Nag Hammadi and Manichaean Studies 95

The Ethics of *The Tripartite Tractate* (NHC I, 5)

A Study of Determinism and Early Christian Philosophy of Ethics

Paul Linjamaa

BRILL

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Nag Hammadi and Manichaean Studies

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By

Paul Linjamaa

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Abbreviations

ApJohn	*The Apocryphon of John* (NHC II, 1; III, 1; IV, 1; Berlin Codex II)
ApJames	*The Apocryphon of James* (NHC I, 2)
ExcTheod	*Excerpta ex Theodoto*
GosPhil	*The Gospel of Philip* (NHC II, 3)
GosTruth	*The Gospel of Truth* (NHC I, 3)
InterpKnow	*The Interpretation of Knowledge* (NHC XI, 1)
LXX	*Septuaginta*
NHC	Nag Hammadi Codex
NRSV	*The New Revised Standard Version of the Bible*
OnOrigWorld	*On the Origin of the World* (NHC II, 4)
PrPaul	*The Prayer of the Apostle Paul* (NHC I, 1)
SVF	*Stoicorum Veterum Fragmenta*
TriTrac	*The Tripartite Tractate* (NHC I, 5)
ValExp	*A Valentinian Exposition* (NHC XI, 2)

Introduction

Throughout antiquity Christian intellectuals debated the question of free will: Can all human beings freely choose the good and thus gain salvation, or does God's providence or differing human natures and capacities limit freedom and thus the possibility of being saved? Several of the most famous and prolific early church writers displayed serious interest in this question. Already Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, Tertullian, and Clement of Alexandria defended the idea that God had endowed humans with complete freedom of will, and they identified this view as fundamental for the development of any ethical system. In his work *On First Principles*, Origen of Alexandria would further this case by advancing a truly sophisticated Christian exploration of the nature of human freedom of will, concepts that Augustine would later build upon. The early Christian doctrine of free will has naturally become a large area of study in modern academia and numerous scholars have highlighted its importance for early Christian discourse on ethics; free will has even been portrayed as one of the key features of Christian thinking setting itself apart from Greek and Roman thought.[1]

Scholars who have explored the topic of early Christian views on free will often argue that the 'Christina view'—that all humans are endowed with the ability to freely choose between good and evil—was developed in opposition to the 'Gnostic view', which rejected free will in favor of determinism.[2] As developments in 'Gnostic Studies' during the last half-decade have shown, the dichotomy Christian-Gnostic is polemically inspired and many of those ancient people associated with 'Gnosticism' were Christians and should be regarded as part of early Christian history. It is somewhat curious, then—considering the strides that have been taken towards revealing the true breath of early Christian pluralism—that most recent studies on the nature of will in early Christian thought have omitted any serious analysis of what was clearly one of the most important early Christian discussions of will, namely proto-heterodox views that restricted it, those views associated with determinism and compatibilism.[3] These positions were serious contenders in the discourse

1 For some of the more recent works, see George E. Karamanolis, *The Philosophy of Early Christianity* (London and New York: Routledge, 2014), 144; Michael Frede, *A Free Will: Origins of the Notion in Ancient Thought*, ed. A. A. Long (Berkley: University of California Press, 2011).

2 See the note above and below for scholars who have argued this.

3 Frede, *A Free Will*; Kyle Harper, *From Shame to Sin: The Christian Transformation of Sexual Morality in Late Antiquity* (Cambridge, M.A.: Harvard University Press, 2013); Karamanolis, *Philosophy*; Scott, when discussing Origen's views of will repeatedly refers to the 'Gnostic'

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on human will and vital in the development of early Christian discussions on the nature of human will and its relation to in ethics.

The chief opponents of those church fathers who promoted free will were without a doubt the so-called 'Valentinians'. These Christians were for polemical convenience sake often associated with 'Gnostics'. According to many church fathers, the Valentinians favored determinism, a position that supposedly caused them to disregard ethics as irrelevant. That Valentinians would have been uninterested in ethics is a polemically inspired slander that has been rightfully abandoned by most scholars during the past few decades.[4] Valentinian texts undoubtedly engage with ethics and consequently, several studies in the field have been dedicated to the subject.[5] Unfortunately, the baby has been thrown out with the bathwater. Some scholars have portrayed determinism, too—just like the lack of Valentinian interest in ethics—as an invention of polemically inspired church fathers.[6] This view is not accurate. As will be demonstrated here, there were indeed early Christians who rejected

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view (represented by Valentinus, Basilides, and Marcion), as the 'deterministic' view without any real qualification (see Mark S. M. Scott, *Journey Back to God: Origen on the Problem of Evil* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).

4 At times one still encounters the old preconception, however; see, for example, Panayotis Coutsoumpos, "The Strong/Gnosis: Paul, and the Corinthian Community", in *Paul and Gnosis*, eds. Stanley E. Porter and David I. Yoon (Leiden: Brill, 2016), 195. Here 'Gnostics' (what is meant by that remains unclear) are still portrayed as either drawn to renouncing the world or libertine ethics.

5 For a discussion of ethics in Valentinian works, see, for example, Michel Desjardins, *Sin in Valentinianism* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1990); Ismo Dunderberg, *Beyond Gnosticism: Myth, Lifestyle, and Society in the School of Valentinus* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008); Philip L. Tite, *Valentinian Ethics and Paraenetic Discourse: Determining the Social Function of Moral Exhortation in Valentinian Christianity* (Leiden: Brill, 2009); Ismo Dunderberg, *Gnostic Morality Revisited* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2015).

6 In her monograph on 'Gnostic' attitudes toward fate, Nicola Denzey Lewis commented upon Irenaeus's portrayal of certain Valentinians as determinists, claiming that: "… there is no substance to Irenaeus' claim; it is merely a standard critique of an opponent's theological position applied, *mutatis mutandis*, to the Valentinians" (Nicola Denzey Lewis, *Cosmology and Fate in Gnosticism and Graeco-Roman Antiquity: Under Pitiless Skies* (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 27). In a recent journal article, Lautaro Roig Lanzillotta states that: "The discovery of the Nag Hammadi manuscripts has, however, dramatically changed our conception of the Gnostic worldview. We now know, for example, that determinism, in spite of the heresiologists, did not characterize Gnostic anthropology"(Lautaro Roig Lanzillotta, "A Way of Salvation: Becoming Like God in Nag Hammadi", *Numen* 60 (2013): 72–73). In one very fundamental way Roig Lanzillotta and Denzey Lewis are both right, one should be careful of generalizing about 'Gnostics' and 'Valentinians'. A closer look at these two quotations suggests that determinism is reduced to an invention of polemically inspired heresiologists. It is not my intention to point out these two scholars particularly, but rather to highlight what I consider to be a broader trend in recent scholarship.

the view that all humans were endowed with free will, a position which could be used to generate an ethical system similarly effective to that of those who professed the doctrine of free will. It is understandable that one could come to the conclusion that determinism must have been a polemical invention, considering that the detailed workings of early Christian views associated with deterministic and compatibilist views, and how exactly they sustained an ethical system, remain to be explored. With this book I hope to take a step toward remedying this lack.

1 The Structure of the Present Study

Determinism, for our purposes, is the rejection of the thought that humans are endowed with free will, and the adoption of the notion that each person's fate is preordained. Compatibilism—which I will treat as a form of determinism—is the idea that causal determinism is compatible with human ability to make choices, however limited they may be.[7] In the scholarship of ancient philosophy, deterministic views have not been reduced to the descriptions of their opponents, nor treated as polemical façades. The rejection of free will did not equal simple fatalism, nor did it lead to disinterest in ethical questions. For example, no one today would think of Stoics as disinterested in ethics, yet Stoicism represents perhaps the most famous ancient determinism.[8] A well-known study which shows how determinism can indeed work to construct and sustain ethics is Max Weber's classic work on sixteenth-century Protestant ethics in light of the theology of predestination.[9] Nevertheless, in early Christian studies, Christian deterministic views have often been dismissed as either irrational 'Gnostic' claptrap, or reduced to the inventions of heresiologists.[10]

As a case study this book explores the ethics of an early Christian text that has received less scholarly attention than it merits: *The Tripartite Tractate*

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7 In the modern discourse surrounding Christian attitudes toward free will and human volition one mostly encounters the term determinism, even if the term compatibilism would be more fitting. In order not to lose touch with this discourse, I will mainly employ the term "determinism". For more on the nature of determinism and compatibilism, see below.

8 See for example Susanne Bobzien, *Determinism and Freedom in Stoic Philosophy* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998).

9 Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (London and New York: Routledge, 2001 [1930]).

10 For a more thorough discussion of previous attitudes toward early Christian determinism, see further below.

(henceforth abbreviated *TriTrac*).[11] *TriTrac* is the second longest text in the Nag Hammadi collection and contains an immensely detailed creation story, as well as comprehensive discussions on anthropology and soteriology. Several translations and text-critical commentaries have been published on *TriTrac* since the Nag Hammadi texts were encountered, yet hardly any thematic studies at all.[12] By investigating the ethics of *TriTrac*—a text that should indeed be described as an example of early Christian determinism—I argue that we can gain valuable insights into a part of the early Christian world that has been misrepresented and overlooked.

A few preliminary notes are due on the text in question. *TriTrac* is part of Nag Hammadi Codex I, and usually dated to the fourth century, although it is most likely based on an earlier Greek version.[13] The text, 88 manuscript pages long, is without a title, getting its name from the fact that the ancient copyist divided the text with decorative markings in two places, thus separating the tractate into three parts—hence it was called 'The Tripartite Tractate'. The first part (51–104), which is by far the longest of the three, deals with protology. We read of the Father, the Son, and the Church from where a community of Aeons emanate. The youngest of these Aeons, "the Logos", strays away from the highest world to commence his own creation together with the Demiurge and other lowly cosmic powers.[14] The second part of the text (104–108), the shortest, deals with the creation of humanity. Here we read that humankind is split into three types: the pneumatic, psychic, and material. The third and last part of the text (108–138) deals with the coming of the Savior, (identified as Jesus on earth) and the salvation of the pneumatic humans, as well as the psychics,

11 This is the only time I give the full title of a text which is otherwise abbreviated. For a full list of abbreviations, see above.

12 To my knowledge, there are no previously published thematical monographs on *TriTrac*. However, there are two unpublished dissertations: Owen Michael Smith, "Approaches to the Unknown God in Second-Century Middle Platonic Natural Theology and the Valentinian Gnosticism of the Tripartite Tractate (NHC I,5)" (PhD diss., University of Texas at Austin, 1995); and Matthew Clark Brewer, "'The Form of the Formless': A Hermeneutical Exegesis of the Tripartite Tractate from Nag Hammadi Codex I" (PhD diss., University of Kent at Canterbury, 2000). These works are discussed further below. I do not include unpublished M.A. theses here.

13 The above is merely meant as a short introduction to *TriTrac*. Details of the text's material and contextual background are discussed in more depth further below, where references to previous research into *TriTrac* are also provided and discussed.

14 In this study, I refer to the Logos in the male gender. Even though the Logos and the Aeons could be seen as standing above cosmic classifications like male and female, the text at times presents femaleness as a sickness (94:16–18) which Logos combats, thus I choose to refer to the Logos as 'he'. For more on the text's attitude to male versus female, see Chapter 2 below.

while the material human beings are condemned to dissolve into nothingness. As I argue in greater detail in later chapters, *TriTrac* seems to present a soteriology detached from the notion of free will, which is restricted to the beings in the highest heavens; how people react to the appearance of the Savior reveals whether they are pneumatic, psychic, or material humans, that is, if they have the capacity for salvation or not.

The central goal of the present study is to address how such a seemingly fixed system laid the foundations for ethical discussion. In order to engage with questions like, 'by what proposed principles should people live?', and 'how is virtue defined?', we first need to understand how *TriTrac* presents the basic workings and mechanisms behind human decision-making and the nature of the faculty of choice.[15] This entails research into ancient physics, epistemology, cognitive theory, and cosmology. Approaching *TriTrac*'s ethics, and the basic ontological and cognitive principles at its foundation, also allows us to consider—in a more detailed manner than before—the context of this most intriguing and complex early Christian text.

This book, just like *TriTrac*, is divided into three parts. Part 1 is devoted to *TriTrac*'s place within the theoretical foundations of ancient ethical discourse, illuminated by unpacking and studying aspects of its very detailed creation myth. Looking more closely at the creation scene—chiefly the description of, and relations between, the different substances that make up humanity and all existence—allows us to enter the realm of ancient physics, cognitive science, epistemology, and anthropological theories. Part 1 is divided into three chapters that examine how human cognition and decision-making is thought to have worked. Chapter 1 explores the epistemology and ontology presented in *TriTrac*. Chapter 2 focuses on the composition of the human mind read from the perspective of *TriTrac*'s theory of emotions. Chapter 3 penetrates further into the theory of the mind, investigating how human choice and the mechanisms of cognition work, and how free will is defined. Each of these chapters explores topics relevant to the ethics of the text as these matters—ontology, epistemology and cognitive theory, the nature of passions, and the *debate* over (not just acceptance of) free will—are areas that remain understudied in *TriTrac*.

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15 I am not ignorant of the important and insightful work of many classicists such as Albrecht Dihle, who has masterfully explained and expanded upon the complexity of ancient discussions of will and choice. See Albrecht Dihle, *The Theory of Will in Classical Antiquity* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London: University of California Press, 1982). However, these studies have yet to be applied on a detailed level to the material that was then called Gnostic. For detailed discussions of the use and development of the notion of free will in antiquity, see Chapter 3 below.

In Part II we turn to lived ethics, exploring questions such as: What is the ideal social structure of society? How do people differ from each other and how should they live their lives in the world? Part II is also divided into three chapters. The first chapter in Part II, Chapter 4, deals with the anthropology of *TriTrac*, a much-debated topic in studies of Valentinian texts. Here I argue that the anthropology presented in the text follows a pedagogical model common in antiquity. I put the findings in Part I into context and ask what social ramifications an ethical system would have that rejected the doctrine of free will and did not allow for humans' transcending the limitations of their physical, intellectual, and soteriological nature. How would a fixed anthropology have worked in practice? Chapter 5 discusses the ideal social structure presented in *TriTrac.* The text mentions teaching, learning, and a school, and in this chapter, we explore the importance played by pedagogy and the relation between the two concepts school and church. The term 'School of Valentinus', which some scholars have adopted, is also scrutinized. Chapter 6 explores *TriTrac*'s attitudes to involvement in politics and everyday life. How should Christians participate in the non-Christian majority society and what can this tell us of the context of the composition of *TriTrac*? The three chapters in Part II deal with questions which represent common topics addressed in studies of early Christian ethics, questions such as: How should people live in the world? What social structures and hierarchies are most suitable? How do people improve morally? My aim has been for the answers presented in these chapters to illuminate early Christian ethics in general, especially considering the deterministic nature of the text.

The book concludes with Part III, which contains one chapter: Chapter 7. Here the findings of the study are summarized and their implications discussed. In conclusion, a hypothesis about the 'original' context of *TriTrac* is presented which suggests that the text derives from a pre-monastic city context consisting of an inner circle of people engaged in theological study within a larger lay-Christian community: two groups that would meet at times for communal worship and for basic educational and catechumenal purposes. Although it is not the main task of this study to explore *TriTrac*'s later contexts, it nevertheless becomes evident that many of the themes central to *TriTrac* reverberate in later monastic literature. This final chapter is followed by a short appendix with a few suggestions on where further research would be most likely to yield fruitful results.

Before this study of *TriTrac*'s ethics can commence, there are important preliminary issues that need to be addressed regarding the terminology to be used in this study. After these considerations, I provide a resume of the contents of *TriTrac* and situate *TriTrac* in the ancient context wherein the study takes

place. This is followed by a review of previous research on the text and, finally, some general points are made on the study and nature of early Christian views on free will and ethics and where *TriTrac* fits into this discourse.

2 Who Were the Valentinians?

TriTrac is often defined as a Valentinian text, a phenomenon that is traditionally described as a form of ancient Christian 'Gnosticism'. As is well known today, the term 'Gnosticism' has brought with it deeply negative connotations.[16] It has been defined in many ways but most often in opposition to 'true' or 'pure' Christianity or Judaism or Platonism—just to pick three phenomena that Gnosticism has been thought to 'appropriate'—as if these terms were in some way clear categories. After 1945, when the Nag Hammadi writings were discovered, some of which fit particular patterns that the church fathers rejected, it became clear the extent to which the church fathers' polemics had influenced the definition of the category. Michael A. Williams' book, *Rethinking Gnosticism*, showed that many stereotypes associated with 'Gnosticism' were misleading.[17] The texts and groups that were being labeled Gnostic did not represent what the category was thought to reference: anti-cosmism, body-hatred, disinterest in ethics, to mention a few supposed characteristics. Williams' work illustrated the imprecision of the term and showed that it brought with it erroneous preconceptions that did not find support in the ancient source material. Karen King went on to describe how the term had been used in modern time

16 The term 'Gnosticism' was first used, as far as we can tell, in 1669, by the Protestant apologetic theologian, Henry More, to designate the teachings of his Catholic opponents. The Catholics were, according to More, leading the masses to heresy, just like he maintained "Gnosticism" had done in ancient time. 'Gnosticism' was a term More used for many different groups and individuals that the church fathers had written about and whom they said called themselves 'Gnostics', or whom they labeled as such. The church fathers' portrayal of their opponents, 'the Gnostics', was at first read uncritically. Irenaeus of Lyon disputed those who claimed possession of a certain knowledge (gnosis) which Irenaeus viewed was a "knowledge falsely so called" (probably citing 1Tim 6:20–21). These ancient people were prone to mythologizing and distorting, and were lured by syncretistic 'Hellenism', according to Adolf von Harnack (Adolf von Harnack, *History of Dogma I* (New York: Dover Publishing, 1961). For a history of the term among early apologetic Protestants, see Karen King, *What is Gnosticism?* (Cambridge and London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2003).

17 Michael A. Williams, *Rethinking "Gnosticism": An Argument for Dismantling a Dubious Category* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1996). See also Morton Smith, "The History of the term Gnostikos", in *The Rediscovery of Gnosticism*, vol. 2, ed. Bentley Layton (Leiden: Brill, 1981), 796–807.

to construct 'the other'; and here, too, it had been used arbitrarily, often more or less as a synonym for heresy.[18]

Due to the work of King, Williams, and others, many scholars have stopped using the term 'Gnosticism', arguing that it is just too laden with imprecision and apologetic circumstance to be used in an effective and neutral way. I sympathize with this view, yet the rule that guides me in choosing whether to employ a category or not is its functionality. Is the term useful? Does it allow us to approach and understand the material at hand better? This is not the case for *TriTrac* and early Christian ethics in general. Using the term in this study would most likely imply relations between texts, individuals, and groups that did not necessarily exist, as well as clouding other possibilities. Thus, the categories 'Gnosticism' and 'Gnostic' will not be utilized in this study.[19]

Some of the same problems that come with the term 'Gnosticism' are also associated with 'Valentinianism', which is also a polemical construction; contrary to 'Gnosticism', however, many of the church fathers' descriptions of Valentinian theology fit ancient sources in a much more concrete and precise way than the sweeping term 'Gnosticism', which is ultimately a modern concept. Contrary to 'Gnosticism', Valentinianism can be more firmly traced to historical people, possibly an originator (Valentinus), as well as concrete theological motifs.[20] Thus, I will use the term Valentinian at times to refer to these theological peculiarities that were identified by some church fathers and that

18 King, *What is Gnosticism?* See further, Karen King, "Social and Theological Effects of Heresiological Discourse", in *Heresy and Identity in Late Antiquity*, eds. Eduard Iricinschi and Holger M. Zellentin (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008), 28–49; Karen King, "Toward a Discussion of the Category 'Gnosis/Gnosticism': The Case of the Epistle of Peter to Philip", in *Jesus in apokryphen Evangelienüberlieferungen. Beiträge zu außerkanonischen Jesusüberlieferungen aus verschiedenen Sprach- und Kulturtraditionen*, eds. J. Frey and J. Schröter (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010), 445–465.

19 A recent trend among some scholars is to narrow down the use of the term 'Gnostic' and 'Gnosticism' to refer to the Sethian material, beginning with those Irenaeus first called "multitude of Gnostics" in the end of book 1 of *Against Heresies* (Chapters 29–31). See Bentley Layton, *The Gnostic Scriptures: A New Translation with Annotations and Introductions* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1987); David Brakke, *The Gnostics* (Cambridge, M.A.: Harvard University Press, 2010); and Tuomas Rasimus, *Paradise Reconsidered in Gnostic Myth-making: Rethinking Sethianism in Light of the Ophite Evidence* (Leiden: Brill, 2009). However, I will simply use the term Sethian when referring to this category, in order not to risk confusion. But as Rasimus has shown, the category Sethian is not simple either, most likely the category includes several *different* groups and myths. For example, the creation story of the *Ophite* traditions were most likely foundational for what we today call Sethianism. Nevertheless, I wonder if this category becomes more clear if we instead call it Gnostic, which brings with it many other preconceived notions.

20 This has been studied in detail in Einar Thomassen's book, *The Spiritual Seed: The Church of the Valentinians* (Leiden: Brill, 2006).

can also be found in later texts from the Nag Hammadi collection. However, I do not use the category Valentinian to refer to a homogenous movement or a *fixed* theological system in antiquity, but rather a collection of theological motifs of sorts (possibly going back to Valentinus) that inspired some early Christian theologians.[21] These Christians were called 'Valentinians' by some church fathers for polemical convenience.[22] However, there is no evidence that those identified as Valentinians called themselves that, nor do we find the term in any of the texts that have been identified as Valentinian.[23] Considering this background, it is problematic to classify texts, people, and theological features as Valentinian.[24] However, since our sources for ancient Christianity are scarce as they are, it would be unfortunate to limit ourselves even further by disregarding similarities just because the sources have a critical and polemical tone.[25] Instead, we should formulate carefully, and not impose preconceived notions on texts that do not fit them.[26] We should strive to read the

21 I will when possible avoid using the '-ism' Valentinianism, in order not to add to the reification of a fixed theology or social category, and instead refer to Valentinian traits or texts.

22 For details on Valentinus' life and works, see Christoph Markschies, *Valentinus Gnosticus? Untersuchungen zur valentinianischen Gnosis mit einem Kommentar zu den Fragmenten Valentins* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1992).

23 Frederik Wisse, "Prolegomena to the Study of the New Testament and Gnosis", in *The New Testament and Gnosis: Essays in Honour of Robert McL. Wilson*, ed. A. H. B. Logan and A. J. M. Wedderburn (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1983), 138–145.

24 Michel Desjardins, "The Sources for Valentinian Gnosticism: A Question of Methodology", *Vigiliae Christianae* 49 (1986): 342–347. David Brakke rightly points out that in using terms like 'Gnosticism' (and this applies to Valentinianism also), there is a risk that peripheral 'Gnostic' features of a text/group (for example, belief in a Demiurge) take precedence in importance at the expense of something that could have been more central, for example, the saving message of Jesus (Brakke, *The Gnostics*, 1–28). See also Williams, *Rethinking*, 51, where he acknowledges the usefulness of using terms like 'Valentinian' to highlight specific sub-traditions within the broader category of Christianity. See also the discussion in Tite, *Valentinian Ethics*, 1–20; and Einar Thomassen, "L'histoire du valentinisme et le Traité Tripartite", in *L'Annuaire de l'École pratique des hautes études* 103 (1994–1995): 301–303.

25 This has recently been discussed by, for example, Geoffrey Smith, in *Guilt by Association: Heresy Catalogues in Early Christianity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 170.

26 See also Michael Kaler and Marie-Pierre Bussières, "Was Heracleon a Valentinian? A New Look at Old Sources", *Harvard Theological Review* 99:3 (2006): 275–289. Here it is argued that people were often described as Valentinians on genealogical grounds in antiquity, and not on doctrinal similarity (although the one does not exclude the other). Kaler and Bussières look at how Origen and Clement attached the term 'Valentinian' to Heracleon on different grounds; Clement on a genealogical basis and Origen on grounds of hearsay. Nevertheless, this does not make the category less useful for our purposes; there are indeed notions in Heracleon's work (at least that cited by Origen) that could be called Valentinian as we here will define the term.

second-hand sources critically without drawing absolute conclusions: making suggestions, arguing for the most probable and illuminating perspectives, and opening them up for discussion and interpretive possibilities rather than obstructing them. In light of this, and remembering not to reify as a fixity or a social identity something that did not necessarily exist, I do think the category 'Valentinian' is useful in the present study, in order to point out particular early Christian theological traits and help situate them in a specific context.

So, what are these particular traits, and in what concrete way does the category illuminate the study at hand? The motifs that are found in church fathers' depictions of Valentinians[27] that also fit first-hand sources, and thus make up the category as it will be used here, include the following: (1) interest in protological and pleromatological issues;[28] (2) the idea that the cosmos was not formed by the highest God but rather a lower being (sometimes called the Demiurge); (3) the idea that the heavenly world (often called the Pleroma) was populated by eternal beings called Aeons (sometimes identified as the emanations of the Father); (4) the idea that the youngest of these Aeons fell from heaven and gave rise to a lower form of existence, that is, material existence in the cosmos where some of the heavenly substance and the youngest Aeon ended up; and lastly (5) the raising of a barrier between Pleroma and cosmos and the entry of a heavenly Savior figure into the cosmos, identified with Jesus on earth, who comes in need of salvation himself.[29]

Texts that can be viewed as Valentinian, according to this typology, include, but are not restricted to: *GosTruth*,[30] *TriTrac, GosPhil, InterpKnow, ValExp*,

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27 Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* I.1–7; Hippolytus, *Refutation of All Heresies*; Tertullian, *Against the Valentinians*; Clement, *Stromata* II.3, II.8, III.1, III.4, IV.9, IV.13, V.1, VI.6, VII.17; Origen, *Commentary on John*; Epiphanius, *Panarion* 33. For a discussion of these sources and for the exact passages, see Thomassen, *Spiritual Seed*, 39–45, 59–61, 104–107, 119–129, 193–230, 241–247. It should also be noted that, since the work of David M. Litwa, the attribution of *Refutation of All Heresies* to Hippolytus is in question. See David M. Litwa, ed., *Refutation of All Heresies* (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2016).

28 Protology refers to the events in the first beginnings, between the time the first godhead started the initial creation until the beginning of the formation of matter. Pleromatology is what I call the interest shown in the detailed formation of the Pleroma, the workings of, and relation between, the different heavenly figures in the Pleroma. The term Pleroma is here used when the highest realm is made up of a larger group of heavenly beings, most often called Aeons. Thomassen and others have discussed this in detail and chiefly identified two pleromatological approaches in Valentinian material. For details, see Thomassen, *Spiritual Seed*, 193–332.

29 The typological features have been thoroughly studied before. For more detailed descriptions of what Valentinian theology included, see Desjardins, *Sin in Valentinianism*, 3–17; Thomassen, *Spiritual Seed*.

30 When referring to *GosTruth* below, I always refer to the better-preserved version in Codex I, if nothing else is indicated.

and *ExcTheod.*[31] The heresiologists discussed many people, who they called Valentinians, to whom these theological traits were attached, such as Ptolemy and Heracleon (just to mention two referred to in more detail by the church fathers).[32] Not all of the above texts have every one of these features and the features do at times differ between the texts. Furthermore, there are other texts and fragments that arguably should be included in the category (or at least texts that are often thought to be Valentinian).[33] However, since I do not propose to present a coherent definition of the phenomenon of Valentinianism, nor strive to present a final list of Valentinian texts, I will not venture into detailed analysis of which other texts could be included in the category. These texts are here called Valentinian so as to facilitate a smoother discussion of particular theological traits found in them, traits that church fathers such as Irenaeus, Hippolytus, Tertullian, Clement, Origen, and Epiphanius attached to theological opponents they called Valentinians.[34]

There are other attributes that could be added to the list of Valentinian traits, for example, a tripartite anthropology, specific rituals (like the bridal

31 *GosTruth* does not have a clear myth of a falling youngest Aeon; instead we have the character Error (ⲡⲗⲁⲛⲏ). However, we do find a Pleroma and Aeons, as well as a soteriology and anthropology that fit the other texts, so one can with relative certainty draw connections between the theology of these texts. The variance is not a problem for the present purposes, but rather proves my point about Valentinian theology not being a clear-cut category in ancient time. *GosPhil* is difficult to place in an earlier setting, since it, as Hugo Lundhaug has argued convincingly, shows awareness of fifth century theological debates. Lundhaug does not view the text as Valentinian (see Hugo Lundhaug, *Images of Rebirth: Cognitive Poetics and Transformational Soteriology in the Gospel of Philip and the Exegesis on the Soul* (Leiden: Brill, 2010). However, there is material in the text that recalls Valentinian theology as defined above; for example, Sophia is an important character, and the Demiurge as well as the Aeons of the Pleroma are discussed in the many seemingly disconnected passages that comprise the text. Concerning *ExcTheod*, we should be aware that this is not *one* text, but rather a composition of what seems to be several different Valentinian texts. It was already divided into four parts in the nineteenth century. See Georg Heinrich, *Die valentinianische Gnosis und die heilige Schrift* (Berlin: Weigandt und Greiben, 1871), 92. For a translation into English, and for the edition which will here be referenced, see Robert Pierce Casey, *The Excerpta ex Theodoto of Clement of Alexandria* (Cambridge, M.A.: Harvard University Press, 1934).

32 For more information on these two, see Thomassen, *Spiritual Seed*, 17–22, 103–118, and for a list of individuals identified as Valentinians by the church fathers, see Thomassen, *Spiritual Seed*, 491–508.

33 For example, Ptolemy's *Letter to Flora* quoted by Epiphanius in his *Panarion*, and Nag Hammadi texts such as *PrPaul* (I,1), *Letter to Rheginos* (I,4), *First and Second Apocalypse of James* (V,3–4), *Letter of Peter to Philip* (VIII,2). For a more thorough discussion of who counts which of these texts as Valentinian and why, see Tite, *Valentinian Ethics*, 15–17.

34 Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*; Hippolytus, *Refutation of All Heresies*; Tertullian, *Against the Valentinians*; Clement, *Stromata* II.3, II.8, III.1, III.4, IV.9, IV.13, V.1, VI.6, VII.17; Origen, *Commentary on John* (Fragments of Heracleon); Epiphanius, *Panarion* 31.

chamber), and soteriological details (like the correspondence of the body of the Savior with those he comes to save), but there is no need to further define the term 'Valentinian' here since I will not treat the category as a clearly defined social or theological entity;[35] rather arguing that previous research on *TriTrac* has at times been led astray by reading it in light of a grand narrative of Valentinian theology. Furthermore, Valentinian texts have many similarities to other religious phenomena such as Sethian texts; *ApJohn*, for example, also presents a myth where an Aeon falls, a Demiurge creates the cosmos, and a Savior appears from the highest heaven.[36] However, there are fundamental differences that set Sethian texts apart from Valentinian texts: for example, the role played by Seth and the image of the highest world populated by four light creatures, traits that are not extant in Valentinian material. When I use the term 'Valentinian', I refer to a set of ideas, not a fixed social group.[37] The term will be employed simply to highlight particular theological traits popular among some of the Christians the church fathers opposed, Christians who did not necessarily have more in common with each other than their being inspired by similar theological and cosmological traits.[38] Thus, the term is here used chiefly to locate *TriTrac* and some other texts that at times will be used as *comparandum* within a particular intra-Christian discussion.

35 The contrary approach has perhaps most vividly been argued for by Einar Thomassen, *The Spiritual Seed*; Einar Thomassen, "Going to Church with the Valentinians", *in Practicing Gnosis: Ritual, Magic, Theurgy and Liturgy in Nag Hammadi, Manichaean and Other Ancient Literature. Essays in Honor of Birger A. Pearson*, eds. April DeConick et al. (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 183–197.

36 See, for example, Karen King, *The Secret Revelation of John* (Cambridge and London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2006).

37 We cannot presuppose that there is an active social group that reflects a text's community ideal and ritual outlook. What is more, we should certainly not take *several* different texts that have clear differences, their exact background being uncertain, and reify the same community context. The social context should be argued for, for each specific text. Furthermore, the ancients who were inspired by the kind of mythologumena that is here called Valentinian, could have been part of Christian communities to which also proto-orthodox theologians belonged. This is surely not inconceivable; consider that Valentinus was, in his lifetime, never excommunicated. He and his followers did not start a competing Church, unlike Marcion.

38 However, I do not deny that people who were inspired by Valentinian myths would have been more easily drawn to other people harboring similar myths, rather than Christians who rejected these myths. My point is simply that we cannot reify a fixed social group from a text that has particular theological traits. At the same time, it is important to remember the plurality and dynamic nature of the early Christian landscape. For more on the plurality of early Christianity, see Brakke, *The Gnostics*, 90–111.

3 The Myth in *TriTrac* and the Ethics in Storytelling

Much of *TriTrac* consists of a very long and complex creation myth, which, I argue, is the key to understanding the basic principles that supply the foundations for the ethics presented in the text. A myth is a story—that much is generally agreed upon—although the question of what else 'myth' is, and is not, is a huge topic in religious studies. In the past and in some contexts still today, myth is synonymous with 'made up' or 'false'.[39] This view of myth, narrowed down to its colloquial sense, is indeed an outdated use of the term in religious studies. However, as Bronislaw Malinowski pointed out at the beginning of the twentieth century, myth "is not merely a story told but a reality lived … [a] sacred story [that] lives in our ritual, in our morality, as it governs our faith and controls our conduct".[40] Malinowski's view is close to how religion in general was approached by Clifford Geertz, who suggested that religions are like cultural systems of symbols that simultaneously create "models of" reality and "models for" reality.[41] All symbols fluctuate between these two; they are appropriated in order to give meaning to reality by simultaneously making reality conform to the system while arranging the system in light of reality. By this he means that religion explains how and why things are as they are while simultaneously telling us how things ought to be.[42] It is by means of this

39 As Paul Veyne has pointed out concerning the Greeks' relation to their myths: the question whether myths are 'true' or not would probably have come as a surprise to many of the ancients. He notes, along with many other scholars like Foucault, that how truth is defined is not a self-evident question, it varies historically. Power relations should be taken into consideration: who decides what is considered to be knowledge, truth, beauty, goodness, or truth? This is context-bound. Of course, the Greeks—if we take them as an example—saw their myths as being true in some sense, just as people today value the stories that belong to our time and culture. See Paul Veyne, *Did the Greeks Believe in Their Gods? An Essay on the Constitutive Imagination.* Translation by Paula Wissing (Chicago and London: Chicago University Press, 1983). This, however, does not mean that myths were not also questioned and discussed by some. Atheism is not an exclusively modern phenomenon; see Tim Whitmarsh, *Battling the Gods: Atheism in the Ancient World* (London: Faber & Faber, 2016).

40 From his talk "Myth in Primitive Psychology" held in honor of Sir James Frazer in Liverpool 1925. The quote is taken from the collection of Malinowski's works, in Ivan Strenski, ed., *Malinowski and the Work of Myth* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1992), 81.

41 Clifford Geertz, "Religion as Cultural System", in *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays by Clifford Geertz*, ed. Clifford Geertz (New York: Basic Books, 2000 [1973]), 87–125.

42 Geertz has been criticized by Talal Asad, for example, who rejects all definitions that border on essentialism and universalism, which Asad sees as necessarily Eurocentric and Christocentric considering the background of concepts like 'religion' and 'myth'. Asad has written that Geertz's definition ignores "varying social condition" (Talal Asad, "Anthropological Conceptions of Religion: Reflections on Geertz", *Man* 18:2 (1983): 237).

perspective that I approach religious narratives as myth, and the creation story we encounter in *TriTrac.* Myths are stories that create and legitimate structures and values for the group to whom they belong.[43]

The ethics of *TriTrac* can be approached through the myth presented in the text. There are few passages in *TriTrac* that elaborate on ethical conduct explicitly, which is in all likelihood one reason why the ethics of *TriTrac* remains rather unexplored.[44] My argument is that even though the clear paraenetic sections in the text are few (I return to this question shortly), the ethical outlook presented in the text would most likely have seemed quite clear for an ancient reader familiar with ethical discourse. As I will argue in Chapters 4 and 5, formative ethical deliberation was in the ancient curriculum one of the

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This critique could be countered by reference to a quote from Santayana that Geertz provides in the introduction to his essay: "Any attempt to speak without speaking any particular language is not more hopeless than the attempt to have a religion that shall be no religion in particular ... Thus every living and healthy religion has a marked idiosyncrasy" (Santayana, *Reason in Religion*, taken from Geertz, "Religion as Cultural System", 87). Furthermore, Kevin Schilbrack has argued that Asad does not represent Geertz fairly in his critique, especially when presenting as Eurocentric and Christocentric Geertz's view of religion as involving metaphysical claims. Claiming metaphysics as Christocentric or Eurocentric is a strange statement because invoking metaphysics has often been used to demonstrate the superiority of the West over non-Christian cultures (who are at times viewed as relying on metaphysics rather than 'science'). For details of this debate, see Kevin Schilbrack, "Religion, Models of, and Reality: Are We Through with Geertz?", *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 73:2 (2005): 429–452.

43 See also Bruce Lincoln, *Theorizing Myth: Narrative, Ideology, and Scholarship* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1999). Lincoln's approach to myth is similar to the way Geertz looks at religion. Lincoln views myth as values in narrative form.

44 Studies have been made of 'Valentinian' ethics but *TriTrac* does not play a central part in them. See, for example, Tite, *Valentinian Ethics*, devoted to *GosTruth* and *InterpKnow*. Desjardins investigates sin in Valentinianism and devotes approximately eight pages to the concept of sin in *TriTrac*, concluding that both pneumatics and psychics are indeed stricken and troubled by sin and need salvation from God. Thus, Desjardins' thesis that ethics is not at all unimportant is confirmed. There is to my knowledge only one text that is solely devoted to the ethics of *TriTrac*: Alexander Kocar's article "'Humanity Came to Be According to Three Essential Types': Ethical Responsibility and Practice in the Valentinian Anthropogony of the *Tripartite Tractate* (NHC I,5)", in *Jewish and Christian Cosmogony in Late Antiquity*, eds. Lance Jenott and Sarit Kattan Gribetz (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2013), 193–221. This very important article will be discussed in detail in Chapter 3, because Kocar investigates parallels to Stoic thought in order to illuminate *TriTrac*, which I also explore in detail below. Kocar's text is divided into two parts, the first examines parallels with Stoicism, the other explores the ethics of the pneumatics in *TriTrac* and concludes that the text is strongly influenced by Pauline theology. I agree, further exploring topics Kocar touches on, for example the dynamics of soteriological fixity and social dynamics (see Chapter 4).

last topics a student approached, that is, an advanced topic, proceeded by rigorous studies in physics, rhetoric, argumentative techniques, and other areas that were thought necessary to master before approaching formative ethics. It is in the myth presented in *TriTrac* that we find the foundations for advanced ethical considerations: epistemology, cognitive theory, and anthropology. Before elaborating on this point, let me give a very brief summary of the myth presented in *TriTrac*. The following are not quotes, but short accounts of the contents and structure of the different parts of the text:

Part I (51:1–104:3): the Godhead, the Structure of the Heavens and the Nature, Organization, and Purpose of the Cosmic System

51:1–74:18	In the beginning, there is only the Father. He is without beginning and without end, being complete and perfect and good. The Father wishes to be known. He creates a Son and then a Collective of Aeons called the Church. The members of the Church are given individuality and free will, and they exist in harmony, giving praise to the Father.
74:18–77:11	The youngest of the Aeons, called the Logos, driven by love of the Father, steps outside the harmony of the collective Church, also called the Pleroma. This happens in accordance with the will of the Father and a border is drawn between the Pleroma and the outside, occupied by the Logos.
77:11–95:38	As a result of the absence of the Father, the Logos becomes confused and creates lower beings. The Logos' initial creation is identified as passions and creatures made of matter, which are described as the lowest form of existence. The Logos suffers due to his isolation and his association with the lack he has created. He repents and prays for forgiveness for the erroneous result of his creation. From this remorse, psychic substance and psychic powers emerge. The psychic powers and the material creatures stand in opposition and fight each other. The Logos continues to be challenged by his creation and the Aeons of the Pleroma take pity on him. They send down the Savior, identified with the Son, the second principle of the Godhead. The Logos rejoices at the vision of the Savior and from this joy spiritual, or pneumatic, substances and powers are born.

95:38–104:3 In a pedagogic act to teach the psychics the nature of error, and to subject the pneumatics to evil so they will learn of the toils of cosmic life, the Logos commences with organizing a system for this purpose. Each of the three levels of powers (material, psychic, and pneumatic) is given a dominion to rule. The Logos creates a demiurge. The Demiurge and his minions create the cosmos and all the things in the world, also humankind.

Part II (104:4–108:12): the Creation of Humans

104:4–108:12 Humans are formed. They are made of a mix of all three substances to which the Logos originally gave rise: matter and psychic and pneumatic stuff. Humanity is also divided into three kinds: people who reject the Savior, people who need to be convinced of the Savior's message, and those people who recognize the Savior right away. These three types of humans are called by the substance with which they are chiefly associated: material, psychic, and pneumatic people.

Part III (108:13–138:27): the Situation on Earth and Final Restoration

108:13–114:30 Before the Savior appears on earth humans only have partial knowledge and the material and psychic powers rule. Greek philosophers, who are guided by the material powers, are divided concerning knowledge and fight amongst each other. The Jews, on the other hand, have partial knowledge and are guided by the psychic powers. But they, too, are divided concerning knowledge of God.

114:31–118:14 The Savior appears on earth. He takes on the same form as the humans on earth and is born in body and soul. The Savior, born as Jesus Christ, accepts death in order to grant humans salvation and freedom from ignorance and suffering. Those who reject him are destined for destruction, but are allowed to remain as long as Logos' organization exists because they are useful for the system that he set in place.

118:14–122:12	Humans react differently to the coming of the Savior. The pneumatic people react instantly and rush toward the Savior. The psychics need convincing but nevertheless possess the ability to recognize the Savior. The psychic people celebrate communion with the pneumatics, sing hymns and share in their suffering. The material people reject the Savior.
122:12–138:27	The pneumatics are the main target for the Savior's work. They make up the body of the Savior, they are his church and correspond to the Church in the Pleroma.[45] The psychic people who accept the Savior are rewarded for their work. However, the pneumatic and psychic humans' reward in the end-time differs. Everything will be reduced once again to the three substances. The material substance is alien to the Pleroma and will be destroyed. The pneumatic substance is of the same kind as those who exist in the Pleroma and will be integrated into it and to the aeonic collective. The psychic substance is not naturally from the Pleroma but, as a reward for their acceptance of the Savior and the aid they bring to their pneumatic superiors, the psychics will reap the benefits of salvation in a position below the Pleroma.

This story needs unpacking and elaboration in order to be made relevant for ethical discussions, that much is clear.[46] It is with this that the present study of *TriTrac* is chiefly concerned. By looking more closely at the creation scene (Part I of *TriTrac*), the relation between the different substances and how they are described—the substances that later make up humanity—we enter the realm of ancient physics, cognitive science, epistemology, and anthropological theories.

I have already emphasized the importance of context when approaching an ancient text and large parts of this present study engage with the detailed

45 I use the capital C for the Church in the Pleroma, not the community of pneumatics on earth, in order to separate the two.

46 There is, of course, a plethora of theological details that this summary omits, for example exactly how Logos organizes the cosmic system or that Logos is split as he falls away from the Pleroma; the baser part of him becoming trapped on the outside while the higher parts of him is reintegrated into the Pleroma. These particular theological details will be discussed in the following chapters as they become relevant for elucidating the ethical outlook of the text.

discussions that Greco-Roman philosophers—chiefly Stoics and Platonists—and Christians utilized when explaining the foundations of ethics. I will show how *TriTrac* positions itself within this debate. How the substances and the different powers we encounter in *TriTrac* relate to each other and to humanity are fundamental questions for ethical considerations, because they help us answer basic questions: Of what does a human action consist? To what degree are humans free to choose their own actions? Are there hidden structures that influence human behavior? After these fundamental questions have been answered, we can go further and look more closely at how *TriTrac* relates to questions concerning lived ethics. How should followers of Christ conduct their lives in the world? What is the ideal social state according to the text? These topics—lived ethics and their theoretical foundations—lie at the core of this study. Before I deliberate on why these issues are important to explore, however, it is time to contextualize the text at hand. What is known of the material and historical background of *TriTrac* and what have previous scholars written about it?

4 Previous Research on *TriTrac* and the Historical Setting of the Text

TriTrac is the fifth text in Nag Hammadi Codex I. Several suggestions have been presented over the years as to the origins of the Nag Hammadi collection. The earliest scholarship examining these fascinating texts suggested that they could be related to the Egyptian monastic movement that had its birth, both chronologically and geographically,[47] in the area where the texts were found.[48]

47 There have been many suggestions as to what kind of monks these might have been; Melitian, Origenist, and Pachomian monks have all been suggested at one time or another. Torgny Säve-Söderberg has suggested that the texts could have been read by monks, not for edification, but to learn about their theological opponents to be able to refute them. See Torgny Säve-Söderberg, "Holy Scripture or Apologetic Documentation? The 'Sitz im Leben' of the Nag Hammadi Library", in *Les textes de Nag Hammadi: Colloque du Centre d'Histoire des Religions* (*Strasbourg, 23–25 octobre 1974*), ed. J. E. Menard (Leiden: Brill, 1975), 3–14. This is a view with few supporters today. The texts were most likely owned by people who valued them as more than reference works, which is suggested by the decorations on the covers as well as the importance placed on the order of the texts. For a brief overview of the history of scholarship on the subject, see Hugo Lundhaug and Lance Jenott, *The Monastic Origins of the Nag Hammadi Codices* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2015), 4–7.

48 There has recently been some debate concerning the validity of the story of the find; James Robinson's credibility has been questioned and he has been accused of orientalism. See Mark Goodacre, "How Reliable is the Story of the Nag Hammadi Discovery?", *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 35 (2013): 303–322; Nicola Denzey Lewis and

Yet many have found it difficult to believe that monks owned the Nag Hammadi texts, much less read them for edification. Some have suggested that the texts belonged to one or a few wealthy learned individuals, while others have hypothesized a 'Gnostic' group behind them. Scholars supporting the view that the texts could not have belonged to proponents of the 'mainstream' Church are perhaps most clearly represented by Alexandr Khosroyev, who argued that most of the data, including codicological evidence, point to a Gnostic urban intelligentsia behind the codices, chiefly due to what was considered to be their 'anti-biblical', 'esoteric', and philosophically laden material. *TriTrac* is one of the texts that has been used as a prime example of these characteristics.[49] According to Khosroyev, the Nag Hammadi texts were commercial products, produced by professional booksellers, commissioned by urban religious group(s) with 'syncretistic' tendencies; he claims that they would not have interested monks.[50]

Hugo Lundhaug and Lance Jenott have recently argued, rather convincingly in my opinion, that there are several problems with Khosroyev's thesis. The Gnosticism-Christianity paradigm, which Khosroyev and others who pose a 'Gnostic-sect origin' take as their departure, has permitted several flawed ideas to fester: for example, that the Nag Hammadi texts are 'anti-biblical',

Justine Ariel Blount, "Rethinking the Origins of the Nag Hammadi Codices", *Journal of Biblical Literature* 133 (2014): 399–419. For an overview of the debate, a nuanced defense of Robinson (where the accusation of orientalism is rightly rejected), and arguments against the hypothesis that the Nag Hammadi texts were Christian books of the dead, used as grave goods among Christians, see Brent Nongbri, "Finding Early Christian Books at Nag Hammadi and Beyond", *Bulletin for the Study of Religion* 45 (2016): 11–19; Dylan Burns, "Telling Nag Hammadi's Egyptian Stories" *Bulletin for the Study of Religion* 45 (2016): 5–11.

49 Alexandr Khosroyev, *Die Bibliothek von Nag Hammadi: Einige Problem des Christentums in Ägypten während der ersten Jahrhunderte* (Altenberge: Oros Verlag, 1995). Khosroyev's perspective has, over the years, gained support by many, for example Alastair Logan, *The Gnostic: Identifying an Early Christian Cult* (London: T&T Clark, 2006) and Ewa Wipszycka, "The Nag Hammadi Library and the Monks: A Papyrologist's Point of View", *The Journal of Juristic Papyrology* 30 (2000): 179–191. For a summary, see Lundhaug and Jenott, *Monastic Origins*, 2–3.

50 Khosroyev, *Die Bibliothek von Nag Hammadi*, 10–13. This is mostly drawn from his analysis of Codex VI where we find a scribal note. Khosroyev is not alone in his opinion that the Nag Hammadi codices are commercial products; this is also the conclusion drawn by Eva Cornelia Römer in "Manichaeism and Gnosticism in the Papyri" in *The Oxford Handbook of Papyrology*, ed. Roger S. Bagnall (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 623–643; as well as Joseph Montserrat-Torrents, "The Social and Cultural Setting of the Coptic Gnostic Library" in *Studia Patristica XXXI: Papers Presented at the Twelfth International Conference on Patristic Studies Held in Oxford 1995*, ed. E. A. Livingstone (Leuven: Peeters, 1995), 464–481.

'syncretistic',[51] and philosophically complex, qualities which would have made Christian monks reject them.[52] Lundhaug and Jenott have rephrased the argument for a monastic setting and taken issue with Khosroyev's representation of the texts,[53] suggesting instead that the codices were produced in book-exchange networks associated with monasteries and that the texts were read by monks who most likely would have found much of the content in the Nag Hammadi texts of great interest. Furthermore, just because certain texts were housed and copied by monks does not necessarily mean that they agreed with everything written in them. I concur; one does not have to agree with everything in a text to find it edifying.

What then, has been said about Codex I and *TriTrac* in particular? *TriTrac* is, as stated above, the fifth and last text in Codex I,[54] which has been thought to form a larger collection of books. However, it is unclear if the twelve codices known today as the Nag Hammadi library ever formed a distinct collection, or if they were part of a bigger collection, or belonged to a single or several owners.[55] Palaeographic—as well as some dialectical—investigations have shown a close connection between Codex I, VII and XI (there are other groupings as well).[56] The sequence of the texts in Codex I also seem to have

51 For a study on the problematic use of the term 'syncretism', and an argument that the term should be avoided if not further qualified, see Paul Linjamaa, "Gnosticism as Inherently Syncretistic?: Identity Constructions among Ancient Christians and Protestant Apologetes" in *Theological and Philosophical Responses to Syncretism: Beyond the Mirage of Pure Religion*, eds. Mika Vähäkangas and Patrik Fridlund (Leiden: Brill, 2017), 25–40.

52 These arguments are systematically and thoroughly countered in Lundhaug and Jenott, *Monastic Origins*, 74–103.

53 Lundhaug and Jenott develop the justified critique leveled at the artificial Gnosticism-Christianity dichotomy, beginning with the groundbreaking work of Michael A. Williams, see Williams, *Rethinking*.

54 There was possibly a sixth text following *TriTrac*, which ends at page 137, but we cannot be certain since the last two leaves are missing. Stephen Emmel has pointed out that these pages were most likely not uninscribed, as there are ink-marks at the presumed end of *TriTrac* indicating that there was something following *TriTrac*. Stephen Emmel, "Announcement", *The Bulletin of the American Society of Papyrologists* 14 (1977): 56–57.

55 Something that seems to support the hypothesis that the Nag Hammadi codices actually represent several collections is the fact that there are duplicates of some texts, and that these do not appear to be codices compiled by the same scribal team. For more, see Michael A. Williams, "Interpreting the Nag Hammadi Library as 'Collection(s)' in the History of 'Gnosticism(s)'" in *Les textes de Nag Hammadi et le problème de leur classification*, eds. L. Painchaud and A. Pasquier (Louvain: Peeters, 1995), 3–50.

56 This is established by way of identifying the scribal hands in the codices. The scribe who copied *Letter to Rheginos* in Codex I also copied the first half of Codex XI. The scribe who copied the second part of Codex XI also copied the whole of Codex VII. For more information, see Williams, "Interpreting", 11–20. For the dialectical similarities between

been of some importance.[57] Some attempts have been made to read Codex I as a collection with a particular purpose[58] and most suggestions up until now have viewed the placement and topic of *TriTrac* as designed to give the proceeding texts contextualization, putting the 'message' of Codex I into a bigger

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Codex I and XI, which both include Lycopolitan (L6), see Wolf-Peter Funk, "The Linguistic Aspect of Classifying the Nag Hammadi Codices", in *Les textes de Nag Hammadi et le problème de leur classification: Actes du colloque tenu à Québec du 15 au 19 septembre 1993*, ed. L. Painchaud and A. Pasquier (Québec: les Presses de Université Lavall, 1995), 107–147. For similarities and differences in the way they were produced, see James Robinson, "The Construction of the Nag Hammadi Codices", in *Essays on the Nag Hammadi Texts: In Honor of Pahor Labib*, ed. Martin Krause (Leiden: Brill, 1975), 170–190; James Robinson, ed., *The Facsimile Edition of the Nag Hammadi Codices: Introduction* (Leiden: Brill, 1984), 71–86.

57 The pages of the fourth text, *Letter to Rheginos*, are un-collated and the text is followed by an empty half page, suggesting that Scribe A skipped over these pages after copying *ApJames* and *GosTruth* and before proceeding to copy *TriTrac*. Thus, there must have been a reason not to copy *TriTrac* after *GosTruth* or a reason why *Letter to Rheginos* should follow *GosTruth* and not *TriTrac*. *PrPaul* was most likely added later, on the flyleaf, which is also un-collated. The *ApJames* begins as page 1. (Actually, the first eight pages are fragmentary at the top, but page nine of *ApJames* is collated as page nine.)

58 Michael Williams reads Codex I as a collection like the New Testament, beginning with the words of Jesus and ending with commentary and elaborations. According to Williams, it makes sense to end the codex with an exposition on "systematic theology" as he interprets *TriTrac* to be. Previously in the codex we have an introductory prayer (*PrPaul*), a dialogue between Christ and the Apostles (*ApJames*), a homily (*GosTruth*), and a treatise about the resurrection (*Letter to Rheginos*). Ending with *TriTrac*, according to Williams, puts what has previously been discussed in Codex I into a broader perspective. For this reason, Williams writes, *TriTrac* would fit just as well in the beginning. However, then the likeness to the New Testament would disappear, there are no sayings of Jesus nor much elaboration on Jesus' life in *TriTrac* (Williams, "Interpreting", 14–15). Louis Painchaud and Michael Kaler have gone further and argue that there was a purpose for the whole collection of the texts connected to the scribal team. They suggest that Codex I, XI and VII (read in this order) introduce the reader to 'heterodox doctrine' which would have induced sympathy for a minority Christian group calling themselves the "lineage of the Father". Codex I and XI portray a context of conflict between different Christians and prepare the reader for what comes in Codex VII: expositions on revelation. See Louis Painchaud and Michael Kaler, "From the *Prayer of the Apostle Paul* to the *Three Steles of Seth*: Codices I, XI and VI from Nag Hammadi Viewed as Collection", *Vigiliae Christanae* 61 (2007): 445–469. Lance Jenott and Elaine Pagels have also presented a hypothesis on the purpose of Codex I as a whole. They read Codex I as a curriculum for a fourth-century Christian seeking divine revelation. The first two tractates function to invite the reader to seek revelations and the last three provide more detailed advice and information on how to attain it. See Lance Jenott and Elaine Pagels, "Antony's Letters and Nag Hammadi Codex I: Sources of Religious Conflict in Fourth-Century Egypt", *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 18:4 (2010): 557–589.

picture.[59] However, no view has received wide scholarly acceptance. As I have argued elsewhere, building on Lundhaug's and Jenott's recent work, *TriTrac* would most likely have interested Christian monks in the early Egyptian monastic movement;[60] in all likelihood Codex I was produced by and belonged to Christian monks, possibly in the emerging Pachomian monasticism.[61]

Still, the fact remains that *TriTrac* most likely existed before it became a part of Nag Hammadi Codex I. The text is preserved in an irregular form of the Coptic dialect Lycopolitan (L6).[62] Kasser has suggested that *TriTrac* was first

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59 All the different suggestions as to the order of texts in Codex I seem to have in common the view that *TriTrac*'s placement and role in the collection offers contextualization (for what exactly, scholars disagree). *TriTrac* takes up more than half of Codex I and seems to offer an attempt at a systematic theological overview, thus bringing the previous texts in the codex into the perspective of a larger whole. However, these observations do not seem to satisfactorily answer the question of why *TriTrac* was placed at the end (although not last, since there was likely a sixth text). Among the Nag Hammadi codices (apart from Codex I) it is only Codex IX that has the obviously longest text at the end (*Testimony of Truth*). The longest text is more often placed at the beginning, especially if the text is a systematic overview, from creation to salvation, as *TriTrac* is often portrayed as. Take for example Codex III and IV, where *ApJohn* is the first and longest text, as well as Codex VII (*Paraphrase of Shem*) and Codex VIII (*Zostrianos*). In the case of Codex II, we have three texts that are almost the same length: *ApJohn, GosPhil* and *OnOrigWorld*. As Williams argues, it makes sense to have the text that is most like an overview at the beginning (Williams, "Interpreting", 20–32).

60 Paul Linjamaa, "Why Monks Read *The Tripartite Tractate*: A New Look at the Codicology of Nag Hammadi Codex I", in *The Nag Hammadi Codices as Monastic Books*, eds. Hugo Lundhaug and Christian Bull (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, forthcoming).

61 Lundhaug and Jenott, *Monastic Origins*. The view that the text derived from a Pachomian context has received critique by Przemysław Piwowarczyk and Ewa Wipszycka, "A Monastic Origin of the Nag Hammadi Codices?", *Adamantius* 23 (2017): 432–458. While it is true that one cannot be 100% certain of the specific monastic context of the Nag Hammadi Codices, in my opinion, Piwowarczyk and Wipszycka do not portray the "goal" of Lundhaug's and Jenott's work fairly. They state that "The goal of Lundhaug and Jenott's work was to demonstrate that the Nag Hammadi codices are a product of copyists and bookbinders active in the monastic environment, namely the Pachomian congregation, and that, in consequence, the treatises they contain were read by Pachomian monks" (Piwowarczyk and Wipszycka, "A Monastic Origin", 432). This is not how I read Lundhaug's and Jenott's work, as the main objective of the book is obviously to show that the Nag Hammadi texts derive from a monastic context, rather than from an urban intelligentsia associated with a 'Gnostic' group. Exactly what context is a secondary question, which is only briefly discussed in comparison to the larger and central question, and only comes up in the very end of the book.

62 It is assumed that Lycopolitan was spoken (if it was not just a literary dialect) in and around Lycopolis in Upper Egypt. This dialect has also been called 'Subakhmimic'. Wolf-Peter Funk has recently shown that Lycopolitan is most likely not *one* dialect, but up to

translated (most likely from Greek) into Sahidic before this present Lycopolitan version.[63] Thomassen points out that there are no other known instances of this phenomenon and, as Layton has argued, it was rather common the other way around, that when standard Sahidic gained status as a literary language, texts in other dialects were made to conform to standard Sahidic.[64]

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four *different* dialects. L6 is the form of Lycopolitan one finds in the Nag Hammadi-texts (*ApJames, GosTruth, TriTrac, Letter to Rheginos, InterpKnow, ValExp, Marsanes*)—which otherwise contains mostly Sahidic Coptic. L6 differs from, for example, the Manichean form of Lycopolitan (L4), in which the labials were expressed differently. For example, where L6 (and L5) has ϥⲓ ("to carry"), L4 would have ⲃⲓ. Furthermore, there are, Funk maintains, idiosyncrasies within these classifications, too. See Wolf-Peter Funk, "How Closely Related are the Subakhmimic Dialects?", *Zeitschrift für Ägyptische Sprache und Altertumskunde* 112 (1985): 124–139. Kasser et al. have suggested that *TriTrac* was translated from Greek to Sahidic and then to Subakhmimic, due to the many irregularities, but this remains a suggestion which has not gained wider acceptance. See Rodolphe Kasser, Michel Malinine, Henri-Charles Puech, Gilles Quispel and Jan Zandee. Adiuuantibus: Werner Vycichl and R. McL. Wilson. *Tractatus Tripartitus: Pars I: De Supernis* (Bern: Francke, 1973), 22, 26. Peter Nagel has suggested that the translator of *TriTrac* might not have been a native Coptic speaker, which would explain the many irregularities in the Lycopolitan (Peter Nagel, "Lycopolitan (or Lyco-diospolitan or Subakhmimic)" in *The Coptic Encyclopedia*, vol. 8, ed. Aziz S. Atiya (New York: Macmillan, 1991), 152–153). Nagel also suggests that the *Vorlage* of *GosTruth* might have been of Syriac origin, due to what he suggests are Syriaisms in the text. The same argument could be applied to other texts in Codex I (Peter Nagel, "Die Herkunft des Evangelium Veritatis in Sprachlicher Sicht", *Orientalistische Literaturzeitung* 61 (1966): 5–14). However, this view has not found much support. There are several linguistic irregularities which make *TriTrac* stand out, such as the use of both Lycopolitan and Sahidic vocalization (alternating for example between ⲙⲙⲟ⸗ and ⲙⲙⲁ⸗ ⲉ-, ⲉⲣⲟ⸗ and ⲁ-, ⲁⲣⲁ⸗) and irregularities in orthography (for example, the letter ⲩ is also rendered as ⲉⲩ, ⲟⲩ, and ⲩⲟⲩ, so the word ⲙⲉⲩⲉ also appears as ⲙⲉⲟⲩⲉ, ⲙⲉⲩⲟⲩⲉ, and ⲙⲉⲉⲩⲉ). For a more complete list of the different linguistic originalities in *TriTrac*, see Harold W. Attridge and Elaine Pagels, "The Tripartite Tractate", in Harold W. Attridge, ed., *Nag Hammadi Codex I* (*The Jung Codex*)*: Introduction, Text, Translation, Indices* (Leiden: Brill, 1985), 160–174. See also Peter Nagel, *Der Tractatus Tripartitus aus Nag Hammadi Codex I* (*Codex Jung*) (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1998), 1–8. For more on the details of Lycopolitan Coptic, see Nagel, "Lycopolitan", 151–159. Wolf-Peter Funk has stated that *TriTrac* contains "puzzling inconsistencies … even in its most superficial respects (such as spelling, vowel representation and basic morphology". For more on the language of Codex I in relation to the other Nag Hammadi codices, see Funk, "Linguistic Aspect", 130.

63 Rodolphe Kasser, Michel Malinine, Henri-Charles Puech, Gilles Quispel and Jan Zandee, Adiuuantibus: Werner Vycichl and R. McL. Wilson, *Tractatus Tripartitus: Pars II: De Creatione Hominis, Pars III: De Generibus Tribus* (Bern: Francke, 1973–1975), 35.

64 See Bentley Layton, "The Hypostasis of the Archons or The Reality of the Rulers", *Harvard Theological Review* 62 (1974): 351–424. For more, see Einar Thomassen and Louis Painchaud, *Le traité tripartite:* (*NH I,5*) (Québec: Presses de l'Université Laval, 1989),

No one to my knowledge has opposed Kasser's initial suggestion that there was a Greek *Vorlage* to the Coptic text we now possess.[65] Thomassen has pointed out the reasons for what is often just assumed, such as sentences that are incoherent in their Coptic phrasing and have to be imagined in the Greek original to make sense.[66] The unusual application of ϫⲉ throughout the text—placed at beginning of what may be new paragraphs, for example—has also been thought to reflect a Greek *Vorlage*. This use of ϫⲉ is not common in Coptic texts and would make more sense viewed as rendering of γάρ, δέ, οὖν or some other particles to bind together paragraphs and sections in a text.[67] However, as Attridge and Pagels have noticed, this does not explain the occurrence of ϫⲉ at the very beginning of the text, as the opening word, where one would not expect a 'thus' or 'next' or 'thereafter'.[68] Hans-Martin Schenke has suggested that the ϫⲉ is short for ⲡⲉϫⲁⲩ ϫⲉ ("they say"), which, he writes, could indicate that *TriTrac* is an anthology, a summary of a longer work, or exegesis of another work. However, the internal logic of the text, which comprises a coherent mythological excursion, does not recall an anthology, or a summary (rather the opposite, it is extremely varied and detailed), or an exegesis elaborating on a *different* text, like commentaries on biblical texts by Origen, which are full of references and excursions.[69] Furthermore, it is possible that the first line of *TriTrac* in Codex I (51:1) is not the beginning of the original text, but that the scribe, for some reason, started copying from a passage further into the text,

60–61. This publication is based on Thomassen's doctoral dissertation, and although Painchaud helped edit the volume, I will only refer to Thomassen when citing this work. For Thomassen's dissertation, see Einar Thomassen, "The Tripartite Tractate: New Translation with Introduction and Commentary" (PhD diss., University of St. Andrews, 1982).

65 Kasser et al., *Tractatus Tripartitus*, 33–35.

66 Thomassen points to un-intuitive sentences in the text that make better sense if translated into Greek. For example, 110:17–18 reads ϩⲛ̄ⲉⲁⲩ ⲛⲉ ϩⲓ̈ ⲙⲛ̄ⲧⲣⲉϥⲙ̄ⲙⲉ, "they are glories and theories" (referring to Greek medicine and rhetoric, mechanics and music). Here δόξα was most likely erroneously translated to ⲉⲁⲩ "glory", because ⲉⲁⲩ makes very poor sense in this context, while the other meaning of δόξα (*opinion, belief, notion*) fits perfectly into the sentence criticizing Greek "theories and *opinions*" (δόξα). Thomassen, *Le traité tripartite*, 10–11. For more on the use of Greek terms in *TriTrac*, see J.-D. Dubois, "L'utilisation du grec dans le texte valentinien copte du Traité Tripartite", in *Gnose et Philosophie. Études en hommage à Pierre Hadot*, eds. J.-M. Narbonne and P.-H. Poirier (Paris and Québec: Les Presses de l'Université Laval, 2009), 29–44.

67 For more on this, see Attridge and Pagels, "The Tripartite Tractate", 172–174; Thomassen, *Le traité tripartite*, 9–10.

68 Attridge and Pagels, "The Tripartite Tractate", 173.

69 Hans-Martin Schenke, "Zum sogenannten Tractatus Tripartitus des Codex Jung", *Zeitschrift für Ägyptische Sprache und Altertumskunde* 105 (1978): 133–141.

thus explaining its beginning with ϫⲉ, as a reflection of a Greek version's use of a particle like γάρ, δέ, or οὖν.[70] Considering the many other anomalies in the copying of *TriTrac*, this is indeed a possibility to take seriously.[71]

TriTrac remains a fairly anonymous text within the field of early Christian studies.[72] One reason for this is most likely the vast scope of the text

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70 Furthermore, ϫⲉ most likely has more than one function in *TriTrac*. Attridge and Pagels have suggested it could be a stylistic feature added to mark the beginning of paragraphs (Attridge and Pagels, "The Tripartite Tractate", 173). This is common in long texts. They refer to *Pistis Sophia* as a parallel, a very long text that uses paragraph markers in the form of forks to section off portions of the text. See Violet MacDermot and Carl Schmidt, *Pistis Sophia* (Leiden: Brill, 1978), I.4.12, I.5.20, I.7.5, I.8.3, I.13.15, I.15.3, I.15.19, I.16.11, and passim. Another example is *Zostrianos*, which also has paragraph markers in order to guide the reader. These are also in the form of forks, at the left side of the margin. Unfortunately, large parts of *Zostrianos* are damaged, but for some visible examples, see 40:7, 44:4–5, 45:1. Considering the length of *TriTrac*, it would undoubtedly be a candidate for a text that would benefit from paragraph makers, but the fact remains that there are no such marks in the text's margin (apart from *diplai* markers at a handful of places, which are not all paragraph markers, for details see Linjamaa, "Why Monks"), but ϫⲉ could have had this function as well as being a particle that introduces, in a more literary style, a new paragraph. Furthermore, recent studies have indicated that the classical pedagogic technique of memorizing and practicing passages from popular texts—for rhetorical and argumentative purpose—was practiced in monastic contexts (Lillian Larsen, "Early Monasticism and the Rhetoric Tradition: Sayings and Stories as Schooltexts", in *Education and Religion in Late Antiquity*, eds. P. Gemeinhardt et al. (Farnham: Ashgate, 2016), 13–33). Even if ϫⲉ does not stand out in a particular way from other words in the text, an experienced reader would most likely still have been able to identify passages more quickly by looking for the word ϫⲉ. Thus, ϫⲉ could have had the function, apart from being a particle that introduces new paragraphs in the narrative, of being a reading aid that facilitated a more effective orientation and identification of passages for discussion and study.

71 The scribal style in the portion of Codex I that makes up *TriTrac* is somewhat erratic, with inconsistent print style, and fluctuating word count, as well as line length. For details on these features, see Linjamaa, "Why Monks".

72 To my knowledge only two studies, unpublished dissertations, take a thematic approach to the text. Owen Michael Smith's thesis focuses mainly on Middle Platonism, more specifically the metaphysical, ritual, and mystical approaches of five Middle Platonic authors to the "unknown god". 23 pages of the 500-page study are devoted to *TriTrac.* In this space, Smith "assesses the degree" to which Middle Platonism influences *TriTrac* from the perspective of approaches toward the "unknown god"; he concludes that *TriTrac* and the Middle Platonic authors have much in common concerning the approach to what is perhaps more commonly known as apophatic theology. As such, Smith's study is very interesting (although preliminary because, as Smith himself points out, the study only investigates a small part of the *TriTrac*; Smith, "Approaches", 286), indicating the similarities between Middle Platonic authors and *TriTrac*'s use of analogy, where the "unknown god" is approached through different likenesses that refer to images and phenomena in the world that allow humans to begin to conceptualize what is ultimately unknowable (like the image of creation being like "a drop from a fountain" (62:8–9) (Smith, "Approaches", 288).

(88 manuscript pages) and what at a first glance looks like an impenetrable complexity. It is generally agreed that *TriTrac* is a philosophically inclined text. Some have even gone so far as to view its disposition as an attempt to convert philosophically trained people to this particular stance of Christianity.[73] Although I am unsure about this hypothesis,[74] there is nevertheless little doubt that *TriTrac* derives from an advanced philosophical and theological context.[75] The myth of the text is indeed daunting and the irregular form of Lycopolitan does not make it more approachable. Thus, most of the detailed scholarly works on it consist of translations and commentaries, studies aimed at making the text legible and comprehensible. The first thorough work to this end was a French collaboration under the editorialship of Rodolphe Kasser, a three-part/two-volume work with facsimile, published in 1973 and 1975.[76] An English translation and commentary followed in Einar Thomassen's doctoral dissertation (1982). This work remained unpublished, however, until 1989 when the French translation in collaboration with Louis Painchaud appeared.[77] By then,

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However, Smith also seeks to present an "analysis of the central paradox of Gnosticism" (Smith, "Approaches", abstract), and he treats Gnosticism as a movement "independent of Christianity" (Smith, "Approaches", 3). Thus, it is obvious that Smith's work predates the paradigm shift that has occurred in light of Williams' and other scholars' work problematizing the term Gnosticism and especially the separation between Christianity and Gnosticism. Matthew Clark Brewer's dissertation is a "hermeneutical engagement with the Valentinian tradition as embodied in the *Tripartite Tractate"* and he seeks to answer the question: what does "the *Tripartite Tractate* and more generally the Valentinian tradition as a whole say?" (Brewer, "'The Form of the Formless'", 1). Brewer's approach differs from the goal of this study, in that I do not believe it is possible to get to a deeper overall meaning behind a text, nor to answer the question what *TriTrac* or Valentinianism "as a whole say". I approach the text historically and wish to highlight particular aspects of the text (pertaining to ethics) in particular and very specific *historical contexts*. One example of how our approaches differ is in the way we engage the source material: Brewer does not work with the Coptic text first-hand, but through Thomassen's French translation which is translated back into English. I am grateful to both Smith and Brewer, who generously shared their work with me.

73 Pheme Perkins, "Logos Christologies in the Nag Hammadi Codices", *Vigiliae Christianae* 35:4 (1981): 388.

74 I am not sure that, if the purpose were to engage pagan philosophers, we would find such harsh condemnations of Greek philosophy and culture as we do on pages 108–115.

75 For a more detailed description of the Platonic background of *TriTrac* see John Peter Kenney, "The Platonism of the *Tripartite Tractate* (NH I, 5)" in *Neoplatonism and Gnosticism*, eds. Richard T Wallis and Jay Bregman (New York: State University of New York Press, 1992), 187–206; Perkins, "Logos", 379–396.

76 Kasser et al., *Tractatus Tripartitus*.

77 Thomassen, *Le traité tripartite.* The translation into French in this work was in collaboration with Louis Painchaud, but the introduction and commentary are by Thomassen, and the whole work is based on his PhD dissertation (Thomassen, "The Tripartite Tractate").

Harold Attridge and Elaine Pagels had, in 1985, published their English translation and commentary, included in *The Coptic Gnostic Library* series under the general editorialship of James M. Robinson.[78] About a decade later, a German translation appeared by Peter Nagel, published in 1998.[79] In recent times a few new popular translations have appeared: for example, Einar Thomassen's English translation in Marvin Meyer's edition *The Nag Hammadi Scriptures*, and a German translation by Hans-Martin Schenke in *Nag Hammadi Deutsch*.[80]

Over the years, many and varied suggestions have been made as to the background of the text. One of the earliest of these, offered by Puech and Quispel, was that *TriTrac* was a product of Heracleon because they had noticed the Valentinian traits of the text; since it could not have been Ptolemy writing it—as he portrayed a very different pleromatology—Heracleon was an obvious candidate because he was also reported to have referred to the Logos as the creating principle (according to Origen's comments on Heracleon's commentary on the Gospel of John).[81] This was accepted—and even developed—by some scholars, while others drew different conclusions.[82] Kasser and his team attributed *TriTrac* to a 'Western' form of Valentinian theology that differed from Heracleon's theology. Einar Thomassen rejected both of these claims, pointing to the fact that Heracleon equated the Logos with the Savior,[83]

When discussing Thomassen's views, I will refer to the French translation, since it contains revisions to the dissertation, and since it is Thomassen's work in almost all respects, I refer only to Thomassen when citing it.

78 Attridge and Pagels, "The Tripartite Tractate". The Notes were published in a separate publication: Harold W. Attridge and Elaine Pagels, "The Tripartite Tractate", in *Nag Hammadi Codex I* (*The Jung Codex*)*: Notes*, ed. Harold W. Attridge (Leiden: Brill, 1985), 217–497. When I refer to the notes in Attridge and Pagels work on the text, I write "in *Notes*", after "The Tripartite Tractate".

79 Nagel, *Der Tractatus Tripartitus*.

80 Marvin Meyer, ed., *The Nag Hammadi Scriptures* (San Francisco: HarperOne, 2007); Hans-Martin Schenke et al., eds., *Nag Hammadi Deutsch: 1 Band: NHC I,1–V,1* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2001). There is also a Spanish and a Russian translation. See Francisco Garcia Bazan, "Tratado Tripartito", in *Textos gnósticos: Biblioteca de Nag Hammadi I*, eds. Antonio Piñero et al. (Madrid: Trotta, 1997), 168–213; and Alla I. Elanskaya, ed., *Tractatus tripartitus* (*Codex Nag Hammadi I, 5*) [in Russian] (Saint Petersburg: Aletheia, 2017).

81 Henri-Charles Puech and Gilles Quispel, "Le Quatrième Écrit gnostique du Codex Jung", *Vigiliae Christianae* 9 (1955) 65–102.

82 Alexander Böhlig also argued that Heracleon was the author in "Zum Gottesbegriff des Tractatus Tripartitus, Nag Hammadi C. 1,2", in *Kerygma und Logos: zu den geistesgeschichtlichen Beziehungen zwischen Antike und Christentum: Festschrift für Carl Andresen zum 70 Geburtstag*, ed. A. M. Ritter (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1979), 49–67; see also Carsten Colpe, "Heidnische, jüdische und christliche Uberlieferung in den Schriften aus Nag Hammadi", *Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum* 22 (1979): 98–122.

83 Origen, *Commentary on John* VI.20–21, XIII.44.

which *TriTrac* does not. Thomassen concluded that *TriTrac* must have been an 'Eastern' Valentinian treatise considering the way the Savior is described—as "putting on" the body of those he comes to save—which echoes other treatises associated with the Eastern Valentinian stance (like *ExcTheod* 26:1).[84] Pagels and Attridge, however, agreed with earlier opinions that *TriTrac* belonged to a Western tradition (although not Heracleon) because, as the text states, the psychics will indeed be saved in the end (129:34–131:13), a stance associated with Western Valentinians.[85]

The date of the text was originally based on the attribution to Heracleon, and thus placed between 150–180 AD.[86] Kasser et al., who rejected the attribution to Heracleon, nevertheless agreed on the dating of the text to the second half of the second century.[87] Attridge and Pagels have suggested a somewhat later dating, to approximately the first half of the third century, based on their understanding of the text as a revision of earlier Valentinian currents. Ismo Dunderberg has argued that since *TriTrac* portrays both knowledge of persecution as well as an ambivalence toward political power, it supports the dating of the text to 150–250, a time when relations between Christians and the Roman ruling elite was volatile and unstable.[88] Thomassen suggests a later dating, based on passages in the text that he argues revealed influences from Origen's thought, concluding that the text probably derived from the second half of the third century AD, rather than the first.[89] Thomassen has argued that *TriTrac* rejects the third-century notion that the Father was made up of a substance, and also points to linguistic evidence for a later dating via a suggested use of Origen's *Hexapla*. This dating is based on Thomassen's hypothetical reconstruction of the Greek behind the Coptic in 107:11–13, that states that the serpent was "more cunning than all the evil powers" (ⲟⲩⲡⲁⲛⲟⲩⲣ̣[ⲅⲟⲥ] ⲛ̄ⲇⲉ ⲇⲉ ⲛ̄ϩⲟⲩⲟ· ⲁⲛⲓϭⲁⲙ ⲧⲏⲣⲟⲩ ⲉ[ⲧ]ϩⲁⲩⲟⲩ). He argues that the Greek behind this Coptic sentence would not have matched the LXX version of Gen 3:1 (which has φρονιμώτατος rather than *TriTrac*'s πανούργος, as well as some of the other Genesis variants that Origen gave in *Hexapla*). There is no reason, however, that this cannot be a coincidence or that the version of Genesis that calls the serpent πανούργος was more common than we think, and not only available to Origen. Whatever the case, the premises of Thomassen's argument seem too weak to date *TriTrac*. The other two arguments Thomassen uses for dating the

84 Thomassen, *Le traité tripartite*, 13–20.
85 Attridge and Pagels, "The Tripartite Tractate", 177–178.
86 Puech and Quispel, "Le Quatrième".
87 Kasser et al., *Tractatus Tripartitus*, 70.
88 Dunderberg, *Beyond Gnosticism*, 171.
89 Thomassen, *Le traité tripartite*, 18–20.

text to the second half of the third century—theological content similar to that of Origen and the idea that the Father did not have a substance with him from which he created—can also be found during the first half of the third century, with Tertullian discussing the substance and advocating the same view we find in *TriTrac.*[90] Thus, while I agree with Thomassen that there are many similarities with Origen's thought, I do not think we can rule out the possibility that *TriTrac* derives from a Christian tradition that was contemporary with Origen in his time in Alexandria. In fact, as I argue in Chapter 3 and Part III, the existence of deterministic ideas among Christians in Alexandria, such as those reflected in *TriTrac*, would explain why Origen felt the need to include such a detailed discussion of the doctrine of free will in *On First Principles*, where he rejects notions we find in *TriTrac.* Of course, *TriTrac* could also have originated from Christians influenced by a similar view on anthropology as that found among Origen's opponents; certainly, this cannot be ruled out. Thomassen offers the date "250 or later" as an estimate suggestion,[91] but I will argue that it is older, at least by a few decades.

As we can see, many scholars who have worked closely with the text have approached it from an internal Valentinian discussion, even though a number of scholars, including Thomassen, have noticed similarities to Origen's theology.[92]

90 Tertullian, *Against Praxeas* 4, 26.

91 Thomassen, *Le traité tripartite*, 18–20.

92 The division of the Valentinian tradition into two different "schools" is explored in detail by Einar Thomassen in *Spiritual Seed*. For the similarities to Origen's thought in the beginning of *TriTrac*, see Alberto Camplani, "Per la cronologia dei testi valentiniani: il Trattato Tripartito e la crisi Ariana", *Cassiodorus* 1 (1995): 171–195; J.-D. Dubois, "Le Traité Tripartite (Nag Hammadi I, 5) est-il antérieure à Origène?" in *Origeniana Octava: Origen and the Alexandrian Tradition. Papers of the 8th International Origen Congress, Pisa, 27–31 August 2001*, eds. L. Perrone et al. (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2003), 303–316. Camplani arrives at a late dating, the second half of the fourth century, on account of what he sees as fourth-century theology affecting the text. For example, Camplani reads the expression we find in *TriTrac* that the Father is necessarily a Father because there is a Son, as representing the same language that is found, for example, in Athanasius. Camplani seems to take the perspective that *TriTrac* is an example of Valentinian theology made to fit orthodox theology, an attempt to reposition Valentinian theology in light of the trends that become prominent in the fourth century. As I have argued above, I will here move away from reading the text through the lens of internal Valentinian development. Furthermore, Camplani reads the anthropology in the text as a move *away* from determinism, while I argue in this study that *TriTrac* is a clear positioning *for* determinism, although one could of course imagine the determinist position in *TriTrac* being expressed even more clearly. For a critique of Camplani's position, see Dubois, "Le Traité Tripartite", 303–316. Dubois takes a similar perspective on *TriTrac* as Markschies has argued is the case for Valentinus, that the 'author' of *TriTrac* was a Platonizing interpreter of the Bible. Dubois writes that this author was active *before* Plotinus and argues that the text belongs to a particular

Arguments for dating the text have often come from viewing it in light of internal Valentinian 'developments'.[93] I am uncertain, however, in what way distinctions such as Eastern/Western (or Italic) Valentinianism—categories that have occupied much of the scholarship on this text's background—actually help us understand the context of *TriTrac* better. These categories might be helpful when comparing texts that have Valentinian traits on an abstract level, but I wonder if we have enough sources to reify actual theological 'schools' of thought or traditions, let alone currents of development from one system to another—especially considering the polemical background as well as the uncertainty of some of the attestations of the split in Valentinian traditions.[94]

Another common trend within the scholarship on *TriTrac* consists of investigating the relation between *TriTrac* and Middle Platonic and Neoplatonic systems. John Peter Kenney has suggested that the text was influenced by Middle Platonists like Numenius and Alcinous, who, like *TriTrac*, posited a creation

strand of Eastern Valentinianism. See, J.-D. Dubois, "La sotériologie valentinienne du Traité tripartite (NH I, 5)", in *Les Textes de Nag Hammadi et le problème de leur classification*, eds. L. Painchaud and A. Pasquier (Paris: Cerf, 1995), 221–232; and Dubois, "Le Traité Tripartite".

93 It has been suggested that *TriTrac* belongs to a variant of an early Western Valentinian 'monadic' theology described by Hippolytus (*Refutation of All Heresies* VI.29.2) and, thus, that the text is from the end of the second century. See Kasser et al., *Tractatus Tripartitus*, passim. Rather than treating *TriTrac* in its own right, the early work done on the text by Kasser et al., systematically views the story of the Logos' as the myth of Sophia. It has also been suggested, by Attridge and Pagels, that the theology in *TriTrac* represents an attempt to revise the traditional Valentinian myth to more orthodox views. See Attridge and Pagels, "The Tripartite Tractate", 177–178. Thomassen views the text as Eastern because it lacks the developed pleromatology of Western Valentinian theology while presenting the Savior as coming chiefly to save the pneumatics, rather than the psychics. Attridge and Pagels refute Thomassen's argument that the text is representative of Eastern Valentinian theology, and state that what might seem as Eastern tendencies are "survivals of original Valentinian positions, which were modified by some of the major Western Valentinians", Attridge and Pagels, "The Tripartite Tractate", 178, n29. These views on *TriTrac*'s relation to internal Valentinian developments must ultimately be viewed as conjecture. See also Pierre Létourneau, "Croyances et contraintes sociales: l'évolution du mouvement valentinien à la lumière du Traité tripartite (NH I,5) et du Dialogue du Sauveur (Nh III,5)", *Théologiques* 13 (2005): 79–94.

94 The category Eastern vs Western Valentinianism has been argued as being a polemical construction by theological opponents. See Joel Kalvesmaki, "Italian versus Eastern Valentinianism?", *Vigiliae Christianae* 62 (2008): 79–89. Kalvesmaki makes some important points which raise doubt as to the accuracy of the church fathers' portrayals of this distinction. For the opposite perspective, see Thomassen, *Spiritual Seed*, where a detailed development between what is called "type A" and "type B" forms of Valentinianism is presented.

scene in which the highest God's thoughts instigated creation.[95] Kenney, in line with previous early Christian scholars, approached the text from its relation to a grander narrative of Valentinian theology and suggested that the text's affinity with Middle Platonic cosmology resulted in a revised Valentinian creation myth wherein Sophia was replaced with the Logos.[96] *TriTrac*, Kenney suggested, derived from a late-second to early-third century philosophical context, perhaps Rome or Alexandria, and contributed to the critique that Plotinus would later level at 'Gnostics'.[97]

Recently Francesco Berno has written that:

> [The] Author [of *TriTrac*] wants to gain favor in the eyes of the contemporary pagan culture: indeed, the battle against the Great Church had been lost for a long time. Clearly, it does not weaken the deeply Christian nature of the text, which aims to restructure Valentinian theologumena, making them pleasing to a reader used to (neo) Platonic literature.[98]

This comes close to the way Pheme Perkins has viewed the text, as a Valentinian recruitment pamphlet directed at pagans.[99] Yet I am also hesitant about this way of approaching the text, which seems to juxtapose, in too firm a way, 'Valentinians' and 'the Great Church' (whatever that is in the third century). The kinship to Platonism are clear, but the use of ancient philosophy does not end there—as becomes clear further on in the present study. Still, rather than going as far as proposing that this reflects attempts to convert pagans, it could merely be an indication of how ancient Christian theologians operated, many of whom were engaged in an intellectual enterprise that in the third century was, more often than not, conducted in close proximity to, and in the language of, ancient philosophy.

95 Kenney points out other similarities, for example the "non-demiurgic forms of production". Kenney, "The Platonism", 202.

96 Kenney, "The Platonism", 202.

97 Kenney, "The Platonism", 203.

98 Francesco Berno, "Rethinking Valentinianism: Some Remarks on the *Tripartite Tractate* with Special Reference to Plotinus' *Enneads* II, 9", *Augustinianum* 56 (2016): 342, n33.

99 Perkins, "Logos", 388. Perkins has discussed 'Gnostics' in a value-laden way, presenting them (homogenously) in an unappealing light, as "irrational" and deriving from "absurd premises" (the latter referring to a number of speculations). See Pheme Perkins, "Beauty, Number, and Loss of Order in the Gnostic Cosmos", in *Neoplatonism and Gnosticism*, ed. Richard T. Wallis (New York: State University of New York Press, 1992), 279.

Most scholarly work on *TriTrac* is devoted to the text's hypothetical original context but this approach raises some problems that should be considered.[100] There are important considerations that must be made when working with texts that have undergone translation and copying, producing alterations in transmission which probably affected *TriTrac*, perhaps several times. The transformation a text might undergo due to translation from one language to another is apparent—errors unavoidably occur and some things may be lost in translation—and there are also problems attached to copying.[101] That being said, a skilled copyist who could copy a work without errors was in high demand in antiquity, which reflects the desire when copying of staying as close to the original as possible.[102]

100 See, for example, Hugo Lundhaug and Liv Ingeborg Lied, "Studying Snapshots: On Manuscript Culture, Textual Fluidity, and New Philology", as well as Hugo Lundhaug, "An Illusion of Textual Stability: Textual Fluidity, New Philology, and the Nag Hammadi Codices", both in *Snapshots of Evolving Traditions: Jewish and Christian Manuscript Culture, Textual Fluidity, and New Philology*, eds. Liv Ingeborg Lied and Hugo Lundhaug (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2017), 1–19, 20–54.

101 An illustrative example concerns the way one views the texts in the Bible. Let us take as an example the text that is most often considered to be the earliest gospel in the New Testament, the Gospel of Mark. Many Mark-scholars consider this text to have been written around the years 66–70. See James G. Crossley, *The Date of Mark's Gospel: Insight from the Law in Earliest Christianity* (London and New York: T&T Clark, 2004). It was then spread among Christians, and the way this was done was through copying, one letter, one word, one page at a time. Mistakes were unavoidable (none of the different copies of any ancient text we have is identical to another). Once a copy was made it was then copied by others who wanted the text, who in turn lent it out for further copying: copies were copied and copies of copies were copied, and so on. The earliest manuscript of the Gospel of Mark is from around the year 200, i.e. around 130 years after the time the text is typically dated. But in light of the points concerning ancient copying, to what extent can the Gospel of Mark from the year 200, which includes mistakes and attempts at corrections and sometimes clarifications from 150 years of copying, be said to be the Gospel of Mark written in the second half of the first century? This is a problem we face with more or less every text of the ancient world. For more, see Bart Ehrman, *Misquoting Jesus: The Story Behind Who Changed the Bible and Why* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 2005). I do not suggest that this methodological problem implies that texts that were copied at a certain date cannot be used as sources for earlier periods; that would be extreme and would, for example, negate the possibility of speaking of many of Plato's and Aristotle's works before the middle ages. Rather, we should be aware of this difficulty and remember that the ancient texts that we read are not unproblematic mirrors of the time they are thought to have been first written down, and we should remain open to the possibility that texts have been subjected to emendation in later periods, or at the very least recognize that the meaning conveyed by, and the use of, a text (even while remaining much the same) may have changed considerably.

102 L. D. Reynolds and N. G. Wilson, *Scribes and Scholars: A Guide to the Transmission of Greek and Latin Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 23–24.

It is, nevertheless, possible that *TriTrac* underwent intentional redaction, a concern for most of the Nag Hammadi-texts. It is very hard to establish the 'original' text and its context with any certainty. Still, the present study is not limited to investigating its fourth-century context; I also treat *TriTrac* as a separate text that makes sense on its own, not only as a part of the collection where it is now found. The chronological window which this study addresses stretches from 200–400 CE, a span of time based on several factors. The manuscript has been carbon dated to the fourth century.[103] The Coptic is in all likelihood based on a Greek *Vorlage*. The Valentinian theology in *TriTrac* is indeed unique, but parts of it are reminiscent of the interest shown in questions that also interested second-century Middle Platonists like Numenius and Alcinous, and later Neoplatonists like Plotinus, while other parts resemble a theology close to Origen of Alexandria. In fact—as I argue in Chapter 3—there are details in *TriTrac* that fit well with the views of Origen's opponents (identified as Valentinians) in *On First Principles*, a work thought to have been composed in Alexandria shortly before Origen left for Caesarea around the year 231.[104] The Christian school milieu of third-century Alexandria—as I suggest in Chapter 5—is also a good match with *TriTrac*. This, together with the fact that Codex I can be dated to the fourth century, gives us a fairly narrow context in which to conduct the present study, a span of approximately 200 years, from the first decades of the third century (or slightly before) to the second half of the fourth century CE.[105]

Most evidence, as I have argued above, points to the text's being copied by monks but many have rejected this scenario. Why would late-fourth or

103 Codex VII, which was copied by a scribe also associated with the scribal team behind Codex I, had documentary papyri (contracts) inside the cover dated to 346 and 348. These dates do not fix the codices to this time, necessarily, the papyri in the cover of Codex VII might have been older. For more, see Lundhaug and Jenott, *Monastic Origins*, 9–11, 104–144.

104 See the introduction to the translation of *On First Principles* by G. W. Butterworth, *Origen: On First Principles* (Notre Dame: Christian Classics, 2013), xxxix–xliii. By looking at references in *On First Principles* to Origen's own works, and from cross-referencing with Eusebius' chronology of some of Origen's works (unfortunately not *On First Principles*), Butterworth shows, convincingly in my opinion, that *On First Principles* was likely written in Alexandria sometime between 219–231. See also John Behr, *Origen: On First Principles* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), xvii. For a similar dating but a critique of Butterworth's translation, and a thorough discussion of the sources for *On First Principles*, see Behr, *Origen*, xv–xxviii.

105 It can appear as if I support my narrowing of the contextual field of my study with the aid of findings that the study has yet to produce. However, as I arrived at my own demarcation, I was guided by previous studies by Attridge and Pagels (dating it to the beginning of the third century) and Thomassen (dating it to the second half of the third century).

early-fifth-century monks be interested in a text that reflected earlier theology, and 'heterodox' Valentinian theology at that? The answer to this is probably that third-century theology was not out of fashion at the time, on the contrary.[106] Furthermore, as pointed out earlier, one does not have to agree with everything in a work to find it valuable, interesting, or even edifying. Origen's writings were hotly debated in the fourth century.[107] Those interested in this debate, or just fascinated by Origen's theology, would undoubtedly have found *TriTrac* interesting as well. In fact, as I argue in several chapters in this study and as has been pointed out by previous scholars, what we find in *TriTrac* often comes close to Origen's own thought, not just that of the opponents Origen addresses. This is not a contradiction because, as is often the case, it is those one resembles the most—those with whom one risks becoming identified—whom it is most urgent to reject by clarifying where differences exist.[108]

TriTrac is a text that can be understood as representing views held by Valentinians Origen rejected (like belief in a demiurge and a tripartite anthropology), but the text also shares many of the doctrines that are very closely associated with Origen in the Origenist debates of the fourth century: for example (1) support of a non-bodily resurrection; (2) the doctrine that human souls existed before they came down into the body; (3) the doctrine of *apokatastasis*.[109] *TriTrac* would have been of interest not only for those drawn to Valentinian theology, but for anyone interested in Origen's theology and, as I argue further in Part 1 below, philosophical debates over the workings of the mind in the first few centuries. Furthermore, if *TriTrac* was identified as containing material by Origen's opponents, it would without a doubt have been of interest for the actors involved in the Origenist debates, particularly on the side that came to Origen's defense, who copied and read (or thought they did,

106 See for example, Jon Frederick Dechow, *Dogma and Mysticism in Early Christianity* (Macon, G.A.: Mercer University Press, 1988); Elizabeth A. Clark, *The Origenist Controversy: The Cultural Construction of an Early Christian Debate* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992).

107 See Hugo Lundhaug, "Origenism in Fifth-Century Upper Egypt: Shenoute of Atripe and the Nag Hammadi Codices", *Studia Patristica LXIV: Papers Presented at the Sixteenth International Conference on Patristic Studies Held in Oxford 2011*, ed. Markus Vinzent (Leuven: Peeters, 2013), 217–228.

108 Marilynn B. Brewer has pointed out that in the pursuit of effective identity-formation there is an equal need for the group/individual to be similar to those within the group (extended group) and different from those outside the group (other groups). Marilynn B. Brewer, "The Social Self: On Being the Same and Different at the Same Time", *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin* 17 (1991): 475–482.

109 For more on the Origenist controversy see Clark, *Origenist Controversy*.

at least) tractates between Origen and his Valentinian opponents.[110] In the concluding chapter, I return to the questions of the *Sitz im Leben* of *TriTrac*.

Having outlined preliminary considerations concerning *TriTrac*, it is timely to discuss the topic of this book: early Christian ethics and determinism.

5 Early Christian Ethics and the Bad Reputation of Determinism

Ethics deals with right and wrong conduct, or rather the theories, structures, and nature of what makes right right and wrong wrong. I will mainly use the term ethics, rather than morality, because I take ethics to mean the theory behind what makes an action moral or a-moral: the structure of moral actions or values rather than the actions or values themselves. As Wayne Meeks put it in his study of the origins of Christian morality, ethics is a "reflective, second-order activity: it is morals rendered self-conscious".[111] Thus, I will focus on the structures behind the morality presented in *TriTrac*: not so much on which actions or values are counted as moral; rather, the mechanism that supports them.

How did Christians, and people in general around the Mediterranean world, convey their ethical convictions? One way that this was done—which allows us to study ancient time in some detail—was through the writing of texts of different kinds. There were many ways of expressing hortatory statements in written form. The most obvious are perhaps lists of 'dos and don'ts', catalogues of virtues and vices, letters of admonition like Paul's epistles or more detailed and complex expositions devoted specifically to ethics, like Clement of Alexandrian's *Paedagogus*, or testaments and *vitae* of different kind depicting the lives of saints for the purpose of imitation.[112]

So, what kind of paraenesis do we find in *TriTrac*? Philip Tite, in his book *Valentinian Ethics*, has stated that *TriTrac* "is replete with moral discourse" and an "excellent example of Valentinian work that is very concerned over moral discourse without being hortorary in nature".[113] It is unfortunate that Tite does not pay much attention to *TriTrac* in his book, especially since he devotes a whole chapter to the relations between Valentinian texts and different

110 I discuss this further in Chapter 3 when delving into the relation between *TriTrac*, Origen, and his immediate readers and commentators.

111 Wayne A. Meeks, *The Origins of Christian Morality: The First Two Centuries* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 4.

112 For a discussion of textual hortatory genres, see Meeks, *Origins*, 66–90; and Tite, *Valentinian Ethics*, 135–184.

113 Tite, *Valentinian Ethics*, 184, n84.

ancient paraenetic literary genres. Tite identifies four different literary aspects of Greco-Roman paraenesis in Valentinian material while not discussing *TriTrac* specifically: imperative/prescriptive discourse; moral *exempla*; virtue/vice lists; and Two-Way Schemas (literary contrasts between right and wrong, expressed in different topics). These literary tropes can, I would argue, be found in *TriTrac* as well.

The bulk of *TriTrac* is made up of the elaborate creation myth and the nature of the heavens, cosmos, and God (51–108). The lists of powers associated with different positive and negative attributes discussed in this part of the text could very well be understood as a kind of literary paraenesis similar to lists of virtues and vices one can find among philosophers and Stoics, as well as the New Testament writings. This is explored in detail in Chapter 2 from the perspective of the ancient theory of passions. A Two-Way Schema can be found in the contrast between what happens "according to the will of God" and what is "not according to the will of God"—the nature of which is discussed in Chapter 3 where I examine the way *TriTrac* tackles the question of free will. We do find, I argue, admonitions (and thus an imperative-type of trope, of sorts) in *TriTrac* that psychics should emulate the behavior of the pneumatics, a kind of *exampla*-type of literary paraenesis. What this means is explored in Chapter 5, which focuses on the nature of the community structure in the text and the relation between the image of church and school. There are other interesting literary paraenetic tropes that Tite does not discuss in his book that also can be found in *TriTrac*. One such trope, common especially among Jews inspired by Middle Platonism and Hermetism, was the popular way of approaching the question of how people should behave and live in the world from the perspective of seeing the cosmos as a reflection—granted, a lower and flawed reflection—of the heavens. This is also a topic addressed in Chapter 5, where I explore how *TriTrac* models the ideal social structure among humans on earth on the description of relations between the heavenly beings in the Pleroma. One paraenetic trope Tite does not find in Valentinian material is the household codes, instructions to members of a household to be submissive toward their superiors. It is true, no obvious household codes are found in *TriTrac*, such as those in Eph 5:22–6:9, yet the Logos' creation is often likened to a household (οἰκονομία) and there are also other hierarchical structures that are used as models for the paraenetics in the text: that of a school, for example. This paraenetic trope is also explored in Chapter 5. I am sure that if one searched, one could find more similarities between *TriTrac* and the literary styles that Christians, Jews, and pagans used to express their ethical admonitions. As Tite argues, Valentinian texts, as with other Christian texts, employ the literary tropes found in their Greco-Roman context. However, I do not use

the concept "Valentinian paraenesis", as Tite does, in order to avoid suggesting that Valentinian texts in general reflect the same ethics.[114] I do not see any convincing evidence for this and restrict the term 'Valentinian' to theological and mythological motifs—chiefly protological—as discussed above.

Much has been written on the topic of early Christian ethics; however, some perspectives are still lacking. One pertains to the serious study of 'heterodox' Christian ethics.[115] Tite's study is one of few exceptions, but even before the paradigm shift that came to question the Christian-Gnostic dichotomy, Michel Desjardins published his groundbreaking book *Sin in Valentinianism*, a work that took seriously the ethical pursuits of 'Gnostics'.[116] For a long time 'Gnostics', and particularly Valentinians, were thought to lack an interest in ethics, an idea that was the result of reading the church fathers uncritically.[117] The 'othering' of those with whom one does not agree is surely as old as humanity itself. The phenomenon of accusing the 'other' of lacking ethics while presenting oneself

114 It is somewhat unfortunate that Tite uses this concept so frequently, because it would seem that it is working against the aim of his study: to get the Valentinian material included in studies of early Christianity and to lessen the apparent gap between Valentinians and 'mainstream' Christianity (Tite, *Valentinian Ethics*, 314–316).

115 There are of course exceptions, but these often follow portrayal of Gnostics as either ascetics or libertines, perspectives that in light of Williams' work are problematic. One classic study on the topic of 'Gnostic' ethics is Edwin Yamauchi, *Gnostic Ethics and Mandaean Origins* (Cambridge, M.A.: Harvard University Press, 1970). Yamauchi develops Hans Jonas' distinction of ascetic and libertine ethics. Hans Jonas, *Gnosis und spätantiker Geist, l: Die mythologische Gnosis, mit einer Einleitung zur Geschichte und Methodologie der Forschung* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1964). Yamauchi recognizes that some gnostic material seems to discuss marriage as a positive thing, and thus does not fit into the two categories of gnostic ethics, where sex was either viewed as free or rejected. Nevertheless, this is seen as an exception, and not as evidence that there is anything wrong with the categories. A more recent work exploring 'Gnostic' ethics, is Emmanouela Grypeou, *Das vollkommene Pascha: Gnostische Bibelexegese und gnostische Ethik* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2005), in which Grypeou argues that a particular ethics developed among people in antiquity who were dualists and who rejected the creator god and his laws, the result being that "ein genügsamer Lebenswandel und eine Absage an weltlichen Bindungen wird oft vorausgesetzt" (Grypeou, *Das vollkommene Pascha*, 275).

116 See also Desjardins, *Sin in Valentinianism.*

117 On example is Henry Chadwick, "The Domestication of Gnosis", in *The Rediscovery of Gnosticism.* vol. 1, ed. Bentley Layton (Leiden: Brill, 1981), 3–16. Here Chadwick argues that there is so much heresiological evidence of libertine and sexual behavior that it is likely that 'Gnostic' groups did indeed engage in the acts that the church fathers say they did. As Dunderberg has noted, Chadwick does not discuss the fact that these are hostile sources. See Dunderberg, *Gnostic Morality*, 12–13. In fact, many of the same accusations the church fathers directed at 'Gnostics' were in fact directed against Christians in general by earlier Roman authors. See Bart Wagemaker, "Incest, Infanticide, and Cannibalism: Anti-Christian Imputations in the Roman Empire", *Greece & Rome* 57:2 (2010): 337–354.

as in possession of the keys to righteous behavior is undoubtedly closely associated with identity formation.

Umberto Eco has written a thought-provoking essay called "Inventing the Enemy" where he expands on the need to have someone to be defined against when building one's own identity and narrative of self. "Having an enemy", he writes, "is important not only to define our identity but also to provide us with an obstacle against which to measure our system of values and, in seeking to overcome it, to demonstrate our own worth".[118] Eco argues that the need for an enemy is second nature to humans, reminding us of Jean-Paul Sartre's concept of the "gaze of the other" as fundamental for becoming self-aware in the first place.[119] Eco also points out that the image of the enemy can easily be shifted from a person to a social or natural force, like communism, capitalism, poverty, or global warming,[120] and I might add: why not Gnosticism? Gnosticism, as Karen King has shown, has been used as an umbrella term for heresy in many shapes, and the heretic, as Carlo Ginzburg has pointed out in his work *Ecstasies: Deciphering the Witches' Sabbath*, is a historically popular archetypal 'other', along with, for example, Jews, Saracens, and lepers (often identified with each other).[121]

Nevertheless, a distinction has still been made in studies of Christian ethics, between the ethics of Christians on the one side, and that of 'heretics'—specifically of Gnostic ethics—on the other.[122] In this study, I do not make such a distinction, one ultimately based on apologetic assumptions. I am not claiming that there are no differences in the ethical outlook of some of those who are later placed in the category of 'the church fathers', and that of the different Christians they opposed, but neither do I presuppose that the differences are greater than those one can find among some of the different church fathers—who often get to represent orthodoxy as if it were *one* thing. Intra-Christian debates over the 'in-group's' ethics and the 'out-group's' lack of morality should be critically assessed in light of what they fundamentally represent: identity constructing techniques. Thus, we should avoid reifying theological alliances that did not exist. Compare, for example, Origen with Irenaeus—both using the

118 Umberto Eco, *Inventing the Enemy* (Boston and New York: Mariner Books, 2013), 2.

119 However, 'the other', for Sartre, is not necessarily something hostile. Jean-Paul Sartre, *Being and Nothingness: An Essay on Phenomenological Ontology* (London: Routledge, 2003), III.1.

120 Eco, *Inventing the Enemy*, 17–18.

121 Carlo Ginzburg, *Ecstasies: Deciphering the Witches' Sabbath* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004).

122 Just to give one example, see Eric Osborn, *Ethical Patterns in Early Christian Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), 46–49; see also Yamauchi, *Gnostic Ethics*.

doctrine of free will for their argument of how best to live and approach the message of Jesus (which also differs greatly), meanwhile harboring completely different worldviews and outlooks on what free will actually was and how it came to be in the possession of humans.[123] Another example is Clement of Alexandria's distinction between the Gnostic Christian (an intellectual expert of sorts) and ordinary Christians: a distinction that sounds very similar to Irenaeus' description of some Valentinians who saw a distinction between pneumatics and psychics. Nevertheless, Clement (and other 'proto-orthodox' Christians) and Valentinus (as well as his followers) have been represented as holding completely opposing views on anthropology and ethics.

One recent example of the problems that the dichotomy Gnostic-Christian can cause for the view of early Christian ethics can be seen in George Karamanolis' book *The Philosophy of Early Christianity*. Here Karamanolis draws a picture of a unified 'Gnostic' view (which Valentinus gets to represent—although Karamanolis does not actually use any fragments of Valentinus in drawing up his view), against which the church fathers defended themselves. The 'Gnostic' view was deterministic, Karamanolis argues, in the sense that it devalued life lived in the possession of free will (the psychic peoples' fate) in favor of knowledge and predetermined salvation (the pneumatic people).[124] There are several problems with this depiction of early Christian ethics and philosophy. First, the employment of the term Gnostic in opposition to Christian is problematic, an issue which I have already addressed. Another problem is the way Valentinus' 'deterministic' view is presented—that is, without proper access to the sources, but rather through the very limited hearsay of Irenaeus. Furthermore, the determinism portrayed here does not deny free will at all, but only restricts it to some humans.

The latest example of this habit, of placing Christians (those who stand for free will) against Gnostics (who deny it), we find in Kyle Harper's work on early Christian sexuality.[125] Harper argues, correctly in my opinion, that early Christians should be taken as serious contenders in the debates on human volition, not only as would-be philosophers who delude advanced views on cognition and the human psyche in an attempt to forward their religious preferences. The study Harper presents, however, only takes serious some Christian

123 This will be discussed in detail in Chapter 3.

124 Karamanolis, *Philosophy*, 147–150. Karamanolis is not alone in presenting the 'Gnostics' as holding *a single* ethical outlook. For more, see Chapter 3 in the present study.

125 Although it remains unclear what he means by the term "Gnostic", and why Sethians "deserve" the term, while Valentinians do not. Harper, *From Shame to Sin*, 119. Harper presents Valentinian anthropology as fluid.

views, namely those associated with proto-orthodoxy,[126] and thus seems to suggest—erroneously—that the doctrine of free will was something that all Christians just universally accepted without any serious debate.

There is indeed the need of a study devoted to the nature of Christian determinism, one that also takes serious the ethics of a text belonging to a tradition similar to those Christians Irenaeus and Origen attack, while at the same time treating such Christians as part of intra-Christian discourse, not only as outsiders that 'the mainstream Church' defined itself against and 'progressed' away from.

In his book *Rethinking Gnosticism*, Michael A. Williams has tackled the erroneous representation of Gnosticism as a 'deterministic elitism'.[127] Williams has rejected previous scholars' presentations, such as those by Karl-Wolfgang Tröger, Henry Green, and Giovanni Filoramo, who based their views of 'Gnostic' anthropology and soteriology on the church fathers' formulations and, as Williams saw it, presented a too "rigidly deterministic understanding of humankind".[128] Williams rightly pointed out that not all those groups and texts lumped together as 'Gnostic' could be said to represent a deterministic worldview, and they certainly did not result in either 'libertine' or 'ascetic' morality, which was the older paradigm of scholars such as Hans Jonas.[129] However,

126 Harper, *From Shame to Sin*, 120–122. I am, however, not convinced of Harper's insinuation that the Roman Stoics interest in the question of free will was a reaction to Christian writers. Harper tones down the influence of Stoicism on the Christian view of free will. In my view the influence from Stoicism is undeniable, and Harper even cites the best example: Clement of Alexandria (as an exception), which makes Harper's position even more unexpected. The reason that Stoics are rejected in name by some early Christians who forwarded the idea of free will, like Justin, is perhaps because of the same reasons some Christians felt the need to disassociate themselves from heretics: from the outside they looked very much alike. Looking closer, there are of course fundamental differences between the view that all humans have free will and the Stoic view that only the sage has free will. The reason why, I believe, Origen is most often counted as the originator of the first really developed case from a Christian for free will (a position Harper rejects), is because he tackled the question from within the cognitive and anthropological discourse of the time, i.e. that which was chiefly developed by Stoics. Justin did not treat the question in the same way, and Clement did not discuss free will at any length, even though he accepted the premises.

127 Williams, *Rethinking*, 189–212.

128 Williams, *Rethinking*, 189–190; Henry A. Green, *The Economic and Social Origins of Gnosticism* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1985); Karl-Wolfgang Tröger, "Die gnostische Anthropologie", *Kairos* 23 (1981): 31–42; Giovanni Filoramo, *A History of Gnosticism* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1990).

129 Jonas, *Gnosis und spätantiker Geist*. Jonas deserves credit, however, for being one of the first scholars who thought that these texts deserve to be studied in their own right, and not just for what they could tell us about the development of orthodoxy.

merely because of the deficiencies in the previous use of the term 'Gnosticism' and the church fathers' erroneous use of determinism as a disclaimer for ethics, it does not mean that there *were* no determinist positions in ancient times nor that these determinist positions were not effective in presenting a viable ethical system. Indeed, as Williams himself writes, and as earlier scholars such as Kurt Rudolph had already recognized, there seem to have been systems that were deterministic and at the same time interested in ethics.[130] In fact, Williams uses *TriTrac* as an example that could be understood as complying with what Irenaeus portrayed as determinism.[131] Unfortunately, Williams never discusses *TriTrac* in any detail, nor does he explain how the determinism could have sustained an ethical system; he is more interested in refuting the idea that the determinism that the heresiologists described appears in all those texts and groups that have been called 'Gnostic'.

In spite of Williams' nuanced work, one still finds in scholarship the idea that determinism was one of the errors pertaining to the wrongful use of the term Gnosticism and that it was just invented by the church fathers.[132] This is, I argue, a misconception that is most likely due to the fact that what such Christian determinism would have looked like and how it would have worked in practice still remains rather unexplored.

What has been recognized and studied recently is the great interest in fate and providence among early Christians.[133] As is discussed further in Chapter 2 and 3, some Christians spent considerable effort, like Middle Platonists, reconciling the idea of God's providence and human will. If God was omnipotent and had created humans, was it really up to humans to choose their fate? The way some Middle Platonists solved this question was by proposing a division between fate and providence. Fate ruled the sublunary sphere and providence

130 Williams, *Rethinking*, 201; Kurt Rudolph, *Gnosis: The Nature & History of Gnosticism* (San Francisco: HarperOne, 1987), 117–118.

131 Williams, *Rethinking*, 190.

132 See, for example, Roig Lanzillotta, "A Way of Salvation"; Denzey Lewis, *Cosmology and Fate*, 27 who adopts Winrich Alfried Löhr's argument that determinism was a heresiologist invention, in Winrich Alfried Löhr, "Gnostic Determinism Reconsidered", *Vigiliae Christanae* 46 (1992): 381–390. It is possible, as Löhr writes, that Irenaeus and others did not have access to the relevant material; however, *TriTrac* would fit with what Origen writes in *On First Principles*, so we are dealing with caricatures, rather than inventions by the heresiologists.

133 See, for example, Michael A. Williams, "Higher Providence, Lower Providence and Fate in Gnosticism and Middle Platonism", in *Neoplatonism and Gnosticism*, ed. R. T. Wallis (Albany: New York State University Press, 1992), 483–507; and the more detailed study by Denzey Lewis, *Cosmology and Fate*; see also Karl W. Giberson, ed., *Adam's Dice: Chance and Providence in the Monotheistic Traditions* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016).

ruled above fate.[134] Even though humans could not control the mechanisms that fate controlled, such as that which guided conditionality (that action A unavoidably leads to result B), providence made sure that humans retained the freedom to choose their own actions and that they thus were ultimately responsible for their own destiny. We see a lot of interest in the realm of fate and providence in early Christian writings, and some seem to have been inspired by Middle Platonic discussions on the negotiation between human choice and fate/providence, especially among many texts that have been labeled 'Gnostic'.[135] Thus, as Williams and others have pointed out, a belief in fate and the power of God's providence did not necessarily negate the importance of human choice.[136] Humans were endowed by the providential will of God with a free will and thus humans were not slaves to fate. These Middle Platonic and Christian negotiations differed from Stoic deterministic systems. As Susanne Bobzien and others have pointed out, the accusation of determinism was sometimes used as a polemical slander,[137] applied by Middle Platonic writers in order to discredit their Stoic opponents.[138] Winrich Löhr and Nicola Denzey Lewis, among others, have also argued that these accusations of determinism were reused by some Christians to discredit other Christians.[139]

However, I argue that what was used as a polemical slander was the *caricature* of determinism: the thought that human will, attitude, or choice was irrelevant, non-existent, thereby leading to a disinterest in ethics. One is hard pressed to find any system in antiquity based on such views, although this does not negate the fact that there *were* determinists, material determinists such as Stoics, for example, who thought that divine fate permeated and decided

134 For more on fate, free will, and Middle Platonism, see John Dillon, *The Middle Platonists: 80 B.C. to A.D. 220* (London: Duckworth, 1977), 84–88, 166–168, 208–211, 294–298, 320–326; John Dillon, "Plutarch and Second Century Platonism", in *Classical Mediterranean Spirituality: Egyptian, Greek, Roman*, ed. Arthur Hilary Armstrong (New York: Crossroad, 1987), 214–229; George Boys-Stones, "'Middle' Platonists on Fate and Human Autonomy", *Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies.* Supplement 94 (2007): 431–447.

135 See for example *ApJohn*, in Zlatko Pleše, "Fate, Providence and Astrology in Gnosticism (1): *The Apocryphon of John*", *MHNH: Revista Internacional de Investigación sobre Magia y Astrología Antiguas* 7 (2007): 237–268; and on *OnOrigWorld*, in Pheme Perkins, "*On the Origin of the World* (CG II, 5): A Gnostic Physics", *Vigiliae Christianae* 34 (1980): 36–46.

136 Williams, *Rethinking*, 202–203.

137 Bobzien, *Determinism*; Denzey Lewis, *Cosmology and Fate*, 89–90.

138 See for example Plutarch, *On Stoic Self-contradictions* 46.1055.

139 Denzey Lewis, *Cosmology and Fate*, 27; Löhr, "Gnostic Determinism"; see also Gerard P. Luttikhuizen, *Gnostic Revisions of Genesis Stories and Early Jesus Traditions* (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 83–86; Alexander Kocar, "In Heaven as It Is on Earth: The Social and Ethical Dimensions of Higher and Lower Levels of Salvation" (PhD diss., Princeton, 2016), 246.

all things.[140] It is true, Stoics did not negate the existence and importance of human choice, but despite viewing the world as causally determined, with the events of a life course already decided; these two concepts were compatible, according to Stoics.[141] Human choice was real; although very limited and restricted to a small area of the mind, it could be trained and cultivated. Some Stoics even maintained that free will *was* possible to attain, but that only a select group of people, the sages, ever got that far. This notion of free will is very different from the notion of free will that was to take shape among many Christians. A person who possessed a completely free will, Stoics maintained, would *always* do good and act in perfect alignment with the divine Logos. Defined in this way, it was obvious that most people did not have free will. Thus, many Stoics viewed free will in a very particular way, and I argue that this is reflected in *TriTrac* but rejected by other Christians, such as Origen of Alexandria. Origen, and predecessors like Irenaeus, instead viewed free will as an ability bestowed upon all humans, one that enabled all humans to choose between good or evil at all times. Origen even went so far as to state that the very definition of humanity was their use and possession of free will.[142] Nevertheless, there were, as I argue in detail in Chapter 3, Christians who rejected this view of free will, and instead adopted views reminiscent of Stoic positions on human choice, even going further, in some cases, to deny free will for humans altogether. It is possible, as Winrich Löhr has argued, that the church fathers did not have access to all relevant material when labeling Valentinians as determinists. Nevertheless, in light of what we find in *TriTrac*, we cannot conclude, like Denzey Lewis, Löhr, and others, that the church fathers *invented* the position of Christian determinism.[143]

Early Christian determinism has either been presented as 'Gnostic' and then not taken seriously, or it has been disregarded as belonging to the inventions of polemics. One of the chief aims of this study, apart from approaching a more nuanced understanding of the nature of *TriTrac*'s ethics, is to restore awareness of theories maintaining that human choice was limited and to show their importance to early Christian discourses of ethics. Before approaching discussions of how a person *should* conduct his or her life, however, it is useful to explore what people were actually thought to be able to do, and not do, in the first place. How was the human mind thought to work? How did the mind

140 This is the topic of Bobzien, *Determinism*, a work devoted to explaining the workings of Stoic notions of causal determinism and its relation to human choice.

141 For a discussion of Stoic compatibilism, see Bobzien, *Determinism*, 234–324.

142 Origen, *On First Principles* preface 4–5.

143 Denzey Lewis, *Cosmology and Fate*, 27; Löhr, "Gnostic Determinism"; see also Roig Lanzillotta, "A Way of Salvation"; Luttikhuizen, *Gnostic Revisions*, 83–86.

relate to the body? How did sensory experience work and relate to human behavior? To what extent were humans affected by outside influence or coercion? These are fundamental questions when exploring how a person *could* act and I will argue that they were important to how ancients developed theories for how a person *should* act. Thus, in this study, it is my aim to connect these two fields: practical lived ethics (morality) and the theoretical foundations for ethical discussions in subjects like cognitive theory, epistemology, and physics. This dynamic is not always acknowledged in studies of early Christian ethics.

6 Notes on Translation and Transcription

The translation of *TriTrac* in the present study as well as the Coptic transcription is Attridge and Pagels', as it appears in *The Coptic Gnostic Library: Nag Hammadi Codex I* (edited by Harold W. Attridge. Leiden: Brill, 1985). Modifications to this translation are noted. When offering a translation which differs in a significant way from Attridge and Pagels', or when I favor some other translation, this is discussed in the note.[144] When rendering the Coptic, I have chosen to leave out the markings that indicate if a letter or word has been added by the scribe or a later redactor above or next to the line in the manuscript. In all other cases, the sigla used follows that adopted by the editors of *The Coptic Gnostic Library*.[145]

144 Chiefly Nagel, *Der Tractatus Tripartitus*; or Thomassen, *Le traité tripartite*; or Thomassen in Meyer, *Nag Hammadi*. I have also consulted the facsimile of Codex I and at times offer slightly modified lacuna suggestions. James Robinson, ed., *The Facsimile Edition of the Nag Hammadi Codices: Codex I* (Leiden: Brill, 1977).

145 The raised dot (ⲁ·), which appears frequently in the manuscript, indicates places where the copyist has felt the need to clarify where one word ends and the next begins. A dot under a letter (ⲁ̣) indicates that it is partly in a lacuna or that the ink is faded. A dot on the line next to brackets (for example [ⲁ]. or .[ⲁ]) indicates that there are residues of a letter in the manuscript but that the exact letter is uncertain. Square brackets, [ⲁ], indicate lacunas in the manuscript where there most likely existed text. The number of dots in the bracket indicates the size of the lacuna; each dot representing one letter. The brackets in the translation indicate whole words added from lacunas. Braces, {ⲁ}, indicate unnecessary words added by the scribe. When citing short sentences in the body I have left out the unnecessary words, to make the text more reader friendly. In the notes, for transparencies sake, all words have been left in, even those the scribe put there by accident. Pointed brackets in the transcription, <ⲁ>, indicate editorial corrections of words or letters that the scribe has omitted. In the translation, the pointed brackets indicate words that have been added. Parentheses in the transcription indicate scribal abbreviations that have been editorially explicated. In the translation, they indicate material supplied by me for the sake of clarity.

PART 1

Theoretical Framework for Ethics

CHAPTER 1

The Ontological and Epistemological Foundations for Ethics

The ambiguity of the modern concept Gnosticism has rendered the term problematic to use in detailed studies into ancient Christianity. However, the importance of the concept *gnosis* in ancient religion and philosophy should not be underappreciated on account of previous erroneous terminological concerns. Knowledge was equal both to godliness and virtue among many, Christians, Jews, and pagans alike.[1] Epistemology and ethics were intimately intertwined in ancient thought. A knowledgeable person was a virtuous person. In *TriTrac*, knowledge of God is equal to salvation (55:27–40, 126:9–27), bringing joy and delight (123:4–10). This is in line with what Plato maintained, that knowledge of the self equaled knowledge of God, and God was good. Many followed suit, like Plotinus who argued that contemplation of one's *nous* was equal to contemplating God since they were one and the same.[2] Stoics maintained that becoming a virtuous person entailed being totally integrated with the divine Logos, which permeated the world. Thus, quite understandably, ontology and ethics were intimately linked. As one Stoic is said to have put it: "physical speculation is to be adopted for no other purpose than for the differentiation of good and bad things".[3] However, ontology, or 'the science of being', was not at all unimportant for 'dualists' either. In this chapter, we explore how knowledge

1 The importance of the concept of *gnosis* has certainly not been neglected by previous scholarship. See for example Jonas, *Gnosis und spätantiker Geist*; Rudolph, *Gnosis*. A problem with early studies into the way *gnosis* was conceptualized in antiquity is the harmonization of different texts and groups and the reifying of 'Gnostics' and a 'Gnostic religion'. At the Messina Conference 1966 scholars decided to separate *gnosis* from 'Gnosticism'. *Gnosis* was defined as "knowledge of the divine reserved for an elite", ultimately a universal concept, while Gnosticism was a much more specific kind of world view held by different people in the first centuries, which included a specific mythology, anthropology, and soteriology. For details, see Ugo Bianchi, ed., *Le origini dello gnosticismo: Colloquio di Messina 13–18 Aprile 1966* (Leiden: Brill, 1967 [1970]). For a summary of the history of the study of Gnosticism, the events leading up to the Messina Conference, and the splits into different "schools" after it, see Antti Marjanen "What is Gnosticism? From the Pastorals to Rudolph", in *Was There a Gnostic Religion*, ed. Antti Marjanen (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 2005), 1–53.

2 Plotinus, *Ennead* V.3–4, 7.

3 SVF III.68. Translation by A. A. Long and D. N. Sedley, *The Hellenistic Philosophers, Vol. 1: Translations of the Principal Sources, with Philosophical Commentary* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 369.

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is conceptualized in *TriTrac* and what ontological foundations are presented. This chapter answers the questions: What are the foundations for existence in the cosmos? How is knowledge retained? And how are ontology and epistemology linked to ethics?

1 Knowledge in *TriTrac* and Ancient Epistemology

Knowledge in *TriTrac* is associated with God.[4] No one can know God without his permission (126:9–27). It is through the Son, who is at times knowledge of the Father himself, that the Father makes himself known (67:12–13, 87:15). Knowledge and understanding is a state granted by the Son to the Aeons of the Pleroma (65:14–31) and knowledge has a salvific function in the text. The Savior places in the Logos "a word which is destined to be knowledge" (ⲛ̄ⲛⲟⲩⲗⲟⲅⲟⲥ ⲉϥⲧⲏϣ ⲛ̄ⲛⲟⲩⲉⲡⲓⲥⲧⲏⲙⲁ) (88:22–23). When the Savior appears to the Logos he begins to act "in wisdom and knowledge" (ϩⲛ̄ⲛ ⲟⲩⲥⲟⲫⲓⲁ ϩⲛ̄ⲛ ⲟⲩⲉⲡⲓⲥⲧⲏⲙⲏ) (91:2–3). Here it seems that knowledge is not retained by oneself but given by God.[5] As seen in the paraphrase of the myth of *TriTrac* in the introductory chapter, the Logos' creation happens in three stages: first matter is created, then psychic stuff, and lastly pneuma. Throughout *TriTrac* it is clear that a part of this creation stands in opposition to knowledge and does not have access to knowledge and understanding: matter. Matter and the powers associated with the first part of the Logos' creation have come forth from "an imitation through an impression" (ⲟⲩⲧⲁⲛⲧⲛ̄ ⲁⲃⲁⲗ ϩⲛ̄ ⲟⲩⲫⲁⲛⲧⲁⲥⲓ̣ⲁ̣) (98:5).[6] We read that "there is no knowledge for the ones who have come forth from them" (ⲙⲛ̄ⲛ ⲟⲩⲥⲁⲩⲛⲉ· ⲛ̄ⲛⲉⲛⲧⲁⲩⲉⲓ̣ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ· ⲙ̄ⲙⲟⲟⲩ) (98:8–9). Why is this? And what about the other substances and their association with knowledge? These questions are important if we are to approach an understanding of the basis for the ethical system proposed in *TriTrac*, because these three substances later make up humanity. To understand why "an imitation through an impression" cannot pertain to true knowledge—and to understand why it is important for discussions on ethics—we need to make a short survey of the field of ancient epistemology.

4 The term ⲉⲡⲓⲥⲧⲏⲙⲏ/ⲉⲡⲓⲥⲧⲏⲙⲁ is used four times in *TriTrac* (68:12–13, 68:15, 88:23, 91:2–3), but Coptic equivalents like ⲥⲁⲩⲛⲉ (and its variants), seem to be used interchangeably. ⲥⲁⲩⲛⲉ occurs over fifty times. See Attridge and Pagels, "The Tripartite Tractate", in *Notes*, 362–363.

5 Compare 1 Cor 12:8.

6 I will translate the words ⲫⲁⲛⲧⲁⲥⲓⲁ with "impression" and ⲧⲁⲛⲧⲛ̄ with "imitation"/"phantasm", throughout, the reasons for which will become apparent in the present chapter. Attridge and Pagels' have no uniform way of treating these words, and thus my treatment of the words, and their translation, differs from theirs.

In order to be able to know what is good, not just the appearance of good, but true virtue, one first needed to be able to discern truth from falsehood. This issue, the ability to recognize truth from falsehood, was at the core of ancient epistemology.[7] Possessing this ability meant the difference between an ignorant person and a knowledgeable person and, by extension, a virtuous person and a person only appearing virtuous. This is the way Socrates, the wisest of them all, was portrayed by Plato.[8] Many of the Platonic dialogues are devoted to the question of how one discerns the mere appearance of virtue, justice, or piety—just to name a few concepts dissected by Plato—from true virtue, justice, and piety. Plato made an important distinction between things that seem to have a particular property and the property itself. He discussed, among other things, the nature of Beauty and maintained that pretenders are only interested in appearances, in beautiful *things*, not the deeper truth, Beauty itself.[9] That which pertains to appearance is mere belief (δόξα) while knowledge (ἐπιστήμη) pertains to deeper truth;[10] hence Plato's theory of Forms. Knowledge was retained through the art of dialectic. In books five through seven of *The Republic*, Plato describes the educational background, chiefly dealing with mathematics, that could lead one to be capable of contemplating the Forms, a process that only a select few ever undergo.[11] As is well known, Plato's thoughts gave rise to a large following, and great interest was shown in Plato's concept of "becoming godlike" (ὁμοίωσις θεῷ).[12] There were different interpretations of what Plato could have meant with the concept of "becoming godlike", but because Plato equated the good with the divine, most

7 For an introduction to ancient approach to the question of how knowledge was defined, see Lloyd P. Gerson, *Ancient Epistemology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

8 In a discussion with a man who claimed to know what was Good, although he knew nothing, Socrates exclaimed that he did not know what Good was either but at least he knew that much (Plato, *Apology of Socrates* 21d).

9 Plato, *The Republic* VII.

10 For a detailed discussion of Plato's epistemology, see Gerson, *Ancient Epistemology*, 27–61.

11 Plato, as is commonly recognized, constantly reworked and reconsidered his thoughts and ideas, which caused his works to differ in details. For a work that studies Plato's epistemology from the perspective of several of Plato's *Meno, Phaedo, The Republic*, and *Theaetetus*, see Elizabeth A. Laidlaw-Johnson, *Plato's Epistemology: How Hard is it to Know?* (Berlin: Peter Lang, 1996).

12 Plato, *Theaetetus* 176a–b; *Phaedo* 82b10–11. For this concept in Plato, see John M. Armstrong, "After the Ascent: Plato on Becoming like God", *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy* 26 (2004): 171–183. For a recent discussion of the impact of Plato's concept of "becoming godlike", see Roig Lanzillotta, "A Way of Salvation", 73–81.

Middle Platonic thinkers seem to have interpreted it as a question of moral progress.[13]

Aristotle, as is well known, rejected Plato's thought on the Forms. Nevertheless, Aristotle also separated belief and knowledge. Knowledge could not be gained from sense perception; it had to be reasoned forth with the mind.[14] Thus, Aristotle distinguished between thinking, which pertained to the mind, and sense perception which depended on the body and its functions—although the mind processed bodily experiences.[15] The mind was needed for forming both knowledge and beliefs and it was the mind's ability to think that separated humans from animals.

Strict materialists—like Epicureans and Stoics—argued that the mind, just like thinking itself, was corporeal, material. These naturalists connected epistemology to the mechanics of human cognition. How did humans form mental representations in the first place? For naturalists, cognition was a bodily event.[16] Epicurus, for example, thought that sense perceptions made images (εἴδωλα) in the mind and that these images were based on appearances (τὰ φαινόμενα) that correlated with the outside world.[17] Some Stoics described the mind as being like a tensional field (κίνησις τονική) on which the outside world made impressions.[18] Perceiving something with the mind was the

13 For references to the Middle Platonists (like Philo and Stobaeus) see Roig Lanzilotta, "A Way of Salvation", 79.

14 The epistemology of Aristotle is a huge topic and cannot be discussed here in a way that would do it justice. For a summary, see Gerson, *Ancient Epistemology*, 62–89.

15 Aristotle, *On the Soul* III.4.429.

16 Epicurus went to the extreme and maintained that all sense perception was in one sense necessarily true. *Letter to Menoeceus* 10.31 2.

17 For the ancient references and translations to Epicurus' views on epistemology and theory of mind, see Long and Sedley, *Hellenistic Philosophers*, 72–86.

18 For ancient sources on Stoic views on epistemology and the workings of the mind in relation to the outside world, see SVF II.52, 55, 61; Long and Sedley, *Hellenistic Philosophers*, 236–241. There were of course differences in detail among all those who through ancient time claimed adherence to the Stoic school of philosophy, but Stoics generally agreed upon some basic tenets, as developed by early founders like Zeno and Chrysippus, such as materialism, causal determinism, and the importance for a virtuous person to merge one's mind to the divine Logos that permeated all existence. For an introduction to the basic differences between the classical Greek philosophical schools, and for translations of much of the ancient material on Stoics, see Long and Sedley, *Hellenistic Philosophers*, 7, and passim. See also Heinrich von Staden, "The Stoic Theory of Perception and its 'Platonic' Critics", in *Studies in Perception: Interrelations in the History of Philosophy and Science*, eds. Peter K. Machamer and Robert G. Turnbull (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1978), 96–136.

result of impressions (φαντασία) appearing in the mind.[19] The tensional field of the mind merged with other tensional fields.[20] The mind was not just a blank sheet of paper on which the outside world made its impressions; rather, the structure of one's mind in part shaped the kind of impressions to which one was subjected, or rather created for oneself. An untrained mind was a tensional field in disarray, and such a mind was prone to experiencing and acting on false impressions (φαντασία).[21] Knowledge only occurred if the mind was in harmonious sync with the divine reason that permeated all existence.

TriTrac's supposition that imitations and impressions are unable to retain true knowledge are related to these discussions. *TriTrac* utilizes these classical discussions on epistemology to present a particular view of different levels of corporeality, which correspond to different relations to knowledge. Let us begin with the text's ontology and by scrutinizing the way the text employs the technical terms pertaining to the ancient discussion of epistemology.

2 Imitations, Likenesses, and Images: the Ontology of *TriTrac* and the Question of Logos

In *TriTrac*, the creation of the cosmos and humanity is presented as coming about in three stages. The instigator throughout the creation process is the Logos, the youngest Aeon. But why is he called Logos? In many Valentinian systems the youngest Aeon is Sophia, Wisdom. Furthermore, Logos, in Greco-Roman philosophy often presented as the rationality of God, is a thoroughly positive force, a being that in *TriTrac* at times seems to act contrary to reason. In the first stage of creation, the Logos is confused on account of his isolation from the Pleroma of God and thus gives rise to matter (74:18–80:11), which causes suffering and passion. However, considering that it is highlighted throughout the text that this happens with the sanction and direction from the Father himself (77:10–11, 107:22, 109:7–11), and considering that the youngest Aeon plays the key role in organizing the whole of creation (always guiding

19 Cicero, *On the Nature of the Gods* II.84.

20 At least according to what Sextus Empiricus tells us of Chrysippus. Sextus Empiricus, *Against the Logicians* I.228–231.

21 For Stoics, the mind was thought to constantly be exposed to impressions, and a person with a weak character was in danger of giving in to sudden changes in the impressions. Thus, the principle of being of an unchanging character, firm, and at rest is paramount for the sage. See Gitte Buch-Hansen, *It is the Spirit that Gives Life: A Stoic Understanding of Pneuma in John's Gospel* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2010), 80–82.

the Demiurge) and also instigating the appearance of the Savior (114:4–11), it is not strange at all, I would argue, that the youngest Aeon in this tractate is called Logos. In the cosmic system as it is presented in *TriTrac*, the youngest Aeon is an active force throughout, providing the whole system with order and purpose, and even though matter (Logos' first act) causes suffering, it has, as we shall see in detail further on, a very important pedagogical function. With such a view of the youngest Aeon, identifying it as Logos is actually, I would argue, the expected choice.[22]

In the second stage of creation, the Logos turns away from this initial material creation and produces psychic substance (80:11–85:15). In the third and last stage of generating substances for the cosmos, the Savior appears and as a result of this the Logos produces pneumatic substance (90:14–95:38). The three substances that comprise the cosmos and humanity are thus: matter, psychê, and pneuma.

The term φαντασία, which will be translated as *impression*, occurs nine times in the *TriTrac*, and relates to the first part of creation, namely matter. Matter is referred to as impression but we also read that matter was created when the Logos acted on impressions.[23] The Stoics used this term to refer to the imprint in the mind that resulted in the process of thinking.[24] The first time the term is used in *TriTrac* it refers to the Logos' initial product, what later in the text is called the left side, associated with matter. We read that the Logos "abandoned that which came to be in the defect along with those who had come forth from him through an impression, since they are not his".[25] What came out from the Logos, through an impression, is also defined as:

22 For Stoics, Logos was the rational principle permeating all existence. Philo presents Logos as the active force located in between the highest Father and cosmos, and other Middle Platonists viewed the Logos as the transcendental mind of God in the world (Maria Hillar, *From Logos to Trinity: The Evolution of Religious Beliefs from Pythagoras to Tertullian* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012); Kenney, "The Platonism"). In the Gospel of John, we read that Logos creates the world and then became flesh (John 1). Even though the Savior (Son) and Logos are not identified with each other in *TriTrac*, we read that the Savior, Jesus Christ on earth, received his "flesh" from Logos at his incarnation (114:4–11). It is obvious that *TriTrac* is deeply invested in the philosophical Logos speculations of the time and what we have in *TriTrac* is a unique and interesting Christian interpretation. There is much more that could be said about Logos in *TriTrac*, for example how this view of Logos relates to other Christian interpretations of the role of Logos. However, this study is not devoted to the nature of the Logos in the text, but to ethics.

23 78:7, 78:34, 79:31, 82:19, 98:5, 103:16, 109:27, 109:34, 111:11.

24 Long and Sedley, *Hellenistic Philosophers*, 237–241.

25 78:4–8: ⲁϥⲕⲱ ⲙ̄ⲡⲉⲧⲁϩϣⲱⲡⲉ ϩⲙ̄ ⲡϣⲧⲁ ⲙ̣[ⲛ] ⲛⲉⲛⲧⲁⲩⲉⲓ̈ ⲁⲃⲁⲗ ⲙ̄ⲙⲁϥ̣ [ϩⲛ]ⲛ ⲟⲩⲫⲁⲛⲧⲁⲥⲓⲁ· ϩⲱⲥ ⲉⲛⲛⲟ̣[ⲩϥ] ⲉⲛ ⲛⲉ. Translation by Attridge and Pagels, slightly modified.

> … phantasms, shadows, and impressions, lacking reason and the light, these which belong to the vain thought, since they are not products of anything. Therefore, their end will be like their beginning: from that which did not exist (they are) to return once again to that which will not be.[26]

Thus, the Logos is driven by impression and he produces impressions. This is repeated several times (78:4–8, 79:31, 99:5). The Logos' initial product is also defined with the term ⲉⲓⲇⲱⲗⲟⲛ, an unsubstantial form. This term, ⲉⲓⲇⲱⲗⲟⲛ, *phantasm* or *imitation*,[27] refers to the corporeality that the Logos instigates. The Coptic word ⲧⲁⲛⲧⲛ is also used in much the same way although much more frequently.[28] Materiality is then explained as coming from "an imitation through an impression" (ⲟⲩⲧⲁⲛⲧⲛ̄ ⲁⲃⲁⲗ ϩⲛ̄ ⲟⲩⲫⲁⲛⲧⲁⲥⲓⲁ) (98:5).[29] According to Diogenes Laertius, Stoics differed between two kinds of impressions: those that resulted from sensory organs, that is, the mind's being exposed through the senses to something outside it, and impressions that were caused by the mind itself.[30] Considering that the Logos is alone in his exile from the Pleroma—and in light of Stoic views on impressions—it would seem that *TriTrac* presents a version of the initial moments of creation as an occurrence when the Logos experiences impressions in his mind; this results in the creation of beings, *imitations*, that themselves cause more impressions. Materiality is thus caused by a figment of the Logos' mind, and that is the reason we read that matter will ultimately be destroyed in the end, because matter comes "from that which did not exist (they are) to return once again to that which will not be".[31]

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26 78:33–79:4: ⲉϩⲛ̄ⲉⲓⲇⲱⲗⲟⲛ ⲛⲉ ⲙⲛ̄ ϩⲛ̄ϩⲁⲉⲓⲃⲉⲥ ⲙⲛ̄ ϩⲛ̄ⲫⲁⲛⲧⲁⲥⲓⲁ ⲉⲩⲟ ⲛ̄ϫⲁⲉⲓⲉ ⲙ̄ⲡⲗⲟⲅⲟⲥ ⲙⲛ̄ ⲡⲟⲩⲟⲉⲓⲛ ⲛⲉⲉⲓ· ⲉⲧⲉ ⲛⲁ ⲡⲓⲙⲉⲉⲩⲉ ⲉⲧϣⲟⲩⲉⲓⲧ· ⲉϩⲛ̄ϫⲡⲟ ⲛⲗⲁⲩⲉ ⲉⲛ ⲛⲉ· ⲉⲧⲃⲉ ⲡⲉⲉⲓ ⲁⲛ ⲁⲣⲉⲧⲟⲩϩⲁⲏ ⲛⲁϣⲱⲡⲉ ⲛ̄ⲑⲉ ⲛ̣̄ⲧⲟⲩⲁⲣⲭⲏ ⲁⲃⲁⲗ ϩⲛ̄ ⲡⲉⲧⲉⲛⲉϥ[ϣ]ⲟⲟⲡ· ⲉⲛ ⲁⲧⲣⲟⲩⲧⲥⲧⲁⲩ ⲁⲛ ⲁⲡⲉ·[ⲧ]ⲛ̣̄ⲛⲁϣⲱⲡⲉ ⲉⲛ. Translation by Attridge and Pagels, slightly modified. In this translation, and throughout the following, I diverge from Attridge and Pagels' translation of ⲉϩⲛ̄ⲉⲓⲇⲱⲗⲟⲛ ⲛⲉ ⲙⲛ̄ ϩⲛ̄ϩⲁⲉⲓⲃⲉⲥ ⲙⲛ̄ ϩⲛ̄ⲫⲁⲛⲧⲁⲥⲓⲁ, in order to present a systematized version of these different reflections of the Pleroma that Logos' fall gives rise to.

27 I use these two translations of the term ⲉⲓⲇⲱⲗⲟⲛ and the Coptic equivalent ⲧⲁⲛⲧⲛ, in order to highlight the difference in context; because even though matter, which is defined as ⲧⲁⲛⲧⲛ and ⲉⲓⲇⲱⲗⲟⲛ is an illusion and negative, *TriTrac* makes clear that matter is still useful for the system as a whole. This will be argued continually in the following.

28 ⲉⲓⲇⲱⲗⲟⲛ only occurs four times: 77:17, 78:33, 79:10, 79:11. ⲧⲁⲛⲧⲛ is used more frequently and most often with the same connotations: 53:28, 74:5, 77:17, 78:32, 79:9–34, 81:4, 82:17–20, 83:8, 84:33–34, 89:21, 91:26, 93:19, 98:5–23, 99:5, 104:20, 106:5, 107:21, 109:32–36, 111:12.

29 My translation.

30 SVF I.52, 55, 6.

31 79:2–4: ⲡⲉⲧⲉⲛⲉϥ[ϣ]ⲟⲟⲡ· ⲉⲛ ⲁⲧⲣⲟⲩⲧⲥⲧⲁⲩ ⲁⲛ ⲁⲡⲉ·[ⲧ]ⲛ̣̄ⲛⲁϣⲱⲡⲉ ⲉⲛ.

After the Logos' initial creation, the psychic substance and powers are produced. These in turn are associated with the term: ⲉⲓⲛⲉ, *likeness*. A war breaks out between the two initial creations, between the material powers and the psychic powers; we read that the *imitations* (ⲉⲓⲇⲱⲗⲟⲛ/ⲧⲁⲛⲧⲛ) wage war on the *likenesses* (ⲉⲓⲛⲉ) (84:33–35). The Logos is pictured as becoming entangled with the first part of his creation. Because of this, the Son appears and the Logos manages to become disentangled from his initial erroneous creation. This leads to the creation of higher beings:

> He brought forth living images of the living persons. Being handsome and good, since they are of those who exist, they resemble these in beauty, though they are not truly equal with them.[32]

Here the pneumatics are created. These in turn are also associated with a kind of reflection. The term used for the pneumatics is ϩⲓⲕⲱⲛ, *image* (εἰκών). This discussion is surely intimately connected to the exegesis of Gen 1:26, which states that humans are molded in the image of God.[33] In the sequence of *TriTrac* quoted here, the Aeons in the Pleroma become represented in the world, not as false caricatures, but in the best possible way considering the limitations of corporeality (93:20–29, 94:10–20). Thus, we encounter the term ϩⲓⲕⲱⲛ as something that in the Logos' creation mirrors the higher world.[34] Plato seems to be a great inspiration here, since the text appears to echo Plato's use of the concept εἰκών, as the representation in the cosmos of the form of

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32 90:31–36: ⲁϥϫⲡⲟ ⲛ̄ϩⲛ̄ϩⲓ̈ⲕⲱⲛ ⲉⲩⲟⲩⲁⲛϩ̄· ⲛ̄ⲇⲉ ⲛⲓϩⲟ· ⲉⲧⲁⲛϩ̄· ⲉϩⲛ̄ⲡⲉⲧⲁⲛⲓⲧ· ⲛⲉ ⲛ̄ⲇⲉ ⲡⲉⲧⲛⲁⲛⲟⲩⲟⲩ ⲉⲩϣⲟⲟⲡ ⲛ̄ⲧⲉ ⲛⲉⲧϣⲟⲟⲡ ⲉⲩⲉⲓⲛⲉ· ⲙⲉⲛ ⲁⲣⲁⲩⲟⲩ ⲛ̄ⲥⲁⲉⲓⲉ ⲉⲩϣⲏϣ ⲛ̄ⲇⲉ ⲁⲣⲁⲟⲩ ⲉⲛ ⲙⲁⲙⲓⲉ. Translation by Attridge and Pagels, slightly modified. I choose to translate ⲛⲓϩⲟ as "persons", somewhat like the way the Greek πρόσωπον also could be used. See LXX 3 Kings 2:20 or Proverbs 18:5. This is also the way πρόσωπον was used in the Trinitarian debates of the fourth century and onward.

33 Gen 1:26 came to be of great inspiration for Christians and Jews, many of whom formulated their anthropology in light of it. Philo, for example, spent a great deal of thought on the nature of the relation between the image of God and human nature. See Philo, *On the Creation of the World; Questions and Answers on Genesis.* The apostle Paul's reading of Gen 1:26 would inspire his anthropology and was of greatly influenced to later Christians (see Geurt Hendrik van Kooten, *Paul's Anthropology in Context: The Image of God, Assimilation to God, and Tripartite Man in Ancient Judaism, Ancient Philosophy and Early Christianity* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008). The question regarding the relation between the cosmos and the image of God would lead to many debates, culminating in the Origenist controversy in the fifth century, see Clark, *Origenist Controversy*, 43–84.

34 For ϩⲓⲕⲱⲛ see: 90:31, 92:3, 93:25, 94:11–33, 96:24–34, 97:20, 98:23–24, 101:9, 102:12, 104:19, 116:28–34, 122:26, 123:15, 124:29.

the world and higher reality.[35] For example, Plato imagined time as the εἰκών of eternity.[36]

In *TriTrac* we have three kinds of creation: pneumatic, psychic, and material, all relating to different kinds of reflections: *imitations, likenesses*, and *images*. These three reflections, I argue, represent different levels of understanding. The three different levels, as we will see further on, are connected to the three different kinds of humans. The term ϩⲓⲕⲱⲛ, *image*, is used for the pneumatic substance and powers; ⲉⲓⲛⲉ, *likeness*, is used for the psychics; ⲧⲁⲛⲧⲛ and ⲉⲓⲇⲱⲗⲟⲛ, *phantasm* or *imitation*, are used for matter (84:23–35, 104:18–20). While ⲉⲓⲇⲱⲗⲟⲛ, ⲧⲁⲛⲧⲛ and ⲫⲁⲛⲧⲁⲥⲓⲁ obfuscate, ϩⲓⲕⲱⲛ and ⲉⲓⲛⲉ are used as representations of the heavenly existence resembling truth. The *image* (ϩⲓⲕⲱⲛ) is closely associated with the Aeons, because the Logos created them as the Savior gave him rest and knowledge of the world above. But the *likeness* (ⲉⲓⲛⲉ) also has some truth to it, because it is derived from a part of the Logos that "remembers" (ⲣⲙⲉⲩⲉ) the life in the Pleroma, before becoming entangled with matter (81:10–14). We thus have a hierarchy of the way the highest world is represented and it is closely associated with the different stages of corporeality imagined in *TriTrac*. Basically, the closer to matter the further away from truth. There are three kinds of appearances: one that derives from the false and illusory matter, which does not have any truth to it. The pneumatic seed has a natural attraction to the Savior and the knowledge he brings, and thus reflects it. The psychics, however, also have access to truth but it does not come immediately. At one point this is expressed through a common Platonic imagery: remembrance.

3 Remembering (and) the Nature of Virtue

The process of remembrance (ἀνάμνησις) as a way to gain knowledge was something Plato developed in his dialogues *Meno* and *Phaedo*. Neoplatonists carried on this tradition of portraying the devolution of soul into matter as slowly sinking into amnesia. Through contemplation and reasoning, one could jolt the memory and discern the differences between appearance and form. However, according to Plato, a mind too deeply rooted within the bodily sensations could not retain images of the forms in their mind.[37] In *TriTrac*, we

35 Plato, *The Republic* X.614–621; *Timaeus* 30.

36 Plato, *Timaeus* 37d.

37 See Plato, *Phaedo* 66b–d. For a discussion on the way Plato viewed the workings of the mind, see David J. Yount, *Plato and Plotinus on Mysticism, Epistemology, and Ethics* (London and New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2017).

read that the Logos prays and then "remembers" the life in the Pleroma and all his brothers there. Then we read that the Logos turns to the psychic substance/powers and "he sowed in them a thought about him and an idea, so that they should remember that something greater than themselves exists prior to them, although they did not understand what it was".[38] There is an association between ontology, remembrance, and ethics. Remembering where he comes from allows the Logos to become disentangled from matter. This remembrance is sown into part of creation and seems to be a way for some to gain knowledge of God (84:24–28, 97:27–36). How are these concepts to be understood further from the perspective of ethics?

The best way to live in the world, according to many ancient philosophical schools of thought, was to adopt the right attitudes to past, present, and future events. Epicurus stated that fear of death was unfounded, because where death existed, you did not, and where you existed, death did not.[39] But there was an imbalance here. Stoics viewed the anticipation of future events as those which were most likely to cause passions. It was more common to fear what could come to pass rather than what had already occurred. One technique to circumvent the effect of anticipated negative future events was to remind oneself of the error of one's fears and not to concentrate on events that were outside one's control. Epictetus is said to have recommended that people continuously remind themselves of the mortality of their family members in order not to cultivate negative anticipation and develop attachments that eventually would be broken.[40]

Another mnemonic technique used to further ethical behavior involved reminding oneself of past good events. Seneca wrote that one should remember the good things of one's past but that this good past was only available for those who *were* good.[41] Seneca remembers what the "genuine and old-fashioned"

38 83:22–26: ⲁϥⲥⲓⲧⲉ ⲛϩⲏⲧⲟ̣ⲩ ⲛ̣ⲛ̣ⲟⲩⲙⲉⲩⲉ [ⲁⲣ]ⲁ̣ϥ ⲁⲩⲱ ⲟⲩⲙⲁⲕⲙ̣ⲉ̣ⲕ̣ ⲁⲧⲣⲟⲩ[ⲣⲡⲙ]ⲉⲩⲉ· ϫⲉ ⲟ̣ⲩⲛ̄ ⲛⲟϭ ⲁ̣ⲣⲁⲩ ϥϣⲟ[ⲟⲡ] ϩ̣ⲁ ⲧⲟⲩⲉϩⲏ· ⲉⲙⲡⲟⲩⲙ̄ⲙⲉ [ϫⲉ] ⲉⲩ ⲡⲉⲧⲉⲛⲉϥϣⲟⲟⲡ. Here I emend the word ⲁⲧⲣⲟⲩ[...]ⲉⲩⲉ to ⲁⲧⲣⲟⲩ[ⲣⲡⲙ]ⲉⲩⲉ, which differs from the renditions of Thomassen, as well as Attridge and Pagels, because in this context, just before this sentence, the Logos has "remembered" (ⲣⲡⲙⲉⲩⲉ) the Aeons of the Pleroma and it is this that results with the creation of the psychics. It is only natural that the sentence would continue with this theme. Furthermore, the lacuna, in my opinion appears to be longer than one letter.

39 Epicurus, *Letter to Menoeceus*. Lucretius tried to argue that it is just as illogical to fear one's future non-existence as fearing the fact that there was once a time in the past when one did not exist. For more on this discussion see Richard Sorabji, *Emotions and Peace of Mind: From Stoic Agitation to Christian Temptation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 228–232.

40 Epictetus, *Discourses* III.28.84–88.

41 Seneca, *On the Shortness of Life* 10.

philosopher Fabianus once said: "we must fight against the passions with main force … for the passions must be, not nipped, but crushed".[42] One important aspect of fighting passions was having a proper handle on time, according to Seneca. A mind that was untroubled and tranquil was free to roam all the parts of one's life and enjoy past good experiences, while a troubled mind focused only on the present and would always find life too short and time wasted. Plutarch agreed and wrote that the wise person uses past good memories for their own benefit instead of just focusing on the future. The wise person mixes the good parts of one's past with the good in the present, while suppressing the bad things in the past, thus retaining a harmonious life.[43] Seneca writes that even the people who have come furthest in their philosophical studies and know the difference between good and evil still need to be reminded of their knowledge, because one's knowledge "should not be in storage, but ready for use".[44] Actively engaging the memory by remembrance was a viable technique for ethical progress.[45] Epictetus is even said to have maintained that one could cure present evils by remembering the past, by shifting focus in distressing moments that could influence and cause disturbances in the mind.[46] Plato, like Epictetus, valued firm hope of relief from present evils, and the remembrance of past goods was a key for building that hope.[47] Some Christians would take this in a somewhat different direction, valuing hope for the future (most often a better and eternal life) that was not based on memory but on a promise. Christian hope, or faith, based on God's word, could give comfort in the present, as Paul claimed (1 Thess 4:13–15).[48]

It is this context, I believe, we should understand *TriTrac*'s frequent call to the psychics and the Logos to *remember*, which draws on the thought that

42 Seneca, *On the Shortness of Life* 10. Translation by John W. Basore, *Seneca: Moral Essays*, vol. 2 (Loeb Classicalal Library. Cambridge, M.A.: Harvard University Press, 1932), 317.

43 Plutarch, *On Tranquility of Mind* 473b–474b.

44 Seneca, *Epistles* 94.26. Translation by Richard M. Gummere, *Seneca: Epistles*, vol. 3 (Loeb Classical Library. Cambridge M.A.: Harvard University Press, 1925), 29.

45 Blossom Stefaniw, "A Disciplined Mind in an Orderly World Mimesis in Late Antique Ethical Regimes", in *Metaphor—Narratio—Mimesis—Doxologie*, eds. Ulrich Volp et al. (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2016), 236–255.

46 Diogenes Laertius, *Lives* X.22; Cicero, *Tusculan Disputations* III.33, III.76, V.74.

47 Plato, *Philebus* 32c, 35e–36b, 40a–e, 50b.

48 "But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers and sisters, about those who have died, so that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope. For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have died. For this we declare to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will by no means precede those who have died". All translations of the New Testament come from NRSV if nothing else is indicated.

the soul was connected to an eternal life before becoming mixed with matter (84:24–28, 97:27–36). The reemergence is, however, not enough, but is combined with the admonition to trust God, and to have "a firm hope" (ⲟⲩϩⲉⲗⲡⲓⲥ· ⲉⲥⲧⲁϫⲣⲁⲉⲓⲧ·) (128:10–11) that God will deliver them to a union with him and the Pleroma.

In *TriTrac* humankind is made up of all three substances: matter, psychê, and pneuma. We read that "the first human is a mixed formation, and a mixed creation, and a deposit of those of the left and those of the right, and a pneumatic rationality".[49] These correspond to, as will be elaborated upon in the next chapter, the three basic substances of the human constitution: a material body, an emotive soul, and a reasoning intellect. However, the representation that made its imprint on the mind, and the kinds of 'knowledge' on which one based one's descriptions, depended on the formation of the mind and the substance which was strongest within each individual. Minds that were too immersed in matter were completely lost, just as Plato maintained that a mind that was too deeply rooted within bodily sensations could not remember images of true forms.[50] People associated with the psychic substance are called to remember (84:24–28, 97:27–36) and thus have the ability to know truth, although not completely it would seem. The psychics can recognize the Savior when he appears, but this does not happen immediately; it is clear that they need to be convinced and taught what to do (118:28–119:15). It is the pneumatic substance that is most clearly associated with knowledge and understanding in *TriTrac*, but rather than remembering, the pneumatic people *react instinctively* to the appearance of knowledge/the Savior. We read that the pneumatic person "gains knowledge immediately" (ⲁϥϫⲓ ⲙ̄ⲡⲥⲁⲩⲛⲉ· ϩⲛ̄ ⲟⲩϭⲉⲡⲏ) (118:35–36), while the psychics are, rather, involved in a process of instruction and remembering (118:28–119:15).

The epistemology of the strict materialists is thoroughly rejected in *TriTrac*, even turned on its head, since matter is treated as an illusion. Matter will be annihilated in the end times (79:1–5). The Platonic view of the relation between the cosmos and the world of forms—that matter was the receptacle for the idea—is radicalized in *TriTrac*. In *TriTrac* the illusions of materiality are juxtaposed with the remembrance and knowledge of the Pleroma above, both granted by the Savior (88:19–25). We read that to reach salvation humans need

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49 106:18–22: ϫⲉ ⲡⲓϣⲁⲣⲡ̄ ⲇⲉ ⲛ̄ⲣⲱⲙⲉ· ⲟⲩⲡⲗⲁⲥⲙⲁ ⲡⲉ ⲉϥⲧⲏϩ ⲡⲉ· ⲁⲩⲱ ⲟⲩⲧⲥⲉ·ⲛⲟ ⲡⲉ ⲉϥⲧⲏϩ ⲡⲉ· ⲁⲩⲱ ⲟⲩⲕⲟⲩ ⲁϩⲣⲏï ⲡⲉ· ⲛ̄ⲇⲉ ⲛⲓϭⲃⲟⲩⲣ ⲡⲉ ⲙⲛ̄ ⲛⲓⲟⲩⲛⲉⲙ ⲡⲉ· ⲁⲩⲱ ⲟⲩⲡⲛ(ⲉⲩⲙ)ⲁⲧⲓⲕⲟ̄ⲥ ⲛ̄ⲗⲟⲅⲟⲥ.

50 See Plato, *Phaedo* 66b–d; *Meno* 82a–86b. For more on this topic, see David J. Yount, *Plato and Plotinus on Mysticism, Epistemology, and Ethics* (London and New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2017).

to be provided with likeness. Twice, the acquisition of knowledge is likened to viewing a reflection through a mirror (ⲟⲩⲉⲓⲉⲗ):

> The entire preparation of the adornment of the images and likenesses and imitations have come into being because of those who need education and teaching and formation, so that the smallness might grow, little by little, as through a mirror image.[51]
>
> (Christ's) members, however, needed a school in the places which are adorned, so that they might receive from them the images of the form of the archetypical pattern, like a mirror.[52]

These passages make clear that the world—made up of "images and likenesses and imitations" (ⲛⲓϩⲓ̈ⲕⲱⲛ ⲙⲛ ⲛⲓⲉⲓⲛⲉ ⲙⲛ̄ ⲛⲓⲧⲁⲛⲧⲛ̄)—works like a mirror for higher truths.[53] Thus, matter, or rather corporeal existence, seems to be treated in a dual way in *TriTrac*. The world is a reflection of the divine, but only some aspects in the world. *TriTrac* downgraded materiality and attaches it to the lowest level of understanding (illusion, phantasms). Salvation and understanding are not reached through matter, through false "impressions" that were subjected to the mind, but through the "images" and "likenesses" associated with the pneumatic or psychic substance, because it was in these two substances that the higher world was mirrored. This becomes clear in the passage expanding on the creation of the pneumatics. The pneumatics are described as:

> … living images of the living persons, pleasing among [things] which are good, existing among the things which exist, resembling them in beauty, but unequal to them in truth.[54]

51 104:18–25: ⲡⲓⲥⲁⲃⲧⲉ ⲧⲏⲣϥ̄ ⲙ̄ⲡⲓⲧⲥⲁⲉⲓⲱ ⲛ̄ⲧⲉ ⲛⲓϩⲓ̈ⲕⲱⲛ ⲙⲛ ⲛⲓⲉⲓⲛⲉ ⲙⲛ̄ ⲛⲓⲧⲁⲛⲧⲛ̄· ⲉⲣⲉⲛ̄ⲧⲁⲩϣⲱⲡⲉ· ⲉⲧⲃⲉ ⲛⲉⲧⲣ̄ ⲭⲣⲓⲁ· ⲛ̄ⲛⲟⲩⲥⲁⲛⲉϣ· ⲙⲛ̄ⲛ ⲟⲩⲥⲃⲱ ⲙⲛ̄ ϯⲙⲟⲣⲫⲏ ϫⲉⲕⲁⲥⲉ ⲉⲣⲉϯⲙⲛ̄ⲧϣⲏⲙ· ⲛⲁϫⲓ ⲛ̄ⲛⲟⲩⲡⲁⲩⲣⲉⲓ· ⲕⲁⲧⲁ ϣⲏⲙ ϣⲏⲙ· ϩⲱⲥ ϩⲓ̈ⲧⲛ̄ ⲡⲉⲓⲛⲉ· ⲛ̄ⲛⲟⲩⲉⲓⲉⲗ. Translation by Attridge and Pagels, slightly modified.

52 123:11–16: ⲛⲉϥⲙⲉⲗⲟⲥ ⲇⲉ· ⲁⲩⲣ̄ ⲭⲣⲓⲁ ⲛ̄ⲛⲟⲩⲙⲁ ⲛ̄ϫⲓ ⲥⲃⲱ ⲡⲉⲉⲓ ⲉⲧϣⲟⲟⲡ ϩⲣⲏⲓ̈ ϩⲛ̄ ⲛ̄ⲧⲟⲡⲟⲥ· ⲉⲧ¨ⲧⲥ̣[ⲉ]ⲛⲁⲉⲓⲧ· ⲁⲧⲣⲉϥϫⲓ ⲉⲓⲛⲉ· ⲁⲃⲁⲗ ϩⲓ̈ⲧⲟⲟ̣ⲧⲟⲩ ⲁⲛⲛⲓϩⲓ̈ⲕⲱⲛ ⲁⲛⲓⲧⲩⲡⲟⲥ ⲛ̄ϣⲁⲣⲡ̣̄ ⲙ̄ⲡⲥⲙⲁⲧ· ⲛⲛⲟⲩⲉⲉⲓⲉⲗ. Translation by Attridge and Pagels, slightly modified.

53 As Thomassen has suggested, the metaphor of the mirror likely draws on 1 Cor 13:12. The above discussion on images, likenesses, and imitations highlights just how important it was. Clement elaborates on the same metaphors.

54 90:31–36: ⲁϥϫⲡⲟ ⲛ̄ϩⲛ̄ϩⲓ̈ⲕⲱⲛ ⲉⲩⲟⲩⲁⲛϩ̄· ⲛ̄ⲇⲉ ⲛⲓϩⲟ· ⲉⲧⲁⲛϩ̄· ⲉϩⲛ̄ⲡⲉⲧⲁⲛⲓⲧ· ⲛⲉ ⲛ̄ⲇⲉ ⲡⲉⲧⲛⲁⲛⲟⲩⲟⲩ ⲉⲩϣⲟⲟⲡ ⲛ̄ⲧⲉ ⲛⲉⲧϣⲟⲟⲡ ⲉⲩⲉⲓⲛⲉ· ⲙⲉⲛ ⲁⲣⲁⲩⲟⲩ ⲛ̄ⲥⲁⲉⲓⲉ ⲉⲩϣⲏϣ ⲛ̄ⲇⲉ ⲁⲣⲁⲟⲩ ⲉⲛ ⲙⲁⲙⲓⲉ. Translation by Attridge and Pagels, slightly modified.

Here ontology, epistemology, and ethics merge. It is only part of the substance that exists in the world, the pneumatic substance, that is able to reflect the highest truths and goodness in the world (however, never matching it). The psychics, too, have truth and goodness within them, but only in relation to the ignorance and morality of matter. We read that these psychic "powers were good and were greater than those of the imitation" (ⲡ[ⲓ]ⲧⲁⲛⲧⲛ̄).[55]

The good in *TriTrac* is firmly attached to the highest divine principle. One term that appears is ἀρετή, which was used throughout the ancient world as a term referring to 'excellence of character', including moral excellence in the sense of 'virtue'. It is a very unusual term in the Nag Hammadi texts, only appearing 18 times, ten of which are in *TriTrac*.[56] This term is almost solely reserved for the highest world in *TriTrac*, chiefly as a quality God possesses (53:10, 59:3, 73:17). The Son is described as "being each one of the virtues (of the Father) (ⲉϥⲟ̣ⲉⲓ [ⲛ]ⲧⲟⲩⲉⲓⲉ ⲧⲟⲩⲉⲓⲉ ⲛ̄ⲛⲓⲁⲣⲉⲧⲏ) (67:13–14). The Aeons, being the collective that makes up the heavenly Church, are also identified as the "virtues" of the Father (69:40, 73:10).[57] It would seem that the best one could do to reach the good *in the world*, was to reflect the divine world to the best of one's ability. Knowledge of God was not reached through materiality, but through images and representations of the higher truths mirrored in psychic substance and pneumatic substance. Furthermore, as has been made clear, the pneumatic substance was associated with immediate knowledge while the psychic substance was referred to a pedagogic plan of remembrance in order to access knowledge. In this way, *TriTrac* uses epistemic language to make ethical points. This connection does not seem to have been all that uncommon among early Christians well read in ancient philosophy. Clement of Alexandria, too, linked epistemology and ethics—in similar metaphors as we find in *TriTrac*—when he wrote that it was only the true Gnostic Christian who had retained deeper

55 82:15–17: ⲛⲓϭⲁ̣ⲙ ϭⲉ ⲛⲉⲛⲁⲛⲟⲩⲟⲩ ⲡ[ⲉ] ⲁⲩⲱ ⲛⲁⲩⲟⲩⲁⲉⲓ ⲛ̄ϩⲟⲩⲟ ⲁⲛⲁ ⲡ[ⲓ]ⲧⲁⲛⲧⲛ̄. Translation by Attridge and Pagels, slightly modified.

56 53:10, 59:3, 59:9, 67:14, 67:21, 67:33, 69:40, 73:10, 73:17, 100:27.

57 Interestingly enough, the only time the term does not refer to the highest divine principle, it is used for the 'excellence' of the chief Archon, the Demiurge, that the Logos places on top of the cosmic *oikonomia*. This is a clear indication, in my mind, of the legitimation *TriTrac* places in the structures that guide the cosmic order. We also encounter the term ἀγαθός and the Coptic equivalent ⲛⲁⲛⲟⲩ, also applied to the Father (61:29, 138:19), but much more often to aspects outside of the Pleroma, chiefly the right side of the Logos creation and the psychics, those who are *likenesses* of the world above. For references to where the words appear, see Attridge and Pagels, "The Tripartite Tractate", in *Notes*, 353–354, 387.

knowledge of God through contemplation. It was the Gnostic who could look in the mirror of the world and see God.[58]

So, in what way is the Pleroma reflected in the world and how do humans relate to the structure of the ideal life in the heavens?

4 The Individual and the Collective

In the beginning the Pleroma is in harmony. What disrupts the initial harmony in the Pleroma and introduces ignorance is the fall of the Logos, the exile of the youngest Aeons from his fellows. The Logos becomes isolated from his collective and instead becomes mixed up with the material part of his creation, what is called "imitation" (ⲉⲓⲇⲱⲗⲟⲛ/ⲧⲁⲛⲧⲛ̄). The Son appears to the Logos, in order for the Logos to escape being mixed with the material powers and instead become one with the Son and reintegrated into the heavenly world. This concept—becoming one with a greater power, with a collective—is how *TriTrac* describes the ideal and harmonious state of being. The reason for the Logos' erroneous and deficient creation is his isolation from the collective. The importance of the relation between the individual and the collective, I will argue, is crucial for the basic epistemology in *TriTrac* and fundamental for the ethics of the text.

We find this theme throughout the text: the ideal state of an individual is to be totally and harmoniously integrated within a greater collective, although retaining individuality. The concept of the godhead is three individuals simultaneously existing as a total unity while retaining their individuality. We read that God consists of Father, Son, and Church, sharing the same substance (ⲟⲩⲥⲓⲁ), dispositions (ⲇⲓⲁⲑⲉⲥⲓⲥ), and virtues (ⲁⲣⲉⲧⲏ) (58:14, 59:3–10). The same is true of the next level: the Pleroma/the All. The nature of the true Aeons above the caricatures of the Logos' creation is described as living in unity, but each Aeon is simultaneously its own. The Pleroma is "a single image although many" (ⲉϥⲟⲉⲓ ⲛ̄ⲟⲩⲉⲓⲛⲉ ⲛ̄ⲟⲩⲱⲧ· ⲉϩⲁϩ ⲡⲉ·) (68:31–32). The Father brought forth the Aeons "in order that it might be discovered that they exist according to their individual virtues in a unified way".[59] Furthermore, the Son is called by numerous names, 19 of them are given on page 66, all of which exist in

58 Clement, *Stromata* IV.3.12.2, VII.10.57.1, VII.3.13.1, V.1.7.5, V.6.40. For more on Clement use of epistemology, see Raoul Mortley, "The Mirror and I Cor. 13,12 in the Epistemology of Clement of Alexandria", *Vigiliae Christanae* 30 (1976): 109–120.

59 67:31–34: ϫⲉⲕⲁⲥ ϩⲛ̄ ⲟⲩⲙⲛ̄ⲧⲟⲩⲉⲓ ⲛ̄ⲟⲩⲱⲧ· ⲉⲩϭⲁⲛⲧⲥ̄ ⲉⲩϣⲟⲟⲡ ⲕⲁⲧⲁ ⲧⲟⲩⲉⲓⲉ· ⲧⲟⲩⲉⲓⲉ ⲛ̄ⲁⲣⲉⲧⲏ. Translation by Attridge and Pagels, slightly modified.

his single Name, by “which he is not called” (ⲥⲉⲙⲟⲩⲧⲉ ⲁⲣⲁϥ ⲙ̄ⲙⲁϥ ⲉⲛ·) (66:33–34).[60] In the middle of the first part of the tractate the unity of the Pleroma and the individual Aeon is expounded upon in a beautiful analogy to time:

> Just as the present age, though a unity, is divided by units of time and units of time are divided into years and years are divided into seasons and seasons into months, and months into days, and days into hours, and hours into moments, so too the aeon of the Truth (the Pleroma) is single yet many.[61]

The passage continues the analogy: each individual is a part of a whole just like different aspects of a tree forms a single tree, or as different body parts together make a whole body. Salvation is in this way likened to the restoration of the individual to the collective. To reach knowledge in *TriTrac* one has to become mingled with the Son (123:11–32).[62] The Son is made up of the collective that is identified as the Church (57:8–59:1, 122:12–125:11).[63] The term *apokatastasis*, which Origen also utilized, is then used for the end-time salvation (123:11–27, 133:6–7).

This ideal state, that of an individual retaining its originality while simultaneously being totally integrated within something else, reminds us of Stoic epistemology.[64] To understand the relation between different substances in

60 The different names do not grasp any aspect of the Father but their function seems to be to enable the Aeons to sing the Father’s praise (54:5–15, 65:35–66:5).

61 73:28–74:3: ϫⲉ ⲡⲓⲣⲏⲧⲉ ⲙ̄ⲡⲓⲁⲓⲱⲛ ⲧⲉⲛⲟⲩ ⲉⲟⲩⲉⲉⲓ ⲡⲉ ⲛ̄ⲟⲩⲱⲧ· ⲉϥⲡⲏϣ ϩⲛ̄ ⲛ̄ⲟⲩⲟⲉⲓϣ ⲁⲩⲱ {ⲁϩ}ⲉⲛⲟⲩⲁⲉⲓϣ ⲡⲏϣ· ⲁϩⲉⲛⲣⲁⲙⲡⲉ· ⲉⲛⲣⲁⲙⲡⲉ· ⲡⲏϣ· ⲁϩⲛ̄ⲥⲏⲟⲩ· ⲛ̄ⲥⲏⲟⲩ ⲇⲉ ⲁϩⲉⲛⲉⲃⲉⲧⲉ· ⲛⲉⲃⲉⲧⲉ· ⲇⲉ ⲁϩⲉⲛϩⲟⲟⲩ· ⲛ̄ϩⲟⲟⲩ ⲁϩⲉⲛⲟⲩⲛⲁⲩⲉ· ⲁⲩⲱ ⲛⲟⲩⲛⲁⲩⲉ ⲁϩⲛ̄ⲥⲟⲩⲥⲟⲩ ⲡⲉⲉⲓ ⲡⲉ ⲡⲣⲏⲧⲉ ϩⲱⲱϥ ⲁⲛ ⲙ̄ⲡⲓⲁⲓⲱⲛ ⲛ̄ⲧⲉ ⲧⲙⲏⲉ· ⲉⲟⲩⲉⲉⲓ ⲡⲉ ⲛ̄ⲟⲩⲱⲧ ⲉⲛⲁϣⲱϥ. Translation by Attridge and Pagels, slightly modified.

62 Just as for Clement, *TriTrac* here makes it clear that the knowledge of the Father is reached through the Son. See Clement, *Stromata* VI.12.102.2.

63 There is a debate whether only the “elect” make up the body of the Savior, or whether psychics were also members of the church. This will be discussed in the second part of the study. Here it suffices to recognize that the psychics are also granted partial knowledge and salvation, and that these psychics are at least closely affiliated with the church, and in this sense, can be counted as among the collective.

64 This is pointed out in Dunderberg, *Gnostic Morality*, 132–133. Here Dunderberg expands on his previous article “Stoic Traditions in the School of Valentinus”, in *Stoicism in Early Christianity*, eds. Tuomas Rasimus et al. (Grand Rapids: Baker Publishing Group, 2010), 220–238. There are several features of *TriTrac* that I here elaborate on, in light of Dunderberg’s findings. The first concerns the description of the highest realm, the Pleroma, which also follows notion of blending, although more explicitly, and the second

the world and the nature of the way they come together, Stoics like Chrysippus employed theories of blending. He maintained that it was possible for a substance to share one and the same space with another substance, that two or more substances could be completely intertwined without being dissolved into one another.[65] This was called *blending* (κρᾶσις). Blending was different from the theory of "fusion" (σύγχυσις) where substances lost their individual integrity, and different from "juxtaposition" (παράθεσις) where substances never really partook of one another. Blending theory was crucial for Stoic physics as well as ethics.[66] Stoics maintained that divine reason (Logos) permeated all existence and for this to work it required the theory of blending. A virtuous person was someone who had become totally blended with the Logos.

The theory of blending was also important for Stoic epistemology. As discussed above, Stoics thought that human cognition was a result of the tensional field of one's mind being joined with the tensional field of the outside.[67] The structure of one's mind in part shaped the kind of impressions to which one was subjected, or rather created for oneself. An untrained mind was a tensional field in disarray, and such a mind was prone to experiencing and acting on false impressions (φαντασία). A stable and firm tensional field of the mind, which was *blended* in harmony with the divine reason that permeated all existence, did not experience or act on false impressions.[68] This state, being harmoniously blended with the Logos, was called συμπάθεια and was the only way one could obtain true knowledge (ἐπιστήμη) and, by extension, experience *good* emotions.[69] To live a virtuous life, according to Stoics, entailed living as a part of a whole, of Nature, as a separate individual although totally and harmoniously integrated into Nature. This was the principle of συμπάθεια, based on the notion of blending (κρᾶσις).[70] As Ismo Dunderberg has noted,

concerns the difference made between different kinds of blending, between a positive *blending* and a negative *mixing*. This will be discussed below.

65 For the ancient sources on Chrysippus' views on blending (κρᾶσις) we have Alexander of Aphrodisias' discussion and elaboration on it in his text *De mixtione* 216.14–218.6.

66 For the importance of the notion of *blending* for Stoic physics, epistemology and ethics, see Buch-Hansen, *It is the Spirit*, 75–84.

67 Cicero, *On the Nature of the Gods* II.84.

68 Some Stoics qualified this by introducing proto-passions, preliminary motions of the mind which all humans, even the sage, experienced. These were not full-blown passions but merely "first movements" (*primus motus*). Seneca, *On Anger* II.2.2, II.2.1, II.4.2.

69 For a summary of Stoic epistemology from the perspective of κρᾶσις see Buch-Hansen, *It is the Spirit*, 79–84.

70 Alexander of Aphrodisias, *De mixtione* 1; Cicero, *On Ends* II.73f.

some Valentinians seem to have been inspired by these ideas.[71] I would argue that *TriTrac*'s employment of these concepts is much more extensive than has previously been noticed and, what is more important for our concerns, the concepts are fundamental for grasping the basis for the ethical foundations of *TriTrac*. Let us now see how *TriTrac*'s epistemology relates to the Stoic concepts of blending (κρᾶσις and συμπάθεια).

5 Mixing and Blending, Truth and Falsehood

The description of the Aeons' individuality and unity within the Pleroma, as well as the Godhead's three separate yet indistinguishable parts, seems to rely on a similar theory of blending as the Stoic idea of κρᾶσις. Existing in harmonious accordance with a whole, playing one's particular part, whether big or small, is in *TriTrac* described as being *merged* or *joined* (ⲙⲟⲩϫϭ or ⲧⲱⲧ). However, *TriTrac* also makes use of a negative state of blending. We find an important distinction made between different states of blending: between ⲙⲟⲩϫϭ[72]/ⲧⲱⲧ[73] on the one hand, and ⲧⲱϩ[74]/ⲧⲁϩⲧϩ[75] on the other. The distinction between these states of blending has to my knowledge not been recognized before.[76] The words ⲧⲱϩ and ⲧⲁϩⲧϩ, or their negations occur 11 times and always in a negative sense, referring to an unhealthy blending. These terms are not used in the first part of the text discussing the highest realm (except once as defining what the highest Father is *not*: 54:26). "Being

71 At least as some church fathers portrayed 'Valentinians'. See, for example, Clement's quotation of *ExcTheod* 17:1; Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 1.6.2. See Dunderberg, *Gnostic Morality*, 131–134; Dunderberg, "Stoic Traditions", 220–238; Dunderberg, *Beyond Gnosticism*, 95–118.

72 One possible Greek equivalent to ⲙⲟⲩϫϭ is συμμιγνύνια. See Walter E. Crum, *A Coptic Dictionary* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1939), 214a. For ⲙⲟⲩϫϭ in *TriTrac*, see 65:22, 66:29, 68:26, 72:14–15, 73:11–12, 80:16, 86:35, 87:26, 90:20, 91:3, 92:17–18, 94:39, 116:4–5, 117:16, 122:23, 128:18. ϩⲱⲧⲣⲉ also appears to be used once in the sense of "being united" or "joined" (132:4–11) (Crum, *Coptic*, 726a).

73 Considering the way ⲧⲱⲧ is used, the Greek equivalent is possibly σύγκρασις (Crum, *Coptic*, 437b). For ⲧⲱⲧ see 68:27, 70:3, 71:11, 74:25, 75:23–24, 76:9–18, 82:1, 90:36–37, 93:3–4, 95:4–7, 99:19, 122:17–27, 123:24.

74 ⲧⲱϩ possibly renders Greek ταράσσεσθαι (Crum, *Coptic*, 453b). See 90:17–18, 93:18, 97:25, 106:19.

75 Sometimes spelled ⲧⲉϩϯϩ, with the connotations "mix" and "confuse" (Greek φυρμός; see Crum, *Coptic*, 462a). See *TriTrac* 54:26, 85:11, 89:34, 110:32, 110:34, 121:22, 132:10.

76 The translation by Attridge and Pagels does not seem to differ between the different connotations of the terms but translates them somewhat interchangeably, a practice followed by, as far as I can see, Thomassen, *Le traité tripartite*; as well as Nagel, *Der Tractatus Tripartitus*.

mixed", as I will henceforth translate ⲧⲱϩ and ⲧⲁϩⲧϩ, designating the unbeneficial form of blending, is contrasted with the terms ⲙⲟⲩϫϭ and ⲧⲱⲧ, which occur over 30 times in the text, and used in a positive sense and context. At times ⲧⲱⲧ has eschatological connotations while ⲙⲟⲩϫϭ seems to also be used more neutrally. ⲧⲱⲧ is used, for example, when the elect join with the Savior (122:13–17); when the Logos is reintegrated with the Pleroma from whom he had fallen away (122:25–27); as the harmonious state of the Aeons (68:27, 71:11); and as a description of the ultimate restoration (ⲁⲡⲟⲕⲁⲧⲁⲥⲧⲁⲥⲓⲥ) of the Church and the Pleroma (123:11–27, 133:6–7).[77]

The state of "mixing" (ⲧⲱϩ/ⲧⲁϩⲧϩ) is never mentioned when the text describes the Aeons in the Pleroma. The words for mixing are used when the Logos gets "unmixed" (ⲁⲧⲧⲱϩ) from his erroneous creation by virtue of the intercession of the Savior (90:17–18); when the Logos does not allow his superior powers to "mix" (ⲧⲱϩ) with the inferior ones (97:25); when the righteous Hebrews transcend the influence of the "mixed powers" (ⲛⲓϭⲟⲙ ⲉⲧⲉϩⲧⲁϩⲧ) and "attained to the level of the unmixed ones" (ⲁⲩⲧⲉϩⲟ ⲛ̄ⲧⲁⲝⲓⲥ ⲛ̄ⲇⲉ ⲛⲓⲁⲧ·ⲁϩⲧϩ̄) (110:33–34);[78] and to denote those humans and angels who will be lost and destroyed in the end; they are described as mixed (ⲧϩϯϩ/ⲧⲉϩϯϩ) (120:21, 121:22). This mixed state is the original human reality and would have been permanent if it were not for the grace of the Savior. The three kinds of human substances/classes we encounter—pneuma, psychê and matter—are all "mixed" (ⲧⲱϩ/ⲧⲏϩ) before the Savior comes, just as the cosmic powers who are at war with each other are mixed. Salvation is then described as a *joining* or *blending* (ⲧⲱⲧ/ⲙⲟⲩϫϭ) with the Savior and the harmony of the Pleroma (122:15–27, 123:21–25).[79]

TriTrac's concept of positive blending, especially ⲧⲱⲧ, is very much reminiscent of the Stoic notions of συμπάθεια, while being mixed (ⲧⲱϩ/ϩϯϩ), on

77 Compared to ⲧⲱⲧ, ⲙⲟⲩϫϭ seems to be used more neutrally.

78 My translation.

79 Dunderberg suggests that Aristotelian notions of blending might also be influential here. I agree and suggest that what we have here is a mix of Aristotelian notions of blending, and Stoic notions of blending and sympathy. According to Aristotle, the superior substance of a mixture could be affected by being mixed and become something new. In *TriTrac*, this is not irreversible, neither was it so for Aristotle. For Stoics, the unfavorable element in life was the result of being in flux, constant changing and shaking that resulted in wrong impressions seeming favorable. What was needed was for the blending to become balanced, firm, and harmonious (συμπάθεια); thus the mind would not be as vulnerable to impressions. I would argue that both these notions, the Aristotelian possibility of a mixed state being reversed and the Stoic goal of a blended state in sympathy, appear in *TriTrac* See Aristotle, *On Generation and Corruption* 1.10.327b; Buch-Hansen, *It is the Spirit*, 75–84; Dunderberg, "Stoic Traditions", 231–236.

the other hand, represents a disturbed state; a person who is intermingled with false impressions and powers is more reminiscent of what Stoics viewed as an untrained mind that did not live in accordance with the divine Logos.[80]

Similarly, *TriTrac* seems to equate salvation and knowledge with a firm mind that is not subjected to false impressions, and one that is harmoniously blended with God/the Savior. This can, for instance, be seen in the way the Logos is depicted in *TriTrac*. When the Logos is in his original state, he is *joined* (ⲙⲟⲩϫϭ/ⲧⲱⲧ) with the Pleroma, and this is described as firm and unchanging, but when he falls he becomes *mixed* (ⲧⲱϩ) with his lower creation and this is described as unstable, disturbed, and changing. After his fall, the Logos is associated with movement; he is called "the one who moved", "the Logos who moved" (85:15–16, 115:21, 115:28), "the movement which is the Logos" (77:7).[81] In this state, he acts erroneously and on false impressions (ⲫⲁⲛⲧⲁⲥⲓⲁ) and is subjected to *phantasms* (ⲉⲓⲇⲱⲗⲟⲛ); he is described as "double minded" (ⲧⲙⲛⲧ·ϩ̣ⲏ̣ⲧ ⲥ̣ⲛ̣ⲉⲩ) (77:21–25), and in an "unstable condition" (ⲛⲓⲧⲱϣⲉ ⲙ̄ⲡⲓⲣⲏⲧⲉ ⲛⲛⲁⲧⲥⲙⲓⲛⲉ) (80:31–32); his creations are "not in accordance with reason" (ⲕⲁⲧⲁ ⲗⲟⲅⲟⲥ ⲉⲛ) (81:12). After his misstep, the Logos looks down at his creation and "instead of unification, he saw division, instead of stability, he [saw] disturbances, instead of [rest], disarray".[82] However, the other Aeons take pity on the Logos in his distress and send down the Savior to him. He is "returned to his stability" (ⲉⲛⲧⲁϥⲥⲧⲁϥ ⲁϩⲟⲩⲛ ⲁⲡⲉϥⲥⲙⲛ̄) (92:23–24) when he becomes "unmixed" (ⲁⲧⲧⲱϩ) from his creation (90:17–18).

The Savior is then sent down to humans as well, from "the unchanging thought of the Logos who returned to himself, after his movement".[83] This results in truth and knowledge. When the Logos is taken from his mixed and unstable state and returned to his original harmonious merged and stable state; he is described as acting through "wisdom and knowledge" (ⲟⲩⲥⲟⲫⲓⲁ ϩⲛ̄ ⲟⲩⲉⲡⲓⲥⲧⲏⲙⲏ) (91:2–3). Thus, the opposite of acting from a mixed and unstable state is to act in accordance with the harmonious blended state of the Father's Pleroma, a state called "restful" (ⲁⲛⲁⲡⲁⲩⲥⲓⲥ/ⲙ̄ⲧⲟⲛ) on several occasions (70:18, 90:19, 92:9, 107:26). The final restoration and the baptism also draw on this particular language. The restoration is complete when all members are back in one place, when they are *merged* (ⲧⲱⲧ) (123:24). Baptism is when

80 For example, 70:3 where ⲧⲱⲧ is used for the unity of the Aeons, defined as the thought of God.

81 These passages and the theme of movement will be discussed in detail in Chapter 2.

82 80:16–19: ⲁⲛⲧⲓ ⲟⲩⲙⲟⲩϫϭ ⲁϥⲛⲉⲩ ⲁ[ⲩⲟⲩ]ⲱϣⲉ· ⲁⲛⲧⲓ ⲟⲩⲥⲙⲓⲛⲉ ⲁ̣ϥ̣[ⲛⲉⲩ] ⲁϩⲛ̄ϣⲧⲟⲣⲧⲣ̄ ⲁⲛⲧⲓ ϩⲉ̣ⲛⲙ̣[ⲧⲁⲛ] ⲁϩⲛ̄ⲧⲁⲣⲁⲭⲏ. Translation by Attridge and Pagels, slightly modified.

83 115:26–28: ⲡⲓⲙⲉⲩⲉ· ⲛ̄ⲛⲁⲧ·ⲡⲱⲛⲉ ⲁⲃⲁⲗ ⲛ̄ⲧⲉ ⲡⲗⲟⲅⲟⲥ ⲉⲛⲧⲁϥⲥⲧⲁϥ· ⲉϩⲟⲩⲛ ⲙ̄ⲙⲓⲛ ⲙ̄ⲙⲟϥ· ⲙⲛ̄ⲛ̄ⲥⲁ ⲡⲉϥⲕⲓⲙ.

the Father grants humans "their merging with him in knowledge" (ⲛⲟⲩⲙⲟⲩϫϭ ⲛ̄ⲙ̄ⲙⲉϥ ϩⲛ̄ⲛ ⲟⲩⲥⲁⲩⲛⲉ) (128:18–19),[84] which will happen in "an unwavering and immovable way" (ⲟⲩⲙⲛ̄ⲧⲁ<ⲧ>ⲣⲓⲕⲉ· ⲙⲛ̄ ⲟⲩⲙⲛ̄ⲧⲁⲧⲕⲓⲙ) (128:27–28), and this is how the "redemption into God, Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit"[85] is described.

As Dunderberg has suggested, it seems possible that *TriTrac* here draws upon the Stoic doctrine of being harmoniously merged with the divine, resulting in knowledge. However, it is still important to recognize—as Dunderberg does—that there are aspects in *TriTrac* that are completely un-Stoic: for example, the attitude toward matter. To this I would add that the way the concept of "mixing" is presented is also fundamentally un-Stoic. In *TriTrac*, the mixed state is due to the influence of matter, which brings about *phantasms* and *imitations*, illusions that draw the mind away from knowledge and harmony and into strife and unrest. Stoics were, as we know, materialists and did not view matter as inherently negative; one could not be "unmixed" from matter since everything was matter. We find, however, in the epistemology of Plato and Aristotle something that is very much reminiscent of the way "mixing" is used in *TriTrac*. As seen above, Plato and Aristotle differentiated between beliefs and knowledge. Belief pertained to the sensible world, to sense perception and was the result of the mind being "mixed" with the body. Knowledge could only be retained in the mind and for this the mind needed to be unmixed from the body. Sense perception was connected to the body, like the eyes and other organs, and it was through the bodily senses that one formed beliefs about the world. But knowledge was something different, it did not depend on organs or anything bodily. The mind itself produced knowledge and if the mind was to retain an uninfluenced perspective it needed to be unmixed from the body. For this, Aristotle uses the term ἀμιγῆ, *unmixed*. In his work *On the Soul*, Aristotle writes that:

> It is necessary then that mind, since it thinks all things, should be unmixed (ἀμιγῆ), as Anaxagoras says, in order that it may be in control, that is, that it may know; for the intrusion of anything foreign hinders and obstructs it … So it is unreasonable to suppose that it [the mind] is mixed (μεμῖχθαι) with the body; for in that case it would become somehow qualitative, *e.g.*, hot or cold, or would even have some organ, as the sensitive faculties have; but in fact, it has none.[86]

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84 Translation by Attridge and Pagels, slightly modified.

85 127:30–32: ⲡⲥⲱⲧⲉ· ⲁϩⲟⲩⲛ ⲉⲡⲛⲟⲩⲧⲉ· ⲡⲓⲱⲧ· ⲙⲛ̄ ⲡϣⲏⲣⲉ ⲙⲛ̄ ⲡⲛ(ⲉⲩⲙ)ⲁ ⲉⲧⲟⲩⲁⲁⲃ.

86 Aristotle, *On the Soul* III.4.429a19–23: ἀνάγκη ἄρα, ἐπεὶ πάντα νοεῖ, ἀμιγῆ εἶναι, ὥσπερ φησὶν Ἀναξαγόρας, ἵνα κρατῇ, τοῦτο δ᾽ ἐστὶν ἵνα γνωρίζῃ· παρεμφαινόμενον γὰρ κωλύει τὸ ἀλλότριον

The mind does not have the same attributes as the body, and a clear mind should not be distracted by bodily functions. Knowledge is reached, not through bodily senses but through pure intellectual ability.[87] Plato argued something very similar.[88] First-century CE Middle Platonists such as Philo and Plutarch used the term ἀμιγῆ in the same way as Aristotle in the above quote.[89] This is also, I argue, the basis for the distinction made in *TriTrac* between those who have the ability to gain knowledge and those who do not. Those powers that are thoroughly material, by definition, do not have what it takes to retain knowledge. To be able to retain knowledge one needs the mind and, what is more pertinent, one needs the absence of bodily influence. As has become clear from the discussion above, the negative mixture is always associated with the left side of the Logos' creation, that which is associated with materiality, false impressions, and the body. Thus, one could say that the concept of *mixing* in *TriTrac* draws on the Platonic and Aristotelian thought that the mind needs to be detached from the influence of base matter, because, as Plato and Aristotle pointed out, an unfavorable mixing between mind and body could not lead to knowledge.[90] The mind needed to be "unmixed", that is, uncorrupted by outside influence, in order for true knowledge to be viable.

6 Conclusion: Ontology, Epistemology, and Ethics

It is perhaps fitting to begin the conclusion of the present chapter with an elucidation of the appropriation of philosophy among ancient Christians. Just because we find Stoic thought in a Christian text (or for that matter Platonic or Aristotelian thought), it does not necessarily mean that the people behind the texts got that specific thought from Stoics, or recognized it as Stoic. Even

καὶ ἀντιφράττει… διὸ οὐδὲ μεμῖχθαι εὔλογον αὐτὸν τῷ σώματι· ποιός τις γὰρ ἂν γίγνοιτο, ψυχρὸς ἢ θερμός, ἢ κἂν ὄργανόν τι εἴη, ὥσπερ τῷ αἰσθητικῷ· νῦν δ' οὐθέν ἐστιν. Translation by Hett, the only difference is that I translate ἀμιγῆ "unmixed" instead of "uncontaminated" in order to make the connection to *TriTrac* clearer. See W. S. Hett, *Aristotle: On the Soul*, Loeb Classicalal Library (Cambridge, M.A.: Harvard University Press, 1957), 165.

87 Aristotle, *On the Soul* III.4.429.

88 Plato, *Phaedo* 66b–67b.

89 Plutarch, *On the Sign of Socrates* 591d–e; Philo, *On Abraham* 124–130. Discussed further in Chapter 4.

90 See also the ethical pursuits favored by Plotinus, who strived for *catharsis*: cutting away the passions and the negative influence of matter and being reintegrated into the divine Intellect. See John Dillon, "An Ethics for the Late Antique Sage", in *The Cambridge Companion to Plotinus*, ed. Lloyd P. Gerson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 320–322.

less likely is it that they—or more specifically whoever was behind *TriTrac*—would have acknowledged that Christianity in any way depended on Stoicism, or any other philosophical school for that matter. As will be discussed in more detail in Chapters 4–5: Christian theologians of the first few centuries, in general terms, saw their teachings as the *culmination* of philosophy, the perfecting of it, not as founded on philosophy. As George Boys-Stones has pointed out: ancient philosophers did not shy away from borrowing ideas from their 'opponents' and making them their own, and this applied to Christian thinkers as well.[91]

In order to understand the fundamental principles of any ethical discussion, ontology and epistemology are crucial. As is so clear in *TriTrac*, the different substances of which the world and humans are made up relate in different ways to knowledge and salvation. As has been explored in detail in this chapter, knowledge is equal to goodness as well as salvation. In *TriTrac*, the world is composed of three different kinds of substance, all of which reflect the divine in different ways. The psychic substance has potential and retains the possibility for gaining truth, being a *likeness* (ⲉⲓⲛⲉ) of the things above, but for this it needs remembrance, a concept reminiscent of how ancient philosophers imagined basic moral development to take place. The pneumatic substance is stronger in its reflection of and attraction to the divine; it is like an *image* (ϩⲓⲕⲱⲛ), and is drawn to knowledge immediately when it appears. Those people who have the *image* or the *likeness* of the divine are described as just and good, but moral excellence is not something one can develop in isolation. The just are those who have become *joined* within a collective. Salvation and moral growth is thus not an individual experience but a joint venture. However, in matter, there is no reflection of the divine and thus becoming entangled with matter, in *TriTrac* called being "mixed" (ⲧⲱϩ/ⲧⲁϩⲧϩ), is associated with ignorance and ultimately destruction. The ontological and epistemological concerns are foundational for the ethical concerns in *TriTrac*. In this way *TriTrac* represents a Christian reception of the views common among Greco-Roman philosophers who claimed that understanding physics was crucial for the differentiation of good and bad things.[92] Clement had maintained the very same thing.[93]

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91 George Boys-Stones, *Post-Hellenistic Philosophy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 101–105.

92 SVF III.68. Translation by Long and Sedley, *Hellenistic Philosophers*, 369.

93 At *Stromata* IV.25 Clement writes that "let us proceed from physics to the more clear ethics" (μετιτέον δὴ ἀπὸ τῶν φυσικωτέρων ἐπὶ τὰ προφανέστερα <τὰ> ἠθικά). Greek text from Otto Stählin, *Clemens Alexandrinus, Zweiter ban. Stromata buch I–VI* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1960).

In Part II, I return to the point that each individual has to be integrated within a whole in order to access knowledge and salvation. It is my contention that these epistemological and ontological details have bearing for ethics of a more practical nature: a person's moral agency is determined by its relationship with other people and the constitution of one's very being. In order for the psychic *likeness* and the pneumatic *image* to be able to reflect the truth they need to be integrated harmoniously. Psychic and pneumatic people also need to be *joined* with a community in order to reach salvation.[94] However, as will be discussed in further detail, not all people had what it took to be able to do this; some people were simply too lost to the illusions of material existence to be able to become members of a Christian community: they did not—indeed, they could not—listen to reason. This chapter should be viewed as a mere introduction to the ethics of the text from the perspective of 'hard sciences', such as physics and cognitive theory.

The way the workings of the human mind related to ethics will be explored further in the next chapter, but this time read from the perspective of the text's relation to ancient theories of emotions and their effect on human life. To understand how emotions related to human behavior we need to look at them in light of their function within ancient theories of cognition. Here, too, the theory of blending and its opposition, being mixed, become important. As we will see, being stable, restfully and harmoniously merged (ⲧⲏⲧ) with the Pleroma, is described as resulting in certain positive feelings, while the opposite mixed state results in passions and negative feelings. The next chapter is devoted to exploring these emotions and the role they play in the ethics of *TriTrac.*

94 This is similar to what Aristotle argued, that each individual has a part to play in the whole. The human being is a "political animal" (πολιτικόν ζῶον), see for example *Politics* I.1253a1–18.

CHAPTER 2

Emotions, Demons, and Moral Ability

This chapter deals with *TriTrac*'s relationship to ancient theories of emotions (πάθη) and cognition. What role do emotions play within the mechanisms of the mind? In ancient time, emotions were not only thought to be a cognitive matter, but very much a bodily matter, too;[1] they were also closely intertwined with ethics and morality.[2] As the famous philosopher-physician Galen stated plainly, the doctrine of virtues was thought to follow necessarily from the doctrine of the emotions.[3] Nonetheless, early Christian attitudes to emotions has been a somewhat neglected topic[4] until fairly recently,[5] while *TriTrac*'s relation to ancient theories on emotions remains to be explored, especially from the perspective of their importance for ethical considerations. In this chapter, we explore the role that emotion, or passion,[6] plays in *TriTrac* from the perspective of ancient debates concerning the composition of the human mind and the cognitive apparatus. We also have reason to explore the connection between ancient theories of emotions and demonology. But first, a short look

1 See, for example, Carlin A. Barton, *Roman Honor: The Fire in the Bones* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 1–4; Sorabji, *Emotion*, 17–29.

2 See, for example, John T. Fitzgerald, "The Passions and Moral Progress: An Introduction", in *Passions and Moral Progress in Greco-Roman Thought*, ed. John T. Fitzgerald (London and New York: Routledge, 2008), 1–25.

3 Galen, *On the Opinions of Hippocrates and Plato* v.6.1. For a work that recognizes the central importance of the body for early Christian social structures, although the focus on cognition and emotions is not discussed to any great extent, see Peter Brown, *The Body and Society: Men, Women, and Sexual Renunciation in Early Christianity* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988).

4 See the overview in Stephen C. Barton, "Eschatology and the Emotions in Early Christianity", *Journal of Biblical Literature* 130:3 (2011): 571–591. For example, as Barton points out, there was no entry on "emotions" or "passions" in *The Dictionary of New Testament Background*, eds. Craig A. Evans and Stanley E. Porter (Downers Grove, I. L.: Inter-Varsity, 2000).

5 Today there is much written on the subject. For example, see Fitzgerald, *The Passions and Moral Progress*; Sorabji, *Emotion*; Simo Knuuttila, *Emotions in Ancient and Medieval Philosophy* (Oxford: Claredon Press, 2004); Matthew A. Elliott, *Faithful Feelings: Rethinking Emotion in the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2006).

6 To translate the Greek πάθος and πάθη I will here use the terms "passion" and "emotion" somewhat interchangeably. I use the term "emotion" when the everyday use of the concept is closer to hand and in a more neutral sense, and the term "passion" when the meaning is closer to the meaning of that which one "suffers under", in a more negative sense. For a discussion of the way πάθος and πάθη are usually translated into English, see Fitzgerald, "The Passions and Moral Progress", 2–5.

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at previous research, followed by a historical survey that will work as an introduction to the discussion of *TriTrac*'s particular view of emotions and their importance for ethical deliberations.

In Christian and Jewish apocrypha, we find a preoccupation with the nature of emotions and particularly the negative influence emotions have on humans.[7] One example of the way ancient theories of emotions could be integrated into Judeo-Christian worldviews can be seen in *ApJohn*. Takashi Onuki has shown that this text (in the long version) is heavily dependent on a Stoic theory of emotions. Emotions are associated with the different heavenly powers that build the human body and soul and that influence human life on earth.[8] When it comes to Valentinian writings, Ismo Dunderberg has done much toward exploring the influence of, and relation to, ancient philosophical theories on emotions.[9] Dunderberg argues that Valentinian writings differ from the Sethian *ApJohn*, which associates emotions with the lower angels of the Demiurge.[10] In Valentinian writings, Dunderberg notes, the role of emotions is associated with the youngest Aeon,[11] often called Wisdom, but not with the lower demons.[12] Wisdom is portrayed as unable to control her emotions; she becomes entangled with them and finally yields to *desire*, resulting in the creation of the Demiurge and the Cosmos. Wisdom is then healed from her destructive emotions by the Savior.[13] Dunderberg has argued that ancient theories of emotion played an important role for Valentinians, to the extent that he has called Valentinian theology "the therapy of emotions".[14] Geoffrey Smith has recently criticized Dunderberg for this, stating that terming Valentinian thought "therapy of emotions" is a misrepresentation that neglects the Christian aspects of the theology in favor of philosophical traits. According to Smith, this is a result of Dunderberg's uncritical reading of the heresiologists'

7 See, for example, *Pseudo-Clementine Homilies* 19.20.6–21.7; 4Macc 1–3, 6–7, 13–16, 18.

8 *ApJohn* NHC II, 1.18. Takashi Onuki, *Gnosis und Stoa: Eine Untersuchung zum Apokryphon des Johannes* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1997).

9 Dunderberg, "Stoic Traditions", 220–238. Dunderberg also discusses some Stoic notions in Valentinian theology in *Beyond Gnosticism*, 95–118.

10 Dunderberg, "Stoic Traditions", 225–229. I agree with Dunderberg that in Valentinian writings emotions do not seem to be connected to the four primal passions as Onuki has shown is the case for *ApJohn*. However, I here argue that passions and lower material angels are indeed intimately linked.

11 See Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* I.4.3; *ExcTheod* 67:2; Hippolytus, *Refutation of All Heresies* VI.32.5.

12 Dunderberg, *Gnostic Morality*, 123.

13 *ExcTheod* 45:1–2; Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* I.2.2. In some versions, a Lower Wisdom is separated from the healed Higher Wisdom and the Lower Wisdom falls and needs a second healing experience from the Savior (Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* I.4.1–5; Hippolytus, *Refutation of All Heresies* VI.32.5–6.

14 Dunderberg, *Beyond Gnosticism*, 95–118.

polemical descriptions of the Valentinians as “school of learning” rather than a church.[15] Although I agree that the comparison of Valentinians to a philosophical school is potentially misleading (Chapter 5 explores this question in detail), I argue here that Dunderberg’s point about emotions is not at all ill-founded, at least when it comes to *TriTrac*. Concern for the negative impact of emotions was not uncommon among Christians, and *TriTrac* is certainly not an exception. Furthermore, I agree with Dunderberg that *TriTrac* is in tune with Stoic thought and that the concept of eradication of emotions is an important theme in the text.

A closer look at *TriTrac* shows a nuanced and very complicated picture. We encounter material powers connected to “desire” (ⲉⲡⲓⲑⲩⲙⲓⲁ), to “fear and perplexity and forgetfulness and confusion and ignorance” (ⲑⲣ̄ⲧⲉ· ⲙⲛ̣̄ ⲧ̣ⲁⲡⲟⲣⲓⲁ· ⲁⲩⲱ ⲧⲃ̄ϣⲉ· ⲁⲩⲱ ϯⲁⲣⲙⲉⲥ ⲁⲩⲱ ⲧⲙⲛ̄ⲧⲁⲧⲥⲁⲩⲛⲉ·) (98:2–4).[16] We also encounter higher-order powers associated with “enjoyment” (ⲧⲁⲡⲟⲗⲁⲩⲥⲓⲥ), “brotherly love” (ⲧⲙⲛ̄ⲧⲙⲁⲉⲓⲥⲁⲛ), “generosity” (ⲧⲙⲛ̄ⲧⲁⲫⲑⲟⲛⲟⲥ), “faith” (ⲡⲛⲁϩⲧⲉ), “obedience” (ⲡⲥⲱⲧⲙ̄), and “joy” (ⲡⲣⲉϣⲉ) (96:26–97:16). On top of this, there is a middle level of powers that are drawn toward feelings like “honor” (ⲧⲁⲉⲓⲟ), “glory” (ⲡⲉⲁⲩ), the “lust for command” (ⲧⲙⲛⲧⲙⲁⲉⲓⲟⲩⲉϩ ⲥⲁϩⲛⲉ), and “empty lust for glory” (ϯⲙⲛ̄ⲧⲙ̣ⲁ̣ⲉⲓⲉⲁ[ⲩ]· ⲉⲧϣⲟⲩⲉⲓⲧ) (83:34–84:24).[17] To sort out the relation between these different emotions and powers and in order to grasp the full depth of their importance to the ethics of the text we need a firm grasp of ancient theories of passions and cognition. Thus, it is fitting to begin with a short overview of ancient discussions of emotions in general and in particular among Christians.

1 Emotions and Cognitive Theory in Ancient Thought

All philosophical schools in ancient time had a position on the nature of emotions and how best to relate to them. Most of them viewed emotions principally as a sickness of the soul that needed healing (θεραπεύειν). However, with closer scrutiny one encounters many nuances, nuances that were important for ethics.[18] Stoics were at the forefront of discussions of emotions and

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15 Smith, *Guilt by Association*, 168–169.

16 Translation by Attridge and Pagels, slightly modified.

17 Attitudes toward honor and the particular notion “lust for command” (ⲧⲙⲛ̄ⲧⲙⲁⲉⲓⲟⲩⲉϩ ⲥⲁϩⲛⲉ) is explored in detail in Chapter 6.

18 For a work on this topic that has become a modern classic, see Martha Nussbaum, *The Therapy of Desire: Theory and Practice in Hellenistic Ethics* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1994).

their role in ethical theory,[19] but it is with Plato that we first find a developed theory of emotions, and as we shall see, it was intimately linked to the mechanisms of human behavior. Plato divided the human soul into three parts: the faculty that reasoned (λογιστικόν); the tempered or spirited part (θυμοειδής); and the emotive part (ἐπιθυμητικόν). The spirited and emotive part was associated with the body while the reasoning part belonged to the immortal mind.[20] The spirited part belonged to the body but was more closely associated with cognition than the body, and as such it could become a supporter for the reasoning part.[21] Honor, pride, and admiration were feelings associated with the spirited part. However, it was the reasoning part which should govern if aspirations for a happy and virtuous life were to be fulfilled. The emotive part of the soul was driven by immediate sensual satisfaction, like desire for pleasure or avoidance of pain; this part of the soul needed to be controlled.[22] Some have argued that Plato changed his view on the emotive part, that he later maintained that there were some aspects of this part, such as love, that could serve to benefit the whole soul, in a similar way as some of the responses caused by the spirited part.[23] The honor and pride of the spirited part and the love of the emotive part could be harnessed to serve reason.[24] Whether or not Plato changed his mind in later years, it is nevertheless clear that he saw emotions chiefly as unhelpful aspects of part of the soul, something associated with the body that needed to be controlled if not completely suppressed.

Aristotle took a somewhat different view (or, rather developed Plato's later thoughts). He accepted a tripartite view of the soul and maintained that one needed to recognize and balance one's emotions; the ideal was moderation.[25] A theory of moderation, *metriopatheia* (μετριοπάθεια), would later become influential among Middle- and Neoplatonists. Aristotle viewed humans primarily as social beings, and to live a good and happy existence one needed to be engaged in everyday life where emotions played an important role.[26] For example, to feel pity was a sign of a well-socialized person, and the lack of

19 Sorabji, *Emotions*, 1–16.
20 Plato, *Phaedo* 66b–67a.
21 Plato, *The Republic* IV.440a–441a.
22 Plato, *The Republic* IV.435a–441c, IX.571b–572b, 580d–583a, 581d–e.
23 See the likeness of the horse span in Plato, *Phaedrus* 246a–256e.
24 See William W. Fortenbaugh, *Aristotle on Emotion* (London: Duckworth, 1975); Martha Nussbaum, *The Fragility of Goodness* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986).
25 See Knuuttila, *Emotions*, 24–48; Fortenbaugh, *Aristotle on Emotion*; S. R. Leighton, "Aristotle and the Emotions", *Phronesis* 27 (1982): 144–174.
26 Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* I.7–9, II.1–8. See also Sorabji, *Emotions*, 22–26.

pity would be a form of negative *apatheia* (absence of emotion) that was not beneficial.[27]

Like Plato, Aristotle saw emotions as bodily phenomena,[28] and both thought that emotions were a natural part of human life and could never be completely eradicated. Stoics, however, strived to reach *apatheia* (ἀπάθεια), the eradication of emotions. This state was, Stoics maintained, reached through therapy (θεραπεύειν) that consisted of improving one's mind and rational faculties to enable a life in harmony with the divine law (the Logos) governing the world. The pursuit of a harmonious life would, if one succeeded, ultimately lead to the substitution of passion for "good emotions" (εὐπάθεια). According to Stoics, if one lacked a firm and well-disciplined mind, passions could affect the way one reacted to different impressions. Passions were disturbances in the mind that could cause an unstable mind to act on false impressions. For example, the impression that one was being ill-treated could cause anger, which in turn could cause one to act contrary to reason.[29] Epicureans were close to the Stoic attitude to emotions. Contrary to popular belief today, Epicureans did not seek pleasure (ἡδονή) in every moment. Pleasure, like all emotions, needed to be checked. Suffering was the result of faulty emotions taking hold, like fear of death. A destructive emotion was like a false belief. The absence of bodily pain combined with the control of positive emotions and eradication of negative emotions resulted in the Epicureans' goal: *tranquility* (ἀταραξία).[30]

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27 Aristotle, *Rhetoric* II.8.1385b21–3, b30–1; *Nicomachean Ethics* II.3.

28 Aristotle, *On the Soul* I.1, especially I.1.403a29–b1; *On the Movements of Animals* VII.701b24–32.

29 SVF III.394. See also a summary of Zeno's and Chrysippus views on what emotions are in Galen, *On the Opinions of Hippocrates and Plato* V.1.4–6. Zeno thought that emotions were flutterings or disturbances in the mind, followed by a judgment, while Chrysippus instead put the focus on the judgment itself. Zeno called emotions movements of the soul and "flutterings" (πτοία) (Stobaeus, *Physical and Moral Extracts* II.39.5). Chrysippus viewed emotions as judgments, a judgment that there was something good or bad at hand. Fear was the judgment that there was something bad at hand, and pleasure that there was something good; these judgments/emotions caused the mind to contract or expand. See Sorabji, *Emotions*, 17–54. Emotions, Chrysippus maintained, were judgments made by reason, thus a reason impaired was the result of emotions getting hold. This was to become the main Stoic opinion. Posidonius might have been an exception. See Richard Sorabji, "Chrysippus—Posidonius—Seneca: A High-Level Debate on Emotion", in *The Emotions in Hellenistic Philosophy*, eds. J. Sihvola and T. Engberg-Pedersen (Dordrecht, Boston, and London: Kluwer 1998), 100–108. See a summary of this line of Stoic thought in, for example, Aulus Gellius, *Attic Nights* XIX.1.

30 Epicurus, *Letter to Menoeceus* 128–132.

Middle Platonists rejected the Stoic notion that all emotions needed to be eradicated and also rejected the view of the soul that did not include an irrational part. Instead, many Middle Platonists seem to have argued for the possibility and appeal of seeking harmony between the different parts of the soul. For this Aristotle's idea of *metriopatheia* was employed.[31] Philo uses this concept[32] and Plutarch writes that the Stoic ideal of *apatheia* was not socially viable.[33] Moral progress was described as *metriopatheia*, not the complete eradication of emotion but an ordered and proportionate attitude. *Apatheia* was, Plutarch and Philo both maintained, something divine but not viable in everyday life.[34] In this sense one can say that Middle Platonists were closer to Aristotle in the view that emotions were useful in everyday social life and in moral progress, while the ideal was still based on Plato's (and to some degree the Stoics') idea of the absence of emotions as a reflection of the divine. This view of emotions—disconnecting social activity from a finer activity associated with the divine potentiality of humans—was continued by Neoplatonists like Plotinus and Porphyry.[35] The highest level of existence did not include the material body, nor the emotions associated with it. This was a wholly un-Stoic thought.

That there was an extensive reception of these theories on emotion among Christians is beyond doubt.[36] Paul's treatment of emotions in his epistles reveals knowledge of theories of emotions developed in the philosophical schools,[37] the influence of which becomes more obvious among later Christians. One example is Clement of Alexandria, who presents in his *Paedagogus*

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31 See, for example, Alcinous, *Didaskalikos* 30.5.

32 Philo, *On Abraham* 257. Here Philo portrays Abraham as in control of his emotions when his wife dies. However, Abraham did not completely suppress his emotions; rather, he "moderated" them (See also *Questions and Answers on Genesis* IV.73).

33 Plutarch, *Consolation to Apollonius* 102c–d.

34 There is a contradiction of the Middle Platonists' praise and critique of *apatheia*. For more on this see John Dillon, "Metriopatheia and apatheia" in *The Golden Chain: Studies in the Development of Platonism and Christianity*, ed. J. Dillon (Aldershot: Variorum, 1990), 510–518.

35 Plotinus, *Ennead* I.2.7, 23–28; Porphyry, *Sententiae* 34.

36 See for example Knuuttila, *Emotions*, 5–176.

37 Paul makes negative assessments of passions in the following places: Rom 7:5, 1:24, 6:12–13, 13:13–14; Gal 5:24; 1 Cor 10:6–10. See Gal 5:24 and Rom 7:5 for passions in association with the body. See Rom 1:26–27, 1 Thess 4:5 but also Col 3:5 for passion and sexuality. In 1 Thess 4:13–18 Paul discusses the passion grief (λύπη) and in 1 Cor 7:32–35 the need to be free from "anxiety" (ἀμέριμνος). For an overview of work performed on Paul's relation to ancient theories of emotions see, for example, David Charles Aune, "Passions in the Pauline Epistles: The Current State of Research", in Fitzgerald, "*The Passions and Moral Progress*", 221–237.

a theory of emotions modeled on the Stoic view.[38] For Clement the irrationality of emotions was combated by the rationality represented by Christ, the divine Logos.[39] Clement followed the Stoics in thinking that emotions were very close to judgments but, just as for Plato, Aristotle, and later Platonists, emotions for Clement were associated with the body and the earth.[40] Imitation of God was the ideal and *metriopatheia* was a good start, but Clement maintained that the goal for any advanced Christian (Gnostic) was *apatheia*.[41] Origen also thought that one needed to suppress the emotional part of the soul to form moral judgments, guided by reason; discussing the suppression of emotions in association with moral progress, he said that the truly virtuous person had reached *apatheia*.[42] Basil of Caesarea likewise claimed that one part of the soul was harmful and associated with emotions and moral progress entailed controlling this part.[43] Gregory of Nyssa argues in *On the Soul and Resurrection* that the two other parts of the soul (the emotive and spirited parts) were also necessary, at least for life in the sensible world.[44] Reason was like the charioteer of a cart made up of the emotions, Gregory wrote.[45] A combination of moderation and correct emotional response was the best way for a Christian to act in the world. *Apatheia* was something divine. In this, Gregory followed Basil as well as

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38 Clement, *Paedagogus* I.13.101. See also *Stromata* II.13.

39 Clement, *Paedagogus* I.1.2–3.

40 Clement, *Paedagogus* I.2.4; *Stromata* VII.1. For more on this theme and immorality as bodily, see Meeks, *Origins*, 130–149.

41 Clement, *Stromata* V.11, VI.9, VI.13.

42 Origen, *Commentary on Matthew* 13.16, 15.4, 15.16–17; *Commentary on the Song of Songs* II.128–33. See also *Homily on Ezekiel* 1.15–16 where Origen discusses the tripartite nature of the soul, and *Commentary on Matthew* 15.4 where he writes of the cutting away of the emotional part of the soul.

43 Basil, *Homily Against Those Who Are Prone to Anger*. Gregory of Nazianzus' work *Against Anger* can be understood to belong to this view of emotions as well. Although he does not discuss the detailed constituents of the soul, he wrote that people needed therapy for anger, which was a destructive emotion. Gregory of Nazianzus, *Against Anger.*

44 He discusses the constitution of the soul but argued that there was need for emotions in earthly life. See Gregory of Nyssa, *Life of Moses* II.89–101, where he discusses the need for balance between the different parts of the soul, following the Platonic tripartition. His sister Macrina, however, is portrayed as taking a different stance in Gregory's work *On the Soul and Resurrection.* Macrina maintains that Moses did not feel destructive emotions at all because his soul was only made up of the most essential substance: reason. Gregory of Nyssa, *On the Soul and Resurrection* 56a.

45 Gregory of Nyssa, *On the Soul and Resurrection* 61b. Here Gregory follows Plato and Galen. Plato, *Phaedrus* 246a–254e. Galen, *On the Opinions of Hippocrates and Plato* V.5.32–35, V.6.31, III.3.5–6.

the Middle Platonists before them, while Origen and Clement seemed to think *apatheia* and perfect virtue were viable in the world.[46]

Nemesius of Emesa and John Chrysostom also valued moderation but applied it to different social situations. They argued that the perfect Christians were those who strove for taming and destroying destructive appetites completely (often associated with the body), while an ideal of moderation was more appropriate for Christians who did not practice as harsh a routine as those striving for perfection (read: monks).[47] In the emerging monastic context, the combatting of emotions was central. Emotions were often associated with demons of different kinds, demons that could visit the monk and stir up different emotions.[48]

Even this brief survey suffices to demonstrate that the view of emotions in ancient philosophy was very closely associated with the formation of the mind, with the cognitive faculty that governed thoughts, beliefs, and actions. The basest emotions were often associated with the body, but the soul also gave rise to emotions. Some, like Stoics, even thought that the intellect, or reasoning aspect of the cognitive faculty, could give rise to emotions, good emotions, although only among the very wise. Sometimes the different components of the mind stood in opposition to one another, and it is here that theories on passions and ethics meet; most would have agreed that a virtuous person was someone who knew which faculty of the mind should govern at which time.

It is time to bring in *TriTrac* and explore the different emotions mentioned in the text and the role they play for the text's ethics. Before we begin, it is worth noting that *TriTrac* is not primarily concerned with presenting a theory of emotions, so we have to approach the subject through the detailed creation narrative.

46 Gregory of Nyssa, *Life of Moses* II.287–290; For a broader discussion and more ancient references, see Knuuttila, *Emotions*, 111–176.

47 Nemesius of Emesa, *On the Nature of Man* 19.80.16–22; John Chrysostom, *On Vainglory and How Parents Should Educate their Children* 65–82.

48 This theme has already been noted by Samuel Rubenson in *The Letters of St. Antony: Origenist Theology, Monastic Tradition and the Making of a Saint* (Lund: Lund University Press, 1990); and later amply explored by David Brakke, *Demons and the Making of the Monk: Spiritual Combat in Early Christianity* (Cambridge, M.A.: Harvard University Press, 2005). However, here it is as important no to over simplify. Emotions were not only negative; we often read of love, devotion, and other 'positive' feelings, often associated with the attitude one should direct to God.

2 Emotions and the Creation Narrative

In *TriTrac* creation is ultimately attributed to the Father, the highest divine figure. The Father is described as “restful” (ⲙ̄ⲧⲁⲛ) (55:16–17), “unchanging” (ϣⲃ̄ⲃⲓⲁⲓⲧ ⲉⲛ) (52:21–22), and “unwavering” (ϩⲁⲥⲉ ⲉⲛ) (53:16); “it is impossible for mind to conceive him” (ⲙⲛ̄ ϭⲁⲙ ⲁⲧⲣⲉⲛⲟⲩⲥ ⲣ̄ ⲛⲟⲓ̈ ⲙ̄ⲙⲁϥ) (54:15–16). The youngest of the Aeons, the Logos, steps away from the unity, stability, and harmony of the Pleroma that emanated from the Father, through the Son and Church. It is clear that the Logos did this of his own free will, but also that it was according to the will of the Father (75:30–76:2, 76:24–77:11). Once the Logos has stepped outside the harmony of the Pleroma, the Limit (ⲡϩⲟⲣⲟⲥ) is raised by the Father, separating the Logos from the rest of the Aeons. After this, the Logos becomes associated with motion, shaking, and disturbance (85:15–16, 115:21, 115:28, 77:7). In this state, the Logos creates substances that are described as coming forth from the Logos through impressions (ⲫⲁⲛⲧⲁⲥⲓⲁ) (78:7–8).[49] Creation is described as beginning when the Logos acted on impressions (ⲫⲁⲛⲧⲁⲥⲓⲁ), when he was confused, “double minded” (ⲧⲙⲛⲧ·ϩⲏ̣ⲧ ⲥ̣ⲛ̣ⲉⲩ) (77:21–25), and not behaving according to the unity of the Pleroma (82:19–21, 98:5). This state leads to self-doubt and “a sickness” (ⲟⲩϣⲱⲛⲉ) being born (77:25–31). Then we read that the Logos “abandoned that which had come to be in defect along with those who had come forth from him through an impression, since they are not his”.[50] What he has produced is described in the following passage:

> … phantasms, shadows, and impressions, lacking reason and the light, these which belong to the vain thought, since they are not products of anything. Therefore, their end will be like their beginning: from that which did not exist (they are) to return once again to that which will not be. According to themselves, however, they are great and powerful beings, more [beautiful] than the names [attached] to them. It is they,

49 Attridge and Pagels’s, and Thomassen’s translations most often use “imagination” or “illusion” or just “phantasy” for ⲫⲁⲛⲧⲁⲥⲓⲁ, but I argue here that “impression” would be more appropriate, as something that appears in your mind on account of exterior influence, not something that you yourself make up, which the English “fantasy”, “imagination”, and “illusion” would imply.

50 78:4–8: ⲁϥⲕⲱ ⲙ̄ⲡⲉⲧⲁϩϣⲱⲡⲉ ϩⲙ̄ ⲡϣⲧⲁ ⲙ̣[ⲛ] ⲛⲉⲛⲧⲁⲩⲉⲓ̄ ⲁⲃⲁⲗ ⲙ̄ⲙⲁϥ [ϩⲛ]ⲛ ⲟⲩⲫⲁⲛⲧⲁⲥⲓⲁ· ϩⲱⲥ ⲉⲛⲛⲟ̣[ⲩϥ] ⲉⲛ ⲛⲉ. Here I favor a translation where the object of ⲁϥⲕⲱ is not translated as “him”, but rather “that which”, in order not to suggest that this object refers to another person present at the creation together with Logos, but that it rather refers to the substance that is the result of Logos’ fall.

however, by themselves who are greater, more powerful, and more honored than the names which are given to them, which are their shadows. In the manner of a reflection are they beautiful. For the face of the copy normally takes its beauty from that of which it is a copy. They thought of themselves that only they existed and that they had no beginning, since they saw no one existing before them. For this reason, they exhibited disobedience and rebellion, being unwilling to submit to the one whom their existence depended on. They desired to command one another and to lord over (each other) [in] their empty ambition, while the glory which they possess contains a cause of the system which was to be. They were imitations of those above. <They> exalted themselves in lust for command, each one of them according to the magnitude of the name of which he was a shadow, imagining that he would become greater than his fellows. The thought of these others was not barren, but just like <those> of which they are shadows, all that they thought about they have as potential sons; those of whom they thought they had as offspring. Therefore, it happened that many offspring came forth from them, as fighters, as warriors, as troublemakers, as apostates. They are disobedient beings, lovers of command. All the other beings of this sort were brought forth from these.[51]

51 78:33–80:11: ⲉϩⲛ̄ⲉⲓⲇⲱⲗⲟⲛ ⲛⲉ ⲙⲛ̄ ϩⲛ̄ϩⲁⲉⲓⲃⲉⲥ ⲙⲛ̄ ϩⲛ̄ⲫⲁⲛⲧⲁⲥⲓⲁ ⲉⲩⲟ ⲛ̄ϫⲁⲉⲓⲉ ⲙ̄ⲡⲗⲟⲅⲟⲥ ⲙⲛ̄ ⲡⲟⲩⲟⲉⲓⲛ ⲛⲉⲉⲓ· ⲉⲧⲉ ⲛⲁ ⲡⲓⲙⲉⲉⲩⲉ ⲉⲧϣⲟⲩⲉⲓⲧ· ⲉϩⲛ̄ϫⲡⲟ ⲛⲗⲁⲩⲉ ⲉⲛ ⲛⲉ· ⲉⲧⲃⲉ ⲡⲉⲉⲓ ⲁⲛ ⲁⲣⲉⲧⲟⲩϩⲁⲏ· ⲛⲁϣⲱⲡⲉ ⲛ̄ⲑⲉ ⲛ̣̄ⲧⲟⲩⲁⲣⲭⲏ ⲁⲃⲁⲗ ϩⲛ̄ ⲡⲉⲧⲉⲛⲉϥ[ϣ]ⲟⲟⲡ· ⲉⲛ ⲁⲧⲣⲟⲩⲧ·ⲥⲧⲁⲩ ⲁⲛ ⲁⲡⲉ·[ⲧ]ⲛ̣̄ⲛⲁϣⲱⲡⲉ ⲉⲛ ⲛ̄ⲧⲁⲩ ⲛ̄ⲇⲉ ⲕⲁⲧⲁ[ⲣⲁ]ⲩ ⲟⲩⲁⲉⲉⲧⲟⲩ ⲉⲧϣⲟⲟⲡ ⲙ̄ⲙⲁⲩ [ⲉⲩ]ⲟ̣ⲉⲓ̄ ⲛⲁϭ ⲉⲩⲟⲉⲓ̄ ⲛ̄ⲣⲙ̄ⲛ̄ϭⲁⲙ·[ⲉⲩⲧⲁⲉ]ⲓⲁⲉⲓⲧ· ⲛ̄ⲇⲉ ⲛ̄ϩⲟⲩⲟ ⲁⲛⲓⲣⲉⲛ [ⲉⲧⲧⲟ]ⲉⲓ ⲁⲣⲁⲩ ⲛⲉⲉⲓ ⲉⲧⲉ ϩⲛϩⲁⲓ̈ⲃⲉⲥ [ⲛⲧⲉⲩ] ⲛ̣ⲉ· ⲉⲩⲧⲥⲁⲉⲓⲁⲉⲓⲧ ϩⲛⲛ ⲟⲩⲧⲁⲛ[ⲧⲛ ⲫⲟ] ⲅ̣ⲁⲣ ⲙ̄ⲡⲓⲇⲱⲗⲟⲛ ϣⲁϥϫⲓ ⲥⲁⲉⲓ[ⲉ ⲛ]ⲧ̣ⲟⲟⲧϥ̄ ⲙ̄ⲡⲉⲉⲓ ⲉⲧⲉ ⲟⲩ<ⲉⲓ>ⲇⲱⲗⲟⲛ [ⲛ]ⲧ̣ⲉϥ ⲡⲉ ϫⲉ ⲛⲉⲩ̣ⲙⲉⲉⲩ̣ⲉ ⲁⲣⲁⲟⲩ [ⲙ]ⲙⲓⲛ ⲙ̄ⲙⲁⲩ· ϫⲉ ϩⲛ̄ϣⲱⲡⲉ ⲟⲩⲁ[ⲉ]ⲉ̣ⲧⲟⲩ ⲛⲉ· ⲁⲩⲱ ϩⲛⲛⲁⲧⲁⲣⲭⲏ ⲛⲉ· [ϩ]ⲱ̣ⲥ ⲉⲛⲥⲉⲛⲉⲩ ⲁϭⲉⲗⲁⲩⲉ ⲉⲛ ⲉϥ[ϣ]ⲟ̣ⲟⲡ ϩⲁ ⲧⲟⲩⲉϩⲏ· ⲉⲧⲃⲉ ⲡⲉⲉⲓ ⲛⲉⲩ[ⲱ]ⲛ̣ϩ ⲁ̣ⲃⲁⲗ· ϩⲛ̄ ⲧⲙⲛ̄ⲧⲁⲧⲣ̄ⲡⲓⲑⲉ [ⲙ]ⲛ̣ ⲛ̣ⲓⲙⲛ̄ⲧⲁⲡⲟⲥⲧⲁⲧⲏⲥ ⲉⲙⲡⲟⲩ[ⲑⲃ]ⲃ̣̄ⲓⲁⲩ ⲙ̄ⲡⲉⲛⲧⲁⲩϣⲱⲡⲉ ⲉⲧⲃⲏⲏ[ⲧϥ] ϫⲉ ⲛⲉⲩⲟⲩⲱϣⲉ· ⲁⲟⲩⲉϩ ⲥⲁ[ϩⲛ]ⲉ· ⲛ̄ⲛⲉⲩⲉⲣⲏⲩ ⲉⲩϭⲣⲱ· ⲁⲣⲁⲟⲩ [ϩⲛ] ⲧⲟⲩⲙⲛ̄ⲧⲙⲁⲉⲓⲉⲁⲟⲩ ⲉⲧϣⲟⲩⲉ̣[ⲓ]ⲧ̣· ⲉⲡⲉⲁⲩ ⲉⲧⲉⲩⲛⲧⲉⲩϥ· ⲉⲩⲛ̄ⲧ̣ⲉϥ̣ ⲙ̄ⲙⲉⲩ ⲛ̄ⲛⲟⲩⲗⲁⲉⲓϭⲉ [ⲛⲧⲉ] ⲧ̣ⲥⲩⲥⲧⲁⲥⲓⲥ ⲉⲧⲛⲁϣⲱⲡⲉ· [ϫ]ⲉ̣ ϩⲛ̣ⲧⲁⲛⲧⲛ̄ ⲛⲉ ϭⲉ ⲛⲧⲉ ⲛⲉⲧϫⲁ·ⲥ̣ⲓ ⲁ<ⲩ>ϥⲓⲧⲟⲩ ⲁϩⲣⲏⲓ̈ ⲁⲩⲙⲛⲧⲙⲁⲓ̈ⲟⲩⲉϩ ⲥⲁϩⲛⲉ· ⲙ̄ⲡⲟⲩⲉ ⲡⲟⲩⲉ ⲙ̄ⲙⲁⲩ ⲕⲁⲧⲁ ⲡⲁⲉⲓⲉⲟⲩ ⲙ̄ⲡⲣⲉⲛ ⲉⲧϥ̄ϣⲟⲟⲡ ⲛ̄ϩⲁⲉⲓⲃⲉⲥ ⲛⲉϥ· ⲫ̣ⲁⲛⲧⲁⲥⲉ· ⲁⲧⲣⲉϥϣⲱⲡⲉ· ⲉϥⲁⲉⲓ· ⲁⲛⲉϥⲉⲣⲏⲩ· ϫⲉ ⲡⲙⲉⲉⲩⲉ ϭⲉ ⲛ̄ⲛⲓⲕⲉⲕⲟⲟⲩⲉ· ⲙⲡⲉϥϣⲱⲡⲉ ⲉϥⲟⲩⲁⲥϥ̄· ⲁⲗⲗⲁ ⲕⲁⲧⲁ ⲡⲧⲁⲛⲧⲛ̄ <ⲛ̄ⲛ>ⲉⲧⲟⲩϣⲟⲟⲡ ⲛⲉⲩ ⲛ̄ϩⲁⲉⲓⲃⲉⲥ ⲡⲉⲧⲁⲩ{ⲁ}ⲙⲉⲩⲉ ⲁⲣⲁϥ ⲧⲏⲣϥ̄ ⲟⲩⲛⲧ̣ⲉⲩϥ̄ ⲙ̄ⲙⲉⲩ ⲛ̄ϣⲏⲣⲉ ⲛⲁⲩⲱ· ⲛ̄ⲧⲁⲩ ⲛⲉⲧⲁⲩⲙⲉⲩⲉ ⲁⲣⲁⲩ ⲙ̄ⲙⲁⲩ ⲛⲉⲟⲩⲛ̄ⲧⲉⲩⲥⲟⲩ ⲙ̄ⲙⲉⲩ ⲛ̄ϫⲡⲟ· ⲁⲃⲁⲗ ⲙ̄ⲡⲉ̣[ⲉⲓ] ⲁⲥϣⲱⲡⲉ· ⲁⲧⲣⲉϩⲁϩ ⲉⲓ̂ ⲁⲃⲁⲗ ⲙ̣̄ⲙⲁⲩ· ⲛ̄ϫⲡⲟ ⲉϩⲛ̄ⲣⲉϥⲙ̄ⲗⲁ̣[ϩ] ⲛⲉ· ⲉϩⲛ̄ⲣⲉϥⲙⲓϣⲉ ⲛⲉ ⲉϩ̣ⲛ̄ⲣⲉϥϯ ϣⲧⲁⲣⲧⲣ̄ ⲛⲉ· ⲉϩⲛ̄ⲁ̣ⲡ̣ⲟⲥⲧ̣ⲁ̣ⲧⲏⲥ ⲛⲉ· ϩⲛ̄ⲁⲧⲣ̄ⲡⲓⲑⲉ ⲛ̣ⲉ̣ ⲉϩ̣ⲛ̣̄ⲙⲁⲉⲓⲟⲩⲉϩ ⲥⲁϩⲛⲉ· ⲛⲉ· ⲁⲩ̣[ⲱ ⲛ]ⲕⲉϩⲁⲉⲓⲛⲉ ⲧⲏⲣⲟⲩ ⲙ̄ⲡⲓⲣⲏ[ⲧⲉ ⲁ]ⲃⲁⲗ ϩⲛ̄ ⲛⲉⲉⲓ. Translation by Attridge and Pagels, slightly modified.

These lower powers are the first part of the Logos creation and it is clear that they derive from impressions and illusion; they are produced as a direct result of the Logos' separation from the Pleroma. In the previous chapter, we identified them with *imitation* (ⲧⲁⲛⲧⲛ), the material substance, that which does not have any true representation of the divine in it. These creatures are several times associated with "sickness" (ϣⲱⲛⲉ) (77:25–31, 80:37–81:4), just before and after the above passage. Later in the text, sickness is identified as "passions" (ϩⲛ̄ⲡⲁⲑⲟⲥ) (95:2–5). Passion is described as a "changing opinion" (ⲟⲩⲅⲛⲱⲙⲏ ⲉⲥⲡ̣ⲁ̣ⲛⲉ) (115:20–21), "a disturbance" (ⲟⲩϣⲟⲣϣⲣ̄), and "a destruction" (ⲟⲩⲧⲉⲕⲟ) (118:5–6).

Then follows the second step of the Logos' creation (the psychics), which in the previous chapter we identified as retaining a *likeness* (ⲉⲓⲛⲉ) to the things in the Pleroma. We are told that the second step of the creation did not come forth "from the sickness" (ⲉⲃ̣ⲟⲗ ⲉⲛ ϩⲛ̄ ⲡϣⲱⲛⲉ) (83:11–12), that is, that psychics are not products of passion. About these creatures we read the following:

> … They were stronger than them in the lust for command, for they were more honored than the first ones, who had been raised above them. Those had not humbled themselves. They thought about themselves that they were beings originating from themselves alone and were without a source. As they brought forth at first according to their own birth, the two orders assaulted one another, fighting for command because of their manner of being. As a result, they were submerged in forces and natures in accord with the condition of mutual assault, having lust for command and all other things of this sort. It is from these that the vain love of glory draws all of them to the desire of the lust for command, while none of them has the exalted thought nor acknowledges it.[52]

52 83:34–84:24. ϫⲉ ⲛ̄ⲧⲁⲩ ϭⲉ ⲁⲩϭⲣ̣ⲱ̣· ⲁⲣⲁⲟⲩ ⲛ̄ⲧⲙⲛ̄ⲧ{ⲙⲛ}ⲙⲁⲉⲓ̣[ⲟ]ⲩⲉϩ ⲥⲁϩⲛⲉ ϫⲉ ⲛⲁⲩⲧⲁⲉⲓⲁⲉⲓ̣[ⲧ]· ⲛ̄ϩⲟⲩⲟ ⲁⲛⲓϣⲁ[ⲣ]ⲡ ⲉⲛⲧⲁⲩϥ[ⲓⲧ]ⲟⲩ̣ [ⲁ]ϩⲣⲏï ⲁϫⲱⲟⲩ· ⲛⲉⲙ̄ⲡⲉ ⲛⲉⲧⲙ̄ⲙ[ⲉⲩ] ⲑⲃⲃⲓⲁⲩ ⲛⲉⲩⲙⲉⲩⲉ ⲁⲣⲁⲟ̣[ⲩ] ϫⲉ ϩⲉⲛϣⲱⲡⲉ ⲁⲃⲁⲗ ⲙ̄ⲙⲁ̣[ⲩ] ⲟⲩⲁⲉⲉⲧⲟⲩ ⲛⲉ· ⲁⲩⲱ· ϩ̣[ⲉ]ⲛⲁⲧⲁⲣⲭⲏ ⲛⲉ· ⲉⲩⲉⲓⲛⲉ ⲁ[ⲃⲁⲗ] ⲛ̄ϣⲁⲣⲡ̄· ⲕⲁⲧⲁ ⲡⲟⲩⲙⲓⲥⲉ ⲛ̣[ⲉⲁⲩ]ϯ ⲡⲉ ⲁϩⲛ̄ ⲛⲟⲩⲉⲣⲏⲟⲩ ⲛ̄ϭⲓ ⲡ̣[ⲓⲇⲁ]ⲅⲙⲁ· ⲥⲛⲉⲩ ⲉⲩⲙⲓϣⲉ· ⲁϫⲛ̣̄ [ⲡⲟⲩ]ⲁϩ ⲥⲁϩⲛ̣ⲉ· ⲁⲃⲁⲗ ⲙ̄ⲡⲓⲥⲙⲁⲧ ⲛ̣ϣⲱ[ⲡ]ⲉ· ⲁⲧⲣⲟⲩⲱⲙⲥ̄ ϩⲁ ϩⲛ̣̄ϭⲟⲙ̣ ⲁⲩⲱ ϩⲁ ϩⲛⲛⲟⲩⲟⲩⲥⲓ[ⲁ] ⲕⲁⲧⲁ ⲡⲧⲱϣⲉ· ⲙ̄ⲡϯ· ⲁ[ϩⲛ] ⲛⲟⲩⲉⲣⲏⲩ· ⲉⲩⲛ̄ⲧⲉⲩ· ⲛ̄ⲧⲙⲛ̣̄[ⲧ]ⲙⲁⲉⲓ̣ⲟ̣ⲩⲉϩ ⲥⲁϩⲛⲉ· ϩⲱⲟⲩ [ⲁⲛ] ⲁⲩⲱ ϩⲛ̣̄ⲕⲉⲕⲟⲟⲩⲉ ⲁⲛ̣ ⲧⲏⲣⲟⲩ ⲙ̣̄ⲡⲓⲣⲏⲧ[ⲉ] ⲁⲃⲁⲗ ϩⲛ̄ ⲛ̣ⲉⲉⲓ ⲉⲥⲥⲱⲕ̣ⲙ̄ⲙⲁ̣ⲩ ⲧⲏⲣⲟⲩ ⲛϭⲓ ϯⲙⲛ̄ⲧⲙ̣ⲁ̣ⲉⲓⲉⲁ[ⲩ]· ⲉⲧϣⲟⲩⲉⲓⲧ· ⲁϩⲟ̣[ⲩⲛ] ⲁⲧⲉⲡ̣ⲓⲑⲩⲙⲓⲁ· ⲛ̄ⲧⲙⲛ̄ⲧ[ⲙⲁ]ⲉⲓⲟⲩⲉϩ ⲥⲁϩⲛⲉ· ⲉⲙⲛ̄ ⲟⲩ[ⲉⲉⲓ]ⲙ̄ⲙⲁ̣ⲩ ⲉⲓⲣⲉ ⲙ̄ⲡⲙⲉⲉⲩ[ⲉ] ⲉⲧϫ̣[ⲁ]ⲥⲓ ⲁⲩⲱ ⲥⲉⲣ̄ ϩⲟⲙ[ⲟ]ⲗⲟⲅ̣ⲓ̣ ⲙⲙⲁϥ ⲉⲛ. Translation by Attridge and Pagels, slightly modified.

Here we encounter the concept "lust for command" (ⲙⲛ̄ⲧⲙⲁⲉⲓⲟⲩⲉϩ ⲥⲁϩⲛⲉ), which is called a *desire* (ⲉⲡⲓⲑⲩⲙⲓⲁ). *Desire* (ἐπιθυμία) was used by Plato for the part of the soul associated with passions and the body. For Stoics, it was one of the four cardinal passions. Here the second order of the Logos' creation becomes stricken with something through association with the sickness with which the first material order is identified. Before any emotions are discussed in any detail, however, the Logos creates a third level of heavenly powers (the pneumatics).

The Aeons of the Pleroma above have mercy on the Logos in his distress and turmoil and send him the Savior, which results in great joy for the Logos, who is described as "returned to his stability" (ⲉⲛⲧⲁϥⲥⲧⲁϥ ⲁϩⲟⲩⲛ ⲁⲡⲉϥⲥⲙⲛ̄ⲛⲉ) (92:23–24). Now the Logos issues forth a third creation modeled after his vision of the Savior and his entourage:

> Because of this, those whom he brought forth in accordance with the *proairesis*[53] are in chariots—in the same way as the existing ones who had revealed themselves—so that they may pass over all regions of activities lying below, and each one may obtain his fixed place in accordance with that which he is.[54]

Here *TriTrac* seems to employ the same metaphor that Plato, Galen, and Gregory of Nyssa use for describing the third part of the soul, that of reason being like a charioteer that governed the two lesser and baser parts of the human, those two that are more clearly associated with passion.[55] That the third order is different from the two other powers is made clear in a passage that follows soon after the above quote:

53 The concept *proairesis* refers to the Logos' faculty of choice, such as it is on the other side of the limit to the Pleroma. This will be elaborated upon in detail in Chapter 3.

54 91:17–25: ⲉⲧⲃⲉ ⲡⲉⲉⲓ ⲛⲉⲧⲉ ⲁϥⲛ̄ⲧⲟⲩ ⲁⲃⲁⲗ· ⲕⲁⲧⲁ ϯ·ⲡⲣⲟⲁⲓⲣⲉⲥⲓⲥ ϩⲛ̄ ϩⲛ̄ϩⲁⲣⲙⲁ· ⲛⲉ ⲛ̄ⲑⲉ ⲛ̄ⲛⲉⲉⲓ ⲉⲛⲧⲁⲩϣⲱⲡⲉ ⲛⲉⲉⲓ ⲉⲛⲧⲁⲩⲟⲩⲱⲛϩ̄ ϫⲉ ⲉⲩⲛⲁϫⲱⲃⲉ ⲛ̄ϩⲉⲛⲙⲁ ⲧⲏⲣⲟⲩ· ⲛ̄ϩⲛ̄ϩⲃⲏⲩⲉ· ⲉⲧⲙ̄ⲡⲥⲁ ⲛⲡⲓⲧⲛ̄· ⲁⲧⲣⲟⲩϯ ⲛ̄ⲧⲭⲱⲣⲁ· ⲙ̄ⲡⲟⲩⲉⲉⲓ ⲡⲟⲩⲉⲉⲓ ⲛⲉϥ· ⲉⲧⲥⲙⲁⲛ̄ⲧ̄· ⲛ̄ⲑⲉ ⲉⲧϥ̄ϣⲟⲟⲡ ⲡⲉⲉⲓ. Translation by Attridge and Pagels, slightly modified.

55 Plato, *Phaedrus* 246a–254e; Galen, *On the Opinions of Hippocrates and Plato* v.5.32–35, v.6.31, III.3.5–6; Gregory, *On the Soul and Resurrection* 61b. Thomassen, *Le traité tripartite*, 375. Plato describes how the gods, led by Zeus, are able to control both of the horses and drive around smoothly in the heavens ordering and adorning things, while other souls struggle to contain the two horses that drive the carriage.

> The aeon, of which we previously spoke, is above the two orders of those who fight against one another. It is not a companion of those who hold dominion and is not implicated in the illnesses and weaknesses, things belonging to the thought (second creation) or to the imitation (first creation).[56]

The third pneumatic order of powers is not infected by the sickness that is identified with the first material order, which also infects the second psychic order. After the Logos' initial stability is restored, he returns to his creation to organize it and "give to each the place which is assigned to it" (ϥϯ ⲛ̄ⲧⲭⲱⲣⲁ ⲙ̄ⲡⲟⲩⲉⲉⲓ ⲡⲟⲩⲉⲉⲓ· ⲉⲧ·ⲧⲉϩⲟ ⲙ̄ⲙⲁϥ) (96:15–16). First the Logos orders the higher pneumatic powers:

> He arranged the place of those he had brought forth in accordance with glory, which is called "paradise", "enjoyment", "delight full of nourishment", and "delight <of> the preexistent ones". And he made images of all the goodness that exists in the Pleroma. Then he ordered the kingdom, which is like a city filled with everything that is pleasing—brotherly love and great generosity—filled with the holy spirits and the strong powers that govern those the Logos brought forth. And he established it firmly. (He organized) the place of the Church that gathers in this place, having the form of the Church that exists in the Aeon, which gives glory to the Father. After this, (he organized) the place of faith and obedience that comes from hope, that which the Logos had received when the light was revealed. The disposition of prayer and supplication is what leads to forgiveness and the announcement about him who would appear.[57]

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56 93:14–20: ϫⲉ ⲡⲓⲁⲓⲱⲛ ϭⲉ· ⲉⲛⲧⲁⲛⲣ̄ ϣⲣⲡ̣̄ ⲛ̄ϫⲟⲟϥ ϥⲙ̄ⲡⲥⲁ ⲛϩⲣⲉ ⲙ̄ⲡ{ⲇⲓⲁ}ⲧⲁⲅⲙⲁ̣ ⲥⲛⲉⲩ ⲛ̄ⲛⲉⲉⲓ ⲉⲧϯ ⲟⲩⲃⲉ ⲛⲉⲩⲉⲣⲏⲟⲩ ϥⲟⲓ̈ ⲛ̄ⲁⲧϣⲃⲏⲣ ⲛ̄ⲛⲉⲧⲁⲙⲁϩⲧⲉ ⲁⲩⲱ ϥⲟⲓ̈ ⲛ̄ⲛⲁⲧ·ⲧⲱϩ· ⲙ̄ⲛ̄ ⲛⲓϣⲱⲛⲉ· ⲙⲛ̄ ⲛⲓϭⲱϫⲃⲉ· ⲛⲁ ⲡⲓⲙⲉⲩⲉ· ⲙⲛ̄ ⲛⲁ ⲡⲓⲧⲁⲛⲧⲛ̄. Translation by Attridge and Pagels, slightly modified.

57 96:27–97:16: ⲁϥⲧⲥⲁⲉⲓⲱ· ⲙ̄ⲡⲙⲁ· ⲛ̄ⲛⲉⲉⲓ ⲉⲛⲧⲁϥⲛ̄ⲧⲟⲩ ⲕⲁⲧⲁ ⲟⲩⲉⲁⲩ ⲡⲉⲧⲟⲩⲙⲟⲩⲧⲉ· ⲁⲣⲁϥ ϫⲉ ⲡⲁⲣⲁⲇⲓⲇⲟⲥ ⲙⲛ̄ ⲧⲁⲡⲟⲗⲁⲩⲥⲓⲥ ⲙⲛ̄ ⲡⲟⲩⲛⲁϥ ⲉ{ϥ}ⲧⲙⲏϩ ⲛ̄ⲧⲣⲟⲫⲏ ⲙⲛ̄ ⲡⲟⲩⲛⲁϥ ⲛⲉⲉⲓ ⲉⲧⲣ̄ ϣⲣⲡ̄ ⲛ̄ϣⲟⲟⲡ· ⲁⲩⲱ ⲁⲃⲁⲗ· ⲛ̄ⲙⲛ̄ⲧⲛⲁϥⲣⲉ ⲛⲓⲙ ⲉⲧϣⲟⲟⲡ ϩⲛ̄ ⲡⲗⲏⲣⲟⲩⲙⲁ· ⲉϥⲧⲟⲩϫⲟ ⲛ̄ϯϩⲓ̈ⲕⲱⲛ ⲉⲓⲇⲁ· ⲁϥⲧⲥⲁⲉⲓⲟ· ⲛ̄ϯⲙⲛ̄ⲧⲣ̄ⲣⲟ· ⲉⲥⲟⲉⲓ̄ ⲙ̄ⲡⲣⲏⲧⲉ ⲛ̄ⲛⲟⲩⲡⲟⲗⲓⲥ ⲉⲥⲙⲏϩ ⲁⲃⲁⲗ ⲙ̄ⲡⲉⲧⲁⲛⲓⲧ· ⲛⲓⲙ· ⲉⲧⲉ ⲧⲙⲛ̄ⲧⲙⲁⲉⲓⲥⲁⲛ ⲧⲉ· ⲁⲩⲱ ϯⲛⲟϭ ⲙ̄ⲙⲛ̄ⲧⲁⲫⲑⲟⲛⲟⲥ· ⲉⲧⲙⲏϩ ⲁ̣ⲃ̣ⲁ̣ⲗ ⲛ̄ⲛⲓⲡⲛ(ⲉⲩⲙ)ⲁ ⲉⲧⲟⲩⲁⲁⲃ· ⲙⲛ̄ [ⲛⲓ]ϭⲟⲙ ⲉⲧϫⲟⲟⲣ· ⲉⲧⲟⲩⲣ̄ ⲡⲟⲗⲓⲧⲉⲩⲉ̣ ⲙ̄ⲙⲟⲟⲩ ⲛⲉⲉⲓ ⲉⲧⲉ·ⲁⲡⲗⲟⲅⲟⲥ· ⲛ̄ⲧⲟⲩ ⲁⲃⲁⲗ· ⲁⲩⲱ ⲁϥⲧⲱⲕ ⲁⲣⲉⲧϥ ϩⲛ̄ⲛ ⲟⲩϭⲟⲙ ⲉⲓⲇⲁ ⲡⲧⲟⲡⲟⲥ ⲛ̄ⲧⲉⲕⲕⲗⲏⲥⲓⲁ ⲉⲧⲥⲟϩⲟⲩ ϩⲙ̄ ⲡⲉⲉⲓⲙ[ⲁ] ⲉⲩⲛ̄ⲧⲉϥ ⲙ̄ⲙⲉⲩ ⲙ̄ⲡⲥⲙⲁⲧ ⲛ̄ⲧⲉⲕ̣ⲕⲗⲏⲥⲓⲁ ⲉⲧϣⲟⲟⲡ ϩⲛ̄ ⲛⲁⲓⲱⲛ ⲉⲧϯ ⲉ̣ⲁⲩ ⲙ̄ⲡⲓⲱⲧ· ⲙⲛ̄ⲛ̄ⲥⲁ ⲛⲁⲓ̈ ⲡⲧⲟⲡⲟⲥ ⲙ̄ⲡⲛⲁϩⲧⲉ· ⲙⲛ̄ ⲡⲥⲱⲧⲙ̄ ⲁⲃⲁ̣[ⲗ ϩⲛ̄] ⲑⲉⲗⲡⲓⲥ ⲛⲁⲉⲓ· ⲉⲛⲧⲁϥϫⲓⲧⲟⲩ ⲛ̄ϭ[ⲓ ⲡⲗⲟⲅ]ⲟ̣ⲥ ⲛ̄ⲧⲁⲣⲉⲡⲟⲩⲁⲉⲓⲛ ⲟⲩⲱⲛ̄ϩ ⲁ̣[ⲃⲁⲗ]ⲉⲓⲇⲉ ϯⲇⲓⲁⲑⲉⲥⲓⲥ· ⲉⲧⲉ ⲡϣⲗⲏⲗ ⲡⲉ̣ [ⲙⲛ]ⲡⲥⲁⲡⲥⲡ̄ ⲛⲉⲉⲓ ⲉⲛⲧⲁⲡⲕⲱⲉ ⲁⲃⲁⲗ

This region and these powers are associated with positive attributes, of "enjoyment" (ⲁⲡⲟⲗⲁⲩⲥⲓⲥ), "brotherly love" (ⲙⲛ̄ⲧⲙⲁⲉⲓⲥⲁⲛ), "generosity" (ⲙⲛ̄ⲧⲁⲫⲑⲟⲛⲟⲥ), "faith" (ⲛⲁϩⲧⲉ), "obedience" (ⲥⲱⲧⲙ̄), and "hope" (ⲑⲉⲗⲡⲓⲥ). This is "a place of joy" (ⲉⲩⲧⲟⲡⲟⲥ ⲡⲉ ⲛ̄ⲟⲩⲣⲁⲧ ⲡⲉ) (98:26–27). Below this region we find the two orders that the Logos created first. These are also called the right and the left side, the psychic and material (98:12–20). The material powers who are below the psychic powers consist of "fear and perplexity and forgetfulness and confusion and ignorance" (ⲑⲣ̄ⲧⲉ· ⲙⲛ̣̄ ⲧ̣ⲁⲡⲟⲣⲓⲁ· ⲁⲩⲱ ⲧⲃ̄ϣⲉ· ⲁⲩⲱ ϯⲁⲣⲙⲉⲥ ⲁⲩⲱ ⲧⲙⲛ̄ⲧⲁⲧⲥⲁⲩⲛⲉ·) (98:2–4).[58] From the material and psychic powers, the Logos creates "angels and archangels" (ⲛⲓⲁⲅⲅⲉⲗⲟⲥ [ⲙ]ⲛ̄ ⲛⲓⲁⲣⲭⲏⲁⲅ·ⲅⲉⲗⲟⲥ), "commanders" (ϩⲛ̄ⲣⲉϥⲟⲩⲉϩ ⲥⲁϩⲛⲉ) and "subordinates" (ⲛⲉⲧⲑⲃ̄ⲃⲓⲁⲉⲓⲧ·) (99:34–100:1). Each one rules over a specific region and "an activity" (ⲟⲩϩⲱⲃ) (99:28). We read that "none (of the powers) lacks a command and none is without kingship".[59] Above the powers of the two orders the Logos places the Demiurge, who is controlled by the Logos (100:18–35). After this the ranks of material powers are elaborated upon:

> The entire order of matter [is] divided into three. The strong powers, these that the pneumatic Logos brought forth through an impression and presumption, he placed in the first, pneumatic rank. Then he placed the ones that these brought forth through lust for command in the middle region, and since these <were> powers of lust for command they ruled and commanded the establishment under them with necessity and violence. Those, finally, who had come into being from envy and jealousy and all other offspring of this sort, he placed in a servant rank controlling the limit and commanding all existing things and all procreation. From these come the sicknesses that kill instantly, who are quick to procreate into existence anything to the place they have issued from and to which they will once more return. Because of that, he placed over them commanding powers that continuously work on matter to ensure that the offspring that come into being may also have durability. For this is their glory.[60]

ⲟ̣[ⲩ]ⲁϩϥ̄ ⲛⲥⲱⲟⲩ ⲁⲩⲱ ⲡϣⲉϫⲉ ϩⲁ ⲡⲣ[ⲁ ⲙ̄]ⲡⲉⲧⲛⲁⲟⲩⲱⲛϩ̄. Translation by Attridge and Pagels, slightly modified. I translate ⲟⲩⲛⲁϥ as "delight", in order to separate it from "joy" (ⲣⲉϣⲉ) which Attridge and Pagels has.

58 Translation by Attridge and Pagels, slightly modified.

59 100:7–10: ⲙⲛ̄ⲗⲁⲩⲉ ⲉϥⲟⲉⲓ ⲛ̄ⲁⲧⲟⲩⲉϩ ⲥⲁϩⲛⲉ· ⲁⲩⲱ ⲙⲛ̄ ⲗ̣ⲁⲩⲉ ⲉϥⲟⲉⲓ ⲛ̄ⲁⲧ·ⲧⲣ̄ⲣⲟ ϫⲓⲛ [ⲁⲣⲏ]ϫϥ̄.

60 103:13–104:3: ⲡⲧⲱⲕ ⲁⲣⲉⲧϥ̄ ⲧⲏⲣϥ̄ ⲛ̄ⲇⲉ ϯϩⲩ̣[ⲗⲏ ϥⲡ]ⲁϣ· ⲁϣⲟⲙⲛ̄ⲧ· ⲛⲓϭⲟⲙ ⲙⲉⲛ [ⲉⲧϫⲟⲟⲣ] ⲛ̣ⲁⲉⲓ ⲉⲛⲧⲁⲡⲗⲟⲅⲟⲥ ⲙ̄ⲡⲛ̣(ⲉⲩⲙ)ⲁ̣[ⲧⲓⲕⲟⲥ] ⲛ[ⲧⲟ]ⲩ ⲁⲃⲁⲗ· ⲕⲁⲧⲁ ⲟⲩⲫⲁⲛⲧⲁⲥ̣[ⲓⲁ] ⲙⲛ̄[ⲛ] ⲟⲩⲙⲛ̄ⲧϫⲁⲥⲓϩⲏⲧ· ⲁϥⲕⲁ[ⲁⲩ] ϩⲛ̄ ⲧϣⲁⲣⲡ̄ ⲛ̄ⲧⲁⲝⲓⲥ· ⲙ̄ⲡⲛ(ⲉⲩⲙ)ⲁⲧⲓⲕⲟ̣[ⲛ] ⲛⲉⲧⲁϩⲁⲛⲉⲉⲓ ϭⲉ ⲛ̄ⲧⲟⲩ ⲁⲃⲁⲗ ϩⲛ̄ ϯⲙⲛ̄ⲧⲙⲁⲉⲓⲟⲩⲉϩ ⲥⲁϩⲛⲉ· ⲁϥⲕⲁⲁⲩ̣ ϩⲛ̄ ⲧⲭⲱⲣⲁ· ⲛ̄ⲧⲙⲏⲧⲉ· ⲉϩⲛ̄ϭⲟⲙ ⲛ̣[ⲉ]

This passage is at first confusing because we read of a "spiritual rank" of material powers. I suggest that this is a way to express the hierarchy of these different material powers. As seen above, the material powers reproduce and spawn more material imitations. The passions associated with the highest rank are not specified in the above passage, but the highest rank of material powers give rise to powers associated with the desire referred to as "lust for command" (ⲙⲛ̄ⲧⲙⲁⲉⲓⲟⲩⲉϩ ⲥⲁϩⲛⲉ). It is this desire, this sickness, with which the psychics are also infected. These in turn rule above those associated with "envy and jealousy and all the other offspring from dispositions of this sort" (ⲡⲓⲫⲑⲟⲛⲟⲥ ⲙⲛ̄ ⲡⲓⲕⲱϩ· ⲙⲛ̄ ⲛⲓⲕⲉϫⲡⲟ ⲧⲏⲣⲟⲩ ⲁⲃⲁⲗ ϩⲛ̄ ⲛⲓⲧⲱϣⲉ ⲙ̄ⲡⲓⲣⲏⲧⲉ) (103:26–28). This expression, "all the other offspring from dispositions of this sort" (ⲛⲓⲕⲉϫⲡⲟ ⲧⲏⲣⲟⲩ ⲁⲃⲁⲗ ϩⲛ̄ ⲛⲓⲧⲱϣⲉ ⲙ̄ⲡⲓⲣⲏⲧⲉ), resembles the generic way *ApJohn* finishes lists of passions.[61] Unfortunately, apart from "lust for command" there are

ⲛ̄·ⲙⲛ̄ⲧⲙⲁⲉⲓⲟⲩⲉϩ ⲥⲁϩⲛⲉ· ⲁⲧⲣⲟⲩ[ⲣ] ϫⲁⲉⲓⲥ ⲁⲩⲱ ⲛⲥⲉⲟⲩⲉϩ ⲥⲁϩⲛⲉ ⲙ̣̄[ⲡ]ⲧⲉϩⲟ ⲁⲣⲉⲧϥ̄ ⲉⲧϩⲓ̈ ⲥⲁ ⲛⲡⲓⲧⲛ̄ ⲙⲛ [ⲟⲩ]ⲁⲛⲁⲅⲕⲏ· ⲙⲛ̄ ⲟⲩϫⲛ̄ϫⲛⲁⲁϩ· ⲛⲉⲉⲓ ⲇⲉ· ⲛ̄ⲧⲁϩϣⲱⲡⲉ· ⲁⲃⲁⲗ ϩⲛ̄ ⲡⲓⲫⲑⲟⲛⲟⲥ ⲙⲛ̄ ⲡⲓⲕⲱϩ· ⲙⲛ̄ ⲛⲓⲕⲉϫⲡⲟ ⲧⲏⲣⲟⲩ ⲁⲃⲁⲗ ϩⲛ̄ ⲛⲓⲧⲱϣⲉ ⲙ̄ⲡⲓⲣⲏⲧⲉ ⲁϥⲕⲁⲩⲉ ⲛ̄ⲛⲟⲩⲧⲁⲝⲓⲥ ⲛⲣⲉϥϣⲙ̄ϣⲉ ⲉⲩⲁⲙⲁϩⲧⲉ· ⲛ̄ⲛϩⲁⲉⲟⲩ· ⲉⲩⲟⲩⲁϩ ⲥⲁϩⲛⲉ ⲛ̄ⲛⲉⲧϣⲟⲟⲡ· ⲧⲏⲣⲟⲩ ⲁⲩⲱ ⲡⲓⲙⲓⲥⲉ ⲧⲏⲣ̣[ϥ] ⲛⲉⲉⲓ ⲉⲧⲉ ⲁⲃⲁⲗ ϩⲓ̈ⲧⲟⲟⲧⲟⲩ ⲛⲉ ⲛⲓϣⲱⲛⲉ· ⲉϩⲛ̄ⲣⲉϥⲧⲉⲕⲟ· ⲥⲉⲧⲟⲟⲧⲟⲩ ⲛⲉ· ⲉⲩⲉⲗⲱⲗ· ⲁϫⲛ̄ⲛ ⲟⲩϫⲡⲟ ⲉⲩϣⲟⲟⲡ ⲁⲩⲗⲁⲩⲉ ⲙ̄ⲡⲙⲁ ⲉⲧⲉ ϩⲛ̄ⲁⲃⲁⲗ ⲙ̄ⲙⲁϥ ⲛⲉ· ⲁⲩⲱ ⲉⲩⲛⲁⲛⲁⲩϩⲟⲩ· ⲁⲛ ⲁⲣⲁϥ ⲁⲩⲱ ⲉⲧⲃⲉ ⲡⲁⲓ̈ ⲁϥⲕⲱϣⲉ ⲁϩⲣⲏⲓ̈ ⲁϫⲱⲟⲩ ⲛ̄ϩⲛ̄ϭⲟⲙ ⲛ̄ⲣⲉϥⲟⲩⲁϩ ⲥⲁϩⲛⲉ ⲉⲩⲣ̄ϩⲱⲃ ⲉⲩ[ⲙ]ⲏ̣ⲛ ⲁⲧϩⲩⲗⲏ· ϫⲉⲕⲁⲥⲉ ⲛ̄ϫⲡⲟ ⲛ̄ⲛⲉⲧϣⲱⲡⲉ· ⲉⲩⲛⲁϣⲱ̣ⲡⲉ· ⲁⲛ ⲉⲩⲙⲏⲛ ⲡⲉⲉⲓ ⲅⲁⲣ ⲡⲉ ⲡⲟⲩⲉⲁⲩ. Translation by Attridge and Pagels, slightly modified. The translation of the second half of this passage differs slightly from the translation of Attridge and Pagels, chiefly the translation of ⲉⲩⲉⲗⲱⲗ· ⲁϫⲛ̄ⲛ ⲟⲩϫⲡⲟ ⲉⲩϣⲟⲟⲡ ⲁⲩⲗⲁⲩⲉ ⲙ̄ⲡⲙⲁ ⲉⲧⲉ ϩⲛ̄ⲁⲃⲁⲗ ⲙ̄ⲙⲁϥ ⲛⲉ· I suggest the formulation: "who are quick to procreate into existence anything to the place they have issued from" instead of "who eagerly desire begetting, who are something in the place where they are from" as Attridge and Pagels have, which I think makes less sense in the context. Otherwise, the differences are solely nuances in choice of words.

61 In the passage 83:34–84:24 where the desire, "lust for command", is mentioned we also find the generic expression "and all the other things of this sort" (ⲁⲩⲱ ϩⲛ̄ⲕⲉⲕⲟⲟⲩⲉ ⲁⲛ ⲧⲏⲣⲟⲩ ⲙ̄ⲡⲣⲏⲧⲉ) follows. Takashi Onuki has argued, regarding *ApJohn*, that this was a common way among early Stoics to refer in a generalizing way to passions when listing them, although he does not give references to any of the ancient Stoics. Onuki writes that references like τὰ τοιοῦτα and τὰ ἄλλα πάντα (found, for example, in *Pseudo-Clementine Homilies* 19.20.6–21.7) were "typical Stoic catalog expressions, going back to the early Stoics", also found in *ApJohn* (Takashi Onuki, "Critical Reception of the Stoic Theory of Passions in the *Apocryphon of John*", in Rasimus, *Stoicism*, 252). Whether Stoics used these generic phrases or not, *ApJohn* certainly does, and Onuki has demonstrated fairly convincingly *ApJohn*'s dependence on Stoicism. In one passage in *ApJohn* where the different passions are considered we read that "from pleasure much wickedness arises, and empty pride, and similar things and from desire (comes) anger, wrath and bitterness and bitter passion and similar things" (ⲉⲃⲟⲗ ⲇⲉ ϩⲛ̄ ⲧϩⲏⲇⲟⲛⲏ ϣⲁⲩϣⲱⲡⲉ ⲛ̄ϭⲓ ϩⲁϩ ⲛ̄ⲕⲁⲕⲓⲁ ⲁⲩⲱ ⲡϣⲟⲩϣⲟⲩ ⲉⲧϣⲟⲩⲉⲓⲧ ⲁⲩⲱ ⲛⲉⲧⲉⲓⲛⲉ ⲛ̄ⲛⲁⲓ̈ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ ⲇⲉ ϩⲛ̄ ⲧⲉⲡⲓⲑⲩ̣ⲙⲓⲁ ⲟⲩⲟⲣⲅⲏ ⲟⲩϭⲱⲛⲧ ⲙⲛ̄ ⲟⲩⲭⲟ[ⲗⲏ] ⲙ[ⲛ̄ ⲟ]ⲩⲉⲣⲱⲥ· ⲉϥⲥⲁϣⲉ ⲙⲛ̄ ⲟⲩⲙ̄ⲛ̄ⲧ̄ⲁ̣ⲧ̣ⲥⲉⲓ ⲁⲩⲱ ⲛⲉⲧⲉⲓⲛⲉ ⲛ̄ⲛⲁⲓ̈) (NHC II,

no descriptions of the emotions with which the psychics were associated. The psychics, however, share in the same sickness with which the material powers are identified. Consequently, the Logos places the psychics in connection with the material realm so that they will perceive this sickness more clearly, and start to long for a better existence (98:27–99:4).

The powers we encountered in the above passage associated with materiality and the first order are, I argue, very close to what usually belonged in the realm of fate. We read that the second rank of material powers commanded out of "necessity" (ⲁⲛⲁⲅⲕⲏ) and that the third rank control the limits of creation, overseeing procreation. This is much the same way fate is described in *ApJohn*, as a power that oversees human births and death, placing souls that try to escape the cosmic realm back into bodies.[62] Fate was thought to be able to control humans through the body, through the elements of which the body consisted, the same elements from which lowly passions derive. Much the same image is used in *Pistis Sophia* and the *ExcTheod.*[63] In the epistles of the apostle Paul, which were probably an influential precursor of Valentinian theology,[64] Paul writes about "elements of the cosmos", and lower powers and archons under which humans were slaves before Christ came.[65] In Gal 4:3–5 Paul writes that "when we were children, we were slaves to the elements (τὰ στοιχεῖα) of the cosmos. But when the time had fully come, God sent forth his son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under

1.18:24–29). This catchall phrase used to round up lists of emotions occurs several times in *TriTrac* (83:34–84:24, 103:28–29, 105:6–16).

62 For a discussion of this see King, *The Secret Revelation of John*, 206–207.

63 See *ExcTheod* 81; *Pistis Sophia* III.15–16 (see MacDermot's chapter division in MacDermot and Schmidt, *Pistis Sophia*). Both these texts view baptism as the way out of the control of fate and the lower material parts of the body. In *ApJohn* the "tomb of the form of the body" is made from "earth and water and fire and air" and it is this in "which they clothed the human as a fetter of matter" (Berlin Codex 55.4–13; Michael Waldstein and Fredrik Wisse, *The Apocryphon of John: Synopsis of Nag Hammadi Codices II,1; III,1; and IV,1 with BG 8502,2* (Leiden: Brill, 1995), 120–22). On how the word was used in ancient time as a word for the elements, see Timothy J. Crowley, "On the Use of Stoicheion in the Sense of 'Element'", *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy* 29 (2005): 367–394. See Aristotle *On Generation and Corruption* 1.10.328b26–329b25. In Ovid's *Metamorphoses* 236–256 the word στοιχεῖα is also used for these four elements. Philo accused pagans of worshiping these στοιχεῖα (*On Abraham* 68–88).

64 Elaine Pagels, *The Gnostic Paul: Gnostic Exegesis of the Pauline Letters* (Philadelphia, P.A.: Fortress, 1975).

65 Rom 8:38–39; Gal 4:3–9; 1 Cor 15–24. Exactly how "the elements of the universe" and the different powers and angels are to be understood in Paul's epistles is debated. For an overview and one interpretation, see Denzey Lewis, *Cosmology and Fate*, 53–84. For deutero-pauline sources see, for example, Eph 2:3 and Col 2:8–20.

the law".[66] Paul was likely a great inspiration for *TriTrac*, too, but what we find in *TriTrac*, as well as in *ApJohn*, for example, is more reminiscent of further developed cosmological systems like those of, for example, Middle Platonists and later Christians. Around the second century CE, among some interpreters of Plato and his successors we encounter the practice of dividing the principles associated with creation and the divine forces with which it was imbued. Numenius and Plutarch, for example, divided the World Soul/Logos into one lower, restless character and a higher, stable one.[67] Some Middle Platonists divided the divine pronoia (providence) into several parts. Fate was also a character being split. Pseudo-Plutarch and Apuleius divided pronoia and fate;[68] the highest pronoia had fate inside it, according to Pseudo-Plutarch, and was the primary God's wholly beneficent will. Middle paranoia (or fate) acted between the highest plane and the cosmos, while lower pronoia was included in fate and acted together with the daemons in the cosmos, the 'lower gods' of Plato's *Timaeus*.[69] These lower powers could induce irrational passions inside humans. Some Christian thinkers also took to dividing pronoia, the highest Father's primordial will (providence). Athenagoras of Athens wrote in the second century that angels stirred up irrational movements in humans and governed them through the aid of a lower pronoia.[70] I believe that the three levels of lower material powers we encounter in *TriTrac*—although we do not explicitly encounter characters called fate or higher or lower pronoia—were modeled in light of these very sophisticated second-century CE ideas concerning the irrational powers existing above humans, working out of necessity, controlling humans in different ways through their command over matter and with the inducement of passion.[71]

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66 NRSV's translates τὰ στοιχεῖα with "elemental spirits of the universe", which I render as "elements of the cosmos".

67 See John Turner, *Sethian Gnosticism and the Platonic Tradition* (Leuven: Peeters, 2001), 250–253 where he discusses the Platonist contribution to Sethianism.

68 Apuleius, *De Platone er eius dogmate*; Pseudo-Plutarch, *De Fato*.

69 Pseudo-Plutarch, *De Fato* 572f–574b. Plato, *Timaeus* 42d–e. Apuleius viewed fate and pronoia as corresponding. He divided pronoia into three parts whereby fate was a lower aspect of pronoia. Apuleius, *De Platone er eius dogmate*.

70 Athenagoras of Athens, *A Plea for the Christians* 24.3, 25.1–27.2. Philo and Clement linked pronoia with divine reason, the Logos, and treated it as God's benevolent will in the universe. Clement, *Stromata* VII.2.8. For a discussion of Philo's views on providence, see Peter Frick, *Divine Providence in Philo of Alexandria* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1999).

71 The way *InterpKnow* portrays different female characters and fate is also reminiscent of these notions, as I have argued in Paul Linjamaa, "The Female Figures and Fate in *The Interpretation of Knowledge*, NHC XI,1", *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 24:1 (2016): 29–54. For the portrayal of fate in other Valentinian texts, see David Brakke, "Valentinians and Their Demons: Fate, Seduction, and Deception in the Quest for Virtue", in *From Gnostics to*

After the different orders of powers and substances are created and organized in *TriTrac*, we read of the creation of humans. The first human was:

> fashioned by them all, the ones on the right and the ones on the left, each of the orders forming [the human just as] it itself was. For the [form] that the Logos brought forth [was] deficient in such a way that it was [afflicted] by sickness. It did not resemble him, for he brought him forth into [oblivion], ignorance, defect and all the other remaining sicknesses.[72]

Again, we find a generic phrase finishing off a list of passions, here in association with humans who are also struck by different sicknesses, and as seen above, emotion is a sickness. Each of the heavenly powers are associated with a single attribute it seems, and we read that as long as the powers are individuals and "have not cast off what is peculiar to itself, therefore they exist in passion and passion is sickness".[73] Here we see the importance of the theory of blending, the importance of the individual being part of a harmonious whole,

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Monastics, eds. David Brakke et al. (Leuven: Peeters, 2017), 14–27. In *TriTrac* it is Logos who is split into two parts, the higher part of him is reintegrated into the Pleroma at his fall while it is the baser part of Logos that commences with creation and organization of the world. The different powers are then layered in similar fashion as pronoia and fate among Middle Platonists, the baser parts being associated with lower fate. See below.

72 105:6–16: [ⲟⲩ]ⲥⲁⲃⲧⲉ ⲛ̄ⲧⲉⲩ ⲧⲏⲣⲟⲩ ⲡⲉ· ⲛⲓⲟⲩⲛ̣ⲉⲙ̣ ⲙⲛ̄ ⲛⲓϭⲃⲟⲩⲣ· ⲉⲡⲓⲟⲩⲉⲉⲓ ⲡ̣[ⲓⲟ]ⲩ̣ⲉ̣ⲉ̣ⲓ̣ ⲛ̣̄[ⲛⲓⲧⲁ]ⲅⲙⲁ· ⲉϥϯ ⲙⲟⲣⲫⲏ ⲙ̄[ⲡⲣⲱⲙⲉ ⲛ̄ⲑⲉ] ⲉⲧϥ̄ϣⲟⲟⲡ· ⲙ̄ⲙⲟⲥ· ϫⲉ ϯ̣[ⲙⲟⲣⲫⲏ ⲉⲛ] ⲧ[ⲁ] ϥⲛⲧⲥ̄ ⲁⲃⲁⲗ· ⲛ̄ϭⲓ ⲡⲗⲟⲅⲟ̣ⲥ̣ [ⲉⲛⲧⲁϥ]ⲣ̄ ϣⲧ̣ⲁ· ⲙ̄ⲡⲥⲙⲁⲧ· ⲉⲛⲧⲁϥϣ[ⲱⲡⲉ]ϩⲛ̄ ⲡϣⲱⲛⲉ· ⲛⲁⲥⲉⲓⲛⲉ· ⲁⲣⲁϥ ⲉⲛ̣ ⲁⲃⲁⲗ ϫⲉ ⲁϥⲛⲧⲥ̄ ⲁⲃⲁⲗ· ϩⲛ̄ⲛ ⲟⲩⲱ̣[ⲃϣ] ⲛ[ⲛ]ⲟⲩⲙⲛ̄ⲧⲁⲧⲥⲁⲩⲛⲉ· ⲙⲛ̄ⲛ ⲟⲩ[ϣⲧⲁ] ⲙⲛ̄ ⲡ̣[ⲕ]ⲉϣⲱϫⲡ̄ ⲧⲏⲣϥ̄· ⲛ̄ϣⲱⲛ̣[ⲉ]. Here I follow Thomassen's translation and the emendations ⲙ̄[ⲡⲣⲱⲙⲉ ⲛ̄ⲑⲉ] and ϯ̣[ⲙⲟⲣⲫⲏ ⲉⲛ] rather than Attridge and Pagels who do not give a suggestion for the lacuna on line 9 and 10. Although I do not think that it is the Logos, as in Thomassen's translation, who gets inflicted by the sickenss of the form but rather that it is the form the Logos brings out that is inflicted with the sickness. See Thomassen, *Le traité tripartite*, 108; and Thomassen in Meyer, *Nag Hammadi*, 87.

73 95:1–3: ⲙ̄ⲡⲟⲩⲛⲁϩ ⲡⲱϥ{ⲛ̄ⲇⲉ} ⲁⲃⲁⲗ· ⲉⲧⲃⲉ ⲡⲉⲉⲓ· ϩⲛ̄ <ϩⲛ̄>ⲡⲁⲑⲟⲥ ⲛⲉ· ⲡⲁⲑⲟⲥ ⲛ̄ⲅⲁⲣ· ⲡⲉ ⲡϣⲱⲛⲉ. Here Attridge and Pagels, as well as Thomassen (in the English translation in Meyer, *Nag Hammadi*, 82) translate "they are passions". I have chosen to emend the text here, since the above translation "they exist in passion", is more attractive considering the narrative wherein the material class is associated with passions while the pneumatics are rather defined as *not* sharing in this sickness, but nevertheless affected by it; in fact, just a page prior to this passage we read that the pneumatics "are not mixed together with the sickness" (ϥⲟ̈ⲓ ⲛ̄ⲛⲁⲧ·<ⲧ>ⲱϩ· ⲙⲛ̄ ⲛⲓϣⲱⲛⲉ) that belongs to the two lower regions/substances (93:18). Thus, I add the indefinite plural ϩⲛ̄ to line 95:2 and read the first ϩⲛ̄ as a preposition). Omissions of this kind, where a word has been accidentally left out, or written twice, occur often in *TriTrac* (see for example the just mentioned sentence at 93:18, or 67:23, 73:9, 88:7, 115:35, 116:7, 117:3, 111:10).

elaborated on in the previous chapter. We have encountered good feelings associated with the highest level of powers and we have passions associated with the two lower levels of powers; the material beings are most clearly linked with base emotions like envy, rage, and fear, but the psychics are also struck with the desire, "lust for command" (ⲙⲛ̄ⲧⲙⲁⲉⲓⲟⲩⲉϩ ⲥⲁϩⲛⲉ). Just as there are three levels of heavenly powers, there are three kinds of humans, but humans are still "a mixed formation, and a mixed creation, and a deposit of those of the left and those of the right, and a pneumatic rationality".[74]

In order to reach salvation, one needs to shed passions, the control of material powers, and substance; this is accentuated. But we also read that passion and the lower powers have a role to play in the bigger scheme of things. Passions seem to have a pedagogical function in *TriTrac.* Life on earth is made so that:

> the human should experience that great evil which is death—that is, the complete ignorance of the All—and that he should also experience all the evils that come from that. And after the impetuosity and anxieties that result from it, he will partake of the greatest good, this which is eternal life.[75]

The cosmic existence is not a mistake, it is destined to come about; it is something that one has to go through to be able to partake of eternity later on. Life in a material body includes emotions. But emotions are not just pedagogical, they also play an important role in the economy of the Logos' cosmic system. *TriTrac* seems to adopt the view that emotions could be useful if harnessed correctly, especially in regard to social life. Humans must suppress wrath, fear, desperation, envy, jealousy, "and all the other remaining sicknesses" (ⲙⲛ̄ ⲡ̣[ⲕ]ⲉϣⲱϫⲡ̄ ⲧⲏⲣϥ̄· ⲛ̄ϣⲱⲛ̣[ⲉ]) (105:16–17), but they were also useful. One particular *desire* (ⲉⲡⲓⲑⲩⲙⲓⲁ) that seems to be central in *TriTrac* is "the lust for command" (ⲧⲙⲛ̄ⲧⲙⲁⲉⲓⲟⲩⲉϩ ⲥⲁϩⲛⲉ).[76] The Logos is portrayed as giving this

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74 106:18–23: ϫⲉ ⲡⲓϣⲁⲣⲡ̄ ⲇⲉ ⲛ̄ⲣⲱⲙⲉ· ⲟⲩ̣ⲡⲗⲁⲥⲙⲁ ⲡⲉ ⲉϥⲧⲏϩ ⲡⲉ· ⲁⲩⲱ ⲟⲩⲧⲥⲉ·ⲛⲟ ⲡⲉ ⲉϥⲧⲏϩ ⲡⲉ· ⲁⲩⲱ ⲟⲩⲕⲟⲩ ⲁϩⲣⲏï ⲡⲉ· ⲛ̄ⲇⲉ ⲛⲓϭⲃⲟⲩⲣ ⲡⲉ ⲙⲛ̄ ⲛⲓⲟⲩⲛⲉⲙ ⲡⲉ· ⲁⲩⲱ ⲟⲩⲡⲛ(ⲉⲩⲙ)ⲁⲧⲓⲕⲟ̄ⲥ ⲛ̄ⲗⲟⲅⲟⲥ. Translation by Attridge and Pagels, slightly modified.

75 107:29–108:2. ⲁⲧⲣⲉϥϫⲓ ⲙ̄ⲡⲓⲣⲉ{ⲛ} ⲛ̄ϭⲓ ⲡⲣⲱⲙⲉ· ⲡⲓⲛⲟϭ ⲙ̄ⲡⲉⲑⲁⲩ ⲉⲧⲉ ⲡⲉⲉⲓ ⲡⲉ ⲡⲙⲟⲩ ⲉⲧⲉ ϯⲙⲛ̄ⲧⲁⲧⲥⲁⲩⲛⲉ ⲧⲉ ⲛ̄ⲇⲉ ⲡⲧⲏⲣϥ̄ ⲧⲉⲗⲉⲩⲧⲏⲥ ⲁⲩⲱ ⲛⲧⲣ̄ⲛⲧϥ̄ϫⲓ ⲙ̄ⲡⲓⲣⲁ ⲁⲛ ⲡⲉ· ⲛ̄ⲛⲓⲡⲉⲧϩⲁⲩⲟⲩ ⲧⲏⲣⲟⲩ ⲉⲧϣⲁⲣⲟⲩϣⲱⲡⲉ· ⲁⲃⲁⲗ ϩⲙ̄ ⲡⲉⲉⲓ ⲁⲩⲱ ⲙⲛ̄ⲛ̄ⲥⲁ ⲛⲓϥⲱϭⲉ ⲉⲧϣⲟ̣ⲟ̣ⲡ· ϩⲛ ⲛⲉⲉⲓ ⲙⲛ̄ ⲛⲓⲗ̣[ⲉ]ϩ ⲛ̄ϥϫⲓ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ ϩⲙ̄ ⲡⲓⲛⲟϭ ⲙ̣ⲡⲉ̣ⲧⲛⲁⲛⲟⲩϥ· ⲉⲧⲉ [ⲡ]ⲉ̣ⲉⲓ ⲡⲉ ⲡⲓ̣ⲱ̣ⲛϩ̄· ϣⲁ ⲛⲓⲉⲛⲏϩⲉ. Translation by Attridge and Pagels, slightly modified.

76 ⲧⲙⲛ̄ⲧⲙⲁⲉⲓⲟⲩⲉϩ ⲥⲁϩⲛⲉ is classed as a desire three times (84:20–21, 99:19–23, 131:23–25) and mentioned throughout the text; see, for example, the following places: 79:27 80:9, 83:35, 84:14–20, 98:10, 99:11–20, 103:20–22, 118:2.

specific desire to both the material powers and the psychic powers because they need it to fill their role in the structure of the Logos' *oikonomia*.[77] In this sense, rather than drawing on Stoic theory of emotions, which is often thought to be the case, *TriTrac* is closer to the Platonic and Aristotelian attitudes to emotions where there is a difference between baser emotions associated with the lower more bodily part of the soul (the material powers in *TriTrac*), and urges that belonged to the spirited part of the soul (θυμοειδής), and which have an important part to play in the world. Wrath, fear, desperation, envy, jealousy, anxiety, "and all other offspring from dispositions of this sort" (ⲙⲛ̄ ⲛⲓⲕⲉϫⲡⲟ ⲧⲏⲣⲟⲩ ⲁⲃⲁⲗ ϩⲛ̄ ⲛⲓⲧⲱϣⲉ ⲙ̄ⲡⲓⲣⲏⲧⲉ) (103:27–28) are associated with the material powers in *TriTrac* and destined to perish. But then there are *desires* like "lust for command" which the material and the psychic share. We read several times that both sides of the two heavenly powers are useful and needed.[78] Even the lowest creations of the Logos destined for destruction are allowed "to exist because even they were useful for the things which were ordained".[79] The Logos grants the powers different skills so "that they, too, should be of use for the *oikonomia* which was to come".[80] At the same time, it is clear that everything that is associated with passions are to be given up in the end; they are viable and useful only for a time:

> Those who get rid of the lust for command that was given them temporarily and for short periods, and who give glory to the Lord of glory, and who renounce their rage; they will be rewarded for their humility and continue (to exist) forever. But those who arrogantly pride themselves in their vainglorious desire, they who love temporary glory, those who forget that the power that has been entrusted to them is only for a limited time and for a period—and because of this reason did not assent to the Son of God, who is the Lord of the All and the Savior—and who have not got rid of indulgence and the imitation of those who are evil; they will receive judgment for their ignorance and erroneous opinion.[81]

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77 See 89:35–36, 99:19–33, 121:20, 118:13–14. Even the lowest creations of the Logos destined for destruction are allowed "to exist because they too were useful for that which had been ordained" (118:13–14). The Logos grants the lower powers different skills "so that they too might become useful for the *oikonomia* that was to be" (89:35–36).

78 See 121:20, 118:13–14, 89:35–36.

79 118:12–14: ⲉⲁϥⲕⲁⲩⲉ· ⲁⲧⲣⲟⲩϣⲱⲡⲉ· ϫⲉ ⲛⲉⲩⲣ̄ ϣⲉⲩ ϩⲱⲟⲩ ⲁⲛ ⲡⲉ· ⲁⲛⲉⲧⲁⲩⲧⲁϣⲟⲩ.

80 89:35–36: ϫⲉ ⲥⲉⲛⲁⲣ̄ ϣⲉⲩ ϩⲱⲟⲩ ⲁⲧⲟⲓⲕⲟⲛⲟⲙⲓⲁ ⲉⲧⲁϣⲱⲡ̣ⲉ.

81 120:22–121:6: ⲛⲉⲧⲛⲁⲛ̄ⲧⲟⲩ ⲙⲉⲛ ⲁⲃⲁⲗ· ϩⲛ̄ ⲧⲙⲛ̄ⲧⲙⲁⲉⲓⲟⲩⲉϩ ⲥⲁϩⲛⲉ· ⲉⲧ⸗ⲧⲱⲉⲓ· ⲛⲉⲩ ⲙ̄ⲡⲣⲟⲥ ⲟⲩⲁⲉⲓϣ ⲙⲛ̄ ϩⲉⲛⲥⲏⲩ ⲛ̄ⲥⲉϯ ⲉⲁⲩ ⲙ̄ⲡϫⲟⲓ̈ⲥ ⲙ̄ⲡⲉⲁⲩ ⲛ̄ⲥⲉⲕⲱ ⲛ̄ⲥⲱⲟⲩ ⲛ̄ⲧⲟⲩⲃⲗ̄ⲕⲉ· ⲥⲉⲛⲁϫⲓ ⲛ̄ⲧϣⲃ̄ⲃⲓⲱ ⲙ̄ⲡⲟⲩⲑⲃ̄ⲃⲓⲟ ⲛ̄ⲇⲉ ⲡⲓⲙⲟⲩⲛ ⲁϩⲟⲩⲛ ϣⲁⲃⲟⲗ ⲡⲉ· ⲛ̄ⲉⲉⲓ ⲇⲉ ⲛ̄ⲧⲁⲩ ⲉⲧⲛⲁⲥⲗ̄ⲗⲁϩⲗ̄· ⲉⲧⲃⲉ ⲧⲉⲡⲓⲑⲩⲙⲓⲁ ⲛ̄ⲧⲙⲛ̄ⲧⲙⲁⲉⲓⲉⲁⲩ ⲛ̄ⲥⲉⲙⲣ̄ⲣⲉ ⲡⲉⲁⲩ ⲡⲣⲟⲥ ⲟⲩⲁⲉⲓϣ ⲛ̄ⲥⲉⲣ̄ⲡⲱⲃϣ· ϫⲉ ϯⲉ⸗ⲝⲟⲩⲥⲓⲁ

TriTrac's double attitude to emotions renders it close to the Platonic and Aristotelian ideas of the usefulness of certain emotions and the reception of these thoughts among Middle Platonists such as Plutarch and Philo, as well as later Christians such as Gregory of Nyssa. Emotions are part of this world; when eternity begins, they are given up. *TriTrac* projects the emphasis on social governance to a cosmic level and clearly associates emotions with the heavenly powers in a somewhat similar way as *ApJohn*, although with less detail.[82] *TriTrac* does not follow any known list of emotions of which I am aware, neither the Stoic division of four cardinal emotions[83] nor Aristotle's divisions of twelve emotions.[84] However, the model of tripartite powers in heaven and their association with emotions resembles the Platonic and Aristotelian tripartite view of the soul where the two lower parts are associated with emotions while the third, logical part, is wholly above both. In *TriTrac* the psychics are those who have turned to the good and succeeded in shedding the addiction to temporary emotions like ambition and love of power are described as deserving salvation (131:22–34); they are the helpers to the elect (135:3–5). This theme will be studied in Part II in detail, but it suffices here to recognize that this anthropological detail is comparable to how Plato and Aristotle imagined that the middle part of the soul, if harnessed correctly, could aid the higher logical part of the soul. In *ApJohn*, too, we read that powers and emotions can be helpful, because they "were like useful things as well as evil things".[85] This is, I argue, also a point *TriTrac* makes. Emotions are basically to be rejected—but at the same time, they are fundamental for cosmic existence, can be used for one's benefit, and also have a pedagogical function. In this sense, they are useful.

We have now examined the creation narrative from the perspective of emotions and gained a perhaps disparate overview of how *TriTrac* fits into the discussion of emotions in ancient time. What remains to be done is to

ⲉⲣⲉⲛ̄ⲧⲁⲩⲧⲛ̄ϩⲟⲩⲧⲟⲩ ⲁⲣⲁⲥ· ⲡⲣⲟⲥ ⲛ̄ⲥⲏⲟⲩ ⲙⲛ̄ ϩⲛ̄ⲟⲩⲟⲉⲓϣ ⲉⲧⲉⲩⲛ̣̄ⲧⲉⲩⲥⲟⲩ ⲁⲩⲱ ⲉⲧⲃⲉ ϯⲗⲁⲉⲓϭⲉ· {ⲙ̄} ⲙ̄ⲡⲟⲩⲣ̄ ϩⲟⲙⲟⲗⲟⲅⲓ ⲙ̄ⲡϣⲏⲣⲉ ⲙ̄ⲡⲛⲟⲩⲧⲉ ϫⲉ ⲡϫⲁⲉⲓⲥ ⲙ̄ⲡⲧⲏⲣϥ̄ ⲡⲉ· ⲁⲩⲱ ⲡⲥⲱⲧⲏⲣ ⲡⲉ· ⲁⲩⲱ ⲙ̄{ⲙ}ⲡⲟⲩⲛ̄ⲧⲟⲩ ⲁⲃⲟⲗ ⲛ̄ϯⲙⲛ̄ⲧ·ⲣⲉϥⲟⲣⲅⲏ· ⲙⲛ̄ ϯⲙⲛ̄ⲧⲧⲛ̄ⲧⲱⲛⲟⲩ ⲁⲛⲉⲧⲑⲁⲩⲟⲩ ⲛⲉ·ⲉⲓ ⲥⲉ·ⲛⲁϫⲓ ⲛ̄ⲛⲟⲩϩⲁⲡ· ⲛ̄ⲧⲟⲩⲙⲛ̄ⲧⲁⲧⲥⲁⲩⲛⲉ· ⲙⲛ̄ ⲧⲟⲩⲙⲛ̄ⲧⲁⲅⲛⲱⲙⲱ(ⲛ). Translation by Attridge and Pagels, slightly modified.

82 Thus, I disagree with Dunderberg's statement that one does not find an association of archons with emotions. See Dunderberg, *Gnostic Morality*, 123; Dunderberg, "Stoic Traditions", 226.

83 Stoics entertained four basic passions: distress (λύπη), pleasure (ήδονή), fear (φόβος), and desire (επιθυμία). See Diogenes Laertius, *Lives* VII.110–14; SVF III.391, 397, 401, 409, 414. See also Cicero, *Tusculan Disputations* IV.11–22, for the Latin equivalents.

84 Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* II.5.1105b21–3, II.2.1220b12–14, *On the Soul* I.1.403a16–18.

85 *ApJohn* NHC II, 1.18:31–33: ⲛⲉⲓ ⲇⲉ ⲧⲏⲣⲟⲩ ⲛ̄ⲑⲉ ⲛ̄ϩⲛ̄ⲡⲉⲧⲣ̄ ϣⲁⲩ ⲙⲛ̄ ⲛ̄ⲡⲉⲑⲟⲟⲩ.

elaborate on certain points of the above discussion of *TriTrac*'s theory of emotions and connect it to ethics. What is the relation between emotions and moral worth? What effects do emotions/heavenly powers have on humans? What is the nature of the *good* emotions associated with the third and highest level of powers? In the following we explore all these questions, and we begin by scrutinizing the workings of cognitive theory in *TriTrac*. This can be done, I argue, by looking more closely at the Logos' association with motion.

3 The Logos' First Movement and Ancient Cognitive Theory

Valentinian theology is sometimes presented as harnessing a creation story wherein the youngest Aeon, Sophia, falls due to passion and a *desire* to know or emulate the Father.[86] These portrayals of Sophia remind us strongly of the Logos in *TriTrac*. However, in *TriTrac* the Logos' creation does not begin with his acting through passion (πάθος) or desire (ἐπιθυμία) in the way Sophia is often described as doing.[87] The Logos' 'sidestep' is clearly sanctioned, in fact, it is orchestrated by the Father. It is predestined to occur. Creation occurred through the will of the Father and everything is governed through pronoia and the will of God (77:10–11, 107:22, 109:7–11).[88] When the Logos creates matter he is described as acting without knowledge of himself, from forgetfulness and division (77:11–25), which is not very strange since he has just been separated from the Pleroma, a collective which is needed for true knowledge to be viable. But the Logos is not driven by passion; his initial creative act is defined in terms of movement and he himself is described as being in a state of movement. We read of "his movement" (πεϥκιⲙ) (115:28) and he is called "the one who moved", "the Logos who moved" (πλογος ⲉⲛⲧⲁϩκιⲙ) (85:15–16, 115:21), "the movement which is the Logos" (ⲙ̄πκιⲙ· ⲉⲧⲉ πλογος πⲉ·) (77:7). This movement, the movement that leads to the Logos' being outside of the Pleroma, is not defined as

86 Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* I.2.3, I.4.1, I.4.3; *ExcTheod* 67:2; Hippolytus, *Refutation of All Heresies* VI.32.5. See also Dunderberg, *Beyond Gnosticism*, 112; Dunderberg, "Stoic Traditions", 225–229.

87 See, for example, Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* I.2.3, where Sophia is stricken with grief and fear, two of the Stoic passions. See also Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* I.4.1–3; *ExcTheod* 67:2. In *GosTruth* the reason creation takes place in the first hand is due to ignorance of the Father, which causes fear. Fear allows Error (πλⲁⲛⲏ) to take hold, a kind of Demiurge-figure/Sophia of this text. See *GosTruth* 17:10–20.

88 Thomassen has pointed how similar this equating the will of God with pronoia and the view of creation as the *oikonomia* of the Father (77:9) is to Stoic notions of fate and the creation and *organization* of the world for humanity's benefit (Thomassen, *Le traité tripartite*, 335–336, 408–409, 411–413).

passion. Instead, passions are created outside the Pleroma as the first act of the Logos when he becomes isolated and exists in a state of movement. Passions are created as a result of the Logos' acting while in this state, when he acts on impressions (ⲫⲁⲛⲧⲁⲥⲓⲁ) (77:37–78:7) while in a disturbed state. When the Logos is later healed by the Savior, we read that he is "returned to his stability" (ⲉⲛⲧⲁϥⲥⲧⲁϥ ⲁϩⲟⲩⲛ ⲁⲡⲉϥⲥⲙⲛ̄) (92:23).

Michael A. Williams has previously highlighted resemblances between the protology in *TriTrac* and Middle Platonic systems wherein creation is described as starting with a first movement from rest. Williams compares the Logos in *TriTrac* with Plutarch's Isis, the movement and the creative element of nature that animates the world; with the creative World Soul moving into the material realm described by Plotinus; and how Sophia is portrayed in *ApJohn* as beginning to move to and fro at creation, like the spirit over the water in Genesis.[89] Williams is surely correct that these general mythological and Platonic notions are also reflected in *TriTrac*. However, I argue that we could add yet another nuance to the description of the Logos' movement through the lens of ancient theories of cognition and emotions.

Ancient cognitive theory held the idea that humans' experience comprised impressions in the mind to which the faculties of the mind responded. Rational judgment associated with the intellect did not cause the mind to fluctuate in any noticeable manner but was used to make neutral calculations; emotive responses like honor and pride were caused by the soul; and responses like hunger or lust were caused by the body. Thus, emotions were often defined as movements of the mind, caused by impressions: by the judgments of impressions by the lower faculties. To be able to make rational decisions, these movements needed to be controlled, so that they did not cause one to behave in a short-sighted way; this much was generally agreed upon.[90]

As is commonly known, the Stoic ideal state of mind was *apatheia*, the eradication of emotions. However, according to some Stoics, like Seneca, all humans, even the sage, experienced what he called "first movements" (*primus motus*).

89 This description of the movement of the Logos and the sickness that is the result of his misstep is also similar to the way the Platonic and Neopythagorean Dyad, the material and formless part of creation, is sometimes described in terms of movement. The Dyad is the moving material part of the creation, with which the soul gets entangled (see, for example, Pseudo-Iamblichus, *The Theology of Arithmetic* 13.5). The irrational and disorderly movement of Plato's World Soul also comes to mind (*Timaeus* 52d–53a). For more on the theme of cosmological movement see Michael A. Williams, *The Immovable Race: A Gnostic Designation and the Theme of Stability in Late Antiquity* (Leiden: Brill, 1985). What makes the description of the Logos in *TriTrac* somewhat particular is the emphasis that this movement is without blame.

90 For a more detailed description, see Sorabji, *Emotions*; Nussbaum, *Therapy of Desire*.

First movements were not passions but involuntary motions in the mind and body, caused by impressions.[91] First movements were without judgment and thus there was no blame attached to having them, because they could not be avoided by use of reason; everyone was subject to them.[92] The situation of the Logos in *TriTrac* reminds us of how Seneca describes "first movements", or pre-passions, passionless states instigated by an initial impression (ⲟⲩⲫⲁⲛⲧⲁⲥⲓⲁ). The Logos' association with movement is emphasized and it is his initial creation that is associated with passion, which is a result of the Logos' acting on an impression (ⲟⲩⲫⲁⲛⲧⲁⲥⲓⲁ) while in a state of movement (78:5–7).

Furthermore, in *TriTrac* the youngest Aeon, the Logos, is clearly free of any blame, although he suffers due to his being separated from his stable heavenly position. The status of the Logos before he becomes separated from the Pleroma is comparable to the Highest Father who is "restful" (ⲙ̄ⲧⲁⲛ) (55:16–17), "unchanging" (ϣⲃ̄ⲃⲓⲁⲓⲧ ⲉⲛ) (52:21–22), and "unwavering" (ϩⲁⲥⲉ ⲉⲛ) (53:16). In some depictions of the Valentinian creation, Sophia, like the Platonic World Soul, makes a mistake due to irrational thoughts and thus is blamed for creation.[93] The emphasis on the Logos' relation to movement and the disassociation from blame and passion makes perfect sense from the perspective of the Stoic distinction between proto-passions, initial *movements* in the mind, and full-blown passions that were the result of judgment. Throughout the text the Logos is associated with passions; they are a result of his being separated from the Pleroma and he is entangled with them (88:23–34, 117:36–118:14), but the initial creation is not due to the Logos being driven by passion. The Logos suffers due to his situation (80:11–14), but does not act on passion, and the situation in which he finds himself is not his fault. This is why *TriTrac* states that "it is not fitting to criticize the movement which is the Logos, but it is fitting that we should say that the Logos' movement is a cause of an *oikonomia* which has been destined to come about".[94]

This originally Stoic distinction between "first motions" and passion, I maintain, is implemented in *TriTrac*. This is no surprise. The distinction between full-fledged emotions and initial movements seems to have been well known

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91 Epictetus seems to agree on this point because, according to Aulus Gellius, *Attic Nights* XIX.1, Epictetus held the view that a wise person could chose freely to ignore *impressions* that were not beneficial, like letting fear control one's reason.

92 Seneca, *On Anger* II.2.2, II.2.1, II.4.2. See also Sorabji, *Emotions*, 55–65.

93 Plato, *Timaeus* 52d–53a; Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* I.2.3.

94 77:6–11: ⲙⲁⲥϣⲉ ⲁⲣ̄ ⲕⲁ[ⲧ]ⲏ̣ⲅⲟⲣⲓ ⲙ̄ⲡⲕⲓⲙ· ⲉⲧⲉ ⲡⲗⲟⲅⲟⲥ ⲡⲉ· [ⲁ]ⲗ̣ⲗⲁ ⲡⲉⲧⲉϣϣⲉ ⲡⲉ· ⲁⲧⲣⲛ̄ϣⲉϫⲉ ⲁ[ⲡ]ⲕ̣ⲓⲙ· ⲛ̄ⲧⲉ ⲡⲗⲟⲅⲟⲥ· ϫⲉ ⲟⲩⲗⲁⲉⲓϭⲉ ⲡⲉ [ⲛ]ⲟⲩⲟⲓⲕⲟⲛⲟⲙⲓⲁ ⲉⲥⲧⲏϣ ⲁⲧⲣⲉⲥϣ̣ⲱⲡⲉ. Translation by Attridge and Pagels, slightly modified.

among third-century Christians. Origen and Didymus the Blind resorted to the same argument in order to distance the portrayal of Jesus from unbecoming emotional behavior. Origen explains Jesus' grief and distress in Gethsemane (Matt 26:37) as a first movement. Jesus merely experienced the first disturbance of grief and distress but did not succumb to the full-blown emotions.[95] In a similar way, the Logos in *TriTrac* is also distressed and suffers but is nonetheless never described as acting on passion or desire. Didymus the Blind employs the same distinction in his reading of John 12:27, where Jesus feels his soul being disturbed; but Jesus is driven by natural motions, not full-fledged passions.[96]

It is perhaps not a coincidence that it is a Valentinian text that clearly stated that the ultimate origin of creation is due to the will of the Father's plan whereby the youngest Aeon is also distanced from passion and materiality using the Stoic distinction between motion and emotion. Corporeality is associated with motion and disturbance, we read, this cannot be avoided, but the movement will cease in the end and things will return to firmness and rest.

So, other than the motion caused by his isolation from the Pleroma, what drives the Logos? At times, we read that his actions are driven by love and a will to know the Father. As it happens, love (ⲁⲅⲁⲡⲏ) and will (ⲟⲩⲱϣ/βούλησις) were counted among the three basic Stoic *good emotions*, which are fundamentally different from the negative passions. Let us turn to look at how *TriTrac* utilizes the distinction between good and bad emotions.

4 Good Emotions

According to Stoics, if one reached a passionless state (ἀπάθεια) one could enjoy *good* emotions (εὐπάθεια), or moods. These good emotions were of three basic kinds: will (βούλησις), joy (χαρά), and caution (εὐλάβεια).[97] Each of these feelings had subcategories. There were different kinds of will: for example, the will to have good things happen to others was called "good will" (εὔνοια), "kindness" (εὐμένεια) was lasting good will, and "welcoming" (ἀσπασμός), was good

95 Origen, *Commentary on Matthew* 92.

96 Didymus the Blind, *Commentary on the Psalms* 43.16–22. For a detailed analysis of how Origen and Didymus the Blind used the Stoic theory of *pre-passions* see Richard Layton, "Propatheia: Origen and Didymus On the Origin of the Passions", *Vigiliae Christianae* 54 (2000): 262–282.

97 Cicero, *Tusculan Disputations* IV.12–13; Diogenes Laertius, *Lives* VII.116; SVF III.432.

will that was uninterrupted.[98] As with the lists of passions, *TriTrac* does not follow the Stoic division or terminology to this point, but there are strong resemblances. As seen above, the Logos is not separated from the Pleroma because of passion; instead we read that the Logos is moved by love (ⲁⲅⲁⲡⲏ/ⲙⲁⲉⲓⲉ), through the will (ⲡⲓⲟⲩⲱϣ) to give glory to the Father (76:13–27, 77:11–15). This is also stated to happen in accordance with the will of the Father (76:24–25). Love is mentioned at other times in association with will as well. When the Logos prays for the Son to aid him it is described as done with love, which in turn is identified as light and will (93:34–94:24). Love (ἀγάπη) for Stoics was a kind of will (βούλησις),[99] a well-balanced rational wish.[100] Thus, it seems that in *TriTrac* the actions of the youngest Aeon are actually driven by one of the *good* emotions, not by desire, which is sometimes the case in descriptions of the youngest Aeon's creation.[101] The Stoic category and subcategories of the good emotions appear in other places in *TriTrac* as well, as results of knowing the Son and the Father and being integrated with the Pleroma.

While the two first products of the Logos' creation (the material and psychic powers) are associated with different passions, the Father, Son, Pleroma, and third creation of the Logos (the pneumatic powers) are instead associated with things that could be defined as good emotions and their sub-categories. The region above the two lower powers is called "a place of joy" (ⲉⲩⲧⲟⲡⲟⲥ ⲡⲉ ⲛ̄ⲟⲩⲣⲁⲧ ⲡⲉ) (98:26–27). This feeling, joy (ⲡⲣⲉϣⲉ), is by far the most frequently used descriptive term in *TriTrac*, for the positive result of knowing the Savior and being integrated into the Pleroma and the Christian community

98 For the full list of emotions that were associated with the three categories of the good emotions, see Sorabji, *Emotions*, 48.

99 See Diogenes Laertius, *Lives* VII.116; Cicero, *Tusculan Disputations* IV.12–13. For a summary of the theory of positive emotions in Stoicism, see Sorabji, *Emotions*, 47–51.

100 Exactly how love was defined in relation to will and the concept of *eupatheia* is not clear from our sources about Stoics (see Sorabji, *Emotions*, 48). Clement spends much time discussing love and, as we have seen above, Clement was also very influenced by the Stoic theory of emotions, but it is unclear if his thoughts on love reflect any Stoic ideas. Whatever the case, love for Clement was the result of having shed all negative passions, a feeling that only the true gnostic felt when possessing total faith and knowledge. *Stromata* II.9, II.20, VI.9. Simo Knuuttila writes that "the Christian *apatheia*" is not associated with the Stoic good emotions but rather to love (Knuuttila, *Emotions*, 119). However, love was counted by some Christians as a sub-category of the good emotion, will (see Sorabji, *Emotions*, 343–418). Gregory of Nyssa also describes love as the will for union with the heavenly beloved. Gregory of Nyssa, *Life of Moses* II.238–239. But contrary to Clement as well as *TriTrac*, Gregory employs the term ἔρως (love) in this sense, it would seem. Eros does not occur in *TriTrac* at all. Evagrius follows the tradition that associates *apatheia* with love (*Praktikos* I.58–112; *Peri Logismon* 10.15, 15.1).

101 See a summary in Dunderberg, *Gnostic Morality*, 123–127.

on earth.[102] Joy (χαρά) was for Stoics one of the three "good emotions" (εὐπάθεια) described as a feeling reserved for the perfect sage who had a firm mind and who was harmoniously blended with the Logos of Nature.[103] In *TriTrac*, joy is described as the result of blending (ⲧⲱⲧ) with the Savior and the Aeons of the Pleroma (122:13–27, 123:9). Joy is used as a descriptive term for the Father (55:16); for the Aeons' emanation from the Father (86:12, 86:24, 86:32–33); as the result of the reintegrating of the Logos into the unity of the other Aeons (122:20–30). The nature of joy is described as the creation of the Savior who bears in him what each individual needs (88:15–20). The Logos experiences joy on several occasions: when he "received blending of rest" (ⲁϥϫⲓ ⲙ̄ⲡⲙⲟⲩϫϭ ⲙ̄ⲡⲓⲙ̄ⲧⲁⲛ) (90:20), and when his offspring who left him return and pay him respect. The Logos' thought is called "joy of the Lord" (ⲡⲣⲉϣⲉ ⲛ̄ⲧⲉ ⲡϫⲁⲉⲓⲥ) (93:8–9) and joy is described as the nature of life with the Aeons above the Logos' creation (93:8–29). Joy is the feeling in the bridal chamber when bride and bridegroom (Christ and the pneumatics who form his body) join together and when the Logos joins the other Aeons (122:20–30): as the result of the return to one's unity (123:9).

The good emotion joy, similarly as with will, also seems to have subcategories. When the Savior appears to the Logos he creates the third level where the pneumatic powers stay, a "place of joy" (ⲉⲩⲧⲟⲡⲟⲥ ⲡⲉ ⲛ̄ⲟⲩⲣⲁⲧ ⲡⲉ) (98:26–27). Then we are told of the kind of notions with which this third level is associated, and to what conversion and knowing the Savior leads:

> That in which the Logos put himself was an Aeon filled with joy. It had the form of the thing but also the character of its cause, which is the one who revealed himself. (The aeon was) an image of those things which are in the Pleroma, those things which came into being from the abundance of the enjoyment of the one who exists joyously. Furthermore, the countenance of him who had revealed himself (was) the confidence and the expectation and the promise he had received of the things he had asked

102 ⲣⲉϣⲉ is one of the Coptic equivalents of the Greek χαρά; see Crum, *Coptic*, 309a. See also *GosTruth* 16:31–17:4 where the message of the text is described as a joy for those who receive it.

103 For Seneca, firm and unchanging joy (*gaudium*) is the obvious benefit of living a life according to Stoic principles (Seneca, *On the Happy Life* III.4, IV.4; *Epistle* 23.3, 59.2). See also Nussbaum, *Therapy of Desire*, 398–401. Nussbaum points out that joy for Seneca is not an exuberant feeling but a calm, restful, and sober state, a conception that strikes a chord with *TriTrac*, where the joy of the harmonious blending with God the Aeons is a joy (ⲣⲉϣⲉ) more in tune with restfulness (ⲙ̄ⲧⲁⲛ) and gladness (ⲣⲁⲟⲩⲧ) than with more lively emotions (92:35, 121:26, 122:15–30).

> for. He had the word of the Son, as well as his substance, power, and form. He (the Savior) was the one he (the Logos) wished for and delighted in, he was the one who had been prayed for in love.[104]

Further down, when the Logos starts to order his three creations, we get more information about the sentiments that are associated with the top level of powers that is generated from this meeting between the Savior and the Logos. This passage was quoted above, but it is worth revisiting, now from the perspective of good emotions:

> He arranged the place of those he had brought forth in accordance with glory, which is called "paradise", "enjoyment", "delight full of nourishment", and "delight <of> the preexistent ones". And he made images of all the goodness that exists in the Pleroma. Then he ordered the kingdom, which is like a city filled with everything that is pleasing—brotherly love and great generosity—filled with the holy spirits and the strong powers that govern those the Logos brought forth. And he established it firmly. (He organized) the place of the Church that gathers in this place, having the form of the Church that exists in the Aeon, which gives glory to the Father. After this, (he organized) the place of faith and obedience that comes from hope, that which the Logos had received when the light was revealed. The disposition of prayer and supplication is what leads to forgiveness and the announcement about him who would appear.[105]

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104 93:20–94:1: ϫⲉ ⲡⲉⲧⲉ·ⲁⲡⲗⲟⲅⲟⲥ ϭⲉ ⲕⲁⲁϥ ⲙ̄ⲙⲟϥ ⲁϩⲣⲏⲓ̈ ⲉϥϫⲏⲕ ⲁⲃⲁⲗ· ⲙ̄ⲡⲓⲣⲉϣⲉ ⲛⲉⲩⲟⲩⲁⲓⲱⲛ ⲡⲉ ⲉⲩⲛ̄ⲧⲉϥ ⲙ̄ⲙⲉⲩ ⲙ̄ⲡⲥⲙⲁⲧ ⲙ̄ⲫⲱⲃ· ⲉⲩⲛ̄ⲧⲉϥ ⲇⲉ ⲁⲛ ⲙ̄ⲡⲧⲉϩⲟ ⲁⲣⲉⲧϥ̄ ⲛ̄ⲧⲗⲁⲉⲓϭⲉ· ⲉⲧⲉ ⲡⲉⲧⲁϩⲟⲩⲁⲛϩϥ̄ ⲡⲉ· ⲉⲩϩⲓ̈ⲕⲱⲛ ⲡⲉ· ⲛ̄ⲛⲉⲉⲓ ⲉⲧϣⲟⲟⲡ· ϩⲛ̄ ⲡⲡⲗⲏⲣⲱⲙⲁ ⲛⲉⲉⲓ· ⲉⲛⲧⲁϩϣⲱⲡⲉ· ⲁⲃⲁⲗ ϩⲛ̄ ⲡϩⲟⲩⲟ ⲛ̄ϯⲁⲡⲟⲗⲁⲩⲥⲓⲥ ⲛ̄ⲇⲉ ⲡⲉⲧϣⲟⲟⲡ ϩⲛ̄ ⲟⲩⲣⲉϣⲉ· ⲛ̄ⲧⲁϥ ⲛ̄ⲇⲉ ⲡⲙⲟⲩⲛⲕ̄ ⲛ̄ϩⲟ ⲙ̄ⲡⲉⲧⲁϩⲟⲩⲁⲛϩϥ̄ ⲁⲃⲁⲗ· ϩⲛ̄ ⲡⲓϫⲱⲕ ⲛ̄ϩⲏⲧ· ⲙⲛ ⲡⲓⲱⲣⲙⲉ· ⲁϩⲟⲩⲛ ⲙⲛ̄ ⲡⲓϣⲡ ⲱⲡ· ϩⲁ ⲡⲣⲁ· ⲛ̄ⲉⲧⲁϥⲣ̄ ⲁⲓⲧⲓ ⲙ̄ⲙⲁⲩⲟⲩ ⲛ̄ⲉⲟⲩⲛ̄ⲧⲉϥ ⲙ̄ⲙⲉⲩ ⲡⲉ ⲙ̄ⲡⲗⲟⲅⲟⲥ ⲛ̄ⲧⲉ ⲡϣⲏⲣⲉ· ⲙⲛ̄ ⲧⲉϥⲟⲩⲥⲓⲁ ⲙⲛ̄ ⲧⲉϥϭⲟⲙ ⲙⲛ̄ ⲧⲉϥⲙⲟⲣⲫⲏ ⲉⲧⲉ ⲡⲁⲉⲓ ⲉⲛⲧⲁϥⲟⲩⲱϣⲉ· <ⲙ̄ⲙⲁϥ> ⲁⲩⲱ ⲁϥⲱⲕ ⲛ̄ϩⲏⲧ· ⲁⲣⲁϥ ⲉⲧⲉ ⲡⲉⲧⲁⲩⲧⲱⲃϩ̄ ⲙ̄ⲙⲁϥ ⲡⲉ ϩⲛ̄ⲛ ⲟⲩⲁ̣ⲅⲁ[ⲡⲏ]. Translation by Attridge and Pagels, modified. Thomassen translates ⲟⲩⲱϣⲉ to "desire", but I think ⲟⲩⲱϣⲉ should not get confused with the passion desire (ἐπιθυμία). ⲟⲩⲱϣⲉ clearly does not have a connotation of the passion desire in *TriTrac*, but is rather much closer to will (βούλησις), which is not something one gets inflicted with. For more on the use of ⲟⲩⲱϣⲉ in *TriTrac* see Chapter 3 and the discussion on free will. Furthermore, I do not agree with Attridge and Pagels' translation of ⲡⲥⲙⲁⲧ ⲙ̄ⲫⲱⲃ here, it seems strange that the Aeon of the Logos, above matter and psychê, would have the "form of matter", which is their translation. Rather I opt to contrast the "form of the thing" (ϩⲱⲃ) with its cause.

105 96:27–97:16: ⲁϥⲧⲥⲁⲉⲓⲱ· ⲙ̄ⲡⲙⲁ· ⲛ̄ⲛⲉⲉⲓ ⲉⲛⲧⲁϥⲛ̄ⲧⲟⲩ ⲕⲁⲧⲁ ⲟⲩⲉⲁⲩ ⲡⲉⲧⲟⲩⲙⲟⲩⲧⲉ· ⲁⲣⲁϥ ϫⲉ ⲡⲁⲣⲁⲇⲓⲇⲟⲥ ⲙⲛ̄ ⲧⲁⲡⲟⲗⲁⲩⲥⲓⲥ ⲙⲛ̄ ⲡⲟⲩⲛⲁϥ ⲉ{ϥ}ⲧⲙⲏϩ ⲛ̄ⲧⲣⲟⲫⲏ ⲙⲛ̄ ⲡⲟⲩⲛⲁϥ ⲛⲉⲉⲓ ⲉⲧⲣ̄

Here ⲟⲩⲛⲁϥ, *delight*, occurs frequently as a feeling in the third sphere of joy. Another word that occurs frequently is ⲁⲡⲟⲗⲁⲩⲥⲓⲥ (ἀπόλαυσις), *enjoyment*. ⲟⲩⲛⲁϥ is the Coptic equivalent of the Greek τέρψις, *delight*.[106] Delight was one of the Stoic types of joy, and just as delight for Stoics was a subcategory of joy, in *TriTrac* delight is found in "the place of joy".[107] In the "place of joy" we also find the following good emotions: "enjoyment" (ⲁⲡⲟⲗⲁⲩⲥⲓⲥ), "brotherly love" (ⲙⲛ̄ⲧⲙⲁⲉⲓⲥⲁⲛ), "generosity" (ⲙⲛ̄ⲧⲁⲫⲑⲟⲛⲟⲥ), "faith" (ⲛⲁϩⲧⲉ), "obedience" (ⲥⲱⲧⲙ̄), and "hope" (ⲑⲉⲗⲡⲓⲥ). These are more reminiscent of the Christian sentiments one can find in scripture, but it seems obvious from the survey above that *TriTrac* also labored under similar categorizations as those made among Stoics, that recognized good and bad emotions.

In between the two quoted passage above there is a crucial sentence, one of the few that seems to deal explicitly with moral questions and the behavior of those who represent the ideal. We read that to be part of the third level is associated with "light and a desire to be upright, an openness for instruction and an eye for vision".[108] These qualities belong to the third level of powers, those that are not associated with passion but instead reap the benefit of good emotions. This will be elaborated upon in the forthcoming chapters, but it suffices to recognize here that *TriTrac*'s theory of emotions is intimately connected to questions of ethics and behavior.

ϣⲣⲡ̄ ⲛ̄ϣⲟⲟⲡ· ⲁⲩⲱ ⲁⲃⲁⲗ· ⲛ̄ⲙⲛ̄ⲧⲛⲁϥⲣⲉ ⲛⲓⲙ ⲉⲧϣⲟⲟⲡ ϩⲛ̄ ⲡⲗⲏⲣⲟⲩⲙⲁ· ⲉϥⲧⲟⲩϫⲟ ⲛ̄ϯϩⲓ̈ⲕⲱⲛ ⲉⲓⲇⲁ· ⲁϥⲧⲥⲁⲉⲓⲟ· ⲛ̄ϯⲙⲛ̄ⲧⲣ̄ⲣⲟ· ⲉⲥⲟⲉⲓ̄ ⲙ̄ⲡⲣⲏⲧⲉ ⲛ̄ⲛⲟⲩⲡⲟⲗⲓⲥ ⲉⲥⲙⲏϩ ⲁⲃⲁⲗ ⲙ̄ⲡⲉⲧⲁⲛⲓⲧ· ⲛⲓⲙ· ⲉⲧⲉ ⲧⲙⲛ̄ⲧⲙⲁⲉⲓⲥⲁⲛ ⲧⲉ· ⲁⲩⲱ ϯⲛⲟϭ ⲙ̄ⲙⲛ̄ⲧⲁⲫⲑⲟⲛⲟⲥ· ⲉⲧⲙⲏϩ ⲁ̣ⲃ̣ⲁ̣ⲗ ⲛ̄ⲛⲓⲡⲛ(ⲉⲩⲙ)ⲁ ⲉⲧⲟⲩⲁⲁⲃ· ⲙⲛ̄ [ⲛⲓ]ϭⲟⲙ ⲉⲧϫⲟⲟⲣ· ⲉⲧⲟⲩⲣ̄ ⲡⲟⲗⲓⲧⲉⲩⲉ̣ ⲙ̄ⲙⲟⲟⲩ ⲛⲉⲉⲓ ⲉⲧⲉ·ⲁⲡⲗⲟⲅⲟⲥ· ⲛ̄ⲧⲟⲩ ⲁⲃⲁⲗ· ⲁⲩⲱ ⲁϥⲧⲱⲕ ⲁⲣⲉⲧϥ ϩⲛ̄ⲛ ⲟⲩϭⲟⲙ ⲉⲓⲇⲁ ⲡⲧⲟⲡⲟⲥ ⲛ̄ⲧⲉⲕⲕⲗⲏⲥⲓⲁ ⲉⲧⲥⲟϩⲟⲩ ϩⲙ̄ ⲡⲉⲉⲓⲙ[ⲁ] ⲉⲩⲛ̄ⲧⲉϥ ⲙ̄ⲙⲉⲩ ⲙ̄ⲡⲥⲙⲁⲧ ⲛ̄ⲧⲉⲕ̣ⲕⲗⲏⲥⲓⲁ ⲉⲧϣⲟⲟⲡ ϩⲛ̄ ⲛⲁⲓⲱⲛ ⲉⲧϯ ⲉ̣ⲁⲩ ⲙ̄ⲡⲓⲱⲧ· ⲙⲛ̄ⲛ̄ⲥⲁ ⲛⲁⲓ̈ ⲡⲧⲟⲡⲟⲥ ⲙ̄ⲡⲛⲁϩⲧⲉ· ⲙⲛ̄ ⲡⲥⲱⲧⲙ̄ ⲁⲃⲁ̣[ⲗ ϩⲛ̄] ⲑⲉⲗⲡⲓⲥ ⲛⲁⲉⲓ· ⲉⲛⲧⲁϥϫⲓⲧⲟⲩ ⲛ̄ϭ[ⲓ ⲡⲗⲟⲅ]ⲟ̣ⲥ ⲛ̄ⲧⲁⲣⲉⲡⲟⲩⲁⲉⲓⲛ ⲟⲩⲱⲛϩ̄ ⲁ̣[ⲃⲁⲗ] ⲉⲓⲇⲉ ϯⲇⲓⲁⲑⲉⲥⲓⲥ· ⲉⲧⲉ ⲡϣⲗⲏⲗ ⲡⲉ̣ [ⲙⲛ] ⲡⲥⲁⲡⲥⲡ̄ ⲛⲉⲉⲓ ⲉⲛⲧⲁⲡⲕⲱⲉ ⲁⲃⲁⲗ ⲟ̣[ⲩ]ⲁϩϥ̄ ⲛⲥⲱⲟⲩ ⲁⲩⲱ ⲡϣⲉϫⲉ ϩⲁ ⲡⲣ[ⲁ ⲙ̄]ⲡⲉⲧⲛⲁⲟⲩⲱⲛϩ̄. Translation by Attridge and Pagels, slightly modified.

106 ⲟⲩⲛⲁϥ is a possible Coptic equivalent of τέρψις, see Crum, *Coptic*, 485b.

107 Delight is also mentioned in other places in relation to joy. We read of the "delight of full sustenance" (ⲡⲟⲩⲛⲁϥ ⲉϥⲧⲙⲏϩ ⲛ̄ⲧⲣⲟⲫⲏ) (96:30–31), and just of ⲟⲩⲛⲁϥ, delight (τέρψις) (55:15, 98:34–35, 100:39, and 122:20–21). If one emends the omicron in ⲧⲣⲟⲫⲏ at 96:30–31 to an upsilon, we get a sentence that fits better: "the enjoyment of complete wantonness" (ⲧⲣⲩⲫⲏ instead of ⲧⲣⲟⲫⲏ), which perhaps would make better sense. This would however mean that we would need to disregard the clear omicron in the manuscript, which should never be done without reservation.

108 94:2–4: ⲛⲉⲟⲩⲁⲉⲓⲛⲉ ⲡⲉ· ⲁⲩⲱ ⲛⲉⲩⲟⲩⲱϣⲉ ⲡⲉ ⲁⲧ̣ⲣⲉϥⲧⲉϩⲟ ⲁⲣⲉⲧϥ̄ ⲁⲩⲱ ⲛⲉⲩⲟⲩⲱⲣϩ̄ ⲡⲉ· ⲁⲩⲥⲃⲟⲩ ⲡⲉ· ⲁⲩⲱ <ⲛ>ⲁⲩⲃⲉⲗ ⲡⲉ· <ⲉ>ⲟⲩϭⲛ̄ⲛⲉⲩ. Translation by Attridge and Pagels, slightly modified.

Even though *TriTrac* does not follow the lists of Stoic good emotions to the same point, and even though the term *eupatheia* does not occur, the resemblance to Stoicism is strong. The relation between love and will, as well as the connection between joy and delight, resembles the Stoic categories and subcategories of *eupatheia* to such a degree that it seems unlikely that it is a mere coincidence. However, the third Stoic good emotion, caution (εὐλάβεια), does not seem to be viable in *TriTrac*, but this is not strange considering that caution was under critique in the first centuries CE by those who did not see it as a viable positive feeling, like Plutarch who wrote that caution was just fear in disguise.[109]

To conclude, the good emotions are attributes of the third level of creation and are clearly separated from the two lower levels that are associated with passion and sickness. So, how do passions and good emotions effect humans? As I argued above, passions are not solely negative in *TriTrac.* This is explored next.

5 Negative Passions as "Mixed" Heavenly Powers and Their Influence on Humans

The discussion of how emotions affect humans should be conducted with close attention to ancient cognitive theory, which most often stated that all humans possessed three basic forms of judgments, derived from body, soul, and intellect. People reacted differently to impressions depending on their state of mind. In *TriTrac* we have a similar anthropology with material, psychic and pneumatic substances/powers and, as seen above, these three substances make up humanity.

As discussed above, the Logos' prehistoric missteps created two sorts of powers, and we read that these were at war with each other before the Savior came and the Logos ordered the superior powers above the lower material powers. The lower material powers are called "mixed" (ϩⲧⲁϩⲧ) (110:31). Being "mixed", as I have argued in Chapter 1, is in *TriTrac* used as way of denoting a state outside the harmony of the Pleroma and God's community. The opposite is a state of "blending" or "joining" (ⲙⲟⲩϫϭ/ⲧⲱⲧ).[110] The material powers are

109 Plutarch, *On Moral Virtue* 449a–b.

110 This distinction is made throughout the text, a difference between mixing and blending, or a positive blended state and a negative blended state, here called mixing. This distinction draws on Stoic epistemology. The state of "mixing" does not occur in the first part of the text's discussion of the highest realm. The words for mixing are used when the Logos gets "unmixed" (ⲁⲧⲧⲱϩ) from his erroneous creation by virtue of the Savior (90:17–18);

described as being mixed, while at the appearance of the Savior psychic powers are able to become "unmixed" from their war with the material powers.

These two orders of powers, also associated with different degrees of passion, are portrayed in one passage of *TriTrac* as influencing the decisions of humans. On pages 109–110, the text expounds on the virtues of pagan philosophy and Hebrew prophecy before the time of the Savior's appearance in the cosmos. We read that Greeks and barbarians produced empty philosophy, which is described as the result of their being moved to act on impressions by rebellious powers that stirred inside them (109:24–110:1). Because of this:

> … nobody was in agreement with its fellows, nothing, neither philosophy nor types of medicine nor types of rhetoric nor types of music nor types of logic, but they are opinions and theories. Ineffability held sway in confusion, because of the indescribable quality of those who hold sway, who give them thoughts. Now, to what concerns that which has arisen from the Hebrews. That which is written by the material (people) who speak in the fashion of the Greeks, (it is) the powers who think for them all, tell them (what to say), (it is) the right powers who move all of them, cause them to think of words and representations. They (the Greeks) sought them out and grasped them so as to reach the truth, and they used the mixed powers that were working in them. After that, they reached the order of the unmixed powers.[111]

when the Logos does not allow his superior powers to "mix" (ⲧⲱϩ) with the inferior (97:25); when the righteous Hebrews transcended the influence of the "mixed powers" (ⲛⲓϭⲟⲙ ⲉⲧⲉϩⲧⲁϩⲧ) and "attained to the level of the unmixed ones" (ⲁⲧⲁϩⲧϩ̄) (110:34); and to denote those humans and angels who will be lost and destroyed in the end as they are mixed (ⲧϩϯϩ/ⲧⲉϩϯϩ) (120:21, 121:22). This mixed state is the original human reality and would have been permanent if it were not for the grace of the Savior.

111 110:11–34: ⲉⲧⲃⲉ ⲡⲉⲉⲓ ⲙ̄ⲡⲉⲗⲁⲩⲉ· ϣⲱⲡⲉ· ⲉϥϯ ⲙⲉⲧⲉ ⲙⲛ̄ ⲛⲉϥⲉⲣⲏⲟⲩ ⲙⲛ̄ ⲗⲁⲩⲉ ⲛϩⲱⲃ ⲟⲩⲇⲉ· ⲙⲛ̄ⲧⲫⲓⲗⲟⲥⲟⲫⲟⲥ ⲟⲩⲇⲉ ϩⲛⲙⲛ̄ⲧⲥⲉⲉⲓⲛ ⲟⲩⲇⲉ ϩⲛ̄ⲙⲛ̄ⲧϩⲣⲏⲧⲱⲣ· ⲟⲩⲇⲉ ϩⲛ̄ⲙⲛ̄ⲧⲙⲟⲩⲥⲓⲕⲟⲛ ⲟⲩⲇⲉ ϩⲛ̄ⲙⲛ̄ⲧⲟⲣⲅⲁⲛⲟⲛ ⲁⲗⲗⲁ ϩⲛ̄ⲉⲁⲩ ⲛⲉ ϩⲓ̈ ⲙⲛ̄ⲧⲣⲉϥⲙ̄ⲙⲉ· ⲁⲥϣⲱⲡⲉ ⲉⲥⲁⲙⲁϩⲧⲉ ⲁϫⲛ̄ ⲧⲙⲛ̄ⲧⲁⲧϯ ϩⲣⲁⲩⲟⲩ ⲉϥⲙⲁϭϫ· ⲉⲧⲃⲉ ⲧⲙⲛ̄ⲧⲁⲧ·ⲧⲉⲟⲩ·[ϫ]ⲉ̣ ⲉⲧⲉ ⲛⲉⲧⲁⲙⲁϩⲧⲉ ⲉⲧϯ ⲛⲉⲩⲛⲛ̄ⲙⲉⲩⲉ· ϫⲉ ⲛⲉⲉⲓ· ⲉⲛⲧⲁϩϣⲱⲡⲉ· ⲁⲃⲁⲗ· ϩⲛ̄ ⲡⲧⲉⲉⲛⲟ· ⲛ̄ⲇⲉ ϩⲛ̄ ϩⲉⲃⲃⲣⲉⲟⲥ· ⲛⲁⲉⲓ ⲉⲧⲥⲏϩ· ⲁⲃⲁⲗ ⲛ̄ⲛⲓϩⲩⲗⲏ ⲉⲧ·ϫⲱ ⲙ̄ⲡⲧⲩⲡⲟⲥ ⲛ̄ⲛϩⲉⲗⲗⲏⲛ ⲛ̄ϭⲟⲙ ⲛ̄ⲛⲉⲧⲁⲙⲉⲉⲩⲉ ⲁⲣⲁⲩ ⲧⲏⲣⲟⲩ ⲁϫⲟⲟⲩ ⲁⲛⲓⲟⲩⲛⲉⲙ ⲛ̄ϭⲟⲙ ⲉⲧⲕⲓⲙ ⲁⲣⲁⲩ ⲧⲏⲣⲟⲩ ⲁⲧⲣⲟⲩⲙⲉⲩⲉ ⲛ̄ϣⲉϫⲉ ⲙⲛ̄ⲛ ⲟⲩⲉⲓⲛⲉ· <ⲁⲩ>ⲛ̄ⲧ{ⲁⲩ}ⲟⲩ ⲁⲩⲱ ⲁⲩⲁⲙⲁϩⲧⲉ ϩⲱⲥ ⲁⲧⲣⲟⲩⲧⲉ·ϩⲟ ⲛ̄ⲧⲙⲏⲉ ⲁⲩⲣ̄ ⲭⲣⲁⲥⲑⲁⲓ ⲁⲛⲓϭⲟⲙ ⲉⲧⲉϩⲧⲁϩⲧ· ⲉⲧⲣ̄ ⲉⲛⲉⲣⲅⲓ ⲛ̄ϩⲏⲧⲟⲩ ⲙⲛ̄ⲛ̄ⲥⲁ ⲛⲁⲉⲓ ⲁⲩⲧⲉϩⲟ ⲛ̄ⲧⲁⲝⲓⲥ ⲛ̄ⲇⲉ ⲛⲓⲁⲧ·ⲁϩⲧϩ̄. Translation by Attridge and Pagels, slightly modified. I suggest an emendation of [ϫ]ⲉ̣ on line 21, as an anticipatory object marker of what it is that they are "able to withstand". Thomassen supplements the lacuna with [ⲁ]ⲥ and starts a new sentence here. Attridge and Pagels opt for not emending the lacuna at all, leaving whatever letter was there untranslated (which is not recognized in their translation).

Pagan philosophers and Greek learning is contradictory because of the material powers/passions that control the impressions on which the Greeks act. Greeks think they have attained truth but it is only empty error. The wisdom of the Hebrews, however, is reached by *using* (ⲣⲭⲣⲁⲥⲑⲁⲓ)[112] the material powers, not being slaves under them. This results in attaining those powers above the lower mixed powers, reaching "the unmixed ones" (ⲛⲓⲁⲧⲁϩⲧⲉ̄ϩ) (110:34), and thus the passage finally ends with "the things which came forth from the <race> of the Hebrews" (ⲛⲉⲉⲓ· ⲉⲛⲧⲁϩϣⲱⲡⲉ· ⲁⲃⲁⲗ· ϩⲛ̄ ⲡⲧⲉⲉⲛⲟ· ⲛ̄ⲇⲉ ϩⲛ̄ϩⲉⲃⲃⲣⲉⲟⲥ) (110:22–24). The Hebrew people are described in the following way:

> … (they) thought nothing and said nothing from an impression or an imitation or from an obscure thought. Rather, each one of them (spoke) from the power working inside him, being attentive to what he saw and heard, he spoke faithfully. They have good pleasure and mutual harmony, in the way of those that were working in them because they were blended and of good pleasure.[113]

As seen above, the two different levels of powers are associated with different emotional stages; the material are attached to baser emotions—associated with movement and division—while psychic powers have the *likeness* of truth when they associate with the Savior and become unmixed from the material powers. Here it appears that the Greek philosophers and Hebrew prophets are influenced by different levels of powers/emotions. The Greeks are controlled by unstable versions that cause them to act on impressions while in unstable conditions. The Hebrews manage to control these powers/emotions and instead work together with those associated with harmony and stability, from a state of *blending* (ⲡⲓⲛⲟⲩϫϭ). However, the Hebrews should not be understood as completely in the right. Only when one is joined with the Savior and the Christian collective can one enjoy good emotions and attain knowledge. The Hebrews had their own writings which they interpreted in light of different "theories and words" (ⲛ̄ϯⲑⲉⲱⲣⲓⲁ ⲙⲛ̄ ⲡⲓϣⲉϫⲉ) (112:13–14) that came to them

112 This is likely the Coptic version of χράω, which is in the medium infinitive here, χρᾶσθαι (ⲣⲭⲣⲁⲥⲑⲁⲓ), meaning "use". See G. W. H. Lampe, *A Patristic Greek Lexicon* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1961), 1527.

113 111:9–20: ⲙⲡⲟⲩⲙⲉⲩⲉ ⲁⲗⲁⲩⲉ ⲙ̄ⲡⲟⲩϫⲟⲩ ⲗⲁⲩⲉ· {ⲙ̄ⲡⲟⲩϫⲉ ⲗⲁⲩⲉ} ⲕⲁⲧⲁ ⲟⲩⲫⲁⲛⲧⲁⲥⲓⲁ· ⲏ ⲁⲃⲁⲗ ϩⲛ̄ ⲟⲩⲧⲁⲛ·ⲧⲛ̄ ⲏ ⲁⲃⲁⲗ ϩⲛ̄ⲛ ⲟⲩⲙⲉⲉⲩⲉ ⲉϥϩⲁⲃⲥ̄ ⲁⲗⲗⲁ ⲡⲟⲩⲉⲉⲓ ⲡⲟⲩⲉⲉⲓ ⲁⲃⲁⲗ ϩⲛ̄ ⲧϭⲁⲙ· ⲉⲧⲉⲛⲉⲣⲅⲓ ⲛ̄ϩⲏⲧϥ̣̄ ⲁⲩⲱ ⲉϥⲥⲱⲧⲙ̄· ⲁⲛⲉⲛⲧⲁϥⲛⲉⲩ ⲁⲣⲁⲩ ⲁⲩⲱ ⲁϥⲥⲟⲧⲙⲟⲩ ⲁϥϫⲟ̣ⲟⲩ ϩⲛ̄ⲛ ⲟⲩⲛⲁⲧ. ⲧⲉ· ⲉⲩⲛ̄ⲧⲉⲩ ⲙ̄ⲙⲉⲩ ⲙ̄ⲡⲓϯ ⲙⲉⲧⲉ ⲙ̄ⲙⲛ̄ⲧϩⲗⲏⲙ· ϣⲁ ⲛⲟⲩⲉⲣⲏⲩ ⲕⲁⲧⲁ [ⲡⲓ]ⲥⲙⲁⲧ· ⲛ̄ⲛⲉⲧⲣ̄ ⲉⲛⲉⲣⲅⲓ ⲛ̄ϩⲏⲧⲟⲩ ⲉⲟⲩⲧⲟⲩϫⲱ ⲙⲡⲓⲛⲟⲩϫϭ ⲙⲛ̄ ⲡⲓϯ ⲙⲉ̣ⲧⲉ. Translation by Attridge and Pagels, modified.

and thus we also read that "they established many heresies which exist to the present among the Jews".[114]

The way the cosmic powers are described here as affecting the way humans relate to impressions strongly recalls how Stoics thought passions could influence human action through the condition of the mind. A stable mind was, like the Hebrews described here, not subject to lowly emotions. Where *TriTrac* differs from Stoic theories of emotions, however, is the association of emotions and heavenly powers. Stoics did not necessarily make this connection, but Roman Stoics like Epictetus, Seneca, and Cicero did assert that passions, like the Hebrews' appropriation of the material powers in *TriTrac*, could actually be useful for novices.[115] It was good to rejoice when progressing in virtue and to feel shame and distress when one's character failed; this would lead to more progress in the long run.[116] In *TriTrac* the psychic powers are held in a higher regard than the material powers. At this point in the creation-narrative, there are no pneumatic people on earth together with Hebrews and Greeks—that is, no Christians—because the Savior has not yet appeared on earth. Let us turn to how the appearance of the Savior affects the dynamics between emotions and humans.

6 *Apatheia, Therapeia*, and *Eleutheria*

In part three of *TriTrac*, the passions associated with the two lower powers are contrasted with the nature of the Savior. The Savior was born, we read, "an infant, in body and soul" (ⲁϥⲧⲣⲟⲩⲙⲉⲥⲧϥ̄ ⲛ̄ⲛⲟⲩⲗⲓⲗⲟⲩ ⲛ̄ⲥⲱⲙⲁ ⲯⲩⲭⲏ) (115:10–11).[117] The Savior's incarnation took place through "a passion without will" (ⲟⲩⲡⲁⲑⲟⲥ ⲛ̄ⲁⲧⲟⲩⲱϣⲉ) (114:35–36).[118] Here, too, Stoic thought can help us with interpretation. According to Stoics like Chrysippus, and later Seneca, passions resulted

114 112:19–22: ⲁⲩⲧⲉϩⲟ ⲁⲣⲉⲧⲟⲩ ⲛ̄ϩⲛ̄ϩⲉⲣⲉⲥⲓⲥ ⲉⲛⲁϣⲱⲟⲩ ⲛⲉⲧⲁⲩϣⲟⲟⲡ· ϣⲁ ϩⲟⲩⲛ ⲉⲧⲉⲛⲟⲩ ϩⲁⲧⲉ ⲛⲓ<ⲓ>ⲟⲩⲇⲁⲉⲓ.

115 Sorabji, *Emotions*, 51–52.

116 Epictetus, *Enchiridion* 33; Seneca, *Epistles* 78.16, *On the Constancy of the Sage* 15.4; Cicero, *Tusculan Disputations* III.61, III.68, III.70, III.77–8.

117 We read that the flesh (ⲥⲁⲣⲝ) of the Savior derives "from the pneumatic Logos" (114:6–7). Thus, the term "body" (ⲥⲱⲙⲁ) here is most likely the spiritual body of the pneumatics. The Savior takes on a pneumatic body and a psychic soul because he comes to save the pneumatics and psychics; the material substance is not part of the plan of salvation. See Thomassen, *Le traité tripartite*, 14–17.

118 This has usually been translated as "involuntary suffering" (as Attridge and Pagels translate it) but I opt for a more literal wording: "a passion without will". If we read the sentence from a Stoic perspective, we solve the problem caused by the fact that the Savior

in a mind's willfully judging to assent to a certain impression without reason, an impression that turns out to be false, unvirtuous, or otherwise unbeneficial. There was no passion if will and judgment were missing.[119] Thus, we read that the Savior in *TriTrac* was born into passion (a lower cosmic existence) and I suggest that the concomitant attribute that this was done "without will" (ⲛ̄ⲁⲧⲟⲩⲱϣⲉ) (114:36) indicates that the Savior has no blame attached to him even though he lingers in passion (i.e. materiality). This is made clear further on in the description of the incarnation, where the Savior is called the one "who did not share in the passions" (ⲉⲧⲉⲙ̄ⲡϥⲣ̄ⲕⲟⲓⲛⲱⲛⲓ ⲁⲛⲓⲡⲁⲑⲟⲥ) (116:26–27). The Savior is "indivisible" (ⲧⲙⲛ̄ⲧⲁⲧⲡⲱϣⲉ) (116:32) which, we read, results in "apatheia" (ⲧⲙⲛ̄ⲧⲁⲧⲡⲁⲑⲟⲥ) (116:33), a passionless state. Those in "body and soul" (ⲥⲱⲙⲁ ϩⲓ̈ ⲯⲩⲭⲏ) (115:22–23) whom the Savior comes to save linger in "passion and changing opinion" (ⲟⲩⲡⲁⲑⲟⲥ ⲙⲛ̄ⲛ̄ ⲟⲩⲅⲛⲱⲙⲏ ⲉⲥⲡ̣ⲁ̣ⲛⲉ·) (115:20–21). We are told that the state in which humans suffer came about through "the Logos who moved" (ⲡⲗⲟⲅⲟⲥ ⲉⲛⲧⲁϩⲕⲓⲙ) (115:21) while the Savior was sent down from "the unchanging thought of the Logos who returned to himself, after his movement".[120] We also read that those who "come forth through division and passion require healing".[121] The word used here for healing, or *therapy*, is ⲧⲗϭⲟ, one of the Coptic equivalents to θεραπεύειν.[122] A few lines further on the Greek equivalent ⲣ̄ⲑⲉⲣⲁⲡⲉⲩⲉ (116:16) is also used.[123] As already stated, most philosophical schools of the time saw emotions as a sickness of the soul that needed healing (θεραπεύειν)[124] but Stoics were those who strived to reach *apatheia* though therapy that consisted of improving one's mind and rational faculties to enable one to live in harmony with the divine law of the world. This harmonious life would ultimately lead

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is described as both apathetic while living in a passion infested body and soul; he never assents to passions with his will.

119 Sorabji, *Emotions*, 29–54. Seneca would perhaps not agree fully that the Savior was passionless here. For Seneca, assenting to an impression was enough to incur passion.

120 115:26–28: ⲡⲓⲙⲉⲩⲉ· ⲛ̄ⲛⲁⲧ·ⲡⲱⲛⲉ ⲁⲃⲁⲗ ⲛ̄ⲧⲉ ⲡⲗⲟⲅⲟⲥ ⲉⲛⲧⲁϥⲥⲧⲁϥ ⲉϩⲟⲩⲛ ⲙ̄ⲙⲓⲛ ⲙ̄ⲙⲟϥ ⲙⲛ̄ⲛ̄ⲥⲁ ⲡⲉϥⲕⲓⲙ.

121 116:11–13: ⲉⲛⲧⲁⲩⲉⲓ̂ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ· ϩⲛ̄ⲛ ⲟⲩⲡⲁⲑⲟⲥ ⲙⲛ̄ⲛ ⲟⲩⲡⲱϣⲉ· ⲉⲩϣⲁⲁⲧ· ⲛ̄ⲛⲟⲩⲧⲗ̄ϭⲟ. Translation by Attridge and Pagels, slightly modified.

122 Crum, *Coptic*, 411b.

123 In another passage at 134:18 *passions* are not mentioned, but healing is. Some characters, exactly who they are is difficult to ascertain (possibly humans or angels), are portrayed as: "serving, healing (ⲣ̄ⲑⲉⲣⲁⲡⲉⲩⲉ) and ministering to" those whom were sent together with them from the place from where Christ also was sent. This is a cryptic passage indeed.

124 See Nussbaum, *Therapy of Desire*. Thus, Dunderberg is not at all in error when stating that Valentinians were interested in the therapy of emotions, at least if we take *TriTrac* as an example. For more on this discussion, see Chapter 5.

to the substitution of passion for "good passion" (εὐπάθεια). Stoics considered it as extremely rare that anyone ever reached *apatheia*, a state only available for the sages. However, in *TriTrac apatheia* does not seem to be a viable option for humans at all; it is only used once, and only for the Savior. But we do read, as discussed above, that joy and other positive feelings are the result of knowing the Savior. Humans and the different powers are nevertheless portrayed as being meant to strive for *freedom* (ⲙⲛ̄ⲧⲣⲙ̄ϩⲉ), and freedom is defined somewhat like *apatheia* usually is, as the absence of coercion from passion. Some humans, the "disciples of the Savior" (ⲛ̄ⲙⲁⲑⲏⲧⲏⲥ ⲛ̄ⲇⲉ ⲛ̄ⲧⲁⲩ ⲙ̄ⲡⲥⲱⲧⲏⲣ·) (116:18–19) and "teachers" (ϩⲛ̄ⲥⲁϩ) (116:19), are meant to *heal* and teach the others, they are the ones identified with Christ. This teaching results in:

> … the release from the captivity and the acceptance of freedom. In its places, the captivity of those who were slaves of ignorance holds sway. The freedom is the knowledge of the truth which existed before the ignorance was ruling, forever without beginning and without end, being something good, and a salvation of things, and a release from the servile nature in which they have suffered. Those who have been brought forth in a lowly thought of vanity, that is, (a thought) which goes to things which are evil through the thought which draws them down to the lust for power, these have received the possession which is freedom, from the abundance of the grace which looked upon the children. It was, however, a disturbance of the passion and a destruction of those things which he cast off from himself at first, when the Logos separated them from himself, (the Logos) who was the cause of their being destined for destruction, though he kept <them> at <the> end of the *oikonomia* and allowed them to exist because even they were useful for the things which were ordained.[125]

125 117:23–118:14: ⲡⲣ̄ ⲃⲟⲗ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ· ⲛ̄ⲧⲟⲟⲧⲥ̄ ⲛ̄ϯⲁⲓⲭⲙⲁⲗⲱⲥⲓⲁ· ⲁⲩⲱ ⲡϫⲓⲛ ⲛ̄ϯⲙⲛ̄ⲧⲣⲙ̄ϩⲉ· ⲧⲉⲕⲭⲙⲁⲗⲱⲥⲓⲁ· ⲛ̄ⲇⲉ ⲛⲉⲉⲓ ⲉⲛⲧⲁⲩⲣ̄ ϭⲁⲩⲟⲩⲁⲛ ⲛ̄ⲧⲙⲛ̄ⲧⲁⲧ·ⲥⲁⲩⲛⲉ· ⲉⲥⲟⲉⲓ ⲛ̄ⲛⲣ̄ⲣⲟ ϩⲛ̄ ⲛⲉⲥⲧⲟⲡⲟⲥ ϯⲙⲛ̄ⲧⲣⲙ̄ϩⲉ ⲇⲉ· ⲡⲉ ⲡⲓⲥⲁⲩⲛⲉ· ⲛ̄ⲧⲉ ⲧⲙⲏⲉ· ⲉⲧϣⲟⲟⲡ· ϩⲁⲑⲏ ⲇⲉ ⲙ̄ⲡⲁⲧⲉⲧⲙⲛ̄ⲧⲁⲧⲥⲁⲩⲛⲉ ϣⲱⲡⲉ· ⲉϥⲟⲉⲓ ⲛ̄ⲣⲣⲟ ϣⲁ ⲁⲛⲏϩⲉ ϩⲛ̄ⲛ ⲟⲩⲙⲛ̄ⲧⲁⲧⲁⲣⲭⲏ· ⲙⲛ̄ⲛ ⲟⲩⲙⲛ̄ⲧⲁⲧ·ϩⲁⲏ· ⲉⲟⲩⲡⲉⲧⲛⲁⲛⲟⲩϥ ⲡⲉ· ⲁⲩⲱ ⲟⲩϫⲁⲉⲓⲧⲉ· ⲛ̄ⲛϩⲃⲏⲩⲉ ⲧⲉ· ⲁⲩⲱ ⲟⲩⲣ̄ ⲃⲟⲗ· ⲉⲃⲟⲗ ⲧⲉ ⲛ̄ⲧⲟⲟⲧⲥ̄ ⲛ̄ϯⲫⲩⲥⲓⲥ ⲙ̄ⲙⲛ̄ⲧϭⲁⲩ·ⲁⲛ· ⲧⲁⲉⲓ ⲛ̄ⲧⲁⲩϣⲱⲡ ⲙ̄ⲕⲁϩ· ⲙ̄ⲙⲁⲥ ϫⲉ ⲛ̣ⲉ̣ⲛ̄ⲧⲁⲩⲛ̄ⲧⲟⲩ ⲁⲃⲁⲗ ϩⲛⲛ ⲟⲩⲙⲉⲉⲩⲉ ⲉϥⲑⲃⲃⲓ·ⲁⲉⲓⲧ· ⲛ̄ⲧⲉ ϯⲙⲛ̄ⲧⲁⲡϭⲗ[ⲁ] ⲉⲧⲉ ⲡⲉ̣ⲉ̣ⲓ ⲡⲉ ⲉⲥⲛⲁ ϣⲁ ⲛⲉⲧⲑⲁⲩ ⲁⲃⲁⲗ ϩⲓ̈ⲧⲛ̄ ⲡⲓⲙⲉⲩⲉ ⲉⲧⲥ̣[ⲱ]ⲕ̣ ⲙ̄ⲙⲁⲩ ⲁⲡⲓⲧⲛ̄ ⲁⲧⲙⲛ̄ⲧⲙⲁⲓ̈ⲟⲩⲁϩ ⲥⲁϩⲛⲉ ⲁⲩϫⲓ ⲇⲉ̣ ⲙ̄ⲡⲓⲕⲧⲏⲙⲁ ⲉⲧⲉ ϯⲙⲛ̄ⲧⲣⲙ̄ϩⲉ ⲇⲉ ϩⲙ̄ ⲡϩⲟⲩⲟ ⲙ̄ⲡϩⲙⲁⲧ· ⲉⲛⲧⲁϩϭⲱϣⲧ̄ ⲁϫⲛ̄ ⲛ̄ϣⲏⲣⲉ· ⲉⲩⲟⲩϣⲟⲣϣⲣ̄ ⲛ̄ⲇⲉ ⲡⲉ ⲙ̄ⲡⲁⲑⲟⲥ ⲡⲉ· ⲁⲩⲱ ⲟⲩⲧⲉⲕⲟ ⲛⲉⲩⲟⲩ ⲡⲉ ⲛ̄ⲛⲁⲉⲓ ⲉⲧⲉ·ⲁϥⲛⲁϩⲟⲩ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ ⲙ̄ⲙⲟϥ ⲟⲩⲁⲉⲉⲧϥ̄· ⲛ̄ϣⲟⲣⲉⲡ· ⲉⲁϥⲡⲁⲣϫⲟⲩ ⲁⲃⲟⲗ ⲙ̄ⲙⲟϥ ⲛ̄ϭⲓ ⲡⲗⲟⲅⲟⲥ ⲉⲛⲧⲁϩϣⲱⲡⲉ ⲛⲉⲩ ⲛ̄ⲗⲁⲉⲓϭⲉ ⲙ̄ⲡⲧⲟⲩϣⲱⲡⲉ· ⲉⲡⲟⲩⲧⲉⲕⲟ ⲉⲁϥⲁⲣⲏϩ ⲁⲣⲁϥ ⲁ<ⲡ>ϩⲁⲉ ⲛ̄ⲧⲟⲓⲕⲟⲛⲟⲙⲓⲁ ⲉⲁϥⲕⲁⲩⲉ ⲁⲧⲣⲟⲩϣⲱⲡⲉ· ϫⲉ ⲛⲉⲩⲣ̄ ϣⲉⲩ ϩⲱⲟⲩ ⲁⲛ ⲡⲉ· ⲁⲛⲉⲧⲁⲩⲧⲁϣⲟⲩ. Translation by Attridge and Pagels, slightly modified.

Freedom (ⲧⲙⲛ̄ⲧⲣⲙ̄ϩⲉ, probably ἐλευθερία), defined as release from ignorance and passion, is not to be confused with free will.[126] The Logos was able to reject passions but still use them in his organization. There is no question that this passage as well as those dealing with the incarnation of the Savior is steeped in the language of ancient theories of emotion. At the very end of the text we read that the psychics:

> … remain for their sake (the pneumatics), until they have all entered into earthly life and passed out of it. As long as their bodies [remain] on the earth, serving all their [needs], making [themselves] partners in their sufferings, persecutions, and tribulations which have been brought upon those who are holy more than anyone else.[127]

There seems to be no complete eradication of suffering and passion as long as one is part of the cosmic system. There is also a clear hierarchy between the pneumatic people/powers and the psychics: the psychics serve the higher order. What this service entailed will be explored in Part II. Nevertheless, the ideal in *TriTrac* is clear: freedom from the control of passions is desirable, although as long as one retains a human bodily existence they cannot be eradicated; only the Savior has reached this purity. According to the above discussion of the Hebrews, the passions should be used as the Hebrews do, and what is more, good emotions are accessible through the pneumatic substance and with the aid of the Savior.[128] If we read the cosmology from the perspective of the workings of ancient theories of passion we can see how ethical admonitions are supported by this cognitive schema. Unvirtuous people are those who act while under the influence of an unstable mind, those who are unfavorably mixed with matter. As long as people are on earth they should utilize their psychic substance to support the pneumatic order, because it is the *pneuma* that is associated with the benefits of good emotions. The three substances most

126 For more on this, and the connection between ⲙⲛ̄ⲧⲣⲙ̄ϩⲉ and the Greek concept of ἐλευθερία, see further below.

127 135:9–18: ⲉⲩⲙⲏⲛ ⲁϩⲟⲩⲛ ⲉⲧⲃⲏⲧ̣ⲟⲩ ϣ[ⲁ]ⲧ̣ⲟⲩⲉⲓ ⲧⲏⲣⲟⲩ ⲁⲡⲃⲓⲟⲥ ⲁⲩⲱ ⲛ̣ⲥⲉⲉ[ⲓ ⲁⲃ]ⲁⲗ· ϩⲙ̄ ⲡⲃⲓⲟⲥ ⲉⲣⲉⲛⲟⲩ[ⲥ]ⲱⲙ[ⲁ ⲙⲏⲛ] ϩ̣ⲓ̈ϫⲙ̄ ⲡⲕⲁϩ· ⲉⲩⲣ̄ ϩⲩⲡⲏⲣⲉⲧⲓ [ⲙ̄ⲛⲡϣⲁ ⲛ̄ⲧ]ⲏ̣ⲣⲟⲩ ⲛ̄ⲧⲉⲩ· ⲉⲩⲉⲓⲣⲉ ⲙ̄[ⲙⲁⲩ]ⲟ̣ⲩ̣ ⲛ̣̄ⲕ̣ⲟⲓⲛⲱⲛⲟⲥ· ⲁⲛⲟⲩⲙ̄ⲕⲟ[ⲟϩ]· ⲙ̣ⲛ̄ [ⲛ]ⲟ̣ⲩⲇⲓⲱⲅⲙⲟⲥ ⲙⲛ̄ ⲛⲟⲩ[ⲗⲱ]ϫϩ· ⲛ̣[ⲉ]ⲉⲓ ⲉⲛⲧⲁⲩⲉⲓⲛⲉ ⲙ̄ⲙⲁⲩ [ⲁϩ]ⲣ̣ⲏⲓ̈ ⲁϫⲛ̣ ⲛ̣ⲉⲧⲟⲩⲁⲁⲃ· ϩⲁⲑⲏ ⲙ̄ⲙⲁⲓ̈ⲧ [ⲛⲓ]ⲙ. Translation by Attridge and Pagels, slightly modified. Here I suggest the word "needs" (ⲛⲡϣⲁ) to fill the lacuna on line 13.

128 Through the Savior one can hope to reach the good emotions. It is the Savior who is "well pleasing" (ⲉⲩⲇⲟⲕⲏⲧⲟⲥ) (87:8). See also Irenaeus *Against Heresies* 1.12.4 and Epiphanius, *Panarion* 35.1 where the Valentinians portrayed by these two also call their Savior εὐδοκητός.

likely referred to social categories, too—explored more deeply in Part II—referring to psychic people's helping pneumatic people, both of which could work together with material people as long as they did not become coerced by the material aspects of life. In this way, the theory of emotion and cognition finds resonance in social reality.

Before concluding this discussion, let us explore one last aspect of ancient theories of emotions: the one identifying femininity with materiality and, by extension, negative emotions.

7 Femaleness and the Sickness of Emotions

In *TriTrac*, passions and materiality are associated with femaleness and salvation with maleness. We read of a deficiency that springs forth from the youngest Aeon, one that is likened to "shadows" (ϩⲉⲛϩⲁϊⲃⲉⲥ) (77:16), a creation which is an "illness … which is femaleness" (ⲡⲓϣⲱⲛⲉ …ⲉⲧⲉ ⲧⲁⲉⲓ ⲧⲉ· ⲧⲙⲛ̄ⲧⲥϩⲓⲙⲉ·) (94:17–18). We read that the process of creation leaves the youngest Aeon weak like "a female nature" (ⲟⲩⲫⲩⲥⲓⲥ ⲛ̄ⲥϩⲓⲙⲉ) (78:11–12).[129] This language is not surprising considering the connection between materiality and femininity in ancient times. In the *Timaeus*, Plato wrote of a certain female figure associated with the foundations of cosmic life. This was the "receptacle", or "the Mother and Nurse of *becoming*".[130] This principle was for Plato the plastic matter that defined what it was to be a substance bound spatially and temporally.[131] Plato's concepts influenced many: Stoics, Middle Platonic

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129 I believe Pagels and Attridge are right when they read 94:17–18 as a reference to the offspring of the youngest Aeon that was created in the fall of the youngest Aeon (Attridge and Pagels, "The Tripartite Tractate", in *Notes*, 369–370). For more on the creation of the youngest Aeon in *TriTrac*, see Thomassen, *Spiritual Seed*, 248–251. Frederik Wisse writes that the passage "remains impenetrable" (Fredrik Wisse, "Flee Femininity: Antifemininity in Gnostic Texts and the Question of Social Milieu" in *Images of the Feminine in Gnosticism*, ed. Karen King (Philadelphia, P.A.: Fortress Press, 1988), 303). With the discussion offered here, this language will hopefully make more sense.

130 This is Turner's paraphrase of Plato's *Timaeus* (Turner, *Sethian Gnosticism*, 252). For an excellent work on Sethianism and its relation to Platonism, see Turner, *Sethian Gnosticism.* For a work on how Plato's *Timaeus* influenced the worldviews in the first centuries, including Christians, see Carl Séan O'Brien, *The Demiurge in Ancient Thought: Secondary Gods and Divine Mediators* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015).

131 For a summary of Plato's metaphysics in *Timaeus*, see Donald Zeyl, "Plato's *Timaeus*", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Spring 2014 Edition), ed. Edward N. Zalta, URL: https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2014/entries/plato-timaeus/.

thinkers, and Christian writers.[132] In another Valentinian Nag Hammadi-text, *InterpKnow*, the creation myth is clad in gender language: motherhood and birth is associated with cosmic existence while virginity is associated with higher existence.[133] In *InterpKnow* we read of a character called "the Female" (ⲧⲉⲥϩⲓⲙⲉ), a representation of cosmic existence that enslaves the soul in body, birth, and death.[134] In *ExcTheod* 67:1 we also read of femaleness likened to weakness. Yet in both these Valentinian texts the youngest Aeon is Sophia, not Logos. *TriTrac*, nevertheless, utilizes the same dichotomy and connects femaleness to the lower bodily functions of cosmic life and maleness to perfection. The ideal state is expressed in terms of maleness: the Aeons in the Pleroma are "forms of maleness, since they are not from the sickness which is femaleness".[135]

This negative portrayal of femininity in *TriTrac* could be seen as 'counter-evidence' of the hypothesis that some scholars have put forward, portraying 'Gnostics' and Valentinians as generally more open to women and femininity.[136] The strong language used against femininity, wherein femaleness is called a sickness and associated with materiality and passion, probably represents more general approaches to understanding creation and the human relation

132 Origen writes that the human body is held together by the soul in the same way the world is held together by the reason of God as a soul (Origen, *On First Principles* II.1.3).

133 Linjamaa, "The Female", 29–54.

134 I argue in Linjamaa, "Female Figures", that the character "the Female" (ⲧⲉⲥϩⲓⲙⲉ) is a representation of Sophia's transgression, the part that broke away from her when she transgressed (11, 13:16–17). The Female is a bleak reflection of the luminous Virgin (4:26–30). Sophia is called by different names in *InterpKnow*, probably due to her different roles throughout the shifting narrative: "Virgin" in primordial times before the fall is complete (3–4, 7); "Mother" to creation and the soul's wandering (7–8, 13); and "Wisdom" when she acts out the role set in motion by the Father's all-knowing plan (12).

135 94:16–18: ϩⲛ̄ⲙⲟⲣⲫⲏ ⲛⲉ ⲙ̄ⲙⲛ̄ⲧϩⲁⲟⲩⲧ ⲉϩⲛ̄ⲛⲁⲃⲁⲗ ϩⲙ̄ ⲡⲓϣⲱⲛⲉ ⲉⲛ ⲛⲉ ⲉⲧⲉ ⲧⲁⲉⲓ ⲧⲉ ⲧⲙⲛ̄ⲧⲥϩⲓ̈ⲙⲉ. Translation by Attridge and Pagels, slightly modified.

136 See for example Elaine Pagels, *The Gnostic Gospels* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979), 48–69; April DeConick, *Holy Misogyny: Why the Sex and Gender Conflict in the Early Church Still Matter* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2013), 102–110. These theses have been previously problematized in relation to early Christian depictions of Mary Magdalene (see Antti Marjanen, *The Woman Jesus Loved: Mary Magdalene in the Nag Hammadi Library and Related Documents* (Leiden: Brill, 1996), 3–11). For an extreme example of how 'Gnostic' attitudes toward the feminine have been misrepresented, see Jonathan Cahana, "Androgyne or Undrogyne?: Queering the Gnostic Myth", *Numen* 61 (2014): 509–524. In this article Cahana applies Judith Butler's queer theory to 'Gnostic' myths and argues that the appearance of strong female characters and androgyne mythological figures in 'Gnostic' mythology can be understood as a social critique of the gender roles of antiquity and that they were used in order to point out that gender is only a construction. I would argue that this view is anachronistic: an example of scholars' imposing modern concepts on ancient material that is ultimately alien to them.

to the divine as a negotiation between two opposing attributes. In this discourse, femininity was demoted in relation to maleness, in accordance with the thoroughly male-dominated contexts of ancient societies. Aristotle, for example—who called women infertile men—associated maleness with rationality and femaleness with the body, and as we have seen, the body was the seat of the base emotions.[137] In *Timaeus* 90–92, Plato divides the creation of animated beings into three levels: men at the top, females (who are described as immoral men reborn in a lower form), and lastly, animals. This generally unequal worldview permeated antiquity, and it is not strange that it also influenced Christian texts of different kinds. In *TriTrac*, however, echoing Gal 3:28, we read that at the end there will be no difference between gentile and Jew, male and female, slave and free person (132:20–24); the differences in the cosmos will be eradicated. Yet this is no argument for viewing *TriTrac* as deriving from a context where equality between the sexes was something sought after. Life in the world was bound to the laws of matter, and life in the Pleroma is portrayed as male, most likely to contrast salvation with materiality, which is strongly attached to femininity. Still, we should be careful when drawing social conclusions from grand cosmological categories.[138] The rejection of femaleness in *TriTrac* pertains chiefly to materiality and emotions; I return to the social context of *TriTrac* in the following part.

8 Conclusion

In light of the above considerations, I agree with Dunderberg that *TriTrac* was firmly in tune with Stoic thought and that the therapy of desire was important.[139] In *TriTrac* this is especially indicated by how good emotions are treated and categorized and the way the judgments of the Logos' actions are mitigated by association with motion, which resembles Stoic views

137 Aristotle, *On the Generation of Animals* 728a13–27.

138 Misogynist language did not necessarily mean that women were rejected or excluded from the 'in group'. For example, *The Gospel of Thomas*, which also contains strong negative references to femaleness, tells us that Mary would deserve salvation if she were to become male (see logion 114). This would indicate that women were thought to be included in the group, but femaleness was at the same time thought to represent something inferior. Anne McGuire has argued convincingly that the way females and femaleness are described in some Christian mythology from the second and third centuries cannot simply be translated into social reality. See her text "Women, Gender, and Gnosis in Gnostic Texts and Traditions", in *Women & Christian Origins*, eds. Ross S. Kraemer and Mary R. D'Angelo (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 257–299.

139 Dunderberg, "Stoic Traditions".

on proto-passions. However, even though *TriTrac* is indebted to Stoic reasoning concerning emotions, it is very much its own text and the overall ontology is more reminiscent of later Platonist views, clearly evidenced by the rejection of materiality as a sickness and as finite. This is not strange at all since Platonists to a large extent absorbed much of the thought of their Stoic predecessors and Stoicism all but died out in the second century.

However, perhaps it is not very illuminating (or even interesting) to spend too much time placing Christian texts within this or that philosophical tradition. Nevertheless, as I have demonstrated above, reading the text in light of the detailed discussion of Stoic and Platonic views on emotion illuminates many aspects of the text. My aim in discussing *TriTrac*'s employment of ancient theories of emotion has been to highlight the theoretical basis of the ethical outlook of the text. The text's theory of emotion hinges on how human cognition was thought to work, which in turn plays into questions like what determines people's behavior and how people should strive to behave.

What we have in *TriTrac* is an advanced reception of Aristotelian, Platonic, and Stoic thought, appropriated within a very particular Christian creation myth. The ideal moral state in *TriTrac* entailed freedom from the control of passion, but *apatheia* does not seem viable for others than the Savior. Thus, much as Plutarch and Philo maintained, cosmic life entailed being entangled with emotions, some of which in fact can be useful and necessary for the functioning of cosmic existence. We return to this in the final chapter, which is devoted to the text's presentation of the concept of honor. Total *apatheia* is not viable in everyday life but is, rather, a divine ideal.[140] Passions are treated as pedagogical tools, because passion and materiality enhance the longing for something better (98:27–99:4). Furthermore, passions could be used for one's own and the collective's benefit, which the treatment of the Hebrews' attitude to the mixed powers shows. To be controlled by passions, however, as the Greeks are portrayed as being, leads to error. It is also clear that passions are associated with the heavenly powers; emotions are in this way treated as demons that could affect human behavior. This is similar to the *ApJohn* and very reminiscent of what we find in the emerging monastic context as well.[141]

In conclusion, it seems clear that emotions play a large part in the conceptual apparatus of *TriTrac* and in Part II, I will expand on how, as Galen put it, the doctrine of virtues followed necessarily from the doctrine of emotions.[142]

140 There is a contradiction of the Middle Platonists praise and critique of *apatheia*. For more on this see Dillon, "Metriopatheia", 510–518.

141 See Brakke, *Demons*.

142 Galen, *On the Opinions of Hippocrates and Plato* V.6.1.

We have encountered similarities to Plato's and Aristotle's ideas that there are relations between different levels of the governing faculty; the psychic part can control the material part for its benefit, and the psychic part in turn can, and should, aid the pneumatic part. Here social categories and behavioral exhortation is mirrored in the cognitive and emotive system. The three substances correspond to three different types of humans, who in turn are associated with three kinds of relation to emotions. The "material" humans are driven by emotion; the psychic are closely associated with emotion, especially the "lust for command" (explored in Chapter 6), but are also portrayed as meant to aid the pneumatics. The pneumatics represent a substance and group of people described as separated from negative emotions, and rather associated with good emotions. The pneumatic part/people should lead; they are placed in a chariot made up of psychic substance/people drawn by a material emotive body/people. Those associated with the positive emotions are portrayed as meant to *heal* and *instruct*. What this instruction and healing entailed will be explored in Chapter 5. This chapter has indicated that the theory of emotion could work very well to legitimize social structures, a topic we return to in Part II.

Before turning to scrutinize the ethical and social structures endorsed in the text, one important aspect of the cognitive apparatus remains to be explored: the nature of human choice. In order to approach the question of how *TriTrac* suggests humans should act in the world, we need first to establish to what degree people's actions depend on themselves in the first place. This is the topic of the next chapter.

CHAPTER 3

Free Will and the Configuration of the Human Mind

Much has been written about ancient attitudes toward the doctrine of free will. Many works that discuss ancient views on will and free will among pagans, Jews, and Christians juxtapose the 'Christian view' with the 'Gnostic view'. We are told that Christians like Irenaeus, Origen, and Clement developed their doctrines concerning will in opposition to the 'Gnostic view'.[1] Christians based their interest in moral questions on the doctrine of free will while 'Gnostics' did not concern themselves much with ethics because they were determinists. This dichotomy has been thought to stem from the polemical nature of the church fathers' writings.[2] Several early church fathers argued that there were Christians who were determinists, viewing themselves as saved by nature, and thus were uninterested in ethics.[3] In light of the work of Michel Desjardins, Michael A. Williams, and others, however, the idea that so-called 'Gnostics' were uninterested in ethics has rightly been rejected and much has been done recently to trace them.[4] Often the ethical interest in 'Gnostic' works is explained by pointing out that the systems the church fathers rejected were not deterministic at all.[5] To a certain extent this is true; many texts that have been associated with 'Gnosticism' are not determinist.[6] Furthermore, one would be hard pressed to find in ancient philosophy or religion an ethical system that argued from the perspective of hard determinism, that there was no possibility for improvement. Nevertheless, as I will argue here, there were Christians who rejected the theory of free will. Thus, even though polemical, the church

1 See for example Dihle, *Theory of Will*; Frede, *A Free Will*; Karamanolis, *Philosophy*.
2 For a discussion about the earlier perspectives in 'Gnostic' Studies, see i.1.1 above, and see the previous note for references to Christian ethics' being based in the doctrine of free will.
3 See, for example, Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* I.6.1; Origen, *Against Celsus* V.61; *On First Principles* II.9.5.
4 For discussion of ethics in Valentinian works, see, for example, Desjardins, *Sin in Valentinianism*; Williams, *Rethinking*; Ismo Dunderberg, *Beyond*; Tite, *Valentinian Ethics*; and most recently Kocar, "Humanity", 193–221.
5 See Williams, *Rethinking*, 189–212; Denise Kimber Buell, *Why this New Race?* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005), 116–137; Attridge and Pagels, "The Tripartite Tractate", 446–447.
6 As Williams has shown, particularly in regard to the Sethian literature, in Williams, *Rethinking*, 198–212.

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fathers' depictions of Christian determinists were not completely unfounded. They were, however, willfully wrong in connecting anthropological systems that restrict human choice with indifference toward ethics. As others have pointed out concerning ancient Greek philosophy, and as we will see in more depth shortly, it was quite possible to construct viable ethical systems without a theory of free will. I argue that *TriTrac* could be understood as representing such a Christian standpoint. By looking more closely at the question of *TriTrac*'s view on free will, in this chapter I deepen the study of the cognitive system represented in the text that has been addressed in the two previous chapters and also attempt to fill two scholarly gaps: (1) chart the workings of a Christian deterministic worldview and (2) investigate how such an anthropology was used for ethical discussions.

Before I begin the investigation of *TriTrac* and the concept of free will, we should first take a look at how the idea of free will emerged in ancient philosophy, especially among Christian authors, and see how the discussion of will and free will was connected to questions of ethics.

1 Will and Ethics in Ancient Thought

First some notes on terminology. The most frequent term used for *will* in ancient Greek thought is probably βούλησις. After the first century, the term θέλημα seems to have become more prominent, which is also what is often used for will among many of the earliest Christian authors, as in the texts that later became the Bible. During the second century onward, when detailed discussion arose concerning whether the human will was free or not, αὐτεξούσια (literally self-power, or perhaps rather self-determination) and προαίρεσις (literally *pre-choice* or *preference*) become common and exclusive terms in this debate, among Stoics like Epictetus, Aristotelians like Alexander of Aphrodisias, as well as Christians like Justin, Origen, and Clement. Latin writers from the first century onward—including Cicero, Lucretius, Tertullian, and later Augustine—used the terms *libera voluntas* (free will) and *arbitrii libertas* (freedom of choice) when discussing the topic of free will.[7]

7 For literature on the different terms used in antiquity for the notion of "will" and its development, see, for example, Charles Kahn, "Discovering the Will: From Aristotle to Augustine" in *The Question of "Eclecticism"*, eds. J. Dillon and A. A. Long (Berkley: University of California Press, 1988), 234–259; John D. Madden, "The Authenticity of Early Christians of Will (Thelesis)", in *Maximus Confessor: actes du symposium sur Maxime le Confesseur*, eds. F. Hernzer and C Schönborn (Fribourg: Éditions Universitaires, 1982), 61–79. For more on the earliest Greek views on the concept of will and cognition, see Dihle, *Theory of Will*, 20–67.

Early Greek philosophers, including Plato and Aristotle, did not have a clear notion of free will.[8] Their idea of human will (the term most often used here is βούλησις/βούλεσθαι) was connected to desire, a very specific form of desire associated with reason (λογισμός).[9] If one reasoned that something was good, that which was deemed good became an object that was desired. As was discussed in the previous chapter, the "good" (ἀγαθὸν) was strongly connected to the rational in ancient philosophy—the highest principle in the decision-making faculty, in *TriTrac* the pneuma—while passions were associated with bodily functions and distress.[10] The world was generally thought to be rationally organized, and if one had knowledge of the order of the world one was guided to act correctly, rationally, which led to a happy life.[11] The idea of the will was closely linked to ethics, and in classical Greece ethics could be viewed as a kind of intellectualism.[12] As discussed in Chapter 1, a knowledgeable person was equal to a moral person. It would have been a contradiction if a knowledgeable person acted immorally. However, the truly wise (σώφρων) also knew their limits; true knowledge was grounded in self-knowledge and a wise person would naturally have the will to do good which resulted in a happy life.

Thus, for Plato and Aristotle the meaning of will (βούλησις) was desiring what one deemed good. Aristotle, however, developed this further, reforming what he portrayed as the Socratic view, that people did not act against their own reason, that people desired and did what they reasoned was good for them. Like Plato, he considered the soul to consist of one rational and two irrational

8 Frede, *A Free Will*, 1–30; Sorabji, *Emotions*, 319–340.

9 Plato, *Laws* 86b, 904b–c.

10 The exception would perhaps be the Cynics. E. R. Dodds has discussed the obsession with rationality among the Greeks and criticized the idea that this meant that only rationality was legitimate. See E. R. Dodds, *The Greek and the Irrational* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004 [1951]).

11 There were of course divergences from this thought also, although rare; for example, the Skeptics who did not want to make a judgment on whether the world was rational or not. Isocrates in Plato's *Phaedrus* 237b–c maintains that no one can know the reason things happen; all one can do is to plan the best course in a world which is governed by forces beyond human control. For more, see Dihle, *Theory of Will*, 42.

12 Much of what we know, or think we know, of classical Greece is based on sources from Athens. However, there were considerable differences between the different city states of Classical Greece (for example the role of women, or education, in Athens compared to Sparta) See for example Elaine Fantham, *Women in the Classical World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995); Jean Ducat, *Spartan Education: Youth and Society in the Classical Period* (Swansea: The Classical Press of Wales, 2006). Thus, we should be careful to generalize when discussing ethics, for example, so as not to apply attitudes to a place/time for which we lack sources.

parts.[13] One could in fact commit an action that was contrary to one's reason. This was due to the irrational parts of the soul that sought to fulfill other goals than the good, like desire (ἐπιθυμία) or temper (θυμός). This did not necessarily mean that the goals sought by the irrational parts of the soul were always unvirtuous, they were just not identical with the good (ἀγαθόν), which the reasonable will (βούλησις) strived after. Only through reason could one judge if an action was right or not, if an action led to the good or was motivated by other cravings, like those connected to the more bodily parts of the soul (like desire and honor). One thing that is already clear in the earliest Greek thought, however, in epic and poetic literature as well as classical and pre-Socratic philosophy, was that when will and moral and immoral actions were discussed, they were often defined by the parameter of what was rational versus irrational.[14] Here we have the background for *TriTrac*'s view that virtue is rewarded with the good emotions associated with the pneumatic substance—which should function like a charioteer of the soul and matter.

It is with Aristotle that the discussion and concept of will seems first to be developed further. Aristotle used the term *choice* (προαίρεσις), a kind of choice that was reminiscent of his understanding of will.[15] A choice was "something

13 Aristotle's view is not crystal clear, according to Richard Sorabji. At one point Aristotle locates will in the rational part of the soul while at another he writes that the will should be counted among other desires, like θυμός and ἐπιθυμία. Plato also made a distinction between βούλησις and θυμός, in that βούλησις will not be opposed by θυμός in conflicts with ἐπιθυμία, a baser form of desire. For a thorough discussion of these issues in Plato and Aristotle, see Sorabji, *Emotions*, 322–323.

14 For more on the pre-Socratic, epic, and poetic portrayal of moral behavior, or right versus wrong actions, see Dihle, *Theory of Will*, 20–47. There is of course the paradigmatic work *The Greek and the Irrational* by E. R. Dodds to consider, a work which highlights that 'the rational' was an ideal, rather than a practical reality. See Dodds 1951. Nicola Denzey Lewis has in turn criticized the overly pessimistic picture Dodds drew up of Late antique 'mentality' in his very influential sequel work *Pagans and Christians in an Age of Anxiety: Some Aspects of Religious Experience from Marcus Aurelius to Constantine* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1965). See Denzey Lewis, *Cosmology and Fate*, 13–28 where Dodds' representation of the ancient worldview is deconstructed. Already Peter Brown noted the limits of Dodds' generalizations in his work *Religion and Society in the Age of Saint Augustine* (London: Harper & Row, 1972).

15 For Aristotle's use of προαίρεσις, see *Nicomachean Ethics* III.1111b5–1113a33, VI.1139a31–b13. For a discussion of Aristotle's use of the concept, see Frede, *A Free Will*, 26ff; Sorabji, *Emotions*, 310–311, 325–327. Προαίρεσις has been translated in many different ways by scholars: for example, willful choice, choice, free will, policy, volition. In the end, the term has been applied to so many things that it needs to be explained. Aristotle, who is the first to use this term in relation to human will and choices, does not seem to use it as some later Stoics did, as meaning a faculty that defined a person, because, as Sorabji notes, when Aristotle "discusses people who fail to abide by their προαίρεσις, he does not present

that is up to us" (τὸ ἐφ' ἡμῖν). Choosing was a specific kind of willing. You chose to do something because it was considered to be good for you, but you could not choose to do something that was not up to you to decide. You could, however, desire what was not up to you. One could also fail to choose that which was good, which then was a cause of the irrational parts of the soul, or rather those that stood further away from reason.[16] People, according to Aristotle and also Plato, who were properly trained, who were completely virtuous and wise, always chose the good. In fact, they could not act in any other way than choosing the good. Those who failed to act on their rational desire (βούλησις) and instead acted on their irrational desire/temper (ἐπιθυμία/θυμός), did not make a choice (προαίρεσις) to do the irrational before the rational, rather they *failed* to choose the rational.[17] This proviso explains the reason why one cannot say that Aristotle (who developed Plato's thoughts) entertained the concept of *free will*, even though he introduces the idea of a choice that can decide on things that are "up to us".[18] A virtuous person would not fail to choose the good, so what hindered unvirtuous people from choosing the good and just? To answer this, we must deepen the discussion begun in the previous chapters, on the mechanisms of cognition and the effects of emotions.

Stoics developed the discussions on will further. The notion of a virtuous person as someone who could not act in another way than choosing the good, was adopted by many Stoics. However, Stoics rejected the view that the soul included irrational parts. If humans were thought to be naturally endowed with irrational parts of the soul, it could lead to the condoning of irrational actions as part of the natural human makeup. Stoics developed a different theory of will. Stoics maintained that the human mind was subjected to *impressions* (φαντασία) from outside. It is said that it was Zeno who developed

this as due to their *proairesis* being weak (Sorabji, *Emotions*, 326). Some later Platonists seems to have been influenced by the Stoic interpretation and argued that one was one's *proairesis*. For a thorough discussion of the use of the term among Neoplatonists, see John M. Rist, "Prohairesis: Proclus, Plotinus et alii", in *De Jamblique a Proclus*, ed. Bent Dalsgaard Larsen (Genève: Vandœuvres, 1974), 103–117.

16 Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* III.1111b29–30, 1145b21–1146b5, 1112b–24.

17 One should perhaps avoid creating a dichotomy between will on the one side and appetite and honor on the other; one governed by reason and the other irrational. They are sometimes all described as forms of desire, connected to reason, only to a greater or lesser degree. See Frede, *A Free Will*: 19–30; Sorabji, *Emotions*, 325–327.

18 For a discussion on whether Aristotle can be said to have entertained a concept of free choice, and an argument against this idea, see Susanne Bobzien, "Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics III.1113b7–8 and Free Choice", in *What is Up to Us? Studies on Agency and Responsibility in Ancient Philosophy*, eds. Pierre Destrée et al. (Sankt Augustin: Academia Verlag, 2014), 59–74.

this idea, and he maintained that the impressions left imprints on the mind.[19] Chrysippus modified this and clarified that the mind did not just passively receive impressions. All impressions took form in a specific mind, and thus also reflected that mind.[20] Small children and animals acted on impressions in the mind with instinct and could also develop preferences for acting on some impressions and avoiding others, but there was no reasoning involved. Adults, however, differed from animals and small children in that the impressions appeared as propositions. For humans, impressions were true or false, and humans decided with their reason on how to act on impressions.[21] Thus, all actions on impressions involved a process of review and rational consent. This is the Stoic theory of *assent* (συγκατάθεσις) which, as we will see, became very influential.[22] However, a weak and untrained mind was subjected to *desire* (ἐπιθυμία), a non-rational willing, a form of passion or emotion (πάθος) that caused disturbances in the mind that could lead to assenting to impressions that were false.[23] A virtuous person with a strong and developed mind was not subjected to desire; such a mind would judge and assent to impressions only through rational will (βούλησις). In later Stoic thought, desire (ἐπιθυμία) became just one of many different emotions that one should avoid. Epictetus developed the Stoic notions on will further and insisted that things that were "up to us" were not the results to which assenting to impressions led. It was not "up to us" if an act actually took place or not; one could at any time be hindered by something or someone even though assenting to the impression. The assent itself, however, the choice of assenting to an impression, was "up to us", and that no one could take away.[24] For Epictetus, the choice of assent, to will something, was fundamental to what defined a person. It was up to each person to develop the ability to choose according to virtue (ἀρετή). We will

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19 Although the idea closely follows Plato's statement in *Theaetetus* 191–195 that the mind is like a wax tablet and that the way humans perceive things was as if the outside world, via the senses, left imprints on the wax tablet of the mind. For details of the development of Stoic epistemology and psychology see Brad Inwood, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to the Stoics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

20 As told, for example, by Sextus Empiricus, *Against the Logicians* I.228–231.

21 SVF II.52, 55, 61; Long and Sedley, *Hellenistic Philosophers*, 236–241.

22 Chrysippus introduced the concept of "assent" and maintained that the things that depended on us were assent or dissent to impressions. For more on the Stoic theory of assent, see A. A. Long, "Freedom and Determinism in the Stoic Theory of Human Action", in *Problems in Stoicism*, ed. A. A. Long (London: Athlone Press, 1971), 173–199; Bobzien, *Determinism*, 274–290. For an ancient source on Chrysippus, see SVF II–III.

23 For a discussion about Stoic views on passions, see above Chapter 2.

24 Epictetus, *Discourses* I.1.10–12, IV.1.72–73. For a more thorough discussion of Epictetus, see further below.

have reason to return to this in more detail below, but it is important to make clear already at this point that ethics in ancient philosophy did not hinge on a simple doctrine of free will; a faculty was not postulated that allowed people to choose between good or bad at any given time.[25] Things were, as we have seen, much more complicated than that.

According to Stoics, people were not born free; humans were born with the ability to develop a reason, but since we were born into a social situation with values that were not always sound, people were actually never free as long as they entertained impressions that were false. This is why Stoics said that it was only the truly wise person who was really free.[26] Plotinus was greatly influenced by this understanding of freedom as well.[27] A completely free mind, according to Stoics like Epictetus, did not contain any false beliefs, it did not get entangled with any false impressions and could not be coerced by any power in the world to change its mind.[28] Here we have a clear idea of what it means to have a completely free will, and it was developed by the Stoics.[29] As it happens, the free person's will and God's will (the Logos in this case) coincide. The completely free person, the wise sage, always acts with the good in mind. But the important thing to notice for our purposes here is that it is not God's will that makes the wise person choose the good, which is why we can speak of free will. So, while Stoics did entertain the concept of free will for humans, it was not universal but rather an utterly rare phenomenon, a merging of one individual's mind with the all-permeating will of God. A person with a free will was motivated solely by the understanding that the good is the best thing to choose, and always did what was good.[30] Thus, the first notions of free will did not refer to a faculty all people possessed, which enabled people in general to always choose the good. People who were not free, that is, who did not have access to free will, were under the influence of different impressions that led to many other things than the good. This did not necessarily mean that all people who did not have a completely free will lead immoral lives. We will return to these discussions in detail below and then also address the way the technical

25 Susanne Bobzien, "Stoic Concept of Freedom and their Relation to Ethics", in *Aristotle and After*, ed. Richard Sorabji (London: Institute of Classical Studies, 1997), 71–89.

26 For example, SVF I.218; for more, see Long and Sedley, *Hellenistic Philosophers*, 359–368, 431–432.

27 Plotinus, *Ennead* VI.8. See also Dillon, "An Ethic", 329–330, where Dillon discusses Plotinus' view on freedom in relation to ethics and recognizes his dependence on Stoic thought.

28 A. A. Long, *Epictetus: A Stoic and a Socratic Guide to Life* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 221–222.

29 Frede, *A Free Will*, 66–89, 85.

30 Frede, *A Free Will*, 79–81.

terms pertaining to the discussion on free will were used, terms like αὐτεξούσια (self-determination) and προαίρεσις (choice).

Stoic psychology and the definitions of freedom would become very influential among later philosophers. Let us now examine how Christian thinkers from the second century onwards approached these questions and then turn to *TriTrac*.

2 Christian Free Will, the Configuration of God, and the Creation of the Cosmos

The notion of free will is not discussed explicitly in the New and Old Testament. Nor are the technical terms used associated with the discourse on free will, like αὐτεξούσια (self-determination) and προαίρεσις (choice). There are, however, several passages that become relevant later, when Christian thinkers begin to get interested in the question of free will. For example, in the synoptic gospels Jesus says he wishes he could avoid death but instead subjects himself to the will (θέλημα) of his Father.[31] Paul writes that the will (φρόνημα) of the body leads to death while the will of the spirit leads to life and peace.[32] Even though the technical terms used to discuss the question of will, like προαίρεσις and αὐτεξούσια, do not occur, the topic would become very important for many Christians during the second century. This was largely due to the fact that the doctrine of free will was applicable to questions of ethics and moral accountability.

Free will was closely connected to the configuration of God. Many ancient Christian thinkers maintained that God was omnipotent, which presupposed absolute freedom.[33] A God who was not free, who was constrained by some other power or substance, could not be omnipotent. Thus, we find God's freedom emphasized in early Christian literature: God was all-powerful and free. This was contrary to many Greco-Roman philosophers' ideas of the divine. The Stoics, for example, maintained that the will of the highest God was identical to the reason that ruled in nature; God could not bend his will to act contrary to nature, that is: God could not change his own will or will himself to be other than he was.[34] Most philosophers did not imagine an independent will

31 Mark 14:36; Matt 26:39; Luke 22:42.

32 Rom 8:6. There are other interesting passages for exegetes who sought answers to the question of will in the Bible. Origen, for example, discusses several of them. I discuss these briefly below.

33 Karamanolis, *Philosophy*, 145.

34 Cicero, *On the Laws* 1.27; Seneca, *Epistles* 95; Pliny the Elder, *Natural History* 11.27.

beyond the laws of nature, nor an ultimate God that unrestrictedly acted in the world solely governed by his own will, choosing to act on certain things while disregarding others. The Platonist Celsus wrote that such a notion was absurd.[35]

Some Middle Platonists' view on the Demiurge, however, came close to the Judeo-Christian idea of an omnipotent creative God with freedom of will. But they were troubled by the fact that the Demiurge seemed to be constrained by Necessity (ἀνάγκη) in the creation story in the *Timaeus*.[36] Surely the Highest God could not be restricted in such a way. There must have been a higher God above the Demiurge, some Middle Platonists argued, like "the One" Plato discussed in the *Parmenides.* One way to make the omnipotence of the Highest God clear was to emphasize that God created the world through his will. If the world was not instigated through the free will and explicit choice of God it implied that either God did not create the world, did not care, or that creation came about through necessity, all of which threatened God's omnipotence and goodness. Thus, we find in Alcinous, Pseudo-Plutarch, and Philo the emphasis that God's will was explicitly the reason for creation taking place.[37] Plotinus came to hold a similar view: God had a will and it was free.[38] We also find this theme in the work of several Christian thinkers, for example Theophilus of Antioch, Tatian, and later Origen.[39] However, the question remained: if God instigated creation and God was good, how did one explain bad things happening in the world? How did you explain human evil?[40] One way early Christians solved this problem was to insist that God had extended free will to humans when creating "humankind in his image" (Gen 1:27).[41]

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35 Origen, *Against Celsus* VI.53–54, V.14.

36 Plato, *Timaeus* 47e–48b, 51e, 53a–b. For a survey of the reception of Plato's *Timaeus* concerning the idea of the Demiurge, chiefly among Middle Platonists, see O'Brien, *The Demiurge in Ancient Thought*.

37 For more on this see Geoffrey Smith, "Irenaeus, the Will of God, and Anti-Valentinian Polemics: A Closer Look at *Against the Heresies* 1.12.1", in *Beyond the Gnostic Gospels: Studies Building on the Work of Elaine Pagels*, eds. E. Iricinshi et al. (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2013): 93–123.

38 Frede, *A Free Will*, 125–152.

39 *2 Clement* 1.8; Ignatius, *Epistle to the Smyrnaeans* 1.1; Theophilus, *Apology to Autolycus* II.22; Tatian, *Address to the Greeks* 5.5; Origen, *On First Principles* II.9.1.

40 There was a difference between human evil and natural catastrophes, like floods, famines, or earth quakes which could and most often were attributed to the providence of God, there was always a reason why they happened and one had to trust that divine providence made the best of the situation. Some Stoics, however, attributed bad things happening to Fate, but it was nevertheless for the greater good, and according to the plan of the Logos. In many circles, however, among certain Christians especially, Fate was to grow into an ominous character. For more on fate, see Denzey Lewis, *Cosmology and Fate*, 31–34, 89–90.

41 This echoed Stoic views. Epictetus maintained that God gave humans a free will (in his understanding of the concept) just like his own. Epictetus, *Discourses* I.1.23. Christians

The question of free will was important for early Christian understanding of the nature of God, the human relation to the divine, and for understanding moral accountability and judgment.[42] Many Christian writers also related the doctrine of free will to questions concerning culpability and justice. If there was no free will, asked Justin Martyr, how did one decide on praise and blame?[43] According to Justin, humans chose freely either to act according to God's will (a virtuous action) or to act, maliciously, against it.[44] For Justin, humans in this sense had self-determination (αὐτεξούσιον). Theophilus and Tatian followed suit[45] and in this way the discussion of free will became connected to eschatology and the final judgment. Origen wrote that God would judge our actions and this judgment-to-come would of course be fair, because God was fair and good. This presupposed free will because a fair judgment of human actions must have been based on actions freely chosen.[46] According to Origen, the free will of humans was one of the essences of humanity and a cornerstone of the Christian faith.[47] God aided humans by his grace to make the right decisions, that is, those choices that complied with his divine will. Clement maintained that the divine Logos and God's angels aided humans in choosing rightly.[48] However, Clement also maintained that it was completely "up to us" (ἐφ' ἡμῖν) to be persuaded or not, while it was up to God to grant his grace to let us become like him.[49]

Origen seems to be the first Christian who deliberately and in detail argued for a theory on free will.[50] His writings on this subject would become very influential, especially for the Cappadocian fathers and the emerging monastic movement.[51] Origen recognized that all humans were not created with the same circumstances; people had different natural constitutions and the social

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would perhaps not go as far as Epictetus who writes in this passage that human will is free and not even God could take that away.

42 For sake of delineation I exclude Augustine and the ensuing discussions on free will after him.

43 Justin, *First Apology* 43.8.

44 Justin, *First Apology* 43.3–6.

45 Tatian, *Address to the Greeks* 11.2; Theophilus, *Apology to Autolycus* II.27, see also Minucius Felix, *The Octavius* 36.

46 Origen, *On First Principles* III.1.1.

47 Origen, *On First Principles* preface 4–5.

48 Clement, *Protrepticus* 117.2; *Stromata* V.13.90–91, VI.17.161.2.

49 *Stromata* II.5.26.3, VI.7.1–2. For a study on Clements's view of the relation between free will and Grace, as well as the pedagogical function of the Logos, see Matyas Havrda, "Grace and Free Will According to Clement of Alexandria", *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 19:1 (2011): 21–48.

50 For overviews of Origen's view on the nature of human free will, see, for example, Frede, *A Free Will*, 102–124; Dihle, *Theory of Will*, 110–122; Karamanolis, *Philosophy*, 168–176.

51 Dihle, *Theory of Will*, 110–122; Karamanolis, *Philosophy*, 168–176.

settings one was born into differed. These factors affected the choices people made. Origen also supported the notion that divine Providence governed in the world. However, he rejected the idea that some people could not help making choices that deviated from divine will, that some were born with the natural inclination not to follow the will of God and to do good. People were, Origen insisted, created completely equal in terms of their will. But it was obvious, not just to Origen, that humans were born under different circumstances and had different opportunities. Some were born Greek, others Jews; some were rich and others poor, and so on. This was significant to the discussion about will, because it forced the question: did all humans really have equal opportunity to follow their will and to do the will of God? This question caused some problems for Origen, and consequently, he spends a good deal of his work *On First Principles* discussing them. Origen's precursors who commented on the free will of humans, like Irenaeus, were adamant that God had distributed free will equally among humans. Those who chose the way of goodness were rewarded with immortality while those who chose evil were punished, but all humans had the equal opportunity to choose the good.[52] Origen solved the problem of equal opportunity and different circumstances by way of his interpretation of the creation story. Origen maintained that God created human bodies because he foresaw that human souls would need them in order to undo previous mistakes.[53] The question of free will, for Origen, was thus connected to the creation of the world. Origen thought that the world looked the way it did because free will was granted to the noetic beings first created by God.[54]

This cosmological doctrine, as we shall see, is also essential for *TriTrac.* Origen believed that God created Intellects (*nous*) separately from the body and that they lived a separate life before and after the bodily life and creation of the cosmos.[55] In the beginning, God had created noetic beings, Intellects (*nous*) with free will, who lived in contemplation of God. These beings became angels, demons, and human souls depending on the impressions to which they gave assent and how far they fell from their initial state of contemplating God.[56] Here Origen employed the cognitive theory of assent. Origen thought that humans shared the faculty of free will with angels and demons. This seems to have been a widespread idea among Christians, also found in Justin Martyr,

52 Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* IV.37, 39.
53 Origen, *On First Principles* I.3.8, I.4.1, II.9.2.
54 Origen, *On First Principles* II.9.6.
55 Origen, *On First Principles* II.9.6.
56 Origen, *On First Principles* I.8.1–2, II.1.1, II.6.3–6, II.8.3–4, II.9.1–6.

Tatian, and Irenaeus, for example.[57] Many early church fathers agreed with the interpretations of Genesis found in the Book of the Watchers in *1 Enoch* where the Nephilim are portrayed as cast out from heaven. Tertullian wrote that the evil angels fell because they had acted in hateful ways and that they had done so of their own free will.[58] Origen also quotes the *Books of Enoch* and holds it in high esteem.[59] Like the angels, Origen maintained, humans were endowed with free will and, thus, the different circumstances in which humans found themselves must have been due to their own choices, freely made, and for which they later would be judged.[60] Origen thought that the circumstances in which people found themselves on earth were due to God's judgment that those particular circumstances, given the makeup of one's body and position in the world, were the best possible conditions in which to recompense for the mistakes for which one had previously been responsible, but that in the end it was always up to us.

Origen developed his thoughts on free will in his work *On First Principles*, which was written, he said, in order to sort out the confusion that existed among some Christians.[61] Consequently, Origen's thoughts on free will are presented in reaction and contrast to the notion among some Christians that people were saved depending on their constitution and depending on *God's* will and not solely on the worth of the choices they themselves made.[62] Irenaeus tells us that he had come across Christians who maintained something similar.[63] Both Irenaeus and Origen were offended by the notion that there could be people who were born saved, without having to make choices at all, which they both associated with Valentinian theology.[64] Origen discusses two New Testament passages, as well as several other texts,[65] when laying out his argument in favor of the doctrine of free will. In Rom 9:16 Paul writes that salvation "depends not on human will (τοῦ θέλοντος) or exertion, but on God who shows mercy" (τοῦ ἐλεῶντος θεοῦ); and Phil 2:13 states that "it is God who is at work in you, enabling you both to will (θέλειν) and to work for his good pleasure". These passages, Origen wrote in *On First Principles*, were used by

57 Justin, *Dialogue with Trypho* 141; Justin, *Second Apology* 7.5–6; Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* IV.37; Tatian, *Address to the Greeks* 7.1.

58 Tertullian, *Apology* 22–23.

59 Origen, *On First Principles* I.3.3, IV.1.35; *Commentary on John* VI.25.

60 Origen, *On First Principles* II.9.5–6.

61 Origen, *On First Principles* I, preface 2, III.1.

62 Origen, *On First Principles* I.8.2, II.9.5, III.1.4–5.

63 Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* I.6.1.

64 Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* I.6.1; Origen, *Against Celsus* V.61; *On First Principles* II.9.5.

65 For example, Ex 4:21, 7:3; Mi 6:8; Is 1:19–20; Dt 30:15–19. See Origen, *On First Principles* III.1.

those Christians who argued that humans were saved according to God's will, not human free will, and that humans were restricted by their natural bodily constitutions.[66] Exactly who these Christians were is not clear, but because Origen mentions the Valentinian "error" of believing that some were saved by nature shortly before elaborating on the correct view on free will, it is likely that he is debating against certain Valentinians with whom he was familiar.[67] This is elaborated on further below, where it is argued that the detailed thoughts Origen rejected are actually present in *TriTrac*.

Irenaeus' depiction of Valentinians differs somewhat from Origen's. Irenaeus writes that the Valentinians he knew considered themselves to belong to a pneumatic class for whom the question of free will was not a concern. However, if we read more closely, the Valentinians Irenaeus described did not reject free will; rather, Irenaeus explains that they restrict it to certain people, namely the psychics. The psychics had free will, and represented a group of the undecided, people who risked damnation but stood to gain salvation if they proved themselves worthy.[68] Clement cites a certain Theodotus who is supposed to have held similar ideas.[69] Psychics had to show through their actions that they deserved salvation and were the only ones who were granted free will. The pneumatics did not need free will because they had nothing to prove, they were saved already. There was a third class in the Valentinian anthropology too, according to Irenaeus (and this also fits *ExcTheod*),[70] the material, who were predetermined to be doomed and who also lacked free will to decide for themselves.

Today, scholars engaged with proto-heterodox Christianity generally agree that the church fathers' portrayals of Valentinians were polemically inspired and that these notions did not negate an interest in morals. However, not many Christian texts operate with the tripartite anthropology that the church fathers reacted against when calling their opponents determinists. One text that does, apart from *ExcTheod* and Irenaeus' depictions, is *TriTrac* (118:14–122:12).[71] Harold Attridge and Elaine Pagels have argued that these are not fixed

66 Origen, *On First Principles* III.1.7, 1.18.

67 Origen, *On First Principles* II.9.5.

68 This seems to be the position in *ExcTheod* 56:3, see also Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 1.6.1.

69 *ExcTheod* 56:3.

70 The reason I restrict the discussion to these two portrayals of Valentinians is because these are the only presentations of Valentinian theology that explicitly mention free will. See Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 1.6.1 and *ExcTheod* 56:3.

71 Pneumatics are portrayed as an elevated, saved people, the material people are doomed to be lost while the middle class, the psychic, are undecided. See *ExcTheod* 56:3 and

categories that negate an interest in moral questions, but that "act determines essence".[72] Thomassen has argued in a similar fashion,[73] and Denise Kimber Buell has added another nuance to the discussion by stating that what we see in *TriTrac* is a "combination of fluidity (action) and fixity (essence)".[74] The three human categories are in fact fluid, Buell writes, and should be understood from the perspective of a discourse on identity construction. The term γένος did not denote fixed categories in early Christian discourse, as the modern categories 'ethnicity' or 'race' often do today. These are important points, but before concluding what a seemingly fixed anthropology would have meant socially, we need to elucidate the actual system behind such an anthropology. I maintain that ethical systems which rejected the notion of free will actually made sense considering the discussions that were taking place at the end of the second and beginning of the third century regarding human will and its relation to God's will and creation. I argue that the rejection of the notion of human free will was a respectable and viable opinion—regardless of Origen's and Irenaeus' portrayals—and that anthropological systems that restricted human choice would have been effective in sustaining a workable ethical system. Furthermore, there are nuances to take into consideration: even if the doctrine of free will was rejected, this did not mean that humans did not have a will, at all or that human choice was irrelevant.

Let us now turn to placing *TriTrac* within the above discussion on ancient views on will and its connection to ethics. We will begin by looking at how *TriTrac* depicts the will of God and its relation to the Logos' creation and human will. Does *TriTrac* reject free will for all but the psychics, like Irenaeus' Valentinians and as scholars seem to have maintained? I argue that the text formally rejects the theory of free will completely, even for psychics, and that the system presented in *TriTrac* fits ideas of the Christians Origen rejected, rather than Irenaeus' opponents. *TriTrac* can indeed be viewed as presenting a deterministic system, in the sense that the text does not depend on the doctrine of free will for its ethics. At the end of the chapter I return to the question of the context of *TriTrac*'s anthropology.

Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 1.6.1. The relation between this anthropology and the one we find in *TriTrac* is discussed in Chapter 4.

72 Attridge and Pagels, "The Tripartite Tractate", in *Notes*, 446–447.

73 Thomassen, *Le traité tripartite*, 428–429.

74 Buell, *Why This New Race*, 127.

3 Free Will and Moral Accountability in *TriTrac*

We begin with a brief note on terminology and then continue with a survey of the creation story, read from the perspective of the different technical terms that are attached to the concept of will. This is followed by an analysis of how *TriTrac* fits into the ancient discourse on free will.

3.1 *A Few Notes on Terminology*

In *TriTrac* the term ⲟⲩⲱϣⲉ, "will" or "desire", appears frequently, as a verb as well as a noun. The Greek equivalent is most probably θέλημα, but ⲟⲩⲱϣⲉ can also be used for desire and love. ⲟⲩⲱϣⲉ is mostly used neutrally (the term ⲣ-ϩⲛⲉ⸗[75] also occurs) but, as I argue, also in a technical sense. In *TriTrac* we find several terms that were specific for discussions of free will during the first centuries, among pagans, Jews, and Christians alike. We encounter the term ⲧⲁⲩⲧⲉⲝⲟⲩⲥⲓⲟⲥ, "self-determination" (αὐτεξούσιον), and the variant ⲡⲓⲟⲩⲱϣⲉ ⲛ̄ⲛⲁⲩⲧⲉⲝⲟⲩⲥⲓⲟⲥ, "the will of self-determination". Of all the Nag Hammadi texts, this phrase only appears in *TriTrac*. The term *proairesis* (ⲡⲣⲟⲁⲓⲣⲉⲥⲓⲥ/προαίρεσις) is used four times in *TriTrac*, and literally means *pre-choice* or *preference.* This term refers to the faculty of choice, and I will argue that in *TriTrac* it is used to define a person's character. *Proairesis* is often used in the discussion of ancient views on human will and moral accountability.[76] Other important terms used in *TriTrac*, also frequently encountered in connection with will, include: ⲇⲓⲁⲑⲉⲥⲓⲥ, "disposition"; ϩⲟⲙⲟⲗⲟⲅⲓ, "consent"/"assent"; ⲅⲛⲱⲙⲏ, "opinion"; as well as several terms we discussed in the previous chapter, like ⲉⲡⲓⲑⲩⲙⲓⲁ and ⲡⲁⲑⲟⲥ, "desire" and "passion", and ⲙⲛ̄ⲧⲣⲙ̄ϩⲉ/ⲙⲛ̄ⲧⲉⲗⲉⲩⲑⲉⲣⲟⲥ, "freedom".

3.2 *Will and the Creation Story*

The first few pages of *TriTrac* are devoted to description of God, as far as this is possible from the apophatic stance *TriTrac* adopts. God is omnipotent and omnipresent and can thus not be limited. We read that the Father's will (ⲟⲩⲱϣⲉ), defined as "his power" (ⲧⲉϥϭⲁⲙ) (55:34–35), is "limitless" (ⲁⲧϣⲁⲡϥ̄) (54:23–24). God was not alone pre-existent but the Son and the Church are with him in the beginning. The same disposition (ⲇⲓⲁⲑⲉⲥⲓⲥ) that the Father has

75 See 62:27–30, 64:11, 86:20, 99:18, 131:31, 133:12, see also Crum, *Coptic*, 690a.

76 Since the term προαίρεσις is used in so many varied ways in antiquity, from Aristotle onward, I choose to leave the term untranslated henceforth. In *TriTrac* it is used to refer to a faculty that the entities in the cosmos have, which determines their character and ability to assent to the Savor. I argue that it is not the same as free will, or a self-determined will, which in *TriTrac* is restricted to perfect beings.

apply to the Son and Church as well. The Son has the disposition (ⲇⲓⲁⲑⲉⲥⲓⲥ) of being without beginning and end (58:14) and he is of the same substance (ⲟⲩⲥⲓⲁ) as the Father (58:37–38). The Father and the Son use their dispositions and virtues (ⲁⲣⲉⲧⲏ) to manifest the Aeons that make up the heavenly Church (59:3–10).[77] The Church is described as having the same disposition (ⲇⲓⲁⲑⲉⲥⲓⲥ) as the Father and the Son. Since the Son and the Church are described as sharing the nature of the Father, one could draw the conclusion that the Son and the Church, too, are completely limitless and powerful, just like the Father, although this is not explicitly stated.

In *TriTrac* the Father's immediate creations are the Aeons. The Father wills to bring forth Aeons who have wisdom and who have lingered in his thought (60:1–5, 62:27, 75:27–31). The Father's will is extended to the Aeons and it is emphasized several times that the will that is given them, including the Logos' will, is *self-determining*:

> They (the Aeons) were fathers of the third glory, in accordance with the self-determination and the power begotten with them.[78]

And further below this is repeated:

> The Aeons have brought [themselves] forth—in accord with the third fruit—by means of the self-determination of the will and through the wisdom which he provided their mind with.[79]

And again, one page later:

> This Aeon (the Logos) was among those to whom wisdom was given, so that everything that first existed in his mind was that which he wished to bring forth. Therefore, he received a wise nature so that he could examine the hidden order, since he is a fruit of wisdom. The will of self-determination which the All (the Pleroma) was begotten with was the

77 The Aeons of which the church consists are not created as such but linger in the consciousness of the Father and are brought out, thus allowing for the doctrine that all parts of the trinity are eternal without beginning nor end.

78 69:24–27: ϫⲉ ⲛⲉϩⲉⲛⲉⲓⲁⲧⲉ· ⲙ̄ⲡⲓⲙⲁϩ ϣⲁⲙⲧ· ⲛ̄ⲉⲁⲩ <ⲛⲉ> ⲕⲁⲧⲁ ⲧⲙⲛ̄ⲧⲁⲩⲧⲉⲝⲟ̣ⲩⲥⲓⲟⲥ ⲙⲛ̄ ⲧϭⲟⲙ· ⲉⲛⲧⲁⲩϫⲡⲁⲥ ⲛⲙ̄ⲙⲉⲟⲩ. Translation by Attridge and Pagels, slightly modified.

79 74:18–23: ϫⲉ ⲛⲓⲁⲓⲱⲛ ⲇⲉ ⲁⲩⲛ̄ⲧ̣[ⲟⲩ] ⲁⲃⲁⲗ· ⲕⲁⲧⲁ ⲡⲓⲙⲁϩ ϣⲁⲙⲛ̄ⲧ ⲛ̣ⲕⲁⲣⲡⲟⲥ ⲁⲃⲁⲗ ϩⲓ̈ⲧⲛ̄ ⲧⲙⲛ̄ⲧ[ⲁⲩ]ⲧⲉⲝⲟⲩⲥⲓⲟⲥ ⲛ̄ⲧⲉ ⲡⲟⲩⲱϣⲉ̣ ⲁⲩⲱ ⲁⲃⲁⲗ· ϩⲓ̈ⲧⲛ̄ ϯⲥⲟⲫⲓⲁ ⲉⲛⲧⲁϥⲣ̄ ϩⲙⲁⲧ· ⲙ̄ⲙⲁⲥ ⲛⲉⲩ ⲁⲡⲟⲩⲙⲉⲩⲉ̣. Translation by Attridge and Pagels, slightly modified.

> reason for this one's conduct, causing him to do that which he wanted, with no one to restrain him.[80]

The Aeons are called "fathers" of three glories, or fruits, which refer to the three ways in which the Aeons honor and praise the highest Father as a collective.[81] The term ⲁⲩⲧⲉⲝⲟⲩⲥⲓⲟⲥ is in *TriTrac* only used regarding the Aeons. We read that the Father granted the Aeons faith so they could accept things they did not understand; this is, we read, a blessing, a fortune, a wisdom and a freedom (ⲙⲛ̄ⲧⲣⲙ̄ϩⲉ) (71:31–33). Faith is necessary because one cannot choose to know the Father; knowledge of the Father is granted by the Father himself and thus one must rely on one's faith for this knowledge. We read that the Father wills the Aeons to know him and blend (ⲙⲟⲩϫϭ) with him and assist each other (71:34–72:15). This is the very first step of the creation.

The youngest Aeon, the Logos, wishes to give glory and tries to grasp the Father. Nothing restrains the Logos. He does it with his free will. The Logos has "the will of self-determination" (ⲡⲓⲟⲩⲱϣⲉ ⲛ̄ⲛⲁⲩⲧⲉⲝⲟⲩⲥⲓⲟⲥ) (75:35–36). However, the Logos does not act contrary to the will of the Father. We read that "thus, the *proairesis* of the Logos, which is him, was good" (ⲧⲡⲣ̣ⲟ̣ⲁⲓⲣⲉⲥⲓⲥ ϭⲉ ⲙ̄ⲡⲗⲟⲅⲟⲥ ⲉⲧⲉ ⲡ̣ⲉ̣ⲉⲓ ⲡⲉ ⲛⲉⲟⲩⲡⲉⲧⲛⲁⲛⲟⲩϥ ⲡⲉ̣) (76:2–4).[82] The term *proairesis*, or more literally *pre-choice/preference*, seems to refer to Logos' faculty of choice on the other side of the limit to the Pleroma. There is no mention of *proairesis* in the Pleroma, there the creatures are described as having a self-determining will (ⲡⲓⲟⲩⲱϣⲉ ⲛ̄ⲛⲁⲩⲧⲉⲝⲟⲩⲥⲓⲟⲥ). *Proairesis* is applied to the Logos and his offspring, and there is a distinction between those creations that come about from his good *proairesis* and those creations that result from his initial misstep, creatures we return to shortly. The Logos' misstep comes about when he rushes forth in love (ⲧⲁⲅⲁⲡⲏ) toward the glory of God and as this happens the Logos is separated from the All, the Pleroma of Aeon (76:13–77:11). The separation is ultimately attributed to God, or more explicitly God's will as is evident from the following passage:

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80 75:27–76:2: ϫⲉ ⲡⲓⲁⲓⲱⲛ ⲛⲉⲩⲟⲩⲁⲃⲁⲗ ⲡⲉ ϩⲛ̄ ⲛⲉⲉⲓ ⲉⲧⲉⲁⲩϯ ⲛⲉⲩ ⲛ̄ⲧⲥⲟⲫⲓⲁ ⲉⲧϥ̄ⲣ̄ ϣⲣⲡ̄ ⲛ̄ϣⲟⲟⲡ ⲡⲟⲩⲉⲉⲓ ⲡⲟⲩⲉⲉⲓ· ⲙ̄ⲡⲉϥⲙⲉⲩⲉ· ⲙ̄ⲡⲉⲧϥ̄ⲟⲩⲁϣϥ̄ ⲉⲩ{ⲟⲩ}ⲛⲧⲟⲩ ⲁⲃⲁⲗ ⲉⲧⲃⲉ ⲡⲉⲉⲓ· ⲁϥϫⲓ ⲛ̄ⲛⲟⲩⲫⲩⲥⲓⲥ ⲛ̄ⲥⲟⲫⲓⲁ ⲁⲧⲣⲉϥϩⲁⲧϩⲧ̄ ⲛ̄ⲥⲁ ⲡⲥⲙⲓⲛⲉ· ⲉⲧⲑⲏⲡ ϩⲱⲥ ⲉⲩⲕⲁⲣⲡⲟⲥ ⲛ̄ⲥⲟⲫⲓⲁ ⲡⲉ· ϫⲉ ⲡⲓⲟⲩⲱϣⲉ ⲛ̄ⲛⲁⲩⲧⲉ{ⲩ}ⲝⲟⲩⲥⲓⲟⲥ ⲉⲧⲁⲩϫ̣ⲡⲁ{ⲩ}ϥ ⲙⲛ̄ ⲛⲓⲡⲧⲏⲣϥ̄ ⲛⲉϥϣⲟⲟⲡ ⲛ̄ⲛⲟⲩⲗⲁⲓ̈ϭⲉ ⲛ̄ⲡⲓⲟⲩⲉⲉⲓ ⲡⲓⲣⲏⲧⲉ ⲁⲧⲣⲉϥⲣ̄ ⲡⲉⲧⲁϥⲟⲩⲁϣϥ̄ ⲉⲙⲛ̄ ⲗⲁⲩⲉ· ⲣ̄ ⲕⲁⲧⲉⲭⲉ ⲙ̄ⲙⲁϥ. Translation by Attridge and Pagels, slightly modified.

81 For more, see Attridge and Pagels, "The Tripartite Tractate", in *Notes*, 278–281.

82 Here I deviate somewhat from Attridge and Pagels' translation, in order to highlight the fact that Logos' is identified with his *proairesis.* They translate: "The intent, then, of the Logos, who is this one, was good" (Attridge and Pagels, "The Tripartite Tractate", 233).

> The Father and the All withdrew from him, so that the limit which the Father had set might be established. It exists not to make firm the incomprehensibility but by the will of the Father and also so that the things that happened would come to be in an *oikonomia* that was to be. If it was to be, it would not happen through the appearance of the Pleroma. Thus, it is not fitting to criticize the movement which is the Logos, but it is fitting that we should say that the movement of the Logos is a cause of an *oikonomia* which has been destined to come about.[83]

What follows is the creation and organization initiated by the Logos. As we have discussed before, as a result of the separation from the Pleroma, the Logos brings forth different powers that are described as phantasms, shadows, and impressions, powers that lack reason and light (78:31–35). These were "imitations of the disposition" ([ⲡⲧ]ⲁⲛⲧⲛ̄ ⲛ̄ϯⲇⲓⲁⲑⲉⲥⲓⲥ) (81:4) of the will of the Father who created the All. We read that these copies will cease existing in the end (79:1–4). The Logos realizes that he has given rise to something faulty and this causes him to become disturbed and distressed and he "repents" (ⲙⲉⲧⲁⲛⲟⲓⲁ). The Logos gives up creating from the opinion (ϯⲅⲛⲱⲙⲏ) which is separated from the other Aeons and turns to "[another] opinion and another thought" ([ⲕⲉ]ⲅ̣ⲛ̣ⲱⲙⲏ· ⲁⲩⲱ ⲕⲉⲙⲉⲉⲩⲉ) and to "what is good" (ⲛⲉⲧⲛⲁⲛⲟⲩⲟⲩ) (81:23–26). His conversion results in the second creation of powers (ϩⲛ̄ϭⲟⲙ) and these powers we read are "greater than those of the imitation" (ⲛⲁⲩⲟⲩⲁⲉⲓ ⲛ̄ϩⲟⲩⲟ ⲁⲛⲁ ⲡ[ⲓ]ⲧⲁⲛⲧⲛ̄) (82:16–17). The Logos places in these powers "a *proairesis* to seek and pray to him (the Father)" ([ⲛ̄]ⲛ̣ⲟⲩⲡⲣⲟⲉⲣⲉⲥⲓⲥ ⲛ̣ϣⲓⲛⲉ [ⲁ]ⲩⲱ ⲛ̄ⲧⲱⲃϩ̄ ⲛⲧⲟⲟ[ⲧ]ϥ̄) (83:19–20). These two orders of powers are engaged in a perpetual struggle amongst each other. The Logos struggles to gain control of the situation and the Pleroma in an act of pity send the Savior to him. The Logos reacts to the appearance and creates the pneumatic substance/powers and we read that what the Logos brought forth "in accordance with the *proairesis* are in chariots" (ⲕⲁⲧⲁ ϯⲡⲣⲟⲁⲓⲣⲉⲥⲓⲥ ϩⲛ̄ ϩⲛ̄ϩⲁⲣⲙⲁ ⲛⲉ) (91:18–19). As discussed in Chapter 2, this image, of being in chariots, is most likely a reference to Plato's description of the logical part of the soul's (λογιστικόν) being like a charioteer in a cart made up of the soul and dragged by horses of matter (θυμοειδής and

83 76:30–77:11: ϫⲉ ⲡⲓⲱⲧ ϭⲉ ⲁⲩⲱ ⲛⲓⲡⲧⲏⲣϥ̄ ⲁⲩⲥⲁⲕⲟⲩ ⲛⲉⲩ ⲥⲁⲃⲟⲗ ⲙ̄ⲙⲟϥ ⲁⲧⲣⲉϥϣⲱⲡⲉ ⲉϥⲧⲁϫⲣⲁⲉⲓⲧ· ⲛ̄ϫⲉ {ⲁ}ⲡϩⲟⲣⲟⲥ ⲉⲛⲧⲁ<ϩ>ⲁⲡⲓⲱⲧ· ⲧⲁϣϥ̄ ϫⲉ ⲟⲩⲁⲃⲁⲗ ⲉⲛ ⲡⲉ· ⲛ̄ⲧⲉϩⲱ ⲛ̄ⲧⲙⲛ̄ⲧⲁⲧⲧⲉϩⲁⲥ ⲁⲗⲗⲁ ϩⲙ̄ ⲡⲟⲩⲱϣⲉ ⲙ̄ⲡⲓⲱⲧ· ⲁⲩⲱ ϫⲉⲕⲁⲥⲉ ⲁⲛ· ⲉⲩⲛⲁ·ϣ̣ⲱⲡⲉ· ⲛ̄ϭⲓ ⲛⲓϩⲃⲏⲩⲉ· ⲉⲛⲧⲁⲩϣⲱⲡⲉ ⲁⲩⲟⲓⲕⲟⲛⲟⲙⲓⲁ ⲉⲥⲛⲁϣⲱⲡⲉ· ⲉ̣ϣⲁⲥϣⲉⲉ ⲛⲁⲥⲛⲁϣⲱⲡⲉ ⲉⲛ ⲡⲉ· [ϩ]ⲙ̄ ⲡⲟⲩⲱⲛϩ̄ ⲁⲃⲁⲗ ⲙ̄ⲡⲗⲏⲣⲱⲙⲁ [ⲁ]ⲃⲁⲗ ϭⲉ ⲙ̄ⲡⲁⲉⲓ· ⲙⲁⲥϣⲉ ⲁⲣ̄ ⲕⲁ[ⲧ]ⲏ̣ⲅⲟⲣⲓ ⲙ̄ⲡⲕⲓⲙ· ⲉⲧⲉ ⲡⲗⲟⲅⲟⲥ ⲡⲉ· [ⲁ]ⲗ̣ⲗⲁ ⲡⲉⲧⲉϣϣⲉ ⲡⲉ· ⲁⲧⲣⲛ̄ϣⲉϫⲉ ⲁ[ⲡ]ⲕ̣ⲓⲙ· ⲛ̄ⲧⲉ ⲡⲗⲟⲅⲟⲥ· ϫⲉ ⲟⲩⲗⲁⲉⲓϭⲉ ⲡⲉ [ⲛ]ⲟⲩⲟⲓⲕⲟⲛⲟⲙⲓⲁ ⲉⲥⲧⲏϣ ⲁⲧⲣⲉⲥϣ̣ⲱⲡⲉ. Translation by Attridge and Pagels, slightly modified.

επιθυμητικόν).[84] This image fits *TriTrac* very well because here the creatures "in chariots" constitute an Aeon—also called "the Church" because it resembles the assembly in the Pleroma—a sphere that stands above the two orders that combat each other (93:14–16, 94:21–23).

Humans are created according to these three substances, a mixture of the three, that mirror the pneumatic Church and the powers of the right and left side. Some humans, called the pneumatic class, recognize the appearance of the Savior right away and rush toward him and are granted knowledge (118:29–36). The psychic humans, we read, are brought forth from the disposition (ⲇⲓⲁⲑⲉⲥⲓⲥ) which is good, the right side of the Logos creation (120:7, 131:19), they thus they will be saved (130:26). Those who are not pneumatics or from the good disposition of the right side, belong to the left side. They prefer honor and temporary glory instead of assenting to the Savior (121:20). The psychics wish to know the Father because they recognize the fact that they were created (131:4). We read that the psychics will be saved if they have the correct opinion (ⲅⲛⲱⲙⲏ) and will (ⲟⲩⲱϣⲉ) and if they follow those who have the good *proairesis* (ⲡⲣⲟⲁⲓⲣⲉⲥⲓⲥ) (131:30–32).

It is high time to unpack the above exposé. I begin with a recapitulation in light of other Christian ideas of creation and the nature of Will.

3.3 *The Creation Story in Light of Other Christian Interpretations of the Will of God*

We find in *TriTrac* a concept of the beginning of creation not at all uncommon among early Christian, Jewish, and pagan thinkers: the highest deity is alone and instigates creation through his will.[85] In *TriTrac* the will of God is defined as one of God's powers (ϭⲟⲙ) and God's will is described as free and without limit. The idea that it is God who through his will, defined as his power, instigates creation was, as we have seen above, common in the first centuries.[86]

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84 There are different versions of the reception of this likeness; sometimes the cart is dragged by two horses identified as the soul and matter, who pull in opposite directions. See Plato, *Phaedrus* 246a–254e. See the reception of this image in, for example, Galen, *On the Opinions of Hippocrates and Plato* and in Gregory of Nyssa, *On the Soul and Resurrection* 61b. See also Thomassen, *Le traité tripartite*, 375.

85 See for example Alcinous, *Didaskalikos* 10.4; Philo, *Migration of Abraham* 120; Cicero, *On the Laws* 1.27; Pseudo-Plutarch, *De Fato* 573b. For the Christian parallels, see Theophilus, *Apology to Autolycus* II.22; Ignatius, *Epistle to the Smyrnaeans* 1.1; Tatian, *Address to the Greeks* 5.5; *2 Clement* 1:8. Origen is the most obvious example and is discussed further below.

86 In some other Valentinian material like *GosTruth, ExcTheod*, and *ValExp* the Son seems to be contained in the thought of the Father and is brought forth when the Father wills it (*ExcTheod* 7:1; *GosTruth* 16:35–36, 37:15–17; *ValExp* 22:34–36, 24:26–28.) This is not so

In a similar manner as many early Christian writers, like Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, Tatian, and Origen, *TriTrac* emphasizes that the first beings created through the will of the Father have *self-determination* (αὐτεξούσια).[87] For Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, and Tatian these creatures were the angels one could read about in Genesis. In *TriTrac*, there was a world—and thus also a creation—to take into account before the creation of angels and the cosmos. The same was true of Origen's cosmogony. In *TriTrac*, free will seems to be limited to the first entities created, the Aeons. The Aeons are portrayed as combining their will with faith, in order to know God. Only God can grant knowledge of himself, and thus will is not enough. The combination of faith and will is also emphasized by Clement.[88] However, in *TriTrac* the term "self-determination", which is a technical term indicating free will, is limited to the Aeons. This term, self-determination, is not used for the beings in the Logos' creation (which includes humans); only the Aeons in the Pleroma are portrayed as possessing it.

The Logos acts by his free will but it is also clear that the border between the Pleroma and the Logos that causes his isolation is raised by the Father: "The Father and the All drew away from him, so that the limit which the Father had set might become firm".[89] Thus, we read later that everything, including deficiency in the world, happened in accordance with the will of God: "For the will (of God) held the All under sin, so that by that will he might have mercy

in *TriTrac*. The Aeons are the first real creation in *TriTrac*. They are willed forth from the thought of God while the Son and Church are pre-existent together with the Father. *TriTrac* also makes clear that all the parts of the trinity have the same *dispositions* (ⲇⲓⲁⲑⲉⲥⲓⲥ) and that the Son and the Church are of the same substance as the Father. The Son has the disposition (ⲇⲓⲁⲑⲉⲥⲓⲥ) of being without beginning and end (58:14) and he is of the same substance (ⲟⲩⲥⲓⲁ) as the Father (58:37–38). The Church has the same disposition (ⲇⲓⲁⲑⲉⲥⲓⲥ) as the Father and the Son (59:3–10). The term, ⲇⲓⲁⲑⲉⲥⲓⲥ, is used in Irenaeus' depiction of a Valentinian myth in 1.12.1 for the Aeons that God emanated but in *TriTrac* this term is not used for the Aeons that the Father wills forth from his thought (60:1–67:37). For more on the myth of Irenaeus' Valentinians see the discussion in Smith, "Irenaeus, the Will of God". Smith argues convincingly that Irenaeus uses a source that is conflated but that it is not necessarily conflated by Irenaeus himself. This indicates that the Aeons were not part of the Father in the same way as the Son and the Church who together with the Father make up the highest principle. Neither are the Aeons in *TriTrac* described in pairs as in Irenaeus, *Against Heresies.*

87 Justin, *Dialogue with Trypho* 141, *Second Apology* 7.5–6; Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* IV.37; Tatian, *Address to the Greeks* 7.1; Origen, *On First Principles* I.8.1–2.

88 Clement claims that faith is a choice. To freely choose to follow what is useful is the beginning of understanding and the foundations of true wisdom, knowledge and salvation (*Stromata* II.2).

89 76:30–34: ϫⲉ ⲡⲓⲱⲧ ϭⲉ ⲁⲩⲱ ⲛⲓⲡⲧⲏⲣϥ̄ ⲁⲩⲥⲁⲕⲟⲩ ⲛⲉⲩ ⲥⲁⲃⲟⲗ ⲙ̄ⲙⲟϥ ⲁⲧⲣⲉϥϣⲱⲡⲉ ⲉϥⲧⲁϫⲣⲁⲉⲓⲧ· ⲛ̄ϫⲉ {ⲁ}ⲡϩⲟⲣⲟⲥ ⲉⲛⲧⲁ<ϩ>ⲁⲡⲓⲱⲧ· ⲧⲁϣϥ̄. Translation by Attridge and Pagels, slightly modified.

on the All and they might be saved".[90] *TriTrac* follows the same tradition found in Origen, that the organization of the material cosmos comes about so that the initial separation from God can be rectified. Origen's discussion of the heavenly powers in *On First Principles* I.8.1–2 is similar to *TriTrac*'s discussion of the different powers the Logos orders; all have their part to play and are skilled in different ways. But *TriTrac* imposes several qualifications on the powers that populate the heavens that clearly differ from Origen's portrayal of Intellects. One clear difference concerns the question of will. Origen's Intellects become angels, demons, and human souls, and *all* have free will. In *TriTrac*, it is only the Intellects in the Pleroma, the Aeons as they are called in *TriTrac* (although *nous* is a concept used for them, too[91]), who have free will. In the level below, created by the Logos, it is much more complicated. As we have discussed in Chapter 1, the Intellects do not step down from the Pleroma, they are rather reproduced as *images, likenesses*, and *imitations*. The cosmic region is populated by these three different entities and in this realm the terms *proairesis* and *opinion* are used instead of *will of self-determination* (ⲡⲓⲟⲩⲱϣⲉ ⲛ̄ⲛⲁⲩⲧⲉⲝⲟⲩⲥⲓⲟⲥ). *TriTrac* differs from Christians such as Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, Tatian, and Origen who tried to explain the presence of evil in the world by resorting to the creation of lower beings with free will who choose to act in despicable ways. In *TriTrac*, this is not possible since the only ones described as possessing a self-determining will (ⲡⲓⲟⲩⲱϣⲉ ⲛ̄ⲛⲁⲩⲧⲉⲝⲟⲩⲥⲓⲟⲥ) are the perfectly harmonious Aeons in heaven who do no evil whatsoever. Thus, it would seem that *TriTrac* represents an early Christian text that tried to solve the problem of moral accountability in a completely different way than by resorting to the doctrine of free will, because free will was not viable in the cosmos. Why is the technical term *self-determination* (ⲧⲁⲩⲧⲉⲝⲟⲩⲥⲓⲟⲥ) limited to the upper level, to the Aeons of the Pleroma? What is the function of the concept *proairesis* (ϯⲡⲣⲟⲁⲓⲣⲉⲥⲓⲥ) that becomes viable in the cosmic realm? Let us turn to these questions now.

90 117:3–8: ⲉⲁⲡⲟⲩⲱϣⲉ {ⲉⲁⲡⲟⲩⲱϣⲉ} ⲅⲁⲣ· ⲭ̣ⲣⲱ ⲁⲣⲙ̄ ⲡⲧⲏⲣϥ̄ ϩⲁ ⲡⲛⲁⲃⲉⲓ ϫⲉⲕⲁⲥⲉ· ϩⲙ̄ ⲡⲟⲩⲱϣⲉ· ⲉⲧⲙ̄ⲙⲉⲩ ⲉϥⲛⲁⲛⲁⲉ· ⲙ̄ⲡⲧⲏⲣϥ̄ ⲛ̄ⲥⲉⲛⲟⲩϩⲙⲉ. Translation by Attridge and Pagels, slightly modified.

91 For the Son and the aeonic collective of the Church associated with ⲛⲟⲩⲥ, see 63:33–64:8, 70:8–20, 55:5–27, 59:16–17, 64:1–11. *TriTrac* emphasizes that it is not possible for *nous* to grasp the Father. This is stated several times and is clearly a positioning against Neoplatonists who believed that through *nous* one could potentially understand and conceive of God. Here *TriTrac* is similar to Origen who states that the Father is higher than *nous* (Origen, *Against Celsus* VII.45). For more on the apophatic approach of Middle Platonists during the time before that of which I argue Origen and *TriTrac* derive, see Smith, *Approaches*, 117–264. In this issue, in the apophatic stance of the highest God, Origen and *TriTrac* are closer to Middle Platonists than later Neoplatonists, I would say.

3.4 *Self-Determination: Absence of Impressions and Passions*

As we saw above, Stoics developed a psychological theory that involved the thought that all humans were subjected to impressions (φαντασία) that appeared in the mind. Human cognition entailed organizing and reacting to these different impressions. Plato and Aristotle maintained that one's actions depended on which parts of one's mind were strongest, desire (ἐπιθυμία), temper (θυμός), or rational will (βούλησις). Stoics did not accept this division, nor did Christians like Origen and Clement, but instead counted the "irrational" parts like desire (ἐπιθυμία) and temper (θυμός) as particular kinds of passions and passions were disturbances in the mind.[92] People decide through reason which impressions to assent to (συγκατάθεσις) and which to reject. Origen seems to belong to a similar tradition, he maintained that the reason Intellects had strayed from their original pure state was because they had assented to false impressions.[93] A false impression was something that came from outside the mind, most often associated with sense-impressions, something that did not always lead to the good and thus did not necessarily correspond to the will of God. False impressions could be more or less strong, depending on the mind having them, and on how one had previously assented to them (somewhat as Aristotle had maintained about the effect of previous actions).[94] A mind could be more or less infested with passions. A mind that was full of passions like fear and anger was prone to act on false impressions. For Stoics, a mind infested with passions was not completely free. This was probably a development of the notion (already discussed by Plato and Aristotle) that the person who only followed his rational will in choosing what to do could not fail to make correct decisions, decisions that correlated with the good. As we saw, Chrysippus had claimed that a thing was "up to you" if you were the cause of that action's taking place. For example, if you were healthy enough to stand up, it was you yourself who decided to stand or remain seated. Later Stoics like Epictetus modified this and claimed that what was up to you was that which was possible for you to do in every possible circumstance, which was only *choosing* to stand up or

92 The Stoics had three other main passions, apart from appetite: anger (λύπη), fear (φόβος), and pleasure (ηδονή). Contrary to popular belief today, Stoics were not opposed to emotions; a sage who had mastered all passions did feel passion (πάθος), but only good emotions (ευπάθεια). The three good emotions Stoics favored were Will (βούλησις), Joy (χαρά), and Caution (εὐλάβεια).

93 Origen, *On First Principles* 1.4.1.

94 Although Aristotle did not have a concept of assent (συγκατάθεσις) like that of Stoics, he did envision that humans as well as animals could have an aversion for some choices because they had chosen thus previously. Animals did not develop a reason while humans did.

remain seated, someone stronger than you could always prevent you from actually standing up.[95] This was applied to the debate concerning the choices of a truly virtuous person. Later Stoics would maintain that a truly virtuous person who had rid himself of passion and gained complete self-determination *could* not act in an unvirtuous way (i.e. assent to a false impression); this would contradict being virtuous.[96] This is a very specific idea of free will, one that I argue is also employed in *TriTrac*.

As seen above, in *TriTrac* the "will of self-determination" (ⲡⲓⲟⲩⲱϣⲉ ⲛ̄ⲛⲁⲩⲧⲉⲝⲟⲩⲥⲓⲟⲥ) is limited to the very top level of creation, the aeonic Intellects in the Pleroma. The Aeons in the Pleroma are perfect beings; they are not subjected to passion, which only becomes viable in the aftermath of the Logos' fall. The Intellects who have complete self-determination thus cannot assent to false impressions, indeed there are no false impressions or passions in the Pleroma to assent to. This is made clear on page 76 where the Aeons and the Logos are described as having complete self-determination. After the Logos rushes forward in love of God, the other Aeons "withdrew from him, so that the limit which the Father had set might be established".[97] At first glance, it could seem like the youngest Aeon makes an erroneous decision and is driven by passion although he has complete free will. However, as we saw in Chapter 2, a closer look at the description of the Logos makes clear that he is never driven by passion directly (love is a good emotion) and he does not become subjected to erroneous impressions until he is on the other side of the limit to the Pleroma. When the border is raised between Logos and the Pleroma there is no further mention of the Logos' self-determination, instead we encounter the term *proairesis* (ⲡⲣⲟⲁⲓⲣⲉⲥⲓⲥ), and as I argue shortly, even if this term is associated with the concept of *choice* (αἵρεσις), it is not equivalent to free choice in *TriTrac*. It is in the description of the Logos' creation that *impressions* and *passions* become viable. Thus, *TriTrac* differs from the standard uses of *impressions* and *passions* that maintained that *all* Intellects were subjected to them. In *TriTrac* the Intellects of the Pleroma are not subjected to them at all. Passions and impressions are associated with the left side of the Logos' creation (82:19, 95:7), what is later called the material part of creation (98:12–20), and matter does not exist in the Pleroma. As I discussed in the previous chapter, the passions were associated with materiality in ancient psychology

95 See Bobzien, "Stoic Concept of Freedom", 79–80.

96 Bobzien, "Stoic Concept of Freedom", 89; Alexander of Aphrodisias, *De Fato* 196.24–197.3.

97 76:31–34: ⲁⲩⲥⲁⲕⲟⲩ ⲛⲉⲩ ⲥⲁⲃⲟⲗ ⲙ̄ⲙⲟϥ ⲁⲧⲣⲉϥϣⲱⲡⲉ ⲉϥⲧⲁϫⲣⲁⲉⲓⲧ· ⲛ̄ϫⲉ {ⲁ}ⲡϩⲟⲣⲟⲥ ⲉⲛⲧⲁ<ϩ>ⲁⲡⲓⲱⲧ· ⲧⲁϣϥ̄.

because it was the body that was thought to entice passions.[98] In *TriTrac an impression* (ⲟⲩⲫⲁⲛⲧⲁⲥⲓⲁ), or *imagining* (ⲣⲫⲁⲛⲧⲁⲥⲓⲁ) is always something negative, likened to falsehood, being driven by false impressions, and passion is likened to being "without form".[99] Only the Intellects in the Pleroma are in totally harmonious sync with the divine will and only there are actions *only* dependent on the one who acts.

For Origen, all angels, demons, and human souls had free will and all were subjected to impressions of different kinds. No one who once had a free will, according to Origen, ever lost it and thus never lost the ability to get reintegrated to God's original collective (his theory of *apokatastasis*). *TriTrac* employs a different psychology that maintains that where there are impressions and passions there cannot be complete free will that corresponds to the will of God, because passion is contrary to God's will. Although I believe this distinction is strongly influenced by Stoic psychology, Stoics would have put it somewhat differently. A free virtuous person did experience impressions (but not passions) but could not act on false impressions.[100] In *TriTrac* this is radicalized. A truly self-determining Intellect did not act on impressions or passions because there were no false impressions or passions in the realm of true forms.

What are the implications of these differences concerning will for the ethics among humans on earth? It is obvious that *TriTrac* is not in the business of presenting a theory of free will as the basis for moral appraisal, like Origen and other Christian authors. I argue that *TriTrac* builds its ethics on similar grounds as the Stoics, that moral worth rested on each person's *proairesis*, a faculty that was defined by the physical and mental composition of each individual. Here the notions *proairesis* and *assent* come in to play. Let us leave the Pleroma and the highest realm and see how the Stoic concept of *assent* and *proairesis* was envisioned and then see how it relates to *TriTrac*.

3.5 Proairesis, *Assent, and Opinion in Stoicism and* TriTrac

Chrysippus, perhaps the most famous of the early Stoics next to the founder Zeno, maintained that causal determinism was compatible with the idea that there were things that depended on us. There *were* things that one could choose to do and not to do, but the world was still determined by the Logos. The thing that was "up to us" to decide to do was how to react to an impression that is, people could choose to "assent" (συγκατάθεσις) to an

98 This becomes an important theme in the early monastic movement. See Brakke, *Demons*.

99 See 78:7, 78:34, 79:30, 79:31, 82:19, 98:5, 103:16, 109:27, 109:33, 109:34, 111:11.

100 See the discussion in Alexander of Aphrodisias, *De Fato* 196.24–197.3.

impression or to withhold assent.[101] Passions, as well as other predispositions and aversions, could influence a person, but the act of *assenting* was not predetermined. What *was* predetermined, however, were the physical causes leading to a particular impression's appearing in the mind, and to what changes in the world the assent, or its withholding, would lead. This is expressed in the famous Stoic metaphor about human life being just like being tied to a moving cart: the road was already paved. The only thing that was up to us was our attitude; one had the choice of either walking next to the cart or being dragged along by it.[102] Again, Epictetus built on earlier Stoic thought and said that the faculty which decided if a person assented to an impression or not was one's *proairesis* (προαίρεσις), one's *choice/preference*, or rather *character*, as Epictetus used the term. It was the *proairesis* that defined one's moral self. Aristotle had used this term, as we saw above, for the *choice* (προαίρεσις), or the act of choosing. Epictetus uses it as the state which decided *who you were*. A *proairesis* with a good disposition (διάθεσις) assented to impressions that led to virtue. But if moral appraisal depended on the reaction to impressions in the mind, which depended on one's *proairesis*, what did one's *proairesis* depend upon? Your *proairesis* was partly the result of your circumstances, that is, the causes leading up to your birth and the development of your early life, determined by fate.[103] You could influence your *proairesis* and build it up so as to construct for yourself a virtuous life, to align it to Nature, to the Logos which governed the cosmos. A weak *proairesis* needed to be developed so it could assent to virtuous impressions and refrain from assenting to false impressions (those which were not in accordance with Nature). This was done by education. Once your *proairesis* was morally sound you could act without the risk

101 As Bobzien notes, there is no direct evidence that Chrysippus used the term ἐφ' ἡμῖν in the technical sense, but since it later becomes the standard phrase when discussing what actions depend on us and the connection to moral accountability, especially among Stoics like Epictetus, it is likely he used it. Aristotle used the phrase in his discussions (*Nicomachean Ethics* III.3, 5; *Eudemian Ethics* II.6.1223.1–9, II.10), but Chrysippus introduced the concept "assent" and maintained that the things that depended on us were assent to or dissent from impressions. For more, see Bobzien, *Determinism*, 274–290.

102 Hippolytus, *Refutation of All Heresies* I.18. The metaphor is traditionally attributed to Zeno, but Bobzien has argued that it is rather of later Roman Stoic origin (Bobzien, *Determinism*, 351–357).

103 Epictetus, *Discourses* I.4.18–22; Cicero, *De Fato* 40–41; Aulus Gellius, *Attic Nights* VII.2.6–13. For more see Inwood 1985: 42–103; Bobzien, *Determinism*, 234–329; Ricardo Salles, *The Stoics on Determinism and Compatibilism* (Ashgate: London, 2005), 69–90; Kathleen Gibbons, "Who Reads the Stars? Origen's Critique of Astrological Geography", in *Routledge Handbook of Identity and the Environment in the Classical and Medieval Worlds*, eds. Rebecca Futo Kennedy and Molly Lewis-Jones (London and New York: Routledge, 2016), 230–246. See also Sorabji, *Emotions*, 215, 331–332.

of falling for false impressions (which was the very definition of being a moral person). This ethical outlook received critique by those who felt that it was much too severe, that such a view did not allow for degrees of goodness.[104]

Alexander Kocar, drawing on Löhr's work,[105] has recently shown that there are similarities in the way *TriTrac* and Stoics accounted for moral responsibility.[106] Kocar points out that how the different kinds of human classes react to the appearance of the Savior in *TriTrac* reminds us of the Stoic theory of assent (συγκατάθεσις).[107] However, the employment of the Stoic theory of assent is in itself not that strange; rather, it seems to have been a fairly common

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104 Some viewed it as leading to the conclusion that people with a good προαίρεσις *could* not make mistakes and that everyone else was immoral. For example, see Alexander of Aphrodisias, *De Fato* 196.13–197.3. See also Diogenes Laertius, *Lives* VII.120, VII.127; Plutarch also criticized Stoics on this account, in *Progress of Virtues* 75a–f, 77a–b, 449d–450a.

105 Löhr briefly mentions that both Clement and Basilides used the Stoic concept of "assent" (συγκατάθεσις). Basilides, we are told, used it as a definition of "faith", as giving in to something that is beyond the senses. Clement's use of "assent" is used more as a defense of the concept of human freedom (see Clement, *Stromata* V.3.3, II.27.2; and for more see Löhr, "Gnostic Determinism", 381–90, for the quote see 384).

106 Kocar, "Humanity", 193–221. Kocar concludes in his article that Valentinians and Stoics have been wrongfully accused of determinism and lack of ethical paraenesis. He discusses Epictetus' use of "volition" (as he translates προαίρεσις) as a case for a Stoic call for ethical behavior; however, what he does not discuss is the fact that this technical term of Epictetus, προαίρεσις, also occurs in *TriTrac*. Stoics and Valentinians were not just accused of being determinists but also of being elitists and egoists. Not just their ancient contemporaries leveled this charge at them; similar perceptions lived on all the way to modern scholarship. For the ancient and modern accusations directed at Valentinians see Williams, *Rethinking*, 189–212; for ancient and modern derogatory remarks about the Stoics see 191–206 in Runar M. Thorsteinsson, *Roman Christianity and Roman Stoicism: A Comparative Study of Ancient Morality* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010). In the *Oxford Handbook of Early Christian Studies* we read: "Stoicism was a philosophy for an exclusive circle of the elect, whereas Christianity taught universal salvation" (Hubertus R. Drobner, "Christian Philosophy", in *The Oxford Handbook of Early Christian Studies*, eds. S. A. Harvey and D. G. Hunter (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 683). This picture of Stoicism reflects the cliché that long also pertained to Valentinians, that it was thought to only be for an elite. Engberg Pedersen has questioned such assertions regarding the Stoics. He writes that "Pauline scholars regularly contrast the idea of an outward directedness (to be found in Paul) with that of an inward directedness (to be found in the Stoics). That is a misunderstanding" (Troels Engberg Pedersen, *Paul and the Stoics* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2000), 290).

107 On pages 118–119 in *TriTrac*, the three human classes react differently to the appearance of the Savior. Kocar writes that the appearance of the Savior is like an *impression* (ⲫⲁⲛⲧⲁⲥⲓⲁ) (Kocar, "Humanity", 205–206). This is partly correct, at least in the sense that the people who are saved are the ones who assent to the appearance of the Savior, but the term *impression* is a very negative term in *TriTrac* and never used for the Savior. Although an excellent article, Kocar only scratches the surface here. He does not discuss the specific

way for early Christians interested in philosophy to conceptualize the workings of human psychology and cognition; we find it in Origen and Clement, for example.[108] What is interesting to note, however, is the faculty that actually determined assent. This is the focus below. I argue that *TriTrac* uses the technical term *proairesis* (προαίρεσις) as what defined a person's character. *Proairesis*, as well as γνώμη (*opinion*), is linked with the concept of assent.

As we just saw, Epictetus maintained that it was one's *proairesis* that defined who one was. It was the disposition of one's *proairesis* that decided what one assented to. A *proairesis* that was free of coercion was never something bad but always acted on the good. Here we have a notion of free will, but it is defined as *always acting on the good.* I argue that the notion of free will is somewhat modified in *TriTrac.* In *TriTrac* it is only the Aeons in the Pleroma who have free will and act according to the will of God while the Logos, when trapped outside the limits of the Pleroma, becomes exposed to impressions and passions that roam freely and is judged by the nature of his *proairesis*. We read that the Logos is not to blame because it was not by any fault of his own, and that "thus, the *proairesis* of the Logos, which is him, was good" (ⲧⲡⲣⲟⲁⲓⲣⲉⲥⲓⲥ ϭⲉ ⲙ̄ⲡⲗⲟⲅⲟⲥ ⲉⲧⲉ ⲡⲉⲉⲓ ⲡⲉ ⲛⲉⲟⲩⲡⲉⲧⲛⲁⲛⲟⲩϥ ⲡⲉ) (76:2–4).[109] The word ⲡⲣⲟⲁⲓⲣⲉⲥⲓⲥ seems to be the very thing that defines him, here in his life outside the Pleroma. In a later passage, we read that the things which the Logos "brought forth in accordance with the *proairesis* are in chariots … so that they may pass over all regions of activities lying below, and each one may obtain his fixed place in accordance with that which he is".[110] Logos' good *proairesis* brings forth the pneumatics. The Logos also places in the second order of powers, the psychics, "a *proairesis* to seek and pray to the Father" (ⲟⲩⲡⲣⲟⲉⲣⲉⲥⲓⲥ ⲛ̣ϣⲓⲛⲉ [ⲁ]ⲩⲱ ⲛ̄ⲧⲱⲃϩ̄ ⲛⲧⲟⲟ[ⲧ]ϥ̄) (83:19–20). Later in the text we read that the psychic humans can be saved, but only those who work together with the ones with a good *proairesis* and if they are willing to abandon falsehood:

> And those who were brought forth from the desire of lust for command—because they have the seed of lust for command inside them—will receive the reward of good things, they who have worked together with

terminology used for assent in *TriTrac* nor the use of *proairesis, self-determination*, or other technical terms.

108 See Sorabji, *Emotions*, 355–376.

109 Translation by Attridge and Pagels, modified.

110 91:17–25: ⲉⲧⲃⲉ ⲡⲉⲉⲓ ⲛⲉⲧⲉ ⲁϥⲛ̄ⲧⲟⲩ ⲁⲃⲁⲗ· ⲕⲁⲧⲁ ϯ·ⲡⲣⲟⲁⲓⲣⲉⲥⲓⲥ ϩⲛ̄ ϩⲛ̄ϩⲁⲣⲙⲁ … ϫⲉ ⲉⲩⲛⲁϫⲱⲃⲉ ⲛ̄ϩⲉⲛⲙⲁ ⲧⲏⲣⲟⲩ· ⲛ̄ϩⲛ̄ϩⲃⲏⲩⲉ· ⲉⲧⲙ̄ⲡⲥⲁ ⲛⲡⲓⲧⲛ̄· ⲁⲧⲣⲟⲩϯ ⲛ̄ⲧⲭⲱⲣⲁ· ⲙ̄ⲡⲟⲩⲉⲉⲓ ⲡⲟⲩⲉⲉⲓ ⲛⲉϥ· ⲉⲧⲥⲙⲁⲛ̄ⲧ̄ ⲛ̄ⲑⲉ ⲉⲧϥ̄ϣⲟⲟⲡ. Translation by Attridge and Pagels, slightly modified.

> those who have the *good proairesis*, provided they, in opinion and will, abandon the desire for vain temporary glory.[111]

We read that the powers of the left, and the humans who take after them, "are not of the good disposition (ϯⲇⲓⲁⲑⲉⲥⲓⲥ ⲉⲧⲛⲁⲛⲟⲩⲥ) of the right side but from the mixture and they instead *preferred* (ⲁⲩⲣϣⲁⲣⲡ̄ ⲛ̄ⲥⲱⲧⲡ̄) temporary honor and desire".[112] The Coptic ⲣϣⲁⲣⲡ̄ ⲛ̄ⲥⲱⲧⲡ̄ literally means "to pre-choose", or "choose first", and seems to corresponds to the Greek *proairesis* (προαίρεσις). The use of the concept *proairesis*, referring to the faculty of choice, stands in contrast to the way the aeonic Intellects are described. They live in a world devoid of passion and false impressions, and this is why they are also described as retaining "the will of self-determination" (ⲡⲓⲟⲩⲱϣⲉ ⲛ̄ⲛⲁⲩⲧⲉⲝⲟⲩⲥⲓⲟⲥ) (75:35–36). In the cosmos, where impressions and passions roam, the different powers' moral worth depends on the disposition of their *proairesis*, which could be good or bad. The completely free choice, a self-determined will (ⲡⲓⲟⲩⲱϣⲉ ⲛ̄ⲛⲁⲩⲧⲉⲝⲟⲩⲥⲓⲟⲥ), which is always good, is reserved for the Aeons in the Pleroma.

This is, I argue, the basis for the way the concept of *assent* is used in *TriTrac.* Those who have a good *proairesis* are portrayed as assenting (ⲣ ϩⲟⲙⲟⲗⲟⲅⲓ) to the good, and to the appearance of the Savior/Son. The most common word for assent, συγκατάθεσις, is not found in *TriTrac*. However, it seems like *TriTrac* uses ⲣ ϩⲟⲙⲟⲗⲟⲅⲓ, (perhaps most often translated "confess", "profess" or "acknowledge"[113]) in an equivalent way. Cicero used this term (in the Latinized form *homologia*) as a word that seems to mean "the assent" to the good, in Stoic terms conformity to *Nature*.[114] In *TriTrac* we read that the powers of the right side whose *proairesis* is disposed toward recognizing the world from above (83:18–21) assent (ⲣ ϩⲟⲙⲟⲗⲟⲅⲓ) to the appearance of the Son. The Logos is also identified as having a good *proairesis* (76:2) and he also assents (ⲣ ϩⲟⲙⲟⲗⲟⲅⲓ) to the Son (91:7–10). The left side, however, "they did not assent

111 131:22–34: ⲁⲩⲱ ⲛⲉⲉⲓ ⲉⲛⲧⲁⲩⲛ̄ⲧⲟⲩ ⲁⲃⲁⲗ ϩⲛ̄ ⲧⲉⲉⲓⲉⲡⲓⲑⲩⲙⲓⲁ ⲛ̄ⲧⲉ ⲧⲙⲛ̄ⲧⲙⲁⲉⲓⲟⲩⲉϩ ⲥⲁϩⲛⲉ· ⲉⲩⲛ̄ⲧⲉⲩ ⲙ̄ⲙⲉⲩ ⲙ̄ⲡⲓⲥⲧⲉ· ⲛ̄ϩⲏⲧⲟⲩ ⲉⲧⲉ ⲧⲉⲉⲓ ⲧⲉ ⲧⲙ<ⲛ̄>ⲧⲙⲁⲉⲓⲟⲩⲉϩ ⲥⲁϩⲛⲉ ⲥⲉⲛⲁϫⲓ ⲛ̄ⲧϣⲃ̄ⲃⲓⲱ̄· ⲛ̄ⲛⲓⲡⲉⲧⲛⲁⲛⲟⲩⲟⲩ ⲛ̄ϭⲓ ⲛⲁⲉⲓ̣ ⲉ̣ⲛⲧⲁϩⲣ̄ ϩⲱⲃ ⲙⲛ̄ ⲛⲁⲉⲓ ⲉⲧⲉⲩⲛ̄ⲧⲉⲩ ⲙ̄ⲙⲉⲩ ⲛ̄ϯⲡⲣⲟⲁⲓⲣⲉⲥⲓⲥ· ⲛ̄ⲛⲓⲡⲉⲧⲛⲁⲛⲟⲩⲟⲩ ⲉⲩϣⲁⲣ̄ ϩⲛⲉⲩ ϩⲛⲛ ⲟⲩⲅⲛⲱⲙⲏ ⲛ̄ⲥⲉⲟⲩⲱϣⲉ· ⲁⲕⲱⲉ ⲛ̄ⲥⲱⲟⲩ ⲛ̄ⲧⲙⲛ̄ⲧⲙⲁⲉⲓⲉⲁⲩⲟⲩ ⲉⲧϣⲟⲩⲉⲓⲧ. Translation by Attridge and Pagels, slightly modified.

112 121:19–25: ⲛⲉⲉⲓ ⲉⲧⲉ ϩⲛ̄ⲁⲃⲁⲗ ⲉⲛ ⲛⲉ ϩⲛ̄ ϯⲇⲓⲁⲑⲉⲥⲓⲥ ⲉⲧⲛⲁⲛⲟⲩⲥ ⲛ̄ⲇⲉ ⲛⲓⲟⲩⲛⲉⲙ· ⲁⲗⲗⲁ ⲟⲩⲁⲃⲁⲗ ⲧⲉ· ϩⲛ̄ ϯⲙⲛ̄ⲧⲉϩϯϩ ⲧⲉ ⲁⲩⲱ {ⲁⲩⲱ} ⲁⲩⲣ̄ ϣⲁⲣⲡ̄ ⲛ̄ⲥⲱⲧⲡ̄ ⲛⲉⲩ ⲙ̄ⲡⲧⲁⲉⲓⲟ ⲉⲩⲟⲩⲱϣⲉ ⲡⲉ ⲡⲣⲟⲥ ⲟⲩⲁⲉⲓϣ ⲁⲩⲱ ⲧⲉⲡⲓⲑⲩⲙⲓⲁ.

113 This is the way Attridge and Pagels translate the term, and thus I choose to deviate from their translation when the word occurs, in order to highlight the connection to ancient discourse on the philosophy of ethics.

114 Cicero, *On Ends* III.6.21.

to him" (ⲥⲉⲣ̄ ϩⲟⲙ[ⲟ]ⲗⲟⲅ̣ⲓ̣ ⲙⲙⲁϥ ⲉⲛ·) (84:23–24), "they did not assent to the Son" (ⲙ̄ⲡⲟⲩⲣ̄ ϩⲟⲙⲟⲗⲟⲅⲓ ⲙ̄ⲡϣⲏⲣⲉ) (120:36). This is understandable considering what we just read: their *proairesis* is prone to passion, temporary honor, and false impressions (121:19–25).[115]

Being able to assent to the good, to the Son, seems to be a direct result of the disposition (ⲧⲇⲓⲁⲑⲉⲥⲓⲥ) of one's *proairesis*, whether it was disposed to the good or the bad. This is something which makes the assent in *TriTrac* different from the Stoic concept of assent. The term ⲣ ϩⲟⲙⲟⲗⲟⲅⲓ is never used when assenting to false impressions, only to the Savior and the good, and the word "impression" (φαντασία)—which has very negative connotations in *TriTrac*—is never used for the Savior. Furthermore, the pneumatic class in the Logos' initial creation is never portrayed as assenting to the Savior, which from one perspective is understandable considering that the pneumatics were created *after* the Son's appearance and as a result of it. The *proairesis* of the pneumatic powers is not commented upon but we do read that they are like "his (the Logos') own substance" (102:15–16), and since the Logos is described as having a *proairesis* which is good, one could argue that the pneumatic powers have the same nature, although this is not stated explicitly. However, the *proairesis* of the pneumatic *humans* is mentioned. The pneumatic humans are those who have a good *proairesis* and whom the psychics are told to work together with (131:22–34). The tripartite heavenly organization of material, psychic, and pneumatic powers becomes the basis for the creation of humanity. When the Savior appears for a second time and finally shows himself to humans, those who react instantly to the appearance of the Savior are called the pneumatics (118:32–119:16). The psychics need convincing, while the material people reject him at the outset and instead pursue worldly glory and honor, due to the disposition of their *proairesis* (118:32–119:16, 120:36, 121:19–25). The psychic humans who are to be saved are those "have worked together with those who have the *good proairesis*, provided they, in *opinion* and *will*, abandon the desire for vain temporary glory".[116]

I argue that the idea of a good *proairesis*, or rather having a disposition that makes you *choose* the good *before* the bad (προαίρεσις), is the way *TriTrac*

115 Assenting is also viable among humans it seems; we read that the righteous Hebrews do not listen to the left mixed powers like the Greeks who are influenced by the "mixed powers that operate in them" (110:31–32). The Hebrew people do not assent to false impressions (ⲫⲁⲛⲧⲁⲥⲓⲁ) but "assent (ϯϩⲟⲙⲟⲗⲟⲅⲓ) to that which is superior to them" (111:22–23); they retain harmony and unity and thus their scripture indeed valuable.

116 131:29–34: ⲛⲁⲉⲓ̣ ⲉ̣ⲛⲧⲁϩⲣ̄ ϩⲱⲃ ⲙⲛ̄ ⲛⲁⲉⲓ ⲉⲧⲉⲩⲛ̄ⲧⲉⲩ ⲙ̄ⲙⲉⲩ ⲛ̄ϯⲡⲣⲟⲁⲓⲣⲉⲥⲓⲥ· ⲛ̄ⲛⲓⲡⲉⲧⲛⲁⲛⲟⲩⲟⲩ ⲉⲩϣⲁⲣ̄ ϩⲛⲉⲩ ϩⲛⲛ ⲟⲩⲅⲛⲱⲙⲏ ⲛ̄ⲥⲉⲟⲩⲱϣⲉ· ⲁⲕⲱⲉ ⲛ̄ⲥⲱⲟⲩ ⲛ̄ⲧⲙⲛ̄ⲧⲙⲁⲉⲓⲉⲁⲩⲟⲩ ⲉⲧϣⲟⲩⲉⲓⲧ. Translation by Attridge and Pagels, slightly modified.

conceptualized moral worth. But *proairesis* is not the only term used for a person's moral status in *TriTrac*. The term *opinion* (ⲅⲛⲱⲙⲏ),[117] as we just saw, also seems to be connected to assent and *proairesis*. *Opinion*, or *judgement* (ⲅⲛⲱⲙⲏ), is a term that appears in ancient discussions on cognition, referring to the judgment that one reaches when presented with impressions of different kinds.[118] One could have a correct or incorrect *opinion* (γνώμη). A correct *opinion* was based on truth and knowledge. With a firm and good *proairesis*, one's *opinions* lead to the good.[119] In *TriTrac* there is no opinion in the Pleroma, just like there is no good or bad *proairesis*, nor are there any impressions or passions. Opinions are something that belong to the lower world, while in the Pleroma there is only truth, knowledge and the will of God. In the world, however, there are opinions, impressions, passions, and substances that reflect the truth to differing degrees. We read that the powers that are able to be saved need to be saved from their *opinions* and their rebellion, and when the Logos repents from his initial unrest he changes to a different *opinion* from the erroneous one he had when he acted on impressions while in an unstable state (81:18–23). When the Logos fell, he was of an erratic opinion (115:20) but then the Aeons helped their brother, "concerning opinion" (ϩⲛ̄ ϯⲅⲛⲱⲙⲏ) (86:31). The powers on the right are of a good opinion. These powers are able to bring forth a unity of opinion through the *proairesis* which the Logos planted in them (83:10–32). When the powers had the right opinion, they assented to the light, the Son, that appeared to them (89:18). The first human, however, before the coming of the Savior, "its opinion is split in two" (ⲉⲧⲉϥⲅⲛⲱⲙⲏ ⲡⲏϣ ⲁⲡⲉⲥⲛⲉⲩ) (106:23), split between the material and psychic. The psychics need to prove that they are of the good (ⲛⲓⲡⲉⲧⲛⲁⲛⲟⲩⲟⲩ) and this is done if "they will through an opinion" (ⲉⲩϣⲁⲣ ϩⲛⲉⲩ ϩⲛⲛ ⲟⲩⲅⲛⲱⲙⲏ) (131:32) to abandon the ways of error (130:29). It seems that the right side of the Logos' creation and the psychics are judged by the status of their *proairesis*, which determines

117 Apart from a few instances in *OnOrigWorld* and *The Teachings of Silvanus, TriTrac* is the only text in the Nag Hammadi collection that uses this term, ⲅⲛⲱⲙⲏ, extensively (11 times).

118 Democritus maintained that there were two kinds of γνώμη, a legitimate which is concerned with the most fundamental aspects of existence (atoms) and the less in tuned kind which has to do with the senses. See Hermann Diels and Walter Kranz, eds., *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker* (Berlin: Weidmann, 1952), 68b11. Aristotle writes that a γνώμη is a statement about conduct (*Rhetoric* II.21) and that a person with γνώμη tends to makes just decisions (*Nicomachean Ethics* VI.11). Church fathers tend to contrast false γνώμη (heretics) from true γνώμη (see Ignatius, *Epistle to the Philadelphians* 3.3; Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* I.1). γνώμη was also used in combination with self-determination, in Tatian for example (*Address to the Greeks* 7), as an *opinion* by a person with free will. See also Clement, *Paedagogus* I.2.

119 See Lampe, *A Patristic Greek Lexicon*, 317–318.

the way they form and act on their opinions. Thus, even though free will, in its strict sense, is restricted to the Aeons above, contrary to the writings of church fathers like Origen, and Tatian—as well Irenaeus' Valentinians in *Against Heresies* I (6.1) and those of *ExcTheod* 56:3 who imagined that the psychics had free will—the psychics in *TriTrac* at least have some choice. Even though they are not prone to the good in the same way as the pneumatics, they are able to choose to follow their example, and we read that the psychics are responsible for their own opinion and will (131:30–34). Nevertheless, *TriTrac* places great significance on the exposure to passions and false impressions; it was impossible to be exposed to them and completely retain self-determination, and thus this perfection is projected onto the Pleroma. Only the actions in the Pleroma are completely free and thus also always in accordance with the will of God. Thus, *TriTrac* avoids the critique that Stoics received, that their notion of free will meant that those people who had it *never* made mistakes, they *could* not make mistakes. Free will seems to be defined in the same way in *TriTrac* but humans do not have it; not even the pneumatics are described as possessing free will, because it is not a viable state in the world. *Opinion* and *proairesis* belong to the realm below the Pleroma and must be developed and proven by rejecting passion and false impressions and assenting to the appearance of the Savior.

In *TriTrac* the term ⲙⲛ̄ⲧⲣⲙ̄ϩⲉ, *freedom*, is used for the status granted humans who have left the life of ignorance and passion, who have become harmoniously integrated into the Christian community (117:17–118:14).[120] However, there are differences between *freedom* (ⲙⲛ̄ⲧⲣⲙ̄ϩⲉ), *self-determination* (ⲁⲩⲧⲉⲝⲟⲩⲥⲓⲟⲥ), and *proairesis* (ⲡⲣⲟⲁⲓⲣⲉⲥⲓⲥ). Unlike the terms *proairesis* and *self-determination*, the word *freedom* (ⲙⲛ̄ⲧⲣⲙ̄ϩⲉ) is not related to the questions of moral worth. The same seems to be the case with the Greek equivalent ἐλευθερία in discussions on the relation between choice and morality.[121] Freedom in this sense means the opposite of slavery, which in *TriTrac* is defined as ignorance and being under the control of passions. In the following passage this becomes clear. We read that salvation means …

120 Freedom is also viable in the Pleroma. The Father grants the Aeons faith so they can accept things they do not understand; this is, we read, a blessing, a fortune, a wisdom, and a freedom (ⲙⲛ̄ⲧⲣⲙ̄ϩⲉ) (71:31–33).

121 Bobzien, *Determinism*, 135. For the relation between ⲙⲛ̄ⲧⲣⲙ̄ϩⲉ and ἐλευθερία see Crum, *Coptic*, 297a. The term is used at the following places: 71:33, 117:25 and 118:3.

> … the release from the captivity and the acceptance of freedom. In its places, the captivity of those who were slaves of ignorance holds sway. The freedom is the knowledge of the truth which existed before the ignorance was ruling, forever without beginning and without end, being something good, and a salvation of things, and a release from the servile nature in which they have suffered. Those who have been brought forth in a lowly thought of vanity, that is, (a thought) which goes to things which are evil through the thought which draws them down to the lust for power, these have received the possession which is freedom, from the abundance of the grace which looked upon the children. It was, however, a disturbance of the passion and a destruction of those things which he cast off from himself at first, when the Logos separated them from himself, (the Logos) who was the cause of their being destined for destruction, though he kept <them> at <the> end of the *oikonomia* and allowed them to exist because even they were useful for the things which were ordained.[122]

Here we see how freedom is defined as release from ignorance and passion, and how the Logos was able to reject passions but still use them in his organization. *TriTrac*'s moral system does not hinge on the doctrine of free will like many early Christian systems. Freedom from ignorance is a reward but true *self-determination* can only be enjoyed in the re-integrated state of the Pleroma, where passions never existed in the first place. The moral system of *TriTrac* is thus built on a model where one's moral worth depended on the disposition of one's *proairesis*. It was the nature of your *proairesis*, your faculty of choice, that determined if you could assent to the good and reject passion and false impressions. What *proairesis* you had depended on your mental composition, whether you were driven by your pneumatic, psychic or material parts

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122 117:23–118:14: ⲡⲣ̄ ⲃⲟⲗ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ· ⲛ̄ⲧⲟⲟⲧⲥ̄ ⲛ̄ϯⲁⲓⲭⲙⲁⲗⲱⲥⲓⲁ· ⲁⲩⲱ ⲡϫⲓⲛ ⲛ̄ϯⲙⲛ̄ⲧⲣⲙ̄ϩⲉ· ⲧⲉⲕⲭⲙⲁⲗⲱⲥⲓⲁ· ⲛ̄ⲇⲉ ⲛⲉⲉⲓ ⲉⲛⲧⲁⲩⲣ̄ ϭⲁⲩⲟⲩⲁⲛ ⲛ̄ⲧⲙⲛ̄ⲧⲁⲧ·ⲥⲁⲩⲛⲉ· ⲉⲥⲟⲉⲓ ⲛ̄ⲛⲣ̄ⲣⲟ ϩⲛ̄ ⲛⲉⲥⲧⲟⲡⲟⲥ ϯⲙⲛ̄ⲧⲣⲙ̄ϩⲉ ⲇⲉ· ⲡⲉ ⲡⲓⲥⲁⲩⲛⲉ· ⲛ̄ⲧⲉ ⲧⲙⲏⲉ· ⲉⲧϣⲟⲟⲡ· ϩⲁⲑⲏ ⲇⲉ ⲙ̄ⲡⲁⲧⲉⲧⲙⲛ̄ⲧⲁⲧⲥⲁⲩⲛⲉ ϣⲱⲡⲉ· ⲉϥⲟⲉⲓ ⲛ̄ⲣⲣⲟ ϣⲁ ⲁⲛⲏϩⲉ ϩⲛ̄ⲛ ⲟⲩⲙⲛ̄ⲧⲁⲧⲁⲣⲭⲏ· ⲙⲛ̄ⲛⲟⲩⲙⲛ̄ⲧⲁⲧ·ϩⲁⲏ· ⲉⲟⲩⲡⲉⲧⲛⲁⲛⲟⲩϥ ⲡⲉ· ⲁⲩⲱ ⲟⲩϫⲁⲉⲓⲧⲉ· ⲛ̄ⲛϩⲃⲏⲩⲉ ⲧⲉ· ⲁⲩⲱ ⲟⲩⲣ̄ ⲃⲟⲗ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ ⲧⲉ ⲛ̄ⲧⲟⲟⲧⲥ̄ ⲛ̄ϯⲫⲩⲥⲓⲥ ⲙ̄ⲙⲛ̄ⲧϭⲁⲩ· ⲁⲛ· ⲧⲁⲉⲓ ⲛ̄ⲧⲁⲩϣⲱⲡ ⲙ̄ⲕⲁϩ· ⲙ̄ⲙⲁⲥ ϫⲉ ⲛ̣ⲉ̣ⲛ̄ⲧⲁⲩⲛ̄ⲧⲟⲩ ⲁⲃⲁⲗ ϩⲛⲛ ⲟⲩⲙⲉⲉⲩⲉ ⲉϥⲑⲃⲃⲓ·ⲁⲉⲓⲧ· ⲛ̄ⲧⲉ ϯⲙⲛ̄ⲧⲁⲡϭⲗ[ⲁ] ⲉⲧⲉ ⲡⲉ̣ⲉ̣ⲓ ⲡⲉ ⲉⲥⲛⲁ ϣⲁ ⲛⲉⲧⲑⲁⲩ ⲁⲃⲁⲗ ϩⲓ̈ⲧⲛ̄ ⲡⲓⲙⲉⲩⲉ ⲉⲧⲥ̣[ⲱ]ⲕ̣ ⲙ̄ⲙⲁⲩ ⲁⲡⲓⲧⲛ̄ ⲁⲧⲙⲛ̄ⲧⲙⲁⲓ̈ⲟⲩⲁϩ ⲥⲁϩⲛⲉ ⲁⲩϫⲓ ⲇⲉ̣ ⲙ̄ⲡⲓⲕⲧⲏⲙⲁ· ⲉⲧⲉ ϯⲙⲛ̄ⲧⲣⲙ̄ϩⲉ ⲇⲉ ϩⲙ̄ ⲡϩⲟⲩⲟ ⲙ̄ⲡϩⲙⲁⲧ· ⲉⲛⲧⲁϩϭⲱϣⲧ̄ ⲁϫⲛ̄ ⲛ̄ϣⲏⲣⲉ· ⲉⲩⲟⲩϣⲟⲣϣⲣ̄ ⲛ̄ⲇⲉ ⲡⲉ ⲙ̄ⲡⲁⲑⲟⲥ ⲡⲉ· ⲁⲩⲱ ⲟⲩⲧⲉⲕⲟ ⲛⲉⲩⲟⲩ ⲡⲉ ⲛ̄ⲛⲁⲉⲓ ⲉⲧⲉ·ⲁϥⲛⲁϩⲟⲩ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ ⲙ̄ⲙⲟϥ ⲟⲩⲁⲉⲉⲧϥ̄· ⲛ̄ϣⲟⲣⲉⲡ· ⲉⲁϥⲡⲁⲣϫⲟⲩ ⲁⲃⲟⲗ ⲙ̄ⲙⲟϥ ⲛ̄ϭⲓ ⲡⲗⲟⲅⲟⲥ ⲉⲛⲧⲁϩϣⲱⲡⲉ ⲛⲉⲩ ⲛ̄ⲗⲁⲉⲓϭⲉ ⲙ̄ⲡⲧⲟⲩϣⲱⲡⲉ· ⲉⲡⲟⲩⲧⲉⲕⲟ ⲉⲁϥⲁⲣⲏϩ ⲁⲣⲁϥ ⲁ<ⲡ>ϩⲁⲉ ⲛ̄ⲧⲟⲓⲕⲟⲛⲟⲙⲓⲁ ⲉⲁϥⲕⲁⲩⲉ ⲁⲧⲣⲟⲩϣⲱⲡⲉ ϫⲉ ⲛⲉⲩⲣ̄ ϣⲉⲩ ϩⲱⲟⲩ ⲁⲛ ⲡⲉ· ⲁⲛⲉⲧⲁⲩⲧⲁϣⲟⲩ. Translation by Attridge and Pagels, slightly modified.

and preferences. In the next part of the study we explore further how this system would have worked socially.

3.6 *A Summary Regarding the Nature of Choice in* TriTrac

In conclusion, the ethical theory in *TriTrac*, contrary to many other early Christian systems, did not rest on the doctrine of free will. As long as passion and false impressions, which had their bases in materiality, was viable there could be no self-determination. Matter is associated with passion and false impression and did not come about through the will of God. Thus, unlike Stoicism, *TriTrac* presents a moral system where no individuals in the cosmic creation of the Logos possessed complete self-determination. Similarly to Stoicism, *TriTrac* likens free will to moral perfection. A mind that was totally self-determining was in tune with the will of God and would always act in accordance with it. This state was not viable in the cosmos. No one in the cosmos is described as being in the possession of a self-determining will, instead the creatures in the cosmic system have a *proairesis*, which can be good or bad, that is, more or less prone to assent to the Savior. The different categories humans can retain on the moral scale are connected to the heavenly powers in the Logos creation. The material powers are those whose *proairesis* is prone to passion and false impressions. The psychics' *proairesis* is inclined to both error and truth but they have the ability to recognize and follow the Savior/the good. The pneumatics stand above these two powers. They make up a superior church above. Humans consist of a mixture of these three substances. The substance with which one is associated, the inclinations one has, becomes known with the appearance of the Savior on earth.

In what sense then, considering that there is an aspect of choice for the psychics, can the system of *TriTrac* be called a deterministic one? It is certainly deterministic in the sense that it seems to reject the notion that not everyone could choose the good at any given time. Those who do not act on the good are the material people, because they are so deeply mixed with their bodily passion that they are not able to recognize the Savior and assent to his appearance. Passions and false impressions are strong influences, which we saw in Chapter 2. It was the nature of your *proairesis* that decided your moral worth, and your *proairesis* was decided on the basis of whether you had the ability to *assent* to the appearance of the Savior and could reject false impressions and passion. As with the Stoics, *TriTrac* does not represent 'hard determinism' (if this ever really existed in practice); there was room for moral improvement. Thus, you could improve your *proairesis* and your circumstances, but this took effort. It was a mental struggle. As we see in the Part II, both psychics and pneumatics have the ability to improve. By highlighting the mental side

of the mechanisms deciding moral worth—through the above discussion on *proairesis*, opinion, and the influence of passion and false impressions—we gain a better view of the provisions that lay at the foundation of a psychic or pneumatic character. In Part II we explore more deeply what exactly this struggle entails, and the mental and theoretical basis of ethics discussed here will be complemented with a practical and social side.

Some patristic scholars have described the early Christian discussions on free will as taking place between the orthodox side representing free will and the 'heretic' side, often exemplified by the Valentinians, representing determinism.[123] The idea that humans possessed completely free will was unusual during the first centuries. It became more common when Christian and Platonic cosmogonic systems encountered the problem of how evil came into the world, an 'evil' or shortage most often attributed to the material side, the eternal dyad juxtaposing the Demiurge.[124] The side of 'determinism' is often misrepresented as a crude attitude towards human decision-making. The fact is very much the opposite, at least if we take *TriTrac* and Stoics as examples. Stoics were not determinists in the sense that they thought that human choices did not matter, and the same is true of *TriTrac*. One could assent or withhold assent to an impression, this was "up to us", because each person acted according to their *proairesis*, according to who they were. A good person acted on the good and a bad person did not assent to the good, that was the very definition of the morally just and unjust. One's *proairesis* was determined by the status of one's mind in relation to its surroundings. Some people, however, simply could not see the truth even if it appeared to them, while for others knowledge of the truth came naturally. As we have seen, the Stoics were at times subjected to critique from their contemporaries, some of whom thought that this was too rigid a moral system.[125] What has been less studied is the intra Christian debate concerning similar issues.

In an attempt to contextualize the deterministic stance of *TriTrac* with which we have become familiar, and in an attempt to approach *TriTrac*'s intellectual context, I now compare *TriTrac* to the views of Origen's opponents in *On First Principles*, who, as Irenaeus' Valentinians, were accused of ethical debauchery resulting from a deterministic world view.

123 See for example Scott, *Journey Back to God*, where Origen's opponents, the 'Gnostics' (represented by Valentinus, Basilides and Marcion) presented as the 'deterministic' view without any description of what this entails.

124 Bobzien, *Determinism*, 412.

125 Explored for example in Bobzien, *Determinism*, 397–399. See also Sorabji, *Emotions*, passim, for discussions of the critique Stoics received.

4 *TriTrac*'s Anthropology in Context: Origen's Christian Opponents

Irenaeus criticized Valentinians for maintaining that only the psychics have free will (αὐτεξούσιον), while the materials were thought to be lost and the pneumatic saved.[126] This view, as we have seen, is not reflected in *TriTrac*. However, it does fit a part of *ExcTheod* (56:3). Here the psychics are presented as possessing self-determination (αὐτεξούσιον). Thus, the Valentinians of *ExcTheod* as well as Irenaeus' Valentinians who claim that the psychics have free will do not align themselves with *TriTrac*, even though this is often thought to be the case in discussions on the 'Valentinian' tripartite anthropology.[127]

There were, however, church fathers other than Irenaeus and Clement who were engaged in debates over free will. Origen was one of them, and he was also familiar with a similar Valentinian anthropology which Irenaeus and Clement described, where humanity is divided into three classes, and where the middle class (the psychics) is thought to be able to freely choose between salvation and damnation. Origen describes Heracleon's view of the psychic class of humans in this way, in his work *Commentary on John*.[128] But Origen seems to be familiar with other Valentinians too, who differed from Heracleon, Valentinians "who introduce the natures" (οἱ μὲν τὰς φύσεις εἰσάγοντες).[129] I will

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126 Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* I.6.1. For the Greek, see Harvey, *Saint Irenaeus*, 51–52.

127 See for example Buell, *Why This New Race*, 127.

128 Origen, *Commentary on John* XIII.60.416–426. Furthermore, Einar Thomassen has argued that Heracleon should not be interpreted as arguing for a fixity of three human categories; he uses the three categories only to highlight the different ways that people are reached by the Savior (Einar Thomassen, "Heracleon", in *The Legacy of John: Second-Century Reception of the Fourth Gospel*, ed. Tuomas Rasimus (Leiden: Brill, 2010): 173–210). In this instance *TriTrac* is very similar to Heracleon: people are known by the way they react to the Savior. From this perspective, however, one could argue that Heracleon viewed it as predetermined how people would react when they encountered the Savior, at least initially. Nevertheless, his view of the middle category seems to be more in line with *ExcTheod* 56:3 than *TriTrac*.

129 Origen, *Commentary on John* XXVIII.21, XX.33; *On First Principles* III.1.8. Origen writes that those "who introduce the natures" (οἱ μὲν τὰς φύσεις εἰσάγοντες) maintain that the pneumatics are naturally inclined to hear God's words. They are in *Against Celsus* V.61 identified as Valentinians, but in *Commentary on John* they are treated as separate from Heracleon. This has recently been argued, fairly convincingly, by Carl Johan Berglund, "Heracleon and the Seven Categories of Exegetical Opponents in Origen's *Commentary on the Gospel of John*", *Zeitschrift für Antikes Christentum* (forthcoming). I suggest that those "who introduce the natures" might have been Valentinians Origen was personally familiar with from Alexandria, while Heracleon lived a generation before. Being a prolific commentator on the Gospels and most likely an inspiration for local Christians, Origen felt the need to both address Heracleon's works as well as those Valentinians who were active in his immediate context.

here argue that these Valentinians Origen opposed, mainly in his text *On First Principles*, retained views on free will similar to those in *TriTrac* that we have discussed above that reject free will in general for humans.

Origen developed his thoughts on free will in his work *On First Principles*, which was written, he says, in order to sort out the confusion among some Christians.[130] In his work, he mentions Valentinus, Marcion, Basilides,[131] some of whom imagine that people are saved or lost already from the beginning. Origen maintained that everyone had the quality of self-determination (αὐτεξούσιον)—for Origen αὐτεξούσιον seems to be the same as free will to decide between good and evil at any given time—and one could never lose it; one could always choose the good. As we have seen, Clement was of a similar view. Origen, like *TriTrac*, utilized the theory of assent in his ethical systems; one's moral worth was determined by how one reacted to impressions in one's mind.[132] However, while Origen (and Clement, too) uses the concept of assent together with free will (αὐτεξούσιον),[133] in *TriTrac*, as I have shown above, assent to the good is not determined by free will but rather depends on the disposition (ⲇⲓⲁⲑⲉⲥⲓⲥ) of one's *proairesis* (ⲡⲣⲟⲁⲓⲣⲉⲥⲓⲥ), which is not completely free. It is such a system against which Origen reacted when stating that his Christian opponents rejected the doctrine of free will and thus misinterpreted the Bible and ended up with an unethical stance.[134] Origen writes that his opponents:

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130 Origen, *On First Principles* III.1, also I, preface 2. For an important discussion on the state of different ancient and modern editions of Origen's work *On First Principles*, see Behr, *Origen*, xv–xxviii. There are many fragments, Greek fragments that are later than the Rufinus Latin translation, and many parts are controversial. Luckily, however, the part of the work where Origen develops his thoughts on free will is preserved in Greek in the early and fairly reliable *Philocalia*, a collection of extracts made by Gregory and Basil. This is book III, Chapter 1 in Butterworth's edition, the part of *On First Principles* preserved in *Philocalia* from which the quotes discussed here are taken and which I use to build up Origen's views on his opponents.

131 Christoph Markschies has argued that Origen often uses these three groups as 'standard opponents' in order to have someone to argue against, and that they do not necessarily represent any existing groups (Christoph Markschies, "Gnostics", in *The Westminster Handbook to Origen*, ed. John Anthony McGuckin (Westminster: John Knox Press, 2004), 104). Indeed, as far as we can see, Origen does not seem to quote from any of the writings of his opponents, but I will argue that in *TriTrac* we actually have a system that resembles the detailed thought Origen rejects.

132 Origen, *On First Principles* III.1; Clement, *Stromata* V.1, 3.3. See also Sorabji, *Emotions*, 355–376.

133 Each person has the ability to choose freely which impressions to assent to and which to reject meaning that there was self-determination for each decision. Origen, *On First Principles* III.1; Clement, *Stromata* V.1.

134 Origen *On First Principles* III.1, see also Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 1.8.3.

> destroy self-determination (τὸ αὐτεξούσιον) by bringing in lost natures, which cannot receive salvation, and on the other hand saved natures, which are incapable of being lost.[135]

As we have seen, in *TriTrac* the material substances in the Logos' creation are lost and it is the pneumatic powers who recognize the Savior. As we have also seen, *TriTrac* rejects the concept of αὐτεξούσιον as being viable in the realm of humans and angels, but it remains a part of the highest world where no passions or outside influences coerce its inhabitants. Origen rejects this idea, however, when he maintains that *self-determination* (τὸ αὐτεξούσιον) is not defined as the absence of external influence:

> But to throw the blame for what so happens to us on external things and to free ourselves from censure, declaring that we are like stocks and stones, which are dragged along by agents that move them from without, is neither true nor reasonable, but is the argument of a man who desires to contradict the idea of free will (αυτεξουσίου). For if we were to ask such a one what free will was, he would say it consisted in this, that when I proposed to do a certain thing no external cause arose which incited me to do the opposite.[136]

Here Origen describes what we have encountered in the Pleroma of *TriTrac*: a place where there is no outward coercion but where self-determination (αὐτεξούσιον) reigns. There are no *impressions, matter*, or *opinions* in the Pleroma; the beings there are solely dependent on themselves for their actions.

Origen was of the view that the stars, the powers in the heavens, were good beings that lived blessed lives without influencing humans on earth in a negative way.[137] Indeed, he writes in *Commentary on Matthew* that the Valentinians and Basilideans were wrong to portray the powers in heaven as influencing humans in any way.[138] As we saw in Chapter 2, this is a view represented in *TriTrac.*

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135 Origen, *On First Principles* III.1.8. Translation by Butterworth, *Origen*, 212 (slightly modified). For the Greek text, see *Origenes Vier Bücher von den Prinzipien*, eds. Herwig Görgemanns and Heinrich Karpp (Dramstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1985), 486.

136 Origen, *On First Principles* III.1.5. Translation by Butterworth, *Origen*, 202–203. For the Greek text, see Görgemanns and Karpp, *Origenes Vier Bücher von den Prinzipien*, 470–472.

137 Alan Scott, *Origen and the Life of the Stars: A History of an Idea* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994).

138 Origen, *Commentary on Matthew* 13.6.

In one passage in *On First Principles*, where Origen argues against his Christian opponents, he discusses Rom 9:18–21 and 2 Tim 2:20–21. In Second Timothy, we read that there are many different utensils in a house and each has its special use and if used correctly each one brings good.[139] In Romans, Paul writes that it is not our place to question why God made us the way he did. God makes people special or ordinary as he sees fit.[140] Origen discusses these two passages and rejects how his opponents interpret them:

> Now someone will say, if just as the potter from the same lump makes some vessels for honor and some for dishonor, so God makes some creatures for salvation and some for destruction, then salvation or destruction does not rest with us nor are we possessed of free will.[141]

Here Origen's opponents seem to have rejected the notion that humans possess free will. It is not, as Irenaeus wrote, that his Valentinian opponents thought that only the psychics had free will, but that humans overall lack it. *TriTrac*, as we have seen, projects self-determination onto the Pleroma. Some passages in *TriTrac* work well as interpretations of Rom 9:18–21 and 2 Tim 2:20–21, for example, those that deal with the creations of the Logos that seek temporary honor but who are still useful in the organization.[142]

It is clear, however, that most of the passages that Origen interprets in *On First Principles* are not represented in *TriTrac*, like the hardening of the heart of Pharaoh in Exodus (4:21 and 7:3) that some apparently used as an argument for the proposition that it was up to God to influence people in their choices, and as an example that humans lacked the free will to take a stance on their

139 2 Tim 2:20–21: "In a large house there are utensils not only of gold and silver but also of wood and clay, some for special use, some for ordinary. All who cleanse themselves of the things I have mentioned will become special utensils, dedicated and useful to the owner of the house, ready for every good work."

140 Rom 9:18–21: "So then he has mercy on whomever he chooses, and he hardens the heart of whomever he chooses. You will say to me then, "Why then does he still find fault? For who can resist his will?" But who indeed are you, a human being, to argue with God? Will what is molded say to the one who molds it, "Why have you made me like this?" Has the potter no right over the clay, to make out of the same lump one object for special use and another for ordinary use?"

141 Origen, *On First Principles* III.1.21. Translation by Butterworth, *Origen*, 262. For the Greek text, see Görgemanns and Karpp, *Origenes Vier Bücher von den Prinzipien*, 542–544.

142 See 121:20, 118:13–14, 89:35–36. Even the lowest creations of the Logos, destined for destruction, are allowed "to exist because they too were useful for the things that had been destined" (118:13–14). The Logos grants the lower powers different skills "so that they too might become useful for the *oikonomia* that was to be" (89:35–36).

own salvation. This would indicate that *TriTrac* was not the only Christian anthropological system that restricted free will. Unfortunately, few other texts remain that are detailed enough to enable us to draw the conclusion that they represent an anthropology similar to that which Origen discussed. There are, however, other Valentinian texts that seem to propose a fixed anthropology. One candidate is *GosTruth*. In this text we read that some people are broken from the start while others are perfect and meant for salvation.[143] Another candidate is *InterpKnow*, where we read of naturally gifted spiritual members of whom the other members of the congregation are envious, and here it is made clear that people have specific roles to play in the community.[144] Neither of these texts consists of detailed cosmogonical expositions, like *TriTrac*. Rather, they are homilies,[145] so it is perhaps not strange that we do not find the particular terminology pertaining to discussion of free will; neither is the cosmogony detailed enough to make out the particular stance of what at a first glance looks like fixed anthropologies. Furthermore, both these texts also differ in anthropology from *TriTrac*, proposing a bipartite rather than a tripartite anthropology.[146] I am not claiming that determinism was a Valentinian trait, but I do argue that determinism was not a polemical invention, but rather a viable option, and that some Christians developed their ethics by utilizing it, rather than the doctrine of free will. What is more, some of the earliest Christian texts which gained high standing among many Christians could easily have been used to support a form of determinism. The Gospel of John,

143 See the allegory of the broken and full jars on page 25 and page 36 where we read that the Savior has come to anoint the perfect jars (because who would pour valuable ointment in broken jars?). As Origen writes, the metaphor of clay being formed in different ways was used by Christians denying free will, as allusions in Rom 9:18–21. See also the end of page 21 in *GosTruth* where it is clear that some humans have "names" that the Father calls out, while other people lack these names and thus will be lost in the end. Similarly to *TriTrac*, it is those who have what it takes who will answer the call of the Savior.

144 See especially the final exhortations at 20:14–21:34 and the long paraenetic section, at 15:10–19:37. Here the intent seems to be to counter this internal conflict troubling the congregation.

145 The genre of the texts can, and has been, discussed, but few would call them detailed expositions aiming to lay out a particular theology. For more on the genre of *InterpKnow* and *GosTruth*, see Wolf Peter Funk, et al., *L'interprétation de la gnose: NH XI, 1* (Quebec: Peeters, 2010), 21–23; Attridge and MacRae in Attridge, *Nag Hammadi Codex I (the Jung Codex): Introductions, Texts, Translations, Indices*, 65–67.

146 The different anthropologies found in Valentinian texts is discussed in Dunderberg, *Gnostic Morality*, 137–148. Concerning *InterpKnow* it is not very clear if we are dealing with three or two human classes, but we can at least say that the most intelligible sections (i.e., the least fragmentary) of the text do not divide humans into material, psychic, and pneumatic classes.

for example—which presents the Jews as not being able to hear the word of God because they are of this world (8:33–47) while Jesus' disciples are not of this world and have been elected (15:19, 17:14–16)—has been interpreted by many modern scholars as presenting a form of determinism.[147] Passages like these were most likely developed in light of Hellenistic philosophy and laid the foundations for alternative ethical systems than those favored free will for all (although I am not here arguing for the fact that John was the chief inspiration for the anthropology of *TriTrac*, as we have seen, the Jews in *TriTrac* are not presented as belonging to the cosmos). One text that could be interpreted as presenting a fixed anthropologic stance similar to *TriTrac* is *Apocalypse of Peter* (NHC VII, 3).[148] Here we read of some people that are a "generation of blind people" (ϩⲉⲛⲃ̄ⲗ̄ⲗⲉ ⲙ̄ⲙⲓⲥⲉ) (83:3) whose minds are closed and thus cannot be persuaded to know truth. Some people have cosmic souls while others have an immortal soul from heaven. Some people "will first receive our teaching but turn away again in accordance with the will of the father of their error because they have done what he wanted"[149] and further on we read that "for every soul of these ages has death assigned to it, in our view. Consequently, it is always a slave … But the immortal souls, O Peter, are not like these".[150]

I will not engage with these prospective deterministic texts further here—even though there are also interesting material connections linking Codex I, VII, and XI—but suffice it to say that *TriTrac* was most likely not alone in proposing a deterministic stance.

I argue that *TriTrac* is a viable example of the views held by Origen's opponents and as such it is an invaluable asset for the study of early Christian ethics and the development of the doctrine of free will, although this was not the only viable option. In fact, Origen's view that everyone could choose the good, at every given time, also received critique. Jerome tells us that a certain Valentinian named Candidus thought that:

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147 Maurice F. Wiles, *The Spiritual Gospel: The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel in the Early Church* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1960); Charles E. Hill, *The Johannine Corpus in the Early Church* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006); Jeffrey A. Trumbower, "Origen's Exegesis of John 8:19–53: The Struggle with Heracleon over the Idea of Fixed Natures", *Vigiliae Christianae* 43 (1989): 138–154.

148 This text was copied by a scribe who was affiliated with the scribe(s) of Codex I. For more on the subject of how the different codices are affiliated, see the introductory chapter above.

149 *Apocalypse of Peter* 73:23–28: ⲛⲁϫⲓ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ ϩ̄ⲛ̄ ϯⲁⲣⲭⲏ ⲛ̄ⲧⲉ ⲡⲉⲛϣⲁϫⲉ· ⲁⲩⲱ ⲥⲉⲛⲁⲕⲟⲧⲟⲩ ⲉⲣⲟⲟⲩ ⲟⲛ ϩ̄ⲙ̄ ⲡⲟⲩⲱϣ ⲛ̄ⲧⲉ ⲡⲓⲱⲧ ⲛ̄ⲧⲉ ⲧⲟⲩⲡⲗⲁⲛⲏ ϫⲉ ⲁⲩⲉⲓⲣⲉ ⲙ̄ⲡⲉⲧⲉ ⲛⲁϥⲁⲩⲱ ϥⲛⲁⲟⲩⲟⲛϩⲟⲩ.

150 *Apocalypse of Peter* 75:15–27: ⲯⲩⲭⲏ ⲅⲁⲣ ⲛⲓⲙ ⲛ̄ⲧⲉ ⲛⲉⲓ̈ⲁⲓⲱⲛ ⲟⲩⲙⲟⲩ ⲡⲉⲧⲟⲩⲏⲡ ⲉⲣⲟ<ⲟⲩ> ⲛ̄ⲛⲁϩⲣⲁⲛ· ⲕⲁⲑⲟⲧⲓ ϫⲉ ⲟⲩⲣⲉϥ ϣ̄ⲙ̄ϣⲉ ⲧⲉ ⲛ̄ⲟⲩⲟⲉⲓϣ ⲛⲓⲙ·…ⲛ̄ⲥⲉⲉⲓⲛⲉ ⲇⲉ ⲛ̄ⲛⲁⲓ̈ ⲁⲛ ⲱ ⲡⲉⲧⲣⲉ ⲛ̄ϭⲓ ⲛⲓⲯⲩⲭⲏ ⲛ̄ⲁⲧⲙⲟⲩ.

> … the devil has an evil nature which can never be saved. To that Origen answers rightly that the devil is not destined to perish because of his substance, but he fell by his own will and he can be saved. Because of that, Candidus calumniates Origen, making him say the devil is of a nature that must be saved, while actually Origen is refuting Candidus' false objection.[151]

Here we encounter echoes of the other side of the early Christian debate concerning free will versus determinism.[152] Even though the devil is not mentioned in *TriTrac*,[153] we do read of material powers responsible for killing Jesus (120:29–121:14), and the material powers (associated with impression and passion) are described as destined to be lost in the end (79:1–4). From the perspective of Origen's opponents, it was Origen who harbored extreme views, for example the idea that no one would ever lose touch with salvation, to the degree that the devil could, and indeed would, be saved in the end.[154] Origen maintained that the doctrine of free will was at the core of Christianity, that true Christians maintained that one's will was endowed with αὐτεξούσιον.[155] Origen's insistence on the importance of the doctrine of free will becomes understandable when considering that there actually were Christians who presented viable options for life in the world without the doctrine of absolute free will. The role of free will became a central doctrine, like so many other doctrines, not as a natural stage of development but as a result of intra-Christian debate.[156]

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151 Jerome, *Apologia adversus libros Rufini* II.18. Translation by J. D. Gauthier, in Henri Crouzel, "A Letter from Origen to Friends in Alexandria", in *The Heritage of the Early Church: Essays in Honor of George Vasilievich Florovsky*, eds. D. Neiman and M. Schatkin (Rome: Pontificio Istituto Orientale, 1973), 135–50, translated passage is found on pages 143–144.

152 Jerome gets this story, we are told, from a collection of letters that Origen, in his exile in Caesarea, wrote for friends back home in Alexandria, letters in which he defended himself against the accusations of his opponents. Crouzel, "A Letter from Origen", 135–150.

153 The closest to a devil is perhaps the serpent, which is called the most cunning of all the evil powers (107:9–12).

154 There is debate concerning whether Origen really argued this. For a recent work contending that Origen actually held this view, see Scott, *Journey Back to God*.

155 See Origen, *On First Principles* III.1.24, see also preface to book I, 4–5. See also, for example, Clement, *Stromata* II.2.

156 What I here call external influence was defined quite differently for Stoics in comparison to *TriTrac*. For Stoics everyone was exposed to impressions and αὐτεξούσιον is rather the eradication of influence from passion (Bobzien, *Determinism*, 330–357). In *TriTrac* passion and impression are connected and strongly associated with materiality overall, which was negative. For Stoics, this was not the case, everything was material and there was nothing inherently bad about that; even the soul was material.

Origen was not the only one who wrote tractates against Valentinians on the topic of free will. Methodius of Olympus, who is often said to have been Origen's first systematic opponent, also wrote a treatise on free will, simply called *On Free Will*.[157] This text is structured as a dialogue between the two main characters called 'the Orthodox' and 'the Valentinian'. The dialogue is largely devoted to the relationship between matter and God. The Valentinian first presents the view that matter was coexistent with God and that evil resides in it. The Orthodox rejects this and instead takes the position that matter was created and formed by God but that there was no evil in it. Rather than matter, it was the free choice of humans that brought evil into the picture; Methodius clarifies this in the latter part of the treatise. The association between matter and evil is reminiscent of how *TriTrac* describes creation. But the Valentinian's way of presenting the creation of matter differs from *TriTrac* in one crucial way: in *TriTrac* matter does not coexist with God from the beginning but is presented as an illusion resulting from being absent from God. While the Orthodox argues for the 'orthodox' view of free will, the Valentinian takes the position that evil resides in matter and not the free will of man, which is the same basic stance which is presented in *TriTrac*—rather than that presented by Irenaeus or *ExcTheod* where free will does not seem to be attached to the subject of the nature of matter. However, it is clear that while Methodius directs his attention toward, and rejects, the opinion that matter is the cause of evil rather than human free will—which is applicable to *TriTrac*—the level of sophistication with which the Valentinian's opinion is presented, wherein free will is rejected as the origin of evil, is quite undeveloped in comparison

157 The text is preserved in part in Greek but completely in Old Slavonic. No extant English translation, to my knowledge, exists of the complete work, but the surviving Greek is translated by William R. Clark in *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, vol. 6, eds. Alexander Roberts et al. (Buffalo, New York: Christian Literature Publishing Co., 1886). For a complete translation, with the Greek and Old Slavonic transcriptions, see A. Vaillant, "Le 'De autexusio' de Méthode d'Olympe, version slave et texte grec édités et traduits en français", *Patrologia Orientalis* 22:5 (1930): 631–877. See also Dylan Burns, "Astrological Determinism, Free Will, and Desire According to Thecla (St. Methodius, *Symposium* 8.15–16)", in *Women and Knowledge in Early Christianity*, eds. Ulla Tervahauta, Ivan Miroshnikov, Outi Lehtipuu, and Ismo Dunderberg (Leiden: Brill, 2017), 206–220. Burns discusses a part of Methodius' *Symposium* where Thecla is described as opposing astrological determinism. Like Methodius' characters in his treatise *On Free Will*, Thecla here argues that God cannot be the origin of evil and she asks why God would have created evil humans only to condemn them to death. In *TriTrac*, material people seem to have a very important purpose: to show everyone else the difference between good and evil. And since materiality is an illusion in the first place, one could imagine that supporters of such a treatise as *TriTrac* would argue that there is no unjust punishment, just a dissolving of substances that have no real existence.

to the attention devoted to the opposite view. *TriTrac* could thus be seen as a more sophisticated version of the stance that free will (which is always something positive) is not the origin of evil, but, rather, matter, which ultimately has nothing to do with God, as Methodius' character 'the Valentinian' would say.

It is unclear how the views of Methodius' Valentinian character relates to Valentinian theology (as defined in the Introductory Chapter above), and it is difficult to make a connection to the Valentinians Origen rejects in *On First Principles*, the sources are just too meager. It is, nevertheless, clear that Methodius' Valentinian, *TriTrac*, and the Valentinian opponents of Origen resemble each other in several key ways. It has been suggested recently that Methodius strove to clarify parts of Origen's theology rather than reject it entirely;[158] in the case of the question of free will, both Origen and Methodius stood in opposition to the view one can find in *TriTrac*.

There is a third text that debates the topic of free will in a form of a dialogue between Valentinians and 'orthodox' Christians. This treatise is today mostly known as *The Adamantius Dialogue*. The origin of this text is unclear. Gregory the Theologian and Basil the Great, as well as Rufinus who translated the work into Latin in the fourth century, all attribute it to Origen (who was sometimes nicknamed Adamantius). Yet, based on the content of the dialogue which does not fit Origen's style and theology, Robert Pretty, who has closely studied the text and its background, rejects the idea that Origen was the author.[159] The only mention of an author for this text is by Eusebius, who tells us it is the work of a certain Maximus. Eusebius also attributes Methodius of Olympus' text *On Free Will* to Maximus, however, so it is possible that Eusebius in fact refers to Methodius and just has the name wrong. In fact, long passages of *The Adamantius Dialogue* seem to consist of extracts from Methodius' work *On Free Will*. What makes *The Adamantius Dialogue* interesting for our purposes, is the part of the dialogue devoted to the question of the origin of evil and the doctrine of free will. This part of the text is a conversation set between several characters: Droserius who reads aloud the views identified as being those of Valentinus; Valens, a Valentinian who at least initially supports Valentinus' view that evil derives from matter; and Adamantius and Eutropius, who reject Valentinus' view and instead argue that evil derives from human free will. Large parts of this dialogue are extracts from Methodius' treaty *On Free Will*

158 Vladimir Cvetkovic, "From Adamantius to Centaur: St. Methodius of Olympus' Critique of Origen", in *Origeniana Decima: Origen as Writer*, ed. Andrezej Dziadowiec (Leuven: Peeters, 2010), 791–802.

159 Robert A. Pretty, *Adamantius: Dialogue on the True Faith in God* (Leuven: Peeters, 1997), 9–16.

and the conclusion is much the same: evil is not connected to substance but to conduct. More polemic material is inserted, however, that rejects Valentinus' views, and Valens' interpretations of them, more strongly, although the 'Valentinian' stance is presented in much the same manner as Methodius: evil originates from matter, but God did not have anything to do with it. This case is rejected in the dialogue as "extremely difficult to follow, and unreasonable".[160] Part four of the dialogue ends with a short discussion concerning the nature of Christ's body, and the doctrine presented by a character named Marinus (who is suddenly introduced into the discussion), who claims that Christ's body was not of matter. This stance is then rejected as blasphemy.

Even though we do not learn any new details about the 'Valentinians' who reject the doctrine of free will, it remains clear that the question of free will was important and widely discussed in the third and fourth centuries. Rufinus, who copied *The Adamantius Dialogue* and who was a supporter of Origen during the Origenist Controversy, might have copied the text in an attempt to highlight Origen's orthodoxy in a time when anti-Origenist tendencies were beginning to flare up. For anyone interested in gaining deeper and more detailed insights into the systems that Origen and others were rejecting, *TriTrac* would have been—and still is today—of great interest. By gaining insights into the views of Christian contenders for the opposite side of the debate on free will, we are able to contextualize Origen's insistence that the doctrine of free will be placed in the center of the Christian identity.

What becomes clear is the extent to which Valentinians were associated with the rejection of free will. As I have shown in this chapter, the view that there were Christians who rejected free will was *not* a mere polemical fantasy; other sophisticated ethical systems did exist that competed with those resting on the doctrine of free will.

One crucial aspect remains to be addressed. In the next part, we tackle the questions that naturally follow from the findings I have presented thus far: to what social implications would the view on human behavior and choice seen in *TriTrac* give rise? What is the collective of which one needs to become part in order to attain knowledge of God? Who exactly are material, psychic, and pneumatic people? How are these people to relate to each other and to society? If humans are not completely free, exactly how far does the human faculty of choice reach? In short, the next part is devoted to grounding the theoretical questions that have been the topic so far in the social reality of Christians living in the Roman empire of the third and fourth centuries.

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160 *Adamantius dialogue* IV.8e. Translation by Pretty, in Pretty, *Adamantius*, 135.

PART 2

Ethics in Practice

CHAPTER 4

Natural Human Categories and Moral Progress

This chapter investigates the tripartite anthropology operating in *TriTrac* and sets the scene for the remainder of the study. How was the division between material, psychic, and pneumatic people envisaged? How does it function in the text and how does it relate to ethics? The anthropology must be viewed in light of the intricate cosmogony which precedes the discussion of different human categories, a cosmology which expounds upon the text's ontology, epistemology, and cognitive theory. Thus, the anthropology will be studied with support from the conclusions of the previous three chapters, discussing *TriTrac* from the perspective of ancient theory on passions, epistemology, and the nature of human choice. I argue that the tripartite anthropology functions in three principal ways: (1) as a pedagogical schema to point out different roles and responsibilities humans have in relation to each other and to teaching and learning the message of the Savior; (2) to explain why people have different responsibilities and roles to play in the world; (3) and to create and sustain a hierarchy within the community. In the concluding part of the chapter we discuss the question of whether the anthropological categories should be understood as fixed or fluid, and what determinism could have looked like in practice, adding to the discussion of other scholars who have pointed out that, from a sociological perspective, the classes in *TriTrac* are best viewed as *both* fixed and fluid.

1 The Three Classes of Humans in *TriTrac*

The tripartite way the text presents humanity is one of the aspects of the text that has drawn most scholarly attention.[1] There are a few key passages in the

1 See, for example, Thomassen, *Spiritual Seed*; Dunderberg, *Beyond Gnosticism*; Kocar, "In Heaven", 221–245; Elaine Pagels, "Conflicting Versions of Valentinian Eschatology: Irenaeus' Treatise vs. the Excerpts from Theodotus", *Harvard Theological Review* 67 (1974): 35–53; James McCue, "Conflicting Versions of Valentinianism? Irenaeus and the Excerpta ex Theodoto", in *The Rediscovery of Gnosticism*, vol. 1 (ed. Bentley Layton, Leiden: Brill, 1980), 404–416; Buell, *Why This New Race*, 116–137; Einar Thomassen, "Saved by Nature?: The Question of Human Races and Soteriological Determinism in Valentinianism", in *Zugänge zur Gnosis*, eds. C. Markschies and J. van Oort (Leuven: Peeters, 2013), 129–149.

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text that elaborate on the tripartite anthropology but the one that is most often quoted in scholarly works is probably the following:

> Humankind came to be in three essential kinds, the pneumatic, the psychic, and the material, in accordance with the tripartite disposition of the Logos, from which were brought forth the material ones and the psychic ones and the pneumatic ones. Each of the three essential kinds is known by its fruit. And they were not known at first but only at the coming of the Savior, who shone upon the holy ones and revealed what each was.[2]

Here it is clear that there are three human types (ⲣⲏⲧⲉ). One way of differentiating between them is by looking at the "fruit" (ⲕⲁⲣⲡⲟⲥ) these humans produce.[3] The fruit most likely refers to human action, or more specifically the result of human actions. Another way of distinguishing between the three types of humans is by scrutinizing the way they react to the Savior, a topic on which the text elaborates just after the quoted passage above. The pneumatic reacts instantly, the psychic needs convincing, while the material person shuns the Lord (118:28–119:15). This much is recognized by most scholars who have made closer studies of the text.[4] But how do these categories and their reactions to the Savior relate to the ethics of the text?

A tripartite anthropology is something that the church fathers found most annoying about the Christians they called Valentinians. Irenaeus read the tripartite anthropology of his Valentinian opponents as interpretations of Pauline theology—erroneous in his mind. He wrote that his opponents thought of themselves as belonging to a higher order of humans who would receive a higher degree of salvation than ordinary Christians and that because they were destined for salvation they were not interested in ethics.[5] Some Christians were without a doubt influenced by Paul's distinctions between pneumatics,

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2 118:14–28: ϫⲉ ⲧⲙⲛ̄ⲧⲣⲱⲙⲉ· ⲁⲥϣⲱⲡⲉ ⲉⲥⲟⲉⲓ· ⲛ̄ϣⲟⲙⲛ̄ⲧ ⲛ̄ⲣⲏⲧⲉ ⲕⲁⲧⲁ ⲟⲩⲥⲓⲁ ⲇⲉ ϯⲡⲛⲉⲩⲙⲁⲧⲓⲕⲏ ⲙⲛ̄ ϯⲯⲩⲭ<ⲓⲕ>ⲏ ⲙⲛ̄ ϯϩⲩⲗⲓⲕⲏ· ⲉⲥⲧⲟⲩϫⲟ ⲙ̄ⲡⲧⲩⲡⲟⲥ· ⲛ̄ϯⲇⲓⲁⲑⲉⲥⲓⲥ ⲙ̄ⲡⲓϣⲟⲙⲛ̄ⲧ ⲛ̄ⲣⲏⲧⲏ ⲛ̄ⲇⲉ ⲡⲗⲟⲅⲟⲥ· {ⲧⲉ·} ⲧⲉⲉⲓ ⲉⲧⲉ· ⲁⲃⲁⲗ ⲛ̄ϩⲏⲧⲥ ⲁⲩⲉⲓⲛⲉ ⲁⲃⲁⲗ ⲛ̄ⲛⲓϩⲩⲗⲓⲕⲟⲛ ⲙⲛ̄ ⲛⲓⲯⲩⲭⲓⲕⲟⲛ· ⲙⲛ̄ ⲛⲓⲡⲛ(ⲉⲩⲙ)ⲁⲧⲓⲕⲟⲛ ⲧⲟⲩⲉⲓⲉ ⲧⲟⲩⲉⲓⲉ ⲛ̄ⲛⲟⲩⲥⲓⲁ ⲙ̄ⲡⲓϣⲟⲙⲛ̄ⲧ ⲛ̄ⲅⲉⲛⲟⲥ ⲁⲃⲁⲗ ϩⲓ̈ⲧⲛ̄ ⲡⲉⲥⲕⲁⲣⲡⲟⲥ ⲉⲩⲥⲟⲩⲱⲛ ⲙ̄ⲙⲟⲥ· ⲁⲩⲱ ⲛⲉⲙ̄ⲡⲟⲩⲥⲟⲩⲱⲛⲟⲩ ⲇⲉ ⲛ̄ϣⲟⲣⲡ̄ ⲁⲗⲗⲁ ϩⲙ̄ ⲡϭⲛ̄ⲉⲓ̂ ⲙ̄ⲡⲥⲱⲧⲏⲣ· ⲡⲁⲓ̈ ⲉⲛⲧⲁϥⲣ̄ ⲟⲩⲁⲉⲓⲛ ⲁⲛⲉⲧⲟⲩⲁⲁⲃ ϣⲁⲣⲟⲟⲩ ⲁⲩⲱ ⲡⲟⲩⲉⲉⲓ ⲡⲟⲩⲉⲉⲓ· ⲁϥⲟⲩⲁⲛϩϥ̄ ⲁⲃⲁⲗ· ⲙ̄ⲡⲉⲧⲉ ⲛ̄ⲧⲁϥ ⲡⲉ. Translation by Attridge and Pagels, slightly modified.

3 Possibly alluding to Matt 7:16 or Luke 6:43–45, that also mention humans being known by their fruit.

4 See for example Attridge and Pagels, "The Tripartite Tractate", in *Notes*, 446; Thomassen, *Le Traité Tripartite*, 428–429; Dunderberg, *Gnostic Morality*, 142.

5 Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 1.1–8.

psychics, and fleshly people, but contrary to some church fathers' claims—as has been discussed by, for example, Ismo Dunderberg and most recently by Alexander Kocar—the tripartite anthropology does not demonstrate an indifference toward ethical questions, quite the opposite.[6] Benjamin Dunning has discussed anthropology in *TriTrac* in a very convincing way, advocating the fact that the tripartite different anthropologies are not solely soteriological indicators, but are intimately connected to the building blocks of the universe itself.[7] I agree, and as argued in Chapter 1 above, these three substances (matter, psychê, pneuma) are fundamental not only for understanding the text's ontology, but also epistemology. Additionally, one aspect that is often overlooked when discussing the text's theory of substances is its ethical implications. As I will argue below, the ethics in *TriTrac* was very much a bodily matter. The above passage unequivocally indicates that the anthropology in *TriTrac*, which is connected to the three substances, is linked to ethical questions: the three classes of humans are clearly value-laden throughout the text and one's *behavior* (for example regarding one's reactions to the Savior and the fruit of one's actions) indicates the category to which one belongs as well as one's status vis-à-vis moral standing. In this chapter I look more closely at this aspect of the text's tripartite anthropology, scrutinizing previously unnoticed aspects of the text's ethics.

Paul writes in First Corinthians that psychic humans lack deeper understanding while pneumatic people are those who discern all things, because they have "the pneuma that is of God" (τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἐκ τοῦ Θεοῦ) and the intellect (νοῦς) of Christ (1 Cor 2:12–16). Paul also adds that people who are on a very low level in terms of the knowledge of Christ are people of flesh (1 Cor 3:1–4). A tripartite anthropology is often presented as one of the characteristics of Valentinian Christianity;[8] we find it in texts like *TriTrac* and *ExcTheod*, and in Christians like Heracleon as described by Origen or Ptolemy as described

6 Dunderberg, *Gnostic Morality*, 137–148; Kocar, "In Heaven", 221–255.

7 Dunning, Benjamin H. "Tripartite Anthropologies and the Limits of the Human in Valentinian Christian Creation Myths", in *The Bible and Posthumanism*, ed. Jennifer L. Koosed (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2014), 175–197. Dunning raises a question in the beginning of the passage dealing with *TriTrac*: "Does a 'psychic' or 'pneumatic' body differ from a 'hylic' body—and if so, in what way?" I assume Dunning is not referring to physiological differences, since all bodies are obviously made up of a mixture of these three substances. If we want to know how these three substances as human classes differed from one another we need to do this by looking at how they reveal different ethical, social and intellectual inclinations.

8 The term used for material people is often ὕλη in the Valentinian material, however, rather than σάρξ, which Paul uses in 1 Cor 3:1–4 (see also Gal 5).

by Irenaeus, but as we can see, there is much of the same language in First Corinthians.[9]

Many scholars who have discussed the tripartite anthropology in *TriTrac* have done so in light of Ptolemy, Heracleon, *ExcTheod*, and other portrayals of a tripartite anthropology.[10] Yet, even though *TriTrac* has a lot in common with these Valentinians, there are important differences to take into consideration concerning its anthropology,[11] differences that are central for understanding the ethical systems presented in the text.[12] Compare these two passages, for instance, that are often represented as exemplifying the *same* anthropology:

ExcTheod:	*TriTrac*:
The pneumatic is saved by nature, but the psychic, having free will (αὐτεξούσιον), and the capacity for both faith and incorruptibility, as well as for unbelief and corruption	The pneumatic class will receive complete salvation in every way. The material (class) will receive destruction in every way, as one who resists him (the Savior). The psychic class, however—since it is

9 Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* I.5.6; Origen, *Commentary on John*, I.7, X.22, XIII.15, XIII.20. Valentinians seem to have used the three categories in more fixed ways, more so than Paul appears to have done. For more on the tripartite anthropology of Valentinian theology, see Thomassen, *Spiritual Seed*, passim; Dunderberg, *Gnostic Morality*, 137–148; Kocar, "In Heaven", 221–255.

10 See, for example, Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* I.1–8; Hippolytus, *Refutation of All Heresies* VI.29–36.

11 Ismo Dunderberg has recently argued, convincingly in my opinion, that there was no unified Valentinian anthropology; we find both tripartite and a bipartite anthropology in texts usually classified as Valentinian. Furthermore, those who harbor a tripartite classification (*TriTrac, ExcTheod*, and Heracleon, for example) differ on many points, for example, on who belonged to these different groups. See Dunderberg, *Gnostic Morality*, 137–148.

12 One difference between Heracleon and *TriTrac* is that Heracleon identifies the groups as Greek, Jew, and Christian. *TriTrac* does not limit itself to this distinction; rather, it is obvious that the category of psychic, for example, includes Christians and that the three categories relate to a cognitive system. For a discussion of the anthropology of Heracleon and *TriTrac* see Manlio Simonetti, "Eracleone, gli psichici ed il Trattato Tripartito", in *Rivista di Storia e Letteratura Religiosa* 27 (1992): 3–34. Simonetti dates *TriTrac* to the end of the third or beginning of the fourth century, a rather late dating, and argues that the category of psychics represents the "Catholic Church" and that *TriTrac* seeks to revitalize the Valentinian doctrine in light of opposition from "Catholic" Christians and does this by opening up the possibility for Catholic Christians (read psychics) to receive salvation. However, this view of the psychics does not fit the parts of the text that state that the psychics are helpers of the community and that the pneumatics teach the psychics, which rather indicates that the psychics are viewed as a particular part of the community, not Christians with opposing theological views.

according to its own choice; but the material perishes by nature.[13]

in the middle when it is brought forth and also when it is created—is double, in accordance with its determination (ⲧⲱϣ) for both good and evil.[14]

The word *TriTrac* uses to describe the psychics—where *ExcTheod* has *free will* (αὐτεξούσιον)—is ⲧⲱϣ, meaning *determined, fixed*, or *bound*, the very opposite of free will.[15] I discuss in more detail below what it could mean to be determined to do *both* good and evil, but suffice it to state here that the role of and capacity for choice is one example of a fundamental principle where these two texts differ. These details should not be ignored when exploring the ethical stance of *TriTrac*. The nature of *TriTrac*'s tripartite anthropology and the way it relates to ethics should instead be understood in light of the intricate details of the text itself.

So, how is the tripartite anthropology conceived of in *TriTrac*? I agree with previous scholars who view it as most likely a development of Paul's notion that there were different levels of understanding among Christians, what he called fleshly people, psychics, and pneumatics. But I will also argue that Paul, and by extension *TriTrac*, was part of a larger ancient discussion about the nature of moral development and anthropology. There were other ancient thinkers, apart from the Valentinians, who utilized similar language, and who also split humanity and the human composition into three categories based on moral worth. To make sense of *TriTrac*'s use of this motif, it needs to be placed in the context of the preceding narrative. The tripartite anthropology is chiefly discussed in the last third of *TriTrac* (104:4ff). We read in the above quote that the three human categories relate to "the triple disposition of the Logos" (ⲛ̄ϯⲇⲓⲁⲑⲉⲥⲓⲥ ⲙ̄ⲡⲓϣⲟⲙⲛ̄ⲧ ⲛ̄ⲣⲏⲧⲏ ⲛ̄ⲇⲉ ⲡⲗⲟⲅⲟⲥ) (118:18–19). The way that tripartite anthropology relates to the first part of the text where the Logos' creation is described is not often discussed when the 'Valentinian' anthropology is mentioned. Thus, I begin by identifying the foundations of the tripartite

13 *ExcTheod* 56:3: Τὸ μὲν οὖν πνευματικὸν φύσει σῳζόμενον· τὸ δὲ ψυχικόν, αὐτεξούσιον ὄν, ἐπιτηδειότητα ἔχει πρός τε πίστιν καὶ ἀφθαρσίαν, καὶ πρὸς ἀπιστίαν καὶ φθοράν, κατὰ τὴν οἰκείαν αἵρεσιν· τὸ δὲ ὑλικὸν φύσει ἀπόλλυται.

14 119:16–24: ϫⲉ ⲡⲓⲅⲉⲛⲟⲥ ⲙ̄ⲡⲛ(ⲉⲩⲙ)ⲁⲧⲓⲕⲟⲛ̣ ϥⲛⲁϫⲓ ⲙ̄ⲡⲛⲟⲩϩⲙⲉ· ⲧⲏⲣϥ̄ ⲕⲁⲧⲁ ⲣⲏⲧⲉ ⲛⲓⲙ· ⲡⲓϩⲩⲗⲓⲕⲟⲛ ⲛ̄ⲇⲉ ϥⲛⲁϫⲓ̣ ⲡⲧⲉⲕⲟ ⲕⲁⲧⲁ ⲣⲏⲧⲉ ⲛⲓⲙ· ⲕⲁ<ⲧⲁ> ⲡⲣⲏⲧⲉ̣ ⲛ̄ⲟⲩⲉⲉⲓ ⲉϥϯ ⲁϩⲧⲏϥ ⲡⲓⲯⲩⲭⲓⲕⲟⲛ ⲇ̣[ⲉ] ⲛ̄ⲅⲉⲛⲟⲥ· ϩⲱⲥ ⲉⲩⲛ̄ ϩⲛ̄ ⲧⲙⲏⲧⲉ ⲡⲉ· ϩⲙ̄ ⲡⲉϥϭⲛ̄ⲛⲧϥ̄ ⲁⲃⲁⲗ· ⲁⲩⲱ ⲡⲉϥⲕⲱ ⲁ·ϩⲣⲏⲓ̈ ϩⲱⲱϥ ⲁⲛ ϥϩⲁⲧⲣⲉ· ⲕⲁⲧⲁ ⲡⲉϥⲧⲱϣ ⲁⲡⲁⲅⲁⲑⲟⲛ ⲙⲛ̄ ⲡⲕⲁⲕⲟⲛ. Translation by Attridge and Pagels, slightly modified.

15 See also Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 1.6 for a discussion on a Valentinian stance where psychics are described as retaining free will.

anthropology by scrutinizing the text's first part (51:1–104:3), where we find the bulk of the cosmogony.

2 The Pedagogical Purpose of the Logos' Organization and the Composition of Humans

One of the principal points that can be drawn from the very long first part of the tractate—which deals with the Logos' fall and the subsequent formation of different powers and their relations—is that the organization of the Logos is divided into three levels. This has been discussed in detail in the preceding chapters, so there is little point in repeating the details here. Suffice it to say that each of these thee levels corresponds to a particular substance and the heavenly powers which are made up of that substance. Then we read of the creation of the first humans:

> the first human was a mixed formation, and a mixed creation, and a deposit of those of the left and those of the right, and a pneumatic rationality, whose attention is divided between each of the two substances. It receives its becoming from these. Therefore, it is said that a paradise was planted for him, so that he might eat of the food of three kinds of trees, since it is a garden of the tripartite order, and since it is that which gives enjoyment.[16]

Here it becomes clear that humans consist of a composition of the three substances the Logos produced. Each human has parts that correspond to the three powers and levels in heaven. These three faculties correspond to the common conceptions of the workings of the mind, divided into a logical, an emotive, and a bodily part; the substance with which each person is chiefly associated becomes evident when the Savior appears among humans. However, this does not mean that pneumatic people do not have any material or psychic substance in them (or vice versa). This would be a rather unorthodox view: that some people lack material or psychic parts, or both, that some move on earth only in a spiritual guise. In light of the apostle Paul and especially the

16 106:18–31: ϫⲉ ⲡⲓϣⲁⲣⲡ̄ ⲇⲉ ⲛ̄ⲣⲱⲙⲉ· ⲟⲩⲡⲗⲁⲥⲙⲁ ⲡⲉ ⲉϥⲧⲏϩ ⲡⲉ· ⲁⲩⲱ ⲟⲩⲧⲥⲉ·ⲛⲟ ⲡⲉ ⲉϥⲧⲏϩ ⲡⲉ· ⲁⲩⲱ ⲟⲩⲕⲟⲩ ⲁϩⲣⲏϊ ⲡⲉ· ⲛ̄ⲇⲉ ⲛⲓϭⲃⲟⲩⲣ ⲡⲉ ⲙⲛ̄ ⲛⲓⲟⲩⲛⲉⲙ ⲡⲉ· ⲁⲩⲱ ⲟⲩⲡⲛ(ⲉⲩⲙ)ⲁⲧⲓⲕⲟ̄ⲥ ⲛ̄ⲗⲟⲅⲟⲥ ⲉⲧⲉϥⲅⲛⲱⲙⲏ ⲡⲏϣ ⲁⲡⲉⲥⲛⲉⲩ ⲧⲟⲩⲉⲓⲉ ⲧⲟⲩⲉⲓⲉ· ⲛⲛⲓⲟⲩⲥⲓⲁ ⲛⲉⲉⲓ ⲉⲛⲧⲁϩϫⲓ ⲡ{ⲣ}ⲉϥϣⲱⲡⲉ· ⲁⲃⲁⲗ ⲙ̄ⲙⲁⲩ ⲁⲃⲁⲗ ⲙ̄ⲡⲉⲉⲓ· ⲥⲉϫⲟⲩ ⲙ̄ⲙⲁⲥ ⲁⲛ ϫⲉ ⲁⲩϫⲱ ⲛⲉϥ· ⲛ̄ⲛⲟⲩⲡⲁⲣⲁ·ⲇⲓⲇⲟⲥ ⲁⲧⲣⲉϥⲟⲩⲱⲙ ⲁⲃⲁⲗ· ϩⲛ̄ ⲧϩⲣⲉ· ⲛ̄ϣⲟⲙⲧⲉ ⲙ̄ⲙⲓⲛⲉ ⲛ̄ϣⲏⲛ ⲉⲩⲟⲩϭⲟⲙ ⲡⲉ ⲛ̄ⲇⲉ ϯⲧⲁⲝⲓⲥ· ⲉⲥϩⲁⲧⲣ̄ ⲛ̄ϣⲟⲙⲛ̄ⲧ ⲛ̄ⲣⲏⲧⲉ· ⲉⲛⲧⲁϥ ⲡⲉⲧ·ϯ ⲛ̄ⲛⲁⲡⲟⲗⲁⲩⲥⲓⲥ. Translation by Attridge and Pagels, slightly modified.

ancient anthropological theory of Plato and Aristotle as discussed in Part I above, it makes much more sense to view the pneumatic people as those who *act* guided by their pneumatic parts; the psychics as those who act according to their psychic part; and, lastly, the material people as those who are controlled by their material part.[17]

The pneumatic people have a specific mission to play out, and this, we read, is activated at the appearance of the Savior:

> The seed of promise (i.e. the pneumatic substance) is kept back for some time, so that those who were destined to be sent out might be put forth by the coming of the Savior …[18]

The Logos' pneumatic level above the two lower levels of powers exists in harmony as a collective but cannot show itself in its state to the lower levels, because they could not stand such awe. This is why the coming of the pneumatic seed is done sequentially and not immediately:

> It was granted them (i.e. the pneumatic seed) to pass through the places which are below (i.e. psychic and material levels), because the places are not able to withstand their sudden, hasty arrival, unless (they come) individually, one by one. Their arrival is necessary, since everything will be perfected through them.[19]

The Logos organizes the three levels and then instigates the creation of the cosmos and humanity, made of three substances with the purpose of bringing everything back into a harmonious conclusion (expressed with the concept *apokatastasis*).[20]

17 Thus, the passage that says that "he (the creator) also sent down souls from his substance" (ⲁϥⲧⲛⲛⲟⲟⲩ ϩⲱⲱϥ ⲁⲛ ⲁⲡⲓⲧⲛ̄ ⲛ̄ϭⲓ ⲡⲓⲣⲉϥⲥⲱⲛⲧ̄ ⲛ̄ϩⲛ̄ⲯⲩⲭ̣[ⲏ]ⲟⲩ ⲁⲃⲁⲗ ϩⲛ̄ ⲧⲉϥⲟⲩⲥⲓⲁ ⲉⲩⲛ̄ⲧ[ⲉϥ]) (105:35–37), should in my view not be interpreted that there are some people who are made up of the substance of the Demiurge and thus are destined for destruction.

18 95:31–35: ⲡⲥⲡⲉⲣⲙⲁ ⲇⲉ ⲛ̄ϣⲡ ⲱⲡ· ⲉⲩⲣⲁⲉⲓⲥ ⲁⲣⲁϥ ⲁϩⲉⲛⲟⲩⲁⲉⲓϣ ⲁⲧⲣⲟⲩϣⲱⲡⲉ ⲉⲁⲩⲧⲁϣⲟⲩ ⲛ̄ϭⲓ ⲛⲉⲛⲧⲁⲩⲧⲁϣⲟⲩ ⲉⲩϫⲁⲩ ⲁⲃⲁⲗ ϩⲓ̈ⲧⲛ̄ ⲧϭⲛ̄ⲉⲓ̄ ⲙ̄ⲡⲥⲱⲧⲏⲣ. Translation by Attridge and Pagels, slightly modified.

19 95:9–16: ⲉⲁⲩⲛⲉⲩⲉ ⲁⲣⲁⲩⲟ̣ⲩ ⲁⲧⲣⲟⲩϫⲱⲃⲉ ⲛ̄ⲛⲧⲟⲡⲟⲥ ⲉⲧⲛ̄ⲡⲥ[ⲁ] ⲛ̣[ⲡ]ⲓ̣ⲧ̣ⲛ̄ ⲉⲛⲥⲉⲛⲁϣ ϭⲙϭⲟⲙ ⲛ̄ⲇⲉ ⲉⲛ ⲛ̄ϫⲓ ⲛ̄ⲧⲟⲡⲟⲥ ⲁϣⲱⲡ ⲙ̄ⲡⲟⲩϭⲛ̄ⲉⲓ ⲥⲉ̣ϩⲏⲧⲟⲩ ⲛ̄ϭⲗⲟⲙ· ⲉⲓⲙⲏⲧⲓ ⲕⲁⲧⲁ ⲟⲩⲉ̣[ⲉⲓ] ⲟⲩⲉⲉⲓ· ⲛ̄ⲇⲉ ⲡⲟⲩⲉⲉⲓ ⲡⲟⲩⲉⲉⲓ ⲉⲩⲁ[ⲛⲁⲅ]ⲕⲁⲓⲟⲛ ⲡⲉ· {ⲡⲉ} ⲡⲟⲩϭⲛ̄ⲉⲓ̂ ⲉⲡⲓⲇⲏ ϩⲱⲃ̣ ⲛⲓⲙ ⲉⲩⲛⲁϫⲱⲕ ⲁⲃⲁⲗ ϩⲓ̈ⲧⲟⲟⲧⲟⲩ. Translation by Attridge and Pagels, slightly modified.

20 123:19–27, 128:30, 133:7.

What makes the pneumatic humans capable of instigating salvation? This is explained on page 94. Here we read of all the qualities that are associated with the pneumatic substance: “desire to be upright” (ⲟⲩⲱϣⲉ ⲁⲧ̣ⲣⲉϥⲧⲉϩⲟ ⲁⲣⲉⲧϥ̄); “openness for instruction” (ⲟⲩⲱⲣϩ̄ ⲁⲩⲥⲃⲟⲩ); “eye for vision” (ⲃⲉⲗ <ⲉ>ⲟⲩϭⲛ̄ⲛⲉⲩ); “wisdom for ones’ mind” (ⲥⲟⲫⲓⲁ ⲁⲡⲉϥⲙⲉⲩⲉ); “word for speaking” (ⲗⲟⲅⲟⲥ ⲁⲩϭⲛϣⲉϫⲉ); and “maleness” (ⲙⲛ̄ⲧϩⲁⲟⲩⲧ). The two lower substances are stuck within the sickness of “femaleness” (ⲙⲛ̄ⲧⲥϩⲓ̈ⲙⲉ). These abilities clearly reflect the pedagogic nature of the Logos’ organization. ⲧⲉϩⲟ, which I translate with “upright”, is an equivalent of the Greek ἱστάναι, a word frequently used to signal moral, spiritual, and intellectual uprightness.[21] Maleness symbolizes the opposite of ignorance, materiality, and passion, which is described as female in *TriTrac*.[22] However, these abilities cannot be bestowed on their subjects in just any way since the lower levels and substances are weak and cannot sustain the pneumatic powers. Thus, it is done gradually by mixing the pneumatic seeds with psychic and material stuff, and then, through the coming of the Savior, those who are destined to spread the knowledge (associated with the pneumatic people) are awakened. It is by this organization that “everything will be perfected” (ϩⲱⲃ̣ ⲛⲓⲙ ⲉⲩⲛⲁϫⲱⲕ) (95:15–16).[23]

But it is not just the pneumatic substance that has a pedagogical mission. We are told that the psychic substance is placed in materiality for its own sake, as well as for the sake of the whole system. The Logos takes the psychic substances and proceeds to:

> … draw them into a material union, for the sake of their system and dwelling place and in order that they might also bring forth an impulse for diminution from their attraction of evil and might not any more rejoice in the glory of their wandering and turning, but might rather see their sickness in which they suffer, so that they might beget love and continuous searching after the one who is able to heal them of the inferiority.[24]

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21 This theme has been studied in Williams, *Immovable Race*.

22 See Chapter 2 above.

23 See also the discussion of the providential role of the “seed of Seth” in Sethian literature as spreaders of truth and justice, in Lance Jenott, “Emissaries of Truth and Justice: The Seed of Seth as Agents of Divine Providence”, in *Gnosticism, Platonism, and the Late Ancient World: Essays in Honour of John D. Turner*, eds. Kevin Corrigan et al. (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 43–62.

24 98:29–99:4: ⲁⲧⲣⲉϥⲥⲁⲕⲟⲩ ⲁⲩⲕⲟⲓⲛⲱⲛⲓⲁ ⲛ̄ϩⲩⲗⲓⲕⲟⲛ ⲉⲧⲃⲉ ⲟⲩⲥⲩⲥⲧⲁⲥⲓⲥ ⲛⲉⲩ· ⲙⲛ̄ⲛ ⲟⲩⲙⲁ ⲛ̄ϣⲱⲡⲉ ⲁⲩⲱ ϫⲉⲕⲁⲥⲉ ⲟⲛ ⲉⲩⲛⲁϫⲡⲟ ⲛ̄ⲛⲟⲩⲁⲫⲟⲣⲙⲏ ⲛ̄ϭⲱϫⲃ̄ ⲁⲃⲁⲗ ϩⲓ̈ⲧⲛ̄ ⲡⲥⲁⲕⲟⲩ ϣⲁ ⲛⲉⲧⲑⲁⲩ ϫ<ⲉ> ⲛ̄ⲛⲟⲩⲣ̄ ϩⲟⲩⲉ· ⲟⲩⲛⲁϥ ⲙ̄ⲙⲁⲩ ⲛ̄ϩⲣⲏⲓ̈ ϩⲛ̄ ⲡⲉⲁⲩ ⲙ̄ⲡⲟⲩⲕⲱⲧⲉ· ⲛ̄ⲥⲉⲡⲱⲛⲉ ⲁⲃⲁⲗ ⲁⲗⲗⲁ ϫⲉⲕⲁⲥⲉ ⲛ̄ⲧⲟϥ ⲉⲩⲛⲁϭⲱ̣ϣ̣ⲧ̣ ⲁⲡⲟⲩϣⲱⲛⲉ ⲉⲛⲧ̣ⲁ̣ⲩⲙ̄ⲕⲁϩ ⲙ̄ⲙⲁϥ ϫⲉⲕⲁⲥⲉ ⲉⲩⲛⲁϫⲡⲟ·

Here we get an indication that the material substance is like a two-edged sword. It lures people in, so they lose themselves, and become fixed in a life of "their wandering and turning" (ⲙ̄ⲡⲟⲩⲕⲱⲧⲉ· ⲛ̄ⲥⲉⲡⲱⲛⲉ)—with clear astrological connotations[25]—where they are tempted by the glories materiality can bring. Yet life in materiality, for some, also serves as a reminder that there is something better, that the glories of materiality are actually transitory and ultimately a sickness. The positive result of contact with matter, below called "the imitation" (ⲡⲓⲧⲁⲛⲧⲛ̄), is clarified in this following passage as well:

> Also over those who belong to the imitation, he set the order of beauty, so that it might bring them into a form. He set over them the law of judgment. Furthermore, he set over them the powers, the roots of which are from the lust for command. He appointed them as rulers over them. So, thus—either by the establishment of the order that is beautiful, or by the threat of the law, or by the power of lust for command—the order is kept safe from those who (would) reduce it to evil. And the Logos is pleased with them, for they are useful for the *oikonomia*.[26]

ⲛⲛⲟⲩⲙⲁⲉⲓⲉ ⲙⲛ̄ⲛ ⲟⲩϣⲓⲛⲉ ⲉⲩⲙⲏⲛ· ⲛ̄ⲥⲉ ⲡⲉⲧⲉⲟⲩⲛ̄ ϭⲟⲙ ⲙⲙⲟϥ ⲛ̄ⲗⲁϭⲉ ⲉⲣⲟⲟⲩ ϩⲛ̄ ⲡⲓϭⲱϫⲃ̄. Translation by Attridge and Pagels, slightly modified.

25 The image that life on earth is endless toil is common in antiquity and so is the metaphor that this toil takes the shape of circular motion, often attributed to fate and destiny. Plato connected the Moirai and Ananke to cosmic motions and the turning of time and ascribes the Moirai sisters' work, especially Clotho's spinning of her wheel, to the movement of the seven circles, the turning of the cosmos and of time. Plato also mentions the spindle of Necessity (Ananke) in this passage, on which all the revolutions turn (Plato, *The Republic* x.616–617). A goddess associated with weaving in Egyptian mythology was the sister of Isis, Nephtys. She was particularly associated with the linen bandages in which the dead were wrapped, Geraldine Pinch, *Egyptian Mythology* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 171. Zeno called fate "a moving power" (δύναμις κινητική) (SVF I.175, 176), an image which is also not uncommon in the Nag Hammadi collection. The name of the demiurge figure in *GosTruth*, ⲡⲗⲁⲛⲏ, has clear astrological connotations; at NHC I, 3.42:17–26 those who have reached the rest (ⲙ̄ⲧⲟⲛ) of the Father are described as "not striving nor being entangled in wandering around for the truth" (ⲉⲩϩⲁⲥⲓ ⲉⲛ ⲟⲩⲧⲉ ⲉⲩϭⲗⲙ̄ⲗⲁⲙⲛⲧ̄ ⲉⲛ ⲙ̄ⲡⲕⲱⲧⲉ ⲙ̄ⲧⲙⲏⲉ). In *GosPhil* 63:11–21, we read an anecdote of an ass that walks round and round a millstone, never going anywhere, and of humans who travel far and wide but never reach any destination. In *InterpKnow* the term ϩⲓⲥⲉ is used for the system that the lower Sophia brings about, a *weariness* that is also connected to the toils and circularity of earthly life (11:16–38:). For more on fate in *TriTrac*, see Chapter 2 above.

26 99:4–19: ⲛⲉⲉⲓ ⲇⲉ ϩⲱⲛⲟⲩ ⲉⲧⲉ ⲛⲁ ⲡⲓⲧⲁⲛⲧⲛ̄ ⲛⲉ ⲁϥⲕⲱ ⲉϩⲣⲁï ⲉϫⲱⲟⲩ ⲙ̄ⲡⲓⲗⲟⲅⲟⲥ ⲛ̄ⲧⲥⲁⲉⲓⲟ· ⲁⲧⲣⲉϥⲛ̄ⲧⲟⲩ ⲁⲩⲙⲟⲣⲫⲏ· ⲁϥⲕⲱⲉ ⲁϩⲣⲏï ⲁ̣ϫⲱⲟⲩ ⲁⲛ ⲙ̄ⲡⲓⲛⲟⲙⲟⲥ ⲛ̄ⲧⲉⲕⲣⲓⲥⲓⲥ̣ ⲉⲧⲓ ⲁⲛ ⲁϥⲕⲱⲉ ⲁϩⲣⲏï ⲁϫⲱⲟⲩ̣ ⲛ̣̄[ⲛⲓ]ϭⲟⲙ· ⲉⲧⲁⲛⲛⲟⲩⲛⲉ· ⲛ̄ⲧⲟⲩ ⲁ̣ⲃ̣[ⲁⲗ ϩⲛ̄] ϯⲙ̣ⲛ̄ⲧⲙⲁⲉⲓⲟⲩⲉϩ ⲥⲁϩⲛⲉ· ⲁϥ[ⲕⲁⲁ]ⲩ ⲉ̣ⲩⲁⲣⲭⲉⲓ ⲁϫⲱⲟⲩ ϫⲉⲕⲁⲥⲉ ⲁⲃⲁ[ⲗ] [ϩï]ⲧ̣ⲛ̣ ⲡⲥⲙⲓⲛⲉ ⲙ̄ⲡⲗⲟⲅⲟⲥ· ⲉⲧ<ⲧ>ⲥⲁ̣ⲉ̣[ⲓⲏ]ⲟ̣ⲩ̣ ⲏ̄ ⲁⲃⲁⲗ ϩïⲧⲛ̄ ⲧⲁⲡⲓⲗⲏ ⲙ̄ⲡⲛ[ⲟⲙⲟⲥ] ⲏ ⲁⲃⲟⲗ· ϩïⲧⲛ̄ ϯϭⲟⲙ· ⲙⲙⲛ̄ⲧⲙⲁⲉ[ⲓ]ⲟⲩⲉϩ ⲥⲁϩⲛⲉ ⲁⲩⲁ<ⲁ>ⲣⲏϩ·

Here we have a reference to the Law. Many Christians saw the Mosaic Law as provisory, set in place by God in order to keep Israel in check until the Messiah came.[27] But this passage is also steeped in Platonism: matter is molded and brought into a certain form. The cosmos is created, a beautiful ordered system. This system is tripartite, as so much else in the text. Matter is kept in check by the ordered form it takes, and by the law of judgment, and lastly with the aid of the powers that come from the passion that is lust for command. As one would expect, the Demiurge enters the scene in this place, being the one who is ultimately responsible for carrying out the Logos' *oikonomia*.

However, after humanity is created something goes wrong. The three trees which sustain the three substances of which each human consists are kept away from Adam and he only gets to eat from one of the trees: the one that nourishes materiality. We read that the lower powers and the serpent lure humanity into death. However, this too was planned, so that:

> the human should experience that great evil which is death—that is, the complete ignorance of the All—and that he should also experience all the evils that come from this. After the impetuosity and anxieties that result from it, he will partake of the greatest good, this which is eternal life, that is, firm knowledge of the All and the reception of all good things.[28]

Again, we encounter a pedagogical theme in association with the three substances that make up humanity. Cosmic life is a *learning experience*. Creation as we know it is instigated to facilitate *apokatastasis*, the return of the pneumatic seed to the Pleroma in heaven. The psychic substance is rewarded with

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ⲁⲧ·ⲧⲁⲝⲓⲥ ⲛ̄ⲛⲉⲧ·ⲁϩⲟⲩⲱⲙ· ⲙ̄ⲙⲟⲥ ⲛ̄ⲛⲉⲧⲑⲁⲩ ϣⲁⲛⲧⲉϥⲣ̄ ϩⲛⲉϥ ⲁⲣⲁⲟⲩ ⲛ̄ϭⲓ ⲡⲗⲟⲅⲟⲥ̣ ⲉⲩⲣ̄ ϣⲉⲩ ⲁⲧⲟⲓⲕⲟⲓⲛⲟⲙⲓⲁ. Translation by Attridge and Pagels, slightly modified.

27 In the Valentinian *Letter to Flora*, we find an interesting exegesis of the Mosaic Law, which is viewed as delegated, not by God alone, but several different agents. The coming of Jesus is meant to fulfill the law. For other early Christian views on the meaning of the Mosaic Law, see Susan J. Wendel, "Torah Obedience and Early Christian Ethical Practices in Justin Martyr", in *Torah Ethics and Early Christian Identity*, eds. Susan J. Wendel and David M. Miller (Grand Rapids: William B Eerdmans, 2016), 177–191; and Peter Widdicombe, "The Law, God, and the Logos: Clement and the Alexandrian Tradition", in Wendel and Miller, *Torah Ethics*, 192–206.

28 107:29–108:4: ⲁⲧⲣⲉϥϫⲓ ⲙ̄ⲡⲓⲣⲉ{ⲛ} ⲛ̄ϭⲓ ⲡⲣⲱⲙⲉ· ⲡⲓⲛⲟϭ ⲙ̄ⲡⲉⲑⲁⲩ ⲉⲧⲉ ⲡⲉⲉⲓ ⲡⲉ ⲡⲙⲟⲩ ⲉⲧⲉ ϯⲙⲛ̄ⲧⲁⲧⲥⲁⲩⲛⲉ ⲧⲉ ⲛ̄ⲇⲉ ⲡⲧⲏⲣϥ̄ ⲧⲉⲗⲉⲩⲧⲏⲥ ⲁⲩⲱ ⲛⲧⲣ̄ⲛⲧϥ̄ϫⲓ ⲙ̄ⲡⲓⲣⲁ ⲁⲛ ⲡⲉ· ⲛ̄ⲛⲓⲡⲉⲧϩⲁⲩⲟⲩ ⲧⲏⲣⲟⲩ ⲉⲧϣⲁⲣⲟⲩϣⲱⲡⲉ· ⲁⲃⲁⲗ ϩⲙ̄ ⲡⲉⲉⲓ ⲁⲩⲱ ⲙⲛ̄ⲛ̄ⲥⲁ ⲛⲓϥⲱϭⲉ ⲉⲧϣⲟ̣ⲟ̣ⲡ· ϩⲛ ⲛⲉⲉⲓ ⲙⲛ̄ ⲛⲓⲗ̣[ⲉ]ϩ ⲛ̄ϥϫⲓ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ ϩⲙ̄ ⲡⲓⲛⲟϭ ⲙ̣ⲡⲉ̣ⲧⲛⲁⲛⲟⲩϥ· ⲉⲧⲉ [ⲡ]ⲉ̣ⲉⲓ ⲡⲉ ⲡⲓ̣ⲱ̣ⲛϩ̄· ϣⲁ ⲛⲓⲉⲛⲏϩⲉ· ⲉⲇⲉ ⲡⲁⲉⲓ ⲡⲉ̣ ⲡⲥⲁⲩⲛⲉ· ⲛ̄ⲇⲉ ⲛⲓⲡⲧⲏⲣϥ̄· ⲉⲧⲟⲩⲁϫ· ⲁⲩⲱ ⲡϫⲓ ⲁⲃⲟⲗ· ϩⲛ̄ⲛⲁⲅⲁⲑⲟⲛ ⲧⲏⲣⲟⲩ. Translation by Attridge and Pagels, slightly modified.

partial salvation while the material substance is destroyed.[29] The creation of humanity should be understood in light of this grand narrative. The three substances are mixed and make up humanity; that is the way the Logos instigates salvation through a detailed pedagogic master plan.

As I made clear above, the pneumatic seed lies dormant in humans until the Savior appears on earth. On pages 109–111 the situation before the Savior's appearance is discussed and Hebrews and Greeks are mentioned in relation to material and psychic powers. The tripartite anthropology is not used to designate ethnic categories, although psychics are associated with Hebrews and material people with Greeks and barbarians. Rather, the categories are used in association with these nations to highlight their connection to knowledge and truth. While the Greeks and barbarians are guided by the left material side of creation, resulting in error and contradictions among them, the Hebrews are prone to listening to the "unmixed" powers—the psychic powers that have managed to get untangled from their strife with their material counterparts—and thus retain partial knowledge. The passage dealing with material Greeks/barbarians and psychic Hebrews can be read in light of early Christian apologists' views of ethnic categories as preparatory stages before the coming of Messiah.[30] Further nuances become evident in the creation scene that precedes the mention of Greeks and Hebrews, a creation which paints a picture of a world made of three substances. All humans possess these three parts. However, before the coming of the Savior there can be no pneumatic people because they are defined by their reaction to the Savior. From a cognitive perspective, *TriTrac* presents the time before the Savior's coming as a time when human decision making was guided without the finest and most rational part of one's mind, which would explain why all human knowledge before the Savior's teaching was lacking.

The tripartite anthropology in *TriTrac* is, from one perspective, very similar to what Paul meant by pneumatic and psychic: referring to different levels of knowledge. However, the distinctions are elaborated upon in a much more sophisticated way in *TriTrac*. As discussed in Part 1, the tripartite anthropology of *TriTrac* fits well within ancient discussions of human cognition. The anthropology is fundamental for understanding the ethics of the text. Humans are built out of three substances. The substance by which one is guided is connected to one's moral status. This is made clear throughout the text. Ethics is

29 For more on the different levels of salvation, see Kocar, "In Heaven", 221–255.

30 Tatian, *Address to the Greeks* 21–22, 31, 36–40; Eusebius, *Preparation for the Gospel* IV.19, VII.1, IX.1, X, XI.1. For more on the negotiation concerning ethnic categories among early Christians, see Buell, *Why This New Race.*

in this sense very much a bodily and cognitive matter. *TriTrac* presents this anthropology through the cosmogonic part of the text and the importance of instruction is highlighted in the parts of the text that deal with the organization of the cosmic system and the creation of humans (Part II and the end of Part I of *TriTrac*). This is indicated by (1) the description of the Logos' pneumatic level, where the inhabitants possess pedagogic qualities (94:2–23); (2) by describing the cosmic system as made to attract psychic substance away from evil (98:29–99:4); (3) by describing death as a learning experience (107:29–30). The pedagogic theme is continued throughout the text. We read that before the Savior came, people were ignorant, because "those who were not instructed were unable to know the cause of the things which exist".[31] After the Savior's appearance, the pneumatics begin their teaching mission and these people know the Savior and are, among other things, called "teachers of those who need teaching".[32] The psychic people are those who need to be convinced and "through a voice it (the psychic class) was instructed" (ϩⲓ̈ⲧⲛ̄ ⲟⲩⲥⲙⲏ ⲉⲩϯ ⲥⲃⲱ ⲛⲉϥ) (119:3). The material class, however, is identified as a people who "is hateful toward the Lord" (ⲟⲩⲙⲁⲥⲧⲉ ⲡⲉ· ϣⲁ ⲡϫⲁⲉⲓⲥ) (119:14–15), and they are associated with ignorance.

Next, we turn to a discussion of how the tripartite anthropology and the specific pedagogic vision in the text is sustained epistemologically and in light of the theory of passion presented in the text.

3 Three Categories of Humans According to *TriTrac*'s Epistemology and Theory of Passions

The distinction between pneumatic, psychic, and material people might have been inspired by Paul's distinction between people with different degrees of understanding (as discussed above), yet it was not at all unusual in ancient times to imagine a tripartite anthropology; neither was it unusual to attach this tripartite anthropology to ethics and the ability to discern God. Philo resembles *TriTrac* in this respect, writing in *On Abraham* that "there are three different categories of humans" (τρεῖς εἰσιν ἠθῶν ἀνθρωπίνων τάξεις).[33] These are

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31 109:3–5: ⲉⲙⲡⲟⲩϭⲛϭⲟⲙ ⲙ̄ⲙⲉ ⲁⲧⲗⲁⲉⲓϩ̣[ⲉ] ⲛ̄ⲛϩⲃⲏⲩⲉ· ⲉⲧϣⲟⲟⲡ· ⲛ̄ϫⲓ ⲛⲉⲉⲓ ⲉⲧ[ⲉ]ⲙ̄ⲡⲟⲩⲧⲁⲙⲁⲩ.

32 116:19–20: ϩⲛ̄ⲥⲁϩ ⲇⲉ ⲛ̄ⲧⲁⲩ ⲛⲉ ⲛⲉⲉⲓ· ⲉⲧⲣ̄ ⲭⲣⲉⲓⲁ ⲛ̄ⲥⲃⲟⲩ. The above translation differs from Attridge and Pagles, who interpret the sentence as the teachers being those in need of instruction. For a discussion of this passage, see page 201 below, note 71.

33 Philo, *On Abraham* 124. My translation. Text from F. H. Colson, *Philo: On Abraham. On Joseph. On Moses* (Loeb Classical Library. Cambridge M.A.: Harvard University Press, 1957), 64.

differentiated by their natural ability to recognize the divine. The highest class of people, those "in the middle", get their knowledge directly from the Logos, they have the sight of the true living God. The next best people are those who "stand on the right", they have the ability to recognize God. Lastly, we have those "on the left", people who need to be ruled because they recognize only the governing power of God, which is called Lord.[34] Contrary to *TriTrac*, we do not find the key terms pneumatic, psychic, and material, and neither is the third and lowest category of humans lost; but we do find the distinction between the left and right powers of the Logos, powers that are associated with different people and ways to relate to God. Furthermore, and perhaps somewhat paradoxically, in *TriTrac* the psychic people are called those "in the middle" and at the same time associated with the powers on the "right side" (while for Philo the middle is the highest level of learning). The tripartite division of humanity is based on "the triple disposition of the Logos" (ⲛ̄ϯⲇⲓⲁⲑⲉⲥⲓⲥ ⲙ̄ⲡⲓϣⲟⲙⲛ̄ⲧ ⲛ̄ⲣⲏⲧⲏ ⲛ̄ⲇⲉ ⲡⲗⲟⲅⲟⲥ) (118:18–19). Philo writes that to access the purest aspects of the living God, people need to be "unmixed" (ἀμιγῆ), to be perfect in virtue and dependent on nothing else than themselves. Some people can only experience a certain aspect of God, the kingly and governing power, or the creative aspect of God, identified as the left and right sides of God. These are the people who are "not yet made perfect in regards to the important virtues" (ὅταν μήπω τὰς μεγάλας τελεσθεῖσα τελετάς).[35]

Philo writes that people need to become unmixed but does not specify from what. One generation after Philo, a fellow Middle Platonist discusses this further. Plutarch writes in *On the Sign of Socrates* that people's moral lives are determined by the relation between the three substances of which every person is made up: matter, soul, and *intellect*. Some people live under the total sway of matter and passion; others have managed to keep their souls above the control of the lower material with the aid of their *nous*:

> Every soul partakes of understanding, none is irrational or unintelligent. But the portion of the soul that mingles with flesh and passions suffers alteration and becomes in the pleasures and pains it undergoes irrational. Not every soul mingles (μιχθῇ) to the same extent: some sink entirely into the body, and becoming disordered throughout, are during their life wholly distracted by passions; others mingle in part, but leave outside what is purest in them. This is not dragged in with the rest,

34 For the whole passage, see Philo, *On Abraham* 119–130. Translations from Colson, *Philo: On Abraham*, 63–67.

35 Philo, *On Abraham* 122. My translation.

> but is like a buoy attached to the top, floating on the surface in contact with the man's head, while he is as it were submerged in the depths, and it supports as much of the soul, which is held upright about it, as is obedient and not overpowered by the passions. Now the part carried submerged in the body (τῷ σώματι) is called the soul (ψυχὴ), whereas the part left free from corruption is called by the multitude the understanding (νοῦν).[36]

In the next passage, Plutarch explains that those who are submerged in passion lead an uneven and unruly life, morally, and this is due to "lack of training" (ἀπαιδευσία). Some people can be trained, but only slowly and with great effort, while others are naturals, so to say, and listen to their *nous* from birth.[37] Just as with Plutarch—and presumably also Philo—the negative influence of matter and the passions are associated with being unfavorably *mixed.*

As I have discussed in Chapter 1, the epistemology of *TriTrac* is based on the definition of true knowledge as being *unmixed* from materiality and instead *merged* with the Savior and Pleroma. This view can be seen as a combination of Stoic ideas of συμπάθεια—an integrated state (κρᾶσις) with the Logos—and the attitudes we find in Plutarch, Philo, and Aristotle,[38] that the mind needs to be *unmixed* from the base body to discern divine things. In *TriTrac* the different compositions of people determine the powers that influence them and the level of learning they can achieve. As I made clear in Chapter 1, there are different levels of knowledge in *TriTrac* associated with the three substances of the Logos' creation. Some people are rooted in their material part to the extent that they perceive with their bodily parts and material sense perception, and thus are only open to false impressions and a lowly *imitation* of the truth (ⲉⲓⲇⲱⲗⲟⲛ, ⲧⲁⲛⲧⲛ, and ⲫⲁⲛⲧⲁⲥⲓⲁ). For knowledge of the divine, one needs to perceive with the mind; and for this *TriTrac* uses different vocabulary.

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36 Plutarch, *On the Sign of Socrates* 591d–e: ψυχὴ πᾶσα νοῦ μετέσχεν, ἄλογος δὲ καὶ ἄνους οὐκ ἔστιν, ἀλλ᾽ ὅσον ἂν αὐτῆς σαρκὶ μιχθῇ καὶ πάθεσιν, ἀλλοιούμενον τρέπεται καθ᾽ ἡδονὰς καὶ ἀλγηδόνας εἰς τὸ ἄλογον. μίγνυται δ᾽ οὐ πᾶσα τὸν αὐτὸν τρόπον· ἀλλ᾽ αἱ μὲνὅλαι κατέδυσαν εἰς σῶμα, καὶ δι᾽ ὅλων ἀναταραχθεῖσαι τὸ σύμπαν ὑπὸ παθῶν διαφέρονται κατὰ τὸν βίον· αἱ δὲ πῇ μὲν ἀνεκράθησαν, πῇ δὲ ἔλιπον ἔξω τὸ καθαρώτατον, οὐκ ἐπισπώμενον ἀλλ᾽ οἷον ἀκρόπλουν ἐπιψαῦον ἐκ κεφαλῆς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου καθάπερ ἐν βυθῷ δεδυκότος ἄρτημα κορυφαῖον, ὀρθουμένης περὶ αὐτὸ τῆς ψυχῆς ἀνέχον ὅσον ὑπακούει καὶ οὐ κρατεῖται τοῖς πάθεσι. τὸ μὲν οὖν ὑποβρύχιον ἐν τῷ σώματι φερόμενον ψυχὴ λέγεται· τὸ δὲ φθορᾶς λειφθὲν οἱ πολλοὶ νοῦν καλοῦντες ἐντὸς εἶναι νομίζουσιν αὐτῶν. Text and translation from Phillip H. De Lacy and Benedict Einarson, *Plutarch: Moralia*, vol. 7 (Loeb Classicalal Library. Cambridge, M.A.: Harvard University Press, 1959), 470–471.

37 Plutarch, *On the Sign of Socrates* 592.

38 Aristotle, *On the Soul* III.4.429a18. For Plotinus on similar ideas of the need to become disentangled from matter, see Dillon, "An Ethic", 320–322.

The words ϩⲓⲕⲱⲛ/ⲉⲓⲛⲉ are used for representations of heavenly existence, and these *images* are only accessible to pneumatics and partly to the psychic people (via the pneumatics) who first recognize the Savior (84:23–35, 104:18–20). *TriTrac* portrays a worldview where exalted people with access to pneumatic substance retain contact with the divine more immediately while others have to struggle and rely on help. Thus, there is an important difference between the way pneumatics and psychics retain their understanding. The psychic people are *taught* and *imitate* the behavior of those who are good while the pneumatics *react* instinctually to the good. The material people, on the other hand, are slaves to passion and their bodily senses. From this perspective, the pneumatics are experts in moral questions while the psychics are more firmly embedded in worldly affairs than in the finer questions of ethics. The psychic substance is connected to a middle position, and is associated with attributes such as honor and lust for command; yet psychics are not totally controlled by passions of the body, which is the lot of material peoples.

It is the configuration of the substances within one that determines one's nature: whether one is a "blended" pneumatic person who can discern the divine instinctively and act as a teacher; a psychic who is more closely entangled with matter and in need of becoming unmixed and shown how to act; or a material person deeply mixed into the bodily aspect of existence and prone to passions. But what determines the composition of substances of each person? Let us now examine the tripartite anthropology from the perspective of a theory that restricts human choice and comment on the difference between pneumatic and psychic people.

4 Restricted Choice in Practice

As argued in Chapter 3, *TriTrac* rejects the doctrine of free will. Resembling how Stoics understood free will, *TriTrac* maintains that it is only viable for perfect beings. Contrary to the Stoics, however, *TriTrac* denies free will (αὐτεξούσιον) in the world and restricts it to the Pleroma where there does not exist any matter, impressions, or passions. In *TriTrac* it is one's *proairesis*, one's *faculty of choice* (ⲧⲡⲣⲟⲁⲓⲣⲉⲥⲓⲥ), which determines the ability to assent to the Savior, which also determines a person's moral worth. *Proairesis* is determined by the composition of each person, which then also decides what impressions a person assents to. Everything happens according to "the will of the Father" (ⲡⲟⲩⲱϣⲉ ⲙ̄ⲡⲓⲱⲧ) (76:36–37), even the fall of the Logos, which instigated creation. The Logos' organization happened in accordance with God's providence (107:22). Material people are lost while pneumatics have a naturally good *proairesis* and assent to the Savior immediately. The psychics, however, need assistance.

They are able to recognize the Savior because we read that the Logos placed in them a *proairesis* prone to seek and pray to the Father (83:18–21). We read that the psychic humans are saved if they work together with the ones with a good *proairesis* and if they are willing to abandon falsehood:

> And those who were brought forth from the desire of lust for command—because they have the seed of lust for command inside them—will receive the reward of good things, they who have worked together with those who have the *good proairesis*, provided they, in opinion and will, abandon the desire for vain temporary glory.[39]

Even though *TriTrac* rejects free will in the world, there still seems to be room for some degree of choice for the psychics, or rather, in the terms of the anthropology presented in *TriTrac*: the composition of those people called the psychics make them susceptible to both matter and pneuma. The nature of the psychics "is double, in accordance with its determination for both good and evil".[40] Psychics have to prove their worth by not acting on temporary glory, that is, by not falling prey to false impressions. This doctrine, that one's moral worth depended on the impressions to which the mind assented, was adopted by many Christians, like Origen and Clement, as well as those behind *TriTrac.* While Clement and Origen used the theory of assent to emphasize a capacity for free choice, *TriTrac* rather emphasizes that it is one's composition that determines assent, and that one needs teaching and guidance from one's peers in acting on good principles. For Origen and Clement, the term *proairesis* is not used as in *TriTrac*, as something other than a self-determining will.[41] They maintained that all people possessed a self-determining (αὐτεξούσιον) will or choice (προαίρεσις), which we have seen does not fit *TriTrac.* In *TriTrac*, salvation and knowledge are not presented as things that can be chosen, only granted by God, and God did this by arranging each person's composition. However, even though one could not influence the basic principles of existence, like the composition of one's physical makeup, which determined access to knowledge,

39 131:22–34: ⲁⲩⲱ ⲛⲉⲉⲓ ⲉⲛⲧⲁⲩⲛ̄ⲧⲟⲩ ⲁⲃⲁⲗ ϩⲛ̄ ⲧⲉⲉⲓⲉⲡⲓⲑⲩⲙⲓⲁ ⲛ̄ⲧⲉ ⲧⲙⲛ̄ⲧⲙⲁⲉⲓⲟⲩⲉϩ ⲥⲁϩⲛⲉ· ⲉⲩⲛ̄ⲧⲉⲩ ⲙ̄ⲙⲉⲩ ⲙ̄ⲡⲓⲥⲓⲧⲉ· ⲛ̄ϩⲏⲧⲟⲩ ⲉⲧⲉ ⲧⲉⲉⲓ ⲧⲉ ⲧⲙ<ⲛ̄>ⲧⲙⲁⲉⲓⲟⲩⲉϩ ⲥⲁϩⲛⲉ ⲥⲉⲛⲁϫⲓ ⲛ̄ⲧϣⲃ̄ⲃⲓⲱ̄· ⲛ̄ⲛⲓⲡⲉⲧⲛⲁⲛⲟⲩⲟⲩ ⲛ̄ϭⲓ ⲛⲁⲉⲓ̣ ⲉ̣ⲛⲧⲁϩⲣ̄ ϩⲱⲃ ⲙⲛ̄ ⲛⲁⲉⲓ ⲉⲧⲉⲩⲛ̄ⲧⲉⲩ ⲙ̄ⲙⲉⲩ ⲛ̄ϯⲡⲣⲟⲁⲓⲣⲉⲥⲓⲥ· ⲛ̄ⲛⲓⲡⲉⲧⲛⲁⲛⲟⲩⲟⲩ ⲉⲩϣⲁⲣ̄ ϩⲛⲉⲩ ϩⲛⲛ ⲟⲩⲅⲛⲱⲙⲏ ⲛ̄ⲥⲉⲟⲩⲱϣⲉ· ⲁⲕⲱⲉ ⲛ̄ⲥⲱⲟⲩ ⲛ̄ⲧⲙⲛ̄ⲧⲙⲁⲉⲓⲉⲁⲩⲟⲩ ⲉⲧϣⲟⲩⲉⲓⲧ. Translation by Attridge and Pagels, slightly modified.

40 119:23–24: ϥϩⲁⲧⲣⲉ· ⲕⲁⲧⲁ ⲡⲉϥⲧⲱϣ ⲁⲡⲁⲅⲁⲑⲟⲛ ⲙⲛ̄ ⲡⲕⲁⲕⲟⲛ.

41 For example, *On First Principles* III.1.24; *Stromata* I.27. For an overview of how προαίρεσις is used in patristic literature, and for further references to Origen and Clement, see Lampe, *A Patristic Greek Lexicon*, 1133–1134.

the psychics and pneumatics could still improve their moral standing, improve their character (*proairesis*). In the above passage the psychics are told to work together with the pneumatics (those who have a good *proairesis*). The psychics must abandon what are described as the emotions with which they are especially afflicted: vain temporal ambition and striving to accumulate transitory honor and glory (more on these afflictions in Chapter 6). Note here that the technical term for free will, the term that is applied for the will of the Aeons in the Pleroma, αὐτεξούσιον, is not used for the psychics (as in *ExcTheod*). *TriTrac* makes a distinction between free will (always being able to choose the good), and the ability to choose to follow those who are gifted with a good *proairesis*, that is, being able to give up worldly ambition and instead listen to the expertise of one's moral betters. In this way *TriTrac* emphasizes the limitations of what humans can control. The doctrine of free will was a rare stance taken in the ethics of antiquity before Christians like Justin, Irenaeus, and then Origen began to advance it. *TriTrac* is much more traditional in maintaining that there were certain things humans just could not control, things that were fundamental to one's moral ability, such as the constitution of one's bodily and cognitive make up, and the mixture between material, psychic, and pneumatic substance. Thus, some people could influence their character, but this does not mean that they could change their nature.

Rather than exhibiting what Irenaeus claimed about Valentinian disinterest in ethical questions, from a sociological perspective, the worldview we encounter in *TriTrac*—where human choice is restricted—would have had great potential to generate the opposite result. Because there was no way one could *always* choose the good, the best that psychics could do was to listen to their moral superiors and *act* the part that was prescribed, as if they indeed had the right composition to do good. The psychic people were obliged, in fine Calvinist manner, to act the way people did who were unmixed from matter and, in that way, prove they had been chosen for salvation by being good subordinates to the pneumatics. People sunk into materiality and passion were controlled by their bodily senses and thus naturally acted on false impressions, that is, they were lost people. The pneumatics—who had access to a higher reality by virtue of being in tune with their pneumatic substance rather than their body—could see the higher order of reality and would thus naturally act on the good.

The psychics were, as Plutarch would have put it, like floating corks on the water, bobbing up and down in between matter and intellect. It was the pneumatics' task to provide the psychic people with guidance and it is obvious that *TriTrac* is concerned with the fate of the psychic people. This is made clear for example in a passage at the end of the text:

> as it is fitting to say, nonetheless, on the matter of those of the Calling (psychic people)—for those of the right are so named—it is necessary for us to return once again to them and it is not profitable for us to forget them.[42]

It is unclear if *TriTrac* was written from the point of view of the pneumatics or if the first-person plural is used here as an authorial plural (a topic I discuss in the next chapter more thoroughly). The need to discuss the salvation of the psychics is mentioned again one page later: "it is fitting that we say what we mentioned previously about the salvation of all those of the right".[43] A few lines later, we read about the relation between different psychics as well:

> For they (the psychics) will receive the vision more and more by nature and not only by a little word, so as to believe, only through a voice, that this is the way it is, that the restoration to that which used to be is a unity. Even if some are exalted because of the *oikonomia*, since they have been appointed as causes of the things which have come into being, since they as natural forces are more active.[44]

Some are naturally exalted while others retain lower positions in life. Much of this is similar to the way the Stoics imagined the relation between the perfect sage and his student. The sage did everything effortlessly.[45] Seneca called the people who were on the path of moral progress, but not yet sages, *proficiens*.[46] The way you progressed was, according to Seneca, determined by your natural abilities, "to our natural gifts and by great and unceasing application to study".[47] Just like *TriTrac* seems to do, Stoics like Epictetus maintained that a good character (*proairesis*) comes from acting on the impressions that lead to the good

42 130:1–9: ⲁⲧⲣⲛ̄ϫⲟⲟⲥ ⲛ̄ⲑⲉ ⲉⲧⲉϣϣⲉ ⲁ·ϫⲟⲟⲥ ⲛⲁⲉⲓ ⲛ̄ⲇⲉ ϩⲱⲟⲩ ϩⲁ· ⲡⲣⲁ· ⲛ̄ⲛⲁ ⲡⲓⲧⲱϩⲙⲉ· ⲡⲉⲉⲓ ⲅⲁⲣ ⲡⲉ ⲡⲣⲏⲧⲉ· ⲉⲧⲟⲩⲙⲟⲩⲧⲉ· ⲁⲛⲓⲟⲩⲛⲉⲙ ⲙ̄ⲙⲁϥ ⲟⲩⲁⲛⲁⲅⲕⲁⲓⲟ(ⲛ) ϭⲉ ⲡⲉ· ⲁⲧⲣⲛ̄ⲟⲩ{ϩ}ⲱϩ· ⲁⲧⲟⲟⲧⲛⲉ· ⲁϣⲉ ⲁⲣⲁⲩⲟⲩ ⲁⲩⲱ ϥⲣ̄ ϣⲉⲩ ⲉⲛ ⲁⲧⲙ̄ⲧⲛ̄ⲣ̄ ⲡⲟⲩⲙⲉⲩⲉ. Translation by Attridge and Pagels, slightly modified.

43 132:7–9: ⲉⲡⲉⲧⲉϣϣⲉ ⲡⲉ· ⲁⲧⲣⲛ̄ϫⲟⲩ· ⲙ̄ⲡⲉⲛⲧⲁⲛⲣ̄ ϣⲣⲡ̄ ⲛ̄ϫⲟⲟϥ· ⲛ̄ⲇⲉ ⲡⲓⲟⲩϫⲁⲉⲓⲧⲉ· ⲛ̄ⲇⲉ ⲛⲓⲟⲩⲛⲉⲙ.

44 133:1–11: ⲥⲉⲛⲁϫⲓ ⲡⲛⲉⲩ ⲛ̄ⲅⲁⲣ· ⲛ̄ϩⲟⲩⲟ ⲛ̄ϩⲟⲩⲟ ϩⲛ̄ⲛ ⲟⲩⲫⲩⲥⲓⲥ ϩⲛⲛ ⲟⲩϣⲉϫⲉ ϣⲏⲙ·ⲟⲩⲁⲉⲉⲧϥ̄ ⲉⲛ ⲁⲧⲣⲟⲩⲛⲁϩⲧⲉ· ⲟⲩⲁⲉⲉⲧϥ̄ ϩⲓ̈ⲧⲛ ⲟⲩⲥⲙⲏ· ϫⲉ ⲡⲉⲉⲓ ⲡⲉ ⲡⲣⲏⲧⲉ· ⲉⲧϣⲟⲟⲡ ϫⲉ ⲟⲩⲉⲓⲉ ⲛ̄ⲟⲩⲱⲧ· ⲇⲉ· ϯⲁⲡⲟⲕⲁⲧⲁⲥⲧⲁⲥⲓⲥ ⲁϩⲟⲩⲛ ⲁⲡⲉⲧⲉⲛⲉϥϣⲟⲟⲡ· ⲕⲁⲛ· ⲉⲩⲛ̄ ϩⲁⲉⲓⲛⲉ ϫⲁⲥⲉ ⲉⲧⲃⲉ ⲧⲟⲓⲕⲟⲛⲟⲙⲓⲁ· ⲉⲁⲩⲕⲁⲩⲉ· ⲛ̄ⲗⲁⲉⲓϭⲉ· ⲛ̄ⲛⲉⲧⲁϩϣⲱⲡⲉ ⲉⲩⲣ̄ ϩⲟⲩⲉ· ⲉⲛⲉⲣⲅⲓⲁ ⲉϩⲛ̄ⲫⲩⲥⲓⲕⲏ ⲛⲉ. Translation by Attridge and Pagels, slightly modified.

45 This is skillfully discussed in Dunderberg, *Gnostic Morality*, 128–130.

46 This is discussed by Seneca in *Epistle* 75.

47 Seneca, *Epistles* 75.15.

and that this had to be demonstrated in action.[48] Seneca wrote that once you have knowledge, "it is not sufficient merely to commit these things to memory, like other matters; they must be practically tested".[49] The *proficiens* who did not have sound mastery of moral questions should, Seneca makes clear, emulate and listen to their moral superiors.[50] This comes very close to the way psychics are described in *TriTrac.* Those who did not excel in moral questions should emulate those who did, while those who had the ability should (and automatically did) devote themselves to moral questions and teach others. In *TriTrac* it is stated that the pneumatics were put on the earth so that "they might experience the evil things and might train themselves in them".[51]

Stoics were said to have maintained that virtue was a *disposition* (διάθεσις) and that there were no degrees to virtue. Either one was virtuous or one was not. This understanding of the Stoic message resulted in the caricature by their opponents that Stoics did not entertain the possibility of moral progress, that all who were not virtuous sages were thought to be unvirtuous fools.[52] This is reminiscent of the critique Irenaeus leveled at his Valentinian opponents. In *TriTrac*, the term *disposition* (ⲇⲓⲁⲑⲉⲥⲓⲥ) is used frequently. It appears 13 times in the Nag Hammadi texts overall, out of which 11 are in *TriTrac.*[53] What is more, it seems that ⲇⲓⲁⲑⲉⲥⲓⲥ is used in much the same way some Stoics used διάθεσις, as a fixed category rather than a *state* (ἕξις) that could shift from being one thing to being something else.[54]

48 On this, see Epictetus, *Discourses* I.26.3. For a similar case, see the discussion of Musonius Rufus in Thorstensson, *Roman Christianity*, 41–54.

49 Seneca, *Epistles* 75.8. Translation by Richard M. Gummere, in *Seneca: Epistles*, vol. 2 (Loeb Classicalal Library. Cambridge M.A.: Harvard University Press, 1925), 141.

50 Merely to be in the presence of a superior person, Seneca writes, was beneficial for a *proficiens*, as he himself had personally experienced (*Epistle* 94).

51 126:32–34: ⲉⲩⲛⲁϫⲓ ϯⲡⲉ· ⲛ̄ⲛⲓⲡⲉⲧⲑⲁⲩⲟⲩ ⲁⲩⲱ ⲛ̄ⲥⲉⲣ̄ ⲅⲩⲙⲛⲁⲍⲉ· ⲙ̄ⲙⲁⲩ ⲛ̄ϩⲣⲏï ⲛ̄ϩⲏⲧⲟⲩ.

52 See, for example, Diogenes Laertius, *Lives* VII.120, 127; Plutarch also criticized Stoics on this account, in *Progress of Virtues*, 75a–f, 77a–b, 449f–450a. For details of Plutarch's view of moral progress, see Richard A. Wright, "Plutarch on Moral Progress", in *Passions and Moral Progress in Greco-Roman Thought*, ed. John T. Fitzgerald (London and New York: Routledge, 2008), 135–150.

53 54:14, 59:2–3, 59:9–10, 63:34, 81:4, 97:13, 118:17–18, 120:7, 121:20, 130:26, 131:19. The other two times this term appears in the Nag Hammadi texts are in *GosPhil* 81:5 and *OnOrigWorld* 112:22.

54 These distinctions belong to the reception of Aristotle's discussion regarding quality: whether the quality of a specific class of thing could intensify or diminish. There were three views of Aristotle's work, according to Middle Platonic interpreters: (1) that material quality as well as the qualified thing could intensify and diminish. A thing could be more or less red, for example; (2) one had to separate the quality and the qualified thing. The qualified thing could intensify and diminish but not the quality that qualifies. The quality red was constant even though some things could be more or less red; (3) some

The term *disposition* (ⲇⲓⲁⲑⲉⲥⲓⲥ) is chiefly used in *TriTrac* for the attributes of the Father and Son and the Aeons. We read that God is "unchanging" (ϣⲃ̄ⲃⲓⲁⲓⲧ ⲉⲛ) (52:21–22), so it is not that strange that his attributes would most likely also be constant.[55] The other times we encounter the term ⲇⲓⲁⲑⲉⲥⲓⲥ is to designate the three natures of the Logos: matter, psychê, and pneuma (118:14–28) and "goodness" (ⲛⲁⲛⲟⲩⲟⲩ) that is found in the psychic powers and people and the pneumatics (120:7–8, 121:20–21, 130:19, 131:19). We read that the material powers are just an imitation of the *disposition* of what is from above.[56]

The way *TriTrac* employs the term *disposition* reinforces the view that we are indeed dealing with a deterministic system. The three categories of material, psychic, and pneumatic are described as *dispositions*; either you had a good disposition (pneumatic person), or a bad disposition (material), or you had a disposition that was able to imitate the good (psychics). Again, some people could influence their *proairesis*, but it was not possible to change the nature of one's disposition. People could not decide to be born prone to be guided by material, psychic, or pneumatic substance, just as they did not have the ability *always to choose the good* (i.e. there was no free will). This was preordained in the organization of the Logos. Because the pneumatics are not described as possessing complete self-determination (αὐτεξούσιον)—a state only applicable to the Aeons in the Pleroma where there is not matter—they are not perfectly aligned with the will of God. Rather, they are exposed to matter and evil throughout their life in the body—in fact, we read, that is the very reason for their existence.[57] The pneumatics are, nevertheless, known by the good disposition of their character (*proairesis*) and thus have natural affinities for moral behavior; because they lack a will that is self-determining, however, they would probably not have been open to the same criticism as the Stoics:

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qualities could change into different *states* (ἕξις), others stayed constant and always kept their *disposition* (διάθεσις). Stoics were identified as maintaining that virtue was a *disposition* that did not fluctuate. For more on the way Stoics were portrayed by their contemporaries, and for a view of the way quality could be interpreted in ancient time, see Katerina Ierodiakonou, "How Feasible is the Stoic Conception of Eudaimonia?", in *The Quest for the Good Life: Ancient Philosophers on Happiness*, eds. Øyvind Rabbås et al. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 183–196.

55 54:14, 59:2–3, 59:9–10, 63:34.

56 The material powers are the "imitation of the disposition" ([ⲡⲧ]ⲁ̣ⲛⲧⲛ̄ ⲛ̄ϯⲇⲓⲁⲑⲉⲥⲓⲥ) of the existence above in the Pleroma (80:37–81:8), while the psychic powers are of the disposition of the good (see 121:20–21, 130:19). The only other time the term is used is to designate the categories "prayer" (ⲡϣⲗⲏⲗ) and "appeal" (ⲡⲥⲁⲡⲥⲡ̄) (97:12–14).

57 We read that the pneumatics have come to earth in order to "they might experience the evil things and might train themselves in them" (ⲉⲩⲛⲁϫⲓ ϯⲡⲉ· ⲛ̄ⲛⲓⲡⲉⲧⲑⲁⲩⲟⲩ ⲁⲩⲱ ⲛ̄ⲥⲉⲣ̄ ⲅⲩⲙⲛⲁⲍⲉ· ⲙ̄ⲙⲁⲩ) (126:32–34).

that a moral person could *never* act erroneously. From a sociological perspective, as we further see below, the anthropological theory of *TriTrac* would have allowed for variation in human behavior, even within the categories, and even though the categories were fixed. There would have been ample opportunity to prove that you belonged to one of the two saved groups of people, which could only have been done by demonstrating that you did indeed possess the disposition of goodness, to demonstrate your belonging to either class of humans through your actions. As we read on page 108: "Each of the three essential kinds is known by its fruit".[58] Let us now explore in greater depth the sociological ramifications of *TriTrac*'s anthropological theory.

5 Fixed, Fluid, or in Flux? The Advantages of a Fixed Anthropology

Does the deterministic stance adopted in *TriTrac* mean that a person could move between the three ethical categories? How could you tell if a person was fated to be a pneumatic, psychic, or material? The only way to tell what class of human a person belonged to would have been through the person's actions and behavior, which to a large extent would have been determined by the position the person had within society and within the group. As the text makes clear, the pneumatics are the leaders of the community and the teachers. The other members are psychics; they help the pneumatics, sing hymns, and act as servants to the pneumatics (120:8–14, 121:30–37, 135:3–10, 135:25–29). Everyone outside these categories is a material person ignorant of the Savior.

A fixed anthropology like the one in *TriTrac* would most likely have been as effective an instigator of moral improvement as one based on the theory of free will. The method is clear: one needed to act the part, and as we have seen, both of the in-group categories (pneumatic and psychic) are described as involved in perpetual ethical formation. The actions of psychics and pneumatics are clearly stated: pneumatics teach but also *study moral questions*. The psychics *listen* and *learn*. People who do not do these things—that is, the material—are lost. *TriTrac*'s tripartite anthropology explains social diversity and at the same time facilitates the implementation of moral improvement through a pedagogical system. As is argued in Chapter 6, it also sustains the hierarchy of the community while leaving room for members to be involved in everyday life.

TriTrac's anthropology has been discussed by several scholars engaged with early Christian ethics and identity formation. In her study of early Christian

58 118:21–23: ⲧⲟⲩⲉⲓⲉ ⲧⲟⲩⲉⲓⲉ ⲛ̄ⲛⲟⲩⲥⲓⲁ ⲙ̄ⲡⲓϣⲟⲙⲛ̄ⲧ ⲛ̄ⲅⲉⲛⲟⲥ ⲁⲃⲁⲗ ϩⲓ̈ⲧⲛ̄ ⲡⲉⲥⲕⲁⲣⲡⲟⲥ ⲉⲩⲥⲟⲩⲱⲛ ⲙ̄ⲙⲟⲥ. Translation by Attridge and Pagels, slightly modified.

attitudes to ethnicity and identity construction, Denise Kimber Buell has argued that the "fluidity among the three human *genê* is central to the text's (*TriTrac*'s) soteriology".[59] Benjamin Dunning agrees with Buell while Ismo Dunderberg has suggested that *TriTrac*'s anthropology was partially fixed in theory, but would most likely have functioned fluidly in practice.[60] Even if this is so, this does not mean that all humans have the potentiality to choose which of the three substances to follow, neither in theory or practice. Buell argues that the anthropology allowed for humans to move in between the categories, by changing one's behavior one could change one's nature.[61] However, as the first part of this study made evident, *TriTrac* presents a theoretical view of human cognition and behavior that does not allow one to disregard one's constitution; the human will is strictly limited. Furthermore, the way *TriTrac* describes pneumatics as ethical experts and moral role models devoted to training and perfection (positions that likely demanded learning and great discipline) makes this category inaccessible to most people, something you could not simply *chose* to become part of, because it presupposed insights into ethics and the foundational topics they were based on (as discussed in Part 1).

Attridge and Pagels have, supported by Buell, argued that the church fathers must have "misunderstood" the Christian systems when they accused them of being deterministic.[62] I would caution against drawing such a conclusion. Even though the church fathers did not usually take the time to elaborate on how a fixed anthropological system would actually sustain a viable ethical system—just as the Stoics' opponents seldom took the time to explain how Stoics' theories of causal determinism worked with their ethical outlook before rejecting them as unviable and unethical—it does not mean that they could not or

59 Buell, *Why This New Race*, 126.

60 Dunning, "Tripartite Anthropologies", 185–186. Dunderberg understands the anthropology as not entirely fixed. This is due to the text's description of the Hebrews as people who are psychics but who seem to have pneumatic ability, since they predict the Savior's appearance. However, in light of *TriTrac*'s epistemology and ontology, which presents psychic substance as retaining partial knowledge, the Hebrews can indeed be understood as psychic people. Dunderberg reads this passage in light of the statement that each person is a mixture until the Savior comes, pointing out that there was obviously already a separation between Greeks and Hebrews before the Savior's appearance. However, this does not mean that the system is not deterministic, only that there were no pneumatic people before the Savior's appearance, only partial knowledge, via the psychics' ability to retain partial understanding. Dunderberg, *Gnostic Morality*, 142.

61 Buell, *Why This New Race*, 127–128. I do, however, agree with Buell that Valentinians in general cannot be described as determinists.

62 Attridge and Pagels, "The Tripartite Tractate", in *Notes*, 446; Buell, *Why This New Race*, 127–128.

did not work as ethical systems. The accusation of determinism may have been polemically effective, but it should not be reduced to a mere rhetorical invention.

TriTrac is an example, in my opinion, of a fixed Christian anthropological system that would have been a highly effective alternative to systems based on the doctrine of free will, and other systems with an openly fluid anthropology.[63] Furthermore, a fixed anthropology would not necessarily have meant that social mobility was harder to explain, on the contrary.[64] As stated above, I agree there would have been a certain degree of fluidity. It is conceivable that people left or that new people arrived, but this could easily have been explained by referring to the discovery of their true identity (more on this shortly). One could not simply choose one's position in the group; indeed, in what society can a person do that? I argue that the fixed theory would, in fact, have had many advantages. There are a number of social circumstances that a fixed theory would have explained effectively, such as rigidity in social and economical mobility. Persecution is another example, which is possibly indicated on pages 121–122 of *TriTrac.*[65] Only people unable to recognize truth would reject it, and furthermore persecute people who spread it. Social injustice and the varying degrees of education in ancient society would also have been effectively explained with a fixed theory. There is a great emphasis on teaching and learning throughout *TriTrac*, which is also made clear in the differences between the categories in the tripartite anthropology. The reason that not all have the same abilities—or indeed *opportunities*—could be easily explained by pointing to a fixed anthropology. A system that imagined that all humans could at any time recognize truth and choose the good, leading to a happy and ultimately eternal life, has the disadvantage of having to explain why people continuously acted against their own best interest. Another set of social circumstances that a fixed theory would have easily explained (while a fluid theory again

63 Thus, I am more in line with Einar Thomassen's interpretation that 'Valentinians' would have answered, if accused of determinism, that nature was connected to action, that one showed one's nature through one's actions. Thomassen, *Le traité tripartite*, 428–429. Buell seems to reject this notion (Buell, *Why This New Race*, 128).

64 As Williams has noted concerning recruitment: "if a particular religious group held to a rigidly deterministic doctrine of salvation, this would not in principle rule out the group's engagement in a vigorous program of recruitment. Those successfully converted might simply be regarded by the group as individuals predestined to salvation, while those completely refusing recruitment could be considered destined for destruction … every person newly contacted *might* be a potential member of the saved" (Williams, *Rethinking*, 208).

65 Here we read that the church and the members that it is made up of have suffered, and that it is the obligation of the psychic to share in this suffering. We also read that there are people who hate the church, are jealous and persecute it.

has some drawbacks)[66] occurs in times of schism, dropout of members, and exclusion—all challenges which most groups suffer on occasion. Unexpected conflicts would easily have been explained by reference to a fixed anthropology. If a person with a high position within the group suddenly decided to leave or if a schism occurred wherein people considered pneumatics were excluded, it would have been explained by claiming that they must have been material people all along. So, even though people were probably coming and going, as in all groups, a fixed theory would have been proficient in many ways from a sociological perspective.[67]

Thus, even though the anthropology is fixed in theory, it would have worked to explain social movement as well.[68] In order to illuminate this further, we can imagine a third social classification: that of being in *flux*. It would likely have been difficult to firmly place young and new members into one of the two categories. The status of young and new members could have been undecided, and possibly changed more easily, until their real and fixed identities were actually discovered (or rather re-discovered).[69] Thus, the anthropology was *fixed* in theory: one was born a pneumatic, psychic, or a material person; but it would partly have been *fluid* and *in flux* in practice: that is, allowing for additions and changes in the group, modifications that would have been explained with reference to a fixed theory. Thus, we are not dealing with a system where the goal is for all humans to develop into pneumatics. Each category of humans have an important role to play. Without the psychic people the pneumatics would not be able to do their work, and for this they are rewarded. The psychics are not encouraged to *become* pneumatics, rather they are encouraged to support the pneumatics and follow their example and the pneumatics

66 For example, it would not have been easy to explain why a person would *choose* damnation before salvation.

67 It is important to note that I am not arguing that a determinist theory is *better* or more effective overall, only that it would have worked just as efficiently as the basis on which to build a social and ethical model.

68 This has previously been suggested by Alexander Kocar. See Kocar, "Humanity", 220, where Kocar argues in much the same way as I do here, that soteriological fixity does not negate social mobility.

69 One could argue that the pneumatics, being in possession of a good *proairesis*, would have had no trouble in recognizing a fellow pneumatic and would not have made mistakes. However, as I have argued above, contrary to Stoic presentations of a good *proairesis* as a completely free *proairesis* that could not act contrary to the good, *TriTrac* restricts complete freedom to the Pleroma. Thus, the work allows for mistakes to be made by pneumatics whose *proairesis*, even though it is good, is restricted by life in materiality, exposed to passion and false impressions.

in turn are encouraged to take care of the psychics (this is developed further in the next two chapters).

But how would a fixed anthropology encourage ethical behavior? As Max Weber already argued at the beginning of the twentieth century, a predetermined anthropology could be very effective in building up and implementing a particular range of ethical behavior, because the only way to be sure you were part of God's chosen people was to act the part associated with a saved person.[70] The deterministic system found in *TriTrac* would have worked socially like any non-deterministic system: the individual creates/gains his or her identity in relation to the other members of the group as well as in negotiation with the larger society wherein the group functions. The importance of *acting the part* was great in ancient society, especially in Roman culture, where much stock was placed on how a person carried themselves, with strict ideals for different social classes, including everything from dress and speech to manner of walking.[71] Social mobility was difficult, which a fixed system would reflect well. However, it would not necessarily have denied it. Unexpected social mobility could also easily have been explained with reference to the fixity of a deterministic anthropology.

In order to visualize how the fixed system would have worked in *TriTrac* we must view it in light of how the text describes the different roles (at least for the two in-group categories). As we have seen, the way *TriTrac* presents human nature allows for moral development for both pneumatics and psychics; in other words, different people had different sets of standards they were expected to maintain. Pneumatics, due to the disposition of their good *proairesis*, were expected to behave as moral examples. The psychics, having the ability to retain partial knowledge and also due to their *proairesis*, which was disposed toward both good and bad choices, needed to assent to the Savior, disregard passions, and follow the lead of pneumatics in order to be saved. Note that this psychic ambiguity is not to be confused with free choice, which, I have argued, *TriTrac* defines as always doing the good. In the next two chapters, we explore in more depth the nature of these two categories and the group dynamic behind *TriTrac*. We read that pneumatics should act as teachers. How could this

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70 Among early Protestants, this was demonstrated by success in business and commerce. Thus Weber argues that Protestant ethics resulted in the emergence of capitalism. See Weber, *Protestant Ethics*.

71 Theories were developed to study and analyze a person's gait (*incessus*); how a person moved could reveal everything from gender and social standing to personal characteristics. See, for example, Timothy M. O'Sullivan, *Walking in Roman Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), which is devoted to the importance of appearance, and what was communicated through it, in the Roman world.

have worked? What did it entail to be a teacher in antiquity? Teacher of what? A psychic is described as someone who is driven by the pursuit of honor, but who must listen to advice and help pneumatics. What did this entail? From the perspective of power dynamics, the social structure favored in *TriTrac* is in clear favor of the pneumatics. Social background would surely have had great influence on one's abilities to be a pneumatic moral expert—which would likely have demanded strenuous and expensive education.

6 Conclusions

The tripartite anthropology in *TriTrac* is a representation of an early Christian deterministic system. We are not dealing with hard determinism; there is room for personal improvement. In fact, moral improvement is an integral component in the nature of both the in-group categories: psychic and pneumatic. The pneumatics are told to gain expertise of good and evil, and the psychics should learn from the pneumatics. Thus, the rejection of the concept of free will and the fixity of the tripartite anthropology would not have led to an indifference to ethical questions.[72] The logic of this is confirmed ontologically and epistemologically: only pneuma and psychê reflect true knowledge (the psychê only partially, compared to pneuma). The social dynamics also gain support from the specific theory of passions and cognition presented in the detailed cosmogony in the first part of *TriTrac*: the two in-categories are fixed but support one another, just as the emotive part supports the logical part in making decisions leading to the benefit of the whole.

As we have seen, it was not at all uncommon to envision an anthropology divided into three classes of humans defined by their relation to the composition of their bodily and mental make-up. Both Philo and Plutarch describe similar anthropologies to the one we find in *TriTrac*. However, *TriTrac* presents the three human categories as Stoic *dispositions*, categories that did not allow for the conversion from one to another. Yet, even though one could not change one's nature, one could nevertheless improve *within* one's category. The fixed theory would not have negated social mobility. For example, if a person previously thought to have been material joined the group, it could easily be explained that it was at that point of conversion that this person's true nature was discovered. The same argument works for member dropout or changes within the group.

72 Bobzien, "Stoic Concept", 71–89.

CHAPTER 5

School or Church? Teaching, Learning, and the Community Structure

Little attention has been devoted to the social context reflected in *TriTrac*, although, judging from the study so far, it is fair to say that it is a philosophically sophisticated text. As discussed in the introduction, some scholars have taken the complexity of *TriTrac* as an indication that the text was directed toward philosophically-trained individuals in order to convert them to the particular Valentinian theology presented in the text;[1] but what can really be said of the context of the text? Who wrote it and for whom? A notion that is frequently employed for the Christians responsible for texts that present a theology like that of *TriTrac* is that they belonged to the 'School of Valentinus'. As it happens, we encounter terms like "school" (literally "a place of receiving teaching" ⲟⲩⲙⲁ ⲛ̄ϫⲓⲥⲃⲱ) (123:12) and "school of conduct" (ⲁⲛⲥⲏⲃ ⲛ̄ⲡⲟ[ⲗ]ⲓⲧⲓⲁ) (71:22–23) in *TriTrac*. To what do these school allusions refer? And what have scholars meant by the term '*School* of Valentinus'? As we established in the previous chapter, the *oikonomia* of the Logos as well as the anthropology seem to be structured around pedagogy. What can be said about the roles that teaching and learning play in *TriTrac*? This chapter investigates the social structure of the group behind the text, positing that the 'school-language' in *TriTrac* is very important for visualizing it. I argue that *TriTrac* envisions a community structure made up of two groups modeled on the pedagogic relationship between pneumatic and psychic members. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the accuracy of the term 'School of Valentinus'.

1 Perkins, "Logos", 388; Berno, "Rethinking Valentinianism", 342, n33. There are important and recognizable similarities between the protology of *TriTrac* and the metaphysics of important philosophical schools of thought: the Middle Platonism of Numenius and Alcinous, for example. Numenius and Alcinous maintained that the intellect of the highest unknowable god produced from contemplation of its own self intellectual beings equivalent to his thoughts; these were connected with each other as well as integrated with and residing within god's mind. This closely resembles how the Aeons are portrayed in *TriTrac*. Furthermore, Alcinous and Numenius did not view the highest god as the creator god but attributed material creation to a second god. However, *TriTrac*'s strong monotheism is somewhat unlike Middle Platonic systems in general. For a more detailed description of the Platonic background of *TriTrac* see Kenney, "The Platonism", 187–206; Perkins, "Logos", 379–396.

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1 On the Community Structure behind *TriTrac* in Light of the Term "Church"

There are different opinions among scholars as to how the community represented in *TriTrac* should be understood. Understandably, the community behind the text has been associated with the term "the church" (ⲧⲉⲕⲕⲗⲏⲥⲓⲁ) in the text. There are basically two views on *TriTrac*'s community structure, represented by the two parties who have made the most systematic studies of the text. Attridge and Pagels have suggested that the psychics and the pneumatics together make up a community represented by the church on earth.[2] Thomassen, on the other hand, has maintained that the community behind *TriTrac* is only made up of pneumatics, because "the church" refers only to pneumatics. Thomassen views the psychics as non-Christian helpers of the church, or a group of people who are friends of Christians but not yet initiated into the church. Thomassen writes that once you were baptized you became a pneumatic.[3] Attridge and Pagels also see the categories as fluid but include the psychics as members of the church.[4]

I suggest that the main reason for the different views as to who was included in the community lies in the clash between the way the term ἐκκλησία is used in *TriTrac* and the connotations that the term "church" often brings with it today: the members of a particular Christian community. What ἐκκλησία refers to in the first three centuries is a debated topic, but one thing is clear: it is used in many different ways and refers to many different group structures.[5] I argue that in *TriTrac* ἐκκλησία is not used as a term for the community of Christians who as a group partook in ritual, teaching and formation, but, rather, refers to a group within a larger assembly, to those who made up "the body of Christ" who will receive a higher order of salvation in the end-time. The idea that there were people who received higher and lower orders of salvation was not unique during the first centuries.[6] So, how exactly is the term "the church" utilized in *TriTrac*?

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2 See, for example, Attridge and Pagels, "The Tripartite Tractate", in *Notes*, 456–457.

3 Thomassen, "Saved by Nature?", 148–149. Schenke adopts a similar view, see Schenke, "Tractatus Tripartitus", 36–38.

4 Attridge and Pagels, "The Tripartite Tractate", in *Notes*, 456–457; see also Dunderberg, *Beyond Gnosticism*, 161–188, who uses the term "Church" for the community of the text which seems to include the psychics.

5 See Ralph J. Korner, *The Origin and Meaning of Ekklēsia in the Early Jesus Movement* (Leiden: Brill, 2017); J. Y. Campbell, "The Origin and Meaning of the Christian Use of the Word ΕΚΚΛΗΣΙΑ", *Journal of Theological Studies* 49 (1948): 130–142.

6 See, for example, Clement, *Stromata* VII.2.9; Origen, *On First Principles* II.10.2; Jerome, *Against Jovinianus* II.23. For a study on early Christian ideas on different levels of salvation and reward, see Kocar, "In Heaven".

The word ἐκκλησία appears 15 times throughout *TriTrac*,[7] first appearing as a term for the third part of the Father, the collective of Aeons (57:34, 58:30, 59:2). It is then used to refer to the collective of pneumatic powers that the Logos creates as the Savior appears to him while he is distressed, the group that, outside the Pleroma, best reflects the members in the heavenly Church (94:21, 97:6–7). In the latter part of the text, dealing with humanity, the term ἐκκλησία appears in different contexts. The long passage describing the three different types of people, their reaction to the Savior, and their subsequent fate (118:14–122:12), ends with mentioning the church twice. We read that some people react instinctually to the Savior's appearance on earth (the pneumatics), some hesitate (the psychics), and some reject him (the material). The psychics will be given salvation, but only if they "assent to the Lord" and "do what is good for the church".[8] The very last part of the text also mentions that the work of the psychics should benefit "the church" and that they will be rewarded in the end (135:26, 137:13–14). These passages do not clearly indicate whether the psychics are part of "the church" or not. However, in another passage it is stated clearly that those whom the psychics should help are the pneumatics, because the psychics "were entrusted with the services which benefit the elect" (ⲁⲩⲛ̄ϩⲟⲩⲧⲟⲩ ⲁⲛⲓϣⲙ̄ϣⲉ· ⲉ̣ⲧ̣ⲉⲓⲣⲉ ⲙ̄ⲡⲉⲧⲛⲁⲛⲟⲩϥ ⲛ̄ⲛⲓⲥⲱⲧⲡ̄) (135:4–6). "The elect" (ⲛⲓⲥⲱⲧⲡ̄) refers to the pneumatics. In light of Pauline theology, it becomes understandable why "the church" solely refers to the pneumatic people. Paul does not necessarily make this restriction, but the church is referred to as the body of the Savior.[9] In *TriTrac*, however, it is clear that it is the pneumatic people who make up the body of the Savior. This is stated in the following way: "When his (the Savior's) head appeared, it (the pneumatic substance) hastened to him immediately, it immediately became a body to his head".[10] Furthermore, we read of the pneumatics that "they share body and essence with the Savior" (ⲟⲩϣⲃⲏⲣ· ⲛ̄ⲥⲱⲙⲁ ⲇⲉ ⲁⲩⲱ ⲟⲩϣⲃⲏⲣ ⲛ̄ⲛⲟⲩⲥⲓⲁ ⲧⲉ ⲙⲛ̄ ⲡⲥⲱⲧⲏⲣ·) (122:14–15) and that the Savior came especially for them (122:12–17): he gave himself for "us in the flesh, who are his church" (ⲁⲛⲁⲛ ϩⲛ̄ ⲥⲁⲣⲝ ⲉⲧⲟⲉⲓ ⲛ̄ⲛⲉⲕⲕⲗⲏⲥⲓⲁ ⲛ̄ⲧⲉϥ) (125:4–5).[11] The members of the church needed to come to

7 57:34, 58:30, 59:2, 94:21, 97:6–7, 121:31–36, 122:7–30, 123:18, 125:5, 135:26, 136:13.

8 "… After they assent to the Lord … and remember what is good for the church" (ⲙⲛ̄ⲛ̄ⲥⲁ ⲧⲣⲟⲩϩⲟⲙⲟⲗⲟⲅⲓ ⲙ̄ⲡϫⲁⲉⲓⲥ ⲁⲩⲱ ⲡⲓⲙⲉⲉⲩⲉ· ⲙ̄ⲡⲉⲧⲁⲛⲓⲧ· ⲁϯⲉⲕⲕⲗⲏⲥⲓⲁ) (121:29–38). Translation by Attridge and Pagels, slightly modified. This passage refers to the "right ones" (ⲛⲓⲟⲩⲛⲉⲙ), which is a term used for the psychics in *TriTrac*.

9 See 1 Cor 12:12–13; Eph 4:4–15; and also Col 1:18, 2:14, 2:19.

10 118:33–35: ⲛ̄ⲧⲁⲣⲉⲧⲉϥⲁ̄ⲡⲉ· ⲟⲩⲱⲛϩ̄ ⲁⲃⲁⲗ ⲁϥⲡⲱⲧ ⲁϩⲟⲩⲛ ⲁⲣⲁϥ ⲥⲉϩⲏⲧϥ· ⲁϥϣⲱⲡⲉ ⲛ̄ⲛⲟⲩⲥⲱⲙⲁ· ⲥⲉϩⲏⲧϥ̄ ⲛ̄ⲧⲉϥⲁⲡⲉ. Translation by Attridge and Pagels, slightly modified.

11 Translation by Attridge and Pagels, slightly modified. This is not the only passage that indicates that the text is written from the perspective of the pneumatics, see also 132:30–133:14.

the cosmos in order to receive the restoration (123:12–18). These passages, read in light of Pauline theology, indicate that "the church" refers to the pneumatics on earth, "the elect" whom the psychics are told to help in exchange for salvation and eternal life. This also fits the internal logic of *TriTrac*, because the term "the church" is used to refer to the pneumatic powers in the Logos' heaven as well as the Aeons in the Pleroma, of whom the pneumatic substance in the cosmos is both a reflection and reintegrated with in the end.

If the term "church" is restricted to pneumatic people, does this mean that the psychic are not Christians, as Thomassen seems to imply? I do not agree with Thomassen's reading of the psychics, that they were seen by the pneumatics as outsiders, as non-Christian "sympathizers", as Thomassen has expressed it.[12] There are clear instances where the psychics are portrayed as playing an active part in the community life represented in *TriTrac*: the psychics sing with the pneumatics (121:29–38), they are taught by the pneumatics (119:3), and they are baptized. We read that the psychics will be saved:

> After they assent to the Lord and the thought of that which is pleasing to the church and (sing) the song of those who are humble along with her to the full extent possible, in that which is pleasing to do for her, in sharing in her sufferings and her pains in the manner of those who understand what is good for the church, they will have a share in her hope.[13]

That ἐκκλησία is used in a very particular way is also suggested by the term "the Man of the Church" (ⲡⲣⲱⲙⲉ ⲛ̄ⲧⲉⲕⲕⲗⲏⲥⲓⲁ) (122:30). "The Man of the Church"[14] most likely refers to Christ because we read that this figure

12 Thomassen, "Saved by Nature?", 148.

13 121:29–38: ⲙⲛ̄ⲛ̄ⲥⲁ ⲧⲣⲟⲩϩⲟⲙⲟⲗⲟⲅⲓ ⲙ̄ⲡϫⲁⲉⲓⲥ ⲁⲩⲱ ⲡⲓⲙⲉⲉⲩⲉ· ⲙ̄ⲡⲉⲧⲁⲛⲓⲧ· ⲁϯⲉⲕⲕⲗⲏⲥⲓⲁ ⲁⲩⲱ ⲡⲓϩⲱⲥ ⲛ̄ⲛⲉⲧϩⲃ̄ⲃⲓⲏⲩ ⲛⲙ̄ⲙⲉⲥ ⲁⲡⲉⲧⲉ ⲟⲩⲛ̄ ϭⲟⲙ· ⲙ̄ⲙⲟⲟⲩ ⲧⲏⲣϥ ⲙ̄ⲡⲉⲧⲁⲛⲓⲧ· ⲁⲉⲉϥ ⲛⲉⲥ ⲁⲧⲣⲟⲩⲕⲟⲓⲛⲱⲛⲓ ⲁⲛⲉⲥϣⲱⲛⲉ ⲙⲛ̄ ⲛⲉⲥⲙ̄ⲕⲟⲟϩ ⲁⲃⲁⲗ ϩⲓ̈ⲧⲛ̄ ⲡⲥⲙⲁⲧ ⲛ̄ⲛⲉⲩⲅⲛⲱⲙⲱⲛ ⲁⲡⲓⲡⲉⲧⲛⲁⲛⲟⲩϥ· ⲁϯⲉ̣ⲕ̣ⲕ̣ⲗ̣ⲏ̣[ⲥ]ⲓⲁ ⲉⲩⲛⲁϫⲓ ⲛ̄ϯⲕⲟⲓⲛⲱⲛ̣ⲓⲁ ϩⲛ̣ [ⲧⲉⲥϩ]ⲉ̣ⲗⲡⲓⲥ. Translation by Attridge and Pagels, slightly modified. This passage reflects the activity of the Aeons in the Pleroma, who sing together to please God even if they are on different levels in the Pleroma. Thus, I choose to add the word "sing" to highlight that the "assent to the song" refers to taking part in the song, i.e. to sing the song together with the pneumatics (the church).

14 Einar Thomassen has also argued that the perfect man is the Savior (see Thomassen, *Spiritual Seed*, 55; Thomassen, *Le Traité tripartite*, 436–437). Attridge and Elaine Pagels argue differently. They view the perfect man and the Man of the Church as references to pneumatic members of the community while the term "members" (ϩⲛ̄ⲙⲉⲗⲟⲥ) refer to the psychics. They point out that the "members" need instruction, and this, they write, fits

"separated pneuma, psychê, and matter in the *oikonomia*, from the one who thinks he is all alone, for he exists in the all, for he is the all, and he is for them all".[15] That Christ, who is the embodied church on earth, is called a "Man", fits well with how the church in the Pleroma is described, as a "human body, which is inseparably divided into members of members, primary members and subordinate ones, into big ones and small".[16] It would seem that if the church in heaven is reflected on earth, there is a hierarchy within the community of pneumatics on earth as well. It nevertheless becomes clear that the theology of "the church" does not negate the fact that the Savior's appearance on earth saves the psychics as well. We read that "the Man of the Church rejoiced and was glad and hoped for it,"[17] i.e., that the psychics would also be given a place of salvation (122:12–30). Thus, I suggest that the term 'church' is used for the inner circle of a larger assembly, for the pneumatics and moral experts within a larger group of lay Christians, represented by the psychics. As Ralph Korner's work on the term *ἐκκλησία* has shown, early Christians did not necessarily envision a church to which all Christians belonged. Rather, the term is used to refer to a permanent group of Christ-followers.[18] The use of the term "church" in *TriTrac* could suggest that the pneumatics were a more stable and close-knit group, compared to the larger group which included the psychics but which met less frequently.

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the psychics, while the pneumatics receive knowledge immediately (Attridge and Pagels, "The Tripartite Tractate", in *Notes*, 460–462). However, as seen previously in this study, and is explored further below, the pneumatics are also described as coming to earth to learn and develop. The passage that follows the mention of the members of the church describes the restoration of the Pleroma, which is depicted as a release from the left and the right powers, i.e. psychê and matter (see 124:3–7), and thus it would be strange if the members of the church that receive salvation are the psychics, the people who need to get unmixed.

15 122:31–35: ⲁϥⲡⲱϣⲉ ⲙ̄ⲡⲛ(ⲉⲩⲙ)ⲁ ⲯⲩⲭⲏ ⲥⲱⲙⲁ ϩⲛ̄ ⲧⲟⲓⲕⲟⲛⲟⲙⲓⲁ ⲙ̄ⲡⲁⲉⲓ ⲉⲧⲙⲉⲩⲉ ϫⲉ ⲛⲉⲟⲩⲉⲉⲓ ⲛ̄ⲟⲩⲱⲧ· ⲡⲉ· ⲉϥϣⲟⲟⲡ· ⲛ̄ϩⲏⲧϥ̄ ⲡⲉ· ⲛ̄ϭⲓ ⲡⲣⲱⲙⲉ ⲡⲉⲉⲓ ⲉⲧⲉ ⲛ̄ⲧⲁϥ ⲡⲉ· ⲡⲧⲏⲣϥ̄ ⲁⲩⲱ ⲛ̄ⲧⲁϥ ⲛ̄ⲧⲁⲩ ⲧⲏⲣⲟⲩ ⲡⲉ. Translation by Attridge and Pagels, slightly modified. See Kasser et al., *Tractatus Tripartitus: Pars II*, 19–20, who also interprets this as a reference to Christ.

16 74:13–18: ⲙ̄ⲡⲣⲏⲧⲉ ⲛ̄ⲟⲩ̣ⲥⲱⲙⲁ̣· ⲛ̄ⲣⲱⲙⲉ· ⲉϥⲡⲏϣ· ϩⲛ̣̄ ⲟⲩⲙⲛ̄ⲧⲁⲧⲡⲱϣⲉ· ⲁϩⲛ̄ⲙⲉⲗⲟⲥ̣ ⲛ̄ⲧⲉ ϩⲛ̄ⲙⲉⲗⲟⲥ ϩⲛ̄ⲙⲉⲗⲟⲥ ⲛ̄ϣⲁ̣ⲣⲡ̄ ⲙⲛ̄ ϩⲛ̄ ϩⲁⲉⲟⲩ ⲁϩⲛ̄ⲛⲁ̣ϭ̣ ϩ̣[ⲓ] ϣⲏⲙ. Translation by Attridge and Pagels, slightly modified.

17 122:28–30: ⲡⲁⲉⲓ ⲉϥⲣⲉϣⲉ· ⲁⲩⲱ ⲉϥⲣⲁⲟⲩⲧ· ⲙ̄ⲙⲟϥ ⲉϥⲣ̄ ϩⲉⲗⲡⲓⲍⲉ ⲙ̄ⲙⲁϥ ⲁⲣⲁϥ ⲛ̄ϭⲓ ⲡⲣⲱⲙⲉ ⲛ̄ⲧⲉⲕⲕⲗⲏⲥⲓⲁ. The psychics are saved and "the place which the Calling (the psychics) will have is the Aeon of the likeness, where the Logos has not joined with the Pleroma" (ⲡⲉⲥⲧⲟⲡⲟⲥ ⲉⲧⲛⲁϣⲱⲡⲉ ⲛⲉⲥ· ⲡⲉ ⲡⲁⲓⲱⲛ ⲛ̄ϫⲉ ⲛⲓϩⲓ̈ⲕⲱⲛ ⲙ̄ⲡⲙⲁ· ⲉⲧⲉⲙ̄ⲡⲁⲧⲉ ⲡⲗⲟⲅⲟⲥ· ⲧⲱⲧ· ⲙ̄ⲡⲡⲗⲏⲣⲱⲙⲁ) (122:25–28). Translation by Attridge and Pagels, slightly modified.

18 Korner, *The Origin*, 150–262. See also 22–80, which explores the term *ἐκκλησία* in light of its relation to Roman associations.

In order to expand on what can be said about these two levels of the community behind *TriTrac*, I believe the school language which permeates the text is important. Let us turn to this next.

2 The Cosmos as a "School" in *TriTrac* and Its Early Christian Context

We encounter the mention of "a school", or literally "a place of receiving teaching" (ⲟⲩⲙⲁ ⲛ̄ϫⲓ ⲥⲃⲱ) (123:12) in *TriTrac* 123:12. The passage in question discusses the restoration of the Savior's "members" (ⲛⲉϥⲙⲉⲗⲟⲥ) (123:11–12) (also identifies as the church). The Savior who steps down into corporeality also needs liberation just like those whom he comes to save.[19] While the Savior will "immediately gain knowledge", we read that the members of Christ:

> … needed a school in the places which are adorned, so that they might receive from them the images of the form of the archetypical pattern, like a mirror.[20]

The "places which are adorned" is a reference to the cosmos (an expression which will be discussed in detail in the next chapter).[21] A few pages later the cosmos is again described as a place of learning. We read that the pneumatics were put on earth in order that "they might experience the evil things and might train (ⲣ̄ ⲅⲩⲙⲛⲁⲍⲉ) themselves in them".[22]

TriTrac was not the only text presenting life on earth in terms of an education. This was a common *topos* during the first few centuries CE. Plotinus maintained that the soul stepped down into corporality as an educational exercise,[23] as did some Middle Platonists like Numenius, and the same language is found in the Hermetic *Poimandres*.[24] Many Christians maintained something similar, for example Origen, and Basil of Caesarea, who saw the cosmos as a school for the soul.[25] We also encounter this imagery, the cosmos

19 For more on the doctrine of "mutual participation", see Thomassen, *Spiritual Seed*, 166–187.

20 123:12–15: ⲁⲩⲣ̄ ⲭⲣⲓⲁ ⲛ̄ⲛⲟⲩⲙⲁ ⲛ̄ϫⲓ ⲥⲃⲱ ⲡⲉⲉⲓ ⲉⲧϣⲟⲟⲡ ϩⲣⲏⲓ ϩⲛ̄ ⲛ̄ⲧⲟⲡⲟⲥ ⲉⲧ¨ⲧⲥ̣[ⲉ]ⲛⲁⲉⲓⲧ ⲁⲧⲣⲉϥϫⲓ ⲉⲓⲛⲉ ⲁⲃⲁⲗ ϩⲓⲧⲟⲟⲧⲟⲩ ⲁⲛⲛⲓϩⲓⲕⲱⲛ ⲁⲛⲓⲧⲩⲡⲟⲥ ⲛ̄ϣⲁⲣⲡ ⲙ̄ⲡⲥⲙⲁⲧ· ⲛⲛⲟⲩⲉⲉⲓⲉⲗ. Translation by Attridge and Pagels, slightly modified.

21 Thomassen, Attridge and Pagels come to the same conclusion (Thomassen, *Le traité tripartite*, 437; Attridge and Pagels, "The Tripartite Tractate", in *Notes*, 464).

22 126:32–34: ⲉⲩⲛⲁϫⲓ ϯⲡⲉ· ⲛ̄ⲛⲓⲡⲉⲧⲑⲁⲩⲟⲩ ⲁⲩⲱ ⲛ̄ⲥⲉⲣ̄ ⲅⲩⲙⲛⲁⲍⲉ· ⲙ̄ⲙⲁⲩ ⲛ̄ϩⲣⲏⲓ̈ ⲛ̄ϩⲏⲧⲟⲩ.

23 See Plotinus, *Ennead* IV.

24 Numenius, *Fragment* 20; *Corpus Hermeticum* 1.13–14.

25 Basil, *Hexaemeron* 1.5; Origen, *On First Principles* II.11.6.

as a school, in other Valentinian texts. In *ValExp* (NHC XI, 2) we read that there are "pneumatic and carnal" ([ⲡⲛⲉⲩⲙⲁ]ⲧⲓⲕⲟⲛ ⲛⲉ ⲁⲩⲱ ⲛ̄ⲥ[ⲁⲣ]ⲕ̣ⲓ̣ⲕⲟⲛ̣) (37:26–27) things and things that are "heavenly and on the earth" (ⲧⲡⲉ ⲙ̄ⲛ̣̄ ⲛ̣ⲉⲧϩⲓϫⲙ̄ ⲡⲕⲁϩ) (38:31) and that the Demiurge "created for them a place like this and a school (ⲟⲩⲥⲭⲟⲗⲏ) like this, for learning and form".[26] Here it would seem that the cosmos is created as a learning experience. We have reason to revisit the question of "form" shortly, when furthering our investigation of *TriTrac.* Yet if the cosmos is a school, who is the teacher? For Christians, it is obvious who the ideal teacher on earth would be: Jesus.[27] In *GosTruth* (NHC I, 3), for example, we read that the Savior appeared in "schools" (ⲙⲁ ⲛ̄ϫⲓⲥⲃⲱ) and "spoke the word as a teacher" (ⲁϥϫⲉ ⲡⲓϣⲉϫⲉ ⲉϥⲟⲉⲓ ⲛ̄ⲟⲩⲥⲁϩ) (19:18–20). Many early Christians carried on with the teaching role they understood Jesus to have instigated and viewed their Christian doctrines as a culmination of pagan philosophy, the next level of a natural and logical culmination of human knowledge.[28] Justin saw his engagement in theological questions as a school of divine virtue.[29] Clement of Alexandria spoke of Christianity as the true philosophy and Basil and Eusebius described the teaching of Christ as the highest form of philosophy.[30]

Not only did Christians in the first centuries carry on the language and imagery of philosophy but there are also interesting similarities in how early Christians congregated and how philosophical movements were organized. The evidence from Rome suggests that the earliest Christians were organized in small house communities. Peter Lampe suggests that many were explicitly organized around a teacher who visited or was visited by other Christians and offered instruction on all kinds of topics, as, for example, Justin Martyr had

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26 37:25–31: [ⲡⲛⲉⲩⲙⲁ]ⲧⲓⲕⲟⲛ ⲛⲉ ⲁⲩⲱ ⲛ̄ⲥ[ⲁⲣ]ⲕ̣ⲓ̣ⲕⲟⲛ̣ ⲛ̄ⲛⲉ̣ⲑ̣̄ⲛ̄ ⲧⲡⲉ ⲙ̄ⲛ̣̄ ⲛ̣ⲉⲧϩⲓϫⲙ̄ ⲡⲕⲁϩ. ⲁϥⲧⲁⲙⲓⲟ ⲛ̣ⲉⲩ ⲛ̄ⲟⲩⲧⲟⲡⲟⲥ ⲛ̄ϯⲙⲓⲛⲉ [ⲁ]ⲩⲱ ⲟⲩⲥⲭⲟⲗⲏ ⲛ̄ϯⲙⲓⲛⲉ ⲁϩ[ⲟ]ⲩⲛ ⲁⲩⲥⲃⲱ ⲁⲩⲱ ⲁ<ϩ>ⲟⲩⲛ ⲁⲩⲙⲟⲣⲫⲏ. However, the devil and evil powers took hold of the cosmos so that God (perhaps here referring to the Demiurge) "almost regretted that he created the world" (ⲥⲭⲉⲇⲟⲛ ⲁϥ̄ⲣϩⲧⲏϥ ϫⲉ ⲁϥⲥⲱⲱⲛⲧ ⲙ̄ⲡⲕⲟⲥ[ⲙⲟⲥ]) (38:38–39).

27 See for example Clement, *Paedagogus.* This is a large scholarly topic, see, for example, Pheme Perkins, *Jesus as Teacher* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990); Chris Keith, *Jesus' Literacy: Scribal Culture and the Teacher from Galilee* (London: T&T Clark, 2011).

28 This attitude is, somewhat paradoxically, combined with the view that philosophy leads to heresy and false beliefs. However, there is a distinction made between pagan and Christian, between atheist and god-fearing philosophy. For more on this, see Karamanolis, *Philosophy*, 29–59.

29 Justin, *Second Apology* 2.13; see also Justin, *Dialogue with Trypho* 8.1–2 where he compares Christianity with the other philosophical schools.

30 Clement, *Stromata* VI.8, I.11; Basil, *Letter* 8; Eusebius, *Demonstratio Evangelica* I.6.56.

done.[31] A common way of organizing, even among philosophical schools, was to create smaller gatherings in the master's house where lectures were offered, sometimes on different levels.[32] As recent scholarship has pointed out, these organizational forms may have looked a lot like voluntary associations,[33] small unofficial gatherings where the members formed around, for example, a common trade, or a deity or a household.[34] Schools depended on wealthy patrons, as associations and Christian gatherings also often did.[35]

In Alexandria, something that could be called a proper Christian school milieu evolved. Eusebius writes that there was a man, Pantenaeus, who was head of a school (διδασκαλεῖον) in Alexandria,[36] and Clement and Origen are depicted as carrying on the practice of teaching students "the divine things" (τῶν θείων).[37] We do not know much about how these gatherings were organized,

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31 *The Martyrdom of Justin* 1–2.

32 Lampe includes some Valentinians in the list of Roman Christians organized in this way. Peter Lampe, *From Paul to Valentinus: Christians at Rome in the First Two Centuries* (London: T&T Clark, 2003), 276–279, 374–380.

33 See Philip A. Harland, *Dynamics of Identity in the World of the Early Christians: Associations, Judeans, and Cultural Minorities* (New York: T&T Clark, 2009); John Kloppenborg, "Collegia and Thiasoi: Issues in Function, Taxonomy and Membership", in *Voluntary Associations in the Graeco-Roman World*, ed. John S. Kloppenborg and Stephen G. Wilson (London and New York: Routledge, 1996), 16–30. See also Robert Louis Wilken, *The Christians as the Romans Saw Them*, 2nd edition (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 15–30. For the dynamics between the term ἐκκλησία and Roman associations, see Korner, *The Origin*, 22–80. Korner concludes that the term ἐκκλησία would have had political connotations for Romans, but that it was not unusual for voluntary associations to adopt political terminology for their organizational structure.

34 These are the three most common associations as suggested by Kloppenborg, "Collegia and Thiasoi", 16–30.

35 Finance, wealth and socio-ecological organization were not topics favored by popular philosophers, which probably was one reason most schools did not survive after the master's death. Harland, *Dynamics of Identity*, 26. However, as Christoph Markschies has discussed from the perspective of Christian organizations in Rome, it is important to distinguish between different kinds of philosophical activity in second-century Rome. There was, apart from 'professional' philosophers who had a curriculum and regular student groups, a popular kind of philosophy practiced by 'parlor' philosophers, who performed in public and at private gatherings. Open lectures were held for the benefit of the interested. Some of Maximus of Tyre's lectures and some of Epictetus and Musonius are preserved, and they deal with all kinds of philosophical questions in which a well-read public would be interested—such as of what goodness and evil consist, where they originate, and how one should live one's life. Christoph Markschies, "Valentinian Gnosticism: Toward and Anatomy of a School", in *The Nag Hammadi Library After 50 Years: Proceedings of the Society of Biblical Literature Commemoration*, eds. Anne McGuire and John Turner (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 403–411.

36 Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* V.10.4.

37 Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* VI.15, 21.4, 5.11.

and the accuracy of Eusebius' testimony is a debated topic.[38] Yet, as Winrich Löhr has pointed out, information about ancient school milieus of this time is not only scarce concerning Christian schools. We do not know much about how the pagan philosophical schools were organized in the second and third centuries either.[39] Porphyry's testimony on the teaching style of Plotinus is one exception.[40] Gregory Thaumaturgus' description of Origen's school is one of the Christian exceptions.[41] It would seem that in Origen's school there was an advanced class and one less advanced. The advanced students taught the less advanced and Origen taught the advanced students. Students came and listened (or were visited) and were given moral instruction and taught to interpret the Bible.[42] Gregory tells us that he was first taught to judge a good argument from a bad one, then taught natural sciences, astronomy, geometry, physics, and finally ethics and theology.[43] However, we are dealing with a

38 Annewies van den Hoek. "The 'Catechetical' School of Early Christian Alexandria and Its Philonic Heritage", *Harvard Theological Review* 90:1 (1997): 59–87.

39 What we have is Porphyry's descriptions, see next note as well as Winrich Löhr, "Christianity as Philosophy: Problems and Perspectives of an Ancient Intellectual Project", *Vigiliae Christianae* 64 (2010): 160–188.

40 Porphyry, *Life of Plotinus.* Here Porphyry writes that Plotinus admitted advanced students who came to him and wanted to attend his lectures. Plotinus is said to have encouraged questions, and some students stayed with him for years, such as Amelius, who Porphyry says followed him for several decades. Plotinus also had many companions and friends, like poets, senators, rhetoricians, and doctors, who seem to have been more like conversation partners that sometimes visited him rather than students who devoted themselves wholeheartedly to the study of philosophy. The "school" of Plotinus seems to have been made up of a mixture of lectures and debates on different philosophical topics, discussions of famous works by Plato or Aristotle, as well as debate over contemporary treatises and the clarification and composing of treaties in reaction to something they had read. However, at this level, there does not seem to have been a clear syllabus that attendees were expected to follow, but since Plotinus only admitted talented and advanced students to these meetings they seem to have already been well versed in classics such as Plato, Aristotle, the Stoics, and various contemporary philosophers. In short, Plotinus's school is an example of the last stage of a 'school milieu', a place where different topics and philosophy were *developed* rather than merely discussed.

41 Gregory, *Panergyric Addressed to Origen.*

42 Roelof van den Broek, "The Christian 'School' of Alexandria in the Second and Third Centuries", in *Centers of Learning: Learning and Location in Pre-Modern Europe and the Near East*, eds. Jan Willem Drijvers and Alasdair A. MacDonald (Leiden: Brill, 1995), 39–47; Clemens Scholten, "Die alexandrinische Katechetenschule", *Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum* 38 (1995): 16–37.

43 For a summary of the curriculum of Gregory at Origen's school see Löhr "Christianity as Philosophy", 165.

pre-monastic period; these Christian scholars and pupils were not isolated but celebrated mass and communion within a larger community.[44]

Before we go deeper into Christian organizational forms of the first centuries, let us bring *TriTrac* into the discussion. What kind of teaching, according to *TriTrac*, took place in the "school of the cosmos" and can this tell us something of the organization of the community reflected in the text or the social context of the text? What is meant by the statement that the cosmos contains a school that provides members of the community with "images and the form of the archetypical pattern" (ⲁⲛⲛⲓϩⲓ̈ⲕⲱⲛ ⲁⲛⲓⲧⲩⲡⲟⲥ ⲛ̄ϣⲁⲣⲡ̣̄ ⲙ̄ⲡⲥⲙⲁⲧ) (123:14–16)?[45] These things are examined below and I begin by discussing the mention of a "school of conduct" among the Aeons.

3 The "School of Conduct" in the Pleroma and the Gaining of Form

Before *TriTrac* expands on the description of the creation of the cosmos and human life in it, the structure of the Pleroma and the Aeons' existence is discussed. Here, too, we encounter the mention of a school, more specifically "a school of conduct" (ⲟⲩⲁⲛⲥⲏⲃ ⲛ̄ⲡⲟ[ⲗ]ⲓⲧⲓⲁ) (71:22–23). The preceding passage portrays the Father creating the Son and the Church, made up of Aeons. The Father gives the Aeons a sense of longing for him, but he did not make them perfect at once. They have inside them a "love and longing for the perfect, complete discovery of the Father".[46] Then we read:

> It is he, [the] Father, who gave root impulses to the Aeons, since they are places on the path which leads toward him, like toward a school of conduct.[47]

44 This is indicated, for example, in the life of Origen, who received critique and was later excommunicated because of his work and preaching within the larger Christian community, work he did without being ordained. We are dealing with a period before organized monasticism; these intellectual Christians functioned within a larger community of lay people. It is also important not to oversimplify the isolation of monastics, who often led dynamic and vibrant lives, not simply being secluded in the desert. See James Goehring, *Ascetics, Society, and the Desert: Studies in Early Egyptian Monasticism* (Harrisburg, P.A.: Trinity Press International, 1999).

45 Translation by Attridge and Pagels, slightly modified.

46 71:9–11: ⲛ̣̄ⲛⲟⲩⲙⲁⲉⲓⲉ· ⲙⲛ̄ ⲟⲩϭⲛ̄ϣⲓⲛⲉ̣ ⲛ̣̄ⲥⲉ ⲡⲓϭⲓⲛⲉ ⲉⲧϫⲏⲕ ⲁⲃⲁⲗ ⲧⲏⲣ̣[ϥ] ⲙ̄ⲡⲓⲱⲧ.

47 71:18–23: ϫⲉ ⲛ̄ⲧⲁϥ [ⲡⲓ]ⲱⲧ· ⲡⲉⲧⲁϩϯ ⲛⲛⲁ{ⲁ}ⲫⲟⲣⲙⲏ [ⲛⲛ]ⲟⲩⲛⲉ ⲛ̄ⲛⲁⲓⲱⲛ· ⲉϩⲛ̄ⲧⲟⲡⲟⲥ ⲛⲉ ⲙ̣ⲡ̣ⲓⲙⲁⲓ̈ⲧ[[ⲛ̄]] ⲉⲧⲙⲁⲧⲛ̄ ϣⲁⲣⲁϥ ⲙ̣ⲡⲣⲏⲧⲉ ϣⲁ ⲟⲩⲁⲛⲥⲏⲃ· ⲙ̄ⲡⲟ[ⲗ]ⲓ̣ⲧⲓⲁ. Translation by Attridge and Pagels, slightly modified. Here we seem to have a play on words: *aforme* (impulse)

The term ⲁⲛⲥⲏⲃ ⲛ̄ⲡⲟⲗⲓⲧⲓⲁ, “school of conduct”, does not, to my knowledge, appear in any other Coptic text. The Aeons’ lives are described as consisting of searching for and worshiping the Father. The term school is used as a metaphor, it would seem, because the term ⲡⲣⲏⲧⲉ, “like” is used. The Aeons’ “way of life”, which we could translate ⲙ̄ⲡⲟⲗⲓⲧⲓⲁ,[48] is likened to a school life.

As Philip Harland and others have shown, πολίτευμα is a term sometimes used for voluntary associations, and as mentioned above, the way voluntary assemblies were organized seems to have been close to how early Christians gathered, as well as some philosophical schools.[49] This terms, πολιτεία, πολιτεύμα, and the verb form πολιτεύω appear four times in *TriTrac*. Twice, as above, it is used to describe the community life of the Aeons in the Pleroma.[50] The pneumatic substance of the Logos is described as “governed” (ⲣⲡⲟⲗⲓⲧⲉⲩⲉ) by good emotions (97:2), and lastly the term is used when the Son steps down on earth together with his angels in order to create a particular “way of life” or “conduct” (ⲡⲟⲗⲓⲧⲉⲩⲉ) on the earth (125:17). We only encounter the term a few times but it does not seem to have the same technical connotations as the term “the church”, which is restricted to the pneumatics and the “body of Christ”.

The Aeons’ “school of conduct” (ⲁⲛⲥⲏⲃ ⲛ̄ⲡⲟ[ⲗ]ⲓⲧⲓⲁ) (71:22–23) is likened to “root impulses” (ⲛⲛⲁⲫⲟⲣⲙⲏ [ⲛⲛ]ⲟⲩⲛⲉ) (71:19–20), a road that leads to the Father. Having a root seems to be the same thing as being able to gain form (ⲧⲩⲡⲟⲥ). The Father is described as a single being; there is nothing next to him. Nor is there an original form outside the Father (53:27). The Father creates by himself and from himself, and those he creates are granted form from him. The Father shapes himself in a way that allows him to be known. This is done through the Son, who is called “the form of the formless” (ⲧⲙⲟⲣⲫⲏ ⲛ̄ⲧⲉ ⲡⲓⲁⲧⲙⲟⲣⲫⲏ) (66:13–14). This “first form” ([ϣⲁ]ⲣⲡ̄ ⲙ̄ⲫⲟⲣⲙⲏ) (61:11–12) is then extended to the next step in the expansion of the Father, to the Pleroma, “in

is the result of having *morfe* (form), which is used to described being from the highest realm.

48 Thomassen has suggested emending πολιτεία to παιδεία (Thomassen, *Le traité tripartite*, 319–320). However, the word παιδεία or its derivatives do not occur in the *TriTrac*, while πολιτεία and its verb forms πολιτεύω and πολιτεύμα occur a number of times, meaning *constitution, assembly* or *the conduct* or *way of life of citizens in a city* (see Lampe, *A Patristic Greek Lexicon*, 1113).

49 These usually included a varied range of people. See Harland, *Dynamics of Identity*; and Kloppenborg, “Collegia and Thiasoi”.

50 Apart from the passage describing the Aeons’ existence as “places on the path which leads toward him, like a school assembly” (ⲉϩⲛ̄ⲧⲟⲡⲟⲥ ⲛⲉ ⲙ̣ⲡ̣ⲓⲙⲁϊⲧ[[ⲛ̄]] ⲉⲧⲙⲁⲧⲛ̄ ϣⲁⲣⲁϥ ⲙ̣ⲡⲣⲏⲧⲉ ϣⲁ ⲟⲩⲁⲛⲥⲏⲃ· ⲙ̄ⲡⲟ[ⲗ]ⲓ̣ⲧⲓⲁ) (71:20–23), the Pleroma as a whole is called a ⲡⲟⲗⲓⲧⲉⲩⲙⲁ (59:11–12).

order that they might [perceive] who the Father is who exists for them".[51] Thus, the Son gives himself to others and this gives them "form", which is equal to the knowledge of the Father. The Aeons do not know the Father completely but are described as naturally drawn to him, and this is because the Father supplies them with form:

> In order that [they] (the Aeons) might know [what exists] for them, he (the Father) graciously [granted] (them) the first form, in order that they might [recognize] who the Father is who exists [for them]. Through a voice, he gave them the name "Father", proclaiming to them that that which exists, exists through that name.[52]

The Aeons are naturally drawn to the Father but at the same time the mention of a school of conduct suggests that there is more going on than a natural attraction, that the Aeons' lives include learning and development. So, exactly how is the "school of conduct" in the Pleroma—where the members have access to the form—organized? What does this natural attraction to the Father look like?

The activity of the Aeons is expounded upon in the latter part of the first sections of the text. The Aeons exist in order to give glory to the Father and this is done collectively. Even though they are individuals, they exist as a collective entity. They are brought forth "in order that the Father might receive honor from each one (of them)" (ϫⲉⲕⲁⲥⲉ ⲉϥⲛⲁϫⲓ ⲉⲁⲩ ⲁⲃⲁⲗ ϩⲛ̄ ⲡⲟⲩⲉⲉⲓ ⲡⲟⲩⲉⲉⲓ) (63:17–18). They sing hymns to the Father in gratitude because of his overflowing sweetness (62:33–64:8). "Through the song" (ϩⲛ̄ ⲡⲓϩⲱⲥ) (68:22–23) the Aeons give glory to the Father, and as they "glorify him, he returns the glory to those who glorify [him]".[53] On account of this, the Aeons "bore fruit through the Father for one another".[54] They are granted free will and wisdom (74:20–23) and the

51 61:12–13: ⲁⲧⲣⲟⲩⲙ[ⲙⲉ ⲇⲉ ϫⲉ] ⲛⲓⲙ ⲡⲉ ⲡⲓⲱⲧ ⲉⲧϣⲟ[ⲟⲡ ⲛⲉⲩ]. See also 72:28–73:2.

52 61:9–17: ⲁⲧ[ⲣⲟⲩ]ⲣ̄ ⲛⲟⲉⲓ ⲙ̄ⲙⲉⲛ ϫⲉ ⲟ̣[ⲩ ⲡⲉⲧ]ϣ[ⲟ]ⲟⲡ· ⲛⲉⲩ· ⲁϥⲣ̄ ϩⲙⲁⲧ [ⲁϯ ⲛ̄ϯϣⲁ]ⲣⲡ̄ ⲙ̄ⲫⲟⲣⲙⲏ ⲁⲧⲣⲟⲩⲙ[ⲙⲉ ⲇⲉ ϫⲉ] ⲛⲓⲙ ⲡⲉ ⲡⲓⲱⲧ ⲉⲧϣⲟ[ⲟⲡ ⲛⲉⲩ] ⲡⲣⲉⲛ ⲙⲉⲛ ⲙ̄ⲡⲓⲱⲧ· ⲁϥⲧⲉⲉⲓϥ̣ ⲛⲉⲩ ϩⲁⲧⲛ̄ ⲟⲩⲥⲙⲏ ⲉⲥϯ ϩⲣⲁⲟⲩ ⲛⲉⲩ ϫⲉ ⲡⲉⲧϣⲟⲟⲡ· ϥϣⲟⲟⲡ ⲁⲃⲁⲗ ϩⲙ̄ ⲡⲣⲉⲛ ⲉⲧⲙ̄ⲙⲉⲩ. Translation by Attridge and Pagels, slightly modified.

53 69:11–12: ⲉⲩϯ ⲉⲁⲩ ⲛⲉϥ· ϣⲁⲣⲉϥ[.ⲥ]ⲥⲱⲧⲙ̄ ⲡⲉⲁⲩ· ⲁⲛ ⲉⲧϯ ⲉⲁⲩ ⲛⲉ[ϥ]. Here I read ⲥⲱⲧ as the verb "returns", and not as Attridge and Pagels do, as "hear". This fits better with what we read further on in the text, where the Aeons are described as being perfect because they glorify the perfect one (69:36–37).

54 69:18–20: ⲉⲛⲧ[ⲁ]ⲩϯ ⲕⲁⲣⲡⲟⲥ ⲙ̣̄ⲙⲁⲥ ⲁⲃⲁⲗ ϩⲙ̄ ⲡⲓⲱ[ⲧ]· ϣⲁ ⲛⲟⲩⲉ·ⲣ̣ⲏⲩ. This reciprocity between the Father and the Aeons is the first and second aspect of the life of the Aeons, also called fruit (ⲕⲁⲣⲡⲟⲥ): the Aeons first glorify the Father; then they themselves receive

Father wishes them to “help each other” (ⲛ̄ⲥⲉϯ ⲧ̣[ⲟⲟ]ⲧϥ̄ ⲛ̄ⲛⲉⲩⲉⲣⲉⲩ) (72:17–18). There exists a hierarchy among the Aeons and there are different levels in the Pleroma, just as there are more and less important parts in a human body. The organization among the Aeons is like that in a:

> human body, which is partitioned in an indivisible way into members of members, primary members and subordinate ones, big [and] small.[55]

The individual Aeons exist in a collective and it is through the collective that they are supposed to glorify the Father (69:24–30). However, “there is a limit to speech set in the Pleroma, so that they are silent about the incomprehensibility of the Father”.[56] It is also suggested that advanced Aeons are supposed to help those lower down but keep quiet about matters that belong to more advanced things, like the true nature of the Father (74:29–75:13). The breach of this hierarchy is what causes the creation of cosmos, when the Aeon at the lowest level attempts to “grasp the incomprehensibility and give glory to it”.[57] The Logos attempts to approach the Father “in order to glorify the Father” (ⲁϥϯ ⲉ̣ⲁⲩ ⲙ̄ⲡⲓⲱⲧ) (76:5–6) but this fails because “he did not have the command” (ⲉⲙⲛⲧⲉϥ ⲙ̄ⲡⲟ̣[ⲩ]ⲁϩ ⲥⲁϩⲛⲉ) (76:11–12).

The “school of conduct” of the Aeons seems to refer to a collective with the clear objective of giving glory to the Father; they have rules of hierarchy that include different levels of knowledge with rules surrounding the boundaries between the levels of knowledge and glorification. This heavenly “school of conduct” seems to correlate with the community on earth and the cosmic school. Let us return to the cosmic school in *TriTrac* and investigate this further.

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glorification from the Father, and then “the fruit of the third is glorifications by the will (ⲟⲩⲱϣⲉ) of each one of the Aeons” (69:37–39: ⲡⲓⲕⲁⲣⲡⲟⲥ ⲇⲉ ⲛ̄ⲧⲁϥ ⲙ̄ⲡⲙⲁϩ ϣⲁⲙⲛ̄ⲧ ϩⲛ̄ⲉⲁⲩ ⲛⲉ ⲛ̄ⲧⲉ ⲡⲟⲩⲱϣⲉ· ⲙ̄ⲡⲟⲩⲉ ⲡⲟⲩⲉ ⲛ̄ⲛⲁⲓⲱⲛ). See also 70:4–5. We also read that it is through the singing of hymns of glorification and through the power of the oneness with him who brought them forth they were “drawn into a blending (ⲟⲩⲧⲱⲧ) and a merging (ⲁⲩⲙⲟⲩϫϭ) and unity” (68:23–28). The Aeons are naturally drawn to the Father just like someone who smells a sweet “fragrance” and seeks the reason for the sweet smell (72:6–8).

55 74:13–18: ⲙ̄ⲡⲣⲏⲧⲉ ⲛ̄ⲟⲩ̣ⲥⲱⲙⲁ̣· ⲛ̄ⲣⲱⲙⲉ· ⲉϥⲡⲏϣ· ϩⲛ̣̄ ⲟⲩⲙⲛ̄ⲧⲁⲧⲡⲱϣⲉ· ⲁϩⲙ̄ⲙⲉⲗⲟⲥ̣ ⲛ̄ⲧⲉ ϩⲙ̄ⲙⲉⲗⲟⲥ ϩⲙ̄ⲙⲉⲗⲟⲥ ⲛ̄ϣⲁ̣ⲣⲡ̄ ⲙⲛ̄ ϩⲛ̄ ϩⲁⲉⲟⲩ ⲁϩⲛ̄ⲛⲁ̣ϭ̣ ϩ̣[ⲓ] ϣⲏⲙ. Translation by Attridge and Pagels, slightly modified. Compare 1 Cor 12 here.

56 75:13–16: ⲟⲩⲛ ⲟⲩϩⲟⲣⲟⲥ ⲛ̣̄ϣⲉϫⲉ· ⲉϥⲕⲏ ϩⲙ̄ ⲡⲗⲏⲣⲟⲩⲙⲁ· ⲁⲧ[ⲣ]ⲟ̣ⲩⲕⲁⲣⲱⲟⲩ· ⲙⲉⲛ ⲁⲧⲙⲛ̄ⲧⲁⲧⲉ· ϩ̣ⲁ̣ⲥ̣ ⲙ̄ⲡⲓⲱⲧ.

57 75:18–20: ⲁⲧⲣⲉϥϩⲓ̈ ⲧⲟ[ⲟ]ⲧ̣ϥ̄· ⲁⲧⲉϩⲟ ⲛ̄ϯⲙⲛ̄ⲧ·ⲁⲧⲣ̄ ⲛⲟⲓ̈ ⲙ̄ⲙ̣ⲁⲥ· ϥϯ ⲉⲁⲩ ⲛⲉⲥ. Translation by Attridge and Pagels, slightly modified.

4 The Cosmic School: an Imperfect Reflection of the Heavens

In *TriTrac*, the cosmos is described as “a place of receiving teaching” (ⲟⲩⲙⲁ ⲛ̄ϫⲓⲥⲃⲱ) (123:12), of gaining form, and we read that the Savior came down to earth because people “need teaching” (ⲉⲧⲣ̄ ⲭⲣⲉⲓⲁ ⲛ̄ⲥⲃⲟⲩ) (116:17–20).[58] Let us look at the description of creation again, but this time from the perspective of the concept “form”, which was so central for gaining knowledge of God in the school of conduct of the Pleroma.

The Logos’ initial creation is described as two sides that make war on each other, associated with psychic and material substances. The Logos returns to his initial stable state on account of the Savior’s appearance. After the Savior’s return, the Logos becomes capable of bringing forth “living images of the living persons” (ϩⲛ̄ϩⲓⲕⲱⲛ ⲉⲩⲟⲩⲁⲛϩ̄ ⲛ̄ⲇⲉ ⲛⲓϩⲟ ⲉⲧⲁⲛϩ̄) (90:31–32).[59] Among those powers that war against each other, there are those who can be saved (the psychics), and the Logos placed before them “beautiful rationality” (ⲡⲓⲗⲟⲅⲟⲥ ⲛ̄ⲧⲥⲁⲉⲓⲟ) so that “it might bring them (the psychics) into a form” (ⲁⲧⲉⲣϥⲛ̄ⲧⲟⲩ ⲁⲩⲙⲟⲣⲫⲏ·) (99:6–7).[60] When the Logos had “returned to his stability” (ⲉⲛⲧⲁϥⲥⲧⲁϥ ⲁϩⲟⲩⲛ ⲁⲡⲉϥⲥⲙⲛ̄) (92:23–24), he established himself in another level of powers made of pneumatic substances (93:15–16). The powers in this level had “the form of the thing” (ⲡⲥⲙⲁⲧ· ⲙ̄ⲫⲱⲃ) (93:23) that resembles the Pleroma.[61] “They are forms of maleness, since they are not from the sickness which is femaleness”.[62] When the Demiurge and his helpers create humans they used the substances available to them, left and right, material and psychic, “each [of the or]ders forming [man in the way] in which it (itself) is”.[63] Corporeality is described

58 In *ValExp* we also encounter salvation described as gaining “form” and here too the cosmos is called a school. We read that the “seeds of Sophia are incomplete and formless” (ⲛ̄ⲥⲡⲉⲣⲙⲁ̣ [ⲛ̄ⲧ]ⲥ̣ⲟ̣ⲫⲓⲁ ⲥⲉⲟⲉ[ⲓ]ⲛ̄ⲁⲧϫⲱⲕ ⲁⲃⲁ[ⲗ ⲁⲩ]ⲱ ⲛ̄ⲁⲙⲟⲣⲫ[ⲟⲥ]) (35:12–13). The cosmos is made up of material as well as pneumatic substances. This is why the Demiurge created “a place like this and a school like this, for learning and form” (37:28–31).

59 Translation by Attridge and Pagels, slightly modified.

60 Something similar is the case in *InterpKnow* where the All (the Pleroma) is described as “receiving form” (ⲛ̣[ϥ̄]ϫ̣[ⲓ] [ⲙⲟ]ⲣⲫⲏ) (14:14) when it is fulfilled.

61 ⲥⲙⲁⲧ is one of the Coptic equivalents of μορφή. See Crum, *Coptic*, 340b. I do not agree with Attridge and Pagels, “The Tripartite Tractate”, 263, who translate ⲙ̄ⲡⲥⲙⲁⲧ· ⲙ̄ⲫⲱⲃ as with “form of matter”. This translation makes it look like the pneumatics are like matter, but the opposite is actually true.

62 94:16–17: ⲛⲉⲉⲓ ⲉⲧⲉ ϩⲛ̄ⲙⲟⲣⲫⲏ ⲛⲉ ⲙ̄ⲙⲛ̄ⲧϩⲁⲟⲩⲧ ⲉϩⲛ̄ⲛⲁⲃⲁⲗ ϩⲙ̄ ⲡⲓϣⲱⲛⲉ ⲉⲛ ⲛⲉ ⲉⲧⲉ ⲧⲁⲉⲓ ⲧⲉ· ⲧⲙⲛ̄ⲧⲥϩⲓ̈ⲙⲉ. Translation by Attridge and Pagels, slightly modified. Femaleness is in *TriTrac* associated with passion and materiality. See Chapter 2 for a discussion of the “sickness of femaleness” and the relation to the Platonic Dyad, the “mother of becoming”.

63 105:8–10: ⲉⲡⲓⲟⲩⲉⲉⲓ ⲡ̣[ⲓⲟ]ⲩ̣ⲉ̣ⲉ̣ⲓ̣ ⲛ̣[ⲛⲓⲧⲁ]ⲅⲙⲁ· ⲉϥϯ ⲙⲟⲣⲫⲏ ⲙ̄[ⲡⲣⲱⲙⲉ ⲛⲑⲉ] ⲉⲧϥ̄ϣⲟⲟⲡ· ⲙ̄ⲙⲟⲥ· Attridge and Pagels do not give any suggestion as to the emendation in the lacuna on line 9. Here I follow Thomassen’s emendation. Thomassen, *Le traité tripartite*, 180.

as “the sickness (of being) [in ma]ny forms” ([ⲡⲓ]ϣⲱⲛⲉ ⲛ̄ⲧⲉⲥ ⲡⲉ ⲡⲧⲱϣⲉ [ϩⲛ ϩⲁ]ϩ̣ ⲛ̄ⲥⲙⲟⲧ) (106:8–9). But the Logos controlled the Demiurge and made him breathe into the humans the pneumatic substance, too, so that “the first human was a mixed formation, and a mixed creation, and a deposit of those of the left and those of the right, and a pneumatic rationality”.[64] When the Savior appears for the second time, this time as a human in the world, the pneumatic people immediately recognize him and gain form (118:29–119:16). As we saw, the pneumatics make up the body of the Savior and they are associated with the term “church”. The psychics, however, hesitated but after being “instructed by means of a voice” they “run to him in faith”.[65] The materials are lost, because they are “darkness” (ⲕⲉⲕⲉⲓ) (119:10) and they “shun the shining of the light” (ⲉϥⲛⲁⲛⲁϩϥ̄ ⲁⲃⲁⲗ· ⲙ̄ⲡⲣⲣⲉ ⲙ̄ⲡⲟⲩⲁⲉⲓⲛ) (119:10–11). Thus, “the material (class) will receive destruction in every way”.[66] Those who heed Christ’s message will ultimately enjoy the dissolution of “the whole multiplicity of shapes and from inequality and change”.[67]

Here it becomes clear that the psychic powers as well as the psychic humans will gain form, and that this is done through teaching and by placing a beautiful order above them. The cosmic school in this way provides the inhabitants with form, similarly to the school of conduct of the Pleroma; however, there are also important differences. There is no material or psychic substance in the Pleroma, and thus the larger community on earth cannot be a pure reflection of the heavens; this is why the term “church” is restricted to the pneumatics. What exists in the cosmos is ultimately a pale representation of what is above or, rather, the pedagogic tasks in heaven which are restricted to members of the church are expanded to include the psychics on earth as well. The cosmic system is still intimately tied up with the gaining of “form”, similar to the aeonic school in the Pleroma. The way “form” is presented aligns itself well with the epistemology we discussed in Chapter 1, where the pneuma and psychê possess *image* and *likeness* of the things above and thus can receive salvation. The *likeness* and *image* corresponds with being able to gain *form*, and thus attain salvation. This takes place through the Savior, “the form of the formless”. However, there is a hierarchy in the way pneumatic and psychic retain form, just as there is a hierarchy between the way pneumatic *image* and the

64 106:18–22: ϫⲉ ⲡⲓϣⲁⲣⲡ̄ ⲇⲉ ⲛ̄ⲣⲱⲙⲉ· ⲟⲩ̣ⲡⲗⲁⲥⲙⲁ ⲡⲉ ⲉϥⲧⲏϩ ⲡⲉ· ⲁⲩⲱ ⲟⲩⲧⲥⲉ·ⲛⲟ ⲡⲉ ⲉϥⲧⲏϩ ⲡⲉ· ⲁⲩⲱ ⲟⲩⲕⲟⲩ ⲁϩⲣⲏⲓ̈ ⲡⲉ· ⲛ̄ⲇⲉ ⲛⲓϭⲃⲟⲩⲣ ⲡⲉ ⲙⲛ̄ ⲛⲓⲟⲩⲛⲉⲙ ⲡⲉ· ⲁⲩⲱ ⲟⲩⲡⲛ(ⲉⲩⲙ)ⲁⲧⲓⲕⲟ̄ⲥ ⲛ̄ⲗⲟⲅⲟⲥ. Translation by Attridge and Pagels, slightly modified.

65 119:2: ⲁⲡⲱⲧ· ϣⲁⲣⲁϥ ϩⲛ̄ⲛ ⲟⲩⲛⲁϩⲧⲉ. This is because they were “instructed through a voice” (ϩⲓ̈ⲧⲛ̄ ⲟⲩⲥⲙⲏ ⲉⲩϯ ⲥⲃⲱ) (119:3).

66 119:18–19: ⲡⲓϩⲩⲗⲓⲕⲟⲛ ⲛ̄ⲇⲉ ϥⲛⲁϫⲓ̣ ⲡⲧⲉⲕⲟ ⲕⲁⲧⲁ ⲣⲏⲧⲉ ⲛⲓⲙ.

67 132:19–20: ⲙ̄ⲡⲓϩⲁϩ ⲛ̄ⲣⲏⲧⲉ ⲧⲏⲣϥ̄ ⲁⲩⲱ ⲧⲙⲛ̄ⲧⲁⲧϣⲱϣ ⲙ̣ⲛ̣̄ ⲡϣⲓⲃⲉ. Translation by Attridge and Pagels, slightly modified. Compare Gal 3:28.

psychic *likeness* reflect knowledge.[68] The pneumatics do not need to be "drawn into form" (ⲁⲧⲉⲣϥⲛ̄ⲧⲟⲩ ⲁⲩⲙⲟⲣⲫⲏ) (99:6–7) as the psychics do. As we saw, the pneumatics in the Pleroma that the Logos creates in the cosmic system—a heaven below the actual heaven—have the form already. When the pneuma is placed in matter it seems to lie dormant, as I argued in the last chapter, but is awakened as the Savior appears. Although the psychic people hesitate, they are nevertheless instructed "through a voice" (ϩⲓⲧⲛ̄ ⲟⲩⲥⲙⲏ) (119:3) and gain form that way. Life on earth is in this way associated with the potentiality of gaining form.[69]

It is clear that *TriTrac* places great emphasis on the pneumatics; it is they who have come to earth in order to edify the Pleroma through their experience of the worldly life. The pneumatics will be integrated into the Pleroma, not the psychics. This is represented in the great focus on pedagogy in *TriTrac*'s description of the pneumatics. The pneumatics are to educate themselves but are also responsible for the formation of the psychics, just like lower members in the aeonic community are taken care of by those above. The psychics are those who needed instruction and guidance and it is the pneumatics that have been appointed for this task.[70] The pneumatics "are the apostles and evangelists, the

68 In *InterpKnow* we also have a clear separation between different members of the church: those with spiritual gifts and those without. However, the way the cosmos is portrayed is very different. The school of the cosmos is associated with error, fear, and illusion, while the *TriTrac* portrays the organization of the cosmos as the road to salvation. Here it becomes obvious that the common theology these two texts are often thought to share takes a backseat role in favor of other matters. As I have argued elsewhere, *InterpKnow*'s negative portrayal of the cosmos is understandable if one reads it from the perspective of the ostensive social conditions portrayed in the text. The text addresses a community in conflict (especially 15:34–35, 16:31–38) and one of the main themes throughout the text is the mediation of this dissension (see Paul Linjamaa, "The Pit and the Day from Above: Sabbath-Symbolism in the *Gospel of Truth* and the *Interpretation of Knowledge*", *Swedish Exegetical Yearbook* 80 (2015): 187–206). *TriTrac* does not reflect any conflict among its addressees. Thus, the different social situations behind the texts are reflected in the theology, which is a good reminder of the placid nature of the phenomenon 'Valentinianism'.

69 It is possible that we encounter something similar in *ValExp*. In this text, we read that the "seeds of Sophia are incomplete and formless" (ⲛ̄ⲥⲡⲉⲣⲙⲁ̣ [ⲛ̄ⲧ]ⲥ̣ⲟ̣ⲫⲓⲁ ⲥⲉⲟⲉ[ⲓ]ⲛ̄ⲁⲧϫⲱⲕ ⲁⲃⲁ[ⲗ ⲁⲩ]ⲱ ⲛ̄ⲁⲙⲟⲣⲫ[ⲟⲥ]) (35:12–13). The cosmos is made up of material as well as pneumatic substance. This is why the Demiurge created "a place like this and a school like this, for learning and form" (37:28–31).

70 This too, could be reflecting 1 Cor 2:16 where we encounter the question: "For who has known the mind of the Lord that he may instruct Him? But we have the mind of Christ" (τίς γὰρ ἔγνω νοῦν Κυρίου, ὃς συμβιβάσει αὐτόν; ἡμεῖς δὲ νοῦν Χριστοῦ ἔχομεν). Dunderberg is probably correct when commenting upon Irenaeus and concluding that it is likely that those who Irenaeus comments upon, who split Christians into psychics and pneumatics,

disciples of the Savior and they are teachers of those who need teaching".[71] The pedagogical skills of the pneumatics in the earthly community are reflected in the pneumatic "church" that the Logos creates upon the appearance of the Savior. These powers are described as possessing skills that focus on pedagogy; they are known for "their desire to be upright" (ⲛⲉⲩⲟⲩⲱϣⲉ ⲁⲧ̣ⲣⲉϥⲧⲉϩⲟ ⲁⲣⲉⲧϥ̄), "openness for instruction" (ⲟⲩⲱⲣϩ̄ ⲁⲩⲥⲃⲟⲩ), "eye for vision" (ⲃⲉⲗ <ⲉ>ⲟⲩϭⲛ̄ⲛⲉⲩ), "wisdom for ones' mind" (ⲥⲟⲫⲓⲁ ⲁⲡⲉϥⲙⲉⲩⲉ), and "word for speaking" (ⲗⲟⲅⲟⲥ ⲁⲩϭⲛϣⲉϫⲉ) (94:2–9). Thus, the pedagogic task of the leaders of the community, "the church" within the larger assembly, is reflected in the nature of the pneumatic substance to which those members have access. The psychics are not 'outsiders' but represent Christians who are not endowed with the task of gaining moral knowledge in order to be reintegrated in the Pleroma; rather, they are rewarded for their services to the pneumatics who are those with the most important task. The psychics still gain salvation as part of the community of those who believe in Christ, a fact over which the Savior rejoices (122:12–30), and they celebrate communion with the pneumatics.

In conclusion, the community on earth corresponds to the structure of the pleromatic community in heaven,[72] but only to the degree that this is possible

develop this Pauline distinction (Dunderberg, *Gnostic Morality*, 137–148). See the previous chapter for a further discussion of this.

71 116:17–20: ⲛⲓⲁⲡⲟⲥⲧⲟⲗⲟⲥ ⲛⲉ ⲙⲛ̄ ⲛⲓⲣⲙ̄ϯ ϣⲙ̄ ⲛⲟⲩϥⲉ ⲛ̄ⲙⲁⲑⲏⲧⲏⲥ ⲛ̄ⲇⲉ ⲛ̄ⲧⲁⲩ ⲙ̄ⲡⲥⲱⲧⲏⲣ· ⲛⲉ ϩⲛ̄ⲥⲁϩ ⲇⲉ ⲛ̄ⲧⲁⲩ {ⲛ̄}ⲛⲉ ⲛⲉⲉⲓ ⲉⲧⲣ̄ ⲭⲣⲉⲓⲁ ⲛ̄ⲥⲃⲟⲩ. Here I diverge from Attridge and Pagels, who translate ϩⲛ̄ⲥⲁϩ ⲇⲉ ⲛ̄ⲧⲁⲩ ⲛⲉ ⲛⲉⲉⲓ ⲉⲧⲣ̄ ⲭⲣⲉⲓⲁ ⲛ̄ⲥⲃⲟⲩ "and teachers who need instruction". I believe ⲛ̄ⲧⲁⲩ stands in relation to the teachers, i.e. ⲛⲉⲉⲓ ⲉⲧⲣ̄ ⲭⲣⲉⲓⲁ ⲛ̄ⲥⲃⲟⲩ, "those who need teaching". This makes better sense in a context where teachers and apostles are spreading the message of Jesus.

72 In the Valentinian text *InterpKnow*, for example, we do find something very similar to *TriTrac*'s way of portraying psychics and pneumatics, although these terms are not used as human categories in *InterpKnow.* In this text, we find references to two schools as well as two levels of learning, but in a somewhat different way than *TriTrac*'s pneumatics and psychics. The term "school" (σχολή) appears twice in the first part of the text, on pages 9 and 10, which represent two of the most well-preserved pages of the very fragmented first part of *InterpKnow*. As I have argued elsewhere, the first part of the text seems to include a mythological exposition that provides a frame for the paraenetic sections in the latter half of the text (Linjamaa, "Female Figures", 29–54). A "school of life" is juxtaposed to "another school", connected to death. The first part explicates how the soul fell into the world, was set on by cosmic powers and imprisoned in the body. Page 9 begins to tell of how the Savior was "entangled with the creations and destroyed them" (ⲉ̣ϥⲁ̣ϭⲗⲁⲙⲗⲗⲙ̄ ⲁⲛ̣[ⲉϩ]ⲃⲏⲩⲉ ⲛ̄ϥϣⲣ̄ϣⲱⲣⲟⲩ), and how he "spoke to the church" (ⲉ̣[ⲁϥ]ϣⲁϫⲉ ⲙ̄ⲛ ⲧⲉⲕ[ⲕⲗ]ⲏⲥⲓⲁ) and became "its teacher of immortality" (ⲛⲉⲥⲛ̄ⲥⲁϩ ⲛ̄ⲧⲙⲛ[ⲧⲁ]ⲧ̣ⲙ̣ⲟⲧ). After this follows the mention of a school and this sentence is unfortunately very fragmentary: [..]ϣ̣ⲡ[.....]ϩⲁ[....] ⲥⲭⲟⲗⲏ ⲛ̄ϣ̣[.....]ϩ̣[..] ⲁⲣⲉⲩ[....]ⲛ̄ⲕⲉⲥⲭ[...]. We read of a "school of [...]" something. All text-critical emendations read the ⲱ following the ⲛ̄ after ⲥⲭⲟⲗⲏ

within the limitations of cosmic existence. Within the church on earth, the inner community, higher level members help lower level members just like in the Pleroma, but the pneumatics also supply psychic Christians with guidance. The larger community of Christians on earth is not a complete mirror of the Church in the Pleroma, since there is no psychê beyond the cosmos. Let us turn to investigating the details of the relationship between psychic and pneumatic members of the community, looking more closely at what teaching and learning entailed. What exactly was the nature of the different pneumatic and psychic instructions? What do the reference to voice and invisible instruction mean?

5 Silent and Oral Instruction: Formation, Baptism, and Education

In *TriTrac* all levels of the community seem to receive instruction. We read that no one has found the Father "by his own wisdom and power" (ϩϊⲧⲛ̄ ⲧⲉϥⲥⲟⲫⲓⲁ ⲙ̄ⲙⲓⲛ ⲙ̄ⲙⲟϥ ⲙⲛ̄ ⲧⲉϥϭⲟⲙ·) (126:14–15). The pneumatics teach the psychics but the pneumatics are also depicted as receiving instruction. While the psychics are those who were instructed vocally by fellow Christians,[73] the pneumatics are "instructed in an invisible manner" (ϩⲛⲛ ⲟⲩ[ⲙ]ⲛ̄ⲧ·ⲁⲧⲛ̣ⲉ̣ⲩ ⲁⲣⲁⲥ· ⲁϥⲧⲥⲉⲃⲁⲩ ⲁⲣⲁϥ̣) (115:1–2) by the Savior himself. This is similar to First Corinthians, where Paul differentiates between ordinary human wisdom and pneumatic teaching, which is without words (1Cor 2:13–14). In *TriTrac* this seems to be expanded upon. After one has received instruction, one enters a state where there is "no need of voice" (ⲙⲛ̄ ⲭⲣⲉⲓⲁ ⲛ̄ⲥⲙⲏ) (124:19–20). The Aeons, too, are instructed "by

as the beginning of the word ⲱⲛϩ, "life", which seems very plausible. The "school of life" fits the previous sentence, where the Savior spoke to the church and taught it immortality. Then we have "another school", which is a very likely emendation of ⲕⲉⲥⲭ[ⲟⲗⲏ]. There are not many words that have the letters ⲥ and ⲭ in them, and since the word ⲥⲭⲟⲗⲏ is just mentioned and fits the lacuna, and since death is mentioned in the very next sentence, it seems plausible that we here have "another school" connected to death which contrasts with "the school of life". We also read of writings or letters (ⲥϩⲉⲉⲓ), and the cosmos which is connected to "our death" (see page 9 in *InterpKnow*). For the Coptic text and generous emendations, see John Turner, "The Interpretation of Knowledge", in *The Coptic Gnostic Library: Nag Hammadi Codices XI, XII, XIII*, ed. C. H. Hedrick (Leiden: Brill, 1990), 21–88. For more conservative emendations, see Uwe-Karsten Plisch, *Die Auslegung Der Erkenntnis* (*Nag-Hammadi-Codex XI, 1*) (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1996); Funk, Painchaud and Thomassen, *L'interprétation de la gnose*. There are considerable similarities between *TriTrac* and *InterpKnow*, but they most likely do not reflect the same community background, and the symbol utilized for the school is also different.

73 "Through a voice", or "vocally" (ϩⲓⲧⲛ̄ ⲟⲩⲥⲙⲏ) (119:3).

means of a voice" (ϩⲁⲧⲛ̄ ⲟⲩⲥⲙⲏ) (61:15) concerning what it is that exists, but then sink into silence. How should we understand the discussion of different levels of learning and invisible learning versus vocal learning?

As I argued above, the "school of conduct" of the Aeons is associated with gaining form and to gain form one needs instruction. It is also clear that the organization of the cosmos is made so that it will reveal something of the true forms. This resembles how Plato described human life and the struggle for excellence.[74] In the metaphor of the cave, Plato describes the ascent from the dark places of the cave to the light of the true forms as a long education.[75] This image, of ascending from darkness into light through instruction and initiation, is a dominant theme in Hellenistic mystery cults, and it would become a central ritual aspect in early Christianity as well. Receiving instruction was a vital part in the process of becoming a member of a new community.[76] This was sometimes expressed as forming and reforming one's mind. Carrol Harrison has discussed this phenomenon among Christians in antiquity in her book *The Art of Listening.* Harrison argues that a common means to describe the way a person became aware of something was that of an image being imprinted on the mind or an image which had previously been imprinted being remembered.[77] This view fits well with *TriTrac* in light of the discussions of ancient cognitive theory with which we engaged in the first part of this study. Harrison also points out that many early Christian writers, like Irenaeus, Clement, Origen, Athanasius, Gregory of Nyssa, and later Augustine, seem to have thought that humans had lost the ability to directly experience God, that humans had been "formed" in the image of God in the beginning of time, but that the image of God had been lost through sin and disobedience, as a result of the original fall in paradise.[78] Several Christian authors portrayed paradise as a place where written and spoken words were not needed, where one

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74 Plato, *The Republic* III.402c.

75 Plato, *The Republic* VI.514a. Not all could, or should, undertake the gruesome curriculum that led to being able to perceive (or rather remember) true forms; there was a need for all social classes (gold, silver, and bronze, as Plato calls them) and it was only the true lover of wisdom who, after continuous training, by the age of 50 could perceive true forms (*The Republic* 521c–541b).

76 Victor Turner has noted the importance of rituals, initiation rituals as well (where a crucial aspect often includes learning new things and receiving hidden knowledge), for social formation and identity creation, for individual and group alike. See Victor Turner, *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure* (Chicago: Aldine Publishing, 1969).

77 Carol Harrison, *The Art of Listening in the Early Church* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 1–14.

78 Harrison, *The Art of Listening*, 254–255.

was in intuitive contact with God's mind.[79] Reinstating the lost image of God was, nevertheless, commenced through words, through oral instruction and study. It is worth reminding ourselves that we are dealing with oral cultures. Texts were read aloud, people wrote by dictating aloud to a scribe, and one announced one's writings by performing them in public.[80] Harrison argues that many early Christian authors made a distinction between inward hearing and outward hearing.[81] In order to be able to hear the word of God within oneself—to be able to believe, pray, and ultimately act in accordance with the will of God—one first needed to receive oral instruction and be baptized.[82]

I argue that it is in this context—in ancient negotiations between inward formation and the outside cosmic world—that we need to place *TriTrac*'s distinctions between psychic and pneumatic learning, between pneumatic invisible instruction and psychic vocal instruction, in order for them to become understandable.[83] The importance *TriTrac*, and other early Christian texts, place on "gaining form" in order to be able to experience the divine and hear only through the mind, gain even further meaning in light of ancient cognitive theory, as explored in Chapter 1. As per ancient cognitive theory, *TriTrac* presents the imprints that take shape in the mind as determined by the shape of one's constitution, the mixture of matter, psychê and pneuma. The form of your mind affected the imprints that were made in it. Furthermore, while the intellect should be the leading principle of any life that was to result in happiness, the emotive part could still be useful and of support to the intellect,[84] just like the pneumatics are represented as the natural leaders who gain support from the psychics.

What about the ritual aspect of the discussion of formation? The ideal community in *TriTrac* does not seem to differ from many other early Christian

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79 Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* IV.4.2; Origen, *Against Celsus* I.48; For references to Ambrose, Augustine, Clement, and for a broader discussion, see Harrison, *The Art of Listening*, 61–83.

80 Harrison, *The Art of Listening*, 61–63.

81 Harrison, *The Art of Listening*, 61–83.

82 To this can be added that some Christians seem to have gone further than others in developing theories and rituals based on the relation between sound and voice in the cosmos vis-à-vis the heavens. One example is Marcosian vocal magic which seems to have been a very intricate system based on similar concepts, whereby one's mind could be cultivated through harnessing the relationship between heavenly sounds and earthly echoes (Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* I.13–17).

83 *GosTruth* also seems to emphasize the reading of text and the different ways to pronounce truth compared to error. The text connects people's ability for salvation with an ability to hear the calling of their name. See especially NHC I, 3.21–23.

84 See Chapter 2 for details.

constellations when it comes to initiation: membership is portrayed as being sealed with a baptism. In fact, it would seem that we find in *TriTrac* references to pre-baptismal instructions, instructions that often were considered necessary before one was allowed to become a member of a Christian community. Page 127 of *TriTrac* begins a long passage on baptism:

> As for the baptism which exists in the fullest sense, into which the All will descend and in which they will be, there is no other baptism apart from this one alone, which is the redemption into God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, when assent is made through faith in those names, which are a single name of the gospel, when they have come to believe what has been said to them, namely that they exist.[85]

Here it would seem that the catechumen confesses, or rather assents to the trinity and then has to *trust* in “what has been said to them” (ⲛⲉⲧⲉⲁⲩϫⲟⲟⲩ ⲉⲛⲉⲩⲟⲩ), that they should have faith in the fact that they truly exist, or rather will remain to exist even after their cosmic existence, because their existence is based on their unity with the All. These could indeed be references to pre-baptismal instruction. The references to higher order members teaching lower order members, and the lower order members needing oral instruction (“with voice”), supports such a reading.

However, education and formation did not necessarily stop after baptism.[86] Cyril of Jerusalem, for example, wrote that people who were taught the basic Christian message heard from the outside, while those who were baptized started to hear from the inside.[87] Something similar seems to be the case in

85 127:25–128:5: ϫⲉ ⲡⲓ̣ⲃⲁⲡⲧⲓⲥⲙⲁ ⲉⲧϣⲟⲟⲡ ϩⲛ̄ⲛ ⲟⲩⲙⲛ̄ⲧϫⲁⲉⲓⲥ ⲡⲉⲉⲓ ⲉⲧⲟⲩⲛⲁϣⲉ ⲁϩⲣⲏï ⲁⲣⲁϥ ⲛ̄ϭⲓ ⲛⲓⲡⲧⲏⲣϥ̄ ⲛ̄ⲥⲉϣⲱⲡⲉ ⲛ̄ϩⲏⲧϥ̄ ⲙⲛ ϭⲉⲃⲁ·ⲡⲧⲓⲥⲙⲁ ⲥⲁ ⲡⲉⲧⲙ̄ⲙⲉⲩ ⲟⲩⲁⲉⲉⲧϥ̄ ⲉⲧⲉ ⲡⲉⲉⲓ ⲡⲉ· ⲡⲥⲱⲧⲉ· ⲁϩⲟⲩⲛ ⲉⲡⲛⲟⲩⲧⲉ· ⲡⲓⲱⲧ· ⲙⲛ̄ ⲡϣⲏⲣⲉ ⲙⲛ̄ ⲡⲛ(ⲉⲩⲙ)ⲁ ⲉⲧⲟⲩⲁⲁⲃ· ⲉⲁⲥϣⲱⲡⲉ ⲛ̄ϭⲓ ϯϩⲟⲙⲟⲗⲟⲅⲓⲁ ⲁⲃⲁⲗ ϩⲓ̈ⲧⲛ̄ⲛ ⲟⲩⲛⲁϩⲧⲉ̣ ⲁϩⲟⲩⲛ ⲁⲛⲓⲣⲉⲛ ⲉⲧⲙ̄ⲙⲉⲩ ⲛⲉⲉⲓ̣ [ⲉⲧⲉ ⲟ]ⲩⲣⲉⲛ ⲛ̄ⲟⲩⲱⲧ ⲡⲉ ⲛ̄ⲇⲉ ⲡⲓϣⲙ̄ ⲛⲟⲩϥⲉ ⲉⲁⲩⲛ̄ϩⲟⲩⲧ ⲛ̄ⲛⲉⲧⲉⲁⲩϫⲟⲟⲩⲉ ⲛⲉⲩⲟⲩ ϫⲉ ⲥⲉϣⲟⲟⲡ ⲉⲁⲃⲁⲗ ⲙ̄ⲡⲁⲉⲓ ⲉⲩⲛ̄ⲧⲉⲩ ⲙ̄ⲙⲉⲩ ⲙ̄ⲡⲟⲩϫⲁⲉⲓⲧⲉ ⲛ̄ϫⲓ ⲛⲁï ⲉⲧⲁⲛⲁϩⲧⲉ ϫⲉ ⲥⲉϣⲟⲟⲡ. Translation by Attridge and Pagels, slightly modified.

86 See, for example, Brian B. McGowan, *Early Christian Worship: Early Church Practices in Social, Historical and Theological Perspective* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2014), 65–110. For a comprehensive study of early Christian baptism practices, see Everett Ferguson, *Baptism in the Early Church: History, Theology, and Liturgy in the First Five Centuries* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2009).

87 Cyril of Jerusalem, *Baptismal Instruction* 11.16. Irenaeus also accentuates the need of the *voice* of the Savior before one can learn to know God: “… we could have learned in no other way than by seeing our Teacher, and hearing His voice with our own ears, that, having become imitators of His works as well as doers of His words …” (Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* V.1.1. Translation by Alexander Roberts and William Rambaut in *Ante-Nicene*

TriTrac. According to *TriTrac*, there are three types of people. Each person's nature is revealed through their reaction to the appearance to the Savior, as well as their ability to learn and level of learning. We read in *TriTrac* that a "seed of the promise of Jesus Christ" exists in humans and that this seed provided the humans of the right constitution with the "ability to be instructed" and to be saved.[88] The instruction is, however, different for different humans. It is specifically stated that the pneumatics have come to earth to learn about, or rather to "train" (γυμνάζειν) themselves in the workings of evil.[89] Pneumatic people "received knowledge swiftly" (ⲁϥϫⲓ ⲙ̄ⲡⲥⲁⲩⲛⲉ ϩⲛ̄ ⲟⲩϭⲉⲡⲏ) (118:35–36), and have immediate access to a "good *proairesis*", that is, the ability to assent to the Savior. As such they are in a position to be role models and the psychics are told to follow the lead of the pneumatics. As mentioned above, ethics was often the last stage of a student's curriculum, which is not strange at all considering what we learn of Origen's school where one needed knowledge in physics, logic, and epistemology to be able to understand the finer structures of ethical reasoning.[90] In light of the discussion in the first part of this study, the relevance of knowledge in physics, epistemology, and cognitive theory becomes obvious; they explain the basis for human behavior. Few people, however, reached the level where ethics were discussed in such detail and further developed, and even fewer devoted their lives to the pursuit of moral excellence. In light of the socioeconomic reality of education in the Greco-Roman world, a deterministic system would most likely have made perfect sense; everyone could not be pneumatic teachers and moral experts. The vast majority of the inhabitants of the Roman Empire during the imperial age did not receive any formal education at all and were virtually illiterate.[91] Only a small

Fathers, vol. 1, eds. Alexander Roberts et al. (Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Publishing Co., 1885)).

88 117:14–23: "A seed of the promise of Jesus Christ was set up, whom we have served in (his) revelation and union. Now the promise possessed ability to be instructed and the return to what they are from the first, from which they possess the drop, so as to return to him, which is that which is called 'the redemption'". (ⲉϥⲕⲏ ⲁϩⲣⲏï ⲛ̄ϭⲓ ⲥⲡⲉⲣⲙⲁ ⲛ̄ⲇⲉ ⲡⲥⲱⲡ ⲱⲡ ⲛ̄ⲇⲉ ⲓⲏ(ⲥⲟⲩ)ⲥ ⲡⲉⲭⲣ(ⲓⲥⲧⲟ)ⲥ· ⲡⲉⲉⲓ ⲛ̄ⲧⲁⲛⲣ̄ ⲇⲓⲁⲕⲟⲛⲓ ⲙ̄ⲡⲓⲟⲩⲱⲛϩ̄ ⲁⲃⲟⲗ ⲙⲛ̄ ⲡⲓⲙⲟ̣[ⲩ]ϫϭ ⲡⲓϣⲡ ⲱⲡ ϭⲉ ⲛⲉⲩⲛ̄ⲧⲉϥ ⲙ̄ⲙⲉⲩ ⲡⲉ ⲙ̄ⲡϭⲛ̄ⲧⲥⲉⲃⲁⲩ ⲁⲩⲱ ⲡϭⲛ̄ⲥⲧⲁⲩ ⲉϩⲟⲩⲛ ⲁⲡⲉⲧⲁⲩϣⲟⲟⲡ· ⲙ̄ⲙⲁϥ ϫⲛ̄ ⲛ̄·ϣⲟⲣⲡ̄· ⲡⲁⲉⲓ ⲉⲧⲉⲩⲛ̄ⲧⲉⲩ ⲁⲃⲟⲗ ⲛ̄ϩⲏⲧϥ̄ ⲛ̄ϯⲧⲗ̄ϯⲗⲉ ⲁⲧⲣⲟⲩⲥⲧⲟ ⲁϩⲟⲩⲛ ⲁⲣⲁϥ· ⲉⲧⲉ ⲡⲉⲧⲟⲩⲙⲟⲩⲧⲉ ⲉⲣⲟϥ ϫⲉ· ⲡⲥⲱⲧⲉ ⲡⲉ).

89 They are come so that they can "experience the evil things and train (ⲣ̄ ⲅⲩⲙⲛⲁⲍⲉ) themselves in them": ⲉⲩⲛⲁϫⲓ ϯⲡⲉ· ⲛ̄ⲛⲓⲡⲉⲧⲑⲁⲩⲟⲩ ⲁⲩⲱ ⲛ̄ⲥⲉⲣ̄ ⲅⲩⲙⲛⲁⲍⲉ· ⲙ̄ⲙⲁⲩ ⲛ̄ϩⲣⲏï ⲛ̄ϩⲏⲧⲟⲩ (126:32–34).

90 Origen's curriculum ended with ethics and theology, and Stoics maintained that physics was the basis of ethical reasoning.

91 In Edward Watts' estimation, between one third and one tenth of the population in the high imperial period were literate to the level of being able to read and write basic

number of people ever completed the time-consuming and costly training of a specialized education that went beyond basic literacy. Those who did receive formal education would most likely have focused on mastering basic skills in reading and writing and not much more. Edward Watts argues that many of those who started such a basic training in literacy would not finish the course and of those who did—as literacy is a skill that has to be developed and practiced continuously—many would probably have forgotten much of what was learned as life continued.[92] In short, anything beyond basic literacy was reserved for the elite spheres of society and, furthermore, elite education was not centered on furthering knowledge of ethics but, rather, rhetoric and a career in public life.[93]

In light of this, the category of pneumatic was probably limited to a few people while the category of psychic seems to have been broad, including everyone within the community who needed the moral guidance of the pneumatics. It is perhaps conceivable that one could have been thought to be a pneumatic even though one lacked *formal* education; there are examples of teachers and sages that come from humble beginnings, like the Apostles, who are in fact called pneumatics in *TriTrac* (116:17–20).[94] Nevertheless, considering the description of pneumatics as teachers and moral experts, and considering the breadth of topics one had to master in order to discuss ethics in any detail (*TriTrac* being an example of this), a formal education would have been indispensable. Porphyry describes the group that surrounded the philosophical school of Plotinus as made up of the best and brightest, people well read on the topics that were being discussed.[95] And Origen's school was, as we have seen, divided into beginners and advanced students. Still, the fact that a person could have been included in the pneumatic church without formal education

documents. See Edward Watts, "Education: Speaking, Thinking, and Socializing", in *The Oxford Handbook of Late Antiquity*, ed. Scott Fitzgerald Johnson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 467–486. For an even lower estimation of literacy levels see W. V. Harris, *Ancient Literacy* (Cambridge, M.A.: Harvard University Press, 1989). For a more optimistic reading see Ann Hanson, "Ancient Literacy", in *Literacy in the Roman Word*, ed. J. L. Humphrey (Ann Arbour: University of Michigan Press, 1991), 159–198.

92 Watts, "Education", 469.

93 For a work that explores the importance of the *paideia* of Roman elite, see Peter Brown, *Power and Persuasion in Late Antiquity: Towards a Christian Empire* (Madison, Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1992).

94 A concrete Egyptian example is Pachomius. See Janet Timbie, "The Education of Shenoute and Other Cenobitic Leaders", in *Education and Religion in Late Antiquity*, eds. P. Gemeinhardt et al. (Farnham: Ashgate, 2016), 34–46; see also James Goehring, *The Letter of Ammon and Pachomian Monasticism* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1986).

95 Porphyry, *Life of Plotinus* 7–10.

or the socioeconomical advantages of someone who had the opportunity to study from a young age (like the Apostles), would have been easily explained in light of the text's fixed anthropology: those who are pneumatics are so because of their mental constitution (or, put in other words, as long as they retain the identity of pneumatics in the group).

Even though the categories are fixed, one has the possibility to develop within one's own category. In the very end of *TriTrac* we encounter a long passage that deals with the return and salvation of "the Calling" (ⲡⲧⲱϩⲙⲉ), which is another term for the psychics, a term that echoes Pauline language[96] and fits well with the idea that some people need the voice. The psychic people need to be *called* to receive their formation. The psychics:

> … will receive the vision more and more by nature and not only by a little word, so as to believe, only through a voice, that this is the way it is, that the restoration to that which used to be is a unity.[97]

The psychics will develop a more natural way of understanding the message of the Savior, to which the phrase, "receive the vision" (ϫⲓ ⲡⲛⲉⲩ), is most likely an allusion, but nowhere does it say that psychics *become* pneumatics. After baptism the psychics will not have to rely only on words and voice to believe but will receive a natural understanding. Nevertheless, they are part of the world in a much more concrete way than those who have chosen to commit themselves solely to moral progress. The question of what to do with 'ordinary' Christians who committed sins even after baptism engaged several early Christian theologians.[98] Origen, for example, imagined that such Christians would, except for receiving less of a reward in heaven, be awakened at a second later resurrection, while the perfect Christians would rise first and reap the full benefit of salvation. Perfect Christians did not, Origen said, mix with worldly affairs once they had given themselves to God.[99] This comes very close to how *TriTrac* describes the differences between pneumatic and psychic. Nevertheless, what a psychic person can expect according to *TriTrac*, after

96 1 Cor 1:9, 7:15–24, Gal 1:6–15, 5:8, 13; 1 Thess 2:12, 4:7, 5:24; 2 Thess 1:11, 2:14; Col 3:15; Eph 4:4; Rom 8:30, 9:24–26.

97 133:1–7: ⲥⲉⲛⲁϫⲓ ⲡⲛⲉⲩ ⲛ̄ⲅⲁⲣ· ⲛ̄ϩⲟⲩⲟ ⲛ̄ϩⲟⲩⲟ ϩⲛ̄ⲛ ⲟⲩⲫⲩⲥⲓⲥ ϩⲛⲛ ⲟⲩϣⲉϫⲉ ϣⲏⲙ ⲟⲩⲁⲉⲉⲧϥ̄ ⲉⲛ ⲁⲧⲣⲟⲩⲛⲁϩⲧⲉ· ⲟⲩⲁⲉⲉⲧϥ̄ ϩⲓ̈ⲧⲛ ⲟⲩⲥⲙⲏ ϫⲉ ⲡⲉⲉⲓ ⲡⲉ ⲡⲣⲏⲧⲉ ⲉⲧϣⲟⲟⲡ ϫⲉ ⲟⲩⲉⲓⲉ ⲛ̄ⲟⲩⲱⲧ· ⲇⲉ· ϯⲁⲡⲟⲕⲁⲧⲁⲥⲧⲁⲥⲓⲥ ⲁϩⲟⲩⲛ ⲁⲡⲉⲧⲉⲛⲉϥϣⲟⲟⲡ.

98 For a discussion of Clement's views on post-baptismal sin, on the controversy over re-baptism in the third century, and much more see Everett, *Baptism*, 320, 380–399.

99 Origen, *Homily on Leviticus* 11.

finishing the oral instructions and baptism, is a natural understanding of the faith and “the revelation of [the] form <in> which they believe … and escape from the whole multiplicity of shapes and from inequality and change”.[100] Even though the category of psychics allows for degrees in knowledge, there is still a great difference between basic Christian formation and the more advanced level of ethical considerations of the pneumatics, whom the psychics should emulate. Let us look at the nature of this “imitation”, which I argue is important for the psychic’s pedagogic process.

6 The Duty of the Pneumatic Moral Expert and the Formation of Psychic Christians

The depiction of pneumatics as role models for psychic behavior was, as we saw in the previous chapter, very similar to the way Stoics imagined the teacher-student relationship. In fact, this image strikes a chord with the general ideal of the ancient student-teacher relationship, and to the *exampla*-type of paraenesis.[101] To a large extent, education consisted of monotonously imitating already prepared syllabuses,[102] but imitation was also part of a broader ethical trope in antiquity: the emulation of one’s moral superiors was the best way to progress in virtue.[103] This is an important literary trope in many forms of early Christian literature as well, in hagiographies, gospels, and *vitae* of different kinds.[104] What can this tell us about the nature of the psychics, and their relation to the pneumatics?

100 132:13–20: ⲡⲟⲩⲱⲛϩ̄ ⲁⲃⲁⲗ ⲙ̣[ⲡⲓ]ⲥⲙⲁⲧ· ⲉⲛⲧⲁⲩⲛ[ⲁ]ϩⲧⲉ…ⲁⲩⲣ̄ ⲃⲟⲗ ⲉ̣ⲃⲟⲗ ⲛ̄ⲧⲟⲟⲧϥ̄ ⲙ̄ⲡⲓϩⲁϩ ⲛ̄ⲣⲏⲧⲉ ⲧⲏⲣϥ̄ ⲁⲩⲱ ⲧⲙⲛ̄ⲧⲁⲧϣⲱϣ ⲙ̣ⲛ̣̄ ⲡϣⲓⲃⲉ. Translation by Attridge and Pagels, slightly modified.

101 For references to the school of ancient philosophers like Plotinus, Porphyry, and Proclus, see John Dillon, “Holy and not so Holy: On the Interpretation of Late Antique Biography”, in *The Limits of Ancient Biography*, eds. Brian McGing and Judith Mossman (Swansea: The Classical Press of Wales), 155–167.

102 See Raffaella Cribiore, *Gymnastics of the Mind: Greek Education on Hellenistic and Roman Egypt* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2001), 220–244.

103 Richard Valantasis, *Spiritual Guides of the Third Century: A Semiotic Study of the Guide-Disciple Relationship in Christianity, Neoplatonism, Hermetism, and Gnosticism* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991); Tite, *Valentinian Ethics*, 147–164; James Petitfils, *Mos Christianorum: The Roman Discourse of Exemplarity and the Jewish and Christian Language of Leadership* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2016).

104 Samuel Rubenson, “Early Monasticism and the Concept of School”, in *School and Monastery: Rethinking Early Monastic Education*, eds. L. Larsen and S. Rubenson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 13–32.

In light of the above points on education and formation, the psychics in *TriTrac* could be defined as "everyday Christians" who did not have moral authority in the community, but who are told to imitate their moral superiors. The language of imitation is already reflected in 1 Cor 11:1 where Paul encourages people to imitate him, just like he has imitated Christ.[105] In 1 Cor 2 Paul also seems to make distinctions between levels of knowledge, and he can be interpreted as having written that some people, those of the flesh, do not have what it takes to hear deeper truths.[106] As we have seen, some Valentinians most likely developed Paul's language on fleshly, psychic, and pneumatic people, and their different levels of understanding.[107] From a broader perspective on attitudes towards moral development, *TriTrac*'s way of dividing humanity into three levels—people who seem to reject moral development (at least their definition of it) on the one side and on the other the student-teacher relationship—is not very strange.

TriTrac is not unique in calling for people who are inferior in knowledge to imitate their betters, and furthermore, highlighting that some people are just naturally prone to deeper insights. As Dunderberg has noted, some Stoics thought that for the wise, good actions came naturally as part of their constitution, and it was the duty of the wise to help those less fortunate, who needed instruction and help to develop a firm mind.[108] This view on natural ability is not limited to Stoics and Valentinians.

In his three-part work, *Paedagogus*, Clement discusses the moral development of 'ordinary Christians'.[109] In book I of *Paedagogus*, he examines the tasks of the Gnostic instructor and in the following two books he turns to the nature of the teaching and behavior of everyday Christians. Clement

105 The call to imitate one's betters also strikes a chord with a common discourse on leadership in the Roman empire. For a study of the Roman, Jewish, and Christian relations to exemplary leadership, see Petitfils, *Mos Christianorum*.

106 For a discussion on the social background of 1 Cor and a review of past scholarship into 1 Cor in light of the early hypothesis that the Corinthians were Gnostics, see Todd E. Klutz, "Re-Reading 1 Corinthians after Rethinking 'Gnosticism'", *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 26:2 (2003): 193–216.

107 For example, in *InterpKnow* we also encounter people that have a natural ability for understanding (15:10–19:37).

108 See, for example, Seneca, *Epistles* 94.13–14: "it is our duty either to treat carefully the diseased mind and free it from faults, or to take possession of the mind when it is still unoccupied and yet inclined to what is evil" (Translation Gummere, *Seneca: Volume 3*, 21). For a broader discussion, see Dunderberg, *Gnostic Morality*, 128–130.

109 For insights into Clement's pedagogical plan, see Michael L. White, "Moral Pathology: Passions, Progress, and Protreptic in Clement of Alexandria", in *Passion and Progress in Greco-Roman Thought*, ed. John T. Fitzgerald (London and New York: Routledge, 2008), 284–321.

writes that everyone should be as children in their attitude to learning the message of God: imitating Jesus and following his example like children who follow a tutor.[110] Clement thought that for some, advanced spiritual studies came naturally. Most people needed someone to instruct them while the true Gnostic sought spiritual knowledge and the immediate experience of God.[111] There were, however, limits to what a teacher could do, because instruction was useless without the total devotion of the pupil to exercising and developing the receptive faculty.[112] Clement writes that the ability to receive instruction is a sort of natural art.[113] Furthermore, Clement maintained, not all reacted in the same way to the call of God:

> … the divine Word cries, calling all together; knowing perfectly well those that will not obey; notwithstanding then since to obey or not is in our own power, provided we have not the excuse of ignorance to adduce. He makes a just call, and demands of each according to his strength.[114]

Those who needed to be instructed were driven by fear, Clement maintained. Those Christians who were not 'Gnostics' like him, acted as they had been instructed, and did it to avoid hell rather than for the love and knowledge of God.[115]

David Brakke has called the split of humans into different levels of understanding, "an Alexandrian tradition".[116] Origen also divided Christians into different categories of moral progress. Simple believers were in the majority while advanced Christians were rare in a community. The majority of Christians based their faith on the fear of God and the hope of salvation. Origen thus distinguished between people with simple faith and those with insights based on rational inquiry, which seems to have been, similarly to *TriTrac*'s distinction between psychic people's *likeness* and pneumatic's *image*,[117] derived from Plato's distinction between *belief* or *opinion* (δόξα) and *knowledge* (ἐπιστήμη).[118]

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110 He writes this as he presents an exegesis of Matt 19:14 wherein Jesus rebukes the disciples for keeping the children from him. Clement, *Paedagogus* I.4–5.

111 See for example Clement, *Stromata* VI.10–18.

112 Clement, *Stromata* II.6. Translation by Wilson in *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*.

113 Clement, *Stromata* II.6. Translation by Wilson in *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*.

114 Clement, *Stromata* II.6. Translation by Wilson in *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*.

115 Clement, *Stromata* VI.12, VII.11.

116 David Brakke, *Athanasius and Asceticism* (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 1996), 170.

117 See Chapter 1 for a thorough discussion of the epistemology and ontology of *TriTrac.*

118 This is an argument put forward by Gunnar af Hällström, *Fides simpliciorum according to Origen of Alexandria* (Helsinki: Societas Scientiarum Fennica, 1984). See this work for

This did not mean that less developed Christians were lost in the end, but they could not expect the same level of reward in heaven as those who had excelled in virtue, like the knowledgeable and the healers of souls. Just like *TriTrac*, Origen distinguishes between Christians who are "called" (*vocatus*) and those who are "chosen" (*electus*).[119] It is the elect Christians who will reap the greatest rewards in heaven, those who are simply called will be saved but have neglected the full grace that God offers and are not devoted wholeheartedly to spiritual progress.[120] This idea, that the degree of moral progress and learning corresponded to the level of one's future rewards in heaven, seems to be suggested in *TriTrac* as well, a view shared by Clement too.[121] In *TriTrac* we read that:

> The pneumatic class will receive complete salvation in every way. The material (class) will receive destruction in every way, as one who resists him (the Savior). The psychic class, however—since it is in the middle when it is brought forth and also when it is created—is double, in accordance with its determination for both good and evil … (they) who give glory to the Lord of glory, and who renounce their rage; they will be rewarded for their humility and continue (to exist) forever.[122]

The damnation of the materials has already been established. Although the exact difference between the rewards pneumatics and psychics will receive is not explained, there seems to be some difference nevertheless. At times, it even seems as if the text is written from the perspective of pneumatics. Let me quote a few passages where the integration of the psychic people is addressed as if the pneumatics' salvation is not an issue:

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a thorough overview of the theme of simple Christians versus advanced Christians in Origen's theology.

119 Origen, *Commentary on Romans* 1.2.

120 Origen, *Commentary on Romans* 1.2; *On First Principles* II.10.2.

121 Clement, *Stromata* VII.2.9. For a work that is devoted to the early Christian texts and attitudes to higher and lower orders of salvation and the ethical implication of this, see Kocar, "In Heaven". Kocar discusses, for example, the apostle Paul, *ApJohn, The Shepherd of Hermas*, and several Valentinian texts from this perspective.

122 119:16–20…120:25–29: ϫⲉ ⲡⲓⲅⲉⲛⲟⲥ ⲙ̄ⲡⲛ(ⲉⲩⲙ)ⲁⲧⲓⲕⲟⲛ̣ ϥⲛⲁϫⲓ ⲙ̄ⲡⲛⲟⲩϩⲙⲉ· ⲧⲏⲣϥ̄ ⲕⲁⲧⲁ ⲣⲏⲧⲉ ⲛⲓⲙ· ⲡⲓϩⲩⲗⲓⲕⲟⲛ ⲛ̄ⲇⲉ ϥⲛⲁϫⲓ̣ ⲡⲧⲉⲕⲟ ⲕⲁⲧⲁ ⲣⲏⲧⲉ ⲛⲓⲙ· ⲕⲁ<ⲧⲁ> ⲡⲣⲏⲧⲉ̣ ⲛ̄ⲟⲩⲉⲉⲓ ⲉϥϯ ⲁϩⲧⲏϥ ⲡⲓⲯⲩⲭⲓⲕⲟⲛ ⲇ̣[ⲉ] ⲛ̄ⲅⲉⲛⲟⲥ· ϩⲱⲥ ⲉⲩⲛ̄ ϩⲛ̄ ⲧⲙⲏⲧⲉ ⲡⲉ ϩⲙ̄ ⲡⲉϥϭⲛ̄ⲛⲧϥ̄ ⲁⲃⲁⲗ· ⲁⲩⲱ ⲡⲉϥⲕⲱ ⲁ·ϩⲣⲏï ϩⲱⲱϥ ⲁⲛ ϥϩⲁⲧⲣⲉ· ⲕⲁⲧⲁ ⲡⲉϥⲧⲱϣ ⲁⲡⲁⲅⲁⲑⲟⲛ ⲙⲛ̄ ⲡⲕⲁⲕⲟⲛ….ⲛ̄ⲥⲉϯ ⲉⲁⲩ ⲙ̄ⲡϫⲟïⲥ ⲙ̄ⲡⲉⲁⲩ ⲛ̄ⲥⲉⲕⲱ ⲛ̄ⲥⲱⲟⲩ ⲛ̄ⲧⲟⲩⲃⲗ̄ⲕⲉ· ⲥⲉⲛⲁϫⲓ ⲛ̄ⲧϣⲃ̄ⲃⲓⲱ ⲙ̄ⲡⲟⲩⲑⲃ̄ⲃⲓⲟ ⲛ̄ⲇⲉ ⲡⲓⲙⲟⲩⲛ ⲁϩⲟⲩⲛ ϣⲁⲃⲟⲗ ⲡⲉ. Translation by Attridge and Pagels, slightly modified.

> As it is fitting to say, nonetheless, on the matter of those of the Calling (psychic people)—for those of the right are so named—it is necessary for us to return once again to them and it is not profitable for us to forget them.[123]

And then a page later:

> Not only those who have come forth from the Logos, about whom we spoke, not only they will attain the good work, but also those whom these brought forth in accordance with the good dispositions, they will share in the repose according to the abundance of the grace. And those who were brought forth from the desire of lust for command—because they have the seed of lust for command inside them—will receive the reward of good things, they who have worked together with those who have the *good proairesis*, provided they, in opinion and will, abandon the desire for vain temporary glory, and keep the commandment of the Lord of glory, instead of the momentary honor, they inherit the eternal kingdom.[124]

And this continues a few lines later:

> What is the nature of the one who was a slave? He will take a place with a free man. For they (the psychics) will receive the vision more and more by nature and not only by a little word, so as to believe, only through a voice, that this is the way it is, that the restoration to that which used to be is a unity. Even so, some are exalted because of the *oikonomia*, since they have been appointed as causes of the things which have happened because they as natural forces are more active and since they are desired.

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123 130:1–9: ⲁⲧⲣⲛ̄ϫⲟⲟⲥ ⲛ̄ⲑⲉ ⲉⲧⲉϣϣⲉ ⲁ·ϫⲟⲟⲥ ⲛⲁⲉⲓ ⲛ̄ⲇⲉ ϩⲱⲟⲩ ϩⲁ· ⲡⲣⲁ· ⲛ̄ⲛⲁ ⲡⲓⲧⲱϩⲙⲉ· ⲡⲉⲉⲓ ⲅⲁⲣ ⲡⲉ ⲡⲣⲏⲧⲉ· ⲉⲧⲟⲩⲙⲟⲩⲧⲉ· ⲁⲛⲓⲟⲩⲛⲉⲙ ⲙ̄ⲙⲁϥ ⲟⲩⲁⲛⲁⲅⲕⲁⲓⲟ(ⲛ) ϭⲉ ⲡⲉ· ⲁⲧⲣⲛ̄ⲟⲩ{ϩ}ⲱϩ· ⲁⲧⲟⲟⲧⲛⲉ· ⲁϣⲉ ⲁⲣⲁⲩⲟⲩ ⲁⲩⲱ ϥⲣ̄ ϣⲉⲩ ⲉⲛ ⲁⲧⲙ̄ⲧⲛ̄ⲣ̄ ⲡⲟⲩⲙⲉⲩⲉ·

124 131:14–132:3: [ϫ]ⲉ ⲟⲩ ⲙⲟⲛⲟⲛ ⲛⲉⲧⲁϩⲉⲓ̈ ⲁⲃⲁⲗ ⲙ̣ⲡⲗⲟⲅⲟⲥ ⲛⲉⲧ·ⲁⲛϫⲟⲩ ⲙ̄ⲙⲟⲥ ⲁ[ⲣⲁ]ⲩⲟⲩ ⲟⲩⲁⲉⲧⲟⲩ ⲛⲉ ϫⲉ· ⲥⲉⲛⲁⲧⲉϩⲉ ⲡⲓϩⲱⲃ ⲉⲧⲛⲁⲛⲟⲩϥ ⲁⲗⲗⲁ ⲛⲉⲧⲁⲛⲁⲉⲓ ϩⲱⲟⲩ ⲁⲛ ϫⲡⲁⲩ ⲕⲁⲧⲁ ⲛⲓⲇⲓⲁⲑⲉⲥⲓⲥ ⲁⲛ ⲉⲧⲛⲁⲛⲟⲩⲟⲩ ⲥⲉⲛⲁⲣ̄ ⲕⲟⲓⲛⲱⲛⲓ ϩⲱⲟⲩ ⲁⲛ ⲁⲡⲓⲙ̄ⲧⲟⲛ ⲕⲁⲧⲁ ⲧⲙⲛⲧϩⲟⲩⲟ ⲙ̄ⲡϩⲙⲟⲧ· ⲁⲩⲱ ⲛⲉⲉⲓ ⲉⲛⲧⲁⲩⲛ̄ⲧⲟⲩ ⲁⲃⲁⲗ ϩⲛ̄ ⲧⲉⲉⲓⲉⲡⲓⲑⲩⲙⲓⲁ ⲛ̄ⲧⲉ ⲧⲙⲛ̄ⲧⲙⲁⲉⲓⲟⲩⲉϩ ⲥⲁϩⲛⲉ· ⲉⲩⲛ̄ⲧⲉⲩ ⲙ̄ⲙⲉⲩ ⲙ̄ⲡⲓⲥⲓⲧⲉ· ⲛ̄ϩⲏⲧⲟⲩ ⲉⲧⲉ ⲧⲉⲉⲓ ⲧⲉ ⲧⲙ<ⲛ̄>ⲧⲙⲁⲉⲓⲟⲩⲉϩ ⲥⲁϩⲛⲉ ⲥⲉⲛⲁϫⲓ ⲛ̄ⲧϣⲃ̄ⲃⲓⲱ̂· ⲛ̄ⲛⲓⲡⲉⲧⲛⲁⲛⲟⲩⲟⲩ ⲛ̄ϭⲓ ⲛⲁⲉⲓ̣ ⲉ̣ⲛⲧⲁϩⲣ̄ ϩⲱⲃ ⲙⲛ̄ ⲛⲁⲉⲓ ⲉⲧⲉⲩⲛ̄ⲧⲉⲩ ⲙ̄ⲙⲉⲩ ⲛ̄ϯⲡⲣⲟⲁⲓⲣⲉⲥⲓⲥ· ⲛ̄ⲛⲓⲡⲉⲧⲛⲁⲛⲟⲩⲟⲩ ⲉⲩϣⲁⲣ̄ ϩⲛⲉⲩ ϩⲛⲛ ⲟⲩⲅⲛⲱⲙⲏ ⲛ̄ⲥⲉⲟⲩⲱϣⲉ· ⲁⲕⲱⲉ ⲛ̄ⲥⲱⲟⲩ ⲛ̄ⲧⲙⲛ̄ⲧⲙⲁⲉⲓⲉⲁⲩⲟⲩ ⲉⲧϣⲟⲩⲉⲓⲧ· ⲡⲣⲟⲥ ⲟⲩⲥⲏⲟⲩ ⲛ̄[ⲥⲉⲣ] ⲡⲟⲩⲁϩ ⲥⲁϩⲛⲉ ⲙ̄ⲡϫⲟⲓ̈ⲥ ⲙ̄ⲡⲉⲁⲩ ⲁⲛⲧⲓ ⲡⲓⲧⲁⲉⲓⲟ ⲡⲣⲟⲥ ⲟⲩⲁⲉⲓϣ ϣⲏⲙ ⲛ̄ⲥⲉⲣ̄ ⲕⲗⲏⲣⲟⲛⲟⲙⲓ ⲛ̄ⲧⲙⲛ̄ⲧⲣ̄ⲣⲟ· ϣⲁ ⲉⲛⲉϩ. Translation by Attridge and Pagels, slightly modified.

> Because of these things angels and men will receive the kingdom and the uprightness and the salvation.[125]

Here it would seem that the text takes the perspective of the pneumatics, telling the reader that it is “not profitable for us to forget them”—that is, *we* the pneumatic elect must not forget *them* the psychics who are being called.[126] It is possible that the first-person plural (us/we) is at times used also as an authorial plural (for example 130:2–9), but the text seems nevertheless primarily be addressed to pneumatics rather than psychics. This is understandable, because in an earlier passage it seems that the focus of the whole text is on the pneumatics’ fate. We read that the Savior gave himself for “us in the flesh, who are his church” (ⲁⲛⲁⲛ ϩⲛ̄ ⲥⲁⲣⲝ ⲉⲧⲟⲉⲓ ⲛ̄ⲛⲉⲕⲕⲗⲏⲥⲓⲁ ⲛ̄ⲧⲉϥ) (125:4–5),[127] which would indicate that the Savior came mainly for the pneumatics (since they are his church). Nevertheless, the salvation of the “Calling” is one of the chief topics of the third part of the text, while at the same time it being clear that the Savior came mainly for his church, the pneumatics, “we in the flesh” (ⲁⲛⲁⲛ ϩⲛ̄ ⲥⲁⲣⲝ). The psychics are more associated with everyday life—the psychics have many different positions depending on their “exaltation”, as we read in the last passage above—while the pneumatics are naturally gifted and moral experts.

We can conclude that from the perspective of moral development—and it would seem from a soteriological perspective too—that it was not at all uncommon to divide humanity into three parts: (1) advanced teachers who would receive the full benefit of salvation for their developed moral formation; (2) ordinary people who would be rewarded for listening and following their betters, (3) and those who outright worked against moral knowhow, guided by their material nature.

125 132:30–133:14: ϩⲓ̈ ⲉϣ ⲡⲉ· ⲧⲫⲩⲥⲓⲥ ⲙ̄ⲡⲉⲧⲉ ⲟⲩϩⲙ̄ϩⲉⲗ {ⲉⲛ} ⲡⲉ· ⲉϥⲛⲁϫⲓ ⲙⲁ̣ ⲙⲛ̄ ⲟⲩⲉⲗⲉⲩⲑⲉⲣⲟⲥ ⲥⲉⲛⲁϫⲓ ⲡⲛⲉⲩ ⲛ̄ⲅⲁⲣ· ⲛ̄ϩⲟⲩⲟ ⲛ̄ϩⲟⲩⲟ ϩⲛ̄ⲛ ⲟⲩⲫⲩⲥⲓⲥ ϩⲛⲛ ⲟⲩϣⲉϫⲉ ϣⲏⲙ· ⲟⲩⲁⲉⲉⲧϥ̄ ⲉⲛ ⲁⲧⲣⲟⲩⲛⲁϩⲧⲉ· ⲟⲩⲁⲉⲉⲧϥ̄ ϩⲓ̈ⲧⲛ ⲟⲩⲥⲙⲏ· ϫⲉ ⲡⲉⲉⲓ ⲡⲉ ⲡⲣⲏⲧⲉ· ⲉⲧϣⲟⲟⲡ ϫⲉ ⲟⲩⲉⲓⲉ ⲛ̄ⲟⲩⲱⲧ· ϫⲉ· ϯⲁⲡⲟⲕⲁⲧⲁⲥⲧⲁⲥⲓⲥ ⲁϩⲟⲩⲛ ⲁⲡⲉⲧⲉⲛⲉϥϣⲟⲟⲡ· ⲕⲁⲛ· ⲉⲩⲛ̄ ϩⲁⲉⲓⲛⲉ ϫⲁⲥⲉ ⲉⲧⲃⲉ ⲧⲟⲓⲕⲟⲛⲟⲙⲓⲁ· ⲉⲁⲩⲕⲁⲩⲉ· ⲛ̄ⲗⲁⲉⲓϭⲉ· ⲛ̄ⲛⲉⲧⲁϩϣⲱⲡⲉ ⲉⲩⲣ̄ ϩⲟⲩⲉ· ⲉⲛⲉⲣⲅⲓⲁ ⲉϩⲛ̄ⲫⲩⲥⲓⲕⲏ ⲛⲉ [ⲁ]ⲩ̣ⲱ ⲉⲩⲣ̄ ϩⲛⲉⲩ ⲉⲧⲃⲉ ⲛⲉⲧⲙ̄ⲙⲉⲩ [ⲥⲉⲛ]ⲁϫⲓ ⲛ̄ϯⲙⲛ̄ⲧⲣ̄ⲣⲟ ⲙⲛ̄ ⲡⲓⲧⲁϫⲣⲟ [ⲙⲛ] ⲡⲓⲟⲩϫⲁⲉⲓⲧⲉ· ⲛ̄ϭⲓ ⲁⲅⲅⲉⲗⲟⲥ [ϩⲓ ⲕ]ⲉ̣ⲣⲱⲙⲉ. Translation by Attridge and Pagels, slightly modified.

126 Another possible interpretation is that the text is written ‘from above’—that this is revelation and the word of God, addressed to humanity as a collective. Nevertheless, if we try to imagine the people/person behind the text, it was most likely someone or a group of people who saw themselves as belonging to the group of pneumatics. This becomes clearer if we consider what it took to write such a text, which must surely have required a moral expert.

127 Translation by Attridge and Pagels, slightly modified.

In the next chapter, we return to the significance of the pedagogical framework of the anthropology of the text and look at attitudes toward social involvement in *TriTrac*. Now, however, before summarizing the discussions above and drawing conclusions as to the social structure presented in *TriTrac*, we need to address the portrayal of Valentinians as those Christians who belonged to the 'School of Valentinus'.

7 The Category of the 'School of Valentinus' in Early Christian Scholarship

It should by now be clear that *TriTrac*'s utilization of school language is paramount for presenting the structure of the community and portraying the characteristics of the different members that it comprises. As stated at the outset of this chapter, the term 'School of Valentinus' has occurred frequently in the study of early Christianity. How, therefore, does this concept relate to the community of *TriTrac*?

Bentley Layton has argued that after Valentinus arrived in Rome in the middle of the second century, he gained followers and his movement "blossomed into a brilliant international school of theologians and biblical commentators".[128] Layton has also maintained that the "Valentinian movement had the character of a philosophical school, or network of schools, rather than a distinct religious sect".[129] Agreeing with Layton, Christoph Markschies has studied the heresiological evidence in hopes of finding "the anatomy" of the Valentinian schools. He is aware of the polemical nature of the evidence but nevertheless makes a case that there are a number of analogies between the Valentinian form of Christianity and philosophical schools. Valentinians attended lectures, he writes, read and created commentaries, had a concept of degrees of learning, and teacher-student relations.[130] Unfortunately, neither Markschies nor

128 Layton, *The Gnostic Scriptures*, 267.

129 Layton, *The Gnostic Scriptures*, 267.

130 See Hippolytus' quoting of Valentinus' poem which is followed by a commentary in the form of a superimposed Valentinian protological myth (Hippolytus, *Refutation of All Heresies* VI.37). See also the commentary on John by Heracleon, which lead Origen to write a response. Heracleon's commentary is the first commentary of which we are aware that is written on John (Origen, *Commentary on John*). However, he deals with Ptolemy's *Letter to Flora.* This text is often taken as an example of a Valentinian school text. Ptolemy writes to a potential student and gives the contours of his view on the law, the creator's law versus the highest god's law, as well as the devil. Ptolemy promises further instruction and initiation, if Flora is interested. Many of these points are indicated in Ptolemy's *Letter to Flora*, according to Markschies, and this text is indeed often held as an example

Layton engage with the question of how the school structures are reflected in the 'first hand sources', the Valentinian texts themselves (i.e., those from Nag Hammadi).

Many scholars have followed Layton and Markschies in visualizing the Valentinian form of Christianity as a school. One example appears in the subtitle of Ismo Dunderberg's book *Beyond Gnosticism: Myth, Lifestyle, and Society in the School of Valentinus.* Dunderberg writes in the introduction to his book that it "seems clear that Valentinians bore some resemblances to ancient schools of thought",[131] and he goes on to study—among many things—the Valentinian "therapy of passions", comparing Valentinus with a philosopher engaging with students with *frankness of speech* (parrhêsia).[132] Dunderberg's understanding of the '*School* of Valentinus' rests chiefly on the heresiologists' depictions that seem to favor school terminology when describing the Valentinians, but he also discusses several interesting similarities between Valentinian texts and the topics that engaged philosophical schools, like the therapy of passions.

Einar Thomassen also seems to be inspired by the heresiologists' depictions of Valentinians as a philosophical school and he puts considerable effort into systematizing and tracing the developments of the 'systems' of two different Valentinian "schools", the Eastern and Italian branches, mentioned by heresiologists (Clement, Hippolytus, and Tertullian).[133] However, Thomassen uses the term "school" in the meaning of 'school of thought', rather than an organizational form, and due to the polemical nature of the heresiologists' portrayals of the Valentinians, Thomassen also cautions against reading too much into the notions of Valentinians as a philosophical school. The Valentinians thought of themselves first and foremost as a church, he writes (what "church" refers to, however, is not clearly defined).[134]

I would caution against contrasting the terms school and church too rigidly. There are many similarities between how early Christians organized themselves and how philosophical schools worked. The term "church" and "school"

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of a Christian teacher directing himself to a young pupil or a potential pupil (Markschies, "Valentinian Gnosticism", 425–429).

131 Dunderberg, *Beyond Gnosticism*, 3.

132 See Paul Linjamaa, "Parrhesia i Valentinos fragment", *Patristica Nordica Annuaria* 28 (2013): 89–110. Here I present a different interpretation of the use of *parrhêsia* in the fragments of Valentinus. I argue that Valentinus is drawing on the philosophical use of the term but utilizes the firmness and steadfastness associated with *parrhêsia*, and turns it against the cosmic rulers and demons pestering humans.

133 Thomassen, *Spiritual Seed*; see also Kalvesmaki, "Italian versus Eastern", where these sources are problematized.

134 Thomassen, *Spiritual Seed*, 4–5, 5 note 4. See also his review of Dunderberg's book in *Journal of Religion in Europe* 3 (2010): 191–193.

should not be treated as mutually exclusive.[135] Thomassen's cautionary note is nevertheless valid and important to consider. There are some general problems with the label 'School of Valentinus'. First of all, as just noted, different connotations are brought to the term "school" which can lead to confusion. As Angela Standhartinger points out when commenting on Pauline scholarship and the use of the term 'School of Paul':

> … the term 'School of Paul' is a kind of Platzhalter for a number of phenomena: Paul's theological work and method, the process of transmitting Pauline traditions, the dependence of his students upon the apostle, and a socio-historic description for the institutional organization of Paul's and/or his followers' mission.[136]

The same could be said about research into the Valentinian Christians. It is often not quite clear what is meant by the '*School* of Valentinus'. Is it a reference to a general tradition of interpreting the Christian message from the view of the theology of Valentinus? Is it a reference to the mutual interests Valentinians shared with pagan philosophers? Or is it a reference to the organizational structure within Valentinian Christian congregations? Was there a particular curriculum Valentinians had to go through that differed from other Christians? These questions are seldom clarified.

Secondly, there are polemical issues involved. We can find strong arguments against using the term 'School of Valentinus' if by this one means that Valentinians thought of themselves as being part of a school rather than the Christian community. Geoffrey Smith has emphasized the apologetic and polemical nature of the epithet '*School* of Valentinus'.[137] In Irenaeus' multi-volume work, *Against Heresies*, he called the people he refuted *heretics* (αἵρεσις). This was not initially a negative term but came to be used among Christian heresiologists more and more derogatorily. By using the term *heretic* (αἵρεσις) for his opponents, meaning *choice*, Irenaeus attached himself to an already established polemical technique also found in Justin Martyr's writings. Justin argued that some people called themselves Christians but were really

135 Neither can we distinguish between the two by saying that one represents a secular organization while the other is a religious one. Philosophical schools had important religious functions. For a more thorough discussion on the similarities between early Christian organizations and the way philosophical schools functioned, see Wilken, *Christians*, 72–93.

136 Angela Standhartinger, "Colossians and the Pauline School", *New Testament Studies* 50:4 (2004): 573.

137 See especially Smith, *Guilt by Association*, 162–170, for a discussion of the use of the term "school" for the Valentinians.

something else, charlatans posing as followers of Christ. These false Christians had made a *choice* (αἵρεσις) to follow other doctrines than those embraced by the church established by God, doctrines established by a human.[138] It was not uncommon to sample different philosophical schools before making a choice to join the school one found most convincing, just like Justin Martyr himself had done.[139] However, Christianity was different, according to Irenaeus and Justin; the Christian community, or *church*, did not belong to the smorgasbord of doctrines and practices of the Hellenistic philosophical landscape. True Christians got their knowledge and legitimacy, not from human sages, but from God, through the community established by the apostles appointed by God's representative on earth: Jesus. Irenaeus and Justin argued that some Christian heretics subscribed to an authority established by a human, a founder of a school, not a follower of the *divinely* established church. This is the reason Justin gives the name *Valentinian* to those Christians who were theologically inspired by Valentinus, just as Plato's followers were called Platonists. Irenaeus and Justin distinguish between 'divinely inspired' and thus pure and true, and 'man-made', or effected by humans, and thus diluted and false. Irenaeus claimed that Valentinus was inspired by "the heresy called Gnostic" (τῆς λεγομένης γνοστικῆς αἱρέσεως), and that he had established his own school (διδασκαλεῖον/ *Ualentini scola*).[140] The audacity of the Valentinians was so great, wrote Irenaeus, that they had written their own gospel and mixed into their writings passages from the true scripture to add legitimacy to their cause.[141] Irenaeus even accused Valentinians of added things to Valentinus' theology so that they could expand the lecture time and thus charge more money for their courses.[142] It was all about the money, according to Irenaeus. Thus, just like the philosophical schools, the Valentinian dogmas were man-made; they stood outside the divinely inspired church Irenaeus himself belonged to.

The polemical aspects of the term "school", as opposed to church, should be clear. Part of the confusion as to the organization of Valentinians in comparison to other Christians surely derives from the vague use of the term "church", which, as I have argued above, does not negate school structures. The polemical techniques used by Irenaeus and Justin continued in modern time, among protestant apologetics who defined true and pure Christianity against erroneous and syncretistic Gnosticism.[143] Geoffrey Smith has argued

138 Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho* 35.
139 Justin, *Second Apology* 12; *Dialogue with Trypho* 2.2–6.
140 Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 1.11.1
141 Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 1.8.
142 Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 1.4.3; see also Epiphanius, *Panarion* 31.17.4.
143 See Linjamaa, "Gnosticism as Inherently Syncretistic?", 25–40.

that after the important work done by Williams, King, and others in unearthing the problems with the term Gnosticism, scholars have instead opted to use the term 'School of Valentinus' more. However, Smith argues that classifying the Valentinians as belonging to a school is problematic on the same grounds as the term 'Gnosticism': it does not refer to anything that existed in ancient time; it is a polemical construction.

Smith and Thomassen make the important points that we need to be aware of the polemical background of the heresiologists' depictions and careful to follow their emphasis on the Valentinians as a school rather than a church.[144] However, as Löhr and others have argued, in light of Gregory's description of Origen's school and other early Christian intellectual milieus, there were strong similarities between Christian schools and philosophical schools.[145] Even though Irenaeus and Justin construct a dichotomy between *school* and *church*, these terms should not be treated as mutually exclusive.[146] Furthermore, the term church has a very specific meaning in *TriTrac*, referring only to one part of the community. For this community the image of the school, school language, and school structures was very important for understanding the human predicament on earth and when visualizing and organizing the structure of the community. In this, *TriTrac* is not alone. The same accusation Irenaeus leveled at Valentinians in general could undoubtedly have been leveled at other Christians as well, like Clement, Origen, or Basil.[147] Indeed, as we have seen, Christians were viewed by some pagan observers as a philosophical movement.[148] Nevertheless, just because we need to be cautious of harmonizing Valentinian texts too much, and reifying social communities that did not exist,[149] we should not discard the importance of the image of the school for

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144 Four Valentinian Nag Hammadi-texts mention a "school". I would not, as Smith does, call this "a small number", even if it partly depends on how many texts one is willing to call Valentinian.

145 Löhr writes that "The fragmentary evidence of the 2nd century sources and the eloquent testimony of Theodore's (Gregory's) *Address* should, however, suffice to dispel the suspicion that any resemblance between these Christian schools and their contemporary Stoic, Epicurean or Platonic counterparts may be due merely to heresiological stereotyping." Löhr, "Christianity as Philosophy", 173.

146 For a proto-orthodox example, see Clement's use of the image of the church as a school, a place where the soul gained learning. Clement, *Paedagogus* III.98.1.

147 Clement, *Stromata* VI.8, I.11; Origen, *On First Principles* II.11.6; Basil, *Letter* 8, *Hexaemeron* 1.5; Eusebius, *Demonstratio Evangelica* I.6.56.

148 See Edwin A. Judge, "The Early Christians as Scholastic Communities", *Journal of Religious History* 1 (1961): 125–137. Here Judge discusses Galen among others.

149 There are fundamental differences between them and I believe that they should only be viewed as representing texts from the same "school" if by "school" one means the theological tradition that the heresiologists associate with Valentinus and his followers. There

early Christian community structures and activities. Christianity was thought by many intellectual Christians to be the culmination of philosophy, not its opposite, and education and study were vital parts for many Christian intellectuals and their vision of ideal social structures. However, concerning *TriTrac* and most of the other Christian texts and individuals discussed here, there is no doubt that the community also included activity other than studying, like singing, praying, baptism, and other rituals of different kinds.[150] At the same time the language of pedagogy was very important; in *TriTrac* it was used to visualize the structure of the cosmos, as well as to present and legitimize the ideal social structure.

Let us now, in conclusion, discuss the above findings and draw some further conclusions as to the social context of *TriTrac*.

8 Conclusions: the Dual Structure of the Community behind *TriTrac*

We have seen how the reference to the Aeons' "school of conduct" (ⲟⲩⲁⲛⲥⲏⲃ· ⲙ̄ⲡⲟ[ⲗ]ⲓ̣ⲧⲓⲁ) (71:22–23) is connected, through structural similarities, to the community on earth. Moral development is paramount for salvation in *TriTrac*. Salvation is likened to gaining a form, which is either perfected invisibly by internal growth or "by voice", that is, teaching by a second party. Whether you belonged to the first category who could develop with the internal aid of the Savior, or the second category who needed aid from a morally superior model, depended on your natural composition, whether you were mainly guided by your logical and intellectual part or the emotive, soulish part of the tripartite picture of the human mind. As we established in the first part of this study, the individual mind does best when following the lead of the logical part rather than the soulish or material part, which do not lead to truth and knowledge. This cognitive and epistemological position is reflected in the community structure as well: the human collective should follow the advice of the pneumatic humans.

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is, as Michel Desjardins has pointed out, a methodological circularity problem here. To accept the 'first hand' sources (the extant texts) as Valentinian we are relying on secondary Patristic sources. See Michel Desjardins, "The Sources", 342–347.

150 We should, however, be careful of creating oppositions where they did not exist. Philosophical schools were not devoid of seemingly religious aspects; for example, one very important aspect of many philosophical schools was the annual veneration of founding figures. For more on the religious aspects of philosophical schools, see Wilken, *Christians*, 72–93.

This social ideal, where pneumatics have a monopoly on the ethical formation of the community, could very well have fueled the heresiologists' depictions of Valentinians as determinists, although, as I have argued above, the intellectualism we encounter in *TriTrac* is also fairly close to the social structure envisioned by other early Christian theologians like Clement and Origen. However, there are differences, too. For example, *TriTrac* presents a fixed anthropology, while Clement, Origen, and others rather adopted the doctrine of free will and envisioned, at least in theory, the possibility of social mobility. A deterministic worldview did not, however, mean that there were no possibilities for moral progress. One could better one's character, although it would not have been possible to change one's natural composition. One's nature was revealed through one's behavior and one's position within the community. Pneumatics were devoted to learning about good and evil, and psychic people developed by taking their advice and imitating their moral superiors.

Nevertheless, the image of a school fits well with the structure favored in *TriTrac*, where knowledge and moral ability is valued highly, and where pneumatics guide the psychics, as in a teacher-student relationship. The school metaphors used in *TriTrac*, however, do not presuppose a formal school setting, with *one* teacher and a group of pupils following a clearly established curriculum.[151] Picturing the cosmos as a school for the soul was a common Christian image. In *TriTrac*, the pneumatic class is not presented as consisting of just one individual pneumatic teacher addressing a group of psychics. Rather, we seem to be dealing with classes, or ideal types, of people. Considering what it took to be viewed as a moral expert, the pneumatics were most likely a minority, a well-educated minority. However, considering that there are examples of teachers and sages coming from humble beginnings (like the Apostles or ascetic pioneers like Pachomius[152]), I am not arguing that all pneumatics had to have a background that included formal schooling, although that would—considering how the pneumatics are described—undoubtedly have improved their likelihood to be counted as one. Rather than the school language and psychic-pneumatic relations' reflecting a formal school setting, we are most likely dealing with metaphors for the ideal structure of how the community was envisioned to function in the world. Nevertheless, considering the way the term "church" is used in the text and considering that the pneumatics are

151 The educational system of the Greco-Roman world was usually built around *one* teacher, often working with a few or just one pupil. As Raffaella Cribiore has argued, "schools did not usually have an existence separate from individual teachers", and formal education was private rather than communal (Cribiore, *Gymnastics of the Mind*, 18, 3).

152 See Timbie, "The Education", 34–46; Goehring, *The Letter of Ammon*.

described as devoted to ethics and teachers of psychic 'ordinary' Christians, the ideal community structure implied by the text consists of one group existing within a larger community; a group consisted of a smaller number of members devoted to study and deeper reflection who catered to the spiritual needs of a larger collective.

Even if it is not unproblematic to translate ideal structures in a text into the social reality behind it, the community structure envisaged in *TriTrac* could very well reflect an actual original context. In fact, *TriTrac*'s view of the pneumatics fits the picture of a Christian study group; for example, the advanced study group of Origen which Gregory describes, or that of the study circle of Justin Martyr.[153] These Christians sought out advanced education. Just like Origen's advanced class, they in turn taught lower-level Christians, and just like Justin's study group,[154] the pneumatics were part of a community setting including lay Christians. The pursuit of moral excellence was a time-consuming matter. Porphyry insisted that the study of moral excellence demanded the abandonment of everyday life,[155] and the way *TriTrac* describes the psychics as taking care of the pneumatics, it is possible that what we find in *TriTrac* resembles early tendencies towards monasticism. In the next chapter, we will explore *TriTrac*'s attitude toward social engagement more deeply. The first proclivities toward organized monasticism are found in Egypt, and most likely emerge in a city context.[156] The Christian school milieu seems to have been especially vibrant in Alexandria,[157] the Egyptian metropolis which produced many intellectual giants, such as Valentinus, Pantenus, Clement, Origen,

153 *The Martyrdom of Justin.* Tatian and a certain Euelpistus is said to have studied with Justin (Lampe, *From Paul*, 277, 285).

154 Justin also engaged in community life with other Christians than those who visited him in his home for teaching (*First Apology* 61–67).

155 See Porphyry's description of the senator Rogatianus, whom Plotinus used as an example of a good philosopher. Rogatianus gave up everything to devote himself to the study of moral excellence. Porphyry, *Life of Plotinus*, 7.

156 James E. Goehring, "The Encroaching Desert: Literary Production and Ascetic Space in Early Christian Egypt", *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 1 (1993): 281–296; Samuel Rubenson, "Asceticism and Monasticism, I: Eastern", in *The Cambridge History of Christianity*, vol. 2, eds. Augustine Casiday and Frederick W. Norris (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 637–668.

157 See, for example, Hans von Campenhausen's study, *Ecclesiastical Authority and Spiritual Power in the Church of the First Centuries*, translation J. A. Baker (London: Hendrickson, 1966). Peter Brown has also written in a similar vein, portraying Valentinians as being socially organized as study groups. Brown, *Body and Society*, 103–121. As I have argued above, there are problems in this line of arguing if one imagines that this is something particularly Valentinian, while it contrasts with the members themselves' viewing the church as a more important image than the school. The observation is nevertheless apt.

Hieracas, and Didymus the Blind, just to mention a few whose names we still have, and who attracted large followings. The 'school milieu' of Alexandria has been characterized by David Brakke as promoting freethinking, debate, and theological speculation.[158] This continued for a long time. In the fourth century, Athanasius, following his predecessor Alexander, combated Arian Christians, connecting them with a form of Christian gathering where doctrines were openly discussed and debated.[159] The pneumatics represented in *TriTrac* were, I suggest, Christian intellectuals who gathered in this way, in study groups. In light of the detailed level of *TriTrac*'s ethical system, which hinges on insights into physics, epistemology, and cognitive theory, these people had most likely undergone formal education. The pneumatics congregated to develop and discuss their doctrines, but were also part of a larger community, teaching and partaking in communion with lay Christians who supported them and used them as moral examples.

In conclusion, I argue that the context reflected in *TriTrac* is a dual one, reflecting a group of pneumatics comprising an inner circle within a larger community. We are most likely not dealing with formal school structures in either case. Nevertheless, both collectives are envisioned as following a pedagogical structure: (1) one could not advance by oneself; (2) there was a need for teaching and learning for all; (3) higher pneumatic members taught lower psychic members as the Savior teaches the pneumatics; (4) psychics saw to the needs of the pneumatics and engaged in worship with them; (5) oral instructions were delivered by the teachers of the community, probably including pre-baptismal instruction; (6) psychic laypeople with a low literary level were expected to follow the example of the teachers and leaders; (7) an upper level identified with the pneumatics who possessed the ability to consider moral questions, topics that would most likely have demanded a high level of literacy.

But how does *TriTrac*'s community structure relate to broader structures and claims to authority of third century Christianity? Christians were a minority during the first centuries, sometimes oppressed, but this would slowly change in the third and fourth centuries. During this time Christians were being given access to the halls of power to a greater extent than before, and it was chiefly Christian intellectuals who were given access, who were at times even sought out for their advice.[160] Peter Brown has outlined how important

158 Brakke, *Athanasius and Asceticism*, 60.

159 Brakke, *Athanasius and Asceticism*, 57–79.

160 For example, Origen is said to have been invited by Emperor Severus' mother for an audience. Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* 11.67–69.

education and the culture of *paideia* was for gaining and exercising power.[161] Christian intellectuals were much like the philosophers of old, admired and sought after for their intellect. The image of the Christian philosopher would slowly give way to the image of the holy man and the monk.[162] When the empire became Christian, a lot of political power naturally flowed into the hands of the bishops.[163] Nevertheless, it was the holy reclusive and monk who stood closer to ancient ideals of virtue, associated with the intellectual, the philosopher, who was an uncorrupted figure not subsumed by the allure of world power. The holy man, and later the monk, were figures whose advice was to become sought after by the powerful.[164] The parallels between holy man/monk and philosopher are well known; both were characters who had mastered their mind, and thus gained control of their passions/demons. The lives of monks and holy reclusives became the topic of numerous literary productions and stories of their moral excellence presented ideals that were to be emulated.[165] *TriTrac*'s emphasis on otherworldly knowledge, the rejection of passions and demons, as well as world pleasures and honors, fits this ideal of the third and fourth centuries CE. However, as I argue further in the next chapter, *TriTrac* does not advocate the abandonment of life *in the world*, but restricts moral authority to those who are not lured by the honor of worldly power. Indeed, the text seems to advocate that the psychics should be engaged in the world. Nevertheless, it is clear where *TriTrac* places the moral authority: in the hands of an intellectual elite. This is done by accentuating the need for 'ordinary

161 Brown, *Power and Persuasion.*

162 As James Goehring has argued, the ideals that would be associated with the ascetic monk were already established, long before Antony entered the scene, by Christian philosophers like Clement and Origen, for example, and, I might add, those Christians reflected in *TriTrac* (if one favors an early dating of the contents of the text, that is). See Goehring, *Ascetics, Society, and the Desert.*

163 For a few studies on the bishop's role in early Christianity, see Claudia Rapp, *Holy Bishops in Late Antiquity: The Nature of Christian Leadership in an Age of Transition* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005); Andrea Sterk, *Renouncing the World Yet Leading the Church: The Monk-Bishop in Late Antiquity* (Cambridge, M.A.: Harvard University Press, 2004), see also Susanna Elm, *Sons of Hellenism, Fathers of the Church: Emperor Julian, Gregory of Nazianzus, and the Vision of Rome* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012), and the discussion, from the perspective of Gregory of Nazianzus, of whether the bishop really can be said to have "renounced the world".

164 Take for instance the monk Macedonius, who was called down from the mountains in Syria where he lived to speak sense to the political elite at the riots in Antioch 387. For more on this incident, see Brown, *Power and Persuasion*, 141. Shenoute, too, was sought after by the emperor himself for his *parrhêsia.* Besa, *Life of Shenoute* 54.

165 See, for example, Athanasius' advice to the Pachomian monks mourning their dead leader Theodoret. Brakke, *Athanasius and Asceticism*, 201.

people'—who are engaged with dealings in the everyday world—to seek the advice of those whose vocation it is to investigate the structures of deeper things.

However, just because the pneumatics are depicted as *teachers* who are engaged with study and the pursuit of the good, we should not draw the conclusion that pneumatics were uninterested in worldly power. On the contrary, the rhetoric of humility seems to have been a common technique for *gaining* power. A closer look at how Christian bishops portrayed themselves, reveals marked similarities with how the pneumatics are described in *TriTrac*. For example, Gregory of Nazianzus and Basil the Great, two early Christian bishops (of Constantinople and Caesarea respectively) who would wield great power in the burgeoning state Church, portrayed themselves, and were portrayed by others, as wholeheartedly devoted to philosophy, to the tranquil life of pursuing spiritual growth, *not* political power.[166] However, as Susanna Elm has argued, even though Gregory and Basil (and other powerful bishops of the early church), may have been portrayed as uninterested in political pursuits, it was no coincidence that they happened to live in close proximity to political power most of their lives. Given their elite upbringing they were bred for politics and the wielding of power.[167] They became bishops against tough competition and entered that vocation because they sought to do so. This fits with David Brakke's study of Athanasius, who used asceticism as a model for the ideal Christian. Athanasius' biography of Antony was not just one of the most widely read Christian texts of ancient time, it was also an immensely important political tool, it was the manifesto with which Athanasius promoted his particular theology and criticized his political opponents.[168] Thus, in the case of the pneumatics of *TriTrac*, we should be careful about imagining a group of reclusives who were solely devoted to the eternal topics of the Pleroma. The political motivations and ramifications of arguing for the monopoly over ethical interpretations by one group of people within a community should not be underestimated, and the community structure behind *TriTrac* needs to be

166 Elm, *Sons of Hellenism*, 24–25.

167 Elm, *Sons of Hellenism*, 6–9. See also Peter Norton, *Episcopal Elections, 25–600: Hierarchy and Political Will in Late Antiquity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), where it is argued that the *paideia* in which the early Christian leadership partook shaped them to be wielders of power, which in turn influenced their interpretation of the Bible, rather than the other way around.

168 See Brakke, *Athanasius and Asceticism*, for more on *Life of Antony*, see Samuel Rubenson, "Apologetics of Asceticism: *The Life of Antony* and Its Political Context", in *Ascetic Culture: Essays in Honor of Philip Rousseau*, eds. Blake Leyerle and Robin Darling Young (Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 2013), 75–96.

explored through the lens of the early developments of Christian church structures and claims to authority.

In order to draw further conclusions concerning the ethical outlook of the text and the social context it might have reflected and how it related to the context of early Christian approaches toward power, let us add the political perspective to the discussion in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 6

Honor and Attitudes toward Social and Political Involvement

This chapter investigates *TriTrac*'s attitude to involvement in the affairs of everyday life. What does the text say concerning politics and earthly governance? Previous chapters have made it clear that a virtuous life, according to *TriTrac*, involves moral development, education and controlling passions. But how would this ideal fit with the structures of everyday life lived in the Roman empire? Must one give up worldly pursuits and instead devote oneself to contemplation in order to attain a moral life? Or was it, like some church fathers would claim about opponents who implemented the tripartite anthropology we find in *TriTrac*, that the rules of society did not apply to them? Ismo Dunderberg has suggested that the *TriTrac* represents a Christian text that engages with these questions, due to, for example, the many and sometimes positive references to the concept "lust for command" or "lust for power" (ⲧⲙⲛ̄ⲧⲙⲁⲉⲓⲟⲩⲉϩ ⲥⲁϩⲛⲉ).[1] I here develop Dunderberg's studies of "lust for command", adding to his findings the perspectives concerning human cognition, free will, and the passions discussed in previous chapters. I argue that a closer look at these issues, as well as at the importance of the concept of "honor" in Roman society, better allows us to understand the social vision presented in *TriTrac* and the locus of the text within early Christian negotiations of leadership and claims to authority.

1 *TriTrac* and Early Christian Attitudes toward Involvement in Society

Ismo Dunderberg has written about *TriTrac* from the perspective of ancient politics and attitudes toward authority. He has suggested that the text advocates that people should leave their places of worldly power when becoming part of the community.[2] *TriTrac* rejects Greek philosophy (109:24–110:22),

1 Dunderberg, *Beyond Gnosticism*, 161–173. "Lust for command" seems indeed to be especially important in *TriTrac* since it is mentioned, always in the same, lengthy construction ⲧⲙⲛ̄ⲧⲙⲁⲉⲓⲟⲩⲉϩ ⲥⲁϩⲛⲉ, at least 14 times throughout the text.

2 Dunderberg, *Beyond Gnosticism*, 168–170.

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which Dunderberg (among others) has viewed as a sign of social deviance. One passage in the text states that the psychic people who follow Christ upon his appearance on earth "abandoned their gods whom they had previously worshipped, and the lords who are in heaven and on earth".[3] When these people gave themselves to Jesus they furthermore "gave him their kingdoms, they rose from their thrones and they abstained from their crowns".[4] These two passages indicate, Dunderberg maintains, that "conversion involves, thus, abandonment of both power and idolatry".[5]

Nevertheless, Dunderberg also recognizes the passages that mention "the lust for command" as being useful. We read, for example, that the Logos allows the lower levels of power to rule because "even they were useful for the things which were ordained".[6] Dunderberg writes that the "political stance in the *Tripartite Tractate* is twofold. On the one hand the lust for command and power is of dubious origin, but, on the other, it is necessary for the administration of *oikonomia*".[7] Dunderberg has, like others, noticed the passages in *TriTrac* that seem to mention persecution. We read that the material powers who crucified Jesus also persecuted the church: "but also toward the church did they direct their hatred and envy and jealousy".[8] Dunderberg concludes that since *TriTrac* portrays both knowledge of persecution as well as an ambivalence toward political power, it supports the dating of the text to 150–250, a time when relations between Christians and the Roman ruling elite was volatile and unstable.[9] I discuss and build upon this preliminary analysis of Dunderberg, and suggest that the latter part of this chronological span is the more likely original context of the text.

First, however, we should recognize the difficulty of drawing conclusions as to the background of a text from passages that mention persecution. The earliest Christians, prior to the conversion of emperors and the establishment of

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3 133:22–26: ⲁⲩⲕⲱ ⲛ̄ⲥⲱⲟⲩ̣ ⲛ̄ⲛⲟⲩⲛⲟⲩⲧⲉ· ⲉⲛⲧⲁⲩϣⲙ̄ϣⲉ ⲙ̄ⲙⲟⲟⲩ ⲛ̄ϣⲟⲣⲡ̄· ⲁⲩⲱ ⲛ̄ϫⲟⲉⲓⲥ ⲛⲉⲉⲓ ⲉⲧϣⲟⲟⲡ· ϩⲛ̄ ⲧⲡⲉ· ⲁⲩⲱ ⲛⲉⲧϣⲟⲟⲡ ϩⲓ̈ϫⲙ̄ ⲡⲕⲁϩ.

4 134:27–30: ⲁⲩϯ ⲛⲁϥ ⲛ̄ⲛⲟⲩⲙⲛⲧⲣ̄ⲣⲁⲉⲓ ⲁⲩⲧϣ̣[ⲱ]ⲛ̣ ⲁⲃⲁⲗ̣· [ϩ]ⲛ̣̄[ⲛ] ⲟⲩⲑⲣⲟⲛⲟⲥ ⲁⲩϣⲉϣⲧⲟⲩ ⲁⲃ[ⲁⲗ]· ⲛ̄ⲛⲟⲩϭⲣⲏⲡⲉ. Attridge and Pagels translates the last sentence as "they were kept from their crowns", but this does not fit with the context (who would keep them from their crowns?) and thus I have opted for interpreting ϣⲉϣⲧ ⲁⲃ[ⲁⲗ] reflexively.

5 Dunderberg, *Beyond Gnosticism*, 170.

6 118:13–14: ⲛⲉⲩⲣ̄ϣⲉⲩ ϩⲱⲟⲩ ⲁⲛ ⲡⲉ· ⲁⲛⲉⲧⲁⲩⲧⲁϣⲟⲩ.

7 Dunderberg, *Beyond Gnosticism*, 173.

8 122:7–9: ⲁⲗⲗⲁ ⲧⲕⲉⲉⲕⲕⲗⲏⲥⲓⲁ· ϩⲱⲱⲥ ⲁⲛ ⲉϥϣⲟⲟⲡ ⲛ̄ϭⲓ ⲡⲟⲩⲙⲁⲥⲧⲉ ϣⲁⲣⲁⲥ ⲙⲛ̄ ⲡⲟⲩⲕⲱϩ· ⲙⲛ̄ ⲡⲟⲩⲫⲑⲟⲛⲟⲥ. See also page 135 in *TriTrac* which likewise shows awareness of times of persecution, calling upon people to share in the sufferings of those "saints" (ⲛⲟⲩⲁⲁⲃ) who were persecuted.

9 Dunderberg, *Beyond Gnosticism*, 171.

an Imperial Church, were painfully aware of their minority situation, and were at times, like so many other minorities, subjected to harsh treatment by the Roman authorities. Nevertheless, it is hard to draw the conclusion that *TriTrac* derives from a context of persecution even though there are passages mentioning it. The language of persecution was a common theme in early Christian literature and something that was very much a part of Christian identity.[10] The extent to which Christians actually were persecuted has also come into question, in light of Candida Moss' work.[11] Persecution could have been highlighted in *TriTrac* simply to emphasize the Christian nature of the text. This becomes more understandable from the perspective of studies in social psychology that maintain that group identity is created and sustained by negotiation between feelings of uniqueness *and* sameness.[12]

Returning now to Christian attitudes to politics, it is safe to say that there was no unified Christian view of politics and social involvement. While it can be hard to access such attitudes due to the fact that they are often embedded in other kinds of writings (exegesis, apology or theology for example),[13] there are some common themes. Tertullian—most likely echoing Matt 22:17 and Rom 13:1–7—writes that the legitimacy and power wielded by the emperor was

10 Dunderberg uses The Book of Revelation as an example of the difficulty of drawing contextual conclusions from language of persecution. The Book of Revelation is perhaps the most anti-Roman text in the New Testament, painting a picture of great Christian suffering at the hands of demonic Romans. But this is a text which was most likely written in times of peace and prosperity. This is thoroughly discussed in Dunderberg, *Beyond Gnosticism*, 168–170. For more on The Book of Revelation as stemming from a time of peace and prosperity for Christians, see Leonard Thompson, *The Book of Revelation: Apocalypse and Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990).

11 See for example Candida Moss, *The Myth of Persecution: How Early Christians Invented a Story of Martyrdom* (New York: HarperCollins, 2013).

12 The feeling of uniqueness is important in order to create a sense of self, and this must be protected against groups with which one risks involvement, against groups who are too similar and thus threaten one's feeling of distinctiveness. However, the feeling of belonging, the need to be similar, is just as important in creating an identity. This is very similar to Jonathan Z. Smith's points on cognition and the human need and aptitude for comparison; identity creation likewise draws on both similarity and difference. See Brewer, "The Social Self", 475–482; Smith, *Drudgery Divine*, 37, 42, 47. For insights into identity construction in the ancient Jewish communities, see Jonathan Z. Smith, "Fences and Neighbors: Some Contours of Early Judaism", in *Imagining Religion: From Babylon to Jonestown*, ed. Jonathan Z. Smith (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1982), 1–18.

13 For an overview of the topic, see Francis Dvornik, *Early Christian and Byzantine Political Philosophy*, 2 vol. (Washington D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks, 1966); for attitudes toward politics after Constantine, see Elm, *Sons of Hellenism*; see also Christoph Markschies, *Christian Theology and Its Institutions in the Early Roman Empire*, translated by Wayne Coppins (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2015).

ultimately dependent on the order created by God and thus Christians should indeed pay homage to the emperor and the order of the Roman Empire.[14] Tertullian did not see Christians as standing outside or in opposition to the power structures of the Roman Empire and he was far from alone in harboring mitigating attitudes toward them.

Before Tertullian, Justin Martyr had already argued much the same thing, that Christianity did not challenge the rule of the emperor. Writing to Emperor Marcus Aurelius, Justin tried in his *First Apology* to lessen the alarm that Christianity seemed to cause among some Roman people. Christians were, Justin told the emperor, ruled by pursuit of the good and governed by reason. This was not a threat, but rather an advantage for ruling people, as well as the ruled, Justin said. Justin, as well as Athenagoras after him, appealed to the emperor to use his reason before condemning Christians because, through reason, the emperor would see that Christians were not a threat but a social, political, and moral good.[15] Irenaeus followed suit and even presented the structure of the Roman Empire and the emperor as appointed by God to rid humanity of sin.[16] Origen later stated that the coming of Christ during Augustus' rule signaled that the authority of the Roman Empire was divinely ordained.[17] We do not have to broaden our survey of early Christian writers further to be able to conclude that there are early and clear attempts by Christians to assert the legitimacy of the political status quo.[18] I argue that *TriTrac* does not differ much from these more general mitigating attitudes toward social and indeed political involvement.

However, some earlier scholarship on 'Gnosticism' has used the language in *TriTrac* as a sign of the opposite, of a 'Gnostic' text that critiques Roman governance, and particularly ecclesiastical church structures.[19] It is well known that the church fathers portrayed Christians with whom they disagreed as

14 Tertullian, *Apology* 30.

15 Justin Martyr, *First Apology* 3, 11; Athenagoras, *A Plea for the Christians* 34.2–3.

16 Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* V.25.

17 Origen, *Against Celsus* II.30.

18 For a study devoted to the nature of Roman governance and Christian involvement in it, see Brown, *Power and Persuasion*.

19 See, for example, Elaine Pagels, "The Demiurge and his Archons: A Gnostic View of the Bishop and Presbyters", *Harvard Theological Review* 69 (1976): 301–324. Although I also argue that *TriTrac* takes action against structures that became prevalent in the mainstream church, i.e. the bishop, presbyter, and deacon structure, I do this on somewhat different grounds: *TriTrac* does not participate in a Gnostic-Christian dichotomy, where Gnostics rejected church structures while Christians embraced them. Rather, it is involved in intra-Christian debates over authority and legitimacy, favoring the image of the teacher and intellectual (much in line with Clement and Origen for example).

social deviants, a threat, and generally unbeneficial for society.[20] Irenaeus leveled these allegations toward those of his Christian opponents who adopted a tripartite anthropology and whom he called Valentinians. These Christians and others inspired by the "multitude of Gnostics", Irenaeus wrote, thought they were above conventional rules—since they claimed that God was not the creator of the cosmos, but that it was rather a lower god whose rule one did not need to accept.[21] Irenaeus and other church fathers argued that these people maintained that the rules in society did not apply to them since they came from a higher entity who did not create the structure of the cosmos. For a long time, the general scholarly attitude toward these and other opponents of the church fathers—often called Gnostics—was that they must have rejected the Roman state.[22]

However, many studies have recently shown the error of taking the church fathers' statements for fact.[23] There is little evidence—save the church fathers' polemics—to suggest that these Christians rejected involvement in social life, or political life for that matter, just because they harbored a 'negative' world view or regarded the powers in the heavens as having influence over creation.[24] Perhaps some of the groups lumped together into the category of Gnosticism did reject involvement in social life and politics, but this should be argued on a case to case basis, and cannot be applied to all the texts or groups that are

20 See, for example, W. H. C. Frend, *The Donatist Church* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1952); Jane Merdinger, *Rome and the African Church in the Time of Augustine* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1997).

21 Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* I.1, I.8, I.11, II.3, II.14.

22 Hans Kippenberg, "Versuch einer soziologischen Verortung des antiken Gnostizismus", *Numen* 17 (1970): 211–231. This view is by no means erased yet. Most recently 'Gnostics' have been portrayed in much the same manner by Karamanolis, *Philosophy*, 222. Here he writes that 'Gnostics' were not motivated to be good according to the standards of the world, because the world was created by a lower God. I am not claiming that there are no texts associated with 'Gnosticism' that also critique the structures of society, only that this cannot be generalized. For one such argument see for example, Karen King's assessment of *ApJohn*, in King, *Secret Revelation*, 1–24, 157–173.

23 Williams, *Rethinking*. Dunderberg's critique of Williams in Dunderberg, *Beyond Gnosticism*, 164 is very important to note, however. Here Dunderberg points out that even though the church fathers' rejections and portrayals of 'Gnostics' as world rejecters cannot be taken at face value, neither should one do the opposite: interpret them as *more* in tune with society, which Williams argued in his work (on account of the fact that the church fathers portray them as more in tune with philosophy and the eating of sacrificial meats). These statements also rest on polemics, Dunderberg notes (Dunderberg, *Beyond Gnosticism*, 164).

24 For an article arguing that a 'negative' world view did not result in dismissal of social involvement, see Michael A. Williams, "A Life Full of Meaning and Purpose: Demiurgic Myths and Social Implications", in Iricinschi, *Beyond*, 19–59.

often labeled Gnostic.[25] Furthermore, the rejection of the power structures of this world in favor of a life in seclusion in search of deeper heavenly truths, was surely not unique to some of the groups and texts that are sometimes grouped as 'Gnostic', but is rather a larger pattern within Christianity.[26]

In *TriTrac* the material and psychic powers and the organization the Logos instigates after the creation of the three structures are at times described as of benefit for the whole. We even read that "the Logos is pleased with them (the material and psychic powers), for they are useful for the *oikonomia*".[27] One common theme in the early Christian (as well as pagan and Jewish) attitude to authority and social issues is the view that the structures of society were reflected in the structure of the creation of the world. We have seen that Tertullian, Irenaeus, and Origen viewed the structure of creation and the birth of Jesus as legitimizing political structures. Philo, who advocated being active in society and worldly governance—and who himself was politically active and met with Caligula as a representative of the Jews in Alexandria—argued that the law of Moses was supported by the laws of nature established in creation, and he invited Romans to follow these laws which were, according to most Jews, superior to—although not necessarily contradicting—those followed by Roman citizens.[28] He viewed the Logos as acting as God's power in governing in the world, somewhat like the Stoics did. The Logos applied the natural law to the world.[29] Philo saw the structure of creation as guiding each person's relation to power, whether one became a ruler or one of the ruled. Those who became rulers had the power to see what was beneficial; these Philo associated with the right side of God—the position of honor. However, Philo viewed good rulers and kings as appointed to *serve* humanity, not govern for the sake of

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25 Williams' attempt to argue that there is little evidence for taking Irenaeus' portrayal of the Valentinians at face value, although basically right, leads him in the wrong direction when he asserts that the opposite might even have been true; that Valentinians were Christians who stood closer to society than other Christians. He based this conclusion on Irenaeus' depiction of Valentinians as participating in the consumption of sacrificial meat during pagan festivals, which Irenaeus refused to do, and that this indicated the Valentinian's positive attitude toward mingling in pagan society. However, as Dunderberg has argued, the sources for Valentinian's eating of sacrificial meat rests on the same polemical material which Williams rejects in the first instance. For more, see Dunderberg, *Beyond Gnosticism*, 162–164.

26 Williams, *Rethinking*, passim.

27 99:18–19: ϣⲁⲛⲧⲉϥⲣ̄ ϩⲛⲉϥ ⲁⲣⲁⲟⲩ ⲛ̄ϭⲓ ⲡⲗⲟⲅⲟⲥ̣ ⲉⲩⲣ̄ⲱϣⲉⲩ ⲁⲧⲟⲓⲕⲟⲓⲛⲟⲙⲓⲁ. Translation by Attridge and Pagels, slightly modified.

28 For Philo's relation to the Greco-Roman legal system, see John W. Martens, *One God, One Law: Philo of Alexandria on the Mosaic and Greco-Roman Law* (Leiden: Brill, 2003).

29 Dillon, *Middle Platonists*, 153–155.

gaining personal world power and honor.[30] Thus, some people had the natural ability to govern, and this ability was appointed by the providence of God.

Platonists, too, saw the structures of creation as foundational for the way people related to power.[31] Plato, of course, thought that the right to rule should be awarded to the best people and wisest, and those who did good for the whole.[32] A successful society was a society which involved all the best people of all social classes and professions. Not all people were natural leaders, however, and humans did not make the rules themselves; rather they were represented in the Ideal World. A good leader knew virtue, which went hand in hand with knowledge of the structures of the Divine, which the Demiurge had used as an image when creating the world. A leader should not govern solely on the basis of his will to acquire personal honor and glory. However, as Aristotle came to highlight, the emotions associated with the middle part of the tripartite structure of the soul were useful for people who obtained positions of power; it was here that emotions like honor and courage were located, emotions that were needed in order to become an effective and just leader.[33]

Middle Platonists valued involvement in politics, contrary to some of the other Hellenistic schools of philosophy like some Stoics (at least pre-Roman Stoicism), Pyrrhonians, and Epicureans, many of whom saw that a self-respecting man should give up the pettiness of the world and engage wholeheartedly in the practice of philosophy. Like Plato, Plutarch advocated monarchy and viewed the king as an *image* (εἰκών) of God. Plutarch, like some Roman Stoics and his fellow Platonist Philo, saw the ruling elite, the kings, as representing the natural law implemented by God.[34] Neoplatonists like Plotinus went deeper into metaphysics and emphasized the lust for power in the human situation on earth. It was the will to "rule by itself" (ἄρχειν αὐτῆς) and experience the power struggles and passions in the cosmos that caused the intellect to step down in creation in the first place; and the different levels of material existence clothed spiritual man in its downward journey with abilities associated with cosmic life.[35]

30 Philo, *On Abraham* 124–130.

31 For more on Plato and his later followers related to politics and power, see Dominic J. O'Meara, *Platonopolis: Platonic Political Philosophy in Late Antiquity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 3–26.

32 Plato, *The Republic* I.349b, III.412b–414b, V.462a–b.

33 Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* III.1125b22. For more on theory of emotions, see Chapter 2 above.

34 Plutarch, *To an Uneducated Ruler* 780e. See Dillon, *Middle Platonists*, 198.

35 Plotinus, *Ennead* III.7.11. For more on Plotinus and his view on the soul's descent, see Damian Caluori, *Plotinus on the Soul* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015). For

The cosmogony of *TriTrac* holds the key for approaching attitudes toward earthly governance. The structure of the *oikonomia* implemented by the Logos, I argue, reveals attitudes toward social and political involvement. So, let us take a closer look at the descriptions of material and psychic powers in light of claims to authority and earthly governance.

2 Cosmogony as Political Commentary

In *TriTrac* the cosmos is the result of the fall of the Logos, this much is clear by now. The fall is, however, sanctioned by the Father (76:2–77:11) and at several places we are told the reason for creation: it is so that the Aeons can gain experience of the life outside the Pleroma, to learn about materiality, about the differences between good and evil:

> The fall, which happened to the Aeons of the Father of the All who did not suffer, was brought to them, as if it were their own, in a careful and non-malicious and immensely sweet way. [It was brought to the] All so that they might be instructed about the [defect] by the single one, from whom [alone] they all received strength to eliminate the defects.[36]

As explained in greater detail in Chapter 2, the fall will benefit the whole. It is the Aeon called the Logos who falls and creates the first two orders of powers—the material left side and the psychic right side. The material powers are created first and strive to "command" (ⲟⲩⲉϩ ⲥⲁϩⲛⲉ) each other, driven by "their empty lust for glory" (ⲧⲟⲩⲙⲛ̄ⲧⲙⲁⲉⲓⲉⲁⲟⲩ ⲉⲧϣⲟⲩⲉ̣[ⲓ]ⲧ̣) (79:20–22, 84:18–21). The closely associated concept "lust for command" (ⲙⲛ̄ⲧⲙⲁⲉⲓⲟⲩⲉϩ ⲥⲁϩⲛⲉ), is mentioned repeatedly throughout the text.[37] As Dunderberg has noted, this concept, "command" (ⲟⲩⲉϩ ⲥⲁϩⲛⲉ) is crucial for the *oikonomia* set

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a discussion of the relationship between *TriTrac* and Plotinus, see Berno, "Rethinking Valentinianism", 331–345.

36 85:33–86:4: ϫⲉ ⲡⲓⲥⲗⲁⲧⲉ ⲉⲛⲧⲁϩϣⲱⲡⲉ ⲁⲛⲁⲓⲱ[ⲛ] ⲛ̄ⲧⲉ ⲡⲓⲱⲧ· ⲛ̄ⲛⲓⲡⲧⲏⲣϥ̄ ⲉⲧⲉⲙ̄ⲡⲟⲩϣⲡ̣ ⲙ̄ⲕⲁϩ· ⲁⲩϫⲓⲧϥ̄ ⲁⲣⲁⲩ ϩⲱⲥ ⲉⲡⲟⲟⲩ ⲡⲉ ϩⲛ̄ⲛ ⲟⲩⲙⲛ̄ϫⲁⲉⲓⲣⲁⲟⲩϣ· ⲙⲛ̄ ⲟⲩⲙⲛ̄ⲧⲁⲧⲣ̣ ⲃϣ̣[ⲛ] ⲁⲩⲱ ϩⲛ̄ⲛ ⲟⲩⲙⲛ̄ⲧϩⲗ̄ϭⲉ ⲉⲛⲁϣⲱⲥ [ⲁⲩϫⲓⲧϥ ⲛⲛⲓⲡ]ⲧⲏⲣϥ̄ ⲁⲧⲣⲟⲩⲧⲥⲉⲃⲟ ⲁⲡ̣[ϣⲧⲁ ⲁⲃⲁⲗ ϩⲓ]ⲧⲟⲟⲧϥ̄ ⲙ̄ⲡⲓⲟⲩⲉⲉⲓ ⲡⲁ[ⲉⲓ ⲉⲧⲟⲩⲧⲁϫ]ⲣ̣ⲟ ⲧⲏⲣⲟⲩ ⲁⲃⲁⲗ ϩⲓ̈ⲧⲟⲟⲧϥ̄ [ⲟⲩⲁⲉⲉⲧϥ̄]· ⲁⲗⲁϭ ⲛ̄ϣⲧⲁ· Translation by Attridge and Pagels, slightly modified. See also 126:32–34 where we read that the pneumatic class is come to this world to "experience the evil things and (so that they) might train themselves in them" (ⲉⲩⲛⲁϫⲓϯⲡⲉ· ⲛ̄ⲛⲓⲡⲉⲧⲑⲁⲩⲟⲩ ⲁⲩⲱ ⲛ̄ⲥⲉⲣ̄ ⲅⲩⲙⲛⲁⲍⲉ· ⲙ̄ⲙⲁⲩ ⲛ̄ϩⲣⲏⲓ̈ ⲛ̄ϩⲏⲧⲟⲩ), and in *TriTrac* it is the pneumatic substance that is re-integrated with the Pleroma.

37 79:27–28, 80:9, 83:35, 84:15, 84:21, 98:10, 99:11–20, 103:22, 120:16–24, 131:24–35.

up by the Logos; it is by virtue of this attribute the powers control and govern the whole system.[38] At this point in the cosmogony, however, only the Logos and his initial creation exist, the material powers, and from these came "fighters, warriors, troublemakers, apostates. They are disobedient beings, lovers of command".[39] This period is defined by lack of order (80:15–19). The Logos then creates a second group of powers. These come forth when the Logos is regretting his mistake of leaving the Pleroma and prays to God. In the second order of powers the Logos placed the ability to understand that there was something greater than they, to recognize the Savior, and think and pray to God (83:18–26): These powers were not, as in the material side, associated with "arrogance" (ϫⲁⲥⲓϩⲏⲧ), "desire" (ⲟⲩⲱϣⲉ), and "a heavy sleep" (ⲟⲩϩⲓⲛⲏⲃ ⲉϥϩⲁⲣϣ) (82:21–27). Instead, the psychic powers are associated with "harmony" (ϯⲙⲉⲧⲉ), "compassion" (ⲙⲛ̄ⲧⲙⲁⲉⲓⲛⲟⲩⲉⲣⲏⲩ) "unity" (ⲙⲛ̄ⲧⲟⲩⲉⲉⲓⲉ), and "honor" (ⲧⲁⲉⲓⲁⲉⲓⲧ). However, we read that "the empty lust for glory draws all of them to the desire that is lust for command";[40] thus, the material powers and the psychic powers start warring amongst each other. This situation is associated with "wrath" (ⲃⲗ̄ⲕⲉ), "violence" (ⲙⲛ̄ⲧϫⲓⲛ̣̄ϭⲁⲛⲥ̄), "desire" (ⲉⲡⲓⲑⲩⲙⲓⲁ), and "ignorance" (ⲙⲛ̄ⲧⲁⲧⲥⲁⲩⲛⲉ).[41] In the course of all this, the Savior appears and the Logos is able to separate the two sides of warring powers. The Savior gives the Logos "a word which is destined to be knowledge. And he gave him power to separate and cast out from himself those who are disobedient to him".[42] The Savior appears to the warring powers and they stop. The psychic powers "assent" (ⲣ ϩⲟⲙⲟⲗⲟⲅⲓ) to him, because they have the ability placed in them to recognize him.[43] Some of the powers, the material side, do not have this inborn ability, so they become "afraid" (ⲧⲣⲣⲉ) and fall down "to the pit of ignorance which is called 'the Outer Darkness' and 'Chaos' and 'Hades' and 'the Abyss'".[44] The powers who fall rule over these lower regions, we read, because it

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38 Dunderberg, *Beyond Gnosticism*, 162.

39 80:5–9: ⲉϩⲛ̄ⲣⲉϥⲙ̄ⲗⲁ̣[ϩ] ⲛⲉ· ⲉϩⲛ̄ⲣⲉϥⲙⲓϣⲉ ⲛⲉ ⲉϩ̣ⲛ̄ⲣⲉϥϯ ϣⲧⲁⲣⲧⲣ̄ ⲛⲉ· ⲉϩⲛ̄ⲁ̣ⲡ̣ⲟⲥⲧ̣ⲁ̣ⲧⲏⲥ ⲛⲉ· ϩⲛ̄ⲁⲧⲣ̄ ⲡⲓⲑⲉ ⲛ̣ⲉ̣ ⲉϩ̣ⲛ̣̄ⲙⲁⲉⲓⲟⲩⲉϩ ⲥⲁϩⲛⲉ. Translation by Attridge and Pagels, slightly modified.

40 84:17–21: ⲉⲥⲥⲱⲕ̣ ⲙ̄ⲙⲁ̣ⲩ ⲧⲏⲣⲟⲩ ⲛϭⲓ ϯⲙⲛ̄ⲧⲙ̣ⲁ̣ⲉⲓⲉⲁ[ⲩ]· ⲉⲧϣⲟⲩⲉⲓⲧ· ⲁϩⲟ̣[ⲩⲛ] ⲁⲧⲉⲡ̣ⲓⲑⲩⲙⲓⲁ· ⲛ̄ⲧⲙⲛ̄ⲧ[ⲙⲁ]ⲉⲓⲟⲩⲉϩ ⲥⲁϩⲛⲉ. Translation by Attridge and Pagels, slightly modified.

41 See Chapter 2 for details on the passions of the material side.

42 88:22–25: ⲛ̄ⲛⲟⲩⲗⲟⲅⲟⲥ ⲉϥⲧⲏϣ ⲛ̄ⲛⲟⲩⲉⲡⲓⲥⲧⲏⲙⲁ· ⲁⲩⲱ ⲁϥϯ ⲛⲉϥ ⲛ̄ⲟⲩϭⲁⲙ· ⲁⲧⲣⲉϥⲡⲱⲣϫ̄ ϥⲛⲟⲩϩⲉ· ⲁⲃⲁⲗ ⲙ̄ⲙⲁϥ ⲛ̄ⲛⲉⲧ·{ⲧ}ⲟⲉⲓ· ⲛ̄ⲛⲁⲧⲣ̄ ⲡⲓⲑⲉ ⲛⲉϥ.

43 90:18–24. See the discussion in Chapter 3 where I suggest that ⲣ ϩⲟⲙⲟⲗⲟⲅⲓ may have this connotation in *TriTrac*, equivalent to συγκατάθεσις, something a mind does when accepting outside impressions.

44 89:25–28: ⲁⲡϣⲓⲕⲉ ⲡⲉ ⲛ̄ⲧⲙⲛ̄ⲧ·ⲁⲧⲥⲁⲩⲛⲉ· ⲉⲧⲉ ⲡⲉⲧⲟⲩⲙⲟⲩⲧⲉ ⲁⲣⲁϥ ϫⲉ ⲡⲕⲉⲕⲉⲓ {ϩ}ⲉⲧϩⲉ ⲥⲁ ⲛⲃⲟⲗ· ⲁⲩⲱ ⲡⲭⲁⲟⲩⲥ· ⲁⲩⲱ ⲉⲙⲛ̄ⲧⲉ ⲁⲩⲱ ⲡⲛⲟⲩⲛ.

was the lot that was assigned to them, and thus the Savior "granted them that they too should be of use for the *oikonomia* which was to be".[45]

As we know, the Logos creates a third class of powers—called "the church"—and these are the pneumatics. These powers do not seem to have anything to do with the governance of the cosmos; no qualities of power or command are attributed to them. Rather, they are associated with good emotions and pedagogic attributes (as seen in Chapters 2 and 4). The pneumatics were made of the substance whose destiny it is to travel through the heavens down to earth and learn of life on earth and teach the psychic humans (90:14–95:38).[46] The material powers are associated with passions (95:2–5); they are imitations of the Aeons in the real Pleroma, not true likenesses but only shadows and, therefore, they will be lost in the end (78:29–79:11). The Logos places the psychics next to the material powers, in order that they might come to see and know—by associating with the lowest level of creation—the faults they must abandon (98:27–99:7). Above the material powers the Logos places "the beautiful rationality" (ⲡⲓⲗⲟⲅⲟⲥ ⲛ̄ⲧⲥⲁⲉⲓⲟ) (99:6) and "the law of judgment" (ⲡⲓⲛⲟⲙⲟⲥ ⲛ̄ⲧⲉⲕⲣⲓⲥⲓⲥ̣) (99:8). The Logos controls them through the enticing beauty and threat of punishment. Furthermore, their "lust for command" keeps all the different powers in their appointed positions, "none (of the powers) lacks a command and none is without kingship from the end of the heavens to the end of the [earth]",[47] and the Logos is pleased with them since they keep the order he has set out (99:5–100:10). These positions have different tasks and ranks. The different powers are made "kings, there are lords and those who give commands, some for administering punishment, others for administering justice, still others for giving rest and healing, others for teaching, others for guarding".[48] The Demiurge is placed above the powers, now called archons. The Demiurge is their leader and has all the honorary titles associated with a creator god, but the Logos nevertheless controls him. The Demiurge in turn creates for himself servants, and again we read of "beauty" (ⲥⲁⲁⲉⲓⲧ) as an ordering *leitmotiv*. We read that "his beautiful name" (ⲡⲉϥⲣⲉⲛ ⲉϥⲧⲥⲁⲉⲁⲉⲓⲧ) is left wherever the

45 89:34–90:1: ⲁϥⲕⲁⲁϥ ⲛⲉⲩ ϫⲉ ⲥⲉⲛⲁⲣ̄ ϣⲉⲩ ϩⲱⲟⲩ ⲁⲧⲟⲓⲕⲟⲛⲟⲙⲓⲁ ⲉⲧⲁϣⲱⲡ̣ⲉ. Translation by Attridge and Pagels, slightly modified.

46 For more on this third and highest class of powers, see Chapter 4, where I discuss the pedagogic task appointed to them.

47 100:7–11: ⲙⲛ̄ ⲗⲁⲩⲉ ⲉϥⲟⲉⲓ ⲛ̄ⲁⲧⲟⲩⲉϩ ⲥⲁϩⲛⲉ· ⲁⲩⲱ ⲙⲛ̄ ⲗ̣ⲁⲩⲉ ⲉϥⲟⲉⲓ ⲛ̄ⲁⲧ¨ⲧⲣ̄ⲣⲟ ϫⲓⲛ [ⲁⲣⲏ]ϫϥ̄ ⲛⲙⲡⲏⲩⲉ· ϣⲁ ⲁⲣⲏϫϥ̄ ⲙ̄ⲡ[ⲕⲁϩ].

48 100:12–18: ⲟ̣[ⲩⲛ̄ ⲣ̄]ⲣⲟ ⲟⲩⲛ̄ ϫⲁⲉⲓⲥ ⲁⲩⲱ ⲛⲉⲧ[ⲟ]ⲩ[ⲉϩ] ⲥ̣ⲁ̣ϩⲛⲉ· ⲙ̄ⲙⲁⲩ ϩⲁⲉⲓⲛⲉ ⲙⲉⲛ̣ ⲁ̣ⲧ̣ⲣⲟⲩϯ ⲕⲟⲗⲁⲥⲓⲥ ϩⲛ̄ⲕⲉ̣ⲕ̣ⲁ̣ⲩⲉ ⲁⲧⲣⲟⲩϯ ϩⲁⲡ ϩⲛ̄ⲕⲉϩⲁⲉⲓⲛⲉ ⲁⲧⲣⲟⲩϯ ⲙ̄ⲧⲁⲛ ⲛⲥⲉⲧⲁⲗϭⲟ· ϩⲛ̄ⲕⲉⲕⲁⲩⲉ ⲁⲧⲣⲟ̣ⲩ̣ϯ̣ ⲥⲃⲱ· ϩⲛ̄ⲕⲉⲕⲁⲩⲉ ⲧⲣⲟⲩⲁⲣⲏϩ.

Demiurge works, and that "he set them over the beauty of the things below" (ⲁϥⲕⲁⲁⲩ ⲁϫⲛ̄ ⲡⲓⲧⲥⲁⲉⲓⲱ̃ ⲛ̄ⲛⲉⲧⲙ̄ⲡⲥⲁ ⲛⲡⲓⲧⲛ̄) (102:30–31).

The image that the cosmic system was beautifully ordered was a widespread concept in antiquity.[49] *TriTrac* is most likely inspired by the same discourse as inspired Middle Platonists like Numenius and Plutarch who—probably in critique of the Stoic view that the cosmos was perfect in itself and did not need anything added from outside to attain the beauty of the ordered Nature[50]—maintained that the cosmos was not beautiful by itself but that matter needed the insertion of intelligence, reason, and harmony in order to become an ordered and beautiful system. The material powers are described in very much the same way as the irrational World Soul of Alcinous, Plutarch, and Atticus, a creative power that was sleeping before order was forced on it[51]—imagery similar to that used in *TriTrac* for the cosmic powers (82:21–27). Plotinus criticizes people he called the 'Gnostics' for being afraid of the rulers of the cosmos, not recognizing that it was they who gave order and beauty to the system.[52] This critique does not fit *TriTrac*, which, as we have seen above, clearly recognizes the beautiful and systematic order that the Logos places over the whole cosmic system and its rulers.[53] Nevertheless, it is also recognized that this order belongs to the governance of the cosmos, and is thus finite.

The cosmogony of *TriTrac* works very effectively as a political commentary: the world is systematically organized and designed to benefit the pneumatic and psychic substances. But of what consists the ordered system that the Logos places over those in power? Much as in Philo's works, the right side of the Logos' governing structure seems to be closely associated with honor as well as

49 See Perkins, "Beauty, Number, and Loss", 277–296.

50 Cicero, *On the Nature of the Gods* II.58–167.

51 See Dillon, *Middle Platonists*, 204–208, 253–257, 285–287.

52 Plotinus, *Ennead* II.9, 13.

53 In this respect, the beauty we encounter in *TriTrac* seems to be different from how beauty is described in *GosTruth* or *InterpKnow*, for example, where the beauty of the system of the cosmos is described as an illusion or oppressor that induces fear and terror in humans; this is closer to the view of Plotinus' opponents than *TriTrac*. As *GosTruth* tells us, the Demiurge (or rather the creature called ⲡⲗⲁⲛⲏ) created a "beautiful (ⲥⲁⲉⲓⲉ) substitute for truth" (17:19). This beauty is contrasted with the "perfect beauty" that is associated with the world above (17:27). In *InterpKnow* 7:17 and 7:32 we read of beautiful but dark reflection of the true Virgin of light, similarly, most likely a reference to Sophia as representing the Dyad and the cosmic order. A problem with Perkins' discussion of the relation between Middle Platonic systems and Nag Hammadi texts is the use of the category 'Gnostic' in her study. Perkins places such texts as *TriTrac, GosTruth*, and *Eugnostos*, as well as Sethian Platonic treatises, into this category. See Perkins, "Beauty, Number, and Loss". Treating all these texts as representations of *one* tradition obviates important differences between them.

the governance of the world. Let us pause here for a moment and consider the concepts of "honor" and "glory" which seem to be a great driving force of those powers who retain positions of authority in the cosmos.

3 The Pursuit of Honor

In *TriTrac* there are different ways of using terms like honor (ⲧⲁⲉⲓⲟ) and glory (ⲉⲁⲩ). In their purest sense, all honor and glory belongs to God.[54] The honor of God is limitless and it is the duty of the Aeons to praise the glory of God (68:14–69:14). In the Logos' creation, however, virtuous honor is lost. Before the entry of the Savior, we read that the powers "did not have honor" ([ⲙ]ⲛ̣̄ⲧⲉⲩ ⲧⲁⲉⲓⲟ· ⲙ̄ⲙⲉⲩ) (83:5). The pursuit of honor and glory seems to be what the system of the Logos is built around:

> They (the powers) wanted to command one another, overcoming one another [in] their empty ambition, while the glory which they possess contains a cause [of] the system which was to be.[55]

As we have seen above, this system, the organization of the Logos, is also described as ultimately beneficial, and not to be criticized. How should we understand this double attitude toward honor?

The political culture of the Roman Empire was structured around honor, perhaps even more than Greek society had been before it. One's honor was based on elements like family ties, wealth, education, status, and personal character. Carlin Barton, in her study *Roman Honor*, and J. E. Lendon, in his work *Empire of Honor*, have shown how significant honor was in Roman society, how valued it was in all social classes—from slave to emperor.[56] Cicero states the natural proclivity of humans for honor in this way: "By nature we yearn and hunger for honor, and once we have glimpsed, as it were, some part of its radiance, there is nothing we are not prepared to bear and suffer in order to secure it".[57] It was not enough to remain honorable by birth; one's honor had

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54 The terms glory and honor appear frequently on pages 54–60 in relation to God, see especially: 54:9–10 and 56:8–22.

55 79:20–25: ϫⲉ ⲛⲉⲩⲟⲩⲱϣⲉ· ⲁⲟⲩⲉϩ ⲥⲁ[ϩⲛ]ⲉ· ⲛ̄ⲛⲉⲩⲉⲣⲏⲩ ⲉⲩϭⲣⲱ· ⲁⲣⲁⲟⲩ [ϩⲛ] ⲧⲟⲩⲙⲛ̄ⲧⲙⲁⲉⲓⲉⲁⲟⲩ ⲉⲧϣⲟⲩⲉ̣[ⲓ]ⲧ̣· ⲉⲡⲉⲁⲩ ⲉⲧⲉⲩⲛⲧⲉⲩϥ· ⲉⲩⲛ̄ⲧ̣ⲉϥ̣ ⲙ̄ⲙⲉⲩ ⲛ̄ⲛⲟⲩⲗⲁⲉⲓϭⲉ [ⲛⲧⲉ] ⲧ̣ⲥⲩⲥⲧⲁⲥⲓⲥ ⲉⲧⲛⲁϣⲱⲡⲉ. Translation by Attridge and Pagels, slightly modified.

56 Barton, *Roman Honor*; J. E. Lendon, *Empire of Honor: The Art of Government in the Roman World* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996).

57 Cicero, *Tusculan Disputations* II.24.58. Translation from Barton, *Roman Honor*, 37.

to be proven and the glory of one's family improved. A quote from a Roman gravestone summarizes the importance placed on the pursuit of honor: "By the way I lived my life I added to the achievements of my family. I aimed at equaling the deeds of my ancestors … I succeeded in obtaining public esteem so that they rejoice that I was born to them. My honor ennobled the stock".[58] In order to gain honor one had to seek glory and achievements of some kind, and consequently, Barton argues, honor was closely associated with activity, with labor, study, and competition (*labor, industria, disciplina, diligentia, studium, aemulatio*).[59] If glory was not gained at the cost of effort or peril, it was not worth pursuing.

The concept φιλοτίμημα, "love of honor" or perhaps "ambition", is treated ambivalently among early Greek writers. Plato, for example, was skeptical about the virtue of honor and did not think of the pursuit of honor as a suitable driving force for the rulers of society.[60] Aristotle viewed honor as a virtue but still advocated a middle position in its pursuit.[61] Nevertheless, φιλοτίμημα was of great importance in Greek society, a traditional 'honor-shame culture' like most in the ancient world, and it would become a central driving force during the Roman period as well, understandable in a society that was based on the will and drive to expand, develop, and conquer. This view of "love of honor" (φιλοτίμημα) as a positive driving force is also reflected in early Christian writings.[62] The apostle Paul, for example, uses the term φιλοτίμημα exclusively in a positive sense, referring to what drove him to be successful in his efforts.[63] Still today in Greek society, φιλοτίμημα is of great importance, denoting the glue that keeps society prosperous and decent.[64]

In *TriTrac* the driving force of the material class of humans is the blind pursuit of command over each other, which gives them glory and honor (79:20–25). This pursuit became "a cause [of] the system which was to be" (ⲛ̄ⲛⲟⲩⲗⲁⲉⲓϭⲉ [ⲛⲧⲉ] ⲧ̣ⲥⲩⲥⲧⲁⲥⲓⲥ ⲉⲧⲛⲁϣⲱⲡⲉ) (79:24–25). The psychic powers are created after the material ones and described as infected with the same lust

58 *Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae* 6, ed. Hermann Dessau, vol. 1 (Berlin: Berolini Apud Weidmannos, 1892): 3. Translation from Barton, *Roman Honor*, 85.

59 Barton, *Roman Honor*, 34–56.

60 Plato, *The Republic* 347b. Here Plato writes that a ruler should not rule for the desire for honor (φιλοτίμημα) or for money; that would be reproachable.

61 Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* III.1125b22.

62 For more on the transition from pagan to Christina society and the continuation of the ideal of honor, see Peter Brown, *The Making of Late Antiquity* (Cambridge, M.A.: Harvard University Press, 1993), 27–53.

63 Rom 15:2; 2 Cor 5; 1 Thess 4:11.

64 See Peter Walcot, *Greek Peasants, Ancient and Modern: A Comparison of Social and Moral Values* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1970).

for glory and honor. However, honor and glory are at the same time regarded as useful and potentially positive in *TriTrac*. Before the entry of the Savior, we read that the powers "did not have honor" ([ⲙ]ⲛ̣̄ⲧⲉⲩ ⲧⲁⲉⲓⲟ· ⲙ̄ⲙⲉⲩ ⲡⲉ) (83:5). The psychics, nevertheless, gain this honor with the assent to the Savior, while the material class restlessly continues to pursue it, with no luck. The honor associated with the positions that the different powers retain in the cosmos are momentary, they only last "for a time" (ⲙ̄ⲡⲣⲟⲥ ⲟⲩⲁⲉⲓϣ) (120:24–25), while the glory of God is eternal (131:31–33). The honor and glory sought by the material class is described as "empty"; it is "the empty lust for glory" (ϯⲙⲛ̄ⲧⲙ̣ⲁ̣ⲉⲓⲉⲁ[ⲩ]· ⲉⲧϣⲟⲩⲉⲓⲧ) that draws one to "lust for command" (ⲛ̄ⲧⲙⲛ̄ⲧ[ⲙⲁ]ⲉⲓⲟⲩⲉϩ ⲥⲁϩⲛⲉ·) (84:18–21). *TriTrac*, therefore, seems to differentiate between the honor of God, honor gained through the Savior, and honor sought solely to command others—the honor of the material powers and of the material cosmos—which is ultimately empty. It would seem from its using the concepts of honor and glory in relation to the governance of the cosmic order that *TriTrac* critiques the honor culture of the Roman Empire. Honor in the world does not seem to carry any value in itself, yet at the same time it is recognized that the pursuit of honor drives the organization of the world, an organization that is described as useful and for the benefit of the pneumatics and psychics (99:4–19, 118:13–14).

Let us look more closely at relations between honor and the Logos' command-driven system, and how *TriTrac* presents human relations with it.

4 Psychic Humans and Their Political Involvement

TriTrac makes clear that the different cosmic powers have different abilities that make them suitable for specific positions of authority. Lust for command, love of honor, as well as glory, envy, and jealousy are all aptitudes attached to the different levels of worldly governance. The Logos structured the cosmos to benefit "those who need education and teaching and formation" (ⲛⲉⲧⲣ̄ ⲭⲣⲓⲁ ⲛ̄ⲛⲟⲩⲥⲁⲛⲉϣ ⲙⲛ̄ⲛ ⲟⲩⲥⲃⲱ ⲙⲛ̄ ϯⲙⲟⲣⲫⲏ) (104:21–23). The cosmos is created *for the benefit of* humanity and the powers that needed instruction. This much is clear in *TriTrac*. This does not mean, however, that the cosmic system is entirely good, especially given that the material foundations upon which beauty is implemented are characterized as illusion, as a sickness that will ultimately perish. Words that occur in association with materiality, as we saw in Chapter 1, are "imitation" (ⲧⲁⲛⲧⲛ) and the adjective "empty" (ϣⲟⲩⲉⲓⲧ). The "lust for "command" is defined as a "desire" (ⲉⲡⲓⲑⲩⲙⲓⲁ) (131:24–25), and as such, it is a product of materiality, and therefore a sickness and empty.

Yet, as I have indicated, even the desire for power and earthly honor has its role in the system of the *oikonomia* set up by the Logos. We read that the world of humans is like the world of the powers in heaven (108:36–109:1). The left side and the right side stand opposite one another and emulate each other, the one sometimes doing good and the other evil. However, there can be no pure good or truth without understanding (ⲙⲙⲉ) and the teaching associated with the pneumatic part. This is made clear in the passages that comment on Greek philosophy and Hebrew prophesies. Before Greek philosophy is rejected, we read there was discord between the two orders of powers, and this is reflected among the learned humans on earth. Let us look at a passage commenting on Greek knowledge:

> … some saying that it is according to providence that the things which exist have their being. These are the people who observe the stability and the conformity of the movement of creation. Others say that it is something alien. These are people who observe the diversity and the lawlessness and the evil of the powers. Others say that the things which exist are what is destined to happen. These are those who have studied the topic. Others say that it is something in accordance with nature. Others say that it is a self-existent. The majority, however, all who have reached as far as the visible elements, do not know anything more than them.[65]

Rather than trying to identify the specific 'school of thought' attributed to each one of these explanations—a topic other scholars have already tackled[66]—I

65 109:7–24: ⲉⲩϫⲱ ⲙ̄ⲙⲁⲥ ϫ[ⲉ] ⲛⲉⲧϣⲟⲟⲡ· ⲉⲩϣⲟⲟⲡ ⲛ̄ϩⲣ̣ⲏï ϩⲛ̄ [ⲟⲩ]ⲡⲣⲟⲛⲟⲓⲁ· ⲉⲧⲉ ⲛⲉⲧ[ϭⲁ]ϣⲧ̣̄ ⲛⲉ ⲁⲡⲥⲙⲓⲛⲉ· ⲙ̄ⲡⲕⲓⲙ· ⲙⲡ̣[ⲥ]ϣ̣ⲛⲧ̄ ⲙⲛ̄ ⲧⲙⲛ̄ⲧⲣ̄ ⲡⲓⲑⲉ· ϩⲛ̄ⲕⲉⲕⲁⲩⲉ̣ ⲉⲩϫⲱ ⲙ̄ⲙⲟⲥ· ϫⲉ ⲟⲩⲁⲗⲟⲧⲣⲓⲟⲛ ⲡⲉ ⲉⲧⲉ ⲛⲉⲉⲓ ⲛⲉ· ⲉⲧϭⲁϣⲧ̄· ⲁⲧ<ⲙ>ⲛ̄ⲧⲁ̣<ⲧ>ϣ̣ⲣ̄ ⲙⲓⲛⲉ· ⲙⲛ̄ ⲧⲙⲛ̄ⲧⲁⲧϩⲉⲡ ⲛ̄ⲛⲓϭⲟⲙ ⲙⲛ̄ ⲡⲉⲧⲑⲁⲩ ϩⲛ̄ⲕⲉⲕⲁⲩⲉ· ⲉ[ⲩ]ϫⲟⲩ ⲙ̄ⲙⲁⲥ· ϫⲉ ⲡⲉⲧⲏⲡ ⲁϣⲱⲡ̣ⲉ̣ ⲛⲉ ⲛⲉⲧϣⲟⲟⲡ· ⲉⲧⲉ ⲛⲉⲉⲓ ⲛⲉ ⲛ̄ⲧⲁ̣[ⲩ]ⲥⲣ̄ϥⲉ ⲁⲡⲓϩⲱⲃ· ϩⲛ̄ ⲕⲉⲕⲁⲩⲉ ⲉⲩϫⲱ ⲙ̄ⲙⲁⲥ ϫⲉ ⲟⲩⲕⲁⲧⲁ ⲫⲩⲥⲓⲥ ⲡ[ⲉ] ϩⲛ̄ⲕⲉⲕⲁⲩⲉ· ⲉⲩϫⲱ ⲙ̄ⲙⲁⲥ ϫⲉ ⲛⲟⲩ ⲡⲉⲧϣⲟⲟⲡ· ⲟⲩⲁⲉⲉⲧϥ̄· ⲡϩⲟⲩⲟ ⲇⲉ̣ ⲧⲏⲣϥ̄ ⲛ̄ⲧⲁⲩⲡⲱϩ ϣⲁ ⲛⲓⲥⲧⲟⲓⲭ̣ⲓ̣[ⲟⲛ] ⲉⲧⲟⲩⲁⲛϩ̄ ⲁⲃⲁⲗ· ⲙ̄ⲡⲟⲩⲥⲟⲩⲱⲛ ϩⲟⲩⲟ̣ ⲁⲣⲁⲟⲩ. Translation by Attridge and Pagels, slightly modified. Here I translate ⲥⲣ̄ϥⲉ "study", and draw the connection between "leisure" (which the term literarily means) and study. The Greek equivalent of ⲥⲣ̄ϥⲉ is σχολάζειν (Crum, *Coptic*, 357a), from where we have the modern terms school/*Schule*/*école*. It was those who had time for leisure who studied in antiquity.

66 For a discussion of whom these statements might refer to—Stoics, Epicureans and others—see Dunderberg, *Beyond Gnosticism*, 178–180. It is interesting to note here that the second group—those who reject the cosmic system and its powers as evil—sound a good deal like the systems and groups Plotinus also criticized (Plotinus, *Ennead* II.9, 13). On the 'Gnostic' opponents of Plotinus, see Dylan Burns, *Apocalypse of the Alien God: Platonism and the Exile of Sethian Gnosticism* (Philadelphia, P.A.: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2014).

wish to put this passage into the context of the discussion of beautification, that is, an ordered, cosmic system set up by the Logos, which is actually reflected on earth. Rather than mere critique, this passage contains observations of the explanations people acknowledge, and then a clarification that these explanations are incomplete. Just like the material and psychic powers of the Logos, they need the application of something from outside, otherwise they remain in conflict with each other. This is elaborated upon in the passage following the above quote. We read that the material powers are at work within the wise among the Greeks and barbarians, and that, therefore:

> … nothing was in agreement with its fellows, nothing, neither philosophy nor types of medicine nor types of rhetoric nor types of music nor types of logic, but they are opinions and theories. Ineffability held sway in confusion, because of the indescribable quality of those who hold sway, who give them thoughts.[67]

These passages discussing different explanations to creation can easily be read without the polemical tone that is often attached to them. The struggle and strife in heaven is reflected on earth. There was no real honor to be gained, nor any real knowledge to be sought, before the Savior's appearance on earth. The material powers and the material humans only attain empty honor and incomplete knowledge. Among the Hebrews, too—a people associated with the psychic powers—there are many different views about God, conflicting views, according to *TriTrac* (112:18–113:1). The psychic class is not restricted to Hebrews; rather, they are those who have the ability to become valuable members of the community. The psychics are named "the Calling" (ⲡⲧⲱϩⲙⲉ) at times (122:19–24, 122:37, 130:4), but as we have seen in the previous chapter, even though the psychics do assent to the appearance of the Savior, they still retain limited understanding compared to pneumatic Christians.

Nevertheless, *TriTrac* makes it clear that even the two lower levels of powers, as well as the different classes of humans associated with them, are still useful. The assent to the Savior enables some humans to gain freedom from the control of passions and "knowledge of the truth which existed before the ignorance was ruling",[68] thereby releasing them from "the servile nature in which

67 110:11–22: ⲉⲧⲃⲉ ⲡⲉⲉⲓ ⲙ̄ⲡⲉⲗⲁⲩⲉ· ϣⲱⲡⲉ· ⲉϥϯ ⲙⲉⲧⲉ ⲙⲛ̄ ⲛⲉϥⲉⲣⲏⲟⲩ ⲙⲛ̄ ⲗⲁⲩⲉ ⲛϩⲱⲃ ⲟⲩⲇⲉ· ⲙⲛ̄ⲧⲫⲓⲗⲟⲥⲟⲫⲟⲥ ⲟⲩⲇⲉ ϩⲛⲙⲛ̄ⲧⲥⲉⲉⲓⲛ ⲟⲩⲇⲉ ϩⲛ̄ⲙⲛ̄ⲧϩⲣⲏⲧⲱⲣ· ⲟⲩⲇⲉ ϩⲛ̄ ⲙⲛ̄ⲧⲙⲟⲩⲥⲓⲕⲟⲛ ⲟⲩⲇⲉ ϩⲛ̄ⲙⲛ̄ⲧⲟⲣⲅⲁⲛⲟⲛ ⲁⲗⲗⲁ ϩⲛ̄ⲉⲁⲩ ⲛⲉ ϩⲓ̈ ⲙⲛ̄ⲧⲣⲉϥⲙ̄ⲙⲉ· ⲁⲥϣⲱⲡⲉ ⲉⲥⲁⲙⲁϩⲧⲉ ⲁϫⲛ̄ ⲧⲙⲛ̄ⲧⲁⲧϯ ϩⲣⲁⲩⲟⲩ ⲉϥⲙⲁϭϫ· ⲉⲧⲃⲉ ⲧⲙⲛ̄ⲧⲁⲧ¨ⲧⲉⲟⲩ· [ϫ]ⲉ̣ ⲉⲧⲉ ⲛⲉⲧⲁⲙⲁϩⲧⲉ ⲉⲧϯ ⲛⲉⲩ ⲛⲛ̄ⲙⲉⲩⲉ.

68 117:28–30: ⲡⲓⲥⲁⲩⲛⲉ· ⲛ̄ⲧⲉ ⲧⲙⲏⲉ· ⲉⲧϣⲟⲟⲡ· ϩⲁⲑⲏ ⲇⲉ ⲙ̄ⲡⲁⲧⲉⲧⲙⲛ̄ⲧⲁⲧⲥⲁⲩⲛⲉ ϣⲱⲡⲉ.

they have suffered … (that) [draws] them down to the lust for command".[69] Yet, again, it is reiterated that even though one can separate the material powers' influence from humanity, the Logos still "allowed them (the material substance) to exist because even they were useful for the things which were ordained".[70] We read that those who only seek the "lust for command" and remain "mixed"[71] are doomed; they choose for themselves honor, but that honor is only short lived. Meanwhile, those who realize that they have only attained their earthly positions for a short time and are willing to give up their "lust for command" will receive salvation (120:15–121:6). Those whose actions are guided by temporary earthly honor are associated with the material powers and the material body while those who manage to give up their pursuit of earthly honor are associated with the psychic substance and the right side of the Logos' system.

Does this mean that the psychics must relinquish places of worldly power?[72] This is, in my opinion, not necessarily the case. It is clear that the psychics also have an element of "the lust for command", but it would seem that as long as one is not driven by *empty* honor and realizes that positions of power are only "for a time and period" (м̄прос оуаеіϣ мн̄ ϩенснү) (120:24–25), one can still be saved as well as retaining one's position in the system. Therefore, retaining political and civic positions—as well as positions of power in the heavens, governing the cosmos—would most likely have been permissible for psychics as long as one's main goal was not to gain worldly honor, but rather to serve in the order of the Logos. The lost ones are the material people and powers who are controlled and solely driven by their "lust for command" and pursuit of earthly honor, those who persecute Christians and direct "their hatred and envy and jealousy" (поүмасте ϣарас мн̄ поүкωϩ· мн̄ поүфθонос) (122:8–9) against Christ and his community (120:29–121:12). Just as the psychics have gained their positions of power "for a time" (прос оуаеіϣ), so the pneumatic mission to come to the world and "experience evil and might train themselves in them" is limited and only meant to last "for a time" (прос оуаеіϣ).[73]

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69 117:34–118:2: оүр̄вол· евол те н̄тоотс̄ н̄ϯфүсіс м̄мн̄тϭаүан· тає̄і н̄таүϣωп м̄каϩ· м̄мас… етс̣[ω]к̣ м̄маү апітн̄ атмн̄тмаїоүаϩ саϩне. Translation by Attridge and Pagels, slightly modified.

70 118:12–14: еаҷкаүе· атроүϣωпе· ϫе неүр̄ ϣеү ϩωоү ан пе· анетаүтаϣоү.

71 "Mixed" as in lost in the material part of one's earthly existence. See more on this discussion in Chapter 1 above.

72 Dunderberg has argued that "Conversion involves, thus, abandonment of both power and idolatry" (Dunderberg, *Beyond Gnosticism*, 170).

73 126:32–35: еүнаϫі ϯпе· н̄ніпетθаүоү аүω н̄сер̄ гүмнаzе· м̄маү н̄ϩрнї н̄ϩнтоү м̣̄пр̣н̣тн н̣н̣о̣ү̣ [.....] прос оуаїϣ.

An interpretation that rejects involvement in everyday life does not conform well with the internal logic of the text wherein the system of the Logos' *oikonomia* is valued and accepted as beneficial in light of the grand scale of things. Without contact with the outside world, with the world of the material powers and people, psychic humans and powers would not see their faults and be able to better themselves; this is the very reason the Logos places the psychics alongside the material side.

As long as the psychic people and powers prioritize their relations with the pneumatics, imitate them as students do teachers, and no longer let worldly honor control them, they can retain their positions in the cosmic system and as such actually function as valuable members of the community, as the helpers of the pneumatics, which is how *TriTrac* expresses it. At the end of *TriTrac* there is a long exposition of the nature and salvation of "the Calling" (ⲡⲧⲱϩⲙⲉ), the psychic people and powers. In this passage, which has been quoted previously in this study, we read that the psychics will be saved:

> … those who were brought forth from the desire of lust for command—because they have the seed of lust for command inside them—will receive the reward of good things, they who have worked together with those who have the *good proairesis*, provided they, in opinion and will, abandon the desire for vain temporary glory, and keep the commandment of the Lord of glory, instead of the momentary honor, they inherit the eternal kingdom.[74]

Here the "command" is no longer called empty, but instead it is the pursuit of glory which is called empty. It would seem that temporary honor is rejected, and firmly placed among the material humans and powers who seek it for themselves above all else. "Command" (ⲟⲩⲉϩ ⲥⲁϩⲛⲉ), however, does not seem to be rejected, but rather deemed a natural impulse of the psychics. This fits well with the scene in *TriTrac* that portrays the birth of the material powers, where the "lust for command" is described as being caused by "the

74 131:22–132:3: ⲛⲉⲉⲓ ⲉⲛⲧⲁⲩⲛ̄ⲧⲟⲩ ⲁⲃⲁⲗ ϩⲛ̄ ⲧⲉⲉⲓⲉⲡⲓⲑⲩⲙⲓⲁ ⲛ̄ⲧⲉ ⲧⲙⲛ̄ⲧⲙⲁⲉⲓⲟⲩⲉϩ ⲥⲁϩⲛⲉ· ⲉⲩⲛ̄ⲧⲉⲩ ⲙ̄ⲙⲉⲩ ⲙ̄ⲡⲓⲥⲓⲧⲉ· ⲛ̄ϩⲏⲧⲟⲩ ⲉⲧⲉ ⲧⲉⲉⲓ ⲧⲉ ⲧⲙ<ⲛ̄>ⲧⲙⲁⲉⲓⲟⲩⲉϩ ⲥⲁϩⲛⲉ ⲥⲉⲛⲁϫⲓ ⲛ̄ⲧϣⲃ̄ⲃⲓⲱ̄· ⲛ̄ⲛⲓⲡⲉⲧⲛⲁⲛⲟⲩⲟⲩ ⲛ̄ϭⲓ ⲛⲁⲉⲓ̣ ⲉ̣ⲛⲧⲁϩⲣ̄ ϩⲱⲃ ⲙⲛ̄ ⲛⲁⲉⲓ ⲉⲧⲉⲩⲛ̄ⲧⲉⲩ ⲙ̄ⲙⲉⲩ ⲛ̄ϯⲡⲣⲟⲁⲓⲣⲉⲥⲓⲥ· ⲛ̄ⲛⲓⲡⲉⲧⲛⲁⲛⲟⲩⲟⲩ ⲉⲩϣⲁⲣ̄ ϩⲛⲉⲩ ϩⲛⲛ ⲟⲩⲅⲛⲱⲙⲏ ⲛ̄ⲥⲉⲟⲩⲱϣⲉ· ⲁⲕⲱⲉ ⲛ̄ⲥⲱⲟⲩ ⲛ̄ⲧⲙⲛ̄ⲧⲙⲁⲉⲓⲉⲁⲩⲟⲩ ⲉⲧϣⲟⲩⲉⲓⲧ· ⲡⲣⲟⲥ ⲟⲩⲥⲛⲟⲩ ⲛ̄[ⲥⲉⲣ] ⲡⲟⲩⲁϩ ⲥⲁϩⲛⲉ ⲙ̄ⲡϫⲟⲓ̈ⲥ ⲙ̄ⲡⲉⲁⲩ ⲁⲛⲧⲓ ⲡⲓⲧⲁⲉⲓⲟ ⲡⲣⲟⲥ ⲟⲩⲁⲉⲓϣ ϣⲏⲙ ⲛ̄ⲥⲉⲣ̄ ⲕⲗⲏⲣⲟⲛⲟⲙⲓ ⲛ̄ⲧⲙⲛ̄ⲧⲣ̄ⲣⲟ· ϣⲁ ⲉⲛⲉϩ. Translation by Attridge and Pagels, slightly modified.

empty lust for glory" (ϯⲙⲛ̄ⲧⲙ̣ⲁ̣ⲉⲓⲉⲁ[ⲩ]· ⲉⲧϣⲟⲩⲉⲓⲧ).[75] In the above passage on the Calling, it is this very thing—the "empty lust for glory" (ⲛ̄ⲧⲙⲛ̄ⲧⲙⲁⲉⲓⲉⲁⲩⲟⲩ ⲉⲧϣⲟⲩⲉⲓⲧ)—that must be given up, not command.

The psychics' relation to power is a topic to which *TriTrac* returns in the final pages of the text. We read that there will be no difference between slave and free man, between male and female, but all will be one in the Pleroma (132:4–133:7). This will happen "even if some are exalted because of the *oikonomia*".[76] Those psychics who benefit from the union and equality in the end are those who stopped worshiping other gods and instead recognized Christ as the only Lord (133:16–134:8). After realizing that Christ was Lord they also realized that the honorary titles they had were only "received on loan" (ⲉⲛⲧⲁⲩϫⲓⲧⲟⲩ [ⲁ]ⲡⲟⲩϣⲉⲡ) (134:20). Then we read that the psychics "gave him their kingdoms, they rose from their thrones and they abstained from their crowns" (134:27–30).[77] This passage might be interpreted to mean that psychic humans and angelic beings indeed should give up their worldly power after assenting to Christ. However, in the next sentence, we read that the psychics "were entrusted with the services that benefited the elect" (the pneumatics)[78] and that the psychics will:

> … remain for their sake (the pneumatics), until they have all entered into earthly life and passed out of it. As long as their bodies [remain] on the earth, serving all their [needs], making [themselves] partners in their sufferings, persecutions, and tribulations.[79]

75 84:17–21: "The empty lust for glory draws all of them to desire for the lust for command" (ⲉⲥⲥⲱⲕ̣ ⲙ̄ⲙ̣ⲁⲩ ⲧⲏⲣⲟⲩ ⲛϭⲓ ϯⲙⲛ̄ⲧⲙ̣ⲁ̣ⲉⲓⲉⲁ[ⲩ]· ⲉⲧϣⲟⲩⲉⲓⲧ· ⲁϩⲟ̣[ⲩⲛ] ⲁⲧⲉⲡ̣ⲓⲑⲩⲙⲓⲁ· ⲛ̄ⲧⲙⲛ̄ⲧ[ⲙⲁ] ⲉⲓⲟⲩⲉϩ ⲥⲁϩⲛⲉ). Translation by Attridge and Pagels, slightly modified.

76 133:8–9: ⲉⲩⲛ̄ ϩⲁⲉⲓⲛⲉ ϫⲁⲥⲉ ⲉⲧⲃⲉ ⲧⲟⲓⲕⲟⲛⲟⲙⲓⲁ. Translation by Attridge and Pagels, slightly modified.

77 Translation by Attridge and Pagels, slightly modified.

78 135:4–6: ⲁⲩⲛ̄ϩⲟⲩⲧⲟⲩ ⲁⲛⲓϣⲙ̄ϣⲉ· ⲉ̣ⲧ̣ⲉⲓⲣⲉ ⲙ̄ⲡⲉⲧⲛⲁⲛⲟⲩϥ ⲛ̄ⲛⲓⲥⲱⲧⲡ̄.

79 135:9–16: ⲉⲩⲙⲏⲛ ⲁϩⲟⲩⲛ ⲉⲧⲃⲏⲧ̣ⲟⲩ ϣ[ⲁ]ⲧ̣ⲟⲩⲉⲓ ⲧⲏⲣⲟⲩ ⲁⲡⲃⲓⲟⲥ ⲁⲩⲱ ⲛ̣ⲥⲉⲉ[ⲓ ⲁⲃ]ⲁⲗ· ϩⲙ̄ ⲡⲃⲓⲟⲥ ⲉⲣⲉⲛⲟⲩ[ⲥ]ⲱⲙ[ⲁ ⲙⲏⲛ] ϩ̣ⲓ̈ϫⲙ̄ ⲡⲕⲁϩ· ⲉⲩⲣ̄ ϩⲩⲡⲏⲣⲉⲧⲓ [ⲙ̄ⲛⲡϣⲁ ⲛ̄ⲧ]ⲏ̣ⲣⲟⲩ ⲛ̄ⲧⲉⲩ· ⲉⲩⲉⲓⲣⲉ ⲙ̄[ⲙⲁⲩ]ⲟ̣ⲩ̣ ⲛ̣̄ⲕ̣ⲟⲓⲛⲱⲛⲟⲥ· ⲁⲛⲟⲩⲙ̄ⲕⲟ[ⲟϩ]· ⲙ̣ⲛ̄ [ⲛ]ⲟ̣ⲩⲇⲓⲱⲅⲙⲟⲥ ⲙⲛ̄ ⲛⲟⲩ[ⲗⲱ]ϫϩ. Translation by Attridge and Pagels, modified. I suggest the word "needs" (ⲛⲡϣⲁ) to fill the lacuna on line 13. This passage has been thought to represent the pneumatics, who remain for the benefit of the psychics. However, I suggest that the reading presented here makes more sense, given that the cosmos is not created for the benefit of the psychics, but rather the pneumatics who need to learn about evil and bring this knowledge back to the Pleroma. Furthermore, in the sentences just before this, we read of those who are entrusted with the service of the church and the benefit of the elect (which can refer to no one else than the psychics), and there is no indication that we are changing subject here.

Unfortunately, this passage is broken, but it nevertheless remains clear, in my opinion, that whatever authority the psychics possess should, after the assent to the Savior, not be given up, but rather turned to benefit the elect. This fits the overall attitude of the text toward governance and command, attributes that play prominent roles in the *oikonomia*, as ultimately serving to benefit the salvation of humans and angels. The structure of the cosmic system benefits the psychic beings because they come to their senses by comparing it with the material side, and the pneumatics benefit by learning about life in the cosmos, meanwhile being supported by powerful psychics who have mastered their attitude toward temporary honor and turned it toward benefitting "the church" (the elect pneumatics, on earth as well as heaven). Thus, *TriTrac* is not just deterministic on the individual level, but presents a fixed system with clear structures and an overall purpose that is designed so that the Aeons in the Pleroma may gain experiences that are impossible for them to gain in their state void of materiality (85:33–86:4).

5 Conclusion: the Character of Psychic Christians and Attitudes toward Social and Ecclesiastical Involvement

There has been some debate among scholars concerning who the psychics actually are. Are they non Valentinian Christians, non-Christian "sympathizers", Jews (who are connected to the psychic substance: see 110ff), or non-Christian polytheists who are called to convert?[80] I agree with Dunderberg who has suggested that "psychics" can refer to several of these groups.[81] The psychic category is not an ethnic category, but rather refers to a cognitive state (as I have shown in Part 1), and also, I would add, a social state.[82] As we concluded in the previous chapter, compared with pneumatics and in terms of knowledge and education, the psychics were 'ordinary' Christians—leaving psychic powers to the side for a moment—and most likely did not hold positions of leadership within the community. *TriTrac* derives from a time when the majority society was not made up of Christians, but nevertheless a time when it was not improbable that Christians could retain positions in the upper ranks of society. This is indicated by the passages that call people and angels in power, potential psychics as it were, to give up their pursuit of worldly honor, give their

80 Pagels, "The Demiurge", 301–324; Thomassen, "Saved by Nature?", 148; Dunderberg, *Beyond Gnosticism*, 168–183.

81 Dunderberg, *Beyond Gnosticism*, 168–183.

82 Dunderberg, *Beyond Gnosticism*, 172.

crowns and thrones to Jesus, and start working for the benefit of pneumatics. Furthermore, the psychics have characteristics that make them suitable for governance and at the same time have natures which facilitate their assent to the Savior. What can this structure and attitude toward psychic involvement in the cosmic system tell us of the social context of the text?

There are not many examples of Christians in the possession of political power in the first three centuries, and many Romans viewed Christians with suspicion.[83] This is perhaps not strange considering the signs of loyalty demanded of people in any official government positions, which often included sacrifice to the imperial gods. The lack of political involvement seems to have gone hand in hand with the pastoral ideal that was widespread in early Christianity. Christians were not overrepresented among the wealthy either.[84] In fact, the pastoral ideal was strong even among the few Christians who were wealthy.[85] As Peter Brown has discussed, many Christians spent a great deal of money ensuring their future life in paradise, especially through donations. Furthermore, some famous early Christians gave up everything they had to live a life of poverty and servitude in their community. At the same time, Christians were recorded as having been criticized for not contributing to the Roman Empire. Origen replies to Celsus' accusation that Christians refused to perform military service or engage in political office for the benefit of the empire by saying that Christians would be more effective offering their prayer than official service.[86] Even though the earliest Christians were not involved in high politics to any great extent and did not represent a significant proportion of the top tier of society, early Christian writings did not—as I argued above—generally deny the legitimacy of the Roman Empire. From the fourth century onward, as emperors started to convert and Christianity was first sanctioned and then made obligatory, things changed.[87]

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83 See Wilken, *Christians*, 117–125, for an overview of Roman writers who were skeptical toward Christians, with a focus on Celsus, who saw Christians as being in opposition to Roman society and rule (among other reasons because Christians did not worship the state gods, participate in military service, or make sacrifices to the Emperor, all basic tenants of Roman life).

84 Roger S. Bagnall, *Egypt in Late Antiquity* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1996), 282–283.

85 For a study on the Christian relationship toward money and wealth, see Peter Brown, *The Ransom of the Soul: Afterlife and Wealth in Early Western Christianity* (Cambridge M.A.: Harvard University Press, 2015).

86 Origen, *Against Celsus* VIII.73.

87 The Greek Libanius (ca 315–393), for example, is known for speaking out in favor of showing leniency toward Christians, most likely recognizing the political weight and prowess of this emerging class of citizens. For more on Libanius and especially his relationship to

Where does *TriTrac* fit in the political situation of Christians in the Roman Empire? The second century was fairly stable, bringing up the rear of the two hundred years of *pax romana* instigated by Augustus.[88] The third century onward became in comparison immensely unstable politically, at least if one takes the constant shift in power and internal strife as indications.[89] The third and fourth centuries CE saw nearly thirty emperors come and go, and countless contenders claiming their right to the throne and seeking power for themselves. Emperors died on the battlefields, a very uncommon occurrence before this time, and many were assassinated. At the same time, the administrative system of governors and tax collectors became increasingly more complex.[90] Even though *TriTrac*'s call to abandon the blind pursuit of honor could be applied to most time periods, the association of material powers with instability and chaos, and the corruption with which "love of glory" and "lust for command" are associated, is nevertheless more reminiscent of the third-century political situation than that during the second century.

However, the *oikonomia* is not presented as evil or solely bad. The system the Logos sets up is good in its foundations, established in accordance with the will of the Father. Its aim is to bring edification to the Pleroma above through the experiences of the pneumatics below, and the pneumatics needed support from Christians who were not blinded by their involvement in the pursuit of worldly honor. The psychics are told to work toward bettering the situation of the pneumatics. Indeed, from this perspective, *TriTrac* fits better in a context where there is a real possibility for Christians to attain powerful positions in society or convert from powerful positions, than one in which they are marginalized and merely tolerated. *TriTrac* encourages everyday Christians to support the leadership of the community and retain positions in society that enable them to do so. Something similar is found in the writings of Cyprian of Carthage. In the middle of the third century he observes that people should

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two prominent Christians, John Chrysostom and Basil the Great, see Raffaella Cribiore, *The School of Libanius in Late Antique Antioch* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2007).

88 Ali Parchami, *Hegemonic Peace and Empire: The Pax Romana, Britannica and Americana* (New York: Routledge, 2009), 31–58.

89 See Olivier Hekster, *Rome and its Empire, AD 193–284* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2008), especially pp 69–81 for the situation for Christians during this time. Peter Brown has also studied this period and argued that the conversion to Christianity as state religion that followed, did not mean great changes in governance and ideals of power. Brown, *Power and Persuasion*; Brown, *Making of Late Antiquity.*

90 Brown, *Power and Persuasion*, 3–34.

pray for the prosperity of the rich and those who donate generously, so that they in turn can continue to give to the Christian community.[91]

There is never any question of where the moral authority of the community of *TriTrac* lies: with the pneumatics. How do the two aptitudes of the members of the community, the intellect of the pneumatics and the political ability of the psychics, fit into early Christian negotiations of authority and leadership within the larger Christian community? As we concluded in the previous chapter, the rhetoric of disinterest in worldly matters was at times used in order to legitimate power, and as was just mentioned, the pastoral ideal was popular in early Christianity. Thus, we should not exclude the pneumatics offhand from positions of power within society. The pneumatics undoubtedly would have been in positions of great influence within the community, considering that they are described as having a monopoly on ethics. How does this fit into the context of the emergence of clearer ecclesiastical structures within early Christian communities? In fact, the above discussion of honor and the psychics lends itself well to considering this question. The bishop, presbyter, and deacon structure would become emblematic of early Christian communities, but the authority of the bishop was not without critique, especially, it would seem, in Christian Egypt. In *Apocalypse of Peter* (VII, 3), a text that is materially connected to *TriTrac*, the bishop and deacons are rejected as "dry canals" that lead people astray (79:21–31).[92] In this text, we read that no mortal human can retain honor.[93] *TriTrac*, similarly, regards worldly honor as fleeting while favoring the language of teacher and prophet for the authority of the community, as does *Apocalypse of Peter.* No clergy are present in the passages describing the Apostles, prophets, and educators as pneumatics.

Third-century Alexandrian Christians like Clement and Origen also seem to prefer the image of the teacher rather than the bishop (although they are not necessarily opposed to the structure which would become prevalent).[94] The

91 Peter Brown, *Treasure in Heaven: The Holy Poor in Early Christianity* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2016), 26.

92 Codex VII was copied by the same scribe who copied the second half of Codex XI, which in turn had a second scribe who also worked on Codex I. Desjardins has suggested that *Apocalypse of Peter* might have affinities to Petrine traditions that Clement was familiar with. Michel Desjardins, "Introduction to VII,3: *Apocalypse of Peter*", in *Nag Hammadi Codex VII*, ed. Birger A. Pearson (Leiden: Brill, 1996), 208.

93 *Apocalypse of Peter* 72:2, 83:19.

94 For more on the struggles for authority and the different models used during the first four centuries, see von Campenhausen, *Ecclesiastical Authority*. How established the ecclesiastical structures were in third-century Egypt is hard to determine. Origen's texts are sometimes used as evidence that the bishop, presbyter, and deacon structure was

call to renounce one's worldly pleasures in favor of treasures in heaven was a popular theme in early Christianity; Jesus was portrayed in the New Testament as telling people that heavenly rewards were awaiting those who gave up their worldly possessions and acted generously (see Matt 6:20, for example).[95] In the middle of the third century, the organized charity administered by Christians was being channeled toward the ecclesiastical structures, and we have sources that indicate that people were told not to give alms to the poor directly, but to give to the leaders of the community who would transfer it to the needy.[96] Origen wrote that people in the newly formed leadership positions were "accustomed to be stirred up by shouts for favors, or who perhaps are provoked by financial gain", and that the leadership positions in the community should not be hereditary but left to the people who "have the spirit of God within them".[97] No doubt, the bishops and leaders of Christian communities enjoyed benefits and honors. The clergy often received a salary, sat while others stood, and even received larger helpings of food at festive occasions than 'ordinary' people.[98] In the *Didaskalia Apostolorum* it is written that it should be so that the layperson "loves the bishop and honours and fears him as father and lord".[99] The leader, as we read in Matt 23:6, receives "the place of honor", a place associated with the right side of God, as Philo wrote.[100] This honor was reserved for those in leadership positions within the community.[101] Connecting honor with the mundane portion of the community in *TriTrac* could be read as a critique of, or an alternative structure to, the ecclesiastical structures that were becoming more firmly established in the third century. Some obviously viewed these as

already firmly in place. See, for example, Francis A. Sullivan, *From Apostles to Bishops: The Development of the Episcopacy in the Early Church* (New York: The Newman Press, 2001), 171–191. However, Origen's knowledge of these three offices does not mean that their roles and authority were unchallenged and fixed. Origen himself was ordained as priest, an ordination and authority that some within the Alexandrian community challenged. And the fact that Clement, a generation before, hardly mentions these structures at all, is saying something.

95 For more on this perspective of the early Jesus movement, see Brown, *Treasure in Heaven*, 1–16.

96 See the Syriac *Didascalia Apostolorum* and Brown, *Treasure in Heaven*, 24–27.

97 Origen, *Homily on Numbers* 22, 4.1–2, Translation from Thomas P. Scheck, *Ancient Christian Texts: Origen: Homily on Numbers*, ed. Christopher A. Hall (Downers Grove, Illinois: Inter Varsity Press, 2009), 138.

98 Brown, *Treasure in Heaven*, 27.

99 *Didascalia Apostolorum* 60. Translation from Hugh Connolly, *Didascalia Apostolorum* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1929), 61.

100 Philo, *On Abraham* 124–130.

101 See, for example, *The Shepherd of Hermas* 3, 9.7.

bringing with them problems of nepotism, and they were understood to risk promoting the pursuit of honor before spiritual growth.

TriTrac's portrayal of psychics as those Christians who were driven by honor could very well be read as presenting a different structure where the moral authority lies, at least outwardly, with those who were detached from politics, as well as ecclesiastical and worldly ambition which was associated with worldly honor.[102] One of the strongest supporters and defenders of the ecclesiastical structure of bishop, presbyter, and deacon was Alexander of Alexandria and his deacon and immediate successor, Athanasius. Athanasius' portrayal of Antony as intensely subservient to this structure has been interpreted as his way of combatting competing views of authority within the Christian community in Alexandria.[103] Some early bishops, rather than viewing ascetic authority associated with figures such as Antony as subordinate to the bishops' authority, tapped into it by portraying themselves as detached philosopher teachers (like Gregory of Nazianzus and Basil the Great can be said to have done), but they were never actually detached from the halls of power.[104] Images of holy men and women fleeing worldly honor and combatting the "lust for power" are, indeed, common, and several famous characters in the burgeoning Egyptian monasticism were portrayed as refusing to take official seats within the ecclesiastical structure that grew even more prominent in the fourth century. Pachomius is said to have addressed his disciples and "frequently told them that it was not good to ask for office and glory … (for) clerical office is the beginning of the contemplation of the lust for power (φιλαρχία)".[105] In the fourth century, and later in the fifth, monks were frequently recruited to office. The monk Ammonius, and he is not alone, is said to have maimed himself in order to escape recruitment into the ecclesiastical structures (citing Lev 21:16–24 which disqualifies a mutilated man from priesthood).[106]

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102 For the role of bishop in relation to teacher during the third and fourth centuries, see Brown, *Treasure in Heaven*, 17–35. Peter Brown has also argued that there was a continuation of the Roman ideal of ambition and honor as the empire transitioned from paganism to Christianity, see Brown, *Making of Late Antiquity*, 27–53.

103 For more on the early critique of the bishops and where the Nag Hammadi texts fit into this debate, see Michael A. Williams, "The *Life of Antony* and the Domestication of Charismatic Wisdom", in *Charisma and Sacred Biography*, ed. M. Williams (Chambersburg, P.A.: American Academy of Religion, 1982), 23–45.

104 Elm, *Sons of Hellenism*, 1–24; see also Norton, *Episcopal Elections.*

105 *Vita Prima* c.27. Translation from Apostolos N. Athanassakis, *The Life of Pachomius:* (*Vita Prima Graeca*) (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1975), 33–35. For the Greek text, see Francisci Halkin, *Sancti Pachomii Vitae Graecae* (Brussels: Société des Bollandistes, 1932), 17.

106 Sterk, *Renouncing the World*, 1–2.

The ecclesiastical structures that developed in the third century were obviously seen as obstructing the task that these people had set themselves. Honor belonged to 'the world' and was thought to be opposed to, or at least hamper, the pursuit of spiritual and moral excellence. In this way, *TriTrac* is very interesting to read from the perspective of early claims to authority and the developing ecclesiastical structures; it seems to resonate with a model apparently favored by Clement and Origen, and later realized in monasticism: a model that allowed for and even supported worldly ambition for part of the Christian community, while rejecting it for those devoted wholeheartedly to the pursuit of moral excellence. As such, the social model in *TriTrac* is a much closer fit with the lives and visions of Origen and Clement, and later monastic figures such as Antony and Ammonius—who lived their lives as teachers and role models devoted to study and spiritual pursuits—than of bishops such as Athanasius, Gregory, and Basil who may have preached the rejection of worldly honor while combining it with the wielding of great worldly power.

In *TriTrac* pneumatics and psychics are associated with different 'skill sets'. Clement wrote that the Gnostic Christian strove for complete eradication of the passions, the goal being *apatheia.* This was not, however, realistic for everybody; regular people, people living in the world, should strive for balance, *metriopatheia*.[107] These thoughts strike a chord with the political theory of Plato and Aristotle—which in turn went hand in hand with the medical and anatomic theories of the time—according to which humans were endowed with different characteristics due to the composition of their minds and bodies.[108] Intellect and reason should govern, but the bodily attributes and the passions associated with them were still useful, especially if one pursued a life 'in the world'. It is in this context that the political attitudes reflected in *TriTrac* make most sense.

As I argued in Chapter 2, *TriTrac* portrays an anatomic and cognitive model which maintains that passions associated with the psychê (soul) can be useful, particularly when guided toward aiding the pneuma (intellect). Therefore,

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107 Clement, *Stromata* VII.3.13.

108 Some had fiery natures which suited them for leadership while others were endowed with a phlegmatic composition leading to calmness and contemplation. These natural compositions should be worked on, because lack of bodily control led to exposure to sickness and weak passions. There were also the melancholic and the sanguine composition. All these four characteristics were associated with the four fluids that made up the human body: blood, yellow bile, black bile, and phlegm, and to the four elements, different planets, and organs. These four fluids belonged to the body, which stood below the soul and intellect. See further David C. Lindberg, *The Beginnings of Western Science: The European Scientific Tradition in Philosophical, Religious, and Institutional Context, Prehistory to A.D. 1450* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008), 275–325.

one could say, the ideal community structure presented in the text is built into the very nature of humanhood; it is reflected in the anatomic and cognitive structures: those with earthly command should aid the intellectual elites by tapping into—but not becoming slave to—emotions like honor and lust for command. In this way, what we have in *TriTrac* is somewhat like a client-patron or teacher-student relationship, where the 'everyday' Christians work for the benefit for their intellectual betters in exchange for their support, guidance, and prayers. This arrangement is not something unique to *TriTrac*. Peter Brown has called the phenomenon "spiritual exchange".[109] Within Christianity, it can be traced back to Paul's appeal to the congregation in Corinth: "If we have sown spiritual good among you, is it too much if we reap your material benefits?" (1 Cor 9:11). The pneumatics are described as possessed of skillsets that remind us of the ideal teacher; they are told to gain moral excellence and function as role models, like the sage philosopher in Greek and Roman contexts, or the rabbi in the Jewish context.[110] The arrangement where the student supports the teacher financially and the teacher facilitates the model for imitation, has much in common with the educational system in antiquity.[111] In light of the financial-spiritual exchange, it is understandable that *apatheia* is not an option, especially for the psychics who are described as driven by the pursuit of honor. Rather, the ideal is to reach *metriopatheia*, because it was necessary to utilize some passions in the everyday life of the Roman Empire.[112]

How would this spiritual exchange have appeared in practice? Again, Origen furnishes a pertinent example. When Origen was still in Alexandria he is said to have been supported by a certain Ambrosius, who had previously been a Valentinian, but whom Origen had turned to become his patron instead.[113] I imagine that the support that the psychics should give the pneumatics in *TriTrac* looked something like this: wealthy and influential Christians like Ambrosius supporting intellectual and spiritual Christians like Origen and his students. It is not unthinkable that they came together at times to celebrate communion, occasions when 'spiritual', educational, and intellectual currency

109 See further Brown, *Treasure in Heaven*, 17–35.

110 See Jonathan Wyn Schofer, *The Making of a Sage: A Study in Rabbinic Ethics* (Madison, Wisconsin: Wisconsin University Press, 2005).

111 For a discussion of how this system was taken over in early monastic Egypt, and for references to studies on early student-teacher relations in ancient time, see Rubenson, "Early Monasticism".

112 Barton, *Roman Honor*. For an article on the violence and forcefulness of the Roman judicial system, see Ramsay MacMullen, "Judicial Savagery in the Roman Empire", *Chiron* 16 (2016): 147–166.

113 Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* VI.18, 23.

could be exchanged for monetary and political support.[114] The story of Origen's benefactor also indicates that there were contacts between Christians such as Origen and those who were inspired by Valentinian theology, and Ambrosius' conversion indicates that there was overlap, too.[115] I suggest that we read *TriTrac* in light of an early Christian Alexandrian scene in which relations between the orthodox and heretics were not as fixed as later ecclesiastical historians such as Eusebius and Athanasius would like to suggest, and where ecclesiastical structures headed by the bishop were not without challenge, but, rather, intellectual pursuits were valued before worldly power.[116]

Since the pneumatics are presented as the ideal Christians in *TriTrac* and those whom people should revere, they would probably have been wielding great influence over a group based on this model. As Christians to a large extent were excluded from political power in the third century, it is not strange that *TriTrac* as well as many other third-century Christians like Clement and Origen, adopted and developed a language and rhetoric that favored those who did not seek worldly power in the first place, but who were advanced and powerful in the spirit. When Christians finally gained greater access to power, this ideal did not disappear but was rather appropriated to the new circumstances. Thus, it is understandable that Basil the Great, Gregory of Nazianzus, and other early and powerful bishops who lived in close proximity to power politics all their lives, were presented as reluctant leaders who really wanted to spend their lives as recluse philosophers.[117] *TriTrac* seems to be located adjacent to this context, deriving from an earlier time when neither ecclesiastical structures nor monastic communities were firmly established, when Christians had begun to gain access to, or be converted from, positions of power, but where

114 Ambrosius is said to have especially encouraged Origen to write commentaries on holy texts. Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* VI.23.

115 For example, see the discussion by Ismo Dunderberg about Origen's attitude toward Heracleon's teachings, which is much more nuanced and moderate than outright rejection. Ismo Dunderberg, "Recognizing the Valentinians—Now and Then", in *The Other Side: Apocryphal Perspectives on Ancient Christian "Orthodoxies"*, eds. Tobias Nicklas et al. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 2017), 49–52.

116 Here we could compare with the rabbinic authority versus the patriarchal authority in late ancient Palestine. Rabbis seem first to have been made up of self-appointed moral experts, a learned elite, without institutionalized power. The rabbis would, however, gain more authority as they gained more followers. Rabbinic schools were created and institutionalized, and ultimately the rabbis took over the authority in Jewish communities from the patriarchs. See David Goodblatt, "The Political and Social History of the Jewish Community in the Land of Israel, c.235–638", in *The Cambridge History of Judaism*, vol. 4, Steven T. Katz (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 404–430.

117 Elm, *Sons of Hellenism*, 1–14.

the moral authority was kept firmly among those who sought spiritual rather than worldly power and where honor was associated strongly with the worldly pursuits of the Roman empire.

The structures that were ultimately to prevail in the greater Church at times led to problems with nepotism and self-aggrandizement; it seems to have been a particular problem among bishops in fourth-century Egypt.[118] In light of this, texts such as *TriTrac* where the intellectual (who is not a politician) is favored as the natural leader of the community would have remained relevant through the fourth and fifth centuries, especially in monastic settings. As Samuel Rubenson and others have shown, the persona of the reclusive scholar (such as Clement, Origen, and Didymus) was taken over by the monk.[119] It is in this context that we also find *TriTrac*, in the third-century negotiations for authority between bishops with growing worldly power on the one side, and intellectual reclusives on the other, reclusives who in a much more efficient way than the bishop would have had the opportunity to manifest one of the more important signs of moral excellence: a life devoid of worldly honor, devoted to spiritual progress.

The intellectualism is outspoken in *TriTrac*, perhaps more so than in many other early Christian treatises. Nevertheless, the portrayal of humans as divided into different groups defined by intellectual ability has sometimes been presented, somewhat similarly to Christian determinism in general, as an erroneous exaggeration made up by polemicizing heresiologists. Valentinians did not, some have claimed, think of themselves as predestined spirituals (pneumatics) who were better than others.[120] Granted, psychics belong to the in-group in *TriTrac* and are portrayed as deserving salvation, but even though heresiologists often expressed themselves partially and in un-nuanced ways, they were not without merit in stating the rigidity of systems that placed pneumatics on top of an intellectual hierarchy.

In light of the general intellectualism that governed ancient discussions of ethics, it was not just the Valentinian pneumatics who monopolized ethics and saw themselves as intellectually superior to others; so did Origen, Clement, and many monks that took after them.[121] Furthermore, the emphasis on aiding people engaged with spiritual pursuits certainly opened up possibilities

118 Bagnall, *Egypt*, 292.

119 Samuel Rubenson, "Monasticism and the Philosophical Heritage", in *The Oxford Handbook of Late Antiquity*, ed. S. F. Johnson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 487–512.

120 See for example Desjardins, *Sin in Valentinianism*, 118–120; Williams, *Rethinking*, 189–192; Elaine Pagels, "Conflicting Versions", 35–53.

121 See Brown, *Making of Late Antiquity*, 27–53 for a discussion of ambition and self-aggrandizing as part of third and fourth century Roman culture. Shenoute, for example,

for those who were otherwise hampered by the rigidity of the ancient social landscape, people who, without help, would not have had access to a life free of everyday toils. Still, as I have attempted to show above, the spiritual life would have meant toil of another sort: subjecting oneself to a pedagogical project entailing rigorous study, when, as reports from early monasteries tell us, not all were made for a life devoted to study and prayer, some just did not have what it took to lead such an existence.[122] This is in *TriTrac* expressed with the term ⲣ̄ⲅⲩⲙⲛⲁⲍⲉ (γυμνάζω)[123] which is a concept also used by Clement and Origen for the exercise of Christian life, especially higher spiritual life and moral perfection.[124] As I have stated before, however, a deterministic system would not have negated social movement in practice. In fact, the differences in social implications between an ethical system based on an anthropology that restricted human choice and one on an anthropology adopting the doctrine of free will would most likely have been subtle indeed, which is also indicated by the similarities in the social models favored by *TriTrac*, Origen, and Clement. All three seem to divide Christians into groups based on intellectual ability, favoring the intellectual devoted to moral and spiritual pursuits as the natural leaders of the Christian community. As shall be elaborated upon in the concluding chapter, this ideal does not disappear when the bishop, presbyter, and deacon structure prevails, but carries on, especially in the monastic movements that develop in fourth-century Egypt.

Let us now turn to concluding the findings of this study and discuss some implications.

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complains of the intellectual retardation of many of the new monastic recruits. See Bagnall, *Egypt*, 302.

122 See for example the discussion of Shenoute in Timbie, "The State of Research", esp. 265.

123 The pneumatics are come to earth to "experience the evil things and (so that they) might train themselves in them" (ⲉⲩⲛⲁϫⲓϯⲡⲉ· ⲛ̄ⲛⲓⲡⲉⲧⲑⲁⲩⲟⲩ ⲁⲩⲱ ⲛ̄ⲥⲉⲣ̄ ⲅⲩⲙⲛⲁⲍⲉ· ⲙ̄ⲙⲁⲩ ⲛ̄ϩⲣⲏï ⲛ̄ϩⲏⲧⲟⲩ) (126:32–34).

124 Clement, *Stromata* VI.10, VII.7; Origen, *Against Celsus* IV.50.

PART 3

Conclusions and Implications

CHAPTER 7

Summary: the Nature of Early Christian Determinism

This study of the ethics of *TriTrac* has been divided into two main blocks. One chief aim of the study as a whole, apart from exploring the ethics of the text, has been to elucidate the workings of early Christian determinism, and to highlight that it did not entail the simple denial of human choice. *The first part* of the study was devoted to investigating the mechanism and theoretical framework of *TriTrac*'s ethics. How could a fixed anthropological system have been used to legitimize ethical discussion? *The second part* of the study was devoted to the practical and social implications of *TriTrac*'s ethics. What social structures did the fixed anthropological categories produce and how were they legitimized?

In Chapter 1, we discussed the ontology and epistemology of *TriTrac.* The three substances that make up the world—pneuma, psychê and matter—are related to three different ways of reflecting knowledge and the divine: as pneumatic *images* that retained knowledge of the divine, as psychic *likenesses* that in a limited way reflected knowledge of the divine, and finally as material *imitations* that did not reflect the divine at all. These three substances, as well as the three epistemological levels, are combined within each human, as per ancient anatomies of the human body and mind. In order to attain knowledge of God one needs to get "unmixed" from one's material parts and instead become "blended" with the Savior and the collective. This language draws upon Stoic and Aristotelian physics, wherein immoral people are described as unfavorably mixed and virtuous people are those who possess the correct blending of the substances making up each person. This chapter demonstrated the importance of ontology and epistemology to ethical considerations.

Chapter 2 investigated the theory of passions employed in *TriTrac* and questions of how human cognition works. In *TriTrac* there are three levels of emotions, corresponding to the three substances that make up the human body and the three powers in heaven. The lowest and basest emotions, like envy, rage, and fear, are identified with materiality and called sickness and femininity. Pneuma is identified with good emotions like enjoyment, love, brotherly love, generosity, and joy. Psychê is in a middle position and attached to honor, ambition, and pursuit of glory. The text does not follow any known list of passions but there are, nevertheless, strong similarities to Stoic theories of emotions,

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especially in the depictions of the good emotions. The way the Logos is described as closely associated with motion and movement is also very similar to Stoic concepts of initial tremors that afflict everyone, motions that are not full-blown emotions. The Logos is without blame in *TriTrac*, as are those who experience initial tremors in the mind. *TriTrac* maintains that, while base emotions and materiality are to be combatted, they are useful in highlighting the need for salvation as well as in the governance of the cosmic system. Emotions affect humans through the body and, consequently, they are likened to demons and lower cosmic powers that coerce people into believing false things. The emotions attached to the psychic substance are depicted as more beneficial, and the psychic humans are told to help the pneumatics. The pneuma should control them both. This resembles the Platonic and Aristotelian tripartite view of the soul where the two lower parts are associated with passions while the third, logical part, is wholly above both. *TriTrac* even uses the same metaphor as found in other depictions of this view of the human mind, of an intellect as a driver driving a carriage made of baser emotions. Here, too, we can see the social application of such a theory, especially given that there are three classes of humans in *TriTrac* called material, psychic, and pneumatic.

Chapter 3 engaged with how *TriTrac* relates to the question of free will and human choice. Here we followed up in greater detail the workings of the cognitive theory of the text initiated in the previous chapter. In common with other Christian theologians, the text utilizes the Stoic notion of *assent* (συγκατάθεσις). The human mind creates mental images by being exposed to different impressions; the impressions that people create for themselves and consequently act upon depend on the constitution of each mind. However, in *TriTrac* the human mind is not in the possession of self-determination, a technical term used in ancient thought for free will. The will of self-determination is restricted to the highest realm, and the Aeons in the Pleroma are the only beings described as possessing this characteristic. The Aeons are in perfect alignment with the will of God—also how some Stoics defined free will. However, it is not possible for humans to attain this state in the cosmos, according to *TriTrac*. Rather, *proairesis* is the faculty that defines a human's moral worth, that decides whether a person can assent to the appearance of the Savior or not. Pneumatics have a good *proairesis*, a preference and natural inclination to assent to the Savior. The *proairesis* of psychic people needs convincing and instruction; they need to imitate the pneumatics' example. The *proairesis* of material people is always inclined to follow temporary honor and the empty glories of the cosmos. The nature of the *proairesis* depends on each person's constitution, on whether one was born with a pneumatic, psychic, or material preference. However, this does not mean that there is no room for

moral improvement, at least for some; both pneumatic and psychic people are described as undergoing moral formation. The concluding part of this chapter was devoted to the context of *TriTrac*'s anthropology and it was argued that the way the Valentinian opponents of Origen of Alexandria are described in his work *On First Principles* resembles the anthropology we encounter in *TriTrac*.

Chapter 4 explored the anthropology of *TriTrac*, arguing that the tripartite anthropology in *TriTrac* should not be read from the lens of other Valentinian anthropologies, since there seem to be clear points of difference. The tripartite anthropology functions in three principal ways: (1) as a pedagogical schema to point out different roles and responsibilities humans have in relation to each other and to teaching and learning the message of the Savior; (2) to explain *why* people have different responsibilities and roles to play in the world; and (3) to create and sustain a hierarchy within the community. The pneumatics are described as ethical experts and play the role of teachers for the members of the community, while the psychics are described as helpers of the pneumatics and as the students of pneumatics. An anthropology that restricted human choice would have been just as effective an ethical system as one that subscribed to the doctrine of free will. As previous scholars have pointed out, the only way one would have been able to know if a person was a pneumatic, psychic, or material human, would have been through scrutinizing that person's behavior. The behavior that reveals one's nature is determined by social factors; in *TriTrac* (as in most anthropological systems I would imagine) each category is defined by its relation to the group and, as group dynamics are prone to change, the categories probably functioned fluidly in practice, which a fixed anthropological theory would likely have supported effectively. It would have been virtually impossible for everyone to live up to the standards of a pneumatic and not everyone could become a teacher and moral expert.

In Chapter 5 the aim was to analyze the social organization from which *TriTrac* stemmed, by way of the mention of a school and the language of teaching and learning. At the outset, we should recognize the technical way the term ἐκκλησία is used in *TriTrac* to refer to the collective of pneumatics and not the community as a whole. How should the community be organized according to *TriTrac*? We quickly concluded that school language and the metaphor of the cosmos as being like a school for the soul was immensely popular, not only among Christians. The ideal social structure in *TriTrac* was modeled on the relationship between the Aeons in the Pleroma. The Aeons are described as existing in a collective with a clear hierarchy, differing in degrees of knowledge and instructed to help one another develop. Gaining knowledge of God is likened to gaining form. This ideal is reflected in the earthly community, which is a place where the pedagogical vision of *TriTrac* culminates. This includes

the following: (1) an attitude that no one could advance alone; (2) a need for teaching and learning for all; (3) higher pneumatic members teaching lower psychic members and the Savior teaching the pneumatics; (4) psychics seeing to the needs of the pneumatics and engaging in worship in the community; (5) oral instructions delivered by the teachers of the congregation, including pre-baptismal instruction; (6) a community made up of psychics, probably with a lower educational level, who are expected to follow the example of the teachers and leaders; (7) an upper level identified with the pneumatics who possessed the ability to consider moral questions, topics that would most likely have demanded a high level of education.

In light of this model of the community I argued that it was likely that the context reflected in *TriTrac* is a dual one, with a group of pneumatics comprising an inner circle within a larger community. We are not dealing with a formal school structure in either case. The larger collective is envisioned as following a pedagogical structure controlled by the pneumatics. The latter point highlights the important differences between people; some are made for more advanced studies, when the metaphor of "invisible" and "silent" learning is used. The socioeconomic reality of ancient education fits with the fixed anthropology we encounter in *TriTrac*: not all could devote themselves to the "leisure" (σχολή) that a pneumatic would have needed for engaging with moral questions, and not all had the intellectual interest or ability for a life of contemplation. Yet pneumatics were not necessarily from the wealthy upper classes; indeed, the text appeals to the psychics to support the pneumatics. Nevertheless, a background that included basic education in physics and epistemology would have been of great value for anyone discussing normative ethics on the level of *TriTrac*. Concluding the chapter, the term, 'School of Valentinus', was discussed. This is not a term that should be utilized generically to indicate the social context of the disparate phenomena that are often called Valentinianism, yet, as *TriTrac* exemplifies, school language is very important, at least in some Valentinian texts, for visualizing the ideal structure of the community.

In Chapter 6 the nature of the text's attitude toward politics and social involvement was scrutinized. *TriTrac* presents the cosmos as a beautifully ordered system designed to teach pneumatic people about life on earth. Different material and psychic powers rule the cosmos and psychic people and material people retain positions of power on earth. This is sanctioned and approved from above. The importance of the concept of honor, so central in Roman society, was accentuated in this chapter. Psychic humans are described as driven by honor but they are told to recognize the transient nature of the earthly variety and follow the advice and example of the pneumatics. At the same time, *TriTrac* maintains that the psychics should retain their

positions of earthly power and start working for the benefit of the pneumatics. In light of this last chapter a clearer vision of the social context of *TriTrac* emerges. Psychic humans include people who do not hold leadership positions within the group, but who are engaged in worldly affairs. The pneumatics most likely wielded great authority within the community, given that they were the moral experts with a monopoly on ethical interpretation.

The aim of this study, as stated above, has partly been to show what ancient Christian determinism—a topic omitted by many scholars while others have recently presented it as heresiological invention—could have looked like. Irenaeus, Clement, and Origen might have been familiar with Stoicism and a lot of the criticism leveled by them at Valentinians resembled the accusations directed at Stoics: that determinism destroyed moral choice and thus also accountability and the interest in moral improvement.[1] The first part of this study reveals the many similarities between *TriTrac*'s cognitive theory, view of emotions, and notion of the nature of human choice, and popular Stoicism, which could explain why some scholars today have thought that the church fathers' critique of Valentinian determinism was a repetition of the older critique of the Stoics. As this study has made clear, however, early Christian determinism was not the invention of heresiologists, at least if we take *TriTrac* as an example of the notions the church fathers opposed. I am not arguing that Irenaeus and Clement, for example, read *TriTrac*, but the anthropology that we find in *TriTrac* probably derived from interest in similar theological thoughts as those we find rejected by Irenaeus and Clement.[2] As I argued at the end of Chapter 3, the views of Origen's deterministic opponents are very close to what we find in *TriTrac*, although just because we find many Stoic notions in *TriTrac*, it does not mean that the people behind *TriTrac* necessarily read the Stoics directly, or, if they did, would have admitted their dependency on Stoicism or ever have thought of themselves as Stoics rather than Christian. Failing to recognize the multimodal nature of Christian discourse is one of the pitfalls that seems to have led previous research astray with regard to the existence of viable early Christian anthropological and ethical systems that restricted human choice. The counterarguments with which the heresiologists combatted Valentinians might have been similar to those with which Aristotelians and Platonists combated Stoics, but as this study has shown, this is no coincidence. The ethics of *TriTrac* is thoroughly indebted to many philosophical traditions, Stoicism in particular. Nevertheless, Irenaeus, Clement, and Origen were engaged in

1 For the detailed arguments, see Löhr, "Gnostic Determinism", and Bobzien, *Determinism*.

2 See Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* I.6.2, II.29.1–3, IV.37.2; Clement, *Stromata* II.10.1ff, V.3.3, II.111.3–4.

an intra-Christian discussion and utilized the terminology that belonged to that discourse, sometimes even recognizing their dependence on previous philosophy.[3] Christianity did not stand in clear opposition to Platonism, Aristotelianism, or Stoicism in ancient time.

Even though I have placed great weight on Greek philosophical thought for the development of *TriTrac*'s particular anthropology, it should be reiterated that we are dealing with a Christian text and Christian thoughts. This becomes clear in *TriTrac*'s epistemology, theory of passions, and tackling of free will, which are very much its own. *TriTrac* does indeed reject the possibility of free will in the cosmos, even going beyond Stoic restrictions of free will to the sage. It seems to define free will in similar ways to the Stoics—as always doing the will of the Father and as a mind that is free of outside coercion—but always doing the Father's will in the cosmos was impossible in light of how materiality was described: the first substance created outside the Pleroma, an illusion destined for destruction, and a substance of which all humans partly consist. However, as we have seen, this does not mean that human choices or attitudes are irrelevant. On the contrary: living a good and moral life means subjecting oneself to a pedagogic plan of gradual moral improvement. Depending on the constitution of one's mind, this plan varied, which in *TriTrac* is presented in terms of psychic and pneumatic classes of humans. Psychic people depend on the pneumatics for advice, but the pneumatics in turn depend on the psychics for worldly support. This reciprocity was reflected in the anatomy of the mind, in the way the different parts of it were thought to engage with one another: cognitive and social structures were in this way interrelated.

The second part of this study shows that a worldview, anthropology, and theory of cognition that restricted human choice, would indeed have worked to create and sustain group identity as well as a viable ethical system. The three categories of humans presented in *TriTrac* were fixed in theory but would most likely have been fluid in practice, which would have helped explain unforeseen events like membership fluctuations. The person/people behind the text most likely thought of themselves as pneumatic Christians. Considering this, the fixity of the text's anthropology would have been an effective tool for consolidating power. A deterministic worldview would also have been reinforced by the context of the community, the thoroughly unequal world of the third- and fourth-century Mediterranean world.

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3 For example, Clements discussion on the nature of the human soul in indebted to the Stoic division of the human soul into eight parts, a fact that Clement recognizes. See Clement, *Stromata* IV.

1 *TriTrac*'s Alexandrian Context

Considering the very mobile life many ancient intellectuals led, it is hard to pinpoint a text geographically.[4] Yet, even though it is virtually impossible to be sure of the geographical background in which *TriTrac* was composed, there are nevertheless several aspects of the text which we have discussed above that are compatible with an Alexandrian intellectual context. The concept of *the image of God*, for example, has a central place of importance in the history of Alexandrian Christianity. Origen's theology and his vision of what was entailed in being a good Christian were greatly inspired by his exegesis of Gen 1:26. Everyone should struggle to attain the likeness of God. As argued in Chapter 5, this often took the form of imitation of one's betters, in accordance with the *exampla*-tradition, and just like in a school milieu.[5] Moral progress lay within each category; the task is to make the image or likeness clearer. The image of God became a political question and a hotly debated topic in the Origenist controversies of the fifth century.[6] As Socrates, writing in the first half of the fifth century, tells us, the topic of the image of God had been controversial for a long time in Egypt.[7] *TriTrac* would clearly have been viewed as belonging on the side identified as Origenist. According to *TriTrac*, the highest Father does

4 Clement of Alexandria's life could be seen as a good example of the life of a philosopher or early Christian intellectual: He traveled widely in order to study and discuss with the best and brightest of his day before finally settling in one of the intellectual metropoles of his time (Alexandria in the case of Clement). For more on the life of Clement, see Eric Osborn, *Clement of Alexandria* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 1–28.

5 Didymus the Blind, an ardent follower of Origen, presented the Christian progress in moral excellence as a development from a likeness to a perfect image of God. For the importance of the image to Didymus, see Grant D. Bayliss, *The Vision of Didymus the Blind: A Fourth-Century Virtue-Origenism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 130–134.

6 Some desert monks are said to have caused a riot in Alexandria at the end of the fourth century after rumor spread that Bishop Theophilus had claimed that God was without form. Other theologians, some of whom favored Origen, accused people of a simplistic view of God, calling them Anthropomorphites who believed that God had human body parts. Theophilus is said to have rejected the Origenist side and instead begun a persecution of those who could be attached to what he himself first was accused of. Some monastic communities were attacked, people were exiled, and books were burned (Palladius, *Dialogus* 7). For details on this controversy, see Clark, *Origenist Controversy*, 43–84; and Hugo Lundhaug, "The Body of God and the Corpus of Historiography: The Life of Aphou of Pemdje and the Anthropomorphite Controversy" in *Bodies, Borders, Believers: Ancient Texts and Present Conversations: Essays in Honor of Turid Karlsen Seim on Her 70th Birthday*, eds. Anne Hege Grung et al. (Eugene, Or.: Pickwick, 2015), 40–56. Some banned the seeking of the "image of God" outside the structures of the community; other debated the theology behind the term "image of God" in the first place.

7 Socrates, *Church History* VI.7.

not have a form; his essence is completely other to materiality and it cannot be grasped by anyone. Only God can grant knowledge of himself and this is done through the Son, who is called the form of the formless Father (53:27, 61:11–13, 66:13–14, 72:28–73:2). Somewhat similarly to Didymus,[8] *TriTrac* maintains that there are different levels of moral excellence that are reflected in the terms "likeness" and "image".

However, contrary to Origen and Didymus, *TriTrac* rejects the possibility of progress between *likeness* (the psychic level) and *image* (the pneumatic). I propose that *TriTrac* derives from a context resembling that shaped by Origen, that is, an intellectual milieu in early third-century Alexandria. This is, apart from similarities in the interest in approaching the form of God, suggested by the deterministic stance we find in the text, a position that Origen felt the need to reject in *On First Principles.* Nevertheless, the theology we encounter in *TriTrac* is in many points very close to Origen's thoughts, in terms of, for example: (1) viewing the first stages of creation as a time when a group of Intellects, in possession of free will, lived harmoniously worshiping God; (2) the doctrine that human souls existed before they came down into the body; (3) the doctrine of *apokatastasis*; (4) support for a non-bodily resurrection; (5) the engagement of the Stoic theory of assent and proto-passions. These ideas, shared by Origen and *TriTrac*, would inspire generations of Christians after *TriTrac* and would undoubtedly have interested Christians in the fourth and fifth centuries, a time when Origen's theology was still a great inspiration and hotly debated.

These issues are far from the only aspects of *TriTrac* that find resonance in Alexandrian theology. The practice of imitation and the portrayal of the community in heaven as a πολιτεία, a structure on which the earthly Christian community should model itself, are very similar to Athanasius' vision. Athanasius obviously rejected the idea of a Pleroma, but he nevertheless uses similar language to that found in *TriTrac.* In the words of David Brakke, Athanasius "accounted for the Church's unity and diversity" by "defining the Church as a πολιτεία ('commonwealth' or 'way of life') that was formed through imitation of the saints".[9] As I have argued, *TriTrac* can be viewed as portraying the same vision for the community.

There are, of course, central points of theological difference between Athanasius and *TriTrac*, but both visualize the "commonwealth" of the community as consisting of people pursuing the path of moral improvement on two levels: higher-order members totally engaged in the topics of theology and

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8 Bayliss, *The Vision of Didymus*, 130–134.
9 Brakke, *Athanasius and Asceticism*, 144.

prayer (monks and bishop for Athanasius, and pneumatics for *TriTrac*) and lower order members who are the 'ordinary' constituents of the community. As we saw in *TriTrac*, Athanasius modelled his ideal community structure on the πολιτεία of the heavens, writing that Christ came into the world so "that we might receive the pattern and example of the heavenly πολιτεία".[10] Again, *TriTrac*'s and Athanasius' views of what heaven was like differed, but the language is the same. Brakke has argued that Athanasius' vision of the Christian community included the language of asceticism, and that this represents a later development of the 'theme of imitation'. As discussed in Part II above, the practice of imitation, so central for ancient *paideia* culture, stands in close proximity to how the pneumatic teachers are represented as models for the larger group. Athanasius, also employing the theme of imitation for his vision of the ideal community, presents the practice of imitation as something common to all Christians, not only those requiring basic formation. Athanasius' imitation was not only something taking place between humans, but between humans and God, the ultimate model. According to Brakke, Athanasius maintained that all Christians should strive to follow the example of the monk, to imitate the divine. This could, however, be done on different levels; ordinary Christians should renounce only some parts of worldly life while monks and virgins should renounce all of it. This emphasis on imitation of the divine, according to Brakke, represents a turn away from intellectual Alexandrian Christianity—of which I argue *TriTrac* is partially representative—wherein imitation took the form common in the classic school setting, and where it was something operating between humans on different levels, not between all humans and God.[11] It is clear where *TriTrac* belongs on Brakke's historical reconstruction: to an earlier form of Egyptian Christianity (probably Alexandrian), which emphasized imitating one's betters, someone in one's own congregation, rather than 'otherworldly' images like God or characters from the Biblical stories.[12]

The ethical ideals at the epicenter of *TriTrac* reverberate in another Egyptian context: the emergence of Christian monasticism. In that context,

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10 *Festal Letters* 2.5. Translation from Brakke, *Athanasius and Asceticism*, 164.

11 Brakke, *Athanasius and Asceticism*, 180–182.

12 Peter Brown has argued that this form of imitation, common between the perfect monk saint and his followers, derives from the classic *paideia* relation between student and teacher. Peter Brown, "The Saint as Exemplar in Late Antiquity", *Representations* 2 (1983): 1–25. See also Philip Rousseau, "Ascetics as Mediators and as Teachers", in *The Cult of Saints in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages: Essays on the Contribution of Peter Brown*, eds. James Howard-Johnston and Paul Antony Hayward (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 45–59.

as in *TriTrac*, there was a great focus on education, formation, combating the passions, and the view that there are degrees in learning in which higher members are tasked with taking care of lower members. At the center of the burgeoning monastic movement in Egypt, we find characters like Antony who was portrayed by his biographer (Athanasius) rather as some bishops of third- and fourth-century Christianity liked to portray themselves: as pious reclusives uninterested in worldly learning and totally devoted to a life in isolation and prayer. However, such images created by fourth-century bishops do not hold up under scrutiny. The bishops' asceticism has been questioned,[13] while many monastic figures, as Samuel Rubenson has shown in the case of Antony, were anything but ignorant peasants before becoming monks, as Athanasius' *Vita* and the *Apophthegmata patrum* would suggest; Antony was, rather, a learned man, a teacher of rank.[14]

Even though there are examples of powerful people in the burgeoning monastic movement coming from humble backgrounds—Pachomius seems to be one example[15]—leadership positions in the monasteries most likely demanded higher education, just as the role of bishop and any administrative position in society would have required.[16] In fact, the image of authority and moral excellence as detached from formal learning was a classical ideal.[17] Several recent publications[18] have highlighted the connections between the Hellenistic culture of *paideia* and the early Egyptian monastic movement.[19] Rather than breaking off from classic culture—which was for a long time the paradigm—Rubenson *et al.* have shown that the early monasteries were places of learning with strong ties to classic philosophy and the Greco-Roman education system. Monasteries were used as schools;[20] popular monastic texts were used in a similar pedagogic way as classic literature in the Greco-Roman

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13 Elm, *Sons of Hellenism.*

14 This conclusion is drawn from close study of the letters of Antony. See Rubenson, *The Letters of St. Antony*, 11, passim.

15 For a study of the educational background of famous monastic leaders, see Timbie, "The Education", 34–46.

16 Bagnall, *Egypt*, 302.

17 Henrik Rydell Jonsén, "The Virtue of Being Uneducated: Attitudes Towards Classical Paideia in Early Monasticism and Ancient Philosophy", in Larsen and Rubenson, *School and Monastery*, 219–235.

18 Publications resulting chiefly from a research project lead by Samuel Rubenson, entitled "Early Monasticism and Classical Paideia", ongoing at Lund University from 2009–2015.

19 See, for example, Larsen and Rubenson, *School and Monastery*.

20 Lillian Larsen, "Excavating the Excavations" of Early Monastic Education", in Larsen and Rubenson, *School and Monastery*, 101–124.

education system;[21] and the ideal monk was similarly portrayed, and engaged in many of the same topics as the philosopher of old.[22] The monastic movement in Egypt began in the cities and monastic literature was much inspired by the theology developed the century before the first monasteries began to surface.[23] Origen and Clement's theology was widely popular in the early monastic milieus and here, too, we find many of the same ideals that connect monasticism to philosophy. The hierarchy between intellectually advanced members and laity that is prevalent in the anthropological outlook of pre-monastic Christian intellectuals (Clement, Origen, and those behind *TriTrac*) was also reflected in the later monasteries; the influx of uneducated members became an increasing problem, according to Shenoute.[24] I suggest that *TriTrac* is best understood as deriving from a third-century Alexandrian context, from the milieu of Origen, Clement and Didymus, the climate of pre-monastic intellectuals who would furnished their later monastic counterparts with much of their philosophical stuff. We find no insistence on isolation in *TriTrac*, but the text does envisage a split community, with lay Christians taking care of the moral experts who function as models for everyone else, experts who are devoted to moral questions. A practice that became popular in monastic settings was the repetition of Bible passages and the memorization of other formative literature in order to combat evil and develop morally.[25] This practice is not clearly reflected in *TriTrac*, but perhaps it could cast light on the peculiar usage of ϫⲉ in the text.[26]

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21 As Lillian Larsen has shown, the sayings of the desert fathers were often employed like Homer; they were memorized and used for learning grammar and rhetoric, as well as argumentation techniques (Larsen, "Early Monasticism", 13–33).

22 Some examples of motifs found in both monasteries and philosophy schools include: withdrawing from the outside world; the idealization of being uneducated in formal learning; engaging the mind and combatting passions; and forming one's inner person by repeating memorized passages. Henrik Rydell Jonsén, "Renunciation, Reorientation and Guidance: Patterns in Early Monasticism and Ancient Philosophy", *Studia Patristica* 55:3: *Papers Presented at the Sixteenth International Conference on Patristic Studies Held in Oxford 2011*, eds. M. Vinzent and S. Rubenson (Leuven: Peeters, 2013), 76–94; see also See Rydell Jonsén, "The Virtue of Being Uneducated".

23 Goehring, "The Encroaching Desert"; Rubenson, "Asceticism and Monasticism".

24 Janet Timbie, "The State of Research on the Career of Shenoute of Atripe" in *The Roots of Egyptian Christianity*, eds. Birger A. Pearson and James Goehring (Philadelphia, P.A.: Fortress Press, 1986), 265.

25 This is also a practice that was developed in rabbinic Judaism, see Wyn Schofer, *Making of a Sage*, 67–119.

26 The use of ϫⲉ needs further research, and reading it in light of different practices in monastic contexts is indeed an avenue that should be pursued.

The connection between demons and passions as mental images is strongly indicated in *TriTrac* and also a feature that fits Origin's thought,[27] but it became much more pronounced in early monasticism, Evagrius Ponticus being the most obvious example.[28] Thus the composition of *TriTrac* best fits the period before communal monasticism became organized on a large scale. Even though the bishop, presbyter, and deacon structure would prevail in the Church as a whole, a structure which does not seem to be reflected in *TriTrac*; the image of a moral superior detached from the world and engaged in study promoted in *TriTrac* and among Alexandrian theologians like Clement and Origen, continued to a large degree as an ideal, especially in the east. This is indicated by the way some early, powerful bishops portrayed themselves, for example, but also by the recruitment of bishops from the monastic movements, which increased after Chalcedon (451) and eventually placed the hierarchy of the Eastern Church virtually under the control of monks.[29] A context where the ecclesiastical structures had not yet become prevalent is a better fit with *TriTrac*.

Thus, I contend that *TriTrac* derives from a pre-monastic city context,[30] consisting of semi-isolated pneumatics engaged in inner formation (which is indicated by the way psychics are described as engaged in the world); the "church" would open up to, or visit, lay Christians at times for communal worship and for basic educational purposes. There are indications that Christian places of worship also functioned as places of education.[31] One should be careful of reifying a whole community from a single text but, as Roger Bagnall has pointed out of the pluralistic world of second- to fourth-century Egyptian Christianity, there is little to suggest that the people, doctrines, and loyalties deemed heretical at some point—like Melitians, Arians (or Valentinians I might add)—were necessarily social forces clearly distinguishable from the Christian community

27 Origen, *On First Principles* III.2. See also *The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs.*

28 Kathleen Gibbons, "Passions, Pleasures, and Perceptions: Rethinking Evagrius Ponticus on Mental Representation", *Zeitschrift für Antikes Christentum* 19:2 (2015): 297–330.

29 Bagnall, *Egypt*, 294.

30 As Roger Bagnall has shown, in third-century Egypt, bishops, deacons, and presbyters are not mentioned in their formal capacity like a hundred years later. However, we do hear of *lectors*. Bagnall, *Egypt*, 279–281, 283–284. For a work on the function of lectors in early Christianity, see Dan Nässelqvist, *Public Reading in Early Christianity: Lectors, Manuscript, and Sound in the Oral Delivery of John 1–4* (Leiden: Brill, 2015).

31 For a study of how the place of worship seems to have functioned as a school in early Egyptian monasticism, see Larsen and Rubenson, *School and Monastery.* Compare also the use of synagogues among Jews in antiquity; for example, during the Sabbath the synagogue would have been used for educational purposes. Heather A. McKay, *Sabbath and Synagogue: The Question of Sabbath Worship in Ancient Judaism* (Leiden: Brill, 1994).

as a whole.[32] As we have seen, *TriTrac* is at home within the context of mainstream third- to fourth-century Egyptian Christianity, so we do not have to reify a Valentinian community in clear opposition to other Christians. There is interaction and even overlap between the community of Origen and Valentinian Christians. There are undoubtedly clear doctrinal and mythological particularities in *TriTrac* that would have set it apart, but there are also enough similarities to have enabled the people behind *TriTrac*[33] to take part in a broader Christian context. Considering the similarities and affinities of cosmogony, it is easy to see how a pneumatic or a psychic individual could have been convinced by Origen to leave the Valentinian group and join his school, or the other way around.

Finally, I wish to highlight the relevance of bringing texts like *TriTrac*—as well as other Valentinian texts, for that matter—into the discussion and study of the nature and development of early Christianity; not as examples of fringe movements, but as part of larger intra-Christian discussions, such as those over claims to authority or how Christians should conduct their ethical lives. As I have argued in detail above, one concrete way in which *TriTrac* was part of the formation of early Christianity concerns its involvement in discussion of the nature of human choice. As I have argued, the doctrine of free will, which was to become a cornerstone in orthodox theology, was no obvious or easy position, but rather a stance that grew out of the intricate discussions over the nature of the human mind and cognitive apparatus, a discussion of which *TriTrac* was a part.

32 Bagnall, *Egypt*, 309.

33 However, we cannot rule out the possibility that the text was a product of a single individual. Even though I find this unlikely, even in this case, this individual would most likely have been part of a larger Christian community.

APPENDIX

Implications and Suggestions for Further Studies

Subsequent studies into the world of early Christian ethics, as well as Egyptian Christianity, would be greatly benefited if deterministic systems were not dismissed as polemical exaggerations but instead taken into account as viable options for the forming of ethical and anthropological systems. The nature of the human will, and its necessity in order to attain salvation, continued to be a hotly debated topic in the third and fourth century and the exact nature of the doctrine of free will was still controversial in the fifth century.[1] The Pelagian controversy is an example of this. Pelagius argued for the free will of humans always to choose the good, which was something God had provided. There was no need of further divine grace; salvation was in one's own hands. In portraying their 'opponents', Pelagius' followers painted a similar picture as that which Irenaeus painted of Valentinians:

> Anyone who hears that it is not possible for him to be without sin will not even try to be what he judges to be impossible, and the man who does not try to be without sin must perforce sin all the time, and all the more boldly because he enjoys the false security of believing that it is impossible for him not to sin … But if he were to hear that he is able not to sin, then he would have exerted himself to fulfil what he now knows to be possible when he is striving to fulfil it, to achieve his purpose for the most part, even if not entirely.[2]

While Irenaeus claimed that Valentinians thought of themselves as naturally saved, the argument is here turned on its head: if all people are sinners without the ability to freely choose the good (a caricature of Augustine's and later Jerome's theology) there would be no use in following any moral code. This argument is, just like Irenaeus' argument against Valentinians, most likely exaggerated for rhetorical effect, but it shows clear similarities in argument. This study has been limited to the time before the fifth century so I will not go into closer comparison between *TriTrac* and the details of the Pelagian controversy. Suffice it to say that a close reading of early Christian views on free will would undoubtedly yield more fruitful results if systems like the one represented in *TriTrac* was included. Augustine's view of the capacity of human free will is at times much closer to what we find in *TriTrac* than, for example, in Origen. Augustine

1 See for example Burns, "Astrological Determinism".
2 *On the Possibility of not Sinning* 2 (part of the Caspari corpus). Translation from Brinley R. Rees, *The Letters of Pelagius and His Followers* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 1991), 168.

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favored a view that highlighted the need for divine grace in order to overcome human propensity to sin, rather than the position that Origen favored, which emphasized the free will of all humans always to choose the good.[3] A closer reading of these positions, from the perspective of ancient theories of cognition, would most likely result in a study that recognized the strong similarities between the systems; the nuances that separate determinism and a case for free will in antiquity are, after all, quite subtle. Whatever the case may be with regard the connection between these different stances toward the question of human will, it is quite clear that any detailed study of early Christian attitudes toward these topics should include systems that restrict human choice such as the one we find in *TriTrac.*

Another topic that would undoubtedly yield fruitful results in light of the above study is the monastic connection; the determinism of *TriTrac* could be compared with how the doctrine of free will was received in monastic writings. Shenoute, for example, believed that oaths and sincerity were not enough to make new recruits eligible for acceptance into the monastery; some were simply prone to sin because they possessed a will to do so. It did not mean anything if a person promised they would not sin; if their will was of a sinful disposition, not even the "thought of God" could prevent that person from wicked behavior, Shenoute writes.[4] Here, it would seem, the strict interpretations of free will and determinism intersect. Shenoute's response of rejecting new recruits' oaths because they might not reflect their true will could be interpreted as strong support for the doctrine of free will (one can always change one's mind), but seems to fit the opposite view even better: it is the 'nature' of one's will that decides how one acts in the long run (why else would one not trust a person's sincere oath?), and this will cannot be changed by any simple mind trick. An anthropology which did not entertain the possibility that people could change their nature would not necessarily have sounded strange in a monastic context, where people devoted their lives to sternly regulated practice. Some were just not made for such a life.

The pedagogical model presented in *TriTrac* is, indeed, reminiscent of early monasticism. Many recent studies of Egyptian monasticism have highlighted the connection to classical paideia and school culture and this perspective also fits *TriTrac*. Apart from the broad general similarities discussed above, there are striking similarities between *TriTrac* and monastic texts: for example, the emphasis on the therapy of emotions and

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3 For more on Augustine's view of free will, and his dependence on—like both *TriTrac* and Origen—Stoic cognitive theory, see Peter King, *Augustine: On the Free Choice of the Will, On Grace and Free Choice, and Other Writings* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), x–xvi. Also like *TriTrac*, Augustine was familiar with the Stoic distinction between proto-passions and full-blown emotions. See Sarah C. Byers, "Augustine and the Cognitive Cause of Stoic Preliminary Passions (Propatheiai)" *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 41 (2003): 433–448.

4 See the quotes from Shenoute's *On Monastic Vows* in Timbie, "The State of Research", 264–265.

combatting of demons. In *TriTrac*, the distinction between pneumatics and psychics strikes a chord with the topic of spiritual warfare, one that is immensely popular in monastic literature. As we have seen, pneumatic people are described as coming to this world to "experience the evil things and might train themselves in them".[5] The operative word here is ⲣ̄ⲅⲩⲙⲛⲁⲍⲉ (γυμνάζω), which Clement and Origen also used for the exercise of higher spiritual and moral Christian life.[6] However, in a monastic context ⲣ̄ⲅⲩⲙⲛⲁⲍⲉ is also used for preparing to withstand attacks against evil demons, as in *Life of Antony*.[7] In *TriTrac* 119:23–27 we read that even psychic people, those who are not made to learn about evil, will receive salvation, a concept that surely would have been a comfort for failed monks or lay Christians who did not have the stamina of a spiritual warrior like Antony. While some studies have been devoted to the connection between the Nag Hammadi texts and monasticism,[8] much still remains to be done. I strongly believe that we would gain much by reading *TriTrac* not only from the perspective of third-century Alexandrian Christianity, but also next to later monastic literature and texts that derive from the same region as the Nag Hammadi texts, like the Bodmer papyri.[9] Our understanding of both *TriTrac* as well as early monasticism would surely gain new and exciting nuances.

It has recently been argued fairly convincingly that the Nag Hammadi codices derived from a monastic context.[10] Some attempts have been made to read the codices that can be attached to each other as collections.[11] As implied in Chapter 3, several of the texts copied by the scribes behind Codex I, VII, and XI could be viewed as proposing a deterministic worldview. This is another connection that should be investigated further, one which could yield interesting results with regard to the background of the collection and its place in Egyptian Christianity.

As we have seen, *TriTrac* also lends itself to studies of early Christian attempts to claim authority. Contrary to the bishop, presbyter, and deacon structure that would become fairly established by the end of the third century, *TriTrac* seems to support an alternative structure where the teacher and intellectual recluse makes up the core of "the church" and caters to the spiritual and educational needs of a laity. Comparing

5 126:32–34: ⲉⲩⲛⲁϫⲓ ϯⲡⲉ ⲛ̄ⲛⲓⲡⲉⲧⲑⲁⲩⲟⲩ ⲁⲩⲱ ⲛ̄ⲥⲉⲣ̄ ⲅⲩⲙⲛⲁⲍⲉ· ⲙ̄ⲙⲁⲩ ⲛ̄ϩⲣⲏï ⲛ̄ϩⲏⲧⲟⲩ.

6 Clement, *Stromata* VI.10, VII.7; Origen, *Against Celsus* IV.50.

7 See the Coptic *Life of Antony* 88.

8 Most recently Lundhaug and Jenott, *Monastic Origins*; but see also Jenott and Pagels, "Antony's Letters"; Williams, "The *Life of Antony*".

9 For example, Bodmer XLI, the Lycopolitian *Acta Pauli*, is one of few texts that is close to *TriTrac* dialectically (Nagel, "Lycopolitan"). And it is obvious that Paul was a great source of inspiration for *TriTrac*. For more on the Bodmer papyri, see James M. Robinson, *Story of the Bodmer Papyri: From the First Monastery's Library in Upper Egypt to Geneva and Dublin* (Eugene, Oregon: Cascade Books, 2011).

10 Lundhaug and Jenott, *Monastic Origins*.

11 For details, see the introductory chapter above.

this model to Manichean community structures would also yield interesting results, as they were communities that made similar anthropological distinctions to those we find in *TriTrac*. The way *TriTrac* relates to questions of authority was most likely a reflection of its early third-century context when church structures were still being negotiated. The structure promoted in *TriTrac* was a better fit with the monastic context than the ecclesiastical milieu of the established church of the fourth century.

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