**THE TRUE MYSTERIES**

**SACRAMENTALISM IN THE GOSPEL OF PHILIP**

**BY**

APRIL D. DECONICK

Previous scholars of *Philip* have identified the sacraments (which they have understood to be ritual activities) as a particularly troublesome puzzle. Thus ritual in *Philip* has been the subject of numerous important and intriguing academic studies over the last generation. Each of these studies has helped steadily advance our understanding of the subject, clarifying many of the problems connected with interpreting the *Gospel of Philip.*

A rough draft of this paper was presented in 1998 to the Early Jewish and Christian Mysticism Group at the annual meeting of the Society for Biblical Literature. It appeared in draft form in the *SBL Seminar Papers*, Part 1 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1998) 483-523 under the title, “Entering God’s Presence: Sacramentalism in the Gospel of Philip.” I would especially like to thank my respondents, Elaine Pagels and Charles Gieschen, for their comments and criticisms on that draft as well as the members of the Early Jewish and Christian Mysticism Group. In addition, my gratitude is extended to Gilles Quispel and Rachel Elior for reading earlier drafts of this article and providing me with their helpful comments.

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Yet, despite this extraordinary effort, several issues need more discussion since we have yet to come to a consensus on the number of sacraments in Philip let alone a “sacramental theology.” Given this situation, some scholars suggest that the style of Philip is so allusive that we cannot understand the individual actions of the specific sacraments. This line of reasoning is supported in the recent article by E. Pagels, “Ritual in the Gospel of Philip”, in The Nag Hammadi Library After Fifty Years, and is further evidence that scholars are still struggling to reconstruct the ritual activity alluded to in this enigmatic gospel. In face of this impasse, I propose that the ritual activity in Philip and its sacramental theology can be reconstructed by seeing these traditions as reflective of similar traditions developing simul-

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taneously in early Jewish mystical circles, circles which were advocating mystical ascent through the heavenly Temple and a transforming vision of God.\textsuperscript{5}

According to the pioneering research of R. Elior, in the aftermath of the destruction of the Temple in 70 C.E., Jews within these mystical circles were perpetuating Temple worship by fostering the idea of a surrogate heavenly Temple. This idea was developed largely from the visions of Ezekiel which were preserved following the destruction of the first Temple. Refusing to accept the end of their religious worship in the wake of the destruction of their cult center, they focused on the notion of a spiritual world whose cultic practices now operated on a mystical-ritual praxis. The structure of the earthly Temple was projected into the heavens as a series of three or seven hekhalot or shrines, merkavot or chariots, devirim or Holy of Holies.\textsuperscript{6} The priestly and levitical traditions of Temple worship were elevated and transferred to these supernal regions in the form of angelic duties and liturgical practices. The priestly ritual was understood to be performed by the angels in the heavenly sanctuary. As the primary liturgical performers, the angels were responsible for the ceremonies associated with the priestly blessing, the use of Divine Names, the pronunciation of the unutterable Name of God, the recitation of prayers, and the performance of music.\textsuperscript{7}

The Jewish mystic could now ascend through the various hekhalot or shrines in order to journey to the inner sanctum and worship before God’s

\textsuperscript{5} Early Jewish mysticism is an esoteric tendency within Second Temple Judaism which was characterized by speculation about ascending into heaven and gaining a transforming vision of the manifestation of God. Evidence for this tendency can be seen mainly in the Philonic corpus, Jewish apocalyptic literature, the Qumran manuscripts, and the Hekhalot texts. For a fuller discussion, refer to A.D. De Conick, \textit{Seek to See Him: Ascent and Vision Mysticism in the Gospel of Thomas}, Supplements to Vigiliae Christianae 33 (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1996) 28-37; idem, \textit{Voices of the Mystics: Early Christian Discourse in the Gospels of John and Thomas and other Ancient Christian Literature}, JSNTS 157 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001) especially 47-61.


throne. He could enter the devir, the Holy of Holies, and gaze on God's manifestation enthroned upon the merkavah, the seat consisting of two cherubim with wings spread over the kapporet, the lid of the Ark of the Covenant (1 Chron 28:183; cf. 1 Kings 6:23-28, 8:6-7; 2 Chron 3:10-1, 5:7-8). For the human practitioner, this journey was understood to be a transformative experience. This transformation generally was described in terms of the human's transfiguration into an angel, his participation in the heavenly liturgy, or his own enthronement. Often the transfiguration involved the revelation of secret knowledge about the world's operation.

In the Gospel of Philip, we are faced with a series of three Temple shrines rather than seven: the Holy shrine, the Holy of the Holy shrine, and the Holy of the Holies shrine:

There are three shrines (HEI) for sacrifice in Jerusalem. The one opening to the west was called “the holy” (NETOYADAD). Another opening to the south was called “the holy of the holy” (NETOYADAD ANETOYADAD). The third open-

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11 I translate HEI as “shrine” because this translation captures its meaning within this
Philip associates these shrines with particular “sacraments”: “Baptism is the holy shrine. Redemption is the holy home. The holy of the holies is the bridal chamber” (πραγματικα πεντε γενοσεπευαβ [Π]ω[Τ]ε πεντε γενοσεπευαβ πετ[α]αβ γενοσεπευαβ πε πνυμφω δυ) (69:22-25). Also in 67:28-30 we find a passage which identifies the “sacraments” as baptism, chrism, eucharist, redemption, and bridal chamber: “The Lord did everything in a mystery: a baptism and a chrism, a eucharist and a redemption, and a bridal chamber” (ανσωει [Ε] ΝΩΛ ΜΙΩ ΝΑΝΟΥΜΥΣΤΗΡΙΟΝ ΟΥΒΑ[Π]ΤΙΣΜΑ ΜΙ ΩΥΧΡΙΣΜΑ ΜΙΝΟΥΝΥΧΑΡ[Ι]ΤΙΑ ΜΙΝΟΥΝΥΧΩΤΕ ΜΙΝΟΥΝΥΜΦΩΝ).13

Clearly baptism, chrism, and the eucharist are ritual activities. But what about “redemption” and “bridal chamber?” Does μυστήριον, or “sacrament,” have to indicate a ritual sacrament as Segelberg and others after him have assumed? Or can it be more inclusive, describing an experience in which the human does not participate alone, but where he acts in communion with God? In a “sacrament,” the human participates in a higher reality, the reality of the Spirit without ever ceasing to be human. Long ago, the Church Father John Chrysostom explained that a “sacrament” had a double meaning: “what we believe is not the same as what we see, but we see one thing and believe another.”14 The distinctive feature of a sacrament is that it is at once both “visible and invisible.”15 It is a combination of “an outward visible sign with an inward spiritual grace.”16
are the means by which “God’s grace is appropriated to every Christian individually.” Today, according to Meyendorff, “a sacrament is a ‘passage’ to true life; it is man’s [humanity’s!] salvation.” A sacrament is an “eternal Mystery where the boundaries between heaven and earth are broken and where human decision and action acquire an eternal dimension.”

If we allow for this broader definition of MYCTHPION in Philip, then “redemption” and the “bridal chamber” might not be actual rituals, but instead holy “mysteries” which, in some way, allow the human to connect to the divine source of life. Therefore, the sacraments should be understood to include manners of thinking sacrally, mundane activities infused with sacrosanct meanings, as well as ritual performances. Philip’s sacraments seem to have this double entendre: a worldly meaning which is “deceptive” and an eternal meaning which is “correct” (53:24-35). Thus, I contend that it is necessary to let MYCTHPION function in this broader sense rather than the narrowly confined understanding that has permeated previous scholarship. If we allow for this broader definition, I believe that the complicated passages which refer to baptism, chrism, eucharist, redemption, bridal chamber, and marriage in Philip become much more sensible.

In this paper, therefore, I propose a new paradigm for interpreting the sacraments in Philip, a paradigm grounded in the broader definition of “sacrament.” So I understand “sacraments” or the “true mysteries” to include more than ritual activities; they also identify those human thoughts and actions which have been invested with sacral meaning.

In addition, I hope to demonstrate that just as the Jewish mystics invented a surrogate supernal Temple of seven shrines through which they could ascend to the Presence of God and perform their liturgical duties, the Gospel of Philip preserves a similar celestial Temple tradition. Its three heavenly Temple shrines represent the esoteric reality behind the sacraments. It is plausible that these sacraments are understood on the spiritual level to represent the three rooms of the previously destroyed Temple: the ulam or vestibule; the hekhal or central room; and the devir or inner sanctum. Just as each of these rooms represents a greater degree of holiness within the Temple, so does each sacrament in Philip. Each stage in the ascent through...

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17 Ware, Orthodox, 276.
19 Meyendorff, Marriage, 23.
the rooms of the heavenly Temple brings the believer closer to the devir, the Holy of Holies where the Presence of God dwells, seated upon his merkavah. As the believer moves through each Temple shrine, he is progressively transformed. For the Christian Gnostic, this ascent culminates in an eschatological experience at the much-anticipated End, when the believer finally is able to enter the Holy of Holies and gaze upon the Father, fully transformed.

1) The Initiatory Sacramental Rituals

The initiatory stage in the mystical-sacramental praxis is a ritual performance stage. Since this stage is the first of the three Holy shrines, it plausibly can be associated with the ulam or vestibule of the Temple in Jerusalem. It is quite noteworthy that before the priests were permitted to enter the Temple, they had to ritually immerse themselves (cf. Mishnah, Tamid 1:2, 4; 2:1; cf. Yoma 3:3). This immersion took place in the “sea of bronze” (1 Kg 7:23-26), a great water container supported by twelve statues of bulls (2 Chron 4:6). This basin was located to the south of the altar just outside the ulam.\(^{21}\) This aspect is transferred to the angels in the Hekhalot literature where they too must bath and purify themselves in order to carry out their liturgical functions in the heavenly Temple.\(^{22}\)

In Philip, the two initiatory rituals are performed at the same time: baptism by water and baptism by fire, which is unction or chrism (cf. 57:23-29; 67:3-9; 69:5-15). These rituals are performed for purification purposes. Baptism by water and fire operate on two levels, purifying the “visible” or physical aspect and the “hidden” or spiritual aspect: “It is through water and fire that the whole place is purified—the visible by visible, the hidden by hidden” (7ITN OYM00 Y 4N OYK0FT ET0Y0B AN0 NTHP NET0Y0NG 7ITN NET0Y0NG EB0A NEHNP 7ITN NEHNP) (57:23-25). Philip explains that the water and oil work to consecrate the soul and the spirit: “It is from water and fire that the soul and spirit came into being... the fire is the chrism” (EB0A 4N OYM00 Y 4N OYK0FT ANA TΨΥΧ[Η] AN

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the oil is that it is the holy fire of the sacred realm "whose form is white, which is bright and beautiful, and which gives beauty" (πιεοῦα 

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(67:7-9).

I suggest that the hidden quality of the oil functions to consecrate the person so that he may enter the fiery realm of heaven. It is a well-documented part of heavenly geography that a river of fire flows near the throne of the Glory. The angels in Jewish texts purify themselves in the river of fire in order to prepare themselves to join in the heavenly Temple liturgy (3 Enoch 36; Schäfer, section 920). It appears that this heavenly geography was embedded deeply in the Valentinian tradition since it shows up in the Extracts of Theodotus as well. In this text, there is a river of fire that runs beneath the throne. Moreover, the whole space of the Holy of Holies is fire. The veil conceals the fiery depths of the Holy of Holies from view so that no one is "destroyed by the sight of it" (Διὰ τοῦτο...καταπέτασμα ἔχει, ἵνα μὴ ἐκ τῆς προσώπως ἁναλωθῇ τὰ πνεύματα). Only the archangel, the High Priest, enters the Holy of Holies. This is Jesus who was called in and enthroned. He will provide passage for the saved seed into the Pleroma only at the End (38:1-3).

The connection between the initiatory rituals and immersion in the fire of heaven may have developed in response to the fact that some traditions remembered Jesus’ own baptism as an event bringing with it heavenly fire. Justin Martyr, for instance, tells Trypho that the Jordan River was blazing with fire when Jesus entered the water (τὸν ἀνάψυκον ἐν τῷ Ἰορδάνῃ). When he came out of the water, he received the Holy Spirit (Dialogue with Trypho 88). In two old Latin recensions of Matthew 3:15, there is mention that a great light shone out of the water at the moment of Jesus’ baptism (Ita: et cum baptizaretur, lumen ingens circumfulsit de aqua; Vgm: et cum baptizaretur Jesus, lumen magnum fulgebat de aqua). According to Ephrem’s Commentary on the Diatessaron 4.5, there was “the shining of the light upon the waters”. The combined evidence has caused W.L. Petersen to con-
clude that this tradition is very old and was either forgotten or rejected by later Christians.26

In addition to their consecrating power, the initiatory rituals in Philip are understood to be a new birth for the believer, begetting him “through Christ in the two [i.e., baptism and chrism]” (ἠγνώστη πέντε γὰς πεναγα) (69:5-7; cf. 67:13-20). This emphasis on rebirth is also highlighted in the Valentinian Extracts of Theodotus 78:1-2 where baptism liberates one from Fate, bringing about rebirth. This rebirth probably mirrors the spiritual birth of the aeon Jesus who had been conceived through the union of the Virgin or Holy Spirit and the Father in the Pleromic bridal chamber (Gos.Phil. 55:24-29; 71:4-11), since the text indicates that “we are indeed reborn through the Holy Spirit” (ἐσθιλά ριπα ετούασας είς απο μεν ἅλον[η] ἄνθεκοι) (69:5).27

Because the text understands baptism to be regenerative (cp. John 3:3), it should not be surprising that it takes issue with the Pauline theology that through baptism the believers undergo ritual death: “Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death (κοίληξέντες οὐ, ὡς Ιησοῦς, εἰς τὸν θάνατον αὐτοῦ ἔβαπτισθημεν)? Therefore we have been buried with him by baptism into death (συνετάφισαν οὖν αὐτῷ διὰ τοῦ βαπτίσματος εἰς τὸν θάνατον)” (Rom 6:3-4a).28 In response, Philip explains that “by perfecting the water of baptism, Jesus emptied it of death. Thus we go down into the water, but we do not go down into death” (ΡΩΕ ΝΙΑ ΤΕ ΔΩΚ ΕΒΟΛ ἁλαθούχ ἈΠΑΛΗΤΙΚΑΣ ΤΑΘΕΙ ΤΕ ΘΕ ΑΥΣΙΟΤΕ ΕΒΟΛ ἁλαθού ετε ΠΑΗ ΤΗΒΗΚ ΜΕΝ ΕΠΙΤΡ ΕΠΑΘΟΥ ΤΗΒΗΚ ΖΕ ΑΠ ΕΠΙΤΡ ΕΠΑΘΟΥ (77:8-11). Rather, through the baptismal ceremonies, which included anointing with holy oil, the initiate is reborn of the Holy Spirit and then is invested with this Spirit (64:23-27).29

Furthermore, the investment of the Holy Spirit through the initiatory rituals is connected to the investment with the redeeming Name of God. Indeed, in Philip the initiate not only gains the name of Christ through


27 Concerning this notion, see now Pagels, “Ritual in the Gospel of Philip”, 285-286.


chrism (74:12-25), becoming a “Christian”, but he now is transformed into “a Christ” (οντός πετρος) (67:29). The name of Christ, of course, is the unutterable Name of the Father which he gave to Jesus (οντός ουσίως μετατηγομαχθέν ητα πνευμα ταυτη άγια) (54:6-10). Moreover, as Philip indicates, Jesus “clothed himself with the Name of the Father” (αιτειται οντός ουσίως άγιος) so that he would be transformed into the Father (54:10-11). The Christians who have been invested with this Name, know the Name but do not speak it (54:11-12). It is “the Name above all things: the name of the Father” (οντός ουσίως άγιος) (54:7). Obviously, it is the same as referred to in Philippians 2:9, το ονόμα το ύπερ πάν άνω ονόμα, which is given to Jesus: κύριος the Greek substitute for the Tetragrammaton.30

The investiture of the Valentinian Christian with the unutterable Name of God may have been in imitation of Jesus’ own baptism and investiture with the Name since the Valentinians taught that the descent of the spirit or dove (cf. Mark 1:10) is associated with the investiture of the Name of God (cf. Extracts of Theodotus 22:5-6).31 Thus, through the initiatory rituals, the believer imitates Jesus’ investment with the Name at his own baptism in the Jordan.

Irenaeus alludes to this connection in his statement about the investiture of the Name upon the Valentinians: “the Name which is hidden (το ονόμα το αποκεχρυμμένον) from every deity, dominion, and power, which Jesus the Nazarene donned (ο ενδώσατο) in the spheres of light, [the Name] of Christ” (Adv. haer. I.21.3). Notice, according to Irenaeus, that Jesus puts on the Name in the “spheres of light”. This must denote investiture within the heavenly realm perhaps representing the supernal hidden reality behind Jesus’ external baptism.

Such an allusion makes me speculate whether Jesus’ investiture and that of the Valentinians as newly born Christians, should be understood within the context of priestly investiture in the heavenly Temple. This becomes plausible when we recall that in the Gospel of Philip, Jesus is associated with the “high priest” who will be able to enter the Holy of Holies of the heavenly Temple, bringing with him the Saved, those of the “order of the priesthood” (εσώα γραοις μάτων ον τραχιν διανούνισι ναει

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According to Exodus 29, the consecration ceremony for the priest began by first washing him at the entrance to the Tent. Then the priest was to be invested with the priestly garb which included the turban. There is evidence that the turban was decorated with the Name of God (cf. Philo, De vita Mos. 2.114, 132; Josephus, Ant. 3.331). Furthermore, his head was anointed with oil. After these ceremonies, he could enter the holy place and perform his liturgical functions.

Similarly, the priest must be consecrated in heaven once the Temple was projected into the supernal realm in the esoteric Jewish traditions. We find a clear example of this in the Testament of Levi where Levi journeys through heaven in a vision. He calls the uppermost heaven the Holy of Holies in which the great Glory is enthroned (3:4; 5:1-2). The gates of the heavenly Temple are opened and he sees the Glory within. Then God gives him the blessing of the priesthood (5:1-2). Later, Levi is washed, anointed, clothed in the priestly garments and fed bread and wine (8). In the Aramaic manuscript, the angels say, “Now, see how we elevated you above all and how we gave you the anointing of eternal peace”.

Comparably, in 2 Enoch, the hero Enoch ascends to the seventh heaven where God is enthroned and the angels perform the liturgy before him. Michael removes Enoch’s earthly garments, anoints him with good oil, and clothes him in glorious garb (22:8). The oil is described as “greater than the greatest light, its ointment is like sweet dew, and its fragrance like myrrh; and its shining is like the sun” (22:9-10). He is transformed into an angel (22:10-11). It is clear that this investiture and transformation is of a priestly nature, since the discussion of Enoch’s progeny toward the closing of 2 Enoch understands them to be of priestly descent (cf. 2 Enoch 68-73).

It should be noted that the association of baptism and chrism with the priesthood and admittance to the heavenly Temple is not unknown in other early Christian literature. For instance, in the Christian-Jewish text, the Pseudo-Clementina, chrism is directly connected to the consecration of Aaron. It is stated that when Jesus became man, God anointed him with oil which was taken from “the wood of the tree of life.” Because of this,

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Jesus is called “Christ.” Moreover, Jesus now “anoints with similar oil every one of the pious when they come to his Kingdom, for their refreshment after their labors, having overcome the difficulties of the way; so that their light may shine, and being filled with the Holy Spirit, they may be endowed with immortality” (Recognitions I.XLX). The author goes on to state that Aaron, the first High priest, “was anointed with a composition of chrism, which was made after the pattern of that spiritual ointment of which we have mentioned previously” (Recognitions I.XLVI).

This cluster of ideas must be connected to the early tradition embedded in 1 Peter 2 where the Christians are described as “being built into a spiritual house, into a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ” (αὐτοὶ ὡς λίθοι ζῶντες οἰκοδομεῖσθε οἶκος πνευματικὸς εἰς ἱεράτευμα ἄγιον ἀνενέκχω πνευματικὰς θυσίας εὐπρεσθέκτως [τῷ] θεῷ διὰ ἶπποι Χριστοῦ) (2:5). They are “the chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people acquired” (γένος ἐκκλεσίων, βασιλείων ἱεράτευμα, ἐθνὸς ἄγιον, λαὸς εἰς σωτηρίαν) which has been called out of darkness into “his marvelous light” (2:9). This transformation into a Christian priesthood, according to 1 Peter, is the result of having been “born anew (ἀναγεννημένοι) not of perishable but of imperishable seed” (1:23). Certainly this language is reminiscent of the initiatory rituals as interpreted by Philip.33

We might note, as well, the reference in Hebrews 10:19-22 which states that Christians can enter the heavenly Temple with confidence because their hearts have been “sprinkled” clean and their “bodies washed with pure water” (ξεκομίζον τὸ σῶμα ὄφελμα καθαρὸν). Similarly, we find a reference to the spiritual Temple in the Epistle of Barnabas where the author expresses his concerns about the destruction of the earthly Temple and the rebuilding of the “incorruptible” Temple. The incorruptible Temple will be built “in the name of the Lord” and “in glory.” How? The author explains:

Having received the forgiveness of sins and having placed our trust in the name of the Lord, we have become new creatures, formed again from the beginning... [God has] opened the doors of the Temple to us who were

33 The notion that Jesus’ own baptism in the Jordan transferred him to the priesthood serves as the basis of Christian baptism in the Syrian tradition rather than the Pauline idea of dying and rising with Christ. On this, see S.P. Brock, “The Syrian Baptismal Ordines”, Studia Liturgica 12 (1977) 177-183. Cf. Didascalia 16: “As of old the priests and kings were anointed in Israel, do thou in like manner, with the imposition of the hand, anoint the head of those who receive baptism...”
enslaved by death... By giving us repentance, [God has] introduced us into the incorruptible Temple (16).

Since the phrase, “having received the forgiveness of sins,” probably indicates baptism, while “having placed our trust in the name of the Lord” must allude to chrism, we find that this text preserves a similar interpretation of these rituals: they open the doors of the spiritual Temple and allow the initiate to enter as “new creatures,” bearing the image of God which was given to the human in the beginning.

It seems that Philip is aware of this trajectory of Christian interpretation of baptism and chrism. This gospel further develops this understanding by connecting the initiatory rituals with the language of life and resurrection. The initiate rises from the water and is anointed into the “resurrection” as Philip states: “it is from the olive tree that we get the chrism, and from the chrism, the resurrection” (73:17-19). In the same passage, Philip associates the oil from the olive tree with the Tree of Life in the garden of Eden (73:15-17). Philip stresses this connection, rebuking those who think otherwise: “Those who say they will die first and then rise are in error. If they do not first receive the resurrection while they live, when they die they will receive nothing” (73:1-5). Just as Christ was resurrected, so too the initiated are resurrected through chrism (56:15-20). They are assured that upon their deaths, when they “strip off the flesh”, they will enter “rest” because they have acquired “the resurrection” while in this world (67:13-16).

Acquiring rebirth, the Name of God, and resurrection through the baptismal and anointing ceremonies is the beginning of the initiate’s transformative experiences. Philip explains this initial transformation by using the analogy of God as a professional “dyer.” The dyes both purify and immortalize. This purifying effect is expressed in one of Philip’s stories: “The Lord went into the dye works of Levi. He took seventy-two different colors and threw them into the vat. He took them out all white. And he said, ‘Even so has the Son of Man come [as] a dyer’” (63:25-30). Immersion also infuses the initiate with immortality. Just as good dyes “dissolve with the things dyed in them, so it is with those whom God has dyed. Since his
dyes are immortal, they become immortal by means of his colors" (ἐπείδ' ἔηνατμοι μᾶς οὖσανε χωρὶς ἄτμοι ἔβολ γίνοστι ἄνεφαναν) (61:13-19). So "God baptises what he baptises in water" (πνούμενος δε ἀβάπτισε ἄνεφαναν ἄμοος γῆ οὐμοος) (61:20).

Lastly, Philip associates the initiatory rituals with a particular visionary experience. This association is made in 69:5-14 where it is stated that through baptism and chrism the initiate is not only begotten by the Holy Spirit and Christ, but he is joined (σχοτρ) to them. This union is necessary in order for the person to gain the ability to "see" in the "light". "For this reason, it is fitting to baptize in the two, in the light [which is chrism] and the water" (διὰ τούτου οὕτως ἀβάπτισε χρῆ χαμά χρῆ πουοειν μὴ παμοος πουοειν δε νε χρίσσα). For Philip such a visionary encounter is nothing less than transformative. This belief in the transformative power of vision rests upon the ancient belief that the image enters the seer through the eye and becomes part of his soul. As we find in Achilles Tatius, Chitophon and Leucippe: "The pleasure which comes from vision enters by the eyes and makes its home in the breast; bearing with it ever the image . . . it impresses it upon the mirror of the soul and leaves there its image" (5:13). Philip teaches the newly initiated about this awesome transforming power of their visionary experience: "It is not possible for anyone to see anything of the things that actually exist unless he becomes like them (Μὴ οὔγοις ήταν έκαντας εγκαὶ ἄνθρωπος οὐκ εἰσήκουν άνθρώπους έκαντας)... You saw something of that place, and you became those things. You saw the Spirit, you became the Spirit" (ακαὶ κακάς έκαντας οὐκ εἰσήκουν ένθρώπους έκαντας άνθρωπος έκαντας άνθρωπος) (61:20-23, 28-30).

Thus the baptismal and anointing ceremonies, according to Philip, first cleanse the initiate, allowing him access into the first of the three heavenly Temple chambers. Moreover, through this ceremony he is ritually reborn of the Holy Spirit, receiving the Name and the resurrection. As a consecrated priest and a child of the resurrection, he mystically enters the first of the sacred shrines and encounters the Holy Spirit face to face.

It is fascinating to find that this understanding of the initiatory rituals is confirmed by another Valentinian text from Nag Hammadi, the Valentinian Exposition. We find in this text, fragments which describe both baptism and

34 I am grateful to Andrea Lieber for bringing this text to my attention.
**2) The Eucharist Sacrament**

The eucharist sacrament is another ritual activity referred to by Philip. It seems to correspond to the Holy of the Holy shrine, the shrine closely tied to “redemption” (69:23). Accordingly, this shrine is to be associated with the second room in the Temple, the hekhal or holy place. In the hekhal stood a golden altar for incense offerings (1 Kg 7:48; cf. 1 Kg 6:20-21), ten lampstands (1 Kg 7:48-49), shulchan ha-panim or the table of the Countenance (1 Kg 7:48-49) upon which was ritually offered lechem ha-panim, the bread of the Countenance. Every Sabbath twelve loaves of unleavened bread were placed on the table before the face of Yahweh (Lev 24:5-9). After a week, the loaves were eaten by the priests (Lev 6:7-9; 24:5-9).\(^{35}\) There seems also to be evidence that the priests placed jugs of wine on the Table along with the loaves and then partook of beverage and bread when the time came for them to participate in the weekly meal.\(^{36}\)

Andrea Lieber, in her research on feasting language and visions in Jewish mysticism, has sparked renewed interest in the cult meal and its ritual context. The holy meal seems to have represented some type of sacrifice to Yahweh. This is supported not only by Ezekiel who compares the table

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\(^{36}\) Haran, 216-217.
with an altar (Ezek 41:21-22), but also by Leviticus 24:5-9 where the eating of the bread by the priests is equated with the most holy offering to God. As such it was a meal offered to God (Lev 3:11, 16) and one which the priests eventually shared (Lev 24:5-9). It is plausible that, since both God and the priests partook of the bread, this sacrifice can be understood as effecting some sort of communion between Yahweh and Israel, perhaps affirming kinship between the deity and the human community. Further, the priests seem to have assimilated the sacred aspect of the bread by consuming the loaves in God’s presence. By imbibing sacred bread, they incorporated the sacred within their bodies (Lev 6:7-9).37

According to Philip, the second shrine is the eucharist and “the eucharist is Jesus (τεονικεια πενειοι) . . . ‘the one spread out’, for Jesus came to crucify the world” (63:21-25). As we find in John, Jesus’ body is understood to be bread from heaven which provides nourishment to those who eat it. Thus Philip exclaims: “When Christ the Perfect Man came, he brought bread from heaven in order that the human might be nourished with the food of Man” (τεαρε πενειοι επελοιον δραλικ ομεινε νοιοι εβολ αν τη πινα ερε προσκε ωδι αν ττρομ πρωμε) (55:11-14).

This action is associated with the crucifixion when Jesus was offered up to God in place of animal sacrifices. Unlike the previous sacrificial cult which offered up animals alive who then died, Jesus was offered up dead and then lived (55:1-5). Thus, Jesus’ body is nourishing, life-giving. His body is living bread from heaven. And “to those who so desired, he gave [life, that] they might not die” (νετοουου αντι ταυ ηουω [νοιω]ανει) (73:25-27).38 Certainly there is a connection between these ideas and the Christological title that Philip applies to Jesus in 85:1-5: the title High Priest.


These ideas are very old since many of them are found embedded in the text of Hebrews. There, Jesus is the High Priest who has entered the Holy of Holies and offered himself up for the sins of humanity just as the previous High Priests had offered the blood of animals for the sins of the people annually in the Temple in Jerusalem (1:3-4; 2:17; 5:8-10; 6:19-20; 7:23-28;9:1-28; 10:11-14). The Christians are told to “have confidence” to “draw near to the throne of grace” (τῷ θρόνῳ τῆς χάριτος) (4:16), to let their hope enter “the inner shrine room behind the curtain where Jesus has gone as a forerunner” on their behalf as the High Priest (ἡ θεού ἡμῶν πύρ καταναλίσκον) (12:28-29).

How do believers enter the Temple to worship God who dwells in the fiery depths of the Holy of Holies? In Hebrews 10:19-22, we find an answer not unlike the one Philip offers: through the initiatory rituals and the eucharist meal: “We have confidence to enter the Temple by the blood of Jesus, by the new and living way which he opened for us through the curtain, that is, through his flesh (ἐγκαθίσταται οὐν, ἀδελφοί, παραχρησίν εἰς τὴν εἴσοδον τῶν ἑγίσχων ἐν τῷ αἵματι ἡσοῦ, ἦν ἐνεκατήνισεν ἡμῖν ὅδὸν πρόσφατον καὶ ζῶσαν διὰ τοῦ καταπετάσματος, τούτῳ ἐστιν τῆς σαρκός αὐτοῦ), and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water (καὶ ἱερὰ μέγαν ἐπὶ τὸν οἶκον τοῦ θεοῦ, προσερχώμεθα μετὰ ἀληθείας καρδίας ἐν πληροφορίᾳ πίστεως χορηγούμενοι τὰς καρδίας ἀπὸ συνεκδήσεως πονηρᾶς καὶ δολουμένοι τὸ σῶμα ὕδατι καθαρῷ).

The emphasis, in Hebrews, is on partaking the body and blood of Jesus as an atoning sacrifice whereas in Philip the focus is on the consumption of a divine body as a divinizing mechanism. Gilles Quispel makes this distinction clear in his discussion about the differences between the Roman mass and the Greek Orthodox eucharist: “In the Roman Mass, God is a tremendous majesty, who is to be atoned by the sacrifice offered to him. The aim and purpose of the Roman Mass is atonement; of the Greek eucharist, at-one-ment.”39 Quispel explains, “The Greeks venerate in their liturgy the Unknown God beyond understanding, they venerate Christ,

who in a mysterious way sacrifices and is sacrificed and whose spirit is
invoked upon the faithful and upon the elements of bread and wine in
order to divinize the initiates who participate in this mystery."\(^{40}\) It seems
that Philip preserves an understanding of the eucharist very close to that
of the Orthodox.

Philip associates the benefits of the eucharist with the eschatological res-
urrection. In 56:26-57:22, the author is involved in a debate over what
kind of body we will have in the resurrection. He seems to be arguing
with a group of Christians who contended that they must rise in the flesh
because they could not be naked before God. Philip responds to this, argu-
ing that those who would rise in the body actually will be naked. He fur-
ther responds by exegeting 1 Corinthians 15, stating that instead, we must
unclothe ourselves so that we can be reclothed in our spiritual bodies. He
maintains that the believer who partakes in the eucharist, will already have
received Jesus' "flesh" as clothing in which to arise. He summarizes:

What is this which will not inherit? This which is on us [i.e., our bodies]
(ταξίοι ετοικον). But what is this, too, which will inherit? It is that which
belongs to Jesus and his blood (τα ιε τε άν πεζσον). Because of this he
said, "He who shall not eat my flesh and drink my blood has not life in him"
(John 6:53). What is it? His flesh is the word, and his blood is the Holy
Spirit (τεγαρί πε πλοος αυχον πε πίπα ετοικα). He
who has received these has food and he has drink and clothing (πενταγκυ

Philip repeatedly refers to this clothing as the "Perfect Man" (πτελείος
πρωμέ), a reference to the resurrected or transformed body of Jesus. In
75:15-25, he tells us that the cup contains "wine and water", the image
of Jesus' blood. This must be a reference to John 19:34 where blood and
water poured out of Jesus' pierced side at the crucifixion. This cup of wine
and water is "full of the Holy Spirit" (μωρος εβολα ρα πίπα ετοικα),
belonging to "the wholly Perfect Man" (πα πτελείος τηρή πρωμέ πε). When
the believers drink of the cup, they will receive for themselves "the
Perfect Man" (πτελείος πρωμέ). Thus the "living water", the eucharis-
tic cup, "is a body" (πλοος ετοιμ ουεσκα με). Since it is neces-
sary for the believer to "put on the living man" (μωρ ουείν ουεσκον
πρωμε ετοιμ), he must first descend into the waters of baptism, unclothing
himself, so that he might now put on the Living Man through imbib-
ing the eucharistic body.

\(^{40}\) Quispel, "Asclepius," 70.
The union of the believer with the resurrected body of Jesus has a significant soteriological purpose. The transformation into the Perfect Man has the effect of cloaking the believer from the archons during ascent.\footnote{Irenaeus associates the sacrament of last rites with this cloaking effect stating that certain Valentinians anointed those who were dieing so that “their inner man may ascend on high in an invisible manner.” The rite made the person “incapable of being seized or seen by the principalities and powers” (Iren., Adv. Haer. 1.21.5).} This may reflect the fact that Jesus’ own movement through the heavens was undetectable to the archons who populate the realms. The Extracts of Theodotus, for instance, mention the fact that Jesus put on the psychic Christ whose body was invisible to the archons (59:3).

So important is this eucharistic theology, that Philip repeats it three times in his gospel. On the first occasion, he states: “The archons do not see those who are clothed in the perfect light, and consequently are not able to detain them.” He will clothe himself in this light by uniting with the Perfect Man sacramentally (70:5-10). In the second instance, Philip associates the garment of perfect light with the body of the Perfect Man: “Not only will they be unable to detain the Perfect Man, but they will not be able to see him, for if they see him they will detain him. There is no other way for a person to acquire this grace except by putting on the perfect light.” The one who has cloaked himself in the light will enter heaven (76:23-30). In the third case, we are told that the person must receive the perfect light while on earth because “he will not be able to receive it in the other place.” He restates that the reception of the body of light provides invisibility so that the believer can not be detained during his final ascent. He adds that no power will be able “to torment a person like this while he dwells in this world” (86:6-11).

These ideas seem to be the basis for a passage found in another Valentinian text, the Interpretation of Knowledge. In this text, believers must “receive” Jesus’ “shape,” probably through the eucharist meal. This “shape” “exists in the presence [of the Father].” So it seems that the resurrected body of Jesus is being described. Furthermore, the shape or resurrected body is the vehicle which will allow the believer to ascend because Jesus is bearing him upon his “shoulders.” Jesus commands him, “Enter through the rib whence you came and hide yourself from the beasts” or Archons (10:24-36). Clearly the believer is understood to become part of the resurrected body of Jesus,
which is also described as the body of the primordial Adam. The connection with the primordial Adam should not be surprising since the first earthly man was identified in Jewish and Christian literature with the "image and likeness of God," the heavenly Man, and the Kavod.41

Thus, for the Valentinians, to receive the resurrected body, the Perfect Man, is to have one's own body transformed into the primordial body which can be resurrected but which also will be invisible to the archons. Only if one possesses the transformed body will one be able to enter the heavenly throneroom and gaze on the Father. Philip explains: "Do not despise the Lamb [i.e., the sacrificed body], for without it, it is not possible to see the King. No one will be able to go in to the King if he is naked" (ΑΠΡΟΚΑΤΑΦΡΟΝΕΙ ΑΠΟΙΕΙΒ ΆΑΗΤΗ ΤΑΡ ΜΗ ΥΠΟΛ ΕΝΑΥ ΕΠ<Ρ>Ο ΜΗ ΛΑΔΝ ΝΑΨΙ ΠΕΓΟΥΟΕΙ ΕΡΟΥΝ ΕΠΙΡΡΟ ΕΥΚΗΚΑΘΥ) (58:15-17). The transformed body then is the proper covering for the ascent into the cosmic Temple and the much-anticipated vision of the Father.

Therefore, the body of the human must be transformed into the body of the Perfect Man. This occurs by incorporating the body and blood of Christ. Such ritual action has extreme consecrating and redeeming power and is to be associated with the believer’s entrance into the second holy shrine of the heavenly Temple, the hekhal. Here, on a regular basis, just like the priests in the past, the believer approaches the table of the Presence, now the table of the eucharist, and partakes of the holy bread and wine. In so doing, he incorporates the divine body and blood of Christ into his own body. Just as the believer saw the Holy Spirit and thus became the Holy Spirit in the first shrine, Philip reminds the believer that here he has seen Christ and has become Christ: "It is not possible for anyone to see anything of the things that actually exist unless he becomes like them... You saw something of that place, and you became those things. You saw the Spirit, you became the Spirit. You saw Christ, you became Christ" (ΑΚΛΑ[Υ Δ]ΙΠΧΕ ΑΚΙΤΩΠΕ ΝΧΕ) (61:20-23, 28-31).

It is noteworthy that connections between the eucharist and ascent into the heavenly Temple have been perserved in the Roman Mass and the Greek Orthodox eucharist liturgies, suggesting that Philip was aware of some very early Christian interpretations of this ritual. During the Roman Mass and Greek eucharist, the congregation is supposed to lift up their hearts to heaven and sing with the angels before God’s throne as Isaiah

41 Fossum, Name, 266-291.
heard during his throne vision (Isa 6:3), “Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord God.” Quispel surmises that “the idea that the faithful make a heavenly journey during the Eucharist is not just simply a metaphor, but must be taken quite literally,” especially in light of texts like the *Apocryphon of James* in which “the terminology of this heavenly journey (‘gave thanks,’ and ‘we also’) clearly is an allusion to the liturgy, where the hearts are lifted up during the Eucharist and man sings in harmony with the angels.”

### 3) Marriage as a Sacrament

Thus we approach the *devir*, the third and most holy chamber of the heavenly Temple. In the *devir*, it was believed that God’s Presence dwelled. As such, his *kavod* or manifestation was enthroned upon the *merkavah* behind the veil which separates the inner sanctum from the *hekhal*. The cherubim with outstretched wings overlaid the lid of the Ark of the Covenant and formed the seat of the special throne (1 Chron 28:18; Sirarch 49:8; cf. 1 Sam 4:4; 2 Sam 6:2; 2 Kg 19:15; Isa 37:16; Ps 80:1, 99:1). The goal of the Jewish mystic was to ascend through the seven *hekhalot* in order to reach the innermost shrine where the mystic would “behold the King in his beauty”. The mystic’s journey is also called a “descent to the chariot” or *yeridah* la-merkavah. As E. Wolfson has argued convincingly, this expression probably refers to the actual entry into the chariot, resulting in the enthronement of the mystic, his vision of the manifestation of God, and his participation in the heavenly liturgy.

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42 Quispel, “Asclepius,” 71.
In some Jewish sources the *devir* or Holy of Holies is associated with God's bridal chamber.\(^{45}\) This notion is reflected in the midrashic tradition which uses the simile of the Temple as a couch or bed in order to exegete *Song of Songs* 3:7, “Behold, it is the couch of Solomon”:

And why was the Temple compared to a couch? Because just as this couch serves fruitfulness and multiplication (i.e., sexual intercourse), so too the Temple, everything that was in it was fruitful and multiplied\(^{46}\) (*Tanhuma Num* fol. 17).

The analogy between the inner sanctum of the Temple with the bed of Yahweh may be very early since already in Ezekiel’s visions the association has been made between the Holy of Holies and the womb of Yahweh’s wife (16 and 23).\(^{47}\)

I suppose that the association of marriage with the Holy of Holies in Jewish tradition should not be too surprising since these two are connected semantically. The sacred act of marriage in Hebrew is לַיְסָדָה or *kidushin*. The verb, “to marry a couple,” is נָשָׁה or *lekdash*. The word for “Temple,” is מִקְדָּשׁ or *mikdash* while “Holy of Holies” is כֹּרֶשׁ מִקְדָּשׁ, *kodesh kodashim*. In addition to its marriage connotations, נָשָׁה also means “to consecrate” and refers to anything that belongs to God. Thus the whole semantic field surrounding the concept of marriage is equal to the semantic field of the Temple and, in particular, the Holy of Holies. It seems then that the expression “Bridal Chamber” is really equivalent to the “Holy of Holies” when one understands how these words functioned in Hebrew!\(^{48}\)

So it should not be surprising to find that, in the *Gospel of Philip*, marriage is associated with the third shrine of the heavenly Temple, the Holy of Holies. On one level, *Philip* talks about marriage as a sacrament in terms of its human institution. On another level, it is understood to be the great eschatological event, the Bridal Chamber, when the cleansed and transformed spirit finally enters the Holy of Holies, marries his angel, and is granted to see the Father face to face. Due to the constraints of language, confusion arises since human marriage is reflective of the perfect marriage

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\(^{46}\) Ed. Buber, 33.

\(^{47}\) For a complete discussion, see J. Galambush, *Jerusalem in the Book of Ezekiel: The City as Yahweh’s Wife*, SBL Dissertation Series 130 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1992) 89-125. It may be that the veil which separated the *hekhal* from the Holy of Holies (cf. *Exod* 26:33; Josephus, *B.J.* V, v, 5) represented her hymen.

\(^{48}\) This insight developed out of a conversation I had with Rachel Elior in 1998.
which takes place in the heavenly realm. This is expressed succinctly in 76:6-10:

In this world the union is one of husband and wife—a case of strength complemented by weakness—in the eternal realm the form of the union is different, although we refer to them by the same names (i.e., marriage and bridal chamber) (πενεκομος γα ένταντος γα πανιόν κεονα πε νεινε έν στόρε εμμονατε 
ς εροφυ ουνεπαν).

This means that for Philip marriage was a sacrament on two levels: in the way it was lived during the earthly experience of the couple; and as an end-of-the-world event when the angelic marriages took place in the Pleroma, the Holy of Holies or the Bridal Chamber.

a. Human Marriage

One of the most telling passages in Philip regarding human marriage is found in 64:31-32: “Great is the mystery of marriage! For [without] it the world would [not exist]” (ΠΛΑΠΤΡΙΟΝ ΑΠΤΑΜ[OC] ΩΥΝΟΣ [ΡΕ ΑΣΡΥ]ΈΡ ΠΕ ΠΚΟΣ[ΑΟ]Ν ΧΑΛΩ[ΡΕ ΑΝ]). Here, human marriage is associated with procreation. Furthermore, the marital union that Philip demands for his followers differs from the normal marital practices of non-Valentinians. Philip demands that the perfect human marital union be one controlled by pure thought rather than one controlled by sexual desire. Thus Philip refers to the former as “marriage of purity” (ΠΛΑΛΟΣ ΣΑΣΣΩΜ) (82:5) while the latter is “marriage of impurity” (ΠΛΑΛΟΣ ΤΙΤΣΩΜ) (64:36-37; 82:5).

In sacramental human marriage, known in Philip as the “marriage of purity,” during sexual intercourse, the thoughts of the couple must not be adulterous, focusing on another lover. For if this were the case, the child conceived would resemble the lover rather than the spouse: “The children a woman bears resembles the man who loves her” (78:14). Nor must the couple’s thoughts be focused on the world. For then the child who is born will resemble the world (78:20-25). What Philip proposes is that the couple direct their thoughts to God so that the child conceived will be of the spiritual race resembling the Lord:

Now you who live together with the son of God, love not the world, but love the Lord, in order that those you will bring forth may not resemble the world,
but may resemble the Lord (Ἠστήρ δὲ κακοσκομῶ ἢ ἐπιήρε ἀνήγουτε
μᾶρ κακοσκομῶ ὡς ἐπιήρε ἀνήγουτε ὑπὸ κακοσκομῆς θεοῦ ἀνήγουτε
Εὐαίσθητοι ἀνήγογει κακοσκομῶ ἀνήγογει ἀνήγογει) (78:20-25).

Because the partners have united with God in their thoughts and love,
they draw the heavenly spirit or light down to rest upon their own spir-
its, thus conceiving children of the Spirit:

Spirit mingles with spirit, and thought consorts with thought, and [light] shares
(with light) (ταύτα τῷ θεῷ εὐαίσθητοι ἀνὴρ ἀνὴρ θεῷ πλοῦτος ἡ
νοῦς ἐνοῦς ἀνὴρ πλοῦτος [ἀγαθὸς πνεῦμα] ἀνὴρ πνεῦμα
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It is noteworthy that this section of Philip is immediately preceded by a
passage which seems to be familiar with the Song of Solomon: “Spiritual love
(Συγκλητὶς άναμνηστική) is wine and fragrance” (77:35-36). Compare
this with the Song of Solomon 1:2-3, “For your love is better than wine, your
anointing oils are fragrant”, and 4:10, “How sweet is your love, my sis-
ter, my bride! How much better is your love than wine, and the fragrance
of your oils than any spice!” It may be that Philip’s understanding of the
marriage of purity which is to be governed by contemplation of the Lord
may be one of the earliest Christian exegeses of the Song of Solomon.

At any rate, the mystical aspect of marriage according to Philip also is
referred to in 81:30-82:26. In this passage, Philip states that sexual inter-
course between married partners is done “in private” (ἡ οὐγενήθη) in
order to beget children. He says that the private procreative moment is a
“mystery” (μυστηριόν) for every ordinary married couple. If procreation
within the ordinary marriage of impurity is a mystery, Philip declares how
much more mysterious is conception between partners of pure thought: “If
there is a hidden quality to the marriage of impurity, how much more is
the marriage of purity a true mystery!” (ἐνέπλησεν φασιν ὅτι
ποτνομὶ χάλλων περὶ σκομῶν φασιν ὅτι σκομὶ φασιν
οὐμυστηρίον περὶ χαλλωτηρίγιον) (82:4-6). The proper marriage is the marriage that is based on “pure”
(τέφθαντις) thought rather than mere “carnal” (καρπίσκον) activity, “belong-
ing not to desire, but to the will” (ἐφηθεὶς ἐκ τεθυμίας ἀλλὰς ἐνοπωθεῖν)
(82:9). During sexual intercourse, the couple must send their will to heaven.
In so doing, they will draw down the light and at the mysterious moment of conception, the light will consort with the couple. Thus Philip states regarding this moment: “It belongs not to the darkness or the night but to the day and the light” (82:9-10). So sacred is this private mystical moment between the partners when heaven’s own descends and mingles with them, that Philip declares sexual relations which are not conducted in private, to be “prostitution” (πόρνεία) (82:9-10).

Thus Philip explains that those who partake of the marriage of purity conceive “from the grace” (χαρίς) which is within their spouses (59:5-6). Associated with this is the emphasis in Philip on kissing between the perfect partners. Because they have been nourished with the body of the Perfect Man by partaking of the eucharistic elements, when they kiss each other, they conceive and give birth to perfect children (59:1-4). Even Jesus seems to be engaged in kissing activity with Mary Magdalene (63:35-36). The idea that life or the spirit could be transferred or exchanged by a kiss is a very old idea and probably underlies this particular behavior and interpretation. It was through the kiss, Philip seems to say, that the perfect spirit of the child is conceived while the body through sexual intercourse itself. Thus marriage and conception involve physical activities as well as a mystical consciousness which invites the divine light to mingle with the couple in order that they may conceive a child of the spiritual race.

Of course, this ideology of marriage and sexual activity must be what Irenaeus is objecting to when he claims that the Valentinians believe themselves “to be perfect,” “the elect seed” because they possess “grace” which has “descended from above by means of unspeakable and indescribable intercourse” (αὐτοῖς δὲ ἐνδοξησμὸν ἀνώθεν ἀπὸ τῆς ἀρρήτου καὶ ἀνομομάστου συζυγίας κατεληκυθεῖσαν ἤχειν τὴν χάριν). Thus the Valentinians maintain that “in every way it is always necessary for them to practice the mystery of intercourse (διὸ καὶ ἐκ παντὸς τρόπου δεῖν αὐτοῖς ἄκε τὸ τῆς συζυγίας μελέταν μυστήριον).” But for the non-elect, sexual intercourse is dangerous because it is not performed as a sacramental union but as an expression of sexual desire. Irenaeus quotes them as saying, “Whosoever being in this world does not so love a woman as to obtain possession of her ὃς ὑπὲρ μοναδικής...”

κόσμῳ γενόμενος γυναίκα οὐκ ἔφυλησεν, ὡστε αὐτῇ κραθήναι, is not of the truth, nor shall attain to the truth. But whosoever being of the world (ὁ δὲ ὅποι κόσμῳ ἄν) has intercourse (κεράνωμι) with a woman, shall not attain to the truth, because intercourse with his wife resulted from desire (διὰ τὸ ἐν ἑπιθυμίᾳ κραθήναι γυναίκι).” Those in the world but not of the world are the Valentinians who will attain to the Pleroma. They are expected to be involved in sacramental sexual practices as married couples. The psychics or ordinary Christians, however, are of the world. In order to attain to the “intermediate habitation” or the dwelling place of the Lower Sophia, they must practice “continence and good works (ἐγκράτειαν καὶ ἀγαθὴν πράξιν)” (Adv. haer. 1.6.4). If they are sexually active, even during their marriages, they are involved in impurity and sin because their minds are focused on fulfilling the pleasures of their bodies rather than the will of their spirits.

Philip’s understanding about the esoteric nature of sexual intercourse is very similar to that espoused by the Hermetics. According to both the Latin and the Coptic fragments of Asclepius, intercourse is a great “mystery” (mysterium; ἀγυστηρῖον) (Latin Asc. 21; NHC 65:15-66:24) which reflects God’s own creative potency. Asclepius 21 insists that “the mystery of intercourse” must be performed “in secret” (effectus itaque huius tam blandi necessariique mysterii in occulto perpetratur; ηὐς ἀπλετήριον ἄτακτος ἔγειρε ἀλοις ἐγγυμ) so that the couple may not be disgraced in front of those who do not themselves partake in the esoteric reality of the sexual experience.

The esoteric reality of the sexual encounter is one that only the pious understand and perform. To the impious, the “holy mysteries” of intercourse are “laughable and unbelievable”. The pious direct their thoughts to the contemplation of their true divine selves so that the divine selves are able to mingle with the other, having arisen in both natures from the sexual coupling (Latin Asc. 21: inperitis utrisque naturae divinitas ex commixtione sexus cogatur erubescere). Unlike the pious, the impious focus on their passions which are an “incurable sore” gnawing at the soul. During intercourse, harmful desire dwells within the impious and blocks them from rising above pure matter (Coptic Asc. 67:9-20). Those, however, who listen to God imitate him by restraining their passions. Like the androgynous Father who “crafted

all things by his own will” (C.H. V.7), their thoughts and actions must be controlled by their own will (Coptic Asc. 67:25-28).

It seems that the Hermetics extended their ideas of self-contemplation to sexual activity, turning a generally carnal activity into the supreme meditative moment when the divine Mind within each sexual partner unites with the other. Thus, the Hermetics claim that the begetting of children is “a duty in life to be taken most seriously and greatly revered”. Furthermore, “should any human being pass away childless”, they suffer “the worst misfortune and irreverence”. Accordingly, “after death such a person suffers retribution from demons” (διο καὶ μεγίστη ἐν τῷ βίῳ σπουδὴ καὶ εὐσεβεστάτη τοῖς εὗρονούσιν ἔστιν ἡ παιδοποιία, καὶ μέγιστον ἀτύχημα καὶ ἀσέβημα ἔστιν ἄτεκνὼν τινα ἐξ ἀνθρώπων ἀπαλλαγήναι, καὶ δίκην οὕτος δίδωσι μετά θέαντον τοῖς δαίμοσιν) (C.H. II.17). Is it possible that the Hermetics understood this reverent coupling to produce children filled with Mind, while the coupling of those who do not rise above the carnal pleasures of intercourse, was responsible for propagating those the Hermetics called “the souls of men devoid of Mind” (C.H. IV.3), mere fodder for death (C.H. I.18)?

This understanding of sexuality may help us to make sense of a difficult passage in Corpus Hermeticum I.18, a passage which has usually been interpreted by scholars as an example of a text advocating sexual asceticism: “let he who has Mind in him recognize that he is immortal, that eros is the cause of death” (ἀναγνωρισάτω ἐννοις ἕκαστον δύναται ἄθανατον, καὶ τῶν αὕτων τοῦ θανάτου ἔρωτα). Outside of its context, this passage smacks of sexual renunciation. But when viewed within its context, this interpretation becomes problematic:

God immediately spoke a holy speech: “Increase in increasing and multiply in multitude, all you creatures and craftworks, and let he who has Mind in him recognize that he is immortal, that eros is the cause of death, and let him recognize all that exists”. After God said this, Providence, through fate and through the cosmic framework, caused acts of intercourse and set in train acts of birth; and all things were multiplied according to kind. The one who recognized himself attained the chosen Good, but the one who loved the body that came from the error of desire goes on in darkness, wandering, suffering sensibly the effects of death (C.H. 18-19).

It seems that sexual activity itself is not the problem according to this passage, but sexual intercourse focused on eros or carnal desire. The one who

directs his thoughts inward and contemplates his divine self, has risen to
God and partakes in the esoteric reality of intercourse. Unfortunately, the
Hermetics state that most people do not do this while having sex. They
are led astray by their desire because they have focused their love on their
bodies rather than their divine selves. In this way, they can not rise to the
heavens during intercourse and, uniting with the divine, perpetuate immor-
tality. Rather, they continue to wander around the darkness of the sense
world, and through their ignorance will perpetuate death.

According to the Gospel of Philip, there are further advantages to the
pure marriage. If the married couple have drawn down the spirit or light
to consort with them during sexual relations, both are protected from the
unwanton advances of evil spirits which would otherwise be free to fon-
dle and defile them (65:3-26). One receives this spiritual spouse from the
marriage of purity which is called here, “the mirrored bridal chamber”
(πνευματικόν ἑρωικόν) (65:13) since it imitates the future marriage
that will occur in the eschatological bridal chamber between the person's
spirit and his angel. Thus the descent of the spirit or light is also referred
to by Philip as the descent of an angel. If the partners unite their thoughts
and love with God, the angel descends into their midst and unites with
them during sexual intercourse (cf. 65:24-26).

According to Philip, this type of marriage is supposed to imitate the
hierogamy of the Father and the Virgin Spirit who, in the great bridal
chamber, conceived Jesus in order to reflect the pristine harmony of the
pleroma (71:5-10). The conception was a fiery event in which the spiritual
body of the aeon Jesus was begotten (71:6-9). He left the bridal cham-
ber “as one who came into being from the bridegroom and the bride”
(71:10-11).

Now such a union is to be enacted by human activity because its imi-
tation helps to reestablish the harmony within the pleroma, a harmony
which was lost when Sophia conceived outside the boundaries of marriage.
This lost harmony was perpetuated after the creation of Adam and Eve
when Eve followed Sophia's example and separated from Adam, having
sex with him outside of marriage. So “Eve separated from Adam because
it was not in the bridal chamber that she united with him” (70:22-23).

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53 This is an old idea reflected in Genesis 6 and 1 Corinthians 11.
54 The notion that Adam and Eve had sex outside of marriage may be connected
to the popular belief that they had sex before they had reached adulthood; cf. Irenaeus,
Adv. haer. 3,22,4; Demonstratio ch. 12; Theophilus, Ad Autolycum 2,25; Clement of Alexandria,
Prot. 11,111,1.
Philip teaches that Jesus came to reestablish the lost harmony by restoring marriage and conception to its proper form. This was accomplished through Jesus’ own conception and birth. Because Jesus’ earthly conception and birth imitated the conception and birth of his aeonic body, the proper form of marriage finally was brought to earth, a marriage which mirrored the great hierogamy: “Christ, therefore, was born from a virgin to rectify the fall which occurred in the beginning” (71:19-21). Jesus came “to repair the separation which was from the beginning” by bringing, through his own birth, the divine bridal chamber to earth. Now those who imitate this divine union in their marriages “will no longer be separated” (νενταγωτός ἂν γὰρ πιθανός οὐκετί σειανώμεθα) (70:20-21). The believers, by following the example of the divine marriage, will enter rest, reestablishing the lost harmony of the pleromic world (70:10-22; 71:12-15; cf. 68:22-26).

It is fascinating how similar ideas develop in the later Jewish mystical traditions where sexual imagery particularly becomes connected to the act of God’s enthronement upon the cherubim seat in the Holy of Holies. In Hekhalot Rabbati, God’s enthronement takes the form of a sacred marriage. Thus the mystic must recite when he enters the merkavah:

Gladden the King who [sits] upon you [the throne], as the joy of the bridegroom in his bridal chamber (המסים מלך📝 שׁעילאכ נמסיו צה יבי עמאס).55

God’s “embellishment is more exquisite than the embellishment of the bridegroom and bride in the house of their wedding” (תַּנְסֵי חֲלֵיהֶה בִּנְתָּה).56 Moreover, the faces of the angels are compared to “the appearance of the bride” (אֱלֹהִים בֵּיתוֹ דְּבִלָּה).57 Therefore, God commands those mystics who have entered the merkavah:

Bear witness to them of the testimony you see in me regarding what I do to the visage of Jacob, your father, which is engraved upon my throne of glory, for when you say before me, Holy, I bend down over it (literally: her), clasp it, embrace it, and kiss it, (כֶּרֶם כָּדוּר אֵל שֶׁלֹּהַ מעַזְּמַח אֱלֹהִים אֱלֹהִים אֱלֹהִים אֱלֹהִים) and my hands are on its arms, thrice daily, for you say before me, Holy, as it says, “Holy, holy, holy”.

55 Schäfer, Synopse, paragraph 94. Cf. paragraphs 154 and 687; idem, Geniza-Fragmente zur Hekhalot-Literatur, 105 and 185.
56 Schäfer, Synopse, paragraph 159.
57 Schäfer, Synopse, paragraph 353.
58 Schäfer, Synopse, paragraph 164.
The sexual nature of the enthronement is alluded to in the Talmudic tradition as well, where emphasis is placed on the two cherubim between which the Shekhinah rests.\footnote{59 Cf. Midrash Tadshe, Jellinek, Beth Hamidrash iii, 167.}

When Israel used to make the pilgrimage, they (i.e., the priests) would roll up for them the veil and show them the cherubim which were intertwined with one another, and say to them: “Behold! Your love before God is like the love of the male and female” (b. Yoma 54a).

Such passages have caused E. Wolfson to treat the enthronement of God’s manifestation as “a metaphor for a sacred union of the masculine and feminine aspects of the divine”.\footnote{60 E. Wolfson, Through a Speculum That Shines: Vision and Imagination in Medieval Jewish Mysticism (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994) 101.}

Ingeniously, M. Idel connects this imagery with the talmudic dictum: “If a man and woman are worthwhile, the divine Presence dwells between them, if not—they shall be consumed by fire” (b. Sotah 17a).\footnote{61 Cf. Pirke de-R. Eliezer, ch. 12, and R. Tuviah ben Eliezer’s Lekah Tov on Genesis, 2:23.}

Idel suggests that this dictum should be interpreted as pertaining to sexual intercourse between married partners, an act whose performance, according to some Jewish traditions, affected the appearance of the Shekhinah on earth. Not only was the Shekhinah believed to be present during intercourse,\footnote{62 Cf. Bereshit Rabba 8,9 (p. 63); 22,2 (p. 206).} but if the union produced children, the Shekhinah would continue to dwell on earth.\footnote{63 Cf. revamot 63b-64a.} Thus, according to Idel, this dictum suggests that “perfect sexual union influences the Divine Presence, causing it to dwell with the worthy pair”.\footnote{64 M. Idel, “Sexual Metaphors and Praxis in the Kabbalah”, in D. Kraemer (ed.), The Jewish Family: Metaphor and Memory (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989) 201-202.}

Idel concludes that after the destruction of the Temple, the role of the cherubim as performers of the sacred union with God was transferred to human partners, thus partially perserving the sacred union by human activity.\footnote{65 Idel, “Sexual Metaphors”, 203.} The pure union of male and female in marriage restored the Shekhinah to her place on earth among the Jews, reestablishing the harmony that had originally existed in the Temple.\footnote{66 Idel, “Sexual Metaphors”, 204.}

In Kabbalistic traditions, it was believed that each person had an astral body which was linked to the image of God in which the human was created. Rabbi Eleazar of Worms says:

\begin{itemize}
  \item Cf. Midrash Tadshe, Jellinek, Beth Hamidrash iii, 167.
  \item Cf. Pirke de-R. Eliezer, ch. 12, and R. Tuviah ben Eliezer’s Lekah Tov on Genesis, 2:23.
  \item Cf. Bereshit Rabba 8,9 (p. 63); 22,2 (p. 206).
  \item Cf. Yevamot 63b-64a.
  \item Idel, “Sexual Metaphors”, 203.
  \item Idel, “Sexual Metaphors”, 204.
\end{itemize}
Each person has his form above, who is his advocate... an angel who guides that person's "star." And when he is sent below, he has the image of that person who is beneath him... And this is, "and God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him" [Genesis 1:27]. Why twice, "in his image/in the image of"? One is the image of man, and one is the image of the angelic being, who is in the form of that man (Hokhmath ha-Nefesh [Lemberg, 1876] 117-118).

This angel was understood to be the person's divine double which was imprinted on him at the moment of conception.

In the Zohar, the personal angel is understood to be a preexistent primordial shape or garment that the soul wears prior to entering the body. The Zohar says:

When a man begins to consecrate himself before sex with his wife with a sacred intention, a holy spirit is aroused above him, composed of both male and female. And the Holy One, Blessed Be He, directs an emissary who is in charge of the human embryos, and assigns to him this particular spirit, and indicates to him the place to which it should be entrusted. Then the spirit descends together with the image, the one in whose likeness [the spirit] existed above. With this image, man grows; with this image he moves through the world (III,43a-b).

Again in the Zohar it is stated, "at the moment of sex, the Holy One, Blessed Be He, sends a likeness that has the physiognomy of the person who is about to be formed imprinted and etched upon this image, and it stands over the act of intercourse. And were the eye allowed to see, he would observe above his head an image formed like the physiognomy of that person, and in that same image man is created (III, 104b)."

Thus, according to Idel, the later Kabbalists had developed this ancient idea of sacral marriage. They stated that when the husband and wife have intercourse, the husband's thought must "unite with the supernal entities" because his thought will draw "the supernal light downward". Then the light will rest upon the semen. The goal of intercourse is procreation in cooperation with the Shekhinah by having sex with a mystical consciousness united with God. The union of the parent's human bodies produces the child's body, while the soul emerges from the spiritual realm through the union of pure thought with God.

According to Idel, in the Kabbalistic tradition, marriage and sex are "transformed into a mystery... whose success is crucial for both the divine

67 Chavel, Kitve ha-Ramban, II,373.
cosmos and the lower universe”. Pure sexual relations were understood as participating mystically in the divine hierogamy by imitating it and influencing the harmony of the upper world.

It seems that the idea of sacramental marriage was not uncommon in Jewish, Valentinian traditions and even Hermetic traditions. The notion seems to be based on an ancient view of sexuality—that it was more than a physical activity with physical consequences. The thoughts of the sexual partners either raised intercourse to a sacred height or drew it down to the depths of sin. When performed sacramentally, the spirit of the child conceived would resemble God. Being immortal, it would be drawn down from the heavens above to sojourn on earth until it returned to its spiritual origin at death. But when performed out of desire, the child would merely resemble the world and its darkness and become fodder for death.

b. The Eschatological Bridal Chamber

The great day of complete “restoration” (ἈΠΟΚΤΑΣΤΑΣΙΣ) when the spirit of the person finally will enter the bridal chamber and marry his angel (67:16-20) will take place at the end of the world. Until that time, the bridal chamber, the Holy of Holies, remains hidden behind the veil (84:20-26). At the Eschaton, however, the veil will be rent “from top to bottom” (85:10) and the interior of the Holy of Holies will be revealed (84:25-26). The world will be left desolate and the Demiurge will flee the cosmos. He, however, will not be able to flee into the heavenly Temple shrines because he “will not be able to mix with the unmixed [light] and the [flawless] pleroma” (84:27-34).

In contrast, the believers who “belong to the order of the priesthood” because they have prepared themselves sacramentally for entry into the Temple, will “go within the veil” led by Jesus “the High Priest” (ἐρωμένες ἐκ τοῦ ἱνατομὴν οὐκ ἔχον σώμα ἔχουσιν ἐν πάντες ἄγκαταπετασμένοις ἀλήθειας μὴ παρθενεῖσαν) (85:3-5). The Ark of the Covenant is “their salvation” since they find themselves under “the wings of the Cross” (ἐσπεριώ οἱ Ἀγγέλοι ἀνεφέροντες ἅγιον [περὶ Ἀγόγημα ήσπερ αἰτήματος πιπα-

70 Exegesis of Hebrews 9:1-10 seems to have contributed to the development of this description of the end of the world.
ment seems to reflect the Jewish tradition of the mystic's entry into the Holy of the Holies and his enthronement between the winged cherubim which overlaid the lid of the Ark. Thus since they are seated under the wings of the Cross upon the kapporet it can be understood that they have been enthroned and transformed. Now the secrets of the heavenly world can be revealed to them (85:18-20). The rending of the veil reveals the Holy of the Holies and they are invited into the bridal chamber (85:20-21).

Just as the light was drawn down to earth by the pure thoughts of the married partners, now in the heavenly bridal chamber "the perfect light will flow out to everyone". As children of the bridal chamber, they enter the Holy of Holies and permanently receive the light which is essential for their union (86.5). In so doing, they join in marriage with their angels, their alter egos or spiritual twins. But for now, while on earth, this could only remain a great hope hidden until the end of the ages.

This eschatological hope, however, is foreshadowed in a saying that seems to have been part of the liturgical words spoken at their eucharist meal.

He said on that day in the eucharist [ceremony] (εἰς τευχαρίστειαν): "You have joined the perfect light with the Holy Spirit; also unite the angels with us, we ourselves as the images" (πεντακοσίων ἄντελεος ποιούειν ἐπίπλω εἰς θαλάσσα τοῦ Πασσελος ἐρωμεῖς ἐν θείῳ) (58:10-15).

It may be that these particular words were part of a eucharist ritual meal which was performed during the marriage ceremony as it was performed in ancient Orthodox tradition and as it remains today in Roman Catholic tradition. During the wedding as recorded by Philip, the couple may have partaken of the elements, enjoining their angels to unite with them in holy matrimony. This, of course, supports the statement in 65.1-26, which explains that each marriage partner must receive his angelic power during the wedding, the "mirrored bridal chamber," in order to ward off lecherous demons. This means that the marriage itself was not a ritual, but was believed to be a "mystery" in the sense that it was a sacral union of two humans and their angels, especially during sexual activity. If any ritual was performed during the actual wedding, it probably was the eucharist which was perhaps followed by the act of consummation in the bridal

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room (cf. Irenaeus, Adv. haer. 1.21.3). In this way, the human marriage of the couple was understood to be a sacramental union anticipating the eschatological marriage in the great Bridal Chamber.

It seems then that the sacramental experiences allowed the believer to mystically penetrate the heavenly Temple as far as the veil of the Holy of Holies. Through the sacraments of initiation and the eucharist meals, the believer gazed upon the Spirit and was transformed into the Spirit, beheld the Christ and was transfigured into Christ. Moreover, by enacting the sacred marriage through properly directed sexual activity, the believer participated mystically in the hierogamy taking place behind the veil and thus influenced the harmony of the divine world. Philip reminds the believer that at this third stage, the human is enacting the divine marriage, and in so doing: “You saw the Father” (Δείκνυε δεινοὶ οἱ ζώοι) (61:31). But complete transformation into the Father must wait until the Eschaton when “you shall become Father” (Καὶ θαυμάζοντας θαυμάζοντας) (61:31). In that divine bridal chamber, the believer will see his angelic self, “and what you see you shall [become]” (πείτε καὶ θαυμάζοντας θαυμάζοντας) (61:32-35).

Similarly, according to the Extracts of Theodotus, on the Lord’s Day, the believers which have been purified and have passed into the second room of the heavenly Temple where they have discarded their soul bodies, are transformed into their pure spiritual bodies. Together with their angelic bridegrooms, they cross the threshold, passing into “the bridal chamber” (τὸς νυμφιός). They “attain to the vision of the Father” (πρὸς τὴν τοῦ πατρὸς ἐκείνην ἔρχοντας), now “having become intellectual aeons, in the intellectual and eternal marriages of the Syzyge” (Αἰώνας νυμφίων γενόμενα, εἰς τοὺς νυμφίους καὶ αἰώνιους γάμους τῆς συζυγίας) (64:1-65:1).

4. Redemption

“Redemption (κομψὸς)” is also called a “sacrament” in the Gospel of Philip (67:28-30; cf. 69:25-26; Tripartite Tractate 127:25) and is mentioned in the writings of the Church Fathers (Irenaeus, Adv. haer. 1.13.6, 1.21.1-5; Hippolytus, Refutatio 4.41). But, like marriage, I believe that it should not be understood as a ritual event. Rather it is the “mystery” of “being redeemed” by God, of entering the heavenly Temple (cf. 69:24-25).

Therefore, in Philip, it is associated with the standard ritual events. It is connected with baptism (69:25-26): “Baptism possesses the resurrection and the redemption [Πολιτικά οὐγκαὶ Αἰώνας Ρατανακτας] (69:25-26).
cōte." In 62:15-17, it is associated with the eucharist, the "measuring" of Jesus. Thus: "Jesus' in Hebrew is 'the redemption' (τὸ ἀντιγεβραῖον πε πεπων) ... It is 'the Nazarene' and 'Jesus' who have been measured." This interpretation is particularly inviting when one recalls that according to 63:22-25, the name "Jesus" is also identified with the eucharist: "The eucharist is Jesus (τὸ ἔχοντες ὑπ' ἡμᾶς). For he is called in Syriac 'Pharisatha,' which is 'the one who is spread out,' for Jesus came to crucify the world." And finally "redemption" is associated with the eschatological Bridal Chamber (69:25-26): "As regards the redemption, it is in the Bridal Chamber (ἐν cōte ἐκ την ἀμφια)." At the end of the world, those who have entered the Bridal Chamber and its perfect light will receive the real chrism, not just the earthly type or image of it as they had formerly when on earth. This will "redeem (cōte)" the "captives." Only then will they be able to marry their betrothed angels.

What I conclude from this is that, for the Valentinians who wrote Philip, there was an important esoteric distinction between their ritual performances and the performances of ordinary Christians: that is, the rituals performed by the Valentinians effected a deeper spiritual action than those performed by other Christians because the Valentinians believed that their rituals actually "redeemed" the person. This conclusion is supported by the evidence given to us by Irenaeus. He admits being confused about how the Valentinians understood "redemption" because they associated it with each of the different rituals. Irenaeus sorts this out by stating that some Valentinians associate redemption with baptism: the pneumatics automatically are redeemed when they are baptized, while the ordinary Christians, the psychics, receive only the remission from their sins when they are baptized (Adv. haer. 1.21.2-3). Other Valentinians connect redemption with chrism (1.21.4) or the anointing rites preceding death (1.21.5) so that "their inner man may ascend on high in an invisible manner as if their body were left among the created things in the world, while their soul is sent forward to the Demiurge." Still others claim that redemption was achieved through their sacramental unions in marriage (1.21.3). And finally, their were some who teach that "knowledge" itself was redemption because only the spiritual element in the human will actually be redeemed (1.21.4).

Although it is certainly possible that different Valentinian groups connected redemption with different rituals, with the evidence in Philip, it seems more likely that the Valentinians generally understood that all of their sacraments possessed the mysterious power of redemption, while the same sacraments did not for ordinary Christians. This interpretation would
also explain Hippolytus' enigmatic statement that the Marcosians performed a second baptism which is called "redemption." I wonder if the Marcosians had found it necessary to rebaptize their new converts in order to ensure their redemption once they left behind the ranks of the ordinary Christians.

5. Conclusion

This reconstruction of attitudes toward marriage in Philip certainly separates the Valentinians from other Gnostic sects which may have tended toward more encratitic lifestyles. This study supports the conclusion that a sacramental marriage virtually was required between Valentinian Christians since it enacted and embodied the supernal hierogamy and the union of the transcendent aeons. This conclusion is in line with Clement of Alexandria's understanding of the Valentinians. In his famous tract On Marriage in which he vehemently writes against the encratitic lifestyle, he praises the Valentinians since they believe in the sanctity of marriage. He begins his book by stating: "The Valentinians, who hold that the union of man and woman is derived from the divine emanation in heaven above, approve of marriage" (Οἱ μὲν οὖν ἄμφι τὸν Οὐσιλεντῖνον ἀνωθεν ἐκ τῶν θείων προβολῶν τὰς συζυγίας καταγαγόντες εὐαφεστοῦνται γάμῳ) (Misc. III, 1, 1). In the Extracts of Theodotus, he records that the Valentinians believe that procreation is "necessary for the salvation of the believers" because procreation must continue until all the children of the spiritual race have been born (67:4). Furthermore, so sacred is conception that it is compared to the mingling of the bodies of aeons Jesus, the Church, and Wisdom (17.1-4). Once the children are born, they are able to partake of the sacraments where they receive "the form of the Savior" and "become children of a bridal chamber" (ὑπὸ δὲ τοῦ Σωτήρος μορφωθέντες Ἀνδρὸς καὶ Νυμφῶνος γεγόναμεν τέκνα) (68:3-4).

This sacramental theology may help to shed light on a perplexing passage in the Extracts of Theodotus. In 27:1-6, Clement of Alexandria discusses the ascent of the soul into the intelligible realm. The ascent of the soul is said to be the entry of the high priest with "the Name engraved upon his heart" (τὸ ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ ἐγκεκαραγμένον "Ονόμα ἔχων") into the Holy of Holies. Before entering the Holy of Holies, he must first enter "the sec-

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72 This is in contradiction to Idel, "Sexual Metaphors", 211-214, who seems to associate all gnostics with encratism and the return to the primal androgyne state; also, in contrast, is M.A. Williams, Rethinking "Gnosticism": An Argument for Dismantling a Dubious Category (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996) 148-150.
ond veil" (τοῦ καταπετάσματος τοῦ δευτέρου), the hekhal where the altar of incense stands. The priest’s body is said to already have been consecrated “like the golden plate” which is “pure and light through purification” since the body previously had been “engraved” with the “lustre of piety”, being “clothed with the Name” (τὸ Ὀνόμα περικείμενος).

The golden plate on the high priest’s turban which has been decorated with the Tetragrammaton, is the body which has been consecrated through baptism and chrism, engraved with the Name. This investiture purifies the body so that the priest can enter the hekhal. As he enters, the body is laid aside revealing pure soul. Here he worships with “the angels who are the ministers of prayers carried aloft”. Now he is ready to enter the Holy of Holies. As he does so, he is transformed completely into a spiritual body, as it were, “a body of the Power” (τὸ δυνάμεως). The work of “the Power” (τὸ δυνάμεως) is such that the person “becomes the bearer of God... as it were, his Body” (τὸ θεοφόρον γίνεσθαι τὸν ἄνθρωπον... καθάπερ σῶμα αὐτοῦ γνώμενον). Only then can the transformed person pass into the spiritual realm in order to “rest” with his “bridegroom”, being granted “to see God ‘face to face’”.

It would seem that Clement is referring to a common Valentinian interpretation of the sacraments here, an interpretation not unlike what we have so far reconstructed from Philip.73 The sacraments of baptism and chrism purify the body, etching the Name upon the person. This makes it possible for the person to enter the hekhal of the heavenly Temple. Within this holy room, the person is further transformed into the Body of God probably through partaking of the eucharist. Thusly transformed, he will be able to enter the Holy of Holies one day and marry his angel.

Illinois Wesleyan University
P.O. Box 2900 Bloomington IL 61702-2900

73 This would argue for the case that this pericope represents Theodotus’ views rather than those of Clement as Sagnard reconstructs: Sagnard, Les Extraits de Théodote, 11, 220-223. Thus, I agree with J. Buckley that this passage is consistent with Valentinianism. See her, Female Fault and Fulfilment in Gnosticism (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1986) 66-70.