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## THE MYSTERY OF THE FIVE SEALS: Gnostic INITIATION RECONSIDERED

BY

ALASTAIR H.B. LOGAN

### I

Three apparently related texts from Nag Hammadi, the *Apocryphon of John* in its long recension,<sup>1</sup> *Trimorphic Protennoia*,<sup>2</sup> and the *Gospel of the Egyptians*,<sup>3</sup> refer in rather enigmatic fashion to “the five seals.” What exactly are these “five seals”? The context and language used would appear to suggest some kind of initiatory rite or formula, involving the granting both of knowledge and of protection from death and ignorance. Thus in the hymnic passage which concludes the long recension of the *Apocryphon* the saviour figure, Pronoia, in her third and final descent, after awakening and enlightening the sleeping Gnostic, raises him up and seals him (σφραγίζειν) “in the light of the water with five seals (σφραγίς) that death might not have power over him from now on.”<sup>4</sup> No less an authority on matters Gnostic than George MacRae thought that the best way to account for this hymnic passage was as “a Gnostic liturgical fragment probably recited at a ceremony of initiation much in the manner of a Christian baptismal homily or hymn.”<sup>5</sup> And J.-M. Sevrin, in his exhaustive and detailed discussion of the so-called Sethian baptismal dossier of texts, develops this further. Although the usage may still be purely metaphorical, he argues that here we have in all probability a rite of quintuple baptism.<sup>6</sup>

Now the evidence of *Trimorphic Protennoia* does seem to confirm such an interpretation of the five seals. In the third descent of the Saviour/Protennoia figure (cf. the Pronoia of the *Apocryphon*), she describes the process of salvation of the Gnostic in terms of stripping, investing in a garment of light, robing, spring baptism, enthroning, glorifying and rapture, followed by reception of the five seals from the Light of the Mother so that he partakes of the mystery of knowledge and becomes a light in light.<sup>7</sup> A page later the five seals are equated with the ordinances of the Father, the glories higher than any glory: those who possess the five seals of these particular names have stripped off the garments of ignorance and put on a shining

light.<sup>8</sup> Finally on the next page Protennoia asserts that she proclaimed to the elect the ineffable five seals that she should abide in them and they in her.<sup>9</sup> The editor of the text in the Nag Hammadi Studies series, J.D. Turner, refers to the suggestion of an earlier editor, Gisela Schenke, that at each stage of the Sethian baptismal rite a divine name was invoked and the person being baptised was provided with a seal, but he himself thinks it more likely that the five seals “are a single baptismal rite consisting of the five stages of enlightenment noted above: investiture, spring baptism, enthronement, glorification and ecstatic rapture.”<sup>10</sup> On the other hand, Yvonne Janssens, in her edition, conjectures that the five seals represent anointings of the five sense organs.<sup>11</sup>

Does our final witness, the *Gospel of the Egyptians*, cast any more light? Certainly its even more allusive references to the five seals might appear to offer some support to these interpretations of the “five seals” as part of a rite of initiation. Thus the passage introducing the final hymnic section does refer, at least in the Codex III version, to the five seals in the context of baptism, invocation, renunciation and freedom from experiencing death.<sup>12</sup> But the Codex IV version omits the number, and earlier on the five seals appear as heavenly figures alongside the triad of Father, Mother and Son as apparently produced by the Father,<sup>13</sup> and as associated with the saving missions of Pronoia and heavenly Seth.<sup>14</sup> Thus the editors of the text in the Nag Hammadi Studies series, Böhlig and Wisse, prefer to interpret the five seals not primarily as sacramental (here they allude to the five sacraments some have claimed to find in the *Gospel of Philip*),<sup>15</sup> but as the figures of triple-male child, Youel and Esephech, five images of the primal triad of Father, Mother and Son.<sup>16</sup> The references to “five seals” as sacramental are therefore to be seen as secondary.<sup>17</sup>

However, Sevrin rightly stresses the liturgical, baptismal character of the entire work, and he ingeniously reconciles the two interpretations: the five seals are primarily baptismal, but have been given archetypes in the Pleroma. It is more a matter of the five seals being dependent on baptismal representation than the reverse, the rite as reconstructed by him involving five-fold immersion rather than insigation.<sup>18</sup> But despite some similarities in language, seal being, as he notes, a “classic designation of Christian baptism,”<sup>19</sup> he is led to deny the Christian character of the rite he finds underlying all three texts, precisely from the five seals and the apparent lack of any mention of unction. He ascribes the rite to a Barbelo-Sethian baptising sect of Jewish origin, while candidly admitting that it has nothing in common with Judaeo-baptist practices.

## II

So which is the right interpretation? Is it a matter of a genuine rite and if so, to what do the five seals refer? Most commentators accept the secondary Christian character of these texts and are forced back to rather implausible appeals to hypothetical Jewish originals and baptismal rituals. But what if the myth underlying these texts—for there are clear structural similarities between them—and the ritual from which the myth was developed—for that is the more usual pattern in such cases—were *fundamentally* Christian, derived from the paradigm of the heavenly birth, anointing and elevation of the Son, Christ, and based on contemporary early second century “mainstream” Christian rites of initiation (water baptism and chrismation or sealing)? What if the Gnostics or Barbelognostics of these texts, imitated by the Valentinians, whom Irenaeus claims derived their mythological schemes from them,<sup>20</sup> were the first to introduce or exploit post-baptismal chrism with ointment (μύρον) understood as “sealing,” the “seal of the Spirit” in connection with their claim to be the real Christians?<sup>21</sup>

Thus Irenaeus, probably summarising the spectrum of Valentinian views of “redemption,” after alluding to their contrast between the psychic baptism of Jesus and their superior, spiritual baptism introduced by Christ, refers to some who baptise in water in the name of Father, Mother and Christ followed by anointing with balsam oil, while others baptise with a mixture of oil and water and then anoint with balsam.<sup>22</sup> He goes on to mention a death-bed rite involving affusion of oil mixed with water or balsam mixed with water on the head to free the initiate from the hostile powers.<sup>23</sup> And the tombstone in Rome of the evidently Valentinian Flavia Sophe speaks of her as “anointed (χρίειν) in the baths (λουτρόν) of Christ with incorruptible, holy ointment (χρίσμα).”<sup>24</sup> And this in turn recalls Celsus’ description of an Ophite (i.e. Gnostic) death rite involving a person called “Father” conferring a seal (σφραγίς) on another called “Son,” who responds “I am anointed (χρίειν) with white (i.e. gleaming?) chrism from the tree of life.” Celsus also mentions the good light angels who transmit the seal standing on one side of the departing soul with evil archontic ones on the other.<sup>25</sup> Origen’s revealing comment is that Celsus has not understood the Christian term “seal.”

Now although the Valentinian rites of initiation do clearly include chrism,<sup>26</sup> the mythologoumenon of the pre-temporal anointing of the heavenly Son as Christ is absent from their myth, whereas as I have recently

argued it is crucial to the myth and ritual of the Gnostics of Irenaeus and the *Apocryphon* and related texts, from which the Valentinians would seem to have adopted it, ever on the lookout for good ideas to plunder.<sup>27</sup> Thus all three of the texts cited as well as Irenaeus' summary of the Barbelognostics feature the pre-temporal anointing of the heavenly Son as Christ.<sup>28</sup> Further, the fullest account, that in the *Apocryphon*, has the Father see himself reflected in the living water of the Spirit which results in the origin of the Mother, Barbelo, who bears the Son, who is then anointed with the goodness of the supreme Spirit.<sup>29</sup> This archetypal pattern is then repeated in the case of a Gnostic elect soul: once it becomes conscious of its real state through the saving knowledge and repents, it is reborn (through baptism in living water) and has the Spirit descend on it (through chrismation or sealing).<sup>30</sup>

This pattern seems confirmed by the—admittedly—allusive language of the Naassene Preaching and Psalm, the work, note, of those who dub themselves “gnostics.”<sup>31</sup> It too speaks of the need for the regeneration by water and the Spirit of the Gnostic in the image of the perfect man,<sup>32</sup> Adamas, describing the promise of baptism (βαπτίσμα) as the introduction into unfading pleasure of the person washed with living water and anointed (χρίειν) with ineffable chrism (χρίσμα).<sup>33</sup> Indeed the Naassenes claim that they alone are Christians completing the mystery at the third gate and being anointed (χρίειν) there with ineffable chrism (χρίσμα) from a horn, like David.<sup>34</sup> And of course the Naassene Psalm has Jesus descend to the benighted soul with the seals (σφραγίς) to reveal all mysteries and transmit the saving knowledge.<sup>35</sup>

Thus all these texts which relate to those who appear to identify themselves or can be identified as “Gnostics” seem to attest a unified rite of initiation involving baptism in living water followed by chrismation with an ointment of some sort (myrrh, i.e. balsam, perhaps oil in some cases)<sup>36</sup> as a seal, which makes them Christians and symbolises possession of saving knowledge, protection from the hostile archons and the presence of the Holy Spirit.<sup>37</sup> Looking again in the light of this evidence at the texts with which we began, can we put more flesh on the bare bones and answer our opening question about the five seals more positively?

The evidence both of the structure of the myth and the Valentinian formulae suggests that the Gnostic initiates were first baptised in living water probably in the name of the supreme triad or Trinity of Father, Mother/Barbelo and Son/Christ, the mystery and goal of the entire development of the Pleroma, and the content of the knowledge possessed by the supreme heavenly Man, Adamas, in whose image we humans were

formed.<sup>38</sup> The baptismal hymn at the end of the *Gospel of the Egyptians* seems to hint at this, with its allusions to the mysterious threefold name Iesseus Mazareus Iessedekus, to the supreme God, the self-begotten Son and the Mother and to the shaping or forming of the initiate.<sup>39</sup> The last recalls the ideas of the Naassene Preaching about the unformed Son forming the Gnostics through baptism.<sup>40</sup> More striking still is the threefold baptismal formula of the Valentinians quoted by Irenaeus: "Into the name of the unknown Father of all things, Into Truth, the Mother of all, into him who descended on Jesus (i.e. Christ)," very probably borrowed from such a threefold pattern among the Gnostics since elsewhere in the Valentinian literature we tend to find the more usual trinitarian formula.<sup>41</sup> The similarity but difference of the Gnostic Trinity to that of "mainstream" Christians is surely no coincidence!

If then baptism evidently represents the rebirth of the Gnostic and his/her acquiring knowledge, spiritual formation and a true identity, the five seals rite must mark not only chrismation (the Gnostic becoming anointed as Christ/Christian) but also sealing (protection against external evil forces, the promise of immortality and the gift of the Spirit). As we have seen, these elements are present in various ways in our Gnostic texts, particularly the *Apocryphon*. But can we be more specific? The elements involved in sealing would imply the use of myrrh (i.e. olive oil mixed with balsam or other such sweet scented product) rather than plain oil:<sup>42</sup> the baptismal hymn in the *Gospel of the Egyptians* has the initiate refer to myrrh mixed with water;<sup>43</sup> myrrh's sweet savour would suggest the presence of the Holy Spirit; more significantly it was used to embalm and thus promise immortality, and this last fact might help unlock the riddle of the five seals. Janssens, as we saw, suggested that in *Trimorphic Prottennoia* the five seals referred to anointing the five organs of sense: eyes, ears, nostrils, mouth, hands. Certainly embalming would involve stuffing the first four with myrrh. So this is one plausible explanation.

But I would like to suggest another. In the *Apocryphon* salvation involves the soul, not the body. Certainly the initiated soul is required to live an ascetic life, but the temptations to avoid are surely more psychic than physical: the whole myth revolves round visions and voices, true and counterfeit spirits. Thus I would like to suggest that what were anointed were the organs for which souls can be assumed to possess equivalents: two eyes, two ears and a mouth. Further, such anointing I surmise would be in the name of the Self-Begotten, Christ and his four accompanying guardian angels, who clearly play a central role in the Gnostic myth.<sup>44</sup> Each organ

would be anointed with a special formula in the name of one of the five. This could explain both the passages where the five seals appear to be formulae associated with names, as in *Trimorphic Protennoia*,<sup>45</sup> and those where they are heavenly beings directly related to the Father, Mother and Son, as in the *Gospel of the Egyptians*.<sup>46</sup> Precisely because baptism in the name of Father, Mother and Son is followed by chrismation involving the five seals, a redactor has hypostatised the five as five heavenly archetypes immediately following Father, Mother and Son. Finally the seals might be interpreted as talismans, as in the Naassene Psalm,<sup>47</sup> symbols giving the ascending soul power over Ialdabaoth and his archons.<sup>48</sup>

### III

I have attempted to sketch out the origins and development of this “classic Gnostic myth” of Irenaeus and the *Apocryphon* elsewhere, suggesting that it probably originated in Syrian Antioch in the opening decades of the second century C.E., in reaction to the final rejection of the Christians by the Jews.<sup>49</sup> But is there any other evidence to support such a conjecture of a group in Antioch or environs claiming to be Christian from their practice of post-baptismal chrismation? Long established orthodoxy has denied any evidence of post-baptismal chrismation in Syria before the late fourth century.<sup>50</sup> It has been argued that earlier Syrian baptismal practice evidently had anointing the head with oil *before* baptism signifying the gift of the Spirit, in imitation both of Old Testament priestly and kingly anointing and of Jesus’ baptism in Jordan as symbolising the inauguration of his Messianic kingship:<sup>51</sup> the Gnostic practice here is anointing the head with myrrh *after* baptism. Clearly the Western Valentinians known to Irenaeus practiced the latter and “mainstream” Christians did something similar;<sup>52</sup> is there any evidence that Eastern Christians did so, or were aware of such practices as the basis of or a parallel to the Gnostic usage? I would like to draw attention to three pieces of evidence which might suggest that at least some Christian groups in the area of Syria and Asia Minor in the early to middle second century did indeed practice post-baptismal chrism with myrrh.<sup>53</sup>

First there is 1 John whose polemic is entirely directed at those who claimed to be Christians but who had seceded, refusing to identify Christ with Jesus. The author identifies them as unloving, exclusive antichrists claiming to walk in the light and be free from sin, rejecting Jesus’ commands and the evidence of the Spirit, the water and the blood (of Christ

and hence the crucifixion, but also by extension the eucharist). R.E. Brown, in his persuasive analysis of the situation in the Johannine community, draws attention to the way the author has to accept that the seceders too have received chrism (χρίσμα: 1 John 2:20, 27), which he allows could well designate an actual sacramental rite.<sup>54</sup> Further, in an evident attempt to reject the seceders' claims to have superior knowledge about Christ and to pass it on by teaching, the author appeals to the proper knowledge possessed by his group which needs no teacher but the chrism itself (i.e. the Holy Spirit). Brown plausibly suggests that the seceders' attitude could readily lead to the developed ideas and systems of the Gnostics, aided, even catalysed by their interpretation of John's Gospel.<sup>55</sup> This is exactly what seems to have happened to the Gnostics stemming from Antioch identified by me, who were much akin to the Johannine community in their rejection of Judaism, their elitism and their high Christology, and who were increasingly influenced by the Fourth Gospel.<sup>56</sup> If they practiced post-baptismal chrism with myrrh as a sign of the gift of the Spirit could not their spiritual ancestors attacked by 1 John have done so too?

Now Brown has suggested Ephesus as the likely location for these events,<sup>57</sup> and a similar, if not more advanced scenario seems to underlie the slightly later polemic of Ignatius of Antioch in *his* letter to the Ephesians. He too attacks those who claim to be Christians (7,1) while not attending the eucharist and denying the reality of Christ's sufferings. These are no straw men; he is aware of their having visited Ephesus with their evil teaching (9,1). Against them, as with 1 John, Ignatius' famous paradoxes are intended to insist that Jesus and Christ are one being (8,2). In a vivid metaphor he appeals to Father, Son, and Spirit and the commands of Christ (9,1). And he too urges the importance of love, not just faith (14), and extols silence over plausible teaching, warning of the fate of eternal punishment for false teaching about Jesus (15-16). And as with 1 John, his response seems to involve an appeal to sacramental practice. Thus he begins by stressing that Christ received ointment (μύρον) on his head (cf. Matt. 26:7) to breathe immortality on the Church, urging his hearers not to be anointed with the evil odour of the doctrine of the prince of this world.<sup>58</sup> Next he proceeds to emphasise the centrality of the cross and of Jesus' real birth and baptism to "purify the water" (18-19). Then follows the famous section on Mary's virginity, the destruction of magic and the planned abolition of death, and a postscript in which he promises to continue the theme emphasising the need to meet together and celebrate the eucharist, the "medicine of immortality" (20).



The sacramental emphasis, then, is obvious in this section. As regards a possible rite of chrism, notice the use of the term myrrh, not oil, and the interpretation in terms of Christ breathing immortality on the Church. The combination of ideas can most plausibly be taken to refer to the gift and odour of the Holy Spirit promising eternal life.<sup>59</sup> Ignatius' order of treatment (myrrh, baptism, eucharist) need not be chronological; after all the anointing of Jesus' head in Matthew 26:7 as paradigm for post-baptismal unction follows his baptism.<sup>60</sup> More significantly, the allusion is not cathartic or exorcistic; indeed that Jesus' baptism was to purify the water surely implies there is no need for any kind of pre-baptismal chrism for that purpose. The cumulative evidence suggests even more strongly than in the case of 1 John that Ignatius' most likely opponents here were my Gnostics with their practice of baptism followed by chrism, something which Ignatius seems implicitly to accept, and this might furnish further support to the hypothesis that in *some* communities and groups in Syria and Asia Minor in the second century baptism was followed by chrism with myrrh signifying the gift of the Spirit.<sup>61</sup>

The final piece of evidence is the myron or ointment prayer in a Coptic fragment of the *Didache*.<sup>62</sup> This occurs at the end of chapter 10, usually interpreted as eucharistic, and very much parallels the prayers over the cup and the bread in 9,1-3, laying down thanksgiving for the perfume (Coptic *stinoufi*) made known through Christ, God's son (Coptic *shēri*). Now there is a very similar but longer Greek version in a corresponding position in book 7 of the *Apostolic Constitutions*,<sup>63</sup> which is usually attributed to a compiler working in Antioch around 380, and using the *Didache* as a key source.<sup>64</sup> The general consensus, working from the variants and context, is that the compiler, a conservative and most likely author of the pseudo-Ignatian epistles,<sup>65</sup> found the prayer in his version of the *Didache* and accommodated it and the newly introduced post-baptismal chrismation with μύρον to his Syrian initiation pattern of pre-baptismal anointings, episcopal and diaconal, with oil.<sup>66</sup> But the question arises, since the prayer is not found in the Bryennius MS (H) or the Georgian version, could it possibly be authentic? E. Peterson thought so, explaining that the editors of H were Novatianists who rejected chrism,<sup>67</sup> while S. Gero defended it by explaining it as modelled on a Jewish prayer over incense at the end of the thanksgiving meal, his interpretation of *Did.* 10.<sup>68</sup> The latest editor of the *Didache*, K. Niederwimmer, argues against its authenticity, making much of the difficulty defenders of genuineness have in explaining why it was apparently omitted by H.<sup>69</sup> He suggests that the prayer, whose precise nature

as either intended for the oil used to anoint the sick or for chrisem remains for him an open question, was modelled on the style of the prayers of 9,1-3 and interpolated perhaps as early as the third century.<sup>70</sup>

But if one rejects the defences of Peterson and Gero as implausible, can a case be made out for the genuineness of the ointment prayer? I think it can for the following reasons. First, Niederwimmer's suggested provenance and criticisms of genuineness can be countered. As regards provenance, why should a forger/interpolator produce such an ambiguous prayer at such an awkward location in the text? Indeed why should he bother to create an archaïcising ointment prayer modelled on the examples in 9,1-3 in the East in the third century, when the evidence suggests the norm was pre-baptismal anointing with *oil*?<sup>71</sup> In his review of Niederwimmer's edition, S.G. Hall has attempted to undermine Niederwimmer's objection that the ointment prayer does not echo the *spiritual* character of the prayers over cup and bread; he claims that the reference to the εὐωδία underlying the Coptic represents that.<sup>72</sup> In response to Niederwimmer's other major objection, why should H and the Georgian have omitted it if genuine, I would repeat the point already made; with pre-baptismal anointing with oil becoming increasingly the norm, any evidence of another form of chrisem would have been overlooked or even suppressed, particularly if it was tainted by association with Gnostics.

Second there is the evidence of the *Apostolic Constitutions* and the links with Antioch. The compiler clearly wanted to enlist the most ancient traditions, and his version of the ointment prayer reflects a combination of his text of the *Didache* with language taken from Ignatius, *Eph.* 17,1, with which he was so familiar, as in all likelihood author of the Pseudo-Ignatian letters.<sup>73</sup> He is championing his own local traditions, perhaps having discovered a more original form of the *Didache* as authority for introducing the post-baptismal chrisem with myrrh, for which he evidently finds it difficult to establish a rationale, rather than unwillingly accepting an outside tradition from Jerusalem or elsewhere.<sup>74</sup> Gero's objection about the Coptic *stinoufi* as not the normal translation of μύρον can be countered by noting that *stinoufi* is an exact rendering of the εὐωδίας τοῦ μύρου of *Ap. Con.* 7,27,2; the translator used that to refer to the μύρον of the original.<sup>75</sup>

Third, developing Peterson's illuminating point that the eucharistic and ointment prayers share the concept εὐχαριστία,<sup>76</sup> what the *Didache's* prayers do is not sanctify the elements (water, bread, chrisem etc.) as in later Eastern rites, but give thanks for them, reflecting the much more ancient Jewish understanding and practice.<sup>77</sup> Wine, bread and myrrh are human products

involved in sacramental acts, and the placing of the ointment prayer after the eucharistic giving of thanks is perfectly appropriate. That the compiler of *Ap. Con.* does not have a prayer of blessing or sanctification of the ointment, as in the case of the oil and baptismal water, but merely a prayer during chrismation requesting the activation of the myrrh, for which a thanksgiving has already been made, reveals both the changes in liturgical thinking that have taken place and the high regard the compiler has for the *Didache* and its ointment prayer.<sup>78</sup> Moreover, the Western evidence from Cyprian that the oil of post-baptismal anointing was that sanctified on the altar in the eucharist<sup>79</sup> might suggest that a similar situation and logic underlies the *Didache's* positioning of its ointment prayer: thanksgiving for the myrrh for the post-baptismal chrismation came after the thanksgiving for the eucharistic elements.<sup>80</sup> What Jesus came to make known according to the *Didache's* prayer was probably the myrrh of Matthew 26:7, interpreted as what made the initiates Christians, administered after baptism, perhaps when the baptised joined the community for their first eucharist.

Thus there might indeed be evidence to suggest that some communities in the East, Gnostic and "mainstream" Christian, did practice post-baptismal chrism with myrrh as the "seal of the Spirit," that which made one a real Christian. The fragmented nature of such communities and diversity of practice might explain why we find no trace of such—or any—chrism in the *First Apology* of Justin Martyr, for example, who was active in Ephesus and Rome in the middle of the second century. Conversely, the language of Theophilus of Antioch, defending the name "Christian" from the fact of Christians being anointed with the oil of God, would appear to support the existence of a rite of chrism in Antioch in the later second century: indeed his cleansing analogies and reference to oil might suggest the pre-baptismal version.<sup>81</sup> And the absence of the ointment prayer in texts of the *Didache* like H may be ascribed to the falling into disuse or suppression of alternative forms with the growing predominance in Syria of pre-baptismal chrism with oil, such as Theophilus may attest. Indeed Theophilus' link of "Christian" with chrismation may help unravel the enigma of early Syrian initiation.

For the fundamental point is that we should consider the introduction of different patterns of chrismation as ultimately determined by the theology underlying the practice. The key to understanding the differences may very well lie in how the anointing of Christ as paradigm for Christian initiation was understood, and when it was supposed to have taken place.

Appeal to the earthly baptism of Jesus as paradigm may be something of a red herring. Thus the Gnostic order and use of myrrh correspond perfectly to their theology of initiation as patterned on the primal chrismation of the Son and probably spread West via the Valentinians.<sup>82</sup> If the evidence of 1 John and Ignatius is less clear-cut about the actual existence of a rite of chrism involving myrrh and how it was understood, certainly the sacramental theology and practice implied by the *Didache*, assuming its ointment prayer to be original, makes perfect sense, taking Jesus' chrismation on the head with myrrh as the paradigm for a post-baptismal anointing. But such examples of post-baptismal chrism with myrrh as sealing probably died out in Syria and the neighbouring areas for various reasons, not so much perhaps because of an association with Gnosticism (although that is possible), but more likely because of the growing predominance of a different interpretation of Christ's anointing. This saw Christian initiation as imitating Christ's pre-incarnational Messianic inauguration (cf. Luke 4:18/Isa. 61:1-2) with the presence of the Spirit outwardly symbolised by chrismation with oil, the "oil of gladness" (cf. Ps. 44:8 LXX), which naturally should take place before baptism.<sup>83</sup>

Despite the ingenious interpretations of Winkler and others, appealing to OT priestly/kingly anointing and imitation of the baptism of Jesus, it is surely significant that no attempt seems to have been made in the early Syrian sources either to exploit the order and instrument of the priestly anointing of Exodus 30:22-33 (namely washing followed by anointing with an oil and aromatic plant mixture, i.e. *μύρον*), or to imitate exactly the earthly baptism of Jesus, which has the Spirit descend *after* the baptism. On the other hand what both Gnostic and "orthodox" Syrian Christians do seem to point up in their interpretation of Christian initiation is the primordial or preincarnational chrismation of Christ. But whereas the Gnostics chose to imitate the birth and primordial chrismation of the heavenly Son by following water baptism with the—for them—more fundamental chrismation with *μύρον*, marking the descent of the Spirit, Syrian "orthodox" Christians chose to put the more important chrismation as sealing with olive oil first. Later on factors such as a change from an earlier more Jewish understanding of initiation to a more Gentile one, and a move to a more Pauline understanding of baptism in terms of dying and rising (Romans 6), coupled with the greater influx of Gentiles, led to the fencing off of the sacraments by preparatory and exorcistic rites, causing the evident reduplication of the single pre-baptismal anointing with oil, and/or the introduction of a post-baptismal chrismation. To this, now interpreted

as modelled on Jesus' post-baptismal chrismation by the Spirit, was transferred the symbolism of new birth, sonship and the gift of the Spirit.<sup>84</sup> Thus the "orthodox" were finally to exhibit a parallel to the views of the Gnostics, as, by another irony, it was the Valentinians, according to E.A. Leeper, who spearheaded the introduction of exorcistic elements into Western liturgies!<sup>85</sup>

Thus almost all trace of a post-baptismal chrismation with myrrh disappeared in Syria until it suddenly emerged in Jerusalem with Cyril (or John)<sup>86</sup> and was rediscovered in Antioch by the compiler of *Ap. Con.*<sup>87</sup> It is intriguing to note that, about the same time, Epiphanius was describing the attitudes of the Archontics of Palestine, possessors of books about Seth and late representatives of my Gnostics, towards sacraments: they condemn baptism, even though some were previously baptised, rejecting participation in the sacraments as extraneous and introduced by Sabaoth, god of the Jews.<sup>88</sup> Whenever the Archontic soul acquires γῶσις and shuns the baptism of the Church and the name of Sabaoth, it ascends through the seven heavens to the Mother and Father of all, defending itself before each of the archons. Reading between the lines of Epiphanius' polemic, which makes great play on the ideas of perfume and the deadly effect of orthodox baptism and sweet fragrance (i.e. εὐωδία) on such heretics,<sup>89</sup> one surmises that these Gnostics practised their own form of baptismal initiation,<sup>90</sup> rejecting the "orthodox" Christian version. What is equally intriguing is Epiphanius' information that Peter, the source of the heresy, had been a presbyter in the Jerusalem area who had participated in the Gnostic ἀρεσις.<sup>91</sup> Could Peter have passed on to Jerusalem Christians the Gnostic idea of a post-baptismal anointing with μύρον of the organs of sense, which Cyril in the 350s is apparently the first to attest?<sup>92</sup> The wheel may well have come full circle, but the parting of the ways is complete.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> NHC II,1 and IV,1.

<sup>2</sup> NHC XIII,1.

<sup>3</sup> NHC III,2 and IV,2.

<sup>4</sup> NHC II 31,22-25/IV 49,1-6 (very fragmentary but very similar).

<sup>5</sup> "Sleep and Awakening in Gnostic Texts" in U. Bianchi ed., *Le origini dello gnosticismo* (Supplements to *Numen* 12) (Leiden 1967) 468-507, esp. 502.

<sup>6</sup> *Le dossier baptismale Séthien: Etudes sur la sacramentaire gnostique* (Bibliothèque copte de Nag Hammadi, Section "Etudes" 2) (Québec 1986) 31-38, cf. also 250-258.

<sup>7</sup> NHC XIII 48,12-35. The text is fragmentary but the reconstructions of J.D. Turner

in *Nag Hammadi Codices XI, XII, XIII* (Nag Hammadi Studies 28) (Leiden/New York/Copenhagen/Köln 1990) 428, seem plausible.

<sup>8</sup> 49,20-32.

<sup>9</sup> 50,9-12.

<sup>10</sup> *Op. cit.* 452-453. But against that interpretation (a) more than five stages are enumerated if you count stripping and giving light/knowledge, and (b) the reception of the seals seems a later, distinct action. The recent sketch by Schenke (now Robinson), "The Trimorphic Proténnoia and the Prologue of the Fourth Gospel" in J.E. Goehring *et al.* eds., *Gnosticism & the Early Christian World* (Sonoma, Cal. 1990) 37-50, summarises her developed view of the initiation as a five-stage baptism with four gifts bestowed at every stage, and the five seals as five mysterious names with a seal bestowed as each name is called out 41-4), assuming the non-Christian nature of the Sethian group.

<sup>11</sup> *La Proténnoia Trimorphe (NH XIII,1)* (Bibliothèque copte de Nag Hammadi Section "Textes" 4) (Québec 1978), 80.

<sup>12</sup> Cf. NHC III 65,26-66,8/IV 78,1-10. Both are garbled: III reads: "the renunciations (ἀποτάξις) of the five seals (σφραγίς) in the spring (πηγή) baptism (βάπτισμα)" and IV refers to "the baptisms of the renunciation (ἀποταγή) and the ineffable seals of [their] baptism (βάπτισμα)."

<sup>13</sup> Cf. IV 56,23-57,1; 58,3-8, 23-59,4.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. IV 58,23-59,29; III 62,24-63,4/IV 74,9-17. At III 55,11-16/IV 66,25-67,1 the five, described as being in charge of the myriads, are given command to reveal [the truth?] to those who are worthy.

<sup>15</sup> A. Böhlig and F. Wisse eds., *Nag Hammadi Codices III,2 and IV,2: The Gospel of the Egyptians* (Nag Hammadi Studies 4) (Leiden 1975), 174 with reference to H.-G. Gaffron, *Studien zum koptischen Philippusevangelium unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Sakramente*, (Bonn 1969).

<sup>16</sup> *Op. cit.* 50, 197.

<sup>17</sup> *Op. cit.* 174.

<sup>18</sup> *Op. cit.* ch. 3 esp. 110-117. The very allusive passage in the Bala'izah Gnostic fragment (see Paul E. Kahle, *Bala'izah: Coptic Texts from Deir El-Bala'izah in Upper Egypt* 2 vols. (Oxford 1954) 1.437-477; W.E. Crum, "A Gnostic Fragment," *Journal of Theological Studies* 44 (1943) 176-179), which refers to initiates who partake of Paradise sealing the five powers in silence, and mentions the allegory of the five trees and has John acknowledge his completion of knowledge (γῶσις) and a hidden mystery, seems to reflect this initiatory background and understanding: the five trees probably represent five heavenly revealer/redeemer figures. See further below.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. e.g. Hermas, *Sim.* 9,16,3-4: "the seal (σφραγίς) is the water"; 2 *Clement* 6,9; 7,6; 8,6.

<sup>20</sup> *Adv. haer.* 1,30,15; 31,3; 2,13,8,10.

<sup>21</sup> Cf. G.W.H. Lampe, *The Seal of the Spirit* (London 1951, 21967) 120 ff. The Pseudo-Clementine *Recognitions* 1,45-8 seem to represent an alternative, clearly Jewish-Christian, interpretation of a pre-incarnate anointing of Christ: the title "Christ," applied to Jewish kings, derives from Christ's primary anointing with oil from the tree of life because he, the true prophet, was to become human, although the Son of God and beginning (*initium*) of everything. Hence he anoints those pious who reach the kingdom of God after a hard struggle as rest for their labours with similar oil, that their light shine and, filled with the Holy Spirit, they be granted immortality. The composite ointment of Aaron's

anointing in Exod. 29 and 30 from which all kings, priests and prophets derive, is an earthly copy of that heavenly pure original, and Christ, anointed a priest then born of the waters, ended priestly, prophetic and kingly chrisim.

<sup>22</sup> *Adv. haer.* 1,21,2-4; Epiphanius, *Pan.* 34,20,7-8. Note the clear distinction between oil and balsam and the interpretation of the balsam as a type of the sweet savour (εὐωδία ?) above all terrestrial things.

<sup>23</sup> 1,21,5; Epiph. *Pan.* 36,2,4-8. On the latter mixture cf. *Gosp. Eg.* III 67,22-24/IV 80,9-12: the Coptic term *stoi* can render the Greek μύρον, cf. W.E. Crum, *A Coptic Dictionary* (Oxford 1972) 362b-363a s.v. *stoi*.

<sup>24</sup> See G. Quispel, "L'inscription de Flavia Sophe," *Gnostic Studies* 1 (Istanbul 1974), 58-69. Text in *CIG* IV 594 no. 9595a.

<sup>25</sup> Origen, *C. Cels.* 6,27. The number seven spoken by the angels probably refers to the seven archontic spheres to be traversed. Cf. 6,31.

<sup>26</sup> Cf. also *Gosp. Phil.* NHC II 67,5, 23-30; 69,4-14; 74,12-24; *On the Anointing A NHC* XI,2 40, 8-29. E. Segelberg, "The Baptismal Rite according to some of the Coptic-Gnostic Texts of Nag Hammadi," F.L. Cross ed., *Studia Patristica* 5, Part III Liturgica, Monastica et Ascetica (TU 80) (Berlin 1962) 117-128, stresses the centrality of chrisim for both the *Gospel of Truth* (NHC I,2), which he interprets as a "confirmation homily" (120), and *Gos. Phil.*

<sup>27</sup> See my *Gnostic Truth and Christian Heresy* (Edinburgh 1996), esp. ch. 2. Note the use in *Iren.* 1,21,3/Epiph. *Pan.* 34,20,3-5 of what are apparently Palestinian Aramaic formulae (cf. H. Gressmann, "Jüdisch-Aramaisches bei Epiphanius," *Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft* 16 (1916) 191-197) which would be in line with the likely Antiochene and Syrian origin of my Gnostics.

<sup>28</sup> Cf. *Apoc. John* BG 29,18-31,5/NHC III 9,10-10,9; NHC II 6,10-33; *Trim. Prot.* NHC XIII 37,20-38,10; *Gosp. Eg.* NHC III 44,22-24/IV 55,11-14; *Iren. Adv. Haer.* 1,29,1.

<sup>29</sup> *Apoc. John* BG 26,15-27,19 and par; BG 29,18-31,5 and par.

<sup>30</sup> Cf. BG 64,14-71,2 and par.

<sup>31</sup> Hippolytus, *Ref.* 5,2,6,3-4.

<sup>32</sup> 5,7,40; 8,10,37-8.

<sup>33</sup> 5,7,19.

<sup>34</sup> 5,9,22. Cf. 1 Samuel 16:13; 10:1.

<sup>35</sup> 5,10,1-2. On the Naassenes as members of the same Gnostic sect, see *Gnostic Truth* 49.

<sup>36</sup> Cf. the Ophites of Celsus: the "white (λευκός) chrisim" may refer to gleaming olive oil. But the Naassene references to "ineffable chrisim" may suggest ointment rather than oil, despite the David reference.

<sup>37</sup> Cf. the *Hypostasis of the Archons* NHC II,4 96,15-97,21, with a similar concatenation of elements: the True Man (i.e. Christ) in creaturely form, the Spirit of Truth sent by the Father, to teach and anoint with the chrisim (χρῖσμα) of eternal life, resulting in trampling the powers to death and ascending to the Infinite Light, coming to know Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

<sup>38</sup> Cf. *Iren. Adv. haer.* 1,29,3; *Apoc. John* BG 34,19-35,20 and par; 47,14-49,9 and par. However, baptism could have been in the name of the Self-Begotten Son, the Autogenes/Christ; cf. *Gosp. Eg.* III 66,22-24 and *Zostrianos* NHC VIII,1 6,7-22 where Zostrianos undergoes a series of baptisms in the name of the Self-Begotten God.

<sup>39</sup> Cf. *Gosp. Eg.* III 66,8-67,22/IV 78,10-80,8. On this cluster of ideas cf. *Apocalypse of*

Adam NHC V,5 85,22-31, which refers to Adam's secret knowledge (γνώσις) as the holy baptism of those who know the eternal knowledge (γνώσις) through the Logos-begotten and the incorruptible luminaries (φωστήρ), who came forth from the holy sowing, Iesseus [Maz]areus [Iesse]dekeus, the [living] water. Iesseus . . . cannot refer to Jesus who for the Gnostics is a creature of the lower world.

<sup>40</sup> Cf. Hipp. *Ref.* 5,7,33; 8,14-22.

<sup>41</sup> Iren. *Adv. haer.* 1,21,3 (see n. 27 on the following Aramaic formulae). For the trinitarian language of the Great Church cf. e.g. *Exc. ex Theod.* 76,3-4—a quotation of Matt. 28:19; *Gosp. Phil.* 67,9-27. Although the *Tripartite Tractate* has its distinctive formula (NHC I,5 56,30-59,10: Father, Son and Church) it too echoes the Catholic version (cf. 127,25-128,19: baptism/redemption into Father, Son, and Holy Spirit).

<sup>42</sup> Cf. Clem. Alex. *Paed.* 2,8,62,3 on μύρον as adulterated oil.

<sup>43</sup> III 67,22-24/IV 80,9-12. See n. 23. To translate *stoi* as incense (so Böhlig/Wisse *Gospel* 160-161) rather than myrrh is surely less likely, if it is described as "mixed with water." The original Greek term could have been εὐωδία. See n. 75 below.

<sup>44</sup> Cf. e.g. Iren. *Adv. haer.* 1,29,2; *Apoc. John* BG 35,20-36,15; 51,1-52,1; *Gosp. Eg.* III 56,13-22; *Hyp. Arch.* 93,8-end; *ζοστ.* 29,1-20. Note also the guardian angels transmitting the seal in Orig. *C. Cels.* 6,27; as suggested above (n. 25), the number seven associated with them probably relates to the seven archontic spheres.

<sup>45</sup> Cf. *Trim. Prot.* 49,20-32.

<sup>46</sup> Cf. IV 56,23-57,1; 58,3-8, 23-59,2; III 55,9-16. See n. 18 on the Bala'izah fragment: its "five powers" which are sealed in silence might be the five senses, thus corroborating Janssens' interpretation.

<sup>47</sup> Hipp. *Ref.* 5,10,2.

<sup>48</sup> The enigmatic language of Origen's ascending Ophites, protected by a "spirit of Pronoia and by Sophia" (cf. *Apoc. John* BG 67,1-14; II 31,11-25), who refer to a symbol in the type of life, a superior pentad, or in the type of the tree of life etc. (*C. Cels.* 6,31), may be a coded reference to the five seals as such talismans.

<sup>49</sup> See *Gnostic Truth* ch. 2.

<sup>50</sup> Cf. e.g. E.C. Whittaker, *Documents of the Baptismal Liturgy* (London <sup>2</sup>1970) xv f.; S.P. Brock, "Studies in the Early History of the Syrian Orthodox Baptismal Liturgy," *Journal of Theological Studies* n.s. 23 (1972) 16-64, esp. 24; id., "The Transition to a Post-Baptismal Anointing in the Antiochene Rite" in B.D. Spinks ed., *The Sacrifice of Praise* (Bibliotheca "Ephemerides Liturgicae" "Subsidia" 19) (Rome 1981) 215; P. Bradshaw, *The Search for the Origins of Christian Worship* (London 1992) 163 f.

<sup>51</sup> Cf. G. Winkler, "The Original Meaning of the Prebaptismal Anointing and its Implications," *Worship* 52 (1978) 24-45, etc.; Bradshaw, *Search* 163-171.

<sup>52</sup> For the latter cf. Tert. *De Bapt.* 7,1-2 (note that he is reacting to Cainite, i.e. Gnostic practice, although he only refers to oil); Cyprian Ep. 70,2 (again oil, blessed in the eucharist).

<sup>53</sup> Note Bradshaw's conclusion on the diversity and regional variety of early forms of initiation, *Search* 183 f.

<sup>54</sup> *The Epistles of John* (Anchor Bible 30) (London 1983) 342-5. For support of this interpretation see G. Dix, "Confirmation or Laying on of Hands?" (*Theology Occasional Papers* 5) (London 1936), 10; L.S. Thornton, *Confirmation, its Place in the Baptismal Mystery* (London 1954) 21; J. Ysebaert, *Greek Baptismal Terminology* (Graecitas Christianorum



Primaeva 1) (Nijmegen 1962) 263. To interpret the order Spirit, water, blood in 1 John 5:7 f. as referring to pre-baptismal unction, baptism and the eucharist, as suggested by e.g. T.W. Manson, "Entry into Membership of the Early Church" *Journal of Theological Studies* 48 (1947) 25-33 etc., might seem at first sight plausible, in the light of later Syrian evidence (see however the criticisms of Brown, *Epistles* 583 f., and Lampe, *Seal* 87-91 and my own proposals below).

<sup>55</sup> Cf. 69-71, 104-106, 112-114. L.L. Mitchell, *Baptismal Anointing* (Alcuin Club Collections 48) (London 1966) 50, sees the spirit of 1 John underlying the Syrian rites and their order over against false gnostics.

<sup>56</sup> See *Gnostic Truth* ch. 2.

<sup>57</sup> 100-102.

<sup>58</sup> The implication is that chrism has a forward reference. Cf. the similar strategy and implication of 1 John 2:27: an appeal to the chrism (i.e. the gift of the Spirit) which all have, which remains and teaches and is true.

<sup>59</sup> Cf. John 20:22: Ignatius appears to have known Johannine traditions if not the written form. Could there also be an echo of 2 Cor. 2:14-16 here? Note that Ignatius does not make the obvious link of myrrh with the death of Christ; chrism is associated with immortality.

<sup>60</sup> A weakness in Winkler's hypothesis for the early Syrian order of chrism interpreted as signifying rebirth and the gift of the Spirit, and modelled on O.T. kingly/priestly anointing—all supposedly based on the baptism of Jesus—is the awkward fact that the Spirit descends *after* Jesus' baptism! Moreover, for one so insistent on observing linguistic distinctions, she fails to note the earlier careful differentiation between oil and myrrh.

<sup>61</sup> The similarities with Ignatius' language and treatment in *Eph.*, *Trall.* and *Smyrn.* over against the differences found in *Magn.* and *Philad.* would suggest (1) that his opponents in the first three were docetic Gnostics, (2) that the threat was real, not projected from Antioch, and would tend to support the claim Ignatius was fighting on two fronts.

<sup>62</sup> In British Library Oriental MS 9271. For the text see C. Schmidt, "Das koptische Didache-Fragment des British Museum" *Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft* 24 (1925) 84 f.; L.-Th. Lefort, *Les pères apostoliques en copte* (CSCO 135 Scriptorum Coptici 17) (Louvain 1952) 32; F. Stanley Jones & Paul A. Mirecki, "Considerations on the Coptic Papyrus of the Didache (British Library Oriental Manuscript 9271)" in C.N. Jefford ed., *The Didache in Context: Essays on its Text, History and Transmission* (Supplements to *Novum Testamentum* 77) (Leiden 1995) 52.

<sup>63</sup> 7,27.

<sup>64</sup> See M. Metzger, *Les constitutions apostoliques* 1 (Sources chrétiennes 320) (Paris 1985) 54-61.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>66</sup> Cf. *Didasc. apost.* 9 and 16; *Ap. Con.* 7,22, 44,1-3; 2,32,3; 3,16-17. On the evident problems see Metzger, *op. cit.* 94.

<sup>67</sup> "Über einige Probleme der Didache-Uberlieferung" in *Frühkirche, Judentum und Gnosis* (Rome/Freiburg/Vienna 1959) 156-167.

<sup>68</sup> "The So-Called Ointment Prayer in the Coptic Version of the Didache: A Re-evaluation," *Harvard Theological Review* 70 (1977), 67-84. His argument centres on *stinoufi* which he claims means incense, not myrrh, which the compiler of *Ap. Con.* misunderstood and converted to the myron prayer familiar to him. But, as suggested above

(n. 66), such a prayer and rite was new, causing him difficulty in explaining its rationale, since its link with the Spirit now applied to pre-baptismal chrism (cf. 3,17; 7,22,2; 2,32,3), and as we shall see, *stinoufi* can translate  $\mu\acute{\upsilon}\rho\omicron\nu\nu$ . In any case Gero's interpretation of 10 in terms of a meal is dubious and his explanation in terms of incense implausible: in what sense can incense be said to have been made known through Jesus? See K. Niederwimmer, "Textprobleme der Didache," *Wiener Studien* NF 16 (1982) 120 f.

<sup>69</sup> See "Textprobleme" *ibid.*, and *Die Didache* (Kommentar zür apostolischen Väter 1) (Göttingen 1995) 205-209. Cf. J.-P. Audet, *La Didache: Instructions des Apôtres* (Etudes Bibliques) (Paris 1958) 68; A Vööbus, *Liturgical Traditions in the Didache* (Papers of the Estonian Theological Society in Exile 16) (Stockholm 1968) 53 f.

<sup>70</sup> "Textprobleme" 121 f.

<sup>71</sup> For the suggestion that earlier Egyptian initiation practice echoed or followed Syrian in having only pre-baptismal anointing cf. G. Kretschmar, "Beiträge zur Geschichte der Liturgie, insbesondere der Taufiturgie, in Aegypten," *Jahrbuch für Liturgik und Hymnologie* 8 (1963) 43 ff.; Bradshaw, "Baptismal Practice in the Alexandrian Tradition, Eastern or Western?" in P. Bradshaw ed., *Essays in Early Eastern Initiation* (Alcuin/GROW Liturgical Study 8) (Nottingham 1988) 15 f.

<sup>72</sup> See *Journal of Theological Studies* n.s. 45 (1994) 309. However, Vööbus, *Traditions* 56, had already commented on the awkwardness of such a correlation. Hall does not commit himself on the genuineness of the prayer or what the *stinoufi* might represent.

<sup>73</sup> The reference to the "immortal aion" is an evident echo of the "immortality" of the latter. Notice his attempt to bolster Ignatius' apostolic credentials in 7,46,4: Ignatius appointed second bishop of Antioch by Paul. Cf. Ps. Ign. *Ant.* 7,1.

<sup>74</sup> See the suggestion of the latter by E.C. Ratcliff, "The Old Syrian Baptismal Tradition and its Resettlement under the Influence of Jerusalem in the Fourth Century," *Studies in Church History* 2 (1965) 19. Moreover the archaic Christology of the prayer ("Jesus your child (*shēri/παῖς*)") and subordination implied (the anointed is subordinate to the anointer) might also have proved attractive to the compiler. Its absence in John Chrysostom, writing in Antioch not long afterwards, can be explained by the justifiable assumption that the *Ap. Con.* compiler was a member of an Arian or non-Nicene community. Conversely, Chrysostom's use of  $\mu\acute{\upsilon}\rho\omicron\nu\nu$  as a mixture of oil and  $\mu\acute{\upsilon}\rho\omicron\nu\nu$ , the latter interpreted in terms of his overarching bridal symbolism (cf. *Cat. hom.* 2.22: Wenger SC 50 145, and *Cat. hom.* 3.27: A. Papadopoulos-Kerameus, *Varia graeca sacra* (St. Petersburg 1909) 173/P.W. Harkins, *St. John Chrysostom: Baptismal Instructions* (ACW 31) (Westminster, Md/London 1963) 169), might represent his appropriation of the developing use of  $\mu\acute{\upsilon}\rho\omicron\nu\nu$  in Antioch.

<sup>75</sup> On *stinoufi* as a combination of *stoei* + *noufe* and rendering of the  $\epsilon\upsilon\omicron\delta\iota\alpha$  of 2 Cor. 2:15, see Crum, *Dictionary* 362b s.v. *stoi*. In any case the compiler clearly understood the prayer to refer to  $\mu\acute{\upsilon}\rho\omicron\nu\nu$ , as is corroborated by the Ignatian allusion.

<sup>76</sup> "Probleme" 167.

<sup>77</sup> Cf. Dix, "Confirmation" 6.

<sup>78</sup> However the fact that in the following section (44,3) he does associate all the acts involving laying on of hands (i.e. pre-baptismal anointing, baptism, chrism) with an epiclesis "of this sort," might imply he considered the ointment prayer here to be such.

<sup>79</sup> *Ep.* 70,2.

<sup>80</sup> The omission of any reference to chrismation in the baptismal section of the *Didache*, an objection of Audet, *Didache* 68 n. 3, could be countered by suggesting that the likely imitation of Jesus' baptism (echoing Matt. 3:16 f.? Note the threefold formula of Matt. 28:19) and the anointing of his head with  $\mu\acute{\upsilon}\rho\omicron\nu$  (in Matt. 26:7) underlying the rite and the prayer would suggest chrismation with  $\mu\acute{\upsilon}\rho\omicron\nu$  after baptism, a simple act not needing to be spelt out, unlike the water baptism, for which the gospel account offers no guidance. Further, the chrismation might have taken place apart from the baptismal site, when the baptised joined the community for the eucharist, cf. *Canons of Hippolytus* 19.

<sup>81</sup> *Ad Autol.* 1,12. His analogies suggest a more Hellenistic view of oil for all-over cleansing and may attest indirectly the transition to the cathartic/exorcistic view of the later Syrian tradition. Cf. *Acts of Thomas* 25-7; 121; 132; 157; Ps. Clem. *Rec.* 3,67,4 etc.

<sup>82</sup> For evidence of Western use of myrrh (or a mixture of oil and myrrh) after baptism, cf. Hipp. *Comm. in Dan.* 1,16,3; Tert. *De bapt.* 7 (but the reference is to oil, not myrrh or a myrrh-oil mixture).

<sup>83</sup> Cf. the continual stress in *Act. Thom.* (e.g. 25; 27; 120; 132; 157) on Jesus' Messiahship in the context of initiation, but with almost no allusion to his baptism. For Christ as first anointed by the Father with oil from the tree of life and thus called "Christ," cf. Ps. Clem. *Rec.* 1,45; for the episcopal chrismating of baptisands on the head as O.T. priests were anointed, to make them Christians from Christ, with holy oil as a type of spiritual baptism (i.e. the original chrismation of Christ) cf. *Ap. Con.* 3,16,3-4. It is only later Syrian commentators (e.g. John Chrysostom, *Cat. hom.* 3,13; Papadopoulos-Kerameus/Harkins ACW 164) who see our initiation as modelled on Jesus' baptism, while Cyril of Jerusalem (*Myst. cat.* 3,2) buttresses his support for post-baptismal chrismation with myrrh by identifying Jesus' chrismation with the descent of the Spirit ("intelligible 'oil of gladness'") after his baptism.

<sup>84</sup> Cf. Brock, "Transition" 216, 220-223; Cyr. Jer. *Myst. cat.* 3,1 f.; *Ap. Con.* 3,16,2-4; Theod. Mops. *Cat. hom.* 14,27 (R. Tonneau & R. Devresse, *Les homélies catéchétiques de Théodore de Mopsueste* (Studi e Testi 149) (Vatican City 1949) 457/A. Mingana, *Woodbrooke Studies* 6 (Cambridge 1933) 68 f.). For a similar development in Egypt cf. *Can. Hipp.* 19; Sarapion, *Sacr.* 15 and 16.

<sup>85</sup> Cf. her "From Alexandria to Rome: The Valentinian Connection to the Incorporation of Exorcism as a Pre-baptismal Rite," *Vigiliae Christianae* 44 (1990) 6-24.

<sup>86</sup> *Myst. cat.* 3,1 ff.

<sup>87</sup> Chrysostom is aware of the term  $\mu\acute{\upsilon}\rho\omicron\nu$  (see n. 74 above) but applies it to the pre-baptismal anointing, while the reference in Theodore of Mopsuestia (*Cat. hom.* 14,27), has been disputed. See Bradshaw, *Search* 122.

<sup>88</sup> *Pan.* 40,2,6-8. Note that the Cainites, a sect of my Gnostics (cf. Iren. *Adv. haer.* 1,31,1) attacked by Tertullian (*De bapt.* 1,2), also rejected water baptism. Cf. *Apoc. Adam* 84,4-85,18.

<sup>89</sup> Cf. *Pan.* 40,2,9-3,6: note the reference to  $\mu\upsilon\upsilon\tau\epsilon\mu\iota\kappa\omicron\nu\ \acute{\epsilon}\lambda\alpha\iota\omicron\nu$ , the gloss of  $\mu\acute{\upsilon}\rho\omicron\nu$  as balsam or nard and the order bath ( $\lambda\omicron\upsilon\tau\tau\acute{\rho}\omicron\nu$ ) and perfume ( $\epsilon\upsilon\delta\omicron\mu\iota\alpha$ ), suggesting the Cyrilline order and ingredient: baptism followed by chrismation with  $\mu\acute{\upsilon}\rho\omicron\nu$ .

<sup>90</sup> The similarity with Irenaeus' Valentinians and Celsus' and Origen's Ophites suggests the kind of rite sketched above: baptism into the Gnostic triad ("Mother and Father of the all . . .") followed by chrismation involving seals as talismans against the archons.

<sup>91</sup> 40,1,3-6. He had been deposed and banished by bishop Aetius (of Lydda?), and on return was finally unmasked by Epiphanius himself.

<sup>92</sup> Cf. *Myst. cat.* 3,3 f.

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