jeweiligen Evangeliums dürfte weitgehend entweder konventionell (Mt, Lk) oder theologisch (Joh) bestimmt sein. **(5) Literarhistorische Basisannahmen:** Eine hervorgehobene Rolle in der Begründung von Ursprünglichkeit, Qualität und Geltung der vier Evangelien spielt eine von Irenäus am Beginn von Haer. III aufgegriffene und zitierte Grundinformation zu allen vier Evangelien: Diese so genannte (Vier-) Evangeliennotiz dürfte in der Bibliothek der römischen Gemeinde begründet sein und deutlich in die Zeit vor Markion zurückreichen. Da es sich um eine offizielle und sorgfältig zusammengestellte Bibliotheksnöte handelt, sehe ich an dieser Stelle **keinen** experimentellen Charakter. Die Notiz ist in der römischen Gemeinde entstanden und hat sich in der Folgezeit in der lateinischen, griechischen und syrischen Kirche verbreitet. Sie ist eine wichtige Grundlage für die Rekonstruktion der vier Evangelien und ihrer Rezeption in der römischen Gemeinde. Die Notiz ist in der römischen Gemeinde entstanden und hat sich in der Folgezeit in der lateinischen, griechischen und syrischen Kirche verbreitet. Sie ist eine wichtige Grundlage für die Rekonstruktion der vier Evangelien und ihrer Rezeption in der römischen Gemeinde.

Hugo Lundhaug

"He who has seen me, has seen the father"

The Gospel of Philip's mystagogical reception of the Gospel of John

In chapter 14 of the Gospel of John, the apostle Philip expresses a desire for more direct knowledge of God, and makes the following request to Jesus:

"Lord, show us the Father and we shall be satisfied." Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you so long, and yet you do not know me, Philip? He who has seen me, has seen the Father; how can you say, 'show us the Father'? Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father in me?" (John 14:8–10 RSV)

As Cyril of Alexandria puts it, "Philip is anxious to learn, but not very keen in that understanding which is adapted to Divine vision."² Indeed, Jesus' rebuke is instructive. Philip should realize that since the Father is in the Son and the Son in the Father, he has in fact already seen the Father, having seen the Son. Thus, if one understands the nature of the Son and his relationship with the Father, one also by definition has knowledge of, and access to, the Father. The Gospel of John does not tell us whether Philip understood Jesus' reply or not, but as I will presently demonstrate, the Coptic gospel that bears his name takes this insight as one of its main exegetical starting points. Indeed, the Gospel of John is arguably the Gospel of Philip's most prominent intertext, and the latter takes its cue from the former throughout.

1. This article has been written under the aegis of the NEWCONT project (New Contexts for Old Texts: Unorthodox Texts and Monastic Manuscript Culture in Fourth- and Fifth-Century Egypt) at the University of Oslo, Faculty of Theology. NEWCONT was funded by the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Community's Seventh Framework Programme (FP7/2007–2013) / ERC Grant agreement no 283741. It was originally presented at the conference *Gospels and Gospel Traditions in the Second Century: Experiments in Reception*, at KU Leuven, 15–17 December 2016. I am grateful to the other conference participants for discussion and feedback.

2. Cyril of Alexandria, *Commentary on the Gospel of John*, 9.8 (trans. Thomas Randell, *Commentary on the Gospel According to S. John by Cyril Archbishop of Alexandria: Vol 2: S. John IX–XXI* [A Library of Fathers of the Holy Catholic Church, Anterior to the Division of the East and West; London: Walter Smith, 1885], 250).

The Gospel of Philip is preserved in a single Coptic manuscript discovered, along with the remains of twelve other codices, by the cliff of the Jabal al-Tarif in Upper Egypt in 1945.⁴ In this manuscript, Nag Hammadi Codex II, the Gospel of Philip is the third of seven texts.⁵ Although it is impossible to date the codex with complete certainty, it was most probably produced in the late fourth or early fifth century.⁶ As for the Gospel of Philip itself, it is unlikely that anything resembling the preserved Coptic version of the text could derive from before the fourth century, since this version of the text seems to be crucially dependent on creedal intertexts of the fourth century.⁷ It is also important to be aware of the fluidity of texts such as this, which makes back-dating the present version and using it as a source for earlier centuries highly speculative.⁸ The present discussion will therefore focus strictly on the Coptic text as it has been preserved in the manuscript.

3 Epiphanius of Salamis, Timothy of Constantinople, and Ps.-Leontius of Byzantium all refer to a Gospel of Philip. The latter mention its use among Manichaeans (Timothy of Constantinople, *De receptione haereticorum* [PG 86.1.21.C]; Ps.-Leontius, *De sectis* 3.2 [PG 86.1.21.C]), but it is impossible to know whether it has anything to do with the text known as the Gospel of Philip in Nag Hammadi Codex II. The Gospel of Philip mentioned by Epiphanius (*Pan.* 26.13.2–3) is unlikely to have anything to do with our text, since the passage he quotes is not found in the Nag Hammadi text.

4 On the discovery of the Nag Hammadi Codices, see esp. James M. Robinson, *The Nag Hammadi Story* (Leiden: Brill, 2014). On the scholarly debate regarding their provenance, see Hugo Lundhaug and Lance Jenott, *The Monastic Origins of the Nag Hammadi Codices* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2015).

5 It follows *Ap. John* and *Gos. Thom.*, and is followed by *Hyp. Arch.*, *Orig. World*, *Exeg. Soul*, and *Thom. Cont.*

6 See Hugo Lundhaug, "Shenoute of Atripe and Nag Hammadi Codex II," in *Zugänge zur Gnosis: Akten zur Tagung der Patristischen Arbeitsgemeinschaft vom 02.–05.01.2011 in Berlin-Spandau*, ed. Christoph Marksches and Johannes van Oort (Leuven: Peeters, 2013), 208–10; Lundhaug and Jenott, *Monastic Origins* (n. 4), 9–11.

7 See Hugo Lundhaug, "Begotten, Not Made, to Arise in This Flesh: The Post-Nicene Soteriology of the Gospel of Philip," in *Beyond the Gnostic Gospels: Studies Building on the Work of Elaine Pagels*, ed. Iricinschi et al. (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2013), 235–71. Most previous studies have dated the text to the second or third centuries. For references, see, e.g., Hugo Lundhaug, *Images of Rebirth: Cognitive Poetics and Transformational Soteriology in the Gospel of Philip and the Exegesis on the Soul* (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 357–74.

8 See Hugo Lundhaug, "An Illusion of Textual Stability: Textual Fluidity, New Philology, and the Nag Hammadi Codices," in *Snapshots of Evolving Traditions: Jewish and Christian Manuscript Culture, Textual Fluidity, and New Philology*, ed. Liv Ingeborg Lied and Hugo Lundhaug (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2017), 20–54; and also Hugo Lundhaug and Liv Ingeborg Lied, "Studying Snapshots: On Manuscript Culture, Textual Fluidity, and New Philology," *Snapshots of Evolving Traditions: Jewish and Christian Manuscript Culture, Textual Fluidity, and New Philology*, ed. Liv Ingeborg Lied and Hugo Lundhaug (TU 175; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2017), 1–19.

1 The Gospel of Philip and Scriptural Exegesis

The Gospel of Philip is a text that is practically impossible for a reader to understand without knowledge of canonical Scripture. It is deeply engaged in scriptural exegesis, and alludes to a wide range of biblical texts.⁹ Aside from its many references to the first chapters of Genesis,¹⁰ an intertext which is also highly important in other texts in this manuscript,¹¹ references to New Testament texts are far more prominent than are those to the Old Testament,¹² and although allusions that may be more or less opaque to different readers are the norm, with many "echoes which may appear significant to one scholar yet unimportant, or even non-existent, to another,"¹³ there are also some "clear and unmistakable quotations" of New Testament texts.¹⁴ Indeed, scholars have been hard pressed to find New Testament texts that are not alluded to in the Gospel of Philip.¹⁵ The

9 Despite never introducing Scriptural quotations and paraphrases by explicitly stating their source, anyone with a knowledge of Scripture should recognize *Gos. Phil.*'s dependence on it.

10 See, e.g., Eric Segelberg, "The Gospel of Philip and the New Testament," in *The New Testament and Gnosis: Essays in Honour of Robert McL. Wilson*, ed. Alastair H. B. Logan and Alexander J. M. Wedderburn (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1983), 204; Lundhaug, *Images of Rebirth* (n. 7); id., "The Fruit of the Tree of Life: Ritual Interpretation of the Crucifixion in the Gospel of Philip" in *Cognitive Linguistic Explorations in Biblical Studies*, ed. Bonnie G. Howe and Joel B. Green (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2014), 73–97.

11 On the importance of the first chapters of Genesis in Codex II as a whole, see Lance Jenott, "Recovering Adam's Lost Glory: Nag Hammadi Codex II in its Egyptian Monastic Environment," in *Jewish and Christian Cosmogony in Late Antiquity*, ed. Lance Jenott and Sarit Kattan Gribetz (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2013), 222–43.

12 These span the entire New Testament from the Gospels to Revelation. See, e.g., Robert McL. Wilson, *The Gospel of Philip: Translated from the Coptic Text, with an Introduction and Commentary* (London: Mowbray, 1962), 7; id., "The New Testament in the Nag Hammadi Gospel of Philip," *NTS* 9 (1963): 291–94; Lundhaug, *Images of Rebirth* (n. 7).

13 Wilson, *Gospel of Philip* (n. 12), 6. Cf. Earl Miner's striking definition of allusion as "a phenomenon that some reader or readers may fail to observe" ("Allusion," in *The New Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics*, ed. Alex Preminger and T. V. F. Brogan [Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993], 39). As Wilson puts it, the Gospel of Philip usually works its references "into the context as if [the author] were a man steeped in the Scriptures, to whom their language and phrases came as a natural vehicle for the expression of his ideas" (Wilson, *Gospel of Philip* [n. 12], 7).

14 Wilson, *Gospel of Philip* (n. 12), 6; cf. Segelberg, "Gospel of Philip and the New Testament" (n. 10), 205–6.

15 Wilson, *Gospel of Philip* (n. 12), 7, mentions Ephesians, Colossians, and Thessalonians as among the few texts to which he could not detect references, while Gaffron, *Studien zum koptischen Philippusevangelium unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Sakramente* (Bonn: Rheinischen Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität, 1969), 54–55, 59, finds no evidence for the use of Acts,

gospels are of primary importance. It was noted very early in Nag Hammadi scholarship that among the canonical gospels, the Gospel of Philip uses especially the Gospels of Matthew and John,¹⁶ although the Gospel of Luke is also referenced at key points in the text.¹⁷ The Gospel of John nevertheless stands out above all other New Testament texts in importance, as we may observe not only from the most clear citations and allusions, but also from a number of themes and interests that run through the entire Gospel of Philip.¹⁸

the Pastoral or Catholic Epistles, or Revelation. In my own studies I have identified references to most of these texts as well (see Lundhaug, *Images of Rebirth* [n.7]). I know of only one scholar who has claimed that the Gospel of Philip is independent of the canonical gospels (Richard N. Longenecker, *The Christology of Early Jewish Christianity* [London: SCM Press, 1970], 82).

16 Robert M. Grant, "Two Gnostic Gospels," *JBL* 79:1 (1960): 5. See also Wilson, *Gospel of Philip* (n. 12), 7. For the view that *Gos. Phil.* shows a clear preference for Matthew among the Synoptics, see, e.g., Wilson, "New Testament (n. 12)," 291–94; Gaffron, *Studien* (n. 15), 32–54; Segelberg, "Gospel of Philip and the New Testament (n. 10)," 205. For the preference for Matthew and John, see Christopher M. Tuckett, *Nag Hammadi and the Gospel Tradition: Synoptic Tradition in the Nag Hammadi Library*, ed. John Riches (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1986), 81 n. 295; id., "Synoptic Traditions in Some Nag Hammadi and Related Texts," *VC* 36:2 (1982): 173–90, esp. 177–78; Wilson, *Gospel of Philip* (n. 12), 7; id., "New Testament (n. 12)," 291.

17 In addition to several reasonably clear allusions to Luke, there is even a direct reference to the parable of the Good Samaritan (*Gos. Phil.* 78.7–10, referring to Luke 10:34). For the opposing view that all references except for that to the parable of the Good Samaritan can be explained as deriving from Matthew rather than Luke, see Tuckett, *Nag Hammadi* (n. 16), 81. Tuckett even expresses doubts that *Gos. Phil.* has derived its reference to the Good Samaritan directly from the Gospel of Luke, and suggests that it might just as well have known the parable independently of the complete gospel (*ibid.*, 80). See also *ibid.*, 74, and id., "Synoptic Traditions (n. 16)," 178.

18 In the following I will not cover all the passages in *Gos. Phil.* that allude to the Gospel of John, nor to all Johannine passages alluded to in *Gos. Phil.*, but I will concentrate on those parts of *Gos. Phil.* that presuppose the Johannine principle of mutual indwelling between the Father and the Son, and the way in which John underlies *Gos. Phil.*'s mystagogy. For references to other Johannine passages that may be alluded to in *Gos. Phil.*, see, e.g., Gaffron, *Studien* (n. 15), 40–43, 52–54; Wolfgang G. Röhl, *Die Rezeption des Johannesevangeliums in christlich-gnostischen Schriften aus Nag Hammadi* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1991), 146–63; Titus Nagel, *Die Rezeption des Johannesevangeliums im 2. Jahrhundert: Studien zur vorirenäischen Aneignung des vierten Evangeliums in christlich-gnostischer Literatur* (Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 2000), 394–407; Lorne Zelyck, *John Among the Other Gospels* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2013), 104–21, although one may or may not agree with these authors' assessments regarding *Gos. Phil.*'s Johannine reception.

2 John 3 and Rebirth Through Ritual

One of the areas in which the Gospel of Philip draws fundamentally upon the Gospel of John is in its mystagogical exegesis and exposition of the deeper meaning of baptism, chrismation, and Eucharist. First of all, the Gospel of Philip's main underlying understanding of the rituals of initiation in terms of rebirth is based on John 3. Just like Jesus makes clear in John 3:7 that it is necessary to be reborn,¹⁹ the Gospel of Philip emphasizes the necessity of rebirth through ritual initiation, even though such rituals can only represent an imperfect image of true rebirth:

There is a rebirth [οὐχίνο ἵκεσιν] and an image of rebirth [οὐχίκοιο ἵκεσιν]. It is truly necessary to be born again [ἀπογεννηθῆναι ἵκεσιν] by means of the image [εἰκόντι]. (*Gos. Phil.* 67.12–14)²⁰

The reason why the image is necessary, despite its secondary status, is because "Truth did not come to the world naked, but in types and images [εἰκόντων μυστηρίων],"²¹ because this is the only way in which the world will receive the truth.²² The image of rebirth is to be understood as ritual initiation consisting of baptism in water, anointing with chrism²³ and the sign of the cross ("the power of the cross"), where one acquires not only the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, but also the realities underlying them, thus becoming not only "a Christian," but even "a Christ."²⁴ This enables entry into the truth, which is equated with heavenly rest, but it is also made clear that heavenly existence is not only attainable after death, or after the general resurrection, but already in this world. When one "has already received the truth in the images,"²⁵ one can no longer be troubled in this world,²⁶ for "the world has become the aeons."²⁷

19 Note that in Coptic, John 3:7, where δεῖ ὑμᾶς γεννηθῆναι ἄνωθεν is translated as εἰς ἀπογεννηθῆναι ἵκεσιν, can only be interpreted in terms of a rebirth, not as a birth from above.

20 All translations of the Gospel of Philip are my own, based on the Coptic text of Lundhaug, *Images of Rebirth* (n.7), 468–539. For references to earlier editions of the text, see *ibid.*, 155–56.

21 *Gos. Phil.* 67.9–11. A. and B. have ἵκεσιν ἵκεσιν, which is a Coptic idiom for "in images."

22 *Gos. Phil.* 67.11–12. A. and B. have ἵκεσιν ἵκεσιν, which is a Coptic idiom for "in images."

23 Cf. Eric Segelberg, "The Coptic-Gnostic Gospel According to Philip and Its Sacramental System," *Numen* 7:2 (1960): 194.

24 *Gos. Phil.* 67.19–27.

25 *Gos. Phil.* 86.12–13.

26 *Gos. Phil.* 86.9–11.

The Gospel of Philip's fondness for John 3's metaphor of rebirth is also on display when the text expresses its opposition to a conceptualization of baptism using the Romans 6-based metaphor of death and resurrection:

As Jesus perfected [χρὴς ἐβόλ] the water [ἡμεοῦ] of baptism, [thus he poured out [πῶρ ἐβόλ] death [ἡμεοῦ].] Therefore we go down into the water [ἡμεοῦ], but we do not go down into death [ἡμεοῦ] (Gos. Phil. 77.7–11).²⁷ With this play on the Coptic words *mooy* and *moγ*, meaning “water” and “death” respectively, the Gospel of Philip argues that the descent into the water should not be understood as descent into death.²⁸ In order for baptism to constitute a rebirth, however, an anointing with chrism is required. The Gospel of Philip here alludes to John 3:3–9 to establish a close connection between baptism and chrismation, which is referred to or presupposed on numerous occasions throughout the text. John 3:3–9 stresses the importance of being reborn through both water and spirit, and in the Gospel of Philip this is to be understood as baptism and chrismation.²⁹ Following John 3:5, the Gospel of Philip makes clear that both baptism in water and chrismation (the Holy Spirit) are necessary, and interprets the process in terms of begetting and (re)birth.³⁰ This is again directly linked to Jesus' baptism in the river Jordan, in which all these aspects are closely connected. There is indeed a pervasive parallelism throughout the Gospel of Philip between Christ and the individual Christian. This includes baptism. They are both baptized in water and receive the Holy Spirit by means of an anointing. This anointing is connected to joining, begetting, and rebirth.

²⁷ Gos. Phil. 86.13. This notion of heavenly existence already in this world is highly similar to what we also find in early Egyptian monastic writings. See, e.g., Samuel Rubenson, “As Already Translated to the Kingdom While Still in the Body: The Transformation of the Ascetic in Early Egyptian Monasticism,” in *Metamorphoses: Resurrection, Body and Transformative Practices in Early Christianity*, ed. Turid Karlsen Seim and Jorunn Økland (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2009), 271–89.

²⁸ On this Coptic wordplay, see Lundhaug, “An Illusion of Textual Stability (n. 8),” 44–46; Lundhaug, *Images of Rebirth* (n. 7), 231–33.

²⁹ See Gos. Phil. 69.12–14.

³⁰ See Gos. Phil. 69.4–8.

3 John 1 and The Mystery of Baptism and The Incarnation

Indeed, the Gospel of Philip's preference for the metaphor of rebirth is evident in its description of Jesus' own baptism in the Jordan. Drawing primarily on the Gospel of Luke for its narrative details,³¹ the Gospel of Philip crucially relies upon the Gospel of John for its interpretation of the event:

He who [was begotten] before all things was begotten again. He [who was anointed] first was anointed again. He who was redeemed, redeemed again. Indeed it is fitting to speak of a mystery. The Father of all things joined with the virgin who came down, and a fire illuminated him. On that day he revealed the great bridal chamber. Therefore his body came into being. On that day he came out from the bridal chamber like the one who came into being from the bridegroom and the bride. Thus Jesus established everything within himself through these, and it is appropriate for each one of the disciples to walk into his rest. (Gos. Phil. 70.34–71.15)

This is a highly allusive and difficult passage. The setting is Jesus' baptism, but who are “the virgin who came down [παρθένος ἤταξε ἀπὸ τῆς]” and “the father of all things [πατρις ἀπὸ τῆς]”? And what exactly is “the great bridal chamber [ἡμεοῦ ἡμεοῦ]”? The references to begetting and the use of the phrase “on that day” (ἡμεοῦ ἐπὶ τῆς) recalls the widespread early variant reading of Luke 3:22, “today I have begotten thee” (ἐγὼ σήμερον γεγεννηκά σε),³² a phrase that is not found in the parallel accounts in Matthew or Mark,³³ nor in the Gospel of John's more vague reference to Jesus' baptism.³⁴

The descent of the Holy Spirit as a dove, however, is referred to in all the gospels, including the Gospel of John,³⁵ and numerous imaginative suggestions

³¹ Luke 3:21–22.

³² Gos. Phil.'s dependence on this variant reading has been noted by David H. Tripp, “The ‘Sacramental System’ of the Gospel of Philip,” in *Studia Patristica 17: The 8th International Conference on Patristic Studies met in Oxford from 3 to 8 Sept. 1979*, ed. Elisabeth A. Livingstone (Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1982), 254–255. This reading of Luke 3:22 is found in Codex Bezae and a number of early patristic witnesses. For an argument that this is probably the more original reading of the passage, see Bart D. Ehrman, *The Orthodox Corruption of Scripture: The Effect of Early Christological Controversies on the Text of the New Testament* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 62–67.

³³ Matt 3:13–17; Mark 1:9–11.

³⁴ See John 1:31–33.

³⁵ Matt 3:16; Mark 1:10; Luke 3:22; John 1:32.

based upon a reading of the Gospel of Philip as a "Valentinian" text notwithstanding,³⁶ it makes most sense to understand the Gospel of Philip's description of a descent of "the virgin" in this context as a reference to the Holy Spirit descending upon Jesus at his baptism.³⁷ The description of the Holy Spirit as a virgin also makes sense in light of the Gospel of Philip as a whole. As is explained

36 I do not think there are any compelling reasons to treat *Gos. Phil.* as a "Valentinian Text." The text makes good sense without interpreting it through the lens of "Valentinian" theologoumena. See Lundhaug, *Images of Rebirth* (n.7), 349–56.

37 This is also the view of Elaine H. Pagels, "Adam and Eve, Christ and the Church: A Survey of Second Century Controversies Concerning Marriage," in *The New Testament and Gnosis: Essays in Honour of Robert McL. Wilson*, ed. Alastair H. B. Logan and Alexander J. M. Wedderburn (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1983), 164, and eadem, "Ritual in the Gospel of Philip," in *The Nag Hammadi Library After Fifty Years: Proceedings of the 1995 Society of Biblical Literature Commemoration*, ed. John D. Turner and Anne McGuire (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 285. For interpretations based on a "Valentinian" reading of the text, see e.g., Holger Strutwolf, *Gnosis als System: Zur Rezeption der valentinianischen Gnosis bei Origenes* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1993), 177; Jean-Daniel Kaestli, "Valentinisme italien et valentinisme oriental: leurs divergences a propos de la nature du corps de Jesus," in *The School of Valentinus*, ed. Bentley Layton (Leiden: Brill, 1980), 399; Einar Thomassen, *The Spiritual Seed: The Church of the 'Valentinians'* (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 92, who all suggest Sophia; Hans-Martin Schenke, "Das Evangelium nach Philippus: Ein Evangelium der Valentinianer aus dem Funde von Nag-Hamadi," *TLZ* 84:1 (1959): 17 n. 154; id., "Das Evangelium nach Philippus: Ein Evangelium der Valentinianer aus dem Funde von Nag-Hamadi," in *Koptisch-gnostische Schriften aus den Papyrus-Codices von Nag-Hamadi* (Hamburg-Bergstedt: Herbert Reich, 1960), 53 n. 11; id., *Das Philippus-Evangelium (Nag-Hammadi-Codex II,3): Neu herausgegeben, übersetzt und erklärt* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1997), 419; Jean-Marie Sevrin, "Les noces spirituelles dans l'Évangile selon Philippe," *Mus* 87 (1974): 160; Majella Franzmann, *Jesus in the Nag Hammadi Writings* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1996), 50–51; Herbert Schmid, *Die Eucharistie ist Jesus: Anfänge einer Theorie des Sakraments im koptischen Philippusevangelium (NHC II 3)* (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 311, who hold it to be Sophia Achamoth; Yvonne Janssens, "L'Évangile selon Philippe," *Mus* 81 (1968): 109, who suggests Sophia-Mary Magdalene; Wilson, *Gospel of Philip* (n. 12), 146, and Jacques-É. Ménard, *L'Évangile selon Philippe: Introduction, Texte – Traduction, Commentaire* (Strasbourg: Université de Strasbourg, 1967), 202, who think it refers to the Virgin Mary; and Jorunn Jacobsen Buckley and Deirdre J. Good, "Sacramental Language and Verbs of Generating, Creating, and Begetting in the Gospel of Philip," *JECS* 5:1 (1997): 17, who suggest "the heavenly Mary." The most imaginative alternative based on a "Valentinian" reading, however, is that of Einar Thomassen, "How Valentinian is the Gospel of Philip?" in *The Nag Hammadi Library After Fifty Years: Proceedings of the 1995 Society of Biblical Literature Commemoration*, ed. John D. Turner and Anne McGuire (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 257, who suggests Jesus. Thomassen has later suggested that "the virgin who came down" is primarily Sophia (see Thomassen, *The Spiritual Seed* [n. 37], 92), but also "the Saviour ... cast in the role of the female partner and bride in the marital union" (see *ibid.*, 98). Most of these suggestions is based on a reading of *Gos. Phil.* as a "Valentinian" text. As I have argued elsewhere, however, it is not necessary to interpret *Gos. Phil.* in light of "Valentinian" theologoumena (see Lundhaug, *Images of Rebirth* (n.7), 349–56; id., "Begotten, Not Made (n. 7)," 270–71).

elsewhere in the text, the Holy Spirit is not only regarded as a female entity,³⁸ but is even described as one of Adam's two virgin mothers in an important exegesis of Gen 2:7:

Adam came into being from two virgins: from the spirit and from the virgin earth. Therefore Christ was born from a virgin, so that he might rectify the fall that happened in the beginning. (*Gos. Phil.* 71.16–21)

The designation "the virgin who came down" is therefore a fitting reference to the descent of the Holy Spirit at the Jordan, where Christ receives his second virgin mother so as to render him the perfect parallel to Adam. Just like Adam had the spirit and the virgin earth as his mothers, Christ has the Virgin Mary and the Holy Spirit. He acquired the latter at his baptism, and all subsequent Christian initiates receive it at their baptismal (or postbaptismal) anointing with chrism. Christ being born from a virgin not only at his birth, but also at his baptism also makes sense in light of the Gospel of John's references to being born of the Spirit.³⁹

Once "the virgin who came down" has been identified as the Holy Spirit coming down upon Jesus at his baptism, "the father of all things," who joins with that virgin, can be none other than Christ himself, despite a multitude of more or less imaginative alternative suggestions based on "Valentinian" theology.⁴⁰ While some scholars have regarded as impossible the designation "the father of all things" (πατρις πάντων) for Christ, rather than for God or the Demiurge, it actually makes perfect sense in light of the prologue of the Gospel of John and Alexandrian theology. John 1:3 states of the Logos that "It was through him that everything [πάντα] came into being," which makes it clear that for the Gospel of John he is to be regarded as the creator of all things. Moreover, Christ the Logos is indeed frequently referred to as "the Father of all things" in the Alex-

38 See *Gos. Phil.* 55.23–27.

39 John 3:5–8.

40 Such suggestions have included the Father (see Franzmann, *Jesus in the Nag Hammadi Writings* [n. 37], 50); the supreme aeon (see Wilson, *Gospel of Philip* [n. 12], 146; Ménard, *L'Évangile selon Philippe* [n. 37], 202; see also Strutwolf, *Gnosis als System* [n. 37], 177, who ultimately rejects it); Christ (see Franzmann, *Jesus in the Nag Hammadi Writings* [n. 37], 50); the Saviour (see Schenke, "Das Evangelium nach Philippus" [n. 37], 17 n.153; id., "Das Evangelium nach Philippus" [n. 37], 53 n.10; Schenke, *Das Philippus-Evangelium* [n. 37], 419; Janssens, "L'Évangile selon Philippe" [n. 37], 109; Sevrin, "Les noces spirituelles" [n. 37], 160; Strutwolf, *Gnosis als System* [n. 37], 177; Franzmann, *Jesus in the Nag Hammadi Writings* [n. 37], 50; Schmid, *Die Eucharistie ist Jesus* [n. 37], 311); the Logos-Saviour (see Kaestli, "Valentinisme" [n. 37], 399; Ménard, *L'Évangile selon Philippe* [n. 37], 202); the pleromatic Father (Thomassen, "How Valentinian" [n. 37], 257).

andrian and Egyptian tradition, including in Coptic sources. The powerful fourth- to fifth-century archimandrite Shenoute of Atripe, for example, describes him using the exact same Coptic phrase that we find in the Gospel of Philip, namely as “the Father of all things” (ⲡⲉⲓⲱⲧⲣ ⲁⲓⲧⲏⲣⲉ).⁴¹

As for the language of joining, begetting, and bridal chamber, it is worth recalling that joining and begetting are actions that are descriptive of the practice of human sexual relations. It is therefore logical when the Gospel of Philip associates these actions with baptism and baptismal anointing by way of the metaphor of the bridal chamber.⁴² Significantly, the Gospel of Philip not only states that Jesus’ body came into being at his baptism, but it also describes the event as an opening, or manifestation, of “the great bridal chamber [ⲡⲓⲛⲟⲥ ⲙⲓⲁⲧⲣⲟⲥ].”⁴³ The metaphor of the “bridal chamber” must here be understood in light of the joining of the Holy Spirit and the Logos, but also with the begetting of Christ’s body that results from it. As the Gospel of Philip puts it, “it was because of this that his body came into being.”⁴⁴ It is therefore logical that his baptism can be understood and described metaphorically as a bridal chamber.⁴⁵ The statement that Christ’s body came into being in his baptism “like the one who came into being from the bridegroom and the bride” also highlights the parallelism between his first begetting and birth, and his baptismal begetting and rebirth. This is again understandable in terms of Christ’s use of the metaphor of rebirth in his dialogue with Nicodemus in chapter 3 of the Gospel of John,⁴⁶ as well as the bride-and-bridegroom references later in the same chapter.⁴⁷ As for the enigmatic statement that “a fire illuminated [ⲡⲱⲣⲟⲥⲓⲛ] him” at the time of the union between the Holy Spirit

41 See Shenoute, *The Lord Thundered* (Paris: Ernest Leroux, 1907–14), 1368. Elsewhere, Shenoute also refers to the Son as the “creator of all things” (ⲡⲁⲛⲛⲓⲟⲩⲣⲟⲥ ⲁⲓⲧⲏⲣⲉ) (Shenoute, *I Am Amazed*, 329=HB 25; Hans-Joachim Cristea, *Schenute von Atripe: Contra Origenistas: Edition des koptischen Textes mit annotierter Übersetzung und Indizes einschließlich einer Übersetzung des 16. Osterfestbriefes des Theophilus in der Fassung des Hieronymus* [ep. 96] [Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011], 146).

42 See Gos. Phil. 67:3–6; 69:4–8; 70:5–9; 74:18–24; 86:4–5; cf. Lundhaug, *Images of Rebirth* (n.7), 203–7; 247–49.

43 Suggestions have included the Pleroma (see Wilson, *Gospel of Philip* [n. 12], 147), and the Virgin Mary (see Sebastian P. Brock, “Passover, Annunciation and Epiclesis: Some Remarks on the Term Aggen in the Syriac Versions of Lk. 1:35,” *NovT* 24:3 [1982]: 228).

44 Gos. Phil. 71:8.

45 Elsewhere the Gospel of Philip also uses bridal chamber as a metaphor for the body of both Christ and the Christians (see Lundhaug, *Images of Rebirth* (n.7), 263–65; 321–24).

46 John 3:1–15.

47 John 3:25–30.

and the Logos,⁴⁸ the interpretive key is to be found in John 1:4, which states that “that which came into being within him was life, and life was the light [ⲡⲱⲣⲟⲥⲓⲛ] of men.”

All of this is important not only as an exegesis of the Jordan event itself, but even more so in relation to the understanding of the deeper meaning and significance of the rites of initiation through which all Christians had to pass. The version of those rites presupposed by the Gospel of Philip clearly involved baptism with water and anointing with chrism, followed by Eucharistic communion, and the text makes sure to emphasize that it is not sufficient just to baptize in water, with no subsequent anointing. Baptism must be accompanied by an anointing with chrism, since the joining with the Holy Spirit takes place by means of this particular ritual action. The connection between the anointing and light on the one hand, and between the anointing and baptism on the other, is explicitly stated:

It was from water and fire that the soul and the spirit came into being. It was from water and fire and light that the son of the bridal chamber (came into being).⁴⁹ The fire is the chrism, the light is the fire. (Gos. Phil. 67:2–6)

Water, fire, and light are the elements needed in order to generate a “son of the bridal chamber,” and both fire and light are associated with the chrism. The description of fire illuminating Jesus at his baptism, where the Logos joined with the Holy Spirit and “his body came into being,”⁵⁰ is thus also an allusion to baptismal chrismation,⁵¹ and light is an attribute of the Holy Spirit.⁵² Simply put, when Christ was baptized in the Jordan he was also anointed with the Holy Spirit, and this also applies not only to Christ himself, but to every Christian going through the rituals of initiation. And as the Gospel of Philip explains, it is by

48 Gos. Phil. 71:4–6. This union is also referred to as “a mystery [ⲟⲩⲙⲩⲥⲧⲏⲣⲓⲟⲛ]” (Gos. Phil. 71:3–4).

49 Cf. Matt 9:15; Mark 2:19; Luke 5:34.

50 See Gos. Phil. 71:6–8.

51 Cf. Thomassen, *The Spiritual Seed* (n. 37), 94. Pagels takes the reference to “his body” here to indicate the church as the body of Christ (Pagels, “Adam and Eve [n. 37],” 164). The connection between fire and chrism is also made elsewhere in *The Gospel of Philip*: “It is by means of water and fire that everything is purified, the revealed by means of the revealed, the hidden by means of the hidden. There are some things that are hidden by means of the revealed. There is water in water, there is fire in chrism” (Gos. Phil. 57:22–28).

52 For the connection between the Holy Spirit and fire, see not only Matt 3:11 = Luke 3:16, and Acts 2:3–4 but also John 1:33 in certain manuscripts (including P75 and the Sahidic manuscripts. This verse is unfortunately not preserved in the early Bohairic P. Bodmer III).

means of the anointing in particular that these rites bring about some of their most profound effects — effects that are understandable first of all in light of the Gospel of John:

He who has been anointed has everything. He has the resurrection, the light, the cross, the Holy Spirit. The Father gave him this in the bridal chamber (νυμφών). He received, and the Father came to be in the Son and the Son in the Father. (Gos. Phil. 74.18–24)

This recalls especially John 10:38, “the Father is in me and I am in the Father,”⁵³ and John 14:10 and 14:11, “I am in the Father and the Father is in me.”⁵⁴ For the Gospel of Philip, this mutual indwelling is effected by means of the anointing. This is where, and how, Christ and subsequently the individual Christians receive “everything” (πᾶν). In his own baptism, “Jesus established everything [πᾶν] within himself,”⁵⁵ and “everything” includes the Father as well as the Holy Spirit. The reception of the latter is also referred to, and directly associated with the metaphor of the bridal chamber, towards the end of the text, where we are told that “If one becomes a son of the bridal chamber [πνυμφών], he will receive the light.”⁵⁶ The mutual indwelling of the Father and the Son, as stated multiple times throughout the Gospel of John, is also directly stated elsewhere in the Gospel of Philip, where it is asserted that “Christ has everything within himself, whether man or angel or mystery and the Father.”⁵⁷ The Gospel of John is not the only important intertext here, as there is also a significant nod to Col 2:9, that “in him all the fullness of divinity dwells in bodily form,” but it is certainly difficult to imagine without the Gospel of John as a major referent:

4 John 6 and the Eucharist

The Gospel of John is not only fundamental to the Gospel of Philip's mystagogical interpretation of baptism and chrismation, but also to its understanding of the Eucharist. In all cases, understanding the way in which ritual action, by means of earthly imagery and actions, conveys the higher realities is a central concern. In this world, the Gospel of Philip informs us, truth is only reachable

53 Cf. Nagel, *Die Rezeption* (n. 18), 405–6.

54 But cf. also John 10:30; 14:7, 9–11, 20; 17:21, 23.

55 Gos. Phil. 71.12–13.

56 Gos. Phil. 86.4–5; cf. Gos. Phil. 67.3–5; Matt 9:15; Mark 2:19; Luke 5:34.

57 Gos. Phil. 56.13–15.

by means of “types and images” [ἑνῶν τύπος καὶ εἰκὼν],⁵⁸ and this fact explains the importance of ritual. In the Eucharist, like in baptism and chrismation, one must receive the truth by means of “the images,” because if truth is not received here on earth, it will not be attained in heaven: “If one does not receive it while being here, he will not be able to receive it in the other place.”⁵⁹ With regard to the Eucharist, the Gospel of Philip closely paraphrases John 6:53–54⁶⁰ when explaining its central mystery:

“He who will not eat my flesh and drink my blood does not have life in him.”⁶¹ What is it? His flesh is the Logos, and his blood is the Holy Spirit. (Gos. Phil. 57.4–7)

In this mystagogical exegesis of John, the significance and effects of the Eucharist⁶² is presented by means of an interpretation of Jesus' words in John 6:53–54,⁶³ together with the specification of the nature of Christ's flesh utilizing an allusion to John 1:14a: “the Word became flesh.” Thus the flesh of the Son of Man, referred to in John 6, is directly identified with the preexistent Logos of John 1. Added to this is the identification of Christ's blood with the Holy Spirit, which must be understood in light of the multitude of associated aspects of the Holy Spirit throughout the Gospel of Philip, including its sacramental association with both the chrism and the Eucharistic wine.⁶⁴ It is also worth noting that the Gospel of Philip's paraphrase of John 6:53–54 follows directly after a

58 Gos. Phil. 67.9–11.

59 Gos. Phil. 86.6–7.

60 While Gos. Phil. sticks closely to John 6:53, it also incorporates parts of 6:54. See Gaffron, *Studien* (n. 15), 40–41; Nagel, *Die Rezeption* (n. 18), 397. Among the early Coptic New Testament manuscripts, Gos. Phil. is here closest to P. Bodmer III.

61 Cf. John 6:53–54.

62 For the view that this passage refers to the Eucharist, see, e.g., Wesley W. Isenberg, “The Coptic Gospel According to Philip” (Ph.D. diss. University of Chicago, 1968), 197, 306; Gaffron, *Studien* (n. 15), 180; Bentley Layton, *The Gnostic Scriptures: A New Translation with Annotations and Introductions* (London: SCM Press, 1987), 333; Schenke, *Das Philippus-Evangelium* (n. 37), 234. Borchert, however, “finds it rather doubtful that this logion has a sacramental emphasis,” on the grounds that the flesh and blood are identified with the Logos and the Holy Spirit (Gerald Leo Borchert, “An Analysis of the Literary Arrangement and Theological Views in the Coptic Gnostic Gospel of Philip” [Ph.D. diss. Princeton Theological Seminary, 1967], 126 n.4); Thomassen argues both for and against a Eucharistic interpretation of the passage (see Thomassen, *The Spiritual Seed* [n. 37], 349 and 345 respectively); cf. also Jean-Marie Sevrin, “Pratique et doctrine des sacrements dans l'Évangile selon Philippe” (Ph.D. diss. Université Catholique de Louvain, 1972).

63 This Johannine intertext establishes a clear Eucharistic setting for this section in Gos. Phil. (cf. Strutwolf, *Gnosis als System* [n. 37], 195; Schenke, *Das Philippus-Evangelium* [n. 37], 234).

64 In addition to blood, the Holy Spirit is associated with life, light, fire, breath, wind, motherhood, and virginity. See Lundhaug, *Images of Rebirth* (n.7), 175.

quotation of 1 Cor 15:50, in a polemic against those who believe in the resurrection of the material flesh:⁶⁵

"Flesh [and blood shall] not inherit the kingdom [of God]." What is this that shall not inherit? (It is) this which is on us. But what also is this that shall inherit? It is Jesus' (flesh) and his blood. Therefore he said, "He who will not eat my flesh and drink my blood does not have life in him." (Gos. Phil. 56.32–57.5)

In this way, resurrection is intimately connected with the Eucharist. It is not the material flesh and blood, "this which is on us" (ταει επιχωων),⁶⁶ that shall inherit the kingdom of God, but rather the flesh and blood of Christ,⁶⁷ and the flesh and blood of Christ is provided to the initiated by means of the Eucharist. Indeed, as the Gospel of Philip makes clear through its use of Jesus' words paraphrased from John 6:53–54, it is necessary to consume his flesh and blood, otherwise one does not possess life. It is significant that this process is described in terms of the metaphor of clothing:

"He who will not eat my flesh and drink my blood has not life in him." What is it? His flesh is the Logos, and his blood is the Holy Spirit. He who has received these has food, and he has drink and clothing. (Gos. Phil. 57.3–8)

Participating in the Eucharist provides the Christians with the clothes they need to avoid arising naked. The Gospel of Philip thus implies that the correct garments, or the perfect man, are put on not only in baptism, but also in the Eucha-

65 A. H. C. van Eijk has argued that "by linking the flesh and blood in 1 Cor 15:50 with the flesh and blood of John 6:53–56," the Gospel of Philip "offers an interesting and original interpretation" of 1 Cor 15:50 (Eijk, "The Gospel of Philip and Clement of Alexandria: Gnostic and Ecclesiastical Theology on the Resurrection and the Eucharist," VC 25 [1971]: 96). He found this interpretation to be original "because this surprising link appears nowhere in the Christian (incl. gnostic) literature on the resurrection up to the end of the third century" (ibid.). By combining John 6:53 with 1 Cor 15:50, van Eijk argues that the author made an original choice, ahead of his time, based simply on his reading of John 6 (ibid., 101). It should be remembered, however, that Gos. Phil.'s interpretation is only original if we assume, with van Eijk, a second-century date Gos. Phil. If the text is rather a product of either the fourth or fifth century, as I am inclined to think, the combination of John 6:53 with 1 Cor 15:50 is not particularly original. For an argument for a fourth- or fifth-century date for the Gospel of Philip, see Lundhaug, "Begotten, Not Made (n. 7)."

66 Cf. Schenke's translation of Gos. Phil. 56.32–57.5 (Schenke, *Das Philippus-Evangelium* [n. 37], 25).

67 Cf. Eijk, "Gospel of Philip (n. 65)," 96; Wesley W. Isenberg, "The Gospel According to Philip: Introduction," in *Nag Hammadi Codex II, 2–7 Together with XIII, 2**, Brit. Lib. Or. 4926(1), and P. Oxy. 1, 654, 655, ed. Bentley Layton (Leiden: Brill, 1989), 1:136.

rist.⁶⁸ Through the Eucharistic bread the communicants receive Christ's flesh, the Logos, and through the wine they receive his blood, the Holy Spirit. As we can see, the Gospel of Philip here adds what seems to be an allusion to Matt 6:25 and 31 to its paraphrase of John 6:53–55,⁶⁹ thus linking the garment metaphor – which is also employed elsewhere in connection with baptism and chrismation, the resurrection, and in allusions to the parable of the wedding feast – with the Eucharist. Clothing is also used metaphorically to describe the deification of the Christian, when the garments of this world are contrasted with those of the Kingdom of Heaven.⁷⁰

The Gospel of Philip explains some of the types and images associated with the Eucharist, when it specifies, with further reference to the Gospel of John, that the Eucharistic cup contains a mixture of wine and water:

The cup of prayer contains wine and it contains water, for it is laid down as the type of the blood over which thanks is given. (Gos. Phil. 75.14–17)

While the "cup of prayer" can be seen as a reference to 1 Cor 10:16,⁷¹ the mixture of wine and water⁷² as an image of the blood of Jesus recalls John 19:34, which relates that when Jesus was pierced with a spear on the cross, there came out "blood and water."⁷³ Wine and water is thus a type of Christ's blood and water.⁷⁴

5 John and the Name

The mutual indwelling of the Father and the Son, and the concept of fatherhood, is in the Gospel of Philip closely connected to baptism, and baptismal anointing,

68 Cf. Jorunn Jacobsen Buckley, "Conceptual Models and Polemical Issues in the Gospel of Philip," in *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt*, ed. Wolfgang Haase (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1988), 4177; Thomas M. Finn, *Early Christian Baptism and the Catechumenate: Italy, North Africa, and Egypt* (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 1992), 10–11.

69 See Tuckett, "Synoptic Traditions (n. 16)," 174; id., *Nag Hammadi* (n. 16), 74; Andrew K. Helmbold, "Translation Problems in the Gospel of Philip," NTS 11 (1964): 91.

70 See Gos. Phil. 57.19–22.

71 Cf. Schenke, *Das Philippus-Evangelium* (n. 37), 61, 456.

72 The mixture of wine and water in the Eucharistic cup became the norm in early Christianity. See Daniel Sheerin, "Eucharistic Liturgy," in *The Oxford Handbook of Early Christian Studies*, ed. Susan Ashbrook Harvey and David G. Hunter (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 726.

73 Cf. Craig Alan Satterlee, *Ambrose of Milan's Method of Mystagogical Preaching* (Collegeville, Minn.: Pueblo/Liturgical Press, 2002), 244.

74 Cf. also John 5:5–8.

by way of the concept of "the name of the father [ἡ τοῦ πατρὸς ὀνομα]."⁷⁵ In order for the Son to attain fatherhood he must put on his Father's name:

A single name is not uttered in the world, the name which the Father gave to the Son. It is exalted above every (other name), that is, the name of the Father. For the Son would not have become father unless he had put on the name of the Father. Those who have this name know it, but they do not speak it, but those who do not have it do not know it. (Gos. Phil. 54.5–13)

In the Gospel of Philip the reception of the name takes place in the chrismation: "it was because of the chrism that Christ was named (as such)" (ἡ βαπτισμα εἰς τὸν χρίσμα).⁷⁶ Similarly, "the name of the father and the son and the Holy Spirit," are received by means of an anointing with chrism in the sign of the cross, and that the one who receives it becomes "no longer a [Christian], but a Christ."⁷⁷ The Christian initiate becomes a Christ when he is anointed with chrism,⁷⁸ where he thereby acquires Sonship and attains the "name of the father." The "name of the father" is here equivalent with the name "Christ," which, as we have seen, connects Father and Son chrismation,⁷⁹ where the son becomes a Christ, like his father. The importance of receiving chrismation with baptism is emphasized, as well as the appropriation of the realities behind the ritual types and images:⁸⁰

If one goes down to the water and comes up without having received anything and says, "I am a Christian," he has borrowed the name at interest. But if he receives the Holy Spirit he has the gift of the name. He who has received a gift does not have it taken away from him, but he who has borrowed at interest has it extorted from him. Thus it is for us when one comes into being in a mystery. (Gos. Phil. 64.22–31)

The connection between the name of Christ and the bestowal of the Holy Spirit is also made in John 14:26, and while Rev 19:12 speaks of the name worn by Christ as being known only by Christ himself, in the Gospel of Philip, where the Christian is a Christ and which builds upon John 17 where Jesus reveals his hidden name to the disciples, the name is possessed by all Christians and known by

⁷⁵ Gos. Phil. 74.15–16.

⁷⁶ Gos. Phil. 67.23–27.

⁷⁷ Cf. e.g., Franzmann, *Jesus in the Nag Hammadi Writings* (n. 37), 63, 175.

⁷⁸ For patristic attestations of the connection between the chrismation and the name "Christ," see, e.g., John Norman Davidson Kelly, *Early Christian Creeds* (3rd ed.; London: Longman, 1972), 139–41.

⁷⁹ Cf. 1 Cor 2:7.

them alone.⁸⁰ It is also significant for the understanding of the role of the name in connection with the bestowal of the spirit that Jesus says in John 4:26 that the Father will send the Holy Spirit in his name, i.e., in the name of Christ. And of course it is also significant how John 1:12 associates Sonship, and John 20:31 associates life with the name.

6 John 14 and Transformation Through Vision

I began this article with a quotation from John 14, where Philip asks Jesus to show him the Father. Philip's question is preceded by another question to Jesus, posed by Thomas, to which Philip's question is the follow-up:

"Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?" Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. If you know me, you will know my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him." (John 14:5–7; NRSV)

The notion that one gets to see the Father by seeing Christ is an important key to the interpretation of the Gospel of Philip, which tries to answer the question of how one may attain a vision of Christ in the first place. With reference to Gen 17:23–18:2 and Col 2:11 it is argued that a rejection of the flesh is required:

When Abraham [. . .] for him to see that which he would see, [he] circumcised the flesh of the foreskin, [telling] us that it is necessary to destroy the flesh. (Gos. Phil. 82.26–29)

For Abraham, the Gospel of Philip argues, circumcision was a precondition for seeing what he was going to see. The Gospel of Philip does not explicitly state that Abraham saw God, but in the Genesis-passage to which the Gospel of Philip alludes, Abraham's circumcision is followed by a vision of God in the form of "three men."⁸¹ This may again be understood in light of John 14, where it is clear that a vision of God can be obtained by seeing Christ, but also in light of John 8:56–58,⁸² where Jesus strongly implies that he has been seen by Abraham, and where the early Coptic and several early Greek manuscripts, including manuscripts from the Dishna Papers discovery, have the variant reading where

⁸⁰ Gos. Phil. 54:10–13; cf. John 14:17; 17:6–8.

⁸¹ For Trinitarian interpretations of Gen 18:1–2 in patristic sources, see, e.g., James L. Kugel, *Traditions of the Bible: A Guide to the Bible as It Was at the Start of the Common Era* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1998), 342.

⁸² The connection is also suggested by Schenke, *Das Philippus-Evangelium* (n. 37), 501.

the Jews ask Jesus whether Abraham has seen him, rather than the other way around.⁸³ Circumcision is not important in itself, but only as teaching the necessity of the destruction of “the flesh” (τσαρξ) – a clear allusion to Col 2:11, where the circumcision of Christ is associated with “the stripping off of the body of flesh” (πικραμένη ἡ σωμα ἡ τσαρξ). “Flesh” is an ambiguous concept in the Gospel of Philip, but in this context it must be understood as the this-worldly material flesh, a point that is driven home in the Gospel of Philip’s discussion of the resurrection, where those who want to arise in the flesh are ridiculed, while the necessity of rising in the flesh of Christ is stressed.⁸⁴

The Gospel of Philip closely associates vision and transformation, and the causal relationship works both ways. What happened in the transfiguration of Christ on the mountain, the Gospel of Philip tells us, was not that Jesus himself changed, but that he transformed those who saw him.⁸⁵ In order for the disciples to see him in his full glory on the mountain, Christ made them great, since people are only able to see him in accordance with their own abilities.⁸⁶ Therefore Christ’s glory, the Logos, was hidden from the disciples’ view until they were elevated to the appropriate level. This theme of seeing and becoming recurs in various guises throughout the Gospel of Philip, but with different twists. While one has to undergo transformation in order to see the higher realities, the causal relationship can also be reversed, with the one who sees becoming transformed into that which is seen:

⁸³ John 8:57: “Abraham has seen you?” (ἀβραάμ η̅ν̅ε̅γ̅ ἀράκ [Qau codex]; ἀβραάμ η̅ν̅ε̅γ̅ ἐροκ [P. Palau Rib. Inv.-Nr. 183]; ἀβραάμ ἀφ̅η̅γ̅ ἐροκ [P. Bodmer III]; Ἀβραάμ ἐώρακεν σε [P75, and the original reading of P75], P. Bodmer III, and perhaps even P. Palau Rib. Inv.-Nr. 183, were part of the Dishna papers discovery, made close to the site of the Nag Hammadi Codices only a few years later. On the circumstances and contents of this discovery, see esp. James M. Robinson, *The Story of the Bodmer Papyri: From the First Monastery’s Library in Upper Egypt to Genoa and Dublin* (Eugene, Or.: Cascade, 2011). On the possible relationship between the Dishna Papers and the Nag Hammadi Codices, see Hugo Lundhaug, “The Nag Hammadi Codices and the Dishna Papers,” in *The Nag Hammadi Codices and Late Antique Egypt*, ed. Hugo Lundhaug and Lance Jenott (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2018), forthcoming.

⁸⁴ Gos. Phil. 56.26–57.19. On Gos. Phil.’s views on the resurrection, see Hugo Lundhaug, “Tell me what shall arise: Conflicting Notions of the Resurrection Body in Coptic Egypt,” in *Coming Back to Life: The Permeability of Past and Present, Mortality and Immortality, Death and Life in the Ancient Mediterranean*, ed. Frederick S. Tappenden and Carly Daniel-Hughes (Montreal: McGill University Library and Archives, 2017), 215–36; id., “Begotten, Not Made (n. 7).”

⁸⁵ Gos. Phil. 57.28–58.10; cf. Matt 17:1–9; Mark 9:2–10; Luke 9:28–36.

⁸⁶ The same principle was argued by Origen, *Comm. in Matt.* 12.37; cf. John Anthony McGuckin, *The Transfiguration of Christ in Scripture and Tradition* (Studies in the Bible and Early Christianity 9; Lewiston/Queenston: Edwin Mellen, 1986), 104, 154–57.

It is impossible for anyone to see any of the ordained (things) unless he becomes like them. It is not like it is with the man who is in the world. He sees the sun while not being sun, and he sees the sky and the earth and all the other things while not being those (things). Thus it is in truth. But you have seen something of that place, and you have become those (things). You have seen the Spirit, and you have become spirit. You have seen Christ, and you have become Christ. You have seen the [Father, and you] will become father. Therefore, [here] you see everything and you do not [see yourself], but you see yourself in [that place], for you will [become] that which you see. (Gos. Phil. 61.20–35)

At the beginning of this excerpt, seeing follows transformation, like in the transfiguration account. Then, towards the end of the passage, the logic is flipped on its head when the act of seeing itself is described as that which causes the change.⁸⁷ The logic is circular: a change in the beholder causes him or her to see differently, but at the same time it is the seeing that causes the beholder to change in accordance with what he or she sees. It is clear that the best metaphor to illustrate this kind of interdependence between what one is and what one sees, is that of seeing oneself in a mirror.

This is especially significant considering the sacramental connotations of the passage, which is implied by the overall mystagogical focus of the Gospel of Philip as a whole as well as by the fact that the passage is directly preceded by a short discussion of baptism, where God is metaphorically presented as a dyer who makes what he dyes “immortal” (ἀτμόν),⁸⁸ and by the fact that the Gospel of Philip elsewhere uses the metaphor of the mirror explicitly to describe the effects of baptism and chrismation. Likening the baptismal water to a mirror, and the chrism, with its strong association with the Holy Spirit, with light, the Gospel of Philip shows how both are necessary in order to see oneself:

No one will be able to see himself in water or in a mirror without light, nor again will you be able to see in light without water (or) mirror.⁸⁹ Therefore it is necessary to baptize in both: in the light and the water, and the light is the chrism. (Gos. Phil. 69.8–14)

⁸⁷ By regarding the end of the passage, from “Therefore” [ἀλλὰ τοῦτο] at Gos. Phil. 61.32, as a new and unrelated saying, Schenke, *Das Philippus-Evangelium* (n. 37), 32–33, 306, avoids the apparent contradiction. In my view it makes more sense to read this part as a fitting conclusion to what precedes it.

⁸⁸ Gos. Phil. 61.12–20. Here the anointing with chrism at baptism is highlighted. The chrism is metaphorically represented by the “dye” which bestows immortality on its recipients, and the act of dipping represents baptism itself. Cf. Borchert, “An Analysis,” 179; Schenke, *Das Philippus-Evangelium* (n. 37), 304–306.

⁸⁹ Cf. 1 Cor 13:12; 2 Cor 3:18.

The imagery of seeing oneself is used to demonstrate the necessity of combining baptism with chrismation, arguing that these ritual acts are not sufficient in themselves, as each of them is of no use without the other. You cannot see yourself in a mirror without light, and you cannot see yourself without a mirror, despite the presence of light. Thus the metaphors of seeing and becoming are associated directly with sacramental action. If one cannot see oneself, neither can one become what one sees. One can see oneself, however, with the help of a mirror (baptism in water) and light (anointing with chrism). Since one becomes a Christ by means of chrismation, what one sees as a result of baptism and chrismation is simply oneself as Christ, just like the apostles saw Christ in his transfiguration. And when one sees oneself as Christ, one has in fact become a Christ. Such a person is no longer simply "a Christian" (οὐχριστιανός), but even "a Christ" (οὐχρῖς).⁹⁰ We also see that as in John 14, seeing Christ is associated with seeing the Father. As the Gospel of Philip puts it, "You have seen Christ, and you have become Christ. You have seen the [Father, and you] will become father."⁹¹ This logic is based upon the principle of mutual indwelling between the Father and the Son as seen in the Gospel of John.⁹²

7 Johannine Christological Titles

Both the deificatory principle of seeing and becoming and its sacramental aspects are seen in another important passage, where we also come across a number of Johannine Christological titles:

Do not despise the lamb, for it is impossible to see the door without it. No one will be able to enter in to the king naked. (Gos. Phil. 58:14–17)

The Gospel of Philip here manages to combine several aspects of its sacramental theology with several important biblical references. The second of the two sentences is best read as an allusion to the Matthean parable of the Wedding

⁹⁰ Gos. Phil. 67:26–27.

⁹¹ Gos. Phil. 61:30–32.

⁹² On the principle of mutual indwelling in John, see, e.g., Jey J. Kanagaraj, *'Mysticism' in the Gospel of John: An Inquiry into Its Background* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), 264–81. As Kanagaraj puts it, "The indwelling of Jesus in the disciples is essentially an experience of 'seeing' Jesus and in him God. In John this indwelling is not one-sided but mutual" (ibid., 280).

Feast,⁹³ where a man shows up without a wedding garment.⁹⁴ In the Gospel of Philip, lacking the proper garment is equated with being naked, which must again be understood in light of other passages in the Gospel of Philip that stress the importance of putting on a garment consisting of Christ's flesh and blood gained in the Eucharist.⁹⁵ Without such a garment, which is elsewhere described as a type of garment that is "better than those who have put them on,"⁹⁶ one may not approach the king, which can be understood as a reference to either Christ or God. Furthermore, it makes sense, of course, that one cannot enter into the throne room if one cannot see the door that leads into it, but in order to understand how the ability to see the door is related to not despising the lamb, the sentence must be read in light of the Gospel of John, where Christ is described, among other things, as lamb, door, and king. "I am the door" (ἐγώ εἰμι ἡ θύρα), says Christ in John 10:9, adding that those who enter by him will be saved,⁹⁷ and in John 1:29 and 1:36 John the Baptist identifies Christ as "the lamb of God."⁹⁸ Both the lamb and the door may thus be identified with Christ.⁹⁹ As we have seen, it is an important principle throughout the Gospel of Philip that to be able to see something of the true realities one needs to become like them. Thus, just like in the transfiguration scene, one needs to become like Christ in order to see him as he really is. Here we see that one must become like Christ in order to see "the door," which is simply Christ by a different name, and becoming like Christ requires one not to despise the lamb, which implies the sacrificial, and especially Eucharistic, connotations of Christ as the lamb.¹⁰⁰ As we have already

⁹³ See, e.g., Carmino J. de Catanzaro, "The Gospel According to Philip," *JTS* 13 (1962): 42; Ménard, *L'Évangile selon Philippe* [n. 37], 147; *Nag Hammadi Texts and the Bible: A Synopsis and Index*, ed. Craig A. Evans, Robert L. Webb and Richard A. Wiebe (Leiden: Brill, 1993), 151–52. Cf. Wilson, *Gospel of Philip* (n. 12), 93, who states that "some connection ... is perhaps to be suspected," and Tuckett, *Nag Hammadi* (n. 16), 77, who holds the allusion to be "very indirect."

⁹⁴ Matt 22:11–14.

⁹⁵ Gos. Phil. 56:26–57:22.

⁹⁶ Gos. Phil. 57:21–22.

⁹⁷ Cf. also John 10:7. For extensive exegesis of Jesus' reference to himself as "the door," see, e.g., Origen, *Comm. in Jo.* 2:10–11, where Origen connects Jesus as door with entry to the Father/King.

⁹⁸ Jesus as the lamb is also an important Christological title in Revelation (Rev 5:6, 8, 12, 13; 6:1, 16; 7:9, 10, 14, 17; 12:11; 13:8; 14:1, 4, 10; 15:3; 17:14; 19:7, 9; 21:9, 14, 22, 23, 27; 22:1, 3; cf. also Acts 8:32; 1 Pet 1:19).

⁹⁹ Stephen Gero, "The Lamb and the King: 'Saying' 27 of the Gospel of Philip Reconsidered," *OrChr* 63 (1979): 180, suggests that the lamb should be identified with the "little ones" of Matt 18:10.

¹⁰⁰ See, e.g., Tripp, "Sacramental System" (n. 32), 253; Elaine H. Pagels, "Pursuing the Spiritual Eve: Imagery and Hermeneutics in the *Hypostasis of the Archons* and the *Gospel of Philip*," in

seen, the Gospel of Philip describes the reception of Christ's flesh and blood in the Eucharist in terms of putting on a garment and becoming "a Christ." Thus the argument that seeing the door requires respecting, not despising, the lamb becomes perfectly logical. One should not despise the Eucharist,¹⁰¹ for it is required in order to become like Christ, and only by becoming "a Christ," by wearing him as a garment, may one see Christ and enter by him to the king.¹⁰²

8. The Gospels of John and Philip

The importance of the Gospel of John for the understanding of the Gospel of Philip can hardly be overstated. Indeed, the fundamental influence of the Gospel of John extends even to the Gospel of Philip's title, which has often been dismissed as an unimportant secondary addition to the text, perhaps even added by the scribe of this particular manuscript.¹⁰³ There is reason to think that the attribution of this text to Philip is less arbitrary than has often been suggested, especially when we consider the importance of the Gospel of John, and particularly John 14, to some of its most important underlying themes. As we have seen, Thomas' and especially Philip's questions and Jesus' response to them in John 14 can function as interpretive keys to the Gospel of Philip's sacramental soteriology. As Christ explains to Philip and the other disciples in John 14, insight into the mutual indwelling of the Father and the Son is of vital importance:

Do you not believe that I am in my Father and my Father in me? The words I say to you, these I say not from myself alone, but my Father who is within me he does his works. Believe me that I am in my Father and my Father is in me. If not, believe in his works. (John 14:10–11)

Images of the Feminine in Gnosticism, ed. Karen L. King (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1988), 201; Schmid, *Die Eucharistie ist Jesus* (n. 37), 365.

¹⁰¹ The identification of the statement not to despise the lamb with not despising the Eucharist is supported by *Ap. Const.* 7.25.7 (see W. Jardine Grisbrooke, *The Liturgical Portions of the Apostolic Constitutions: A Text for Students* [Bramcote: Grove Books, 1990], 18).

¹⁰² The two sentences are connected by means of a Coptic wordplay on "door" (po) and "king" (ppo). On the Coptic wordplay and the various scholarly dismissals of the manuscript reading on the basis of the hypothetical Greek original, see Lundhaug, "An Illusion of Textual Stability" (n.8), 43–44; id., *Images of Rebirth* (n. 7), 282–83.

¹⁰³ See, e.g., Martha Lee Turner, *The Gospel According to Philip: The Sources and Coherence of an Early Christian Collection* (Leiden: Brill, 1996), 9–10; Wilson, *Gospel of Philip* (n. 12), 3; Schenke, *Das Philippus-Evangelium* (n. 37), 6–7; Gaffron, *Studien* (n. 15), 10–12.

It is significant that one way of gaining insight into this relationship between the Father and the Son is through the works, i.e., the works done by the Father through the Son, and with a nod to 1 Cor 2:7 the Gospel of Philip holds that everything Christ did had a deeper significance.¹⁰⁴ In the form in which the Gospel of Philip appears in Nag Hammadi Codex II its title thus corresponds exceptionally well with the contents of the text and functions as an allusion to the important intertextual function of the Gospel of John throughout the Gospel of Philip. The role of the principle of the mutual indwelling between the Father and the Son in John 14 and elsewhere in the Gospel of John¹⁰⁵ is fundamental to the sacramental soteriology of the Gospel of Philip. This principle underlies the seeing-and-becoming passages¹⁰⁶ as well as the mystagogical understanding of baptism, chrismation, and Eucharist. The Gospel of John can be thus be regarded as the Gospel of Philip's main intertext, and the title of the work hints at this fact by pointing us to the apostle Philip's dialogue with Jesus in John 14.¹⁰⁷ Indeed, the Gospel of Philip may be regarded as an extended treatment of Philip's question.

¹⁰⁴ See *Gos. Phil.* 67.27–28; Lundhaug, *Images of Rebirth* (n.7), 311–16.

¹⁰⁵ For an overview of the relevant passages in John, see David Crump, "Re-examining the Johannine Trinity: Perichoresis or Deification," *SJT* 59:4 (2006): 398.

¹⁰⁶ It is also worth mentioning that most of the passages where the Gospel of John mentions the apostle Philip have to do with seeing (John 1:43–51; 12:21–22; 14:8–14).

¹⁰⁷ On the interpretive function of titles, see Gérard Genette, *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 55–103, 294–316. Even the beginning of the Gospel of Philip, abrupt as it is, indicates the importance of the Gospel of John, by introducing the theme of religious kinship and begetting in combination with a strongly polemical stance towards Judaism, themes for which the Gospel of Philip draws upon the Gospel of John (On the anti-Judaism of the Gospel of Philip, see Lundhaug, *Images of Rebirth* [n.7], 385–94). *Gos. Phil.*'s title may also function as an allusion to Acts 21:8, which mentions "Philip the Evangelist" [Φίλιππου τοῦ εὐαγγελιστοῦ], or even, considering the importance of baptism in *Gos. Phil.*, the apostle Philip's baptism of the Ethiopian eunuch in Acts 8:26–40.

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