

“Gnosticism” and other “Heresies”

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- Christian “Heresies”
- Gnosticism
- Footnote: Christianity and the philosophical traditions
- Historiographical implications of “heresy”

Christian “Heresies”

- *haeresis*
 - meaning and (Christian) use
 - heresiology, *diadokhē* (succession) and the invention of “heresy”
- Gnosticism: “knowledge so-called”
- Other (early) heresies: cosmological or mythological
 - Marcion (and other “heresiarchs” in Irenaeus)
- Increasingly (late 2nd century & later) heresies are theological or ecclesiological
 - definitions of Christ, Godhead (e.g., “Monarchians” in Tertullian’s *Against Praxeas*)
 - place of the lapsed, of the “confessors” (Cyprian)
 - Montanus: “New Prophecy”?
 - Created **by** increasingly structured and theologically defined Christianity?

Gnosticism: “Knowledge So-Called”

- Terminology and problems
 - Gnosis (“knowledge”)
 - Was there a “gnostic” movement in second and third century?
 - Nag Hamadi codices
- Gnosticism and the “Platonic” Cosmology
- Footnote: Christianity and the (same) philosophical traditions
- Gnosticism and the Biblical Tradition
- Innovation or root tradition in Christianity?

“Gnosticism” and “Platonic” Cosmology

Common “Platonizing” Cosmology

- The One
- The Forms (Ideas)
- Artisan/Artificer (demiourgos)
- Gods (Planets, etc., and Gods of Greek religion)
- Material world, patterned on the perfect, using the “Forms”
- Humans as hybrid

“Gnostic” Paradigm

- The Father (One, etc.)
- *Pleroma* (“fullness”)
- Sophia’s Error*—
- Yaldabaoth (= creator of the Bible)
- Archons
- Created world (copied from *Pleroma*, with trapped light)
- Humans as hybrid (product of cosmic struggle)

Innovation or root tradition in Christianity?

- Gospel of John Prologue
- Paul, 1 Corinthians 8

Footnote: Christianity and the (same) philosophical traditions

- Christ as demiurge:
 - Jn 1:3 All things came into being through him (Logos) ...
 - See *In Princ.* 2.2–3
- Emanation
 - Tert. *Ag. Praxeas* 4: Formation of Word in divine thought (also 12)
 - Origen, *In Princ.* 2.10
- Unpacking hidden meanings: Allegory and Typology

Gnosticism and the Biblical Tradition

- In general: Note the significance for Christian movements (including Paul) of mythological interpretations of Genesis: **Why/How is this world under evil powers?**
- Gospel of Truth, Origin of World, e.g., maintain story of Genesis, but unpack its hidden, dark meaning: Creator **is** the source of evil
- Within this framework, differing models:
 - Origin of World: imprisoning of Yaldabaoth, enthronement of Sabaoth
 - Role of Christ: emissary? originary emanation? paradigmatic gnostic? (cf. Neo in *Matrix*)

Historiographical implications of “heresy”

A feedback mechanism that is part of the proto-orthodox construction of:

- “Rule of faith” (*regula fides*): insistence on consensus and traditionality
- Canon: solidified and institutionalized
- Theology: increasingly refined, sophisticated, and “Greek”
