GNOSTICISM:

AN INVESTIGATION INTO

THE POSSIBLE ORIGINS OF

SOME OF ITS SALIENT FEATURES.

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**GNOSTICISM:**

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This essay attempts to uncover various areas in the study of Gnosticism worthy of further research, such as the emphasis on various divine or angelic intermediaries in the creative and redemptive processes and the widespread tendency towards the allegorisation or re-interpretation of ancient myths, although many of them are here investigated.

It is divided into six chapters, the first of which aspires to trace the possible impact of both the Graeco-Roman mystery religions and the oriental cults upon the Gnostic movement. The second chapter attempts to investigate Judaism, (which was in the Classical world viewed as a mystery religion), and its relevance to Gnostic thought, while the third chapter seeks to describe the place of the Holy Spirit within Jewish mysticism, whether as the creative "Ruach", or the "Shekinah", (or "Divine Indwelling"), usually described in female terms.

The fourth chapter endeavours to re-examine the myth of Simon Magus and his female companion, Helen, and details the possible backgrounds of Simonian thought which for the early haeresiologists, such as Irenaeus and Hippolytus, was the source of all the Gnostic heresies. The fifth chapter dwells on the astrological and calendrical aspects of Gnosticism and examines the Jewish symbolism of the "Quabbalah", which as Scholem has demonstrated betrays much Gnostic influence, while the sixth chapter attempts to explore in greater detail the classic four-fold Gnostic myth as expounded in the systems of Basilides and Valentinus, among others.
IN

MEMORIAM

PAM RAWLINSON

AND

PEG OLIVER
DEDICATION

FOR MY MOTHER AND FATHER,
TO WHOM I AM, IN SO MANY WAYS,
DEEPLY INDEBTED;

TO MY GRANDMOTHER AND HER SISTER,
FOR THEIR HELP AND ENCOURAGEMENT;

AND, TO MY BROTHER,
FOR HIS BEING THUS;

I OFFER THESE PAGES

* * *
"The Spirit and the Bride say, "Come". Let everyone who listens answer, "Come".

Then let all who are thirsty come: all who want it may have the water of life, and have it free."

(Rev. XXII 17)
NOTE

It should be noted that throughout the text no accentual or diacritical marks have been used: for example, raison d'etre is typed without the circumflex, and Demophoon, without the diaresis.
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ABBREVIATIONS

N.B.: All "Biblical" quotations are from the "JERUSALEM BIBLE", (with abridged introductions and notes), published by Darton, Longman, & Todd, Ltd.; London, [1968].

Gen. The Book of Genesis
Exo. The Book of Exodus
Lev. The Book of Leviticus
Num. The Book of Numbers
Deu. The Book of Deuteronomy
Jos. The Book of Joshua
Jud. The Book of Judges
I Sam. The First Book of Samuel
II Sam. The Second Book of Samuel
I Kin. The First Book of Kings
II Kin. The Second Book of Kings
I Ezr. The First Book of Ezra
II Ezr. The Second Book of Ezra
III Ezr. The Third Book of Ezra
IV Ezr. The Fourth Book of Ezra
Job. The Book of Job
Psa. The Book of Psalms
Psa. Sol. The Psalms of Solomon
Pro. The Book of Proverbs
Ecc./Sir. Ecclesiasticus: The Wisdom Of Jesus ben Sirach
SoS. The Song of Songs
Wis. The Book of the Wisdom of Solomon

Isa. The Book of Isaiah
Jer. The Book of Jeremiah
I Bar. The First Book of Baruch
II Bar. The Second Book of Baruch
III Bar. The Third Book of Baruch
IV Bar. The Fourth Book of Baruch
Eze. The Book of Ezekiel
Dan. The Book of Daniel

Hos. The Book of Hosea
Joe. The Book of Joel
Amo. The Book of Amos
Jon. The Book of Jonah
Mic. The Book of Micah
Zep. The Book of Zephaniah
Hag. The Book of Haggai
Zec. The Book of Zechariah
Mal. The Book of Malachi

continued:-
continued:-

Mat. The Gospel According to Matthew
Joh. The Gospel According to John

Rom. The Epistle to the Romans
I Cor. The First Epistle to the Corinthians
II Cor. The Second Epistle to the Corinthians
Gal. The Epistle to the Galatians
Eph. The Epistle to the Ephesians
Phi. The Epistle to the Philippians
Col. The Epistle to the Colossians
I The. The First Epistle to the Thessalonians
II The. The Second Epistle to the Thessalonians
I Tim. The First Epistle to Timothy
II Tim. The Second Epistle to Timothy
Tit. The Epistle to Titus

Heb. The Epistle to the Hebrews
Jam. The Epistle of James
I Pet. The First Epistle of Peter
II Pet. The Second Epistle of Peter
I Joh. The First Epistle of John
II Joh. The Second Epistle of John
III Joh. The Third Epistle of John
Jude. The Epistle of Jude
Rev. The Book of the Revelation of John

I Eno. The First Book of Enoch
II Eno. The Second Book of Enoch
III Eno. The Third Book of Enoch/Sepher Hekaloth
Jub. The Book of Jubilees
Rec. The History of the Rechabites
Sib. The Sibylline Oracles
T. Sol. The Testament of Solomon
Liv. Pro. The "Lives of the Prophets"

Bar. The Epistle of Barnabas
G. Bar. The Gospel of Bartholomew
Apo. The "Epistula Apostolorum"
I Cle. The First Epistle of Clement
II Cle. The Second Epistle of Clement
A. Pau. The Apocalypse of Paul
G. Phi. The Gospel of Philip
G. Tho. The Gospel of Thomas
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INTRODUCTION
This thesis is divided into six chapters, the first of which aspires to trace the possible impact of both the Graeco-Roman mystery religions, namely, Eleusinianism; Dionysianism; and Orphism; all of which deal with a descent into the Underworld in search of a lost female, (Kore, daughter of Demeter, in the first; Semele, mother of the god, Dionysus who was often portrayed in the form of an apparelled post or pillar, in the second; and Euridice, or Agriope, wife of Orpheus, in the third); and the oriental cults, namely, those of Isis, Queen of Heaven, (who was symbolised astrologically by the constellation of Virgo), and Osiris, Lord of the Dead, (represented by the Tet tree); the Magna Mater, Cybele, (also typified by the aforementioned asterism), and her lover, whether Attis, or Adonis, (both of whom were depicted in the form of a fir tree and both of whom, as with Dionysus, Orpheus, Heracles, and Osiris, suffered violent deaths); and Mithras and the Sun; (in which a "Taurobolium" played a great part, as it did in the mysteries of Dionysus, and in which astroosophy was as important as in those of Isis and Osiris), upon the Gnostic movement. {1}

{1} The gods Osiris and Attis, or Adonis, (both of whom also descended to the Underworld), and Mithras, (including Heracles with whom he was identified by the Greeks), were all associated with the constellation Orion, which for three months of the year disappears from view.
The second chapter attempts to investigate Judaism, (whether Samaritan, Sadducaean, Pharisaean, Essene, or that of Qumran), to follow the development in the transcendentalisation of its god to become the supreme being, (known to the Graeco-Romans as "Hypistos", the Highest, and equated by them with Chronos, god of Time, or Saturn, ruler of the seventh day), who communicated to his people through the agency of the "Captain of the Armies of the Lord", which, (though often identified with him), came to be viewed as his "Angel", or Messenger, and hypostasised as either his Word, "Memra", (which, to those like the Greek-speaking Philo, was equivalent with the philosophic term, "Logos"), or Holy Spirit, (often portrayed in female form as his Glory, or "Chabod", or his "Chokmah", or Wisdom; the Hebrew word being synonymous with the Greek, "Sophia"), and to consider the mysticism of the "Maaseh Merkabah", or Chariot, as detailed by "Ezekiel" and "Daniel", (which for non-Jews was represented astrologically by the constellation Auriga), its amplification within the "Hekaloth" texts, (which mention Enoch, detail his ascent through the Seven Heavenly Halls, and his transformation into the Archangel, "Metatron", due, perhaps, to the influence of "Shiur Komah" symbolism), theories of the "Messiah", (and the figures of Jacob, Joshua, or Melchizedek, as well as those of the anti-Messiah, the Satan, and Melchiresha), the "Maaseh Berashith", or cosmological speculation, and its relevance to Gnostic thought.
The third chapter seeks to describe the place of this Holy Spirit within Jewish mysticism, whether as the creative "Ruach", or Spirit, which <<hovered over>>, the, <<formless void>>, (known as the "Tohu-wa-Bohu", and equated with the Babylonian principle of chaos, Tiamat), her descent, (either at baptism or unction), in the form of a dove, or as the "Shekinah", or Divine Indwelling, (often portrayed as the Chokmah or Wisdom of God), identified with the "Pillar", (with which symbol Simon Magus was linked), that marched before the tribes of Israel in their Exodus from Egypt, mentions the association of a goddess with Yahweh at Elephantine and the warnings of "Isaiah" and "Jeremiah" against the continued apostasy of Israel in whoring after foreign goddesses, especially those of Tyre and Sidon, (from where Simon rescued and redeemed his docetic "Ennoia", or First Thought, Helen, who, in Classical legend, was, with her twin brothers, the Dioscuri, born from an egg, notes the worship of Simon and Helen as a divine pair in the forms of Jupiter, or Zeus, and Minerva, or Athene, virgin daughter of Metis, who sprang fully-formed from the head of Zeus), recalls those prophecies in which the nation of Israel itself, depicted in female form as the righteous virgin, was to give birth to a Messiah who would vanquish the forces of darkness forever, and indicates the importance of such concepts for the Gnostics and their theologies. (1)

(1) (Gen. I 2).
The fourth chapter endeavours to re-examine the myth of Simon, (the Samaritan magician of whom "Acts" records that, "eminent citizens and ordinary people alike had declared, "He is the divine power that is called Great"), as outlined by the haeresiologists, Irenaeus and Hippolytus, and his female companion, details the possible backgrounds of Simonian thought, (which to the aforementioned Church Fathers was the source of all subsequent heresy), including its emphases on the Tree of Life, and on the supreme principle in the form of Fire, concentrates on the plethora of those Gnostic schools in which importance was given to three root principles of Light, Spirit, and Darkness, (equated with the three parts of the human being, Spirit, or Pneuma, Soul, or Psyche, and Matter, or Phuke), from which the cosmos was held to be constructed, views the milieu from which Mandaeanism, or Nasoraeanism, (the only extant organised Gnostic religion), with its dualism of the worlds of Light and Darkness may have originated, and investigates the varieties of allegorical Ophite thought, with its accent on the figure of the snake, (perhaps equated with the constellation of Draco, which encircles the pole star, or with the "Via Lactaea), as a glyph of both the Messiah and the Sophia as redeemed redeemer or the "Demiurgos", (whether in male or female guise), as the created creator. (1)

(1) (Act. VIII 10).
The fifth chapter dwells on the astrological aspects of Gnosticism and its prototypes, (especially the widespread veneration of the northern circumpolar stars in the ancient world), explores Egyptian, Chaldaeo-Babylonian and Zoroastrian concerns in the calendrical field and their possible influences on the sect of Jewish separatists from within whose ranks the "Dead Sea Scrolls" originated, (the remains of whose library, which includes the pseudepigraphical works, "Jubilees", and "I Enoch", have been found at the Wadi Qumran), notes the existence of a well-defined angelology in which the whole cosmos was portrayed as being inhabited by various divine beings, (such as the "Decani", the angelic host said to rule over each ten degree division of the ecliptic), examines the Jewish symbolism of the "Quabbalah", (with its allegorical and numerical exegesis of scripture, such as "Gematria", "Notariqon", and "Temura"), in which the universe was described as being formed from the twenty-two letters of the Hebrew alphabet and the first ten numbers, or "Sephira", (often equated with the limbs of the body of the archetypal man, or "Adam Qadmon"), though pictured in the form of the cosmic "Otz Chiim", or Tree of Life, and seeks to analyse the influence on the Gnostic movement of the four-phased creation myth of both the neo-Platonic "Chaldaean Oracles" and that of Zurvanism; the first Zoroastrian schism.
The sixth chapter attempts to explore in greater detail the classic four-fold Gnostic myth with its premise of the two worlds, noumenal and phenomenal, into the latter of which the soul, (previously a resident of the former), had fallen, (its redemption, transfiguration, and return to its true home beyond the reach of <<the Sovereignties and the Powers who originate the darkness ... the spiritual army of evil in the heavens>>), to detail the exposition of such a fall as given in the four-fold sub-plot in which the creation of the material universe, (and that of the lifeless body of the first human by the rulers of that world, into which the soul was, through the grace of the divine realm, installed), was described both in Basilidaeanism, (which, according to Irenaeus, was influenced by the system of Saturninus who portrayed the God of the Jews as ignorant of the spiritual kingdom and depicted the whole of "Biblical" history as the record of the struggle of the emissary of that world with the ruler of this), with its theory of the origination of the cosmos from the primal seed emitted from the Ineffable Parent, and in Valentinianism, (which claimed the apostolic sanction of "Paul", through Theudas, as Basilidaeanism, that of "Peter", through Glaucias), with its hypothesis of the emanation of existence from the intellectual coupling of noumenal syzygies. {1}

{1} (Eph. VI 12).
CHAPTER ONE
During the two first centuries of our era cults from Egypt, the Near East, and Persia, mainly and respectively, those of Isis and Osiris, of Cybele and Attis, and of Mithras and the sun, became prominent at Rome, and these traditional cults were active in the second century C.E., some surviving still later so that Augustine of Hippo considered them worthy of refutation in his "City of God". {1}

Of the oldest currency in the West were the Eleusinian mysteries, (with the annual disappearance of Kore commemorated at the "Thesmophoria" at Eleusis), which, although often revised, continued unbroken, (except for that in 480 B.C.E. which was interrupted by the invasion of Xerxes), for some two thousand years.

High priests or hierophants of the cult were supposed to be able to prove their descent from either King Keleos or his sons, swineherd and shepherd, Eubuleus and Eumolpus, (although it later became customary for emperors, following the example of Augustus as Pontifex Maximus, to take the office).

It was to this king's youngest son, Demophoon, "the golden boy", that Demeter herself was reputed to have become nanny.

The Greater Mysteries, or Thesmophoria, celebrated in late September at what was then the beginning of the year, (though an especial "Eleusinia" was also held every four or five years, to which all were invited, women and slaves included), became prefaced with the Lesser Mysteries of fasting and baptism, (which were supposedly the invention of Heracles who had been excluded from the Greater due to his blood-guilt), and at a later stage all Greek colonists and eventually Roman citizens were also admitted.

It was at Eleusis that the mysteries of agriculture, gift of Demeter, had first been practised and her cult bore similarities to that of Gaea, an earth-goddess of the early Greeks, who, before the usurpation of her shrine by Apollo, owned the famed oracular site at Delphi. It may be that the name of Gaea had links with that of Kore, since according to Harrison, the "Ker" or "Ger" was also a divinity of the earth. {1}

According to Hesiod, (as quoted by Hippolytus), Gaea, whose cult remained of the greatest importance in Greece, appeared from Chaos in the beginning of time. {3}

{1} PROLEGOMENA TO THE STUDY OF GREEK RELIGION, (passim).
{2} (q.v. Hippolytus' "Refutatio", [vol. I cap. 23], as quoted in THE ANTE-NICENE CHRISTIAN LIBRARY, [vol. VI p. 62]).
However, later mythographers saw in them the first divine couple, male and female respectively, both giving birth to various principles and divinities. Yet, since the name Chaos simply means an opening, it is likely that both were seen as female, and that at one stage they may have been one and the same; howsoever, the Chaos of Hesiod remains so abstract a conception as to be most probably a purely theological creation.

The unfathered son of Gaea was Uranus, the firmament, who later united with his mother to produce the race of Titans so that from the primal incest between the earth and sky the ancestors of humanity, accredited with magical powers, were born.

Children born to Chaos included Erebus, the ether, and day and night. Of these only Erebus was accorded a shadowy personality and seen as father of various baneful afflictions such as Old Age, Death and Murder, with his wife, Night. In this union Night seems to have played the part of the chaotic and ill-defined menstruum with Erebus, the infernal serpent or wind. Their most powerful progeny, however were the three Fates or "Moirae" namely Clotho, Lachesis, and Atropos, to whose rule even Zeus was, on the occasion of Sarpedon, subject.
Demeter, daughter of Chronos, (the youngest son of Uranus), and Rhea, (his sister, who cult bore many similarities with that of Gaea), was worshipped in Arcadia in mare-headed form, ruled over most aspects of agriculture including the harvest, and later became invoked as a protectress of marriage.

To evade the attentions of the god, (whether Zeus or his brother), she transformed herself into a cow, to no avail, since as a result of this union, both Kore and Iacchus were born, though it was with her daughter that the Eleusinian mysteries were originally concerned.

After the abduction of Kore by Hades, Demeter searched for nine days and nights, (during which time she was also said to have been approached by Poseidon and hid herself in the form of a mare, although she was still covered), until finally she came to the court of Keleos at Eleusis, in disguise, where she purified the royal prince, (making him immortal), by burning away his mortality in the fire until his mother surprised her before the process was complete, at which he died.

As compensation, Demeter decided to confer her blessings upon the kine-herd son, the eldest, Triptolemus, (though he was also associated both with Demophoon and Hades himself), who had recognised her and told her that his brothers had witnessed the rape.
With the moon-goddess Hecate she approached the sun who named the culprit, upon which Demeter travelled the world ordering it to remain barren until Kore was returned. However, since Kore had eaten sepulchral pomegranate seeds during her captivity, she was condemned to remain underground for the winter months, and given the title "Persephone".

The three central "dramatis personae" were Demeter; the god of the Underworld variously known as Hades, Pluto, Ops, and Aidoneus, cognate with Adonis, (although his inclusion seems to be a relatively late addition); and Kore, according to Harrison, probably the original Ker, or chthonic deity.

It would appear that the original mystery of the death and renewal of the fertility of the soil was equated with that of childbirth which would have been that of Kore, as child, from Demeter, as mother, (most probably without the intervention of a male).

The annual mysteries commemorated the disappearance and return of Demeter’s daughter, and the climax of this festival, (after a procession headed by an image of Iacchus and the consumption of the draught "Kykeon" and sacred cakes), was a ritual enactment, involving the hierophant and priestess of Demeter, following which the cry went out that Brimo had given birth to Brimos.
However, Mylonas asserts that Brimo, (venerated as a virgin who without the aid of man had produced a son), was a title of Rhea and not of Demeter, and that most modern theories based on those given by the church fathers, being sexual in nature, are untenable. (1)

Harrison identifies this son with Dionysus, holds that, "Iacchos ... was the name by which Dionysos was known at Eleusis, his mystery name par excellence for Athens", and that a link between Iacchus and Eleusinianism was early established. (2)

A further association between the two cults may be drawn from the tradition that Zagreus, a form of the child Dionysus, was fathered by Zeus on Persephone before her descent. (3) As they had protected him at his own birth, Zeus commanded the Kuretes to guard his infant son although the Titans, sworn enemies of his father, waited until his guardians slept and, after a chase in which Zagreus transformed himself into various, mainly animal, forms, cornered him, (when in bovine shape), and tore him apart, although his heart was rescued by Athene.

(1) ELEUSIS AND THE ELEUSINIAN MYSTERIES, (p. 307).
(2) PROLEGOMENA TO THE STUDY OF GREEK RELIGION, (p. 543), [her emphasis].
(3) (ibid. p. 413).
The conception of the dying and resurrected vegetation god, as exemplified in the Thracian cultus of Dionysus, (the name means "the Zeus of Nyssa", which place has still not been identified), spread throughout the Greek islands from Boeotia and was identified with those of the Cretan Zagreus; the Lydian Bassareus, (from whom he took the title); and the Phrygian Sabazius.

First worshipped in the form of a venerable bearded man, he was later portrayed as an effeminate ephebe dressed in the skin of a panther, or fawn, (the "Nebris"), and his mother was reputed to have been Semele, daughter of the King of Thebes, though as Harrison notes she was also worshipped as an earth goddess in Thrace. (1)

Of him, Bachofen notes, "Dionysus is foremost among the great adversaries of matriarchy, particularly in its extreme Amazonian form", and though libidinous and worshipped by hordes of ecstatic devotees, such as the frenzied Maenads, placed great emphasis upon the sober institution of monogamous marriage. (2)

(1) PROLEGOMENA TO THE STUDY OF GREEK RELIGION, (p. 409).
(2) MYTH, RELIGION AND MOTHER RIGHT, (p. 100).
Other candidates for the divine motherhood of the child included Demeter; her daughter, Persephone; the lunar, Io, (worshipped in the form of a divine cow); Lethe, a personification of the infernal river of forgetfulness; and Dione, daughter of the world ocean; though the common story was that at six months the baby was taken from its mother and placed in the thigh of Zeus, (usually by Hermes), to mature for the further three, and so Dionysus was spoken of as "twice-born".

Concerning this fancy Harrison writes, "A babe is rather the attribute of the divine Mother than the divine Father, and in patriarchal times once the cult of the Mother was overshadowed, the infant Zeus needed apology.". \(^1\)

Eventually, Dionysus became incorporated into the official Olympian dodecad. As at Athens Dionysus was annually married to the Queen, so too at Eleusis, Zeus seems to have married Demeter and, in the forms of their priest and priestess, consummated that union.

\(^1\) THEMIS, (p. 20).
According to Frazer, "The grave of Zeus ... was shown to visitors in Crete as late as about the beginning of our era. The body of Dionysus was buried at Delphi beside the golden statue of Apollo, and his tomb bore the inscription, 'Here lies Dionysus dead, the son of Semele.'", however, in another version of the story, "Apollo himself was buried at Delphi; for Pythagorus is said to have carved an inscription on his tomb, setting forth how the god had been killed by the python", oracular goddess of the site, "and buried under the tripod", symbol of her authority and perhaps a representation of the Omphalos or navel of the world. (1)

He writes, "Like other gods of vegetation Dionysus was believed to have died a violent death, but to have been brought to life again; and his sufferings, death, and resurrection were enacted in his sacred rites.". (2)

Again, according to Frazer, in one version of the myth, his father Zeus, in the form of serpent, visited Persephone, Queen of Hell, and begot Zagreus, a horned infant, upon her, and the myth continued that the Titans, age-old enemies of Zeus though sometimes equated with the Kuretes, tried to murder him, but that he transformed himself through various animal shapes until being slaughtered in the form of a bull. (3)

(1) THE GOLDEN BOUGH, (cap. XXIV).
(2) (ibid. cap. XLIII).
(3) (ibid. cap. XLIII).
He notes that, according to Proclus, "Dionysus was the last king of the gods appointed by Zeus. For his father set him on the kingly throne, and placed in his hand the sceptre, and made him king of all the gods of the world". {1}

Concerning the similarity of many deities in various vegetation cults, Frazer writes that, "We need not ... suppose that these Western peoples borrowed from the older civilisation of the Orient the conception of the Dying and Reviving God ... More probably the resemblance which may be traced in this respect between the religions of the East and West is no more than what we commonly, though incorrectly, call a fortuitous coincidence, the effect of similar causes acting alike on the similar constitution of the human mind in different countries and under different skies." {2}

Although it is as god of the vine that Dionysus is best known, he was venerated as a god of trees and plants in general, and often his image was simply an apparelled upright post, known as "Dionysus Stylos", the Pillar, which was probably identified with the "Herm" or sculptured erect penis. {3}

{1} (ibid. p. 389).

{2} (ibid. cap. XLIII).

{3} In Hebrew, the word for pillar as "Amud", (spelt as OMVD and equalling 120, as does the name of Orion as KSIL), also bore phallic connotations. EROTICA JUDAICA, (p. 6).
Particularly associated with him were the pine-tree, the ivy, the fig-tree, and the pomegranate. (1) Worshipped in various animal forms, such as the bull, the goat, and the stag, the tradition is that, incarnate in one of these forms, he was torn apart and devoured by his worshippers following the example of the Titans.

This tearing apart by the teeth though seems highly unlikely and it is difficult to imagine his worshippers biting a bullock to death once a year however drunk they may have been. The tearing limb-from-limb of a sacrificial animal and the eating of its raw flesh would not seem to have satisfied a community of devotees, (ensuring that they were all able to partake of a part of the feast), especially due to the fact that it was an uncooked one, and considering the numbers said to have been involved, unless this was a privilege of an inner circle of the elect.

(1) Frazer writes, "Pomegranates were supposed to have sprung from the blood of Dionysus, as anemones from the blood of Adonis and violets from the blood of Attis:". THE GOLDEN BOUGH, (cap. XLIII), and Brown writes in THE GREAT DIONYSIAK MYTH, (vol. I p. 100), that the pine-cone was "carried at the end of the Thrysos or budding-rod, itself the emblem of vitality", and symbol of his resurrection.
This would, surely, also be the case with a human victim; even so Frazer announces, "The custom of tearing in pieces the bodies of animals and of men and then devouring them raw has been practised as a religious rite by savages in modern times. We need not therefore dismiss as a fable the testimony of antiquity to the observance of similar rites among the frenzied worshippers of Bacchus.". (1)

Of human sacrifice in this manner, it should be noted that, although it is possible that ritual cannibalism may have been practised, often the animal sacrificed was treated and addressed as a human being and divine incarnation in honour of its holiness, and it may be that the records of that sort of sacrifice derive from this practice.

Yet it seems more likely that what was consumed or utilised in prophylactic ceremonies was the blood, (which played so important a part in both the mysteries of Attis and of Mithras, and which would become so central a feature of Christianity), and the Pentateuchal injunction against the consumption of blood may be based on a rejection of such ceremonies rather than for mere culinary or hygienic reasons.

It is also probable that simulated death formed part of the mysteries since the most important result of the initiation was that the initiates felt that they had been born again: thus a central feature may have been a guided passage and return through a symbolic hell.

(1) (ibid. cap XLIII).
The climax of these later mysteries was in the showing by
the Hierophant, (who was said to be descended from the
Eumolpids), of the sacred objects.

As to what these objects were, Mylonas notes that many of
the early Church fathers proposed various answers: Tertullian
suggested that the main feature was of the nature of a sacred
marriage, with the sacred object being a phallus; Clement of
Alexandria surmised the recital of a kind of creed in archaic
code-words, and a simulated trip to the underworld; and
Hippolytus dismissed the whole thing as merely an agricultural
festival with the showing of an ear of wheat. (1)

In a sense all three guesses seem to be apt in that the
sacred marriage, (or ritual copulation), produced the new birth
of fertility, (whether agricultural as wheat, or human as child),
from the sterile underworld of winter, (pictured as the dark womb
of the dark goddess).

Of the mysteries Mylonas holds that there were three
stages: an initial purification and preparation known as the
"Katharuos" or "Katharsis"; an initiation and communion or
"Teleteia"; and an "Epopteia" or salvation symbolised by an
"Anadesis" or coronation. (2)

(1) ELEUSIS AND THE ELEUSINIAN MYSTERIES, (p.310, 294, & 305,
respectively).
(2) (ibid. p. 239).
Of the second stage, Angus notes that it was also known as the "Muesis" and that, according to Proclus, it formed the basis of the Teleteia which comprised a large part of the Orphic cultus and were held to wash away the consequences of sin. {1}

Russell believes that Orphism may have entered Greece from Crete, with the fugitive priests of the solar monotheist Akenaten, (following Herodotus), and writes, "The Orphies were an ascetic sect: wine to them, was only a symbol, ... The intoxication that they sought was that of 'enthusiasm', of union with the god. They believed themselves, in this way, to acquire mystic knowledge not obtainable by ordinary means. This mystical element entered into Greek philosophy with Pythagoras, who was a reformer of Orphism as Orpheus was a reformer of the religion of Dionysus. From Pythagoras Orphic elements entered into the philosophy of Plato, and from Plato into most later philosophy that was in any degree religious.". {2}

They believed in the transmigration of the soul, were consequently vegetarian, and seem to have constituted a reform movement rather than a separate religion since Guthrie writes, "There is little evidence for the existence of organised Orphic communities, but it would be wrong to say that there is none, and its scantiness is only what we should expect from the obscure existence which they led.". {3}

{1} THE MYSTERY RELIGIONS AND CHRISTIANITY, (p. 76).
{2} HISTORY OF WESTERN PHILOSOPHY, (p. 39).
{3} ORPHEUS AND GREEK RELIGION, (p. 205).
Orphism as a movement seems to have been both widespread and diffuse since its founder was associated with seven other cults; namely those of Eleusis, Samothrace, of the Theosophoria, and of the Theban cult of Dionysus as the son of Semele, with the mysteries of the Athenian Persephone, the Spartan Demeter, and of those of Hecate, which may indicate that he, like the vegetation gods, had been the original object of the harrowing of hell.

The Dionysian reformer, Orpheus, (whom Harrison sees as a reviver of primitive pre-Olympianism), was said to have been the son of Calliope the Muse, fathered by Oiangros, (a Thracian river god), though he was thought of as the progeny of the sun-god.

His wife was Eurydice, or Agriope, for whom he sought in hell, and who may have been viewed as a glyph of the soul, since Harrison writes that, "The cardinal doctrine of Orphic religion was ... the possibility of attaining divine life", possibly through an ecstatic though quietist identification of the adept with the soul as divine spark which enabled the initiate to become free of the wheel of rebirth. (1)

Although accorded a semi-divine status, Guthrie writes that, "Orpheus was probably never, certainly scarcely ever worshipped as a god", though he seems to have been identified with many divinities and heroes. (2)

(1) PROLEGOMENA TO THE STUDY OF GREEK RELIGION, (p. 454).
(2) ORPHEUS AND GREEK RELIGION, (p. 41).
Plato, in the "Republic", heralded Orpheus as the first to introduce the Teleteia, (as personal rites of initiation), and spoke of the allegorical stance of the movement and its reinterpretation of conventional myth. {1} According to Guthrie, Aristotle, concerning the cultus, "ventured to doubt not only the authenticity of the poems but the existence of Orpheus himself.". {2}

As a hero he seems to have been cast in a different mould to the usual variety and was celebrated primarily for his exceptional musical ability which hypnotised the underworld, in voice, and on the lyre, (which instrument was said to have been made from the upper shell of a tortoise or turtle).

After his death his seven-stringed lyre or "Cithara" was transferred to the skies and figured as the constellation Lyra, though this asterism was more ancienly seen as an eagle or vulture and as such may have represented his soul. {3}

{1} THE REPUBLIC OF PLATO, (p. 48).
{2} ORPHEUS AND GREEK RELIGION, (p. 12).
{3} Hippolytus writes that, "the lyre is a musical instrument fashioned by Logos", and explicitly equates this "Word" with Hermes. (q.v. "Refutatio", [vol. IV cap. 47], as quoted in THE ANTE-NICENE LIBRARY, [vol. VI p. 116]).
The whole figure seems to have been connected with the neighbouring constellation Hercules, and in Thrace may have been identified with Orpheus himself since the ascription of Hercules to these stars is comparatively late in the classical period.

The asterism was previously known as "Engonasis", whose foot rested on the Serpents head, though to the Phoenicians it was known as "Melkart". (1) According to Allen, another title was "Sancus", the herculaean "Semo Sancus" with whom Simon Magus was identified. (2)

However, all these heroes were said to have visited the underworld and returned, and it would seem that the purified initiate was identified with them since Feibleman writes, "The follower of Orpheus was led to hope that he could become a god.". (3)

(1) It is pertinent to note that according to Hippolytus the gnostic Peratae, "assert that Engonasis is Adam.". THE ANTE-NICENE CHRISTIAN LIBRARY, (vol. VI p. 116).

(2) STAR NAMES; THEIR LORE AND MEANING, (p. 241).

(3) RELIGIOUS PLATONISM, (p. 51).
According to Harrison, the "Petalia" tablet warned the adept that, at death, "Thou shalt find on the left of the House of Hades a Well-spring", (the lake of Lethe or forgetfulness), "And by the side thereof standing a white cypress. To this Well-spring approach not near. But thou shalt find another by the Lake of Memory, Cold water flowing forth, and there are Guardians before it. Say: "I am a child of Earth and of Starry Heaven; But my race is of Heaven (alone). This ye know yourselves. And lo, I am parched with thirst and I perish. Give me quickly the cold water flowing forth from the Lake of Memory." And of themselves they will give thee to drink from the holy Well-spring, And thereafter among the other Heroes thou shalt have lordship.>>.

Orpheus was to be lauded in neo-Platonism, from which source much of our information comes, and Guthrie writes, "If we may trust the Neo-Platonists, the World Egg was a prominent feature of the theogonies ascribed to Orpheus." (2)

This egg, originally laid by the goddess in avian form and perhaps equated with Brimos as the cosmic seed, was later taken to represent the primal manifestation of Chaos and as such the source of the phenomenal world from which all came to be and into which all would be resolved.

(1) PROLEGOMENA TO THE STUDY OF GREEK RELIGION, (p. 573 fig. 160).

(2) (ibid. p. 93).
This seed was often known as Eros, ("Love", child of Aphrodite), or as Phanes, ("Appearance"), and was considered to be of hermaphroditic nature, or as "Protogonos", (the first-born of all creation), or in female guise as Metis, ("Wisdom"), and may have been identified with the heart of Dionysus, akin to the spark of life encased within the body, rescued by Athene.

The birth of Eros from the cosmic egg was recorded by Aristophanes in his play, "The Birds", by the owl in his "parabasis", thus: "In the beginning of Things, black-winged Night into the bosom of Erebos dark and deep laid a wind-born egg, and, as the seasons rolled, Forth sprang Love, gleaming with wings of gold, Like to the whirlings of wind, Love the Delight - And Love with Chaos in Tartaros laid him to sleep; And we, his children, nestled, fluttering there, Till he led us forth to the light of the upper air.". (1)

The child, Love, (or Eros as the Cosmic Soul), golden-winged, double-sexed, and four-headed was also identified both with Phaeton, as the sun, and Chronos, as lord of time, (who was held to have been born from a union of the original principles of Water and Earth along with his stellar sister, Adrasteia).

Chronos was allotted three children, Aethyr, Chaos, and Erebus, upon whom he fathered the egg from which Eros arose.

(1) PROLEGOMENA TO THE STUDY OF GREEK RELIGION, (p. 624), and (q.v. THE BIRDS OF ARISTOPHANES, [p. 57]).
Since, in the Dionysian cultus, the primal sacrifice or hatching was held to begin creation, chronolatry seems to have remained of great importance within Orphism, in which the concept of Time was seen as a god and was sometimes known as Herakles, though more often as Chronos Ageraos, ("Ageless Time"). (1)

Yet, by the time of Herodotus, the figures of Dionysus and Orpheus had, to some extent, become identical, although the death of the latter was said to have been due to the outrage felt by the Maenads, (at the exclusion of women from his rites), upon the orders of Dionysus, (who had been offended by his worship of Apollo as supreme), and he thus he died in the home of his ideological enemy.

Orphism reached its philosophical zenith in Pythagoraeanism whose founder was thought to have visited Egypt. Pythagoras also believed in the transmigration of the soul through the spheres of existence, in a mystical type of mathematics or numerology, as well as in a theory of sound. These seem to have been practised in his societies in which men and women were admitted on equal terms and in which all property was held in common.

(1) ORPHEUS AND GREEK RELIGION, (p. 87). Guthrie here compares this Chronos with the Zoroastrian, Zurvan Akarana.
According to Hippolytus, these communities, (which specifically excluded butchers, hunters and those with blood-guilt since Pythagoreanism was against the practice of animal sacrifice lauding instead a personal asceticism), in common with Orphism, taught the belief that the body was the prison of the soul, (which could be ennobled through Catharsis and thus avoid metempsychosis), and that vegetarianism was part of this process, (as was the avoidance of wool). (1)

By the last two an attempt was made to separate from the state or city economy in dependence on animal products though it is unlikely that he forbade milk even if he, himself, was a vegan.

Pythagorean thought developed the conception of "Theoria", (from its Orphic significance as an ecstasy of feeling), into an intellectual contemplation based upon mathematical understanding which knowledge liberated the adept from the cycle of time and thereby rebirth.

(1) (q.v. Hippolytus' "Refutatio", [vol. I cap. 2], as quoted in THE ANTE-NICENE CHRISTIAN LIBRARY, [vol. VI p. 35]).
Numbers, in themselves, were held to possess mystical properties, (as well as shape), and to form the substance of the cosmos as formulae, (which the creator re-arranged to create order), and were aligned to the planets, the musical modes, and the notes in the Diatonic scale.

This latter discipline was of great importance in Pythagorean teaching with the story of his calming of an agitated man through lyre-playing being well-known. This may demonstrate another link with Orphism and Apollo since the Cithara was used as a symbol of the perfectly tuned soul with each of its strings allotted to one of the sacred planets, and as the dominant note in the mode itself.

Pythagoras was supposed to have left Egypt during the Persian invasion and was reputedly carried off to Babylon as a slave though he claimed as past human lives, those of Aithalides, Hermotinus, and Euphortus, and later metaphysicians adopted this convenience by ascribing to him all subsequent teachings.
Since whole numbers were ascribed to the planets and as such seen as divine, fractions as incomplete parts, were considered to be demonic, thus the primal number, (discounting the zero), was seen as the representative of truth, light, fire, the sun, Zeus as source of creation, and was symbolised by the point.

The second was viewed as opinion, the moon, the dyad, source of chaos and, therefore, evil and dark, since it resisted the creative impulse of the One, and was symbolised by the line. Thus the first was seen as a glyph of the assertive male as spiritual, rational and mental and that its alter was consequently female, passive, material and mad.

The tertiary was considered to be the first finite odd number proper, as an expansion, (or son), of the one through contact with the secondary, seen as of three parts, times or dimensions of the cosmos, (beginning, middle, end, and past, present, future), symbolised by the plane, triangle, and prophetic tripod of Apollo, and was sacred to Hermes Trismegistos as the knowable mind.
The quarternity, representative of the material as a duplication of the dyad, was known as Justice or Equality, pictured by the square demonstrating its solidity, (though sometimes by a three-sided pyramid), and to it were allotted the four elements, directions, and faculties of intelligence, knowledge, opinion, and sensation, as well as the components of life, namely the reason, heart, desires, and body. (1)

The infinite yet ephemeral quinary, sacred to Aphrodite, was known as the number of Marriage since it united odd three and even two, though the sesary was considered perfect, (as a reflective manifestation of the mental three and lord of the second emanation), since it was formed of the son, mother and father as three, two and one, and cubed was supposedly the aeon between rebirths.

Sacred to Athene and wisdom, known as Health, was the virgin, yet self-inactive, septenary, since it could not be multiplied by another number to produce one less than ten, the limit.

(1) (q.v. Hippolytus’ "Refutatio", [vol. I cap. 2], for the Pythagorean concept of number, as quoted in THE ANTE-NICENE CHRISTIAN LIBRARY, [vol. VI p. 32]).
To the ogdoad was allotted the octave formed of the marriage of the son with the mother, (as two times two times two), rational principle of the material world, symbolised by Harmonia, wife of Cadmus the Phoenician, known as the number of Friendship and sacred to Eros and Hermes, as the nonary was to all-encompassing hysterical Oceanos, limit of the cosmos as was the nine of the decimal system, which when fertilised by the ogdoad began the series again. (1)

The odd numbers in this schema were considered male, finite, (in the sense of full and complete unities as single "Pleromata"), dextrous, perfectly straight, geometrically ordered and morally good, while the even were female, infinite as plural "Kenomata" or emptinesses, constantly in motion, sinister, crooked, ungeometric, dark and evil, and together formed two corresponding sets of ten pairs of emanations representing the obverse and reverse planes of the "Tetractys", or figure of ten points. (2)

(1) For the meanings and attributions of the Pythagorean numerals, q.v. THE HARMONY OF THE SPHERES, (passim).

(2) .
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This diagram, formed in the shape of an equilateral triangle with its apex upwards, was held to demonstrate the development of the cosmos from the primal egg or point which bifurcated by self-reflection to form base gender and other opposites.

This dyad when considered with reference to its primal parent formed the original trinity which was depicted by the placing of two lower points equidistant from the first and as such produced its lesser reflection as their child which, after uniting with its mother, fathered the quarternary as the plan of this four-square world below.

The fourth point stimulated by the previous also bifurcated into actual antipathies which was represented by a third line of three points the central one being that of the tetrad. Thus far a triad of six points was made of three upward-pointing triangles and one central figure reversed.

The antipathies on either side of the quarter point themselves produced antipathies in similar fashion, which was represented by a further line of four points, forming the base of the Tetractys of ten marks, in which the perfect geometric figure of the hexagon could be perceived surrounding the central point allotted to Athene, virgin or unmarried daughter of Zeus, with whom Isis, as daughter of Ra, was identified.
The cult of Isis, or Aset, who as mother-goddess was identified with the asterism of Virgo, was Hellenised during the time of Alexander, continued under the Roman rule of the Ptolemies, and fused with that of Ausar, or Osiris, as Serapis, (possibly a combination of the god with the bull Apis perhaps as Taurus-Orion), and produced what seems to have been the first Holy Family, for, after the re-membering of her dead lover whose phallus had been swallowed by a fish, (representative of her opposite zodiacal sign), she bore his posthumous child, Horus. Budge writes of this goddess that, "The position that Isis occupied among the goddesses of Egypt was unique, for none but she is ever represented as a mother suckling her child, and none of them conceived a son under such circumstances, or reconstituted her husband, or restored her son to life.". (1)  

(1) LEGENDS OF OUR LADY MARY THE PERPETUAL VIRGIN & HER MOTHER HANNA, (p. LV).
Of Osiris, he writes, "As the god and judge of the dead he dwelt in a portion of the Tuat or Underworld, and the souls of the beatified dead spent their time there in the cultivation of the wonderful Maat plant. This plant or shrub was a form of the body of Osiris, and his followers ate it and lived upon it. It maintained their lives, and because they ate the body of their god, they became one with him, and like him, lived forever", though the "Maat" plant, sacred to the goddess of Truth and Justice, and the "Tet" tree of Isis have, of course, still not been identified with certainty. (1)

(1) THE DIVINE ORIGIN OF THE CRAFT OF THE HERBALIST, (p. 12), [his emphasis].
Their son, Horus, was considered to be the especial deity of Lower Egypt as was Set of Upper Egypt, and the struggles between the two were often recounted. The punishment assigned to the defeated Set for his part in the contention was the task of the carrying of Osiris, spoken of in terms which indicate that this function was similar to that of the ass as the beast of burden.

Griffiths notes that as well as being represented by the star Sirius, soul of Isis, according to Plutarch, Set was also represented by the totem of his mother Typhon, the hippopotamus as Ursa Major, with Horus as Orion, and quotes from the text, "The Contending of Horus and Seth", that, "Horus has lamented because of his eye, Seth has lamented because of his testicles", since in the struggle the eye of Horus, usually identified with either the sun or moon, was put out and in revenge he castrated his adversary. (1)

During the struggle the seed of Horus had been spilt on some wild lettuce and was consumed by Set, though Griffiths notes that, "lettuce ... was frequently linked with Min in representation ... Its milk-sap doubtless suggesting human seminal fluid, and Seth, like Min, was obviously imagined as increasing his renowned sexual strength by partaking of it.". (2)

(1) THE CONTENDING OF HORUS AND SETH, (p. 3).
(2) (ibid. p. 46).
The worship of the Tet tree appears to have been allied to phallolatry which was canonised in Egypt by the story of the dismemberment of Osiris. Set, (his brother), whom the Greeks called Typhon, and seventy-two others plotted against him and in the twenty-eighth year of his reign on the seventeenth day of the month, Hathor, murdered him, sealing him in a coffin, and setting it on the Nile.

It sailed out to Byblus in Syria and on landing a tree sprouted from within, though upon discovering what had happened Isis in disguise begged for the coffin. The Syrians had placed the trunk of the tree in their temple, clothed, and worshipped it, though a tree-trunk, most probably of conifer or tamarisk, was seen as a symbol of him from early times as the Tet. (1)

(1) The Tet, Tat, or Ded, is in the "Papyrus of Ani", represented as a pillar with cross pieces, and with human arms holding the symbols of sovereignty, the crook and the flail, thus clearly identified with Osiris, as Pharoah.
But the evil Set found the coffin and hacked the body into fourteen pieces distributing them throughout Egypt, and though Isis managed to find most of the pieces, as Frazer writes, "the genital member of Osiris had been eaten by the fishes, so Isis made an image of it instead". (1)

Although he seems to have been worshipped as a vegetation deity, it is as god of the dead that he is most famous since the deceased was identified with him in order to partake of eternal life in the abode of the blessed, the "Sekhet Aaru". (2)

(1) THE GOLDEN BOUGH, (cap. XXXVIII)

(2) Though Budge writes, "Osiris was a form of the sun-god, and ... represented the sun after he had set, and as such was the emblem of the motionless dead; later texts identify him with the moon.". THE EGYPTIAN BOOK OF THE DEAD, (p. CXIII).
The posthumous child of Isis and Osiris, made with the image of the member of his father, was taken to be the hero Horus, especially in his lunar aspect as Hoor-paar-kraat, (whose twin was held to be the solar Ra-hoor-khut), known to the Greek-speaking world as Harpocrates.

The moon-god, in the form of the child Khonsu, was held to have begun the year and of this Fagan writes, "From the beginning of astrological history ... the Egyptians appear to have regarded LIBRA as the first of the zodiacal constellations." (1)

However, at this time the constellation which we now know as Libra was viewed as part of the claws of the Scorpion and known as the "Chelae". The Romans claimed the privilege of the addition of the twelfth zodiacal constellation newly formed, called by them, "Jugum", meaning the "Yoke".

According to Fagan, the Egyptian calendar was measured by the acronychal or night-rising of the signs. This would mean that the opposite sign would have been rising heliacally, which in the case of Libra would be Aries.

(1) SYMBOLISM OF THE CONSTELLATIONS, (Introduction p. 1). [his emphasis].
In the place of the Roman Libra was the god Omphta, or "Khonsu the Child", (though referring to the birth of the sun and year); followed by those of the "Snake" or "Worm", a glyph of Typhon; the "Arrow", ruled over by Nephthys; the "Face of the Goat", (probably equivalent to the god Khnemu and equated with Pan); the "Waters", (during which Leo was rising heliacally with the effect that the star Sirius was in the ascendant), and was therefore the time of the annual inundation of the Nile, (although the star Canopus was also associated with the constellation); and the "Fishes", sacred to Ichton, an apt symbol of the results of the flood.

The second hemisphere began with the "Fleece", (pictured as a ram bearing the Aten disk between its horns and sacred to Amon); the "Bull of Heaven", (presumably, originally a cow sacred to Hathor though later to Apis, bull of Osiris); the "Divine Pair", either Horus, elder and younger, or perhaps earlier, Osiris and his brother Set, (however, the Hellenist Egyptians saw the twins as Hercules and Apollo); the "Scarab", Khepera, (though an ascription to the ibis of Thoth or Hermanubis of Anpu was common); the "Sickle", sacred to Momphta, (from which the astrological glyph for Leo derives); and the "Woman", the last of the signs, who gave birth to Khonsu and from whom therefore the circle derived.
The large constellation of Virgo, (in whose hands the star Spica, represented as an ear of wheat on the "Denderah" zodiac, was clutched), was identified with Isis, and sometimes the hippopotamus goddess Tauret, the "Great", (with responsibility for women in general and childbirth in particular); one of her other titles was of "Mother of Time", (seen as her child), though the rulership of time was later accorded to the earth-god Seb, or Geb, since the name itself means star and carries with it the implication of chronology.

Budge writes, "Towards the close of the XIXth dynasty the cult of Isis in her character of faithful and loving wife and tender mother increased greatly. One of the best proofs of the growth of this phase of her cult is afforded by the numerous small figures of the goddess that are found in the tombs of this period ... the goddess is represented seated on a throne, the symbol of her name, and suckling her son Horus, whom she clasps to her left breast". (1)

In Egypt, Isis was also said to be the daughter of Geb, the Earth, and Nut, the Sky, and was held to be both the wife and sister of Osiris, and sister to both Nephthys and Set.

(1) (ibid. p. LIV).

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Isis later became known as "She of Many Names", (as she had by then absorbed most of the attributes and names of the other Egyptian goddesses), but, originally, she seems to have been a relatively minor divinity celebrated as protectress of Perehbet, near Busiris, though Budge writes, "Her names were many and in each great city she had a special name. Thus she was called ... Anit in Denderah.". (1)

Her ideogram was that of the throne, with which she was often pictured, though she had already appropriated the horns and disk of Hathor, (a mother-goddess often portrayed in the form of a cow), whose name meant the "House of Horus".

The mysteries of Isis spread all over the Mediterranean, existing still in the sixth century C.E., and were based upon her search for the body of Osiris, (though she was worshipped as a goddess in her own right), and played an important part in the underworld concerning which Budge writes that, "There were many goddesses in Egypt, but none save Isis, together with her shadowy dual counterpart," (Nephthys), "appears with Osiris in his shrine at the Judgement.". (2)

(1) (ibid. p. LVI).
(2) (ibid. p. LI).
Apuleius records the ass's prayer to her, in the book now known as "The Golden Ass", who addressed her as "Blessed Queen of Heaven ... I beseech you, by whatever name, in whatever aspect, with whatever ceremonies you deign to be invoked, have mercy on me in my extreme distress", and that in response she appeared declaring herself thus, "I am Nature, the universal Mother, mistress of all the elements, primordial child of time, sovereign of all things spiritual, queen of the dead, queen also of the immortals, the single manifestation of all gods and goddesses ... Though I am worshipped in many aspects, known by countless names, and propitiated with all manner of different rites, yet the whole round earth venerates me.". {1}

According to Budge, "The chief features of the Egyptian religion remained unchanged from the Vth and VIth dynasties down to the period when the Egyptians embraced Christianity ... so firmly had the early beliefs taken possession of the Egyptian mind", and that, "Furthermore, we find that the doctrine of eternal life and of the resurrection of a glorified or transformed body, based upon the ancient story of the resurrection of Osiris ... was the same in all periods". {2}

{1} Both passages are from Graves' translation of chapter XVII
{2} THE EGYPTIAN BOOK OF THE DEAD, (p. XLVIII).
The earliest core of this religion he asserts was its necrolatry, (perhaps based on ancestor-worship and hamanism), and the doctrine of the soul, especially that of the king, with whom Osiris was identified. In the legends of Osiris, Thoth, the Egyptian Hermes, played draughts with the moon and won the seventieth part of each day which totalled five whole days.

Concerning this myth Frazer writes, "Osiris was the offspring of an intrigue between the earth-god Seb ... and the sky-goddess Nut ... When the sun-god Ra perceived that his wife Nut had been unfaithful to him, he declared with a curse that she should be delivered of the child in no month and no year. But the goddess had another lover, the god Thoth ... and he playing at draughts with the moon won from her a seventy-second part of every day, and having compounded five whole days out of these parts he added them to the Egyptian year of three hundred and sixty days.". {1}

These were the five additional or epagomenal days of the year: on the first was Osiris born; on the second, Horus; on the third, Set; with the births of Isis and Nephthys celebrated on the fourth and fifth days respectively. Of these five, the first, third, and fifth, were considered unlucky though sacred to Osiris, Set, and Nephthys; all dark and chthonic divinities.

{1} THE GOLDEN BOUGH, (cap. XXXVIII).
The champion of the doctrine of eternal life, (in which the deceased was identified with Osiris), was the city of Annu, chief seat of the worship of the Sun as chronocrator, since Osiris was now often equated with him as during the XVIIIth and XIXth dynasties he had been identified with a more primitive version of Ra.

Yet the earlier association was lunar; in this the deceased was held to inhabit the same realm as the moon, namely the stars of the night sky over which constellations the luminary passed.

Of such a soul beyond the cycles of lunar time, Budge quotes from a text of the VIth dynasty, «He hath eaten the knowledge of god every, [his] existence is for all eternity and to everlasting in his sah this; what he willeth he doeth, [what] he hateth not doth he do>>, for as the Pharaoh was supreme in life, so too would he be in death. (1)

To the soul of the Pharaoh alone was given the promise of Tmu, «Thou shalt exist for millions of millions of years, a period of millions of years>>, and, in the eighty-fourth chapter of the "Book of the Dead", the deceased was identified with the pillar of the world, (child of Nut, the sky, and Geb, the earth), the god of the firmament through the words, «I am Shu [the god] of unformed matter. My soul is God, my soul is eternity>>. (2)

(1) (ibid. p. LVI), [his emphasis].
(2) (ibid. p. LVII), [both references].
This soul was thought to live on after the death of the body and was the immortal part of the human, but the difference between this early conception of immortality and its later development in eschatological thought is noted by Budge who writes, "while we have this evidence of the Egyptian belief in eternal life, we are nowhere told that man's corruptible body will rise again", and quotes from a Vth dynasty text which states, "Soul to heaven, body to earth.". (1)

There were in all considered to be ten parts of the perfected Egyptian. Firstly, the "Khat" or material basis which was liable to decay, (although the term is also applied to the mummified body), the determinative part of the hieroglyph being a fish. This body remained in the tomb and did not reappear on earth but the preservation of the corpse was considered vital, (as a focal point for the discarnate being), since it was thought that it could be re-animated through the rites carried out on the day of burial when it was transmuted into the "Sahu" or "astral" form of the body which germinated like a plant, and was exhorted to "Stand up thou mighty one being strong.". (2)

The Sahu seems to be a term for the perfected initiate and formed the metaphysical basis of the other parts of the soul though it was only operative upon death and after the correct ritual.

(1) (ibid. p. LVII).
(2) (ibid. p. LX).
The energy of this conception was known as the "Tet" or "Zet", (the spiritual essence symbolised by an upright snake), and worthy of worship.

The "Khaibit" or "shadow" also formed part of the living organism which could be attacked by the demons of disease, (in some ways similar to the concept of the aura), was symbolised by a fan, and seems later to have been closely associated with the post-mortem life of the soul. (1)

The faculty of will was represented by the "Hati" or "instinctive executant", symbolised by the fore-parts of a lion to indicate vigour though it was sometimes equated with the "Aib", or "Ab", the heart which connected the material and spiritual elements of the body, was symbolised as a vessel with ears as handles, and was judged in the presence of Thoth as to its virtue or vice.

The "Kai", or "Ka", (akin to both the conceptions of the human ego in its post-mortem existence and the "doppelganger" or "eidolon"), was symbolised by a pair of upraised hands. The Ka was in some sense also a shade or form of the person and like most shades needed offerings of physical food and drink from which it would extract nourishment.

(1) EGYPTIAN MAGIC, (introduction).
It was also held to be resident within an image; statues of the gods each bore their own individual Ka which was enticed within the image at its installation in a ceremony during which the god was invited to inhabit the object. It would seem that this transpersonal element was the mask of the soul during its travels in the underworld after death, (or the dream state during life).

It was the vehicle of the various manifestations of the "Baie", or souls, which appeared in four main forms as a hawk, a heron, a ram, and a human-faced bird. Budge writes, "It revisited the body in the tomb and re-animated it, and conversed with it; it could take upon itself any shape that it pleased; and it had the power of passing into heaven and of dwelling with the perfected souls there.". (1)

The Ba, though not incorporeal, was eternal, in its glorified state was held to reside in the stars of the night sky, and seems to have been seen as akin to divinity. The "Papyrus of Pepi" asserts, <<behold thy soul is a star living, behold among its brethren>>. (2) It would appear to have been the vehicle of exploration used by the magicians while alive to detail the underworld.

(1) EGYPTIAN BOOK OF THE DEAD, (p. LXIV).
(2) (ibid. p. LXVI).
Its immortality is stated in the "Papyrus of Nu" which reads, "I am Yesterday and Tomorrow; and I have the power to be born a second time. [I am] the divine hidden Soul, who createth the gods, and who giveth sepulchral meals to the divine hidden beings [in the Tuat (underworld)], in Amenti, and in heaven.". (1)

The papyrus records the assertions of the deceased who acclaims himself named as, "I know the abysses", one who has, "opened a way for myself [among] the ... gods of the Tuat", and who identifies himself with the Ba of, "the Chief in Re-stau, and [I] go in and come forth in my name of 'Hehi, the lord of the millions of years [and of] the earth' ... the maker of my name". (2)

When in heaven, glorified as a god and star, the person was known as the "Khu", (symbolised by a heron or bennu bird), which seems to mean a "shining intelligence", and was seen as one of the company of heaven who, like they, partook of celestial food and became a full-fledged divinity, though it would appear that it used the Ba as a means of communication with the world below, and, although identified with deity, still retained its name or "Ren", which was consequently tabooed.

(1) THE PAPYRUS OF NU, (cap. LXIV p. 116).
(2) THE PAPYRUS OF NU (passim.).
The post-mortem travelling of the soul, through the "Tuat", or Underworld, and its final resting place in the field of the "Sekhet-Hetep" to the north of Egypt was seen as a journey through the the twelve hours of the night in the bark of the midnight sun, (later associated with the darkness of Hades), through the night-sky and so the nature of the expedition is naturally one of ascent to the stars.

During the night they held that the sun passed, as it were, below the earth through the infernal heavens also represented by the body, presumably the womb, of its mother to be reborn each morning anew.

James writes, "It was Heaven that was regarded as a woman deified as the Goddess Nut whom, as the Goddess of the West, the sun enters in his daily course to be reborn by her in the sky", thus both fertilising her and sireing himself. (1)

The Tuat itself was sometimes pictured by the figure of a man lying on his back with his legs bent forward to touch his head, thereby forming a circle, though it would seem to be a tortuous representation of a bodily enclosure.

(1) THE MOTHER GODDESS, (p. 58).
Massey writes, "An early figure of the zodiac was that of the human body, the head being in the sign where the sun rose at the time of the spring equinox; the feet in the sign preceding. The head of Osiris, whose body was represented as divided into various parts, was supposed to be in Abtu, the point of commencement in the circle.". (1)

However, seeing that it was in the Tuat that the sun spent the twelve hours of the night before its birth each morning, it would seem that the womb would have been the more natural symbol of a bodily enclosure.

The twelve stations of the sun during the nocturnal passage of heaven were figured as parts of the body of Nut as she crouched upon the earth and were associated with the hours of the night thus; her hand or "Drt" being the first, second was her lip or "Spt" and was followed by her tooth "Nhdt", throat "Htt" and breast or "Snbt".

(1) A BOOK OF BEGINNINGS, (p. 471).
The sixth station seems to have been her heart and the seventh, her stomach, with the eighth and ninth her gallbladder or "Mndr" and intestines or "Mhtws". Her vulva or "Kt" formed the tenth station, her buttocks, the eleventh, with the last represented by her thigh or "Mnt", though it is interesting to note that most diagrams depict the sun as being born from the vulva, which may have been astrologically equivalent with the tenth solar sign of Capricorn, in which the winter solstice falls when the sun begins its upward journey and becomes stronger. (1)

Budge writes, "The region of the Tuat was a long, mountainous, narrow valley with a river running along it; starting from the east it made its way to the north, and then taking a circular direction it came back to the east. (2)

The souls were reputed to pass from this world to the Tuat either by way of a ladder or through the passage known as "Peq", a mountain pass in the region of Abtu or Abydos, a centre of Osiris worship as is evidenced by its Greek name of Busiris, "the house of Ausar".

(1) EGYPTIAN ASTRONOMICAL TEXTS, (vol. I p. 82).
(2) THE EGYPTIAN BOOK OF THE DEAD, (p. CIV).
The Tuat, originally a conception similar to that of Sheol, became seen as the nocturnal home of the sun and divided in twelve parts. (1) Thus Budge writes, "The Tuat was divided into twelve parts, corresponding to the twelve hours of the night".

(2)


Records of such a post-mortem odyssey were given in the funerary texts which were designed to assist the dead by providing detailed instructions on the stages of the passage to the "Sekhet Aaru" or "Place of the Gods".

At first these instructions were painted on the inner walls of the pyramids, (with what seem to be maps of the night sky inscribed within the sarcophagi), but by the XVIIIth dynasty the formulae had become so extensive that they were written on papyrus rolls.

One of the earliest passages of these "Books of the Dead" was known as the "Pert-Em-Hru" which means the "Chapter of the Coming Forth by Day", (although an alternative title describes it as the "Chapter of Making Perfect the Khu"). (1)

Essentially the texts have remained unchanged for thousands of years and their authorship was ascribed to Thoth. The vignette allotted to this, the sixty-fourth chapter in the Theban rescension, shows the deceased in adoration of the solar disk, which is pictured hovering above a stylised tree in the form of the Tet.

(1) THE EGYPTIAN BOOK OF THE DEAD, (p. XXX note 2).
However, given the nocturnal nature of the journey it is possible that the solar disk may be an earlier representation of the Pole Star, with the tree a glyph of the path of the Khu, which was supposed to reach the heavens by means of a ladder, much as the Shaman was said to use a pole.

Although the deceased was held to travel in the bark of the sun to the final resting place it is nowhere stated that this was within the solar orb, since this would imply a cyclical return, and it would therefore seem that the Pole Star was a more likely destination.

Concerning its nature Massey writes that it was, "a type of the eternal, because appearing beyond the region of time and change. It was the earliest type of a supreme intelligence which gave the law in heaven that was unerring, just and true". (1)

As part of the judgement, the passing of which qualified the Khu to eternal life, it had to come face-to-face with the devourer of wicked souls. This female figure was pictured with the head of a crocodile, the body of a lion or leopard, and the hind parts of an hippopotamus, and was named Am-mit, the "eater of the dead".

Concerning her, Massey writes, "The great directress of Amenti ... who is portrayed in the scenes of the Hades sitting at the fatal corner waiting wide-mouthed for the souls of the dead, is the degraded form in the Egyptian eschatology of the Great Mother who in the earlier mythology had been doubly-first in heaven in her twin starry types of the Great Bear and Sothis the Dog-Star, the types of Sut-Typhon." (1)

However Typhon, (as with Zeus), had also been associated with the constellation Draco, and the fruit of her womb with the polar star around which she circles.

The Egyptians figured the polestar as a mooring-peg in the hand of the great hippopotamus goddess, Tauret, otherwise known as the "Mother of Revolutions", a deity of maternity and childbirth as well as being identified with the avenging goddess of the "Tuat" or Underworld.

An alternative portrayal was of the star as the Jackal of Set, namely Anubis, or Anpu, dread lord of the dead, as can be seen on the Helleno-Egyptian Zodiac of Denderah.

(1) A BOOK OF BEGINNINGS, (p. 14). Further he equates Typhon with the shadowy goddess, Nephthys.
Yet the central part of the drama was the judgement of the soul of the deceased in the "Scales of Truth" in which the heart was weighed against the balance of a yellow feather, (known as the "Maat" or symbol of righteousness, and emblem of the goddess of Truth of the same name, often viewed as the wife of Thoth), and that if found wanting the heart was devoured by the horrific figure.

If the judgement was in favour of the deceased it became identified with the resurrected Osiris and was given a place in the "Land of the West", (known as "Amenti"), in a spiritual body. This composite body was known as the "Sahu" and seems to have been identified in a celestial sense with the constellation Orion.

Like other triform deities such as the Sphinx, or the Chimaera, Am-mit may have represented a symbol of the three seasons of the Egyptian year, namely winter, the rainy and dry seasons, though a stellar origin for such a conception is also a possibility. The Egyptian year as Adams notes was divided into three great seasons; Se, the "Inundation" or "Flood", Pir or "Winter", and Seman or "Heat". (1)

These seasons were symbolised by three birds: the phoenix of Se; a swallow for Pir; and a swan or goose for Seman. (2)

(2) LES ZODIAQUES DE DENDERAH, (p. 89).
This year then was divided into three periods of four months apiece. In the season of Se were the months, Thoth; Paophi; Hathor; and Choriak, which Lauth identifies with the ecliptical divisions of Cancer, Leo, Virgo, and Libra. (1)

In Pir, those of Tybi, the "time of coming forth"; Mechi; Phamenoth; and Pharmouti, allotted to Scorpio, Sagittarius, Capricorn and Aquarius respectively, and in Seman, the months of Pachons, the "time of deficiency"; Payri; Epiphi; and Mesori. The last four months were allotted to the constellations Pisces, Aries, Taurus and Gemini, respectively.

Proposing a calendrical significance to her form as a figure of the year the meaning would seem to be that if found guilty the deceased was condemned to wander endlessly in continual reincarnation but that if justified it could pass beyond the jurisdiction of time and cease to revolve in the cycle of birth and death.

(1) (ibid. p. 95).
As well as an identification with the constellation Orion, the deceased was associated with Osiris in his form as Seker; a title of Osiris when in the guise of the "Sun at Night", the hidden sun. Budge writes that, "When the Osiris of a man has entered into heaven as a living soul, he is regarded as one of those who 'have eaten the eye of Horus'". (1)

Because of this consumption of the sun the right side of the body of the deceased was held to belong to Horus with the left side to the lunar Set, and further all the members of the resurrected body became identified with most of the deities of heaven.

Thus Budge writes of the resurrected person, "He is the brother of the moon, he is the child of the star Sothis, he revolves in heaven like Orion ... and he rises in his place like a star.". (2) The dead soul, by identification with Osiris, became seen as the ruler of the gods having triumphed over the demons of the afterlife.

The post-mortem existence of the soul was held to be similar to that of its life on earth, hunting, eating, sleeping, but with the difference that in the afterlife the Khu, "eats of the 'bread of eternity' and drinks of the 'beer of everlastingness' which the gods eat and drink". (3)

(1) PAPYRUS OF NESI AMSU, (p. LXXI).
(2) (ibid. p. LXXIII).
(3) (ibid. p. LXXVI).
While for the Egyptian noble and civil servant a pleasant afterlife could be expected for many other peoples the concept of the underworld was less than congenial and, despite the probability that the Babylonian king and members of his court also achieved a more agreeable end, the Near and Middle Eastern picture of the life after death was miserable though hope was also to be found in the tale of the rescue of the dead lord or Baal of the supreme goddess, whether of Adonis and Ishtar or Attis and Cybele.

The Phrygian Mother goddess Cybele was represented with the turreted crown of the city-state and was shown either in a lion-drawn chariot or a lion-decorated throne which would have indicated her similarity to the Greeks with Sekmet. {1}

Her priests, known as the "Galli" were a flagellant fraternity and would voluntarily mutilate and even castrate themselves in her honour and a similar group with whom they were identified, and to some extent, later merged were the "Corybantes".

{1) Sekhmet was an early Egyptian lioness-headed goddess from Latopolis, consort of Ptah, and became one of the Memphis Triad. Identified by the Greeks with Artemis, she was said to have assisted Hathor in carrying out the orders of Ra concerning the destruction of humanity. Her name, which means "The Powerful", was also a title of Hathor.
Graves writes, of these bands that seem to have replaced orgiastic sororities, that they "tried to achieve ecstatic unity with her by emasculating themselves and dressing like women", and that the practice of anal intercourse in her temples was "a recognised institution ... at Tyre ... and at Jerusalem ... until just before the Exile.". (1)

With her was associated her son, or lover, Attis, whom she sent mad before turning him into a fir; a symbol of the Cosmic Tree. (2) Attis was a symbol of her dealings with humanity whose soul was held to be re-absorbed into her womb upon death to be later reborn. Due to the Carthaginian threat and after consulting the "Sibylline Books", the Roman Senate invited the cult of Cybele, (there known as the "Magna Mater"), and Attis to Rome.

(2) Frazer writes in "The Golden Bough", (cap. XXXIV p. 347), that "Like Adonis, he appears to have been a god of vegetation, and his death and resurrection were annually mourned and rejoiced over at a festival in spring. The legends and rites of the two gods were so much alike that the ancients themselves sometimes identified them", and later on the same page notes that, "Two different accounts of the death of Attis were current. According to one he was killed by a boar, like Adonis. According to the other he unmanned himself under a pine-tree, and bled to death on the spot.".

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A central feature of the cult was the emasculation of Attis in honour of Cybele; his death was celebrated by the felling of a pine tree, its wrapping as a corpse, and burial on the "Dies Sanguinis", or "Day of Blood". {1}

This death and resurrection was celebrated at Rome in the "Hilaria", or "Festival of Joy", held around the time of the vernal equinox as a kind of spring Saturnalia since it demonstrated his rebirth. The Mithraic ceremony of the "Taurobolium" in which the novice was held to have been reborn after the washing away of sins in the blood of the sacrificed bull was paralleled in the Mysteries of Attis in a "Criobolium" or lamb sacrifice, the blood of which marked the devotee as saved.

(1) Frazer writes in "The Golden Bough", (cap. XXXIV p. 348-349), "Further, we may conjecture, though we are not expressly told, that it was on the same Day of Blood and for the same purpose that the novices sacrificed their virility.". The purpose he refers to is that by the spilling of the blood of the devotee the resurrection of Attis was held to be aided. It is also interesting to note that in the worship of Osiris a tree draped in finery was also seen as an emblem of the god as seems to have been the case with the Hebrew "Asherah" or sacred pole.
The cult of Attis was paralleled in many aspects by that of Adonis, (which name was merely a Greek misunderstanding of the title, "Adon" meaning "Lord", given also to the god Tammuz or Dumuzi), who though considered to be the lover and brother to Belili, was later made spouse to Ishtar.

This goddess was said to have descended to Aralu, (or Hades), kingdom of her sister, Ereshkigal to recapture her lover, the representation of her fertility, Tammuz, during which she stripped herself of her emblems of divinity at the seven gates of the Underworld, (also paradoxically the heavens), and though annually lamented, through the help of the goddess, he, like Adon Mot, triumphed over death.

The sixth month of the Assyrian year, (August to September), known as "Ululu" or "Elul" was ruled by Istar, during which was commemorated her descent, and both her purification and the miraculous renewal of her virginity. (1) The five extra days of the Chaldaean year were allotted similarly as the Egyptian to the five gods: Nergal; Nabu; Marduk; Ishtar; and Ninib, and were placed at the end of this month.

(1) BABYLONIAN MENOLOGIES, (p. 126).
The annual death and rebirth of Adon Mot was widely celebrated though his worship seems to have been superseded by that of the Baal Aleyin.

In one version of the myth as recorded by Greek-speaking Phoenicians, Aphrodite, placed Adonis after his death in a coffer which she gave to Persephone for safekeeping, however, the goddess of the underworld would not return him.

Delaporte writes, "The dispute between the two goddesses was brought before Zeus, who decided that Adonis should spend half the year on earth and half in the underworld", and it is possible that the role of Pluto in the Greek version originally was as the abducted, not the abductor. (1)

This Adonis or Baal was the Eshmun of Sidon in whose festivals an image was subjected to funerary rites in which lettuce played a great part, (as it did in those of Horus and Set), since it was held that Aphrodite had laid the body of her lover to rest on a bed of this plant.

(1) LAROUSSE ENCYCLOPAEDIA OF MYTHOLOGY, (p. 81).
The story of the usurpation of the father by the son, with the same dire results as in the Greek, was to be found in Phoenician mythology which gave as the reason the sexual impotence of El, whose son, Baal then married his mother Asherah, and was often portrayed as the enemy of El, as was Zeus of his own father.

The mother of Baal, (as son of El), was Asheratian, Lady of the Sea, who bore the title "Mother of the Gods". This was also the name of the consort of Baal, the goddess of Tyre, while the Baal of Sidon was Eshmun, (which appears to mean "The Name"), who was equated by the Greeks with Asclepius.

Of this cryptonym Delaporte writes, "The real name of the divinity is almost never known. As in Israel one avoided pronouncing it ... to prevent strangers from discovering it lest, in their turn, they invoked the god, drew his benevolence upon themselves and succeeded by diverting his interest in turning him from his own people.". (1)

(1) (ibid. p. 80).
The usurpation was deemed necessary due to the weakened <ld>
of the All-Father and in the marriage to his mother, the<pr>primeaval wisdom, the son strengthened his claim to authority and<wa>was exalted by this act.<hi>

However in the sayings of "Ahiqar" the converse was held to<be the case and it was written, "From heaven the peoples are<favoured; Wisdom is of the gods. Indeed, she is precious to the<gosd; her kingdom is eternal. She has been established by<Shamayn; yea, the Holy Lord has exalted her." (1)</

The Greeks identified Adon Mot with Adonis who, "ruled the<ountryside when the ground lay dry beneath the burning sun, when<the corn had reached maturity", and was annually sacrificed by<Anat, goddess of the dew, one of whose epithets was Qadesh, the"Holy". (2)


(2) LAROUSSE ENCYCLOPAEDIA OF MYTHOLOGY, (p. 76).
Yet there were other cults like those of Mithras in which the female element was noticeably lacking. The worship of Mithras, (originally an Aryan god of contracts), which, by the time of Xerxes I, spread to Greece, had, by that of Pompey, a stronghold in Rome and the language which later came to be used in its liturgy was that of the Roman army, namely Latin.

However, the worship of Mithras had existed from ancient times, and he is mentioned, as Mitra, as Goyal points out, with Varuna, (perhaps cognate with Uranus), "among the gods of the Mitannians of the Boghaz-koi inscriptions". (1) In the text of this treaty, the people of the Mitanni, a kingdom of the Upper Euphrates, came to an agreement with the Hittites and called upon the gods to witness this.

Mitra, often associated with the supreme deity, was a god of contracts and friendship, and became protector of truth and the enemy of falsehood. In India, Mitra and Varuna were seen as the maintainers of order: Mitra, as the sun, governed the day, and Varuna, as the moon, the night.

According to Vermaseren, the cult seems to have first entered Rome during the Republic, for in 66 C.E., Tiridates I, King of Armenia, entered the city bringing with him Persian Magi in his entourage though with the conquering of the Greek trading centre of Corinth by Rome the East became far more accessible. (2)

(2) MITHRAS: THE SECRET GOD, (p. 23).
Cultically, Mithras was seen as "Son of the Light", (referring to the Supreme Being akin to Ahura Mazda), and as the slayer of darkness, and was originally invoked as the protector of the Persian army under both Darius and Xerxes. The cult which quickly spread to the West achieved its zenith in 307 C.E., when the Emperor Diocletian dedicated the whole Empire to Mithras.

Due to astrological syncretism many of the gods of the Greeks were identified with those of the Persian pantheon: Ahura Mazda was equated with Zeus; Anahita, with Venus; Mithras, with the hero Heracles; and Zervan Akarana, with Chronos or Saturn.

The origin of Mithraism in the west is obscure but its spread followed that of the army: it was restricted to men and its central drama was that of the killing of the bull celebrated by the Taurobolium.

Speidel holds that the Taurobolium was concerned especially with the constellation of Taurus, herald of the vernal rains, with Mithras being represented celestially by that of Orion, part of whose sword was later said to be formed from the stars of Aries. {1}

{1} MITHRAS-ORION, (p. 14).
The stellar figure was also linked with both Tammuz or Adonis and, since it announced the onset of the rains, was an apt representation of the fertility god annually sacrificed. In the Arabic world it was known as the "Giant", "Al Jabbar", though in Hebrew it was known as KSIL, with the meaning "the foolish or inconstant one". (1) It seems to have been connected with the month of Chislev, known to the Assyrians, (from whom the Hebrews borrowed the name), as Cuzallu, during which the resurrection of the sun was celebrated with the lighting of great fires of sacrifice. (2)

The three stellar figures mentioned in "Job" and "Amos", namely, Ursa Major, Orion, and the Pleiades, may have been taken to represent the four celestial directions in Hebrew cosmography: the rising and setting Pleiades, the east and west; Ursa Major, the north; and Orion, since it lies completely below the ecliptic, the south. (3)

(1) The numerical value of this word, according to Hebrew Gematria, is 120, that of the letter Samekh meaning a "prop", when spelt in full, as well as those for an "obelisk", or "pillar", as OMVD; a "foundation", as MVSDI; a "fool", as LTz; a "great announcement", as MVOD; and finally, the Lord, or Baal, as BOL.

(2) BABYLONIAN MENOLOGIES, (p. 135).

(3) The references are to "Job" IX 9, and "Amos" V 8.
In Egypt it was portrayed as Horus the sailor and also known as "Sahu", and in this sense it was identified with the soul of the glorified and resurrected Osiris, who was heard to exclaim, "I am Sah the great in the midst of the souls of Heliopolis", though the figure was also identified with Osiris as the god of barley, in the form, "Smati-Ausar".  

It was also identified with the hunter-lover of the chaste moon-goddess Diana, who died from the sting of a scorpion, (since the natural "enemy" of this constellation was that of Scorpio which rose in the east when both Orion and Taurus sank in the west), or who was ripped to shreds by her pack-dogs in the form of a stag.

Originally prefixed with the digamma the constellation became known to the Greeks as "Oarion". In ancient Mesopotamia it had become associated with the sun under the name, "Uru-anna" meaning the "Light of Heaven", which may have been the derivation of the name Uranus, (perhaps of Varuna also), since the cognate Phoenician "Saturnos" was also worshipped as the sun, and a link between Chronos and Mithras seems to have been early accepted.

(1) THE EGYPTIAN BOOK OF THE DEAD, (p. 85).
Of the sacrificial representation, which detailed the constellations from Taurus to Scorpio, Speidel holds that Orion represented the slaughterer, with Taurus, (the bull or cow on whom the fertility of the world depended). (1)

The sacrifice was followed by Gemini, (which may have represented her twin children; solar and lunar, strong and weak, good and evil), Canis minor, (the hunting dog licking the blood from the wounded neck), and Cancer, (which may have symbolised a drop of this blood). After these came Hydra, (the water-snake), Crater, (the beast pawing at the heels of the victim), often represented as a lion, (which may have been included in the constellation Leo, since in the Zodiac of Denderah it is shown as riding the water-snake), and Corvus, the raven. The last was the star Spica in Virgo, (the ear of wheat, representative of the vegetable kingdom released by the sacrifice), which was often shown by the terminus of the tail of the beast. The Milky Way then appears to represent the blood streaming from the neck of the victim.

Speidel writes that "the bull-slaying scene represents the equatorial summer constellations from Taurus to Scorpio.". (2)

(1) MITHRAS-ORION, (p. 19).
(2) (ibid. p. 46).
If this was so one would also expect the succeeding equatorial constellations to form part of his mythos and that perhaps those of the winter depicted either his birth or death.

The most appropriate would seem to be: Ophiuchus; Sagittarius; Aquila; Capricorn; Aquarius, possibly including Fomalhaut of Pisces Australis; Pegasus; and Aries, possibly including some of the stars of Pisces.

It soon adopted features of predominantly Syrian solar mythology including the feast of the birth of the Sun at the Winter Solstice known as the "Dies Invictis Solis", which festival proved so difficult to eradicate that it was later adopted as the birthday of the Saviour within the popular festivals of the Christian church.

Other similarities between these two religions were the centrality of a sacred meal or eucharist, baptismal rites, belief in the immortality of the soul, and the sanctification of Sunday.
Peculiar to Mithraism was the legend of his defeat of the sun who may have represented his brother, although the sun was later to become his stellar representative. If the Taurobolium was held to begin the year then the sun may have been seen as re-created through the slaughter.

His major adventure, however, was the taming of the bull, seen as the representative of humanity. Vermaseren notes that it was a raven who told Mithras to sacrifice, and that a scorpion, ant or serpent waited to devour the energy thus released. (1) From the blood came plants and humans, and, in honour of the creation, a great feast was held in which Mithras and the Sun celebrated the meal which was of the nature of a contract between them. In the sacred art, the Sun was usually shown cloaked but naked. (2)

Following this act Mithras then ascended to heaven in the solar chariot passing through the spheres of the planets though, (since the Mithraic celebrations were usually conducted underground in either natural or artificially constructed caverns with seven orders of initiates associated both with the planets and the days of the week), the odyssey may also have been viewed as a descent to the underworld to rescue the soul of the sun.

(3)

(1) MITHRAS: THE SECRET GOD, (p. 70).

(2) (ibid. p. 98).

(3) (ibid. p. 113).
James writes of this ascent that, "In the mysteries of Mithra the ceremonial ladder (climax) had seven rungs, each being of a different metal". {1}

The first, allotted to Saturn was of lead; that of Venus, tin; Jupiter, bronze; Mercury, iron; Mars, monetary alloy; Moon, silver; and that of the Sun, gold, yet this arrangement is slightly unusual in that Venus is usually given copper; Jupiter, tin; Mercury, bronze and other alloys; and Mars, iron. Whatever, ascension of this ladder was a means of escape from the domination of time.

In their congregations all members wore animal masks associated with their cultic ranks, perhaps to preserve their anonymity, and shared a common meal.

Despite the dedication of the whole empire to Mithras under Diocletian the influence of Mithraism declined, perhaps because it was so androcentric, (with the result that there was little opportunity for the indoctrination of children by women devotees), and that objections were raised by the state concerning the oaths of allegiance by the devotee to his spiritual father, instead of to his superior officer in the army hierarchy.

{1} THE TREE OF LIFE, (p. 48), [his emphasis].
The grades began, in ascending order, with that of "The Raven" or "Corax" who, first encouraged the sacrificial bull-slaughter, was considered to be the messenger of Mithras, and was associated with the god Mercury as "Psychopompus".

Entry into the grade entailed an initiation into the element of air and the emblem of this rank was the Cadeuceus. If Speidel is correct in his analysis then the association of the constellation Corvus with the grade would seem obvious. {1}

The next rank was that of "The Gryphon" or Bride, known as the "Nymphus", (in which the initiate was considered to be married to the Supreme God), though Angus gives the name of this grade as "Cryphius", the "secret one". {2}

Vermaseren writes, "This male bride ... is joined to Mithras in a mystic marriage by the Father". {3} It was related to the planet Venus and, (though it included a baptism of water or blood), its emblem was of an evergreen torch, (perhaps the star Spica held by the virgin goddess, Anahita, with whom Mithras seems to have been paired at an early stage).

(1) The grades and their symbols and initiations are given in MITHRAS: THE SECRET GOD, (p. 144-149).

(2) THE MYSTERY RELIGIONS AND CHRISTIANITY, (p. 88).

(3) MITHRAS: THE SECRET GOD, (p. 142).
The grade of "The Soldier", or "Miles", was naturally linked with the planet Mars and the initiate was admitted through a ceremony involving the element of earth. The emblem of the grade was either a lance, helmet, or cup, (perhaps represented by Crater?), and was used in a rite in which the postulant was crowned with a wreath after having sworn an oath of allegiance.

The fourth grade, "The Lion" or "Leo", was of Jovian influence and involved a purification by fire. Its emblem was the fire-shovel or the thunderbolt sceptre, and the adepts of this rank, like the sun, wore a scarlet cloak.

The following grade, that of "The Persian" or "Perses", was connected with the Moon and the ritual of this rank was symbolised by the partaking of honey. Its emblem was either a sickle or a scythe, (perhaps a representation of Hydra, which Theon knew as Draco, or Ursa Major), and it would appear that a mystical chronology was taught at this stage.

The penultimate rank was "The Courier of the Sun", known as "Heliodromus", and allotted to that planet, in which the adept was considered to be the representative of the creative principle. For this grade there were three emblems, the whip, the solar nimbus and the torch, and would seem to be appropriate to the hunting dog Canis minor.
The final grade was that of "The Eagle", or the "Father", who in his coronation was clothed like Mithras presumably with the emblem of the rank, namely the Phrygian cap, and Vermaseren notes that he had to be proficient in astrology. (1)

Ruled over by Saturn or Chronos, the symbols of his authority were the staff and ring, and he was considered the representative and vice-regent on earth of the Supreme God, perhaps the victorious eagle-soul of Orion as Auriga since there was held to be a link between Mithras and Chronos, perhaps as "redivivus".

The great Pater seems to have been akin to the transcendent Zervan Akarana and was called Aeon, God of Time, though outside of its influence, which may indicate that he was identified with the polestar around which the great chronocrators processed through the zodiacal stations.

Vermaseren writes, "This Aion is a divine character who 'by his holy nature remains ever the same, who has no beginning or end, undergoes no change and who is the begetter of the divine nature’", alone, celibate, and resident in the highest heaven; the supreme representation of male rationality. (2)

(1) MITHRAS: THE SECRET GOD, (p. 153).

(2) (ibid. p. 138).
CHAPTER TWO
As well as the eastern mystery cults of the Egyptian Isis and Osiris, (both divine parents, and brother and sister), the Syrian Cybele and Attis, (either mother and son, or goddess and lover), and the Persian Mithras, Judaism influenced Western thought and was admired, especially for its anti-iconic monotheism which the Jews had for centuries long claimed as their own particular revelation.

However, (apart from the traces of polytheism through the use of the plural feminine term, "the Elohim", to indicate the divine, discernible with "Genesis" and other books), the god of the Jews, in the form of Yahweh, as with the many Baalim of the Middle East, had been described as bovine to emphasise both his strength and virility. {1}

According to the instructions of Aaron, the people made an image of a golden calf from their jewellery, while Moses, in conference with Yahweh the law-giver on the mountain, pleaded for the disaster threatened to be averted.

Upon his descent and witnessing of the worship, <<He threw down the tablets he was holding and broke them at the foot of the mountain>>, the same tablets that, <<were the work of God, and the writing on them was God’s writing engraved upon the tablets>>. {2}

{1} (Gen. XXXV 7); (Deu. V 26); (Jos. XXIV 19);

(I Sam. II 25, & XVII 26); & (Jer. X 10, & XXIII 36).

{2} (Exo. XXXII 19 & 16).
In propitiation of the anger of Yahweh, Moses called to him his supporters, (apparently only the sons of Levi), who then slaughtered about three thousand male idolaters, after which Moses announced that they had won for themselves, «investiture as priests of Yahweh>>. (1)

Again, the "Biblical" view of the political and religious schism, (which resulted in the existence of two kingdoms after the death of Solomon), with the consequent emphasis on Jerusalem by the southern kingdom, was also portrayed in similar terms as this first apostasy with Jeroboam erecting a couple of golden calves for the people. (2)

The same metaphor was used to describe the northern idolaters, in "Hosea", who writes, «The inhabitants of Samaria are trembling for the calf of Beth-aven; yes, its people mourn for it, its so-called priests bewail its glory>>. (3)

Yet the recurring portrayal of deity as bovine would seem to show that for many years the popular god of the Hebrew peoples had been identified with that of a bull cult, as were the gods of neighbouring peoples, with their consorts portrayed as divine cows.

(1) (Exo. XXXII 29).
(2) (I Kin. XII 28).
(3) (Hos. X 5 & 6).
However, as Pagels notes, "Unlike many of his contemporaries among the deities of the ancient Near East, the God of Israel shared his power with no female divinity, nor was he the divine Husband or Lover of any". (1)

Thus, some of the first descriptions of this god in the "Pentateuch" would seem to reflect the ideals of the patriarchal society from which they issued, in asserting the absolute uniqueness, undisputed primacy, and total self-reliance of a governing male principle.

They begin with anthropomorphic references to a male tribal guardian who is eventually assumed by his worshippers to be Lord not only of the tribe but also creator of the whole cosmos.

The title of this deity was first given as "El", meaning "He, the Lord", and was paralleled by that of "Baal" who, although likewise raised to the status of a city-state god, did not share the abhorrence of the god of the "Five Books of Moses" for his origins in the predominantly fertility religion of his ancestors.

(1) THE Gnostic Gospels, (p. 71).
The religious change and increasing isolation of the Divine was made clear in the assertion of God to Moses that, <<"I am Yahweh. To Abraham and Isaac and Jacob I appeared as El Shaddai; I did not make myself known to them by my name Yahweh">>, with the implication that Yahweh was his true and personal name and distinct from a mere title. (1)

Despite the Jewish insistence concerning the uniqueness of their conception, throughout the scriptures Yahweh was often described as appearing in a pillar of cloud, or fire, (which may have been a poetic metaphor for the thunderbolt), or, as in "Job", speaking from the centre of the whirlwind.

He was also portrayed as inhabiting the "high places", as did the "Lord of the Mountain", Baal Tzaphon.

(1) (Exo. VI 2 & 3). The personal name of this Baal as YHVH was recited once a year by the High Priest in the Holy of Holies. By "Gematria", (a system of numerical and alphabetic exegesis), it totals the number 26, which equals the words for beast as ChICh, pre-existence as HVIH, dual as ZVGI, and vision as ChZVH, though it should be noted that a variant of this name was spelt YHV, totalling 21, and that this may be the source of the name Iao. The title, "Baal", was spelt BL, meaning "Lord", and totals 32, as do the words for "lightning", as ChZIZ, and "glory", as KBVD.
This is shown most clearly in "Exodus", where the "Decalogue" was presented when the book related how, <<the sons of Israel came to the wilderness of Sinai>>, and that <<Moses then went up to God, and Yahweh called to him from the mountain>>, where he was told, <<"I am coming to you in a dense cloud so that the people may hear when I speak to you and may trust you always">>. (1)

The preparation for the divine theophany included warnings against touching the mountain itself; presumably because of the need for its physical inviolability, and because it was thought that ritual uncleanness could be transmitted by contagion. Moses promised that, <<"Whoever touches the mountain will be put to death. No one must lay a hand on him: he must be stoned or shot down by an arrow, whether man or beast; he must not remain alive">>. (2)

Although the Law had at this time not been given, taboos against menstruation would most likely have been in force since, Moses warned the menfolk, <<"do not go near any women">>. (3)

(1) (Exo. XIX 2, 3 & 9).
(2) (Exo. XIX 13).
(3) (Exo. XIX 15).
The manifestation was graphically described, thus, <<Now at daybreak on the third day there were peals of thunder on the mountain and lightning flashes, a dense cloud, and a loud trumpet blast ... The mountain of Sinai was entirely wrapped in smoke, because Yahweh had descended on it in the form of fire. Like smoke from a furnace the smoke went up, and the whole mountain shook violently. Louder and louder grew the sound of the trumpet. Moses spoke, and God answered him with peals of thunder>>. (1)

This conception was of enduring currency, for even in the late "Wisdom" poem, "Job", Yahweh was still described as speaking from within the whirlwind. (2)

Yahweh was also portrayed riding on the clouds as the King of the Army and as god of war, <<fighting for Israel>>, with power over the celestial bodies themselves proven when, at the command of his chosen and anointed hero Joshua, <<The sun stood still in the middle of the sky and delayed its setting for almost a whole day.>>. (3)

(1) (Exo. XIX 16, 18 & 19).
(2) (Job. XXXVIII 1).
(3) (Jos. X).
"Isaiah" continued these descriptions of Yahweh as "Lord of Hosts" who declaimed, "On a bare hill hoist a signal, sound the war cry ... I, for my part, issue orders to my sacred warriors, I summon my knights to serve my anger ... Listen! The din of kingdoms, of nations mustering. It is Yahweh Sabaoth marshalling the troops for battle ... Howl! For the day of Yahweh is near ... with wrath and fierce anger, to reduce the earth to desert".

(1)

Although the prophets exhorted the nation to monolatry the existence of other gods was sometimes implied as in "First Commandment" of the "Decalogue", or mentioned as in the speech of Yahweh to Solomon. (2)

A common Hebrew conception was of the world as composed of seventy nations each of which worshipped one of seventy gods, although the god of the Jews was considered to be the Lord of all and known by various names.

Much mystical speculation was to be centred on these names of God, and especially upon the "divided name", or "Shemhamphorash", (so called because of the insertion of the letter Shin into the "Tetragrammaton" or four-lettered name, thus, "YShHVH").

(1) (Isa. XIII 2-9).

(2) The references are: (Exo. XX 3); and (I Kin. IX 6-7).
Allied to this were the so-called "angels of the divided name", which were derived from the passage in "Exodus", which demonstrated the visible presence of Yahweh in the form of an atmospheric pillar, and begins, "Then the angel of Yahweh, who marched at the front of the army of Israel, changed station and moved to their rear. The pillar of cloud changed station from the front to the rear of them, and remained there. It came between the camp of the Egyptians and the camp of Israel. The cloud was dark, and the night passed without the armies drawing any closer the whole night long". (1)

From these verses, by various alphabetic permutations, were derived seventy-two names of angels, each pair of which were said, in the mediaeval grimoires, to rule over ten degrees of the ecliptic. (2)

During the Graeco-Roman empire the title "Hypistos" was a favourite of the "Gentile" "God-fearers" for this now transcendent deity and means "the Highest".

(1) (Exo. XIV 19-21).

(2) The names of these beings may be found, (passim.), in THE MAGUS, A DICTIONARY OF ANGELS, and BLACK MAGIC.
There may have been, what to outsiders would have seemed akin to, a pseudo-mystery cult of this Hypistos lacking the more Jewish legalistic elements but with an emphasis on monotheism for the circle of initiates, and, if there was not, as Goodenough has suggested, an actual organised mystery cult, it is still probable that there was a pietist philosophical circle comparable with other philosophical schools of the period. (1)

This Hypistos was identified with Zeus in his transplanetary form as the Supreme Divinity, as well as the god Sabazius, (who was often identified with Dionysus as well as Zeus) and, according to McL. Wilson, Plutarch directly identifies Yahweh with him due to the similarity perceived between the divine names of Yahweh, or Iaho, and Iao, a name of the mystic Dionysus perhaps derived from his title, Iacchus, though Charlesworth suggests that this name was but a contraction of the Tetragrammaton which became appropriated by the "Gentiles". (2)

(1) THE GnostIC PROBLEM, (p. 13).

(2) THE Old TESTAMENT Pseudepigrapha, (vol. II p. 721 n. 1).
For non-Jews, Yahweh was also identified with Saturn or Chronos, partly due to his nature, and partly because his holy day was that ruled by Saturn in Hellenist astrology. (1)

Certainly, the bowdlerised translations of the divine titles in the "Septuagint" as Hypistos and "Kurios Sabaoth" show that these were acceptable terms, at least in the more liberal Diasporan communities. (2)

But with the "Septuagint" translation in Alexandria, designed to meet the needs of its Jews who had become Hellenised at least in language), a further opening for philosophical speculation was made, most probably due to the use of epithets for the Divine, (in order to avoid direct translation of the Tetragrammaton or four-lettered name of YHVH), with the result that the development of the concepts of the namelessness of God and of his unknowability were facilitated.

(1) The name of the planet in Hebrew is "Kaiwan", spelt KIVN, totals 86, (as does the name, "Elohim", as ALHIM), and was mentioned by "Amos", thus, «Now you must shoulder Sakkuth your king and Kaiwan your god, those idols you have made for yourselves; for I mean to take you far beyond Damascus into exile, says Yahweh - God of Sabaoth is his name>>, (Amo. V 26-27), as Vermes notes in his introduction to the "Damascus Rule" of the Qumran sectaries in THE DEAD SEA SCROLLS IN ENGLISH, (p. 96).

(2) THE Gnostic Problem, (p. 12).
In this way much that had now become seen as gross and anthropomorphic, and consequently a slur upon the transcendental nature of the supreme, was removed, and in order to minimalise this anthropomorphism, various changes to the actual texts were introduced by the scribes during the time of Ezra, presumably before the return to Palestine, and as a result of the contact between the Exiles and Babylonian philosophies.

The path cleared by these "Tikkune Sopherim" was continued within the Aramaic translations of the "Pentateuch", wherein the word "Memra", meaning "The Word", (equivalent to the Greek "Logos"), replaced the more anthropomorphic expressions of God's activity, and the tendency was adopted by the translators of the "Pentateuch" into Greek which was known as the "Septuagint".

This alteration of the text was due to the prevalent reaction against literalism and in favour of a more allegorical interpretation in order to obscure more primitive theological elements. (1)

This process can be seen in the "Targumim" also, with the use of the sexless term Memra as a replacement for the unutterable name, although the male gender for the divine was retained as more than implicit since it would appear that the word was represented by the pillar, or Amud, of fire and smoke. (2)

(1) JUDAISM, (p. 196).

(2) Memra spelt MAMR totals by Gematria 281 as do the words for a crown as APR, vestment as PAR, and pudenda as ORVH.
Direct theophany of the Divine in male gender was not unknown, and in "Genesis", God himself was spoken of as appearing upon the earth, though later Judaism was to explain such manifestations as the unidentified "angel of the Lord".

In the "Hekaloth" texts, such as III Enoch, the angel was named as Metatron who was given the title, "the lesser YHVH", which as Alexander notes, "arose through speculation about the angel of the Lord in whom God’s name resides". (1)

Yet despite the extensive mention of the angel of the Lord little amplification of his nature and character was given in the "Torah", though identification of the angel with the Lord was made clear in the third chapter of "Exodus", and the phrase seems to have been used especially for the theophanous manifestation of God.

At Horeb, "the angel of Yahweh appeared to him", (Moses), "in the shape of a flame of fire, coming from the middle of a bush", though on Moses’ approach, "God called to him from the middle of the bush". After announcing himself as the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, "Moses covered his face, afraid to look at God". (2)

(1) THE OLD TESTAMENT PSEUDEPIGRAPHA, (vol. I p. 265 n. e).
(2) (Exo. III 2, 4, & 6).
Following this God commissioned Moses and announced His true name, <<I Am who I Am>>; his, <<name for all time; by this name I shall be invoked for all generations to come>>, though it is never mentioned again in the book. (1)

The figure known as the "Captain" or "Angel of the Lord" is mentioned in the stories of Joshua, and Sampson, though perhaps the first use of such a metaphor is in the story of Jacob and his confrontation with God. (2)

The text states, <<And there was one that wrestled with him until daybreak who, seeing that he could not master him, struck him in the socket of his hip>>, and who says, <<"Let me go, for day is breaking">>.

After receiving his blessing from the unnamed one by his bestowal of a new name to his adversary, namely Israel, Jacob realised that he had seen God face-to-face and had survived the ordeal, which descent of the spirit qualified him as one anointed. (3)

(1) (Exo. III 14-15). The name is spelt in Hebrew as AHIH-AShR-AHIH and totals 543. Its constituents, AHIH, and AShR, total 21, (the sacred number of the Samaritans), and 501, respectively, as do words for Iao as IHV, and "the head", (which also bears the implication, "a beginning"), as RASH, respectively.

(2) (Jos. V 13-15), & (Jud. XIII).

(3) (Gen. XXXII 26 & 27).
The figure of Jacob as Israel seems to have been viewed by some Jewish circles as similar to that of Metatron, as Smith notes in his introduction to the "Prayer of Joseph", wherein he writes that as Philo, (in his "De Confusione Linguarum", CXLVI), had spoken of the Logos as, "God's firstborn ... who holds the eldership among the angels", whose names are, "the Beginning ... and Word, and the Man after His Image ... and ... Israel", so too the "Prayer" states, "I, Jacob ... am also Israel, and angel of God and a ruling spirit ... I ... am he who God called Israel ... because I am the firstborn of every living thing to whom God gives life ... Am I not Israel, the first minister before the face of God?>>. {1}

{1} The references are to THE OLD TESTAMENT PSEUDEPIGRAPHA, (vol. II p. 701), and "Prayer of Joseph", (Fragment A, 1-3, & 8). "Genesis" states, concerning the naming, "But Jacob answered, "I will not let you go unless you bless me". He then asked, "What is your name?" "Jacob", he replied. He said, "Your name shall no longer be Jacob, but Israel, because you have been strong against God, you shall prevail against men".>>. (Gen. XXXII 28-29).
In "Exodus" Moses was told that the form in which God had previously appeared to the ancestors, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, was that of El Shaddai, (He, the Almighty), since God says, "I did not make myself known to them by my name Yahweh", yet although Jacob was blessed with a face-to-face vision of God Moses was not so rewarded. {1}

After the crossing by the "Israelites" of the Jordan direct theophany of God seems to have receded and instead it was written of the anointed Joshua that, "he raised his eyes and saw a man standing there before him, grasping a naked sword. Joshua walked towards him and said to him, "Are you with us or with our enemies?" He answered, "No, I am captain of the army of Yahweh, and now I come". Joshua fell on his face to the ground and worshipped him and ... the captain of the army ... answered ... "Take your sandals off your feet, for the place you are standing on is holy". And Joshua obeyed>. {2}

{1} (Exo. VI 2 & 3), and (Exo. XXXIII 18-23). It is interesting to note that by Gematria Shaddai, spelt ShDI, and totalling 314, equals both the word for an "acacia bush", ShTH, (perhaps from which God appeared to Moses), and the Lesser YHVH, Metatron, spelt as MTTRVN. Further, El Shaddai, as AL-ShDI, totals 345, as do the words for, "The Name", as H-ShM, and Moses, as MShH.

Yet it is probable that this passage, now most certainly interpolated, was understood as a parallel to that of Moses and the Burning Bush, with the captain as a visible image of the power of God, and perhaps as a guarantee of the authority of Joshua as the spiritual descendant of Moses.

Again, in "Judges" the angel of Yahweh reiterated the opening words of the "Decalogue" in the first person himself, and it is possible that passages such as this have been subject to priestly revision in order to emphasise the uniqueness of the appearances to Moses, and gradually it seems that only the voice of God was left to direct his flock as he himself became viewed as more and more transcendental.

The dangers attendant upon the vision of Yahweh became, in the eyes of Gideon at least, transferred to that of his angels, thus he exclaims, <<"Alas, my Lord Yahweh! I have seen the angel of Yahweh face to face!">>, and until assurances to the contrary from God himself believed that he would therefore die. (1)

A similar appearance, though of a more developed conception, heralded the birth of the hero Samson and the canonical institution of the vow of the "Nazirite".

(1) (Jud. VI 22).
Upon the second appearance of the angel, Manoah offered him hospitality, although the angel explained, "Even if I did stay with you, I would not eat your food". So instead they offered up an holocaust and, "As the flame went up heavenwards from the altar, the angel of Yahweh ascended in the flame ... And Manoah said to his wife, "We are certain to die, because we have seen God"." {1}

It would appear then that originally Yahweh himself had intervened in these episodes but that, due to the emphasis on the utter uniqueness of God and the developing tendency towards transcendentalisation, a metaphorical surrogate for the actual appearance of the creator was substituted and emphasis began to be placed upon the vehicle of theophanous manifestation instead.

In Judaism this involved the acceptance of an angelic host as messengers and actors from the Supreme: as is evidenced in "Acts", for the citizens of Lycaonia as for most non-Jews, the gods themselves were, even at this late date, held to be able to use the mortal frame of an human being for their work upon earth.

{2}

{1} (Jud. XIII 16a & 20-22).

{2} (Act. XIV 6-13).
In thanksgiving for being impregnated, the child of the couple was dedicated to Yahweh and tabooed in the sense that he had to follow the Nazirite vow.

This vow was of ancient origin and may have been a precondition for prophecy, which as a process of communion with the deity, often goes hand-in-hand with various methods of "Ascesis" or preparatory discipline.

The Nazirite vow, since it is so often connected with either prophets or heroes, may have originally been a qualification for the assumption of the mantle of prophecy as a "Messiah" or anointed one.

Mead notes that the idea that the Messiah was supposed to come from Nazareth was but a confusion of the name of that town with the word "Nazir" meaning "consecrated to God". (1)

The Nazirite vow by which the devotee was dedicated to Yahweh entailed the abstention from all products of the vine. (2)

Other details included refraining the cutting of the hair, (which was later to be offered in the fire of the communion sacrifice), or from going near to a corpse, (since this was held to nullify the vow which had then to be taken again), with a dove being offered as a sacrifice of reparation. (3)

(1) THE GNOTIC JOHN THE BAPTISER, (p. 7).
(2) (Num. cap. VI 3-4).
(3) (Num. cap. VI 5-13).
The most obvious example of such a Nazirite seems to be found in the prophet Samuel, who was left by his mother, Hannah, in the care of Eli, whose house God was later to condemn through the boy. (1)

But the principles of abstention, (notably after the rise of Christianity), were later seen to be against the grain of Jewish teaching, (even such as the ancient Nazirite vows with the emphasis on the avoidance of wine).

Other records of a type of asceticism in post-Exilic works such as fasting, may be found as the practices of Baruch in the valley of Kidron; of Joseph, in the house of Potiphar; and the exhortations of Enoch to his son Methuselah. (2)

(1) (I Sam. III 11-15). The text states that God speaking to Samuel announced, "I am about to do such a thing in Israel as will make the ears of all who hear it ring. On that day, I will carry out against Eli everything I have spoken about his House ... You are to tell him that I condemn his House for ever ... neither sacrifice nor offering shall ever expiate the guilt of the House of Eli."

(2) The respective references are to: (II Bar. XX 5); (T. Jos. III 4); and (I Eno. XCVIII 8).
In the first of the letters ascribed to Paul to the predominantly "Gentile" church at Corinth, (and allegedly written at Ephesus), mention is made of factions within the Christian communities concerning scriptural interpretation in the light of the "Gospel" which include strains of libertinism, (including incest believed to have been condoned due to the alleged transcendence by the believer of the "Old" Law), although Corinthian licentiousness was already well-known, and of theories of election, because of which Paul has to modify one of his own sayings. (1)

The existence of such factions has traditionally been attributed to the misunderstanding of the converts, and to deliberate misinterpretation by self-seeking sinners, as if there was such a thing as a complete and sealed core Christianity from the outset. (2)

(1) Paul originally appears to have written four letters to the Corinthians, though the two extant date from about 57 C.E.

(2) (I Cor. VI 12). The "Epistle" states, "For me there are no forbidden things"; maybe, but not everything does good. I agree there are no forbidden things for me, but I am not going to let anything dominate me ... Your body, you know, is the temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you since you have received him from God. You are not your own property; you have been bought and paid for.>>.

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Yet even before the Diaspora, and especially after it, there were within Judaism itself movements which in the light of recent discoveries contained elements which may be viewed as proto-Gnostic, such as the emphasis on angelic intermediaries between the Divine and the human, on a more personal knowledge of God, philosophical cosmogonic speculation, and an interest in apocalyptic, as well as allegorical interpretations of the creation mythos. (1)

(1) Only three angels are named throughout the Bible, "Michael" in the "Old Testament"; "Gabriel" in the "New Testament", and "Raphael", who identifies himself, in the apocryphal "Book of Tobit", (cap. XII 15), thus, "I am Raphael, one of the seven angels who stand ever ready to enter the presence of the glory of the Lord". According to III Enoch, "Rabbi Ishmael said: The angel Metatron, Prince of the Divine Presence, the glory of highest heaven, said to me: There are seven great, beautiful, wonderful, and honoured princes who are in charge of the seven heavens. They are, Michael, Gabriel, Satqiel, Sahaqiel, Baradiel, Baraqiel, and Sidriel>>, who were in charge of the seventh to the first heavens, respectively. (III Eno. XVII 1-3).
The emphasis on angelology, most markedly in the visions to be found within "Zechariah" and especially the amplification of the stories of the Fall given in the sixth chapter of "Genesis" as given in "Jubilees" and "I Enoch", are examples of the tendency within certain Jewish communities towards syncretism, or at least acquaintance with foreign doctrine, and, prior to the apparent explosion of new religious ideologies which marks the beginning of the Christian era, there was also within Judaism a recognised tradition of mysticism with the allegorical exegesis of the "Torah" highly developed, as well as a growing respect for some aspects of Hellenist philosophy. (1)

The practical side of this tradition was centred around the Chariot of the Most High, the "Merkabah", often equated with the Ark of the Covenant, which seems to have replaced the tradition of the appearance of the Captain of the Heavenly Hosts. (1)

(1) (Zec. I 7-12; II 1-9; III 1-10; IV 1-14; V 1-11; VI 1-9), (Jub. V 1-2), & (I Eno. VI, VII, & VIII).

(2) The mystical texts associated with the seven Hekaloth or Heavenly Halls, (often seen as planetary spheres), such as the "Hekaloth Rabbati", include hymns to the Merkabah, as Alexander points out in THE OLD TESTAMENT PSEUDEPIGRAPHA, (vol. I p. 231).
The most obvious of these seems to be the development of Merkabah mysticism, (with the veneration of Enoch as the type of the charioteer), and its amplification within the "Hekaloth" texts. (1)

However the symbol of the chariot was by no means peculiar to Jewish mysticism, for the Asiatic mother goddesses such as Cybele, and later the various sun gods, such as Apollo and Helios, were represented as driving the vehicle, and its image was to be found in the heavens in the large constellation of Auriga which is of great antiquity and found in the Euphrataean stellar catalogues.

Although the earliest representations of this asterism included the chariot, by the classical period this had disappeared leaving only the charioteer and a nanny with her kids, from which his reputation as a goat-herd developed.

The largest star in the constellation is Capella, sometimes equated with the nymph Amalthea, the nurse of Zeus, (perhaps also representing the glorified soul of the child-victim as Dionysus), and it would appear to be this star to which various of the temples of the Egyptian Ptah, the pantocratorous potter, were orientated. (2)

(1) Merkabah, spelt in Hebrew as MRKBH, equals 267, as does the word for a Nazirite, as NZVR.

(2) STAR NAMES: THEIR LORE AND MEANING, (p. 86-89).
Thus the cult of the chariot, or quadriga, as seen in a vision by Ezekiel, had presumably as long a currency within Judaism, as the vehicle of the Captain of the Heavenly Hosts, as it had outside.

It was viewed as the theophanic organ of God, his "Shekinah" or glory, equated with his wisdom, which in Hellenist circles was taken as equivalent to the "Logos", as the word of God, and in Christianity became seen as the pre-existent Messiah.

The symbolism of the chariot became a metaphor for the method of divine descent to the world from the heavens, (a description seemingly borrowed from solar mythology), and this conception appears to have superseded that of the ladder upon which the angels travelled in the dream of Jacob. (1)

(1) "Genesis" states, "He had a dream: a ladder was there, standing on the ground with its top reaching to heaven; and there were angels of God going up it and coming down ... Then Jacob awoke from his sleep and said ... "How awe-inspiring this place is! This is nothing less than a house of God; this is the gate of Heaven!" Rising up early in the morning, Jacob took the stone he had used for his pillow, and set it up as a monument, pouring oil over the top of it." (Gen. XXVIII 12-13, & 17-18). He named the place "Bethel", meaning a "house of God", which, in Hebrew, is spelt BITh-AL, and totals 443, as does the word for a "virgin", as BThVLH.
Further it became, especially after the decline in importance of the Temple, particularly associated with the Ark of the Covenant and the Mercy Seat thereon. (1)

Thus the chariot was seen as a visible symbol of the presence of the Invisible, and the vesture of the Divine, the glory, (equated with wisdom and usually portrayed as female), of Yahweh. It was, by implication, also the method of return to the heights and as such the vehicle used by Enoch in his ascent.

(1) The chariot itself was held to be supported by four beasts, which may well have a calendrical significance. The beasts have four faces apiece; of an eagle, a bull, a lion, and of a man. It is written, "Above the vault over their heads was something ... shaped like a throne and high up on this throne was a being that looked like a man." (Eze I 26). These animals were later assigned to the four Evangelists but seem to have been early equated with the fixed or grave signs, thus: Bull to Taurus; Lion to Leo; Eagle to Scorpio; and Man to Aquarius. The four seasons of the Chaldaean solar year, as well as being allotted deities of the cardinal directions, were also similarly symbolised as the "Sed", or "Kirub", pictured as a human-faced bull; the "Lamas", or lion; the "Ustur", or man; and the "Nattig", or eagle. CHALDAEAN MAGIC, (p. 121).
Merkabah mysticism is traditionally thought to have been brought to Europe from Palestine by Aaron ben Samuel and later entered German Judaism in the early tenth century, C.E., where it merged with a movement of pietism which stressed the importance of frequent and heartfelt prayer, although it is probable that this predominantly esoteric tradition had already gained ground in the Diaspora.

The contemplation of the Merkabah, according to Dan, seems to have been regularly practised in the circle of Rabbi Yochanan ben Zakkai in 70 C.E., which would seem to indicate that the discipline was passed on by the Rabbi to a closed circle of initiates, though the practice was quite possibly extant before the writings of the prophet Ezekiel and he may have merely compiled the available wisdom. (1)

However, "Ezekiel" is valuable for his account of the chariot which may also have perhaps been read as an allegory of the method used by Enoch in his ascent to the Hekaloth or Heavenly Halls.

(1) JEWISH SPIRITUALITY, (cap. XI p. 290).
The journey of ascent to the heavens signified the triumph over death and it would appear that, as with the descent of Ishtar who stripped herself at the seven gates of the Underworld, (related to the seven sacred planets), in search of her lover Adonis, and the practices of the Egyptian Pharaohs in preparation for their celestial passage through the Tuat, the first stage on this odyssey was a visit to the realm of the dead.

For the Hebrews this place was typified as Sheol wherein the dead continued to exist in an insubstantial body similar to the shadow they threw when alive.

In the earliest periods it appears that this was a kingdom over which Yahweh had no jurisdiction of which the psalmist laments, "<Come back, Yahweh, rescue my soul, save me, if you love me; for in death there is no remembrance of you: who can sing your praises in Sheol?>. (1)

It was to this place that a king descended when he "slept with his fathers"; a fate common to all but one, the patriarch Enoch.

(1) (Psa. VI 4 & 5).
The tradition that he did not die and instead "walked with God" appears to have been associated with the record of the taking-up of Elijah, for the former was also connected with the chariot, and his mythos, (presumably incorporating the ascent), supersedes that of Elijah, at least in the pseudepigraphical books, until the traditions recorded concerning Elijah in the "New Testament".

It seems to have become a common belief that before the end of the world, (and later, before the appearance of the Messiah), the prophet Elijah would descend to the earth in the role of herald, and that in some quarters the Messiah himself was seen as Elijah "redivivus", and that the prophecy of Moses referred not to Joshua, son of Nun, (successor of Moses), but to the prophet.

"Matthew" records that upon hearing of the reputation of Jesus, Herod said, «"This is John the Baptist himself; he has risen from the dead, and that is why miraculous powers are at work in him"», and further that Jesus himself equates John with Elijah prophesying that the "Son of Man" would be similarly treated by the authorities. (1)

(1) (Matt. XIV 2, and XVII 13).
In "Luke", the account of the transfiguration stated that as Jesus prayed, "Suddenly there were two men there talking to him; they were Moses and Elijah appearing in glory!", which seems to confirm that in some circles Elijah was seen as the one guaranteed by Moses. (1)

The affiliation of the prophet with the Messiah was recalled in "Matthew", wherein Jesus asked his disciples, "Who do people say the Son of Man is?" And they said, "Some say he is John the Baptist, some Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets!", and the divergence of opinion was noted. (2)

The ascension of Elijah is reported almost as an introduction to the story of his successor Elisha and his exploits, and it may well be a later addition to the corpus, however, it explicitly equates the vehicle upon which the prophet ascended with the chariot of the Lord of Hosts, Yahweh Sabaoth, which seems to have been seen as a whirlwind from which God was later to address Job.

(1) (Luk. IX 30 & 31).
(2) (Matt. XVI 13 & 14).
In the legend the two companions visited various of the holy sites, including Gilgal where Joshua set up the twelve stones, and Bethel where Jacob received his vision, until resting by the Jordan river which Elijah separated, as had Moses the Red Sea, when suddenly, "a chariot of fire appeared and horses of fire, coming between the two of them; and Elijah went up to heaven in the whirlwind. Elisha saw it and shouted ... "Chariot of Israel and its chargers!"." (1)

Yet it seems that the earliest elaboration of such an ascent in "Biblical" literature is from the third century B.C.E., "Book of Enoch", and it concerns Enoch not Elijah. (2)

It is a highly composite work, portions of which were discovered at Qumran, and it appears to have been known to the writer of the "Epistle of Jude". (3)

The genealogy of the patriarch is given in the fifth chapter of the book of "Genesis" which describes the "roll of Adam's descendants", and lists an unbroken line from Adam to Noah, the great-grandson of Enoch, who was the seventh descendant of Adam and Eve.

(1) (II Kin. II 11 & 12).
(2) (I Eno. XVII-XXXVI).
(3) (Jude I 6 & 14).
Of all the antediluvian patriarchs mentioned in the priestly records in "Genesis", Enoch, is mentioned as living for 365 years before he vanished.

That this figure corresponds with the number of days in both the Babylonian and Egyptian calendars can hardly be a coincidence and in some way, Enoch may have been viewed as either a symbol of the year, or its lord; whatever, he was often mentioned along with the calendar.

What distinguished him from all the other patriarchs of that chapter, including Adam, was that it is not recorded that he died. Instead the text reads that, "Enoch walked with God. Then he vanished because God took him!", which seems to have become seen as happening in the same way as was recorded of Elijah, and in later Jewish myth he was said to have become the angel Metatron, king over all the angelic hosts.

During his ascension it was held that he alone saw the mysteries of the universe and the future of the world though in later apocryphal literature the act of ascension seems to have proliferated and was ascribed also to Isaiah, Abraham, and Zephaniah, although many of these works have been heavily Christianised. {1}

{1} The "Apocalypse of Abraham" and the "Apocalypse of Zephaniah", are given in THE OLD TESTAMENT PSEUDEPIGRAPHA, (vol. I), and the "Martyrdom and Ascension of Isaiah", (ibid. vol. II).
Much of the Enochian literature was taken up with descriptions of the Heavenly Halls or seven palaces encountered during an ascent into the heavens with the gate of each palace guarded by an angel, entry to which was by the use of a mystic passwords often a "Notariqon", or mystic abbreviation, of various divine names.

The divine halls gave their name to this literature the oldest of such works most probably being the "Hekaloth Zutarti", ascribed to Rabbi Akiba, though perhaps the most detailed is the late work known as "III Enoch". Throughout these books the method of ascent is but briefly described which would seem to indicate that the tradition was already well-known.

One of the most striking descriptions in "III Enoch" was the transfiguration of Enoch who became aggrandised and whose celestial dimensions paralleled those of the central figure of the "Shiur Komah" works. (1)

The "Shiur Komah", or "The Measurement of the Divine Stature", pseudepigraphically ascribed to Rabbi Ishmael, was perhaps based on contemplation of the figure of the Lover in the fifth chapter of the "Song of Songs". (2)

(1) (III Eno. IX).
(2) (SoS. V 10-16).
As the figure of the Lover was in some places identified as Solomon the work was early ascribed to him, (although it became seen as an allegory of the love for the Lord as exemplified in the person of the Messiah for his people)

There are a number of "Biblical" prophecies concerning the origin and nature of the Messiah, whether Son of David, Son of Man, or Son of Joseph, (or as in the Christian version, a descendant of all three), while for those at Qumran, the expectation concerned the appearance of two Messianic figures; the spiritual High Priest and the temporal Son of David. (1)

During times of political unrest there arose separatist or Messianic groups centred around particular Rabbinim, an example of the former being the Maccabean "Hasidim". Without necessarily accepting the existence of a Jewish mystery cult it is probable that individual Rabbinim were as revered for their alleged contact with the divine as were the "Zaddikim" in Poland centuries later.

(1) The word Messiah is spelt in Hebrew, MShICh, and equals the number 358; as does the word, "Nechesh", spelt NChSh, and meaning "snake", which may have been taken by some Jewish exegeticists as significant.
Thus while there may not have been a cult as such it would seem pertinent to suggest that the appeal of the Jewish faith for the "God-fearers" may have consisted in more than either ethical monotheism or an admiration for the apparent stability of Jewish family life.

The asceticism of some of these communities showed itself positively in prayer meetings, (where prolonged recitation of psalms and hymns was undertaken in an attempt to prepare the devotee for a closer communion with the divine than a basic observance of the "Torah" achieved), and it is possible that, (given the persistence of "Enochian" pseudepigrapha), a system of preparation for the post-mortem journey of the soul was taught. This would have involved the invocation of angelic beings and the memorisation of their attributes in the hope that the adept could, having triumphed over death, join the choirs of angels of the heavenly court whose spokesman appears to have been the angel Metatron, captain of the armies of the Lord and vice-regent of the divine.

The captain of the armies seems to have become seen as the messenger of God "par excellence" and, as the supreme and arch angel, was spoken of as "the word of the Lord".
He seems to have been imagined as the pillar of smoke, (the visible symbol of the invisible Absolute), and to have become a metaphorical replacement for the real presence of Yahweh, (and as such a guarantee of credibility to the audience for the divine inspiration of the speaker rather than a reliance upon miraculous portents).

Although the early communities of ecstatic prophets had manifested signs and wonders the core of later prophetic teaching was ethical rather than supernatural so that the role of the prophet became seen as the mouthpiece or channel of the "word of God".

Despite the tradition that Moses had reached a certain pre-eminence at the court of the Pharaoh he complained that he was a slow speaker and, (after his being granted miraculous powers), God allowed his brother Aaron to be his interpreter.

A precedent seems here to have been set in that those who manifested the miraculous were, generally speaking, not prophets but instead needed a prophet of their own. Thus God said to Moses, "See, I make you as a god for Pharaoh, and Aaron your brother is to be your prophet." (1)

Other early figures, (such as Elijah and Elisha), were remnants of the more heroic type but they seem to have been later viewed as prophets who criticised various rulers for their iniquities, with their miracles being merely adjuncts to their ethical preaching.

(1) (Exo. VII 1).
That Enoch had been more than this would seem to be proven by the pseudepigrapha concerning him, and the difference between him and the classical pre-Exilic prophets such as Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, and Jeremiah, is most apparent.

After the siege of Jerusalem and the decline of the Temple service the importance to the Exiles of the "Torah", as the basis of their faith, and the synagogue, of their community, became uppermost. Scriptural exegesis among the scribes or "Soferim", now of far greater importance, undoubtedly reached dizzying heights in those centres of learning and cosmological speculation. {1}

Apart from an interest in angelology it would appear that the mysticism particular to the "Shiur Komah" movement which with the "Maaseh Merkah", or "Matter of the Chariot", and the "Maaseh Berashith", or "Matter of Creation", were privately expounded. The two former are both to be found in "Ezekiel" and it is significant that the vision begins with a mention of the psychotropic effect of the "hand of Yahweh" on the prophet.

{1} The successors of the Babylonian scribes were the "Men of the Great Assembly", precursors of the "Pharisim", (as the priestly guilds were those of the Sadducees or "Zadokim").
Upon the throne or chariot described was, <<a being that looked like a man ... and all around him from what seemed his loins upwards was what looked like fire; and from what seemed his loins downwards ... fire, and a light all round like a bow in the clouds on rainy days ... It was something that looked like the glory of Yahweh>>. (1)

The physical or supra-physical descriptions of Yahweh are here transferred to his glory, (which was later to be described in female terms), but the effect on Ezekiel was still as striking as that of God himself on Moses.

Yet the fundamental act of God during these early chapters was summarised in the description by the seer of the effects of the sins of Jerusalem, (which he holds were the cause of its fall and its rejection by its maker); <<The glory of Yahweh came out from the Temple threshold and paused over the cherubs. The cherubs spread their wings and rose from the ground to leave, and as I watched ... They paused at the entrance to the east gate of the Temple ... and the glory of the God of Israel hovered over them ... The cherubs then spread their wings and ... the glory of Yahweh rose to leave the city and paused on the mountain to the east of the city>>. (2)

(1) (Eze. I 26-28).
(2) (Eze. X 18-20 & XI 22-23).
Due to this exodus the synagogue, especially in the Diaspora, became the centre of religious thought and maintained its influence even after both Haggai and Zechariah had emphasised the essentially political need for the rebuilding of the Temple, and it was from these Rabbinic circles that the "Mishnah", a collection of legal decisions finally written down in second century C.E., and the "Midrash" consisting of legendary narrative exegesis, arose.

As well as the representation of the "Captain" of the angelic host as God immanent, which process seems to have reached new heights in the book of "Ezekiel", (most probably a product of the priestly schools), went a similar development of the concept of God as communicating his will through the agency of the word as a spiritual entity within the prophetic tradition. Here the word of God, audible but not visible, became associated with his spirit.

Two differing conceptions may be discerned: in the former, modelled after neighbouring forms of government, that of a king and his many ministers; in the latter, (a more simple view), that of God and his voice or breath, the precursor of the Christian view of the Holy Spirit.
One of the first instances of this conception is related to the story of the prophecy of Balaam. "Numbers" states that, <<Raising his eyes Balaam saw Israel, encamped by tribes; the spirit of God came on him and he declaimed ... "the oracle of one who hears the word of God. He sees what Shaddai makes him see, receives the divine answer, and his eyes are opened ... I see him - but not in the present, I behold him - but not close at hand".>>. (1)

Although the spirit and El Shaddai are almost certainly one and the same, the emphasis is on supernatural audition and interior vision: a theophany within.

Yet the ecstatic effects of "possession" by the spirit of Yahweh were not confined to the prophets alone and with the institution of kingship the office of the ruler and that of the prophet were to be combined; thus it later became thought that the spirit descended upon the king at his anointing.

So Saul was warned, as both king and prophet, that after his consecration by Samuel, <<Then the spirit of Yahweh will seize on you, and you will go into an ecstasy ... and be changed into another man>>. (2)

(1) (Num. XXIV 2-4 & 17).
(2) (I Sam. X 5).
At David's anointing the spirit also descended upon him and Samuel seems to have retired from the scene, dwelling at Ramah. (1) However, the ecstasy of possession was not only consequent upon anointing but could also be contagious since, later in the book, the spirit also descended on the servants of Saul when they went to arrest David.

The differences between the descent of the spirit, (which seem to mark out either a visionary or a king), and its audible reception, (the common method of the prophets), is apparent in the more apocalyptic style of "Ezekiel" upon whom the spirit falls and it is in this work that the two conceptions seem to combine, as distinct from those of Isaiah and Jeremiah in which the ecstatic elements are negligible. (2)

But by the time of Zechariah it was held that God had spoken to his prophets in the past through the agency of his Holy Spirit and that as such they had been duly anointed, and by that of Joel, a more universalist notion in which all Israel was to be consecrated as Messiahim was guaranteed to occur at the end of days, or "Eschata". (3)

Each of the religious sects in Palestine seem to have had their own doctrine concerning the figure and lineage of the Messiah and of his herald.

(1) (I Sam. XVI 13).
(2) (Eze. XI 5).
(3) (Zec. VII 12), and (Joe. III 1).
The oldest of these southern Palestinian groups were the Sadducees, (the main fundamentalist faction who formed the upper class at Jerusalem), traditional enough to deny the post-exilic doctrine of the resurrection of the body, the existence of emphasis on angels and apocalyptic.

They kept to the elder doctrines of reward and punishment in this life believing in a shadowy post-existence in the underworld and tended to the support of the House of David as the Messianic royalty, whereas the Pharisees and their supporters leaned towards republicanism and theocratic democracy and laid greater emphasis on the spiritually redemptive aspect of the Messiah.

Their name connotes those who separated themselves from the common practice and they may have originally been a pietistic movement from whom the Messianic "Psalms of Solomon", with their use of the cultic titles "Son of David" and "Lord Messiah", which the author of "Luke" uses often, derive. (1)

Though lay, they accepted the commandments of "Levitical" purity meant for the priest and their immediate precursors were the Hasidim, the extremely anti-Hellenist faction of Maccabean times. They believed in a future life, (first mentioned in "Daniel"), in which the wicked would go to the underworld and the righteous return to the Garden of Eden. (2)

(1) (Psa. Sol. XVII 21, & 32), and (Luk. II 11).
(2) (Dan. XII).
The synagogues, built to face Jerusalem, were exegetical and teaching centres for the community, (and to the Greeks were synonymous with the philosophical schools), but they were not the first flowering of Jewish exegeticism for as Mead writes, "there were certain Palestinian pre-Christian allegorists or exponents of the scriptures on quasi-mystical lines called Dorshe Reshumoth", who may also have formed themselves into prayer and study groups forming spiritual communities within the community at large. (1)

The Samaritans were also fundamentalists, (accepting the "Pentateuch" only and rejecting the canonicity of the prophetic books), though they awaited the "<prophet like unto me>" predicted by Moses and known by them as the "Taheb" meaning the "Restorer".

For some groups this figure seems to have been seen almost as a messianic "reincarnation" of Joshua, (or in Greek, Jesus), to whom, by the southern Jews, the verse is said solely to refer. (2)

The Taheb, whom Gaster describes as a "Moses Redivivus", was to be of the tribe of Levi and would rebuild the destroyed Temple on Gerizim thus fulfilling, what was to them, the Mosaic promise. (3)

(1) THE GnostIC JOHN THE BAPTISER, (p. 5).
(2) (Deu. XVIII 18- 19).
(3) SAMARITAN ORAL LAW AND ANCIENT TRADITIONS, (p. 226).
It was written of Joshua that he had command over the celestial chronocrators and it was said of his actions, <<There was never a day like that before or since, when Yahweh obeyed the voice of a man>>. {1}

He carried out the order given to Moses and built an altar of undressed stones on Mount Ebal inscribing them with the Law, ordered circumcision, read the blessings and curses, and celebrated the first passover in Canaan, and it is pertinent to note that it was at this point that the food of their wandering, the Manna, ceased.

Later tradition however held that Joshua had placed the Law inside the Ark of the Covenant and that it was not rediscovered until the time of Josiah, (well after the division of Palestine into two kingdoms), who immediately consulted a prophetess to reveal the word of God.

She replied that God would curse Jerusalem, saying, <<My anger blazes out against this place; it will not be extinguished.>>. {2}

{1} (Jos. X 14).
{2} (II Kin. XXII 18).
Josiah promulgated both the rediscovered book and the consequent reforming legislation based upon its injunctions in the capital, destroying "all the cult objects that had been made for Baal, Asherah and the whole array of heaven", removing from office both those who sacrificed "to the sun, the moon, the constellations", and the "sacred male prostitutes", the result of which was to centralise worship on the city of David as the national and orthodox shrine. (1)

In the "Testament of Moses", which purported to be his farewell speech to Joshua, Moses tells him to take the sacred books in which the covenant had been written and "deposit them in earthenware jars in the place which God has chosen from the beginning of the creation of the world", supposedly Jerusalem or its environs. (2)

However, a different version from that given in the "Book of Kings" was expounded in the fifth chapter of the "Damascus Rule" found at Qumran, in a sectarian explanation of the notorious bigamy of David, which was excused, since he, "had not read the sealed book of the Law which was in the ark, for it was not opened in Israel from the death of ... Joshua ... It was hidden ... until the coming of Zadok". (3)

(1) (II Kin. XXIII).
(2) (T. Mos. I).
(3) THE DEAD SEA SCROLLS IN ENGLISH, (p. 101). The name, "Zadok", spelt TzDQ, means "righteousness".
However, it is important to ask whether the book had been hidden or whether it was pseudepigraphically ascribed to an earlier figure in order to proclaim new doctrines with authority although in this case the bulk of the book does seem to be another version of "Deuteronomy" with little doctrinal innovation.

The name Joshua when spelt in Hebrew as IHVShO equals 391, as does the word for salvation and help, ISHVOH, but, since the name of Yahweh was also given as IHVO and since the Shemhamphorash was taken as a synonym for the saviour Jesus, (the Greek version of the Hebrew name), it may have been that the name was tabooed in its earlier spelling as YHShVH since it contained the elements of the Tetragrammaton.

Yet a link between the two names appears to be a reasonable assumption especially given the fact that the second famous bearer of the name, the grandson of Seriah, was also lauded as a Messiah. This Joshua, son of Jehozadak, was probably born in Babylon, became High Priest upon his return, with Zerubbabel governed the southern kingdom, and upon the advice of Haggai rebuilt the Temple. (1)

The name of his father may also be a clue to his veneration since the messianic title given in "Jeremiah" as Yozedek seems to have been translated by the Seventy as a personal name meaning "Yahweh is righteousness". (2)

(1) (Hag. I).
(2) (Jer. XXIII 6).
Both Joshua and Zerubbabel were proclaimed as Messiahim by "Zechariah", (and it appears were often confused), identified with the two olive trees, (which may have been glyphs for the Trees of Knowledge and Life), were proclaimed as, <<the two anointed ones who stand before the Lord of the whole world>>, and may have been seen as analogous to the Joshua and Eleazar who first crossed the Jordan into the promised land. (1)

Further, this second Joshua as High Priest was also identified with the figure of the "Branch", (though it is evident that this peculiar title originally referred to Zerubbabel, since a priest was mentioned as being co-ruler with him); however the whole piece is hopelessly corrupt since the son of the priest was also portrayed as the temporal ruler.

The prophet states, <<"make a crown and set it on the head of Joshua ... And say ... Yahweh Sabaoth says this: Here is a man whose name is Branch ... It is he who is going to rebuild the sanctuary ... It is he who is going to wear the royal insignia. He will sit on his throne as ruler. And a priest shall be at his right hand.">>. (2)

(1) (Zec. IV 3-14).
(2) (Zec. VI 12 & 13).
In "Zechariah’s" fourth vision the second Joshua was described as, purified, transfigured, and clothed in priestly garments before a stone was placed in front of him with seven eyes carved upon it which supposedly represented the seven eyes of Yahweh, (although, later the text reads, «"People will rejoice when they see the chosen stone in the hands of Zerubbabel"»), and which in "Revelation" were symbolised by the stars, lampstands, and churches, and undoubtedly stood for the planets. (1)

In all probability the earlier version equated them with the seven tribes mentioned in the book of "Joshua" namely Benjamin, Simeon, Zebulun, Issachar, Asher, Napthali, and Dan, which themselves may well have been equated with the sacred seven planets, though the attributions are not clear. (2)

Joshua and Zerubbabel may have links with the concept of the dual messiahship expounded at Qumran, (of the spiritual Priest Messiah of Aaron and the temporal King Messiah of Israel), which also seems to be reflected both in "Haggai" and "Zechariah".

(1) (Zec. III & IV 10a).

(2) (Jos. XVIII 2).
Yet, in the "Community Rule" of Qumran mention was made of three messianic personages, the two aforementioned and the Prophet, (perhaps announced by Moses and thus equivalent to the Samaritan Taheb), which figure may, however, refer to Moses, (given the taboos against swearing in his name), as the other two refer to Aaron and David, since the King Messiah was to be of Davidic line, and to whom the two Messiahim would minister. (1)

In "Haggai", the two latter seem to be figured by Zerubbabel, (son of the High Commissioner of Judah), and Joshua, (son of the High Priest). The work concerns the rebuilding of the Temple, (although it may have later been seen as an allegory of the Kingdom of Righteousness to be expected), and the confirmation of the Davidic Messiah, exegetised from the verse following a description of the overthrow of the nations, "When the day comes ... I will take you, Zerubbabel ... my servant" ... "and make you like a signet ring. For I have chosen you -it is Yahweh Sabaoth who speaks">, though given the confusion between the two protagonists the verse may refer instead to Joshua, and the signet-ring equated with the stone with seven eyes. (2)

(1) Of these Messiahim, Vermes writes, "The King-Messiah was to be the Prince of the Congregation, and the Priestly Anointed, the Messiah of Aaron and Israel, was to be the Interpreter of the Law". THE DEAD SEA SCROLLS IN ENGLISH, (p. 49).

(2) (Hag. II 23).
Another noticeable feature of the Captivity from which Joshua returned was the growing importance attached to the knowledge of the angels, (though this may have grown from textual exegesis), especially in communities such as that of Qumran.

Yet the Persian was not the only formative influence on Judaism during these times with Hellenism exerting just as strong an influence. It was due to the current fashion of the day that the Jewish and other scriptures began to be interpreted more and more allegorically but it should not be thought that it was due to the Dispersion alone that alien elements entered an otherwise pure Judaism. What is apparent is the flourishing of such divergences during the centuries surrounding the traditional date of the birth of Christ.

From the separatist movements of the period of the Maccabean uprising, (the largest of which were known as the Hasidim, "the Pious"), came both the Pharisees and the Essenes. The principle of separatism was carried, by the latter, to its extreme especially in the establishment in the Dead Sea area around Qumran of a group calling themselves "Those of the New Covenant". (1)

Unlike their kindred, the Egyptian Theraputae, they were male dominated and according to Josephus some rejected marriage entirely. (2)

(1) THE JEWISH WAR, (p. 132).
(2) The New Covenant, in Hebrew, "Berith Hadashah".
What is striking about their philosophy is the outspoken emphasis on the dualism of good and evil given expression in the third chapter of their "Serekh ha Yahad" or "Manual of Discipline", "He has created man to govern the world, and has appointed for him two spirits in which to walk until the time of His visitation: the spirits of truth and falsehood. Those born of truth spring from a fountain of light, but those born of falsehood spring from a source of darkness". (1)

They were clearly an important group within Judaism and were secretive concerning their inner teachings which, as in the mystery cults, were divulged to the initiate only after admission to the Inner circle of the Elect.

One of the more obvious differences of the sect was its rejection of the hierarchy in Jerusalem which it considered to be contaminated by too close an association with the occupying force.

(1) THE DEAD SEA SCROLLS IN ENGLISH, (p. 75). At Qumran, the leader of the armies of light was named Melchizedek, while the captain of the hosts of darkness was known as Melkiresha; the kings of righteousness and wickedness, respectively.
It also preferred a strictly solar computation, was influenced by astrological interpretation, and exhibited what seems like wild freedom in its textual exegesis. (1)

They thought of themselves as a righteous remnant living in the last days, and called themselves "The Sons of Zadok", the same that "Ezekiel" mentioned would be in charge of the New Temple, along with the "Sons of Levi", the priests in charge of the sacrifices. (2)

But they did not consider themselves innovative; on the contrary, they believed that they were merely keeping to the true tradition which had recently become perverted by the intrusion of foreign doctrines and influence.

(1) Allegro writes concerning this exegesis, "nothing is barred to the commentator: any twisting of the meanings of words, reference to variant traditions known to the author although not included in the text before him, word plays, and even rewriting the passage to suit his interpretation, all is legitimate to the Qumran writer who is himself fired with the spirit of prophecy.". THE DEAD SEA SCROLLS: A REAPPRAISAL, (p. 103).

(2) (Eze. XL 46). In Hebrew, the "Sons of Zadok" is spelt, BNI-TzDVQ: the word TzDVQ also carries the meaning, "submission", and totals 200, as does the word for "a branch", as ONP.
Most of the information concerning the sect comes from the so-called "Damascus Scroll" and the "Community Rule", (which vindicates the account of Josephus), and which indicate that they practised ritual baptism and rehearsed a common meal amongst the elect, in preparation for the coming re-establishment of the Kingdom. (1)

This was to be brought about after an eschatological battle in which the forces of darkness would be finally defeated by the "Sons of Light" under the leadership of the Messiah, though its origins may be found in Zoroastrian apocalyptic with its doctrines of the "Last Days". (2)

(1) THE JEWISH WAR, (p. 133-134).
(2) The "Damascus Scroll" mentions the place of the sect’s exile as Damascus, the capital of the Aramaean state, although this is most probably meant to be understood figuratively, as Damascus had for many years been a sworn enemy of Israel: though the prophet "Amos" writes, "I hate and despise your feasts, I take no pleasure in your solemn festivals ... for I mean to take you far beyond Damascus into exile, says Yahweh - God of Sabaith is his name". (Amo. V 21 & 27). And in "Zechariah", in a description of the new promised land, "Yahweh has passed through the land of Hadrach and Damascus is his dwelling place". (Zec. IX 1).
However the dualism of the sectaries does not seem to have been complete, (in the sense of two primeval and opposing principles), as is the case within Zoroastrianism.

Yet in both the primacy of the Good was predicated, in both truth and error were symbolised by light and darkness, and this dualism was continued throughout the "Johannine" works: thus, "God is light; there is no darkness in him at all". {1}

"John" too establishes the dualism of the Transcendent God and the "Prince of this World" so, "We know that we belong to God, but the whole world lies in the power of the Evil One". (2)

Because of this emphasis on the duality of light and darkness so central to the pre-Christian Covenanters, Allegro writes, "No longer can John be regarded as the most Hellenist of the Evangelists; his 'gnosticism' and the whole framework of his thought is seen now to spring directly from a Jewish sectarianism rooted in Palestinian soul". (3)

{1} (I Joh. I 6).
{2} (I Joh. V 19).
{3} THE DEAD SEA SCROLLS AND THE CHRISTIAN MYTH, (p. 143).
Yet, after the abortive attempts of Jewish nationalist groups such as the Zealots, it would seem that the Kingdom became allegorised and synonymous with a state of righteousness within the believer as appears to be the case in the "Gospel of Thomas". (1)

In this state the devotee was thought to be able to communicate directly with the divine and, having transcended his old self, often symbolised in the "New Testament" as the "Torah", saw God face-to-face. Such a novelty, as compared with the vision granted to Moses, would have been further confirmation of the "New Covenant" though it should be noted that in canonical Christian writings this is not generally emphasised other than in reference to Jesus as the Messiah and Son of God.

John writes, "No one has ever seen God; but as long as we love one another God will live in us and his love will be complete in us>>, which direct knowledge has been given the name, "Gnosis", from the Greek verb, "Gignosko". (2)

It used to be fashionable to interpret Gnosticism in psychologically existential terms explaining its rise to the "angst" produced in the minds of Gnostics by the uncertainty of life in the subject nations of the "Pax Romana".

(2) (I Joh. IV 12).
Yet the roots of Jewish Gnosticism may be found in the development of Messianic speculation, (over a hundred years before the start of our era), hand-in-hand with Merkabah mysticism, the central feature of which was the ascent into the heavens of both Enoch and Elijah, the details of such being the secret property of the circles from whence they arose.

This appearance of Jewish esotericism is also to be found in the development of allegory and apocalyptic literature rife in the years before the formation of Christianity though Zoroastrianism has often been leaped upon in eagerness as the almost sole source of the Gnostic dualist heresy of the antipathy of the present world with the "World to Come".

Although this dualism was also to be found at Qumran, Bruce writes concerning the sectaries, "We shall look in vain here for that gnosis which enables the soul to liberate itself progressively from its imprisonment in matter by ascending through the spheres to the upper realm of light.". (1)

However such a journey was common to many of the mystery cults, the earliest examples being those of the judgement texts of Egyptians, and would appear to have formed part of Enochian tradition.

(1) SECOND THOUGHTS ON THE DEAD SEA SCROLLS, (p. 115), [his emphasis].
The astrosophical nature of such a journey provides the schema for the Hekaloth, (or seven halls), through which Enoch, (and perhaps the initiate), passed to come before the presence of God, as a result of which they would have been held to have become free of planetary influence.

In Ptolemaic astrology the seven planets were equated with the seven lower heavens and in the mystery cults it was considered to be the duty of the adept to learn the various stages in the ascent as well as the names of the angelic rulers encountered on the path.

One of the more common similarities of this literature is that they are usually pseudepigraphically ascribed either, as formerly, to "Old Testament" characters or, as latterly, to the Apostles, Christ, or to members of his family.

Often they are reputed to have recently been discovered, having lain hidden for years, or, that, as in "Daniel", originally esoteric, they have now been revealed in preparation for the Last Days. (1)

(1) «"But you, Daniel, must keep these words secret and the book sealed until the time of the End"», (Dan. XII 4).
Generally received as visions either through dreams or ecstasy, (one of the best examples seems to have been "Ezekiel"), in some places, such as "I Enoch" and "II Corinthians", the seer describes being translated bodily into heaven, (or as with Ezekiel, to Jerusalem), sometimes with the assistance of an angel or messianic figure which indicates the widespread interest in celestial matters and may be the results of much of the Maaseh Berashith speculation. (1)

The visions sometimes deal with symbolic imagery or allegory which is explained to the seer by an angelic interpreter and much of this imagery seems to have become traditional through continual use, such as the four beasts of "Ezekiel", and the chariot symbolism, (the first derived perhaps from calendar mysticism and the second perhaps a development from the pillar of fire as the vehicle of God’s manifestation and his method of appearance).

In later apocalyptic works a large part was taken up with a prophetic record and an interpretation of history, either from the time of the supposed author or from the creation, and which lead up to the present time seen as the "Last Days", the Eschata; whether the history was that of Israel or of humanity in general.

(1) The references are: (I Eno. XVII), (II Cor. XII), & (Eze. VIII), respectively.
This present age was portrayed as one almost completely corrupt during which the righteous must suffer, (either until the last battle between good and evil or until the final conflagration by fire); a doctrine comparable with that of the flood, and in which, likewise, a righteous remnant would be saved to experience the "Kingdom of God".

According to Vielhauer, another common feature was in the emphasis on a kind of temporal dualism although the "Age-to-Come" was seen as essentially different to the present turmoils which marked, in a sense, the end of linear history. (1)

The passing away of the old, or present age, and the birth of the new, or future time, was seen as a purification of the world by fire as the Flood had been by water.

The establishment of the eternal kingdom of righteousness was to be prepared for in the Eschata which was to be heralded by the Messiah, either as the beginning of the birth pangs of the new age itself, or as an interregnum, (though often the distinction is confused as in the "Revelation").

(1) (q.v. his introduction to Apocalyptic in NEW TESTAMENT APOCRYPHA, [vol. II ps. 582-600]).
The present time was said to be ruled over by the "Adversary", the "ha-Satan" and the demonic powers, and, as in the Persian system, there was to be a last battle in which the forces of darkness would be defeated and bound for ever. (1)

In Christian eschatology the figure of the Anti-Christ was of great importance in the sub-Apostolic age and was seen as equivalent with Satan as "Prince of this World", and in its apocalyptic thought the "Parousia", (or immanent return of Christ), was, (as in the "New Testament"), was of central concern.

The present over which the Enemy of God and "Governor of the Air" ruled was seen as old and decaying and compared to the Age-to-Come, worthless, just as the actual was to the ideal in religious Platonism. (2)

(1) The "Adversary" was spelt in Hebrew as H-ShTN, and his demons, the "Satans", as ShDIN, both of which total 364: the number of days in the Qumran calendar.

(2) (Eph. II 3). The "Epistle" states, <<Put God's armour on so as to be able to resist the devil's tactics. For it is not against human enemies that we have to struggle, but against the Sovereignties and the Powers who originate the darkness in this world, the spiritual army of evil in the heavens.>>. (Eph. VI 10-13). 

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The future however was seen as both ideal and eternal: a fixed state in which the righteous would receive their reward having triumphed over evil after which the Adversary would be, along with the Leviathan with whom he is sometimes equated, bound for ever.

Then would be established the kingdom of God with the primacy of the Jewish people accepted by all and their ministry as a global priesthood confirmed. Eventually this apocalyptic and nationalistic hope became extended beyond the borders of Israel, traces of which appear as early as "Daniel" who does not even mention the nation.

Yet originally, as is shown by the scrolls discovered at Qumran, the hope was that the remnant of Israel would be victorious and under the Messianic rule would receive authority over all as a reward for the humiliation that the nation had received at the hands of the Gentile world; thus the "War Rule" states, "O Zion, rejoice greatly! ... Their kings shall serve you and all your oppressors shall bow down before you ... Sovereignty shall be to the Lord and everlasting dominion to Israel.". (1)

(1) THE DEAD SEA SCROLLS IN ENGLISH, (p. 148).
The Qumran eschatology shares common ground with the Zoroastrian most obviously in the doctrine of the two spirits continually contending for the soul of the individual, the eventual defeat and imprisonment of the Evil Spirit, and the Last Judgement.

The details of the Eschata were said to have been determined even before the creation of this world and had been written in the heavenly annals, (though God alone knew the exact time of the End), and the importance of the apocalyptic message for both the individual and the community was to be able to recognise the signs of the times and to prepare for admission to the Kingdom, the arrival of which was imminently expected. This doctrine formed the central core also of the preaching of repentance ascribed to John the Baptist. (1)

For many Jews this Kingdom was to be the land of Israel victorious over all other nations and led by two Messiahim, one of whom would be General of the Army of Righteousness, and the other, High Priest, although it seems that these two figures were sometimes identified within one individual: the Messiah as warlike conqueror of Satan and religious ruler of the Kingdom established by his defeat.

(1) (Mat. III 2).
It is in the figure and function of the Messiah that differences in apocalyptic style are most noticeable because of the variance in conception of his person, becoming in the later apocalypses more of a world saviour than a national hero-to-be. This development and fusion of the two conceptions, universal and national, is most evident in "I Enoch" in the figure of the Elect One. (1)

In this the nation of Israel was to become to the world what the Messiah was to be to the nation and the priestly mission of the Jews was guaranteed as extending in influence to cover the globe. Although it was thought that before the establishment of the Messianic rule would come a time of trials and tribulations brought on by the adversary of God there does not seem to have existed the concept of an anti-Messiah and instead the attributes with which this figure is portrayed in Christian polemic were given to the opposer as leader of the army of irreligion.

One of the other titles of this demonic conception, given in the literature of the sect at Qumran, was Melkiresha, (which name appears to mean, "My King is Wickedness"), who was to be finally bound at the Last Judgement by his celestial opponent, "Melchizedek", (sometimes seen as the archangel Michael, Chief of the Angelic Host, although given the identification of Metatron with Michael, the figure may have also been seen as the patriarch Enoch).

(1) (I Eno. caps. XLVI, XLVIII & LXII).
The Satan was described in the "Testament of Amram", father of Moses, thus, «His looks were frightening like those of a viper, and his garments were multi-coloured and he was extremely dark>>. {1}

His angelic counterpart was seen as a glorified version of the King of Salem who, <<brought bread and wine>> to Abraham pronouncing a blessing over him, and to whom Abraham gave tithes, namely Melchizedek, "King of Righteousness", and <<priest of God Most High>>. {2}

Of him the author of "Hebrews" writes, <<he has no father, mother or ancestry, and his life has no beginning or ending; he is like the Son of God. He remains a priest for ever>>. {3}

The author claimed the Messiah to be a second Melchizedek, <<not by virtue of a law about physical descent>>, (while Paul insisted upon the descent of Jesus from Abraham as did the authors of the "Matthew" & "Luke"), <<but by the power of an indestructible life>>. {4}

{1) THE DEAD SEA SCROLLS IN ENGLISH, (p. 260).
{2) (Gen. XIV 19).
{3) (Heb. VII 3).
{4) (Mat. I 1-17), & (Luk. III 23-38).
He asserted that the Melchizedekian priesthood was of a higher nature than that of Aaron, and contended that, since the prophet Jeremiah announced a new covenant, the High Priesthood that would serve it would be after this order. (1)

The "Epistle" states that this new Melchizedek, "can never lose his priesthood>>, and "that his power to save is utterly certain, since he is living for ever to intercede for all who come to God through him>>. (2)

Divergence of opinion was noted by Pseudo-Tertullian who, according to Stevenson, recorded that Theodotus said, "that Christ was only a man ... But he was inferior to Melchizedek ... because what Christ does for men, becoming their intercessor and advocate, Melchizedek does for the heavenly angels and powers. For he is better than Christ, since he is fatherless, motherless, without genealogy, whose beginning and end is neither comprehended nor comprehensible.". (3)

(1) (Heb. VII 15).
(2) (Heb. VII 25).
(3) A NEW EUSEBIUS, (p. 158).
This conception of the Messiah as a cosmic figure with authority over the angelic hosts themselves was readily related by Hellenist thinkers with the Stoic concept of the seminal Logos, and may have been related by Jewish sectaries with the captain of the armies of the Lord, whether as Melchizedek, Michael, or Metatron.

Further it is possible that Diasporan Jews equated the figure with that of "Wisdom" as the glory, (or "Chabod"), of the Lord, known as the "Shekinah", through whom the world was made.

A similar identification of the Wisdom or "Chokmah" and the Word or Memra seems also to have been made and as such may have been the source of the Logos Christianity, (in which the Messiah was associated with the immanent glory of the One as the creative word), to be found in the prologue of the "Gospel according to John".

In the "Gospel" the Memra was described as being, « with God in the beginning. Through him all things came to be, not one thing had its being but through him. All that came to be had life in him and that life was the light of men ... a light that darkness could not overpower.» (Joh. I 2-5).
Despite the change in gender involved this Memra may well have been identified with the divine Chokmah who was seen as "a reflection of the eternal light, un tarnished mirror of God's active power, image of his goodness ... indeed more splendid than the sun", who, "outshines all the constellations", and over whom, "evil can never triumph". {1}

In the "Epistle to the Hebrews", a similar doctrine was expounded which stated of the cosmic Messiah, "He is the radiant light of God's glory and the perfect copy of his nature". (2)

The "Epistle" opposes the claims held by certain members of the Jewish-Christian community of the efficacy of angelolatry as well as the view that Christ as the Word of God was but the Chief of these Angels, (and as such perhaps equated with Melchizedek), which view would seem to indicate that the practice of angelic communion was a common one in the Judaism of the period.

The author describes the Memra as, "something alive and active: it cuts like any double-edged sword but more finely; it can slip through the place where the soul is divided from the spirit, or joints from the marrow; it can judge the secret emotions and thoughts", and from it, "No created thing can hide". (3)

{1} (Wis. VII 26-30).
{2} (Heb. I 3).
{3} (Heb. IV 12 & 13).
The writer of the "Epistle" dealt with the widely accepted theory that God established angelic guardians over the world by asserting that, though this was undoubtedly true, "He did not appoint angels to be rulers of the world to come, and that world is what we are talking about." (1)

Yet the idea that the future world was to be ruled by the Messiah alone seems to have struck the audience as something of a novelty and the author conceded that, "At present, it is true, we are not able to see that "everything has been put under his command"", and until the time that this was apparent the reality of the angelic rulers or "Archons" of the cosmos would seem to have been accepted, especially that of the Devil, (often known as Belial), "who had power over death", and who had enslaved by the fear of death, all humanity, which charge was later to be laid at the door of the Jewish creator and his court who were to become viewed as abortive and distorted reflections of that of the Logos as visible glory of the Unknowable Father. (2)

(1) (Heb. II 5).

(2) (Heb. II 8 & 15).
This Shekinah of the transcendent was anthropomorphically detailed by the author of the "Revelation" as it had been so portrayed, on the sapphire throne in "Ezekiel", thus, <<I saw him shine like bronze, and close to and all around him from what seemed like his loins upwards was what looked like fire; and from what seemed his loins downwards I saw what looked like fire, and a light all round like a bow in the clouds on rainy days; that is how the surrounding light appeared. It was something that looked like the glory of Yahweh.>>. (1)

"Daniel", too depicted the supreme in human terms; <<His robe was white as snow, the hair of his head as pure as wool. His throne was a blaze of flames ... A stream of fire poured out, issuing from his presence.>>. (2)

Similarly, the author of "Revelation described, <<a figure like a Son of man, dressed in a long robe tied at the waist with a golden girdle. His head and his hair were white as white wool or as snow, his eyes like a burning flame, his feet like burnished bronze when it has been refined in a furnace, and his voice like the sound of the ocean. In his right hand he was holding seven stars, out of his mouth came a sharp sword, double-edged, and his face was like the sun shining with all its force.>>. (3)

(1) (Eze. I 26-28)
(2) (Dan. VII 9).
(3) (Rev. I 13-16).
CHAPTER THREE
As well as the identification of the Messiah, (as a cosmic figure), with the Memra, (as a cosmic principle), an association of the glory of the Lord with his wisdom or Chokmah seems to have been made, (both of which were accorded female gender), and it would seem that the Shekinah was seen as the visible, (or audible), manifestation of the divine presence and as such equated with the spirit of God. {1}

With the building of the Temple at Jerusalem, in which the Shekinah of Yahweh was thought to dwell, the main method of communication between the human and the divine was held to be through the word of God being delivered through the agency of his angels to be heard by the prophets.

After the Exile, angelology developed along the lines of the court of Babylon, with acceptance of the concept of Yahweh residing in the centre of a heavenly palace and attended to by choirs of angels, (which themselves were at first of generally rare appearance), and emphasis seems to have been placed upon the chief herald of the host as archangel.

{1} The word in Hebrew was spelt ShKINH totalling 385 as does the word for lip as ShPH. The spirit of God was, in Hebrew, spelt, "RVCh-ALHIM", and totals 300, the number of the letter "Shin", which was inserted into the Tetragrammaton to produce the "Divided Name".

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Given the alleged departure of the glory of Yahweh from the Temple, (as recorded in "Ezekiel"), and the comparative isolation of Diasporan Jews from Palestine, it is probable that an emphasis on the glorious Shekinah or "Divine Indwelling" was held to be possible outside of both Temple and synagogal services since it was now no longer bound to one place.

Such a view seems to have become acceptable both within and without Palestine so that the doctrine of the Shekinah, (as the prime manifestation of the divine presence), became normative and thus the "Talmud" was able to state that the Shekinah was everywhere, and the "Midrash" on "Exodus", that there was no place without her; further it is possible that to some fervent prayer was held to cause her manifestation which was recognisable by a kind of ecstatic trance.
Her omnipresence was stressed in the "Pirke Aboth", or "Sayings of the Fathers", included in the "Mishnah", which record that Rabbi Halaphta said that when, "ten sit and are occupied with Torah, the Shechinah is among them, as it is said: "God stands in the congregation of God.". Thus it was held that when ten men gathered together in prayer the glory of Yahweh was present, but that further, "And whence even three? As it is said: "He judgeth among gods.".

The principle was continued thus, "And whence even two? As it is said: "Then they that feared the Lord spoke often one to another."", until it was held that the individual could be blessed with the appearance of God, so, "And whence even one? As it is said: "In every place where I record My name I will come to thee and will bless thee.". (1)

The presence of the Shekinah was held to be ascertainable by the ecstasy of the recipient and by the uttering of prophecy. Later this conception of the Shekinah was equated with that of the Holy Spirit, seen almost as a separate entity, and, if only in metaphor, feminine.

(1) APOCRYPHA AND PSEUDEPIGRAPHA OF THE OLD TESTAMENT, (vol. II p. 699), the "Biblical" references being respectively:
(Psa. LXXXII 1), (ibid.), (Mal. III 16), and (Exo. XX 24).
Although much of the "Wisdom" literature was rejected as uncanonical by Palestinian Judaism it enjoyed great currency and influence among Jews of the Diaspora; in these works Wisdom was seen as an intermediary between a transcendent god and his creation.

The basis for this conception may be from the description of Chokmah outlined in "Proverbs" which stated, "Yahweh created me when his purpose first unfolded, before the oldest of his works. From everlasting I was firmly set, from the beginning, before earth came into being."(1) "Proverbs" equates this Chokmah with the fear of the Lord as, "the beginning of knowledge", since Yahweh is acclaimed as the, "giver of wisdom, from his mouth issue knowledge and discernment", and Wisdom is lauded as, "beyond the price of pearls, nothing you could covet is her equal. In her right hand is length of days; in her left hand, riches and honour", whose, "ways are delightful ways, her paths all lead to contentment. She is a tree of life for those who hold her fast, those who cling to her live happy lives."(2)

(1) (Pro. VIII 22 & 23).
(2) (Pro. I 7, II 6, & III 15-18).
This same intermediary by whom, <<Yahweh set the earth on its foundations, by discernment, he fixed the heavens firm. Through his knowledge the depths were carved out, and the clouds rain down the dew>>, was later eulogised in explicitly female terms, (as in the advice of the father of the author), whose contact seems to glorify its possessor, as was Joshua glorified, thus, <<"Hold her close, and she will make you great; embrace her, and she will be your pride; she will set a crown of grace on your head, present you with a glorious diadem.">>. (1)

Later in the work she is moved to say: <<"I, Wisdom, am mistress of discretion, the inventor of lucidity of thought ... I love those who love me; those who seek me eagerly shall find me. By me monarchs rule and princes issue just laws; by me rulers govern, and the great impose justice on the world ... Before the mountains were settled, before the hills, I came to birth; before he made the earth, the countryside, or the first grains of the world's dust. When he fixed the heavens firm, I was there, when he drew a ring on the surface of the deep, when he thickened the clouds above, when he fixed fast the springs of the deep, when he assigned the sea its boundaries ... when he laid down the foundations of the earth, I was by his side">>. (2)

(1) (Pro. IV 8-9).

(2) (Pro. VIII 12-30).
Wisdom, as the Shekinah, was accorded a high place in the "Enochian" works and was seen as a glyph of both the soul and the chariot. Her celestial residence was described in the "Book of Enoch", thus, <<Wisdom could not find a place in which she could dwell; but a place was found (for her) in the heavens. Then Wisdom went out to dwell with the children of the people, but she found no dwelling place. (So) Wisdom returned to her place and she settled permanently among the angels>>. (1)

She was, in the work, equated with the pre-existent Messiah, thus, <<So wisdom flows like water and glory is measureless before him ... The Elect One stands before the Lord of the Spirits; his glory is forever and ever and his power is unto all generations. In him dwells the spirit of wisdom>>. (2)

She was also an important angelic figure within the Dead Sea Scrolls, especially the hymns which seem to have been recited before the gathered community and may have been composed by one of their number, the first of which lauds her in similar terms as those later to be used by the author of the "Wisdom of Solomon".

(1) THE BOOK OF ENOCH, (p. 61).
(2) (ibid. p. 67).
The text reads, <<"By Thy wisdom all things exist from eternity, and before creating them Thou knewest their works for ever and ever ... Thou hast created all the spirits and has established a statute and law for all their works">>, and the same hymn acclaims her as an illuminator with the words, <<"All things exist according to Thy Will and without Thee nothing is done. These things I know by the wisdom which comes from Thee, for Thou hast unstopped my ears to marvellous mysteries.">>. (1)

In the seventh hymn this metaphor is continued thus, <<"I thank Thee, O Lord, for Thou hast illumined my face by Thy Covenant ... I seek Thee, and sure as the dawn Thou appearest as perfect Light to me">>, with those outside the community held to be duly punished, <<"For they hearken not to Thy voice, nor do they give ear to Thy word; of the vision of Knowledge they say, 'It is unsure', and of the way of Thy heart, 'It is not the way'".>>. (2)

(1) The numbering of the hymns follows Vermes; the quotation is from the first given in THE DEAD SEA SCROLLS IN ENGLISH, (p. 150-151).

(2) (ibid. p. 162).
The hymn continues, "Thou hast revealed Thyself to me in Thy power as perfect Light, and ... hast not covered my face with shame ... Thou hast illumined the face of the Congregation and hast shown Thine infinite power. For Thou hast given me knowledge through Thy marvellous mysteries, and hast shown Thyself mighty with me in the midst of Thy marvellous Council". (1)

It is possible that for the sectaries as for the author of the "Ecclesiasticus" the Chokmah was mystically equated with the "Torah" as a representative of the covenant between Yahweh and his people and was perhaps symbolised by the pillar of cloud which went before them during the Exodus.

Of her, the book states, "Before all other things wisdom was created, shrewd understanding is everlasting. For whom has the root of wisdom ever been uncovered? One only is wise, terrible indeed, seated on his throne, the Lord. He himself has created her, looked on her and assessed her, and poured her out on all his works", and she seems to be identified with the covenant since the author writes that, "whoever grasps the Law will obtain wisdom. She will come to meet him like a mother, and receive him like a virgin bride. She will give him the bread of understanding to eat, and the water of wisdom to drink" (2)

(1) (ibid. p. 163).
(2) (Sir. I 4-10 & XV 1-3).
The identification is made explicit later in the book which asserts that, "Wisdom consists entirely in fearing the Lord, and wisdom is entirely constituted by the fulfilling of the Law», since, "the fear of the Lord is made perfect in wisdom», and it would appear that the doctrine of the pre-existence of the Torah in the form of the Chokmah of the Lord was maintained. (1)

The text states, "Wisdom sings her own praises, in the midst of her people she glories in herself. She opens her mouth in the assembly of the Most High, she glories in herself in the presence of the Mighty One ... "Alone I encircled the vault of the sky, and I walked on the bottom of the deeps ... From eternity, in the beginning, he created me, and for eternity I shall remain. I ministered before him in the holy tabernacle, and thus was I established on Zion. In the beloved city he has given me rest, and in Jerusalem I wield my authority>>, and the author identifies all this as, "no other than the book of the covenant of the Most High God, the Law that Moses enjoined upon us». (2)

Yet the portrayal of her in "Wisdom" shows a development of these earlier speculations in that she was represented almost as a second god, (which may be the reason for its exclusion from the Jewish canon), though its popularity continued within early Christianity.

(1) (Sir. XIX 20 & XXI 12).
(2) (Sir. XXIV passim.).
She seems to be identified with that other mysterious being, the Holy Spirit, since the author writes, "Wisdom is a spirit, a friend to man, though she will not pardon the words of a blasphemer, since God sees into the innermost parts of him, truly observes his heart, and listens to his tongue. The spirit of the Lord, indeed, fills the whole world, and that which holds all things together knows every word that is said". (1)

Solomon, the reputed author, before beginning the history of her intervention in the affairs of humanity, prayed to the Lord to, "Despatch her from the holy heavens, send her forth from your throne of glory ... since she knows and understands everything", and asserted that, "As for your intention, who could have learnt it, had you not granted Wisdom and sent your holy spirit from above?". (2)

(1) (Wis. I 6 & 7).
(2) (Wis. IX 10-17).
There then follows a catalogue of the activities of the Chokmah in the life of the patriarchs describing how she saved the world from the flood, showed Jacob the kingdom of God, protected those on the Exodus in the form of the pillar which preceded them being, "their shelter by day and their starlight through the night," and as such later seems to have been equated with the very hand of God which, "from formless matter created the world," and consecrated his chosen anointed. (1)

Just as the Spirit of Yahweh was believed to have descended upon the ancient kings, (usually upon their anointing), and that like the prophets they could hear the "Bath Qol", so too within Christianity the descent of the Holy Spirit was held to produce miraculous portents although there seems to have been some disagreement within the early church as to whether the Spirit was received upon baptism or upon the laying-on of hands.

However, it would seem from "Acts" that baptism with water was the first stage in the initiation of the convert and that the laying-on of hands, (which may have included unction and anointing), was the second. (2)

(1) (Wis. X 17 & XI 18).

(2) In Aramaic, this is spelt as BTh-QLA, totalling 533, and in Hebrew, BTh-QVL, totalling 538, which, incidentally, is that of the word "Gospel", as BShVRH-TVBH.
Two baptisms appear to be recognised in this work, that of John, and, that of Jesus, with the former lesser than the latter, as was demonstrated by the case of Apollos, an Alexandrian Jew. {1}

The Christian exegetes seem to have surmised that since the Baptist was a herald of the Messiah to follow, so too his baptism was in preparation for that of the Apostles; thus at Ephesus, Paul stated, <<"John’s baptism ... was a baptism of repentance; but he insisted that the people should believe in the one who was to come after him - in other words Jesus.">>. {2}

What is significant about the difference between the "Johannine" and "Pauline" baptisms concerns the Holy Spirit since the "Johannines" answered that, <<"we were never even told that there was such a thing as a Holy Spirit">>, and it was only after baptism when Paul laid his hands upon them that, <<they began to speak with tongues and to prophesy.">>. {3}

{1} (Act. XVIII 24).
{2} (Act. XIX 4).
{3} (Act. XIX 2 & 7).
That both repentance and the descent of the Holy Spirit were conjoined in baptism was demonstrated by Peter, in the second chapter, though in the episode with Simon Magus it was stated that, "Peter and John ... prayed for the Samaritans to receive the Holy Spirit, for as yet he had not come down on any of them: they had only been baptised in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then they laid their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit>>, and that, "When Simon saw that the Spirit was given through the imposition of hands ... he offered them some money>>. (1)

Two types of preparation seem then to have been distinguished; the preliminary being the baptism of repentance, and the second, possession by the Holy Spirit, (or as seems to be the case in the "Pauline" writings), by the spirit of the Messiah, which union enabled the devotee to share in both the passion and resurrection.

A prophetic distinction was also made in the baptism of Jesus, by John, who declared that, "he who sent me to baptise with water had said to me, "The man on whom you see the Spirit come down and rest is the one who is going to baptise with the Holy Spirit".>>. (2)

(1) The references are to (Act. II 38), and (Act. VIII 14-18).
(2) (Joh. I 33).
Thus while the baptism of John was of repentance and by water, that of Jesus was to be of the Holy Spirit and by fire, (with the pre-eminence ascribed to the element of fire implicitly contrasted with the inferiority of water as a means of salvation). Just as the disciples were touched with the spirit in the forms of tongues of fire at Pentecost and began to prophesy, at Jesus' baptism the spirit descended upon him <<in bodily shape, like a dove>>, although this visible appearance was distinguished from the voice heard.

The portrayal of the spirit as a dove, (traditionally the bird of Venus), at first sight seems an unlikely choice. (1) The word "dove" in Hebrew is equivalent to the name Jonah, as Mead notes, and he says, thereby the expansion of the name as John, and he points to the myth of Jonah and the whale for the symbolic use of the concept. (2)

(1) The spirit of God as the "Ruach Elohim" which fertilised the chaotic waters was seen as the breath, (or RVCh), of the plural deities, (or ALHIM). The first word totals by Gematria the number 214 as does the word for "descent" as IRD, while that for the Elohim equals 86 as does that for the name of the planet Saturn as KIVN. Together they total the number 300, (allotted to the letter Shin which may therefore have been seen as the number of spirit), as do the words for "separation", as PIRVD, "formation", as ITzR, and "fecundation", as HPRIH.

(2) THE Gnostic John the Baptist, (p 18).
The Book of "Jonah" was probably written in fourth century B.C.E., and would seem to represent the swallowing of the bird by the great fish which was identified with Leviathan, (and equated with the Satan), and its subsequent release.

The myth of the battle between the dove, (or eagle), and the denizen of the deep, (whether serpent or fish), appears in other mythologies. In most versions of the myth the two protagonists, as eagle and serpent, inhabited the top and bottom of the World-Tree, were constantly waging war on each other, (and as such may have been taken as theriomorphic representations of the leaders of the armies of truth and falsehood such as Melchizedek and Melkiresa). The dove may have been seen as equivalent to the spirit of God while the serpent represented the waters over which it moved.

The symbol was still common within alchemical texts centuries later when the Orphic egg had become the Philosophers' stone and later Christian iconography was to see in the myth a prophecy of Jesus' harrowing of hell: the whale as Sheol and the dove as the Christ, (the word of the Father), since, as Paul said in his "Acts", "you know that Jonah ... was swallowed by the whale, and after three days and three nights God heard Jonah's prayer out of deepest hell, and no part of him was corrupted, not even a hair or an eyelid." (1)

The theme of the release of the Messiah from the domain of darkness was continued in the "Fourth Book of Ezra", wherein like the prophet, so too, the Son of Man would rise from the sea.

Indeed, since the Taheb himself was by some Samaritans, taken to be Joshua-ben-Nun returned, (comparable as a concept to that of the expectations of the return of Elijah), that "ben-Nun" literally means "Son of the Fish", and given that Jesus as Messiah, (and by extension Christianity itself), was first represented in art by the "Ichthus" or fish-symbol it may be that a common source of this symbolism could be proposed.

Both Jonah and Elijah were mentioned in the "Lives of the Prophets" where it was written that the latter visited Jonah and his mother at Sour, (most probably Tyre), and that, "when her son died, God raised him again from the dead through Elijah, for he wanted to show him that it is not possible to run away from God". (1)

The creative aspect of Wisdom as the hovering bird symbolic of the Memra was emphasised in the "Wisdom of Jesus ben Sirach", (also known as "Ecclesiasticus"), which stated, "I came forth from the mouth of the Most High, and I covered the earth like mist", although she was later in the same chapter identified with the Torah or Law as the supreme creative act. (2)


(2) (Sir. XXIV 3).
Further she was described as the sole emanation of God in the words, "She is a breath of the power of God, pure emanation of the glory of the Almighty ... She is a reflection of the eternal light, untarnished mirror of God’s active power, image of his goodness." (1)

In this guise it would appear that an identification with the Messiah was made in male terms given that the "Son of Man" was seen as a lesser reflection of his heavenly father who, (perhaps due to an Hellenist interpretation of "Shiur Komah" speculation), began to be known as the "Archanthropos", or divine male, alone and without consort.

Moves towards such an equation may be seen in the adoption by Hellenised Jews of Greek philosophical method and especially the Stoic concept of the seminal Logos as the immanent intermediary between the supreme unknowable spirit and the world of matter.

Such an identification seems to have been made by Philo, among others, who developed the Stoic view of the Logos as the active hypostasis of the transcendent One, (spark of the Universal Fire), by aligning it with that written of Wisdom in the eponymous literature,which equation among Greek-educated Jews of his day may have been more acceptable than it was to become to later generations and can hardly have been of great surprise.

{1} (Wis. VII 25 & 26).
It would have seemed a natural conclusion rather than a misinterpretation of scripture, though Winston writes, "The only serious gaps in his knowledge belong to the Jewish side of his scholarship, where an inadequate mastery of Hebrew compelled him to rely almost completely on the Greek translation of the Bible", though he also notes that, "we also find in rabbinic literature that the divine 'Word' is hypostasized after the manner of Philo's Logos". (1)

This charge however cannot have been altogether rare, especially among Jews of the Diaspora, and it seems more likely that Philo merely used the current philosophical "lingua franca" in his own "Apologies".

Where he does seem to have diverged from tradition is in his attempt to maintain the masculinity of all things divine for he spoke of this generally female Wisdom both as a second god and as the "Son of God" further identifying this hypostasis with a single Messiah who was to him, as Logos, definitely inferior to the Father as a created being and inconsubstantial with him.

Thus the Logos was considered embodied, subject to time and place, and therefore, not eternal, although his presence in scripture was held to be found in those passages in which the hand of God was mentioned.

(1) JEWISH SPIRITUALITY, (cap. VIII p. 198).
Later Platonism merged the figure of Plato's "Demiurge", (or divine architect), with the idea of the world-soul, (which was further identified with the Mind of God, or "Nous", the Rational Spark at the centre of the cosmos), and in this guise, equated with the Wisdom, (or "Sophia"), as creatrix.

Since Jewish Wisdom literature used the concept of the created yet pre-existent Wisdom as a synonym for the "Word of God", the Memra, which in Philonic thought had become equated with the Greek Logos, the Stoic "Reason", it seems to have been further associated with the now pre-existent Messiah as God Immanent, and therefore represented scripturally by both the voice of God, the "Bath Qol, and his hand, or creative power.

Thus "Proverbs" describes this "demiurgos" as saying, <<"I was by his side, a master craftsman, delighting him day after day, ever at play in his presence, at play everywhere in his world, delighting to be with the sons of men".>>. (1)

(1) (Pro. VIII 30). The word for a "hand", in Hebrew, is spelt YD, totalling 14. It is cognate to the name of the letter I or Y, known as the Yod, which when spelt in full, as YVD, totals 20, the number of the following letter, Kaph, which means the "palm of the hand".
Despite the doctrinal emphasis on the splendid isolation of God within Judaism, the singularity of Yahweh had not always been insisted upon, and Ashe writes, "Papyri dating from the fifth century BC show that Jewish mercenaries stationed at Elephantine near Aswan had a small temple dedicated not only to 'Yaho' (as they called Yahweh, the God of Israel) but also to Anath. These troops and their families, probably descendants of Jeremiah's apostates, had attached Anath to the Lord as a female companion", although it is possible that they were merely worshipping a more ancient conception of the Baal Yahweh, (or Iao), as lover, (or son), of the Queen of Heaven. (1)

That this name continued to be an acceptable substitute for YHVH is re-affirmed by Brown, who quotes from the commentary of Jerome on Psalm VIII, thus, <<The name of the Lord amongst the Hebrews is of four letters, Jod, He, Vau, He; which is properly the name of God, and may be read as IAHO, and is held by the Jews for ineffable>>, and he suggests that the identity of Iao, Iacchus, and Yahweh, was likely and that such an association was perceived in antiquity. (2)

(1) THE VIRGIN, (p. 30).
(2) THE GREAT DIONYSIAK MYTH, (vol. I p. 56 & 58).
The goddess Anath bears many resemblances to Neith, who was the Egyptian warrior goddess of Sais which became capital during the seven century B.C.E. Probably of Libyan origin, (whom the Greeks associated with Pallas Athene), with a famous medical school known as the "House of Life" attached to her temple, Neith was an unmarried goddess worshipped as the virgin mother of Heaven, self-begotten, and according to her priests, the mother of Ra as the sun.

Early representations show her crowned with the red "Net" crown of Lower Egypt and she was often associated with the scorpion goddess Selket, or Sergert, ruler of the opposite constellation to Taurus.

Further since Osiris, in his guise as the Sahu or immortal soul, was often spoken of as born again in the body of Nut as Khepera it may be that Isis, though traditionally both his sister and his wife, was readily associated with the great and virgin Queen of Heaven, and that if, as seems likely, Osiris was equated within the Empire with Adonis then a corresponding association of Ishtar and Isis would have been made and paradoxically her husband and lover would have come to be seen also as her child.

Of Athene, the unmarried city-goddess of Athens, famed for her wisdom, Apollonius Rhodius, according to Graves, recorded the Pelasgian tradition that she was born at Lake Tritonis in Libya.

(1) THE GREEK MYTHS, (vol. I p. 44).
Kerenyi also asserts the association and notes that one of the surnames of Athene was "Tritogeneia", meaning born at Lake Triton, in Libya; a land famed for the comparative freedom of its women who have come down to us as the Amazons. {1}

She was commonly titled "Pallas", (a name she adopted after accidentally killing her friend of the same name), though the name simply means "youth" and by implication "virgin", however, (again according to Graves), Tzetzes wrote in "On Lycophron" that some said that her own father was called Pallas and in Homer's "Hymn to Hermes", Pallas was given as the "father of the moon", with whom she was associated. {2}

Kerenyi writes, "But she was further called Hellotis, like Europa, 'the broad-faced' - an expression that is associated with the name Selene", and, (as with Ishtar, goddess of the fifteenth day of the month), as such may have been revered as the full-moon. {3}

Her only recorded son, (though this was hotly disputed by the Athenians themselves), was said to be Erichthonius, by Hephaestus, who was born "test-tube" fashion by the Earth and whose image was set up in the sky as the constellation Auriga.

{1) THE GODS OF THE GREEKS, (p. 118).
{3) THE GODS OF THE GREEKS, (p. 128).
However, it was her own birth that was to be of greater controversy since she became seen as springing fully formed from the cloven head of the supreme being.

Harrison describes the birth of Athene from Zeus as a, "desperate theological expedient to rid an earth-born Kore of her matriarchal conditions", and hints at her primacy over her forcibly adopted father: the processes of adoption, of marriage, or of rape, being those most commonly used in the re-interpretation of ancient myth by the patriarchal theologians.

(1)

Instead of the usual method of subjugating a goddess through patriarchal marriage Zeus became unimpregnated mother of the Virgin, concerning which state in Greek mythology Lefkowitz writes, "A woman can keep her identity only by remaining a virgin, like the goddesses Athene and Artemis, or by destroying or abandoning her male partner, like Aphrodite, or Clytemnestra, or Medea. Marriage is death, either literally, or figuratively, as for Semele or Io, whose stories end with the birth of their sons.". (2)

(1) PROLEGOMENA TO THE STUDY OF GREEK RELIGION, (p. 302).
(2) HEROINES AND HYSTERICS, (p. 1).
The basis for the cerebral birth of Athene, (apart from the subjugation that it entailed), may have been derived from portrayals of her arising from the earth at its "Omphalos", or navel, just as Persephone, or Kore, was said to do at the onset of the spring and it is possible that, like Artemis, she was identified with this goddess and thus the later re-interpretation was of the nature of a mis-interpretation.

Graves calls this reworking of myth "iconotropy" and says that, "examples of it can be found in every body of sacred literature which sets the seal upon a radical reform of ancient beliefs": certainly this new conception of the goddess took some time to establish itself in the minds of the common people. (1)

It would seem that to the theologians this Athene, (as "Pronoia", the foreseeing), was viewed as the first thought, (or "Epinoia"), of Zeus, as an emanation of his wisdom, and that through her he gave order to the world.

(1) THE GREEK MYTHS, (vol. I p. 21).
Further, this hypostasised goddess was seen as the first creative act of his mind, and as such may have been equated with the Nous, (as virgin daughter of a transcendent and "virgin" father): whatever, it appears as if much philosophical and theological speculation was centred on the unique relationship between the two deities, and Athene later seems to have been lauded with the attributes of Metis, goddess of Wisdom, both her mother and first wife of Zeus.

The legend related how he was warned by his father and mother, Uranus and Gaea, that any children born to Metis would dethrone him, (and perhaps even emasculate him), and that he swallowed his pregnant consort whole thereby embodying wisdom who everafter remained in his stomach giving him, from time to time, counsel.

Warner writes, "As a daimon who dwells within the paternal womb of Zeus, Metis no longer possesses the individuality of separate physical existence, by which we understand her to be a person. But her powers remain unimpaired". (1)

However, afterwards he became struck with a terrible headache, (though not through guilt), and to cure him his skull was rent asunder by the smith Hephaestus from which the "bright-eyed" goddess Athene, his favourite daughter, arose.

(1) MONUMENTS AND MAIDENS, (p. 73).
The oldest representations of the goddess were the "Palladia", perhaps meteorites, which are generally seen as sacred standing-stones, said to have descended from the heavens often as a result of the anger of the goddess; the most famous of which was the one Zeus presented to Dardanus of Troy.

By virtue of her warlike characteristics, and due to her reputation for wisdom, she was often associated with the Etruscan Minerva who "was perhaps a goddess of the thunderbolt ... and very early merged with the Greek Athene", and with Mars, (the Roman Ares), was worshipped during the festival of the spring equinox. (1)

Under the name Menrva she was described by Sykes as usually, "shown armed and with the aegis on her breast, but in addition she sometimes has wings.". (2)

(1) LAROUSSE ENCYCLOPAEDIA OF MYTHOLOGY, (p. 207).
(2) EVERYMAN DICTIONARY OF NON-CLASSICAL MYTHOLOGY, (p. 140).
But whereas Athene was revered as the virgin protectrix of Athens, Astarte, the Baalat of Tyre, was worshipped along with her consort, who was known under the generic name of Melkart meaning God of the City, (whom the Greeks identified with Heracles and Adonis), as a divine couple.

Like Sodom and Gomorrah, the towns of Tyre and Sidon were often paired in Jewish polemic as wealthy and corrupt hotbeds of iniquity. {1}

{1} The city of Sidon is later mentioned in the "Acts of Paul", who visits it and by prayer manages to bring the temple of Melkart, known to him as Apollo, to the ground, thus necessitating his escape to Tyre where he was met by a hostile crowd of fellow Jews after which the manuscript unfortunately breaks off. (Act. Pau. V & VI), as quoted in NEW TESTAMENT APOCRYPHA, (p. 367-368). The names of the cities, Tyre and Sidon, are spelt in Hebrew as TzR and TzIDVN, totalling 290 and 160, respectively. Other words totalling 290 include the name of Miriam, or Mary, as MRIM; "thine enemy", as ORB; and "schism", as PRVD. Those totalling 160 include a "tree", as OTz; an "omen", as SIMN; and an "image", as TzLM. This may indicate that the Magdalene and her lord were earlier seen as Mary and Simon, representatives of the two cities of the sea coast.
The goddess of Tyre, as mother of the Adonis, was known to 
the author of the "Book of Kings" as the same as the <<the 
goddess of the Sidonians>>, of whom Solomon became a follower. 

(1)

Jeremiah too laments her worship saying, <<Cannot you see 
what they are doing in the towns of Judah and in the streets of 
Jerusalem? The children collect the wood, the fathers light the 
fire, the women knead the dough, to make cakes for the Queen of 
Heaven>>. (2)

"Isaiah" raged against the port saying <<Rejoice no more, 
ravished one, virgin daughter of Sidon>>, (the two cities being 
considered one), and later in the same chapter prophesied that, 
<<Tyre will become like the whore in the song: "Take your lyre, 
and walk the town, forgotten whore. Play your sweetest, sing your 
songs again, to make them remember you.">>.

Again he announced that, <<She will play the whore with all 
the kingdoms on the surface of the earth. But her profits and 
wages will be dedicated to Yahweh and not stored or hoarded>>, 
though the portrayal of the city as a prostitute had been of long 
duration, which metaphor was to reassert itself concerning the 
city of Babylon in the "Revelation". (3)

(1) (1 Kin. XI 5).
(2) (Jer. VII 18).
(3) (Isa. XXIII)
In the forty-fifth psalm, it was said of Israel, personified as an anointed Messiah, that «The daughter of Tyre will solicit your favour with gifts».

"Ezekiel" too prophesied against the city which dared to jeer against Jerusalem saying that she would be left as «a naked rock>>, and later in the same chapter recorded the voice of Yahweh which proclaimed, «"I will cast you down with those who go down to the pit, down to the men of old ... so that you can never come back and be restored to the land of the living".».

Allegro supposes that the basis of the legends concerning the female companion of Simon Magus who was revered as his first thought, or Epinoia, may be found in the "Biblical" polemics against the port wherein she was supposed to have been discovered plying her trade. (2)

In the myth Simon descended to harrow hell to rescue his "Ennoia", or thought, who was the rock or corner-stone of his theology concerning which Allegro writes, "The gnostics found in Tyre's degradation biblical testimony to their heroine's exile from her heavenly home.". (3)

(1) (Eze. XXVI 4).
(2) THE DEAD SEA SCROLLS AND THE CHRISTIAN MYTH, (passim.).
(3) (ibid. p. 150).
One of the more famous incarnations of the companion of Simon was held to have been that of Helen of Troy who was supposed to have been ultimately reduced to becoming a prostitute in the port of Tyre. It was to save her from such degradation, (which was apparently used as a metaphor for the soul’s imprisonment in the flesh), that Simon appeared in the world. Jonas writes of this that, "Her representation as a harlot is intended to show the depth to which the divine principle has sunk by becoming involved in the creation". (1)

The classical legend stated that Helen was seized by Theseus from Sparta but since she was too young he entrusted her to the care of his mother and that she was brought home again by the Dioscuri. Later she was supposed to have been married to the hero Menelaus and, abducted by Paris, was to be the cause of the Trojan War.

However, another version of the myth quoted by Socrates in the "Phaedrus", was given by Stesichorus, who was blinded for his blasphemy and struck with agnosia until he recanted with the words, "False is this tale. You never went in a ship to sea, nor saw the towers of Troy.". (2) Bromhead continues his reconstruction of the "palinode" thus, "The faithless Paris put to sea, With a dead Image, shaped like Thee!". (3)

(1) THE GNOSTIC RELIGION, (p. 109).
(2) PHAEDRUS & LETTERS VII AND VIII, (p. 45).
(3) THE REMAINS OF STESICHORUS, (p. 18).
This "palinode" hints at what seems to have been the oldest Western example of Docetism, (a doctrine of phantasmic divine appearance, from the Greek "dokesis" meaning a semblance), in which only her "Eidolon", or image, went to Troy, (which due to the similarity between the name of this city and that of Tyre may indicate that the two were equated), while she remained in Egypt, and it would seem unusual to ascribe a "dokesis" to a merely mortal figure which may indicate that Helen was viewed as more than this.

The "Expository Treatise on the Soul" uses, among others, proof-texts from the "Odyssey" to describe the tragic fall and eventual deliverance of the soul, or "Psyche", who was personified for many philosophers as Helen, wife of the hero, Menelaus. In it she states, "My heart turned itself from me. It is to my house that I want to return." (1) Here Helen was purported to lament her fall from grace and to affirm her desire to return to her true and heavenly home.

The two sides of the heroine as immortal core and immoral whore were detailed in an hymn found at Nag Hammadi entitled "The Thunder, Perfect Mind" in which the speaker identifies herself as the Nous of the transcendent one in the form of Sophia, equates herself with the Chokmah of the Lord, as well as describing herself as Isis, goddess of many names.

(1) THE NAG HAMMADI LIBRARY IN ENGLISH, (p. 186), [from the "Odyssey" IV 260-261].
She declares, "I was sent forth from the power, and I have come to those who reflect upon me ... Do not be ignorant of me. For I am the first and the last. I am the honoured one and the scorned one. I am the whore and the holy one. I am the wife and the virgin. I am the mother and the daughter ... I am the mother of my father and the sister of my husband, and he is my offspring ... I am the staff of his power in his youth and he is the rod of my old age. And whatever he wills happens to me. I am the silence that is incomprehensible and the idea whose remembrance is frequent. I am the voice whose sound is manifold and the word whose appearance is multiple ... For I am the wisdom of the Greeks and the knowledge of the barbarians. I am the one whose image is great in Egypt ... I am the one who is honoured, and who is praised, and who is despised scornfully ... I, I am sinless, and the root of sin derives from me. I am lust in outward appearance, and interior self-control exists within me. I am the hearing which is attainable to everyone and the speech which cannot be grasped." (1)

(1) THE NAG HAMMADI LIBRARY IN ENGLISH, (p. 271-277), and (c.f. THE Gnostic SCRIPTURES, [p. 80-85]).
In this hymn an identity was made between the wisdom of the Greeks, as "Sophia", with the knowledge of the barbarians, (in this case, the Jews), as Chokmah, and, it would seem, with both the cosmic and individual soul in whom rests the decision to follow either good or evil, which the beauty of Helen was said to have done seeing that she was viewed as the cause of the Trojan war.

In classical mythology the father of Helen was Zeus himself who ravaged her mother Leda in the form of a swan, which image was afterward transferred to the heavens in the form of the constellation Cygnus, though, according to Allen, it was also known under the titles, Ornis, meaning a bird, and Helenae Genitor, as well as being associated with Orpheus, "placed after death in the heavens, near to his favorite (sic.) Lyre". (1)

The congress between the immortals and humanity was not held to be confined to the distant past for Ashe notes that, "Even in historical times such legends attached themselves to famous men. Alexander was said to have been conceived by Olympias, Philip of Macedon’s wife, when Zeus coupled with her in the form of a snake.". (2)

(1) STAR NAMES: THEIR LORE AND MEANING, (p. 193).
(2) THE VIRGIN, (p. 56).
Although Eratosthenes, the Alexandrian astronomer, knew the constellation as "Kyknos" its more common name among the other Greeks was merely "Ornis" and they saw it usually as a hen as did the third century B.C.E., Egyptian priest, Manetho, although it should be noted that the Pleiades were similarly portrayed and as such connected with Minerva since they heralded the spring equinox, and given the association between Helen and the twin Dioscuri, represented by the neighbouring constellation of Gemini, it may be that she was earlier portrayed as Alcyone, leader of the daughters of Atlas and Pleione.

Graves gives various accounts of her birth quoted from classical authors; that Leda found the egg laid by Nemesis after her rape, that Hermes threw Nemesis' egg between Leda's thighs, or that Leda was deified as the goddess after her own ordeal. He notes that Homer and Euripides believed that Zeus fathered Helen and that Leda's husband, Tyndareus, fathered the Dioscuri, though Pindar and Appollodorus disagreed. (1)

Another version of the myth, described by Guirand, relates how "Leda had been brought to bed with two eggs from one of which issued Pollux and Helen, regarded as the children of Zeus, and from the other Castor and Clytemnestra, who were reputed to be the children of Tyndareus.". (2)

(1) THE GREEK MYTHS, (p. 207).

(2) LAROUSSE ENCYCLOPAEDIA OF MYTHOLOGY, (p. 188).
Yet a link between this daughter of Zeus and the twin Dioscuri was accepted by all and given that Helen seems to have been associated with the moon goddess, since as Graves points out her name was in fact a divine title and that she was also known as "Luna", (and as such was sister to the sun as was Artemis to Apollo), it may be that the twins were originally seen as her two children, representing both the waxing and waning crescents, and the propensity of the soul for good or evil.

The image of the Spartan Twins known as the "Docana" was placed in the sky by Zeus after their deaths as the constellation we know as Gemini, and the Greeks, the "Didymoi".

In Egyptian thought they represented Horus, Elder and Younger, while to the Hindus they were, along with other twin stars, known as the "Asvins", or "Divine Horsemen".

The link between the Dioscuri and Helen as the fallen woman was made clear by the fact that to the Jews they were known as the "Teomim", the Tyrians, perhaps the Baalim, Aleyin and Mot.

The persistence of the twin myth may also be found in the Syrian Christian legends of Thomas, the doubting disciple, who was seen as Jesus' twin brother, presumably born from the same womb, and that as Jesus was seen as the more spiritual of the two, Thomas represented the human side.
That the twin mythos may have been part of a more widespread Christian mythology might be inferred from the fact that in "The Acts of the Apostles" Paul journeyed from Malta on an Alexandrian ship whose <<figure-head was the Twins>>, and that previously he and Barnabas had been hailed by the Lycaonians as Hermes and Zeus, respectively. (1)

The most essential feature of the twin mythology was in the antithetical nature of the brothers themselves with Castor representing brain and Pollux, brawn; Abel, good, and Cain, evil; and with Jesus, faith, and Thomas, doubt.

However, the Dioscuri do not seem to have been included in the mythology of the Simonian sect, who have generally been seen as the first Gnostic group, which gave primacy to Simon Magus and his female companion, often known as Helen, who was early given the title "Kuria", the female variant of that given to Jesus as "Kyrios" or Lord.

According to Irenaeus, among the pagans, Simon and Helen were worshipped in the forms of Jupiter and Minerva, (the Roman version of Zeus and Athene), and seem also to have been venerated in the form of the luminaries, Sol and Luna, as the divine parents Apollo and Artemis. The concept of the heavenly mother and father seems to have been held in Phoenicia which due to its proximity to Samaria may have influenced Simonian thought.

(1) The references are: (Act. XXVIII 11, and XIV 12).
According to the bishop, the central features of the Simonian mythos were in the figures of the two protagonists themselves. (1) Helen appears to have represented both the Epinoia of the transcendent one, as Simon, and the individual soul or psyche which, though spiritual, had fallen into material imprisonment.

The explanation seems to have been divided into four acts: in the first, the father was alone and content; in the second, he contemplated his mind, (or Nous), which reflected itself as the divine Sophia; in the third, as a result of this original emanation, the Ennoia was born into the phenomenal world, passed through every sphere of existence as a means of gaining self-knowledge, and finally came to rest in the figure of the lowest of the low as a prostitute in the busy port of Tyre; and in the fourth, out of pity for the plight of his wisdom, the unknowable father himself descended through the various levels of matter, in the form of the magus Simon, in order to free the Epinoia from its tragic fate and escort it back to its true spiritual home.

Thus it would appear that the content of the Simonian myth was an explanation of the creation of the spiritual principle and its redemption from the bondage of the material world which it had created during its fall.

The drama of the redemption of the soul, through the remembering of its heavenly origin, was paralleled in Egypt in the myth of the re-membering of Osiris, god of the dead, by his sister-wife, Isis, Queen of Heaven.

In the myth, Isis was his salvation since she replaced his lost power in the shape of the image of his divine penis, or "Tet", the Tree of Life, and thereby aided his immortality.

It may also have been the case that Isis was considered as the first thought of her husband, paradoxically seen as his divine phallus as fountain of eternal life, which though swallowed by a denizen of the deep, (perhaps a symbol of the base nature of the material world), was re-united with her lord thus securing both his and her redemption.

In the allegorical "Hermeticism", a school of thought named after the Hermopolitan Thoth, god of knowledge, as Hermes Trismegistos, popular in Egyptian centres of learning such as Alexandria throughout this period, Osiris and Isis were viewed as the celestial parents of humanity with the former seen as the spiritual principle lost in congress in the arms of the material "Dame Nature".
In the Simonian myth the roles were reversed with the eternal unchanging principle, in the form of Simon, the "Standing One", pillar, or Ammud, (which also seems to have been attributed phallic connotations), in descent in order to save her, (who was subject to flux and change), who had passed through various bodies until she appeared as a prostitute at Tyre, (well known for its licentiousness), and in this guise she may have been the prototype for Mary the hairdresser, and other scarlet women.\(^1\)

The position of Helen in the Simonian mythos may be seen as a reaction against the prevalent trend towards totally patriarchal and monotheistic explanations of religion and was one of the many systems which posited a female emanation, or at least a hypostasised function, generally viewed as the wisdom or first thought of God.

(1) Within some Christian exegesis the Messiah was identified with the pillar of cloud which led the Exodus, and concerning the judgement the second book of the "Sibylline Oracles" states, <<When Sabaoth Adonai, who thunders on high, dissolves fate and raises the dead, and takes his seat on a heavenly throne, and establishes a great pillar, Christ, imperishable himself, will come in glory on a cloud>>, (Sib. II 238-241), as given in THE OLD TESTAMENT PSEUDEPIGRAPHA, (vol. I p. 351).
Thus in explanation of how the world appeared from the transcedent principle for the Simonian sect, Duchesne quotes Irenaeus; "There is a Supreme Power ... and a corresponding feminine power," which, "proceeded from her father, and produced the angels, who, in their turn created the world." (1)

Here it would seem that Helen was portrayed as Wisdom, mother of the seven archangels, or pillars, who with her formed a celestial ogdoad, and in this guise she may have been seen as the pole star around whom the heptasterisms of the Ursae revolve.

This doctrine as well as establishing the primacy of the Father had the effect of separating the Divine One from the messy business of creation carried out by the female aspect thus leaving the process of emanation as purely cerebral.

Of course, it would have been difficult for the theologians to explain how a masculine deity could have produced the world; especially as in goddess-centred cults birth was the most common explanation, if only in exoteric doctrine. What it does not explain is why the Father should have first thought of a female, (given that the Ennoia was often thought of in terms of the reflection of the divine principle), and not of himself.

(1) THE EARLY HISTORY OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH, (p. 115).
Yet despite, or perhaps because of, the method of creation there developed a war in heaven with the rebellion of some of the angels occurring apparently because they were, according to Irenaeus as quoted by Duchesne, "unwilling to appear to be ... creatures of Ennoia," and so they, "detained her, and put insults upon her, and even confined her in a human body, and for ages she passed on into other female bodies"; which seems to have been the grossest insult of all, until she appeared as a practitioner of the world's oldest profession in one of the busiest sea ports of the time. (1)

As to how this act of theirs against their mother was either permitted or carried out, explanation was not given, though it generally seems to refer to the imprisonment of the wavering soul in base matter, often symbolised as the tomb.

There were presumably seven archons created by Ennoia most probably corresponding with the planets, the days of the week, and perhaps the seven stars of Ursa Major.

What is unclear, however, is how the seven could have enslaved their mother forcing her to transmigrate, (always in the female line), or how her father could have permitted this treachery, though if it is primarily designed to demonstrate the descent of the soul it may represent the gradual densification of the spiritual through the planetary spheres and consequently show the path, if not the method, of return.

The descent then was from beyond the seven spheres, or heavens, passing successively through them until the earth, the lowest of the low, was reached.

The mind, or Nous, of the Father in this system may be equivalent to the technical use of the term "Paternal Depth", or "Bythos", common to Basilidaean and Valentinian Gnosticism from which the first principle of the cosmos was held to emanate.

It is also interesting to note that in this way the divine mind was symbolically equivalent to a womb as the source, and that creation by the divine fiat of speech continued the womb symbolism, though here in an oral sense. Yet the radical departure of the patriarchal theologians was in the explanation of fertilisation for they, of necessity, were forced to imply that the Father fertilised himself.
Quoted in the same passage, Irenaeus describes how Simon was supposed to have taught that, "This thought leaping forth from me, and knowing what was in the will of her Father, descended to the lower regions and generated the angels and powers, by whom also the world was made", and gives the reason for their ingratitude as envy.

The Father then says, in his guise as Simon, "As for myself, I am entirely unknown to them. Wherefore, also am I come to take her away for the first time, and free her from her bonds; to make sure salvation to men by my Gnosis.". (1)

Thus, the Unknown Father himself descended, following her degradation and contamination, though without himself suffering, and appeared to humanity as a man, though whether this was what Simon actually taught and whether he actually saw himself as this Transcendent Father is debatable.

Other than the Ennoia there seems to be no mention of a separate Logos figure, (though it may have been taught that in his descent the Father adopted this form), and certainly none of the Holy Spirit, (unless in the form of the redeemed Helen), in which guise he was supposed to have manifested himself to the "Gentile" world, having already appeared as the Father himself to the Samaritans, and as the Messiah to the Jews.

(1) (ibid. p. 169).
It is also not clear whether it was the Ennoia or the Father who was represented in the form of a dove although the symbol may have been applied to both; to Sophia in her aspect as the divine thought, and to the Father, as Logos, in his descent.

Graves writes, "According to a Phoenician version, quoted by Philo of Byblos, the prime Chaos was acted upon by a wind which became enamoured of its own elements", and quotes another creation myth, which, "gives the name of Baou to the female principle", which he says means "Exalted Mother", derives the word dove from the syllable "ou" or "hu", and equates the name with that of Iahu. (1)

He further associates it with the cryptic principle of chaos known as "Tohu wa Bohu" mentioned in "Genesis". (2)

However, Bau was also the name of the wife of the patron of the city of Lagash, Ninib, or Ningirsu, was portrayed in the form of a dove, and breathed into humanity the breath of life.

Her husband was represented celestially by Orion, and although in the Babylonian month, Airu, (during which the constellation rose), the marriage of the Adonis, Dumuzi or Tammuz, to the earth was celebrated, this may have been a later version of the marriage of Ningirsu to Bau, as Langdon points out.

(1) ADAMS RIB, (p. 13).
(2) (Gen. I 2).
Their nuptials included the festival known as the "Procession of the Oxen", which seem to refer to the Pleiades; heralds of the official Sumerian year. {1}  

It was also during this month that the cleaving of Tiamat in twain by a wind that filled her belly, sent by her son, Marduk, who created the heavens and the earth from her body, was commemorated.  

Many scholars now accept that the root of the phrase, Tohu wa Bohu, is in the name of the Biblical "Tehom", or the Babylonian Tiamat, goddess of the bitter waters of the seas, (over whom the spirit of God moved), as against Apsu, god of sweet waters such as rivers and springs, though he later came to be identified with the supernal waters, the starry sky.

Barrett writes concerning the symbolism of the dove within Christianity that, "The significance of the dove-form is to bring out clearly the fact that the Spirit (in Hebrew, ruah) is a female principle, over against God the Father as a male principle", though the ambiguity of the gender of the spirit was to remain a point of controversy for some time. (2)  

(1) BABYLONIAN MENOLOGIES, (p. 12).  
(2) THE HOLY SPIRIT AND THE GOSPEL TRADITION, (p. 36). It should be noted that as well as the meaning of "spirit", the Hebrew word, Ruach, spelt RVCh, bears connotations of "air", "breath", and "wind".
The Philonic conception, as noted by Baer, was that the human was of dual nature, higher and lower, and that the former was considered to be the rational and divine immortal part, of which Ruach, or "Pneuma", was the essence, while the latter, the "Nephesch", was the vital and bestial mortal nature, of which blood was the essence.

This division was frequently spoken of in terms of gender with, unsurprisingly, the higher as the male and the lower as female. (1)

Baer notes that Philo equated the male with the Nous or mind and the female with the faculty of "Aisthesis" or sense-perception and writes, "This pejorative use of female terminology to describe man's irrational soul and the created world is found throughout Philo's writings", and that his, "depreciation of actual woman and of female sense-perception are frequently so closely intertwined that no clear separation between the two can be made.". (2)

(1) The word Nephesch is spelt in Hebrew, NPSH, and totals 430, as does the phrase, Tohu wa Bohu, spelt ThHV-V-BHV, over which the Ruach moved.

(2) PHILO'S USE OF THE CATEGORIES MALE AND FEMALE, (p. 40).
However, it should be noted that this division was hardly peculiar to Philo. It is only fairly recently that society is beginning to accept that many of its cherished views concerning the "virtues" of the "second sex" are in fact inculcated and learned, rather than natural and instinctive, and that female subservience in all things, mental and physical, is primarily due to male propaganda rather than the deliberations of "Mother Nature".

A clear dichotomy between mind and body was established as a fact as natural as male superiority, with the rational male mind ruling the irrational female body; since women were considered to be mostly body anyway, the difficulties in explaining what the gender of the female mind was were avoided.

Rationality was considered eternal and unchanging as compared with the body in flux and it was here that the division may have begun. While the male body was seen to change but once, (when the true voice was attained and the tutelage of women superseded by the entrance of the child into manhood), the female body changed monthly.

It should be noted that in many cultures puberty was the time of the ascription of gender and, in the case of the male, political rights, and that before such time the child, whether male or female, was considered undifferentiated and amorphous since it was brought up in the women's quarters, was considered to be in some sense, female.
With the onset of the breaking of the voice the division was completed since from that time the male was considered to be unchanging and its function established with reason attained.

Reason naturally inhabited the cranial region though some of it was lost during the fathering of children and weakness ensued which was why continence was lauded since it prevented dispersion. Women, however, were seen, except in remarkable cases, as being devoid of natural reason and therefore sought to obtain it in the only way they knew how.

That this was so was amply demonstrated by the fact of menstruation; a curse or a bodily flux which temporarily deprived them of what little sense they had and since this disease was a regular occurrence there could be little hope of concentrated mental effort when their wombs fell downwards. Having no control over their bodies, there could be no control over their minds and during the disability they were held to be open to baneful influences.

Because of her disobedience the first woman and all her female progeny were accursed by the male creator with the words, "I will multiply your pains in childbearing, you shall give birth to your children in pain. Your yearning shall be for your husband, yet he will lord it over you", although she had not at that time given birth. (1)

(1) (Gen. III 16).
Yet the next major account of docetism also concerns a female figure, namely that of Eve, and is to be found in the "Genesis" haggadah given in the Gnostic "Hypostasis of the Archons". Of this work Bullard writes, "The indications are that The Hypostasis of the Archons is a composite document, consisting of probably two fragments brought together into a whole by an editor.". {1}

The first, and earlier, part deals with a Jewish Gnostic, possibly Ophite, re-interpretation of "Genesis" in the "Septuagint" version, and the second with a type of Christian soteriology, with the two parts being joined by the figure of Norea, which name may be derived from the Hebrew word for a young woman, who was supposed to have been the daughter of Eve, sister to the brothers, Cain and Abel, whom the demiurge attempted to lead astray. {2}

(1) THE HYPOSTASIS OF THE ARCHONS, (p. 115).

(2) The word NORH equals 325, as does the word for smoke, perhaps the pillar of cloud, as QITVR. Numerical exegesis may also be found in the Aramaic name of Saklas, the foolish demiurge, often identified with the evil angel Samael who in turn was equated with the creator, spelt as SKLA which equals 111, as does the full version of the letter Aleph, the words for "ruin", and "destruction" as AMN, "darkness" as APL, and the "holocaust" as OVLH, as well as the word for "vomit", QYA.
An alternative variant, of Oraios or Oraea, Bullard compares with the Graeco-Egyptian word "Uraeus", the serpent symbol of divine life. (1)

Layton, however identifies the second name with the Greek, "Horaia", meaning beautiful. (2)

In order to accommodate the widely accepted Platonic doctrine of the two worlds, noumenal and phenomenal, the haggadah re-interpreted the two accounts of creation given in "Genesis"; the first as the creation of the world of the perfect "Eide", or Ideas, and the second as that made by the demiurge, an imperfect reflection of the ideal world of light above.

Further the Elohim mentioned in the first account seem to have been associated with the host of angels responsible for creating the phenomenal world of base matter, (perhaps in the guise of the seven archangels as the progeny of the Sophia), seen as the realm of darkness, over which they ruled under their demiurgic chief.

(1) (ibid. p. 98).

(2) THE GnostIC SCRIPTURES, (p. 73, note c).
The text opens with the words, "On account of the reality of the authorities, inspired by the spirit of the parent of truth, the great apostle - referring to the authorities of the darkness - told us that "our contest is not against flesh and blood; rather, the authorities of the world and the spiritual hosts of wickedness." (1)

These rulers were thought to have become infatuated with the Divine Image as Shekinah reflected in the waters and proceeded to make humanity from the memory of this figure.

The work states, "As Incorruptibility looked down into the region of the Waters, her Image appeared in the Waters; and the Authorities of the Darkness became enamoured of her. But they could not lay hold of that Image ... since beings that merely possess a soul cannot lay hold of those that possess a Spirit - for they were from Below, while it was from Above." (2)

They tried to rape the image of the heavenly Eve though during this attempt she, "laughed at them for their folly and their blindness; and in their clutches, she became a tree, and left before them a shadow of herself resembling herself; and they defiled it foully." (3)

(1) THE GNOSTIC SCRIPTURES, (p. 68), and (c.f., Col. I 13 and Eph. VI 12).

(2) THE NAG HAMMADI LIBRARY IN ENGLISH, (p. 153).

(3) THE GNOSTIC SCRIPTURES, (p. 71).
But the human creation of the Archons laid inert, and in pity, <<the Spirit saw the soul-endowed Man upon the ground. And the Spirit came forth from the Adamantine Land; it descended and came to dwell within him, and that Man became a living soul>>.

(1)

The creation of the earthly Eve, abortive reflection of her heavenly mother, was next described with the words, <<Now the deep sleep that they "caused to fall upon him, and he slept" is lack of acquaintance. They opened his side like a living woman. And they built up his side with some flesh in place of her, and Adam came to be merely animate. And the spirit-endowed woman came to him ... and when he saw her, he said, "It is you who have given me life; you will be called 'mother of the living.' For it is she who is my mother. It is she who is the midwife, and the woman, and she who has given birth.">>. (2)

After the giving of life to Adam by Eve, in her heavenly form, and after the births of Cain, Abel, and Seth, came that of Norea, upon which Eve declared, <<"He has begotten on me a virgin as an assistance for many generations of mankind." She is the virgin whom the Forces did not defile.">>. (3)

(1) THE NAG HAMMADI LIBRARY IN ENGLISH, (p. 154).
(2) THE GNOSTIC SCRIPTURES, (p. 70).
(3) THE NAG HAMMADI LIBRARY IN ENGLISH, (p. 156).
In the work Norea was seen as a type of Sophia, as the virtuous soul, who, when attacked by the Archons and refused entrance to the ark, (a plot devised by them for the destruction of righteousness), called out for deliverance and was answered by the being Eleleth, whose name means Understanding or Sagacity, who said of the creation of the androgynous demiurge identified as Ialdabaoth, (perhaps a corruption of YHVH Sabaoth), <<"A veil exists between the World Above and the realms that are below; and Shadow came into being beneath the veil; and that Shadow became Matter; and that Shadow was projected apart.">>. (1)

This shadow seems to have been identified with the reflection of the divine Eidolon from which the phenomenal world arose, (apparently insubstantial in itself and equated with ignorance or agnosia), into which the spiritual principle descended as knowledge to liberate those in awareness from the bondage caused by lack of understanding.

What is unusual about the haggadah is that the figure of Eve, (who though seen as mother of all life, and thus in Greek known as Zoe), was reviled, for from her disobedience was held to come all evil, and yet was equated with that of the female emanation of the supreme and seen as the Chokmah of the divine, source of all spirituality. (1)

(1) (ibid. p. 158).
(2) The name Eve in Hebrew, spelt as ChVH and equalling 19, has connotations of manifestation.
Yet the traditional view of Eve, (mother of humanity and progenitrix of the Jewish nation, and thereby woman as the bringer of death into the world through her disobedient apostasy), prevailed.

Israel itself, described in female terms as the betrothed of Yahweh, was similarly rebuked for its recreancy, and this metaphor for the submission of the nation to God, (as a bride to her bridegroom and wife to her husband), seems to have gained currency just before the time of the Exile.

The cyclical nature of the dying god was, in "Genesis", transferred instead to womankind who, as the result of the refusal of Eve to accept the word of the Lord, then suffered the monthly flux of menstruation.

The Jewish nation became seen both as the virgin daughter of Zion, spouse of the mountain, faithful to her lord, and as the harlot seeking after foreign gods but though apostasy was often laid at the door of the women of Israel, the nation as a whole was responsible, and the description of the tribes as the betrothed of God applied equally to the menfolk also.
"Hosea" writes of the people as the unfaithful wife at the Eschata who, "When that day comes - it is Yahweh who speaks - she will call me, "My husband", no longer will she call me, "My Baal"." (1)

Because of her whoring and rejection of monogamy however she was held to be under a temporary ban which would be lifted during the last days when the city and the nation would repent of its prostitution. (2)

The nation, due to its apostasy, was sometimes portrayed as suffering similarly to a woman in childbirth, "Yes, I hear screams like those of a woman in labour, anguish like that of a woman giving birth to her first child; they are the screams of the daughter of Zion, gasping, hands outstretched, 'Ah, I despair! I am fainting away with murderers surrounding me'", and it is possible that such metaphors drew their inspiration from those used in the fertility cults, perhaps from the ullulation practised by female devotees at the burial of the dead god. (3)

(1) (Hos. II 19).
(2) (Zep. III 14).
(3) (Jer. IV 31).
The redemption of Israel, or more often Jerusalem, was also placed in somewhat sexual terms with the Eschata seen as the nuptials of the Lord and his people, thus "Zechariah" prophesied, "Sing, rejoice, daughter of Zion; for I am coming to dwell in the middle of you - it is Yahweh who speaks". (1)

Jerusalem would again be honoured with the presence of God who had departed, as was recorded in "Ezekiel", and yet who promised to be "a wall of fire for her all round her", and "her glory in the midst of her.". (2)

In this guise the Messiah was to appear as the heavenly bridegroom, and "Zechariah" predicted, "Shout with gladness, daughter of Jerusalem! See now, your king comes to you; he is victorious, he is triumphant, humble and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey". (3)

The humility of the later Messiah, as compared with earlier expectations of a military and nationalistic deliverer of the nation and scion of David, may have been drawn from the portrayal of the rejected figure, or "Suffering Servant", from "Deutero-Isaiah", and although many Christian apologists used these passages as a pre-figurement of the life and death of Jesus it is instructive to note that Paul never quotes the text.

(1) (Zec. II 10).
(2) (Zec. II 9).
(3) (Zec. IX 9).
Previous prophecies from the same book stated that,

"When the Lord has washed away the filth of the daughter of Zion and cleansed Jerusalem ... Yahweh will come and rest on the whole stretch of Mount Zion ... a cloud by day, and smoke, and by night the brightness of a flaring fire>>, and seem to portray the descent of the Lord, (or his Shekinah), in traditional terms as the pillar. (1)

The sign for the commencement of the tribulations, expected before the descent of the Lord, was described thus,

"The Lord himself, therefore, will give you a sign. It is this: the maiden is with child and will soon give birth to a son whom she will call Immanuel>>, and would seem to refer to the birth of the expected anointed. (2)

(1) (Isa. IV 4 & 5).
(2) (Isa. VII 14). It is instructive to note that the name of this conception, spelt in Hebrew as OMNV-AL, totals 197, as does the name of the god worshipped by Melchizedek, king of Salem, namely, Hypistos, the Most High, as AL-OLIVN. Further, that the name is composed of two parts: OMNV, and AL; AL, or El, being an ancient name of the Lord, and that OMNV, totals 160, as do the words for "an omen", or "sign", as SIMN; a "shepherd", as NVQD; an "image", as TzLM; and a "tree", as OTz.
This son was later described, in terms normally reserved for the Lord himself, as one upon whom, «dominion is laid on his shoulders; and this is the name they give to him: Wonder-Counsellor, Mighty-God, Eternal-Father, Prince-of-Peace». (1)

Yet he was still figured as a virtuous king from the «stock of Jesse, a scion thrusts from his roots: on him the spirit of Yahweh rests, a spirit of wisdom and insight, a spirit of counsel and power, a spirit of knowledge and the fear of Yahweh. (The fear of Yahweh is his breath)>>, which with Yahweh himself may have been viewed as forming an heptad of hypostases, perhaps with authority over the seven planets. (2)

The coming of the Messiah was originally secondary to the second coming of the Lord, after his alleged departure from the holy city, though it seems as if the two conceptions soon became one.

"Isaiah" described how, when Zion had been cleansed, «Yahweh Sabaoth will prepare for all peoples a banquet of rich food ... On this mountain he will remove the mourning veil covering all peoples, and the shroud enwrapping all nations, he will destroy Death for ever. The Lord Yahweh will wipe away the tears from every cheek>>. (3)

(1) (Isa. IX 6).
(2) (Isa. XI 1-3).
(3) (Isa. XXV 6-8).
This prophecy also seems to refer to an eschatological battle between the forces of light and darkness, since it was also implied that the Leviathan was to be punished once and for all, after which the kingdom of righteousness would be established. (1)

God himself was figured as the kingly Messiah dealing out justice, avenging his bride, and gathering his people together, <<like a shepherd feeding his flock, gathering lambs in his arms, holding them against his breast and leading to their rest the mother ewes>>. (2)

The first of the songs of the servant of Yahweh, a human instrument of his plan, seems to have been early used to refer to the liberal Persian, Cyrus, <<as covenant of the people and light of the nations>>, although the passage was later seen as referring to Yahweh himself, once more, probably after the experience of Persian rule. (3)

(1) (Isa. XXVI 1). The number of this demon, spelt in Hebrew as LVITHN, totals the number 496, as do the words for "fiend" as TzVRR, and the theocratic "kingdom" as MLKVTh.

(2) (Isa. XL 11).

(3) (Isa. XLII 6).
It appears to be the Lord himself who, though described as a military leader, bemoaned, "From the beginning I have been silent, I have kept quiet, held myself in check. I groan like a woman in labour, I suffocate, I stifle," though later in the same chapter the reference seems to be to Israel as "light of the world", angel of the hosts of Yahweh, and example to the nations. (1)

The suffering servant became seen as a metaphor for the nation of Israel who, "was pierced through for our faults, crushed for our sins. On him lies a punishment that brings us peace, and through his wounds we are healed ... Harshly dealt with, he bore it humbly, he never opened his mouth, like a lamb that is led to the slaughter-house, like a sheep that is dumb before its shearers never opening its mouth." (2)

The spiritual rebirth of the nation was detailed in the last chapter of "Isaiah" by the words, "Listen. An uproar from the city! A voice from the Temple! ... Long before being in labour she has given birth. Before being overtaken by birth pangs, she has been delivered of a boy. Who has ever heard of such a thing, who ever saw anything like this? Is a country born in one day? Is a nation brought forth all at once, that Zion only just in labour should bring forth sons?". (3)

(1) (Isa. XLII 14).
(2) (Isa. LIII 5 & 7).
(3) (Isa. LXVI 6-8).
It is fairly clear then that the virgin, or young woman, who was to bring forth a child was identified with the nation of Israel, and that the Messiah was to be seen as her son, of the House of David, who would redeem the people.

According to "Jeremiah", «Yahweh says this: They have found pardon in the wilderness, those who have survived the sword. Israel is marching to his rest. Yahweh has appeared to him from afar: I have loved you with an everlasting love, so I am constant in my affection for you. I build you once more; you shall be rebuilt, virgin of Israel ... Come home, virgin of Israel, come home to these towns of yours. How long will you hesitate, disloyal daughter? For Yahweh is creating something new on earth: the Woman sets out to find her Husband again>>. (1)

This search symbolised the return to the covenant, represented as the bridegroom, by the errant whore, as lost sheep, with the prospect of a new marriage vow being made between them. Yet as Yahweh pointed out, «"If a man divorces his wife and she leaves him to marry someone else, may she still go back to him? Has not that piece of land been totally polluted?">>, and implied that a new contract would have to be drawn up, since «"The House of Israel and the House of Judah have broken my covenant which I made with their ancestors.">>. (2)

(1) (Jer. XXXI 2-4 & 22).
(2) (Jer. III 1), and (Jer. XI 11).
The virtuous remnant epitomised by "Jeremiah" had, however, struggled like Jacob before them to gain the favour of God, and the proper relationship between the devotees and their Lord was described in no uncertain terms, <<You have seduced me, Yahweh, and I have let myself be seduced; you have overpowered me: you were the stronger>>, which seemed to them to depict the correct nature of submission to be ratified in the new covenant. (1)

This new contract was, <<"not a covenant like the one I made with their ancestors on the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt. They broke that covenant of mine, so I had to show them who was master. ... No, this is the covenant I will make ... Deep within them I will plant my Law, writing it on their hearts.">>. (2)

The new covenant to be implanted upon the heart of the virgin daughter of Zion, equated with the word of God, was by later Christians seen as a prophecy of the virgin birth in which, in restitution of the first creation, the spirit of God hovered over the womb of Mary and impregnated her with the seed of the Messiah. (3)

(1) (Jer. XX 7).
(2) (Jer. XXI 31-34).
(3) "Luke" records the words of the angel who proclaimed the event to Mary thus, <<"The Holy Spirit will come upon you" ... "and the power of the Most High will cover you with its shadow">>. (Luk. I 35).
However, "Paul" never dwells upon the virgin birth and neither does "John", despite his eulogy of the incarnation of the Memra, and although passages in both "Matthew" and "Mark" seem to speak of an earlier conception, the idea of the divine impregnation became central to the demonstration of the heavenly origin of the Messiah within some sections of Christianity, although the Ebionites, (often seen as Jewish Christians), maintained that Jesus was son of Mary and Joseph, and physical brother of James, Joseph, Jude, Simon, as well as both unnamed and unnumbered sisters. (1)

Ashe writes that, for some Christians, "Jesus's mother had to be in some sense the bride of the Lord, therefore untouched by man; but she could not be 'touched', in the crude pagan sense, by the Lord either; no other state than virginity was open to her, and her conception of his Son could only be an inscrutable divine action", though the idea would have been readily accepted by the non-Jewish world with her veneration guaranteed. (2)

He writes, "While Mary's worship came to mean many things, it certainly had its roots in one thing. The only credible point of departure is her special, divinely-ordained motherhood", and was thus centred on the Annunciation. (3)

(1) c.f., (Mat. XIII 53), & (Mar. VI 3).
(2) THE VIRGIN, (p. 57).
(3) (ibid. p. 117).
In her obedient acceptance of the word of the Lord she was compared with the first woman, through whom humanity fell, and was seen as the source of the redemptive mission of God, thus Bettenson quotes Irenaeus who writes, "Eve by her disobedience brought death upon herself and on all the human race: Mary, by her obedience, brought salvation". {1}

The importance of the virgin birth in the redemptive process was stressed by Irenaeus who asked concerning the Ebionites, "How can they be saved unless he was God who wrought their salvation on the earth? And how shall man pass to God unless God has passed into man? How shall man be freed from the generation of death, except he pass into a new birth, wonderfully and unexpectedly given by God, for a token for salvation, a birth from a virgin, receiving a re-birth through faith?". {2}

Both Justin and Irenaeus made use of this view of Mary as the Second Eve and saw her as the true mother of life as the first had been the introducer of death, concerning which Graef writes, "It seems very probable, indeed, that Justin, who was himself converted near Ephesus, received this teaching on Mary and Eve as part of the apostolic tradition", though given that Ephesus was a centre of a Diana cult this seems an unlikely supposition. {3}

{1} THE EARLY CHRISTIAN FATHERS, (vol. I p. 74).
{2} (ibid. p. 78).
{3} DEVOTION TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN, (p. 17).
Justin wrote in his "Apologia", quoted by Bettenson, concerning the alleged virgin births of other heroes and gods, "My purpose is to establish that our beliefs ... are the sole truth and are anterior to all these chronicles", and he sought to prove that the similarities between the doctrines of the Christians and those of other sects were by direct borrowing on the part of the pagans including the importance of both blood and wine in the cult of Bacchus, the concept of the virgin birth in the legend of Perseus, the ascension in that of Bellerophon, and the mystery of the eucharist in Mithraism. (1)

Yet Mariolatry, or the "hyperdulia" of the Virgin, became normative only in the fourth century of our era and she became the type for all spiritual virgins. Indeed Marian typology claimed most of the women appearing in the "Bible" as prototypes of the Virgin. The "extra-Biblical" nature of much of her mythology did not deter the "Apostolic Fathers" from implying the centrality of her function since, as Ignatius opined in his "Letter to the Ephesians", "The virginity of Mary and her child-bearing was hidden from the prince of this world; so likewise was the death of the Lord - three mysteries that are to be proclaimed with a shout". (2)

(1) THE EARLY CHRISTIAN FATHERS, (vol. I p. 60).
(2) Ignatius' "Epistle to the Ephesians" (XIX), as quoted in THE EARLY CHRISTIAN FATHERS, (p. 41), and c.f. EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITINGS, (p. 81).
The importance of Mary seems to have been recognised in early times although as Graef writes, "St. Paul himself, who brought the Faith to such centres of pagan immorality as Corinth and Ephesus, refers to Mary only once, in his Letter to the Galatians, as a test of the reality of the Incarnation". (1)

Whereas Gnostic thought tended to focus on Eve as the Heavenly Female Archetype and sometimes as creatrix, Nicaean Christianity, especially after the Council of Chalcedon, looked towards Mary as "Mother of All Living". Of one of the "Cappadocian Fathers", Gregory of Nyssa, she writes, "He calls Mary the 'Mother of Life' who gave birth in joy, whereas Eve had done so in pain and sorrow". (2)

The veneration of Mary reached ecstatic heights developing towards a mysticism of the female. The approach of Gregory of Nyssa was through typology claiming that Mary was prefigured by the burning bush from which God uttered his word, and as the Temple of the Heavenly Jerusalem, (which became seen as a glyph of the "Ecclesia" of the saints), in which the Lord was to dwell.

(1) MARY: HER HISTORY, (p. 33), and q.v. (Gal. IV 5).
(2) (ibid. p. 20).
The author of "Revelation" described this city as, «coming down from God out of heaven. It had all the radiant glory of God and glittered like some precious jewel ... lit by the radiant glory of God>>, and prophesied that, «The pagan nations will live by its light and the kings of the earth will bring it their treasures and their wealth ... Nothing unclean may come into it: no one who does what is loathsome or false, but only those who are listed in the ... book of life.>>. (1)

The Latin bishop, Ambrose, thought that Mary was indicated by the pillar of light and the cloud of smoke that marched before the Israelites and both he and Jerome applied the "dramatis personae" of the "Song of Songs" to Mary and her son.

The figure of the virgin, mother of the saviour, was also equated with that of the celestial female described in "Revelation" as, «a woman, adorned with the sun, standing on the moon, and with the twelve stars on her head for a crown ... pregnant, and in labour, crying aloud in the pangs of childbirth>>, and the vision was thought of as describing the anger of the Satan upon the realisation that she was to be the bearer of his conqueror. (2)

(1) (Rev. XXI 11 & 23-27).

(2) (Rev. XII 1-3).
The adversary was described in terms reminiscent of those given to the Leviathan as the great beast of the underworld. The text describes a, "huge red dragon which had seven heads ... Its tail dragged a third of the stars from the sky and dropped them to the earth, and the dragon stopped in front of the woman as she was having the child, so that he could eat it as soon as it was born from its mother. The woman brought a male child into the world, the son who was to rule all the nations with an iron sceptre, and the child was taken straight up to God and to his throne". (1)

The saviour was described in the "Johannine" writings as the Memra who, "was made flesh, he lived among us, and we saw his glory, the glory that is his as the only Son of the Father, full of grace and truth". (2)

Coming in the flesh he was visible not only to humanity but also to this demonic world ruled over by his mortal enemy, both the satanic Leviathan and Anti-Christ, with whom he was to battle for the souls of the righteous.

The angels themselves were held to be divided into two camps depending upon which side they fought and it was apparently not easy for the average Christian to discover their nature.

(1) (Rev. XII 3-5).
(2) (Joh. I 14).
To deal with this difficulty "John" gave this advice, <<You can tell the spirits that come from God by this: every spirit which acknowledges that Jesus the Christ has come in the flesh is from God; but any spirit which will not say this of Jesus is not of God, but is the spirit of Antichrist, whose coming you were warned about. Well, now he is here, in the world. Children, you have already overcome these false prophets, because you are from God and you have in you one who is greater than anyone in this world; as for them, they are of the world, and so they speak the language of the world and the world listens to them. But we are children of God, and those who know God listen to us; those who are not of God refuse to listen to us. This is how we can tell the spirit of truth from the spirit of falsehood.>>. (1) (I Joh. IV 2-6).
The appearance of the evil one was, for the early Christians, proof that they were living in the Eschata.

"John" writes, "Children, these are the last days; you were told that an Antichrist must come, and now several antichrists have already appeared; we know from this that these are the last days. Those rivals of Christ came out of our own number, but they had never really belonged>>, and he announced that, "The man who denies that Jesus is the Christ - he is the liar, he is Antichrist; and he is denying the Father as well as the son, because no one who has the Father can deny the Son, and to acknowledge the Son is to have the Father as well.". (1)

"John" states, "There are many deceivers about in the world, refusing to admit that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh. They are the Deceiver; they are the Antichrist ... If anybody does not keep within the teaching of Christ but goes beyond it, he cannot have God with him: only those who keep to what he taught can have the Father and the Son with them. If anyone comes to you bringing a different doctrine, you must not receive him in your house or even give him a greeting. To greet him would make you a partner in his wicked work". (2)

(1) (I Joh. II 18-19 & 22-23).
(2) (II Joh. 7-10).
"Peter" too warned against false teachers, in his second pastoral letter, who would, "insinuate their own disruptive views", characterised them as, "dried-up rivers, fogs swirling in the wind", and proclaimed that, "the dark underworld is the place reserved for them", while to "Jude" they were like, "clouds blown about by the winds and bringing no rain, or like barren trees which are then uprooted in the winter and so are twice dead; like wild sea waves capped with shame as if with foam; or like shooting stars bound for an eternity of black darkness". (1)

"Paul" affirmed that, "The Spirit has explicitly said that during the last times there will be some who will desert the faith and choose to listen to deceitful spirits and doctrines that come from the devils", which he held were but, "godless myths and old wives' tales", and warned that, "You may be quite sure that in the last days there are going to be some difficult times. People will be self-centered and grasping; boastful, arrogant and rude; disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, irreligious; heartless and unappeasable; they will be slanderers, profligates, savages and enemies of everything that is good; they will be treacherous and reckless and demented by pride, preferring their own pleasure to God.". (2)

(1) (II Pet. II 17), & (Jude 12-13).
(2) (I Tim. IV 1 & 7), & (II Tim. III 1-5).
Apart from Hymenaeus, Alexander, and Nicolaus, (founder of the Nicolaitan sect), mentioned in the second chapter of the "Revelation", (whose teachings were characterised as from the same school as Balaam which may indicate that, given the oracle ascribed to the prophet, they were largely astrological in nature and, as McL.Wilson suggests, Nicolaus may have been an attempt to render Balaam into Greek), one of the earliest figures to have been identified as a representative of the antichrist seems to have been Simon Magus who has been vilified as the sole "Founder of Gnosticism" and seen as a deliberate and deviationist misinterpreter of the "Good News". (1)

During the last days the servants of the Satan were held to infiltrate the early Christian communities spreading doctrinal dispute and heresy.

"Peter" rants against these people whom he saw as, "unsightly blots on your society: men whose only object is dissipation all day long, and they amuse themselves deceiving you even when they are your guests at a meal; with their eyes always looking for adultery; men with an infinite capacity for sinning, they will seduce any soul which is at all unstable. Greed is the one lesson their minds have learnt. They are under a curse". (2)

(1) THE Gnostic PROBLEM, (p. 111 note 24).
(2) (II Pet. II 13-14).
To Irenaeus, the second century, C.E., bishop of Lugdunum in Gaul, to whom we are indebted for his accounts of what he termed heresy, the most accursed figure of all was Simon Magus.

According to the bishop, his followers saw him as the Logos incarnate who appeared to the Jews as the Son of God, having already manifested himself to the Samaritans as the Father, the Great, and who would go forth among the "Gentiles" as the Holy Spirit.

Irenaeus wrote his "Adversus Haereses" about 180 C.E., at a time when the oral tradition was in retreat, and he relied for his definitions of doctrine mainly upon a canon still in formation, which, with the appeal to the theory of apostolic succession and to a creed or "Rule of Faith", were his main weapons against what he saw as the perversion of the true doctrine.
Of his family and background, Justinus, himself a Samaritan, records that he came from the village of Gitta, and that he went to Rome in the time of Claudius Caesar, there to be confronted by Peter.

It was also Justin who first mentioned the inaccurate tradition that a statue had been erected at the capital in his honour as the young, or new, God and, in his "Apology", quoted by Stevenson, wrote of Simon, "He was considered a god, and as a god was honoured ... with a statue ... and bore this inscription, 'Simoni Deo Sancto,' 'To Simon the holy God.' And almost all the Samaritans, and a few even of other nations, worship him, and acknowledge him as the first god; and a woman, Helen, who went about with him at that time, and had formerly been a prostitute, they say is the first idea generated by him." (1)

However, the god to whom the statue was dedicated was worshipped along with Fides, and Deus Fidius, as responsible for overseeing that promises given were undertaken, and as such had authority over contracts and oaths, as had the Vedic Mitra, or Mithra, mentioned in the "Boghaz-koi" inscriptions, along with Varuna, (perhaps cognate with Uranus), and the war god, Indra.

(1) A NEW EUSEBIUS, (p. 74).
Mead, quoting from Hippolytus, notes that Simon was known as "He who stood, stands, and will stand, a male-female power like the preexisting Boundless Power, which has neither beginning nor end". (1)

According to tradition, Simon was reported of as having shown himself, firstly, to the Samaritans as the Father and Creator. Yet this would have been as gross a blasphemy to Samaritan Jewry, as it would have been to the rest of Judaism, since they appear to have been far more literalist than their southern cousins, and it is unlikely, if this is indeed what he proclaimed, that he would have even survived to travel abroad.

Gaster writes of them, "In their own nomenclature they are called Shamerine, which means in Hebrew, 'those who keep faithfully the word of God,' ... in contradiction to the Jews, whom they charged with having changed the Law, and altered the wording of the Bible", which charge has, since the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls, been taken more seriously than was previously the case. (2)

Evidence in support of this Samaritan claim has been made available due to "Biblical" criticism and textual analysis even though the "Torah" seems to have been transmitted basically unchanged for a good many centuries after the schism.

(1) SIMON MAGUS, (p. 20).
(2) SAMARITAN ORAL LAW AND ANCIENT TRADITIONS, (p. 14), [his emphases].
Duchesne writes, following the contention of Irenaeus concerning Simon as the sole founder of Gnosticism, "It was then in Samaria, the ancient rival of Jerusalem, that Gnosticism proper first appeared in Christian history". (1)

"Biblically" the final split between the Jews and Samaritans was taken to be the expulsion from the new post-exilic Palestine of the son-in-law of the Governor of Samaria, although it is likely that tensions between the two regions had existed well before this date, and probable that Samaritanism had been a staunch opposer of both the monarchy and the emphasis on Jerusalem, as the capital, instead of Shechem. (2)

For Southern Palestinian Judaism the last straw was when the Samaritans built their own Temple on Mount Gerizim for which they claimed divine authority in accordance with the injunction in "Deuteronomy". (3)

Thus began the hatred between the factions which has lasted to this day although the Samaritan variety of Judaism has dwindled in numbers. As with the conservative Sadducees they rejected the new belief in bodily resurrection and held a more primitive view of the afterlife.

(2) (Neh. XIII 28).
(3) (Deu. II 29, and XXVII 12).
Yet, according to Gaster, in the "Hilluk", a compendium of Samaritan halachah, exegesis is made of various texts in order to demonstrate the existence of four worlds or stages through which a soul was held to pass.

These were: firstly, the womb; secondly, this present life within the community of believers; thirdly, the dust, held to be between this world and the last, (a condition of attendance); and finally, present in the new world for the "Day of Judgement", although the belief in this ethical assessment at the end of time is extra-scriptural and the pre-existence of the soul, it should be noted, is not maintained. (1)

Thomson writes, "In the Jewish writings there are several accounts of the Samaritans, all disrespectful, and none of them trustworthy. Among other things they are accused of worshipping a dove, and disbelieving in angels and in the immortality of the soul and the resurrection of the body.". (2)

As has been noted, with the latter two points they were in agreement with the Sadducees, and as to their alleged deprecation of angelology they seem to have been more purist than those of the southern kingdom.

(1) SAMARITAN ORAL LAW AND ANCIENT TRADITIONS, (p. 133).
(2) BOOKS WHICH INFLUENCED OUR LORD AND HIS APOSTLES, (p. 47).
The taunt of dove-worship is of central importance, given the use of the bird within both Christian and Gnostic symbolism, especially since both Nazareth and Galilee proper had long been under Samaritan influence and, at times, rule, which may explain the reluctance of the Jerusalem hierarchy to accept the teaching of Jesus as a Nazarene.

Although the Samaritans used only the "Pentateuch", mystical exegesis cannot have been unknown to them, nor knowledge of the prophets or other scriptures of the southern variety of Judaism and, of course, much of the polemic would probably have been re-interpreted.

Since the "Five Books of Moses" were so important to them they even counted the words and letters occurring in the works in order to enable accurate transmission and from this precaution comes the interest in Gematria for which they were famed. (1)

For them the numbers attributed to the letters at the beginning of the five books were of special significance, with the "Torah" being seen as the faithful wife of the Lord. (2)

(1) SAMARITAN ORAL LAW AND ANCIENT TRADITIONS, (p. 103).
(2) These are B, V, V, V, A, and total 21. The number is also equivalent to part of the name given from the burning bush to Moses and signifying existence, as AHIH; the contracted form of YHVH as YHV, or Iao; "form", as TYB; "purity", as ZChV; "contemplation", as HGIG; and "wife", as ZVGH.
Gaster notes that, "The use of the letters in their numerical value are often met with among the Samaritans", and along with their interest in calendrical computation, (of which there now remain three major varieties), it would seem that Gematria, (as a method of revealing further mysteries from the study of the text), was practised within the Rabbinic circles among them for some considerable time and that this teaching formed a secret tradition. (1)

Diringer points out that, due to the sacredness accorded the Tetragrammaton, the numbers fifteen and sixteen, which would normally be written IH and IV, were instead written TV and TZ to avoid reference to the sacred name. (2)

Concerning the mission of Philip in promulgation of the "Gospel", (after the stoning of Stephen), in an unnamed town in Samaria, the "Acts of the Apostles" states, "Now a man called Simon had already practised magic arts in the town and astounded the Samaritan people>>, and that he, "had given it out that he was someone momentous". (3)

(1)  SAMARITAN ORAL LAW AND ANCIENT TRADITIONS, (p. 106).
(2)  ALEPH BETH, (p. 179).
(3)  (Act. VIII 9).
Due to this mention in the "Acts" it has been assumed that there was a heretical and historical figure known as Simon, though this may be nothing more than another example of a play on words, (often to be found throughout the "New Testament" most notably in the re-naming of Simon, son of John, as Peter), and held to be a pun on the Greek word for a "sign" as "Semeion". (1)

Of Simon Magus, "Luke" records that many called him «the divine power that is called Great>>. (2) Another of the titles of Simon was "The Standing One", "Standing Stone", or pillar, which description must have been of common comprehension despite the injunction against the erection of such menhirs. (3)

As with the epithet "Branch", the words may have indicated instead a cultic title, however, there were held to be two pillars of the Temple built by Solomon, one of which was named Jachin while the other was known as Boaz. (4)

(1) However, it should be noted that the word for an omen in Hebrew is spelt SIMN, and totals 160.

(2) (Act. VIII 10).

(3) (Deu. XVI 22).

(4) (I Kin. VII 21). They may have been taken by the Simonians to refer to Simon and his female companion and in the Quabbalah are generally seen as representing the male and female principles. These principles, the first to emanate from the Highest, or "Kether", the Crown, are known as Chokmah and "Binah".
Given that in the Hellenist environment such standing-stones would have been readily identified with the phallic pillars known as "Hermae", and since Hermes was often identified with the messenger, or "aggelos" of Zeus, it is possible that Simon was viewed as the angel of the Father, as was the "Captain of the Hosts of Yahweh" seen as the voice of God.

With God represented in the Simonian Gnosis as an ever-burning Fire it would be probable that Simon was seen as a spark of this flame, consubstantial with its source.

According to Mead, some of his followers claimed that Simon had received the designation, the "Standing One", from John the Baptist, who in Mandaean tradition was also revered as a "fisher of souls", while others claimed that it was from Dositheus who apparently taught him as his successor to be. (1)

The source for this fisher-figure may have ultimately been that of Oannes, who in Babylonian tradition, was revered as a culture-god, bringer of both fire and wisdom.

In the Phoenician legend of creation, outlined by Philo Byblos, Oannes seems to have been identified with the fish-god, the Baal of Dagon, or Sidon, child of Heaven and Earth, and Brown writes that, "Philo Byblius expressly states that 'Dag-aun is Sidon'". (2)

(1) THE Gnostic John the Baptist, (p 21).
(2) Poseidon, (p. 105).
The Chaldaean version of this figure was seen as the half-man, half-fish father of Semiramis. (1)

Dagon was also worshipped by the Philistines at Ashdod, according to the author of the "First Book of Samuel", in whose temple the Ark of the Covenant was placed with calamitous results. (2)

(1) The mother of this queen, also known as Sammuramat, was held to be Ataryatis, (who may be equivalent to Atargatis, daughter of Astarte). The legend of Semiramis tells how after her birth she was fed by the doves sacred to Astarte and how, having been found by the shepherd, Simmos, was brought up as his own daughter.

(2) (I Sam. V 4). The name, in Hebrew, may be constructed from two words; the first, meaning a "fish" is spelt DG, totalling 7; while the second, as VN, totalling 56, (as do the words for "day", as IVM, and "baptism", as TBYLH), is the "Biblical" name of the city of Heliopolis, (famed centre of solar worship). Together they total 63: as do the words for "Abaddon" as ABDVN; "ecstasy", as ChIMH; and "prophet", as NBIA.
The followers of Dositeus were a strict sect which arose in Maccabean times and rejected both the Jerusalem hierarchy and calendar. Yet the name, Dositeus is only the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew, Jonathon, meaning "Gift of God", and so he may have been identified with the Baptist himself.

He was said to have had a group of thirty disciples though the number may have been derived from calendrical exegesis allotting these disciples, (as prototypes for the thirty "Aeons"), to the days of the month. However, it is also important to note that the planet Saturn, representative of Chronos, takes roughly thirty years to complete its cycle. (1)

The Dosithaeans held that like Enoch, (and possibly Elisha), Dositeus had not died but had been miraculously transported to heaven. (2)

(1) The cycle of Jupiter, which was much used in ancient chronology, takes twelve tropical years each of which seems to have been allotted to one of the zodiacal signs, and it is interesting to note that in the year 7 B.C.E., three conjunctions of the two planets occurred in Pisces. THE OLD TESTAMENT PSEUDEPIGRAPHA, (vol. I p. 479).

(2) Foerster quotes Origen who writes, "Thus a certain Dositeus of the Samaritans came forward and said that he was the prophesied Christ; from that day until now there are Dositeans who ... relate tales about him, as that he did taste of death". GNOSIS, (vol. I p. 32).
An equation between Joshua and the Messiah seems to have been made in the fifth book of the "Sibylline Oracles", probably compiled by Helleno-Egyptian Jewry, in which the saviour was predicted as coming from the heavens, (perhaps in avian form as a new Jonah or "dove"), "There will again be one exceptional man from the sky ... the best of the Hebrews, who will one day cause the sun to stand, speaking with fair speech and holy lips."

Yet the central feature of the Dosithaeans, Mandaeans, Christians, and the followers of John the Baptist, was baptism for the remission of sin as a preparation for admittance to the community of believers.

(Sib. V 256-260), as quoted in THE OLD TESTAMENT PSEUDEPIGRAPHA, (vol. I p. 399). As Collins notes in his introduction, "The only passage in Sibylline Oracles 5 that reflects Christian redaction is verses 256-59. Even here it is probable that a reference to a Jewish savior (sic.) figure in the original Jewish oracle has been modified only by an allusion to the crucifixion." (ibid. vol. I. p. 390.)
The Mandaeans, (who derived their name from the word "Manda" meaning Gnosis), practised both baptism and unction, as in the "Thomasine" schools, and it should be noted that they were, according to Alexander, (in his introduction to III Enoch), "for several centuries, in close historical contact with the Rabbinic communities of Babylonia in which Merkabah mysticism flourished.". (1)

Rudolph notes that the Mandaeans were famed for their baptism for the remission of sins and that this was performed by the individual worshipper although in the spiritual community a weekly baptism was held on Sunday in lustral water known as the "Jordan", performed either in a river or in pools. (2)

This central use of water in the sect was due to the belief that it was through this medium that the noumenal "World of Light" communicated its essence "via" the spiritual or celestial river, mirrored on earth by the river Jordan, perhaps identified with the Milky Way, or "Via Lactaea", which, in much "pagan" thought, was seen as the pathway of the soul.

The Mandaean scripture, or "Ginza", is divided into the larger "Right Ginza", (which deals mainly with mythological and cosmological details), and the "Left Ginza", which details the ascent of the soul after death on its forty-five day journey during which it was guided by the priesthood.

(2) GNOSIS, (vol. II p. 131).
This ascent of the soul was through the seven planetary spheres until it reached its true home above the sway of the stars, their rulers, and evil influences. Mandaean dualism posited a "World of Light", (true home of the soul), whose emanations were pastiched by the "World of Darkness", (in which the soul had fallen), which emitted both the sidereal gods and the zodiac.

The Mandaean priest was, after consecration, known as a "Sislam", held to be equivalent to the transfigured Adam by virtue of his coronation, upon which he was given a gold ring, two crowns, and a staff, and after which he was subject to taboo.

He seems to have practised a rite known as the "Masiqta", or "Uprising", concerning which Drower writes that it, "is celebrated primarily for the dead, but includes the living, since death does not separate those ... 'standing in the body' ... from those who have departed from the body, for the Mandaean believes that at physical death there is no cessation of existence.". (1)

In this state it would appear that the priest was seen almost as a living deity and accorded much veneration since his soul had been purified. This soul, or "Nisimta", was accorded pre-existence but thought to depend upon the spiritual body, known as the pillar, made of the two elements, water and wine, which in the eucharist was drunk by the priest, with the two being representative of sperm and blood.

(1) THE CORONATION OF THE GREAT SISLAM, (p. XI), [her emphasis].

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The "Quran" refers to the Mandaens as Sabaeans, meaning submergers or baptists, though the priests seem to have been known as Nasoraeans with each one being seen as a "Malka", or king, and as such an image of the "Adam Kasia", or glorified soul, and the antiquity of this sect was noted by Drower who writes, "Epiphanius (Adversus Haereses, XXIX. 6) says that there were 'Nasoraeans' ... amongst the Jews before the time of Christ.". (1)

They taught that the Supreme, but formless, being created the archetypal human, the pillar, or Adam Kasia, and that from the dual aspects of the supreme, as Mother and Father, a series of syzygies was emanated.

The word for the supreme being in Mandaean terminology was, according to Drower, "absolutely without sex or human attributes and in speaking of It the pronoun, 'They' is used, for Hiia, 'Life' is an abstract plural.". (2)

This complete plurality was held to produce the principles of Mind, the masculine, known as "Ziwa", represented as an animated robe, since great play was made between the words for garment or vessel and that for the mind, and Light, the feminine, known as "Nhura", (perhaps the source for the Gnostic virgin, "Norea").

(1) THE SECRET ADAM, (p. XIV).
(2) (ibid. p. 1), [her emphasis].
These two, when in conjunction, emitted a series of dualities represented in the community by the clerics and laity: celestially, by sky and earth; astronomically, by sun and moon; alchemically, by gold and silver; paraphernally by the crown and myrtle wreath, and of course, by right and left.

However, these opposites were seen as inseparable and were united in the symbolism of the sacred marriage between the female "Wellspring" and the male "Date-palm", tree or pillar; the trees of life and knowledge.

Drower writes of the "Wellspring" that, "In Nasoraean cosmology the female principle of propagation, the Mother, is very like the Magian Spandarmat", and as with the Gnostic Sophia was of two natures, higher and lower. (1) The higher was seen as the womb of life while the lower represented, "the material, the every-day, the worldly.". (2) Of the male principle she notes that, "The Father is sometimes equated with Ayar (Ether)", which is, "related to the Vayu of the Zoroastrians and Rig-Veda", and was held to possess three hundred and sixty names. (3)

They saw the soul as in exile, subject to the influence of the planets, (portrayed as seven evil brothers known as the "Sibiahia" and seen as base reflections of the seven holy angels), from which it was to be rescued by the saviour and led unharmed through the seven heavenly halls.

(1) THE SECRET ADAM, (p. 12).
(2) (ibid. p. XIII, note 4).
(3) (ibid. p. 14), [her emphasis].
The names of these seven spirits are but corruptions of those of the Chaldaean gods: thus Shamash, Lord of the Sun, was by them known as Samis, the heavenly King; and Dlibat as Venus, the Queen, mystically equated with the mother of the seven, and who appears as a dove.

In Mandaean "Gematria" there were held to be twenty-two letters, though they added the first letter again and inserted the particle "d'" meaning "the" to make twenty-four. The letter "A" was written as a circle and so the alphabet, which was known as the "Wellspring", was thought to begin and end with a womb and they made great exegesis on the "L" as the middle letter of the alphabet, each letter of which was held to be the crown of one of twenty-four kings.

The child of the Wellspring, as mother of the letters of the alphabet, was the soul, or pillar, as Adam Kasia, (akin to the "Adam Kadmon" of the Jewish Quabbalah), whereas the form of the physical body was known as the "Adam Pagria". To the Mandaeans this body was represented by the Adam formed from red earth while the soul was represented by the son of Adam, the biune Adam Kasia, Seth, the saviour. Concerning him Drower writes that though, "The Mystic Adam is androgynous ... the male organ represents the Female principle", since it distributes ... 'streams of living water', by which, through baptism, redemption was held to be attained and the soul purified thus enabling it to return to its heavenly home. {1}

{1} THE SECRET ADAM, (p. 28).
There is little in "The Acts of the Apostles" as a clue to Simon, the "Standing One", other than identifying him as a misguided megalomaniac. Duchesne writes that he "claimed to be an incarnation of the Divinity. This is evidently an imitation of the Gospel story", and with Irenaeus and others, views Simon as merely a Christian heretic: the proto-heretic. (1)

This is the traditional view, as given in "Acts", which states that Simon became a believer who then fell from grace because he wanted to buy the gift of the Holy Spirit, apparently given in baptism.

Peter rebuked him with the words, "May your silver be lost, forever, and you with it, for thinking that money could buy what God has given for nothing!", and explained that Simon was "trapped in the bitterness of gall and the chains of sin". Thus Simon was execrated as the originator of the vice Simony. (2)

Yet "Acts" does not seem to have been quoted as a scriptural authority before about 180 C.E., and it may be that the work is an attempt at a reconciliation of the "Pauline" and "Petrine" parties as Mead proposes, and, as the "Biblical" criticism of the Tubingen school suggests there are similarities between the "Petro-Simonian" and "Petro-Pauline" disputes. (3)

(2) (Act. VIII 20 & 22).
(3) FRAGMENTS OF A FAITH FORGOTTEN, (passim.).
The implicit contest between Simon and Peter in Samaria as detailed in "Acts and its elaboration in the second chapter of the "Actus Vercellenses" in which Simon, now in Rome, had corrupted the teaching of Paul, who had since left the city, was fought in the Forum not along doctrinal lines but according to the astonishing powers of the protagonists; those of Peter being lauded as miraculous and those of Simon, reviled as demonic.

The crux of the competition concerned the resurrection of a dead boy and although it was admitted that Simon was able to animate the corpse, it was Peter who bade him stand who upon doing so then testified to Peter's superiority. The resurrection drama was followed by the attempted ascension of Simon whom Peter crippled by the power of prayer.

Yet it is interesting to note that according to the followers of Simon it was Paul who was scorned as an agent of the evil one, for as the apocryphal "Acts" state, <<And Simon's reputation continually increased with those among whom he worked, and some of them in their daily conversations called Paul a sorcerer, others a deceiver>>. (1)

Further, in the early church itself, it seems as if Paul was slandered in the same way as Simon with the Jerusalem faction dismissing him as an apostate as he had not been recommended by James, brother of the Lord.

(1) THE NEW TESTAMENT APOCRYPHA, (vol. II p. 283).
It was said of Simon, who was reputed to have brought this message, that he took the form of different Powers, in order to avoid recognition on his journey to this world through the demonic creation of the demiurge, and finally appeared as a human in the Messiah, only seeming to suffer. Mead, quoting Hippolytus, says that Simon taught of seven powers through whom the world was created, six in pairs and one both as origin and result, and notes that Simon, as the Cosmic Pillar, was equated with the Tree of Life which was said to have seven roots. (1)

The six, equated with the days of creation and the seventh with the day of rest, were known as: Mind, or Heaven, and Thought, or Earth; Voice, or Sol, and Name, or Luna; Reason, or Air, and Reflection, or Water. These were in all probability associated with the seven planets of antiquity and may have been considered to be the Archons of the seven heavens. (2)

(1) SIMON MAGUS, (p. 15).
(2) A possible allocation follows: Mind to Jupiter; Thought to Saturn; Reason to Mars, and Reflection to Venus. Thus three syzygies of male and female were posited: the male being Jupiter, Sol, and Mars; the female being Saturn, Luna, and Venus. In this schema, the ambisexual Mercury, the child, would have been equivalent to the Logos, since Hermes was often represented by a standing stone, and as such comparable with Simon, whom, as Foerster notes was known as, "'him that stands, took his stand, and will stand'". GNOSIS, (vol. I p. 254).
Although astrolatry as such is condemned in Judaism, mystical exegesis concentrated on the seven days of creation, (which would have been understood by the non-Jewish world, at least, to be representative of the planets), and this exegesis assumed greater importance amongst those groups that rejected the official civil Jerusalem calendar including those at Qumran.

The seven days were equated also with the creation of the seven heavens which were held to separate the world from its creator, each of which was ruled over by an angelic guardian, the highest of which was generally assumed to be Metatron or Michael, and through whose territories the divine spark descended from the heights to bring the "Gospel" of salvific Gnosis.

Thus, in the so called "Epistula Apostolorum", Christ, as the Logos, was held to take on the form of the various angels, (mentioning Gabriel, Uriel, Raphael and Michael by name), in the heavenly spheres during his descent into matter, finally assuming flesh among men through the Virgin in the guise of the angel Gabriel. {1}

The "Epistle" states that it was written against the <<false apostles Simon and Cerinthus, that no one should follow them>> as they were "enemies of the truth" and prophesied the conversion and importance of Saul of Tarsus. {1}

{1} (Apo. cap XIII & XIV).
{2} (Apo. cap. I), as given in NEW TESTAMENT APOCRYPHA, (vol. I p. 191)
Mead notes that the followers of Cerinthus, were active in the first half of the first century C.E., and seem to have held that their founder had been taught by the evangelist John, though similar claims were also made by the Ebionites. (1)

McL. Wilson notes that according to his teachings the world had been made by the angelic host, one of whom was the god of the Jews in his guise as Lord of the Sabbath, often known as Sabaoth. (2)

Grant notes that the other Archons were also often named after various titles of the god of the Jews and were equated with the sacred planets, as were the Sibiahia, and the days of the week. (3)

(1) FRAGMENTS OF A FAITH FORGOTTEN, (p. 237).
(2) THE GNOSTIC PROBLEM, (cap. IV).
(3) The seven spirits were: Ialdabaoth or in some systems, Michael, symbolised as lion-headed; the bull-headed Iao, or Suriel; the snake-headed Sabaoth or Raphael; the eagle-headed Adonai or Gabriel; Astaphaeus, symbolised either by a bear or an hyena; Ailoaeus, either as a dog or a seven-headed snake; and finally, the ass-headed Horaeus. GNOSTICISM AND EARLY CHRISTIANITY, (p. 48).
Cerinthus was reputed to have taught an adoptionist theology in which the Christ descended on the man Jesus at baptism in the form of a dove, preached through him, and then left him at the crucifixion whereupon Jesus uttered his "cri de coeur", and it seems that Cerinthus, Simon, Saturninus, and Menander of Capparataea, all agreed on such essential points.

In support of the Platonic theory of the two worlds, noumenal, and phenomenal, much exegesis was made of the accounts given in the first book of the "Pentateuch", concerning which Grant writes that "Saturninus radically rewrites the creation story of Genesis, interpreting it in haggadic fashion", and seems to have taught that the god who made the world was but the leader of the Archontic host. (1)

The figure of this leader, the demiurge, Ialdabaoth, was introduced in order to fashion matter, which he did by copying his imperfect idea of the spiritual realm of light by memory, thus producing the shadow world of darkness in which humanity was held to abide, subject to the rule of the ignorant and evil architect.

(1) GNOSTICISM AND EARLY CHRISTIANITY, (p. 100).
"John" writes of the "Gospel" brought by the Word from the highest heaven, « This is what we have heard from him ... God is light; there is no darkness in him at all >», and compares the spiritual world of light to the material world of darkness, giving the injunction, « You must not love this passing world or anything that is in the world, because nothing the world has to offer - the sensual body, the lustful eye, pride in possessions - could ever come from the Father but only from the world; and the world, with all it craves for, is coming to an end >». (1)

Mead notes that, according to Hippolytus, Simon, as with Heraclitus, taught that the Original Principle was of the nature of Fire. (2) The concept of deity in this form was common to both the Zoroastrian and Mosaic sacrificial cults and Moses in his exposition of the revelation explained that as the tribespeople, « saw no shape on that day ... when Yahweh spoke to you from the midst of the fire >», no graven image of the deity was to be made. (3) He asked them of this theophany, « Was there ever a word so majestic, from one end of heaven to the other? Was anything ever heard? Did ever a people hear the voice of the living God speaking from the heart of the fire, as you heard it, and remain alive? »>. (4)

(1) (I Joh. I 5 & II 15-17).
(2) SIMON MAGUS, (p. 13).
(3) (Deu. IV 15).
(4) (Deu. IV 32-33).
The author of the letter to the "Hebrews", continued the image in his explanation of both the two covenants and the two worlds and stated, «For our God is a consuming fire». {1}

Stoicism too, active from the time of the defeat of Alexander until its supercession by Christianity, upheld the supremacy of fire as the original element from which emerged air, water and earth, in that order. {2}

One of its most influential eschatological doctrines was of the final conflagration, or "Ecpurosis", in which all would again become fire in the conclusion of yet another cycle when the earth would dissolve into water, which would rarefy into air, which would explode into fire.

Governing the balance of the elements was the Logos, the soul or vital force of the world itself, (which was considered to be a vast living organism), in the form of fire and it was held that this manifestation of the supreme was all pervasive and universal while individual sparks of it enlivened the particular.

These individual sparks, formed the Cosmic Spark, the supreme fire and soul of the world, or Logos, and were known as "spermatic Logoi", or seeds of Reason, which, equated with the Divine Fire, was seen as the governing principle of the cosmos.

{1} (Heb. XII 29).

{2} In Ptolemaic astrology fire and air were considered as male, with water and earth as female.
Mead says that the Tree of Life, which was identified with the fiery Logos, "plays so important a part in the Simonian Gnosis." (1) Another manifestation of the cosmic tree was held to be the burning bush in the flowers of which the secret of divine life as fire was concealed. Foerster notes that in the "Megale Apophasis", (or "Great Announcement"), the cause of all was taken to be fire, but that this fire was of dual nature, unseen and apparent, and that the fruit of the tree, or burning bush, was seen as the noumenal, while the tree itself was held as phenomenal. (2)

Mead also quotes from this "Great Announcement", reputedly a Simonian work, which describes the cosmic tree as a symbol of both the fiery Logos and the body itself, with the words, "The manifest side of the Fire is the trunk, branch, and leaves, and the outside bark. All these parts of the great Tree are set on fire from the all-devouring flame of the fire and destroyed. But the fruit of the Tree, if its imaging has been perfected and it takes shape of itself, is placed in the storehouse (treasury), and cast not into the Fire". (3) This would seem to indicate that some kind of creative visualisation was taught by which the elements of the body of the initiate could be transmuted and, according to Hippolytus, the Simonians did apply the symbolism of the garden of Eden to the physical body.

(1) SIMON MAGUS, (p. 76).
(2) GNOSIS, (vol. I p. 253).
(3) SIMON MAGUS, (p. 172).
Thus, Foerster quotes Hippolytus who claims that Simon made exegesis of the passage thus, "How then and in what manner does God mould men. In the Garden, he maintains. The Garden ... must be the womb ... and Eden the placenta, and 'the river which comes out of Eden to water the garden' the navel. This navel ... 'is divided into four sources'; for on either side of the navel there extend two arteries, which are air-channels and two veins, which are blood-channels", and it would appear that the air channels which ended in the heart conveyed the divine in the form of spirit, which in the male was transmuted into semen and in the female into milk, while those of the blood conducted matter in the form of water to the liver. (1)

The human body then, it would seem, was, according to the Simonian Gnostics, considered to be a machine for the transmutation of the elements and they may have taught a form of alchemy involving the gross bodily substances, (most probably semen and menses perhaps as representations of Simon and Helen), which charge of magic and sorcery was to be levelled against many of their successors by the early Church fathers.

(1) GNOSIS, (vol. I p. 256).
In those groups within the early church also who equated baptism with the descent of the spirit the act was given profound significance and would readily have been interpreted by those outside as a magical act.

However, as can be seen from the confusion with "Acts", it would appear that the baptism proper was but a preparation for the laying on of hands after which the spirit was held to descend which act of consecration would seem to have been accompanied by an anointing and may have been akin to the practice of unction.

Thus, higher often than baptism in some Gnostic sects was the ceremony of anointing with oil which would seem to have been seen as a representation of the fiery spirit which consecrated the Messiah and was often accompanied by ecstatic trance, which anointing was viewed as a sealing process by which the person was changed forever.

The Ophites used a similar rite to seal candidates as "sons" of the "Father" who then declared that they had been anointed with the white ointment from the Tree of Life, as distinct from the red substance of the Tree of Knowledge, which seems to have been part of a ceremony involving five such sealings. These, however, may have formed separate parts of the one rite with baptism and chrism viewed as necessary preparation for communion with the deity.
The "Gospel of Philip", (named after the apostle mentioned in the text), seems also to have posited five rites and declares, "The Lord did all things by means of a mystery: baptism, chrism, eucharist, ransom, and bridal chamber.". (1)

The "Gospel" asserted that Philip himself said, "Joseph the Carpenter planted a paradise, for he needed wood for his trade. It is he who made the cross from the trees that he had planted, and its seed hung from what he had planted: the seed was Jesus, and the plant was the cross. But the tree of life is in the midst of paradise, and from the olive tree comes chrism; and from the latter comes resurrection", and it would appear that Jesus, the anointed Messiah, as fruit of the tree, was equated with this ointment. (2)

This resurrection appears to have been given during the anointing, after which the candidate was dead to the world of darkness having been reborn into the world of light, and the "Gospel" explained that, "People who say they will first die and then arise are mistaken. If they do not first receive resurrection while they are alive, once they have died they will receive nothing. Just so it is said of baptism: "Great is baptism!" For if one receives it, one will live.". (3)

(1) THE GNOSTIC SCRIPTURES, (p. 341).
(2) (ibid. p. 345)
(3) (ibid. p. 345).
It may be that after the baptism for the remission of sins, and the anointing, the candidate was then fortified with the eucharist by remembering the call of the Word, following which he could travel through the realms of the demiurge unharmed, thus ransoming himself, (since according to the "Gospel", the name Jesus means ransom), and, thus freed from the clutches of the forces of darkness, attend the nuptials of the saviour in the Holy of Holies. (1)

As well as the ascription of semen to the fiery chrism some sects saw menstrual blood as an emblem of divine grace with the Borborites calling it the "Blood of Christ". (2) Again, according to the early Church fathers, for some groups the "Agape", or eucharist, was celebrated by sexual union, the part of the solar male representing the Body, or Bread, and that of the lunar female as the Blood, or Wine.

(1) THE Gnostic Scriptures, (p. 337).
(2) The name of this group, for whom the "Barbelo", (apparently a form of the Chokmah or Sophia), was of central importance may have known her as the "Barbero" which in Hebrew would be denoted by the word BRBVR meaning a "barbarian", with the numerical value of 474, and equivalent both to the word DOTh, or "knowledge", and that of "the covenant within the Ark", as ODTh.
As Mead notes the sun was seen as the celestial representative of Simon as the redeeming Mind while Helen, as the moon, was held to be a glyph of the fallen soul cast into matter, and it is possible that they were viewed as the male and female aspects of the divine, as were Ziwa and Nhura within Mandaean thought. (1)

The secondary light, as product of the male radiance, was equated with the Chokmah and Mead quotes Irenaeus who writes that Simon said, "Wisdom was the first conception (thought) of My Mind ... by whom in the beginning I conceived in My Mind the making of the Angels and Archangels. This thought leaping forth from me ... descended to the lower regions and generated the angels and powers, by whom also the world was made. And after she had generated them, she was detained by them through envy ... As for myself, I am entirely unknown to them", thus making the first fall that of the angels themselves. (2)

He continued, "Wherefore, also am I come to take her away for the first time, and free her from her bonds; to make sure salvation to men by my Gnosis", which consisted in escape from the angels who had enslaved humanity in order to prevent them from gaining immortality from the Tree of Life after the primal parents had eaten of the fruit of the other tree at the encouragement of the Ennoia in the form of the snake. (3)

(1) FRAGMENTS OF A FAITH FORGOTTEN, (p. 168).
(2) (ibid. p. 169).
(3) (ibid. p. 170).
The unifying symbol of the major schools of the Gnostic Ophites whether Naaseni, Peratae, or Sethian was the snake or serpent who announced to the first woman concerning the fruit of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil that, "God knows in fact that on the day you eat it your eyes will be opened and you will be like gods">, though how it had gained this knowledge was never explained. {1}

Mc.Laren Wilson writes that, "The name Ophite is used in two senses by such early Haeresiologists as Irenaeus, to describe what for want of a better word are Ophites proper including the Naasenes, and in a more general way to those sects in which a fair degree of importance is given to the symbol of the serpent.". {2}

In fact, according to Mead, Hippolytus asserted that "the mysteries symbolised by the serpent are at the root of all Gnosticism.". {3}

The central importance of the serpent in most of these sects was derived from its role in the "Genesis" story in which it was seen as the revealer of Gnosis and consequently as a saviour.

{1} (Gen. III 5).
{2} THE GNOSTIC PROBLEM, (cap. V).
{3} FRAGMENTS OF A FAITH FORGOTTEN, (p. 206).
Many Gnostics pointed out that since, (after tasting the fruit of the tree) the warning given by the creator was not fulfilled, the serpent was in fact an emissary to the first parents from the Unknown God, and they held that the expulsion from the garden of Adam and Eve was through the jealousy of the demiurgic creator who had realised that the two had now become his superiors in wisdom and feared lest they tasted of the Tree of Life.

The serpent was often spoken of in female terms, (equated with the monthly flux since the serpent periodically sloughed off its skin), but later with the identification between the snake and the saviour, (who had sloughed off death), a male gender was generally supposed.

However, the third century C.E., work known as the "Hypostasis of the Archons" states that the, <<Female Spiritual Principle came in the Snake, the Instructor>> which taught the couple that, <<"it was out of jealousy that he said this to you. Rather your eyes shall open and you shall come to be like gods, recognizing evil and good.">>. (1)

The passage continued to explain that after this instruction the female principle left the earthly form of the snake which was later cursed by the Archons.

(1) THE NAG HAMMADI LIBRARY IN ENGLISH, (p. 155).
The identification of the wise serpent with the female principle, Sophia, was noted by the bishop of Lugdunum who writes, "Some assert that it was wisdom ... herself who became the snake; accordingly she remained hostile to the creator of Adam, and introduced acquaintance into humankind. For this reason the snake was said to be more prudent than all (others).". (1)

Other schools of Gnostics equated the chief Archon with the reptile according to Epiphanius who writes, "Thus, (they say) ... the soul passes through the ... rulers; but it cannot get through unless it is in fullness of acquaintance ... and if it has become full it escapes the clutches of the rulers and the authorities. And the ruler who restrains this world has the form of a snake, and it swallows the souls that do not exist in ... acquaintance and returns them to the world through its tail", and in this would seem to have equated the snake with the Milky Way, (also seen as the path of departed souls), as the celestial river which encircles the night sky. (2)

(1) THE Gnostic SCRIPTURES, (p. 181).

(2) (ibid. p. 211). It would not appear unreasonable to assume that the entry and exit points for the soul would be at those places that the Via crosses the ecliptic, namely at the constellations of Taurus and Scorpio, (sometimes represented as a snake), given that the former seems in many cultures to have been seen as the opener of the year, and the latter, its destroyer.
This ruler was often equated with the god of the Jews as in the "Acts of John" who states that their "lawgiver is the lawless serpent". (1)

The identification was carried further in the "Acts of Thomas" wherein a snake informed the apostle, "I am a reptile of reptile nature, the baleful son of a baleful father ... I am son of him who sits upon the throne and has power over the creation which is under heaven ... I am son of him who girds the sphere about; and I am a kinsman of him who is outside the ocean, whose tail is set in his own mouth", which symbol was also used in the "Hymn of the Pearl" given later in the "Acts" and in this work the snake was seen as an emissary of evil. (2)

The antipathy of the principle of righteousness whether the sun, the eagle, or the supreme God, and the snake is well known as a metaphor for the battle between good and evil in many cultures, perhaps the most famous being that of the sun-god Ra and the serpent Apep or Apophis, a manifestation of Set, in the Egyptian myth.


Concerning the symbol Budge writes, "The principal enemy of the natural body was the worm, and from the earliest times it seems that a huge worm or serpent was chosen by the Egyptians as the type of the powers which were hostile to the dead and also of the foe against whom the Sun-god fought ... and we find ... that the dread of the serpent as the emblem of physical and moral evil existed among the Egyptians in all generations, and that ... the belief in a limbo filled with snakes swayed their minds long after they had been converted to Christianity.". {1}

The identification of such a serpent as both guardian of the underworld and as Hades itself was drawn in the "Third Apocalypse of Baruch" in which, before being shown the mystery of the journey of the sun on the wings of a phoenix, Baruch saw a vast snake, perhaps equated with Draco, <<which eats the bodies of those who pass through their lives badly, and ... is nourished by them>>, whose, <<belly is Hades>>. {2}

A link between the snake and the underworld was to be found in the female serpent divinity named Mertseger, the beloved of Isis, who was worshipped at Thebes often with three heads and shown as the "Peak of the West" since she was identified with the zenith of the pyramid.

Her worship seems to have been early merged with that of the serpentine Per-Uadjet, known to the Greeks as Buto, who was the ancient protectrix of lower Egypt and linked with the goddess of childbirth and upper Egypt, Nekhebet, whose emblem, a vulture, she also wore. Often shown as hovering over the Pharaoh as a protective divinity, the latter goddess was with the former sometimes known as one of the "Nebti", or mistresses of the King. A link between these goddesses, the great serpent Seba, and the scorpion goddess Serket, with Apophis would seem to be shown by the figure of Sati, who was said to devour the dead in the Tuat at the first cataract.

At Elephantine, the goddess said to rule this hall was known as Anquet or Anoukhis, whose title was "Lady of Sati", with whom she reigned alongside the other member of the Triad, Khnemu who fashioned the Cosmic Egg. Yet since the elder god of upper Egypt, Set, who ruled over the circumpolar stars, as did Horus whose which rose and set, was sometimes also known as Sati it may be that the eponymous goddess was originally viewed as his other, especially given her association with the constellation Draco.
As well as an identification between the Sophia and the serpent, an association between the beast and the Messiah was made, for since the snake had brought the Gnosis to the first humans, so too would the saviour bring liberation to future humanity, and although reviled by the evil creator as the devil, was seen by some Gnostics as a type of the redeemer.

Thus the "Testimony of Truth" states, "in one place Moses writes, "He made the devil a serpent for those whom he has in his generation"", and further in the work, "Again it is written, "He made a serpent of bronze and hung it upon a pole ... and the one who will believe in this bronze serpent will be saved." For this is Christ; those who believed in him have received life. Those who did not believe will die.". (1)

Although the Peretae identified the snake with the letters Yod or Iota and saw it as the redeemer, the Ophites also equated the reptile with the fish, spelt in Hebrew as NVN, viewing it as a creature of evil and a product of the creator designed to lead humanity astray. (2) Whatever, the symbols of the fish and the serpent were often seen as identical. (3)

(1) THE NAG HAMMADI LIBRARY IN ENGLISH, (p. 412).
(2) GNOSIS, (vol. I p. 89).
(3) In both Hebrew and Greek the letter was representative of the number 50 which in Hebrew by Gematria was equivalent to the "sea", as IM; "procreation", as HVLDH; and the "whale" that swallowed Jonah, DG-GDVL.
Thus according to Irenaeus some Gnostics held that from the union of the demiurge with base matter the form of the serpent was born, "This offspring is the letter nun, which is twisted in the form of a snake. From it derive spirit, soul, and all worldly things; from it were generated all forgetfulness, evil, jealousy, envy, and death". (1)

According to Hippolytus the Peratae taught that this "universal serpent ... is the wise word of Eve. This ... is the mystery of Eden, this is the river (that flowed) out of Eden", thus equivalent to the stream of pure water which overflowed from the Mother of all Living and to the stream that flowed from the heavenly Jerusalem. (2)

In some groups of which Irenaeus writes the snake was held to be the progenitor of the six planetary bodies, forming the Infernal Heptad with itself as chief, perhaps equivalent with the ambisexual Mercury. Layton notes that he held that they taught that "the snake too, which had worked against its parent was cast down by it into this the lower world. And it brought under its authority the angels that are here, and engendered six offspring ... which always oppose and resist the race of human beings". (3)

(1) THE Gnostic Scriptures, (p. 175), [his emphasis].


(3) THE Gnostic Scriptures, (p. 177).
The snake or fish, whether infernal or supernal, was also seen as a living counterpart to the heavenly waters of life or the spiritual Jordan, often identified with the Milky Way or "Via Lactaea", though in earlier ophiolatry the constellation Draco, (which points towards the Pole Star), seems to have been the constellation indicated, and although its common classical title was that of Drakon, both Hipparchos and Eratosthenes knew it as Ophis, (which in Hebrew would be rendered NChSh, Nechesh, a snake).

Although Tiamat, the Babylonian principle of chaos, from whose body the cosmos was formed, has been identified with the other great sky-snake held by Ophiuchus it seems apt to see Draco as its most obvious stellar representative since the ancient Egyptians also gave great importance to the figure and symbolised this circumpolar constellation as a hippopotamus, (perhaps the origin of the Hebrew concept of Behemoth), or sometimes a crocodile, assigning it to Isis as Hathor, mother of Horus, or Tauret.

However the earlier ascription seems to have been to Typhon, mother of Set, which, before Osiris or Horus, appears to have been represented by the star, Sirius. (1)

(1) It should be noted that the Peratae identified Isis with Sirius, and both Osiris and the foolish demiurge, Sakla, with the constellation Orion.
It would appear that when the Pole star regressed, (due to the precession of the equinoxes), its position was instead given to the present holder of the office, alpha Ursa Minoris, in the tail of the predator, and as such may have been seen as the egg of the monster, whose mother was then figured by either of the two bears most probably the greater since its major stars are seven in number and are often seen as representative of the seven planets.

Yet, as Borsch notes, one of the Ophite schools, the Peratae, quoted "John" to equate the serpent with the Son of Man, seed of the "Archanthropos", or Father, since just as the Father had created the world through his son so too some Gnostics held that the act of creation had been the function of the serpent.

(1)

The serpent was considered within these schools to be of watery nature, (which is why the equation with the fish is apt), and the source of all fertility as a symbol of the waters of life. In the human this concept became identified with the physical sperm that awakened the unconscious egg of the female thus bringing new life and its journey along the birth-canal was seen as allegorised in both the Hebrew legend of the Exodus and the parting of the Red Sea.

(1) THE CHRISTIAN AND GNOSTIC SON OF MAN, (p. 65), and (Joh. III 14).
Of primal importance to these sects was the element of fertile water, or the moist principle, from which they believed all else developed, it being the seed of the material world. This came to be symbolised as the cold-blooded snake, (or sea-serpent), which, due to its habit of the sloughing off of old skin, became a type of the transformed initiate; born again according to a spiritual rebirth.

Foerster notes that Hippolytus writes of these schools, "And they say that the serpent is liquid substance ... and that nothing at all that exists, be it immortal or mortal, animate or inanimate, can consist without it." (1)

The Orphies also represented the world ocean in serpentine form, as the river which encircled the globe, and it seems that this concept of the waters as a snake or sea-monster, the Oceanus, was equated with the primeval element from which the dry land arose on the third day. (2)

(1) GNOSIS, (vol. I p. 280).
(2) (Gen. I 9-10). The text states, "God said, "Let the waters under heaven come together into a single mass, and let dry land appear". And so it was. God called the dry land 'earth' and the mass of waters 'seas', and God saw that it was good."
After the deaths of Aaron and Miriam, and because the people had spoken against God, a plague of fiery serpents was sent to them whose, "bite brought death to many in Israel", so that "Moses interceded for the people, and Yahweh answered him, "Make a fiery serpent and put it on a standard. If anyone is bitten and looks at it, he shall live."". (1)

It apparently stood until the time of Hezekiah, despite the injunction against graven images, for, "It was he who abolished the high places, broke the pillars, cut down the sacred poles and smashed the bronze serpent that Moses had made; for up to that time the Israelites had offered sacrifice to it; it was called Nehushtan.". (2)

(1) (Num. XXI 7 & 8). Beltz writes, "In Egypt, the uraeus, symbol of the sacred queen of Buto, became the hieroglyph for all the names of goddesses and finally the hieroglyph for 'goddess' pure and simple.". GOD AND THE GODS, (p. 119).

(2) (II Kin. XVIII 4). The only other bearer of a similar name, Nechushta, is mentioned later in the same work as the mother of Jehoiachin, (II Kin. XXIV 8). The name Jehoiachin, spelt in Hebrew as YHVIKIN, may be composed of two roots: IHV, as the contracted Tetragrammaton; and IKIN, the name of the pillar, Jachin. The name of the king, who, "did what is displeasing to Yahweh", totals 111, as does the name of the foolish demiurge, Sakla.
Thus it would appear that ophiolatry formed a popular cult within Palestinian practice, was of fairly ancient origin, and it is possible that here lies the basis of the Ophite obsession. Of the Ophite sects Mc.Laren Wilson writes that they, "are among the oldest of all Gnostic sects, the nearest to Judaism, although with marked anti-Jewish features, and probably the most likely to be pre-Christian". (1) Exegesis concerning the brazen serpent, euphemised in the work as "a piece of brass", may have been widespread enough for it to have survived as a type of the Messiah. (2)

Among the Ophite sects, the Archontics, who believed in the reality of the celestial rulers, seem to have taught of an original trinity of Light, Spirit, or Ruach, and Darkness; the former they held to be completely pure, Spirit both pure and impure, and the latter, the completely impure basis of the material world. (3)

(1) THE GNOSTIC PROBLEM, (cap. VII).
(2) The Gematria of the word spelt as NChShThN is interesting as the word for the solar year, ShNTh-HChMH, equals the same number, 808, as do those for "womb", RChM, and "darkness", ChShK. Removing NChSh, a "snake", totalling 358, from the word leaves a total of 450 and that other words equalling this number include the "fruit of the Tree" as PRI-OTz, and "transgression", as PShO.
(3) FRAGMENTS OF A FAITH FORGOTTEN, (p. 214).
Further, these principles were held to be eternal and mutually interdependent though it seems that Spirit introduced movement into this schema and that the principles collided, with Darkness, which they identified with water, (the root material element), capturing elements of Light. (1)

They taught that the World Egg, or Cosmic Seed, arose from the phenomenal womb of the impure universe of Darkness and that both the Light and Spirit descended to enliven this sterile abortion, or "Hystera". The generative power, sometimes seen as the Spirit, was variously portrayed by them as a wind, (the breath of the Unknown Light), a beast, a dove, or a serpent.

Foerster notes that Epiphanius writes, "Now from the water there has come, as a first derivative principle, a fierce and violent wind which is the cause of all generation", which zephyr contained a tiny spark of the light; the whole thing taking the form of a serpent, representative, in this case, of the second principle. (2)

(1) Thus, they divided humanity into three groups also: the children of Light, or "Pneumatics"; "Psychics", children of the Spirit; and the "Hylics", spawn of darkness.

(2) GNOSIS, (vol. I p. 301).
The names of these three elements: of the fiery light; the aery wind; and the watery darkness; they held to be recorded in the "Pentateuch" at the giving of the "Decalogue" after which Moses announced, "With a great voice he spoke to you from the heart of the fire, in cloud and thick darkness", which they took as referring to the three principles and rejoiced in the knowledge that, "Today we have seen that God can speak with man and man still live ... For what creature of flesh could possibly live after hearing, as we have heard, the voice of the living God speaking from the heart of the fire?". (1)

Further confirmation of the existence of the principle of darkness they took from the ninth plague with which Moses confounded the Egyptians, although Hippolytus stated, concerning the Sethians, that, "The whole content of their teaching comes from the ancient theologians, Musaeus, Linus, and Orpheus.". (2)

(1) (Deu. V 22-26).
(2) q.v. Hippolytus' "Refutatio", (vol. V cap. 15), as quoted in THE ANTE-NICENE CHRISTIAN LIBRARY, (vol. VI p. 177), and GNOSIS, (vol. I p. 303), and for the plague, q.v. (Exo. X 22).
It would seem that they represented the cosmos in anthropomorphic form, as did many other Gnostic groups, since Hippolytus writes concerning the movement of the these elements that, "from the first great impact of the three principles there has come a great form of a seal, namely that of heaven and earth. Heaven and earth are shaped like a womb having the navel in the middle", although it would appear that from this description their cosmological view was gynomorphic and that the entrance to this womb was through the gateway of the darkness represented as the vagina. (1)

However, in much Ophite thought the cosmos was symbolised as the Heavenly Man known as the "Anthropos", who was bisexual, and of three natures: spiritual, psychic, and material. They further divided humanity into three types, mirroring the Anthropos, which corresponded to the parts of the inner person as spirit, psyche and soul, or in Hebrew, "Yechidah", Ruach, and Nephesch.

These were the noumenal "Spirituals", or Pneumatics; the Psychics, or hybrids; and the phenomenal "Materials, or Hylics. (1) q.v. Hippolytus' "Refutatio", (vol. V cap. 14), as quoted in THE ANTE-NICENE CHRISTIAN LIBRARY, (vol. VI p. 173), and GNOSIS, (vol. I p. 301).
They appear to have rejected baptism, especially infant baptism, as practised in the Catholic Church since they held that it was performed in the name of Sabaoth, whom they equated with the demiurgic Ialdabaoth, maintained "that the devil is an offspring of Sabaoth the seventh authority, and that Sabaoth is god of the Jews; the devil is the evil offspring of the latter, which presides over the earth and opposes its own parent", and that the world itself was the product of these evil beings. (1)

Layton notes, that Epiphanius records, that they said of the Hylics, that "the devil came to Eve and united with her as a man with a woman and begot on her Cain and Abel ... For, they say, they were physically begotten from the devil's sperm", whereas Seth, from whom they, as Pneumatics, claimed descent, was the physical and natural son of Adam and Eve. (2)

(1) THE Gnostic SCRIPTURES, (p. 197).
(2) (ibid. p. 197), In Hebrew the name Seth is spelt as ShTh and equals the number, 700 as does the word for the "Mercy Seat", upon which the Shekinah, the Chabod of Yahweh, was held to dwell, as KPRTh. The number is also that of the "veil of the Temple", as PRKTh, and "secrecy" as MSThR.
However, as Layton notes, "the mother ... once she recognised that Abel had been killed, took thought and caused Seth to be born. And she deposited her power within him, establishing in him a posterity of the power from above ... And ... it is for this reason that the people of Seth have been set apart and are descended from that origin, as being the elect who are differentiated from the other people", namely the Psychics and Hylics. (1)

According to Epiphanius, "The Sethians boast that they trace their descent from Seth the son of Adam, and glorify him and ascribe to him everything that seems virtuous ... Indeed they even call him Christ and assert that he is Jesus.". (2) Him, they saw as their spiritual ancestor, parent of their race and progenitor of their line, and they claimed that they had awaited his return as the Messiah.

Layton notes that, "the anointed ... itself came as Jesus, a descendant of Seth by descent ... This was Seth himself, who both formerly and at that time ... visited the human race, having been sent from above, from the mother", whom they equated with the Celestial Eve, progenitrix of the spiritual race, as distinct from the Infernal Eve, mother of matter. (3)

(1) THE GnostIC SCriPTURES, (p. 188).
(2) GNOSIS, (vol. I p. 293).
(3) THE GnostIC SCriPTURES, (p. 189).
Foerster notes that they taught that "the same Mother and female went and brought on a flood and destroyed every insurrection of all men of the opposing race, in order, of course, that the pure and just race deriving from Seth should alone remain in the world ... But the angels again evaded her and brought Ham into the ark, who was of their seed", which angels they seem to have associated with the seven Archons. (1)

In the Ark of salvation, (which later Basilidaean and Valentinian Gnostics saw as a glyph of the "Ogdoad"), were eight souls, seven pure, and one, that of Ham, wicked. Of these the highest were thought to be those of Seth and his wife, Noria or Noraia, the parents of the Pneumatic children of light.

Of the school, Irenaeus holds that they taught a trinity of First Man, or "Anthropos", the Transcendent Father of Light; of the Second Man, the Son, First Thought of the First; and of a female Holy Spirit, the Mother, whom they mystically equated with Eve as "mother of all living".

Below this trinity was mass or matter composed of four elements; the waters, darkness, abyss and chaos. These principles presumably corresponded to the traditional four perhaps as water, earth, air and fire, respectively. (2)

(1) GNOSIS, (p. 294).
(2) THE GNOSTIC PROBLEM, (p. 117)
Over this mass the Mother brooded as a bird and, enamoured of her, the first and second members produced a third male principle, the Christ, (seen as a blend of male and female), who was "caught up" with her into the Aeon of the Paternal Depth, or Bythos. But she did not seem to be able to bear the quantity of light thrust upon her some of which fell into the elements as a kind of dew: product of the watery principle, as Mother.

This substance assumed matter from the elements creating a body which was known as either "Prunicus", "Prudicus", or the lower Sophia, often known as the "Achamoth". {1}

The hermaphrodite Prunicus, tainted with matter, struggled to ascend and formed the heavens from her body, which when sloughing off, was re-united with her Mother, the Higher Sophia, as the boundary of the Ideal Cosmos.

Yet through her contact with matter Achamoth had generated a son, Ialdabaoth, who, due to his origin, possessed a yearning for incorruptibility. In an attempted imitation of those above he created a group of seven angelic powers, each of whom created its own heaven.

{1} Foerster, in "Gnosis", (vol. I p. 86), explains this name as "The Lewd".

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Thus the "Hebdomad" was formed, with Prunicus as its eighth member, and thereby, the Ogdoad, and these Archons were identified with the Elohim who made the first human. \(^{1}\)

But Adam, then gave thanks to the Father above and, in a fit of jealousy, Ialdabaoth created woman in order to deprive the man of the divine spark through sexual intercourse. It was held to be his own mother who took pity on the first couple and told them to disobey the injunction of her son against the tasting of the fruit.

\(^{1}\) Foerster quotes from Irenaeus who names these Archons from whom the prophets were held to have gained their inspiration, "They distribute the prophets thus: to Ialdabaoth belonged Moses, Joshua son of Nun, Amos, and Habbakkuk; to Iao, Samuel, Nathan, Jonah, and Micah; to Sabaoth, Elijah, Joel, and Zechariah; to Adonai, Isaiah, Ezekiel, Jeremiah and Daniel; to Eloi, Tobias and Haggai; to Oreus, Micah and Nahum; (and) to Astapheus, Ezra and Zephaniah.". GNOSIS, (vol. I p. 91), and, c.f. "Adversus Haereses", (vol. I cap. XXX 11), as given in THE ANTE-NICENE CHRISTIAN LIBRARY, (vol. V p. 110).
The whole of "Biblical" history was then seen as the record of the struggle between Ialdabaoth, as the evil demiurgic God of the Jews, and Sophia, his mother, as the Saving Wisdom who had come in the form of the snake.

Aware of his plans Sophia then sent the righteous serpent, as the Nous, to enlighten the first man and his wife upon which Ialdabaoth banished them from the paradise of Eden.

To rescue them and their progeny from banishment Christ, as the Logos, descended through the seven celestial spheres thereby draining them of their stolen power, united with Sophia, and the two were then held to descend on the man Jesus in the form of a dove at his second birth in baptism.

Because of his proclaiming of the Unknown Father, the "Allogenés", or "Stranger", above, Jesus was crucified on the orders of Ialdabaoth and the Christ and Sophia escaped and ascended into the incorruptible and noumenal Aeon, from there sending Jesus the power of resurrection, who, in an impalpable and spiritual body, then taught his disciples for a further eighteen months before being assumed into the heavens.
There were groups, however, in which the absence of a creative mother-figure, or "Mater", (and often that of the Hebdomad), was apparent.

These taught that the three primary Aeons were considered to be a part of the hermaphroditic Archanthropos itself, repeated in the human reflection as "Phuke", Nephesch, or physical matter, Psyche, Ruach, or soul, and Pneuma, Yechidah, or spirit.

One of these was the Peratae which, though predominantly Ophite in that the figure of the snake was of great importance, based its teachings on an analogy with sidereal considerations, (was most probably dependent on the traditions and doctrines of Chaldaean star cults), as well as a kind of religious geometry.

Mead notes that, "according to the school, the universe was symbolised by a circle enclosing a triangle. The triangle denoted the primal trichotomy into the three worlds", or original elements, and it would seem that the circle represented the serpent, or World Ocean, encircling the world of the three principles of light, spirit, or soul, and darkness. (1)

(1) FRAGMENTS OF A FAITH FORGOTTEN, (p. 207).
Of the Peratae Hippolytus complains that "they simply elaborated the whole delusion of the astrologers concerning the stars", for, "since the astrologers recognise the horoscope (rising) and the zenith and the setting and the nadir, and realise that as these stars undergo their different motions at different times through the perpetual revolution of the whole universe there are different declinations from the pole at different times ... so (these men) ... present the pole as God and monad and Lord ... and the declination as the river (that flowed) out of Eden", though it is possible that the river was equated with the Via Lactaea. (1)

For the sect the world was created from the ever-moving waters of matter, (which as will have been seen were often symbolised in female form), known as the Hyle or "Thalassa". (2) They believed that nothing which existed through generation could survive and that, therefore, everything that was constructed would be destroyed.

Teaching that the world was of a triple nature they held the primal principles were symbolised by the Father, the Son, and matter, or nature, as Hyle.

(2) FRAGMENTS OF A FAITH FORGOTTEN, (p. 209).
Foerster notes that to them the Son was in a position and relationship midway between the other two, in mediation turning first to his Father and then to matter, and they taught of this saviour as having a threefold nature, a threefold body, and possessing a threefold power.

These three agents were further differentiated for the Father was considered to be the Unoriginate and Perfect Good. The Son was seen as self-generated, self-originate and also known to them as the Serpent. Matter, they taught to be originate being. (1)

The sun they held to be a fitting symbol of the Father, and the moon, his Son, with matter, the earth, as in some way, their product or child. Of these persons the second was held to be dual, turning his face first upward toward the Monad during which contemplation he was considered to incarnate the "pleroma" or fullness of the Father, and then downward toward matter during which act he descended into incarnation, albeit docetically.

The tripartite analogy was also extended to encompass the human mind with the Father representing the brain, the Son, the cerebellum, with matter seen as the medulla. Hippolytus notes that they "compare the brain itself to the Father because of its immobility, and the cerebellum with the Son, since it moves and has a serpentine shape". (2)

(1) GNOSIS, (vol. I p. 283).
(2) THE ANTE-NICENE CHRISTIAN LIBRARY, (vol. VI p. 169).
A similar system, mentioned only by Hippolytus, equates these divine principles with manifestations of both the dying gods Attis and Osiris. {1}

The three were known as the Pre-Existent, the Self-Originate, and Outpoured Chaos. The self-originate saviour was also known as "Adamas", or Adam, whose symbols included those of a seed, of water, the serpent, and the soul. This Adamas was also capable of two functions for when contemplating the higher, the gods came into being and when the lower, humanity.

The three powers were also given names based on those from "Isaiah": "Caulacau" equated with the self-originate Adamas; "Sulasau", representative of the chaotic world of matter; and "Zeesar", the heavenly Jordan. {2}

They taught abstention from sexual intercourse holding that the Anthropos, Caulacau, was an androgyne thus, as Foerster notes, "Man, they say is bisexual. So in accordance with this thought of theirs, the intercourse of woman and man is in their teaching shown to be most wicked and prohibited.". {3}

{1} The references are to Hippolytus' "Refutatio", (vol. V cap. 3), and (vol. V cap. 4), as quoted in THE ANTE-NICENE CHRISTIAN LIBRARY, (vol. VI p. 139, and p. 149).
{2} (Isa. XXVIII 10).
{3} GNOSIS, (vol. I p. 266).
Yet this androgynous figure was equated both with the mutilated Attis, whose castration was seen as a figure of the separation of the spiritual principle from the earthly, and with the ithyphallic Hermes, or Min, (and perhaps Simon in his guise as the "Standing One").

As Hippolytus noted they held that, "there is no temple ... which has not standing before its entrance the hidden thing unclothed", which was described later in the same passage as one who, "stands among them as an honoured figure, portrayed in a form like this, namely a human phallus, pointing upwards from below", and despite the contradiction it is possible that they, as the Mandaens, viewed his organ in feminine form, which, like the Tet of Osiris, was lost in the darkness of matter, symbolised as a denizen of the deep. (1)

Further some groups seem to have equated this phallus with either the Cosmic Tree, or its fruit, since, as Hippolytus notes, "The Phrygians also say that the Father of the universe is Amygdalus, an almond (-tree)". (2)

(1) (ibid. vol. I p. 266).
(2) (ibid. vol. I p. 278). In Hebrew, both the "fruit of the tree", and the "tree" itself were known as ShQD, which totals 404, and also bears the meaning, "watchfulness". Other cognate words include "religion", and "law", as DTh, "holiness", as QDSh, and a "toadstool", as MIN-PTRIH, which may have been equated with the cosmic tree.
CHAPTER FIVE
The Cosmic Tree, (which stood in the centre of the garden of Eden, or Paradise), was then seen as a glyph of Simon in his guise as the pillar, (the Fiery Logos), standing in the centre of the universe which symbol may have been readily equated in the non-Jewish world with that of the mountain of the north which pointed towards the Pole star, or "Cynosure".

It is important to note that in the thousand odd years before the beginning of the common era no fixed star exactly marked the pole, (which had previously been signified by alpha Ursae Majoris), and that during this period, gamma Draconis, (and later beta Ursae Minoris), had been used to refer to this point.

Beta Ursae Minoris was known to the Jewish astronomers as the "Kochab", (the star "par excellence"), and it is possible that it is to this luminary that the pseudonym of the resistance zealot Simon bar-Kochebah, (who, lauded as a Messiah, with Eleazar, the high priest, led the second Jewish revolt), refers.

{1}

{1} This star, Alrucaba, was, it would seem, known by the Hebrews as "Rekhubah" and spelt RKB, which totals 222, as do the words for "blessing", as BRK; the "holy mountain", as HR-TVBB; "vehicle" and "charioteer", as RKB; and the "Magi", the wise ones of the East, as ChKMI-QDM.
When the present occupant of the office, Polaris, assumed importance a sign could truly be said to be have been seen in the heavens, which for the Mandaeans was representative of their supreme being, who therefore turn in prayer towards the north, and were accused of worshipping the thunder-god Baal Tzaphon as lord of the sky resident upon the mountain of the north. (1)

Since the star appears to mark the point around which the constellations revolve it was seen as an apt symbol of the unchanging principle at the heart of the cosmos and to the Indians was known as "Meru", the pillar of the world.

As has been noted one of Simon’s titles was pillar, (in Greek, "Estos", and in Aramaic, "Ammud"), and it may be that in this guise he was seen as the pivot of the world, represented as the Tree of Life, who, in his mission to redeem the fallen soul, the lost sheep, adopted the form of the messianic Logos as Orion, (whose name in Hebrew as KSIL equals that of the pillar as OMVD), who was to bind the beast of wickedness and proclaim the new aeon.

(1) The name for such a heavenly omen, and also that for a star, is in Hebrew spelt as SIMN, totalling 160, and may have been viewed as a symbol for Simon, (the Greek variant of whose name may have also been derived from their word for omen), since other words equalling the same number include those for "grandfather", as AB-ZQN; "descent", as NPL; a "rock", as SLO; an "image", as OLS; a "shepherd", as NVQD; and a "tree", as OTz.
However, it is equally possible that the figure was seen as a glyph of Helen, since, followed by the dogs Sirius, (soul of Isis), and Procyon, Orion may have earlier been the stellar representative of the ravished daughter of Demeter, (perhaps as Artemis, the chaste huntress, instigator of the death of Actaeon who assumed the form of a stag), who annually disappeared from view and whose reappearance marked the beginning of spring when the new year sacrifices were celebrated.

It would appear that the Simonian initiate, when purified was, like the Mandaean, identified with the glorified Adam, (in the Jewish Quabbalah known as the "Adam Quadmon", or archetypal man), and seen as consubstantial with the unchanging principle as the faithful and anointed "son" of God, one of whose titles was "Son of Man". (1)

In "Galatians" the word for pillar was used as a title of both James and Peter and it would seem to be implied that Paul himself was also thus entitled as a leader whose mission was to shepherd the righteous into the new Ark of salvation, namely the Church, in preparation for the last days, as the celestial pillar of fire which had led those in exodus from the corruption typified by Egypt, the dark land of Khem. (2)

(1) The title "Son of Man" in Hebrew is literally "Son of Adam", the first human, and as BN-ADM totals 97, as does the word for "fidelity", as AMVN, an "orator", as NVAM, and the "appointed time", as ZMN.

(2) (Gal. II 9).
During the Exodus it will be remembered that the tribespeople, complaining of starvation, encountered the Shekinah, "the glory of Yahweh appearing in the form of a cloud", who promised to, "rain down bread ... from the heavens", named "Manna", some of which was placed in the ark of the covenant. (1)

"John" equated this with the old covenant as distinct from the new, which was described as the, "food that endures to eternal life, the kind of food the Son of Man is offering you", which the anointed Jesus announced was, "the true bread ... the bread of God ... which comes down from heaven and gives life to the world" and with which he identified himself as, "The living bread which has come down from heaven. Anyone who eats this bread will live for ever; and the bread that I shall give is my flesh, for the life of the world". (2)

This bread was the gift of God, (a "Dositheus" or "Jonathon"), and seems to have represented the descent of the Holy Spirit concerning which "Paul" explained to Timothy, "You have in you a spiritual gift which was given to you when the prophets spoke and the body of elders laid their hands on you". (3)

(1) (Exo. XVI 13-36).
(2) (Joh. VI).
(3) (I Tim. IV 14).
Those who had been, "brought into the light, and tasted the gift from heaven, and received a share of the Holy Spirit, and appreciated the good message of God and the powers of the world to come", were seen as having been resurrected with the Messiah and, later in the "Epistle", were equated with Melchizedek who stood before the throne of the Living God. (1)

This, "king of Salem", who, "brought bread and wine", and, "was a priest of God Most High", who pronounced a blessing on Abram, and tithed him, was seen as a prophetic type of the Messiah and as priest of the new covenant who would minister to God himself in the Heavenly Temple or New Jerusalem. (2)

Identification between the Messiah and the High Priest had been made by Philo in his work "On Flight and Finding", whom Schonfield quotes as writing, "We say, then that the High Priest is not a man, but a Divine Word and immune from all unrighteousness whether intentional or unintentional", and who later asserted that, "his Father being God, who is likewise Father of all, and his mother Wisdom, through whom the universe came into existence", who qualified for the office, "because moreover, his head has been anointed with oil, and by this I mean that his ruling faculty is illumined with a brilliant light". (3)

(1) (Heb. VI 4).
(2) (Gen. XIV 17-21).
(3) THE ESSENE ODYSSEY, (p. 144), and, c.f. PHILO, (vol. V p. 69).
This light seems to have been equated with the gift of prophecy, sure proof of the descent of the Holy Spirit, and appears to have been symbolised by the Morning star, concerning which "Peter" writes to the Christian community, "you will be right to depend on prophecy and take it as a lamp for lighting a way through the dark until the dawn comes and the morning star rises in your minds". (1)

Since the pillar of cloud went before the children of Israel in their sojourn through the desert, and since the Manna appeared before the sun rose, it may be that an equation was made between the morning star, (known to the Greeks as Lucifer, the light-bearer), and the Shekinah, the glory, or Chabod, of God.

The day star is but a poetic name for the planet Venus who was often seen to rise ahead of the sun, was therefore revered as bringer of the dawn, and as such may have been a symbol of John the Baptist who announced the coming of the Messiah; the dove who proclaimed the imminent arrival of the "Light of the World", or sun, with which Jesus was often identified both within and without the early Church.

To "Isaiah", however, it appears that the star was equated with the fallen gamma Draconis as leader of the rebellious angels, and he used this connection to satirize the mortality of the king of Babylon with the words, <<"How did you come to fall from the heavens, Daystar, son of Dawn? How did you come to be thrown to the ground, you who enslaved the nations? You who used to think to yourself, 'I will climb up to the heavens; and higher than the stars of God I will set my throne. I will sit on the Mount of Assembly in the recesses of the north. I will climb to the top of thunderclouds, I will rival the Most High.' What! Now you have fallen to Sheol to the very bottom of the abyss!">>.

Yet the author of "Revelation" asserted that the Messiah had spoken to him and announced, <<I, Jesus, have sent my angel to make these revelations to you for the sake of the churches. I am of David's line, the root of David and the bright star of the morning>>, who to the church at Thyatira had declared that those Christians who, <<keep working for me until the end, I will give the authority over the pagans which I myself have been given by my Father, to rule them with an iron sceptre and shatter them like earthenware. And I will give him the Morning Star>>. (2)

(1) (Isa. XIV 12-15).
(2) (Rev. XXII 16 & II 26-29).
Balaam too linked star and sceptre in declaiming,
<<"the oracle of one who hears the word of God, of one who knows the knowledge of the Most High. He sees what Shaddai makes him see, receives the divine answer, and his eyes are opened. I see him - but not in the present, I behold him - but not close at hand: a star from Jacob takes the leadership, a sceptre arises from Israel.>>. (1)

In the episodes recorded in "Exodus", the punishments of the Egyptians, through the agency of the staff, or sceptre, of Aaron, were given and the identification of the staff with the serpent was made clear in the same book.

Thus, <<Yahweh said to Moses and Aaron, "If Pharaoh says to you, 'Produce some marvel', you must say to Aaron, 'Take your staff and throw it down in front of Pharaoh, and let it turn into a serpent'">>, and although the Egyptian magicians were able to mimic this action, <<Aaron's staff swallowed up the staffs of the magicians.>>. (2)

In each of the successive plagues the staff was used to wreak havoc upon Egypt which was often taken as a symbol of the material world. By the time of the third plague, and seeing that they could not replicate the disaster, <<the magicians said to Pharaoh, "This is the finger of God">>. (3)

(1) (Num. XXIV 15-17).
(2) (Exo. VII 8-9 & 12-13).
(3) (Exo. VIII 15).
Other examples of the power of the staff of Moses or Aaron, (since various traditions have been blended in the account), stress its redemptive aspects such as its use in the crossing of the sea when Moses was told to, "raise your staff and stretch out your hand over the sea and part it for the sons of Israel to walk through the sea on dry ground.". {1}

In this passage the staff raised in the hand of Moses represented a visible manifestation to the Hebrews of the power of Yahweh when it divided the sea. {2}

A further miracle concerning both staff and water was said to have occurred at Horeb when the community complained of drought where Moses was enjoined to "take in your hand the staff with which you struck the river", and was to strike a rock upon which Yahweh would be standing whereupon, "water will flow from it for the people to drink.". {3}

(1) (Exo. XIV 16).

(2) Among the words for staff in Hebrew are MQL and ShBT. The first was the staff of David from whose line the Messiah was to come, totals 170, as do words for "cloud", as OBN, "interpreter", as MLITz, and a "statue", as PSL, while the second totals 311, means a "sceptre", a "person", as AISh, and equals the name of the angel Raphael as RPAL.

(3) (Exo. XVII 5-6).
A link between the staff and the Messiah seems to have been based on a similar account of this miracle in which the rod was known as the "Branch", a title of the Messiah, according to "Zechariah", who paralleled the parting of the sea and the striking of the rock in the eschatological splitting of the Mount of Olives when the Divine would descend on earth. (1)

A correlation between the staff, sceptre, or branch, and the stellar pivot of the heavens seems to have been made with the latter seen as the source of the cosmos which revolved around it and it may have been with this star that the Messiah was identified. (2)

(1) (Zec. XIV 4-5).

(2) The daystar was in Hebrew spelt AILTh-HShChR, totalling 913, as does the word for "cosmogony", and the first word of the "Pentateuch" as BRAShITH. It had previously been found in the constellation Draco, known to the Hebrews as the beast or "jackal", as ThN, which totals 450, as do the words for the "winter solstice", (on which day the saviour was later held to have been born), as ChG-HLDTh, "resemblance", as DMVTh, and the "fruit of the tree", as PRI-OTz.
This sceptre, equated with the messianic "Branch", described in "Zechariah", who was to be of the stock of Jesse, became associated with the Tree of Life which, in the "New Testament", was generally associated with the vine as a symbol of Jesus, who declared to the disciples, "I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser. Every branch in me that bears no fruit he cuts away, and every branch that does bear fruit he prunes to make it bear even more. You are pruned already, by means of the word that I have spoken to you ... I am the vine, you are the branches". (1)

The Tree of Life, here a glyph of the year, bore twelve branches from its trunk, which were seen as symbolic of the twelve disciples, while the Messiah was represented by the stream, or Wellspring, which watered the tree, though later twelve trees seem to have been mentioned as in "Revelation" which described the "river of life", (perhaps the stream that flowed out of Eden), that rose, "from the throne of God", coursed down the middle of the New Jerusalem and upon its banks, "were the trees of life, which bear twelve crops of fruit a year, one in each month, and the leaves of which are the cure for the pagans". (2)

(1) (Joh. XV 1-3 & 5).
(2) (Rev. XXII 1-2).
The fourteenth hymn of the Dead Sea Scrolls, (according to Jarmes' classification), also used a similar metaphor in which the author gave praise to God, <<For Thou didst set a plantation of cypress, pine, and cedar for Thy glory, trees of life beside a mysterious fountain hidden among the trees by the water, and they put out a shoot of the everlasting Plant. But before they did so, they took root and sent out their roots to the watercourse that its stem might be open to the living waters and be one with the everlasting spring.>>. (1)

Concerning this, <<bud of the shoot of holiness>>, the author stated that, <<the Plant of truth was hidden and was not esteemed; and being unperceived, its mystery was sealed. Thou didst hedge in its fruit, O God, with the mystery of mighty heroes and of spirits of holiness and of the whirling flame of fire>>, and warned that, <<No man shall approach the well-spring of life or drink the waters of holiness with the everlasting trees, or bear fruit with the Plant of heaven, who seeing has not discerned, and considering has not believed in the fountain of life, who has turned his hand against the everlasting bud>>. (2)

1) THE DEAD SEA SCROLLS IN ENGLISH, (p. 176).
2) (ibid. p. 176).
During the Eschata however, "The trees shall sink like lead in the mighty waters, fire shall burn among them and they shall be dried up; but the fruitful Plant by the everlasting spring shall be an Eden of glory bearing fruits of life.". (1)

It would appear that both this Plant, and the Wellspring which watered it, were equated, by the sectaries, with the Messiahim who would lead the righteous remnant, which alone of all the tribes of Israel would be saved, during the Last Battle against Melkiresha and his hosts of wickedness, and would reign over the Kingdom of Righteousness from the glorified and purified city, Jerusalem, perhaps in the guise of the Heavenly Melchizedek, leader of the victorious armies of Truth.

(1) (ibid. p. 177).
Further, it would seem that the twelve trees and tribes of Israel were equated with the twelve zodiacal constellations destined to fall at the end of the age, though there is disagreement about which tribe represents which sign. (1)

(1) The twelve sons of Jacob, (or as he was to become, Israel), are listed: from Leah, Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar and Zebulun; from Bilhah, Dan, and Napthali; from Zilpah, Gad, and Asher; and from Rachel, Joseph, and Benjamin. (Gen. XXIX 31-35, & XL 1-24). "Ezekiel", in his description of the Heavenly Jerusalem, allocates three tribes apiece to the cardinal directions: to the north, Reuben, Judah, and Levi; the east, Joseph, Benjamin, and Dan; south, Simeon, Issachar, and Zebulun; and to the west, Gad, Asher, and Napthali. (Eze. XLVIII 30-35). In "Exodus", (Exo. XXVIII 15-22), the "Ephod", or Pectoral of Judgement, was set with, "<four rows of stones>>", which were to, "<bear the names of the sons of Israel>>", and which may relate to those stones mentioned as facing the walls of the New Jerusalem in "Revelation", though there is disagreement as to which stone represented which tribe. (Rev. XXI 19-20).
Concerning such an astrological interpretation Dupont-Sominer writes, "It is necessary to bear in mind that solar mysticism and, in a more general way, astral mysticism were extremely widespread in the entire ancient world, both in the Hellenistic and Roman period.". (1)

Thus it would appear that the Messiah, as the fountain of life, in the midst of the garden, surrounded by twelve trees, would have been equated with both the sun, (or the Polestar), in the centre of the cosmos encircled by the zodiacal constellations, and the New Year's day at the heart of the year around which the twelve months processed.

Fagan notes that the Chaldaeans appear to have been the first to have divided the year into twelve portions, based upon the passage of the sun around the celestial ecliptic, and that the antiquity of the system seems to be demonstrated from the ascription of the "Hypsomata". (2)

These degrees of exaltation have for centuries been held to be of prime importance, although no real reason for this esteem has been given, though Fagan proves that in the year 786 B.C.E., corrected for the latitude of Babylon, the planets were in their traditional hypsomatic positions and at no other reasonable time. (3)

(1) THE JEWISH SECT OF QUMRAN, (p. 106).
(2) A PRIMER OF THE SIDEREAL ZODIAC, (p. 8).
(3) ZODIACS OLD AND NEW, (p. 1)
Yet the earliest solar zodiac may have consisted of only six signs, (as with archaic Euphrataean astronomy and its concept of the "Sar" or sixty degree division), namely: the opposites of Taurus, and Scorpio; Cancer, and Capricorn; and, Virgo, and Pisces, (later doubled due to the annual occurrence of twelve full moons in successive parts of the ecliptic which was divided into twelve equal parts of thirty degrees each). (1)

(1) Each of these constellations and the months with which they were originally aligned were ruled over by a duodecad of deities, who in Chaldea were the saturnine Adar, and Belit, (variously, his mother, or wife, or sister); the jovial Marduk, and his spouse, Zarpanit; the martial Nergal, and Laz; the venusian Ishtar, (considered to be of two aspects, as Morning and Evening Star), and her spouse, or son, Dumuzi; and, Nebo, (also of two aspects as befits the ambisexual planet, Mercury; his obverse being Nusku, god of fire), and his sister-wife, Tasmit. Concerning them Lenormant writes, "With these planetary personages ends the series of the twelve great gods who constituted the true Chaldaic-Babylonian Olympus, the superior order of that divine hierarchy, the twelve who were called by Diodorus Siculus ... 'masters,' or 'lords of the gods,' and who were said by him to preside over the twelve months of the year and the twelve signs of the zodiac.". CHALDAEAN MAGIC, (p. 118).
Before the invention of the zodiacal "cycle of little animals" the circumpolar stars were of widespread veneration since they stood at the roof of the sky itself, were constant in their visibility, and indicated the pole, and it seems that later the sun was used as a symbol of this star at the hole in the sky.

The Greeks revered Thales as the discoverer of Ursa Major, identified with Callisto as the nurse of Zeus, (though this is hardly likely, it being more probable that the philosopher introduced the lesser Bear), and in Egypt the constellation was portrayed as a haunch of beef, known as the "Meshket", which seems to have been sacred to Set, whose jackal was a symbol for the pole for centuries, as can be seen on the Denderah zodiac, even after his master's demise. (1)

(1) Budge writes, "About the XXIInd dynasty ... it became the fashion to regard the god as the origin of all evil", perhaps because alpha Ursae Majoris had ceased to mark the pole and instead was shown by gamma Draconis known as Tauret-Aset, the hippopotamus, which dragon was revered as the mother of the pole. This descent of the god may be indicated in the one hundred and seventy-fifth chapter of the "Papyrus of Ani" which states, "But hath departed the soul of Sut, greater than all the gods to Amenta". THE EGYPTIAN BOOK OF THE DEAD, (p. CXVI & 184).
The asterism appears to have become circumpolar around 4000 B.C.E. and to have replaced Draco in importance as the pointer towards the pole, previously alpha Ursae Majoris.

It will be remembered that prior to the assumption of Polaris the constellation of Draco was worshipped as the possessor of the lodestar, it being likely that this was viewed as the prime of her children, and it appears that much of the worship accorded to the asterism as mother of the Cynosure was later transferred to the seven-starred Ursa Major as now being a more accurate shewer.

Later it seems that the group of stars in which the pole lay was portrayed as an image in miniature of the larger heptasterism and was, by the Greeks, seen as an Ursa Minor concerning which Allen writes that, "Ursa Minor was not mentioned by Homer or Hesiod, for, according to Strabo, it was not admitted among the constellations of the Greeks until about 600 B.C.".

(1) To the Egyptians alpha Ursae Minoris was still represented as the jackal of Set, (perhaps Anubis, god of the dead), even down to the time of the Denderah zodiac, despite his vilification, and as such was greatly revered.

(1) STAR NAMES: THEIR LORE AND MEANING, (p. 448).
In China the star was known as "Tien Hwang Ta Ti", the Great Imperial Ruler of Heaven, or "Tai Chi", the Supreme Pivot, and in India, "Grahadhara", the root, or pivot, of the planets around which all heaven revolved. Given these ascriptions it is likely that it was this star that, like the Mandaean, the Christians used to refer to the Messiah as the ruler at the centre of the cosmos.

However, the ancients seem to have been aware of its motion concerning which Allen writes, "Polaris is one degree, fourteen minutes distant from the exact pole ... and will continue in gradual approach to the pole till about the year 2095 ... It will then recede in favour successively of gamma, pi, zeta, nu, and alpha of Cepheus, alpha and delta of the Swan, and Wega of the Lyre ... which for 3000 years will serve as the pole-star". {1}

He describes how the pole would then rest at iota and tau Herculis and then to theta, iota, and alpha Draconis. Following this, beta Ursae Minoris, and gamma Draconis, would again show the pole until being replaced by Polaris: a period of some twenty-five thousand years.

It appears that the ancient civilisations of China, India, Chaldaea, and Egypt, were aware of part of this cycle of precession and that by mathematical calculation approximated the figure, which in Egypt was held to represent the Great Sothiac Year of 26,000 sidereal aeons.

{1} (ibid. p. 457).
Though it is doubtful that much of this period had been actually observed by them, (or the Chaldaeans and Indians whose astronomical lore was also pervaded with such high figures), given the fixed nature of the heavens which they held, it appears that they deduced these cycles and retrogressed them in order to discover the date of the creation of the world, and that the various stages within the cycle until the great cessation were held to be of immense significance and were marked by the fluctuation of the pole star.

Massey writes that to the Egyptian astronomers in this great year there were held to be, "seven stations of the celestial pole, six of which are still identifiable in the constellations of Draconis, the Lesser Bear, Kepheus, Cygnus, Lyra and Herakles", and that since the, "pole changes, and its position is approximately determined by another central star about each 3,700 years", that, "Seven times in the great year the station of the pole was raised aloft as a land-mark amid the fundamental waters in the shape of an island, or a mound; a tree, a pillar, horn, or pyramid.". (1)

(1) ANCIENT EGYPT, (vol. II p. 580). He proposes that the seventh may be found in Corona, although it is likely that instead two were held to reside in Draco.
He writes that, "The Book of the Dead (chapters 114 and 123) not only proves the ancient Egyptians to have been acquainted with the precessional movement, it also gives an account of the actual changing of a polestar", which he holds is the meaning of the phrase, "I have rescued Atu from his backward course>>, found therein and, with Renouf, sees this as referring to the phenomena of precession. (1) During such times the ancient astronomers, especially the Magi, would have watched the skies with great interest and noted the positions of the planets with care.

Although normative Judaism was anti-astrological in the divinatory sense, it did not turn its back totally on cosmological speculation, and the discovery of what are popularly known as horoscopes, (though the word literally means a "view of the hour" and therefore refers rather to horary than to genethliacal charts), in the settlement at Qumran written in cipher, in both Hebrew and Greek, indicates the importance of a type of astrology to the separatists, whether prognostic, or as Vermes suggests, as a literary device. (2)

Of the sectaries Allegro writes, "For them the stars and their positions could affect men's lives", and it appears that they gave reverence to the patriarch Enoch as the discoverer of the art. (3)

(1) ANCIENT EGYPT, (vol. II p. 580), [his emphases].
(2) THE DEAD SEA SCROLLS IN ENGLISH, (p. 269).
(3) THE DEAD SEA SCROLLS, (p. 126).
Among the various apocryphal books, such as "Tobit", and what appears to be an original Hebrew version of "Ecclesiasticus", found in the library at Qumran were pseudepigraphal works such as "Jubilees", "I Enoch", and the "Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs". Concerning the composite collection known as "I Enoch" Isaac writes, in his introduction to the aforementioned, "The earliest portions of the work originated probably in a proto-Essene milieu; the latter sections perhaps in a setting quite different from Qumran Essenism.". (1)

The work is replete with calendrical, (and therefore, astrological), symbolism and purports to describe the ascent of Enoch to the heavens and the denizens thereof, as well as the underworld with its two monsters, the female Leviathan and the male Behemoth. In it the constellations of the zodiac appear to be symbolised by the twelve winds which reside in the houses of the heavens, (though they are negatively described as the bearers of illness), and may have been held to be resident in the night-sky which was divided into four quarters.

Four angels were portrayed as ruling over the seasons, with three angels apiece under them in charge of the months of the year, which was divided into two halves. Thus the whole cosmos was portrayed as inhabited by various divine beings who were responsible for the correct procession of the year.

(1) OLD TESTAMENT PSEUDEPIGRAPHA, (vol. I p. 8).
In the work, Enoch was described as interceding on behalf of the "Watchers"; some two hundred fallen angels, (although the text mentions only eighteen, some of which may be duplicates), with the leader of the infernal host named as Azazel or Semyaza, (which may mean the Name of the Evil One), and who was perhaps equated with the demonic Melkiresa, leader of the army of wickedness mentioned in the writings at Qumran.

Opposing them were the seven archangelic leaders of the army of righteousness, whose chief seems to have been Melchizedek, who, with them, stood before the throne of God.

The pseudepigrapha names them as, "Uriel, one of the holy angels, who is over the world and over Tartarus. Raphael ... over the spirits of men. Raguel ... who takes vengeance on the world of the luminaries. Michael ... he that is set ... over chaos. Saraqael ... who is set over the spirits, who sin in the spirit. Gabriel ... who is over Paradise and the serpents and the Cherubim. Remiel ... whom God set over those who rise." (1)

These angels have traditionally been seen as representatives of the planets, (though there are many and divergent lists), and the days over which they ruled, and their importance within the Judaism of this period may have been due to the reverence the celestial bodies received in Babylon to which city the leading Jewish families were exiled.

(1) THE BOOK OF ENOCH, (p. 46).
In Chaldaea the planets were equated with their chief divinities: the sun with Samas; the moon with Sin; Mars with Nergal; Mercury with Nebo; Jupiter with Bel; Venus with Beltis; and Saturn with Ninib. (1)

To the Hebrews these were represented by Shemesh; Levanah; Madim; Kokab, (which it will be remembered was also the name of what had been the pole star); Tzedeq; Nogah; and finally, Shabatai, or Kaiwan.

In later Greece it would appear that such attributions were also made of the gods, in the same order, as Helios; Selene; Ares; Hermes or Apollo; Zeus; Aphrodite; and Chronos.

In Rome they were equated with the divinities who have given their names to the days of the week in most of the Romance languages, namely, and in the same order, Sol; Luna; Mars; Mercurius; Jupiter; Venus; and Saturnus.

{1} In THE SECRET ADAM, (passim), Drower gives the Mandaean names of the planets, in the same order, thus; Samis, Sin, Nerig, Nbu, Bel, Dlibat, and Kewan.
In Egypt too the seven planets were associated with various divinities, (in the same order), and pictured thus: Re as the solar disk, or Horus as a falcon wearing the double crown of Egypt; Thoth as the ibis, or Ioh as a crescent moon; Hor-desher, (Horus the Red), whose symbol was a knife, or Hor-akheti, (Horus of the Horizon), who was usually portrayed as a red flamingo, or sometimes as Re; Sebek, though often portrayed as a hovering hawk, or as seems to be the earlier of the two, as Set, whose image was later despised and obliterated; Hor-wep-sheta, (Horus the Revealer of Secrets), often shown as a falcon wearing the "Atef" crown of Osiris and the cow horns of Hathor; Bennu-Ausar, (the Phoenix of Osiris), portrayed as a heron enperched, or as Pa-neter-tuat, (God of the Morning), double-headed; and finally, Hor-pa-ka, (Horus, Bull of the Sky), whose symbol was a square.

(1)

It is also possible that the members of the Zoroastrian heptad were equated with the seven planets, though the attributions are unknown. Although the core of Zarathustra's teaching was a call to moral monotheism, the worship of the wise lord, Ahura Mazda, the existence of others, the Holy Immortals, was accepted forming in all a divine septenary. The Zoroastrian creation myth, as with the Hebrews, was thought of as having happened in seven consecutive stages and seems to have been based upon exegesis concerning the sacrificial cultus.

(1) EGYPTIAN ASTRONOMICAL TEXTS, (vol. III p. 177).
The first act was the creation of the heavens, (or sky of stone), figured as a huge shell or bowl, which enclosed all and was made by Khshathra-Vairya, or "Ideal Dominion". He was represented by the stone pestle and mortar used in the "Haoma Yasna", or herbal sacrifice, and seen as the creator of the luminaries in the Adamantine Sky over which he ruled.

At the base of the second half of the shell were the primeval waters ruled over by Haurvatat, who represented perfection, was known as "Health" and was seen as the supreme genius of the consecrated water used in the sacrificial ritual.

Floating in the centre of these waters was the disk of earth, the third creation, made by Spenta Aramaiti, "Holy Devotion", whose virtues were those of an ideal wife, namely modesty and piety, who may have been an early nature-goddess, and who, in the cosmogonic rite, was figured as the sacred enclosure itself.

Fourthly, at the centre of the earth was the cosmic plant or tree, (identified with the Haoma), and formed by Ameretat, or "Immortality", whose authority extended over all vegetation.

Near this central plant were the two beings next created, the bull and the man, in that order, though in later versions of the myth the man was held to have sacrificed the bull from whose blood the plant grew.
The bull, (known as "Geush Urvan", meaning "Ox-soul"), precursor of all animal life, the fifth creation, was brought to life by Vohu-Mano, the "Good Thought" or "Good Purpose", who was ruler over all the animal kingdom, especially cattle and its products, and who became representative of the sacrificial victim itself.

The man, (known as "Gayomaretan", or "Gayomart", meaning "Mortal Life"), was created by the great Spenta Mainyu, the "Holy Spirit" of Ahura Mazda, (perhaps originally identical with him), was represented in the rites by the priest or the just man; possessor of "Asha", or righteousness, as against "Drug", or irreligion.

The final creation of fire by Asha-Vahishta, the "Righteous Spirit of Truth and Order", completed both the process and the rite, performed by the priest, in which the bull was sacrificed, after having been consecrated with sanctified water, in the sacred enclosure, and offered to the flames in a communal feast.

Seven times of the year, when the tribespeople gathered together, were held to be sacred, each of which was ruled by one of the Amesha Spenta although the traditional equations between the festivals and the Holy Immortals are suspect since their corresponding creations do not seem to correlate with the purpose of the feasts.

For the Holy Immortals and their creations, q.v. TEXTUAL SOURCES FOR THE STUDY OF ZOROASTRIANISM, (p. 13).
In the order generally given they are: the holy day in the middle of spring known in Avestan as "Maidhyoi-zaremaya", sacred to Khshathra Vairya and the sky; "Maidhyoi-shema" at midsummer, sacred to Haurvatat and the waters; "Paitishahya", at the time of the corn harvest, sacred to Spenta Armaiti and the earth; "Ayathrima" or the "Homecoming of the herds", which, (though specifically mentioning cattle), was held to be sacred to Ameretat and plants; the midwinter festival known as "Maidhyairyaya", supposedly sacred to Vohu Manah and cattle; the festival of "All Souls", or "Hamaspath-maedaya", sacred to the Spenta Mainyu and man; and finally that of New Year's Day, known in Middle Pahlavi as "No Roz", sacred to Asha Vahishta and fire, which once corresponded to Ayathrima, but which had since retrogressed. (1)

1) If, as seems apt, Ayathrima was in fact sacred to cattle, the following order corresponding to that given above seems likely. Thus the mid-spring festival would instead be sacred to the waters, perhaps the first rains; midsummer, earth; the corn harvest, plants; the homecoming, cattle; midwinter, man; "All Souls", fire; and New Year's Day, the sky, and the god of order and justice. For the names of the festivals and their association with the Holy Immortals, q.v. TEXTUAL SOURCES FOR THE STUDY OF ZOROASTRIANISM, (p. 18).
During the fourth century B.C.E., the cult of the sacred fire was founded as a centralised and orthodox practice, (a unifying socio-political move for a burgeoning empire), thus making it the state religion of Iran. This was further made firm by the creation of the new official calendar and, either from these changes, or as the cause of them, the first major Zoroastrian schism became a prominent school of thought especially at court.

Boyce writes of Zurvanism that it was "the only considerable Zoroastrian heresy, evolved probably by Persian magi in the late fifth century B.C.", and that it was a monism, "in which the two spirits were "seen as twin sons of Time, Zurvan (a minor divinity of late Younger Avestan texts). The earliest reference to it, by the Greek historian Theopompus, shows it was linked with a special version of the 'world year'. The heresy was, it seems, adopted as the true orthodoxy by the late Achaemenian kings", and since the dispute concerned interpretation the Zurvanites were, even after the demise in their royal patronage, able to worship alongside the "old believers". (1) (ibid. p. 96).
But with the rise of Zurvanism the importance of the septenary diminished and the supreme being became equated with Zurvan Akarana, "Eternity" or "Ageless Time", who was seen as the father of the twin good and evil spirits, Spenta Mainyu, (possessor of Asha, and leader of the forces of Light), and Aingra Mainyu, (possessor of Drug, and leader of the forces of Darkness), who struggled for possession of the human soul, which yet had a free choice in its allegiance.

The concept of these two spirits between whose trains the person wavered was also central to the teaching of the sect at Qumran whose "Community Rule" states that the, <<God of Knowledge>>, has, <<created man to govern the world, and has appointed for him two spirits in which to walk until the time of His visitation: the spirits of truth and falsehood. Those born of truth spring from a fountain of light, but those born of falsehood spring from a source of darkness>>, and announces that, <<All the children of righteousness are ruled by the Prince of Light and walk in the ways of light, but all the children of falsehood are ruled by the Angel of Darkness and walk in the ways of darkness.>>. (1)

It would appear that, at Qumran, the place allotted to Zurvan Akarana in Zoroastrian thought had been taken by the "God of Knowledge" and that those of Spenta Mainyu and Aingra Mainyu were replaced by the Melchizedek and Melkiresa, the kings of righteousness and wickedness, respectively.

(1) THE DEAD SEA SCROLLS IN ENGLISH, (p. 75).
In the Zurvanite reformation of the calendar the Great Year, of which the ordinary months, (of thirty days), and the year, (of three hundred and sixty days), were reflections, was supposed to consist of twelve thousand solar years as celestial months and as such represented the duration of the world.

This Year was divided into four periods of three millennia apiece, as the solar year was divided into four seasons, and in the first period, the spring, the "Menog", or invisible spiritual creation, (a concept akin to the Platonic creation of the world of the Eide), occurred. Because of this spiritual preview of history Ahura Mazda, (or Spenta Mainyu), realised that there would be a constant struggle between himself and his opposite, Aingra Mainyu, although war was only declared at the end of the second period.

The summer of the Year was the time of the "Getig" or creation of the phenomenal world in seven stages and was followed by the first segment of human history, until the appearance of Zarathustra, which formed the third division. The winter of the Year was held to have been the present time which would continue as a battlefield between the two moral principles until the triumph of good over evil when the whole cosmos would come to an end in a final conflagration. Thus a four-fold creation was proposed, during the last acts of which humanity was said to live, with individuals either on the side of righteousness or irreligion, until the Last Day, the "Day of Healing", known as "Frashegird" when evil would be vanquished for ever.
However when the Persian Empire, (which had reached its zenith in the time of Cyrus), was replaced by the Macedonian Empire of Alexander and the Diadochi, which stretched from lower Greece to Northern India, (including both the Greek colonies and Egypt), many Iranian priests were slaughtered, though some fled, and it seems likely that Zoroastrian apocalyptic began in this period.

Cyrus II had overthrown the long-standing Babylonian domination in 538 B.C.E., and in religious affairs was fairly 'laissez faire" for his time. Under his rule preparations for the rebuilding of the Temple at Jerusalem were undertaken though the work was not completed until over twenty years later.

During this period the absence of a spiritual centre for the Jews resulted in the development of the "priestly tradition" and the committal to writing of the six day creation myth, given in the first chapter of "Genesis", which gained in importance over the older account, now remaining as the second chapter.

The importance of the scribe and interpreter for the Jewish community became normative and that of the prophet appears to have begun to diminish at this time while the influences from both the Babylonian exile and the increased religious freedom experienced under Persian rule became incorporated into exilic Judaism.
Through the collation of such works as "I Enoch" an interest in cosmology developed among the scribes from which circles the "Book of Jubilees" seems to have arisen.

The book includes a "Midrash" on the creation: on the first day God made seven things, (perhaps ruled over by the seven archangels), the heavens, the earth, the waters, the angelic host, the abyss, darkness, and light; on the second, only one, the firmament; on the third, four, namely, dry land, bodies of water, flora, and the garden of Eden; on the fourth day, three, namely, the sun, moon, and stars; on the fifth, three, namely, sea monsters, fish, and birds; and on the final day, four things, namely, wild beasts, domestic beasts, reptiles, and man. (1)

Thus on the six days a total of twenty-two separate creations were made which may have been related to the letters of the Hebrew alphabet, which in the later "Quabbalah", or esoteric tradition, were said to be the basis of the cosmos.

Jewish mysticism was to form itself into two main branches of Quabbalah, practical and speculative: the German school of the "Ashkenazim", which developed "Palestinian" thaumaturgy and its emphasis on the Merkabah and Shiur Komah; and the Spanish, or Provencal, school of the "Sepharadim", which centred on "Babylonian" astrological cosmology as found within the Maaseh Berashith.

(1) (Jub. II 2-16).
Cosmogonic speculation, as found in the "Sepher Yetzirah", or "Book of Formation", sought to explain creation by means of thirty-two emanations: the twenty-two letters of the Hebrew alphabet and the ten "Sephiroth", or numbers, (held to form the trunk and branches of the Tree of Life they may have been derived from the ten utterances of God in "Genesis"), which were equated, beginning with the first: spirit, air, water, fire, height, north, west, south, east, and depth. (1)

Concerning the Tree, Matt quotes from the "Sepher ha-Bahir" that, "There is one pillar extending from the earth to the sky. Zaddiq ... is its name", and equates this with the sephiroth "Yesod", which means "foundation". (2)

(1) JEWISH SPIRITUALITY, cap. XI p. 302.
(2) (ibid. cap. XIV p. 377). These emanations are also known, in descending order, as: "Kether", the Crown; "Chokmah", Wisdom; "Binah", Understanding; "Chesed", or "Gedulah", Mercy; "Pachad", or "Geburah", Wrath; "Tiphareth", Beauty; "Hod", Splendour; "Netzach", Victory; "Yesod", the Foundation; and finally, "Malkuth", the Kingdom. Further they were allotted to the various limbs of the Heavenly Adam, the "Adam Kadmon", or Anthropos, so: Kether to his head; Chokmah and Binah, either his right and left eyes or his shoulders; Gedulah and Geburah, his arms and hands; Tiphareth, his heart; Hod and Netzach, his legs; Yesod, his genitalia; and Malkuth, his feet.
The earliest possible date for the compilation of the "Sepher Yetzirah", though its traditions may reach further into the past, would be in the fourth century, C.E., and it basically taught an adaptation of the Platonic theory of "Ideas", hierarchically arranged within a neo-Platonic schema. It mentions four supreme Sephiroth: the Spirit of the Living God or "Ruach Elohim Chayyim"; spirit, as in wind or breath; water; and fire; in that order of precedence. The last three may have represented the elemental "Mother Letters" of the Hebrew alphabet with the Ruach as Aleph, water, as Mem, and fire, as the letter, Shin.

The letters of the alphabet were later further divided into three groups and it was said that the three "Mothers" produced the seven "Double" letters, B, G, D, K, P, R, and Th, which in turn produced the final twelve, allotted to the signs of the Zodiac, (as were the seven to the planets). (1)

(1) As with the Greek, and presumably other alphabets, the Hebrew letters also stood for numbers. The Greek and Roman languages, however, were known to the Rabbinim as the "Roman Beast", which was spelt in Hebrew as RVMIITH, and totalled 666, traditionally the number of the antichrist though it should be noted that the name of the Shemhamphorash also totals this number when spelt ShM-IHShVH, and it is possible that in some Gnostic groups the phrase was also used to refer to the name of Jesus when spelt IHShVH.
Such allegorical and numerical exegesis had been a long accepted practice in both Palestinian and Samaritan Judaism from which, due to the belief that God gave Moses the written 'Pentateuch' on Mount Sinai, developed an interest with the written word itself leading to the widespread use of alphabetic and numerical speculation such as Gematria, (which word may be based on the Greek "grammateia"), Notariqon, and "Temura", in mystical writings and Rabbinic exegesis.

Gematria was based on the hypothesis that each letter of the Hebrew alphabet was equivalent to a number and that words of the same numerical value shared a mystical identification. Thus the word for the pangs of childbirth awarded to Eve for her part in the illicit tasting of the fruit of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, (spelt in Hebrew as ChBLI-LIDH), is equivalent in value, in that it adds up to 99, with a word meaning acquaintance in the sense of knowledge, (spelt IDIOH).

Notariqon, (possibly derived from the Latin word, Notarius, meaning a shorthand writer), was a system whereby the letters of a word were used as the initials of others, thus, from the first word in the "Pentateuch", (spelt in Hebrew, BRASHITh), was spun the sentence, BRASHITh RAH ALHIM ShIQBLV IShRAL ThVRH, with the meaning, "In the Beginning God saw that Israel would observe the Torah."

With the practice of Temura, the permutation of letters was used according to various and complicated ciphers, the like of which produced the Shemhamphorash from three verses in "Exodus".

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Scriptural exegesis seems to have been practised by the sect at Qumran, which appears to have been well acquainted with the Maaseh Merkabah and the Maaseh Berashith, and differed most noticeably from Jerusalem Judaism in its rejection of the official calendar which the sectaries felt had become corrupted by the adoption of "Gentile" practices of intercalation.

Instead of the lunar, they preferred a solar method for the calculation of festival dates and seem to have used that mentioned in "Jubilees". This calendar was reputedly used by Noah who was told to, "command the children of Israel so that they shall guard the years in this number, three hundred and sixty-four days ... and no one shall corrupt its appointed time>>, which would, "set awry the months and the appointed times and the sabbaths and the feasts". (1)

Concerning this, Allegro writes that, "scholars have recently shown that this old Jubilees calendar has a history going right back to the Exile, being used probably by Ezekiel, the priestly redactor of the Pentateuch, and the Chronicler to whom we owe the books of Chronicles and Ezra-Nehemiah.". (2)

(1) (Jub. VI 32 & 38)
(2) THE DEAD SEA SCROLLS: A REAPPRAISAL, (p. 129).
The same appears to be referred to in "I Enoch" in which Enoch imparted the knowledge he had learned from the angel Uriel to his son, detailing twelve months of thirty days apiece, divided into four seasons, each of which was heralded by an additional day, originally perhaps the solar stations. (1)

The work also gave the names of some of the angelic guardians over the months and seasons, and it is probable that each day of the week was held to be sacred to one of the seven archangels. The year was thus composed of fifty-two weeks exactly, divided into four seasons of thirteen weeks, with four extra-seasonal days. Seven of these years were held to form a celestial week and seven of these weeks formed a "Jubilee", (after which it would appear that inaccuracies within the calendar were rectified), and it is further probable that forty-nine Jubilees were seen as an aeon. (2)

According to Allegro, Jaubert has shown that "the Jubilees calendar began the year on the fourth day of the week, Wednesday, on the principle that it was only on that day that the heavenly luminaries were created, and thus one could not properly speak of 'day and night' before that.". (3)

(1) (I Eno. LXXXII).
(2) The word Jubilee is spelt in Hebrew as IVBL and totals 48 as does the word for the star "par excellence", Kokab, and the name of the planet Mercury.
(3) THE DEAD SEA SCROLLS: A REAPPRAISAL, (p. 132).
Vermes writes, "Furthermore, not only did the year begin on a Wednesday, but so also did every season of thirteen weeks. In fact, any date during the year fell on exactly the same day of the week in every other year." (1) This concern for order would seem to have also been the case within the Zoroastrian Zurvanite calendar, and it is possible that like it, that of Qumran, was attributed to various angelic beings, and further, that since the yearly cycle of the sect also contained seven seasonal feasts, (at seven weekly intervals), that these feasts were held to be separately under the jurisdiction of one of the archangelic heptad.

The veneration of Wednesday as both the Sabbath and the Passover may have been identified with the central light in the "Menorah" candelabra and being the middle of the classical week would have been attributed to the planet Mercury, ruled by Hermes, which comes in its orbit nearest to the earth and may therefore have been considered to be the prime messenger of God as the angel of the Lord, and to those like Philo, the Messiah or Logos. (2)

(1) THE DEAD SEA SCROLLS IN ENGLISH, (p. 43).

(2) Barrett, in THE MAGUS, identifies Raphael as the angel of the day although Michael is often proposed by other authors. Raphael whose name means "God has healed" would be an appropriate candidate since the Qumran separatists were in antiquity confused with the Essenes famed for their healing abilities.
Associated by the Greeks with their Hermes was the Egyptian Thoth who had become seen as the wisdom of the supreme divinity. Represented as ibis-headed, he seems originally to have been worshipped as a moon god under the title "Aah-Te-Huti", (equated with Khonsu), and was adopted into the various Egyptian pantheons, sometimes identified with Ptah, and like many "culture gods", he was reputed to have invented the calendar, as well as arithmetic, astronomy, and geometry among other sciences. As well as being credited with the invention of the above, he was also viewed as the inventor of language and the hieroglyphs, one of his titles being "Lord of the Holy Words", and was often linked with the goddess of truth and justice, Maat. He also had a reputation as a master magician, his devotees claiming that they had access to his books of spells and it is this reputation that established him as "Trismegistos", meaning "Thrice Great".

The Hermetic writings were supposedly handed down from great antiquity and pseudepigraphically ascribed to Hermes Trismegistos, though they date, however, in their present form from the second century C.E., and yet incorporate much ancient material. The matter of the earliest of the "Hermetica" was largely astrological and dealt with a system of planetary and zodiacal correspondences in which various herbs and semi-precious stones were thought of as being ruled over by the heavenly bodies and constellations, and seems to have been predominantly consulted for medicinal and magical purposes.
According to the Hermopolitan theologians Thoth was the creator of the universe. He merely spoke and immediately four gods and four goddesses, the Hermopolitan Ogdoad, appeared and through them the work of creation began. These eight were thought to be the components of the Cosmic Egg laid in the waters of space by the Great Cackler, the female goose Kenken-Uar. Drioton mentions this group, known as the "Khemennu", which was held to issue at the command of Thoth from the primaeval waters; eight couples, both pairs of which were called "Night" or "Depth", Nau and Naunet; "Darkness", Kuk and Kakuet; "Mystery", Amun and Amaunet; and "Eternity", Huh and Hauhet; the males being frog-headed and the females, snake-headed. (1)

Mead notes that Justin, in the twenty-second chapter of his "Apologia", acknowledged that in pagan speculation, Hermes, and consequently, Thoth, was seen as the Logos and ruler of the middle day of the week. (2) He was viewed as having authority over time and seen as the husband of the goddesses of the hours of the day which, as Fagan notes, began at sunset. (3)

(1) EGYPTIAN RELIGION, (p. 25). It is pertinent to note that in the "Discourse on the Eighth and Ninth", Hermes Trismegistos instructs his disciple to place the work in a sanctuary protected by four male frog-faced, and four female cat-faced guardians. THE NAG HAMMADI LIBRARY IN ENGLISH, (p. 296).

(2) THRICE GREATEST HERMES, (vol. I p. 218).

(3) SYMBOLISM OF THE CONSTELLATIONS (p. 44).
The Chaldaean day too seems to have begun at sunset and was divided into six parts with three watches by day and three by night. This system was later succeeded by that of twelve double hours, known as "Beru", which were subsequently divided into thirty sections of about four minutes, each of which was ruled over by a different divinity. (1)

This system appears also to have been known to the Egyptians since Brown writes that, "In Egypt Day and Night were from an archaic period divided into twelve Hours each, every Hour being named and personified. The Hours were called collectively Unnu, 'the Apparent,' 'the Actual', and seem to have been personified as a hare, which figure was reputedly to be seen in the moon. (2)

Concerning the depiction of the supreme as the god of time Dumont quotes Proclus, from his commentary on the "Timaeus" of Plato, "General opinion makes the Hours goddesses and the Month a god ... we say also that the Day and the Night are deities ... Does it not necessarily follow that Time also should be a god, seeing that it includes at once months and hours, days and nights?". (3)

(1) NEW YEARS DAY, (p. 19).
(2) KOSMIC ORDER, (p. 11).
(3) ASTROLOGY AND RELIGION AMONG THE GREEKS AND ROMANS, (p. 61).
Such a concept may have readily been applied to Thoth since one of his Graeco-Roman titles, as with the composite lion-headed Abraxas, was "Aeon". Zurvan Akarana, associated by the Hellenes with Chronos, was also portrayed as lion-headed, with an eye in the centre of his chest, and wrapped in the seven folds of a snake, which may have represented the circumpolar Dragon thus equating Aeon with Polaris in the centre of the constellations.

Hermetic astrology was geocentric and it was thought that around the earth were ten spheres in concentric orbit. These ten spheres were, in ascending order, those of the Moon; Mercury; Venus; the Sun; Mars; Jupiter; Saturn, (in which the planets were held to struggle against the Primum Mobile or Prime Mover); the eighth sphere containing two small circles in which the beginning of Aries and that of Libra were supposed to vibrate; the ninth sphere, the starless watery heaven; and the tenth sphere, the Primum Mobile, (which it seems was the sphere of the Pole star), and which because of its superior force was thought to carry all within it in a diurnal rotation from east to west. Thus three further spheres than the traditional seven of the planets were posited and it was held that the initiated soul, (often identified with Hermes), could pass through these until it reached the place of the Supreme Being, resident outside the circles of time. (#)

A major aspect of the "Hermetica" was this concept of the supreme deity at the centre of the zodiacal circle, which was divided into ten degree sections, each of which was held to be ruled over by a different divinity, of whom Proclus, as quoted by Mead, writes, "Let us ... think of them as though of Watchers stationed round (and watching) over both the Seven themselves and o'er the Circle of the All". (1)

Lindsay writes that the Egyptians, "divided the sky into 36 sections or bakiu, called dekanoi by the Greeks. Each Dekan had its spirit or god", and Budge, in his "Egyptian Dictionary" notes that the Egyptians also spoke of them as "Khabsu" or shining hearts. (2)

Lindsay holds that the thirty Councillor gods of the Babylonians were most probably equated with individual stars, which system may have been the precursor of that of the Decans (3) Allen quotes Clerke, who writes that, "The Chaldaeans chose three stars in each sign to be the 'councillor gods' of the planets. These were called by the Greeks 'decans,' because ten degrees of the ecliptic and ten days of the year were presided over by each.". (4)

(1) THRICE GREATEST HERMES, (vol. III p. 45).
(2) THE ORIGINS OF ASTROLOGY, (p. 153), [his emphasis].
(3) (ibid. p. 58).
(4) STAR NAMES: THEIR LORE AND MEANING, (p. 9).

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Brown proposes that these thirty-six Decans were based on the Babylonian system of thirty councillor stars used to differentiate the seasons, themselves derived from those used to delineate the Euphrataean lunar mansions. (1) Of these stars he writes that they, "support the origin of the theory of the Decans, or thirty-six Genii, who ruled the Zodiac", and that, 'Decanal 'theology’ was a secret and important part of ancient astro-religious belief.". (2)

Indeed, in the Hermetic mysteries the decans played an important part, as even a cursory glance at the Zodiac of Penderah shows. The Egyptian names of the decans became Romanised and in this form entered occidental astrology. In the "Testament of Solomon" also a series of thirty-six rulers was given which may be equated with the other lists of Decans, and in mediaeval magic grimoires each decan was allotted a pair of the seventy-two angels of the Shemhamphorash or Divided Name. (3)

The invocation of these Decans formed a major part of the esoteric theurgy practised by the Hermeticists as part of the discipline necessary for the successful ascension of the soul after death through whose influence it would pass on its way through the spheres of the planets to join the chorus around the supreme deity.

(1) EUPHRATEAN STELLAR RESEARCH, (vol. I p. 337).
(2) (ibid. p. 341).
(3) (T. Sol. XVIII 5-40).
It would seem apparent, (as would be the case with the post-mortem journey of the soul in both the Egyptian and Tibetan books of the dead), that this ascent was rehearsed by the initiate while living, who if successful, could be considered to be reborn, and it would appear likely that contemplation upon the images of the Decans and other celestial beings was undergone in preparation for this event.

Theurgy of this kind played an important part in Hermeticism throughout the Greek-speaking world which often revered Zoroaster, (the Greek version of the name, Zarathustra), as a magician and philosopher, with even Aristotle viewing his teacher Plato as a reincarnation of the prophet.

He was championed as the author of the "Chaldaean Oracles", collected by the two Julians, ("Father" and "Theurgist"), which work was esteemed by Platonists, Christians and Gnostics alike, the latter especially for oracles such as <<Explore the River of the Soul, whence, or in what order you have come: so that although you have become a servant to the body, you may again rise to the Order from which you descended, joining works to sacred reason>>, and he appears as the subject of the fragmentary "Words of Truth of Zostrianos" found at Nag Hammadi. (1)

(1) (Oracle 172), as quoted in THE CHALDAEAN ORACLES OF ZOROASTER, (p. 49).
The "Oracles" purported to explain the emanation of the world from the utterly transcendent first principle, which it described as the "Unknowable Depth", in four stages, known as the worlds of the Supramundane Light, of the Empyrean, Ethereal, and Elementary.

The lower three worlds correspond with the more ancient concepts of the heavens, the earth, and the underworld over which the highest world, which was said to lie beyond both the visible heavens and the reaches of time, was posited.

The first thought of the Supramundane and Eternal Father appeared as the Mother, his reflection in the sphere of potentiality, who, in union with her source, produced consciousness of the act, which appeared as the First Intelligible.

In this first world then was a trinity consisting of Father, or Pater, Mother, or Mater, and Mind, or Nous, their child, which was seen as a triune expression of the Supreme Paternal Depth and which overflowed as a triad into the second world, which process continued until the elementary world was created, was ruled over by the Demiurge as a pale reflection of the first Supramundane Father.

Thus a quarternity of triads, consisting of twelve persons, was said to issue from the Transcendent Father, detailing both a schematic explanation of the emanations of the One, and therefore, the path of return by the contemplation of the celestial rulers.
CHAPTER SIX
It will be remembered that according to "Acts", the first heretic was Simon Magus, who had, <<given it out that he was someone momentous>>, and that, <<everyone believed what he said; eminent citizens and ordinary people alike had declared, 'He is the divine power that is called Great'>>, and that he, and his Pronoia, Helen, were worshipped as a divine couple in the forms of Jupiter and Minerva. {1} Of his successors, Duchesne writes that, "One of the earliest mentioned is Saturninus of Antioch, who gained some notoriety about the time of Trajan". {2}

Saturninus held that the utterly transcendent First Principle was only the creator of the angelic hosts, seven of whom created the world, taught that one of this Divine Septenary was the God of the Jews who, as captain of the others, was in revolt against the Supreme, and that it was to defeat these rebellious beings, and rectify the imbalance caused, that the unborn, immaterial, and docetic Saviour descended from the noumenal world. {3}

{1} (Act. VIII 9-10).
{3} The Syrian philosopher, Cerdo, also based his system on that of the followers of Simon, teaching that the God proclaimed by the "Torah" and the Prophets was not the Unknown Father that Jesus proclaimed and, therefore, entirely rejected the authority of the "Old Testament", as Marcion was also later to do.
In his system the creation of the first human was by the
Angelic Heptad, who following the appearance of a luminous
Anthropos, (either the immanent image of the Transcendent Father,
or the Saviour as Pronoia, probably in androgynous form),
proceeded to create their own version from memory.

Having formed this homunculus, however, they found to their
consternation that instead of standing upright like a pillar, it
writhed upon the ground like a snake.

Layton quotes Irenaeus, who writes that, "the superior
power had pity upon him because he had come into being after her
likeness; and that (power) sent a spark of life, which aroused
the human being, raised him up, and made him alive." [l]

Yet the gift of life was but temporary, due to the
corruptibility of the body created by the angels, and upon death
it flew to its real home in the ideal realm while the body
reverted to the elements from which both it, and the material
cosmos, were composed.

The bones of this body were formed from the element of
earth; blood and the humours, from water; air, both the breath
and channels of energy; and to fire returned the heart and
principle of animation as distinct from the spark of life,
allocated to the ether, although it would appear that the spark
was earlier identified as one from the Cosmic Fire.

He seems to have taught that the universe was composed of the four elements, earth, water, air, and fire, in the form of the five Platonic solids: thus, the atoms of earth were cubic; those of water, icosahedronal; of air, octahedronal; and of fire, tetrahedronal.

Saturninus divided humanity into two groups, (or races), as did the Qumran sectaries: those with the knowledge of the spark of life, the elect "Children of Light", (whose prototype may have been Seth); and those without, the "Children of Darkness".

Since sexual intercourse and meat-eating were thought to be the method of bondage used by the rebellious angel to maintain his authority over humanity the higher adherents of Saturninianism were encratitic, abstained from both marriage and sex, and were vegetarian. {1}

It is important for an understanding of later Gnostic thought to note that Irenaeus himself pointed out the theological and cosmogonical similarities between the systems of Saturninus and the Christian philosopher, Basilides, and further that Basilidaean thought may well have influenced Valentinus and his movement. {2}

{1} THE Gnostic Problem, (cap. IV).
The duty of the race of elected Gnostics was that of escape from the bondage of the world, and a return to the Paradise from which their ancestors had, (through the machinations of the rebellious angels) been unjustly expelled, which heaven was held to be the true home of the soul, or divine spark.

The awakening into remembrance of their original state was accomplished through reception to the Call, or Good News, which quenched the thirst for Gnosis and came from the other, and numenal, world: this world being seen as the tomb, or hell, separated from their true home by the seven planetary spheres, or prisons, and their custodians.

The whole, often picturesque, metaphor was an explanation of how the docetic Saviour redeemed the immaterial soul from the bondage of attachment to the ephemerality of the senses and matter, which escape from the vanities of this corrupt world is one of the most distinctive features of Gnostic thought.

Yet it would be surprising if their condemnation of the numenal world as such was total, it being more probable that they held it a gloomy reflection, or shadow, of the ideal world above, and if this is so, then they fall more in line with the general trend in Platonic thought, and their vilification by the heresiologists as puritanical nihilists loses some of its piquol.
The way of liberation from the imprisonment caused by this lack of understanding was through the saving Gnosis, often seen as experiential or revelatory self-knowledge, which the "Gospel of Truth" states enables the seeker to know, <<where he comes from and where he is going. He knows as one who having become drunk has turned away from his drunkenness, having returned to himself>>. {1}

This experience was often described as an awakening from sleep, drunkenness, or the dream state, and as an enlightenment in the darkness, like a blinding flash that paradoxically enabled one to see clearly, and to bring this insight to the ignorant was the function of the saviour descending from the spiritual realm.

From such accounts the classic Gnostic creation myth appears to have been constructed and Layton notes a division of this cosmic drama into four phases. {2}

In the first was related the expansion of the solitary "First Principle" into the "Pleroma", or full spiritual and non-physical universe, which seems to be an equivalent conception to the Zoroastrian doctrine of the noumenal Menog.

Following this the creation of the material universe, the "Kenoma", or shadowy emptiness, akin to the phenomenal Getig, was accomplished.

{1} THE NAG HAMMADI LIBRARY IN ENGLISH, (p. 40), and THE GNOSTIC SCRIPTURES, (p. 256).

{2} THE GNOSTIC SCRIPTURES, (p. 13).
The work of the third phase dealt with the creation of the "First Man", the Anthropos, or Adam, usually by the created inhabitants of the second realm, and the final, with the subsequent history of the human race and the plight of the Children of Light.

Contemporary with the major drama of creation was a subplot also in four phases, in the first of which was recounted the expansion of the divine power in order to completely fill the spiritual cosmos.

The second described the appearance of evil in creation which was held to have been due to either the theft, or loss, of some of the power through the machinations of an inferior being, often known as Ialdabaoth, which figure parallels that of the Aingra Mainyu or Evil Spirit, later known as Ahriman, in the Zoroastrian schema.

The third phase of the drama was held to have occurred at the creation of the progenitor of the human race, and the transfer of some of the spiritual power, given by the Supreme Being in the form of the immortal soul, to the first man's descendants.

Due to the efforts of the noumenal world, usually in the form of Wisdom, to regain the stolen power the demiurge Ialdabaoth was forced to surrender some, or all, of his ill-gotten gains derived from the process by which the material Adam was created so that the power was dispersed.
The final phase was the gradual recovery by the divine, through his Children of Light, of the missing power which was accomplished as the spiritual and Gnostic souls were summoned by the saviour and returned to their rightful home in the bosom of God.

They believed that the final act of the drama was still in progress under the authority of the docetic saviour who had been sent to awaken the divine spark in all thereby freeing the souls from their bondage.

This basic four-fold schema was later elaborated whereby the original being, although perfect in himself, nevertheless emitted a second through which, or by which, the Aeons came into existence. Various and conflicting numbers of these Aeons were given by the different sects although in most the last being emanated was female, and in many, known as Sophia.

The metaphysical explanation of the creation held that the supreme God was of the nature of supra-rational Mind, or solitary intellect, and that the only possible object of thought was himself. The theory continued that this act of thinking was itself the second principle, known as the Ennoia of the First Mind; the first thought or first-born of God, which was often symbolised as the female Barbelo, or Barbero.
The conception of the supreme being as Nous, or Mind, was of ancient pedigree yet it does not explain why the Father should need, or desire, to think. The attempts to explain how and why the Transcendent One should create made much use of the example of how and why the mind thinks.

Given the philosophical bent of these sects the drama of creation was seen as equivalent to that of the emergence of an individual thought, and the present state of the world as akin to that of the mind in its usual condition.

In creation it was reasoned that the universal Mind particularised itself, perhaps in order to know itself, the result of which was its reflection or image. This reflection, or division of the One Father into duality, was sometimes seen as the Son, perfect in every way, but yet the product of an unity, though as a mere reflection the son could not be said to have an existence of its own on its own.

This difficulty was faced by those Gnostics, such as the Basilidaeans and Valentinians, who taught of the creation of the universe through pairs of syzygies, with the assumption that the first reflection of the Father, his first thought, was the mother of the later child, and thus some of them saw the first principle as passive in the form of Silence, or "Sige", or Depth, or "Bythos"; aMonad which though often viewed apophatically was, due to the desire to avoid the ascription of creation to a female principle, generally seen as male.
From this original abyss emerged a desire for self-knowledge which, in itself, was seen as the reflection of the Transcendent, and from the union of these two principles arose their product, child, or son.

In mental terms, this seems to relate to a similar experience as that involved in meditation in which the practitioner has managed to maintain the mind in a quiescent state yet wherein a realisation that this very state is in fact that of original mentation occurs.

The realisation is then united with the mind from which it came upon which both the perceived and the perceiver appear, for a moment, to be no more.

The result of this illumination is generally seen as beneficial since it releases the personality from its psychologically-produced, societally-and self-imposed strictures, and the emotional effect appears to be cathartic with the result that the subject feels recharged, reborn, or renewed.

As a result of this rejuvenation the process of redemption begins, which too seems to describe the method of return to what is thought to be the original, noumenal, and undifferentiated state of the mind, free from the chaos of particular thoughts and resting in its own self-consciousness.
This second principle as the docetic Son of the Transcendent Father, and First Thought of the Ineffable, was also known by the technical term of the Barbelo, or Barbero, which the "Apocryphon of John" described as, <<the most perfect glory among the aeons, the glory of the manifestation, which glories the virgin spirit and praises it, for because of the latter it was shown forth. It is the first thinking of the spirit's image.>>.

According to Mead, the Docetae held that the Primal Being was the seed of the World Tree, from which the cosmos was to emanate, which was equated with the Tree of Life at the centre of the intellectual world, before the sensible world was formed.

An emanation of the ideal world of three root Aeons, or heavens, of Light, Spirit, and Darkness, then produced the Alone-Begotten, the saviour, the perfect Aeon, also in tripartite, yet docetic, form.

The phenomenal world was thought to have been produced by the third, and lowest, root Aeon which made itself threelfold but was seized by the darkness.

The Logos, as light, then separated himself forming the firmament and impressing his image, or semblance, on the lower world, though the captured light was dispersed by the Demiurge who tried to imprison it by the creation of gross matter, and due to this the saviour descended to set souls free from metempsychosis and the circle of rebirth.

The Docetae taught that in his descent he in-drew his glory eventually taking the form of a material human body but that after washing in the Jordan, the stream of Logos, this body became spiritual.

For them, Jesus only seemed to manifest himself in human form and was, as Saturninus and the Archontics said, "unengendered, incorporeal, and formless, and was shown forth as a human being only in appearance". {1}

These three root Aeons, comprising the worlds of the Divine Saviour, the Angelic Host, and the Human Race, were considered to be derived from a single fig-seed as representative of God and given names derived from the "Pentateuch", as fire, air, and darkness, perhaps from the passage, <<With a great voice he spoke to you from the heart of the fire, in cloud and thick darkness.>>. {2}

{1} THE GnostIC SCRIPTURES, (p. 162, 198, & 211).

{2} (Exo. X 22) & (Deu. V 22).
Foerster quotes Hippolytus as writing, "But God himself remains by himself, being far removed from the three aeons", (which thus posits four worlds of being), all of which were bisexual and produced a further series of emanations. \[1\]

Thus, the first expanded tenfold and produced the thirty Aeons; the second, six-fold; and the third, threefold, producing the three material constituents, fire, or Light, air, or Spirit, and water, or Darkness, which were essentially ephemeral.

The ephemeral nature of the world was proposed in the theory generally known as Docetism, and although later roundly condemned seems to have been of wide currency and may, perhaps, be found even in the "Gospels" in their descriptions of the transfigured or resurrected Christ.

It was reasoned that human flesh could not stand the presence of the divine, that, therefore, the Saviour was composed of completely pure spirit, and that he merely assumed a phantasmal body because of which he was able to perform miracles, such as the healing of the lepers: if he had been of physical constitution he would have instead contracted the disease. \[2\]

\[1\] GNOSIS, (vol. I p. 308).

\[2\] (Luk. V 12-14).
Another instance of the docetic nature of his form was held to be found in his attempted murder by those of his home-town from whose clutches he miraculously escaped unnoticed. {1}

Docetism was fiercely attacked by the early Church fathers, especially Ignatius in his "Epistle to the Trallians", wherein concerning the real passion of Christ, and his own impending martyrdom, he writes, "But if it be, as some godless men, i.e. unbelievers, assert, that He suffered in phantom only ... Why ... do I pray that I may fight with the wild beasts? Then I die for naught.". {2}

In the "First Epistle of Clement", (reputedly the fourth Bishop of Rome), which highlighted the movement within Roman Christianity to establish both spiritual and temporal authority within the Empire, an argument was presented for dividing the Christian community into clergy, which the author proposes was of divine institution, and laity, with the theory of Apostolic Succession propounded, as a remedy against Docetism, though the author stated that this was not an innovation. {3}

{1} (Luk. IV 30).
{2} (Epistle to the Trallians, X), quoted in A NEW EUSEBIUS, (p. 47).
{3} (I Cle. 42)
His argument was that since the bishops and deacons stood in direct succession to the Apostles, and since the Apostles received their commission physically from God, opposition to the bishop was opposition to God. [1]

Clement writes concerning the opposition his dogma received that, "Our Apostles also knew, through our Lord Jesus Christ, that there would be strife on the question of the bishop's office", and along with the growing importance of the theory of Apostolic Succession went an insistence on the physical nature of the saviour. [2]

The doctrine stated that, through God, the Lord when on earth commissioned his disciples, had physical contact with them and devolved upon them his authority, later appearing to them in his resurrected body which was also held to be palpable.

[1] That the church at the Imperial capital should feel justified to interfere with the autonomy of the church at the colony of Corinth, indicates that this was probably not the first instance of the assertion of Roman primacy and it may be that it was the church at Rome which first accepted the idea of a monarchical episcopacy.

Ignatius, in his letter to the "Ephesians" stated baldly, "Let us then be very careful not to resist the bishop, that through our submission to the bishop we may belong to God", and, "Clearly then we should regard the bishop as the Lord himself". {1}

The episcopal authority was confirmed at Pentecost when the Holy Spirit anointed with fire the heads of the Apostles, proven by the gift of prophecy, and that this experience would seem to have some connection with the ritual of the laying-on of hands may be inferred from the procedure for the investiture of the Bishop as a living Apostle and vice-regent of God, though in reality the holder of the office was more likely to have been appointed by the ruling classes, and of the timbre of the time Bettenson writes, "The Church has settled down in the world ... Christians pray for their secular rulers, and for a spirit of submission to authority". {2}

In support of this he quotes Clement, "Let us therefore, brethren, enthusiastically accept military service, in obedience to his perfect commands.". {3}

{1} (Epistle to the Ephesians, V-VI,) quoted in THE EARLY CHRISTIAN FATHERS, (p. 40).

{2} DOCUMENTS OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH, (p. 3).

{3} (ibid. p. 31).
The insistence upon the material nature of the body of the saviour, and thus his resurrection in the flesh stressed by such early Church fathers as Tertullian, was secondary to the reclamation of matter as good since, as Pagels notes, "the doctrine of bodily resurrection also serves an essentially political function; it legitimizes the authority of certain men who claim to exercise exclusive leadership over the churches, as the successors of the apostle Peter.". {1}

She writes, "Tertullian ... speaking for the majority, defines the orthodox position: as Christ rose bodily from the grave, so every believer should anticipate the resurrection of the flesh.". {2}

However even within the "Gospels" docetic interpretation was discernible and the post-mortem appearances of Jesus were recorded with some variety throughout the "New Testament". {3}

{1} THE GNOSTIC GOSPELS, (p. 38). [her emphasis].

{2} (ibid. p. 36).

{3} In "Mark", (cap. XVI 12), although these verses are most probably not by the same author of the "Gospel", the words, <<under another form>> indicate that the risen Jesus may have appeared in another guise. Some theologians, however, opine that this phrase refers merely to his transfigured form.
Indeed, Cleopas, and another, failed to recognise the risen Jesus until he broke bread with them. {1}

Some passages seem to speak of a literal bodily resurrection which astounded the disciples and it was this doctrine which became fundamental to orthodox Christian belief. {2}

Yet while Thomas was permitted to touch the risen Jesus to assuage his disbelief, Mary Magdalene was not so rewarded. {3}

{1} Thus "Luke" relates the tale of the appearance of the risen Jesus to Simon and/or Cleophas, though he notes that, <<something prevented them from recognising him.>>. (Luk. XXIV 13-32).

{2} <<Their joy was so great that they still could not believe it, and they stood there dumbfounded; so he said to them, "Have you anything here to eat?". And they offered him a piece of grilled fish, which he took and ate before their eyes.>>. (Luk. XXIV 41-43). It will be remembered from the appearance of the angel to Manoah and his wife that the angelic host did not eat human food, which may be the reason that the risen Christ demonstrated his essential difference from them. (Jud. XIII 16a).

{3} (Joh. cap. XX, 17-18 & 27-29).
No real reason for this disparity was given though it is instructive to note the characters involved, and it may be that, as in the "Thomasine" writings where the idea of a war against the "Female", (a glyph of matter), was propounded, the Magdalene, being a woman, may possibly have been ritually unclean and could therefore contaminate, or hinder the ascent, by touch, whereas Thomas as Jesus' twin was actually permitted to put his hand inside the wound from which the water and the blood had flowed.

It is also important to note that nowhere in the "Gospels" did the risen Jesus appear to his mother by name, and although both "Mark" and "John" wrote that it was the Magdalene who first witnessed the resurrection, it was Peter who was traditionally seen as the "Prime Witness" which strengthened his claim as the Father of the Church, the root of all authority.

Yet the non-docetic interpretation won the day, with Polycarp, in his "Epistle to the Phillipians", stating that the non-literalists were to be equated with the antichrist.

The doctrine had important consequences for the transmission of spiritual authority central to the theory of Apostolic Succession, as Peter was said to have received his commission directly from the Christ risen in the flesh.
This had the effect of limiting the transmission of authority in time, a problem "Paul" faced in trying to base his standing on a trance-like state.

Firstly, by insisting on the incarnation in time it discredited all those who placed Jesus in a long line of incarnate saviours, secondly, it discredited those sects within Judaism who, as is beginning to become apparent, had already proclaimed an earlier Messiah, and thirdly, it restricted correct understanding to a limited circle, namely, the "Church at Jerusalem". {1}

The call to the orthodox line was firmly laid down by Ignatius of Antioch who wrote, in the to "Epistle to the Magnesians", of the absolute necessity of obedience to their bishop, Damas, and his clergy who were held to reflect the heavenly court. {2}

{1} This may be the clue to the doctrinal disputes between Peter and Paul, and Peter and James.

{2} "Epistle to the Magnesians" (VI & VII), as quoted in EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITINGS, (p. 88).
Yet Docetism remained of importance for the Christian Gnosticism proposed by both Basilides, who according to Irenaeus owed much to Saturninus, and Valentinus.

Basilides taught in Egypt and it is probable that his teachings influenced his younger contemporary and compatriot, Valentinus, though little of his own theology is now complete and retrogressive reliance upon that of Valentinus supplements the few extant extracts.

Layton writes that, "His followers in Alexandria later reported that he had claimed a kind of apostolic sanction for his teaching by maintaining that he had received lessons in Christian religion from ... Glaucias, who - they said - had been an interpreter of St. Peter", and although little is known of him the proximity of the movement to the developing theology of the Christian church is fairly clear. {1}

He wrote many works, including the "Traditions of Mathias", reputedly given by the docetic Jesus after his resurrection, and the "Exegetica", twenty-four books of commentary, although only fragments of his writings survive perhaps because Basilides imposed a five year silence on disciples concerning which Irenaeus writes that, "One is wholly forbidden to reveal their mysteries; rather, one must keep keep them secret in silence.". {2}

{1} THE GNOSTIC SCRIPTURES, (p. 417)
{2} (ibid. p. 425).
He taught that the saving Gnosis, which he held to be proclaimed in the "Gospels", was the "knowledge of supramundane things", the salvific descent of which was symbolised by the Baptism of Jesus which they celebrated on the fifteenth day of the Egyptian month, Tybi, the "time of coming forth", ruled over by the constellation of Scorpio. {1}

His seems to have been a syncretistic system, borrowing from the Gnostics a cosmogonic myth, (itself an adaption of that of "Genesis" to that given in the "Timaeus"), from Platonism and developing neo-Pythagoraeanism various concepts of salvation, and from late Stoicism, ethical concerns and terminology.

The first principle in the Basilidaean system was the "Unengendered and Unnameable Parent", beyond even the Ineffable proposed as supreme in Platonic positivism, and often known as the "Non-Existent", resident in the realms of Non-Being.

The transcendentalisation of the Original One was carried by Basilides into the realms of apophatic theology, and considered so remote and so rarefied that nothing positive whatsoever could be predicated of it.

{1} FRAGMENTS OF A FAITH FORGOTTEN, (p. 255).
For the rationale behind this doctrine Mead quotes him as saying, "The names (we use) are not sufficient even for the (manifested) universe (which is outside the world of real being), so diversified is it; they fall short", which viewpoint was to reach its zenith in the later Christianised neo-Platonism of Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite. {1}

From the ineffable depths, or Bythos, of non-being, both outside the cycles of time and yet the womb of potential manifestation, the phenomenal seed of universality, fruit of the Cosmic Tree, was willed into being; a product of the turning within of the One in an act of particular concentration.

This universal egg was held, within the white, to contain all forms of being "in potentia". Mead quotes from the system as elaborated by his followers, "Thus the Divinity beyond being created universality beyond being from elements beyond being, positing and causing to subsist a single something", which was this seed; a singular and positive manifestation from the womb of undifferentiated negativity from which seed the Ogdoad was to appear.

{2}

{1} FRAGMENTS OF A FAITH FORGOTTEN, (p. 257).
{2} (ibid. p. 258).
Irenaeus records that he taught that from this first principle alone the seed, in the form of an Ogdoad, was emanated though this seems to be a later development of the system perhaps along Valentinian lines since, in that described by Hippolytus, the completed egg would seem to have been a symbol of the Triple Sonship, as the Pleroma, with the sperm as the First Son of the Father, the yolk as the Second, and the white the Third, with the shell equivalent to the Holy Spirit as boundary.

Further, according to Basilidaean thought, the emanations proceeding from the Non-Existent were successive reflections, distinct from the products of the syzygies, (as in that of Valentinus), and in the Hippolytaean account there is little room for a female principle, with the Transcendent Father instead the sole source of manifestation, (playing a role akin to that of Sige in Valentinian metaphysic).

Despite this unfolding of the spiritual principle, Basilides seems to have rejected all ideas of actual emanation, real projection, and bodily incarnation of the divine, holding that creation was "ex nihilo" and by Divine Fiat, that the manifestation was eternal, resting in infinity, with no need of manufacture in order to form the Pleroma, and that the apparently incarnated saviour existed in perpetuity, since "In the Absolute Seed there was a triple Sonship in every way consubstantial with the God beyond Being.". {1}

{1} FRAGMENTS OF A FAITH FORGOTTEN, (p. 260).
Stevenson quotes Hippolytus who writes concerning this doctrine of Basilides, "In this way, 'non-existent' God made the world out of 'non-existents', casting and depositing some one Seed that contained in itself a conglomeration of the germs of the world.". {1}

This totality, or Pleroma, was composed of three parts as a triad of sons formed from the creative act, and he held that the highest manifestation returned to God, that the second son hovered, as it were, awaiting ascension but was unable of its own accord to do so without the aid of the Holy Spirit upon whose wings it rose, and that the lesser son formed part of the substance of the seed and was, therefore, in need of purification, although the reasons for the inability of the Third Sonship to ascend were not given, and neither was the appearance of the Holy Spirit or its relationship to the Second or Third Sons explained, nor the reason for the original creative process outlined.

It may be that the Third Sonship was unable to ascend because the Holy Spirit had been withdrawn from it in assistance of the Second Son.

However, it is also possible that the Triple Sonship formed, as it were, the spiritual essence of the three major elements: fire, or Light, corresponding to the First Sonship; air, or Spirit, to the Second; and water, or Darkness, the Third. {1} A NEW EUSEBIUS, (p. 76).
It would appear that the earliest formulation of the Basilidaean system was based solely upon this conception of the Cosmic Seed, containing within itself the totality of future manifestation into the three Sons, representatives of the three worlds of being which may have corresponded to the true homes of the ethereal Pneumatics, hybrid Psychics, and material Hylics.

Thus, it may have been held that the Pneumatics, like the First Son, had no need of redemption and automatically ascended, that the Psychics had need of the wings of the Holy Spirit, and that the Hylics, could only be saved when the sparks of divinity had become absorbed within the Pleroma once more at which point the phenomenal world would cease to exist. From this it would seem that there was a possibility of a doctrine of the unreality of matter and of its ultimate illusory nature.

Layton quotes from Irenaeus' "Adversus Haereses" wherein he writes of a Basilidaean system that it posited five beings thus, "First, by the unengendered parent there was engendered intellect. And from it was engendered verbal expression ... From the verbal expression, prudence. From prudence, wisdom ... and power.". [1]

[1] THE GNOSTIC SCRIPTURES, (p. 422). However, according to Clement of Alexandria, as quoted by Layton, another two hypostases, namely, Justice, and Peace, existed which, with the Parent, formed a Pleroma of eight entities. (ibid. p. 429).
It is probable that these eight hypostases, namely, Parent, Nous, Logos, Phronesis, Justice, Dynamis, Sophia, and Peace, were similarly arranged to the Ogdoad of Valentinus, though it is not clear which Basilidaean syzygy corresponded with which Valentinian pair. Neither is it apparent which were female and which were male, though it is likely that Sophia occupied the same position in both systems.

Yet it would also appear that the Word was taken as equivalent to the Triple Sonship "in toto", with the First Son as the thought, the Second as the manifested word, and the Third as the deed or effect of the former.

The importance of such triadic philosophy extended also to the human race which was divided into Pneumatics, Psychics, and Hylics, a division corresponding with the common view of the constitution of the individual.

Bettenson quotes Irenaeus who writes in the ninth chapter of the fourth book of his "Adversus Haereses", "There are three elements of which ... the complete man is made up, flesh, soul, and spirit; one of these preserves and fashions the man, and this is the spirit; another is given unity and form by the first, and this is the flesh; the third, the soul, is midway between the first two". [1]

Each person was considered to be formed of a divine element, the aery Pneuma, or breath; a soul or vaguely mechanical principle, the fiery Psyche, subject to passion and emotion; and fluid matter, flesh and bone, or Hyle.

In most Gnostic sects only the first would be saved, although the possibility of salvation for the Psychics could be earned, while only damnation and destruction awaited those more material beings, and as in Augustinian Christianity, this "Massa Damnata", Lump, or "Bolos" was to be completely annihilated in the final conflagration.

From the unknowable Father then emanated the Triple Sonship which formed in itself a divine trinity as Cosmic seed. The head of this trinity was the First Son, or Anthropos, a positive image of the Archanthropos as Non-Being, and below him was the dual Second, Son of Anthropos, with the trinity completed by the Holy Spirit, whose body formed the boundary of the Pleroma thus excluding the Third Son, the redemption of whom was the function of the saviour who was to cause the Third Sonship to be re-united with his brothers within the protective wings of the Holy Spirit, upon which, the world considered as a "Kenoma", would come to an end.
Although it is nowhere stated, there is nothing to suggest that the process could not be repeated "ad infinitum", and given the leanings towards metempsychosis determinable within Basilidaean thought, that this was in fact the case. {1}

From the chaff of the cosmic seed was finally issued the figure of the Demiurge, the head of the phenomenal world, and who upon coming into existence ascended to the boundary of the Pleroma formed by first two sons of the triad, which limit was the third person of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit.

The rebuff experienced by the Demiurge in being unable to join in the Pleroma seems to have been the cause of his own abortive creation, in which the passions he experienced provided the matter with which he worked.

{1} The First Sonship was mirrored in the son of the Archon of the Ogdoad; the Second, in that of the Archon of the Hebdomad; and the Third formed the soul of the righteous man, Jesus. It is important to remember that when the evolutionary stream of creative energy began to return on itself the Third Sonship, made of the spark of righteous humanity, still remained in the seed.
Thus the trinity expounded by Basilides consisted of the Unknowable Father, (the "sphere" of non-being perhaps akin to the germ of the seed), the Triad of Sons, (Being, the product of the previous, the grain), and the membrane of the Pleroma, the Spirit, (or husk), outside of which apparently existed the Craftsman. {1}

The Demiurge then created both the seven Aethyrs, equated with those of the planetary heavens, up to and including that of the moon, and a son, considered to be superior to his parent, thus forming the Infernal Ogdoad, as shadow of the Supernal, over which the son of the Demiurge ruled, sitting at the right hand of his father.

Although it is often thought that the Ogdoad was formed of the seven classical planets with the eighth and unknown member ruling over them, it is more likely that the planetary heavens associated with the celestial bodies were intended, since the Hebdomad itself was also said to consist of the planets.

{1} In the creation of the human, while the father or Demiurge was held to have formed the body, the son was likewise held to have produced the mind, just as the "Prince of this World" bound the apparent body of the saviour to the cross, who had liberated the mind of the world.
Given the importance of the northern circumpolar stars, both for astrological and navigational purposes, it may be that the seven heavens created by the Demiurge were held to be equivalent to the seven stars in Ursa major, with the eighth, his son, represented by the Pole Star.

Just as the source of the Ogdoad had issued a Demiurge who gave form to its matter, so too the Ogdoad then issued a second demiurgic Archon who emerged as ruler of the sub-lunary plane, perhaps akin to the atmosphere or the sphere in which the planets themselves appear to move, between the moon and the earth.

This secondary ruler, likewise gave form to the Hebdomad, and was, the Basilidaeans taught, the God of the Jews from whom the inspiration of Moses came, and he too produced a son greater than himself.

Basilides taught that the "Gospel" of Gnosis came from beyond the limiting spirit, or boundary, formed by the Holy Spirit, and that in its manifestation the first Sonship did not leave his sphere but simply oozed the truth downwards to the Second from whom it was dispersed throughout the world identical with the sparks of the Third Son bound in matter.

The son of the first Demiurge realised this "Gospel" and repented longing for reunion, as did the Demiurge, and later the whole Ogdoad from where the process reached the Hebdomad which also repented.
The message, or "Gospel" of repentance, portrayed as light, descended on Jesus as a representative of the lost Third Son, from the second Sonship, through the Holy spirit or Boundary, through the son of the Archon of the Ogdoad, through the son of the Archon of the Hebdomad, and into the woman, Mary, at the apparent birth of the saviour.

Despite the widespread emphasis on Docetism, in some Basilidaean thought the reverse of this process occurred during the ascension so that while the apparently material elements of the body of Jesus experienced suffering in their return to their source, his psyche returned to the Hebdomad, the vehicle of the Holy Spirit to the Ogdoad, and that the spirit in him returned to the Holy Spirit above.

This process was held to demonstrate how through Jesus the Third Sonship was purified and how through following the "Gospel" the souls of the righteous, which formed part of the Third Sonship, would be redeemed and brought within the Pleroma, upon which a veil of ignorance would be drawn over the matter remaining, though it should be noted that many Basilidaeans were thoroughly Docetic and denied the passion of Christ asserting that Simon of Cyrene instead suffered.
The Basilidaeanism mentioned by Irenaeus describes how the one undivided egg separated to distinguish itself in a dyad of yolk and white, and that from the union of these two, a third was born, which activity was representative of the bifurcation of the two principles, and thus forming a Tetrad.

The four members of this tetrad seem to have been represented by the solstices and equinoxes, as the pillars of the world, and as the elements.

From these four agents, as androgynes or gynanders, a further four were generated forming an Ogdoad, (akin to that of Hermopolis), of four males and four females, the members of which in pairs, were named; the Unengendered Parent and Intellect, Word and Prudence, Peace and Justice, and Power, or Dynamis, and Wisdom, the first term in each pair being considered male.

From the latter syzygy the first three divisions of the celestial host was born who made the first in a series of three hundred and sixty-five heavens.

That this number is derived from calendrical exegesis was made explicit by Irenaeus, quoted by Layton, who writes in his "Adversus Haereses", "And it is because of them that the year has that quantity of days, corresponding to the number of heavens.".

The ruler of the Hebdomad which produced the heavens was according to Irenaeus, who quotes a spurious system, known as Abraxas, ruler of the first of the heavens. [1]

The name is constructed from letters giving a total of three hundred and sixty-five in either Greek or Hebrew. [2]

Layton quotes Irenaeus, "They locate the positions of the 365 heavens just as astrologers do; for they accept the astrologer's principles, adapting them to their own kind of system", and states that, "the ruler of them is named Abrasaks, and that is why this (ruler) has the number 365 within it.". [3]

The members of the last of the heavens were held to be those who created the phenomenal world and each of these heavens were thought to be ruled over by hosts of angelic beings emitted by the preceding group.

[2] THE SEARCH FOR ABRAXAS, (p. 14). Thus ABRAXAS = 1, 2, 100, 1, 60, 1, 200, (in Greek), and ABRAQAS = 1, 2, 200, 1, 100, 1, 60, (in Hebrew). Also, q.v. THE ANTE-NICENE CHRISTIAN LIBRARY, (vol. V p. 93).
It seems that these angelic collections were formed of three divisions, which Irenaeus details as "Authorities" or "Powers", "Archons" or "Realms", and Angels, and though the number and name of each division is unrecorded it was taught that by knowing the names of the angelic host one could travel through them unrecognised just as the saviour had done.

Thus the whole system seems to have been based on zodiacal and calendrical symbolism and it may be that the Father was held to be represented by his son as Polaris, with the Holy Spirit symbolised celestially as Draco, and the Hebdomad as Ursa Major ruling over the Decans through whose sphere of influence the Third Sonship as representative of the spermatic Logos in the form of the soul had to pass in order to be at one, again, with the supreme.

However, it is most unlikely that the original system of Basilides was as complex or confused as that given by the haeresiologists and, although astrological symbolism undoubtedly formed part of his teachings, it is probable that the cosmogonic myth of the tripartite World Egg, or Cosmic Seed, provided the basis for his philosophical speculation, albeit in a more simplified structure. Thus, the first pair of the Parent and Intellect may have been held to issue the egg, its three divisions corresponding to the fiery realms of Word and Prudence in the Light, Peace and Justice in the aery Spirit, and Power and Wisdom in the moist Darkness.
According to Mead such concepts are also to be found expounded by Valentinus who was, most probably, an Egyptian, educated at Alexandria, and taught by Theodas, or Theodotus, reputedly one of the later apostles. [1] In the third century, C.E., Valentinian thought became differentiated into two main streams: the eastern or Anatolic school, which flowered in Egypt, Syria, and Asia Minor, taught that Christ had a spiritual body at birth, was Docetic, and influenced Marcosian thought; and the western or Italic, which taught that he had a psychic body, and was adoptionist in that it held that the spirit in the form of Sophia had descended upon the man Jesus at baptism.

Many names and titles seem to have been given to the creatrix as Sophia, including those of "Mother of the Living", and "Daughter of Light", and she was figured as a holy dove who had given birth to twins, being the syzygy of the lower Sophia and her consort, "Desire". The dual nature of Sophia herself was well brought out by the fact that although revered as a mediatrix between the Ogdoad and the Hebdomad, and resident in the midst of the former, her part in creation was held to mirror that of the soul in the process of redemption.

[1] FRAGMENTS OF A FAITH FORGOTTEN, (p. 294). Layton notes that, "Valentinian writers claimed to speak on the authority of a secretly transmitted academic tradition, whose origin they traced back to St. Paul.". THE GnostIC SCRIPTURES, (p. 273), [his emphasis].
These two aspects of the principle of Wisdom may have been derived from the myth of the rape of Persephone, with Sophia as Creatrix identified with Demeter, herself often equated with Gaea, and as the soul, or lost sheep, with the goddess who visited Hades, perhaps a glyph of the Kenoma.

In the beginning, of the Hippolytaean account of the creation myth, the monadic entity known as the Father was completely devoid of femininity and was without a syzygy.

However, some groups, such as those recorded by Irenaeus, seem to have added the Aeon, "Sige", or "Silence", as either the female potentiality residing within him or the depths from which he sprang and which was seen as the womb of non-being from wherein potential creativity, a condition of being, arose.

It may have been that the primal parent was considered to be hermaphroditic, as was the first human according to Plato, and that when active was seen as male and when at rest, as female, yet although the One seems to have been viewed as androgynous it was generally spoken of as male.

This primal pair were sometimes symbolised in the figures of the passive Osiris and active Isis, (in the search of Isis for the member of her husband may be found a source of the fall and recovery of the soul), the former representing heaven, or the world of the spirit, and the latter, Nature, with the subsequent syzygies being hypostases of the original parents.
Thus, in the three stages of creation, Osiris was described as "Nous", "Logos", and "Anthropos", while Isis was similarly described as his first thought, "Truth", "Life", and the community or "Church", and in the first stage, their progeny was the Ogdoad; in the second, the Hebdomad; and in the third, the Dodekad.

At the heart of the system were two opposite principles, positive and negative, or being and non-being, which formed the first pair, while the method of creation was held to be through their conjunction, and through that of their emanations.

Layton notes that Irenaeus, quoting the system of Ptolemy, writes, "the aforementioned deep took thought to emit a source of the entirety. And it deposited this emanation that it had thought to emit, like sperm, in the womb of the silence that coexisted with it", which may refer to the appearance of the lodestar from the darkness of the celestial waters. {1}

At the time of this communion when the two principles were absorbed in one another they formed a fullness, while alone they existed each as an individual emptiness.

Adopting Platonic dualism, the Ideal or Positive World was seen as the Pleroma, and identified with the Cosmic Egg or "Fullness", while the Phenomenal or Negative world was known as the Kenoma or "Abortion".

{1} THE GNOSTIC SCRIPTURES, (p. 281).
The movement taught that all those Aeons which emanated from a syzygy were of the nature of their parents, and known as "Pleromata", while those that emanated from a single being were merely images of their progenitor and as such abortions, or "Kenomata".

The conjunction of the syzygies was often described in terms borrowed from human coupling, with the male Aeon seen as positive, yet passive, and the female, active, though negative. Considered alone, each was but an image of the respective parent according to gender, but together, in consort, as a true synthesis of the opposites from which they had their origin.

It may be assumed that the moment of their birth coincided with that in which their parents lost each other in love, since the union was often described in terms of the wedding-night of the bridegroom and bride; perhaps a glyph of orgasm.

In this schema the two worlds came into contact and the negative, although sometimes resisting, gave its light or energy to the positive, which process was held to continue until the negative was completely absorbed within the positive at which time phenomenal existence, as such, ceased to be.
The whole series of emanations was seen as the development of multiplicity from an original unity. Thus, from within the silence of the Parental depths was then generated the first member of the first syzygy, the Nous, or Mind, (the name of the Heavenly Father, or First Man, and son of the Bythos, or Abyss), which was the only Aeon to know the Ineffable Father completely, and around whom was a boundary.

Layton notes that Irenaeus writes, "Now, in their system the only being that was acquainted with the ancestor was ... the only-begotten, or intellect, which derived from it. To all the others, this ancestor was invisible and incomprehensible.". {1}

The first thought of the Unknowable Father was of himself as the "Intellect", and the second was "Aleitheia", or "Truth", which, in conjunction with Mind, later emanated ten Aeons, perhaps equated with the ten celestial spheres as detailed by Claudius Ptolemy.

At the beginning then the first principle discovered itself at which moment it considered itself dual. These dual components of a sole Monad were held to form, with the original undifferentiated, a triad of expression.

This trinity may be described as consisting of Mentality, undifferentiated and differentiated; the mind conscious of a single thought; and the "Unconscious" Mind, composed of myriad other thoughts.

{1} THE GnostIC SCRIPTURES, (p. 283).
It may be that the first Tetrad of the Ineffable Father, (the differentiated mind), Silence, (the undifferentiated mind), Mind, (the mind conscious of itself), and Truth, (the mind, unconscious), were equated with the four elements, and if so, it would probably have been thus: the Father with fire, the primal element of the Stoics; Silence with water, the deeps over which the Spirit hovered; Mind with air or breath; and Truth, with earth.

From this quartet by reflection issued another, composed of the Logos and "Zoe", born of Intellect and Truth, and Anthropos and "Ecclesia", born of Word and Life, which, with the first Tetrad, formed the Supernal Ogdoad, which may have been based upon that of Hermopolis.

In all the Pleroma was held to consist of thirty Aeons, eight from the Abyss, ten from Logos and Zoe, and twelve from Anthropos and Ecclesia, thus forming a triacontad of being, fifteen of these male, and fifteen, female, which may have been equated with the days of the month.

The ten Aeons emitted by the second syzygy of Word, or Logos, and "Life", or Zoe, were considered to be of masculine and feminine natures respectively, and were known as: the "Depth-like", and "Commingling", or "Intercourse"; the "Unageing", and "Union"; the "Self-productive", and "Bliss", or "Pleasure"; the "Immovable", or "Motionless", and "Blending", or the "Mixed"; and the "Alone-begotten", and "Happiness", or "Blessedness".
It should be remembered that each of the male members of the Pleroma were considered to be primal and androgynous emanating their own consorts.

It is likely that they were in some way equated with the five senses and the organs of those senses as well as the four elements and the ether, or quintessence, with the Depth-like being spirit, the Unageing or Ancient of Days with fire, the Self-productive with air, the Immovable with water, and the Alone-begotten with earth.

The next major syzygy generated by the Father was that of the "Man", or Anthropos, and the "Church", or Ecclesia, which together emanated the succeeding twelve Aeons. As before, the first of these pairs of beings were considered male, and the second, female.

They were: the "Paraclete", "Comforter", or "Intercessor", and "Faith", or "Pistis"; the "Father-like", and "Hope"; the "Mother-like", and "Love", or "Charity"; the "Everlasting", and "Understanding"; the "Church-like", and "Happiness"; and "Desire", or the "Longed-for", and Wisdom, or Sophia.

Thus in all thirty aeons were emanated from the Paternal Depths, namely the Supernal Ogdoad, and twenty-two lesser beings divided into two groups, the former of ten, and the latter, twelve. {1}

{1} It is probable that the twenty-two lesser aeons were equated with the letters of Hebrew alphabet, and the Greek, with the exception of the Alpha and Omega.
They were equated with the signs of the zodiac in pairs, which in Classical astrology were considered to be, beginning with Aries, male and female alternately, and it is likely that the ultimate and double sign of Pisces was equated with Sophia, both higher and lower.

Layton quotes Irenaeus who writes of her, "One of these revolted and became lacking; this one was responsible for the rest of the affair." [1] The last of these Aeons, the Sophia, attempted to ascend desirous of knowing the Unknowable Father and, realising that although the Aeons created in pairs the Abyss created alone, she wished to imitate him. In her ascension, however, she was prevented from such attainment by the boundary around the first-born Nous and, realising her mistake, returned to her position, although she alone of all the Aeons had reached the limit of her knowledge.

But due to her illicit desire, and without the co-operation of her partner in her penetration of the Pleroma, she happened to give birth to an abortion, known as the "Desire or Thought of Wisdom", the Achamoth, (identified with the Prunicus), which act formed the first error, also known as the "Plane", which was expelled from the totality since it was formed from one Aeon alone, contrary to the nature of the Pleroma, and thus the grief, fear, and terror of Sophia became the basis of the cosmos in the form of air, water, and earth, respectively, though fire was present in all three as death and corruption.

To prevent a similar rupture in the Pleroma from happening again the Father decreed that Mind and Truth, (or in some systems, Mind alone) should emanate a further pair of Aeons, namely Christ and his female consort, the Holy Spirit to redress the imbalance, and thus created a dodecad from the ten Aeons of Word and Life, which the two new Aeons mystically represented since Christ was the Word of the Heavenly Man and the Holy Spirit, the Life of the Church.

These two instructed the others in the reason for the rupture in the Pleroma and purified the Lower Sophia, who still remained without and now longed for union with Christ as her bridegroom, and upon realisation of this lack the Pleroma combined its powers and emanated a final Aeon in which all the Pleroma was held to be perfected, the saviour Jesus.

In completion, a cross, membrane, or boundary to the Pleroma was emanated which in some systems was identified with the Lower Sophia when she had been expelled from the Pleroma and crucified in space. This turning-back of Sophia, terminated by her meeting with the boundary or limit known as "Horus", or "Stauros", which was equated with the Cross, reminded her that she was unable to receive Gnosis.
It should be noted, however, that according to Irenaeus, the Valentinians spoke of two boundaries, one "between the deep and the rest of the fullness, bounding the engendered aeons away from the unengendered parent; the other bounds their mother apart from the fullness.". {1}

The purification of the abortion Achamoth, or the Lower Sophia, was first undertaken by the Aeon Christ who gave a form to this afterbirth which, when conscious by the gift of the Holy Spirit, realised its own inferiority and error and in her passion of repentance externalised her inner sadness as ignorance and despair. To save her from this misery the Aeon Jesus descended.

Yet these passions from which she was liberated by the saviour developed a life of their own producing the source of matter, or Hyle, and during the liberation, of Phuke, source of psychic being; proof of her repentance.

In her ascent from her Hylic beginnings and upon her gaining of Psychic wisdom she, realising the nature of the Aeon Jesus, conceived, giving birth to the highest of the three natures, the spiritual or Pneumatic. {2}

{1} THE Gnostic SCRIPTURES, (p. 226).
{2} Her grief, as air, implied repentance and so was considered upwardly mobile, while her fear, as water, wavered in limbo, and her terror, as earth, which caused her to stand still and be petrified, was seen as downward-looking.
Of these the Hyle formed part of the lowest matter, the Phuke, the intermediate psychic, and the Pneuma, the highest spiritual, which corresponded in humanity to those incapable of salvation, those who in this life had to strive towards it, and those Elect predestined for life in heaven.

From the intermediate principle Achamoth emanated the Demiurge who copied the images from the divine world in his own creation, or reorganisation, of the Phuke and Hyle, of which he erroneously believed himself Lord, and formed the Intellect of the Kenoma as Achamoth was its Abyss, though his own consort was the Lie, or Error, instead of Truth.

When considered with his mother Achamoth he was seen as Demiurge of the Ogdoad and when without, leader of the Hebdomad, in structure seven spheres of psychic substance, (perhaps equated with Ursa Major as representative of the seven stations of the pole), which was considered to be ruled over by the Ogdoad, (perhaps equated with Draco), as Mother Sophia, which concept may have been drawn from the passage concerning Wisdom in "Proverbs", "Wisdom has built herself a house, she has erected her seven pillars.". [1]

[1] (Pro. IX 1). The figure of Sophia was discerned by the Valentinian Ptolemy in the "Gospel of Luke" also: "Yet Wisdom has been proved right by all her children.". (Luk. VII 35). THE GNOSTIC SCRIPTURES, (p. 300).
The redeemed Achamoth in her glorious form as the purified soul, (a spermatic and consubstantial particle of the Sophia), which shone in the light of its own Gnosis, was a central feature of the theology of Marcus, or Mark, who was an early pupil of Valentinus, possibly an Egyptian, and a representative of the Eastern branch of Valentinianism.

Mead notes that he taught that the Unknowable Parent first uttered a Tetragrammaton, that its symbol was the "Amen", and that it was identical with the Church as the Ark of Salvation.

[1] In all the Father was held to have spoken four words, (perhaps equated with the four realms, of Bythos and Sige, and Nous and Aleitheia; of Logos and Zoe, and Anthropos and Ecclesia; of the ten syzygies; and of the twelve pairs): the first and second of four letters thus producing the Ogdoad; the third of ten, equalling the celestial spheres; and the fourth of twelve letters representative of the zodiacal constellations. [2]

[1] FRAGMENTS OF A FAITH FORGOTTEN, (p. 363). It is pertinent to note that, in Hebrew, the word was spelt AMN and totalled 91, as do those for the Ephod or twelve-stone breastplate of the High Priest as APVD, and that for daughter, virgin, bride, and queen, as MLKA. "Paul" writes of this Sophia, <<The hidden wisdom of God which we teach in our mysteries is the wisdom that God predestined to be for our glory before the ages began.>>. (I Cor. II 7).

These letters were equivalent to the thirty Aeons, presumably corresponded with the days of the solar month upon which they were venerated, and were assigned to the twelve limbs of the Heavenly Anthropos though it appears that, for him, this figure was none other than the Wisdom of God herself, and he was quoted as writing, "I desire to show thee also Truth herself; for I have brought her down from above, so that you may see her without a veil, and understand her beauty.". {1}

{1} THE GnostIC GOSPELS, (p. 49), and, c.f. "Adversus Haereses", (vol. I cap. XIV 3), as quoted in THE ANTE-NICENE CHRISTIAN LIBRARY, (vol. V p. 59). In this it would seem that he taught that the cosmos itself was constructed from the twenty-four letters of the Greek alphabet, each of which was considered to have especial properties, much as the Pythagoreans had viewed numbers. He may have derived this metaphor of the descent of the Sophia from the "Prayer of Solomon", which asks, <<"God of our ancestors, Lord of Mercy, who by your word have made all things ... grant me Wisdom, consort of your throne ... she who was present when you made the world ... Despatch her from the holy heavens, send her forth from your throne of glory ... As for your intention, who could have learnt it, had you not granted Wisdom and sent your holy spirit from above?">>. (Wis. IX 1, 4, 9-10, & 17).
He appears to have portrayed the cosmos in female form, though equating this with the Anthropos, and in the passage beginning, "Behold her head on high", he assigned the letters of the Greek alphabet, in pairs, to the limbs of her body. {1}

{1} To her head, the letters, Alpha and Omega; Beta and Psi, to her neck; Gamma and Chi to her shoulders and hands; Delta and Phi to the breast; Epsilon and Upsilon to the diaphragm; Zeta and Tau to the back; Eta and Sigma to the stomach; Theta and Rho to the thighs; Iota and Pi to the knees; Kappa and Omicron to the shins; Lambda and Xi to the ankles; and Mu and Nu to the feet. It is probable that they also taught a zodiacal significance to the letters, since they were ascribed in twelve pairs, corresponding with the traditional zodiacal correspondences to the body. Thus, Aries, to the head; Taurus, the neck; Gemini, the upper trunk; Cancer, the breast; Leo, the heart; Virgo, the back parts; Libra, the liver, or stomach; Scorpio, the loins; Sagittarius, the thighs; Capricorn, the bones, or shins; Aquarius, the ankles; and Pisces, the feet. GNOSIS, (vol. I p. 205). Further, it is probable that these pairs of letters were ascribed to the twelve aeons produced from the Anthropos and the Ecclesia, though their ascription is not clear.
In his system it appears that the principle of the Sophia as Aleitheia was seen as the voice of God and she was invoked with the words, "May She who is before all things, the incomprehensible and indescribable Charis, fill you within, and increase in you Her own knowledge.". {1}

The "Acts of Thomas" record that the epiclesis of the eucharist invoked her thus: <<Come, gift of the Most High; Come perfect compassion ... Come treasure of glory ... Come, silence that dost reveal the great deeds of the whole greatness; Come, thou that dost show forth the hidden things and make the ineffable manifest; Holy Dove That bearest the twin young; Come, hidden Mother; Come, thou that art manifest in thy deeds and dost furnish joy and rest for all that are joined with thee; Come and partake with us in this Eucharist which we celebrate in thy name, and in the love-feast in which we are gathered together at thy call.>>. {2}

{1} THE GnostIC GOSPELS, (p. 73), and, c.f. THE ANTE-NICENE CHRISTIAN LIBRARY, (vol. V p. 52).

{2} (Act. Tho. L), quoted in NEW TESTAMENT APOCRYPHA, (vol. II p. 470). The twin young of the Holy Dove, (a glyph of the Divine Creatrix), are most probably to be understood as the spiritual Jesus and his material twin brother, Judas, known as Didymus, the doubter, and comparable to Castor and Pollux, respectively.
The "Acts" earlier described her as a central figure:
<<The maiden is the daughter of light, Upon her stands and rests the majestic effulgence of kings, Delightful is the sight of her, Radiant with shining beauty ... In the crown of her head the king is established, Feeding with his own ambrosia those who are set under him. Truth rests upon her head ... Her mouth is open, and that becomingly, For with it she sings loud songs of praise. Thirty and two are they that sing her praises ... Her two hands make signs and secret patterns, proclaiming the dance of the blessed aeons ... Her groomsmen keep her compassed about, whose number is seven, Whom she herself has chosen; And her bridesmaids are seven, Who dance before her. Twelve are they in number who serve her and are subject to her, Having their gaze and look toward the bridegroom, That by the sight of him they may be enlightened; And forever shall they be with him in that eternal joy, And shall be at that marriage>>. {1}

This would seem to indicate that she was viewed as at the centre of the cosmos surrounded by the seven stars of the heptasterisms of Ursa, Majoris and Minoris, (as the grooms and bridesmaids, encompassed by Draco), and the zodiacal constellations, (as her servants). {1}

In this guise she may have been equated with the pearl, as the seed of righteousness, <<Which is in midst of the sea, in the abode of the loud-breathing serpent>>, mentioned in the "Hymn of the Pearl", in which work the sea seems to have also been symbolised by the land of Egypt. {2}

{1} The thirty-two, <<that sing her praises>>, may have been identified with the twenty-two letters of the Hebrew, Aramaic, or Syriac alphabets, and the ten with the heavenly spheres, perhaps as prototypes of the ten Quabbalistic sephira that formed the trunk and branches of the Tree of Life which stood in the centre of the garden of Eden.

{2} (Act. Tho. CVIII 13), quoted in NEW TESTAMENT APOCRYPHA, (vol. II p. 499). In Hebrew, Egypt was spelt as ChM and totalled 48, (which as previously mentioned was the number of the words for a "Jubilee", and the star "Kochab"), while a "pearl", is spelt DR, which totals 204, as do words for a "foreign resident" and "race", similarly spelt, and the word for the "righteous" as TzDVQ, which coincidence may have been equated by some Gnostics with the righteous race of Seth, the "Children of the Light".
The final act of the cosmic drama, according to Ptolemy, as quoted by Layton, was when the Achamoth, Chokmah, Sophia, or Wisdom, would, "enter the fullness, and receive as her bridegroom the savior (sic.), who derives from all the aeons, so that a pair is produced consisting of the savior (sic.) and wisdom who is Achamoth: they are the bridegroom and the bride, and the entire fullness is the bridal chamber." {1}

It is possible that, for the Gnostics, the union spoken of by "Paul" in "Ephesians", wherein he says that, <<a man must leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two will become one body. This mystery has many implications; but I am saying it applies to Christ and the Church>>, was applied to this marriage of the Messiah, (the man, Anthropos, who had left his Father, the Ineffable God, and Mother, in the guise of the Supernal Sophia), and the lost sheep of the soul, in the guise of the fallen Chokmah, (apparently a glyph of the Ecclesia as the Church). {2}

This Lower Sophia, as Prunicus, was identified with the spermatic soul fallen from grace, (often represented as a harlot wallowing in the slime of the material world), who, upon the remembering of her heavenly home, began her ascent returning to the bosom of divinity from which, as the Epinoia, she had emerged to form the body of the cosmos itself.

{1} THE GNOSTIC SCRIPTURES, (p.294).
{2} (Eph. V 32).
CONCLUSION
Throughout the material previously reviewed a number of features become apparent, perhaps the most central being the various descriptions of the origin of the world and humanity.

Three major explanations of the process are detailed within Gnostic exegesis of patriarchal theology: whether by the divine edict of a singular God in the pronunciation of a Word, Memra, or Logos, (which became seen as an entity in itself); by the first of the created angels, (whether as the Cosmic Messiah, Jacob as Israel, Enoch as Metatron, or Jesus as Melchizedek); or through the agency of a Demiurgos, (whether as Wisdom, or Sophia; or similarly in the form of the first thought, or Ennoia, of God), though often these myths are amalgamated both within and without Gnosticism.

Other methods described herein included creation through the primaeval sacrifice of a bull, with which animal Osiris, Attis, Mithras, Adonis, and Dionysus were linked; from the primal Seed of the Cosmic Tree; by the hatching of an egg; or through the coupling of various pairs of syzygies emanating from the Divine Parents as in Valentinian thought.

Of these the two latter bear the most resemblances to animal, (and human), methods of procreation, and it should be noted that of the examples previously cited in the text very few describe the appearance of the world through the method of physical birth from a great Mother goddess, though, as has been noted, vestiges of such a method may remain discernible, especially in those Gnostic sects which ascribe the birth of the Demiurgos from the fallen Wisdom.
Another common aspect is in the myth of the descent of the Divine from the spiritual realm to the world below. In the mystery religions such as Eleusinianism, Dionysianism, and Orphism, or those of Cybele, Ishtar, and Isis, the myth of the descent into the Underworld to recover a lost soul, (whether that of Demeter, in search of her daughter; Dionysus, of his mother; Orpheus, his wife; or Cybele, in search of her lover Attis; Ishtar, Adonis; or that of Isis, for the genital member of her husband), was of paramount importance, as it was to become in Christian doctrine.

This descent was often an annual occurrence held to take place in the winter months during which the fertility of the earth was affected, and it was common to equate this place with the resting place of the dead. Yet, with the triumph over death, or infertility, the soul, rescued in the spring, was often placed in the Overworld and reborn in the field of the stars.

Since the gods Osiris, Attis, Adonis, and Mithras, were all associated with the constellation Orion, which for three months of the year disappears from view, it is probable that an astrological interpretation was early superimposed upon the original myth.

As well as the descent or fall of the divine soul it was widely held that the initiate could, while living, ascend to the spiritual realms which were often symbolised by the night sky. Thus the Jewish Chariot mystics, or Yoredei Merkabah, as with the Mithraic initiate, learnt how to ascend through the Seven Spheres, though for the former the means of ascension was not the Ladder but the Chariot.
The Cosmic Tree was also seen as a bridge between the earth and the sky and it has been noted that Osiris, Dionysus, Attis, and Adonis were all represented in the form of a tree or pillar, or as an appareled upright post, such as the "Asherah", or an undressed stone obelisk, such as those of Gilgal, or as a carved stone monument such as the Herm, which often included the face and phallus of the god. {1}

The importance of the tree for the ancient Hebrews seems to be proven by the visits of the patriarch Abraham to, "Shechem's holy place, the Oak of Moreh", where "Yahweh appeared", and whereupon, "Abram built there an altar for Yahweh", and to Mamre where, "Yahweh appeared to him at the Oak of Mamre". {2}

Further, in the blessing of the tribe of Joseph, Moses describes Yahweh as, "him who dwells in the Bush", which was perhaps an acacia shrub. {3}

{1} The Asherim were sacred to the Caananite goddess Asherah, after whom they were named, ASHRH, which totals 506, as do the words for Taurus, the bull, as ShVR, and "decapitation", as HRASH.

{2} (Gen. XII 6-8) & (Gen. XVIII 1). The name of the first place was spelt in Hebrew, as MVRH, (also the spelling of the words for "teacher", and "preceptor"), and totals 251, as do words for the "top of a tree", as AMYR, and "fir", or "cedar", as ARN. Mamre is spelt, in Hebrew, MMRA, and totals 281, as does the word "Memra", the Divine Word, or Logos, as MAMR.

{3} (Deu. XXXIII 16).
Cognate with the symbol of the Tree was that of the Pillar, (which as the Pillar of Cloud was equated with the Shekinah, and with which Simon was identified), such as that used by Jacob for a pillow at Bethel, whereon he dreamt of the ladder upon which the angels ascended and descended, "Rising early in the morning, Jacob took the stone he had used for his pillow, and set it up as a monument, pouring oil over the top of it". {1}

The World Tree or Pole also constituted the core aspect of most forms of Shamanism, the roots of which were held to reach down to the underworld while its branches touched the sky: it was thus a bridge from the underworld to the heavens and in Jewish mysticism appears as the Otz Chiim, or Tree of Life. In much Shamanic and Gnostic thought the Polestar was also very important since it stood at the centre of the cosmos and Eliade notes that, "The Turko-Altaians conceive the Pole Star as a pillar". {2}

This tree at the centre of the world was seen as a means of ascent, symbolised as the central pole of the hut of the Shaman, and James notes that, "The assimilation of the ritual tree to the Cosmic Tree is ... apparent in Central and North Asiatic shamanism. The climbing of such a tree by the Tartar shaman symbolises his ascension to heaven ... he describes to the onlookers all that he sees at each of the celestial levels which he passes through"; these levels being those of the planetary spheres. {3}

{1} (Gen. XXVIII 18).
{2} SHAMANISM, (p. 261).
{3} THE TREE OF LIFE, (p. 45).
The bull sacrifice was widespread throughout the classical world and seems to have been seen as both a commemoration of the primaeval slaughter whereby order was wraught from chaos and as necessary for the continuation of the cosmos and the regulation of the seasons. It was of ancient origin and played as great a part in Mithraism, (the one-time rival of Christianity), as it did in Egypt, where the bull was known as Apis and identified with Hapi, god of the Nile.

Frazer describes the Taurobolium of Attis in which, "A bull, adorned with garlands of flowers, its forehead glittering with gold leaf, was driven on to the grating", under which the devotees waited, and was there, "stabbed to death ... Its hot reeking blood poured in torrents through the apertures, and was received with devout eagerness by the worshipper on every part of his person and garments", and that this, "regeneration of the worshipper took place at the same time as the regeneration of his god, namely at the vernal equinox.". {1}

The constellation of the bull seems to have indicated this point, from about 4000 to 1700 B.C.E., and began the year which continued while the creature processed around the Pole until its capture and sacrifice by Orion. In Babylonian astronomy it marked the beginning of the "Pidnu-na-shame", or way of the sun god, known as the "Furrow of Heaven", though the constellation is not particularly noticeable apart from the Pleiades, or "Peleiades", (the rock-doves associated with the venusian goddesses), which were greatly worshipped.

{1} THE GOLDEN BOUGH, (p. 351-352).
Allen writes, "They were a marked object on the Nile ... and supposed to represent the goddess Nit or Neith ... one of the principal divinities of Lower Egypt, identified by the Greeks with Athene, the Roman Minerva", who was, with Jupiter, from whose cloven head she had sprung fully-armed, worshipped by the Simonians, as Helen; the fallen Sophia, and Epinnoia of the "Standing One". {1}

To the Egyptians the world itself was a mirror of the physical conditions of the valley of the Nile; two hemicircles bounded by the Circular Ocean and divided by the great river; thus there was no exact centre of their earth though various Nilotic islands claimed this privilege. {2}

Celestially the river was paralleled by the Via Lactaea which appears to divide the heavens into two halves and Allen writes, "In classic folklore the Milky Way was marked out by the corn ears dropped by Isis in her flight from Typhon". {3}

The Galaxy, perhaps named after Galataea, daughter of Oceanus, was in ancient times almost universally pictured as a river from which the name "Eridanus", identified with the Euphrates, the stream of Ocean derives. In Akkad, it was seen as the serpentine Great River, "Hid-dagal", identical with the "Biblical" Hiddekel. In China too it was known as "Tien-Ho", the "Celestial River", and in India, "Akasa Ganga", or the "Spiritual Ganges".

{1} STAR NAMES: THEIR LORE AND MEANING, (p. 399).
{2} ANCIENT COSMOLOGIES, (p. 28).
{3} STAR NAMES: THEIR LORE AND MEANING, (p. 481).
The World Ocean was figured in serpentine guise as the "Ouroboros" which swallowed its own tail thereby encircling the globe and was often portrayed as a dragon. Yet the earlier representation seems to have referred to the constellation Draco, in whose tail the lodestar once resided.

Known in Egypt as Tauret, the hippopotamus goddess, in whose hands the "Haunch of Beef", (a glyph of Ursa Major), is clutched, the pole star once marked the head of this "Mother of Revolutions". She was often equated with Isis, or Typhon, mother of Set, whose jackal was still used as a marker of the pole even on the Graeco-Roman Denderah zodiac.

Also known to the Greeks as Ophis, a snake, it may have been the stellar source for the mystical Ophitism of the Gnostics, especially since, as it has been shown Hippolytus asserted, the Gnostics equated Engonasis, more commonly called Hercules, with Adam: his foot bruising the serpents head.

"Genesis" describes the fall of Adam thus, "The serpent was the most subtle of all the wild beasts that Yahweh God had made. It asked the woman, "Did God really say you were not to eat from any of the trees in the garden?" The woman answered the serpent, "We may eat the fruit of the trees in the garden. But of the fruit of the tree in the middle of the garden God said, "You must not eat it, nor touch it, under pain of death."
Then the serpent said to the woman, "No! You will not die! God knows in fact that on the day you eat it your eyes will be opened and you will be like gods, knowing good and evil."". {1}  

{1} (Gen. III 1-5).
The symbol of the snake which revealed the knowledge of good and evil was throughout Gnostic thought often taken as a glyph of the redeemer who had come to remind humanity of its celestial origin and aid his, or her, followers in their escape from the clutches of the evil rulers, generally equated with the planetary bodies, beyond the endless cycle of birth and death, and the seasons.

It has been shown that these Archons were associated with the seven wandering stars, through whose Heavenly Halls the initiate had to pass on the path to truth, and that below them the thirty-six Lords of the Decans ruled the ten degree divisions of the ecliptic which had to be overcome before release from the wheel of phenomenal activity could be attained.

The hub of this wheel was the Pole which was seen as a sign, semeion, or simn, in the centre of the heavens, of the one, true, and previously unknown god. This and the seven-starred asterism of Ursa Major may have been equated with the heavenly ogdoad, which in the system of Basilides came forth from an egg or seed, at the head of the celestial spheres, (which due to the influence of Ptolemaic astronomy had now increased to ten), around which processed the twelve zodiacal constellations.

The residence of this supreme being seems to have been in the centre of the cosmos around which all else revolved in perpetual adoration and was, as such, pictured as the Pole Star, to which the Mandaeans, a surviving Gnostic sect, still turn in worship.
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