

L'Écrit sans titre: traité sur l'origine du monde (NH II,5 et XIII,2 et Brit. Lib. Or. 4926[1])

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«Bibliothèque copte de Nag Hammadi [section «Textes»]», 21

1995

xvi + 622 p.

ISBN: 2-7637-7419-9

The fifth document of codex II, which has come down to use without a title, is a veritable didactic treatise on the origin of the world. It seems intended to persuade a non-Gnostic audience (probably Jewish) to embrace Gnostic beliefs concerning the creation of the world, in order to discredit the God of the Jewish Scriptures and to invite them to accept a superior doctrine concerning the existence of a transcendent God, superior to the Demiurge and master of the material world.

This is what is led to believe in light of the disposition of the tractate and the material used in each of its parts. After a prologue claiming to refute the theory of the primacy of chaos, in order to win over the Jewish or Christian readers, the Gnostic master delivers a long exposition concerning Gnostic cosmogony and anthropology. For this, he uses a Gnostic source also cited in the *Hypostasis of the Archons* and, possibly, the *Apocryphon of John*. These sources present the divine creator of the material world as an ignorant and envious god that blasphemes and claims to be the only god. Certainly by means of *captatio benevolentiae*, the author makes Sabaoth, one of the sons of the Demiurge Ialdabaoth, an example of Gnostic conversion, and proposes to his readers the God of the Jewish Scriptures as a model. In his anthropogonic exposition, he again presents Ialdabaoth, the creator God, as ignorant and jealous, when Adam and Eve, like Sabaoth, become models who attain true knowledge by disobeying their creator.

Once this exposition ends, the author proposes as a demonstration not an argument drawn from some Gnostic myth, but the belief, well attested in inter-testamental Jewish literature, that idolatrous cults, magical practices and spells had been taught to human beings by the fallen angels that he hastens to identify with the archons of his exposition. The tractate concludes with an epilogue that summarizes the exposition and concludes with a vibrant appeal to conversion, a promise of reward or eternal punishment.

The literary links observed in this untitled document, as well as the text known to us as *Eugnostos the Blessed* permit the belief that these two tractates originally formed two sides of a diptych—the first dedicated to the origin of the world and the second to the transcendent God. Subsequently, these two documents have taken different paths in which they have experienced a certain number of modifications.

This volume contains the following contributions:

- «L'orthographe et la langue du traité» [Funk, Wolf-Peter] (p. 29–68)
- «Les Fragments Brit. Lib. Or. 4926(1)» [Funk, Wolf-Peter] (p. 529–570)