

Eugnoste. Lettre sur le Dieu transcendant (NH III, 3 et V, 1). Commentaire

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The ancient Christian text known as *Eugnostos* is distinguished by the emphasis that it puts on the myth of the Primordial Man, the manifested form of the supreme God. Such an emphasis makes it an important work for the longstanding modern debate—carried on since the days of the German *History of Religions School*—as to the possible links between Christianity and gnosticism with regard to the myth of the Celestial Man, or the Redeemed Redeemer.

Eugnostos is undoubtedly even older than the fourth century CE Coptic manuscripts in which it is preserved. The original version of *Eugnostos* might have been written in Alexandria, for it shows the influence of a Platonizing Judaism such as one finds in the works of Philo of Alexandria: its version of Christianity is one that would have fit into, and perhaps even been found persuasive in, such a context. Its philosophical teachings, which are marked by Middle Platonism, and the parallels that it shows with Patristic literature suggest that its date of composition lies in the first half of the second century.

In its history of transmission, *Eugnostos* was rewritten several times, and three of these rewritings are extant. This volume works with both the versions found at Nag Hammadi—in codex III,3 and V,1—and also contains a chapter dealing with the baptismal teachings found in yet a third rewriting, entitled *The Sophia of Jesus Christ*, attested in the Berlin gnostic codex and in Nag Hammadi codex III,4.