Let me begin with a disclaimer of sorts regarding the scope of this study. I became intrigued with the Gospel of Philip while researching second-century Christian disputes with Judaism evidenced in such writings as Justin’s *Dialogue with Trypho*, the Epistle of Barnabas, the letters of Ignatius, the Apology of Aristides, and the like. My approach to the Gospel of Philip, then, comes out of curiosity regarding what it might reveal about relations between Gnostics, Jews, and Christians, realizing that these are in all likelihood mutually overlapping groups to some degree.

In this paper I am advancing two proposals regarding the Gospel of Philip. First, we find references in the Gospel of Philip to the following series of terms: circumcision, proselytes, the Sabbath, sacrifice, Gentiles, Jews, Hebrews, and Christians. I would argue

that these terms provide some evidence of social and theological tensions faced by Valentinian Gnostics interacting with Jews and Christians. Second, regarding the most likely time and place to locate this interaction, I would tentatively suggest second century Antioch. I will conclude this study by plotting the Gospel of Philip within a plausible trajectory of Christian conflict with Judaism in Antioch.

We turn first, then, to consider the terms in the Gospel of Philip that suggest social and theological tensions between Jewish, Christian, and Valentinian Gnostic communities. We may begin simply by citing the opening lines of the Gospel of Philip, where several of these terms converge (51:29-52:24):

A Hebrew makes a Hebrew, and such a person is called a proselyte. But a proselyte does not make a proselyte. ...

All that a slave wants is to be free; the slave does not hope for the riches of its master. But a child is not merely a child; rather, the child lays claim to the father's legacy. Those who inherit dead things are also dead, and what they inherit are dead things. Those who inherit the living are alive, and they inherit both the living and the things that are dead. Dead things inherit nothing, or how could a dead thing inherit anything? If a dead person inherits the living, that person will not die, but rather will greatly live.

A Gentile does not die, for the Gentile has never become alive so as to die. One who has believed in the truth has become alive; and this person runs the risk of dying, because of being alive.

Since Christ came, the world has been created, cities have been organized, and the dead have been buried. When we were Hebrews we were orphans with only our mother, but when we became Christians we got father and mother.

Although the first paragraph cited unfortunately survives only in fragmentary form, the passage as a whole is nonetheless striking in that it refers explicitly to Hebrews, proselytes, Gentiles, and Christians all in the same connection. We will examine each in turn.

**Hebrews**

The word "Hebrew" appears six times in the Gospel of Philip, at 51:29 (2x); 52:21; 55:28; 62:5, and 62:13. In the last instance

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2 Most scholars have labeled the Gospel of Philip as Valentinian because of its use of the Old Testament, its view of Christ, the resurrection, eucharist, and baptism, and its view of humanity as divided into hylic, psychic, and pneumatic existence. See K. Rudolph, *Gnosis*, 193-94, 226-27, 317-25; idem, "Der Valentinianismus," *Die Gnosis*, vol. 1, ed. E. Haenchen, M. Krause, & W. Foerster (Zurich & Stuttgart, 1969) 162-314; and the various editions and translations of the Gospel of Philip listed in note 1 above, where it is regularly described as a Valentinian gospel. See also W. Foerster, *Von Valentin zu Herakleon* (Giessen, 1928).