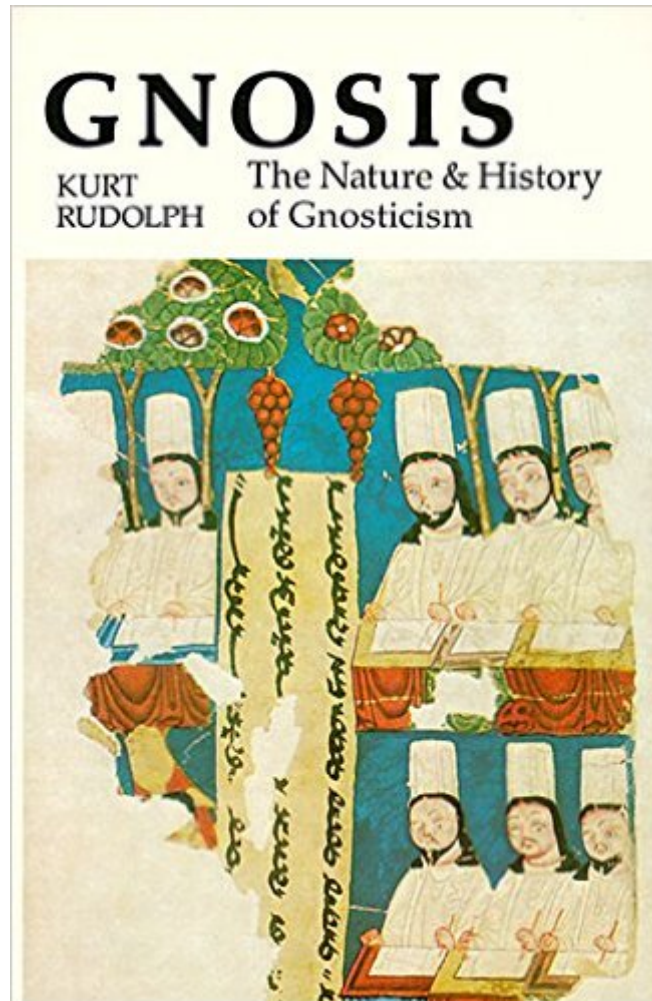


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Gnosis: The Nature And History Of Gnosticism



Synopsis

Presents a readable and appealing introduction to what otherwise might seem an inaccessible religion of late antiquity.

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[from Boating on the Catawba...in the "Musketaquid"] "The hidden significance of these fables which is sometimes thought to have been detected, the ethics running parallel to the poetry and the history, are not so remarkable as the readiness with which they may be made to express a variety of truths. As if they were the skeletons of still older and more universal truths than any whose flesh and blood they are for the time made to wear. *** But what signifies it? In them thus a superhuman intelligence uses the unconscious thoughts and dreams of men as its hieroglyphics to address men unborn. In the history of the human mind, these glowing and ruddy fables precede the noonday thoughts of men, as Aurora [does] the sun's rays. The matutine intellect of the poet, keeping in advance of the glare of philosophy, always dwells in this auroral atmosphere." -- Henry David Thoreau; *A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers*. * * * * * This work by Kurt Rudolph is the most clearly defined, cross-referenced, and helpfully labeled (in the margins) guide to understanding Gnosticism which I have so far encountered. His explanations and numerous excerpts are concise and clear, as are his numerous guides to other places in the text which are also relevant. Rudolph also includes an excellent discussion of the discovery and significance of the Nag Hammadi Coptic gnostic texts, including an excellent and clear outline of the Codices and their contents. The book also contains remarkable photographs of the places of discovery as well as

of some individual pages.

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