoint of light and darkness ¹ Eros appeared and at the midpoint ¹ of the angels and mankind ²⁰ the sexual union of Eros was consummated, so ¹ out of the earth the primal pleasure blossomed. ¹ The woman followed earth. ¹ And marriage followed woman. ¹ Birth followed marriage. Dissolution ²⁵ followed birth.

After that Eros, ¹ the grapevine sprouted up ¹ out of that blood, which had been shed over ¹ the earth. Because of this, those who drink of it ¹ conceive the desire of sexual union. ³⁰ After the grapevine, a fig tree ¹ and a pomegranate tree sprouted up from ¹ the earth, together with the rest of the trees, ¹ all species, having ¹ within them their seed from the **110** seed of the authorities and their angels. ¹

Then Justice created Paradise, ¹ being beautiful and being outside the orbit ¹ of the moon and the orbit of the sun in ¹⁵ the Land of Wantonness, in the East in the midst ¹ of the stones. And desire is in the midst of ¹ the beautiful, appetizing trees. And ¹ the tree of eternal life is as it ¹ appeared by God's will, ¹⁰ to the north of Paradise, so that it might make ¹ eternal the souls of the pure, ¹ who shall come forth from the modelled forms of poverty ¹ at the consummation of the age. Now the

color ¹ of the tree of life is like the sun. And ¹⁵ its branches are beautiful. Its leaves are like ¹ those of the cypress. Its fruit is like ¹ a bunch of grapes when it is white. Its height ¹ goes as far as heaven. And next to it (is) the tree ¹ of acquaintance (*gnosis*), having the strength ²⁰ of God. Its glory is like the moon ¹ when fully radiant. And its branches are beautiful. ¹ Its leaves are like fig leaves. ¹ Its fruit is like a good appetizing date. ¹ And this tree is to the north of Paradise, ²⁵ so that it might arouse the souls from ¹ the torpor of the demons, in order that they might approach ¹ the tree of life and eat of ¹ its fruit and so condemn the ¹ authorities and their angels.

The effect ³⁰ of this tree is described in the *Sacred Book*, ¹ to wit: "It is you who are the tree of acquaintance, ¹ which is in Paradise, from which the first ¹ man ate and which opened his mind; ¹ and he loved his female counterpart and condemned **111** the other, alien likenesses and loathed them." ¹

Now after it, the olive tree sprouted up, ¹ which was to purify the kings and the ¹ high priests of righteousness, who were to ⁵ appear in the last days, since ¹ the olive tree appeared out of the light ¹ of the first Adam for the sake of the unguent ¹ that they were to receive.

And the first soul (*psyche*) loved ¹ Eros, who was with her, and poured her blood ¹⁰ upon him and upon the earth. ¹ And out of that blood the rose first sprouted up, ¹ out of the earth, out of ¹ the thorn bush, to be a source of joy for the light that ¹ was to appear in the bush. ¹⁵ Moreover after this the beautiful, good-smelling flowers ¹ sprouted up from the earth, ¹ different kinds, from every single virgin ¹ of the daughters of Pronoia. ¹ And they, when they had become enamored of Eros, poured out ²⁰ their blood upon him and upon the earth. ¹ After these, every plant sprouted up ¹ from the earth, different kinds, containing ¹ the seed of the authorities and their ¹ angels. After these, the authorities ²⁵ created out of the waters all species of beast, ¹ and the reptiles and birds — different kinds — containing ¹ the seed of the authorities and their angels. ¹

But before all these, when he had appeared ³⁰ on the first day, he remained upon the earth, something like two days, and ¹ left the lower Pronoia in ¹ heaven, and ascended towards his light. And ¹ immediately darkness covered all the universe. **112** Now when she wished, the Sophia who was in the lower heaven ¹ received authority from ¹ Pistis, and fashioned great luminous bodies ¹ and all the stars. And she put them in the sky to ⁵ shine upon the earth and to render ¹ temporal signs and seasons and ¹ years and months and days ¹ and nights and moments and so

forth. ¹ And in this way the entire region upon the sky was adorned. ¹⁰

Now when Adam of Light conceived the wish ¹ to enter his light — i.e., ¹ the eighth heaven — he was unable to do so because of ¹ the poverty that had mingled with his light. Then ¹ he created for himself a vast eternal realm. And within ¹⁵ that eternal realm he created six eternal realms ¹ and their adornments, six in number, that were seven times better ¹ than the heavens of chaos and their adornments. ¹ Now all these eternal realms and their ¹ adornments exist within the infinity ²⁰ that is between the eighth heaven and the chaos below ¹ it, being counted with the universe that belongs to ¹ poverty.

If you (sg.) want to know the arrangement ¹ of these, you will find it written in the *Seventh ¹ Universe of the Prophet Hieralias*. ²⁵

And before Adam of Light had ¹ withdrawn in the chaos, the authorities saw him ¹ and laughed at the prime parent because he had ¹ lied when he said, “It is I who am God. ¹ No one exists before me.” When they came to ³⁰ him, they said, “Is this not the god who ¹ ruined our work?” He answered and said, ¹ “Yes. If you do not want him to be able ¹ to ruin our work, come let us ¹ create a man (i.e., human being) out of earth, according to ³⁵ the image of our body and according to the likeness 113 of this being (viz., Adam of Light), to serve us; so that when he (viz., Adam of Light) ¹ sees his likeness he might become enamored of it. No longer will he ¹ ruin our work; rather, ¹ we shall make those who are born out of the light our servants ⁵ for all the duration of this eternal realm. Now all of this ¹ came to pass according to the forethought of Pistis, ¹ in order that man should appear after ¹ his likeness, and should condemn them ¹ because of their modelled form. And their modelled form ¹⁰ became an enclosure of the light.

Then the authorities ¹ received the acquaintance (*gnosis*) necessary to create ¹ man. Sophia ¹ Zoe — she who is with Sabaoth — had anticipated them. And she laughed ¹ at their decision. For they are blind: ¹⁵ against their own interests they ignorantly created him. ¹ And they do not realise what they are about to do. ¹ The reason she anticipated them and made her own man (i.e., human being) ¹ first, was in order that he might instruct ¹ their modelled form how to despise ²⁰ them and thus to escape from them. ¹

Now the production of the instructor came about ¹ as follows. When Sophia let fall a droplet ¹ of light, it flowed onto the water, ¹ and immediately a human being appeared, being androgynous. ²⁵ That droplet she molded ¹ first as a female body. Afterwards, ¹ using the body she molded it ¹ in the likeness of the mother which had appeared. ¹ And he

finished it in twelve months. ³⁰ An androgynous human being was produced, ¹ whom the Greeks call Hermaphrodites; ¹ and whose mother the Hebrews call ¹ Eve of Life (Eve of Zoe), namely, the female instructor ¹ of life. Her offspring is the creature ³⁵ that is lord. Afterwards, the authorities **114** called it "Beast," so that it might lead astray ¹ their modelled creatures. The interpretation of "the beast" ¹ is "the instructor." For it was found to be the wisest ¹ of all beings.

Now, Eve is the first ⁵ virgin, the one who without a husband bore her first offspring. ¹ It is she who served as her own midwife.

For ¹ this reason she is held to have said: ¹

"It is I who am the part of my mother;
 And it is I who am ¹ the mother;
 It is I who am the wife;
 It is I who am the virgin; ¹⁰
 It is I who am pregnant;
 It is I who am the midwife;
 It is I who am the one that ¹ comforts pains of travail;
 It is my husband who bore me;
 And ¹ it is I who am his mother,
 And it is he who is my father ¹ and my lord.
 It is he who is my force;
 What he desires, ¹ he says with reason.
 I am in the process of becoming.
 Yet ¹⁵ I have borne a man as lord."

Now these through the will ¹ (. . .). The souls ¹ that were going to enter the modelled forms of the authorities were manifested to Sabaoth and his Christ. ¹ And regarding these the holy voice ¹ said, "Multiply and improve! Be lord ²⁰ over all creatures." And it is they who were ¹ taken captive, according to their destinies, by ¹ the prime parent. And thus ¹ they were shut into the prisons of the modelled forms. ¹ Or: at the consummation of the age. And at that time, ²⁵ the prime parent ¹ then rendered an opinion concerning man to those who were with him. ¹ Then each of them cast ¹ his sperm into the midst of the navel of ¹ the earth. Since that day, the seven rulers ³⁰ have fashioned man with his body ¹ resembling their body, but his likeness ¹ resembling the man that had appeared to them. ¹ His modelling took place by parts, ¹ one at a time. And their leader fashioned ³⁵ the brain and the nervous system. Afterwards ¹ he appeared as prior to him. He became **115** a soul-endowed man. And he was called ¹ Adam, that is, "father," according to ¹ the name of the one that existed before him.

And when they had finished ¹ Adam, he abandoned him as an inanimate vessel, since he had taken form ⁵ like an abortion, in that no spirit was in him. ¹ Regarding this thing, when the chief ruler ¹ remembered the saying of Pistis, he was afraid ¹ lest the true man enter his ¹ modelled form and become its lord. For this reason he ¹⁰ left his modelled form forty days without ¹ soul, and he withdrew and abandoned it. Now on the fortieth ¹ day, Sophia Zoe sent ¹ her breath into Adam, who had no ¹ soul. He began to move upon the ground. ¹⁵ And he could not stand up.

Then when the seven ¹ rulers came, they saw him and ¹ were greatly disturbed. They went up to ¹ him and seized him. And he (viz., the chief ruler) said to ¹ the breath within him, "Who are you? And ²⁰ whence did you come hither?" It answered ¹ and said, "I have come from the force ¹ of the man for the destruction of your work." ¹ <...> When they heard, they glorified him, since he ¹ gave them respite from the fear and the anxiety in which they found themselves. ²⁵ Then they called that day ¹ "Rest," in as much as they had rested ¹ from toil. And when they saw that Adam ¹ could not stand up, they were glad, and they took him ¹ and put him in Paradise. And they withdrew ³⁰ up to their heavens.

After ¹ the day of rest Sophia ¹ sent her daughter Zoe, being called ¹ Eve, as an instructor in order that she might ¹ make Adam, who had no soul, arise ³⁵ so that those whom he should engender might become ¹ containers of light. When 116 Eve saw her male counterpart prostrate she had pity ¹ upon him, and she said, "Adam! Become alive! ¹ Arise upon the earth!" Immediately her word ¹ became accomplished fact. For Adam, having ⁵ arisen, suddenly opened his eyes. ¹ When he saw her he said, "You shall be called ¹ 'Mother of the Living'. For it is you who have ¹ given me life."

Then the authorities were informed ¹ that their modelled form was alive and had arisen, and they ¹⁰ were greatly troubled. They sent seven archangels ¹ to see what had happened. They came ¹ to Adam. When they saw Eve talking to ¹ him they said to one another, "What sort of thing is this luminous woman? ¹ For she resembles that likeness which appeared ¹⁵ to us in the light. Now come, ¹ let us lay hold of her and cast our ¹ seed into her, so that when she becomes soiled ¹ she may not be able to ascend into her light. ¹ Rather, those whom she bears will be under ²⁰ our charge. But let us not tell Adam, for he is not one ¹ of us. Rather let us bring a deep sleep ¹ over him. And let us instruct him in his ¹ sleep to the effect that she came from ¹ his rib, in order that his wife may obey, ²⁵ and he may be lord over her."

Then Eve, ¹ being a force, laughed at their decision. ¹ She put mist into their eyes and secretly left ¹ her likeness with Adam. She entered ¹ the tree of acquaintance and remained there. ³⁰ And they pursued her, and she revealed ¹ to them that she had gone into the tree and become ¹ a tree. Then, entering a great ¹ state of fear, the blind creatures fled.

Afterwards, ¹ when they had recovered from the daze, they came ³⁵ [to Adam]; and seeing the likeness of this woman **117** with him, they were greatly disturbed, thinking it was she ¹ that was the true Eve. And they acted rashly; they came ¹ up to her and seized her and cast ¹ their seed upon her. They did so ⁵ wickedly, defiling not only ¹ in natural ways but also in foul ways, ¹ defiling first the seal of her voice ¹ – that had spoken with them, saying, “What is it that exists ¹ before you?” – intending to defile those who might say ¹⁰ at the consummation (viz., of the age) that they had been born ¹ of the true man through verbal expression. ¹ And they erred, not knowing ¹ that it was their own body that they had defiled: it was the likeness that ¹ the authorities and their angels defiled in every way. ¹⁵

First she was pregnant with Abel, ¹ by the first ruler. And it was ¹ by the seven authorities and their angels ¹ that she bore the other offspring. And all this ¹ came to pass according to the forethought of the prime parent, ²⁰ so that the first mother ¹ might bear within her every seed, ¹ being mixed and being fitted to the fate ¹ of the universe and its configurations, and ¹ to Justice. A prearranged plan came into effect ²⁵ regarding Eve, so that the modelled forms of the authorities ¹ might become enclosures of the light, whereupon ¹ it (viz., the light) would condemn them through their ¹ modelled forms.

Now the first Adam, (Adam) of Light, ¹ is spirit-endowed (*pneumatikos*), and appeared ³⁰ on the first day. The second ¹ Adam is soul-endowed (*psychikos*), and appeared ¹ on the sixth day, which is called Aphrodite. The third ¹ Adam is a creature of the earth (*choikos*), that is, ³⁵ the man of the law, and he appeared on ¹ the eighth day [... the] tranquility **118** of poverty, which is called ¹ Sunday. And the progeny of the ¹ earthly Adam became numerous and was completed, ¹ and produced within itself every kind of scientific information of ⁵ the soul-endowed Adam. But all were in ¹ ignorance.

Next let me say ¹ that once the rulers had seen him and ¹ the female creature who was with him erring ignorantly ¹ like beasts, they were very glad. ¹⁰ <...> When they learned that the immortal man was not going to ¹ neglect them, rather that they would even have to fear ¹ the female creature that had turned into a tree, they were disturbed, and said,

“Perhaps this is the true man – this being who has brought a fog upon us and ¹⁵ has taught us that she who was soiled is like him – and so we shall be conquered!”

Then the seven of them together laid plans. They came up to Adam and Eve timidly: they said to him, “The fruit of all the trees created for you in Paradise ²⁰ shall be eaten; but as for the tree of acquaintance, control yourselves and do not eat from it. If you eat you will die.” Having imparted great fear to them they withdrew up to their authorities.

Then ²⁵ came the wisest of all creatures, who was called Beast. And when he saw the likeness of their mother Eve he said to her, “What did God say to you (pl.)? Was it ‘do not eat from the tree ³⁰ of acquaintance (*gnosis*)’?” She said, “He said, ‘Not only do not eat from it, but do not touch it, lest you (sg.) die’.” He said to her, “Do not be afraid. In death you (pl.) shall not die. For he knows that when you eat **119** from it, your intellect will become sober and you will come to be like gods, recognizing the difference that obtains between evil men and good ones. ⁵ Indeed, it was in jealousy that he said this to you, so that you would not eat from it.”

Now Eve had confidence in the words of the instructor. She gazed at the tree and saw that it was beautiful and appetizing, and liked it; she took some of ¹⁰ its fruit and ate it; and she gave some also to her husband, and he too ate it. Then their intellect became open. For when they had eaten, the light of acquaintance had shone upon them. When they clothed themselves with shame, they knew that they were naked ¹⁵ of acquaintance. When they became sober, they saw that they were naked and became enamored of one another. When they saw that the ones who had modelled them had the form of beasts, they loathed them: they were very aware.

Then when the rulers knew that they had broken ²⁰ their commandments, they entered Paradise and came to Adam and Eve with earthquake and great threatening, to see the effect of the aid. Then Adam and Eve trembled greatly ²⁵ and hid under the trees in Paradise. Then the rulers did not know where they were and said, “Adam, where are you?” He said, “I am here, for through fear of you I hid, being ashamed.” And they said to him ignorantly, ³⁰ “Who told you about the shame with which you clothed yourself? – unless you have eaten from that tree!” He said, “The woman whom you gave me – it is she that gave to me and I ate.” Then they said to the latter, **120** “What is this that you have done?” She answered and said, “It is the instructor that urged me on, and I ate.”

Then the rulers came up to the instructor. ¹ Their eyes became misty because of him, ⁵ and they could not do anything to him. They cursed him, ¹ since they were powerless. Afterwards, they came up to the woman ¹ and cursed her and her offspring. After ¹ the woman, they cursed Adam; and (cursed) the land because of him, ¹ and the crops; and all things that they had created ¹⁰ they cursed. They have no blessing. ¹ Good cannot result from ¹ evil.

From that day, the authorities ¹ knew that truly there was something mightier than ¹ they: they recognized only that ¹⁵ their commandments had not been kept. Great ¹ jealousy was brought into the world solely because of ¹ the immortal man. Now when the rulers saw ¹ that their Adam had entered into an alien state of acquaintance they ¹ desired to test him, and they gathered together ²⁰ all the domestic animals and the wild beasts ¹ of the earth and the birds of heaven and brought them to Adam ¹ to see what he would call them. ¹ When he saw them he gave names to their ¹ creatures.

They became troubled because Adam had recovered from ²⁵ all the trials. They assembled and ¹ laid plans, and they said, "Behold Adam! ¹ He has come to be like one of us, so that he ¹ knows the difference between the light and the darkness. ¹ Now perhaps he will be deceived as in the case of ³⁵ the tree of acquaintance and also will come to ¹ the tree of life and eat from it ¹ and become immortal and become lord and despise ¹ us and disdain [us] and all our glory. ¹ Then he will denounce ³⁵ [us along with our] universe. Come let us expel him **121** from Paradise down to the land ¹ from which he was taken, so that henceforth he might not ¹ be able to recognize anything better ¹ than we can." And so they expelled Adam from ⁵ Paradise, along with his wife. And this deed ¹ that they had done was not enough for them. Rather, they were afraid. ¹ They went in to the tree of life and surrounded it ¹ with great fearful things, fiery living creatures ¹ called "Cheroubin," and they put ¹⁰ a flaming sword in their midst, fearfully ¹ twirling at all times, so that ¹ no earthly being might ever enter ¹ that place.

Thereupon ¹ since the rulers were envious of Adam they wanted to diminish ¹⁵ their (viz., Adam's and Eve's) lifespans. They could not because of ¹ fate, which had been fixed since the beginning. ¹ For to each had been allotted a lifespan ¹ of 1,000 years according to the course of the luminous bodies. ¹ But although the rulers could not ²⁰ do this, each of the evil doers ¹ took away ten years. ¹ And all this lifespan (which remained) amounted to 930 years: and these are in pain and ¹ weakness and evil ²⁵ distraction. And so ¹ life has turned out to be, from that day until the consummation ¹ of the age.

Then when Sophia Zoe¹ saw that the rulers of the darkness had¹ laid a curse upon her counterparts, she was indignant.³⁰ And coming out of the first heaven with¹ full power she chased those rulers out of¹ [their] heavens, and cast them down into¹ the sinful [world], so that there they¹ should dwell, in the form of evil³⁵ spirits (*daimones*) upon the earth.

[...], 122 so that in their world it might pass the thousand years in Paradise¹ – a soul-endowed living creature¹ called “phoenix.” It¹ kills itself and brings itself to life as a witness⁵ to the judgment against them, for they did wrong to Adam and his¹ generation, unto the consummation of the age. <...> There are ... three¹ men, and also his posterities unto the consummation¹ of the world: the spirit-endowed of eternity, and the soul-endowed, and the earthly. Likewise,¹⁰ the three phoenixes <in> Paradise – the first¹ [is] immortal; the second lives 1,000¹ years; as for the third, it is written in the *Sacred Book*¹ that it is consumed. So too there are¹ three baptisms – the first is the spiritual,¹⁵ the second is by fire, the third¹ is by water. Just as the phoenix¹ appears as a witness concerning the angels,¹ so the case of the water hydri in Egypt,¹ which has been a witness to those going down²⁰ into the baptism of a true man.¹ The two bulls in Egypt possess¹ a mystery, the sun and moon, being¹ a witness to Sabaoth: namely, that over¹ them Sophia received the universe; from²⁵ the day that she made the sun and the moon she¹ put a seal upon her heaven, unto eternity.¹

And the worm that has been born out of the phoenix¹ is a human being as well. It is written (Ps 91:13 LXX) concerning it, “the just man¹ will blossom like a phoenix.” And³⁰ the phoenix first appears¹ in a living state, and dies, and rises again,¹ being a sign of what has become apparent¹ at the consummation of the age. It was only in Egypt that these great signs appeared³⁵ – nowhere else – as an indication 123 that it is like God’s Paradise.¹

Let us return to the aforementioned rulers,¹ so that we may offer¹ some explanation of them. Now, when the seven rulers⁵ were cast down from their heavens¹ onto the earth, they made for themselves angels,¹ numerous, demonic, to serve¹ them. And the latter instructed mankind in many kinds of error¹ and magic and potions and worship of¹⁰ idols and spilling of blood and altars and¹ temples and sacrifices and libations to all the spirits¹ of the earth, having their coworker¹ fate, who came into existence by¹ the concord between the gods of injustice¹⁵ and justice.

And thus when the world¹ had come into being, it distractedly erred¹ at all times. For all men¹ upon earth worshipped the spirits (*daimo-*

nes) from ¹ the creation to the consummation – both the angels ²⁰ of righteousness and the men of unrighteousness. ¹ Thus did the world come to exist in distraction, ¹ in ignorance, and in a stupor. ¹ They all erred, until the appearance (*parousia*) ¹ of the true man.

Let this suffice ²⁵ so far as the matter goes. Now we shall proceed to consideration of our world, ¹ so that we may accurately finish the description of its structure ¹ and management. ¹ Then it will become obvious how ¹ belief in the unseen realm, which has been apparent ³⁰ from creation down to the consummation ¹ of the age was discovered.

I come, therefore, to the main points ¹ [regarding] the immortal man: I shall ¹ speak of all the beings that belong to him, explaining how ¹ they happen to be here.

When a multitude ³⁵ of human beings had come into existence, through the parentage of [the Adam] **124** who had been fashioned, and out of matter, ¹ and when the world had already become full, the rulers were master ¹ over it – that is, they kept ¹ it restrained by ignorance. For what reason? ⁵ For the following: since the immortal father knows ¹ that a deficiency of truth came into being amongst the eternal realms ¹ and their universe, when he wished ¹ to bring to naught the rulers of perdition through the ¹ creatures they had modelled he sent your (pl.) likenesses down into the world ¹⁰ of perdition, namely, the blessed little ¹ innocent spirits. They are not alien to ¹ acquaintance. For all acquaintance is vested in one angel ¹ who appeared before them; he is not without power ¹ in the company of the father. And <he> gave them acquaintance. ¹⁵ Whenever they appear in the world ¹ of perdition, immediately and first of all they reveal ²⁰ the pattern of imperishability as a condemnation ¹ of the rulers and their forces. Thus when the blessed beings ¹ appeared in forms modelled by authorities, ¹ they were envied. And out of envy the authorities ¹ mixed their seed with them, in hopes of ²⁵ polluting them. They could not. Then when the blessed beings ¹ appeared in luminous form, ¹ they appeared in various ways. And each one ¹ of them, starting out in his land, revealed ¹ his (kind of) acquaintance to the visible church ³⁰ constituted of the modelled forms of perdition. ¹ It (viz., the church) was found to contain all kinds of seed, because of the seed ¹ of the authorities that had [mixed with it].

Then ¹ the savior created [...] of ¹ them all – and the spirits of these [are manifestly] ³⁵ superior, being blessed **125** and varying in election – and ¹ also (he created) many other beings, which have no king and are superior ¹ to everyone that was before them. Consequently, four ¹ races exist. There are three that belong to the kings ⁵ of the eighth heaven. But

the fourth ¹ race is kingless and perfect, being ¹ the highest of all. For these shall enter ¹ the holy place of their father. ¹ And they will gain rest in repose ¹⁰ and eternal, unspeakable glory ¹ and unending joy. Moreover they are ¹ kings within the mortal domain, in that they are immortal. They ¹ will condemn the gods of chaos and ¹ their forces.

Now the Word (*Logos*) that is superior to ¹⁵ all beings was sent for this purpose alone: ¹ that he might proclaim the unknown. ¹ He said (Mk 4:22 par.), "There is nothing hidden that is ¹ not apparent, and what has not been recognized ¹ will be recognized." And these were sent ²⁰ to make known what is hidden, and ¹ the seven authorities of chaos and their ¹ impiety. And thus they were condemned ¹ to death.

So when all the perfect ¹ appeared in the forms modelled ²⁵ by the rulers and when they revealed ¹ the incomparable truth, ¹ they put to shame all the wisdom of the gods. ¹ And their fate was found ¹ to be a condemnation. And their force ³⁰ dried up. Their lordship was dissolved. ¹ Their forethought became [emptiness, ¹ along with] their glory.

Before the consummation ¹ [of the age], the whole place will shake ¹ with great thundering. Then the rulers ³⁵ will be sad, [...] their **126** death. The angels will mourn for their mankind, ¹ and the demons will weep over their seasons, ¹ and their mankind will wail and scream ¹ at their death. Then the age ⁵ will begin, and they will be disturbed. Their kings will ¹ be intoxicated with the fiery sword, and they will ¹ wage war against one another, so that ¹ the earth is intoxicated with bloodshed. ¹ And the seas will be disturbed by ¹⁰ those wars. Then the sun will become dark. ¹ And the moon will cause its light to cease. ¹ The stars of the sky will cancel their circuits. ¹ And a great clap of thunder will come out ¹ of a great force that is above ¹⁵ all the forces of chaos, where ¹ the firmament of the woman is situated. ¹ Having created the first product, she will ¹ put away the wise fire of intelligence ¹ and clothe herself with witless wrath. ²⁰ Then she will pursue the gods ¹ of chaos, whom she created along with the prime parent. ¹ She will cast them down into the abyss. ¹ They will be obliterated because of their wickedness. For they will ¹ come to be like volcanoes ²⁵ and consume one another until they perish ¹ at the hand of the prime parent. ¹ When he has destroyed them, he will turn against himself ¹ and destroy himself until he ceases to exist.

And ¹ their heavens will fall one upon the next ³⁰ and their (the rulers') forces will be consumed by fire. Their eternal realms, too, ¹ will be overturned. And his (the prime parent's) heaven will ¹ fall and break in two. His ... will ¹ fall down upon the [...] ¹ support them; they will fall into the abyss, ³⁵ and the abyss will be overturned.

The light will ¹ [. . . the] darkness and obliterate it: it will be like **127** something that has never been. And the product ¹ to which the darkness had been posterior will dissolve. And ¹ the deficiency will be plucked out by the root (and thrown) down into ¹ the darkness. And the light will withdraw up ⁵ to its root. And the glory of the unbegotten ¹ will appear. And it will fill ¹ all the eternal realm. When the prophecy and ¹ the account of those that are king becomes known and ¹ is fulfilled by those who are called ¹⁰ perfect, those who – in contrast – have not become perfect ¹ in the unbegotten father will receive their glory ¹ in their realms and in the kingdoms of the ¹ immortals: but they will never enter ¹ the kingless realm.

For everyone must ¹⁵ go to the place from which he has come. ¹ Indeed, by his acts and his ¹ acquaintance each person will make his nature known.