A Hellenistic Legacy: The Foundation for an 'Unorthodox' World View within the Byzantine Tradition (part two)

J.B. McMinn
A HELLENISTIC LEGACY: THE FOUNDATION FOR AN 'UNORTHODOX' WORLD VIEW WITHIN BYZANTINE TRADITION*

(part two)

The Gnostic World View

The gnostic world view, like that of Posidonian Stoicism, is a synoptic view which various Hellenistic religious systems share\(^1\). Also like the Posidonian view, it is an astrological *Weltanschauung* in which the seven planets play a primary role\(^2\). Commenting on this similarity, Bevan remarks:

> There is an undeniable family resemblance between his [Posidonius'] world, in which the souls rise through grosser air to the spheres of divine ether, and the world of the Gnostics a century or two later, where the souls strive to make their way upward through the demon-guarded spheres of the Seven Planets to the sphere of light and bliss beyond\(^3\).

But in Bevan's remark there lies implicit a fundamental difference between these world views, viz., in their interpretation of the astrological significance of the seven planets\(^4\). In the Stoic world view, as shown above, the planets are the divine rulers of the macrocosm, and as such they are the supreme and beneficent gods. According to the gnostic world view, however, they are demonic rulers of the physical world, subordinates to the first and

\(^*\) This monograph was read before the Society of Cultural Studies in Athens, Greece, on November 26, 1982. The notes of the text have been abbreviated for lack of space; complete notes may be supplied if requested.


\(^4\) There are other differences, of course, e.g., the difference between Stoic immanence and gnostic transcendence, but these differences may be seen incidentally, as they bear upon the problem of the astrological significance of the seven planets in gnostic cosmology.
ultimate God, who is beyond the planets. This disparaging view of the planets comes out of a sharply defined cosmic dualism, which distinguishes between the immanent world of nature and the transcendent world of spirit. Here arises a new mythological drama, the theme of which is the old conflict between good and evil. Its protagonists are the ultimate God of goodness, the seven evil planets, and man, who, tragically cast, is capable of both good and evil. The plot consists of a theological scheme, whereby man through the gift of divine gnosis overcomes the fatalistic tyranny of the planets to gain freedom and ultimate union with God. A brief description of this world picture and of its underlying sidereal theology will indicate clearly the astrological character of gnostic cosmology and the malevolent role which it assigns to the seven planets.

The Macrocosm

The pictorial cosmography of the gnostic world has two levels. It includes an outlook on the immanent world and a perspective on the transcendent world. Underlying and strengthening this cosmic dualism is the moral distinction between good and evil. Matter is evil, and all that is material is consequently tainted with evil. Spirit, on the other hand, is good, and whatever would achieve the state of goodness must divest itself of the material. Thus the immanent and the transcendent worlds of gnostic cosmography become two opposing moral spheres in which the planets and the ultimate God are respectively the forces of evil and good.

The immanent world. Like the Stoic universe, the immanent world of the gnostics is a sensible cosmos of sublunary and superlunary parts. In the sublunary part there are the four concentric spheres of the four elements:

---

5 For a synoptic view of the various aspects of gnostic cosmology, vide Murray, Five Stages, p. 140 sq.; Festugière, Personal Religion, p. 124-139; Knox, St. Paul and the Church of the Gentiles, p. 41 sq., et passim; Bell, Cults and Creeds, p. 75 sq.

6 The accounts of the gnostic world view are largely fragmentary and differ frequently in detail. Partial data, e.g., are found in Serapic fragments, Pauline writings, Greek and Latin patrology, and Neo-Platonic commentaries. The most systematic account, however, appears in the Corpus Hermeticum, and particularly in The Poimandres, i.e., Libellus I of Scott, ed., Hermetica, Oxford, 1924, I, 114-133. It is from The Poimandres, therefore, that the following description is drawn primarily.

7 Corp. Herm., I, 19-21; Stob., Herm., XI, 18 sq.

8 Corp. Herm., I, 7-9 and 20; cf. also Corp. Herm., XVI, 12 and 29; XVII, 19, where the αἰσθήτος κόμος is distinguished from the νοητός κόμος.
earth, water, air, and fire. The two lower spheres are inhabited by men and all the species of plant and animal life. The upper air and fiery zone have for inhabitants the airy demons and the souls of the dead who have not yet ascended to the sphere of heaven. Above the moon is the fiery region which is divided into the spheres of the seven planets and the fixed stars. The planets are living beings, endowed with superior intelligence and function as the administrators of the physical world. They encompass with their orbits the world perceived by sense; and their administration is called Destiny. The fixed stars are also astral powers, but their function is subordinate to the seven planets.

9 Corp. Herm., I, 5b; III, 2ab. N.B. that the mixing of the four elements gives rise to all sublunary bodies; cf. Corp. Herm., I, 11b; IX, 6-8; Stob., Herm., XXVI, 13 sq. Note the detailed account of these four regions in Stob., Herm., XXV, 11-13.

10 Corp. Herm., I, 11b; Stob., Herm., XXV, 10 sq.

11 Corp. Herm., XVI, 8 sq.; Asclepius, III, 33b. In connection with this passage in Asclepius, Scott (Hermetica, III, 274-275 and 276) includes an excerpt from Lydus, De Mens., 4, 32 and 148, which describes the ascent of the souls from the lower air to the upper air or possibly the celestial fire. Cf. Galat. 4:3, 9; Coloss. 2:8, 20; Ephes. 1:20; 2:6; 6:12.

12 Corp. Herm., III, 2b; Stob., Herm., XXV, 9. Within these spheres also are the souls of the dead who are ascending to the ogdoas, on which vide infra n. 18.

13 Corp. Herm., I, 9. The Greek term used here is δοῦλοιτηρεῖς; cf. the use of οἰκείοιμες in Dioq. Laert., VII, 147, and δυνάμεις ιδωρογοῦν in Plut., De Is. et Os., 378a, trans. F.C. Bubbitt, LCL. In Corp. Herm., XVI, 13 sq., the administrative function of the seven planets is described in conjunction with demonic intermediaries. The demons are described as drawn up in παλαιθδσις or χοροφός, i.e., columns, battalions, or corps, and each παλαιθδσας of demons is commanded by one of the planets. This account, however, assigns chief power to the sun. Scott, Hermetica, II, 451, says: «the planet-gods, working in subordination to the Sun, govern the material world; i.e. they collectively discharge the function of ειωρεμένη. And each of them discharges his special part of this function through the agency of a particular corps of daemons subject to his orders. Cf. Gen. 1:14-19, H.B. Swete ed., The Old Testament in Greek According to the Septuagint, Cambridge, 1895. Vide infra the section on Heimarmene.

14 It is necessary to remark here that the fixed stars (the 36 Decani) are «subordinate» to the seven planets, in so far as the planets are the administrators of the sensible world; Corp. Herm., I, 9. N.B., however, the government of the material universe as described in Asclepius, III, 19b and 27c. Scott, Hermetica, III, 109. Wherever the Decani appear as the sovereign visible gods and the planets as subordinate powers, this is the result of the influence from the astrologers of the «Egyptian» school. The «Chaldean» school always attributes primacy to the seven planets; vide Scott, Hermetica, III, 372. E.g., the writer of Corp. Herm., I (The Poimandros), as Scott, Hermetica, II, 33, notes, has nothing to say about the fixed stars, but takes into account the influence of the seven planets. Cf. also Bouche-Leclercq, L'Astrologie Greque, p. 215-240; Boll, Sphaera, Leipzig, 1903, p. 216 sq.; 316; 336, n. 2; 372 sq.
The transcendent world. Above and beyond this sublunary and superlunary physical realm is the transcendent intelligible world, which is the archetype and exemplar of the sensible world. In this incorporeal sphere the supreme God resides, and around him are gathered his innumerable Powers. From this vantage point, he governs the whole universe, with the


16 Corp. Herm., I, 8a: όρφεύτωσι ἐξῆς. Cf. Philo, On the Confusion of Tongues, 171-172, where he asserts that «God is one, but He has around Him numberless Potencies... Through these Potencies the incorporeal and intelligible world was framed, the ὅρφεύτωσι of this phenomenal world, that being a system of invisible ideal forms, as this is of visible material bodies». Dodd, The Bible and the Greeks, p. 108 sq. As Scott, Hermetica, II, 27, observes: «This 'intelligible world' is the παριδήσιμα in God’s mind, after the model of which the ‘sensible world’ is organized». Festugière, op. cit., p. 126 sq.


18 I.e. enthroned above the firmament of stars, which is called the ogdoas. Cf. Corp. Herm., I, 26a. Scott, Hermetica, II, 63, writes: «The substance of the ogdoas is the eighth and outermost sphere, that of the fixed stars». Cf. Basilides in Hippol. (Orig.), Ref. Omnia. Haer. (Migne), VII, 25-27, who refers to the ogdoas as the sphere of the fixed stars, the κεφαλὴ τοῦ παντὸς κόσμου. Sometimes he uses ogdoas as a personal name signifying «the Power that resides in the eighth sphere»; vide Scott, Hermetica, II, 64, n. 5. Valentinus, in Irenæus, C. Haer., I, 1 and 5 (Migne), uses the word ogdoas in two senses: (1) as the group of the eight highest aeons; (2) as the eighth sphere, i.e., the sphere of the fixed stars, which is above the planetary hebdomas. Ogdoas as a person-name also occurs in the Leiden Magical Papyrus W (Dieterich, Abraxas), XVI, 45, and XVII, 5, where it refers to the Being which rules
planetary administrators in the *Hebdomas* and the demons in the airy zone serving as his intermediaries. Also in this intelligible sphere are the pure souls of men who have risen at death through the elemental zones and the evil planetary spheres to immortal bliss with the ultimate God. Their lot is to rejoice in the contemplation of the beatific vision of God in his glory and in the comprehension of the ultimate reason of things.

The Planets

*Necessity.* Within the various gnostic systems the seven planets take on a terrifying role. They are not only administrators of the physical world but also astral powers which inexorably pronounce man's fate. As such, they put into effect the dread powers of Necessity, viz., ἀνάγκη and εἰμιστημόνη.

---

19 *Hebdomas* refers to the region of the seven planets; *vide Basilides in Hippol.* (Orig.), Ref. Omn. Haer., VII, 26-27 (Migne); *Ophites in Irenaeus, C. Haer.*, I, 30, 9 (Migne). *Valentinus in Irenaeus, C. Haer.*, I, 5, 3 (Migne), holding the ogdoas to be the sphere of Achamoth-Sophia, and the planetary hebdomas to be the sphere of her son the Demiurgus, refers sometimes to Sophia as the ogdoas and the Demiurgus as the Hebdomas.


22 In *Corp. Herm.*, I, 26a, Poimandres says that at death the souls ἀνέφερον ταύτα πρὸς τὸν κόσμον, i.e., they leave the material world and enter the intelligible world, which is filled with the presence of God. That is to say, as some of the Gnostics put it, they enter the πάλαιμα; *vide Scott, Hermetica*, II, 67; also *Bell, Cults and Creeds*, p. 92. Cf. *Corp. Herm.*, IV, 8b-9; V, 3-5. A variation of this theme appears in *Corp. Herm.*, X, 7, where the soul is pictured as passing through three successive transformations on its *itinerarium ad deum* becoming first a man, then a demon, and finally a god. Concerning this apotheosis, Hermes states that «human souls, when they have attained to a beginning of immortal life, change into demons, and thereafter pass on into the choral dance of the gods». This probably means that they take their place among the star-gods, reflecting here more of a Stoic rather than a gnostic apotheosis. For an account of the gnostic ascent toward God, *vide Cumont, After Life*, in *Roman Paganism*, New Haven, 1922, p. 190-213, et passim, and also *Festugière, op. cit.*, p. 122-139.

23 As the descriptive term for these powers, «Necessity» is not altogether adequate. It will be noted that gnostic influence in Hermetic literature refines this notion into two distinct ideas, which are actually subordinate to a third notion closely related to the two. A similar difficulty occurred in the discussions of Necessity in Chaldean astrology (*vide* part one, in *Kernos* 1 [1988], p. 73, n. 50-51) and in the Stoic world.
According to this distinction, Ananke is that power which puts constraint on particular things within the cosmos, "a firm and unalterable decision of Providence." Heimarmene, on the other hand, is Destiny, the power of cyclical movement. In heaven, it is the aitia τῆς ἀστραν διαθέσεως; on earth, it is the process of γένεσις, and φθορά. Under these compelling forces the planets become powers of evil rather than good. They are malignant and pitiless, subjecting man to their dominion and making his life a vain thing. Yet, in their administration the planets are under πρόωνω, the

---

view (vide ibidem, n. 52). Yet, this term, properly understood, may apply here without too much ambiguity.

24 Corp. Herm., III, 1a, declares that nature operates κατ' ἀνάγκην and, in 4, that the control of ἀνάγκη depends upon the θεῶν ἑρκύκλιων ἑναριθμη ἀδραμματι, i.e., the star-gods. Cf. also Corp. Herm., IX, 8; XVI, 11; Stob., Herm., VII, 1; XXIII, 28 (Kronos is here designated as the father of Ananke) and 38. Cf. St. Paul's use of Ananke in 1 Cor. 9:16.

25 Corp. Herm., I, 9: ἡ διοίκησις αὐτῶν [the seven planets] εἰμαρμένη κολείτως; cf. 15. Also Corp. Herm., XVI, 16: τούτην δὲ τὴν διοίκησιν ἑρμῆς εἰμαρμένη ἐκάθευν. In Stob., Herm., VII, 3, men are under Heimarmene by forces at work in their birth. In Stob., Herm., XV, 6; XVII, 1; XVIII, 3 and 5, however, men are under Heimarmene as a result of evil choices.

26 Stob., Herm., XIV, 1; vide on this passage, Scott, Hermetica, I, 437, n. 1.

27 Stob., Herm., XIII: ἀνάγκη ἐστι κρίσις βεβαια καὶ ἀμετάτρεπτος προνοίας.


29 Stob., Herm., XIV, 2. Scott, Hermetica, III, 429, suggests the use of κνήσεως in place of the suspected διαθέσεως: "It might be said that Heimarmene is (in subordination to Providence) aitia τῆς ἀστραν κνήσεως..." On earth, this power takes the form of cyclic succession of births and deaths. The notion that Heimarmene affects things in the sublunary zones by the movements of the planets and stars occurs throughout the Hermetica. Cf., e.g., Corp. Herm., I, 9, on the administrative function of the planets; Corp. Herm., III, 4, man's destiny determined by the δρομῆσις ἑρκύκλιων θεῶν; Corp. Herm., XVI, 16, on the planetary administration of the sublunary world through the agency of their subordinates the demons; Stob., Herm., XII, 2: ὁ πλοῖον ἐκαθαρμένης οἱ ἀστέρες, N.B. the Stoic variation of this theme in Asclepius III, 38b, where the caelestes dii rule over things universal, and the terreni administer particulars; vide Scott, Hermetica, III, 248 sq.

30 Stob., Herm., VI, 2-17. In this Excerpt the planets, the Decans, the Liturgi — in fact all the stars — are considered to be maleficient powers, which bring calamities upon man and all things sublunar. Scott, Hermetica, III, 363, observes: "The stars were held to be instruments of εἰμαρμένη; and it was commonly thought that εἰμαρμένη is a maleficient power, and that the salvation of man consists in escape from εἰμαρμένη, i.e. from the dominance of astral influences." Cf. also Murray, Five Stages, p. 141.
supreme or sovereign design of God; thus, ἀνάγκη and εἰμαρμένη are actually subservient to the decisions of Providence. On the basis of this theological distinction gnosticism provides a way of escape from astrological fatalism. If man looks to Providence, he can attain to gnosis and thereby nullify the tyrannical power of the planets.

Gnosis. The gnostic systems, therefore, are overwhelmingly concerned with man's escape from the prison of the seven planets. And the formula for freedom which they offer prefigures the later epic formula that «the all wise God and the hero's courage conquer Fate». Only here, instead of the «hero's courage», it is the «initiate's gnosis» which overcomes Fate. Gnosis, however, unlike courage, does not originate from man; it is a gift from heaven. Moreover, it is not speculative knowledge, but rather δύναμις, divine power which unites man with God. The immediate purpose of this

31 Corp. Herm., I, 9-11a. Although the term ἱπόνως is not used here, its sense is clearly implied; cf. Scott, Hermetica, II, 34.
32 Stob., Herm., XII, 1: πρόνως δέ ἄντι αὐτοπελής λόγος τοῦ ἐκουφραντος θεού· δόο δὲ τούτοις συνοφρυους δυνάμεις· ἀνάγκη καὶ εἰμαρμένη.
33 Corp. Herm., I, 25-26a; X, 23; Asclépius III, 29b. Cf. also the use of magic to overcome Ananke, the fatalis necessitatis lex, in Eitrem, P. Osl., Fasc. I, 133 sq.
37 Corp. Herm., X, 9; γνῶσις as the perfect science cannot be taught by speech or learned by hearing, rather it is the δόρον τοῦ θεοῦ; cf. Bell, op. cit., p. 91. As W. Morgan, The Religion and Theology of Paul, Edinburgh, 1917, p. 136, puts it: «The knowledge which makes man a partaker of the divine nature is no product of philosophical speculation, but a gift of Heaven».
38 Corp. Herm., III, 3b. Cf. also the Neo-Platonic work Abammonis ad Porphyrius Responsum, X, 5c, ed. Scott, Hermetica, IV, Oxford, 1936; this work is commonly known as Tamblichus' De Mysteriis Liber and will be referred to as such when citations are made from G. Parthey's edition (Berlin, 1857). Scott's reconstruction of this passage, IV, 93, reads in part: οἱ μὲν τοῦ θεοῦ ἐγκαταστὸς τῷ θεῷ σύνεια. On the γνῶσις θεοῦ, vide, Th. Whittaker, The Neo-Platonists: A Study in the History of Hellenism, Cambridge, 1918, p. 220; H.A.A. Kennedy, St. Paul and the Mystery-Religions, New York, 1913, p. 25; Bell, op. cit., p. 92; Murray, op. cit., p. 154. Commenting on the text of Corp. Herm., I, 16, Scott, Hermetica, II, 48, states that «When a man is 'illuminated', or has attained to gnosis, he is no longer subject to the baleful influence of his planet, and the 'ruling passion' derived from that planet is suppressed in him.» Gnosis is thus pre-eminently δύναμις, which redeems man from
esoteric «knowledge» is to provide the initiate with the effective means of exorcising or propitiating the planets, so that he might escape their fatalistic tyranny. Under its tutelage he learns magic formulae, prayers, hymns, incantations, which appease the wrath of the planets. He also learns the mystery of redemption, which provides at death the safe conduct of the soul through the planetary spheres as it ascends to its home in heaven. The final purpose of gnosis, however, is more than the securing of freedom from hostile powers. It is the attaining to ultimate union with God, the divine fulfillment of human destiny.

**Magic.** An essential aspect of gnosis is the art of magic. Through this occult power the gnostic adept has limited control over the planets. He can compel or cajole them with prayers, invocations, and hymns to act in his favor. For example, a prayer to the sun in the *Papyri Osloenses* restrains wrath, brings victory, and procures favor for the one who offers the prayer. In another magical prayer the sun is addressed to procure for the sorcerer the dominion over a *βιοθάνατος*. Sun-prayers are also effective in medicine.

---

*Heimarmene* and from matter, i.e., primordial evil, both of which are imposed upon man through the corrupting influence of the seven planetary gods.


43 *Oslo Magic. P.* (Eitrem), I, 211-130: Ἑδύν ἐλεονη, The sun is addressed here as ὁ ἁγαθός δούλον τοῦ κόσμου and ὁ στέφανος τῆς οἰκουμένης; vide Eitrem's notes, in *P. Osl.*, Fasc. I, 86-87, on these two epithets.

they rid man of gout, fever, and other pestilences. The sun, frequently addressed in magical hymns as the παντοκράτωρ or κοσμοκράτωρ, is thought in its rising and setting to be of theurgic importance to all life on earth. The moon also in its waxing and waning and in its conjunction with other celestial bodies is thought to be of theurgic importance to all life on earth.

85. N.B. APULIEUS, The Golden Ass, XI, 2 sq., where Lucius prays to Isis, the Queen of Heaven, to end his shame and suffering in the shape of an ass. The astrological connection here is indicated in PLUT., De Is. et Os., 368c-d, and 372d, where Isis is identified with the moon; her consort is Osiris, the sun. CÚMONT (After Life, p. 141) remarks that βιοδάναις is a popular form for a word for καθέκόστη- meaning 'all life on earth'. This classification, he thinks, originated with the astrologists who claimed to enumerate, in accordance with the position of Mars and Saturn, all the kinds of death reserved for victims of these murderous planets, and to foretell whether these unfortunate were to be drowned, burnt, poisoned, hanged, beheaded, crucified, impaled, crucified to death, thrown to the beasts, or given over to yet more atrocious tortures.

Alex. Trall., XII, 563, ed. T. Puschmann, Berlin, 1886, cited by EITREM, P. Obs., Fasc. I, 88, recommends an amulet against gout: ὁ ἡλίος ἐν τοῖς ἀνώμοις τοῦτοις καὶ ἀνακανυζέται καθ' ἐκάστην ἡμέραν, κύκλος στερέωσε τὸ πλάσμα τοῦτο... Cf. also the mantic nature of the δράκων as a representation of the sun, e.g., as the φιλομάρχος δράκων in Oslo Magic. P. (Eitrem), I, 186; in this connection vide EITREM, op. cit., Fasc. I, 81, 86-87, and 141. N.B. In Pistis Sophia, V, 369, trans. G.R.S. Mead (London, 1921), describes the disk of the sun as a great dragon with its tail in its mouth; also The Testament of Solomon, VI, 10, ed. C.C. McCown, Leipzig, 1922, indicates that one may see τοὺς δράκοντας τοὺς ἐκουφαντώς κάτω εἰσιν καὶ σύρουσι τὸ ἄρμα τοῦ ἡλίου, reminiscent perhaps of Elijah’s apotheosis in II Kings 2:11 (LXX), as well as Medea’s (by implication) in Eur., Medea, 1921, ed. A.W. Verrall, London, 1950; cf. CÚMONT, op. cit., p. 156 sq.

45

46

47


tial bodies has magical significance. Astrological medicine, for example, depends on the position of the moon in relation to the planets and the zodiac. According to the London Magical Papyrus, a hymn to Mercury is to be recited while facing the rising moon and the rising sun in order to obtain an oracular response. Through spells, bans, and imprecations the gnostic counteracts the demonic force of the planets and staves off unfavorable consequences. For instance, charms are used against the evil influence of

48 Oslo Magic. P., I, 321 sq. (Eitrem), provides a remedy to prevent conception; the amulet is to be worn ὀσκοφοσοτικὸς ὀφθαλμὸς σελήνης ἐν θηλυκῷ ἔοιδα ἐν ἡμέρᾳ Ἀρμονίᾳ ἡ Εἰρμοῦ. According to astrological belief in Greece, the moon was the female principle of all life, being referred to by the theologians as the μήτη τοῦ κόσμου: Plut., De Is. et Os., 368c; 372c; the moon influences the erotic life of both sexes; the Egyptians, e.g., ἔργοι τὴν σελήνην ἐτικελοῦνται; 353f: when the moon was on the wane, the Egyptian priests abstained from onions, pigs, etc. And Eitrem, P. Osl., Fasc. I, 128 sq., remarks that the waning of the moon is prescribed in malevolent magic and that it also has theurgic effect on fever, gout, and surgical operations. Note also the significance of the rising, waxing, new, and full moon. Further, Eitrem states that «the prophetication depended on the position of the moon in relation to the planets and to the signs of the zodiac... The first sign of the zodiac was male, the second female etc., according to the Pythagorean rule that odd numbers were male and even numbers female. The moon and the female planets were especially favourable or mighty in the female signs, as were, conversely, the sun and the male planets in the male signs.» Cf., in this connection, αἱ ἐπὶ παρθένου καὶ ἐπὶ τὸ θεῖο, in the Mithra Liturgy (Dieterich, Eine Mithrasliturgie), 12, 16 sq., who attend the μήτη τοῦ θεοῦ; the ἐπὶ εὐεξίας κόσμους and the ἐπὶ παίδας ἀνακτας of the Orphic tradition, Orpica, Frag. 94, ed. E. Abel, Leipzig, 1885; the ἐπὶ ἐνθρόνων ἀρχενθήθεικα in Corp. Herm., I, 16; and the ἐπὶ κυνηστα (female star-gods) in The Testament of Solomon, VIII, 1-4 (McCown). Along with their specific meanings, these diverse sevens apparently represent the planets in their masculine and feminine aspect; N.B. Scott, Hermetica, II, 46, n. 2 and 97, n. 2; III, 376; Dieterich, Abraxas, p. 107 sq.; Murray, Five Stages, p. 140.


Saturn\textsuperscript{52}; and recipes, which are to be accompanied with the clanging of cymbals, drive away the moon\textsuperscript{53}. Astral incantations and exorcisms employ the seven vowels, \textit{αεομωυ}, as the mystic signs of the planets\textsuperscript{54}, for the ancient learning of the Chaldeans\textsuperscript{55} had long ago correlated the vowels and the planets with magical significance. Thus, the one who uses this vocalic formula has control over all the planets\textsuperscript{56}. It is possible also that this same general planetary control appears in many exorcisms based upon \textit{ἀνάγκη}\textsuperscript{57}. At any rate, it is clear that magical charms and formulae serve as occult means to the gnostic end, viz., the freedom of the soul from the fatal influence of the seven planets.

\textit{Mystery.} Gnosticism offers in \textit{μυστήριον}, however, the ultimate prospects of overcoming the relentless tyranny of the planets\textsuperscript{58}. But only the «fully

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{52} Cf. \textsc{Eitrem}, \textit{P. Osl.}, Fasc. I, 130 : «Saturnus who according to Greek mythology swallowed his own children, was according to common astrological belief γυρχόν and εξορών, and therefore caused barrenness and childlessness.» \textit{Leiden Magic. P. W} (\textsc{Dieterich}, \textit{Abraxas}, XXIV, 15), refers to Kronos as a hostile star. \textit{Vide Dieterich, Abraxas}, p. 78.
  \item \textsuperscript{53} Cf. \textsc{Eitrem}, \textit{P. Osl.}, Fasc. I, 76, who cites from a papyrus, χολλός κροηθείς λίκε τά φάσματα, as an instance of the clanging of cymbals which drove away the moon.
  \item \textsuperscript{54} Cf. \textsc{Paris Magic. P.} (Wessely), 1301, which reads in part : ἄρχεται θεά μεγίστη, ἄρχοντα ὁφαρτον, σύστημα τοῦ παντός, πολυφθής ἀρμονία τῶν ἅλων αειμονο καλθίνον. Here the Great Bear is invoked as the «all-splendorous harmony of the ordered group of the seven planets. It is altogether likely here that the seven stars of the Bear are representative of the seven planets». As \textsc{Scott}, \textit{Hermetica}, III, 378, n. 2, suggests, these are the \textit{πρόσωμα} of the planets. On this passage, \textit{vide} also \textsc{Dieterich}, \textit{Abraxas}, p. 103, n. 1. Again, in the \textit{Zauberpapyri} (Preisendanz), IV, 2194 sq., an invocation to ὅ αἰών τῶν αἰωνῶν speaks of the \textit{αειμονο} which, although the text is not clear, represents the seven planets. The use of the seven vowels as symbols of the planets occurs as a magic formula in the \textit{Mithra Liturgy} (\textsc{Dieterich}, \textit{Eine Mithrasliturgie}), 10 sq. and 33.
  \item \textsuperscript{55} \textsc{Plutarch}, \textit{The E at Delphi}, 386a.
  \item \textsuperscript{56} \textsc{Murray}, \textit{Five Stages}, p. 136-137, comments : «The planets also become Elements in the \textit{Kosmos, Stoicheia...} The word \textit{Stoicheia, 'elementa', had long been used for the Greek A B C, and in particular for the seven vowels αειμονο. That is no chance, no mere coincidence. The vowels are the mystic signs of the Planets; they have control over the planets. Hence strange prayers and magic formulae innumerable».
  \item \textsuperscript{57} \textit{Ἀνάγκη}, in this sense, refers by synecdoche to the talismanic power of the seven planets. Cf. the \textit{Mithra Liturgy} (\textsc{Dieterich}, \textit{Eine Mithrasliturgie}), 10, 4 sq. : ἐπικολύματι ένεκα τῆς κατεξουσίας καὶ πικρᾶς καὶ ἀκαραίτητον ἀνάγκης; \textit{also Eitrem, P. Ols.}, Fasc. I, 133 sq.
  \item \textsuperscript{58} \textit{Corp. Herm.}, I, 16. Cf. \textsc{Scott}, \textit{Hermetica}, II, 46 sq., on \textit{μυστήριον} in connection with man's relation to the seven planets; also \textsc{Kennedy}, \textit{op. cit.} (n. 38), p. 72 sq. and 129 sq.; \textsc{S. Angus}, \textit{The Mystery-Religions and Christianity}, New York, 1925, p. 39-75.
\end{itemize}
initiated are worthy of this wisdom. It is the mystery of complete redemption, the apotheosis of the soul. According to this eschatological doctrine, man achieves the final victory over the seven evil planets and the ascent of his disembodied soul to the highest of the celestial spheres. At this point gnosis involves the union of myth and mystery, for underlying the mystical ascent of the soul is the story of man’s origin, fall, and restoration. The details of this redemption-myth differ in the various gnostic accounts, but the motif is essentially the same. Man is originally a son of God, incorporeal and immortal, and has his abode in the sphere of heaven above the planets. For one reason or another he falls from his high estate, is incarnated, and takes up residence on earth. In descending to earth, he passes through the planetary spheres, where he receives from each of the planets something of its evil nature. Thus living on a plane below the planets, he becomes subject to their evil will. Although now in part corporeal and mortal, he is in respect of his true being still divine and immortal. Yet two destinies are open to him. If he yields to the rule of the planets, turning to carnal desire and love of the body, he falls under the power of death. If, however, he recognizes his divinity and his essential superiority to the planets, he may enter into mystic communion with God, be redeemed, and overcome the evil influence of the planets. The finale of this redemption-myth comes at death, when man’s soul separates itself from the body and ascends to

59 Corp. Herm., IV, 4, speaks of those who have received baptism τοῦ νόσημα and who have got a share τῆς γνώσης as τέλειοι. Philo, On the Cherubim, 42, refers to the μόσαν as those who receive instruction in the τελείας θείας. St. Paul, I Corinth. 2:6, considers σοφία a higher level of instruction which he presents to the τέλειοι; vide Kennedy, op. cit., p. 130, and Morgan, op. cit. (n. 37), p. 165 sq.

60 Corp. Herm., I, 25-26a; IV, 8b; XI (2), 19. Cf. Dieterich, Eine Mithrasliturgie, p. 180 sq., «der Ideen von des Himmelsreise der Seele». As Scott, Hermetica, II, 61, observes, this notion was probably adopted by the Mithraists of the Roman Empire and represented symbolically in their ritual. The details of the Mithraic ritual appear in Orig., C. Cels., VI, 22 (Migne); the planets are referred to as the κλίματα τῆς θείας. It was probably from the Mithraists that this notion of the apotheosis of the soul passed to the Christian Gnostics, who substituted the names of angels for those of the planets-gods; cf. Orig., C. Cels., VI, 22-31 (Migne). Vide another Gnostic account in Irenaeus, C. Haer., I, 30, 12 (Migne). Basilides in Hippol. (Orig.), Ref. Omn. Haer., VII, 27 (Migne), speaks of the death and ascension of Jesus. Although the eschatological significance is not emphasized in Lucius’ initiation into the Isis mystery cult, Apuleius, The Golden Ass., XI, 18-25, his visionary ascent into the celestial spheres portends the actual apotheosis at death. On the diverse aspects of gnostic apotheosis, vide Bousset, Die Himmelreise der Seele, in ARW, 4 (1901), p. 136-169 and 229-273.

61 Corp. Herm., X, 24b; Asclepius, I, 8. The account which follows here is taken primarily from The Poimandres, Corp. Herm., I, 12-26a.
the sphere of heaven from which it came. The account given in the Poimandres is typical of this apotheosis.

[At death] ... the bodily senses go back to their own sources, becoming parts of the universe, and entering into fresh combinations to do other work. And thereupon the man mounts upward through the structure of the heavens.

And to the first zone of heaven [Moon] he gives up the force which works increase and that which works decrease; to the second zone [Mercury], the machinations of evil cunning; to the third zone [Venus], the lust whereby men are deceived; to the fourth zone [Sun], domineering arrogance; to the fifth zone [Mars], unholy daring and rash audacity; to the sixth zone [Jupiter], evil strivings after wealth; and to the seventh zone [Saturn], the falsehood which lies in wait to work harm. And thereupon, having been stripped of all that was wrought upon him by the structure of the heavens, he ascends to the substance of the eighth sphere [the fixed stars], being now possessed by his own proper power; and he sings, together with those who dwell there, hymning the Father; and they that are there rejoice with him at his coming. And being made like to those with whom he dwells, he hears the Powers, who are above the substance of the eighth sphere, singing praise, to God with a voice that is theirs alone. And thereafter, each in his turn, they [the men who have ascended to the eighth sphere] mount upward to the Father; they give themselves up to the Powers, and becoming Powers themselves, they enter into God. This is the Good; this is the consummation, for those who have got gnosis62.

The Astrological Role of the Planets

In the preceding sections it has been shown that the astrological character of Hellenistic cosmology appears most clearly in the importance which the Stoic and the gnostic systems attach to the planets and that this astrological emphasis is patently of Chaldean origin. From this account it is also clear that the planets have a dual astrological role in the Hellenistic setting. In keeping with Chaldean astrology, the planets are divine rulers who preside over the physical world, determining its phenomena and processes. But, more than cosmic rulers, the planets are astral deities who stand in a certain moral relation to man. According to the Stoic world view, for example, they are the supreme beneficent gods who offer man salvation from the demonic forces of Fortune and Fate; while according to the gnostic world view, they

62 Corp. Herm., I, 25-26a. Vide Cumont, Les Religions Orientales, p. 265 sq., n. 91, where he argues for «la provenance babylonienne de la doctrine que les âmes remontent au ciel en traversant les sept sphères planétaires».
are evil subordinate deities who thwart man's attempt for freedom and union with the ultimate God of Heaven. It remains now to discuss more specifically this dual astrological role of the planets, considering first their administrative relation to the world and secondly their moral relation to man.

The Planets and the Physical Order

Since the conception of the physical world in both the Stoic and the gnostic systems is essentially the same, it is not necessary to distinguish these systems in describing the astrological role of the planets as comic rulers. Moreover, in both systems, the planets have the same administrative office. They are the gods who rule the physical world through the power of Necessity. This regulative power the planets administer according to the constitutive division of the physical world into its sublunary and superlunary parts. The planets, therefore, may be regarded in this astrological role as sublunary and superlunary rulers, and the role itself may be indicated by characteristic epithets which designate particular ruling functions.

The Planets as Sublunary Rulers

Rulers of the elements. One of the most significant ruling functions of the seven planets within the sublunary zones is their regulative control over the four elements. Simplicius refers to the planets in this capacity under the characteristic epithet θεοὶ στοιχειοκράτορες. The positions of the planets in the sky, their mutual relations and energies, and their own particular dispositions determine the various combinations of the elements, which give rise to all physical phenomena. Winds, rain, drought, earthquakes, and other catastrophic events, usually ascribed to the operation of Chance, are actually under the divine auspices of the planets. Moreover, the more natural courses of events and development of phenomena are also under the direction of the planets. For example, Cicero observes that the sun in regulating the changes of the four seasons is an indirect cause of all creatures which exist.

---


65 Diod., II, 30, 4-5.
on the land and in the sea\textsuperscript{66}. Similarly, in a magical papyrus, the sun is singed out as the ἀλήμων θαλασσοκράτωρ\textsuperscript{67}. Iamblichus refers to both the sun and the moon as presiding over all γένεσις in the sublunar world\textsuperscript{68}. And Cicero remarks that the moon brings nourishment to animals and stimulates their growth and causes plants to thrive and attain their full development\textsuperscript{69}. Also on commemorative reliefs there are various inscriptions which contain epithets descriptive of the planets in this astrological function. For example, in a Palmyran inscription Saturn is referred to as the star-god of night\textsuperscript{70}. Jupiter, usually designated as the god of lightning, is represented on an astrological plaque as the god of iron\textsuperscript{71}. The gnostic systems frequently attribute each of the planets to one of the elements: the moon is the ethereal earth; Mercury and Saturn the water; Venus and Jupiter the air; the sun and Mars the fire\textsuperscript{72}. In the mysteries of Mithra the planets are represented symbolically by the seven different metals of which the Mithraic ladder to

\textsuperscript{66} Cic., De Nat. Deo., II, 49.

\textsuperscript{67} Paris Magic. P. (Wessely), 1596-1605; cf. also Zauerpapyri (Preisendanz), IV, 1596-1604, both of which read in part: πρὸς Ἐλληνον λόγον ἐπικαλούμαι σε, τὸν μέγιστον θείν... ἀλήμων θαλασσοκράτωρ. The sun is also referred to in the Paris Magic. P. (DIETERICH, Abraxas, p. 49), 588 sq., as φωκοράτωρ. In all the hymns and invocations to the sun, its rising and setting are especially noted as being of great importance to all life on earth; cf. EITREM, P. Oe., Fasc. I, 65.

\textsuperscript{68} Abammonis ad Prophyrium Responsum, VIII, 3d (Scott): καὶ ἄλλῃ τῆς φύσεως ὀλης παρι γένεσιν ἄρη, ἤτονια σελήνη διάσας. Cf. SCOTT, Hermetica, IV, 64. I have referred to Iamblichus here in connection with this passage because this work is more commonly known was Iamblichus De Mysteriis Liber; vide supra n. 38. As regards the problem of authorship, vide SCOTT, Hermetica, IV, 40f. According to WHITTAKER, op. cit., p. 121 sq., Iamblichus was a native of Chalceis in Coele-Syria, who followed Porphyry in the Neo-Platonic succession, teaching primarily in Syria; he died in the reign of Constantine, c. A.D. 330. On the theurgic nature of his De Mysteriis, vide DODDS, op. cit. (n. 47), p. 287 sq.

\textsuperscript{69} Cic., De Nat. Deor., II, 50. Cf. MACROB., Comm. in Somn. Scipion., I, 19, 23 (Stahl).

\textsuperscript{70} Vide inscription in CUMONT, Les Religions Orientales, pl. X, concerning which Curnont notes: «Saturne est, suivant une doctrine astrologique très répandue, le soleil de la nuit».

\textsuperscript{71} CUMONT, op. cit., p. 105, fig. 7; cf. also pl. XI, p. 118 sq., and especially p. 137 sq.

heaven is composed. This mystical symbolism is extended so that plants and stones are also attached to the planets and receive theurgic powers from this association. As a consequence the busts of the planet-gods and other planetary charms are used as phylacteries to control the elements.

Rulers of time. Not only do the planets exercise dominion over physical nature but they also serve as tutelary rulers of sublunar time. Ptolemy thus refers to them as χρονοκράτορες. Each planet has a special power over a period of time: hours, days, weeks, months, seasons, years, and even centuries and millenaries. These periods become propitious or unpromising according to the mythological nature of the planet presiding at the time. Of special significance is the association of the seven chronokratores with seven sacred days. Under this planetary influence there evolves a new way of reckoning time. Instead of the old month division of three nine-day

---

73 Orig., C. Cels. (Migne), VI, 21. Cf. Cumont, The Mysteries of Mithra, p. 144. Also Cumont, After Life, p. 107. Cf. Philo, Who is the Heir, 221 sq., where the seven candlesticks are symbolical of the seven planets; and Philo, On the Creation, 126, where the seven vowels (στόιχεῖα) are associated with the seven planets and thus with the sympathy of the universe.

74 Asclepius, III, 38a, speaks of the use of herbs, stones, and scents which induce the gods to acquiesce to the will of man. Cf. Dodds, op. cit. (n. 47), p. 293; Cumont, Astrology and Religion, p. 120; McCown, The Testament of Solomon, p. 48.

75 Cumont, Les Religions Orientales, pl. XV, 3, buste de Mercure employé comme phylactère. Cf. the astrological recipes in Eitrem, P. Ost., Fasc. I, 127-130, where the names of different planets are employed as charms for health, prosperity, prophecy, interpretation of dreams, etc.; vide Murray, Five Stages, p. 136 sq.

76 Ptol., Tetrabiblos, 209. Cf. Procl., Platonis Timaeum Commentaria, III, 2, 10 ed. E. Diehl, Lipsiae, 1906, where the planets are referred to as the guardians of χρόνον; also Nechepsonis et Petosiridis fragmenta magica, fr. 21, 5, ed. E. Riess, in Philologus, 6 (1891-1893), refers to a planet as a χρονοκράτωρ of the same name.

77 Dio Cass., XXXVII, 18, suggests this notion of chronokratores, i.e., the notion that each division of time is presided over by its own star-god, in his assignment of the days to the seven planets. As Scott, Hermetic, III, 365, n. 4, observes, this practice of assigning divisions of time to chronokratores must have arisen out of actual observation of the positions of certain heavenly bodies at certain times. Diod., I, 28, speaks of the Chaldean χαρατηρισμός τῶν διατηρῶν; also II, 30, 2. This same practice has a religious significance, as may be seen in St. Paul, Galat. 4:10, ἡμέρας χαρατηρισμός καὶ μήνας καὶ χρόνοις καὶ ἔως τῶν τοιχῶν. It is not difficult to see also that the observation of time and its subdivisions leads under the influence of astrology to their veneration; cf. Cumont, Les Religions Orientales, p. 288, n. 50, and ID., Astrology and Religion, p. 109, 120, and 165.

periods, the seven-day week is established, each day being named after a planet and placed under its patronage. Thus in the astrological system, as Cumont notes, each day is sacred to a planet:

All these durations continued to be regarded as having a definite influence, as being endowed with a magic potency, and astrology sought to codify these activities, by placing each division of time under the protection of a star in its system of «chronocratories».

**Rulers of mankind.** Another ruling function attributed to the planets in the sublunary world is their administration of Necessity in connection with human affairs. In this regard the planets are referred to as κοσμοκράτορες or as παντοκράτορες. These epithets of course have a wider application, as will be shown in the following section on their superlunary use. But their use here is simply descriptive of planetary influence on man. Two aspects of this influence may be noted briefly. In one sense the planets color the lives of men by affecting through their qualities and influences human dispositions and activities. For example, Saturn, because of its slow deliberate movement, makes men vacillating and apathetic; Jupiter brings fortune and health to men; Mars threatens the dwellings of men; the sun, as the mind and guiding principle of the universe, reveals all things to men by his light; Venus favors lovers; Mercury assures success in business; and the moon produces mysterious influences, particularly on the growth of plants and on the health of women. More significantly, however, the planets determine man's nativity and foretell his destiny. Cicero notes that the Chaldeans attribute this

---


80 Cumont, op. cit., p. 109. Bouche-Leclercq, *L'Astrologie Grecque*, p. 474 sq. and 491 sq., thus remarks that according to Greek astrology the seven planets are at the same time κοσμοκρατόρες and χρονοκρατόρες.

81 Diod., II, 30, 3-5; Cic., *De Republ.*, VI, 17.


83 Cf. the use of παντοκράτωρ as applied to the influence of Hermes in the London Magic. P., CXI, 668 sq. (Kenyon), and Helios in Macrobi., *Saturn.*, I, 23, 21 (Ewissenhardt). Vide infra n. 128 sq. and 136 for further remarks on these citations.

particular ruling function to the moon, believing that the condition of the moon at the time of one's birth affects one's destiny. But it is also believed that man's natural end can be hastened by the intervention of a murderous star (ἀναφέτης). For example, Saturn and Mars in a certain position can bring unexpected death by accident or killing. This apparent contradiction raises the question of the moral nature of the planets, as to whether they are essentially baneful or beneficial to men, and also indicates the fluid character of astrology in Hellenistic times. The difficulty can be resolved partially by considering the moral nature of the planets according to the two representative systems of Hellenistic comology; and this consideration will be taken up in the section on «The Planets and the Moral Order». It is sufficient to note here that the planets have a determinative influence on human destiny. As a result, they become either supreme beneficent deities or subordinate evil powers. Because of this moral interpretation, therefore, it is not strange that the planets are identified by other deity-titles, as well as their more customary Olympian names.

88 i.e., the Stoic and the gnostic systems.
89 E.g., Helios is identified with the Egyptian deity Serapis, the Leiden Magic. P. W (DIETERICH, Abraxas), XIV, 20, and with the Persian god Mithra, the Mithra Liturgy (DIETERICH, Eine Mithraliturgie), 2, 5; the moon is identified on occasions with Isis, as in PLUT., De Is. et Os., 372e, and also with Men, in Orphic Hymn (Hermann), IX (8), 2-3. Kronos, as well as Helios, is identified with the Hebrew god Iao or Yahweh. Vide the «Buste de Sabazius» in CUMONT, Les Religions Orientales, pl. III, where the old Thraco-Phrygian divinity has been identified with Yahweh Sabaoth. Sabazius is referred to here as «le Jupiter Sabazius, l'Hypistos, maître des sphères étoilées». On the identification of Helios and Yahweh, vide the Leiden Magic. P. W (DIETERICH, Abraxas), II, 35 : ἡλιος, ὁ ὁ δέξα λα τα ης σω ὁς τα ἡς σω ἡς Σεβαστά ἀρβόδ τώο. Other identifications appear from time to time in the papyri, e.g., the sun with Shamash and Adad or with Seth-Typhon and Re; one of the planets, or all of them together, may be identified with Ahriman, Lucifer, Satan, et al. On this problem, cf. J.B. McMinn, Fusion of the Gods: A Religio-Astrological Study of the Interpenetration of the East and West in Asia Minor, in JNES, 15 (1956), p. 210 sq.
The Planets as Superlunary Rulers

Rulers of the Firmament. One of the special superlunary functions of the planets is to turn the axis of the firmament\(^90\). In this connection they are referred to as πολυκράτορες\(^91\) and are identified in some way with the seven stars of the Great Bear\(^92\), which in Mithraism becomes the abode of the μέγιστος θεὸς\(^93\). The seven stars of the Bear are also represented by the seven Greek vowels 
εμπιο, which are frequently used as mystic signs of the planets\(^94\). Because of this planetary association, Scott concludes that

---

\(^90\) Cf. Corp. Herm., II, 7; especially, the Mithra Liturgy (DIETERICH, Eine Mithrasliturgie), 12, 27-14, 10; Paris Magic. P. (Wessely), 1301-1305.

\(^91\) The Mithra Liturgy (DIETERICH, Eine Mithrasliturgie), 12, 29 sq., speaking of seven star-gods (perhaps symbolically the seven planets), reads in part: οὐκ εἰσὶν οἱ καλομένοι πολυκράτορες τοῦ οὐρανοῦ, who are associated with the ἄρκτος καὶ ἀντιπρόφυσι τῶν οὐρανῶν (14, 17 sq.). Cf. DIETERICH, op. cit., p. 72 sq.; also DIETERICH, Abraxas, p. 105.

\(^92\) STOB., Herm., VI, 13, describes the Bear as the constellation composed εἰς ἀντίπροσ ψηφίῳ ἐκτά, whose function is to make the zodiacal circle revolve. In Corp. Herm., V, 4, the Bear is said to carry round through its own revolution the whole cosmos. Cf. SCOTT, Hermetica, II, 161-162 and III, 377 sq.

\(^93\) As SCOTT, Hermetica, II, 97, notes, in the Mithraic cult the North Pole seems to have been of primary significance, being the abode of Mithra, the Μεγίστου θεοῦ, to whom Helios, the ruler of the planetary spheres, is subordinated. Attending the supreme god is a group of seven youths (perhaps the stars of the Great Bear) and a group of seven maidens (the stars of the Little Bear); it is the seven youths who are referred to as οἱ πολυκράτορες τοῦ οὐρανοῦ... οἱ κυνοκοφόσως... οἱ στρέφοντες ὑπὸ ἐν κέλυσμα τῶν περιδήνην τοῦ κύκλου ἄξονα τοῦ οὐρανοῦ (12, 29-14, 2). On p. 48, n. 2, Scott remarks that the number (ἐπτάς) of these groups might cause them to be associated with the seven planets. If the two groups were fused into one, it would become a group of seven bisexual beings; cf., e.g., the seven bisexual men in Corp. Herm., I, 17-18.

\(^94\) Paris Magic. P. (Wessely), 1301 : ἄρκτε, θεὸς μεγάτη, ἀρχοσα οὐρανοῦ... πανηγεγη ἁμοία τῶν διὸν αἰεινος πληθιο. Cf. PHILO, On The Creation, 113 sq. Because of a natural sympathy, the things of earth depend on the things of heaven; thus he correlates the various «seven» on earth (e.g., the seven parts of the body and the soul, the seven varieties of the voice, the seven movements, the seven days, the seven-stringed lyre, and the seven vowels) with the primal celestial «seven», viz., the planets. This hebdomadal harmony appears most clearly in the correspondence of the seven vowels and the seven-stringed lyre with the seven planets (126). DIETERICH, Abraxas, p. 24, thus concludes: «Die sieben Wochentage, die sieben Planeten, die sieben Sphären, die sieben Vokale, die sieben Seiten der Leier—alles wird schliesslich verbunden». 
...the seven stars of the Bear are [frequently] identified with the seven planets, or assumed to be under the charge of the same star-gods; they are, so to speak, ἀρχηγοί of the planets.\textsuperscript{95}

**Rulers of time.** The planets are also ἀρχηγοί of the superlunary spheres. As the sun and the moon produce the days, the months, and the years of sublunar time, so the seven planets together determine the superlunary phases of the Great Cosmic Year\textsuperscript{96}, the consummation (ἀποκατάστασις)\textsuperscript{97} of which occurs by ἔκκρισις\textsuperscript{98} when the seven wandering stars return to their original point of departure. Associated with this idea of cosmic apokatastasis, however, is the notion of cosmic eternity. The world, though experiencing a conflagration in the Great Cosmic Year, is generated again and continues eternally in the divine process of generation and destruction\textsuperscript{99}. The planets, therefore, are ἀρχηγοί which oversee this process, effecting through their movements \textit{ad infinimum one cosmic period after another}\textsuperscript{100}. As the Hermetist puts it, they «fill endless time with their movements»,\textsuperscript{101} and their movements endure through eternity. This function of the planets as masters


\textsuperscript{96} Cic., \textit{De Republ.}, VI, 24; \textit{De Nat. Deor.}, II, 51; Ptolem., \textit{Tetrabiblos}, 7. Cf. Procl., \textit{Platon. Tim. Comment.}, I, 101, 2, ed. E. Diehl, Lipsiae, 1903, where, according to Iamblichus, the Assyrians have preserved the memorials of the whole apokatastasis and periods of the seven kosmokratores; henceforth referred to as Procl., \textit{Tim.} (Diehl). Plat., \textit{Tim.}, 39, gives the Cosmic Year as 36,000 years; cf. R.G. Bury, \textit{Plato}, LCL, VII, p. 82, n. 2. Vide Cumont, \textit{Les Religions Orientales}, p. 164 and 289, n. 53.

\textsuperscript{97} Stoics (Eusebius) in Diels, \textit{Doxographi}, p. 469, 12-16. Cf. Corp. Herm., VIII, 4; XI (1), 2; XII (2), 15b.


\textsuperscript{99} Diog. Laert., VII, 137-142 and 147. This account discusses briefly the nature of the world in its process of coming into being and passing away. Although it emphasizes the destruction of the world, it indicates clearly that its destruction and renewal continue ἀπαντηπέρω, Cf. Greene, \textit{Moira}, p. 340. Bevan, \textit{op. cit.} (n. 3), p. 50-51, refers to the eternity of the Stoic world in terms of the doctrine of Eternal Recurrence.


\textsuperscript{101} Corp. Herm., XI, (2), 7: ἐκτὰ κόσμων ... δρόμω διαφόρῳ τὸν αἰῶνα ἀνακληροῦντος.
of time demonstrates their omnipotence, whereby they also rightfully receive
the titles of κοσμοκράτορες\textsuperscript{102} and παντοκράτορες\textsuperscript{103}.

*Rulers of the spheres.* As Cumont has suggested\textsuperscript{104}, it is possible that the
planets were originally referred to as the masters of the celestial spheres.
Certainly, in the language of astrology and the oriental cults, one finds the
epithet κόσμος or κόσμοι employed in the sense of *world* or *worlds* to designate
the planetary spheres\textsuperscript{105}. In the astronomical system ascribed to
Philolaus\textsuperscript{106}, κόσμος does not signify the universe as a whole (τὸ πᾶν), but
rather denotes the region of the planetary spheres, in contrast both to the outer
sphere (δύλμιος) above the planets and to the sublunar atmosphere (σύμφωνος)
below them\textsuperscript{107}. One Hermetic passage refers to the planets as the ἐπὶ τὰ κόσμοι\textsuperscript{108}. Also Heraclides Ponticus\textsuperscript{109} and some of the Pythagoreans call
each of the planets a κόσμος\textsuperscript{110}. According to Hippolytus\textsuperscript{111}, the astrologers
distinguish the κόσμος of the fixed stars and the κόσμος of the planets, remarking
that these powers govern their own proper zones. In this connection the
planets are usually referred to as κοσμοκράτορες\textsuperscript{112}, although occasionally

---

\textsuperscript{102} E.g., Zauberpapyri (Preisendanz), IV, 2198 (*Paris Magic. P.*), the sun is referred to
not only as ὁ αἰών τῶν αἰώνων but also ὁ κοσμοκράτωρ; also Procl., *Tim.*, III, 95, 31-34 (Diehl) :
καὶ ἕνεκαι τῆς τούτων γενέσεως ἁγαθοῦ καὶ ἅλλον καὶ τοὺς ἄλλους κοσμοκράτορας ὡς προκαλουμένους μὲν τὸν ἁφανή χρόνον καὶ ἕκφανοντας καὶ μεριζομένους αὐτὸν καὶ διαφύλαττας καὶ ἁέρ ἄσκος συνελίσσοντας. Here it is clear
that the Demiurge has produced the sun and the other κοσμοκράτορες for the
purpose of establishing invisible time.

\textsuperscript{103} In the *Leiden Magic. P. W* (Dieterich, *Abraxas*), XVII, 14, and XIX, 10, the sun is
referred to this astrological connection as ὁ παντοκράτωρ.

\textsuperscript{104} Cf. von Humboldt, *Cosmos*, I, 62.

\textsuperscript{105} According to W.D. Ross, Philolaus, in *OCD*, p. 682, little is known about Philolaus of
Croton. He was a Pythagorean contemporary with Socrates; his fragments and
Testimonia are found in *Diels, Vorsokratiker*, I, 398-419.

\textsuperscript{106} *Philolaus* (Aetius) in *Diels, Vorsokratiker*, I, 403, 21 sq. : τὰ δὲ ὧτι τῆς τοῦ δόλμου
φοράν, ἐν ὃι τοὺς πέντε πλανῆς μεθ’ ἥλιον καὶ σελήνης τετάχθαι, [καλεῖ] κόσμων.


\textsuperscript{108} Cf. K.O. Brink, in *OCD*, p. 414.

\textsuperscript{109} Heraclides (Stobaeus) in *Diels, Doxographi*, p. 343 : Ἡρακλείδης καὶ οἱ
Πυθαγόρειοι ἔκαστον τῶν ἀστέρων κόσμον ὑπάρχειν ... τὰ τὰ δύσματα ἐν τοῖς

\textsuperscript{110} E.g., cf. *Procl., Tim.*, III, 58, 7-8 (Diehl) : οἱ γὰρ καλοῦμενοι πλάνητες κοσμοκράτορες
εἰσὶ καὶ ὅλης εἰδόχησι δύναμιν.
called μεγάλοκράτορες.\(^{113}\) As rulers of their own spheres, they preside over the innumerable spirits occupying planetary space\(^{114}\). These spirits, according to Hellenistic cosmology, are disembodied souls which have passed from mortality through the sublunary zones to astral immortality\(^{115}\). Being associated with the planets in this way, they too are sometimes identified as κοσμοκράτορες;\(^{116}\) yet, in the strictest sense, it is only the visible gods, i.e., the seven planets, which are the rulers of the spheres. An extension of this spherical command is observed in the regulative power of the planets over the zodiacal sphere. They become the ζωοκράτορες\(^{117}\). This power, however, as well as the general surveillance of the universe, is finally assigned to the

\(^{113}\) Vide the Mithra Liturgy (DIETERICH, Eine Mithrasliturgie), 14, 6-7, where the Mithraic votary addresses the ἐπτὰ θεοὶ (in all likelihood the seven planets), asking for health, good sight, courage, etc., and calls them οἱ κύριοι μου καὶ μεγάλοκράτορες θεοὶ; in 10, 32, the sun is addressed as μεγάλοκράτωρ βασιλέως.

\(^{114}\) MURRAY, Five Stages, p. 135.

\(^{115}\) Cf. Cic., De Republ., VI, 16-16; POSIDONIUS (?) (Sextus Empiricus) in von ARNIM, Stoicorum Veterum Fragmenta, II, 223-224 and 321, 8-18; Corp. Herm., I, 16 sq.; IRENEAUS, C. Haer., I, 21, 1-5 (Migne); APULEIUS, The Golden Ass, XI.

\(^{116}\) Particularly is this identification true in the case of kings and emperors who stand in a mystical relation with the sun. CUMONT, L’Égypte des Astrologues, Bruxelles, 1937, p. 27 sq. Cf. Mrs. S.A. STRONG, A Bronze Bust of a Julio-Claudian Prince (? Caligula) in the Museum of Colchester; with a Note on the Symbolism of the Globe in Imperial Portraiture, in JRS, 6 (1916), p. 44-46, on the emperor and his connection with Jupiter and Sol on the Chariot of the Sun as a symbol of apotheosis. Cf. also L.R. TAYLOR, The Divinity of the Roman Emperor, Middletown, 1931, p. 45, 90-92, 177, 180, and 187. The idea of the assimilation of the kings to the sun is expressed particularly in Pseudo-Callisthenis Historiam Fabulosam, I, 20 (cod. c), ed. C. Müller, Paris, 1846; when Alexander returned victorious to Macedonia, the people marvelling at his wisdom and courage sang his praises in a song, part of which reads: ἀνατεῖλας γὰρ καταγλάττας ράμνας, / καὶ πάντας ἥματος λοιπὸς ὀστέρας. / Δέχον εὖν αὐτὸν, λαμπρὰ Μακεδονία, / καὶ τοῦ ἐχθρὸς ἀμύναν ἐν τούτῳ δίδου / Ἀλέξανδρος γὰρ ἔστιν ὁ κοσμοκράτωρ. Cf. PETERSON, Eις Θεός, p. 173, n. 1, where the emperor, linked with κοσμοκράτωρ Ἡλίως, himself becomes κοσμοκράτωρ, i.e., Ηλίως-Αῖόν. Although astral apotheosis was granted originally only to the royal souls, as STOB., Herm., XXIV, 1-6, notes, it later became the popular itinerarium ad deum; vide CUMONT, Astrology and Religion, p. 178 sq.

\(^{117}\) Damascii Successors Dubitationes et Solutiones de Primis Principiis, 131, ed. C.A. Ruelle, II, Paris, 1889, refers to the ἐπὶ κοσμοκράτορας as the ἐγκοσμίους ζωοκράτορας... ἐπὶ τῶν τεταρτημορίων καὶ ἐπὶ τῶν ἡμισφαίριων βεβαίως. Cf. WHITTAKER, op. cit. (n. 38), p. 180 sq.
sun. The gradual ascendancy of Helios over the other planets distinguishes him as the \( \cosmocrator \) par excellence. He is the bright star of the day, the most illustrious of the visible gods. By his power he moves all the starry spheres and thus rules the universe. This astronomical extension results in solar henotheism, one of the eminent religious forms of Hellenistic cosmology.

**Rulers of the universe.** In connection with their sovereignty over the superlunary spheres, the planets are also regarded as the masters of the universe. The most common epithet descriptive of this planetary function is \( \cosmocrator \), signifying in this sense one who has power of control over the whole world. This notion of planetary omnipotence is associated particu-

---


120 Corp. Herm., XVI, 7: λαμπρότατα ἡλίου περιλαμβάνει πάντα τὸν κόσμον by which light the sun maintains everlasting life in immortal ζωή and generates temporary life in mortal ζωή. Vide Scott, *Hermetica*, II, 446 sq.; *De Républ.*, VI, 17 refers to the sun as dux et princeps et moderator luminum reliquorum, mens mundi et temperatio, tanta magnitudine ut cuncta sua luce lustret et compleat. Cf. Plato, *Républ.*, 508c, where the sun is spoken of as the offspring and visible image of the Good.

121 Cf. Corp. Herm., XI (2), 7, where the sun is spoken of as \( \piά\sigmaς \) τάξεως ἄρχοντος (i.e., as Scott, *Hermetica*, I, 213, translates it, «the rulers of all ordered movement») and ἕγεμόνος τῶν ἐκτὰ κόσμων; Julian of Laodicea, *Catalogus Codicium Astralorum*, I, 136, ed. F. Cumont et alii, Brussels, 1898. In Corp. Herm., V, 3, Helios is called the \( \muέ\στος \) τῶν κατ' οὐρανο ὅθεν, ὁ πάντες ἔκκλησαν οἱ οὐρανίου θεοὶ ὡσανεὶ βασιλεύ καὶ δυναστῆ. Stob., Herm., II, A, 14, speaks of the sun as ἄρχων πάνων καὶ ποίων πάνω. Earlier Cleanthes (Stobaeus) in Diels, *Doxographi*, p. 465, 5-6, had placed the *hegemonikon* of the world in the sun: ἡγεμονικόν ἕκ τοῦ κόσμου Κλεάνθης μὲν ἔφεσε τὸν ἢλιον εἶναι διὰ τὸ μέγιστον τῶν ἀστρων ὑπάρχειν.


larly with the gods Mithra, Serapis, Zeus, Helios and Hermes and with certain kings and emperors. On at least two occasions the idea of omnipotence is strengthened by the adjective "οἰκονομός". The epithet "οἰκονομός" is coined on the same model. It means the one who rules or controls all things; and used, as Dodd suggests, with "οἰκονομός" in mind, it refers to the one God who rules and controls all other cosmic powers. In this sense "οἰκονομός" and "οἰκονομός" are synonyms. An instance of this synonymity appears in the magical papyri, where, in two

---

124 Cf. an inscription found in Ghislanzoni (Notizie degli Scavi di Antichità, IX, 323): εἰς ἡλικίαν διάφορων νομισμάτων οἰκονομός καὶ Υἱὸς οἰκονομός. This same inscription is studied in CUMONT and CANET, art. cit., p. 315 sq. N.B. the same union of divinities in the London Magic. P. (Kenyon), XLVI, 65: Ἐπικαλοῦμαι σε Ζεύς Μίθρα Δάρκα άνίκητος. Other associations which reflect planetary connections occur, e.g., in the London Magic. P. (DIETERICH, Abraxas), XIV, 21 sq.: Ἐπικαλοῦμαι σε... οἰκονομός Σάραπασ; also 41 sq.; in the Mithra Liturgy (DIETERICH, Eine Mithrasliturgie), 2, 5: ὁ μέγας θεός ὁ Υἱὸς Μίθρας; Orphic Hymn (HERMANN), VIII (7), 11: ὁ Υἱὸς οἰκονομός; XVI: ὁ δέσποτας κόσμου. DIETERICH, Abraxas, p. 55, observes that "Alle die größten Götter Zeus und Sarapis, Attis und Mithras, Osiris und Dionysos, sie sind nun Sonnengötter und auch Helios vereinigt noch einmal in sich alle andern".


126 Cf. I.G.S.I., 926 (Kaiibel), where the city of Gaza makes a dedication to Gordion III: τὸν θεοφάρεταν οἰκονομότορον; I.G.R., I, 1063 (Cagnat), where, in Alexandria, Caracalla is referred to as οἰκονομότατος because he is a lover of the sun-god Sarapis (c. A.D. 216). Cf. also PSEUDO-CALLISTH., Hist. Fabul., I, 7 and 16 (Müller); II, 26 and 43; passim; this work expresses the idea of the assimilation of the kings to the sun. Vide Taylor, op. cit. (n. 116), p. 90-92, 113 sq., and 242.

127 Vide supra n. 124.


129 Dodd, The Bible and the Greeks, p. 19.

130 Cf. the use of οἰκονομότατος in the LXX : Wisdom of Solomon 7:25; Jeremiah 38 (36):36; also in the N.T.: II Cor. 6:18; Revelation 1:8; 4:8; 11:17; 15:3, 16:7, 14; 19:6, 15; 21:22. DioG. LAER., VII, 147, speaks of the one god who functions through his oικονομάτες; also PLUT., De Is. et Os., 378a, implies a theoretical monotheism in his μία κρόνον, which watches over the ancillary powers. Another instance of this same usage occurs in The Testament of Solomon (McCown), III, 5, where in a brief panegyric, Solomon prays: εἰκονομός τινὲς θεοὶ... τινὲς οἰκονομότατος [sic]; this praise comes as a result of Solomon's divine authority over the διόμονες; cf. also VI, 8.
versions of a prayer to the planet-god Hermes, these epithets are used as equivalent titles. In one version the god is addressed as ἔρμη κοσμοκράτωρ; in the other, ἔρμη παντοκράτωρ. The idea of omnipotence, however, is eventually attributed only to the sun. Because he leads the «starry choir» and is the king and guide of all the other luminaries, he is master of the whole world: ἡλιος βασιλεύς καὶ ἡγεμόν τῶν ὑπερασπισμένων κόσμου καθεστῶς πάντων καθηγούμενος καὶ πάντων ἄν γενεσιάρχης. In later Hellenistic times Helios becomes the chief deity of the mystery cults and the royal planet of the Roman Empire. Many prayers and invocations are addressed to him as the omnipotent planet-god. For example, Macrobius records such an invocation to Helios offered by the Syrian priests at Heliopolis: Ἡλιος παντοκράτωρ κόσμου πνεῦμα κόσμου δόναμις κόσμου φῶς. The supremacy of the sun over the other planets indicates the astrological religious tendency of Helios as the chief deity among the mystery cults: cf. the Mithra Liturgy (Dieterich, Eine Mithraisliturgie), 2, 5, et passim, where Helios is identical with the μέγας θεός; vide Cumont, The Mysteries of Mithra, p. 95, 121, and 135. Also cf. Orphic Hymn (Hermann), VIII (7); vide Guthrie, op. cit. (n. 110), p. 43; Macchioro, op. cit. (n. 46), p. 149. According to the Leiden Magic. P. W (Dieterich, Abraxas), XIV, 20 sq. and 40 sq., the cult of Serapis identifies Serapis as a heliacal deity; vide Bell, Cults and Creeds, p. 21. Helios as the royal planet of the Roman Empire: cf. Tac., Hist., III, 24, trans. C.H. Moore, LCL, where Antonius encourages the Flavian troops, challenging them to defeat the Vitellians; Iul., Orat., IV, 137c, refers to Helios as ὁ θεός, who gives life and is the cause of all movement, i.e., coming to be and passing away. Cumont, Astrology and Religion, p. 94 sq., 104-106, 133 sq., and 161. N.B. Scott's résumé, in Hermetica, II, 431, of the exaltation of the sun-god in later Hellenistic times.

131 Vide supra n. 128. No other change is noted; cf. Cumont and Canet, art. cit., p. 320.
132 Cf. e.g., Stob., Herm., II, A, 14. It must be remarked here, however, that the Hermetist regards the sun as second to the Demiurge, the first invisible god. Vide supra n. 118-121. This same idea occurs in Corp. Herm., XVI, 4-10a, 12, and 13-16, where the sun is supreme within the cosmos, being subordinate only to the supracosmic god.
134 Helios as the chief deity among the mystery cults: cf. the Mithra Liturgy (Dieterich, Eine Mithrasliturgie), 2, 5, et passim, where Helios is identical with the μέγας θεός; vide Cumont, The Mysteries of Mithra, p. 95, 121, and 135. Also cf. Orphic Hymn (Hermann), VIII (7); vide Guthrie, op. cit. (n. 110), p. 43; Macchioro, op. cit. (n. 46), p. 149. According to the Leiden Magic. P. W (Dieterich, Abraxas), XIV, 20 sq. and 40 sq., the cult of Serapis identifies Serapis as a heliacal deity; vide Bell, Cults and Creeds, p. 21. Helios as the royal planet of the Roman Empire: cf. Tac., Hist., III, 24, trans. C.H. Moore, LCL, where Antonius encourages the Flavian troops, challenging them to defeat the Vitellians; Iul., Orat., IV, 137c, refers to Helios as ὁ θεός, who gives life and is the cause of all movement, i.e., coming to be and passing away. Cumont, Astrology and Religion, p. 94 sq., 104-106, 133 sq., and 161. N.B. Scott's résumé, in Hermetica, II, 431, of the exaltation of the sun-god in later Hellenistic times.
135 Vide supra n. 118-121.
136 Macrobius, Saturn., I, 23, 21 (Eyssenhardt). Cf. Orphic fragment in 23, 22; also in Hermann, Orphica, p. 464, where the sun is addressed as ἡξίος παγεγέντος. N. also in Macrobius, Saturn., I, 18, 18, that the line ἔς Ζεὺς ἔς Ἀιδώς ἔς Ἡλιος ἔς Δόνους ἔς occurs. This line may reflect, as Knox, op. cit. (n. 5), p. 37, n. 7, notes, the oriental notion of the sun as the one divine Aion expressing himself in the four seasons and thus representing the division of eternity into recurring cycles of time. Vide invocation addressed to the sun-god in the Papyrus Maimaut transcribed in Scott, Hermetica, III, 284. Macchioro, op. cit., p. 364, n. 7.
Hellenistic cosmology, a tendency which expresses itself literally in solar henotheism and metaphorically in transcendent monotheism\textsuperscript{137}.

The Planets and the Moral Order

The moral nature of the planets in Hellenistic cosmology is dependent upon the manner in which these gods influence man and determine his destiny. According to the two representative Hellenistic systems, this astrological role has two interpretations. In the Stoic system the planets are benevolent supreme deities who offer their devotees deliverance from the ills of sublunary existence. This deliverance is a redemptive process rising out of the mystical contemplation of the starry heavens and results in astral apotheosis. Man is not only elevated to the rank of deity but is also identified with one of the planets; he becomes a «fellow star»\textsuperscript{138}. In the gnostic system, however, the planets are malevolent subordinate deities, who impose upon man the demonic forces of Fortune and Fate. Redemption from these cosmic powers comes directly from the first and ultimate God, who is above and beyond the planets. His gift of gnosis empowers man through magic and mystery to overcome planetary influence and at death to pass triumphantly through the malign planetary spheres to freedom and union with the ultimate God. Thus transcending the nature and the power of the planets, man achieves the true fulfillment of his destiny, becoming one of God's innumerable Powers.

The Planets as Benevolent Gods

To observe the benevolent role of the planets in the Stoic world view, one must turn his attention away from the exterior world towards the world of the

\textsuperscript{137} Cf. Plut., \textit{The E at Delphi}, 393d, where, in his exposition of the Delphic religion, he speaks of those who identify Apollo with the sun, but he himself prefers to identify the sun as the visible image of the supracosmic deity. The sun as the symbol and image of the supreme extracosmic god also appears in \textit{Corp. Herm.}, XVI, 7 sq. Eitrem, \textit{P. Osl.}, Fasc. I, 51, transcribes an invocation to the supreme god Typhon Seth, which is to be uttered before the sun and which employs epithets frequently associated with the sun, e.g., \textit{kunuciontaro} and \textit{thôn òeîw}. This monotheistic bent, in association with sun-worship, is also referred to in its Orphic connections in Harrison, \textit{Prolegomena}, p. 461-462, in Hermetic thought in Scott, \textit{Hermetica}, II, 455, and III, 189; and in Neo-Platonic theology in Cumont, \textit{Astrology and Religion}, p. 134 sq. and 197. Observe Cumont's account of this theological development in Syria (id., \textit{Les Religions Orientales}, p. 122-124).

soul. According to this moral order, the planets are not simply astral deities who protect men against the perils of nature: wind, rain, drought, earthquake, and other pestilences. They are also the gods who save men’s souls from death and lead them to eternal life amid their spheres. This divine intervention in human affairs translates the gods into saviors of men and guides of the soul and serves as the basis of the belief in astral apotheosis.

It is significant to note that this eschatological belief appears in its early stages in Hellenic thought, particularly in Aristophanes and Plato, but it has little religious significance. During Hellenistic times, however, it is permeated with mysticism and astrology and becomes more religious than philosophical. As a consequence, it dominates all other eschatological theories. At first, this apotheosis is restricted to the heroes of the past, but later it becomes appropriate to assure this same destiny to kings, emperors, and

139 Although a lacuna occurs in the text, these two functions of the astral gods are described briefly in Stob., Herm., XXVI, 3: δορυφόροι ὄντες τῆς καθόλου προνοίας, ὁ δὲ μὲν νυχτερινός, ὁ δὲ ψυχόμολος. In Stob., Herm., XXVI, 1, the moon functions as a ψυχόμολος; Dio. Laer., VIII, 31 refers to Hermes as ταμίας τῶν νεκρῶν καὶ διὰ τούτο τοιχικός. In Eur., Alc., 361, ed. H.W. Hayley, *The Acestia of Euripides*, Boston, 1898, Charon is spoken of as a νυχτερινός; Diod., I, 96, 6, refers to Hermes as the ψυχόμολος in Egyptian and Orphic mysteries.

140 Perhaps the earliest extant statement indicating such a belief is one found in Aristoph., Pac., 832 sq., trans. B.B. Rogers, LCL. The hero Trygaios flies up to heaven on an enormous Mount Etna dung-beetle to persuade the gods to restore Peace to Greece. On his return from this adventurous journey, his servant, questioning him about what he has seen, asks: ὅς οὖν τῶν τούτων ἄνθρωπος ἠνεκάρμην. The assumption is that the souls of the dead not only ascend to heaven but actually turn into stars. Both Harrison, *Prolegomena*, p. 205, and Guthrie, *op. cit.*, p. 185., ascribe this belief to Orphic doctrine. Rohde, *Psyche*, p. 359, n. 76, assigns this notion to popular belief; cf. also Guthrie, *The Greeks and their Gods*, p. 213 and 264. Cumont, *After Life*, p. 96, on the other hand, ascribes the belief in astral immortality to the Chaldeans: that it was propagated in Greece by the Pythagoreans.

eminent men of the state\textsuperscript{142}. For example, in the account of «Scipio's Dream», it is remarked that

\textit{omnibus, qui patriam conservaverint, adiuvverint, auxerint, certum esse in caelo definitum locum, ubi beati aevō sempiterno fruanter...} \textsuperscript{143}

Finally, under the religious impetus of the mystery cults, astral redemption is accorded to everyone who devotes himself to the service of the planet-gods. So popular is this salvation that Cicero comments: \textit{Totem prope caelum nonne humano generi completum est}\textsuperscript{144}?

\textit{Saviors of men}. To Posidonius and his Stoic circle all the planets indiscriminately are saviors of the good disembodied \textit{δαίμονες}\textsuperscript{145}. On being liberated from the body, the good \textit{δαίμονες} flies instantly to the region of the pure stars, where it remains in paradisiacal bliss. The Orphic, however, looks primarily to the moon for salvation\textsuperscript{146}. At death he declares:

\textit{γῆς παῖς εἰμί καὶ σώφρανον ἀστερόκεντος, αὐτὰρ ἐμοὶ γένος σώφρανίων}\textsuperscript{147}.

\begin{footnotes}

\textsuperscript{143} Cic., \textit{De Republ.}, VI, 13, 18. Cf. CUMONT, \textit{After Life}, p. 113-114.

\textsuperscript{144} Cic., \textit{Tusc.}, I, 12, 28, trans. J.E. King, LCL. \textit{Cf. also I, 43, 18; CUMONT, Astrology and Religion}, p. 190.

\textsuperscript{145} Posidonius (?) (Sextus Empiricus) in von ARNIM, \textit{Fragmenta}, II, 321, 8-18; also 223-224. This passage is also cited in BEVAN, \textit{Stoics}, p. 108., n. 1, and is attributed to Posidonius; \textit{cf. also p. 106-107 and 114-115.}


\end{footnotes}
Upon his ascent to the lunar sphere, he thus becomes a planetary god. The Pythagorean also shares this belief in astral apotheosis. The first question in the Pythagorean catechism asks: ἔστην αἱ μοιχάρες νῆσοι; to which the devotee replies: ἣλιος καὶ σελήνη. Although having Mithra as mediator and guide in his empyrean ascent, the Mithraic votary places his confidence in the support of the seven benevolent planets, who combat without respite the powers of evil. But of particular significance in his redemption are the planets Saturn, Jupiter, and Helios. As he ascends to the eighth sphere of heaven, he can with assurance declare to the planets: ἐγὼ εἰμί σύμπλανος ὑμῶν ἀστήρ. Under the patronage of the Imperial cult, the sun becomes the principal planet-god and is referred to in prayers and panegyrics, e.g., as βασιλεύς ἡλίου, ἡλίος αἰών, ἡλίος κοσμοκράτωρ, and sol sanctissimus. He is associated also with other deity-titles which indicate his supremacy, such as Zeus, Serapis, and Mithra. The emperor is the image of Helios on earth and like him receives epithets descriptive of divinity, e.g., δεσπότης τῆς οἰκουμένης, ὁ λευθ, κοσμοκράτωρ, ἀστοκράτωρ, and σωτήρ τοῦ κόσμου. As the divine solar representative, he leads his people in the true worship of the royal...
planet. At death he takes his place among the planetary spheres as an astral deity and a companion to the sun-god.\footnote{156}

Guides of the soul. The benevolent role of the planets also appears in their function as psychopompoi\footnote{157}, the ἠγεμόνες τεὸι who escort the pure souls to heaven.\footnote{158} Although Posidonius speaks of the apotheosis of the δαίμων, he seems to leave its ascent to the planetary spheres up to the «law of physics»\footnote{159}. In Plutarch, however, – who is thought to re-echo Posidonius –\footnote{160} the disembodied daïmones render aid to the soul seeking its own salvation.\footnote{161} Perhaps Posidonius thinks of these daïmones as planet-gods, who in a sense are, like Philo’s angeloi, conductors of the soul.\footnote{162}

According to Orphic and Pythagorean traditions, it is said that Hermes guides the pure souls after their separation from the body εἰς τὸν ὄψι σων\footnote{163} or to Olympus to shine among the stars.\footnote{164} The Mithraic devotee looks to the leadership of Mithra himself as the ἠγεμόν τεὸς.\footnote{165} But in this capacity Mithra is usually associated with Helios, whose chariot is used to convey the good souls to the celestial thrones where Jupiter-Ormazd receives them.\footnote{166} In the Syrian cults,\footnote{167} as well as in

\footnotesize

\begin{itemize}
\item \footnote{156} Cf. CUMONT, After Life, p. 112 sq. and 157; Astrology and Religion, p. 185; TAYLOR, op. cit., p. 91 sq.; supra n. 142.
\item \footnote{157} Vide supra n. 139. This idea also appears in PLAT., Phaed., 107d and 108b.
\item \footnote{158} JULIAN, The Caesars, 336c. Cf. a funeral inscription transcribed in CUMONT, Les Religions Orientales, p. 264, n. 90, where one asserts that he is in the ether among the choirs of stars, λοχῶν θεὸν ἠγεμόνα.
\item \footnote{159} BEVAN, Stoics, p. 107. On the mechanical means of the ascent of the soul, cf. CUMONT, Astronomy and Religion, p. 188 sq.
\item \footnote{160} BEVAN, Stoics, p. 112.
\item \footnote{161} PLUT., De Genio Socrates (Moral.), 24, passage quoted in BEVAN, Stoics, p. 113, n. 1.
\item \footnote{164} HAUSSOULLIER, in RPh, 23 (1909), p. 6 : ἀλλὰ σ’ ἔχων εἰς Ὀλυμπον ἀν [ήγαγεν] εὐσεβοίς Ἐρμῆς/ Ἀθράρα δ’ ὑκταέστης κατιδών ἄστρων ἄμα λάμπεις (cited by CUMONT, Les Religions Orientales, p. 286, n. 90).
\item \footnote{165} E.g., the emperor JULIAN, The Caesars, 336c, represents himself as being told by Hermes that Mithra will be his psychopompos at death. CUMONT, After Life, p. 164.
\item \footnote{166} The inscription of Antiochus Commagene in MICHEL, Recueil, n° 735, 1, 40 : Σώμα πρὸς σύμφωνος Δίως ὑπομόδου θρόνονος θεοφιλῇ γυοχήν προσέμενον εἰς τὸν ἄκειρον οὐδένα κοιμήσεται (cited by CUMONT, Les Religions Orientales, p. 286, n. 91). Cf.
\end{itemize}
the Imperial cult. Helios becomes the primary escort of the souls returning to heaven. And as indicated above, this solar motif tends to absorb or subordinate all other forms.

The Planets as Malevolent Gods

According to the moral order of the gnostic world view, the planets assume a terrifying role. They are malevolent deities who impose on man the enslaving power of astral Necessity. Under their control man cannot hope for freedom and ultimate union with the supreme God, who resides above the planets in the sphere of intelligible light. His destiny is to remain beneath the moon among the demonic elemental spirits of the airy and the fiery zones. Yet, escape from the planets is open to him in the mysteries. Through a complicated series of ceremonies and instructions in the sacred lore of gnosis, he can enter into mystical communion with God, become divine, and be withdrawn from the power of Fate. His final victory over the planets, however, occurs at death, when his soul, by the magical power of gnosis, passes safely through the dread planetary spheres in its ascent to heaven to become one of the Powers of God. According to Hermes Trismegistus, Τοῦτο έστι τὸ ἀγαθόν, τοῦτο τὸ τέλος τοῦ γνώσεως ἐσχημάτισθαι θεωθήναι.

Although this planetary hostility towards man is apparent in all gnostic systems, the particular malevolent functions which the planets assume are not always clear and distinct. This ambiguity occurs, perhaps, because the mythological structure of each gnostic system differs and also because the epithets descriptive of the malign planetary functions frequently coalesce. Yet, in the gnostic systems there are two fairly distinct classifications which localize generally the malevolent functions of the planets and which give some coherence to the various epithets ascribed to them. Accordingly,


Cumont, Les Religions Orientales, p. 264, n. 90, writes: «La croyance que les âmes pieuses sont guidées vers le ciel par une divinité psychopompe ne se trouve pas seulement dans les mystères de Mithra... mais aussi dans les cultes syriens où ce rôle est souvent attribué au dieu solaire», citing the Le Bas-Waddington inscription, 2442: βασιλεὺς δέσποτα [Helios] θεὸς καὶ δίδων κάσιν ἧμιν ὑγιὴν καθορᾶν, πρήξεις ἀγαθᾶς καὶ βίου τέλος ἔσθηλν.


therefore, the planets are conceived of as being both celestial and elemental evil powers.

Celestial powers. As hostile celestial deities, the planets assume a typical role in the gnostic systems. They are commandants (¢Þðýòôñòçè) or cosmic rulers (κοομοκράτορεç) who are posted by the entrances to their separate spheres to guard the gates of heaven against the uninitiated soul’s ascent to God. These seven Archons admit safe passage through their portals only to the souls who have gnosis and who are under the guidance of a divine ñegùûñ. All other souls they turn away, consigning them to the sublunary zones, where they remain enslaved to the planets, under the dread rule of ελµαηµενη. This eschatological motif appears most clearly in the Hermetica and in the early Christian Gnostic writings. In Philo’s discussion of the sovereignty of God in his Special Laws, he refers to the planets in this gnostic personal sense as ¢Þðýòôñòçè, but he refuses to admit their

170 Cf. Stolb., Herm., XXIV, 2, where the sun and the moon are spoken of as ¢Þðýòôñòçè; in Corp. Herm., I, 9, the planets are called δειωτηρεç, but their evil function as ¢Þðýòôñòçè is seen in 25-26a, in the account of the soul’s ascent to heaven. N.B. also the account of this celestial ascent (perhaps the teaching of the Ophites) in Orig., C. Cels., VI, 31 (Migne), where it is said that the pure soul must pass through the φεργψνν κακίας-κύλας ¢Þðýòôνν αιων δεδεμένας—on its journey to God; cf. also 27 and 37. Similar accounts appear in Irenaeus, C. Haer., I, 21, 5 (Migne); Hippol., (Orig.), Ref. Omn. Haer., V, 3 (Migne); Acta Ionannis, 114, ed. M. Bonnet, Lipsiae, 1898 : vide M.R. James, The Apocryphal New Testament, Oxford, 1945, p. 269 sq. An allusion to this archontic function is found also in The Testament of Solomon (McCown), Rec. C X, 25; cf. Ms. P IX, 7, where esoteric knowledge of the names of οι ελµάηµενη gives Solomon power over these fiery star-gods. For a brief review of the astrological sense of ¢Þðýòνν in N.T. and early Christian literature, vide Arndt & Gingrich, A Greek-English Lexicon, p. 113.

171 Cf. Acta Philippi, 144, ed. M. Bonnet, Lipsiae, 1903, where Philip prays for safe passage through the planetary spheres to paradise, saying: ἐκ δὲν καρέλθω πάντας τοῖς κοομοκράτορας καὶ τὸν πυρηνὸν δράκοντα (vide James, op. cit., p. 450); Iamb., De Myst. Liber., II, 3 (Parthey), (vide supra n. 82 for partial quotation); Irenaeus, C. Haer., I, 5, 4 (Migne), (κοομοκράτορ = Satan).

172 Other terms are also employed to describe the planetary powers who guard the gates of heaven, e.g.: Corp. Herm., IV, 8b, speaks of the δράκον ἄστερων; XI (2), 19, refers to them as the δύν τῶν ἄστερων.


sovereignty over man. Writers of Jewish apocalyptic and early Rabbinic literature reflect their gnostic heritage, when they refer to the planets as δυνάμεις, θρόνοι, ἔξωσις, ἄγγελοι, and ἀρχάγγελοι of the seven heavens. In the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs, particularly, there are various lists of τὰ ἐπάνω τὰ πνεύματα τῆς πλάνης, which may be referred to as planetary Archons, since they are under the authority of the chief ἄρχων τῆς πλάνης (σατανᾶς or βελίαρ). A conception like that of the seven Archons or Kosmokratores can be discerned also in the background of the Pauline letters, in those hierarchies of evil forces ἐν τοῖς ἐπουρανίοις, which are ruled κατὰ τὸν ἄρχοντα τῆς ἔξωσιας τοῦ ἄρεως, ὁ θεὸς τοῦ αἰῶνος τοῦτον. Although the chief Archon (σατανᾶς) appears here to reside in the lower air, perhaps ὃς ἀστραπὴν ἐκ τοῦ ὀὐρανοῦ πεσόντα, he is nevertheless a celestial power, and his primary habitat is ἐν τοῖς ἐπουρανίοις. This seems

175 Philo, On the Special Laws, I, 13 sq.; there is here, however, little or no eschatological significance. Cf. Dodd, op. cit., p. 140; also Knox, op. cit. (n. 5), p. 150, n. 2. I Samuel (LXX) 6:1 refers to the οἱ ἄρχοντες visible and invisible.


177 Reuben (Charles, Testaments) 2:2-3:7. Levi (Charles, Testaments) 3:1, refers to these πνεύματα as ἐπάνω ὀὐρανῶν.


179 Ephesians 3:10 and 6:12.

180 Ephes. 2:2. Cf. Scott's note, in Hermetica, III, 259, on summi daemonis in Asclepius, III, 28, as a parallel to the Pauline phrase.


clear in *Ephesians* 6:12, where St. Paul transfers the struggle between the Christian and the powers of evil to the planetary spheres. He writes:

\[
\text{ότι οὐκ ἔστιν ἡμῖν ἡ πάλη πρὸς αἷμα καὶ σάρκα,}
\text{ἀλλὰ πρὸς τὰς ἀρχὰς, πρὸς τὰς ἐξουσίας, πρὸς τοὺς κοσμοκράτορας τοῦ ἑκάτου τοῦ αἰῶνος, τοῦτον, πρὸς τὰ πνευματικὰ τῆς πονηρίας ἐν τοῖς ἐπουρανίοις.}^{185}
\]

Again, in *Romans* 8, St. Paul describes the relation of the Christian to the fate determined by the planets.\(^{186}\) More specifically, however, in his Corinthian correspondence, he reflects the influence of gnostic thought, when he refers to the hostile celestial powers as the ἀρχοντες τοῦ αἰῶνος τοῦτον who unwittingly crucified τὸν κύριον τῆς δόξης.\(^{187}\) This reference to the role of the Archons in the crucifixion of Jesus suggests the motif of the incognito redeemer who descends to earth through the portals of the planetary spheres unrecognized. Like St. Paul, other New Testament writers also describe Satan as the chief Archon of the planetary spheres, referring to him as ὁ ἀρχων τῶν

---


\(^{186}\) *Rom. 8:15-39.* Cf. St. Paul’s reference to τὰ ἄσθενη καὶ πωλά στοιχεία in *Galat.* 4:9; also to τὰ στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου in 4:3; *Coloss.* 2:8 and 20.


Similarly, the Apostolic Fathers speak of Satan as ὁ ἐρχόν τοῦ κόσμου τοῦτου and ὁ ἐρχόν τοῦ αἰῶνος τοῦτου, ὁ ἀδικός ἐρχόν, ὁ πονηρός ἐρχόν and ὁ ἐρχόν κακοῦ τοῦ ἑαυτοῦ τοῦ νῦν τῆς ἀνομίας and of his celestial forces as ἄγγελοι and δυνάμεις τοῦ σατανᾶ, ἀρχοντικαί, and ἀγγελικαί. The writers of the Apocryphal New Testament also allude to the planets as hostile forces and refer to Satan as the chief ἐρχόν and κοσμοκράτωρ. Particularly significant in the Apocryphal New Testament, however, is Philip’s prayer in the Acts of Philip, where upon his death he asks for safe passage through the spheres of all τῶν κοσμοκρατόρων καὶ τῶν πονηρῶν δράκοντα. In the writings of the early Church Fathers, the New Testament appellatives for the evil planetary powers quite naturally recur; yet the Fathers themselves under the influence of the gnostic world view describe in their own terms the austere role of the «ruling» planets. Moreover, in their essays against the deviant teachings of the Christian Gnostics, they review the various cosmic schemes in which the souls of men are thought to ascend to heaven through the demon-

---

189 E.g., Matthew 9:34 and 12:24; in this same context, cf. Mark 3:22 and Luke 11:15. Cf. also Strack & Billerbeck, Kommentar, I, 631-635. The Testament of Solomon (McCown), II, 9 sq., speaks of ἀλεξαμονᾶς as the ἐρχόν τῶν δαμανῶν, in keeping with the N.T., Talmud, and Midrasch. Porphyry, Of the Philosophy to be derived from Oracles in Euseb., Praep. Evang., 174a, ed. E.H. Gifford, I, Oxford, 1903, says that τῶν ἀρχαίων τῶν πονηρῶν δαμανῶν λέγων εἶναι τόν Σάραπι και τήν Ἐκάτην ή δι θεία γραφή τοῦ βελομενί. 190 John 12:31, 14:30, and 16:11. 191 Cf. The Epistles of Ignatius (Lake, The Apostolic Fathers) passim; The Epistle of Barnabas (Lake, op. cit.) 4:13 and 18:2; The Martyrdom of Polycarp (Lake, op. cit.) 192. 192 Cf. The Epistle of Barnabas (Lake, The Apostolic Fathers) 18:1; The Epistles of Ignatius (Lake, op. cit.): Ephes. 13:1-2; Trall. 5:2; also The Epistle to Diognetus (Lake, op. cit.) 7. Vide the interesting account of the devil as kosmokrator in Graves, The White Goddess, New York, 1958, p. 515-517. 193 E.g., Acta Philippi (Bonnet), 144; The Preaching of Peter in Clem. Al., Strom., VI, 5, 39 (Migne); Acta Ioannis (Bonnet), 23. Vide James, op. cit. (n. 170), p. 17, 231 sq., 290, and 450. 194 Acta Philippi (Bonnet), 144. Cf. also James, op. cit., p. 450. 195 Cf., e.g., Irenaeus, C. Haer., I, 10, 1 (Migne), on Ephes. 6:12: re the angels who transgressed and became apostates; such are the kosmokratores; Clem. Al., Strom., III, 26; IV, 7; V, 14; VII, 3 (Migne); Orig., C. Cels., VIII, 34 (Migne).
guarded spheres of the seven planets. With a similar emphasis, *The Testament of Solomon*, a Hellenistic compilation of magic, astrology, and demonology, speaks of the planets as the seven evil spirits, under the familiar epithets ἀρχαὶ, ἔξουσίαι, δυνάμεις, στοιχεῖα, and κοσμοκράτορες, and also refers to Satan (βελτιζομένα) as their chief. The Neo-Platonists Porphyry, Iamblichus, and Proclus, influenced by the gnostic mysteries, call the planets ἄρχοντες and κοσμοκράτορες, οἱ τὰ ὑπὸ σελήνης στοιχεῖα διοικοῦντες.

Elemental powers. As a result of the close association between the planets and the elements in the gnostic world view, it is not strange that these two forces should occasionally coalesce. Thus, under the epithets στοιχεῖα and κοσμοκράτορες, the planets now and then become identified with the elemental powers, i.e., the demons which reside in the sublunary zones. Murray notes this coalescence and remarks on its mystical character.

It is significant that in Hellenistic theology the word Stoicheion, Element, gets to mean a Daemon as Megathos, Greatness, means an Angel. But behold a mystery! The word Stoicheia, «elementa», had long been used for the Greek A B C, and in particular for the seven vowels αειμονοῦ. That is no chance, no mere coincidence. The vowels are the mystic signs of the

---

196 Cf. IRENAEUS, C. Haer., I, 21, 5 (Migne), re the deviant teaching of Marcus; HIPPOL. (Orig.), Ref. Omn. Haer., V, 1 sq. (Migne), re the Naasen on the seven heavens and the seven planets; CLEM. AL., Strom., II, 8 (Migne), re Basilides and Valentinus; ORIG., C. Celsum, VI, 27 (Migne), re the ἀφορμοσὶ in the Ophitic teaching; also in 30, Origen speaks of οἱ ἐπὶ ἄρχοντες δαίμονες; and in 31, he refers to the πόλεμος ἀρχόντων σιδηροῦ δεδομένης.

197 The Testament of Solomon (McCown), XX, 14-15; VIII, 2; XVIII, 2. Cf. Ephes. 1:21 and Coloss. 1:16.

198 The Testament of Solomon (McCown), II, 9; III, 5-6; XVI, 3 and 5; passim.

199 PORPHYRY, Of the Philosophy to be derived from Oracles, in EUSEB., Praep. Evang., 174a; vide supra n. 189. Cf. also 181a.


201 E.g., cf. Orphic Hymn (Hermann), LXV, 4, where Hephæstus (fire) is personified as both an elemental and an astral spirit and is called στοιχεῖα ἀρχαὶ. It is possible also to interpret St. Paul's use of στοιχεία τοῦ κόσμου in Galat. 4:3 and 9 and in Coloss. 2:8 and 20 as referring to cosmic spirits, i.e., either planetary powers or elemental demons. Cf. The Testament of Solomon (McCown), VIII, 2: ἡμεῖς ἐσμέν στοιχεία κοσμοκράτορες τοῦ σκότους; also XX, 14b: ἀρχαί, ἔξουσίαι, κοσμοκράτορες, καὶ ἅπαλεθα ἡμεῖς οἱ δαίμονες εἰς τῷ ἄγρι καὶ ἄθορμον τῶν ἐκουσάνων τῶν φονῶν. Although these passages are ambiguous, in the light of other passages, e.g., VIII, 4; XV, 5; XVII, 4; XVIII, 1-2, it seems more probable that these forces are planetary gods rather than elemental demons.
Planets; they have control over the Planets. Hence strange prayers and magic formulae innumerable.

Many uses of στοιχεία in Hellenistic writings suggest this transition in meaning. It is possible, for example, to interpret Manetho's phrase τοι τοι στοιχεία in the double sense. Yet, as E.D. Burton observes, the meaning of demons might be ascribed to στοιχεία in Manetho, but the context does not require anything other than the familiar classical usage of the word.

Perhaps the earliest probable identification of the two spirit-forces appears in St. Paul's Galatian and Colossian correspondence, where the στοιχεία τοῦ κόσμου may be thought of as the astral or the elemental powers of the universe which had formerly held the Anatolian Christians in bondage. Similarly, Justin Martyr speaks of τὰ οὐράνια στοιχεία in this inclusive sense, as the fallen angels of heaven and the demons of earth.

The writers of The Epistle to Diognetus and The Clementine Homilies identified these forces as monotheistic deities.
also telescope these demonic forces under the epithet στοιχεία. In the Testament of Solomon there appears under the descriptive phrase στοιχεία κοσμοκράτωρες τοῦ σκότους a more explicit identification of the planetary gods with the elemental demons. While interviewing the demons of earth, Solomon encounters seven evil spirits of beauty and grace, who come before him in submission. Not recognizing them, however, he asks for their identification, and they reply:

ημεῖς εἰμεν στοιχεία κοσμοκράτωρες τοῦ σκότους...
καὶ τὰ ἄστρα ἡμῶν ἐν οὐρανῷ φαίνονται
μικρά καὶ ὡς θεοὶ καλομεθάνῃ.210

These seven spirits are evidently the planet-gods, who as demonic forces reside not only in the heavens but also on earth. This implication of dual residence might possibly account for St. Paul’s apparent inconsistency in Ephesians 2:2, where the powers of darkness are assigned to the sublunary zones, and 6:12, where they are placed in the celestial spheres. At any rate, it is clear that the two forces coalesce at times and are thought of indiscriminately as demonic elemental powers.

Mantissa

Now, to what extent can we say that these paradigms serve as a Hellenistic legacy to Byzantine tradition? How do they afford a foundation for an 'unorthodox' world view within the tradition? On the face of it, adoption of either of these world views would account, in a significant way, for the

209 Cf. Clementina: Homilia, X, 9 (Migne), where the writer disparages the worshiping of idols: οἱ λογισμοὶ ξοντες αὐτὰ τὰ θιαί προσκυνεῖαν, σώθη στοιχεία τὰ ὑπὸ θεοῦ γεγενημένα κολακεύονται, λέγε δὲ οὐρανὸν, ἕλιον, σελήνην, ἀστραπῆν, θάλασσαν καὶ πάνα τὰ ἐν αὐτοῖς.

210 The Testament of Solomon (McCown), VIII, 2 and 4a. McCown notes: "They [demons] cause all kinds of diseases and bodily defects, from seasickness to epilepsy, being particularly dangerous to women in childbirth and to infants. They destroy fields, flocks, houses, ships, and human lives, and will finally bring the end of the world. The thirty-six decani are entirely of this sort. Demons are sources also of moral evil, inspiring heresies, idolatry, lust, theft, envy, hatred, murder, war, and kindred evils. The seven spirits who call themselves... [kosmokratores] are of this kind" (p. 45).
dominance of spirit forces in the life and thought of the ordinary Byzantine citizen. To that one, the world of the supernatural exists in a very real and familiar sense. God, his angels, and the saints, as well as the devil and his minions, inhabit the spheres, special locales, and even the artifacts of the Byzantine world. Consequently, a world view that recognizes such forces, and, especially, one with an astrological motif, could accommodate the beliefs and superstitions of the spirit-minded. Such a world view is ready to hand in the Hellenistic legacy, and a cursory reconstruction of certain 'unorthodox' features of a cosmic scheme within Byzantinism will suffice to show that this legacy provides this accommodation.

Byzantine autocracy gives evidence of this adjustment. As an adaptation of the Hellenistic view, with its astrological overtone, the emperor, although not a god, is the god's vice-regent. His duty is to imitate god by establishing on earth a mimesis of the celestial order. Under counsel of the logos, which is the immanent principle of order in the universe, he is the agent of the supreme cosmic power. Thus he shares the titles of his divine sovereign; he is the autokrator, the kosmokrator, and the pantokrator. The symbols of his imperial authority also reflect this astrological vintage. As a personification of the planetary sun-god, the emperor has the same attributes as the god and, in his portraits, is represented wearing the nimbus and carrying in his hand the terrestrial globe. The sun and the moon, as well as the eagle, the attribute of Kronos, are also planetary symbols of his universal authority. Under the influence of this symbolic association, the emperor bears the astrological epithet chronokrator. The final stroke, indicating both Hellenistic and astrological origins, is the apotheosis of the emperor, his ascent through the lower planetary spheres to the highest sphere.


Vide supra, n. 82, 100-104, and, especially, 116-139.
of heaven. This ascension reflects the pagan sense of apotheosis, the
deification of the Roman emperor as a planetary deity in the starry heavens.

Byzantine mysticism affords another example of an «unorthodox»
motive, a «Christian» adaptation of the Hellenistic legacy. Based on an
asceticism aiming at a deepened inner spirituality, the Byzantine mystic
seeks to achieve a vision of god and ultimately to become god. This
entheosis he undertakes, not without orthodox regard for the sacraments of
liturgy and prayer, but rather through a love of god undisturbed by the
sufferings and other evils of the temporal world. His desire for ecstatic com-
munion with god leads to the final goal of religion – the unio mystica.
This mystical claim to entheosis, Lindsay argues, comes within the bounds
of orthodoxy:

... in the East the idea of becoming God could be embodied in positions that
forced their way to the centre of orthodoxy. Knowledge and being were
held to be one: to know God was to be God. As a man rises from apatheia to
gnosis, from a passive acceptance to unifying insight and knowledge, he
gained a soma pneumatikon, a spiritual body, and at last became God.

To argue this weak point, however, seems futile, when the Stoic format of
«astral mysticism» is so ready to hand. Here, the Byzantine mystic's ecstatic
communion with god, through love, to overcome the ills of this life and to
become god is merely a stand-in for the Stoic devotee's esthetic contemplation
of the starry heavens, through cosmic emotion, to overcome sublunary ills
and to achieve astral apotheosis. But if one finds this Stoic stratagem inap-
propriate to the exaltation of the Byzantine mystic, then surely one can see its
affinity with the gnostic mystery redemption-motif.

In pursuit of the vision of god, the mystic adopts another «unorthodox»
feature to accommodate the «Christian» world view. Investing the symbols of
the church with a new and profound content, he invokes the powers of the spirit
world to effect his purposes. The traditional icons now possess mystic signi-
ficance previously unknown in the church; they become numinous. As a
locus for a saint, the saint could speak through it and by its agency work
miracles. But no longer remaining a sacred tool of the mystic, the icon
acquires an important place in popular piety; its miraculous aid comes to be

218 Cf. LINDSAY, op. cit., p. 324.
219 HAUSIG, op. cit., p. 329-331.
220 LINDSAY, op. cit., p. 324.
221 MANGO, op. cit., p. 98; HAUSIG, op. cit., p. 330.
regarded as a sacred right. For the ordinary Byzantine, it becomes a magical charm for all purposes: to procure favor, to bring victory, to counter evil influences, to ward off unfavorable circumstances, or to overcome illness. That this belief in the miraculous power of the icon should emerge even within the bastions of orthodoxy ought not be too surprising, for the efficacy of signs, spells, bans, incantations, and charms of all sorts has lain all too deep in the Greek psyche. And as shown earlier, gnostic or esoteric wisdom always makes use of occult power.

One last example of an "unorthodox" fancy widely accepted among the Byzantine masses, an account vividly reminiscent of the gnostic mystery of redemption—the apotheosis of the soul. Life on earth, taken as a spiritual contest between angelic and demonic forces over the destiny of a soul, has its final act at the time of one's death. As the soul separates itself from the body, a throng of demons rushes to the deathbed in an attempt to take possession of the soul only to be thwarted by the soul's guardian angel. Departing the body, the soul has to journey through the planetary spheres and to stop along the way at customs houses (telonia) run by demons, who examine it on its deeds done on earth, either letting it pass upon proper payment due, determined by good works, or taking possession of it on the spot. Passing muster, the soul then mounts upward to the Father.

While these accounts make no outward show of the austerity of planetary control, either from friendliness or hostility, all of the spirit-filled hosts of the celestial domain, both sublunary and superlunary, are still present in the form of angelic and demonic powers. Under a faint astrological motif, cosmic dualism still remains in the mind-set of the religious and the superstitious, whether in terms of icon-worship or in the struggle of the soul's ascent to heaven through demon-ridden planetary spheres. Leading philosophers and scientists, too, as well as religionists, magicians, alchemists, and, of course, astrologers, not only accept in theory this occult world view but also conduct their lives under its auspices. And it is at least an amalgam of this Hellenistic legacy that Byzantine intellectuals, such as Maximus the Confessor, Leo the Mathematician, Photius, Michael Psellos, John Italus, Theodore Metochites, and Gemistus Pletho, inherit and under its patronage practice this abstruse "science", albeit sub rosa. As Norman Baynes has so carefully argued, the Byzantines are the intellectual heirs of the Hel-

222 Rice, op. cit., p. 130.
224 Vide Mango, op. cit., p. 164; this account derives from the Life of St. Anthony (Vita S. Antonii, 9, 28, PG XXVI, 857, 888). Also cf. Baynes, op. cit., p. 6 sq.
225 Baynes, op. cit., p. 3.
Hellenistic Age, having appropriated and making intimately their own the Hellenistic outlook. It serves as the surprising continuity in the Christian restatement of the pagan ideal. And this legacy, I claim, provides the foundation for an "unorthodox" world view within this unique Christian tradition.


p. 64, n. 1 : last, in place of late.
p. 66, n. 7 : Diehl, in place of Diehls.
p. 66, n. 8 : interpenetration, in place of interpretation.
p. 70, l. 9 : eternal, in place of eternal.
p. 71, l. 34 : after ruling, enter power.
p. 72, n. 44 : paper, in place of chapter.
p. 73, n. 50 : before henotheistic, its, in place of his.
p. 75, l. 10 : and, in place of an (before «the will of the God»).
p. 77, l. 8 : immortality, in place of immorality.
p. 77, n. 72 : men, in place of man.