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Journal of the Italian Research Group on
“Origen and the Alexandrian Tradition”

23

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Origene di Alessandria interprete della Genesi



Morcelliana

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1.2. Note e Rassegne

A Monastic Origin of the Nag Hammadi Codices?

by

Przemysław Piwowarczyk and Ewa Wipszycka

INTRODUCTION

The title of the present paper alludes to the title of a book by Hugo Lundhaug and Lance Jenott published in 2015. The goal of Lundhaug and Jenott's work was to demonstrate that the Nag Hammadi codices are a product of copyists and bookbinders active in the monastic environment, namely the Pachomian congregation, and that, in consequence, the treatises they contain were read by Pachomian monks¹. The authors constructed their thesis based on arguments of various nature: an analysis of the external aspects of manuscripts, the content of their colophons, the characteristics of the documents found in the covers of the codices, and the information on the content of monastic libraries.

The merit of the book lies in directing the attention of researchers to a subject that has long remained on the margin of scholarship. Taking up this subject is all the more important as the majority of texts dealing with ideas and beliefs of the fourth-century Egyptian monks balanced (and, unfortunately, still do balance) on the border that separates the output of academic historians of doctrine and Church apologetics. The resistance to the idea that monks, who were praised by Athanasius—commonly acknowledged as 'guarantor' of orthodoxy—could display openness to various teachings that were later condemned by the Church was and still remains very strong.

There can be no doubt that the thesis of the book will stir a debate proportionate to the weight of the problem, and, in consequence, all the arguments used by Lundhaug and Jenott will be thoroughly examined. Such a discussion is also our objective in the present article.

The orthodoxy of the Pachomians was beyond dispute until the mid-twentieth century. It was guaranteed by the authority of Athanasius, whose good relations with the congregation were described in the *Lives* of Pachomius with understandable reverence. The authors of the *Lives* emphasized Pachomius' deep distrust, even hate towards heretics; it would seem that the monks of his congregation would make poor candidates for readers of the Nag Hammadi treatises.

As the content of the so-called Gnostic codices (found in 1945 in Nag Hammadi, about 8 km from the most important Pachomian monastery in Pbow, present day Faw Qibli) became available to the researchers, and strong ascetic features appearing in some (but only some)² of the treatises were highlighted, a suspicion arose that the spatial proximity to the settlement of Pachomian monks was not at all accidental. If the codices had been owned by the congregation, it would seem obvious that their hiding would have been the result of Athanasius' festal letter 39 of AD 367, in which the Alexandrian bishop condemned apocryphal and heretical books, and published a list of works belonging to the canon of divinely inspired

* Ewa Wipszycka has written the *Introduction* and § 1 («The dossier of papyri from the covers of the Nag Hammadi codices»), Przemysław Piwowarczyk is responsible for the other sections (§§ 2-6). The *Conclusion* is by both authors. The article has been written as a part of the project nr. 2015/18/A/HS3/00485 funded by National Science Centre (Poland).

¹ H. LUNDHAUG – L. JENOTT, *The Monastic Origins of the Nag Hammadi Codices* (STAC 97), Tübingen 2015. We are aware of a new volume edited by H. LUNDHAUG and L. JENOTT, *The Nag Hammadi Codices and Late Antique Egypt* (STAC 110), Tübingen 2018, but because our text was already in the process of publication, it was impossible for us to take it into consideration.

² See the analysis by R. VALANTASIS, *Nag Hammadi and Asceticism: Theory and Practice*, StPatr 35 (2001) 172-190, who shows clearly that ascetic values were not at the center of interest for the authors of the Nag Hammadi treatises. Already M.A. WILLIAMS, *Rethinking "Gnosticism". An Argument for Dismantling a Dubious Category*, Princeton 1996, 139-162, criticized the concept of 'Gnostic' asceticism referring also to the sources outside the Nag Hammadi codices.

writings³. The head of the congregation, Theodore, who – as we know – read this Paschal letter to his monks⁴, would then have given the order to remove the doctrinally dangerous texts. However, in order to propose such sequence of events, it was necessary to prove that the monks, regarded as orthodox in the Athanasian sense, had read heterodox books before Athanasius' letter reached them. The first strong arguments in favour of this hypothesis was drawn not from the content of the Nag Hammadi treatises, but from the texts found in the leather covers of the codices, which were strengthened with a layer of re-used papyrus called *cartonnages* by the editors. A number of the papyri found in cartonnages were letters of monks⁵, what made the 'Pachomian connexion' theory acceptable for many scholars. The decisive argument was still, however, a geographical one: it was assumed that in close proximity to Pachomian monasteries there was no space for other monastic groups. We can immediately reject this argument as invalid, as traces of activity of monks—certainly not Pachomians—were found in the rock scarp, called *gabai*, at the foot of which the codices were discovered⁶. Also the Pachomian dossier itself contains information that allows us to be sure that a monastic community, which developed independently of Pachomius' initiatives, existed in the vicinity of the first two monasteries of the congregation: «After a while, the number of the brothers also increased in the monastery called Phbow. Then came an old ascetic called Ebonh, father of another monastery of ancient brothers. He asked Pachomius to receive his monastery into the brothers' Community. The name of the monastery was Chenoboskion» (G⁵⁴, transl. A. Veilleux). Phbow was established in 329–330, therefore the monastery at (or rather near) Chenoboskion functioned in the end of the 320s at the latest⁷.

The supposed connection between the Pachomians and the collection of Nag Hammadi caused, as expected, a discussion which engaged many patrologists; the list of articles on the subject is long. Some of the scholars protested against connecting the codices with the Pachomians: for traditional scholars the idea that orthodox monks could read treatises of various Gnostic currents (not to mention works of other religious groups) was unacceptable or even absurd. However, in the course of the last few decades, changes in the studies of theology and Church history led to greater caution in the use of the concept of orthodoxy. We realized that the formation process of orthodoxy was slow and should be seen rather as a chain of transformations than as a rapid change. Views considered orthodox in the beginning of the fourth century were not necessarily treated as such at the end of this century. With the passage of time, a combination of social conformity, persuasion and pressure led to essential uniformity of the Christian doctrine, but for a long time many circles (especially the ascetic ones) were open to various suggestions from groups that worked on the biblical message in their own specific ways. The awareness that fourth-century monks were much more open as far as doctrinal questions were concerned than traditional patrology had assumed, led a few scholars to the suggestion that Pachomians could possibly read the Nag Hammadi codices. In 1975, before the publication of the documents stuffed in the book covers, F. Wisse already supposed that

³ Athanasius, *Epistula festalis* 39, éd. L.-Th. LEFORT, S. Athanase, *Lettres festales et pastorales en copte* (CSCO.C 19), Louvain 1955, 15–22, 58–62 (text); introduzione, traduzione e note A. CAMPLANI, *Atanasio di Alessandria, Lettere festali* (LCPM 34), Milano 2003, 504–518 (transl.).

⁴ *Vita Pachomii* (SBo) 189, éd. L.-Th. LEFORT, S. *Pachomii vita bohairice scripta* (CSCO.C 7), Paris 1925, 175–178 (text); *Pachomian Koinonia I. The Life of Saint Pachomius*, ed. A. VEILLEUX (CistSS 45), Kalamazoo / Michigan 1980, 230–232 (English transl.).

⁵ The first article that informed about the content of the covers: J.W.B. BARNES, *The Greek and Coptic Papyri from the Covers of the Nag Hammadi Codices. A Preliminary Report*, in *Essays on the Nag Hammadi Texts*, in *Essays on the Nag Hammadi Codices in Honour of Pahor Labib*, ed. M. KRAUSE (NHS 6), Leiden 1975, 9–18, was followed by publications of the papyri. Barnes died before the work ended. The Coptic texts have finally been published by G. M. BROWNE, and the Greek texts by J.C. SHELTON in the volume *Nag Hammadi Codices: Greek and Coptic Papyri from the Cartonnage of the Covers* (NHS 16), Leiden 1981. They are cited as P. Nag Hamm. with G for the Greek and C for Coptic texts.

⁶ In the pharaonic tombs cut in the slopes of Jabal al-Ṭārif (T 8) was found an inscription with incipits of the Psalms. Similar inscriptions have been found under the overhanging rock in Wādī Sheikh 'Alī, not far from Jabal al-Ṭārif (J.M. ROBINSON, *The Nag Hammadi Story*, Vol. 2: *The Publication* [NHMS 86], Leiden-Boston 2014, 1118, 1135). Both places may be interpreted as spaces of Christian, probably even monastic, prayer; this interpretation is taken for granted by Lundhaug and Jenott (40–41). Inscriptions are published in P. BUCHER, *Les commencements des Psaumes LI à XCIII: Inscription d'une tombe de Kasr es Saijād*, *Kémi* 4 (1931) 157–160; M.W. MEYER, *Archaeological Survey of the Wadi Sheikh Ali December 1980*, *GöMisiz* 64 (1983) 77–82.

⁷ Chenoboskion, Coptic Šeneset, modern Qasr el-Saiyad, is located close to the village of Nag Hammadi.

the phenomenon of the Nag Hammadi collection could be understood as a result of the fact that a group of Gnostic ascetics came with their library to a Pachomian monastery⁸. J. E. Goehring, in his publication of 1986, strongly supported this hypothesis, considering the letters of monks from the cover of one of the Nag Hammadi Codices (NHC VII) an important argument for the 'Pachomian connection'⁹. C. Scholten put forward additional arguments in support of this theory¹⁰. A. Veilleux, the strongest opponent of the 'Pachomian connection' theory, pointed out that there is a long way from hypothesising that monks could read the Nag Hammadi codices to proving that they actually did it, and emphasised that to accept the hypothesis we would need solid arguments which, in his opinion, were missing¹¹. A. Khosroyev, a second important adversary of the 'Pachomian connection', completely rejected the possibility of a relationship between monks (all monks) and the works from Nag Hammadi, and looked for the writers and readers of the codices in a completely different milieu, namely among the urban elite¹². S. Emmel supported this intuition among the heated discussion concerning the emergence of the Coptic language, which greatly stimulated our understanding of the culture of the period. He wrote: «Bilingual 'Hellenised' Egyptians who grew up and remained in the largely Greek-speaking metropoleis of the Nile Valley, where they were in communication with like-minded members of the same 'class' or 'group' who shared an interest in this sort of esoteric and in some sense also erudite literature»¹³. This opinion received the support of N. D. Lewis and J. A. Blount, the authors of a recent article who aimed first and foremost at an explanation of the material context of the Nag Hammadi find. Lewis and Blount wrote: «We considered (...) that the Nag Hammadi codices may have derived from private Greco-Egyptian citizens in late antiquity who commissioned the texts for personal use, depositing them as grave goods following a practice well attested in Egypt»¹⁴. The authors took up an idea put forward years before by M. Krause¹⁵, adducing new examples of literary texts found in funerary contexts.

J. Shelton, a good papyrologist, was convinced that the content of the cartonnages can be explained by assuming that the bookbinders used waste paper coming from different sources. He was willing to accept the 'monastic connection' due to the presence of monks' letters in the material, but in his opinion these monks were not Pachomians. E. Wipszycka in year 2000 went even further in this direction. Repeating Shelton's arguments, she supposed that also the letters of monks came to the bookbinder from the basket of a wastepaper dealer, concluding that the content of the cartonnages cannot absolutely be used as an

⁸ F. WISSE, *Gnosticism and Early Monasticism in Egypt*, in *Gnosis: Festschrift für Hans Jonas*, hrsg. B. ALAND, Göttingen 1978, 431-440.

⁹ J.E. GOEHRING, *New Frontiers in Pachomian Studies*, in *The Roots of Egyptian Christianity*, eds. B.A. PEARSON – J.E. GOEHRING, Philadelphia 1986, 236-257. Goehring expounded his opinion further in later articles and has not changed his mind; see the last two texts about Pachomians and Nag Hammadi: Id., *The Provenance of the Nag Hammadi Codices once more*, StPatr 35 (2001) 234-253 (a lecture delivered in 1999); Id., *An Early Roman Bowl from the Monastery of Pachomius at Bhow and the Milieu of the Nag Hammadi Codices*, in *Coptica – Gnostica – Manichaica. Mélanges offerts à Wolf Peter Funk*, éds. L. PAINCHAUD – P.-H. POIRIER (BCNH.E 7), Québec 2006, 357-371.

¹⁰ C. SCHOLTEN, *Die Nag-Hammadi-Texte als Buchbesitz der Pachomianer*, JAC 31 (1988) 144-172. Scholten's arguments are based on the content of monastery libraries, colophons, and similarities with Bodmer papyri called also the Dishna Papers (which, in his opinion, are for certain Pachomian). We discuss this dossier further in our paper. Lundhaug and Jenott often repeat and develop Scholten's theories, presenting, however, much more radical conclusions than Scholten, who was a cautious scholar.

¹¹ A. VEILLEUX, *Monasticism and Gnosis in Egypt*, in *The Roots*, cit., 271-306.

¹² A. KHOSROYEV, *Die Bibliothek von Nag Hammadi. Einige Probleme des Christentums in Ägypten während der ersten Jahrhunderte*, Altenberge 1995.

¹³ S. EMMEL, *The Coptic Gnostic Texts as Witnesses to the Production and Transmission of Gnostic (and Other) Traditions*, in *Das Thomasevangelium. Entstehung – Rezeption – Theologie*, eds. J. FREY – E.E. POPKES – J. SCHRÖTER, Berlin 2008, 36.

¹⁴ N.D. LEWIS – J.A. BLOUNT, *Rethinking the Origins of the Nag Hammadi Codices*, JBL 133 (2014) 397-417, quotation at 397, and subsequently N.D. LEWIS, *Rethinking the Rethinking of the Nag Hammadi Codices*, Bulletin for the Study of Religion 45 (2016) 39-45. Both articles contain a radical polemic against the reconstruction of the history of the Nag Hammadi discovery presented in numerous works of J.M. Robinson, who was one of the leading figures of the 'Pachomian connection'. Lundhaug and Jenott accepted Robinson's conclusions in their book. We decided not to pursue the matter as it is of no significance to our study.

¹⁵ M. KRAUSE, *Die Texte von Nag Hammadi*, in *Gnosis: Festschrift*, cit., 216-243.

argument in the discussion about the owners and readers of the codices¹⁶.

The theory that the codices belonged to the Pachomians was accepted by many scholars at the first stages of the discussion, but was abandoned later on. S. Emmel, in one of the most recent studies of the Nag Hammadi codices, expressed the opinion that the Pachomian hypothesis is «not at all the most likely one»¹⁷. Lundhaug and Jenott broke with this trend, returning primarily to Goehring's hypotheses. In the authors' argumentation the documents from the covers, which, in their opinion, were waste paper produced within the congregation, play an extremely important role. Therefore, we shall begin with a discussion of this part of their argument.

1. THE DOSSIER OF PAPYRI FROM THE COVERS OF THE NAG HAMMADI CODICES

The covers of the Nag Hammadi codices contained various texts: two literary fragments, a group of sixteen letters written to or by monks, and documents with no obvious connection to the monastic milieu. In the eyes of Shelton and Wipszycka, the presence of these non-monastic documents supported the hypothesis that the bookbinders used wastepaper of mixed provenance for stiffening the covers. In order to reject this opinion, Lundhaug and Jenott had to prove that all the papyri from the codex covers came into existence as a result of the functioning of Pachomian monastic administration. Let us examine their arguments and see what they are worth.

G 1¹⁸. Undertaking by oil-workers from an unknown village of the nome of Diospolis Parva (the name of the village is lost in lacuna) to provide oil for εὐθεναία (the term in this context means 'provisions'). Oil producers are represented by a person bearing the title of προεστώς. Lundhaug and Jenott are convinced that προεστώς in this text is the superior of a monastery (pp. 113-117). However, in the Roman and early fourth-century terminology προεστώς usually means a head of a corporation (Shelton cites texts to support such understanding of the term). The fact that the storehouses of Pachomian monasteries contained some amount of oil for internal use does not suffice to suggest that G1 comes from the Pachomian milieu. Obviously, the monastery kept some oil for use in the kitchens, but the existence of such provisions has nothing to do with the supply of this product to Diospolis Parva by producers that were completely unrelated to the monastery. Lundhaug and Jenott's idea that «the monks could have been involved in some kind of joint venture with oil-workers from a local village» (p. 117) does not find support either in this text or in any other.

G 3. A badly damaged text treated by Shelton as a 'private account', mentioning mattresses (with the weight), a word meaning warp (στήμωνος), wool of different colours, and a 'weaver's pool'. The document belongs to a category we know very well; similar texts were written mostly in connection with weaving practiced by professionals or in private households. There is no reason to believe that this text is related to weaving in the Pachomian monastery. It is true that Pachomian nuns manufactured textiles, but this fact does not suffice to interpret G 3 as a product of the Pachomian milieu.

G 22 and 23. Fragments of badly preserved official accounts. Two terms appearing in these texts draw our attention: ἐπιτροπή Θηβαΐδος ἄνω and ἐπιτροπή Θηβαΐδος κάτω – indicating that we are dealing with fiscal divisions headed by two high officials bearing the title of epitropos (= *procurator*) of the Upper and Lower Thebaid. This suggests that we should treat these accounts as documents produced in the office of the province of the Thebaid. The texts have been republished in F. MITTHOF, *Annona militaris. Die Heeresversorgung im spätantiken Ägypten*, Florence 2001, 139, 401-405. Mitthof, similarly as Shelton, dates them to 298-323. In the place where Shelton read τάλαντον, Mitthof proposed λίτραι, which is in accordance with the word ἀχύρον (chaff) in the first line of G 22 c; therefore, instead of a money account we have an account of the delivery of chaff, a product which was important to the army (as forage for beasts of burden) and measured in weight units. In consequence, we do not have to worry about the high amounts stated in the document (they seemed alarming as long as the accounts were believed to record sums of money), and the date in the first quarter of the fourth century does not need to be questioned. Lundhaug and Jenott are ignorant of Mitthof's

¹⁶ E. WIPSYZKA, *The Nag Hammadi Library and the Monks: A Papyrologist's Point of View*, JJP 30 (2000) 179-191.

¹⁷ S. EMMEL, *The 'Coptic Gnostic Library of Nag Hammadi' and the Faw Qibli Excavations*, in *Christianity and Monasticism in Upper Egypt*, Vol 2: *Nag Hammadi – Esna*, eds. G. GABRA – H.N. TAKLA, Cairo 2010, 41.

¹⁸ In his publication of the documents from the covers, Shelton introduced separate numbering for Greek (G) and Coptic (C) documents.

reedition and insist on assigning the texts to the second half of the fourth century, imagining that «such a roll might just as well have originated in the hands of a private individual appointed to the public task of tax farming» (p. 120), who brought the papers with him while joining the monastic community.

G 44-45: list of names preserved in five fragments. The document drew the attention of Lundhaug and Jenott because it features people described not only by their name and patronymic, but also the designation ἀδελφοί, which in the authors' opinion is enough to identify these persons as monks. Such lists are well known to us as they occur very often in the papyri, and the designation ἀδελφός means a brother in the common sense of the word (similarly as 'son', υἱός, mentioned twice in G 44-45). In one of the fragments some names—for reasons that escape us—are followed by the word ζή(τησον), 'look up, examine'. On the list, we find people with professions like 'vegetable gardener', 'carpet weaver', 'shepherd', perhaps ἀπαιτητής – 'tax collector'. Lundhaug and Jenott, stating that the text features Christian names, conclude: «Far from being accounts used for the purposes of taxation, (...) these documents may just as well be examples of the accounts kept by the *oikonomoi* and *logographoi* of the monasteries» (p. 123). However, nothing supports such an interpretation, especially since the occurrences of the word υἱός and names of professions in the text confirm Shelton's interpretation of ἀδελφοί as biological brothers. Additionally, Christian names do not point automatically to monastic status of their bearers (p. 123). The texts from the covers are dated to the fourth (maybe fifth) century, when Christianisation of names had already made significant progress¹⁹.

G 143-144. Under these numbers, Shelton presents fragments of imperial regulations found in the cover of codex VIII. The date of these texts is very uncertain; they are certainly addressed to the people of the whole empire. There is nothing in these documents to suggest that they regulate monastic matters. Lundhaug and Jenott comment: «There is no reason to assume that a monastery would not have received copies of such directives either directly from the government or indirectly through its social contacts» (p. 126). We do not even have the smallest source reference suggesting that monks collected legislative dossiers. Why would officials send imperial regulations to monasteries? Lundhaug and Jenott imagined a quite anachronistic situation.

M. Choat, who commented most recently on the texts in the codex covers, wrote the following about this part of Lundhaug and Jenott's argument: «The attempts (...) to explain how these could have proceeded from a monastic context are not entirely convincing»²⁰.

J.E. Goehring, and Lundhaug and Jenott after him, chose to maintain that an analogy to the non-monastic documents from covers of the Nag Hammadi codices can be found in the dossier from a monastery called Deir el-Balaizah in the Thebaid, located ca. twenty kilometres south of Lykopolis. This monastery was founded in the 7th century and ceased functioning shortly after the second half of the 8th century AD. The documents from the multilingual (Coptic, Greek, Arabic) dossier of Deir el-Balaizah found during excavations in the monastery's area include receipts, contracts, private letters, lists of various kinds, and Arabic texts, among which there are three letters of the Arab governor of Egypt Kurrah ben Sharik (AD 709-714). The part of the collection not connected with the Balaizah monastery was very important for Goehring, as the presence of these documents in the dossier allowed him, by way of analogy, to explain the existence of non-monastic texts in covers of Nag Hammadi codices. The analogy, however, is inaccurate.

Joanna Wegner, the author of the newest and very detailed study about connections between monasteries of this region and the "world", writes:

a considerable number of texts edited in P. Balaizah cannot be firmly connected with the monastery, or even present features that speak strongly against such identification. These documents mention government officials, fiscal districts, and village communities unrelated to the community. In some cases, these texts found their way to the monastery having been reused for letters addressed to community members (e.g., *P. Bal.* 245: a letter to Mone from his parents, written on the back side of *P. Bal.* 154 – a contract between a village community and a *symmachos*). Some of them originated in offices of government agents or were addressed to them, as indicated by

¹⁹ Cf. M. DEPAUW – W. CLARYSSE, *How Christian was Fourth Century Egypt? Onomastic Perspectives on Conversion*, *VigChr* 67 (2013) 407-435; A polemic article: D. FRANKFURTER, *Onomastic Statistics and the Christianisation of Egypt: A Response to Depauw and Clarysse*, *VigChr* 68 (2014) 284-289; the answer of the authors: M. DEPAUW – W. CLARYSSE, *Christian Onomastics: A Response to Frankfurter*, *VigChr* 69 (2015) 327-329.

²⁰ M. CHOAT, *Monastic Letters on Papyrus from Late Antique Egypt*, in *Writing and Communication in Early Egyptian Monasticism*, eds. M. CHOAT – M.CH. GIORDA, Leiden-Boston 2017, 34, n. 88; *ibidem* 35, n. 93.

their content (mentions of fiscal districts, land divisions, functionaries – e.g., *zygostatai* or work overseers, and taxes) and form (the majority of the registers are written in ‘professional’ Greek, with numerous abbreviations)²¹.

Petra Sijpesteijn, who prepares an edition of the Arabic and bilingual texts from Deir el-Balaizah and knows well the style and palaeography of official documents, did not hesitate to treat them as second-hand papyri²². Other analogies between the texts from Nag Hammadi and Deir el-Balaizah suggested by Goehring, Lundhaug and Jenott, are very inaccurate. Goehring, who was the first to propose them, did not have experience in working with papyrus documents, and thus was easily deceived; while both dossiers mention economic issues, the nature of the operations they discuss was quite different.

Nothing indicates that the four documents from the cover of codex VII (G 63-65: deed of sale, two loans of wheat, deed of surety) had any monastic connections. This is true also of the letter discussing economic affairs of an estate (G 66). They cannot be placed among written documentation that was certainly produced in monasteries; they were ordinary deeds registering various legal actions, of the kind we know well from papyrological publications. Suffice it to look into the volumes of, say, *P. Oxy.*, to find numerous analogies.

On the other hand, the letters which certainly come from the monastic milieu have different value for the hypothesis of Pachomian provenance of the Nag Hammadi codices. These texts are: G 67, 68, 69, 72, 73, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79 and C 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 from codex VII and C 15 from codex VIII.

The letters do not feature elements that would allow us to date them precisely. However, Lundhaug and Jenott think that they come from the middle of the fourth century, due to the fact that the cover of codex VII contains three documents bearing the date of AD 341 (G 63), 346 (G 64) and 348 (G 65). Their reasoning is, however, incorrect, as there is no visible connection between the monastic letters and the three dated documents. Moreover, even if there were a connection, it would only give us a *terminus post quem* for the cover. We must remember that establishing the date of the cover is not the same as dating the texts from this cover, as the letters could span a broad chronological period²³. The lack of solid knowledge or even good approximations of how long documents were stored calls for caution in drawing conclusions. Unfortunately, it is very difficult to establish the date of the monastic letters (especially of the Coptic ones), as we cannot determine, based on palaeography alone, when in the fourth, or perhaps the fifth century the texts were written. The best solution in this situation is to refrain from propositions of dating. Surely, we are not allowed to think that all the cartonnage content is from the same period.

The most important text for the ‘Pachomian connection’ is the Coptic letter C 6. The sender is Paphnoute and the addressee Pachome, the ‘most beloved father’. The extant part of the letter preserves respectful greetings. On the *verso* we read an address:]ΔΠΡ[.]ΗΤ[...].ΕΙΩΤ[]ΤΕ[., which Barns reconstructed as [ΤΑΑΣ Μ]ΠΑΠΡ[Ο]ΦΗΤ[ΗΣ] ΕΙΩΤ[ΠΑΧΩΜΕ ΖΗΤΗ ΠΑΠΝΟΥ]ΤΕ. Barns supposed that what he had in his hands was an original letter of one of the founders of the congregation, namely Paphnoute, the ‘great *oikonomos*’ (i.e. the steward of the whole congregation), a person known from the Pachomian dossier. It is only Barns’ enthusiasm caused by this hypothesis that can explain the abandonment of the rules, which guide publications of papyri. Since we are dealing with a very damaged text (please note the number of uncertain letters, indicated by under-dots), we cannot propose any reading here. In the period when Barns was a student, papyrologists accepted this kind of supplementation, which is now firmly rejected. The identification of persons in C 6 proposed by Barns is very difficult to accept, as the names Paphnoute and Pachome were extremely popular. In this situation, the rules of our profession (not only those established by papyrologists) require to remain sceptical, even more so since we do not know when the letter was written²⁴.

Monks who appear in the texts purchase products, possess small amounts of money, deal with people

²¹ J. WEGNER, *Monastic Communities in Context: Social and Economic Interrelations of Monastic Institutions and Laymen in Middle Egypt (6th-8th Centuries)*. This doctoral dissertation will be published in 2018.

²² P. SIJPESTEIJN, *Coptic and Arabic Papyri from Deir El-Balaizah*, in *Actes du 26e Congrès International de Papyrologie de Genève* 2010, éd. P. SCHUBERT (Recherches et rencontres 30), Genève 2012, 710-713.

²³ M. CHOAT, *Monastic Letters*, cit., 33, supposes that the letters come from the second half of the fourth century, but does not put forward any new arguments in support of such dating.

²⁴ J.W.B. BARNS, *The Greek and Coptic Papyri*, cit., 141, looking for a proof, that Pachomius could be addressed by his followers as a ‘prophet’ (in the classical Pachomian dossier we do not find such examples), found an Arabic text of Pachomian provenance *Allocution de Timothée d’Alexandrie* published by A. VAN LANTSCHOOT, *Muséon* 47 (1934) 13-56, in which such epithet occurs. Firstly, however, this text does not come from the times of Pachomius; second-

“from the world”, ask about the health of their correspondents, greet them and provide religious consolation to each other. Nothing, however, suggests that we are dealing with people belonging to a large (or even very large) group such as the Pachomian congregation, or that their actions were undertaken in the name of the whole community. Without the suggestions of the scholars who believe in the ‘Pachomian connection’, we could treat this batch of monks’ correspondence like analogous collections of letters written by monks living in loose communities (*laura*) which we know very well from the papyri²⁵. These monks deal with their own economic affairs as well as with those of others members of their communities and maintain contacts with people from ‘the world’. Lundhaug and Jenott are right when they say that in Pachomian monasteries there had to be a group of monks who purchased various products and sold articles manufactured by Pachomian monks, and who, in consequence, had numerous connections outside the monastery (in ‘the world’); the two authors suggest that the discussed letters were written by or addressed to such monks. However, the fact that such a ‘managerial’ group existed in the congregation does not mean that we have any chance to find its members in the documents from the covers of the Nag Hammadi codices. In the texts we do not find any piece of evidence to prove that. The dispositions of the very ill Aphrodisios from letter C 5, who asks Sansnos to take 24 talents from someone and give 10 to someone else, seem to pertain to Aphrodisios’ own financial matters and cannot be considered a part of Pachomian ‘business’. All (or almost all) Pachomian monks worked at least occasionally in ‘the world’ (they most probably engaged themselves in agricultural activities), but only a little group played a part in the economic decisions connected with ‘the world’. The rest of the monks remained isolated from ‘the world’. Our use of the word ‘isolated’ is in this place intentional; while we agree with Lundhaug and Jenott that the congregation as a whole was not isolated from ‘the world’, we need to observe that Pachomius and his successors tried to limit the scope of activities of the average monk to the circle of monastic affairs. The emphasis on the concentration on prayers, recitations of psalms (even while walking to work and during the work) are a proof of that. Pachomius even limited the freedom of movement of the monks inside the monastery, just to create an illusion of detachment from the society. In this manner, he created for them a sense of loneliness (it is true that this was a very specific kind of loneliness which we could call ‘loneliness in a crowd’), and tried to cut them off from the sources of passion which sprung from the memories of the life they had abandoned. Of course, we could say that the image we find in the *Lives*, the *Letter of Ammon*, in the *Rules* and the *Regulations of Horsiese* can be rejected as an idealized picture. However, we do not believe it would be possible, for we are dealing with a construction seen in many texts from different periods produced independently of each other. Single episodes were subjected to the usual hagiographic distortions, but the clearly visible concept of community life which was created by Pachomius is present in the whole dossier and we have no reason to question it. A different opinion was expressed by Choat, who wrote the following in his very cautious characterisation of the group of monastic letters from the Nag Hammadi codices: «it is at least clear that the variety of monasticism displayed in the codices can be easily reconciled with Pachomian monasticism if one reads attentively past the ideals in the literary record of the *koinonia*»²⁶. Of course, we have to take into account the idealisation of the congregation of the times of the first generation of monks, which is typical of the *lives*; the idealisation, however, functioned only within a certain framework determined by the community model. The ‘real monks’ could pray less and accept the orders and teachings of their superiors with lesser enthusiasm than the *lives* want us to believe; they could

ly, it is a translation from Coptic. We do not know if this title was present in the Coptic original, and later language customs were different from those of the first half of the fourth century. Pachomians could adopt this title from monks of Shenoute’s federation who associated it with their great leader. Certainly, Shenoute styled himself a prophet and was called prophet in hagiographical narratives (such as his *Vita* attributed to Besa). However, we cannot find a proof that he was addressed in this manner in conversations or letters during his lifetime. Cf. D. BRAKKE, *Shenoute, Weber, and the Monastic Prophet: Ancient and Modern Articulations of Ascetic Authority in Foundations of Power and Conflicts of Authority in Late-Antique Monasticism: Proceedings of the International Seminar Turin, December 2–4 2004*, eds. A. CAMPLANI – G. FILORAMO, Leuven 2007, 47–73.

²⁵ Although the term *laura* is only rarely attested in Egypt (E. WIPSZYCKA, *Moines et communautés monastiques en Égypte (IVe–VIIIe siècles)* (JJPS 11), Warszawa 2009, 288–290), the communities organized according to this model were quite common, as proven by the examples of the well-investigated monastery in Naqlun (the Fayum) and the monastery of Epiphanius in West Thebes.

²⁶ M. CHOAT, *Monastic letters*, cit., 36.

steal food or be unwilling to work, etc. However, in large monasteries, where the community members worked together, ate together in refectories, and renounced the possession of private property, there was no place for the monks' individual economic undertakings. Studies of the whole economic behaviour of the Pachomians give us certainty in this matter²⁷.

Let us summarize this part of the paper: we know that the documents from the codices' covers do not provide any solid base for connecting Nag Hammadi and Pachomius. The non-monastic texts were certainly wastepaper. As for the letters of monks preserved in the covers, even if we reject Wipszycka's hypothesis of 2000 that they were wastepaper too, it still appears that they were produced among monks living in a loosely organised community of the *laura*-type. Could monks from a *laura* produce the covers without reading the treatises contained in the codices?

Let us now follow the reasoning of Lundhaug and Jenott and imagine what in the Nag Hammadi treatises could be interesting enough for monks (not Pachomian brothers, but monks from an unknown, loosely structured community) to justify copying the texts for internal use rather than making the covers on commission of an unknown reader or a group of readers.

2. Gnostics and Monks

After scrutinizing the key argument of Lundhaug and Jenott based on the papyri found in cartonnages, we will tackle other parts of their argumentation in attempt to show that a closer look at the sources they analysed does not necessarily leads only to monks, much less to the Pachomian monks, as the creators and readers of the Nag Hammadi 'library'. The weakness of single pieces of analysis results in the deficiency of the whole structure of cumulative argumentation. We focus on the chapters of Lundhaug's and Jenott's book devoted to the mentality of the readers of the Nag Hammadi Codices («Contrasting Mentalities»), the reading of apocrypha in the monastic milieu («Apocryphal books in Egyptian monasteries»), the scribal notes (in the form of subscriptions)²⁸ of the Nag Hammadi codices, and finally the links between the codices and the so-called Disha Papers («The codices»). At first, however, it seems useful to show, how the very narrow model of 'Gnostics' adopted by the authors determined their simplified understanding of Egyptian Christianity.

Differences and even theological contradictions evident even at the level of the single codices exclude the possibility that their owners shared all the views contained therein, but nevertheless it seems reasonable to assume, that they acknowledged at least some of them. In such context, it is significant that the codices do not feature any monastic text or even any texts attested either in the literature created within the Egyptian Church, or by papyrological finds in monastic sites²⁹.

Logical reasoning suggests that one should look for the readers of the codices among the supporters of the views contained in the treatises. Such supporters are sometimes, conventionally and collectively, referred to as 'Gnostics', although this label, if not explained properly, blurs the theological heterogeneity of the 'library'. Within the library there are represented two major theological models which scholars

²⁷ Our knowledge about the economy of the Pachomian congregation is sufficient to exclude any doubts. Sources of various kind and the conclusions that can be drawn from them in order to understand the monastic management and economic activities are gathered in E. WIPSYZKA, *Contribution à l'étude de l'économie de la congrégation pachômienne*, JJP 26 (1996) 167-210, and could be found also in E. WIPSYZKA, *Moines et communautés*, cit., 471-566. This monograph contains also a detailed characterisation both of the economy of hermitages and of that of *laurai*; H. Lundhaug and L. Jenott did not take this study into consideration.

²⁸ It would be preferable to use this more general term instead of 'colophons', which denotes much more standardized form of a peritext; for terminology and characteristic of the Coptic colophon cf. P. BUZI, *Titoli e colofoni: riflessioni sugli elementi paratestuali dei manoscritti copti saidici*, in *Colofoni armeni a confronto. Le sottoscrizioni dei manoscritti in ambito armeno e nelle altre tradizioni scritte del mondo mediterraneo. Atti del colloquio internazionale Bologna, 12-13 ottobre 2012*, a cura di A. SIRINIAN – P. BUZI – G. SHURGAIA (OCA 299), Roma 2016, 203-217.

²⁹ H. LUNDHAUG, *The Nag Hammadi Codices in the Complex World of 4th and 5th-Cent. Egypt*, in *Beyond Conflicts. Cultural and Religious Cohabitations in Alexandria and Egypt between the 1st and the 6th Century CE*, ed. L. ARCARI (STAC 103), Tübingen 2017, 341 underscores this striking fact. The only example of a shared textual tradition is a passage from *Teaching of Silvanus* (NHC VII 97,3-98,22) found also in texts attributed to Anthony, but in this case there is no interdependence but an independent use and translation of an earlier wisdom text.

call 'Sethian' and 'Valentinian'. We need to stress, however, that those labels are heuristic tools (such as 'orphanic', 'judeo-Christians' or 'neoplatonics'), not self-designations, and do not indicate that all the texts were produced within a single community or a network of communities institutionally separated from the church. Besides Sethian and Valentinian, there are other texts which could be safely numbered among 'biblical demiurgical traditions' if we prefer this term coined by Michael Williams against traditional 'Gnosticism'³⁰. The modern origin of the terms 'Gnosticism', 'Sethianism' or 'Valentinianism' does not mean that in Egypt of the 4th and the 5th centuries AD there were no Christians who shared beliefs put under those umbrella terms.

Lundhaug and Jenott, in their attempt to demonstrate that the codices could not belong to anyone but monks, refer only to a very narrow definition of 'Gnostics', limited to the so-called 'Sethian Gnostics' (pp. 57-59)³¹. The authors proceed to show that in the 4th and 5th centuries, there were no Gnostic groups in Egypt (p. 64). To achieve this, they have no other way but to accept Gnostics (i.e. Sethians) as an 'independent cult movement', socially withdrawn from the Christian Church³². This opinion, however, is not commonly shared in current scholarship, even when it comes to 'Sethians'³³.

The idea of the absence of the Gnostics in fourth-century Egypt can be reasonably maintained only if we consider Gnostic groups as independent from other Christian congregations. Such a situation would be possible only rarely and in an extremely favourable circumstances, but this possibility cannot be ruled out altogether. In the case of Valentinians, whose theological thought is widely represented in the Nag Hammadi texts, there is even an evidence (admittedly of non-Egyptian provenance) of their institutional autonomy³⁴. Locating the supporters of non-orthodox beliefs in the formal structures of the orthodox Church (which in the fourth-century Egypt can be defined as the Church following Athanasius' theology), should not be regarded as too daring. A shift towards such an inclusive understanding of the Gnostics is evident in the recent studies, both in relation to Christians of Valentinian³⁵ and Sethian orientation³⁶.

It is particularly difficult to accept that in Egypt of the 4th century there were no Christian groups which shared theological views different from the Christian mainstream, and created and copied texts in which such views were expressed. In fact, Lundhaug and Jennot admit that Epiphanius³⁷ met «Christians who

³⁰ M.A. WILLIAMS, *Rethinking*, cit., 51-52.

³¹ Sethian dossier from Nag Hammadi: *Apocryphon of John* (in two recensions: NHC II, 1; NHC III, 1, NHC IV, 1; the independent translation of the shorter recension is BG 2); *The Holy Book of the Great Invisible Spirit* (also called: *The Gospel of Egyptians*; two independent translations from Greek: NHC III, 2; NHC IV, 2); *The Three Stelae of Seth* (NHC VII, 5); *Zostrianos* (NHC VIII, 1); *Melchizedek* (NHC IX, 1); *Trimorphic Protennoia* (NHC XIII, 1). We can also add to it (reluctantly) *The Hypostasis of Archons* (NHC II, 4); *Apocalypse of Adam* (NHC V, 5), *Marsanes* (NHC X); *Allogenes* (NHC XI, 3). To this tradition belongs also *The Gospel of Judas* (CT 3). In the broadest sense, 13 texts from Nag Hammadi can be considered as Sethian, which amounts to only a quarter of the whole 'library'. About the Sethian dossier: M.A. WILLIAMS, *Sethianism*, in *A Companion to Second-Century Christian 'Heretics'*, eds. A. MARJANEN – P. LUOMANEN (SVigChr 76), Leiden 2005, 32-63.

³² The definition is based on the work of A. LOGAN, *The Gnostics: Identifying an Early Christian Cult*, Edinburgh 2006; this narrow understanding is shared by others, to mention only one influential work, by D. BRAKKE, *The Gnostics. Myth, Ritual, and Diversity in Early Christianity*, Cambridge, MA 2010, 31.

³³ A.B. SCOTT, *Churches or Books? Sethian Social Organization*, JECS 3 (1995) 109-122. This author postulates a very loose community of people connected by reading the same texts, which he names an 'audience cult'; a similar hypothesis is presented by F. WISSE, *Stalking those Elusive Sethians*, in *The Rediscovery of Gnosticism. Proceedings of the International Conference on Gnosticism at Yale New Haven, Connecticut, March 28-31, 1978*, Vol. 2: *Sethian Gnosticism*, ed. B. LAYTON (SHR 41), Leiden 1981, 563-576; M.A. WILLIAMS, *Did Plotinus "Friends" Still Go to Church? Communal Rituals and Ascent Apocalypses in Ritual*, in *Practicing Gnosis. Ritual, Magic, Theurgy and Liturgy in Nag Hammadi, Manichaeism and Other Ancient Literature. Essays in Honor of Birger A. Pearson*, eds. A.D. DECONICK – G. SHAW, J.D. TURNER (NHMS 85), Leiden – Boston 2013, 495-522.

³⁴ Iulianus Imperator, *Ep. 59*; Ambrosius, *Epist. extra coll.* 1-1a (= 40-41). Material gathered by K. KOSCHORKE, *Patristische Materialien zur Spätgeschichte der valentinianischen Gnosis*, in *Gnosis and Gnosticism. Papers read at the Eight International Conference of Patristic Studies (Oxford, September 3rd-8th 1979)*, ed. M. KRAUSE (NHS 17), Leiden 1981, 132-133 (Nrs. VIII-IX); to add is the usually neglected evidence of *Vita Epiphani* 59 (PG 41,100).

³⁵ E. THOMASSEN, *Going to the Church with the Valentinians*, in *Practicing Gnosis*, cit., 183-197.

³⁶ M.A. WILLIAMS, *Did Plotinus "Friends" Still Go to Church?*, cit., 495-522.

³⁷ Epiphanius, *Panarion*, 26,17,4-9.

participated in their local Christian Church and who found value in reading non-canonical texts» (p. 67), but further in their book they forget about them, even though such groups (Epiphanius treats them as groups³⁸ – a fact that Lundhaug and Jennot do not take into consideration) would be good candidates for creators of codices like those from Nag Hammadi.

Although Lundhaug and Jennot admit that there were 'Gnostic' books (p. 70), they are silent about what happened to 'Gnostics' themselves. When one states, that 'Gnostics' (that is, groups sharing theological views found in various texts from Nag Hammadi) were absent from Egypt of the 4th century AD, the question about the fate of those who originally created and read 'Gnostic' texts (in Greek and then in Coptic) in Egypt before the rise of monasticism has to be answered³⁹. The authors do not discuss this crucial subject.

3. MONASTIC MENTALITIES AND NAG HAMMADI CODICES

In the chapter «Contrasting Mentalities?», Lundhaug and Jennot intend to demonstrate that the readers of the texts from Nag Hammadi knew well and accepted the key content of the Bible, and therefore could not be 'Gnostics', with their allegedly characteristic anti-biblical and anti-cosmic attitude: «In a majority of the Nag Hammadi texts, the canonical Old and New Testament function as authoritative Scripture» (p. 83). Lundhaug and Jennot admit that in the Nag Hammadi codices biblical texts are subject to various interpretations, but are never rejected.

The views expressed by Lundhaug and Jennot are nothing new. They even seem to have the status of *opinio communis* in contemporary works on Nag Hammadi⁴⁰, but this consent does not result in widespread recognition of the monastic origin of the codices. Based on the undoubtedly legitimate argument that «their [the Nag Hammadi Codices] ideal readers must have known Scripture well enough to be able to intuitively grasp their numerous scriptural quotations and allusions», the authors conclude that the readers were monks (p. 84). They forget that not only monks read the Bible. All Christians (as well as Manichaeans⁴¹, Jews and even some 'pagans'), regardless of their theological views and organisational affiliation read the Bible or listened to it.

The hypothesis of Lundhaug and Jennot requires to be explained not only in the light of high frequency of the biblical allusions and quotations, but also in the light of absence of them in a substantial group of texts (Hermetic texts, the paraphrase of Plato's *Republic*, and a group of Sethian texts such as *Three Stelae of Seth*, *Zostrianos*, *Marsanes*, and *Allogenes*, which do not contain any biblical names, quotations, or obvious allusions to the Bible). The authors do not explain what the monks, immersed in the biblical language and imagery, would look for in such texts.

Contrary to the opinion of Lundhaug and Jennot, the 'library' contains also apparent critical re-evaluations of biblical episodes, which are hardly simple interpretations. For instance, we believe that even the most ordinary monk could notice that the positive evaluation of the snake in Paradise differs seriously from its image in the Book of Genesis (*Hypostasis of the Archonts*, NHC II 89,31-90,19; *On the Origin of*

³⁸ According to Epiphanius, they had common rituals and identification marks; Epiphanius mentions also the collective names they used to describe themselves or by which they were labelled by others.

³⁹ There is also the question of who translated the texts into Coptic. Could the *Apocrypha of John* be so popular among the monks, and the connections inside the monastic environment so weak, that the text was translated independently three times (as the Nag Hammadi Codices and Codex Bezae Cantabrigiae witness)? This would be a unique situation in the Egyptian monasticism.

⁴⁰ General overview: L. PAINCHAUD, *The Use of Scripture in Gnostic Literature*, JECS 1996 (4) 129-146; representative examples are given in Ch. MARKSCHIES, *Kaiserzeitliche christliche Theologie und ihre Institutionen. Prolegomena zu einer Geschichte der antiken christlichen Theologie*, Tübingen 2007, 278-298, where the author concludes: «Mehrheitskirchliche und gnostische freie christliche Lehrer unterschieden sich in ihrem Umgang mit dem biblischen 'Kanon' praktisch nicht [...] weil sie dieselbe Form der Institutionalisierung von expliziter christlicher Theologie repräsentieren» (298). The approach to the tradition of Paul is shown as a case study in S. EMMEL, *Exploring the Pathway That Leads from Paul to Gnosticism: What Is the Genre of The Interpretation of Knowledge (NHC XI, 1)?* in *Die Weisheit – Ursprünge und Rezeption. Festschrift für Karl Löning zum 65. Geburtstag*, hrsg. M. FASSNACHT et al., Münster 2003, 257-276.

⁴¹ House 3 in the village of Kellis (Oasis Magna), in which a number of Manichaean texts were excavated, yielded also fragments of the *Epistles to the Romans and Hebrews* (P. Kell. Copt. 6; P. Kell. Copt. 9). Since we know that the members of the family who lived there copied the texts, nothing prevents us from thinking that they copied also the biblical passages.

the World, NHC II 118,6-119,19). The directly expressed 'apocryphal' nature of some of the texts points to their distance from the existing canon⁴².

The authors also try to belittle the unorthodox (what means roughly non-Athanasian) nature of the texts from Nag Hammadi, pointing out that many of them contain no negative assessment of the creation and the creator (pp. 83-87). However, the table drawn up by them shows that in as many as 21 texts (which constitute more than one-third of the entire 'library') such a negative view is expressed directly. Moreover, in some of those texts the negative outlook on the relation between creation and the creator occupies a prominent place.

Nonetheless, Lundhaug and Jenott ignore the fact that the concept of the relation between creation and the creator was not the only idea that in the fourth century could raise serious theological concern, even among those Christians who were not particularly engaged in the life of the Church. For example, the authors consider the *Gospel of the Egyptians* (NHC III, 2; NHC IV, 2) as a text expressing positive outlook on the creator. They absolutely ignore, however, the fact that the *Gospel* introduces a quite exotic group of aeons and angels, which in the emanative process participate in the creation of the world and man, and which do not appear anywhere except for 'Sethian' texts from Nag Hammadi. The sets of texts put by Lundhaug and Jenott under the headings "positive" attitude toward the creator and "no clear evaluation" (pp. 86-87) include majority of the above-mentioned texts without biblical references; their 'ideal' readers could therefore be sought for outside Christianity as well. Even if we limit ourselves to this problem, we can infer that the relation to the creator and the Scriptures (as well as any other single criterion, such as the attitude towards asceticism) cannot be the only element taken into consideration while thinking about the mentality of the readers of the Nag Hammadi dossier.

Lundhaug and Jenott have to admit that not everything in the texts from Nag Hammadi agrees with orthodoxy, even in the form it was assumed in the fourth century. As a solution to this problem, they put forward the idea of selective reading: «It is important to remind ourselves that one cannot assume that ancient readers believed everything they read in these texts any more than readers do today [...]. It may have been that the presence of such texts in the collection was not regarded as theologically problematic, at least not by everyone in the community» (p. 89). The problem of selective reading has hardly been fully discussed in scholarly literature. It seems, however, very problematic to equate the reading practices of today with those prevalent in the Christian antiquity. Athanasius' stance is clear, and may serve as an authoritative example: apocryphal texts should be excluded from the reading of the faithful, even if some profitable passages could be found in them⁴³. On the contrary, the fact that censorship of books was being executed in antiquity on the level of both imperial and synodic legislation, and through the actions of individuals, has been demonstrated by Wolfgang Speyer, who gathered dozens of examples of destruction of books that were deemed heretical. Moreover, he pointed out that in the manuscript tradition we find examples of censorship of doctrinally dubious fragments even in works of otherwise respected authors (the best example is Irenaeus from Lyon)⁴⁴. It is worthy of note that the Alexandrian synod against Orige-

⁴² I refer here to the concept of "apokryph konzipierte Texte" developed by T. NICKLAS, *Apokryph gewordene Schriften. Gedanken zum Apokryphenbegriff bei großkirchlichen Autoren und in einigen 'gnostischen' Texten*, in *In Search of Truth. Augustine, Manichaeism and other Gnosticism. Studies for Johannes van Oort at Sixty*, eds. J. VAN DEN BERG et al. (NHMS 74), Leiden-Boston 2011, 557-564. It is hard to believe that even before the publication of the letter of Athanasius in 367, texts designated as 'apocryphal' already in their title (like all the four manuscripts of the *Apocryphon of John*) did not arouse suspicions of monastic superiors.

⁴³ Athanasius, *Epistula festalis* 39,23 (CSCO.C 19), 20-21 (text), (CSCO.C 20), 38 (French translation); for the complete translation of this passage into Italian, as the text edited by Lefort in CSCO.C 19 has lacuna, see A. CAMPLANI, *Atanasio di Alessandria, Lettere*, cit., 513. Cf. *Apophthegmata*, Sopatrus (PG 65, 413), *The Sayings of the Desert Fathers, The Alphabetical Collection*, transl. B. WARD, Kalamazoo 1984, 225 (English transl.).

⁴⁴ W. SPEYER, *Büchervernichtung und Zensur des Geistes bei Heiden, Juden und Christen*, Stuttgart 1981, 144-160. About the censorship, *ibid.*, 147, 150; we do not find much new (especially new sources) in D. SARAFIELD, *The Symbolics of Book Burning. The Establishment of a Christian Ritual of Persecution*, in *The Early Christian Book*, eds. L. SAFRAN – W.E. KLINGSHIRN, Washington, DC 2007, 169-173. For censoring the codex in the monastic context see the story in Joannes Moschus, *Pratum spirituale* 46 (PG 87C, 2900-2901), John Moschus, *The Spiritual Meadow*, transl. J. WORTLEY (CistSS 139), Collegeville, MN 1992, 37-38 (English transl.).

nists condemned not particular doctrinal views, but the books of Origen⁴⁵. We managed to find only one clear instance confirming the practice of selective reading among the monks, although it comes not from Egypt, but from Palestine⁴⁶. Of course, there were readers who could take advantage of reading works of authors with different theological views (Origenes reading the *Commentary to the Gospel of John* written by Valentinian Heracleon can serve as an example), but universality of such approach is, however, yet to be proven and not be taken for granted; the imperial authorities and the Church certainly treated such reading practices as highly suspicious.

In the context of discussion on the influence of Bible over the Nag Hammadi and monastic texts, we should reconsider a Genesis fragment from the cover of Codex VII (*P.NagHamm.* C 2). Lundhaug and Jenott write that the Nag Hammadi codices and this fragment «share a common scribal culture and were probably produced in the same milieu, perhaps even in the same monastery» (p. 127). It should be noted that the editor of the fragment, R. Kasser (to whom the authors refer), does not write about a monastery but about a «scriptorium»⁴⁷, without elaborating of what character it was. Such caution is reasonable, especially since Kasser thinks that the codex comes from the beginning of the fourth or the end of the third century⁴⁸. Therefore, its monastic origin could not be taken for granted at least because of chronology. The fact that a biblical text was used to stiffen the covers also does not indicate that the codex originated in a monastic environment. In a similar way (but not as cartonnage but as a loose cover filling) were treated fragments of the Gospels of Luke and Matthew (it is not certain whether they come from the same or from two different codices) which were found in a codex containing works of Philo of Alexandria⁴⁹. The codex of Philo is dated to the third century AD (Leuven Database of Ancient Books)⁵⁰, and was discovered probably in Koptos⁵¹, in a vessel built into a wall of a building not identified as a church. Thus, again, it would point to the interest for religious texts enjoyed among secular people.

The manuscript of Genesis, even if dated to the 4th century, did not necessarily originate in a monastic scriptorium. Christians of the first centuries (regardless of their theological views) and even Manichaeans were interested in the Genesis in a special way, – what is confirmed by the eight manuscripts of Christian origin dated to the second and third centuries AD (only Psalms and the Gospel of Matthew are represented by a greater number of fragments)⁵²; – therefore there is no reason to favour the monastic provenance of the discussed fragment.

Lundhaug and Jenott – even though they refer to Kasser – do not mention his opinion about the orthography of P. NagHamm. C2, which cools the enthusiasm over its resemblance to the Nag Hammadi texts: «il est, cependant, plus proche des Papyrus Bodmer que des manuscrits gnostiques de Nag Hammadi»⁵³. As the relationship between the Dishna papers and the codices of Nag Hammadi is not easy to determine, Kasser's evaluation cannot bring any evidence for the milieu in which the codices were made.

⁴⁵ Hier, *Epist.* 92,1, ed. I. HILBERG, *Sancti Eusebii Hieronymi Epistulae. Pars II* (CSEL 55), Vindobonae-Lipsiae 1912, 148: *lecti sunt libri Origenis, in quibus in pio labore sudavit, et consensu omnium condemnati*.

⁴⁶ Barsanuphius et Johannes, *Responsiones*, 602, éd. F. NEYT – P. DE ANGELI-NOAH, Barsanuphe, Jean de Gaza, *Correspondance*, vol. 2, t. II. (Sch 451), Paris 2001, 812-813.

⁴⁷ R. KASSER, *Fragments du livre biblique de la Genèse cachés dans la reliure d'un codex gnostique*, Muséon 85 (1972) 80.

⁴⁸ R. KASSER, *Fragments*, cit., 76.

⁴⁹ V. SCHEIL, ΦΙΛΩΝΟΣ ΠΕΡΙ ΤΟΥ ΤΙΣ Ο ΤΩΝ ΘΕΙΩΝ ΕΣΤΙΝ ΚΑΘΕΡΟΝΟΜΟΣ Η ΠΕΡΙ ΤΗΣ ΕΙΣ ΤΑ ΙΣΑ ΚΑΙ ΕΝΑΝΤΙΑ ΤΟΜΗΣ, ΠΕΡΙ ΓΕΝΕΣΕΩΣ ΑΒΕΛ ΚΑΙ ΩΝ ΑΥΤΟΣ ΤΕ ΚΑΙ Ο ΑΔΕΛΦΟΣ ΙΕΡΟΥΡΓΟΥΣΙ (MMAF 9.2), Paris 1893, III; relations between the codex of Philo and biblical papyri: S. GATHERCOLE, *The Earliest Manuscript Title of Matthew's Gospel* (BnF Suppl. gr. 1120 ii 3/P4), NT 54 (2012) 219-221.

⁵⁰ Gathercole dated it even to the 2nd/3rd century.

⁵¹ About the provenance of the papyrus, see: K.A. WÖR, *A Note on the Provenances of some Greek Literary Papyri*, JJP 28 (1998) 207.

⁵² L. HURTADO, *The Earliest Christian Artifacts. Manuscripts and Christian Origins*, Grand Rapids, MI – Cambridge 2006, 19-20.

⁵³ R. KASSER, *Fragments*, cit., 83.

4. APOCRYPHAL BOOKS IN EGYPTIAN MONASTERIES

Let us now examine in detail the source analyses which Lundhaug and Jenott give to prove that monks read apocrypha, and in consequence could also read texts like those from the Nag Hammadi codices. We follow the sequence of sources presented in their book.

4.1 *Pseudo-Euodius and John of Parallos*

Pointing at the homily of Pseudo-Euodius⁵⁴ in which the author defends the use of apocrypha, Lundhaug and Jenott treat it as evidence that reading of such extra-canonical texts was accepted among monks. However, what Pseudo-Euodius had in mind were doubtlessly only narrative additions with which he embellishes his story of the trial of Jesus. Noteworthy is the fact that he mentions no books, but only «embellishment (κόσμησις) of the words of the Holy Spirit, through the teachers»⁵⁵. It seems that even the author of this homily considered it inappropriate to name directly or mention the titles of texts external to the Gospels. He was aware that even the most cautious use of non-canonical tradition may bring serious charges⁵⁶. Meanwhile in the Nag Hammadi collection, the majority of the texts have a speculative, apocalyptic or exegetic character, and only few of them can be treated as narratives in some of their passages (this group includes, to a certain extent, the *Acts of Peter and the Twelve Apostles* [NHC VI, 1] and the *Acts of Peter* [BG 4]). In few other texts we can find only a loose narrative framework.

Further on, Lundhaug and Jenott mention a homily against heretic books written by the bishop John of Parallos (second half of the 6th century AD)⁵⁷. John attacks five works mentioned by title, of which only the *Investiture of St. Michael the Archangel* is preserved. This text has no analogy in the Nag Hammadi dossier. About the four remaining works we cannot say anything. It should be emphasised that John says that the texts he condemns are read in «orthodox churches», and that simple men repeat them in Egyptian cities and villages and some zealots listen to them⁵⁸. In the preserved text, John does not speak about monasteries and monks. The «zealots» of the homily are a well-known group of laypeople concentrated around ecclesial service⁵⁹, and by mentioning them John of Parallos reveals that not only monks or clergy could be regarded as groups especially interested in non-canonical texts⁶⁰.

4.2 *Apocrypha in the catalogues of monastic libraries preserved on papyri*

Further on, Lundhaug and Jenott examine lists of books preserved on papyri and ostraca. Although the authors are fully aware that among the seven Christian book lists in Greek preserved on papyri and gathered by Rosa Otranto⁶¹, «only two [...] are clearly associated with a monastery» (p. 153)⁶², it does not prevent them from quoting the *Memoirs of Pilate* [βίβλος τῶν ὑπο]μνημ(ά)τ(ων) Πιλάτου mentioned in *P.Vindob.Gr. inv. 26015* as an example of an apocryphal text from a monastic library, despite the fact that

⁵⁴ *Homily on the Passion and the Resurrection, attributed to Euodius of Rome*, in *Homiletica from the Pierpont Morgan Library* (CSCO.C 43), 79-106 (text), (CSCO. C 44), 83-114 (English translation).

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, cit. 91 (text), 96 (transl.).

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, cit., 90 (text), 95 (transl.).

⁵⁷ A. VAN LANTSCHOOT, *Fragments coptes d'une homélie de Jean de Parallos contre les livres hérétiques*, in *Miscellanea Giovanni Mercati*, Vol. 1: *Bibbia-Letteratura cristiana antica. Studi e testi*, Città del Vaticano 1946, 296-326.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 302, 304: ἡραπλοῦς μελετᾷ ἡγήτου εἰρητικῆς ἡθικῆς ἡσυχαστικῆς ἐροῦς ἡσυχαστικῆς ἡσυχαστικῆς.

⁵⁹ E. WIPSZYCKA, *Les confréries dans la vie religieuse de l'Égypte chrétienne*, in E. WIPSZYCKA, *Études sur le christianisme dans l'Égypte de l'antiquité tardive* (SEAug 52), Roma 1996, 257-278 (an updated version of a text originally published in 1970). The article contains a list of the Coptic sources which mention confraternities of *spoudaioi* and *philoponoi*.

⁶⁰ Because the information about the reading of these books in churches appears only in the title of the homily, which surely does not come from John himself, it cannot be taken as certain that these books were also read by clergy.

⁶¹ R. OTRANTO, *Antiche liste di libri su papiro* (SusEr 49), Roma 2000. The part of the book dealing with the Christian material was published independently earlier: R. OTRANTO, *Alia tempora, alii libri. Notizie ed elenchi di libri cristiani su papiro*, Aeg. 77 (1997). These seven papyri are in chronological order established by Otranto: *PAsh. inv. 3*, *POxy. LXIII 4365*, *P.Grenfell II 111*, *P.Prag. II 178*, *P.Prag. I 87*, *P.Vindob.Gr. 26015*, *P.L.Bat. 25,13*.

⁶² According to Lundhaug and Jenott, these two papyri are *P. Prag. I 87* and *P. Prag. II 178*. The monastic origin of the former is, however, uncertain.

all we know about this papyrus is that it comes from the Fayum and nothing can be said about the owner of books it listed⁶³.

Lundhaug and Jennot claim that *P.Prag.* I 87—a catalogue containing an otherwise unknown book τὸ τῆς γνῶσεως ἐσαγόντων τῆς ἁγίας ἀναστάσεως—was connected with a monastery⁶⁴. The catalogue is entitled Γνωσις βιβλίων πεμφθ(έντων) τῷ ἀδελφῷ μ[ου] – «List of books sent to my brother». Although monastic identity of the individual mentioned in the title is possible, there can be no certainty about it⁶⁵. Even if we acknowledge the monastic identification as valid, the further reasoning of the authors is, however, difficult to accept: «What the actual contents of these books were is impossible to know, though the latter title is reminiscent of the *Treatise on the Resurrection* and the *Interpretation of Knowledge* discovered in the Nag Hammadi Codices» (p. 153). The argument based on similarity of the titles seems to be extremely weak, especially in the light of absence of any further indications in the papyrus itself.

The Shepherd and the works of Origen which feature in the oldest known list of Christian books, *O.Ash.* inv. 3, dated to the 4th century (quoted by Lundhaug and Jennot on p. 153) cannot be considered as apocrypha, and it is very difficult to explain the reasons why the authors mention them.

Book catalogues preserved on papyrus show first and foremost that collections of books were kept not only in monasteries but also in churches (*P. Grenfell* II 111, fifth/sixth century; *P.Prag.* II 178, fifth/sixth century; *P.L. Bat* XIII 25,13, seventh/eight century). If we take into account the Coptic ostrakon IFAO 13315 (*SB Kopt.* I 12), an extensive book inventory of the monastery of saint apa Elias, we find there only one book of apocryphal character, namely the *Life of Saint Mary* (πῖος ἡθαρῖα ἡαρῖα), which can hardly be associated with the Nag Hammadi texts⁶⁶.

4.3 *Apocrypha in book collections of the Egyptian monasteries*

In the following part of their book, Lundhaug and Jennot discuss the remains of book collections of the Coptic monastic libraries (p. 155). They admit clearly that the manuscripts they refer to are of medieval date. Remnants of the oldest book collection known to us were found in the ruins of the monastery of Deir el-Balaizah (the latest texts are dated to the 8th century). This collection contains only one, very fragmentarily preserved manuscript which legitimately can be compared with the *Apocryphon of John*. The text was inaccurately labelled by W.E. Crum as a «Gnostic Fragment», and P. Kahle described it as a «Gnostic Treatise»⁶⁷. This text has the same protagonists as the *Apocryphon of John*, Jesus (probably resurrected) and John the Apostle, and contains a few terms and themes typical of apocrypha. The form of 'dialogue with the Resurrected'⁶⁸ is not only characteristic of 'heterodox' books⁶⁹. In the preserved parts of the text, there is no interest in the emanation mythology, so typical for the *Apocryphon of John* and related texts. This of course may be the result of its state of preservation, but we might as well be dealing with a dialogue free from heterodox content and thus should refrain from drawing any unambiguous conclusions. The oldest preserved codices from Shenoute's White Monastery in Sohag date from the 9th century. The inscriptions which list books stored in the niches of the so-called 'secret-chamber' in the White Monastery are also of medieval date. However, none of these inscriptions mentions apocrypha of any kind⁷⁰, while

⁶³ R. OTRANTO, *Antiche liste*, cit., 134: «sia ad una biblioteca ecclesiastica, sia alla biblioteca di un privato particolarmente interessato a testi agiografici».

⁶⁴ *P. Prag.* I 87, l. 8.

⁶⁵ R. OTRANTO, *Antiche liste*, cit., 132: «probabilmente un monaco».

⁶⁶ O. IFAO 13315 = *SB Kopt.* I 12, l. 59.

⁶⁷ W.E. CRUM, *A Gnostic Fragment*, *JThS* 44 (1943) 176-179; *Coptic Texts from Deir El-Bala'izah in Upper Egypt*. Vol. 1, ed. P.E. KAHLE, London 1954, 473-477.

⁶⁸ Seminal article by K. RUDOLPH, *Der gnostische „Dialog“ als literarisches Genus*, in *Probleme der koptischen Literatur*, hrsg. P. NAGEL, Halle an der Saale 1968, 85-107.

⁶⁹ This form is represented, for instance, by the first of the two apocrypha in the codex of Kasr el-Wizz: *Koptische Apokryphen aus Nubien: Der Kasr el-Wizz Kodex*, hrsg. P. HUBAI (TU 163), Berlin 2009. Also the core of *Epistula Apostolorum* is shaped as a dialog of the apostles with the Resurrected.

⁷⁰ W.E. CRUM, *Inscriptions from Shenoute's Monastery*, *JThS* 5 (1904) 564-567. Republished in more accurate order by T. ORLANDI, *The Library of the Monastery of Saint Shenoute at Atriye, in Perspectives on Panopolis: An Egyptian Town from Alexander the Great to the Arab Conquest*, eds. A. EGBERTS – B. P. MUHS – J. VAN DER VLIET (PLG 31), Leiden 2002, 211-213.

all the apocryphal writings found in preserved codices are of narrative type. The same type is represented by the apocrypha from the library of the monastery of Archangel Michael in Phantou⁷¹. Lundhaug and Jenott try to demonstrate that because manuscripts of such a late date contained apocrypha, earlier libraries could easily have had books like those from Nag Hammadi. They do not recognize the fact that the Nag Hammadi texts are for the most part speculative, not narrative.

Particularly noteworthy is a manuscript from the collection of the Pierpont Morgan Library (M 593; dated to 892/893), which comes from the aforementioned monastery of Archangel Michael. It contains two texts: *Investiture of St. Michael the Archangel* and *Investiture of St. Gabriel the Archangel* (the latter is known only from this manuscript). *Investiture of St Gabriel* features the figure of an angel named Litharkouel⁷², whom we find earlier in the *Acts of Peter and the Twelve Apostles* (NHC VI, 1). Lundhaug and Jenott suppose: «Those who first composed the Investiture texts might even read and draw elements from such texts as the *Apocryphon of John* and the *Acts of Peter and the Twelve Apostles* directly» (p. 160). The *Acts of Peter*, however, have almost no doctrinally suspicious content⁷³, and are completely different from the *Apocryphon of John*. It is even very doubtful that the author of the *Investiture* read the *Acts of Peter*. Litharkouel appears in the *Acts* as a figurative representation of Christ, while in the *Investiture* he is only an angel. More probably, the *Investiture* is an example of reception of an isolated motif which could be transmitted through many centuries and traditions. Had Lundhaug and Jenott taken a closer look at the *Investiture*, they would have found there also luminaries known e.g. from the *Gospel of the Egyptians* and the *Apocryphon of John*⁷⁴. Also in this case, what we have are plain names isolated from the original narrative context. We know from other sources that these names were widely used in Coptic magical tradition⁷⁵.

The presence of names of figures known from the 'Gnostic' context is attested also in other sources outside the monastic milieu. Let us consider Nikotheos, whose apocalypse is mentioned by Porphyry (who associates it with the apocalypses of Zostrianos, Allogenes and Messos)⁷⁶. The authority of the visionary Nikotheos (and also Marsanes, cf. NHC X) is recalled in *Treaty without a Title* from *Codex Brucianus*⁷⁷, as well as in the writings of the alchemist Zosimos of Panopolis⁷⁸, by no means a monk.

4.4 Apocrypha in the Pachomian libraries

Lundhaug and Jenott draw our attention to the interesting fact that in one of the episodes narrated in the *Life of Pachomius* (S³) a preacher (probably a leader of congregation addressing the members of his community) warns his audience against a book circulating under a holy name in which it is written that Cain was conceived by the devil. Doubtlessly, it means that this book was considered a threat for the brothers, but the conclusion that «books like these were actually circulating in the monasteries» (p. 168) goes, however, much too far, as it is clearly said that there was only one dangerous book. Moreover, the identification of this text with the *Gospel of Philip* (NHC II, 3) based solely on the idea of devilish origin of Cain cannot be accepted. Lundhaug and Jenott do mention after all (p. 168, n. 103) that this idea about Cain's parentage is shared also by the so-called Archontics, to whom Epiphanius ascribes using of the

⁷¹ As shown in the catalogue of L. DEPUYDT, *Catalogue of Coptic Manuscripts in the Pierpont Morgan Library*, Leuven 1993. The catalogue lists various acts of apostles (nrs. 93-95), a narrative on Jesus' infancy (101), and a narrative on Mary's infancy (nr. 108).

⁷² ΛΙΘΑΡΚΟΥΗΛ: *Die Bücher der Einsetzung der Erzengel Michael und Gabriel*, hrsg. C.G.D. MÜLLER (CSCO.C 31), Louvain 1962, 71, l. 3.

⁷³ R.McL. WILSON – D.M. PARROT, *The Acts of Peter and the Twelve Apostles*, in *Nag Hammadi Codices V, 2-5 and VI with Papyrus Berolinensis 8502, 1 and 4*, ed. D.M. Parrott (NHS 11), Leiden 1979, 202.

⁷⁴ ΖΩΡΜΟCΙΝΗ: (CSCO 31), 67, l. 8; ΔΑΥΕΙΘΑΝΗ: (CSCO 31), 70, ll. 26-27.

⁷⁵ Esp. Ms. London Hay 10122, W.E. CRUM, *Magical Texts in Coptic: II*, JEA 20 (1934) 197-199; P.Macq. I 1, *A Coptic Handbook of Ritual Power (P. Macq. I 1)*, eds. M. CHOAT – I. GARDNER (The Macquarie Papyri 1), Turnhout 2013, and some others.

⁷⁶ Porphyrius, *Vita Plotini*, 16.

⁷⁷ *Codex Brucianus*, C. SCHMIDT (ed.) – V. MACDERMOT (transl.), *The Books of Jeu and the Untitled Text in the Bruce Codex*, (NHS 13), Leiden 1978, 232, ll. 14-23 (text), 233 (transl.).

⁷⁸ Zosimos, *De omega*, 1,4: Νικόθεος <ὁ> κεκρυμμένος; *De omega*, 10,5: Νικόθεος ὁ ἀνεύρετος, Zosimos of Panopolis, *On the Letter Omega*, ed. H.M. JACKSON, Missoula, MT 1978, 16,28 (text), 17,29 (transl.).

Ascension of Isaiah and «still other apocrypha»⁷⁹.

At the end of their work, Lundhaug and Jenott add that «the Pachomian movement cannot be conceived of in such static terms as “orthodox” or “heterodox”, but involved a much more complicated range of beliefs and practices» (p. 252). Many examples taken by the authors from the Pachomian dossier to exemplify this assumption prove only the presence of personal conflicts and universal human weaknesses, but not doctrinal disputes⁸⁰. Recently, Emiliano Fiori proposed possible links between the imagery of Pachomian texts and the *Apocalypse of Paul* (different from Nag Hammadi text of the same title)⁸¹, but no such link to Nag Hammadi texts has been yet convincingly demonstrated. Even if we assume that the fourth-century *koinonia* was characterised by openness to various theological ideas, such as apocalypticism, we cannot consider the problem solved. This is because still active Valentinians (and probably also other groups) and Manichaeans constitute equally good candidates for readers of the texts like those found in Nag Hammadi. The argument that the Pachomians discussed the Scripture (and thus were liable to its heterodox interpretations, p. 254) is inaccurate, since discussion and especially systematic catechesis delivered by the elders of the monasteries (confirmed in the Pachomian dossier)⁸² promoted standardization rather than esoteric exegesis.

4.5 Shenoute's Discourse *I Am Amazed* and Dioscorus' Letter to Shenoute

Lundhaug and Jenott focus then on Shenoute's polemic against apocryphal books: «The kind of books kept in the collections of Shenoute's monasteries in the fourth and fifth centuries is unknown, but the fact that the archimandrite polemicalizes against apocryphal books and their use and promulgation by certain people in leading positions in the Christian congregations that he was familiar with, suggests that he regarded such books as a threat to the members of his own congregations» (p. 172). Special attention is given to Shenoute's polemical discourse *I Am Amazed*. Shenoute identifies directly some among the doctrinal opponents he condemns. He invokes the authority of Athanasius (*Ep. fest.* 39), according to whom the apocryphal books are appreciated by Melitians⁸³. He also mentions the names of Origen⁸⁴, Nestorius⁸⁵, and Arius⁸⁶. However, it would be hard to believe that a single person could hold theological views of all these theologians at the same time. Clearly, even Shenoute does not argue that all of those authors used apocryphal books. Shenoute does not mention any of the texts which are included in the Nag Hammadi 'library'. In the preserved parts of his discourse he gives only one title, *The Gospel of Jesus, the son of God, Begotten of the An-*

⁷⁹ Epiphanius, *Panarion*, 40,2,2.

⁸⁰ 'Carnal minds': G¹ 38, ed. F. Halkin, *Sancti Pachomii Vitae Graecae* (SHG 19), Bruxelles 1932, 23-24; excess of ambition: G¹ 42 (SHG 19), 26-27; greed and luxury: G¹ 55 (SHG 19), 37-38; disobedience toward superiors: G¹ 100 (SHG 19), 67; negligence: G¹ 116 (SHG 19), 75; desire for unnecessary goods: G¹ 127 (SHG 19), 80-81. The only reason for the split in the community in the time of Horsiesi given in the *Life* is personal conflict (the *Life* does not explain the exact cause of the split): G¹ 127 (SHG 19), 80-81; SBo 139, ed. L. TH. LEFORT, *S. Pachomii vitae Sahidice scriptae* (CSCO.C 8), Paris 1933, 268-270 (text); English transl. VEILLEUX, 195-197. It of course does not rule out deeper reasons, of which, however, we are ignorant. Only one episode offers a glimpse of some theological controversies within the *koinonia*, namely the views of a monk who denied the resurrection of the body (*Epistula Ammonis* 26). The problem is presented as a single episode and finds a quick and efficient resolution.

⁸¹ E. Fiori highlighted and explained interest of Pachomians in the apocalyptic material. His hypothesis about a Pachomian provenance of the *Apocalypse of Paul* (not the text from Nag Hammadi) is still based on rather weak premises: E. FIORI, *A Reactivation of the Apocalyptic Genre in Early Egyptian Monasticism: The Apocalypse of Paul*, in *Wissen in Bewegung. Institution – Iteration – Transfer*, eds. E. CANKIK-KIRSCHBAUM – A. TRANINGER, Wiesbaden 2015, 307-322; E. FIORI, *Death and Judgment in the Apocalypse of Paul: Old Imagery and Monastic Reinvention*, ZAC 20 (2016) 92-108.

⁸² For example SBo 186 (CSCO.C 7), 169-173 (text); English transl. VEILLEUX, 224-228; G¹ 141-142 (SHG 19), 88-89.

⁸³ Shenoute, *I Am Amazed* 319, hrsg. H.-J. CRISTEA, *Schenute von Atripe, Contra Origenistas* (STAC 60), Tübingen 2011, 144-145 (text). *Editio princeps* is Shenoute, *Contra Origenistas*, a cura di T. ORLANDI, Roma 1985. Orlandi gives Italian and Cristea German translation of the text. For the English translation, see: *Selected Discourses of Shenoute the Great. Community, Theology, and Social Conflict in Late Antique Egypt*, transl. D. BRAKKE – A. CRISLIP, Cambridge 2015, 57.

⁸⁴ For example Shenoute, *I Am Amazed*, 359, ed. CRISTEA, 155 (text); *Selected Discourses*, cit., 62.

⁸⁵ Shenoute, *I Am Amazed*, 464, ed. CRISTEA, 190; *Selected Discourses*, cit., 73.

⁸⁶ Shenoute, *I Am Amazed*, 484, ed. CRISTEA, 198 (text), 270 (transl.). Brakke and Crislip do not translate this passage.

gels⁸⁷. If we treat this title as a summary of the content of this otherwise unknown text, we can conclude that the theological view it hints at, does not agree with anything we know from Nag Hammadi, but suggests an early Judeo-Christian tradition (similar concepts appear in the *Gospel of the Ebionites*, fr. 6; *The Shepherd of Hermas* 33,7)⁸⁸.

Lundhaug and Jenott think that «there is no doubt that Shenoute had texts in mind that do find parallels in Nag Hammadi Codices» (p. 173). They give, however, no direct parallel. From the purely grammatical point of view, the preserved beginning of the speech, in which Shenoute rejects the doctrine of the multiplicity of worlds, is directed against an author whose name must have been mentioned in the lost part of the discourse («He also has [...] said»)⁸⁹, but the choice of grammatical person and number may be only rhetorical strategy, because further Shenoute deals with «they» without any reservation. There is no way to tell whether «they» are the authors of apocryphal works, readers of such literature or only people who follow some ideas taken from it. Even if we assume that Shenoute has in mind texts like those of Nag Hammadi (what is yet to be proven), he may see their readers not among his own monks (or monks is general), but among the laypeople from the area surrounding Panopolis, or even from more distant regions of Egypt (Shenoute, who had numerous visitors, could easily get to know about such persons).

Lundhaug and Jenott's idea that Shenoute in *I Am Amazed* speaks about problems in his own community («problem of heretical teachers within the local Christian congregations, and perhaps within his own monasteries as well»: p. 172; «Shenoute clearly perceived the potential threat of heretical writings also circulating in his own monasteries»: p. 174) is baseless. Unlike the *Canons*, the *Discourses* included Shenoute's speeches of different kind delivered on various occasions and directed to wide audience. We have no reason to think (the beginning of *I Am Amazed*, where Shenoute certainly addressed, and thus defined, his audience is not preserved) that this discourse was the only one addressed solely to the monks of Shenoute's congregation. We actually have a direct hint to the contrary. Discussing the problem of the lack of faith in transubstantiation of bread and wine, Shenoute writes: «And why do you partake of the holy mystery? Did you not find bread to eat and wine to drink, as we have written these things elsewhere? You, truly hypocritical and deceitful people, false Christians, only but in name, priest and monk, and leader and father»⁹⁰. In Shenoute's monasteries, however, wine was not served to healthy monks⁹¹. His monks, therefore, could not form his whole audience. Indeed, Shenoute speaks in this place about some monks and monks, among others, formed a part of his audience, but in fact in this part of his speech he does not bring up the problem of apocryphal books.

As for the letter of the patriarch Dioscorus to Shenoute, it mentions «books and numerous treatises of the pest named Origenes and other heretics»⁹², which are, however, difficult to associate with texts from the Nag Hammadi collection. The widely discussed question of certain similarities between the theology of Origen and the *The Tripartite Tractate* is far from being resolved⁹³. Could a text of this kind be treated as

⁸⁷ Shenoute, *I Am Amazed*, 309, ed. CRISTEA, 141; *Selected Discourses*, cit., 56. Although in the case of relation between title and the content of the Coptic works a due caution is always necessary (cf. P. BUZI, *Titles in the Coptic Manuscript Tradition: Complex Structure Titels and Extended Complex Structure Titles*, in *Coptic Studies on the Threshold of a New Millennium. Proceedings of the Seventh International Congress of Coptic Studies. Leiden, August 27 - September 2, 2000*, eds. M. IMMERZEEL – J. VAN DER VLIET – M. KERSTEN – C. VAN ZOEST (OLA 133), Leuven 2004, 309-316) such an early title should rather accurately refer to the subject of the text.

⁸⁸ Also Celsus apud: Origenes, CC V,53, éd. M. BORRET, Origène, *Contre Celse*, t. III, livres V et VI (SC 147), Paris 1969, 148-149, refers to possibility that Jesus might be of angelic nature. Gregorius Thaumaturgus, *In Origenem oratio panegyrica*, 4,42, éd. H. CROUZEL, Grégoire le Thaumaturge, *Remerciement à Origène, suivi de la Lettre d'Origène à Grégoire* (SC 148), Paris 1969, 112-113, assumes that Origen's guardian angel might be Christ himself as «The Angel of the High Council».

⁸⁹ Shenoute, *I Am Amazed*, 102, ed. CRISTEA, 138; *Selected Discourses*, cit., 54.

⁹⁰ Shenoute, *I Am Amazed*, 370, ed. CRISTEA, 158; *Selected Discourses*, cit., 63.

⁹¹ B. LAYTON, *Social Structure and Food Consumption in an Early Christian Monastery. The Evidence of Shenoute's Canons and the White Monastery Federation A.D. 385-465*, *Muséon* 115 (2002) 38, 41.

⁹² H. THOMPSON, *Dioscorus and Shenoute*, in *Recueil d'études égyptologiques dédiées à la mémoire de Jean-François Champollion*, Paris 1922, 376.

⁹³ For an overview of the discussion, see J.-D. DUBOIS, *Le «Traité tripartite» (Nag Hammadi I,5) est-il antérieur à Origène? in Orig. VIII*, 303-316. The author himself supports the hypothesis that the treatise presents a pre-Origenist

a work of Origen or of someone from his school?

Lundhaug and Jenott discuss broadly the problem of the Origenist controversy once again in the final part of their work. Their assumption that «monks charged with Origenist leanings certainly would have found much in the Nag Hammadi texts to pique their theological interests» (p. 241) cannot be rejected but neither cannot be proved⁹⁴. There are still other candidates for the producers and readers of the Nag Hammadi codices, who could have been interested in a larger group of texts than the six examples quoted by Lundhaug and Jenott as somehow associated with the ideas of 'Origenist' theology (pp. 241-245: *Teachings of Silvanus, Tripartite Tractate, Exegesis on the Soul, Authoritative Teaching, Treatise on the Resurrection, Gospel of Philip*) – after all, the 'library' of Nag Hammadi contains much more than six works. According to Lundhaug and Jenott, the texts from Nag Hammadi are full of Origenistic themes (pp. 241-242); many other points are, however, not in line with either original Origen's ideas or their perception in 4th and 5th centuries.

The idea that the *Gospel of Philip* could have been created in the course of Origenist disputes (p. 246) seems to be too radical (it could have been just rewritten or supplemented), however, the proposed location of its origin in the 4th century, contrary to the date given by the editors⁹⁵, should be taken seriously in the light of Lundhaug's analyses made in his earlier book and a recent article⁹⁶. Such dating does not mean, however, that this work should not be included into the core of the Valentinian corpus⁹⁷. If we accept the fourth-century date of the *Gospel*, as proposed by Lundhaug and Jenott, this text might actually witness to the vitality of Valentinian groups in the fourth-century Egypt, able to reshape their own tradition in the face of the new theological dilemmas, than to the Origenist origin of this text⁹⁸.

If Pachomian monks read works of Origen in the fourth century AD (for which we have no solid evidence), they would do that most probably not because they thought that the advantages of such readings prevailed over doctrinal doubts, but rather because they did not consider Origenist texts as heretical at that time.

Tackling the question of how much influence Origen's doctrine had on the Egyptian monasteries is in fact purposeless; we have no grounds to think that the Nag Hammadi texts were in any way associated with the thought of Origen. Whether books of «other heretics», mentioned in the letter of Dioscorus to Shenoute, have any connection for example with the *Apocryphon of John* is less than hypothetical, but Lundhaug and Jenott try to present this connection as very likely (pp. 238-246), or even take it for granted (p. 176).

4.6 *The issue of ownership of the Codex Bezae Cantabrigiae*

The argument based on the examination of a codex whose contents are very similar to those of the Nag Hammadi codices⁹⁹, inscribed on the cover with the name of the owner, ΖΑΧΑΡ ΑΡΙΤ ΑΒΒΑ¹⁰⁰ (p. 164), could

theology (J.-D. DUBOIS, *Le «Traité tripartite»*, cit., 311 writes about theological view typical of the second century). In a more recent study F. BERNÉ proves that theological ideas of *The Tripartite Tractate* are of a later date, and may fit the best the debates of the fourth century: *Rethinking Valentinianism: Some Remarks on the Tripartite Tractate with Special Reference to Plotinus' Enneads II, 9*, Aug. 56/2 (2016) 331-345.

⁹⁴ The *Homiletica* found in the Monastery of St. Michael in Hamuli are perceived by D. Brakke (*The Egyptian Afterlife of Origenism: Conflicts over Embodiment in Coptic Sermons*, OrChrP 66 [2000] 277-293, esp. 280) as a response of «middle-level clerics» to the renewal of some Origenist topics in the ascetic circles, but neither the homilies themselves nor Brakke point at association of those circles with texts like those of Nag Hammadi.

⁹⁵ W.W. ISENBERG, *The Gospel according to Philip. Introduction*, in *Nag Hammadi Codex II*, 2-7, cit., 134-135.

⁹⁶ H. LUNDHAUG, *Images of Rebirth. Cognitive Poetics and Transformational Soteriology in the Gospel of Philip and the Exegesis on the Soul* (NHMS 73), Leiden - Boston 2010, 153-394; ID. *An Illusion of Textual Stability: Textual Fluidity, New Philology, and the Nag Hammadi Codices*, in *Snapshots of Evolving Traditions. Jewish and Christian Manuscript Culture, Textual Fluidity, and New Philology*, eds. L.I. LIED – H. LUNDHAUG (TU 157), Berlin 2017, 42-46.

⁹⁷ E. THOMASSEN, *The Spiritual Seed. The Church of the 'Valentinians'* (NHMS 60), Leiden-Boston 2006, 90-102; I. DUNDERBERG, *The School of Valentinus*, in *A Companion to Second-Century 'Heretics'*, cit., 84; E. THOMASSEN, *Le Valentinisme à Nag Hammadi*, CRAI 152 (2008) 1760.

⁹⁸ For locating the Valentinian tradition in the 4th century, see M.J. EDWARDS, *The Epistle to Rheginus: Valentinianism in the Fourth Century*, NT 37 (1995) 76-91.

⁹⁹ It includes the *Gospel of Mary*, the *Apocryphon of John*, the *Sophia of Jesus Christ* (both attested also in Nag Hammadi) and the *Acts of Peter*.

¹⁰⁰ There must be a printing mistake. Lundhaug and Jenott have ΖΑΧΑΡ ΑΡΙΤ ΑΒΒΑ, based on M. KRUTZCH – G. POETHKE,

potentially be crucial in the reasoning of Lundhaug and Jenott. Therefore, it deserves our closer attention. The sign of ownership is located on the front cover at the bottom right. The cover was made in the fifth century AD at the earliest (it has characteristic dimensions), but the quality of the decoration fits better the codices of the sixth century AD and later. The cover was stiffened using a Greek Christian letter from the third/fourth century AD and an unspecified Coptic text of the fourth/fifth century AD. Later, however, the cover was recut and fitted to a fifth-century codex with contents similar and partially parallel to the texts from Nag Hammadi. The precise date of the reuse and resizing of the cover is unknown¹⁰¹. M. Krutzsch and G. Poethke, cited by Lundhaug and Jenott, do not comment on the date of the inscription on the cover. Lundhaug and Jenott write, however:

the inscription was *apparently* added after the resizing took place, thus indicating that the Apocryphon of John, etc., belonged to Abbot Zacharias. The inscription is thus a *clear* indication that this codex belonged to an abbot in the sixth, seventh, or eighth century and testifies to the continued use of books with contents like the Nag Hammadi Codices in Egyptian monasticism long after the time of Athanasius' 39th Festal Letter (p. 164, italics of P.P.).

Lundhaug and Jenott do not cite any new scholarship, nor do they present the reasoning that led them to the conclusion that the abbot Zacharias could not be the owner of the first codex which was put inside this cover. Myriam Krutzsch, who worked on the conservation of the codex, observed that it displays many traces of an intensive use and that some cards have been ripped and repaired in antiquity¹⁰². This points at a fairly intensive reading and great value attached to the texts in the codex, and makes less likely the idea of only one user.

Even if further studies would prove that the person mentioned on the cover was actually the owner of the Gnostic texts, it would only mean that an otherwise unknown abbot Zacharias read the *Apocryphon of John*, not that the Egyptian, or especially Pachomian monks, read and copied such materials.

4.7 Readers of apocrypha in late antique Egypt

Lundhaug and Jenott are determined to demonstrate that monks studied apocryphal books, what then leads them to the conclusion that monks could also read the Nag Hammadi texts. There is, however, no indisputable link between the generally true premise that monks read apocrypha and the conclusion that they read (and created) the texts from Nag Hammadi. Moreover, Lundhaug and Jenott entirely ignore the fact that even though monks did read apocrypha, they were not their only readers.

That apocrypha were studied also by laypeople, is directly proved by *P. Oxy. LXIII 4365*, a letter concerning a book exchange between two persons (at least one of them was a woman), dated to the beginning of the fourth century AD¹⁰³. One of these books is probably the *Fourth Book of Ezra*, the other one is the *Book of Jubilees*. In Oxyrhynchus we find also fragments of the *Gospel of Thomas* (NHC II 2): *P. Oxy I 1*; *P. Oxy*

Der Einband des koptisch-gnostischen Kodex Papyrus Berolinensis 8502 (Forschungen und Berichte 24. Archäologische Beiträge), Berlin 1984, 39, where this reading is found indeed. However, it is not clear why ⲁⲣⲛ would signify an archipresbyter. Since Krutzsch and Poethke use a Coptic font in which ⲛ looks almost identical as ⲛ (a very similar font was used in the edition of the text from the monastery of Epiphanius in Thebes) what Betz, who read the inscription, saw was probably ⲁⲣⲛ.

¹⁰¹ M. KRUTZSCH – G. POETHKE, *Der Einband*, cit., 39–40.

¹⁰² M. KRUTZSCH, *Beobachtungen zur Herstellungstechnik früherer gnostischer Kodizes*, in *Zugänge zur Gnosis: Akten zur Tagung der Patristischen Arbeitsgemeinschaft vom 02.-05.01.2011 in Berlin-Spandau*, hrsg. Ch. MARKSCHIES – J. VAN OORT, Leuven-Walpole, MA 2013, 286.

¹⁰³ This letter, and especially the texts mentioned in it, has been a subject of many interpretations; the one we present here is the currently predominant one. See discussion in T.J. KRAUS, *The Lending of Books in the Fourth Century C.E. P.Oxy. LXIII 4365 – A Letter on Papyrus and the Reciprocal Lending of Literature Having Become Apocryphal* in Id., *Ad fontes. Original Manuscripts and Their Significance for Studying Early Christianity*, Leiden-Boston 2007, 185–190 (text first published in German: *Bücherleihe im 4. Jh. n. Chr. P. Oxy. LXIII 4365 – ein Brief auf Papyrus und die gegenseitige Leihe von apokryphen gewordener Literatur*, *Biblos* 50 [2001] 285–296); R. Otranto supports the interpretation of the first publisher who claimed that the letter mentions the first book of the Old Testament: R. OTRANTO, *Alia tempora*, cit., 106–108.

IV 654; *P. Oxy* IV 655¹⁰⁴, none of which is dated by the scholars later than to the end of the 3rd century¹⁰⁵. Moreover, another *logion* of the *Gospel of Thomas* was written on a linen shroud from Oxyrhynchus dated to the 5th/6th century¹⁰⁶. As the shroud comes from illegal excavations, we know nothing about the person who was buried in it. Since in the third-century Oxyrhynchus the monks certainly were not among the readers of the *Gospel of Thomas*, there is no reason to believe that in the 5th/6th century the reading of this work was limited to the monastic milieu. From Oxyrhynchus come also fragments of the *Gospel of Mary* (Coptic text in BG 1; 5th century): *P. Oxy.* L 3525, *P. Ryl.* III 463 (both from the 3rd century)¹⁰⁷, and the *Sophia of Jesus Christ* (NHC III 3; BG 3): *P. Oxy.* VIII 1081 (4th century)¹⁰⁸; considering their date, at least *P. Oxy.* L 3525 and *P. Ryl.* III 463 could not originate in the monastic milieu.

Although all these texts are Greek, they are chronologically closer to the Nag Hammadi dossier than to monastic libraries from the 9th – 12th centuries, to which Lundhaug and Jenott links them (we discuss this subject further). It also cannot be said that they belonged to some marginal Christian literature. While numerous fragments from the Gospels of John and Matthew were found in Oxyrhynchus, only one fragment from Mark and three from Luke have emerged; therefore, the *Gospel of Thomas* or *Gospel of Mary* seem to have enjoyed comparable popularity. We know that before the emergence of the monastic movement, people already read non-canonical texts, like the fragments of Gospels of an unknown origin (*P. Egerton* 2, 2nd century)¹⁰⁹ or the recently published *P. Oxy.* LXXVI 5072 (2nd/3rd century). The assumption that all readers of such texts collectively joined the monastic movement is unreasonable. We would also draw the attention to the so-called miniature codices. The interpretation that they were destined for private reading, especially during a journey, seems correct. This means that not only monks should be taken into account as their primary users. They might be as well pious people from the world¹¹⁰ or ecclesiastics. One such codex contains the so-called *Gospel of the Saviour* (*P. Oxy.* V 840) and is dated to the early fourth century¹¹¹.

We know with certainty that at least the *Gospel of Thomas* was read and used by Manicheans¹¹². Meanwhile, there is no trace of this gospel in monastic literature. Manichaeans drew also from a wide range of

¹⁰⁴ H.W. ATTRIDGE, *The Greek Fragments*, in *Nag Hammadi Codex II, 2–7: together with XIII, 2**, *Brit. Lib. Or.* 4926(1), and *P.OXY.* I, 654, 655, vol. 1, eds. B. LAYTON *et al.* (NHS 20), Leiden 1989, 96–99; S. GATHERCOLE, *The Gospel of Thomas. Introduction and Commentary*, Leiden 2014, 4–8.

¹⁰⁵ For the dates of the texts, see S. GATHERCOLE, *The Gospel of Thomas*, cit., 8.

¹⁰⁶ *Editio princeps*: H.-Ch. PUECH, *Un logion de Jésus sur bandelette funéraire*, *BSER* 3 (1955) 126–129. This fragment belonged to Puech's private collection and has never been further examined. For an exhaustive presentation of it see A. LUIJENDIJK, *Jesus says: 'There Is Nothing Buried That Will Not Be Raised'. A Late-Antique Shroud with Gospel of Thomas Logion 5 in Context*, *ZAC* 15 (2011) 389–410.

¹⁰⁷ *The Gospel of Mary*, ed. Ch. TUCKETT, Oxford 2007, 5–9.

¹⁰⁸ Edition: *Nag Hammadi Codices III, 3–4 and V, 1 with Papyrus Berolinensis 8502,3 and Oxyrhynchus Papyrus 1081*, ed. D.M. PARROTT *et al.* (NHS 27), Leiden 1991, 209–216.

¹⁰⁹ Ch. MARKSCHIES, *Was wissen wir über den Sitz im Leben der apokryphen Evangelien*, in *Jesus in Apokryphen Evangelienüberlieferungen. Beiträge zu außerkanonischen Jesusüberlieferungen aus verschiedenen Sprach- und Kulturtraditionen*, hrsg. J. FREY – J. SCHRÖTER, Tübingen 2010, 79–80.

¹¹⁰ That such people lived in Egypt is evident from the well-known case of Dioscorus of Aphroditon.

¹¹¹ T. KRAUS, *Ad fontes*, cit., 63 (middle of the fourth century); M.J. KRUGER, *The Gospel of the Savior: An Analysis of P.Oxy. 840 and its Place in the Gospel Traditions of Early Christianity*, Leiden 2005, 62 (first half of the fourth century); LDAB gives (based on Orsini) years 325–425.

¹¹² Evidence of the use of the *Gospel of Thomas* by Manichaeans is collected by H.W. ATTRIDGE, in *Nag Hammadi Codex II, 2–7*, cit., 103–109: text 4 (Mani, *Epistula fundamenti*), text 6a (Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catechesis*, 4,36); text 6b (Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catechesis*, 6,31); text 11 (*Decretum Gelasianum*), text 12 (Pseudo-Leontius of Byzantium, *De sectis*, 3,2; 6th century), text 13 (Timothy of Constantinople, *De receptione haereticorum*, 6th century). In Manichaean literature there are also direct links to the text of the *Gospel*, see: P. MIRECKI, *Coptic Manichaean Psalm 278 and Gospel of Thomas 37*, in *Manichaica selecta*, eds. A. VAN TONGERLOO – S. GIVERSEN, Louvain 1991, 243–262; W.-P. FUNK, *„Einer aus tausend, zwei aus zehntausend“. Zitate aus dem Thomas-Evangelium in den koptischen Manichaica*, in *For the Children, Perfect Instruction. Studies in Honor of Hans-Martin Schenke on the Occasion of the Berliner Arbeitskreis für koptisch-gnostische Schriften's Thirtieth Year*, eds. H.-G. BETHGE *et al.* (NHMS 54), Leiden 2002, 67–94. Full bibliography in S. GATHERCOLE, *The Gospel of Thomas*, cit., 80, n. 66. The skeptical revision of the above mentioned links between the *Gospel of Thomas* and the Manichaeans, in J.K. COYLE, *The Gospel of Thomas in Manichaeism?*, in *Id., Manichaesim and its Legacy* (NHMS 69), Leiden-Boston 2009, 123–138, is too far-reaching and ignores the abundance of evidence. Cf. GATHERCOLE, *The Gospel of Thomas*, cit., 80–84.

Christian apocryphal literature, especially the apocryphal apostolic acts¹¹³.

Lundhaug and Jenott completely lost from sight the private production and circulation of books which is attested in the dossier of the Manichaean community of Kellis. Aside from numerous Manichaean texts mentioned in private letters as well as preserved on papyri fragments, in one letter there is mentioned *The Judgment of Peter* (ⲧⲕⲣⲓⲥ ⲙⲡⲉⲧⲣⲟⲥ). The work is unknown and is most probably of apocryphal nature in relation to the New Testament¹¹⁴. We should add here that at least some of the Manicheans of Kellis were fully bilingual, which is evident not only from the fact that the Kellis dossier was written in two languages, but is also revealed in an expression from one of the letters: «study your Psalms whether Greek or Coptic»¹¹⁵.

There was still another milieu in Late Ancient Egypt interested in exegesis of the Creation myth. In the writings of the alchemist Zosimus there are clear traces of an interest in the *Genesis* and the broader Enochic tradition, going far beyond widely shared *topoi*¹¹⁶. To some extent, there is some evidence of his knowledge of writings like the *Apocryphon of John*¹¹⁷ and the *Hermetica*¹¹⁸. Links between 'Gnostic' theologians, practitioners of magic and professional non-monastic scribes are, however, not limited only to Zosimus and his circle¹¹⁹. Why then could such "urban litterati" not be seriously taken into account as producers of the Nag Hammadi codices?¹²⁰

5. SCRIBAL NOTES IN THE NAG HAMMADI CODICES

In this very important chapter, Lundhaug and Jenott discuss in detail the various scribal notes (calling them all together «colophons») from the Nag Hammadi codices, referring to the known practices of the monastic scriptoria.

The authors start with an examination of the colophon of codex VII: ⲡⲉⲗⲃⲱⲙⲛⲉ ⲡⲁⲧⲏⲡⲧⲉⲓⲱⲧ ⲡⲉ ⲡⲱⲛⲣⲉ ⲡⲉⲛⲧⲁⲩⲥⲁⲛⲧⲱⲥ ⲥⲙⲟⲩ ⲉⲣⲟⲓ ⲡⲱⲧ ⲧⲥⲙⲟⲩ ⲉⲣⲟⲕ ⲡⲱⲧ ⲉⲛⲟⲩⲉⲣⲏⲏⲏ ⲉⲁⲙⲏⲏ¹²¹. They write: «colophons like this are quite common in later Coptic monastic manuscripts» (p. 178). While it is true that requests for blessing are quite frequent in colophons collected by A. van Lantschoot¹²², in which Lundhaug and Jenott search for

¹¹³ Suffice it to look at *A Manichaean Psalm-Book*. Part II, ed. C. R. C. ALLBERRY (Manichaean Manuscripts in the Chester Beatty Collection), Stuttgart 1938, 142, 194. The range of apocrypha used by Manichaeans is well outlined in J. K. COYLE, *Biblical Pseudepigrapha among North African Manichaeans*, in *Mani in Dublin: Selected Papers from the Seventh International Conference of the International Association of Manichaean Studies in the Chester Beatty Library, Dublin, 8-12 September 2009*, eds. S.G. RICHTER, Ch. HORTON, K. OHLHAFFER, (NHMS 88), Leiden – Boston 2015, 71-100 (Coyle presents broader material than the title of the paper suggests).

¹¹⁴ *P. Kell. Copt.* 19, l. 84.

¹¹⁵ *P. Kell. Copt.* 19, ll. 13-14, transl. *P. Kell. Copt.* I, 160. The word ⲡⲣⲏⲩⲕⲏⲙⲉ translated as "Coptic", literally means "Egyptian". On the linguistic aspects of this archive, see S. CLACKSON – A. PAPACONSTANTINOU, *Coptic or Greek? Bilingualism in the Papyri*, in *The Multilingual Experience in Egypt, from the Ptolemies to the Abbāsids*, ed. A. PAPACONSTANTINOU, Farnham 2010, 89-92.

¹¹⁶ Zosimus' reference to the Enochic tradition preserved in passage quoted by Syncellus, *Georgi Syncelli Ecloga Chronographica*, ed. A.A. MOSHAMMER, 14, ll. 2-13. About the use of Enochic tradition and even possession and reworking of the texts see. K. FRASER, *Zosimos of Panopolis and the Book of Enoch. Alchemy as Forbidden Knowledge*, *Aries* 4 (2004) 125-147; D.C. OLSON, *From the Alchemist's Library? Zosimos of Panopolis and Codex Panopolitanus*, *Henoch* 35 (2013) 135-153.

¹¹⁷ D.C. OLSON, *From the Alchemist's Library*, cit., 139-143.

¹¹⁸ A. CAMPLANI, *Procedimenti magico-alchemici e discorso filosofico ermetico, in Il tardoantico alle soglie del duemila. Diritto – Religione – Società. Atti del quinto convegno nazionale dell'Associazione di Studi Tardoantichi*, a cura di G. LANATA, Pisa 2000, 83-84. Camplani notes also some links between ideas of Zosimos and some Nag Hammadi texts, cf. *ibid.*, 79, 82.

¹¹⁹ See discussion on particular spell: L.S.B. MACCOULL, *P. Cair. Masp. II 67188 Verso 1-5. The Gnostica of Dioscorus of Aphroditō*, *Tyche* 2 (1987) 95-97. D.R. JORDAN, *A Prayer Copied by Dioskoros of Kômê Aphroditēs (PGM 13a)*, *Tyche* 16 (2001) 87-90.

¹²⁰ Of course there still remains the question of the language. We know nothing about Coptic speaking alchemists of the 4th-5th centuries, but the possibility of the existence of urban inventors and users of Coptic has been raised by many scholars.

¹²¹ NHC VII 127, 28-32. Text in J. M. ROBINSON – J. E. GOEHRING, *The Three Steles of Seth: Text and Translation*, in *Nag Hammadi Codex VII*, ed. B.A. PEARSON (NHS 30), Leiden 1996, 420.

¹²² A. VAN LANTSCHOOT, *Recueil des colophons des manuscrits chrétiens d'Égypte*, Tome 1: *Les colophons coptes des*

analogies, none of these colophons designates the owner of the book as «Fatherhood (ΤΗΝΤΕΙΩΤ)». For the authors this term is, however, essential for the association of the entire colophon with the monastic milieu: «The “son” who copied the codex would then refer to the scribe himself, and the “father” and “fatherhood” would refer to his superior in the community, probably the abbot of his monastery» (p. 181).

Apart from the logical error – (if we assume that the books from Nag Hammadi were reserved for the abbots [p. 182], it is difficult to say that they were widely read in the monasteries) we cannot be certain that the colophon should be understood in the way proposed by the authors. Even on the same page (p. 181, note 15), Lundhaug and Jenott give an example of the use of the term “fatherhood” referring to the Archbishop Timothy of Alexandria, by no means a monk¹²³.

In the documents (mainly letters) mentioned by Lundhaug and Jenott, this term generally appears with a more detailed identification of a person: ΤΕΚΗΝΤΕΙΩΤ, «your (*sing.*) Fatherhood» or ΤΕΤΗΝΤΕΙΩΤ, «your (*pl.*) Fatherhood». Among the examples presented by the authors we find none without the possessive article. Similarly, the only Greek equivalent of this expression shown by Lundhaug and Jenott has τῆς ὑμῶν πατριότητος (*P. Lond.* VI 1916 = *P. Jews* 1916). Also, all the examples taken from monastic literature given at p. 181, n. 15, contain the possessive article. There is only one important exception: a remark of Shenoute in *I am Amazed*¹²⁴, where the abbot speaks generally about the leaders of Christian communities. In the discussed scribal note, there is a non-personalized form which seems unrelated to any specific person or group of persons. If we understand the colophon in this way, it would mean that the scribe did not have any personal relationship with the person for whom he worked and possibly even did not know his identity—except for the fact that he was a respected person (which, of course, does not imply that we are dealing with a monk, let alone an abbot).

Based on the letters from Western Thebes, we are able to demonstrate that the expression ‘Fatherhood’ does not always refer to the abbots. It is hardly imaginable that the monk Frange, well known from an extensive epistolary dossier, was a superior of a monastic community. However, in *O. Frange* 347 he is addressed as ΤΕΚΗΝΤΕΙΩΤ by two persons (one of them is a presbyter) who ask him to prepare a book for another individual. Especially interesting is *P. Mon. Epiph.* 281, a letter, which «Paul, your humblest servant» addresses to «abba Pson, the anchorite»; the latter is named «your fatherhood» in the letter. Paul informs Pson that «Archimandrite (ΑΡΧΗΜΑΝΤ/) shall depart», which indicates that even though Paul respected Pson¹²⁵, the latter could not be the superior of Paul’s monastery (nor of any other monastery, because Paul does not characterize the archimandrite any closer; he was most probably the superior of both monks). An intriguing example is found also in *P. Mon. Epiph.* 243, where we read: «I, Ananias, your (*pl.*) brother (ΑΝΟΚ ΑΝΑΝΙΑΣ ΠΙΕΤΝΟΝ). Seeing I said unto your fatherhood, “I am coming north forthwith”» (transl. Crum, modified). In this context, it appears that the term “fatherhood” can be used also to refer to a person who had a similar status – not the father of community, but another monk of comparable rank. We must also remember about numerous examples in which the very content of the letter and the absence of vocabulary of self-humiliation suggest that we are dealing with people of equal status¹²⁶. It cannot be denied that there are cases in which “fatherhood” means “leadership”¹²⁷, but generally ΤΗΝΤΕΙΩΤ expresses rather particular respect gained not only because of the function, but also because of exceptional piety, and as such it was not reserved for monastic superiors. Clear proof is given in the *Life of Moses of Abydos*. When one of the brethren calls the abbot a «father», Moses answers «God is the father of us all. But all of us, we are brethren.

manuscripts sahidiques, Fascicule 1, Louvain 1929.

¹²³ A similar employing of the term: *Histories of the Monks in the Egyptian Desert* by Paphnutius, in *Miscellaneous Coptic Texts*, ed. E.A.W. BUDGE, London 1915, 463 (text), 978 (transl.).

¹²⁴ Shenoute, *I Am Amazed*, 376, ed. CRISTEA, 161; *Selected Discourses*, cit., 64.

¹²⁵ Cf. *P. Mon. Epiph.* 172.

¹²⁶ E.g. *O. Frange* 74; *O. Frange* 99.

¹²⁷ *The Life of Saint Macarius of Scetis* 36, É. AMÉLINEAU, *Histoire des monastères de la Basse-Égypte* (Annales du Musée Guimet 25), Paris 1894, 111 (text and French transl.); *St. Macarius the Spiritbearer. Coptic Texts Relating to Saint Macarius the Great*, transl. T. Vivian (Popular Patristic Series), Crestwood NY 2004, 195 (English transl.): (on Paphnute) «It was he, moreover, who assumed the fatherhood in the holy places after Abba Macarius (ΦΑΙ ΟΝ ΕΤΑΛΕΒΗ ΝΤΕΜΕΤΙΩΤ ΞΕΝ ΝΙΤΟΠΟΣ ΕΘΟΥΔΒ ΜΕΝΕΝΩΩ)».

For many of you have attained the status of paternity (αγαθὸν γὰρ ἡμῶντι πῶς ἐπὶ νῦν ἵκνῃται)»¹²⁸.

The formularies of the scribal notes of NHC VII do not resemble the medieval colophons. The Coptic colophons collected by van Lantschoot are centuries later than those from the Nag Hammadi codices. Only one of the former can be dated perhaps to the 5th/6th century (nr. 123), another one to the 7th century (nr. 105). The term ἡμῖνται does not appear in any of them. Ownership is expressed simply by the name of the particular church or monastery¹²⁹. Very often instead of the bare name of the owner the colophons include a donation formula, usually introduced by a verb ἔδωκεν ε- or ἔ-¹³⁰, less frequently by ἐμῖναι ἐδωκεν ε-¹³¹, Δορεῖται ἐδωκεν¹³². The phrase that the book is «in the power of (ὑποὶ σταθεροῦς)» also appears¹³³.

Further, Lundhaug and Jenott analyse the scribal notes from NHC II 145, 18-23. The terms which occur in this subscription are present in the corpus of van Lantschoot, but in totally different contexts than in the Nag Hammadi codex (Lundhaug and Jenott ignore this difference). The term τέλειος can be found in three colophons where it characterises the person who ordered the book¹³⁴ or the author of the work¹³⁵, but never the readers of the text for whom the book is prepared. While trying to interpret τέλειος in this particular Nag Hammadi colophon, we do not have to refer to monastic literature, as Lundhaug and Jenott do (pp. 188-189), because this term can be easily understood in the context of the codex itself, especially the *Gospel of Philip* contained therein¹³⁶. The next important term in the colophon of NHC II, πνευματικός, in Lantschoot's corpus refers only once to an archimandrite¹³⁷, while in all other instances it refers to spiritual blessings¹³⁸, and is never applied to a whole community of monks or the assumed readers.

The scribal notes of Codex II should be compared not with their medieval counterparts but with two subscriptions from a Manichean book of Psalms found in Medinet Madi¹³⁹ (dated, like six other codices from this find, to the fourth/fifth century AD), of which the second one was added some time after the first:

αῤπαμεεγ ναμερετε ἡμῶντι αῤπαμεεγ
αῤπαμεεγ ναμερετ

Both the length and the content of these subscriptions are similar to what we find in the second subscription of NHC II: αῤπαμεεγε ρω νασινη γ[ῆ]νετῆπρσεγχι.

Lundhaug and Jenott write as follows about the subscription in NHC III: «The scribe's rather unique claim to be in possession of two names, one fleshly and another spiritual [...] finds parallels in Egyptian monastic letters from the fourth century» (p. 193); this statement, however, has yet to be proven. The authors do not give any source-rooted example of a change of the name or of adoption of a spiritual name; they cannot do it, because such a practice did not exist in Egyptian monasticism¹⁴⁰.

¹²⁸ É. AMÉLINEAU, *Monuments pour servir à l'histoire de l'Égypte chrétienne aux IV^e, V^e, VI^e et VII^e siècles* (MMAF 4), Paris 1895, 692; M. MOUSSA, *The Coptic literary dossier of Abba Moses of Abydos*, Coptic Church Review 24 (2003) 88 (English transl.).

¹²⁹ For example A. VAN LANTSCHOOT, *Recueil*, cit., nrs. XXXIX and XLIV. Cf. L. DEPUYDT, *Catalogue of Coptic Manuscripts*, cit., 24 (nr. 13), 135 (nr. 66).

¹³⁰ Numerous examples from the monasteries of Fayum and from the White Monastery, see e.g. A. VAN LANTSCHOOT, *Recueil*, cit., nrs. XIV, l. 9; XV, l. 7; XVI, l. 6; XVIII, l. 5; XXVI, l. 4; XXVII, ll. 18-19; XXIX, ll. 11-12 (Fayum); LI, l. 5v; LII, ll. 18-19, LXXV, l. 17 (White Monastery).

¹³¹ A. VAN LANTSCHOOT, *Recueil*, cit., nr. LXXXVII, l. 9.

¹³² A. VAN LANTSCHOOT, *Recueil*, cit., nrs. XCVIII, l. 5 and CVIII, l. 3.

¹³³ A. VAN LANTSCHOOT, *Recueil*, cit., nr. XCII, l. 19.

¹³⁴ A. VAN LANTSCHOOT, *Recueil*, cit., nrs. LXX, l.4 and LXXXI, l. 11.

¹³⁵ A. VAN LANTSCHOOT, *Recueil*, cit., nr. XCII, l. 24.

¹³⁶ This *Gospel* directly shows how one can become a perfect man through participation in the liturgical life (NHC II 75,19-20) and imitation of Christ (NHC II 80,4: «That person is Jesus Christ. He came to the whole place and did not burden anyone. Therefore, blessed is the one who is like this, because he is a perfect man»: transl. W.W. ISENBERG in *Nag Hammadi Codex II*, 2-7, cit., 203)

¹³⁷ A. VAN LANTSCHOOT, *Recueil*, cit., nr. XVI, l. 19.

¹³⁸ For example A. VAN LANTSCHOOT, *Recueil*, cit., nr. LV, ll. 20-22: ερεπνογτε μογ εροχ ρη μογ νημ ἡπῆκον. We have other ten occurrences of this word in the same context; see the list given by A. VAN LANTSCHOOT, *Recueil des colophons des manuscrits chrétiens d'Égypte*, Tome 1, *Les colophons coptes des manuscrits sahidiques*, Fascicule 2, Louvain 1929, 128.

¹³⁹ *A Manichaean Psalm-Book*, cit., 113,21-23.

¹⁴⁰ We know of only one change of the name in the whole Egyptian literature: *Histories of the monks*, cit. 450 (text),

Subscriptions iNHC VII and VIII attract the attention of Lundhaug and Jenott due to their use of cryptography. Indeed, encoding names is a common practice in colophons of medieval Coptic codices. It is worthy of note, however, that in Codex VIII it is the title that is encoded, while in Codex VII the encoded part conveyed perhaps some theological message (but we cannot say anything certain here).

A note of a scribe in NHC VI mentions certain trouble (ⲡⲓϥⲉ) associated with copying the texts. According to Lundhaug and Jenott, the “trouble” against which the scribe warns may be the necessity of returning the favor of copying some extra texts or «potential dangers inherent in receiving texts like the ones the scribe is hesitant to copy» (p. 205). But we can hardly think about fear of monastic censorship, because the texts already copied by the scribe were enough suspicious in terms of Pachomian orthodoxy. The other way to understand the expression “trouble”, maybe simpler, is to see it as an euphemism for additional payment¹⁴¹, which leaves a monastic milieu unprivileged as a possible context of transaction.

6. NAG HAMMADI CODICES AND THE DISHNA PAPERS

Here we shall offer only a brief discussion of the issues important to Lundhaug and Jenott, who try to explain the Nag Hammadi dossier through an analogy with a collection of heterogeneous documents known collectively as the Dishna Papers (the name is derived from the village near which, according to R.M. Robinson, the papers were found, and has not gained general acceptance), or less accurately as Bodmer Papyri (from the name of Martin Bodmer, who bought most, but not all of them). The spatial proximity – still only hypothetical – of the finding spots of the Nag Hammadi and Dishna collections could encourage comparisons. However, when we look more closely at the context of production of the two dossiers, the question of their ownership and the reason of their hiding, we have to admit the lack of firm evidence for their similarity, and the reasoning of Lundhaug and Jenott is revealed as a kind of *ignotum per ignotum*. Even the number of the Dishna Papers is a matter of discussion (from ca. twenty to sixty ‘books’, according to Jean-Luc Fournet)¹⁴². Certain codicological features of some of the Dishna codices actually resemble those known from Nag Hammadi. Dishna Papers as a whole are, however, radically different from the Nag Hammadi ones, what is best evidenced by the fact that «not a single shred belonging to the Gnostic library has been found among the Bodmer papyri and vice versa»¹⁴³. Although some scholars – like J.M. Robinson – connect with the Dishna Papers also nine texts with Pachomian content, such an association is very dubious. This, along with some additional evidence, weakens the theory of the Pachomian origin of the Dishna collection¹⁴⁴, and, in consequence, also the force of possible arguments *per analogiam* used by Lundhaug and Jenott to confirm the attribution of the Nag Hammadi ‘library’ to Pachomians¹⁴⁵. Moreover, the subsection on the Dishna Papers contains a clear over-interpretation. *P. Bodmer XLIII* contains a fragment of a text identified as part of *Zostrianos*, a work of Sethian character, preserved in Nag Hammadi ‘library’. (NHC VIII 1). Lundhaug and Jenott state that this fragment «closely resembles the Nag Hammadi codices in its dimensions and palaeography» (p. 233), whereas the editors of the papyrus, R. Kasser and Ph. Luisier, on whose edition Lundhaug and Jenott rely, write the following: «Le main de copiste ne ressemble à aucune autre des papyrus Bodmer ou de Nag Hammadi, mais elle évoque de près celle de BG, le Papyrus Berolinensis 8502»¹⁴⁶. Furthermore, as Lundhaug and Jenott admit, the connection

966 (translation). The change of name occurs during the baptism ceremony, and the names that are abandoned are related to Egyptian gods. It is, however, an absolute exception, which is anyway unrelated to monastic life. The text is currently dated to the sixth century.

¹⁴¹ Lundhaug and Jenott reject the commercial nature of the relation between scribe and recipient of the codex (p. 205).

¹⁴² J.-L. FOURNET, *Anatomie d'une bibliothèque de l'Antiquité tardive: l'inventaire, le faciès et la provenance de la 'Bibliothèque Bodmer'*, Adamantius 21 (2015) 8.

¹⁴³ R. KASSER, *Bodmer papyri*, in *Coptic Encyclopedia*, vol. 8, ed. A.S. ATIYA, New York 1991, 49.

¹⁴⁴ J.-L. FOURNET, *Anatomie*, cit., 12, 16-17. A. CAMPLANI, *Per un profilo storico-religioso degli ambienti di produzione e fruizione dei Papyri Bodmer: contaminazione dei linguaggi e dialettica delle idee nel contesto del dibattito su dualismo e origenismo*, Adamantius 21 (2015) 127.

¹⁴⁵ The authors rely on the hypothesis of Robinson, and even though they assume a more balanced stance: «Dishna Papers (...) might have belonged to the Pachomian federation headquartered at Pbow» (p. 231), they cannot, for the sake of consistence of their argument, doubt the Pachomian attribution of the Dishna Papers.

¹⁴⁶ R. KASSER – Ph. LUISIER, *P. Bodmer XLIII: un feuillet de Zostrien*, Muséon 120 (2007) 256-257.

of *P. Bodmer XLIII* with the Dishna papers is very dubious («may also be discovered among the Dishna papers»)¹⁴⁷; therefore, the whole argumentation built on this connection is almost of no value.

CONCLUSION

The biggest flaw of Lundhaug and Jenott's work is their biased interpretation of the sources, rooted in their presupposition of the monastic provenance of the Nag Hammadi codices on the one hand, and the complete disregard of other possibilities of interpretation of the scrutinized material on the other. The authors do not investigate thoroughly enough neither the context of production and transmission of the Nag Hammadi texts nor the question of their intended and actual readers.

For instance, we do not find a firm proof to support the suggestion that the more experienced and perfect monks could read different texts than other brothers (p. 255), as some of the *apophthegmata* suggest (however, the *apophthegmata* are not connected with Pachomian monks or Shenoute's community). It is also true that monks had to possess a knowledge of demons (p. 259) – but rather not those of the sort featured in the Nag Hammadi texts (Satan is almost absent from the Nag Hammadi texts¹⁴⁸, and the monks were not interested in the names of heavenly guardians and similar beings enumerated in the Gnostic mystical ascensions); the way in which such knowledge was supposed to be acquired was also different.

Forty years is quite long in such an intensively researched area like monasticism and culture of late Antique Egypt. We do not think that Lundhaug and Jenott, in spite of the plethora of works they cite, realise how much the image of the époque has changed as a result of numerous studies on the towns in *chora* and their elites, the process of creation of Coptic literary texts, the ambitions of bilingual communities, the organisation of various forms of monastic life, as well as on Gnosticism and Manichaeism. Lundhaug and Jenott's minds are dominated by works of authors who started their studies in the 1970s and 1980s.

It was with particular astonishment that we read the section of the chapter *Contrasting Mentalities?* in which the authors try to determine why the works contained in the Nag Hammadi codices were translated into Coptic (pp. 91–101). Their answer can be summarised as follows: the aim of the Coptic translation was to make potentially interesting texts available to Pachomian monks who did not know Greek. With this statement, Lundhaug and Jenott rehash the old 'common-sense' theory which explained the creation of translations by treating Coptic as natural language of the monks, used in everyday communication and thus entirely comprehensible. However, the discussion which began among Coptologists in the 1980s was sparked by the opinion that Coptic was, in fact, an artificial language created on the basis of Egyptian, but with significant content of Greek elements. These components were not limited to the sphere of vocabulary but included also grammatical forms adopted from the Greek language. The idea was first explored by Tito Orlandi, followed by Stephen Emmel. The two scholars were the first to try to explain in what conditions and with what goal in mind such an artificial language could have come into being without having recourse to the hypothesis of nationalist motivation. The nationalist hypothesis, which was based on a delusive conviction that late antique Egypt witnessed some ethnic clashes, found no support in the sources and was consequently expelled from scholarship over the last 25 years. Recent works that develop the ideas of Orlandi and Emmel make us realise the complexity of the process of language creation and warn against unconditional application of common sense as the best possible research instrument¹⁴⁹. What is

¹⁴⁷ J.-L. FOURNET, *Anatomie*, cit., 21–24, does not include this text in the 'Bibliothèque' Bodmer. In fact, the only scholar who includes it into the Dishna Papers is J.M. ROBINSON, *The Story of the Bodmer Papyri. From the First Monastery's Library in Upper Egypt to Geneva and Dublin*, Cambridge 2013, 15. Robinson did not know that this text had been published a few years earlier and cites it as «forthcoming». Since we are dealing here with a single page used as an amulet (as Kassel suggests), it is very difficult to connect this papyrus with the Dishna Papers.

¹⁴⁸ He is mentioned twice in the dialogue on temptation in the non-Gnostic *Apocryphon of James* (NHC I 4,37; 4,39) and once in destroyed context in *Melchisedek* (NHC IX 20,15). Satan also appears four times in the preserved fragments of the fourth text in the *Codex Tchacos*, but the context is lost.

¹⁴⁹ Mainly A. CAMPLANI, *Il copto e la chiesa copta. La lenta e inconclusa affermazione della lingua copta nello spazio pubblico della tarda antichità*, in *L'Africa, l'Oriente mediterraneo e l'Europa. Tradizioni e culture a confronto*, a cura di P. NICELLI, Milan-Roma 2015, 129–153; ID., *Sulla multifunzionalità del tradurre in copto: note sparse su frammenti copti tardoantichi, Cicerone e moderne ipotesi di ricerca*, in *Egitto: crocevia di traduzioni*, ed. F. CREVATIN (Dialogoi 1), Trieste 2018, 97–140. Camplani, who proceeded along the trail marked out by Orlandi and Emmel, clarified the social context

also important is the fact that the study of the Coptic language has acquired linguistic foundations¹⁵⁰. Although Lundhaug and Jenott's text abounds in notes, the authors failed to deal with due attention with the scholarship on the subject, dismissing its conclusions altogether without systematic discussion.

An obvious deficiency of the book is the easy rejection of the hypothesis of Manichaean provenance of the codices (p. 235). The authors appear not to know about the discoveries in Kellis and the subsequent discussion about the existence of Manichaean monasticism. While quotes from the texts of Nag Hammadi are not found in the Egyptian monastic texts, nor is there any mention of the titles of these works, such evidence is available in the case of Manicheans. This topic has been so far little examined¹⁵¹, even though the Manichaean connection seems equally – if not more – promising as the monastic one.

The possible creators and users of the texts from Nag Hammadi could be found also in other communities we mentioned in the present article: the Valentinian or Sethian groups operating informally within the Church, non-monastic clergy, lay Christians engaged in ecclesiastical life, bilingual lay intellectuals, milieus associated with the production of magical texts. None of them is taken into account by Lundhaug and Jenott.

The authors constantly repeat that a certain text or fact may perhaps indicate the Pachomian origin of the codices, but they are unable to gather and present arguments which would eliminate the word "perhaps". Their argumentation which led them to the hypothesis of the Pachomian origin of the Nag Hammadi codices is not based on any single decisive argument; to the contrary, its nature is vague, circumstantial and cumulative. The numerous hypotheses meticulously formulated by the authors, if put together, do not raise at all the level of certainty.

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of the creation of Coptic texts. He drew the necessary distinction between the Coptic of literary texts, such as the Nag Hammadi works, and the Coptic of everyday communication (used, e.g. in letters, inscriptions/graffiti, documents). Literary Coptic, in order to be comprehensible, required preparation which included at least basic knowledge of Greek and orientation in the religious-philosophical sphere.

¹⁵⁰ We are thinking, first and foremost, of the study by E. ZAKRZEWSKA, "A Bilingual Language Variety" or "the Language of the Pharaohs"?, in *Greek Influence on Egyptian-Coptic. Contact-Induced Change in an Ancient African Language*, eds. E. GROSSMAN – P. DILS – T.S. RICHTER – W. SCHENKEL, Hamburg 2017, 115-161 and an earlier article by the same author, *L* as Secret Language: Social Functions of Early Coptic, Christianity and Monasticism in Middle Egypt. Al-Minya and Asyut*, eds. G. GABRA – H.N. TAKLA, Cairo 2015, 185-197. In both papers there is appended an extensive bibliography.

¹⁵¹ Manichaean influence in the *Paraphrase of Shem* (NHC VII, 1) is perceptible in terminology and in mythological character of the narration: F. WISSE, *The Paraphrase of Shem in Nag Hammadi Codex VII*, cit., 21; M. ROBERGE, *The Paraphrase of Shem. Introduction, Translation and Commentary* (NHMS 72), Leiden-Boston 2010, 83-84. This topic was also examined by A. KHOSROYEV, *Die Bibliothek von Nag Hammadi*, cit., 104-133 (Lundhaug and Jenott do not refer to this part of the work of Khosroyev); A. CAMPLANI, *Sulla trasmissione di testi gnostici in Copto*, in *L'Egitto cristiana: aspetti e problemi in eta tardo-antica*, a cura di A. CAMPLANI (SEAug 56), Roma 1997, 154-158.

Abstract. The article aims to scrutinize the recently revived theory of the monastic (and particularly Pachomian) origin of the Nag Hammadi codices as it was fully developed by Hugo Lundhaug and Lance Jenott in their book *The Monastic Origins of the Nag Hammadi Codices* (Mohr Siebeck 2015). The main focus is on the source evidence gleaned by the authors of the monograph from the papyri found in the cartonnage of the Nag Hammadi codices, scribal notes, ancient book lists and monastic literature. These sources are here discussed once again to show that the monastic (and particularly Pachomian) milieu is not the only one, even not the most plausible, setting for the creation of Nag Hammadi codices and reading of the texts contained in them.

Keywords. Pachomian Monasticism; Nag Hammadi Codices; Gnosticism; Papyri.