Reconsidering the ‘Prophecy of Zardūšt’

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One intriguing aspect of late antique speculation about the character and significance of the biblical forefather Seth b. Adam is the notion that he is simply the initial material manifestation of a pre-existent heavenly entity who periodically descends to the physical realm and “clothes” itself in human flesh in order to impart authoritative instruction regarding the supernal realm. This concept of the cyclical return of a discrete heavenly entity in diverse human forms is structurally congruous with the Manichaean doctrine of the recurrent incarnation of the Apostle of Light within select antediluvian forefathers and “national” religious teachers like the Buddha, Zoroaster, and Jesus. Most scholars agree that the Manichaean version of this teaching appears to be a variant formulation of the so-called “true prophet” doctrine of the Pseudo-Clementines and Ebionite Christianity. Given the close concord of the Sethian

1The following study is an extensively revised and expanded version of material previously published in my Heralds of That Good Realm: Syro-Mesopotamian Gnostics and Jewish Traditions (NHMS 41; Leiden: Brill, 1996) 126–29 and the pertinent notes. I thank E. I. Brill for graciously granting me permission to re-employ and expand that copyrighted material in this new context. Please note the following supplemental abbreviations: BHM = Bet ha-Midrasch (6 vols.; ed. A. Jellinek; reprinted, Jerusalem: Bamberger & Wahrmann, 1938); CMC = Cologne Mani Codex (L. Koenen and C. Römer, Der Kölner Mani-Kodex: Kritische Edition (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1938)); Ginzä = M. Lidzbarski, Ginzä: Der Schatz oder das grosse Buch der Mandâär (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1925); Homilien=H. J. Polotsky, Manichäische Handschriften der Sammlung A. Chester Beatty, Band I: Manichäische Homilien (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1934); Ep=The Encyclopaedia of Islam, new edition (Leiden: Brill, 1960–); Kephalaia=Manichäische Handschriften der Staatlichen Museen, Berlin, Band I: Kephalaiâ, I. Hälfte (ed. H. J. Polotsky and A. Böhlig; Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1934–40); 2. Hälfte (Lfg. 11/12) (Stuttgart, 1966); NHC=Nag Hammadi Codex.

2For the continued repercussions of this mytheme in sectarian Islam, see H. Corbin, History of Islamic Philosophy (London: Kegan Paul International, 1993) 61–68.
apostolic scheme with these attested analogues, one should probably link this latter expression of the concept to the same ideological environment.

This notion of the repeated incarnation upon earth of a “heavenly Seth” is arguably one of the constituent features of so-called “Sethian” gnosticism. B. A. Pearson (among others) has provided a concise survey of the most important places where this doctrine finds expression, calling attention to its occurrence in patristic testimonies and certain Nag Hammadi works. These instances invariably stress an essential identity between the figures of Seth and Jesus, sometimes by means of genealogy (Epiphanius, Panarion 39.3.5), but more often via assimilation (Panarion 39.1.3; Gos. Eg. 64.1–3; 65.16–18). Obviously this specific correlation requires a Christian context for its construction. However, it is possible, as Pearson argues, that the Christian identification of Seth with Jesus may be presaged in certain Jewish traditions which apparently attach a “messianic” significance to the figure of Seth. For example, Pearson notes that the so-called “Animal Apocalypse” (I Enoch 85–90), a symbolic narrative composed no later than the mid-second century BCE, portrays both Seth and the future eschatological deliverer in the form of a white bull. Moreover, an early midrash (Gen. Rab. 23.5) pregnantly connects Gen 4:25, the verse relating the birth and naming of Seth, with the appearance of the “messianic king” at the End of Days.

Mirroring a practice attested by the Pseudo-Clementines, Mani, and Muhammad, some gnostic circles apparently constructed official rosters of Sethian “prophets” or “teachers” who served as fleshly vehicles for the temporal sojourn of the “heavenly Seth.” This is presumably the import of the tradition reported by Epiphanius regarding the Archontic sect’s esteem for the “seven sons (of Seth) termed ‘strangers’” (Panarion 40.7.5); it is doubtful whether Seth’s biological progeny are intended by this phrase. The enumeration of “seven” sons is suggestive in this context, given its demonstrable popularity as an ordering principle governing the arrangement of several other heterodox lists of authoritative spiritual instructors. Unfortunately Epiphanius does not provide the corporeal identities of these “sons.” Anonymously also marks the thirteen separate manifestations of the “illuminator” (φωτιστής) recounted in a cryptic hymn contained within the Coptic Apocalypse of Adam (NHC V.5),

“illuminator” (φωτιστής) among “thirteen aeons” in the Coptic Gospel of the Egyptians (NHC III.2). Significantly, this latter text goes on to identify the φωτιστής as “Seth” and “the living Jesus” (64.1–9).

The term φωτιστής thus functions as a terminus technicus for an avatar of the “heavenly Seth.” Interestingly, the same Greek designation is employed by the Coptic Manichaean texts as a title for the Apostle of Light, the supernal entity who periodically descends to earth in human guise in order to proclaim Manichaean gnosis. This can hardly be coincidental. The use of the term φωτιστής by both the Sethian and Manichaean communities to signify human incarnations of their respective heavenly alter-egos (heavenly Seth/Apostle of Light) suggests an intellectual nexus, probably literary in nature, between these two groups. Their mutual recognition of both Seth and Jesus as authentic emissaries further cements this posited bond. And finally, even though Sethian texts and testimonia display some reticence in revealing the human identities of that system’s salvific agents, one is able to discern an additional common φωτιστής which Sethian and Manichaean communities share. The Apocryphon of John cites a “book of Zoroaster” as an authority for its correlation of bodily passions with archonic angels. Moreover, the Coptic tractate Zostrianos seems to regard the Iranian sage Zoroaster as one of the corporeal manifestations of the heavenly Seth. Interestingly, Mani also identifies Zoroaster as an avatar of the Apostle of Light.

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3B. A. Pearson, “The Figure of Seth in Gnostic Literature,” Gnosticism, Judaism, and Egyptian Christianity (B. A. Pearson; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1990) 76–79.

4Gen. Rab. 23.5 (J. Theodor and C. Albeck, Midrash Bereshit Rabah [Berlin, 1936] 1.226). “She named him Seth, because ‘God has granted me another seed etc.’ (Gen 4:25). R. Tanhumah in the name of Samuel Kuzit (said, She alludes to) that seed who arises from another place. Who is he? He is the King Messiah.” The ostensible allusion is to David’s ancestry through Ruth the Moabitess; see Theodor’s notes ad loc. and Gen. Rab. 51.8.

5Apost. Adam 77.27–82.19.
The resultant truncated apostolic chain (Seth-Zoroaster-Jesus) generated by this gnostic assimilation raises some intriguing questions about a curious text preserved within Syriac Christian literature known as the “Prophecy of Zaraddûs.” Two versions of this interesting oracle, differing only with regard to minor details, are currently extant. One is found in the Scholion of the eight-century bishop Theodore bar Konai, attached to his explication of the gospel story of the Visit of the Magi in Matthew 2. Theodore provides us with no indication of his source for this “prophecy.” Portions of the “prophecy” are quoted in the ninth-century commentary to Matt 2:2 by Iahdôdâdâr Merv. The other version is contained in the thirteenth-century compilation of Christian aggadic lore by Solomon of Basra known as The Book of the Bee, where once again no source is given for the “Prophecy.” This text’s potential importance for the present topic requires its full citation at this point.

The Prophecy of Zaraddûs regarding Christ

When Zaraddûs was sitting by the spring of waters named Giosa of Horin, the place where the ancient royal bath stood, he opened his mouth and spoke to his disciples Gûstasp, Sasan, and Mahman, (saying) ‘I tell you, my beloved ones and sons whom I have educated in my teachings. Hearken, (for) I shall reveal to you a marvelous secret concerning the great king who is going to come to the world. In the fullness of time and at the end of the final age an infant will be conceived and its members shaped within the womb of a virgin, without a man approaching her. He will be like a tree with lovely foliage and copious fruit that stands in a parched place. The inhabitants of that place will obstruct his growth, and struggle to uproot him from the ground, but they will not succeed. Then they shall seize him and put him to death upon a tree, and heaven and earth will sit in mourning due to his murder, and the generations of the peoples will mourn him. He will begin (by) descending to the abyss of the earth, and from the abyss he will be exalted to the height. Then he will reappear when he comes with an army of light, riding upon bright clouds, for he is the child conceived by the word which established the natural order.’

Gûstasp said to Zaraddûs: ‘This one of whom you speak all these things—from where does his power come? Is he greater than you, or are you greater than he?’ Zaraddûs replied to him: ‘He shall arise from my lineage and family. I am he, and he is me: he is in me, and I in him. When the advent of his coming is made manifest, great signs will appear in heaven, and a bright star will appear in the midst of heaven, whose light will surpass the light of the sun.14 Now, my sons, you (who) are the seed of life which came forth from the treasuries (of light and)15 of light16 and of spirit, and (who) were sown in a place of fire17 and water,18 it is necessary for you to watch and guard these things which I have told you so that you can look for his appointed time. For you will be the first to perceive the arrival of that great king, the one whose prisoners await so that they can be released.19 And now, my sons, preserve the secret which I have revealed to you, and let it be inscribed upon your hearts, and may it be preserved in the treasuries of your souls. When that star which I told you about rises, you shall dispatch messengers bearing gifts, and they shall offer worship to him and present the gifts to him. Do not be negligent, so that you not perish by the sword, for he is the king of kings, and all (kings) receive their crowns from him. I and he are one.’

These (things) were uttered by that second Balaam. As is customary, (either) God forced him to expound them; or he derived from a people who were conversant with the symbolic prophecies about Christ, (and) he predicted them.20

In its present form, the “Prophecy of Zaraddûs” is clearly a Christian tract, one that cleverly exploits the maniac fame of a renowned pagan sage to underscore the authoritative status of the Christian messiah. However, in spite of its orthodox veneer, the “Prophecy of Zaraddûs” displays certain arresting features which indicate that its conceptual core may be rooted in Syro-Mesopotamian gnostic circles like those mentioned above. One should note the following suggestive things:


13Added from the text of Solomon of Basra, since its omission may be due to a Nicole-tography.

13Compare Gos. Thom. logion 50: “Jesus said, If they say to you, ‘Where have you come from?’ say to them, ‘We have come from the light...’” Translation cited from The Complete Gospels: Annotated Scholars Version (HarperSanFrancisco: Polebridge Press, 1994) 313.

14Read with Solomon of Basra here.

15Does the phrase “place of fire and water” encode a reference to the “heavens” (ῶον), based on the popular midrash of their fabrication from fire (ἐι) and water (ὕ): See b. Hug. 12a: Gen. Rab. 4:7; Midrash Konen (Jellinek, BHM 2:24): ὃ o εἰς πῦρ ὅ ὁ ὕ ὁ ὃ ὃ ὃ ὃ ὃ ὃ “and He took fire and water and mixed them together and made from them the heavens; i.e., fire and water.”

16Note the address of the disembodied souls to the so-called “Son of Light” in the course of Theodore bar Konai’s exposition of the teachings of what are apparently the Mazdakites (Scholion 2:34:22–25). “Son of Light, go ask our Father when the prisoners will be freed, and (when) solace (will come) to the grieving ones who are distressed, and (when) solace (will come) to those souls who suffer calamity upon earth.”


18Es ist jedenfalls bezeichnend, dass im Bereich der christlich-griechischen Ueberlieferung Zarathustra-apokalypsen nur im Besitz von hetretisch-gnostischen Kreisen sich finden (my emphasis).” Quotation from H. Windisch, Die Orakel des Hystapes (Amsterdam: Koninklijke Akademie van Wetenschappen te Amsterdan, 1929) 18.
Occidental image of Zoroaster, unlike that of the Sibyls, was so intricately connected in the popular imagination with sorcery, astrology, and idol-worship that he was effectively precluded as a viable candidate for delivering pre-Christian testimony to the advent of the Messiah. Syriac Christianity, although nominally better informed, retains and accentuates this negative appraisal by bluntly equating the figure of Zoroaster with such biblical villains as Nimrod, Balaam, or Azazel, and ascribing his alleged prophetic gifts to the willful or unwitting inspiration of Satan. In providing the "prophecy," Theodore bar Konai thus departs from the general trend of disparagement exhibited by his Christian predecessors and peers. Lingering suspicion of Zoroaster's novel guise as pre-advocate of the Messiah seems to survive in at least one work roughly contemporaneous with the literary activity of Theodore. The ninth-century gospel commentary of Isho'dad of Merv cites certain lines from Theodore's version of our "prophecy" in his remarks on Matt 2:2, but only after uttering the disclaimer that the "prophecy" was excerpted from "that vomit of Satan, their scripture which is called Avesta." No such text of course is found within any authentic Zoroastrian writing. Could Isho'dad have been so confused about the actual provenance of the "prophecy?" It seems rather that he exhibits here some honest misgivings about this particular pseudopigraphon. In view of Windisch's observation about the heritage of Christian pseudo-Zoroastrian writings, coupled with the known Persian and Manichaean esteem for Zoroaster as teacher, his skepticism appears well founded. Any text claiming that Zoroaster predicted the coming of Christ is automatically of suspect provenance.

2. Twice in the course of the "prophecy" the phrase "great king" (ملكها) is used in reference to the anticipated eschatological deliverer. While this specific locution is not unknown in biblical literature, it serves there primarily as an attribute of God Himself with no indication that the designation bears any special nuance. For such a usage, one must turn to Near Eastern sectarian currents, particularly those which apparently nurture the gestation of Syro-Mesopotamian gnosia. Both Hippolytus (Refutatio 9.15.1) and Epiphanius (Panarion 19.3.4) report that the Elchasaites sect, the group among whom Mani was raised, term Christ (and not God!) α μεγας βασιλευς "the great king." Moreover, the pseudo-Iranian Oracles of Hystaspes, a late Hellenistic apocalyptic work that was known and used by Mani, and which possesses abundant connections with Irano-Judaic syncretic efforts, refers to the final deliverer as "the great king" (rex magnus). It should thus occasion no surprise to discover this same phrase within Manichaean eschatological literature (Homilies 32.20). Therefore the prominent use of this locution suggestively parallels the terminology employed in proto- and mature Manichaean apocalyptic speculation.

3. Portraying the authoritative teacher with arboreal imagery is a favorite trope of Manichaean parabolic discourse. Widengren, Amtold-Döben, Klimkeit, and the present author have previously discussed the Manichaean predilection for this type of metaphor, which is exploited not only as a literary image but also as an iconographic figure in Central Asian illuminations and wall-paintings. An excellent example is contained within Ibn al-Nadim's report regarding the ordination of prayer laid upon the Manichaean electi, wherein he provides the actual verbiage which the faithful are enjoined to repeat. One berakhah addressed to Mani reads as follows: "Praise be to you, O Shining One, Mani our guide, root of light and branch of life, great tree which is entirely (for) healing." The application of this image, however, is not limited to Mani; other authentic teachers of Manichaean gnosia are described similarly

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23 Lacantius, Div. Inst. 7.17.11.
in the extant sources, including most importantly Jesus. The seemingly gratuitous employment of the same imagery in the “Prophecy of Zarzūst” with respect to Jesus is reminiscent of Manichean discourse.

4. The redeemer’s triumphant return “riding upon bright clouds” at first glance seems dependent upon the description of Daniel’s visionary experience of God’s enthronement found in Daniel 7, a biblical image of a cloud-swathed advent lacking the crucial element of passage wherein the seer beholds “one like a human being who came with the clouds of heaven and reached the Ancient of Days” (Dan 7:13). However, this biblical image of a cloud-swathed advent lacks the crucial element of luminosity which distinguishes the arrival of the pseudo-Zoroastrian redeemer. A better analogue may be the “bright cloud” (σφαίρα φωτείνη) accompanying the theophany found in Matt 17:5, although Jesus is not portrayed as traveling with the cloud. According to the apocryphal Protoevangelium of James, a “bright cloud” marks the cave outside Bethlehem when the infant Jesus is born—Joseph and the midwife are able to return to Mary upon espying its light. But the most relevant comparative material for this particular narrative motif stems from Syro-Mesopotamian gnostic

5. Phrases like “sons of the seed of life,” “treasuries of life,” and “treasures of light” pepper the lexicon of Syro-Mesopotamian gnosticism. “Treasuries of Life” was in fact the title of one of the canonical compositions of Mani.

6. But perhaps the clearest indication of this text’s sectarian provenance enters in Zarzūst’s response to his disciple’s question about the source of the future king’s “power” (مشیئا). “He is a descendant of my lineage. I am he and he is me; he is in me, and I in him.” Similarly, at the conclusion of the oracle,
Zardūš reiterates "I and he are one." This is an extraordinary claim. The author of these quasi-Johannine exclamations asserts the essential identity of Zoroaster and Jesus, an assimilation nowhere affirmed in classical Christian sources and which is consonant only with those attested within both Sethian and Manichaean apostolic ideology, as we saw above. It stands to reason that this attempt to win converts from Zoroastrianism, encouraging them to see in Jesus the prophet's seed from a virgin mother.43 Although this interpretation is widely accepted, it must be seriously doubt, however, that the "prophecy" owes its existence to the creative imagination of Nestorian evangelism.44

The conceptual and linguistic affinities which we have isolated above link this text firmly with the thought-world of Syro-Mesopotamian gnosis. The "Prophecy of Zardūš" is apparently a valuable survival, with only linguistic adaptation, of an original gnostic source.

Addendum

An intriguing feature of Isho'dad's citation of the pseudo-Avestan "Prophecy of Zardūš" within his commentary to Matthew 2 is its contextual literary juxtaposition at the conclusion of a lengthy rehearsal of the so-called "Chaldean art."45 This physical proximity of supposedly "Chaldean" teachings to the alleged oracle from Zoroaster is not on the face of it surprising—ancient writers frequently confuse and conflate so-called "Magian" and "Chaldean" lore, treating these formally distinct labels as essentially identical.46 Isho'dad in fact reflects this popular assimilation in his exegetical linkage of "Chaldean" teachings to the scriptural visit of the Magi in Matthew 2. Moreover, a popular tradition attributed the discovery of the astrological arts—the Chaldean science par excellence—to Zoroaster.47

Among Isho'dad's collection of purported Chaldean materials are a number of lines expounding the occult relationship of the seven visible planets and twelve zodiacal signs to certain constituent elements of the human body.48 Therein we find the following anthropogonic passage: "And moreover these

42Compare Pistas Sophia: "That man is me, and I am that man" (NHS 9; ed. C. Schmidt and V. MacDermot; Leiden: Brill, 1978) 231. An excellent comparative discussion of the heterodox doctrine of "successive incarnation," which has been in no way superseded, is that of I. Friedlaender, "Jewish-Arabic Studies," JQR n.s. 3 (1912–13) 246–54. Note especially the hadith cited in the Ismāʿīlī Kitāb al-Kashf of Jaʿfar b. Mansūr al-Yaman (10th cen.), according to which "All once proclaimed in Kūfa: 'I am the Christ...I am he, and he is me.' Iṣā b. Maryām is part of me and I am part of him" (!), cited and discussed with similar examples by E. F. Tijdens, "Der mythologisch-gnostische Hintergrund des »Umm al-Kitāb«," VARIA 1977 (Acata Ivana 16; Leiden: Brill, 1977) 286–91. Tijdens suggests (p. 291) that the "Prophecy of Zardūš" and this portion of Kitāb al-Kashf share a "judentheosophische (gnostische)" background. See also H. Corbin, "From the Gnosis of Antiquity to Ismāʿīlī Gnosis," in H. Corbin, Cycllical Time and Ismāʿīlī Gnosis (London: Kegan Paul International, 1983) 151–93, esp. 186. One must be careful to distinguish between assertions about the identity of certain "messengers" (as above) and cognate assertions about a unio mystica between an individual and the Godhead. The latter conceptually expresses mystical communion between the human soul and God. For examples, see Maʿasrak Merkavah 588 (Synops [ed. Schäfer] 224): אַף אַף וְאַף וְאַף "He is His Name and His Name is He," with the discussion of Wolfson, Through a Speculum 181–87; also Abraham Abulafia as cited and discussed by M. Ide, The Mystical Experience in Abraham Abulafia (Albany: SUNY Press, 1988) 124–34; E. R. Wolfson, "Jewish Mysticism: A Philosophical Overview," History of Jewish Philosophy (ed. D. H. Frank and O. Leaman; Routledge History of World Philosophies 2; London & New York: Routledge, 1997) 480–81; also al-Balḥi) and his exclamation al-baqī, for which see Corbin, History of Islamic Philosophy, 103.

by the planetary
books, Zdtsprarn
planet is responsible for the fabrication of a specific bodily component. The
ninth-century Pahlavi anthology of selections culled from various lost Avestan
The planets are listed in an
order in which these components are listed is governed in the present instance
by the planetary week—the sequence in which the planets are listed follows that
of the days of the week, beginning on Sunday and ending on Saturday. As we
shall see, this is not the typical way in which similar lists of planet/body
homologies are sequentially structured.

An "authentically Zoroastrian" melothesia is present in Zātspram, a
ninth-century Pahlavi anthology of selections culled from various lost Avestan
books, and a work whose compilation would be roughly contemporary with the
literary activity of Theodore bar Konai and Isho’dad. Therein we find the
following list of correlations of planets to corporeal constituents, presented as
follows (30.5–11): moon to marrow, Mercury to bone, Venus to flesh, sun to
sinew, Mars to veins, Jupiter to skin, and Saturn to hair. Three of the
Zātspram correlations overlap with those of Isho’dad: Venus/flesh, Saturn/hair,
and Mars/blood (= veins). The remaining corporeal substances are identical
with those listed by Isho’dad. This verbal similarity suggests that the two lists
are genealogically related. Furthermore, it is quite apparent that the Zātspram
roster exhibits an internal logical consistency that is absent from Isho’dad’s list.

The planets are listed in an ascending series from the moon to Saturn, with the
sun inserted between Venus and Mars, a sequence which follows the usual
order in which Hellenistic astronomers presented them from a geocentric
perspective. Moreover, their correlated body components move progressively
from the innermost to the outermost section of the human body. In other words,
both the human body and the planetary spheres of the physical cosmos are
envisioned as consisting of seven concentric "layers (ōf), of which the
innermost is mazg, 'marrow,' and around this in successive layers lie bone,
flesh, fat, veins, skin, and hair. The architecture of body and cosmos thus
mirror one another. However, the planets in Zātspram are not depicted as
anthropogonic entities; they simply schematize the cosmos as a corporeal form.

Ner oracles of Zoroaster or mention of "Chaldean" teachings found in the
immediate proximity of the Zātspram melothesia. It is this contextual
connection, exhibited in Isho’dad, between the two specific motifs of an
anthropogonic melothesia and an invocation of either Zoroaster or "Chaldeans"
that warrants closer scrutiny. Where else in the extant literary traditions do we
find this particular nexus?

One place is in the twelfth-century universal chronicle of Michael Syrus,
a work heavily dependent upon much earlier traditions and sources. A series
of planet/body homologies occurs there in the context of Michael’s presentation
of the life and doctrines of Bardaisan, the renowned second-century Edessene
heresiarch whom Ephrem branded "the teacher of Mani" and whose adherents,
the Dayansites, flourished as a distinct dualist sect in the East well
into the ‘Abbasid era. Although garbled and lacunose in its present form,

55Reeves: ‘Prophecy of Zardāšt’
"Chaldeanism," description of yet another quasi-gnostic Christian lore. "He (Bardaisan) also says that Christ the son of God was born at the time of Jupiter, crucified at the hour of Mars, buried at the hour of Mercury, and resurrected from the grave at the time of the planet Jupiter."65

Another significant occurrence of this imagery appears within the description of yet another quasi-gnostic Edessene religious sect supplied by the eighth-century Nestorian heresiologist Theodore bar Konai, our source for the earliest version of the "Prophecy of Zardošt." In his exposition of the teachings promulgated by one 'Audii,66 Theodore provides us with the following valuable quotation from an 'Audian scripture. "In an apocalypse attributed to John... it lists the names of the holy creators, when it says, 'My wisdom created flesh, understanding created skin, Elohim created bones, my kingdom created blood, Adonai created sinews, anger created hair, and thought created marrow.'67 Theodore then informs us, 'This material was taken from Chaldean doctrines.'68 Here it is important to notice that Theodore verbalizes the same nexus previously beheld in Isho'dad's recitation, although instead of the planet/body homologies provided by Isho'dad and Michael Syrus, we are here given a mixture of Jewish divine names and hypostasized attributes of human mental and emotional life. Nevertheless, this list is correlated with the same roster of body constituents seen above—flesh, skin, bones, blood, sinews, hair, and marrow—recognizable despite its thoroughly skewed sequence.

A third instance figures in the long version of the Coptic Apocryphon of John, at the point when the archons fashion the psychic form of the first human being Adam: "kindness made... bone; forethought made... connective tissue (i.e., sinews); divinity made... flesh; lordship made... marrow; kingship made... blood; zeal made... skin; intelligence made... hair."69 As in the 'Audian quotation taken from the "apocalypse attributed to John," a series of mental and emotional attributes stand in the stead of the planetary designations in the correlations. In spite of this difference, R. van den Broek has conclusively demonstrated that this form of the melothesia is intimately linked with the (earlier?) versions which supply only planetary correspondences.70 A comparative examination of the Syriac and Coptic lists, performed by H.-C. Puech long ago,71 demonstrates conclusively that Theodore was in fact quoting from a Syriac version of what we now know as the Apocryphon of John. Yet what is of paramount importance in this latter source is the internal bibliographic reference that appears at the conclusion of what is, in its long version, a proximal roster of homologies. "Now others whom I have not mentioned to you preside over the rest of the passions; and if you want to know about them, the matter is written in the Book of Zoroaster."72
It is exceedingly curious that planet/body homologies followed by invocations of the authority of Chaldeans, and in at least two cases, Zoroaster, recur with such frequency in Oriental gnostic and Christian literature. Isho'dad's juxtapositioning of this material, with which we initiated this short excursion, is therefore probably neither arbitrary nor accidental. It suggests in fact the existence at one time of a gnostic literary source which featured both the planet/body correspondences and allusions to or even quotations from Zoroastrian pseudepigrapha, among which may have been a pre-orthodox version of the "Prophecy of Zarudios," isolated portions of which survive in truncated and adapted forms in several literary settings. At the very least this discernible structural feature provides some additional support for the possible gnostic origin of the "Prophecy of Zarudios."

It is a great pleasure to contribute to this celebratory volume in honor of Bob Kraft. Bob suggested Timothy and Aquila as a dissertation topic and guided my exploration of the broad corpus of adversus Judaeos dialogues, an interest that continues to drive my work. Bob was a tireless dissertation advisor and he remains a cherished teacher, colleague, and friend.

The Dialogue of Timothy and Aquila (TA) is an anonymous, Jewish and Christian disputation which, in its final form, was situated in Alexandria during the episcopacy of Cyril. There is no scholarly consensus concerning date, provenance, or transmission history of this text. Earlier I argued that TA was composed in the third century CE to which an elaborate narrative setting (TA 1-2) and conclusion (57.10-20), proper names for interlocutors, and references to the ἡμοίοςος trinity (25.1-3, 25.7, 30.2) were appended in the fifth. This paper will focus on the narrator's summary of Aquila's argument in TA 1 and a key argument from the earlier dialogue (TA 5) which represents the longest monologue permitted to Aquila, and one which differs markedly in tone and content from the narrator's summary. Apologetic arguments (e.g., the Jews are not rejected by God), incidental counter-arguments, and exegetical arguments

1An earlier form of this paper was presented at the AAR/SBL annual meetings in San Francisco, 1992, in the Early Jewish/Christian Relations Section. The present paper is a revised version of material from Chap. 5 of my dissertation, "Representations of Jews and Judaism in the 'Dialogue of Timothy and Aquila': Construct or Social Reality?" (Ph.D. diss., University of Pennsylvania, 1994).


3"Representations," Chap. 2. I will hereafter refer to the Jewish and Christian speakers respectively as Aquila and Timothy.
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