Hugo Lundhaug

The Fruit of the Tree of Life

Ritual Interpretation of the Crucifixion in the *Gospel of Philip*

The *Gospel of Philip*, preserved only in Nag Hammadi Codex II,[1] has proven to be a difficult text for its modern interpreters. In addition to its numerous lacunae, scholars have consistently been frustrated by its seemingly haphazard structure and highly allusive rhetoric, leading some to regard it as simply a collection of excerpts, rather than as a coherent composition in its own right.[2] Still, the *Gospel of Philip* is nevertheless one of the most discussed texts of the Nag Hammadi Codices and one of the texts that crop up most often in discussions on ancient

---

1 The *Gospel of Philip* is the third and longest tractate of the seven that make up the contents of Nag Hammadi Codex II, where it is found between the *Gospel of Thomas* and the *Hypostasis of the Archons*. The Coptic text utilized in the present article is based on *The Facsimile Edition of the Nag Hammadi Codices: Codex II* (Leiden: Brill, 1974), together with the two main critical editions: "The Gospel According to Philip," in *Gospel According to Thomas, Gospel According to Philip, Hypostasis of the Archons, and Indexes* (ed. Bentley Layton; trans. Wesley W. Isenberg; vol. 1 of *Nag Hammadi Codex II,2–7 Together with XIII,2*, Brit. Lib. Or.4926(1), and P. Oxy. 1, 654, 655*; NHS 20; Leiden: Brill, 1989), 142–215; Hans-Martin Schenke, *Das Philippus-Evangelium (Nag Hammadi-Codex II,3): neu herausgegeben, übersetzt und erklärt* (TUGAL 143; Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1997). Any divergences from either of these editions in the Coptic text used are noted in the footnotes. All translations from the Coptic are my own.

2 Cf., e.g., Robert McL. Wilson's statement that "it cannot be contended that Philip is a single coherent text, composed according to normal standards of writing. That any such claim would be erroneous is evident on every page" (*The Gospel of Philip: Translated from the Coptic Text, with an Introduction and Commentary* [London: Mowbray, 1962], 9). Hans-Martin Schenke's conclusion that the *Gospel of Philip* should be regarded as a florilegium – i.e., a collection of excerpts, notes, or instructions expressing diverse and even contradictory doctrinal contents – has been followed by many scholars. Schenke even divided the text into numbered "Sprüche" similar to the *Gospel of Thomas* (see "Das Evangelium nach Philippus: Ein Evangelium der Valentinianer aus dem Funde von Nag-Hamadi," *TLZ* 84, no. 1 [1959]: 1–26; Hans-Martin Schenke, "Das Evangelium nach Philippus: Ein Evangelium der Valentinianer aus dem Funde von Nag-Hamadi," in *Koptisch-gnostische Schriften aus den Papyrus-Codices von Nag-Hamadi* [ed. Johannes Leipoldt and Hans-Martin Schenke; Theologische Forschung: Wissenschaftliche Beiträge zur kirchlich-evangelischen Lehre 20; Hamburg-Bergstedt: Herbert Reich, 1960], 31–65). The most extended argument in favor of the florilegium hypothesis is that of Martha Lee Turner, *The Gospel According to Philip: The Sources and Coherence of an Early Christian Collection* (NHS 38; Leiden: Brill, 1996).

"Gnosticism" or "Valentinianism,"[3] while in relation to NT studies the text is of interest with regard to its rhetorical dependence on NT allusions. Yet there is presently no consensus as to the date and provenance of the text nor its nature and purpose. In the present article I aim to show how a methodology inspired by cognitive linguistics, more specifically Blending Theory, may help us understand how the *Gospel of Philip* makes sense. As an example, I use Blending Theory to analyze the way in which the tractate interprets the crucifixion in light of Scripture on the one hand and ritual practice on the other, and thereby try to show how the *Gospel of Philip* may in fact be read as a coherent theological statement, at least in this regard.

This is an especially useful example as it has been claimed that, in the *Gospel of Philip*, "the Cross is viewed as an historic event, but hardly as the source of redemption, the sacraments, or spiritual knowledge."[4] In light of the common practice of analyzing the Nag Hammadi writings on the basis of scholarly constructions of "Gnosticism," such a conclusion is hardly surprising.[5] On closer inspection, however, the crucifixion seems to play a rather more central role in the soteriology and rhetorics of the *Gospel of Philip* than such a conclusion would suggest, as will be shown in what follows.

---

3 In line with the studies of Michael Allen Williams (*Rethinking "Gnosticism": An Argument for Dismantling a Dubious Category* [Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1996]; idem, "Was There a Gnostic Religion? Strategies for a Clearer Analysis," in *Was There a Gnostic Religion?* [ed. Antti Marjanen; Publications of the Finnish Exegetical Society 87; Helsinki: Finnish Exegetical Society, 2005], 55–79) and Karen L. King (*What Is Gnosticism?* [Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2003]; idem, "The Origins of Gnosticism and the Identity of Christianity," in *Was There a Gnostic Religion?* [ed. Antti Marjanen; Publications of the Finnish Exegetical Society 87; Helsinki: Finnish Exegetical Society, 2005], 103–20), I reject the use of "Gnosticism" as an analytical category in the study of the Nag Hammadi texts. Cf. also Morton Smith, "The History of the Term Gnostikos," in *Sethian Gnosticism* (ed. Bentley Layton; vol. 2 of *The Rediscovery of Gnosticism: Proceedings of the International Conference on Gnosticism at Yale, New Haven, Connecticut, March 28–31, 1978*; SHR 41; Leiden: Brill, 1981), 796–807. I also do not think it is helpful to analyze the *Gospel of Philip* in light of the category of "Valentinianism," as I hold it to be highly debateable whether the *Gospel of Philip* can in any meaningful sense be described as a "Valentinian" text (cf. Hugo Lundhaug, *Images of Rebirth: Cognitive Poetics and Transformational Soteriology in the* Gospel of Philip *and the* Exegesis on the Soul [NHS 73; Leiden: Brill, 2010]).
4 G. C. Stead, review of Robert McL. Wilson, *The Gospel of Philip: Translated from the Coptic Text, with an Introduction and Commentary*, *NTS* 10 (1963/64): 418. Wilson himself stated that the *Gospel of Philip* presents us with a Christ that "comes not to save the world by giving his life but to restore things to their proper places and become the father of a redeemed progeny. Deliverance comes through knowledge, not through the sacrifice of Calvary" (*Gospel of Philip*, 13–14).
5 Cf. n. 3, above.

The Tree of Life

The *Gospel of Philip* interprets the crucifixion from several perspectives, connecting the event to various scriptural passages and ritual acts. I will start with a central and highly creative passage, put into the mouth of the apostle Philip,[6] where the tractate connects the crucifixion simultaneously to the Garden of Eden, to Jesus' earthly father Joseph, and to Christian ritual:

> Philip the apostle said: "Joseph the carpenter planted a garden because he needed wood for his trade. It was he who made the cross from the trees which he planted, and his seed hung upon that which he planted. His seed was Jesus,[7] and the plant was the Cross." But the Tree of Life is in the middle of the garden,[8] and it was from the olive tree that the chrism came, and from it (i.e. the chrism) the resurrection. (*Gos. Phil.* 73.8-19)

As we shall see, this passage turns out to capture the gist of the *Gospel of Philip*'s understanding of the cross. To show this I will employ the methodological framework of Blending Theory. From such a perspective we may observe that the *Gospel of Philip* here prompts for the creation of what Gilles Fauconnier and Mark Turner would call a multiple-scope conceptual integration network.[9]

Before proceeding to the analysis of the quoted passage, however, it should be mentioned that it is an important presupposition of the present methodological approach that meaning is not something that resides *in* a text, but is rather something that is constructed by the reader or hearer in his or her encounter with it. "Expressions do not mean; they are prompts for us to construct mean-

---

6 This is the only time the name Philip is mentioned in the text apart from its title, where the implicit reference is to Philip the evangelist, who may well be a different person.

7 Cf. Gal 3:16, where Christ is described as "the seed" (σπέρμα) of Abraham.

8 Cf. Gen 2:9; 3:3; Rev 2:7.

9 In short, Blending Theory deals with how the selective combination of two or more mental spaces create new mental "blended spaces" that also contain new elements not derived from any single contributing input space, but which emerge from the combination itself. The most comprehensive formulation of Blending Theory is found in Gilles Fauconnier and Mark Turner, *The Way We Think: Conceptual Blending and the Mind's Hidden Complexities* (New York: Basic Books, 2002), but see also, especially, Gilles Fauconnier and Mark Turner, "Conceptual Integration Networks," *Cognitive Science* 22, no. 2 (1998): 133–87; Seana Coulson and Todd Oakley, "Blending Basics," *Cognitive Linguistics* 11, nos. 3-4 (2000): 175–96; Joseph Grady, "Cognitive Mechanisms of Conceptual Integration," *Cognitive Linguistics* 11, nos. 3-4 (2000): 335–45; Vyvyan Evans and Melanie Green, *Cognitive Linguistics: An Introduction* (Mahwah, N.J.: Lawrence Erlbaum, 2006), 400–44.

ings by working with processes we already know," as Mark Turner puts it.[10] The process of making sense of a text is therefore not to be regarded as a matter of *decoding* meaning that is *inherent in* the text, but rather as a process of dynamically and creatively *constructing* meaning *on the basis of* it.[11] As Keith Oatley describes it, "The writer offers a kit of parts, or a set of cues. The reader does the construction."[12]
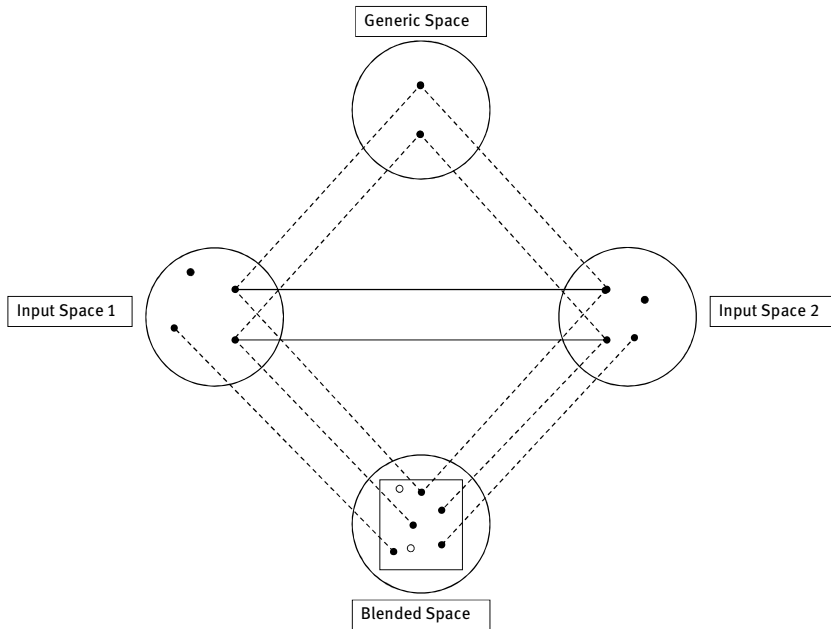

Figure 1: Basic Conceptual Integration Network

Now, we *do* want to make sense of the way in which the *Gospel of Philip* may have been understood around the time it was produced, and not simply the myriad ways in which it might be interpreted by various people today. Since we

10 Mark Turner, *Reading Minds: The Study of English in the Age of Cognitive Science* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1991), 206.
11 See Raymond W. Gibbs Jr., "Prototypes in Dynamic Meaning Construal," in *Cognitive Poetics in Practice* (ed. Joanna Gavins and Gerard Steen; London: Routledge, 2003), 27–40, esp. 29; Evans and Green, *Cognitive Linguistics*, 396.
12 Keith Oatley, "Writingandreading: The Future of Cognitive Poetics," in *Cognitive Poetics in Practice* (ed. Joanna Gavins and Gerard Steen; London: Routledge, 2003), 166.

do not have access to the heads of the ancient author(s)/redactor(s) or readers, however, we are in need of analytical tools to help us map out, and become aware of, the various interpretive possibilities that are offered up by the text, and to help us outline its potential patterns of meaning. For this purpose, the emergence of Blending Theory constitutes in my view one of the most promising recent developments in the cognitive study of literature, and may profitably be used to model possible readings of texts like the *Gospel of Philip*, by understanding the interpretation of such texts as processes of meaning production involving the construction and combination of mental spaces[13] that are cued in the experience of reading or hearing the text in question.

The passage from the *Gospel of Philip* just quoted should evoke at least three mental input spaces in the minds of readers already familiar with the biblical texts alluded to (see figure 2).
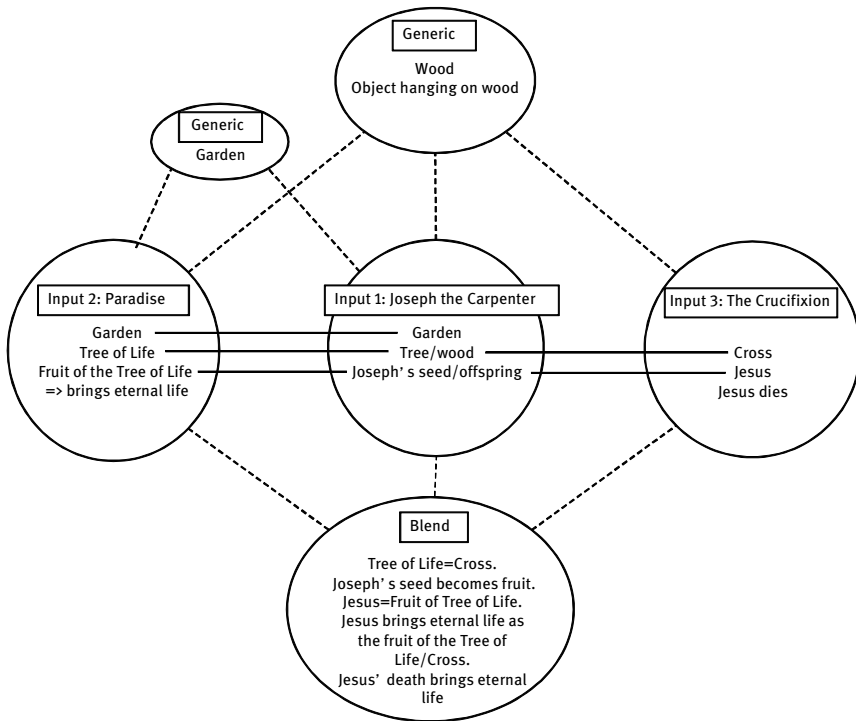

Figure 2: Joseph the Carpenter

13 The "mental spaces" referred to here can be described as "small conceptual packets" that are continually being constructed while thinking "for purposes of local understanding and action" (Fauconnier and Turner, "Conceptual Integration Networks," 137; Fauconnier and Turner, *The Way We Think*, 40, 102).

We see that input space 1 contains the surface story about Joseph the carpenter, but the passage also prompts for a second input space based on the Genesis-account of the garden of Eden, cued by references to the garden and the Tree of Life, and a third one concerning salvation history and the crucifixion of Jesus. There are important counterpart mappings between elements in all these spaces and they are held together by a shared generic space that includes the features "wood" and "object hanging on wood," features that are common to the three inputs. In addition, both spaces 1 and 2 contain a "garden" (ⲡⲁⲣⲁⲇⲉⲓⲥⲟⲥ, *paradeisos*): the garden planted by Joseph and the garden of Eden, respectively, and they thus share an additional generic space between the two of them. We also see that there are counterpart mappings between the wood in input 1, the tree in input 2, and the cross in input 3.

It is important to note that, in the interpretive blending network created in a reading of this passage, crucial aspects of the input spaces that are not directly mentioned in the text are also brought into play. In this case, the fruit of the tree of Life in input space 2, which is not explicitly mentioned in the passage, but which is a feature of the Genesis account, maps onto Jesus and Joseph's seed (in inputs 1 and 3), since all three of them hang on wood.[14] We also see that the text uses Joseph's vocation as a carpenter, as well as his garden, in input space 1, in order to connect the cross in input space 3 to the Tree of Life in input space 2. By extension, Jesus in input space 3 is connected to the fruit of the Tree of Life in input space 2 via input space 1. In the blended space, the analogical relationship between the cross and the Tree of Life is compressed to identity, as is that between Jesus and its fruit.[15]

---

14 By describing Joseph's "seed" as hanging "on that which he planted," the text also makes a pun on the multiple meanings of the Coptic word ϭⲣⲟϭ (*čroč*, "seed"), which corresponds to the Greek word σπέρμα (*sperma*, "seed") (see W. E. Crum, *A Coptic Dictionary* [Oxford: Clarendon, 1939], 831b), denoting the "seed" of plants as well as human "sperm" and "offspring."

15 Certain elements of the inputs are, however, not projected to the blend, e.g., Adam and Eve or the serpent, who are all parts of the Genesis paradise input (input 2). A further allegorical interpretation of this passage is given by Thomassen, who, from the point of view of a "Valentinian" reading of the *Gospel of Philip*, holds Joseph to represent the Demiurge, the garden to represent the cosmos, the cross to represent matter, and Jesus hanging on the tree to represent his birth in a material body (see Einar Thomassen, "How Valentinian Is the *Gospel of Philip*?" in *The Nag Hammadi Library after Fifty Years: Proceedings of the 1995 Society of Biblical Literature Commemoration* [ed. John D. Turner and Anne McGuire; NHS 44; Leiden: Brill, 1997], 268–69; Einar Thomassen, *The Spiritual Seed: The Church of the 'Valentinians'* [NHS 60; Leiden: Brill, 2005], 91). The connection between crucifixion and incarnation is also made by Catherine Trautmann, "Le schème de la croix dans l'Évangile selon Philippe (NH II,3)," in *Deuxième journée d'études coptes: Strasbourg 25 mai 1984* (Cahiers de la Bibliothèque Copte 3;

In the *Gospel of Philip*'s interpretation of the crucifixion, this is a crucial conceptual integration network. Its most significant entailment arises from the way it implicitly makes Jesus the fruit of the Tree of Life by blending the two gardens and identifying the cross with the tree. This blend has significant soteriological and mystagogical consequences. According to the Genesis account, eating from the Tree of Life was not only strictly forbidden (an aspect that is not projected to this blend), but it is also said to bestow eternal life (Gen 3:22). An important interpretive consequence of this projection is the insight that by being crucified and thus becoming the fruit of the Tree of Life, Christ brings eternal life to those who partake of him. This again brings us to the mystagogical implications of the blend, which depend on contextual information both internal and external to the *Gospel of Philip* itself.

Before we proceed, it is here worth noting that words, sentences, and texts cannot meaningfully be analyzed apart from discourse context, nor can semantic meaning meaningfully be separated from pragmatic meaning.[16] In the words of Margaret Freeman, "literary texts are the products of cognizing minds and their interpretations the products of other cognizing minds in the context of the physical and sociocultural worlds in which they have been created and read."[17] With regard to Blending Theory, Fauconnier and Turner have likewise noted that "the unpacking possibilities offered by the blended space will depend on what is already active in the context of communication."[18] Put in somewhat

---

Leuven: Peeters, 1986), 129. However, such an allegorical interpretation of the text requires the creation of an additional input space derived from "Valentinian" mythology, as well as a presupposition of a "Valentinian" author and/or reader(s), which is in my view unnecessary.

16 See, e.g., Eve Sweetser, "Compositionality and Blending: Semantic Composition in a Cognitively Realistic Framework," in *Cognitive Linguistics: Foundations, Scope, and Methodology* (ed. Theo Janssen and Gisela Redeker; Cognitive Linguistics Research 15; Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 1999), 137.

17 Margaret H. Freeman, "Poetry and the Scope of Metaphor: Toward a Cognitive Theory of Literature," in *Metaphor and Metonymy at the Crossroads: A Cognitive Perspective* (ed. Antonio Barcelona; Topics in English Linguistics 30; Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 2000), 253.

18 Fauconnier and Turner, *The Way We Think*, 333. As Seana Coulson has put it, "context-free expression meaning is an illusion based on the use of defaults. Instead, understanding language utterances involves integrating linguistic, contextual, and background knowledge to yield cognitive models with which to incorporate the content of expressions and their implications for the interpretation of the larger speech activity" ("Semantic Leaps: The Role of Frame-Shifting and Conceptual Blending in Meaning Construction" [Ph.D. diss., University of California at San Diego, 1997], 294). More recently, this concern with the importance of context has resulted in Coulson and Oakley's incorporating a separate "grounding box" in their conceptual integration diagrams (see Seana Coulson and Todd Oakley, "Blending and Coded Meaning:

simpler terms, readers or hearers understand utterances on the basis of the contexts in which they are heard or read. Trying to understand how the intended readers or hearers might have interpreted a text like the *Gospel of Philip*, for which we lack any firm historical context, is hindered by the impossibility of being specific concerning the context of communication, apart from what we can glean from the contents of the text itself. On the basis of an overall understanding of the text, a minimal context for the *Gospel of Philip* can be said to be constituted by the fact that it is fundamentally concerned with the interpretation of Scripture and the mystagogical interpretation of Christian ritual, most prominently baptism, chrismation,[19] and Eucharist.[20] Taking this into consideration, we see that the *Gospel of Philip* makes clear the mystagogical entailments of the integration network that has been outlined here in two ways. Not only does it connect the chrism used in the initiatory chrismation to Christ and the crucifixion by deriving it from the Tree of Life, but it also connects the Eucharist to Christ as the fruit of the Tree of Life that brings eternal life when it is eaten. There are thus simultaneous counterpart mappings from the Tree of Life and the cross to both the chrismation and the Eucharist. With regard to the latter, the blend simultaneously indicates the life-bringing properties of the Eucharist and the soteriological importance of the crucifixion. Moreover, by connecting the chrism to the crucified Christ and the resurrection by way of the Tree of Life, the life-giving qualities of the chrism are also directly connected to the crucifixion.[21] The multiple entailments of this integration network are evident from figure 3.[22]

Literal and Figurative Meaning in Cognitive Semantics," *Journal of Pragmatics* 37, no. 10 [2005]: 1510–36).

19 By "chrismation" I refer to an anointing with chrism.

20 The importance of the sacraments in the *Gospel of Philip* has been acknowledged by most modern interpreters, and there has been no lack of attempts to make sense of the text's sacramental system. For summaries of the debate and in-depth discussions of the way the *Gospel of Philip* understands the sacraments, see Lundhaug, *Images of Rebirth*; Herbert Schmid, *Die Eucharistie ist Jesus: Anfänge einer Theorie des Sakraments im koptischen Philippusevangelium (NHC II 3)* (Supplements to Vigiliae Christianae 88; Leiden: Brill, 2007).

21 Cf. Jorunn Jacobsen Buckley, "Conceptual Models and Polemical Issues in the Gospel of Philip," *ANRW* 2.25.5 (1988): 4179.

22 The richness of this conceptual integration network is such that it is impossible to list all the features of the input spaces that are not projected to the blended space, so I have only indicated the most relevant features that are indeed projected. Among the various features of the inputs that are not projected we could mention, e.g., the means and methods of gardening in input 1, the role of Eve and the Serpent in input 2, and the use of nails and a spear in input 3. Also in the following figures I will only show those features that are relevant to the interpretation.

Generic Space

Wood
Object hanging on wood
Agent of profound change

Input 2: Olive Tree

Olive tree
Olives hang on it
Chrism derived from olive oil
Chrism causes resurrection

FRAME: Agriculture
+ Ritual Practice

Input 1: Tree of Life

Tree of Life
Fruit hangs on it

Fruit causes eternal life

FRAME: Paradise

Input 3: Cross

Cross
Christ hangs on it

Cross causes death of
Christ

FRAME: Crucifixion

Ritual practice FRAME
+ Soteriology FRAME

Blended Space

Cross=Tree of Life=Olive Tree
Christ is Fruit of Tree of Life
Chrism from Fruit/Christ
Chrism Causes Resurrection
Crucifixion connected with Resurrection
Christ's death brings eternal life
The Eucharist causes eternal life
Chrismation causes resurrection

Figure 3: The Crucifixion and Ritual Practice

It may be added that this interpretation is also supported by other passages in the *Gospel of Philip*, as both the connection between the chrism, the cross, and the resurrection, and the connection between the Eucharist and the crucified Jesus, are also referred to elsewhere in the text.[23]

---

23 At 74.18-21, the *Gospel of Philip* states that "he who has been anointed has everything. He has the resurrection, the light, the cross, the Holy Spirit," and at *Gos. Phil.* 67.23-24 the tractate speaks about "the power of the cross" (ⲧⲁⲩⲛⲁⲙⲓⲥ ⲙ̄ⲡⲥⲧⲣ[ⲟ]ⲥ, *tdunamis ᵉmpstaur[o]s*) in direct connection with the chrismation. For the connection between the Eucharist and the crucified Jesus, see, e.g., *Gos. Phil.* 63.21-24.

Two Trees of Knowledge

So far we have seen how the cross is presented as a new Tree of Life, but other connections are also made between the paradise account in Genesis and the crucifixion that have important implications for our understanding of the sacramental soteriology of the *Gospel of Philip*. First, the Tree of Life is not the only tree that is blended conceptually with the cross, for the tractate emphasizes the existence of not only one, but two important trees in paradise.[24] The other one is the Tree of Knowledge, which, according to the *Gospel of Philip*,

> killed Adam, but here the Tree of Knowledge has made man alive. The law was the tree.[25] It could give knowledge of good and evil. It neither removed him from evil, nor did it place him in the good, but it created death for those who ate from it. For when he said, "eat this, do not eat that,"[26] it became the beginning of death. (*Gos. Phil.* 74.3-12)

As we can see, the tractate traces the origin of death to the Genesis account of Adam and Eve's eating from the Tree of Knowledge. The statement that the Tree of Knowledge killed Adam makes good sense in light of the Genesis account, where it was the act of eating from the Tree of Knowledge that led to his expulsion from paradise and his acquisition of mortality. Before the *Gospel of Philip* goes on to explain that "the law" (ⲡⲛⲟⲙⲟⲥ, *pnomos*) was the tree, and that this law brought death, however, it makes sure to point out the life-giving effects of the Tree of Knowledge "here." This may at first sight seem like a contradiction, but in fact it indicates that we are here in a sense dealing with two trees of knowledge.[27] The first, which is later identified with the law, is the Tree of Knowledge from the Genesis account. For the identification of the other tree, however, we need to take into account how the *Gospel of Philip* here recruits input spaces based on several Pauline passages, like Gal 3:13 and Phil 3:8-9.

We thereby encounter a phenomenon that is usually studied within the theoretical framework of intertextuality. However, several theoretical statements on the mechanics of allusion in literary theoretical studies of intertextuality lend themselves easily to be rephrased and restated within the framework of

---

24 *Gos. Phil.* 70.22-23.
25 Cf. Gal 3:13; Phil 3:8-9.
26 Cf. Gen 2:16-17.
27 Cf. Schenke, *Philippus-Evangelium*, 444–45.

blending theory.[28] A few examples will suffice. In the mid-1970s, Ziva Ben-Porat conceived of the intertextual patterns created by means of literary allusions in terms of "the simultaneous activation of two texts," resulting in "the formation of intertextual patterns whose nature cannot be predetermined."[29] Ben-Porat conceived of the interplay between texts that is established through the use of allusions in terms of the dialogical relationship between two independent spaces. As it turns out, Blending Theory is ideally suited to model what Ben-Porat described in terms of intertextual patterning and the unpredictable production of meaning that arises from it. In addition, it also fits well with the fact that, although Ben-Porat uses different terms, in her theory as well, what we may term the blended space may recruit structure from the intertextual input spaces that lie outside of the actual allusive device or signal used to activate them. Similarly in line with Blending Theory is Gian Biagio Conte's description of "the poetic dimension" of an allusion as being "created by the simultaneous presence of two different realities whose competition with one another produces a single more complex reality,"[30] as well as his assertion that, in both metaphor and allusion, "the poetry lies in the simultaneous presence of two different realities that try to indicate a single reality."[31] As a final example, the same can be said of literary theorist Joseph Pucci's claim that an allusion is created exclusively "at the point of mental connection."[32] Pucci even refers to an "allusive space," which he describes as a "mental place where the allusion is made to mean," a concept that is once again similar to Blending Theory's notion of the blended space.[33]

---

28 The use of blending theory to model intertextuality has also recently been suggested by Eve Sweetser, "Whose Rhyme Is Whose Reason? Sound and Sense in *Cyrano de Bergerac*," *Language and Literature* 15, no. 1 (2006): 29–54.

29 Ziva Ben-Porat, "The Poetics of Literary Allusion," *PTL: A Journal for Descriptive Poetics and Theory of Literature* 1 (1976): 108.

30 Gian Biagio Conte, *The Rhetoric of Imitation: Genre and Poetic Memory in Virgil and Other Latin Poets* (Cornell Studies in Classical Philology 44; Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1986), 24.

31 Conte, Rhetoric of Imitation, 38.

32 Joseph Pucci, The Full-Knowing Reader: Allusion and the Power of the Reader in the Western Literary Tradition (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1998), 36.

33 Pucci, *Full-Knowing Reader*, 43. As Pucci describes it, the "allusive space" "exists apart from the referential and significative control of the language that gives rise to it. So, too, are the meanings that arise in it unique, because they result from an interpretive free-play on the part of the reader, as the dissonances of two discrete works are mediated in the give and take of a mental, interpretive dialogue. As it turns out, that dialogue may extend to places and topics that have nothing at all to do with the two works that constitute the allusion, whose language nonetheless occasions their articulation, if only momentarily. This dialogue ensures that the

Although Blending Theory usually operates with mental spaces that arise on the basis of domains or idealized cognitive models, and may therefore aptly be termed *conceptual* blending, I suggest we may similarly regard memories of texts that are brought to the mind of a reader as mental spaces and model the mental connections made between them in the act of interpretation in terms of the methodological framework of Blending Theory. In both cases we are modeling mental interpretive processes involving the recruitment and combination of mental spaces that become active in working memory, cued by visual or auditory sensory input, and in both cases we may have integration networks that are single-, double-, or multiple-scope. What we may refer to as *intertextual* blending can thus be modeled in terms of the recollection (and construction) of memories of large and small pieces of texts and discourses, that when called upon constitute mental input spaces that are recruited to integration networks in working memory and blended in the process of interpretation. One of the benefits of using blending theory to model intertextuality is that it helps demystify the mechanics of intertextual interpretation, making it easier for us to understand the mental processes at work, and thereby facilitate more sophisticated analysis of the phenomenon in general as well as in its specific manifestations.

To see how this works we may now return to look at the way certain Pauline verses may be brought to the mind of a reader and blended in an interpretation of the *Gospel of Philip* passage quoted above (see figure 4 on page 85).

The Gal 3:13 input (input 2), where Paul states that Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law by hanging on a tree, is cued by the *Gospel of Philip*'s references to the Tree of Knowledge as the law, and is connected to the *Gospel of Philip* surface-input (input 1) by counterpart mappings between the references to the law and the tree in both inputs. At the same time, the Phil 3:8-9 input (input 3), which speaks of the knowledge of (and faith in) Christ as a counterpart of, and contrary to, the law, is brought to mind and connected to input 1 primarily through the references to knowledge and the law in these two inputs. In the blend the Tree of Knowledge is thus connected both to the law as a bringer of death, and to the cross as a bringer of life. We also see that there is a generic space shared by all three input spaces, as well as two generic spaces shared by inputs 1 and 2, and 1 and 3 respectively. From the blend we see that the old Tree of Knowledge, which is identified as the law, brings death, while the new Tree of Knowledge, which brings life, is identified with the cross.

---

reader assumes complete interpretive power over the allusive moment – and at the expense of the author, whose power evanesces" (ibid.).
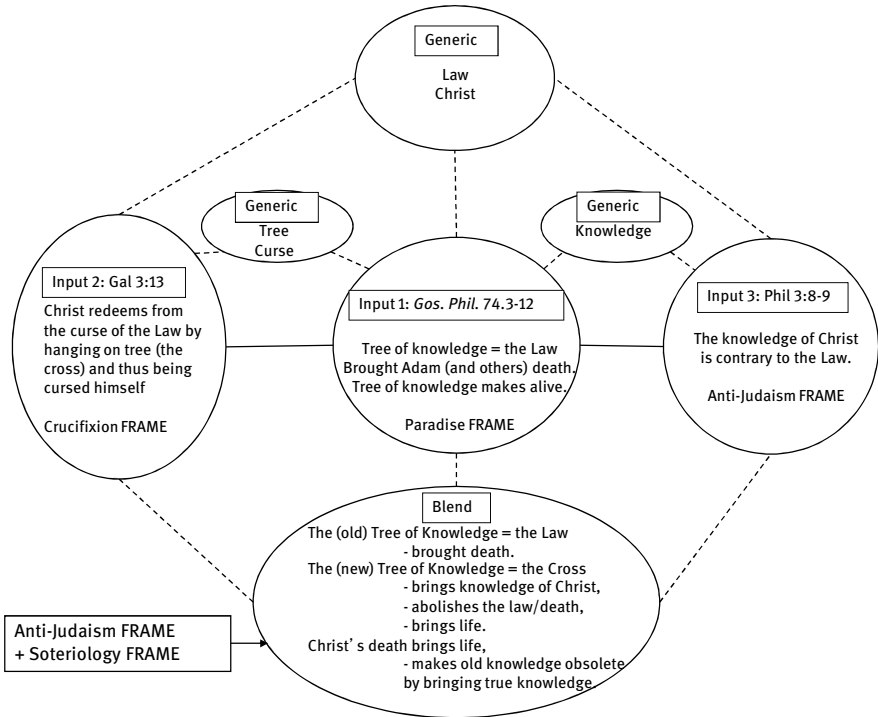
Figure 4: The Tree of Knowledge and the Law

The arising conceptual blending of the Tree of Knowledge with both the law and the cross can also be shown with figure 5 (see page 86).
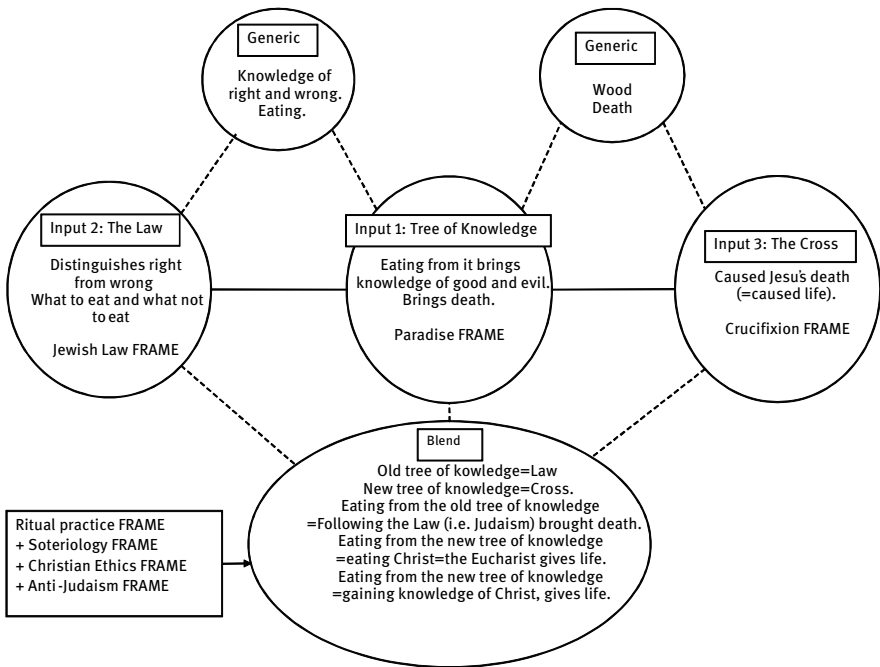
Figure 5: The Tree of Knowledge

What we here observe may also be described as a case of conceptual disintegration,[34] where a single Tree of Knowledge turns out to be two separate, but connected, conceptual entities. In the *Gospel of Philip* passage the two trees are only implicitly separated by means of the spatial references "that tree" and "here" and the references to their different effects, but without directly stating that there are two trees. It becomes evident from the analysis, however, that there are in fact two different but related trees of knowledge, as further illustrated by figures 6 (see page 87) and 7 (see page 88). By not spelling out, but instead

---

34 For conceptual disintegration, see Anders Hougaard, "Conceptual Disintegration and Blending in Interactional Sequences: A Discussion of New Phenomena, Processes vs. Products, and Methodology," *Journal of Pragmatics* 37, no. 10 (2005): 1653–85; Carl Bache, "Constraining Conceptual Integration Theory: Levels of Blending and Disintegration," *Journal of Pragmatics* 37, no. 10 (2005): 1615–35. Conceptual disintegration may be defined as "the process by which one unified and discrete structural element in a mental space gets to receive multiple counterpart relations and is projected to (an)other mental space(s) as two, or more, separate structural elements" (Bache, "Constraining Conceptual Integration Theory," 1626, quoting a conference paper by Anders Hougaard).

understating this implication in the text, the *Gospel of Philip* manages not only to separate the two trees of knowledge, but also to keep them intimately connected, which nicely suits the overall rhetorical strategy, to which we will return, of subverting the differences between life and death.[35]
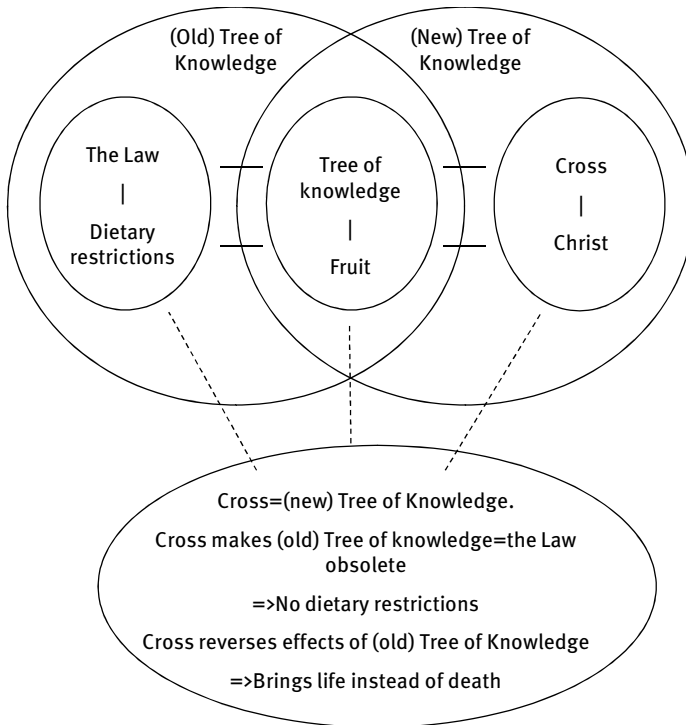

Figure 6: The Two Trees of Knowledge

---

35 To Schenke's question why the text does not simply state something like "*Dort* befindet sich *jener* Baum der Erkenntnis, *der* Adam getötet hat. *Hier* aber befindet sich *dieser* Baum der Erkenntnis, *der* den Menschen lebendig gemacht hat" (*Philippus-Evangelium*, 444), it may be replied that such a statement would not have achieved the same rhetorical effects as the actual manuscript reading.
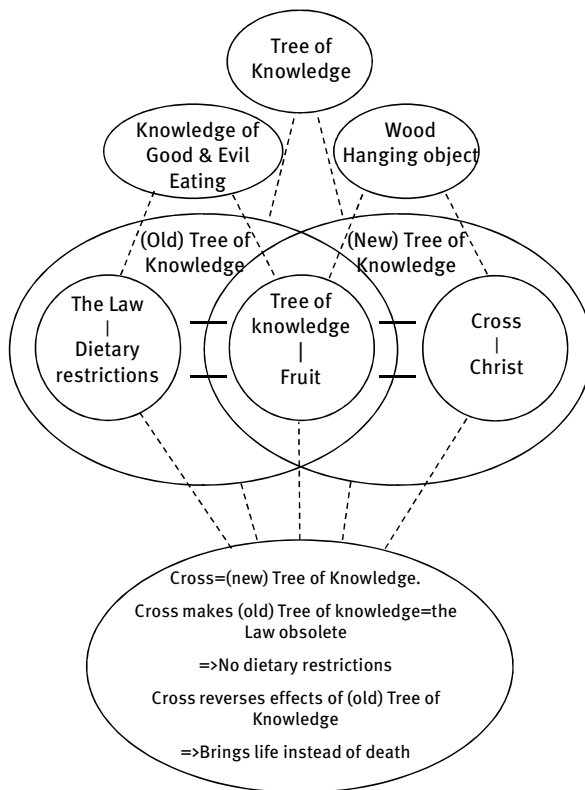
Figure 7: The Two Trees of Knowledge (w/Generic Spaces)

Adam's eating of the fruit from the Tree of Knowledge led to death. On the other hand, eating from the new Tree of Knowledge brings life. Together, the conceptual and intertextual blending prompted by this passage in the *Gospel of Philip* lead to several emerging entailments. Not only is the old Tree of Knowledge the law and the new one the cross, but there are also more wide-ranging implications:

Since the new Tree of Knowledge is the cross, and what hung on it as its "fruit" was Christ, it is Christ's death on the cross, and the eating of Christ that brings life. Moreover, since the eating is here also connected to the knowledge of Christ, we may interpret this as a simultaneous reference to gaining knowledge of Christ, and participating in the Eucharist. Another important entailment, especially in light of the rhetoric of the *Gospel of Philip* as a whole, is the implicit anti-Judaism. The law can here be metonymically understood as a reference to Judaism, and to follow the Jewish law, as exemplified by its dietary

restrictions ("eat this, do not eat that"), is thus directly connected to Adam's eating of the forbidden fruit, and can only lead to death. On the other hand, eating from the new Tree of Knowledge, the cross, which can be understood as a metonymy for Christianity, brings life. In summary, then, we see that the cross as the new Tree of Knowledge replaces the old Tree of Knowledge, brings life in place of death, and makes the Jewish law obsolete. In this way the new tree replaces the old tree, the new knowledge replaces the old knowledge, the new life-giving death replaces the old death, and hence Christianity replaces Judaism.

The integration networks shown here represent only the tip of the interpretive iceberg however, since the recollection of Gal 3:13 in this context will likely also remind readers familiar with this text of the rest of Paul's discussion of the law in Galatians, and the allusion to Phil 3:8-9 may likewise bring to mind the broader discussion in Phil 3 concerning death and resurrection. Such intertextual integration networks will by their very nature always be open ended.

Since the calling up and composition of mental spaces and integration networks are fundamentally tied to processes of memory recall, it may be fruitful to take into account theories and perspectives from memory research, not least the insight that memory recall of any kind is fundamentally interpretive, as argued by Daniel Schacter and others.[36] Since the recall of memories is not analogous to simply taking objects out of a container or playing back recordings, but rather involves the construction of mental representations that are merely "attempts at replication of patterns that were once experienced,"[37] it is not only the process of blending itself that has a constructive and interpretive quality to it, but even the very process of calling up and assembling the basic mental spaces that are the constitutive parts of that process. As Bradd Shore has pointed out, "the analogical schematizing processes by which cultural models are brought to mind are activities of an active, intentional, and opportunistic intelligence, not a passive recording device."[38]

---

36 See, e.g., Daniel L. Schacter, *Searching for Memory: The Brain, the Mind, and the Past* (New York: Basic Books, 1996); Antonio R. Damasio, *Descartes' Error: Emotion, Reason, and the Human Brain* (New York: Putnam, 1994).

37 Damasio, *Descartes' Error*, 100–101; cf. also Schacter, *Searching for Memory*.

38 Bradd Shore, *Culture in Mind: Cognition, Culture, and the Problem of Meaning* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 371–72. One is here also reminded of Gibbs' arguments for the dynamic composition of prototype structures in meaning construction, a perspective that when generalized is highly relevant to the processes of blending discussed here ("Prototypes").

The recall, and online construction, of memories are also crucially dependent on the mechanism of "priming." This is the process by which the activation of one memory partially, and often unconsciously, activates related memories for easier subsequent recall.[39] Importantly, this process is dependent on the way in which the memories have been encoded in the first place,[40] for as the context of encoding fundamentally affects the relation between memories, it thus also affects their recall. I will mention just a couple of examples that are relevant with regard to the *Gospel of Philip*. Mystagogical instruction prior to and following ritual initiation, for instance, will affect which textual passages and doctrines the initiates associate with their memories of experiencing the rituals, and thus which memories are triggered by references to either the rituals themselves or to the texts or dogmas that have been associated with them. Similarly, the practice of learning biblical texts by heart, which we know was the norm in Egyptian monasteries of the fourth and fifth centuries, the probable time and place of the production of the Nag Hammadi codices, would decisively influence the ways in which biblical allusions in a text like the *Gospel of Philip* would trigger intertextual and conceptual integration networks in the minds of its readers and hearers. To put it in more general terms, sociocultural factors will always have a crucial influence on memory recall and construction.

As for the fragments of memory that are primed by the activation of related memories, such items come to be "in a different mental state from either the conscious / rehearsal material or the material stored in long-term memory."[41] They have in a sense been "placed temporarily in a sort of buffer between long-term memory and consciousness."[42] The notion of priming thus helps us understand the mechanics of how mental spaces are called up to the processes of blending that take place in working memory, and also the function of context and memory encoding in this regard. This is especially relevant with regard to allusions. If, for instance, a reader has detected an allusion to a particular bibli-

---

39 See, e.g., Bob Snyder, *Music and Memory: An Introduction* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2000), 262; Patrick Colm Hogan, *The Mind and Its Stories: Narrative Universals and Human Emotion* (Studies in Emotion and Social Interaction; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003); Endel Tulving and Daniel L. Schacter, "Priming and Human Memory Systems," *Science* 247, no. 4940 (1990): 301–6; Barbara Knowlton, "Declarative and Nondeclarative Knowledge: Insights from Cognitive Neuroscience," in *Knowledge, Concepts, and Categories* (ed. Koen Lamberts and David Shanks; Studies in Cognition; Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1997), 222–28.

40 See, e.g., Schacter, *Searching for Memory*.

41 Hogan, *The Mind and Its Stories*, 56–57.

42 Hogan, *The Mind and Its Stories*, 57.

cal text at one point in his or her reading of *the Gospel of Philip*, that person is consequently more likely to detect further allusions to the same biblical text, or other associated texts, in subsequent parts, or subsequent readings, of *the Gospel of Philip*, since memories of these texts are now likely to have been primed.

Thus, references to certain texts are likely to prime these texts, their local contexts, and in many cases related texts, for easier subsequent recall among readers familiar with them. The recall of one Pauline text may for instance be likely to prime other Pauline texts known by the reader or community of readers. The integration network shown here may for instance further prime and trigger other scriptural passages, such as Eph 2:15, and several passages in Romans (e.g., 4:15; 5:13; 7:7-13).[43] In fact, each of the implications we have seen arising from the blending processes discussed here, and every input-, generic-, or blended space, have the potential to activate further mental input spaces, the possible cumulative effects of which are difficult to assess, and which would always depend on the sociocultural context and individual knowledge of the reader. What we may do as modern scholars is therefore not to come up with the definitive interpretation of the text, but simply to map out plausible interpretive possibilities among hypothetical readers.
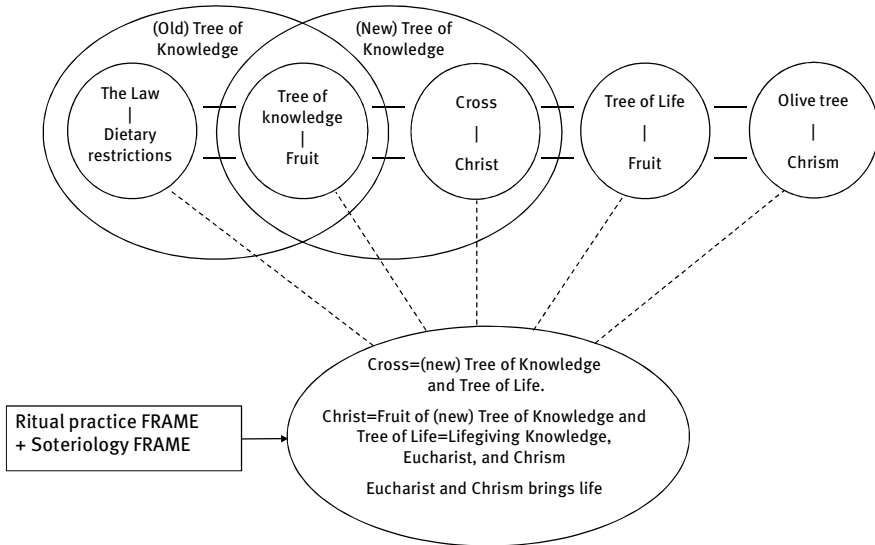

Figure 8: The Cross as the Tree of Knowledge and the Tree of Life

43 Cf. Yvonne Janssens, "L'Évangile selon Philippe," *Mus* 81 (1968): 114; Craig A. Evans, et al., *Nag Hammadi Texts and the Bible: A Synopsis and Index* (NTTS 18; Leiden: Brill, 1993), 163.

What can be concluded, however, and what emerges from the integration networks we have analyzed thus far, is that in the *Gospel of Philip* the cross, with Christ crucified, is blended with both of the trees from the Genesis account, making it become simultaneously a new Tree of Life and a new Tree of Knowledge.

Separation

The *Gospel of Philip* does not content itself with the abovementioned account of the origin of death based on the eating of the forbidden fruit in Gen 3, however, but also utilizes the account of the creation of Eve in Gen 2. To understand the significance of the latter we must remember that Eve is here identified with Adam's soul,[44] and that the description of her creation in Gen 2:21-23 is understood by the *Gospel of Philip* as the removal of that soul, and thus also the loss of Adam's original life. In accordance with this understanding, *the Gospel of Philip* tells us that, "when Eve was [in] Adam,[45] there was no death. When she separated from him, death came into being" (68.22-24).

Adam was immortal in the beginning, but when he lost his soul, death came into being and he became mortal.[46] The *Gospel of Philip* is more concerned with how death may be abolished, however, than with how it came into being, so having thus described the origin of death, the tractate then explains that death will be abolished by Christ.[47]

We have already seen how the *Gospel of Philip* presents Christ's death on the cross as life-giving. Using a similar logic the tractate also conceives of the effects of the original separation as being mended by a new separation. This separation takes place on the cross and is explained by means of etymology,

---

44 See *Gos. Phil.* 70.25.

45 I here follow Layton's restoration ⳉⲉⲛⲁ[ⲇ]ⲁⲙ (*[h]ᵉna[d]am*) "[in] Adam," against Schenke, who reconstructs ⲙⲛⲁ[ⲇ]ⲁⲙ (*[m]ᵉna[d]am*) "[with] Adam" (Schenke, *Philippus-Evangelium*, 46–47).

46 Cf. also *Gos. Phil.* 70.9-12, 25-26.

47 *Gos. Phil.* 68.24-26: "Again, when he enters and receives it for himself, no death will take place." The passage is ambiguous, but the subject of this sentence seems to be best understood as Christ, as the second Adam, and since the text refers to the origin of death just a few lines before this, the "it" that Christ receives is probably "death" (ⲡⲙⲟⲩ, *pmou*). We may thus interpret it to mean that Christ, as the second Adam, dies in order to abolish death (this is also the view of Louis Painchaud, "Le Christ vainqueur de la mort dans l'*Evangile selon Philippe*: Une exégèse valentinienne de Matt. 27:46," *NovT* 38, no. 4 [1996]: 386).

wordplay, and allusion: "The Eucharist is Jesus, for in Syriac he is called Pharisatha, that is, "the one who is spread out," for Jesus came crucifying the world" (63.21-24).
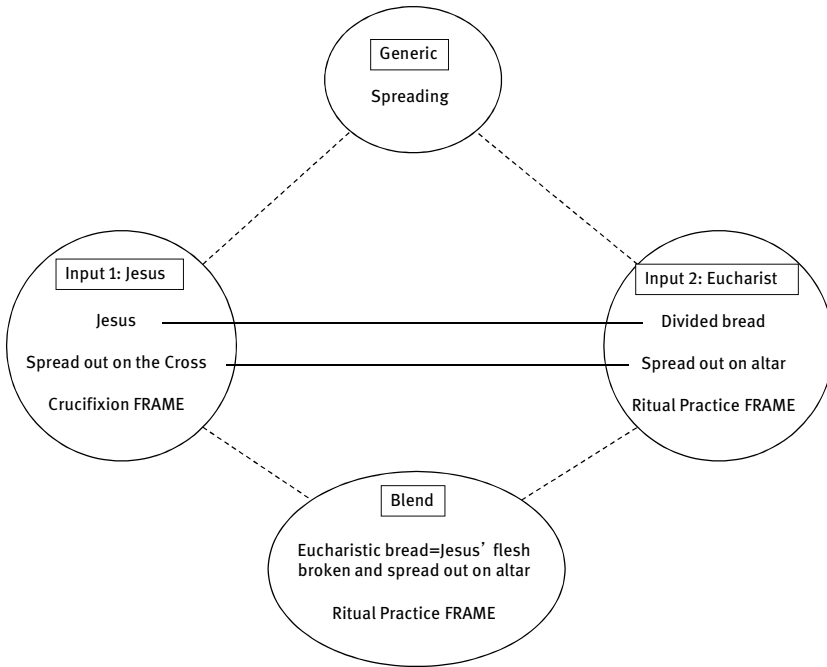

Figure 9: The Eucharist is Jesus (*Gos. Phil.* 63.21-23)

Using this Syriac etymology, the text sets up a blend between the eucharistic bread and the flesh of Jesus (see figure 9). The statement that Jesus crucified the world may perhaps seem strange at first sight, but it clearly recalls Gal 6:14 where Paul states that Christ has crucified the world to him and him to the world.[48] More importantly for my current analysis, however, is the way in which the crucified Christ is identified with the Eucharist. Not only does the word *pharisatha* denote simultaneously the spreading out of the body of Jesus on the cross and the distribution of the bread in the eucharistic ritual,[49] but this Syriac

---

48 See W. C. van Unnik, "Three Notes on the 'Gospel of Philip'," *NTS* 10 (1964): 469. Cf. also Col 2:14.

49 See van Unnik, "Three Notes," 468–69; Eric Segelberg, "The Antiochene Background of the Gospel of Philip," *BSac* 18 (1966): 218–19; Jacques-É. Ménard, "Beziehungen des Philippus- und des Thomas-Evangeliums zur syrischen Welt," in *Altes Testament – Frühjudentum – Gnosis:*

word may actually mean both "spread" and "break,"[50] a wordplay that is even preserved by the use of the Coptic word ⲡⲱⲣϣ (*pōrš*) to translate it, a word that was often confused with the phonetically similar word ⲡⲱⲣϫ (*pōrj*) meaning "to divide or separate."[51]

The significance of this breaking or separation is also carried over into another description of the crucifixion, where the *Gospel of Philip* interprets Jesus' words on the cross, closely paraphrasing Matt 27:46=Mark 15:34: "'[My] God, my God, why, Lord, [have] you forsaken me?'[52] It was on the cross that he said these (words), for it was in that place that he was divided" (68.26-29).[53]

Not only is Jesus "spread out" on the cross and in the eucharistic ritual, but he is also divided in both places, on the cross and in the ritual.[54] In this way, the

------

Neue Studien zu "Gnosis und Bibel" (ed. Karl-Wolfgang Tröger; Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus/Gerd Mohn, 1980), 318. Both Segelberg and van Unnik connect the *Gospel of Philip*'s use of the word *pharisatha* with "orthodox" Christian practice and interpretation and the latter also points out that the word is used in the Syriac translation of Acts 2:46: "and they brake the *pharisatha* in the houses" (Unnik, "Three Notes," 469). In contrast to these interpretations, Thomassen connects the term to "the abstract notion of an emanation from unity to plurality," and holds that the *Gospel of Philip* here presents us with "a characteristic Valentinian synthesizing of protology, salvation in history, and redemption in ritual" ("How Valentinian," 275).

50 See Segelberg, "Antiochene Background," 218–19.

51 See Crum, *Coptic Dictionary*, 271b. This is not noted by Segelberg.

52 The *Gospel of Philip* here closely follows Matt 27:46 (=Mark 15:34) in its rendering of Jesus' words on the cross, with one exception, the insertion of the word "Lord" (ⲡϫⲟⲉⲓⲥ, *pjoeis*) (cf Painchaud, "Le Christ," 383; Christopher M. Tuckett, "Synoptic Traditions in Some Nag Hammadi and Related Texts," *VC* 36, no. 2 [1982]: 175). In order to make the passage conform to its biblical source, Schenke argues that ⲡϫⲟⲉⲓⲥ (*pjoeis*, "Lord") has been written too early, and emends the passage to read: "'[M]ein Gott, mein Gott, warum { } [hast] du mich verlassen?' <Der Herr> sprach diese (Worte) am Kreuz" (*Philippus-Evangelium*, 46–47). Since the passage already makes good sense as it is, however, it is not necessary to emend it (cf. Painchaud, "Le Christ," 382–92, esp. 391, who also argues strongly in favor of following the manuscript reading).

53 I follow Schenke's reconstruction [ⲛ̄ⲧ]ⲁϥⲡⲱⲣϫ (*[ⁿnt]afpōrj*, "that he was divided") (*Philippus-Evangelium*, 46).

54 The view that Christ's divinity was separated from his humanity on the cross is widely attested in patristic sources. The fifth-century archimandrite Shenoute of Atripe attributes such a view to Nestorius who, according to Shenoute, claimed that "it was the flesh which called up toward the divinity, 'why have you forsaken me?'" According to Nestorius, he says, "The divinity departed to the height and abandoned the flesh on the cross" (Shenoute, *I Am Amazed*, 469; the section number (469) follows the numeration of Tito Orlandi, *Shenute Contra Origenistas: Testo con Introduzione e Traduzione* [Unione Accademica Nazionale: Corpus dei Manoscritti Copti Letterari; Roma: C.I.M., 1985], but the present translation is based on a reading of manuscript DR 131=IT-NB IB14 f. 21r, which was not yet identified as a witness to *I Am Amazed* when Orlandi prepared his edition of the text). Cf. also Ambrose of Milan, who stated that "it was the

Gospel of Philip reinforces the links between crucifixion, Eucharist, and Christology.

The specific reference in the *Gospel of Philip* to Christ's separation should also be read intertextually with the New Testament.[55] This is because, when Christ was divided on the cross, according to the *Gospel of Philip*, the veil of the temple was divided as well. This rending of the veil at the time of Jesus' death, which is known from the synoptic Gospels,[56] lends weight to the statement in the *Gospel of Philip* that Christ was also separated on the cross, especially when read together with Heb 10:20, which explicitly identifies the veil and Jesus,[57] This latter intertext is also likely to be brought to the mind of readers familiar with it, and may be regarded as the glue that connects the division of Christ and the rending of the veil, and also strengthens the eucharistic implications of the two events, as interpreted by the *Gospel of Philip* (see figure 10 on page 96).

We may also surmise that readers familiar with Hebrews who recognize this link would also likely be reminded of other aspects of this intertext and its local context, like the statement in 10:19 that one may enter into the holy of the holies by means of the blood of Jesus, together with the information that the way of entry is through his flesh (10:20).

Category Inversion and Subversion

The logic behind all this is more easily understood when we also take into account what the *Gospel of Philip* has to say concerning the deceptive nature of worldly names and concepts.[58] One conceptual pair that is especially important

---

man who cried out as he was about to die by separation from the divinity" (*Exposition of the Gospel of Luke* 10.127; ET, Jaroslav Pelikan, *The Emergence of the Catholic Tradition [100–600]* [vol. 1 of *The Christian Tradition: A History of the Development of Doctrine*; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1971], 245), and Theodore of Mopsuestia who is reported to have held similar views (see Pelikan, *Emergence of the Catholic Tradition*, 246).

55 See Painchaud, "Le Christ," 392.

56 Matt 27:51; Mark 15:38; Luke 23:45.

57 ". . . through the veil, that is, his flesh." Cf. Wesley W. Isenberg, "The Coptic Gospel According to Philip" (Ph.D. diss., University of Chicago, 1968), 185.

58 According to the *Gospel of Philip* "the names that are given to the worldly are very deceptive (ογⲛ̄ⲧⲉγ ⲙ̄ⲙⲁγ ⲛ̄ογⲛⲟϭ ⲙ̄ⲡⲗⲁⲛⲏ, *ou^enteu ^emmau ^enounoč ^emplanē*)," for they lead the mind to "the incorrect" (ⲛⲉⲧⲥⲙⲟⲛⲧ ⲁⲛ, *netsmont an*) rather than "the correct" (ⲛⲉⲧⲥⲙⲟⲛⲧ, *netsmont*) (53.23-27). Therefore, continues *the Gospel of Philip*, people do not "perceive" (ⲣ̄ⲛⲟⲉⲓ, *^ernoei*) "the correct" (ⲡⲉⲧⲥⲙⲟⲛⲧ, *petsmont*), but rather "the incorrect" (ⲡⲉⲧⲥⲙⲟⲛⲧ ⲁⲛ, *petsmont an*), when they hear terms such as "life" (ⲡⲱⲛϩ, *pōnh*), "light" (ⲡⲟγⲟⲉⲓⲛ, *pouoein*), or "resurrection"
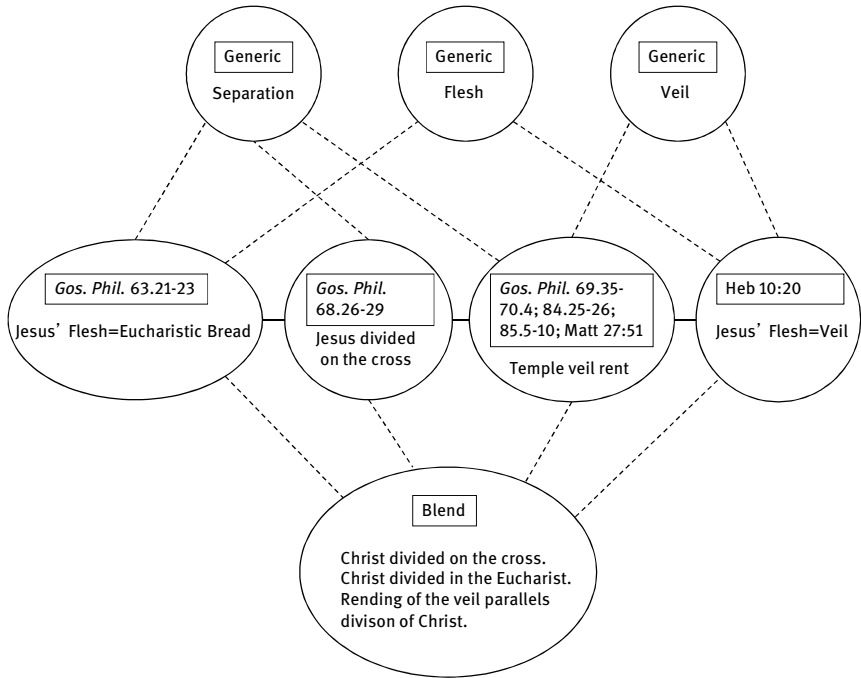
Figure 10: The Rending of the Veil and the Separation of Christ

with regard to the crucifixion is that of life and death. The rhetorical strategy of confounding readers' expectations and turning common concepts on their heads permeates the *Gospel of Philip*, and this conceptual pair is no exception: "Light and darkness, life and death, right and left, they are brothers of one another. It is impossible for them to be separated from each other. Therefore, neither are the good good, nor are the bad bad, nor is life life, nor is death death" (*Gos. Phil.* 53.14-20). Life and death are thus both connected and deceptive concepts, and according to this text it is soteriologically important to learn the true nature of the various references to them. And as we have seen in the present analysis, the crucial event where the *Gospel of Philip* connects death with life

---

(ⲧⲁⲛⲁⲥⲧⲁⲥⲓⲥ, *tanastasis*) (*Gos. Phil.* 53.27-34). That is, "[unless] they have learnt the correct" ([ⲡⲗ]ⲏⲛ ⲁⲩⲥⲉⲃⲟ ⲁⲛⲉⲧⲥⲙⲟⲛⲧ, *[pl]ēn ausebo anetsmont*) (53.34-35). The *Gospel of Philip* is very much concerned with getting across the correct understanding of certain key terms and concepts, the *real* meaning of the worldly representations of heavenly realities, and the *real* meaning of central events in the life of Christ, and in the sacramental life of the Christian.

and subverts the differences between them is the crucifixion, where Christ's death is directly life-giving.[59]

Conclusion

It should be clear by now that the crucifixion is of great soteriological and mystagogical importance in the *Gospel of Philip*. Not only does Christ rectify the original death-bringing sin of eating from the Tree of Knowledge by his own death on the cross which makes him the life-giving fruit of a new Tree of Knowledge, which is also identified as the Tree of Life, but by himself becoming divided on the cross he also rectifies what the *Gospel of Philip* sees as the other primordial death-creating event, namely, the separation of Eve from Adam. In addition, both the eucharistic elements and the chrism are presented as being directly derived from, and connected to, the crucified Christ.[60]

Ellen Spolsky has recently argued for the use of cognitive literary theory as a tool for the description of "the systems that allow specific examples of human representational complexity and creativity to emerge; that allow not only new, but heart-stoppingly powerful collocations of sense perceptions and abstract understanding to be – now and then – articulated and understood."[61] I hope by the present analysis not only to have shown how the *Gospel of Philip* interprets the crucifixion, and that it indeed presents us with a coherent theology of the cross, but also how cognitive linguistics provides us with tools that enable us to better understand and describe how a cryptic, allusive, and non-linear text like this makes sense.

---

59 As Buckley puts it, the *Gospel of Philip* "clearly associates the cross, the tree of life, and Jesus' life-giving death" (Buckley, "Conceptual Models," 4179). For the reversal of the concepts of life and death, see also *Gos. Phil.* 52.15-19; 56.15-20; 73.1-5.

60 For more on the context of the *Gospel of Philip*'s treatment of the crucifixion, and a full, in-depth analysis of the text as a whole using a methodological framework based on Blending Theory, see Lundhaug, *Images of Rebirth*.

61 Ellen Spolsky, "Preface," in *The Work of Fiction: Cognition, Culture, and Complexity* (ed. Alan Richardson and Ellen Spolsky; Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004), ix-x.