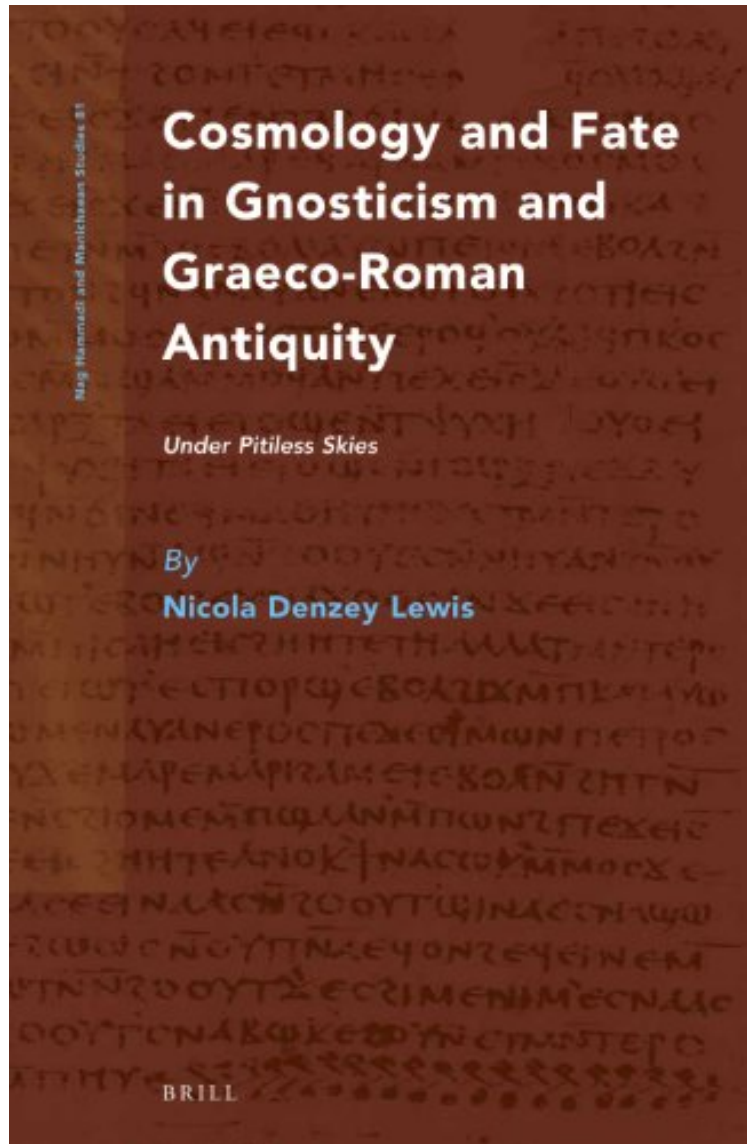


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Cosmology and Fate in Gnosticism and Graeco-Roman Antiquity: Under Pitiless Skies (Nag Hammadi and Manichaean Studies)

Nicola Denzey Lewis

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Nicola Denzey Lewis : Cosmology and Fate in Gnosticism and Graeco-Roman Antiquity: Under Pitiless Skies (Nag Hammadi and Manichaean Studies) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Cosmology and Fate in Gnosticism and Graeco-Roman Antiquity: Under Pitiless Skies (Nag Hammadi and Manichaean Studies):

5 of 7 people found the following review helpful. You are ignorant slaves of fate; we have been released from fate. By Michael Hoffman I had my university library order this book in hardcover and electronic form. People in Mediterranean antiquity including Jews, Pagans, Gnostics, and Christians, around the 1st Century, believed in fatedness. Then around the 2nd Century, people adopted a rhetoric of transcending fatedness, while disparaging other people or the other groups as being ignorant and being slaves to fate. This book supports the 3-tiered systematic analysis in my Egodeath theory, in which we move through three stages during initiation experiences: 1. Ignorant freewill thinking. 2. Enlightened realization of fatedness and personal noncontrol. This stage disparages stage 1 (ignorant freewill thinking). 3. Transcending fatedness to gain a transcendent freedom. This stage conflates and disparages stage 1 (ignorant freewill thinking) and stage 2 (realization of fatedness and personal noncontrol). Lewis' analysis is not as systematic, but supports this explanation of how stage 2 was first positively valued and then later was negatively valued. Lewis shows that competition and rhetoric inflation led all the groups (Jews, pagans, Christians, gnostics) to praise themselves as having true freedom and disparage the other people as being both ignorant (per stage 1) and slaves of fate (as realized in stage 2). People didn't complain of themselves being enslaved by fate; they disparaged other people as being ignorant and enslaved by fate. However, during initiation, as I have analyzed, the experience of fatedness and personal noncontrol give rise to panic and egodeath, which amounts to suffering enslavement by fate. Lewis misses this point and understates the intensity of ancient experience of enslavement to fate; she argues that enslavement to fate was mere rhetoric, but in fact enslavement to fate was intense peak experiencing. Lewis' theory is literary scholarship unplugged from intense, lightning-bolt, ancient experiential transformation of consciousness. Once this connection is made, from initiation experience to the encounter with fatedness, Lewis' book can be corrected and recognized as relevant to explaining the heart of religious origins in antiquity.

Introduction
 Chapter 1: Were the Gnostics Cosmic Pessimists?
 Chapter 2: Nag Hammadi and the Providential Cosmos
 Chapter 3: 'This Body of Death': Cosmic Malevolence and Enslavement to Sin in Pauline Exegesis
 Chapter 4: 'Heimarmene' at Nag Hammadi: 'The Apocryphon of John' and 'On the Origin of the World'
 Chapter 5: Middle Platonism, Heimarmene, and the Corpus Hermeticum
 Chapter 6: Ways Out I: Interventions of the Savior God
 Chapter 7: Ways Out II: Baptism and Cosmic Freedom: A New Genesis
 Chapter 8: Astral Determinism in the Gospel of Judas
 Chapter 9: Conclusions, and a New Way Forward
 Selected Bibliography
 Subject Index-- Michael Hoffman, the Egodeath theorist

In *Cosmology and Fate in Gnosticism and Graeco-Roman Antiquity*, Nicola Denzey Lewis dismisses Hans Jonas' mischaracterization of second-century Gnosticism as a philosophically-oriented religious movement built on the perception of the cosmos as negative or enslaving. A focused study on the concept of astrological fate in "Gnostic" writings including the Apocryphon of John, the recently-discovered Gospel of Judas, Trimorphic Protennoia, and the Pistis Sophia, this book reexamines their language of "enslavement to fate (Gk: heimarmene)" from its origins in Greek Stoicism, its deployment by the apostle Paul, to its later use by a variety of second-century intellectuals (both Christian and non-Christian). Denzey Lewis thus offers an informed and revisionist conceptual map of the ancient cosmos, its influence, and all those who claimed to be free of its potentially pernicious effects.

"...concise and convincing, ... the book is clearly-argued [...]. Its critical engagement with the research of the old school dispels scholarly myths and provides a new starting point for debate about how we are to understand the problems of fate, providence, and salvation in late ancient religious life.[...] worthwhile reading not just for students of Gnostic and Hermetic literature, but the New Testament, early Christian studies, and religion in the later Roman Empire as well." Dylan Burns, Leipzig University, "Numen" 61 (2014)."

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"...excellent overview of the primary sources whilst producing numerous thought-provoking arguments...It is a useful book for anyone interested in second-century thought patterns and is suitable for a wide audience with a range of interests." Sarah Parkhouse, Durham University, "Journal of Biblical and Early Christian Studies (RBECS.org)"

"...focused study that seeks to rebut the characterisation of second-century Gnosticism as a religious philosophy that apprehends the universe as an enslaving force. [...] a rich study, which offers a new way of thinking about the concept of fate in Gnostic texts. ...it promises to be a valuable and provocative contribution." Paul Foster, University of Edinburgh, "The Expository Times" 126(2,) 2014 ."

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